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Sustainable mobility as essential ingredient for vibrant cities: 3 cases in point

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Summary

1. Achieving smart urban mobility: the case of Zürich 1985-
2. Regeneration through public-public partnerships and public transport:
the case of Bilbao 1989-2012
3. Planning for sustainable mobility in the new university town of Louvain-
la-Neuve (Brussels) 1972-

I. ZÜRICH

Achieving smart urban mobility: the case of Zürich 1985-

1. Zurich's traffic management.

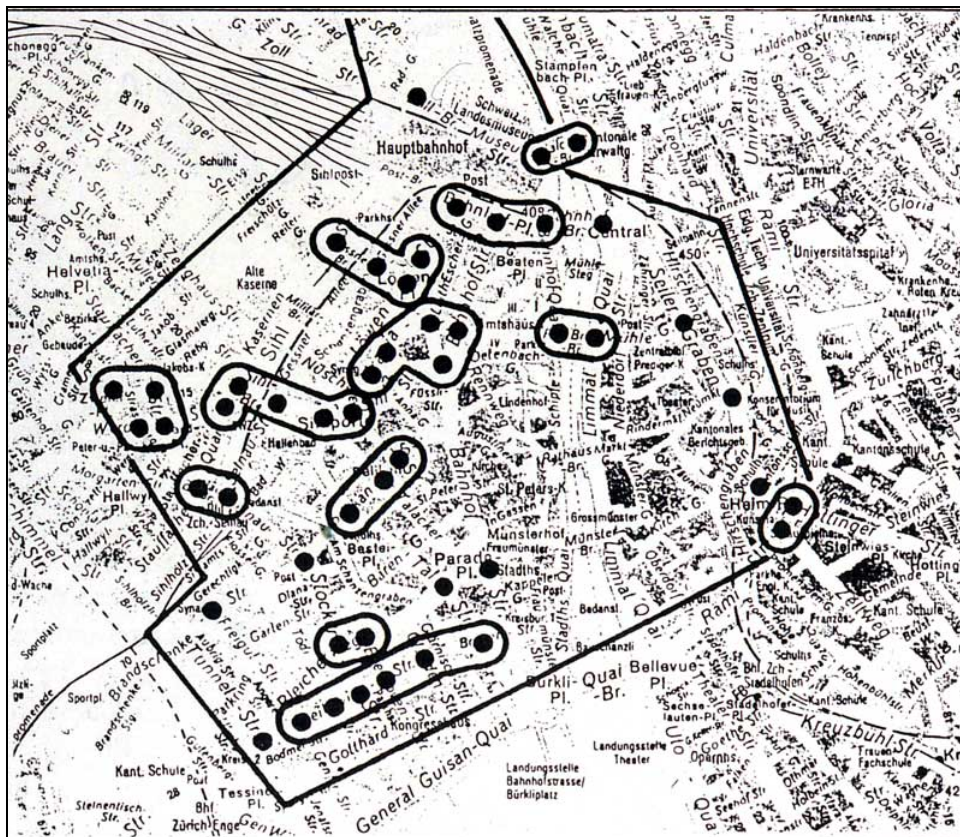
In Zurich, trams and buses enjoy absolute priority on-street. When approaching a traffic light the sensor (seen on the lower left) ensures they have a green light at any time of the day. The reliability of timetables makes public transport the city's fastest mode of transport. Modal split is around 80% in favour of public transport. Taxis are not allowed to use public transport lanes.



Ill. 1. Trams and buses enjoy priority at any time.

Zurich's traffic management includes traffic calming.

Traffic calming is ensured by adapting the traffic light system (a much shorter cycle favours pedestrians, cyclists and public transport).



III. 2. As the cycle of traffic lights has been shortened they are no longer synchronised, thus no “green waves” of more than a couple of traffic lights.

