

CONTEXT DOCUMENT

Grand Paris Sud 2019 Workshop

Living day-to-day with the river Seine

The emergence of a complete city
south of the Paris metropolitan area



LES ATELIERS INTERNATIONAUX DE MAÎTRISE D'OEUVRE URBAINE DE CERGY-PONTOISE

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“There are few places in the world where freedom of expression, mix of cultures and disciplines, mutual cross-fertilization and production of ideas, combined with a true professionalism allow us to think about those spaces where more and more inhabitants of our planet live : cities.”

Pierre-André Périssol, Chairman of les Ateliers

A non profit - organization since 1982, Les Ateliers – International workshops of planning and urban design – aims to develop the collective creation of ideas that tackle the challenges and processes of everyday city planning and design by promoting a process of collective and multidisciplinary work that produces innovative and illustrative proposals relating to urban design and spatial development.

Whether it involves students or professionals, each “atelier” brings together people of diverse nationalities and disciplines: architecture and urban planning, but also geography, economics, landscape architecture, sociology, art, engineering, environment...

Year after year, Les Ateliers internationaux network has been growing: it includes more than two thousand former participants who are now professionals, academics, and decision-makers in the urban field.

Our convictions

Creating cities is by its very nature a collective process. As true as architecture enables an individual and identifiable creation of masterpieces, developing cities cannot be ascribed to a single person who would dominate all the aspects of urban creation: this process is collective in its essence.

Based on the logic of laboratory work, urban project management should encompass the various disciplines required to plan urban areas and their interfaces. Therefore, each atelier is a place of freedom of proposal, where the aspirations of collective and voluntary work enable the development of new ideas, innovative projects and proposals for the future of urban areas which are in perpetual transition.

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Preamble

Created in 2016, the intermunicipality of the Grand Paris Sud (GPS) consolidates 23 municipalities located on either side of the Seine. This administrative entity is the result of the fusion of four local governments: Grigny, Evry-Courcouronnes, Brunoy, and Grigny. Because of its areas of responsibility and expertise (planning, economic development, environment, etc.), it is now engaged in the development of a territorial strategy adapted to this newly defined area.

This workshop focuses on the identity, specific characteristics and role of the Grand Paris Sud within the Paris metropolitan area. It must also address a new challenge: the Seine Valley. Once viewed as a boundary between the various administrative spaces, it now finds itself at their centre. It is therefore necessary to (re)define its role.

Even if the potential of the river has been clearly identified by a number of the stakeholders involved in the development process, there is currently no synergy between the urbanized territory and the river territory. It is therefore urgent to rethink the interface between the city and the river; this space of under-explored cultural potential.

In addition to flood-risk management, there is the question of how to offer new usages to inhabitants, facilitate contact with the river, develop economic activities; in short, how to re-appropriate the riverbanks. It is therefore necessary to develop a strategy that is capable of anticipating usage conflicts through an approach of integration and reversibility. The question that arises is therefore how to connect economic, urban and ecological concerns?

This workshop «*Living day-to-day with the river Seine. The emergence of a complete city south of the Paris Metropolitan Area*» is part of a series of ongoing initiatives, for which it has no intention to be a substitute. Instead, it aims to enrich the ongoing reflection of the overall strategy by proposing, through outside and alternative perspectives, strategic elements for the development of the Seine Valley within the Grand Paris Sud.

The work to be carried out during the workshop will build on local specificities and dynamics while also breaking away from constraints (administrative,

political, etc.) to create new perspectives. It will also have to address different territorial scales — the Paris metropolitan area, the conurbation of Seine-Amont, Seine-Aval, the Grand Paris Sud, and the Seine Valley within the Grand Paris Sud — in order to properly analyse the relationship between the valley and the plateaus as well as the challenges for sustainable development.

To question, to surprise, to change perspectives: these are the objectives of the workshop! The final proposals will be presented and discussed with the elected officials and decision-makers concerned. As such, participants will have to propose visions, offering avenues of reflection, of what the Seine Valley could be within the Grand Paris Sud. There is no set format for the proposals; it is up to the different teams to determine the elements and presentation format that they consider best suited for conveying their message.

The workshop aims to be an opportunity for collective creation, independent from the conventional framework required of local authorities, so as to enrich the reflection process being pursued by the region's elected officials.

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CHAPTER I
THE LARGE
TERRITORIAL SCALE

THE GRAND PARIS SUD PARTICIPATES IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PARIS METROPOLITAN AREA WHILE AT THE SAME TIME POSSESSING ITS OWN IDENTITY AND SPECIFIC FEATURES. AS SUCH, IT IS NECESSARY TO KNOW THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEINE AS A WHOLE, IN ORDER TO ACCURATELY DEFINE THE ROLE OF THE SEINE VALLEY WITHIN THE GRAND PARIS SUD. THIS FIRST SECTION FOCUSES ON TWO TERRITORIAL SCALES: THE METROPOLITAN AREA AND THE RIVER.

I. The Paris Metropolitan Area

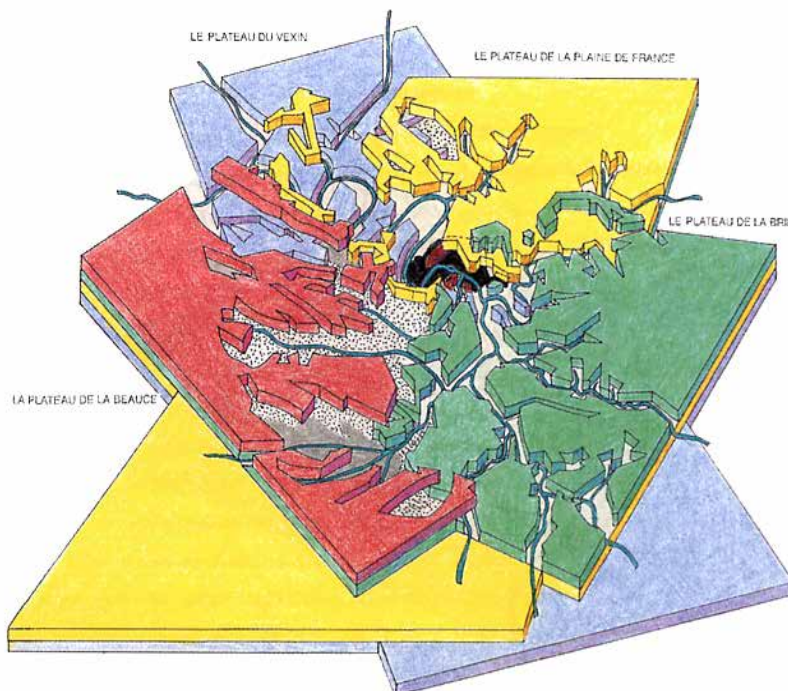


Figure 1. The geological and landscape structure of the Île-de-France. Source: M. Belliot, IAU-IDF

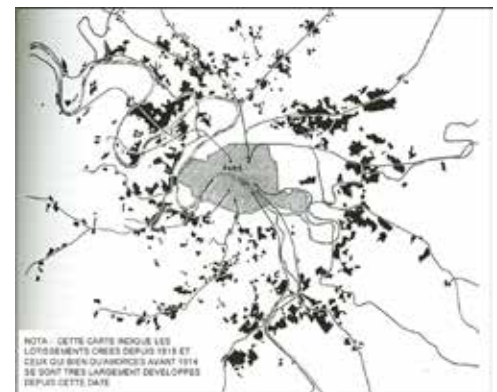


Figure 2. Housing estates built between 1918 and 1946 in the Île-de-France

Today, the Paris metropolitan area corresponds roughly to the boundaries of the Île-de-France Region. As such, all of the following analyses will be based on this perimeter.

The Île-de-France Region is defined, in terms of its geography, by the meeting of four plateaus (Plaine de France, Vexin, Beauce and Brie) which have been shaped by the Seine river network and its tributaries. The Île-de-France therefore features a rolling landscape, characterized by the predominance of nearly flat surfaces on the main plateaus when moving away from the main valleys and confluences. The main valleys (Seine, Oise and Marne) are characterized by a high number of curving river bends (explained by the limited gradient of these rivers and streams).

Until the 19th century, there were no major cities in the area that were closely linked to Paris. However, there were several historic towns (Meaux, Corbeil-Essonnes, Versailles) that concentrated vast agricultural and forested areas.

The arrival of the railway and the first industrial revolution led to an urban development that spread

along the valleys around the new railway stations. This movement intensified at the beginning of the 20th century and particularly during the intervening years between World War I and II.

Industrial activity (chemical, automotive, aviation) was developed in the immediate vicinity of Paris. Housing estates, on the other hand, were built much farther away and would form what is now called the Parisian banlieues or suburbs.

After World War II, Paris and its “Region” (rural periphery) continued to develop, but in new ways.

Roads became increasingly important, both for passenger and freight transport. The road network was built in a star pattern around Paris, thus providing access to the plateaus of the Île-de-France.

Urban growth became even more intense, leading the French national government to intervene more directly in the Paris Region’s development.

In 1965, the Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région Parisienne [Master Plan for Urban Planning and Development in the Paris Region](SDAURP) provided for the creation of four new towns and the introduction of a regional express network (RER) connecting these new hubs in order to create a polycentric urban area.

The development of the Île-de-France flourished during the 1970s and 1980s and was shaped by the directives of the SDAURP. The spatial extension of the Paris metropolitan area was thus structured by road and rail networks and channelled towards the new towns. At the same time, the inner suburbs of

Paris began to experience a trend of departures by its main industries.

From the 1990s onwards, urban development, in accordance with the directives of the new regional master plan (1994 SDRIF), moved in two directions: continued urban expansion along the main roads but also the redevelopment of the inner suburbs of Paris (transformation of urban wastelands, densification).

