liveable
city

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region

Co-funded by
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RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES
Liveability

Liveability Charter Guide

Structure of this guide

In the following, we will outline possible steps to help you formulate an action plan rooted in the needs and working conditions of your city or municipality, and based on the principles of the Liveability Charter.

This guide is structured into three steps:

Step 1 provides a brief overview of the Liveability project.

Step 2 includes the method „Stakeholder map" which helps you identify participants for a charter workshop.

Step 3 provides guidance for preparing the workshop. To give you the right level of support, we offer three layers of guidance here: a short checklist, a spread-sheet/table, and a detailed plan.

Step 4 will give you an Idea of what could happen after the workshops.
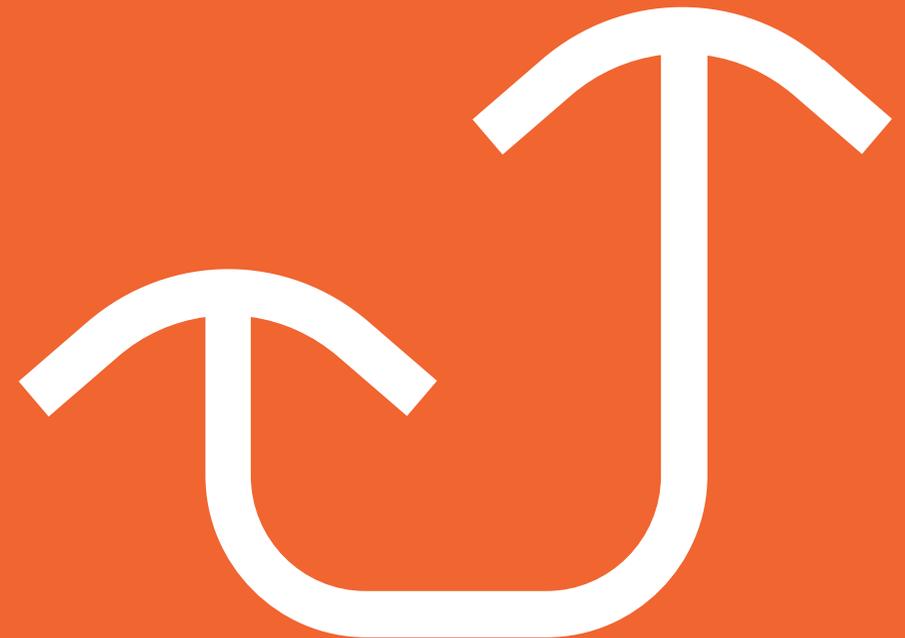
Step 1

→ **Introduction of the Liveability project**

Introduction

The EU-Interreg project "Liveability" brings together six partner cities and additional actors from the Baltic Sea Region.

The Charter for Designing Liveable Cities is key in this process. It provides guidance and outlines six principles that we think help cities enhance liveability through design-driven approaches by creating an enabling environment.

The Charter is based on the core ideas of Public Interest Design (PID) and helps people understand and apply these ideas in practice. It encourages public administrations—and others—to find solutions that are efficient, open, and creative. The Charter can be used in any city, no matter its size, background, or how its administration is set up.

Each partner city has piloted the charter in its own context, exploring different ways to discuss and apply its principles.This guide draws on those experiences to offer a series of suggested steps for introducing and implementing the charter in other cities or municipalities. It is intended to support municipal staff and decision-makers by providing inspiration and practical advice. The outlined steps are flexible and can be adapted to fit the specific conditions, priorities, and structures of your local administration.

