Transit City

*Transit city fabric*, the Transit City is a city system, which can be found in transit cities. Transit cities are usually intermediate or big cities. The size and the qualities of the transit 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 transit city fabric can be identified from its typical elements and features. *Basic elements of the transit city fabric* are the public transport system and a network of urban areas with qualities that enable the existence of the public transport. The public transport system can consist of one system or a combination of several systems like trams, buses, local trains, a light rail system or metro with their infrastructure, vehicles, stops and stations. Urban areas of the transit city fabric consist of buildings and courtyards with apartments, offices service units, etc that are close enough to the transit service. They need to have also proper intensities, volumes and locations in terms of the requirements of the transit systems. Other elements of the transit city fabric are service centers and local services which can easily be reached on foot, a network of sidewalks, paths and lanes for pedestrians, parks, squares and other public spaces that enable carless activities, good infrastructure for cycling etc.

*Typical features of the transit city fabric* are a relatively high number of carless households and a small number of households with two or more cars. A big share of the people use public transport as a main mode of transportation. They also walk, use the local services and bike if it is possible and convenient. Good transit city fabric is a good basis for sustainable living and activities.

*Zone of the transit city fabric*, Transit City Zone is an area surrounding the Walking City Zone forming strings and fingers, which reach out from the main center. The zone can consist of several sub zones, depending on the transit systems. Maximum radius of the transit city zone based on local buses is about 8 kilometres. In addition to walking on both ends of the trip, this means a travelling time of 30 minutes. The distance can be a bit longer, if there is a busway or some other special systems to extend the area of the service. In terms of light rail, local train or metro the radius can be much longer, depending on travelling times.

Transit city zone includes also many elements of the walking city fabric inside areas and neighbourhoods, which have a good level of services, including a neighbourhood- or a district center. These sub-centers and big institutes can function like small walking towns.

Many households of the transit city zone have cars and the zone can include many elements and areas of the car city fabric. The impact of these elements is negative, if they are dominating and limiting the functions of the transit city. The transit city can even lose most of its importance if the number of elements of the car city fabric inside the zone or in the vicinity is too high and people with cars use mainly the services of the car city fabric. Some of the car city elements like underground carparks, joint service units etc., can have neutral or even positive impacts, if they function in a symbiosis with the transit city fabric.

Transit city fabric is part of the urban process and there have been several stages of development, which can be considered as *historical layers or stages of the transit city*. The first stage of the transit city fabric was modest in most Finnish towns. The second stage in the 60’s and early 70’s was strong when people of the new suburbs didn’t have cars and were dependent on public transport. Since that the development polarized. The transit city fabric of the
capital region with local trains and metro lines has grown stronger. The other cities have faced a
decline of the transit city fabric. Transit city fabric has maintained most of its significance in Transit
Cities (Tampere, Turku, Oulu, Jyväskylä, Lahti and Kuopio) but needs renewals. Smaller cities of
Finland have turned to Car Cities and they have lost most of the former elements of the transit city
fabric.  

Transit City is also a definition of the historical stage, which followed the period Walking Cities. The
cities expanded to broader areas than in walking cities due to new rail -, street car – and bus
connections and formed string-like structures, suburbs, outskirts and networks of outskirts. In
classification of cities "Transit City" refers to European-type of cities where public transport plays a
key role.