



## SUMMARY

### **MUKUSALA AREA DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT: BUSINESS, KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY**

During Baltic Urban Lab project Riga Council City Development Department organized student competition to get the best proposal for the development of the Mūkusalas site and to test a new planning method. Student teams were assembled from the University of Latvia (LU), Riga Technical University (RTU) and Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration (RISEBA), representing various disciplines of expertise: architecture, spatial planning, transport engineering, landscape architecture, geography, environmental science, sociology, culture, economy and communication. The work was based on baseline analysis carried out on the current situation of area, results from surveys targeted to local inhabitants and entrepreneurs as well as input received from a series of stakeholder events organised by the City of Riga to discuss the future development of Mūkusalas area.

As a result of the intensive work for 6 months, all three student groups emphasized the development potential of the Mūkusalas territory by visioning it as a multifunctional urban environment that would be liveable for residents, prosper for developers and exciting for visitors. Three elaborated development proposals were evaluated by a professional jury consisting of Riga City Council City Development Department, Riga City Council Traffic Department and Riga City Architect's Office experts, users of the Mūkusalas territory and professional architects. Various stakeholders were invited to express their opinions. After intensive and fruitful discussions by jury commission, Mūkusalas area development proposal elaborated by RISEBA student group were announced as the winners of the student competition.

#### **Description and background of the Mūkusalas**

Mūkusalas area is a former industrial territory, which is a part of Torņakalns neighbourhood. Mūkusalas is included in the protection zone of the UNESCO World Heritage Site "Historic Centre of Riga". The pilot site of Mūkusalas is located between Mūkusalas street, Bieķensalas street, Jelgavas street and the railway.

The character of Mūkusalas area is mainly formed of commercial and industrial identities. Throughout history this identity has been displayed through value-creation in its varied forms: from woodworking and agrarian industrialization of the 19th century to industrial manufacture and workshops. Since the independence restoration of Latvia in 1991 and especially in the more recent context of knowledge mile development in Pārdaugava, a new identity is being searched for the area of Mūkusalas, with a need to retain the area's special and robust image. During the last 5 years there has been a steady transformation of brownfield areas into office and business spaces, which has led to significant employment growth in the area.

Moreover, University of Latvia has chosen Mūkusalas for its new Academic Centre. With the first campus building finished in 2015 and the second one finished in 2019, Academic Centre will be hosting more than 7000 students and academics. It is expected that the Rail Baltic railway

transit infrastructure between the city centre and airport will provide additional pedestrian and cyclist path connection between Mūkusalā and the city centre.

Currently the strategic potential and unique location of the site is not used to its full potential. It is essential to use public private people partnerships as a tool to create a more dynamic housing market, improve the state of public spaces and mobility services in the area.

## **Main challenges**

The main development challenges that faces Mūkusalā area are:

- the fragmented land and building ownership structure and lack of coherent development vision among the stakeholders.
- the area is overflowed by high traffic intensity with private vehicle and cargo vehicle flows, which significantly limit the access to the riverfront and other destinations in its proximity.
- whilst both the business and higher education sector have experienced substantial growth during the last years, the number of inhabitants remains to be low.

## **Stakeholder involvement**

The study groups closely worked with local inhabitants, entrepreneurs and employees working in the area as well the staff and students at the University of Latvia. Stakeholders were frequently interviewed and took part in several co-design workshops organized by the Riga City Council and universities. There are nearly 200 different entities located in the area.

## **The new identity of Mūkusalā**

The development of Academic Centre will support transformation of Mūkusalā from a post-industrial neighbourhood into an attractive part of the city centre, characterized by a variety of programme, new dwelling and housing developments, linear infrastructure, high density and intensity.

Kīleveina ditch is valued as potential landmark, asset of the neighbourhood and main public space focal point, which determines the basis for the linear infrastructure of the area, its parcellation and development principles and criteria, and an opportunity for a connection between the commercial and educational entities of Mūkusalā. The Kīleveina ditch also provides a possibility to structure buildings and public space with an orientation towards the water, in contrast to, currently, being structured towards the intensive Mūkusalas street.

Future development of Mūkusalas area is connected to the entities which already exist in the area and have proven to have an impact on its growth and profile.





***“Commerce, education and affordable housing are the three main development vectors which stem not only from the brief given by the city and government, but also from the aspirations and needs of local citizens and foreigners alike.”*** Source: Riga City Council City Development department, 2018.

## Summary of the concept

The plan emphasizes housing market potential, importance of infrastructure improvement and waterfront accessibility as well as necessary of public services development to attract inhabitants and employees to the area. Moreover, plan highlights the need for a closer cooperation between the budding IT business and office development sector on the one hand, and the ever-growing academic campus by University of Latvia. The synergies and the considerable potential for cooperation between these two sectors have long been proved as successful by urban planners and policy makers across EU.

Lastly, improvements in the condition and diversification of public outdoor space - the green and blue infrastructure - would certainly transform Mūkusalā into a cherished and sought-after destination in the city of Riga.

## Implementation

Riga City Council City Development Department has prepared an Action Plan based on all three student group competition proposals. Action Plan is the most important driver and cooperation platform encouraging stakeholders to implement necessary activities. Action Plan includes both public and private stakeholder responsibilities in Mūkusalā area redevelopment. Action plan consist of short term activities (until 2022), medium term (until 2027), long term (until 2050) and its divided in seven thematic parts:

- Kīleveina ditch as a new recreational space in Riga;
- Mobility;
- Infrastructure;
- Common placemaking;
- Strengthening communities;
- Free time and leisure activities;
- Contemporary planning and management.

Municipal activities identified within the Action Plan are in the process of incorporation in the new Development Programme of Riga for the next planning period (2021-2027).

### Mūkusalā area development concept:

- 1) “Concept for development of Mūkusalā area: Business, Knowledge, Human.” (199 pages);
  - a. Annex 1: Graphic design (7 pages);
  - b. Annex 2: Presentation (37 pages).
- 2) Mūkusalā area development Action plan (10 pages);

Link to document:

<http://www.rdpad.lv/portfolio/integreta-planosana-un-sadarbibas-modelis-degradeto-teritoriju-revitalizacijai-baltic-urban-lab/>