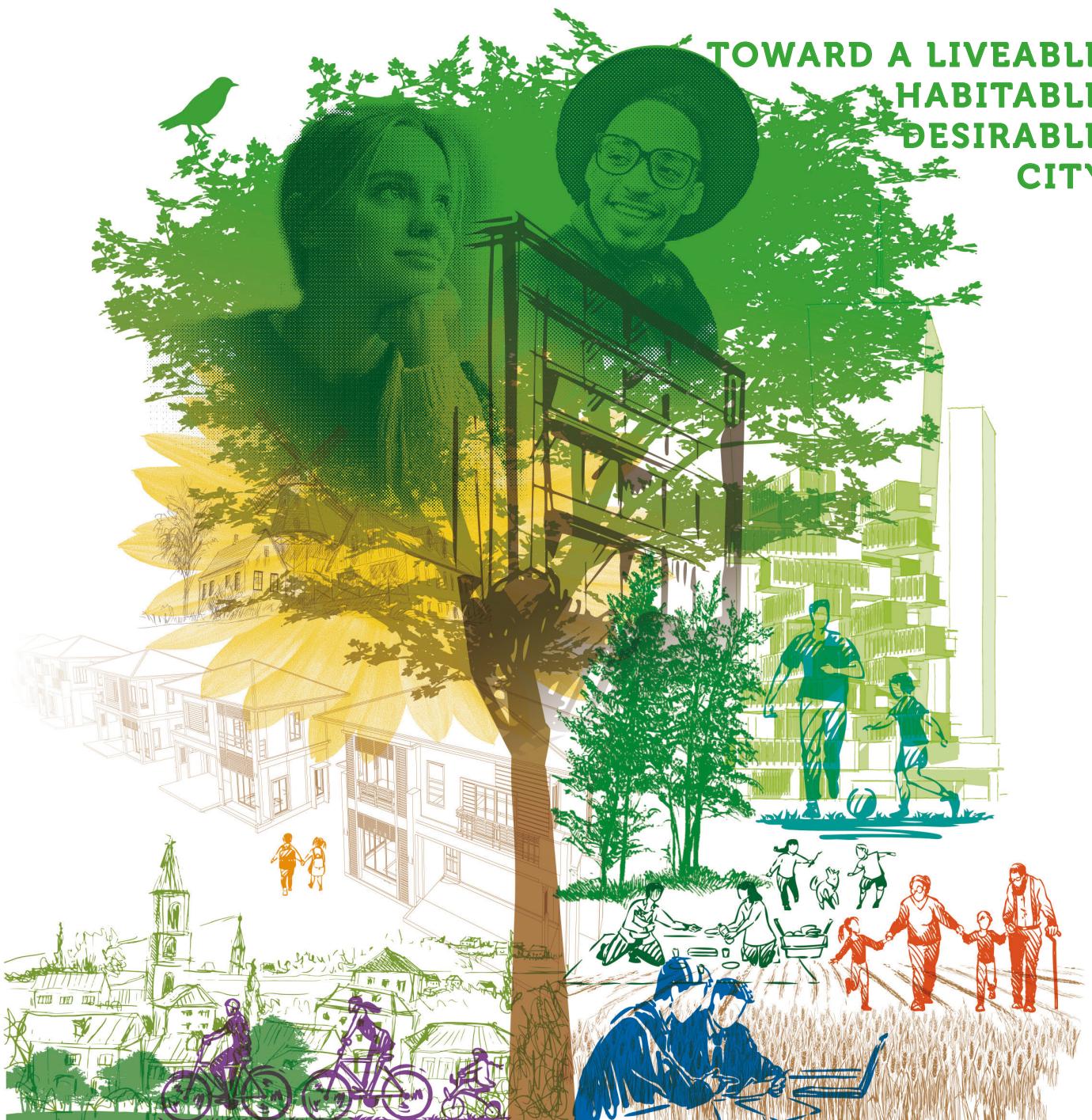


# CONTEXT DOCUMENT

39 TH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP OF  
URBAN PLANING AND DESIGN  
OF CERGY- PONTOISE

# CHOOSING THE CITY?

TOWARD A LIVEABLE  
HABITABLE  
DESIRABLE  
CITY



les ateliers

maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

# les ateliers

## maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

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*"Few in the world are these spaces of freedom of expression, of mutual fertilization and sharing of ideas, of crossing cultures and disciplines, allied to a real professionalism, to think of this place where more and more inhabitants of our planet live: the City."*

Pierre-André Périssol  
President of Les Ateliers

Les Ateliers, a non-profit association created in 1982 by the town planners of the New Town of Cergy-Pontoise, organizes in France and internationally collective production workshops in the service of the territorial project, allowing to take a new look, to vary the scales, forget the administrative borders, revisit the territories.

These workshops bring together students or professionals of all nationalities selected with high standards, who take part for several weeks in a team reflection at the crossroads of planning and architecture, by integrating other disciplines: geography, economics, landscape, sociology, art, engineering, environment ...

Over the years, an international network has been built up around the two thousand people who have already participated in one of our workshops: professionals, academics and decision-makers in urban planning.

The added value of these workshops lies on the one hand in the production of analyzes and original ideas, which daily pressure and institutional roles do not always allow to emerge, and on the other hand in meetings and exchanges. informal meetings of urban decision-makers, actors and professionals who punctuate the course of the workshops.

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# Chapter I : SUMMARY OF ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS

# SUMMARY OF ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS

## 39TH INTERNATIONAL URBAN PLANNING WORKSHOP IN CERGY-PONTOISE

This workshop will look at the latent trends that have been accelerated or revealed by the pandemic: a growing interest in health and well-being, an affirmation of the need for contact with nature, and the consideration and creation of new uses for the city, for which the housing situation has proven inadequate.

How can the city become liveable, habitable and desirable again? What interactions need to be found to make housing more habitable and the city more liveable? What facilities and services could help to make our living environment more desirable?

In preparation for this international workshop, which will take place from 30 August to 17 September 2021, three round-table discussions were organized:

**Urban planning and health: Towards a city that provides care?  
Nature, a new everyday space for urbanites?  
Housing and new uses**

The purpose of these round-table discussions was to bring together different actors (local authorities, urban operators and planners, researchers) to discuss aspects of the workshop topic in order to identify the main issues and questions, and thereby enrich the reflections of those participating in the September workshop.

Each round-table discussion was divided into two parts: first, the speakers' presentations; followed by debates and exchanges between the speakers, the audience and panel.

## Round table 1

# Urban planning and health: Towards a city that provides care?

27 april 2021

Approaching cities through the prism of health not only makes it possible to address the issues raised by the health crisis of the past year, but more importantly to integrate them into a more global reflection, by questioning the adaptability of cities in the face of future crises, particularly environmental ones.

This round-table discussion aims to understand how cities, far from being merely a barrier to well-being, can be a resource for the physical and mental health of their inhabitants. How can health and environmental co-benefits be integrated into territorial development and urban projects?

### Panel :

Marie VENOT,  
Occupational therapist and consultant at  
Villanthrope

Marion GAUDEL,  
Local health facilitator and coordinator  
of the local health programme for Redon  
Agglomeration

Deborah de CECCO-MARCORELLES,  
Project manager for the City of Nanterre

### Speakers :

Nina LEMAIRE,  
Health-environment and Health-Friendly  
Urban Planning project manager, RfVS of  
the Villes-Santé network

Alban NARBONNE,  
Health and urban planning project manager  
at Ekopolis and coordinator of the Call  
for Interest in Health, Environment and  
Sustainable Development by the ARS  
Île-de-France and ADEME

Thomas SALMON,  
Director of urban development for  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine

Alex GUILLET,  
Head of urban planning: economy, trade,  
health, inter-territoriality at the Syndicat  
Mixte SCoT Grand Douaisis

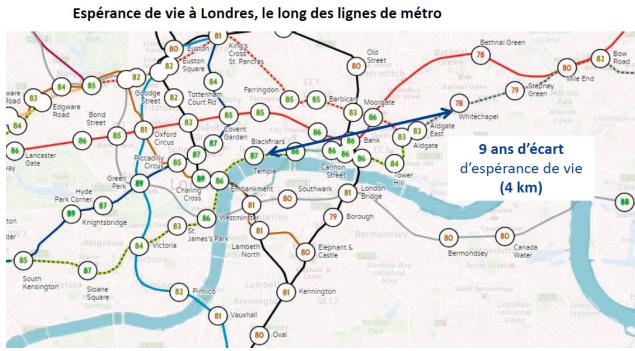
Talk by Nina LEMAIRE:  
What is Health-Friendly Urban Planning  
(UFS, in French)?

Health is not just the absence of disease or infirmity. This notion goes beyond the question of care and is concerned with all “determinants towards health”, including risk and protective factors. Indeed, our state of health is heavily linked to our physical and social environment, our habits and living conditions; all of these elements can be influenced by the actors in a city’s urban fabric.

These are also factors of inequality: disadvantaged populations are at once more exposed to risk factors and less exposed to protective factors. Moreover, as their health is worse and they have less access to care, exposure to risk factors will have a greater impact on their state of health.

These social inequalities often translate into territorial health inequalities, with sometimes considerable differences in life expectancy depending on the neighbourhood. Climate change, sedentary lifestyles and the increase in chronic diseases, and the importance of social ties for mental health are all factors that should prompt urban planners to better integrate the issue of health.

- How can residents be mobilized around these health issues, beyond just a basic consultation?
- How can we move from experimentation to a more comprehensive consideration of UFS in urban planning?
- How can we ensure that health is not perceived by planners as an additional burden on top of sustainability?



Credit: Nina Lemaire

**Talk by Thomas SALMON:** In concrete terms, what can the consideration of health in urban planning consist of on the scale of an intermunicipality or a commune?

Pierrefitte-sur-Seine is a municipality of thirty thousand inhabitants, in which some of its neighbourhoods are experiencing significant socio-economic difficulties that have an impact on the health of the population. In addition, there is a shortage of health care facilities throughout the entire department.

- How does urban planning have positive or negative impacts on health?
- How can urban planning help to reduce social and territorial inequalities in terms of health?
- How do the concepts of sustainable cities and health-friendly urban planning fit together?

**Talk by Alban NARBONNE:** How can territories be encouraged to implement Health-Friendly Urban Planning?

A consensus and political will exists to integrate health issues into the area's urban planning. The Plaine Commune's PLUi (Local Inter-communal Urban Planning Plan) explicitly mentions them and, for example, requires buildings to be set back from the road and supports the development of bicycle paths to encourage active modes of mobility.

Health is also a strong argument for imposing greater requirements on developers and operators when they submit urban projects to the city, depending on their financial leeway. Recently, the city has taken the liberty of categorically refusing urban projects if they are deemed not qualitative enough.

- How can the challenges of economic profitability be reconciled with the demand for higher building standards and their impact on the health of the population and the environment?
- Can cities that are not attractive be as demanding of developers?
- What methodologies should be deployed to assess the impact of urban planning on health?

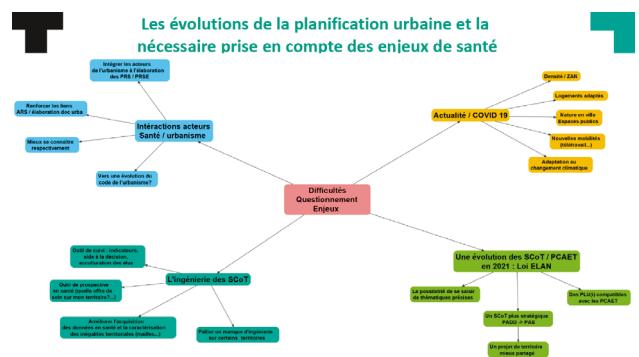
The Call for Interest in Health, Environment and Sustainable Development (AMI SEAD) is an operational mechanism aimed at helping project leaders integrate health issues into the design of their projects — experimenting with new urban design approaches, developing innovative consultation methods and structuring an Île-de-France community around these issues. The first AMI took place in 2016. It enabled pilot projects to be carried out and actors to progressively increase their skills. The feedback from these projects led to the launch of a second, more ambitious AMI SEAD.

Talk by Alex GUILLET: How can a systemic and transversal approach to health be implemented at all levels of a territory?

The Douai area is located in a former mining basin, close to Lille and Lens. It is therefore a former industrial area, whose populations have significant health problems, with a premature mortality rate (below the age of 75) that is 42.9% higher than the national metropolitan average. The health approach adopted in the area is the result of a broad study that took into account all dimensions of health, including mental health and the provision of care. It was carried out in 2018, at the same time as the revision of the Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale (SCoT) and the development of the Plan Climat Air Energie Territorial (PCAET). This made it possible to explicitly integrate the issue of health into the SCoT.

This systemic approach to UFS has made it possible to work with health actors such as the ARS and the Douai hospital.

- How can health issues be included in all urban policies, in a transversal and systemic way?
- How can interactions between urban planning and health actors be developed?
- How can densification and the health of populations be combined?



Credit : Alex Guillet

## The debate...

"When we act at the city or neighbourhood level, we have to prioritize interventions so as not to increase territorial inequalities; to avoid having perfect neighbourhoods on the one hand and, on the other, existing neighbourhoods where difficulties accumulate. It is more effective to act first on the neighbourhoods with the most difficulties."

Nina Lemaire

"The starting point must be the inhabitants, their needs and uses. I also think it is very important to think about the city for the most vulnerable, the elderly and children."

Marie Venot

"The UFS is not just another constraint, it is a win-win situation. We have different objectives and interests, but we are all involved in a common action."

Deborah de Cecco-Marcorelles

"One of the challenges of health promotion is participation — the community approach which allows inhabitants to take ownership of health issues."

Marion Gaudel

"We need to integrate the issue of health as far in advance as possible so that it really infuses the project, and discuss it and question it with the populations concerned."

Alban Narbonne

## Round table 2

# Nature, a new everyday space for urbanites?

1 June 2021

Approaching cities through the prism of health not only makes it possible to address the issues raised by the health crisis of the past year, but more importantly to integrate them into a more global reflection, by questioning the adaptability of cities in the face of future crises, particularly environmental ones.

This round-table discussion aims to understand how cities, far from being merely a barrier to well-being, can be a resource for the physical and mental health of their inhabitants. How can health and environmental co-benefits be integrated into territorial development and urban projects?

### Speakers :

Frédéric DELLINGER,  
Landscape designer, urban planner, ecologist; lecturer in Urban and Territorial Planning at the Grenoble School of Architecture; member of the Architecture, Environment and Constructive Cultures Laboratory at ENSAG; and founding manager of the landscape agency Eranthis in Lyon

Marine LINGLART,  
Doctor of Ethnoecology at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle; founder and director of SCOP URBAN-ECO, which specializes in urban ecology and landscape design

### Panel :

Yannick FERRY,  
Urban landscape designer, and Céline MAYER urban architect, at Atelier ligne, Cocottes urbaines

Laurent SAMUEL,  
Lawyer and co-founder of the association Haie Magique

Talk by Frédéric DELLINGER: Nature in the city, contradictions and convergences

Introducing more nature into urban spaces can be an inexhaustible source of well-being, but it can also pose a number of everyday problems.

To better understand them, we must first ask ourselves the question of the relationship between humans and nature. In animist societies, humans have developed ways of living in harmony with nature, closely aligned with spirituality. Western societies, on the other hand, have developed a relationship of control and organization of nature, placing it at the service of humans. This has consisted in particular of cultivating plant species outside of their native climates, which echoes current issues such as climate change.



Le Square des Bouleaux, Paris 19th Arr.

Credit: Le Blog de Claire

Introducing more nature into the city can raise sometimes contradictory expectations — expectations in terms of aesthetics, services rendered to humans such as natural air conditioning, or developing biodiversity, and finally the sometimes unforeseen effects of vegetation such as allergens or pests.

- How can we move from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric view?
- What type of vegetation should be introduced today to anticipate global warming over the long term?
- Is introducing nature into the city an end in itself or should it be at the service of humans?

Talk by Marine LINGLART: An eco-landscape approach to nature in the city and a review of the Montjoie project in Saint-Denis

It is essential to think of the reintroduction of nature in the city not plant by plant, tree by tree, but as the reconstitution of an environment, of a territory in which each species interacts with the others. It is under these conditions that nature can fully develop and also be more pleasant to live in for its inhabitants.

Let's take for example the territory of the Plaine Commune. It has only 1.4 m<sup>2</sup> of green space per inhabitant, which is very dense and mineral-rich. The first step was to conduct a large-scale diagnosis and identification in order to create green and blue infrastructure that would prevent the concentration of pollen or insects in certain places. The objective was to recreate ecological habitats and not to develop specific natural areas. It was important to explain the

time frame of the project to the inhabitants and also to the project manager, because rebuilding an ecosystem takes time, it takes several years for the plants to develop.

- How can we manage natural spaces so that they develop a specific degree of biodiversity, while at the same time guaranteeing access for residents who want to relax and enjoy themselves within them?
- How can projects be designed for the long time frame of plants when the need for natural spaces is urgent for urban dwellers?
- How can municipal maintenance services and residents be supported in changing practices and the aesthetics of nature?

## The debate...

“The more there are public natural areas in cities, the more natural and rural areas outside of cities will be preserved. Moreover, it should be remembered that most natural spaces in cities are private spaces.”

Frédéric Dellinger

“The Zero Net Artificialization objective has shaken up our practices as urban planners; we know that we are going to have to deal with high density, which is necessary to house everyone, while also guaranteeing a significant presence of green spaces. We also have to think about how to involve the inhabitants in this process, to succeed in moving past technical and scientific debates.”

Thomas Cormier

“These new practices of nature in the city, which take into account ecosystems and biodiversity, can also be a source of pride for the municipal workers who maintain these spaces.”

Marine Linglart

“There is also the question of the appropriation and acceptance of these natural spaces in the city by their inhabitants, which raises a certain number of contradictions: we want nature, but not the nuisances they might bring about (insects, pollen, etc.). We can also think of nature in the city as new public spaces, spaces for conviviality and culture. How can nature be transformed into public spaces, and vice versa?”

