

What happens to the East-West Cornucopia? Regional development opportunities in Schwechat revisited

Judith Ryser

(Judith Ryser, CityScope Europe, London, UK; jryser@dircon.co.uk, www.urbanthinker.co)

1 ABSTRACT

The fall of the Berlin wall and the EU enlargement raised the stakes for the fringe of the EU. Opportunities were plentiful to reconnect historic links and create new synergies. The Vienna city region was particularly well placed to expand its regional economy through joint ventures with its immediate neighbours, thereby strengthening its centrality as a supra-regional multimodal interchange node. Expanding the future role of Vienna International Airport was just one of the attractive options, while preventing the region from becoming a low value-added logistics destination. Was it a promising vision or just an unrealistic fantasy?

The paper revisits Schwechat's development strategies. It inquires what happened to the initial opportunities of reconnecting its historic eastern ties through the Centrope initiative, the EU transportation network proposals, and the role of Schwechat in Vienna's momentum of urban change. It reconsiders the proposals of the Isocarp Urban Task Force in the light of the global economic crisis and explores Schwechat's chances to become an integral part of a liveable, healthy and prosperous city region.

2 URBAN TASK FORCE IN SCHWECHAT, AUSTRIA, 2007

In June 2007, an Urban Task Force (UTF)¹ of Isocarp² was invited by the Municipality of Schwechat and the International Airport of Vienna (VIE) to offer its planning experience and produce ideas from an international perspective on pressing planning issues of a region with great development potential, owing to the demise of the iron curtain.

The key aspects on which the hosts sought the advice of the UTF were transport, innovation and cooperation. In particular, they wanted to harness the existing multi-modal transport infrastructure, while transforming the area from a transport into a knowledge hub, and improve cooperation at local, regional and international levels to that effect.

The main threats perceived by the Schwechat municipality as obstacles to successful development were:

- the risk to become a low value-added logistics node;
- being blighted by through traffic, generated to a great extent by the commuting workforce of the airport and major industries;
- constraints on housing development by aircraft noise, exacerbated by the planned third runway, and by its Vienna metropolitan green belt status.

Conversely, Schwechat saw significant opportunities owing to:

- its location in the buoyant city-region of Vienna;
- its multi-modal supra-regional transport infrastructure of road, rail, air and water; and
- the reconnection with its traditional supra-regional hinterland in Central and Eastern Europe.

The UTF proposed a single bold development scenario as a basis for further strategic planning and implementation at international, regional and local levels³. It recommended greater cooperation between the protagonists of the region, and, in particular, between the municipality and the international airport to achieve negotiated development strategies, and to establish new instruments of governance for their implementation. A concrete idea was to combine Schwechat's existing industries and brands, its outstanding transportation networks and its exceptional green spaces to strengthen the competitiveness of its local economy. These physical assets, together with existing links with Vienna's Technical University would

¹ Urban Task Forces, now Urban Advisory Planning Teams (UPAT) are provided by experienced planners. They consist of six senior members of Isocarp assisted by six young local planners. In Schwechat the international team of planners was from Argentina, India, Serbia-Estonia, Netherlands, Spain and the UK.

² Isocarp: International Society of City and Regional Planners

³ Outcome of the Urban Task Force of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (Isocarp) in Schwechat, Austria, 9-17 June 2007, by Judith Ryser, Urban Task Force leader. Isocarp

enable Schwechat to attract, train and retain knowledge workers to advance its own knowledge economy and to contribute to a high value-added airport expansion. The UTF proposed to locate the new knowledge hub as a physical link between the town centre and the airport as part of a polycentric development structure⁴.