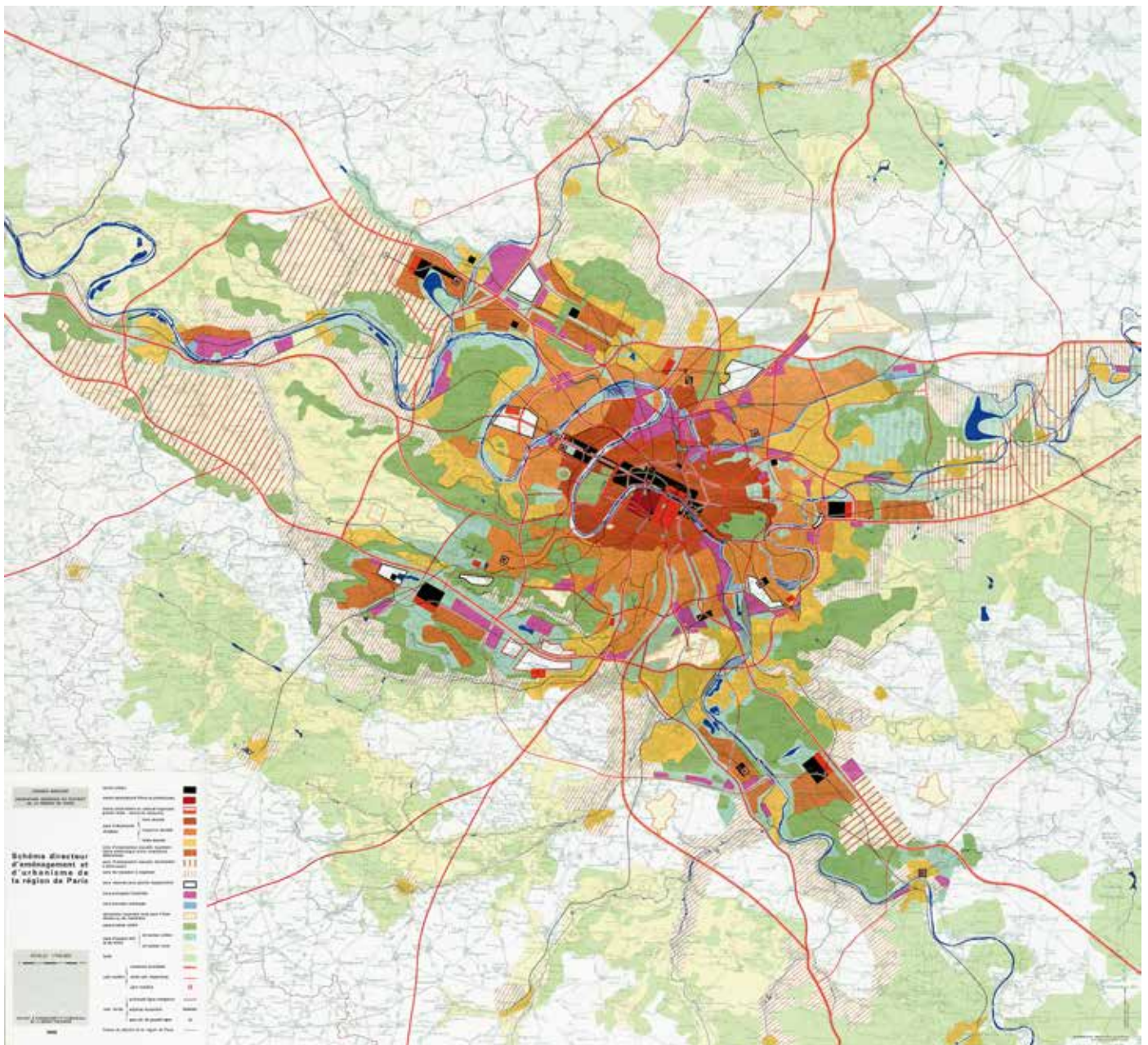


Figure 3. 1965 SDAURP-IDF. Source: IAU-IDF

At the end of the 2000s, the government began building a new commuter rail network, the Grand Paris Express. The intention behind these new metro lines was to re-organize the transportation offering to adapt to the densification of the inner suburbs.



Figure 4. The Grand Paris Express commuter rail network. Source: Société du Grand Paris

In 2013, the Île-de-France Region, now exercising jurisdiction, drew up a new Master Plan (SDRIF) that was very different from the one drawn up by the State in 1994.

While the objective of a polycentric approach remained as strong as ever, priority was now given to limiting urban sprawl and preserving and valorizing natural areas.

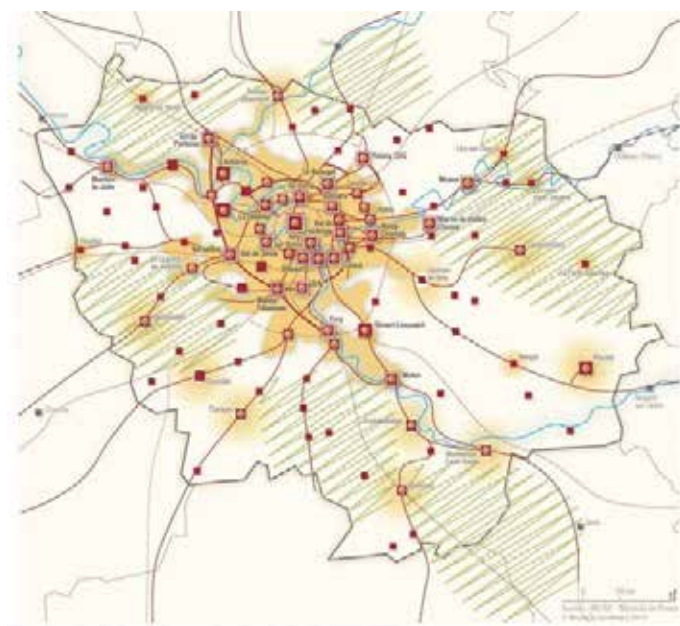


Figure 5. SDRIF map of the main urban centres and their connections

The densification and transformation of urban sites was promoted as the main solution to ensure the continued development of the Paris metropolitan area. This “building of a city on a city” was also intended to facilitate the development of mixed-use urban centres (housing, shops, public facilities, economic activities).

At the same time, urban fronts (the boundary between urbanized and “natural” spaces) were, as best as possible, to be preserved. In addition, there was a strong emphasis on preserving and improving ecological continuities.



Figure 6. SDRIF map of ecological continuities

Finally, the Seine Valley was seen as a strategic area, deserving of recognition as a dynamic territory conducive to exchanges and trade through the implementation of specific development initiatives.

Consequently, over the past decade, there has been an evolution in the vision of the Paris metropolitan area and some promising developments. The inner suburbs of Paris, soon to be served by a commuter rail network, are undergoing significant changes as vast areas are densified. The other territories — particularly around the former new towns — remain structured by the RER network that was introduced in the 1980s and by the road network, and are experiencing less dynamic growth than twenty years ago. These developments obviously raise questions about the relationship between the centre of the conurbation and the other territories of the metropolitan area, particularly around the new towns.

To this end, the inhabitants of the metropolitan area are awaiting a major change. Announced in 2008, for a completion before the 2024 Olympic Games, the Grand Paris Express (GPE), a network of more than 200 km of commuter rail lines, is intended to extend preexisting connections and create new ones. Moreover, in regards to the Île-de-France's motorway network, reports indicate less traffic, although roads remain congested and speeds are falling. This points to a trend of single-occupancy vehicles (i.e. vehicles occupied by the driver and no other passengers). It is therefore urgent to address mobility in the Île-de-France. The current network is heavily concentrated on the city of Paris, and travel from suburb to suburb is very complex. The new bypass transportation system is meant to reverse this trend.

The impact of this project on the Paris metropolitan area is multidimensional: the layout of the new commuter rail system is expected to define new economic development zones and shape the extension of the metropolitan area. The hubs around the new stations will gradually become denser, countering the urban sprawl that is currently at play. Finally, from an environmental standpoint, the GPE also aims to improve the region's overall eco-efficiency

by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, this new commuter rail network does not serve the entire metropolitan area and sectors such as the Grand Paris Sud do not benefit from direct access to it. In other words, this transportation project cannot be the sole solution for responding to the mobility needs of Île-de-France residents. Reflections on the transformation of motorway networks to accommodate new, more collective mobility are currently taking centre stage in the Île-de-France.

Greater Paris (the region, the metropolitan area, the geographical basin) has many challenges to meet in order to continue to be attractive to the growing number of inhabitants wanting to leave the capital for other metropolitan areas. The development of this metropolitan area must meet both the needs of the urban conurbation — in terms of housing supply, access to employment, improved transportation, but also in terms of breathing spaces — and the challenge of limiting the consumption of spaces. These challenges for the development of a sustainable metropolis are present at all scales when attempting to create a more inclusive metropolitan area, capable of reducing its social and territorial inequalities.

2. The Seine Valley



Figure 7 The Seine and the Paris basin. Source: IGN

This geography has also shaped the history of this territory. The development of Paris was first and foremost carried out in the Seine Valley due to the maritime outlet it provided. Similarly, many cities in the basin have historical ties with each other and with Paris. For example, while the King resided in Paris, he was coronated in Reims. In even closer proximity, the Paris basin, during the 1950s, developed economically by taking advantage of the “industrial disengagement” from Paris and its inner suburbs¹.

These interdependencies were highlighted during the discussions on the future of the Parisian metropolitan area that were held in 2009². One of the participants, Antoine Grumbach, organized his contribution around the idea of a Seine Metropolis. Stressing the need for a world-class city capable of participating in global markets, he proposed the creation of a development strategy for the Seine Valley (from Le Havre to Paris) that would combine transportation, natural spaces, urban development and economic complementarities.

