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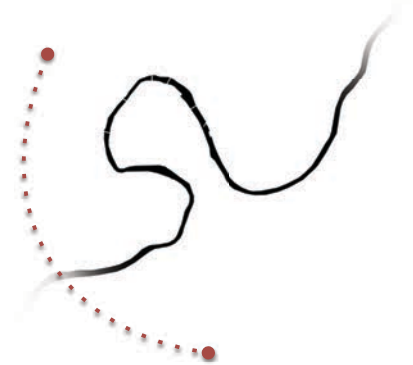
Committee of the Regions

11TH EUROPEAN URBAN PLANNING AWARD 2015-2016

4-PAGE STUDY PRESENTED

A BYPASS « IN AND FOR » THE CITY

A GLOBAL « ROAD & TOWN » PROGRAMME
FOR AN URBAN MOBILITY AND LINKAGE PROJECT IN BESANÇON (FRANCE)



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« In the final workshops, your support mission was widely praised, revealing satisfaction shared by all and a common feeling that progress had at last been made on this issue. Your experience of both urban and road issues helped to define a territory common to each party, avoiding stances that lead nowhere and speeches that are too specialized, leading to mutual misunderstanding, and the expression of one's own interests. (...) Your perseverance and full understanding of the content of the programmes helped to develop a new range of solutions, breaking down the urban and road network. The intelligence of the stance and the quality of the project arising from this were hailed with expressions of satisfaction from road designers and managers and those who run the exhibition centre.»

Pascal Millard, director of urban planning and projects of the City of Besançon - From the certificate of proficiency issued on July 7, 2014 by the City of Besançon.

Our work is based on the fact that we consider every project as an act of spatial planning. No matter what type of project is involved (urban, equipment or infrastructure) and whatever its scale, from our point of view the project constitutes an act of transformation of the area.

Until the end of the 1980s, areas were taken into account in development projects from the standpoint of limiting negative impacts. Areas were considered by contracting authorities as mere recipients for projects. In the 1990s, the concept of integration emerged. We believe that this integration is too "passive" because it supposes that notion of an area is a "rigid" one. Rather, we defend the idea of transforming the area. This involves giving consideration to the project both in and with a changing area, and to make it contribute actively to the future of that area. We work on the project by considering it as an element contributing to transformation of the area, and as an act of spatial planning in its own right.

The **PROGRAMME** is the tool that makes spatial planning possible. Generally, it is never easy for those involved to discuss a project, either because there is no concrete information to be shared, or because the discussion deals with specific solutions that are not easily connected to the objectives of the project. The needs and social expectations that the project must meet are rarely made explicit. Solutions and counter-proposals accumulate, each one with its own arguments. Finding a shared solution seems to be impossible. Such a perspective frightens the contracting authorities: they are worried about the day they will have to present their project. However, there is an "object" that makes it possible to work collectively and openly on the aims of the project: this is the **PROGRAMME**.

The programme is a legal obligation in France, for every public contracting authority: « in the programme the contracting authority defines the objectives of the operation and the needs that it must meet...» (Article 2, from the Act on public contracting, July 12th 1985). The Act is now 30 years old, but projects with a programme are very rare in the field of spatial planning, and even rarer for infrastructure projects. **It is these SPATIAL PLANNING PROGRAMMES that we have created and made central to our approach.** We draw them up as part of a collaborative process with contracting authorities, i.e. those who decide and finance the projects.

The concept of « **SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED** » to the area, is central to the programmes. This concept is a concrete one and easier to understand than the concepts of needs and requirements. Moreover, the project is seen more positively and as being useful for the area. The ability of the project to provide these different services will mean that it is more or less attractive and acceptable for its beneficiaries and for inhabitants. The services are changed into operational objectives described in factsheets and functional plans, with satisfaction indicators. This is the **PROGRAMME** of the project within its area.

This is what we did in 2013 for the Besançon bypass, with a « **ROAD & TOWN PROGRAMME** », which included 38 objectives for the city, roadways, the landscape and the environment. The city of Besançon had to answer a request from the State (the public contracting authority for road studies) on the "urban imperatives to be considered for the project of bypassing Besançon by means of the national road (RN 57) linking Luxembourg to Lausanne. The city chose to implement our proposition, which consisted in clarifying the services to be provided for the area with this spatial planning, by means of collective work by elected officials, and regional and local state engineers. This partnership approach led to a consensual draft programme describing the objectives to be attained from the standpoint of the road, urban planning, the landscape AND the environment. After a final check by each of the different entities involved in the draft programme, it led to a « **ROAD & TOWN** », shared programme. This programme is broken down into 4 services to be provided in the western area of Besançon:

- A « **CIRCULATORY SERVICE** » that suggests improvements for all mobility modes in the western area of Besançon,
- An « **URBAN SERVICE** » which qualifies the new urban uses to be implemented around the road,
- An « **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE** » that sets ambitious environmental objectives,
- A « **LANDSCAPING SERVICE** » which qualifies the landscape of the city and the road and the relationships between the two.

