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Mapping City Visions: Integrating Mega-projects in Urban Development

By Isa Baud, Eric Denis, Karin Pfeffer, John Sydenstricker-Neto, Dianne Scott, Catherine Sutherland, Liliana Miranda Sara, Christine Richter

This policy brief explores the mapping of city visions in fast-growing cities in several emerging economies (Brazil, South Africa, India, Peru). As cities have to deal increasingly with both complexity and uncertainty in their development, they are concerned with the future pathways their cities can take. City visions on urban development portray idealized situations as goals for the future, and the maps portraying them are strongly idealized. To get behind these idealized versions of reality, policy makers need to understand how such visions are developed, by whom, and whose realities they reflect.

This policy brief explores the mapping of city visions in fast-growing cities in several emerging economies (Brazil, South Africa, India, Peru). As cities have to deal increasingly with both complexity and uncertainty in their development, they are concerned with the future pathways their cities can take. City visions on urban development portray idealized situations as goals for the future, and the maps portraying them are strongly idealized. To get behind these idealized versions of reality, policy makers need to understand how such visions are developed, by whom, and whose realities they reflect.

Many cities promote pro-growth visions utilizing mega-projects for kick-starting economic growth, pushed by discourse coalitions visioning the "world-classing" of their city. Implicit in such visions are improvements in quality of life to draw in more middle-class and elite residents, better opportunities for economic investment, and the idea of a slum-free city. These visions are sometimes complemented by pro-poor coalitions visioning their city to be inclusive of the low-income households who make important contributions to the local labour market, but whose lived experience is not recognized or valued.

In this policy brief, we look at the ways in which mega-projects are included in four city visions; first, in terms of the degree to which they integrate goals of economic growth with environmental sustainability, and reducing social inequality; second, the scale of integration and whether city governments are bypassed by national and provincial governments in their implementation, and third, the participation of different actors in the decision-making processes around mega-projects. The cases also illustrate the different ways in which cities are inserted into their governmental and geographic context: capital cities, versus regional hubs, and cities in larger agglomerations.

We illustrate this by four city case studies with different ways of integrating mega-projects in their urban development visions:

- Guarulhos, where the Tietê River Park project shows an entrepreneurial vision cutting across city borders in the Sao Paulo agglomeration, bypassing Guarulhos city policy.

- Durban, where the integrated city vision works with spatial development frameworks to reduce previously strongly segregated populations and socio-economic inequalities.

○ Chennai, where the development of the IT corridor was carried out as a juxtaposition of a number of individual private sector projects rather than having an integrated city vision. The corridor therefore represents the administrative inclusion of the sprawl.

○ Lima, where the Rimac River Parkway project and others combine infrastructural improvements with public private partnerships opening up real estate opportunities which have reconfigured the city as a whole. In parallel, the Municipal Development Plan was being discussed and megaprojects of the final city vision have been approved.

Guarulhos – Brazil

by John Sydenstricker-Neto

The Tietê Linear Park (Parque Várzeas do Tietê, PVT) is a state-sponsored megaproject along the Tietê river cutting through eight municipalities, including the cities of Sao Paulo and Guarulhos, Brazil (Image 1). The stated main purpose of the project is to retrieve and protect the functioning of the river lowlands, ensuring flood control and better housing for individuals at risk in substandard settlements and creating options for leisure, culture, tourism, and education for over three million people in the Metropolitan Region of Sao Paulo (RMSP) (Image 2). The visioning informing this project is one based on environmentally sound and socially accountable public policy more connected to political campaigns than to implementing long-term initiatives for confronting social and environmental problems. The project was developed within the provincial bureaucracy and the models and visualisations aimed to showcase a shift towards improved governance. The project was announced in 2010, months before provincial and federal elections, and so far its implementation has been very slow.

Until now, municipalities along the river were not involved in project discussions nor have they been partners in its implementation. In Guarulhos, city officials feel bypassed as local government and various stakeholders, including neighbourhoods along the river, have not been consulted. As an official in a local authority in Guarulhos stated: "We share the land but not the park; to enter the park, we need to cross the river and enter the park through the city of Sao Paulo; we own the back fence."

Had the project included from the outset the municipalities and fostered inclusion and participation, it could have contributed to the process of integrating domains of regional development with attention to environmental sustainability, social inclusion and land use management at the city level and metropolitan region. In addition, it could have offered important lessons for improving metropolitan institutional design. In Brazil, metropolitan regions have neither legal mandate nor resourceful collegiate bodies. As a city within an agglomeration ruled by a state capital of the size and importance of Sao Paulo, Guarulhos has limited power to contribute to city/metropolitan visioning and actively foster more sustainable urban policy and governance. This might explain why Guarulhos has not directly challenged the park official vision.