This reflection led to an improved cooperation around the Seine Valley with the rapprochement of the ports of Paris, Rouen and Le Havre (HAROPA, the holding company supervising the three ports) and the increased collaboration between the various government planning agencies (Le Havre, Rouen, IAU–Île-de-France) to conduct strategic considerations on the scale of the Seine Valley and to share them with decision-makers.

These actions concern the Lower Seine of Paris. It is remarkable that no actions have been taken downstream of Paris, except during occasional periods of flood management.

1 Many companies that had factories in the inner suburbs of Paris relocated these factories or, in response to a growth in their activity, set up factories in other large cities in the Paris basin. This trend was strongly encouraged by the French government.

2 Under the umbrella of the Grand Paris Express, the new commuter transportation network for the Paris metropolitan area, the French government launched a project to discuss the future of the Parisian metropolitan area. Ten groups, made up of architects, urban planners and experts, came together for what was called the Atelier du Grand Paris. Their ten proposals have since been made public.



CHAPTER II

THE GRAND PARIS SUD AND THE SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN AREA

I. The landscape structure

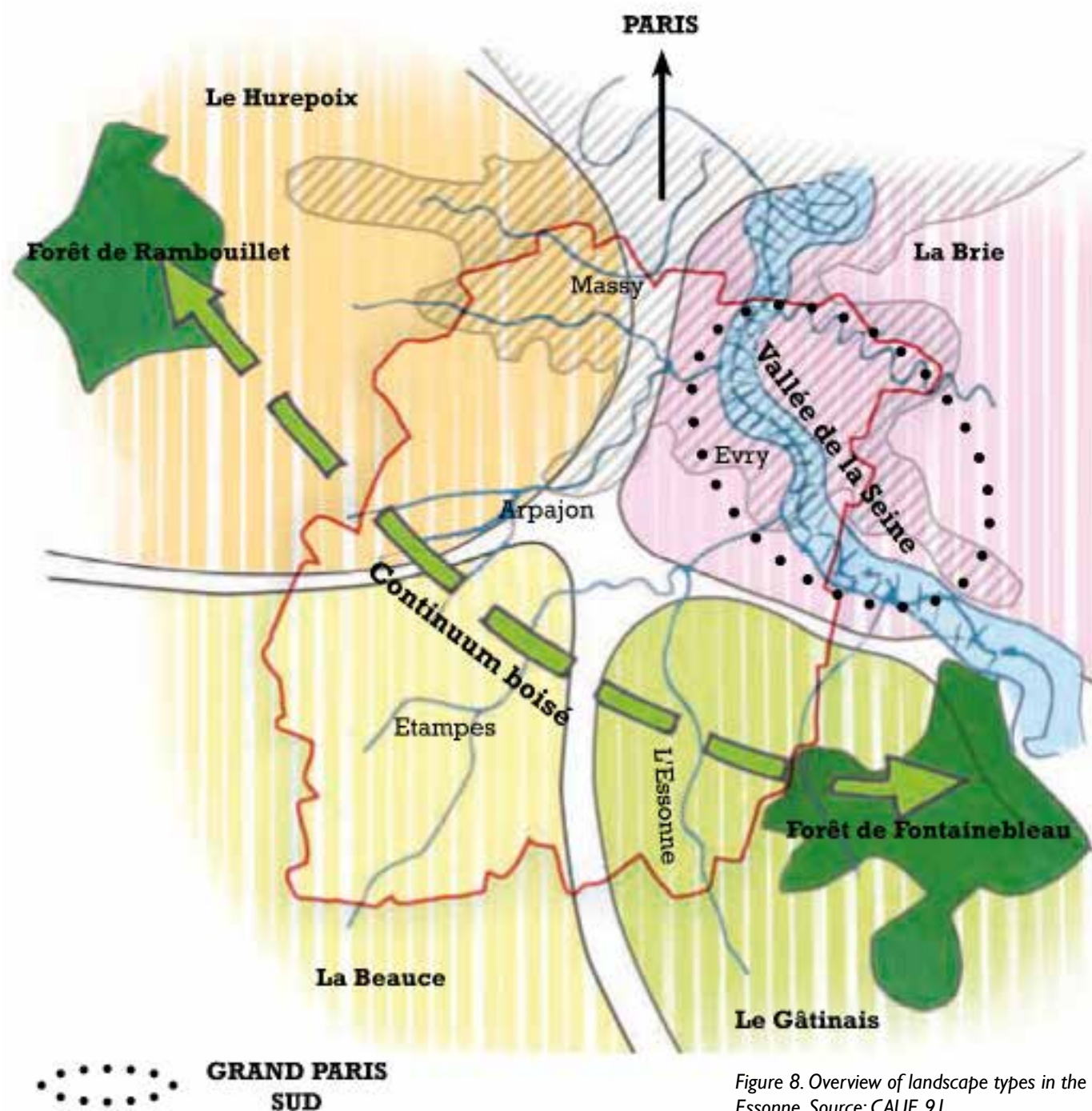


Figure 8. Overview of landscape types in the Essonne. Source: CAUE 91

The landscape structure of the southern Île-de-France Region and the Essonne

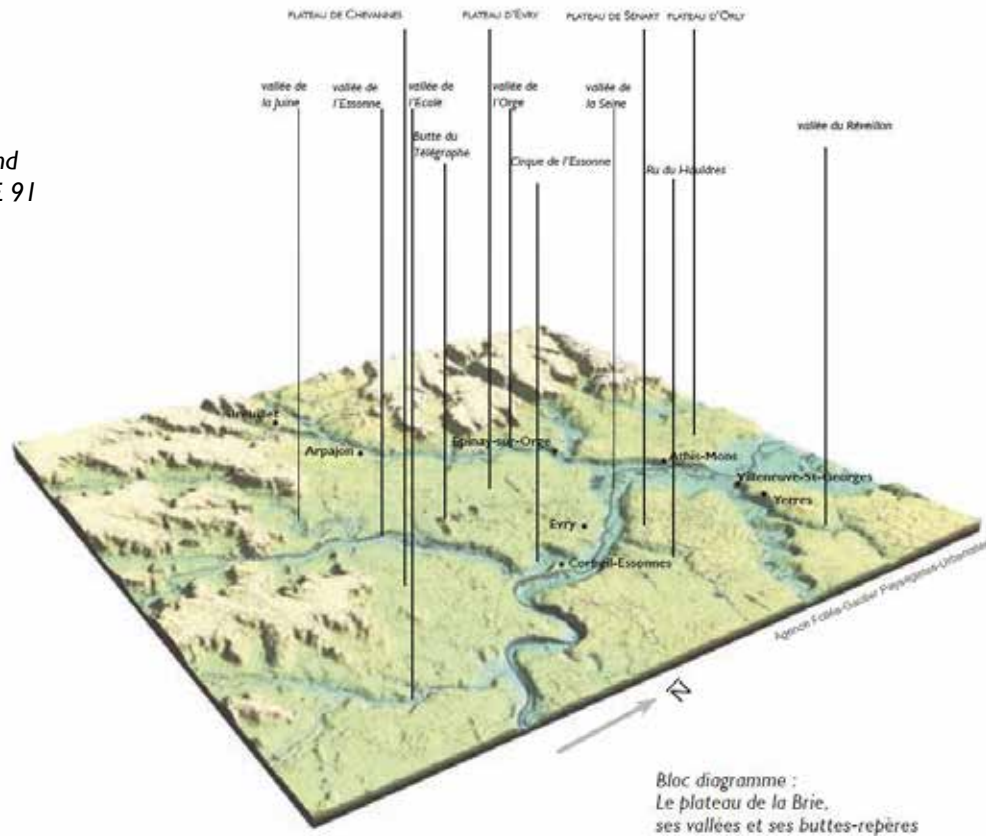
The Grand Paris Sud (Southern Greater Paris) is located in the southeast quadrant of the metropolitan area, at the junction between the denser areas of the north and the more natural and agricultural areas in the south.

This territory sits at the crossroads of the two main plateaus of Beauce and Brie, which form the main contours of the département. These plateaus are bisected by the Seine River Valley and its tributaries:

the Essonne, Juine, Barley, Rémarde, Yvette and Bièvre.

The landscape of the southern Île-de-France Region is thus composed of natural structural elements such as the river network, ecological corridors and forest areas. Within this landscape structure, urban development first began in the valleys and hills, before spreading to the plateaus, following the path of the new transportation infrastructure.

Figure 9. The Brie Plateau, its valleys and peaks. Source: CAUE 91



Three landscape structures can be identified within the intermunicipal territory :

The plateau of Centre-Essonne

Transversed by the valley created by the Essonne (at its confluence with the Seine in Corbeil) and the Orge-Yvette (at its confluence with the Seine in Juvisy-sur-Orge), the plateau is marked by several important urban centres, the main one being Évry-Courcouronnes. Its urban development has been rapid, driven by the development of road and rail infrastructure (RN 7, A6, RER D) and planning by the State (new town of Évry). The plateau is now organized into large single-function zones (single-family homes, large apartment buildings, commercial zones, industrial/port areas), which weakens the clarity of the landscape.

The Seine Valley

The Seine, along with its tributaries, forms a key artery in the topography of the territory. Its valley is relatively narrow across the territory of the Grand Paris Sud. It widens at its junction with the Orge, forming a vast alluvial plain, before narrowing at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges.

The hillsides here are regular and relatively steep, more pronounced on the left bank than on the right; they create a clear outline of the valley/s landscapes.

In contrast to further downstream (Val-de-Marne), the valley does not host any significant road infrastructure. It is therefore less urbanized, with a more natural character (although urbanized areas do exist, as in Ris-Orangis or the city centre of Corbeil).

