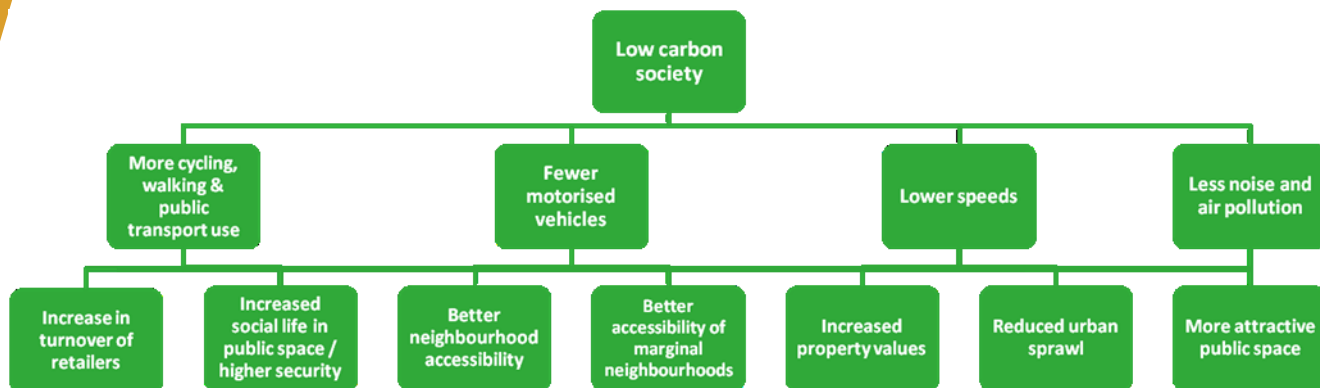


PLANNING



More lively urban neighbourhoods

Urban planning and transport affect each other: land use planning can favour car use or it can make the city more suitable for public transport, walking and cycling. Transport planning can make certain urban areas or neighbourhoods more attractive than others and can thus influence urban development/land use. Each choice has different repercussions on our health, safety, wealth, city experience, and quality of life in general.



If the transport needs of residents or employees are not considered from the beginning when planning new residential neighbourhoods or business districts, this usually leads to car-oriented transport patterns. This in particular happens when urban development is not coordinated by land use planning, but driven by informal processes based on growth of population and/or economy.

But also integrated approaches to the development of new neighbourhoods – in particular in the past – often focus on individual transport, thus producing high-carbon transport patterns. A good – or rather bad – example for this are the large scale residential areas planned and built in the outskirts of many European cities in the 1960s and 70s.

But there is an opportunity for transport planning to set some limits and help to shape the physical form of cities and to increase their sustainability. This opportunity is given by the low-carbon transport culture and its principles. In a low-carbon society, there will be fewer motorised vehicles, speeds will be lower, and the share of walking, cycling and public transport will be higher. This will help rebalance the urban space in favour of non-exclusive, shared, productive, liveable, safe and attractive spaces.

How can a low carbon society help to improve urban areas?



Multimodal traffic can increase pedestrian traffic, such as in Brighton, UK¹.

In a low carbon society, land use and transport planning will be better integrated, thus better addressing the mobility needs of people and creating better conditions for walking, cycling, and public transport. More space will be allocated to walking and cycling. Due to fewer (and less polluting) motorised vehicles, public space will be less affected by noise and air pollutants. This will again attract more pedestrians and cyclists and will invite people to stay in the area for longer. Strategies of re-allocating space to pedestrians, and the introduction of shared, multi-modal surfaces can increase pedestrian traffic by more than 100% as well as increase the likelihood of people staying in the area (and socialisation) by up to 600%¹. Public space will become more attractive and lively and, due to higher social control, more secure.

A low carbon transport system creates good conditions for neighbourhood accessibility planning which means a participatory approach to increase accessibility to local facilities (e.g. schools, shops) and public transport services for pedestrians and cyclists. The issues to be addressed (and changes to the infrastructure to be made) are identified in cooperation of urban planners and the local community².

Better (and safer) accessibility and more pedestrian and cyclist traffic have shown to positively impact on the visits to local retailers³. Car users' visits are often time-limited by parking restrictions while those on foot, including from public transport, and cycle have more time to shop. This in turn is a good argument to convince retailers to reduce parking space and to reallocate space to walking and cycling.

Better accessibility by public transport (light rail or bus rapid systems) has also shown positive impacts on (residential and office) property values⁴. For less developed or deprived urban areas, this can mean a significant push for investments from private stakeholders in order to improve the neighbourhoods.



More pedestrian traffic can positively affect retailers.
Picture source: Matts

As regards new urban developments (either on greenfield or brownfield sites), in a low-carbon society these will be focused on public transport corridors, thus containing urban sprawl.

How can the CATCH project help?

The CATCH (Carbon Aware Travel Choice) project shows you how your city is performing in terms of carbon emission reduction and how you can help to make a positive change. Catch will also compare cities against a range of indicators, among which:

- Urban density;
- Ratio between movement space and shared, multimodal space;
- Coverage by public transport, not in terms of space but in terms of time;
- GDP and average house prices.

www.carbonaware.eu

References:

¹ Such were the results of the improvement of New Road in Brighton, UK – “Our Cities Ourselves: 10 principles for transport in urban life”- www.ourcitiesourselves.org/ (accessed 4 November 2010)

² NICHES+. *Guidelines for implementers of Neighbourhood Accessibility Planning*. 2010. Available at: www.niches-transport.org/fileadmin/NICHESplus/G4Is/21582_policynotesWG1_2.indd_low.pdf (accessed 4 Nov 2010).

³ Buis, J and Wittink, R. *The Economic Significance of Cycling. A study to illustrate the costs and benefits of cycling policy*. Den Haag, Netherlands: TNG Uitgeverij. 2000.

⁴ Weinstein, Bernard L and Clower, Terry L. *DART Light Rail's Effect on Taxable Property Valuations and Transit Oriented Development*. University of North Texas, Center for Economic Development and Research, Dallas, TX. January 2003.

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