



Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) Québec Roadmap: Together towards a "New Urban Project"

Progress report (November 2022-September 2023)

INTRODUCTION

The Québec Roadmap was launched on November 1, 2022. By combining the principles of communities of practice and the concept of participatory engineering, the Québec Roadmap offers an innovative method for developing, and ultimately implementing, integrated solutions that meet the needs of OWHC member cities for urban management in general and the preservation of historic centres in particular.

This report provides an update on the progress of the project. It capitalizes on the initial results to clarify the outlook for the next OWHC World Congress, to be held in Cordoba (Spain, September 24-27, 2024).

REMINDER

In the run-up to the 16th World Congress (Quebec City, Canada, September 6-9, 2022), OWHC member cities adopted the "Québec Roadmap: Towards a New Urban Project 2022-2024." The political vision behind the Roadmap is based on four main ideas:

- As the core of cities, the historical areas have shaped their identities. As a living entity, the historic city must continually adapt itself to continue being the foundation for the future development of the whole urban area.
- Interventions in these areas must preserve and dynamize all the functions that have to coexist in order to constitute attractive living environments.
- Their development in modernity must be carried out with respect for the idea that the city is made to live in and for the integrity of their heritage which must be regarded as an irreplaceable resource for quality community life.
- Local governments must create and maintain a permanent dialogue with all the actors involved in the development of the city.

The combined effects of climate, economic, and social crises are putting considerable pressure on urban environments, which are particularly vulnerable in their historical and heritage dimensions. Faced with the scale of the changes underway, other ways of acting and new urban practices need to be considered by OWHC cities.



RESULTS

From the outset, the Roadmap establishes the operational framework for an innovative collective approach aimed at building a bold strategy for action, common to all the Organization's member cities, that will reconcile the human, the urban, and the environmental dimensions.

- a. 20 cities have already made a formal commitment: Bordeaux (France), Brugge (Belgium), Brussels (Belgium), Cidade Velha (Cape Verde), Colonia de Sacramento (Uruguay), Cordoba (Spain), Krakow (Poland), Cuenca (Ecuador), Dubrovnik (Croatia), Évora (Portugal), Marrakesh (Morocco), Morelia (Mexico), Puebla (Mexico), Quebec City (Canada), Querétaro (Mexico), Regensburg (Germany), Split (Croatia), Strasbourg (France), Vilnius (Lithuania), and Xochimilco (Mexico). These cities are joined by cities associated with the Regional Secretariat for Southern Europe and the Mediterranean (RSSEM).
- b. As members of the "Scientific Committee," experts from the participating cities have directly contributed to establishing a rigorous and efficient methodology, adjusted to the constraints of the municipal teams, so as to only solicit them on the essentials and obtain only data and contributions deemed useful to the process. Three steps have been proposed:
 - The first "conception" step aims to identify and define thematics, as well as set up "Collaborative Networks."
 - The second "implementation" step involves exploration work on the part of the Collaborative Networks.
 - The third "evaluation" step assesses the results to draw lessons and identify possible solutions to the issues at stake.
- c. The Roadmap benefits from the involvement of various monitoring bodies:
 - The Mayors' Panel, which provides political oversight of the entire process.
 - The Network of Elected Officials, which oversees strategic reflections with a view to the Cordoba Symposium (September 2024).
 - The Scientific Committee, made up of experts from the participating cities, which reviews/adjusts and validates the technical documents.
 - The Advisory Group, made up of international experts, which assists the General Secretariat throughout the process.
- d. Participating cities have mobilized local expertise and carried out various interdepartmental consultations leading to a precise description of their situations and the main concerns they wish to address within the framework of the Roadmap.
- e. The situations described by the cities have yielded 31 thematics identified so far.
- f. Nine of these thematics are now considered "priorities." They were presented by the elected representatives of the first eight pilot cities and by the Regional Secretariat for Southern Europe and the Mediterranean (RSSEM) at five Round Tables held in June and July 2023:
 - Greening and space planning for urban refreshment (Bordeaux)
 - Intangible heritage as a resource for urban rehabilitation (Brugge)



- Protecting and strengthening the residential function of the city's historic centre (Brussels)
- Raising awareness and disseminating heritage information to the local community (Colonia del Sacramento)
- Regulation of traffic within the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site (Dubrovnik)
- Greening public spaces (Krakow)
- Rejuvenating the historic centre through an active mobility model (Puebla)
- Pacified mobility: Arrangement and sharing of streets between different users and mobility modes (Quebec City)
- Crafts and traditional know-how for the preservation of heritage (RSSEM)