The valley is thus recognized in regional planning documents as important in terms of the landscape and environment. The SDRIF, in particular, points out the continuities to be preserved and valorized, notably the links between the plateaus and the valley.

In addition, it hosts a number of interesting urban sites such as the Corbeil city centre and Ris-Orangis (eco-neighbourhood), which the SDRIF would like to see densified.

Finally, the valley is marked by several river crossings (four bridges across the territory) that vary in height: the Corbeil bridge, which sits at bank level on one side, and the A104 bridge, which connects the two plateaus.

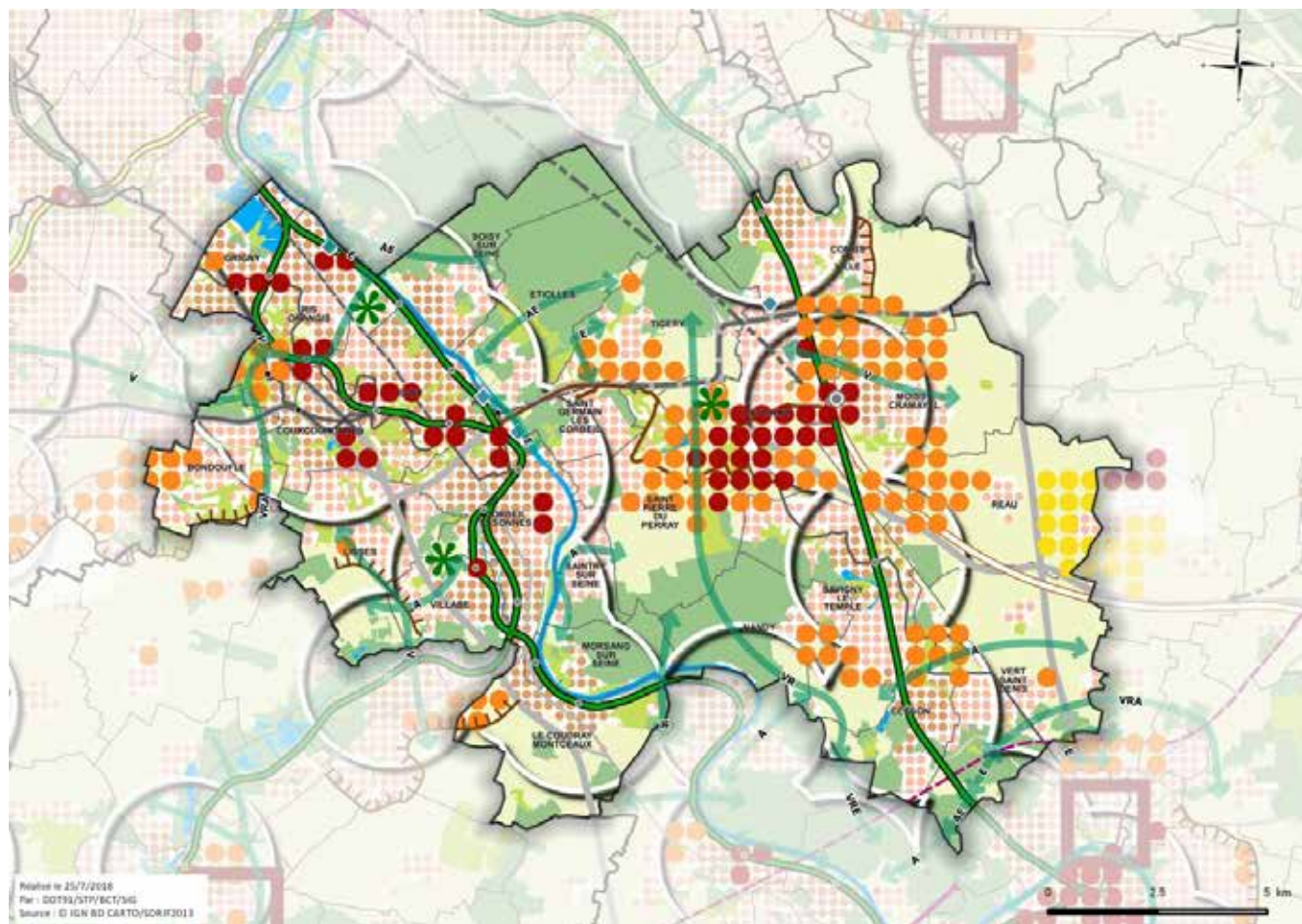


Figure 10. Sites identified by the SDRIF for the territory Source: CAUE 91

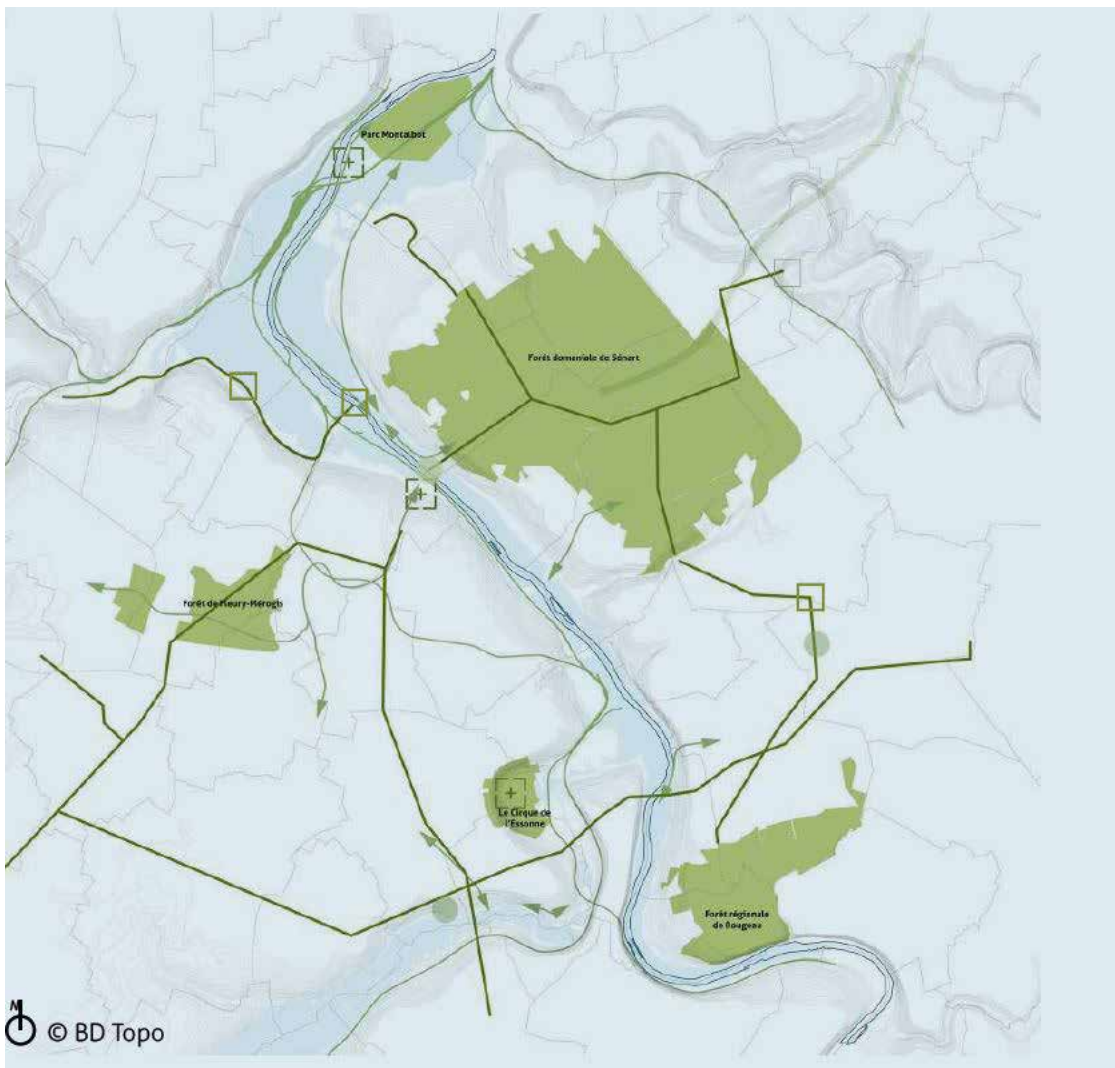







Figure 12. Sites with potential affects on the ecological continuities of the GPS. Source: CAUE 91

-  The railway and its interstitial spaces as continuities
-  The green links between the wooded areas of the plateau and the valley
-  Areas of vulnerability
-  Natural and recreational sites of metropolitan interest
-  The continuities between urban, agricultural, forest and ecological spaces

Lastly, these three landscape structures support a number of biodiversity reserves, of which their conservation and integration into a network are key issues. Several of these areas are subject to specific management regulations as a result of their classification as Espaces Naturels Sensibles [Sensitive Natural Areas] (ENS).

For example, the Cirque de l'Essonne, located in the municipalities of Corbeil-Essonnes, Lisses and Villabé, has a 134-hectare natural amphitheatre sculpted by a former bend in the Essonne River. The Canardières site, located on the right bank of a curve in the Seine and tied to the forested hills of Rougeau, Morsang-sur-Seine and Saintry-sur-Seine, can also be mentioned. Woodland corridors connect it to the Rougeau massif.

These various remarkable sites contribute to the biodiversity, but also to the landscape quality of the Grand Paris Sud.

2. The urban structure

Until the 19th century, southern Île-de-France was an agricultural territory structured around the historic cities of Arpajon (to the east) and Corbeil-Essonnes, as well as around the national highways (RN 20 and RN 7) and the Seine which were used in particular for trade with Paris.

