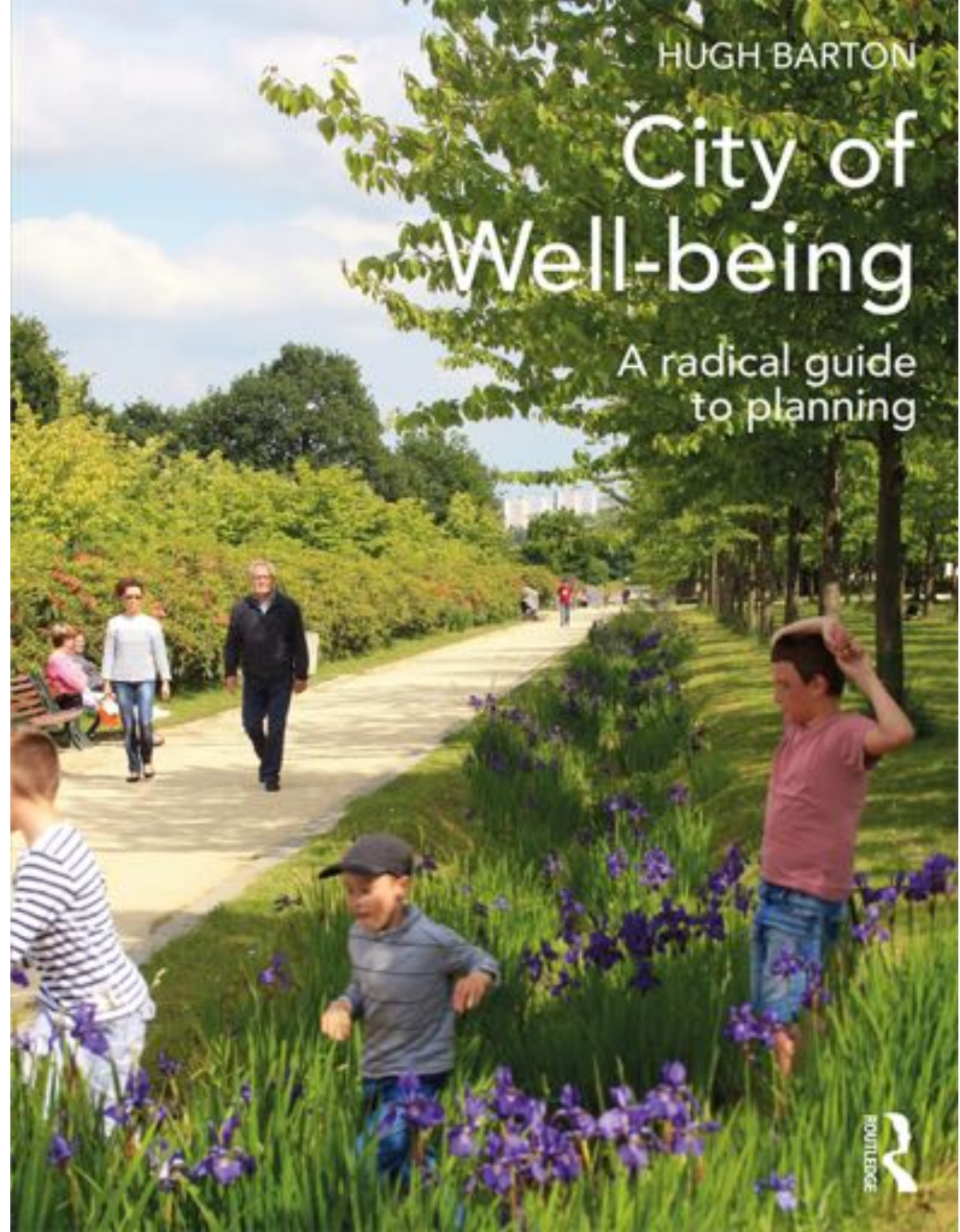


Healthy City Design Congress
October 2017

Land, power and well-being

Hugh Barton

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planning, health and sustainability
WHO Collaborating Centre for
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UWE Bristol



Multiple health crises...

