



# Short Report on Implementation Pathways

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## **TuneOurBlock**

***Transforming urban quarters to human scale environments: applying superblock concepts for different urban structures***

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# 1 Introduction

The Superblocks concept is best understood as an alternative traffic and public space regime to that of automobility. Rather than an interesting exception to current norms, it is meant to become the new normal. As such, the implementation of Superblocks consists of more than simply traffic calming and neighborhood improvement measures. Superblocks have the potential to reshape how we move, how much we move, how we use space, how we engage each other in public, and how much space can be devoted to climate adaptation and other non-traffic issues.

Our working definition of Superblocks, presented in deliverable 2.2 of this research project, is as follows:

"The Superblocks concept leverages traffic reorganization and the reallocation of public space to support urban sustainability transitions. By systematically reducing the number of motor vehicle through-routes, the Superblocks concept transforms the city into a mosaic of traffic-calmed neighborhoods. Traffic reorganization is applied at scales large enough to promote systemic change, such as that of urban districts or even entire cities. Individual neighborhoods – superblocks – prevent motor-vehicle through-traffic, are walkable in scale, and redesign reclaimed public space to prioritize active mobility, climate adaptation, the improvement of local environmental conditions, and opportunities for diverse and inclusive public social life."

Superblocks concepts contain many interconnecting elements intended to achieve many different aims. They are expressions of systems of urban mobility and social behavior, norms of public space allocation, and urban environmental priorities that differ greatly from those found in cities across the world today. Moving from what Superblocks are to how they come into being, this report focuses on implementation pathways.

Our ambitions in this document are:

- to hypothesize an implementation process ideally suited to the Superblocks concept;
- to theorize the various alternative pathways that implementation might follow and the components of implementation strategies and tactics;
- to identify the contextual determinants that make each implementation process unique;
- and to explain why the real-world implementation of Superblocks is neither simple nor straightforward.

## 2 Theorizing implementation pathways

For all the attention that the Superblocks concept has received, it is perhaps surprising that it has never been fully implemented. Even in Barcelona, which is synonymous with Superblocks in urban planning circles, implementation consists of only a handful of neighborhood Superblock cells and no wider traffic reorganization. Full realization of Superblocks appears to have been hampered by a lack of sufficient scale, lack of fidelity to the core concept, and lack of both political will and public support.

The transformative capacity of Superblocks is lost when the scale of implementation is too small. Compromising the vision by, for example, seeking to implement fragmented Superblock cells without an accompanying traffic reorganization, or by failing to challenge the supremacy of automobility, hinders the ability of the concept to function properly. A lack of either political will or public support risks abandoning implementation prematurely, or else realization of a compromised vision. The first question for cities hoping to fully implement the Superblocks concept is how such pitfalls can be avoided. In other words, how would an “ideal” implementation process unfold?

### 2.1 An ideal four-phase implementation process

An “ideal” implementation process designed to avoid the risks noted above would seek to envision a future state, overcome resistance, institutionalize transformation, and co-create sustainable, livable, and equitable urban futures. We refer to the four phases of such a process as, in order: (1) Futuring, (2) Planning, (3) Piloting, and (4) Institutionalizing. There are several components to each phase that are necessary for implementation to have the greatest likelihood of success (see Fig.1 below).

