

# Introduction to visit n°1

## The regeneration of the Plaine Saint-Denis and the renewal of the North-East of Paris 22 November 2007, 1:15 pm-5:30 pm

Paul Lecroart, urban planner, IAURIF, November 2007

### The Plaine Saint-Denis

Located directly to the north of Paris and to the south of the historic city of Saint-Denis, on the main axis linking the city centre to the Roissy-Charles de Gaulle international airport, (A1 Motorway, RER B railway), the Plaine Saint-Denis has been undergoing profound transformation over the last 15 years.

The Plaine, which was one of Europe's largest industrial zones at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with 50,000 jobs in an area of 750 hectares, was hit by an economic and social crisis at the end of the 1970s. Its regeneration, dating from the very end of the 1990s is the result of conflictual yet constructive cooperation between:

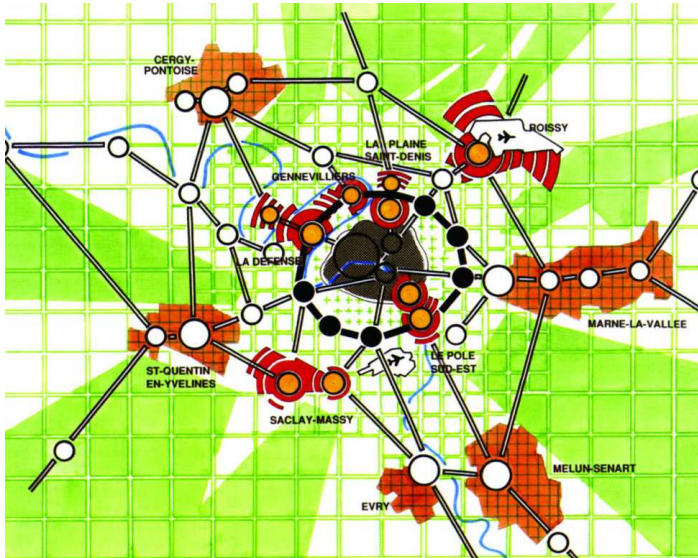
- the local authorities, in particular those of Saint-Denis and Aubervilliers: the Plaine Renaissance Association was created in 1985, the Urban Project for the Plaine developed by the GIE (EIG – Economic Interest Group) Hippodamus 93 was approved in 1992;
- and the French State, with support from the Regional Council and other public partners: the Plaine was identified as a “strategic sector” in the Ile-de-France *White Paper* in 1990, then in the 1994 Regional Master Plan and in the Investment Programmes related to the Plans for 1994-1998 and 2000-2006 defining the relationship between State and Region.

The increased impetus for change came from the decision in 1993 to build a large multifunctional urban facility in view of the staging of the World Cup in 1998: the Stade de France stadium. The improvement of access (RER B and D stations) and the development of good quality public spaces (notably the covering of the A1 Motorway) – helped by the victory of the French football team in 1998! – enabled the Plaine to take off, by changing its image. Since then – through urban development schemes that we will visit (the Stadium, Landy-Pleyel and Icade-EMPG quarters) - this area has gained 20,000 jobs and 5,000 dwellings have been built. It is now a major urban centre for the north of the agglomeration – the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest service sector centre in the Ile-de-France – notably oriented towards hosting major events, the media and the visual image industry, training, research and development, services, wholesaling and craft industries.

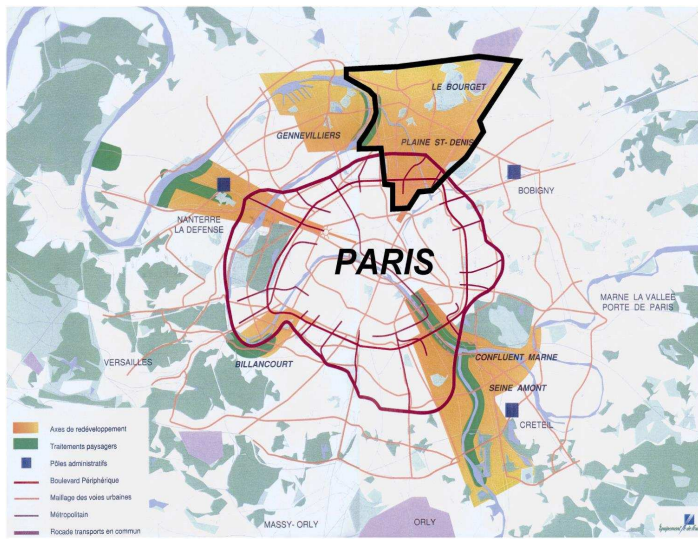
Current projects, and projects under development, are showing a tendency to confirm this range of potential (cf. visitor file) at the heart of the Plaine Commune metropolitan area (created in 2000, 8 communes and 352,000 inhabitants at present), our host today.

The transformation of the Plaine Saint-Denis, through its diversity, its scale and the complexity of the interplay of the stakeholders, is giving rise to multiple challenges that may be debated during the visit. These include questions such as: how can a long-term urban project on this scale, with a multiplicity of levels of decision-making, be successfully handled and completed? How can the different metropolitan, inter-communal and local scales of the project be articulated? How can an urban centre, that is dynamic and mixed in functional, social and generational terms, be created?