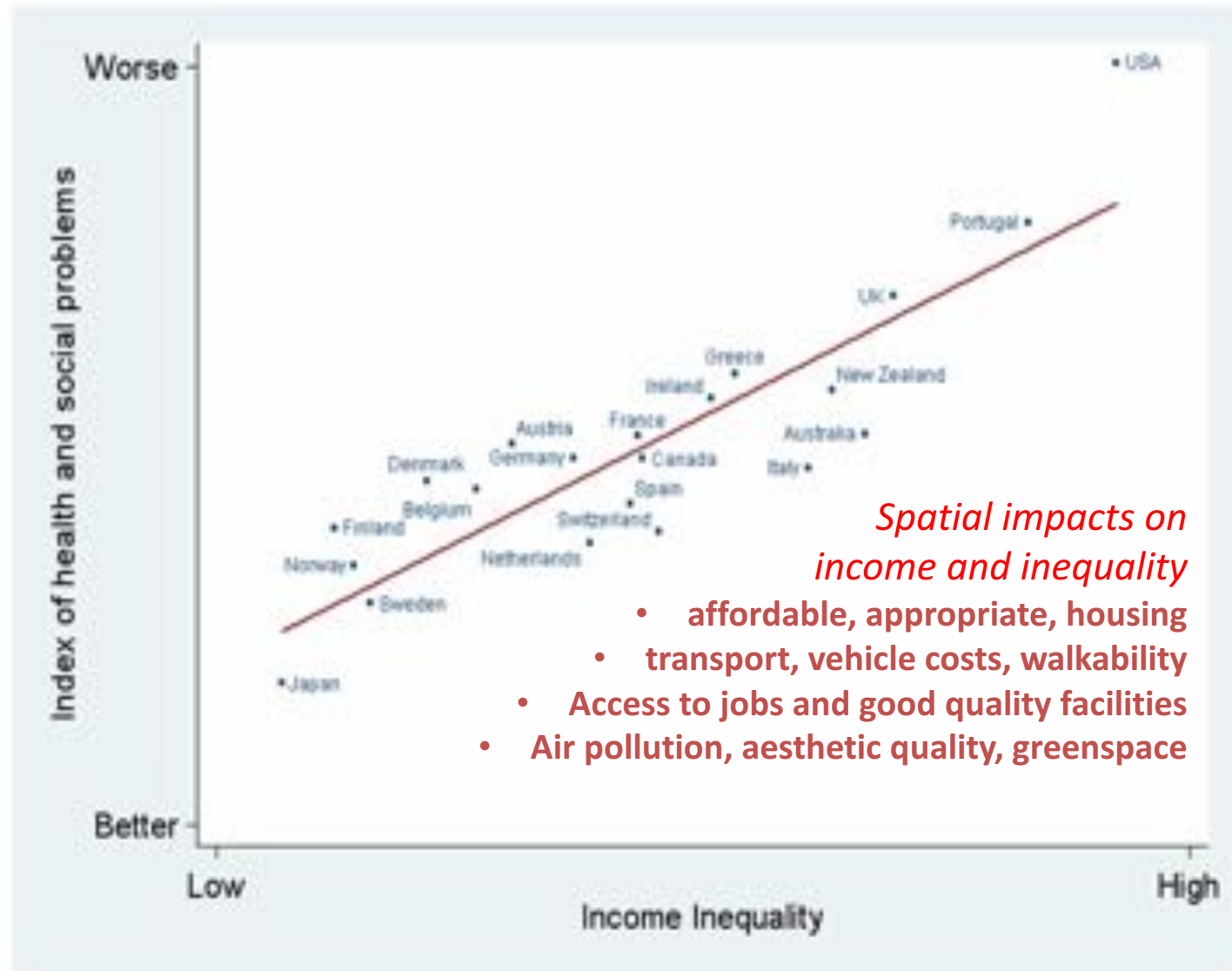
Planning and development decisions are implicated

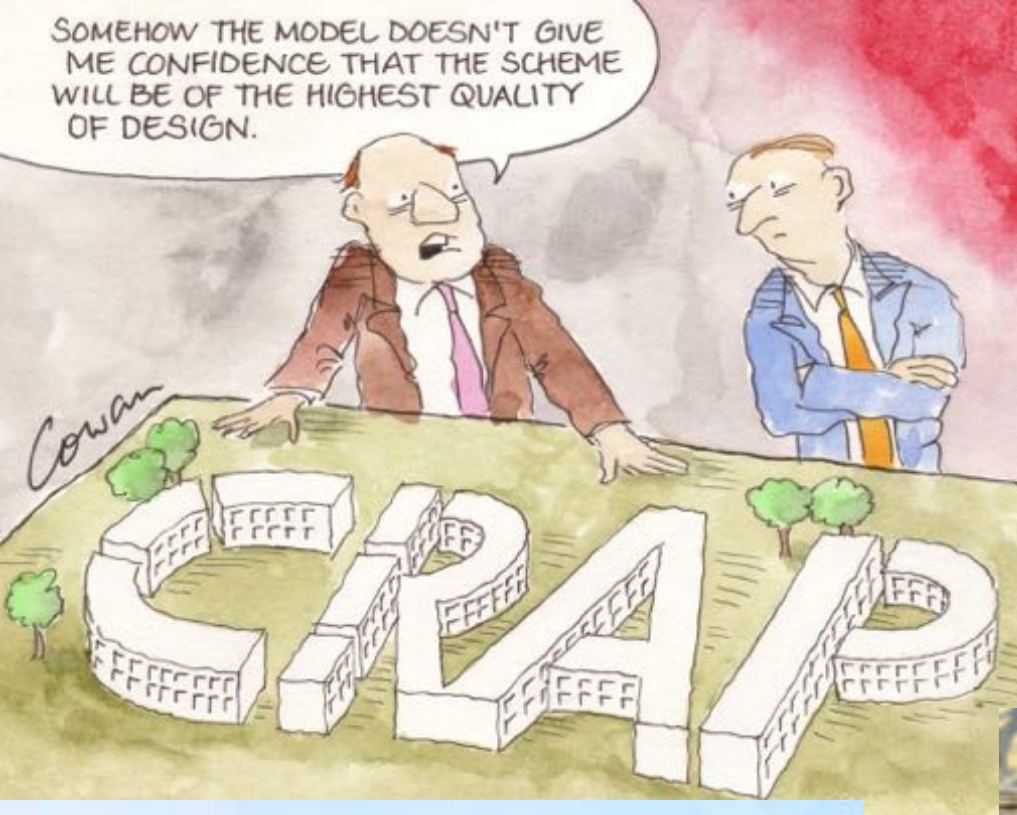
- More people die prematurely from **poor air quality** in London each year than died in the Great Smog of 1952. (*Mayor's Air Quality Strategy 2003*)
- **Overweight and obese** populations cost the NHS £6.3 billion (2015) and society £27 billion (*Foresight Report: Tackling obesity, 2007*)
- Health advice is for at least 10 minutes brisk walk each day, but 40% middle-aged people in UK don't manage even one brisk walk *each month* (Public Health England 2017)
- Socially and economically **deprived populations** spend a third of their shorter lives with physical or mental disability (*Marmot report, 2010*)
- The population is ageing, with longer periods of **mental or physical disability**
- **Climate change** is considered by the World Health Organization to be the biggest threat to global health