Image 1: Tietê Linear Park map - 8 municipalities
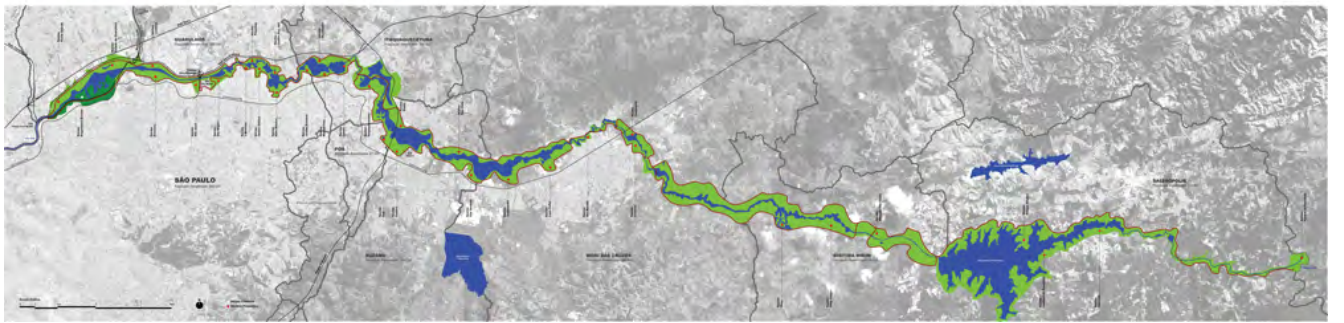
Source: http://www.daee.sp.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=370:parque-varzeas-do-tiete-o-maior-parque-linear-do-mundo&catid=48:noticias&Itemid=53;

Image 2: Tietê Linear Park - Envisioning mixed landuse

Source: http://www.daee.sp.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=370:parque-varzeas-do-tiete-o-maior-parque-linear-do-mundo&catid=48:noticias&Itemid=53;

Durban – South Africa
by Dianne Scott and Catherine Sutherland

Durban has a Spatial Development Framework (SDF) as part of its hierarchy of plans, which portrays the future sustainable spatial growth path for the city. In the post-apartheid period, spatial planning has lost its dominance to the national mandate of "integrated" planning, and as such, the SDF uses the discourse of nodes and corridors as "space integrators" to redress apartheid inequalities and segregation.

The dominance of pro-growth neoliberal urban development is revealed in the growth of the number of megaprojects in the city of Durban over the last 15 years, driven by the private sector often in partnership with the state. These mega-projects boost the image of the city in a "highly competitive global investment environment" (Robbins, 2014). The Dube TradePort megaproject, which includes the new King Shaka International Airport (KSIA), is visioned as an "aerotropolis" by provincial government, as a result of the influence of this highly mobile global urban development discourse. The aerotropolis is a normative concept which frames an airport as a "speed-driven logistics hub" (Kasarda, 2006) to drive urban growth and development. Dube TradePort is "exceptional" as it has been developed outside the city's urban development line (UDL), undermining a tool developed to promote the compact city (Sim et al, 2014). The map (Image 3) shows Durban's 2008 SDF with the contradiction of Dube TradePort and the KSIA (Image 4) lying outside the UDL and a northern arrow showing the development trajectory of the city. The UDL was subsequently extended to include this megaproject in the revised 2012/2013 SDF, revealing the power of megaprojects, and their visions, in reshaping the city.

