



# **VAASA - LIVING CITY MEETS THE SEA**

**LIVING CITIES / 2**

**REIMAGINING ARCHITECTURES  
BY CARING FOR THE INHABITED MILIEUS**

27.3.-30.7.2023



# Summary



Vaskiluoto island in the background, City Centre of Vaasa on the right. © Vaasan kaupuni / Antti Flander

## THE SITE'S PARTICULAR CHALLENGES WITH REGARDS THE THEME

The island of Vaskiluoto, where the competition site is located, is situated to the west of the Vaasa city centre. The island is connected to the mainland by an embankment in the east and a bridge in the south. Vaskiluoto is partly preserved in a near natural state, and partly heavily shaped by human action, especially in the major cargo, oil and passenger port areas. One third of the island's surface is in residential and other accommodational use, including a camping site, but there're very few inhabitants living on the island. The central location calls for developing Vaskiluoto as a unified part of the Vaasa urban area, and according to the new Vaskiluoto master plan, the competition site at tip of the northern peninsula of the island is assigned for housing.

The re-use of the sites of the existing camping area and a demolished hotel for this new housing area set amidst green and blue nature will offer unique opportunities for the creation of an attractive living environment, but it has to be done in a socially, culturally and ecologically sustainable way, and cherish the nature and shorelines of the northern peninsula. A sustainable lifestyle for the new residents must be enabled.

## THE SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE CITY

The competition calls for insightful urban design proposals for the residential areas, which are feasible and have potential in order to allow the prompt progress of detailed planning.

Versatile housing typologies are to be introduced on the project site. Diverse methods for both the implementation and production of the housing should be enabled.

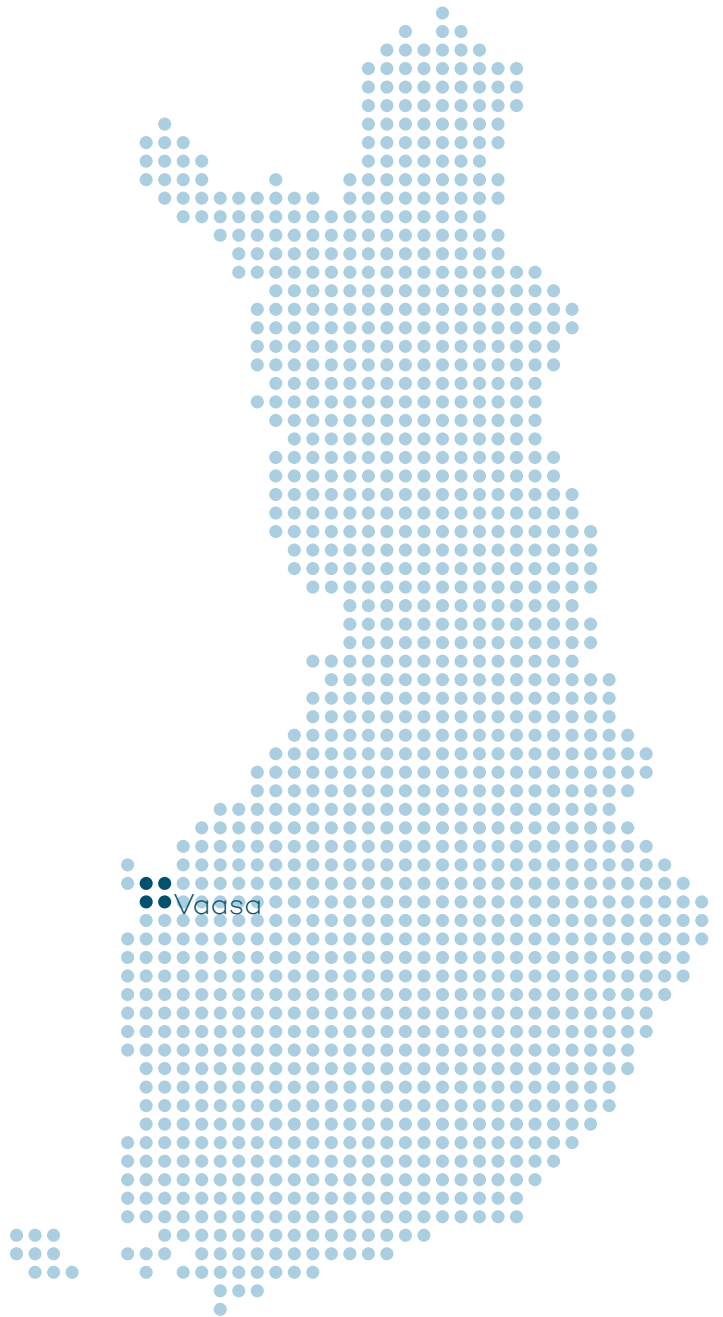
The identity of Vaskiluoto needs to be identified and strengthened.

Hopefully all these goals related to the theme and expectations would be reflected and enhanced in the urban, architectural and landscape architectural design solutions.

- **How to figure out a vision for a future, sustainable lifestyle for new residents?**
- **How to take advantage of the maritime location and activities?**
- **How to support the community of the new residential area from the very beginning?**
- **How to promote biking & walking as attractive modes of transportation?**
- **How to turn into an advantage the location's natural conditions: dark snowy winters? Springs and summers with a lot of sunshine and daylight? But also the increasing weather extremities.**

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# 0. / Competition information

## CALENDAR 2023

**27 March:** Launch of the competition on the Europan website and the opening date for registrations

**4 April:** Kickoff event in Helsinki 9:00-10:00, see [european.fi](https://european.fi)

**12 May:** Site visit, see [european.fi](https://european.fi)

**2 June:** Deadline for submitting questions on the sites and rules

**16 June:** Deadline for answers to the questions on the sites and rules

**30 July:** Deadline for submitting documents

**31 July:** Publication of a temporary listing of submitted projects on the Europan website

**4 August:** Publication of the definitive listing of submitted projects

**Aug./Sept.** All the entries to Finnish sites will be displayed anonymously after the first jury meeting on [www.european.fi](https://www.european.fi), dates TBA.

