

Assessing master plan preparation mechanisms in Syria. A Legislative Decree No. 5 of 1982 review

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Abstract. This paper will discuss Decree No. 5 of 1982, which serves as the fundamental policy for creating master plans in Syrian cities. The study involves revising the decree using a descriptive method, followed by an evaluation to examine the efficiency of Decree No. 5 and the adherence to the principles of New Urbanism and smart growth, utilizing both the analytical comparative method and the descriptive analytical method. The results of the evaluation will be used to propose recommendations for enhancing policies and integrating the principles of New Urbanism and smart growth.

Key words: planning policy, Decree No. 5 of 1982, master plan, smart growth, New Urbanism.

1. Introduction

Master plans are considered one of the main tools for controlling and guiding urban growth and development. Master plans are official documents according to which development policies in an area are determined. Many countries nowadays adopt inefficient master plans due to the inefficient policies and methods used in preparing master plans. Studies and analyses have indicated that policies used to prepare master plans are conventional and contain inefficient principles, these principles primarily centered on land use planning. The approach that is centered on land use planning, neglects important aspects such as environmental, social, cultural, urban, and economic considerations, making these master plans inflexible, time-consuming, and unsustainable¹.

As a result, master plans often fail to respond to the needs of cities and the requirements of the residents². Furthermore, master plans do not comply with smart growth and New Urbanism policies. New Urbanism and smart growth are relatively new approaches to city planning and urban design that aim to address environmental problems, housing issues, and community well-being³. New Urbanism in particular focuses on several principles, such as supporting the physical organization of a region with transportation alternatives and interconnected networks of streets to encourage walking and reduce the use of automobiles. Neighborhoods should be designed to be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use, allowing for easy access to various daily activities. New Urbanism also emphasizes the availability of different housing types and price ranges within walking distance of transit stops to foster diversity. Civic, institutional, and commercial activities should be integrated into neighborhoods and districts, rather than isolated in separate areas. Streets and public spaces should be designed for shared use and safety, while individual architectural projects should blend in with the surrounding environment. The design of architecture and landscape should be informed by the local climate, topography, history, and

¹ Gupta 2017

² Maya 2013

³ Javid *et al* 2005

building practices. Moreover, civic buildings and public gathering places should be strategically located to enhance community identity and democratic culture. Buildings should provide inhabitants with a sense of location, weather, and time⁴. Many countries are attempting to integrate the principles of New Urbanism and smart growth into their policies and planning processes, responsible for creating master plans. This is done in order to avoid the urban problems that arise from conventional policies and principles and to create communities that support smart development patterns, resulting in positive environmental, social, economic, and urban impacts⁵. Syria is a West Asian country located in the Eastern Mediterranean⁶. Syria uses Decree No. 5 of 1982 for preparing master plans for residential settlements. The decree contains urban planning principles and the mechanism to regulate the process of planning population centers and preparing master plans. There are many shortcomings in the principles mentioned in Decree No. 5 of 1982, resulting in inefficient master plans that do not comply with smart growth and New Urbanism principles⁷. This research discusses the Syrian case, specifically focusing on Decree No. 5 of 1982 and highlighting the drawbacks in order to find suitable solutions and to achieve a better policy for a better master plan.

2. Review of the preparation of master plans in Syria in accordance with Legislative Decree No. 5 of 1982

The Decree No. 5 of 1982 defines urban planning principles, as unified principles that regulate the process of planning population centers. These principles aim to meet the requirements of population centers within the available possibilities for each center, while considering the comprehensive framework of regional planning. The decree includes general scientific engineering principles for urban planning and construction, and defines the steps and stages to be followed in preparing the comprehensive and detailed planning program, and the building system for any community⁸. Decree No. 5 of 1982 defines the planning program, as a program that determines the immediate and future needs of population, population size, population density, type and number of public services, and necessary infrastructure for the next twenty years, based on urban planning principles, and on urban analysis of data processing and evaluation in relation to regional data⁹. The structural plan is a plan that determines the functional areas and expansion areas along with the housing program. The general master plan is the plan that illustrates the future vision of population center and its expansion by defining urban boundaries, main road network, land uses within the plan, building regulations and codes, in a manner that does not conflict with urban planning principles and the planning program. The detailed master plan is the plan that specifies all planning details for the main and secondary road network, pedestrian paths, public spaces, and all urban details of the lands according to their intended use, all without conflicting with the general master plan and building system¹⁰.

