
EUROPAN 18 KARLSTAD

RE-SOURCING - SWEDEN

*Våxnäs: From Grey to Green.
Transforming industrial landscapes into vibrant,
sustainable communities—where nature and urban
life thrive together.*

European is a biennial
competition for young
architects under 40
years of age.



 **European SE**





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EUROPAN 18
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Site Representative:

Henrik Sjöberg
City Architect
Municipality of Karlstad

Actor involved:

Municipality of Karlstad

Team composition:

Architect non mandatory

Expected skills regarding the site's issues and characteristics:

Architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning.

Communication:

Anonymous local exhibition after the first jury round.

After the competition there will be a public prize ceremony, a catalogue of results will be printed, and the winners will be published on the website of Architects Sweden.

Jury evaluation:

With the participation of the site representative.

Post-competition intermediate procedure:

Meeting and workshop with the municipality and the prize winning team(s).

The proposals will form the basis for a citizen dialogue, a dialogue with politicians, and the development of a planning programme. The ambition is that the winning team will continue to work together with the municipality on the proposal in the planning programme.

PARTICIPATE IN EUROSPAN 18!

INTRODUCTION

The Municipality of Karlstad and Europan Sweden would like to thank you for choosing to participate in Europan 18. The competition brief provides information about the character of the site and plot, and includes a list of references with links to supplementary information. In addition to this material, you can download high-resolution images and drawings from the project database. Please read the condensed "Short Site File" brief parallel to this unabridged competition brief. The theme of Europan 18 is "Re-sourcing".

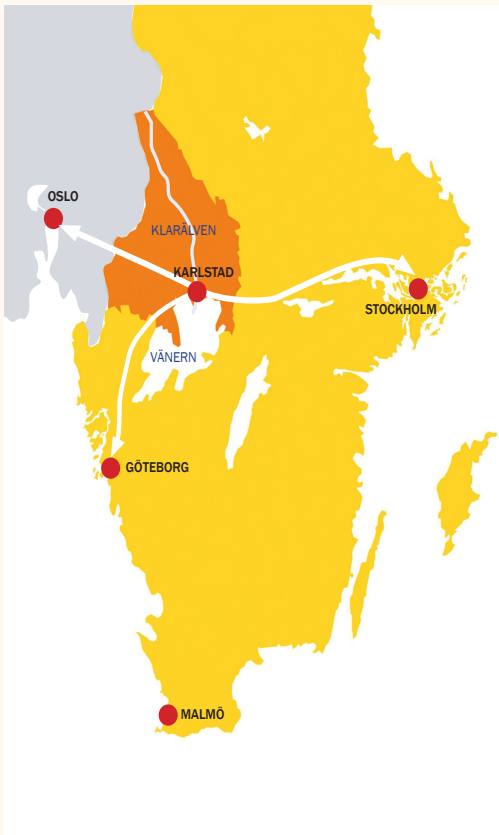
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KARLSTAD MUNICIPALITY

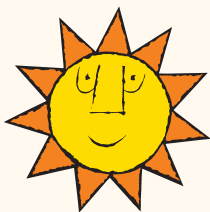
Located midway between Stockholm and Oslo, Karlstad is the capital and largest city of Värmland County. It sits at the delta of the Klarälven River, on the northern shore of Lake Vänern. Just two km northwest of the city centre is Våxnäs industrial area, the project site for this ambitious urban transformation project.

Currently dominated by industries, commercial activities, and car traffic, Våxnäs faces significant challenges, including frequent flooding and a lack of housing, which contribute to an unsafe atmosphere, particularly at night. However, its proximity to natural assets such as the I2-Forest and Låglandet Park offers a unique opportunity to integrate green infrastructure and address water management and heavy rainfall sustainably.

This competition invites participants to reimagine the future of Våxnäs as a vibrant, mixed-use neighbourhood. The objective is to transform the area from an industrial, storage, and commercial zone into a lively, human-centred district. How can existing businesses and sports facilities be complemented with new functions, such as housing, to ensure the neighbourhood thrives around the clock? How can this transformation make the best use of existing resources while introducing innovative solutions?



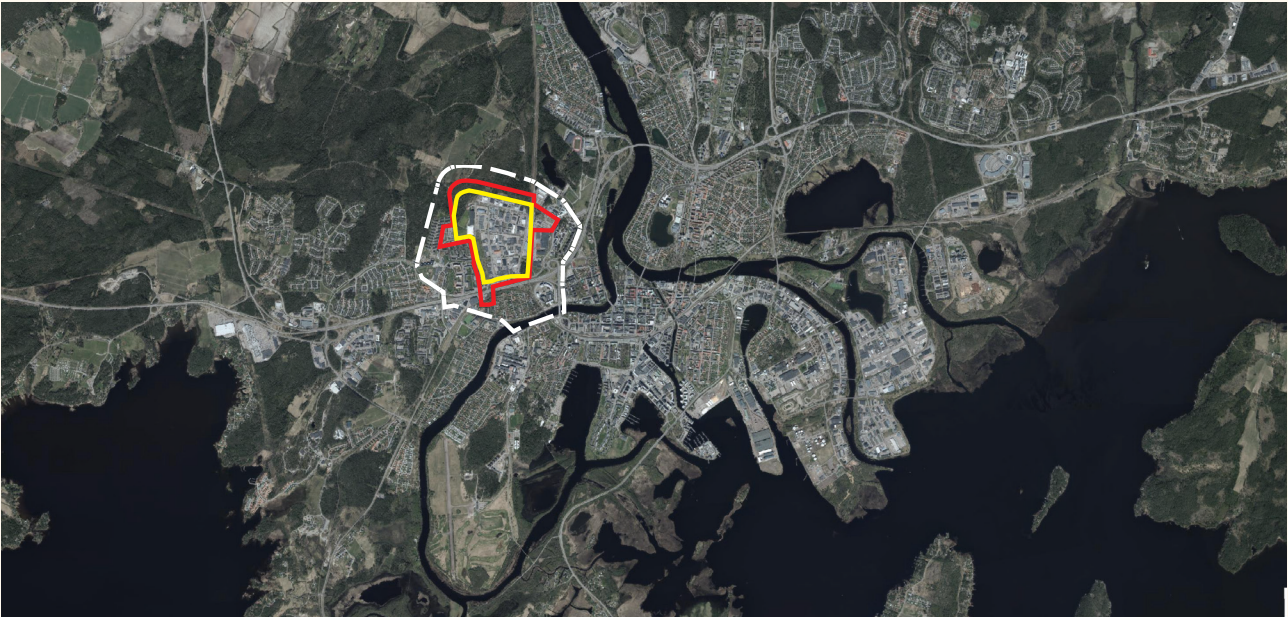
Regional map. Image: Karlstad Municipality



KARLSTADS KOMMUN

COMPETITION BRIEF

KARLSTAD



Orthophoto of Karlstad and the competition site. Photo: Karlstad Municipality

URBAN CONTEXT

Regional Description

Karlstad, located in Värmland County at the Klarälven River delta on Lake Vänern's northern shore, sits strategically between Stockholm and Oslo. The city is accessible by train in about 2.5 hours from Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Oslo, with nearly 8 million people living within a 3.5-hour drive. Karlstad Municipality has over 97,000 residents, while the region is home to around 150,000.

The municipality is part of the Stockholm–Oslo 2:55 railway project, aiming to cut travel time between the capitals from five to under three hours. This initiative, in its planning phase, seeks to improve accessibility, compete with air travel, and promote sustainability, boosting Karlstad's geographic importance and labour market.

As Värmland County's administrative centre, Karlstad drives regional development. Known for its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and industries like forestry, paper, and steel, the city also serves as a cultural and business hub, with no major cities nearby.

Shaped by the Klarälven River and Lake Vänern's archipelago with 25,000 islands, Karlstad offers unique outdoor recreation opportunities enhanced during the summer by boat buses. Recognised as Sweden's Outdoor Municipality of the Year in 2024, Karlstad prioritises outdoor activities.

Karlstad University, educating 16,000 students in engineering, economics, and nursing, attracts businesses and investments. The local economy blends traditional industries like forestry and paper with modern sectors such as IT and game development.

The city hosts key government agencies, including the Swedish Consumer Agency, and a central hospital, fostering collaboration on societal safety. Cultural and sports highlights include the Sandgrund Lars Lerin gallery, Värmland Museum, and Wermland Opera. The renowned hockey team Färjestad BK and the Karlstad CCC event venue add to the city's vibrancy. Numerous second-hand shops contribute to its lively shopping scene, while the Löfbergs roastery fills the air with the scent of freshly roasted coffee.

URBAN CONTEXT

Description of the city

Karlstad was founded in 1584 by Duke Karl (later Karl IX) at the Klarälven River delta and Lake Vänern to promote trade and communication. In 1865, a fire destroyed much of the city centre. During the reconstruction streets were widened and open spaces like Stora Torget were created to reduce fire risks, laying the foundation for today's city centre, now a national heritage site.

In the 19th century, Karlstad became a hub for the forestry and paper industries, supported by modernised railways and ports. Housing was developed for industrial workers. The city further expanded in the 20th century, driven by post-war housing needs and increasing car traffic.

Recent development focuses on areas like Inre Hamn, where industrial zones are being transformed into mixed-use districts with waterfront housing. Green urban spaces, public transport, cycling, and walking infrastructure have been prioritised. Karlstad has received national recognition, being named "Architecture Municipality of the Year" four times and Sweden's best cycling city in 2024.

Karlstad and Värmland's building culture reflects their history, rooted in medieval timber traditions and shaped by industrial and urban evolution. Natural resources like wood and iron have influenced architecture, alongside fires and societal changes.

Until the 19th century, wood was the primary building material, with simple log houses being common. After the 1865 fire, brick became more prevalent in public and multi-family housing, though timber remained common in suburban areas. Around 1900, panel architecture grew decorative, especially in Art Nouveau and National Romantic styles, showcasing craftsmanship. Post-war expansion introduced rational construction, significantly shaping the cityscape.

The city's location at the Klarälven River delta and Lake Vänern has been crucial for its development. Klarälven was historically used for timber rafting, requiring extensive clearing and regulation of the river. Measures like embankments and dams have reduced flooding risks, enabling construction in previously flood-prone areas.

Today, Klarälven River and Lake Vänern are essential for recreation and contribute to the city's character and quality of life.

Våxnäs

In north-western Karlstad, about 2 km from the city centre, lies the district of Våxnäs, home to 3,624 inhabitants, most living in terraced or multi-family houses. Våxnäs faces socio-economic challenges, with around 32 per cent of the population on low incomes. It is also one of Karlstad's most vulnerable areas in terms of crime and child protection reports to social services.

The name Våxnäs, documented from the 15th century, originates from Wågnäs, referring to a low mountain range running north-south through the area. Although now fragmented by traffic routes, remnants of the mountain remain visible on maps and as outcrops along Vänern's shoreline. The land consists of old lakebeds of blålera, a bluish, glacial clay. This required piling to depths of 70–90 metres to reach solid ground during the construction boom of the 1950s–60s. (See appendix 1, 2 & 3)

Våxnäs is divided into a residential area in the west, an industrial/business area in the east, and the Låglandet Park in between. It developed during Karlstad's 1950s expansion, providing space for housing and industry. Its master plan was the first in Karlstad designed for increased car use, featuring green courtyards and "car squares" (parking lots) between buildings. Apartments included garages, and a ring road was built around the residential area.



