



SMART SHRINKING AS A DEVELOPMENT APPROACH FOR KERIMÄKI AND VALGA

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SMART SHRINKING

- Broad concept, hard to define
- Adaptation to depopulation
- *“Smart adaptation [shrinking] means planned, long-term, place-based adaptation and renewal in a socially, regionally, and economically sustainable way as the population and economy change.”* Kahila et.al. (2022)
- Long-term and systematic work on resilience to population and economic changes

OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

TWO CASE STUDIES

- Kerimäki: “Introduction”
 - Explore the concept of smart shrinking with broader view
 - How locals see the ongoing depopulation process
 - How the community could adjust to that process
- Valga: “Case study”
 - Very specific case
 - How to develop the town square?
 - How to increase its attractiveness for entrepreneurs and local citizens

FINNISH CASE STUDY – KERIMÄKI

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA

- Kerimäki has an area of 5,304 km². It is a former municipality in South Savo.
- It was merged into city of Savonlinna in 2013.
- Most of the former municipality was sparsely populated rural areas.
- In the center is the town called Kerimäki.

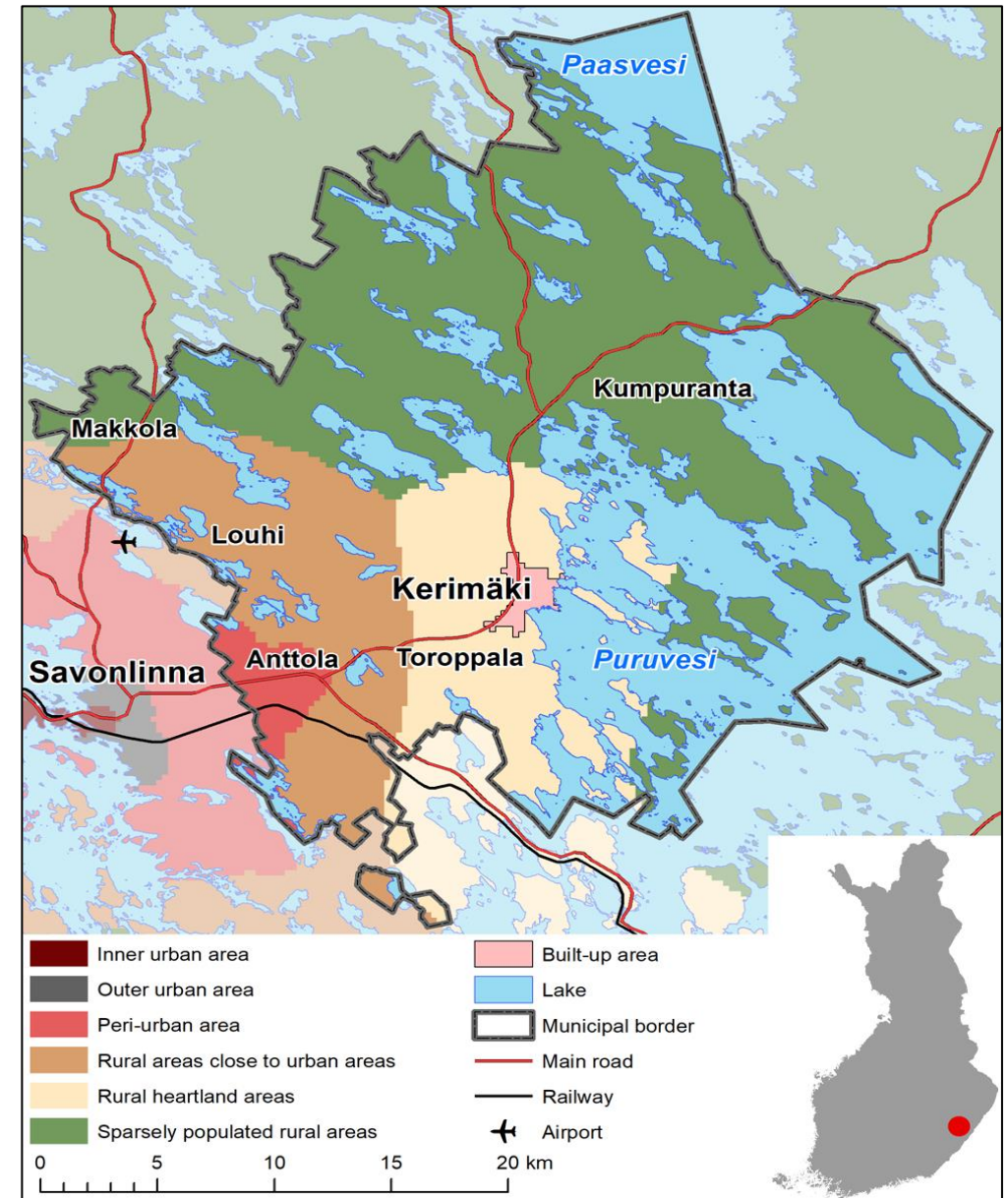


Figure 1. Map of Kerimäki municipality and prevalent urban-rural-typologies.

FINNISH CASE STUDY – KERIMÄKI

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA

- About 5 000 people living in the municipal area.
- Urbanization and stagnation.
- Decrease of almost 1 500 inhabitants (-23%).
- Severely aging population. 1/3 inhabitant is 65+.