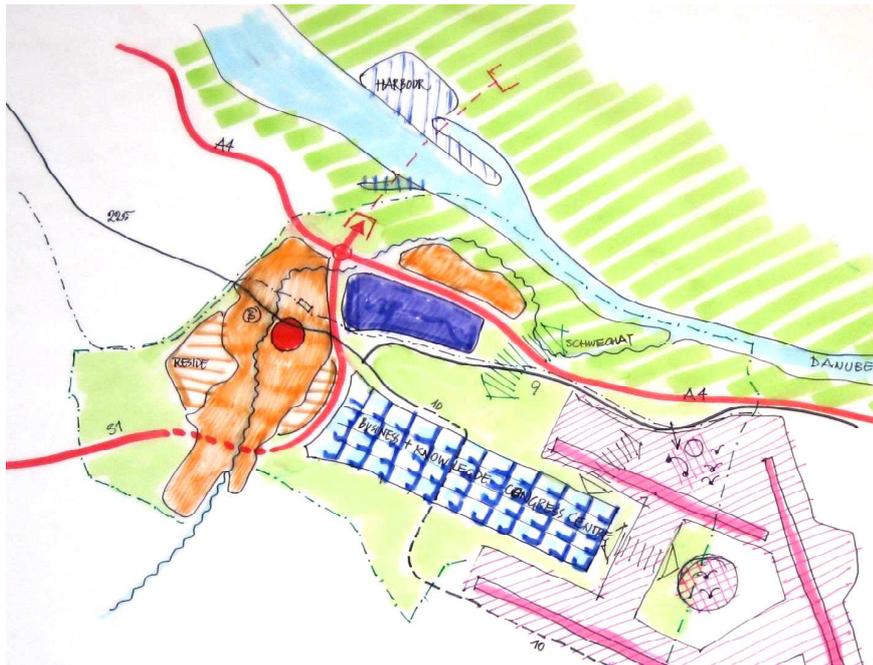


Fig. 1: Isocarp UTF 2007: synthetic visualisation of ideas

2.1 UPAT Evolution

A new initiative of the Isocarp UPAT programme is to revisit selected places and find out what impacts UPATs had on their development strategies. Schwechat is of particular interest as international airports were deeply affected by the global recession and experienced serious development challenges with direct repercussions on the places where they are located.

This paper is proposing a series of questions with the aim to provide a new insight into Schwechat's development strategies in changed circumstances. The questions are based on the objectives and briefing notes which the clients had prepared for the 2007 UTF. They are also put into the context of information currently available in the public domain (internet) about changing circumstances of Schwechat and Vienna International airport. The questions constitute a framework to find out what progress has been made, how the clients may have been obliged to reorientate their objectives due to a changed context, how useful the UTF advice had been, and what it may still be able to contribute at present.

Subsequently, this survey will include interviews with key protagonists, institutions and businesses which play a role in Schwechat's local economy and its future. Further, the original UTF members will be invited to give comments on these findings. This follow-up work has two aims. One is to find out whether and what concrete influences the UTF had on planning of the municipality of Schwechat and on development strategies of the Vienna international airport. The second aim is to provide feedback on the UPAT process (based initially on this pilot assessment) to assess its current uses and provide inputs to longer term objectives.

3 EVIDENCE OF CHANGE IN SCHWECHAT

From information available in the public domain, changes in contextual circumstances are identified which have been affecting the key protagonists and their actions considered by the UTF in 2007. Clearly the unexpected economic recession is hampering the rather bold and optimistic UTF perspective. Nevertheless, such drastic changes are able to throw light on the robustness of longer term scenarios and expose generic development contradictions. They may be usefully studied during periods of stagnation to provide fresh insights towards future development strategies, and UPATs could play a useful role in this process.

⁴ op.cit p18, diagram p19

Comparing current development strategies with the visions put forward by the UTF are an experimental step in that direction.

3.1 Vienna City-Region

The Atlas⁵ of the regional planning cooperation Vienna, Burgenland and Lower Austria (PGO)⁶ which contains Schwechat shows the growth dynamic of the Vienna city-region. It concludes that the city region is forming a contiguous whole of 2.6 million inhabitants (1.67 m thereof in the city) with Vienna growing by 250,000 by 2031. The city region will have reached 3 million population by 2030, mainly due to national and international immigration which the region is well equipped to accommodate. Functional structural changes include suburbanisation away from the high density of Vienna by families seeking home ownership where they can still benefit from the city's facilities due to good road and public transport links. Migration is determined by lifecycles, re-urbanisation being mainly due to young learners and job seekers, not by the elder generations as often assumed. Locational choices depend on land prices, housing costs and availability, less on accessibility. Good schools, social provisions, shops, infrastructure, green areas, job availability, image of the area are other locational attractors. Dormitory towns and extreme sprawl are disliked, although problems might occur in the longer term if population pressures persist.

PGO has also studied relations between the Vienna city region and the Bratislava conurbation⁷ and its wider hinterland growing by 400,000 in the next ten years. In the light of the implementation of the Schengen agreement in 2007 this dual city region may grow rapidly and evolve towards greater convergence. There is a proposal to set up a city-hinterland management and information system to foster balanced development, including the preservation of nature with cycle lanes and footpaths. Improving public transport between Vienna and Bratislava is a major concern and its Euro-region status is relevant, especially as the Bratislava city region tends to expand into Austria.

