



REDUCED-PARKING HABITAT PLATFORM

Report of the ATE Webinar of 5 November 2020



Pour une mobilité
d'avenir





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The year 2020 has been a very unusual one, so it comes as no surprise that the annual Reduced-Parking Habitat seminar would be too. In the form of a webinar, it provided the opportunity to discover projects from Sweden, Germany and Switzerland. It was a unique occasion to be inspired by an array of housing projects with limited parking beyond Switzerland's borders.

The webinar began with an introduction to the Reduced-Parking Habitat Platform. Cord Siegel, architect and entrepreneur, presented two housing projects in Malmö (Cykelhuset and Iggy) focusing on cycling and walking. The project Stellwerk 60, located in Cologne and promoting the motto 'share rather than own', was introduced by Hans-Georg Kleinmann, a member of the residents' board. Finally, Maria Gracia Riera, project manager and engineer for the City of Lausanne presented the development "Plaines-du-Loup eco-district". This Swiss project is unique in its scale and will become home to almost 10,000 residents and on-site jobs.

Throughout the presentations the participants were able to discuss and ask questions through a live chat. The questions were shared with the speakers which resulted in insightful discussions.

FIRST ATE WEBINAR

This webinar was the first of its kind organised by ATE. It provided opportunities to present high-quality European projects and bring together participants from all over Europe. More such seminars are sure to follow.

This first seminar was recorded and can be viewed at www.ate-hsr.ch (Network & Events).

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CYKELHUSET AND IGGY: PROJECTS BUILT AROUND CYCLING AND WALKING

Architect Cord Siegel presented two car-free housing projects in Malmö, Sweden. The first building was designed around cycling, and the second around walking.

Iggy, the pedestrians' house

After carrying out a building project promoting the use of bicycles in the city, the natural next step was to showcase the original mode of transport, walking. While it's true that people who do not own a car tend to cycle, they also walk a lot!

The building's central location means that almost all points of interest can be reached in no more than 20 minutes by bike or in one hour on foot. These distances may seem relatively big, but in Sweden the '10,000 daily steps' concept is cherished and every Swede tries to achieve it. It is therefore good for both health and society to encourage people to walk and bike.

To make walking more attractive, it was important from the outset to consider what matters to pedestrians and makes it easier for them to get around. To this end, the following elements were identified:

- Access to drinking water throughout the city for staying hydrated
- Shelter along the way
- Benches for resting
- Good ground surfaces and good shoes
- Sufficient good-quality lighting
- Clear indications of the distances to different destinations
- A means to carry purchases
- Ease in getting around in groups or with children

- Efficient alternatives for travelling longer distances easily during weekend leisure activities and holidays

Once these factors were identified, it was important to establish what the neighbourhood already had to offer.

At the same time, the City of Malmö carried out a study to determine the main reasons for residents' trips—the results of the study were very useful for the Iggy project.

Cykelhuset, the cyclists' house

The construction of a building centred on bicycles also includes constraints that must be taken into account in order to facilitate bicycle use, such as providing enough space for all types of bicycles to enter the building. The parking space was designed to accommodate all kinds of bicycles – everything from classic bikes to cargo and tailer bikes. The supports allowing to park one's bike easily were adapted. Every door is automatic to make entering and leaving the building with a bicycle easy, and a bike washing station is also available.

Residents who prefer not to use a bike, for example because of the weather, have access to bus routes located nearby. To encourage residents to use public transport as well, attractively priced transit passes are available. Bus and train arrival times are displayed in real time in the building, making it easier to organise outings.



Adapted bicycle racks

© Cord Siegel, Cykelhuset

When people consider going car-free, a common question is how to transport heavy or bulky purchases. To overcome this challenge, large delivery boxes were installed along with the traditional letterboxes for receiving items too bulky to be carried on a bike or with public transport.

Alongside these developments, great efforts were made to ensure that residents need not make trips every day. This included creating co-working spaces and setting up a wide range of leisure facilities and ways to escape the day-to-day routine without having to go far.

