Designing and developing public spaces in Brussels

Concevoir et aménager les espaces publics à Bruxelles
De openbare ruimten in Brussel ontwerpen en aanleggen

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This text is a short account or summary of urban imaginations which have conditioned the formal view of the development of public space since the creation of the Brussels-Capital Region.

It presents different periods which have constituted turning points and overlappings in the evolution of these imaginations.

Through concrete examples, the text illustrates in particular how development practices for public space became recognised, at first through projects which were simply aimed at a better balance in the distribution of public space, and then progressively through projects which integrated questions regarding use and the architectural qualities of developments. The author discusses in particular the influence of the ‘neighbourhood contract’ urban revitalisation tool in this evolution.

The texts ends with the identification of new methodological challenges facing public spaces in Brussels, as regards the understanding of the different levels as well as project formalisation processes.

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Introduction

1. In order to understand the situation which characterises the development of public spaces in Brussels today, it is a good idea to take a retrospective look at the way in which it has been viewed and imagined over the past twenty years.

2. The starting point of this text is therefore 1989, when the Brussels Region was founded, and its end point is the contemporary period.

3. This text is therefore a short account or summary of changing and evolving urban imaginations. It presents different periods which have constituted turning points in the evolution and superposing of these imaginations.

4. This text is not intended to be a complete and exhaustive account of the development of public spaces in Brussels. Instead, it is the result of a personal analysis of this phenomenon.

First period: sharing public space and ‘improving’ the city

5. This account begins with the situation which prevailed at the time of the creation of the Brussels-Capital Region in 1989, which does not constitute a starting point in itself, but rather a moment of transition between an old and a new regime for the design of public space: an old regime characterised by the predominance of large-scale transport infrastructures in the urban fabric and a functionalist vision of public space; a new regime characterised by the predominance of urban structures and spaces in the infrastructures.

6. As with any transition, it was prepared in particular in the framework of the movement for the reconstruction of the traditional European city and movements and associations in Brussels which were associated with it (Archives d’Architecture Modernes, Inter-Environnement Bruxelles, ARAU, Fondation Roi Baudouin, etc.).

7. This transition was thus anticipated through the elaboration of a doctrine based on the idea of the reconstruction of the traditional city - a doctrine based on a body of ideas developed with a rich bibliography. It was also anticipated through the emergence of a generation of professionals (architects, urban planners, sociologists) who were given decision-making functions at the time of the creation of the Brussels Region, which allowed these ideas to be put into practice.

8. The Brussels Region was therefore not empty handed or without ulterior motives when it launched a public space policy as soon as it was created in 1989, based on three essential principles:

- the promotion of public spaces as places of urban sociability which, through their development, are able to improve the living conditions of inhabitants;
- a better distribution of public spaces with a decrease in the dominance of the car to the benefit of other methods of travel;
- the idea of ‘improving’ the city, which one may describe as being an imaginary set of references and reuse of development tools for the city - inherited or put together (mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries).

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3 In particular tramway lanes, widened pavements and pedestrian crossing extensions.
9. Therefore, with respect to the Belgian institutional situation, this public space policy takes on a political dimension, namely that of rebuilding and underlining the specificities of the urban space in Brussels and of reinforcing the habitability of neighbourhoods. Thus, Charles Picqué, first Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region, wrote the following with respect to public space: ‘Since 1989, the Brussels Region and no longer the state has controlled the main infrastructures, with the municipalities still responsible for their own networks. Since this date, it has concentrated on the improvement of public space in a double perspective: assert the identity of Brussels as an urban entity and reinforce the qualities of its neighbourhoods’.5

10. This text clearly identifies the ideological insinuation of what would initially be the public space policy led by the Region: build an identity for Brussels through the promotion of the architectural language inherited from the traditional urban fabrics (of the 18th and 19th centuries), in reaction to the devastating policy led by the state during the 1960s and 1970s.

