

# QUESTION OF THE WEEK, WEEK 43–44 (23.10–3.11.2024)

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 394

The margin of error is 5 % and thereby the answers are considered to reflect the opinions of the population in Jakobstad.

## FUTURE LOOK AND USE OF THE TOWN SQUARE

In the Question of the Week the residents were asked: *“How should the town square be used in winter?”*

Here is a summary of the responses:

### 1. Winter activities and events:

- Many respondents suggest turning the town square into a hub for winter activities. Ideas include building an ice rink, organising outdoor events such as Christmas markets, and holding winter festivals or themed fairs.

### 2. Warm gathering places:

- Respondents recommend creating warm and cosy areas with seating to encourage people to gather even during the colder months. Some mention pop-up cafés with hot drinks to make the square a lively social place.

### 3. Decorations and lighting:

- Suggestions include enhancing the town square with winter decorations, such as fairy lights, festive installations, and seasonal art exhibitions. Good lighting is emphasised to make the town square inviting and safe during the darker months.

### 4. Accessible design:

- Ensuring walkways are free of snow and ice is a priority for safety and accessibility. Heated walkways or paths are mentioned in some responses, along with benches and shelters where people can rest or take shelter from snow and wind.

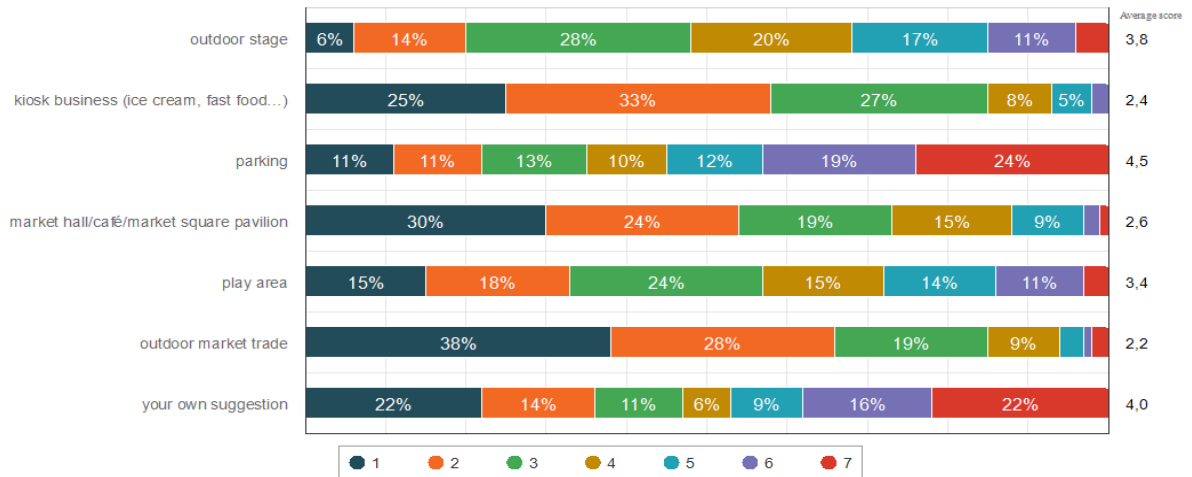
### 5. Activities for children:

- Several responses suggest family-friendly features such as snow playgrounds or small slides for children, encouraging families to spend time outdoors.

### 6. Support for local businesses:

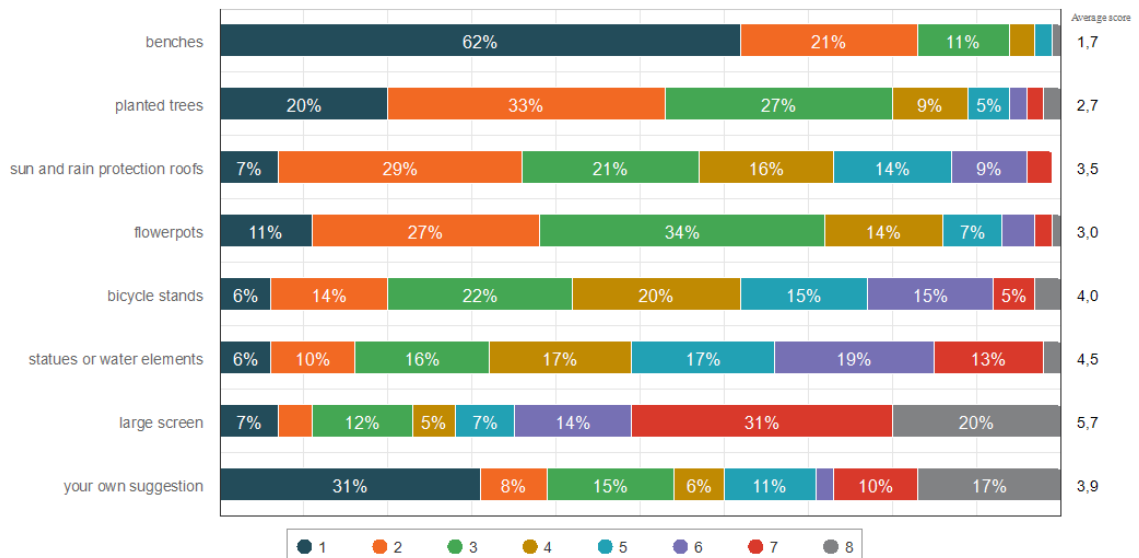
- Some respondents suggest that the town square could have local vendors or food stalls to create a vibrant atmosphere and give small businesses an opportunity to flourish in winter.