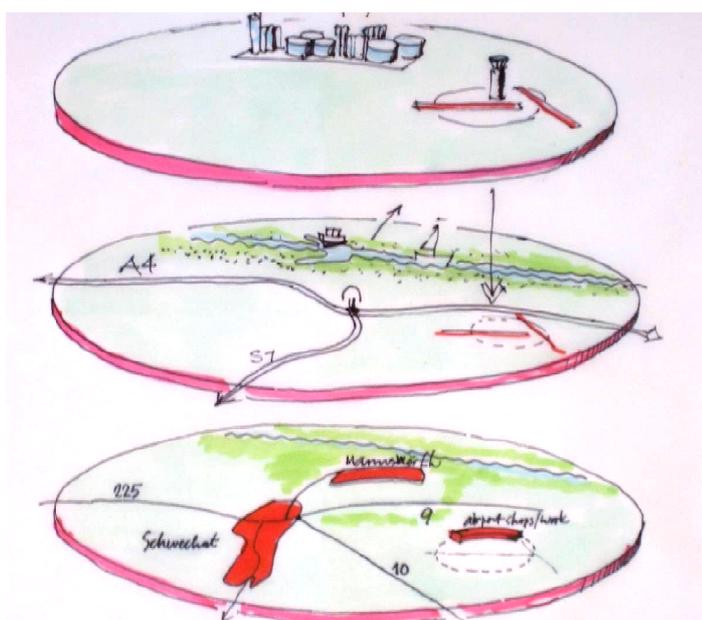


Fig. 2: UTF: interdependent levels of decision making in Schwechat

A regional study of population distribution, economic activities, commuting, and recreation shows the favourable economic position of Schwechat and its overall development potential⁸. However, healthcare and especially its retail is losing to surrounding supermarkets and hospitals which affects the livelihood of the town centre. Conversely the airport contributes to increased tourism.

Contradictions between green belt preservation and housing expansion of Vienna onto Schwechat is not documented in the public domain, despite high commuting to and from Vienna and Schwechat's aspiration to town status by increasing its population from 15,500 to 20,000. The PGO maintains an active role in

⁵ H Fassmann, P Gorgl, M Helbrich. 2009. Atlas der Wachsenden Stadtregion PGO (Planungsgemeinschaft Ost).

⁶ PGO: Planungsgemeinschaft Ost. <http://www.pgo.wien.at/>

⁷ Kobra, Stadt Umland Kooperation Bratislava. PGO 2004.

⁸ DI Andreas Hacker. 2004. Teilkonzept Bezirk Wien Umgebung.

regional spatial planning and management, but the degree of cooperation with the lower tier authorities, such as Schwechat is not explicit. For UPATs the generic issue is one of democratic consensus building between vertical layers of governance and reconciliation of objectives which vary with geographic scale.

3.2 Schwechat Municipality

Schwechat's website⁹ caters for local demands and services. Its development strategies are summed up in twelve principles with some project proposals.¹⁰ The development plan cannot be easily accessed on-line, but information is available on all aspects on request. There is feedback on Schwechat's demand that the airport should provide extensive ground traffic mitigation related to the third runway.

The tenor after a return of a socialist government (on 14/03/2010) with low participation and reduced numbers is to provide for the needs of all inhabitants of "Schwechat, Industrial Town". They should benefit from a wide spectrum of jobs at the international airport, as well as from Schwechat's efforts to protect the environment and provide social infrastructure for those in need.

Vienna's plans for Kugelkreuz for 4000 high value added service workplaces on land it owns in Schwechat are presented on Schwechat's website. The mayor stresses that the CEIT technology centre and the two education and training colleges he instated in Schwechat are proof of Schwechat's own proactive stance to achieve a high-tech innovative local economy to the benefit of the local community for which Schwechat has installed free wifi. He insists on the need to extend public transport related to this development as contribution to Schwechat's high quality of life in line with its sustainability agenda.

The recession may have toned down Schwechat's ambition of an international, or at least a supra-regional role in the central European growth process. The image projected in its twelve development principles is one of incrementally improving the status quo, rather than one of a radical leap towards the knowledge society.

Keen to balance diverse interests and to cater for all the citizens the mayor did not appear to receive the expected responses to his efforts of communicating and engaging with his constituents. He could mobilise the local knowledge capital to gain greater understanding of such apparent apathy. For UPATs this raises the conflictual issue of gentrification, recipients of its economic benefits and uneven social and spatial repercussions on local society.

