



Aleppo City Development Strategy

URBAN FORM

PROPOSED VISION

INTRODUCTION

This brochure summarizes our proposed vision for the urban form of Aleppo City.

We present here a brief analysis of the existing physical situation in the city, then, based on this analysis, we present our vision of Aleppo in 2025. We also present five universal urbanism principles that we applied to the specific context of Aleppo City. These principles are:

- Phasing and space reservation
- Multifunctional open spaces
- Polycentric development
- Integrated urban mobility
- Identity, proximity, density and mixture



STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Strengths

Spatial Structure: clear city boundary, diverse city structure, rich and solid building types

Density: short walkable distances, modest land consumption

Demography: cultural diversity, young city

Regulations & Policy Making: strong leadership

Informal Settlements: strong local identity, self organised housing provision

Green Space: fertile ground with productive landscape around Aleppo, available water (river Kweik)

Urban Mobility: proximity, high density increases feasibility and profitability of public transport

Heritage: strong local identity, touristic attractor

Opportunities

Spatial Structure: continue the tradition of density and diversity, upgrade existing areas

Density: new typologies with private-public support, sustainable transport

Demography: new market opportunities due to cultural mix and growth

Regulations & Policy Making: using test cases for more flexibility, using existing local informal structures

Informal Settlements: establishment and upgrade by legalisation and provision of public space, education and community facilities

Green Space: create continuous green spaces or bands, create green 'fingers' to link to landscape, maintain productive landscape as multifunctional area

Urban Mobility: implementation of high capacity public transport (BRT), modernisation of mini-buses, creation of multifunctional transport hubs

Heritage: asset in city marketing, maintaining the authenticity, cultural tourism

PHOTO BY OMAR SANADIKI



WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

Weaknesses

Spatial Structure: east-west disparity, highways separating neighbourhoods

Density: lack of public space, social tensions, construction quality

Demography: poverty

Regulations & Policy Making: rigidity, deep hierarchies

Informal Settlements: weak infrastructure, lack of communal public space, weak building quality, unclear legal status

Green Space: overall lack of green space, discontinuous distribution

Urban Mobility: lack of public transport, individual car use

Heritage: lack of services and infrastructure, no integrated touristic concept applied

Threats

Spatial Structure: private interests undermining the clear land-city distinction, 'sprawlification'

Density: low densities proposed in masterplan, massive designation of buildable due to land speculation

Demography: growth despite limited resources, cultural conflicts

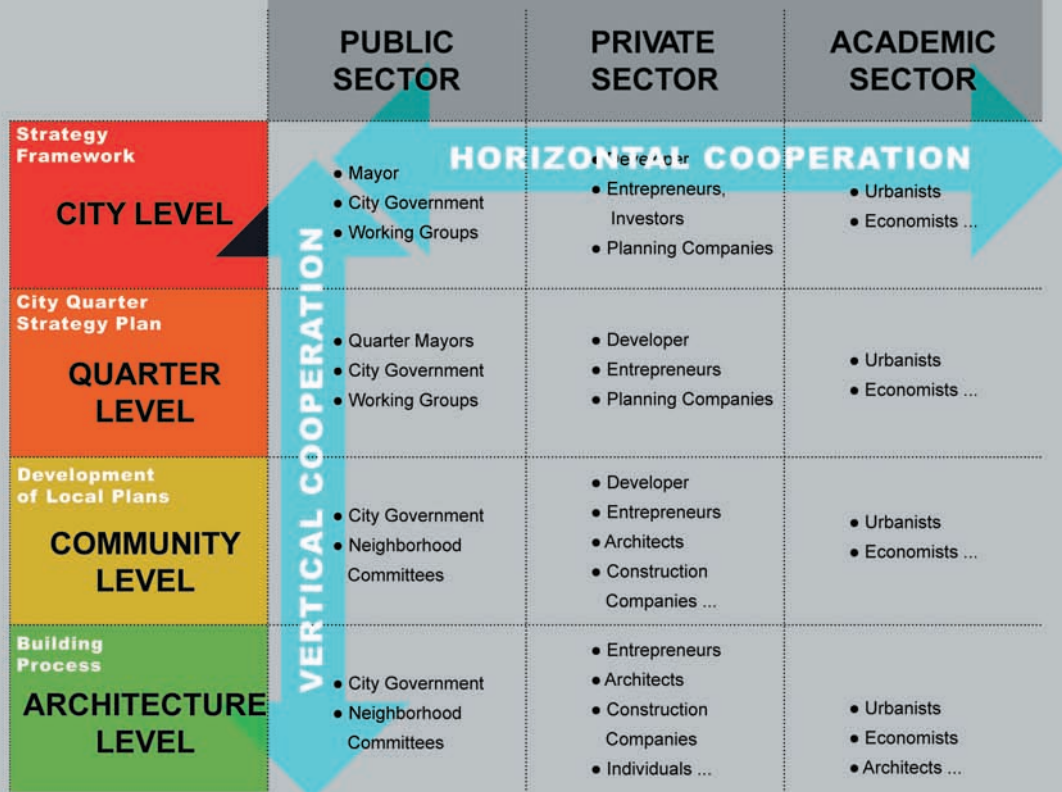
Regulations & Policy Making: monotonous developments, ignorance of local conditions and opportunities, policy cannot keep up with rapid growth and change