In Article 5 of Legislative Decree No. 5 of 1982, the process of preparing general master plans in Syria is explained. The steps are mentioned along with a summary of each step:

⁴ Congress for the new urbanism 2022

⁵ Nizam and Petrișor 2022

⁶ Gammer 2004

⁷ Nizam and Petrișor 2022

⁸ Ministry of Local Administration and Environment 2005

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ Ministry of Local Administration and Environment 2005

2.1. Preparation of urban analysis studies

Preparing urban analysis studies involves studying all field, environmental, urban, social, and economic settings. The current situation is studied, and all relevant information about the study area gathered, taking into account regional data and regional connections. These studies are then analyzed and processed to evaluate them by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks. The results derived from these analyses form the basis for developing an appropriate functional planning program. Furthermore, the broad outlines of future are determined through a comprehensive plan, considering the current situation and future framework of urban development, while ensuring the compatibility of current situation and future framework of urban development, in both short and long term. The formulation of objectives aims to achieve the following: preservation of natural resources; avoiding expansion in green, forested, and fertile agricultural areas as much as possible; optimal use of site elements; preservation of the city's image (in the case of urban expansion of an existing city with a specific character); appropriate transportation and traffic system; activation of economic activities; provision of public facilities and essential services; setting development priorities with public participation; established topographic survey boundaries for this purpose; feasibility of plan implementation¹¹.

2.2. Preparation of the planning program

After conducting urban studies, analyzing and evaluating data, then formulating the results, the planning program is developed; it is defined as a computational and explanatory memorandum that demonstrates the current and future needs of urban agglomeration for the next twenty years. The planning program is prepared according to urban planning criteria, principles, and guidelines, based on the urban analysis of data, in addition, processing, and evaluation data, which include regional data and regional connectivity study; site specificity, geographical, geological, and environmental nature (environmental impact assessment); study of historical development, physical status, and urban environment; dynamics of socio-demographic and economic relationships and determining the degree of specificity; mechanisms of urban development for the studied agglomeration; study of transportation and traffic generated to and from the agglomeration, movement trends, and economic considerations, and accessibility and orientation¹².

2.3. Elements of prioritizing alternatives

The elements of prioritizing alternatives are optimal utilization of available resources; compatibility of planning areas with the current situation and clear boundaries between the gradual units of the residential area (sectors, neighborhoods, units); clear depiction of proposed urban structure and integration between the city elements and green areas; strong connectivity between the components of urban structure, development of transportation network, achieving hierarchical progression, and ensuring ease of communication; balanced distribution of population and densities; hierarchical provision of services and optimal distribution, taking into account their efficiency; achieving suitable environmental characteristics and preserving nature as much as possible, and selecting the optimal alternative achieving technical and economic feasibility¹³.

¹¹ ibid

¹² ibid

¹³ Ministry of Local Administration and Environment 2005

2.4. Preparation of the structure plan

After selecting the best alternative, the final structure plan is developed, including the network of major and arterial roads that divide the city into sectors and residential neighborhoods; area of sectors and residential neighborhoods, population, density, and proposed housing; locations and gradations of public service centers; green spaces and parks; area for artisanal and industrial zones. The structure plan is produced at a scale proportional to the size of settlement and can be prepared based on topographic maps, aerial or satellite images corrected and referenced¹⁴.

2.5. Preparation of the general master plan

After preparing the final structure plan, the next stage is preparing the general master plan, which includes establishing the general master plan for all land uses and development of urban regulation specific to all land uses¹⁵.

2.6. Land use planning orientations

Decree No. 5 of 1982 states that urban development plans are aimed at achieving balanced development of land uses, ensuring functional integration of land uses, and safeguarding environmental, health, social, and economic conditions of these land uses. The master plan considers the following land uses:

- Residential areas, sectors and residential neighborhoods outlined in the structure plan are divided into basic units and residential clusters, equipped with all necessary services, in line with the planning program (administrative, commercial, educational, social services, green areas, and sports facilities), and main, secondary, and service roads, pedestrian routes, squares, and parking areas;
- Major public services, including main centers in units, neighborhoods, sectors, and the main center of expansion areas, with commercial, administrative, health, and recreational services;
- Green areas, public parks, sports facilities, religious centers, and cemeteries with a gradual distribution;
- Tourist areas and entertainment places;
- Industrial, craft, and warehouse areas;
- Public transportation network, including: main, secondary, service roads; pedestrian routes, and squares; departure centers of various types (small cars, buses, trains, airports, ports); internal transport lines and stations according to their types; solid waste transport routes and collection sites; main sewerage network lines, combined lines, and treatment plant locations, typical cross-sections of roads; public transportation network¹⁶.

