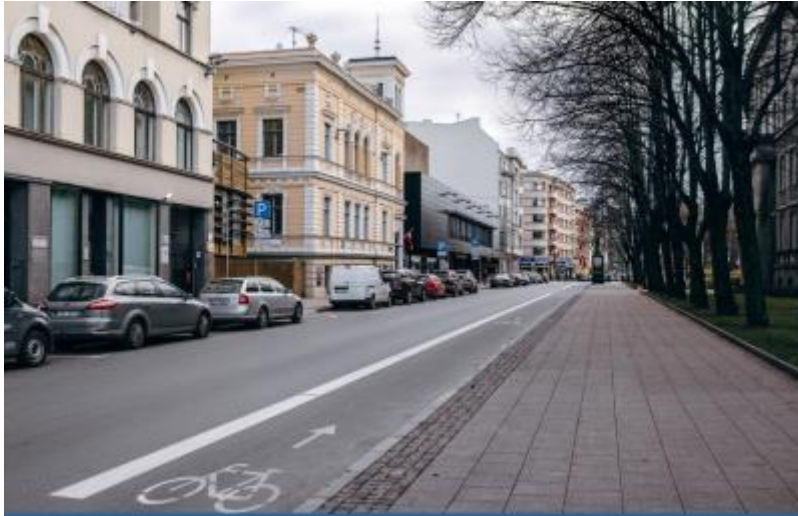


Development of Riga transport infrastructure – inefficient and does not solve problems

06/02/2019



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The Municipality of Riga, in developing the transport infrastructure of the city, acted inefficiently, not economically and not in compliance with the requirements of laws and regulations. There is a lack of targeted solutions to long-standing problems, while the implementation of existing projects has been chaotic and non-transparent.

By doing so, the needs and interests of traffic participants – drivers, cyclists and pedestrians – are not addressed in the short or long term.

Lack of purposeful action and weak linkage between project planning, plan implementation and monitoring has led to an inefficient use of tax money of citizens of Riga by more than EUR 5.4 million. In turn, the use of more than EUR 9 million that was to be used for car park development is not traceable in the accounting of SIA “Rīgas satiksme”. Therefore, there is a risk that these financial resources have not been used for the development of parking infrastructure, but have reached the total budget of SIA “Rīgas satiksme”.

“The municipality is constantly excusing itself of a lack of money to solve problems. After the audit we have reason to point out – if the municipality does not work purposefully and according to the priorities it has set itself, then the additional funds will hardly be used for the long-term solution of the real problems,” states the Auditor General Elīta Krūmiņa.

There have been a number of unresolved problems in Riga that have been identified for a long time, but solutions to address them are not being implemented. If the municipality continues to operate in this way, the inhabitants and guests of Riga have no reason to hope for improvement of the transport infrastructure – the municipality lacks the offer to eliminate the danger to pedestrian crossings, solution for safe and convenient cycling. Solutions to problems of traffic jams are not based on modelling and analysis of transport flows.

Unintelligible project selection and costly research without application

The audit found that the process of selecting infrastructure development projects is not transparent and that it is not possible to track the principles for selecting priority works. Although the procedure has been developed in the municipality and a working group has been established for the evaluation of project ideas, the audit concludes that this process takes place formally. For example, the Investment Programme of 2016 included seven projects, although the working group did not recognize them as a priority. In 2017, however, none of the 48 project plans evaluated by the working group were included in the Investment Programme, but seven other street cover renovation projects were included which were not assessed at all. In this way, in the time period audited, to at

least 30 projects, funding of EUR 3.3 million has been allocated without any evaluation or contrary to the recommendations of the working group.

From 2010 to 2017, the Transport Department has developed a number of transport infrastructure projects that have not been implemented but their costs of EUR 5.3 million are written-off losses. For example, the cost of the construction project for the connection between Raņķa dambis – Vienības gatve – Mūkusalas Street and the tunnel between Ģertrūdes Street and Daugavpils Street has been written off in the amount of 3.4 million euros because the land ownership issues have not been solved, although it had to be clarified already at the beginning of the construction project preparation.

There is no complex solution for street cover and engineering network repairs

The rainwater sewerage system of Riga has been in an unsatisfactory technical condition for at least 12 years and is unable to efficiently drain rain water from the streets. Instead of dealing with rainwater drainage problems that cause traffic disruption, the Traffic Department is mainly dealing with street cover restoration. For example, at Krišjāņa Barona Street all along it, at the intersection of Brīvības and Pērnavas streets, at the intersection of Brīvības and Tallinas streets near Jaunās Sv. Ģertrūdes church not only the street cover was to be restored but also a problem of street flooding must be solved.

With the consequences of poor planning and poor communication between different municipal units, citizens and guests of the city are forced to face daily – improvements in transport infrastructure problems are not felt. At the time of the audit, a survey of city streets that were undergoing street renovation revealed that several of them had undergone repeatedly repairs during a period of less than a year in order to eliminate the consequences of accidents and change engineering communications, by breaking the new pavement again.

The Department has two directors, taxpayers pay twice

Before the termination of the employment relationship, the chairman of the Riga City Council has suspended and assigned the Director of the Department of Transport to a standstill without sufficient and clear justification, while retaining his salary, but has appointed another employed person to act as the acting director of the Department. As a result, in two years illegally spent municipal funds were at least 46.2 thousand euros.