

# YELLOW HUB

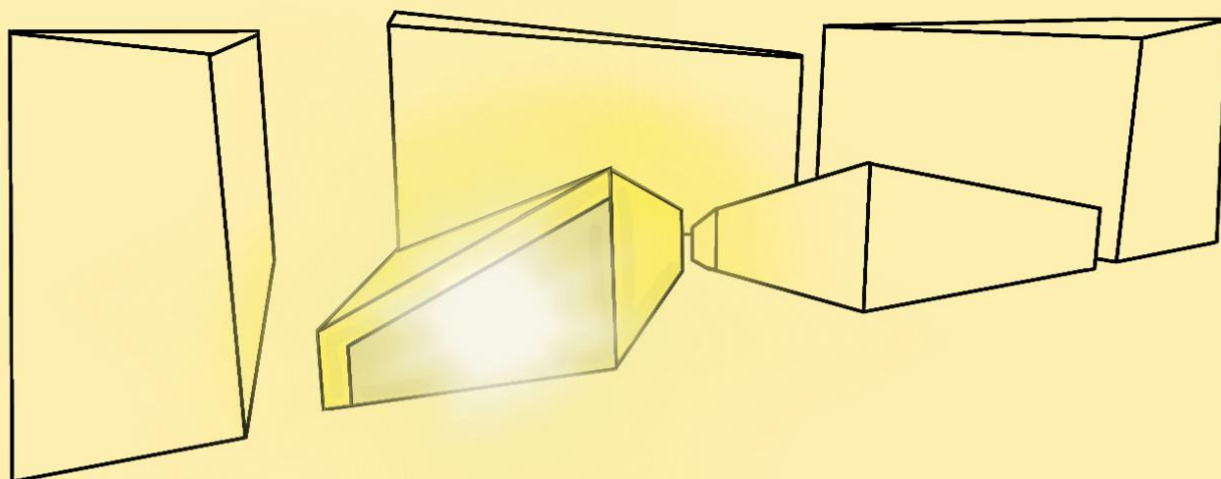


SCAN ME 

A guide on creating neighborhood houses

## FROM A SPACE TO A HAPPIER PLACE

A neighborhood house that creates a meeting place for young adults from 18-25 years old in Furuset



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## Introduction – Who are we?

### Group members

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### What is CityStudio Oslo?

CityStudio Oslo is a co-built learning arena for students to practice being adaptive problem solvers. This course connects disciplines and institutions to frame and face challenges occurring in the City of Oslo. Through the activities, the students strive to learn how to solve local problems together.

In the full-time course, projects led by students will provide value for the city in the form of experimental solutions, lessons, and feedback. To do this, students use the tools taught across the fields of urbanism, dialogue, and design in combination with their own backgrounds. To understand the challenges, staff from the City of Oslo visit the studio regularly to discuss the current practices, challenges, and visions for the city. The course focuses on process and skill-oriented learning outcomes (UiO, 2022).

## Project summary

### Yellow Hub – A good neighborhood house

Yellow Hub is about creating a meeting place for young adults in the Furuset area of Oslo through a neighborhood house. The aim is for the age group 18-25 in the area to share their needs through participation. The result is a guide for OBOS, the developer, on how to create a good neighborhood house for young adults in Furuset.



The project focuses on a neighborhood house being built in Furuset through a housing project called Furuset village. By creating a survey and using this to make a guideline, the young adults' voices are distributed to OBOS and the City of Oslo. The city of Oslo will gain value by having a guide to creating a well-functioning neighborhood house, an indoor meeting place, that will strengthen social cohesion in Furuset, and therefore also strengthen social- sustainability and infrastructure in the city of Oslo.

#### **Vision**

The vision for this project is to help OBOS create a good neighborhood house fit for the local community at Furuset. By doing this, the bridge between young adults in Furuset and OBOS is created, and the local community is informed about the ongoing project as well as the possibility they must co-create a space that they will be able to use in only a couple of years. There is also a general need for good social infrastructure, and this guide could be used for further developments.

#### Project outcome

The final project consists of a written guide tailored to the Furuset Village project. The content is spread over 30 pages and designed to be a booklet through Canva. This was distributed both as a physical book and as a PDF format on the release date of December 7th, 2022, for OBOS and Oslo municipality. In addition to being fit for OBOS's project in Furuset, the guide provides advice and recommendations for neighborhood houses in general and is therefore scalable for other local, national, and international projects.