These 38 objectives define the services that the project will have to provide for the area in concrete terms. They allow the project to extend beyond its initial technical universe: a road is more than just vehicle traffic, an exhibition park is more than just a gathering of exhibitors and visitors, and a district is more than just dwellings. The project gains an overall dimension and becomes an act of spatial planning. This is the heart of our approach.

A process of collaborative work between elected officials, local authority and State engineers.

A programme is mainly made up of objectives. People who decide and finance the project have to formulate and validate the objectives. This is the reason why the programme must be drawn up by the right people, those who have authority over the area and over the choices made as to its planning. A separation between political and technical fields is still common in planning studies. As a consequence, there is a succession of technical committees and steering committees, which do not really steer. This type of organization is doomed to failure because it cannot prevent frequent discrepancies between technical work on one hand and political decision-making on the other.

It is especially true that the issues are always related to objects that seem not to be compatible with each other: road/town, town/agriculture, infrastructure/environment, amenities/landscape... This type of technical/political organization is totally useless when it comes to resolving locked situations or different points of view between the people involved. This is why we recommended constituting **only one referent committee with elected officials and engineers** to work together on the programme, from the beginning of the project. This committee had a real capacity for speech and for making proposals to lay down objectives and thus build the programme.

Each word had the same weight and the same value, and it is the sum of the thinking and proposals from each workshop, which helped to build the programme. For this equality of speech and understanding to be possible, it was essential for elected officials and directors to be personally involved in the construction of the programme, without any delegation. This involvement included their being present at all workshops around the same table and also their participation in the writing and producing of diagrams on cards and on photos.

The process of drawing up the programme was active, efficient and led to decisions being made. Only the final validation of the programme was subjected to the different decision-making and deliberative bodies of the local authorities and contractors involved in the project.

VERBATIM COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC CONTRACTORS

« VILLE RIVERAINE » (CITY ON THE BANKS OF A BYPASS) WORKSHOP ON JUNE 3, 2013

"Micropolis is going to be opening up further on the tramway side. But does that mean we must close its access from Planoise? This access is still important for buses 2 and 22, and it is also the most obvious pedestrian link for people who live in Planoise. We must find how to reconcile keeping it open with the bypass".

Michel LOYAT, Deputy Mayor of Besançon, in charge of urban planning, forecasting and strategy.

"At Micropolis, there is a need to make the entrance and exit more fluid: at times, the entrance blocks the main RN road and it takes 40 to 50 minutes to clear the car park".

Joel PRILLARD, Deputy Director, DREAL Franche-Comté.

"We must streamline access to the site because we have to fill the 1,200 spaces inside; this would be even more true if direct access from the RN57 were closed. And we must keep the technical specificity of the northern access".

Didier SIKKINK, CEO of SEM Micropolis.

"Around the tramway, the Micropolis P & R is dedicated to public transport, not to parking for the exhibition centre; but the new 210-space car park planned at the foot of the convention centre may have both functions".

Jean-Claude ROY, 2nd Vice President of Greater Besançon in charge of transport, infrastructure and travel.

"If we don't use the lure of the tramway to bring people to big events at Micropolis, then we're getting something wrong! It wouldn't make any sense to increase the capacity of the car parks".

Jean-Claude ROY, 2nd Vice President of Greater Besançon in charge of transport, infrastructure and travel.

"There will always be those exceptional days when the Micropolis car park overflows onto the bypass. Shall we work it so that this doesn't happen any more? Shall we organize it anyway? If it's an objective, it must be stated now!"

Joel PRILLARD, Deputy Director, DREAL Franche-Comté.

A collaborative process, that took the form of participatory planning workshops.

The process of writing the programme that we ran was based on a place and organized times for thinking and collective production. It took the form of **PROGRAMMING WORKSHOPS**. The services to be provided were worked on by the group in four half-day workshops. Each service to be provided determined the scale of the area examined. Actually, all subjects and all scales were processed. We presented the elements of the programme that had previously been identified one by one at the end of the targeted analysis of the area's orientation documents. These documents already contain numerous imperatives, orientations, needs and goals. Each participant was then invited to give his approval or not and explain his point of view (« Yes but... », « No because... », « But it could be, provided that... »), and we, the workshop facilitators, had the responsibility of organizing the discussion and bringing out the points of convergence or divergence in real time. Each remark was written and positioned precisely on a map, which is used as a common vocabulary item. During these workshops, some pre-identified programme elements were reworded and rewritten. New programme elements have emerged. Some have been gone into in more depth or clarified by further analysis by our team. In this way, workshop-by-workshop, programme elements have been written and detailed as they completed each other.

The Road & Town programme for the Besançon bypass required a new solution to be invented.

Before this programme, two attitudes were opposed to each other, with no prospect of reconciliation: on the one hand, a road-based approach to the issue using a wide road with uneven intersections and, as always, a multitude of technical alternatives; on the other, an urban approach maintaining at-grade intersections and urban uses on the road and its sides. Urban planners and local authority representatives deemed the road-based approach inadequate; road engineers deemed the urban approach infeasible. These solutions were so opposed to each other that reconciling them or combining them seemed impossible. This is the unfortunately classic situation for technical projects that are mismatched with their area.

