

Pedestrian countings and observations

The purpose of this part of the study is to examine how the urban spaces are used. It provides information on where people walk either as part of their daily activities or for recreational purposes. This can form the basis for future decisions on which streets and routes to strengthen in order to maintain the activity or which to improve to make it easy and pleasant to use the necessary routes. This part of the survey also provides information on how much and where people sit, stand or carry out other stationary activities in the city. These stationary activities act as a good indicator of the quality of the urban spaces. A high number of pedestrians who walk in the city do not necessarily indicate a high level of quality in the city but a high number of people who choose to spend time in the city indicate a lively city of quality.

How was the data collected

- counting of pedestrian traffic
- surveys of stationary activities (behavioural mapping)
- field observations

Survey period

- the surveys took place on summer days with nice weather in June and July
- the data were collected on weekdays and Saturdays both during the day and in the evenings.

Survey days

- Saturday the 16th of June 2001, 10 am to 12 pm.
Weather: Sunny, 20-25° C
- Wednesday the 20th of June 2001, 10 am to 12 pm.
Weather: Cloudy, 17-20° C, rain at 5 pm
- Thursday the 28th of June 2001, 12 am to 8 pm.
Weather: Sunny, 23-26° C.
- Wednesday the 25th of July 2001, 10 am to 12 pm.
Weather: Sunny, 30-32° C.
- Thursday the 26th of July 2001, 12 am to 2 pm.
Weather: Sunny, 30° C.

Pedestrian traffic:

The findings from the surveys on a weekday in July and a Saturday in June will be presented in the following pages. Findings on a weekday in June do not differ substantially from findings in July.

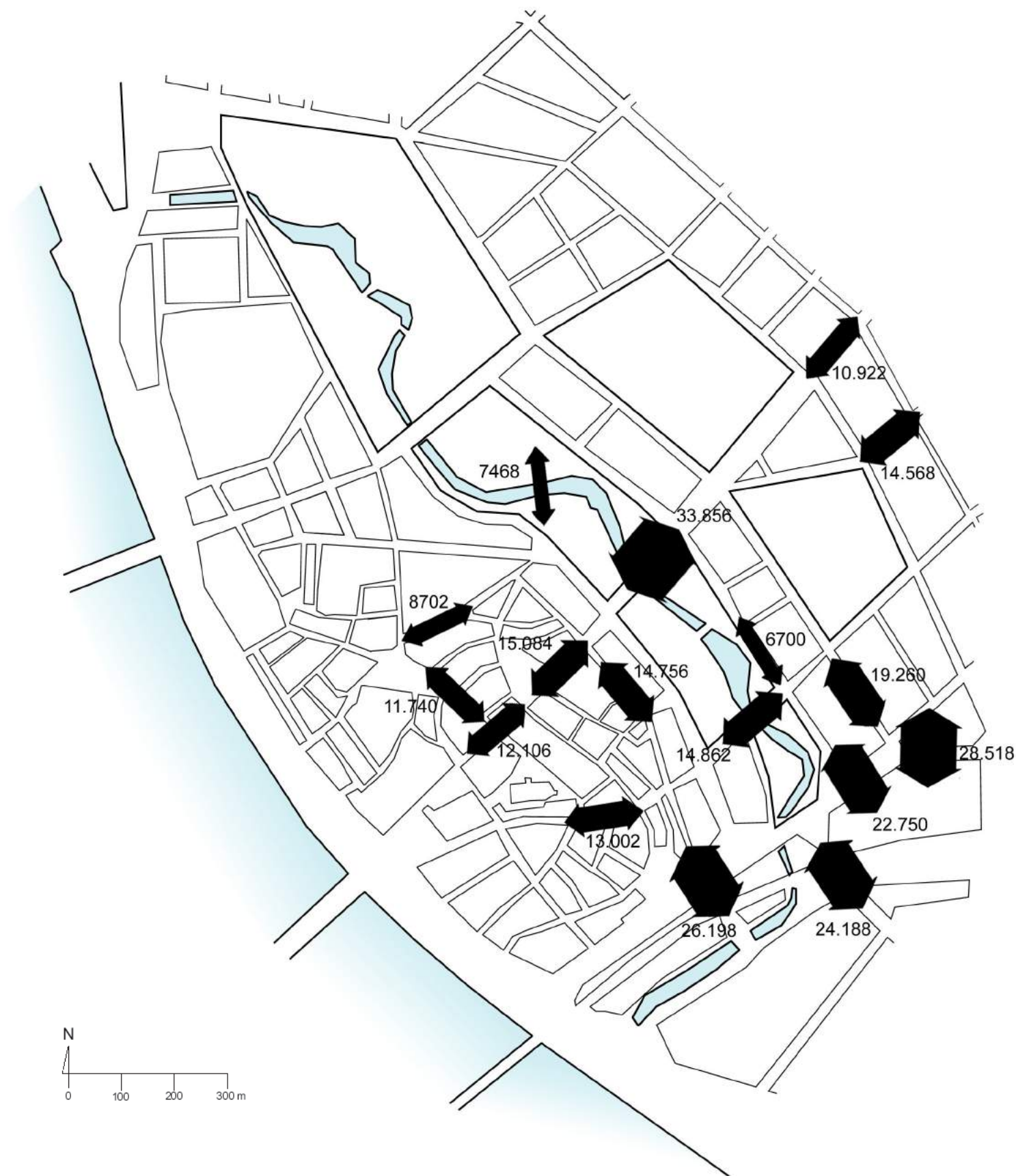
The volume of pedestrian traffic in Riga's city centre is high compared to other cities of a similar size. More people walk in Riga and they walk long distances on the main routes between the city centre and the residential areas outside the centre.

During the day from 10 am to 6 pm there is a concentration of pedestrians around the Freedom Monument. There are also a high number of pedestrians around the station and on the access roads to the market.

Remarkable are the very high numbers of pedestrians walking between the city and the station and the city and the central market despite the difficult conditions as described in part 1. Many pedestrians in this area indicate the significance of the station and the central market as major destinations in the city. The high number of pedestrians here emphasise how important it is to ensure easy and safe pedestrian connections in this area.

In Riga's shopping streets there are 12-15.000 people between 10 am and 6 pm. This is a surprisingly low figure compared to main streets in cities of this size in Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. It can be assumed that the pedestrian traffic in the major streets in the city centre will increase markedly in the years to come following the improved economy.

It is worth noting that the pedestrian crossing to Stacijas Laukums has 25% more pedestrian traffic than the pedestrian tunnel which also leads to the square. This daytime pattern shows a general tendency confirmed by the pedestrian counts in the evenings as well as on Saturday both during the day and in the evening.



Pedestrian traffic on a Wednesday between 10 am and 6 pm.
(Wednesday the 25th of July 2001. Weather: Sunny, 30-32° C).



Pedestrian traffic on a Wednesday between 6 pm and 12 pm.
(Wednesday the 25th of July 2001. Weather: Nice summer evening 18-22° C)

There is in the evening a very interesting increase in the total number of pedestrians as well as in the average hourly pedestrian traffic of about 100% compared to the pedestrian traffic during daytime in the northern part of the main street, Kalku iela. The southern part of the street has an increase of about 15%.

Audeju iela and Skúnu iela has a reduction of 20-30%.

The remaining part of the city centre, including the area around the station, experiences a reduction of 50-60% in the number of pedestrians in the evening compared to the daytime pedestrian traffic.

Compared to other cities around the Baltic Sea the high numbers of evening pedestrian traffic on a weekday night in Riga city centre is an unusual pattern. It is partly explained by the late opening hours in Riga where many shops stay open till 10 pm. There is for instance in Copenhagen a reduction of pedestrians of about 50% after 6 pm when the shops close.

The high concentration of cafes, restaurants and cultural institutions in the Old Town is another reason for the high level of evening activities in this area. Generally speaking a high level of evening activities in streets and squares in the city centre is a very positive and important attraction for any city.



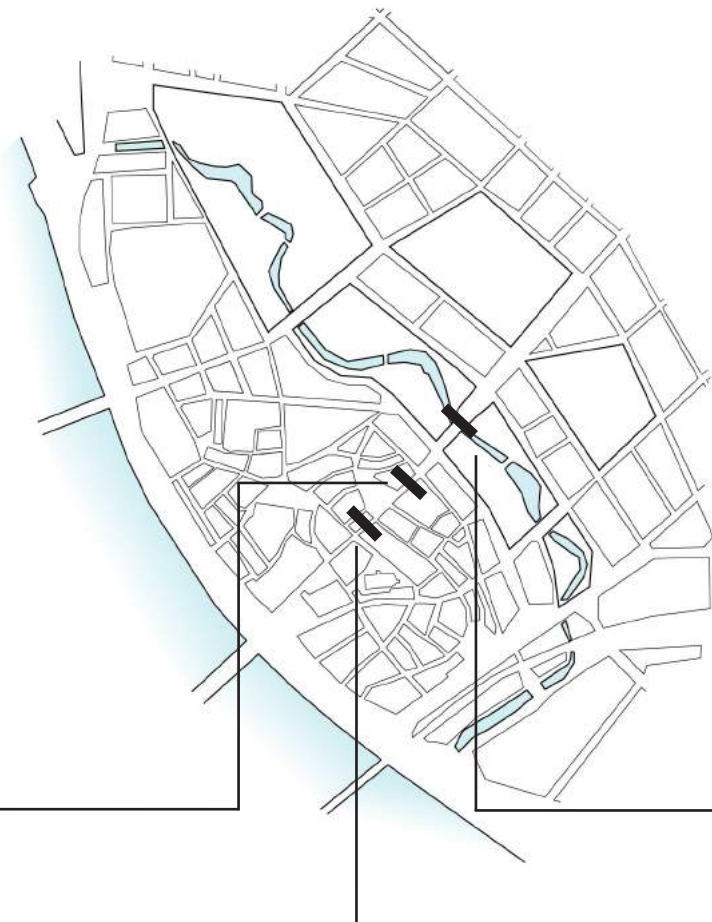
Audeju iela. There are some confusion about the traffic priority in certain places in Old Town.

WEEKDAY JULY, STREET BY STREET

Wednesday the 25th of July 2001. Weather: Sunny, 30-32° C

The illustrations on this page show a survey of the pedestrian traffic throughout the day on **Kalku iela**. In the evening this is the busiest place in the city centre. Pedestrian traffic in the northern and southern parts is similar during the day until 5 pm when the number of pedestrians in the northern part start to increase. The peak is reached between 8 and 9 pm when people go out for dinner.

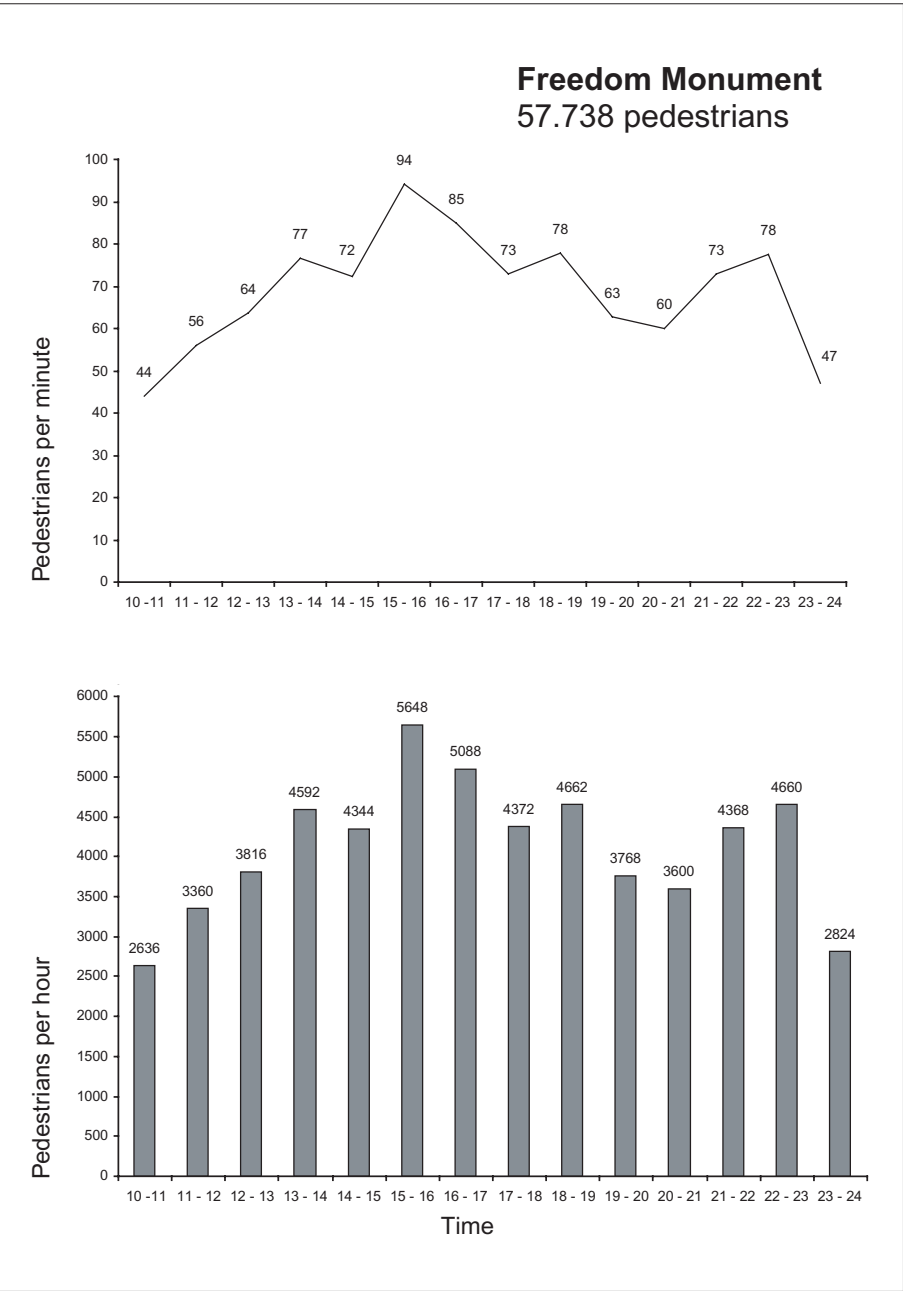
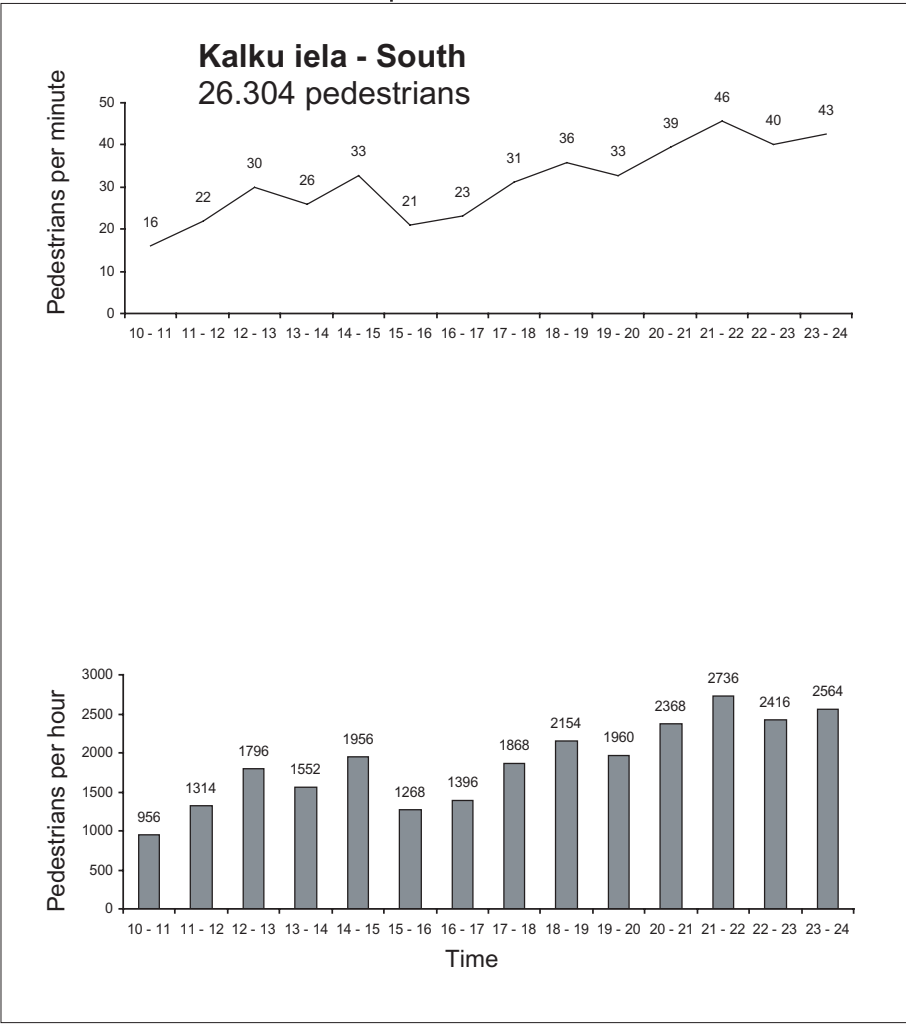
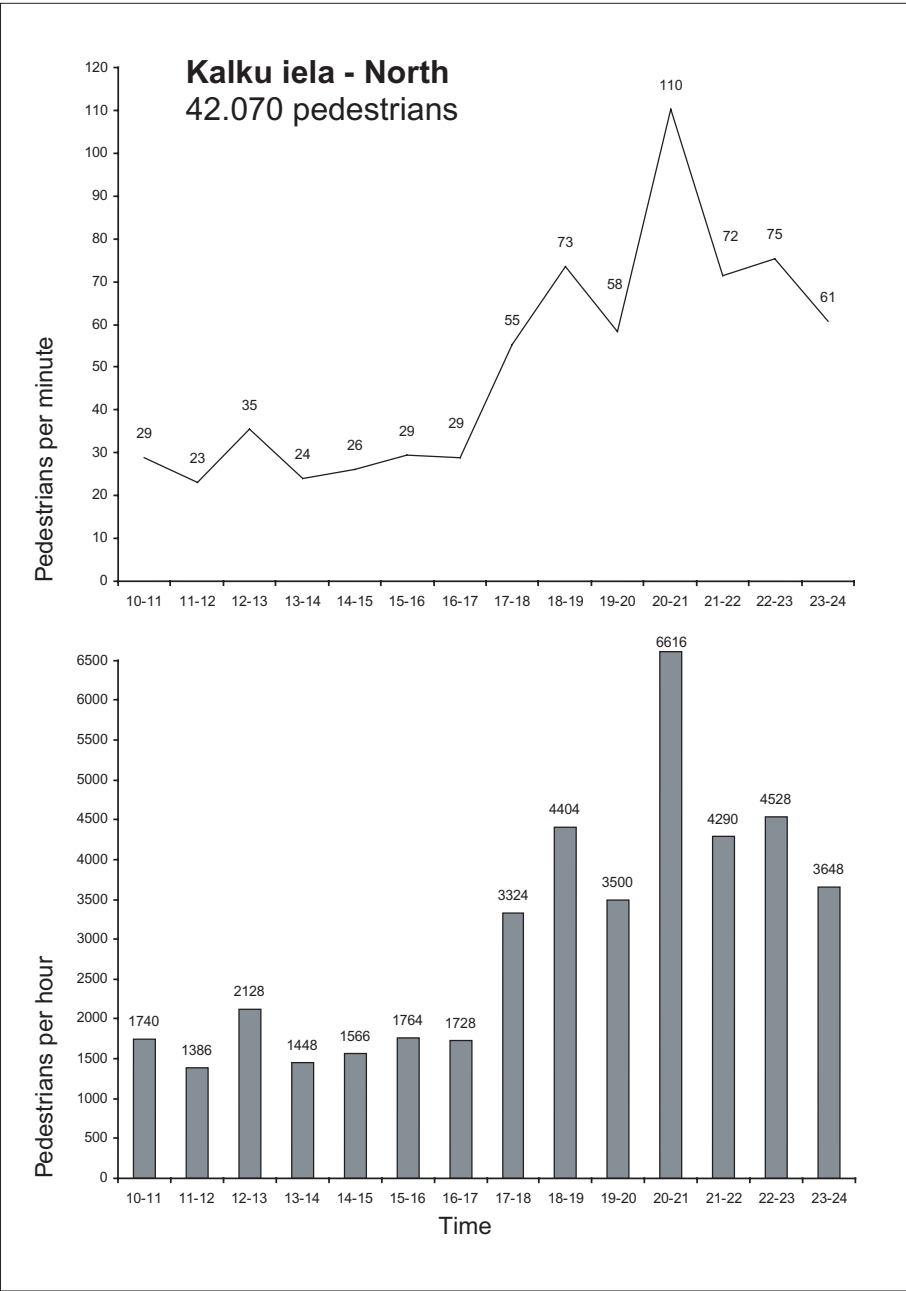
The pedestrian flow by the **Freedom Monument** is constantly high from 10 am to 12 pm. This is a key junction in the city. The peaks are reached in the afternoon between 3 pm and 4 pm and again at 10 pm when people are on their way home and the shops are closing.



