

# Opportunities provided for the entrepreneurs near Greenways in Latvia



Jānis Sijāts | Vidzeme Tourism Association and Latvian Greenways Association  
[www.greenrailways.eu](http://www.greenrailways.eu) [Fb.com/greenwayslv](https://fb.com/greenwayslv) [info@greenways.lv](mailto:info@greenways.lv)

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# GREENWAYS CONCEPT

## Improve communications and non-motorised itineraries in Europe:

hundreds of kilometers running through European countries are available for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and mobility impaired people.

Promote  
**healthier and more  
balanced ways of life**  
and transport reducing the  
congestion and the  
pollution of cities.

Promote  
**rural development,**  
active tourism and local  
employment.

Bring Europeans  
closer to both their  
**natural and cultural  
environment.**

Encourage a more  
human and closer  
**relationship  
among citizens.**



Greenways are communication routes reserved exclusively for non-motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area.

These routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient, and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low-risk for users of all abilities. In this respect, canal towpaths and disused railway lines are a highly suitable resource for the development of greenways.

*Lille Declaration, 12 September 2000*

# Railway map of Latvia, 1934 / RailwayMuseum.lv



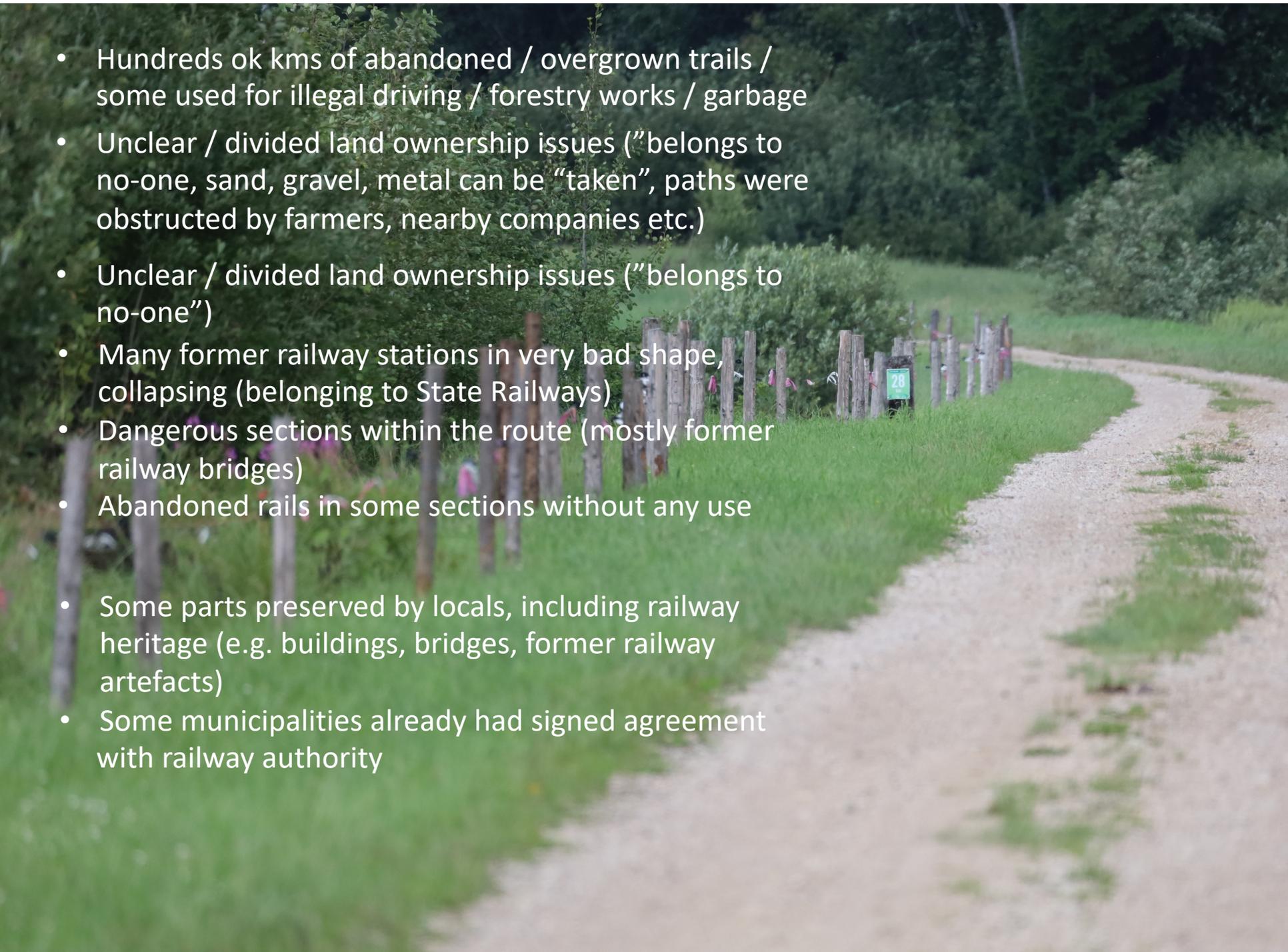
# Infrastructure development plans of Latvian Railways / LR, 2022



