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# E17 Norway Jury Report Åkrehamn



# Content

## 3 European 17 in Norway

## 4 The composition of the jury

### 4 Substitutes

## 5 The jury procedure

### 5 Technical committee

### 5 The 1st jury round

### 6 Midpoint meeting between jury and site representatives

### 6 The 2nd jury round

## 7 Matrix of all submitted entries

## 9 Summary of the task

### 11 General remarks

## 12 Winner

### 12 MC855 – Grønn og glad

## 14 Runner-Up

### 14 XT796 - Stitching together

### 16 PU810 - Symbiotic Landscape





# European 17 in Norway

European is an innovation process for architecture and urban development, centered around an open competition of ideas for architects, landscape architects, and urban planners under the age of 40. The European competition takes place every 2 years with European 17 being the 17th edition.

In European 17, 51 competition sites from 12 different European countries were launched at the same time connected by the theme Living Cities 2: Care.

For European 17 there were 5 sites in Norway:

- Larvik, represented by Larvik municipality.
- Krøgenes, represented by Arendal municipality
- Åkrahamn, represented by Karmøy municipality
- Østmarka, represented by Trondheim municipality
- Grensen, represented by NTNU (Norwegian University of science and technology)

European-Norway is a foundation that organizes the European process in Norway. The secretariat of European Norway is run by Kaleidoscope Nordic.

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# The composition of the jury

**Ida Winge Andersen**

President of the jury. M. Architect, company director, and partner at Rebuilding.

**Jacob Kamp**

Partner and creative director at 1:1 Landskab .

**Eli Grønn**

M. of Architecture and Urbanism MNAL, partner and leader for Urbanism and Planning with Dyrvik Architects.

**Luis Basabe Montalvo**

Founding partner of ARENAS BASABE PALACIOS ARQUITECTOS.

**Katariina Haigh**

M. Architect, Project Development Director at Asuntosäätiö.

**Ilkka Törmä**

M. Architect, urban designer and researcher, editor-in-chief at Outlines

**Eili Vigestad Berge**

Director of sustainability and public relations at Mustad Eiendom.

**Substitutes:****Cristian Ștefănescu**

Owner of a-works Assistant Professor, Bergen School of Architecture

**Merete Gunnes**

M.Sc Landscape Architect MNLA and founder of TAG landscape.



# The jury procedure

The competition is organized as a tender under the Norwegian rules public procurements as a "Plan-og Designkonkurransse" Listed on the TED database and according to the Rules for European 17.

As stated by the rules for European 17, the jury met 2 times per site. The first jury meeting selected a shortlist of a maximum of 25% of submitted entries. The second jury meeting selects the winner(s), runner-ups, and special mentions.

## Technical Committee

The secretariat for European Norway made up the technical committee. The technical committee prepares the jury process, controls the eligibility of the proposals, and takes notes of the jury discussions.

The Technical committee consisted of Tone Berge, Bjørnar Haveland, and Andrea Pérez Montesdeoca.

## The 1st jury round

The purpose of the 1st jury round is to select a shortlist for the second and final round of the jury. The site representative participates as a jury member with one vote. The jury met for a full day per site. The meeting was conducted using the A1 printed boards of the proposals and Miro as a digital exhibition.

The 1st jury round took place the 14.09.2023 in Åkrehamn.

Attending:

From the jury: Ida Winge Andersen, Jacob Kamp, Eli Grønn, Luis Basabe Montalvo, Katariina Haigh, Ilkka Törmä and Eili Vigestad Berge.

From the technical committee: Tone Berge and Bjørnar Haveland

From the site: Kristian Endresen and Vignleik Winje

### **Midpoint dialogue meeting between jury and site representatives**

A dialogue meeting was held between jury leader Ida Winge and jury members Jacob Kamp, Katariina Haigh, Luis Basabe Montalvo, and the site representatives at the European Forum for cities and juries in Vienna on the 11th of November 2023.

### **The 2nd jury round**

Selection of winner, runner up, special mentions.

Conducted as a physical meeting on the 12th of November 2023, also in Vienna.

In this meeting the site representatives participate as an observer, with the right to make a statement at the start, but without any vote.

Members of the board of European Norway can also be present, but just as observers.

The decision of the jury is final and independent.

