

# It takes a village

Roadmap towards affordable  
housing in Fåglavik



Chalmers University of Technology  
ARK174 2021

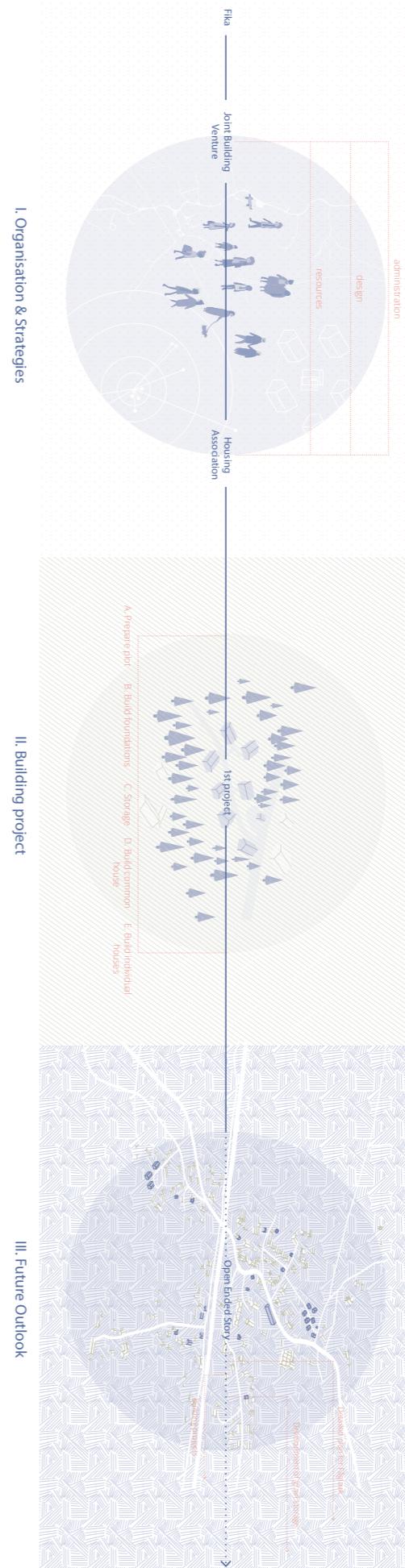
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## Abstract

This project is part of the studio Planning and Design for Sustainable Development in a Local Context. The overall theme for the studio is Planning and design for sustainable development in a small or medium-sized municipality and the special annual theme of 2021 is Another countryside is possible. This year the studio has collaborated with the Västra Götaland region and worked with four different places: Åstol, Dyrön, Fåglavik and Hällekis. The studio is initiated by analyzing and creating an understanding of the local situation including the larger geographical and functional context, which then is used as a point of departure for an in-depth project.

A common SWOT-analysis made during the first part of the studio made several issues regarding the housing situation in Fåglavik visible. This project addresses these challenges and aims to provide a roadmap for creating affordable housing in Fåglavik and show how the town can continue to develop in the future.

The booklet is organized into 3 parts – Phase I, Phase II and Phase III – where each part represents a phase in the development process. The first phase covers the planning and organization of people, knowledge and resources as well as formulating building strategies to promote a more affordable and sustainable building process. In the second phase a concept for a small house village – the co-village- is created to showcase a possible way to organize and build affordable housing in Fåglavik. Finally, the third phase presents a future outlook of Fåglavik to visualize possible projects and potential pathways that could continue the development.



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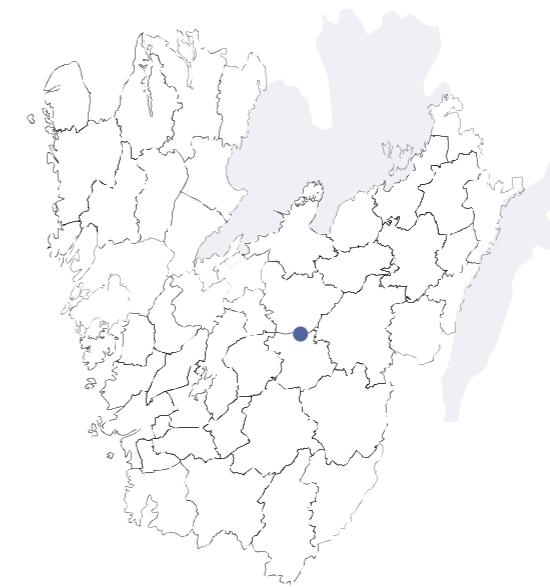
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# 01 Introduction

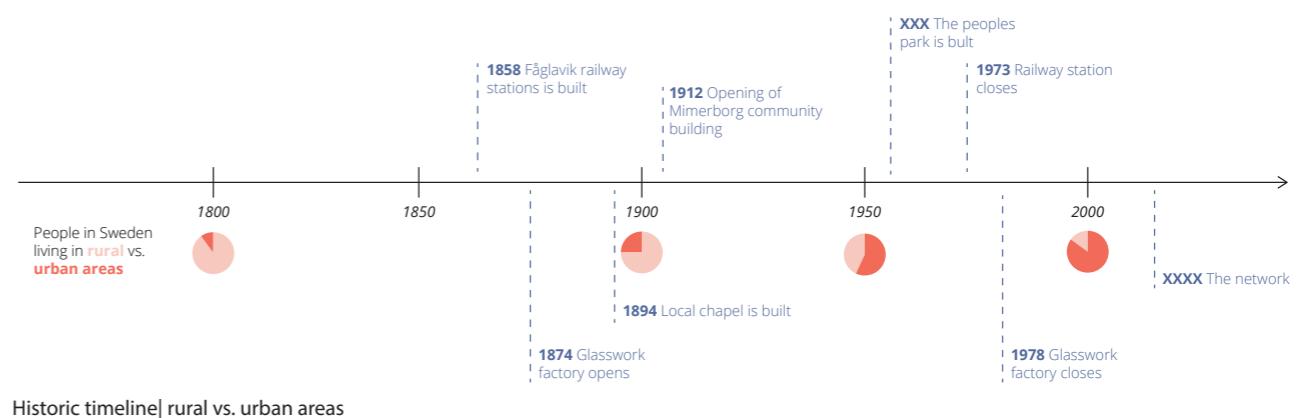




Map of Västra Götalands Region

## Fåglavik

At the border between Vara and Herrljunga municipality among forests and farmlands lies the small village of Fåglavik. Fåglavik is a former mill town, which has been slowly depopulated since the glass factory closed in 1978. Today there are 234 inhabitants living in Fåglavik. They are all of different nationalities and backgrounds, but they all have one thing in common - their love for Fåglavik.



## Background

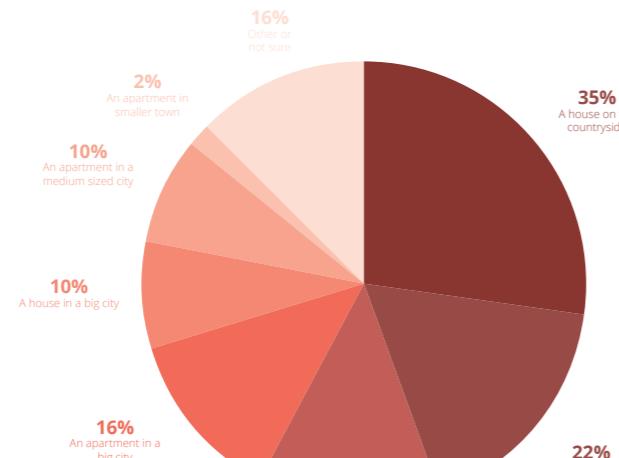
Events in the 20th century have set steady trends of urbanization and rural flight, leaving the countryside with small, deserted settlements. However, this last decade has brought a slight change to this pattern, allowing the trend to shift. In a recent survey asking Swedish citizens where they would prefer to live, "a house on the countryside" was the answer given by a third of the participants. The reasons mentioned were the closeness to nature, calmer surroundings, and the possibility to have an alternative lifestyle, enjoying more freedom. (Novus, 2020)

At the same time the majority of Sweden's municipalities – including many rural areas – are facing a housing shortage today. (Boverket, 2021) Unfortunately, the current economic system of the housing market forces both private developers and public housing companies to develop where it is most profitable, rather than where it is most needed. (Åkerman, 2020) Therefore, even

though there is a clear demand for more housing in the countryside there is not a substantial amount being built.

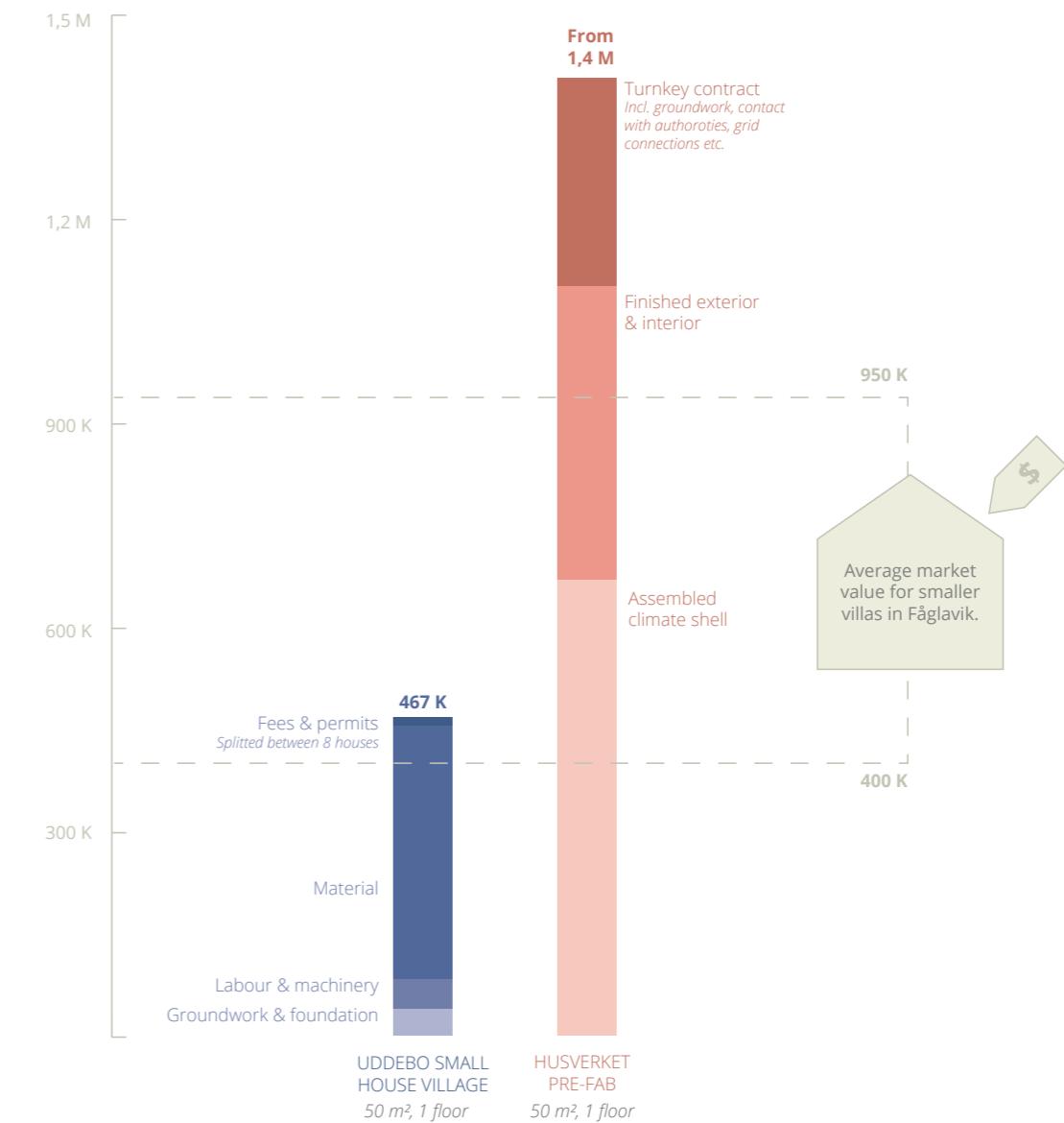
The town of Fåglavik is in several ways a common example displaying this issue. The available building stock is limited or in great need of renovations. Land, on the other hand, is both cheap and available but its low market value in comparison to production costs makes it unprofitable to build and get a loan. For example, most houses are sold for 400 000 to 950 000 kr, while building costs for a small villa usually start at 1,5 million. To get around this lock-in effect there is a need for alternative building options and lifestyles.

