

The Spatial Agenda Karlsruhe

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1 ABSTRACT

The Karlsruhe Spatial Agenda is a comprehensive plan for the entire city (Fig. 1) and its future spatial development, jointly developed and supported by citizens, select committees and administration. It was adopted by the council at the end of 2016 and thereby gained binding status. The Spatial Agenda defines parameters for future planning decisions and provides guidance for planning practice. It covers the range from abstract visions to specific plans. Administration and elected members refer to the Spatial Agenda in making objectives and decisions fully transparent.

Keywords: framework, future development, spatial agenda, urban planning, Karlsruhe



Fig. 1: Spatial Agenda. Source: MESS

2 THE PROCESS

The Spatial Agenda is the result of an intensive discussion over a number of years, involving an innovative consultation process. The Karlsruhe Spatial Agenda process was officially launched at the „10 questions for Karlsruhe“ exhibition in summer 2013. Three interdisciplinary design teams – Team berchtoldkrass + STUDIO. URBANE STRATEGIEN + URBAN CATALYST STUDIO, Team West 8 + Verkehrsplus und Team Machleidt + Sinai + SHP - elaborated framework concepts during a planning workshop of six months in 2014.

The workshop with a broad public participation was followed by a period of reflection, during which the city planning process group, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and other experts drew up the draft Spatial Agenda. Guided walks and cycle rides were organised for interested members of the public. The draft Spatial Agenda was presented at the exhibition „Die Stadt neu denken“ (Rethinking the city) on the occasion of the city anniversary in 2015. More than 1,700 people visited the exhibition. The Urban Planning Department took the lead in further refining the draft Spatial Agenda together with KIT, external specialist planners and other departments of the city. Interim findings were presented at various select committee proceedings, and

debated with a broad public until the adoption by the city council in 2016. The number and range of stakeholders included from the outset of the process were unprecedented. The resulting openness and transparency fed citizens' and elected members' support for city-wide urban and spatial planning measures.

3 PURPOSE AND KEY TASKS

The Spatial Agenda will gain importance in the face of the global and local challenges the city of Karlsruhe is presented with. Population growth, changes in society and climate exert a major influence on the shape of the city. Karlsruhe has long been lending priority to inward development, a policy demanding the prudent allocation of spatial resources. It also requires strategies to link quality in growth with simultaneous enhancements to open space. This brings quality of life in the city and in its neighbourhoods to the fore. In the past years, the city has embedded first foundations in the „Integrated Urban Development Concept Karlsruhe 2020“ (ISEK). This is accompanied by further plans such as the Green Network, the Climate Change Framework, and the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP). The Spatial Agenda builds on these foundations. It describes strategic targets which chart the way ahead for the city's spatial development as well as describing specific projects and visions.

The spatial framework highlights three very different avenues of approach. The seven drivers set out the foundations and point to the direction of development in the next 20 years. The described proposals should be seen as tasks for Karlsruhe to plan from the current point of view and put into practice soon. The focus areas explore ways in which projects can be implemented in important key areas and identify possible synergies and interdependencies as well as conflicts with other proposals.

- Karlsruhe needs new, good quality homes within its existing boundaries.
- The ongoing development of existing neighbourhoods must conform to a socially equitable urban society.
- Existing trading estates must be transformed and improved in order to ensure future-proof employment.
- Karlsruhe's open space must be enhanced and improved.
- Karlsruhe must be a city of short distances: well-connected transport systems must ensure access to all its central facilities within five minutes.
- The city's internal and external contours must become more apparent.
- The inner city must be enhanced and reinforced in terms of its design, retail offer, employment, housing, adaptation to climate change, open space, quality of place and transport.

The purpose of the Spatial Agenda is to guide and coordinate the city's spatial development, to place priorities and focal points for future projects within a coherent wider context, to provide a basis for elaborating and updating existing plans, to formulate project guidelines and provide design competition frameworks, to provide a framework of reference for engaging with external stakeholders such as investors, to provide a foundation for political decision making; and to safeguard quality assurance in planning, processes and construction.

“Seven drivers” strikingly sum up the overall thrust of the city's future development. The concretization of the strategic goals is carried out through 16 projects and three specializations. The projects represent concrete tasks which the city has to face from today's perspective. The aim is to describe quality criteria as well as spatial strategies that provide orientation for foreseeable or future projects. Some projects are permanent tasks that have to be carried out city-wide, others relate to specific places in the city or represent independent projects.