2.6.1. Residential zones

Residential areas consist of gradually organized units based on unit size and population, including basic units, residential neighborhoods, and residential sectors. The basic unit comprises groups of residential buildings, the residential neighborhood includes a collection of basic units, and the residential sector comprises a group of residential neighborhoods. For

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Ministry of Local Administration and Environment 2005

each organizational unit mentioned above, the population, density, and area are determined. The typical density ranges from 200 to 350 persons per hectare. The appropriate density is determined based on the unit's characteristics and the unit location within the urban area (central, peripheral, rural). The concerned parties and local authorities should agree that the density is not below 60 persons per hectare¹⁷.

General principles in residential zone planning include: types of residential buildings; arrangement of residential clusters according to site characteristics compliance with environmental conditions; ensuring personal privacy for residents meeting the needs and roles of residents based on specific location. Regarding the types of residential buildings, there are tables that classify the types of residential buildings as urban, rural, or social housing (cooperative housing, youth housing, public housing). Each type includes different building forms such as tower, high-rise, low-rise, villa, local urban housing, detached rural housing, connected rural housing, local rural housing, agricultural rural housing, agricultural farmhouses, and villa farms in rural style. Each building type is specified by the number of floors, occupancy ratio, individual share, subdivided area, land occupancy ratio, and investment factor. These characteristics vary based on the population of urban area¹⁸.

There are also guiding criteria for the building shape, including facade width, conditions related to the investment factor, and land occupancy ratio. These criteria vary depending on the building type and its location, whether the location of building type is in central areas of cities, peripheral areas, or rural areas. Higher land occupancy ratios and investment factors are considered in central areas of cities, while the higher land occupancy ratios and investment factors decrease towards peripheral areas, towns, and rural areas. The number of floors is also determined accordingly. There is a mention of the presence of car parking garages in basements for tower and high-rise buildings, and an adequate number of parking spaces within the plot, covering the needs. The maximum length of buildings is specified for most types, ensuring it is not exceeded¹⁹.

2.6.2. Commercial and service activity zones (various levels of service centers)

- Commercial zones: activities and general commercial services are gathered in centers of varying importance, distributed throughout the city or urban area based on population, starting from smaller residential clusters to the main city center. It is preferable for these commercial zones to be located on level ground, connected to transportation means, and have suitable parking space. The size of commercial activity zones is determined based on population and their needs. At the basic unit level, service centers include retail stores for daily and weekly needs, with an allocated area of 1 square meter per person and a walking distance of approximately 500 meters. At the residential neighborhood level, service centers include retail stores with weekly or monthly frequency and some non-polluting craft activities. The allocated area for these centers is 1 square meter per person, with a walking distance of approximately 500 meters. Central commercial areas cover the entire city and residential area, including various

¹⁷ ibid

¹⁸ ibid

¹⁹ Ministry of Local Administration and Environment 2005

commercial activities and some craft activities. The size of these central commercial areas is determined based on the nature of urban area, city, and the economic impact of these central commercial areas. Beside this, central commercial areas are distributed in centers or outskirts based on the nature and pollution level of activities²⁰.

- Social, administrative, cultural, and health institutions are gradually distributed at the residential neighborhood, residential sector, and city levels. Each type is allocated a different area per person²¹.

2.6.3. Educational institutions

Educational institutions are distributed as follows: kindergarten-level institutions are located within the residential cluster, with a walking distance of 500 meters. Primary school-level institutions are located within the basic unit, with a walking distance of 700 meters. General secondary schools are located within the residential neighborhood, with a walking distance of 1,000 meters. Vocational schools and some cultural services are located within the residential sector, with a walking distance of 1,200 meters. Higher education institutions, specialized institutes, and some cultural services are located at the city level. The area per person is specified for each type of service, but the access distance at the city level is not specified²².

2.6.4. Craft and industrial zones

Craft and industrial zones are located on the outskirts or within the city, depending on the degree of pollution and harm. Flat land connected to transportation routes is preferred to ensure good access for workers and services. The possibility of creating green belts with a specified width surrounding these industries is also considered²³.

2.6.5. Green areas, playgrounds, and public parks in residential units

Parks are distributed at the residential cluster level, while playgrounds, parks, and squares are distributed at other levels: basic unit; residential neighborhood; residential sector, and then city. A designated area per person has been determined for each type according to the level²⁴.