Health and Social Problems are Worse in More Unequal Countries

Index of:

- Life expectancy
- Math & Literacy
- Infant mortality
- Homicides
- Imprisonment
- Teenage births
- Trust
- Obesity
- Mental illness – incl. drug & alcohol addiction
- Social mobility





**Planning at the cross-roads:
sustaining the neo-liberal version of
planning: market facilitation**



or sustaining people's well-being?

Origins

Town planning and public health were intimate bed-fellows at the turn of the 19th century

Ebenezer

“I realised the splendid possibilities of a new civilization based on service to the community and not self-interest, at present the dominant motive...”



Imagine three cities... with very different political values and spatial trajectories

City 1 – values the free market, and the freedom of landowners and individuals to pursue their own interests, with unconstrained car use considered a basic right.

City 2 – also values the free market, but modified by strong concerns for built heritage and open countryside.

City 3 – promotes a 'social' market, valuing equality of opportunity and with a strong belief in civic responsibility.

City 1: American dream

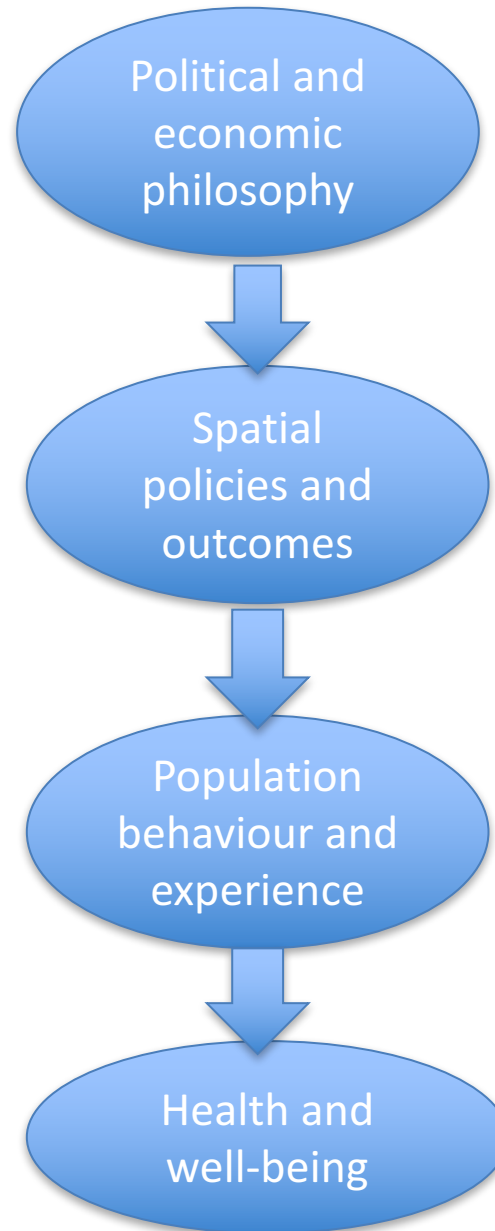
- **Dominant spatial policies**
 - Freeway construction
 - Quarter-acre residential plots
 - Decentralization of city facilities
- **Health**
 - Car-dependent population, sedentary lifestyles
 - 70% overweight, 35% obese
 - Life expectancy of the poor 20 years less than the rich

City 2: British mix and match

- **Dominant spatial policies**
 - Make do and muddle through on transport and land use
 - Green belt and countryside protection
 - High residential but low commercial densities,
- **Health**
 - High levels of congestion and air pollution
 - The rich: 70 years healthy life, 88 years of life
 - The poor: 50 years healthy life, 75 years of life
 - Children the least happy in OECD countries