This project will provide a roadmap for creating affordable housing in Fåglavik and show how the town can continue to grow and flourish in the future.

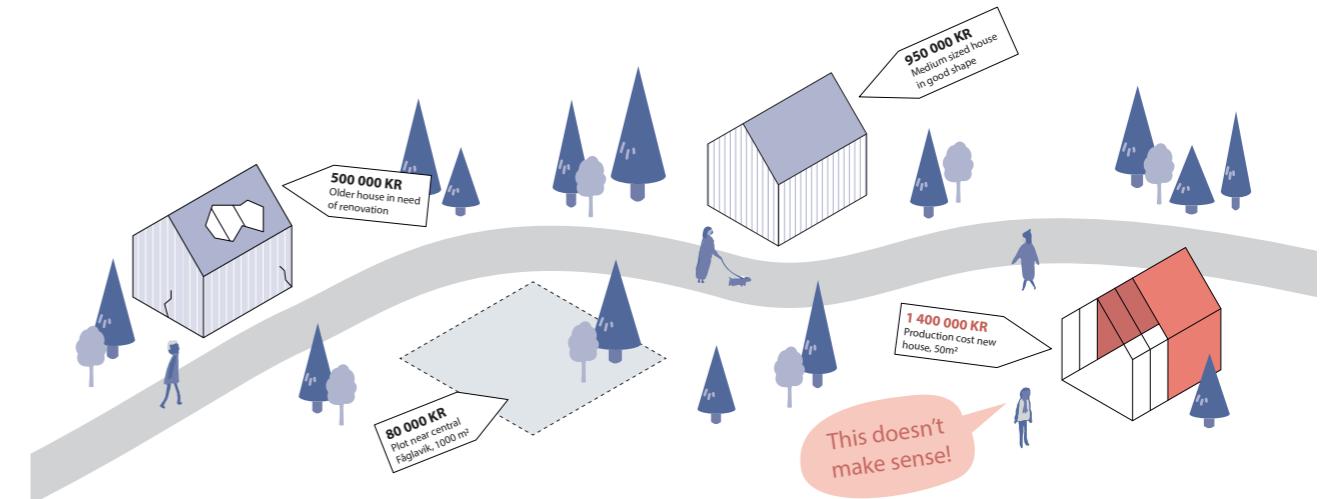


Where would you live if you could choose freely?

(Novus, 2020)



Comparison between market values in Fåglavik, prefab house (Husverket) and a low cost self-building project (Uddebo småhusby).



Market values of housing in Fåglavik.

## SWOT

A SWOT-analysis was made to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Fåglavik.

The town has an active community with two local associations that are already engaged in creating new development opportunities and activities. The attractive location with its close proximity to larger cities, nature and recreational activities has the potential to attract new inhabitants. Digitalization and the new work-from-home-culture together with an increased interest in living another lifestyle in the countryside are some other driving forces expected to bring even more people to Fåglavik.

However, as mentioned before, there is currently a lack of housing and public services. Even though there is affordable land available the production costs for a new house exceed the current market values. There are also challenges among local groups with differing interest and ideas regarding Fåglaviks future.

Several aspects identified in the SWOT Analysis could lead to further rural neglect and leave Fåglavik at risk of being overlooked in further development plans.

Our project intends to counteract these challenges and use the strengths and opportunities as a point of departure.

## STRENGTHS

### COMMUNITY

facilities owned by local associations create a foundation for self-governing functions; community engagement creates a strong driving force

### SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

there are many options of affordable land available for further development

### LOCATION

located in close proximity to larger cities and situated close to the main railroad, close to nature and recreational activities

## WEAKNESSES

### LACK OF COMMON VISION

Internal differences lead to differing interests regarding Fåglaviks future, this creates difficulty to form a common vision

### SCARCITY

lack in housing, activities for different demographics and social spaces/ meeting places for the community

### INFRASTRUCTURE / PUBLIC SERVICES

lack of transportation options, fiber internet & public services (schools, health centers, groceries etc) - Herrljunga is closest option

## OPPORTUNITIES

### DIGITALIZATION

Digitalization and remote work possibilities might lead to people being more willing to relocate

### NEW IDENTITY

Form a new identity; great possibilities for local development with residents participating, residents moving in [norm creative people with environmental awareness

### SPATIAL OPPORTUNITY

Alternative housing/lifestyle concepts form new possibilities to attract people, reverse urbanization promotes moving to the area and creates incentives to develop it spatially

## THREATS

### DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

there being only very few residents to support Fåglaviks economical system is also creating issues

### CENTRALIZATION

trend of centralization could lead to rural neglect and leave Fåglavik at risk to be left out in development plans from the municipalities

### CONFLICTS OF LAND USE

conflict and competition of land use on a global scale, these include forestry, farming and housing

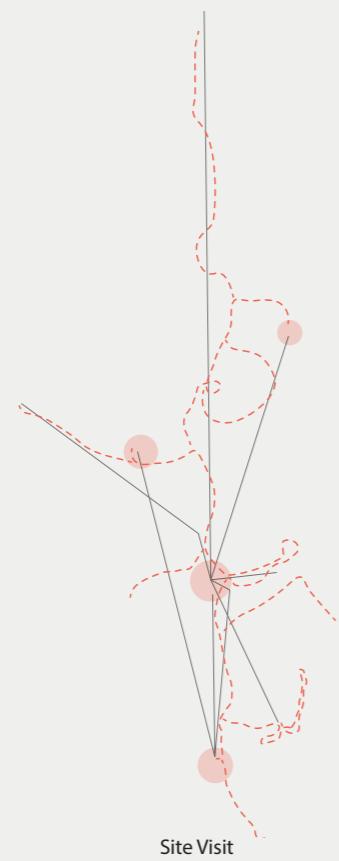
### DIVIDED ENGAGEMENT

part of two municipalities might be a reason for neither of them to feel responsible

## Method

In order for us to create a design proposal that was locally anchored it was of great importance to gain a thorough understanding of the village. Several working methods have therefore been combined and used simultaneously.

- Research | building costs, affordable & materials with low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, reference projects, local businesses & associations, funding options
- Design work
- Team discussions
- Site visits | walks, photographing, building visits
- Interviews | planned & spontaneous
- Supervisions with teachers and external supervisors



## Delimitations & boundaries

As this project is focusing on providing a roadmap towards sustainable and affordable housing, we are not...

- Designing a one-size-fits-all solution nor providing finished detailed housing solutions.
- Striving for economic growth or an extreme urban expansion of Fåglavik.
- Detailing the future urban plans, but rather showing possible pathways.
- Resolving the issues of the broader transportation network and large-scale infrastructure.
- Liberating the municipalities from all responsibility and planning to rely solely on personal engagement and investments.
- Addressing the planned transformation of the old railway station

## Key References

These are some key references that has inspired this project:

- Småhusbyn, Uddebo | Tiny house village
- Egnahemsfabriken, Tjörn | Self-builder platform
- Svartlamoen, Trondheim | Co-housing project

## 02 Project





## I Organizing & Strategies

A key for building affordable is to base the development on already existing resources. Therefore, a thorough mapping was done to get a better understanding of Fåglavik's different assets. The mapping is divided into three parts – land ownership, resource mapping, existing social networks, and associations – where each map covers a specific topic. Together they give a comprehensive overview of what social and physical structures could be utilized connected.

Based on the mappings and background information gathered we developed several building strategies. In this subchapter we explain how these strategies are intertwined and could be used to reduce building costs and help create an overall more affordable and sustainable building process.

## Site analysis

### Mapping land ownership

The land ownership mapping shows the typology of the landscape as well as existing properties and plots and the ownership of these. This gives an overview of spaces that could be potentially developed in the future.

### Resource Mapping | Distance

The resource mapping covers distances to businesses, skill resources and material resources that are relevant for building projects. One mapping has its focus within Fåglavik and the other takes in the surrounding of Fåglavik.

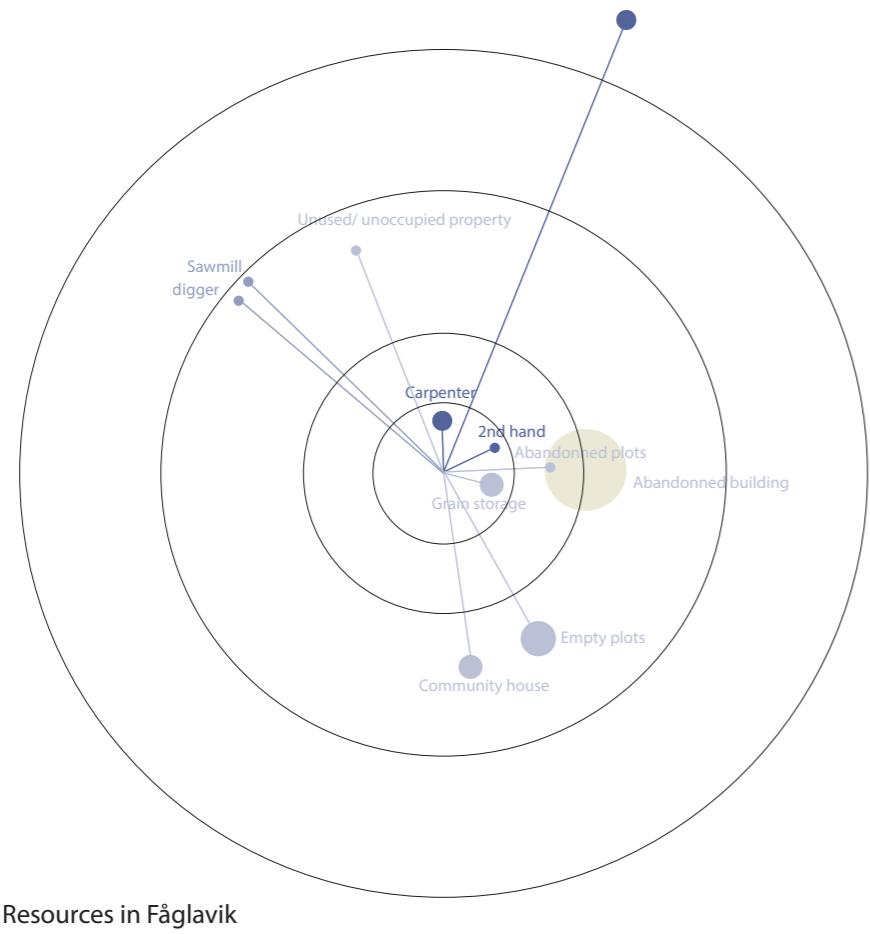
### Social Networks| Physical structures

This mapping summarizes important existing social structures and physical platforms that can be built upon in the future development. This includes local associations and buildings connected to these as well as other important structures that could be of interest, e.g., abandoned buildings, important meeting places and outdoor areas.

