

Press notice - for immediate release

19/05/2006

*“High levels of investment in new public transport infrastructure - making a big difference to people’s lives”* was the headline verdict of a team of European transport experts as they completed their week long assessment of the progress Liepaja is making towards a Sustainable Transport system. They presented their headline findings at a meeting in the Liepaja council chamber on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April.

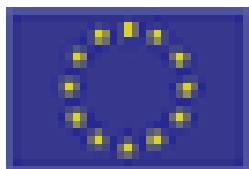
The city of Liepaja is one of twelve pioneering cities who have taken up the challenge from the European Commission to test the idea and practice of cities using *“Sustainable Urban Transport Plans”* (SUTP’s) to manage urban transport and investments for urban transport problems.

*“The team is here as critical friends, to provide an independent view of the progress we are making towards Sustainable urban transport and to share their knowledge ”* said Mr. Gunars Ansins

*“We are not content with our achievements so far, but recognise the challenges ahead, with our local economic challenges, globalisation, ever rising energy prices and growing evidence of the impact of climate change we must answer the key questions, - how do we continue to improve living standards but minimise the impacts of growing transport?”*

The team has examined our transport investments, partnerships, plans, achievements, and failures. They have met with business leaders to get their views. Their headline findings are that Liepaja

- The city is committed to preparing a new transport development plan that will be integrated with the new City Development Strategy - but may need to look at how economic social and environmental aspects are brought together in this plan
- Is committed to delivering an efficient public transport system that meets the needs of business and residents - but may need new ideas and partnerships if it is to meet expectations of residents and business
- Recognises the need to balance economic and transport growth with environmental protection - but needs to look again at the long term transport and environmental impact of future economic growth policies,
- Sympathetic to the pressure from residents for greater mobility through personal car use - but needs to recognise and control the long term damage this might cause
- Understands the importance of effective transport and development policy coordination between politicians, officers and stakeholders but may need to look at the ways all stakeholders are involved in taking decisions



## A first in Latvia for Liepaja!

The city of Liepaja is part of exciting and challenging urban transport project. On the 15th of May it welcomes an international team of sustainable transport experts. Liepaja is part of the European Commission sponsored project that is testing new ideas and developing new tools for European cities as they grapple with the need to improve living standards whilst managing the ever increasing impacts of transport. The experts will work as a peer review team spending the week assessing the progress the city is making towards sustainable transport. Liepaja has already provided the experts with information on its approach to sustainable urban transport. Now they have digested this, they have a full week in the city of meetings politicians, business leaders and transport experts. They also want to hear from the whole community and so there are opportunities for the general public and pressure groups to ask questions and raise their own issues. As they assess Liepaja's transport they hope to uncover examples of best practise to share with other European cities. The conclusion of the weeks work will be a presentation of the peer review teams' initial findings. By mid June they will have completed their review and will provide a short report for the city administration to use as it starts to prepare a new sustainable urban transport plan.

The expert team:

Mrs. Tea Nommann - University of Turku

Mr. Hinrich Kählert - Institute for Transport Ecology, Bremen

Mr. Toomas Talts - Pärnu ATP Ltd. City of Pärnu

Mr. Karolis Dekeris - Deputy Head of Kaunas City Transport Division

Mr. Allen Creedy - Union of Baltic Cities - Environment Commission

Contact :

City of Liepaja

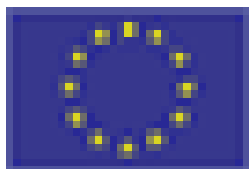
Dace Liepniece + 37129188499

Mara Zeltina + 37129425050

Background information

BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Implementation and Planning - [www.bustrip-project.net](http://www.bustrip-project.net))

Bustrip will provide practical solutions and tools for European cities and municipalities to deliver Sustainable Urban Transport. The 12 partner cities in the BUSTRIP project are the first in Europe to start preparing and implementing Sustainable Urban Transport Plans. - SUTP's are advocated in the European Commissions' Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (6th Environmental Action Plan). BUSTRIP is uniquely positioned to show European cities how to deliver sustainable transport whilst generating economic growth.



Each of the 12 partner cities will receive a peer review that will assist them in understanding their current progress towards Sustainable Urban Transport. They will use this to prepare their SUTP and revise existing plans; from this they will implement pilot actions that will make tangible progress.

BUSTRIP will produce a SUTP toolbox of techniques, collecting all the learning experiences and best practices from the cities. The toolbox will assist European cities to understand SUTP and the opportunities available to move towards sustainable urban transport.

The project is coordinated by UBC Commission on Environment Secretariat. Two other core partners are UBC Commission on Transportation and Chalmers University of Technology (in Gothenburg). These three main partners form the Project Steering Group (PSG). Twelve local and regional authorities from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden will be receiving the peer reviews and preparing the sustainable urban transport plans

The project is co-funded by European Union (ERDF- European Regional Development Fund) within the BSR INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme, Finnish Ministry of the Environment and the partner cities. The total project budget is 3,1 MEUR. The project duration is July 2005 - December 2007.

Partnership: UBC Commissions on Environment and Transportation, Chalmers University of Technology, local and regional authorities from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

Approximate total project budget: 3,1 MEUR

ERDF: 1,73 MEUR

Duration: July 2005 - December 2007

Lead Partner: Union of the Baltic Cities, Commission on Environment, Finland

Contact person:

Mr Sakari Saarinen

Tel. +358 2 262 3201

E-mail: [sakari.saarinen@turku.fi](mailto:sakari.saarinen@turku.fi)

[www.bustrip-project.net](http://www.bustrip-project.net)