



# ACTION PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RIGA METROPOLITAN AREA

Approved by  
RPR Development Council meeting  
10 January 2020



RĪGAS  
PLĀNOŠANAS  
REĢIONS

**The aim of drafting an Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area** is to achieve a coherent development of the Riga metropolitan area and to coordinate the ongoing processes, using an integrated approach and complex solutions to reconcile the interests of the state, Riga City, municipalities and residents of the Riga metropolitan area.

**The plan serves as a basis for negotiations** between the Riga region, metropolitan municipalities, ministries, the government and international institutions on the necessary investment needs and funding for the implementation of the Riga metropolitan development initiatives.

**The solutions contained in the plan are to be implemented** within the framework of the European Union funds for the programming period 2021-2027, public and local government budgets and other financial instruments.

**The indirect objective is to establish a qualitative dialogue** between metropolitan development actors in the process of developing and implementing the plan, as well as in the long term, by strengthening the need for planning and a coordinated development of the Riga metropolitan area.



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## Plan Development Concept

In accordance with the decision of the Riga Planning Region (hereinafter – RPR) Development Council of 16 March 2018, the [Riga Planning Region](#) has developed an **Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area** (hereinafter – Plan) in order to update the issues of Riga metropolitan area development and strengthen the internal and external cooperation in the functional space of the capital.

**The need for the plan** has already been established in 2010, with the approval of the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030. The Regional Policy Guidelines and the Latvian National Development Plan also include issues of Riga metropolitan area to be addressed as one of Latvia's national interest areas, however, it is necessary to reinforce the importance and potential of Riga as a Northern European metropolis, while also attracting adequate financial capital to this area. The spatial development perspective of the RPR Sustainable Development Strategy for 2014-2030 includes a vision for the development of the Riga metropolitan area, and the RPR Development Programme for 2014-2020 includes issues to be addressed in the metropolitan area, which are also clarified and expanded in the context of the needs of the planning period 2021-2027. The Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030 also highlights the need for active cooperation in the metropolis and the importance of international competitiveness.

[Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030](#) (hereinafter – “Latvia 2030”) defines **the Riga metropolitan area as an area of national interest** with great value and importance for the sustainable development of the country, preservation of identity and includes strategic resources important for the country's development (see Figure 1). At the same time, there are various conflicts of interest and challenges in this area that go beyond regional and sectoral competence, therefore complex solutions and targeted policies are needed to promote coordinated development.

**The Riga metropolitan area** is composed of city of Riga, along with neighbouring towns of different sizes – Jurmala, Olaine, Jelgava, Baldone, Salaspils, Ogre, Tukums, Sigulda and other municipalities adjacent to the city of Riga. Due to their placement and relatively comfortable reach of Riga, strong functional links have emerged, determined by the attraction of Riga as an economic, financial, and cultural centre and facilitated by daily commuting of the population.

The morphological border of the city of Riga extends far beyond its administrative borders – **the Riga urban development area** has been established, which is stimulated by various economic activities. However, the lack of coordinated planning for the development of suburban areas causes a number of problems of a wide variety, including the deterioration of the transport situation, the decline of green and recreational areas of Pierīga (Riga surrounding municipalities), the lack of adequate infrastructure, insufficient access to services, etc.

“Latvia 2030” states that **a coherent development of the spatial structure of the Riga metropolitan area** and coordination of the ongoing processes **should be achieved by developing an integrated spatial development perspective** and using an integrated approach and complex solutions to reconcile the different interests of the city of Riga, the surrounding municipalities, the state and the population.

One of the main developments suggested is the **implementation of coordinated cooperation** between local authorities, regions, and public authorities. It is necessary to ensure **harmonised planning for transport infrastructure, public transport and urban (building) development**. It is necessary to ensure **the preservation and functioning of green areas and ecological corridors** between urbanised areas.



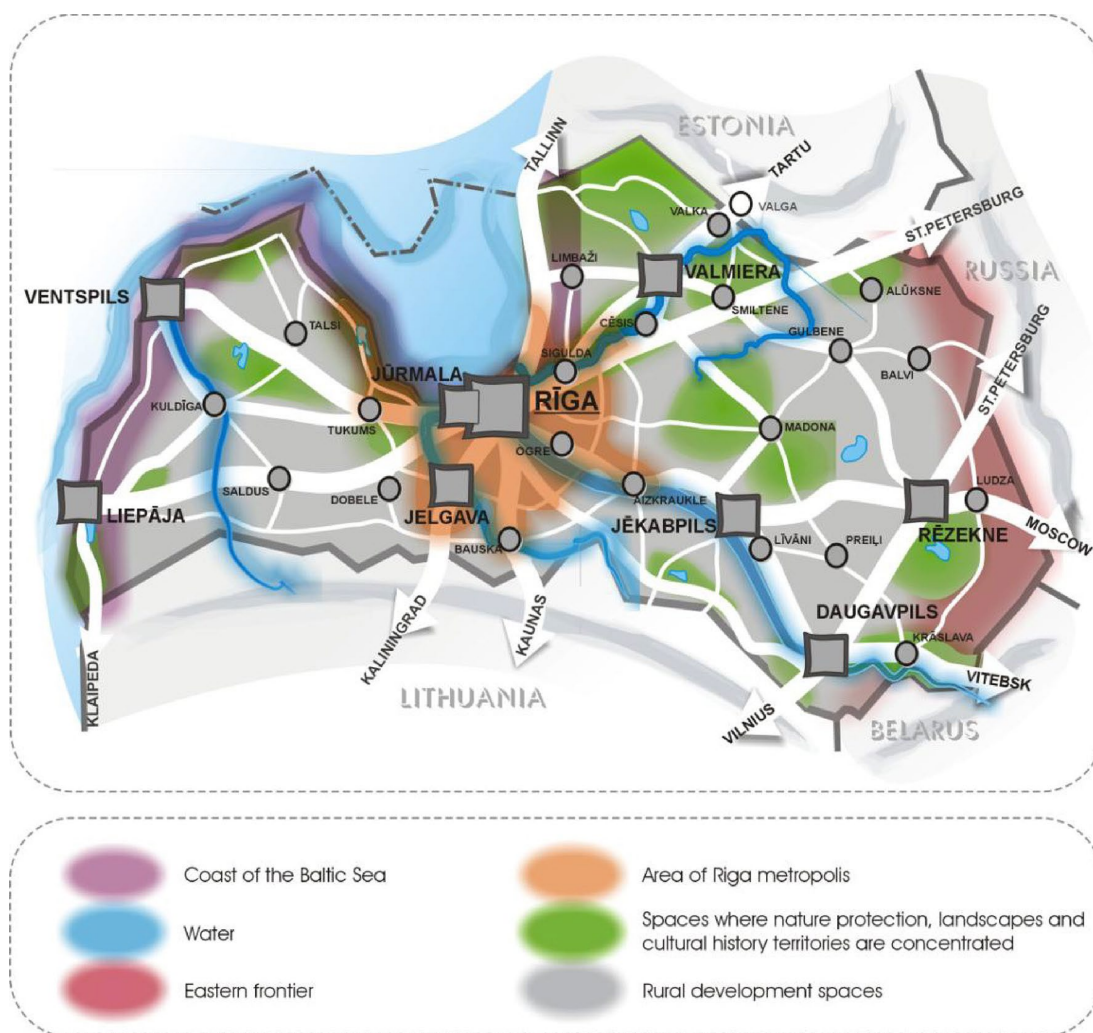


Figure 1. Riga metropolitan area as a development space of national interest

Source: Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030

The Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy for 2014-2030 inherits and develops the core elements of the existing settlement spatial structure, highlighting the importance of Riga and rural spaces in settlement planning. While respecting the idea of polycentrism, the increasing role of the site in social planning and considering the special international scale of Riga, **the RPR strategy emphasizes the interaction of the relationship between the centralised territories on different spatial scales.** Settlement is viewed as the organizing element of the spatial structure.

Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030 emphasizes that **a unified economy of the Riga metropolitan area is the basis for wellbeing for residents of the entire area** and there is a need for active cooperation with municipalities in the agglomeration, the Riga planning region and state administration institutions. Various studies have also been carried out on the theme of the Riga metropolitan and agglomerations, which demonstrate the need for integrated development solutions in this functional area. In planning and organising the development of the Riga metropolitan area, it is important to consider the city of Riga and to look at the level of its spatial structures (see Figure 2).

## Participants and Process of Plan Development

The development of the plan is a process proposed by the Riga Planning Region Development Council. The drafting process is provided by the RPR administration, with the support of the RPR Development Planning Advisory Working Group, composed of all local government development planners in the region. A Coordination Group has been set up for the management and monitoring of the planning process, consisting of representatives of the parties involved in

the development of the plan – Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Education and Science, Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre, Zemgale Planning Region, Riga City, Jurmala City and other municipalities included in the Riga metropolitan area. The development process is based on a quantitative and qualitative approach, a collection of views on internal processes, developments and needs of the Riga metropolitan area, conducted in the consultation process. From the point of view of the drafting process, it is an **“agreement plan”** on key development issues in the most socially and economically active part of Latvia, which ensures the growth of the entire country and international competitiveness.

## Status of the Plan

A conceptual **vision for the development** of the Riga metropolitan area. A thematic plan with integrated development solutions for the Riga metropolitan area. The plan shall be approved by the RPR Development Council. The plan potentially serves as a basis for organising cooperation between members of the metropolitan area development and outlines the development of the thematic plan of the Riga metropolitan area at national level.

## Territorial Coverage

According to the wording of the Riga metropolitan area as set out in the RPR development planning documents, the metropolis is considered to be a well-connected economic and social movement area of the capital, formed by the city of Riga together with the neighbouring towns of different sizes and the municipalities of Pierīga with many residents commuting on a daily basis. The territorial coverage of the metropolis defines **the inner space of the metropolis, the outer space of the metropolis and the area of direct functional impact of the metropolis** (for reasons see section “Territorial Coverage of the Metropolis” of the Plan).