Autumn in Karlstad. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



View over the town centre. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Klarälven River. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Tyggårdsviken. Photo: Karlstad Municipality

RESOURCES

Klarälven and Vänern

Klarälven and Lake Vänern are two of Karlstad's greatest natural assets, offering recreational opportunities like swimming, canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), fishing, and ice skating. These water bodies enhance the city's quality of life and provide cooling, crucial in a warming climate. They also form ecological corridors, linking green spaces within the city to larger recreational areas on its outskirts.

The I2-Forest: Historical and Natural Value

The I2-Forest, covering 550 hectares, is Karlstad's largest outdoor recreational area. Preserved from urban development due to its use as a military training ground (1913–1993), it still holds traces of its past, such as shooting ranges, trenches, and "General's Meadow," now revitalised as a rest area. Before the military era, it was home to small-scale farms, pastures, and settlements, some dating back to the 14th century.

The forest's history includes archaeological findings from the Stone and Iron Ages, such as the Dye Domarring, an Iron Age stone circle used for judicial gatherings, and burial sites from the late Iron Age. These areas, protected under the Cultural Heritage Act, reflect the forest's historical richness.

Recreation, Biodiversity and Connectivity

Today, the I2-Forest offers activities like hiking, running, birdwatching, orienteering, golf, horse riding, and winter cross-country skiing. It also provides relaxation spots with walking paths,

picnic areas, and places for grilling. According to Karlstad's comprehensive plan, the forest is to be protected as a nature reserve for outdoor recreation.

Parts of the forest have significant biodiversity value, including tall rocky areas that host rare mosses and insects, self-regenerating coniferous forests, and preserved seed trees. A natural inventory identified 17 areas with high ecological value and 72 with notable ecological value, further emphasising its importance. (See appendix 4)

The I2-Forest also plays a vital role in maintaining ecological corridors, supporting species movement across Karlstad. Notably, these corridors connect the I2-Forest to Tyrskogen to the north and facilitate movement for species like forest birds and the relic beetle. Maintaining old sunlit pines and coniferous forests is critical for preserving these connections. (See appendix 5)

Låglandet Park and Urban Green Space

Låglandet, a 5.4-hectare park, is used for ball games and as a shortcut for pedestrians and cyclists. Despite its simple design, it is a key resource for stormwater management and is planned for development as a district park. (See appendix 6)

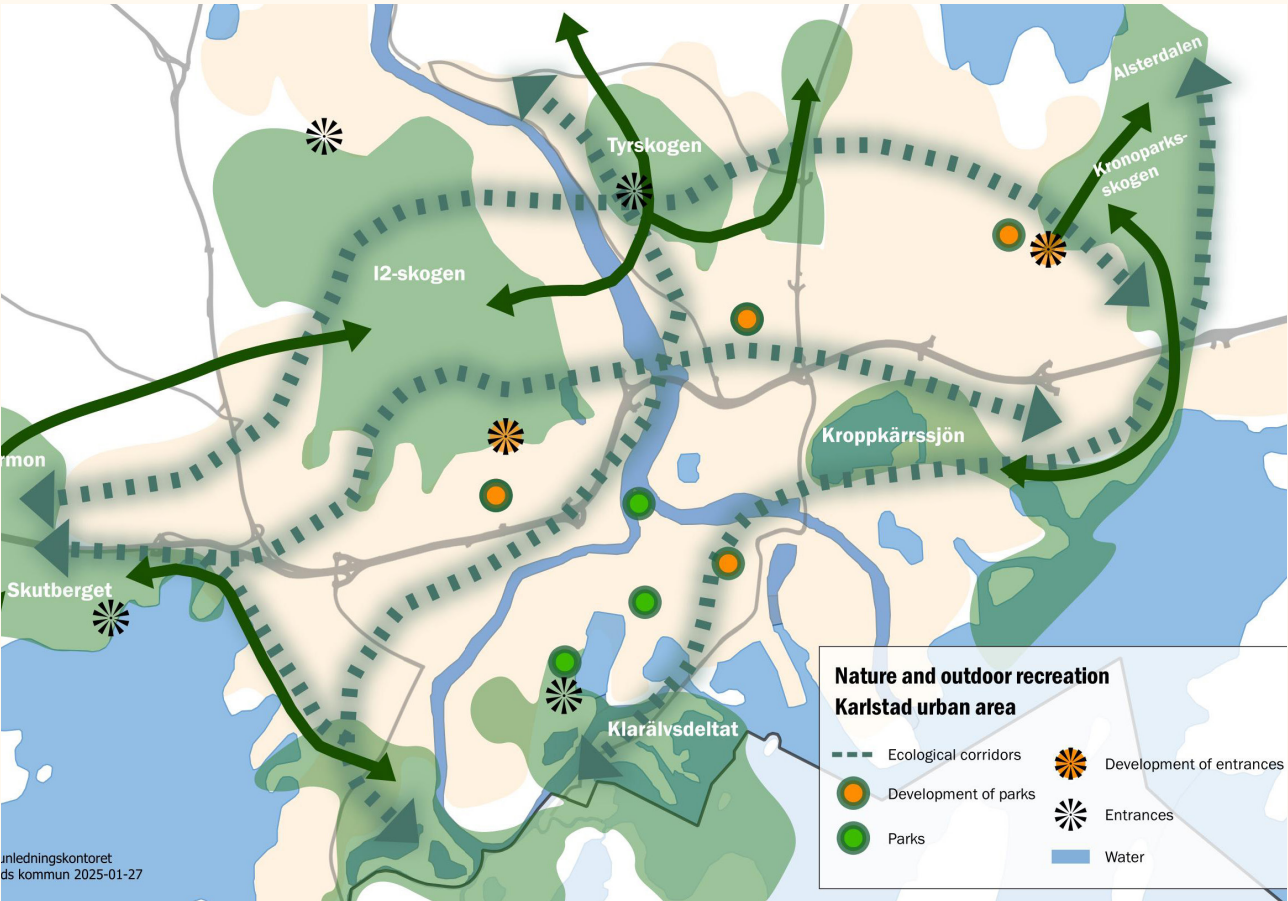
Karlstad overall has a high proportion of green space per capita. However, areas like the Våxnäs industrial zone lack greenery, forming urban heat islands. The municipality is actively addressing these areas to improve those microclimates. (See appendix 7, 8 & 9)



Winter in Karlstad. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



View over the town centre with Sandgrundsudden in the front. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



I2-Forest: Part of the Green Structure. Development strategies for nature and outdoor recreation for Karlstad's Urban Area. Image: Karlstad Municipality

RE-SOURCING

Cultivating Resilience Through Synergy

The fragility of Earth's ecosystems and the increasing strain of social crises underscore the urgent need for new ways of planning and designing well-functioning and attractive living environments. Moving beyond harmful cycles of extraction, overconsumption, and pollution, requires practices that regenerate ecosystems and foster equitable relationships between nature and culture. By combining ecological balance, socio-spatial justice, and the health of all living beings, the goal is to cultivate a resilient and inclusive vision for the future.

Rethinking our relationship with the fundamental elements of nature—water, air, earth, and fire—is essential. These elements sustain life and hold symbolic significance but become sources of risk when exploited unsustainably. Flooding, wildfires, and polluted air are just some of the catastrophic outcomes of harmful human activity. Restoring these forces to their regenerative roles forms the basis for a harmonious alliance between human settlements and the natural world.

As society evolves digitally and adapts socially, how we live and interact will change accordingly. Well-designed and visually appealing environments that balance privacy and community—with a foundation of solidarity—are crucial. Such spaces must integrate bioclimatic and permacultural strategies, enabling humans and non-humans to coexist and thrive. The challenge lies in creating conditions where diverse forms of life can flourish, by balancing technological progress with ecological responsibility.

Materiality plays a pivotal role in this transformation. The built environment, often seen merely as a backdrop, holds untapped potential for circular practices. By minimizing new construction, reusing existing spaces, and recycling materials like stone, earth, and fiber, we can alleviate pressure on natural ecosystems. These practices not only conserve resources but also reconnect communities with their environments through local expertise and stewardship.

This approach leads to a dynamic interplay of regenerative and forward-thinking processes:

- Revitalizing natural elements by recognizing their energy, symbolism, and regenerative potential while mitigating risks of environmental degradation.
- Healing ecosystems by removing environmental burdens and creating healthier conditions for sustainable living.
- Designing inclusive spaces that blend intimacy, community, and solidarity while fostering cooperation between humans and non-humans.
- Encouraging circular material practices that prioritize reuse, recycling, and the incorporation of local knowledge for sustainable development.
- Strengthening biodiversity through a closer connection between nature and culture, fostering hybrid environments that support life.
- Addressing resource scarcity through innovative solutions that bridge ecological and societal challenges.
- Engaging local populations in participatory processes to align global ecological goals with tangible community actions.

The sites in focus provide opportunities to reconnect nature and culture, creating mutually beneficial relationships. Whether revitalizing abandoned areas, reusing resources, or enhancing green initiatives, the aim is to transform neglected spaces into vibrant, sustainable environments. Strengthening biodiversity alongside human activity and linking fragmented landscapes are central to this vision.

Life's natural rhythms—day and night, seasons, tides—serve as powerful inspiration for these projects. Designing environments aligned with these cycles fosters ecosystems where humans and non-humans collaborate in regeneration. Local networks, such as green corridors or urban grids, can further strengthen these connections, enhancing biodiversity and ecological health.

This is more than a shift in project execution; it is a transformation in how we approach design, planning, and stewardship of the environments we share. By intertwining ecological restoration, social inclusivity, and circular materiality, this vision creates spaces that are resilient, regenerative, and adaptable to future needs—while fostering beautiful and inclusive living environments.

RE-SOURCING KARLSTAD MUNICIPALITY

Karlstad's location in a delta presents flooding challenges from both Klarälven River and Lake Vänern. Lake Vänern floods can last months, while Klarälven River floods are shorter but more intense. Climate change is increasing risks of heavy rainfall and water intrusion in low-lying areas, requiring long-term adaptation, which the municipality is actively addressing.

The Våxnäs industrial area, once farmland prone to flooding by Klarälven River, faces significant water challenges (See appendix 10 & 11). During a 200-year flood, large sections would be inundated, while southwestern parts already experience issues during a 50-year flood. The clay soil absorbs little water, making infiltration difficult. Settlement damage affects underground utilities and the ground itself, with risks of further subsidence from increased load. The flat terrain causes water to pool during heavy rains, leaving properties with recurring issues of standing water and water intrusion into buildings. Larger ditches in Låglandet Park help manage and delay water flow, supported by underground utility lines.

The area is heavily paved and prioritised for industrial use and car traffic, with minimal greenery. Replacing hard surfaces with green infrastructure can enhance water retention, cooling, air purification, and recreation. Better connections to the I2-Forest could also strengthen ecological and recreational networks.

Another important asset within and near the competition area is the availability of mixed-use facilities and a wide range of sports venues, both indoor and outdoor. (See appendix 12 & 13)

Transforming Våxnäs with green infrastructure, sustainable water management, sports facilities, and mixed-use activities could solve flooding issues while creating a sustainable, multifunctional district. Adding housing would foster an active urban environment and improve safety throughout the day.

