

FREIBURG CHARTER

REQUIREMENTS ON
URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Major contributions to the Charter were made by:



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Head of Department at the Office for
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Retired Head of Department at the Office
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Dr. Dieter Salomon
Lord Mayor of Freiburg



John Thompson
Chairman, The Academy of Urbanism

Freiburg 
IM BREISGAU

THE ACADEMY
OF URBANISM



Participants in the Academy meeting which took place in Freiburg in October 2010

By adding their signatures, the undersigned express their support for the principles of the Freiburg Charter.

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Rector of Freiburg University

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Institute of Environmental Medicine,
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Prof. Dr. Horst Linde
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Detlef Sacker
Chairman of the Association of German
Architects in Freiburg

THE URBANISM AWARDS 2010

THE EUROPEAN CITY OF THE YEAR

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WINNER

FREIBURG

*Have a look at Freiburg in many different ways;
High up in a cable car shifting slightly in the air
Walking through the old town with a hungry tourist's gaze
Wandering through a gallery, with time to stand and stare
Or sitting in a cafe with a glass of local wine.
From every different angle Freiburg is a city
That takes the time to sparkle, takes the time to shine
In a way that's somehow more profound than pretty.
There's nothing wrong with pretty but that's not the whole story
Of a place as multilayered, multifaceted as this
With history, culture, architecture and a dash of scenic glory
As expansive as a group hug or intimate as a kiss:
So much is hidden from your gaze; it's a mystery, it's an iceberg
With hidden depths and striking beauty from all angles: Freiburg!*

Ian McMillan

Ian McMillan, Poet-in-Residence



John Thompson

John Thompson, Chairman

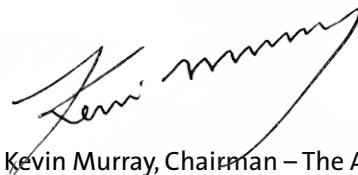
PREFACE

At the end of 2009, Freiburg received the Academy of Urbanism's "European City of the Year 2010" award in London. This prize was awarded following a lengthy process in which the Academy's jury members travelled to several European cities during 2009. A majority of the jury members voted for the City of Freiburg on account of its impressive urban development and urban planning principles, which had been followed consistently for decades.

In October 2010, representatives of the Academy of Urbanism travelled to Freiburg in order to pass a Charter together with the City, which was to outline the framework of a viable, sustainable urban planning policy based on 12 principles.

It is important to note that the Freiburg Charter does not claim to provide a final concept for all urban systems, cultures and climate zones. The Charter is meant as a guideline, whose principles can provide pointers towards a forward-looking urban development and urban planning policy for other cities, districts and networks. These deliberations are intended to inspire others to think about the issues and to explore them within many different local environments. The Charter's principles are not strict rules, but rather basic ideas that are designed to provide food for thought and inspiration to act. We hope that the Freiburg Charter will, as such, be received openly and used to promote efforts to advance sustainable urban planning through the sharing of ideas.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to and supported the Charter. Our special thanks go to Prof. Wulf Daseking for his commitment and his initiative in preparing the Freiburg Charter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Murray', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Kevin Murray, Chairman – The Academy of Urbanism

FREIBURG CHARTER



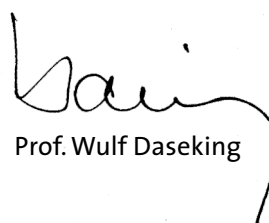
Requirements on Urban Development and Planning for the Future

There is no clear definition of what makes a city. Cities may emerge as the result of specific planning – or sometimes through coincidence. There is no alternative to cities! In the past, cities served to protect their inhabitants, trade and divisions of labour, to secure territory and act as a meeting place. Today, urban systems are extremely complex structures – usually covering a very small area. Cities are not static entities – quite the contrary, they are the result of centuries of development, characterised by events and upheavals, which were always connected with social and/or technical innovations. The Industrial Revolution, which started at the beginning of the 19th century, brought with it the most drastic changes to urban systems experienced so far. Complete reorientation ensued. In the 20th century, the face of cities changed following the arrival of the motor car and the subsequent adaptations to increasing motorisation. Communication technologies – particularly those developed in the 21st century – will once again bring about deep-rooted transformations. Today, our cities mirror the complex social structure of urban societies. In the future, their design must become a model for all those who wish to treat their environment and its limited resources responsibly. This argument was poignantly made in the report on “Limits to Growth” published by the Club of Rome back in 1972, which recognised the limitations of our resources and called for responsible resource management. Anyone for whom the message was not yet clear was finally forced to recognise that things would not simply be able to

