

SOFT DENSIFICATION STRATEGIES FOR CZECH REPUBLIC SUBURBS

Introduction

Growth of Czech suburbs after 1990 can be described as a massive, unregulated and chaotic development of extensive and amorphous settlements of individual family houses, characterised by low efficiency.

The fundamental problems of this type of development are:

- low or non-existent civic infrastructure,
- poor quality public spaces and the absence of public life (isolation of residents),
- dependence on individual car traffic - traffic jams and parking issues in the inner city,
- excessive financial burden on municipalities and,
- above all, irreversible devastation of the landscape

253m², Price: 24 mil CZK



Source: Grandys Reality

Public space?



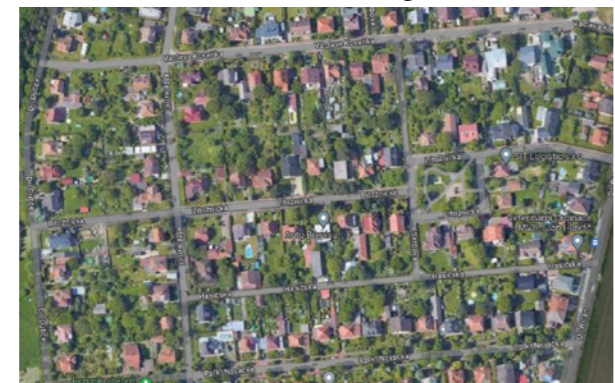
Source: googlemaps.com

Traffic load



Source: lidovky.cz

Low density



Source: googlemaps.com

Specifics



Demand for suburban living is still ongoing!

The population forecast for the Prague suburban zone between 2022 and 2030 is 17,000 new inhabitants (Burcin 2013), with an average household size of 2.15 persons, this requires 7,906 new dwellings. Is it possible to fit some of these dwellings into existing built environment?

Suburban population is ageing

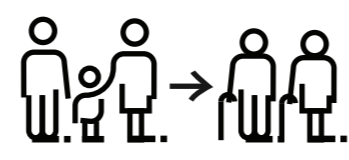
In terms of the projected age composition of the population, by 2030 there will be almost 150,000 people of post-working age in the Prague suburban zone. (Burcin 2013)

There is not enough money

Municipal budgets are tight due to high infrastructure costs, so there is no money for big top-down developments. (Hudeček 2018)

Private plots

The land is divided into private plots, so no development is possible without the involvement of local residents.



Sustainability point of view

"suburbanisation as a land-consuming phenomenon creating a socially, ecologically and economically imbalanced environment" (Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, 2015)



- Adaptation of existing buildings for resource efficiency,
- Making compact settlements with planned growth to prevent urban sprawl



- Increasing investment in sustainable housing, using more integrated urban development and regeneration with jobs and services spatially closer to residential areas
- Spatial planning, including policies leading to the efficient distribution of economic activity
- Provision of affordable housing and addressing urban sprawl.



- Increased involvement of civil society, access to basic technical infrastructure and services that promote social cohesion
- Increased availability of housing choice
- Promoting the application of universal design principles to increase the usability of homes for all people across generations and social groups



- Supporting the development of public spaces for cultural and social activities,
- Designing and actively maintaining residential areas of towns to improve people's emotional wellbeing, involving local communities in these processes.

Main theme of this dissertation is to show that existing suburbs are not the final state of their development and to research suitable possibilities of their further development - renewal.

