

The Future of Walking Perspectives, Trends and Visions

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Past decades

Paradigm changes to urban streets



Phase 1:
Loss of space
and network
(car invasion)

Phase 2:
Walking is transport
(too); first steps of
traffic calming

Phase 3:
Creating attractive
public spaces:
"there is more to
walking than just
walking" (Gehl)

Source pictures: Stadt Schaffhausen / Fussverkehr Schweiz;
Deutsches Bundesarchiv & D. Sauter

Visions in 1910 ...of the year 2000

Source: Villemard, 1910
Chromolithographie Paris, BNF,
Estampes.

Website: <http://expositions.bnf.fr/utopie/feuille/index.htm>



Methodology

- Trends and scenarios
=> Forecasting
- Visions and the path to achieve them
=> Back-casting
- Time horizon 2030
=> same time frame as 1990-2010

Key findings

- **People**
Preparing for a changing society
- **Spaces**
Creating inclusive public spaces
- **Energy**
Anticipating the impact of increasing energy prices
and climate change

People: trends (1)

- **Aging societies**
 - in absolute and relative terms
 - people fitter/healthier & more frail/vulnerable
- **Increasing diversity and inequality**
 - poverty, cultures/identities, lifestyles
 - political attempts to divide and exclude



People: trends (2)

- **Health and individual well-being**
 - healthy lifestyles: food, physical activity, 'wellness'
 - powerful argument: individual & societal benefits ~congruent
 - also danger: fine line to avoid stigmatisation and discrimination
- **Leisure and tourism**
 - recreation in daily life - to relax, exercise, enjoy environment
 - walking as important part of tourism experience



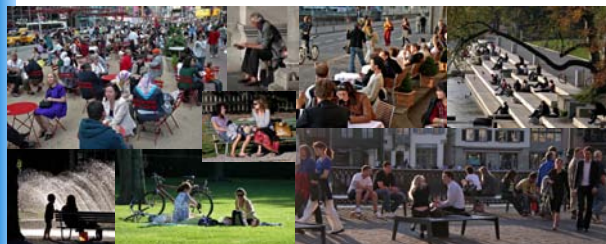
Spaces: trends (1)

- **Continued urban sprawl & renewal in the centres**
 - peri-urban single family homes (multi-car households)... & ...suburban high density apartment buildings
 - city neighbourhoods upgraded (industrial sites, water fronts)
 - good walking & sojourning cond. in centre, dismal in periphery



Spaces: trends (2)

- **Increasing (?) time spent in public spaces**
 - mainly in Northern Europe (no street café culture before)
 - 30-60 mins. staying per day - plus ~30 mins. walking



Spaces: trends (3)

- **Good quality public spaces as economic assets**
 - for tourism, businesses, investors => 'liveable cities' ranking
 - discovery of pedestrian as consumer
- **Space becoming relational**
 - "real" and "virtual" worlds combined
 - mobile/interactive devices, concurrent multi-purpose activities



Spaces: trends (4)

- **Gentrification & commercialising of public spaces**
 - upgrading leads to attractive spaces in centres *but often also* to expensive / exclusive stores, apartments, street cafés etc. => pushing out poor(er) people and store owners
 - events, tourism-orientation, 'management of masses' => store-mix changes; loss of specific characteristics of places
 - economy as powerful argument – but walking also human right



Spaces: trends (5)

- **Conflict, surveillance & social exclusion**
 - city center as party place; waste, noise, vandalism, violence
 - surveillance, private security, disciplining & education
 - displacement of 'undesired' people (homeless, disadvantaged)
 - creation of 'badistic environments' (Mike Davis)



Energy: trends (1)

- **Expected rise in energy prices (peak oil)**
 - cheap energy as main driver of economy since 1950's
 - impact on societies of price increase:
 - mobility patterns & land-use
 - political reactions, social divide, potential unrest
 - oil price + aging + suburbs: potentially dramatic mix
 - transition time decisive
- **Effects of climate change**
 - foreseeable changes, i.e. heat in southern climates, flooding, glaciers & permafrost melting



Energy: trends (2)

Technology: e-vehicles

- "cleantech", "safetech" sold as "solution"; image enhancing but what about walking?
- potentially positive effects: less noise and pollution (?)
- negative: more mileage (cheaper); space allocation conflicts
- unclear or both +/-: safety



Which future? Manuel J. Ramos



Visions 2030

Source: Miles Tight et al.



Policy recommendations

- **Put pedestrians at the centre of your vision**
 - think beyond the myths and traditional ideological arguments
 - create positive awareness & recognition of walking/sojourning
 - develop an appropriate institutional framework
- **Refocus policy and initiate paradigm shifts**
 - shift focus to local transport and to sojourning
 - create conditions for inclusive public life: participation, housing
 - balance mobility & access.; link & place; integration & segreg.
 - adopt an area-wide approach: whole network, conurbation
- **Collect comprehensive & good-quality data**
 - based on characteristics, needs, abilities and longings of peds.
 - see www.measuring-walking.org
- **Be consistent - no double agenda**
 - i.e. not promote car ownership, new roads & parking while asking people to walk more

Key needs for action

- **Prepare for a changing society**
 - more elderly persons – both, active and frail
 - satisfy needs for healthy lifestyles, leisure & agreeable tourism
- **Create inclusive public spaces**
 - in city centres and suburban areas
 - avoid social exclusion (gentrification, commercialisation)
 - learn from past & seize new opportunities (relational space)
- **Anticipate the impact of increasing energy prices and climate change**
 - make provisions for more people walking – for longer distances
 - and for better multi-modal mobility – mainly public transport
- **Important to act now!**
 - quality requirements are sufficiently known to get started
 - basic technical knowledge is there

Conclusion

A walking city with priority to pedestrians
is imaginable and possible ...

... and the need for change is evident.

For more information:
PQN Final Report Part B3
"The Future of Walking"
www.walkeurope.org

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Merci de votre attention!

