

The City We Need: Principles for a New Urban Paradigm

The city we need is socially inclusive. It provides spaces and opportunities for all segments and age groups of the population to partake in social and cultural expressions and interactions. It eliminates all physical, spatial, material and immaterial forms of segregation and exclusion. It should take the necessary steps to raise the public's awareness of the value of urban diversity. To foster a thriving society the city should enable the growth of each individual.

The city we need is well planned and designed, to be attractive, walkable, and transit-friendly. A continuous public space network links different parts of the city and offer comfortable spaces for different human activities across the cities. Schools are within walking or biking distance from homes. Offices are located no farther than a few transit stops away from homes. Public facilities and shopping for daily necessities are within walking distance of residential buildings and located near transit stops. Open space for recreation is near schools, work, and home. Priorities should be given to pedestrians and higher open space ratio should be achieved.

The city we need is a regenerative city. It is designed to be resilient by being energy efficient, low-carbon, and increasingly reliant on renewable energy sources. It produces and replenishes the resources it consumes and recycles and reuses waste. It uses water, land, energy and other resources in a coordinated manner and in harmony with its natural environment and surrounding hinterland in support of urban and peri-urban agriculture. It prioritizes the development of brownfields and the use of sustainable food supply and green building materials.

The city we need is economically vibrant and inclusive. It encourages and fosters local economic development from the smallest entrepreneur to the largest corporations. It provides a one-stop shop for streamlined licensing and other administrative services. It recognizes and protects the specific needs of the informal sector of the economy in its economic development policies and strategies.

The city we need has a positive identity, a strong sense of place and generates a sense of belonging. It recognizes culture and diversity as key to human dignity and to sustainability. It recognizes the value of heritage, tradition and organic strengths. It highlights the importance of conservation of culture and lifestyle of local people and its citizens have a strong sense of place and ownership to the city. The creative potential of all citizens should be enhanced and prioritized. It strengthens the bonds between city and its surrounding hinterland.

The city we need is a safe city. The city is welcoming night and day, inviting all people to use the streets, parks, and transit without fear. Public officials - the police, the fire department, and health, welfare, transit, and environmental services - and neighborhood residents and community groups communicate frequently and speak with one voice. It prevents unsustainable practices and regulations are reviewed regularly.

The city we need is a healthy and livable city. The city's parks and gardens are havens of peace and tranquillity (!?) and harbor local flora and fauna and biodiversity. All public and private entities providing public services (water, waste, energy, transport) work together with the city's residents and have public and environmental health as a common performance indicator. The city should use energy

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in a sustainable manner; equate social cohesion with healthy lifestyle and balance housing with public space provision.

The city we need is need is just, fair, affordable, and equitable. Land, infrastructure, housing, and basic services are planned with different income groups involved. Public services and land resources are planned together with the communities they serve and consciously include the needs of women, youth, minorities and vulnerable populations. Everyone inhabiting the city should be regarded as a citizen regardless of legal status. It avoids deprivation of rights and services to citizens and strives to represent public interests.

The city we need is participatory and managed at the metropolitan level. It coordinates sectoral policies and actions (economy, mobility, biodiversity, energy, water, and waste) within a comprehensive and coherent local framework. It incorporates a strong sense of community. Citizens are equipped with the knowledge and means to express their views on urban issues. They engage in city management and planning decisions through transparent public discussion. Communities and neighborhoods are active participants in metropolitan decision making. Roles and responsibilities between all stakeholders, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, are clearly defined with resources allocated strategically, justly, and around a common agenda. It has a government that listens and responds to a trusting people. In sum, the city we need is socially inclusive, well-planned, regenerative and resilient, and prosperous.

The City We Need dares to experiment. The city we need is not afraid to open itself to new ideas and innovations and communicates well at all levels. The city we need engages in an open and transparent way at local, regional and national levels. It welcomes new ideas, experiments, and innovation. It develops multi-level open and democratic institutions and dialogue.

The city we need promotes social mobility.

The city we need embraces and encourages experimentation in the use and development of space.

The city we need cares. The city we need fosters a spirit of respect and care about one and other and the environment. It endeavours to develop a concept of WE rather than ME. The city we need recognizes its dependence on its rural hinterlands, and its ecological footprint.

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The Policy and Legislative Framework We Need: A
Roadmap for a New Urban Paradigm

To achieve the 21st century city we need, we must encourage nations, regions, cities, and the Habitat Partners to work together to craft their respective policy and legislative frameworks that:

- Calls for each nation to adopt its own accountable national urban policy, one that also drives and coordinates regional and local urban policy that embodies the key principles of a new urban paradigm: cities planned to be just and inclusive, resilient and regenerative, and prosperous.
- Asks public and private decision-makers to move from sectoral interventions to those that address the city as whole and are at the scale of the problems. These interventions should:
 - Embrace the compact and mixed-use city.
 - Assert that public space is a highly effective method for improving a city’s functioning, identity, and sense of place.
 - Reduce reliance on vehicular transport and support sustainable transportation.
- Places marginalized groups, including women, as primary beneficiaries of the called-for solutions based on the principle of equal rights to the city in terms of access to housing, land, and basic services. Encourages citizens to be proactive in meeting their own needs.
- Assumes that solutions will involve all actors of society - public, private, and non-governmental in a participatory manner.
- Puts democratic, transparent and environmentally friendly controls on public goods such as the public domain, urban services, and land management.
- Sets regularly reviewed and revised legislated targets and an associated roadmap for cities working in close collaboration with private sector and civil society stakeholders to ensure implementation of policy measures.
- Establishes urban laboratories open to the public to monitor, measure and publicize progress by mutually agreed to indicators and to inform decision-makers on the state of urban sprawl, biodiversity, affordability and access to housing, public services, urban mobility, urban safety, etc.

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