2.6.6. Locations of recreational and touristic zones

Locations of recreational and touristic zones are determined based on the uniqueness of gathering. A specific area is allocated per person at the city level. As for hotels, the number of rooms is calculated as a specific ratio of the total population²⁵.

2.6.7. Basic infrastructure zones

The transportation and communication network is the fundamental structure for organizing and connecting various urban elements in terms of dimensions and importance. The following considerations should be taken into account: gradual categorization of street types based on

²⁰ ibid

²¹ ibid

²² ibid

²³ Ministry of Local Administration and Environment 2005

²⁴ ibid

²⁵ ibid

urban settlement levels; studying and evaluating the efficiency of existing roads; railway networks, airports, and their capacity to accommodate current and future traffic; studying public transportation routes, terminals, and their requirements; ensuring necessary parking facilities. There are also guidelines for other basic infrastructure aspects, such as water supply networks, sewage and waste disposal systems, communications, and energy (including the feasibility study of using renewable and new energy sources, i.e., solar and wind)²⁶.

3. Analysis and evaluation of the mechanism for preparing master plans, in Syria

After reviewing the mechanism of preparing master plans in Syria according to Legislative Decree No. 5 of 1982, the mechanism is analyzed using both the descriptive, analytical method and the comparative, analytical method to identify strengths and weaknesses and assess the extent to which the mechanism incorporates the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism.

The mechanism of preparing master plans according to Decree No. 5 of 1982 is a comprehensive mechanism that begins with environmental, urban, social, and economic analytical studies. The mechanism of preparing master plans takes into account regional data and regional connectivity. Then the comprehensive studies are analyzed and processed to assess them by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks, and then deriving results. The results form the basis for developing an appropriate functional planning program.

Although the comprehensive plan's objectives, which are the broad outlines of the future and serve as basis for subsequent master plans, do not explicitly mention the importance of achieving growth based on the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism. Some of the comprehensive plan's goals align with the objectives and principles of smart growth and New Urbanism. For example, from an environmental standpoint, the comprehensive plan includes preserving natural resources and minimizing expansion in green, forested, and fertile agricultural areas, and optimizing site elements. With respect to economy, the comprehensive plan focuses on stimulating economic activities, while from a social perspective the comprehensive plan aims to provide suitable facilities and services and prioritize development through public participation. The comprehensive plan also emphasizes preserving the city's image. However, the goals are concise and do not specify the methods for achieving them or ensuring employment opportunities for population. One of the goals is to establish a suitable transportation and traffic system, which contradicts the principles of smart growth that advocate for diversified transportation options (walking, biking, public transport)^{27, 28}.

The comprehensive plan does not pay attention to the hierarchical structure of the region and city, sectors, the developmental form, and the types of communities they contain. Each community should have a percentage of building density, natural density, and usage diversity density, specifying the properties of buildings within communities. The regional structure, including developmental sectors, communities, and zoning districts, forms the essential framework for a smart code, as it represents the latest codes based on form. Through the mentioned regional structure, a developmental form that supports smart growth patterns and a built environment of anticipated quality will be ensured²⁹.

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ Smart Growth Online 2015

²⁸ Michigan Association of Planning 2007

²⁹ Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company 2003

Considering the shortcomings of the comprehensive plan, the planning program based on the comprehensive plan won't fulfill the goals of smart growth and New Urbanism. Despite that planning program being based on comprehensive analytical studies, the planning program ultimate goal is to meet the current and future needs of the urban community in line with the comprehensive plan's objectives. These current and future needs refer to the type and quantity of public services and necessary constructions for the next twenty years, i.e., functional needs. Therefore, the planning program primarily focuses on land use planning, neglecting other essential dimensions of smart planning. Consequently, the result of land use-based planning is conventional developmental patterns that consume more land and require longer roads, encouraging reliance on cars and increasing pollution, among other negative outcomes. This conventional development pattern does not support smart communities that embody the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism. On the contrary, conventional development pattern acts as an obstacle to creating smart communities in the studied urban center.

Regarding the planning alternatives, there are three alternatives that propose graphical representations of the planning program's ideas, illustrating the specific urban structure of project elements, the functional relationships of the elements, and the connection to the transportation network. Since the planning program rests on an erroneous foundation that does not consider the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism, planning alternatives fall short of expectations in terms of efficiency.

