

# Valga town in action and transformation

## INC – Resilient communities in action and transformation



Jiří Tintěra

Town architect at Valga Town government

doctoral student at Tallinn University of Technology



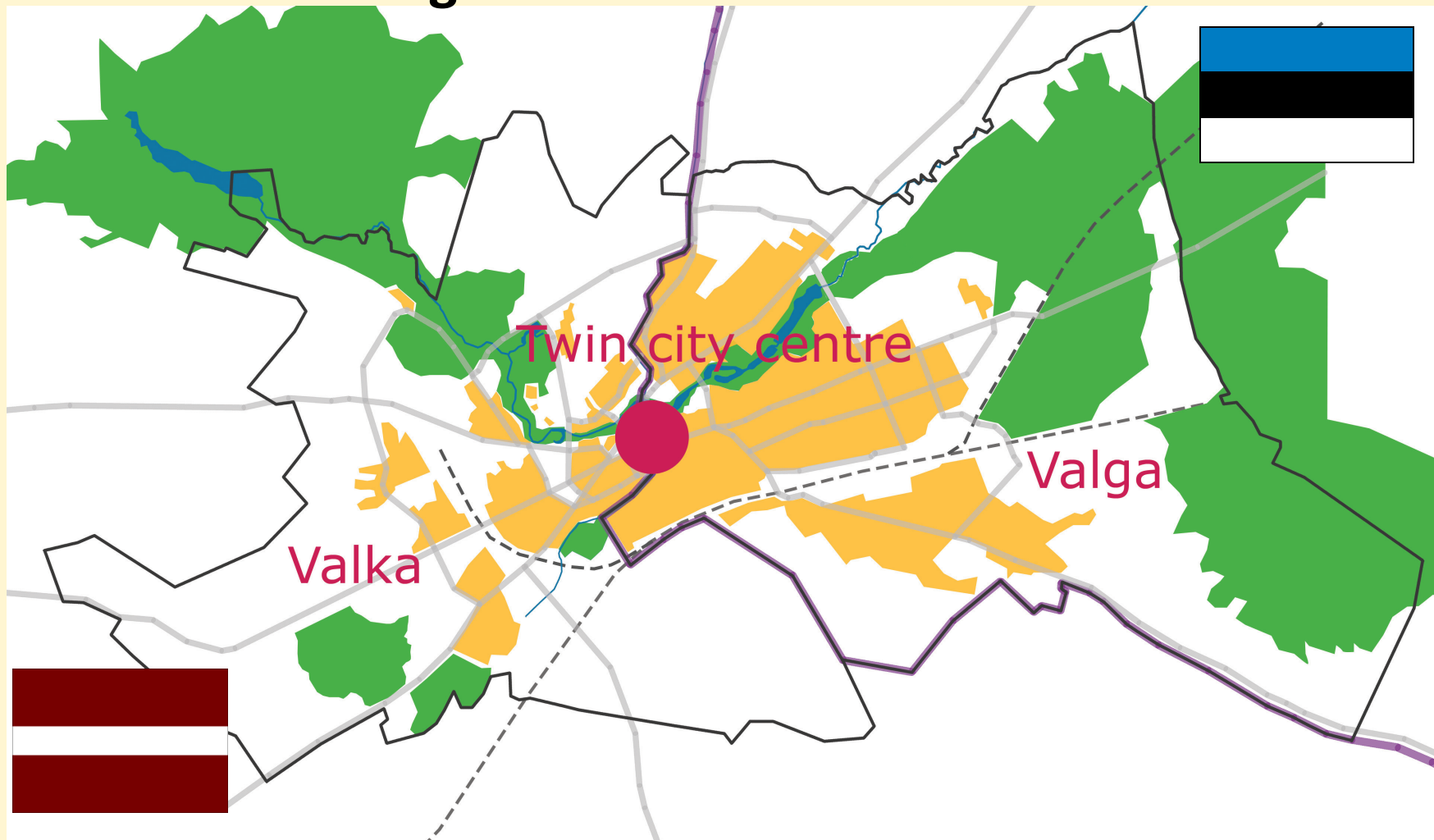
# Location of Valga



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# Twin towns Valga and Valka



Valka: area 14.0 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population 5 700

Valga: area 16.5 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population 14 300



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- In 1286 first mentioned as Walk in Rigas`debt book.
- Traditional place for assembling towns` days of **Old Livonia** (36 times in the 1500s)
- **Town rights** were given by the Polish king Stefan Bathory in **June 11, 1584**.
- Valga became a **Railway Junction** (Tartu-Valga 1887, Riga-Valga 1888, Valga-Pskov 1889)
- Number of inhabitants – In 1881 - 4207, In 1897 – 10 922, In 1906 – 16 122, In 1913 –exceeding 20 thousand
- Johannes Märtson – the **first Estonian ever to be elected as Mayor of Township in 1902**
- In 1920 state border marked by British colonel Stephen George Tallents. Town Walk was divided in two parts – Valga and Valka



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# Best practices of cooperation of Valga-Valka

- **Art school in Valka** - 204 students, more than half from Valga. Joint exhibitions and camps
- VALKA- VALGA celebrate every year the **Border Market** in May and **Town Festival** in June
- **Latvian-Estonian Institute**
- Modern dance **studio “Joy”** in Valga - 25 participants from Valga
- **Pāvels Loskutovs Cup** in 10 km race (a race along the streets of Valga and Valka)
- BC Valga Maks&Moorits/BC Valga/Valka **basketball team** both in Estonian and Latvian leagues



# Development of Valga population

- 1881: 4 200
  - 1897: 10 900
  - 1913: 16 000
  - 1917: **20 371**
  - 1922: 9 455 (without Valka)
  - 1934: 10 842
  - 1939: 10 419
  - 1959: 13 354
  - 1979: **18 474**
- wood
- concrete
- 1989: 17 700
  - 1990: ~15 000  
(Soviet military troops are leaving)
  - 2000: 14 550
  - 2005: 13 480
  - 2011: **13 400** (with Valka 19 100)

Source: Statistics Estonia



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# Adaptation of building stock to meet actual needs:



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# Land use in Valga

Actually in use in Valga:

- 80% of sites of development (in terms of the number)
- 72% of sites of development (in terms of surface)

Apartment houses:

- total: 389
- more than half of the apartments empty: 50
- abandoned: 52
- typically built in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, without sewage and water equipment
- in various parts of the town, often in the town center



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# Psychological challenges:

- There is a need for a psychological bond between the individual and his/her place of residence significantly affects individual activity in the community
- In order to fulfill this challenge:
  - The need for attractive environment
  - Being proud of home town
  - Having confidence in the town's future
  - Willingness of citizens to contribute to environmental protection, preservation, improvement, etc.



environmental degradation is accelerating



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# Solutions:

there are no easy solutions

- deceleration of depopulation process would be success  
cityscape to refocus
- the size of the town has to be adjusted to meet the needs of  
the 13 400 citizens
- part of the building stocks needs to be demolished, part of the  
developed sites turned into open green spaces or returned to  
the nature



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# Valga's plan to deal with mobilization:

Type of actions:

- I. revitalization of the historical town center
- II. reunification of Valga-Valka twin town center
- III. adaptation of building stock to meet actual needs
- IV. industrial and commercial brownfield redevelopment
- V. development of Valga as important railway junction



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# I. Revitalization of the historical town center:



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# Reunification of Valga-Valka twin-town center :



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# Valga town greening strategy:

Public green space to replace demolished buildings



Source: authors' survey