#### **Attending:**

From the jury: Ida Winge Andersen, Jacob Kamp, Eli Grønn, Luis Basabe Montalvo, Katariina Haigh, Ilkka Törmä and Eili Vigestad Berge.

From the secretariat: Tone Berge, Bjørnar Haveland, Andrea Perez Montesdeoca.

From the board: Marianne Skjulhaug

From the site: Kristian Endresen and Vignleik Winje

# Matrix of submitted entries

	Jurymeeting 1	Code	Project Name	Project Feedback
01	Shortlisted	MC855	Grønn og glad	Winner: 12 000 Euro prize
02	Shortlisted	XT796	Stitching together	Runner-Up: 3000 Euro prize
03	Shortlisted	PU810	Symbiotic Landscape	Runner-Up: 3000 Euro prize
04	Shortlisted	GA752	Spirit of simplicity	<p>The jury gives credit to well-studied and represented street redesigns. They provide a useful tool to discuss one important topic in Åkrehamn with the stakeholders. Secondly, the need and recognition of wind-sheltered public spaces is a welcomed observation.</p> <p>The new proposed plaza is oversized for this small town, competing with the existing town squares. Ideas about infill building, ecological concepts and green roofs remain too abstract. Overall the proposal is somewhat conventional in its aims and while simplicity can be good, the proposal does not offer enough to build a vision for Åkrehamn.</p>
05		IC622	Åkra is almost alright	<p>The project did not make it to the shortlist. The jury valued the thoughtful programming of certain buildings and their illustrations that could engage the public. However, the proposal is too focused on these separate buildings and their choice is not sufficiently argued. Another idea that the jury acknowledged having potential, is the rerouting of the county road around the central block, thus strengthening the walkability towards the harbour. Beyond these, the proposal is undeveloped; it appears to lack the capacity to tackle the various challenges presented by the site comprehensively and convincingly.</p>
06		JL875	A forest with clearings	<p>The project did not make it to the shortlist. The jury found the concept of the city as a forest with clearings interesting as it suggests an ecological approach. However, the execution of this promising idea falls short and appears contradictory: the "clearings", meaning the key public spaces in Åkra, are the planted places, while otherwise, there is little forest in the town. The proposal is concerned with the detailed design of the squares, but the designs and their reasoning are challenging to comprehend. On the strategic level, the proposal is thin and does not deliver a holistic proposal for the town centre.</p>
07		OW292	Reconciling the city with the sea	<p>The project did not make it to the shortlist. The jury acknowledges the concept of bringing the city back to the sea, but this concept is not depicted in the proposal clearly. There are interesting elements such as boathouses by the sea, a seafood theme, and multipurpose buildings near Elkjøp that frame the park. Nevertheless, the proposal appears as a collection of ideas about buildings and lacks a cohesive concept and overarching urban vision to masterplan Åkrehamn's development.</p>



# Matrix of submitted entries

	Jurymeeting 1	Code	Project Name	Project Feedback
08		TH709	Sharing time!	The project did not make it to the shortlist. The strength of the proposal is in the first board: the jury praises the proposal for understanding the need for a process to develop the town and the importance of engaging and involving the citizens. The proposal does so with do-it-yourself culture as a tactic, which might well work in Åkrehamn. The proposal focuses on Rådhusgaten street: redesigning the street and lining it with new buildings. However, there are issues with the proximity of the proposed buildings and the proposed architecture falls short of showing qualities that can engage the street. The proposal does not address nor communicate wider mobility; it seems to be closing potential routes to the Rådhusgaten. Some drawings are not explained sufficiently or linked to the text-based ideas, making it difficult to understand certain solutions.
09		UA053	Land(m)Åkr(s)	The project did not make it to the shortlist. The jury appreciates the proposal for structuring the town with different levels of mobility, although the proposal lacks clarity in what that entails concretely. A useful observation in the proposal is the relationship between the cultural centre and the soon-to-be-vacated school building and the goal to utilize it. However, the challenge lies in the excessive plazas in the small town, and the reasoning for the parking solution that further enlarges such space. The project's drawback is its focus on separate themes without demonstrating connections between them.
10		YZ408	Sharing is caring	The project did not make it to the shortlist. The concepts of the commons, sharing and participation are commendable. For example, the idea that car parks could be seen as multipurpose areas that could be drive-in cinemas. That gives a unique twist to the large amount of surface parking in Åkrehamn. Unfortunately, the ideas and concepts remain underdeveloped as a masterplan, which is a significant drawback and without which the project lacks a backbone.