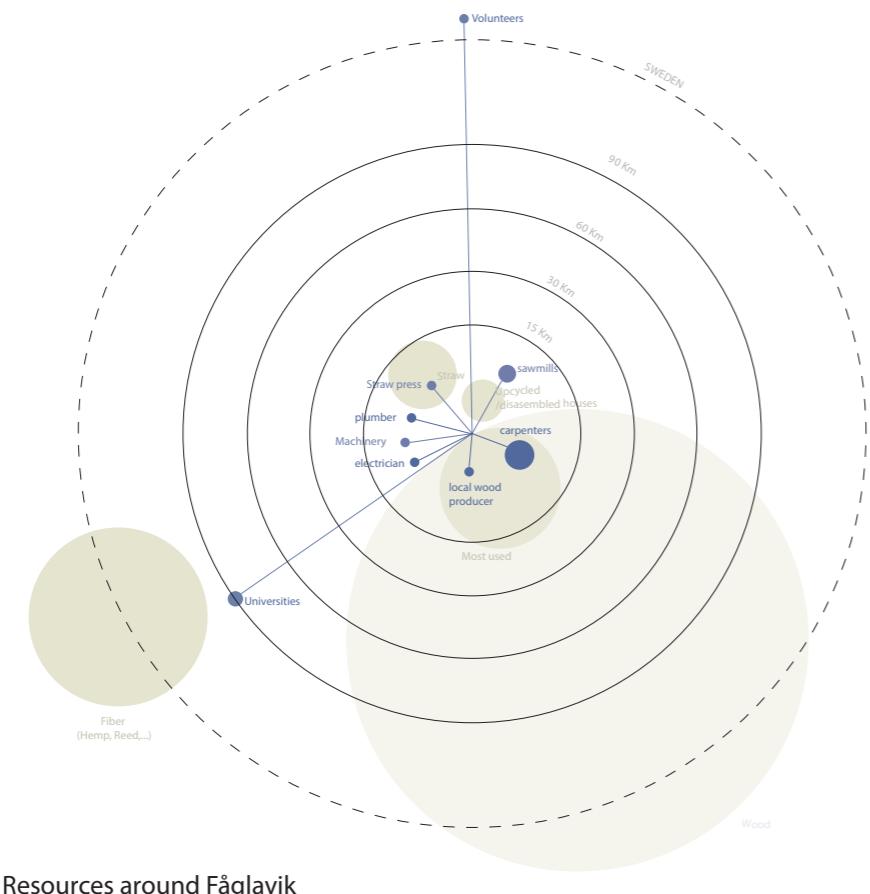
### Mapping land ownership



Resource Mapping | Distance

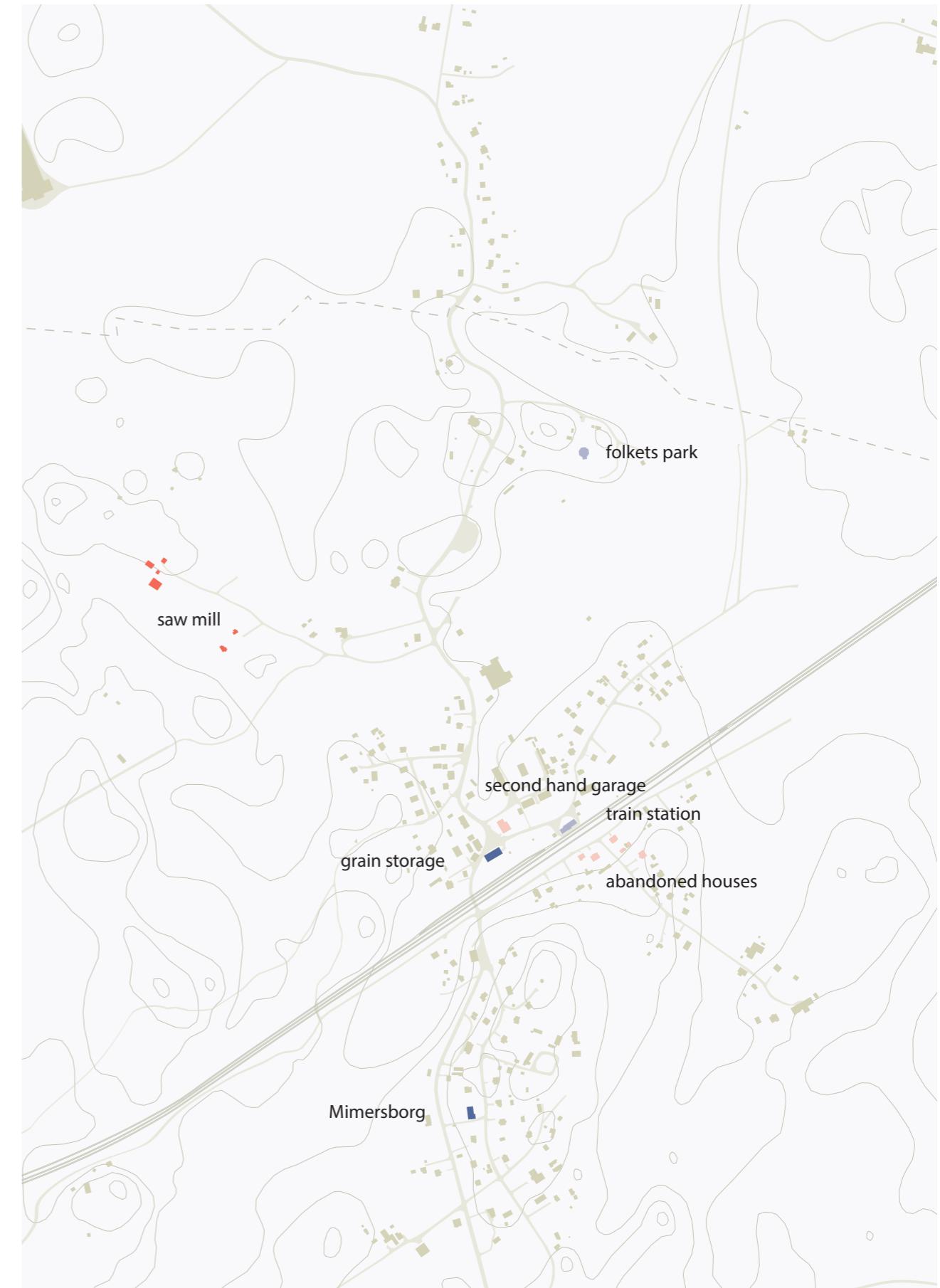


Resources in Fåglavik



Resources around Fåglavik

Social Networks | Physical Structures



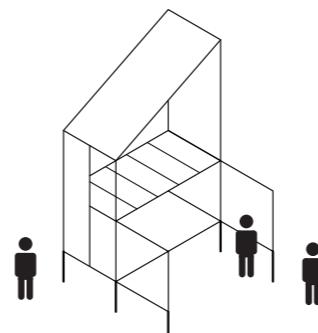
Networks & physical structures in Fåglavik

## Reducing building costs

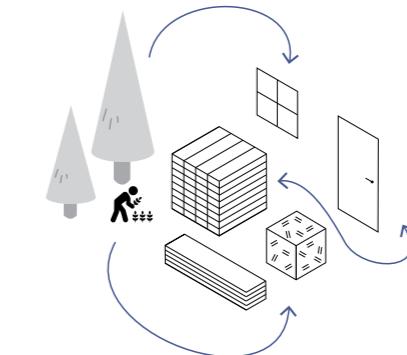
The typical costs connected to a building project can be divided into developer costs - including fees, permits and costs for buying and developing the land into a suitable building plot - and building costs - including all the necessary materials, labor, transportation, and machinery. How big each part is varies between projects depending on location, production method and developer.

With these costs in mind, we have formulated six general building strategies with the potential to significantly reduce the final price for a home.

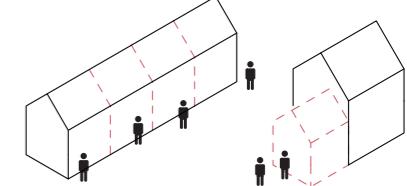
-  material costs
-  labour costs
-  tools | machinery | transport
-  plot | fees | developer costs



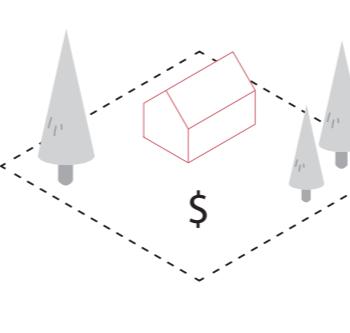
   
BIY |  
BUILD IT YOURSELVES!



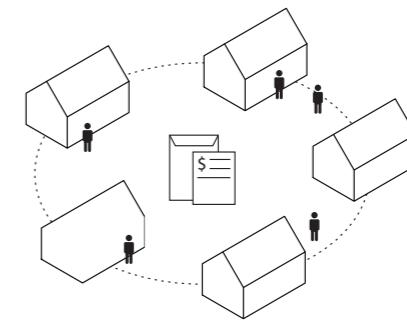
   
USE INEXPENSIVE  
MATERIALS



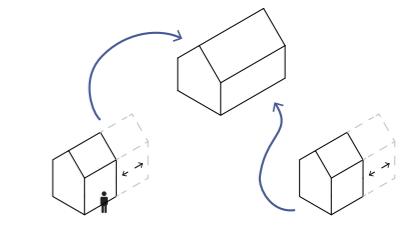
 MINIMIZE AREA OF  
CLIMATE SHELL



   
CONSIDER PLOT  
OPTIONS

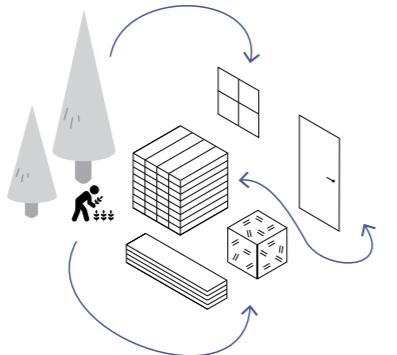


    
ORGANIZE IN JOINT BUILD-  
ING VENTURES



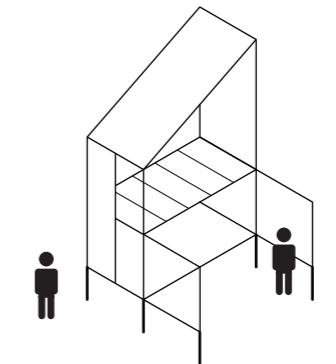
   
REDUCE PRIVATE  
SPACE

## Building strategies



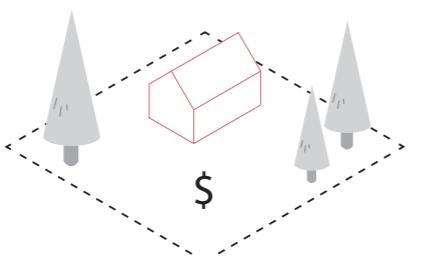
### Consider plot options

The cost of buying and transforming a plot can make up a substantial part of the cost of building projects. Rural areas usually have notably more affordable prices and combined with a good site option it can save a lot of groundwork costs and even provide resource materials. Building on plots with existing buildings can reduce fees and the need for building permits.



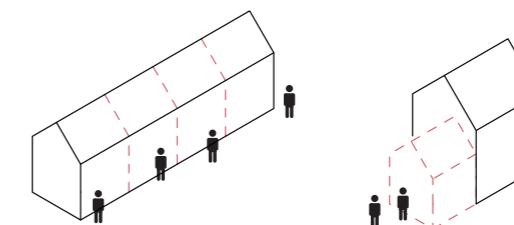
### Build it yourselves!

With enough time a considerable amount of the building tasks can be done without hiring professional contractors. However, some tasks might require investing in an experienced person to lead the work and teach the necessary skills.



### Use inexpensive materials

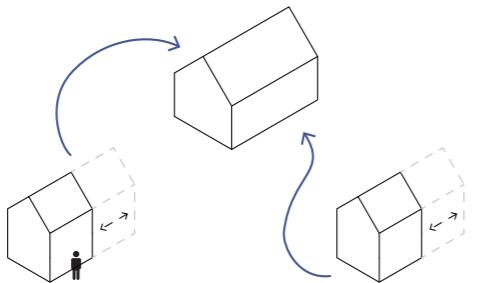
Using low-cost, local materials from the area - such as timber, clay, or straw - and sourcing for pre-used doors, windows and other building elements can save a lot of money in material costs.



### Minimize area of climate shell

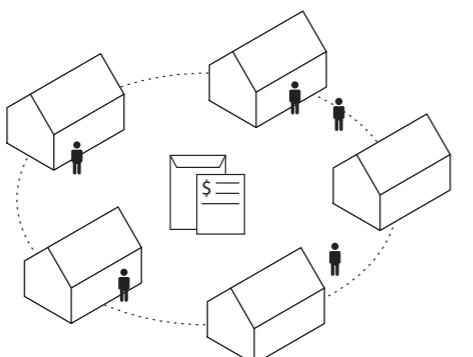
Another possibility to minimize production costs can be either adding to existing structures or collaborating on new projects that combine several units within the same building. Sharing walls is also an opportunity to reduce energy costs when living in the building.

