Car City

Car city fabric, the Car City is a city system, which can be found in all cities which have car traffic and a stock of private cars. The size and the qualities of the car city fabric vary depending on the history, location, size, type, stage of development, level of motorization, etc. of the city in question.

Extensions and qualities of the car city fabric can be identified from its typical elements and features. Basic elements of the car city fabric are the infrastructure of freeways, roads, streets and parking facilities, urban areas of low density and other car oriented or car dependent areas, units and facilities. Typical units are also shopping malls, car oriented shopping streets, car dependent service units etc. System of car traffic allows areas and units of almost any size, type, density and location.

Typical feature of the car city fabric is big number of cars and households with two or more cars. The number of carless households is small. The share of car use is high compared to other modes of transportation. The traffic flows are promoting the development of the car city units. On the other hand congestion and long distances of the networks limit the functions. Car city fabric consumes a lot of energy and causes many kinds of problems and disturbances, so it is not a good basis for sustainability. At worst the car city fabric serves only car users, making it really difficult or impossible for a carless person to manage.

Zone of the car city fabric, Car City Zone is an area surrounding the Walking- and Transit City Zones. The zone can consist of several sub zones, depending on the location, density contents and qualities of the areas. Within a travelling time of 30 minutes, car city zone can be extended up to 20 or even 40 kilometres from the centre and main units of the region. A network of car city fabric can be more or less continuous and a large car city zone can include several cities with their own walking- and transit city fabrics.

Car city fabric is newest phase of the urban process. Yet there have been several stages of development, which can be considered as historical layers or stages of the car city. At first the cars were used mainly inside the zones of the walking- and transit city fabrics and the elements of the car city fabric were constructed inside these zones. This led to destruction of numerous walking- and transit city elements and decline of the walking and transit city fabrics. Typical features of the next phases have been zoning according to principles of the Modern City and vast urban sprawl of new cities or a belt of car city fabric (edge city) around the traditional city zone of walking and transit city fabrics. Typical feature of the new layers has been growth of the scale of the elements like freeways, intersections, shopping malls etc. The newest stage of the car city fabrics has been orientation towards better mix, balance and symbiosis of the three fabrics and renewal of the car city fabric using elements of the transit city fabric. For instance, in extensive car cities, the elements of the transit city fabric like a new light rail can change the patterns of transportation and form basis for expansion of the new elements of the transit and walking city fabrics.

Car City is also a definition of the historical stage, which followed the periods of the Walking- and Transit Cities. The new car stock made it possible for the cities to grow in all directions and led to new types of cities. In classification of cities "Car City" refers to cities of USA, Australia and Canada.