**Create bold plans for how Åkrehamn can develop from a fragmented, car-based landscape into an attractive, urban town centre.**

Flexibility and adaptability to different uses. There is a will to invest in Åkrehamn, but it is still a small place where each new building is a considerable investment. New proposals should explore flexible uses for buildings such as housing that can easily be converted to commercial use and vice versa.

How can a new urban center connect to the harbor and the breathtaking landscape?



# Summary of the task

The goal is to give Åkrehamn a vital and functional centre that promotes more walking and biking. We need a plan for how the existing urban structure can be strengthened, and how the centre can be strengthened through developing the connections between the harbour and the main road.

The site has massive potential for both new construction and transformation of existing structures. We see this area as the key for achieving a sustainable urban environment in Åkrehamn and create stronger continuity in the urban fabric.

How can the site be developed to create an attractive town centre? How can the sustainable city simultaneously be a place for businesses, retail, and a preferred place to live in an area currently dominated by suburban housing?

How can we create high-quality and inclusive outdoor areas and urban spaces? How can the town be better connected to the sea, the beach and its natural surroundings?

The task is to make an overarching urban plan, one that can convincingly allow room for ambitious visions and realistic processes for implementation. Show how the vision can be implemented in the immediate, short, medium and long term.



# General remarks

The main tasks outlined by the competition brief were to create an attractive city center, showing the potential for both new construction and renovation as well as creating high-quality outdoor areas in an overarching urban plan. The jury saw the key challenge to be giving coherence and vibrancy to the existing, dispersed town structure.

Having viewed all of the competition proposals, it is clear that mending the urban fabric, creating conceivable city spaces and finding the identity of Åkrehamn has not been easy. Perhaps the proposals show us that there is not ONE solution that does the trick. And maybe even more controversially, that architecture alone cannot answer the task.

Looking at the aerial photos of Åkra, seeing the town center – and the study site around it with a beach, a harbor, fields and sea, the city center looks empty. Densely knit suburban fabric surrounds the less dense town center. The only real dense urban place within the town center is the old harbor.

The jury has thus favored proposals that aim to solve the city on more than one level in a balanced way; successful proposals have combined different scales or worked simultaneously on town blocks, streets and the landscape. The most interesting proposals managed to create a clear vision of how to sensibly connect the harbor with the 'new' city center. These proposals also linked the urban fabric to its underlying and surrounding landscape. Finally, successful proposals had something to help get local stakeholders on board, whether that was a well-communicated theme in the proposal or a sense of excitement about the place.

So, what is needed to turn the competition proposals into successful planning? Is it an overall conceptual plan, a toolbox, a set of city-building rules or a very detailed and prescriptive plan covering all areas of the city center? Or is it something that can inspire the various stakeholders to join the process? Åkrehamn needs all of the above in a good mix to create the necessary city hierarchy and participation. It is the clear recommendation from the jury that the winning proposal work together with the 2 runners up to form a coherent strategy on many scales for the renewal of Åkrahamn.

