

# **'Danmark C' and 'Fredericia C'**

## ***-the double transformation strategy of Fredericia***

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by

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### **1 INTRODUCTION**

This paper will present and tentatively discuss how the Danish city Fredericia (37.000 inhabitants) has significantly changed its urban development and planning profile during the last 10-15 years. Fredericia attracts our attention because it is in the midst of transforming itself from being a rather traditional industrial city to becoming a city that actively searches for new ways to attract both citizens and businesses – not unlike many other smaller and mid-sized cities. However, in the case of Fredericia this has resulted in two very different large scale urban development initiatives: 1) the 'Danmark C' plan and project, one of the largest initiatives ever in Denmark for land use development for businesses, and 2) the 'Fredericia C' initiative, a vision to regenerate an existing industrial site in the harbour area and establish attractive housing, office-space and cultural and recreational facilities. Both initiatives are considered, by local politicians and planners, to be of significant strategic importance, not only for Fredericia, but also for the development in the region. Furthermore, in particular the 'Danmark C' initiative can be claimed to be of national importance due to its scale and location near and around the intersection of (inter)national main transport infrastructures.

Based on the Fredericia example, and its actual practices of trying to deal with urban development through two apparently very different local strategies and plans, the paper intends to generate research questions, challenges and ideas. Furthermore, the paper is based on emerging research collaboration and establishment of projects between the authors and their institutions (rather than being the outcome of finalised research). Hence, and as a starting point for this collaboration, it is the intention of this paper to base itself in exploring the context, rather than theorising over it from the outset, and presenting 'what (local) urban development characteristics can actually be identified?' and 'what has apparently been the role of strategy-making and planning?' We then conclude by attempting to debate and identify what might be worth researching into in our future work, e.g. 'what may this exemplify, what may be learned from studying the changes in Fredericia?' The paper is therefore to be considered rather open-ended and it is meant to encourage and invite the reader to join in on a discussion and expansion of possible useful perspectives, ideas, questions, similar examples, etc.

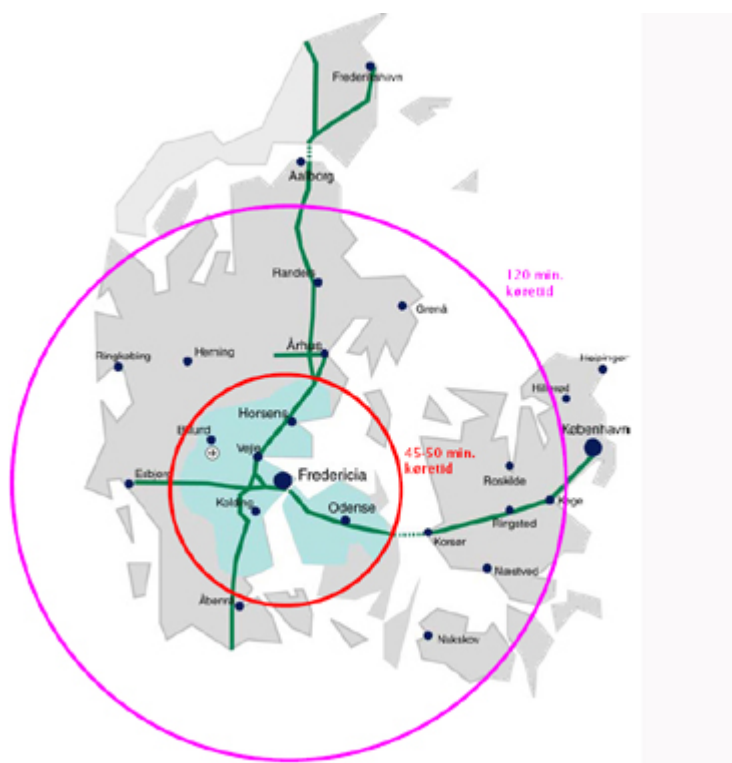
Our approach, so far, has been to merge two sets of data and preliminary analysis and conclusions; one is concerned with the development of the business area 'Danmark C' and the other with the proposed mixed development of 'Fredericia C'. The methods applied have been document studies (e.g. strategies, plans, press releases, minutes and notes from meetings, etc.) as well as interviews with two local civil servants. The collection of data continues, as we speak, e.g. it is expected that a number of interviews will be carried out in the near future. At the very end of this paper we shall also return to a few reflections on the future methods of our research into development and planning in Fredericia.