liveable city
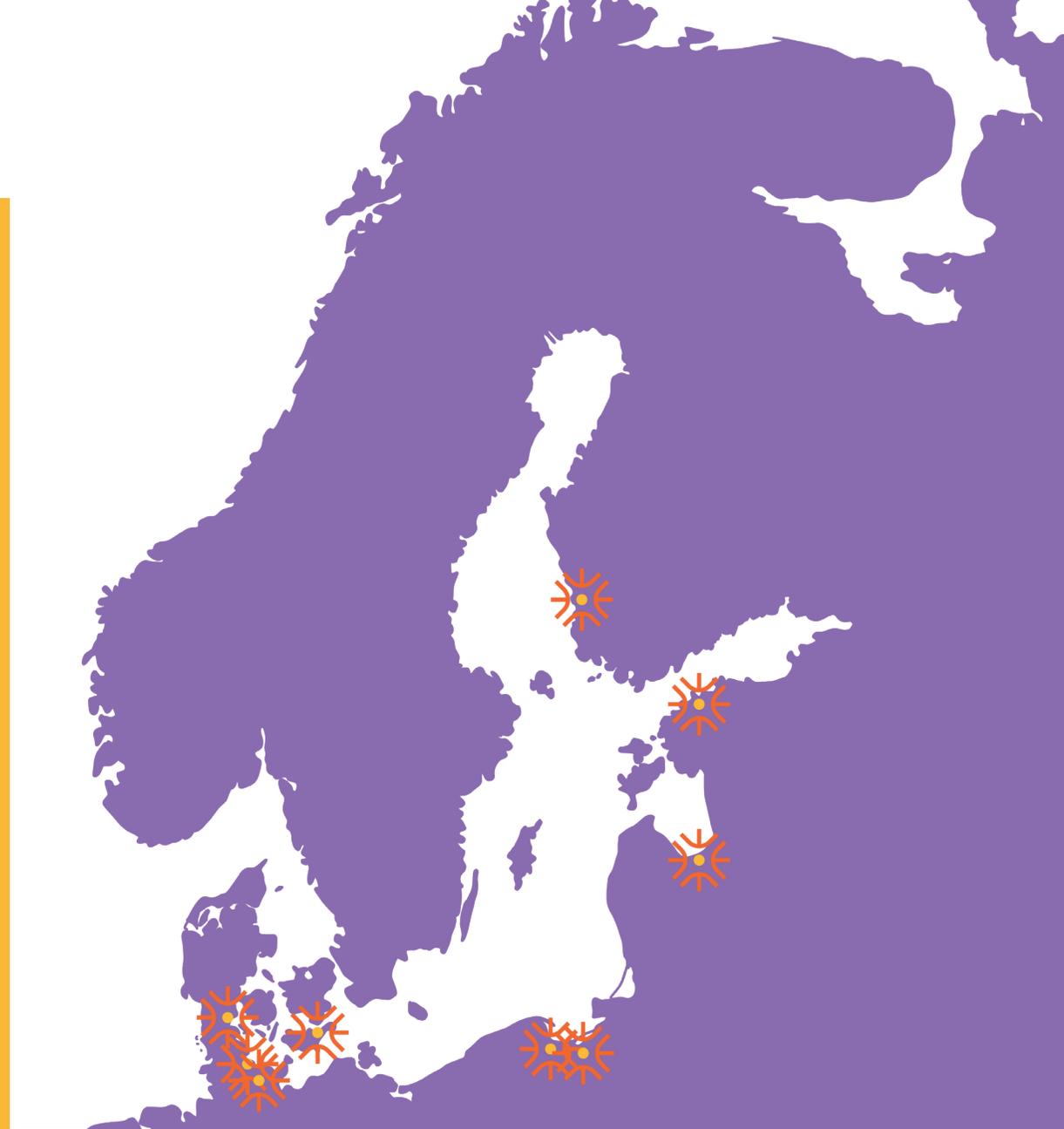
Step 2

⟶ **Who to get started with in your city/municipality?**

⟶ **How to work with the identifed stakeholders?**

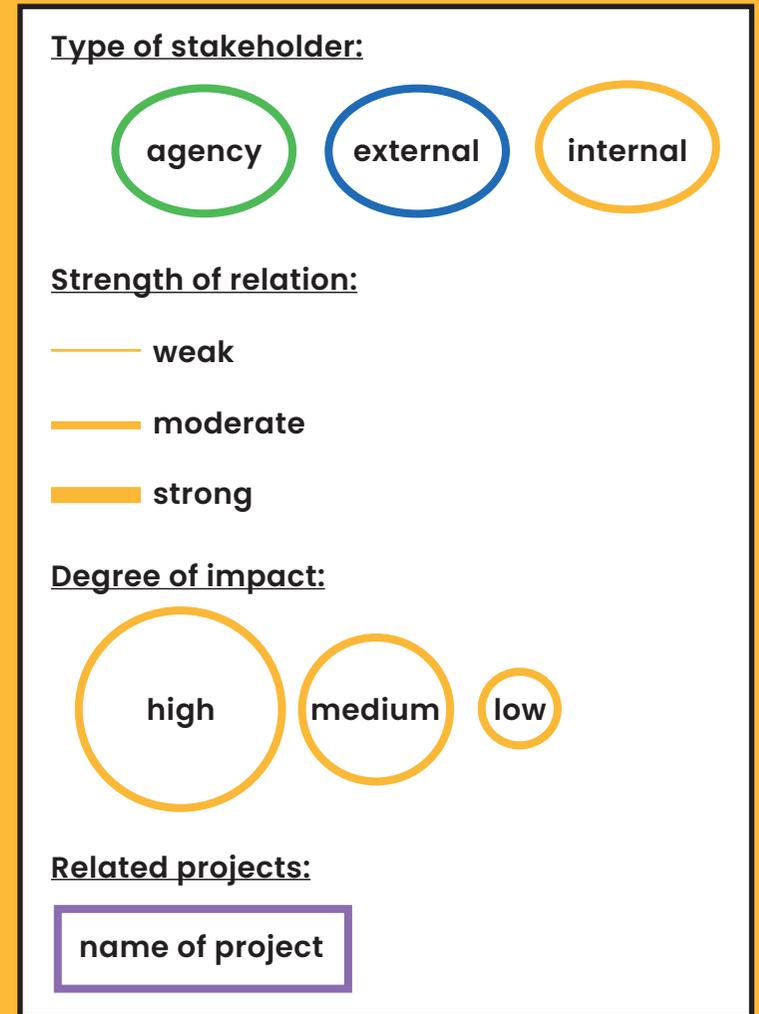# Who to get started with in your city/municipality?

Implementing the charter in your public administration is a collective effort that depends on the alignment of stakeholders across departments and communities. Without broad buy-in, a charter risks becoming symbolic rather than a practical tool for effective governance. You need to understand who is critical for the success of implementing the charter - you need to map your city's ecosystem.

Determine your stakeholder. On the right-hand side, you will find a legend that helps your define your stakeholders in more detail. You can find an example of a stakeholder map on the next page.

What is your own position within the city?

Who are the people that might be favourable towards the contents of the charter ?

Method: Stakeholder map
(according to influence and interest)

Type of stakeholder:

agency   external   internal

Strength of relation:

—— weak

—— moderate

—— strong

Degree of impact:

high   medium   low

Related projects:

name of project

Think of a list of actors according to different levels and fields of action

• internal actors (colleagues, middle management and high management in your administration/organisation)
• agencies (closely connected with public administration)
• external actors (e.g. from civil society, business, politics)

Then map the stakeholders

in a graph with two coordinate axes with interest (x-axis) and influence (y-axis) (as seen in the graph on the right).
In order to get an overview over the stakeholders within your city's ecosystem, it is helpful to map the stakeholders according to influence within the city and interest in the contents of the charter.

