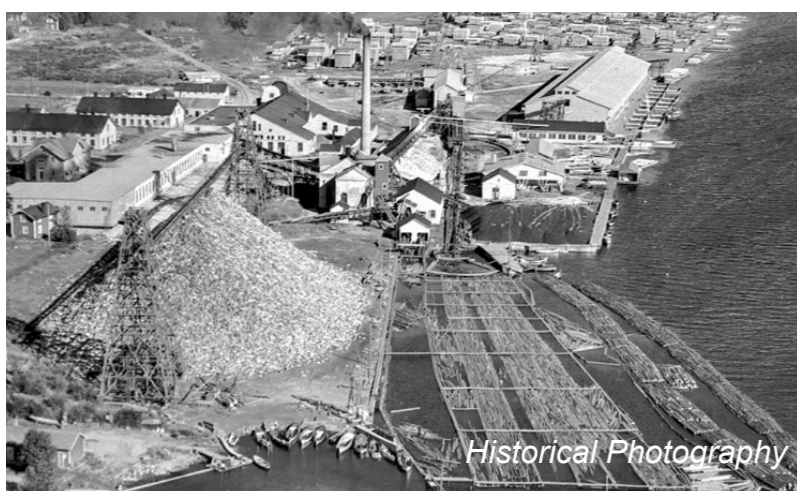




SAFESCAPE

from past barriers to future magnets

Introduction



Historical Photography

The Skellefteå region is in imminent need of accommodating their booming population as a result of rekindled industrial development and job creation. Growth is particularly accelerated due to the nearby, state-of-the-art, electric car battery factory under construction, which will be the largest of its kind in Europe.

The nearby Town of Ursviken is uniquely situated along the Skellefte River halfway between the City of Skellefteå and the Baltic Sea, amidst the epic scenery of Norrland's nature. The Town, with several other localities along the River between the City and the port Town of Skelleftehamn, can be described as an extension of the City.

Ursviken has potential to become a new gravitational local center, tying dispersed communities together, supporting and relieving existing nearby centers.

The Scharins site will not only be transforming within its borders, but is also in a perfect position to be at the nexus of a broader regional transformation.

Industrial activities of the past have left their mark on the ground and the site is now a mostly vacant, partially contaminated brownfield. What once was a booming wood pulp factory and small port settlement, now has a strained connection to its founding attraction - the River.

Incoming and existing residents of the Skellefteå metro area, both local and global, human and nonhuman, require a solution which is mindful in design and promotes safety, equity, inclusion, livability, accessibility, and ecology.

The small Town of about 3,900 residents is expected to double or triple in size in the next 20-25 years. Rising current and future housing demand has the opportunity to attract a new diverse milieu for residents.

The subarctic climate, landscape, history, and context are opportunities to embrace with a both forward-thinking and historically reflecting approach.

Vision

The paramount goal is to create a safe, inclusive and desirable place to live. Historical narratives serve as a unifying element, taking on new meaning. An inclusive ecology allows for many species and cultures to call this place a safe home. The riverfront is a place for all, with access and mobility as key components for success.

"There is no single answer to any problem in the city. The solution comes from a multiplicity of answers."
— Charles Montgomery, Happy City

Montgomery argues that people in medium-sized communities tend to establish better bonds, are healthier, spend less time in traffic, and have everything they need within 15 minutes. This procures a stronger feeling of belonging. The Scharins site as a part of Ursviken and Skellefteå has all the necessary components to make this a reality.

The introduction of this local center is intended to attract residents, businesses, investment, and economic mobility. Initiative is taken to link the new development harmoniously to the existing smaller-scale context. Amenities and uses proposed contribute to the diversity and attractiveness of the entire region. Diverse communities increase resilience with awareness and have binding overlaps. Social resources for multi-generational learning, playing, and health are woven into an ecological framework. Public spaces are accessible and free of barriers.

Approach

An evolution of site identity incorporates the following design principles which are merged along a central backbone.