Winner



Winner



Winner



Winner



Winne



Winner



Winner



Winner



Winner



Winne

# Winner

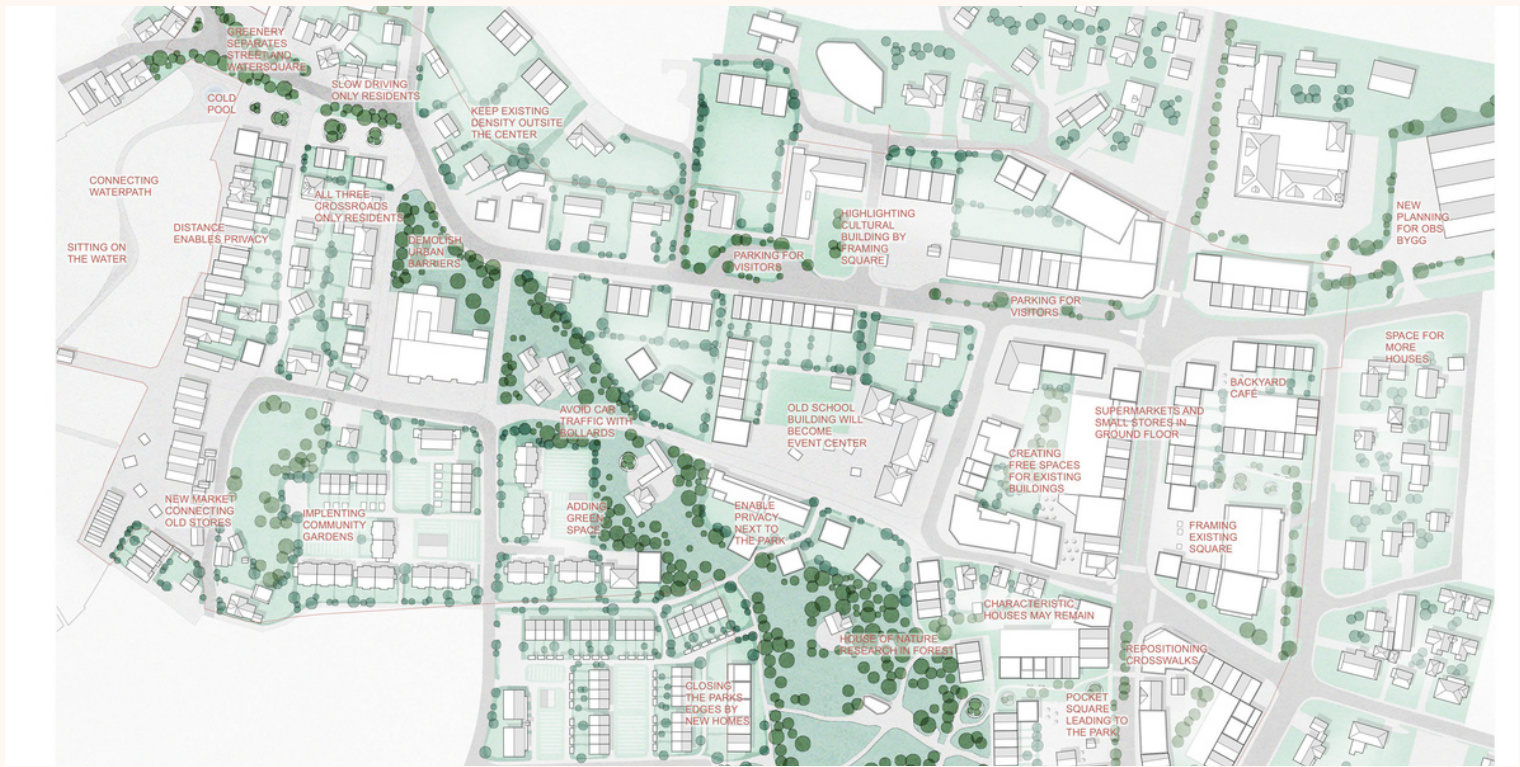
## MC855 – Grønn og glad

On the large scale, the project “Grønn og Glad – A Community of All Beings” proposes a clear strategy to generate an urban centrality for Åkrehamn by developing and extending the existing North-South green belt into a clearly defined central spine. This structure, reaching all the way from the beach to the old harbor, connects the natural qualities that surround Åkra with a row of existing programs in the center to create a common narrative. Although some specific situations proposed in this green belt do not seem easily realizable, the jury sees in it a narrative clear and strong enough to lead its gradual development, capable of giving Åkrehamn from the very moment an image of its missing centre.

Beside this big move, the proposal identifies the urban block as the key scale, in which this rather dispersed urban situation has a chance to become an urban structure.

Subsequently, it proposes a set of tools to regulate a transformation of the blocks, both in their role of generating spatially clear outsides and programmed living insides. The Jury sees in the idea of redefining Åkrehamn by the reinforcement of its urban cells a credible response to the informal dynamics, which seem to have been the motor of this area’s urban development up to today. At the same time, it opens possibilities for the public actors –the municipality– to get integrated with a leading role in this complex process.





The scale of the proposed buildings are successful both at keeping with Åkras architectural identity while showing how carefully placed taller buildings successfully can contribute to reinforcing urban qualities.

The jury has observed with some skepticism the over-dimensioning of public spaces in the project, especially in the number of urban squares. On the one hand, they do not seem credible with an urban density and intensity like Åkrehamn's. On the other hand, they would reduce the intensity of both the green centrality and the greater definition of urban space created by the new blocks.