The selection of optimal planning alternative depends on its capacity to fulfill the evaluation criteria outlined in Decree No. 5 of 1982. Although various evaluation criteria are available, the evaluation criteria do not sufficiently encompass the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism. In fact, the evaluation criteria encompass certain environmental, social, and urban factors.

The optimal planning alternative is developed as a final master plan, encompassing functional zones and urban expansion areas along with the housing programs of these areas. The optimal planning alternative illustrates the network of highways and main roads that divide the city into sectors and residential neighborhoods (including area, density, and proposed housing), public service centers and the gradients, green spaces and playgrounds, and area for artisanal and industrial zones. Hence, the base of optimal planning alternative lies in functional and land use-based divisions, i.e., conventional planning.

Based on the final master plan, the general master plan is prepared, outlining the future vision and the expansion of the population center by defining urban boundaries, main road networks, land uses within the plan, construction methods and regulations. Then the detailed master plan specifies all planning details of main and secondary road networks, pedestrian paths, public spaces, and all urban details. Since the foundation of the detailed plan (master plan) does not consider the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism, both the general master plan and detailed plan fall short of the desired efficiency.

Regarding the analysis of preparation criteria for different functional zones in Syria, it can be said that initially the conventional mechanism is followed, where each usage is studied separately, and planning criteria are determined accordingly. However, this conventional approach does not align with the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism. The comprehensiveness of each functional area regarding smart growth and New Urbanism are examined below.

3. 1. Analysis of land use principles

3. 1. 1. Analysis of residential use

- There is no provision regarding the design of diverse buildings that cater to all segments of society, aiming to prevent concentration of poverty or isolation. This is not in line with principles of New Urbanism, which emphasize providing a variety of housing types and prices to enable interaction among people of different ages, races, and incomes.
- There is no provision in the planning of residential areas that aligns with principles of New Urbanism, which state that the neighborhood should be walkable and mixed-use.
- There is no provision in the planning of residential areas that aligns with principles of New Urbanism, which emphasize that daily activities should occur within walking distance to allow non-drivers to maintain independence, and connected street networks should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the need for car trips, and conserve energy.
- There is no provision in the planning of residential areas that aligns with principles of New Urbanism, which aim to achieve building density and land uses within a short walking distance from transit stations to replace car dependency.
- There is no provision in the planning of residential areas that aligns with principles of New Urbanism, which emphasize the concentration of civic institutions and commercial activities within the neighborhood and district, rather than isolated complexes, and placement of schools to allow children to bike to schools.
- There is no provision in the planning of residential areas that aligns with principles of New Urbanism, which emphasize the physical definition of streets and public spaces as places for shared use. There is also no provision similar to principles of New Urbanism for connecting individual buildings to their surroundings not only through style but also through function, and no provision in line with principle which states that streets and squares should be safe, comfortable, and interesting for pedestrians, encouraging walking and fostering neighborly interactions.
- Moreover, there is no provision in the planning of residential areas that aligns with principles, which emphasize the importance of designing landscapes and buildings that respond to the local climate, topography, history, and building practices. Similarly, there is no provision aligned with principles, which highlight the significance of civic buildings and public assemblies occupying prominent sites to strengthen community identity and culture, taking on distinctive forms different from other buildings in the city. Additionally, there is no provision in line with principles, stating that buildings should provide their occupants with a clear sense of location, weather, and time (natural methods of heating and cooling can be more efficient than mechanical systems).
- Lastly, there is no provision that aligns with principles, which focus on the preservation and revitalization of historic buildings, areas, and landscapes to reinforce the continuity and evolution of the urban community.
- The achievement of diverse transportation options is not addressed in the planning of residential areas in Decree No. 5.

3. 1. 2. Analysis of commercial and service activity areas (service centers at various levels)

3. 1. 2. 1. Commercial areas

- No provision was observed regarding the location of commercial services in a prominent place and designed in a distinctive manner in accordance with principles of New Urbanism.
- No provision was observed specifying the location of commercial areas around transportation stations, along transportation routes, or on important intersections as outlined in the principles of New Urbanism.
- No provision was observed regarding the intensification and diversification of commercial activities beyond daily or weekly needs in the proposed locations, in line with principles of New Urbanism.
- The accessibility to commercial services was determined at the level of basic unit and residential neighborhood, but not specified at the city level, where it should not exceed 2 km.
- There are no provisions regarding the connection of individual buildings to their surroundings in the current guidelines. Additionally, there is no mention of the significance of designing buildings that consider the local climate, topography, history, and building practices. Furthermore, the guidelines do not align with principles that state buildings should offer residents a clear sense of location, weather, and time.