How to build car-free in Sweden?

Swedish law requires property developers to provide proof that one parking spot has been allocated for each flat. If this parking spot is not created, the city of Malmö charges a compensatory tax of 10,000 SEK (Swedish krona) per spot. For the Cykelhuset car-free project, a request was submitted to the city for an exemption from both creating these parking spaces and paying the tax. Given the argument that the money saved would be invested



Public transport information and letterboxes of various sizes

© Cord Siegel, Cykelhuset

in quality cycling infrastructure, making going car-free possible, the city of Malmö was convinced and the tax was not levied. This is how Cykelhuset became Sweden's first car-free project.

Link to the video presenting the project:
<https://vimeo.com/179528719>



STELLWERK 60, THE EXPERIENCE OF AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT

Hans-Georg Kleinmann, member of the residents' board, presented the Stellwerk 60 project, which is located in Cologne, Germany. This project is the first of its kind in Cologne and was initiated by a group of citizens back in 1994. It is interesting to note not only the successes the project has had over its more than 20-year existence, but also the difficulties it has encountered and the solutions that were adopted.

Unlike with the Malmö project, the district is not completely car-free: a car park has been built on its periphery. However, the number of parking spots was greatly reduced and motor traffic in the heart of the district is prohibited.

The area is ideally situated close to shops, the tram and the metro, with everything less than a kilometre away. The neighbourhood is also home to schools. Moreover, Cologne's dense urban environment makes walking and cycling easy, and it's even possible to do without public transport altogether.

For the people, by the people

Built on a former train yard, the project is the result of a citizen's initiative. Most of the residents did not own a private car and wanted to live in a neighbourhood adapted to their needs and free from the drawbacks of traffic.

The initial dealings with the city were complicated. The city began by taking the pulse of the city's residents to find out whether they would want to live in this type of neighbourhood. Imagine the city administrators' surprise when the survey revealed that many residents were prepared to live without a private car. Thanks to these findings, the residents' association was able to move forward and develop the plans for the project.

In 2005, it was difficult to find investors both motivated and confident enough to invest in the construction of such a district. In the end, the solution came from the Netherlands. However, the Dutch financier's motivation was more about establishing itself and investing in Germany than about supporting an innovative and original project.

The car park

A car park was nevertheless built to meet the needs of future residents who did not wish to live completely car-free. It was set up on the periphery of the district to keep the neighbourhood core free of vehicles and discourage car use by moving it away from the residential area. The car park, which also includes spots for car-sharing, was built using light materials that lowered construction costs.

This type of construction uses a modular design so that if the need for parking spots should increase or decrease, the car park could easily be changed or even demolished.

In the rental contract, residents are free to indicate that they do not have a private vehicle and therefore do not need to pay for a parking spot. Currently, about 80% of residents live without a car.

Offering alternatives

A number of initiatives were put in place to encourage residents not to use their cars. Many bicycle parking spots are available and easily accessible; bicycles can be borrowed by residents; the neighbourhood association has set up a system for sharing goods such as carts, bicycles for families, party tables and tents, tools, and so on. A bike delivery service was also set up and is working well. Lastly, to transport bulky items, special carts are available in the neighbourhood, and for exceptional cases such as when moving house, residents can drive in the district for a fee.

Better quality of life

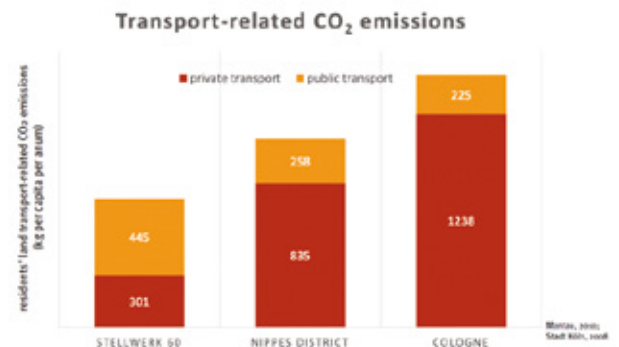
By removing cars from the equation, the neighbourhood streets have come to life, often becoming the playground of the local children. Parties are also organised to add vibrancy to the neighbourhood.



