

# PROPOSALS FOR WALKING ROUTES / MAIKEN VARDJA / URBAN STUDIES 2020

One way how to better integrate companion animals and their humans to urban public spaces is to improve their walking experience, since walking is how citizens with companion animals use the urban space every day and it is a necessity for them. Based on the analysis of the current walking ex

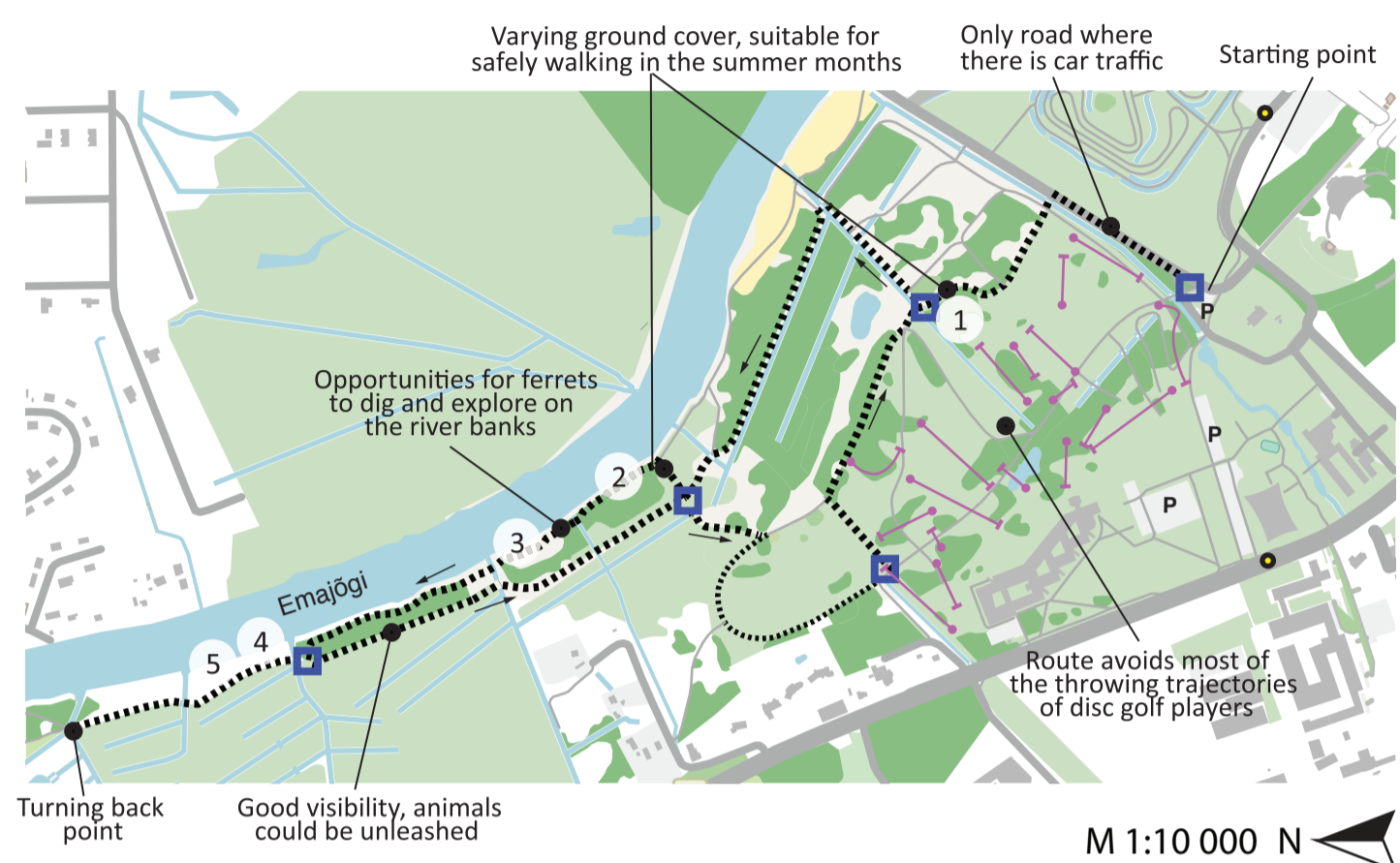
perience I propose new walking routes with small interventions on them to enhance the urban landscape experience of companion animals and their humans. I will focus on Tähtvere, Kesklinn and Annelinn neighbourhoods because they have the highest number of walkers with companion

animals and all of these neighbourhoods have different street structures that influence walking in different ways. Factors that are considered for planning the routes are: the time – how much time people have, what kinds of animals' people are walking with (species, age, health), the sur

face/street structure, practical aspects, quality of infrastructure (greenery, waste stations, potable water).

## Route 1 – A weekend hike in Dendropark and Jänese trail

Length: 4km  
Walking time: ~1h



Some of the characteristics of the Dendropark and Jänese hiking trail through the eyes of a human and an animal

This route is meant for a longer walk when the walker can take time with their animal. It was created because of its popularity among citizens, but also because there were some concerns in the area that could be addressed. Although it is a beloved walking route, there are not enough waste stations and there is a problem with disc golf players. It was mentioned several times that there are no public swimming areas in Tartu for companion animals and their caregivers. This proposed walking trail takes all the aforementioned components into consideration and tries to find a way how different user groups can share this valuable urban greenery with least possibility of conflicts.

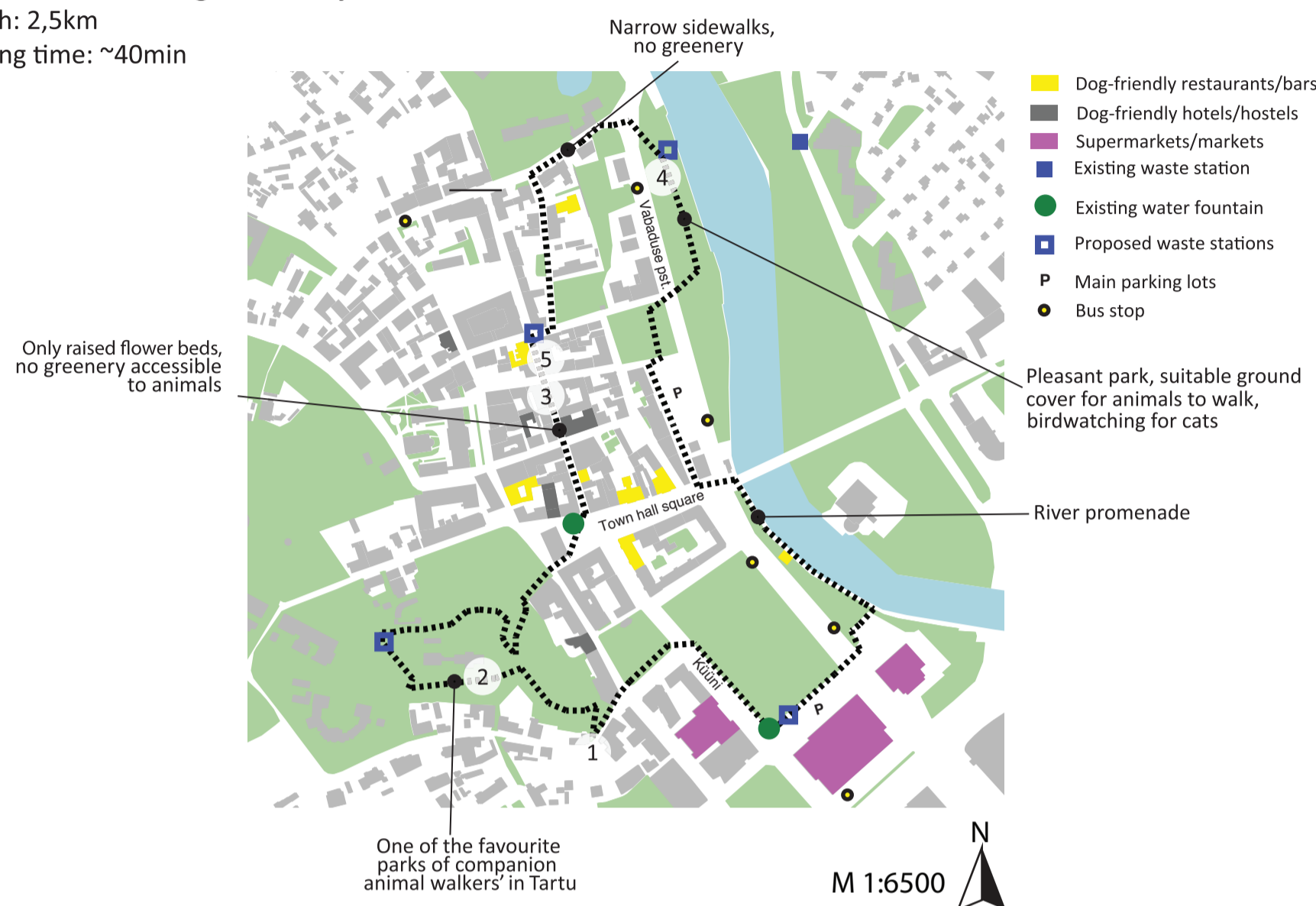
This trail has already naturally very much to offer for animals in terms of enrichment – different surfaces (sand, gravel, mulch) and different landscapes (wide open fields, more enclosed spaces). As there is a lot of space and always the opportunity to step away from the marked route, also cats and ferrets can enjoy being there. Offering the possibility to go for a swim can enrich the animals' lives. The grass in Dendropark and Jänese hiking trail is currently cut regularly and is not so interesting for companion animals. I would suggest not to mow the Jänese hiking trail green areas, instead plant more companion animal-friendly plants (meadowsweet, plantago, wheat).



View of the possible new location of companion-animal friendly beach. The area would be fenced in, the grass would not be cut, only some paths would be mown inside the area. Non-poisonous plants to companion animals should be used.

## Route 2 – Socializing in the city centre

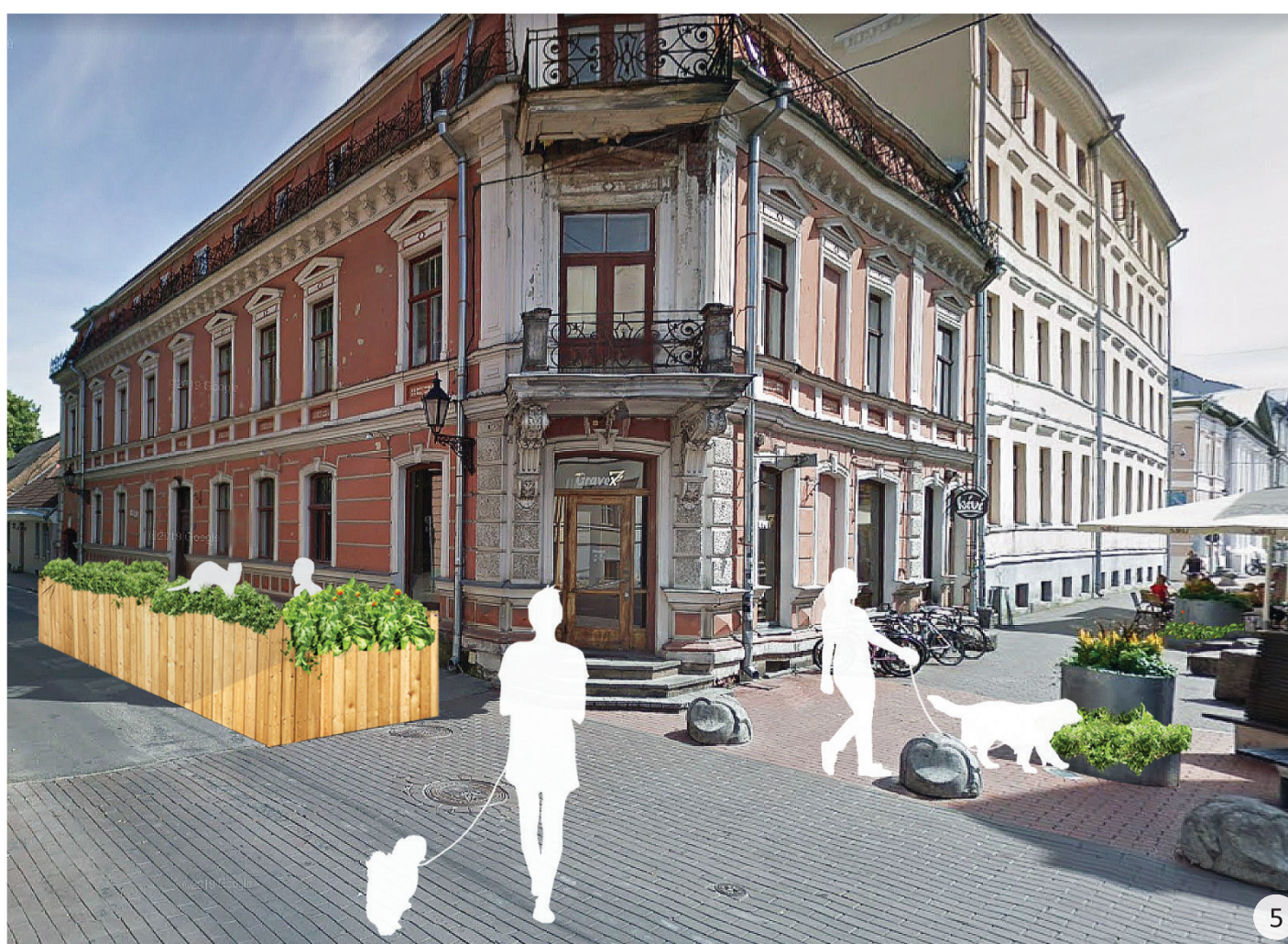
Length: 2,5km  
Walking time: ~40min



Selected characteristics of the route planned in the city centre through the eyes of the human and the companion animal

One of the key points that came out from the questionnaire was that walking depends on the practical aspects. This walking route is trying to connect the walker's practical aspects and the needs of the animal. The route follows vicinity of animal-friendly restaurants and bars, existing amenities for the animals and grocery shops for people. It is meant to show how companion animal can also be included when the walker conducts their own business. This route has in addition to pleasant areas for companion animals also unpleasant areas in terms of street structure. Although old town's main street Rütüli is car-free, it has been renovated with paving

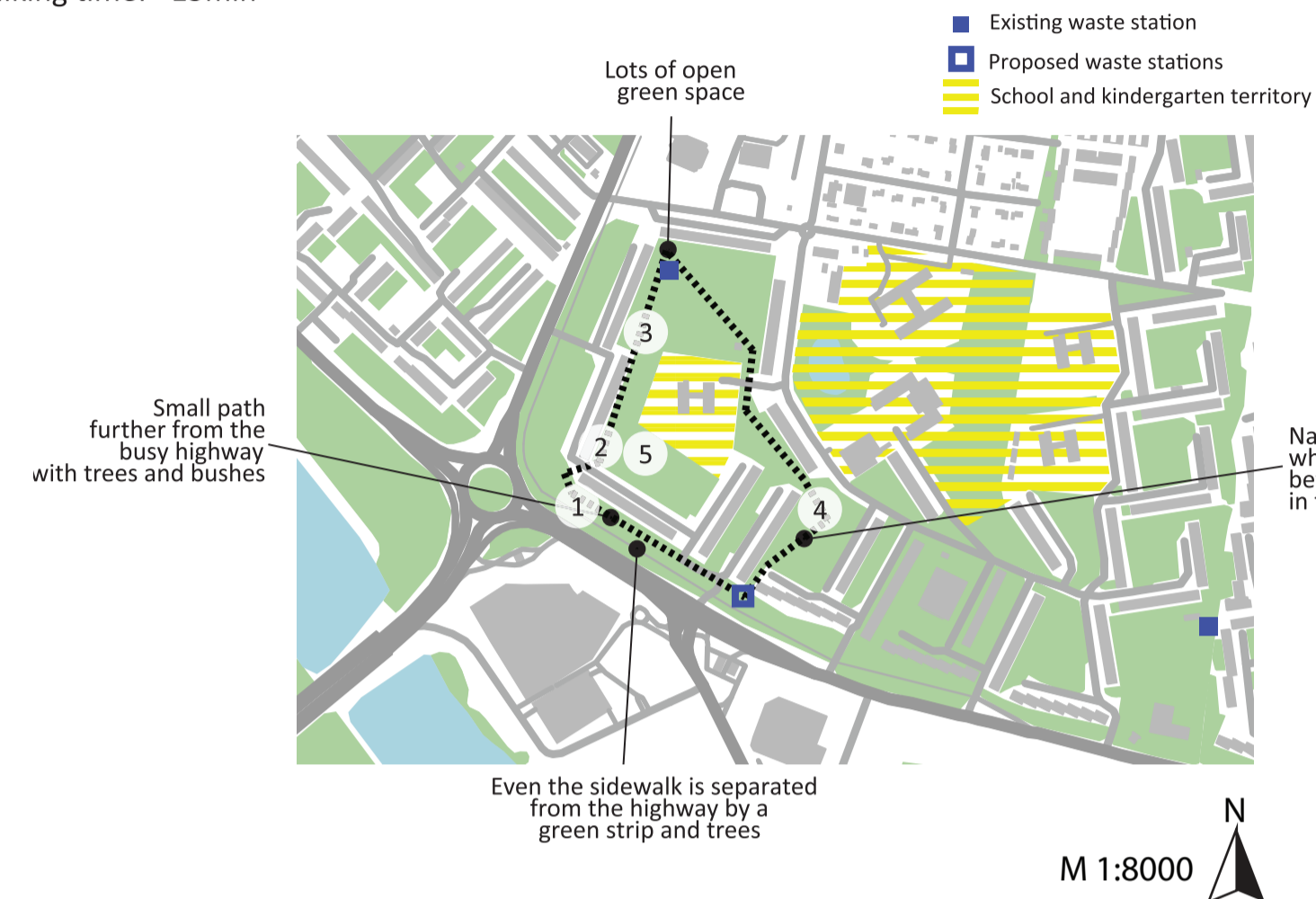
stones and the only nature that exists on this street, has been put to flowerpots that are raised from the ground. I propose an intervention to show how this urban environment consisting mostly of man-made materials can be made more suitable for companion animals. Small sensory garden can be created to occupy existing parking space. This mini-park would consist of boxes with live plants that are non-poisonous to animals (for example, rosemary, chamomile and catmint could be used in Estonian conditions) and even beneficial when sniffing. Some plant boxes could also be filled with sand/dirt where ferrets could dig.



View of Rütüli street showing a sensory garden possible location in the city centre instead of a parking spot and portable greenery on the level of companion animal reach

## Route 3 – A Quick Neighbourhood Stroll

Length: 1km  
Walking time: ~15min



Main characteristics of Annelinn's walking route through the eyes of human and companion animal

The third walk is a quick 15-minute stroll and it is mainly meant for the local inhabitants of this neighbourhood. Annelinn is one of the examples of Soviet panel housing districts. As these type of areas have sparked discussions about the quality of the living environment, it is interesting to see it from the perspective of the animal and analyse based on the findings how this area might affect companion animals. In terms of companion animals, it is quiet (there is minimum amount of exposure to traffic on this route), there is ample space between the buildings to accommodate different companion animals who can have enough distance to observe each

other from further away. Although a main highway is across from this route, the green strip is so wide and covered with different vegetation (high and low) that it is possible not to notice the heavy traffic at all. One negative side is that the space is quite homogeneous in between the buildings – empty fields between the houses where the grass is cut. As animals like visual variation and different points of view, this area could be enriched with small topographical forms. Different plants and sensory gardens can also be used in this area to make the green areas more biodiverse. Trees that are located on the route are great for cats to climb.



Enriching the animals' lives through topography and plants