Informal Settlements: social unrest through increased poverty, lacking health and education, collapsing buildings, unregulated growth due to population increase

Green Space: landscape is converted to building land, pollution, overuse, fragmentation

Urban Mobility: simple-minded upgrading of road infrastructure, highways separating neighbourhoods

Heritage: modernisation degrading authenticity and cultural heritage



Collaborative Integration across Sectors and Levels in Aleppo

PRECONDITIONS

Aleppo City Development Strategy presented in this document is a conceptual framework, not a master plan! It accepts the existing forces of the city and drives them towards a better future, instead of working against them. However, our strategy will not succeed in achieving that, if it is not accompanied by an evolution in the practices we use to develop our city. The most important practices that need to evolve are: regulations, models of governance, and planning procedures.

Regulations

Aleppo suffers from an existing culture of over-regulation that proves to be relatively useless given the informal character of much of Aleppo's urban development.

We think that Aleppo needs less rules, and the rules need to be enforced transparently. In other words, Aleppo needs careful deregulation that can satisfy the housing needs legally.

Models of Governance

We believe in the involvement of the public in the planning process on different levels, coupled with the strong leadership of the Mayor. We believe in development that is in accordance with economic and political goals of the private, public, and civic society stakeholders.

Planning Procedures

We believe in this shift from classical planning towards process-oriented development strategy. This strategy lay out a vision rather than a detailed master plan. We don't start with the quantitative aspects of planning, but rather we first focus on the qualitative aspects of future city development. This does not mean that we abandon the master plans, but we use them later, once the direction of city development is clear and accepted by all stakeholders.



GENERAL

Topography (25 m steps)

River Qareh

PHASING

Space reservation zones

MULTIFUNCTIONAL OPEN SPACES

River Qareh Park

Bus Ring

Network of Parks & regenerated quarters

Local public spaces

Urban city edge & Green character areas

INTEGRATED URBAN MOBILITY

Bus Rapid Transit lines

Multimodal stations

Microbuses

Services of proximity

Train

Urban boulevards

ACCESSIBLE CENTRES

Old City and Modern Centre

Proposed subcentres

Strategic locations for future subcentres

EVOLVING NEIGHBOURHOODS IDENTITIES

Old City

Modern Centre

Informal settlements

Industrial areas

Exemplary typologies: high to medium density

Exemplary typologies: high to medium density

Exemplary typologies: high to medium density

Exemplary typologies: medium to low density

VISION

VISION

Our vision reflects the city's strengths and potentials, and shows how they can flourish and evolve.

We imagine Aleppo growing along its main thoroughfares, which are the backbone of the city's current urban development. Along the main thoroughfares, higher density and programmatic mix should be concentrated.

We imagine Aleppo as a place that has multiple city centers. These centers are well connected with a modern, fast and affordable public transport system. Each center has its own character and functions; such as tourism and cultural activities, shopping and entertainment, knowledge and services, or agricultural trade and logistics.

