

Etienne Tricaud

After a year as design engineer with Ove Arup in London and RFR in Paris, Etienne Tricaud joined the French National Railway (SNCF) as project manager for the restructuring of Paris-Montparnasse TGV station. He then became Head of the SNCF Station Design Office, managing the design of all major SNCF stations along the TGV Atlantic and TGV North high speed lines.

In 1997 Etienne Tricaud became CEO and Chief architect of AREP, a 100% subsidiary of SNCF with 500 employees and an annual turnover of around 55 million Euros. He was named President of AREP Group in 2012. He is managing AREP's architecture, engineering and urban planning activity as well as designing its major realisations, for SNCF in France (TGV Mediterranean, TGV East, TGV Rhine-Rhone, major Paris stations, major regional stations), as well as for public and private clients in France and abroad, in the fields of stations, transportation hubs, public buildings, offices, commerce and housing as well as in urban planning, design and engineering.

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A New Dynamic Way Of Life V3

Etienne Tricaud - AREP

Originally the railroads developed outside of the populated cities and urban centres, taking best advantage of unperturbed rights-of-way with relatively limited impact on the surrounding environment. However, over time, the railroads expanded their presence. They developed stations, marshalling yards, stabling yards, depots, workshops, and other activities alongside their infrastructure corridors. Industry profited from the railroad's presence by developing warehouse and industrial districts alongside the rail corridors.

Likewise, the urban centres expanded outward and the out-lying areas began to densify. With this increased expansion and urbanization, paired with the existence of the railroad-generated industrial districts, nearly impenetrable chasms and gulches were created, separating and disjointing the emerging urban fabric.

As a consequence, these neighbourhoods developed disconnected from each other, and emerged as run down, low density and low activity, sometimes crime-ridden slums, punctuated with red-light districts.

This condition became more obvious the second half of the twentieth century, with the decline of the railroad as the principle means of transporting people across a region.

Recently, passenger rail transport has regained much of its prior importance as a principle means of moving people. This is due in part to evolving demographics, an increasing urbanisation of society and the modernization of the railway system (HST, but also tramway and urban public transport). This re-emergence of passenger rail can also be credited to growing a frustration with our heavy reliance on the private automobile as our principal means of mobility, along with the realisation that such dependence carries an embedded social cost. This cost manifested in the heavy traffic congestion of our transit corridors, in reduced productivity, in diminished air quality, in loss of time, and in a devalued, stressful quality of life.

The rebirth of passenger rail brings the rail stations back into focus as the departure point for cities' urban mobility strategy. Likewise, this new mobility has made the urban rail station a catalyst for economic and social development, leading to the revitalization of the districts and the neighbourhoods which surround them. Over recent years, the real estate values of properties affronting rail infrastructure having potential relevance to urban mobility strategies has risen sharply. Likewise, recent trends in urban development have seen the most concentrated activity along the lines of mobility with particular emphasis placed on their rail stations and multimodal exchange hubs.

This phenomenon is mainly due to a growing new concern about sustainability in the city which has raised the status of the local rail station environments to a strategic urban issue. Urban mobility, energy-efficient transport, and interconnectivity are principle components of modern and effective urban sustainable strategy. The rail stations districts, by the very nature of being anchored by multimodal transit hubs are inherently accessible to a connected and mobile public; offering to them numerous mobility options. Stations are therefore the obvious departure point for delineating a city's or a district's sustainable strategy.

As a result, modern station area zoning-plans and masterplans call for the stations to be connected to the city via quality and active public spaces offering access to lively activity centres where people meet and interact. The stations are to be embraced by cultural activities, commerce, and entertainment venues which inject value, and add a heightened level of liveability to the neighbourhood.

At the same time, a new dynamic urban way of life has emerged: in many big cities around the world, young urban dwellers have a sort of "dynamic" life style, characterized by connectivity, mobility, multimodality, being multitask oriented.

These people expect and demand quality urban public spaces to facilitate their access to the richness of the city: its activities and amenities... They expect for their daily lives to be enhanced by the environment through which they move. The presence of useful activities and commerce along these lines of movement; grocery stores, coffee shops, pharmacies, laundry/dry-cleaning services, and the like serve to enhance the transit experience for people on the move and help to add value, opportunity, and convenience to what would otherwise be a mundane transit from their home to their work and vice-versa.

Therefore, the station becomes an integral part of the daily lives of urban dwellers and thus becomes a normal extension of their transit routine; a critical road-mark of one's daily activity, the place where a few precious minutes are gained, or where a much-needed pause for a quick conversation and maybe a cup of coffee is enjoyed before moving on. This emplacement of new activity within the heart of an emerging economic centre often serves to attract more such activity.

Urban multi-modal rail stations by fortune of the numbers of people that pass through them on a daily basis have the opportunity to maximize this benefit. If well planned and conceived; with commitment, careful thought and attention given to how people will use and move through it, the multimodal facility can be the catalyst for thriving, local economic and social development; which therefore will result in a wealth of amenities, services, and activities both within and around the station covering its users daily needs. Thus the station becomes a popular destination in itself.