

THSG POLICY ON TRANSPORT AND SPATIAL PLANNING:

SUMMARY

Transport, land use, and spatial planning are powerful tools for community development strategies that encourage active travel, living streets and community interaction. This policy document is concerned with technical aspects of the planning system but it is important to emphasise that these must be part of a coordinated process of placemaking which also draws upon community development and investment in local facilities. We will develop this wider concept in a policy document on placemaking.

Within the limited scope of this particular policy we call for

- Deepening the democratic aspects of neighbourhood, city and regional planning, from a health, equity and mobility perspective
- Coalitions of planners, public health, gender and other organizations, planners and policy makers with an ongoing commitment to educating and providing a referential public opinion about the links between mobility, social inclusion and health, similar to anti-tobacco or AIDs education, with additional capacity to respond in times of crisis, such as floods, pandemics, droughts, etc.
- The use of health impact assessment in transport planning and spatial planning and the development of national policies on healthy placemaking empowering communities to protect and create healthy communities
- An emphasis on carbon footprints and provision of sufficient green space to reduce urban heat islands, provide biological corridors and networks; recycle grey water and preserve water supplies in general; contribute to food provision and security; and foster greater resilience should be an integral part of planning suitable walk-bike-bus mobility networks.
- High priority intermodal, walk-bike-bus networks favourable to car-free living, reduced parking, low and traffic-free neighbourhoods, with reduced priority to private vehicle routes and uses
- Commitment to mobility networks at neighbourhood, city and regional scale that reflect the hierarchy of provision which gives cyclists, cycle taxis, cargo bikes and electro-assisted vehicles, pedestrians and wheelchair users priority over motor vehicles and gives pedestrians and wheelchair users priority over cyclists
- Linking of pedestrian-priority and quiet streets to create a comprehensive walking and cycling network, well connected to key public transport hubs
- Removing engineering obstacles to pedestrians, bicycle and tricycle users, to provide safe crossing points over busy roads, enhancing pedestrian signage, and aesthetically enhancing pedestrian routes

- Recognition that bus priority measures are not a cause of congestion but part of the strategy for addressing it, which must emphasise development of public transport and active travel.
- Speed limits should prioritise the safety of the prevailing land use and other contextual elements, with recommended speeds 5 km/hr in walking areas, and 30 km/hr maximums around schools and in residential and shopping areas
- “Black spots” where more than one serious traffic collision has occurred should receive priority treatment, with drastic reductions of speeds using limits, design and street light timing, among other methods
- Heavily trafficked roads should be re-purposed to provide expedited public transport, safe walking and cycling conditions, and suitable densification or redevelopment that provides for sufficient green space for each new resident.
- Policies should be developed to prevent more houses being developed which border heavily-trafficked roads. Detailed proposals are set out in the text at paragraphs 11 to 18, and include home zones, limits on the use of residential streets to access new developments, and support for reshaping existing residential development along main roads.
- Home zones and living streets should be the norm for new residential and mixed residential-commercial streets, particularly throughout areas connecting homes to schools and other essential services (health, shopping, etc.)
- In paragraphs 21 to 28 we set out priority transport-related goals for spatial planning, including
 - access to recreational exercise opportunities, affordable healthy food growing and shopping, parks and countryside, work, education, places of social interaction, health facilities
 - opportunities to guarantee exercise is easily included as part of daily life
 - using street trees, grass, open space, green roofs and living walls so people spend as much as possible of their day in surroundings that are green and aesthetically attractive
 - making it easy for people to obtain facilities as close as possible to where they live and work, guaranteeing access with no more than 15 minutes walking for a small child or older adult
 - moving away from thinking ‘car’ towards a ‘walk-bike-bus-train’ future, with daily destinations such as schools, primary health care, basic services and regular shopping within safe, comfortable, attractive, direct and secure walking distance.
 - recognising healthy environments that provide people with the maximum autonomy and access to social goods and services are crucial community development and economic drivers, since the knowledge-based, creative and other industries, much freer in the choice of where to site themselves, seek to locate where it is pleasant to live

