

Features of preservation of the Russian motor transport heritage and its participation in urban development

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Abstract: The article deals with the specific features of the Russian motor transport heritage preservation based on the example of museums. This heritage also allows to develop the space of the cities themselves. Space reclamation represents one of the key aspects for Russian civilization. In addition, it is important to address motor transport heritage because it has no legal protection in Russia, though museums are being created actively and collections are growing, starting to change space in cities and their cultural environment. The current research aims at revealing space peculiarities of the motor transport museums development in Russia and the way they influence the cities where they are situated. The factors that favour the creation of museums include motor transport or neighbouring productions at the location, especially during the first stages of creation. Later, population number and the level of social and economic development of Russian cities and regions start to play an important role. The main territories where the museums are located include Central and Ural districts. Some museums are located in rural areas alongside with cities and towns. About half of the museums have foreign motor transport exhibits in their collections. The creation of children and public transport museums becomes an important event. The main directions, where museums develop local communities, create working places as well as many cultural events, include automobile rallies, the work with collections, devoted to the Soviet era, and joint projects with transportation companies (OAO “RZhD”), State archive and grant foundations. The work with big companies, state institutions and foundations is exemplified by the museum complex UGMK in Verkhnyaya Pyshma and Perm motor transport museum “Retro-garage”.

Keywords: motor transport heritage; Motor transport museums; Russian automobile museums; Technical museums; Scientific and technical heritage of Russia; Automobile culture; City museums; Russian cities and towns.

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1. Introduction

Soviet automobile industry will celebrate its 100th anniversary on the 1st of November 2024. This was the lorry AMO-F-15 that started this industry. This is a specific feature of Russian automobile production because in other countries the production started with light motor cars, not lorries. Though the factory “Russo-Balt” produced light motor cars in

tsarist Russia in 1912–1919, the mass production of Soviet cars started only in 1932 (Karasev, 2024).

Motor transport (automobile transport) represents the kind of transport engaged in mainly short and medium-distance transportation of cargos and people by cars and lorries from one place (region, country) to another by trackless roads (Gorkin, et al., 2013). In Russia, the motor transport production meant the production of light motor cars, lorries, motorcycles, mopeds, buses and other vehicles on wheels (Lyadova, 2023). That is why this article will examine the automobile industry as a whole variety of vehicles. Moreover, the article refers to the products of all factories of all Soviet republics and the countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid as the Soviet automobile industry. The products of modern Russian factories are referred to as Russian automobile industry; the ones of other countries are referred to as the foreign automobile industry.

A museum represents a key object of motor transport heritage preservation. The motor transport museum is understood as the museum of motor vehicles, whose collection demonstrates either the history or/and modern development trends of motor transport production of producing countries. It is important to note that sometimes these museums are more than just museums. They have scientific and technical collections (military vehicles, airplanes and others), tell the history of engineering research, display the collection of culture and everyday life of the time when motor transport was created. This enriches the collection and gives a complex impression about geography, history, economy and people of those days. There are other preservation ways, such as automobile clubs, private collections, but we will discuss the museums.

The automobile industry represents the essence of engineers' daring and successful calculations of business people. It also reflects the economic development of producing countries. Motor transport is a part of the transport complex, which means it is also a part of transport heritage (Zaparii, 2008). But Russian researchers do not consider motor transport as a subtype and hardly ever study it, compared to transport infrastructure (stations, roads and others). At the same time, this is included in the equipment, which is protected as an object of cultural heritage, but motor vehicles are not referred as a separate part of the technical heritage. Pipelines and spaceships are examples of transport, but they are studied as technical heritage. It is largely connected with the fact that the products of the automobile industry are the objects of science and technology; moreover, they move (Lyadova, 2023). The Moscow Museum of Transport is trying to solve this legislation problem.

In geographical sciences, the heritage is studied within the landscape approach (the study of cultural landscapes). The experience of cultural and landscape territorial zoning on different hierarchical levels (macro-, mezzo-, and micro-) allows evaluating the territorial richness in the monuments of natural and cultural heritage integrally. However, these studies do not consider motor transport and automobile heritage (more broadly, it is necessary to research transportation systems, which include transport, highways, stops and bridges). There are several reasons why this heritage is excluded. 1) Urban landscapes and geosystems do not attract attention as sources of heritage. Researchers became interested in Russian industrial heritage only in the 1970s, but they started to study it in the 2000s. These were economic historians who first paid attention to industrial heritage. 2) According to legislation, heritage is seen as immovable and nonmaterial objects. 3) Transport systems have their own specific features, such as the infrastructure (highways, railroad tracks, railway stations, airports, spaceports), is used for a long time, but the means of transport are often changed. Therefore, the rapid change of these means, which is associated with disposable, market consumption, does not allow them to be considered as a heritage.

