



Co-creative processes, involving different stakeholders, are increasingly replacing the top down planning approach. The co-creative process has evolved from citizens' movements such as action groups that oppose (city) government planning and projects to stakeholders or partners involved in the assessment of mobility challenges. In doing so, they are involved in the formation of new visions, future mobility scenarios and the design of new project concepts.

Problem description

For many decades car oriented city road engineering projects have encountered protests and opposition from citizens' movement groups. The 'Lower Manhattan Expressway' design, led by Robert Moses, is one iconic example from the 1960's. A citizens' movement opposed his plans during the early sixties. Its leader was Jane Jacobs, who later became one of the leading urban planning academics and her book 'The death and life of great American cities' has remained important for decades.



The European SUMP process aims to replace old school mobility planning by replacing top down planning with co-creative approaches to broaden the scope of interventions from large road infrastructure projects to multimodal mobility services whilst involving different stakeholders and including citizens' movements groups.

Apart from finding the appropriate format for corporation, a fundamental pre-condition for success appears to be establishing 'mutual trust' between all parties involved: namely politicians, city/regional/state administration and citizens.



How does it work?

The new roles in co-creative planning processes call for new planning formats such as 'mobility covenants' between the process partners, development of planning and design labs that include experts as well as citizens and other stakeholders such as local businesses. Within a mobility covenant there is a need for new competencies for all planning participants. The PROSPERITY Innovation Brief¹ "Crowd funding of studies as instrument to develop alternatives to government planning concepts" describes the need for and potential ways that citizens'

http://sump-network.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/innovation_briefs/Innovation_Brief_Crowd_funding_FINAL_web.pdf

movements could develop their expertise to facilitate full-fledged participation in this process as a partner, to contributing not only to problem descriptions but also to mobility solutions.

An overall agreement concerning the urban mobility process is needed to avoid unstructured or limited involvement of participants. To demonstrate how this would work, we will discuss how Antwerp implemented this approach and used a covenant between the key partners (regional and city government; administrations and citizen groups). The covenant described the overall mobility ambitions and the different cooperation

formats. Working platforms were created, apart from a policy decision level (politicians, top of administration and citizens' movement leaders), for the different planning and strategic project issues. The platforms also included open discussions held on-line as well as meetings that captured the involvement of interested citizens.

A co-operative planning process needs openness so that bottom-up initiatives can develop overtime, however this process requires leadership. In Antwerp the role of 'steward' was created for this purpose to chair meetings and organise the co-operative process.



Who benefits from the Co-creative process?

The benefits of co-creation in urban mobility planning processes are well established and go beyond the scope of this Innovation Brief. In the private business world it is well known² that co-creation initiatives allow a firm to create more attractive products for its customers, to be ahead of its competitors and as a result achieve a better market position. Therefore, it seems obvious

that having a more attractive, innovative and robust urban mobility plan and related projects should be of the utmost importance to a city. Policy makers can make great gains by using well organised co-creation processes to deliver higher quality plans and projects. The future benefits for citizens to obtain better, tailor-made projects and plans are obvious.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/social-innovation/benefits-of-co-creation/>

Co-creation credibility

The credibility of citizens' movements will increase if they can demonstrate a constructive contribution to mobility planning. The appealing power of strong stories and visions for people centred mobility in cities, places with high quality design and streets should not be underestimated. The credibility of the citizens' movements will increase where the stories, visions and plans they create are made reality, by the public authorities ultimately responsible for delivery.

The co-creative process can also help to improve the credibility of the city or public authorities. If politicians can show they have an open ear towards the citizens they represent, administrations adopting co-creative processes may be able to improve their image, often one of being bureaucratic and technocratic organisations.

Policy options for cities

City governments that create 'in consultation with citizens' movements' that are well organised and that have formalised a framework for co-creation for urban mobility can create a process to involve citizen in their planning process, develop new perspectives that leave behind car oriented top down approaches to make way for human centred approaches instead.

Furthermore, if citizens' movements become more involved in the co-creative processes instead of planning opposition or legal action then efficiency of the planning process may improve because the citizens' need to oppose may be removed.