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. We recommend that local transport planning continues to be seen as important and as relevant to health, and that those involved in local transport planning take full account of the other THSG policies; build health impact assessment into their planning process; empower communities to direct spatial planning towards protecting and creating healthy communities and pursue the following priority actions.**
2. All local transport plans should include an assessment of the carbon footprint of the local transport system and an estimate of the extent to which the plan will reduce it.
3. All local transport plans should include firm plans, committed resources and a target date for completing a cycle network usable by new cyclists as well as established cyclists and for providing cycle parking.
4. . All local transport plans should include a timetable (with firm plans and committed resources) for closing rat runs and developing low traffic neighbourhoods so as to reduce the number of households experiencing heavy street traffic and so as to contribute to recommendation 012.
5. In developing their cycle network, all local transport plans should use the revised hierarchy of provision recommended in chapter 14 of *Health on the Move 2*, which gives high priority to linking quiet streets to create a comprehensive quiet cycle network.
6. All local transport plans should include firm plans, committed resources and a target date for improving pedestrian routes by removing engineering obstacles to pedestrians; providing safe crossing points over busy roads; and enhancing pedestrian signage.
7. All local transport plans should include firm plans, committed resources and a target date for aesthetic enhancement of pedestrian routes.
8. All local transport plans should develop plans for bus priority measures which will ensure that the bus network operates freely. Transport planners should have the confidence to transfer road space for this purpose, recognising that the significance of the Downs-Thomson Corollary of Pigou's Theorem is that a free-flowing bus network will ease congestion but additional road space will not. This point is developed in our policy on congestion and road charging.
9. All local transport plans should focus any efforts directed at congestion upon improved public transport and active travel rather than new roads. Where bypasses are built to divert traffic, the bypass should be of no greater capacity and no faster than the road it replaces (to avoid traffic generation) and the old road should be closed to through traffic and traffic calmed. Under no circumstances should money be wasted on enhancing the capacity of the road system. Capacity issues should be addressed by public transport or rail alternatives for longer journeys, and active travel for shorter trips.

10. All local transport plans should address road safety by area-wide 20mph speed limits in residential areas and at accident black spots on main roads.

11. We recommend that those engaged in spatial planning recognise the significance of the Appleyard / Lindell / Hart findings and proceed on the basis that it is entirely plausible that within the near future it may come to be considered that heavy traffic in a road renders houses bordering that road unfit for long term human habitation.

12. There should be a strict prohibition on new development of any kind being accessed via a residential road (other than a major road with residential development along it) if this would increase the flow of traffic along the road to a steady flow. If it is necessary, in order to avoid this, for the main car parks of a new development to be some distance away with the final access being on foot, then so be it.

13. There should be a strict prohibition on residential properties being built with their principal pedestrian access being from a main road, with exceptions for owner-occupied plots purchased before the policy was adopted, holiday homes, or properties to be used as temporary lodgings.

14. In new residential developments there should be a strict limit on the number of properties that might be accessed by a residential road. Developments larger than this should either have multiple access points or a non-residential access road.

15. Where residential properties have already been built on a main road, spatial planners should facilitate measures to address this, including reorientation of the properties' relationships to the road, shared gardens or conversion to holiday homes, temporary lodgings, or business premises.

16. The Home Zone should be adopted as the norm for all new residential streets.

17. All future large residential developments should be divided into residential cells, so as to prevent the creation of new rat runs. There should, however, be pedestrian and cycle links between the cells, with only motor vehicles being prevented from passing through.

18. Residential developments should have a pedestrian-permeable street design, with good cycle routes and aesthetically attractive pedestrian routes through them.

19. We recommend that Governments recognise the importance of spatial planning to health and other social values and should develop health-orientated policies on placemaking which should have priority in spatial planning decisions and should empower communities to direct spatial planning towards protecting and creating healthy communities

20. Those engaged in spatial planning adopt a policy that the health of the people shall be a material consideration to any development proposal, build health impact assessment into their procedures, and pursue the following actions.

21. Spatial planning should aim to ensure that the whole population can access the sources of a healthy lifestyle – recreational exercise opportunities, affordable healthy food shopping, parks and countryside, work, education, places of social interaction, health facilities.

22. Spatial planning should aim to ensure that people are provided with opportunities to build exercise into their daily lives more easily than to avoid it.

23. Spatial planning should have a goal that people spend as much as possible of their day in surroundings that are green and aesthetically attractive and should to that end make as much use as possible of street trees, grass, open space, green roofs and living walls.

24 Spatial planners should aim to make it easy for people to obtain facilities as close as possible to where they live and work. Much of the movement that we call 'increased mobility' is a human benefit but much of it is not – much of it is the hardship of having to travel a long way to find something that once was local.

25. In making provision for transport infrastructure spatial planners should move away from thinking 'car' and towards a future that is 'train, bus, cycle and foot'.

26. Insofar as spatial planning must be intimately linked to economic development, it must recognise good environments as an economic driver since the knowledge-based industries of the future, much freer in the choice of where to site themselves, will want to place themselves where it is pleasant to live.

27. Two of the aims of town planning should be firstly, to minimise journey lengths, by resisting the trend to fewer and larger facilities, and secondly, to ensure that all facilities are easily accessible by foot, bicycle and public transport. This is particularly important for shops, schools, health services, local authority services, recreational facilities and places of employment.

28. Planning should ensure that residential developments can be serviced by public transport. Particular care needs to be taken with areas of low residential density since these tend to be difficult to serve by public transport.

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