## Ownership models



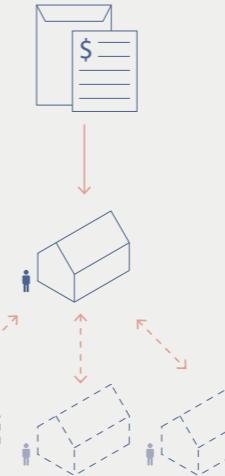
### Reduce private space

The size of the building is usually one of the most cost-driving factors. Reducing private space by choosing compact and efficient design solutions and sharing more functions with others will therefore have a significant impact on the final price.



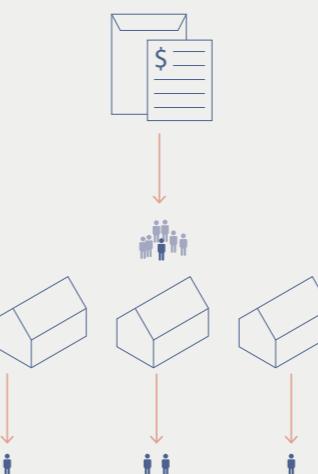
### Organize in joint building ventures

By uniting in different forms of joint building ventures several costs can be split and thereby be reduced, for example contractor costs, mandatory administrative fees and permits, costs for groundwork, tools, and connections to the grid.



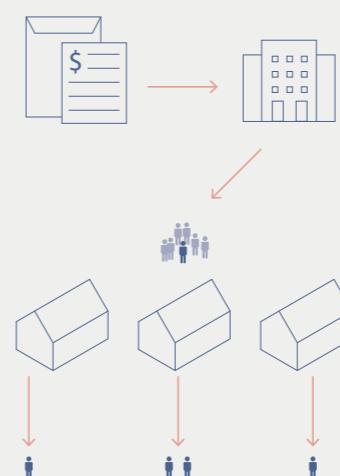
#### Private Ownership

Owning your own plot and your own house gives you great freedom and it is easy to expand or change it over time. A lot of savings can be done by selfbuilding together with others.



#### Cooperative tenancy association

Cooperative tenancy is a form of leasing that is a hybrid of a traditional "hyresrätt" and "bostadsrätt". The rent is based on the costs of the cooperative tenancy association and is set by the association itself. The association can keep the costs for maintenance down, by utilizing the labor of members, which will result in a lower rent. When moving out members will get their down payment back, but they cannot sell their house with profit.



#### Cooperative tenancy + additional part

An association rents a number of buildings from another party, such as a municipal housing company, with greater financial means. By engaging another party with experience and a well-functioning organisation, a safe and secure rental agreement will be obtained.

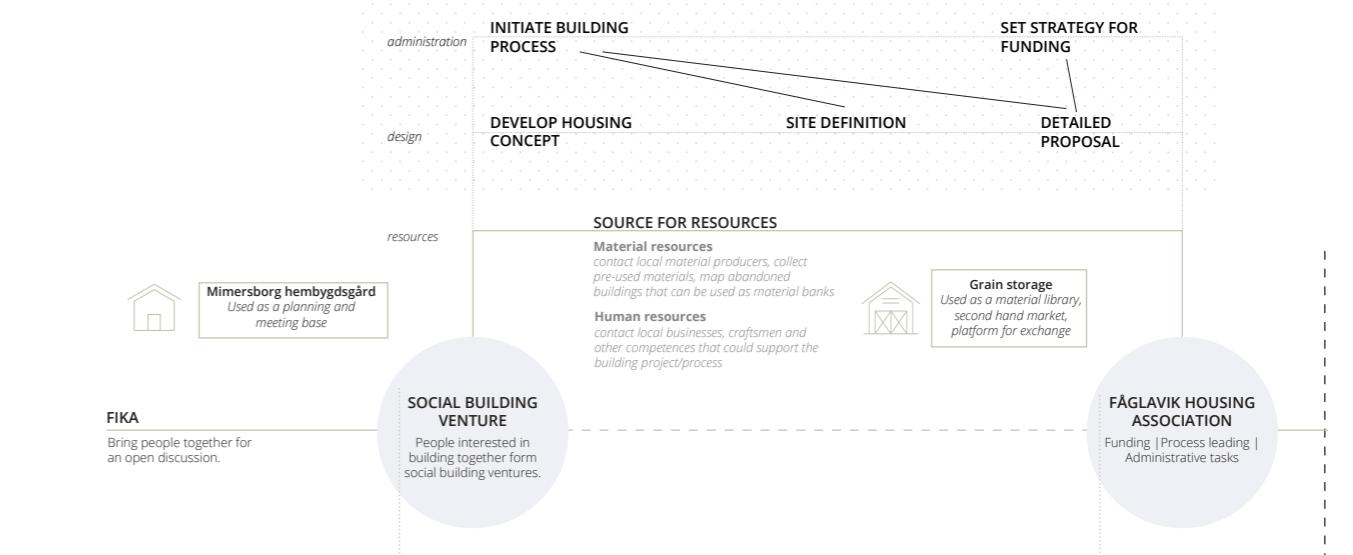
## Planning and organizing

The housing development in Fåglavik is initiated by a simple fika bringing people with similar interests and visions together for planning and open discussions. This includes current residents, potential new residents, and members of the two local groups. Mimersborg hembygdsgård is further on established as a meeting place for the ongoing planning.

In the next step a joint building venture is formed by people interested in doing a building project together. They then continue with the work of developing a design concept, gathering necessary resources, and looking into rules and regulations.

Gathering resources is an essential and more general part of the supporting network and includes material resources as well as skill resources. This step is crucial to broaden the network that will support current and future residents. The grain storage is established as a material library to create access to available material resources.

To further facilitate and simplify the development of this and other housing projects Fåglavik's Housing Association is established as the heart of the supporting network. This association will take on administrative tasks such as discussing possibilities for a detailed plan, permits and funding options with the municipality and region as well as connecting people with skilled professionals.



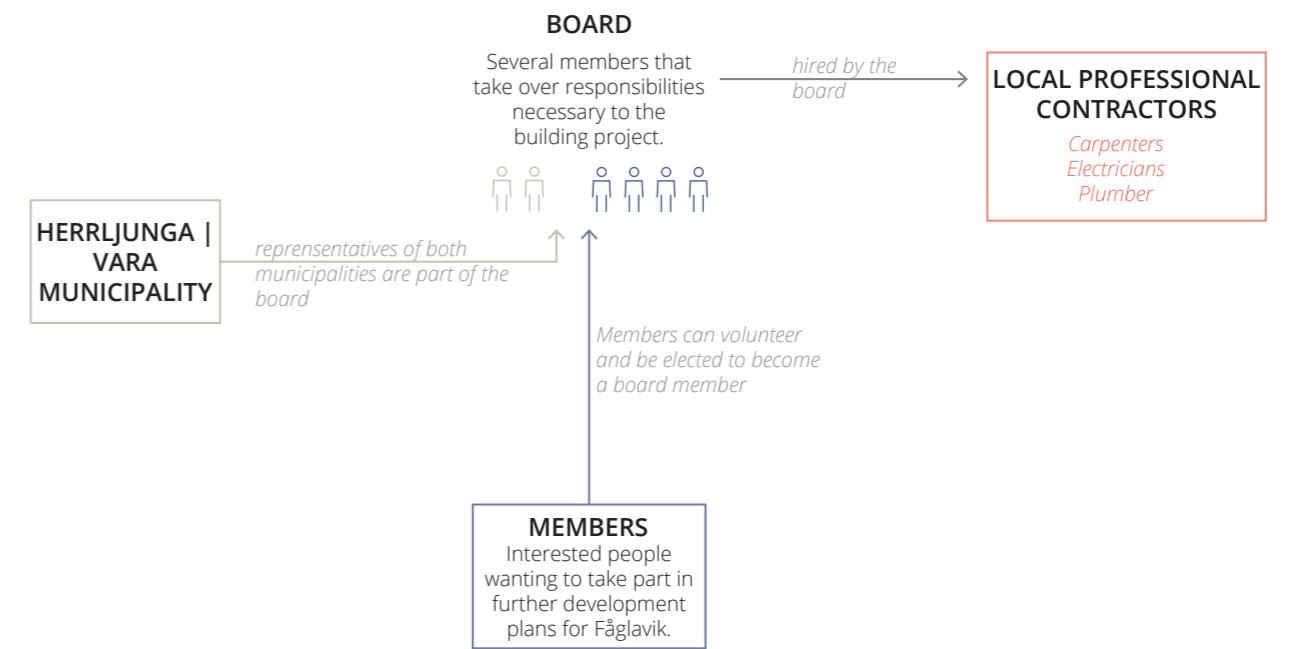
Part I, timeline of the process

## The Fåglavik Housing Association

The Fåglavik Housing Association consists of members that can volunteer and be voted into the Board of the association. The board is elected every two years. The members are people either living in Fåglavik or interested in moving there and taking part in decisions concerning the development.

Additional to members being part of the board there will also be two representatives from the municipalities, one from Herrljunga, the other from Vara. They do not have a specific task but carry a supporting function for the other board members and build a direct link to the municipalities.

The board of the Fåglavik Housing Association is not only responsible for administrative tasks. They will also hold responsibility and provide access to the material library in the grain storage, as well as being in contact with local professional contractors and when necessary, hire them to support the building projects. The Fåglavik Housing Association could also oversee the loan for the building project if that is the chosen ownership model.



Fåglavik Housing Association



## II Building project

In this chapter an exemplary housing project, the Co-Village project, is highlighted. The project is based on the organization method and strategies presented in the previous chapter and is visualizing the second phase of the process. Topics such as organization and funding as well as the building process are covered in this chapter.