Christine Lepoittevin

"The main obstacle that we now encounter when we want to reintroduce biodiversity into the city is the population itself. These alternative nature projects in the city still face poor social acceptance. Inhabitants expect well-trimmed lawns, nicely cleared grounds. We must therefore work with them so that their vision changes; just because it grows a little more does not mean that it is less maintained or that the space is neglected."

Laurent Samuel

"The main obstacle that we now encounter when we want to reintroduce biodiversity into the city is the population itself. These alternative nature projects in the city still face poor social acceptance. Inhabitants expect well-trimmed lawns, nicely cleared grounds. We must therefore work with them so that their vision changes; just because it grows a little more does not mean that it is less maintained or that the space is neglected."

Yannick Ferry

## Round table 3 Housing and new uses 15 june 2021

Initiatives to diversify ways of designing and inhabiting housing are multiplying and finding growing success: participatory or grouped housing, eco-villages, shared spaces on the scale of a block or building.

Beyond the actual housing unit, the neighbourhood can become an extension of this — the missing external piece or, conversely, a simple place of passage.

How can these new uses of space and housing be interpreted and taken into account in urban projects? How can the interfaces between public and private space be reimagined? How can the appropriation of public spaces by residents be encouraged?

### Speakers :

Piero ZANINI,  
Architect-urban planner and Doctor of Anthropology; associate lecturer at ENSA Paris la Villette

Magali PARIS,  
Landscape engineer and Doctor of Urban Planning and Architecture; senior lecturer at ENSA Grenoble

Sonia DINH,  
Project manager at Sens de la Ville and PhD candidate on the issues of production and management of shared spaces in collective housing

### Panel:

Catherine SABBAH,  
General delegate of the Institut des Hautes Etudes pour l'Action dans le Logement (IDHEAL)

Rabia ENCKELL,  
Director of Courtoisie Urbaine

Jean Baptiste DUPONT,  
Manager of the Collectif d'Animation de l'Habitat Participatif en Île-de-France

Talk by Piero ZANINI: What lessons can be drawn from the modes of occupation of space during the pandemic?

If there is one thing that the pandemic has dramatically exposed, it is the disparity that exists in terms of housing, economic and spatial resources. The severe restrictions and the limited outdoor space available reconfigured the boundary between the indoors and outdoors. This, in turn, has led to a change in the relationship to the street.

There is a form of intimate appropriation of public space: activities take place outside, exactly as if we were inside, at home. There are also forms of hybridization and collaboration in the use of space; for example, shops that allow café terraces to be set up and extended right up to their windows. We have also observed activities from window spaces and very relaxed ways of using the ground, of diverting the uses of urban furniture. All this indicates a freedom in the way of occupying spaces.



Credit : Piero Zanini

- Will this new relationship to the street hold up over time and be maintained despite the lifting of restrictions?
- What are the limits to these private occupations of public spaces? Can this be a source of conflict in their use?
- How can this appropriation of public space be encouraged, while also ensuring equity between different groups (age, gender)?

Talk by Magali PARIS: Inhabiting the already there.  
From landscape to urbanity

**“URBANITY: The courtesy of houses. Welcoming doors, hospitable porches, stairs to climb and sit on, discreet or sumptuous stoops, flowering balconies — the house, in the city, takes care of the other, known or unknown.” Renée GAILHOUSTET**

We conducted a workshop with students interested in the forms of urbanity in the existing, in a context of the inner city, on the outskirts of Grenoble. The students had to design spaces with certain constraints: imagine ways of living outside and not just inside, and with as many interior areas as intermediary ones. The challenge was to allow intimacy to exist without closing the housing unit in on itself, in other words, by remaining open and porous.

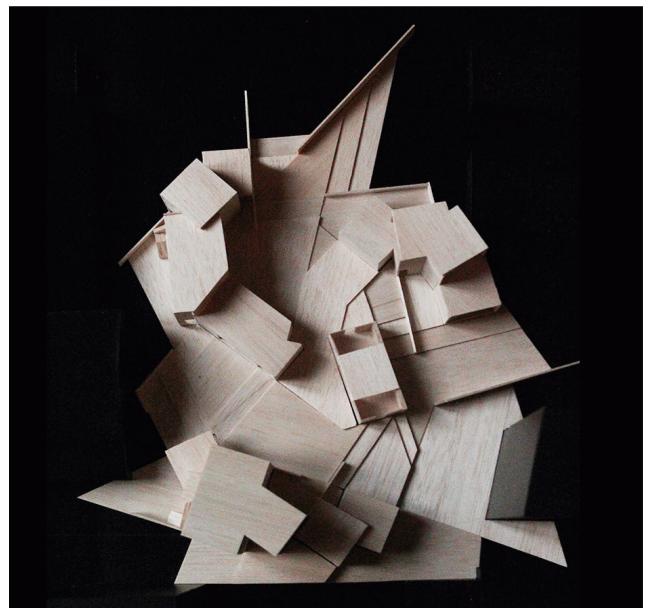


Photo of a student project. Credit: Magali Paris

The first stage of this workshop was to work on the representations of space; to represent the voids rather than the built spaces, or the gradients of private and public, not only in terms of the legal status of the spaces, but in their uses and the ways in which they are perceived.

Three dimensions stand out when we try to imagine different ways of living:

1. The question of the ground/floor level and thresholds which help to define the gradients of public and private.
2. From the ground to the sky: using elevations to imagine these intermediary spaces.
3. Temporalities: the possibility for evolution of a unit so that it can be inclusive and appropriable; designing different types of housing within the same block to accommodate different ages.

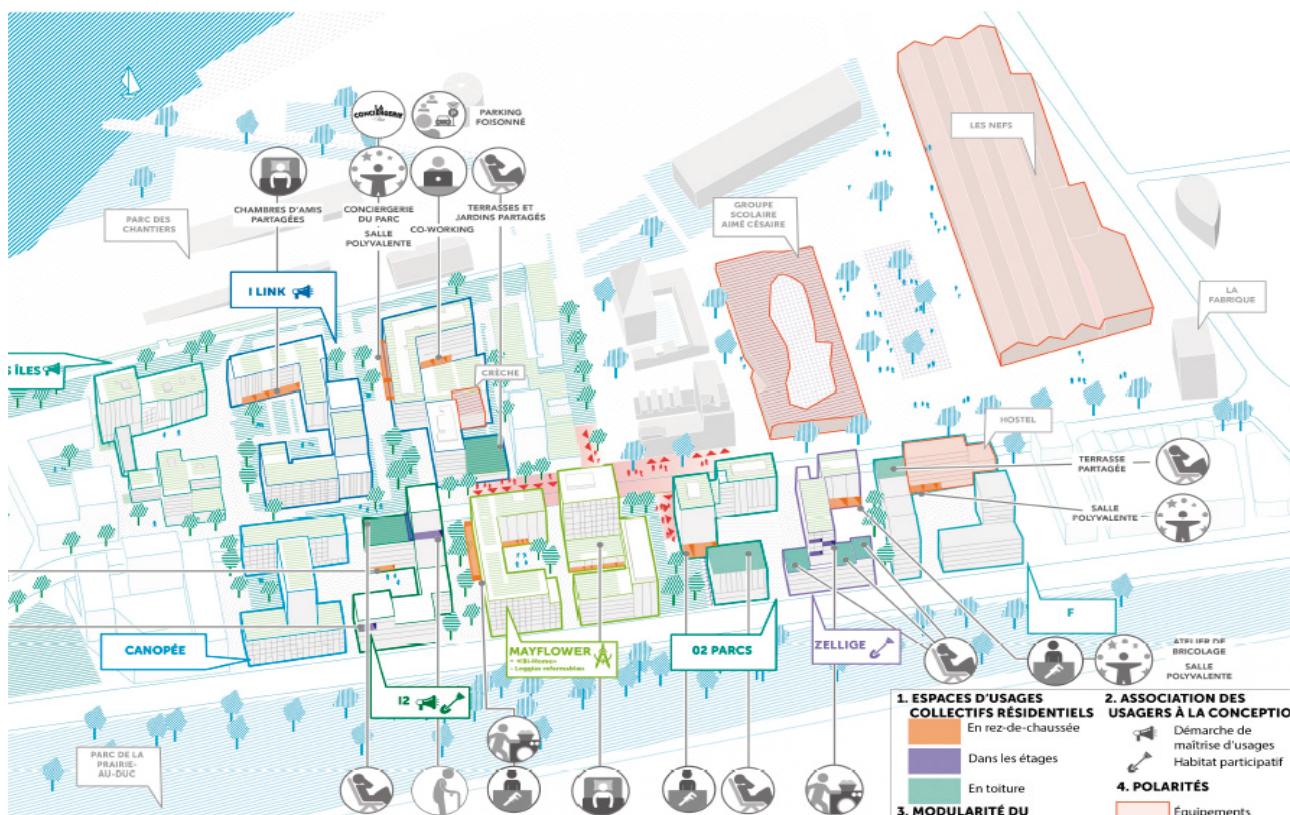
## Talk by Sonia DINH: New uses, example of the Île-de-Nantes

Le Sens de la Ville is an urban planning agency that is interested in the question of new uses, particularly in the context of the Île-de-Nantes urban project, in partnership with its developer SAMOA. One of the objectives of this project is to improve the quality of collective housing to compete with individual housing and attract owner-occupied families. Therefore, the developers and landlords proposed a set of spaces that would meet a variety of uses, which Le Sens de la Ville then evaluated. This evaluation consisted firstly of categorizing the uses:

1. Intangible features: concierge, services
2. Shared spaces: collective outdoor spaces, multi-purpose rooms, communal facilities such as a laundry room or a guest room
3. Association of users in the design: participatory housing, involvement of future residents in the design
4. Modularity of the building: duplex to be finished, extra room

This evaluation showed that many intermediary, shared spaces were not used by the residents. And in the end, many spaces proposed by the developers were not retained in the final project.

- At what scale should new uses be designed (ground/floor, building, block, neighbourhood)?
- How can residents be supported in the appropriation of shared spaces?
- How can the management of these spaces be considered from the initial design stage?



Map showing all the spaces seeking to respond to “new uses” in the Île-de-Nantes urban project. Credit: Le Sens

## The debate...

“We have to think about supporting the inhabitants in the appropriation and management of shared spaces, and also anticipate the end of this support.”

Sonia Dinh

“Since the beginning of this round-table discussion, what is interesting is that we have been talking about initiatives that start from the bottom-up, from the needs of future occupants. This is not at all the way housing is made in France, and that is the problem. Today, housing is produced to make the real estate industry work, and housing is the result of a series of constraints: land prices, plot size. This results in small, poorly designed housing.”

Catherine Sabbah

“The question of housing is in dialogue with those of all the other spaces: questions of public space, work space, transport, neighbourhoods... But it also resonates with questions of temporality.”

Piero Zanini

“We are seeing more and more projects where developers offer shared spaces with potential uses. But if we don't start with the needs of the inhabitants, the places remain unused. We also need to think about the social mix, so that participative housing does not reinforce social exclusion.”

Jean-Baptiste Dupont

“How to be in your home without feeling like you are trapped? This is a question that has come to the forefront due to the lockdown. There is also the question of free public space and services in the city, especially for people who do not have housing. Today, almost all public spaces require payment.”

Christine Lepoittevin

“For us, it is not really about new uses, but rather a new look at uses that have already existed for a long time.”

Rabia Enckell

# Chapter II :

## Thematic fact sheets

# I. •

The Val Parisis, a territory  
increasingly important in  
global and regional dynamics

# The Val Parisis, a territory increasingly important in global and regional dynamics

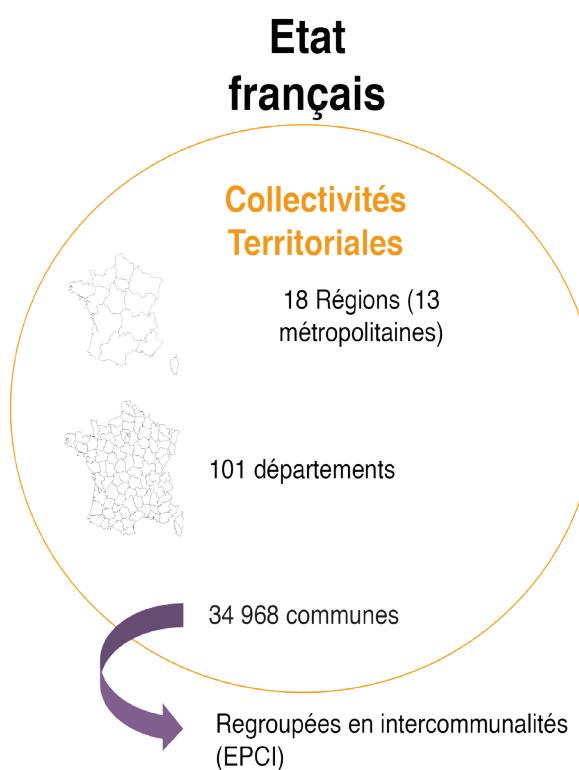
The Val Parisis, the territory of focus for the 39th Paris Region Workshop, has historically developed under the impetus of a peri-urbanization process (1.1) due to its proximity to metropolitan and regional dynamics. While this development model has made the area extremely attractive, it is now being called into question as it has its limits (1.2).

# 1.1 Historically, the Île-de-France has been an attractive suburban area

## 1.1.1. Portrait of the territory at several scales

### a. Territorial governance and the multiplicity of actors involved in the planning and development process

Many public actors participate in the territory's spatial and urban planning. A distinction can be made between the State and territorial authorities (regions, departments, communes), which are subdivisions of the territory with their own powers and degrees of autonomy. No hierarchical link exists between these entities; for example, communes are not subordinate to departments.



Territorial Governance. Credit: Les Ateliers de Cergy.

At the national level, numerous regulations guide and constrain all of these actors while also defining their prerogatives. In addition, the State can carry out or support major strategic projects of national interest. Various territorial authorities also act in this field, in particular the regions and communes.

For instance, regions may intervene in the fields of:

- Regional planning and the environment: waste management, regional nature parks, rural and urban development, regional air quality plan, etc. The region is also responsible for the Regional Plan for Development, Sustainable Development and Territorial Equality (SRADDET). It establishes the objectives for territorial balance and equality, the location of various infrastructures of regional interest, the opening up of rural areas, housing, economical space management, inter-modality and the development of transport
- Transport: management of ports and airports, Regional Express Trains (TER) and Regional Express Network (RER) in the Île-de-France, inter-city and school transport, roads, public bus stations, etc. Regions have become authorities in their own right when it comes to structuring and organizing transport.
- Economic development: coordination of competitiveness clusters, aid to the economic fabric and implementation of the Regional Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalization Plan.

Communes may intervene in all matters of local public interest. They play a key role in the field of urban planning and development:

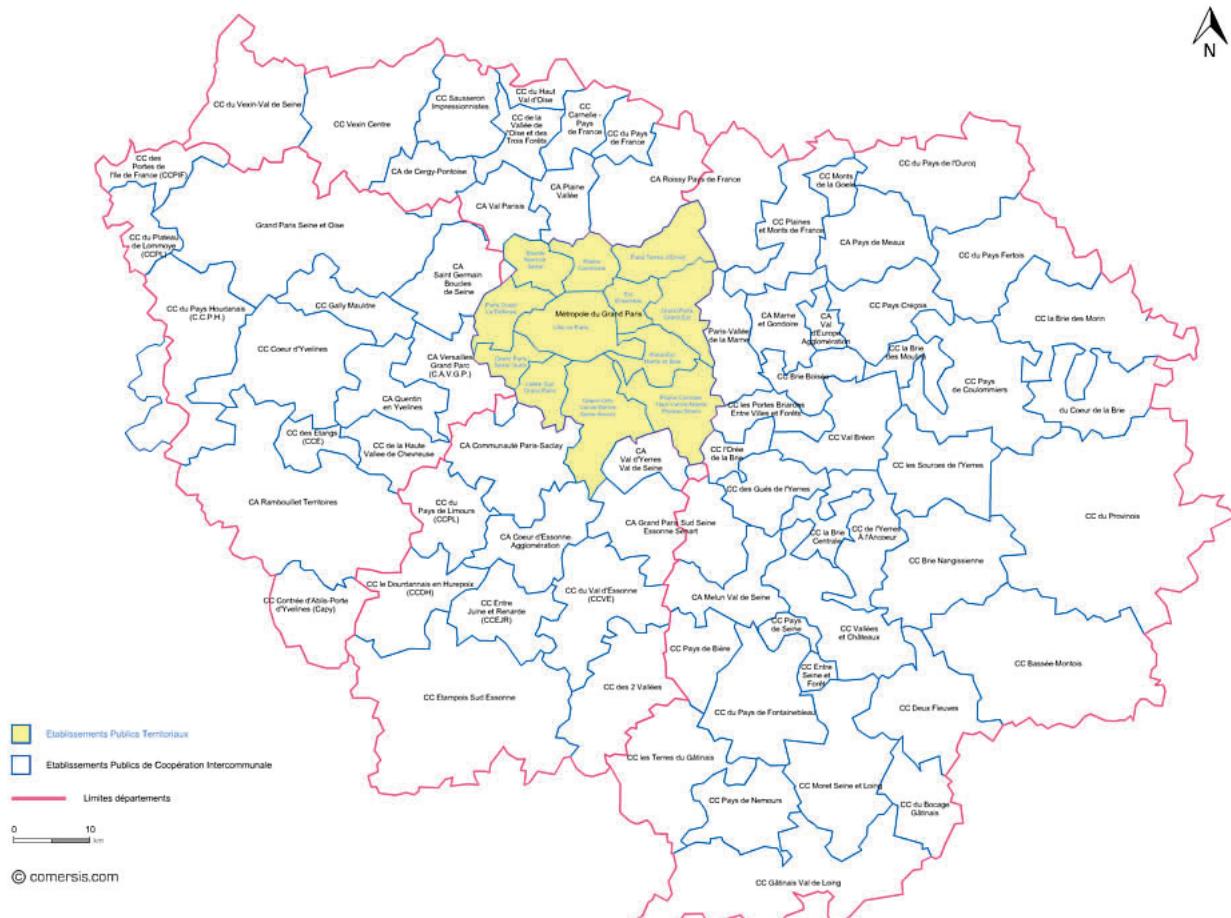
- They draw up the main urban planning directives: Territorial Coherence Scheme (SCoT), Local Urban Plan (PLU).
- They are responsible for urban development projects: creation of Zones d'Aménagements Concertés (ZAC) or pre-emptive rights.
- Finally, they issue building permits, which are compulsory for all new buildings, as well as construction permits, which concern, for example, the creation of housing estates.