However, in Russian history, especially in the Soviet period, the development of transport was of epochal significance, in particular as a part of urbanization processes, the development of the country's space, and the work of practically all industries. Moreover, this was important for the development of design and service. The lack of continuity led to the situation when modern automobilization poses serious fundamental problems for geosystems themselves (including the historical and cultural heritage. This gives grounds to the ideas about “car dead end” (Rodoman, 2010) and the growing role of public transport and public places. The problem of “automobile culture” also appeared. It is based not only on management systems at factories and road safety rules

(Chongyang, Du, 2024; Panteleeva, Prokofieva, 2021), but also serves as a foundation of the development culture of Russian space at all space levels. Therefore, the solution to the problems of this heritage opens the opportunities for broadening of semantic and civilizational discoveries in Russia, as well as the optimization of its space development.

2. Materials and methods

There is no consolidated data source about Russian motor transport museums. Therefore, the author previously conducted a historical and geographical research on the development of museums' network of Russian automobile industry from the 1960s to 2025 (Lyadova, 2023).

The network analysis included the following steps:

1) creation of a database with the following data: official name, official status, location, contacts, year of foundation, and composition of the exposition. Data on existing private, corporate and other non-state museums in a simplified version can be collected thanks to data from the Association of Private and Folk Museums of Russia (Associaciya chastnyh, 2025), the National Award Corporate Museum (Nacional'naya premiya, 2025), data from the Register of Non-Profit Organizations of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation (Reestr nekommercheskih, 2025) and author's studies in "Vkontakte" and information from founders and directors of these museums.

2) historical and geographical analysis of the development of a network of museums and museum entities. The key points of the analysis are the features of the periodization of the network and the identification of types of museums based on the composition of their exposition. The main factors for the location and development of museums in different parts of the Russian Federation were identified. At this stage, the comparative method is widely used;

3) analysis of existing ways for museums to participate in the development of their cities and regions: car rallies, preservation of Soviet life and development of urban space. The last point was considered using the example of museums in the cities of Verkhnyaya Pyshma and Perm.

3. Results

3.1. Historical and geographical features of the museum network of motor transport museums in the Russian Federation and factors of its development

In Russia, as of May 1, 2024, there are 72 museums and collections in 46 cities and 7 rural settlements in 35 constituent entities of the Russian Federation (figure 1). It is worth noting that the number of museums exceeds the number of collections, but the information is difficult to find in the Internet. The majority of museums are the museums of light motor cars, though the share of motorcycle and other motor transport museums is also significant (Figure 2).

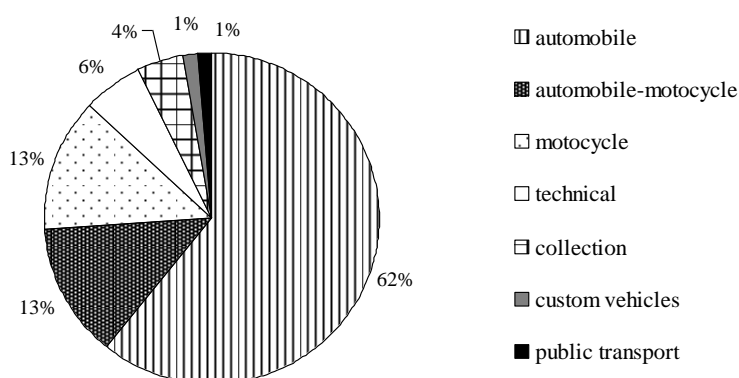


Figure 1. Structure of motor transport museums in Russia (based on data (Lyadova, 2023))

The museums appeared not in an even manner throughout the country. This process had several stages, which differ in the number and structure of the created museums. Several peculiarities can be singled out:

1. If we consider the appearance of museums by stages (before 1991 and after that by decades), it is obvious that the creation of museums was fostered (at least at initial stages) by motor transport or neighbouring production existing in a city or territorial entity. However, a direct correlation is not always seen (e.g. in Vladivostok). Later, population numbers and the level of social and economic development become important factors.