**4 December 2023:** Announcement of the results on [european-europe.eu](https://european-europe.eu) and [european.fi](https://european.fi)

**December 2023:** National prize-giving ceremony in Helsinki

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS / UPDATE OF MATERIAL

Please use and check the forum online: [european-europe.eu](https://european-europe.eu)

## COMPETITION RULES

[european-europe.eu](https://european-europe.eu)

## NATIONAL JURY

**Anssi Lassila (chairman),** Architect (SAFA), Professor of Contemporary Architecture, University of Oulu, OPEAA Office For Peripheral Architecture

**Elisa Lähde,** Professor of Landscape Architecture, Aalto University, Landscape Architect (MARK)

**Pia Kuusiniemi,** Landscape Architect (MARK), LOCI Landscape Architects Ltd, President of the Finnish Association of Landscape Architects

**Jonas Nordgren,** Architect MAA, SAR, Schauman & Nordgren Architects, Denmark

**Dan Mollgren,** Architect (SAFA), Head of City Planning, City of Porvoo

**Arto O. Salonen,** Professor of Sustainable Well-being, Department of Social Sciences, University of Eastern Finland

**Helena Wessberg,** Urban Planning Strategist, Architect SAR/MSA, City of Stockholm, Sweden.

The Site Representative, City Planning Director Päivi Korkealaakso, architect (SAFA), will have a voting right in the first jury meetings.

Competition secretary: Kirsti Rantanen, general secretary of Europan Suomi Finland

## SITE LOCATION

Vaskiluoto northern peninsula, Vaasa

## SITE FAMILY

Living Cities II: Think Tabula Non-Rasa – Designing new habitats towards a holistic environment.

## SITE PROPOSED BY

City of Vaasa

## SITE REPRESENTATIVE

Päivi Korkealaakso, Architect SAFA, City Planning Director, City of Vaasa

## TEAM REPRESENTATIVE

Architect, landscape architect, urban designer

## EXPECTED SKILLS OF THE TEAM

Competitors are strongly encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams of architects and landscape architects, as well as other professionals from relevant fields, such as, for example, engineering, art, sociology, geography, biology, environment and ecology.

## PRIZES

There will be a first prize of 12 000 € and a runner-up prize of 6 000 €. The jury can also award special mentions when deemed appropriate (no reward). According to a decree by the Finnish Ministry of Finance, the prizes for the Finnish Europan 17 competition paid in Finland are tax free ([www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2022/20221137](https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/alkup/2022/20221137))

## TYPE OF COMMUNICATION AFTER THE COMPETITION

Awarded teams will receive travel grants to attend the prize ceremony and a kick-off seminar in Finland, as well as the Europan International Forum of Results in autumn 2024; dates and places TBA.

## FURTHER MEASURES AFTER THE COMPETITION

The goal is to prepare the detailed plan on the basis of the winning entry of Europan 17, and to complete it by 2025. The intention of the City of Vaasa is to commission the winner(s) for the design of the pilot site(s) at the level of urban design. The competition is a design contest as specified in the Finnish Act on Public Procurement and Concession Contracts (1397/2016). When negotiating the follow-up commission, it must be ensured that the working group has sufficient expertise and competence at its disposal for the implementation phase of the project and that the design costs remain reasonable.



## USAGE RIGHTS OF THE COMPETITION ENTRIES

All material submitted to the organizers becomes their property, including reproduction rights and research purposes. The intellectual property rights will remain the exclusive property of the author(s) of the entries. The organizers reserve the right to publish all the projects submitted to them. Projects are exhibited or published under the names of their authors after the official announcement of results.

The commissioned designer and the City of Vaasa have the right to use the themes and ideas of other purchased proposals in accordance with the Finnish Copyright Act.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

[europan.fi](http://europan.fi), [europan-europe.eu](http://europan-europe.eu)

## ATTACHMENTS TO THE COMPETITION BRIEF

The competition documents consist of this brief and the following attachments:

- Base maps with competition area (dxf, pdf)
- 3D-model (dxf)
- Territorial map of Vaasa (dxf, pdf)
- Vaskiluoto Component Masterplan 2040 (dxf, pdf)
- Built structure of Vaskiluoto (dxf, pdf)
- Green area plan of Vaasa (Vaasa Masterplan 2030) (pdf)
- Landscape structure of Vaskiluoto and Vaasa City Centre (pdf)
- General plan of Vaskiluoto forest.(pdf)
  
- Aerial photos (jpg)
- Photos from the ground level (jpg)
  
- Vaskiluoto Component Masterplan 2040, summary (pdf)
  - Surveys
  - Cultural history and recommendations
  - Nature
  - Nature
  - Storm runoff waters
  - Traffic
  - Alternative walking and bicycle connections
  
- Video (3 min)

For more data and maps about different themes, see also:

Vaasa Map Service: <https://karttavaasa.fi/IMS/en/Map>



# 1./ Introduction



Housing & the sea on Vaskiluoto. © City Planning

## 1.1 COMPETITION TASK

Vaasa is a steadily growing city on the west coast of Finland. The goal of the competition is to conceive a new residential area on the island of Vaskiluoto, located adjacent to the city centre, where a rich urban fabric meets the surrounding nature and the sea. Competitors are asked to come up with a vision for a sustainable lifestyle for the future residents, one which would be attractive. The site already holds great potential because of its central location and the surrounding sea.

The competition project site consists of the plot of a demolished hotel and an existing camping area, together with adjacent areas to the east. The site's proximity to the sea should be promoted and strengthened both conceptually and visually in the proposals for the new residential area.

In addition to the other surrounding seashores, the reflection site covers the shoreline leading from the project area towards the city centre of Vaasa, and is home to several small yacht harbours and a guest harbour. New ideas that would support the solutions presented for the competition project site are welcome!

## 1.2 IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Detailed plans for the project area will be prepared in stages on the basis of the winning entry of European 17 and in collaboration with the winners. The goal is to have the detailed plan of the first phase completed within 2 years of the competition. Construction of the area will also proceed in phases.

## 1.3 THEME: LIVING CITIES II

European 17 continues to develop the theme Living Cities of the previous E16 session, while emphasising the need for a profound change in the manner of envisioning projects in a context of ecological transition. This transition entails a transformation in the ways of thinking about and imagining the city and architecture. The aim is to explore the regenerative capacities of living milieus amidst new architectural, urban and landscape ecologies that attempt to overcome the opposition between nature and culture and anthropocentrism. The climate emergency, overexploitation, pollution, inequality and iniquity – all these ills, upheavals and disorientations demand actions of “care” that address the coexistence and interrelationship of all the elements of the living world, and thus mandate a radical shift in paradigm. Sensitivity, responsibility, and creativity are aspects of care and of interest in other beings.

The Vaasa site is in the sub-group Living Cities – Think tabula non-rasa! together with the sites from Arendal (NO), Berlin (DE), Eivissa (ES), El Prat (ES), Kassel (DE), Kenniskwartie (NL), Ostmarka (NO), 't Zoet (NL), Waalwijk (NL) and Vienna (AT).

The coexistence of humans and non-human beings is all the more evident when the vulnerability of human cultures is linked to the one of biodiversity. The challenge today is to reintegrate living beings into the city, to reinforce biodiversity where it exists or to create it in urban situations. Considering the human inhabitants and the non-human beings that are settling in this environment – how can they cohabit? The goal is to design new habitats as holistic environments.

