

# SUUR-TALLINN 2024

Reconsidering Eliel Saarinen's integrative plan

Bachelor's thesis

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July 2014

Particular thanks are due to

Professor PhD Paul Sigel  
PhD Jörg Seifert

PhD Maroš Krivy

Eesti Arhitektuurimuuseum

Jaak-Adam Looveer  
Tiina Nigul  
Kadri Vaher

Lennard Piggini

and my family.

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Bachelor's thesis

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July 2014

## Abstract

Tallinn was undergoing various tremendous changes since the start of its rapid industrialisation 150 years ago. The following topic is the reissue of the city's historical ties in terms of spatial planning.

101 years ago, the Finn Eliel Saarinen planned a Great Tallinn, not only in size and population, but as an integral concept and unity, following logical considerations as well as economic, environmental and aesthetical rules. Is it possible to once more picture the city's future, this time in 10 years from now and 111 years from Saarinen's estimable vision? Precisely in this regard, the aim is to reconsider the 1913 plan for present-day Tallinn, concurrently widening the paper's range by emphasising spatial issues of the later 20<sup>th</sup> and the ongoing 21th century. Hence, the leitmotif is the thought of looking to the future, being rooted in the past.

Following this reasoning, the aim of the conceptual section is to complete the circle and come up with a grounded strategy for Tallinn's positioning in a world characterised by polarisation as well as the rising need of distinctiveness, networking and competitiveness.



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# 1. Introduction

*“Our capital is shaped like a bat. The city jammed between the lake and the sea spreads its wings out a long way to the east and to the west (...) The bat’s body is in the city’s narrowest place. This body has a medieval heart surrounded by a green ring of parks. The contemporary city is beside the heart and consists of a business district with high-rise buildings, a presentable city around the perimeter dating back to the first period of Estonian independence, and an urban space open to the sea and with an abundance of nuances, built in the middle of an area of old industrial architecture.”<sup>1</sup>*

When discussing future scenarios of Tallinn, a number of master’s degree students from the Estonian Academy of Arts described an interesting feature of the ‘bat’s body in the city’s narrowest place’, which was similarly recognised by the young Finnish architect and urban planner Eliel Saarinen already 101 years ago. The tiny space between the medieval old town, the Tallinn Bay and Lake Ülemiste was chosen by him as the prospective city centre. The wings should be developed as Tallinn’s future big-city districts, with radial boulevards and concentric train lines. Saarinen planned Suur Tallinn. The intention behind one of the first urban plans in his career was exactly what the Estonian title suggests: a Great Tallinn, not only in size and population, but as a integral concept and unity, following logical considerations as well as economic, environmental and aesthetical rules.

Nowadays it is hard to find a contemporary vision of the same value for Tallinn’s future. The direction remains mostly unclear, even though the Academy of Arts students emphasise that “the global world is becoming ever more uniform and places that differentiate become attractive. ‘Ideas’ help up market our city. There are many green capital cities and even more coastal cities. Yet there is only one city in the world where the Christmas tree was born - Tallinn”<sup>2</sup>.

It is impossible to truly foresee Tallinn in 10 years from now and 111 years from Eliel Saarinen’s tremendous vision of Estonia’s capital. Nevertheless and precisely for this reason it is inevitable to suggest a way - a vision - which implements a strategy to execute in the future. The following thesis’ aim is therefore a reconsideration of the 1913 plan for present-day Tallinn. A continuous adaptability and astonishing flexibility are recognised in the integrative Suur Tallinn approach, which is why the possi-

bility of its realignment is being assumed in this thesis.

Saarinen’s answers on various questions indeed continue to be current solutions. However, the fact that he was engaged in Tallinn 101 years ago suggests that many additional aspects have become important matters of urban policy. Starting with the triumph of cars and the accompanying urban sprawl during the 20th century, over their slow deterioration, to an increasing environmental awareness in the new millennium - those issues are crucial when analysing agglomerations nowadays. Moreover, demographic changes, shrinking state coffers or self-reinforcing polarisation trends accompanied by the supraregional competition of city regions in a globalised world gain importance today.

This paper follows the thought of looking to the future, being rooted in the past. Especially when urban design has to adjust to such epochal changes in theory and practice, which today cover town and country due to ecological, demographic and telematic revolutions, then its own past has to be browsed for those theories, which have previously already adjusted similar turnovers. Keeping in mind an urban architectural perspective, this process has to happen with regard to the planning instruments.<sup>3</sup>

The thematic spectrum of this paper is comparatively broad. Thus, the first chapter makes subject to modern spatial planning’s beginnings in regard of the massive urban growth and industrialisation in the 19th century. Tallinn followed the tendency of industrial cities and has expanded tremendously during the last two centuries. The chapter ‘The Greater Tallinn Plan and planning culture in the 1910s’ goes behind the scenes of a newly evolving multidisciplinary understanding of planning in the second decade of the 20th century. It is important to deal with this attitude with regard to fully understand Eliel Saarinen’s Greater Tallinn Plan, which has officially never been made reality until today. After briefly going through Estonia’s - and Tallinn’s - history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the years of the First Estonian Republic as well as the Soviet years, a look at the lastly established economic, juridical and political system of the Second Estonian Republic can be found in the next section. Based on the 1913 vision of Suur-Tallinn, Estonia’s recent history and current urbanistic ideas, the conceptual section tries to consolidate all the experience and different approaches, finally coming to a conclusion as to whether a holistic strategy can be implemented and how to achieve.

‘Suur Tallinn 2024’ is meant to reveal the philosophy and culture of planning in the 1910s, which has been exemplary realised by Eliel Saarinen,. The thesis is supposed to be understood as an inspiration for experts and technical planners, who deal with contemporary questions, being familiar with further details and modalities on-site. In this respect, the paper is kept in a relatively abstract - and hopefully adaptable - nature.

1 Tallinna Idee (2010), page 27.

2 Tallinna Idee (2010), page 24.

3 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 447.

## 2. Methodology

The following Bachelor's thesis has been structured following the leitmotif of historical ties in spatial planning and recurring epochal changes. This program identifies two focal points, which are noticeable in the structure and extent: the one being the never realised city plan for Tallinn designed by Eliel Saarinen. The second focal point is Tallinn's inscrutable circumstances in terms of spatial planning and city development nowadays, taken as an occasion to reconsider the past proposals for the city's future.

Chapters three to five are mostly historical works, collecting information about past events and endeavouring to reproduce elapsed movements. The focus is put on the Greater Tallinn Competition from 1913, along with similar architectural contests at the time and key intellectual movements. Various publications serve as sources here, including recapitulations of Eliel Saarinen's Greater Tallinn proposal. Vaike Haas' academic thesis "A Review of Urban Planning in Tallinn, Estonia: Post-Soviet Planning Initiatives in Historic and Cultural Context" is primarily valuable in the fifth chapter, outlining Tallinn's development during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapters six and seven, which discuss Tallinn's current framework and future strategies, are primarily based on five different sources. Firstly, the chapters follow recent strategic papers, juridical information and statistical data, which have been evaluated by Estonia's and Tallinn's official side. Further, the results of an interview with Kadri Vaher and Jaak-Adam Looveer, both working in the Tallinn City Planning Department today, as well as Tiina Nigul, former operative in the department, are completing the first source. After being transcribed, the interview has been evaluated according to the following categories: 1) Demographics Tallinn, 2) Tallinn's Development during Soviet times, 3) Strategic Focal Points, 4) Planning Tools, 5) Tallinn Master Plan, 6) Infrastructure and Transportation Plans, 7) Rail Baltica and Via Baltica, 8) Helsinki to Tallinn Tunnel, 9) Muuga Harbour, 10) Eliel Saarinen's Impact, 11) Main Challenges of Today and 12) Conclusion and Forecast. Thirdly, the Estonian Academy of Arts study "The 'Ideas' of Tallinn" is being integrated in the paper. Further, a considerable amount of attention is paid to the publication "Stadtvisionen 1910|2010". Lastly, Eliel Saarinen's Greater Tallinn Plan, formulated in 1913, has its significant impact on the proposals presented in the concept chapter.

The proposals, which have been drawn in the conceptual section of the thesis, are on the one hand based on existent focal points pointed out in the interview or strategic papers. In addition, own observations form the basis for the suggested solutions. However, the decisions made confirm the relatively abstract nature of the concept, which has the aim to be a trend-setting direction in contrast to detailed elaborations.

As the following thesis deals with urban issues, it is necessary to clarify the different scales and areas of research. The most elaborated scales are the ones covering the city and the city region. Tallinn as an administrative, political and economic unity as well as its intertwined agglomeration area are at the focus. Concurrently, certain aspects which are going to be discussed on the city scale have to be deepened on chosen district levels. Especially in case of the inner city of Tallinn, there appears the opportunity to do so. It should be noted that the medieval old town, been discussed often already a top tourist attraction under maximum heritage protection in the core of the surrounding city, is being excluded from the paper to a large extent. However, especially in terms of legal conditions, demographics, long-distance transportation and supraregional cooperation, a broader scale is of substantial importance, too. This is why additionally the geographically and institutionally close city of Helsinki plays a significant role.

# 3. Genesis

## 3.a Liberal democracy, industrialisation and urban growth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was affected by a rapid industrialisation and an overall growth of population. Initially, European politics drifted towards market-oriented liberalism. The concentration of production in large workshops implemented the new proletarian class and reservoir of labour. Many significant inventions, such as railways, steam engines, the telephone, photography, the motion picture, electric energy and traffic signals took place in this period. “The masses have suddenly become visible, settled in the stage, whereas now they have appeared in the footlights, become main characters (...) This new world was made possible by three founding principles: liberal democracy, experimental sciences and industrialisation.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet, the Revolutions of 1848 threw both the liberal jurisdictions of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the leftist movement into a crisis. The 1848 fights emerged the political right with Napoleon III. in France, Bismarck in Germany and Disraeli in the United Kingdom as winners, who moved away from the principal of the state’s non-intervention. In this regard, the rising bourgeoisie designed a new model of town planning, which would coordinate the different belonging groups’ interests based on intervening in the lower-class environment. The absolute entrepreneurial freedom was limited in favour of administrative bodies, which prescribed building regulations and at the same time executed public building projects. This marks the shift from the ‘liberal’ to the ‘post liberal’ city. This model proved itself with immediate success, as the development of big European cities such as Paris got under control and at the same time new colonial city foundations followed its format all over the world.<sup>2</sup>

In the European cities the two disciplines science and arts gradually fell apart, as the technical experts were reduced to their specialities, while the artists enjoyed certain freedom, but at the same time in less essential fields. Both groups suffered from their secondary rank behind highly influential property owners and increasing bureaucracy.<sup>3</sup> “The inevitable side effect of growing towns was the increasing price of land, and land becoming an object of business. Speculating with land enriched private owners and hindered the development of towns in community interests.”<sup>4</sup> Whole districts with poor sanitation emerged within a short period of time.

With the progressive urban growth and densification of the European city, it came to a big clash between the migrants’ rural mentality and newly appearing habits of the metropolis. A high concentration of people opened new social conditions in the cities: “The crowd - no subject was more entitled

1 Ortega y Gasset (1930), pages 13 and 69.

2 Benevolo (1982), page 813.

3 Benevolo (1982), page 828.

4 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 20.

to the attention of nineteenth-century writers.”<sup>5</sup> The settlement of thousands of migrants who were seeking work in the rising European metropolises had not only a spatial impact on the cities’ entity. Most of them arrived in the course of the overall rural exodus. Therefore, people from a countryside background suddenly found themselves in highly urbanised surroundings. The masses, usually pouring either into the tiny and shady backhouses or entire slums, were facing such unseen phenomena as technological inventions and traffic jams. At the same time, they continued their rural lifestyle and, for instance, kept cattle in the courtyards.

Georg Simmel, a German sociologist, analysed the mental state of the cities’ inhabitants in his 1903 published work, *Metropolis and mental life*. The key of this counterintuitive approach lied in the intensification of consciousness, compared with the pre-industrial cities and especially with the rural setting. A huge amount of impressions as well as a largely speeded up rhythm of life confronted the people in the densifying and mechanising metropolises. In this regard, the author implements the notion of blasé. The growing importance of precision and exactness goes hand in hand with an expanding population, which consists of ‘strangers’. Altogether this leads to anonymity and indifference in the distinction of things.<sup>6</sup>

As the urban population continued to expand and more and more officials started to recognise the negative consequences of their lacking management, a first bigger movement of reactionary regulations occurred. “Germany, where industrialisation and the growth of towns was the quickest, became the leading light in planning in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Stadterweiterungen in technischer, baupolizeilicher und wirtschaftlicher Beziehung, published in 1876 by Reinhard Baumeister (...) was the first systematic ‘handbook’ of urban planning (...) This introduced the idea of zoning of towns (...) For the first time the price of the plot of land did not depend on the general market situation, but on the peculiarity of a specific area determined by planning. By the turn of the centuries, the zoning building regulations had spread into many German towns.”<sup>7</sup> More publications followed and more city governments started to become active in terms of managing urban growth, though in various cases this late change of direction came without proper consistency. So, European as well as US-American cities continued to expand tremendously in the same way even during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

5 Benjamin (1919), page 25.  
6 Simmel (1903).  
7 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 31.

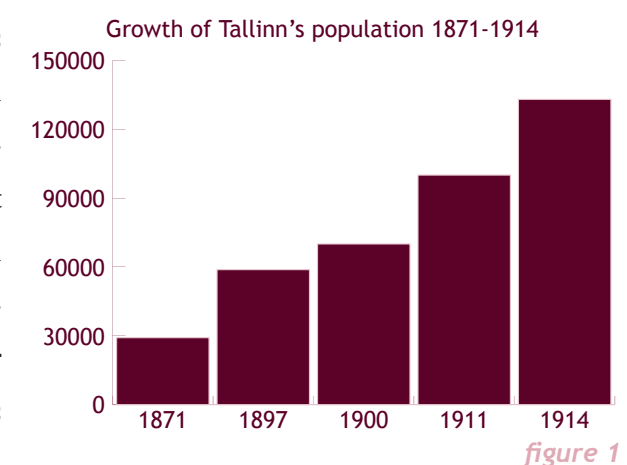
### 3.b Tallinn’s way to a metropolis 1870-1910

“With the demolition of the medieval town gates in the 1870s and 1890s, Tallinn had broken out of its medieval boundaries.”<sup>8</sup> Since the opening of the railway between Sankt Petersburg and Tallinn in 1870, the future Estonian capital started to grow rapidly. The rail connection boosted the already important seaport of the Russian Empire. During the next decades, the port’s position changed from an outpost of Sankt Petersburg to one of the leading ports in the Russian Empire in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A significant number of large enterprises has accumulated around the existing city after the railway was established. Most of those companies were situated along the railroad line on land which had not been used so far. New housing districts, mainly consisting of wooden buildings, followed to establish along the arteries rapidly and chaotically.<sup>9</sup>

In the last decades of the century, two major efforts have been done about regulating the future expansion of the city. Unfortunately, both of them only dealt with the central city and allowed private owners to develop the suburbs in their own way. This has led to a wide lack of structure and a chaotic mixture of wooden houses and industry especially in the East of the city. Meanwhile, most of the seaside has been cultivated with dockyards and depots for the port, which have led to a break between the sea and the city.<sup>10</sup>

Between 1910 and 1914, the growth rate of Tallinn’s population was 9,5 % per year, while in the Western European cities a rate of 4,4 % was considered normal. Riga and Helsinki showed a growth rate of just 3,8 % per year, being comparable cities with Tallinn in size and location in this period. The speed of construction was significantly high, but on the other hand the percentage of high quality buildings was small. While the number of stone buildings doubled, the wooden constructions quadrupled.<sup>11</sup> “In 1911, Tallinn’s population exceeded 100 000, after which it was declared a big city according to European custom and the statistics of the Tsarist empire. This in turn demanded a general plan of the city.”<sup>12</sup>



8 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 50  
9 Djomkin (1977), page 52.  
10 Djomkin (1977), page 51.  
11 Djomkin (1977), page 51.  
12 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 19.