An initial period of urban development began in the middle of the 19th century, with the arrival of the railway: the Paris-Corbeil line was inaugurated in 1840, followed by the completion of the Paris-Etampes line in 1843. The rail network developed rapidly and the Essonne was soon crossed by national lines. Consequently, Juvisy-sur-Orge is the junction of the Paris-Orléans and Paris-Lyon-Marseille lines.

Trains led to the urban development of the sectors they served and profoundly modified the way in which the territory operated. As such, the Seine Valley and its hills underwent major residential (construction of housing estates) and industrial development, even if the population dynamics were less pronounced than in the immediate vicinity of Paris. This significant urbanization changed the relationship to the riverbanks, despite the continued access to the left bank through to the presence of a towpath¹.

The second half of the 20th century was a new phase for the urbanization of the Grand Paris Sud, with the development of two new towns: Évry and Sénart.

They were introduced, along with the RER, in the 1965 SDAURP to serve one objective: to prevent concentric growth and to promote the polycentric expansion of the Paris urban area. The aim was to create conurbations of 400,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants, that would be endowed with a certain degree of autonomy in order to create real urban centres, and thus reduce commuter travel and ensure quality living standards for inhabitants.

In southern Île-de-France, much debating was had, not only on the choice of locations for the new towns but also on their relationship to the river. It was finally decided that two new towns would be built: Évry and Sénart. Their locations on the plateaus were chosen in order to preserve the valley.



Figure 13. New towns in the Île-de-France



Figure 14. The new town of Évry, construction of the pyramid neighbourhood

Continuing its polycentric development strategy, the 1994 SDRIF also began redeveloping former industrial territories near Paris. As Évry and Sénart were still in the development phase, they benefited from the creation of new transportation infrastructure (the A104, also known as the Francilienne). Therefore, they already served as urban polarities structuring a vast territory.

¹ Syndicat Intercommunal d'Aménagement, de Rivières et du Cycle de l'Eau [Intermunicipal Syndicate of Land Use Planning, Rivers and Water Management] (SIARCE)

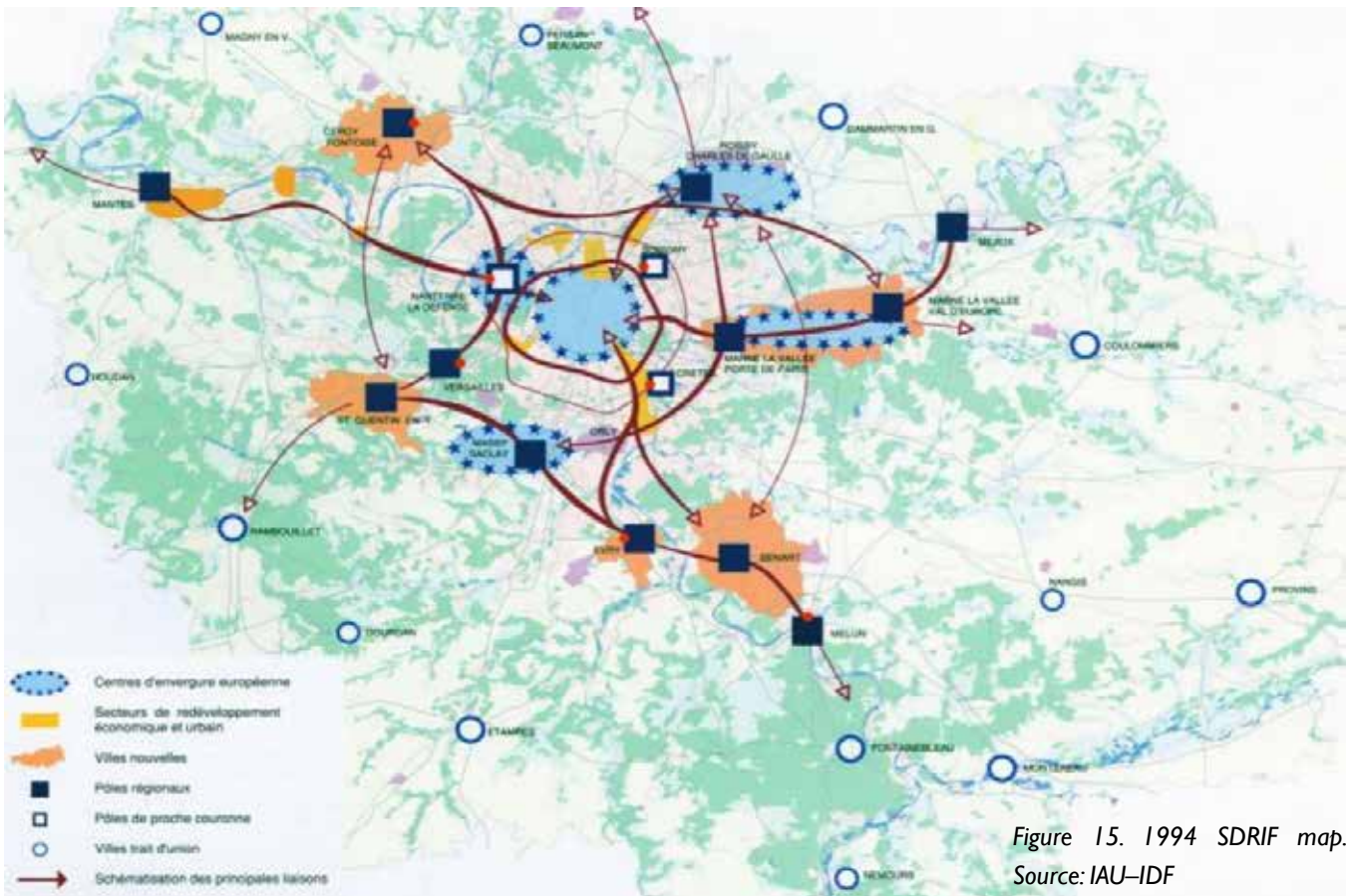


Figure 15. 1994 SDRIF map.
Source: IAU-IDF

During the 2000s, the regional development strategy shifted with the decision to create a new transportation network that would serve the inner suburbs of Paris (the Grand Paris Express). New towns, until then managed by special administrative bodies, became subject to the jurisdiction of local authorities. The question of their identity, of their relationship to the Paris metropolitan area, became a structuring issue.

The Grand Paris Sud is therefore marked by a rich urban history that has been shaped by successive “strata”. It can thus be seen as an urban “museum”, composed of historic cities, large housing estates from the early 20th century, and major state-led development schemes. This is evident in Évry through its clearly functionalist design (separation of flows, X-shaped urban plan, contemporary buildings like the Cathedral of the Resurrection¹) and in Sénart by a concern for the composition of the landscape. The territory, as a whole, has been structured around the historical centres of Melun and Corbeil-Essonnes, the more recent centres of Évry and Sénart and by the relatively recent centres of Ris-Orangis and Grigny.

¹ Cathedral of the Resurrection in Évry, designed by Mario Botta.

These centres have created hubs of increasingly larger and more residential areas.

Finally, it is important to highlight the importance of infrastructure, particularly roadways, in the Grand Paris Sud. Not only marking the landscape, infrastructure has also shaped the urbanization of the territory, notably through the creation of large commercial strips along the main roads linking the territory to Paris.

The Grand Paris Sud has public transportation services, provided mainly by line D of the Île-de-France RER network and tramway line TZEN I. Three projects are in the works to improve this network: the no. 12 Express tramway which will link Évry to Massy in 39 minutes, followed by the no. 4 TZen in 2020, and the no. 2 TZen in 2023. TZen are bus lines with dedicated lanes. The connection with Massy will allow residents to connect to the Greater Paris metro express network. Pending the development of new public transportation options, the territory relies significantly on car travel, resulting in heavily congested road infrastructure.

3. Socio-economic characteristics



Figure 16. Demographic evolution between 1975 and 2011. Source: AUDES0 Agency

Grand Paris Sud has experienced a major demographic growth from 50,000 to 350,000 inhabitants over the past 40 years. The 1970s and 1980s were particularly dynamic years.

The intensive production of housing concentrated in the new towns was a direct consequence of a demographic growth (+266% for Sénart and +121% for Évry between 1975 and 2011) generated by the arrival of new residents.

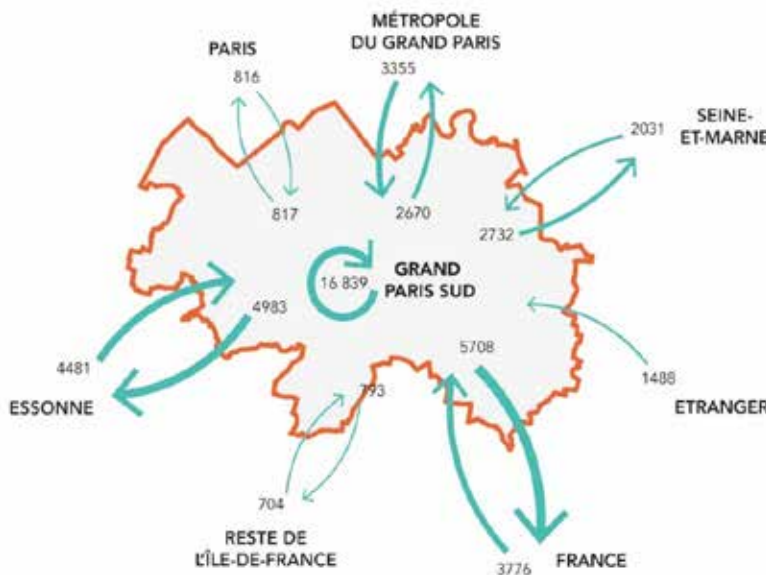


Figure 17. residential migrations in 2013 Source : GPS

In recent years, demographic dynamics have changed: growth is now slower (annual growth rate of 1.5% between 2011 and 2016) and above all, it is driven by the natural increase (1.35% between 2011 and 2016), with net migration having become weaker. The territory now attracts fewer people from outside its limits.¹

(+3,7% annual growth for Évry-Courcouronnes²), while several municipalities on the right bank, with decidedly residential characters, are still experiencing sustained growth (growth rates are thus: 34.8% in Tigery between 2014 and 2019).