***“What functions should there be at the town square? (rank at least three of the alternatives, 1 being the most important)”***



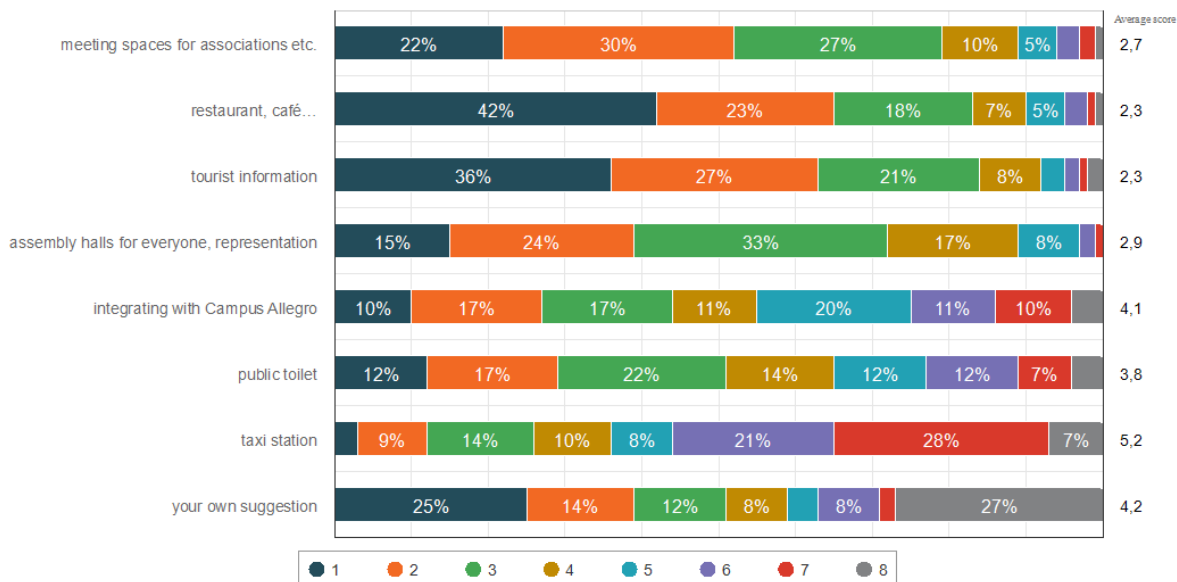
The table shows that the highest ranked alternatives are **outdoor market trade** with a mean score of 2.2; **kiosk business (ice cream, fast food...)** (mean score 2.4) and **market hall/café/market square pavilion** (mean score 2.6). The own suggestions are mainly **seating and relaxation areas** where people can socialise, rest, and gather. Other suggestions are **green spaces and decorations** - trees, flowers, plantings, and atmospheric lighting to create a welcoming and visually appealing environment. In addition, there are suggestions for **facilities for events**, such as spaces with a stage for performances, Christmas markets, evening events, flea markets, and car and motorbike rallies, etc. The own suggestions are many more, but they tend to resemble the alternatives that already existed.

***“What equipment should there be at the square? (rank at least three of the alternatives, 1 being the most important)”***



The table clearly shows that the highest ranked alternative is **benches** with a mean score of 1.7; followed by **planted trees** (mean score 2.7) and **flowerpots** (mean score 3.0). The own suggestions were 57, almost all of them unique.

*“What could the old town hall (rådhuset/raatihuone) be used for? (rank at least three of the alternatives, 1 being the most important)”*



The highest ranked alternatives were **restaurant, café...** (mean score 2.3); **tourist information** (mean score 2.3) and **meeting spaces for associations etc.** (mean score 2.7). Own suggestions are for example banqueting hall, market hall, hotel, gallery for art exhibitions, travel centre, pub down on the south side of the town hall.

## NEXT STEP

It was interesting to take part of the residents’ wishes for how to use the town square. The suggestions and ideas presented will be reviewed and as far as possible they will be considered during the continuing work with the plan for urban construction (plan för stadsbygge). The work is currently ongoing, and the plan is a revision of the current plan for the traffic and environment in the town centre (trafik och miljöplan för centrum) from 1989. We are aiming to create a joint vision for a good urban environment and a uniformity in the town centre. In the work with the plan, we have arranged two workshops, where the main topics have been urban environment and life in the town centre. The third workshop, traffic, has not yet been held. The suggestions and ideas from the two first workshops largely correspond to the desires for primarily the town square. The green element for example is missing in certain places of the town centre.

*More information:*

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