The continuously increasing construction of mostly cheap buildings called for regulations of urban development. A committee was established to prepare a town plan in 1894. In 1880, 1883, 1893, 1897 and 1898, more and more local building regulations were added in Tallinn, especially trying to lower the number of cheap wooden buildings in the city centre and along main roads such as Tartu, Narva and Pärnu roads. In 1902, another committee started the preparations for a 'general building plan' of Tallinn, which came into effect the year after, no longer allowing the establishment of new streets without a municipal permit.<sup>13</sup> By the year 1913, many landowners were frightened by the increasingly strict limitations and started to hurry with a remarkable last wave of wooden house constructions in smaller streets immediate to the city centre, which by then still allowed such a cheap execution.<sup>14</sup>

One significant reason for the disorganised development of the quickly expanding city was the fact that the Baltic-Germans, who were the constant majority in Tallinn city council for centuries until 1904, looked mostly after the old town, which was absolutely dominated by them. The ongoing urban growth, however, considerably changed the ethnic structure of Tallinn on the edge of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the rural Estonian migrants settled on the outskirts of the city.

From 1908-1909 onwards, an overall improvement of the ongoing construction's quality is noticeable. There are three main reasons for this positive change: 1) the consequent tightening of building regulations since the 1880s, 2) an increasing architecture culture in Estonia with the establishment of an own specialised press, 3) the rising appearance, professionalism and internationality of architectural competitions.<sup>15</sup>

Among these contests, the city of Tallinn, like many other European cities in that time, came up with plans for a new representative town hall, which can be viewed in the context of a rising national consciousness. Five jurists from Finland, Russia and Latvia were asked to form a panel of judges. Among 14 other participants, also the Finn Eliel Saarinen submitted his design, which "(...) gained an honourable mention (...) and was selected in 1914 as a basis for the eventual form of the [town hall] building. [However] the undertaking was abandoned at the outbreak of the Great War."<sup>16</sup>

13 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 51.

14 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 80.

15 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 52.

16 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 200.

# 4. The Greater Tallinn Plan and planning culture in the 1910s

## 4.a Integrative planning around 1910

The years around 1910 can be called the real bloom of modern city planning. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, planning was mostly done in a reactionary, pragmatic and engineering way. Most of the different planning movements during the 20<sup>th</sup> century were characterised by splitting the disciplines and reductionist approaches. Around 1910, in contrast, spatial planning became a holistic task, maturing in the architect's creative hand. This time was marked by a multidisciplinary urban theory, a historically established practice of planning and an internationally oriented urbanistic debate.<sup>1</sup>

“The new terms reflected a principally different approach: planning towns no longer only signified extending the borders, but systematic re-structuring, creating a town as a new whole. This point of view was much more directed into the future, plans were made for the next 25 years and in the long term for almost a century, which naturally produced bold visions of future.”<sup>2</sup> Besides the search for adequate solutions for the inexorable urban traffic, poor living conditions of the proletarians and insufficient recreational possibilities, it was the lack of aesthetics in practice which led to all the innovative ideas in planning right from the beginning. The urban planning in those years could generate such a successful practice because of its complex theory.<sup>3</sup>

The origin of this international urbanistic exchange lies in different national doctrines, which appeared in their diverse contexts and had mutual stimulation on the urbanistic debate. Joseph Stübben's systematic and rational sense of proportions was greatly inspired by his studies of French baroque. He is also responsible for the clear differentiation between public and residential streets.<sup>4</sup> Camillo Sitte's publication *Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen* advocated an urban design in responsibility of architects as experts, with an encouragement for a universal paradigm shift towards diverse compositions of space in a holistic city context<sup>5</sup>, creating meaningful 'places' instead of simple squares. A significant inspiration of Sitte were the artistic aspects of medieval towns. “While Sitte stressed the townscape and spatial matters, Stübben regarded the solution of circulation problems as the starting point for successful town planning.”<sup>6</sup> Ebenezer Howard's decentralist garden city movement was trying to totally dissolve the chaotic metropolis and conciliate the city with nature. It was at the same time an economic suggestion against the raging speculation with land<sup>7</sup> and especially embraced in Great Britain. The American City-Beautiful movement, in turn, being a result of the bursting American capitalistic cities, was rationalistically oriented and had sought inspiration in the sanifying

1 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 29.

2 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 21.

3 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 34.

4 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 78.

5 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 78.

6 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 194..

7 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 33.

Hausmannian boulevards of Paris, but at the same time emphasising the greenness in cities, which again influenced the European debate.<sup>8</sup>

All the historical, cultural, social and linguistic features of the different movements could on the one hand keep their distinctiveness. On the other hand a downright wave of congresses (2271 between 1900 and 1913<sup>9</sup>), study trips and international competitions led to a roughly equal state of knowledge in the different culture groups, supported by a growing technical urbanistic press.<sup>10</sup>

*“In addition to the (...) important works appearing in print, a master plan for Chicago by Daniel Burnham was completed in 1909, and a competition for a master plan for Berlin was announced in 1910. Berlin was also the venue of the International Town Planning Exhibition that year; two years later it was Düsseldorf. The exhibition secretary, Werner Hegemann, had the contents of these exhibitions published in 1911 and 1913 in two volumes titled Der Städtebau. When we recall that there had been a dwelling exhibition in Vienna in 1910 and a hygiene exhibition in Dresden the following year, this was indeed a period when town planning enjoyed a high profile.”<sup>11</sup>*

#### Generalregulierungsplan Wien 1892 and Otto Wagner’s Die Groszstadt

A remarkable example of epochal plans and their three-dimensional renderings is the case of Vienna. After a first architectural contest, dealing only with the rearrangement of the Ringstraße in 1858, a pompous stylistic development led to fundamental criticism of arts, architecture and urban design. Based on this debate, Vienna became a widely recognised lab of modernity in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 34 years after the Ringstraße project, the Generalregulierungsplan was concerned with a rearrangement of the whole metropolis. The first prize of the competition was shared by Joseph Stübben and Otto Wagner. “Wagner’s solution relied on the idea of decentralisation: the city nucleus was surrounded by satellite centres that considerably alleviated the burden of the main centre, connected by wide boulevards (...) The role of Otto Wagner as an ideologue was essential; in new big cities he saw the monumentality of the new era that did not derive from royal grandeur, but from the need to create an environment for the masses.”<sup>12</sup>

8 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 36.  
9 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 21.  
10 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 35.  
11 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 194..  
12 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 32.

In 1911 Otto Wagner, Austrian Imperial Royal Surveyor-in-Chief of Buildings, published his study Die Groszstadt. Eine Studie über diese in respect of the previous urbanistic competition in Vienna. In this document, he disputed the regulation of an expansion of Vienna.

Wagner’s slogan was *artis sola domina necessitas* - goal orientation of the arts. He was the figurehead of a growing opposition against the leading direction and claimed the search for a new logic in architecture. Instead of ‘stylistic architecture’, the form has to follow a function. Influenced by the Art Nouveau, the author wanted the ‘beautiful city’: Disliking a copying of ancient architecture, the modern city has to connect the features of ornamental architecture with functionality.

In his paper, he stated a series of elements for a reasoned expansion of particularly, but not only, Vienna. The author saw the catalogue of features convenient for any European metropolis.<sup>13</sup> “It reveals a concept of urban growth that would place no limits on the size of cities but would provide an orderly method of expansion through successive additions of districts of 100 000 to 150 000 people. These were to be located within a great spiderweb system of ring and radial boulevards extending outward from the urban core.”<sup>14</sup> Wagner set up the precondition that the majority of townspeople values to get lost in the crowd because of the spirit of freedom. Based on this, the whole city is homogenous instead of being busy to fight with its own outskirts.<sup>15</sup>

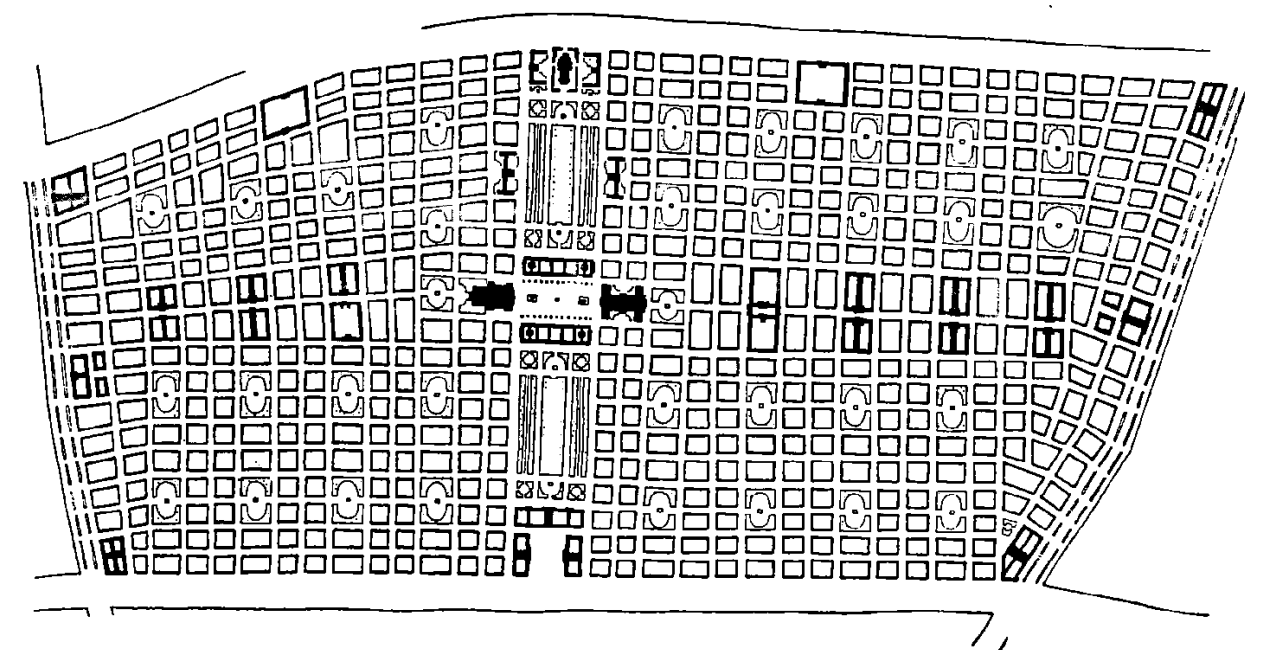


figure 2 District plan from ‘Die Groszstadt’

13 Wagner (1912).  
14 Wagner (1912), page 485.  
15 Geretsegger, Peintner (1978), page 41.



Wagner emphasised the question of land ownership and pointed out the importance of constantly purchasing the land on the outskirts by the municipality. The land's value is increasing with the urban growth, that's why it is essential for the city to prepare. Simultaneously, he pointed out the economic reason of the increasing densification, which was taking place not only in Vienna:

“Our democratic existence, in which the masses feel the pressure of the necessity for economy in their methods of living, and call for homes at once sanitary and cheap, has resulted in a certain uniformity in our dwelling houses. This tendency will therefore find expression in the plan of the future city (...) And since the proverb ‘Time is money’ is truer today than ever before, the increase in height of residential and office buildings in the city’s centre to seven or eight stories, indeed, to skyscrapers (if the city permits) is a natural development.”<sup>16</sup>



figure 3 Birds-eye view from ‘Die Groszstadt’

In his work, Wagner underlined the importance of a well-working transportation system, based on both the street grid and the railway. Therefore, he imagined the city as a skeleton of traffic. Based on this frame, it seems reasonable to zone the city. Every district should have its own centre and nature, while institutions like museums and theatres would stay in the inner city. Factories and warehouses were only meant to be in certain designated parts of the city.

16 Wagner (1912).

Chicago Plan 1909

Since its official foundation in 1833, during just a few decades Chicago has become the second largest city in the USA and fifth largest city in the world. Its important location led to the establishment as a hub and trade centre. However, the uncontrolled growth could be recognised in both the potential and the dark side of capitalism. At the turn of the century, the Chicagoan elites reached a consensus that the city’s development has to be scheduled by the so-called Chicago Plan. The American architect Daniel Burnham, together with his assistant Edward H. Bennett “a Beaux-Arts designer and architect twenty-eight years his junior”<sup>17</sup>, managed to collaborate with the Commercial Club, an association of Chicago’s reform-oriented economic elite. “Businessmen initiated the plan because they saw in Chicago an inadequate infrastructure and a disintegrating social order.”<sup>18</sup> After two years of dealing with financial, political and urbanistic questions of execution, the project group published a far-ranging plan with determinations of public buildings, recreational areas with emphasis on the Michigan Lakefront, and different traffic networks of railway, motorways and the harbour, which should all together form an integrated and regulated cityscape. The approach followed the idea of a ‘social trickle-down effect’: the more the wealthy population profits and therefore invests, the better it is for the whole society. The immediate role model for Burnham and Bennett was Haussmann’s bourgeois urbanity, following a long tradition of diligent planning since the ancient Rome.<sup>19</sup>

A special feature of the Chicago Plan from 1909 was its regional component, being in relation to the Michigan Lake and the city’s wide hinterland. The network of diagonal and radial traffic arteries, together with a net of recreational green areas, should improve the connectivity between the outer districts, the city centre and the outskirts, which were foreseen to be embedded by the cityscape in the future.<sup>20</sup>



figure 4 Chicago’s Exterior Highways

17 Schwieterman, Mammoser (2009), page 13.  
18 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 96.  
19 Stadtvisionen (2010), pages 54-57.  
20 Stadtvisionen (2010), pages 54-57.



Moreover, the undertaking was innovative in terms of its marketing. A special commission was immensely active in promoting the project even in the 1930s. The three main addressee groups were the city’s officials, influential people from the private sector as well as politics and the public. The extensive three-dimensional perspectives remarkably helped visualising and convincing the addressees.