Finally, the Jury acknowledges the emphasis placed by the project on using and enhancing what is already there, what increases its ecological, social and economic resilience, and therefore its credibility.

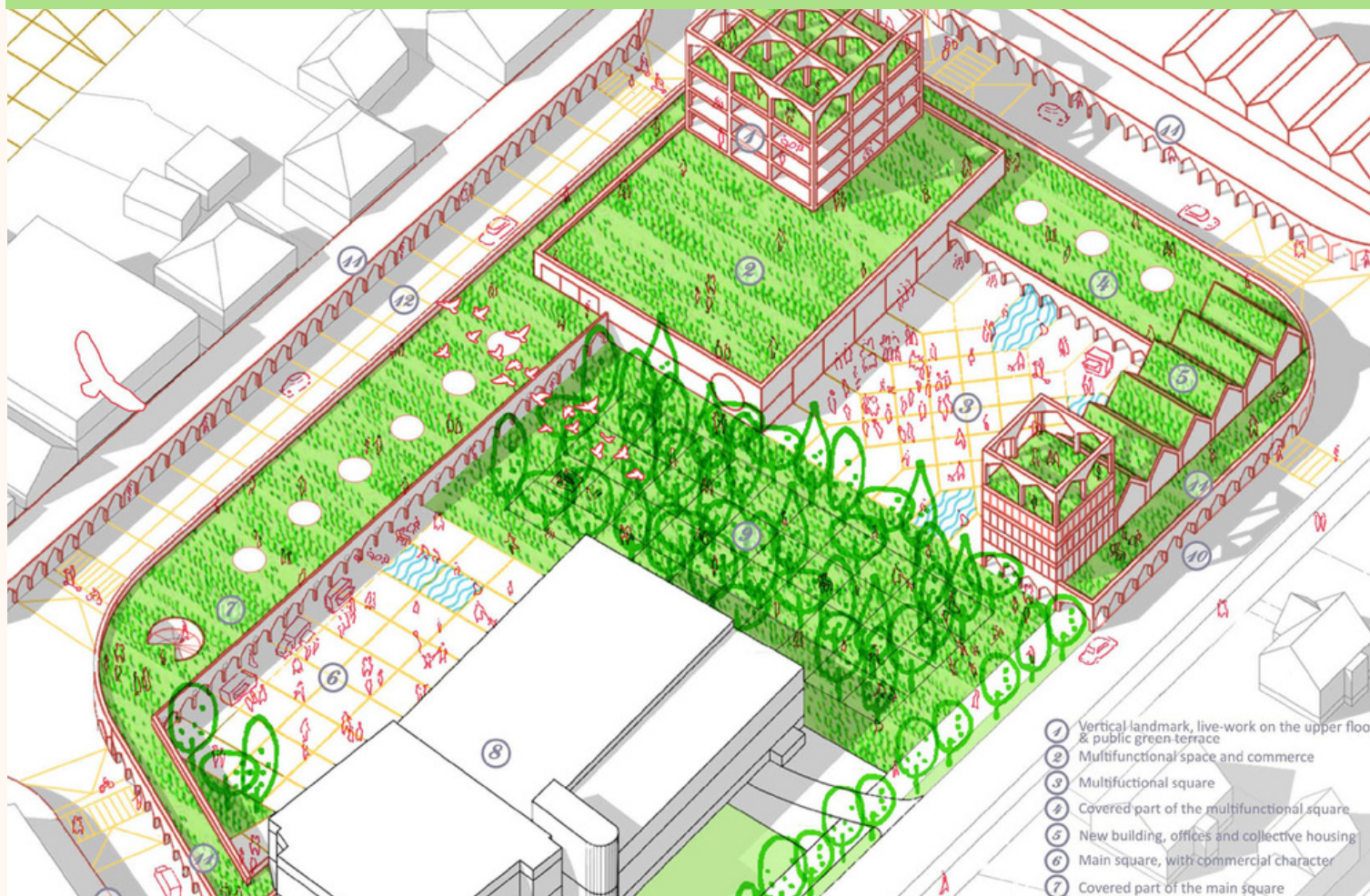
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# Runner-Up

## XT796 - Stitching together

Stitching together provides Åkrehamn with a wealth of suggestions. Some of the ideas are provocative and exaggerated, obscuring the foundations of the proposal and making it difficult to communicate to stakeholders. Nevertheless, the proposal is built on well-thought-out and presented master-plan basics. It emanates excitement and optimism about the town, which might serve Åkrehamn well in the upcoming planning work.