11. During this first period, a public space policy was thus pushed by the Region through three types of action:

- firstly, thoughts on the concept of public space expressed in a best practices manual entitled the ‘Manuel des espaces publics bruxellois’ (Manual of public spaces in Brussels), constituting the reference work in which unifying concepts were developed to remodel urban spaces in Brussels;

- secondly, the coherence between thoughts on public space and the ‘model’ of the compact city which clearly occurred in the first Regional Development Plan in 1995 and which was formally translated into the

Figure 1. Place Poelaert – Map taken from the ‘Chemins de la ville’ master plan. This map presents the stakes involved in the improvement and distribution of public space.


section entitled ‘Improvement of the city’ of the aforementioned plan;

• finally, the realisation of a series of ‘exemplary’ projects which implemented the new public space development model on a large scale. These were the first programmes to create tramway lanes such as the one on Avenue Brugman (1993), as well as the ambitious ‘Chemins de la ville’ (1990–….) programmes and the ‘Charte d’aménagement du Tracé Royal’ followed by its realisations (1995-2002).

Second period: when the improvement and distribution of public space are no longer enough

12. The three types of action mentioned above had the effect of reintroducing a cultural dimension into the development of public space whose design was a product of ‘urban art’. Public space would therefore no longer be designed as a space intended to accommodate the large-scale transport infrastructures (urban motorways), but rather as a type of foundation for the developed and social environment which it serves.

13. The resulting development model – reduced to the minimum and based on a form of aesthetic simplicity – made use of noble materials and was implemented first of all in regional projects (such as the Chemins de la ville or the Tracé Royal), and then gradually imposed itself on all of the stakeholders of public space in Brussels (in particular the municipalities).

14. Parallel to its adoption, the minimum development model was, however, questioned or even criticised with respect to:

• on the one hand, the consideration of uses and practices in public space;

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7 These were part of the programme led by the Brussels Region whose objective was to improve the connections between the upper and lower parts of the city through five routes developed in a qualitative manner. The authors were different consultancy firms in Brussels (AVA, JNC International, Van Wunnik&Partners, etc.) which had to respect a basic charter ensuring coherence as a whole.

8 The Tracé Royal programme, which was launched following the death of King Baudouin in July 1993 and the funeral procession along a route in a pitiful state, dealt with the problem of a main route in Brussels, between the Laeken Castle and the Royal Palace with its continuation up to the Law Courts. This route – which is 7 kilometres long – goes through three municipalities and was almost always shared with trams. In terms of development, the main challenge was in keeping with development of the same quality integrating a tramway lane and a better distribution of public space. The Tracé Royal project was carried out gradually between 1995 and 2002 based on financing from the federal state. This development was carried out by an association of consultancy firms mainly from Brussels (AVA, JNC International, Agora, W.J. & M.C. Van Campenhout).


10 Such as, for example, minor projects for the reconstruction of squares and streets carried out from 2000 in the Pentagon by the City of Brussels: redevelopment of Vieux Marché aux Grains, Place Sainte-Catherine and Place du Jardin aux Fleurs.

11 Who can recall – as part of our collective memory – the names of the consultancy firms which carried out these developments?
• on the other hand, architectural ambition or, more broadly, public space as a ‘project’, mentioned in connection with the success of the models in Barcelona and Lyon for the development of public spaces.

15. The first issue, which should be considered as a form of enrichment of the basic model, emerged at the end of the 1990s, when the urban revitalisation tools (in particular the neighbourhood contracts initiated in 1994), as well as specific developments such as the Bonnevie Park development project in Molenbeek-Saint-Jean, led to the first public discussions regarding public space development projects. These issues were raised mainly during information meetings or during public inquiries.

16. The second issue formally emerged in 1997, during the ‘Impératrice’ and Sentiers de l’Europe competitions organised firstly by the City of Brussels, and secondly by the Brussels-Capital Region. This issue was centred on the capacity of public space to be the subject of projects with an architectural ambition for urban space, beyond the minimum development format.

17. For these two competitions, the public authorities therefore had international aims, which supposedly guaranteed the quality of the projects.

