Peer Review Report

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Supervised by: **team red,** Benjamin Techen, Project Manager.

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Short description of the host city:

The City of Riga with 633 thousand inhabitants (in 2019) is a slightly shrinking city. 33% of the country's population live in Riga. Riga agglomeration has about 1,3 million inhabitants, meaning that country is very monocentric-orientated. It causes very high traffic volumes in Riga city administrative area, where the demand for business, education, culture, healthcare and other services is high.

The City of Riga struggles with traffic congestion, noise and air pollution which are getting worse in the city due to internal migration from rural regions to the city, economic growth, associated with more frequent driving and people choosing to live in the suburbs circling Riga, but to work and to educate their children in the city centre. Thus, there is an average of 180 thousand daily commuters, causing a high pressure on the city streets network.

The key mobility challenges for the City of Riga are the following: incomplete network of the main streets, insufficient integration of train and public transport into city's transport system, lack of mobility management measures and insufficient joint planning of transport and mobility at the regional and national levels. Other mobility challenges are related to missing linkages between different modes of transportation and low public awareness on sustainable transport modes and multimodality.

Various planning documents have been developed for the City of Riga, but there is no SUMP document for Riga that would integrate mobility issues and define transport development priorities more precisely. Although the modal split is relatively positive among residents of Riga (car 35%, PT 47%, pedestrian 25%, cycling 8%), due to the large incoming transport and passenger flows in the capital city the picture is no longer so positive – and it requires immediate solutions.

In order to solve traffic problems in a holistic way, recently (in August 2018) the City of Riga has begun collaboration with the Jan Gehl's office along with their partners MOE Tetraplan and SWECO.

This partnership was established with aim to assist the Riga City Municipality in tackling its key mobility planning challenges. External experts are focusing on 3 main tasks related to the future development of mobility in the City of Riga:

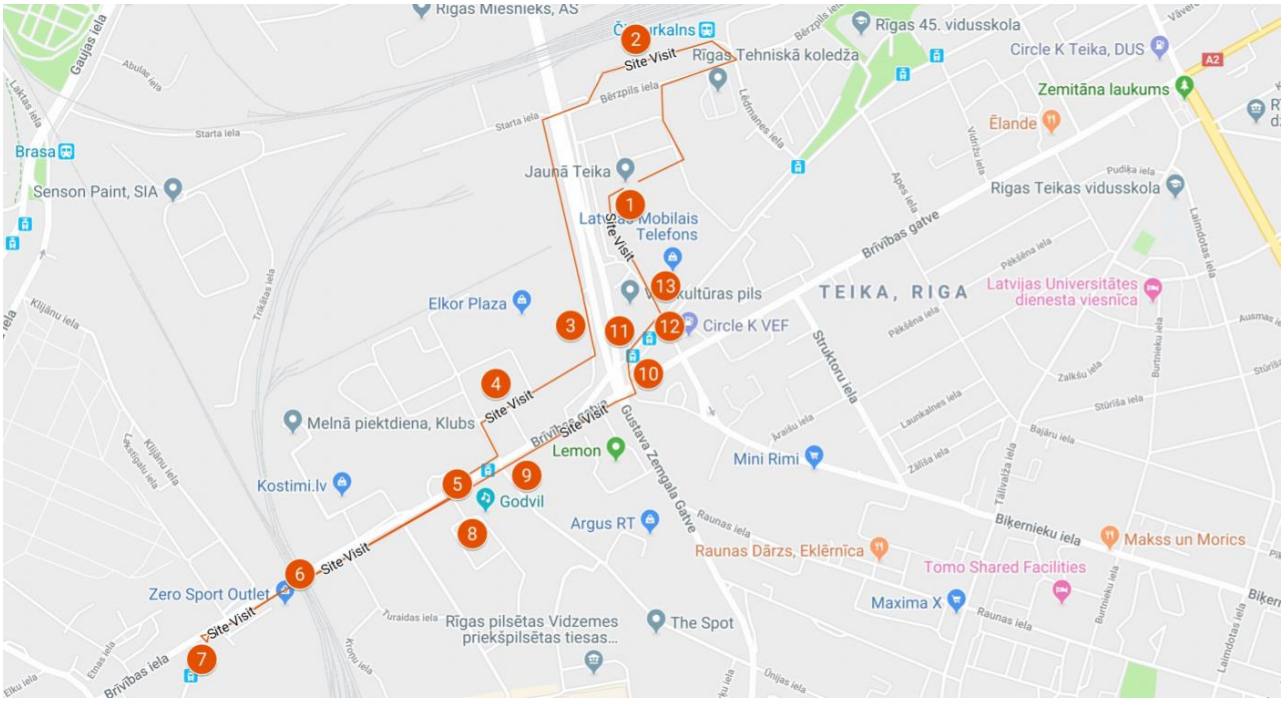
- Providing a draft vision for mobility in Riga looking towards 2050;
- Collecting background information on best practice mobility systems;
- Discussion and ad hoc advice related to the Mobility Action Plan prepared by the City of Riga and local partners.