We imagine Aleppo as a place of distinct neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are home to a mix of old and new urban forms that fit the variety of lifestyles in the city; from the garden villa to the dense city block, from self-built settlements, to new, locally adapted building typologies. Each neighborhood offers services that cover its residents' daily needs. Each neighborhood is well connected to the city centers through flexible microbus systems.

We imagine Aleppo as a green yet compact and sprawl-free city. Green areas on the edge of the city are preserved and kept free from sprawl. The city has Green fingers that transport fresh air into the city and that offers residents with a hiatus from the intensity of urban life. The city has a network of green and high-quality public spaces that link its parts together. The city has a multifunctional park along the Quaik River Bed.

Space Reservation Area

Phase II

Phase I

Existing City



**PHASING
AND
SPACE
RESERVATION**

PHASING PHASING

We propose a step-by-step development of Aleppo. The city should grow in two consecutive phases spanning over 15 years (evaluated each five years)

We propose to prioritize development depending on public interest (as opposed to the opportunistic and uncontrolled development that prevails today). Priority is given to development along main thoroughfares.

Agricultural areas around the city should be excluded from development and kept agricultural.



Active urban edge

Green fingers

Quweik Park

Graduated open space network

Bab ring

OPEN SPACE NETWORK

MULTIFUNCTIONAL OPEN SPACES

We propose a system of recognizable public spaces that fulfill various functions at the same time such as: transport, representation, recreation, air cleaning, rest, and communication.

Urban Edge

We propose to maintain the current clear edge of the city to nature. This edge could be transformed into public park-like zones, that would serve as a recreational buffer. Buildings along this edge could include prototypes of new building types, like housing and farms for urban agriculture.

Green Fingers

We propose creating transversal green corridors that connect the city with the country side, located in the west and the east.

Quweik Park

We propose to re-naturalize the Quweik river bed and to transform it into a multifunctional city park. This park would integrate the existing functions (rail tracks, existing parks, the main city square, urban agriculture, housing, industry etc), and cover them with a continuous band of vegetation and walking paths.

A Green Ring Around The Old City

We propose to transform the area surrounding the old city gates into a green ring of attractive public spaces. This green ring will integrate small parks, squares, green boulevards, the Agh Khan park, even the cemeteries.

Graduated Open Space Network

We propose to have a series of bigger squares on the City level. These squares can be linked to specific city functions, i.e. a square in front of the museum.

We propose to have intimate public spaces on the neighborhood level. These could be like a square in front of a school, at a street junction... etc



Subcenters

Main Road

Strategic Positions
for Later Centers

**PROPOSED
ZONES
FOR NEW
CENTERS**

ACCESSIBLE CENTERS

We propose to move from having one center for the city towards polycentrality. This move will relieve pressure and congestion and drive real estate prices down.

Accessibility

We propose to locate the new centers in direct vicinity to new transport infrastructures, i.e. on main thoroughfares, intersections of ring roads, external bus stations, train stations, airport.. etc. These centers will have higher buildings, higher densities, and more functional mixture than the rest of the city. These centers will be quickly accessible among each other, and will encourage pedestrian movements inside them.