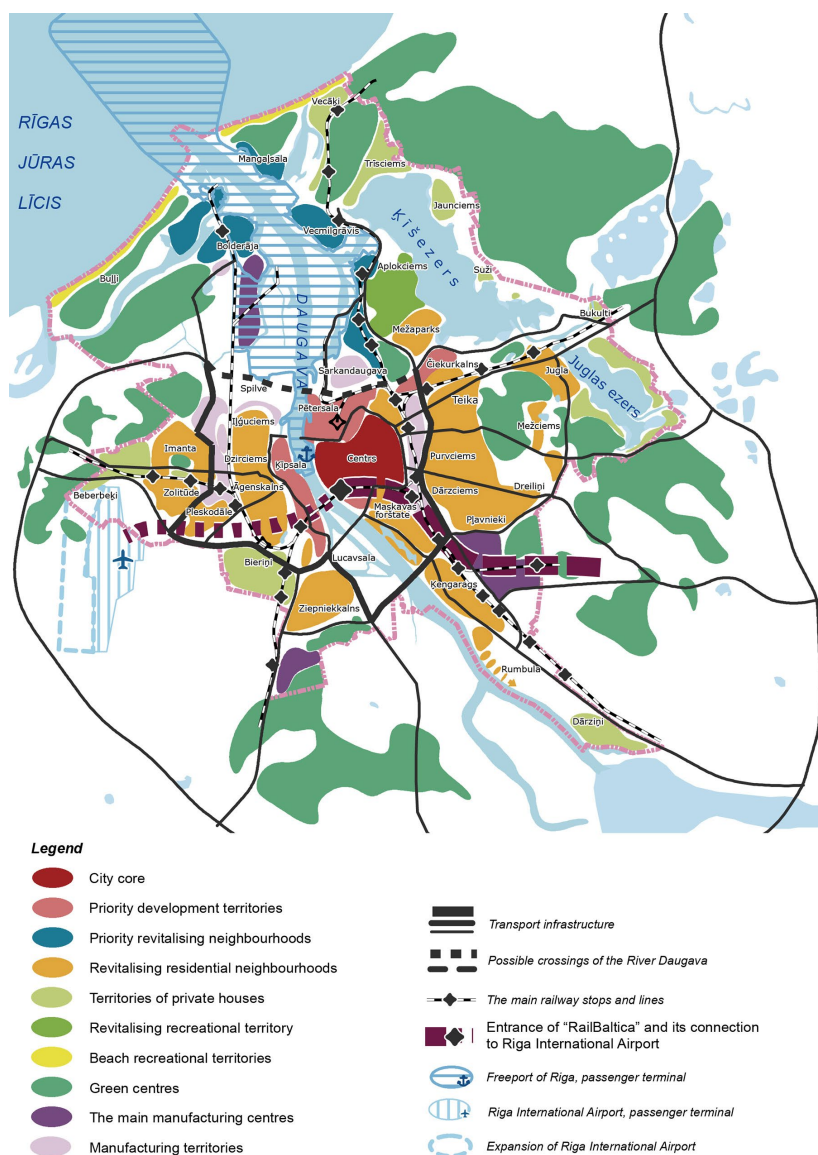


Figure 2. Riga City Structural Plan

Source: Sustainable Development Strategy of Riga until 2030



The concept of developing the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area provides that the development of the plan respects the **3 dimensions – thematic, territorial and time frames**.

## **1 THEMATIC FRAMEWORK** and Main Directions

### **Settlement structure**

Housing and improvement of the living environment of populated areas

### **Public services**

Education, lifelong learning, health, culture, sports and opportunities for leisure

### **Transport and mobility**

Reach, accessibility, and public transport

### **Natural environment and energy**

Environmental status, environmental and natural resource management, impact of the climate change, energy efficiency measures and renewable energy sources

### **Regional and international competitiveness**

Business environment, tourism, culture, sports, and regional marketing

### **Metropolitan area governance**

Coordination of development issues, responsibilities, decision-making, activities implementation mechanisms, cooperation agreements

## **2 TERRITORIAL FRAMEWORK** (see Figure 3)

### **Inner space of Riga metropolis**

Riga, immediate adjacent and closest territories

### **Outer space of Riga metropolis**

Parts of municipalities of the metropolitan centres – parts of municipal territories of Tukums, Jelgava, Ogre, Sigulda and Limbazi and closest territories

### **Direct functional impact area of Riga metropolis**

Direct functional impact areas in the Riga, Zemgale and Vidzeme planning regions, mainly in terms of major transport corridors

## **3 TIME FRAME**

### **Long-term strategic settings**

Long-term development vision (2030+)

### **Issues to be addressed in the medium term**

By 2027

### **Short-term solutions**

Or immediate steps (needs for coming 3 years)



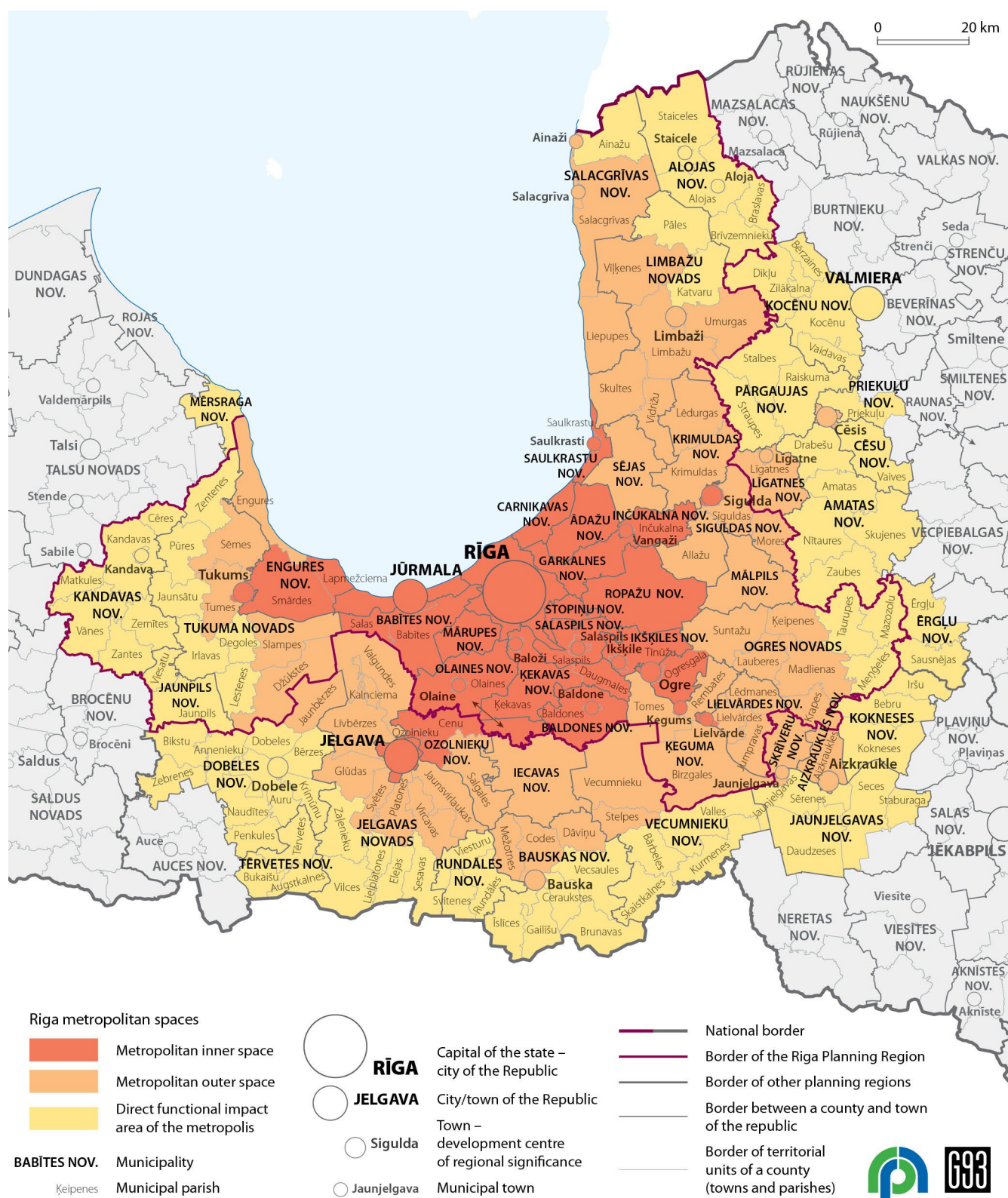


Figure 3. Space of the Riga metropolitan area



## Building Understanding of the Riga Functional Space

Today, the evolution of the understanding of Riga's functional space is largely linked to the origins of regional formation. Cooperation within the Riga region has been ongoing for more than 20 years – the Riga region was established in 1996, in cooperation between the cities of Riga and Jūrmala and the Riga district, in order to create a common platform for development planning and harmonised action. In 1998, the public organisation “Riga Regional Development Council” was officially registered, voluntarily joining the 8 local municipalities of the Riga district. According to the status and functions of the region specified in the Law on Regional Development, the Riga Planning Region was founded as a derived public person in late 2006. With the creation of the planning region, it has been the main initiator and co-ordinator for promoting cooperation in the Riga metropolitan area.

### Planning Documents

The first regional long-term planning document – Development Strategy of the Region of Riga 2000-2020 (see Figure 4) – was developed already in 2000, under the leadership of the Riga Regional Development Council, even before the planning region was established. This includes the strategic vision of the region's development, the region's potential and development perspective, as well as proposals for the main directions of the settlement structure and spatial development of the Riga region. The territorial coverage of the Riga functional space identified in the strategy is largely inherited by the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, drafted in 2010, defining the Riga metropolitan area (see Figure 1).

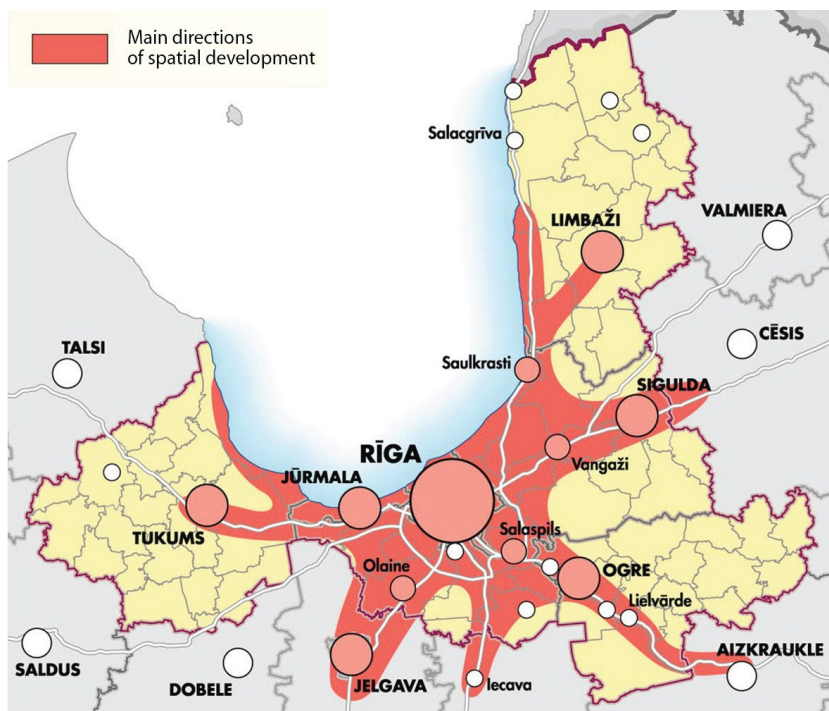


Figure 4. Main strands of spatial development of the Riga region

Source: Development Strategy of the Region of Riga 2000-2020, approved in 2000, updated in 2008