City 3: European best

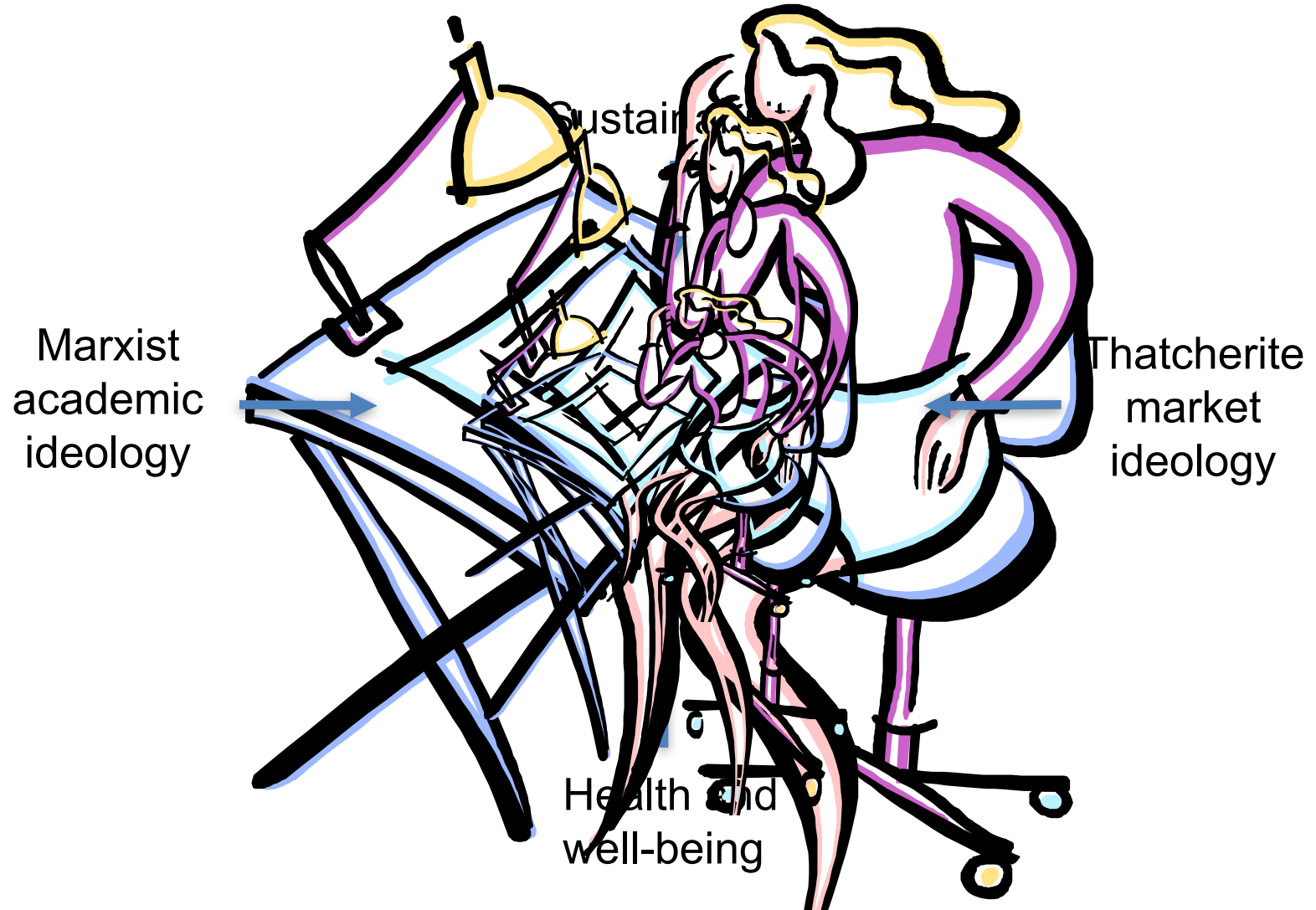
- **Dominant spatial policies**
 - Tram, bus, cycling and walking networks
 - Urban land use tied to public transport
 - Diversity of housing stock, rent control
- **Health**
 - Daily exercise the rule, few people overweight or obese
 - Low congestion and air pollution levels
 - The poor 5 years less healthy life and longevity than rich
 - Children the happiest in OECD



What are the key differences between the cities?

- Political philosophy: neo-liberal v. social democratic
- Attitude to planning: market-enabling v. people-enabling
- Land/property rights: private v. state v. community
- Local authorities: government agents or autonomous agents
- Urban investment: silo, corporate or co-operating agencies