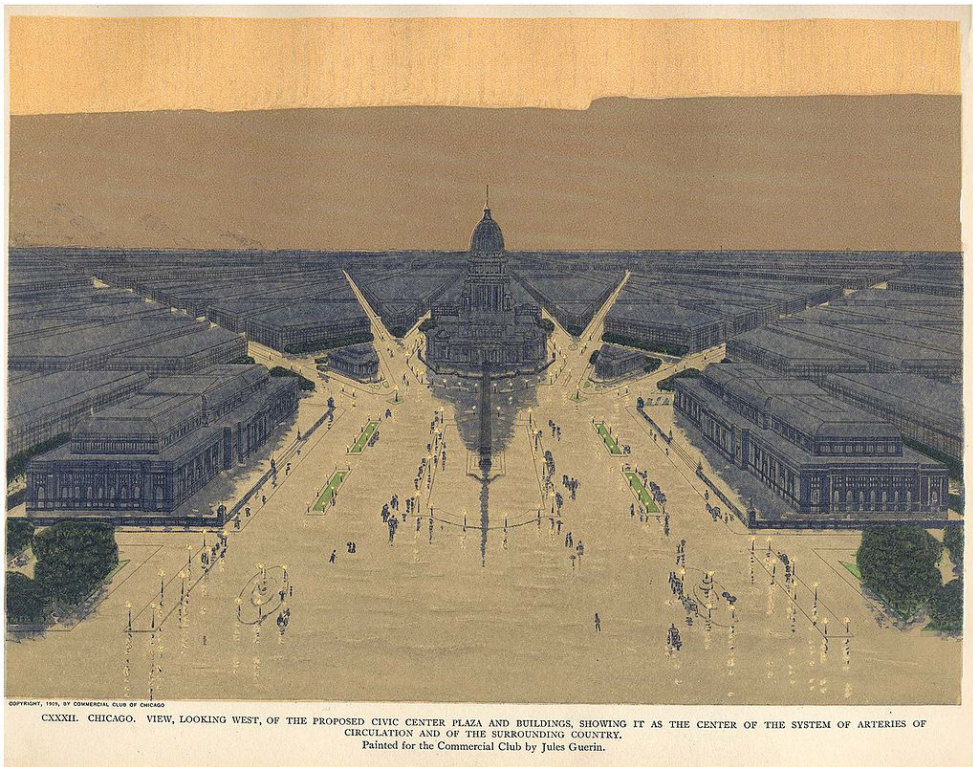


figure 5 Civic Center Plaza

*“Make no little plans. They have no magic to sit men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die.”<sup>21</sup>*  
(Daniel Burnham)

“Criticism has been directed at the plan for its relative silence on issues important to the working class population. The plan (...) [had] relatively little to say on education, health care, and social justice - omissions partially due to the removal of sections that dealt with these issues in earlier drafts. Scholar Kristen Schaffer, in her foreword to a 1993 reprint of the Plan of Chicago, contends that the document might have found a far different place in history had these ‘unpublished’ sections been included.”<sup>22</sup>

21 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 130.  
22 Schwieterman, Mammoser (2009), page 20.

Berliner Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung 1910

In close relation with these events, Werner Hegemann, responsible for organising the exhibition Berliner Allgemeine Städtebau-Ausstellung, implemented the above-mentioned trends to a significant extent on the case of Berlin, which struggled with similar problems as the American cities and just recently hosted the Groß-Berlin competition 1908-1910.<sup>23</sup> The exhibition was the first remarkable and effective presentation of the newly emerging discipline of urban planning to the broader public. The event was highly international with the aim to conclude the existing, many-sided urbanistic knowledge.<sup>24</sup>

The question how to solve the growing traffic problem within a metropolis was a key issue at the congress. Masses of people needed to be transported by a radial rapid transit railway and wide traffic arteries. Sanitary conditions, profitability and aesthetics were further aspects of the issue.<sup>25</sup>

In this respect, the statement of the Finnish architect and planner Bertel Jung from 1912 is worth of mentioning: “Whereas earlier one could say aesthetic factors were paramount and that architects asserted to themselves the final say in urban planning questions, it is economic, social, health and traffic circulation matters which demand attention today and complicate the work of the town planner.”<sup>26</sup>

Baron Haussmann	Boulevards
Camillo Sitte	Diverse aesthetics
Otto Wagner	Satellite towns
Daniel Burnham	Greenery
Ebenezer Howard	Decentralisation

figure 6 Eliel Saarinen’s key inspirations

4.b The Greater Tallinn competition in 1913

All the plans implemented for Tallinn so far dealt only with certain parts of the city and didn’t cover more than one sixth of the entire area. The lack of integrative planning documents made the development of the growing city of Tallinn difficult. In November 1910, the association of homeowners desperately applied for the formulation of a city plan, which would be presented for confirmation to the Russian Car.

Consequently, since the early months of 1911, a new committee of five professionals set-up by the municipality worked on preparations for future planning work. Three of the members were the mag-

23 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 78.  
24 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 15.  
25 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 216.  
26 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 194..

istrates Juhan Umblija, Georg Kalla and from 1913 Anton Uesson. The writer and theatre critic, Artur Adson, together with the later prime minister of Estonia, Otto Tief, were the other two members. As a result of the committee's work in November 1911, the decision to organise an international competition was made and its conditions were confirmed in February 1912.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, the Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, who had already been engaged in Tallinn since late 1911, was invited to be the committee's consultant in preparing the competition. Saarinen got Tallinn's officials' attention by undertaking several impressive works in the field of urban planning before, most notably his visions of the district of Munkkiniemi in Helsinki (1910) and Australia's new capital city, Canberra (1912). In February 1912, Saarinen's suggestions for Tallinn, which were later included in the competition conditions, were reported as following:

"The competition should primarily be a contest of intentions and ideas. Today the towns no longer grow in a circle around the centre as they used to do, but as spokes around focal points that must be connected with the heart of the city by good roads. Proper thoroughfares allow the towns-people to settle further from the city centre where the conditions of the flats meet all sorts of health requirements much better than in the middle of the town. To facilitate progress between such centres, the main roads must be built in accordance with all modern demands. We therefore declare that each contestant must also present his project of thoroughfares, such as a) railways and railway stations of the town b) electric railways and main roads. As a certain layer of inhabitants naturally lives around the city centre (...) the contestants must show the way to 1) business centres, 2) areas of 5-6 and 3-4 storey residential houses, 3) location of industry 4) harbour areas, housing for the military and workers 5) alleys and sporting fields - both within the city and in the surroundings. The plans should additionally show what kind of work the existing streets and the main central roads still need."<sup>28</sup>

The project was related to the important Tallinn-Moscow-railway plan, which would allow the shortest way from Moscow to a Baltic Sea harbour and would therefore enhance Tallinn's status as a commercial city.<sup>29</sup> Also, the Greater Tallinn competition can be seen in a row of architectural contests in Estonia from that time:

"Estonia (...) had recently gained its independence from Russian and German rulers and was in the process of catching up on all fronts. Within a decade a professional community

of architects was established who had received their education in Riga Polytechnical Institute and in various German technical universities at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (...) At the beginning of the 1920s international architectural competitions were organised and Eliel Saarinen and Armas Lindgren were invited from Finland to sit on juries, later on the local architects were considered sufficiently competent."<sup>30</sup>

The assessment of the Greater Tallinn competition was done by a jury of four experts in April 1913. The invited assessors were Joseph Stübben and Professor Theodor Goecke from Berlin, Bertel Jung from Helsinki and Professor Grigori Dubelier from Kiev.<sup>31</sup> The jurists from Berlin enjoyed a special reputation and got nearly double the salary as the remaining two did. The competition was advertised in many respectable architectural magazines abroad such as *Der Städtebau* (Berlin) or *Gorodskoje Delo* (St Petersburg). As a result, there were many requests for the competition conditions.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the organisers received only five entries. This might have been caused by the chaotic organisation of the competition: the interested architects had to ask the organisers several times to get basic plans of the area. One Finnish architect even received plans in an incorrect scale.

From the five remaining plans, three were immediately discarded. One of them was presented on only one page. Another proposal didn't meet the requirements of anonymity. A third work contained formal defects and didn't convince the jury by its content either. It was relatively easy for Eliel Saarinen to become the winner of the Greater Tallinn competition, as he was highly involved in the preparations and well informed about the requirements. As a result, his proposal was much more detailed and of a highly practical nature, including instructions how to realise the plan. Simultaneously to Saarinen's first price, the city also purchased the proposal from the runner-up team, Johansen and Ljunggren. Although displeased because of too drastic and costly changes and too much demolition in the medieval old town, the jury appreciated certain aspects of the mainly radial arrangement.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4.c Opinions on Eliel Saarinen

Saarinen's closest colleague in his Finnish years, Bertel Jung, made the following statement about his fellow: "Although Saarinen is an artist, he is possessed of a very strong talent for philosophical speculation and cool logic. He is modern in the best sense of the word, esteems what is current, is intensely

27 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 81.

28 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 86.

29 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 86.

30 Kalm (1998), page 11.

31 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 200.

32 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 86.

33 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 112.



part of it, understands the vital forms it assumes (...)”<sup>34</sup> J. S. Siren, a younger contemporary of Saarinen, revealed “he would not tolerate compromise: he saw the artistic value of an idea developed in a consistent and uniform way and was at a loss to understand politicians who compromised and bargained.”<sup>35</sup>

Saarinen’s urban plans from the 1910s can be seen in a series of urbanistic approaches, ranging from Haussmann’s axial designs, through Howard’s garden cities, Sitte’s diverse compositions and aim of a ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’, to Wagner’s satellite centres and a wide boulevard as the main axis crossing the city.<sup>36</sup> Before starting to plan the Helsinki district of Munkkiniemi in 1911, Saarinen most probably visited the Berlin exhibition, being on a study tour to German, Danish, Austria-Hungarian and Swedish cities.<sup>37</sup> Asked for his intentions with regard to cityscape, Saarinen was quoted in the periodical 1921 edition of Der Städtebau: “Monumental urban spaces, wide avenues and suchlike are just as suitable in a city as picturesque, enclosed streetscapes and enclosed yards. A carefully measured monumentally and an intimate, picturesqueness identify the charm of the modern city (...)”<sup>38</sup>. This once again shows his sensitivity and many-sidedness.

“Three qualities gave him a solid basis for action: his architectural vision which had distilled into personal conviction, his incredible stamina and his realistic evaluation of society in his time. Added to this was a singular farsightedness which brought him into conflict with the prejudices of decision-makers in town planning issues. In this regard, the apt remark of Eric Mendelsohn in 1924 is worthy of note: he describes Saarinen as ‘a dreamer, a fanatical worker, a creator, clearly aware of where his work stands, and hence a friend of the next generation.’”<sup>39</sup>

#### 4.d Eliel Saarinen’s regulation plan of Greater Tallinn

*“I do not want to make the final decision before knowing that the solution is on the right foundation, namely: by eliminating all impossibilities I finally come to the only and best solution.”*<sup>40</sup> (Eliel Saarinen)

Eliel Saarinen presented his vision of Greater Tallinn on several large plans in April 1913. He complemented them with a explanatory letter on 51 pages, which unfortunately has been lost. Based on the growth rate of population from the previous years, the Finnish architect predicted the size of Tallinn’s

34 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 188.  
 35 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 188.  
 36 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 190.  
 37 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 39.  
 38 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 200..  
 39 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 188.  
 40 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 188.

population for a nearer future in 25 years and a more distant future in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The estimated number of population was 300 000 in 1938 and 665 000 in a long-term perspective. All the considerations and layers of Saarinen’s plan are based on those two prognoses of population. His accuracy is remarkable. If there weren’t for two World Wars, the prognosticated size of 300 000 inhabitants in 1937-1940 would most probably have been reached, but the population of Tallinn diminished by one third only during World War I.<sup>41</sup>



figure 7 Eliel Saarinen’s general plan

41 Djomkin (1977), page 53.

The initial point of the planning besides the prognosis of population was the estimated social division of the residents. Saarinen based the proportioning on the tendency within European cities, with 55 % working-class, 30 % middle-class and 15 % upper-class residents.<sup>42</sup> He followed the ideas of zoning, by that time especially discussed and applied in Germany. For instance, zones of industry and residential houses should be necessarily separated from each other, though staying close. Based on the composition and the functional zoning, the city was supposed to be zoned according to different scales of density. Higher buildings were destined along the district's centres and radial roads in the first place. The main ideas behind this model are a good accessibility of the city centre and promising traffic conditions of the district centres for all the inhabitants. In 1915, the city's average density was 25 people per ha. Saarinen's idea of the aspired density was 75 people per ha. That's the reason why a five times higher population could be accommodated in an only one-and-a-half times higher area.

However, the author considered the prevailing advantages of a population concentration to only some extent. An overcrowding of population would rapidly lead to the opposite and decrease morals as well as culture. Also, the health would be in danger due to permanent noise, pollution and long distances in traffic. An effective treatment of all those symptoms would be the 'organic decentralization'. For this, the workplaces have to first of all be as near as possible to the residential areas. Every single residential entity, together with its industrial counterpart, would form a functional unit with an own representative core. Also, those functional units were meant as the basis of the city's planning structure.<sup>43</sup> Various public buildings were intended to give those local centres a facade, which is why they played an important role in the key issue of having a network of vivid public squares.

The principle of organic decentralization premises the establishment of an efficient transportation system. This should be mainly built on radial and concentric roads. Still, the efficient transportation system was considered to primarily manage the so-called 'random contacts', as the newly designed districts contain all the necessary functions of everyday life and therefore the main way of traffic is expected to be pedestrian. Saarinen wanted to establish a hierarchy and typology of street types within the city, adjusted for different needs and therefore divided into main, secondary and local roads, business and transport streets and of residential area streets.<sup>44</sup>

Against the background that the future traffic will expect much more comfort and speed for its participants, Saarinen suggested to place emphasis on a dense railroad and tram network with combined

42 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 101.

43 Djomkin (1977).

44 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 102.

stations. The biggest distance from any apartment within Greater Tallinn to its next station should be not higher than 500 m. Such a network would make a traffic time of 15 minutes from every district to the new town hall possible with a speed of 30 km per hour. One precondition for such an outcome is the relatively wide distance between the following stations of around 1000 m.<sup>45</sup>

*“What the future has in store in terms of new inventions is hard to predict, but we may be certain that the demands for the comfort and speed of the means of transport will greatly increase. We would be therefore well advised to plan our towns in such a way that the traffic system could be easily altered to suit future requirements.”<sup>46</sup> (Eliel Saarinen)*

The location of the railway stations and transport junctions was of special importance. Saarinen planned to reposition the existing railway tracks, because he recognised that the foreseen development of the city would shift the location of the existing central station to a peripheral place. The new central station should be replaced to the above-mentioned new city centre between Lake Ülemiste and the old town. Simultaneously, three civil train stations in the East, West and South and a then-required military station were placed within the network. Saarinen also anticipated that the different railway companies with their independent networks would have to fuse together at some point and this should happen according to a certain advisement. He pointed out the importance of transport hubs with changing possibilities between the different types of transport. Ideas of different over- and underground layers for vehicles with different speeds supported this consideration.

Saarinen chose to work with many of the existing features of Tallinn, preserving the old town and taking the ownership and natural borders into account. The author soon realised that the old town would not be able to function as the expanding city's centre in the future. For this reason he suggested to focus the city centre's extension towards the South and Southeast. The city's growth was limited in the North and West by the Baltic Sea and in the South by Lake Ülemiste. Also, the historical structures of the old town made the planning of a Great Tallinn not only a challenge, but even a hazard.