Image 3:   Revised Spatial Development Framework 2008, Durban
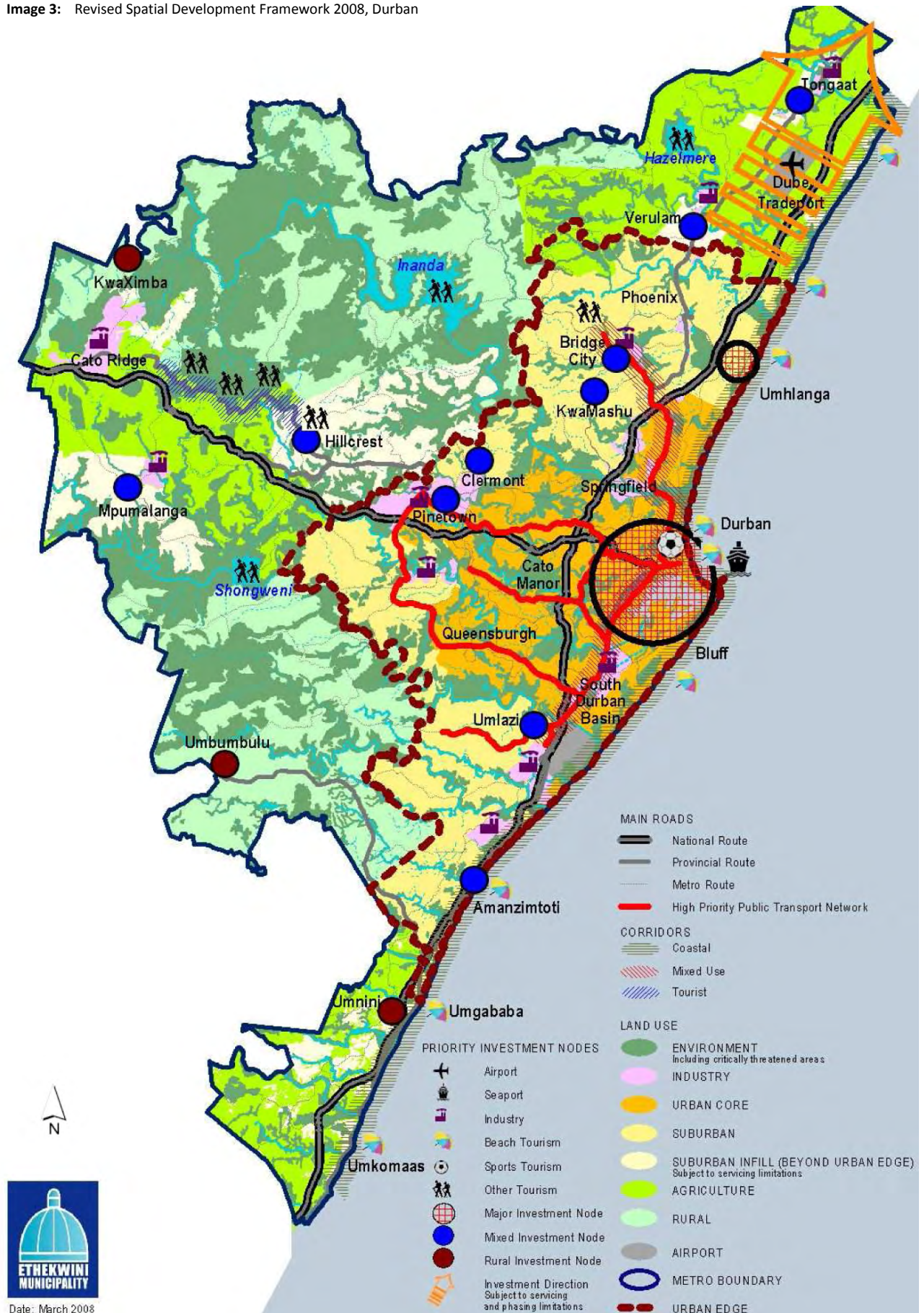
Source: http://www.durban.gov.za/Documents/City_Government/IDP_Policy/IDP_2009_10.pdf

Image 4:   Aerotropolis map

Source: http://aerotropoliskzn.com/Assets/Downloads/MAP.pdf

Chennai – India

by Eric Denis

An overall Greater Chennai vision map does not exist. There is no plan available offering a comprehensive and unifying conception linking the different projects and structural trends that are shaping the future of the fast expanding city. Only the Second Master Plan offers a global approach with proposed land use in 2026. It was enacted in 2008, after an extremely long process and a first draft submitted in 1995. It remains largely a legal and administrative tool that is the product of several major projects undertaken in the course of time. For instance, the current mass transportation plan has very much evolved independently of the Master Plan.