Related projects

Consider projects that are content-related to the charter and approach the people that are responsible for them. Before you approach different stakeholders consider their point of view and try to mold your approach towards that person or group of people, e.g. a person interested in change management might be interested in knowing more about strategic city management; a stakeholder who tries to push digital innovation can most likely agree with design principles as they are often used in digital/software creation. It is important to consider your discussion partner's interests in detail and adapt your approach accordingly.
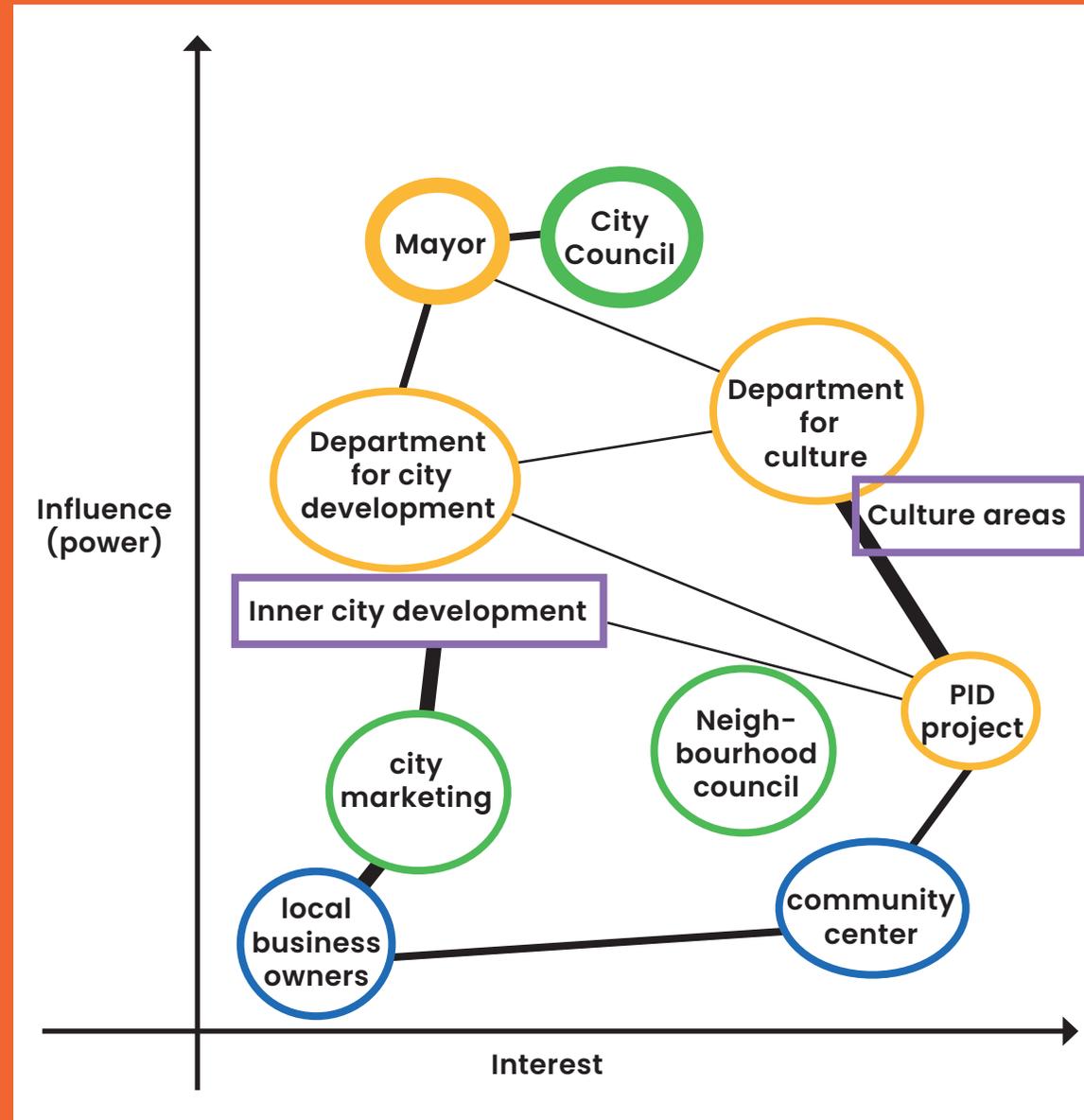
Example of a stakeholder mapping according to influence on the city and interest in the charter

How to work with the identified stakeholders?

WORKSHOP
Format and presentation

We suggest to deliver workshops for your identified target groups to discuss the contents of the charter. These workshops or presentations will serve as a starting point of the discussions around liveability in your city.

The goal is to find out whether the charter principles resonate with your stakeholders and how they can be implemented to make your city more liveable.

In the workshops you should familiarise your identified stakeholders with the principles and characteristics of the charter and enter into discussion with them on what the principles and characteristics might mean for your city. The goal of the workshop is to identify realisable actions for an action plan.