SOFT DENSIFICATION

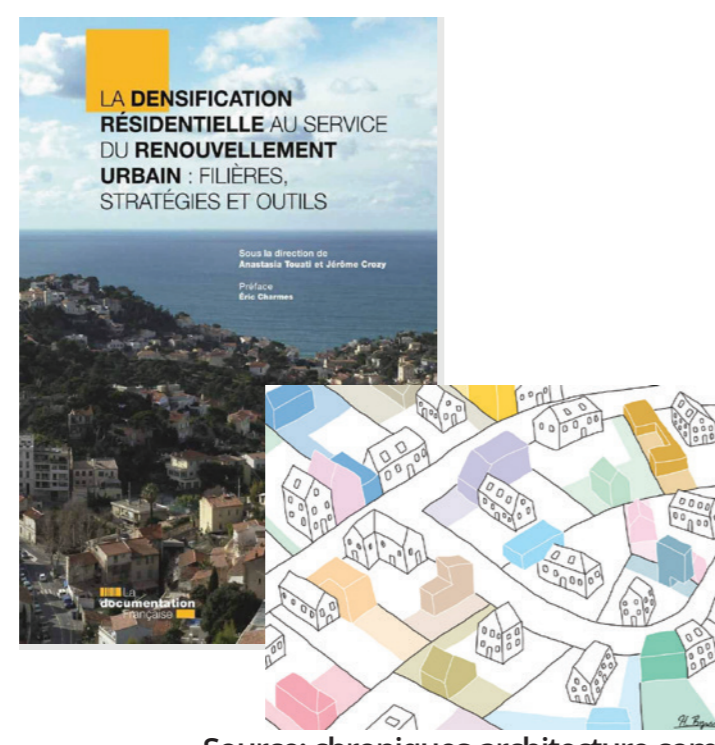
The term "soft densification" has become established in European countries to describe the incremental increase in density that occurs on private plots and is mostly initiated by private actors.

Review

Strategies



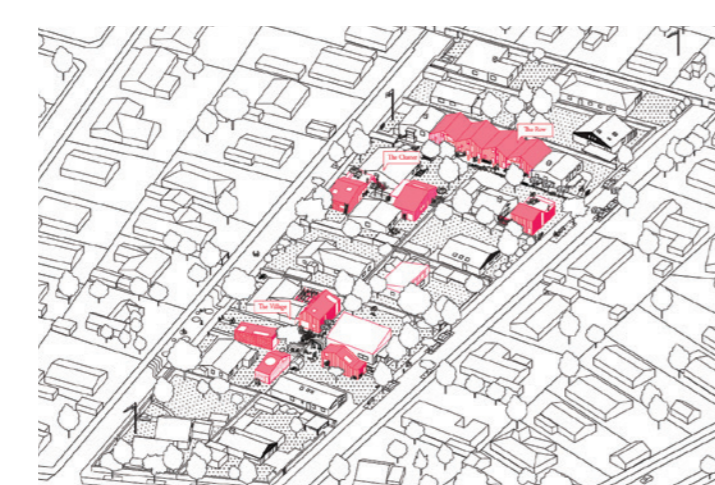
Source: www.metamorphouse.ch



BIMBY Project, France
Benoit Le Foll et David Miet

'Build In My Back Yard'. This research project, launched in 2009, aims to create a new sector of housing production capable of intervening in existing residential structures through land subdivision, extensions to existing houses or their redevelopment.

Projects



Source: Elin Ingrid Hirsch - RE-housing Danish Suburbia



The gouse - Marta Nowicka
Garage conversion, London



Hasenboehler house, subdivision with extension, Metamorphouse, Villars-sur-Glane

Glossary

ADU - Additional Dwelling Unit (granny flat, backyard cottage)

Subdivision - plot or house division to create multiple dwelling units

Extension - vertical or horizontal - new room or space which is added to an existing building

Excavation - house extension to underground level

Conversion - change in use of a building constructed as a single family house - housing to mix-use, garage to housing

Infill - building within unused and underutilized lands within existing built environment - separate or connected to original house

Post-suburbia - enabling development within the suburbs, not simply the homogenous suburbanization of housing, but also a mix of uses, such as significant economic activities in the service sector

Research question

How can specific characteristics of soft densification scenarios influence the local residents evaluation of soft densification?

How does the residents evaluation of soft densification scenarios varies by age of respondents?

Main Objectives

- to find a way to manage soft densification of Czech suburbs by improving built environment and maximizing the benefits it might offer

- to identify motives of suburban residents towards soft densification - opportunities, benefits, risks

Method