## 2 THE EMERGENCE OF 'DANMARK C' AND 'FREDERICIA C'

This section will unfold the stories and development leading to the emergence of the two strategic initiatives of 'Danmark C' and 'Fredericia C'. At first, they may seem to be very different due to their objectives (large scale business vs. mixed use), location (outside vs. inside city limits) and scale. However, as we will see below, the two strategies may also be viewed as part of one overall local strategy to improve the development conditions for (new) businesses and the attraction of citizens.

### 2.1 'Danmark C' – large scale business development area

'Danmark C' concerns 600 ha (6 million m<sup>2</sup>) of land, situated in the countryside 5-7 km southwest from the city centre of Fredericia and near and around the motorway intersection that connects towards both the east (Odense and Copenhagen), the north (Vejle, Århus and Aalborg), and the south (Kolding and Flensburg).<sup>1</sup> None of those more populated and business intensive destinations are more than 220 km's away and therefore this intersection and area is often described as being very centrally located and even described as 'the big intersection of Denmark'.



Source: The 'Danmark C Fredericia' website, [www.fredericiakommune.dk/danmarkc/da-dk](http://www.fredericiakommune.dk/danmarkc/da-dk).

As mentioned, 'Danmark C' is on one of the largest plans ever in Denmark for land use development for business and was initiated as a municipal development project. Significant efforts has been carried out by local civil servants and politicians to ensure

<sup>1</sup> This subsection is partly based on: 1) Hansen C. J. & Nielsen, T. S. & Hovgesen, H. H. (2006) 'Motorvejen, Byudviklingen og Governance. Planlægning og politik langs motorveje.' Conference: Trafikdagene i Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, and partly on 2) additional data acquisition during spring-summer 2009.

a broad political anchoring of this project – both internally in the municipality and externally through transversal and informal cooperation with regional and national spatial policy-making and planning actors.



Air photograph: DDO, copyright COWI

Source: The 'Danmark C Fredericia' website, [www.fredericiakommune.dk/danmarkc/da-dk](http://www.fredericiakommune.dk/danmarkc/da-dk).

### ***The land use plan – and status***

The initiative was approved by the local municipal council in June 2002 as part of a masterplan for Fredericia. The area was split up into 6 parts, see map, with the following intentions for land use: E1) knowledge-based offices, E2) light warehousing and manufacturing enterprises, E3) knowledge-based enterprises, E4) manufacturing enterprises within food processing requiring large plot sizes, E5) distribution and location services, and CE1) a mixed-business area with broad commercial/industrial use and leisure activities.

Preparing the area for new businesses has been implemented and carried out with some speed (new local infrastructure), so that during the first years the actual development (businesses buying land and locating in the area) even exceeded the high expectations. Today (summer 2009), more than 50 mostly larger companies are located in the area, and 50 % of the total area has been sold.

### ***Unsuccessful development in the 1990s***

The idea for the development project came out of a two-day seminar, arranged by the municipal planning board in 1998, in which a range of development problems in the area were debated between local politicians and civil servants.

*...it was about the good areas along the motorway, where we had registered a relatively low demand. Another aspect was that Taulov [a nearby business development area] grew slowly, and it was about to grow into new areas where we had to say stop and apply a `helicopter perspective` before we did anything further. For instance, those areas could also be of interest for national level service facilities and functions, national institutions and a new international railways centre. The third reason was that we wanted a fully developed service infrastructure. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

Through the 1990s, parts of what became the 'Danmark C' area had already been available for business development, however without much success in attracting new businesses. It was considered, by the local politicians and planners, with some sense of surprise and failure that it was not possible to attract companies to such a location – right next to a busy intersection of national importance.