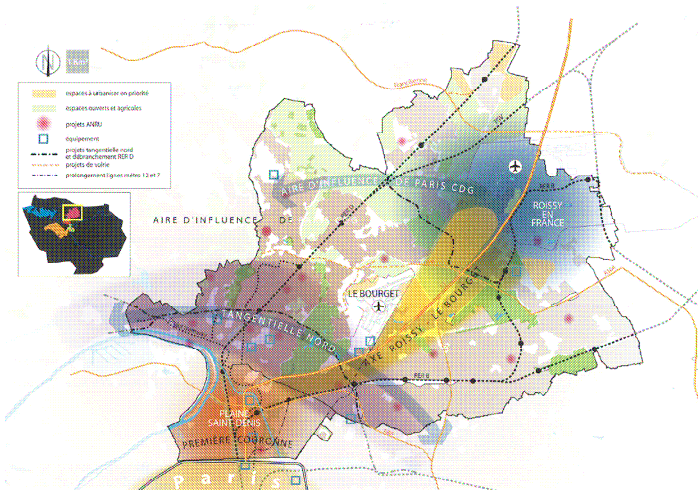




The Plaine Saint Denis in the White Paper (1990)



The Plaine Saint Denis in the Regional Master Plan (1994)



The Plaine de France development strategy (2005)





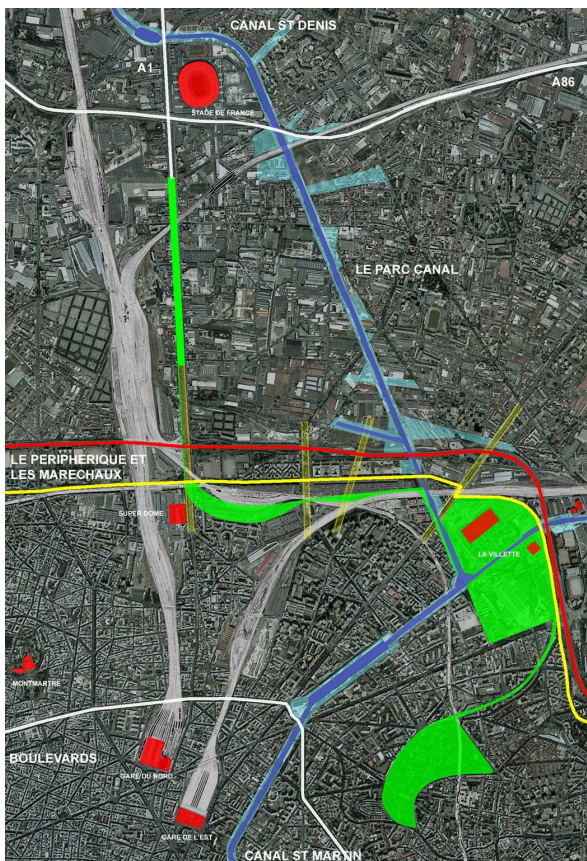
## The Paris Nord Est project

The Paris Nord Est project concerns the transformation of a area of 200 hectares strongly marked by transport infrastructure (the Boulevard *Périphérique* or Parisian circular, and railways) and logistical activities. This project, begun by the City of Paris in 2002, aims to generate the emergence of a new centre of economic activity, based on the dynamism of the Plaine Saint-Denis and the Icade EMPG business park site, and to modify, open up and improve the functioning of a disjointed territory.

It is also a matter of taking advantage of the considerable availability of real estate close to facilities and infrastructures of national and regional importance: the Parc de la Villette, the Paris circular, the A1 Motorway, and the future Evangile station on RER line E. It is developing a programme combining activities, office space, housing and facilities, with a particular focus on parks and public spaces.

The interest of the project, which is just beginning, lies in the ambitious objectives regarding the environmental, economic and social transformation of this degraded territory (notably, the covering of the Paris *Périphérique*), in the progressive real estate enhancement strategy within the context of the Dussapin-Leclerc team project, providing co-ordination, and in the diversity of the operational modes according to sector (of which the Macdonald warehouses restructuring project, which we will visit, is one interesting example).

The transformation of Paris Nord Est raises the specific issue of the capacity of a space, long perceived as peripheral, to become a place of urban, economic and recreational centrality. One of the keys to the success of the project depends on close inter-communal cooperation.



Paris Nord Est in context (Dussapin - Leclercq -Agence Ter 2003)

### The Icade EMGP site (Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers and Paris)

The *Magasins Généraux* de Paris multi-site activities park is specific in that it is at the meeting-point of the three communes of Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers (Plaine Commune) and Paris, which means that it is a point of connection and articulation between the projects in Plaine Saint-Denis and Paris Nord Est. A private stakeholder, the *Foncière Icade EMPG*, is undertaking the enhancement of this real estate (land and constructions).

The park is home to diverse business activities, notably around centres of activity in the audiovisual and events organisation, fashion and distribution, e-commerce, and industry, research and training domains. It is currently extending and opening its offer of real estate to leisure and housing. Within the framework of its Masterplan, Icade EMPG is developing a strategy aiming to confer greater permeability on its sites, and increased openness to its urban environment. The visit will tackle the question of cooperation between public authorities and a major private stakeholder.