There are motor transport museums practically in all million cities, excluding Rostov-on-Don, Voronezh, Volgograd and Omsk. On the one hand, these cities did not have industries connected to the motor transport complex (except Volgograd). The enterprises of the aerospace industry and corresponding museums are situated in these cities. On the other hand, at present, there are no investors to create museums (social and economic factors).

2. The main regions where motor transport museums are situated include the Central and the Ural economic areas (figure 1). Moreover, they possess the widest variety of museums and their collections. These areas show high social and economic indicators, compared to others (Sharygin, 2016), but the Trans Volga economic Area, which falls behind (Gusev et. al., 2021) and traditionally specializes in motor transport production, does not demonstrate such a variety of museums.

First museums in the Asian part of Russia appeared in 2002. They are represented by Russian, European and American exhibits. Moscow is ahead of all regions, as the museums of all kinds of transport are situated there (except motorcycles). All museums are private.

3. More than half of the museums are private. Moreover, half of them appeared in the period between 2011 and 2020 (Table 1). The collections of about half of the museums consist of foreign exhibits (this phenomenon requires a study). It is worth noting that private museums in Russia have their own peculiarities, that is why a private museum in Russia is not always a licensed and fully-featured museum institution (Yureneva, 2024). It is possible that a rapid growth in the number of museums will be replaced by the closure of a part of them, especially in the case of the owner's death. This creates a problem of collection preservation for local communities and the owner's relatives.

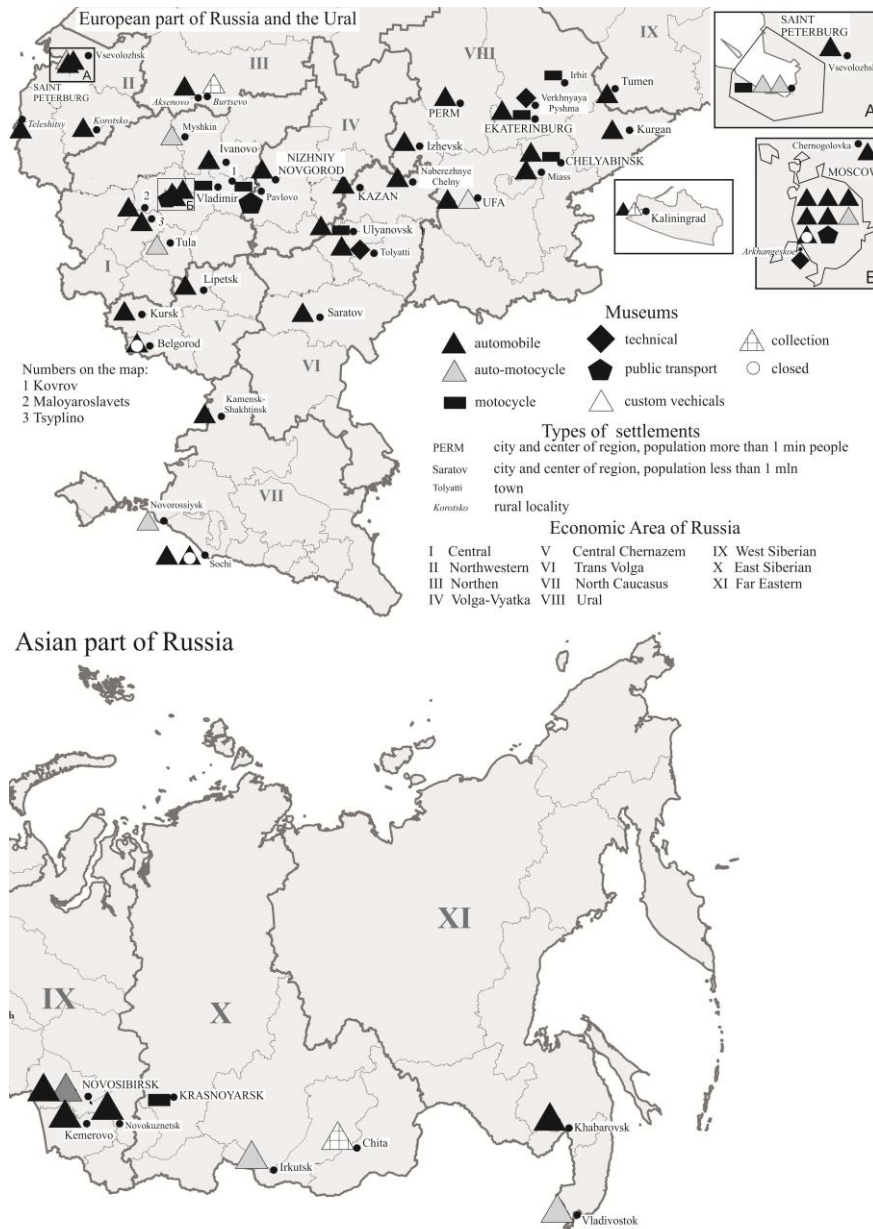


Figure 2. Russian motor transport museums (based on data, Lyadova, 2023)