Currently, the industrial area acts as a barrier between Karlstad's districts, increasing perceived distances to the city centre, nature, and recreation areas. Redevelopment could improve cohesion, providing equal access to services, amenities, and high-quality public spaces. The concentration of sports facilities and active organisations is a strength that offers an opportunity to make the area a naturally integrated part of the city, easily accessible by bike, foot, or public transport.

The competition area's robust structure can be reused and developed incrementally. While no buildings have specific architectural or cultural value, some could be repurposed for new uses, contributing to the area's renewal. Existing simple buildings could serve cultural needs, complementing sports and mixed-use activities to create a vibrant urban environment.



Ditch through the Southern Part of Låglandet Park. Photo: Karlstad Municipality

TERRITORIAL SCALE (MARKED IN WHITE)

The territorial scale area covers around **271 hectares**, including infrastructure that forms a strong barrier between Våxnäs and the rest of the city, adjacent residential districts, city centre connections, and, in the north, the I2-Forest.

To the east, running north-south, is the **railway (1)**, with a level crossing **(2)** in the north and a tunnel **(3)** in the south providing connections. **East of the railway** are sports halls **(4)** for skateboarding, floorball, ice skating, bandy, hockey, and racket sports. At **Kasernhöjden (5)**, a former military barracks area has been redeveloped into an urban district with housing, offices, restaurants, and a bakery, preserving culturally significant buildings. **North of Kasernhöjden (6)** are police, detention, fire station, and ambulance facilities. Pedestrian and cycle access is available via a tunnel near **Kärleksdungen Hill (7)**, historically a meeting spot for conscripts and their girlfriends.

South of the reflection site, runs the **E18 motorway (8)**, with direct connections to Våxnäs and Kasernhöjden. Between the highway and the Klarälven River lies **Strand (9)**, a district that features early 20th-century villas, terraced houses, and apartment buildings, with notable cultural value due to its preserved architecture blending panel, Art Nouveau, and national romantic styles. It includes a primary school, smaller offices and restaurants.

Våxnäs, built between 1958 and 1968, reflects 1950s Swedish planning ideals. It was designed as a small community with its own **centre (10)**, **school (11)**, park, and playground. The district borders the I2 forest to the north, with several informal trails lacking a significant entrance to invite visitors. By the forest, 1 km north of Våxnäs, Solstadens sportcenter offers facilities for football, inline skating, and fitness. The forest is also widely used for outdoor exercise.

In the **southern part of the territorial scale**, two bridges are the potential pedestrian and cycling connections to the city centre. **(12 & 13)**



Kärleksdungen Hill historical image (7). Photo: Karlstad Municipality

REFLECTION SITE (MARKED IN RED)

The reflection site is **106 hectares** and consists of the project site and a “buffer zone” covering all entrances and strategic areas that could connect to surrounding districts. In addition to the previously mentioned entrances over the railway, another runs from the southwest, parallel to the E18 motorway **(14)**, leading to Låglandet park’s southernmost point and Våxnäs.

The area is currently dominated by car dealerships, retail, and light industry. It has been designed primarily for car traffic. Access is available from the south via two north-south roads and from the northeast over the railway. Future railway expansion will require the northeast crossing to be grade-separated.

The Våxnäs industrial area is served by one bus line running centrally through the area and two bus lines through the southern part. (See appendix 10) Karlstad has expanded a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the southern and eastern parts of the city. A direct route through Våxnäs has been discussed but not yet decided. Efficient public transport will be crucial for promoting sustainable travel during the area’s redevelopment.

To the west (15), near the sports halls, a large surface parking area for the nearby residential buildings occupies a significant amount of space and makes the project site’s connection feel uninviting.

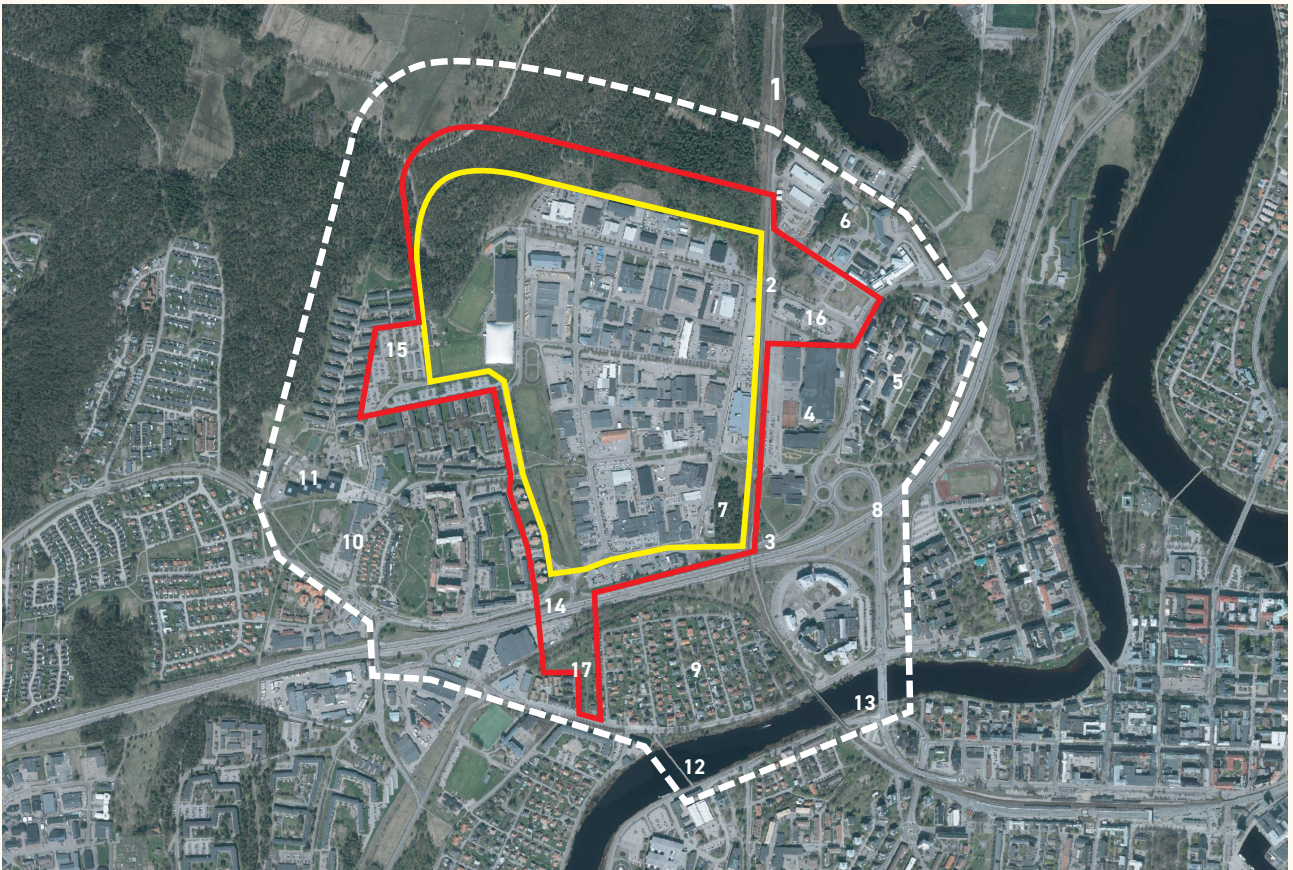
Northeast of the reflection site (16), across the railway, is an area with the potential to connect Våxnäs to surrounding districts, including a recycling station that could be relocated.

In the southwest (17), in Strand, a small park disconnected from Låglandet Park by the E18 and railway, could be integrated into the project and connect to one of the bridges leading to the city centre. Stormwater from Våxnäs flows beneath this park to Klarälven River.



I2-Forest. Photo: Karlstad Municipality

TERRITORIAL SCALE AND REFLECTION SITE



Key points of the territorial scale and the reflection area. Image: Karlstad Municipality



Railway crossing (2). Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Housing on Karmgatan . Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Parking area included in the reflection site, Plintgatan (15).
Photo: Karlstads kommun.



Våxnäs view från Karmgatan. Photo: Karlstad Municipality

PROJECT SITE

PROJECT SITE (MARKED IN YELLOW)

The project site spans approximately **71 hectares** and is confined to Våxnäs industrial area, including Låglandet Park (1).

Våxnäs industrial area is a central and strategic location in Karlstad, designated as a mixed use area in the new comprehensive plan. Situated about 2 km from Karlstad's travel centre, it offers excellent access to national, regional, and local public transport. This provides high potential for land use and future development, including housing, workplaces, and public functions. The future high-speed rail connection between Oslo and Stockholm is expected to further enhance Våxnäs' role in the cityscape.

Karlstad is growing, and the long-term development of Våxnäs is vital for connecting the northwestern districts with the city centre and recreational areas. Currently, the area forms both a physical and mental barrier. Planned changes aim to break these barriers and create a vibrant, sustainable district.

Våxnäs industrial area began development in the 1960s, with land raised by 1–2 metres during its planning. Wide streets were introduced to avoid the congestion typical of similar industrial zones. Two green corridors run east-west through the area, adding variety to the streetscape.

Låglandet Park is the green space separating the industrial area from the residential district. This open grassland is divided by an east-west pedestrian and cycle path, the only connection between the two areas. A green link extends westward through the residential area, leading to Våxnäs park, Himlabacken, and the I2-Forest. The I2-Forest has two entrances (2) from the area, but lacks a clear connection.

In the southeast of the project site, between the



Pedestrian and cycle path through Låglandet Park (1).
Photo: Karlstad Municipality

railway and a petrol station, lies the tree-covered **Kärleksdungen hill (3)**.

Within Våxnäs industrial area, a significant portion is dedicated to storage, crafts, and various forms of trade, ranging from groceries and home goods to car showrooms, workwear sales, construction supplies, restaurants, and interior design. In the northwest, sports facilities block potential connections between the I2 forest and Låglandet.

Many pedestrians and cyclists pass through the area daily, but it feels unsafe, especially at night, due to the lack of housing and meeting places. Most of the area lacks pavements, cycle paths, and greenery, with streets designed on a large scale for car traffic.