The most prominent ideas are arcades and stoaes that Stitching together proposes to unify the town centre, bestow it with identity, and provide shelter from the elements. The amount of arcades is overblown, and their implementation would be problematic in several ways. However, in places, stoaes could work as intended, giving integrity and intimacy to shapeless, oversized squares or undefined streets.





Most successfully, *Stitching together* demonstrates how to turn the backyard-like area between Rådhusvegen and the old road to the harbour, Åkravegen, into legible streets and town blocks. The proposal has placed infill buildings to form compact blocks and complemented that with a boldly extensive redesign of the streets and revamp of the surface parking. Central city blocks of Åkrehamn take shape.

Another great goal of *Stitching together* is to extend access to the waterside of the harbour. A key element is a pier in front of the private waterfront plots. While not an easy solution to implement, the pier could be transformative for the harbour in combination with other public space improvements proposed by the water.

Finally, the tentative schedule of the various projects provides insight into a strategy to revitalize and transform Åkrehamn, giving the vision a much-needed time perspective and priority.

**Authors:**

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- Marius Stelian Gaman (RO), architect urbanist
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Runner-up



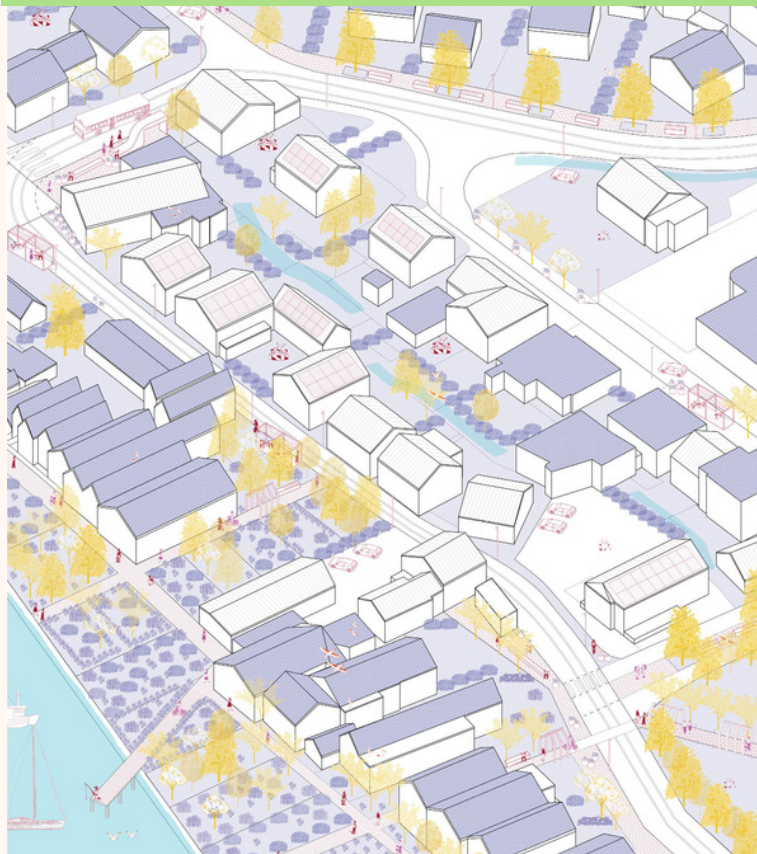
Runner-up



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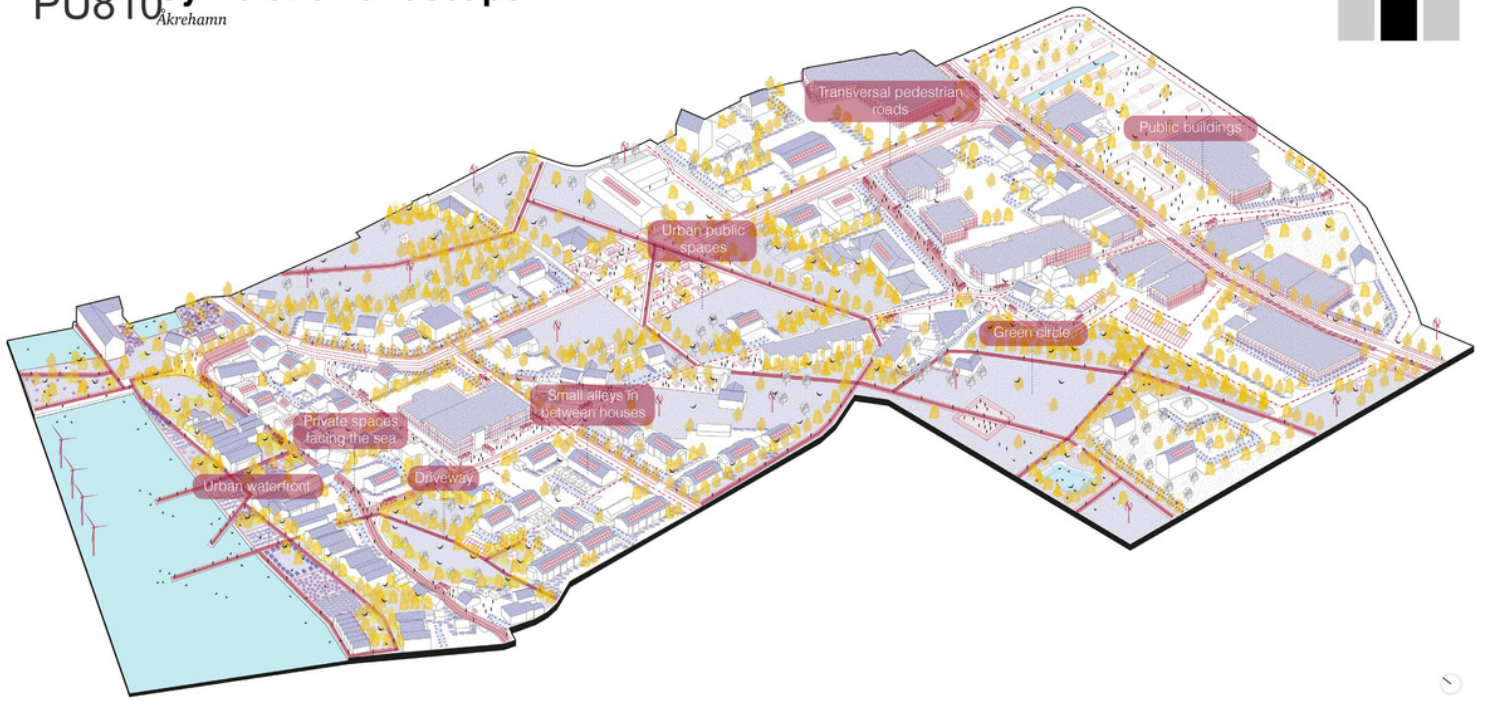