18. In the framework of the first competition, the question raised concerned the capacity of public space to ‘sew up’ the urban fabric of the European quarter again, which was undergoing a new upheaval due to the construction of the vast European Parliament complex. Under the leadership of Brussels Minister of Regional Planning and Public Works, Hervé Hasquin, a partnership was therefore established with the European Commission, with Commissioner Erkki Liikanen and the SCAB in charge of organising the competition.

19. In April 1998, the Aukett (UK) and Art & Build (B) association won the competition, yet the procedure as a whole was soon questioned.

20. On the one hand, as regards the method, the competition was organised without prior planning (in terms of locations and limits of interventions, mobility options, the priority of interventions, etc.), and the winning proposal to extend the European Parliament mall up to the Schuman roundabout, the total demolition of the Rue de Toulouse and Rue de Pascal blocks, and the partial reconfiguration of the Vaubert/Wiertz block soon proved to be unrealistic, too expensive and even...
controversial. On the other hand, the architect R. Mathy who had placed third, launched proceedings in November 1998 at the Council of State for the violation, in particular, of the European directive and the Belgian laws on public contracts and failure to comply with the provisions of the competition regulations.\textsuperscript{14}

21. Finally, when Minister Hasquin left in July 1999 to become Minister-President of the French Community, the project lost its political support, and the European Commission launched infringement proceedings against the Belgian state in November of the same year. In the end, the competition only resulted in the restoration of Léopold Park.

22. In the framework of the ‘Impératrice’ competition, the City of Brussels, represented by H. Simons, Deputy Mayor of Urbanism at the time, sought to match the quality of the projects in Barcelona and Lyon by inviting renowned architects to participate in the competition (Spanish architect J. Farrando, the team from Barcelona J. Roig and E. Battle, French architect B. Huet, Belgian architect X. De Geyter, etc.).

23. This ambition – which led to the designation of French architect A. Sarfati\textsuperscript{15} as the winner in 1999 – quickly encountered two pitfalls, however, which delayed the beginning and completion of the works until now: on the one hand, a lack of initial control of all of the financing costs,\textsuperscript{16} and on the other, a lack of prior programming definition (in terms of mobility management). Unlike the ‘Sentiers de l’Europe’ competition, the ‘Impératrice’ competition had precise limits of interventions as well as a clear statement of objectives, which nevertheless allowed the proposals to be kept within a more or less realistic conceptual framework, making it possible for the projects to come to a successful conclusion. The competition was also organised by the City of Brussels administration rather than by a non-profit organisation, which also gave it legitimacy in terms of the continuity and conformity of the procedure.

24. The two abovementioned issues (the questions regarding uses and ambition) emerged together again in 2003, at the time of the debate regarding the surface redevelopment of Place Flagey in Ixelles.

**Third period: the Flagey saga or the emergence of other models for the development of public space**

25. I shall not go back over the problem regarding the development of Place Flagey in detail, as it has already been the object of many publications.\textsuperscript{17}

26. Let me simply mention the basic problem, i.e. the need to develop the surface of the square following the underground construction of a storm water basin.

27. Let me also mention the claims which led to the evolution from the initial project for the redevelopment of the square as envisaged in 2003 at the time of the first request for planning permission, to the project which was finally implemented in 2007-2008.

28. Among these claims was the one made by residents’ associations and committees regarding the opportunity for citizens to participate in the project’s elaboration process; in reality, this claim raised the question as to the process for the prior definition of the project’s programme. On behalf of the academic and professional worlds, there was also a strong demand for the statement of an architectural ambition, for which there would be a clear selection process via the organisation of a competition.

29. Beyond the initial preliminary sketch by the consultancy firm in charge of the surface redevelopment which favoured the application of the principles of minimum development as defined in the Manual of

\textsuperscript{14} For further information, read ‘Les Sentiers de l’Europe étaient bien balisés’, Schoune Ch. in Le Soir, 3 April 2000.

\textsuperscript{15} This architect, author of the redevelopment of Place and Rue de la République in Lyon in 1995, had cleverly proposed to make a Barcelonan ‘rambla’ at the site of Boulevard de l’Impératrice, for the Brussels competition.

\textsuperscript{16} The project management was ensured by Beliris in the end.

