

How to change mobility practices?

The case of Vauban in Freiburg (Germany) reconsidered

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When plans were developed in the late 1990s to convert the Vauban area in Freiburg into a district for 5,300 people, civil society actors lobbied strongly for a design that would enable and support a car-free life and environment with all possible means. Consequently, parking space in parts of the new district was limited to park houses at the fringe of the settlement and a way was found to bypass the building code which requires every household to provide parking space for a car, regardless of whether they use one or not. These innovations in the field of regulatory institutions together with infrastructural decisions (settlement layout, parking facilities, tram line) worked hand in hand with the building-up of various forms of car-sharing and resulted in a built, institutional and social environment which is very supportive of a car-free (and low carbon) lifestyle.

We review some studies on this process of urban development and re-analyze them with a particular focus on the factors (e.g. infrastructural decisions and institutional innovations) which enabled or supported the emergence of social practices that make individual car ownership obsolete for so many households.