Since 2015, communes have been required to join together in inter-communal bodies (also called Établissement Public de Coopération Intercommunal or EPCI), in order to pool services and coordinate actions. They can thus transfer some of their competences in the field of town planning to the

inter-municipality. This means that the PLU can be drawn up at the level of an intermunicipality, in which case it is known as a PLUi. EPICIs with more than 20,000 inhabitants are also required to establish a Territorial Climate Air Energy Plan (PCAET). There are four main types of intermunicipalities:

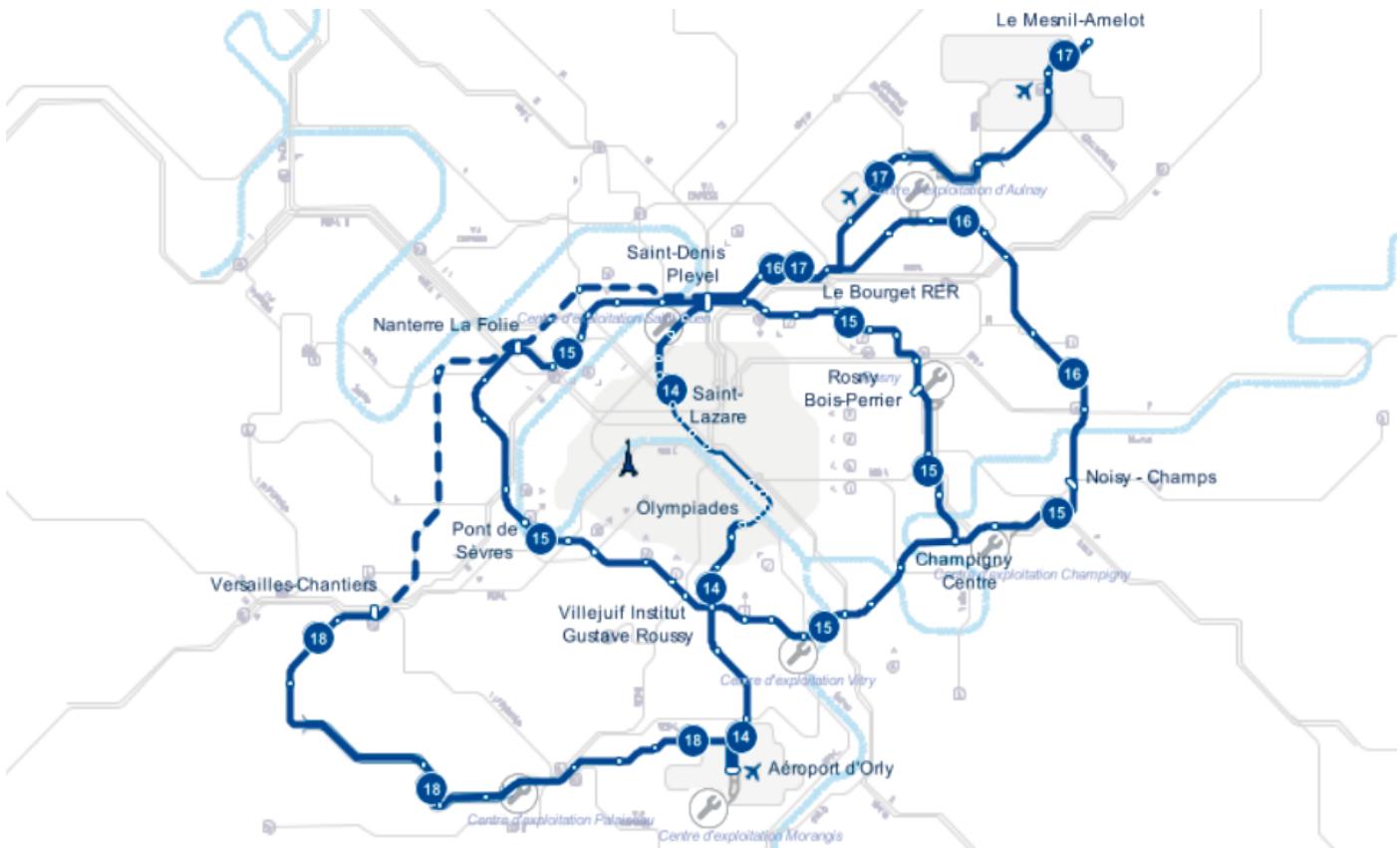
- Communauté de communes (Joint Local Authority)
- Communauté d'agglomération (Joint Municipal Authority) (50,000 inhabitants or more)
- Communauté urbaine (Joint Urban Authority) (450,000 inhabitants or more)
- Metropolises

The area covered by this 2021 Paris Region workshop — the Val Parisis — is a Communautés d'agglomération (CA) located in the Val-d'Oise department of the Île-de-France. It was created on 1 January 2016 following the merger of the Parisis and Val-et-Forêt Communautés d'agglomération. It now includes 15 municipalities. In July 2021, it adopted a Territory Project with the aim of gradually achieving a greater level of territorial integration in the future.



Ile-de-France intermunicipal map.  
Credit: Comersis

Some EPCIs have a special status. This is the case of the Greater Paris Metropolitan Area which was created in 2016 and includes the commune of Paris as well as the 123 communes of the departments for the inner ring. With 7.6 million inhabitants, it does not represent the whole of the Paris conurbation, but does account for nearly 65% of the region's population.



Grand Paris Express map. Credit: Grand Paris

+ 200km OF RAIL

## x 2 COMPARED TO THE CURRENT METRO NETWORK

+ 68 NEW  
STATIONS IN 2030

**+ 4** NEW LINES  
**& 4** EXTENDED LINE  
(16 currently)

Generally speaking, territorial planning is increasingly carried out on a metropolitan or even regional scale, particularly in the Île-de-France. For example, Grand Paris Aménagement is a public operator, chaired by the President of the Region (currently Valérie Pécresse), which carries out development, renovation and reclassification projects throughout the Île-de-France. The Société du Grand Paris is a public company created by the State, dedicated to managing the Grand Paris Express project.

## b. Demographic and economic data for the Île-de-France region

### Identity card for the territory

1 region  
8 departments  
1,268 communes  
12,011 km<sup>2</sup>

The Île-de-France Region is particularly important in France, not only demographically but also economically and symbolically. Distinguished by its high concentration of people, wealth and places of power, the region is structured in a radio-concentric pattern around Paris. Indeed, France as a whole tends to be plagued by the phenomenon of “Parisian macrocephaly”, although numerous decentralization and de-concentration reforms have been undertaken over the last several decades to mitigate this problem.

The region has more than 12 million inhabitants, i.e., 18% of the French population. It represents 31% of France's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (612 million euros), which makes it the most important region in Europe and the sixth largest metropolis in the world in terms of GDP. It counts nearly 6 million jobs, 88% of which are in the service sector. It is home to a multitude of national and international company headquarters. Its international influence is also heavily linked to tourism; the Île-de-France welcomes nearly 50 million visitors per year, making it the world's leading tourist destination.

This region is therefore very attractive on an international scale. Although it is structured around Paris, it is nevertheless marked by the diversity of its landscapes and urban typologies. For example, the Île-de-France is predominantly agricultural and rural in terms of land use: nearly 50% of its 12,070 km<sup>2</sup> is devoted to agriculture, making it one of the most productive regions in France, and forests represent nearly 23% (287,000 hectares) of the territory, compared to a national average of 30%.

The city of Paris is particularly dense, with an average density of 20,745 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, making it the seventh most densely populated city in the world, ahead of Seoul. Surrounding Paris is a collection of communes that make up the city's inner ring, which are also extremely diverse in their typologies. Density in these areas, while still high, is considerably lower with an average of 6,848 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. Finally, Paris' outer ring has 1,860 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> and plays an important role in terms of agricultural and woodland activities. This area has undergone significant development, with a steady demographic growth until very recently. This can be explained in particular by the phenomenon of peri-urbanization and the creation of the new towns of Cergy-Pontoise, Marne-la-Vallée, Evry, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines and Sénart.

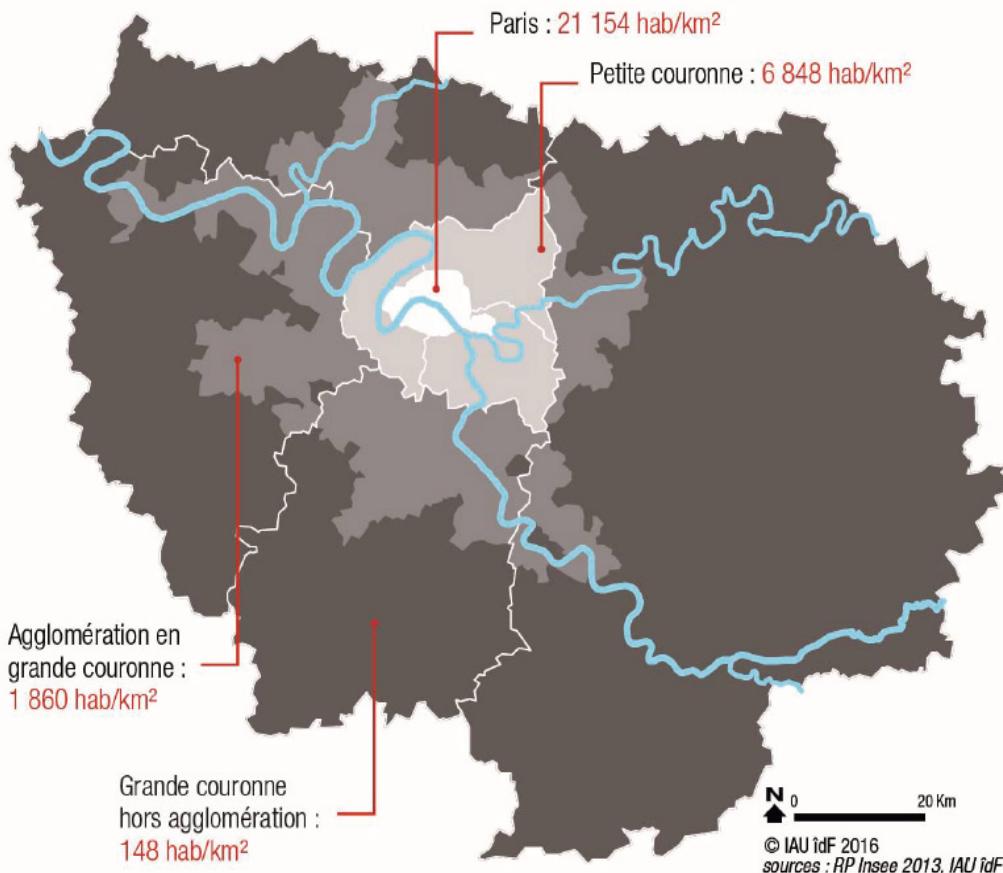


Île-de-France new town map. Credit: A. Brune, C. Imbert et C. Rozenholc.

In France, from the 1960s onwards, a spatial planning policy was implemented with the aim of promoting multipolar urban development, particularly in Paris. Nine new towns were subsequently built; five in the Île-de-France as mentioned above, and four others on the outskirts of Rouen, Lille, Marseille and Lyon.

These new towns differ from the large housing estates built at the beginning of the 1960s in that they sought to be independent of the main conurbation. While not considered mono-functional, they do constitute their own administrative and economic centrality.

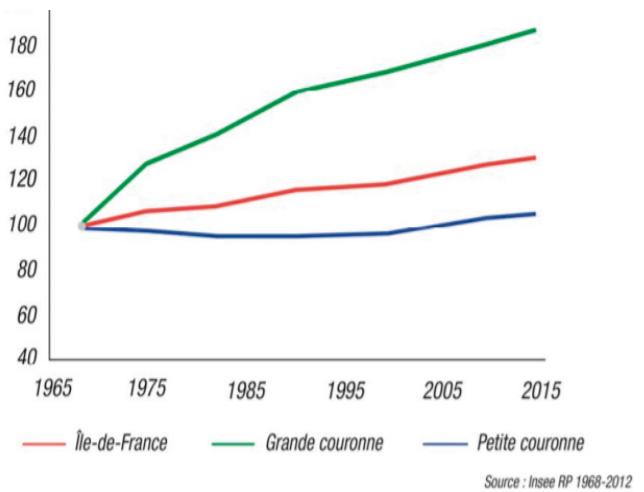
## La densité de population en 2013



Île-de-France map, population density of each urban ring. Credit: IAU.

The phenomenon of peri-urbanization began in the 1960s in the western part of the Paris Region, with the massive construction of single-family homes, which represented up to 2/3 of new constructions in 1990. In 2012, 1/4 of Île-de-France households lived in an individual detached house that they owned, and 43% of couples with children lived in single-family homes (compared to 28% in 1975)<sup>1</sup>. Peri-urbanization is the result of several concomitant dynamics:

- The search for larger homes, outdoor spaces and in particular a garden, privacy and calm.
- The desire to purchase one's own home, which is difficult in the city for modest or middle-class households.
- The importance of maintaining rapid accessibility to the centre and employment areas, whether by car or by public transport. Development in this sector has been one of the main reasons why settling outside the dense city is seen as a viable



Evolution of the population of each urban ring. Credit: IAU

<sup>1</sup> BERGER Martine "Au-delà des banlieues : trois décennies de périurbanisation pavillonnaire en Île-de-France", In : Agrandir Paris (1860-1970) [en ligne]. Paris : Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2012

## c. Initial description of the territory of the Val Parisis Communautés d'agglomération

Identity card of the territory:

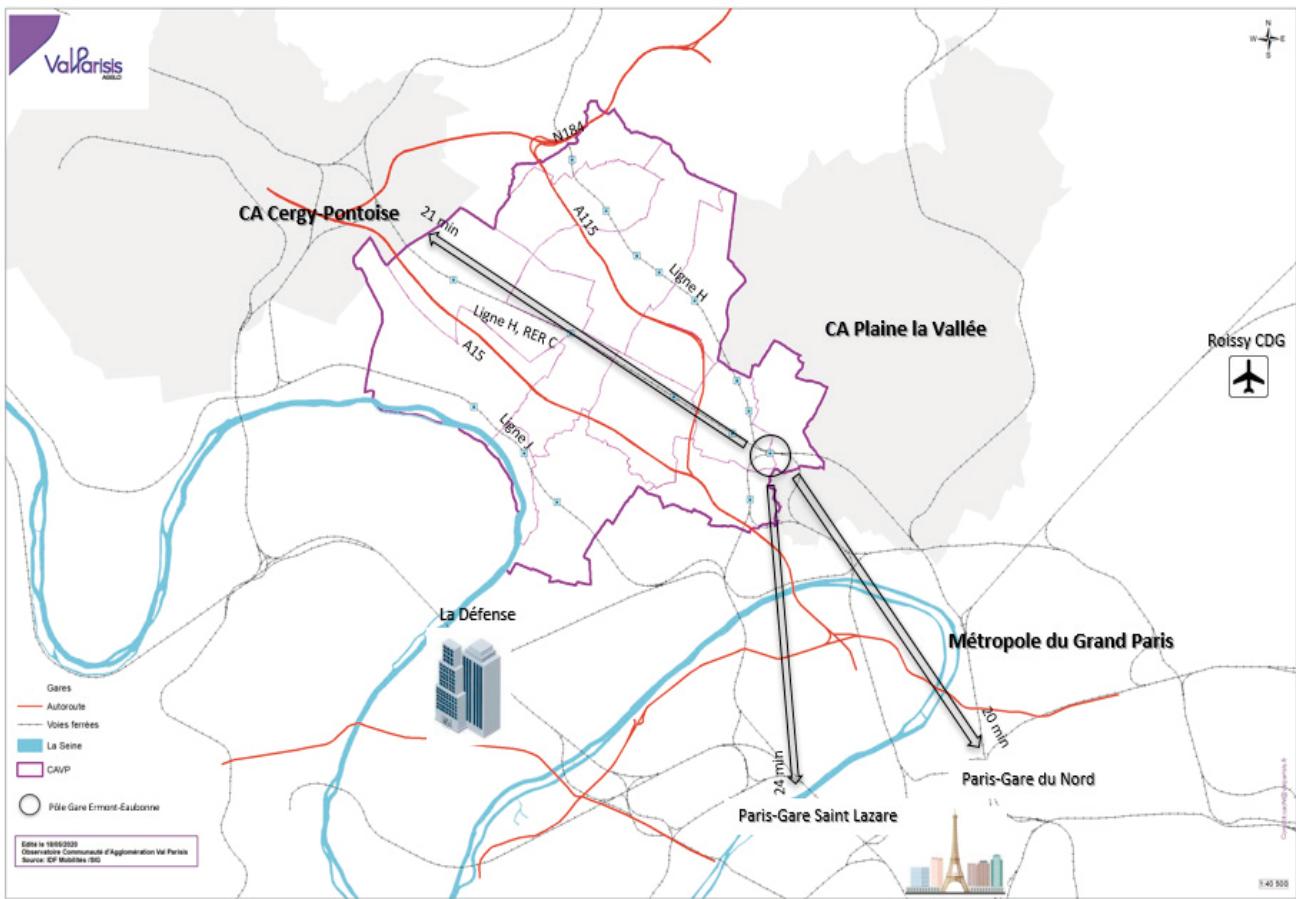
272,890 inhabitants in 2016

87 km<sup>2</sup>

115,000 housing units

Intermunicipality created in 2016, comprising 15 communes of varying size and populations

The Val Parisis territory is directly affected by this phenomenon of peri-urbanization, which can be explained by its strategic geographical location. The Val Parisis is located to the northwest of Paris, in the outer ring, to the southeast of the Val-d'Oise department. The area is also close to the new town of Cergy-Pontoise, built in the 1970s, which is an important economic and demographic centre. The Val Parisis is therefore well connected to the various employment areas formed by Cergy-Pontoise, central Paris and Paris La Défense.