\textsuperscript{17} See, for example, ‘De la participation urbaine - La place Flagey’, La Lettre volée / ISACF La Cambre, Brussels, 2005.
Public Spaces in Brussels, in reality, the saga of the redevelopment of Place Flagey led to the beginning of a turning point in Brussels urbanism.

30. In the Flagey case, we witnessed the emergence of the idea that minimum rationality and the distribution of public space to the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, were no longer enough in themselves as a project for public space, and that other stakes might exist such as, for example, large-scale public space as a tool for the revitalisation of neighbourhoods, public space as support for architectural ambition, the uses of public space, public space as a factor of social cohesion, etc.

31. It was no coincidence that this sudden awareness received media coverage through the development of Place Flagey. Certain surrounding neighbourhoods had been the object of neighbourhood contract elaboration procedures since 2001 and 2003, which had allowed certain local stakeholders to be made aware of the abovementioned stakes involved in the development of public space.

32. However, although the Flagey case served as a standard bearer for the claims relating to the project’s procedure and quality, other concomitant examples did not receive the same media coverage, but should be mentioned here.

33. Their identification also reveals a chronologically concomitant and collective awareness of the social and architectural stakes in the development of public spaces, on behalf of certain municipal and regional authorities.

34. I am referring in particular to the redevelopment of Place Houffalize in Schaerbeek, for which a very advanced participative process with

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18 Year of the elaboration of the basic programme for the ‘Blyckaert’ neighbourhood contract (implemented 2002-2006/2008).
19 Year of the elaboration of the basic programme for the ‘Malibran’ neighbourhood contract (implemented 2004-2008/2010).
the inhabitants was prompted by the firms VIA/Cooparch – responsible for the elaboration of the ‘Jerusalem’ neighbourhood contract basic programme – beginning with this phase in 2001, allowing the definition of the major development options for this space. The project as it was carried out in 2006 by the firm D+A Consult, took over these options, reinforcing them in a simple development, relying on the developed environment as well as on concrete uses such as the frequent passage of families on their way to Josaphat Park, parking, the problem of water drainage, etc. I am also referring to redevelopment in the framework of the neighbourhood contract programmes for the parks inside the Saint-François block in Saint-Josse and the Reine-Verte block in Schaerbeek.

35. In the framework of Saint-François Park, the specificity of the park’s location inside a block and at the end of a parcel of land belonging to a municipal school and a block of public housing flats, led to an intense process led by the municipality to include needs on the agenda, as soon as the ‘Rue Verte’ neighbourhood contract was launched in 2002. The working group of inhabitants therefore participated in the choices made by the project developer (choices based on an outline presented orally), followed by dialogue later on in order to ensure that the uses would fit their expectations.

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20 Project carried out in 2007 / Project developer: M. De Visscher / Project manager: Municipality of Saint-Josse
36. In the framework of Reine-Verte Park, as soon as the basic programme of the ‘Brabant-Verte’ neighbourhood contract was approved in 2001, the municipality implemented a process for a multi-stakeholder project integrating a ‘Park’ working group made up of inhabitants, associations, the developer, the landscape architect, IBGE and the municipal department for green spaces, which examined the future needs of the park in terms of management, based on experience.

37. And finally, I am referring to Ursulines Square for which IBGE and Recyclart developed an innovative coproduction mechanism as soon as the project was initiated in 2003, integrating skateboarders, designers and neighbours, and allowing the invention of a new form of public space in an abandoned part of the North-South Junction.

38. In these three cases, public participation – organised in advance and in various forms (from the preliminary sketch to the project) – served as a basis for the competition between architects in the framework of the contract for the design of public spaces. In these three cases, this prior programming allowed designers to concentrate on the challenge of architectural quality, and even on the enhancement of a minimum planning of public space by elements and objects based on questions of use.

39. These four projects were designed around 2000 within densely developed and inhabited urban fabrics, and lie within the scope of a truly ‘new way’ of designing public space, as did the final development project for Place Flagey.

40. This new way of designing public space does not content itself with a unique architectural language as claimed at the time of the first projects initiated by the Region. On the contrary, it claims a true acknowledgement of the complexity and diversification of uses of the space developed by inhabitants, as well as an acknowledgement of the need for a sort of contemporary mark on public space.