Table 1. Stages of museums' and collections' creation according to their status (made by the author)

Period	Quantity		Status			
	total	exhibit foreign automobiles	corporate	state	non-governmental organization	private, NPO
1965–1991	12	1	8	1	1	2
1992–2000	4	0	0	1	0	3
2001–2010	12	5	0	2	1	9
2011–2020	39	1	0	2	0	37
2021–2024	6	2	0	0	0	5

4. Having started with automobile collections, the museums in the town of Tolyatti, Arkhangelskoe settlement (a part of the town of Krasnogorsk), and the town of Verkhnyaya Pyshma

actually created technical museums, which include aviation, space, military and other types of equipment. Though the Polytechnical museum in Moscow is a national museum of science and technology, the three museums mentioned above became its alternatives, whose collections and the work scale exceed those of the Moscow Museum.

It can be said that the UGMK museum complex is practically the only operating and actively developing technical museum-park, that accumulates different activities and harmonically develops the culture of Verkhnyaya Pyshma. It is visited by more than 200,000 visitors every year.

5. The museums appeared in rural area alongside with towns and cities of different sizes. They are often created by auto enthusiasts and former racing drivers, but not by professional museum workers. Currently two of them are closed due to the owner's death, collections of soviet and Russian automobiles are not protected and therefore are lost.

3.2. Motor transport museums and the development of their cities and regions

There are different approaches to assessing the contribution of the cultural sector: 1. economic approach (within the framework of cultural economics). Within its framework, the impact is assessed on the basis of statistical data on the activities of cultural objects (income and expenses, costs and benefits, consumer behavior, impact on other sectors of the economy, for example, tourism), standard indicators of cultural consumption (Bychkova, 2016; Tishchuk et. al., 2023). 2. socio-cultural approach. Considers the features of forming the identity of the population, instilling patriotism, and preserving memory. 3. The geographical approach, first of all, considers the placement of museums as elements of the cultural landscape of the region, studies cultural objects in all the diversity of their influence on the life of the community, and assesses the impact on the urban environment and cultural policy (Amelkina, 2021; Lyadova, 2023a; Streletsky, Gorokhov, 2022).

After all, the main task of such museum formations is cultural activity. A similar position is supported by economists themselves (for example, Muzychuk, 2025).

The emergence of children's and public transport museums (in Moscow and Ufa) became an important factor. The development of urban transport systems includes public transport and, possibly, in the future, it will also involve children's transport. Moreover, the development of off-street transport is already on the urban development agenda (Merkushev, 2022).

Private museums often work within a certain business model when a museum becomes a part of a hotel, restaurant and wine business. This feature characterizes the museums of the North Caucasus, the town of Kovrov (Vladimir oblast) and the Vologda oblast. Probably, this model will expand to other private museums. This symbiosis appeared due to several reasons: diversification of business, including the owner's hobby into business, and "saving" the collection by joining it to a more profitable enterprise.

Museums can participate in life of cities, towns, regions, and the country in different ways. Museums and collections play an educational role (Chirkov, 2025). Alongside demonstrating achievements, they create an environment to develop the engineering and creative abilities of children and youth. Chief engineers and veterans of production inspired the creation of museums at factories producing motor transport with the aim of transferring experience (Mazur, 2021). Corporate museums at motor transport producers in Russia still do this job.

As motor transport museums are situated in different regional centers, cities and towns, they allow the space in these settlements to progress. Furthermore, these museums develop local communities, as the majority of them were created by these societies. This is connected with specific features of the heritage itself, its mobility and functional diversity, local communities' active participation in its preservation and establishing connections outside cities, towns and territorial entities. The following kinds of work represent such space relations:

– Automobile rallies. This is the earliest and most direct way to show automobiles. It is also a campaign to participate in the production on purchase of cars. Modern automobile rally includes moving Soviet and Russian cars, military vehicles, more seldom motorcycles, in the city, where the museum is situated, as well as between cities. As before, the rallies are devoted to important dates in

the history of the country and the city: the 1st of May, Victory Day, City Day, the Day of Russia, and different professional holidays. Practically all museums take part in Victory Day parades in the cities of their location, and sometimes in other cities. Moreover, when a museum is situated in the city, it became possible to include this city in the routes of international automobile rallies (e.g., the rally “Paris – Beijing”) (Aktualizatsiia promyshlennogo, 2020).