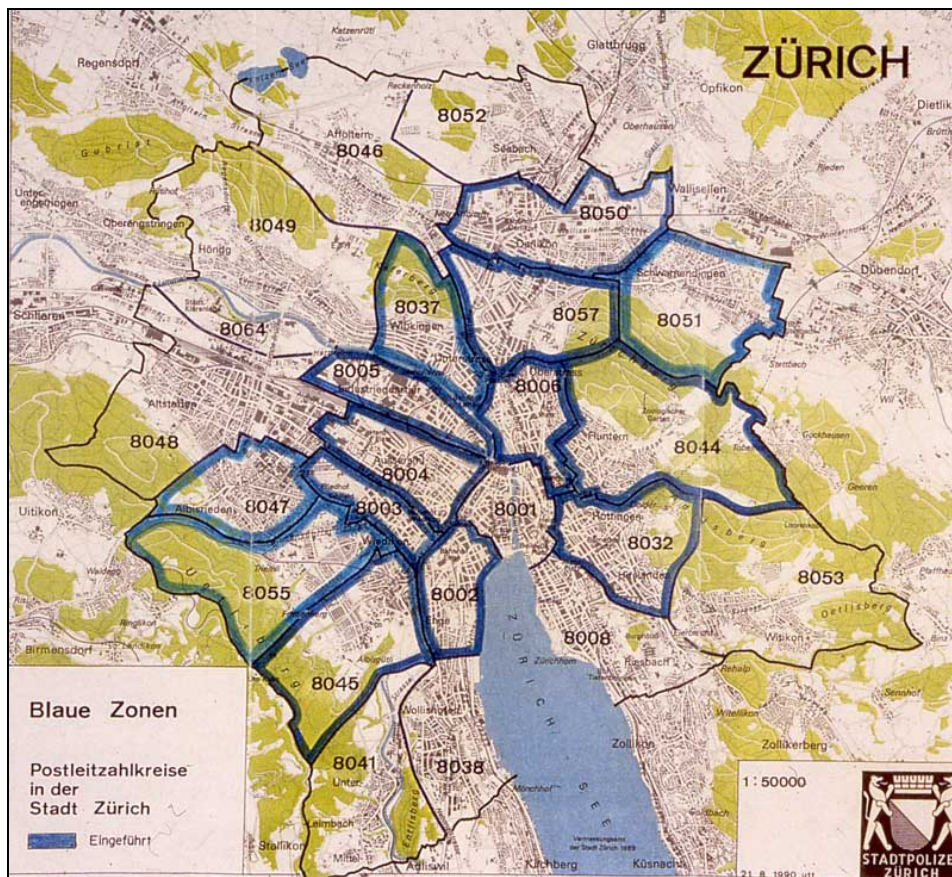
2. Zurich’s parking management.

The highest political ingenuity, however, lies in a parking policy favouring local voters.

Only Zurich-registered residents (the voters) benefit from unrestricted on-street parking in their district (see map), while drivers entering the city from other districts or from other municipalities have a maximum of 90 minutes’ free parking time (blue zone).

This measure triggered a large movement of inhabitants back to the city, benefited the public car parks and has been politically very rewarding for the city fathers, while suburban rail travel has been improved.

This system could be applied in any city where commuters come from other electoral districts.



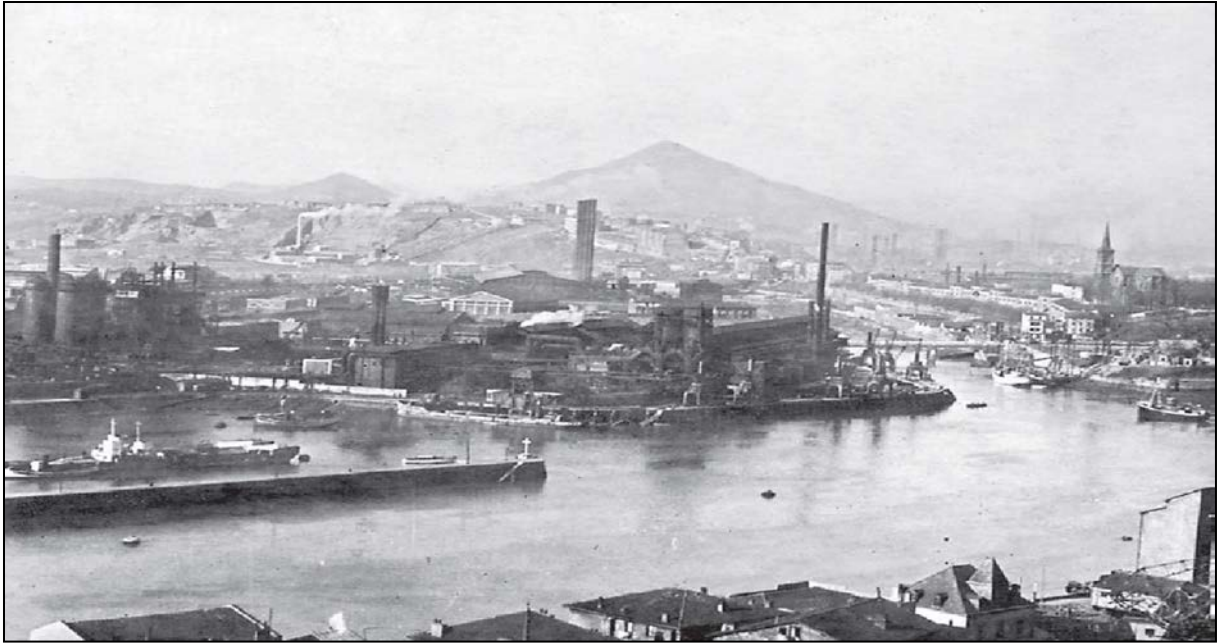
III. 3. Zurich: map of districts. Residents enjoy unlimited parking only within their own district.