41. Furthermore, it appears to me that the success of these projects is the result of a harmony between the definition of a programme objective through participation, and the inclusion of the projects in a general policy vision for the city.
Fourth period: after Flagey, or the coexistence of two models

42. The fourth period corresponds to the current period. This period began at the turning point of the 2004 regional elections; a period during which the model of minimum planning coexisted with the contemporary model which I have just mentioned.

43. The first model, which resulted from well-established thought, emerged by itself in the form of a ‘mainstream’ attitude; the second model, due to its young age, is certainly still seeking a form of legitimacy through the projects which have been carried out.

44. During this period, the emergence of the new model is supported by some additional experiments led by the Regional Minister of Public Works, such as the development process for Place Schweitzer in Berchem-Sainte-Agathe, Place Cardinal Mercier in Jette and Place Rogier, but they have not yet resulted in work sites or finished jobs.

45. In the framework of the redevelopment of Place Rogier, the architectural choice to make a canopy measuring 66 metres in diameter led to a debate regarding the way in which the notion of architectural ambition finds expression in public space.

46. In July 2008, Place Flagey was inaugurated, thus illustrating in a concrete manner the first project for the architecture of public space in Brussels.

47. The new model for the design of public space also continues to be...
used in projects led by IBGE\textsuperscript{27} such as, for example, the renovation of the Georges Henri playground in Woluwé-Saint-Lambert,\textsuperscript{28} which was carried out in participation with the children who use the playground.

48. Beyond the experiments conducted by the \textit{Administration de l’Équipement et des Déplacements} (Public Service for Facilities and Mobility) of the Brussels Region, there have been many more small-scale development projects for public spaces led by certain municipalities in Brussels,\textsuperscript{29} which combine the public dissemination of expertise prior to the project, the definition of a programme before the organisation of architecture competitions, and finally, operationalisation via a quick implementation of the project.

49. Some of these projects lie within the scope of neighbourhood contract programmes such as, for example, the development of Parc Ligne 28\textsuperscript{30} and Zennetuïn\textsuperscript{31} in Molenbeek-Saint-Jean, and the public space

\textsuperscript{27} IBGE: Institut Bruxellois de Gestion de l’Environnement
\textsuperscript{28} Project carried out in 2008 / Project developer: Suède 36 / Project manager: IBGE
\textsuperscript{29} Mainly those in the inner ring of Brussels
\textsuperscript{30} Project carried out in 2010 / Project developer: Fondu Landscape architects / Project manager: Municipality of Molenbeek-Saint-Jean
\textsuperscript{31} Project carried out in 2010 / Project developer: B-Architecten / Project manager: Municipality of Molenbeek-Saint-Jean
trilogy, Jardin Gray-Couronne / Petite Rue Malibran / Place Henri Conscience in Ixelles.

50. Others lie within the scope of projects led directly by the municipalities regarding specific public spaces whose development prompted strong social expectations on behalf of inhabitants.

51. For example, let us mention the development of Place Gaucheret in Schaerbeek, which mobilised the active participation of inhabitants in the project (in particular the integration of an artistic intervention created with the children from the neighbourhood), and the redevelopment of Place Morichar in Saint-Gilles. In the case of the latter, given the complexity of the social, patrimonial and financial stakes, the municipality divided the study into three phases (programming/participation, economic feasibility, project) in order to clear up questions little by little and gradually deal with the aspects of design. Between the launching of studies in March 2005 and the current execution of works, five years

Figure 8. Place Morichar: Outlines of intentions made during the planning/definition phase. They clearly illustrate the intention to underline the structure of the square’s existing design and to create harmony between the spaces.

