

# 6. Promoting public participation in urban planning

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## 6.1 Participation in town planning

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## 6.1 PARTICIPATION IN TOWN PLANNING

### 6.1.1 Master plan – structural changes

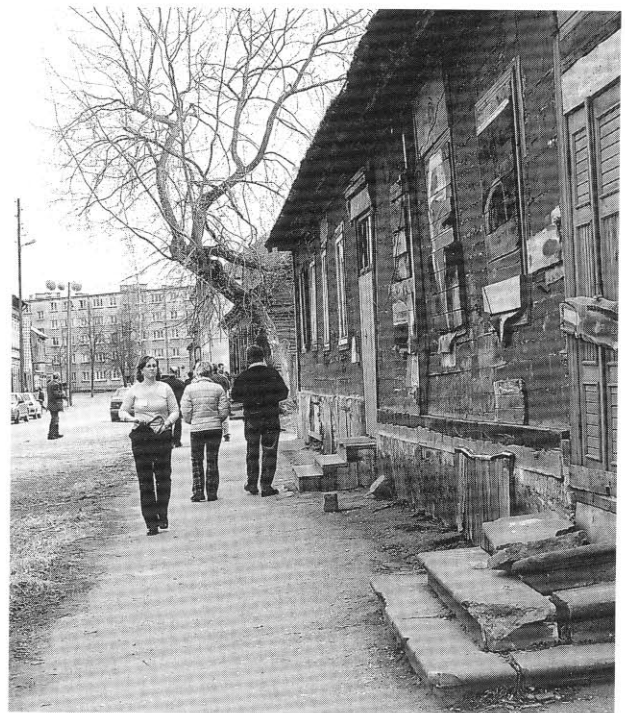
The key principles for revisions to the Jelgava city master plan were:

- sustainable development,
- democracy and participation; revisions were worked out with public participation,
- the principle of continuity; the basis for the master plan revisions was the 1976 master plan,
- the co-operation principle; the development of the city was looked at in context of the development of the country as a whole, and separate elements of the plan were considered in close conjunction with the development of other structural elements in the city.

### 6.1.2 The main principles in the new planning system – democracy and public participation

The Jelgava city master plan provides the opportunity for the public to receive information, express their opinions and to take part in the process of working out territorial plans through discussions and by giving proposals.

The first stage of public involvement was held during the assessment of the existing old master plan. It was possible for citizens to participate in public discussions in the city Dome's main hall as well as through newspapers and written letters to the working group responsible for revising the master plan. The next stage was to use questionnaires to ask enterprises and inhabitants about actual conditions and facts in the city plan.



**Figure 6.1** The inhabitants of Jelgava participate in the planning of the development and reconstruction of the town. (Photo: Lars Rydén)

The revisions to the master plan were also available to the public at the city Dome (city hall) for two months (09.05.97 – 09.07.97). During these two months, the working group for revising the master plan, headed by architect, Iveta Lacuniece, organised discussions with the inhabitants of Jelgava – with industry and commercial associations,

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mature inhabitants and students. Active interest was stressed during meetings with students and academic staff from the Latvia University of Agriculture. Specialists and students from the university were involved in assessment and working out proposals for special environmental, social and cultural issues. Important in this first open discussion about the future of the city was the involvement of media, i.e., local newspapers and local TV. A press conference was organised and open exchanges were held with city inhabitants, for example, using telephone hotlines and providing information from a variety of specialists about the existing plan. As well, enterprises and city institutions were asked to submit proposals and the necessary data for planning process.

The new master plan was proposed for the period from 1999 to 2010. It was published in the newspapers and citizens were asked to submit their opinions and proposals. A special plan was worked out with regard to public involvement in planning and the development of democracy (see box 6.1).