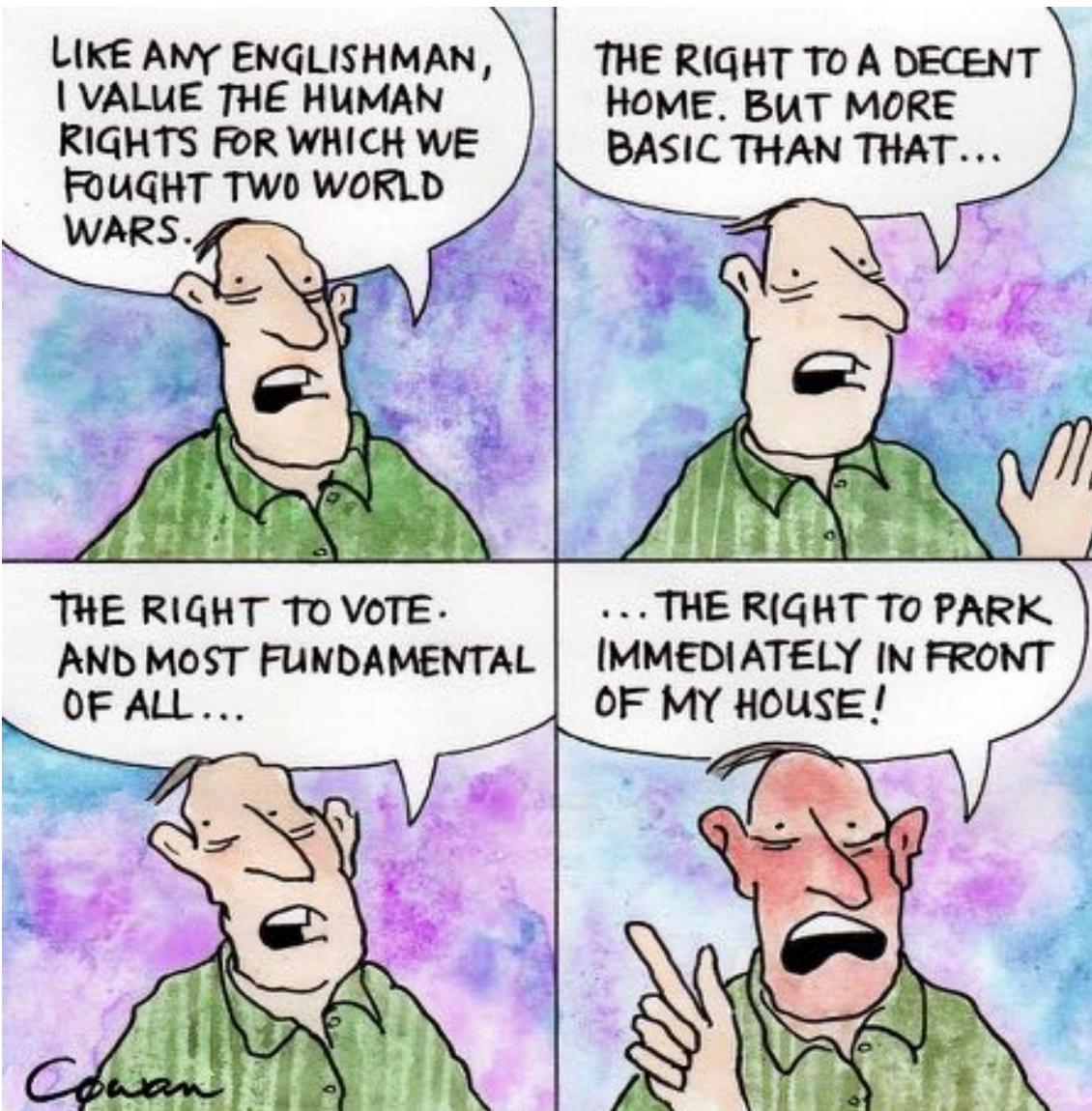
Who'd be a planner?



Who'd be a planner?



Grasping the political nettles...