3. 1. 2. 2. Social, administrative, cultural, and health institutions

- No provision was observed regarding the location of social, administrative, cultural, and health institutions in a prominent place and designed in a distinctive manner in accordance with principles of New Urbanism.
- No provision was observed specifying the location of social, administrative, cultural, and health institutions around transportation stations, along transportation routes, or on important intersections as outlined in the principles of New Urbanism.
- No provision was observed regarding the intensification and diversification of social, administrative, cultural, and health institutions in the proposed locations, in line with principles of New Urbanism.
- The accessibility to social, administrative, cultural, and health institutions was not determined.
- There are no provisions regarding the connection of individual buildings to their surroundings in the current guidelines. Additionally, there is no mention of the significance of designing buildings that consider the local climate, topography, history, and building practices. Furthermore, the guidelines do not align with principles that state buildings should offer residents a clear sense of location, weather, and time.

3. 1. 2. 3. Educational institutions

- A significant walking distance was observed for secondary schools, exceeding 800 meters, vocational schools, and some cultural services.
- The accessibility distance to educational institutions at the city level was not specified.

- Safe cycling routes for students were not determined.
- There are no provisions regarding the connection of individual buildings to their surroundings in the current guidelines. Additionally, there is no mention of the significance of designing buildings that consider the local climate, topography, history, and building practices. Furthermore, the guidelines do not align with principles that state buildings should offer residents a clear sense of location, weather, and time.

3. 1. 3. Analysis of green areas, playgrounds, and public parks in residential units

- There is no provision regarding the distribution and positioning of green areas of different types along pedestrian paths and rivers, and creating a network that connects green streets with pedestrian pathways, urban squares, and greywater.
- There is no provision about the role of green areas and open spaces in renewing and connecting neighborhoods and different areas.
- There is no provision specifying that landscape design should be based on local climate, topography, and history, as stated in principles of the New Urbanism principles.

3. 1. 4. Analysis of basic infrastructure

- Alternative modes of transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) are not mentioned in a way that maximizes accessibility and movement within the region while reducing reliance on cars, in line with principles of the New Urbanism. Also, there is no mention of diversifying transportation systems to include railroads.
- There is no provision calling for intensifying building construction and diversifying land use around transit stations, such as transit-oriented development (TOD), which is one of the smart growth patterns.
- The importance of physically designating streets as shared spaces is not emphasized. Also, designing streets that encourage safe environments, is not mentioned.
- There is no provision that aligns with principles, which state that contemporary urbanism should accommodate cars but in a manner that respects pedestrians and the character of open space.
- There is no provision that aligns with principles, which emphasize that streets should be safe, comfortable, interesting, and pedestrian-friendly, encouraging walking and fostering neighborly interaction.
- There is no provision stating that public transportation should be affordable, safe, and comfortable to attract a larger portion of population as an alternative to cars.
- There is no mention of what aligns with the concept of smart transportation, which includes well-connected train systems linking neighborhoods, towns, and regions with strategically located transit stations within easy walking and cycling distance. Also, a smart transportation system encourages street design that accommodates pedestrians, bicycles, scooters, and cars while promoting walking through sidewalk design and tree planting for shade.

4. Conclusion

The research on Decree No. 5 of 1982 in Syria has revealed various shortcomings in the urban planning principles and mechanisms for preparing master plans for residential

settlements. These shortcomings have resulted in inefficient master plans that do not align with smart growth and New Urbanism principles. To address these issues and achieve better master plans, it is crucial to find suitable solutions and implement a more effective policy. This could include revising and updating Decree No. 5 of 1982 to incorporate more comprehensive and modern urban planning principles, like the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism.

Additionally, it is essential to improve coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders, such as urban planners, government officials, and local communities. This can help ensure that the master plans are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the population and promote sustainable development. Furthermore, the public participation in the urban planning process and engaging local communities in decision-making can help in identifying the needs and concerns of community, leading to more inclusive and effective master plans.

By addressing the shortcomings identified in Decree No. 5 of 1982, such as incorporating the principles of smart growth and New Urbanism, promoting greater public participation, and improving coordination among stakeholders, Syria can make significant progress towards the development of better master plans. These plans, aligned with New Urbanism principles, will play a crucial role in fostering sustainable urban development.

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