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Urban Mobility Plans and Accessibility

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Abstract

In France, as in other European countries, towns and cities have committed to reducing effects of automobile traffic---accidents and air pollution---either by regulation or voluntarily improve their inhabitants' quality of life. Creating urban transport plans (PDUs) involves automotive travel modes---walking and cycling---as well as public transport. Investment planning of corresponding facilities are an excellent opportunity for improving accessibility and public transport for disabled people and those with reduced mobility. The French law 11, 2005 "for equality of rights and chances, participation and citizenship of disabled people" imposes an obligation for PDUs to include an accessibility appendix whenever they are created, revised. After a short review of the new regulatory obligations for authorities responsible for transport and cities, this paper examines how PDUs approved since 1997 have dealt with accessibility for pedestrians and users of public transport. Two examples are analyzed. The first example is the PDU for the town of Mulhouse, the actual decisions made concerning highways and public transport and the lessons learned by following indications and the difficulties encountered in involving authorities responsible for accessibility modifications. The second example is the experience of Valenciennes in creating a street accessibility plan that will form part of the revision of its urban transport plan. Both examples highlight the institutional difficulties encountered and suggest methodological approaches to facilitate cooperation between the various partners concerned and agreements with disability associations.

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