Safe Residence

Above all, safety is envisioned to have a multi-faceted meaning with respect to this project. Soil conditions are addressed to clarify to future residents and visitors that they can feel safe at all times. Safe mobility is implemented through a car-free network and designated car-use areas. Interspecies safety is proposed, knowing that biodiversity, food security, and biophilia make places happier and stronger. Social amenities for children and intergenerational participation invite people of all ages, genders and cultures to feel at home.

Historical Rejuvenation

All that is left from the site's bygone industrial past are the traces in the ground. A gravel clearing is where the main factory building once stood. Overgrown footpaths and meandering runoff swales are all that remain of the rail spur. Imprints from the past are redefined. The old factory site transforms into a new public square, and the rail imprints create two dynamic axes, reclaimed as undulating pedestrian and ecological esplanades. This historical background is complemented with building forms familiar to the context and the use of wood as a local material. A site that was once used as an exporter of goods transforms into an importer of residents and recreation.

Inclusive Ecology

Social and ecological systems facilitate community cohesion for both human and non-human actors. Inspiration is drawn from the overarching indigenous features, systems, and peoples already at work. The forest is extending to meet the river like an old friend. Integration of stormwater and snow management systems are proposed which creates a network of care. The project framework welcomes diverse cultures and species. A boardwalk pathway continues beyond the site in either direction along the river's edge as a bike and pedestrian artery heralding the beauty of the landscape.

Mobility

Reinforced multimodal infrastructure could not only reduce car dependency, but strengthen global, regional, and local connections. A robust pedestrian/cycling network, mobility hub with a bus stop and car-sharing fleet, future light rail station, and alternative transit modes such as snow scooters and ferries increase livability.

Economic mobility is fortified by these transit attractors and commercial opportunities in a thriving cultural center and society. Parking is reasonably accommodated in order to balance desirability for residents, commuting workers, and commercial/recreational visitors. Drivers are routed to aggregated areas that balance day and evening utilization.