*“Monumental squares, wide streets and other dimensionally analogous solutions have their own place in a town, just as picturesque squares, intimate corners of streets, cosy inner courtyards. What makes a modern city so charming is precisely the alternating monumentality and intimacy, just like*

45 Djomkin (1977), page 57.

46 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 101.



*the allure of a medieval town is seen in the contrast between colossal, richly decorated cathedrals and small, simple but picturesque streets.”<sup>47</sup> (Eliel Saarinen)*

One important aspect of the regulation plan and its organic decentralization lies in the creation of healthy living conditions, which in the author’s eyes are mostly based on the permanent access to a closed nature system. The total recreational area of 150 ha in 1913 should be extended to over 2110 ha according to the Suur-Tallinn Plan. The average recreational area per inhabitant should be around 28 m<sup>2</sup>.

*“We must not scrimp when allocating land for future parks”<sup>48</sup> (Eliel Saarinen)*

Besides the complexity and detailedness of his vision, Eliel Saarinen was an advocate of a ‘natural’, unregulated development of cities. Urban planning should emphasise broader perspectives without regulating every single detail. The wish of such regulation would lead to many mistakes within urban development, which would be very difficult or even impossible to correct in the future: “The aim of this competition was not to produce a common plan of regulation and extension that could be realised in all its details. Instead, the aim was to produce a plan that would determine activities the realisation of which would enable the town to develop peacefully and healthily.”<sup>49</sup>

As a result of the natural borders which occurred to the expanding city, Saarinen put his focus on the areas in the Northeast and Southwest, symmetric to the old town, which were not built-up by that time and thus promising for a broader constructing. The communication between all the future districts needed to be managed on the narrow strip between the two waters, where Saarinen saw the future centre of Tallinn. The new street grid would consist of two independent radial subsystems, which would come together in this narrow part in the form of a high-capacity axis. This grid was also supposed to be the plan’s compositional basis.<sup>50</sup>

Seen as one of the most essential preconditions of a continuing existence and development of Tallinn, a massive sea port’s expansion was considered to be absolutely necessary. The overall pier length was intended to be widened from 2400 m to 6700 m. In theory, the handling of cargo could be extended ten times compared with the capacities in 1910. In 1913, not a single sea port of the Russian Empire had

such a handling cargo. Saarinen accepted the historically grown fact of an overall disconnection from the sea due to the outstanding economic importance of the port.

*“It would be short-sighted to create a residential area here and thus obstruct the development of the harbour because a successful harbour is a significant condition in the future development of the whole town.”<sup>51</sup> (Eliel Saarinen)*

In terms of precise propositions, the author imagined a catalogue of dwelling types, which should fully satisfy the three basic classes of society - the proletarians, the middle-class and the bourgeoisie. “Saarinen had already designed a huge number of dwellings [hitherto in his career], ranging from rural residences to apartment blocks, and numerous commercial and civic buildings. This had given him experience in handling different elements which occurred in the urban environment. Now it was time to transform them into an organic whole.”<sup>52</sup> In this matter, he was comparatively permissive in his Tallinn plan and regulated only the very basic character of construction. Saarinen recommends three general building types for the working-class based on the increasing density from the outskirts to the centre: one-family houses with gardens, followed by apartment blocks with optional vegetable gardens, and finally four-storey apartment buildings with reserved space for various functions on the ground floor. On this occasion it should be mentioned that Saarinen’s three-dimensional drawings of the Greater Tallinn are typical of the planning methods in that era, rather emphasising essential proportions and implementing unity within the urban structure than defining the exact elevation of whole districts.<sup>53</sup>

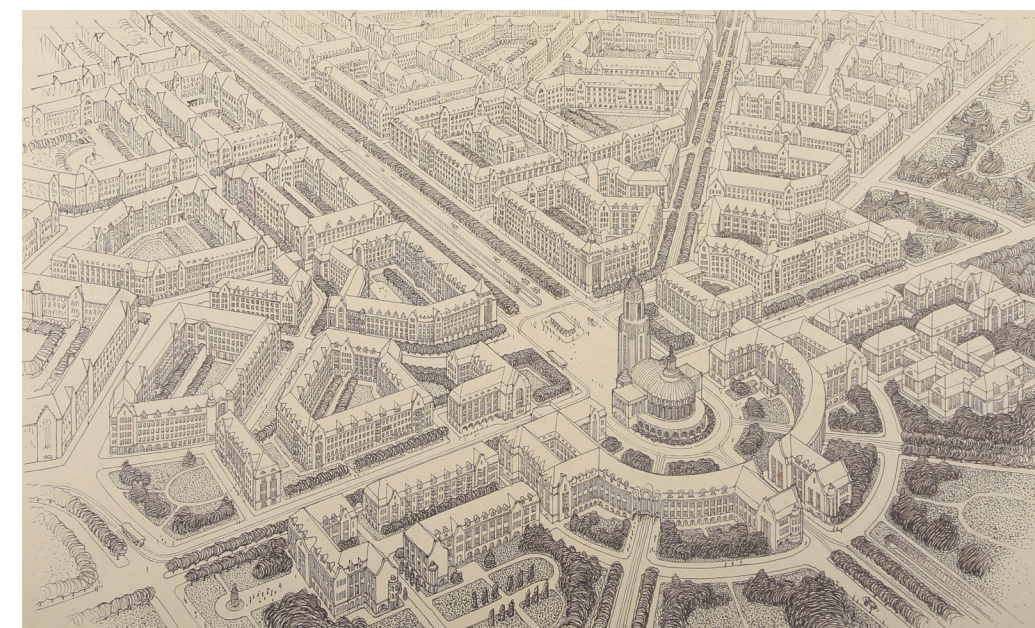


figure 8 Birds-eye view of Lasnamäe

47 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 103.  
48 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 105.  
49 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 101.  
50 Djomkin (1977).

51 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 102.  
52 Hausen, Mikkola, Amberg, Valto (1990), page 188.  
53 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 105.



The ring of sanitary poor wooden houses around the old town had to be replaced by three-to-four and five-to-six-storey stone houses. There were three class-oriented key directions of development in Saarinen's Suur-Tallinn Plan. The wealthy population was supposed to be accommodated mainly in Lasnamäe, the East of the existing city. A higher density working-class district was supposed to be situated in the South of the old town, following the Tondi and Linnu streets. Thirdly, a district dominated by the middle-class should be constructed in the West, namely in Põhja-Tallinn, Mustjõe and northern parts of Kristiine. The existing old town, which should mostly stay unchanged, was accommodating up to 50 000 people according to Saarinen's calculations, being primarily intended as a district for the middle- and lower-class population.<sup>54</sup>

“Even though it came early in his career, the Tallinn plan embodies Saarinen's main planning motifs. Saarinen repeated features of his Tallinn plan (...) [in later projects such as] satellite centres, focal traffic arteries, linear greenways, and a formal, axial arrangement of streets pulling the attention to genius loci (...) [His] plans also use occasionally forceful architecture to punctuate space against a backdrop of neutral buildings.”<sup>55</sup>

Saarinen managed to elegantly define the compositional principles, at the same time keeping the opportunity of flexible and varying solutions in the future. In his eyes, the general plan should be able to suggest solutions for all the problems which would appear during the upcoming development of the city, taking all the diverse features of the different districts into account.

54 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 103.  
55 Haas (2006), page 26.



figure 9 traffic plan



# 5. Recent history of Tallinn

## 5.a World War I and years of the Estonian Republic

Altogether, the jury's opinion on Eliel Saarinen's Suur-Tallinn Plan was undoubtedly positive and it decided to adapt most the proposed aspects.

"The jury appreciated the realism of Saarinen's project and his consideration for local circumstances. However, Lasnamäe residential district was regarded as spread over too large an area. The locations of green areas were deemed good, although there could have been more in the City. The solution of railway junctions was acceptable, but the territory of the new main station was thought too small (...) Developing the harbour as far as Kadriorg was regarded as a matter for the distant future. Tramlines were accepted, as was the plan to keep the trams out of the old town (...) The six-storey buildings proposed by Saarinen for the city were too high and this was changed to five storeys, and in Lasnamäe even to three (...) Considering the later development of the city centre, limiting the houses to five storeys was normal; five storeys have indeed remained dominant in Tallinn, and this principle was maintained also in the 1920s-1930s. The jury concluded that 'this project could be too pretentious for Tallinn over the next 25 years', while appreciating the good network of roads, fixing the character of urban districts, the location of parks and the artistically compact solution, characterised as an 'organic whole'."<sup>1</sup>



figure 10 Tallinn in 1921

1 Hallas-Murula (2005), pages 106-107.



In January 1914 a Riga Polytechnical Institute graduate, the Estonian Eugen Habermann, became urban planner-architect of Tallinn with the task to execute Saarinen's plan. Before, seven applicants from Russia and several applicants from Germany were refused due to inadequate applications or language barriers. By summer, Habermann had documented and illustrated the existing and intended division of land according to Saarinen's plan. The department started to prepare the city's land in the North-east for being rented by building cooperatives to implement a garden city on about 70 ha. The plans were confirmed in 1915, but smaller discrepancies with the universal Russian building restrictions due to too narrow streets and especially World War I stopped any further actions. Although reissued on the agenda in 1918, Saarinen's plan was finally displaced by a new plan produced by Anton Soans, co-founder of the Estonian architects' association.<sup>2</sup>

Some smaller fragments of Saarinen's plan have been realised during the years of independence, such as a number of summer cottages in Nõmme or residential houses for the working-class in Kopli. Also, a number of streets has been newly built or widened.<sup>3</sup> During the years of the Estonian Republic, the direction of Tallinn's development followed Saarinen's ideas in some significant ways. First, the city centre mainly developed towards the area envisaged by Saarinen. Till the 1930s the projects for the city centre clearly followed the three-dimensional visions of Greater Tallinn.<sup>4</sup> Konstantin Päts, Habermann's successor since 1934, initiated another architectural competition for a new town hall for Tallinn, which took place in 1936-37. The first price, won by Edgar Johan Kuusik, showed influence from Saarinen once again, namely his proposal within the scope of the first town hall competition.<sup>5</sup>

Estonia, developing in a typical way of a European country, which recently gained independence, recorded rapid growth while being politically insecure: "(...) The first period of Estonian independence was fraught with post-war economic hardship and political instability. Progress, however, was rapid, and industry revived through the expansion of home markets. By the 1930s, industry generated nearly a third of Estonian national income, remaining, however, less important than agriculture and holding a smaller proportion of employment. Industry remained focused in the same areas designated by the tsars, particularly Paljassaare, Põhja-Tallinn and Kopli, due to the location of the industrial port and rail-yard."<sup>6</sup>

2 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 120.  
3 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
4 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 122.  
5 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 122.  
6 Haas (2006), pages 35-36.

## 5.b Soviet times

With the beginning of the definite Soviet occupation in 1944, Estonia's constitution was invalidated and replaced by the Soviet body of laws. Logically, also planning was regulated according to the rules within the Soviet Union, which meant no officially existing planning act, yet composed rules and regulations. The preparation of plans was centralised with no place for impact from local governments.<sup>7</sup>

Tallinn's urban planners in Soviet times received Saarinen's plan in various ways. Some appreciated its grandeur and flexibility. Others criticized the 'utopianism' and the missed opportunity to open the city to the sea.<sup>8</sup> However, "the first post-war general plan of Tallinn (1952) borrowed quite a lot from Saarinen: the likely population was also estimated at 300 000 (in 1946 Tallinn had 167 000 inhabitants), the bulk of the construction was directed to Lasnamäe, the maximum height was fixed at four to five storeys and an ensemble of grand buildings was planned in Lahekalda. A green belt was supposed to encircle the town, the Rotermanni quarter stayed an industrial zone, and the old town was totally untouched."<sup>9</sup> Many of the wooden house districts, which have for decades been a thorn in the side of Tallinn's city architects, were heavily damaged in a bombing raid during World War II. Adjusted to the principles of time, those of the dense and randomly structured districts, which required a reconstruction, have been sanified.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Tallinn received a massive wave of immigrants from Russia. This led to a significant lack of living space in the growing city. "In the allocation of new housing, migrants from throughout the Soviet Union enjoyed preferential treatment under centralized rule. Migration to Estonia was officially supported: (1) to replace the industrial labour force lost by deportation, death and emigration, and (2) as a means to dilute Estonian cultural identity and resistance."<sup>10</sup> Tallinn continued its rapid expansion during the 1970s and 1980s, following the Soviet planning doctrine. In this period, the main attention was paid towards panel-housing areas first on the then-outskirts in Mustamäe, from the 1970s on also in Väike-Õismäe and the largest panel-housing district in the East of Tallinn, Lasnamäe.

Built from mid-1970s onwards, till the late 1980s, when the Soviet Union ended, it is the biggest of the three mass housing districts from the post-war period in Tallinn. The area is situated on a limestone bank, higher from the surrounding city and in terms of planning the designers could in the empty and flat site follow almost ideally the modernist tabula rasa principles. The area was to be divided in

7 COMMIN (2007), pages 1-2.  
8 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 122.  
9 Hallas-Murula (2005), page 122.  
10 Haas (2006), page 50.

11 micro-districts with 10 000 – 12 000 inhabitants in each, and with shops, schools and kindergartens in the walking distance from homes. The area is tied together by a central highway cut into the limestone bank, the initial project included there also a tramline running between the car roads. The houses in the micro-districts do not follow orthodox free planning, the ones from the 1980s form up clusters that remind courtyards, partly in order to protect the areas from strong winds. Initially a centre within the residential area was supposed to include a cultural centre, but remained unrealised and mostly vacant until today.<sup>11</sup>

Soviet planners abandoned Eliel Saarinen's philosophy from 1913 over the years for good, as closed block structures became highly discredited and row housing types were promoted instead. Saarinen's approach to develop the city was seen as difficult and slowly evolving. However, one can still identify certain recognisable adaptations from the Suur-Tallinn Plan, such as the street grid and priority transportation corridors.<sup>12</sup> "Väike-Õismäe and Mustamäe have street layouts that look as if their Soviet planners tried to imitate Saarinen's approach without being obvious about it."<sup>13</sup>



figure 11 Väike-Õismäe



figure 12 Lasnamäe

- 11 EACEA Culture Programme 2007-2013 (2013), page 155.  
 12 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
 13 Haas (2006), page 31.

### 5.c Post-Soviet privatisation, liberal market economy and suburbanisation

A progressive Perestroika policy during the 1980s and such events as the Baltic Chain in 1989 have led to the process of transformation from a Soviet republic to the reestablishment of sovereignty in 1991 in Estonia. Becoming independent from the Soviet Union, the resurrected republic changed its economic course radically. "Estonia tried to distance itself from its neighbours [Latvia and Lithuania] in the early post-Soviet period, fearing that slower political and economic transformations in Latvia and Lithuania could slow down Estonia's ascendancy to the EU."<sup>14</sup> Scandinavian investors and a willingness to embrace innovative technology contributed to the atmosphere of entrepreneurship.<sup>15</sup> The new Estonian government, searching for its own liberalistic political course and being negatively influenced by the Soviet model of state ownership, initiated a massive privatisation program of property, which has led to an urban development policy largely dominated by private developers.