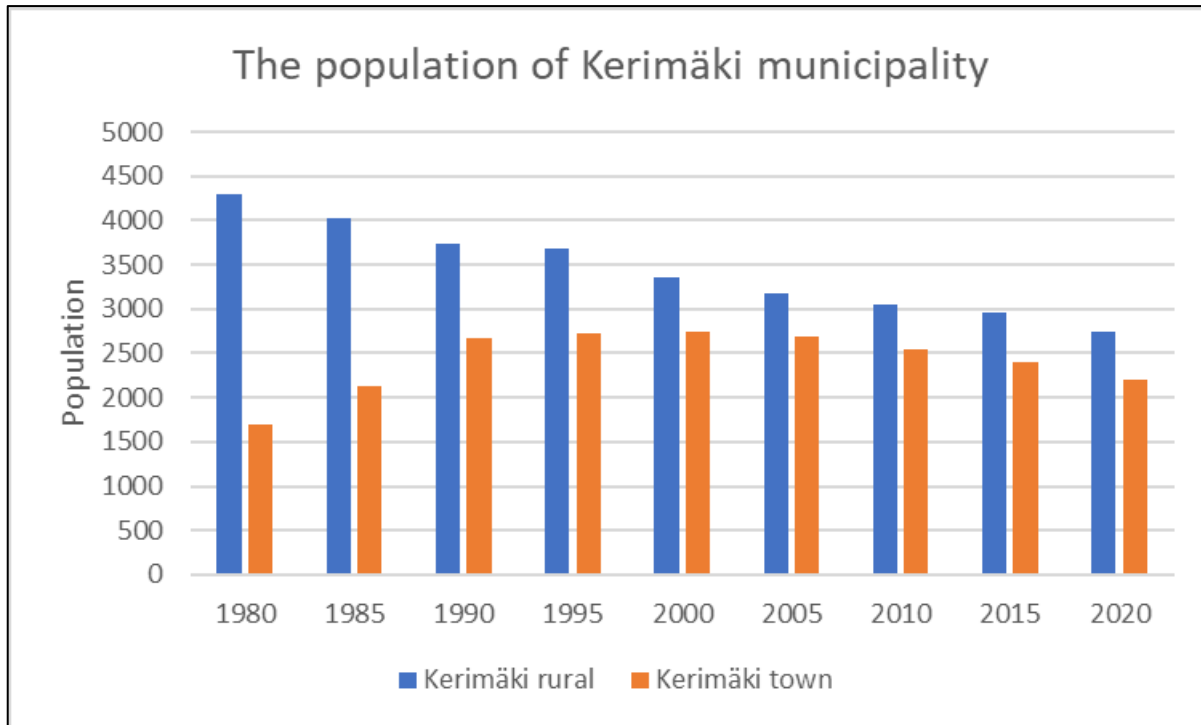


Figure 2. The population decline of Kerimäki municipality.

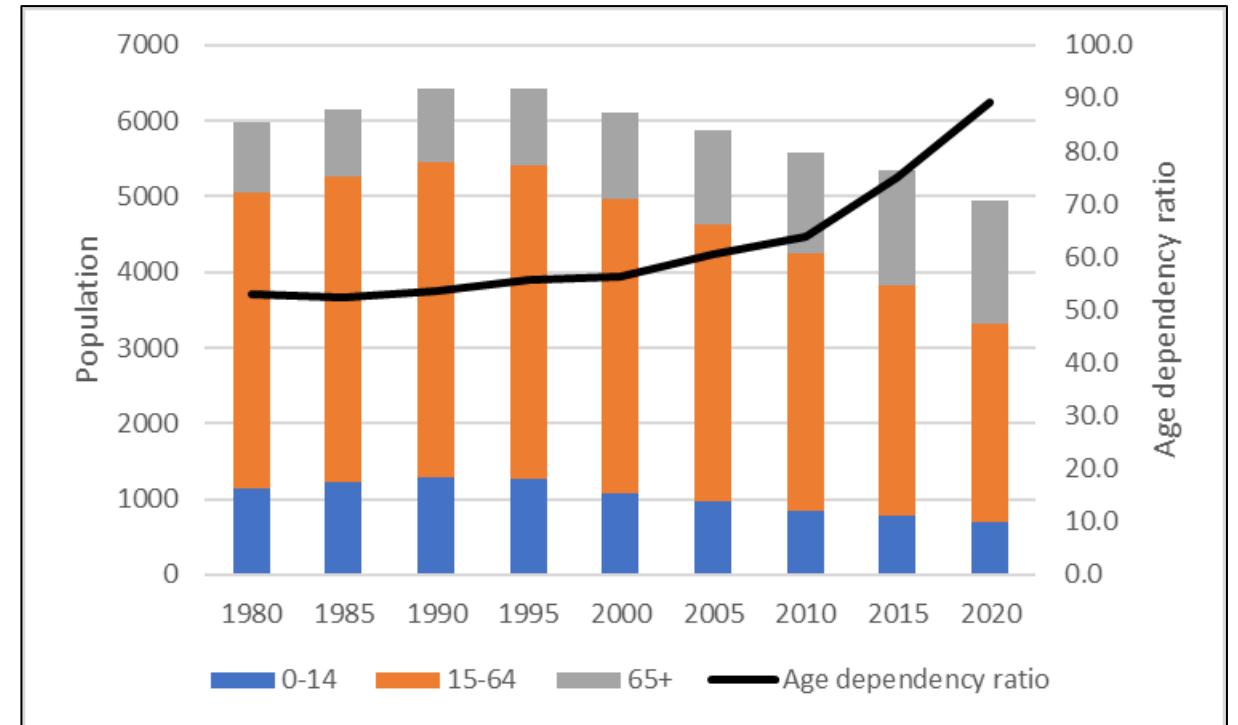


Figure 3. The ageing of Kerimäki population and rising age dependency.

FINNISH CASE STUDY – KERIMÄKI

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA

- The number of jobs in the town was relatively high until 2010 due to the influx on people from the countryside.

- Almost every third person working in public sector.
- A relatively large industry and primary sector.