Nevertheless, the Grand Paris Sud is by no means homogeneous: the main urban centres on the left bank are experiencing a decline in their growth

¹ The migratory balance of Grand Paris Sud remains higher than the Paris Region and the départements of Essonne and Seine-et-Marne

² Corbeil-Essonnes remains an exception with a growth of 17% between 2014 and 2019

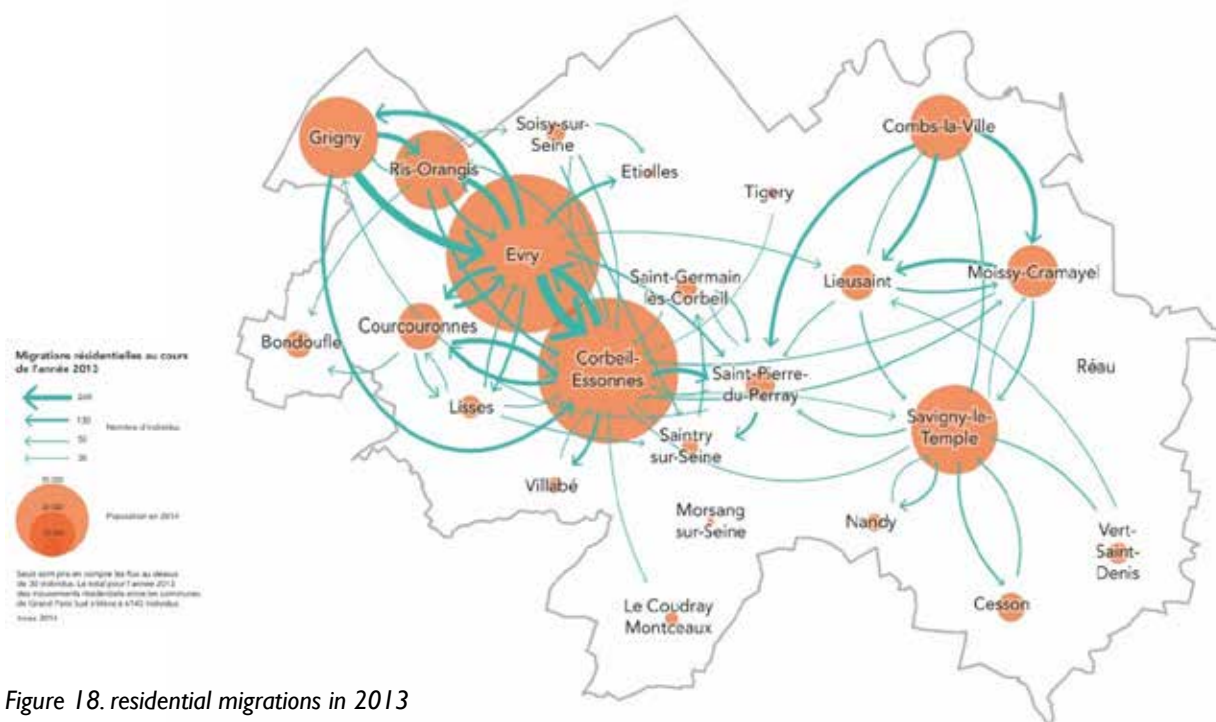


Figure 18. residential migrations in 2013
Source : GPS

This difference, between urban centres and residential areas on both sides of the river, thus exists not only in terms of the growth dynamics of resident populations but also in terms of the characteristics that define these populations.

Urban centres — first and foremost, the urban centres on the left bank — host modest populations, with average household incomes per capita below 17,756 euros; while on the right bank, which is more residential with individual housing, average household incomes per capita are between 21,909 and 24,743 euros, or more. The rest of the territory, also mainly residential, is home mostly to middle-class residents.

Grand Paris Sud therefore represents a territory with a dichotomy between the left bank (demographic and economic weight) and the right bank, which is greener and less dense.

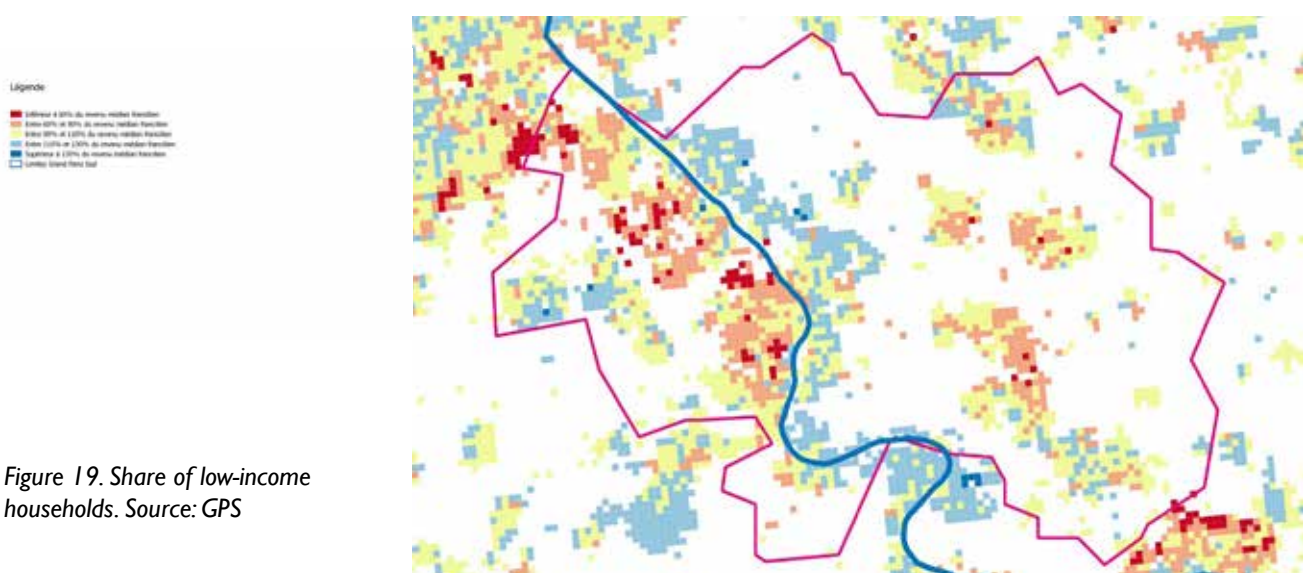


Figure 19. Share of low-income households. Source: GPS

4. Economic activities

The territory of the Grand Paris Sud has many economic assets, which can contribute to the creation of a comprehensive urban conurbation that has a role in the Parisian metropolitan area.

Logistics is an important economic sector, in line with the density of the road network and the character of the plateaus. The major facilities for logistics innovation are located in Moissy-Cramayel / Réau (Zalando logistics hub; Sarenza platform; Cdiscount) and Évry / Corbeil-Essonnes with the arrival of UPS (world leader in courier services).

The Grand Paris Sud is the 2nd largest aeronautics cluster in the Île-de-France, heritor of a tradition that began in the 1930s. Safran, the world leader in civil, military and space engines, operates out of two industrial sites employing 9,000 people in the area: Évry / Corbeil-Essonnes and Réau. The territory thus hosted both production and development activities,

with the presence of the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales [National Centre for Space Studies] (CNES), which left the territory in 2011.

Génopôle, located in Évry-Courcouronnes, is the leading European health and innovation cluster, and the leading French biocluster in genomics and biotechnology; it is composed of several research laboratories, biotechnology companies and technological platforms.

The Grand Paris Sud thus welcomes important economic sectors that are fully integrated into the operations of the Île-de-France Metropolitan Area. Historically, the Grand Paris Sud was primarily host to the spillover of certain activities from the inner suburbs of Paris. However, the territory now has its own economic identity.