*"The post-socialist 1990s were defined by radical urban changes in Tallinn. Rejecting the Soviet centralised state and planning practices, the municipal government ceased to be the source of control for town matters and more often took the role of a cartographer, mapping the changes that had taken place independently of them. And the general policy of attracting investments avoided regulations that would have made the city less attractive for entrepreneurs and developers."*<sup>16</sup>



figure 13 The Baltic Chain

- 14 Haas (2006), page 60.  
 15 Haas (2006), page 64.  
 16 Kurg (2009), pages 37-38.



Setting the course for private investment and a deliberate refusal of municipal master plans resulted in a majority of upper-class tax-payers purchasing one-family-houses outside the borders of Tallinn, which contributed to a immense suburbanisation. “As in the rest of Eastern Europe, 50 years of Soviet occupation initially gave ‘all forms of planning a bad name.’ In the first years of independence, rapid political flux and economic concerns took precedence over long-term planning.”<sup>17</sup> The urban sprawl benefited from a steady economic situation, growing living standards and bank loans with favourable conditions.

By the 2000s, this continuous course, together with a lingering lack of investment in the public infrastructures and transportation, resulted in a slow paradigm shift in architectural theory towards imposing public space against the one-dimensional profit-oriented thinking within the city.<sup>18</sup> Beforehand, the city has been forced several times to repurchase land for preservation in favour of public and recreational use or in order to widen roads.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike the 1990s, the beginning of the new century showed an overall prosperity and growth of the population of the city of Tallinn as well. Moreover, fortunately the stratification has not increased. Compared to Scandinavian countries, however, it is still remarkable, as particularly large, single-parent and unemployed families find themselves in especially difficult situations.<sup>20</sup>

In 2004, Estonia joined the European Union together with nine other countries. Because of Estonia’s comparably stable growth, liberal economic model and tight bonds with Scandinavia, Tallinn has been a stage for many foreign bank investments especially from Sweden and Finland. The membership within the EU has had a significant impact on Estonia’s foreign and internal policies: “(...) Estonia will be entitled to the support of EU structural funds until its GDP reaches 75 % of the EU-25 average. A condition of EU support is policy integration, which has potentially significant implications for Tallinn town planning.”<sup>21</sup>

17 Haas (2006), page 66.

18 Kurg (2009), page 39.

19 Haas (2006), page 75.

20 Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 (2014), page 19.

21 Haas (2006), pages 68-69.

# 6. Tallinn in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## 6.a Planning system of Estonia

### Principle structure

With the regaining of Estonia's independence, the modern Planning and Building Act (PBA), which has already been composed before 1991, finally came into force in July 1995 and remained in effect without major modifications for more than seven years.

The following Planning Act (PLA), coming into effect in January 2003, retains the structure and terminology of the previous PBA as much as it is reasonable to ensure the continuity between the two acts. The most radical amendment compared to the PBA is the act's division into two separate ones: the Planning Act, which contains issues related to planning, and the Building Act, issuing building and engineering.<sup>1</sup>

### Four levels of formal planning

In the Estonian planning system there are four types of plans in both a hierarchical and interactive order. Those four layers are the National Spatial Plan, the County Plan, the Comprehensive Plan (of a rural municipality or a city) and the Detailed Plan. On the one hand the system is hierarchical, which expects the compliance of a less general plan with the more general plan within the hierarchy. On the other hand it is relatively easy to amend the next more general plan in the hierarchy during the preparation of a less general plan, which shows the interactive character of the Estonian planning system.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, the law does not draw a very clear line between different types of plans with the aim to raise their flexibility. Only two clearly distinguishable boundaries are named between the different types of plans. A detailed plan is the only plan which deals with plots, while a county plan is the last plan in terms of generalisation and deals with land use planning. From the perspective of an owner of an immovable property, the most detailed plan, which is compulsory to be prepared is for the particular area, is legally binding. This means, for example, that the particular Comprehensive Plan is legally binding in such areas where a Detailed Plan is not mandatory.

All the preparatory proceedings of a plan have to be carried out by the local government, county governor or the ministry in contrast to consultants or assistants who are not qualified for a fulfilment. It should be mentioned here that in Estonia there is no regional local government. Therefore, the county governor is the representative of state in the county.

1 COMMUN (2007), page 2.

2 COMMUN (2007), pages 2-3.

Planning Related Legislation

In addition to the Planning Act, the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act assesses the likely effects of the implementation of plans. According to the PLA, an adopted National Spatial Plan, County Plan and Comprehensive Plan of a built-up territory form the mandatory basis for the preparation of a more detailed type of plan, but they do not have a direct legally binding effect for owners of immovables.

There is no general obligation provided to prepare a National Spatial Plan, County Plan or Comprehensive Plan. However, there is an obligation provided to prepare a Detailed Plan in case of being a basis for land areas' division into plots and the construction of buildings. A municipality may make exceptions.<sup>3</sup>

Tallinn

The County Plan for the Harju County was prepared in 1999. It contains general issues of road networks, major traffic junctions, principles for residential area development. However, its impact is weak due to insufficient administrative capacities mandatory for an execution.<sup>4</sup>

On the second lowest level of formal planning, Tallinn has so far worked with a Comprehensive Plan, commonly also called 'master plan'. Today, though, the city doesn't modify its formal planning document anymore, which used to cover the full cityscape, but splits it on City District Development Plans.<sup>5</sup>

6.b Tallinn's current situation and urban development policy

Administration and demographics

Tallinn is divided into eight administrative districts. Kesklinn, the Central District, consists of the historical old town, the contemporary city centre with Tallinn's high rise buildings, but also wooden house districts, the Kadriorg Park and Lake Ülemiste. Kristiine, in the South of the city centre, is dominated by a repetitive, rectangular street grid and both small and bigger residential buildings. Pirita in the Northeast and Nõmme in the Southwest are dominated by one- and two-family-houses in garden city structures. In Põhja-Tallinn there are harbour facilities and industry, but also a remarkable number of wooden house or Socialist realism neighbourhoods. While Haabersti is characterised by a panel-housing area in its South, Lake Harku and small residential buildings in its North, Tallinn's West and East are dominated by three huge panel-housing residential areas with up to 180 000 apartments:

1) Mustamäe district and 2) Väike-Õismäe, which is a part of the above-mentioned Haabersti district, are located in the West, 3) Lasnamäe is situated in the East of the city, of which the Southern part is mostly industrial.

The generally known problems of panel-houses from the Soviet era, such as insufficient technical execution, tiny apartments, grim surroundings and a poor traffic development are supplemented by difficulties due to restitution, which cause several legal questions as well as social and infrastructural undersupply.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, it is important to mention that the most populated districts, Mustamäe and the Lasnamäe residential area, are both not connected with a tram line. The four existing tram lines are crossing Põhja-Tallinn, Kesklinn, the Lasnamäe industrial area and a part of Kristiine only, while the rapid train railway services Kesklinn, Kristiine, Nõmme and the Lasnamäe industrial district. Only the trolleybuses are destined for Mustamäe, Haabersti and the Central District.

According to the Estonian Population Register, in April 2013, 425 249 people live in Tallinn, which makes up 31 % of Estonia's population. During the last five years, the population has shown an upward trend in all city districts. Pirita, Kesklinn and Haabersti have grown the most.<sup>7</sup> The number of inhabitants of Tallinn and its city region, an area more or less covered by the Harju County, is quite stable. This is mostly due to a migration wave from the South and East of Estonia to the city of Tallinn during the last decade. Concurrently, Tallinn's richer population tends to search for one-family-houses on the outskirts, which still leads to a significant suburbanisation. The average suburbanite is relatively young, well-educated and of higher income.<sup>8</sup> According to the City Planning Department, the real number of inhabitants varies around 450 000. Therefore, when studying the official statistics it must be taken into account as to whether one just registers or actually lives in Tallinn. Since January 2013, the public transport in Tallinn is free of charge for citizens of the city. That's why many people decide to register for the ability to use this advantage.<sup>9</sup> The city government's goal is to maintain the number of population against the background of the income tax: "It's who gets the money (...) And it's really not a secret that this free public transport was made to get these people to register in Tallinn"<sup>10</sup>. Three different scenarios for the future development of Tallinn's population until 2030, dependent on the variables migration and birth rate, indicate 1) a decrease of 5 % leading to 390 000 inhabitants, 2) a decrease of 8 % leading to 381 000 inhabitants, 3) an increase of 5 % raising the population up to 428 000 inhabitants.<sup>11</sup>

3 COMMIN (2007), page 5.  
4 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 69.  
5 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).

6 Deutsche Akademie für Städtebau und Landesplanung (1993), page 18.  
7 Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 (2014), page 8.  
8 Märtin (2014), page 7.  
9 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
10 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
11 Statistical Yearbook (2012), page 14.

### The role of the municipality and perspectives on the market situation

Cooperation is a keyword concerning a paradigm shift within the relations with the surrounding municipalities. Until today, the relations are dominated by competition for the income tax mentioned above. Especially if Tallinn wants to seriously put pressure on investors to build in strategic directives, it has to be sure to have the support of the surrounding municipalities. In return, Tallinn has to be ready to cooperate with those local governments. This aspect already suggests a reconsideration of the planning system and habits. The frame of the Tallinn City Region (TCR), though as mentioned being usually defined as Harju County, is cognitively different depending on the thematic framework discussed. According to the Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020, “the impact area of Tallinn is the whole of Estonia, with over 90 % of the residents of neighbouring areas somehow related to the capital; in Southeast Estonia, this number decreases to 25 %.”<sup>12</sup> The infrastructure, public transportation as well as educational, social and cultural establishments are insufficiently developed in the TCR, while the use of private cars as the main way of transportation is growing fast, which has a negative effect on the quality of life and the environment.<sup>13</sup>

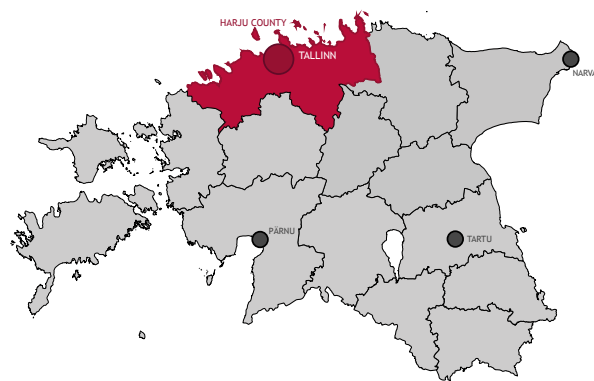


figure 14 Tallinn and the Harju County

Setbacks of economic growth, money and the population are three main challenges pointed out by the city planners of Tallinn looking to the future. Moreover, the municipality is struggling with getting a better cooperation with the private investors on the one hand while keeping the broader urban view on the other.

Approximately 80 % of land is private or state owned. Less than 2 % of developable land is in municipal property.<sup>14</sup> The main tool, which the urban planners of Tallinn have used to guide the city’s development so far, is the master plan, “(...) but let’s be honest, I think we mostly make the master plans according to the needs of owners, so if they ask that they would like to have residential area here or something else, we kind of take their needs into account (...) Just regulating the density and height and this kind of regulation.”<sup>15</sup> This means a focus on zoning and defining magisterial roads within the city structure. The city planners admit to have a lack of tools caused by the lack of owned land: “Basically the biggest difference is the thing that if you own the land, you can sell the land where you want to

12 Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 (2014), page 19.  
13 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 69.  
14 Märtin (2014), page 2.  
15 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).

have changes to take place, for example you can drive the development. But at the moment it’s rather difficult to drive the development, for example the desirable focal points you mentioned.”<sup>16</sup>

During the last 20 years, only about 10 % of residential space has been added to the existing built structure. There was a building boom between 2005 and 2008, during which investments mainly occurred in the outskirts. The city practically owns zero developable land. The only significant plot in size and opportunities of development is situated in Lasnamäe. Except for that, the city mostly owns recreational area, infrastructure and the generally undevelopable courtyards of existing panel-houses. The plots at the seaside, which are considered as a focal point in future development, also don’t belong to the city but to lots of different private owners, and there is no mentionable construction going on so far.

### Gulf of Finland RINA

The Gulf of Finland Representative Interregional Networking Activities (RINA) represent a part of the PolyMetrexplus Action Plan, the Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas. It “aims to contribute to the effective polycentric metropolitan relationships based on complementarity and co-operation in respect of the European Union’s European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and its Territorial Agenda.”<sup>17</sup>

The main agglomerations within the Gulf of Finland region, Helsinki, Tallinn and St Petersburg have begun to define a joint vision and bidirectional future scenarios in accordance of a stronger appearance altogether. “An Action Plan, entitled ‘Joint Statement of Intent’ delivers the necessary policy options as agreed by the three participating cities to implement collectively. In doing so, all new development will be managed and controlled in line with the agreed set of policies.”<sup>18</sup> Some significant key points of the Joint Statement of Intent are: 1) creating more compact, high density ‘smart cities’, 2) creating more polycentric city-regions, 3) strengthening the three city centres, 4) producing a more transnational profile for each circle of cooperation within the GoF-triangle.

The Gulf of Finland is the main gateway for Russian trade with the EU. The linking with Russian development is the main driver of the region’s development. The GoF should strengthen its position as fastest-developing European region, with emerging new types and fields of cooperation. The interregional cooperation is still not reaching its potential. In this respect, the development of infrastructure is crucial. Concurrently, the improvement and extension of infrastructure brings also the need of the improvement and extension of logistics.

16 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
17 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 6.  
18 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 84.



An integrative policy in terms of joint infrastructure planning and polycentricism can make all the three Capital cities benefit from their so far inactivated potentials.<sup>19</sup> Having been written in 2007 before a wave of implementing new planning documents in Tallinn, the RINA strategic paper underscored that while St Petersburg and Helsinki have positioned themselves and formulated their individual visions of the future, Tallinn didn't have its clear vision until then.

