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City:

Riga

Region:

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Latvia

Topic:

Intermodality

Mobility management

Public and stakeholder involvement

Safety and urban mobility

Shared mobility

Traffic and demand management

Urban mobility planning

Walking and cycling

In brief

The [cities.multimodal](#) project's pilot area in Riga, the former VEF industrial complex and adjacent territory, was selected by Riga City Municipality experts.

It is within this framework that the Urban Planning Workshop with a focus on the VEF area was held on 01 June 2018. The goal of the Urban Planning Workshop was to bring together the minds and the diverse experiences of urban planners, residents of the VEF neighbourhood, businesses operating in the area, and other stakeholders with an interest in developing the area. The aim was to create very

specific and tangible ideas for the improvement of the urban environment.

Context

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, 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 participating in its development. All these characteristics make the VEF area a relevant territory for the implementation of a workshop on mobility and multimodality.

In action

The workshop aimed to;

1. Identify the main objectives of the workshop by using the SMART method to define the key characteristics of the project: Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic, Time-related.
2. Define the resources that were required - and those available (for example, time, finances, personnel).
3. Target participants and stakeholders. Those targeted were both experts and members of civil society. Residents and employees of the VEF neighbourhood have knowledge about daily life, while urban planners have a wide range of theoretical knowledge of what could be done at all. It's also quite important to get to know the target group of residents (for example, habits, major features) to assure the success of the workshop.
4. Communication with 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 mobility planning. For this communication was carried out through Facebook and private invitations.
5. Call on a professional facilitator or someone to conduct and moderate the workshop.
6. Bring creative and thought-provoking material, for example; some pictures of the focus area, presentations, maps, and a stationary.

Results

No specific studies had been undertaken in the focus area before the "cities multimodal" project began. Therefore, one of the tasks of the Urban Planning Workshop was to undertake the initial assessment of the focus area in terms of mobility and multimodality, this involved understanding:

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

According to the working group, the most common problem for the area as a whole was 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);
- Transport was mainly used to travel outside the zone and not within the zone.

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 the 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.

Open, moderated discussion on the issues were tackled and solutions identified. The ideas and proposals raised by the workshop groups will be included in the new City Master Plan.

Challenges, opportunities and transferability

What made the measure successful in Riga?

- Learning from the residents as well as engaging and discussing with and co-creation.
- The communication and awareness-raising campaign was effective: residents were able to take part in the workshop and give their opinions and ideas about their local area.
- With the issues and objectives clearly defined, it was easier to think collectively about solutions.
- Involving and informing residents 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 for other cities who are interested in the method used during the Riga workshop:

- Define a clear objective.
- Be conflict-sensitive throughout the process. Conflict prevention actions should be taken to reduce the risk of dispute and lower tensions between the different interest groups and experts.
- 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, 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 help to initiate behavioural change.

The process ends with the evaluation of the success of the workshop. Besides assessing the effectiveness, organisers should also assess the reasons why the campaign has or has not succeeded. What were the reasons for the behavioural change or the observed effects? In the next step, organisers should also reflect self-critically on what went well and what elements during the process of the campaign could have been better?

In Depth

This case study was created as a part of the [cities.multimodal](#) project and based on a report by [Jānis Andriņš](#) Senior Expert on Sustainable Transport & Mobility, City of Riga, Riga Energy Agency.

Keywords

[cities.multimodal](#)

Urban planning; Stakeholder involvement; Multimodality; Urban mobility; Pilot Area

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