Read more at [european-europe.eu](https://european-europe.eu)



## 2. / Urban context



Aerial photo of Vaasa city centre, Vaskiluoto Island with the competition site showing on the background. © City of Vaasa, Mikael Matikainen

### 2.1 VAASA

The city of Vaasa is located on the west coast of Finland, at the narrowest point of the Gulf of Bothnia Sea. The Vaasa region has been an important trading place since the 14th century. Shipbuilding and trade, especially the tar trade, flourished in Vaasa during the 17th century and most of the inhabitants earned their living from it. The current city centre was established in its current place in the 1850s after the old wooden town was burned down. The new town plan was conceived by Swedish-born Finnish architect Carl Axel Setterberg in the Empire style, where the disastrous consequences of the fire were considered: the main streets in the new town comprised five broad avenues which divided the town into sections. Each block was divided by alleys. The old esplanades still characterise the Vaasa city centre of today.

Vaasa is embraced by a unique archipelago, of which the Kvarken area was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List as an extension of Sweden's High Coast 2006, and together these two areas form a unique geological area where post-glacial land uplift is still continuing, gradually reshaping local landscapes and seascapes. Every year the land area in the Vaasa region grows as new land emerges from the sea; that was also the reason why Vaasa was established in its current location in 1855, as the harbour of the old town had become too shallow for ships.

Vaasa has a university, and several important hubs and research centres for technology and the energy industry, and with many IT, software and energy-related companies having a presence in the area. The local port is one of the busiest in the country, and Vaasa is also a home to a number of industrial and manufacturing companies.

Today Vaasa is the 15th largest city in Finland, with 68,000 inhabitants. 67% of them speak Finnish, 23% Swedish and 9% other languages as their mother tongue. The number of residents in the city centre is approx. 15,000. The age structure of the city centre is dominated by the proportion of 20-39-year-olds.

The city is aiming for strong growth and a long-term population of 100 000. Attention is being paid to the fact that the public and private services work properly and that people feel comfortable and well. Companies are offered a skilled workforce, the opportunity to operate in a carbon-neutral manner and in an international environment. Vaasa aims to be a carbon neutral city by 2030, and is known for its advanced clean energy policies.

### 2.2 VASKILUOTO

The island of Vaskiluoto, where the competition site is located, is situated to the west of the Vaasa city centre. The island is connected to the mainland by an embankment in the east and a bridge in the south.

The activities on Vaskiluoto today are very diverse: one third of the area is in the use of industrial and port activities, though in the process of change; one third is in residential and accommodational use, including a camping site; and one third consists of nature and recreational areas for locals and other Vaasa residents, as well as tourists. The port of Vaasa, a thermal power plant, and business



Project site by yellow line, reflection site by red line, territorial scale by white, dotted line. © Maanmittauslaitos

activities related to logistics and small-scale industry are located in the western part of the island.

There are 245 inhabitants living on Vaskiluoto (2021), of which 5 live in the harbour area, 193 in the old Sugar Factory area and 56 in the mostly private villas in the northern peninsula area. The new land use is estimated to bring about 3 000 new jobs and 2 200 new inhabitants to Vaskiluoto by 2040.

Water traffic is the characteristic mode of transportation, and the harbour and marina functions play a central role in the area's identity. The distance between the coastlines of Sweden and Finland is only 70 km and a ferry from Vaasa to the Swedish city of Umeå takes only 3,5 hours.

Vaskiluoto's greatest values, in addition to its central location, is the proximity of the sea and its versatile nature.

The goal is to develop Vaskiluoto as a unified part of the Vaasa urban area. The diverse activities existing in the area will be safeguarded and their development needs taken into account. Because of the growing number of inhabitants, a sub-centre with some services, such as a grocery store and a kindergarten, are planned for the south-eastern part of the island, on the site of a former amusement park, next to the embankment.

## HISTORY AND BUILT HERITAGE

In the beginning of the 19th century, Vaskiluoto still consisted of three separate islands, which were later joined together. For a long time, there was only forest on the island, and since the 1880s some private villas, but at the end of the 19th century considerable

changes took place. Due to land uplift, the city council decided in 1886 to move the harbour to Vaskiluoto. The railway line built to Vaasa ten years earlier was extended to the harbour in 1893. The railway embankment leading to Vaskiluoto was widened for road use in 1910.

The Wasa Sugar factory, founded in 1897, can be considered the beginning of the island's industry. The sugar factory was a major employer in Vaasa, and after its establishment the number of residents in Vaskiluoto increased significantly. Apartment blocks built in the area have survived to this day; also, the factory buildings have been preserved as an industrial monument.

Oil port operations began in the area in 1903. Since then, the oil port and storage area has expanded considerably. Over the years, in addition to the city's own port operations, there has also been private docks built for several factories.

After the Second World War, Finland started to transform from a predominantly agrarian society into an increasingly industrial one, and people moved to cities. New industrial areas were built in Vaskiluoto. The need for energy was growing, and a power plant located on the western part of Vaskiluoto was completed in 1958; also dwellings for workers were built. A new power plant producing heat and electricity was completed in 1972 with a flue rising to the height of 150 metres. The Myrgrund bridge in the south of the island was completed in 1976.

The first sailing club – one of the oldest in Finland – was established on the eastern shoreline of Vaskiluoto in the beginning of the 20th century, and serves today as Vaasa's guest marina; the other yacht clubs in the area date from the 1920s and 1940s.





Vaskiluoto 1855, in an almost natural state consisting of three islands. @ Ostrobothnian Museum

In the 1920s, some old wooden villas were moved to the waterfront at the beginning of Niemeläntie Road, north of the embankment leading to the city centre.

In the 1970s the tip of the northern peninsula was reserved for use as a camping site, and a hotel was then built next to it. Another hotel was then built on the south-eastern waterfront, next to the embankment. Waterpark Tropiclandia was built next to this hotel in 1992. An amusement park was established a little further to the north in 1988, but it shut down in 2015 due to the eventual decline in the number of visitors. The amusement park has been in temporary use as a street art exhibition "Vasa Graffitilandia" and as a paintball park. The decision to demolish the structures of the former amusement park was finally made in the beginning of 2023.

Areal types of different functions have been well preserved. In several areas the building stock dates from the same time or forms a layered entity ranging from the end of the 19th century to the 2010s. The architecture is typical of similar areas, and is preserved in its original state, something even rare on the national level; e.g. in the sugar factory area, the railway station and the old private villas. The modern building stock dating from the 1950s-60s has a uniform look; e.g. around the sugar factory and the power plant area. Especially the cultural heritage and the evolution of the industrial and maritime activities still shape the identity of the area.