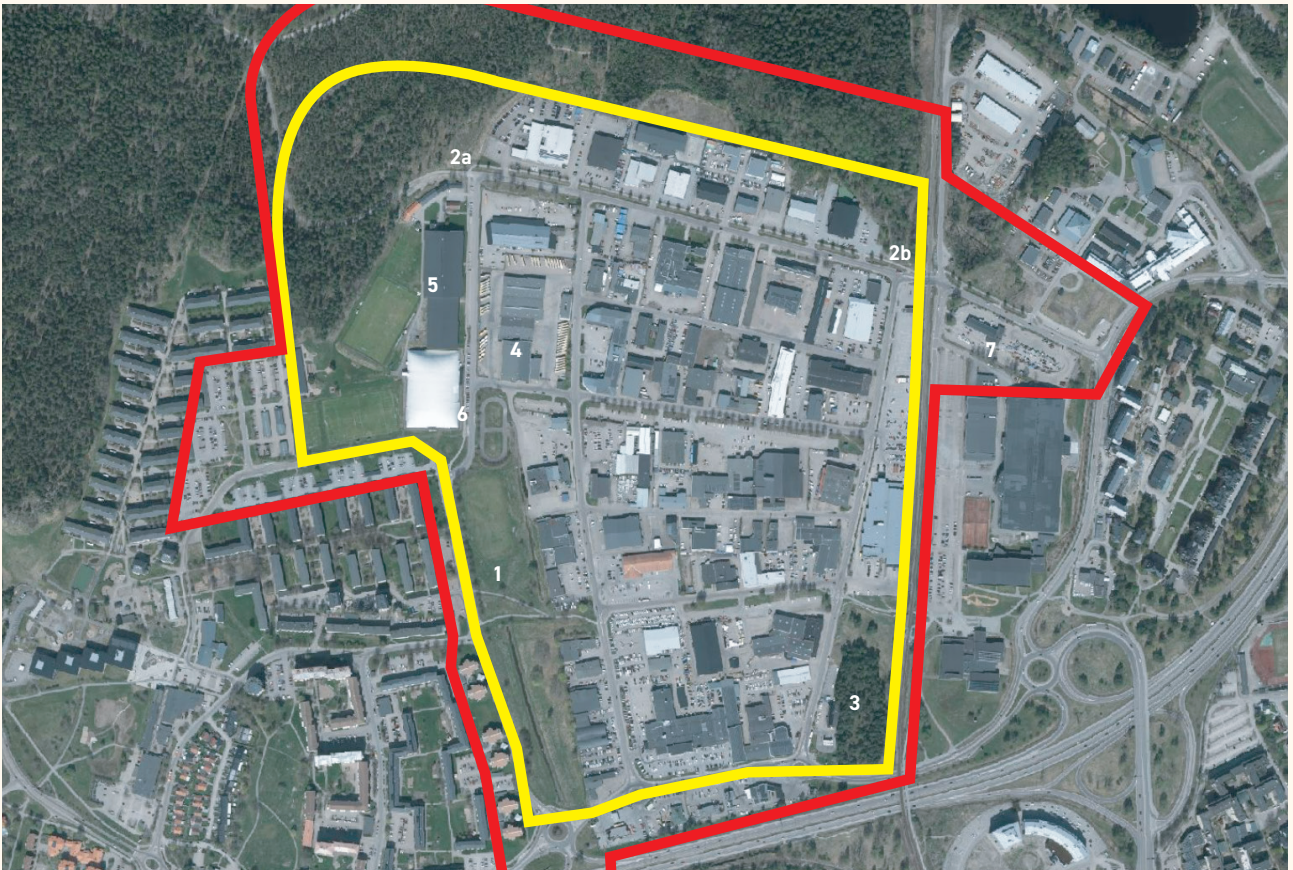
It remains one of the city's most central industrial zones, with excellent access for cars and public transport. Many businesses benefit from the central location, but some could eventually be relocated to other parts of the city. Certain buildings and spaces currently used for storage could also be repurposed.

Several areas will become available for new purposes in the coming years. In the northwest, a **bus depot (4)** will be decommissioned and relocated by 2030. Nearby, **Våxnäshallen (5)** will soon be demolished, leaving only a shelter section intact, freeing additional space. An **air dome (6)** used for indoor football training has a temporary permit and may also be dismantled. In the northeast, near the railway crossing, a **recycling station (7)** is another potential site for relocation, freeing up further land.

The existing football fields and halls in the area are highly utilised and essential. It is crucial to preserve or replace these facilities within the area. Additional space should also be reserved to expand cultural and sports venues or to create environments promoting healthy lifestyles for children and young people.



View over Låglandet Park with the Air dome (6) in the back.
Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Key points of the project site. Image: Karlstads kommun.



View from I2 Forest towards the sports facilities. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Bus depot (4). Photo: Karlstads kommun.



Bromsgatan Allé. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Entrance to I2-Forest from Säterivägen (2a). Photo: Karlstad Municipality

COMPETITION TASK

Goals:

The task is to create a long-term vision for transforming Våxnäs industrial area into a vibrant, mixed-use district. The area will transition from an industrial, storage, and commercial zone into a lively neighbourhood with housing, businesses, recreation areas, and green spaces. The transformation should be sustainable, utilising existing resources and introducing new functions. The area's potential should be harnessed to create a district that thrives throughout the day, fosters social cohesion, and offers quality housing and an active urban life.

Proposal Focus:

Mixed Land Use and Urban Structure:

The current structure supports mixed land use. Proposals should show how existing businesses and sports facilities can be complemented with housing, workplaces, and meeting spaces to create a lively, active area. Housing must play a central role in enhancing safety and urban activity throughout the day.

Proposals should also explore a variety of housing forms to create a socially inclusive and diverse neighbourhood. A mix of apartments, townhouses, or other housing types can cater to different needs, fostering a balanced and integrated community. Additionally, proposals should study the required housing density to ensure the neighbourhood remains vibrant and active throughout the day, with sufficient population to support local businesses and public spaces.

Proposals should demonstrate how the area can adopt a human scale where residents and businesses coexist harmoniously, creating a functional and visually appealing urban environment with public spaces and green areas fostering vitality and cohesion.

Connections and Integration with Surrounding Neighbourhoods:

The industrial area is separated from nearby districts by the motorway to the south and the railway to the east. Proposals must address overcoming these barriers to create strong connections between Våxnäs and surrounding areas.

Links between Våxnäs, the city centre, and nearby recreational areas such as the I2 forest and Låglandet must be strengthened with clear, accessible routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport.

Green Spaces, Recreation, and Ecosystem Services:

The area offers significant potential for developing green spaces that provide recreation and ecosystem

services. Proposals should include new parks and green areas for recreation and stormwater management while supporting climate adaptation.

Key priorities include welcoming entrances to the I2 forest and a park in Låglandet to manage stormwater from the industrial area. Open solutions to delay water flow in streets can reduce flooding and purify stormwater effectively.

Green spaces should enhance biodiversity and serve as social meeting places for residents and visitors.

Sustainable Mobility and Traffic Solutions:

Proposals should prioritise sustainable transport, focusing on public transport, walking, and cycling as the main modes. Streets must be designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists while reducing car traffic. Current extensive parking areas should be replaced with more attractive solutions that reduce barriers and improve urban appeal. Public transport should be integrated to provide easy access to key destinations without relying on cars.

Climate Adaptation and Resource Use:

Proposals must address flooding risks, especially in the southwest, using elevation adjustments, green infrastructure, and adapted land use to manage rainwater.

The area's heat island effect can be reduced by enhancing greenery and limiting hard surfaces. Proposals should prioritise reusing and renovating existing buildings where possible, promoting long-term sustainable development instead of demolition and rebuilding.

Transformation Process and Phasing:

Proposals should present a realistic and sustainable process for transforming Våxnäs, achievable in phases. Logical starting points, such as the bus depot and the areas around the sports fields and Låglandet Park, should be considered.

Proposals should also highlight how collaboration between stakeholders—including the municipality, existing businesses, and new developers—can drive sustainable and long-term development of the area.

Summary:

Proposals must transform Våxnäs industrial area into a mixed and integrated district. Key goals include addressing social and physical barriers, sustainable mobility, green spaces, and climate adaptation while balancing existing businesses with new functions. The winning proposal will serve as a foundation for the municipality's future planning programme.



South of Blockgatan. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Bromsgata. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Buildings in Blockgatan. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



Våxnäshallen. Photo: Karlstad Municipality



The football pitches with the I2 forest in the background. Photo: Karlstad Municipality

GENERAL

Submission requirements

Below are abridged submission guidelines — please visit European Europe’s website to read the submission requirements and competition rules in their entirety.

Proposals should consist of panels and a text. The panels should be three in A1 (594 x 841 mm) portrait format. The content should — in drawings, images and text — explain how the proposal relates to the site’s needs and to the theme of “Re-sourcing”, and how the proposal’s architectural values relate to context and surrounding environment. The content should include a three-dimensional representation of the proposal (for example in perspective, photo montage or model photography). The accompanying text should be a maximum of four A4 pages long and present the proposal ideas, as well as a suggested process of implementation (for example, transforming the plot in a certain order)

JURY

European 18 jury

Members of the competition jury:



Pernilla Wåhlin Norén, SE
Chairman of jury
– Architect and Building Conservator
– City architect of Borlänge
– Board member of Swedish Architects Plan academy
– Borlänge, Sweden



Johan Arrhov, SE
– Architect
– Founding partner, Arrhov Frick Arkitektkontor
– Visiting professor Accademia di Architettura Mendrisio Switzerland
– Stockholm, Sweden



Lone-Pia Bach, SE
– Professor architectural preservation at Royal institute of art
– Founder of Bach architects
– Stockholm, Sweden



Meta Berghauer Pont, SE
– Professor in Urban Morphology and Urban Design at Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg
– Runs the research group SMOG
– Norrköping, Sweden

Competition timeline and dates of importance:

Monday March 3rd, 2025 -The competition opens. All competition sites are presented. Registration and download of complete competition documents starts.

Launch event, with lectures and presentations. See European Sweden’s website.

Wednesday April 9th, 2025 - Site visit with site representatives (pre-registration to info@european.se required).

Friday May 16th, 2025 - Last date for competition questions.

Friday May 30th, 2025 - Last date for answers to competition questions.

Sunday June 29th, 2025 - Last day for submitting competition entries.

Monday Nov. 17th, 2025 - Competition results and winners are published.



Helle Juul, DK
– Architect, Ph.D.
– Founding partner of JUULFROST Architects
– President to INTA
– Copenhagen, Denmark



Sam Keshavarz, SE
– Landscape architect
– Founder of Outer Space Arkitekter
– Stockholm, Sweden



Øystein Rø, NO
– Architect
– Founding partner Transborder Studio
– Oslo, Norway

SUBSTITUTES:

Anders Johansson, SE
– Architect
– Founding partner at Ateljé Södersvik
– Stockholm, Sweden

Frida Öster, SE
– Architect
– Municipal architect of Nynäshamn Municipality
– Stockholm, Sweden

REFERENCES

About the European competition

European Europe. This includes rules for the the competition:

<https://www.europan-europe.eu>

European Sweden:

www.europan.se

Instagram account for European Europe. Lots of previous winners and examples:

https://www.instagram.com/europan_europe/

Instagram account for European Sweden:

<https://www.instagram.com/europansweden/>

About Karlstad Municipality

Karlstad Municipality:

[-https://karlstad.se/](https://karlstad.se/)

Current urban development projects in Karlstad:

<https://karlstad.se/karlstad-vaxer>

Karlstad's comprehensive plan:

<https://karlstad.se/bygga-bo-och-leva-hallbart/samhallsutveckling-och-planering/oversiktsplan>

Karlstad's Architecture Policy:

<https://karlstad.se/bygga-bo-och-leva-hallbart/bygglov-och-tillstand/arkitektur/arkitektur-karlstad>

Karlstad's Cultural Heritage Programme:

<https://karlstad.se/bygga-bo-och-leva-hallbart/bygglov-och-tillstand/kulturhistoriska-byggnader/kulturmiljoprogrammet>

Historical images of Karlstad:

<https://gi.karlstad.se/historiskabilder/>

Stockholm–Oslo 2:55 railway project:

<https://www.oslo-sthlm.se/>

Relevant laws and regulations

Accessibility:

<https://www.boverket.se/sv/byggande/tillganglighet-bostadsutformning/tillganglighet/>

BBR, the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning's building regulations in English: :

<https://www.boverket.se/en/start/publications/2019/boverkets-building-regulations--mandatory-provisions-and-general-recommendations-bbr/>

Temadelar detaljplan Boverket's guidance on specific planning issues:

<https://www.boverket.se/sv/PBL-kunskapsbanken/planering/detaljplan/temadelar-detaljplan/>

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Public tendering – Swedish sites

European 18 is a design contest with the purpose of negotiating a subsequent service contract. We will further inform the Swedish contracting authorities in the document "Europanhandboken".

