



Planned City Extensions:

Analysis of Historical Examples

PLANNED CITY EXTENSIONS: ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Revision 1

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Foreword



The world is fast becoming predominantly urban, and relentlessly so. At the beginning of the 19th century, only 2 per cent of the world's population was urban. By the beginning of the 20th century, that percentage had

increased to 10. By the beginning of the present decade, the world's population living in urban areas had reached 50 per cent. This rapid urbanization is an unprecedented challenge in the history of humanity. In forty years, four of every five people will live in towns and cities, and ours will be an urban planet.

It was only in 1960 that the first 1 billion people had urbanized. We have since then seen a runaway urban growth. In the 15 years between 2003 and 2018, 1 billion people will have been added to our cities. Most of this growth is occurring in developing regions. In fact, it is predicted that seven out of ten urban dwellers will be African or Asian in 2030. Beyond being a demographic phenomenon, urbanization is a transformative force that is continually shaping societies, their economies, political systems and environments.

In a business as usual scenario, we can project that more than half the world's urban population will live in sub-human conditions in the future. Already today, almost 60 per cent of the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa resides in slums and although great efforts are being made to improve many slums around the world and better the lives of those that live there, solutions and new approaches are needed to prevent their formation and expansion. Slums are but a manifestation of rapid unchecked urbanization – a result of allowing our cities to expand without design or regulation and with disregard for environment or social concerns.

Similarly, cities will also bear the brunt of years of uncontrolled expansion and sprawl, without

planning provisions, the delimitation of sufficient public space and the establishment of basic connectivity. Only cities that are able to address the double challenge of land in good supply and orderly patterns of expansion will be able to establish a solid basis for future economic and social growth.

The urgency of the accelerated growth experienced by cities around the world should not be an excuse to perpetuate the dominant development model of the last seventy years. By 2050, cities will host 70 per cent of the world's urban population. This is a fact. But there is no justification for urban expansion that leads to more segregated, more unequal, more unfair and intolerant cities.

The urbanization process should be planned for the long term; it should provide an essential structure, the spine, the matrix, the pattern of how the city will expand. Over time, economic activities and the various social needs will change the shape and urban land uses, but not the pattern. This essential element must be defended and protected by the local authority, the repository of political legitimacy, and the rule of law.

To address the challenge of rapidly urbanizing cities, UN-Habitat advocates for planned city extensions – an urban planning approach that can offer sufficient, affordable and serviced urban plots in a timely fashion. This approach requires that cities plan in advance, plan at the scale of the expected growth, plan in phases, plan for contiguity, apply sustainable and efficient usage of resources and ecosystems and promote a system of cities at the national level. First and foremost, cities must define public space and protect it. Without social and political understanding of the use and productivity of public space, no capacity for planned urbanization can be developed. Planned city extensions can help cities become more compact, more integrated and more connected and thus more liveable.

Without planned city extension measures we risk compounded informal proliferation and its consequences. These include economic consequences such as loss of economies of urbanization, loss of agglomeration benefits and loss of job opportunities, especially for the youth; social consequences such as socio-economic segregation, mobility and transport breakdown, lack of access to energy and clean water and lack of public health and increased safety risks; and environmental consequences such as sprawl-induced stress on land and resources, geographic vulnerability, loss of biodiversity and the vital system functions it supports.

This collection of historical examples of planned city extensions illustrates UN-Habitat principles and exemplifies the adaptability and versatility of the approach and how it can – if meticulously and consistently carried out – provide long term spatial direction for growing cities while allowing local reality and socio-economic forces to thrive and evolve.

The publication of this compilation is especially relevant in the context of the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016. The Conference offers a unique opportunity to discuss the important challenge of how cities, towns and villages are planned and managed, in order to fulfill their role as drivers of sustainable development. Planned city extensions will be one of the essential elements to take into consideration in the creation of a pattern of sustainable urban development fostering a new model city.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joan Clos', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joan Clos

Under-Secretary-General, United Nations
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

Selected city case studies



List of cities considered

AFRICA	ASIA	EUROPE	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	OCEANIA
Argel (Algeria)	Kyoto (Japan)	Amsterdam (Holland)	Buenos Aires (Argentina)	Adelaide (Australia)
Cairo (Egypt)	Saint Petersburg (Russia)	Berlin (Germany)	Mexico D.F (Mexico)	
Cape Town (South Africa)	Seoul (South Korea)	Edinburgh (Scotland)	Santiago (Chile)	
Nairobi Sites and Service (Kenya)	Tainai (Taiwan)	Lisbon (Portugal)	Pravi Lima (Peru)	

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