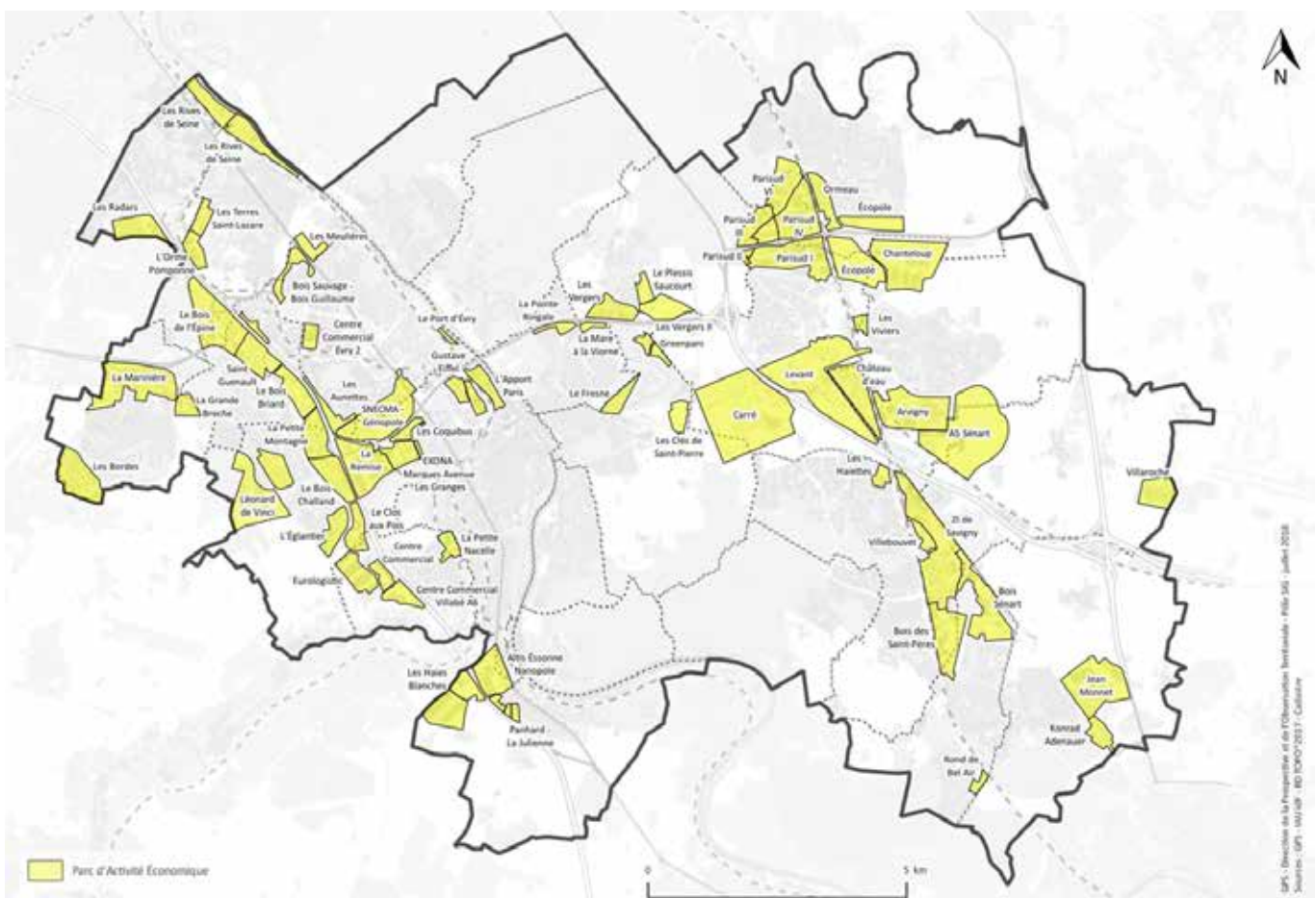


Figure 20. Economic activity zones in the GPS territory. Source: GPS

“An economic development strategy cannot be based solely on headquarters, administrative offices and research centres, every actor in the chain participates in the economic vitality of territories, including industry and logistics[...]. However, in the Île-de-France, the latter are pushed ever farther to the fringes, far into the periphery. These land-intensive activities (trade work, waste treatment, SME/SMI, business parks), which are considered harmful, nevertheless contribute to the proper functioning of the city, and will be all the more necessary in the future given the objectives of housing construction and job creation in Greater Paris”. (2016 Paris Region Workshop Context Document)x



Figure 21: Socio-professional job categories. Source: GPS

EMPLOYMENT

The job market in the Grand Paris Sud is, on the whole, considered less skilled than in the Île-de-France Region. Senior managers comprise 21% of jobs and labourers 18%, while in the Île-de-France the proportion is 29% for managers and 13% for labourers.

Forty-five per cent (45%) of GPS jobs are mainly held by GPS residents, followed by residents of the Essonne and Seine-et-Marne départements (40% from outside the Grand Paris Sud). Most commutes are made within the territory or in close proximity. These observations reflect a reality of the territory: GPS is a lived territory, in which one works, one lives, one travels.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The study area has an important training and research ecosystem, enabling it to develop interdisciplinary cooperation and to be part of the university system of southern Île-de-France (Créteil, Évry and Saclay). There are 14 higher education institutions (IUT, engineering sciences, health, environment, etc.) with more than 20,000 students and several companies and research laboratories covering various fields of study (aeronautics/airports, robotics, health, logistics/e-commerce, biotechnology, digital technologies, etc.). The state of the existing system concentrates a significant potential in the structuring of the conurbation’s identity and in the future of a possible central role in the Greater Paris metropolitan area.

Overall, the territory of the Grand Paris Sud already possesses many attributes of an urban conurbation: its demography, its social geography, its jobs, its facilities, etc. But the latter is not perceived as such. How can a functioning closer to that of an urban conurbation be achieved ?



CHAPTER III

THE VALLEYS IN THE GRAND PARIS SUD

I. Their role in the territory's history

In the 19th century, the territory of the département underwent a major revolution as a result of the development of the railway network, which allowed the valleys to be urbanized.

They thus became transportation hubs (freight transport by river and rail, passenger transport by train), which would eventually shape their urban development. As a result, the Seine Valley lost its wine-growing identity and its woodland areas. It became more urban, its riverbanks became host to recreational activities (restaurants and open-air bars).

Corbeil and Essonne grew rapidly. Corbeil saw the development of the textile industry but also of metallurgy, papermaking and tanneries, due to its strategic position on the Seine and its transportation capacities. The two cities experienced unprecedented population growth (their populations doubled between 1872 and 1912)

These developments concerned, in particular, the main sectors that had already been urbanized, such as Saint-Fargeau-Ponthierry (municipality bordering Coudray-Montceaux, outside the perimeter of the Grand Paris Sud), where wallpaper factories were opened in 1912.

The second half of the 20th century was, as described above, marked by the development of the road network and, consequently, of the plateaus: the Seine Valley, constrained and subject to flooding, became less conducive to urban and economic development (river transport, particularly in this part of the Seine where large boats could not be accommodated, became less competitive in relation to road transport).

The perception of the Seine Valley changed in the 1960s: it became a breathing space, where natural spaces needed to be preserved (the SDAURP planned for the new towns to be on the plateaus precisely to be able to preserve the Seine Valley!). This perception of the valley, combined with regulations for flood management, partly explains the end of the development that began at the start of the 20th century.



Figure 22 Les Grands Moulins and its stores along the Seine, in Corbeil-Essonnes



Figure 23. The Leroy factories in Saint-Fargeau-Ponthierry



Figure 24. View of the Seine Valley from Seine-Port. Source: SIARCE

2. Current situation

Urban history explains the diversity of situations in the valley of the Grand Paris Sud. But before returning to the current systems of managing the territory of the valley, it is necessary to look at the different segments of the valley located in the Grand Paris Sud.

Le Coudray-Montceaux – Morsang-sur-Seine

The valley has a natural character with well-preserved landscapes, strongly shaped by the hills, and urban centres that recall the importance of the Seine as a means of communication (around the canal of Coudray, a village built around inland water shipping activities). Constructed and agricultural areas touch. On the right bank, at the level of the Morsang-sur-Seine bend, the plain is preserved whereas the hills are more urbanized, with a high density of buildings but also a strong woodland presence.



Southern Corbeil-Essonnes – Saintry-sur-Seine

The valley widens, especially on the right bank. The hills remain steep and continuous. This part of the valley is more urbanized than in the first segment, but with a still highly natural setting thanks to large preserved areas at the bottom of the valley. It is less urbanized than in the south of the valley, as evidenced by its relatively low density of individual housing (especially subdivision areas).



Central Corbeil-Essonnes – Saint-Pierre-du-Perray and Saint-Germain-lès-Corbeil

This segment is characterized mainly by the historic urban centre of Corbeil-Essonnes, with urban façades on both the right and left banks of the river. The city is one of the few examples of a river-city interface, even though its industrial activities and infrastructure cut it off from the river. The crossing of this sector therefore combines a varied temporality of spaces: industrial spaces (Corbeil mills, port, cement plant, etc.), recreational spaces, a relatively monospecific mixed urbanization (traditional forms, individual and collective housing). Nevertheless, outside the urban centre, there is a rather natural atmosphere, with wooded horizons (like the Sénart forest) and shifts between the left and right banks.



Evry – Saint-Germain-les-Corbeil – Etioilles

The valley opens onto a clear demarcation between the left and right banks: the right bank has a natural setting with wooded areas on the hillsides (forest areas and architectural heritage), while the left bank weaves a more mixed fabric with urban infrastructure (port, water treatment plant) creating breaks between the river and the hillsides (wastewater treatment plant). Then, the left bank narrows, becoming markedly more natural, along the edge of the RER railway line.



Evry – Soisy-sur-Seine

The left bank becomes less developed as one leaves the urban centre. It returns to a natural appearance with preserved natural spaces and a residential fabric that is less and less dense. The wooded horizon remains present on both sides of the river. The right bank continues to be marked by wooded hillsides and a low density of construction, it is therefore characterized by the continuity of its course along this segment.



Ris-Orangis – Soisy-sur-Seine

The river widens around the right bank at the original village of Soisy-sur-Seine. On the left bank, the abandonment of industrial activities (formerly the Dock des Alcools in Ris-Orangis) in the 1980s led to the revival of urban and environmental dynamics: construction of an eco-neighbourhood on the banks of the Seine and development of the riverbanks.



Viry-Châtillon (outside the perimeter of the GPS)

An industrial character remains very strong here, reflected in the density of construction on the banks. During the last century, major alluvial mining sites (for sand and gravel) have been created along the Seine, such as in Viry-Châtillon. The N7 and the industrial zone cut the city off from the river.