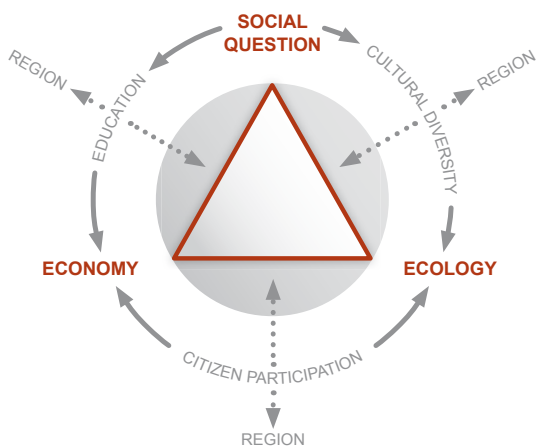
continue as before when the oil crisis hit in 1973 and when the Chernobyl nuclear power station exploded in 1986. Countries, cities and their regions have to face up to these challenges and develop new strategies.

More recent environmental disasters – which support such stipulations – occurred in 2010, when the oil platform Deepwater Horizon exploded in the Gulf of Mexico, and in 2011, when the tsunami and earthquake struck Japan. These events triggered explosions in four reactors of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, the consequences of which remain impossible to predict. The response from the German parliament was its decision, in 2011, to phase out nuclear energy by 2022.

This means that new sources of much-needed energy must be found while cutting consumption at the same time. There is no doubt that urban development and planning play an important pioneering role in solving the issues before us. The areas of economy, ecology, social affairs and education as well as cultural diversity must be addressed through an integrated approach. Involving citizens at an early stage in the planning process and giving consideration to regional integration are basic preconditions for viable urban development.


Prof. Wulf Daseking

QUO VADIS CIVITAS?



The “magic triangle” of urban development
Office for Town Planning, Freiburg

The model for the development of all future settlements is that of a “compact, decentralised city”. It consists of functional units where all services are accessible on foot to all of the population, and involves a consistent focus on in-town development. The city of the future is one that embraces cultural and functional overlapping, cultural diversity, education, careful resource management, energy efficiency and regional communication. When cities grow, it may, in exceptional cases, become necessary to develop settlements on their outskirts. Such settlements must fulfil the criteria of a compact city. The following 12 principles should therefore be considered and applied in all planning and development measures for a sustainable city:

A. SPATIAL PRINCIPLES

I. City of Diversity, Safety and Tolerance

The objectives are:

- ❑ balanced age and social structures with functioning neighbourhoods
- ❑ construction of varied dwellings and work facilities for all parts of the population/promotion of innovative forms of accommodation
- ❑ creation of manageable units and open spaces
- ❑ provision of public and private infrastructure, specifically for all generations
- ❑ care, leisure and educational services, particularly for the very young and the elderly
- ❑ integration of all sectors of the population taking into consideration their ethnic origin



II. City of Neighbourhoods

Once a city reaches a certain size, it becomes indispensable to strengthen decentralised development and to specify particular areas of autonomous responsibility (see illustration of Dimension/Scale on p. 14/15). Decentralised development is particularly important for the following areas:

- living and working
- social and care infrastructure
- education and culture
- leisure and recreation
- interconnected green areas
- sustainable resource management.

At the same time, the preservation of a specific urban spatial identity is a precondition for viable urban development and planning.

III. City of Short Distances

Being able to access all essential services on foot helps minimise the use of personal means of transport, improving the immediate living environment. Public inner city transport, footpaths and cycle routes must be given priority over personal motor cars. In the long-term, personal means of transport should be

switched to electric or fuel cell vehicles which exploit renewable, emission-free energy carriers. All services which are already accessible on foot in the centres of cities or neighbourhoods must be strengthened; when new ones are established they must comply with the model of a “compact, decentralised city”.

IV. Urban Development along Public Transportation Lines | High-Density Model

Public transport must be closely tied to any urban development concept and must be given general priority over personal means of transport. The objective is to carefully and consistently increase urban density

along public transport routes and to locate services around the stops of tram lines or other public transport nodes which have a central function and high user frequency.