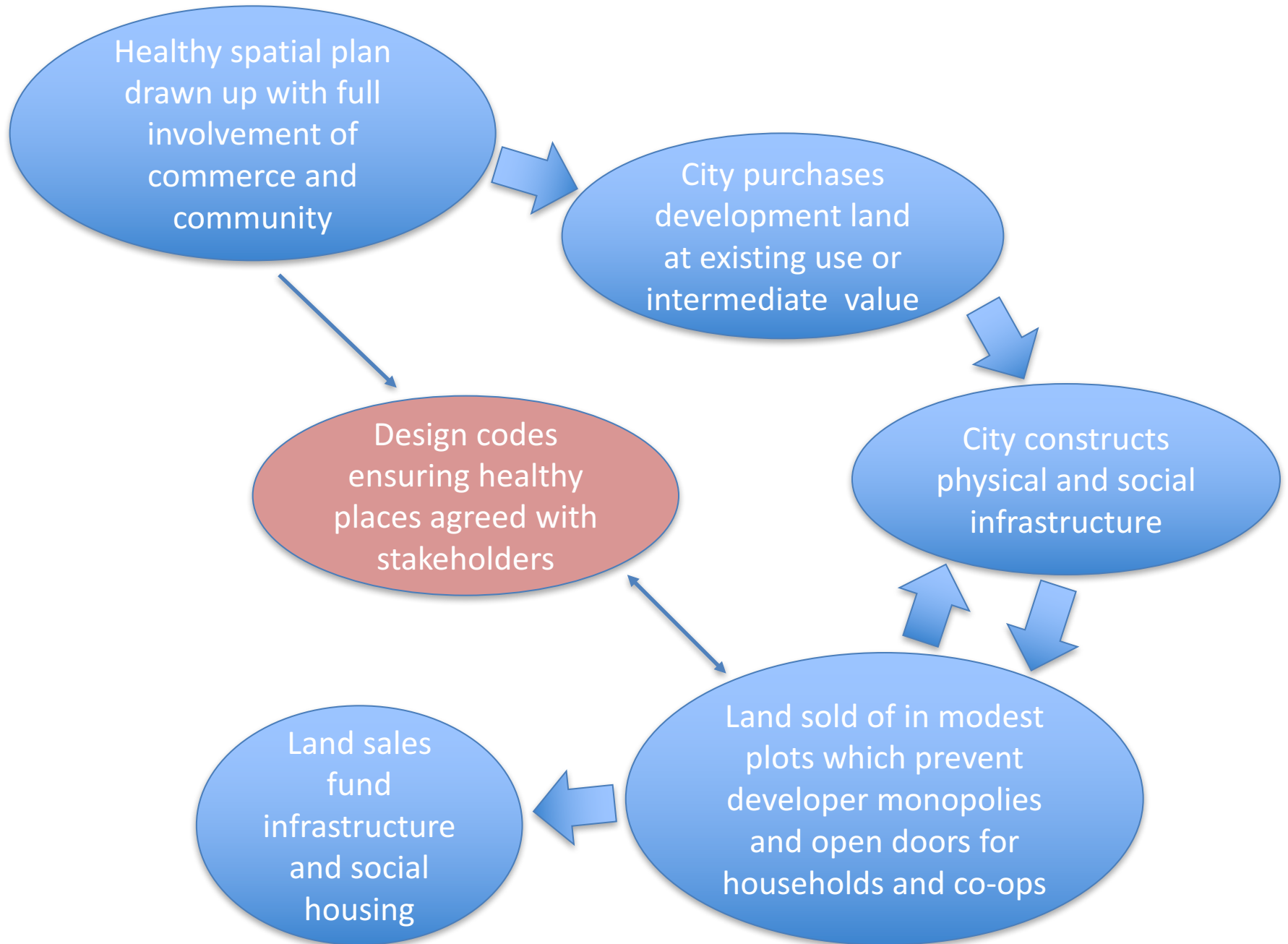


The governance of land

Is planning needed?

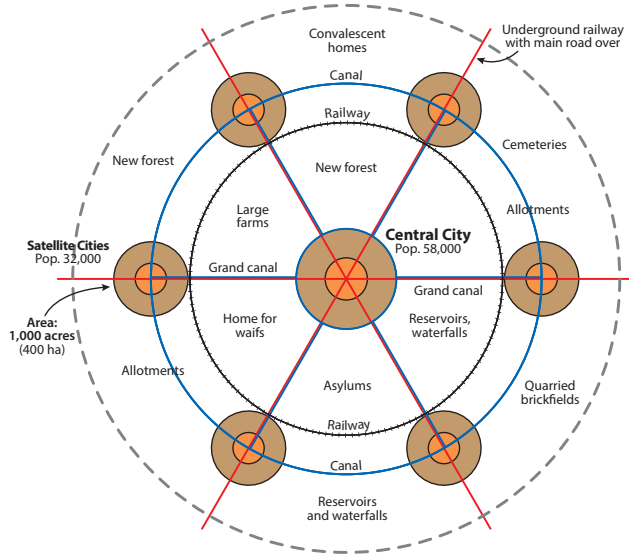
Whose property rights?

What power for local government?