ANTWERP: An example of Good practices

A covenant between the Regional and City Governments, their Agencies and three leading citizens' movements was signed on 15th March 2017. The signing of the covenant follows more than 20 years of opposition to a major road project, the completion of the Antwerp ring road motorway (part of the TEN-T network).

The three citizens' movements have different concerns and backgrounds:

- 'Straten Generaal' this organisation traditionally employs effective legal actions to engage with planning process. They have successfully led appeals to the High Court based on EIA concerns that stalled the project progress.
- Ademloos ('Breathless') is a group from around a former CEO of a leading marketing company in Belgium. Together, with the help of the other city movements, they compiled a petition for a referendum on the project, 60% of the Antwerp population rejected the approved project plan.
- Ringland is a movement formed to express an alternative vision for the ring road area. They envisage a project where the ring road is covering and the area remains green. Their meetings attract more than 1000 citizens to listen and discuss their plans.



An important feature of the Antwerp co-creation process is the strong representation and organisation of the citizens' movements before the signing of the covenant.

The covenant was jointly prepared using a cooperative process involving the citizens' movements that was led by a mediator, called 'the curator'. The mediator, Alexander D'Hooghe was appointed by the Flemish government following a rigorous process to identify an individual that understood complex urban planning matters and project design issues and importantly possessed negotiation skills to manage complex opposing positions.

He delivered an ambition report that concentrated on the most contested project, the inner ring road, as a basis for an agreement between the stakeholders, including the citizens' movements. This report was different to former options put forward by the government that only partially addressed the point of view of the citizens' movements.

The 'Covenant for the Future' stipulates strategic elements of the Mobility Plan for Antwerp that all parties agree upon as follows:

- a tangential motorway north of the city (partially new construction) for east- west through traffic and port related transport,
- the contested missing link of the inner ring road will be constructed but downgraded to an urban instead of an international motorway, the Flemish government and the port authority will budget 1,25 billion euro for the capping of this ring road,
- an ambitious increase in modal shift from 70% (car)/30% (other modes) in the city region to 50/50 split in 2030 as well as traffic management of the through traffic to create a more liveable city.

A Mobility Plan for the region outlining key projects will be included as part of the covenant.

The following platforms were created to be in the Future Covenant:

- **A decision level platform:** This platform include representatives of the Minister and the Mayor's office, heads of the administrations and the project agency concerned, as well as the leaders of the three city movements. Step by step consultation at this level steers the overall progress of the Future Covenant.
- **Working platforms:** These platforms further develop the Regional Mobility Plan, the planning of the Motorway, the Environmental Impact Assessment of the missing link of the inner ring road and the urban design of the capped ring road area.

Each platform consists of a government representative and a co-chair from the citizens' movements. Within the working platform experts from administrations as well as external experts, appointed by the city movements, participate. They deliver reviews of the working documents, plans and reports from consultants and urban design companies appointed by the government. On this basis, the work of the consultants is steered using step by step joint steering group decisions.

It has been one and a half year since the start of this process and it has received positive feedback from the politicians and the citizens' movements. None of the working platforms have however yet delivered final planning or design documents which needs to be approved by the government.

The citizens' movement role within the Future Covenant has evolved in three ways:

- **Citizen action groups:** a series of open meetings was organised to explain the state of affairs to interested citizens and check to what extent support existed for the planning in progress.
- **Citizens' expertise centres:** The position of citizens' movements is aided by academics, external experts and a scientific board (see PROSPERITY innovation brief: Crowd funding of studies as instrument to develop alternatives to government planning concepts) .

- **Co-creation partner:** in the urban mobility planning process organised by the government.

It is too early at this stage to judge whether the Future Covenant is a success or a failure. However, the Antwerp example seems to be one of the most far reaching in terms of the urban mobility planning processes in Europe. The budget for completion of the ring road, including the capping is estimated at 4,50 billion euro (3,25 billion euro for the road and tunnel infrastructure and 1,25 for the capping) financed by the Flemish government. The planned construction is due to take place from 2019 to 2026. The other projects covered by the Future Covenant will double this budget. It is clear that the scope of the planned projects will demand transgenerational efforts, not only for the building of the projects concerned, but also for the planning process.

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