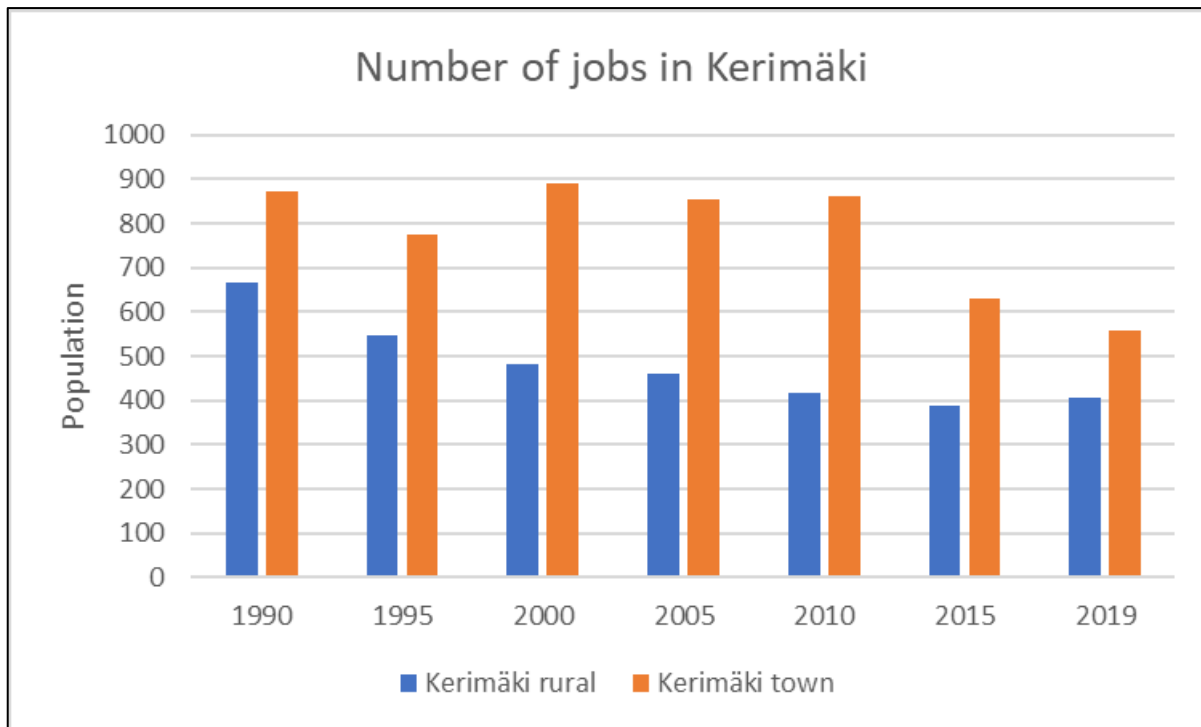


Figure 4. Number of jobs in Kerimäki

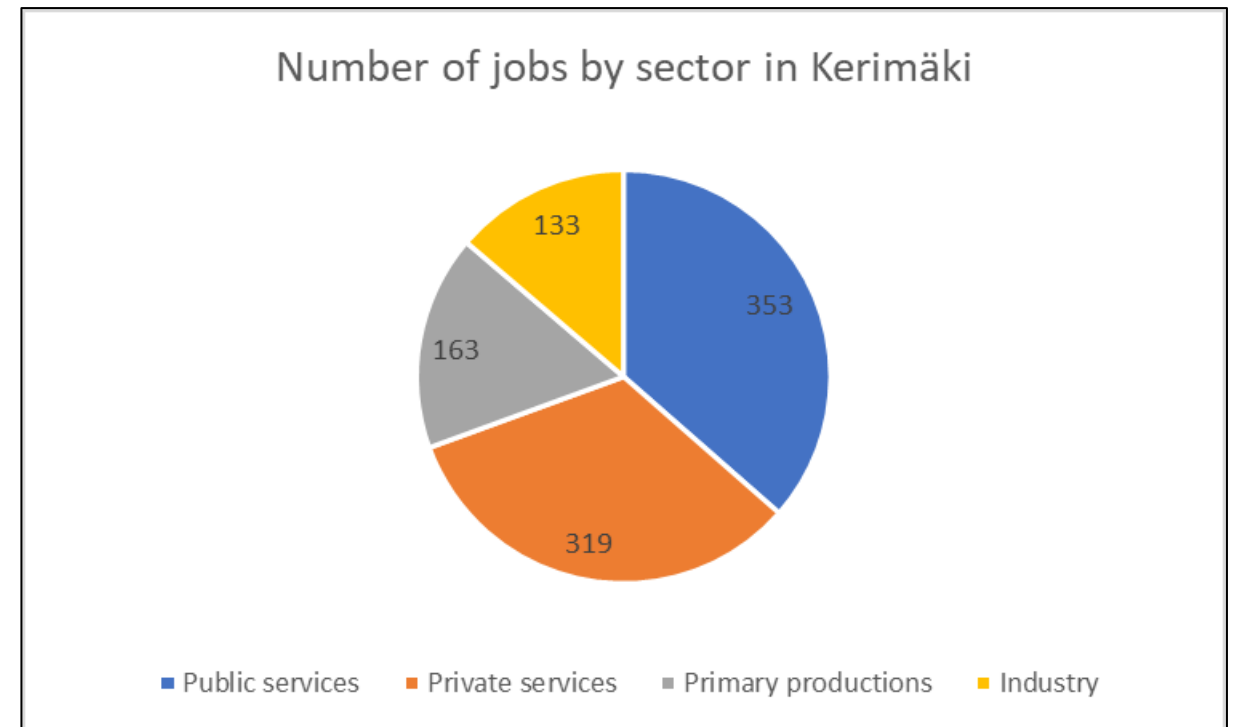


Figure 5. Number of jobs by sector in Kerimäki.

KERIMÄKI: KEY FINDINGS

ADAPTATION TO DEPOPULATION

- Depopulation clearly visible
 - Services, pupils, sport clubs, associations
 - Lack of labour force
- Seeking population growth is not realistic
 - Young power is still needed
- Focusing the few resources on holding force
 - Keep those who already live in the area, especially young
 - Well-being, good living environment
 - Job possibilities
 - Child and family friendly environment

KERIMÄKI: KEY FINDINGS

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

- Tourism has lots of unused potential
 - No accomodation
 - Keeping tourists longer, expanding the season
- Part time residents
 - Remote working possibilities
 - Bigger part of the community
- City has made big investments on infrastructure
 - Health care center, school, fire station, streets

KERIMÄKI: KEY FINDINGS

LOCAL DEMOCRACY

- Partnership tables
 - Good intention, hearing the locals
 - The Municipal Act
 - Poor execution
- Small development projects by locals
 - Very limited resources
 - Bitterness towards the city → forgotten, second class citizens
 - Big boost in local identity
 - Development projects despite the city → "Let's do it by ourselves!"

ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA

Population of Valga: 11 792 inhabitants

Population decrease:

2000-2007 by 1130 people (7.8 %)

2000-2017 by 2098 people (14.4 %)

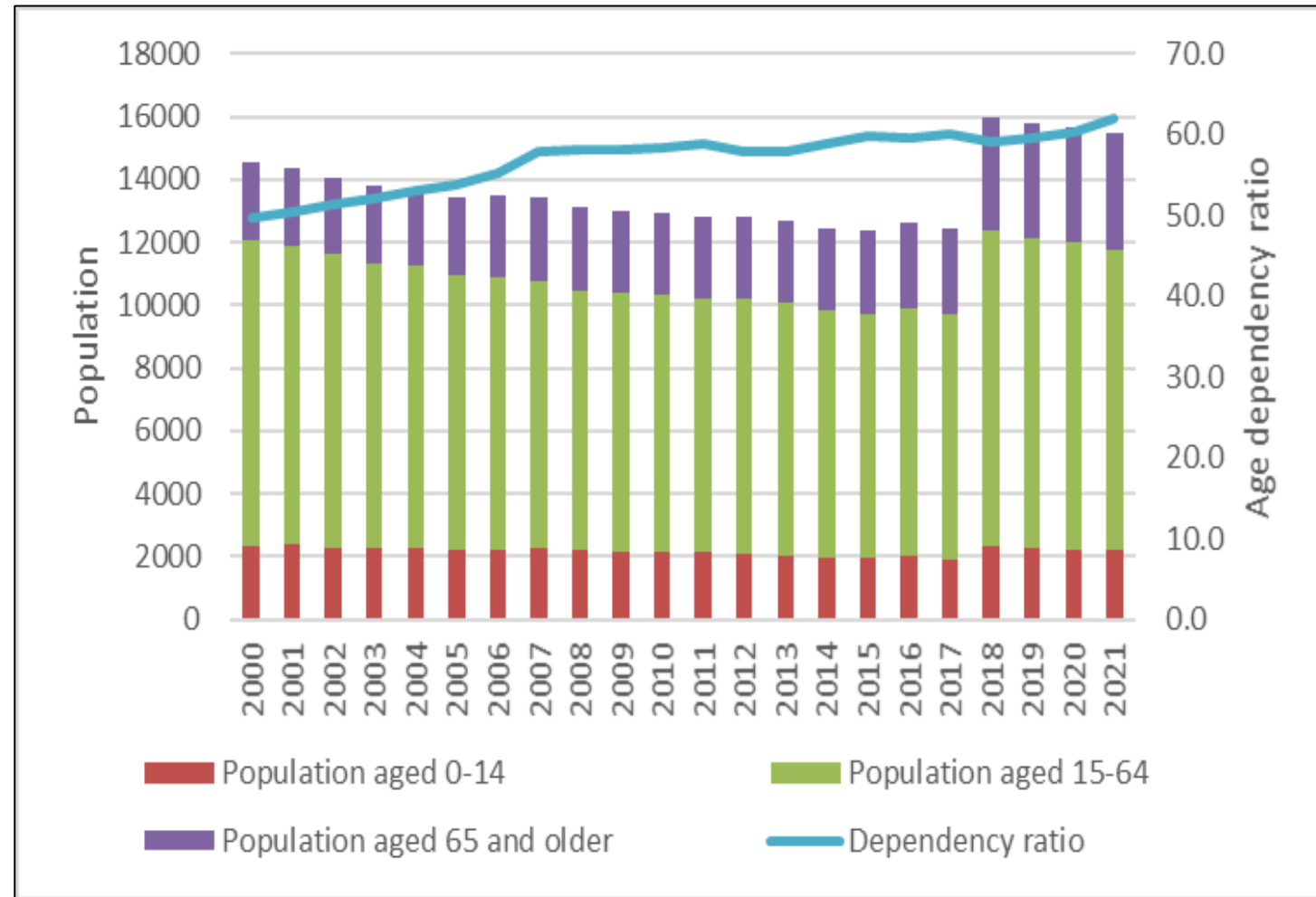


Figure 6. Dependency ratio in Valga (Data: Statistics Estonia; Author: Ieva Cvetkovaite, 2022)

ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA

Valga matches a typical population distribution model in Europe:

- Young age female population is slightly lower than male
- Old age (65 and older) female population is significantly higher than male