Group of Slumless, Smokeless Cities

Total area: 66,000 acres. Population 250,000

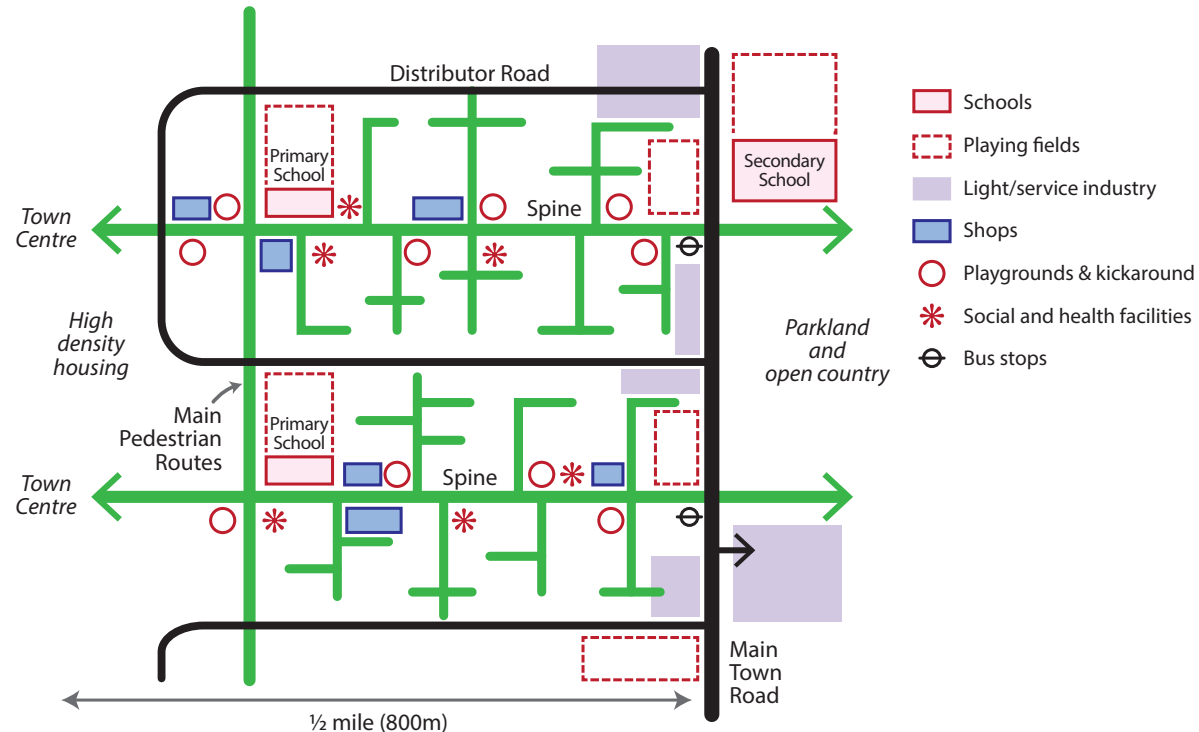


Inspiration from the recent past

Letchworth: the civic ownership of land with rental income funding infrastructure

New Town and Urban Development Corporations

Hook: a concentration of meeting places on a central pedestrian spine



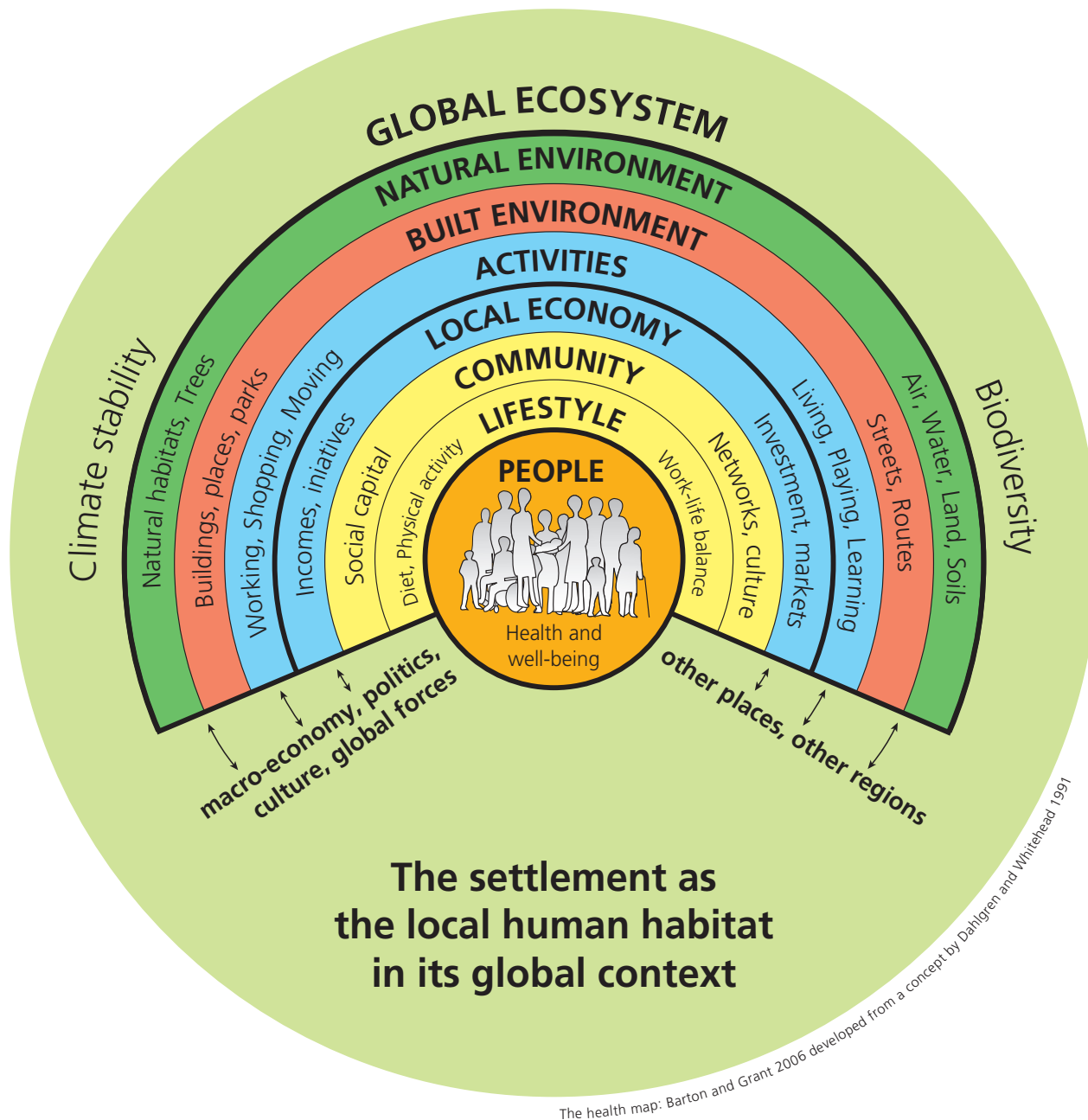
“You can achieve incredible progress if you set a clear goal and find a measure that will drive you toward that goal. That may seem basic but it is amazing how often it is not done, and how hard it is to get right” *Bill Gates*