The RINA defines four key challenges: 1) a balanced competitiveness, 2) social equity, 3) a connected GoF development, 4) a spatially cohesive strategy. Based on these four challenges, an agreed vision has been formulated, where "(...) elements are no longer compartmentalised by functions, but are brought together into a cohesive whole."<sup>20</sup> The vision shows the directive for the next 50 years from 2007, which is as follows:

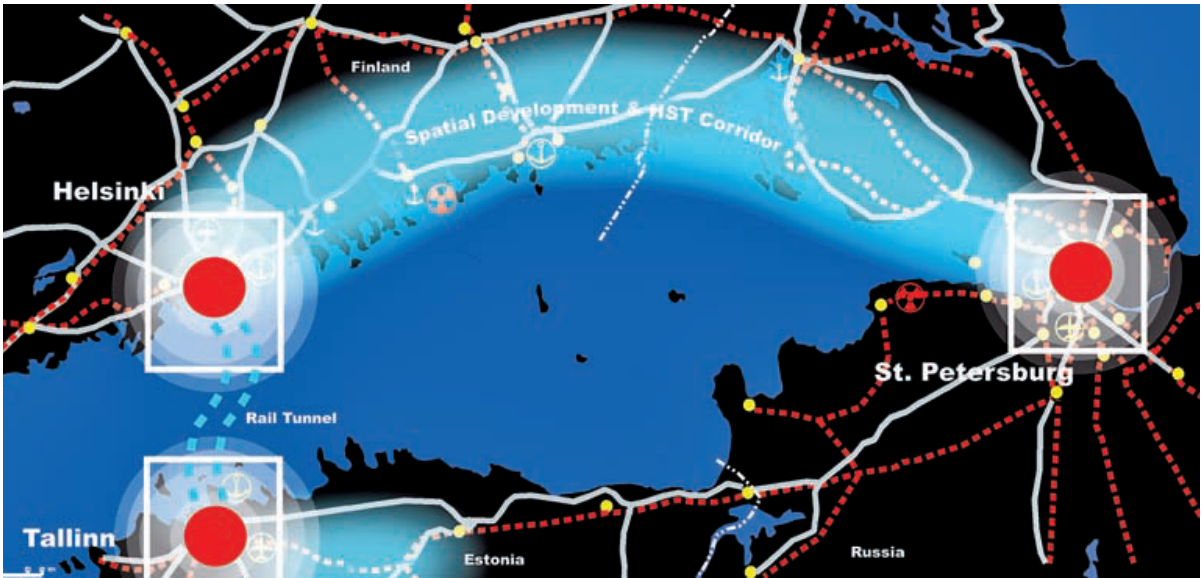


figure 15 Spatial corridors in the Gulf of Finland

*“By 2050 the Vision for the Gulf of Finland will be to create a compact and dense set of polycentric city-regions operating at a transnational level within a unified economic and development triangle of Helsinki - St Petersburg - Tallinn that will create spatial and business cohesion, offer a connected high-speed public transport network transnationally and locally, ensure safe and secure city-regions with social equity, be energy efficient with low carbon emissions, and geared to making clean and healthy environments.”<sup>21</sup>*

### Further planning documents

The master plan, which has been completed 20 years ago and approved by the city council seven years later, still carries the key strategy and ideas of development until today. One focal point in this document has been the concentration of the city centre to the Southeast of the old town. The goal has been to interconnect the ferry port area with the central Viru Square by developing the adjacent post-industrial Rotermanni quarter. In addition, the former industrial ring along the railway has been defined as a densification and conversion area. Further, the East-West connection within the city should be improved and fastened by building a highway, which would at the same time help to establish businesses and other institutions near the panel-housing districts on the edges of the city.

The above-mentioned focal points of the master plan have been mostly completed. Until recently there was a lack of general planning documents for Tallinn. Since the independence has created a chaotic situation, the city is still dealing with it until now: “(...) For some period of time the main level in city planning was the detail plan that could not foresee wider development needs of the city, but was based on the concrete investment plans of private landowners/real estate developers.”<sup>22</sup> Today, the master plan, which was meant to cover the whole city, is being successively replaced by nine City District Development plans.<sup>23 24</sup>

In 2009, a ‘Development Plan of Tallinn 2009-2027’ has been formulated, trying to define a development vision of Tallinn in the nearer future. It is written as follows: “Tallinn is the capital of the Republic of Estonia - a city of multicultural, industrious and creative people, unique cultural sign and seaside gate to the history. Tallinn is internationally attractive destination of visits and a leader of competitive new economy in innovative, balanced and safe urban environment - love from the first sight, active and trustworthy cooperation partner.”<sup>25</sup> The vision is being specified by six main objectives.

Based on the objectives of the 2009-2027 plan, the Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 has been prepared in order of putting it in concrete terms. “Furthermore, the Tallinn sectoral and city district development plans, the main views of the Tallinn budget strategy and the comprehensive plan for Tallinn have been taken into account.”<sup>26</sup> The six priorities stated in this document are: 1) the creation of a favourable growth environment for start-ups and creative enterprises, 2) the development of education and youth work fields, 3) a national culture that is modern, evolving and inclusive of the younger generation, 4) social protection, health and safety, 5) the creation of a high-quality urban space that

19 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 80.  
20 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 85.  
21 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 86.

22 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 71.  
23 Märtin (2014), page 4.  
24 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
25 Development Plan of Tallinn 2009-2027 (2009), page 29.  
26 Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 (2014), page 4.

supports an increase in population and the addition of jobs, 6) the expansion of the conurbation-based development model.<sup>27</sup> “The objectives of the Tallinn Development Plan for 2014-2020 are implemented by the Tallinn City Government, agencies, city district governments and their agencies, city-owned businesses and cooperation partners. Since Tallinn’s area of influence extends considerably beyond the administrative border, cross-border cooperation must be improved in the implementation of the development plan, above all in Harju County and with the capital region of Finland-Uusimaa.”<sup>28</sup>

Sadly, the focal points, which are provided in the current planning documents, are desirable ones. According to Jaak-Adam Looveer, head of the City Planning Department of Tallinn, in the end everything depends on the market needs and the current economic situation. Even along the waterfront, a priority area on State level, there hasn’t been made ready any significant development yet. Nevertheless, the city centre as another focal point is fortunately developing quite well recently due to considerable interest of investors.

The private sector knows the needs of the market very well, and according to Looveer, the privatisation was not a mistake, but the way it has been done was unwise without taking the general plan and public interests into account. Today, the city planners’ idea is to let the private investors build the infrastructure such as tram lanes in their investment areas. Concurrently, the municipality should focus on making research on the issue which type of area is needed and economically suitable. The reference shown here is the experience gained in the United States of America. The higher the cash flow in the private sector, the more money comes to the city and the more guiding power the city gains. “It’s like in the USA, it’s also totally private land and private development, the city guides with such a big guidance, complex of rules, and that’s all.”<sup>29</sup> Also, the municipality has to ensure the creation and management of more public space, which is usually neglected by the private investors. The city planners admit that their impact is unfortunately not as big as it should be yet. Looveer says the cultural understanding as impact on planning has developed during the last 20 years and the way of thinking about ownership has changed. Now it would be more balanced: “In the beginning after the privatisation, everybody was thinking the private thing is the holy thing (...) More and more we see the things more complex, it won’t be so in the future as well.”<sup>30</sup>

### Infrastructural plans for the future

In terms of infrastructure and transportation plans, the most important aspect pointed out by the city

planners is the simplification and unification of the different transportation systems. Today there are trams, trolleybuses, buses and suburban trains in the city, which additionally all have their different central stations. Furthermore, the central station for long-distance trains and the coach station are also scattered across the city. That’s why Tallinn is planning to place a transportation hub near the airport, not far away from the coach station’s current location. The long-distance busses, the future Rail Baltica trains (exclusively), one tram line and one suburban train are supposed to hold here and simultaneously improve the connection between the airport and the sea port: “This is quite a priority on state level as well, so I think this will be realised in the future (...) If there will be now the Rail Baltica, then its final station will be here.”<sup>31</sup>

New tram lines are necessary to improve the public transportation within the city, especially the North and East. Many parts of the city suffer from traffic jams: “(...) the higher rate of car ownership, combined with the exodus to single-family homes in the suburbs, has increased traffic congestion (...) even in the absence of population growth (...) Tallinn’s plans to improve auto congestion are likely to attract even more traffic to widened roads.”<sup>32</sup> However, economic calculations show that at the moment the construction of new tram lanes would not be profitable. Therefore, the city is not eager to build them in the next years. Tallinn doesn’t have sufficiently concentrated residential areas or working places anymore, as it was the case during Soviet times. Also, new tram lanes have a wider gauge than the existing ones and without a unification of the system this would decrease the flexibility. The existing trolleybuses play a central role, especially in Mustamäe. Their modernisation in the next ten years will turn out to be costly, which might be an argument in favour of replacing the trolleybuses with new tram lanes, as the long-term profitability might be higher, also supported by the idea of unifying the whole system mentioned above.

The Rail Baltica, one of the priority projects of the Trans-European Transport Networks, is highly welcomed by the city planners. A better competition with Riga and Helsinki as well as an improving tourism are expected to be main advantages. With shortened travel durations, the central role of Riga might be weakened. Concurrently, the Rail Baltica supports the

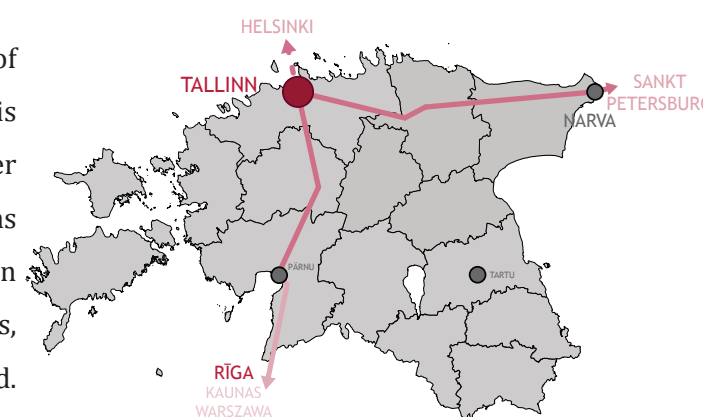


figure 16 Estonia’s key transportation corridors

27 Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 (2014), pages 5-6.

28 Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 (2014), page 5.

29 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).

30 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).

31 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).

32 Haas (2006), page 72.



need for the above-mentioned transportation hub, which will offer changing possibilities for trams, trolleybuses and suburban trains: “We see that if the Rail Baltic Station comes here, it’s a very good reason to have these other things here also, and it would be probably kind of a starting point for this to just have the tram line until the airport. Because nowadays the city really doesn’t have money for this kind of things, but this could really bring it together.”<sup>33</sup>

In this regard, it is especially a Finnish interest until today to also construct the Helsinki to Tallinn Tunnel, which would cross the Gulf of Finland on a submarine length of 50 km. In 2014, the city of Tallinn is making a pre-research dealing with the economic and technical conditions, “to understand if it has any point at all to go further with the research, as to understand whether to close the topic or to commission a further study.”<sup>34</sup> A possible corridor for the rail track and tunnel is available in the East of Tallinn and in theory could be connected with the Rail Baltica. The Finns are said to be motivated because of growing fuel costs for the ferries in the future, as the environmental taxations will increase. As Finland is interested to bring its goods to mainland Europe and the ferry connections will get more expensive, a tunnel might have an economic point in longer terms. Irrespectively of the tunnel, the Estonian side is very much interested in an intensification of the Finnish-Estonian exchange of visitors, residents and employees. There is already a tendency of small Finnish business foundations in Tallinn. Also, many elderly Finnish people settle down here.

**Main economic activities**

Between 2007 and 2011, the number of enterprises in Tallinn has increased from 33 373 to 42 773, which is a rise of around 28 %.<sup>35</sup> Especially the branch of administrative and support service activities has grown rapidly from 440 registered enterprises in 2007 to 1 270 in 2011. This underlines Estonia’s ongoing trend to found small companies, especially in the start-up sector. The 2014 Index of Economic Freedom lists Estonia 11th behind Denmark and before the United States.<sup>36</sup>

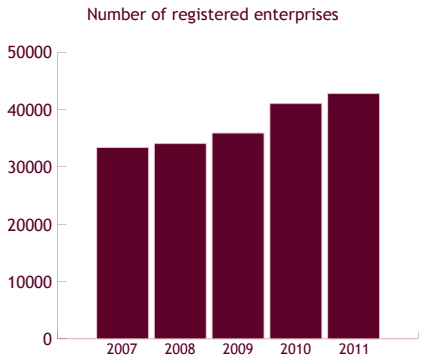


figure 17

Tallinn is becoming an increasingly recognised tourist destination. The number of accommodated visitors has grown more than 30 %, from 1 140 754 people in 2007 to 1 498 462 people in 2011. Most of the tourists come from the Scandinavian countries, followed by Russia and Germany.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, this commercial sector is already been taken into account as a growth engine for

33 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
34 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
35 Statistical Yearbook (2012), page 119.  
36 2014 Index of Economic Freedom.  
37 Statistical Yearbook (2012), page 84.

Tallinn in its strategic documents. However, from the point of view of spatial distribution, the current tourist attractions leave something to be desired, as a vast majority of visitors rather doesn’t leave the medieval old town.

From the perspective of maritime transport in Tallinn, key growth engines are the ferry terminals connecting Estonia with Scandinavia and Russia as well as the Muuga Harbour, located 13 km northeast of Tallinn, being Estonia’s largest cargo port and one of the deepest, most modern, ice-free and at the same time one of the three biggest of its kind in the entire Baltic Sea Region. The port in the neighbouring municipality is close to the existing industrial and service area along the Peterburi road, which is a magisterial road to Narva and St Petersburg. Together with the East of Tallinn, the port forms a potentially developable zone for business and industry. This idea is supported by the fact that the port emits fetidness, which is a counterargument concerning any plans for residential areas in close surroundings. Economically, the port has clearly positive effects on Tallinn. “As cargo from Russia (mainly oil) is expected to double over next 15 years, the port and related settlements will continue to develop.”<sup>38</sup> Since the tax system is not based on enterprises but on the population’s income, it is not unfavourable to have the port outside of Tallinn’s borders. Simultaneously, the closeness to the city brings forth employees who settle and consume in Tallinn. Finally, the goods traffic is shortened and simplified to Estonia’s biggest agglomeration.

**Key challenges today**

If all the statements and data from above are broken down to a concluding essence, it is becoming clear that the city of Tallinn is currently not following a comprehensible direction. The lack of municipally-owned, developable land and an arguable spatial policy of the recent past have left an insufficient inscrutable public transportation with numerous partial systems plus a lack of holistic guidance of urban development. Until today, a parallel as well as contradictory trend of ongoing suburbanisation on the one hand and the intention of densification on the other is apparent. The Estonian planning system combined with the liberal market economy has shown its pitfalls, which occur in the form of a lack of tools as wells as poor regional and interdisciplinary collaboration. The city of Tallinn is perceived as a ‘one-spot-city’ with a bloated focus on the medieval old town, which among other things is caused by a lack of polycentric planning. However, spatial initiatives not only associated with the EU- membership and a comparably stable economic growth give reason to hope that Tallinn will position itself well in the network of city regions, being more and more characterised by competition and interaction. Still, it is crucial to implement these preconditions in resilient strategies.

38 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 77.