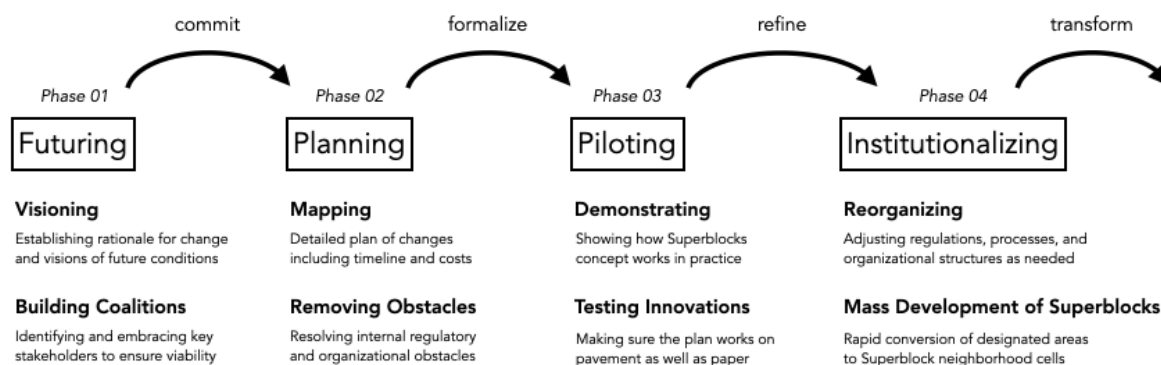


Figure 1: Ideal Four-Phase Implementation Process (TuneOurBlock/Joshua Grigsby)

### **2.1.1 Phase one: Futuring**

#### Establishing rationale for change and visioning process

The futuring phase is concerned with diagnosing the root causes of problems, identifying actions capable of resolving them, and envisioning the societal changes likely to accompany such actions. It answers the questions "what are we trying to accomplish here?" and "what changes will that entail?" This phase consists mostly of discussions and workshops with the broadest possible range of stakeholders from all sectors of society to assess systemic problems and imagine a future state in which they have been resolved. It produces narratives and visualizations that serve as a foundation for communication and planning.

#### Building support coalition of essential stakeholders

Additionally, the first phase seeks to identify "changemakers" and other potential leaders who can galvanize various populations into support, and to do so strategically in order to build a powerful support coalition. Without rigorous futuring, there is a high risk that plans will not reach the necessary scale and scope for systemic change and that support coalitions essential for such an endeavor will not be assembled.

### **2.1.2 Phase two: Planning**

#### Mapping of future Superblocks

In the second phase, the entire urbanized area of a city is assessed for its suitability for Superblocks, using indicators such as those identified in deliverable 2.2 (e.g., type of built environment, population density, street network characteristics, existing traffic patterns, and ground floor functionality, among others). This assessment produces a plan of the maximum useful application of the Superblocks concept, including the streets that will separate individual neighborhood cells and provide circulation corridors between them. This "map of the future" serves as a reference point throughout the implementation process. Perhaps more importantly, it establishes a scale of implementation consistent with the aim of Superblocks to foster systemic transformations.

#### Identification of structural obstacles and strategic plan for overcoming them

The planning phase is also the time to identify whether any existing planning regulations, administrative structures, or other internal organizational elements might pose problems for implementing Superblocks. For example, the streets inside neighborhood Superblock cells may not conform to existing designations such as shared space or pedestrian zones and instead require formal recognition of a new street type. Planning departments also tend to operate in silos that may impede the kind of cooperation and joined-up thinking that Superblocks call for. Such internal obstacles should be resolved at the earliest possible stage.

### **2.1.3 Phase three: Piloting**

#### Demonstration & familiarization

In the third phase, several potential Superblock neighborhood cells are selected from the plan. Each should be different enough from the others that, in total, they can be said to include all of the built environment types that will be eventually transformed within the case city. Test cells are then temporarily transformed (for approximately 3-6 months) to familiarize citizens with the concept of Superblocks, demonstrate how it might impact their neighborhood, and engage them in developing changes to implement more permanently. A wide range of spatial and functional transition experiments are undertaken, with citizens involved as heavily as possible. The piloting phase is also when traffic reorganization schemes can be tested, monitored, and evaluated. The primary aims of this phase are to allay fears, reduce confusion, test possible interventions, build local support, and establish Superblocks within local political and planning discourses. At the end of phase three, permanent changes to the test cells are implemented.