1

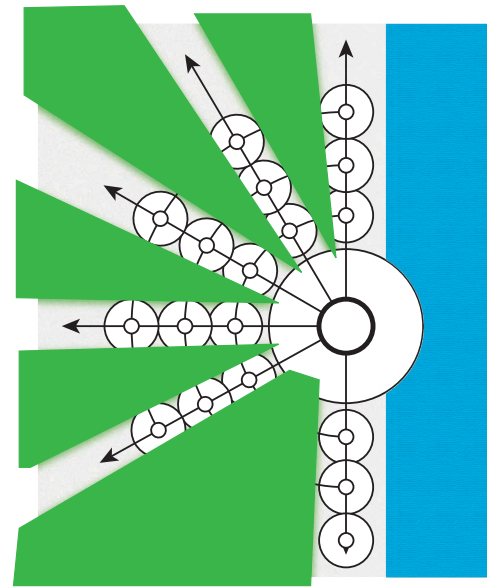
An holistic
approach: and
people at the
heart of planning

The Settlement Health Map

Combines the idea of the city as
an eco-system with the city as a
social and environmental
determinant of health



Beacons of hope...

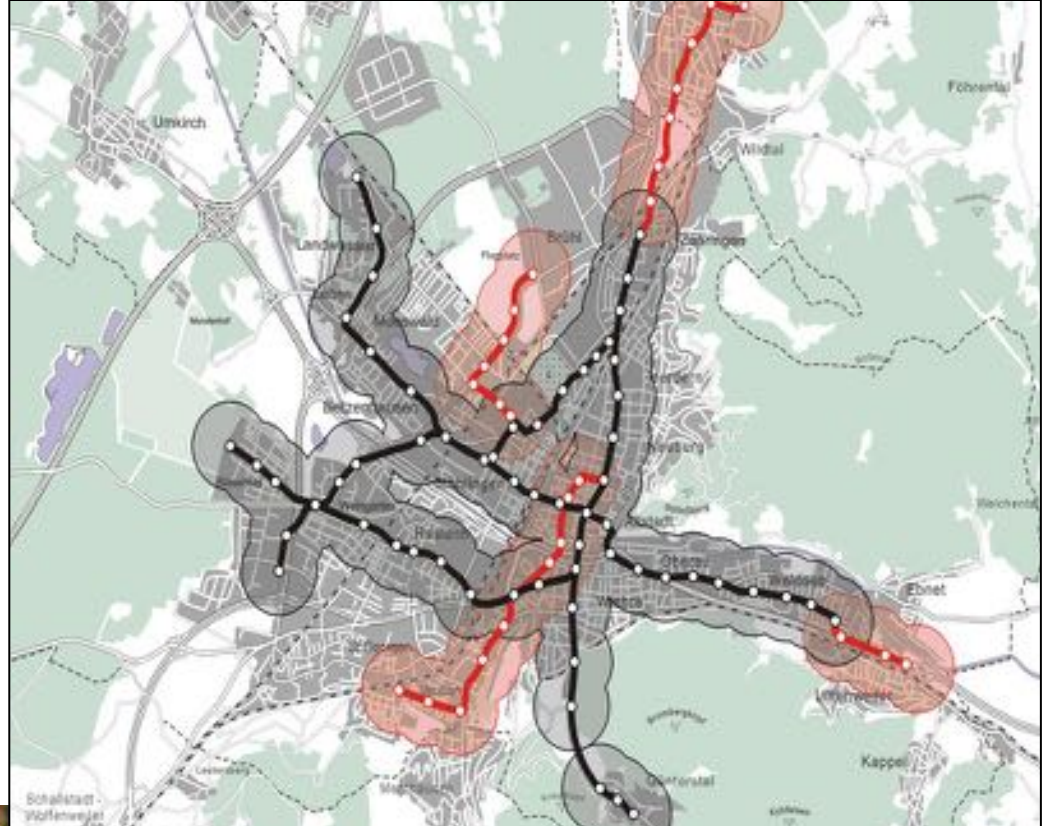


Copenhagen

Freiburg

Kuopio

Portland





Creating places that are open and accessible to all, free from danger and pollution, encouraging healthy physical activity, conviviality and a sense of identity



Plugging a gaping hole in the literature...

“Takes us on a wonderful and passionate journey about the potential of planning...eloquently argued, beautifully written, scholarly in its comprehensive scope” *Prof. Susan Thompson*

“This is the urban planning book I have been waiting for, tackling health, community, climate change...and people at the heart of our place-making process” *George Ferguson*