# Runner-Up

## PU810 - Symbiotic Landscape

Symbiotic Landscape focuses on a series of elements that need to be connected and proposes a phased project through various steps to transform the landscape. Highlighting the significance of a north-south urban waterfront and a corresponding green belt in the city center, the project links these features through a network of west-east transversal streets. A masterplan is composed using plants, shrubs and street furniture as tools for tactical urbanism that adds a consistent scale to the street network.

The jury thinks Symbiotic Landscape is an interesting proposal that uses green structures as tools for transforming and revitalizing the urban fabric of Åkra. The jury is impressed with the solid concept and boldness of this project. It is a fully sustainable project, presented in stunningly beautiful graphics. It triggers the viewer's visions and imagination of what Åkrehamn could become.





In the jury's opinion, the proposal to develop along the waterfront is important, although the landfilling might be unnecessary. The jury also questions the economic feasibility, as well as the challenging growing conditions for trees, due to heavy weather and constant wind. It would be interesting to see the urban scheme of waterfront, green belt, and transversal streets clarified and strengthened through a strategy that is more varied and contains a wider array of tools and instruments than only trees, shrubs, and furniture.

This proposal shows a new meaning of densification, through trees and vegetation, and is a completely new way to address the situation of Åkra, and although it is not proposing new buildings, it structures and provides identity to the city in an innovative way.

**Authors:**

- Filippo Fiandanese (IT), architect
- Silvia Lanteri (IT), architect urbanist
- Maicol Negrello (IT), landscape architect
- Alessia Carena (IT), architect
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