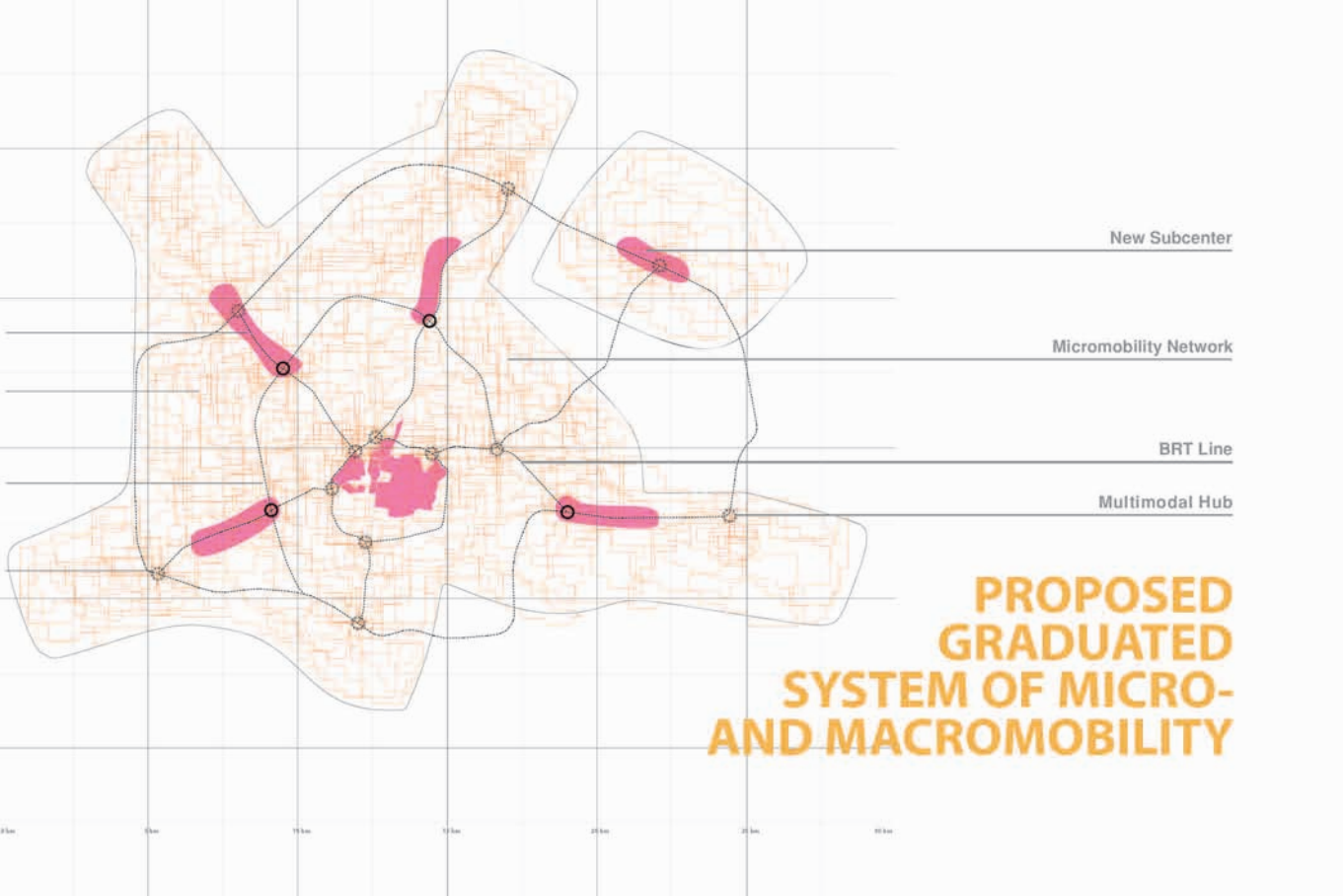
Self Sufficiency

We propose to make these centers self-sufficient to function independently from each other. These centers will have services that provide residents with all their daily needs. These services can include offices, housing, schools, religious buildings, health centers, shops...etc.

Specialization

We propose to give each sub-center a specialized character and set of functions. For example:

- the old city: culture and tourism
- modern city center: commerce and entertainment
- university campus: knowledge and service economy
- sheikh najjar: industry
- around the airport: logistics, and agricultural trade



New Subcenter

Micromobility Network

BRT Line

Multimodal Hub

PROPOSED GRADUATED SYSTEM OF MICRO- AND MACROMOBILITY

0km 5km 10km 15km 20km 25km 30km

INTEGRATED URBAN MOBILITY

We propose to create an integrated public transport system that relieves the city from its dependency on individual transport. The system will have two main levels of mobility: “macromobility” which connects the city centers with each other, and “micromobility” which acts on the neighbourhood level. Both systems would be integrated by stations, which would facilitate the transition from one mode of traffic to the other.

