

Sustainable revitalisation of Turku areas

Turku neighbourhoods reinvented at the UBC Planning and Sustainable Cities Commission meeting organised on 13-15 September 2023!

Mid-September is the perfect time to visit Turku, an ambitiously smart and sustainable city in Finland, working towards reaching carbon neutrality already in 2029.

64 participants from 19 different BSR cities took pens and markers in their hands, joining the development of the visions for task areas to connect the city of Turku built around the river Aura to the Baltic Sea.

The Seminar was opened at the Forum Marinum on Wednesday morning. The participants were welcome by **Elina Rantanen, Deputy Mayor of Turku and the 1st Vice-President of UBC, Agnieszka Ilola, Head of Secretariat, UBC Sustainable Commission, Paulina Szewczyk, Chairperson, UBC Planning Cities Commission Paula Kesikastari Urban Planning Director, City of Turku and Risto Veivo, Climate Director, City of Turku and Co-chair of UBC Sustainable Cities Commission.**

One of the highlights of the event were the presentations regarding the City of Turku – its strategies and visions by **Risto Veivo, Timo Hintsanen**, City Development Director, **Anna Leena-Jokitalo**, Urban Planning Architect, **Marie Nyman**, Landscape Architect and **Andrei Panschín**, Master plan engineer and – but even more, the inspiring guest lecture on planetary boundaries by **Susa Eräranta**, Professor of Practice at Aalto University and Project Director at the City of Helsinki.

The concept of planetary urban planning in which the boundaries of the planet's life-supporting systems are taken equally into account with the boundaries of economy and society, became a reference point in rethinking five Turku neighborhoods into blue-green, inclusive and thriving public hubs. With this inspiration in mind, the participants headed for a guided site visit to look at the task areas and start the process of creative brainstorming.

The wide array of the geographical as well as professional backgrounds brought to the drawing desks unique knowledge about local solutions and best practices in sustainable urban planning. Three active days of co-creative planning workshops developing five different city areas – both on the sea and on the river – allowed a hands-on experience exchange, inspiring everyone to consider the planning process from a holistic perspective.

For the first workshop area in western city district four kilometers from the city centre (ARTUKAINEN), the mixed land use was proposed on existing/former airport structures, fulfilled with the urban pattern created in human scale accompanied with green corridors, natural stormwater solutions improving biodiversity and sustainable mobility transportation opportunities. The main axis was designed as a sequence of key public spaces, public transport hubs and iconic buildings.

The second workshop area THE INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONT BETWEEN PANSIONTIE AND POHJOISSALMI – part of the Turku waterfront – was studied by as many as three project groups. All of them worked according to the trend of planetary planning. The participants focused on climate responsibility, proposed solutions based on the idea of a well-connected 15-minute city with housing for different communities, jobs needed to enforce the economic growth of the city and its inhabitants; social infrastructure and sustainable mobility were much considered and proposed. Environmental issues were strongly emphasized, touching upon biodiversity, energy production and stormwater management for a regenerative urban future.

The third workshop area was the sequence of public squares along the western side of Aura river (VEISTÄMÖNAUKIO & VARVINTORI, ARCHIPELAGO BOAT HARBOUR, BORENAUKIO). The first step was removing the possibility of parking in these spaces, greening the areas and creating possibilities for better

physical contact with the water: with river and stormwater as well. New activities were proposed to make the areas more attractive all year round for different age groups of users.

Whilst the final presentations of the redesigned city spaces, it was easy to notice how sustainable solutions met creative urban planning on many fronts to make achieving climate neutrality possible. And it's not only Turku, which will benefit from the meeting now and in the future! It was also a great opportunity for the participants to bring home new ideas and solutions, which can be integrated into local processes.

The Seminar participants were also introduced to the next UBC Planning Cities Commission that will be held in Gdańsk in September 2024.

During the meeting the UBC Planning Cities Commission Steering Committee elected Paulina Szewczyk to continue as the Chairperson of the Commission and Mara Liepa-Zemesa to continue as the vice-chairperson, the Steering Committee stands as it is for the period 2023-2025.

If you are interested in voluntary working for the UBC Planning Cities Commission Steering Committee, please contact the Chairperson by e-mail.



Photo: UBC Sustainable Commission