

Somewhere over the RINGBO

Sustainable development only makes sense if it fosters human happiness.

The root cause of climate change is not the water crisis or environmental aggression, but rather the model of civilization we have adopted. It is essential to reevaluate our way of living. Architecture possesses the power and responsibility to shape a better, healthier, and more beautiful everyday life. We must urgently seek solutions and embrace a new emergent urban culture.

The challenges before us are immense, and the true crisis is political, not ecological. Our purpose on this planet is to find happiness, and development should prioritize human well-being: nurturing our love for Earth, fostering meaningful human relationships, caring for our children, and cherishing friendships while ensuring access to basic necessities for all, and preserving these opportunities for future generations. As happiness is our most precious treasure, we must recognize that the foundation of a healthy environment is human happiness itself.

A Vibrant Town Centre

Rimbo currently lacks a lively urban centre. The construction of a new transportation hub presents a unique opportunity to create a vibrant town centre that reflects Rimbo's identity. It has all the necessary ingredients: the combination of bus and train mobility, a strategic location, the qualities of the Galten building, and the fact that everybody will use it.

A multifunctional travel centre

Recognizing that the Galten building alone cannot accommodate the future train station, a new multifunctional building is strategically placed to create a covered, in-between space, defining the new gateway to Rimbo. This public interior will be a dynamic and vibrant space activated by a mixed programme. Integrating the bus, train, and bicycle services, along with facilities like restaurants, a gym, offices, and co-working spaces, will bring essential services and social activities together in the multi-purpose hub.

A genuine town hall

Transforming the transportation hub into an inviting, central space that fosters social interaction is crucial, especially as the town's population is expected to double by 2050. This vibrant space will be a hub for gathering and developing local initiatives, for hosting town-level events, and for generating valuable social opportunities. It will act as an active public space that can be used by diverse groups and can engage the community in various projects, such as developing the new town centre or new neighbourhoods. In the absence of an actual town hall, the new multifunctional hub will act as the main, much-needed public building of Rimbo.



A welcoming central square

In the nearby future, the regional road 280 will become a street with much less traffic. By connecting it with the Köpmannagatan shopping street, a vast space adjacent to the multi-purpose hub is liberated, generating the perfect location for a welcoming central square and additional housing. Densification in the centre, achieved through urban blocks with an active plinth, will create a lively and human-scale town.

A lively main street

To activate the vast plot left by the current bus terminal, the existing shopping street, Köpmannagatan, is insufficient on its own. Therefore, a new main street connecting the multi-purpose hub with the swimming pool and library is established. Running parallel to Köpmannagatan, the two streets establish together a dense and active urban fabric with a rich variety of public spaces.

Extending and connecting with the rest of the town, the new main street becomes the new main urban artery. Imagine being able to easily access all essential facilities and services, diverse green spaces and natural areas on foot or by bike. That's the quality of our envisioned main street. Because, when you reinforce life on foot, a multitude of valuable social opportunities appear.

Rimbo's identity

The hub stands proudly at the turning point of the main street, serving as a new welcoming gate for people, not cars, and further enhancing the town's vibrancy. It combines the characteristic Galten building and a new wooden structure, blending old and new to establish a fresh identity for Rimbo's centre, while honouring the town's history as a rail hub. The iconic brick chimney stands tall over the centre, providing a visual landmark that can be seen throughout Rimbo, including the new development areas.

The new wooden building has been designed to complement and highlight the qualities of the historical brick factory. A 14m-wide glass space connects both structures, forming a vibrant 'hall' that is linked to the new main square outside. Key elements such as this connecting 'hall' and a public auditorium located in the new building are designed to foster community engagement, to reinforce the collective identity and to strengthen The Rimbo Spirit.

A Clear Structure: RINGBO

Rimbo currently lacks a clear structure and urban hierarchy. In the coming future, the main regional roads will become streets, but they alone will not be capable of structuring a future, denser city. Therefore, taking advantage of the voids generated by the waterfront in the South, the burying of electrical lines in the West and the old railway in the East, a ring is created to encircle the central Garden City area of Rimbo. By using these existing infrastructure lines as a backbone, the ring will transform these elements into connectors, enriching both nature and urban life. This clear and impactful gesture connects all scales and provides a structure for growth, densification, and future developments.

An open system for diversity

The ring, or main street, acts as a circular membrane preserving and enhancing Rimbo's identity as a Garden City. This structured approach creates an open system for organizing the growth of future areas, whether these are urban, rural, or natural spaces. Acting as a path of infinite happiness, this main circular route will seamlessly connect the existing town with new developments and nature.

By fostering human-scale proximity and densifying the urban fabric, this open system aims to cultivate a sense of community and collective identity. Coupled with the diversification of natural, spatial, and architectural elements, Rimbo will become resilient, equipped to tackle future social and climate challenges and to preserve the town's qualities as a Garden City.