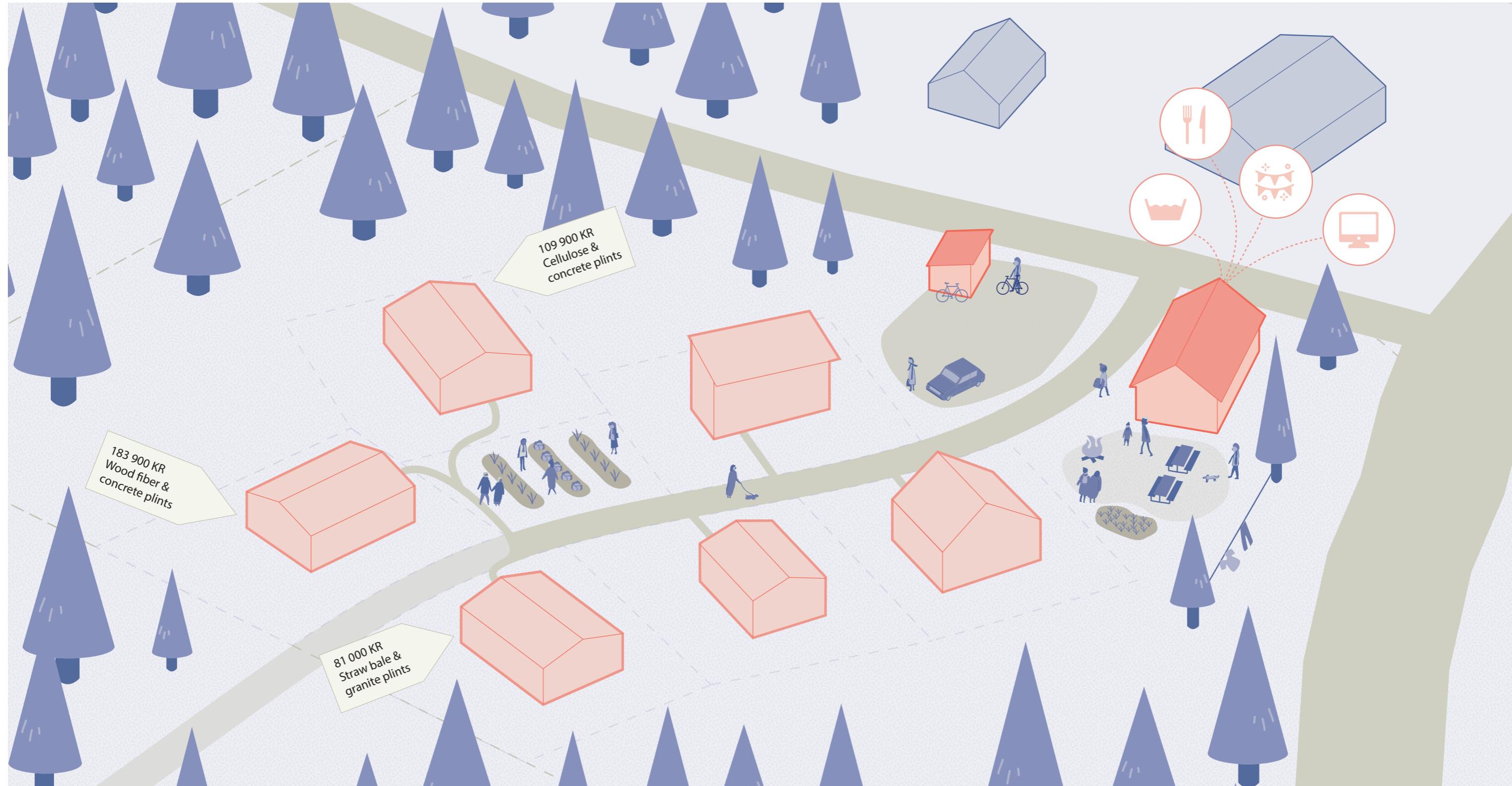
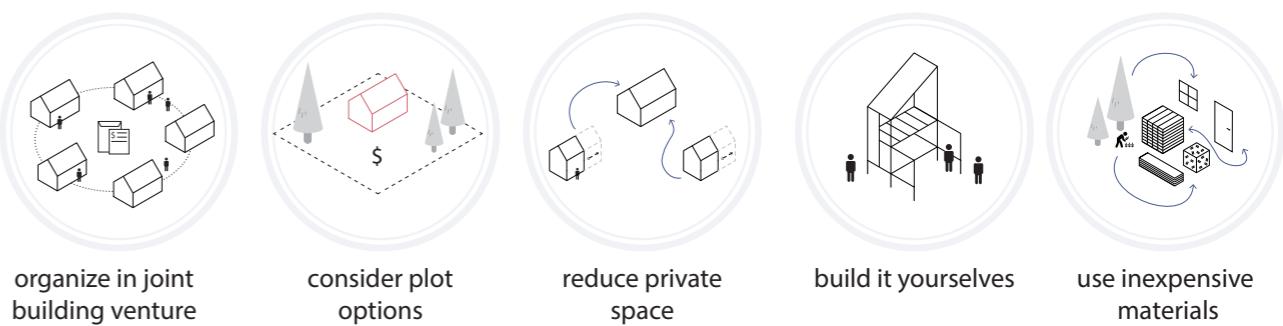
## Co-village project

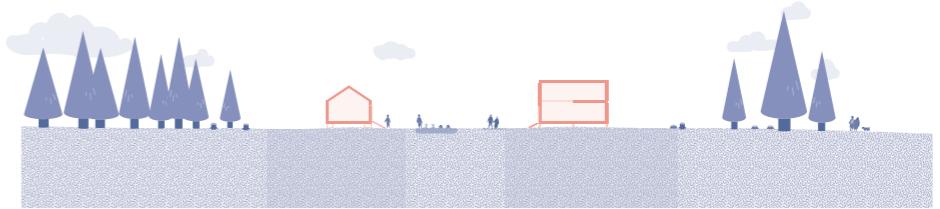
The Co-Village project is implementing five of the previously mentioned strategies. It is a self-built project and consists of six individual houses and one common building. The self-builders are designing and building their own houses, with support from professional contractors.

The self-builders are given materials choices as a support to keep the cost of the houses low.

The price tags on the buildings shown below give an estimation of the material costs for a 50 m<sup>2</sup> house built with materials from the catalogue.

The sizes of the individual houses are minimized, which is possible due to the common building, containing functions such as a laundry room, working areas, a large kitchen and of course – a big space for parties!





Section 1\_1000| Co Village Project

## Site plan and section

The plot for the co-village is cut off from a bigger municipality plot and then divided into assigned building plots for the self-builders. The location was chosen for the good ground and sun conditions as well as proximity to the central part of town and existing roads. The common house was placed visibly in the corner of the plot to be easily recognized and accessible for the whole village. As shown on the site plan the settlement could easily grow and connect to the nearby block by extending the road south.

The shown footprint of the buildings are examples of what could be developed within the designated house plots but the final size and design will be dependent of the people moving in. The area closest to the houses are more private while the rest of the plot is to be shared by everyone. There is a designated space for eating, cooking and socialising outside the common house as well as a co-gardening area in the centre. The rest of the plot can be used as a flexible common garden that could gradually grow into other spaces for different activities.



Site plan 1\_1000 | Co Village Project

# Building process

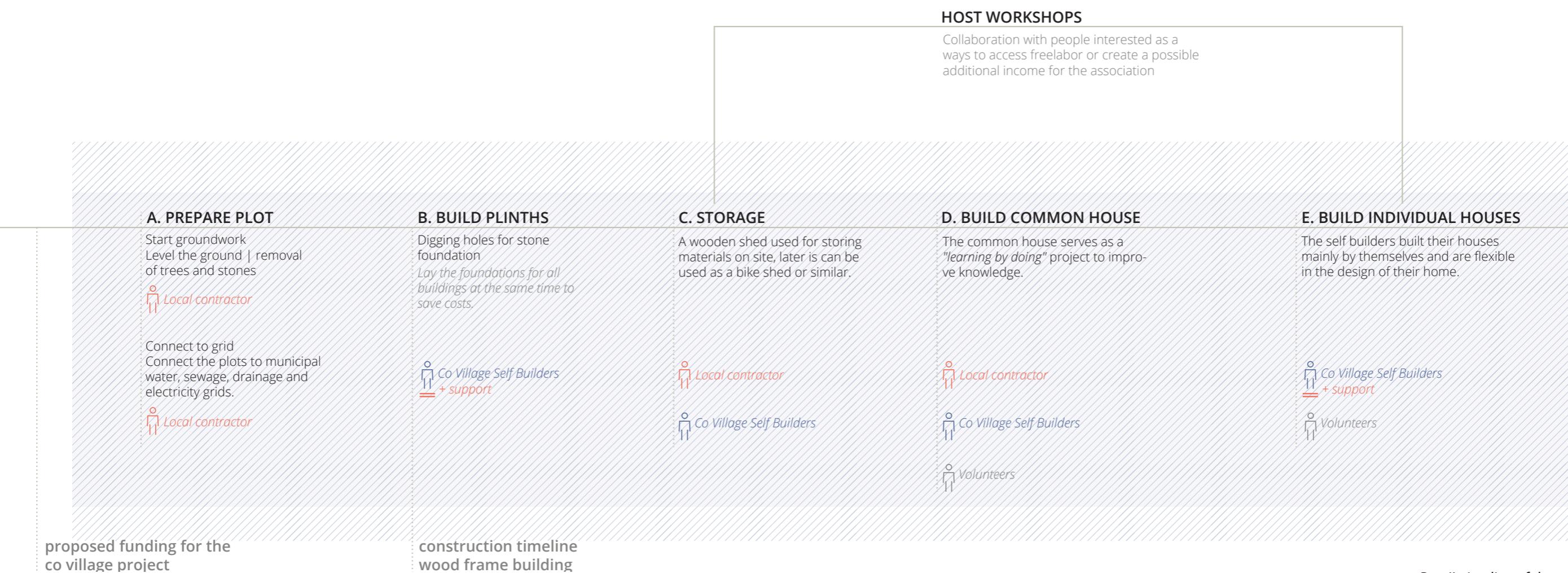
When all plans and drawings for the Co-village, including both the common house as well as the individual houses are ready the construction process begins.

The first thing in the process is the preparation of the plot. This includes the removal of trees and stones to level the ground. After that, the plots need to be connected to the municipal water and electricity grids. Then the holes for the plinths are dug. This is done for all buildings simultaneously to save costs.

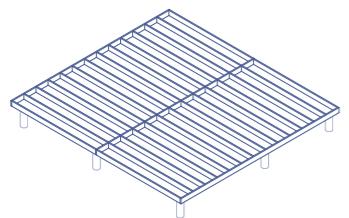
Three steps follow that have a similar building process. First a storage shed is built, for storing materials and

machinery temporarily. After that, the common house is built by the self-builders together with professionals as a "learning by doing"- project to improve their knowledge.

The last step is the individual houses, which the self-builders build mostly by themselves, but with support from professional contractors. The different construction steps for a wooden frame house including who does what during the construction phase are specified on the next page.



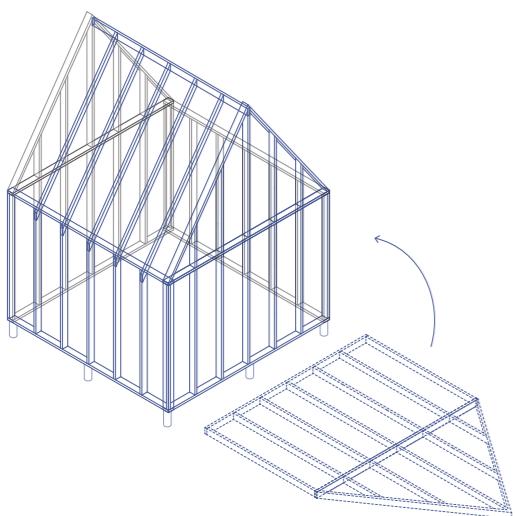
## Construction steps



Co Village Self Builders  
 + support  
 Volunteers

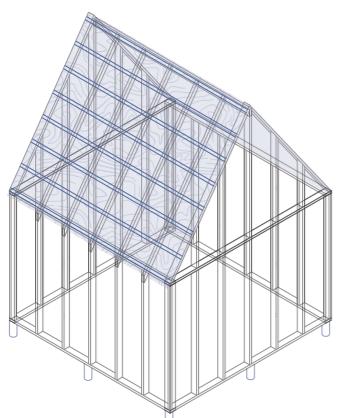
### I. FOUNDATION SLAB

- construct and insulate the foundation slab



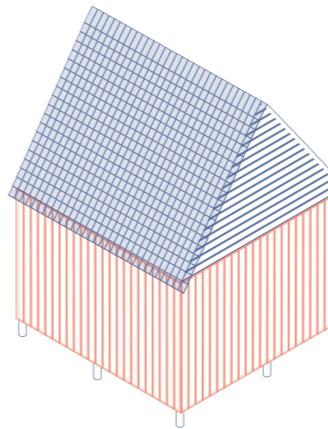
### II. LOAD BEARING STRUCTURE

- construct and raise the load bearing structure
- openings for doors and windows are placed depending on the individual design
- add trusses and rafters



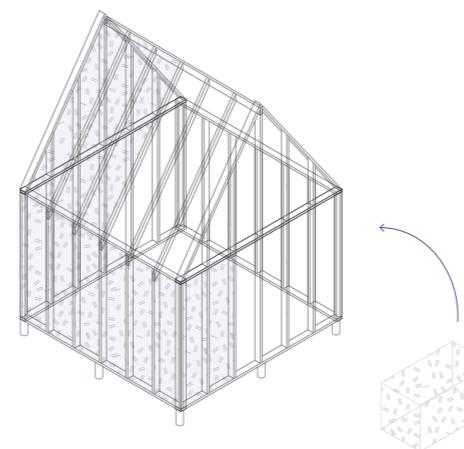
### III. ENVELOPING THE ROOF

- outside of the load bearing structure woodfibre boards are mounted, followed by battens as a ventilation layer, woodenpanels and cardboard for waterproofing| windproofing