II. BILBAO

Urban regeneration through public-public partnerships: the case of Bilbao 1989-2012

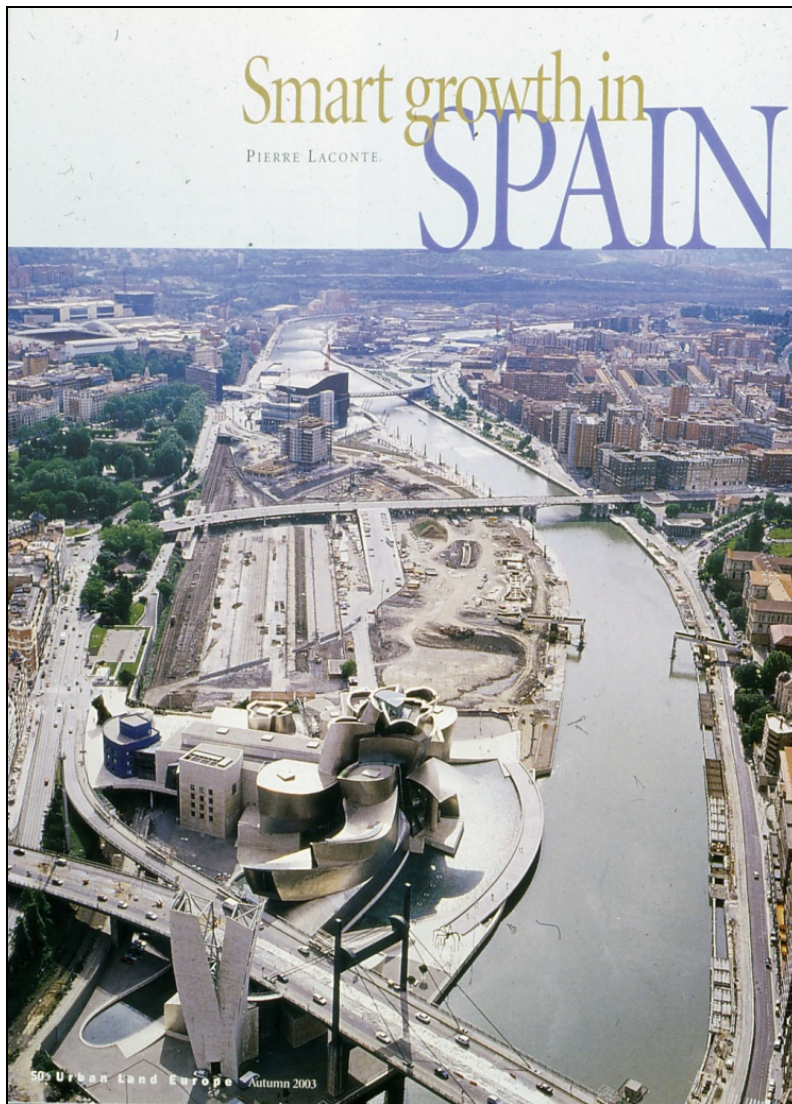
1. Bilbao's reconversion.