The opposite page:
The surveys show pedestrian traffic in the most important streets in the Old Town.

Smilsu iela is part of a quiet area in the city and has a limited number of pedestrians. The street is still an important link between Doma laukums and the city districts to the north. The restaurants influence the pedestrian traffic through **Skūnu iela**, which attracts people around lunch time and again in the evening at dinner time.

Valnu iela is a main shopping street. The survey point was on the pedestrianized part of the street. Here the flow decreases at 6 pm when the small shops close. **Audeju iela** is also a shopping street and an important link in the city centre. It has a constant pedestrian flow throughout the day.



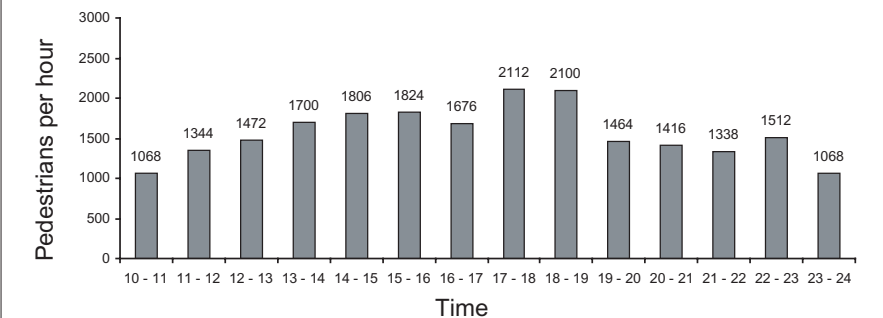
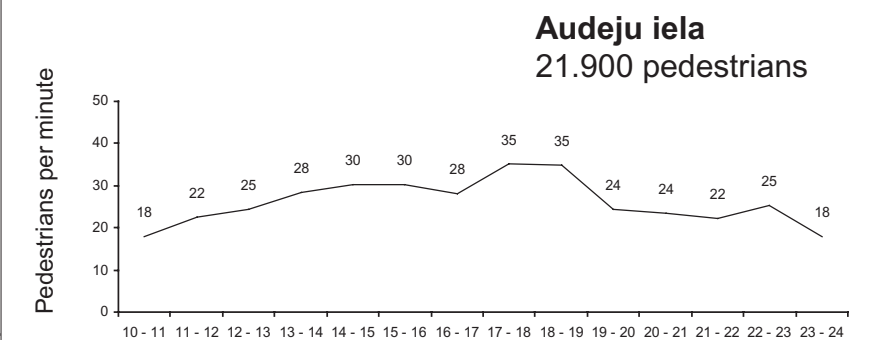
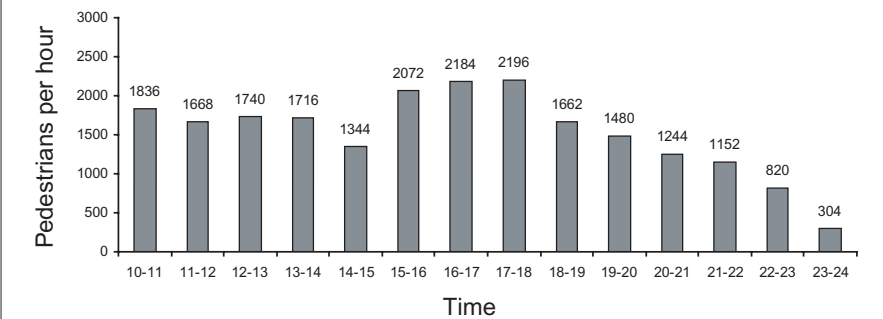
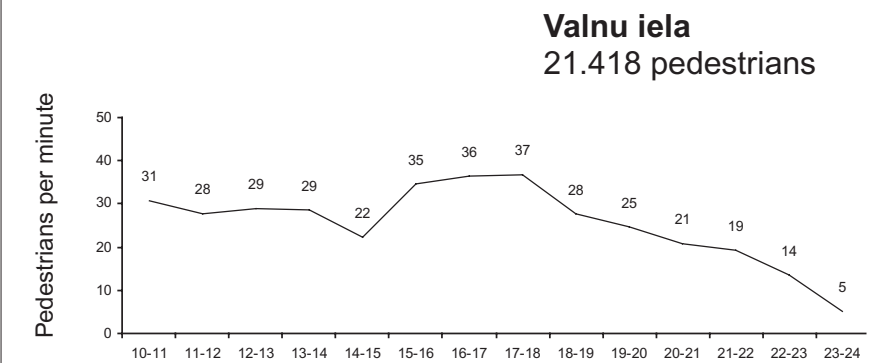
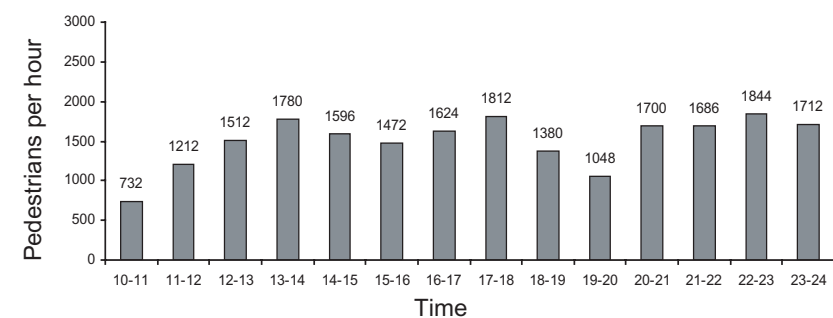
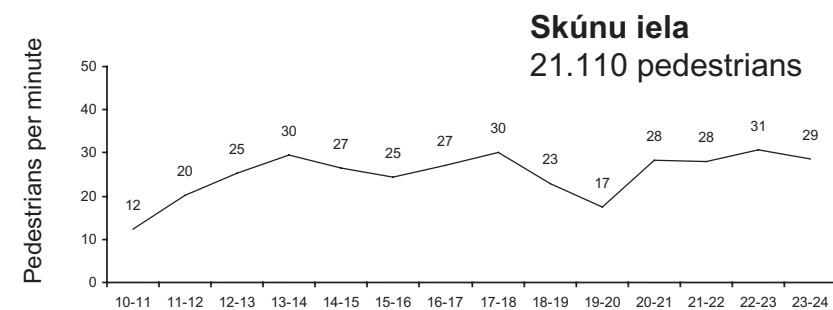
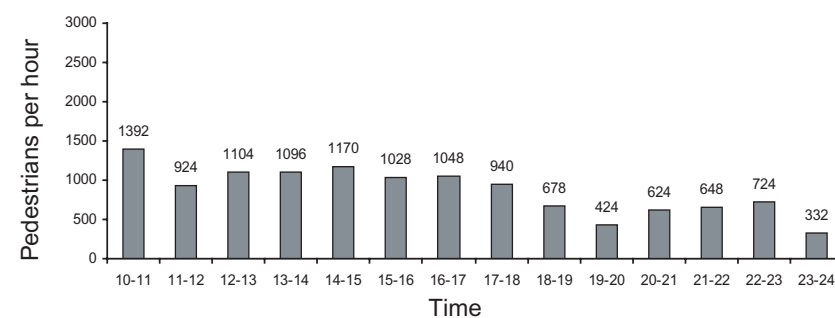
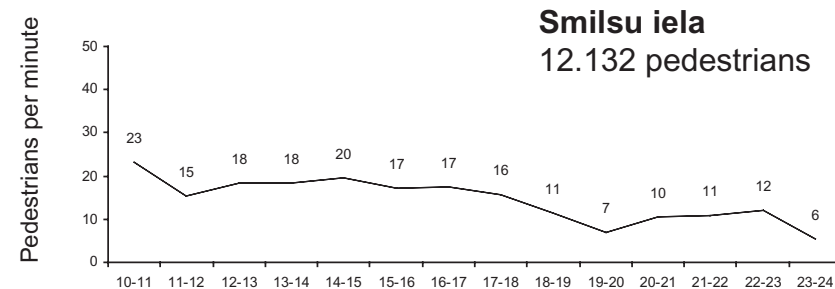
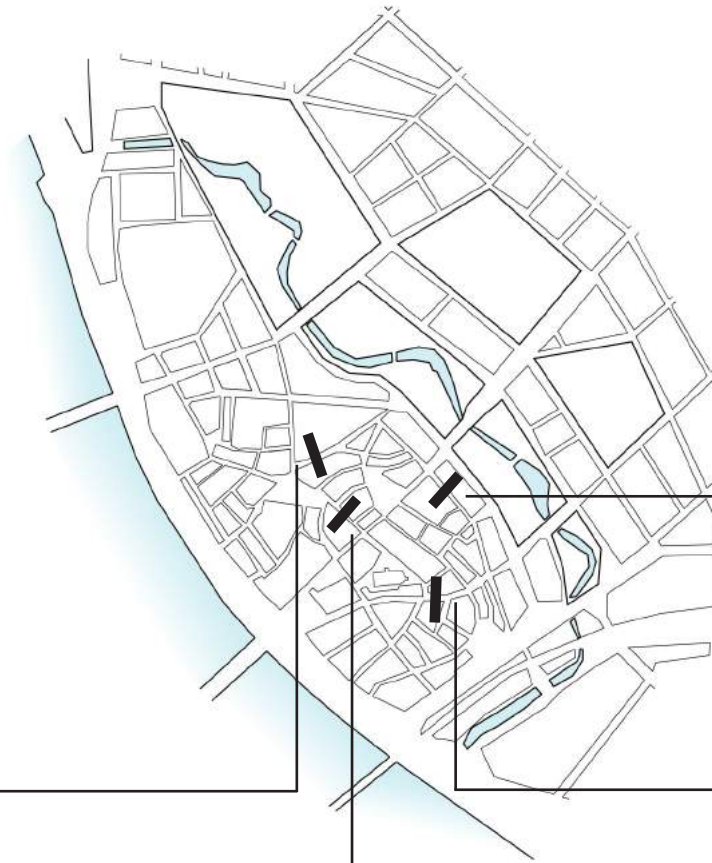
The illustrations on the following pages, pages 38 and 39:

The surveys outside the Old Town mainly show the traffic between the Old Town and the surrounding districts including the railway station and the central market.

Pragas iela and **Gogola iela** are access routes to Riga's central market. In Gogola iela the peak is reached at about 6 pm, when the market closes. Later the pedestrian traffic is reduced in both streets.

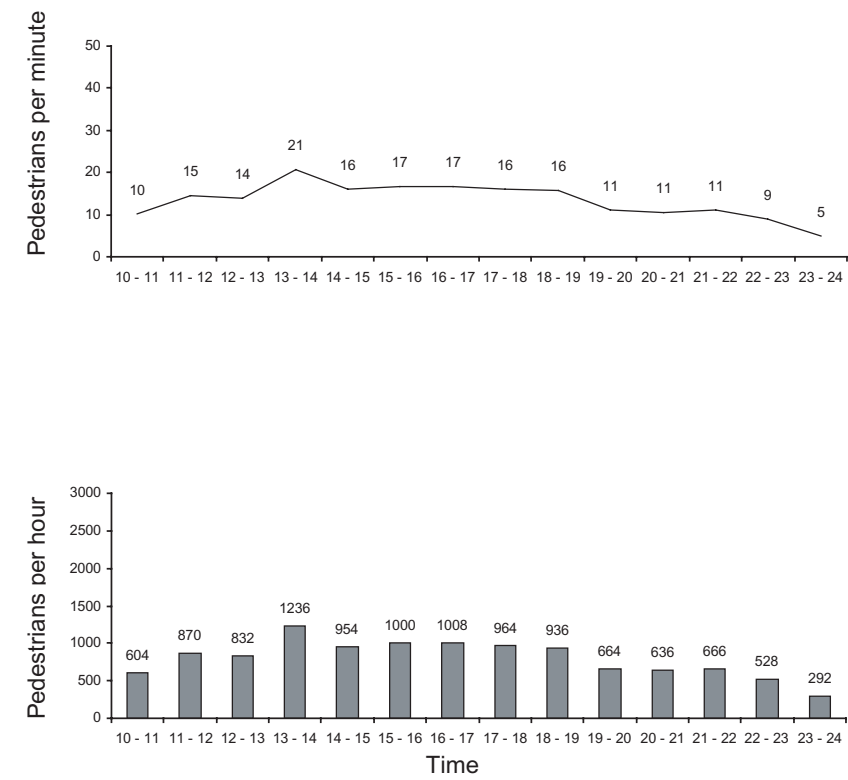
The pedestrian crossing to **Stacijas laukums** is busy with people going to the station or to the central market. 39.000 pedestrians cross one of the largest roads in Riga at this pedestrian crossing.

32.000 pedestrians go through the **pedestrian tunnel to Stacijas laukums** during a weekday.

