

Transport Planning in Shrinking Cities

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Abstract

This paper is related to Demographical Changes of European Society and its Impact on mobility, transport and accessibility of elderly. Demographic trends indicate a marked rise in the number of elderly people in the population and there is a high correlation between age and disability. The share of elderly people in the total population is expected to rise from 21% in 2000 to around 31% by the year 2020 and to around 34% by the year 2050. Disabled people represent around 13% of the nation.

Methods: European policy regarding the elderly aims at maintaining their mobility. This is a central element of their integration in society. Senior citizens want to stay autonomous and independent as far as possible. Without the possibility to maintain mobility, senior citizens cannot lead an independent life, with many other problems, such as isolation and health problems as a consequence.

Life quality of senior citizens in relation to mobility conditions SIZE – “Life quality of senior citizens in relation to mobility conditions” (project number QLK6-CT-2002-02399) was a project in the framework of the specific research and technological development programme “Quality of life and management of living resources”, key action 6 “The ageing population and disabilities” in EU’s Fifth Framework Programme. Project objectives were:

To explain and to describe the present mobility situation of senior citizens.

To motivate action from the side of the authorities and other relevant groups.

To provide guidance for the setting up and the implementation of policies.

The project SIZE had a life span of 3 years and is divided into 4 research areas: State-of-the art & preparatory activities, qualitative studies, standardized survey and finalization & distribution of results.

Results and discussion: Due to demographic changes older and disabled people represent a significant and permanent growing part of Czech population. There has been a progressive increase over the past decade in the social awareness of the requirements for older and disabled people throughout the Czech Republic and other parts of the former eastern bloc. This progression has moved from making provision for older and disabled people on a welfare-oriented basis, towards increasingly equal access to all facilities as a matter of human rights. Improving access to any form of travel will provide additional social, as well as economic, benefits at personal, governmental and commercial levels.

Various initiatives recognise the needs of elderly people. With changing attitudes and conditions the desire to travel for education, business and leisure represents a potential major new source of ideas for mobility providers and vehicle designers and producers.

Keywords: Population Aging, Shrinking cities, Mobility, Transport, Accessibility, Modal Split