# 7. Concept

## Proposal: Interdependent strategic points

After having an insight into the historical background and current economic, demographic, political and urbanistic situation of Tallinn, the following chapter addresses with possible starting points for conceptual suggestions. Assuming that the future development of cities cannot only be managed by higher-ranking principles and its compatible comprehensive plan, the consequent strategy is to locally specify models instead. But what is a solitarily understood space without seeing it in a broader urban context? All of those individual areas are part of a complex organism, which - as an integrated system - generates a tangible profile.<sup>1</sup>

“Nineteenth century myths are no longer topical - sanitary catastrophes, transportation congestion, and the shortage of air and open space have long since been overcome.”<sup>2</sup> Why should the attention turn to Saarinen’s Suur-Tallinn Plan then, being formulated 101 years ago? The difference to Saarinen’s strategy is substantial. Instead of managing an urban expansion, the goal of this thesis has to come up with suggestions how to deal with issues typical of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Precisely because many key problems Tallinn is struggling with today are caused by the far-ranging ignorance towards Saarinen’s reasoning and assumptions, though, and because of Tallinn’s lacking integrated idea of a joint way to the future, an effort to transpose Suur-Tallinn from 1913 to nowadays seems reasonable. In addition to 100 year old thoughts, however, it is obviously necessary to consult further, more recent models. A decreasing population, polarising regions, market mechanisms within a globalised world - those are matters and scales which haven’t been discussed by Saarinen in his work from 1913, but are pivotal nowadays and will therefore be included in the concept presented below.

## Infrastructure and transportation in Tallinn

Tallinn needs to implement a paradigm shift in terms of transportation priorities as soon as possible. As the officials advise in their strategic papers already, the different fragmentary systems, which are not harmonising sufficiently so far, have to be unified and simplified. Trams, trolleybuses, buses and rapid transit must all follow one directive. Following the reasonable trend within European cities due to general advantages of rail-borne means of transportation, the city should make a commitment to convert all the highly-stressed trolleybus and bus lanes into tram lanes, simultaneously extending the existing system in a medium-term by new connections especially to the large panel-housing-areas.

*“The ‘smart city’ places its stakes on public transportation. In the long run, a high quality public transportation network is the most economical choice (...) The first thing that needs to be done is to make public transporta-*

<sup>1</sup> Stadtvisionen (2010), page 451.

<sup>2</sup> Tallinna Idee (2010), page 28.



figure 18 Architectural master's thesis proposing interconnected manufacturing hubs

*tion the quickest and most convenient type of transportation. Thereafter we can begin speaking of changing people's transportation preferences (...) Cost-benefit analyses of the building of the future transportation system for Tallinn should be considered together with its users after the transportation system is built, not on the basis of the present environment.”<sup>3</sup>*

Consequently, the partial hubs will inevitably move together to a new central transportation hub. This spot should be built next to the Ülemiste highway junction along the existing rail track, being in perspective well-located in a direct neighbourhood of the condensing city centre and at



figure 20 existing and suggested tram lanes



figure 19 existing and planned railway

the same time close to the airport. This location is already being considered by the city for being a hub for travel coaches, an airport-harbour-tram line and the Rail Baltica final stop. Still, in accordance to a more visionary and holistic development of transportation and the inner city, the local government is encouraged to ultimately replace the main central station with its remaining train connections to this

3 Tallinna Idee (2010), pages 46-48.

new hub as well. The central station's present location is poorly rated by many. Its accessibility is limited. Saarinen already suggested to move it approximately to the location, where the Ülemiste junction is today, foreseeing the developmental shift towards this direction.

This step will not only solve issues on the city level by improving the local transportation system. The chance to improve mobility on all the three local, regional and long-distance levels occurs together with the construction of a comprehensive Ülemiste transportation hub. The surroundings should be reserved for Park and Ride and public space at the same time. Moreover, the Helsinki to Tallinn Tunnel, being calculated for economic efficiency and environmental effect at the moment, will most probably follow the Pirita peninsula in the East of Tallinn to shorten the submarine distance. Geographically, this is a major argument in favour of a new 'Tallinn Ülemiste Central Station', as it would raise its interchange quality even more in a longer-term and a broader scale.

In general, public transport development has to be consequently prioritised over car traffic.<sup>4</sup> Still, it is crucial to enlarge the road system in Tallinn especially in a shorter and medium-term. The construction and completion of ring roads around Tallinn's centre and East-West-routes, according to Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 already on the agenda, is also at this point highly recommended. In a longer term it is advised to impose fees on car traffic within the inner city, assuming the significant improvement of the public transportation and the implementation of a dense Park and Ride network as two important preconditions.



figure 21 proposed public space network

4 Märtin (2014).

## Spatial focal points in Tallinn

Saarinen's emphasis on axes and public squares, which would radially surround the old town and centre, framing the city by a network of well-functioning transportation and public space, is despite the passage of time and historical caesuras still recommended to pursue. All the different districts should have their individual local compact centres, with high-quality public space and own local identities.<sup>5</sup> This will have two positive effects: Multifunctional and attractive local spots will relieve the overburdened city centre towards a more polycentric city structure, while strengthening the localities will support neighbourhood and enrich the facets of Tallinn.

The network of widely branched public spaces plays a key role in linking direct connections between different spots within the city, but also in creating countless occasions for random interpersonal encounters.<sup>6</sup> Linking to this, the city should support retail trade in contrast to peripheral shopping malls.<sup>7</sup> As the example of the Chicago Millennium Park shows, implementing public space can be financed smartly. First, the city of Chicago took out a loan, covering the project's costs together with donations. An underground parking and the increasing value of the surrounding lots enable the city to refund its loan.<sup>8</sup>

*“Every article that is published somewhere says that we have this old town. And that, well, we have this old town, and beyond the old town there isn't much of anything.”<sup>9</sup>*

Tallinn is a port. Compared with cities like Copenhagen or Helsinki, however, the cityscape itself doesn't harmonise with the seaside adequately. From today's perspective, the directive of the waterfront might be the major point of criticism related to Saarinen's Suur-Tallinn Plan. Seeing the port as the city's key growth engine in a time of rapid urban growth and continuous industrialisation, Eliel Saarinen had his reasons to reserve the coastline for industrial matters, no doubt being aware of not only an aesthetical potential being sacrificed. Yet in this sense times have changed radically and the inner city waterfront deserves a smarter solution nowadays. The officials' aim and widely voiced postulation is to redevelop the coastline in the East of the ferry port in order to create high-quality and diverse urban space, which currently is still fragmentarily and inadequately shaped. This strategic point written down by the city's officials is welcome, though it again seems half-hearted. The shipyards of Paljassaare in Põhja-Tallinn, being less than 3 km away from the old town, go through a process of industrial deconstruction due

to structural changes. The commonly discredited shape and too exclusive location of the existing ferry terminals raise the question whether this facility wouldn't be better suited in a former dock, which is still comparably close to the city centre and at the top of the list of tram lane construction plans. In return, a supremely prestigious space in immediate vicinity of the old town as well as the contemporary city centre would be freed for a more elegant and accessible type of use.

Urban growth and redevelopment have led to such long-term changes in transport networks that former airports, marshalling yards and industrial sites show potential for a rearrangement to become new city quarters and public spaces.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, the former marshalling yard bordered by Pelgulinna and Kalamaja in the Põhja-Tallinn district, being at the same time on half a way of old town to Paljassaare harbour, should be another focal point for redevelopment. Besides the construction of apartments and businesses, parks and gardens are a more and more helpful tool of urban development for both temporary and long-term usage to raise the attractiveness of such areas. Furthermore, the area is already excellently integrated into the public transportation system by two tram lines.

What will be with the widely discredited panel-housing districts of Lasnamäe, Vääke-Õismäe and Mustamäe? The three Soviet era districts host approximately one half of Tallinn's population. They have already begun to remarkably suffer from an outflow of people, while this trend is expected to worsen. In a longer term, the decreasing population will cause a serious under-utilisation of infrastructure. Furthermore, public transportation will become unprofitable and consequently suffer from quality limitations, which will again lower the attractiveness of the districts as well as boost car traffic. Therefore, it is recommended to prepare both a short-term and a longer-term strategy for the panel-housing areas. First, it is crucial to achieve a maximum revitalisation of different facilities, public space, but also outer facades by involving private investors and the local population in participatory projects. In a longer-term, however, the possibility to sustainably stabilise the whole number of population in those districts is highly unlikely, also due to demographic trends and thus a deliberate densification of the inner city. For that reason, a series of criteria should be worked out to divide the entire territories into deconstruction and reconstruction areas, focusing the infrastructural efforts on certain densified locations, which will fit in the regional transportation system.

5 Märtin (2014).

6 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 447.

7 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 459.

8 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 359.

9 Tallinna Idee (2010), page 22.

10 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 355.



## Inner city of Tallinn

The above-mentioned rearrangement of the waterfront opens up the opportunity to create a new urban and architectural highlight in the close proximity of the centre. However, the adoption of such a project must be done sensibly, taking the need for public accessibility and adaptability into account. It is important to elegantly integrate this piece of the cityscape into a whole, on the contrary to one-sided, profit-maximising solutions intended by many private investors.

The railway ring around the city centre and old town has been recommended to be the defined zone of an intense densification and brownfield development by several sides already. In this respect, an interesting experiment was conducted by a number of master's students from the Estonian Academy of Arts in order to find out the capacities for densification within this ring. The conclusion has been the following: "The number of residents in Tallinn's city centre is presently nearly 35 000. In studying the densification potential of the city centre, it became apparent that there is additional room here for over twice the amount of current residents. According to the experiment, Tallinn's city centre has the potential for 100 000 residents. We added only residential buildings to the city centre. The number of residents would drop in the event that buildings with more functions are added."<sup>11</sup> The result confirms the statement published in the Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020<sup>12</sup> that there are still many vacant lots in the very centre, being eligible for development.

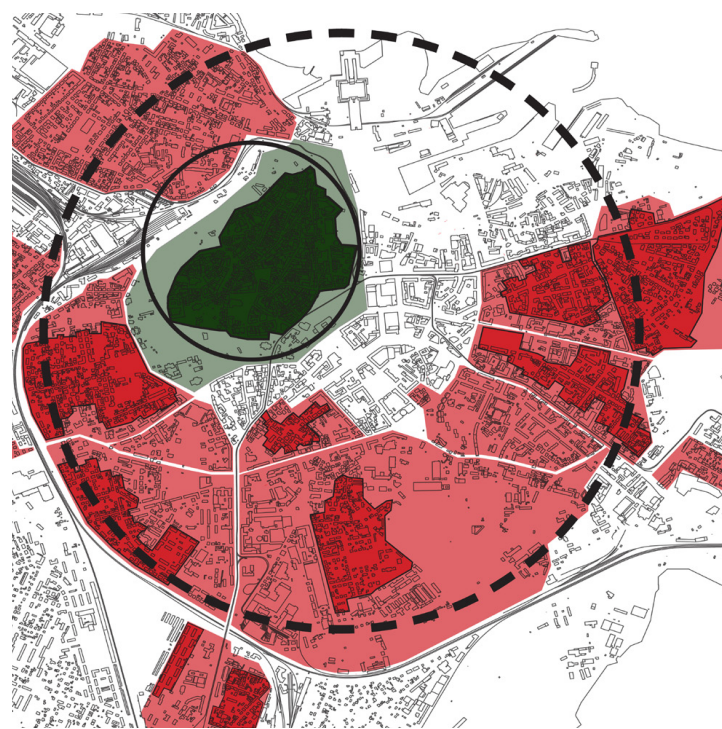


figure 22 heritage & densification belt

Besides their densification, the different residential quarters of the city centre have started to undergo a process of gentrification, coming along with the renaissance of their former wooden working-class appearance, which has in the course become a rare local speciality and is therefore understood as worthy of protection. "The old town is not the only district and valuable historical environment in Tallinn. Municipal districts of wooden architecture are undergoing the same sort of process of being placed under cultural protection as

the old town underwent in the mid-20th century. A thematic plan for areas of cultural and environmental heritage has been established with the aim of preserving complete and characteristic areas of Tallinn's districts. Districts of wooden architecture, and areas of cultural and environmental heritage are characteristic of Tallinn alone."<sup>13</sup> Tallinn should continue this balanced policy of a heritage protection on the one hand and brownfield development on the other to secure the city's unique identity while following the agenda of reurbanisation.

Against the background of aesthetical harmony and appropriate types of use within different parts of the cityscape, it is advised to continue the concentration of high-rise buildings on one defined quarter of the city centre. Simultaneously, the city should be aware of its advantage that most of the inner-city neighbourhoods are comparably holistic in height and typology.

## Aesthetical direction

Many quarters within the city show a local identity and can be rated highly in many urbanistic aspects on a small scale. Altogether, though the cityscape is a heterogenic palimpsest of many different identities, partially adapted urbanistic approaches and typologies, often fragmented due to a historically caused lack of fulfilment. This feature of Tallinn must be taken into account in the search for a vision of the future. The acceptance of heterogeneity uncovers the chance to strengthen all the local identities by formulating partial, locally limited scenarios. Together with the top priority development areas such as a new waterfront or the growing business quarter in the city centre, all of those different localities can harmonise as connectors and proper jigsaw pieces for the bigger picture.

## Actors involved

A strategic plan needs a political leadership, which can confidently communicate the clear vision, being supported by a competent and assertive administration. However, the strategic plan concurrently needs the cooperation with representatives from economics, science and civil society who all follow congruent aims.<sup>14</sup> The public officials can't stop the advancement of inadequate resource consumption alone. They are dependent on the agreement and involvement of landowners, investors, companies and initiatives. Cooperative action requires a changed understand of planning.<sup>15</sup>

"One of the difficult tasks of the present-day city planning is to find the balance between investment and planning based urban spatial development."<sup>16</sup>

11 Tallinna Idee (2010), page 35.

12 Tallinn Development Plan 2014-2020 (2014), page 12.

13 Tallinna Idee (2010), page 38.

14 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 390.

15 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 469.

16 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 69.

Not only the city's officials are reliant on cooperation to perform their work well. Coordination is necessary for both ends, for example in the typical case of redeveloping brownfields: the municipality is not in possession of the land and doesn't have sufficient investment funds, but the private owner needs 1) a building permission, 2) technical and social infrastructure. Both sides would additionally benefit from a holistic and guided development. "It would be nice, if the city's needs would somehow be more taken into account, because I think still it's quite hard for us to give some guidelines to the private owners. I mean we are still arguing about a lot of things, it's hard for them to understand, they should also build some recreational areas, public buildings and of course infrastructures."<sup>17</sup>

The city of Tallinn is advised to study successful examples of city marketing, such as Daniel Burnham's Chicago Plan advertising campaign, to transfer appropriate methods on the case of Estonia. The goal is to activate economic forerunners for participatory processes, especially in a widely privatised and liberalistic country.

### e-Participation

There is no tradition of participation in planning matters in Estonia until now. Sustainable development requires good governance and active public participation. Estonians however learnt to avoid drawing attention to themselves in the public arena during the Soviet occupation.<sup>18</sup>

The densification and reurbanisation of Tallinn is absolutely necessary. Other top priority aspects are the vitalisation and extension of the city's public space offer. However, the Estonian mentality with commonly portrayed features as introversion and aloofness has made a culture of active participation in issues of city development very difficult so far. On the other hand, the advanced and far-ranging digitalism opens the chance for the introduction of new forms of e-participation within the country. Estonians are used to vote or do their taxes online already.

The city planner, trying to represent a broader view with observance of the city's needs himself, has to find proper methods and tools to convince Tallinn's residents of the needs of holistic development. In this respect, the planner has the role of a educator and moderator. He should use informative meetings and other platforms to convince the public of framework conditions, the functioning, different needs and consequences of the planning. Therefore, it is crucial to set up adequate platforms and requirements for such participation.<sup>19</sup> Another dimension to encourage increasing participation would be the probable rapprochement of different ethnic groups, which until today remain highly disintegrated and spatially separated.