3.3 Vienna International Airport and BTS (Bratislava Airport)

Vienna International airport (VIE)¹¹, privatised in 1992 and owned by the city of Vienna (20%), the regional authority of Lower Austria (20%), airport staff (10%) and share holders (50%) went it alone after its failed cooperation with Bratislava airport to become a powerful international Central European hub. Used by Austrian Airlines as its hub it specialised in Eastern European and Middle Eastern flights, and became an important transit node due to its fast turnaround capacity facilitated by its own ground handling. A new terminal, traffic control tower and third runway were to support its strategy of aggressive expansion, although it did not have the ambition to become an airport city in its own right at the time of the UTF.

The economic crisis reduced air traffic considerably and damaged a number of carriers, including Austrian Airlines. Lufthansa took it over without depriving it of its hub position in Schwechat. Its recovery in 2010, together with that of charters may bring about VIE's recovery before other European airports. While completion of the Skyline terminal is pursued no timetable is published about the third runway. This may revive local resistance, despite previous civic negotiations and environmental impact analyses.

⁹ <http://www.schwechat.gv.at/fs1/cs1/home/>

¹⁰ Sustainable development; commitment to Industry City Schwechat (full employment, balance between residents and workplaces, technical innovation, etc); economic efficiency and value for money, need-based social services, quality standards; anticipation and prevention, healthy cities objectives, regional centre of retail and services, sustainable traffic; help for self-help, foster housing provision, sustainable energy use; social and infrastructure provision for all with attention to special needs; protection of precarious activities and people; balance between different social groups, housing supply, access to jobs and education; foster communication between public sector and citizens, different social groups, the city and the economy; cooperation and coordination of social networks, education, transportation and technical infrastructure at national, regional and local level; comprehensive and active public participation; development within super-regional and international context, social provider of the region, core role for eastern Vienna city region.

¹¹ <http://www.viennaairport.com/>

The wholly publicly owned Letisko M R Stefanika Airport Bratislava (BTS)¹² became a budget airline hub with strong seasonal fluctuations. Ryanair has become its main carrier while other airlines ceased their operation, including national ones. BTS suffered a steep decline in 2009 (-23%), especially in domestic flights (-44%), but managed to attract cargo traffic. De facto, BTS assumes the complementary role to Vienna airport which was envisaged during merger negotiations, except that it now faces stiffer competition from VIE for cheap flights.

Austria is still planning to intensify its regional rail network with connections to a new station at VIE airport and links to both Bratislava and its airport, but the latter connection may be less complementary than competitive as VIE, used by a total of 128 airlines, has increased its budget airlines.

The bold UTF proposal to create a synergetic knowledge and technology base of international importance, shared between the municipality and the airport (see figure 1), formed part of the third runway construction. Neither body may have the investment capital, nor the appetite to pursue such an undertaking now. Nevertheless, continuous dialogue between the municipality and the airport would be beneficial for both and perhaps the work¹³ carried out for the airport by local authority supported CEIT may constitute such a link. The topics for UPATs are the potential competition between the livelihood of an existing town centre and an independent airport city, as well as the type of governance required to avoid damaging conflicts and duplication and to create synergy instead to the benefit of both the municipality and the airport, as well as the region as a whole.

3.4 Central European Institute of Technology

The Central European Institute of Technology (CEIT)¹⁴ was actively involved in the UTF. This ambitious institution set up by the municipality in 2006 combines education and training, R&D aiming at assisted living, ICT supported planning, and evidence based development strategies for transportation, the environment and spatial economy. It epitomised the driving force which could pro-actively contribute to the transformation of Schwechat from an industrial town into a knowledge society. It has carried out several projects on airport cities, airports and climate preservation,¹⁵ multiple use bus transportation stops, SDI for spatial planning for Plan4all, coordinated CentropeMAPs based on spatial data sets of the Centrope region, and other technology innovations through international cooperation. It makes a major contribution to eSchwechat, eHealth and renewable energy. It is thereby establishing Schwechat as a high value-added research and technology environment for innovative companies. Its education and training activities in technology fields and its links to the Vienna Technical University consolidate its knowledge base.

Its membership of international Living Labs provides broad exposure to its R&D. As it uses the local population as testing ground there is direct local benefit from international cooperation and knowledge exchange. Its contribution of knowledge to the airport is another local link with international repercussions. Its work for Centrope is creating a link to a supra regional political body which could influence development strategies through concrete cross border projects to which CEIT could contribute analytical capacity. CEIT has the potential to cooperate more closely with local industries and the local planning process, and it could give itself greater exposure by linking itself to other information outlets locally as well as nationally and internationally, such as the Vienna Technical University, the EU frameworks of research and technology development and demonstration activities (CORDIS) and, in particular, the new Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). CEIT could assume a hub function of clusters in targeted fields, such as ICT, with direct benefits to the locality.

