

Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2020 Special Mentions

Jury Citations²

Antwerp, Belgium

Antwerp is recognised for its careful and deliberate development of systematic plans and projects to rejuvenate the city, through a combination of large-scale and small-scale interventions over the long term. The lack of coordination in the post-war development of Antwerp and the northward expansion of its port had resulted in disused and neglected areas, particularly along the Scheldt River. The Strategic Spatial Plan approved in 2006 catalysed the reversal of these conditions by introducing the strategy of *Renovatio Urbis* within the context of the region – renewal of the city through strategic interventions to tackle issues of climate change, affordable housing and living environments, urban mobility, and to strengthen the green and blue infrastructure.

Most significantly, the revitalisation of the quays along the River Scheldt has enabled conservation of selected historic heritage, mitigated flood risks, and reconnected the city with the river through new high-quality public spaces for all to enjoy. The climate-neutral Blue Gate project is another major initiative with great potential. Through the Urban Renewal Housing Programme, sites deemed unattractive by private developers are taken over by AG VESPA – an autonomous public developer – and converted into good quality affordable housing. Emphasis is placed on spatial quality and planning processes are supported by design research conducted by a dedicated team under the guidance of the City Architect. These small, surgical insertions in the urban fabric are laudable for seeding efforts to redevelop and revive neglected neighbourhoods.

To address congestion, the city launched the ‘Smart Ways to Antwerp’ programme to promote multi-modal travel, well integrated to serve new developments. Antwerp also took a bold step of embarking on the ambitious Over the Ring project, to cover a

² Facts and figures provided are accurate as of 2019.

congested ring road to better integrate two parts of the city and provide more green space. To overcome public concerns over potential dis-amenities of this massive project, Antwerp embarked on the most ambitious citizen participation experiment in Belgium to date. The city appointed an independent curator and design team to work with citizen groups to come up with implementable concepts, through an extensive series of workshops, exhibitions and tours, thus turning a confrontational situation into a long-term collaboration with citizens. It will be interesting to follow the progress of the project over the years ahead. The people-centric approach continues in Antwerp's efforts to integrate migrants by helping them gain the necessary skills to fit into the larger community.

Antwerp has demonstrated that there are merits to a 'Slow Urbanism' development approach – the flexibility to adapt and respond to new challenges, gain public support for long-term objectives, and grow the city in an organic way. The breadth and depth of ongoing interventions are highly impressive and poised for success. The sense of cooperation that transcends all levels from citizens to city administration sends a strong signal that solutions can gain widespread acceptance if governments are willing to work with citizens to co-create solutions. Antwerp's achievements thus far carry significant lessons for many cities tackling the complex challenge of integrating historical infrastructure with modern city planning.

Boston, United States

Boston is recognised for its holistic and cumulative effort on climate resilience, improving housing affordability and mobility options, and fostering civic participation, as exemplified through the completion of multiple projects with significant transformative effects. Boston's future readiness is most significantly highlighted in its innovative and tailored solutions to overcome its vulnerability to flooding as a dense city with 75 kilometres of coastline. Its redefinition as a knowledge economy since rebounding from decline in the 1980s, to be a thought leader today backed by a highly skilled workforce and residents with a deep love for the city, is also remarkable.

Imagine Boston 2030, launched in 2017, is highly commended as a forward-looking plan to guide the city into its next lap. As the first comprehensive citywide plan in over 50 years, it outlines clear goals in key aspects of housing, transport and resilience for implementation. Boston's ongoing effort to provide innovative and affordable housing solutions and transport measures to lower reliance on auto-centre lifestyles in favour of active mobility is praiseworthy and yielding results. In the aspect of resilience, the city has formulated various strategies at multiple scales, such as Climate Ready Boston and Resilient Boston Harbor, aimed at mitigating climate change issues.

Boston's exceptional efforts in recent years to build communities at various economic levels is laudable, with residents' voices articulating the challenges faced, setting goals for the city, and generating ideas to achieve results. This underscores the city's unwavering commitment to engagement and participation, and the residents' receptiveness to work alongside the city for win-win outcomes.

Boston stands out for its sincere engagement with not just its residents, but also developers and NGOs, through creating tailored solutions for value-added development. For instance, the completion of the New Balance Headquarters, 401 Park, and Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building contributed to positive transformative effects to the locales and catalysed further investment. In the example of Rose Kennedy Greenway, after the completion of the linear green as part of the 'Big Dig' project in 1991, the city focused on activating the resultant public spaces. Especially

over the last decade, more collaborators have stepped forward to install seasonal artworks, contribute programming and fund the upkeep of the urban oasis. These efforts paid off as today, the Greenway remained well-loved amongst residents and visitors alike. The evolution and sustainability of this long-term project also propels it to be a role model for other cities in park management and placemaking.

Overall, Boston's foresight in resilience leads the way, and urges other waterfront cities to take a similar proactive approach to tackle climate change issues. The city's visionary and strategic planning, together with the close partnership and trust of its people to deliver results, places itself on a good track to achieve the goals set for both the city and its people, in 2030 and beyond.

Lisbon, Portugal

Lisbon is recognised for its dramatic resurgence over the past ten years. Suffering from two decades of financial turmoil, the city took the crisis as a chance for better governance and transformed itself into an attractive city with new investments, residents and visitors. Through innovative ideas and effective implementation, Lisbon has achieved significant results in a short period of time despite limited financial resources.

The city develops various innovative schemes to collaborate with private sector investment to meet its strategic objectives. For example, the city offers incentives to developers to operate affordable homes for a growing population under the Affordable Rent Programme, and floor area bonuses to private land owners to achieve conservation objectives and recover former parking spaces at prime locations. The latter helps to preserve the city's historic character and create a more pedestrian-friendly urban environment and vibrant public spaces.

Lisbon is highly commended for its strategic urban interventions and mobility measures leading to significant physical transformation and improved public realm experiences. There are many catalytic projects implemented along the riverfront, such as the new Cruise Terminal, pedestrianisation of a major arterial road along the waterfront, and removal of a surface carpark at the waterfront into the extremely popular Comercio Square. These projects helped to stitch the city core back to the river, and created an attractive recreational corridor that continues to catalyse improvement and rejuvenation works along the waterfront.

The thoughtful and integrated approach of opening up new areas enabled the city to grow while preserving its historic core. The Beato Creative Hub will transform a disused military complex into a new start-up facility to foster entrepreneurship, while the conversion of underutilised spaces into new community nodes under the 'A Square in Each Neighbourhood' initiative encouraged people to step out of their homes, especially the elderly and handicapped. The Lisbon Green Corridors that has been progressively realised since 2008 not only helped to connect communities, but also

created attractive recreational areas, cycling pathways, and much needed green spaces.

The city leaders recognised that for Lisbon to meet its 2050 goal of carbon neutrality, the city must act now. While implementing its long-term transport strategy for a 40 per cent increase in regional public transport network, smaller but impactful measures such as the introduction of a €40 monthly metropolitan pass, improvement of pedestrian connectivity, and regular road closures make it possible for the people to start adopting more sustainable modes of commuting.

Working with the local community also helps the city do more with less. The Participatory Budget initiative allocates 5 per cent of the municipal budget to citizens' proposed projects, allowing the city to be responsive to citizens' needs while maximising its limited resources to projects that matter most. An excellent use of this fund was to rejuvenate the once-stigmatised Mouraria Quarter and turn it around from a dangerous area of prostitution and drugs into the vibrant and diverse district one experiences today.

Lisbon demonstrates resilience in the face of adversity to overcome limitations by turning crisis into opportunity. Its story of rebound should encourage other cities which find themselves in a similar situation.