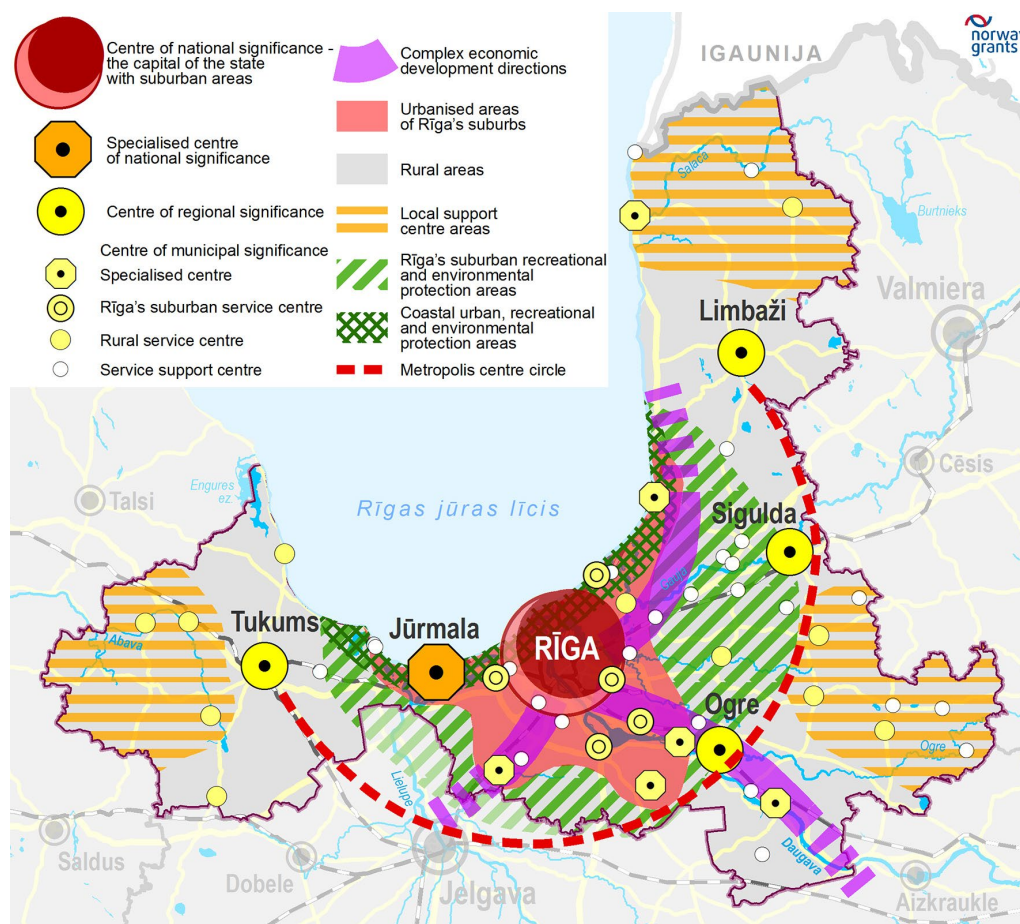


Figure 5. Riga Region Perspective Structure of Distribution of Population

Source: RPR Development Strategy 2014-2030, approved in 2015

In the context of the residential outlook structure of the Riga Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy for the period 2014-2030 (see Figure 5), the strategic guidelines highlight the different spatial structures within the Riga metropolitan area – the urbanised space around Riga-Pierīga, the Pierīga Recreation and Environmental Protection Area, as well as the circle of metropolitan centres.

## Reports and Studies

Various studies have also been carried out on the theme of the Riga metropolitan area and the agglomerations, which demonstrate the need for integrated development solutions in this functional area.

The “Regional Development in Latvia 2011” report (see Figure 6) includes a vision of Latvia's development centres and their impact areas. The term agglomeration is used to denominate a highly urbanised area consisting of a centre of territory, one or more large cities and surrounding areas and rural centres with close interrelations, whose borders are set according to the intensity of mobility, commuting of population and services.

The definition of Riga's functional space is complicated because large territorial districts (Ogre, Tukums, Limbaži districts) have a highly heterogeneous structure of links, but statistical data on district territorial units are most often not compiled and the only data available is information that reflects the

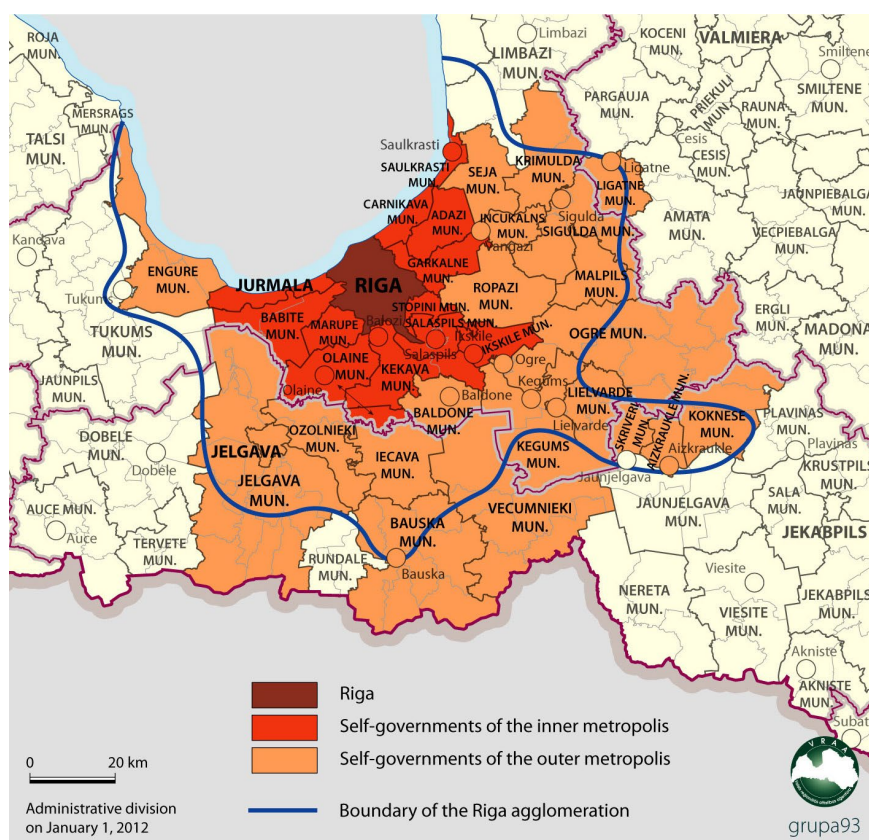


Figure 6. Riga Functional Space – metropolitan area

Source: "Regional Development in Latvia 2011". State Regional Development Agency, 2012

characteristics of the entire municipality. Links with the capital are more pronounced in municipalities, which are closer to Riga, but the situation is different on the periphery of the municipalities, where these links are much weaker. Thus, to determine the area of the Riga metropolitan area, qualitative indicators can also be used alongside quantitative data.

To draft development planning documents of the Riga municipality post-2020, a study was carried out on the clarification of the borders of the Riga agglomeration. The study performed in 2017 clarifies the previously defined borders of the agglomeration of Riga (see Figure 7), as well as the extent of work and study related commuting. The results of the study reflect the impact area of the city of Riga, which is characterised by mutual relations between residential areas and the interaction between Riga and other municipalities within the agglomeration.

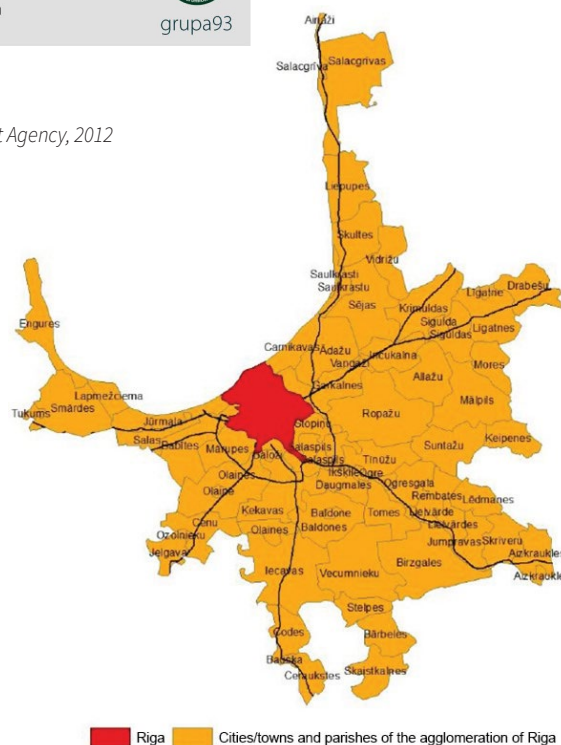


Figure 7. Territories within the agglomeration of Riga

Source: "Refinement of the borders of the agglomeration of Riga".  
Riga City Council City Development Department,  
University of Latvia Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, 2017







## Territorial Coverage of the Metropolis

The Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area defines the territorial coverage of the metropolis, based on the understanding set in the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030, as well as in the RPR territorial development planning documents, namely, in the RPR Sustainable Development Strategy for 2014-2030 and in the RPR Development Programme for 2014-2020.

The division of the Riga metropolitan area into 3 different spaces is based on a set of features specific to each of these spaces, taking into account the characteristics such as the distance to the capital Riga, the intensity of daily commuting, trends in the changes of the number of population, transport flows, availability of public services, as well as other specific features (see Figure 8).

Population mobility indicators show that **Riga, along with Pieriga, is an important direction of connections for the entire territory of Latvia.** According to the relatively high intensity of daily commuting, the metropolis covers not only the areas close to Riga, but also extends further, covering part of the municipal areas of Riga metropolitan centres (Tukums, Jelgava, Ogre, Sigulda, and Limbaži).

Population migration is not the only characteristic feature of metropolitan areas, also the concentration of population (see Figure 9), demographic and economic situation, transport infrastructure and settlement structure identify the spatial coverage of the metropolis. In the vicinity of the metropolitan area, mainly in the direction of the most important transport corridors there are territories functionally directly linked to the Riga metropolitan area and forming a circular area, including territories of other regions close to the capital in other regions.