### **2.1.4 Phase four: Institutionalizing**

#### Restructuring of traffic plan

It is essential that the second & third phases position Superblock cells as the new normal and not as isolated areas of improvement. This enables phase four, which includes adopting a new traffic plan covering a broad section of the city, ideally the entire area included in the plan from phase two. The rules and regulations of the Superblocks concept, such as restricting through-traffic, including mass transit, to the circulation routes between future Superblock cells, and de-segregating rights-of-way within Superblock cells, now become the new status quo.

#### Mass redevelopment of Superblock cells

Adopting the new traffic plan also assists the mass redevelopment of Superblock cells. A neighborhood transformation process similar to that in phase three is carried out, but lessons learned during piloting should make it more streamlined, with numerous cells being redeveloped at the same time. This will likely require dedicated teams of experts, residents, and coordinators for each cell, as each new Superblock neighborhood will have its own unique challenges and opportunities. The aim should be to complete all four phases within 5-10 years so that the benefits can be experienced as soon as possible and the risks of burnout and rejection reduced.

## 2.2 Action-priority implementation pathways

Real-world implementation of Superblocks has thus far not followed the ideal four-phase process laid out above. Instead, it has appeared to be guided by what could be called action-priorities. Rather than attempting to implement a cohesive Superblocks vision in support of rapid systemic transformation, a more cautious, piecemeal approach is taken, with aspects of the Superblocks concept extracted and implemented individually. The priority of implementation then rests with these specific aspects. This may be a strategic approach to slowly build political and public support or to find ways around obstacles that would preclude the ideal process, or it may be due to a lack of commitment to the Superblocks concept on the part of those overseeing implementation. Whatever the reason, implementation pathways guided by action-priorities diverge from the “ideal”.

Action-priorities are the central aim of any given attempt to implement Superblocks and are derived from the concept's essential elements (grids and cells) and degree of coherence (fragmented or unified). We identify three pathway-types and refer to them as: Building Blocks, Re-Gridding, Opportunistic Hybrid. A fourth pathway-type could be called Rapid Transformation and is not considered here because it mirrors the ideal implementation pathway described above.

### 2.2.1 *Building blocks*

The Building Blocks pathway focuses on the implementation of individual traffic-calmed Superblock neighborhood cells. This is likely to occur one Superblock cell at a time, with each cell being treated as essentially a stand-alone project. The Building Blocks pathway could eventually produce enough individual cells to reach a kind of tipping point at which full implementation of the Superblocks concept is met with less and less resistance. More likely, no more than a small number of blocks will be implemented, as each requires its own support coalition and momentum. The vision of this pathway does not extend beyond each block and must therefore be renewed each time a new block is to be developed. Broader reorganization of traffic outside of Superblock cells is absent.

### 2.2.2 *Re-gridding*

Re-Gridding focuses on traffic reorganization instead of Superblock cells. Implemented at the scale of an urban district or entire city, it seeks to create the conditions for Superblock cells to gradually emerge and fill in the grid. The "grid" in this sense is not necessarily an orthogonal grid but rather a grid-like network of through-traffic routes. Re-gridding normalizes future traffic patterns and mobility behavior, hopefully reducing resistance to the Superblocks concept and to transformation of individual Superblock cells. However, reorganizing traffic flows at such a scale without clearly visible reasons could generate frustration, defection, and general public resistance to further implementation of the Superblocks concept.

### 2.2.3 *Opportunistic hybrid*

The Opportunistic Hybrid pathway looks to make gains in both grids and cells wherever they can most easily be won, even if the initial result could be considered fragmented or compromised. By following the path of least resistance, this pathway aims to implement as much as possible, as quickly as possible, without generating pushback (whether from politicians, municipal departments, residents, or other stakeholders). The more that gets implemented, the more normal the Superblocks concept becomes, and the easier it should be to later fill in the gaps. There is certainly merit to this pathway, but such a fragmented approach could lead to less than cohesive results.