CEIT has clearly the potential of intellectual capacity building at local, regional and international level and thus to create vertical synergy which is often the weak link of spatial development strategies. The implication for UPATs is to secure links with such institutions in order to establish some continuity to enhance the effectiveness of their interventions. UPATs could harness their potential more as catalysts between levels of policy and decision making which may be one of their most effective contributions.

¹² <http://www.airportbratislava.sk/index>

¹³ 'AIRCLIP' research on potential international best practice related to land based activities at airports

¹⁴ <http://www.ceit.at/>

¹⁵ Airclip, CEIT with TAKE OFF. 2009, for the Austrian Ministry of Traffic, Innovation and Technology

3.5 CENTROPE – Central Europe Region

Centrope¹⁶ created in 2006 comprises 6.5 million population. It is the fastest growing region in Europe with a growth rate only surpassed by South Asia. Supported by the EU InterRegio programmes, it offers the best of east and west for inward investment. For that reason, politicians from sub-regions in Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary with Vienna at its core have created a body with a decentralised management structure, based on voluntary cooperation and diversity. This enables the partners to pursue proactive development strategies to their mutual benefit. Centrope was active and ambitious before the economic crisis, also participating in the meta-regional projects of links between the Adriatic and the Baltic passing through the region.

Its 2015 vision¹⁷ focuses on cooperation in science, education and culture. Its assets are a competitive, economic, skilled workforce also for traditional industries, a network of higher education institutions, technological innovation centres with an outstanding technology-oriented R&D capability, an NGO academy, an open and supportive political strategy towards SEMs and inward investment, modern infrastructure, propensity for logistics, and a multimodal efficient transportation network. Its high quality of living environment includes local food production, sustainable waste disposal and energy generation and it attracts tourism as well as knowledge workers. Its marketing builds Centrope's identity while maintaining its diversity. An example is the 'region of 1000 unique features' tourism route¹⁸. However, language barriers may remain a constraint. Centrope set up a data base with analytical capacity and common strategies for cross border, multi-modal infrastructure development. The complexity of a culturally diverse extra body of decision coordination was an issue, together with national allegiances which may weigh more during recession.

How much of its vision has been implemented is not stated on Centrope's website which does not publish the outcomes of the annual conferences of its political management. News stops with the 2007 conference on 'business location Centrope' and there is neither a follow up of its vision nor its undated 'European courtyard' notion¹⁹. Newsletter 6 on Economic Area dates of 2007. Not mentioned on the Centrope website is CITT, Centrope's ICT Technology Transfer and its latest EU supported initiative²⁰ which held its first conference in Vienna in March 2010²¹.

Lack of up to date information points to lack of Centrope activities, due to the recession and possibly declining EU subsidies. It points to weakness in governance of cross border cooperation, despite its great potential and the growing trends towards supra- and mega-regional strategies in the USA²² and also in Europe²³. Small communes like Schwechat may feel powerless within such a complex, large scale setting, although they could play a crucial role in real life experimentation and implementation. The UTF Centropolis vision with a Freeport in Schwechat would have been such a pilot opportunity. Lessons for UPATs concerns are very large scale development strategies for which there is no obvious political or civic ownership and, more generally, the level of abstraction of meta-regional long term visions.

¹⁶ <http://centrope.com/> <http://www.centrope.info/>

¹⁷ Centrope. 2006. Vision 2015, we grow together we grow.

¹⁸ e.g. Issue No 1: Wine and Architecture. Erlebnisse im Zentrum Europa's

¹⁹ Centrope White Book for Centrope Themeworld. Undated. Arthesia AG CH, for FDI Centrope project (Interreg IIIA initiative).

²⁰ <http://centrope.ceconsult.biz/>

²¹ Centrope ICT Technology Transfer. 16/03/2010. Vienna. FP& project: capacities –coordination and support action / regions of knowledge. Coordinated by VITE. www.centrope-itt.eu

²² e.g. America 2025, national planning strategy proposed by the Regional Plan Association.

²³ The French Voluntary SCOT regional strategic planning initiative has produced positive results, e.g. Loire Valley, Montpellier, Paris region.