## Background and context

### About C40 and Furuset Village

C40 is a global network of cities collaborating to confront the climate crisis. Through C40s' international competition Reinventing Cities, cities identify under-utilized sites that are ready to be transformed and invite creative teams to build for the future. The Norwegian developer OBOS win the competition in 2019 with the project Furuset Village. Furuset Village is a housing development and will house 76 homes for those who want a social everyday life and be part of a community (OBOS 2022). The village will have a greenhouse and a neighborhood house in addition to the apartments. The project mainly focuses on the neighborhood house. It is expected to be around 100 m<sup>2</sup>. Construction is expected to begin in 2023.

### Identified need

After a meeting with Hanne Løvbrøtte, a project leader at OBOS, the group was informed about the lack of young adults' participation in the Furuset Village project. She also stated that the neighborhood house functions have not yet been decided on.

After looking into Furuset, there is no set indoor public space for this age group besides the shopping center. What exists in public meeting spaces is centered around sports.

### City Connection

The Oslo municipality plan decided in 2018, is an urban development strategy for 2040 (Oslo kommune 2018). The document states that there is an increasing need for meeting places in the city and the need for a solid social infrastructure. Meeting places are places for different experiences and activities that focus on sustainability. These places are created on inhabitants' premises and adapted to the local neighborhood values. The aim for 2040 is for Oslo to create accessible city space and social meeting places. The future of the city would be young adults. The same municipality plan states that young people aged 19-29 are expected to increase by 17 percent (Oslo commune 2018).

### Theoretical context

A neighborhood house is not a well-established term. It could be described as a local facility that mobilizes community assets to serve the needs of residents (Yan, Lauer, and Riaño-Alcalá,

2017). In this project, it is used as an umbrella term for a community center and other social meeting places made for the neighborhood.

A neighborhood house is an example of- and can best be described as a social infrastructure, a space where people encounter one another. Social infrastructures shape the way we interact and help mitigate a variety of social conflicts, including crime, isolation, food insecurity, and climate change (Klinenberg, 2018). Creating social infrastructure brings people together in unique ways that facilitate neighborhood attachment and community engagement.

The Furuset Village project meets 10 different requirements relating to environmental, social, and economic sustainability (FutureBuilt, 2022). The focus has been social sustainability, which occurs when formal and informal processes systems, structures, and relationships actively support the capacity of future generations to create healthy and livable communities (Barron and Gauntlett 2002). This includes human rights, preservations of diversity, protection and promotion of health and safety, and intra and intergenerational equity among many others.

To achieve socially sustainable results, participation is a tool to integrate people into the development process. Participation, or public participation, is a process that empowers relevant communities through involvement in the decision-making process. Specifically, it means involving in the process those who are affected by the decision (Dippert et al.,2017).

The neighborhood house and Furuset Village is a colorful and modern project. However, there is a risk of it not being accepted by the locals at Furuset. NIMBY (not in my backyard) is a term originally used to describe the arguments of those opposing development in their vicinity while not necessarily being against a similar development elsewhere (Hubbard, 2009). If a community is unhappy with the constructions that are made in their local area, the discontent can lead to conflict and division, as well as rejection of the new development.

### Furuset specifics and demography

Furuset is located east in Oslo in Alna district. The area is known for being multicultural. Norwegian media has on different occasions portrayed the district as unsafe due to the presence of youth crime. Currently, 1105 people in the age group 18-25 live at Furuset (Oslo Kommune, 2022). This group is challenging to find. Since there is not an existing social space for all young adults in Furuset, there is no exact place where they gather. They might study or work outside of Furuset and stay in the city center when not at home.



