

Deliverable 7.4
Executive Summary

*Urban/regional planning
evolution and its impact*

1. Executive Summary

Cities are today the image of their historical evolution, and in them we can see the result of the various attempts to organize them, with the overlapping outcomes of historical citizen promoted growth, governmental and mainly master planning lead progress. As a result, the “as is situation” is in many cities long away from the ideal and egalitarian city that would be wished for. Main urban problems in developed areas refer to socio-spatial inequalities and urban fragmentation, environmental issues, population decline and shrinking cities or sprawl.

In Europe each country has its own planning system, dependent on the existing legal systems and institutional frameworks. There exists a wide range of equilibriums between the powers and responsibilities of central, regional and local authorities. Different levels of centralizations and decentralization give more or less balanced distributions of responsibilities and while some countries are trying to loosen the grip, others have identified the need to tighten their regulatory frameworks.

Nevertheless, although having different situations, the Member State Ministers have committed themselves, by signing the “Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities”,

- to initiate a political debate in their states on how to integrate the principles and strategies of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities into national, regional and local development policies,
- to use the tool of integrated urban development and the related governance for its implementation and, to this end, establish any necessary framework at national level,
- to promote the establishment of a balanced territorial organisation based on a European polycentric urban structure.

Basically, to promote sustainability, it is firstly important to understand to what degree mobility is dependent on urban planning, and vice versa. One question should be asked: “Why are we moving?”

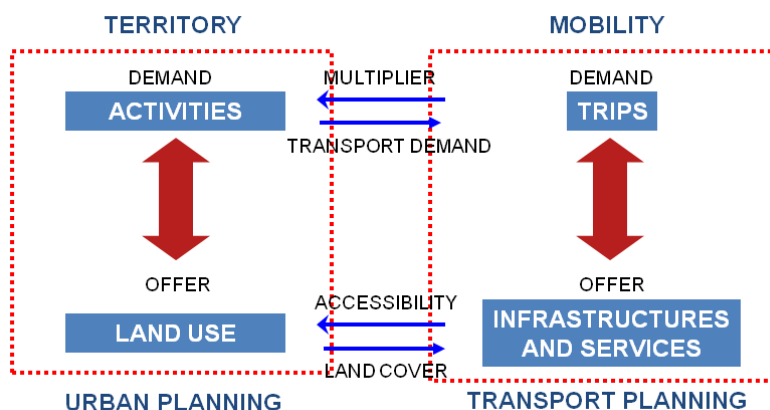


Figure 1: Relation between territory and mobility

Considering that travel, very rarely, is an end in itself, the reply to that question is simple: we move to switch from one activity to another, as it is shown in Figure 5. And the activities are seated in the territory according to the criteria established in urban planning

In fact, mobility is a basic element of urban planning, as is land-use or land-use intensity regulation. Properly balancing land-use and activities significantly contributes to reducing the need to move from one place to another.

Experience shows that this relationship has been forgotten in many instances. The driver of urban development has often been economic gains. From this perspective, many plans have been developed without assessing how the resulting product will function and affect urban quality, social equality or energy efficiency, thereby disregarding the relationship between mobility and land-use regulation. As planning has become more complex, urban planning laws have become more prolific, but, in most cases, there is no regulation to narrow the scope of mobility reports that must accompany planning documents.

The urban planning elements of the 2050 vision are aimed at two goals:

- To reduce the needs of urban and metropolitan mobility, ensuring that the demands are served by more sustainable modes
- To ensure good accessibility to mobility hubs, both passenger and freight, in order to improve railway modal shift in middle and long distance mobility.

In the **2050 Vision**:

The transport system is configured in such a way **public transport, walking and cycling are the main ways of moving around the city**. Using the private vehicle inside cities has become not only expensive but highly uncomfortable. Freight distribution and logistic activities within cities is strongly controlled and causes minimum impacts.