*It was simply unbelievable. Our take on it, then, was that the concept of accessibility can be seen in stages. If the big companies coming to Trekant-*

*området<sup>2</sup> really are located for logistic reasons, then even the smallest of obstacles will mean something to them. It was therefore our assumption that we should try and screen the areas in order to find out if we could improve road accessibility even further. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

This approach turned out to be successful. Adjustments in the local road infrastructure near the motorway were negotiated with national road authorities and then implemented. This manoeuvre removed a local congestion problem, and immediately companies and businesses started to show a significantly higher interest in the area.

### ***A shift in planning horizon, scale and process***

However, meanwhile it also became increasingly apparent to key local politicians and planners that the earlier strategies and plans for not only this area but for Fredericia and its surroundings had been too short-sighted. A 12 year compulsory planning horizon (according to the Danish Planning Act) was considered too limited. During the above mentioned two-day seminar, several other development perspectives reaching much further into the future were also debated, and a consensus emerged that Fredericia needed to think 'bigger and more long-term'. This became the initiation of strategy-making and planning process that resulted in the masterplan in 2002. Here, it was not only about optimising local accessibility solutions but much more broadly about establishing a strategy that would enable Fredericia to get a fair or larger share of the economic growth and development of the urban region of Trekantområdet.

It reflected a shift in magnitude not only in the visions and objectives of the further development of Fredericia, but also in the way in which strategy-building and planning was approached and carried out. With reference to apparently positive experiences with a planning process concerning local urban renewal in the mid-1990s, the two-day seminar led to the establishment of a political steering group with members from the planning board and the economic board, including the mayor. This was done in order to secure an early and bullet-proof political anchoring of the master plan as well as the 'Danmark C' development project. In general, it seems reasonable to conclude that there has been an extensive and close cooperation between key politicians and civil servants internally in the municipal organisation.

*We have a rather low organisation-level in this municipality. It means that we actually have rather free limits to how tasks are being carried out, and who is attached to a task. To some people it can be deeply frustrating not to have fixed frameworks, to others it provides a lot of opportunities. Here, I think that we [four urban planners in the municipality] understood to use the opportunities coming from the fact that we have not had too many hierarchical structures, in which we had to `clear` upwards in the system... We don't have to go through a lot of decision levels. The way we are organised means that I do not go behind anyone's back if I get a good idea and call the head of the municipal administration or the mayor. In other municipalities there are a number of levels you have to pass. It is a very capacious municipality. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

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<sup>2</sup> The urban region of Fredericia, Vejle, Kolding and several nearby smaller cities. The municipalities in this area are organised together in what is termed 'Trekantområdet Danmark'. One important consequence of this is that a common plan strategy for the whole area is upheld and revised by the municipalities in cooperation.

*We have also had some general restructuring where we established some groups that discussed how to improve cooperation between politicians and civil servants... Through many years of experience we have learned that transversal cooperation is good. And that the earlier you involve, the better. It has something to do with ownership. (Civil servant B, Fredericia municipality)*

In addition, two key planners behind the development project were released from their tasks in the technical administration so that they could spend all their time on the 'Danmark C' project and significant parts of the emerging masterplan. Finally, external relations have been practiced in close cooperation, e.g. with other authorities where local attempts have been made at arguing for and promoting a coherent view of the plans – primarily through direct dialogue and early informal contacts and meetings, rather than through minutes and notes.

*We have not written to each other, we have organised meetings. We have also been very prepared to take on dialogues... We have not just forwarded something, but followed up with arguments on where we wanted to go, and what it would take from different road authorities. We are not for minutes and long letters. We are much more inclined to the process and the personal dialogue. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

Hence, the 'Danmark C' initiative became part of a larger strategy-building process intended to develop all of Fredericia and its immediate surroundings. It became somewhat catalytic to the process of changing the horizon, scale and process of planning in Fredericia. In the concluding discussion, in section 3, we will try to identify and tentatively characterise those changes further. However, first we will unfold the story of a more recent development project in Fredericia – 'Fredericia C'.