Latvijas dzelzceļa infrastruktūras attīstība



- Hundreds of kms of abandoned / overgrown trails / some used for illegal driving / forestry works / garbage
- Unclear / divided land ownership issues ("belongs to no-one, sand, gravel, metal can be "taken", paths were obstructed by farmers, nearby companies etc.)
- Unclear / divided land ownership issues ("belongs to no-one")
- Many former railway stations in very bad shape, collapsing (belonging to State Railways)
- Dangerous sections within the route (mostly former railway bridges)
- Abandoned rails in some sections without any use
- Some parts preserved by locals, including railway heritage (e.g. buildings, bridges, former railway artefacts)
- Some municipalities already had signed agreement with railway authority



# Network of former railways in North-East Latvia and South Estonia Works performed during 2015 - 2023



# Development of former railway lines into sustainable tourism routes

## From a dream to reality - trails, bidges, stations, activities etc.

Before



After



*Former railway bridge over Gauja river in Jaunpiebalga*

Former railway bridge over Gauja river in Jaunpiebalga



## Bijušais dzelzceļa tilts pār Gauju

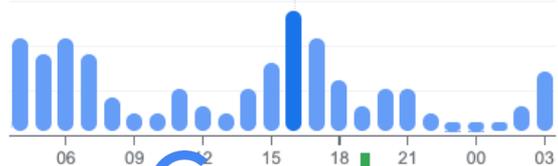
Norādījumi Saglabāt

4,4 ★★★★★ 7 Google atsauksmes ⓘ

Intensīvākā apmeklējuma laiki ⓘ

PIRMD. OTRD. **TREŠD.** CETURTD. PIEKTD. SESTD. SVĒTD.

👤 16:00: Parasti tik daudz apmeklēta



Last Year Leilkruzes  
Daily Average **13**  
+10.2%  
Compared to Previous Year

Last Year Leilkruzes  
Peak Day **265**  
Tuesday Jun 28, 2022

Annual Comparison by Month @3y → @0d



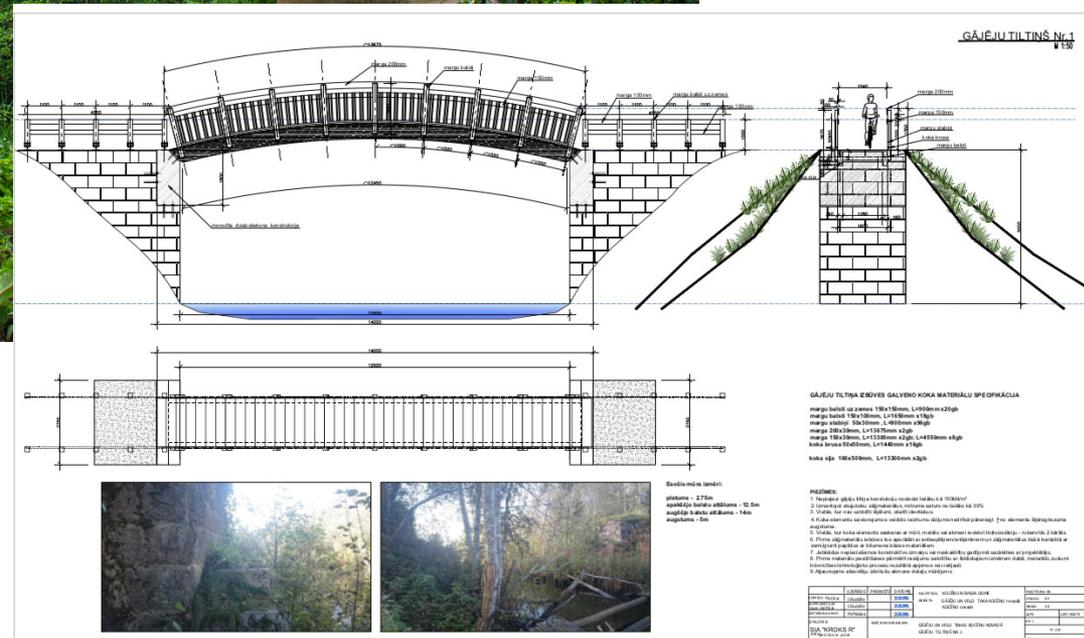
Former railway bridge over  
river Tirza

