

TOD and the 15-minute City – Avoid traffic once and for all!

Traffic is generated by people using transport for daily routines. Urban planners know that high population density and mixed land-use space (work, living, services, recreation) in compact urban spaces generally minimise the need for motorised transport. The "**Transit-Oriented Development**" (TOD) concept, introduced in the 1990s, aims at strengthening the links between urban and transport planning by developing new districts along public transport corridors. In general, TOD also means creating walkable and cyclable neighbourhoods and supporting mixed land-use, income and demographics in compact urban spaces. Parking and road traffic is also regulated to deter the use of private vehicles.

Today, we rather refer to the "**15-minute City**" as a guideline for integrated urban and transport planning in European and MENA cities. Creating mixed neighbourhoods with a broad offer of workplaces, shopping options and services in short distances is in fact the most effective way to avoid motorised traffic on the long-term. Particularly new greenfield developments can apply this *proximity* concept from inception and minimise traffic and emission by relying on active mobility for local trips. Here, pioneers like [Masdar City](#) near Abu Dhabi demonstrate that walking and cycling is even possible during the hot season in desert climates if streets are shaded and naturally cooled by wind channels.



Masdar City street, source: Own picture

[NEOM](#), in the northwest region of Saudi Arabia, aims at substituting private car use by **harmonising urban environment and smart transport systems** already during the planning phase. Dornier has furthermore developed an operating model for a multimodal mobility system for a car-reduced new district at Jeddah's seaside. Here, street spaces are also narrow and shaded to provide good conditions for walking and cycling throughout the year. A nice side effect is that by reducing or eliminating cars like in NEOM, Masdar or Jeddah's new development, streets and public spaces will also automatically become safer and more attractive for residents, visitors, businesses and investors.

In European cities, human-centred planning faces the challenge that street spaces firstly need to be reclaimed from cars to make way for pedestrians and cyclists. Though, without thorough **participation and communication measures**, conflicts between car drivers and other road users may unnecessarily block the urban and mobility transition, sometimes for years. Therefore, the transition towards walkable and cyclable 15-minute Cities will be most effective when combined with mobility management measures (see Friday post) which ensure that infrastructure adaptations are accepted by all relevant stakeholders.