Short-term mobility action plan 2019-2025 has been elaborated in a coherent and straightforward way, addressing a topic which is crucial for the future of Riga and could be a step towards more sustainable transport and mobility system.

Description of the site visit

During the site visit the Peer Review group visited the former VEF industrial complex and adjacent territory" also referred as the "VEF district" which is a fast growing multi-functional area (with IT, retail, transport, industry related companies and residential function) located in close proximity to the city centre (2-3 km), bordering the Historic Centre of Riga, the UNESCO World Heritage site.

Regular traffic jams are observed in the pilot area due to insufficient capacity of the intersection of *Gustava Zemgala gatve* and *Brīvības gatve* and "bottleneck" towards to city centre along the VEF bridge.



Site visit included 13 different points (Stops) related to the piloting of the "VEF Mobility Point" and mobility management activities in the pilot area.

During the site visit participants were introduced with the development plans of the "Jaunā Teika" neighbourhood (additional info can be seen here) and with the open innovation movement "VE-FRESH" (additional info here). Presentations given by the representatives of both undertakings highlighted the mobility management measures that are planned to be implemented in the "Jaunā Teika" neighbourhood.

"Jaunā Teika" (in translation "The New Fairy Tale") neighbourhood currently is among top 5 neighbourhoods of Riga, a striking, smart area next to Riga's Historic Centre. As majority of its buildings and infrastructure were developed in 21st century, it is a place for urban planners to realize their ideas of a modern neighbourhood, with the main development priorities – sustainability, functionality and accessibility. "Jaunā Teika" is specifically designed to be a dynamic urban environment, bringing together excellent business spaces, apartment buildings and recreation areas. Everything that is created here goes to support the dreams and goals of its community that itself is a new, young, diverse and multi-cultural community of incomers from other neighbourhoods, cities and countries.

There is a strong local community self-established at “Jaunā Teika”, motivated to take part in development of their neighbourhood, as well as local businesses willing to collaborate to develop the neighbourhood – rise its overall urban qualities, such as sustainability, liveability, comfort, attractiveness, accessibility, acceptability, etc.

The “VEFRESH” movement was launched in 2019 when the VEF district technology companies joined forces with real estate developers and the “VEF Culture Palace”, a venue for culture and recreation owned by the Riga City Municipality. The “VEFRESH” movement aims to redevelop the VEF district as a pilot area for smart city solutions – where the business corporations, the start-ups and the public sector representatives can prototype and test various innovative public space solutions including piloting of the “VEF Mobility Point” (Stop Nr.1, Nr. 8).

Participants also visited the railway station “Čiekurkalns” and observed its poor amenities and connection with the adjacent VEF district and the site of the planned “VEF Mobility Point” (Stop Nr.2).

