

Evaluation and Discussion of the Perm Masterplan

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A Masterplan for the City of Perm

The Perm Strategic Masterplan is a spatial framework designed to guide the future transformation of the city's physical environment. It is an open-end document that will steer the transformation of the city towards a higher quality in its urban condition over a projected period of fifty years. Perm is a large industrial city, located along the Kama River near the Ural Mountains. It is the capital of the Perm Krai.

For future development of the city, seven core objectives have been identified: compact city, consolidation and densification, medium scale, mixed-use, balanced transport modes as well as valuable public space and landscape.

The Masterplan aspires to the compact city, an urban model that attempts to balance land use and that of resources with social and economic sustainability and a high quality urban environment. It aims to establish a rational urban footprint. This optimizes the use of land, built fabric and existing infrastructure, while minimizing the use of resources, energy consumption and environmental pollution. The Red & Green Strategy is key as an instrument of urban development that will steer the city towards a rational pattern of land use. This strategy establishes a clear Separation between urban Red zones, which can be developed further and Green zones, which are areas of open and public Spaces and are therefore protected from new building activities. Perm is set in a rich natural environment of floodplains, forest, Valleys, the Kama River and its tributaries. Improvement, maintenance and protection of these areas are key objectives for the guidance of future growth and development as well as the qualities found throughout the city. Two concepts have been formulated as part of the landscape strategy and the public space strategy: the Green Belt as a more naturalistic green area enclosing the city and the Green Loop as a recreational area which defines the city centre. Both the Green Belt and the Green Loop depart from existing qualities.

1. A concept of long lines and radials

Perm has great Potential to become a well-defined city and the existing city grid provides a good starting point. However, there is a lack of clarity in terms of hierarchy and use. Furthermore the city structure is defined by gaps and missing connections both on a network and built fabric level. Therefore many proposed measures simply focus upon establishing a clear spatial structure and hierarchy, providing new or re-storing lost connections: long lines and radials which stretch across the city held together by streets along the valley edges, which cut through the city fabric.

Long lines comprise streets that run parallel to the river. Radials are streets that run perpendicular to the river. As the main streets of Perm, they should have recognizable and consistent spatial qualities, defined as a central strip of dedicated public transport, wide pavements and car traffic reduced to one, maximum two lanes in each direction. Bicycle paths that are also designated areas where the massive amount of snow can be deposited during winter are an important further element. The public transport network closely conforms to the long line and radial layout throughout the city.

The mixed-use strategy also proposes the highest level of activity to be concentrated along these main streets, helping to prioritize pedestrian flow and legitimizing the creation and maintenance of appropriate public space.



Figure 1: the 8 main strategies of the Perm Masterplan

2. Evaluation Criteria of the Masterplan

The Perm Strategic Masterplan does not consider formal development and approval of new and revised town planning and building norms, as well as legal issues. It focuses on the physical environment of the city and the creation of an attractive urban environment, and is “unable to directly address wider social and economic concerns”.

Short terms and long terms objectives of the Masterplan have to be “spread out over several legal documents, namely the General Plan, the Zoning Plan and related land use and Town Planning Norms.”

3 central evaluation criteria have been used for the evaluation:

1. *Urban Planning Excellence: Soundness of the concept and quality of objectives, Progress beyond the state-of-the-art*
2. *Process of implementation: Appropriateness of structure and procedure, Quality and relevant experience of individual participants and consortium as a whole*
3. *Potential impact: contribution at national and European level, appropriateness of measures for dissemination and project results exploitation*

The Perm Masterplan represents the state-of-the-art of urban planning methodology and urban design principles in Europe. It is well-balanced, addresses the concept of the compact city and the European city to combat the phenomenon of urban sprawl, gives a central role to the landscape conception, articulates the strategy into key projects and develops principles for the future development of the city. It refers to the concept of the compact city and to the essence of the traditional form of the European city.

The strategies of red and green area, landscape, priority development, transport, public space, mixed-use, block, heritage and periphery are well developed. The central concept of the Compact City applied for Perm is comprehensively described and argued in a vibrant way.

Furthermore, the Perm Strategic Masterplan Team is characterized by a high level of professional interdisciplinary qualification as well as international level of experience: the team is composed by architects and urban planners, landscapers, traffic consultants, and heritage and urban economics consultants from different European countries. It has the advantage to compare Perm's development with similar cities all over Europe.