### 3 Factors shaping implementation pathways

As the Chinese military strategist and philosopher Sun Tzu eloquently explained more than 2500 years ago, intentional change processes consist of both strategy and tactics. Strategy provides the plan or path for achieving a goal, while tactics are the individual steps taken along the way to reach the destination; strategy can be equated with approach, and tactics with actions or concrete initiatives. Each implementation pathway-type consists of both a strategic approach and a related set of implementation tactics. We assume that implementation pathways begin with an action-priority, and that implementation strategies and tactics then take shape in response to both the selected action-priority and a set of contextual determinants that support certain approaches and hinder others (see Fig.2 below).

#### 3.1 Implementation Strategies

While directed by action-priorities and shaped by contextual determinants (explained below), the implementation process itself consists of strategies and tactics. Kornberger (2012, 2017) explains strategy as “a body of knowledge concerned with the production of truth”, a set of practices “concerned with value creation”, and “a political mechanism to mobilize people.” It is simultaneously an approach (of management and leadership), a process (of strategy making), and a product (comprising plans, discourses, and texts). Strategic planning in the realm of public policymaking can be understood as a form of discursive governance in which claims are made as to what knowledge of a problem is relevant, which values should guide the assessment of response options, and how responses should be enacted. Instead of rule by fiat, strategy leverages narrative framing to circumscribe the concerns of governance configurations and guide social and institutional behavior toward the production of normative futures. Put simply, implementation strategies are normative plans of implementation and include discourses of change, political configuration, public engagement, and implementation phasing. Rather than attempt to formulate types of strategies, we describe their main components below.

##### 3.1.1 *Discourses of change*

Four distinct discourses of change inform the implementation strategies of Superblocks. The Sustainable Mobility discourse draws primarily on calls to shift to non-carbon-based energy sources and to reduce the consumption of finite resources, and it questions the sustainability of automobility both in terms of the technological object it is based on and the mobility patterns it generates. The Social Equity & Inclusion discourse focuses on the individuals and groups marginalized by automobility's spatial and behavioral norms, and seeks to diversify mobility options and reallocate space so that access and benefits are more equitably distributed. Concerns over excessive air and noise pollution, a lack of real or perceived safety, and the insufficient provision of functional, comfortable, and attractive public space animate the Urban Living Environment discourse. The fourth discourse of change, Climate Adaptation, typically calls for greatly expanded green and blue urban infrastructure to reduce the effects of extreme weather associated with climate change such as heat waves and flooding.

### **3.1.2 Political configuration**

The implementation of Superblocks demands high levels of political will, and strategies are thus likely to be strongly shaped by the positions and aims of the political coalitions established to support them. Preexisting political agendas produce different frames that provide implementation strategies with different starting points and goalposts along the way. In short, Superblocks concepts cannot be implemented without being politicized. Implementation strategies must correspond to specific political configurations and negotiate political landscapes of varied terrain.

### **3.1.3 Public engagement**

Because Superblocks concepts require extensive regulatory and physical changes to streets and other public spaces, all implementation pathway-types are assumed to be led by municipal planning departments. This is not to diminish the role of citizen-led initiatives in support of Superblocks, as they may provide the impetus for authorities to act, it is simply acknowledgment of where power in implementation processes ultimately resides. Still, all implementation strategies assign roles to residents and other stakeholders through their approach to public engagement. Engagement types reflect the degree to which the public is involved and given agency and include communication, participation, and co-creation.

### **3.1.4 Implementation phasing**

As plans for implementation, strategies must address phasing, or the stages through which Superblocks concepts will be realized, the objectives of each stage, who the key actors are, and how long each stage will last. Depending on where one designates the starting point of the implementation process, phases can include planning and design, feasibility and impact assessment, communication and public participation, temporary implementation, additional assessment and revision, and finally "permanent" implementation. Phasing can include very few or relatively many distinct phases, and is generally arranged to serve several purposes: to increase public support through proof-of-concept, to minimize the disruption to stakeholders, and to produce plans that are feasible to execute, effective in achieving their aims, and viewed as successes after completion.