## **2.2 'Fredericia C' – changing the industrial face of the inner city**

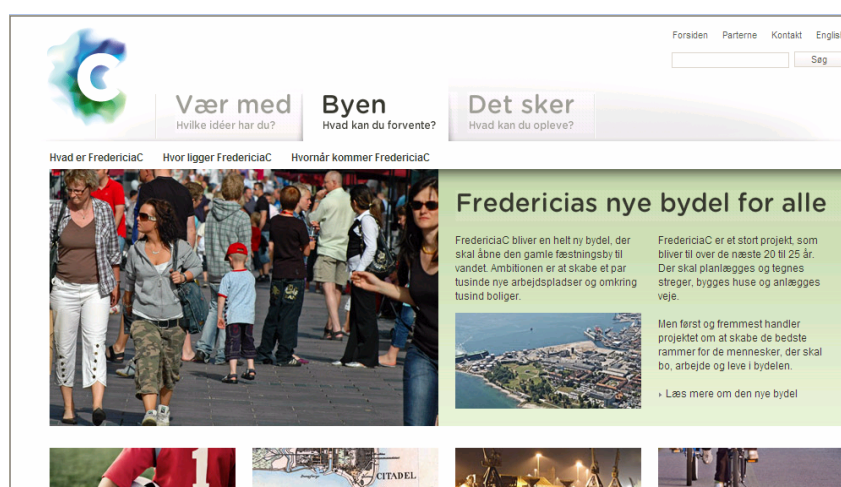
In 2008, the municipality of Fredericia and Realdania Arealudvikling, a Copenhagen-based developer associated with the philanthropic Realdania Foundation, joined in partnership with the purpose of developing a 140,000 m<sup>2</sup> site industrial site in the Fredericia harbour into a new city district with attractive housing, office-space and cultural and recreational facilities. The ambition is to create a high-quality district based on sustainable urban design principles including urban qualities and amenities that supports a liveable district. In particular it is stressed that the new district should include links between the present and the unique history of Fredericia including a connection from the historic city centre to the new city district.



Source: The 'Fredericia C' website, [www.fredericiac.dk](http://www.fredericiac.dk)

## ***A vision of regional and national magnitude***

In a regional perspective, the vision is that Frederica C will support the role of Fredericia as a catalyst for the development of Trekantområdet in its competition with the Copenhagen-region (Planstrategi for Trekantområdet, 2007). Having an attractive and distinct area like this in Fredericia, it is believed by the investors, would attract new types of inhabitants to the 1,000 new housing units as well as new industries to the city, which has been lacking in comparison to other cities in the East Jutland region (Fredericia Municipality, 2004). It is believed that the office-space in the district will be home to between 2-3,000 new jobs, primarily in 'new economies', that is knowledge jobs and jobs in the cultural and experience sector. The project is scheduled for the next 10-20 years and will cost approximately 5 billion DKR (approximately 650 million Euro).



In the agreement, it was decided that the municipality, which owns the harbour, would keep an owner-share of 25 % while Realdania Arealudvikling would have a share of 75 %. Responsibility for transforming the site into a new vibrant city district was handed over to a development-company, Fredericia C, controlled by the municipality and the investor.

Source: The 'Fredericia C' website, [www.fredericiac.dk](http://www.fredericiac.dk)

## ***Fredericia Shipyard – sacrificed by strategic planning***

In spring 2008 it was announced by the city council and the owner of the harbour, ADP (The Association of Danish Ports), a company owned by the municipality, that the leasing of the shipyard-site would be terminated by 1st January 2017. As the owner of the harbour, the city council could do this in accordance with the Danish law for leasing (Lejeloven). This ended a leasing that had existed since 1916. As a result, a conflict arose with the shipyard and the municipality as the core combatants, a Copenhagen-based developer, and the Ministry of the Environment on the side.

The shipyard blocks the view from the central part of the city towards the new district and the Belt. The new district would make it possible to open up the city centre towards the sea, which would show the fortress of King Frederik III from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Trying to be constructive, the municipality suggested that the yard should move to other premises in the harbour, which, however was declined by the yard with the argument that it would be insufficient for the present and planned activities of the shipyard. The site that the municipality offered was significantly smaller than the present site.