Preparation

This is an example on how to organise such a charter workshop:

Step	Activity	Description	Comment
1	Target audience	Choose diverse stakeholders: residents, NGOs, municipal staff, council members, business owners.	We suggest starting with a „safe" audience – supportive, constructive and known "insiders" – before scaling up. This will help you build confidence, correct errors in a friendly environment, and improve the overall flow of the workshop before scaling up. Limit to 20–25 participants (5 groups of 4–5).
2	Reason	1. Feedback to the Charter 2. Measuring and ranking the city via Charter principles 3. Identifying weak areas and propose actions to improve them.	Again - "safe space" is key. Some municipalities have stronger community/council involvement – use it as an advantage accordingly.
3	Date & time	2.5–3 hours, with a short break between evaluation of principles and designing future actions to improve them.	Pick a time convenient for the audience. E.g., evenings for residents, during regular working hours for city staff etc.
4	Homework	1. Prepare presentation, slides, venue, materials. 2. Share Charter with participants 1–2 weeks prior to the event.	Keep the Charter delivery close to the date to maintain relevance. Choose a venue close to your audience. Provide snacks.

Step 3

⟶ **How to design the „charter workshop"?**
⟶ **Suggestion for a meeting agenda**
⟶ **Introducing the liveability charter**
⟶ **Spiderweb**
⟶ **Circle of concern**

How to design the „charter workshop"?

This is an example on how to organise a charter workshop

During the workshop:
INTRODUCING the liveability charter

SPIDERWEB discussion +- rating the principles

IDENTIFY weakest principle in your city

DISCUSS existing challenges and possible actions to improve on this principle

USE CIRCLE OF CONCERN to prioritise possible steps for an action plan to improve implementation of this principle in your municipality

On the next page there is a more detailed explanation of steps we suggest using when implementing a Charter workshop.

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Suggestion for a meeting agenda:

THE MEETING

1. Introduction (15 min)
- **Project Overview:** What is Liveability? Purpose of the project.
- **Charter Explanation:** Purpose, development, and definition of principles.
- **Workshop Goals:**
    - Use the Charter to start a discussion around liveability in your city
    - Identify weakest principle(s) in your administration by ranking each principle and putting the rankings in the spider web (method explained below)
    - Based on the discussions use the method „Circle of concern" to develop actions that help improve the lowest ranking principles
- **Rules Set for Error-Free Zone:**
  1. All opinions accepted, not criticized
  2. Start with positive feedback
  3. Use current experiences relevant to each principle
  4. Rate charter principles on a scale of 1–6
  5. Assign one note-taker per group
  6. Charter is conceptual, not prescriptive - it is not a law or a policy document
  7. Workshops may be recorded for documentation purposes

2. The Charter Exercise (1h45' incl. break)
Group Setup (15 min)
- Divide groups in random (use your favourite method)
- Participant introductions (within each group, participants introduce themselves to others)

Principle Evaluation (1h30')
- One slide per principle
- Process:
  1. Individual rating (every participant ranks each principle individually first from 1–6)
  2. Group discussion→average group score (principle is discussed within each group and average group score per principle is then calculated)
  3. Discuss findings→average total score (one person from each group reports its findings and gives the group score; then the final average score is calculated from all group scores)
  4. Add the final score to spiderweb diagram+spreadsheet

Spiderweb Tool
- Visualize average scores (it's easy - you can add final scores per principle into a simple Excel table that can be exported into a spiderweb graph)

Suggestion for a meeting agenda:

We suggest to prepare a presentation which is moulded towards the target group's field of interest/work.

Try to prepare concrete questions for each principle considering the person's field of work. This is an example that may help you get a clearer idea:

3. Deep Dive into Weakest Principle (15 min)
Use „Circle of Concern" Method:
- What can I influence?
- What can I or the city control?
- What is important but beyond our influence?

Output:
3x3 matrix of practical areas for action and non-action (write at least 3 actions per each level in the Circle of concern and discuss with the audience)

4. Discussion & Feedback (15 min)
5-Finger Evaluation (use the 5 finger method to evaluate the quality of the workshop, principles, useful knowledge etc):

Thumb: What did you like?

Index finger: What would you stress as something important?

Middle finger: What didn't work or you did not like?

Ring finger: What will you take away as something useful?

Pinky finger: What needed more attention or is missing?

3. Sustainable strategic city management
- A sense of shared responsibility for the development of our city
- Knowledge about innovative and creative good practices/approaches is shared within the administration
- There is a clear vision (e.g. strategic goals) and a way to achieve it (plus monitoring)
- Active change management

Concrete questions:
→ Do you see yourself as part of a larger whole (such as the city of Kiel), or primarily as an employee of a specific department? If not, what would help you feel more connected to the broader organization?

