



## RIGA: Co-creating multimodal pilot areas in Riga

The cities.multimodal project's pilot area in the City of Riga was selected by Riga City Municipality experts. It is within this framework that the Urban Planning Workshop with the focus on "former VEF industrial complex and adjacent territory" was held on June 1, 2018. Riga Energy Agency facilitated the workshop from the city side in collaboration with city stakeholders, urban planning experts and citizens. This Urban Planning workshop was organized within the framework of the "MadCity" event, a two-day long international happening which was dedicated to unusual ideas for the development of cities.

### Challenges and purpose of the workshop

The goal of this Urban Planning Workshop was to bring together the minds and diverse experiences of urban planners, residents of the VEF neighbourhood, businesses operating at the VEF neighbourhood and other stakeholders interested in development of this neighbourhood, with an aim to create very specific, tangible ideas for the improvement of the urban environment. Participants of the workshop were introduced to the focus area and stakeholders were invited to present their visions for development of the neighbourhood.

Several main objectives were identified regarding mobility and transport in the city, in particular in the VEF sector:

- Development of crossing solutions for the main streets of the focus area (Brīvības street and Gustava Zemgala street);

- Improvement of pedestrian and bicycle flows in the whole VEF neighbourhood;
- Proposals and reflections about mobility management solutions including proposals for the most suitable location(s) and preferred functionality of the Mobility points.

These objectives were set according to the current challenges of mobility and transport infrastructure in the city of Riga. The following were outlined : lack of unified planning and management of city streets, rail networks and public transport; fragmented street network resulting in traffic flow congestion; insufficient amount of pedestrian, cycle and segregated public transport lines, leading to poor multimodal accessibility to different places; inefficient organisation of logistics (cargo flows) in the city, and other.

## **The workshop: a relevant tool for the “citizen involvement strategy”**

Sustainable urban mobility planning should be driven by those who are at the heart of the transport system: the civil society. The involvement of citizens in urban planning is crucial for the joint analysis of local mobility problems, development of common objectives and targets, identification of mobility strategies and selection of measures that are widely accepted and supported.

The workshop seemed to be the most relevant participation tool : it facilitates exchange and collaboration with citizens ; citizens and stakeholders become active and creative players of the planning process, while the planning authority is taking a facilitating role ; co-creation is especially suitable for implementing measures together with citizens and stakeholders e.g. mobility points, living street concepts etc. Finally, the workshop assures a high potential for practical application of co-created urban mobility solutions.

## **The focus area of the workshop: “VEF industrial complex and adjacent territory”**

Several potential locations were thoroughly evaluated and the “former VEF industrial complex and adjacent territory”, also referred as the “VEF neighbourhood”, was selected to be the focus area of the workshop.

The VEF area has a 100-year technology tradition as the foundation upon which to build future development. The area has a creative environment in which people, the environment and technology meet. The VEF territory is a priority development area for Riga, and it is located on the border of the city centre. It is also a multifunctional area (commercial, public and residential spaces) with a wide range of transport infrastructure. Moreover, it is an area where the inhabitants and the community are committed to participate in its development. All these characteristics make VEF a relevant territory for the implementation of a workshop on mobility and multimodality.



# The method of the workshop

## Preparations

### 1. Identify the main objectives of the workshop

The SMART method was used to define the key characteristics of the project: specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, time related. (objectives mentioned above)

### 2. Define resources needed and available (time, finances, personnel)

### 3. Target participants and stakeholders

Both experts and members of civil society should be involved. Residents and employees of the VEF neighbourhood know what's going on here, while urban planners have a wide range of theoretical knowledge of what could be done. It's also quite important to get to know the target group of citizens (habits, major features) to assure the success of the workshop.

### 4. Communication to the target group

It is important to keep the public up to date on your activities in order to gain informal feedback and to raise awareness about opportunities to participate in the mobility planning. For this workshop it was done through Facebook and private invitations.

### 5. Call on a professional facilitator or someone to conduct and moderate the workshop

### 6. Have creative and thought-provoking material

Some pictures of the focus area, presentations, maps, stationary.

## The agenda of the workshop

### 1. Introduction

Purposes of the workshop, method of the workshop, brief description of selected urban mobility issues to be discussed.