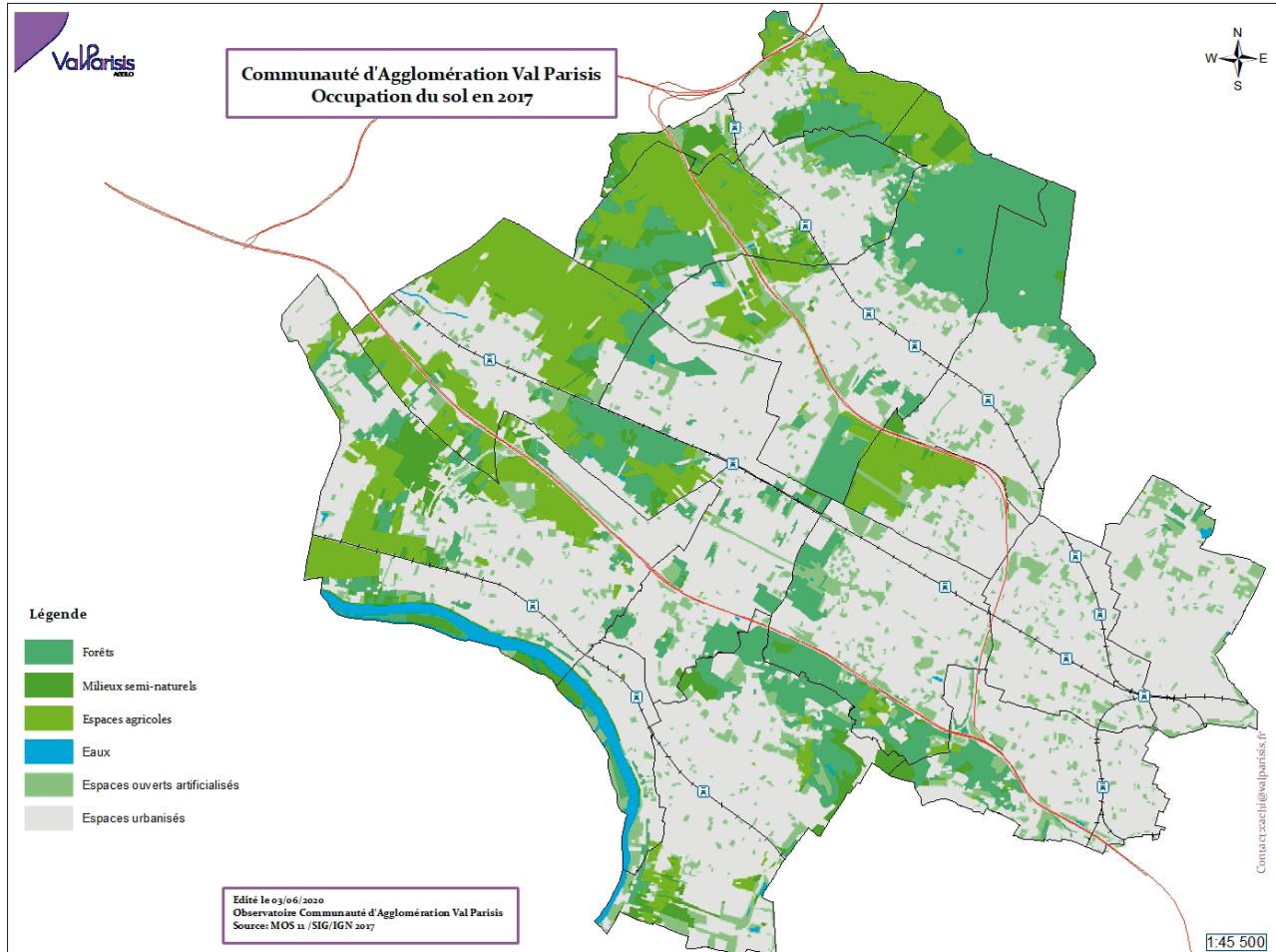


Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

The area is particularly well served by transport networks:

- Public transport: the J and H Transilienne lines, the RER C
- Major roads and motorways, notably the A15, A115, RD14, etc.

In economic terms, the Val Parisis has 63,000 jobs and 25,088 companies located in its territory.



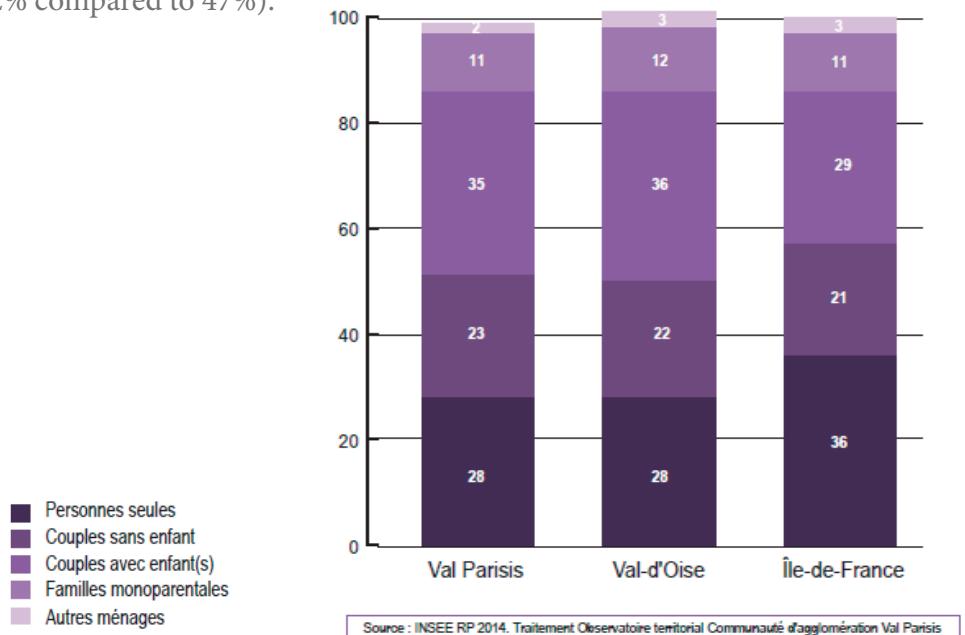
Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis

Industrial activities are more developed here than in the rest of the Paris Region, as is the construction sector, which reflects the region's demographic dynamism. For instance, the average annual population fluctuation rate was 1% for the period 2014-2017, compared with 0.7% for the Val-d'Oise or even 0.5% for the Île-de-France (Source: INSEE).

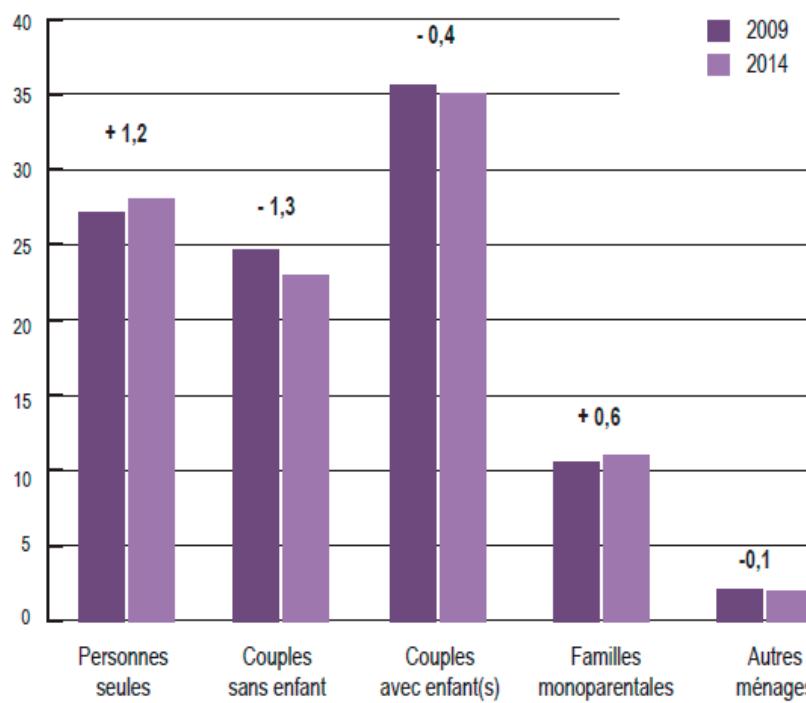
The territory is also distinguished by its numerous natural and non-urbanized spaces — agricultural land, parks, forests, and the banks of the Seine along its southern border — which play an important role in its attractiveness. In addition, the Val Parisis diverse topography and relief includes the presence of the Parisis Hills and the Montmorency Forest, between whose steep hills lies the Montmorency Valley.

This economic dynamism, combined with good public transport links and the area's natural capital, has attracted families to settle here. Single-family homes are by far the most common type of housing, covering 1,944 hectares compared to 427 hectares for collective housing. Therefore, 47% of the main residences of the Val Parisis Communautés d'agglomération are houses compared to 27% at the regional scale.

Furthermore, the proportion of households owning their main residence is significantly higher than that of the Paris Region (62% compared to 47%).



Credit: Communauté d'agglomération du Val Parisis.

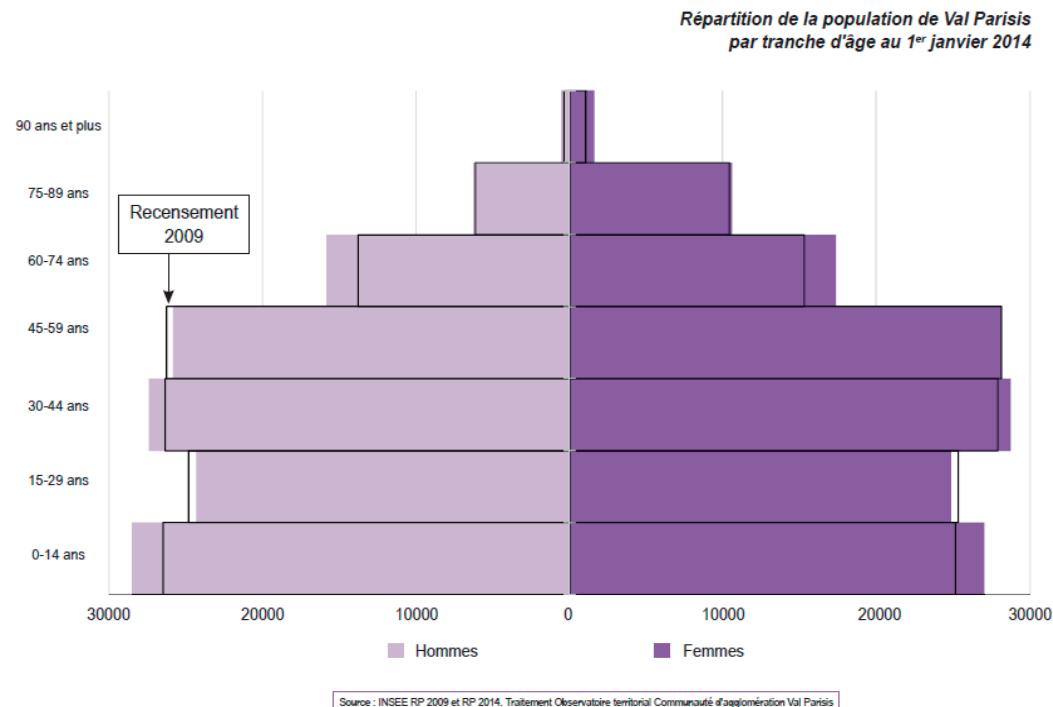


Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

The area therefore has an important residential role, particularly for families. Indeed, there is a significant presence of couples with children, who represent 35% of the area's households, compared to 29% for the Île-de-France Region. Conversely, single-person households are less represented than on the regional scale (28% in the conurbation compared to 36% for the Île-de-France).

Nonetheless and even if it remains minor, the proportion of single-person households and single-parent families has increased, whereas that of couples has decreased. It should also be noted that homes are also larger than the Paris Region average, even if they are now starting to become smaller.

A study of the population structure by age group reveals an increasing ageing population. Between 2009 and 2014, the proportion of people aged over 60 rose from 18.3 to 19.6% (+1.3 points), while at the same time the population aged between 15 and 29 fell from 19.5 to 18.4% (-1.1 points). The youth index tends to confirm this trend. In 2014, the Val Parisis conurbation had 1.39 young people under 20 years of age for every person over 60 years of age, whereas this ratio was 1.46 in 2009.



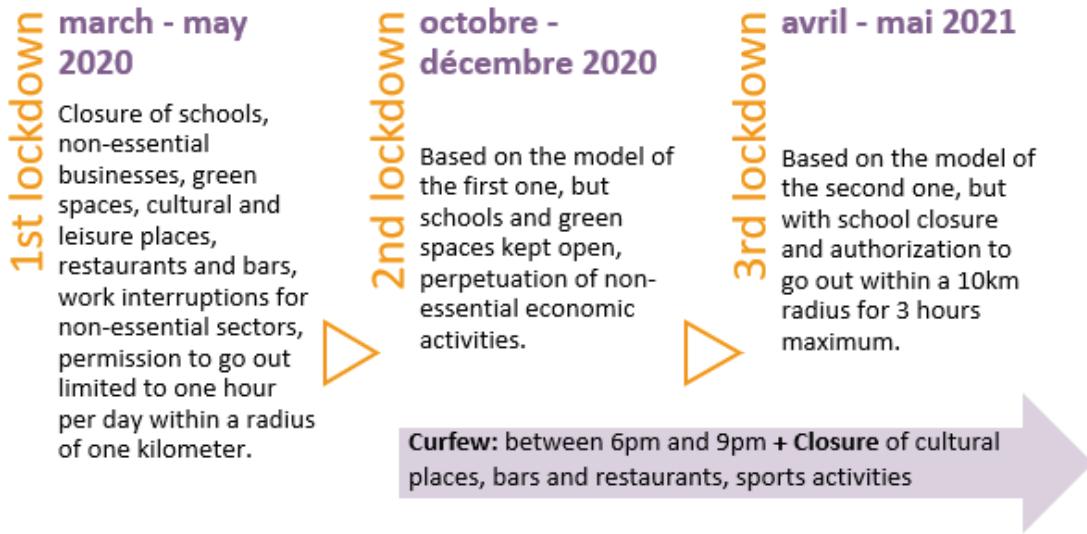
Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

The ageing population currently observed in the inter-municipal territory must however be weighed against the increase in the young population over the first half of the decade. Between 2009 and 2014, the proportion of people under 14 years of age increased by 0.7 percentage points, from 20.1% to 20.8% of the total population. The Val Parisis territory thus remains one of the youngest in the region.

The limited number of private rental housing has resulted in a delay in the age of young adults leaving their parental homes, even when they have the necessary financial resources.

## 1.1.2. A renewed attractiveness of peri-urban areas?

### a. In the short term, aspirations reinforced by the pandemic



When they had the chance, many urban residents decided to spend the successive confinements outside the major cities. For instance, during the first confinement, nearly 1.2 million people dwelling in the Ile-de-France left the region within a week.

Credit: Les Ateliers de Cergy.

Buying and living in a single-family house is an ideal, a way of life that may seem all the more attractive after the successive lockdowns and prolonged health restrictions tied to COVID-19.

The obligation to stay in one's own home or in its immediate vicinity and the possibility of teleworking seems to have had an incentive effect on households wishing to have a larger and/or less expensive surface area, as well as an exterior (balcony, garden, etc.). The need for nature was also particularly felt, with increased use of parks and gardens during the periods when they were open to the public. On the contrary, the conveniences of a dense city such as social spaces and cultural effervescence were impossible to access.

### b. Trends echoing those triggered by climate change adaptation

The COVID-19 epidemic may have therefore precipitated latent long-term trends. Indeed, the urban issues raised by the pandemic resonate strongly with the challenges cities face in mitigating and adapting to climate change. This is the case, for example, with the attention paid to local food, which is highly valued by consumers. Developing food autonomy (relocating production and packaging) is a strategic issue for territories; it involves building resiliency and decarbonizing food by reducing transport emissions.

To address this issue, some territories have set up Territorial Food Projects (PAT), which aim to re-localize agriculture and food in their territories by supporting the installation of farmers, short supply chains or local products in schools and public cafeterias. These are collective and voluntary approaches that can be implemented at several territorial levels, from small municipalities to large regions, departments, natural parks, etc. The issue of food must therefore be addressed in a comprehensive manner through all its aspects, particularly those of a social, environmental, economic or health nature.

The Val Parisis is therefore considering establishing its own Territorial Food Plan. There is already a local agricultural hub covering 120 ha, structured around three municipalities (Bessancourt, Taverny and Le Plessis-Bouchard) which have large areas dedicated to market gardening and whose production is distributed through local food systems. The challenge now is to build a dynamic on the territorial scale, by involving the communes whose agricultural vocation is less strong.

The proximity of the Val Parisis to the Vexin Français Regional Nature Park as well as to one of the largest grain-growing plateaus in the Seine basin and to the Capital Region also offers the possibility of structuring local food systems and distribution networks in conjunction with neighbouring areas.

As part of the preparation of the Territorial Climate Air and Energy Plan (PCAET) by the Val Parisis Communautés d'agglomération, other subjects are being discussed, such as the need to reduce air and noise pollution.

Rising temperatures could force people to leave the dense city, if and when they have the opportunity to do so. Local authorities must therefore anticipate the effects of climate change, particularly the formation of urban heat islands (see box).