Multimodal Rapid Bus Transit

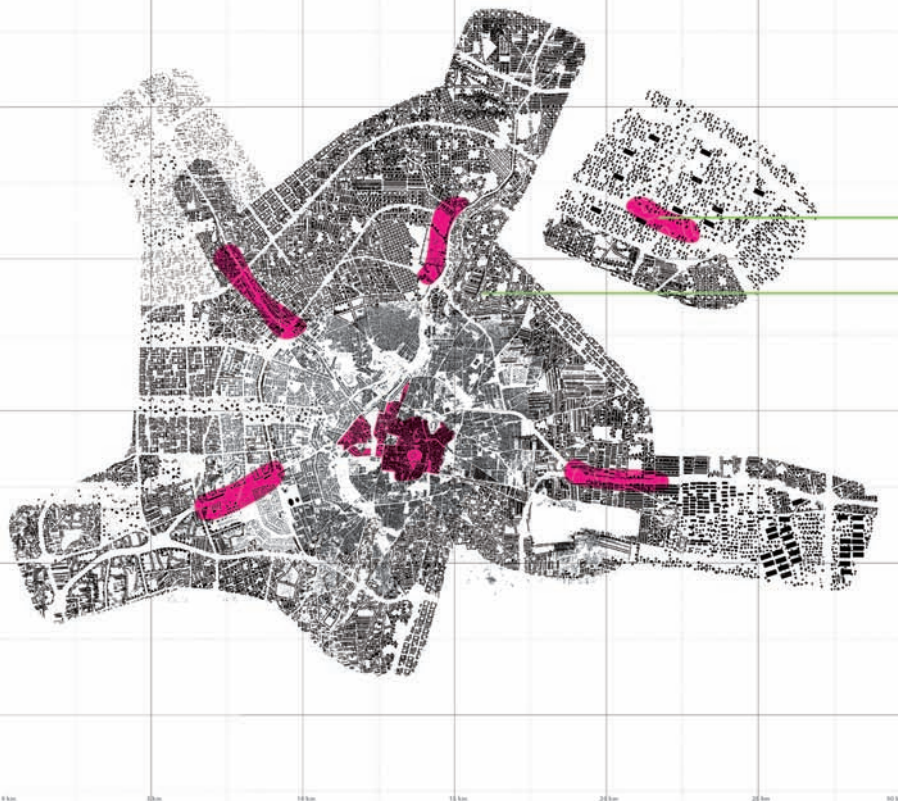
Macromobility will be delivered through a public Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system that connects the city centers together (Old city, modern city centre, new centers, and any unique recreational spaces) as well as the main entrances to the city (airport, train station, external bus stations). This system will be designed to transport large numbers of people in short periods of time. Stations will be integrated with other modes of transport (a passenger will leave his/her car there to access the BRT, or get on BRT from the air port).

Neighborhood Mobility

Micromobility will be delivered through a micro buses system. The system aims to relieve the middle and low density neighbourhoods from their dependency on individual transport. There could be two modes of operation for these busses: Firstly, they could continue running on fixed routes as they are doing right now, but in an upgraded route network. Secondly, they could work as busses on demand. Bus stops will be located next to other functions to maximize efficiency; i.e. next to convenience stores.

Integrated Boulevards

We propose to re-configure Aleppo’s main roads into urban boulevards with integrated public transport. Considering their potentially high value for commercial or office buildings, these boulevards could be densified, especially on major junctions.



New centers

Compact urban tissue
with a diversity of typologies

**BUILT UP
SPACE
WITH
CENTER**

EVOLVING NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITIES

We propose to have a higher variety of neighborhood types to provide a mix of typologies and densities and high quality open spaces to suit different lifestyles and income groups.

Balanced Development Between East And West

We propose more high density areas in the west, middle class typologies in the east, and an increase in average density.

Typological Diversity

We propose to strengthen local identities. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- Deregulating existing building typologies to lead to more flexibility and mixture in the use. This would better suit socially balanced neighbourhoods.
- Allow unobstructive businesses in residential areas (24h city)
- Developing new medium-to-high density building typologies that address the aspect of mixed use. These new types will reflect local climate, energy savings, building technologies, and tradition.



Neighbourhood boundaries with names

Topography

NAMES & PLACES, METROPOLITAN SCALE

Aerial image with superposed names of boroughs and their boundaries (based on Google Earth, 2009 and Municipality of Aleppo, 2008)

NAMES & PLACES

Executive Team

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Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums