

Explanatory note

Vilnius Railway Station Complex, Central Station Square and Public Transport Terminal

International open architectural project competition

This is our proposal for the idea of a new Vilnius Station and its connected surroundings. We have not solved all details, but we have made sure all details are solvable through one unifying idea.

Urban idea

3 main walkways connect from one side of the station to the other side. Perpendicular to these are elevated walkways along the edges of the tracks. This system creates a grid of streets that connect the station with the urban fabric of the city around.

Architectural idea

The new station has a blue roof made from extruded geometrical figures in the façade. The same blue is applied to the roof of the existing station. This way the old and new will blend and form one station.

The main hall of the new station is built from a forest of wooden columns supporting the blue roof. The columns also form a rhythm and spread out along walkways that connect to the city, strengthening the presence of the station in the city.

The North and South sides of the station are the entrances. The East and West sides of the station are also facades facing the tracks, with cantilevering balconies under the roof eaves. Here the low morning or evening Lithuanian sun will cast warm shadows into the station, and these balconies will be important hangout spots for people in the city – both those who are travelling by train and those who are not. This place will become as important for Vilnius as Parc Güell is for Barcelona.

The station will bring the imagination to Lithuanian wooden houses with beautiful decorations while at the same time becoming something entirely new; a station like nowhere else.

Materials

The elevated walkways and the station foundations are in concrete, with a smooth coloured surface to resemble the plaster walls of the old station building.

The columns are in natural wood and can withstand climate exposure with the right protection in the top. However, the columns are also intended to age over time, so that when the columns are 100 years old they will still stand, however with a patina. In maybe 200 years they will need to be replaced; one by one according to its condition, just as with traditional Lithuanian architecture.

The blue roof is made from a blue glazed tile with an integrated photovoltaic cell that will generate electricity for the lighting and temperature control in the station.

Functionality

The grid structure of the plan will allow for maximum flexibility of station functionality, both as it is now and in an unforeseeable future in 2040 or 2090. It allows for 3 axes running across the station and 2 axes running along the station. The plan works like a city square, where entrances to all functions can line up along axes like houses line up along city streets.

The station is divided into local, regional, national, and international travel, and the divisions can change freely over time without the need for rebuilding. There is a separate hall for departure and for arrival, with security checkpoints as in an airport terminal.

Central station square and public transport terminal

The long colonnade out from the station on one side embraces the square and reaches all the way to the streets in the North. This ensures efficient connections, but also emphasizes urban orientation for travellers not familiar with the place. The colonnade will contain the functions of the public transport terminal and connect well between the square and the bus station.

The square connects to the street in the North through a big stair resembling the Potemkin stairs in Odessa or Spanish Steps in Rome: essentially an urban space for people.

Bicycle access

Currently bicycle access in Vilnius is limited, but with increased bicycle use the coming decades, bicycle traffic will be comparable to private car traffic today. Therefore, the bicycles are not allowed access over the main axes over the station but can park in 4 bicycle centers close to the station.

Naujininkai centre

The elevated walkways will provide the Naujininkai centre with an extra street façade in addition to the regular street façade. This will increase commercial attractiveness and the area's integration with the city around.