(emphasis not only on the  
surface and safety, but as a  
“natural” bottleneck for  
restriction of the  
motorized transport)

> Additional measures –  
reflective elements



# Setting-up new wooden bridges (instead of the former iron)



*Bridge over Briede river  
not far from Valmiera*



Creating favorable conditions for (potential) entrepreneurs nearby:

A case of Suntaži former railway station (replacing former bridge surface to make it safe and accessible)



# Suntaži former railway station and nearby bridge - abandoned and forgotten



# Suntaži former railway station > Design Hotel (Aug. 2023)



Jes krāsu pase:

**Pasīrums:**  
1. Fasādes ir izstrādātas pamatpārtikas uz inventārtāpniecības tīru, tīrītas tīras un apstrādātas.  
2. Ēkas bēgļi, augstumi, ka arī pārējās fasādes tīras tīrītas un apstrādātas.  
3. Ēkas iekšējās sienas tīras un apstrādātas, izņemot tās, kas ir apstrādātas.

Creating favorable conditions for (potential) entrepreneurs nearby:

A case of DodKepu.lv  
(Huskey dog sledging and walks on former railway)

Improvement of the safety over railway bridge, traffic restriction (signs), active local community





# Aloja former railway station – local pizzeria presently

<https://www.facebook.com/Alojaspicas/>



# Ērgļi former station - a meeting place for tourists and creativity



# Additional support for the local entrepreneurs

- Thematic seminars with local and international lecturers
- Possibilities to join local and international experience exchange trips
- Included in the promotional materials (maps, mini-maps, articles etc.)



# International Awards for the Greenways Network 2019 and 2023

## EGWA AWARDS 2019



European Greenways Award is presented to greenways that stand out for their excellence and demonstration of best practice. The award ceremony happens **every two years**.

At the 9th EGWA awards in 2019, September project "Green railways" received **1st Prize of Excellence**. Green Railways in Latvia and Estonia was presented by Vidzeme Tourism Association (Latvia) and the projects team involved in Green Railways development.

The Excellence award shows the best integration of the various characteristics that define greenways and that also demonstrates specific strengths.



Family photo at the 9th European Greenways Award Ceremony at Dikļi Palace, September 5, 2019.

← Award statuette.

MORE INFO:

[www.aevv-egwa.org/awards/9th-ega-2019](http://www.aevv-egwa.org/awards/9th-ega-2019)



# Potential hard-surface sections identified connecting/overlapping with greenways





- Electric (micro) mobility: making greenways even more accessible to various groups of visitors
- Electric car charging facilities (more time spent near/at tourism destinations)
- Electric sockets for phone and e-bike charging (renewable energy solutions); more time spent at destinations

## Near-future plans regarding greenways development in Latvia

- Greenways network further development in Vidzeme, Kurzeme and South Estonia regions
  - Emphasis on accessibility improvements, but also new sections (EstLat, approved)
- Urban Mobility connection improvements (Interreg Europe, under assessment)
- Urban Mobility Lighthouse site as an initiative of the European Commission, under DG MOVE
- Local development initiatives by the communities (e.g. through LEADER) enthusiasts and entrepreneurs
- Cooperation with European Greenways Assoc., incl. policy advocacy via European Parliament resolution of 25 March 2021 on establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism (2020/2038(INI)) – Rail Trails



Thank you very much for your attention!