## Heat islands

“Combined with population growth and urban densification, climate change will make the phenomenon of urban heat islands (ICU) more prevalent, i.e. a rise in air and surface temperatures in city centres compared to the suburbs, particularly at night.

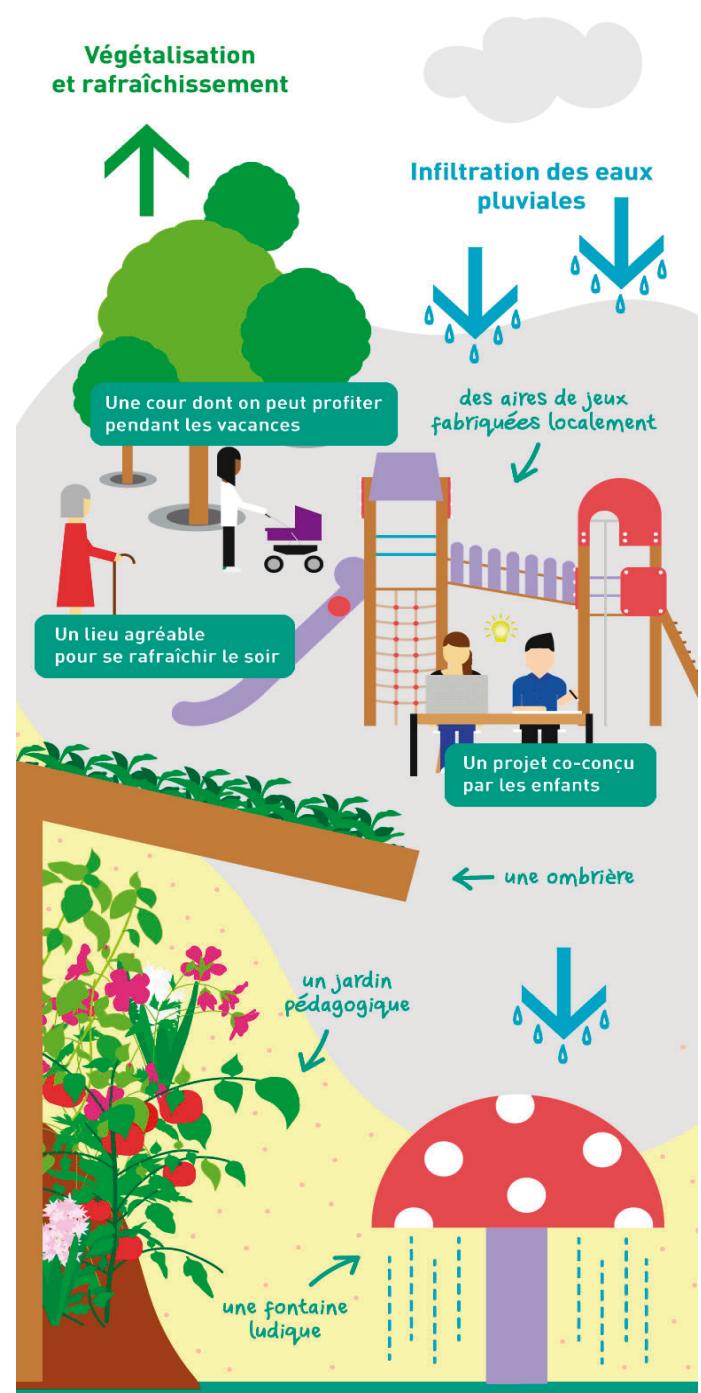
The phenomenon of ICUs is linked to several factors:

- The thermo-physical properties of the materials used in the construction of buildings, roads and other infrastructure; L'occupation du sol (sols minéralisés, absence de végétation)
- Land use (hard surfaces, lack of vegetation)
- Urban morphology (major thoroughfares, urban ‘ruggedness’ which reduces convection...);
- The release of heat from human activities (engines, heating and air conditioning systems, etc.)” CEREMA.<sup>2</sup>

In order to improve urban development in the face of the heat island problem, local authorities have “green” solutions which correspond to nature and vegetation, “blue” solutions linked to the presence of water, and “grey” solutions for urban materials.

Examples of developments that respond to the ICU phenomenon:

- The Clichy Batignolles EcoQuartier: located on 54 hectares of disused former SNCF industrial land, the EcoQuartier, which will eventually accommodate 3,400 homes and 12,000 jobs in the northeast of Paris, was designed to take into account the ICU phenomenon. Its urban spaces meet the objective of cooling users: a 10-hectare tree park in addition to natural spaces, light-coloured walkways, the presence of water (fountains, water jets), alternative rainwater management (recovery, storage and distribution in a biotope basin), and buildings designed for significant summer comfort. The site, which should allow for a 2°C drop in temperature during heat waves, will also serve as a biodiversity reserve (Source: CEREMA).
- New public spaces that are more resilient to climate change: the City of Paris is also deploying a greening programme, better management of rainwater, and the de-sealing of schoolyards and secondary schools, which have been identified as important levers for action. The latter represent 70 hectares spread evenly over the territory. While they currently contribute to the heat island phenomenon, the objective is to convert them into cooling spots accessible to all during weekends and which can also serve as refuges for the most vulnerable during heat waves. These courtyards must obviously offer more comfort to children, who are their main beneficiaries and are also a vulnerable population during hot weather.



Credit: Ville de Paris.

As this problem is due to amplify, people who have the opportunity to do so may be tempted to leave the dense city and head for more suburban areas such as the Val Parisis, where temperatures are more liveable.

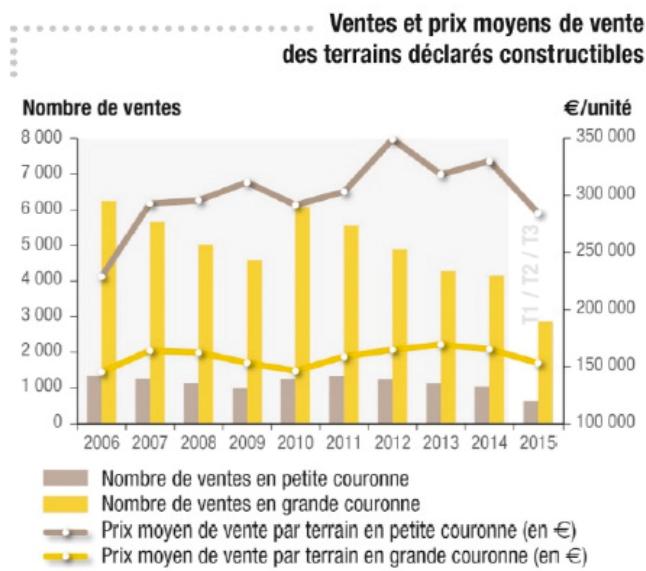
That said, the model of peri-urban expansion based on single-family homes poses new challenges and has its limits.

## 1.2. Limits to the territory's historical development model

### 1. 2. 1. A dynamic at times imposed

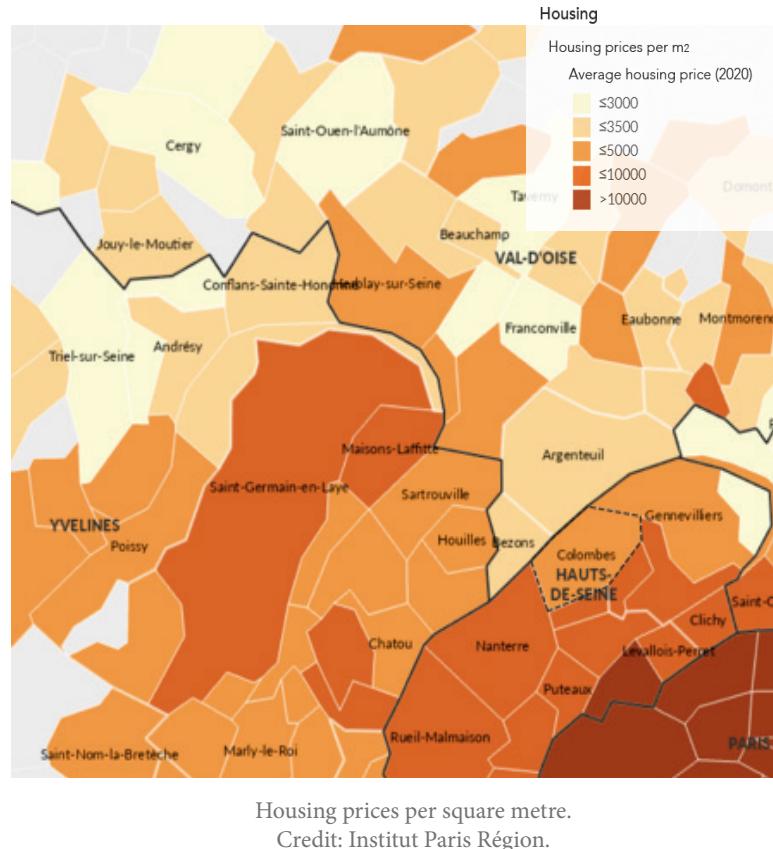
#### a. Gentrification phenomenon

First of all, it should be remembered that living in a peri-urban area is sometimes a choice that is made due partly to the significant increase in property prices, whether for buying or renting, in major French cities. This phenomenon is not specific to the Paris Region, but it is accentuated there.



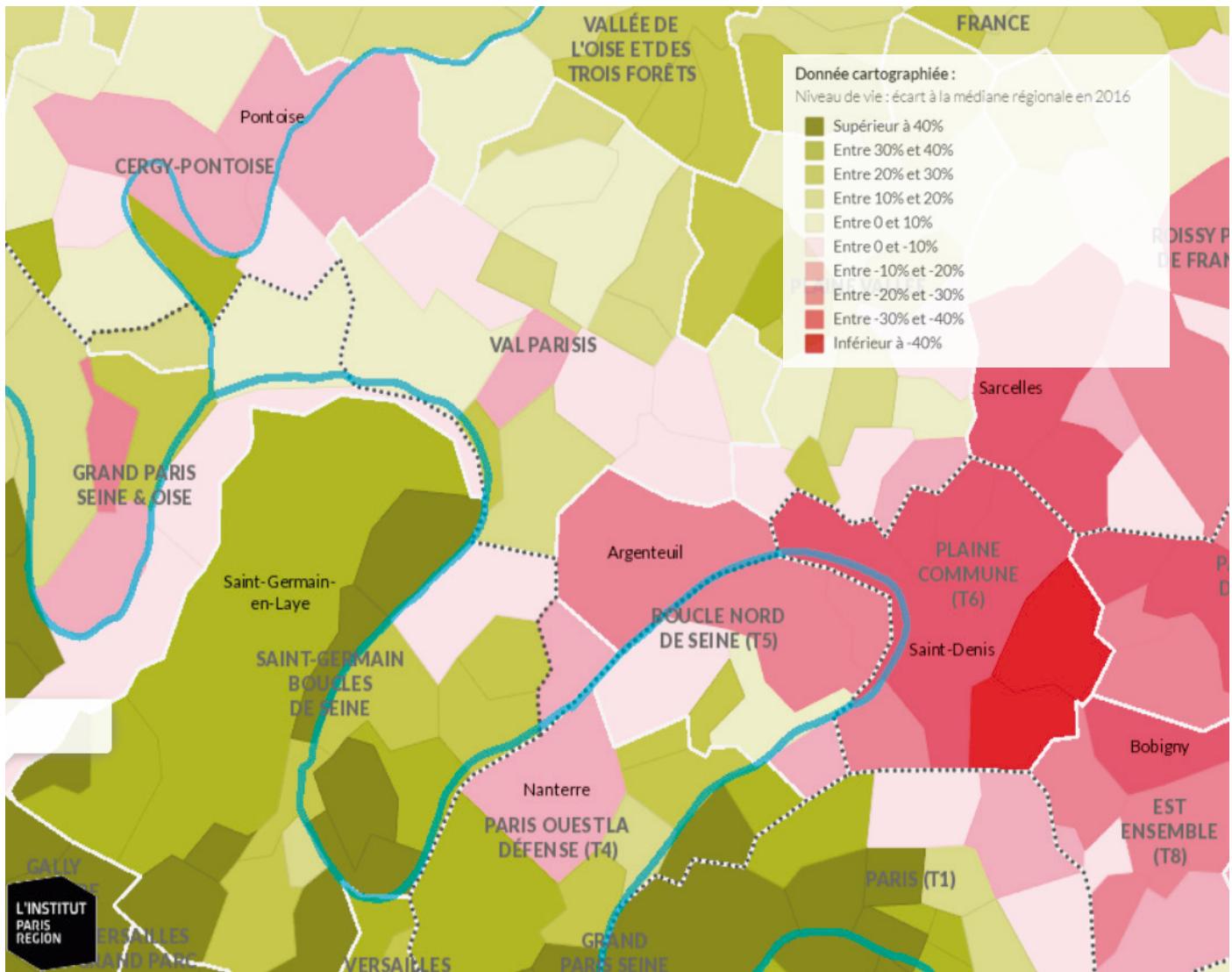
Credit: Institut Paris Région.

The price of land falls between a very high average in the inner ring and a lower and more accessible average in the north of the Val-d'Oise department. This makes it an attractive area, particularly for households with children who come from Paris or the inner ring; it is an attractiveness that also contributes to pushing more modest households out towards the north of the Val-d'Oise.



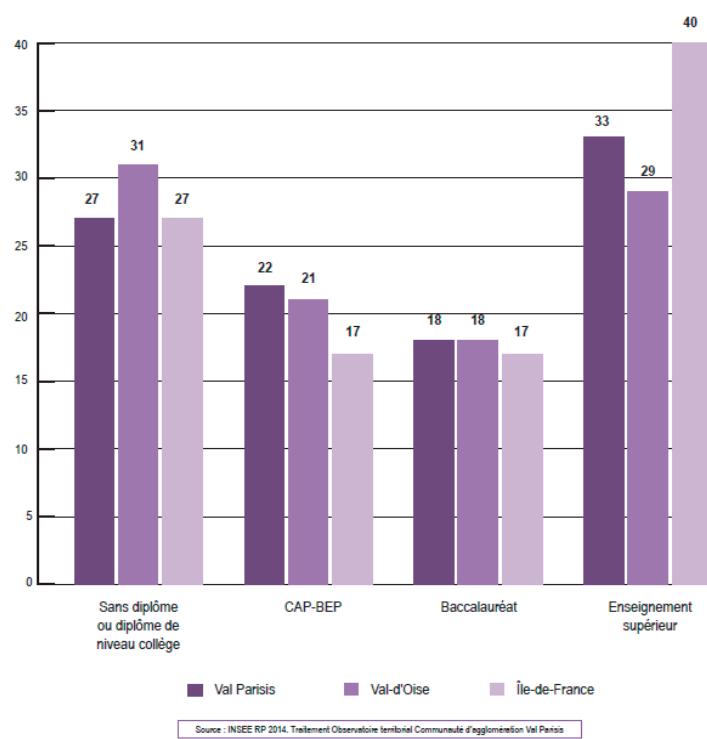
This gentrification has therefore forced certain modest or middle classes to move farther and farther away from the capital, even if they cannot completely leave the region and its employment areas. In Paris, a decline in the presence of working-class populations (labourers and employees) has been observed, while executives and higher intellectual professions have benefited from a dynamic that starts in the west of the city. The multiplication of short-term rentals and the increase in second homes also plays an important role, and partly explains the fact that Paris is losing inhabitants every year. Between 2013 and 2018, the capital lost an average of 10,800 inhabitants each year, i.e. almost 54,000 inhabitants in the space of five years (Credit: APUR/INSEE).

Although the Val Parisis territory has “priority neighbourhoods”, its inhabitants still enjoy a high average standard of living, as evidenced by an average net annual salary of €30,370, compared with €28,101 for the Val-d’Oise. In terms of educational levels, the population of Val Parisis is characterized by a higher level of education than that of Val-d’Oise but lower than that of the Île-de-France.



Credit: Institut Paris Région.

Répartition de la population de Val Parisis  
par niveau de diplôme au 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2014 (en %)

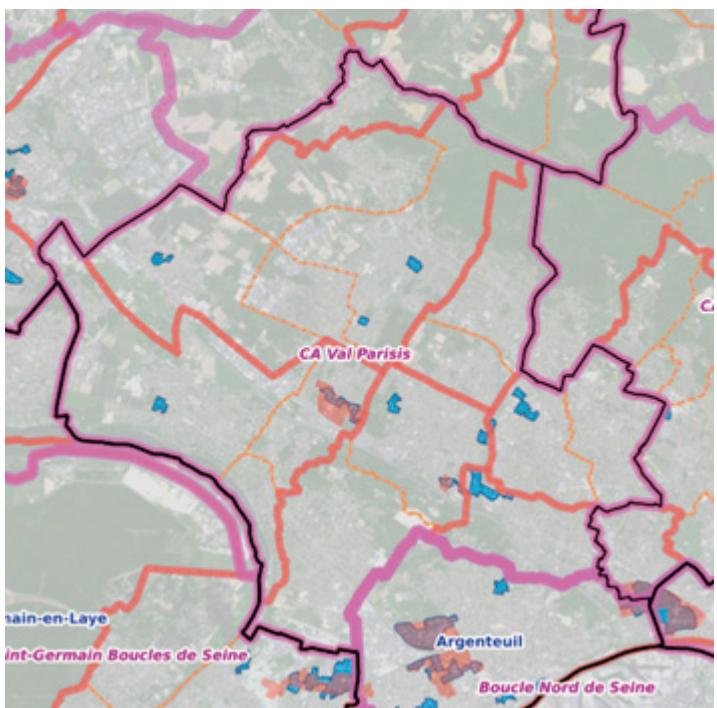


Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

## b. A contrasted territory: Socio-spatial inequalities

As we have seen, the Val Parisis is immersed in metropolitan dynamics that affect it as a whole. That said, it is a contrasted and heterogeneous territory, particularly between its southeastern and northwestern parts.