Past Barriers

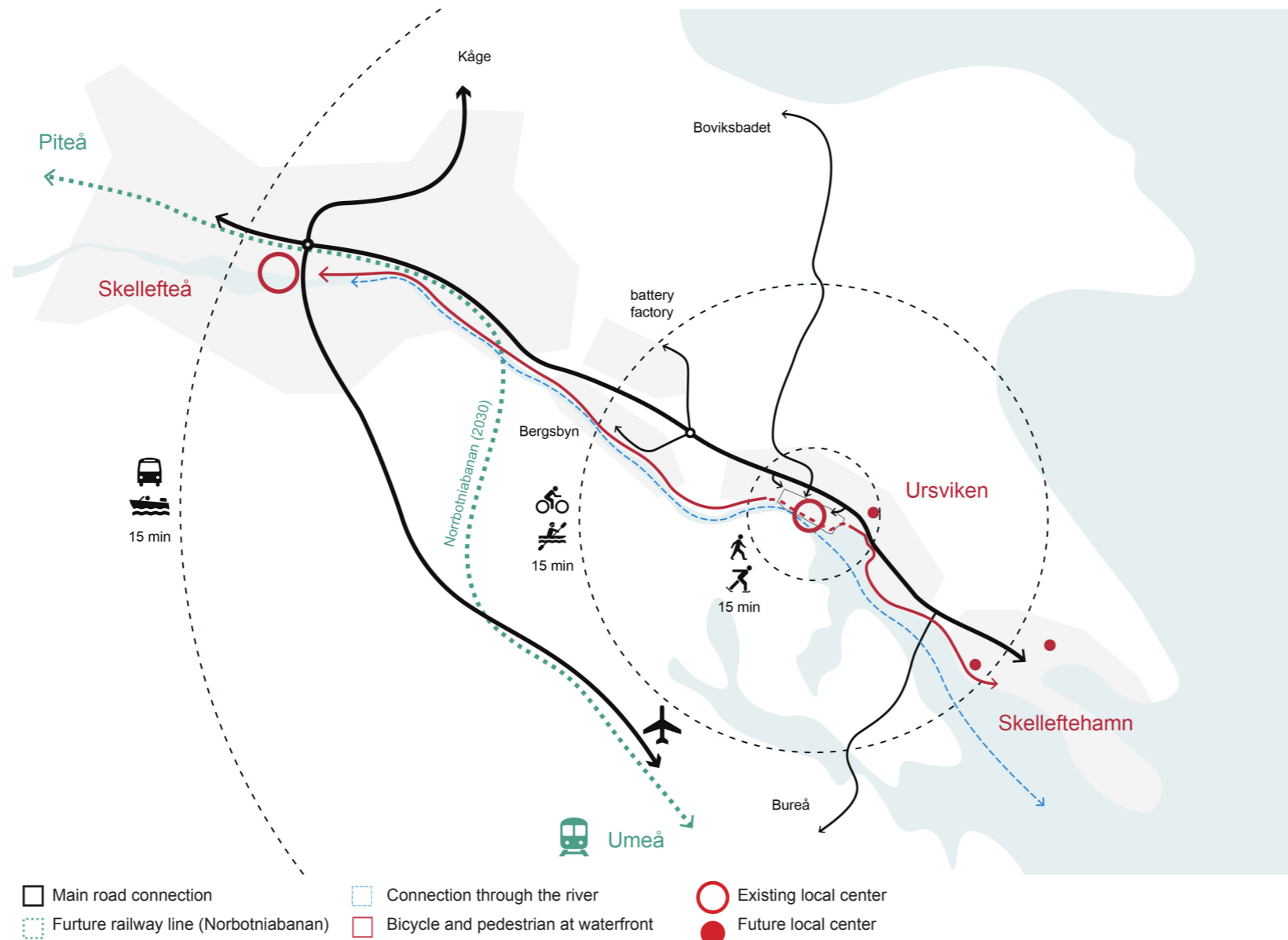


Future Magnet



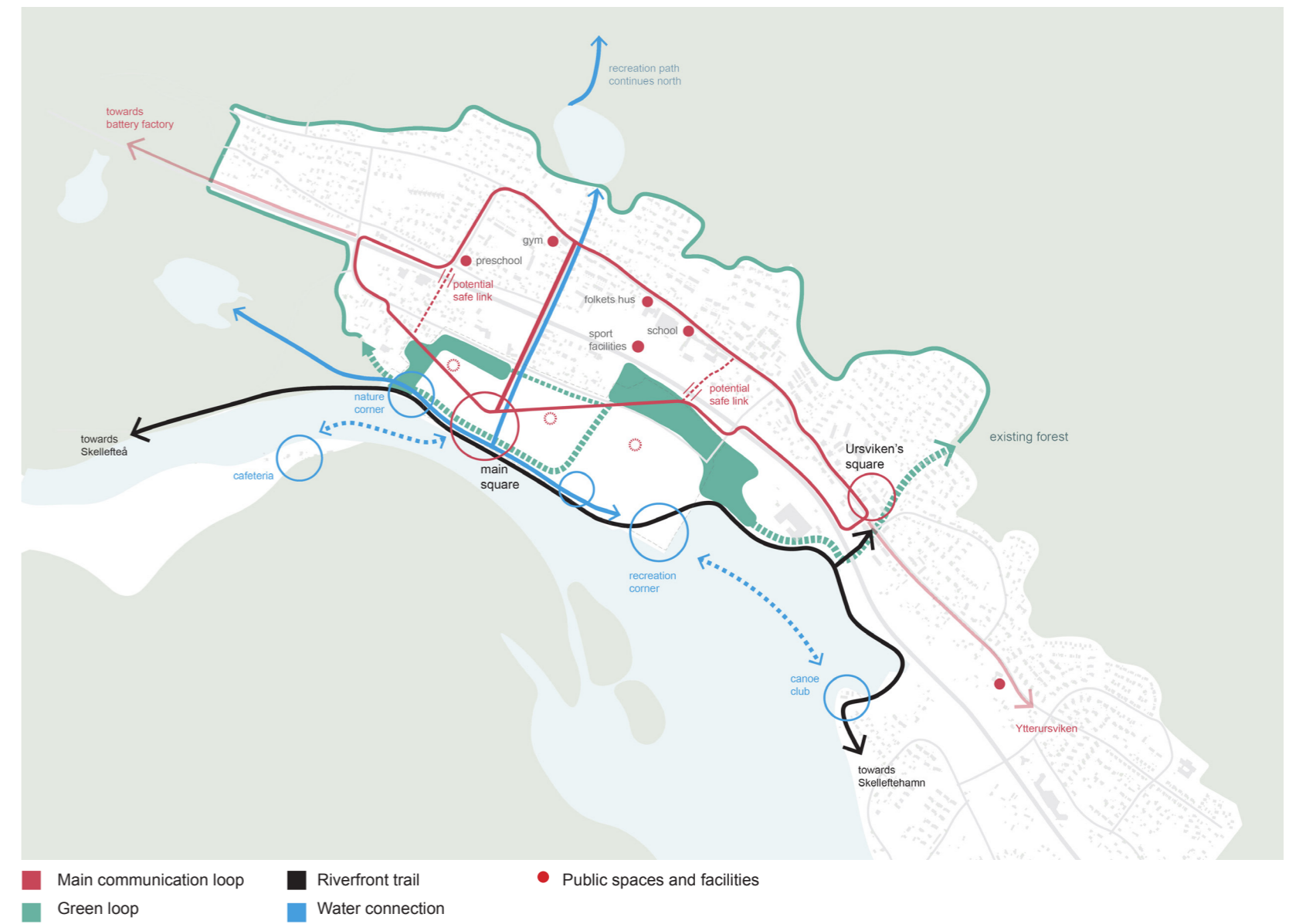
Former Factory Site

Multi-Center Region



- Main road connection
- Connection through the river
- Existing local center
- Future railway line (Norbottanbanan)
- Bicycle and pedestrian at waterfront
- Future local center

Reflection Site - Tying It All Together



- Main communication loop
- Riverfront trail
- Public spaces and facilities
- Green loop
- Water connection



Historical Lines
A confluence with dynamic narratives with a new gesture towards the waterfront



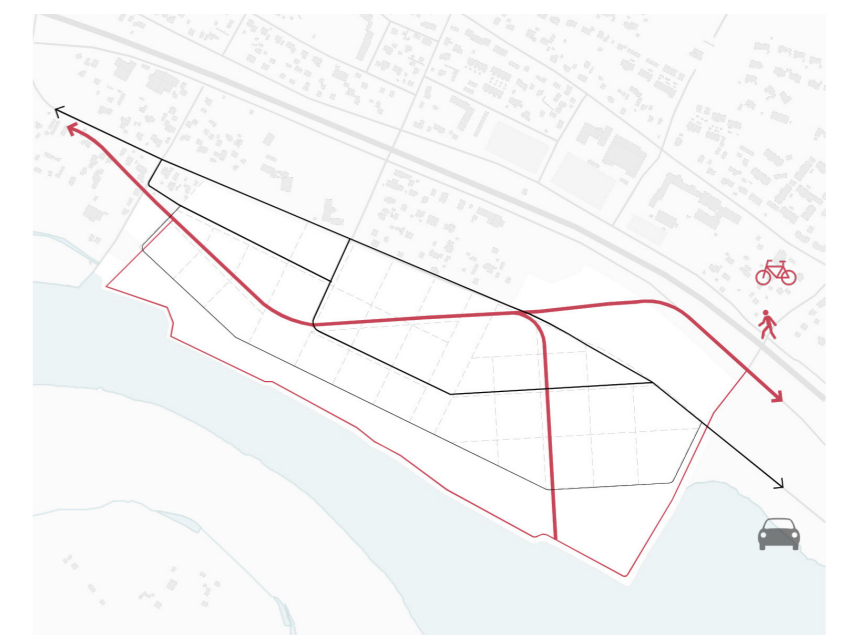
Safe-street
Redefining the historical traces with revitalized public spaces for civic and neighborhood needs



Framework
A water-oriented network and block structure derived from the site's founding assets



Reaching Forest
The existing forest penetrates and envelopes the new framework greeting the River like an old friend



Accessibility
Pedestrian and cycling network and designated car-use areas maximize waterfront accessibility