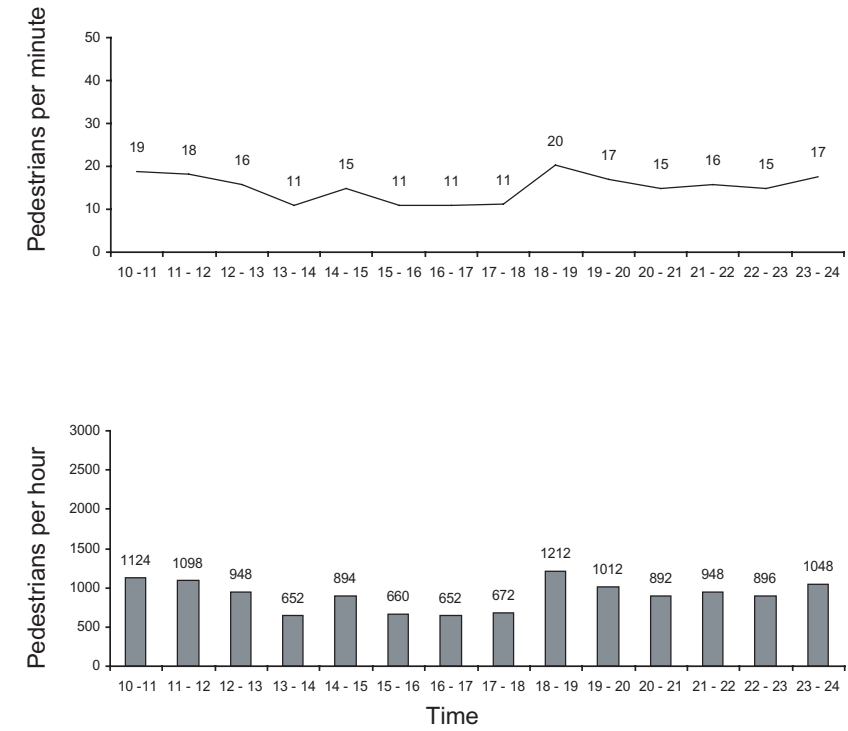


WEEKDAY JULY, STREET BY STREET

Bastejkalns
11.190 pedestrians

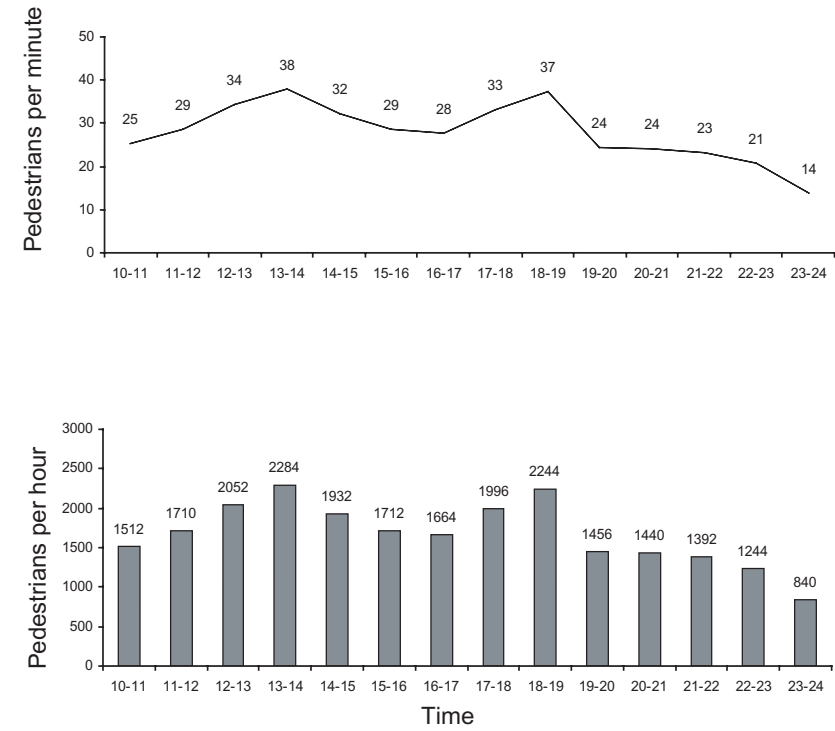


Raina bulvaris
12.708 pedestrians

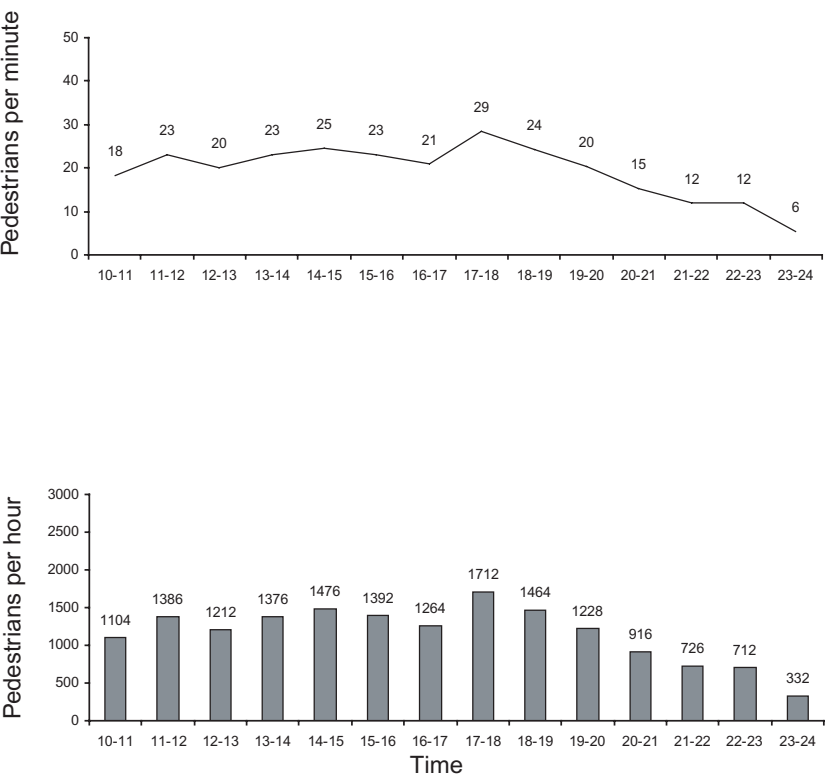


Wednesday the 25th of July 2001. Weather: Sunny, 30-32° C

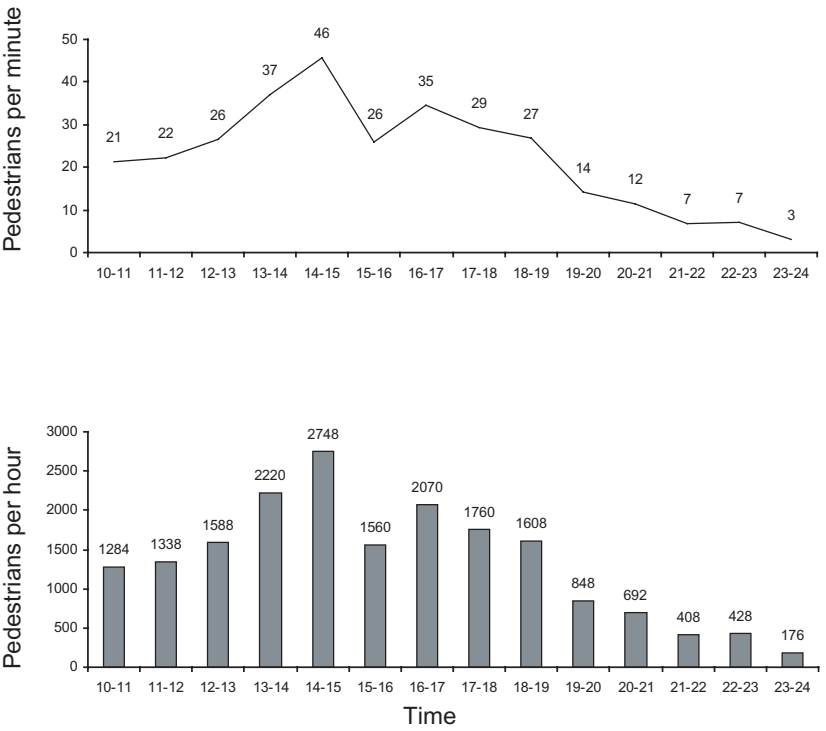
K. Barona iela
23.478 pedestrians

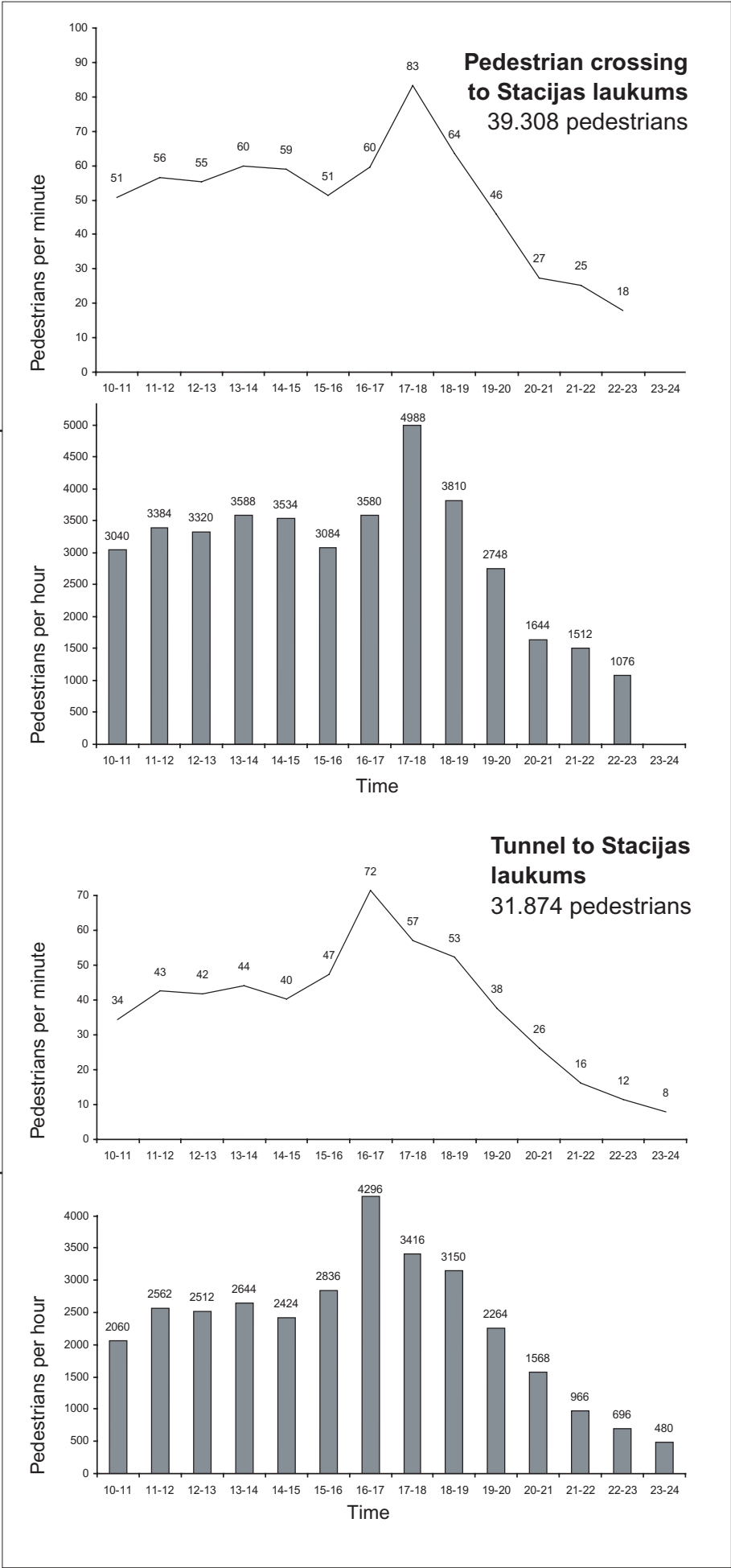
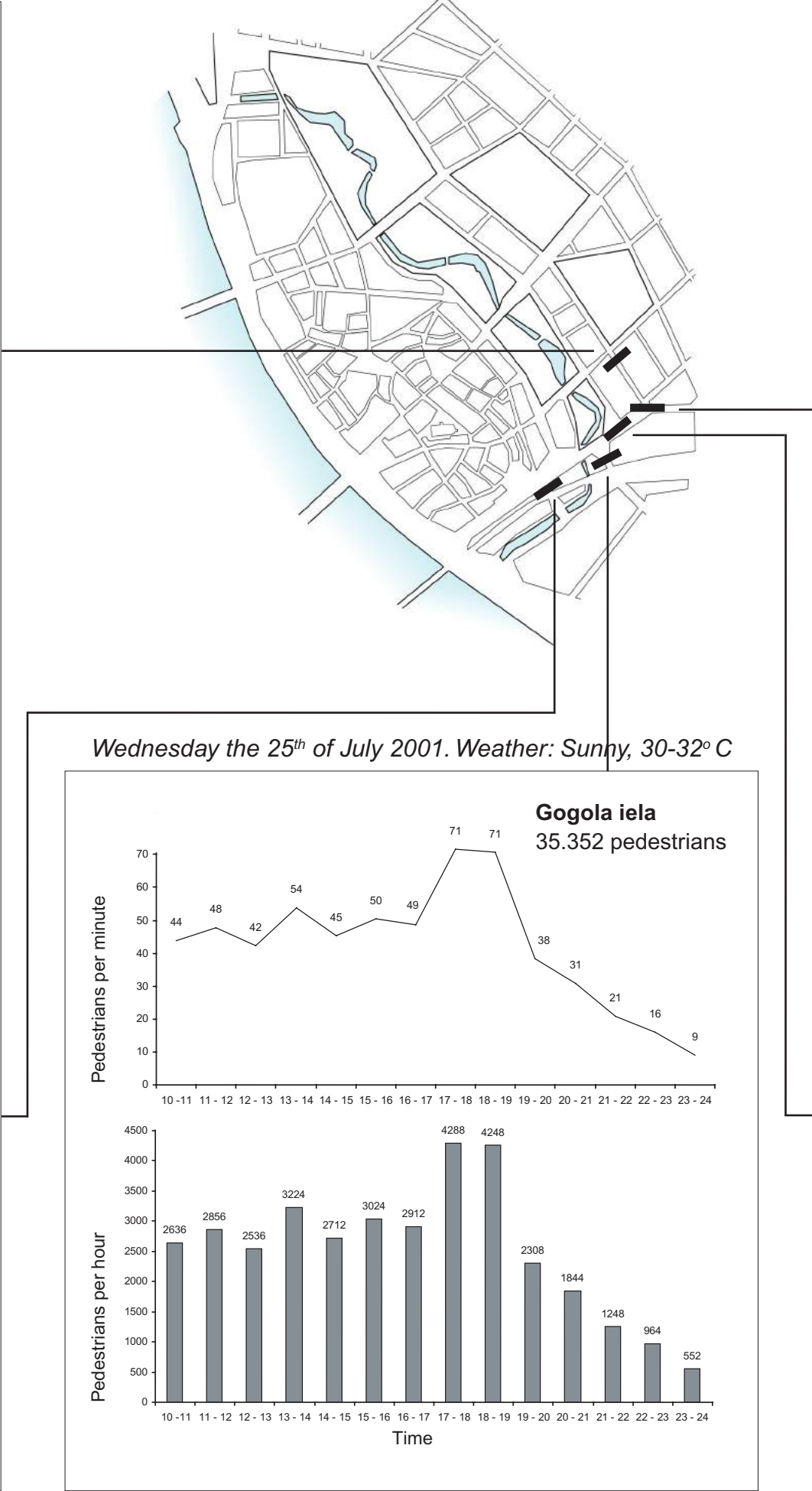
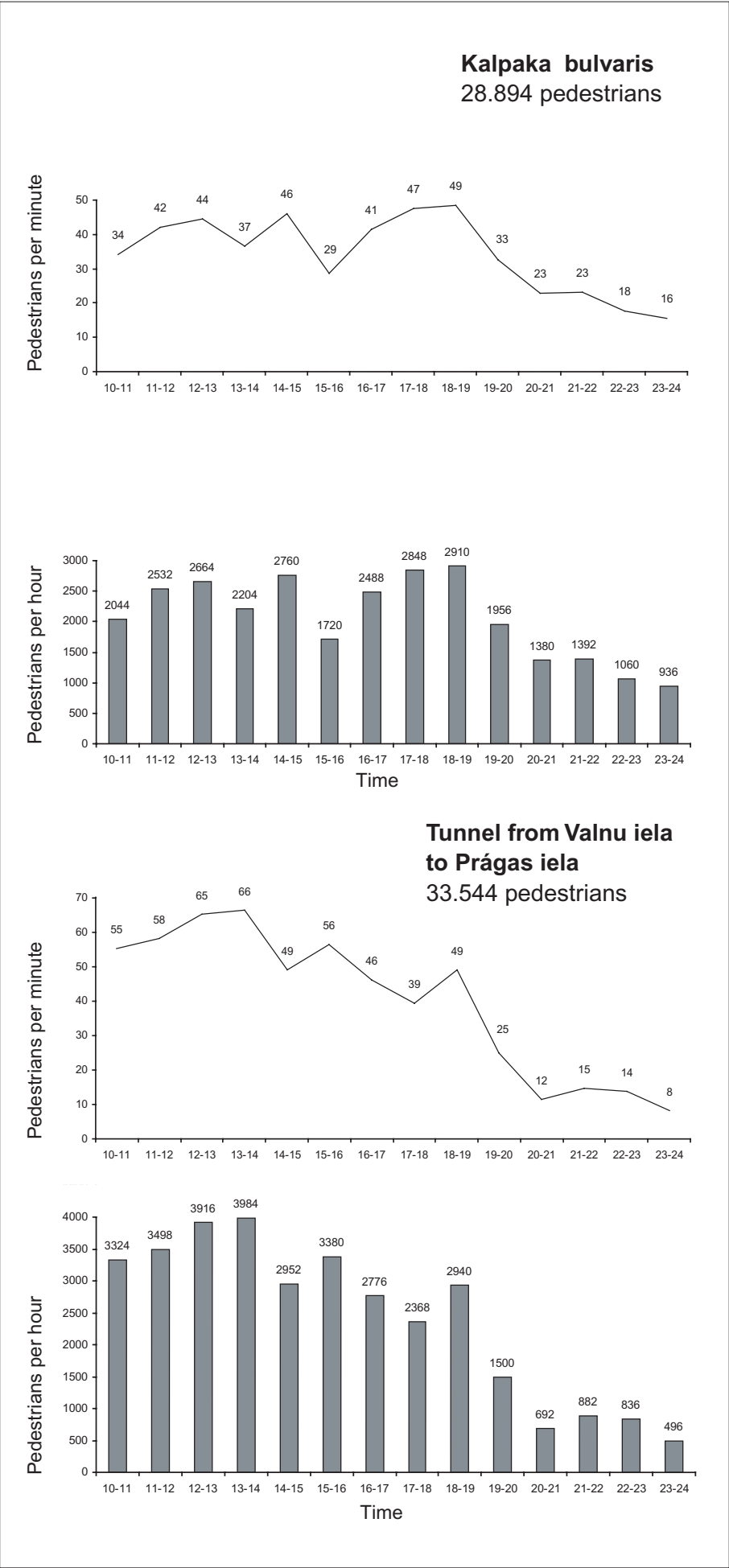


Brivibas iela
16.300 pedestrians



Térbatas iela
18.728 pedestrians






A Saturday compared with a weekday show a reduction of 10-20% in Kalku iela, the shopping streets Audeju iela, Valnu iela and the access routes to the Central Market.

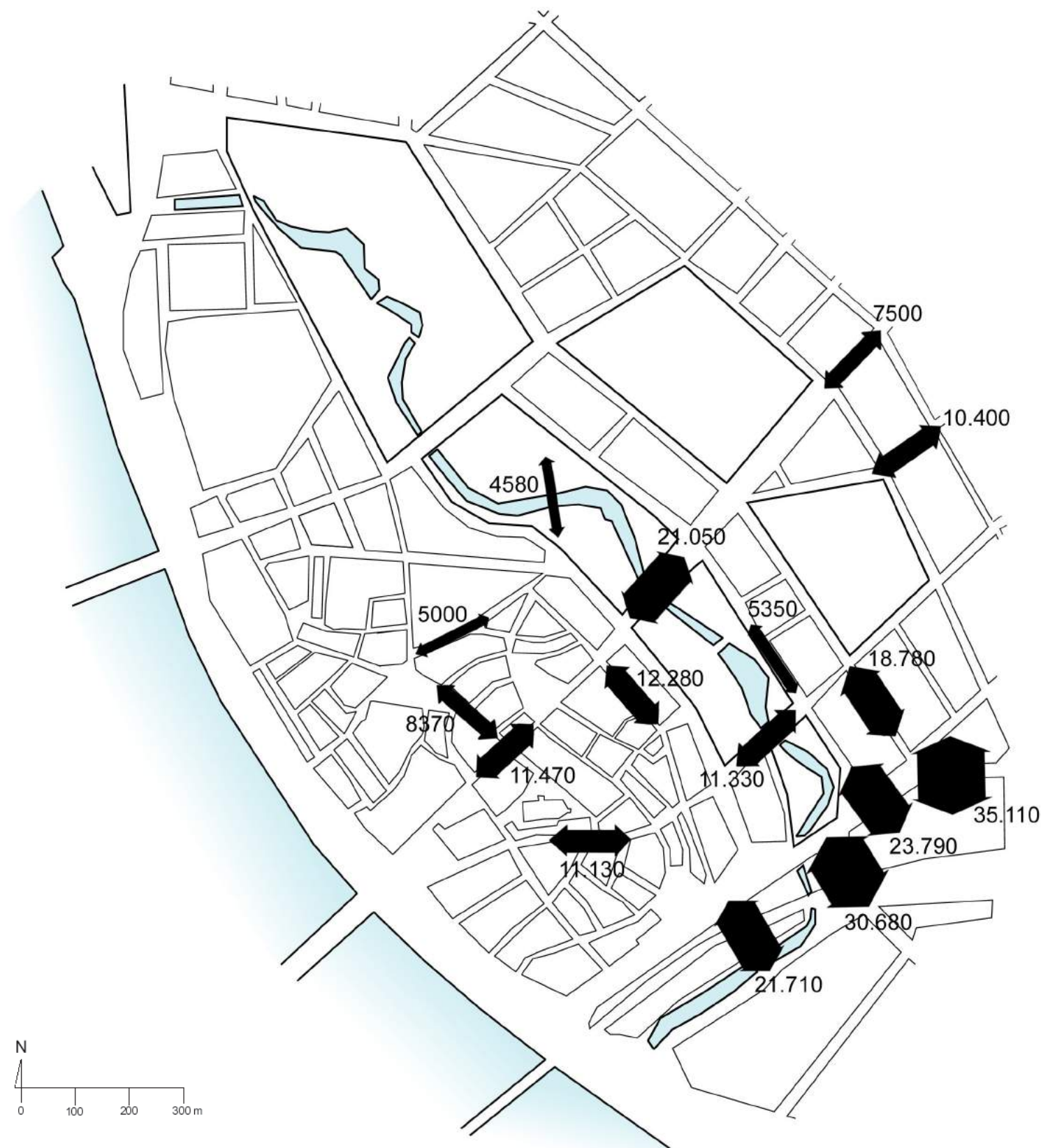
The area around the station experience an increase in pedestrian traffic of about 20% on Saturdays compared to weekdays.

The pedestrian traffic is reduced with about 30% in the remaining part of the city.

This is a different pattern compared to other European cities which experience the highest pedestrian volumes on Saturdays when people have time off and go out to shop or take a stroll in the inner city. Life in Riga's city centre takes place during the week. One major explanation is the city's present economy. There is an emphasis on daily consumer goods and less on other types of shops. This pattern is likely to change with the ongoing development of the Latvian economy.



Kalku iela. The main pedestrian street in Riga.



Pedestrian traffic on a Saturday between 10 am and 6 pm.
(Saturday the 16th of June 2001. Weather: Sunny, 20-25° C).



Pedestrian traffic on a Saturday between 6pm and 12am.
(Saturday the 16th of June 2001. Weather: Nice summer evening 18-22° C).

There is a slight reduction in pedestrian traffic on a Saturday evening compared to the daytime traffic around the Freedom Monument, in Kalku iela and in Skúnu iela.

However the rest of the city centre experience a significant reduction in pedestrian traffic of 40-70%.

The number of pedestrians around the station and on the access routes to the market is reduced with 60-70% compared to the daytime hours of this summer Saturday.

Summary:

The major pedestrian movements take place near Stacijas laukums and near the Freedom Monument.

Stacijas laukums represents a main transportation junction for busses and trains and gives access to the central market.

The Freedom Monument is the key entrance to the Old Town and links to the most important public spaces.

The main shopping streets do not carry the number of pedestrians to be expected. This indicates a pedestrian network to be developed to increase the number of pleasure walks.

A weekday night experience a general reduction in pedestrian traffic of about 50%.

