

EUROPAN 18 RE-SOURCING

TURKU (FI)

SCALES: S/S
LOCATION: VÄHÄHEIKKILÄ, TURKU
POPULATION: TURKU 198,000 / VÄHÄHEIKKILÄ 1,017 / THE COMPETITION SITE LESS THAN 20 INHAB.
REFLECTION SITE: 105 HA / **PROJECT SITE:** 11,4 HA
SITE PROPOSED BY: CITY OF TURKU,
ACTORS INVOLVED: CITY OF TURKU, PRIVATE PARTNERS
OWNERS OF THE SITE: CITY OF TURKU, PRIVATE OWNERS

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE

Despite being near the centre of Turku, Vähäheikkilä is known for its peaceful, green, residential environment. The area primarily consists of low-rise housing and small residential buildings, contributing to its tranquil, suburban feel. Although close to the city centre – some 30-40 minutes' walking distance – the site is a car-centric nodal point. This mixture of services, residential neighbourhoods, small-scale industries, schools, and parking lots, is also lacking a distinct identity. The competition site is surrounded by historical riverside areas, "veteran's houses", schools, a few apartment buildings, the Heikkilä garrison area, and green spaces. The seafront is within a 10-15 minutes' walking distance.

The Vähäheikkilä area transformed from agricultural land into a suburban worker settlement with around 200 tenant cottages by the early 20th century. Post-war the construction of individual houses for veterans took place, which still characterise the streetscape today. Vähäheikkilä experienced significant urbanisation during the 1960s and 1970s, with the addition of residential buildings, schools, and public services. Nevertheless, residents and a local residents' association have cherished the small-house character of the area.

The landscape of the surrounding areas is characterised by varying height differences. The nature includes rocky hills, pines, birches and other deciduous trees, as well as open meadows. In the middle of the small industry plots there's also a dense green area that consists of a decades old reservation for a possible new street, which is no longer necessary. Instead, better stormwater solutions and bike paths are needed in the area.