## HARBOUR AND WORKPLACES

The number of workplaces in Vaasa has increased by approximately 4,100 between 2000 and 2015. There was a total of 36,638 jobs in the city in 2015, of which 524 were located in Vaskiluoto. The number of jobs in Vaskiluoto has decreased by 285 between 2000 and 2015.

Today, a total of more than 100 companies operate in Vaskiluoto. The main source of employment in the area is the port and industry, as well as the other sectors that serve them. Vaskiluoto has great regional, national and international significance for the port and shipping. Between Vaasa and Umeå in Sweden runs the northernmost year-round sea route between two countries, which logistically connects to the sea, land and air transport networks of Northern Europe. The amount of cargo between the two has constantly increased.

The number of passengers between Vaasa and Umeå has also continuously increased in the 2010s, and in 2018 more than 210,000 passengers travelled by ferry. There are about 50 jobs in Vaskiluoto in accommodation and catering services.

A new integrated centre of research, product development and production in order to decarbonise the marine and energy sector is located in the western area of Vaskiluoto, adding 1 300 employees to the total number of workplaces.



Segelföreningen Sailing and yacht club pavilion, old post card



Sugar factory, old postcard



## SOCIETY AND INHABITANTS

In the 1970s, more than 800 inhabitants still lived in Vaskiluoto, but that number halved by the mid-1980s. The change was due to the closure of industry and new construction outside the city centre. The population trend has continued downwards even since then, and has decreased by a further 80 inhabitants in the 21st century. The reason for this development is, among other things, that no new residential buildings have been constructed in the area, and the area lacks practically all services for residents (See the next paragraph).

In regard to the population trends of the 21st century, a decrease in the number of youths and young adults is evident. The number of 40–64-year-olds and over 65-year-olds has remained at the same level.

During the preparation of the masterplan, also the possibilities of increasing new housing in Vaskiluoto was studied, and an internet poll and interactive workshop with the residents was held on the topic. Vaskiluoto and the liveable environment was analysed from various viewpoints, including safety. Besides the former amusement park area in the south and the sugar factory area in the west, the project site at the tip of the northern peninsula is assigned for housing.

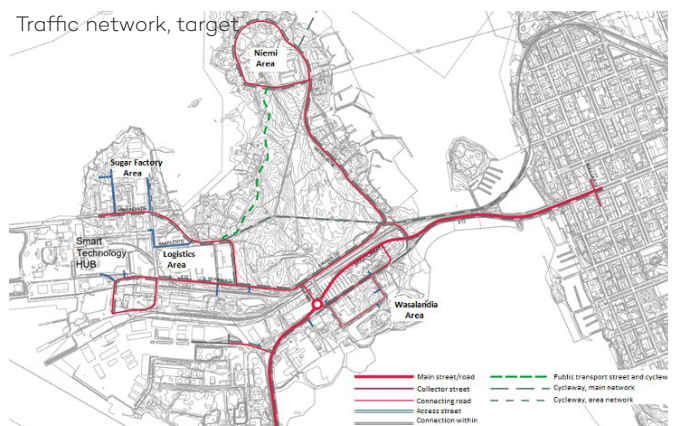
## SERVICES

After the demolition of the hotel Fenno in the northern peninsula, the only hotel today in Vaskiluoto is the Hotel Waskia on the south-eastern waterfront. On the site of the former amusement park there will also be a new sub-centre, with commercial services such as a grocery store and a kindergarten. Currently the nearest kindergartens and elementary schools operate in the city centre at a distance of 1,5 km from the eastern edge of Vaskiluoto.

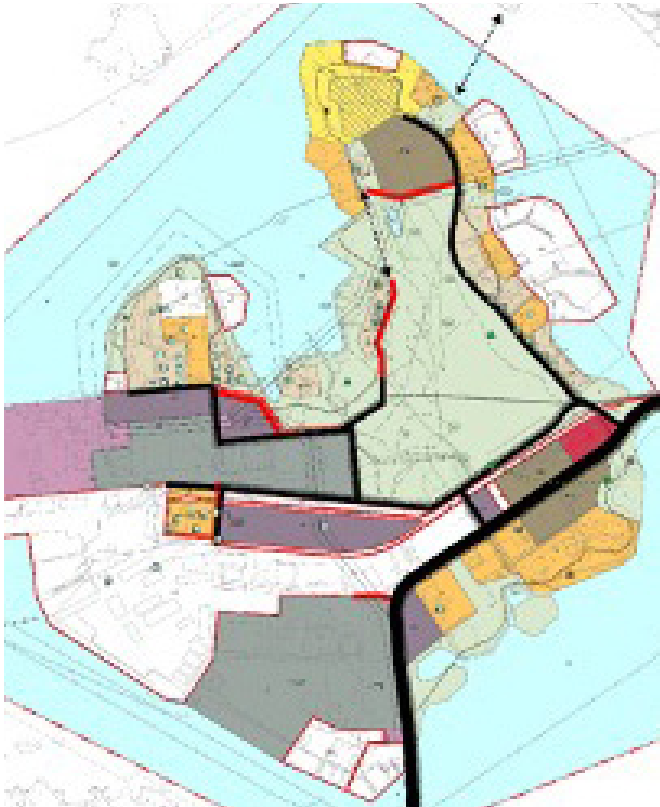
The island of Vaskiluoto also has several swimming beaches, a dog park, an adventure park (rope climbing) and a mini golf course, as well as several opportunities for playing beach volleyball, football, tennis and basketball. In the wintertime there are ski routes and an ice-skating rink. These activities are a part of the recreational services used by all inhabitants of Vaasa.

## TRAFFIC

The current transport network primarily serves the port and industry, and the changes in land use, especially an increase in housing, requires the development of the transport infrastructure in favour of walking and bicycling. The short distance from the city centre and the transformation of the bicycle and pedestrian traffic routes leading there into direct, high-quality and safe ones makes it possible for a large part of commuting traffic to be done on foot and by bike. Changes are currently being proposed to the bus routes, particularly those that run according to rush-hour timetables or are aligned with the timetables of passenger ferries, so that they pass through residential and workplace areas. A pedestrian and bicycle traffic connection from Palosaari to the northern tip of Vaskiluoto would increase cycling traffic instead of car traffic and also serve leisure-time mobility. Only freight trains operate on the Vaskiluoto railway line, on average one train per







Vaskiluoto master plan 2022: The goal of the master plan can be the development of Vaskiluoto as a unified area and as a part of the Vaasa city urban area by consolidating various interests and end-user goals in the area.