Poor and unsafe connections are the key issues in the pilot area, therefore participants were introduced with different problematic junctions around the “VEF Mobility Point” such as *Gustava Zemgala gatve* and *Brīvības gatve* junction (Stop Nr.3) were the “smart and soft” measures are needed to be implemented, the pedestrian tunnel under the *Brīvības gatve* (Stop Nr.5), the VEF bridge with its narrow pavements (Stop Nr.6), the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connections at the *Barona iela*, *Brīvības gatve* and *Ropažu iela* (Stop Nr.7, Nr.9, Nr.11, Nr.12) where some significant traffic infrastructure redesign is needed.

The most important stop was at the site of the planned “VEF Mobility Point” (Stop Nr.10) where discussions on its potential location, technical elements, connections with various public transport modes, functionality and visibility were held. Also, the best location of the pedestrian and cycling counter was discussed, as well as the evaluation methods of the “VEF Mobility Point” users and usages were discussed among the Peer Review partners.

Finally, the Peer Review group stopped nearby the largest telecommunications company “LMT” which is part of the “VEFRESH” movement (Stop Nr.13). At this stop partners discussed how large companies could be convinced to implement mobility management activities and to become part of the multimodal and green mobility movement.

Each reviewing city (Rostock, Gdansk, Aarhus) documented their ideas and provided their feedback concerning the possible solutions to improve mobility-related issues in the above-mentioned locations by filling the site visit questionnaire. Most important findings are summarized below.

Description of the peer review workshop

The Peer Review workshop began with a presentation about the City of Riga, a description of its mobility situation and a presentation of the planned activities for implementation of the pilot Mobility Point in Riga.

After the Peer Review’s site visit, a round table was organized, were each reviewing partner summarized their recommendations for each Stop in 3 bullet points and presented to others.

Feedback and recommendations to the host city:

Summary of the feedback and proposals from the reviewing cities – City of Rostock & City of Gdansk & City of Aarhus:

Stop 1: New development *"Jaunā teika"*

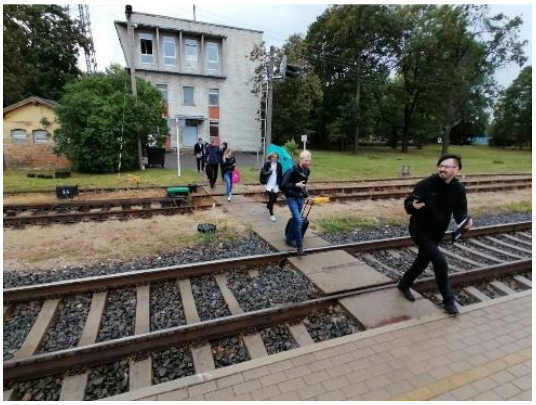
Question: How the multimodality in the *"Jaunā teika"* development area could be improved?

As part of the neighbourhood management plan, a mobility management plan should be elaborated were the general regulations for mobility management at the residential area shall be defined (e.g., how to plan/organize greener, multimodal mobility);

- Promote car sharing in the area, as well as bike sharing and e-scooter schemes;
- Weather-protected bike parking close to the entrance of the buildings should be set up;
- Pedestrian friendly access from and to station;
- Access to main cycling roads, more signs and information;
- Flexible use of existing multi-storey car parking building, reduce car space to more efficient solutions;
- Consider promoting e-scooter scheme for last mile delivery to the train station and the "VEF Mobility Point";
- Develop peer to peer car sharing, cargo bikes;
- Give bonuses to families without a car, etc.

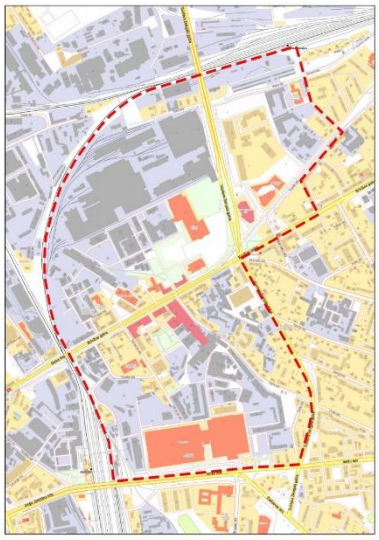
Stop 2: Railway station *"Čiekurkalns"*

Question: How the connection between the railway station and the "VEF Mobility Point" could be improved?