The Perm Strategic Masterplan consists in a series of recommendations for implementation, illustrated by high quality projects and rich examples. However, the Key Projects seem to be recommended by the authors, and not the result of political or public participation procedures. Furthermore, the participation and implementation process is not described in the Strategic Masterplan, as it should be an interactive top-down and bottom-up process.

And finally, the Perm Strategic Masterplan is a high level reference to urban development practices to any other city in Eastern Europe and worldwide: it can be considered as an excellent contribution to the urban knowledge in the "best practices" collection of the professional world.

The Masterplan document is well-designed, high quality graphics and very informative diagrams. However, regarding the dissemination aspects, the document is not user-friendly, due to the high rate of data. Furthermore, a comprehensive dissemination concept of the Masterplan results is not mentioned.



Figure 2: the Green structure of Perm

3. Discussion of the evaluation

A central part of the Masterplan is the different Urban Strategies, focussing on the aspects of Perm's urban development; especially the red-green strategy, the public space and the periphery strategy are interesting.

- Red-green strategy: an excellent way to achieve the compact city and fight against urban sprawl.
- Landscape strategy and environment: good approach of the urban environment and the connection of urban and non-urban context; the strategy distinguish between urban and landscape, which is not exact. A distinction between urban, suburban and rural landscape would be more appropriate.
- Priority strategy: recommendations proposed by the authors are reasonable from a planner's point of view. The series of Key Projects visualize advantages of these projects – even when selection procedures, criteria, political decisions and stakeholders/public participation are not subject to these recommendations.
- Transport strategy: all topics relevant to the transport policy are well developed. However, an appendix document is missing; we presume that the appendix has been integrated into the Strategy; nevertheless, an expected traffic development (Traffic prognostic, Modal Split development) is not mentioned and should be part of the transport strategy.
- Public space strategy: as preservation, maintenance and design of public space is one of the most important contributions for a city's image and citizen's, the identification the

strategies of the Masterplan are well developed, for places and parks as well as for street profiles and views.

- Periphery strategy: the model of a compact city helps to concentrate development on central areas and avoid urban sprawl, but also to maintain the identities of neighbourhoods outside of the inner city.

Regarding some missing aspects of the Masterplan, the evaluation could identify the following:

Some Basics: Information about the General Plan, Local Urban Plan, laws – to be included in the main Masterplan (especially because of dissemination in the local public and outside of Russia as well) and in an appendix.

The link of information between Appendices and strategies seems partially too weak.

Analysis:

A SWOT Analysis prior strategies and Appendix (survey) not implemented, a demand analysis is not implemented.

Facts:

Existing demographic structures and future evolution, existing economic structures and future developments, future working places evaluation, job creation initiatives, climate prevention strategies and future climate evolution as well as essentials facts on culture and education policies and infrastructure are not clear described.

Time line:

A Priority strategy is presented, but not in a time line. We are convinced that a 30 to 50 years strategy is out of the range of a serious perspective. In a 30 to 50 years period too many changes and unattended events will occur. A Masterplan should be developed for a period of 10 to 15 years, and has to be re-discussed regularly.

Implementation:

If priority strategy regarding land use, why land use management concept not proposed?
Description of participation process before and after the Masterplan elaboration?



Figure 3: Simulation for urban development along the Kama

4. Some recommendations

As the authors point out in Part 1 (Scope and Implementation), 'the Masterplan is explicitly concerned with the physical environment of the city and is unable to directly address wider social and economic concerns' as well as the Masterplan does not reflect Russian and local planning laws and procedures.

To enable the city of Perm to take fruitful use of the Masterplan we recommend following actions:

- To concentrate the Masterplan perspectives on a time range of 10 to 15 years.
- To complete the physical aspects of Perm's urban development with a serious study Perm's demography, on social, economic and cultural development of City and Region.
- To complete the Masterplan with an appendix on the Russian planning law and local urban planning regulations and instruments.
- To develop a moderation and participation process and an implementation concept based on financial budgets in a time line perspective.
- To integrate essentials of the appendices in the main Masterplan as recommended in the discussion of appendices.

- To establish Land Use Management as essential part of implementation and follow-up of the Masterplan.
- To publish a short version as a brochure (ca. 20 pages) for public dissemination and participation.

Integrating these aspects the Perm Masterplan can be seen as an excellent instrument of city development.



Figure 4: Green infrastructure in Perm

References:

KCAP Amsterdam, Strategic Masterplan City of Perm