The shipyard, however, is not on its way to shut down. On the contrary it has increased its production in the most recent years quite substantially. 2008 was its best year ever with a surplus of 82 million DKR and a turnover of 540 million DKR . The yard argued that it would cost 150 jobs at the yard and 300 jobs at local subcontractors.



Source: The 'Fredericia C' website, [www.fredericiac.dk](http://www.fredericiac.dk)

A consultancy report ordered by the municipality and the developer on the other hand showed that developing the Kemira-site would create some 2,800 new jobs. Another consultancy report that was later ordered by the shipyard concluded that the figure of 2,800 new jobs was basically groundless.

The shipyard argued that the local politicians were making decisions that were against their constituency. To back this, the shipyard organised the collection of citizen signatures to oppose the development, which was supported by some 11,000 inhabitants. In October 2008, a public meeting set up to discuss the case gathered around 300 persons. Despite some support for the shipyard, the general opinion however was support to the plans for 'Fredericia C' (TVSyd, 28-10-08).

### ***Mobilising resistance***

As a response, the shipyard hired communication consultants to frame the case according to their experience. In addition, national interest organisations supported the shipyard, including The Association of Danish Harbour Business and the major organisation Danish Industry. The CEO of the latter called the decision by the city council as 'senseless' and encouraged businesses to stay away from Fredericia. This was the first time ever that the organisation had encouraged its members to stay away from a Danish municipality (TV2 Syd, 17-08-08).

The employees at the shipyard began to run to the political parties in order to gain influence, partly by the promise from the shipyard-management that they would financially support the potential new local members of the city council. In total, 180 of 300 employees tried to join local parties (Politiken, 30-01-09).

In particular, the mayor of Fredericia was approached and attacked by the shipyard and Danish Industry because of his double-role and for being untrustworthy – being mayor on the one hand and national chairman of the organisation of Danish Ports on the other. He was accused for working against the policy of Danish Ports, which is focused on increasing the amount of transport by ship, arguably in order to protect the environment (which is also the policy of the Danish government, see Infrastrukturkommissionen, 2009). Although this was supported by the director of Danish Ports, the city council was attacked for refusing to take on any dialogue over the matter. According to Danish Industry, this could very well be the beginning of a trend where Danish municipalities decide to push out industries and buy up land for urban

development (Erhvervsbladet, 19-08-08). This, however, is countered by the organisation Danish Harbours that points out that the 22 largest harbours in Denmark in fact will be expanding their area by 25 % in the years to come. In order to gain finances for this, the municipal harbours are selling land for other purposes, for instance housing and offices (Erhvervsbladet, 19-08-08).

### **Recent developments**

Recently, the story took a new turn when Shell declared that it planned to extend its facilities at the Shell-terminal located right next to the Kemira-plot. The minister of the environment has declared in the media that Shell's extension plans should be supported (Børsen, 10-07-09). The speaker for environmental matters from the government party 'Venstre' said that it is hard to believe that housing can be build on



Source: The 'Fredericia C' website, [www.fredericiac.dk](http://www.fredericiac.dk)

the site if a sufficient 500 meter security distance to risk-production should be upheld and has suggested, that the municipality and the developer should really consider if housing is possible. Furthermore, Fredericia municipality and Realdania Arealudvikling A/S has been accused by the shipyard for paying overprize for the Kemiara-site (Børsen, 15-07-09).

Additionally, in summer 2009 the shipyard was told not to use two quays (that they are using) and has rented with the argument, that having activities there would impair the view of the Belt during cultural arrangements during the summer – exactly some cultural activities that were organised by 'Fredericia C' to make the citizens start using the area (Børsen, 09-06-2009). The shipyard saw this as pure chicane and a 'declaration of war' and as a decrease of their production facilities. The director of Realdania Arealudvikling A/S said that it was ok that cruise-liners and ships from the yard could use the quays occasionally, but that it had to be decided from case to case (Børsen, 09-06-2009).