A registered company is not required to compete, but it is required for a subsequent commission from the site owner.

Legal Provisions for Foreign Architects

In Sweden the title "architect" is not protected, nor is the profession. Anyone can apply for a building permit. There are no legal restrictions to foreign architects exercising their profession in Sweden or having their projects implemented. It is however common that foreign architects in this situation for practical reasons collaborate with a Swedish architect.

In European, the competition rules stipulate that each team must include an architect. As architect counts all persons with a five-year architectural degree (master's degree). For the Swedish sites, we will approve everyone with a European degree that is accepted for a professional title by Architects Sweden (in Swedish "Sveriges Arkitekter", the national architects' organization). If your degree is not from a European country, you have additionally to be a member of a national European architects' organization affiliated with ACE or UIA.

For more information please see www.europan.se/faq/

ABOUT EUROPAN

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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Visit our website:
www.europan.se

CONTACT INFORMATION:



E-mail: info@europan.se

EUROPAN SWEDEN

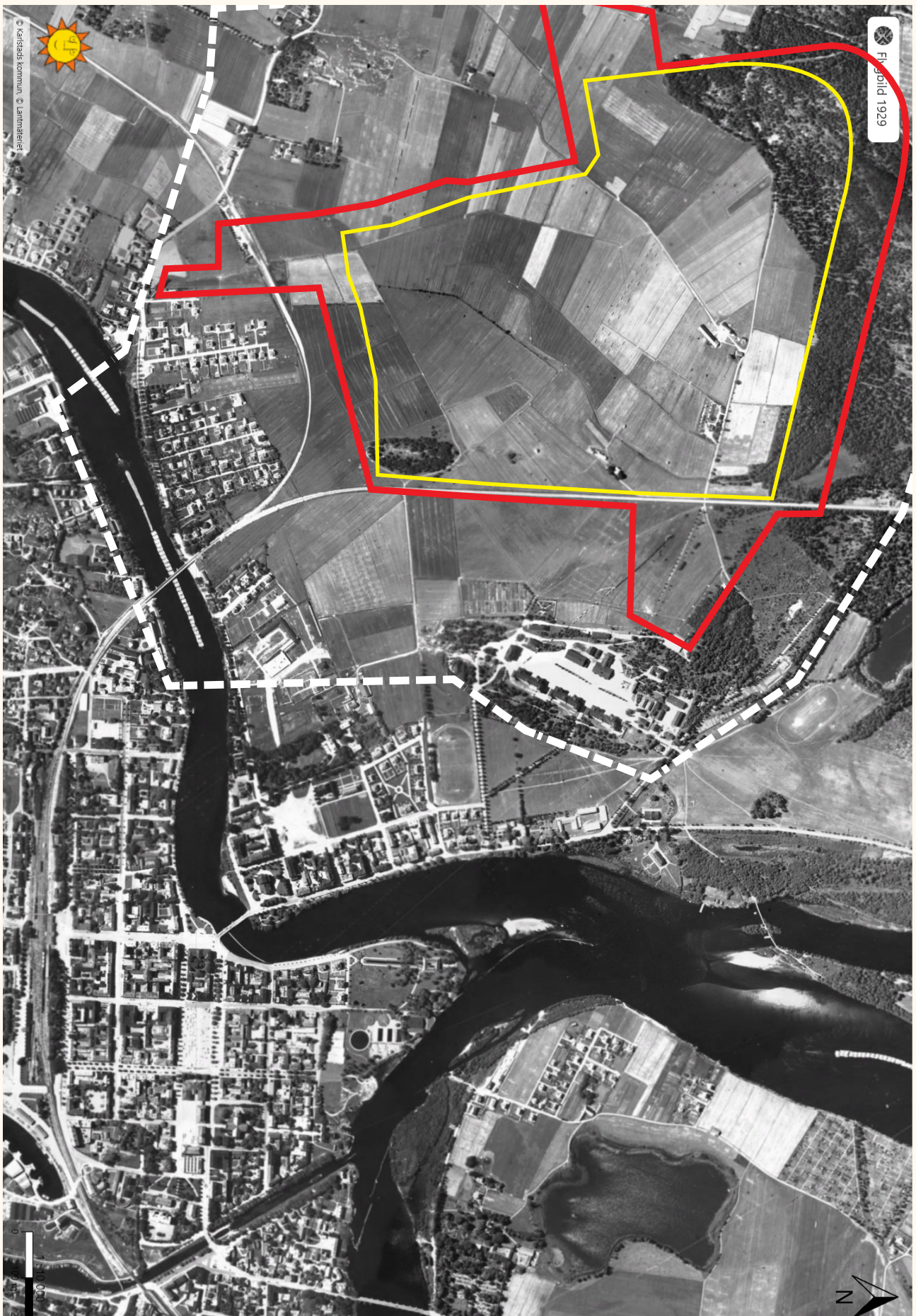


The Swedish European Secretariat is run by Asante Architecture & Design. Europan 18 is under the auspices of Architects Sweden.

