
GRAND ROISSY (PARIS-CHARLES-DE-GAULLE AIRPORT AREA): A REGION IN THE MAKING

New scope, new strategic vision, new governance

OVERVIEW

A systemic, multi-partner approach to creating a new development model on the scale of a major international airport

Grand Roissy is the region under the direct influence of Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle airport. A powerful driver within the extended Greater Paris region, it covers some 500 sq km, is home to 650,000 people and presents a number of major development challenges. Over the next 20 years, the area will add 130,000 new direct jobs, generated by 25 projects totalling €15 billion in private investment from sources in France and around the world. It also has strategic importance due to the scope of its urban, environmental and social challenges. Some of our residents are among the most disadvantaged in the Grand Paris region—the urban riots of 2005 and 2008 began here—and rising demand for real estate is threatening some of the most fertile farmland in Europe.

Positioned on the edge of a major metropolis, our region as a whole initially had no administrative, political or institutional structure. Yet its 69 municipalities, five inter-municipal organizations and three *départements* realized that they were united by a community of interest and a shared future. **For nearly seven years we have worked together to craft a development strategy centred around our region's assets and infrastructure—a strategy that makes us the architects of our own development and frees us from dependence on the airport.**

By developing a systemic, holistic approach to regional development, Grand Roissy's stakeholders have brought an end to decades of fragmentation. In partnership with all of our stakeholders—the airport authority, international and local business, employment partners, farmers and more—the region's local communities, the Paris region, the French State and our public development organization (EPA) are all working together to make Grand Roissy a success by giving it greater balance and cohesion.

BACKGROUND

Grand Roissy: the legacy of haphazard development

Subordinate and fragmented

Grand Roissy has long been subordinate to Paris and the Greater Paris region. We are home to the infrastructures essential to running the city, but were never seen as a real region with our own identity, needs and strengths. Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle airport is ranked second in Europe for both passengers and freight. It serves as a hub for Air France and FedEx, and provides our area's iconic infrastructure. Nearby Paris-Le Bourget is Europe's leading business aviation airport. Five highways and expressways, high-speed rail, high-tension lines and gas networks also slice through our region.

Development has been patchy, creating isolated, single-purpose parcels that are closed and inward-facing. As such, it has further fragmented a region already divided by infrastructure and its location on the edge of the urban continuum. Whereas Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle airport and the various economic areas in Grand Roissy are linked to Paris, our region's internal network is inadequate. Today, this burdensome urban legacy makes planning and development a challenge, in large part because of drawbacks caused by existing infrastructure and by airport noise restrictions, which limit our ability to build new housing.

This urban fragmentation is made worse by institutional fragmentation—Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle airport is a part of eight different municipalities in three different *départements*—and by economic fragmentation, since our region's many stakeholders do not always share the same interests.

Finding balance among extremes

In addition to fragmentation, our region is home to extreme urban, social and economic contrasts. Grand Roissy contains a major employment hub—one of the largest in France, with outstanding growth potential—but it is only 10 km from social housing complexes dating back to the 1960s, whose residents often struggle to get by. For these residents, the negatives of our region outweigh the positives.

In short, the challenge for Grand Roissy is to become an inclusive region, making the most of our strengths to find the balance essential to sustainable development for all, and:

- Realise our region's economic potential and generate development that serves our residents.
- Deal with inevitable urban sprawl linked to economic and housing development projects, while preserving our green space and farmland.
- Maintain our connection to Paris and meet pressing needs for internal mobility within our region.
- Promote functional mixed development within the constraints imposed by noise restrictions.
- Build on existing infrastructures to give our region its own urban identity.

OUR AMBITIONS FOR THE REGION

Develop Grand Roissy by integrating Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle airport and leveraging its value

Put our infrastructure to work with and for the region

Grand Roissy is unique in that the competitiveness of an international and metropolitan economy depends heavily on local factors: the airport and the economic activity it generates play a powerful role in France's appeal for international visitors and investors. But this potential can only be realised if the region also benefits. Because if local and metropolitan interests remain out of balance, there is a real risk that heightened social tensions, runaway urbanisation of available land, bottlenecks in transport infrastructures, and other problems will ultimately become obstacles to economic development.

Our Grand Roissy initiative began with the recognition that the airport infrastructure—which was originally imposed on the region from outside, and was long viewed as a constraint—can be a real advantage for both the region and its residents. Like many other major airport complexes that serve as hubs for global airlines—Dubai, Hong Kong, Seoul, Amsterdam, Singapore, Atlanta and Washington, DC—Grand Roissy has become an attractive base for businesses involved in trade and exchanges of all types. It is a place for networking, negotiation and cross-pollination of products, goods and knowledge.