As an attachment to this brief, there's a Vaskiluoto Component Masterplan Map and its legend with plan symbols and regulations concerning the competition site, as well as the summary of the Component Masterplan Report with additional maps, surveys and photographs.

day and often less than that. In the future, uses of not only freight but also passenger traffic may be explored for the railway line.

## NATURE AND LANDSCAPE

The island of Vaskiluoto is very low-lying, being partly landfill. The unbuilt central part of Vaskiluoto comprises two ridges that act as a water divide, which direct the runoff waters into the sea and the wetland areas in the middle of the green areas. In the built-up areas, runoff water is directed to suitable discharge locations using stormwater pipelines.

Vaskiluoto's vegetation consists mainly of dry pine and spruce woodland, but the area also has humid coastal woodland. The uniform woodland area of the central part of the island and the connected shoreline zone of Kuulahti, which has been best preserved in its natural state, are the most valuable areas in terms of biodiversity. The flora of the area is in parts abundant.

Vaskiluoto's nesting bird species are diverse, including the most common forest species and with an abundance of species of waterfowl and shorebirds. There are also plenty of bats in the area, but their breeding or resting sites have not been observed. Bats have been protected in Finland since 1923.

## CLIMATE

The Finnish climate has four distinct seasons. In Vaasa the average temperature in July is +16-17°C and in February -5°C. Also, the differences in the amount of daylight between summer

and winter are great. In winter, darkness falls early (around 15:30), whereas in summer daylight lasts long into the night. Already by springtime there is plenty of light and indoor spaces might get a lot of heat load through the windows, especially, if there is no external protection.

Due to climate change, extremities such as heavier rains and stronger winds in the wintertime and hot, dry summers are to be expected in the future. The growing season of plants extends to a longer period, but the number of plant pests and diseases might increase.

## ZONING STATUS

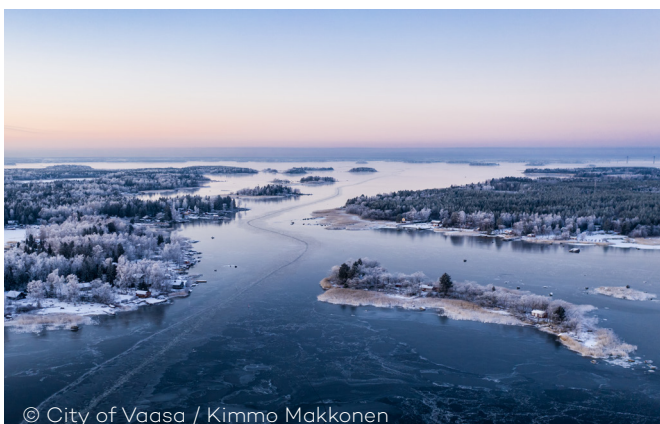
The new Vaskiluoto component master plan (2022) covers a total area of about 5 km<sup>2</sup>, of which about 2,5 km<sup>2</sup> is water. The goal of the planning is, among other things, to utilise the possibilities and potential of Vaskiluoto as a part of Vaasa and the Vaasa region, to create prerequisites for a district centre in Vaskiluoto as well as to reconcile various interests and uses in the area.

The versatile functions in the area, such as housing (both current and new), recreation, tourism, industry, workplaces, service as well as sea-port activity, should be secured at the same time as considering the development needs as the land use evolves. Prerequisites for a Vaskiluoto district centre also need to be created, and the identity of the island needs to be identified and strengthened.

Some of the most important starting points for the development of Vaskiluoto are the preservation of the forest and its natural values, the utilisation of the high development potential of Vaskiluoto, and increasing services to the area.

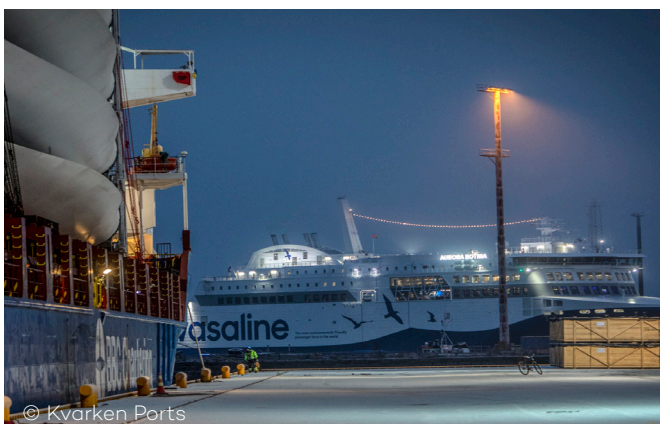


# Photos from Vaasa





# Photos from Vaskiluoto





# 3. / Site information



**BEACH**

Reflection Site

**CAMPING SITE**

reflection site

project site

**FORMER COAST  
GUARD AREA**

**SITE OF A  
DEMOLISHED HOTEL**

**MERENKYNTÄJÄT  
SMALL YACHT  
CLUB**

**NIEMELÄNTIE ROAD**

**MINIGOLF**

reflection site

**VAASA MOTOR  
BOAT CLUB**

**WASA SEGELFORENINGEN  
SAILING CLUB AND GUEST  
MARINA**





Boats in winter docking at Merenkyntäjät yacht club. © Juhani Hamberg

### 3.1 REFLECTION SITE

The reflection site consists of the highly prominent area of small yacht harbours and villas facing the Vaasa city centre, and the shore areas comprising the existing camping site on the very tip of the northern peninsula - except the former Coast Guard area as well as the adjacent forested area to the south-east of it, which are part of the project area.

The shores surrounding the camping site are owned by the city and the shoreline is open to the public. The beach area to the west is in the use of the camping site. There is also a sauna serving the campers.

#### THE BOAT CLUBS AND MARINAS

The home marina of the Wasa Segelförening yacht and sailing club, founded in 1878, has been on Vaskiluoto since 1907, and is the southernmost of the marinas located on the eastern shoreline. There are 180 berths in the marina, as well as guest boat berths. The Wasa Segelförening's well-preserved villa- and pavilion-type clubhouse is in a scenically key location, and it operates a restaurant during the summertime. The modern shoreline sauna building was built in the 1970s-80s. The colourful postmodernist facade, glazed surfaces and attention-grabbing building volume are typical of that time. The club also has, for instance, a boathouse in the area.

The Vaasa motorboat club, Vaasan moottorivenekerho, founded in 1947, is located next to the Wasa Segelförening. The club's marina has approximately 220 berths and winter docking for more than 100 boats, as well as a clubhouse. There is a boat fuelling station on the south side of the motorboat club marina.

