

Freiraumqualitäten in der zukünftigen Stadtentwicklung

9 Summary⁷

One objective of the National Sustainability Strategy adopted by the Federal Government in 2001 is to reduce land use by residential, commercial and traffic zones to 30 ha/day by the year 2020. The desired objective can be attained e. g. through urban densification (e. g. priority to upgrading existing buildings over building new ones, infill development, land recycling, mixed uses, reclaiming traffic zones), if at the same time the availability and usability of open spaces is preserved and improved. This is called "dual urban development."

Cities and dense urban areas are sites where people live and work. They require special qualities in order for us to both live in them and to be able to find recreational opportunities close to home. In the DRL's (Deutscher Rat für Landespflege/German Council for Land Stewardship) opinion, urban qualities include not only availability of extensive cultural, communicative and leisure activities, shops and a good infrastructure, but also and in particular an attractive residential environment, a good supply of managed and near-natural open spaces, clean air and unpolluted soils and bodies of water.

Open spaces can be separated from developed land, do not necessarily consist of vegetation, include the third dimension and ensure usability and a certain degree of openness. They have sociocultural and health promoting functions (e. g. aesthetic perception, identification, garden cultural history, communication, leisure activities, sport, nature experience) as well as ecological functions (soil, water, air/climate, fauna and flora).

In order to attain the objective "reduction of land use", the DRL considers the following model necessary for future urban development:

Model for dual urban-developed cities

Cities and residential areas are densified but mixed with a reasonable amount of open spaces which offer their inhabitants a lot of different uses and a high quality of life. Densification in residential areas serves the purpose of avoiding further use of land by residential, commercial and

traffic development in the surrounding countryside (sprawl).

High urban residential and living quality can be achieved if the buildings themselves are well designed with regard to architecture and to scale and if attractive open spaces suitable for diverse uses for human well-being are located in the immediate vicinity. In addition, diverse types of open spaces of various sizes should be located farther away and if possible linked with one another and with the surrounding countryside. Moreover, these should be within reasonable walking or cycling distance.

Open spaces have positive functions for humans (recreation, health, play, sport, nature experience) while fulfilling ecological functions (soil, water, air/climate, fauna and flora) as well.

Moreover, in order to implement this model, the DRL proposes quality objectives for three types of urban open spaces, namely those a) within the immediate residential environment as well as b) open spaces within a residential area or urban district and c) open spaces near to settlements:

a) Quality objectives for the immediate residential environment

The immediate residential environment is more or less structurally dense. The buildings are architecturally pleasing with balconies, terraces, and planted façades and roofs. Undeveloped areas (unpaved inner courtyards, unpaved dividing greenery, unpaved front gardens, including so-called private greenery) are planted aesthetically or are left to grow unmanaged and these areas carry out ecological functions. The undeveloped areas can be used by the occupants of various ages, genders and origins for diverse types of recreation (tenant gardens, playgrounds, seating areas). Paved areas (seating areas, sport fields, play streets, traffic-calmed streets bordered by trees) supplement the open space. Parking spaces for automobiles are located in underground garages (under the buildings) or in concentrated parking garages. Each occupant can find a variety of opportunities for relaxation in their immediate residential environment, i. e. when they come home from work.

b) Quality objectives for open spaces within

a residential area or urban district

Open spaces within a residential area or urban district supplement the immediate residential environment because they are far larger and fulfil a number of sociocultural and health promoting functions, which can range from quiet relaxation to active athletics to event-like activities. Their design is varied: historical and garden areas and squares that are managed intensively, park-like areas with walking and cycling paths, sunbathing lawns, sport grounds and playgrounds for diverse uses, small gardens as well as standing and open flowing bodies of water, extensively managed and unmanaged areas and wood-like areas where nature can be experienced. The open spaces located within a residential area or urban district simultaneously carry out ecological functions: flora and fauna typical for residential areas – sometimes even rare species – find habitats here. At least 10 % of the areas are unmanaged ("spontaneous vegetation"). More than 50 % of the open spaces are linked with one another by walking and cycling paths with bordering protective or dividing greenery.