Carts for transporting bulky objects

© Nachbarn 60

Furthermore, the CO₂ emissions in different Cologne districts were measured and compared. Not surprisingly, emissions in the Stellwerk 60 neighbourhood were found to be very low compared to those recorded in the city of Cologne and even in the larger area where the project is situated.



CO₂ emissions are significantly lower than in the rest of the city

For more information about the project (in German):

www.nachbarn60.de/home.html



PLAINES-DU-LOUP ECO-DISTRICT, A MAJOR PROJECT

Maria Gracia Riera, engineer and project manager for the City of Lausanne (Switzerland), presented the Plaines-du-Loup Eco-district project, one of the two neighbourhoods of the Métamorphose project. Unlike the Swedish and German projects, this eco-district is still under construction— developments only began in July 2020.



Before and after: a major project

© Ville de Lausanne

The Métamorphose project meets a dual need of the City of Lausanne: the construction of housing and the renovation of sports facilities. Lausanne has seen its population rise sharply, while the vacancy rate has remained below 1% since the 2000s, reflecting a housing shortage. Thus, the completion of the Plaines-du-Loup Eco-district will eventually add some 3,600 units to the housing market in a socially and functionally mixed part of town. Furthermore, over 20% of total floor space will be dedicated to non-residential purposes, such as businesses, services and more. Other initiatives for efficient public transport are being developed hand in hand with the Métamorphose project (Plaines-du-Loup and Prés-de-Vidy). They will include the future metro line (M3), which will serve the Plaines-du-Loup Eco-district. Given Lausanne's extremely hilly topography, these kind of infrastructure are much appreciated.

The Plaines-du-Loup Eco-district

Situated in the upper reaches of Lausanne, the **Plaines-du-Loup Eco-district** will be built on former sports fields that have been moved to another area further north. This Eco-district will eventually be home to around 10,000 residents and jobs.

The City of Lausanne has set specific objectives for this project:

- Economy
 - Efficient urban density and structure
 - Attractiveness through functional diversity
- Society
 - Variety of housing options including subsidised housing, market-rate housing, affordable rental housing and resident-run cooperatives
 - Quality of life
 - Strong connection with surrounding neighbourhoods

- Functional mixing combining local services
- Community centre and sporting activities
- Environment
 - Respect of the objectives of a 2,000-watt society
 - Water and waste management and optimisation
 - Biodiversity preservation
 - Soft mobility networks

The goal of reducing energy consumption to 2,000 watts is linked to the 2050 energy targets for mobility and construction. For the district's operating energy (heating, hot water and electricity) the objectives are those of the more ambitious 2150 targets.