The steel industry, which had prospered for many years, was wiped out by the 1989 economic crisis. Industrial land was re-used for new activities, based on services and culture, while preserving architectural heritage.



III. 4. View of Bilbao's industrial area along the Ría.

The regeneration programme for the derelict industrial area along the Ría, owned by several public bodies, from local to national, was unified by a public-public partnership embodied in a common public redevelopment corporation - Ría 2000. The two anchors for new development, at each end of the site, were the new Guggenheim museum and the congress and concert centre.



III. 5. View of the industrial area, after clearance (Source: Laconte 2003)

The regeneration was achieved by selling the land available between the two anchors for offices, housing and commerce.

The huge financial surplus was used exclusively to enhance connectivity and further urban regeneration.

The master plan's implementation was completed in 2011.



III. 6. The regeneration programme was finalised in 2011 (office tower by Arch. Cesar Pelli).



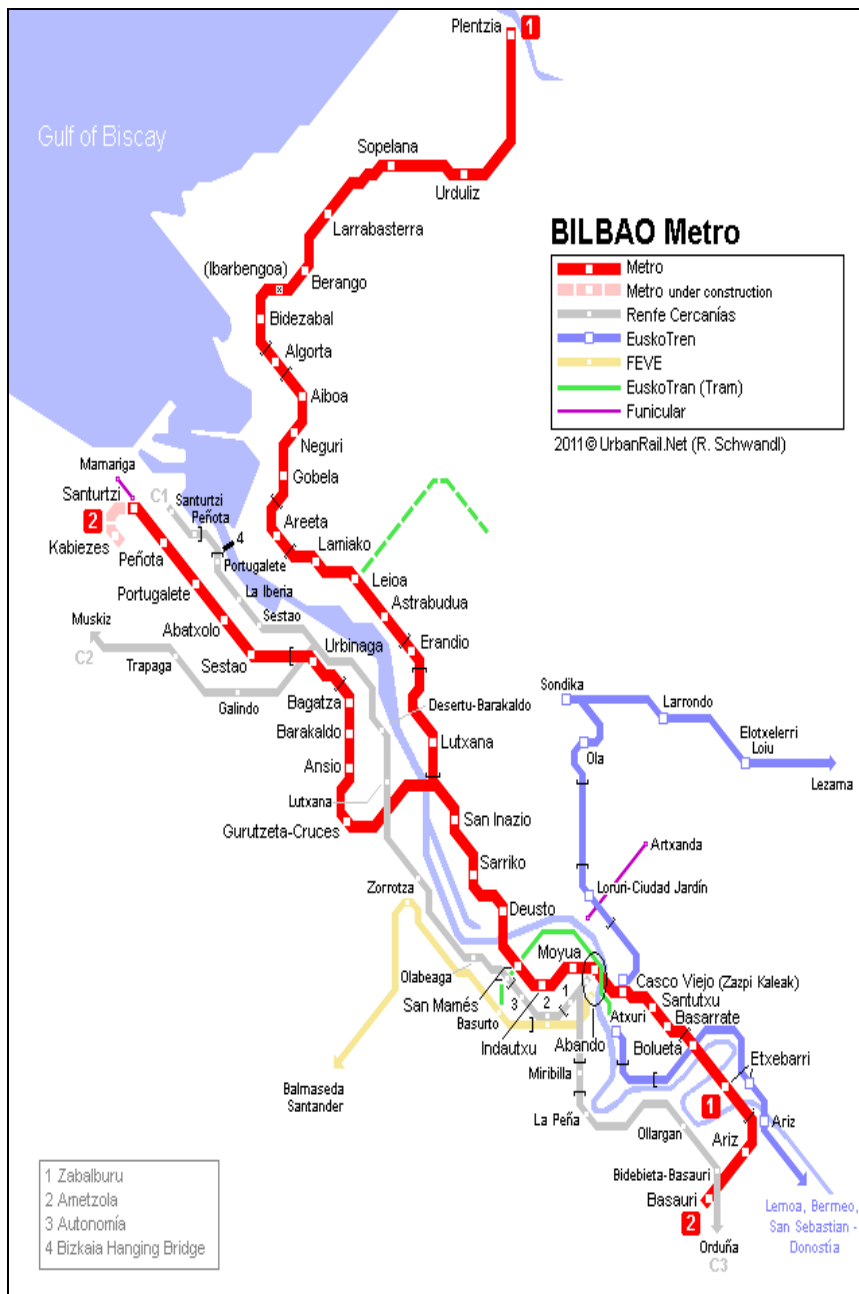
Image 02. Tram stop

III. 7. Thanks partly to the surplus achieved from the sale of the former industrial area a new tramline was built along the Ría.