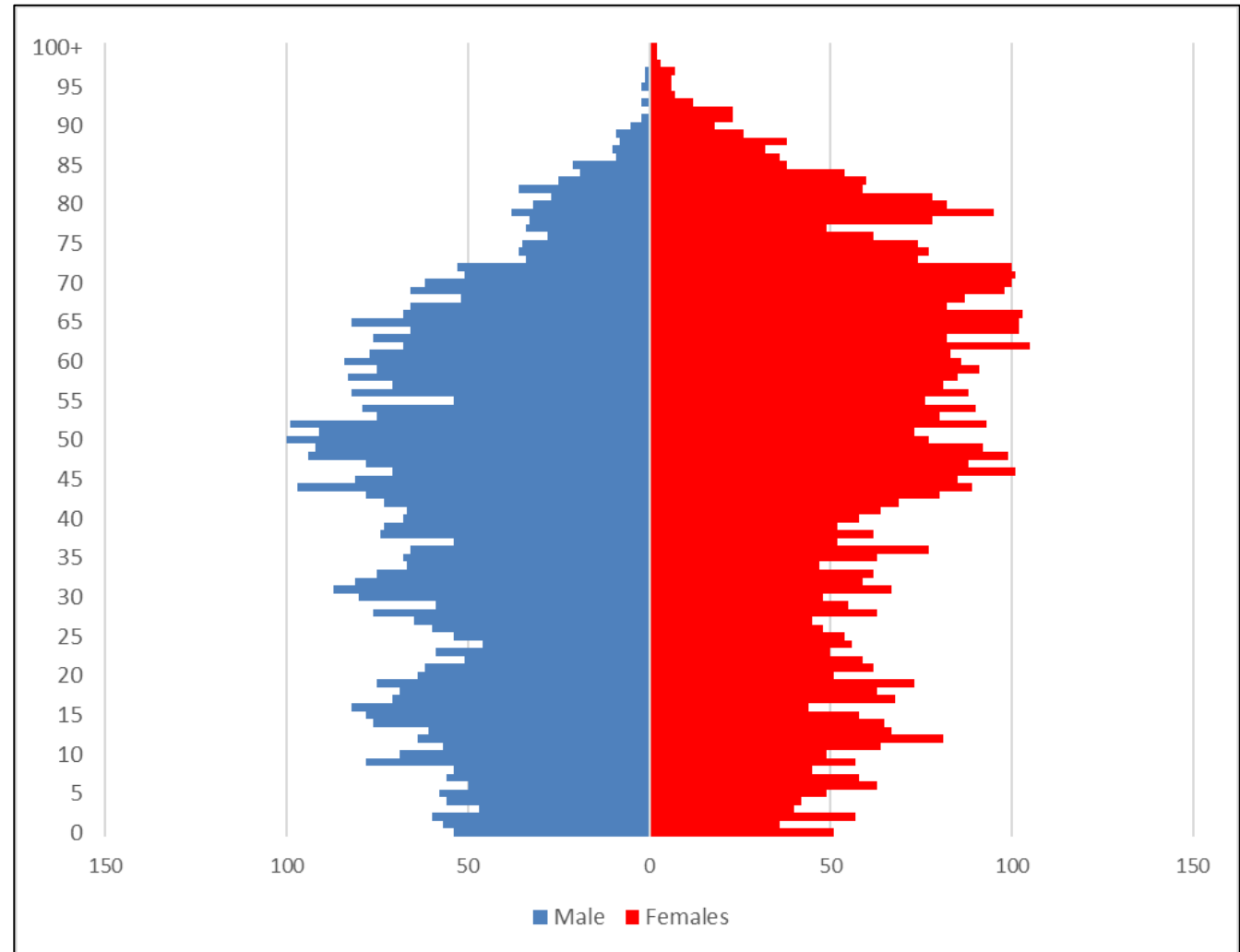


Figure 7. Population in Valga by age group in 2021 (Data: Statistics Estonia; Author: Ieva Cvetkovaitė, 2022)

ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA

Population projection

- Since 2020 to 2040 the population of Valga town should lower by **2830** inhabitants or **24 %**
- Youth and working age population will be drastically decreasing, causing inhabitants maintenance problems in Valga town

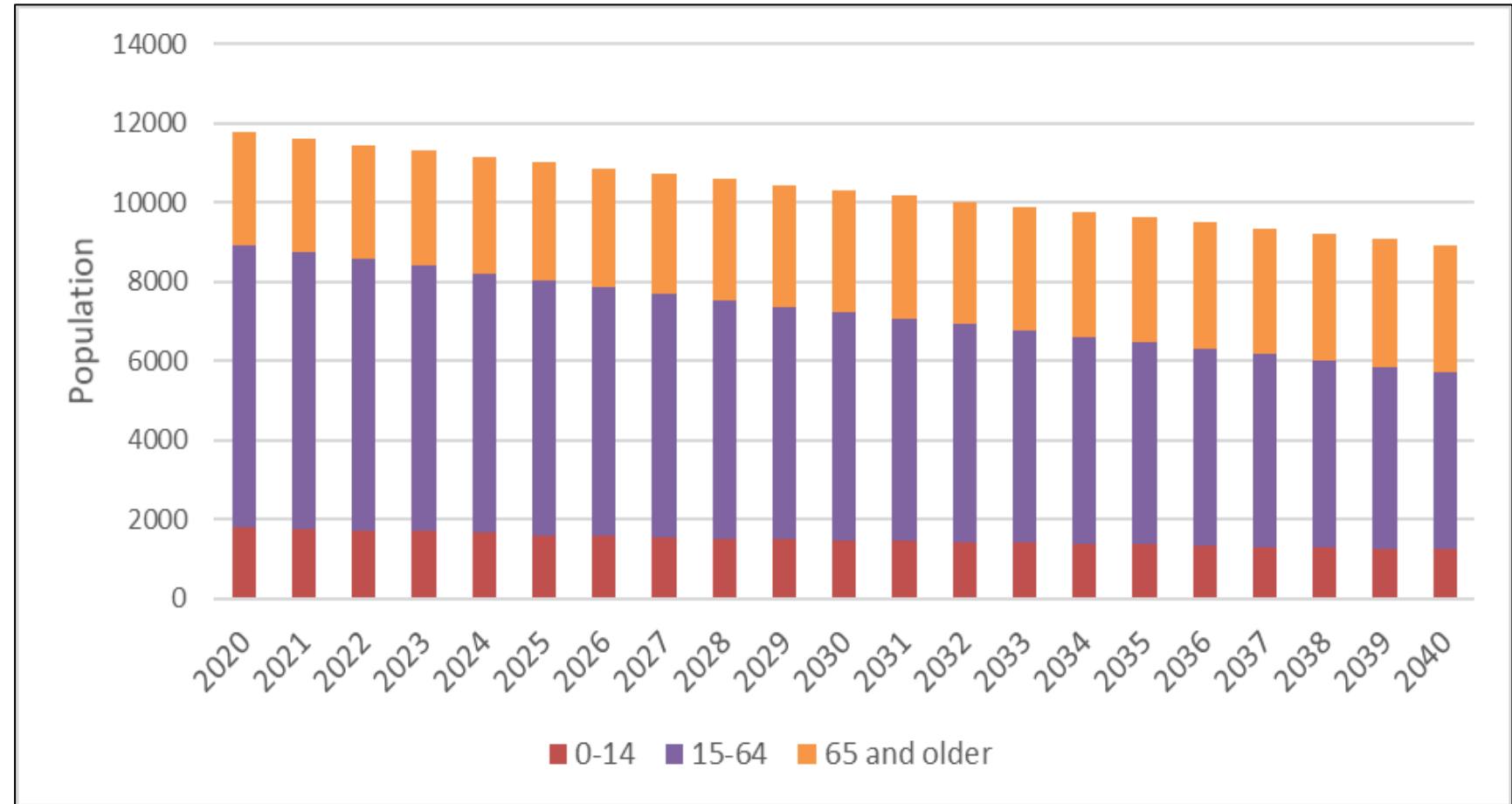


Figure 8. Population projection of Valga 2020-2040 (Data: Statistics Estonia; Author: Ieva Cvetkovaitė, 2022)

ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREA

- Valga is an important transit city crossed by important Latvia's and Estonia's roads which connects Tartu and Riga, also smaller towns in the Baltic states.
- Valga town has under development food processing, wood production, shoe, textile production industry and industrial areas in North and East part of the town.

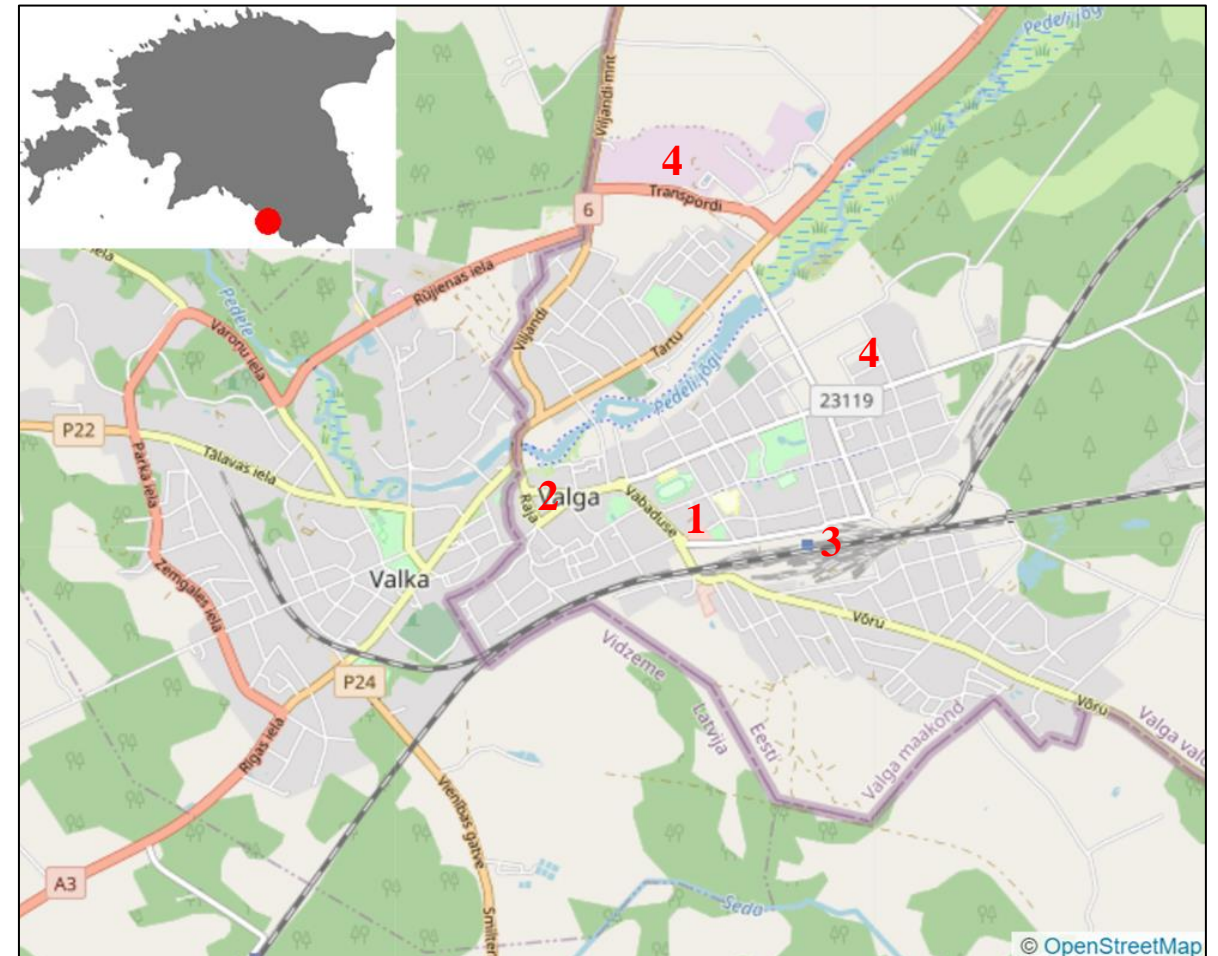


Figure 9. Map of Valga-Valka town and suburb areas. Economic centre of Valga (1), Valga's town hall (2), railway station (3), industrial area (4) (Open Street Map, 2022).