## **3.2 Implementation Tactics**

The strategic development of implementation phases also provides the logic for the selection of tactics, or the specific actions that are taken as part of the overall plan. Tactics are, so to speak, where the rubber meets the road in implementation processes. If action-priorities are the "why" and strategy the "how" of implementation, tactics are the "what". For the purposes of theorizing Superblocks implementation, we can say that there are four categories of tactics, listed according to their likely order of appearance throughout the process: futuring, transition experiments, long-term regulatory changes, and long-term physical changes.

### **3.2.1 Futuring**

Futuring tactics consist of "the identification, creation and dissemination of images of the future shaping the possibility space for action" (Oomen et al. 2022). They help produce a shared imaginary of a future in which sustainable urban mobility is the norm. Futuring aims to bring the future into the present by converting abstract ambitions into detailed possible realities and by clarifying the connections between actions and impacts. Futuring is intimately concerned with agency, specifically the ability of collective action to bring about desired futures. Ideation, visualization, and storying are all examples.

### **3.2.2 Transition experiments**

Transition experiments include any “intentional and temporary change of the street use, regulation and or form, featuring a shift from motorized to non-motorized dominance and aimed at exploring systemic change in urban mobility and public space” (Bertolini 2020). Transition experiments actively involve stakeholders in testing and revising proposed changes connected to Superblocks concepts before their "final" implementation.

### **3.2.3 Long-term regulatory changes**

Long-term regulatory changes include tactics such as reducing speed limits, reorganizing traffic flows, converting segregated lanes into shared space, and altering rules governing street parking.

### **3.2.4 Long-term physical changes**

Tactics of long-term physical change include actions such as leveling and resurfacing streets, erecting physical barriers to motor vehicle traffic, and installing street furniture, trees, and planters.

### **3.2.5 Conditional aspects shaping implementation tactics**

Each tactic, or action taken, is shaped by a number of conditional aspects, some of which refer back to strategy. These aspects correspond to questions, and the answers provided can produce considerable variation in how the tactic manifests and whether it succeeds in its aims. Categories of conditional aspects include:

- functional (what should the tactic do?)
- political (whose agency and agendas are invoked?)
- participatory (who should be involved?)
- spatial (at what scale will the tactic be applied?)
- temporal (how long will the tactic last?)
- physical (what materials and/or objects are involved?)
- regulatory (how do existing laws & policies affect it? which need to be changed?)
- financial (how much will it cost? where will the money come from?)
- aesthetic (how will things look? what will this visual identity communicate?)

In practice, conditional aspects serve as a sort of checklist for considering the range of possibilities for each specific tactic. For example, two adjacent streets closed to motorized traffic could become very different places depending on how the conditional aspects above differ in each.

## **3.3 Contextual Determinants**

Further complicating things, the choice of implementation pathway and the articulation of strategies and tactics are highly dependent on case-context. Key contextual determinants likely to exert influence on path selection and implementation approach can be organized into three categories: landscape pressures (issues originating from outside the city that nonetheless exhibit agency within it), local push-pull factors (forces pushing local stakeholders away from automobility and pulling them toward Superblocks), and regime resistance (the ability of the status quo to maintain its hegemony).

### 3.3.1 Landscape pressures

Landscape pressures are changes in the exogenous context that threaten to delegitimize the incumbent regime. Notable landscape pressures threatening automobility include climate change, resource depletion, and decarbonization.

### 3.3.2 Local push-pull factors

At the local level, a variety of factors can push urban mobility away from the automobility regime, such as high local levels of air pollution, high cost relative to income, and severe traffic congestion, while other factors can pull the system toward a new regime compatible with Superblocks such as public desires for more green spaces, healthier lifestyles, and community-oriented neighborhoods, and political agendas based on increasing sustainability and quality of life.

### 3.3.3 Regime resistance

Regime resistance works in the other direction, as prevailing legal, regulatory, and planning frameworks, mobility patterns, levels of car-ownership, the design of streets, conservative political agendas, and more are likely to be tailored to the logic of automobility. Although determinants in each of the three categories will manifest differently in different places, cities will need to leverage landscape pressures and local push-pull factors to overcome regime resistance in order to effectively implement Superblocks concepts.