asante
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

Sveriges Arkitekter

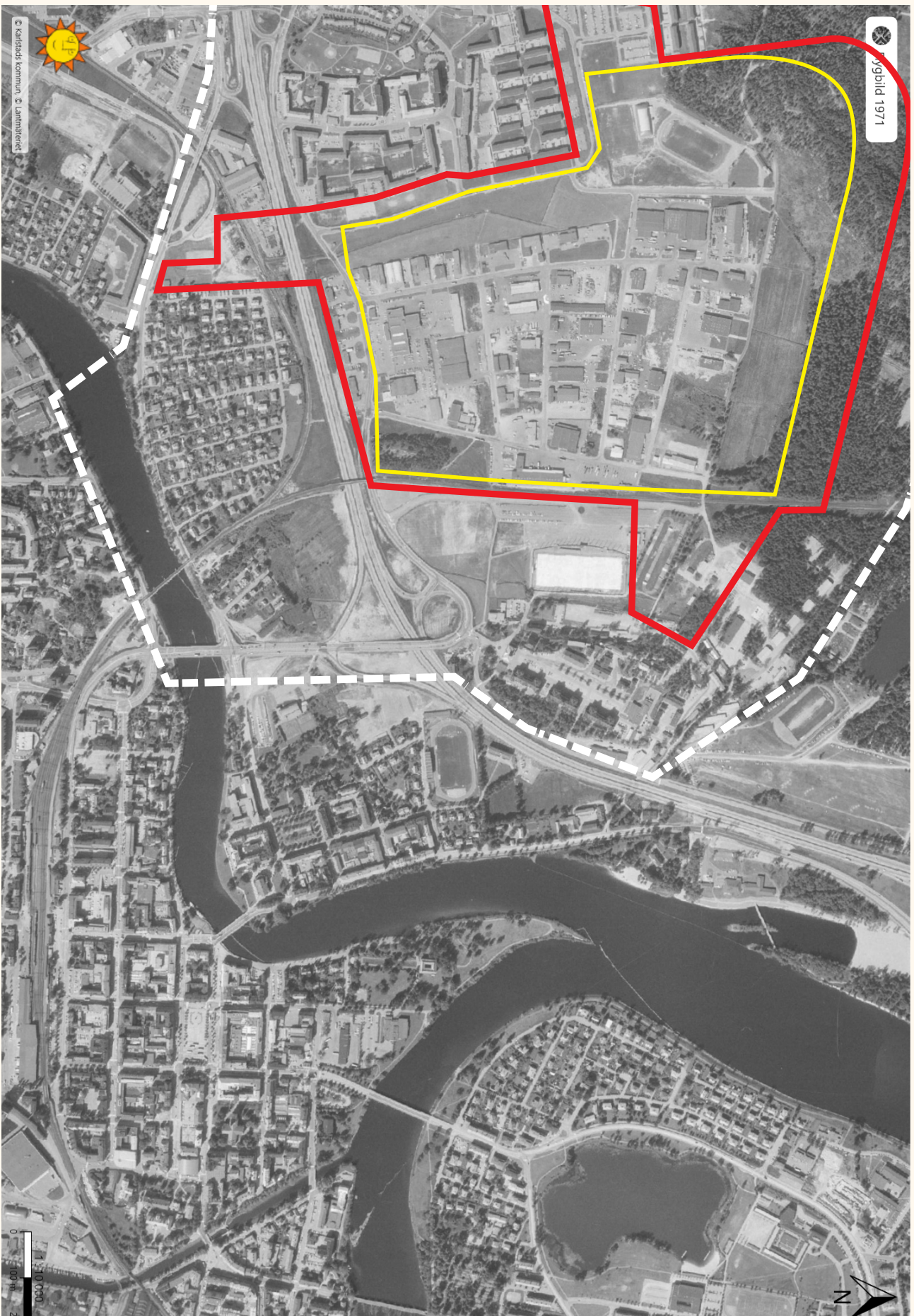
HISTORICAL AERIAL VIEW OVER THE COMPETITION AREA. 1929



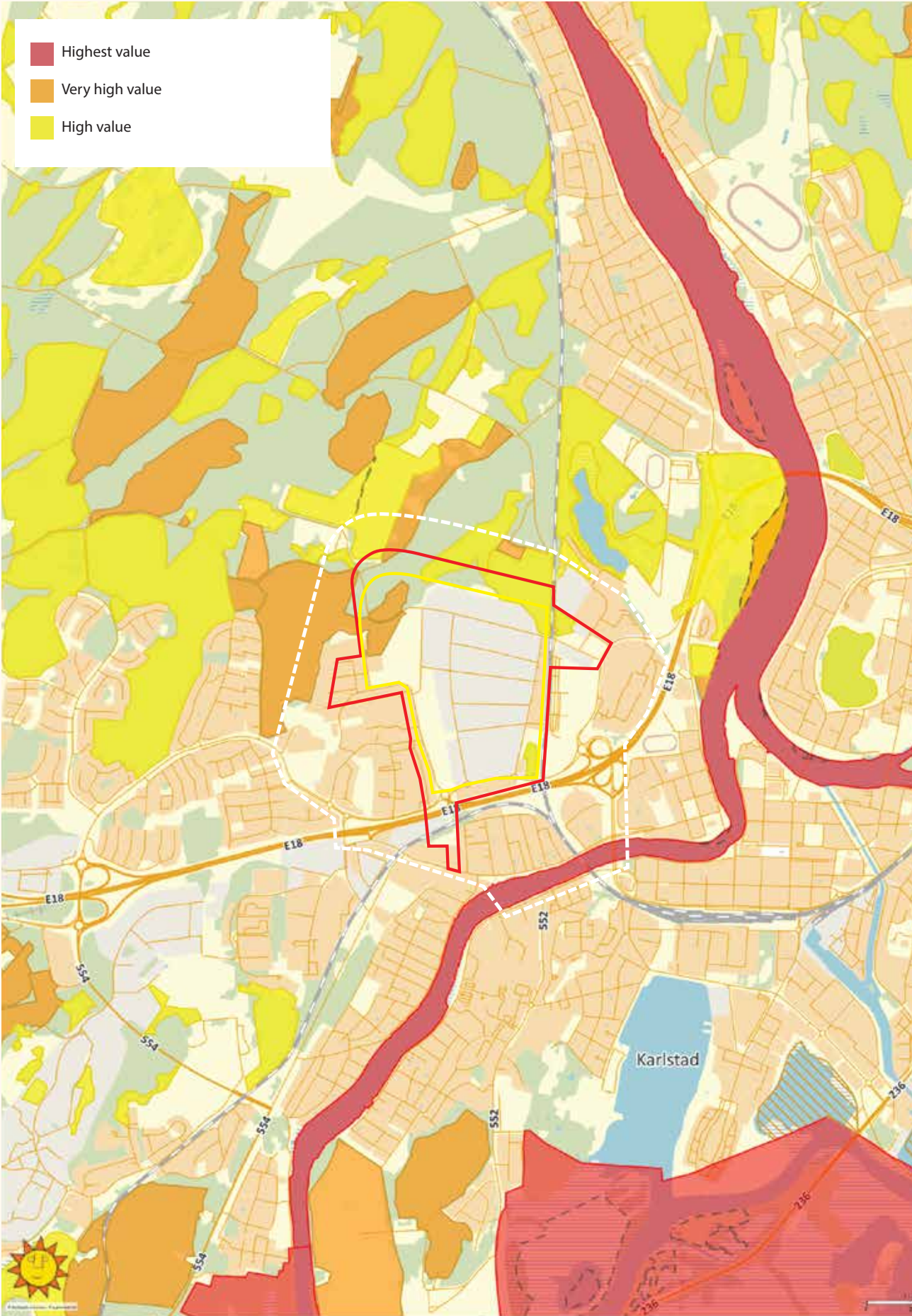
HISTORICAL AERIAL VIEW OVER THE COMPETITION AREA. 1959



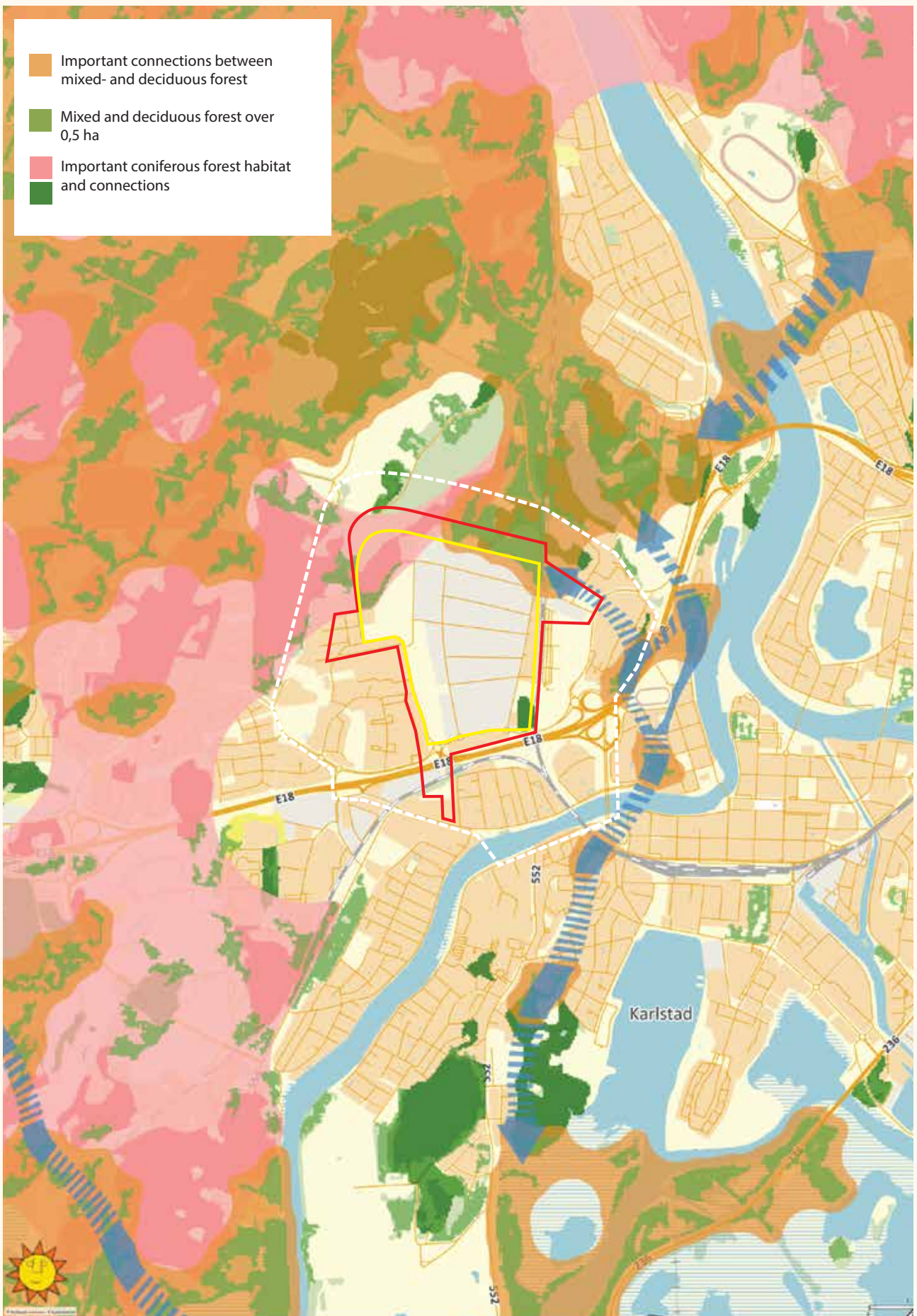
HISTORICAL AERIAL VIEW OVER THE COMPETITION AREA. 1971