Our programme goals-based approach broke the deadlock. It made it possible for a time to give up work on solutions: this work had become impossible for lack of clarification as to the objectives to be attained. Collective thinking about the four services to be provided for the area through the development work and the formulation of 38 goals opened up the floodgates of creativity. A new solution was invented.

We started out from the programme and the fact that the total traffic was divided equally between transit and resident service. We therefore proposed a half-and-half partition of the space with a precisely dimensioned roadway to handle through-traffic efficiently and new streets and boulevards with pavements, cycle paths and bus stops to meet with all resident service needs. This allows the exhibition centre and neighbouring districts to be fully part of the city. This solution is therefore not expressed by a road profile but rather is reflected by a complete network of roads of different characteristics in which all dimensions of mobility are present: pedestrians, two-wheelers, buses, trams, cars, lorries, and even slow vehicles and special transport vehicles.

It is both a road and an urban solution. This is so because the « distancing » of through-traffic makes it possible to reclassify the living environment of resident neighbourhoods. Developing new streets creates new urban façades and helps to open up districts to give them an address once more, and accessibility for all modes. Creating a new urban bridge over the River Doubs also helps to connect the two banks without going round the bypass. Independent urban roads and an efficient, dense and comfortable pedestrian/cycle network thereby directly connect all districts to each other. The new urban network also helps organize access to the exhibition centre at four points with management of parking facilities. Bus and tram stops are maintained at the entrances to the districts and can be used by people with reduced mobility. Finally, reducing the space occupied by the interchanges and urban integration make it possible to reuse all the formerly abandoned road spaces to accommodate new buildings and to redeploy the activities of the exhibition centre. New development areas are appearing and these can be used sooner or later for offices, to expand an industrial zone or for new housing, in connection with improved public transport.

Finally, this new solution is also an environmental and a landscaped one. This is because it best meets all 38 goals. This is also how it was evaluated and compared with the first solutions. It changes the perception of the entrance to the city from the west by getting users more quickly into the city and giving them access to the Park & Ride and the tram; new roads have been plotted and laid out following the relief of the terrain and making use of former routes and paths.

In this, they reveal the geography, the topography and history of the place; the new network prevents circumvention of adjacent streets and in this way the development has been able to create a large green space between the hills and in the city in favour of the landscape, the use of green modes and the environment, thereby requalifying all the formerly abandoned areas. This large planted area performs the hydraulic, ecological and landscape functions of the road and streets at the same time as it allows the new cycle path to pass comfortably and efficiently through the urban area.

It also means that all the objectives of the programme related to the environmental service can be dealt with in a single generous and comfortable space, such as restriction of soil sealing, open rainwater recovery, revitalizing wetlands in the foothills and rebuilding a north-south ecological corridor. All former abandoned and unused spaces around the road have been reoccupied and requalified by the many superimposed uses of mobility, urban development, environmental and hydraulic functions and landscaping. This planted area resolutely transforms the character and use of the bypass, changing it into a landscaped road, showing off the natural features of Besançon and strengthening its identity as a « Nature city ».

All the dimensions of the area are treated equally. All are involved in the transformation of part of the city of Besançon. This complete transformation was made possible because of environment and landscape-related objectives. The project is no longer just a road project but a global project about the road and the city. A global project about the city with a road, thanks to the fact that the programme was used. This is the first project of its kind in France, despite the fact that the law making it compulsory dates from as far back as 1985.

Participatory programming is now central to all our work, at all levels, and for all projects.

We systematically propose that project owners adopt a different approach from the usual diagnosis / project / participation sequence. This is no longer suited to the way areas are developing, nor to the many objectives that projects must attain today. No technical project can now afford to ignore environmental, landscape and urban objectives.

We no longer consider such aspects as imperatives that are evaluated only at the end of the design process, but as goals to be worked on explicitly as part of the project. For this reason, we reorganize work steps around a programme / participation / project sequence. Each element is accorded equal importance and an equal amount of time. This joint construction-oriented process begins on the first day. It makes it possible to invent, test and evaluate clear, shared solutions iteratively in relation to the objectives and goals to be attained, (this is what we call « services rendered »). It explicitly links the subject of study to its area and cross-references all issues of planning, economics, mobility, environment and landscape relating to it.

As compared with the common approach (see below), our approach performs a 90° rotation of the conventional pattern, with simultaneous work between the programme, participation and the project, and redistribution of the weighting of the importance given to the programme in relation to the project.

We propose that project owners work explicitly on the programme and engage participation as of this stage. The programme includes diagnosis and allows it to be fully assessed easily. The time and cost of diagnosis are reassigned to the drawing up of the programme. The times taken up by technical committees and steering committees are reinvested in community workshops with technicians and elected officials. This allows us to remain within a financial scheme that is acceptable for the project owner.

We have applied this approach successfully in technical projects and intercommunal planning exercises. It is applicable to all the processes for transforming an area. This is what led us to structure our bid for the 11th European urban planning award around this approach.