### Characteristics of metropolitan spaces

Characteristics	INNER space	OUTER space	IMPACT area
Territorial coverage (distance from Riga)	~50 km	~75 km	~100 km
Intensity of daily commuting (working population employed in Riga)	>50 %	30-50 %	>20 %
Changes in population numbers	growing	slightly negative trend	mainly negative trend
Public transport organisation	in the direction of Riga	in the direction of Riga and centres of regional significance	mainly in the direction of centres of regional significance
Reception of public and household services	mainly in Riga	in Riga and centres of regional significance	mainly in centres of regional significance
Accessibility and quality of services	relatively good, but there are problems of service scarcity in Pieriga (particularly in the fields of education and health)	limited, particularly outside regional centres	limited
Specific features	Low unemployment. A relatively high level of income with a tendency to grow. International tourism. Concentration of education and science	The role and potential of centres of regional significance significantly exceeds the development potential of surrounding areas	Relatively poorly developed public transport system and related infrastructure. Lower quality and poorer condition of local and regional roads

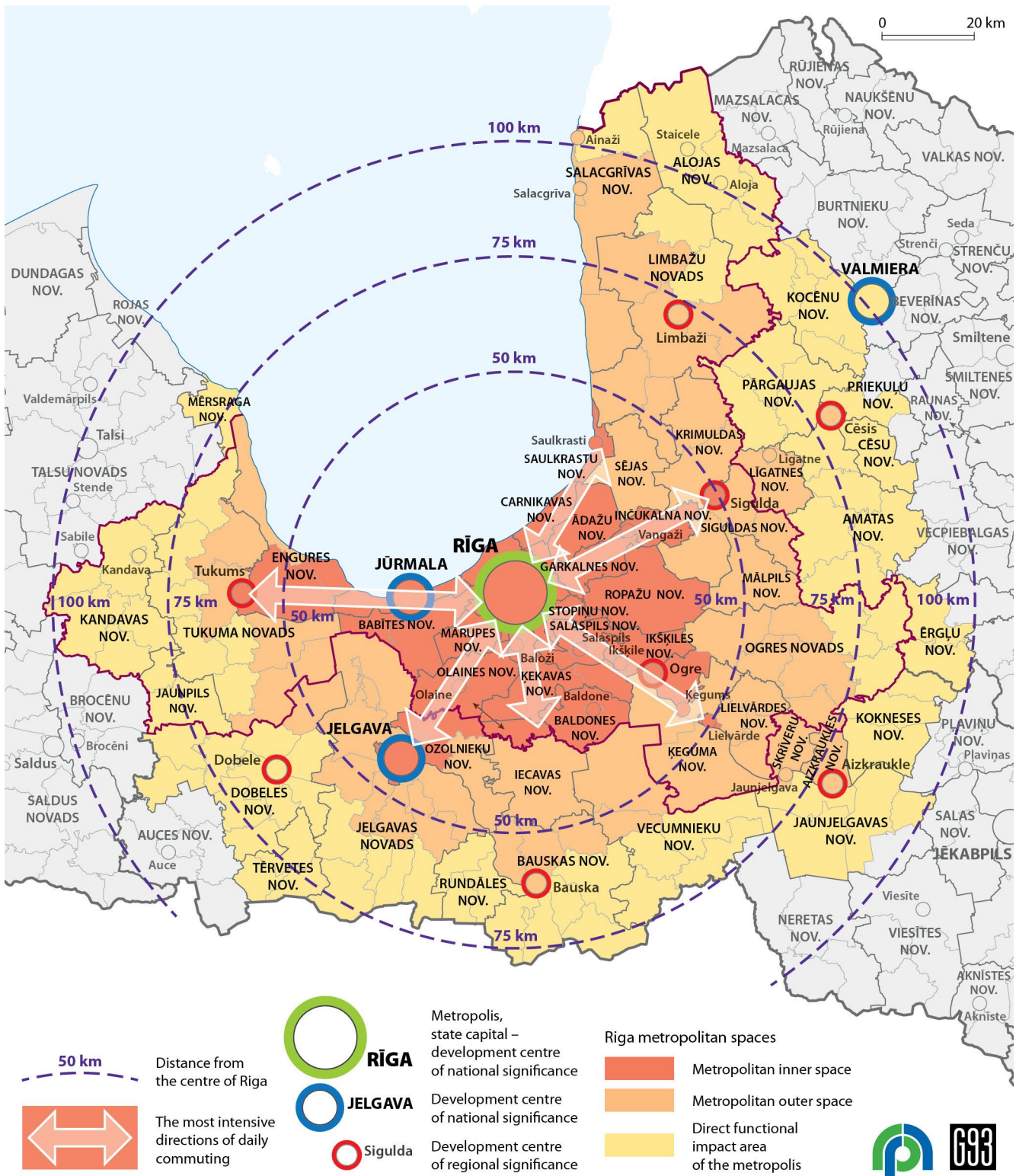


Figure 8. Characteristics of metropolitan spaces





## Strategic Framework

The Riga metropolitan area has **a population of 1.25 million which is approximately 65% of the total number of residents of Latvia** and **accounts for approximately 3/4 of Latvia's economic value** – it makes the metropolitan area the driving force of all Latvian economy, education, science, tourism, sports and cultural life. The Riga metropolitan area strengthens the role of Riga as a global-oriented Baltic metropolis and promotes international competitiveness.

Looking at the vision for the development of the macro-region of the Baltic Sea by 2050, the Riga metropolitan area should also be formed as a polycentric, spatial and socially unified region with an integrated high-speed rail line (both for trans-national and internal connections), which is economically dynamic, energy-efficient and carbon-neutral, while the green corridors should be a strong regionally unifying element<sup>1</sup>.

To achieve this vision, the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area sets out the following **priorities and key issues to be solved**:

- 1 **SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE**
- 2 **PUBLIC SERVICES**
- 3 **TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY**
- 4 **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY**
- 5 **REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**
- 6 **METROPOLITAN AREA GOVERNANCE**

As determined by the planning documents at national and regional level, **the main strategic issues in Riga metropolitan area are related to the promotion of international competitiveness of the Riga metropolis**. It is important to position the Riga metropolitan area as a single region with more than 1 million inhabitants, which is able to create a single tourism and investment strategy with a view to attract international businesses and the workforce in the metropolitan area, thereby promoting the economy of the metropolis and Latvia as a whole.

To achieve this goal, **it is essential to fine-tune the processes inside the area**, including key issues such as the settlement structure, transport and mobility, the competitiveness of the region and coordinated development and promotion of business infrastructure, public services (education, health, culture, etc.) and the state and management of the natural environment.

The Riga metropolitan area **can serve as a basis for the development of wider cooperation** between municipalities and state institutions, it consists of **common functional links, common interests, and issues to be addressed**.

The “Priorities and Solutions of the Metropolis” section of the plan sets out development needs and investment directions for each of the priorities involving actions on the level of metropolis. The cartographic material reflects the spatial aspects of each thematic priority and highlights the territorial location of the issues to be addressed.

<sup>1</sup> Nordic-Baltic Space Transnational Development Perspective  
<https://www.hel.fi/static/liitteet/kaupunkiymparisto/julkaisut/julkaisut/julkaisu-09-19.pdf>











## Priorities and Solutions of the Metropolis

### Settlement Structure

The settlement structure is one of the basic elements of spatial planning, which together with natural environmental areas and the network of transport infrastructure forms the Riga metropolitan

area. In view of the internal diversity of the metropolitan area (see Figure 10), appropriate solutions are needed for planning and managing the settlement structure.

#### Development Needs and Investment Directions

Activities **for improving the settlement structure and quality of living environment of the Riga metropolitan area and residential areas**, implementation of complex and integrated development solutions.

**Management and development solutions for degraded areas and unused buildings** (including unfinished residential buildings, resort areas, industrial areas, etc.), investments for public and private owners to rebuild sites, in particular by converting these sites into business areas, public outdoor or public infrastructure facilities.

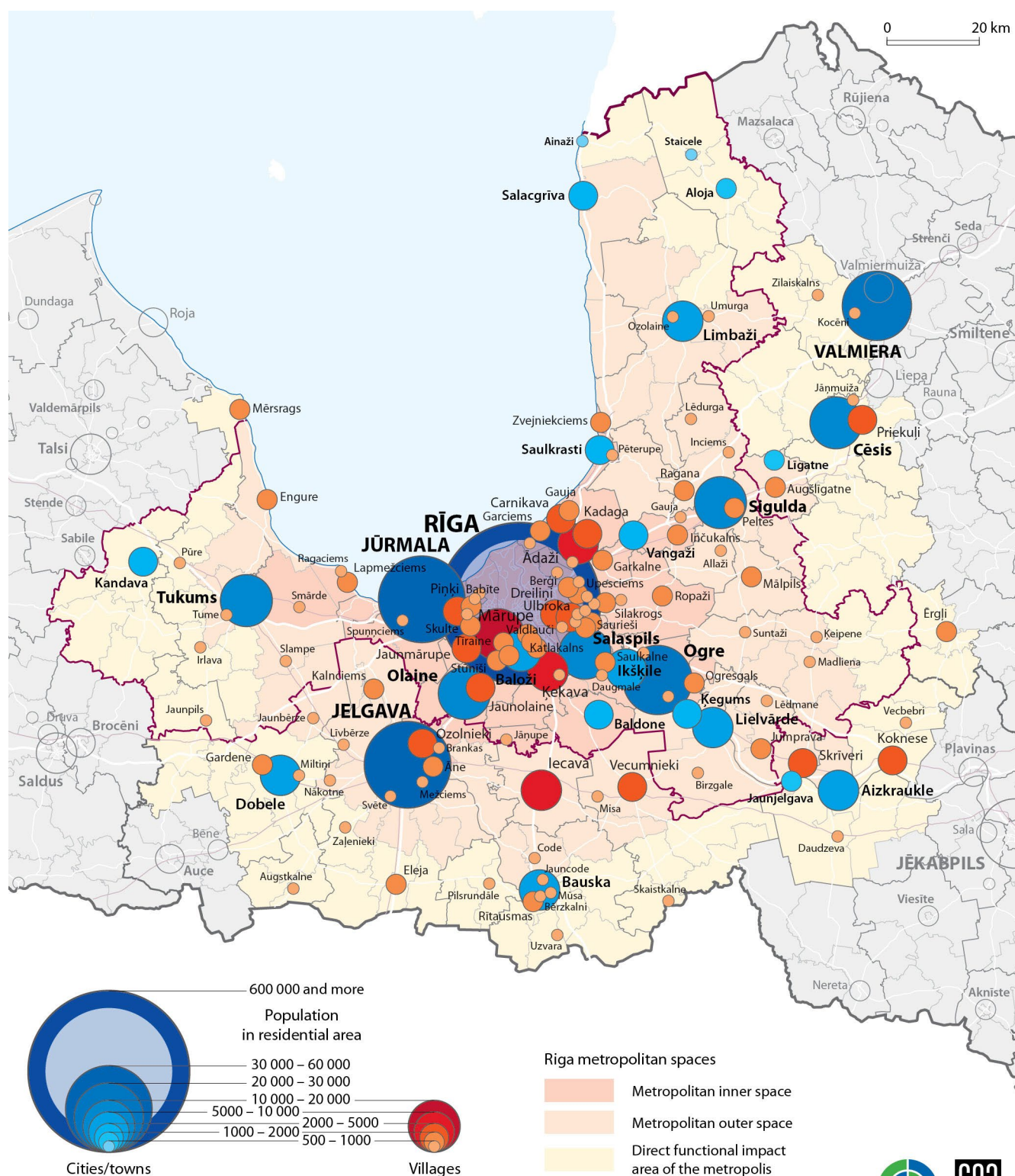
**Supporting and strengthening local communities**, planning neighbourhoods and villages, based on initiatives by local residents and active groups of society, **by creating community centres** (infrastructure) in more densely populated areas.

**Review of the status of populated areas** due to changes in the settlement structure of the metropolitan area – status of cities and villages and provision of services (particularly the role of the satellite towns of Pierīga). **Specific infrastructure solutions** in the case of new “growing” and “shrinking” residential areas – building appropri-

ate complex infrastructures: street/road infrastructure, engineering, the “blue-green structure” and the urban environment.

**Management of settlement** in the region:

- uniform guidelines (recommendations) for settlement planning, principles for developing building rules in the Riga metropolitan area. Assessment of the capacity and functionality of populated areas: capacity to accommodate new residents and necessary infrastructure improvements,
- restricting the urban sprawl and the convergence of urbanised areas, harmonising settlement structures and building sites, measures to intensify building (review of municipal spatial plans, proposals, or municipal agreements on making the necessary changes to the general building rules).



Data source: CSB, 2019 and assessment of SIA "Grupa93"



Figure 10. Settlement structure in Riga metropolitan area



## Specific Issues to be addressed in Individual Spaces of the Metropolitan Area

- 1 In the inner space of the metropolis**  
Limiting the urban sprawl, compact settlement planning, building intensification measures
- 2 3 In the outer space of the metropolis and in direct functional impact areas**  
Improving the functionality of populated areas combined with surrounding areas, linking the availability of settlement – mobility – public services

## Public Services

Ensuring access to public services should be seen in the context of the settlement structure and mobility opportunities of the metropolitan area. According to the heterogeneous deployment of populated areas

in the metropolitan area, it is necessary to identify the centres of provision of services on a different scale, meaning and range (see Figure 11).

The following types of populated areas shall be identified in the overall settlement structure of the Riga metropolitan area and its impact zones, the functionality of which shall be viewed in the context of the provision of services:

### **Metropolis, state capital**

Riga

### **Centres of national significance**

Jurmala, Jelgava, Valmiera

### **Regional centres**

Tukums, Ogre, Sigulda, Limbazi, Dobeles, Bauska, Aizkraukle, Cēsis

### **Riga Satellite Centres** (Pierīga centres with a special role)

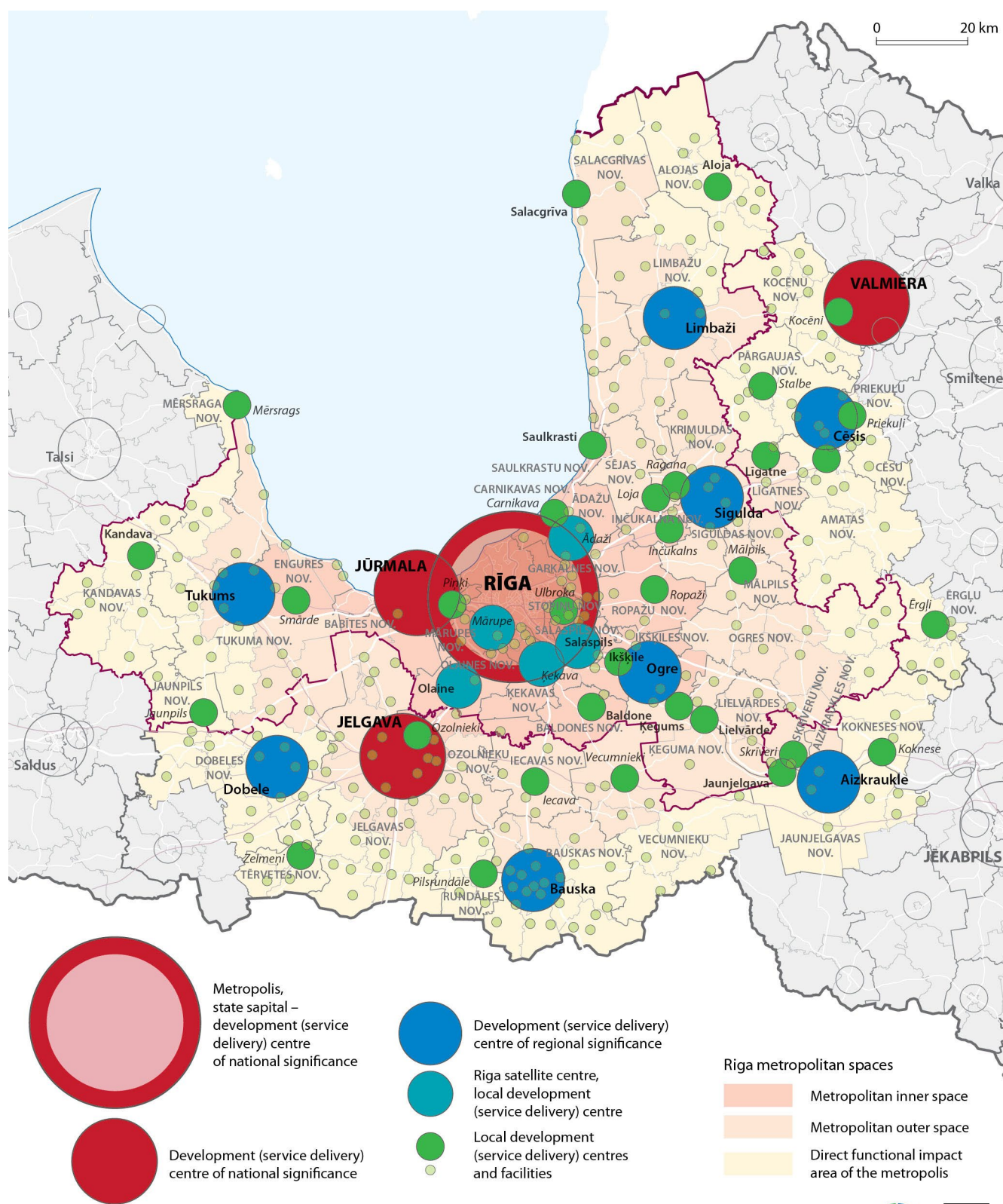
Marupe, Olaine, Kekava, Salaspils, Adazi

### **Local centres and objects**

Other service provision centres of local significance

## Specific Issues to be Addressed in Individual Spaces of the Metropolitan Area

- 1 In the inner space of the metropolis**  
International competitiveness of higher education, pre-school and general education infrastructure, special role of local Riga *satellite centres*
- 2 In the outer space of the metropolis**  
Lifelong learning and vocational education, linking to specialisation
- 3 In areas under direct functional impact of the metropolis**  
Strengthening regional centres



Data source: "Assessment of the range of public individual services compared to the number of residents", SIA "Grupa93", 2015



Figure 11. Service provision centres in the Riga metropolitan area

## Development Needs and Investment Directions

Actions **to ensure the deployment and quality of coordinated public services**, particularly in relation to education issues.

Identification of the situation and **development of a well-founded educational establishment location offer** for the Riga metropolitan area, based on existing and planned settlement structures and service centres:

- improvement of the general education school network in the metropolitan area,
- planning, establishment, and development of pre-school educational institutions in the region,
- location and specialisation of vocational schools and higher educational establishments.

**Infrastructure of educational establishments** – accessibility of pre-schools (especially in Pierīga), general education establishments (throughout the Riga metropolitan area) and vocational educational establishments (according to specialisation) in the territories of the area.

**Compliance of educational programmes with labour market requirements** (including professional orientation and lifelong learning).

**Sports and cultural establishments**, services, and specialisation on the basis of complex planning according to the actual settlement and availability of services.

**Deployment of police, rescue, and fire-fighting services**, including the assessment of coastal rescue measures, measures to eliminate high-risk fires in concentrated areas of production plants and peat swamps.

**The development of the public-private partnership** for the efficient, appropriate provision of public services.

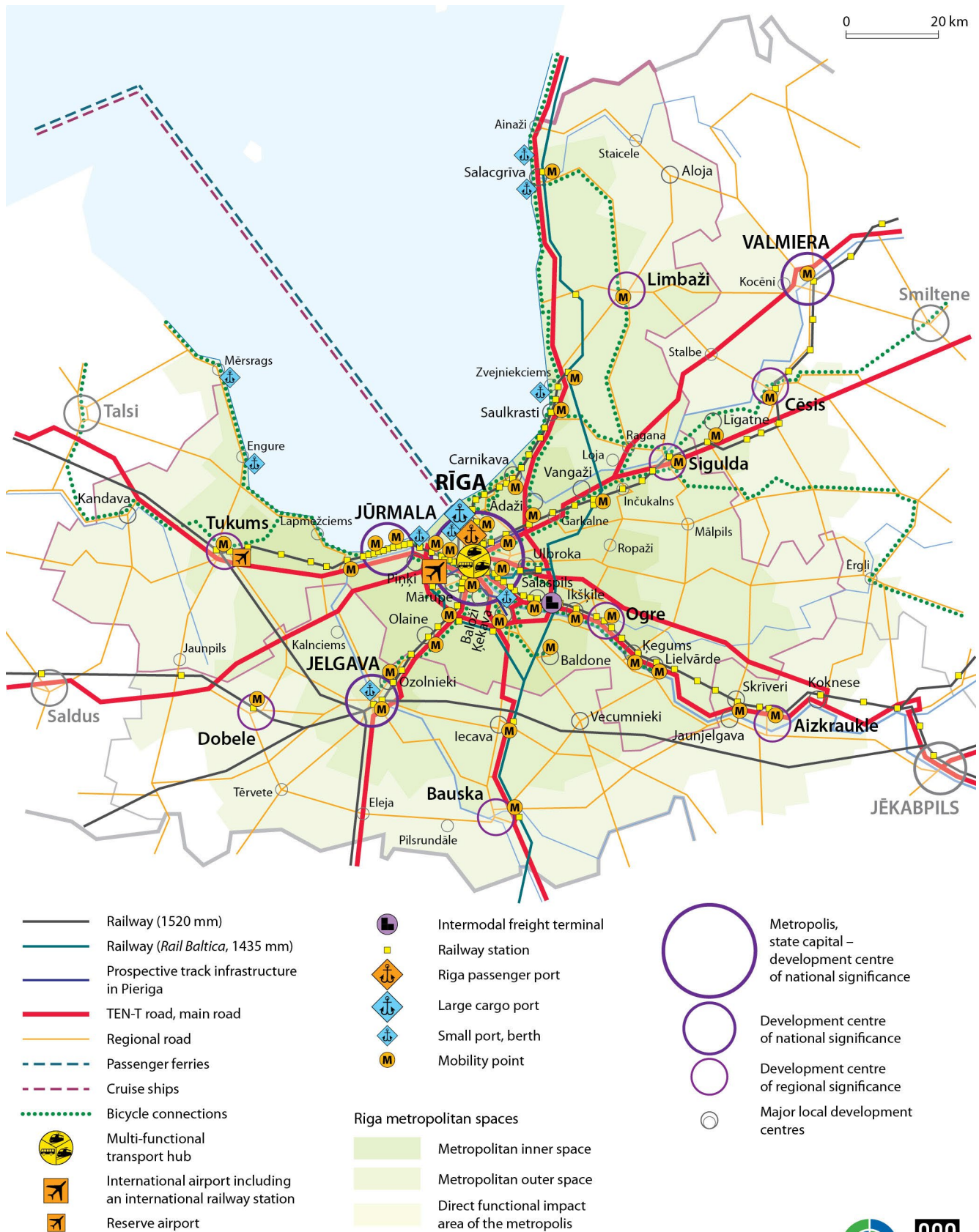
## Transport and Mobility

Transport and mobility issues are key to ensuring the full potential of the remaining metropolitan functions: fast and efficient accessibility is equally crucial both domestically for daily mobility and access to services and internationally for strengthening competitiveness. Riga planning region has developed a [Riga Metropolitan Area Mobility Spatial Vision](#), which includes a vision for the development of the outer and internal accessibility of the metropolitan area. The key elements of a single vision for the development of metropolitan mobility include a common transport system with railroads as a basis, roads as a support, integrated and high-quality

public transport, mobility points, cycling roads, waterways, and micro-mobility.

Transport development, in particular the construction of the Rail Baltica railway, is a catalyst for mobility change in the Riga metropolitan area, the Baltic States, as well as the entire Northern European corridor. New rolling stock of passenger trains, modernisation of railway stations and stops, coordinated reorganisation of bus routes, construction of Rail Baltica and regional transportation capabilities – all these measures will significantly improve mobility opportunities in Latvia.





Data source: Riga Metropolitan Area Spatial Vision, SIA "Grupa93", 2019

Figure 12. Mobility vision in the Riga metropolitan area

The key to the success of efficient and modern mobility is the diversification and adaptation of transport modes to the necessary scale and purpose of use. Advanced traffic connections that allow easy

transport change *at mobility points* can serve as a means of more efficient and environmentally friendly mobility and reduce travelling time.

The functionality of **the mobility point** and the set of elements it contains depend on the scale of the location – it would be necessary to use the following classification in the Riga metropolitan area:

#### **Intermodal traffic hub**

International traffic hub (Riga Central Station, Tornakalna, Riga passenger port, RIX – Riga International airport) – should mainly foresee interconnections from international to regional or local modes of transport

#### **Railway station mobility point**

The point of mobility at the railway station is based on the accessibility of the railway, both for those living nearby and for those who come to the station with their own private car or cycling – mainly a convenient, safe parking facilities for cars and bicycles or other micro-mobility elements, rental services, electrical equipment charging facilities and other related services should be developed

#### **Mobility point**

In densely populated areas and/or areas with significant service intensity, in the vicinity of public transport hubs. Location – both in the centre and in outskirts – mainly by providing services and quality of a similar nature as in railway station mobility points

#### **Micro mobility point**

In any 2-3 parking areas, in the centre, for getting from point A to point B or to the nearest public transport stop, place of passenger embarking/disembarking. Primarily envisages parking facilities of elements of micro mobility, rental services, charging facilities for electrical equipment

### **Specific Issues to be Addressed in Individual Spaces of the Metropolitan Area**

- 1 In the inner space of the metropolis**  
Fast and efficient connections between Riga and urbanised space of Pierīga, development of transit corridors and circular connections around Riga, Rail Baltica express train operation, development of a cycling network for day-to-day mobility, waterways
- 2 In the outer space of the metropolis**  
Reach of regional centres from surrounding areas, rapid access to international transport hubs (railway station, bus terminal, port, airport)
- 3 In direct functional impact areas of the metropolis**  
In areas located further away from settlement centres and in rural areas, the use of the “on-demand transport” concept

## Development Needs and Investment Directions

Activities **to improve the mobility** of the Riga metropolitan area **and to intensify the use of public transport**.

**Establishment of a single public transport network and system** in the Riga metropolitan area:

- development of IT infrastructure for public transport (electronic timetables, single tickets, mobile applications, etc.),
- establishing a common management of regional traffic and transport networks in the RPR,
- provision of public transport and concerted practices (routes, timetables, ticket prices, single public transport ticket), higher priority for public transport and uniform quality requirements for different carriers.

**Establishment of complex traffic hubs (*mobility points*)**, ensuring a convenient and rapid change of means of transport (bus terminal, railway station, *Park & Ride*, bicycle parking lot, charging point, etc.). *Mobility points* should first of all be developed at priority sites in Riga and Pieriga. Improving mobility infrastructure by defining rail transport (railway, tram) as the “backbone” of public transport, adapting the infrastructure of populated areas to this concept and developing related infrastructure – crossings, pedestrian crossings, parking areas, pedestrian roads, cycleways, improving road safety.

**Planning and integrating regional bicycle lanes and Riga/Pieriga connections** into existing cycling routes.

**Development of transit corridors and connections** to them by channelling intensive traffic flows from residential areas, including the development and improvement of links between industrial territories generating major transport flows with national and regional roads, reducing congestion, and improving road safety.

**Development of Pieriga rail transport** (railway, tram) **and extension of the network of bus routes** and increasing the intensity in places where no railway is available.

**Potential impact of the Rail Baltica project** part of the North Sea – Baltic transport corridor on the municipalities of the area connecting the Baltic States to the European rail network – location of the route and location of potential regional passenger departure points in the Riga metropolitan area, maximum use of the route (regional stops) for internal metropolitan mobility, development of the Salaspils intermodal transport hub (freight terminal) and infrastructure of associated areas, regular express train connections from the district of Marupe via the Riga international airport and Riga Central Station to the Stopini municipality, as well as from Ogre via Riga Central Station to the Riga international airport, improvement of rail track crossings for road transport.

**Development of access roads and connectivity of the Riga international airport** to the rest of the RPR area, integration of the airport “Jurmala” into the overall air transport network.

**Development of water transport:** related infrastructure (ports, berths) and inland waterways as a potential for the development of water transport and the development of waterfronts.

Linking the road transport infrastructure of **densely populated areas** to national and regional roads, improving transport flows and road safety.



## Natural Environment and Energy

The need for a harmonised and efficient natural environment and energy management in the Riga metropolitan area is characterised and justified by the diverse network of natural territories of the Riga metropolitan area, as well as the importance of the

overall implementation of energy efficiency and the introduction of solutions that maintain and renew sustainable environmental quality which is especially vital considering climate change.

### Development Needs and Investment Directions

Activities **to ensure a coherent and efficient management of the environment, natural resources, and energy** in the Riga metropolitan area.

Coordinated development **of environmental infrastructure** in the region:

- reclamation of rainwater, drainage in rural and populated areas, anti-flood measures under the national flood programme,
- extension of networks of water and sewer engineering structures.

**Energy planning and adaptation to climate change:**

- coordination of energy planning at regional level,
- promoting the use of renewable energy sources, decarbonising the economy and measures for green mobility,
- infrastructure solutions to the challenges posed by climate change.

**Use of natural resources** for recreation:

- rules for the use, management and development of inland waters and waterfronts, including joint management and management of public waters located in the territories of several municipalities or belonging to several owners,
- measures to regulate anthropogenic loads in the forests and swamps of Pieriga. The separa-

tion of forests as landscape elements from forests in which logging is carried out,

- development of common recreational areas and active recreational sites in Pieriga in cooperation with the city of Riga, including planning of natural parks and forest parks, including facilities for promoting physical activities and active lifestyles.

**Development of the circular economy** in the Riga metropolitan area:

- sorting and shared management of collected waste, the use of environmentally friendly technologies,
- establishment and development of centralised biomass collection sites in the region.

Addressing **environmental management:**

- cross-border pollution (air, water, sound), in particular, putting the emphasis on objects and spaces affecting two or more municipalities,
- measures to preserve wild territories and vacant areas,
- conservation of the *green* and *blue* areas, monitoring of environmental quality (in particular the green belt of Riga and the inland waters of Riga-Pieriga).



Figure 13. Natural Environment and Energy in the Riga metropolitan area

## Regional and International Competitiveness

The Riga metropolitan area has a high potential for the development of regional and international competitiveness, however, currently the Riga metropolitan area is lagging behind other Baltic and Northern European metropolises in terms of development indicators. International competitiveness of the Riga

metropolitan area should be strengthened by defining the space of the area in a coordinated manner and setting directions in which each municipality should specialise planning investments for an efficient use of resources of the area space.

### Development Needs and Investment Directions

Activities **to strengthen international competitiveness and visibility** of the Riga metropolitan area.

**Identifying smart development areas and stimulating development.** Identification of metropolitan areas with high development potential (science, research, business, social capital, technology) – mapping the situation and identifying directions for specialisation. Investment in support of the reach, technological and social capital of smart development areas.

**Location of industrial and manufacturing areas in the metropolitan area,** provision of the related infrastructure (engineering supplies) according to the specialisation and uniform planning of the area and the creation of the necessary complementary service facilities – rental apartment houses, etc.

**Marketing and branding of the Riga metropolitan area,** understanding the type of products and the audience (branding language) – representing common values and resources of the region internationally.

**Developing a complex regional tourism offer,** common management of tourism supply in the region. Specialisation of tourism – health tourism, nature tourism, spa, industrial tourism, rural tourism, culture, conferences, etc.

**Promoting internationally important events in sport and cultural life,** extending the scale of some existing events, developing new ones, as well as the planning and provision of appropriate infrastructure and services networks.

**Development of infrastructure for international transport hubs** (Riga port, Riga international airport, Riga central station and Salaspils intermodal freight terminal), **interlinking** and effective reach from the main towns of the Riga metropolitan area (in relation to the priority “Transport and Mobility”).



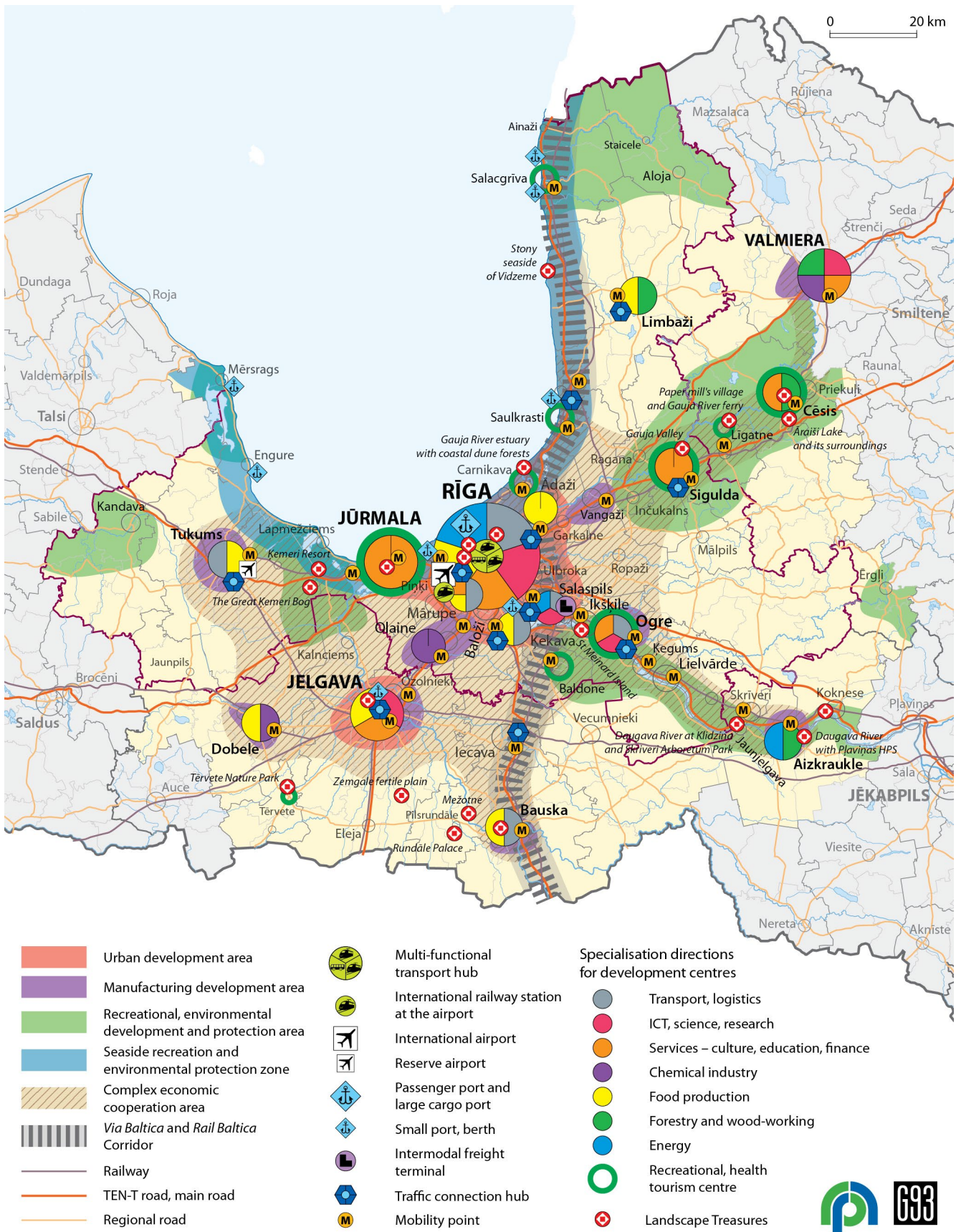


Figure 14. Potential of Riga metropolitan areas and directions for specialisation

## Metropolitan Area Governance

The organisation of the Riga metropolitan area governance process includes a number of important steps and serves as a basis for a planned development of the metropolitan area. Adequate area governance is an essential prerequisite for carrying

out development ideas. Accordingly, the parties involved in the governance process should agree on immediate actions, actions to be carried out over a period of seven years and a long-term vision.

### Road Map for Organising the Riga Metropolitan Area Governance Process

#### In the short term

Immediate steps over a 3-year period

**Creating a common understanding** of the Riga metropolitan area: cooperation objectives, territorial coverage, and thematic directions.

**Setting up and launching possible metropolitan area cooperation and governance mechanisms**, with immediate preparation of cross-municipal cooperation projects as examples of successful cooperation and justification for the need for future cooperation in the area.

**Providing a research analytical base** for monitoring the development processes of the metropolitan area, spotting trends, and identifying the best solutions.

**At the level of the local metropolitan area, the decision to guarantee support for the common priorities of the area**, actions to be implemented and projects to be adequately adapted to local developments.

**At national level, support instruments are provided** with separate funding for the introduction of joint Riga metropolitan area projects in the next programming period.

#### Medium term

By 2027

**Functional solutions for the metropolitan area governance model and the establishment of a governance model** (division of responsibilities, coordination of individual areas of activity, decision-making and enforcement procedures). Both the Riga metropolitan area municipalities and the responsible state institutions (ministries, planning regions) participate in the development of the governance model, and the solutions are developed on the basis of existing cooperation experience in the functional area of Riga.

**Annual organisation of regular forums at both political and expert level** for the review of the Riga metropolitan area development process, for addressing current issues, and for a more successful cooperation between state and local authorities at regional level.

**Financing mechanisms and joint projects** (organisation of financial management – taxes and contributions, financing, and coordination of cross-territorial (two or more administrative areas) development projects).

**Joint projects at Riga metropolitan area level are constantly being developed and implemented.**

## Top 10 Metropolitan Projects

### Priority: **settlement structure**

**Review of the status of populated areas** as a result of changes in the settlement structure of the metropolitan area and **specific infrastructure solutions** in the case of new “growing” and also “shrinking” populated areas – building an appropriate complex infrastructure: street/road infrastructure, engineering, “blue-green structure” and the urban environment.

means of transport (bus terminal, railway station, *Park & Ride*, bicycle parking, charging point, etc.).

**Planning and integrating regional cycling lanes and Riga/Pieriga connections** into existing bicycle routes.

### Priority: **public services**

**Development of a well-founded offer of educational establishments** based on settlement structure and service centres, **infrastructure of educational institutions** – pre-school establishments (especially in Pieriga), availability of general (throughout the Riga metropolitan area) and vocational (according to specialisation) educational institutions.

**Sports and cultural establishments**, services, specialisation on the basis of complex planning according to the actual settlement and access to services.

**Energy saving, including adaptation to climate change and the development of the circular economy** in the Riga metropolitan area (coordination of energy planning, use of renewable energy resources, transformation of infrastructure, sorting of waste, etc.).

**Use of natural resources** for recreation (inland waters and waterfronts, separation of recreational forests and their management, network of recreational spaces in Pieriga).

### Priority: **regional and international competitiveness**

### Priority: **transport and mobility**

**Establishment of a single public transport network and system** in the Riga metropolitan area (joint management, settlement, routes, timetables).

**Establishment of complex traffic hubs (*mobility points*)** – a convenient and rapid change of

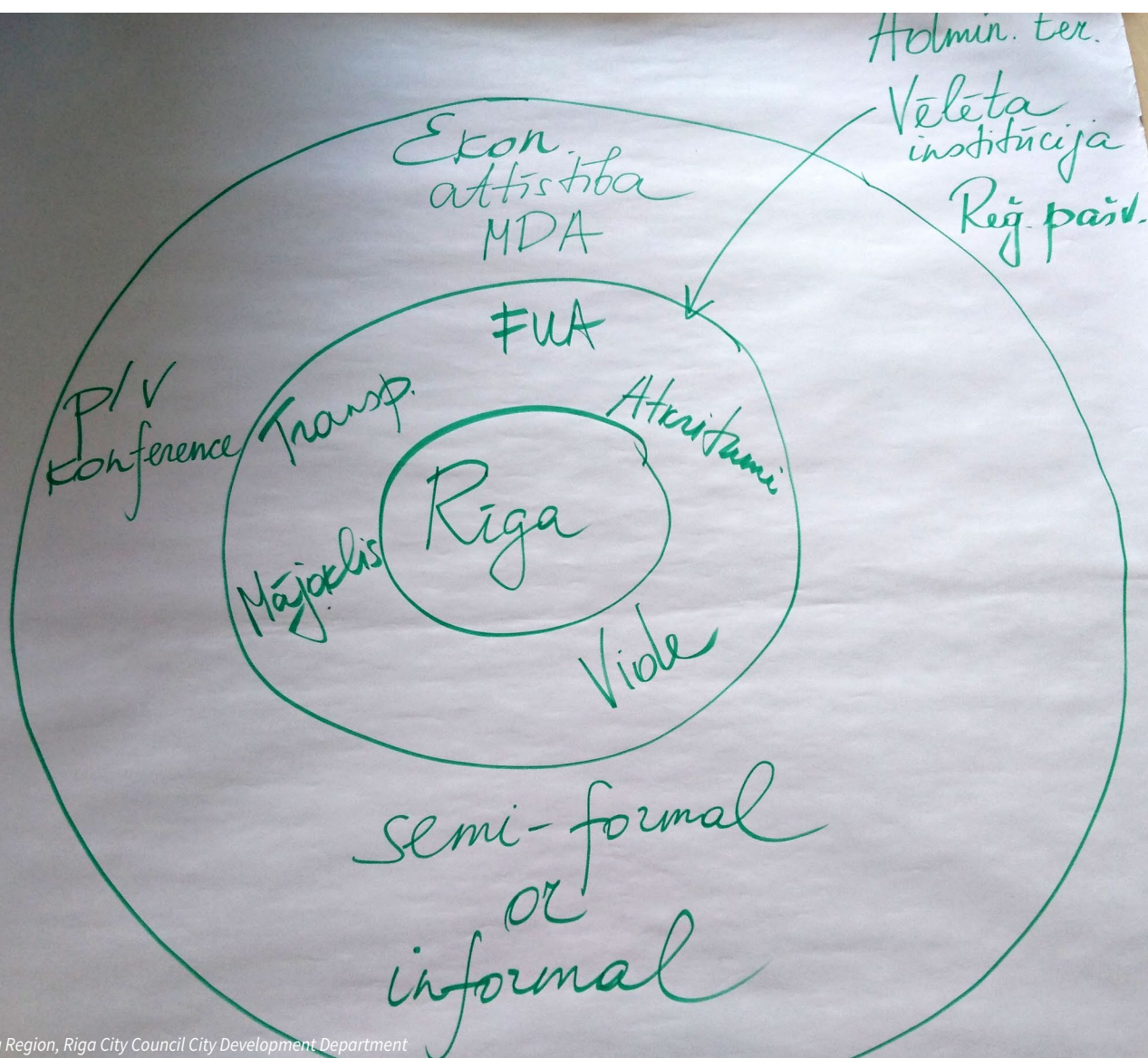
**Development of infrastructure for international transport hubs** (Riga passenger port, Riga international airport, Riga central station and Salaspils intermodal freight terminal), **interlinking** and effective reach from the most important towns of the metropolitan area.

**Location of industrial and production sites in the metropolitan area**, provision of related infrastructure, building services facilities complementary to the area's specialisation.











## Instruments for Implementing the Plan


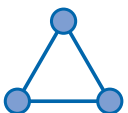


### Local Cooperation Platforms

**Riga Planning Region** – according to the status and functions of the region specified in the Law on Regional Development, the Riga Planning Region was founded as a derived public person in late 2006. Within the scope of its competence, the planning region shall ensure the planning, coordination of the development of the region, cooperation between municipalities and other public administrative bodies. With the creation of the planning region, it has been the main initiator and co-ordinator for

promoting cooperation in the Riga metropolitan area.

A collaborative platform set up by active associations is a contributing factor to successful local cooperation. In the metropolitan area, **the Pieriga Local Government Association, the Lower Daugava Tourism Cluster, the Alliance of Riga Neighbourhoods, the Pieriga Partnership**, regularly cooperate on metropolitan issues at regional and local levels.