17 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).  
18 Haas (2006), page 89.  
19 Stadtvisionen (2010), pages 443-444.

### Tallinn City Region and supranational scale

All the cities in the world have one thing in common: the challenge to find the balance between market pressure, demographics and political decisions concerning land-use in a rapidly moving global world.<sup>20</sup>

As the current legal and institutional frames show, Tallinn's administrative borders and Tallinn as a body of functional interrelations with spheres beyond are not congruent. Instead of cooperating with the surrounding municipalities to perform as a united Harju County in the international arena, the individual bodies / subjects have to compete for the highly regarded income tax. The format of the Tallinn City Region has to be reconsidered and significantly restructured. By that, once again a paradigm shift has to be achieved, this time on a broader supraregional scale.

*"A defined problem of missing coordination in TCR planning processes and interregional reconstructing exists. Existing administrative system of regional and local governance in Estonia should be reassessed and amended for the reason to create prerequisites for developing integrated, highly effective, well connected polycentric city-regions. The ultimate aim is to create a showcase region, where independent municipalities are working towards common spatial structure, counting on each other's development, cooperating in the development of infrastructures and competing for the people, based on quality of life."*<sup>21</sup>

Besides a legal and institutional turnover, the future Tallinn City Region has to formulate its agenda with listing key strategic points and accordant scenarios for implementation. It is advised to list the deceleration of urban sprawl, the improvement and extension of the regional transportation system and joint development areas such as industrial and science parks on this agenda. Connectivity is a main determinant for further spatial planning within the TCR. An example is Tallinn's industrial area on its East border, offering potential together with the expanding Muuga Cargo Harbour in the neighbouring Maardu municipality in terms of concentrating jobs, infrastructure, facilities, freight and public transportation. Furthermore, it is becoming obvious that the increasing migration due to polarisation will demand deconstruction management, which will especially be an issue on the regional scale.<sup>22</sup>

Looking at Tallinn's existing involvement in transboundary cooperation, the close ties with the city of Helsinki become apparent quickly. Many Estonians commute to or live in Finland's capital, while in re-

20 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 435.  
21 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 75.  
22 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 435.

turn an immense number of Finnish tourists and consumers travels to Tallinn. “The City of Tallinn cannot be planned to the city limits. The city extends farther - administrative boundaries do not exist for residents and everyday doings. Over the course of a year, 6 million passengers pass through the Port of Tallinn. Interaction with Helsinki makes the Port of Tallinn one of the world’s most intense passenger ports.”<sup>23</sup> Not only statistics illustrate how tight the relations with Helsinki are.

In this respect, the Gulf of Finland RINA Spatial Vision, mainly initiated by the city of Helsinki, already makes the effort to institutionalise joint ambitions and projects of the three cities of Helsinki, St Petersburg and Tallinn. Developed regional transportation corridors and the interlocking of polyfunctional local centres are major components defined as preconditions for regional connectivity, effectivity of public transportation and energy use. From Tallinn’s perspective, the two most important networking directions to enhance are: 1) St Petersburg and Helsinki, the focal points of the Gulf of Finland region, 2) Via Baltica and Rail Baltica, tightening the ties with Riga and further with the mainland of the EU.

Against the background of the GoF-initiative, it is recommended to indeed tighten the transportation corridors with Helsinki, St Petersburg and Riga. Via Baltica and Rail Baltica are still planned, but once realised they will improve the connection with Riga remarkably. Looking to Tallinn’s East, St Petersburg already is relatively well connected by the International E-20 Road. In terms of passenger rail traffic, however, Estonia should follow its Northern neighbour Finland and establish a high-speed train connection with St Petersburg. “The Gulf of Finland structure, from Helsinki in the Northern most part of EU to Tallinn in the South and St Petersburg in Russia to the East, is recognised as one of the key gateways of the EU to Russia.”<sup>24</sup> Thirdly, Tallinn should elaborately examine different infrastructural projects, which would improve the link with Helsinki. When doing profitability calculations, the officials have to look in macroeconomic terms and take those cluster effects into account, which will occur in a longer term. Obviously, the opportunity of funds from the European Union are crucial in those matters.

Finally, it should be mentioned that also within supraregional and supranational initiatives a clear profiling would stabilise Tallinn’s position in the highly competitive international arena. Specifying one’s role and formulating tailor-made strategies, a city becomes even more respected by its competitors and partners. Estonia’s emphasis on innovation since its independence leads to speciality, which again triggers diversity. Following this thread, the need for mobility and exchange will successively increase.

23 Tallinna Idee (2010), page 58.

24 Helsinki City Planning Department Strategic Urban Planning Division (2007), page 8.

*“The ‘ideas’ of a city must be worked with in all perspectives of planning: proceeding from the global, local, meaningful and economic points of view. On the global level in the international competition between cities, the idiomatic traits of the spatial environment and how they play out have an important role.”<sup>25</sup>*

### Juridical changes

In the view of the above assumptions, it is decisive to especially change the legal frameworks concerning regional planning and inter-municipal cooperation. The future planning system must be timely and structurally adequate. Those framework conditions, which support urban sprawl, must be changed in the first place. Subsidies have to be banned, the costs for constructing in greenfield locations increased. Sprawled landscapes should be partially densified, the rearrangement of brownfields encouraged. Especially the life in inner cities must be made attractive and constructing in greenfield locations aggravated plus - if necessary at all - concentrated on hubs of the public transportation.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, the necessity for local governments to allocate costs for infrastructures on private investors who are authorised to construct on the particular plots discloses the need for an appropriate law. It is to be expected that municipal funds will get even tighter than they are already. That’s why it is high time to lay down the tracks in this matter.

Tallinn’s shift in terms of formal planning from preparing Comprehensive Plans towards City District Development Plans is imprudent. The risk of drifting even more into fragmentary short-sighted frames is being raised. Against the background of the wish to tighten the relations with surrounding municipalities, the chosen direction is ultimately not reasonable. Tallinn should work on holistic plans plus expanded polycentric documents instead.

There is an interesting lack of congruence between Estonia’s law system, which is analogous to Scandinavian law systems, and the liberal market economy, comparable with the United States. While the planning law follows a framework oriented on social democratic societies, the actual economic model nearly almost exclusively follows market mechanisms.<sup>27 28</sup> It is to be hoped that the upcoming revisions of the planning system will bring the two pillars closer.

25 Tallinna Idee (2010), page 24.

26 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 344.

27 Haas (2006), page 90.

28 Interview Tallinn City Planning Department (2014).



General strategy

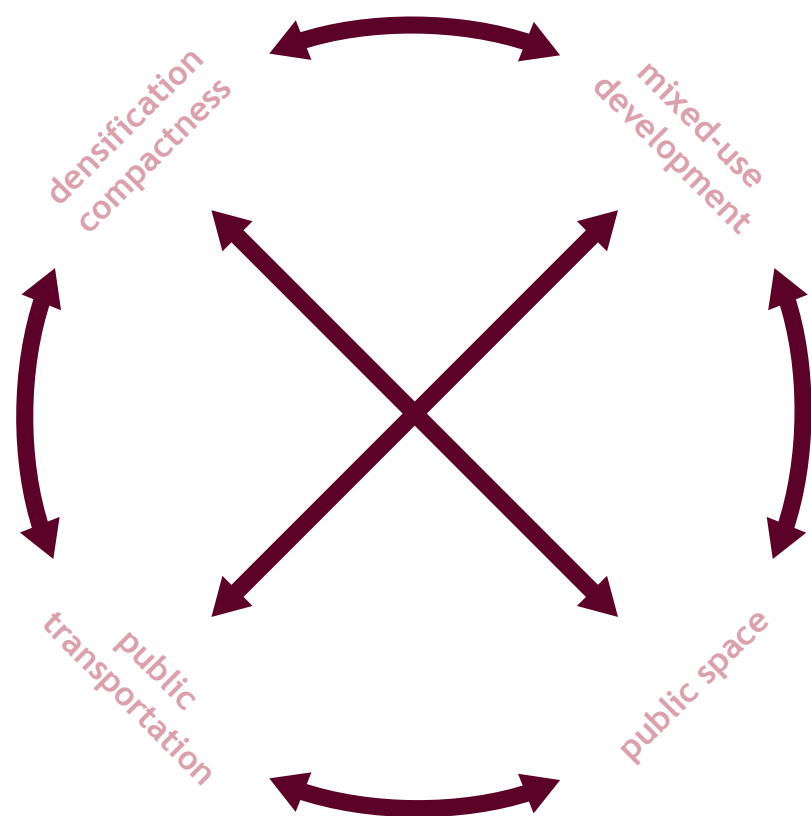


figure 23 strategic interdependencies

After presenting all the respective areas of action and the proposals associated with, the next step is to bring them together and accomplish the overall strategy for the next decade. When developing a strategic plan today, an overall scientific analysis is not fully in the focus anymore, based on which comprehensive aims would be formulated as it was common 100 years ago. Instead, the city and its region rather define different spaces with different identities, which will have priority in future development.<sup>29</sup> The main goal is to make the higher-ranking principles serve the identities in the differentiated sub-areas. On the other hand, each of those individual spaces has its impact on the holistic system of the city.<sup>30</sup>

Estonia, being part of the European Union, has to follow relevant EU Directives, which as expected also capture spatial planning. Consequently, in certain aspects Tallinn and the Tallinn City Region have to follow such strategies, which simultaneously are already been applied in Germany, France, Sweden et cetera. Many of those directives such as the smart city, brownfield development, reurbanisation or environmentally responsible policies follow the recommendation formulated by urbanistic experts and other specialists.<sup>31</sup>

The difficulty of a holistic management usually lies in a high fragmentation of real estate and not in a lack of knowledge or experience. The quality of urban design suffers from insufficient integrity.<sup>32</sup> In this respect, it is strongly recommended to reconsider the juridical framework as well as the platforms of participation in accordance with a better collaboration between the city, private investors, the public and other municipalities.

One feature often coming along with a liberalistic market economy is a remarkable stratification. In the case of Estonia and especially Tallinn, income disparities are spatially perceivable and closely connected to ethnicity. Sustainability cannot become an exclusive indicator of wealth. Besides economic and ecologic aspects, such components as integration of different communities and communication with the surrounding neighbourhoods are crucial for a social balance.<sup>33</sup>

*“In accordance with the continuing delicacy of relationships between Estonia and Russia, Tallinn’s city planning needs to prioritise ways of bringing Russian and Estonian enclaves into common spheres of interaction.”<sup>34</sup>*

Luckily, Tallinn’s official have already recognised and formulated many wise priorities. One of those directives is to prioritise larger area planning in expectation of creating wholesome and multifunctional urban environment. More aims are the densifying of residential areas as well as encouraging construction of different types of housing for different target groups, especially for young families. A last example is the establishment of high-quality public space.<sup>35</sup> However, now the next step is to carry these ambitious statements over scenarios and realise those by organising a projects series.

To summarise and link the content above, the following diagram tries to simplify and illustrate it for the city scale of Tallinn. The smart city of the future is characterised by compactness, which can be achieved by densification and reurbanisation. Urban sprawl has to be stopped and redirected toward established inner-city neighbourhoods. Without an intelligently mixed-use development, however, such a densified arrangement can’t work properly. Because a higher density comes along with heavier traffic, the second precondition for a satisfactory urban model is an adequate public transportation system. Once implemented and proven, it can widely replace car traffic.

29 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 389.  
30 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 452.  
31 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 434.

32 Stadtvisionen (2010), pages 436-437.  
33 Stadtvisionen (2010), page 436.  
34 Haas (2006), pages 102-103.  
35 Märtin (2014).



This paradigm shift can and should be accelerated by juridical restrictions on unsustainable mobility, for instance by a city toll system. The model's last main pillar is public space, acting as the key connector of the other three and being responsible for creating identity.

### Vision for 2024

Now that the proposals have been tabled and comprised in a comprehensive course of action, the final step is to formulate such a vision for the year 2024, which involves the desired results of the strategic program. Looking once again back to Saarinen's approach, one will see the open-structured nature of his regulation plan. Eliel Saarinen was well-aware of the element of uncertainty when prognosticating future changes, which is an effect of his sensitivity. In this respect, Saarinen's philosophy and methodology haven't aged. Still, the following vision can't have a comparable nature as his, simply because of the significant difference of the structural circumstances: 101 years ago, the city of Tallinn asked Saarinen to deal with urban growth, problematic sanitation and anarchistic expansion. In contrast, today the capital of Estonia needs to reconsider its future prospects, institutional framework, planning culture and demographic changes. Finally, the conclusion of my vision of Tallinn in 2024 is worded as follows:

*Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, a member of the European Union, is together with its city region an economically, environmentally, socially and aesthetically sustainably-managed, profiled and competitive agglomeration with well-developed transport links to its important neighbouring city regions.*



# 8. Conclusion

According to Jaak-Adam Looveer, head of Tallinn City Planning Department, Eliel Saarinen 'has never been alive in Tallinn'. One may agree, as it indeed seems there is no recognisable impact of his except for the theoretical statement in the Greater Tallinn Competition. Though, in contrast to this initial impression, the number of features, which can be read out of both the Soviet and today's approaches, is astonishing.

Against the background of the preceding investigation, it can be said that most of the directives proposed by Saarinen are still widely reasonable and would therefore be adjuvant as well as adaptable to some extent today. However, different modalities and tasks, together with additional contemporary challenges, cause the necessity to extend the width of spatial planning in 2014. Various new tasks mean also a wider range of different scales, on which planning has to operate.

Estonia's policy of liberalistic economy and privatisation has gone very far since regaining independence. Besides the positive effects, this direction has led to a lack of regulatory tools and to a large extent to impenetrableness. As a result, Tallinn is principally struggling with profiling itself in a world, which is more and more characterised by the rat race for prosperous investments and highly qualified specialists. For city regions, it is more crucial nowadays than ever before to adapt a line in order to emerge an original identity, in regard to the ability for competing within an increasingly uniform arena.

The necessity of holistic strategies and visions has not lost its actuality until today, which can be observed on various prominent efforts around the globe. Cities like Chicago or Paris reissue aspects of their historical plans on the contemporary cityscape. In this respect, in the case of Tallinn this trend strongly suggests a reconsideration of Saarinen's Suur-Tallinn as well. As the city lies ahead of undergoing an alignment of the contradictory welfare-state-based planning system with the liberalistic market economy model, this number of reforms opens the opportunity of a new discourse about the regulation plan from 1913. In one way or another, the inevitable restructuring allows to hope that, once implemented, Tallinn will master its above-mentioned future challenges.

To make its urgently required paradigm shift possible, urban design has to both evolve new skills and reanimate frivolously forgotten ones. In the first place, however, the discipline will need to focus on its original destination: the human scale, functional, environmental as well as aesthetically and culturally sophisticated shaping of the environment. Planning and designing have to be brought back together, filling the occurred vacuum.<sup>1</sup>

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1      Stadtvisionen (2010), page 446.

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