### 6.1.3 Implementing public participation

A press conference was held on September 21, 1997. Representatives from four newspapers and Zemgales' TV participated. The new democratic way of working and the general conceptual changes between the old master plan and the proposed changes for the new were explained. (see table 6.2). Representatives from the media were asked to actively work for the involvement of the public in the planning process. After two months of public discussions in the city Dome, an overview of the public discussions was given. In the first stage of the master plan revision, there were a total of nine publications in newspapers. In total, 73 proposals were received, 44 of which came from Jelgava's inhabitants, one from a public organisation, two

**Table 6.1** Changes between the old and new masterplan.

Before 1991	Now
Jelgava's aim was highly developed industrial city.	Jelgava's aim is to be the center of culture and science of Zemgale region.
City development was planned for a large amount of inhabitants, due to growing industrial trends.	The number of population has become stable.
A huge transport network was made due to the growing industry	Transport system is stabilized.
Prevailing type of buildings was a multi-storey blockhouses.	individual apartment houses prevail.
Ownership – state property.	A variety of property forms.

from the city administration and two from specialists in urban planning. The new master plan included 49 of the proposals. They concerned primarily local character changes and the location of some objects.

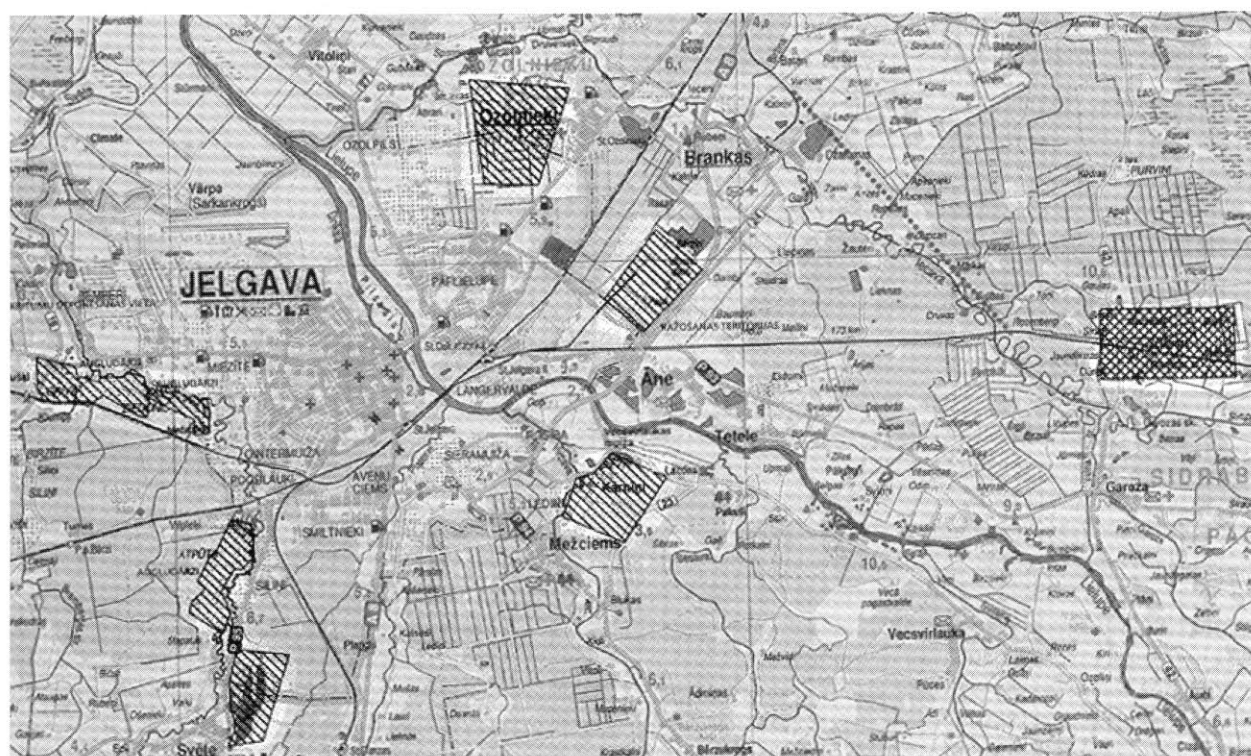
The results show that activity from the public was low. To increase public participation in the period from July 1997 to September 1997 a questionnaire was made. (see box).