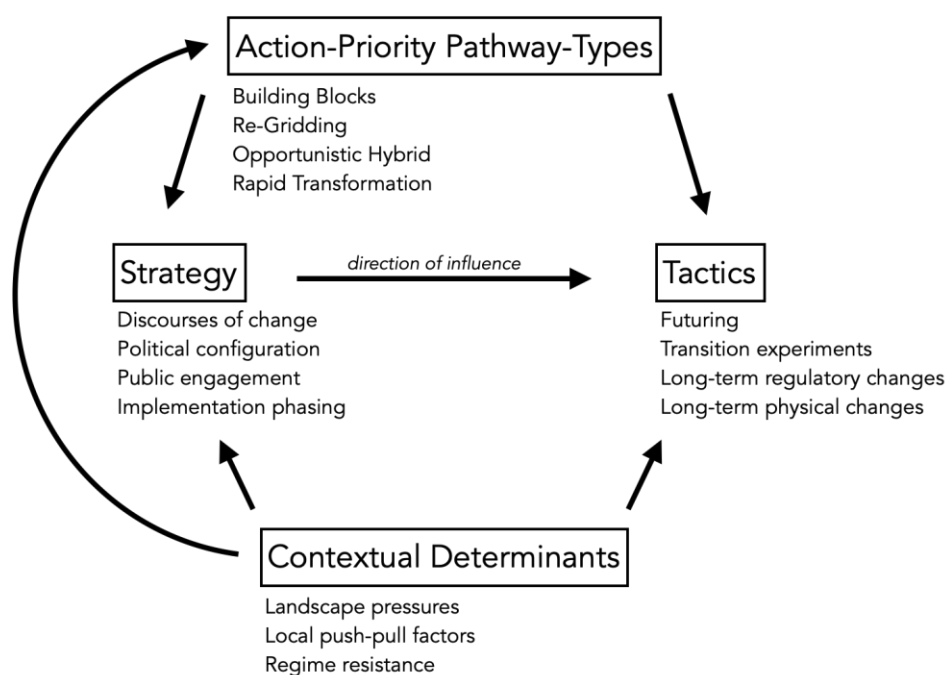


Figure 2: Factors Shaping Implementation Pathways (TuneOurBlock/Joshua Grigsby)

## 4 Real world integration

While Superblocks concepts appear to have transformative potential, implementation faces an array of challenges in practice. The spatial scale of Superblocks concepts generally does not conform to those commonly used in urban planning, and the holistic nature of Superblocks requires the cooperation of numerous municipal departments and stakeholder groups. Superblocks concepts may be perceived as threats by those invested in incumbent long-term strategies, while their complexity may prove daunting for risk-averse political figures and parties. Extensive outreach and communication efforts are necessary to build public support, and resistance to change will likely be substantial. Even if public consensus in favor of Superblocks is achieved, implementation may be both protracted and expensive.

In order for implementation to succeed, several key challenges will likely need to be overcome: (1) resistance to transformation; (2) the scale and complexity of Superblocks concepts; (3) the time- and resource-intensiveness of implementation processes. At the same time, at least three aspects of Superblocks concepts need to be understood as advantages and utilized accordingly: (1) the high-leverage potential of Superblocks' systemic approach; (2) complementarity and synergy with respect to existing strategies and tactics; (3) co-creative and co-learning processes that allow for public engagement, experimentation, and adaptation.

