



Developing soft infrastructure in one of the largest urban renewal projects in France



Site plan of Molière park - atelier Villes et Paysages

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2006, the town of Les Mureaux embarked on a major urban renewal project that covers about a quarter of its territory. This is one of the largest ANRU (National Agency for Urban Renewal) projects in France, affecting nearly 15,000 residents on a site covering almost 175 acres.

It is a long site, moving through inhabited areas. In this context, *atelier Villes et Paysages* (Egis group), in consortium with Richez Associés and INFRA Services, was entrusted with the project management for restructuring all public areas in this major urban renewal project.

Following this redefinition, the entire town will be crossed by a truly urban park. This new “backbone” is the missing link between the different areas: it is an ambitious planning project for strengthening social cohesion.



AN “OPEN” DESIGN MODE

SUSTAINABLE TECHNIQUES IMPLEMENTED AS THE PROJECT PROGRESSES

From the outset, the town of Les Mureaux has strived to integrate sustainable development measures into this ANRU operation.

Alongside the renewal of public spaces, the town has also realised high environmental quality building projects: the construction of the Town Hall and the Park facilities in particular.

Having ascertained these high expectations in terms of EPC, *atelier Villes et Paysages* has gradually defined the challenges and objectives of the project in terms of sustainable development, working in collaboration with all the town's services: roads, transportation, waste collection, etc. This “open” design mode, which encourages the participation of the various municipal departments, makes

it easier to adapt to the existing context, and to optimise the future operation of the facilities.

The choice of “sustainable techniques” applied to the operation has therefore been developed as the project progresses.

In order to benefit from feedback on measures already in place across other sites, and to have detailed information on the operation and maintenance of the proposed developments, the project management team also approached specialists in certain targeted areas, to choose and adapt the best possible solutions. They met, for example, a specialist in soft modes of transport, and the manager of an organisation that manages allotments.

THE KEY ASPECTS OF THIS SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE

Alternative stormwater management

The whole principle of stormwater collection is based on alternative techniques. The flood risk is managed by the presence of retention structures and the limitation of runoff rates.

Surface water runoff is collected and stored in porous pavements and swales. Both systems allow water to infiltrate into the soil. The chosen techniques have been adapted according to the site topography: for example, for steep roads, cascading swales have been built to optimise the volume stored. Additionally, the swales' appearance has been designed in line with the type of road.

A focus on soft modes of transport

“The main technical challenge of the operation was to redefine an innovative road network, putting the onus on green transport, and using existing roads”, explains Patrick Bouchardon, Project Manager for *atelier Villes et Paysages* and responsible for the sustainable development approach in this operation.

All the different approaches to integrating cycling into urban areas have been included in this project: bike lanes, cycle paths, mixed lanes, etc. The entire development site has become a 30 kmph zone, and speed tables have been added to junctions, forcing motorists to reduce their speed, and making pedestrian and cycle paths safer.



Parc Molière - Rue d'Orgeval

Patrick Bouchardon made the following observation: “Previously, cycling was not a common means of transportation for residents of Les Mureaux, and the first sections of cycle paths were not a great success when they first opened. But habits are changing as the project progresses, and now residents are beginning to explore the cycle paths that we have created. Furthermore, the incorporation of proper parking spaces into the road profile has significantly reduced illegal parking”.

The creation of green infrastructure

The Molière park is a flagship project for urban renewal. The unusual relief of the site means the park is constructed on a slope, on different levels, thus obtaining beautiful views of the landscape. This 35 acre area has been designed with the idea of linking the urbanised valley with the forested plateaus. It will be a sprawling park, with the Orgeval stream uncovered to be a central channel with the side gardens as offshoots. Educational and recreational areas will be included in the Molière Park: allotments, orchards, riverbeds, playgrounds, recreational or rest areas, room for events, and so on...

ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OF GREEN SPACES

The creation of a “sprawling” park in the heart of the town will significantly increase the town’s green heritage. So that the town’s maintenance services can manage these new green spaces in an optimised way, Atelier Villes et Paysages has prepared a report on “differentiated management” for green spaces. This involves mapping and prioritising levels of maintenance depending on the use of the different areas. This file defines priority areas, and specifies the type of maintenance and size, zone by zone. In addition, the plan is for stormwater in the Molière park to be naturally purified and reused for watering the gardens, and the vegetation has been chosen for its low water consumption. All of these initiatives will help limit energy costs related to the maintenance of green spaces.



A CYCLING TROPHY FOR LES MUREAUX

In 2009, the town of Les Mureaux wrote a report describing the technical principles it had applied for the insertion of cycling in the town. In 2001, the city became very committed to developing cycling as a means of transport, since at that time not single metre of cycle path existed in the town of Les Mureaux. After prioritising soft transport in its urban renewal operations, in 2009 the town boasted 14 kilometres of cycle paths. It was rewarded for its effort and awarded the 2009 Trophée Vélos (Cycling Trophy).

Operation Planning

- > Pre-operational studies: 2006 - 2007
- > Project management studies (From preliminary designs to contractor consultation files) 2007 - 2009
- > The preliminary design studies were carried out for the entire site.
- > The PRO phase was broken down by sector.
- > Works: from 2010, for an amount of €42.5 million.
- > In January 2014, three quarters of the work was complete. All that remained really was the park site (for a total of 6 million euros of works) for which the contractor consultation file was delivered in September 2013.



“What I’m most proud of is that the developments already in place have had a real impact on the daily lives of residents!”



LOCAL ROOTS

ENCOURAGING LOCAL PEOPLE TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF NEW SPACES

Consultation

The Molière park project began with a consultation process. It took place during summer 2013, as part of the project (PRO) phase of the park's studies. Workshops were organised so that local residents could put their stamp on the park's uses and operation. Patrick Bouchardon explains: "As part of these consultations, we presented the basic principles that had been defined for this park.

Based on this information we asked people to think about the layout of these structures and the organisation of facilities". They were asked, for example, to indicate their preferred location for each facility, and the surface area they wanted to devote to them. To help the people of Les Mureaux, visits to existing sites were arranged: an open urban park, an eco park and allotments.

Following this consultation process, the aspects defined with residents were included in the Molière park project.

This approach has enabled residents to get involved in the project, and give an identity to the park.

Work on the park work began in 2014.

Artistic contributions

In order to strengthen the identity of the park, local people have also been encouraged to display their artistic creations within the park. One of the display areas available is a large retaining wall, which serves as a gallery for the exhibition of temporary works (see illustration). There is also a plan to install works on the Grand Place. The role of Atelier Villes et Paysages in this work includes verifying that these workshops are in line with the spirit of the park.

Educational workshops

An educational activity has also been organised on the site: field trips have been arranged for children to take part in planting some of the site's green areas. This workshop helps to familiarise children with the site, get them interested in the new development, and help them to take ownership of these new spaces. This approach has been a great success, and the town has asked Atelier Villes et Paysages to reproduce this process for all ANRU projects.



New road profile with swale and bike trail



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