The yacht and sailing club Vaasan Merenkyntäjät, founded in 1926, is the northernmost of the clubs located on the eastern shoreline. The

marina has space for around 175 boats. The buildings owned by the club are located on the plot between Niemeläntie road and the eastern shoreline, in a key scenic area (the highest point of the terrain and an open intersection area). The impressive and symbolic club building is clearly visible from the road. It has been preserved in a state close to its original neoclassical style of the 1920s. In the building, there is a restaurant space for hire as well as meeting and workshop spaces. The club's boathouses presumably date from the 1930s-40s and have been preserved in a near-original state (weatherboarding and balloon-frame structure). They give a good impression of the boating and club activities. The boat houses form an enclosed and sheltered yard. In addition, the club has its own shoreline sauna and tennis court.

Most of the land of the small yacht marinas, with their clubhouses and boat shelters, are privately owned, and there are no services open to the public on the waterfront except for one summer restaurant. In the wintertime the boats are moved up on to the shorefront to winterise, and there are no activities at the marinas.

#### VILLAS

The oldest buildings on the area and whole Vaskiluoto are the villas originally built for summer residencies. The row of villas in the beginning of Niemeläntie Road form an ensemble, which has an important role in the seascenery. One of the oldest villas, Villa Narciss, is located near the western shore of the peninsula next to the project site.

#### ADJACENT RECREATIONAL AND GREEN AREAS

The key recreational area in Vaskiluoto is the central forest area on the west side of the Niemeläntie road, on the southern side of the





A view of the beach of the camping site © City of Vaasa / Aarni Nikkola

project site. The area has been preserved nearly in a natural state, with a valley and a pond at the centre. The area is crossed by paths and outdoor routes, including a 2650-metre-long illuminated fitness track. There is also a rope climbing park and a mini golf course next to Niemeläntie road.

The forest area is the nearest and most important recreational area for those residents living in the Vaasa city centre. The forest areas are assigned for recreation in the Component Master plan.

## NATURE

Since the retreat of the edge of the continental ice sheet during the last ice age, especially strong land uplift in the Vaasa region has continued until the present day, currently lifting by about 8.5 mm per year. In the future, the land rise might be smaller because of the sea level rise caused by the climate change.

The difference between the highest and the lowest measured water level is more than two meters. These sea level variations are mainly caused by wind and air pressure or the ice conditions in winter. Due to flood risk, the lowest level of buildings and other structures exposed to water must be above +2.15 minimum. In Finland, the tide has an effect of only a few centimeters.

The waterfront areas of the private villas and small yacht marinas are mainly built-up. The shoreline around the project area has special fauna and flora adapted to grow on the land that has revealed from the sea.

## PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING PATHS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES AND THE ROAD NETWORK

Niemeläntie is the main road leading from Vaskiluoto to the city centre and is lined by harbours on one side and forest on the other side; it also serves as a bus route. Haukilammentie road leads to the old private villas and the sauna next to the beach in the west. A route for pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists goes around the peninsula.

In the Vaskiluoto master plan a need is stated for a new connection for pedestrians and bicyclists over the water between the northern part of Vaskiluoto and Palosaari, the district next to the city centre in the mainland. An ordinary bridge is not feasible as the sailing boats must be able to pass through the water area, but the connection could be made as, for example, a drawbridge with a lift, a cable car or ferry connection. These options would have very different impacts on water, bicycle and pedestrian traffic, the scenery, and building and operating costs.



Villa Narciss next to the project site. © Vaasan kaupunki, City Planning



## Photos from the reflection site







Site of the demolished hotel. © Vaasan kaupunki / City Planning

### 3.2 PROJECT SITE

The project site is located at the tip of the northern peninsula of the island of Vaskiluoto, and is within walking and biking distance (less than 3 km) from the city centre and its services as well as the workplace areas of the Vaskiluoto harbour and old sugar factory area. The pedestrian and bike connections to the mainland might improve if the preliminary idea of a new connection between the peninsula and the mainland is implemented.

The project site consists of the plot of a recently demolished hotel and its surroundings, a camping site, and an adjacent area to the east, where there is a harbour area formerly used by the Coast Guard at the northern end of Niemeläntie road, and a small forested area between the Coast Guard area and Merenkyntäjät yacht and sailing club.

In the Coast Guard area there is a two-storey former dormitory building from the 1950s-60s, some service buildings, and a fine wooden aeroplane hangar from the 1920s, now used as a leisure-time home. The dormitory has been preserved in its original state with just minor changes in appearance. Also, the hangar has been well preserved, with its original frame shape and appearance. As viewed from the sea, the hangar is centrally located in the seascape, as well as the storage building (of no special value).

The camping site dates from the 1970s. It comprises 31 small, modest cottages for hire as well as lawns for tents and places for camper vans. Besides the reception, there're also some basic services for the campers such as a café/pub, a shared kitchen, and spaces for laundry, toilets and showers. The cottages and other buildings have no special value. The now demolished hotel

also dated from the 1970s; its site is now totally empty, except for the trees which grew in its courtyard.

#### TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURE

The ridge in the middle of the northern peninsula rises to a height of 5 m above sea level. The most valuable forest areas are located outside the competition area. In the vicinity of the demolished hotel inside the project area and on the waterfront on the northeastern side there is mixed forest, with spruce, pine and birch. The camping area is more like a park: it has mainly deciduous trees, especially birches, growing on lawns and gravel surfaces, and with bushes separating the different sites for campers.

The waterfront of the former Coast Guard area is built.

#### SOIL AND ITS SUITABILITY FOR CONSTRUCTION

The buildability of the project site is good, as the ground consists mostly of a mixture of sand and moraine. On the site of the demolished hotel the bed rock extends to the surface. An underground parking solution excavated from the bedrock, would not be economically viable.

#### TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

A power line running from the power plant in the western part of Vaskiluoto to the city centre passes by the project area. The line is marked in the master plan. Water and sewage pipes extend to the project site.



## Photos from the project site





## 4. / Competition task



Project site by yellow line, reflection site by red. @ CC

### 4.1 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The re-use of the sites of the camping area and demolished hotel for a new housing area amidst green and blue nature will offer unique opportunities for the creation of an attractive living environment. The competition calls for insightful urban design proposals for these residential areas and shoreline development in the project area, where the environment should be holistic and promote the benevolent co-existence of all beings. Besides being safe and healthy, the living environment should take into consideration the needs of different lifestyles, age groups and cultural backgrounds in society: it should be encompassing and inclusive, and foster a community spirit. Possibilities for hands-on activities and self-expression should be created. The residents' own sustainable and ecological choices should be supported and facilitated. Also, a resilience towards society's changing needs should be considered.

The option of placing services and some housing on the former Coast Guard area next to the shoreline can also be studied. The other seashores and the southern forest area will be retained as common recreation and service areas, but ideas how to enhance the strategic and social connections between the project site and Vaasa City Centre are welcome.