The southeastern part is characterized by strong urbanization and relatively high densities, in continuity with the inner ring of Paris. The population is more modest, which can be explained by the high proportion of social housing: the southeastern arc of the conurbation — comprised of Montigny-lès-Cormeilles, Franconville, Sannois, Ermont and Eaubonne — alone accounts for 63% of the area's social housing. In the agglomeration, four communes exceed the regulatory rate of 25% of social housing, three of which are located in this arc (Sannois, Ermont and Montigny-lès-Cormeilles). There are more priority neighbourhoods and “sensitive urban areas” than in the rest of the territory.

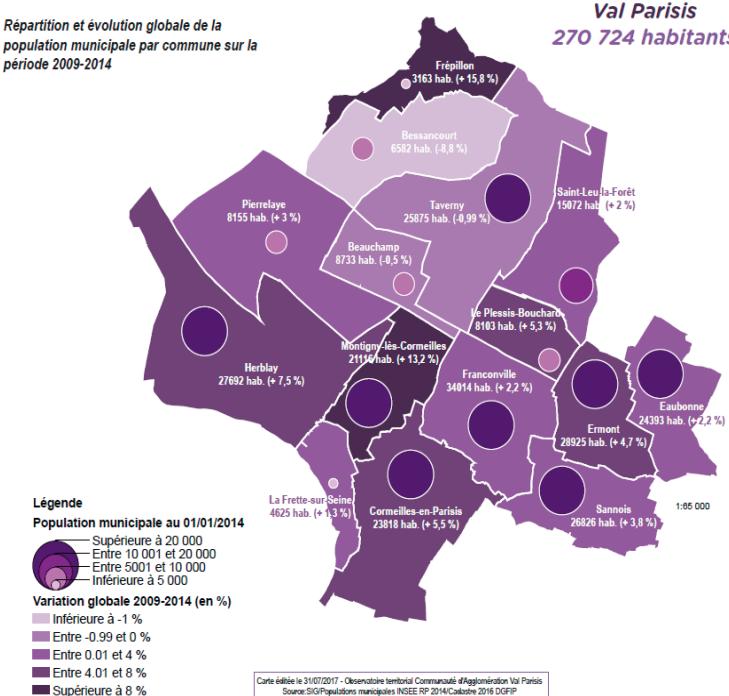


Map of Priority Neighbourhoods (blue areas) and Sensitive Urban Areas (red areas). Credit: Géoportail

This southeastern arc has a high level of demographic and economic dynamism, which drives the construction sector.

In contrast, the northwestern part is made up of smaller and more rural communes, which tend to be less dynamic both economically and demographically.

In addition to this contrast, on the scale of the intermunicipality, it is also necessary to highlight that there are sometimes significant disparities within each commune.



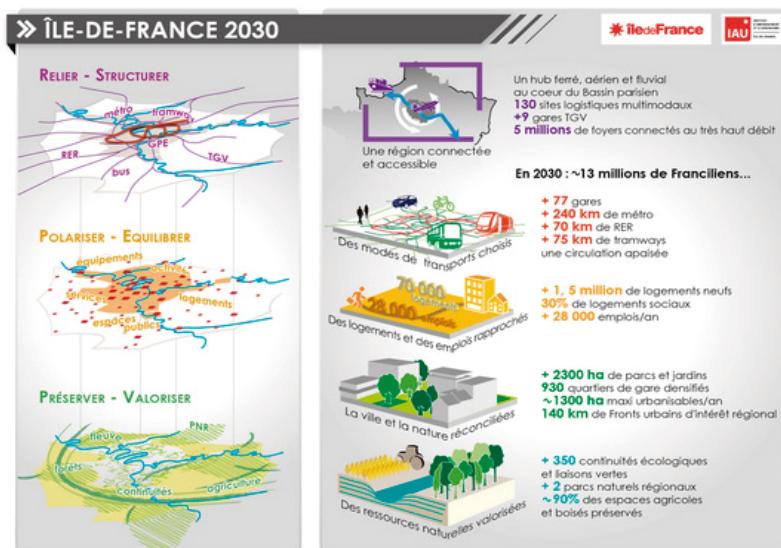
Demography map. Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

## 1. 2. 2. Limiting urban sprawl and land artificialization

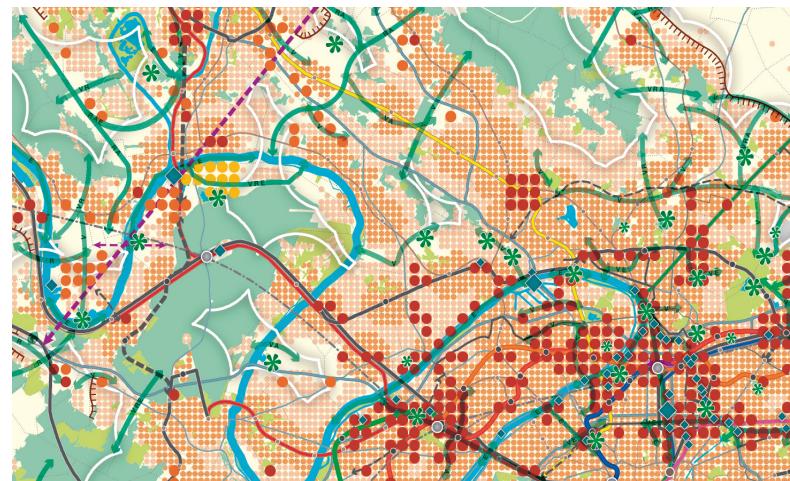
### a. The Île-de-France Region Master Plan (SDRIF)

The SDRIF is a regulatory urban planning framework, drawn up by the Île-de-France Region in association with the State, which sets out regional planning strategies. According to the town planning code, its objective is to control urban and demographic growth and the use of space while guaranteeing the international status of the region. In other words, it is a medium-term urban planning framework for the Paris Region, which establishes guidelines and obligations for the communes and departments. It specifies the means to be implemented to correct spatial, social and economic disparities; to coordinate the supply of transport; and to preserve rural and natural areas in order to ensure the conditions for the sustainable development of the region.

The SDRIF determines the location of transportation modes, facilities and environmental protection measures. The Île-de-France is the only region with a regional coherence plan for land use. The current SDRIF was adopted in 2013 and will remain in force until 2030. Reflections for its revision are already underway.



Credit: Région Île-de-France



Excerpt from the SDRIF. Credit: Institut Paris Région.

In the Île-de-France, all local urban planning regulations must comply with the SDRIF. Conversely, the SDRIF itself must also comply with national regulations (Urban Planning Code, Environmental Code, etc.).

The 2013 SDRIF affirms the residential function of the Val Parisis and identifies this territory as a priority area for densification, while also providing for ecological continuity, particularly with the Pierrelaye Forest project.

Several areas of the Val Parisis are thus identified as requiring densification. This is the case for the areas with transport centres or stations, where the urban fabric must be densified within a radius of at least one kilometre.

Although the SDRIF specifies the sectors to be densified, the ways in which this densification is carried out depends on the projects validated by each commune rather than an overall strategy for the territory. Densification therefore raises the question of how the identity of the Val Parisis will evolve as its attractiveness is based in part on its sparsely populated suburban fabric.

## b. The Zero Net Artificialization (ZAN) objective

Several public policy measures have been put in place as well as legislative and regulatory texts aimed at reducing the artificialization of land caused by urban sprawl. In France, natural and agricultural areas lost approximately 31,000 hectares in 2019 to urbanization; and, at the current rate, 280,000 additional hectares of natural areas will be artificialized by 2030, which is more than the surface area of Luxembourg (Source: CEREMA).

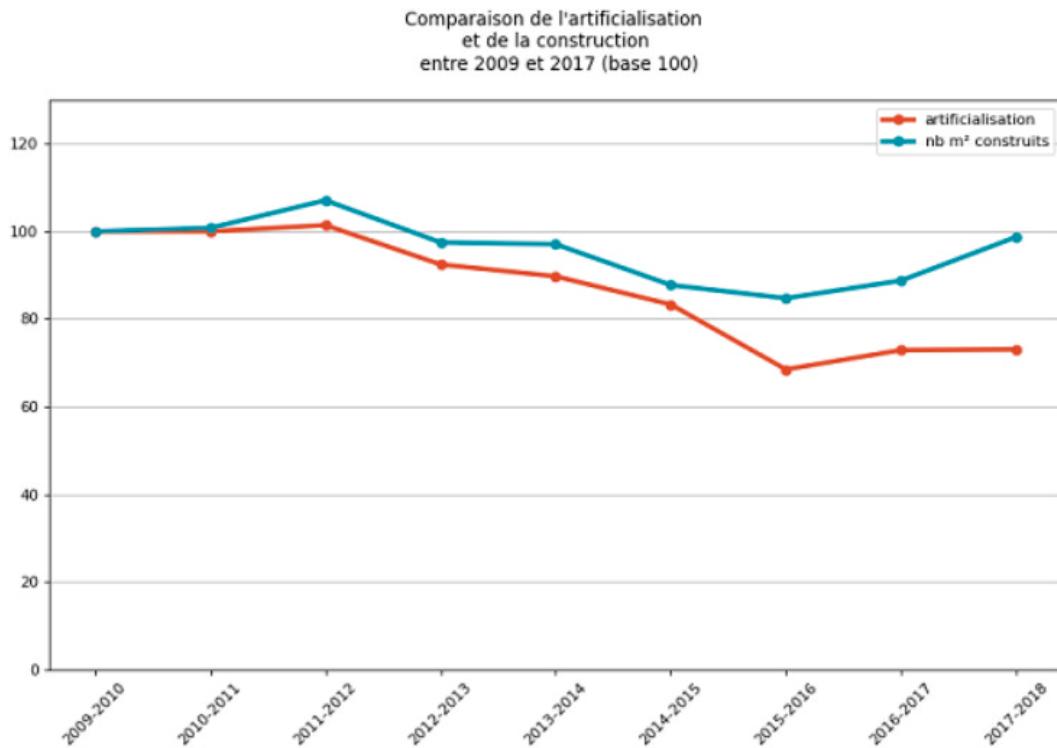
Land artificialization has several negative impacts:

- The reduction of agricultural and natural areas, which has a significant impact on the capacity to feed local populations, and on biodiversity due to the destruction of habitats;
- Soil sealing makes it difficult for rainwater to infiltrate into the ground and contributes to the phenomenon of urban heat islands;
- Soil is a carbon reserve, the destruction of which contributes to climate change.

To meet these challenges, the objective of Zero Net Artificialization by 2050 was adopted in 2021 as part of the Climate and Resilience Act, which identified several levers of action:

- Densification: urban densification has been identified by many public actors as a global lever for the ecological transition which would enable, for example, a shift from car use to public transport or active mobility.
- Making use of vacant spaces: from empty offices and housing to the intermittent occupation of secondary residences (which represented 9.5% of housing in 2015), the existing building stock is under-exploited in France.
- De-artificialize and re-naturalize: this can involve significant costs depending on the level of renaturation desired and the level of pollution. The priority is to no longer artificialize areas and, only if this is not possible, to re-naturalize as an alternative solution.

Encouragingly, the rate of land artificialization has already slowed and no longer correlates with the number of square metres built. This indicates that solutions are being found to build more while using less space.



.Credit: Observatoire de l'artificialisation

# III.

New forms of urbanity to  
accompany societal changes

## 2.1 Building a desirable density that responds to the ecological challenge

### 2.1.1. Addressing the quality and social accessibility of housing

#### a. Eco-districts

One of the ways in which the territory's densification and transformation comes about is through the construction of eco-districts. These are areas in which a property developer adopts a specific approach, one that is rewarded with a label issued by the Ministry of Ecological Transition. To obtain this label, an urban project must meet several conditions, notably the implementation of 20 commitments aimed at integrating every dimension of sustainable development into the project.



#### Dimension 1 « Approach and Process »

1. Carry out projects that meet the needs of all by drawing on the resources and constraints of the territory.
2. Formalize and establish a participatory steering process and shared governance.
3. Integrate the financial dimension throughout the entire project in an approach that takes into consideration the overall cost.
4. Take into account the practices of users and the constraints of managers in the design choices made throughout the project.
5. Implement evaluation and continuous improvement procedures.



#### Dimension 2

#### « Living Environment and Uses »

6. Work, first and foremost, on the existing city and propose a density adapted to combat the further artificialization of land.
7. Establish the conditions for living together and in solidarity.
8. Implement health-friendly urban planning to ensure a safe and healthy living environment.
9. Provide a quality of life that reconciles intensity with living together well and environmental quality.
10. Enhance the natural and built heritage, history and identity of the site.



#### Dimension 3

#### « Territorial Development »

11. Contribute to local, sustainable, balanced, social and solidarity-based economic development.
12. Promote a diversity of functions/uses and their proximity.
13. Optimize the use of resources and develop local networks and short distribution channels.
14. Encourage active modes, public transport and alternative travel options to decarbonize mobility.
15. Promote the digital transition for a sustainable city.



#### Dimension 4

#### « Environment and Climate »

16. Propose urban planning programmes that anticipate and adapt to climate change and risks.
17. Aim for energy conservation, lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the diversification of resources by promoting renewable and recovered energy.
18. Limit waste production, develop and consolidate recovery and recycling channels in a circular economy approach.
19. Preserve water resources and ensure their quality and economical management.
20. Preserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, soil and natural environments.

Credit: Ministère de la Transition Écologique.

## Les Meuniers Eco-district in Bessancourt



Credit: Grand Paris Aménagement.



Credit: Grand Paris Aménagement.

The eco-district of Les Meuniers is located in Bessancourt, in the immediate vicinity of the Transilien H train station, which connects the town to the Gare du Nord in approximately 30 minutes. The proximity of the district to this station and its mixed-use planning should make it possible to avoid the use of cars.

In addition, pedestrian and bicycle paths are provided to encourage active modes of travel. The planning approach mixes economic activities, shops and public facilities (school complex, leisure centre, gymnasium) with a diverse range of housing, from collective to individual and from owner-occupied to social. These different types of housing are aimed in particular at young households or young people living alone, who may find it difficult to find housing

### MÉMO

	↔	🚶	🚴
École → Gare	300 m	4 min	≈ 2 min
Espace multi-activités → Gare	450 m	7 min	≈ 3 min
Espace multi-activités → École	350 m	5 min	≈ 2 min
Super U → Gare	500 m	7-8 min	≈ 3-4 min

Credit: Grand Paris Aménagement.

elsewhere in the commune. Although the project includes a large proportion of collective housing, single-family homes have not been left out and are an integral part of the first-home ownership programme.

The developer of this district, whose work should be completed by 2023, is Grand Paris Aménagement. This is a large-scale operation for the town of Bessancourt, since 1,000 additional housing units are planned on top of the 3,168 that the town currently has.

The district of Les Meuniers in numbers:

- Approximately 1,000 homes, 30% of which will be social housing and 125 building lots
- 4 hectares of economic activities
- Approximately 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> of shops and services
- 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> of public facilities
- 35% of green spaces

The district's layout is designed around a main roadway, the former Chemin rural des Meuniers, while the existing thalweg is to be developed into a promenade with a succession of rainwater management systems. The ditches and basins, which are dry most of the year, will be planted with vegetation in order to encourage biodiversity and provide a pleasant living environment for users and residents. These green spaces are thus public spaces in their own right — places for walking, sport or relaxation.

Family gardens have also been created, and composting facilities have been provided on each individual plot and on the ground floor of some buildings.



Credit: Les Ateliers de Cergy.

In addition to the landscape treatment, the energy performance of the housing units and the public lighting also contributes to the sustainable dimension of this district. For example, the brightness level of the public lighting decreases during the night and, after a certain hour, is switched on only by motion detection. This makes it possible to illuminate pedestrian and bicycle paths to promote a feeling of safety, while also limiting light pollution.



Credit: Les Ateliers de Cergy.

## The Train Station Eco-district in Montigny-lès-Cormeilles

This new district is another example of what an eco-district can be. It is a neighbourhood with an asserted residential vocation, but which also constitutes an entrance to the city. Like the district of Les Meuniers, it is located near a train station, that of Montigny-lès-Cormeilles, which is served by the RER C line and the Transilien J line.

This district therefore also responds to the strategy set out by the SDRIF, which consists of densifying the areas around rail stations. The proposed density is higher, and accepted as such, with tall buildings up to 9 stories high.



Credit: Citallios.

Apart from the residential buildings, the area includes a school, a nursery and a medical centre. The areas around the station have also been redeveloped, with the construction of a new pedestrian square for local shops.



Credit: Les Ateliers de Cergy.

## b. Thinking about new uses

For several years now, discussions have been held on how to think about housing beyond the individual unit or its traditional uses and functions: this is what we are calling “new uses”. Behind this expression lies a multiplicity of new practices, methodologies, spaces and services. One of the round-table discussions dealt specifically with these new approaches, with the example of the Île de Nantes developed by Sonia Dinh, to which we will return to in the following section. As already mentioned in the round-table summary, the urban planning agency Le Sens de la Ville proposed a categorization of the elements covered by the expression “new uses”:

- Intangible features: concierge, services, mobile applications
- Shared spaces: collective outdoor spaces, multi-purpose rooms, sharing of spaces generally integrated into residences such as a laundry room or a guest room
- Association of users in the design: participatory housing, involvement of future residents in the design
- Features allowing for the modularity of the building: duplex to be finished, extra room, etc

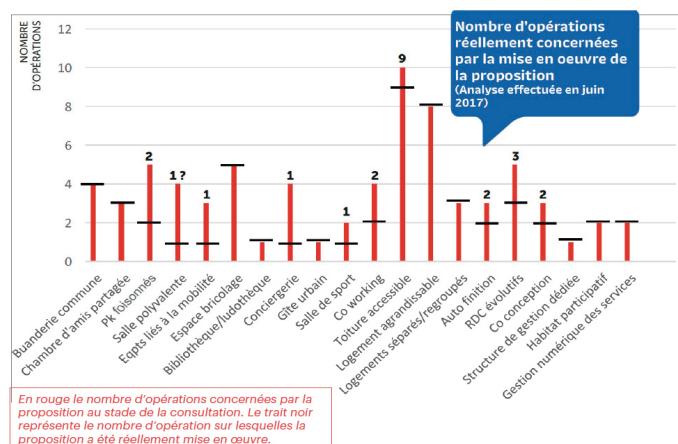
The example of the Île de Nantes:

The Île de Nantes is an island on the Loire River, in the heart of the Nantes metropolis, just a few minutes from the city centre. Historically, the western part of the island was home to industrial activities, in particular shipyards. In 1987, the last ship left the shipyard, which then became a huge brownfield. Consultations were launched in the 1990s to imagine how the site could be converted. In 2003, Nantes Métropole entrusted SAMOA with the management of this project, based on three objectives:

- Build a new metropolitan centre in the heart of the city, thereby bolstering the historic centre;
- Return the Loire to its central position in the city and renew the network of public spaces;
- Create a mixed city for all, with a diversity of populations and uses.