2. Bilbao Transport

A new tram line serves the canal side in the urban centre, reducing traffic and parking space and adding to the citizens' quality of life.

The metro runs partly on a new alignment (with stations designed by Norman Foster) and partly on reused former regional railways, ensuring enhanced connectivity throughout the city and its region.



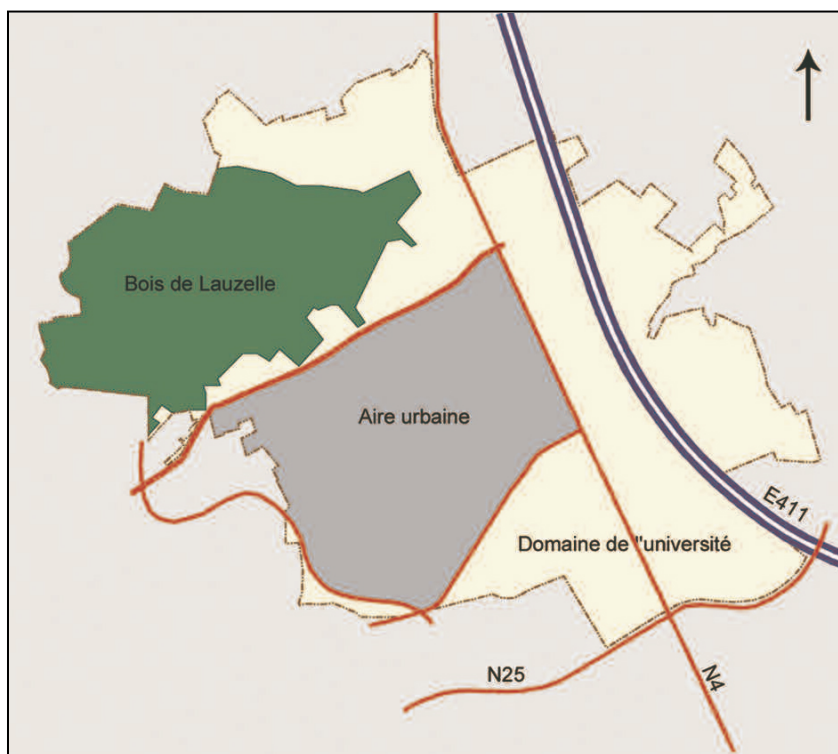
III. 8. The new Metro partly uses old regional lines.

III. LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE

Sustainable mobility in the new university town of Louvain-la-Neuve (Brussels) 1972-

The university town of Louvain is one of the oldest in Europe. Obligated to leave Louvain because of language legislation, the University decided to develop a new town on the model of the old university towns. For this purpose it bought 920 ha of agricultural and forest land in a rural area close to the Brussels-Namur road (N4). (Laconte 2009)

The central part was set aside for urban development; forest land in the north was preserved. The overall master plan and architectural coordination of the new university town was entrusted to the Groupe Urbanisme-Architecture (R. Lemaire, J.-P. Blondel and P. Laconte). Political uncertainty dictated a stop-and-go approach.



III. 9. The map shows the land acquired by the university in 1969, the part to be urbanised in grey and the part reserved as forest in green. The E411 motorway had not yet been built at that time.

The first phase (1972), close to the existing road, was built around the Science Library, an iconic building seen as the cathedral of a university town, with its plaza (parvis), its university buildings, its housing for both students and non-students, and its shops and restaurants (architect A. Jacqmain).