Cultural sustainability requires urban and architectural solutions of a high quality, in line with the cultural heritage of Vaasa and Vaskiluoto, and able to withstand the test of time.

The amount of greenery should be maximised, stormwater managed effectively and the biodiversity of the environment should be promoted in all forms. These goals should be reflected and enhanced in the urban, architectural and landscape architectural design solutions.

### 4.2 DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### PUBLIC SPACES

Competitors are expected to create high-quality public urban spaces for recreation, play, and as a stage for social life for all the residents. The goal is to create a lively area with rich urban fabric. The spaces have to be functional, barrier-free, and act as a part of the local green network. The character and appearance of the important boundary area between the housing blocks and public park-like recreational areas should be studied and defined.

#### HOUSING

On the area marked AK2 in the Vaskiluoto Component Masterplan (the brown area on the map, see page 11 and the attachments of the competition brief), the goal is to place about 55,000 sq-m<sup>2</sup> (gross floor area) of housing for about 800 inhabitants. For the rest of the project site contestants are welcome to propose appropriate amount of housing, considering the goals and conditions of the competition.

Two-room apartments (i.e. a bedroom with a living room / kitchen or kitchenette) should include an extra storage space of 2 m<sup>2</sup>, and apartments with three rooms or more plus a kitchen should have an extra storage space of 3 m<sup>2</sup>. These storage rooms (+ corridors) are usually located on the ground floor or underground. Special attention should be paid to how housing is linked to outdoor greenery and other natural elements. Solutions have to be barrier-free.

The designs must make allowances for the Finnish climate and the differences between summertime and wintertime. To ensure good natural lighting conditions in the apartments also in the dark



The waterfront, former Coast Guard area on the left. © Vaasan kaupunki, City Planning

times, habitable rooms (i.e. rooms for living but not including the kitchen, bathroom and other service spaces) should be outside of the 45-degree angle of the nearest building (i.e. the angle drawn from the top of the opposite building; see 45-degree planning rule). Both shelter against the harsh winds from the sea and a pleasant microclimate should be created where possible.

## SHARED SPACES

2% of the floor area (gross m<sup>2</sup>) of the housing should be allocated as common spaces for residents. These spaces for saunas, gathering rooms, gyms, etc. can also be concentrated in separate locations to be shared by multiple apartment blocks, in order to have these resources in a more intense use. This could also allow for more diverse functions and higher-quality facilities. This applies also to courtyards.

In any case, the new residential area requires a central meeting place to support the community from the very beginning, as well as other communal spaces and structures. These functions could also include, for example, hubs for recycling, as well as for local food suppliers in order to promote short supply chains. Proposals for communal living are also welcome.

## GREENERY

By the green area system of Vaasa (2008) there are two types of green areas indicated in Vaskiluoto: coastal zone to be developed as a seaside park and island's central green recreational area. The general green area plan of Vaskiluoto forest (in attachments) showcases i.a. the trails, routes and tracks planned and to be connected with from the south of competition area.

Development towards healthier urban environment means it is necessary to find less maintenance acquiring natural and ecological solutions for green construction. Based on this ideal, it would be most natural for Vaasa to develop green areas into rocky

parks, forest parks, wetland parks, meadow parks and reed parks. The green network plan must support all sustainable solutions, and greenery should be interwoven into the new built areas. The adjacent nature and shorelines should be cherished while bringing more residents to the area.

Stormwater must be treated primarily at the place where it is formed, so that when entering the sea it would be as clean as possible. This means all properties should have a plan how to utilize, saturate, delay and redirect the stormwater which cannot be prevented.

Solutions should be seamlessly integrated into the other sustainability- and ecology-related concepts, e.g. when enhancing biodiversity and creating a favourable microclimate, as well as a pleasant, high-quality, multi-purpose green environment for both humans and non-humans. Also, sufficient space for handling snow in the wintertime should be reserved on the streets, courtyards, etc.

10 m<sup>2</sup> per dwelling must be allocated for a planted yard space on the plot designated for recreation, children's play and other common uses such as kitchen gardens. Alternatively, if adding and/or saving existing greenery as well as other natural elements in the courtyards, then these spaces can be smaller than the target size. Courtyard solutions should promote biodiversity, soil fertilisation and allow residents to keep kitchen gardens and composts, for example. Deck structures covering entire courtyard areas should be avoided. Wide access routes in the courtyards for fire engines are not needed if apartment blocks have an extra exit route staircase for residents.

## FORMER COAST GUARD AREA

New activities and development in line with the values of the old buildings, especially the aircraft hangar, should be studied. One third of the gross m<sup>2</sup> in the area can be allocated for housing.

The need for the new access connection to Palosaari on the mainland should be taken into account and located either on this





Phasing of the project site in three stages. © City of Vaasa.

site or next to it (see the Component Plan). Otherwise the forested area next to the area is assigned for recreation.

## TRAFFIC

The traffic network must be developed to meet the needs of the new residential area, and especially biking and walking should be promoted as attractive modes of transportation by making these routes safe, effortless and pleasant.

The main road, Niemeläntie, is to be continued to make a loop. The loop is planned to be connected to a public transportation route in the west. The main road and its loop will include bike routes. On the project site, a landing place for a (ferry) connection over the water towards Palosaari on the mainland should be integrated into the proposal.

Also, the closeness of the city centre and the flat topography make biking easier and allow for an urban lifestyle with fewer cars. Shared cars and joint arrangements for parking can be studied in the proposals. The parking norm for housing is 1 car place / 100 m<sup>2</sup>. Plenty of good quality and easy access storage facilities for bikes, including cargo cycles, are to be presented (2 bike places / 30 m<sup>2</sup> of dwelling area), half of which must be located in spaces protected from the weather. Construction of extensive parking lots is to be avoided.

## PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

Due consideration should be given to the implementation schedule and phasing. The plan should enable the construction of housing units, green areas, outdoor areas as well as the route and street

networks in three major stages. In the first phase, the area of the demolished hotel shall be built (2030's-). The second phase will extend also on to a small part of the existing camping area, and competitors can propose arrangements for how especially the edge zone between the housing and the camping areas is to be treated, and these functions can co-exist, as the third phase will be implemented only if/when a new location for the camping site is found. Also, some interim functions and/or common services for both residents and camping site visitors could be proposed. The former Coast Guard area will be developed in accordance with a schedule mutually determined with the the site occupant.

## TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

The electricity, district heating and sewer networks are available near the project site. Although the greatest potential yield of the solar panels is during the summer months, the period between November and April still provides for approximately 25% of the entire year's total production. The optimal installation angle of solar panels in Finland is around 35-45 degrees, albeit the deviation of 15 degrees from the optimum reduces production only some 5%. Besides solar panels, also solar thermal collectors and greenery on roofs can be studied. Also, the thermal wells can be drilled into the ground and seawater used for district cooling of the buildings.