32 Project carried out in 2010 / Project developer: L’Escaut / Project manager: Municipality of Ixelles
33 Project carried out in 2008 / Project developer: R2D2 Architecture / Project manager: Municipality of Schaerbeek
34 Project under way / Project developer: G. Pinson / Project manager: Municipality of Saint-Gilles. The team in charge of the planning/participation phase was made up of Georges Pinson as architect, Pierre Vanderstraeten (VIA) as architect, sociologist and town planner, Denis Dujaardin as landscape architect.
have passed, which, in reality, corresponds to a typical timeframe for the commissioning of a project. In this sense, the redevelopment of Place Morichar in Saint-Gilles is an example of a municipality dealing with a complex problem regarding the development of public space on its own initiative, through a methodology which is built and structured over time.

52. Parallel to these projects, the Brussels government launched the PYBLIK\(^{35}\) training programme in September 2007 intended for civil servants and project developers who are actively involved in the issue of public space in Brussels. It therefore contributes to the movement of reflection on the emergence of a model for the design and creation of urban space, based on the anticipation of programme needs, coproduction and architectural ambition.

New methodological challenges?

53. It seems a good idea – by way of provisional conclusions – to review some of the points in this brief history of the design of public space developments in Brussels.

54. Firstly, let us recall the validity of the Brussels Region’s initial approach to define a minimum development model for public space.

55. In the historical perspective of the beginnings of a regional policy, this model first had to establish itself so that it would be considered today as being “self-evident”. With respect to the historical and patrimonial fabrics in which the first interventions were situated, this model was quite legitimate. The brief historical journey which was described in this text has shown us that at a certain moment, the project stakes and territories changed, and that it was therefore necessary to define another model for the design of public spaces.

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\(^{35}\) See www.pyblik.be
56. It should be noted that this model brought with it new stakeholders and new design mechanisms.37

57. Furthermore, although the minimum development model appears to have established itself, the question of the distribution of public space is still an unclear issue for which there is certainly not a consensus among the population of Brussels, the political class or economic circles. The multiplicity of project managers involved in public space in Brussels (Region, municipalities, federal state) and the necessary link with the nineteen municipalities (each of which has a specific view of the issue), do not allow a unique and coherent point of view to emerge, and solutions must be found on a case-by-case basis in order to gain ground with respect to the dominance of the car. Examples of this are the semi-exclusive tramway lanes in Chaussée de Charleroi between Place Stéphanie and Ma Campagne (carried out in 2003 with prior knowledge that it would not work); the development of Goulet Louise, where the removal of parking spaces has been the object of bitter debates since the beginning of the 1990s;38 the redevelopment of Place Jourdan which began in 2004 and is taking a long time to finish due to claimed compensation for the loss of surface parking spaces through the construction of hypothetical underground parking; the heated debates regarding the removal of surface parking spaces in Place du Grand Sablon in the centre of Brussels; and the debates of an identical nature which are currently under way regarding the project for the redevelopment of Place Saint-Lambert in Woluwé-Saint-Lambert.39 Of course, positive signs exist such as, for example, the work to reshape and distribute public space on the occasion of the extension of the tram 94 route between Place Wiener and Hermann-Debroux (inauguration in 2007), which allowed the mass removal of unauthorised parking in the centre of Boulevard du Souverain to be carried out willingly.

58. In addition to the question of the distribution of public space (in terms of the division of space) is the question of distribution within public space (in terms of negotiated copresence in public space). This question finds expression today in certain European cities through the development of ‘shared spaces’40 in which public space is no longer defined via clear limits between modes, but rather via relationships and the amount of use made of the space.

59. In the Brussels Region, this design of public space has run into different obstacles, such as the absence of a vision and a shared idea of mobility among public stakeholders, as well as the absence of a reference in terms of projects carried out in a city of a similar size to Brussels. More fundamentally, it comes up against the minimum development model for public space, which establishes the traditional vocabulary of the street (kerb, channel, pavement, etc.) as the very basis of the continuity and unity of urban space.

60. It is also surprising to identify the particularly ‘localised’ aspect of the abovementioned projects which lie within the scope of the second design model. Most of the time this involves development projects for squares, parks and streets, carried out in the framework of the neighbourhood contracts programme. This tool instituted by the Region at the level of the neighbourhoods therefore proves to be a project mechanism which is a forerunner in new design practices for urban space. The new design model for public space which emerged in the framework of the neighbourhood contracts programme thus contaminated to some extent development projects for public spaces at Regional level (Place

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36 The design teams included: sociologists, landscape architects, mediators, etc. The project management teams included: project managers, communication specialists, social coordination team, the master architect, etc.