3. Management of the Seine's riverbanks and valley

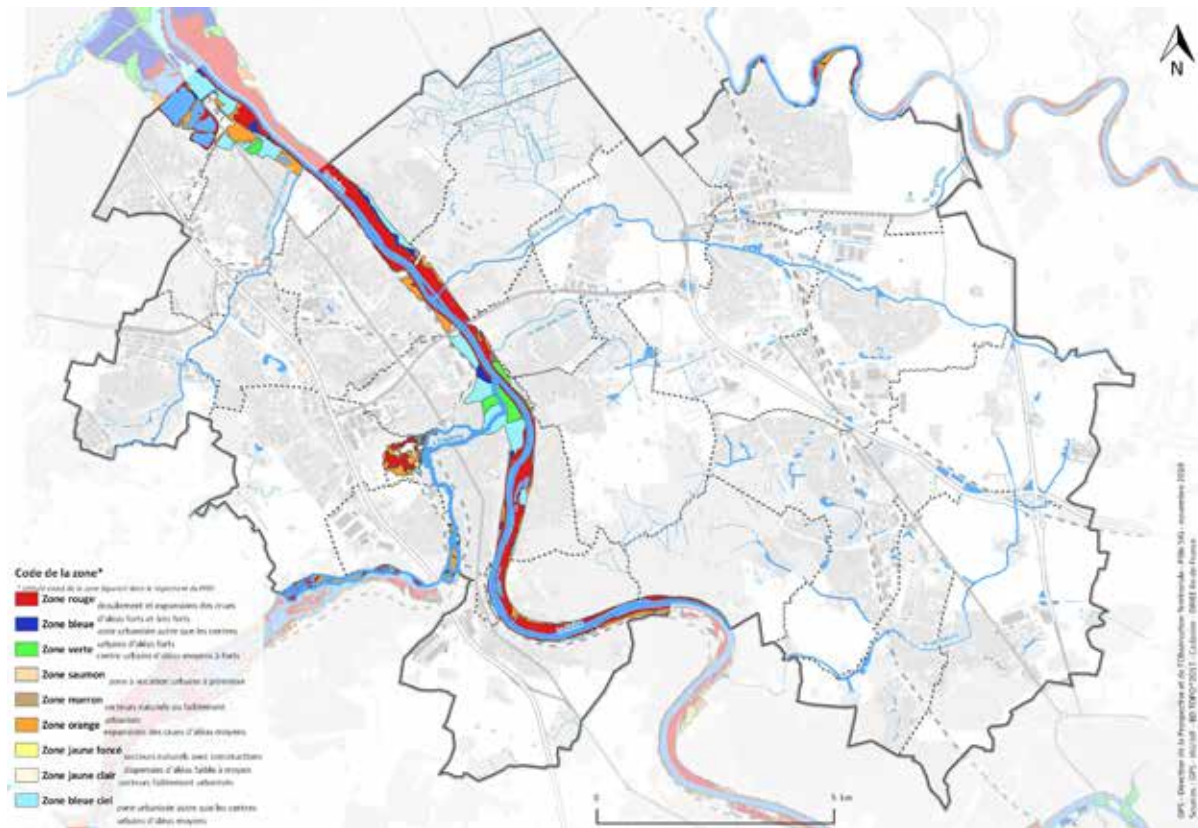


Figure 25. PPRI and zoning map of the GPS territory. Source: GPS

The development of riverside spaces, as they are considered flood-prone areas, is subject to a regulatory framework: the Plan de Prévention des Risques Inondation [Flood Risk Prevention Plan] (PPRI). Its main purpose is to limit and regulate construction, based on waterway and flooding concerns.

As such, the Seine Valley is relatively constrained from a hydraulic standpoint. Immediately upstream of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges — where the confluence with the Yerres coincides with a narrowing of the valley, creating a “bottleneck” effect when the Seine is flooded — the challenge is to preserve water flow capacities so as not to worsen the situation.

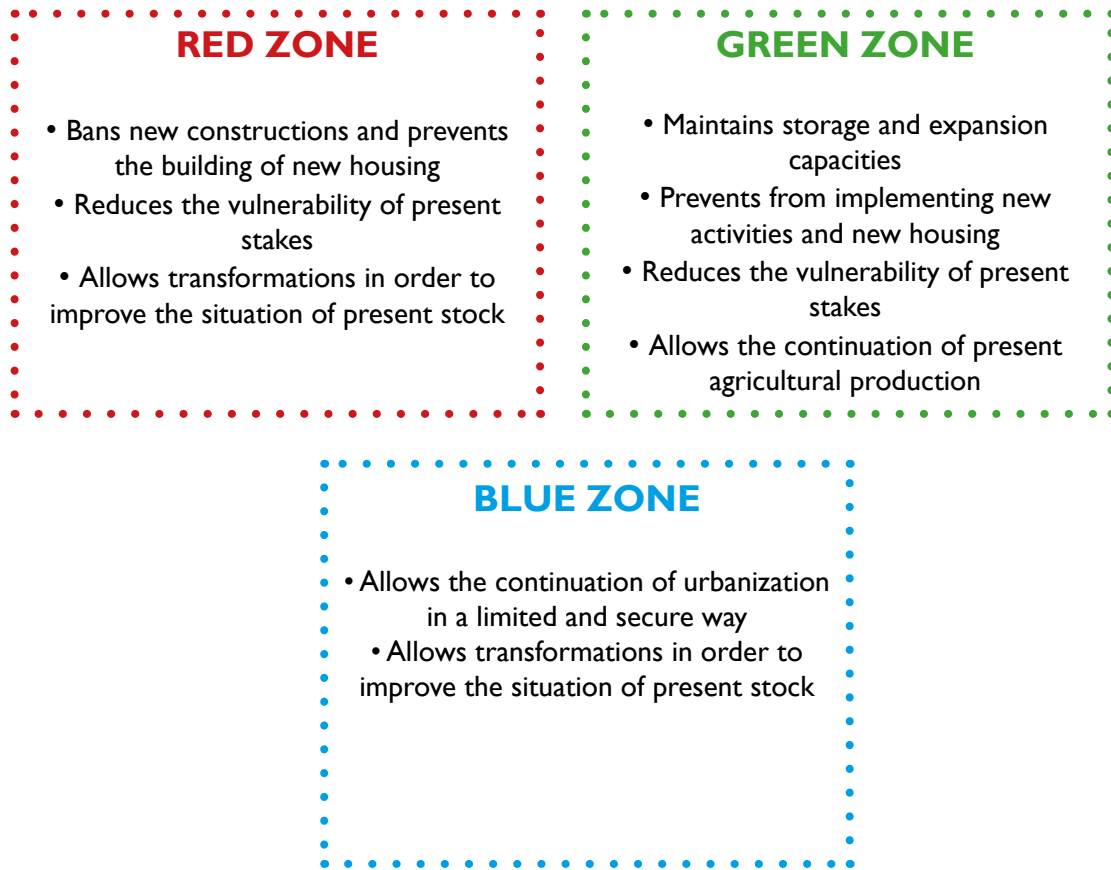
This is why the first objective of PPRI is to limit the construction and densification of areas where the highest flows occur.

This objective is tied to the aim of improving housing reconstruction and, more broadly, to ensuring a responsible development of flood-prone urban areas.

By linking urban and hydraulic concerns, PPRI allows changes to be made in urban centres by making

them conditional on maintaining or improving flow conditions in the event of flooding.

This relationship between urban and hydraulic issues is reflected in the different types of zoning:



In areas that are already largely urbanized, PPRI relies on a process of consultation between the various local authorities, making it possible to define, at the départemental and intermunicipal levels, areas in which densification should be severely limited or even prohibited, and areas in which it is possible to densify.

This is how the centre of Corbeil and the banks of Ris-Orangis were identified as urban areas of interest, since they have the capacity to evolve, unlike the open spaces present on the left bank.

More generally, the Seine Valley and its development are subject to numerous public policies, led by different public entities, which can lead to contradictions.

As a waterway, the river falls under the responsibility of the Voies Navigables de France (VNF) and the Ports de Paris for the management, operation and modernization of the waterways and associated ports. In its role as a water resource, but also as a flood and biodiversity vector, the Seine is the responsibility of the Agence de l'Eau, the Syndicat Intercommunal d'Aménagement, de Rivières et du Cycle de l'Eau (SIARCE) and the Grand Paris Sud Authority. As a recreational area for new water-related activities, the river is managed by the Île-de-France Region, the

Département de l'Essonne and the conurbation of the Grand Paris Sud.

Lastly, the river and its valley are recreational areas. To this end, GPS has launched a Bicycle Plan for the banks of the Seine, including EuroVelo 3, also known as the Scandibérique in France, a cycling route from Trondheim to Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, which covers 22 km of the Seine from Grigny to Coudray-Montceaux as well as stretches connecting the valley and the plateaus.

Similarly, the département of Essonne has launched a project to revive river swimming and sunbathing activities in order to continue the development of new uses for river tourism that contribute to local life.

The development of the Seine Valley is therefore managed by many actors, each of whom manages a particular issue: water resources, flooding, recreation, cycling, freight transport, etc. One of the challenges is therefore to define a strategy that integrates all these dimensions.

The following page summarizes the responsibilities of the various entities involved in the development of the Seine Valley.

The development of the Seine Valley

State

(prefectures of Essonne and Seine-et-Marne, Prefecture of the Île-de-France Region)

Flood risk management

Région Ile-de-France

Strategic planning in environmental matters (SRCE for ecological continuities), development (SDRIF), economic development, tourism, culture and sport

Départements

(Essonne et Seine-et-Marne)

Shoreline plan, management of sensitive natural areas, secondary roads

Intermunicipality

(Grand Paris Sud)

Economy, spatial planning, roads, quality of life and environment, cultural and sports facilities, governance of aquatic environment (GEMAPI)

Municipalities

(12 neighbouring municipalities)

Roadways, social welfare, urban planning, culture and sports...

Public private partnership (SIARCE)

Development and maintenance of the riverbanks to facilitate accessibility and public use; flood prevention and protection; conservation and rehabilitation of natural sites, aquatic ecosystems and wetlands as well as riparian forest formations

Public Institutions (VNF, Ports de Paris, AESN)

VNF: management, operation and modernization of waterways

Ports of Paris: management and development of ports

AESN: Pollution control, protection of aquatic environments, limiting economic development, preserving water resources

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