A thousand questionnaires were distributed in two ways:

- to special groups of inhabitants which were recognised as very important in city development (teachers, medical personnel, students, and local municipality workers), and
- by being made available in all post offices in the city after an announcement in newspapers.

The result was that 267 questionnaires were received.

A questionnaire about the current situation of objects and proposals for city development was distributed especially to the administrations and workers of



**Figure 6.2** Areas of common interest for the neighbouring municipalities are marked.

## Public involvement plan

1. Depending on question in planning process discussion are in larger or smaller interest groups.
2. Involvement of interest parties in the question and involvement of groups not understanding actuality of question.
3. Inhabitants participate in discussion with interest or they are involved especially by asking questions in public places.
4. Education and information about needs and problems for sustainable development in the city.
5. Depending on planning topics are involved different groups of public.
6. City development plan – involvement in discussion of:
  - local inhabitants
  - city administration
  - different interest groups
  - inhabitants and administration of neighbouring communities
  - inhabitants of whole state are welcome
7. District plan of the city – involvement in discussion of:
  - all inhabitants of the district
  - city administration
  - interest groups of district
  - inhabitants of whole city if possible
8. Object, site in the city – involvement in discussion of:
  - users of the site, object
  - neighbouring users and owners
  - city administration
  - if possible all inhabitants of the district

**Box 6.2** City plans.

enterprises. The master plan revision group received answers from 15 institutions with a total of 36 proposals. The next stage was to distribute questionnaires to industrial enterprises in the city. They were asked to describe the current situation, development possibilities, the market and urban structure relating to the proposals. Replies were received from 16 enterprises. (see box 6.3)

### 6.1.4 The principles of involvement – transparency of data, partnership, collaboration, responsibility

A special programme was worked out to discuss the first version of the revised master plan. It lasted from December 1, 1998 to February 1, 1999 and consisted of an exhibition of materials, public announcements for public discussions, and an introduction to the first new version of the master plan in an open conference. The discussions of different interest groups, the development of public activities during the discussions, publications in newspapers including the administration of neighbouring municipalities in the discussion process were summarised up to and including February 22, 1999.

During these 3 months, all citizens had the opportunity to carefully study the exhibited proposed city master plan. All remarks and proposals were registered and all of them were given a written answer. For some questions, a close dialogue arose between planners and the public, for instance, with regard to bird sanctuaries on the banks of the Lielupe river. For the first edition, reviews were

## Questionnaire

### *Current building structure, city centre*

1. Do you like to live in Jelgava?  
Yes. No. Your comment:
2. Is it necessary to locate in the central part of the city?  
Cultural object: theatre, art gallery... Shops. Offices.  
Pedestrian - shopping streets. Your comment:

### *Historical buildings and structure of the city.*

3. Is it necessary to renovate historical look of city centre? Fully removing existing buildings and rebuilt old one. Rebuilt some remarkable objects including them in the existing structure. It is not necessary rebuilt.
4. What can be future for historical part Vecpilsētas – Asaru Streets? Conservation and preservation as historical monument. Rekonstruction of buildings and location of public objects. Location of cultural objects: museum, galleries, artists studios.
5. Is it necessary to create in Jelgava? Park for active recreation in pasta sala. New open air stage. Where? Recreation parks and forests on city boarders. Squares in the housing areas. Children playgrounds. Sites for dogs.
6. Is it necessary to create in the city? Bicycle roads. New sport objects. Which? Youth center for active recreation.

### *Transport in the city.*

7. Is it necessary for Jelgava? To built North ring road and bridge over Lielupe. Create new streets. Where? Create new parking places. Where? Built new parking buildings. Where? Locate fuel stations.

### *Engineering communications.*

8. Is it necessary to develop in city? Central heating system. Created local heating systems in districts on gas heating.

### *Housing.*

9. If you have possibility, you would live in? Multi-story housing district. One family house district. 2-3 story housing district with public services. Small blocked housing area. In the separate one family house district.
10. For living the best multi-story housing district are?  
Centre. RAF. Satiksmes Street district. 4. līnijas district. Tervetes Street district.