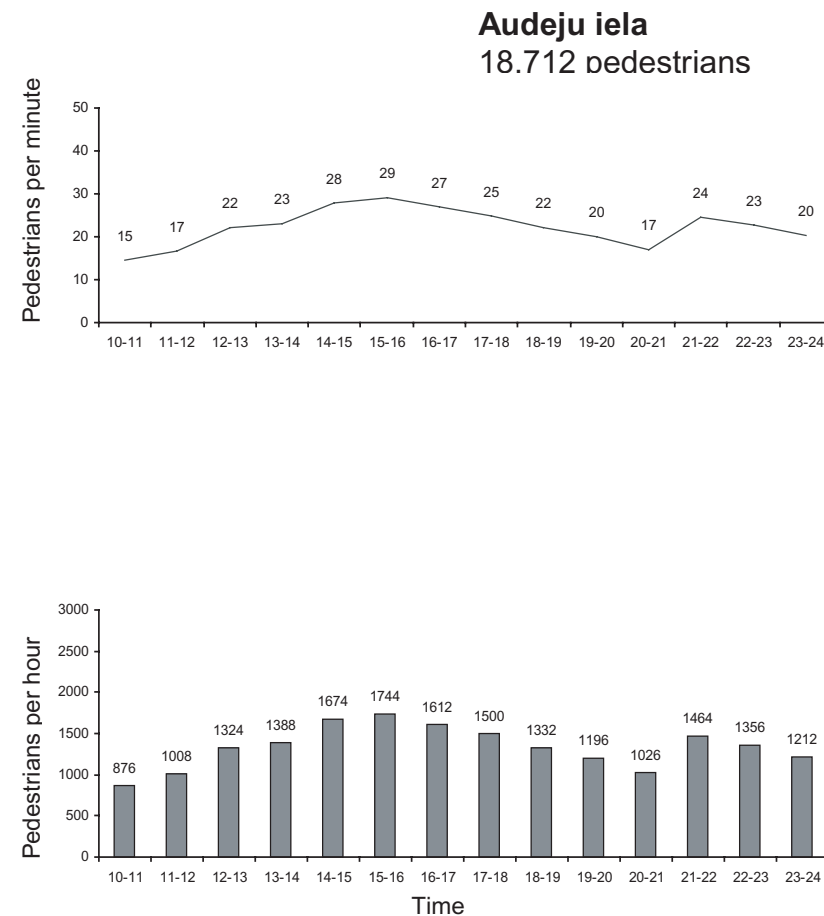
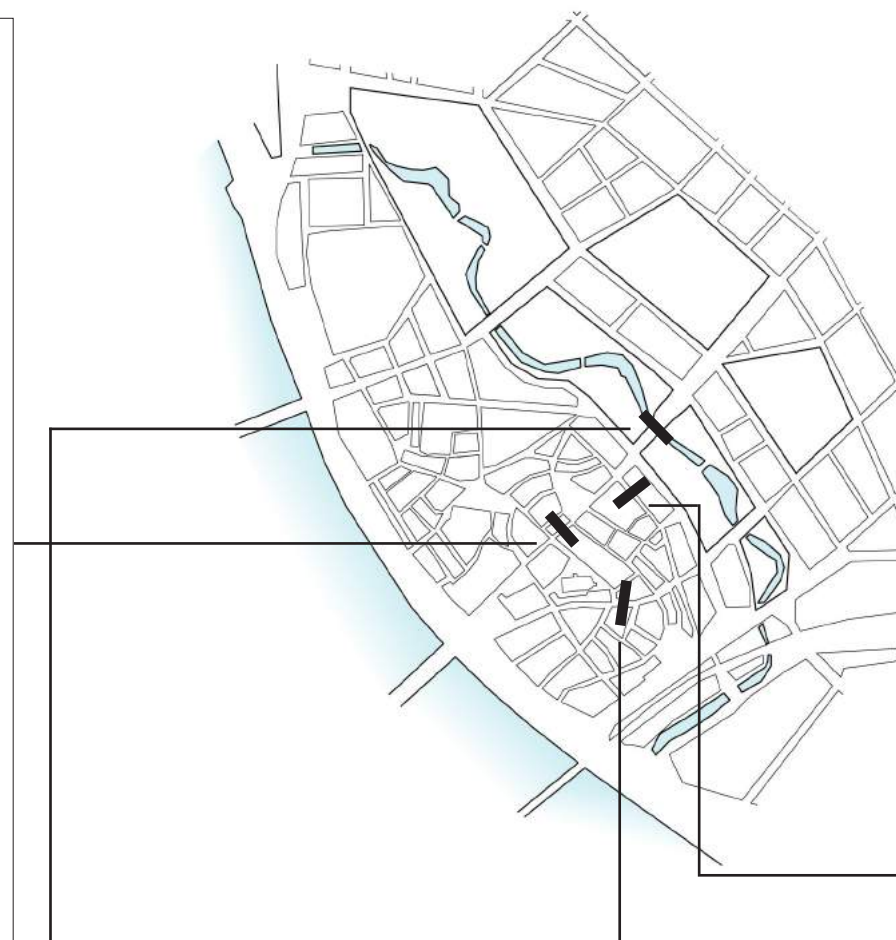
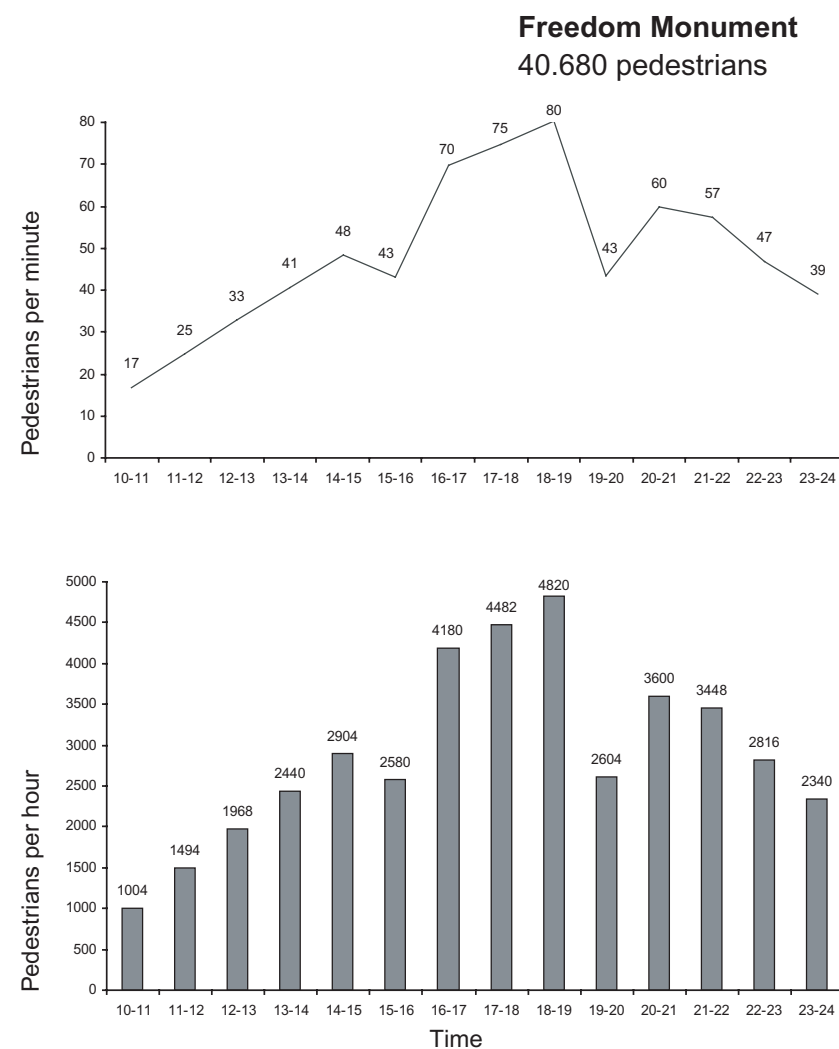
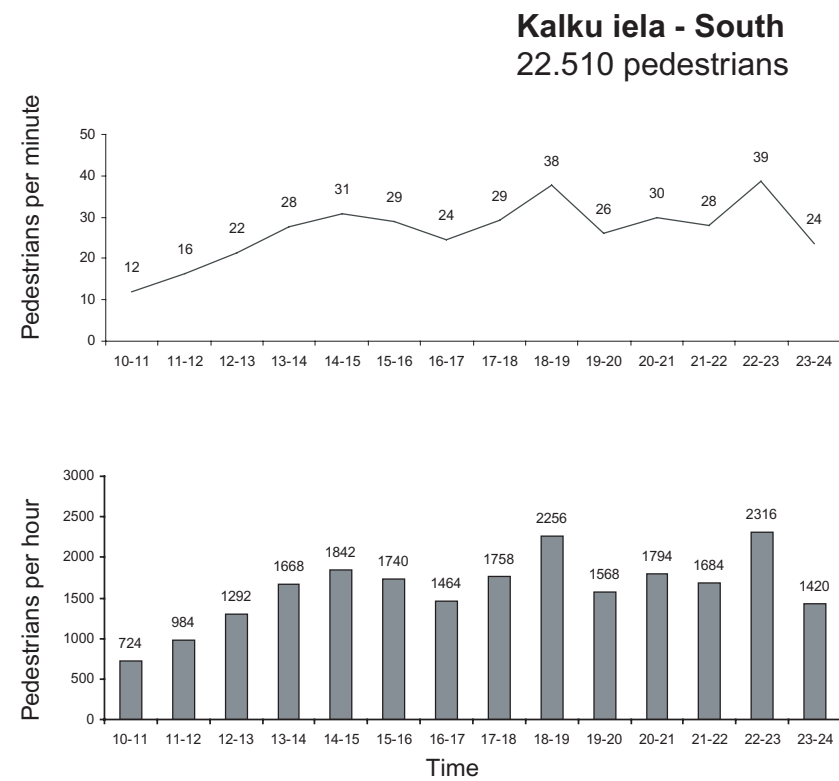
The main street experience an increase of 100%, which is extraordinary compared to cities of a similar size.

The pedestrian traffic during a Saturday is 30% lower compared to a weekday except for the main street where the reduction is 10-20%.

Compared to cities of a similar size an increase in the number of pedestrians was expected on a Saturday where people generally do not work and have time to go for a walk in the city.

There is no Saturday night phenomena as pedestrian traffic is generally 20% lower compared to a weekday night.

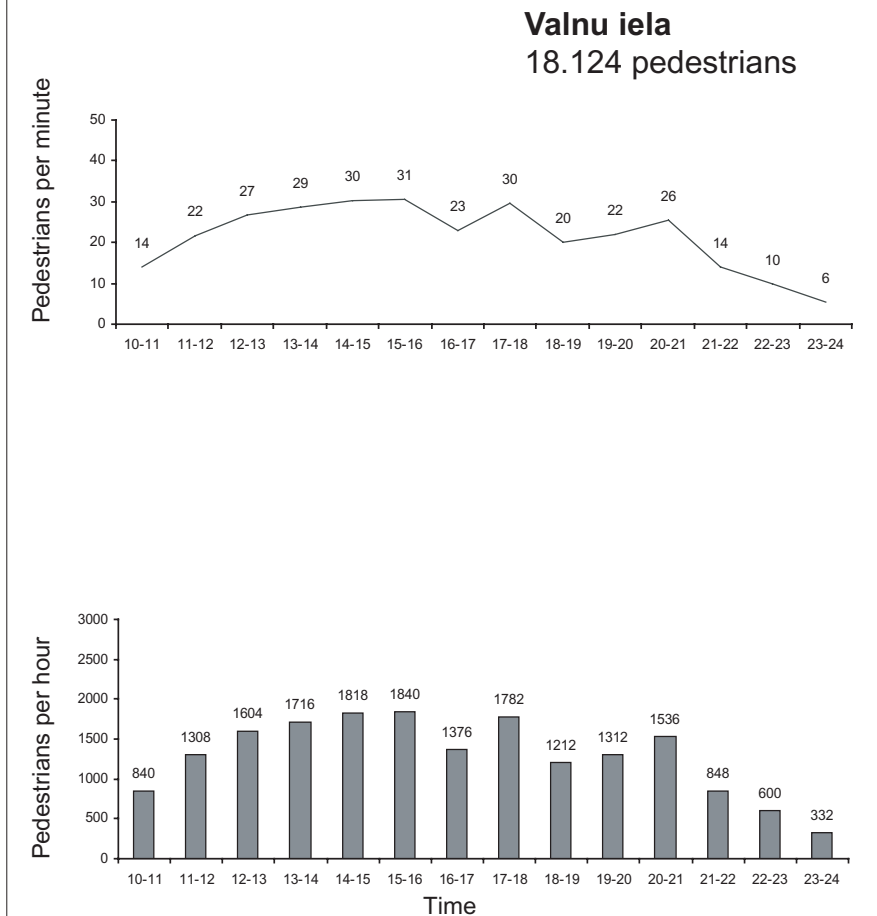
SATURDAY JUNE, STREET BY STREET



On the southern part of **Kalku iela** the pedestrian flow is similar on Saturdays to the pattern seen throughout the week. There is a constant flow of pedestrians from around lunchtime and continuing until late evening.

At the **Freedom Monument** the period between 10 am and 6 pm is quieter on Saturdays than during the week. The pedestrian traffic is similar during the evening between 6 pm and midnight to the ordinary weekday pattern.

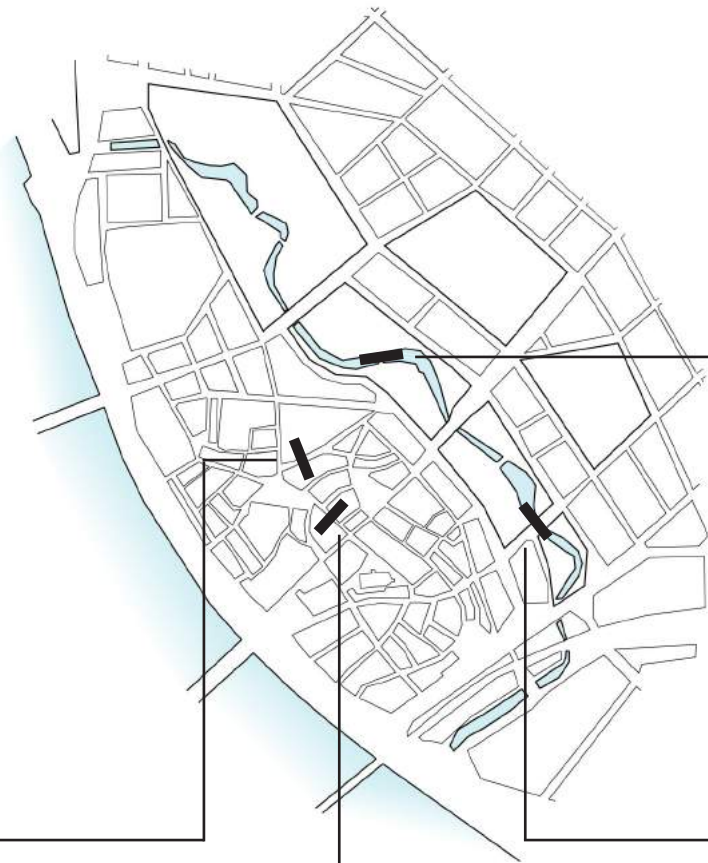
Valnu iela and **Audeju iela** show the same pattern as during the weekdays and the number of pedestrians is similar. These streets are shopping streets and link important parts of the city.



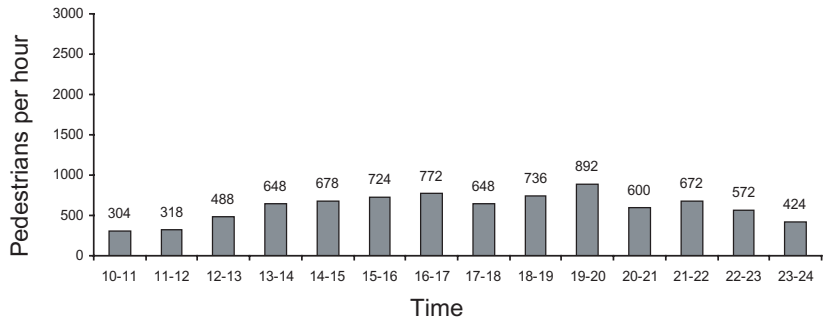
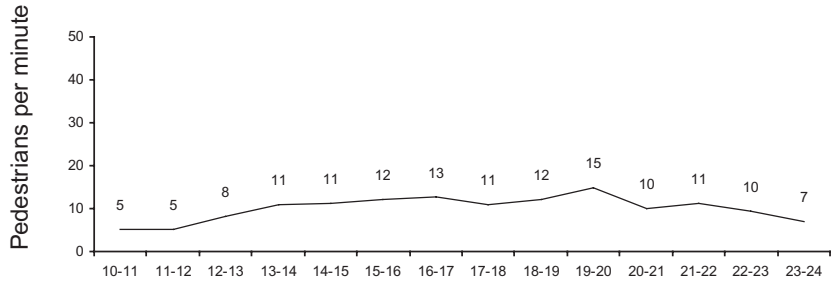
Smilsu iela has a steady number of pedestrians throughout the Saturday. Every hour 4-500 people pass through to and from Doma laukums.

Skūnū iela has a slight increase in pedestrian traffic in the evenings when people visit the restaurants at Doma laukums or Filharmonija skvers.

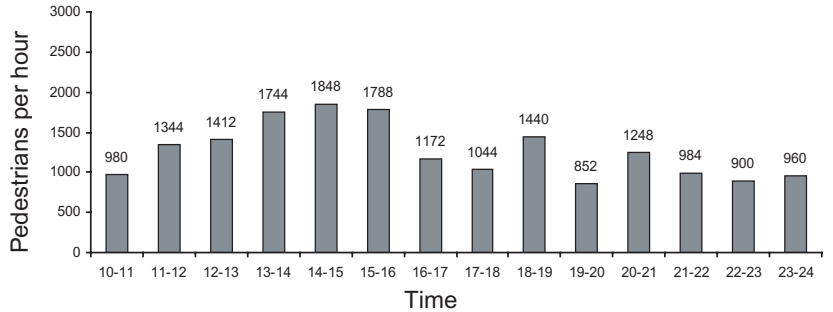
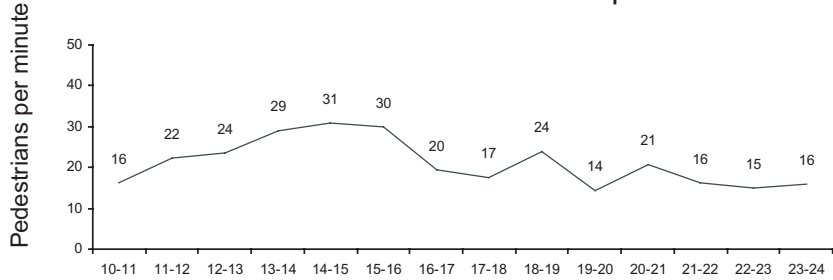
The traffic through **Bastejkalns** is quite low and almost constant during the Saturday. In **K. Barona iela** the number of pedestrians differs during the Saturday from almost 2000 per hour to less than 1000 per hour in the afternoon and evening.



