FRANCE VILLE DURABLE

Local authorities, State, companies and experts united in the general interest

MANIFESTO

Manifesto for sustainable cities

Cities, whatever their size, are the centre of most of the social, economic and environmental challenges that are currently being re-examined and redefined in light of climate change, other phenomena linked to the Anthropocene, and the resurgence of major global pandemics. In the wake of the health crisis, at a time when cities and territories are benefiting from Post Covid-19 recovery plans, there is an urgent need to redefine the visions of the sustainable city of tomorrow, which can no longer be the same as those of the 20th century.

Due to their competencies, their governance tools and their proximity to civil society, cities hold a large part of the solutions to concretely implement the transition needed to mitigate climate change. At the same time, cities must adapt to the evolving effects of climate change while preserving and improving the quality of life for their inhabitants, particularly through urban planning, the "making" of the city, and its management.

The city of tomorrow must reinvent itself to bring people together, rather than divide them. The sustainable city is a city that cares. It takes care of its residents, especially the most vulnerable, of its ecosystems, its infrastructures, its public space, its businesses and surrounding regions…

It is a city that is thought of and managed on a wider scale than its administrative boundaries. It is an interactive territory that forms a system, which interacts, cooperates and facilitates joint efforts. It is a city that considers all the issues of sustainable development at all scales, from the household to the entire territory, and over time, from planning to day-to-day management.

It is a city that is democratically regulated and shaped by local public authorities in the general interest. The city thus works as closely as possible with citizens and companies, maintaining a dialogue and an in-depth understanding of their needs, based on a logic of inclusion and the concern for the protection of

individual liberties. It regards multi-partner cooperation and the involvement in a project's governance of all stakeholders as an effective tool for meeting the challenges of ecological transition.

There is no "one size fits all" for the city: while transition objectives are global and must be the same for all, the transformation required is implemented differently according to the context and local specificities (geographical, heritage, historical, cultural, socio-economic, etc.). It is a city that is aware of its vulnerabilities and resources. It is able to anticipate, to adapt to, and to recover from crises since it has developed its governance and urban planning to be more resilient in the face of daily hazards as well as major shocks.

Safe, attentive, protective and creative, it offers a set of services adapted to residents' needs. Such services improve quality of life, while preserving resources, saving energy, and restoring the quality of the air, water, and soil, both in France and abroad. It develops a responsible, creative and prosperous economy, respecting the planet's physical limits.

The city of the 21st century is sufficient, resilient, inclusive and creative.

Sufficiency: the responsible city

It is a city that functions and develops in a manner compatible with the planet's physical limits. Its political, administrative, technical, and economic leaders and its citizens are trained in these issues and are able to measure the life-cycle impacts of projects before deciding on their implementation. It significantly reduces its energy consumption, and replaces non-renewable energy sources with renewable ones.

It has a precise and public understanding of its direct emissions and greenhouse gas footprint. It has taken steps to reduce them 55% by 2030, and 100% by 2050, using monitoring tools that ensure accountability to the public and to other interested parties.

It reduces the generation of waste at source, promotes reuse and more broadly a circular approach to the economy.

It reduces urban sprawl and recovers the availability and the quality of fertile land, both within the city and in its surrounding area. It gives priority to the renewal of vulnerable districts, the restoration of existing structures based on low-carbon and low-energy solutions, and the rebuilding of the city over the city, before the development of new projects for urban extension. Its planning identifies and integrates the ecosystem services rendered by nature, the biodiversity enhancement, the water cycle, etc.

The need for commuting is reduced thanks to spatial planning policies that bring employment, activities, and housing closer together, and that are pursued on an appropriate scale relying on urban/suburban and urban/rural complementarities. The city integrates the objective of increasing low-carbon mobility, by encouraging active mobility and public transportation.

It engages its residents in an educational and participatory approach aimed at changing consumption and usage behaviour.

Resilience: the adaptive and reactive city

It is a city that has become aware of its current and future vulnerabilities and resources in the environmental, health, economic, social, organizational and infrastructure sectors. Its projects and governance have hence evolved accordingly.

It continues to operate independently of major shocks because its systems have been adapted in a more holistic approach and because civil society has been trained and receives support to cope with and recover from crises.

It reduces its chronic stresses and impacts on ecosystems on a daily basis. It regards adaptation to climate change as being at the same level as its mitigation and develops projects and policies that systematically integrate both issues. The resilient city is attentive and safe: it protects its residents and its ecosystems, and it knows how to innovate and cooperate.

Inclusion: the city for and with everyone

The inclusive city fights against all forms of social and spatial segregation, by recreating neighbourhoods, places and opportunities that act as sources of social ties, by helping the most vulnerable people and by promoting social diversity. It encourages cooperation and a balanced regional network. It ensures the response to people's needs, the access to essential services and a good life, regardless of one's age, gender, revenue, disabilities, origin or religion. Fundamental rights, security and individual liberties are safeguarded.

It is a participative city, where each resident has the power to act, to get information and to be educated on the issues surrounding ecological and social transition, especially with respect to understanding the purpose of public policies. Residents are included in assessing problems, in policy development and evaluation, as well as in decisions that affect them. They can take the initiative.

It is a democratic city that implements public and local regulation to the advantage of the greatest number of people by mobilizing and engaging the institutional, economic, citizens and academic stakeholders concerned. This collective intelligence is harnessed at every step of the process of transition and resilience.

Creativity: the city of human, cultural, social and economic progress

It is a city that promotes human, cultural, social and economic progress at a local level by considering economic development as a tool in the service of ecological transition and improving quality of life. The city is prosperous, attractive to companies and employees.

Agile and innovative, it shifts its priorities of economic development and skills improvement with the goal of meeting the challenges of transition. It focuses in particular on creating non-relocatable and sustainable jobs in the context of circularity and short circuits (food, energy renovation of housing, decentralised energy production, reuse and repairing, local commerce, densified and mixed usages, etc.).

It promotes the social and solidarity economy and supports businesses that are aware of their societal and ecological responsibilities and have consequently evolved their economic model and governance.

It co-produces and disseminates knowledge about adaptation and transition challenges, drawing on scientific research, and sees arts and culture as a tool to build social cohesion, education and transformation.

It takes advantage of available technologies and digital strategies in order to optimize the public and private urban services and to ensure the efficient preservation of resources through action-oriented data management. It ensures digital sufficiency, a positive overall ecological balance of solutions implemented and provides residents with guarantees of the protection of personal data.

Conclusion

This vision of the sustainable city, currently proposed by the French State, local authorities, companies and experts within France Ville Durable, should be shared more broadly and more frequently, enriched and questioned by public and private actors, citizens and scientists. It should foster action and present both more lucid and desirable visions of our cities' future.

The Climate emergency is here, but so are many solutions. Without reducing ambition in terms of innovations, it is urgently required to massively and collectively share, disseminate and implement proven solutions.

Together, let's accelerate the transition!