During automobile rallies, museums use not only their own exhibits, but also invite automobile clubs, re-enactment clubs, private collectors and moto transport companies. These rallies help to demonstrate the main feature of motor transport heritage: it can seamlessly connect different layers of historic and cultural heritage and demonstrate spacial relations between different periods of Russian history.

– The demonstration of the heritage of the USSR and urban heritage of those days. Almost all museums possess collections of Soviet motor transport, exhibit the objects of everyday life, household appliances, interiors, collections of modelmakers, posters, paintings, toys and other characteristic things of the Soviet era. This feature of the museums requires a careful study. It allows not to put the equipment into the opposition to other spheres of society, but vice versa, it helps to find common development routes. As the BMW experience shows (Tafintseva, 2021), such combinations set new trends in urban planning, architecture, management, museum’s work and art (Gelfond, 2016) and develop tourism (Michnicka, Kołodziejczyk, 2022).

– There is no research dedicated to the impact these museums made on the development of communities, culture and economy in cities. However, its important influence can be seen through special and regular events. Some museums demonstrate an active position in attracting attention to themselves and creating different places of attraction. The most ambitious and complex projects include the ones with OAO “RZhD”. The project, which especially stands out, is the locomotive-hauled tourist retro train “Ural Express”, going from Ekaterinburg to the territory of the museum complex in Verkhnyaya Pyshma. This is a unique example of such a form of work with a museum in Russia. But it is not known how many workplaces it created, as well as how many taxes it collected for the Sverdlovsk oblast. During 3 years, the train carried over 65,000 passengers – tourists from different parts of Russia and foreign countries and became the hallmark of the Sverdlovsk region (Retro train “Ural Express”, 2025).

The projects of the Perm motor transport museum “Retro-garage” stand out in a way that they influence local communities. They include the work with OAO “RZhD” and the joint projects with GKBU “State archive of Perm Krai”. The train “Victory Echelon” runs annually between towns of Perm Krai situated along the Sverdlovskaya railway thanks to joint projects with OAO “RZhD”. More than 1000 people gather in each town to see the train. It includes a locomotive, coaches and platforms of the war times. Machines and equipment, motor and military transport are demonstrated on the platforms. The work with the State archive involves urban spaces in Perm and other towns of the region. This work helps to create theme exhibitions in towns and movable exhibitions for automobile rallies, which tell about the industrial heritage of the places and people who were creating it (Lyadova, 2023a; Kozlova, 2022).

It is worth noting that such projects can be implemented only if they are financed through grant foundations (in Perm, this is the Foundation of Presidential grants) or if there is a big investor represented by an enterprise or a company (OAO “UGMK”). These projects show that transport represents a system that easily integrates all its types and can find partners in all spheres. This allows to get various effects for cities and towns and create unique projects.

4. Discussion

The areas of museum participation in the development of territories at various levels and the cultural sphere as a whole need to be carried out on a unified basis, but, unfortunately, this is not yet possible.

Although sociological studies show an increase in attention and attendance at these museums (Chirkov, 2025). The authors see the solution to the problem of actively involving these museums in

the cultural support of their communities and actively participating in the development of the cultural sphere in solving the fundamental problems of museum policy in Russia.

5. Conclusion

Motor transport plays an important role in modern society, though serious changes await it in the future. Russian motor transport heritage is preserved mostly thanks to private museums, private individuals and organizations. Such museums exist throughout Russia, but their number is the biggest in the Central and Ural areas. The number of museums had been growing since 1963 when the first ones appeared at producing enterprises. Almost half of them were created between 2011 and 2020. The development of museums' network led to the emergence of transport and technical museums of different types. The biggest share of these museums is private; therefore, they are not legally protected and incur significant economic costs.

Motor transport museums play a part in the development of their cities and towns, because they preserve and promote motor transport heritage. Because this type of heritage represents a backbone for a large number of activities, the museums are able to attract different partners for the projects aiming at developing their territories.

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7. Author Contributions. The author performed all stages of the study independently.