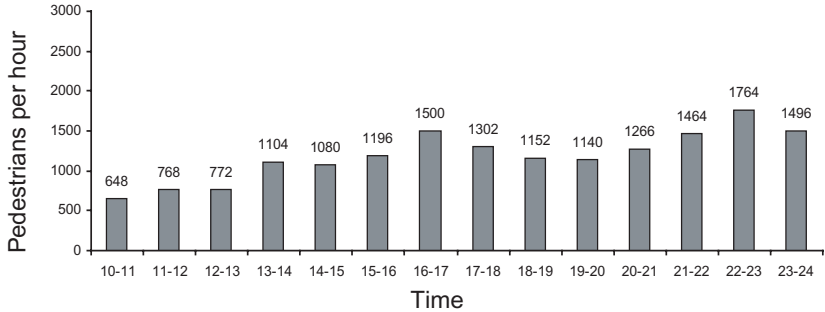
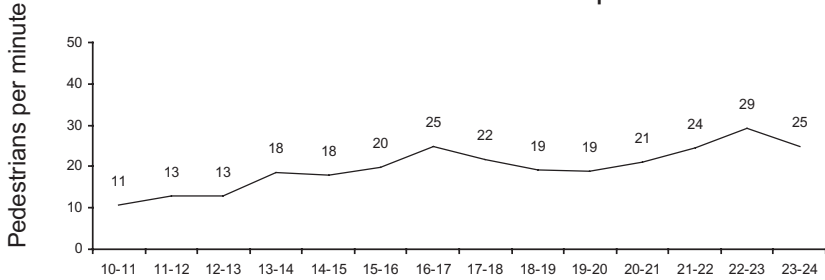
Bastejkalns
8.476 pedestrians



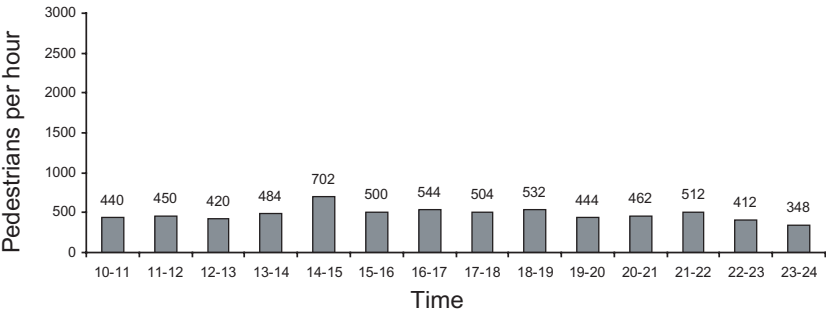
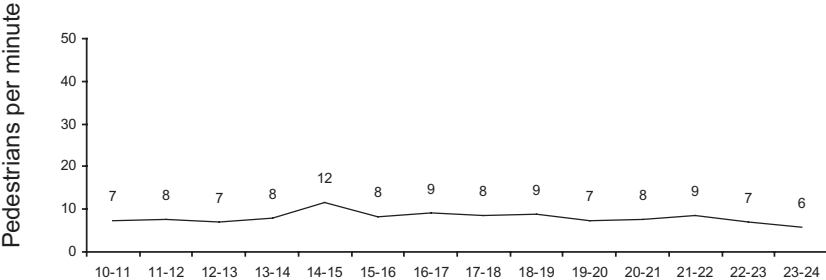
K. Barona iela
17.716 pedestrians



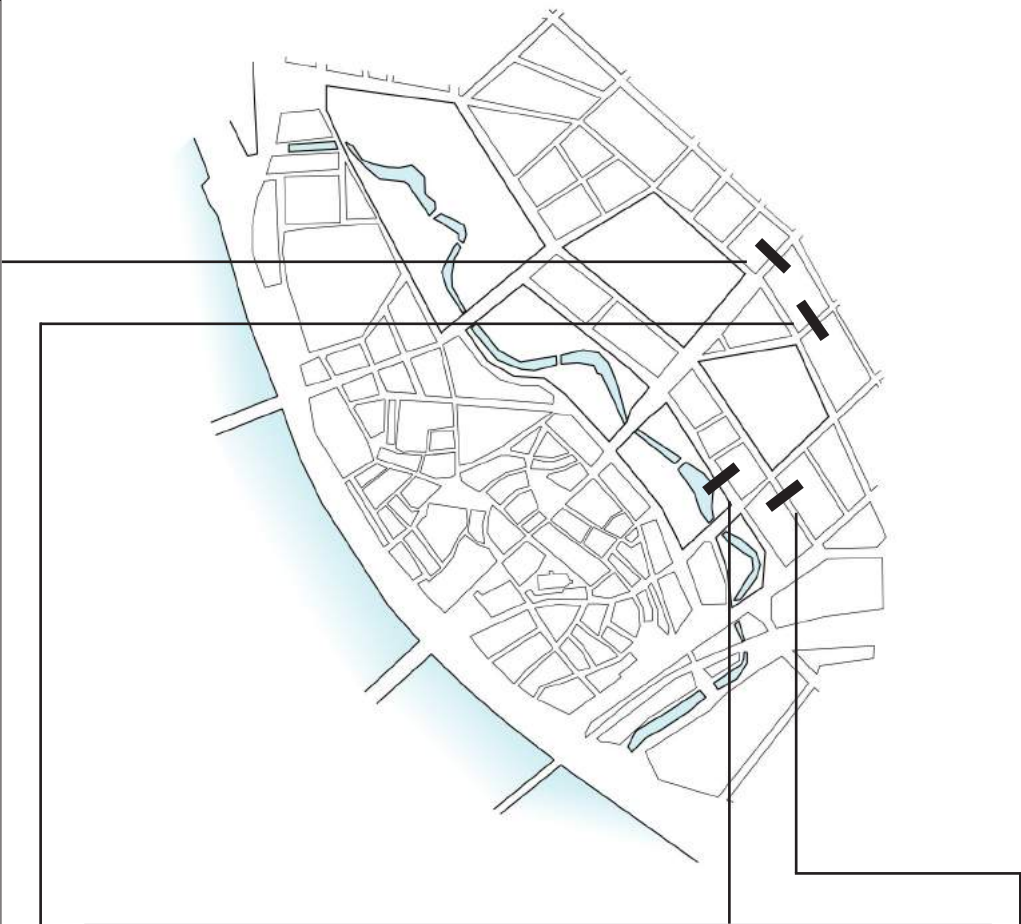
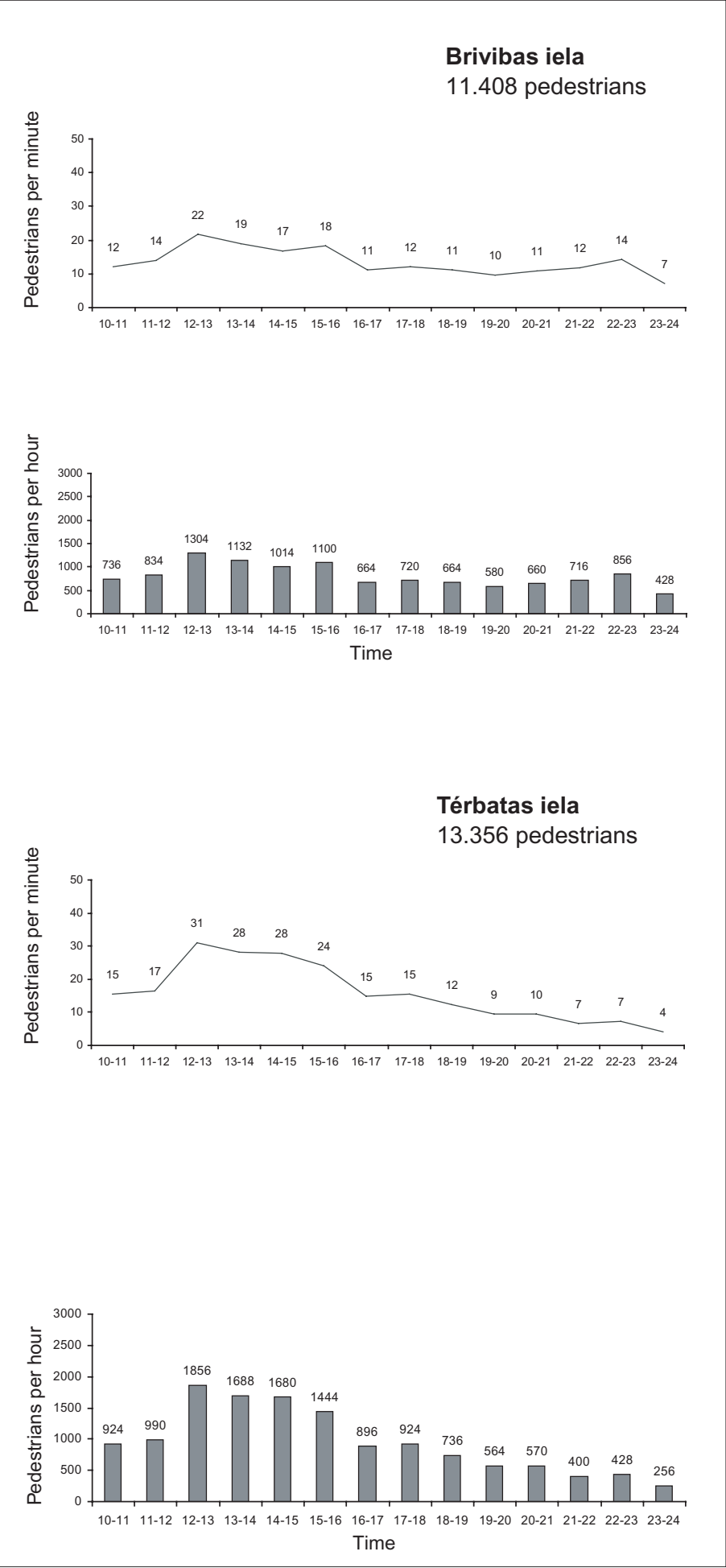
Skūnū iela
16.652 pedestrians



Smilsu iela
6.754 pedestrians



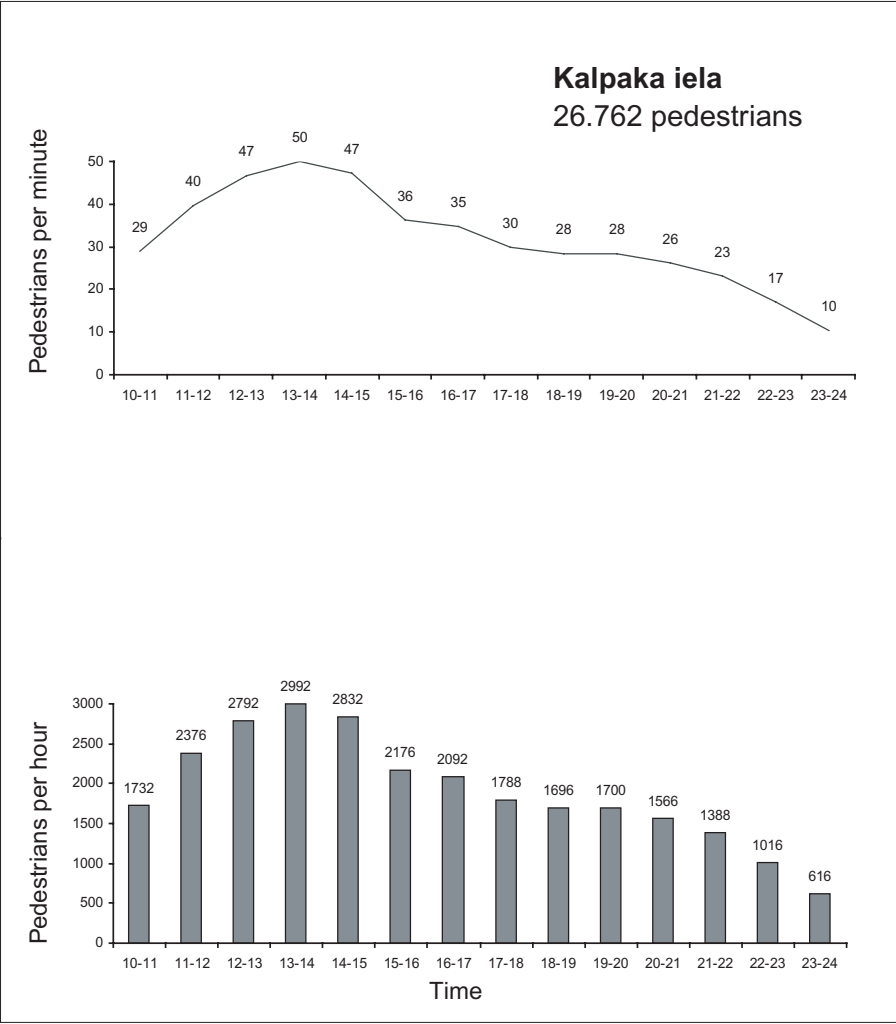
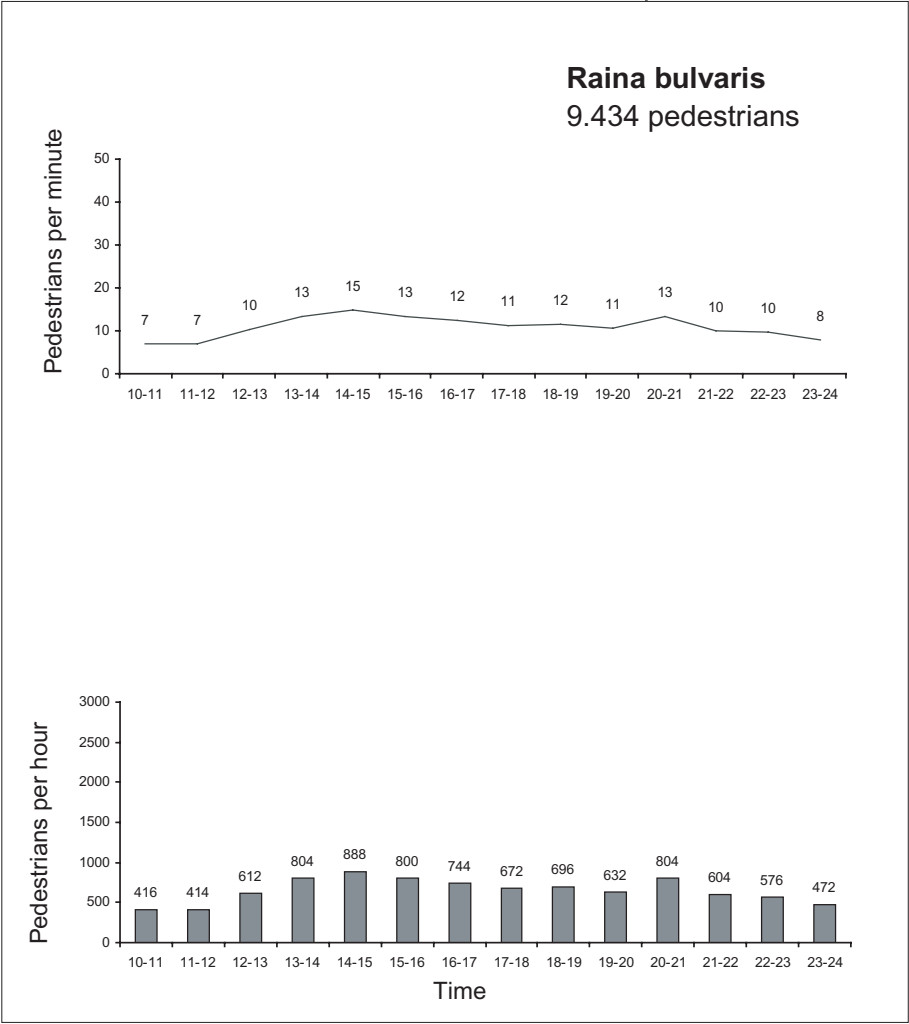
SATURDAY JUNE, STREET BY STREET



Saturday the 16th of June 2001. Weather: Sunny, 20-25° C

The pedestrian traffic is reduced by 50% on Saturdays compared to a weekday on **Brivibas iela** and **Terbatas iela**. The traffic in Brivibas iela is constant while there is a peak of traffic on Terbatas iela in the afternoon commencing at around 1 pm.

The figures for **Raina Bulvaris** show a constant flow through the day. On **Kalpaka iela** there is a similar number of pedestrians on a Saturday as on a weekday. The traffic peaks around 1 pm and falls throughout the afternoon.