Our region's stakeholders have worked to realize this new potential, embracing an economic position that is linked to our infrastructure and its strengths and serves both the region and the metropolis. While we have strengthened aviation, aeronautics, airport operations, logistics and other traditional sectors, we have also diversified our economic base, moving into international trade and the connectivity economy. Some sectors benefit directly from proximity to an airport: express freight, business meetings and trade shows, internal corporate functions such as training centres and corporate campuses, sales, and even leisure activities such as shopping and theme parks. In Grand Roissy, we're focusing on five key sectors: airports/aviation, aeronautics, business tourism/international meetings, logistics and international trade. Our goal is to become an international trade cluster by creating synergies between sectors and facilities.

At Grand Roissy, we have integrated this economic vision into a larger systemic vision, focusing simultaneously on metropolitan appeal and local development. Our strategy takes a new approach to creating an urban community—one that has never before been applied to an airport complex on the scale of Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle. It calls for creating connections at every level and in every domain, from physical (urban development projects, infrastructure and public spaces) to social (training programs) to psychological (cultivating a shared sense of belonging). We have thus focused on all local public policy issues—and their interactions with one another—at the same time: the economy, urban planning, housing, the environment, culture, jobs and training, and a sense of belonging. In concrete terms, this means enhancing the North-South corridor that serves as our region's axis for economic development, connecting it with nearby urban spaces, and creating an East-West axis that carries development from the centre outwards.

Grand Roissy: a hub for Greater Paris—and a local community, too

Several years on, our stakeholders now agree on the main components of this strategy, with each component broken down into strategic plans, programmes and projects.

Our first goal is to find sustainable ways to realize the region's potential for economic development.

In addition to defining our economic positioning, we have set up shared management of our offer to ensure cohesiveness and adapt to regional needs as closely as possible. We also strive for a balance between a thriving international economy and a more endogenous, residential economy powered by local projects that generates its own appeal.

Our second goal is to create a more urban form of development, starting from the airport—inventing a sustainable urban entity in a region that has so far been shaped by infrastructure. Grand Roissy structures development around urban centres of gravity, increasing density and establishing residential hubs, especially

around the stations of the future Grand Paris Express public transport system (at Sevran Terre d'Avenir, the exhibition and convention centre station, and more). Our approach serves this new urban model by:

- promoting renewal of existing residential hubs (the 14 ANRU neighbourhoods under the national urban renewal programme) and business/industrial areas (revitalisation of business/industrial parks, and requalification of the PSA Peugeot-Citroën site in Aulnay) and keeping new projects as compact as possible (the Eco-quartier in Louvres-Puiseux and the Triangle de Gonesse business district).
- giving the region structure and cohesion by developing public and active transport. This includes enhancing public transport lines in dedicated lanes that link residential hubs to employment hubs, as with the Villiers-le-Bel – Parc des Expositions high-service bus line and the CoMet project.
- preserving and enhancing green space and farmland. This includes the Arc Nature Loisirs project (details below), preserving 8,000 ha of farmland under our Agriculture Plan, revitalizing ecosystems in streams and waterways, implementing a green and blue corridor project to prevent ecosystem fragmentation, and earning *Ecocité* and *Territoires à énergie positive* labels from the French Ministry for Ecology.

Our third goal is to promote human and social development by sharing the benefits. Essentially, this means giving the region's residents better access to jobs and training (knowledge of English, forward planning to match jobs and skills) to improve their qualifications for employment. We are also intent on enhancing quality of life by restoring the area around the Ourcq Canal, creating parks, upgrading public spaces and enabling residential mobility.

By combining these three goals, we are gradually transforming Grand Roissy into a major component of the Paris region's multi-hub structure, with strategic positioning, a collective identity and the internal momentum of a true community.

OUR METHOD

Strategic action on a whole new scale, centred on the Paris-Charles-de-Gaulle airport area

Strategic, project-driven urban development built on consensus and political vision

The method we have developed over the past seven years is also unusual. It favours strategic urban planning that transcends institutional and governmental bounds by focusing on **projects, consensus and political vision**. This project-driven approach began with the local stakeholders and their commitment to building the future of Grand Roissy together, before institutions became involved.

Several trends coincided to set the stage. First, the broader Grand Paris initiative—including the Grand Paris Express project, and the international urban and architectural consultation on the future of the Paris metropolis—and the increased appeal of international airport complexes led to project agreements between local municipalities, *départements* and the French State. Result: we began to set regional priorities. At the same time, inter-municipal organizations emerged and the airport authority ADP entered into dialog with the region and other authorities, recognizing Grand Roissy as a strategic hub for Paris.

As these trends converged, Grand Roissy stakeholders realized that they faced common challenges and a common future, and we sketched out a single, comprehensive, shared initiative based on three facts: we cannot succeed separately if we do not succeed together; the airport cannot do business without the region that surrounds it; and metropolitan and local challenges are interdependent.