37 Such as urban workshops, in situ visits, model work, etc.


39 On this subject, read ‘La nouvelle place Saint-Lambert divise le monde politique’, De Shrijver, M in Le Soir, 10 April 2010.

40 see www.shared-space.org
of the city. These territories were not affected by the neighbourhood contract practices and therefore cannot aspire to capitalise on the methodological experience brought by this mechanism.

61. Another observation may be the fact that no development projects for large-scale infrastructures emerge from a qualitative and architectural point of view. Although the tram network has undergone a significant extension these past years (extension of the tram 94 route between Place Wiener and Herrmann-Debroux and new routes are planned (a tram between Simonis and UZ Brussel and a tram between Place Royale, Central Station and Rue Royale) or being built (between Herrmann-Debroux and Boulevard de la Woluwe, on Boulevard Léopold III), this type of project unfortunately does not appear to have given rise to collective enthusiasm at the level of Brussels society with respect to the capacity of an infrastructure to re-establish the urban environment, as was the case, for example, when the tram networks were reinstalled in Strasbourg, Montpellier and Bordeaux. In this respect, an area still has to be developed in particular by scaling down the qualitative implementation of projects, thus generating a ‘mass effect’ and, at the level of public policies, by envisaging urban transport not only as a means of travel but more generally as a tool for the implementation of social mix and territorial development policies.

62. In terms of the large-scale development of public spaces, relatively speaking, the development of the regional Promenade Verte managed by IBGE is certainly a good example to follow and, at the very least, an interesting case to examine.

63. Initiated in the framework of the 1995 Regional Development Plan, the Promenade Verte is a cycling/pedestrian circuit covering 63 kilometres in the outskirts of the Region.

64. It was completed in sections, according to Beliris regional and federal funding, and is now nearing its final stages. The project design methodology developed by IBGE is based on the simple idea of a continuous circuit located within the territory of the RDP opening local development potentials. Its success is therefore due to an interaction be-

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Figure 10. Promenade du Chemin de fer between Delta and Chausée de Watermael. The Promenade is a cycling/pedestrian circuit covering more than 60 kilometres in the outskirts of the Region.
tween a large-scale circuit and its local capacity to generate high-quality projects, in terms of infrastructure and public space and/or landscape development. Whilst in Brussels, public space projects are often highly localised in places of note, the Promenade Verte is a project with a territorial objective, enhancing the qualitative value of the region.

65. Without going into detail, some of the interesting places in the Promenade Verte should be mentioned for the diversity of resulting developments: the footbridge over Avenue de Tervuren, the Promenade du Chemin de fer between Delta and Chausée de Watermael, the ‘anti-noise’ landscape development on the right side of Avenue de l’Exposition Universelle in Jette, and the Cognassier vegetable garden park in Berchem-Sainte-Agathe.

66. The Promenade Verte was completed in sections, with internal project management or by calling on the services of external consultancy firms. Its exemplary nature therefore results from the link between large-scale territorial planning which lies within the scope of a spatial outline, a local objective which adapts to the social context, and finally – from a landscape point of view – the capacity of the Promenade Verte to take root in new spaces and promote their discovery.

67. As a new (sustainable) Regional Development Plan is currently being drafted, it appears that the case of the Promenade Verte may constitute the main inspiration for a ‘third model’ for the large-scale development of public space. By linking a public space development policy with a political project with a territorial vision, by defining a project methodology which connects the global level with the local stakes and integrates a multi-stakeholder production system from the start, by making a clear distinction between the programme aspects and the architectural design aspects, by defining choices and priorities as regards the transport methods to favour, and by implementing mechanisms for the selection of project developers based on the production of preliminary sketches, it will also be possible to carry out ambitious public space development projects of a regional nature in Brussels.

68. The challenge lies in the emergence and the reinforcement of this third model, as an addition (and not a substitution) to the two established models.
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