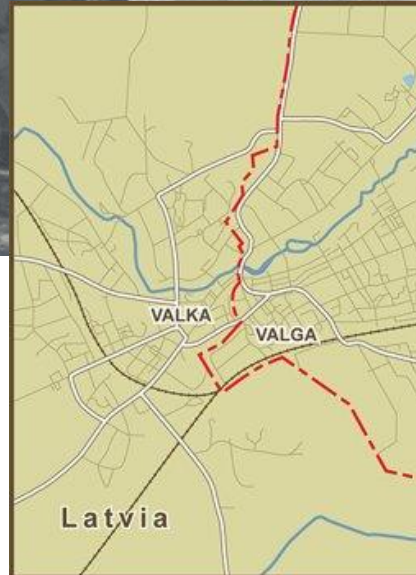
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DATA AND METHODOLOGY

- Interviews with key persons of the town
- Mini-interviews with locals

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PAST



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BEGINNINGS

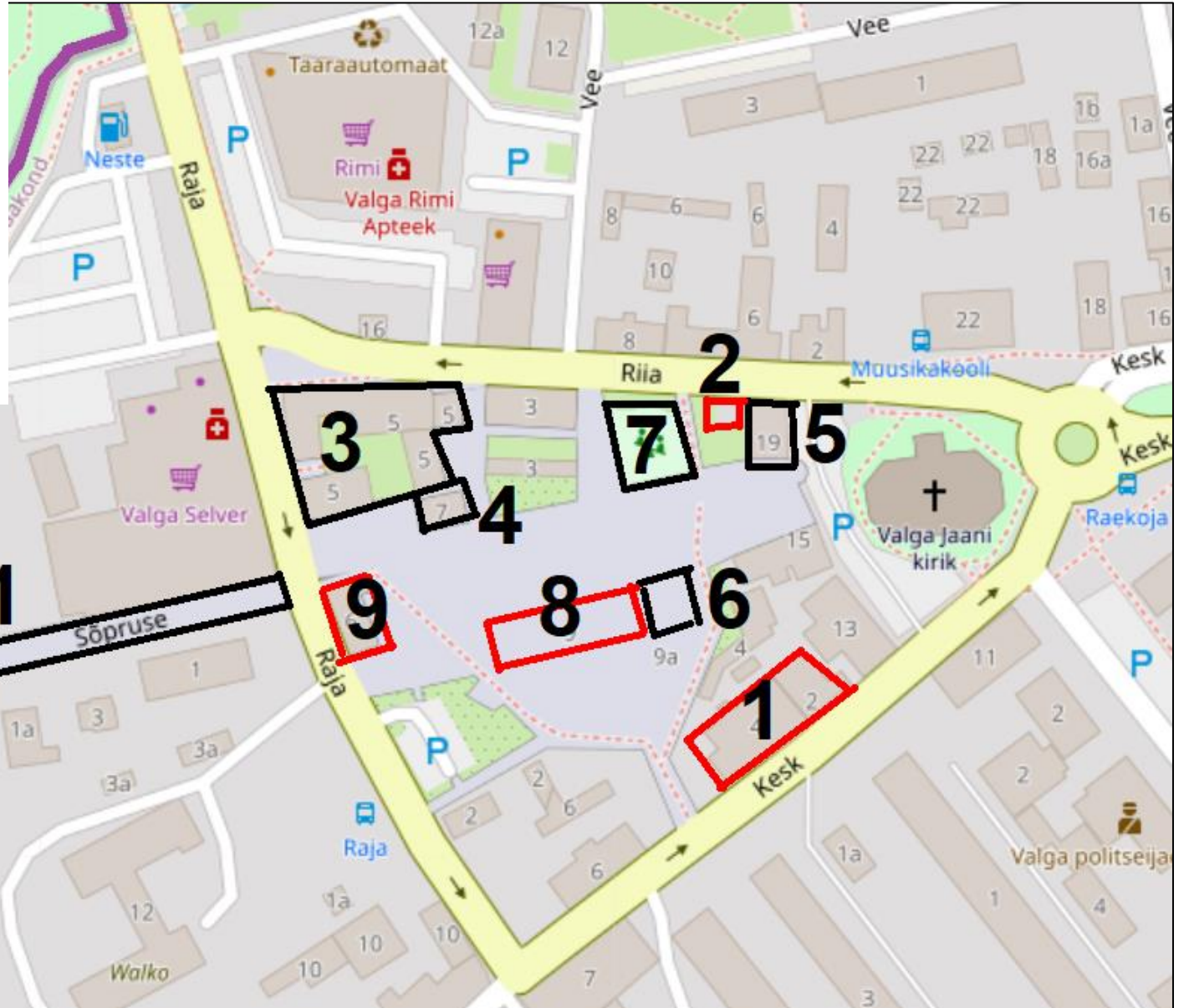
- Initially was built at its' current location.
- The economic zone moved towards new-built railway station.
- Cultural zone was renovated in 2018.



ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

THE TOWN SQUARE TODAY

Short term rental apartments (1), Puusepa Pizza (2), large city owned building complex (3), red building next to the complex (4), yellow building (5), open building (6), playground (7), white privately owned building (8), green privately owned building (9), Valka town square (10), and pedestrian zone connecting two squares (11).