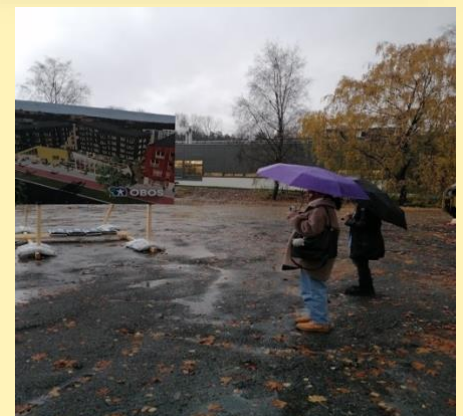
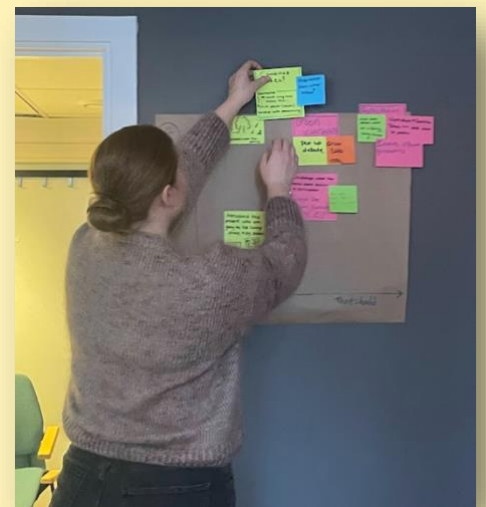
Low prices of renting and property buying lead to a high degree of relocation of people of other nationalities than Norwegian to this area. Norwegians tend to move out of Furuset. This could be because of xenophobia, but also the wish for a better and “more Norwegian” education for the children (Ruud et al., 2019).

In the 1950s and 1960s, new workplaces in Norway were mainly created within industrial and service industries. To achieve the economic growth that Norway desired, relocation was necessary. At the end of World War II, half of Norway's population lived in cities and towns, and the other half in "scattered areas" (Bull, 1981). Furuset was built to respond to these needs, and due to the amount of migration to Norway in general and to Oslo in particular, today the area is highly multicultural, with an immigrant share of around 70% (Vang, 2011). Due to this social composition, the district's organization and characteristics are quite different from the center of Oslo. In Furuset, most young adults, which constitute our target group, tend to live with their parents until an older age. These young adults have a particular need for social activities and for spaces that can provide them with that. Closely related to this is the need they have to participate in the development of their community, and the desire to give identity to their surroundings.

## Project process and outcome

### Planning and meetings

Peter Austin, the key contact for this project, informed the group about C40 and the development of Furuset Village. The students contacted OBOS and proposed a collaboration. Hanne Løvbrøtte, the project leader at OBOS, showed interest and engagement in the ideas the group presented, and initiated the thought of working with the age group 18-25 and the neighborhood house.



The group conducted informal interviews and a survey instead of a formal participation process. This is because there was not a clear group of participants at hand.

## Methods

A survey was created for young adults at Furuset between the ages of 18 to 25. This was connected to a QR code and put on posters and flyers. These posters were put up both at UiO campus Blindern and at OsloMet in hopes of getting some answers from potential students living in Furuset. The group visited Furuset to hang up more posters, as well as do informal interviews. The interviews all happened at Furuset library and AlnaHub. This allowed the group to realize that a new way of approaching young adults was needed, as they were either busy or did not show interest in the conversation.

The initial yellow QR code was also hard to scan in certain types of lightning.



The group expanded the survey to young adults living at or using Furuset, as well as others who know these groups and their needs. This guaranteed more survey answers, and therefore more accuracy in the findings.

For the second version of the flyer, a new and more visible QR-code was created. Flyers (A5) and posters (A3) were printed. These were distributed and hung up at Øst Kulturfestival. Flyers were also set around on tables at Fubiak and AlnaHub, at the front desk at Furuset Forum and around the bus stop at Furuset. The group also visited the local high school (Natur VGS) to put up posters and hand out flyers.





### Neighborhood house research

Field trips to visit neighborhood houses in Oslo took place. Firstly, Sagene Samfunnshus. The key to their success was the total area they had at their disposal, having a co-ownership between the district and private actors, but most importantly that they followed a co-creative process in which the local community was directly responsible for proposing and organizing different activities. Their action plan is based on a long-term perspective in which they consider the impacts of the neighborhood house in a 20-year perspective.

The second example was Samfunnshus Vest at Røa. Here the group learned that the neighborhood house is private, and currently employs two people. This translates into the users doing much of the work needed for it to run -mostly cleaning after an event. This was a great example of how trust is important and was therefore a strong point for the guideline.