c) Quality objectives for open spaces near to settlements

The open spaces near to settlements fulfil various sociocultural and health promoting functions as well, ranging from quiet relaxation to active athletics to the experience of cultivated and natural landscapes. Examples of open spaces near to settlements include historical gardens, large parks, frequently land used for agriculture or forestry as well as near-natural streams or rivers and their surroundings, which are linked with the other open spaces by walking and cycling paths. Open spaces near to settlements fulfil ecological functions to a major extent and allow humans to experience nature. At least 10 % of the land should be extensively managed or be unmanaged ("spontaneous vegetation") and serve species and biotope protection.

Every city develops in a unique way and has its own type of open space system resulting, i. e. from the geographic circumstances, in original uses and plans made over the course of its urban development. It is therefore

⁷ Übersetzung/Translation: Faith Gibson-Tegethoff.

impossible to make generalized recommendations or prescribe mandatory guidelines on the quality of its developments with regard to the fulfilment of sociocultural and health promoting as well as ecological functions. However, it can be helpful for decision making to work with benchmarks, known from urban development and open space planning, and to back them up with quality characteristics and indicators.

When considering strategies and action recommendations for reducing land use using the "dual urban development" model, it is very important that the model is communicated prior to and during all stages of planning (e. g. urban land use planning, landscape planning), in order to later attain acceptance.

The planning instruments for implementation of the above model of dual urban densification are regional planning, state-level regional planning and urban land use planning, supplemented by the federal and state nature-conservation laws. The possibilities and opportunities these instruments offer need to be better utilized. Moreover, financial steering instruments should not be underestimated.

The primary demands and recommendations of the DRL with regard to reclamation of land use include the following:

The conventional way that land use and area statistics are portrayed (built and open space, commercial areas, recreational areas incl. cemeteries, traffic areas) on the basis of the land surveys carried out by the Federal, state and local governments must be improved, portrayed in an easier to understand way and refined so that it is possible

to work with them more precisely, to derive quality characteristics from them and make comparisons.

Urban development in the prosperous regions of Germany must in future be oriented to corresponding action potentials for densification. This means, in particular, granting priority to upgrading existing buildings over building new ones (additions to existing buildings, converting attics into living space, adding stories), infill development, building on back lots, recycling fallow land, consolidating infrastructure, mix of uses and high-quality architecture and new types of residencies.

The DRL recommends that some of the benchmarks for the availability of open space long known by urban development and open space planning should be further developed and equipped with quality characteristics, thereby making it easier to determine where dual urban development can be implemented:

- The benchmark for *open space in the immediate residential environment* is the existence of 4 m² per occupant in up to 150 to 250 m distance, which can be reached within approx. 5 minutes.
- The benchmark for *open spaces within a residential area* are 6 to 7 m² per occupant; the individual spaces are roughly 0.5 to 5 ha in area; they are 10 to 20 minutes walking distance or about 300 to 750 m away.
- The benchmark for *open spaces near to settlements* are 7 m² per occupant; these open spaces are at least 10 ha in area; they are approx. 20 minutes walking distance or about 1,000 m away.

A number of political, financial and administrative measures can facilitate implementa-

tion of the model of dual urban development. These include monetary incentives for economical use of land. Instruments that promote the direct or indirect new use of land, to any extent, should be eradicated. Better state-private cooperation in planning and coordinating construction measures should be aimed for. Environmental protection and nature conservation aspects should be weighed conscientiously against economical aspects. Higher priority should be given to the objective of reducing land use in all federal and state administration responsible for spatial planning.

In the DRL's (Deutscher Rat für Landespflege/German Council for Land Stewardship) opinion every form of spatial planning, and hence urban planning, is afflicted with great uncertainties in view of present challenges such as global competition, major economical structural differences in Germany, the need for greater workforce mobility and flexibility, demographic development and generally weak financial strength. This involves risks, but opportunities as well for the development and implementation of new planning schemes in urban development, which integrate the sociocultural and health promoting as well as the ecological qualities of open spaces.

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Der Sprecher



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