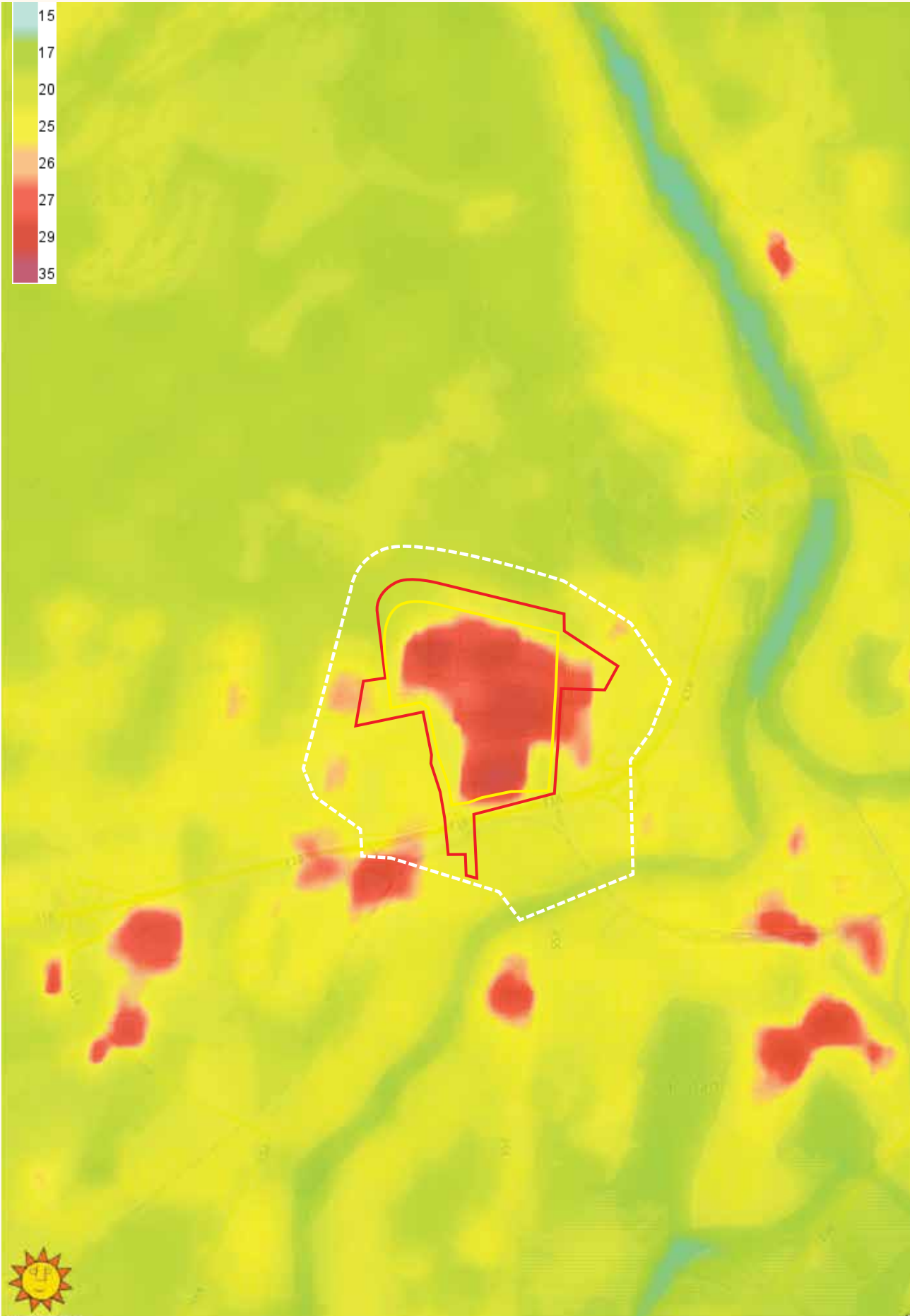
NATURAL VALUES



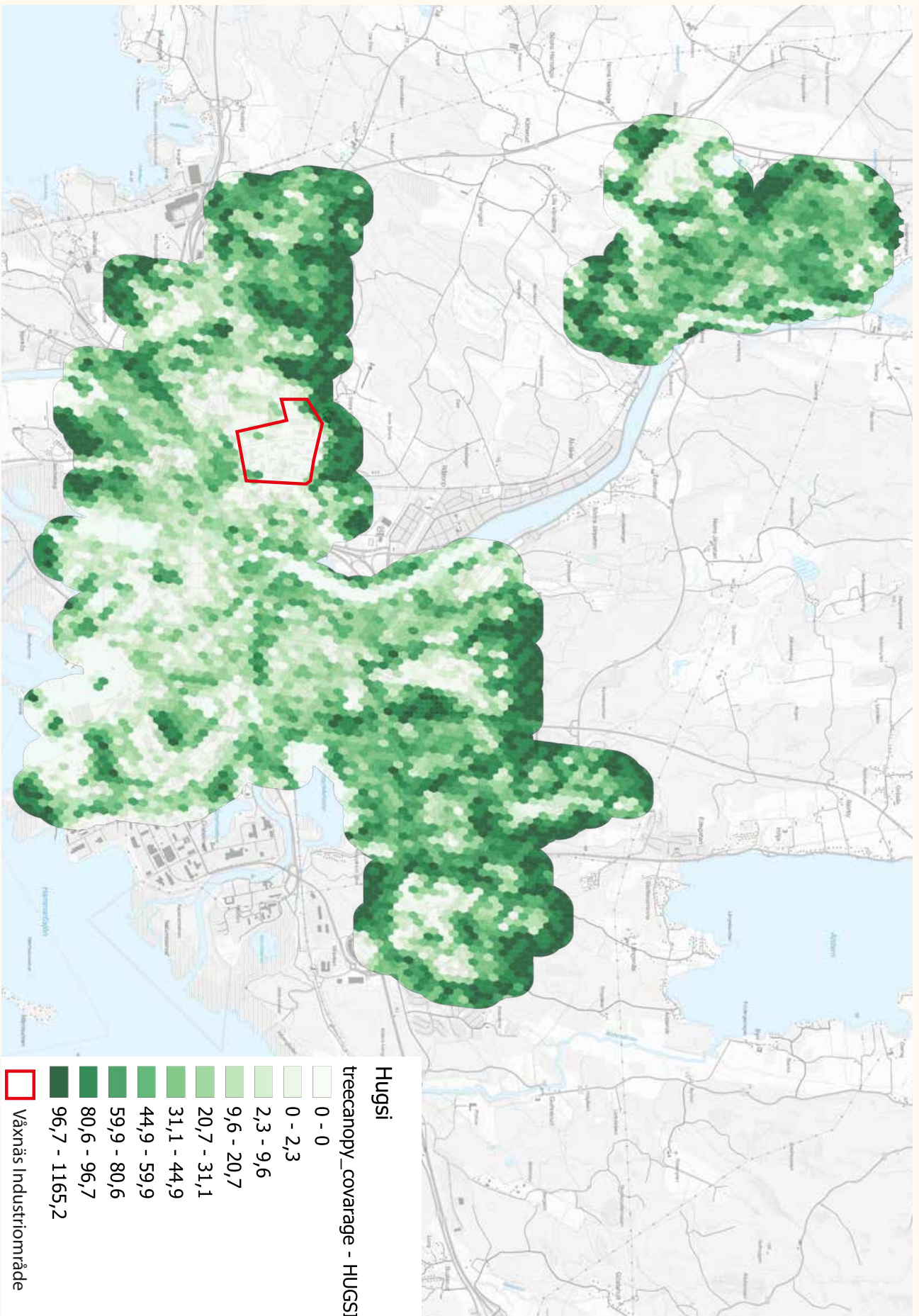
GREEN CONNECTIONS



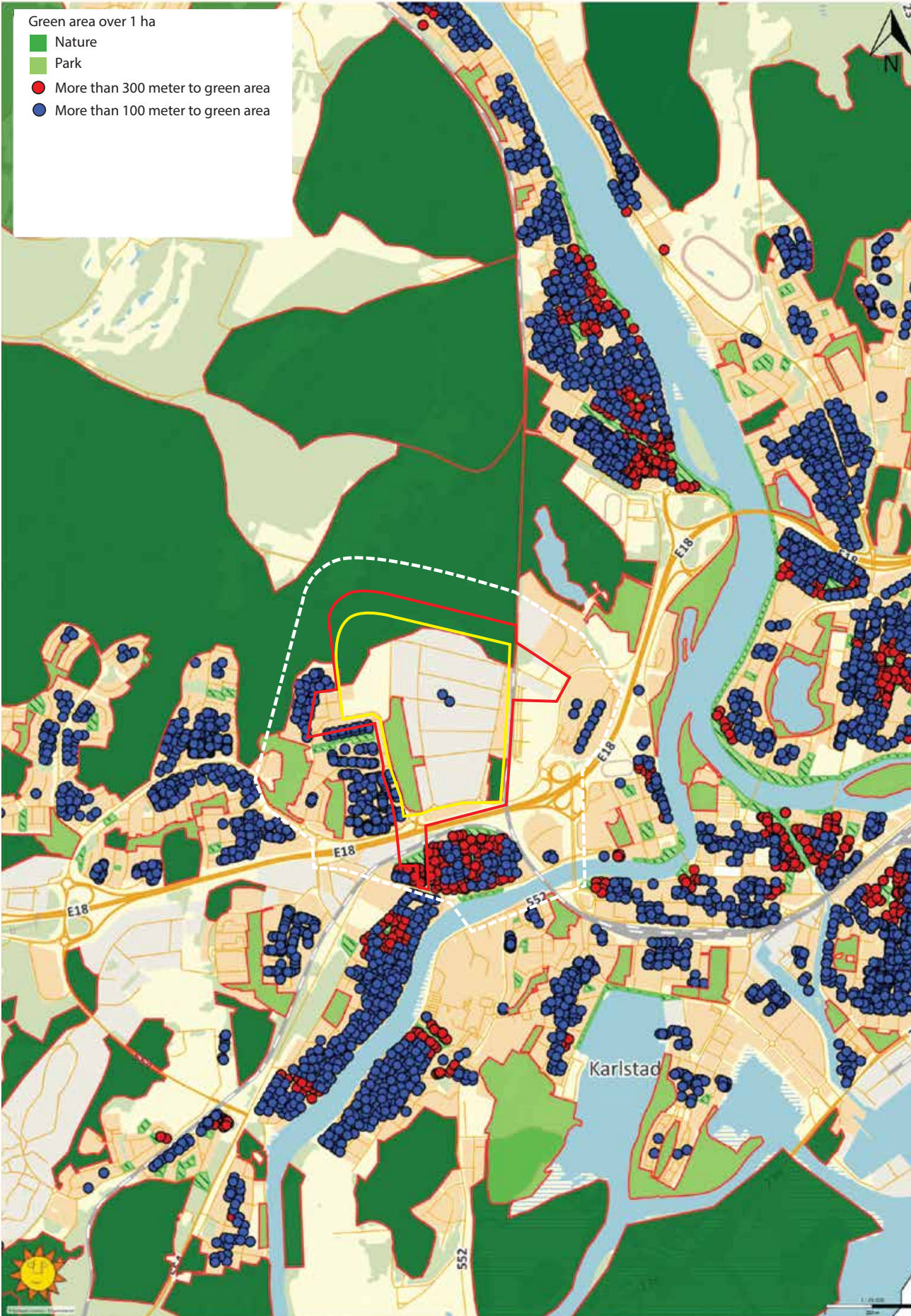
AVERAGE TEMPERATURE



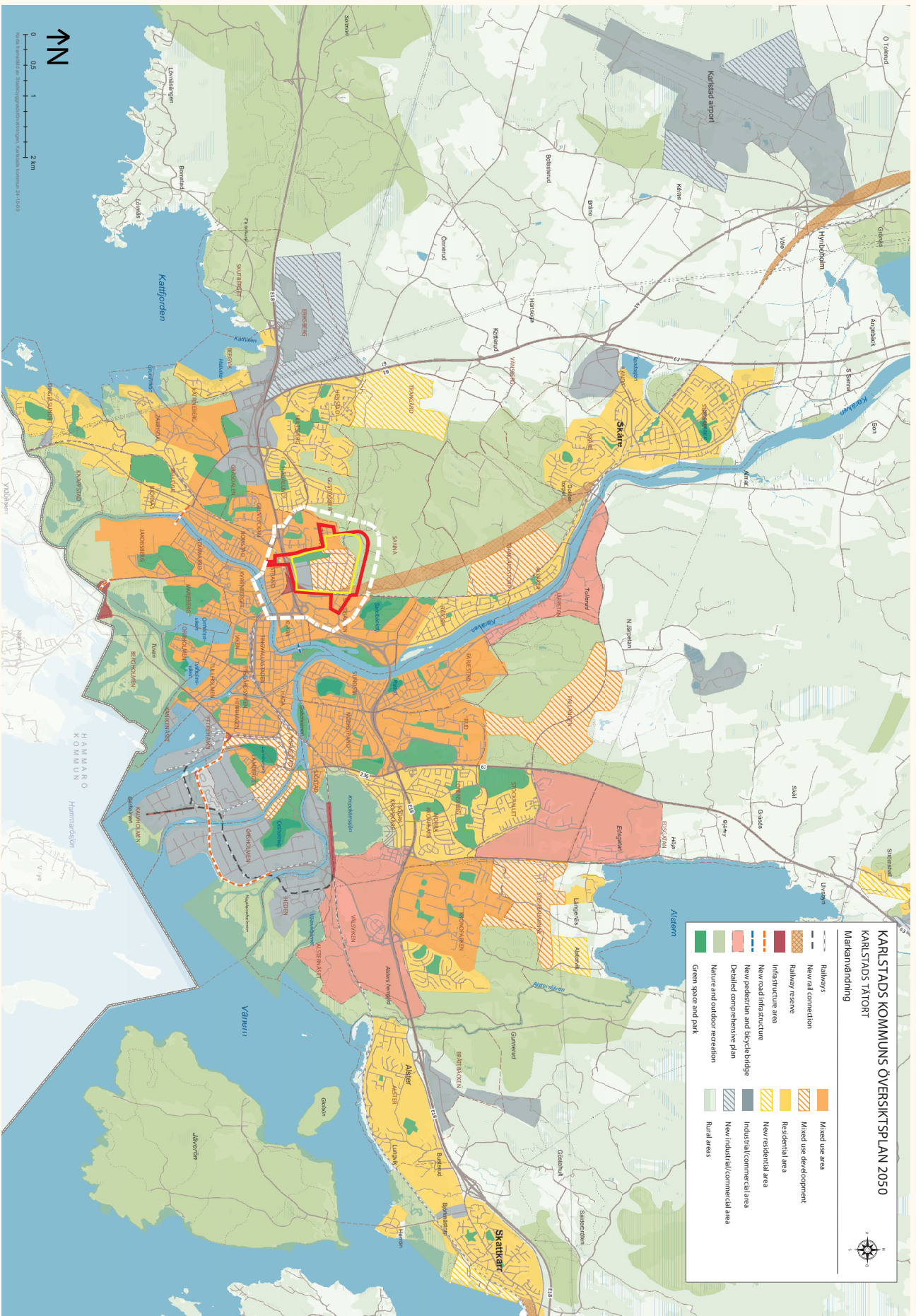
TREE CANOPY COVERAGE



DISTANCE TO GREEN AREA ANALYSIS



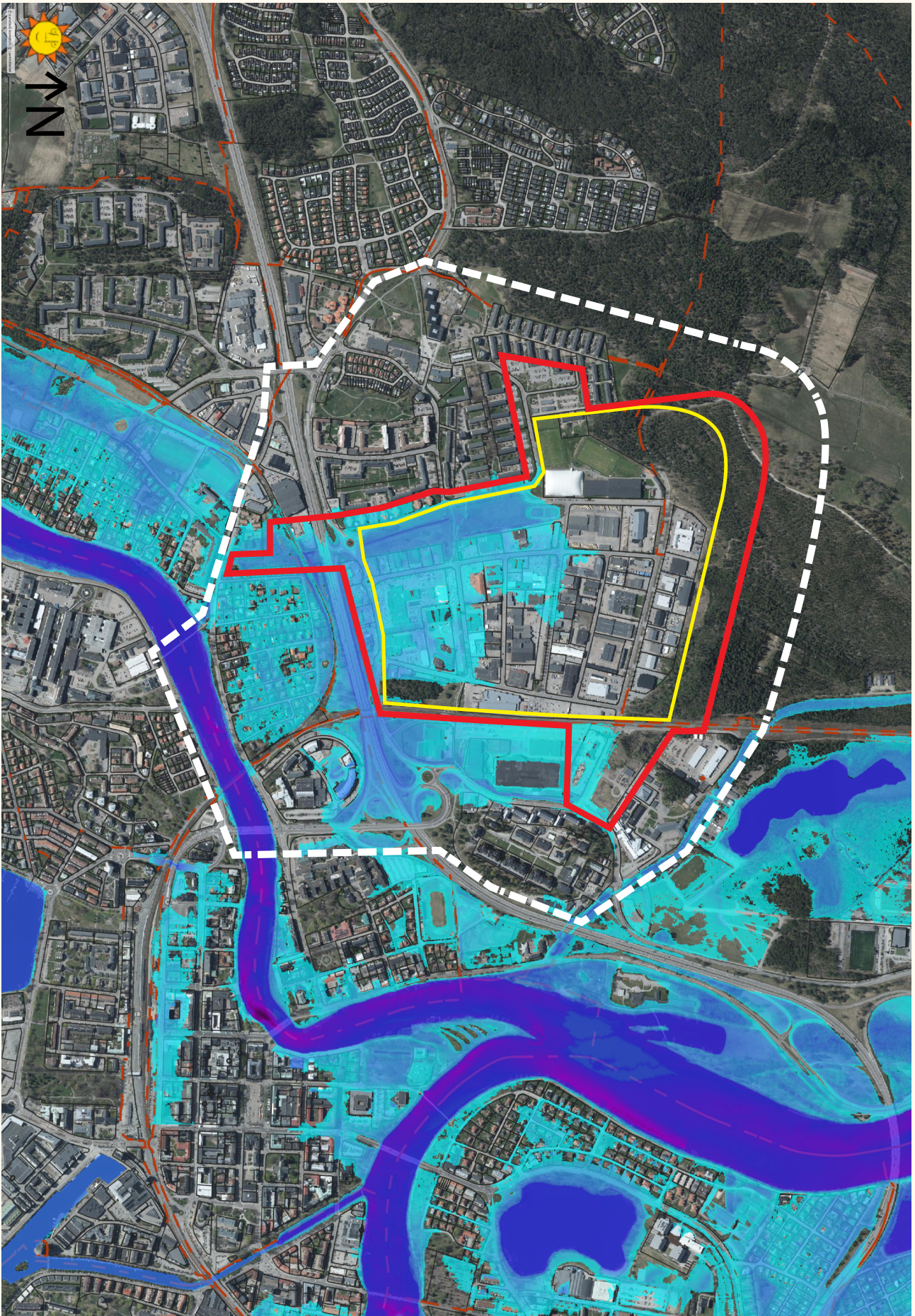