4 STEERING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT ON URBAN KEY TOPICS

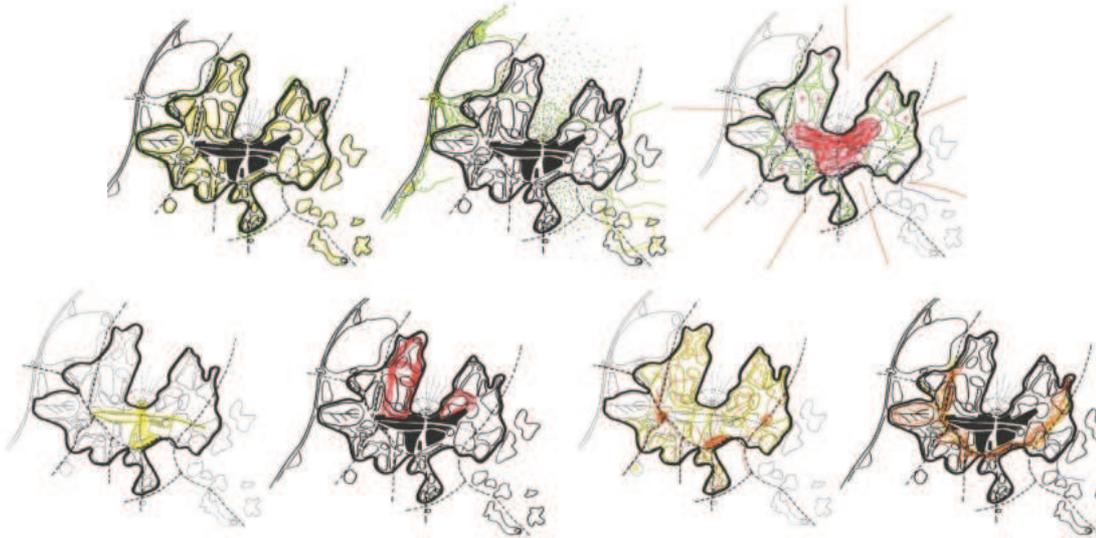


Fig. 2: Karlsruhe draft Spatial Agenda 2015, Drivers. Source: Prof. Markus Nepl, KIT

The seven drivers arose out of a process of engaging with Karlsruhe's specific context and qualities, inspired by the ideas of the three teams taking part in the planning workshop.

The drivers (Fig. 2) capture the key issues at stake for Karlsruhe's future and set out clear objectives which play to the city's strengths: "Distinct outlines", "Green addresses", "Core strength", "More housing", "Cool quarters", "Dynamic cordon" and "Urban proximity". They include the key issues of housing, employment, climate and mobility as well as reinforcing identity and adopting an unequivocal stance with regard to the city's design culture and future development.

4.1 Distinct Outlines – The leitmotif of urban spatial development



Fig. 3: District outlines. Source: MESS

Karlsruhe has mapped out a line separating the inner city from its surroundings, thereby articulating a leitmotif for its urban development.

Developing and improving the design quality of interstitial areas between independent neighbourhoods is a key step. Clear outlines help improve land use on many development sites. Interstitial areas can be home to spaces for living and working as well as leisure areas.

Inner urban gateways, such as the railway stations, end to be located at the conclusion of spatial corridors extending into the city from the outer edge. “Distinct outlines“ (Fig. 3) clearly spells out to those arriving where Karlsruhe really begins.

4.2 Green Addresses – The city in the landscape



Fig. 4: Green addresses. Source: MESS

The cultivated landscape surrounding the city and the green spaces within it contribute to Karlsruhe’s outstanding quality of life (Fig. 4). Two landscape spaces hold the key to future urban development: the Hardtwald and the Rhine. The Hardtwald and Oberwald forests extend tendrils deep into the inner city. The foundation of the city with the construction of the castle in the Hardtwald is still a characteristic feature of the city, it is the DNA of the inner city until today.

Enhancing the role of these landscape features as urban recreational space in tune with the requirements of forestry and agriculture is a key task. This applies particularly to the part of the Hardtwald closest to the city. The Landschaftspark Rhein project sees a venerable idea of connecting Karlsruhe to the Rhine being put into practice. What is missing is the built-up connection between the city and the Rhine. The Rhine dock harbour is a long-term development potential.

4.3 Core Strength – More Karlsruhe for Karlsruhe



Fig. 5: Core strength. Source: MESS

Not only should Karlsruhe stay the attractive centre of an economically vigorous region, but its attractiveness should further increase. For this to happen, Karlsruhe’s centre must unlock new urban development potential to the south and finally breach the barrier posed by the Kriegsstraße (Fig. 5). A broad urban corridor encompassing the new Staatstheater, the Festival Square and the northern entrance to the Zoo offers the inner city scope for further growth, culminating at its southern vertex with the main station.

Karlsruhe must live up to its metropolitan character. Particularly the two east-west routes should be viewed as „tomorrow’s boulevards”. This is where new urban qualities can evolve.

4.4 More Housing – Karlsruhe grows with inner values



Fig. 6: More housing. Source: MESS

Karlsruhe is growing and needs space to live in the heart of the city. Developing these areas is a task presenting opportunities and challenges. Creating the new presents a chance to improve the old. With this in mind, regenerating older neighbourhoods and enhancing and extending existing districts takes centre stage (Fig. 6). This approach will deliver many improvements for Karlsruhe as a whole. A coordinated redevelopment paves the way for creating strong, new neighbourhoods. In some areas dormant opportunities for housing and employment can best be activated by developing a shared identity for the entire area.

