Examples of the implement phase

Our guide explains the step-by-step process for doing large scale urban design projects, but there is nothing quite like seeing how other people do it. These are some of the best examples of the implement phase for large scale urban design that we've come across from all over the world.
Spatial-Economic vision for Schiphol Region, Holland

An example of the implementation phase for large scale urban design.

Delivering a strategic vision

The City of Amsterdam, Municipality of Haarlemmermeer, the Province of Noord-Holland and the Schiphol Group (airport operator) were concerned that they were not sufficiently capitalising on the benefits of the airport because of a lack of joint working. They also felt that leaving the development of business sites around the airport to market forces would lead to fragmented development, with adverse effects on the accessibility and international competitiveness of the airport and the region.

To address this they set up a management forum (Bestuursforum Schiphol) in 1987 and subsequently a joint development company – the Schiphol Area Development Company (SADC).

In 2000 the Bestuursforum produced its first spatial-economic vision aimed at providing a coherent development framework for the economic growth in the airport region and a powerful marketing tool. The framework established a strong context for SADC’s activities.

Even though the vision was developed and is being implemented outside the statutory planning system, it has been perceived by the partners as an essential and meaningful strategy that fills the gap between the regional structure plan for Noord Holland Zuid and the local land use plans for Amsterdam and Haarlemmermeer.

Read more about the Spatial-Economic Vision for Schiphol Region (Dutch language).
Amsterdam airport corridor concept diagram
© Bestuursforum Schiphol
Emscher Landschaftspark, Germany

Characteristics of large scale urban design

The Emscher Landschaftspark (Landscape Park) was originally conceived as a part of a 10-year regeneration programme led by the International Building Exhibition Emscher Park (IBA). The programme addressed the decline of the Ruhr Region in North-Rhine Westphalia, the industrial heartland of north west Germany, stretching across 20 local authorities and including several major urban centres.

The area was characterised by social deprivation, huge outward migration and economic problems caused by the closure of most of the mines and steel factories. Its environment was extremely poor because of decades of heavy industrial pollution.

The regeneration programme’s coordination group made a bold decision to focus on a handful of strategic themes to reverse the decline and change the internal and external perceptions of the area. As well as social initiatives:

- education, training and new types of jobs – they included the following:
- ‘Industrial monuments’: retention and creative reuse of key industrial heritage
- ‘The new Emscher’: regeneration of the river system
- ‘Working in the park’: provision of new types of employment spaces
- ‘Living in the park’: provision of new types of housing.

The most ambitious idea was to unite all the themes under the umbrella of a regional park. This entailed tremendous efforts to improve the environmental quality of the existing green areas and to clean up and integrate former contaminated industrial sites into a green network. Naming the regional park after the river Emscher, which was for decades the main industrial drain of the area and its most polluted element, was a clear sign of the project’s ambition and the project leadership’s confidence and resolve.

The team carried out a huge amount of consultation with local authorities in the area to overcome an initial lack of interest in addressing the decline through coordinated delivery of local projects within the agreed strategic themes. Through a process of developing the joint strategy this view gradually changed as people realised that they had to work together to attract investment and people to live and work in the area.

The result of the team’s design work with local partners was a non-statutory, flexible spatial strategy to guide the work at local level. Each local authority eventually took on and translated the strategic directions into local policies and projects.

After the conclusion of the initial regeneration programme led by IBA, further revisions of the strategy and the coordination of projects were led by Projekt Ruhr GmbH and Regionalverband Ruhr (RVR). There have been over 400 projects delivered across the sub-region since 1989.

Read more about the Emscher Landschaftspark.
Masterplan for Emscher Landschaftspark 2010.
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More detailed proposals for key areas and sites in the Emscher region.
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Montpellier SCOT, France

From strategy to site briefs

In France a new generation of sub-regional strategies – SCOTs (Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale) have been developed since 2004. Montpellier SCOT provides a cross-scale and cross-sectoral policy and delivery framework for Montpellier conurbation. It includes spatial policy at different spatial scales, including:

- conurbation-wide plans focusing on management and conservation of the strategic environmental, economic and social assets
- more detailed spatial plans for six sub-areas of the conurbation at 1:25,000 scale
- a design guide for local planning, including guidance for preparing urban projects, local plans and street design standards
- design briefs for eleven strategic sites, to demonstrate the application of the SCOT principles in the range of different contexts found in the conurbation.

[Read more about the Montpellier SCOT](#) (French language).
The proposed limits of urban expansion.
© Montpellier Agglomeration
Existing and proposed retail centres.
© Montpellier Agglomeration
The 1:2500 sector plan for Montpellier (urban core of the conurbation). © Montpellier Agglomeration

A design brief for one of the strategic sites (a new business park). © Montpellier Agglomeration
A description of the principles for defining an urban edge.
© Montpellier Agglomeration
Greater Zurich Themeworld

An example of planning the delivery.

Implementing a theme-based strategy

The ‘Zurich Themeworld’ project is implemented through three types of projects:

- development projects such as ‘creative sector initiative’ or ‘knowledge marketing strategy’
- communication and marketing efforts and campaigns
- flagship capital project, such as the new ‘Science City’ and convention centre.

The most important and strongest impact was so far achieved in two areas:

- dispersing the strategy internationally, through ‘multiplicators’ and ambassadors such as global players, big consulting firms, high profile individuals
- reinforcing the cooperation and collaboration of partners on the issues of Zurich’s identity and future through an informal ‘Zurich Themeworld Steering Committee’.

The Steering Committee includes representatives of key stakeholders organisations:

- City of Zurich
- Canton of Zurich
- GZA AG (representing outlying GZA cantons)
- Zurich Tourism
- Zurich Airport
- University of Zurich
- Federal Institute of Technology (ETH)
- Fortune-500-Companies
- SME association

The main outputs of the work to date include:

- an agreed direction in GZA’s development
- joint budgets for studies or communication activities
- a more coherent presentation of Zurich at international fairs and trade shows.

The main control and performance monitoring mechanisms are:

- a continuous internet monitoring of the GZA image, reviewing what is written and said about the area
- measuring growth in certain sectors of the economy
- monitoring Zurich’s ranking in key world city rankings.
Implementation diagrams

Themeworld (themes / story)

- policies and planning strategies
- dedicated projects with high symbolic value
- communication and marketing tools

Themeworld Board