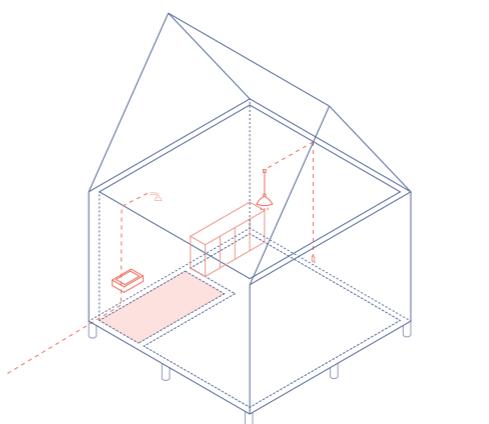
### IV. ENVELOPING THE BUILDING AND EXTERNAL CLADDING

- enveloping the wooden stud frames with gypsum
- add wooden laths on the outside
- add wooden laths to attach roof cladding; this could be tiles, shingles or sheets, depending on material choices
- windows and doors are mounted and cladding is added onto the walls
- treatment of external cladding de-



### V. INSULATION

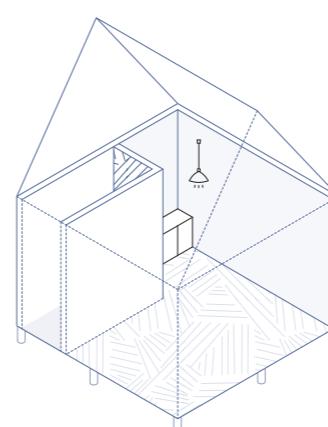
- insulation is added on the inside of the building



Local contractor

### VI. TECHNICAL INSTALLATIONS

- plumbing and electrical installations are put in and kitchens and bathrooms are added



Co Village Self Builders  
 + support  
 Volunteers

### VII. INTERIOR

- interior walls, floors and structures are built depending on self builders plans

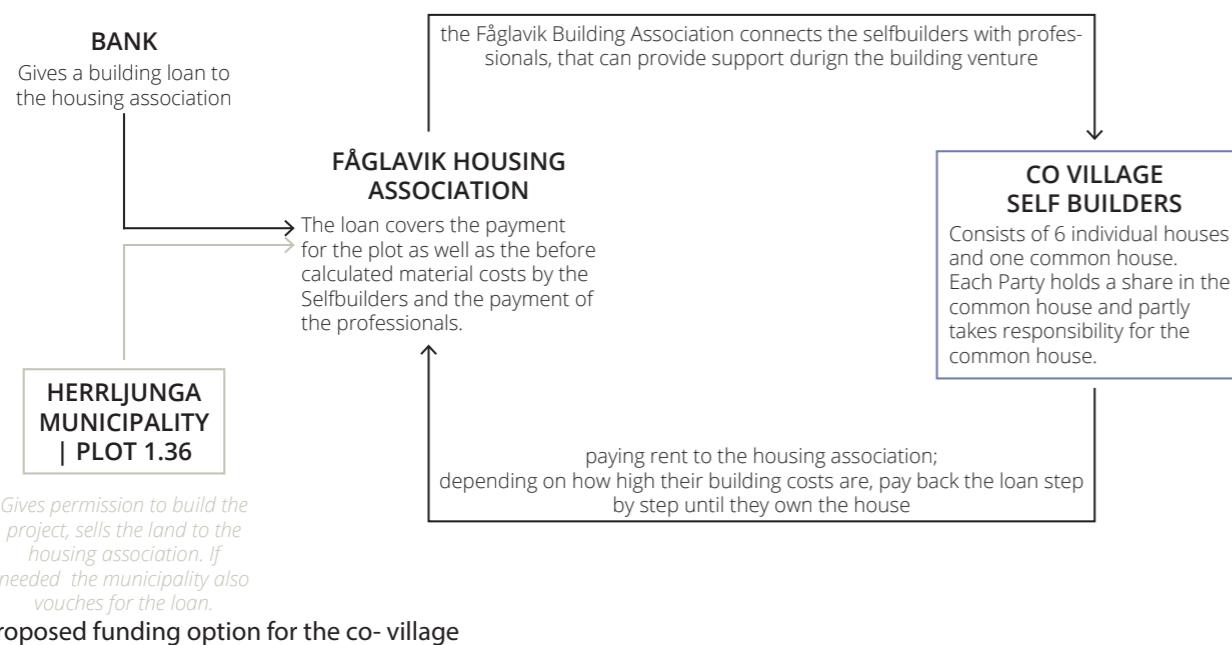
# Implementation of the strategies in the Co Village Project

## Organization & Funding

To lower the building costs the parties involved organize in a cooperative tenancy association which promotes implementing the strategies shown below.

The Fåglavik Housing Association takes on the administrative tasks within this project. Herrljunga municipality sells the land to the Association and they receive permission from the municipality to build the Co-Village project. Additionally, the Fåglavik Housing Association oversees the loan from the bank. The loan covers the payment for material costs and professional contractors. Each party

holds a share in the common house and partly takes responsibility for its maintenance. The Villagers pay rent to the housing association for the plot as well as the construction costs for the individual and common house. Depending on material choices the rent varies for each house. Once all the money is paid back the self-builders do not need to pay rent anymore and own their house. However, the intention of the project is not to make profit by selling the house but provide long term affordable housing.



proposed funding option for the co-village

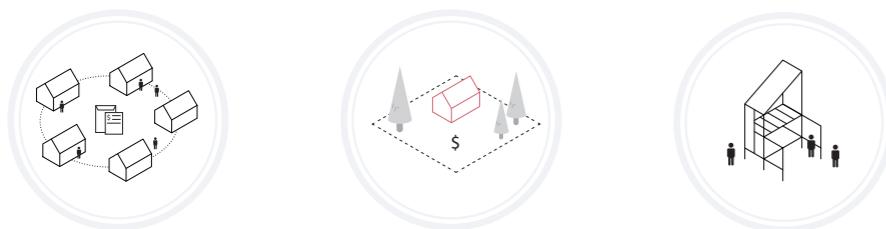
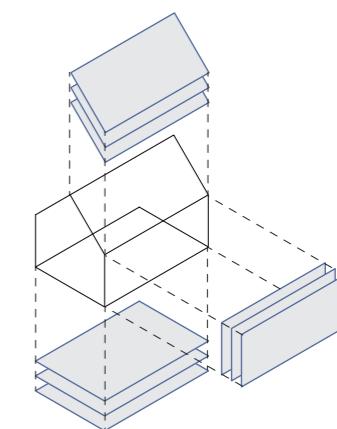
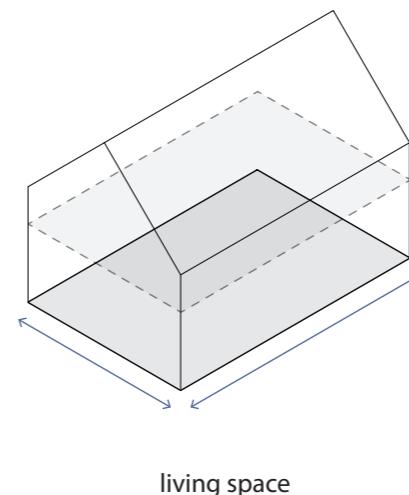
## Design guidelines

To reduce the threshold for people who have never built before the self-builders can follow a couple of design guidelines which all comply with the building strategies and are based upon them.

Each household is provided with a plot on which they can build their house. One guideline concerns private space and encourages the self-builders to be mindful of how

much private space is necessary, especially regarding the common house.

The other one concerns the selection of building materials. The self-builders are encouraged to use materials from the material catalogue on page 47, which contains a selection of affordable, local, and sustainable materials.



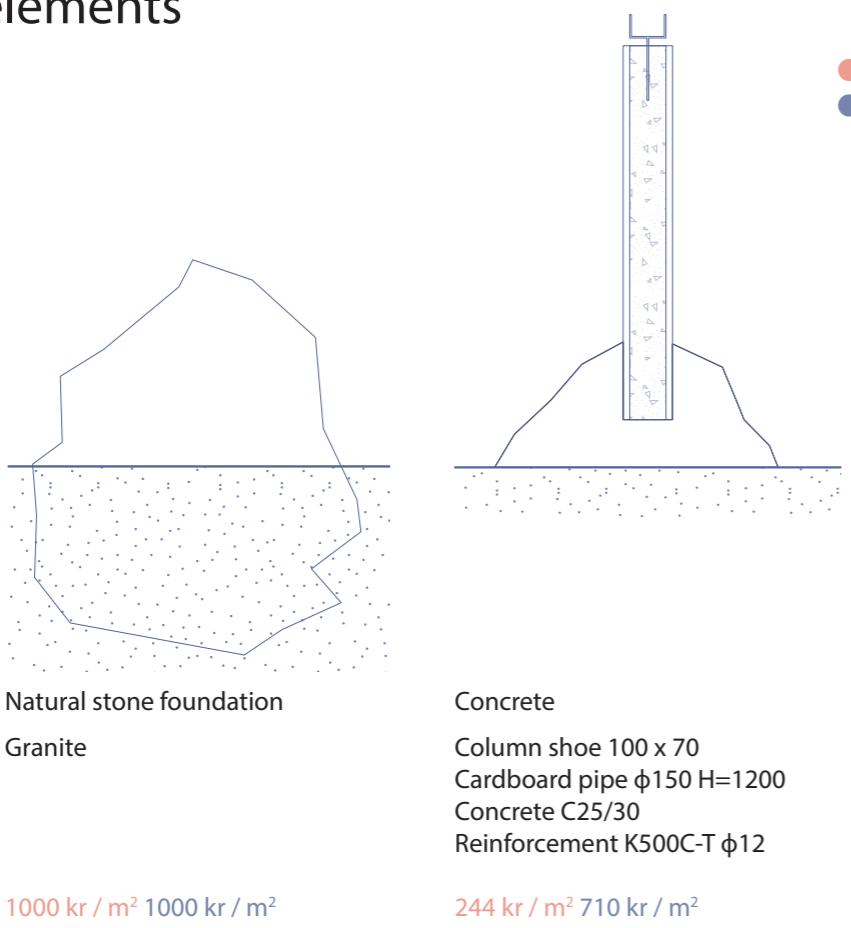
## Material catalogue

Supporting the strategy of using low cost, local and sustainable building materials we put together a material catalogue.

The material & labor cost for each element is specified, which makes it easier for the self-builders to estimate the cost for their own house. The material options are only suggestions and if they would like to use other materials for their specific house, they are free and encouraged to do so.