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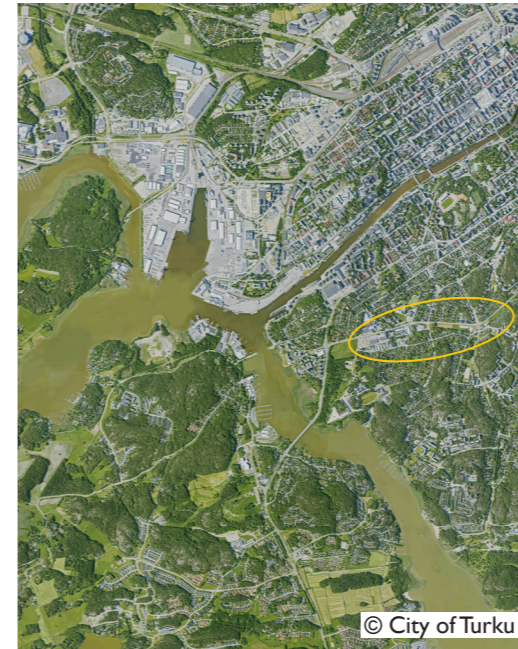
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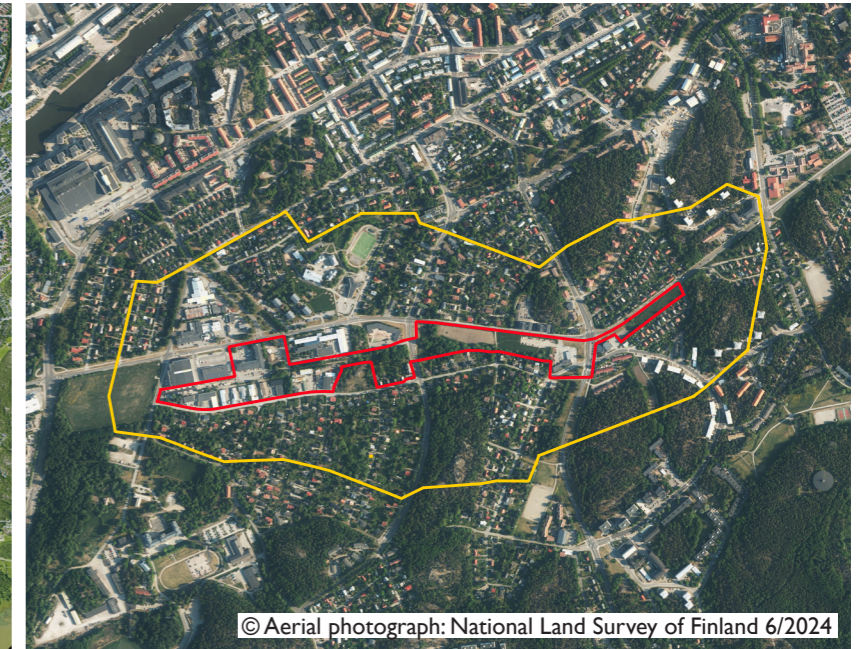
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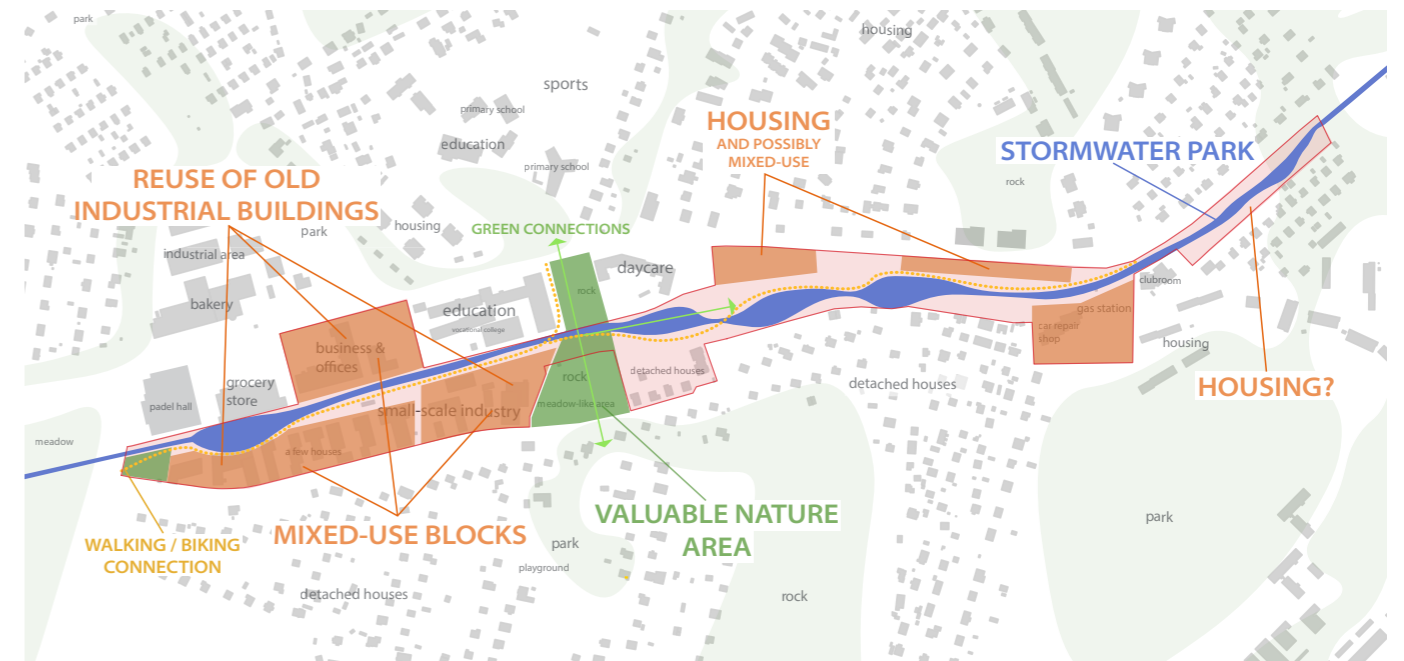
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QUESTIONS TO THE COMPETITORS

Vähäheikkilä is a historic yet evolving urban area. How can it be **better integrated with the surrounding neighbourhoods and the city centre**? How can the site **effectively integrate business, industry, education, and mixed housing in a sustainable way**?

The area currently lacks a cohesive urban structure. The site is at a busy car traffic intersection, so ensuring safety is essential. Considerations include managing driving speeds, minimising noise, and providing safe street crossings. The area should be **designed to favour walking, cycling, and public transport**. Vähäheikkiläntie Road is too narrow at certain points, so space must be reserved for widening the street if pedestrian and cycling routes are added on both sides.

As Turku prepares for climate change, ecological solutions are central. **Urban nature should be qualitatively improved**, with key considerations including **enhancing the biodiversity** of greenfield areas and protecting valuable meadows. **Solutions for stormwater management** should be implemented, with landscape architecture playing a crucial role.

What will new housing and services look like in this small-scale neighbourhood? How will **light industry interact with residential areas**, and what is **the future of the industrial halls in terms**

of resources and mixed use-housing? Can the halls be preserved or the structures reused? New **innovative circular economy ideas** are needed for the area in general. Additionally, how will the adjacent new residential Pihlajaniemi area influence the future of the site? The project should **balance suburban housing with a new, functional, and sustainable urban environment**. The competition site currently has approximately 25,000 square metres, with the goal of increasing it to 1.5 to 2 times that amount.

A comprehensive, holistic and open-minded approach is needed to develop this historically, ecologically, and culturally significant area, ensuring it serves as a cohesive space for housing, education, industry and employment. How could the site be **better connected to the garden-like single-family home area and the central city?** The competition site has already been studied extensively, but no progress has been made. Therefore, new and fresh ideas are needed from the young European18 competitors. **This competition does not aim for high density in the area but rather focuses on improving the quality of the site.**