

# **THE BASQUE COUNTRY HAS A NEW TERRITORIAL STRATEGY, THE DOT OF 2019**

*Posted on 13/02/2020 by Naider*

## ¿Camisa de fuerza al expansionismo urbanístico o buenas palabras para la libre interpretación?

ial Planning Law of the Basque Country (LOT) was approved. Since then and to date, Basque society (and its territory) has experienced the first generation of land use planning. It was in 1997 when the first Land Management Guidelines (DOT) were approved by Decree 28/1997 of February 11.

Although this is a somewhat generic framework document, it is also relevant when it comes to redirecting territorial policy through its guidelines. The DOTs have established the rules of the game, but then they have delegated to the smaller scale plans when it comes to specifying the planning measures most linked to specific areas of the territory.

The DOT approved in 1997 has not been a rigid document, it has also been modified to be adapted to demographic changes over the years. The TODs have been revised since 2015 through a process that culminated in the final approval of a new document on July 30, 2019. With this, the second generation for territorial planning begins. It is more aware of the climatic and ecological challenges and the importance of ordering the territory with sustainability criteria. They include the network of ecological corridors that connect natural spaces carried out in 2005 and promote limiting urban expansionism, leaving behind the culture of depredation of soil and resources. These are the guiding principles included in the new [Guidelines for Territorial Planning](#) :

1. Incorporate **green infrastructure** and value ecosystem services in the planning of the physical environment.
2. Specifically make **rural habitats** visible in territorial planning.
3. Incorporate the figure of **the axes of transformation** into the **urban system**.
4. Optimize the **use of already artificialized land** by promoting:
  1. urban regeneration
  2. the mix of uses
  3. the perimeters of urban growth to avoid unlimited growth
5. Promote existing land use for **new economic activities** through:

1. Feedback
2. Renewal
3. Redensification
6. Include **landscape management** through territorial planning instruments.
7. Incorporate the concept of **sustainable resource management**:
  1. Water
  2. Energy sovereignty
  3. Circular economy
  4. Connected self-sufficiency of resources and raw materials
8. **Promote mobility and sustainable logistics** with special attention to:
  1. Pedestrian and cyclist mobility
  2. Multimodal public transport
  3. Intermodality (optimizing the combination of different transports)
  4. The high-speed train
9. Include **cross-cutting issues**:
  1. Universal accessibility,
  2. Gender perspective,
  3. Basque,
  4. Climate change,
  5. Health
  6. Territorial interrelation
10. Promote **good governance** of land use planning by:
  1. Monitoring and evaluation of plans
  2. Citizen participation
  3. Administrative integration.

From these guidelines it can be concluded that territorial planning has to give a considerable change. The levels of artificialization of the soil should be stopped dead, and would even have to be reconverted through recovery and renaturation processes. There should be no place within this framework for more Partial Territorial Plans (PTP) that plan new roads and highways, nor those that give the green light to expand the areas of economic activity at the expense of ecological corridors and natural and rural habitats. The General Urban Planning Plans (PGOU) of the municipalities that continue to eliminate areas of agricultural countryside to build more new housing, with empty houses and despite the demographic decrease, would not be understood as coherent either.

We will see if the DOT serve as a straitjacket against the plans to depred the territory or if it will be limited to being a document of good words, but generic enough to include any interpretation. At the moment councils and town halls follow their own roadmaps with their current and approved plans during the previous framework.

**Aitor Mingo Bilbao**

**MSc Cities and Sustainability**

**Naider**

**There are no comments yet.**