LANDUSE MAP KARLSTAD URBAN AREA



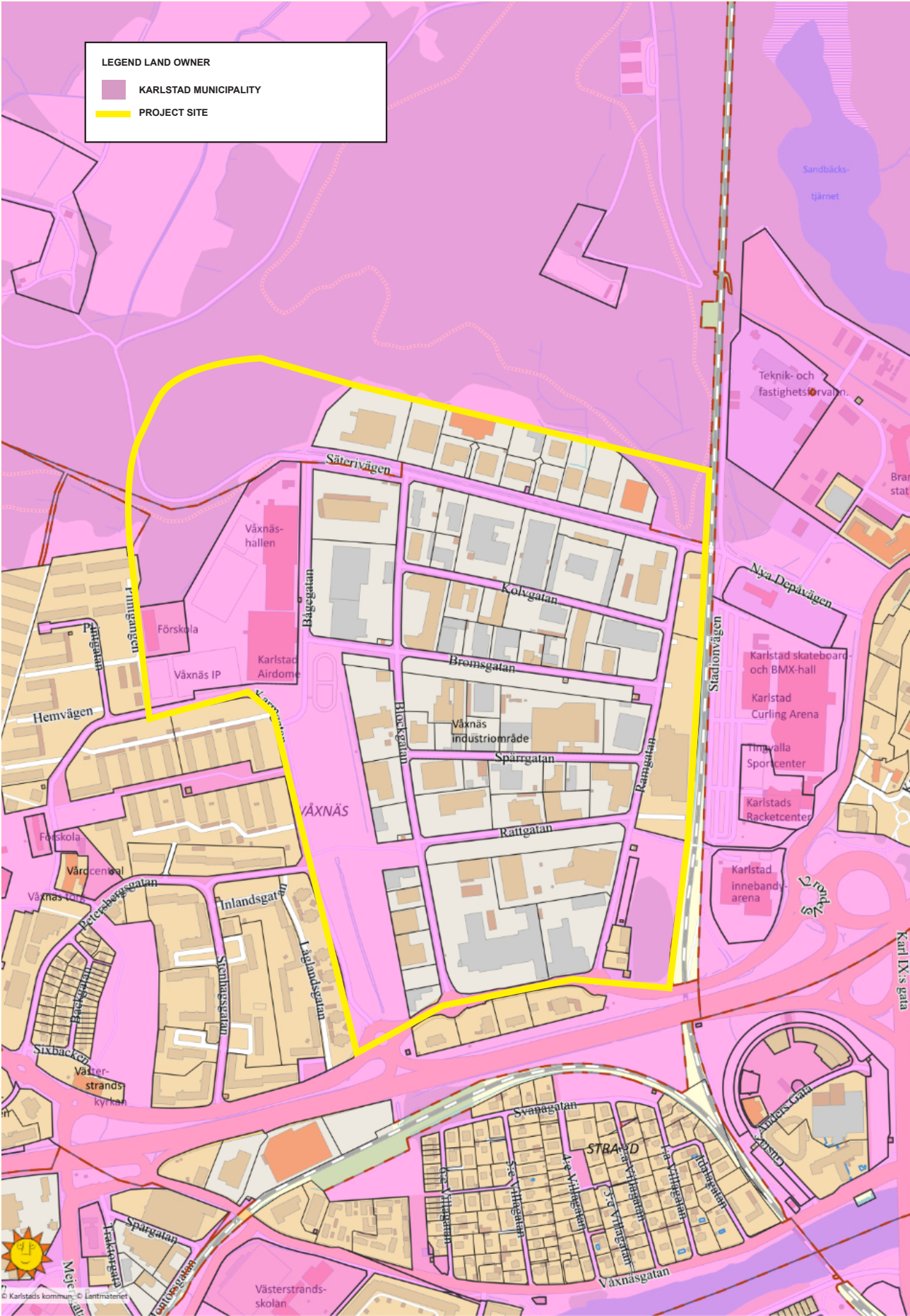
100-YEAR RAINFALL



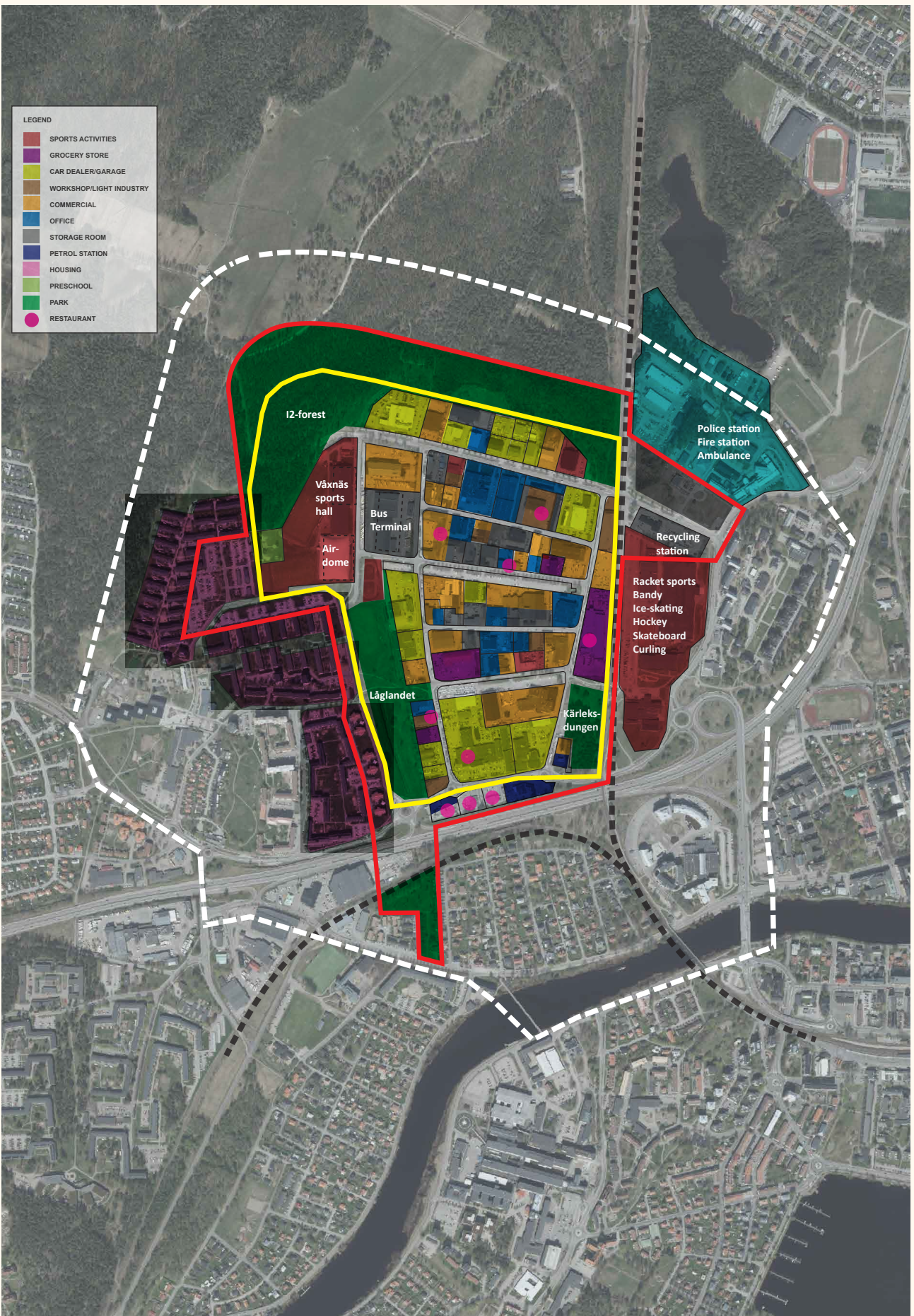
200-YEAR FLOOD KLARÄLVEN RIVER



LAND OWNED BY KARLSTAD MUNIDIPALITY IN THE COMPETITION AREA



LAND USE IN THE COMPETITION AREA



PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND BIKE LANE MAP VÄXNÄS