PROVISIONAL REPORT

Initial intuitions are confirmed

- i. The number of cities involved in the Roadmap to date confirms both the relevance of the operational objectives pursued by the OWHC since the Quebec City Congress and the willingness of member cities to seek other forms of cooperation.
- ii. The Roadmap effectively serves the political vision adopted at the Quebec City Congress and responds concretely to situations widely shared by the participating cities.
- iii. The issues raised by these situations become clearer as the process unfolds; they further structure the developing process and clarify the OWHC's original approach.
- iv. Taken together, the thematics identified so far by the cities offer an ambitious "panorama" that provides an ideal framework for the collective work to be carried out by the Collaborative Networks.
- v. The dynamic developed by the Roadmap is already an innovative participative engineering tool for the OWHC:
 - It proposes a process of collective reflection that implements the notion of learning through action, collaboration, and the pooling of expertise.
 - It is based on the principles of communities of practice, assembling cities that share a desire to work together on issues of common interest. Communities of practice encourage participative learning, in which members can exchange knowledge, ideas, and best practices.
 - It fosters dialogue and ensures recognition of the importance of involving everyone in the design and implementation of the process.

Constraints are turned to advantage

- vi. The 20 participating cities provide sufficient critical mass to legitimize the Roadmap and fully implement its participatory methodology. Enthusiasm or curiosity on the part of member cities about the opportunities offered by the Roadmap is, in some cases, limited by resource constraints and the scale of the tasks and responsibilities with which municipal departments and services are confronted on a daily basis. The success of the Roadmap does not rest primarily on the number of cities involved, but rather on the quality of the commitment of the participating cities and the means used to share the results of the work.
- vii. The methodology and the various steps are constantly simplified and adapted to the different cultural and political realities of the member cities, taking care to maintain a logical basic

structure and a common frame of reference, as well as maintaining the principles that set the Roadmap apart:

- The mayor's written confirmation of a city's commitment meets the need to marshal municipal teams for the duration of the Roadmap and to incorporate the approach into the urban planning work of the cities involved.
 - Cities that can't engage this way right now also have the opportunity to get involved in the technical work of the Collaborative Networks as "followers," to enable as many members as possible to take an active part in the work.
 - The deliverables expected at the various stages of the process minimize the demands on municipal teams as much as possible, but it is the contributions of the cities that must be the main focus of the Roadmap.
 - The Roadmap is designed to provide practical support for the work of municipal departments and is to be incorporated as much as possible into existing procedures and budgetary frameworks.
 - The Roadmap's operational principles must therefore be constantly foregrounded and stakeholders convinced of the virtues of its method, which provides concrete opportunities for cooperation, openness, and experience sharing. The difference it brings to member cities must be seen as an opportunity.
- viii. Explaining the method and mobilizing cities to identify the Priority Thematics has involved a considerable investment and a vast array of meetings and discussions. Step 1 of the Roadmap was spread out over a longer period than originally estimated, opening up a clearer and simpler pathway for future cities that decide to sign on. The iterative approach of "working together" is an original feature that ensures that participatory work is firmly anchored in OWHC procedures.
- ix. The mainstay of the Roadmap remains practical, hands-on experimentation as the principal means of learning together, testing possible solutions, and deciding on the form and content of urban projects to be prioritized in the future to meet the challenges identified by OWHC cities. As step 2 of the Roadmap (implementation) will be rescheduled over a shorter period than planned (September 2023-May 2024), the Collaborative Networks will be able to focus on pooling experience and knowledge and building a shared culture concerning each Thematic. Their work will lead to the proposal of common objectives and guidelines, which will form the basis for the work of the Cordoba Symposium. In order to arrive at a proposal for the OWHC's "New Urban Project," Symposium participants may wish to continue the process by prioritizing the implementation of pilot projects.

PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

- The concentration of efforts on step 1 (identification of Thematics) during the first year of the Roadmap consolidates the conditions for success of the collective work to come within the framework of the Collaborative Networks (step 2). These will give the Roadmap its full scope and reveal the full potential of the approach.
- The Collaborative Networks will take on particular importance in the run-up to the Cordoba Symposium. They will perpetuate a way of working that will definitively change the OWHC's contribution to its members. To this end, the concept of the Cordoba Symposium will give



- priority to workshop endeavours and the establishment of gateways for the transfer of experience between the Collaborative Networks.
- The Cordoba Symposium will provide an opportunity to validate all the innovations and results. On this occasion, member cities will be able to consider expanding the scope of the approach to offer a further phase of experimentation through pilot projects.
 - To ensure that the process continues in the run-up to the Cordoba Symposium, the Mayors' Panel will meet in Brussels on October 13, 2023.