Most recently, the shipyard has decided to move from Fredericia to the shipyard in Lindø, some 60-70 km's away, a move that has only been possible because there was sufficient finances in the company to do so; an estimated 200 million DKR should be used to make new investments at Lindø in order to get the shipyard up-and-running again (Børsen, 25-05-09). The shipyard has started to move right away and expect to be fully established by mid-2012.

### 3 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION – A NEW AND MORE TRANSFORMATIVE ROLE FOR PLANNING?

*All independent business analysis pointed towards that Trekantområdet was one of the areas where a significant growth would occur in the years to come. This has also had political implications – that one has dared to take risks. The faith in this development was the ‘carrot’. The threat was that we could risk getting a huge group of unemployed citizens, because companies moved abroad. Those companies were in the old business areas, for instance in the harbour. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

The Fredericia case, with both the ‘Danmark C’ and ‘Fredericia C’ initiatives, clearly illustrates the birth and further development of a much more risk-inclined, proactive and strategic approach to development and planning.

*The difference is between the empirical planning, where you look 10 years ahead and ask yourself how you think it will look like, and then you plan for that – and on the other side to say: how do we want this to look like in 10 years? How do we want the development in this municipality to unfold, if we control it ourselves? That is somehow the thinking behind it. (Civil servant B, Fredericia municipality)*

Planning, envisioning and a more intensive political steering and management (through the elected municipal council and its committees) have become central instruments in Fredericia’s development.

*...we have worked incredibly hard, since the urban renewal projects [in the mid-1990s] to improve the political ownership to the plans we produce. ...There has been a shift from having meetings concerning single cases to have meetings concerning visions and goals. ...Earlier, a municipal plan may have been handled more hurriedly than a case concerning a carport. Now we only have one decision-making committee meeting a month where single cases are handled. In stead there are 4-6 theme meetings a year, half-day meetings between committees and their administration, where one talks about the overall plans and formulates visions. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

*Somewhere, we were inspired by planning being more centrally managed in France, and that one can make such big decisions. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

However, the examples described in this paper may not be considered particularly unusual. In fact, during the 1990s and onwards it has become quite common that municipalities increasingly, and more consciously, apply such instruments and approaches in order to change the use of areas and to achieve specific strategic objectives. In fact, it may well be perceived as some of the practical tools of strategic planning.

#### ***Gathering courage to act more strategically***

The ‘Danmark C’ initiative illustrates a stage (late-1990s) in this development where Fredericia started discovering its possibly greater regional development potential, and

that it might be advisable to change the way in which it approached planning as an activity. Central local politicians and civil servants in Fredericia seem to have gathered courage when experiencing success with convincing national authorities to adhere to the local wishes to optimise accessibility between the motorway system and the business development area. The fact that regional and national authorities could be convinced and that far-sightedness, negotiation and persistence turned out to be useful approaches seem to have helped to spark a turn in the role of planning in Fredericia.

In some ways, the process that emerged can be termed a somewhat elitist, pragmatic, project-oriented and political-administratively dominated planning. However, within those limitations there were also very clear indications of a move towards a more transversal and dialogue-based planning – primarily in the relation between the municipality and other public authorities and internally between municipal sectors/administrations and political commissions. In particular in the latter case, ideas and visions were shared and developed. In some cases there are also close collaborate links between the municipality and private actors/companies.

In any case, the 'Danmark C' initiative and the masterplan of 2002 showed an increase in what might be thought of as strategic planning awareness and consciousness, and that such more 'bold' approaches needed the creation of rock-steady prior political ownership and early anchoring of decisions. This again seem to have been made more likely due to the increased breaking down of sectoral borders and the establishment and development of relations of mutual trust and interdependence between key actors. The actors in the planning processes often knew – or else they often found out – that they could not do without each others knowledge and solution-oriented capabilities. They also knew that failure to achieve success through dialogue would prolong the process unnecessarily and often with an increased use of resources as a result.