- 6 trains per day passing this station is a very little number, could the intensity of the train traffic be increased?
- Improve straight connection to the VEF district – no loop ways;
- New pavement, shelters, bike and scooter parking, lightening, promenade to district, demolish the wall, facilities for disabled people;
- Consider to implement concept of community rail: https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/community-rail/

Stop 3: *Gustava Zemgala gatve – Brīvības gatve* junction – multi-modality perspective



Question: In order to improve the capacity of the junction, what kind of "soft" measures could be implemented instead of "hard" measures (e.g. building a two-level junction)?

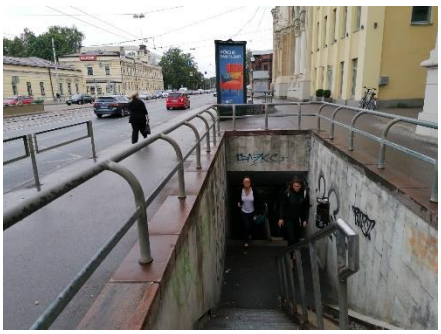
- Smart traffic light adapted to traffic flow; smart IT solution based on video adapter;
- Develop traffic circulation analysis for this junction;
- Prioritization on the tram, good example of the big roundabout in Bremen "Stern";
- Implement the "VEF Mobility Point" as a good "last mile" alternative;
- Crossing options for *Gustava Zemgala gatve* are necessary. Could have been part of the planning permission. It looks like the developer of "Jaunā teika" has developed the area on an island without any requirements from the city on the areas around. Could also include the nearby train station. The Danish Planning act gives the opportunity for these types of agreements: §21b, stk 3 "The development agreement can only provide that the landowner must, in whole or in part, carry out or cover the costs of the physical infrastructure which must be established in or outside the area to implement the planning *(own translation)*."

Stop 4: ELKOR centre – car parking

Question: How the multimodality could be improved in the car parking area? Could you suggest any alternative land use solutions for the car parking area that would help to improve the multimodality?

- Redesign smaller parking and create more space for other liveable functions and better public realm;
- "Park+" station and bike parking with repair station;
- Improve connections for pedestrians – e.g., the air bridge with the "Jaunā Teika";
- Cinema at the wall of old luxury shopping building;
- Skatepark for the young people from new development;
- Flee market, second-hand market;
- Volleyball field, ice skating.

Stop 5: *Brīvības gatve* tunnel – underground pedestrian crossing



Question: Is the pedestrian connection convenient and safe? Have you got any alternative (preferably, low-cost) solutions how to better organize pedestrian flows crossing the *Brīvības gatve*?

All peer review participants voted that the tunnel is NOT enough safe and convenient for pedestrians.

- Due to high pedestrian volumes, crossing should be on the ground level with traffic lights;
- Tunnel should be equipped with lightning;
- Improved accessibility for disabled people.

Stop 6: "*Gaisa* tilts" bridge – connection with the city centre

Question: Please suggest how the walking and the bicycle riding over the bridge could be improved?

- There is a very big issue with the width of the bike path from the mobility point to the city centre. Probably difficult with the bridge being the narrowest point. Good cycling infrastructure is the main factor, if people should leave their car at the mobility point and go by bike or scooter from there. Aarhus would recommend the Danish Cycling Embassy catalogue of good cycling practice in Denmark. Hereby the link to cycling infrastructure: https://cyclingsolutions.info/category/designing-cycling-infrastructure/

  There are some recommendations from peers:

- Public transport in the middle;
- Decrease the width of the car line;
- Separate bike line from the pedestrians;
- Speed limit;
- Light reconstruction of the bridge is needed – extension of the existing pavements;
- Unfortunately, there is not possibility for promoting another route. It its only way to city centre.

Stop 7: *Brīvības iela – Kr.Barona iela* junction

Question: Any suggestions if pedestrian and cycling paths could be better organized in this junction in order to improve the safety and the visibility? Could this be a suitable place for (another) Mobility point?