Building the European Diagonal was an initiative by the Fundacion Metropoliti to create a new mega-region for spatial development strategies. Judith Ryser (ed). 2008. Building the European Diagonal. Fundacion Metropoliti

4 UTF SCENARIOS AND THEIR LIKELIHOOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

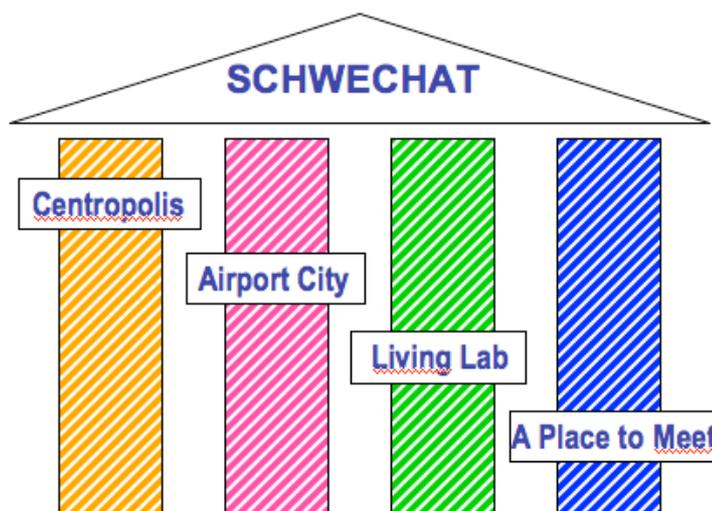


Fig. 3: UTF: four pillar scenarios

Among its twelve principles of city development Schwechat acknowledges the importance of supra-regional and international developments and advocates openness and tolerance towards intercultural and integrative forces which Schwechat is in a good position to shape to its advantage. However, this does not include proactive pursuits such as the UTF's Centropolis vision which assumed a prominent role for Schwechat in harnessing the central European development potential. Similarly, the UTF's airport-city scenario is far from the priorities of an airport struggling for its recovery.

In the absence of data on new ICT inward investment in Schwechat and CEIT not forming part of the ICTT project of Centrope, Schwechat does not hold a prominent role in the consolidation of information technology in the region by creating clusters and networks of indigenous capacity and promoting them internationally. Schwechat can still harness its local base for its Living Lab activities which have innovation and export potential, possibly as a specialised niche. This activity is underpinned by a number of Schwechat's principles of assisted self-help, small business and innovation support, provision for the disadvantaged, improved communication between social groups and citizen participation. It still means that CEIT would have to become self-sufficient in a viable economic future.

The UTF's scenario with the most local outlook, 'a place to meet', seems to be the most likely to emerge. Most Schwechat's principles comprise a dimension of sustainability, be it for public transport, housing, the environment or social provisions. Also, the municipality has direct powers to implement many aspects towards such a scenario. This includes the revitalisation of the town centre with animation programmes and the involvement of citizens and local businesses, the preservation of the high environmental quality of the towns and villages in the municipality and the open spaces between them, assets which the industrial town image tends to obscure but which are very appreciated by residents, workers and visitors, also from Vienna. This strategy should also include a more forceful effort to provide housing capable of attracting commuters to settle in Schwechat. This objective does not figure explicitly among the twelve principles, except as a target to bring numbers of residents closer to numbers of workplaces. Indirectly, this would solve a series of Schwechat's problems, as it would remove pressure from the transportation networks, reduce pollution and retain more consumers within the municipality to support local services and commerce.

5 ORIGINAL UTF BRIEF OF 2007 AND 2010 QUESTIONS

From these reflections on publicly available evidence related to Schwechat's future development, the likelihood of UTF scenarios in the changing circumstances, and the original questions of the 2007 UTF brief, a set of structured questions have been devised for interviews with the key protagonists and for feedback from the UTF team to draw lessons for the future on cooperation by international planning experts towards practical political and commercial decision making on development strategies.

In 2007, Schwechat's goal was "to generate a liveable city where people like to live, work and consume, equipped with a quality of life with which every part of the population can identify in its own way". The

contribution of the UTF was to provide concrete suggestions towards realising this goal through planning mechanisms. The 2010 questions below have been selected to find out what the local authority and the international airport have done to introduce changes of their own or in response to the proposals of the UTF on the three selected aspects, transportation, innovation and cooperation, originally singled out for consideration by the UTF.