### 2. Diagnosis of the focus area

No specific studies have been undertaken in the pilot area before the cities.multi-modal project. Therefore, one of the tasks of the Urban Planning Workshop was to undertake the initial assessment of the area in terms of mobility and multi-modality:

- Functions and uses of the area;
- Usages of mobility modes;
- Spatial accessibility.

### 3. Selection of issues

According to the working group, the most common problems of the area are insufficient quality and accessibility of the urban space (its buildings, transport infrastructure, commercial objects). More specifically, the following issues were identified:



- Transport segmentation between three zones (commercial, public and residential);
- Little space for pedestrian traffic (cars, old streets with no facilities);
- Transports are mainly used to travel outside the zone and not within the zone.

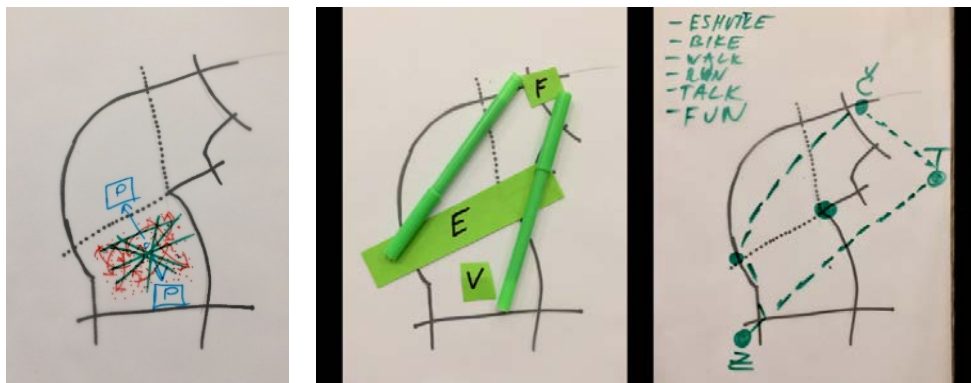
**4. Group work on potential solutions to the selected issues**

During the workshop, seven multi-disciplinary teams of experts and local stakeholders in one day created countless new ideas for the development of the VEF neighbourhood – with an emphasis on urban mobility and multimodality, liveability and vibrancy, innovations and green technologies, as well as financial incentives aimed to support development



of the focus area. The ideas varied from the creation of a roundabout crossing for Gustava Zemgala gatve and Brīvības gatve along with the elevated pedestrian-cyclist bridge that crosses these circular crossroads, innovative solutions for the reconstruction of the VEF bridge, setting up intelligent traffic lights, mobile applications for car parking, mobile squares, etc. to several ideas for potential locations of the Mobility points and their preferred functionality.

**5. Conclusions: open and moderated discussion on the issues tackled and solutions found**



*Analysis of the focus area during the Urban Planning Workshop and initial proposal*

## Follow-up and valorisation of the ideas and proposals of the workshop

The ideas and proposals made by the workshop groups will be included in the new City Master Plan that is currently being developed.

The process ends with the evaluation of the success of the workshop. Besides assessing the effectiveness, the reasons why your campaign was or was not successful should also be assessed. What were the reasons for the behavioural change or the observed effects? In a next step, you should also reflect



self-critically what went well and what elements during the process of the campaign could have been better?

## What made the workshop successful?

- We have learned from, engaged, discussed and co-created a new way of mobility with your citizens.
- The communication and awareness-raising campaign was effective: citizens were present to take part in the workshop and give their opinion.
- With the issues and objectives clearly defined, it was easier to think collectively about solutions.
- Involving and informing citizens about mobility projects helps to ensure that they accept the project. It is also a guarantee of the efficiency and validity of the project, as it best meets the needs of the territory.

## Recommendations to other cities who are interested in the method of workshop:

- Define a clear objective.
- Be conflict-sensitive throughout the process. Conflict prevention actions should be taken to reduce the risk for dispute and lower tensions.
- Be clear and open about your process and transparent about how decisions will be taken.
- Critically review the effectiveness of the participation strategy in order to enhance participation in future activities
- In general, a behavioural change is a long-term process that can't completely be achieved through a short intervention like a campaign or an incentive. But a campaign can lead to commencement of a behavioural change.

## Contact details

**Jānis Andiņš**

Senior Expert on Sustainable Transport & Mobility

City of Riga, Riga Energy Agency

[janis.andins@riga.lv](mailto:janis.andins@riga.lv)