Mobility is an essential issue of spatial planning, with strong relationships in both directions. Regional strategy plans list the basic principles of management and establish priorities for further development of city master plans, and their mobility plans. The different land uses are posed based on the different territory's "vocations" with the aim of achieving the best possible balance between the different territorial areas. In addition, the management of land use is proposed on the basis of criteria that lead to decreased mobility needs, by combining the mixed land use, service decentralization and approach, and an advanced urban planning.

Coordination at local and regional level is much stronger than nowadays. European cities assume responsibility for territorial cohesion. Urban development policy issues and decisions are no longer locked at the level of each city in isolation. Our cities do networking more closely with each other at European level. Integrated urban development policies offer a set of worthy instruments to develop modern, co-operative and effective governance structures. Different actors including the citizens will be involved in urban planning. The vision exposes coordination between different levels of planning as well as cooperation between institutional agents.

In regards to **regulation**, even urban legislations still are quite different among countries, basic criteria for urban functionality, in regards of urban planning and transport, are identified as European Standards and each country integrates them into their own specific regulations. These criteria are not only in the spirit of each urban law, but specific requirements.

High densities plus land use mix are the main features that make it feasible to implement a dense network of rail/metro stations and bus stops as well as high frequency public transport services. Mobility is in this scenario, walking, cycling and public transport based; and the city provides open spaces designed with inclusive criteria, to help achieving social inclusion and quality of life. Industrial and logistic

centres, requiring specific locations for security/environmental reasons are accessible by public transport in comfortable conditions.

The vision comprises increasing the quality of public spaces, by integrating infrastructure in the territory, creating liveable open spaces, guaranteeing **walkable and cyclable** links throughout the city, limiting private vehicle trips inside the city as well as offering a functional and comfortable public transport network based on rail for high volume connections. Road and street networks inside the city are mainly used by emergency and logistics vehicles.

Any other longer trip, out of walking / cycling distance range (especially those related to work or studies) is, as said, feasible through the extended public transport network, which covers 100% of the city and grants functionality by providing speed and comfort.

On the other hand, every task or activity that is beyond this reach is accessible in a **virtual system**. Ordering for shopping, administrative tasks and civic duties can all be handled this way.

There is a clear division between industry and logistics enabling, netter integration of logistics and freight transport in urban planning. This integration is reinforced by the development of Logistics Master Plans to order these uses in the territory and ensure affordable land for logistics activities. In addition, these lands are located taking into account the accessibility requirements of logistics functions.

Urban planning provides central locations for new **mobility hubs**, with enough space to include the elements necessary for optimal functioning. Around mobility hubs, urban planning poses land uses with important ability to generate or attract trips with high building densities. Moreover, to improve or expand mobility hubs in consolidated urban areas, special urban plans are designed.

Regional and local logistics plans are developed **in favour of rail**. Logistics is planned from a territorial perspective, through Master Plans that, instead of promoting competition between municipalities/cities, orders logistics activity in the region or metropolitan areas.

Each city has one or more **urban distribution centres**, depending on its size, located homogenously around the city concentrating the reception and expenditure of freight, and minimizing the presence of heavy vehicles inside urban zones. Special deliveries ask for permission for entering protected areas. Almost the whole city is integrated in a protected area.

The Vision is technically, socially, financially and politically **achievable if understood and shared**.

The proposed changes are time requiring, and can only be implemented in the long term, but with continuous work throughout the next 35 years (2015 – 2050).

Planning costs are minimum compared to the costs of developing projects and much smaller when compared with the benefits for the population in terms of quality of life. Financial planning is very important in terms of identifying priorities and planning in the long term. Funds are, of course, limited.

Political support has to be achieved now, to grant the necessary planning framework to develop the Master Plans from which “The Vision” can be constructed and put into operation.

Having “The 2050 Vision” in full operation requires having completed the PLANNING STEP by 2030:

-
- A completely developed planning framework and regulations (EUROPEAN STANDARDS transcribed to NATIONAL REGULATIONS)
 - Master Plans defined and approved under sustainable standards, and developed under "Governance" criteria.