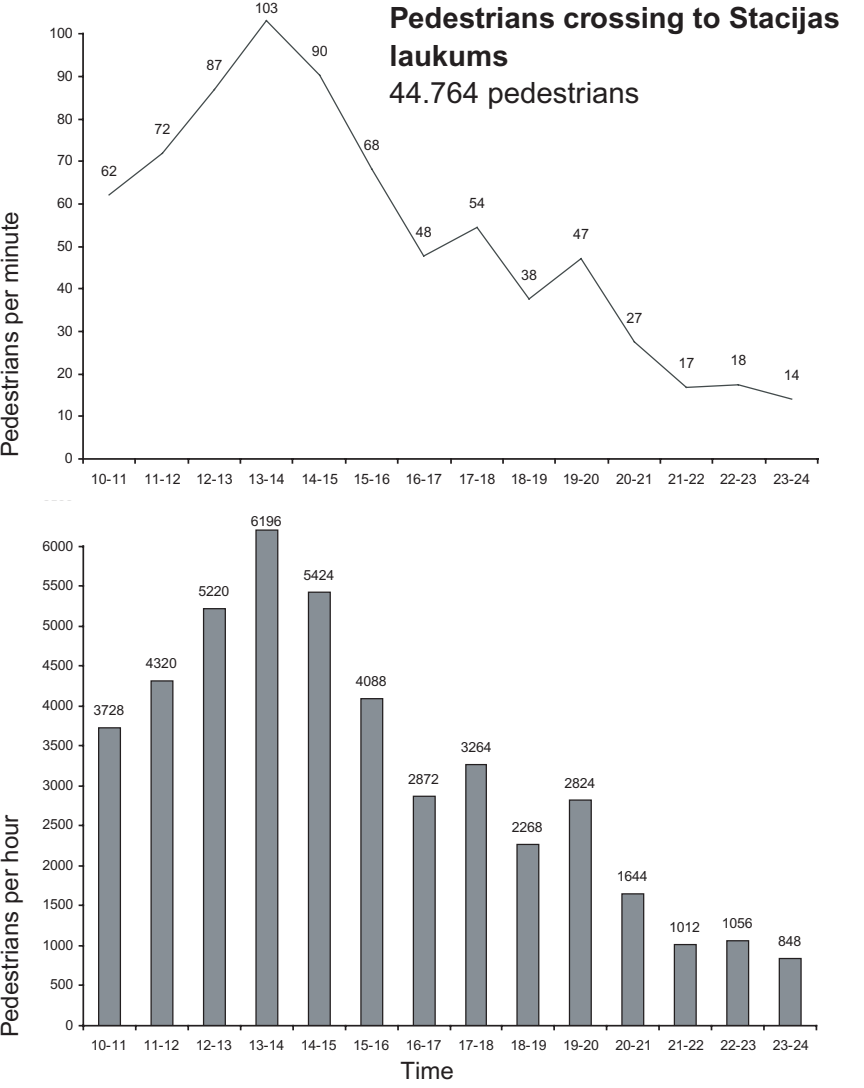
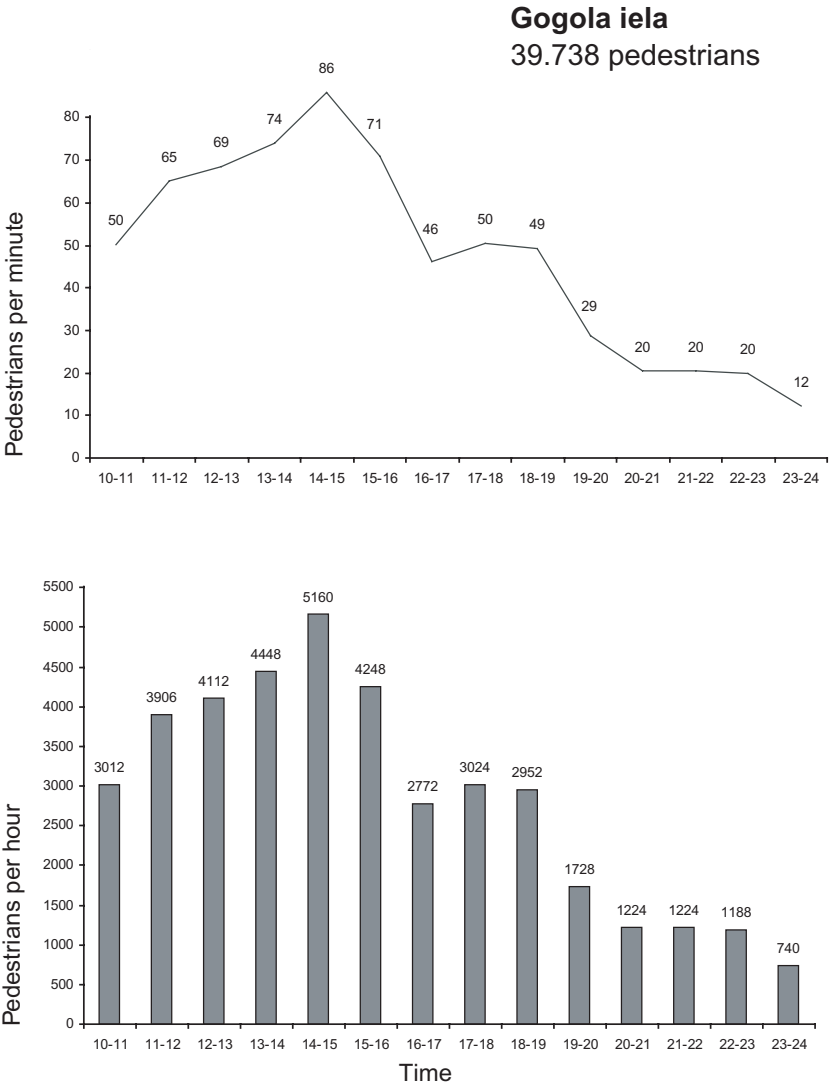
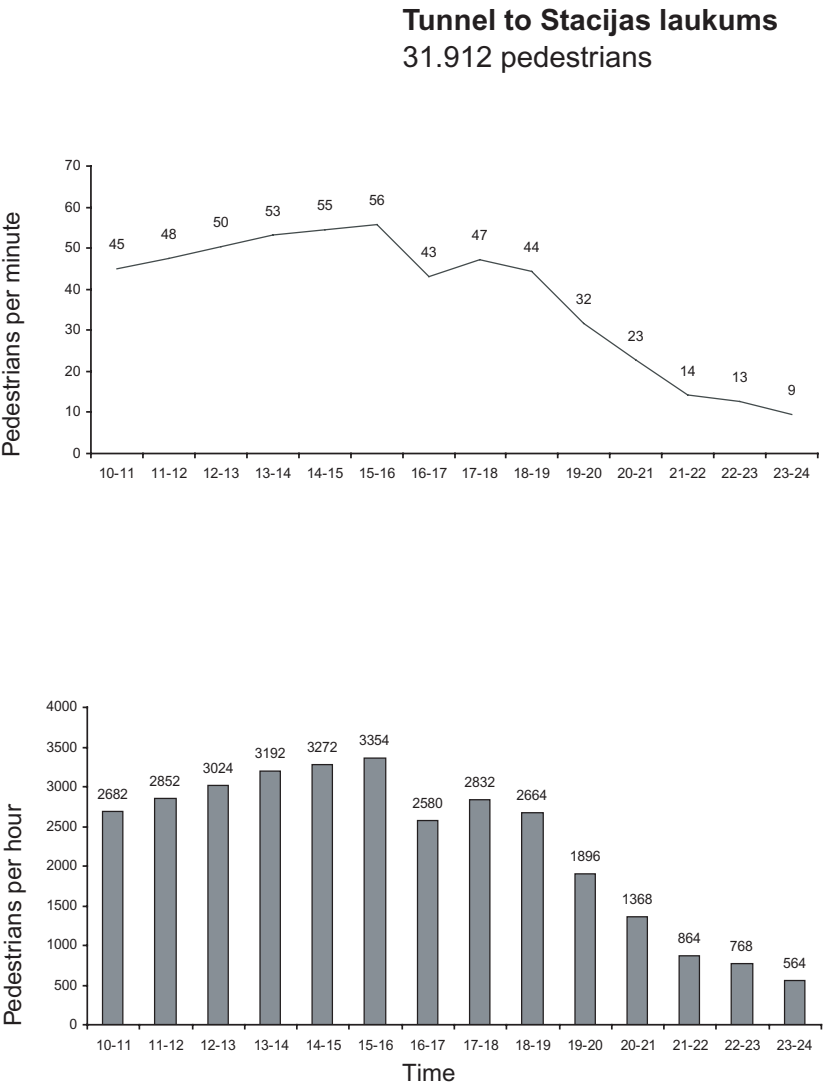
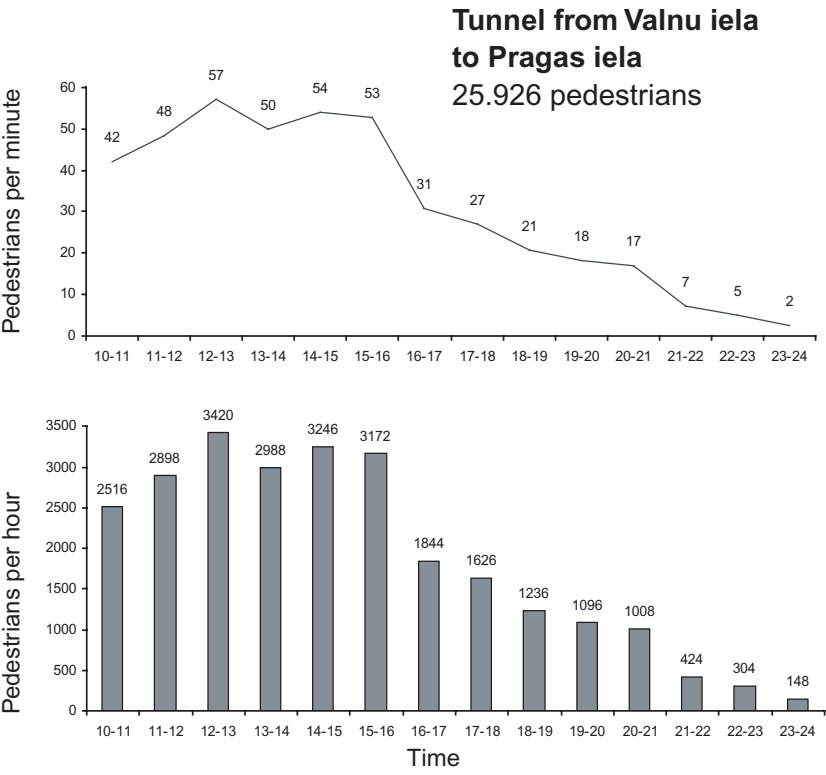
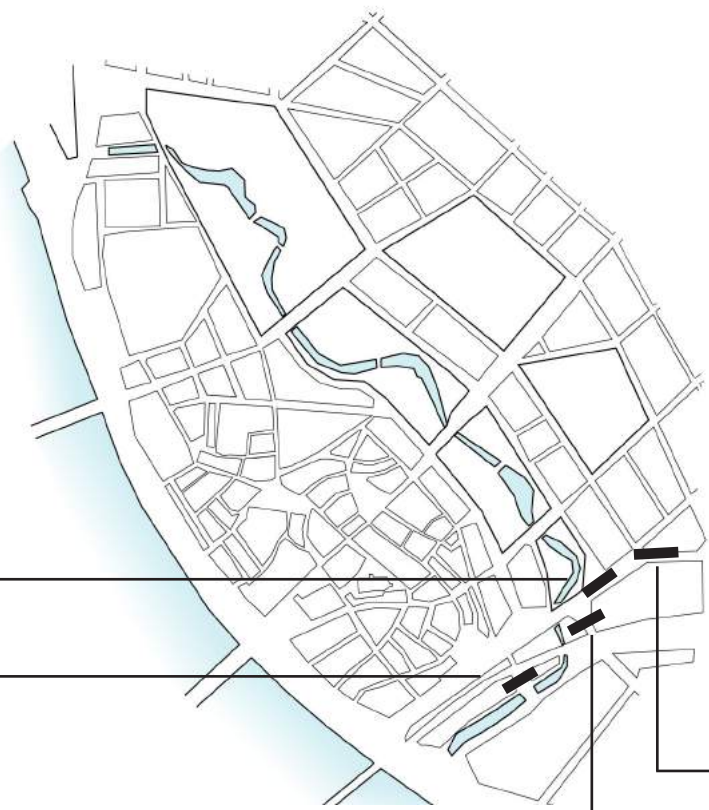
SATURDAY JUNE, STREET BY STREET

Pragas iela is one of the access roads to the market. It has a high number of pedestrians until 3 pm when it falls steadily during the late afternoon and evening.

The tunnel to Stacijas laukums has 25% more pedestrians on a Saturday compared to a weekday until 3 pm. Hereafter it falls to the same level as on a weekday.

Gogola iela, which leads to the market and the station, has during a Saturday 30% more pedestrians than during a weekday.

The pedestrian crossing at Stacijas laukums is used by 35-50% more pedestrians until 4 pm compared to a weekday. There are times during the day when twice as many people use the pedestrian crossing as the pedestrian tunnel also leading to and from the station.



SEATING IN THE CITY

The number, quality and location of seating provided in a city is an important factor for the activities that are invited to take place. Obviously, people like to have the opportunity to sit down in the city, and when more good quality seating are available, more people sit down to rest.

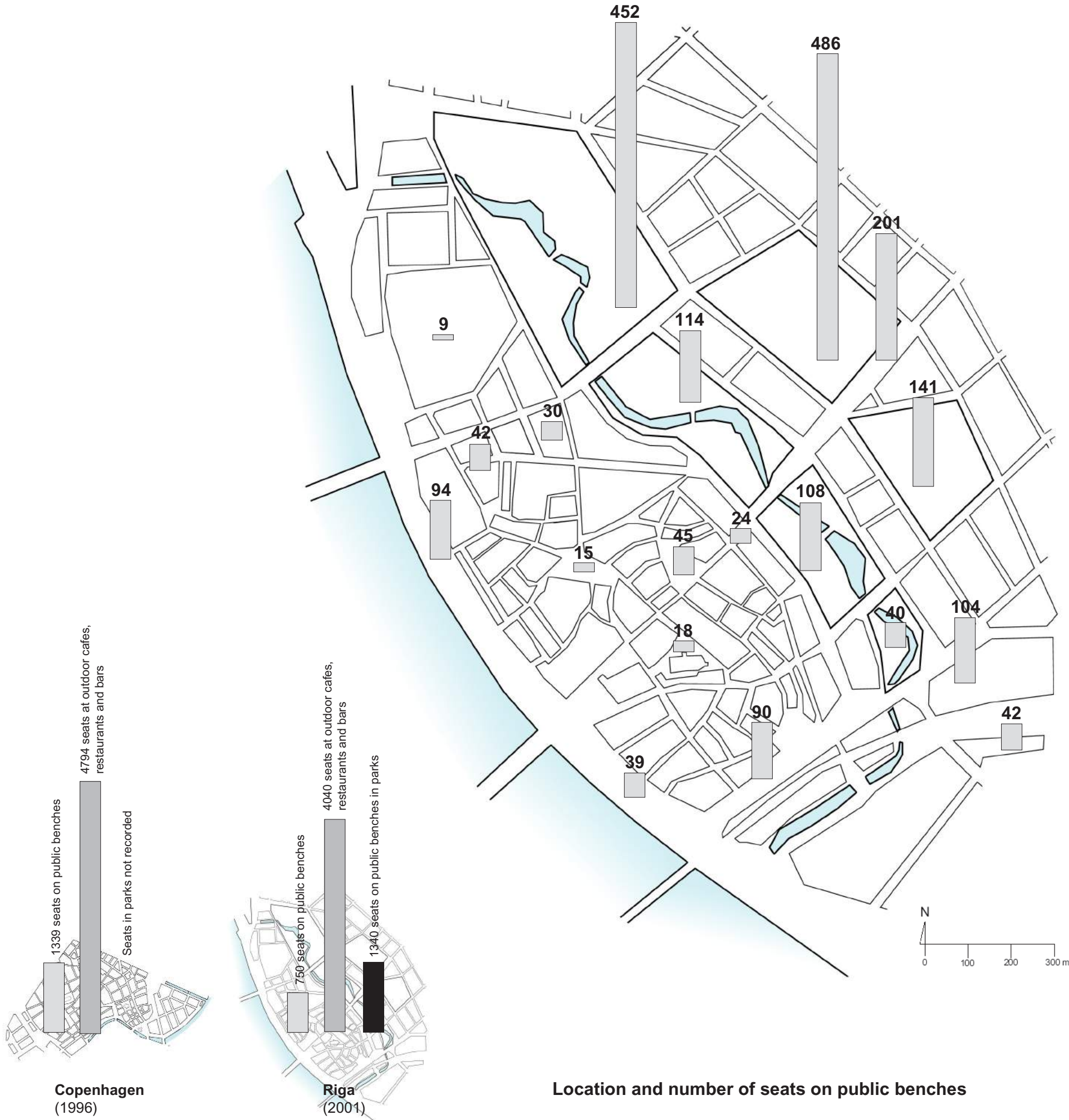
A total of 6.130 seats were available in Riga city centre for visitors in the summer of 2001. There was 750 seats on public benches in squares and streets, 1.340 seats in parks and 4.040 on chairs at the outdoor bars, cafes and restaurants.

These figures reflect the general situation in the city. The parks are the large spaces for recreation and the city centre relies on private cafes to supply the city with seating. The high number of chairs at the outdoor cafes, restaurants and bars do not substitute public benches as you have to pay to sit down. The city has an obligation to provide the public with good and well-placed seating.

Apart from the number of available chairs and benches it is also how they are placed that determines if people stay in the city.

The observational studies show that the most popular benches are around Kalku iela where there is a good view of public life and in the parks where people seek rest and greenery.

The public benches on Stacijas laukums are in a poor condition and many are not usable. This is unfortunate as many people need to sit down as they wait for the busses. The condition of the street furniture is a general problem as mentioned in part 1.



The culture of outdoor eating and drinking has developed rapidly in many countries around the world and especially in the North European cities. This has significantly changed the usage patterns of the city centres. 20 or 30 years ago walking, shopping and window-shopping were the dominating activities where the summer activities today are of a much more recreational nature. Shopping, working and studying in the city are made more attractive by opportunities for new activities centred on urban recreation and enjoyment of the city and people.

The outdoor restaurants, bars and cafes play an important role in this context as they provide seating and refreshments, as well as a comfortable pretext to spend more time in a nice place. Drinking coffee is an uncomplicated way to combine several attractions: to be outdoors, feel the sunshine and the fresh air, enjoy pleasant views and the ever-present amusement of watching people pass by.

Riga has an impressive number of outdoor cafes and restaurants. The number of seats compare favourably to the other Nordic capitals, which have between 4.000 and 6.000 seats in the city centres. In Riga the concentration of restaurants and bars is in the Old town, especially at Doma laukums and Filharmonija skvers. These two squares hold 42% of the total number of seats on outdoor restaurants and bars in the centre.

In the study area there are 60 different outdoor servings. This number changes as serving areas come and go throughout the outdoor season. The outdoor restaurants, bars and cafes are of varying appearance. On Filharmonijas skvers they separate the main street from the square in an unfortunate manner. Doma laukums is dominated by about 480 yellow plastic chairs and about 100 yellow advertisement sunshades. In the present location and design they seem misplaced in this dignified square. Many cafes have raised wooden platforms for their outdoor tables and chairs. While the furniture is removed in the winter the platforms are left. They are unattractive and act as obstacles for pedestrians.

The positive side of the outdoor life is that people spend more time in the city, meet, rest and talk but there are also negative effects that have to be limited. The introduction of simple guidelines for the location of the outdoor cafes, noise, opening hours, number of seats and the choice of furniture could ensure good quality and limit many of the present problems.



Outdoor cafes

SPENDING TIME IN THE CITY ON A WEEKDAY IN JUNE

Thursday 28th of June 2001, 10 am to 12 pm.
Weather: Sunny, 23-26°C.
Spending time in the city.
Average in the period between 12 am and 4 pm: **1847 activities**
(In comparison Copenhagen has 5.900 activities).

The bar graphs on the map indicate the extent of stationary activities recorded in 16 different locations. Pictured are the average number and categories of activities at any time between 12 am and 4 pm on weekdays in June.

64% of all activities are people sitting on public benches and at outdoor restaurants or bars. (Outdoor serving: 32%, Public benches: 32%). The activities in the Old Town are concentrated at the restaurants and bars while people sitting on public benches are mainly found in the parks.

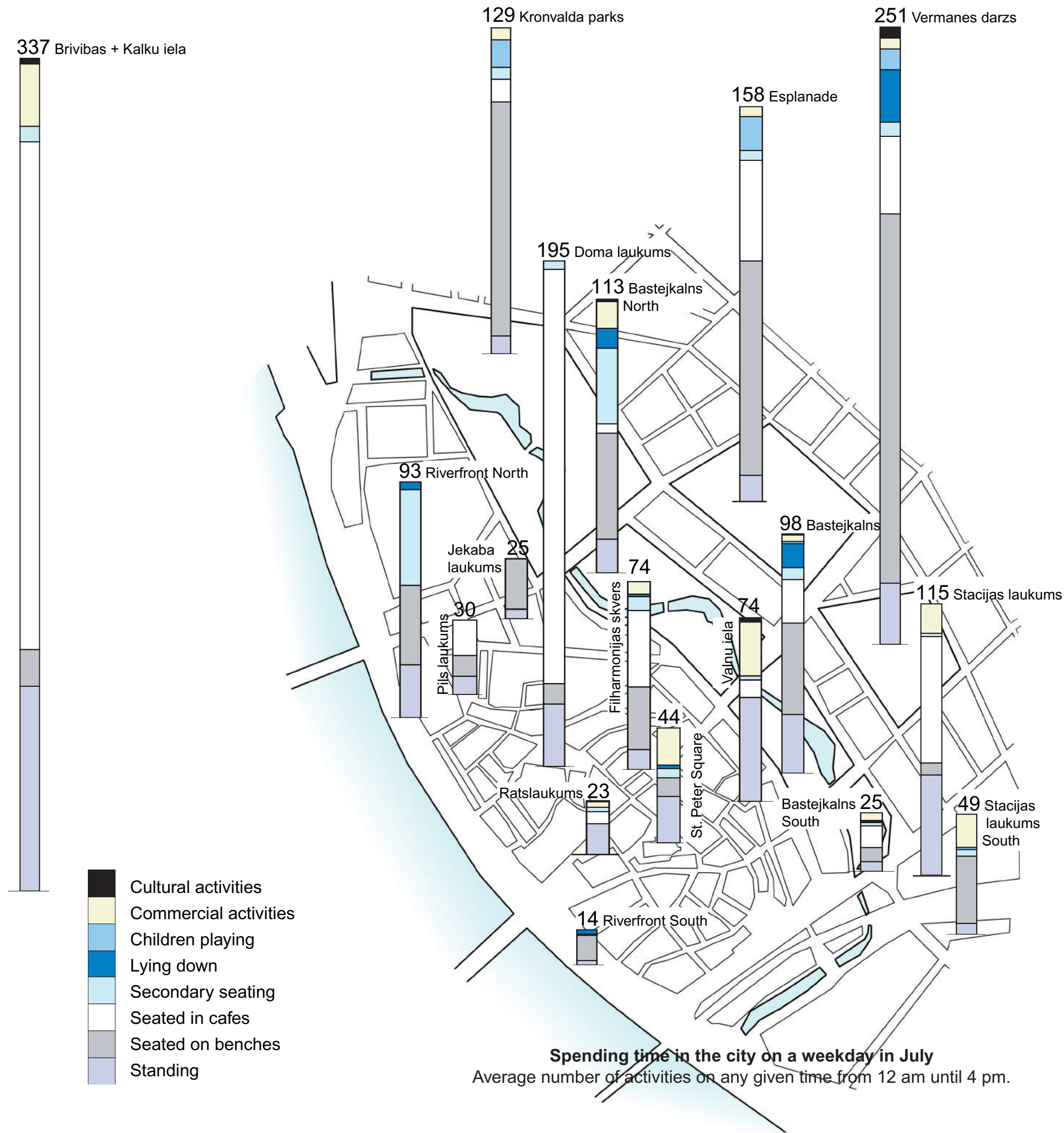
The most popular place is not surprisingly Brivibas and the northern part of Kalku iela where people flock to sit at the outdoor cafes. 62% of the activities were observed at the outdoor restaurants and bars. Many people (25%) were standing watching street traders, window displays, musicians or public life in general.

The number of public benches in the city squares is low and to be able to sit down people have to pay at the restaurants or bars. Previous surveys have indicated a direct relationship between seat availability and the number of people spending time in the city. Obviously, people like to have the opportunity to sit down in the city, and when more seats are available, more people take a seat.

Street trading holds 7% of all activities. 123 persons were occupied with street trading at any given time between 12 am and 4 pm. Street traders mark the important pedestrian routes in the city, from the Old Town to Bastejkalns and from the Old Town to the station and market areas. Street traders will always set up their stalls where many pedestrians pass.

