THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN COMPACT CITIES: POLICY IMPLICATION TO FAST-GROWING CITIES

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OECD’s contribution to Habitat III

• Discussion
  – 1st PrepCom (September 2014)
  – OECD Territorial Development Policy Committee (November 2014) – in presence of UN-Habitat and UNECE
  – 2nd PrepCom (September 2014)

• Policy paper on urbanisation

• Policy Units (national urban policies, urban governance)
Compact cities – not only environmentally sustainable, but also economically viable

While “density” could be an obstacle to get buy-in for compact cities, public space has an important role to play.

In a fast-growing cities, with urban sprawl commonly observed, proactive provision of key public space is crucial.

Not only financing, but political will matters.
Compact City?

- Not at a city scale, but the metropolitan scale
- Focusing on “urban spatial form” – how can we use urban space in a more sustainable way?

**Dense and proximate development patterns**
- Urban land is intensively utilised
- Urban agglomerations are contiguous or close together
- Distinct border between urban and rural land use
- Public spaces are secured

**Urban areas linked by public transport systems**
- Effective use of urban land
- Public transport systems facilitate mobility in urban areas

**Accessibility to local services and jobs**
- Land use is mixed
- Most residents have access to local services either on foot or using public transport
The five key policy strategies

1. Set explicit compact city goals
2. Encourage dense and contiguous development at urban fringes
3. Retrofit existing built-up areas
4. Enhance diversity and quality of life in urban centres
5. Minimise adverse negative effects
Visualise urban land cover

Athens (3.4 million)  Atlanta (4.6 million)
3-D density map

Portland
Max 35,524 pop/km²

Vancouver
Max 11,413 pop/km²
Density gradient

Portland

Vancouver

Share of grid cells by density in urban land

Distance from the centre (km)

High (≥5 000 pop/km²) Medium (2 500-4 999 pop/km²) Low (0-2 499 pop/km²)
Urban design in contexts
(Southeast False Creek, Vancouver)
Storm water + heat island + perceived density (retrofitting)
Urgency in Asia: the world’s urban population is growing at the fastest speed

New urban dwellers in absolute numbers (1950-2050)

Urbanisation is accompanied by motorisation at an unprecedented speed and scale.

Number of registered cars and motorisation index (2005-2035)

Note: Southeast Asia here refers to Indonesia, Viet Nam, Philippines and Thailand.
Improving public transport through metropolitan land-use policies

Key recommendations:

- Encourage development along mass transit lines
- Introduce area development plans for mass transit stations
- Promote greater reliance on canal transport and bicycles

Number of vehicles in Bangkok (in millions)

Source: Thailand’s Department of Land Transport
Street layout facilitates congestion

Manhattan, NYC

Bangkok
For more information:

OECD (2012), Compact City Policies: A Comparative Assessment
OECD (2013), Green Growth in Cities
OECD (2016), Urban Green Growth in Dynamic Asia

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