### 4.1 Implementation challenges of Superblocks concepts

#### 4.1.1 *Resistance to transformation*

Opposition to Superblocks is likely to arise from those concerned that Superblocks will significantly impact existing practices, mostly related to motor vehicles, such as street parking and automobility. Such concerns are well-founded, as Superblocks concepts explicitly aim to transform urban mobility practices and spaces. While they do not seek to exclude motor vehicles, and maintaining accessibility for motor vehicles is still seen as essential, their fundamental goal is the replacement of the automobility regime with a multi-modal sustainable mobility regime in which: (a) active modes such as walking and cycling and mass transit modes such as trams are dominant; (b) motor vehicles are reduced to niche roles; and (c) public space made available through this transition is repurposed to address other public needs. The case for implementing Superblocks should therefore also be explicitly made on the need for, and benefits of, transformation of both urban mobility and public space. To position Superblocks as something other than a tool for wide-scale urban transformation is to mislead; this risks the loss of trust, the breakdown of necessary coalitions, and general public and political backlash and rejection. Superblocks concepts therefore require substantial political will and a strong coalition of supporters capable of constructively confronting opposition on multiple fronts.

#### 4.1.2 *Scale and complexity*

Because of the dual-aspect nature of Superblocks concepts (the combination of restructured circulation networks and individual Superblock cells), implementation occurs at two scales and at multiple sites simultaneously. In addition, the changes introduced by Superblocks require a range of experts and stakeholders to work cooperatively. The more spatially fragmented and technically atomized planning systems are, the more difficulty they may encounter. Implementation of Superblocks concepts is actually most similar to the development of new urban districts, in which work is normally done at multiple scales and the need for incorporating complexity and holism is well established. The major difference, of course, is that Superblocks redevelop existing neighborhoods and public space, not

buildings, is the primary locus of change. It is conceivable that new institutions will need to be set up to effectively implement Superblocks concepts. At the very least, many cities will need to devise new approaches to urban planning and development to capably handle their scale and complexity.

### **4.1.3 Time- and resource-intensiveness**

Due to both the transformative nature of Superblocks and their scale and complexity, implementation processes are likely to be both time- and resource-intensive. Political coalition-building, communication between planning and other administrative departments, public information and engagement campaigns, public debate, changes to laws and policies, on-the-ground coordination, replacement of signage and street markings, street resurfacing, tree-planting, monitoring and assessment – Superblocks concepts are major undertakings, and the scope of action they require may be intimidating to politicians, practitioners, and the public alike. A long-term perspective and realistic estimation of available resources is necessary.

## **4.2 Implementation strengths of Superblocks concepts**

### **4.2.1 Systemic approach**

The single greatest advantage of the Superblocks concept is its systemic approach. Under normal (non-Superblock) conditions, measures taken to calm traffic, support walking and cycling, improve public space, and adapt to climate change are typically taken individually. This makes change incremental and often fragmented and incomplete. By providing a different underlying logic, one that views streets as public space and public space as having to serve more needs than just traffic circulation, Superblocks unify previously disconnected interventions. When the purpose of the system changes, the rules change, behavior changes, and space – the physical context of behavior – changes. Reducing motor vehicle speed limits and street parking; converting segregated streets into shared space; adding modal filters, street furniture, trees, and green space; redesigning intersections; and countless other modifications: these all become interconnected parts of a coherent concept, all simultaneously justified by the aims and needs of the new system. Superblocks shift the implementation of urban transformations from piecemeal to paradigmatic.

### **4.2.2 Complementarity and synergy**

The core goals of Superblocks concepts – transition to sustainable mobility, improvement of urban living environments, adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and fostering of social equity and engagement – share common ground with virtually all strategic visions of sustainable futures. Superblocks do not challenge smart cities, resilient cities, postcarbon cities, green cities, sustainable cities, or cities for people; on the contrary, they complement them by acting as catalysts for a wide range of actions specified by preexisting strategies. Superblocks can support and even enhance existing strategic visions by bringing them "down to the ground", providing a method for implementation and a scale for demonstration and proof of concept.