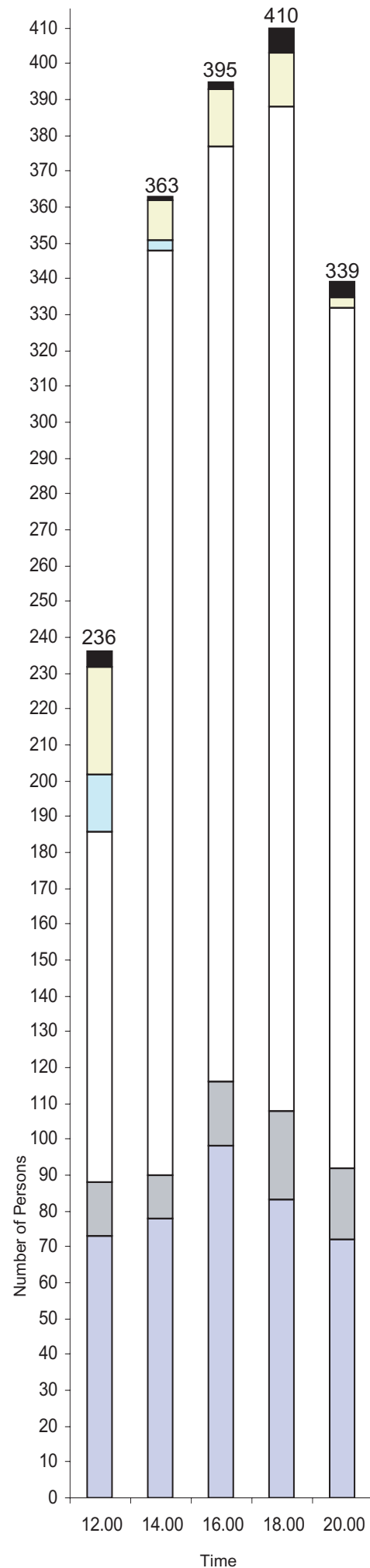
Children who play are only found in the parks where they have the opportunity to run freely. The squares are generally not suited for children walking on their own as many squares are bounded by traffic such as Stacijas laukums or have mixed pedestrian and motor traffic such as Doma laukums.

The people who manage to cross 11. novembra krastmala to the riverfront relax on the benches or on the grass and watch the water. Despite the difficult access, parts of the riverfront have more activities going on than Filharmonijas skvers where people mainly pass through. This shows what a great attraction the riverfront holds.

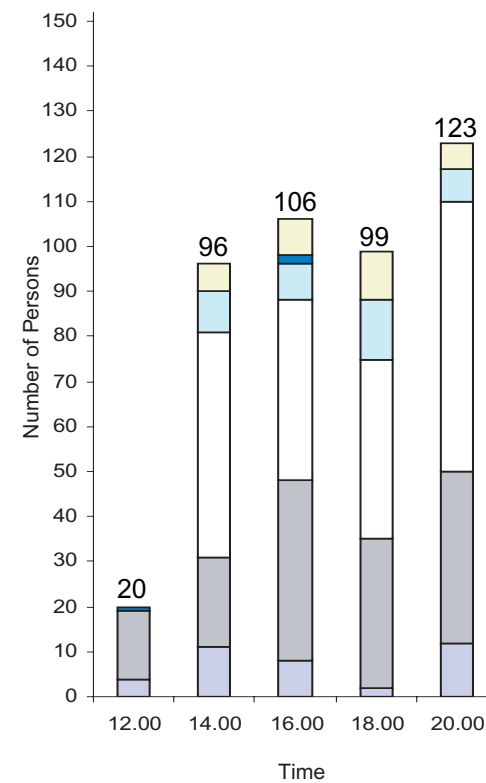


SPENDING TIME IN THE CITY ON A WEEKDAY IN JUNE

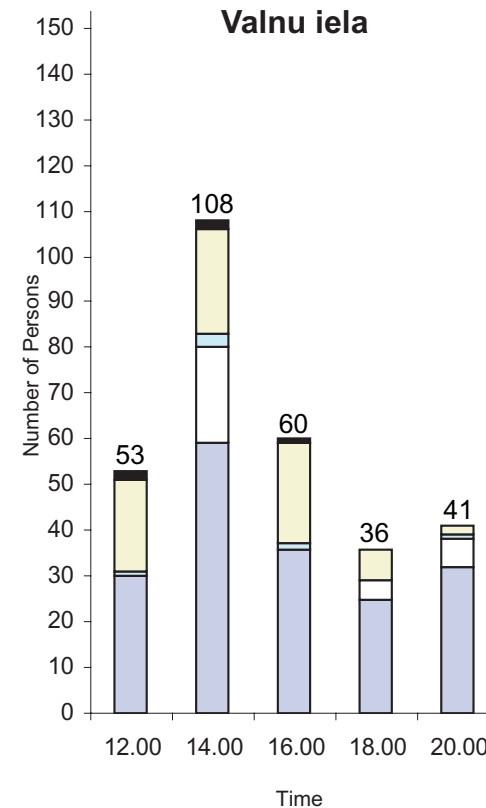
Brivibas + Kalku iela North



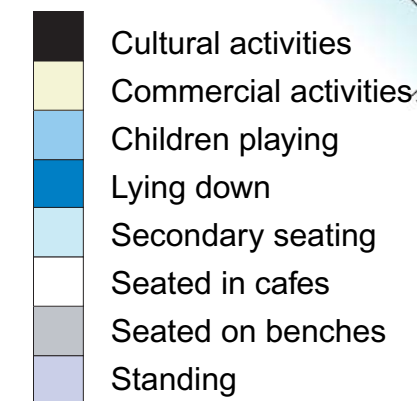
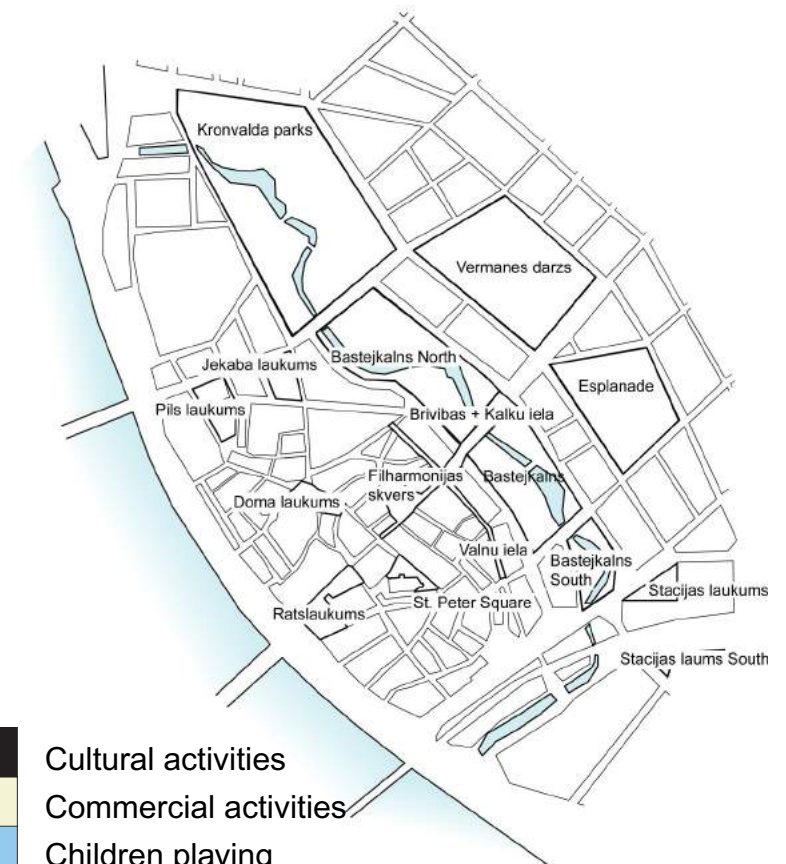
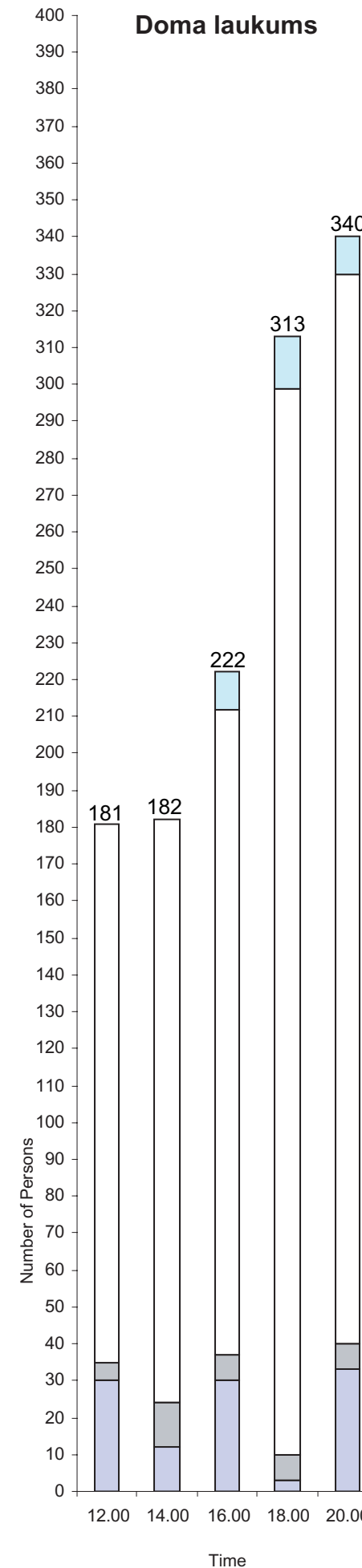
Filharmonijas skvers



Valnu iela



Doma laukums



Thursday 28th of Juni 2001, 10 am to 12 pm.
Weather: Sunny, 23-26°C.

Brivibas + Kalku iela North

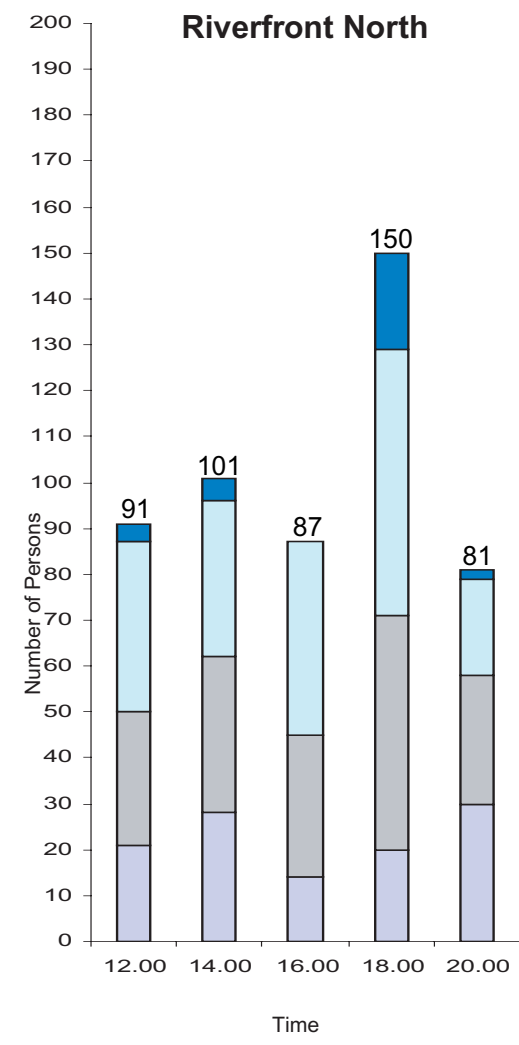
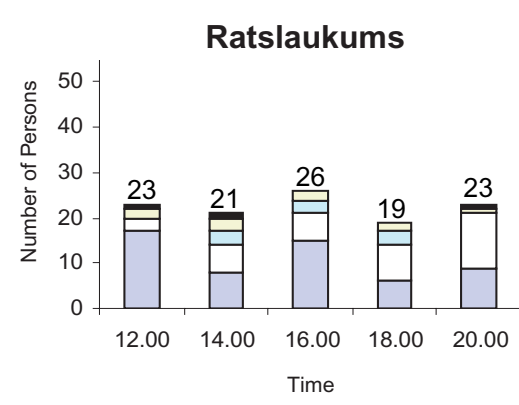
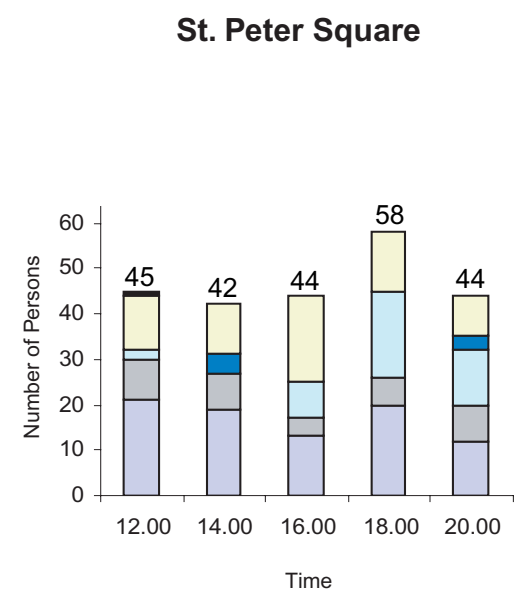
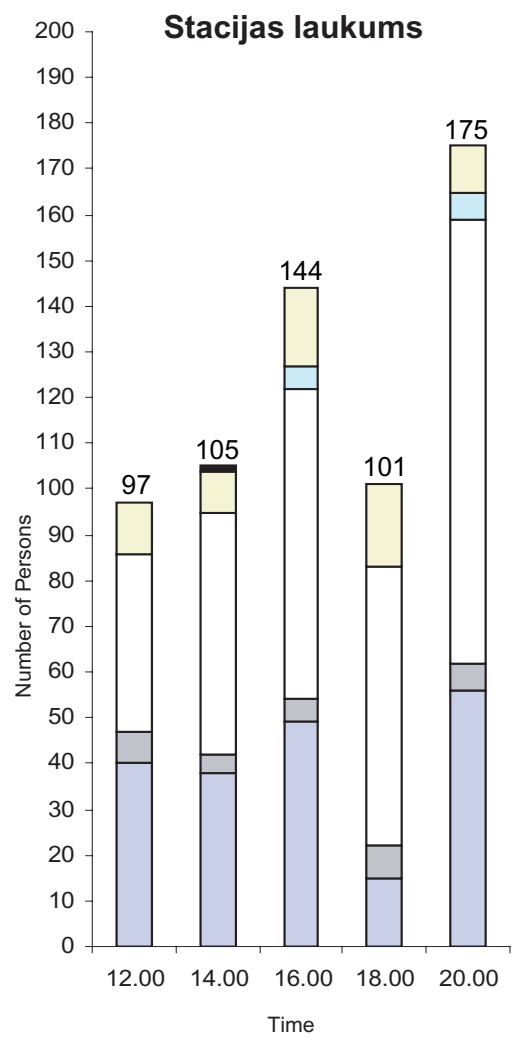
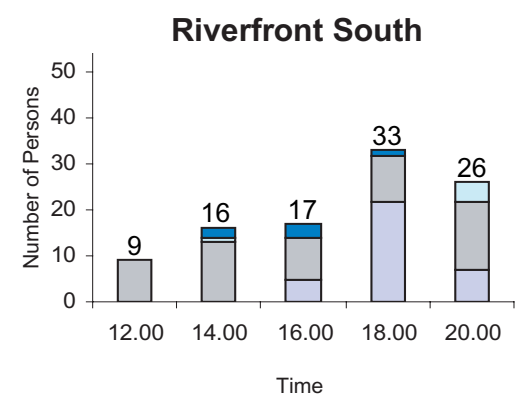
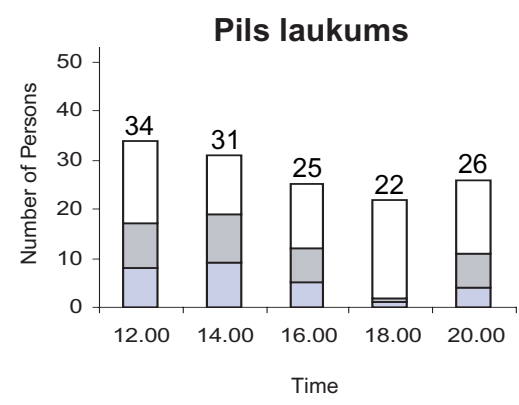
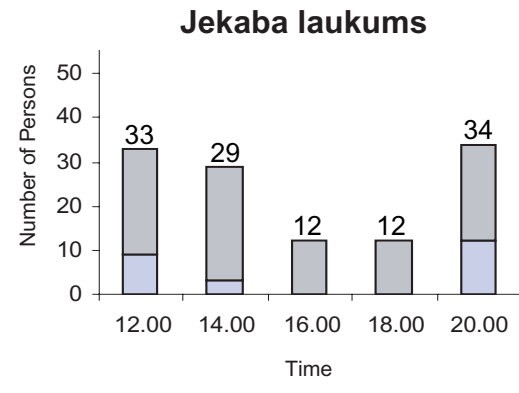
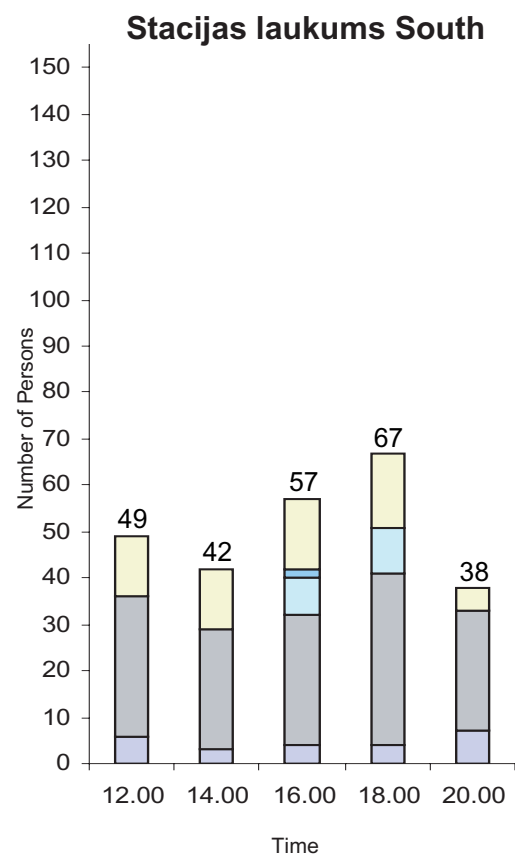
The dominating activity is people who sit at the outdoor restaurants or bars. The number increases around lunchtime and decreases again after 4 pm. Many street traders gather here in the morning hours while the number decreases after lunch.

Filharmonijas skvers is used equally by people resting and people sitting at the outdoor cafes. When the number of benches are not adequate people use other possibilities to sit as edges of planter boxes.

Valnu iela is dominated by people who stand and watch the window displays or look at the goods presented by street traders.

Doma laukums has only a few activities apart from outdoor restaurants. There are almost no public benches which prevents people from resting elsewhere than at the outdoor restaurants or bars.

SPENDING TIME IN THE CITY ON A WEEKDAY IN JUNE



Stacijas laukums is used by people who wait for a bus or a train. Street traders gather here as many people pass throughout the day. The area south of the station is more quiet and people rest on the public benches before they go to the central market, the station or the city.