- Need to improve surface over the tram lines, it's dangerous now!
- Need to improve the visibility and signage were bike path goes to *Barona iela* and further, were the tram line continues towards *Valdemara iela*.
- Give more traffic lights priority for pedestrians and cyclists.

Stop 8: "VEFRESH" innovation platform

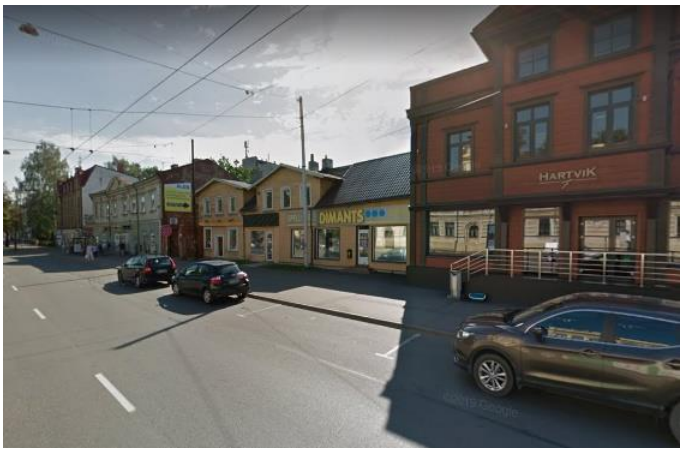
Question: Any suggestions for improving the mobility management in this area?

- Claim the space for people not for cars;
- Limit car parking zone and develop shared space;
- Improve connections with public transportation, better connections, weather protected on street bike parking;
- Mobility day in the area;
- Promote walking and cycling to work, etc.

Stop 9: Public transport stop on the *Brīvības gatve* – shared space and priorities

Question: How the safety for pedestrians and cyclists could be improved here?

- There are no any safety sections on the bike path due to high volumes of bikers;
- It's important for the "VEF Mobility Point" to improve this section;
- Remove a car parking nearby the *Hartvik*, propose to organize stakeholder meeting together with the pilot sites residents and visitors;
- Separate bike track from the pedestrians and public transport stop;
- Put the bike track behind the public transport stop.



Stop 10: Pilot project "VEF Mobility point" + bike and pedestrian counter

Question: Any further comments or suggestions concerning the Mobility point – location, functionality, etc.?

- Proposed location for the "VEF Mobility Point" is good, although consider opposite site of the tram line;
- Real time tablo at the "VEF Mobility Point" and improvements to access of public transportation;
- Active "Bike and ride" function, put bike box station;
- "Green walls" – to reduce noise pollution;
- Bike racks with shed for long-term parking, protecting from the bad weather conditions;
- Add bike sharing station;
- More bike racks but later when the "VEF Mobility Point" expands;
- Add e-bikes, e-scooters;
- Remove asphalt;
- Location for bike and pedestrian counter is good, but real time data should be available online, column on which is planned to install counter is rusted, so is necessary to paint it.

General advice concerning the development of the "VEF Mobility Point":

- Location is good but some traffic flow analysis should be done in the area;
- It is a transportation hub MP not the neighbourhood MP;
- Tray to reallocate all public transport stops in one spot nearby the "VEF Mobility Point";
- Think more about functionality not relaxing functions;
- Reduce noise with green walls;
- Add more functions like bike sharing and e-scooters.

Stop 11: Car parking next to the "VEF Mobility point"

Question: Have you got any proposals for reconstruction or re-organization of this parking lot? Is there a need to improve the crossing of a tram line heading towards the Mobility point? If yes – what could be potential solutions?

- Car parking as part of the MP;
- Tray to implement Park and Ride;

- 1/3 short time parking visitors (3 hours) and 2/3 long time parking commuters for P+R (gate to open with e-ticket of public transport);
- Shelters for bus and tram, benches;
- Boxes for bikes;
- Post parcel;
- Car-sharing, kiss and ride, car chargers;
- Remove fences to ensure good connection with the planned “VEF Mobility Point”.

Stop 12: *Ropažu iela* connections – a place for a shared space?