The IT Corridor has been incorporated into the Second Master Plan during the long period of its redrawing after several written petitions and court cases which resulted in more public consultations and the injunction to take into account recent developments. The IT Corridor itself does not have an official map. The several agencies, which have assembled the land for several Special Economic Zones and private companies investing along the main road also have not come up with a comprehensive map. The Tamil Nadu Road Development Company Ltd (TNRDC), incorporated in May 1998, is a 50:50 Joint Initiative of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation Ltd (TIDCO) and Tidel Park Ltd (TIDEL). As the key player in the implementation of the IT corridor infrastructure, it exhibits the most complete map. However, it presents a very static representation rather than a holistic and dynamic vision (Image 5).
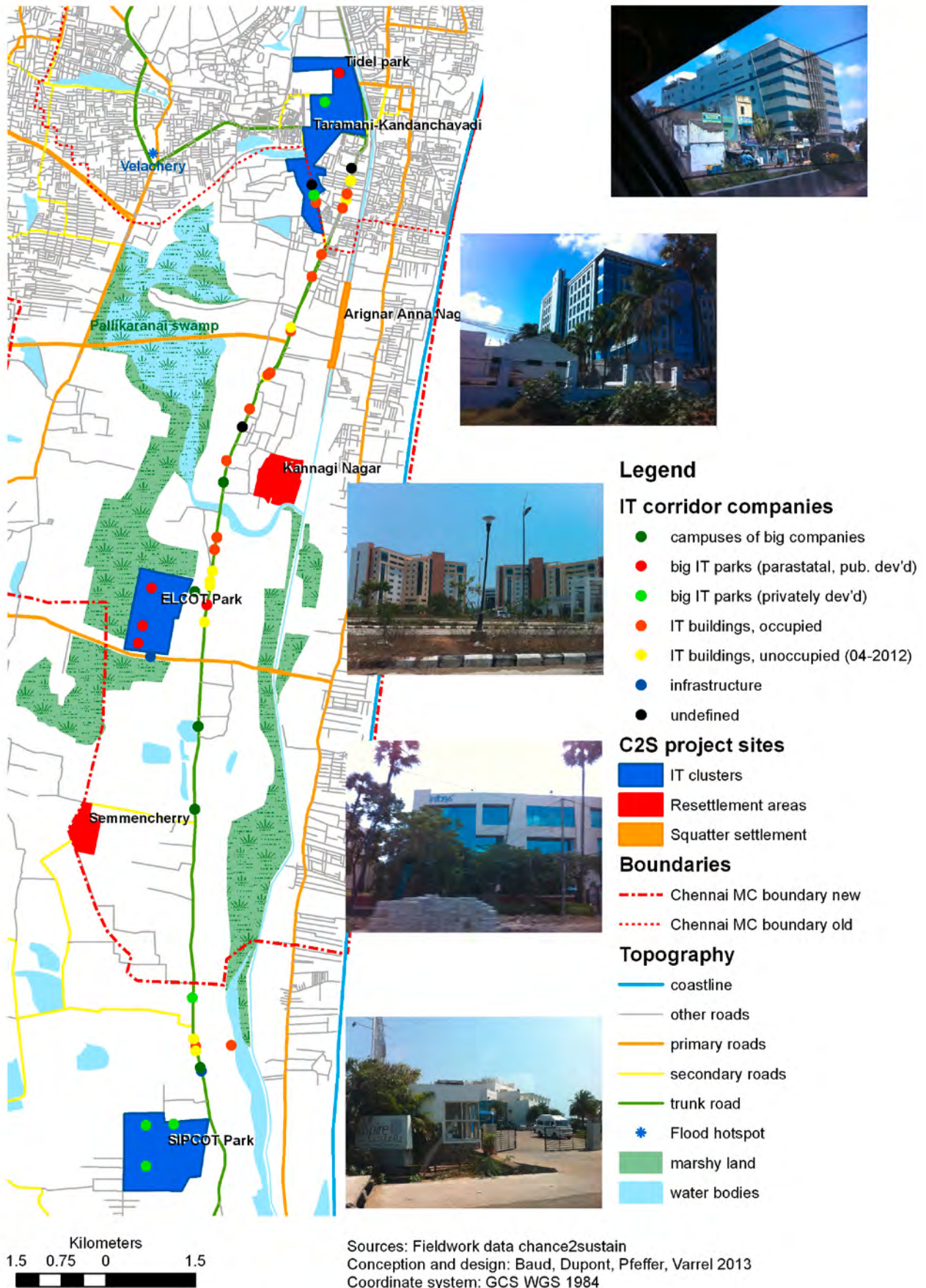
The spatial and thematic segmentation of the available maps of Chennai's development reveals the very limited coordination between actors across sectors and over time, rather than an integrated vision. Sectoral mapping by agencies bypasses the issues of slum areas and their population, leaving them outside processes for dealing with quality of life issues. Neither popular participation nor integration have found a space in the visioning of the city driven mainly by investment opportunities and infrastructure demands. Private investors, parastatal agencies and the State authorities are by far the most influential actors that share an unmapped/implicit city vision. With the Chance2Sustain research programme, an integrated map has been prepared showing the tension of the various land uses (Image 6).