The use of wood must be enabled in the building construction, with the floor-to-floor height being 3.2 m at minimum. With regard to all construction, it is important to consider entire lifecycles.

It's desirable, that the brand of Vaasa as the Energy Capital is shown in the technical solutions.

## 5. / Evaluation criteria

### SERVICES

Public services such as day-care centres or schools are not planned for the competition area. Some new private services for the small yacht harbours on the reflection site, which would support their activities, can be suggested. New services may also be related to physical exercise and sports, such as rowing and canoeing in the summer.

### THE REFLECTION SITE

Competors are welcome to propose ideas to the reflection site, that support their solutions on the project site.

The seashores around the project site shall be kept in public use, and housing construction may not extend towards them. Instead, the seashores are to be further developed into attractive walking and recreational areas. Infills and heavy structures by the shoreline are to be avoided.

During the final phase of the implementation of the project area, the beach area can be developed for common use, too.

The housing may not extend to the adjacent forest either. The valuable villa Narciss near the western shorearea and the beach has to be taken into account when conceiving the new residential area on the project site.

In the assessment of the competition entries, special attention will be paid to the overall concept and the identity it creates for the northern peninsula of Vaskiluoto.

### KEY EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE:

- The overall concept and its relationship with the surroundings, natural conditions and local identity
- The quality of public spaces (routes, open areas, recreational areas, green areas)
- The quality and attractiveness of the housing solutions in line with the sustainable lifestyles of the future inhabitants
- Other concepts of sustainability, the integration of the living spheres of humans and non-humans
- The feasibility and potential of the proposal to allow for the prompt progress of detailed planning

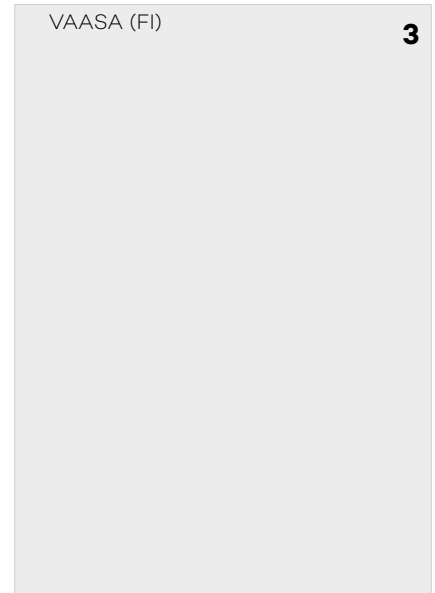
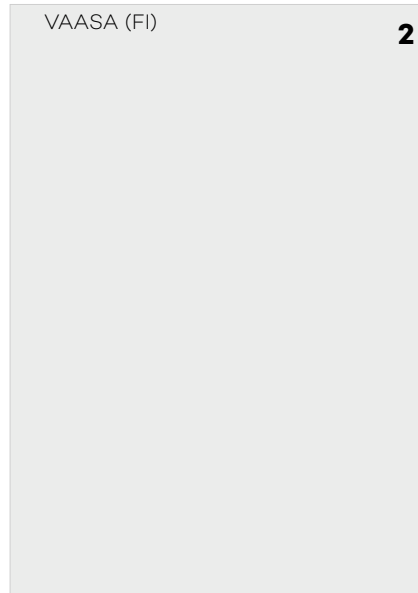
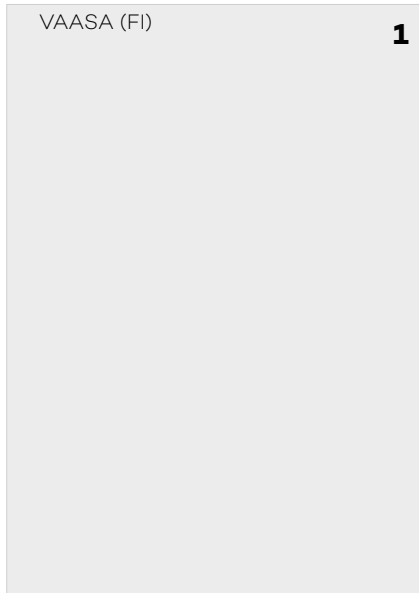
The overall design solution of the competition proposal is more important than the faultlessness of individual details.

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## 6. / Required drawings



### ON THREE VERTICAL A1-SIZED BOARDS:

#### SITE PLAN OF THE PROJECT AREA 1:2000

- Show buildings (with transparent shadows in a 45-degree angle), traffic areas and other routes, parking solutions, vegetation types and courtyard layouts
- Show connections to the surroundings (reflection site)
- Indicate quantities: the number of storeys of the buildings, floor areas (gross m<sup>2</sup>), and the number of parking places.
- Indicate the ground heights (+ x.x from the sea level)
- Show section marks

#### TWO SECTIONS OF THE AREA 1:1000

- Show the buildings, the number of storeys of the buildings, traffic areas, shore areas, and trees
- Indicate the ground heights (+ x.x from the sea level)
- Longitudinal and cross section

#### DRAWINGS OF TYPICAL HOUSING BLOCK(S) / HOUSING TYPOLOGIES 1:500

- Schematic floor plans, sections, and elevations that are central to the competition proposal
- Show connections between the dwellings and nature
- Ground floors and adjacent outdoor spaces of central area(s) on the phase 1 area of the project site

#### DIAGRAMS

- The most important urban, landscaping and housing ideas of the competition proposal
- The functional principles of the green and recreational areas, both public and private
- The principles of biodiversity
- Traffic network and parking; also the cycling and pedestrian routes
- Phasing of the implementation in three stages

#### TWO PERSPECTIVE VIEWS ILLUSTRATING THE DESIGN SOLUTION

- 1 perspective from the ground level illustrating interesting public space (from the first stage of development)
- 1 embedded aerial illustration of the project area (on the photograph FI-VAASA-PS-AP2.jpg)

#### DESCRIPTION TEXT

- Description of the proposal's main ideas and the concept of the holistic environment

These are the minimum requirements for the three panels. The contestants are encouraged to present other material to illustrate and clarify their proposal.

In addition to the three panels, for communication purpose the submission shall consist of:

- 1 illustrated description text, max. 6 x A4, pdf -format
- 2 images, jpeg -format / 2000px x 3000px
- a short text.

No extra panels can be presented; only the three panels will be accepted for the evaluation.

**All material shall be downloaded to Europeans's server in digital format. See instructions at: [www.europan-europe.eu](http://www.europan-europe.eu)**

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# VAASA (FI)

2

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