5.1 Transportation

Schwechat has great locational advantages as a multimodal transportation hub. The drawbacks are environmentally damaging through traffic and loss of quality of life in the town centre. The 2007 objectives were:

re through traffic:

- reduce through traffic
- reconcile traffic growth projections with traffic calming
- alternative traffic routes
- shift cargo from lorries to rail

re revitalising the city centre

- revitalise city centre activities and attract users (by traffic calming)
- stimulate economic viability of the city centre
- design an appropriate physical functional shape
- extend the functional influence of the city centre to its surroundings

Questions 2010

re through traffic

has the local authority monitored the impacts of its traffic calming scheme of the high street?

if yes, what measures has it taken to act upon the findings?

has it undertaken further traffic calming in the city centre?

If yes, was it based on monitoring results?

has it explored locations for bypasses for through traffic?

If yes, has it amended its development plan?

(e.g. introduced the idea of an eco-boulevard as proposed by UTF?)

has it studied the potential positive and negative impacts of shifting traffic out of the city centre?

has it undertaken experimental closure to test the scenarios? (e.g. Geneva experiments)

has it measured the effects of the completion of the eastern motorway ring on through / local traffic?

if yes, and impacts were negative or neutral, has it altered the local network and its connections to the motorway?

has it studied how it could increase local public transportation supply?

in connection with better high speed connections between Vienna and the airport and to the east

has it explored what would be required to shift freight from lorries to rail?

has it found out which partners would need to be involved?

re revitalising the city centre

has the local authority introduced mixed uses and more housing in the city centre?

if yes, has this policy been formally incorporate in the local development plan?

has it explored incentives (or constraints) to stimulate the uptake of mixed development?

if yes, did more people move to the centre, did more shops return?

if yes, what effect did this have on local mobility?

has it taken measures to extend the influence of the city centre to its wider surroundings?

if yes, what were they and how have they contributed to the regeneration of the centre?

5.2 Innovation

Schwechat has the ambition to convert itself from a transport hub into a knowledge hub. The municipality has an industrial tradition with high land consumption. Similarly, it has a dense, multimodal transport infrastructure network which may attract low grade, land hungry logistics instead of high value added economic activities. While building on its industrial strength and curbing its adverse impacts the local economy needs innovative diversification. The municipality initiated e-Schwechat to that effect. The expectations in 2007 were:

re economic diversification

- make the existing industrial economy more sustainable
- attract new competitive firms
- diversify the local economy
- offer state of the art infrastructure and high quality living conditions

re town marketing

- make Schwechat known as a competitive business destination
- publicise its favourable international location
- participate in virtual networks

Questions 2010

re economic diversification

has the local authority managed to curb industrial pollution?

if yes, to what extend, with what long term commitments?

has it managed to attract new modern industrial firms to reinforce the industrial cluster effect?

if yes, how do they cooperate, complement or compete with existing firms?

has it taken physical planning measures to attract new companies?

if yes, has it made land and/or premises and infrastructure available?

has it worked on other conditions to attract innovative service industries?

if yes, has it contributed to (re-)training and skill provision

has it studied the feasibility of attracting congress tourism and related activities?

if yes, what are its conclusions and action plan?

has it attracted new innovative (service) businesses?

if yes, how many, which types, with which incentives?

has it taken concrete measures to avoid becoming a preferred location for low grade, land hungry logistics due to its dense multimodal transport infrastructure?

if yes, which measures, and how are they being implement?

re town marketing

has the local authority set up a marketing strategy?

if yes, what is it and how is it disseminated?

has it managed to overcome the contradiction between an industrial image and a green city?

if yes, with what measures, to what effect?

has it taken measures to change its image and market itself as a leisure and health destination?

if yes, has it monitored visitor numbers, their activities, spending pattern and length of stay?

has it built up a professional and international marketing capacity?

if yes, has it marketed its privileged location as a “4-country corner”, its proximity to Vienna and its airport and its exceptional open spaces along the Danube, the Schwechat river and the Vienna green belt?

5.3 Cooperation

Schwechat enjoys a favourable position as it can benefit from the future development of the eastern region of Austria, also beyond its national boundaries due to the extension of the EU. Centrope, a political structure of voluntary cross-border cooperation between regions in four adjacent countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) at supra-regional level offers new development opportunities. Planning cooperation (Planungsgemeinschaft Ost) between three Austrian Laender (Vienna, Burgenland and Lower Austria) identifies Schwechat’s regional strategic position. At the metropolitan level, Schwechat forms an integral functional part of Vienna’s growing conurbation and can take advantage of the presence in its municipality of energy supply, port, motorway ring-road and multimodal transport infrastructure and especially Vienna’s international airport. Schwechat’s aspirations were as follows:

re cooperation at international, regional and local levels

- strengthen cooperation with the city of Vienna, the city region and supra-regional opportunities
- take part of the growth dynamic of the Vienna conurbation
- exploit new economic opportunities arising from closer openness toward Eastern Europe
- seek dialogue and cooperation with international companies and increase competitiveness
- develop international city to city relations

re relation between the international airport and the city

- improve cooperation and coordination between the international airport and the municipality
- deal with possible contradiction between an emerging airport city and the traditional city centre
- identify and share complementary activities (eg housing provision for commuters)