→ Does your department have a clear vision and strategic goals that are shared with everyone? And are these actively pursued and evaluated in the sub-divisions?

→ Does your department effectively share knowledge about (new, innovative) methods/practices?

→ Do you have active change management in your department?

The Liveability charter

The "The Liveability Charter for Designing Liveable Cities" is a strategic document outlining important principles for working more citizen-centred to do more impactful work in administration based on the principles of public interest design.

The charter provides a framework within which municipalities can develop their own measures that contribute to creating a liveable city (liveability characteristics). Based on this framework, municipalities can formulate localised action plans. They should outline concrete measures fpr implementing the charter principles to realise the the characteristics of a liveable city. While these characteristics may vary in their manifestation, key aspects such as emotional well-being, green spaces, and creativity are essential for the city's growth and prosperity.

On the right you can see the liveability flower. It has 8 petals representing the 8 liveable charateristics. And 6 leaves showing our 6 principles.

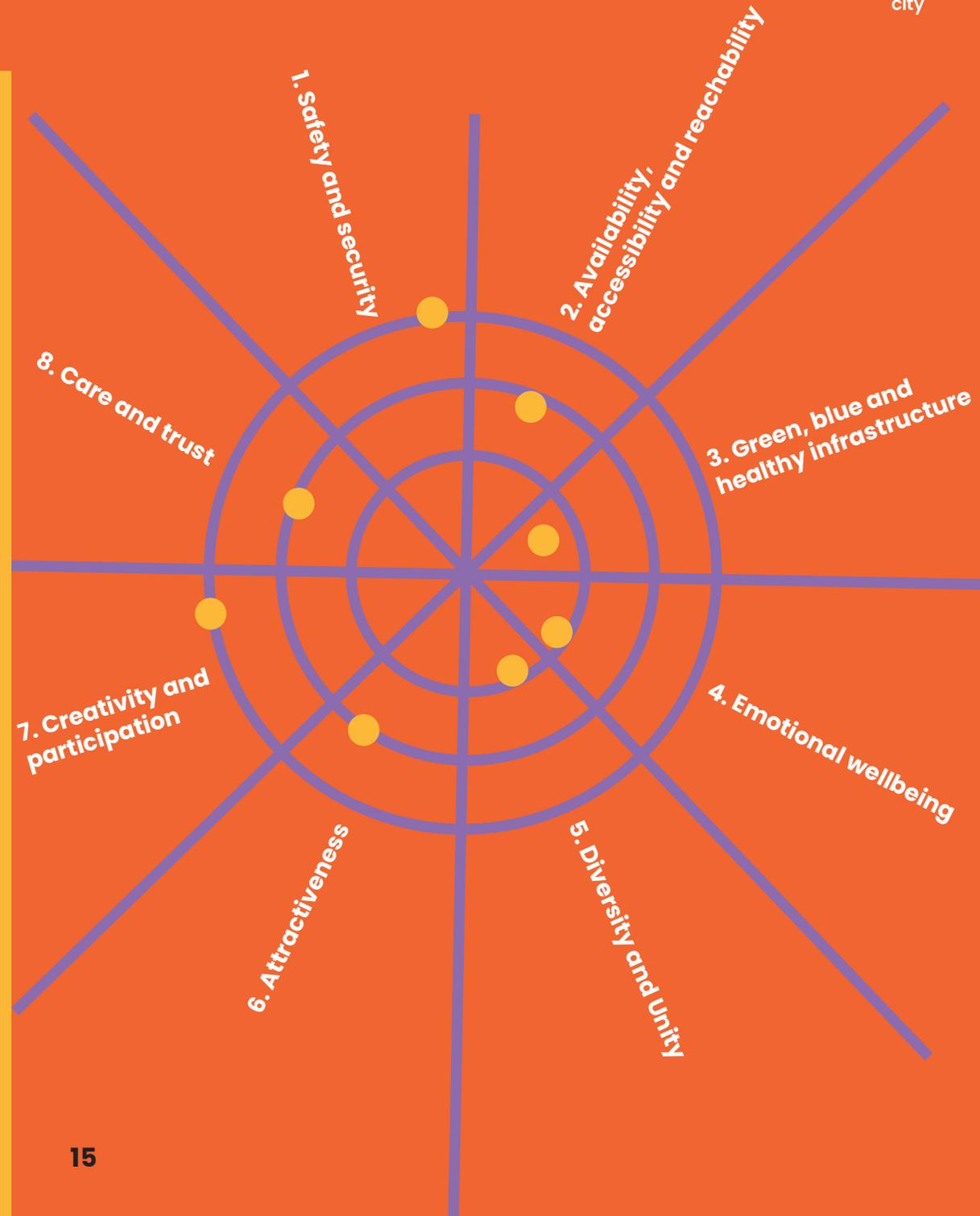The full charter can be found here:
(LINK to new website is coming)