### **4.2.3 "Living laboratories" of co-creation and co-learning**

The exact trajectories and impacts of the transition of complex adaptive systems are effectively impossible to predict, emergence being one of the central characteristics of such processes. This can pose problems for political, technical, and administrative bodies accustomed to linear, predictable, solutions-oriented interventions. Superblocks concepts remove some of the burden of needing to have ready-made answers to unanswerable questions by virtue of their emphasis on process, engagement, experimentation, learning,

reflection, and adaptation. While new traffic regulation plans can be implemented relatively quickly, at scale, and on the basis of traditional expert knowledge, the transformation of spaces within Superblock cells and of behavior (mobility, social, etc.) throughout the city happens over a longer time frame. Superblocks serve as "living laboratories" in which citizens and practitioners alike learn what works, what doesn't, and why, as the norms of the new system are gradually established.

### **4.3 Universality and particularity**

The academic literature on Superblocks consistently refers to the need for implementation to be participatory and context-sensitive. While we concur with this point, it can imply that every Superblocks concept and implementation process must be entirely bespoke, and that the development of transferable best practices is impossible or inappropriate. Such an interpretation would fail to recognize the underlying consistency inherent in Superblocks concepts and the fact that Superblocks comprise a wide range of tactics that call upon an equally wide range of competencies and therefore stakeholders.

The most powerful lever of change in the Superblocks toolkit is the re-gridding or restructuring of circulation routes at something like a district scale (large enough to contain a significant number of Superblock cells) or larger. This new traffic plan provides the foundation and context for transformation by setting new rules that express new paradigmatic logic. By determining through-routes, speeds, and parking allowances, and by differentiating between modes, the traffic plan normativizes certain mobility practices and discourages others. As the realm of traffic planning is that of experts, and as the logic governing traffic plans in Superblocks concepts is consistent (a network of circulation routes dividing contiguous traffic-calmed cells of similar size), it seems reasonable to suggest that traffic plans for Superblocks can be drafted without extensive public engagement and that the criteria such plans rely on will be largely consistent from city to city. This means that a considerable amount of knowledge produced by forerunner cities is likely to be transferable, and that current planning structures and competencies are capable of at least partially implementing Superblocks concepts quickly and at scale.

If the traffic plans of Superblocks concepts lean toward the universal, the particular reasserts itself in the process of redeveloping Superblock cells, where placemaking takes priority over the "simple" institution of new rules. The toolkit of tactics may be similar from one cell to the next – adding trees and planted areas, installing street furniture and developing cohesive public spaces, reducing street parking, moving toward shared space right-of-way designs – but the results will differ from block to block and cell to cell. It is during the transformation of Superblock cells that local knowledge, public engagement, and context-sensitivity take on greater importance.

## 5 Summary

This preliminary attempt to theorize the implementation of Superblocks concepts seeks to explain the ways that implementation can happen, the primary components of implementation processes, and the forces that shape the particular form implementation pathways take in practice.

Having situated Superblocks within processes of systemic change and identified regime destabilization and replacement of automobility in service of socio-technical transition toward sustainable mobility as their central aim, we proposed an “ideal” four-phase implementation process. Acknowledging that real-world processes are rarely if ever ideal, we then developed a conceptual model of implementation pathways based on three different action-priorities derived from the two primary components of Superblocks concepts (traffic grids and traffic-calmed neighborhood cells) and the degree of coherence (fragmented or unified). Action-priorities are achieved through a combination of strategy (approach) and tactics (actions). The model considers strategy to be structured by discourses of change, political configurations, the role of public engagement, and phases of implementation. Tactics are likewise grouped into four categories: futuring, transition experiments, long-term regulatory change, and long-term physical change. Action-priorities, implementation strategies, and the tactics used to realize them are all shaped by three types of contextual determinants: landscape pressures, local push-pull factors, and regime resistance.

The integration of Superblocks concepts into real-world planning and politics is inherently fraught with challenges. The scope of intended change, complexity, and time- and resource-intensiveness of Superblocks poses particular challenges. However, their systemic approach enables them to combine a wide range of initiatives, they can coexist with and even enhance many existing planning strategies, and their experimental, co-creative nature can relieve authorities of some of the burden of needing to predict and control complex development processes. Furthermore, we distinguished universal aspects of implementation from context-sensitive ones.



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