



SCALES: L - urban + architecture
TEAM REPRESENTATIVE: urbanist / landscaper / architect
SITE FAMILY: IMPLANTING - Productive uses
LOCATION: Östercentrum, Visby
POPULATION: Visby: 23500 inhabitants
STRATEGIC SITE: 10 ha **PROJECT SITE:** 2 ha
SITE PROPOSED BY: Region Gotland
ACTORS INVOLVED: Region Gotland
OWNER(S) OF THE SITE: Region Gotland
COMMISSION AFTER COMPETITION: Urban studies, detailed development plan

THE SITE IN THE PRODUCTIVE CITY
Since the beginning of the 20th century, the city of Visby has expanded far beyond its historic city walls. Östercentrum (The East Centre) was developed between the 1950s and the 1990s at the eastern gate of the wall, accommodating shops, office spaces and parking lots. The study site encircles Östercentrum's main parking space and the commercial centre. The success of the commercial centre, as well as current restrictions in car usage and a shortage of parking spots inside the city walls, has generated a pressing demand for parking space in the area. The abundance of summer tourism transforms the neighbourhood into a vibrant district, while in low-season the open spaces leave the area with a desolate atmosphere. Östercentrum is the strategic node between the dense historic town and the scattered modern cityscape beyond. The main challenge is to develop the project site and study site areas so that the whole city can benefit from a new vitality within Östercentrum.

CITY STRATEGY

- The municipality aims to Östercentrum into a vital mixed-use area in the city centre. New housing and well-designed public spaces could facilitate the development of the city centre, and better connect it to the low-density city districts beyond.
- Public spaces, building heights and levels of densification need to be considered and regulated. Finding new solutions to parking spaces are vital for the survival of Östercentrum as a popular shopping district. Within the bigger plot, the red marked study site, the municipality is investigating the possibility of adding stories to existing buildings, in which new functions could be added.

European 15 - Visby (Sweden)



Map of Visby



SITE DEFINITION

The Hanseatic town of Visby was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1995. The study site borders the town at the Eastern Gate and contains the commercial centre of the city, with parking facilities serving both Östercentrum and the historic town (the World Heritage site). Close to the city wall and Österport (the Eastern Gate), 19th century buildings connect the narrow streets within the wall to the modern Östercentrum district. The street of Österväg is today a pedestrian zone with a small shopping mall adjacent to the large parking area. The commercial buildings are generally one-sided, with shops facing Österväg street, and loading zones with poorly designed facades facing the parking area.

PRODUCTION AND URBAN DIVERSITY

Östercentrum can become a harmonic transition, binding together the dense historic centre and the modern city, where the majority of the inhabitants live and work. The project aims to balance the urban with the suburban and the modern with the historic, creating diversity in equilibrium.

Östercentrum today is primarily active during the day. In order to inject activity, movement and vitality, it is important to consider the twenty-four-hour cycle as well as the seasonal differences and what they require from the small town of Visby. More housing in the area is essential for a dynamic populating of the emerging area. The project site also requires

new uses, meeting places, active ground floors and passages that can create new connections within the study site. The project site contains 500 parking spots today that need to be relocated.

Development on the project site should relate to the entire study site of Östercentrum and the immediate presence of the city wall. The competition proposals are encouraged to give concepts for the site which include both housing and additional uses that could generate and promote new and dynamic production within Östercentrum.

European 15 - Visby (Sweden)



The parking with the medieval city wall of Visby in the background

European 15 - Visby (Sweden)



The Hanseatic town of Visby, photo: Sara Appelgren



View from the project site towards Östercentrum (East Centre) shopping district



Östercentrum (East Centre) shopping district



View from the project site towards the city wall and the residential area