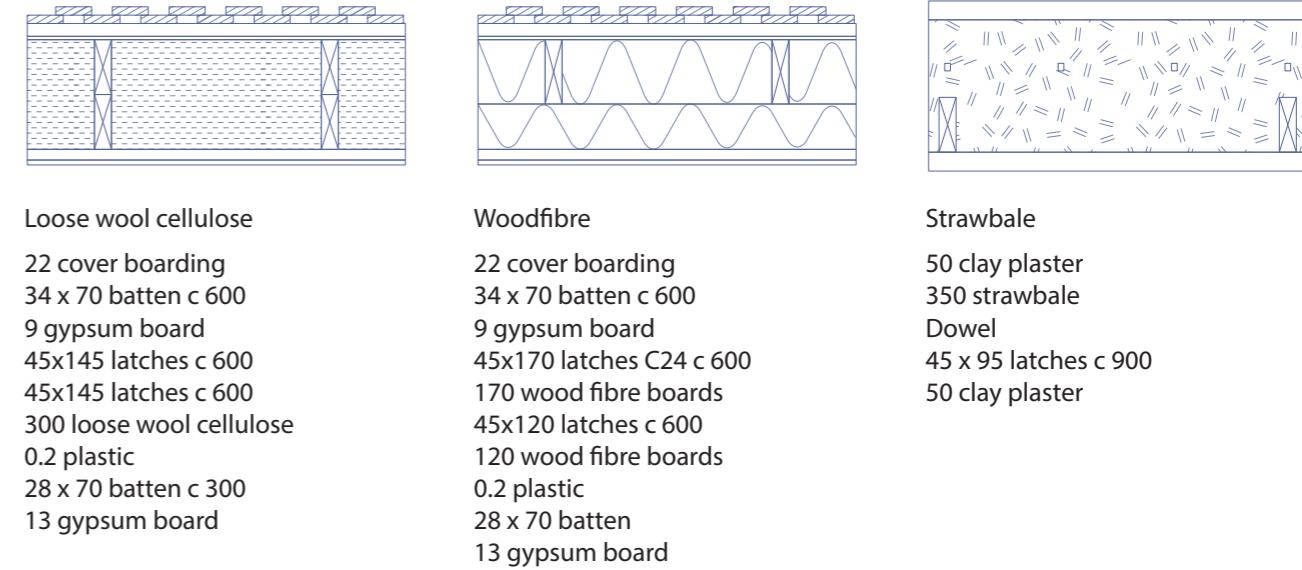
# Building elements

## Plinths

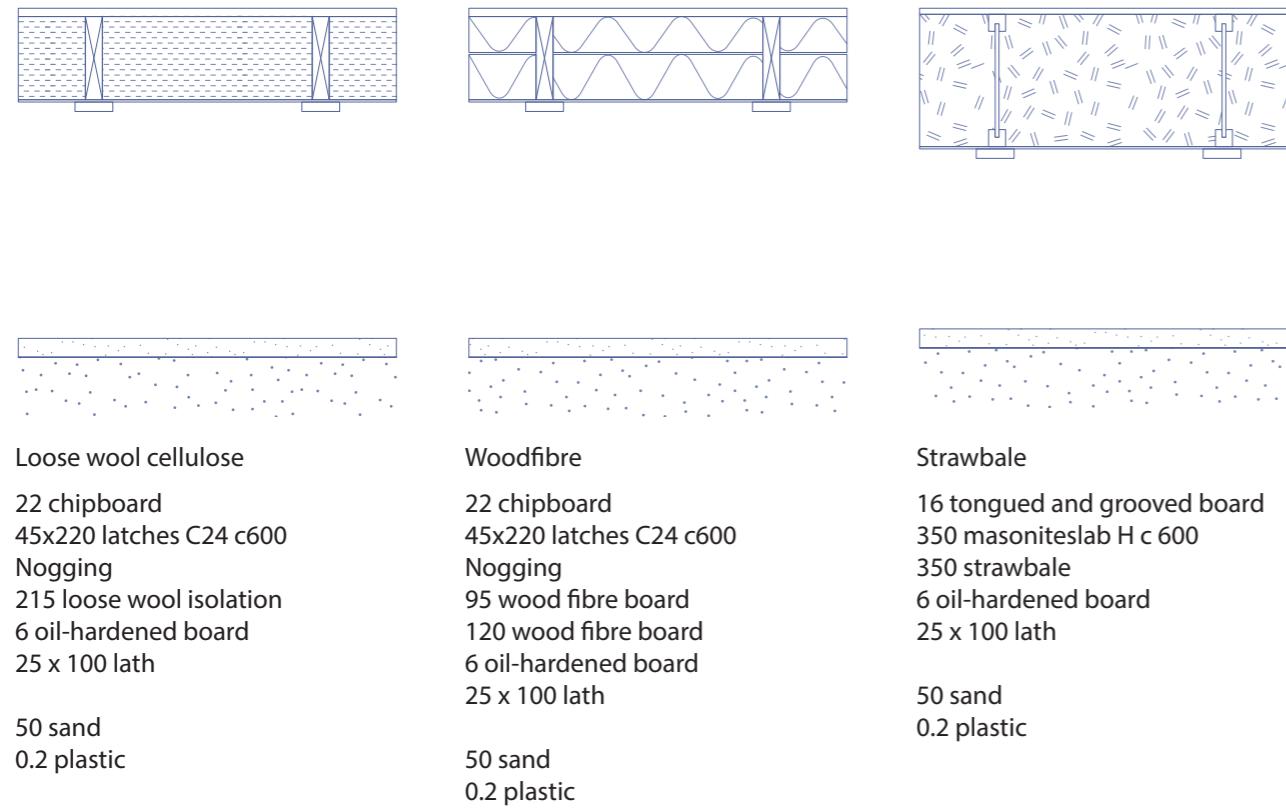


● Material cost  
● Labour cost

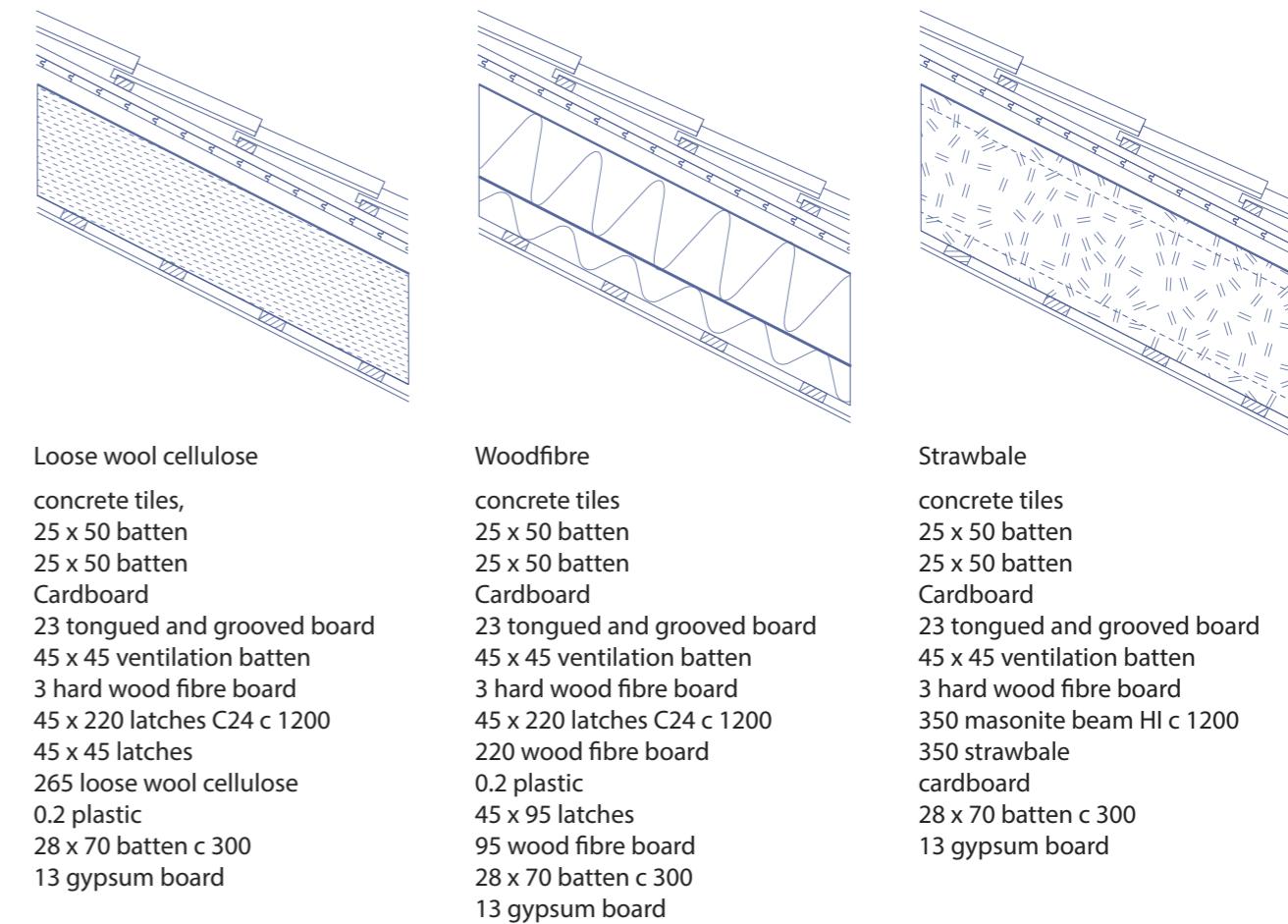
## Walls



## Beam foundation



## Roof



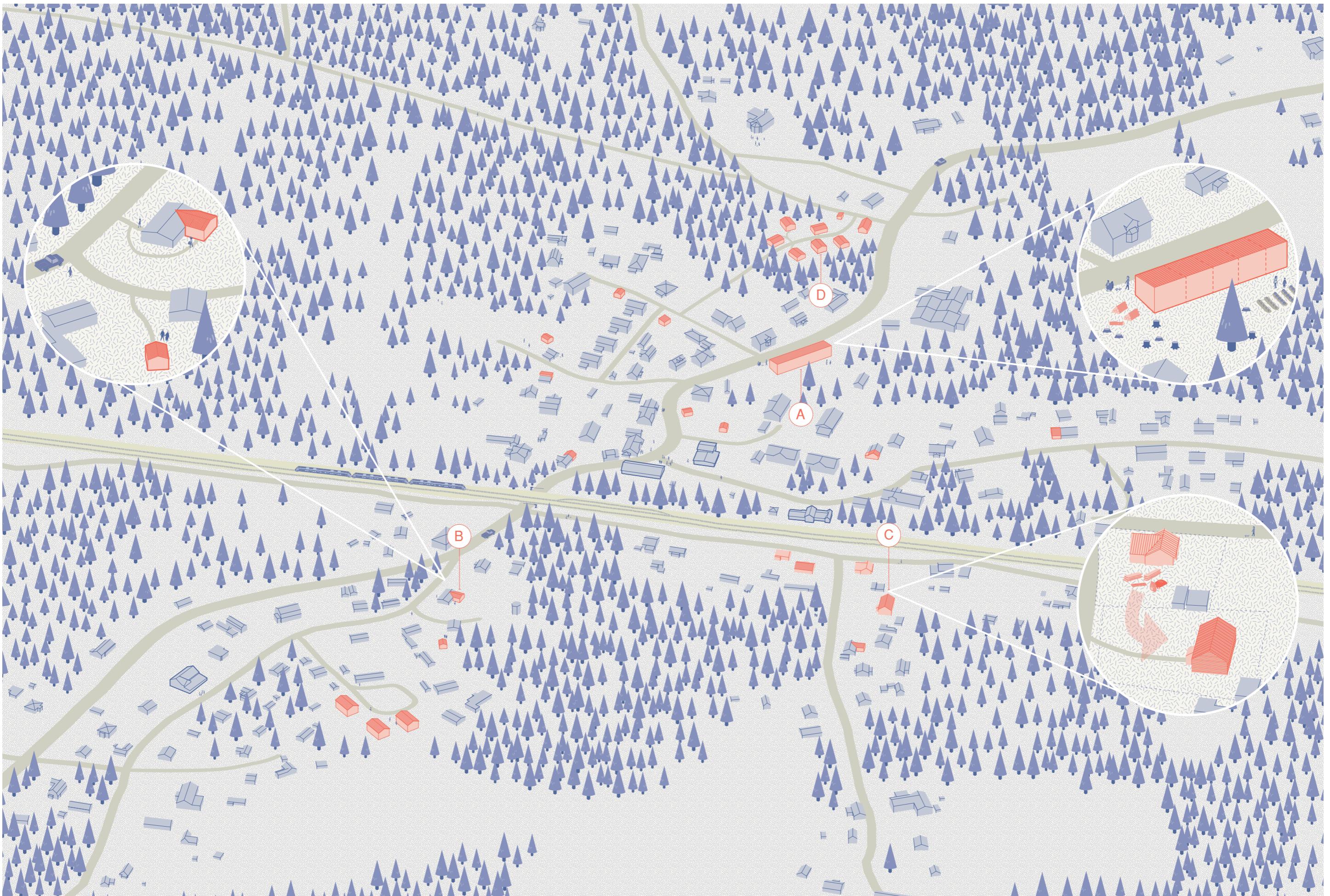
(Wikells, 2020)

\*Without the labour costs for straw & plaster. Approximated to be 680 000 kr for a 50 m<sup>2</sup> house.



### III Future outlook

The third phase presents a future outlook of Fåglavik to visualize possibilities for the future. In this chapter we will present a few concepts and examples of affordable housing projects that could continue the development process.



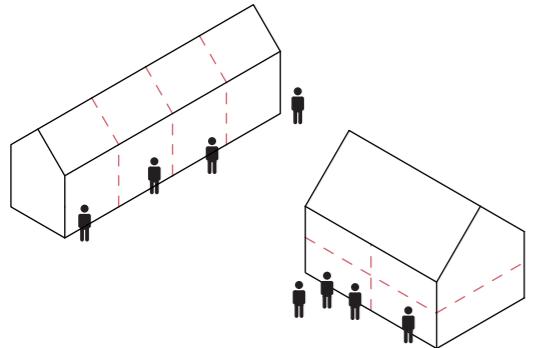
Overview of possible future housing development in Fåglavik.