According to the OECD, four concepts of metropolitan governance can be identified:

	<p><b>Informal coordination</b></p> <p>Non-formalised cooperation between municipalities is taking place to transfer information, experience, and ideas</p>	<p>Delta metropolis (The Netherlands)</p> <p>Helsinki Capital Region (Finland)</p>
	<p><b>Inter-municipal cooperation</b></p> <p>Responsibility and costs are shared among municipalities in a specific sphere, such as transport development, often involving other organisations and management levels. There is also scope for greater coordination and policy development, such as spatial development, transport, engineering infrastructure</p>	<p>Oslo-Akershus metropolis (Norway)</p>
	<p><b>Hierarchical cooperation between municipalities</b></p> <p>An additional level of governance is established which can be composed of a political representation directly elected by the population (mayor and/or council) or an unelected body established by the government</p>	<p>Stuttgart metropolitan region (Germany)</p> <p>Helsinki-Uusimaa region (Finland)</p>
	<p><b>Metropolitan city status</b></p> <p>Cities in which the population increases or exceeds the statutory classification of populated areas may be given the status of a “metropolitan city”. Such status means more support from the next level of governance and a wider range of competences</p>	<p>Daejeon (Korea Republic)</p>

Source: *Governing the City*, OECD, 2015

## Helsinki Capital Region

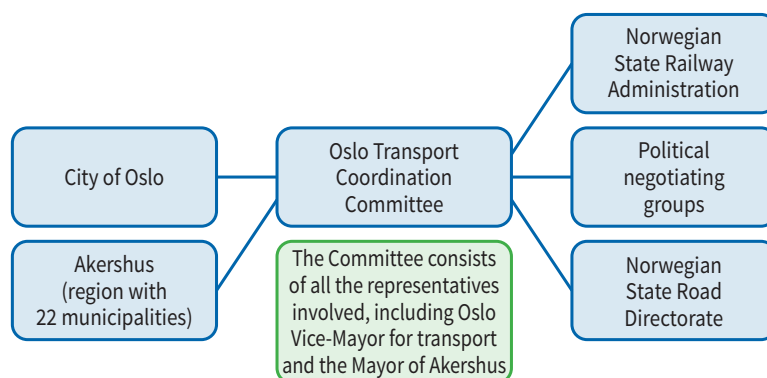
Informal coordination in the Helsinki capital region<sup>2</sup> is organised within the framework of the Helsinki Metropolitan Cooperation group. The Cooperation Group is a body formed by officials and public servants of the Helsinki metropolitan area. It is based on a cooperation agreement approved by the city councils of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen belonging to the Helsinki metropolitan area.



The Cooperation Agreement aims to improve the international competitiveness of the Helsinki metropolitan area, to develop regional cooperation and to defend common interests at national level.

## Oslo-Akershus Metropolis

The main objective of inter-municipal cooperation in the Oslo-Akershus metropolitan area<sup>3</sup> is to implement the Oslo transport, including public transport, investment portfolio from 2008 to 2032. The total budget is €12 billion.



## Stuttgart Metropolitan Region

Tasks of the Regional Assembly.<sup>4</sup>

Planning:

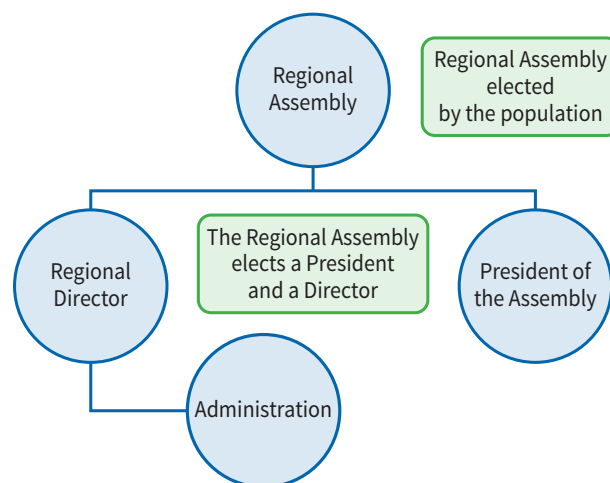
- regional planning,
- infrastructure planning,
- Landscape Park of the Stuttgart region.

Transport:

- regional transport planning,
- provision of the *S-Bahn* train in the region,
- development of sustainable mobility,
- provision of a single public transport network and ticket system.

Business:

- development of business,
- marketing of tourism,
- cooperation at European level.



Environment:

- framework for landscape development,
- waste management.

Voluntary tasks:

- culture, sports, congresses.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.helsinkiiregion.fi/hs/en/cooperation/helsinki-metropolitan-area-cooperation-group>

<sup>3</sup> METREX Oslo - Akershus Autumn 2013 Conference

<sup>4</sup> METREX Stuttgart Autumn 2019 Conference



## International Cooperation Platforms

### ESPON

**In support of the elaboration process and implementation of the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga metropolitan area**, the RPR has engaged in [ESPON](#) (European Spatial Planning Observation Network), a programme of applied research with a view to supporting the drafting of territorial development policies in the European Union. RPR, together with European metropolises such as Vienna (Austria), Berlin (Germany), Oslo (Norway), Stuttgart (Germany), Turin (Italy) and Warsaw (Poland), is conducting a study **Metropolitan Industrial Spatial Strategies & Economic Sprawl (MISTA) on the metropolitan area prospects for future development**. The information gathered under this study will allow for better planning of the location of economic activities and industrial sites in the Riga metropolitan area, identifying the most appropriate locations of business and production areas and, consequently, the main points of job concentration and the daily mobility flows of the population. The results of the study will contribute significantly to the planning process of land use, settlement structure, service placement and transport infrastructure, as well as **provide a comparative picture of the level of economic development of the Riga metropolitan area among strong European urban regions**.

In 2019, another ESPON study on the **Role and future perspectives of Cohesion Policy in the planning of Metropolitan Areas and Cities (METRO)** was approved, in which the Riga City municipality together with Turin (Italy), the Barcelona metropolis (Spain), the Lisbon metropolis (Portugal), Brno (Czech Republic), Gdansk (Poland), Florence (Italy), Lyon (France) and the Brussels region (Belgium) will explore the link between strategic planning at urban and metropolitan level and financing and instruments for cohesion policy, seeking answers to the following questions: what are the strengths and weaknesses in the process of implementation of the strategic cohesion policy planning and how integrated territorial development

in urban functional spaces is implemented due to cohesion policy? What types of instruments have they implemented and what could be implemented in the future (e.g. integrated territorial investment projects, community-led development projects (CLLD), other territorial instruments)?

### EUROCITIES

Since 2002, **Riga City Municipality has been a member of the European network for large cities, [EUROCITIES](#)**, and since 2014 representatives from Riga **have been participating in the EURO CITIES Metropolitan Area working group**. EURO CITIES is a strong interest representative (lobbyist) in the European Union, drawing on documents/mission strategies developed within the working groups and defending interests in drawing up thematic documentation for the European Union programming periods. The participation of the Riga City municipality in the Metropolitan Area working group of the cooperation network has contributed to discussions on the development of the Riga metropolitan area. In 2016, the Riga City Municipality together with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development organised an international conference entitled “Competitiveness through Cooperation: New Strategic and Management Solutions for the Riga Metropolitan Area Municipalities”, with experts from the network's Metropolitan Area working group. As part of the international conference and the survey of Riga metropolitan areas, experts provided recommendations for the development of the Riga metropolitan area. In 2018, the international partners of the network's Metropolitan Area working group were invited to participate in the ESPON workshop organised by the Riga Planning Region “Support for the Establishment of the Riga Metropolitan Area Action Plan”, in 2018 and in 2019, participation in the working group contributed to the participation of the Riga Planning Region and the city of Riga in two ESPON projects that will provide support for successful research and management of the metropolitan area. As part of the EURO CITIES

Metropolitan Area working group, the city of Riga has received a cooperation proposal from the University of Biberach Architecture and Energy Faculty to carry out research on the development of the administrative cross-border project of Riga-Pieriga. In summer 2019, the first fact-finding visit was carried out to identify the territories to be researched in the Riga metropolitan area.

## METREX

Another network to be mentioned as an example where the city of Riga is actively participating, is **METREX – the Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas**. METREX provides a platform for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience on metropolitan development, governance, and joint action on issues of interest.

The network consists of around 50 metropolitan regions and areas. METREX contributes to the metro-

politan dimension of policies, programmes, and projects at European level. METREX is a partner in the networks of European institutions, research communities, government organisations and other cooperation networks.

## Experience-sharing visits

**International experience-sharing visits** with the main participants in the development of the Riga metropolitan area – the municipalities in the area. The Riga Planning Region organizes such exchanges of experience with a view to establishing closer cooperation links at international level and to learn from examples of good practice. An experience sharing visit was organised in 2017 to Helsinki (Finland) and in 2019 to Vienna (Austria), focusing mainly on themes such as promoting the business environment, education, urban development, mobility, metropolitan area management, etc.

## Cooperation Agreements, ITI, Regional Fund and Other Support Instruments

*Cross-municipal cooperation agreements in different spheres: mobility, social services, education, health, active recreation, etc., integrated territorial investment (ITI) and the idea of a regional fund.*

### Regional Fund

In developing **a regional fund**, the municipal financial cohesion system should be seen as a common package, because in the case of the Riga metropolitan area, the municipalities of the area are the main contributors to the municipal financial cohesion system, which provides support to other local governments in Latvia. Contributions to the new regional fund will not stimulate mutual motivation, as provided for in the Guidelines, unless at least a partial recovery of the amount paid is ensured. The aim of the municipal financial cohesion system should be to promote the development of joint projects of the Riga metropolitan area, including to ensure that the municipal financial cohesion system is not an additional burden on municipal budgets.

### Taxes

In order to ensure high quality support for businesses, it is necessary to find new financial instruments and sources of income in the municipal budget directly linked to business taxes. The Riga metropolitan area could actively represent a position in favour of a partial transfer of a business-related tax, for example, the corporate income tax, to the local municipal budget, thereby encouraging the interest of the specific municipalities in promoting business development in their territory. At the same time, the potential role of business-related taxation in setting up a regional fund should also be examined.



## Framework for Cooperation

The choice of a management model and a form of cooperation is essential for the success of the metropolitan development objectives. In the case of the Riga metropolitan area, the initial informal activities to promote cooperation between the Riga planning

region, Riga and Pierīga municipalities have resulted in drafting the Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area, and in organising regular fora devoted to issues topical to the metropolis. As a result, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed on 29 October 2019 on the establishment of the Riga metropolitan area cooperation framework.

The Action Plan for the Development of the Riga Metropolitan Area has been developed under the leadership of the Spatial Planning Division of the Riga Planning Region. Gratitude to the members of the Coordination Group of drafting the plan, the Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre, representatives of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and the Ministry of Transport. Special thanks to representatives of the City Development Department of the Riga City Council and specialists of local municipalities in the Riga metropolitan area for their support in the drafting process.

Preparation of the mapping material and plan layout – SIA “Grupa93”.