*In a way we have become much, much more flexible. We have moved from single projects and detailed regulation to working with bigger issues and themes in a mixture of political and administrative groups – where it's about development, and where you have to act very, very fast. And I think it happens in sort of a selection process – if you cannot deliver flexibility or power when it's necessary, then I don't think you will be asked to participate in those groups. (Civil servant A, Fredericia municipality)*

### **Going full-scale strategic? The municipality as a transformation agent?**

The 'Fredericia C' initiative is remarkable as it may perhaps illustrate new emerging trends in urban development and planning in Denmark and elsewhere. This is due to the fact that the proposed development may lead, at first, to an actual loss of jobs in the area. Furthermore, it is in particular remarkable since the moving shipyard is a very sound company that has been expanding in the most recent years. Usually, such strategic endeavours and instruments are used to push declining companies the last few steps out over the cliff. It shows that there is indeed a priority and persistency to (re)make the inner city into a place to experience and live in, rather than a site for traditional production.

This is not uncommon, of course; however, in view of the discussion above, it can be hypothesised or perhaps argued that the local experiences with strategic planning through the last 10 years have made the city increasingly aware of its problems and opportunities? It seems that Fredericia is very much aware of the complexities of changes in economic development conditions and opportunities and in the larger and more long-term 'picture'. There is perhaps what might be termed a sophisticated scalar consciousness emerging or even settling locally? There is apparently a municipal council and administration that actively pursues and develops a role of urban transformation agent?

This is the kind of research curiosity and questioning that brings us together in this paper. For instance, some further questioning could be to ask: what kind of city the city council wanted instead? Such a question is likely to be useful in disclosing further the underlying reasoning and anatomy of the supposed scalar consciousness among the local politicians and civil servants, as well as in relation to their planning ambitions and approaches. E.g. according to the mayor, industrial jobs are not future-oriented (Børsen 24-06-09), however the mayor has also argued that Fredericia is one of the most successful municipalities in Denmark when it comes to attracting new industries. Companies like Carlsberg, Arla Foods and Rexam have all established larger production facilities in Fredericia – in the 'Danmark C' area.

Does it imply that the city council may be guided by a strategic frame (Healey, 2007) where the vision of Fredericia is a very different kind of city, than it really is? Clearly, it seems to be guided by an ambition to become an attractive (inner) city to live in and to experience, not necessarily to work in, at least not for workers on a ship-yard. This has generated local resistance and conflicts, because the shipyard may easily be seen as a victim of strategic planning.

On the other hand, the actual spatial development and the strategic guidance may not necessarily be contradictory in neither terms nor context. Fredericia is part of a rather strong competition among municipalities in the East Jutland city region. The kind of business development that has been planned for, and that has actually emerged outside the city along the nearby motorway, is perhaps the kind of business Fredericia can realistically go for. And with 50 % of the 600 ha area already being developed, it would seem that Fredericia has managed to establish itself as a logistical regional/national hub and a late-industrial and somewhat more service-oriented, and in some cases more knowledge-oriented, business centre in Trekantområdet as well as in East Jutland. A liveable city centre with housing, shopping, culture and experiences may then become supportive of this massive outer-city development.

This leads us to also want to look further, in our upcoming research, into the relationship between the two main strategic initiatives dealt with in this paper – 'Danmark C' and 'Fredericia C'. As indicated, in terms of thinking strategically and developing local skills to do so the two initiatives are interlinked and likely to be part of the same planning culture. However, it will also be interesting to see how these initiatives might link (and perhaps interlink) up to more general regional development tendencies? And, finally how they may link, in the future, to matters of more national interest, e.g. the two main development zones of the Øresund-region and the East Jutland urban corridor (see Miljøministeriet, 2006)?

The questions identified in this last section form the basis for our future work, together with the material collected so far. In proceeding, we intend to continue our studies of both national, regional and municipal documents, as well as documents related to partnerships and larger companies and organisations whose dispositions are of importance to the development of Fredericia. In addition, we intend to perform a range of interviews with key actors in the above mentioned organisations and processes.

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Planning documents concerning Fredericia, such as the municipal plan (latest two versions), minutes, notes, press releases.

Partnership agreement (9th June 2008) between Fredericia municipality and Realdania Arealudvikling A/S.

Media broadcasts, e.g. from the regional television station TV2Syd, and articles from the Danish newspapers Børsen and Politiken and the magazine Erhvervsbladet.