Image 5: Map of the IT corridor, put online by TNRDC.

Source: http://www.tnrdc.com/itel/html/about_routemap.htm

Image 6: Integrated map of IT corridor, developed by the Chance2Sustain project

Legend

IT corridor companies

- campuses of big companies
- big IT parks (parastatal, pub. dev'd)
- big IT parks (privately dev'd)
- IT buildings, occupied
- IT buildings, unoccupied (04-2012)
- infrastructure
- undefined

C2S project sites

- IT clusters
- Resettlement areas
- Squatter settlement

Boundaries

- Chennai MC boundary new
- Chennai MC boundary old

Topography

- coastline
- other roads
- primary roads
- secondary roads
- trunk road
- Flood hotspot
- marshy land
- water bodies

Kilometers
1.5   0.75   0   1.5

Sources: Fieldwork data chance2sustain
Conception and design: Baud, Dupont, Pfeffer, Varrel 2013
Coordinate system: GCS WGS 1984

Source: Chance2Sustain programme, funded by the EU.

Lima – Peru

by Liliana Miranda Sara and Christine Richter

Planning and visioning of Lima are characterized by a discourse of "global" and "compact" city. The former facilitates urban speculation with a strong emphasis on public private partnerships and investments (PPP), which are already reconfiguring the city with projected highways, express ways, new modern bus system ("Metropolitano") and a new underground line. Central government especially, promotes a pro-growth agenda in the context of a neo-liberal policy regime that arose since 1992. This "global city" combined with a "pro-growth" development discourse are reflected on the map (Image 7) in the linear parks and highways (e.g. Rimac River Parkway – Image 8), which coincide with real estate interests since early 2000. The other side of this discourse – and somewhat contradictory - of the "compact city" is reflected in the expansion areas (expansion to the North in Ancón and to the South in Lurin), as well as the (over) densification of Lima Central, North, South, and East areas, which, depending on the income level, are receiving sufficient to good quality urban services and equipment.

Formulating the Lima Development Plan 2012-2025 involved numerous thematic workshops with more than 10,000 people participating in 2012, in addition to metropolitan key actors meetings. However, the map depicted in Image 7, a spatial synthesis of the vision, had not been included in the workshops and discussions preceding the final report, but was nevertheless approved by the Municipal council as final version.

Despite Lima's large inequalities in economic terms and in terms of exposure to environmental risks, as well as Lima being among the top ten countries most impacted by climate change worldwide, "pro-poor" and "pro-green" discourses recently introduced by the Lima municipality have not yet been able to shift the dominant "pro-growth" agenda. Furthermore, risks related to climate change are not yet perceived as such by the majority of key governance actors.

Image 7:   MML Lima City Vision: Concerted Development Plan 2012 -2025 Synthesis Map

Image 8: Representation of the Rio Rimac river basin

Source: http://infografiasos.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/cuenca-1.jpg

Lessons for policy

City vision maps from our different city-cases bring to light various levels of integration and unequal capacities to conceive and manage the future.

Durban has by far the most advanced map. It reveals a city level plan which is in place to guide development, giving the city more "control" over its own future. However, the new airport in Durban was a provincial decision, showing that the city did not have the ultimate power. Despite the massive public hearings, the Lima vision is captured in the end by a real estate bias, short-term interests and a national strategy putting at risk the population and environment. Chennai also, being the scene of land speculations and captured by investment opportunities, does not reveal a common vision for its future on a shared and inclusive map. The regional power nexus - politicians and major investors - are drawing the main lines bypassing the municipal powers and populations concerned. The Tietê Linear Park, part of which is in Guarulhos, has an idealistic integrative vision of being environmentally sound and socially accountable, but this has not been implemented.

Only Durban is able to enact on a public map a concerted and poverty-reducing inclusive identity, which also provides space for megaprojects and investors. The other cities' destinies are more subordinated to corporate, regional or national interests. Guarulhos, as a suburban municipality of Sao Paulo, is integrated into a much larger vision without much to say regarding its own trajectory.

When a city vision map exists, it indicates a certain level of integration of different ideas, although it is in itself not a sufficient indicator of the existence of a local strategy. For tracing the latter, it is important to check who has directed its production, at which scale and to what extent it is a product of diverse stakeholders and reflects a shared local vision at the city level. The lack of a city-vision map reveals that there is not a long-term sustainable urban development vision. Rather, it is the product of a selective combination of actors, and as such, is less inclusive and motivated by short-term economic interests.

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