Abstract

One of the most frequently mentioned negative effects of suburbanisation is the effect on traffic. New suburb residents daily commute to the centre of the urban region to work and to access services. Unlike the original residents, they use cars more extensively as a means of transport. This causes high traffic volume on roads (especially those which are radially oriented), which were not designed for it. As a consequence, traffic congestion during peak hours occurs regularly. This problem can be solved through a variety of measures. This thesis focuses only on one group of measures – tools of spatial planning.

In the case of Prague, suburban housing has developed extremely quickly over the last 20 years. As a result, the problem and its solution are even more difficult. Pressure on land use in the city's hinterland is greater than in Western Europe, where the suburbanization process took place gradually. Moreover, spatial planning tools were affected by changes in public administration (formation of regions). The thesis models the impact of residential suburbanization on traffic. It then examines whether spatial planning tools are sufficient to control that impact or if there is a threat that traffic should become a barrier to development.

Prague's hinterland has experienced increases in traffic volume, involving transit, local transport and commuting. Using a simplified model of commuting, the portion of new residents in increased traffic volumes is estimated. During the period from 1990 to 2005, it was only about 10 to 40%. The thesis focuses on monitoring traffic on the I/2 highway and evaluating the traffic increase as a cause of congestion along the borders of Prague. Spatial plans of suburban municipalities surrounding the metropolis do not reflect that phenomena and project a fourfold increase of population, over the next decade, in comparison with the increase between 1990 and 2005, with no regard for road capacity. This is in contrary to the spatial plan at the regional level (UP VUC or ZUR), which alerts that transport network is prepared to absorb such an increase.

The UP VUC, however, cannot restrict individual projects in local community plans and is not able to ensure coordination with the construction of new transport infrastructure. In the case of Prague, another problem arises - the administrative boundaries of city. One solution would, therefore, be the establishment of a new document. That document would have the competence to temporarily regulate the construction of new houses, shopping centres or manufacturing facilities in areas plagued by congestion and other traffic problems. Such a document could also address a range of problems (commuting).