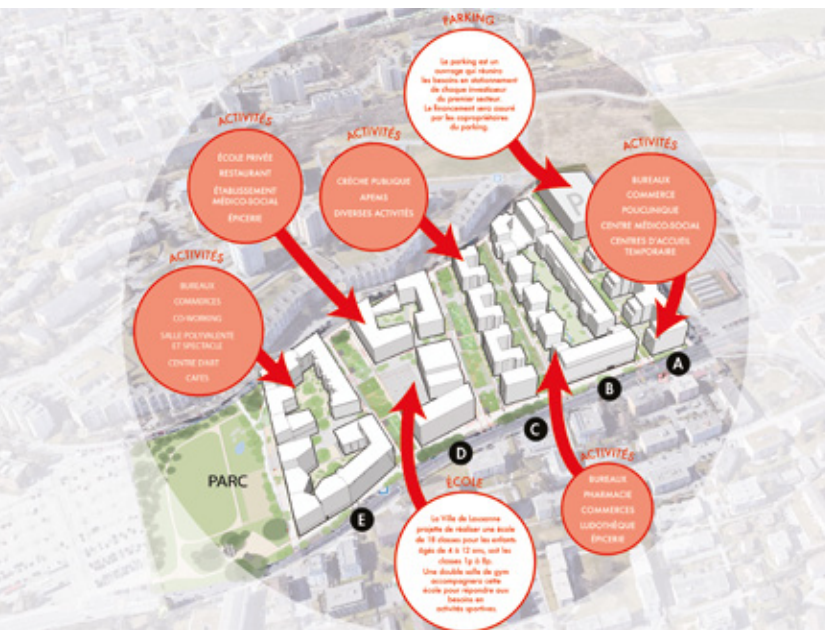
For the first of the four development stages, parking was reduced to 0.5 spaces per 100 m² of living space. This means that only about 50% of the dwellings will have a parking space. However, while the average parking ratio is 0.5 spaces per 100 m² of living space, an agreement between the 18 investors in this first stage of the Eco-district has made it possible to adapt the ratio to each investor.

To prevent them from parking in the surrounding parking spaces, there will be no way for them to obtain a parking pass. Parking spaces for people with reduced mobility will be available near the buildings, in the central car park and in the public section.

Lastly, creating a neighbourhood that is free of cars on the surface makes it possible to develop quality pedestrian areas. Special attention will be given to the design of public spaces so as to promote active transport—walking and cycling.

For more information on this project (available in French only):

www.lausanne.ch/officiel/grands-projets/metamorphose/plaines-du-loup.html



© Ville de Lausanne

Parking

In planning the first stage of the Plaines-du-Loup Eco-district, the choice was made to include centralised car parks. As a result, parking will be located not under each building, but on the district's periphery instead. The aim is to encourage residents to use public transport, as it will take less time to get to a public transport stop than it does to retrieve a car from the car park. This makes automobile use less attractive.



DISCUSSIONS



The webinar ended with a rich discussion between participants and speakers. Among other topics, the panellists were asked about what they would change or repeat if they had the opportunity to develop their projects all over again.

Hans-Georg Kleinmann said that he would build his housing development in the conventional way without a reduced number of parking spaces. At the time, it was a hard fight to get the city to accept a car-free neighbourhood. Without this constraint, things would have been much simpler. On the other hand, he believes that the district should maintain the ban on cars above ground and in pedestrian areas.

In Sweden, the concept has already evolved to focus on pedestrians and not only on bicycles as at the beginning.

Lausanne's project is still in a developing stage, which made the question difficult to answer. However, Maria Gracia Riera is convinced that the project will be adaptable at all times and able to evolve.



ATE ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT



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For over 40 years, ATE Swiss association for transport and environment has promoted a sustainable mobility through innovative initiatives focusing on improving public transport, optimising road safety and reducing emissions for a better environment. With more than 100,000 members, ATE is committed to meeting the needs of its members by advocating multimodal mobility in Switzerland.

www.ate.ch

REDUCED-PARKING HABITAT PLATFORM

Towards a car-free environment – how to go about it?

Reduced-Parking Habitat Platform provides building owners, municipal authorities and city planners with detailed information that can be used to study the feasibility of housing projects with limited parking: legal provisions, examples of best practices in Switzerland and abroad, evaluation tools, advice for site visits and knowledge-sharing.



Car-free housing projects – a win-win situation for everyone

Town planners enjoy greater freedom of design, residents pay lower rents and enjoy a better quality of life and municipalities develop more lively neighbourhoods.

Parking spots create urban wastelands

The proportion of households without a car is high and has steadily increased in the recent years. Half the population of major cities have no car: Lausanne (46%) Geneva (41%), Basel (52%), Bern (57%) and Zurich (53%). However, the obligation to provide parking spaces when building housing units in many municipalities leads to an excess of parking spaces in areas often well served by public transport.

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