A: Multi-unit housing B: Add ons C: Transformation projects D: Co-housing

# Possible housing concepts

With the experience, knowledge and attention gained from the Co-village project and the established supporting network, Fåglavik will have a great foundation to continue the development.

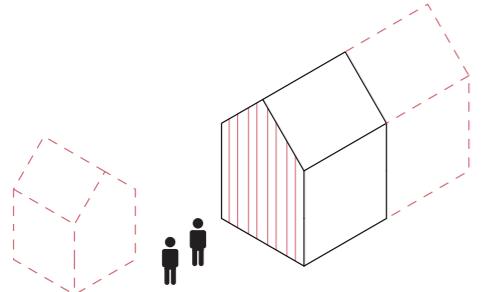
Beside the Co-village, we have identified three other concepts for affordable housing, which we are showing examples of an outlook of Fåglavik.



## A - Multi-unit housing

Create unit for multiple households, e.g. a row-house project or a larger villa with separate apartments.

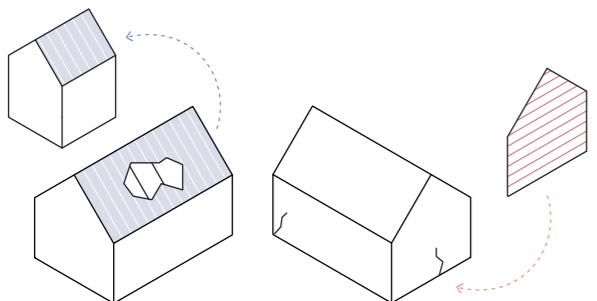
- Split fees, loan & permit costs
- Share costs for expensive exterior walls, foundation work etc.
- Build some parts together - less contractor costs



## B - Add-ons

Adding a separate building to a plot (attefallshus) or extending an existing building which could be rented out to new tenants-

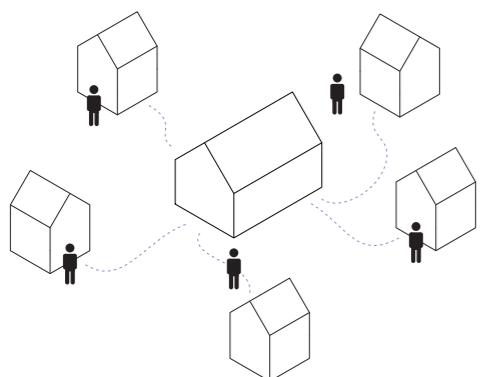
- Easy process - minimize fees, permits
- Cheap material costs
- Less groundwork to be done



## C - Transformation projects

Use existing buildings as a resource, either for renovation project or as material banks for new projects.

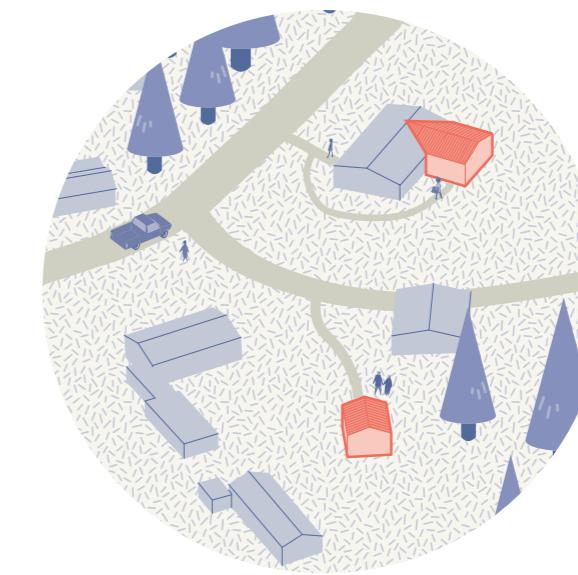
- Easy process - minimize fees, permits
- Cheap material costs
- Less construction work & groundwork



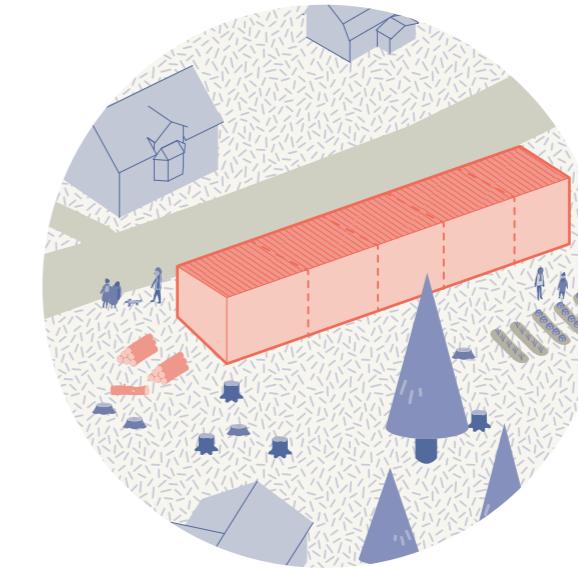
## D - Co-housing

Focusing on collaborative projects where functions are shared and personal space minimized.

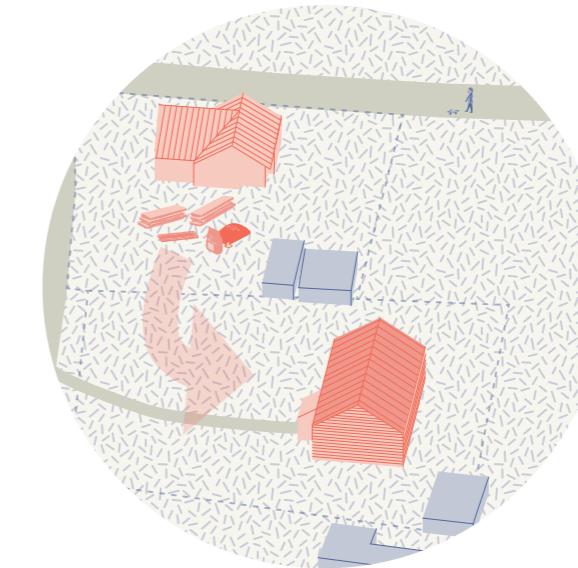
- Split developer fees, maybe even funding together
- Build together, minimize need for contractors
- Minimize built space, share some functions



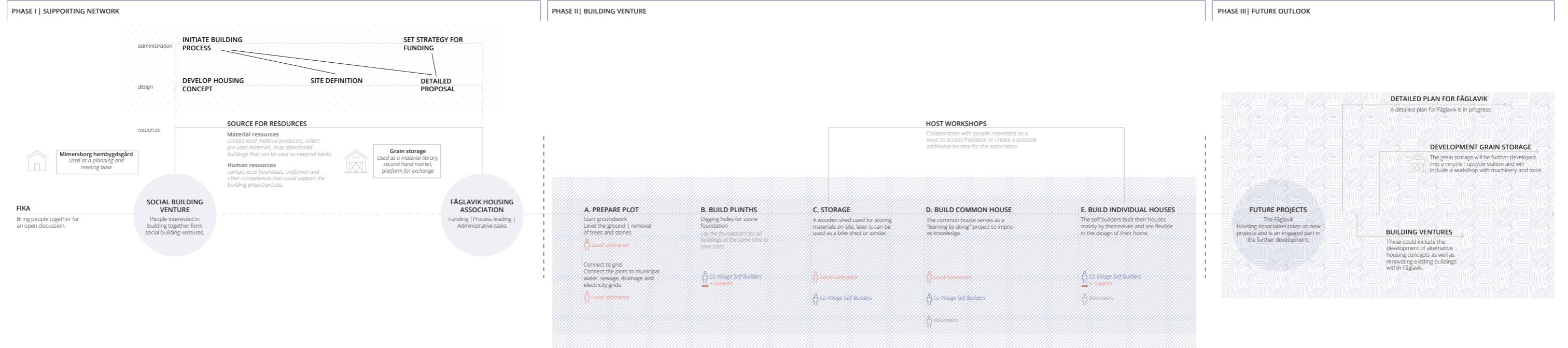
Attefallshus and additions to existing buildings.



Possible row house or other multi-unit projects.



Transformation of old buildings.





03 Outro

## Reflections & Discussions

The aim of this project was to create a roadmap towards affordable housing. While working and researching various aspects, the complexity, and the diversity of "affordable housing" was made increasingly clear. There are many ways to build affordable, which does not necessarily mean that they are sustainable or long-term solutions.

This became clear during the making of the material catalogue, that shows a selection of low-cost building elements. When designing these elements, we tried to minimize both the costs and climate impact simultaneously. It became clear that materials with a low CO<sub>2</sub> footprint and cost do not always go hand in hand. However, by sourcing local materials, we found many good materials that were both local and cheap. For example, you can find wood for construction, straw for insulation and reused roof tiles within a 15 km radius. Geographical locality turned out to be a key element when building affordable.

Developing strategies that could help lower building costs created a frame for our group, what to focus on and clarified what affordable housing meant for us and the project. By giving an example on how the development process could take place we hope to set a first impulse for the people in Fåglavik to push for further development.

It is important to acknowledge that the project is dependent on residents of Fåglavik wanting to be involved and volunteering as well as skilled professionals taking the time to be involved in these types of projects. In the process we did include carpentry, plumbing and electricity as areas where professionals are needed in the building process. Of course, professionals such as planners and architects are needed even before the actual building process starts in the planning phase of the project supporting the finding of a concept and fitting design. We are aware that several of the strategies that we have implemented in the exemplary co-housing

project are difficult to follow if the right support is not provided.

The process that we depict is linear and does not show a specific time sequence. It certainly needs to be considered that there could be obstacles that would open up different ways paths for the process to develop, taking away from the linearity and contributing to a more circular process. Obstacles could refer to aspects such as the workforce needed to build a house as well as problems in finding a suitable design and later materials. We did not connect the process to specific time lengths and are aware that some steps of the process may take longer than others. As mentioned before, the occurrence of different obstacles and changes makes it difficult to allocate a specific time to a specific phase. Even within the building process various aspects could widely affect the duration of the building process such as weather conditions and as before mentioned workforce and accessibility to materials.

By considering that the project should work for an ordinary person and that people might be interested in self-building without any prior knowledge, we hope to have made the project accessible. However, as these housing concepts may seem out of the box, fitting for alternative lifestyles, it might not interest everyone wanting to move to Fåglavik. Even so, the support provided by this new network may also be used for reducing costs in conventional house building.

Additionally, we are aware that people embarking on self-building journeys as we are describing in the co-village project would need to bring the time to follow through with such a building project as well as needing to consider the flexibility regarding time necessary when embarking on such a journey.

Furthermore, by diving into the many different layers of the building and planning process we came to realize

how complex they were. We chose to only address the costs during the building process, but to make housing truly affordable the reflection could extend to the lifespan of the building, its energy efficiency, and its part in the inhabitants' lifestyles. It would be interesting to dive deeper into these topics and have a sort of "follow up."

In the beginning of the project, we set delimitations and boundaries for our project. Here we did constitute that we are not designing a "one-size-fits-all" solution to the housing issue. Through the process we have come to realize, that even though this sort of project would need adjustments to the local context, it could still be applied to regions facing similar challenges as Fåglavik does regarding affordable housing.

When thinking about the constraints of the project apart from the willingness of people to be part of such building projects it is necessary to mention that a detailed plan is necessary to have when developing Fåglavik further. A detailed plan might be one of the biggest obstacles of the project when thinking about what would come next. A big question as in many parts of our project is the aspect of who is and feels responsible. The project overall really helped our process of learning and understanding the challenges and needs in Fåglavik. Taking on a project which is different than what we had worked on before in projects really helped us to explore topics that were not necessarily within our comfort zone and within our previously gained knowledge such as the cost aspect that is part of building a house.

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Cost estimations for the co-village project and building  
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byggmax.se

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Market values in Fåglavik are based on numbers from  
booli.se and interviews with local inhabitants.

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... because it takes a village!

