IUC-NA Urban Cooperation Action Plan (U-CAP) Summary

November 2020

City:	Riga	Edmonton
Province, State, Department:		Alberta
Country:	Latvia	Canada
Population:	632,614 (2019)	981,280 (2017)
Size (km²)	304 km²	684 km²
Period of cooperation	June 2019- November 2020	

Cooperation Themes:	• **Urban Regeneration** • **Climate Resilience**
Related SDGs and Urban Agenda topics:	**SDGs:** • 11- Sustainable cities and communities • 13- Climate Action **EU Urban Agenda:** • Sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions; Air quality • Climate adaptation • Sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions • Energy Transition
Key focus of cooperation themes:	• Open, creative and effective local governance • Advancing urban actions for climate resilience including: energy transition and greenhouse gas emissions mitigation; climate change adaptation; and clean air and water.
Key challenges of cooperation theme:	Each city had different objectives and different skills of key team members. Edmonton was much more focused on climate action with deep expertise in this area by team members. In Riga, focus was much more on planning and development, with key team members being planners and architects. It took some relationship development at the beginning for each team to be comfortable, and the differences in teams ended up benefitting both. Both teams expressed that the project enabled them to step outside of their narrow foci to better integrate and understand their work from the others perspectives. They were also able to find language and way to work together to advance learning on both sides.
Main objectives of cooperation as described in the U-CAP:	- Options to further advance greenhouse gas mitigation in Edmonton, including carbon budgeting, advancing district energy systems, electrifying its public transit fleet, and negative emissions in general and advancing nature-based solutions.

	- Public space revitalization and regeneration, activity integration, accessibility of environment, green and blue infrastructure, nature-based solutions and governance issues which are essential for sustainable city development. And as many potentially attractive places in the city are underused or being underused for primarily through traffic..
Short description of main activities and key outputs (e.g. pilot projects):	For Riga, much of the learning from Edmonton (and the learning from other cities through networking activities) was both about a mind shift in how Rigans should approach city building generally, but also real building of capacity in certain skills. Edmonton in particular, has become skilled at using data and business approaches in how they plan, develop and justify investment to reach their climate and city building objectives. In Edmonton, it hasn't been enough to promote climate action and good city building as part of the city's value proposition. To enable broader public support for investment, Edmonton has been using data models and business approaches. For Edmonton, seeing how Riga was operating as a vibrant, compact urban city with a natural low carbon footprint was inspiring. In particular, Edmonton is now modelling Riga's use of hydrogen buses using a data-informed and tested approach. Other learnings that Edmonton is incorporating into its planning includes district energy, green streets and the relationship of urban farmers markets with food security.
Expected results and benefits:	***Key learning from Riga:*** ● Different approach to city management issues. Edmonton more business-oriented governance (ICE district development approach, Blatchford development). ● Very focused planning system to succeed transformation in energy & climate issues. Many sectoral planning documents interlinked with climate issues. As well "Touch the River", Bike plan. The new city plan is comprehensive and holistic and takes a multi solve approach ● Inspiring approach how to change behavior for reality, create equity and look for economic opportunities demonstrated with Winter city strategy. It includes change of peoples' mindset and creating of real activities. ● The new City plan is planning for an additional 1 million inhabitants. ● Well-developed, integrated IT tool at different levels. Includes Strategic Level, Mobility Demand Module (optional, simulates daily mobility), Dynamic Transport Module, and Microsimulation Module. ● Economical model carries out calculations on the preferred location of industrial plants based on extensive data analysis. Includes demographical data as well target for a 2 million inhabitant city. Municipality conducts regular surveys of entrepreneurs to find out if they are satisfied with the location / services or plans to stay / change the municipality. If it is determined that a change of location is to be made to another municipality, the deputies are notified and they decide whether to resolve the dissatisfaction of the entrepreneur with the municipality's work (streets, taxes). ● Innovative approaches to working with youth (feeding kids pizza at basketball games to get time to consult)

- Importance of wind modelling before building up towers.
- Many buildings have green certificates (LEED etc.). Requirement of certain level for all new municipal buildings (seems also for private?).
- It was interesting to discover, that in Edmonton old buildings mostly are demolished and new ones are being built instead of reconstruction. MANASC ISAAC architects demonstrated 30% of savings in case of reconstruction/renewal with efficiency, functional and design upgrading.
- Wooden sidewalks were amazing.
- Edmonton has a lot of brownfields, from former industrial objects to old gas stations. The municipality employs financing mechanisms to help developers/owners clean up the pollution by holding on collecting real estate tax in the amount of CAD that was spent to remediate site.
- EPCOR is a profitable municipal utility company, that is based in Edmonton, owned by the city and operates in the US as well. EPCOR introduced ongoing work related to flooding (risks, society involvement, green capital assessment).
- Key learning in the major redevelopment site of a former airport area Blatchford. Municipality acts as a developer, invests in the engineering infrastructure, does all the planning, divides land into plots and then sells to builders to recover upfront costs of infrastructure.

Key learnings from Edmonton:
- The team was so impressed with the historical evolution of the city that seemed to be very organized through circles. The careful preservation of different historic districts was impressive – the Old Town, a UNESCO heritage site, but also Art Nouveau district, wooden buildings, etc.
- The compact urban form that has been developed over this historic city creates a natural density so that investments in infrastructure such as transit and integrated bike paths have return and make sense. A consistent medium density throughout the city creates a human-scale form that feels very comfortable.
- Edmonton have been looking for ways to transition our diesel buses to more climate friendly alternatives. There had been some talk in Edmonton about using hydrogen, but seeing hydrogen buses in Riga and having the ability to learn from the research and testing phase was transformative for us. We were able to use those learnings to begin testing this as a model…in a city with similar climate and topography.
- Riga's green streets were impressive and something that Edmonton hadn't done much using weather as an excuse. Seeing how warm and inviting these streets are year-round has caused us to rethink this and look for opportunities to incorporate in new development or when major infrastructure projects going on.

For further information (including access to the full UCAP), please contact:
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