Nabolagshuset Petersburg was also part of the research. An email was sent including concrete questions and a proposal for a meeting, but they responded by saying they did not have time in their schedule. Therefore, the research done here is based on desktop research. This neighborhood house is a collaborative project between Ferd developer and a selection of co-owners in Ensjø. This neighborhood house is operated by Kirkens Bymisjon, and has offers for all age groups.



### Guideline launch date

A final meeting was held on December 7th at the OBOS offices at Økern. The presentation was attended by seven people, including the three members of the group. This meeting had three parts.

1. Information about the project and methods used to gather the findings.
2. A workshop where each person was given a new identity of a young adult 18-25 years old based on the survey results. Then they had to think about what they, with this new identity, wanted to happen at Furuset and at the neighborhood house.
3. Presentation of the guide and recommendations moving forward with the neighborhood house.

Examples of the IDs used for the workshop:



#### **Sarah, 18 years old**

Sarah lives with her boyfriend and his family at Furuset. She did not finish high school and is now working at a gas station. She likes to party and has gotten in trouble with the police multiple times. She has a lot of friends at Furuset that she is always hanging out with at the Furuset center.



#### **Eivind, 21 years old**

Eivind works as a cashier at Furuset Senter. He lives at home with his parents and 2 siblings at Granstangen borettslag. In his spare time, he likes to work out. On the side, he studies sociology at UiO and has a lot of friends from outside of Furuset.

The meeting ended by formally handing the guide over to Hanne. This marked the end of the project.

## CityStudio 5S'S – Designing and executing our project

### Staff and strategies

Peter Austin is a Planning Advisor for the Department of Urban Development in the City of Oslo. He is the key contact person for this project.

Farah Humayun is an Urban Planner in the district of Alna and became the groups' second key contact.

The city strategy used for this project is *Kommunplanen samfunnsdel for Oslo 2018 – Visjon, mål og strategier mot 2014* (Oslo kommune 2018). Part one of this plan is about how Oslo municipality will develop the services, facilitate community development, and solve tasks as best as possible towards 2040. The urban development strategy says something about how the city will develop, and therefore concerns everyone who lives in Oslo.

Another strategy that underpins this project is *Områdeløft Furuset 2020-2026* which is part of the Groruddal investment in the district of Alna (Oslo kommune 2020). The investment will ensure that Furuset gets food solutions for sustainable urban development, where the local population has been included in participation processes.

### Support and resources

To get the best outcome and impact, Yellow Hub needed flyers and posters for our survey. The survey was done through Google Surveys. The printing of the flyers and poster was done through UiO's printing services and was 740 KR. The guide was printed out as physical copies, 20 copies, and uploaded on UiO's website which can get accessed through a QR code. The costs of the guide 496 KR. At the guide launch with OBOS, coffee and snacks were provided by OBOS.



## Site

The site used in the project was Furuset and the area where Furuset Village will be built. Fieldwork was conducted at AlnaHub and at the Deichman library in Alna Bydelshus located at Trygve Lies plass 6, Oslo. This is situated next to the actual site where the Furuset Village will be built. The First Village site is currently a parking lot and has a size of about 2,200 square meters (Reinventing Cities).



## Stewardship

The guide is designed for OBOS and the Furuset project in mind, but also for other actors interested in developing neighborhood houses.

This project is also relevant for the “Students Reinventing Cities” competition. The program consists of students around the world working to visualize sustainable and inclusive urban developments (Reinventing Cities, 2022). This project did not fit into the timeline of the competition; however, it is still relevant for the program.

A dissemination meeting occurred on December 7th to share the recommendations with OBOS. In this way, the guide will be used also after the 2022 fall semester at CityStudio Oslo.

## Scalability

The guide includes a broader part about how to create a good neighborhood house, before focusing on the Furuset context. Therefore, it can be used for other neighborhood house developments as well as the neighborhood house in Furuset. Since Furuset Village is a C40 project, the guide might also be distributed to and used by the other C40 cities.

Yellow Hub is scalable in the sense that it can be transferred to neighborhood houses in Oslo east based on the densification of this area. It can also be transferred how to include young adults from 18-25 in the participation processes.

## Interdisciplinarity and barriers

### Interdisciplinary study backgrounds

The project group consisted of three members from different study fields: Human Geography, International Environmental studies, and Administration and Leadership.