Moving towards a more cohesive region

Step by step, we crafted a more cohesive planning and development initiative through strategic research, including a “petal” study that clearly identified the need for a systemic approach within the metropolitan area. In the next phase, strategic and sector-specific planning efforts with multiple partners defined our shared priorities and created a framework for future development.

- Our Economic Areas Plan identifies the full range of potential expansion projects and the dominant sector(s) for each site, and defines phases in each project over time.
- Our Agricultural Plan identifies functional farmland and gives farmers a clear view of land use, present and future.
- Our Green and Blue Corridor Environmental Plan preserves and restores biodiversity in our corridors and open spaces.
- Our Road Plan rank-orders components of our road network and proposes solutions to our mobility needs, particularly by reducing breaks in East-West routes.
- Our Public Transport Plan identifies 12 priority connections that will link areas where people live to areas where they work, and connect both to major transport links to Paris.

These plans are not traditional urban planning documents with the force of law. Instead they formalize the Grand Roissy initiative that we have developed together; they depend on the voluntary engagement of the region's stakeholders and municipalities; and they express the priorities that we share. As works in progress, they shape and are shaped by our development projects, and they help us identify the work we need to do in the region. We are taking the same approach to housing and have already completed the diagnostic phase.

Negotiated urban planning involving all stakeholders

Gradually Grand Roissy's stakeholders developed the necessary organization to act at regional level. We set up project-level governance based on public-private management, with tools including Hubstart Paris Region to promote the region internationally; Aerotropolis Europe, an association representing large companies and institutions backing major economic development projects; GIP Emploi CDG, focusing on jobs and training; and EPA Plaine de France, to provide the engineering and technical skills required for regional development.

At the same time, political governance took shape. We founded the Association des Collectivités du Grand Roissy to help set priorities, to identify our common strategy and speak to higher regional authorities with one voice, and to win approval of line 17 of the Grand Paris Express metro system. At the same time, a new system of governance was created to allow for collective regional planning and development under the French State's regional reform effort. Since 1 January 2016, our five inter-municipal organizations have been reduced to two, and we will be working on an overall planning document covering all of our initiatives, as well as a partnership agreement with the French State on putting our plans into action.

All of Grand Roissy's stakeholders came together for this project management effort, with support from our local public bodies. We have also created many working groups and workshops to move these initiatives forward. For example, stakeholders worked with leading real-estate developers to design our Economic Area Plan before it was approved by elected officials, and our strategy for economic development was co-designed with regional authorities. Farmers, elected officials and representatives of civil society came together to draft our Agricultural Plan and then translate it into a project. All of our stakeholders have attended annual conferences sponsored by the French State and the region. We have also called in many project management experts to help us draft our plans and design urban development projects. Finally, we have involved the general public: we recently published a narrative imagining our region in 2044 and distributed it to secondary students, inviting them to share their vision for Grand Roissy.

HOW IT WORKS

Making connections: creating an urban community and increasing its appeal

Several planning projects illustrate our holistic, multi-scale, multi-sector strategy, with Corridor Métropolitain/Avenue du Parisis and Arc Nature Loisirs offering especially good examples.

Corridor Métropolitain (CoMet) and Avenue du Parisis

The CoMet project (North-South axis) and the Avenue du Parisis project (East-West axis) use infrastructure to create a new kind of urban development. CoMet aims to develop road infrastructures in ways that improve the quality of public spaces, recreate identifiable addresses, and link existing pockets of development—namely, the central economic areas and the residential hubs that are currently isolated or not served by public transport. By taking a holistic approach that combines renovation of the road system with dedicated-lane public transport, and newly created pathways through developed and natural landscapes, CoMet is linking Grand Roissy's fragmented pockets of urban life and creating a new model for urban development. It moves the region away from a "private city" mentality, which limits scope for public involvement and simultaneously reduces the potential for transforming areas under private ownership.

Similarly, the Avenue du Parisis project meets the need for mobility throughout the region along an East-West axis running perpendicular to CoMet. By setting up this new East-West corridor and increasing urban development adjacent to it, Avenue du Parisis is creating an urban backbone that links major projects, including *Triangle de Gonesse*, *ZAC Entre-2-Pointe-3/4* (development zone in Sarcelles), environmental restoration of the *Petit Rosne*, and urban renewal of the *Lochères* and *Dame-Blanche* communities.

Arc Nature Loisirs

The Arc Nature Loisirs project aims to create a community by linking the urban parks and open areas in East Seine-Saint-Denis (Sausset and Poudrierie parks, Bondy forest and other, smaller parks), from Aulnay-sous-Bois to Montfermeil. Today these green spaces are isolated enclaves; once the project is complete, they will form a continuous corridor for culture and leisure. Arc Nature Loisirs will structure Grand Roissy's economic growth and enhance its image, making it a destination in its own right within the Greater Paris region.