### *Information about you*

11. Where you are living?
12. Your age?
13. Your profession?

**Box 6.1** Questionnaire on city development for inhabitants.

**Box 6.3** Questionnaire for companies.

## Questionnaire list of enterprises

1. Name of object, ownership, construction year.
2. Territory of object. Ownership.
3. Territory of object. Total. Planned till 2010.  
Territory for production, storage, free, squares.
4. Working places. 1990. 1996. 2010.
5. Type of production. Volume. For export.
6. Main resources for production. Location of resources. Transport.
7. Market places and transport.
8. Environmental impact.
9. Proposals for improvement of technologies and city planning structures.



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invited from The Latvia University of Agriculture staff and students, a real estate company, and local municipalities bordering the city of Jelgava.

With some neighbouring municipalities there were several joint aspects of interest. In these cases, meetings and discussions were organised in these territories. All interested partners and the public were informed about the results of the public discussions. In total, 45 proposals were received. As well, during the meeting, new proposals were given and discussed as alternative variants for the city (Figure 6.2).

### 6.2 WAYS TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC

#### 6.2.1 Information, consultation, participation

Democracy and public participation are necessary in all aspects of city development. Depending on the issue, discussions can include large or small interest groups, as well as representatives from the public that may or may not understand the facts involved. Further, the uninformed public may be involved, by for example, public relations staff standing outside shops and asking questions to people who enter the shops.

To stimulate and make public participation a reality in development processes, it is necessary to put a lot of effort into education and information. For example, inhabitants of one district might not know that in another part of the city an improperly located gas station can be a danger for the whole city.

Public participation in the Jelgava city master plan revision during the period from 1998-1999, shows that public activities and understanding of the role of the public in sustainable development are low. Interest in issues included in the new master plan and level of participation varied (Table 6.2). About half of the inhabitants remembered the city's past and were half wishing a return of good living conditions for themselves. That segment of the population consisted mainly of those who had only lived in Jelgava a short time and they were not interested in the city's cultural heritage. They were most interested in engineering communications. Environmental quality and waste problems were not of interest. This was connected to the public's lack of knowledge about these matters. In all public discussions carried out over time about revision issues on the city master plan, contributions came from specialists from different fields. It is first necessary to provide some knowledge and education and then to ask questions.

#### 6.2.2 Future developments

Direction for future aims for city planning were of interest only among educated people. Zoning, building codes,

**Table 6.2.** Summary of public participation.

Topics included in plan	Public participate	Planned public participation	Will be good to have public participation
3. Town history	X		
4. Town development directions and aims	X		
5. Environmental quality			X
6. Social economical development			X
7. Cultural heritage	X		
8. Town structure and elements		X	
8.1 Town structure		X	
8.2 Housing	X		
8.3 Transport	X		
8.4 Green structure		X	
8.5 Gardens		X	
8.6 Cemeteries			X
8.7 Engineering communications	X		
8.8 Garbage			X
8.9 Overflading			
9. Territorial zones and building rules			

and town structure and elements were especially of interest to owners of industrial enterprises and shops. Public discussion showed, for example, that city problems with flooding were mentioned only by some older inhabitants, because it hasn't occurred in the city during the last few years. This is an indication of a short memory about city problems among inhabitants. In general, inhabitants were more interested in proposals concerning visible aspects of the city, like transportation and green spaces.

It is possible to increase participation and democracy in different ways during discussions with all city inhabitants in large meetings, by providing information about different aspects of city development, by involving the media, by using sociological questionnaires, and by consulting specialists during discussions. It is difficult to involve different groups of inhabitants when the same questions do not directly affect all people. For example, older people participated less in discussions about city development, but were more interested in questions connected to social issues. In order to have sustainable city development in the current stage of public democracy in Jelgava, it is very important to have discussions with the local administration and government because some of the problems may be politically oriented.

One of the planning issues is to provide people with the opportunity to receive information, to express opinions, and to take an active part in the territorial planning process.