A framework for facilities

Future and existing facilities are strategically organized along the ring. Nodes with large-scale town facilities are created in the intersections of the ring with the main roads and infrastructure, like for example the multi-purpose transport hub. All the other smaller, neighbourhood-scale programs are placed along the ring, ensuring an easy access by foot or bike, and creating opportunities for social interaction.

A framework for urban nature

The ring will also be a biodiversity conduit, connecting diverse transversal natural spaces and reducing car mobility. In this way, nature and culture will be embedded into the urban fabric, creating a reciprocal relationship where daily life is also embedded into nature. The ring street will be a major asset in the town, providing the opportunity for ecological corridors and bringing nature close to the residents, including the currently underused waterfront of Lake Långsjön. Urbanity can and should help nature, not fracture it.

A framework for densification

The ring will also serve to organise the new housing developments. It will provide support for diverse types of urban living, generating a rich variety of lifestyles by responding to the specifics of each location. By densifying along the ring, we can contribute to minimising the impact on the territory, while preserving the qualities of the Garden City. Densification will primarily focus on the nodes, but this system could also serve to structure more distant developments, like Adamsberg, always ensuring a connection to the ring.

A Strong Identity

Rimbo's recent developments have strayed from the qualities of a Garden City, becoming generic sprawl with small gardens, limited communal spaces and disconnection from nature, focusing on car-oriented design. By embracing the Garden City principles and breaking away from the model of monotonous sprawl, we aim to create a diverse and vibrant urban fabric that prioritizes human life and nature.

Rimbo Superblocks

The urban fabric adjacent to the main street is divided into distinct Superblocks, bordered by green-blue corridors. In each Superblock, we aim to strike a balance between preserving existing buildings and incorporating new programs and facilities, plus offering a variety of housing options to embrace different ways of living. These housing types range from dense blocks in the town centre to an urban village or community huts, catering to a wide range of population: families, young adults, seniors, or those with physical disabilities, among others. Each Superblock allows for a different style of living, always following the Garden City principles while adapting to higher density models.

Natural corridors

The green-blue transversal connections that intersect with the main street play a vital role in organizing and segmenting the urban fabric. Carefully adapted to the urban and hydrological context, these multifunctional green structures serve multiple purposes. They connect flora and fauna, maximize biodiversity, and act as water buffers and infiltration systems to enhance climate resilience. Among the proposed green areas, there is a pollinator garden, a wadi for stormwater management, a connecting mix forest, or edible gardens. These green spaces are key in ensuring that all the stormwater doesn't gather at the lowest point. With a mix of vegetation, natural infiltration, water mirrors and rainwater harvesting, the stormwater is managed as a resource and as a starting point for the design, rather than being viewed as a problem.

Distinct and vibrant public spaces

Connected by the main street, the new public spaces each possess a unique identity. Whether it's the boulevard-like square near the swimming pool and library, the intimate square for the elderly, the central square next to the transport hub, the reception square in front of the hospital, the clearing in the forest, or the characteristic squares within the new superblocs, each space is distinctly defined to contribute to the overall vibrancy and to the coherence articulated by the main street.

We shape cities, and cities shape us. Instead of a strictly aesthetic expression we want a deeper impact; we want to create a sense of community. This network of connected public spaces aims to strengthen the local identity, presenting a physical collective image that celebrates and expresses the rich diversity of Rimbo.



Process

The power of the existing serves as the foundation for Rimbo's future. As the tool to enhance its identity. To achieve this and taking into account that the town has a very involved community, we must mobilize The Rimbo Spirit. Our approach is open, realistic, and adaptable, avoiding rigid blueprints.

RINGBO is an ongoing process, never truly finished in design, implementation, operation, or management. It remains flexible, responding to the changing needs and desires of its residents. This requires an inclusive planning process with extensive input from the people involved, encouraging participatory democracy and fostering a vibrant urban life.

Establishing a dialogue between locals and experts is essential in this open process. The urban superbloc system, like any living organism, evolves over time, and sustainable development means embracing openness and adaptability. The open system and spatial structure that has been established leaves room for new insights, initiatives, and evolving agendas. Time is a crucial factor, enabling spaces to gradually acquire meaning, moving beyond mere phasing to incorporate a dynamic dimension in the city's growth.

Through this incremental and adaptive urban development, Rimbo can flourish as a diverse, vibrant, and interconnected community, embodying the shared values and identity of its inhabitants across scales and generations. The integration of infrastructure and nature as a solid backbone ensures a resilient and evolving urban ecosystem. It fosters places of exchange, co-learning, and biodiversity, promoting a thriving urban life that embraces change while remaining deeply rooted in Rimbo's collective history and culture.