4.5 Cool Districts – local climate adaption



Fig. 7: Cool districts. Source: MESS

The projected increase in the frequency of hot periods presents a particular challenge to Karlsruhe’s urban development and its planning. Sufficient areas for cooling in urban neighbourhoods are especially important. As a result, the merits of development and the preservation of green and open areas must be weighed up with

great care (Fig. 7). Creating open space networks and greening street space contributes decisively to reduce warming. Streets, squares and undeveloped areas are all open spaces which act as cooling elements within the city. Adaptation to climate change must be tailor-made to provide cooling and shade in the public realm and in open space, pay attention to climate adaptation in new areas and extensions to existing neighbourhoods. New building must not create further heat islands.

4.6 Dynamic cordon – connections and growth points for commerce



Fig. 8: Dynamic Cordon. Source: MESS

Karlsruhe's future growth potential lies where major infrastructure, trading estates and unused open space coalesce to form an ill-defined space. Trading estates and zones for service industries are Karlsruhe's economic backbone and should be stimulated for growth and transformation (Fig. 8). The area along the southern by-pass and the railway forms a cohesive structure, offering space and good access for research and commerce to flourish. The infrastructure is all there and just need bringing together to develop. There is plenty of room for unexpected innovation. What is lacking, are connections and ignition points to kick-start the transformative process and generate new centres of growth at transport nodes.

4.7 Urban Proximity – new access routes

Karlsruhe is one of Germany's mobility capitals. Few other cities offer as many networked transport options. This asset must be further developed. Karlsruhe is exploring new avenues (Fig. 9): access and connectivity set new standards for quality of life and provide new input for neighbourhood development. Everybody should benefit from quick access to every day facilities, preferably on foot or by bicycle. Local amenities and social infrastructure in local neighbourhoods are linked to central connectivity nodes and create new meeting points in the quarter.

Karlsruhe's city centre is a location of identity and attracts visitors from the entire metropolitan region. It is also facing a step-change. An integrated, interdepartmental plan for the future of the inner city will be developed to seize the opportunities presented by the "Kombilösung" (Fig. 11) combined rail and road tunnel project and master the tasks and challenges ahead. This process will involve intensive public consultation. Completion of the "Kombilösung" will fundamentally shift the inner city's main axes. Sections of Kaiserstraße and Ettlingerstraße will be free of tram traffic. The severance caused by the Kriegsstraße will be reduced between Mendelssohnplatz and Karlstor.

At the same time, the shopping precinct will need new solutions to counter an expected further decline in retail. The results of the planning workshop reveal the long-term need for the inner city to expand in order to be able to meet all future requirements. Further trends to consider include climate change adaptation and the growing engagement between Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and the city, to reinforce links between the inner city and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. An integrated approach, focussing not only on spatial aspects, is essential in order to explore suitable development options.



Fig. 11: Visualisation of the marketplace. Source: KASIG, Schüßler-Plan GmbH, Düsseldorf

The establishment of an urban redevelopment area of 30 ha exhausts all legal and financial possibilities. In 2018, the state of Baden-Württemberg allocated € 90 million to an urban regeneration program (Fig. 12) jointly funded by the city and the state.



Fig. 12: Urban regeneration program. Source: Stadtplanungsamt Karlsruhe, Sippel+buff, Stuttgart

6 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The Spatial Agenda is the result of close collaboration between professionals in a wide range of design and planning disciplines. Thanks are due to all those who took part in and helped shape this lengthy process. Their efforts ensured that the challenges could be met with great professional competence. Tried and tested collaboration has proved its value and will be continued.

The Spatial Agenda's intensive gestation concluded with the adoption of its final report. In order to fully take effect, the Spatial Agenda must be embedded in ongoing processes and become a fixture of Karlsruhe's planning culture. And yet the Agenda remains a living document: Periodical amendments, adjustments and

monitoring in defined intervals allow for changing conditions and new challenges to be taken into account. Following the city council's resolution in December 2016, the Spatial Agenda has a life expectancy of around 20 years, extending well beyond the land use plan.

Implementation of the Spatial Agenda will be successful, because the work on proposals has already begun; specific pilot projects on housing deliver key aspects of the spatial framework, the debate around conflicting goals remains open, and resolved in suitable planning processes both locally and in the city as a whole.

Elected members, administration and the general public maintain the dialogue begun during the spatial framework's gestation; the appropriateness of proposals, key projects and objectives in response to prevailing conditions is reassessed and, where necessary, refined every five years.

Since the adoption of the Spatial Agenda 2016 however, the implementation of projects at the important neighbourhood level and in the quarters themselves has become increasingly difficult. Citizens' initiatives and neighbours are defending themselves against any kind of change, the conflict between the creation of housing, increased structural density and the preservation of open spaces is at the focus of the debate.

7 REFERENCES

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