Question: How the crossing of a tram line can be improved towards the *“Jaunā Teika”* neighbourhood?

- Propose city to develop promenade, pedestrian friendly zone, connection with the MP;
- One level, remove/decrease car parking;
- Green space and improvements of the public space, etc.

Stop 13: Mobility management activities around the pilot institution (LMT – VEFRESH)

Question: How could we convince large companies to implement mobility management activities here? Please write down 3 (three) arguments that could be used to convince them.

- Display benefits for company’s economy (optimization of the company resources, health and safety);
- Provide outsources international experts who could give insight from large companies (Siemens, Philips etc.);
- Involve insurance companies (ERGO Hestia group as a good example: Innovative ways of sustainable mobility – case studies for Employees, clients and victims of traffic accidents
- Provide health security offices as a key person;
- Competition between companies involved in VEFRESH movement (who has the most cycling kilometres, public transport use, best in modal split) for trips Home-Family- Work-Home.
- Displays with the departure’s times of the trams and bus (real time);
- Reduce fleet, carpooling services;
- Share positive examples and best practices.

The flashlight evaluation has shown that all participants to the peer review were very satisfied with the overall peer review organization etc. Detailed feedback on the planned measures was given during the site-visit with the help of the survey documents.

Learnings for the host city

All ideas and thoughts on how to improve the area – "Jaunā Teika" neighbourhood, where the pilot "VEF Mobility Point" is being implemented, will be taken into account. Most important learnings for Riga city – during the designing phase is to focus more on the MP functionality, not relaxing functions, meaning adding more MP functions related to the public transportation improvements, Park+Ride development, bike sharing, long term bike parking and e-scooters parking, with excellent visual identity – signages, new colours and MP logo.

Also, its important improve existing surface, improve lightening and install some noise protection walls or plant special trees.

Proposed location of the MP should be more analysed from the traffic flows perspective and the best option needs to be chosen. Proposed location is close to car parking area and nearby the train stop, so these aspects should be taken into account.

As the MP is planned to be a part of the "VEFRESH" activities, it is important to decide as soon as possible with stakeholders (IT companies) – what kind of innovations are planned to be tested and how this will impact the MP?

Finally, with regard to mobility management activities, it is important to inform companies about the benefits (such as optimization of the company resources, health and safety) and to give good examples on other large companies where the mobility management activities are implemented successfully.

Learnings for the reviewer cities

City of Aarhus:

1. New developments must be part of a bigger planning context and not be isolated and hidden away in infrastructure.
2. Look for hidden mobility spots in the city like the nearby train station and think it in planning early.
3. Let residents vote locally on mobility issues such as the amount of parking permits per household.

City of Gdansk:

1. We appreciate the idea of the mobility point to be created in Riga consisting of various elements, like benches, bike racks, chargers for e-scooters, etc. Such mobility points could also be created in Gdansk next to every Gdansk mobility hub.
2. The great advantage multimodal travels is using water flows for everyday transportation and recreational purposes, as well as, crossing form one side of the river to another by means of boats.
3. Great amount of green spaces and parks surrounding the old part of the city are being at the same time a pedestrian-friendly area where you can walk and rest, but also, well separated footpaths from the traffic.

City of Rostock:

1. It was impressive to see the progress and the positive influence of the innovation movement VEFRESH. It was good to see how innovative IT and consulting companies redesign an old industrial urban area into a new district with high quality living and working. It is good to take this as a base for further implementations and collaborations. This helps, that the later users

can identify with the public measures (mobility points, mobility management measures) when it is a cooperation and they can be part of the decision-making process.

2. The peer review shows on the one hand how fast private development is taking place and brings advantages concerning urban planning and qualities. And on the other hand, how slow the public development (traffic solutions, connections, accessibility and so on) reacts to those developments and lags behind to adopt the new circumstances.
3. I like the idea to define the offers of a mobility point concerning the type of the mobility point. That means that other elements are important if the mobility point is situated in the neighbourhood or at a transportation hub. All mobility points will have a basic configuration that will be adopted depending on the type.