Questions 2010

re cooperation at international, regional and local levels

has the local authority taken advantage of Centrope?

if yes, in terms of what concrete projects or benefits?

has it initiated independent cooperative ventures with regions beyond its own and national borders?

if yes, what are they, and with which local authorities, companies, other institutions?

has it taken advantage of its functional importance by obtaining new roles for Vienna?

if yes, what are they, and what are the concrete and material benefits?

has it taken pro-active initiatives to cooperate with international innovative companies?

if yes, with which companies, for what purpose, under which contractual arrangements?

re relation between international airport and the locality

has the local authority examined potential adverse impacts of airport growth on the municipality?

if yes, what are the potential impacts, how can they be resolved, by whom?

has it explored whether an airport centre can coexist soundly with the city centre?

if yes, what are the findings and what measures are proposed?

has it studied the requirements of airport growth on transport infrastructure?

if yes, what are they, and how will they be carried out and financed?

has it undertaken steps to initiate shifts between multimodal transport?

if yes, has it made proposals of shifting staff and passengers from car to public transport?

has it negotiated a division of labour between services at the airport city and those of the city centre?

if yes, which services, businesses, under what conditions and/or responsibilities.

6 UTF OUTCOME 2007 AND UPTAKE BY THE CLIENT 2010

Besides the single spatial scenario produced by the UTF in 2007 to synthesise its ideas for Schwechat's transformation from a transportation hub into a knowledge hub (see figure 1), the UTF suggested specific actions. They were conceived around four functional scenarios at different scales: Centropolis, Airport City, Living Lab, A Place to Meet (see figure 2). Detached from everyday local constraints and reality the purpose of the UTF was not to undertake existing planning functions but to contribute ideas towards the future of the region and the chances of their implementation.

The UTF used its potential as a catalyst to suggest closer relations between Schwechat, regional protagonists and, in particular, the international airport, to benefit from synergies in improving local conditions, including new forms of local governance to contribute to institutional capacity building.

re establishing synergies between the municipality, the international airport and others

cooperative – negotiated development strategies

- conceptualise development strategies through cooperation between the local authority, the airport and other main workplaces (refinery, plastic factory, brewery, etc), and ways of implementing them

sound and transparent evidence base

- develop an easily accessible, user friendly evidence base as a powerful support of development strategies;
- disseminate and explain planning proposals and strategies to the local community and beyond;

create a regular discussion forum open to all to identify potential conflicts early innovative governance and institutional capacity building

- build on existing new institutional structures through more active participation, e.g, Centrope;
- initiate new horizontal structures for cross-functional cooperation and coordination on a project basis;
- set up an interactive contact point at the municipality for regular information exchange and project exploration, inviting suggestions from the main businesses, local interest groups and civil society.

Questions 2010

Has the local authority worked out an evidence base (SWOT) for alternative spatial plans, taking into account the economic downturn?

if yes, where is the evidence available and to what development strategies has it led?

has it costed all its initiatives and explored sources of funding?

if yes, has it consulted on the budget and put the results into the public domain?

has it attempted to implement ideas and suggestions of the UTF?

if yes, which aspects, and with what results?

For both parties, the last question is probably the most relevant regarding future UPATs and their usefulness in practice. One expected outcome of this analytical survey is to provide some empirical base for a debate on the future orientation of UPATs. More generally, the results would provide a concrete and informed basis for future decision makers to seek independent advice from professional planners.

7 CONCLUSION

This paper is a speculative follow-up of an Urban Task Force which Isocarp provided on the invitation of the Municipality of Schwechat and the Vienna International Airport in 2007. The purpose of the survey, once the questions are answered by the key protagonists who requested planning inputs from the UTF to their benefit, is to draw some lessons from such short term interventions by professionals without local knowledge but well versed in a broad range of planning issues in countries throughout the world. One aspect is to examine

what such varied cultural perspectives can contribute in the light of little knowledge of local circumstances, and whether they can have a catalytic effect beyond the scope of local expertise. The exceptional changes in economic circumstances may skew the outcome of this particular survey, but they are also testing the robustness of long term scenarios which should withstand unpredictable contexts.