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THE TOWN SQUARE TODAY



The town square before

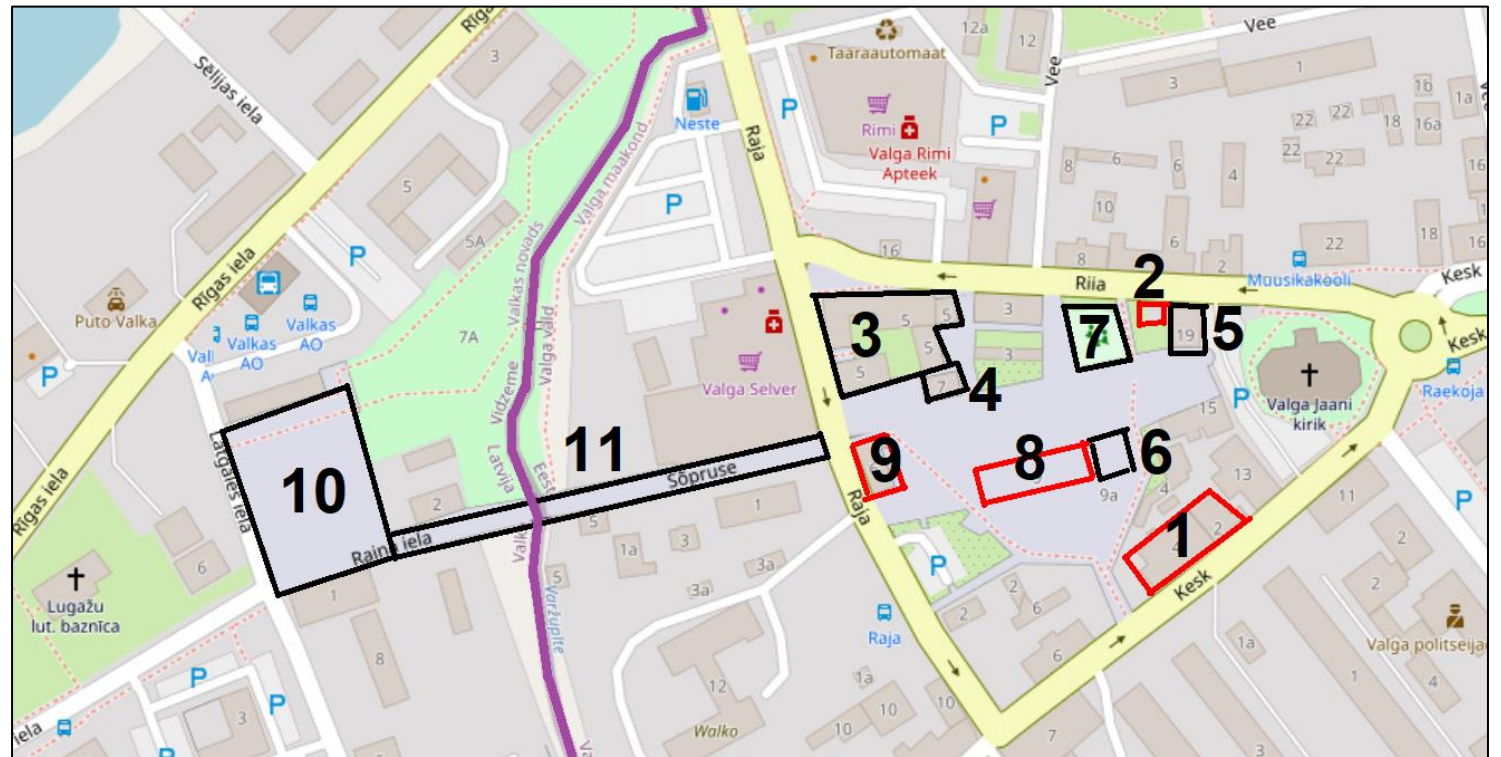


The town square after

ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

THE TOWN SQUARE TODAY - INTERVIEWS

- To find out more about the square we carried out interviews with:
 - The owner of the Puusepa Pizza
 - The owner of Johanna Café
 - The private owner of the buildings (8,9)
 - The culture specialist of Valga
- Puusepa Pizza is not an economic venture
- Even after the square was built many businesses open in the economic center:
 - Better accessibility
 - Closeness to the economic center
 - Decent buildings up for sale/rent
 - **The town square has none of the above**



ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

THE TOWN SQUARE TODAY - INTERVIEWS

- Private land owner:
 - There used to be a second hand shop in the white building
 - Business flow was cut with the construction of the square
 - No resources nor willpower to do anything with the buildings
 - The selling and buying of the complex
 - He wants the city to buy his buildings.
 - Strained relations with the city council
- Very few events are held here:
 - Border market
 - Christmas tree
 - Smaller weekend markets



ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

THE TOWN SQUARE IN THE FUTURE - INTERVIEWS

- Main thing that can be done with relatively low expense – move all events there
 - Reputation of the square
 - Flow of people
 - A perfect place for events
- Setting up the first café
 - Needs events
 - Housing – yellow building/ white building
 - Year round presence
- Town square or shared space?



ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

THE TOWN SQUARE IN THE FUTURE - INTERVIEWS

- Some smaller things that can be done:
 - Massive artwork related to Valga on the empty wall
 - Information tablets for the old buildings – postal service, oldest building in Valga and the prison
 - Ice cream stand near the playground
- The ball is in the city councils court:
 - Not everything that could be done has been done – events, small investments
 - Make the square economically viable for businesses
 - Give it a reputation of holding events

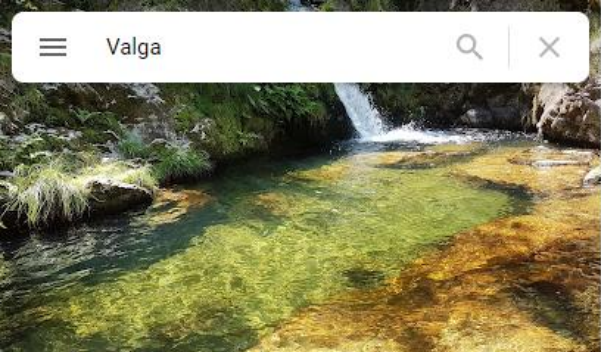


ESTONIAN CASE STUDY – VALGA

BENCHMARK CASE: JOENSUU MARKET SQUARE

- Ideas to Valga?
- Different premises
- Market square renovation 2017-2018
- Vapaudenpuisto renovation 2019
- New market hall 2022→
- Lessons / good practices
 1. Locality
 2. Versatility
 3. Private investments
 4. Participation





Valga
 36645
 Pontevedra
 Spain

Partly cloudy · 22°C
 9:32 PM

- Directions
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Hotels About pricing

- 

Casa da Torre
 4.8 ★
 2 stars
 €75
- 

Casa do Hórreo
 4.8 ★
 €38
- 

Pensión
 3.5 ★
 2 stars

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Photos



Restaurants Hotels Attractions Museums Transit Pharmacies ATMs

Map labels include: Milagros Gago, Farmacia Vanesa, Estrada Xeral, Rua Paredes, BARTON MAQUINARIA, SL, Electricidad Devesa S.L., AGENCIA TOUCEDA, N-550, Dúo Nueva Era, A Redonda, Bar Potel, Somos Publicidad Print shop, Gama e Hijos S.L., Talleres Refojo S.L., Plaza A, Bar Maneiro, Pastelería Caprichos Confectionery, Casa do Concello de Valga, Museo da Historia de Valga, C. Baixa, Plaza Z, Estrada de Baño, Casa Amil, Valga, Google.