The development of the island is structured around major projects in which these new uses are integrated, whether in the design and construction of facilities or through housing. The projects therefore vary significantly: a new hospital centre is due to be built as well as a hall dedicated to creative, artistic and digital activities; an urban park designed to bring the inhabitants closer to the Loire is in the works, etc. The design of these spaces and the definition of the new uses they are to take on are based on consultations with inhabitants and users and their participation. Among these projects is the Prairie-au-Duc district. With its more pronounced residential vocation, it has been designed as a place of experimentation to set up shared spaces and services, and even participative housing programmes. The developer was eager to promote these innovative approaches in order to make the island and its collective housing attractive to young households, who often prefer to live in the suburbs.

- In order to meet the site manager's demands, the developer proposed a myriad of initiatives, services and shared spaces during the competition phase. In order to evaluate their implementation, SAMOA commissioned the urban planning agency Le Sens de la Ville, who came up with two key findings:
  - There is a significant difference between what was presented during the competition and the actual implementation or construction on delivery (see graph).



Credit: Le Sens de la Ville.

- Some of the services or shared spaces that were created are not actually used or invested in by the inhabitants. While the impact of COVID-19 must be taken into account (as it hindered the appropriation of the premises by the inhabitants due to the fact that some were closed off or because the population was called upon to stay at home), there are other factors that can explain this lack of occupation. Sonia Dinh notes, for example, that the management and animation of these places was sometimes totally unthought of during the design of the project. In her opinion, it is necessary to accompany the inhabitants in the appropriation of these places, and also to foresee the end of this accompaniment.

Beyond housing, the question of new uses also arises for public spaces, all the more so as the epidemic has encouraged private uses of public space. The latter can then constitute an extension of housing and respond to issues of health and adaptation to climate change.

### 2.1.2. Designing quality public spaces accessible to all

#### a. Current thinking on public spaces

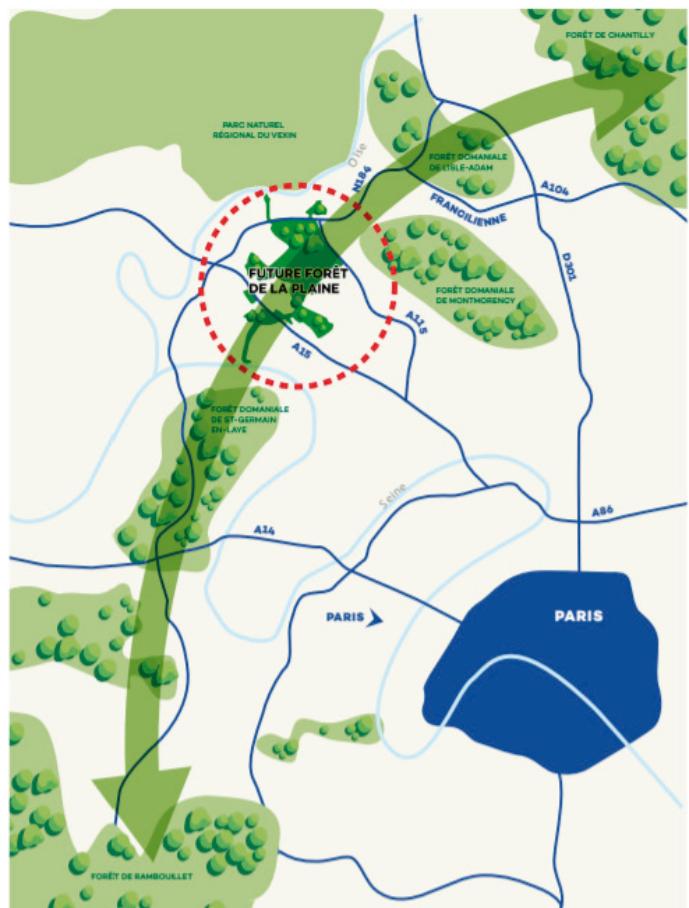
Making the city habitable and desirable also involves the quality of public space, particularly if the aim is to increase the density of apartment living and make it attractive. In order for alternatives to individual housing to be desirable, the need for outdoor spaces — particularly nature — expressed by urban dwellers must be taken into account and respected.

The natural spaces offered by the Val Parisis are an important factor of its attractiveness, which will be only reinforced in the coming years thanks to several projects under study or in progress: the Pierrelaye Forest, the redevelopment of the banks of the Seine and the Marina project.

#### • The Pierrelaye Metropolitan Forest

Developing the Plaine de Pierrelaye Bessancourt into a new forest is an emblematic project that has long been in the works. The plain extends over 2,000 hectares: 400 ha are already wooded and 1,350 ha are dedicated to agriculture, 800 ha of which are within the forest's perimeter. For a long time, these agricultural areas were used for sewage disposal by the city of Paris, which polluted the soil. Moreover, the land has been poorly maintained and the plain is regularly polluted by various types of illegal dumping (solvents, paint cans, construction materials, car scraps, etc.), particularly at the interfaces between urban and non-urban areas.

Despite this increasing phenomenon, the Plaine de Pierrelaye has a significant environmental and biodiversity potential. The site is strategically located for the development of an ecological continuum between the various regional corridors (the Seine, the Oise, the forests of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Montmorency and Isle Adam).

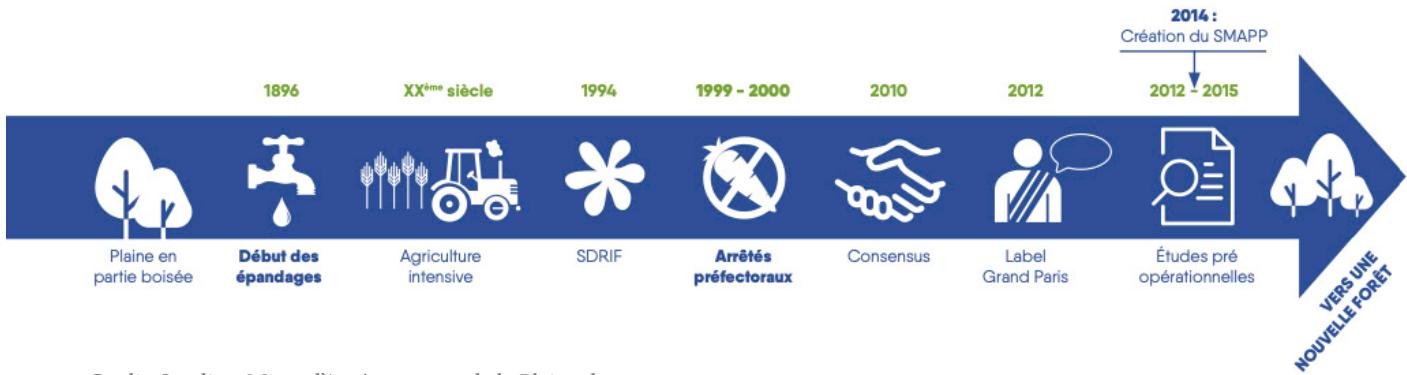


Crédit : Syndicat Mixte d'Aménagement de la Plaine de Pierrelaye-Bessancourt.

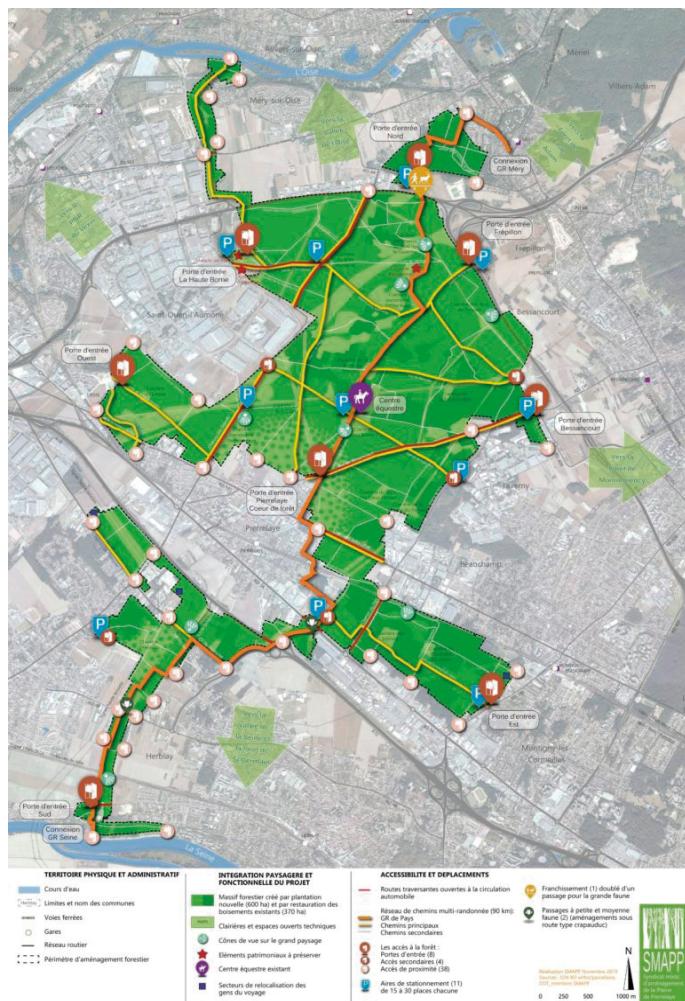
This project aims to meet not only the environmental challenges but also to offer the inhabitants of the Val Parisis and the entire Paris Region a more pleasant living environment.

The State, the Region, the Department, the Val Parisis Communauté d'agglomération and the communes concerned have created the Syndicat Mixte d'Aménagement de la Plaine de Pierrelaye-Bessancourt (SMAPP) in order to carry out this project.

The governance of the SMAPP unites all these stakeholders and has been used to conduct consultation procedures. This project is included in the SDRIF, which also calls for a densification of the areas surrounding the forest.



Credit: Syndicat Mixte d'Aménagement de la Plaine de Pierrelaye-Bessancourt.



Credit: Syndicat Mixte d'Aménagement de la Plaine de Pierrelaye-Bessancourt.

In concrete terms, the new forest of approximately 1,340 hectares will be composed of:

- 655 hectares of new woodland made up of 30 species selected for their suitability to the soil's water reserves, their low capacity to accumulate heavy metals and their resistance to climate change;
- 374 hectares of existing woodland to be restored by thinning and eliminating invasive tropical species;
- 280 hectares of open spaces intended for public use, ecological reserves, or the passage and maintenance of technical services;

As well as the following installations

- 90 kilometres of paths for pedestrians, cyclists and horseback riders, incorporating and completing the heritage circuit of historic paths;
- 1 GR de Pays (local footpath) crossing the forest, which would also link to the GR1 to the north and the GR2 to the south;
- 8 main entrances featuring a design that marks their importance;

- 4 secondary entrances guaranteeing intermunicipal access;
- 38 local access points for local residents;
- 11 woodland parking areas with 15 to 25 spaces, i.e. approximately 260 spaces;
- Several heritage elements, viewpoints and existing facilities to be highlighted;
- 3 relocation areas for caravans and travellers;
- Creation of a crossing to allow the passage of maintenance and operating vehicles, bicycles, horse riders and pedestrians, coupled with a wildlife crossing;
- 2 wildlife crossings for small and medium-sized fauna [Source SMAPP].

The forest will therefore constitute a new space for relaxation and leisure, an urban cooling zone conducive to sports activities and active mobility. It will also represent a strong marker of the territory's identity. Other projects are also in the works to enhance more or less natural spaces, or in any case to offer new public spaces for relaxation.

### • The banks of the Seine

The south of the Val Parisis territory is bordered by the Seine, which crosses the communes of Herblay, La Frette-sur-Seine and Cormeilles-en-Parisis. For the latter, there is already a project to convert the brownfield left by the Lafarge cement factory. This site on the banks of the Seine, which has already been artificially developed, is to be converted into a marina and residential area: 1200 logements sont envisagés dont 30% sociaux,

- 1,200 housing units are planned, 30% of which are to be social housing;
- A marina with 150 moorings;
- 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> of shops and services;
- A school complex and a nursery;
- Green spaces and open spaces across 30% of the area.

This project is thus expected to create a residential and commercial area, which will liven up the banks of the Seine by offering new services such as restaurants. But it also poses the problem of access by car on a road that is already congested in the evenings and during weekends. The large number of housing units and the attractiveness of the marina may therefore accentuate this problem.

The banks of the Seine are already bordered by a road and parking areas, leaving little space for relaxation or for pedestrians, cyclists, etc. Although no projects are currently planned, the banks of the Seine must also be redeveloped to encourage active mobility and improve the quality of the public spaces they offer.

## b. Inclusive public spaces accommodating new uses

The quality of public spaces is all the more crucial as new uses have been adopted, a trend that may well continue to develop. For example, one can imagine that work meetings and school courses will be held outside, and that more and more cultural events will take place in the open air. The current changes may be a consequence of the pandemic, but they may now and in future also be the result of an adaptation to climate change. The banks of the Seine, for example, could be cooling spots accessible to all. As such, public spaces must be designed to be inclusive in terms of:

- Economic resources: public spaces must be free of charge and offer services and amenities that are also free of charge. For example, there must be toilets, water points, street furniture to sit on, etc.
- Mobility and disability: for the elderly, young children, people with reduced mobility, people with prams, but also for the visually impaired. It is also important to think about disabilities that cannot be seen, and people with cognitive disabilities. For example, in Toulouse, the transport network has put in place pictograms indicating the metro stations, which can facilitate their orientation in the city. This device is also aimed at foreigners or people who cannot read
- Gender: this is a dimension that is increasingly taken into account in urban projects. Indeed, the dynamics of public space occupation are gendered and often unequal. More and more research is being carried out on this issue, and has shown that women tend to occupy public space less and/ or in a more differentiated way. To explore this issue in more detail:

o DAGENAIS Huguette, « Les femmes dans la ville et dans la sociologie urbaine. Les multiples facettes d'une même oppression », in Anthropologie et Société, vol. 4, n°1, 1980, pp. 21-36.)

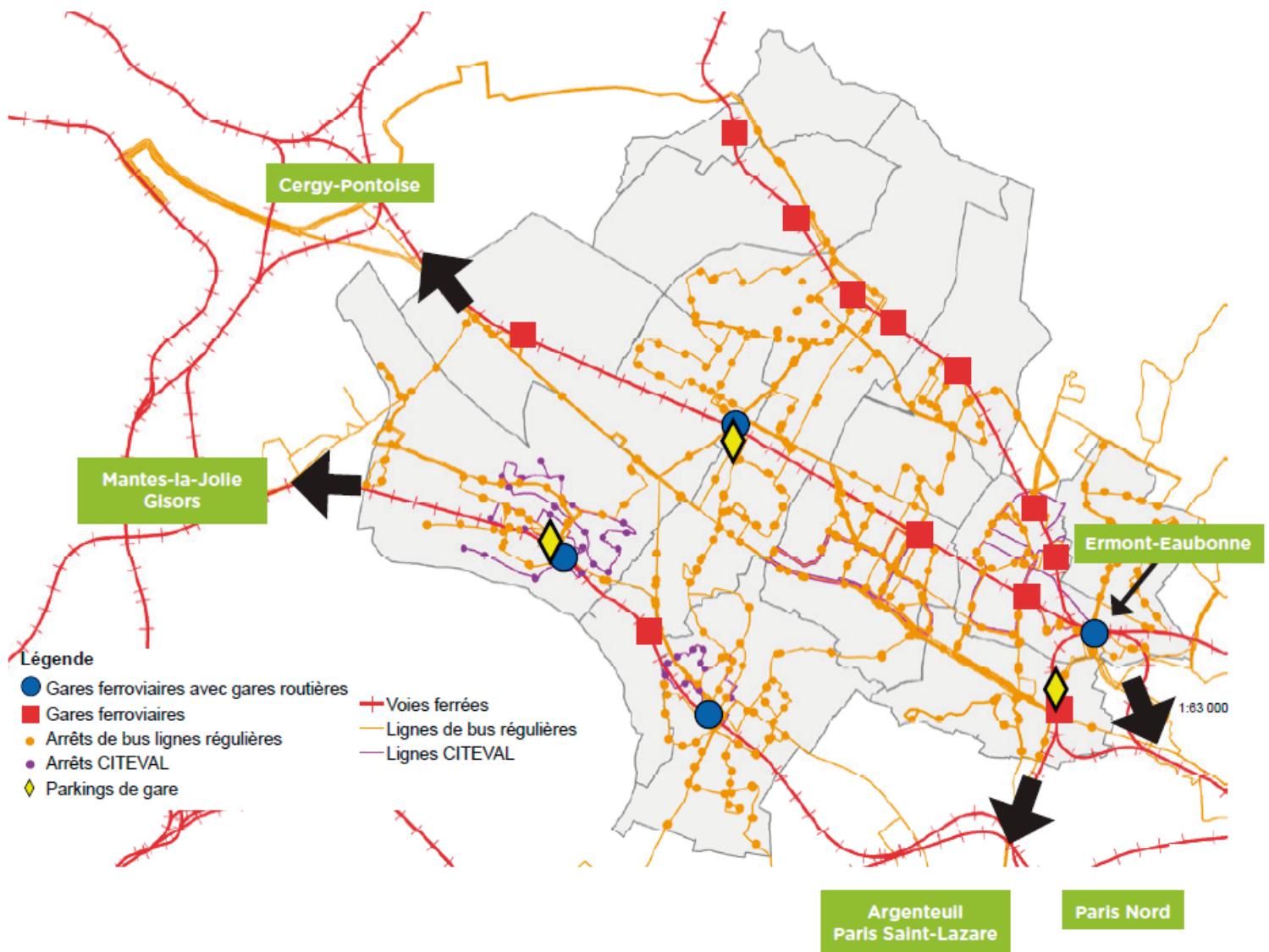
o DENEFLÉ Sylvette, "Introduction", in Femmes et villes, Tours : Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2004.

o DI MEO Guy, « Les femmes et la ville. Pour une géographie sociale du genre », Annales de géographie, n°684, pp. 107-127.