1. Safety and security

2. Availability, accessibility and reachability

3. Green, blue and healthy infrastructure

4. Emotional wellbeing

5. Diversity and Unity

6. Attractiveness

7. Creativity and participation

8. Care and trust

Above you can see our 8 defined characteristics

1. Design for public good

2. Integrated and holistic planning

3. Sustainable strategic city management

4. Strenghten trust, transparency, communication and collaboration

5. Co-design with citizens

6. Become a learning city / municipality

Above you can see our 6 defined principles

Spider web

In order to identify the weakest principles in your municipality, we use a spider web tool for ranking the principles from 1 (weak) to 6 (strong). The ranking of each principle is done individually first and then discussed in smaller groups of not more than 4-5 people per group. The average ranking of each group is then calculated and put up for a discussion among all participants. The final average score of all rankings combined is calculated for each principle and put on the spider web tool as the final mark.

Through this process, the principle ranking the lowest (weakest principle) can be identified. Based on this assessment a discussion must follow, identifying existing challenges and possible actions to improve the implementation of the principle in your municipality.

1. Safety and security
2. Availability, accessibility and reachability
3. Green, blue and healthy infrastructure
4. Emotional wellbeing
5. Diversity and Unity
6. Attractiveness
7. Creativity and participation
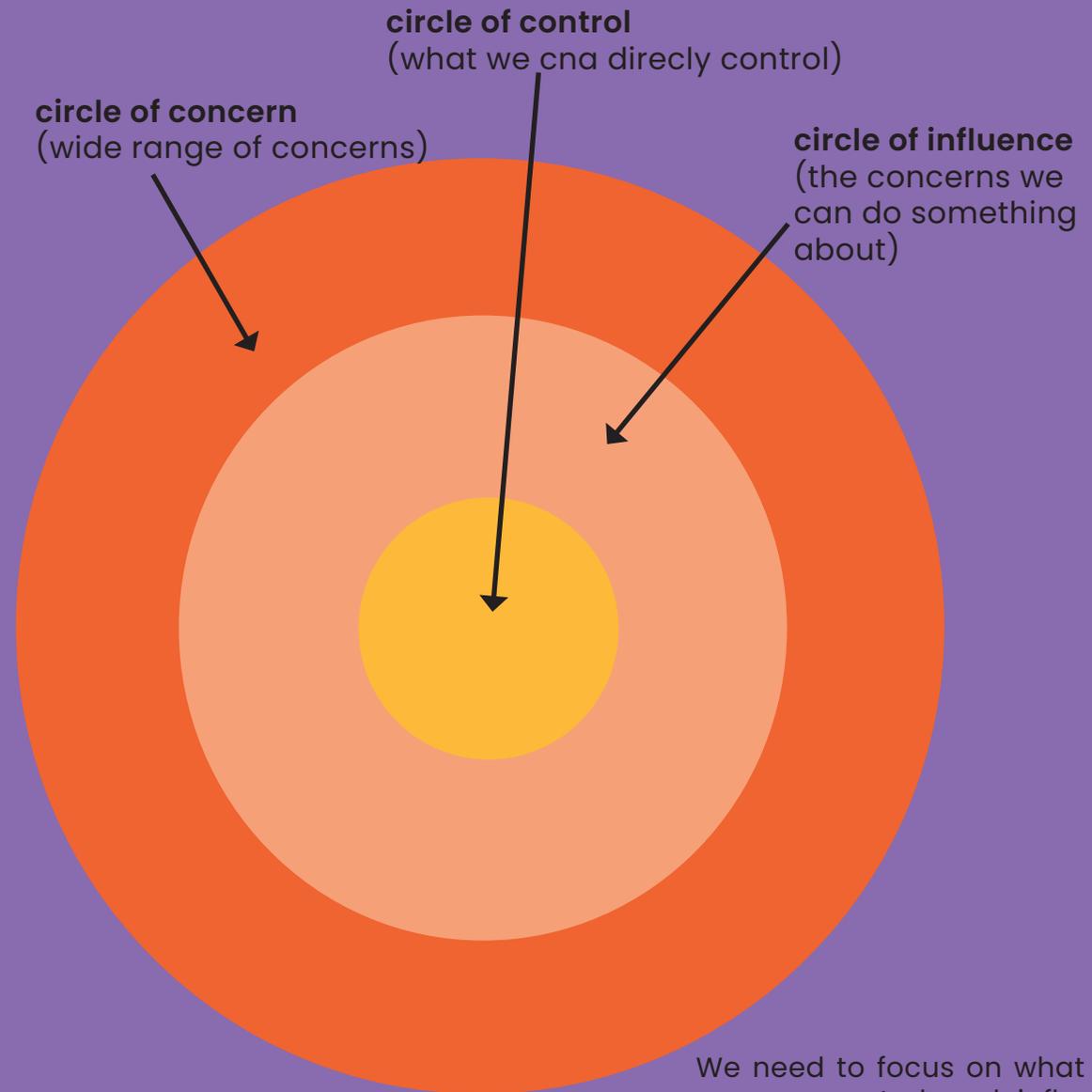8. Care and trust