III. 10. View of the initial phase (1972). All streets are pedestrian, with access and parking underneath.

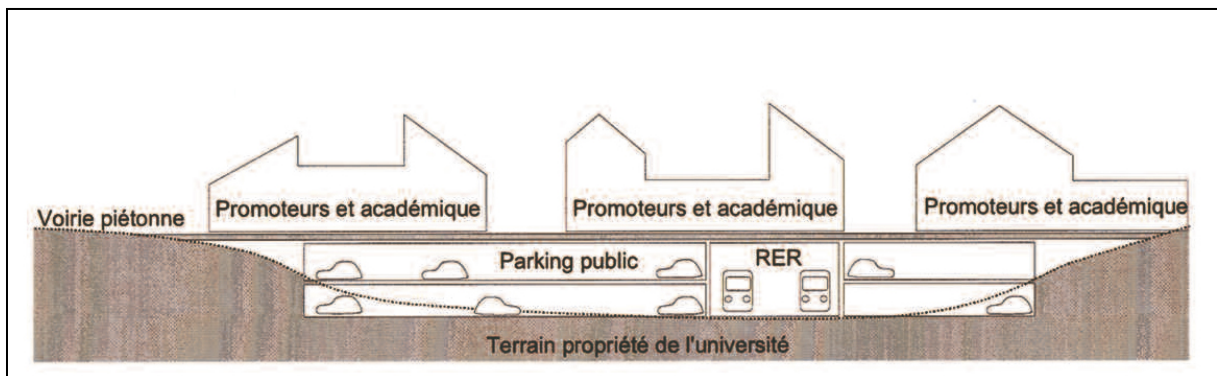
From 1976 the new underground railway station – built thanks to the foresight of the national railway company, became the centre of the development, including an adjacent shopping mall. The tracks are to be covered by the shopping centre extension.

This rail link ensured maximal regional connectivity.





III. 11. a) View of the station seen from the tracks. Tracks are presently in open air but will be covered by the shopping mall extension. b) View of the street entrance to the railway station. All streets are pedestrianised and combine university buildings, housing, retail and cultural services. Land remains the property of the University and is leased to investors. All motorised transport is located underground or in the periphery.



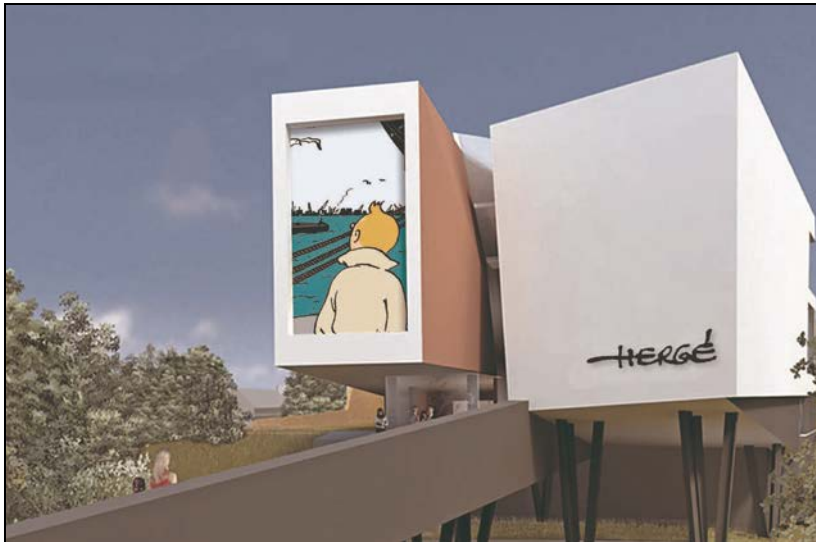
III. 12. The functioning of the slab. The diagram shows how the ground below – essential for long-term connectivity - remains the property of the university while the infrastructure and buildings are leased (for up to 99 years) to public and private investors.



III. 13. View of one the numerous small piazzas on the pedestrian street network. The trees are growing on the slab. Cars are parked underneath.



III. 14. (To be added) Louvain-la-Neuve university town: all storm water is led to a reservoir which appears to be a lake, which saves infrastructure costs and attracts housing investment.



Ill. 16. The Hergé Museum, close to the railway station (Arch Atelier de Portzamparc, Paris)

References.

Laconte 2003: Smart Growth in Spain, ULI Europe 2003.

Laconte 2009 (Ed.) : La recherche de la qualité environnementale et urbaine. Le cas de Louvain-la-Neuve, Lyon: Éditions du CERTU, 2009.