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Ресейдің автокөлік мұрасын сақтау ерекшеліктері және оның қалаларды дамытудағы үлесі

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада мұражайлар жұмысының мысалында Ресейдің автокөлік мұрасын сақтаудың ерекшеліктері қарастырылады, ол да қалалардың кеңістігін дамытуға мүмкіндік береді. Орыс өркениеті үшін кеңістікті игеру оның негізгі аспектілерінің бірі. Мұраның осы түріне жүгінудің маңыздылығы Ресейде мұражайлар мен жиналыстар белсенді түрде құрылып, қалалар кеңістігі мен олардың мәдени саласын өзгерте бастағанымен, оның заңмен қорғалмағанына байланысты. Осы зерттеудің мақсаты – Ресейдегі автокөлік музейлері дамуының кеңістіктік ерекшеліктерін және олардың орналасқан қалаларына әсерінің ерекшеліктерін анықтау. Мұражайлар құруға, әсіресе құрылудың алғашқы кезеңдерінде орналасқан жерде автокөлік өндірісінің немесе аралас өндірістердің болуы қолайлы, бұдан әрі Ресей Федерациясының қалалары мен субъектілерінің халық саны мен әлеуметтік-экономикалық даму деңгейі маңызды болып отыр. Осы музейлерді орналастырудың негізгі аудандары – Орталық және Орал. Саны әртүрлі қалалардан басқа, музейлер ауылдық жерлерде бар. Барлық мұражайлардың жартысына жуығы өз коллекцияларында шетелдік автокөліктердің экспонаттарын сақтайды. Балалар және қоғамдық көлік мұражайларының пайда болуы маңызды оқиға болып табылады. Мұражайлар жергілікті қоғамдастықты

дамытатын негізгі бағыттарды, жұмыс орындарын, сондай-ақ көптеген мәдени оқиғаларды - автошерулерді, кеңес дәуіріне арналған коллекциялармен жұмыс істеуді және көлік компанияларымен («РТЖ» ААҚ), мемлекеттік мұрағатпен және гранттық қорлармен бірлескен жобаларды құрайды. Верхняя Пышма қаласындағы УГМК мұражай кешенінің және Пермь қаласындағы «Ретро-гараж» Пермь автомобиль мұражайының мысалында ірі компаниялармен, мемлекеттік мекемелермен және қорлармен жұмысы көрсетілген.

Түйін сөздер: автокөлік мұрасы; автокөлік мұражайлары; Ресейдің автомобиль мұражайлары; техникалық мұражайлар; Ресейдің ғылыми-техникалық мұрасы; автомобиль мәдениеті; қалалық мұражайлар; Ресей қалалары.

Особенности сохранения автотранспортного наследия России и его участие в развитии городов

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Аннотация: В статье на примере работы музеев рассматриваются особенности сохранения автотранспортного наследия России, которое также позволяет развивать пространство самих городов. Для русской цивилизации освоение пространства один из ключевых её аспектов. Важность обращения к данному виду наследия также обусловлено тем, что в России оно не защищено законодательно, хотя активно создаются музеи, растут собрания и начинают менять пространство городов и их культурную сферу. Цель данного исследования – выявление пространственных особенностей развития автотранспортных музеев в России и особенностей их влияния на города их размещения. Созданию музеев благоприятствует наличие автотранспортного производства или смежных производств в месте размещения особенно на первых этапах создания, в дальнейшем важным становится численность населения и уровень социально-экономического развития городов и субъектов РФ. Основные районы размещения данных музеев – Центральный и Уральский. Кроме городов различной численности, музеи существуют в сельской местности. Около половины всех музеев содержат в своих коллекциях экспонаты зарубежного автотранспорта. Важным событием становится возникновение музеев детского и общественного транспорта. Основные направления, в которых музеи развивают местное сообщество, создают рабочие места, а также множество культурных событий – автопробеги, работа с коллекциями, посвященными советской эпохе, и совместные проекты с транспортными компаниями (ОАО «РЖД»), Государственным архивом и грантовыми фондами. На примере Музейного комплекса УГМК в г. Верхняя Пышма и Пермского автомобильного музея «Ретро-гараж» в г. Перми показана работа с крупными компаниями, государственными учреждениями и фондами.

Ключевые слова: автотранспортное наследие; музеи автотранспорта; автомобильные музеи России; технические музеи; научно-техническое наследие России; автомобильная культура; городские музеи; города России.