CIRCLE of CONCERN

find your focus

The model of the circle of concern can help you find the focus for possible actions to realise the charter principles in your municipality. Based on the identified challenges and possible actions discussed in your workshops, consider with the workshop members which actions have the most impact and lie within your circle of control.

In order to detect and prioritise actions, and improve the weakest (or any other) principle, try categorising your identified possible actions according to these three circles:

☐ circle of control (actions you or the municipality can directly control and implement to improve the principle)

☐ circle of influence (actions that you as a municipality specialist, politician, resident, representative etc. can influence to improve the principle but might need more energy and effort to realise)

☐ circle of concern (actions that interest you and which outcomes are relevant to improving the principle but that you can't directly influence)

When you draw up an action plan, consider carefully within which circle the proposed actions lie. Prioritise actions that fall in the circle of control, then consider actions that lie within the circle of influence. You should keep in mind but let go of actions falling within the circle of concern. They cost a lot of effort, they are often far away from our possible influence and are often not rewarded with a good result.

circle of control
(what we cna direcly control)

circle of concern
(wide range of concerns)

circle of influence
(the concerns we can do something about)

We need to focus on what we can control and influence. The other things we need to let go.

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Step 4

⟶ **What happens after the workshops and presentations?**

What happens after the workshops and presentations?

What is the goal?

The goal is to develop an action plan that considers the situation of your city and thus localises the contents of the charter. The action plan can outline more concretely which steps to take in the near future to realise the principles of the charter in your work and to contribute to promoting the liveability characteristics.

An action plan makes sense because it helps turn ideas into clear, manageable steps. It shows what exactly is to be achieved, who is responsible for what, what needs to be done, and when, what amount and source is the funding, and other useful characteristics. This makes it easier to stay organized, track progress, and meet goals on time. Without an action plan, projects can become confusing, delayed, or incomplete. It also helps communicate the plan to others and gain their support. Overall, an action plan increases the chances of success by providing a clear roadmap to follow.

To create a basic action plan you can use the spreadsheet provided by the city of Riga (see example below). First start by assigning a number and naming the city or partner responsible. Note the status of the action (idle, in progress, or finished) and give it a clear title. Define the scale of the action — whether it's citywide, local, or legislative. Identify the main organizer who will lead and fund the action, along with any munici-

pal partners or external stakeholders involved. Add a short description of the action, including its goals and challenges. Then list the key activities needed to reach those goals, and track the progress of each one. Finally, set a clear deadline for when the action should be completed. This structure helps keep the plan organized, easy to follow, and results-focused.

New Website is coming

Instagram

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