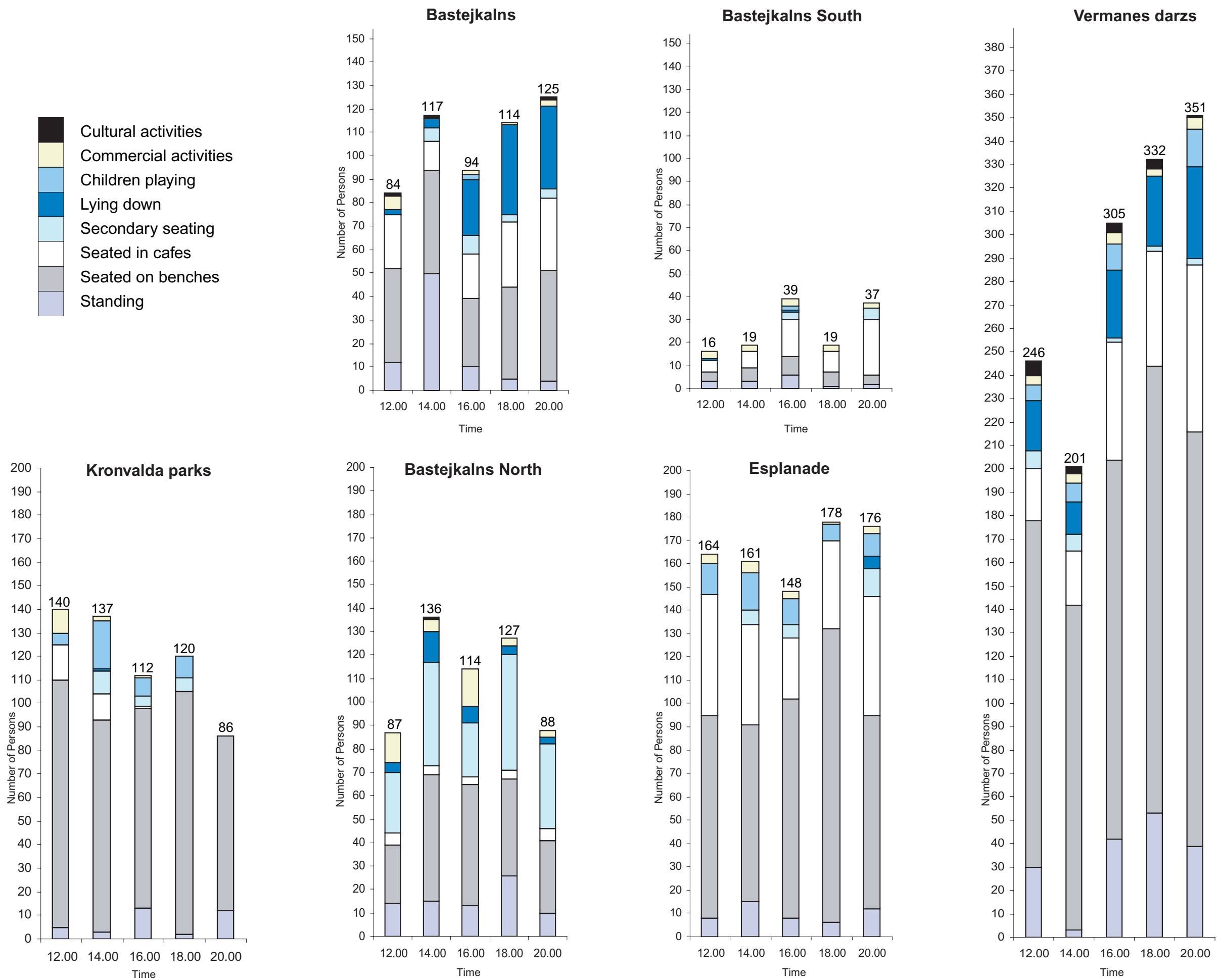
Jekaba laukums and **Pils laukums** are quiet squares without a diversity of activities. People generally stop here to rest on their way to other destinations in the city.

The main activity at **St. Peter Square** is street trading.

Ratslaukums is obviously not working well as a public space. At the moment it is a building site and suffers from the traffic, which explains why so few people choose to spend time here.

The **parks** are very popular in Riga with Vermanes darzs as the most attractive place. In the parks people come to rest and the main activity is sitting on benches which covers between 60-70% of all the activities in Vermanes darzs, Esplanade and Kronvalda parks. The observations show that the southern part of Bastejkalns is not used much as it is dominated by major roads. Street traders find their way to the parks but are concentrated where most pedestrians cross such as Bastejkalns and Esplanade.

SPENDING TIME IN THE CITY ON A WEEKDAY IN JUNE



ACTIVITIES IN THE CITY



The public spaces in Riga city centre act as venues for a wide range of formal and cultural as well as other types of activities. These types of activities are very important for any city and Riga is fortunate to be able to provide a string of very pleasant public spaces for city events and for peoples' many every day activities.



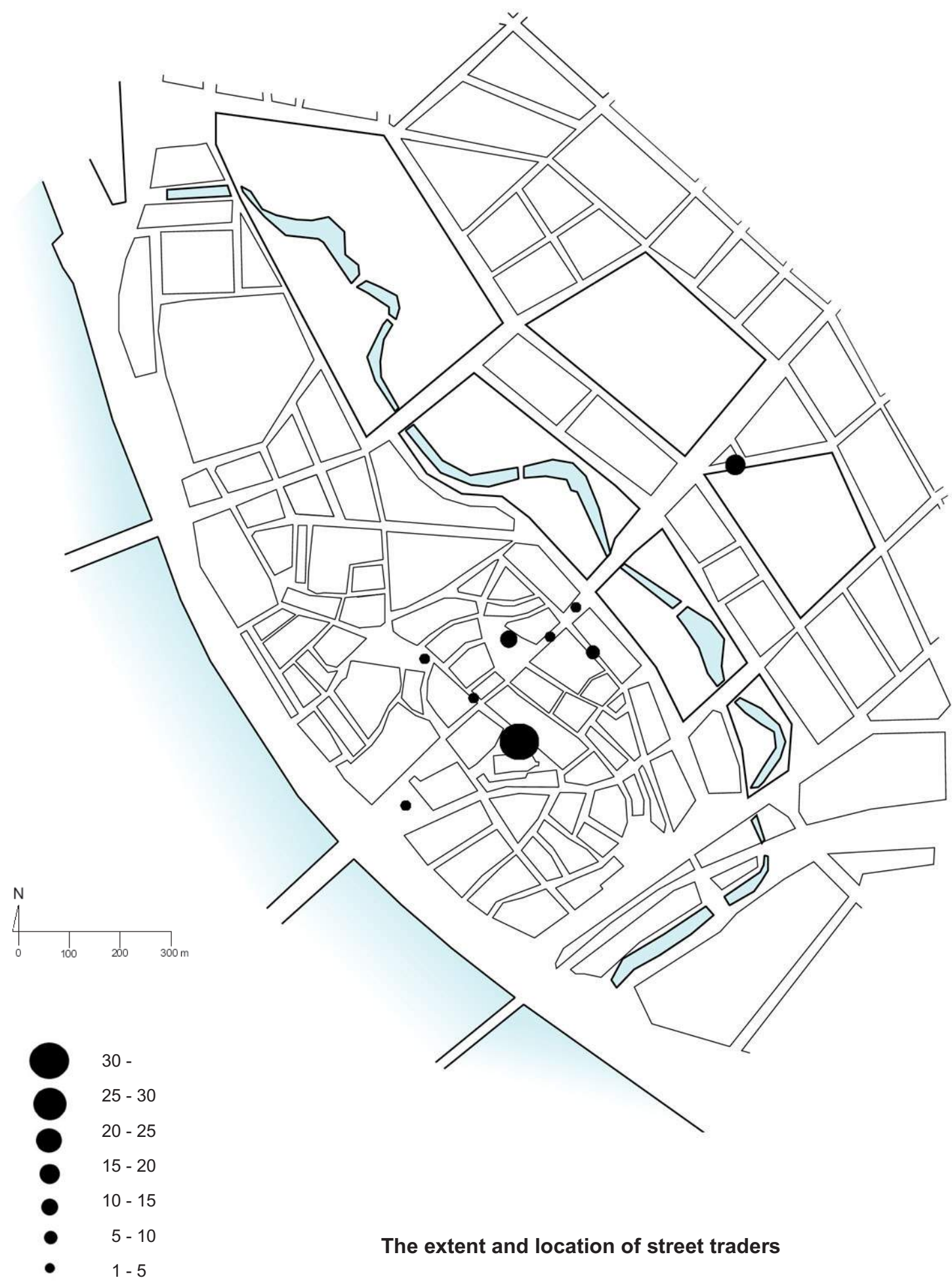
Above: Tivoli at Stacijas laukums.
Below: Basketball in Kronvalda park.

Above left: Streetmusician at Stacijas laukums.
Below left: Vermanes darzs has much to offer for families with children.



Above: Folk dance at Doma laukums as part of the Hansestadt Festival.
Below: Market and Tivoli at the riverfront during the Hansestadt festival.





The street traders add life to the city. The traders and their stalls are a colourful element in the streets and squares.

Street traders are common in Riga. There are both full time professional traders and people who do it to supplement their main income. The principal areas for street trading in the Old Town are Filharmonija skvers, Valnu iela and St. Peter Square. The street environment is lively which has a positive effect on city life.

There are beautiful flower stalls outside the Old Town in Terbatas iela. Many street traders join the established flower market and sell their own bouquets.

Street traders put up their stalls in the busiest streets and squares where most people pass by to maximise their trade. The stalls are generally placed near the buildings and at the edge of the public spaces. They can cause unwanted congestion at peak hours when many people pass through the narrow streets. At present the streets are not used to full capacity and it do not seem to be a problem.

The many street traders add vitality and diversity to the streetscapes in Riga. It will be valuable to retain and cultivate this type of activity which is so characteristic for Riga.



AGE DISTRIBUTION ON KALKU IELA

Wednesday 20th of June 2001, 11 am to 7 pm.

The surveys of the age distribution have taken place in the northern part of Kalku iela.

At 11am, 1pm, 3 pm, 5 pm and 7 pm a representative section of pedestrians have been observed.

The results show that the group of **0 to 6 year olds** is limited during the whole day. There is a slight increase around 5 pm when the children are picked up from nurseries and kindergartens

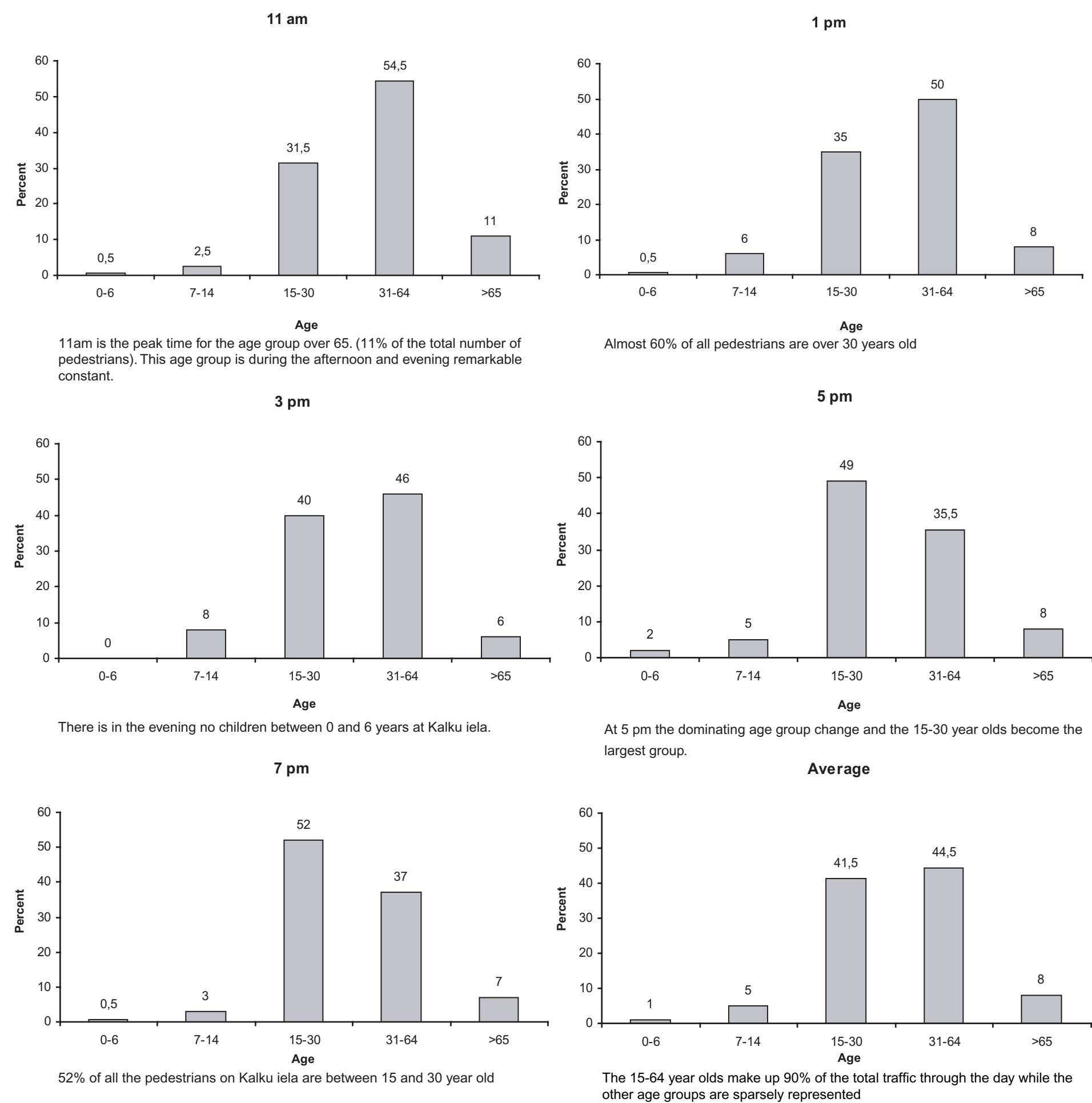
The number of children from **7 to 14 year olds** is also limited. There is a rise in the numbers at 3 pm when the children leave school.

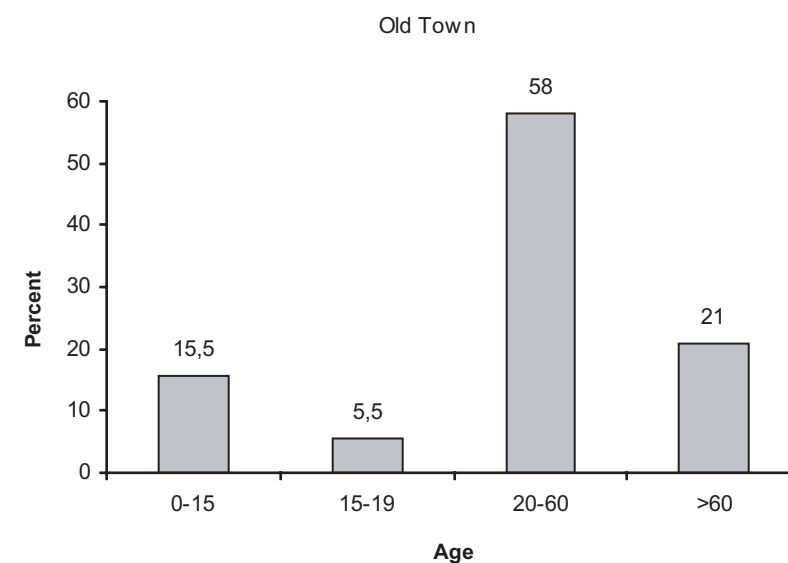
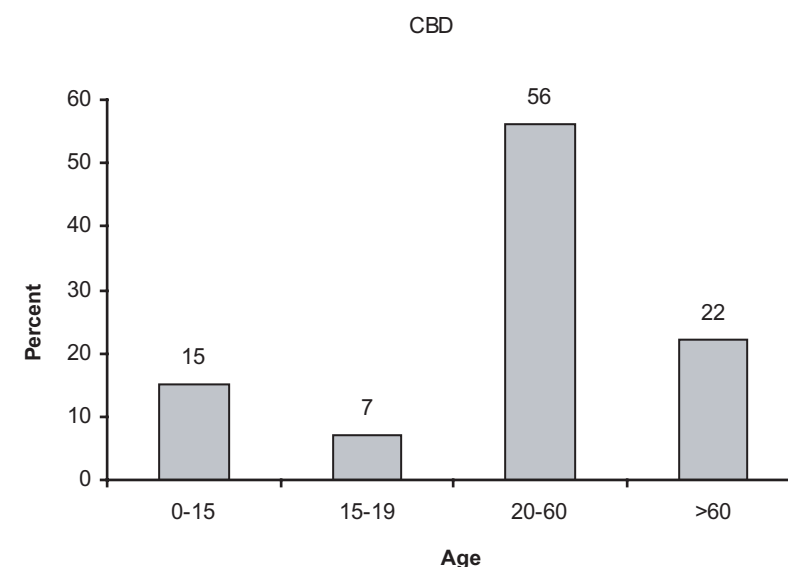
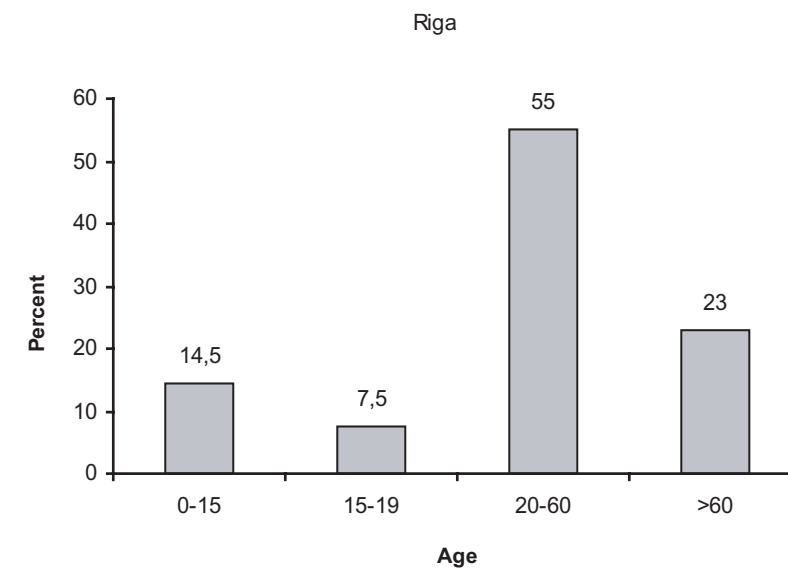
The number of **15 to 30 year olds** is rising during the day. This age group dominates among the user groups on Kalku iela at 7pm like in all other European main streets. This age group includes the city's students and make up about 40% of the total pedestrian traffic Kalku iela throughout the day. There is almost equal distribution between men and women though with a slight predominance of women.

The largest group is the **31 to 64 year olds**. This is of course also age wise the largest group. In total they make up 45% of the number of pedestrians. The number of this age group is slightly falling during the day. It makes up 55% at 11am and 37% at 7pm. 60% of this group is women.



There are few children on Riga's main street Kalku iela





The number of residents in the city center is of significance for the life that takes place after the shops close. A large number of residents in the city center contributes to a sense of safety. The light from the windows are important as they make the city more friendly to be in.

The total number of inhabitants in Riga city region is 1.2 mio.

There is in CBD (the central business district) , which is the same as the study area, 106.538 inhabitants. This is equivalent to 14% of the total number of inhabitants in Riga.

There is in the Old Town 3.980 inhabitants. This is equivalent to 0,5% of the total number of inhabitants in Riga.

The age distribution in the three zones are almost identical and show that the population is the same in the Old Town as in the CBD as in all of Riga.

The age distribution show that the group of 0 to 20 year olds make up 20-25% of the population which is the same as the group of elderly over 60. More than half of the population (55-60%) is represented in the age group between 20 and 60.

Comparison (see also part 1, page 5):

Old Town in Riga has 3.980 inhabitants.

(60 inhabitants pr. hectare)

Copenhagen: 6.800 inhabitants in the city centre

(59 inhabitants pr. hectare)

Oslo: 900 inhabitants in the city centre

(9 inhabitants pr. hectare)

Stockholm: 900 inhabitants in the city centre

(7 inhabitants pr. hectare)

Students contribute to the vitalization of the city's streets and squares. Young people use the city more intensively and the location and number of educational institutions and student housing are important elements in a lively and exciting city.

In Riga the total **number of students is 71.076**. They are divided on **26 different educational institutions**.

Recommendations:

- 1. Capitalize on Riga's unique qualities**
- 2. Reduce traffic through the city centre**
- 3. Create a better city to walk in**
- 4. Create a better city to stay in**
- 5. Improve the contact between the city and the riverfront**
- 6. Introduce general quality improvements**
- 7. Invite more residents and more diversity to the city centre**



Part 3 - Recommendations