The student from Human Geography contributed her knowledge about city planning and planning tailored to a specific place or group. The focus relies on critical thinking and problem-solving. According to that, the student brought relevant theory and contributed to the research in the project process, and work on the final report and guide.

The student from International Environmental studies brought knowledge about sustainability and the challenges between private developers and the common paradigm in urban development. They brought the concept of a sustainable social arena as important as an environmentally sustainable physical construction.

Administration and leadership student contributed with her knowledge about project management, insight into public policies and administration, organizational structure, and how the municipalities work. From their discipline, they used their knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods, conducted desktop research on existing neighborhood houses in Oslo, and used their creativity when designing the guide, poster, and final report.

### Project barriers and lessons learned

The project could have been more proactive earlier on. The group spent too long deciding the outcome of the project and contacted the important stakeholder a little later than desired. This project relied on OBOS consent to create the guide, and therefore could not start until the group got the consent they wished for. Had the group started contacting the stakeholder earlier, there could have been more research and a proactive participation process, and more time to work on the guide.

The age group that was targeted for this project was a challenging group to reach. Handing out flyers and putting up posters worked on getting 33 answers on the survey results, however, there could have been more answers to impact the guide more. To reach out to this group, the group understood it needed a more active and attractive method to engage the young adults.



Another challenge that was faced with the first QR-code on the flyers was that it did not scan well due to color, and for Samsung phones, it did not work. The group had to then change the QR-code on the next flyers and posters to achieve the desired results. To overcome this challenge, the members tried the QR-code on different phones and realized the black color on the QR code works the best.

What important lessons came from the project?

- The project can change all the time, both in scope and specificity.
- Participation is a gradual process and people require time and information before they believe their opinions and requests have social value.
- Even though OBOS was far along in the planning process, the group still found a way to influence the Furuset Village project.
- Neighborhood houses are structures that hold the power to transform a community

What is still unknown?

- The initial predictions about low participation and inclusion from young adults in Furuset were revealed to be true based on the answers from our surveys. It is still unknown how the neighborhood house in Furuset will operate and whether it will cover the social needs that young adults expressed in the survey.

What questions are you left with now?

- How will this neighborhood house function when it is finished?
- An extra question in the survey to address gender would have helped to understand the relationship between interests, needs, and gender in Furuset. This way, the group would know for who the Yellow Hub is tailored for.

## Next steps and recommendations

After the creation of this guide, the steps OBOS should follow are initially to have the Furuset Village project built, which should begin in 2023. However, if the developers are interested in strengthening the work our team did, it is recommended to continue researching the local community and how the community can be used as social capital for the neighborhood house to succeed.

Once the housing project is built and functioning, the concrete implementations found in the guide can be executed.

It is also recommended to continue academic research regarding the district of Furuset as well as fieldwork on public spaces. The findings presented in the guide are based on 33 answers,

however there are many more adults living in Furuset that have a voice and that can contribute to the use and management of a neighborhood house.

More research about the operation of neighborhood houses and their influence on the local society is recommended as well. Studies that can quantify how and in which way a neighborhood house impacts a community can reveal and support the need for them in suburbs.

# Timeline of events



## September

**28th:** Project formation and start of the project

**30th:** Informed about C40 and Furuset Village



## October

**10th:** First meeting with Peter Austin. Introduction to Farah Humayun from Alna district.

**28th:** Meeting with Peter Austin and Farah Humayun (City hall).



## November

**4th:** First meeting with OBOS

**10th:** Flyers and posters at universities and Furuset

**11th:** Presentation at Designit. Visit Sagene samfunnshus

**14th:** Meeting with Peter and Farah

**15th:** New flyers and poster sent for printing

**17th:** Visit Samfunnshus Vest. Attend Øst kunstfestival at Furuset

**18th:** Follow-up meeting with OBOS again. Planned the launch day. More fieldwork at Furuset

**24th:** Meeting with activating youth at Sagene samfunnshus

**29th:** Meeting with Peter and Farah



## December

**5th:** Guide sent for printing

**7th:** Launch of the guide for OBOS

**12th:** Final showcase

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**Emilijana**, UX-designer at Designit

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Appendix



From an empty space to a happier place

**A guide to creating good neighborhood houses**

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