Public spaces are closely linked to modes of transport, and in particular to the place occupied by cars. From traffic lanes to parking, cars consume a lot of space. Because of the nuisances they cause (air and noise pollution), they sometimes discourage the use of public space. This is a problem that the Val Parisis is also facing.

### 2.1.3. Overcoming car dependency

Réseaux de transports en commun



Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

## a. Encouraging active modes of mobility

Cars play an important role in the Val Parisis. Inhabitants are largely dependent on them in their daily lives, despite the fact that the area is well served by public transport. Indeed, this mode of transportation is particularly effective for crossing, entering or leaving the territory. However, intra-territorial travel, within the same commune or between communes, is more difficult. Car use increased during the pandemic, as the population wished to avoid crowded places (not to mention, their access was regulated at peak times at the end of the first lockdown period).

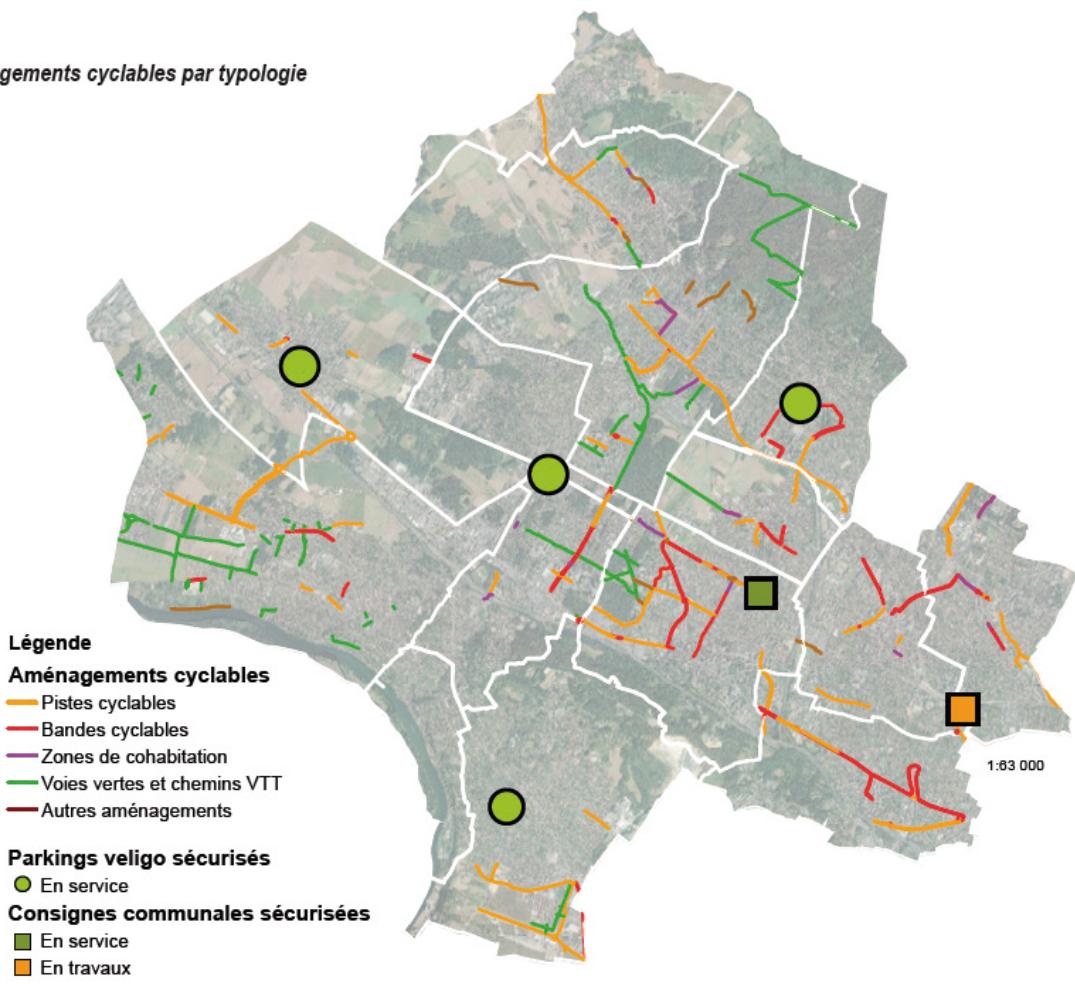
Cycling was also popular with the population as a whole during the pandemic; bicycle use jumped by 27% in France, including 15% in rural areas. This phenomenon is far from being Franco-French. According to a study conducted by YouGov in 21 major European cities, 68% said they were ready to remove facilities for cars in favour of bikes, and

to remove facilities for cars in favour of bikes, and 21% intend to cycle “more” once the pandemic is over (Source: L'Equipe). This dynamic is happening worldwide, particularly in the United States which saw a 65% increase in bicycle sales.

In response to this craze, many cities have considerably increased their investment in cycling infrastructure. In the Île-de-France, the “coronapistes” — temporary bicycle lanes set up to cope with the influx of cyclists after the initial lockdown — are being made permanent. In Greater Paris, 17 million euros have been made available by the State to transform 22 of these new cycle lanes into permanent ones.

To encourage this dynamic in its own territory, the Val Parisis has adopted a cycling plan, which provides for the development of new bicycle lanes and infrastructure. The territory is also crossed by the bicycle route linking Paris to Le Havre, which is currently being developed and runs along the Seine.

**Aménagements cyclables par typologie**



Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

## b. New transport infrastructure

The agglomeration is also planning a complete overhaul of its bus network to improve its efficiency. Numerous projects to redevelop station hubs are under study or have already been completed. This is the case for the stations of Cormeilles-en-Parisis, Saint-Leu-la-Foret and Pierrelaye. For Ermont, Eaubonne and Montigny-lès-Cormeilles, it is the neighbourhoods surrounding the station that have been redeveloped. This concern is not unique to the Val Parisis; whatever their size, stations are the subject of numerous discussions throughout France. That said, this is still a major issue for the Val Parisis, whose attractiveness lies partly in its transport network, especially as densification is taking place around its stations. Their use is therefore likely to increase greatly in the coming years, due to the combined effects of population growth and the encouragement to use public transport instead of cars.

The redevelopment of these stations has several objectives, including encouraging inter-modality and making travel more fluid. For example, the redevelopment of the Bessancourt station involved expanding the forecourt, relocating the

bus stops that used to be on the main road, and building a secure bicycle room. In the case of the Ermont-Eaubonne station, one of the area's main stations since it serves as the junction between the RER C and the Transilien H and J lines, it was the entire neighbourhood and not just the station itself that was redeveloped. This consisted of densifying the area with the construction of 850 housing units and commercial spaces.

The rail station projects, whether they extend to the district or only to the station itself, are therefore defined by their primarily functional aspect. These are places that should facilitate traffic, offer commercial services, and allow people to live near public transport. Nevertheless, this raises the question of the other uses that a station can offer, the sociability that can be created there. For example, in the Ermont-Eaubonne station, an annex of the town hall has been installed which offers public services. These range from civil registry services to postal services and free access portals for unemployment, social security and pension benefits, etc. It is therefore conceivable that stations, beyond just being commercial spaces, could also offer free services, cultural spaces, or simply welcoming public spaces that are open to the city.

## 2.2 Working with what is already there

### 2.2.1. Creating continuity between different urban forms

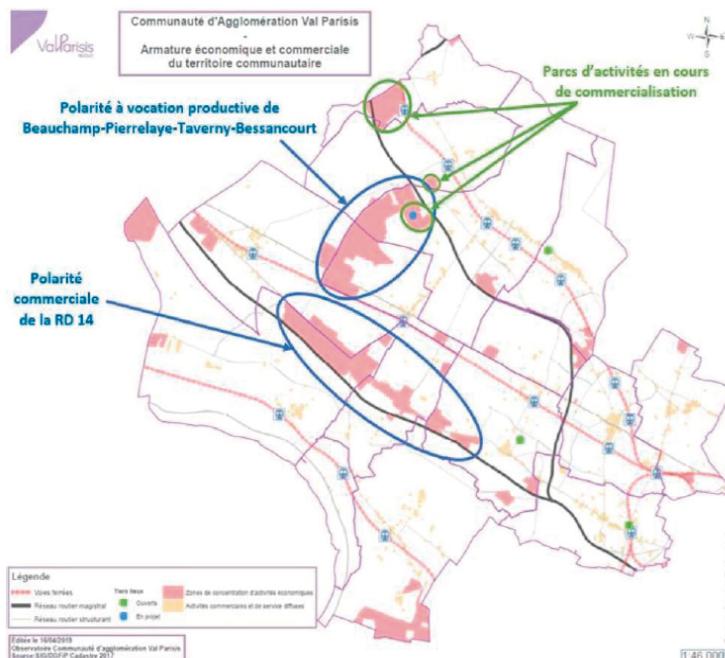
Numerous transformations are therefore underway in the Val Parisis area: densification, Pierrelaye Forest projects, the redevelopment of station hubs, etc. Some neighbourhoods are being completely transformed and this is leading to the reconfiguration of centralities within the communes. With historic town centres and railway stations not always in the same place, two centralities are thus created, the latter of which is being bolstered by the densification programmes. From a landscape or architectural point of view, there are also very significant contrasts between housing typologies, whether individual or collective, and in terms of building height. Given the planned densification around the Pierrelaye Forest and the creation of this forest, some of whose entrances will be located in very different typologies (suburban, collective, commercial activity zones, etc.), one of the challenges for land use planning is to create continuity between these different urban forms that date from different eras.

### 2.2.2. Redevelopment of commercial Economic Activity Zones

This issue of continuity also arises in the case of the commercial Economic Activity Zones (commercial ZAE), which are widespread in the area and for which the agglomeration has jurisdictional authority.

One of the most important commercial ZAE in the area is the Patte d'Oie in Herblay, which is regional or even national in importance. It is located along Departmental Road 14 (RD14), straddling five communes (Pierrelaye, Herblay,

Montigny-lès-Cormeilles, Franconville and Sannois), and includes nearly 730 businesses. Although it is a highly dynamic economic centre and a source of employment, the agglomeration is questioning what its future holds.



Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

Firstly, in terms of transport and access, the RD14 is completely saturated at peak times and on Saturdays. The area is poorly served by public transport, and it is not easy or comfortable to get around other than by car. Pedestrian areas are not always well developed, and the nuisances caused by cars (noise, air pollution) do not make walking very pleasant. In addition to landscape and architectural continuity, pedestrian and cycle continuity must also be developed.

Over the longer term, it is the transformation of the types of commerce and even activities that must be supported. The agglomeration is therefore seeking to encourage the installation of local shops, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and activities in the tertiary sector.

Some developments are moving towards mixed-use operations, combining ZAEs and housing. This is the case of the Bois Rochefort joint development zone (ZAC). The northern part of the ZAC is mainly dedicated to housing, with 1,900 units planned (small collective housing units, single-family homes and townhouses, a residence for the elderly and a student residence). There are also plans for 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of local shops and facilities (two school complexes, a nursery and a secondary school).

Then, on its southern edge is a ZAE dedicated to non-polluting activities: a business park to the south, a shopping centre to the east, a clinic, a medical centre and a leisure and cultural centre including a sports complex, a cinema, a café-theatre, a co-working space, two restaurants, a 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> supermarket and 850 parking spaces (Source IPR).



Credit: Communauté d'Agglomération du Val Parisis.

### 2.2.3 The pace of the urban project; accompanying transformations

This document as a whole has highlighted the transformations at work — across several scales and highly diverse timeframes — in the territory. Between the strategies implemented by regional actors over several decades and formalized in regulatory documents such as the SDRIF, unforeseen events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of climate change, numerous and sometimes contradictory dynamics are taking place at a very local level in the Val Parisis territory and in the urban projects it supports. The intermunicipality accompanies these important changes, which raise the question of the temporality of urban projects.

For example, the Pierrelaye Forest is a case in which the project has been under discussion for several years already and which will still take decades before it becomes a reality (the time it takes for the vegetation to be planted and to grow). This long period of time can be seen as a constraint, a difficulty (e.g. consultations cannot be carried out with the people who will be affected by this forest) or it can be seen as an opportunity to involve the population in an innovative way. The birth of a forest is highly symbolic and can inspire artists to encourage the development of a sense of imagination and attachment to the forest.

In contrast to the long time frame of creating a forest, densification — although sometimes described as “soft” — can on the other hand seem brutal for inhabitants. They may feel a lack of understanding and find it difficult to accept such rapid transformations.

For example, in Tremblay-en-France, in Seine-Saint-Denis, a participatory cultural project was set up as part of the development of an 11-hectare urban park. A group of some twenty residents was formed to choose from a number of artists who had made proposals for installations and artistic interventions. These proposals had to be permanent, include a participatory dimension and be environmentally friendly. At the end of the process, the artist Tadashi Kawamata and his project of huts and nests was selected. With the help of local residents and involving children, he and his team built wooden huts and structures perched high in the trees, inaccessible to humans, but which would provide habitats for animals and birds. Walkers would then be able to enjoy looking for these huts, sometimes straying from the main paths (Credit: Mairie de Tremblay-en-France).

<https://www.tremblay-en-france.fr/fonctionnalites/actualites-109/lart-est-dans-le-bois-6294.html?cHash=1ba7b2cd4f845526464219cf6f6176dc>



Credit: Mairie de Tremblay and Tadashi Kawamata.

The Pavillon de l'Arsenal, a centre for urban planning and architecture in Paris, devoted an exhibition and a conference to experimental projects that addressed the issue of transforming suburban housing in the Parisian suburb of Arcueil. The approach consisted of working directly with individual home owners who wished to carry out renovations to transform their plots of land while preserving as much of the exterior surface as possible. Based on the owners' needs and the existing PLU regulations, the architects proposed projects that would allow for the densification desired by the current inhabitants. For example, a mother, whose two daughters were leaving home for their studies, wished to create an intergenerational housing project in which two rooms would be used for student rental, while three others would be kept for her exclusive use. Renovation, raised construction and extension work made it possible to carry out this project, even though only 50% of the plot of land was suitable for construction.

See the replay of the video :

<https://www.pavillon-arsenal.com/fr/arsenal-tv/conferences/grand-format/11514-integrale-transformations-pavillonnaires.html>

New urban planning methods are designed precisely to address the temporalities of the urban project, over the short or long term. For example, transitional urban planning consists of occupying a site while waiting for a new use or its conversion. This trend has been growing rapidly since the beginning of the 2010s: between 2012 and 2017, the IAU counted 62 transitional urbanism sites in the Île-de-France. The notion of transitional urbanism covers an extremely diverse range of projects, since these sites sometimes host artists' studios, emergency accommodations, bars and restaurants, co-working spaces and associations. Whatever the project, studies attest to their positive impact on several levels: economic gain for the owners of the premises, a factor in the dynamism of urban life for local authorities, low-cost premises and a creative environment for the occupants, and support for citizen initiatives through partner associations.

In France, these projects are particularly relevant in the context of the scarcity of land and the increase in its price, on the one hand, and deindustrialization on the other, which has left many areas fall into wastelands. The increasing complexity of development projects also lengthens construction times, leaving spaces vacant sometimes for decades.

Transitional urban planning, even if it is not systematic, makes it possible to set up consultations and participation procedures and thus influence the future urban project. One obvious example is the emblematic case of Les Grands Voisins, in the 14th arrondissement of Paris. Located in the decommissioned Saint-Vincent-de-Paul hospital, this space was taken over by a collective of three associations (Yes We Camp, Plateau Urbain and Aurore), in agreement with local authorities and the site developer. Artistic and cultural programming, a bar and leisure area, accommodation for vulnerable individuals, public spaces open to the public until midnight, etc were established. The space was full of activity and hosted a diversity of functions and uses during the five years of its occupation, from 2015 to 2020. Although it was not originally intended for this purpose, the temporary occupation of the site ultimately influenced the urban planning of the eco-district that is to be built there. For instance, the former hospital linen room, which was originally set to be demolished, has now been integrated into the final urban project, in an attempt to preserve some of the uses developed during the occupation: festive and cultural activities.

Alongside transitional urbanism, other alternative and innovative methodologies that have emerged within the same current are also developing further: tactical, temporary or ephemeral urbanism. The latter two differ from transitional urbanism in several respects: “Temporary urbanism refers to the occupation of buildings or temporary developments for a limited period of time, carried out without the intention of influencing a future development project. Ephemeral urbanism is an event-based concept that is deployed over a very short period of time”.

(Credit: “Etude-Action, l’urbanisme transitoire: évaluer les impacts sociaux et sur les projets urbains, atelier Approche.s !”).

As for tactical urban planning, the objective is often to test an urban development by installing easily removable devices, before making them permanent if they prove their usefulness. For example, as mentioned earlier, many cycle paths were installed following the first lockdown. Called “coronapistes”, they were presented as temporary and created from signposts. Now that they have proven their success, it is easier to announce that they are permanent. Tactical urban planning thus makes it possible to assess needs, to better understand uses and to adapt urban development before it becomes definitive.

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