B. CONTENT PRINCIPLES



V. Education, Science and Culture

Universities and research institutes as well as schools and cultural venues notably contribute to making a city attractive and valuable. They have a marked influence on public life and on planning culture. In a changing society, and in the face of the current challenges posed by scarce resources and climate change, planning and the arts and sciences are inevitably becoming ever more closely intertwined.

Mutual inspiration between these spheres is a key requirement for innovative planning solutions in the competition of ideas. Manifold collaborations both within research and for the development of new technical, economic and social models for urban living are needed. Cities are obliged to offer – or create – such models and to provide scope for them to develop.

VI. Commerce, Economy and Employment

In the future, the essential task of urban development will be to maintain and modernise existing developments as well as to attract pioneering, innovative businesses. The aim must be to fully exploit the maximum potential, so that jobs can be preserved while new businesses are attracted in line with the

principle of a “compact, decentralised city”. Industry’s desire for greenfield development must be counteracted by offering a concept of in-town development. This requires an appropriate organisational structure to control such developments.

VII. Nature and Environment

Preserving biological diversity, conserving resources for future generations and maintaining a healthy environment and climate worth living in form central objectives of sustainable urban development. The habitats for animal and plant life, the natural quality of soil, water, air and climate, and historically grown cultural landscapes must be preserved and developed in a positive way as a living space for people. To avoid negative consequences, all planning must start with an expert investigation into the

potential impact on nature, the environment and the climate.

For many reasons, the model of a “compact city where everything is close at hand” is the right model for progressing towards climate-neutral cities: it reduces the need for personal mobility, provides a decentralised, local supply of regional products and enables a sustainable way of life in individual neighbourhoods without wasting resources.



This model must be supplemented by consistently making existing buildings more energy-efficient, building more new buildings which produce energy,

introducing a more efficient, interconnected energy supply and switching to renewable energy sources as part of an overall urban energy concept.

VIII. Quality of Design

Planning decisions impact the face of a city for generations to come. They must cultivate the unique character of a city and develop it further while complying with the highest design quality standards. Public spaces play an important role in this. Together with the buildings that surround them, they make up the face of a city. Ownership and control of public spaces must remain with the local community in order to manage claims on use and prevent misguided developments. The planning process for prominent buildings must be closely supervised – from the initial idea through to implementation by

the administrative planning body (as a general contractor).

Architectural competitions, multiple commissions, collaborative and/or expert processes should always be used in important construction and planning tasks – including the design of public spaces. Plot structures play a significant role in this by providing a basis for diversity. Remodelling cities will become particularly important in the decades to come.

C. PRINCIPLES OF PROCEDURE



IX. Long-term Vision

Far-sighted urban development and planning follows a central theme which stretches back way into the city's individual past and reaches several decades into the future. The face of a city must not be subjugated to short-lived fashions and political U-turns. Cities have evolved through eras in history and must be carefully developed bearing in mind future generations.

Preserve the old and dare to embrace the new! This is the only way of developing, maintaining and intensifying a city's unique quality and character. Continuity, quality, sensitivity, identity and innovation for a particular place are the tools of viable development. Careful resource management plays a key role in this.

X. Communication and Participation

A "collective vision" of the city should be continuously developed through open discourse. This vision is reflected in the public spaces and the city's structure. Extensive and ongoing communication between all players within and outside the administration, as well as the results of citizen participation, should be directly integrated into planning processes, creating transparency and preparing the way for political decisions.

All groupings within an urban community, including regional players, are invited to become and to remain involved in the process – from developing a vision to planning the details, using suitable methods of participation (participation culture). There are endless options for participation; the method should always be developed and implemented taking into account the unique characteristics of each local government.



XI. Reliability, Obligation and Fairness

City-wide concepts with binding regulations create a framework within which all parties involved in urban development can work on a level playing field. The local government takes fundamental decisions, committing itself and the administration to certain principles of urban development and planning. This makes the city a reliable partner for its citizens and private investors, giving each of them equal rights and duties.

Land development principles lay down the standards for sustainable development. Guiding principles, such

as that of the “city of short distances”, are anchored in technical concepts such as the retail trade concept (Freiburg concept of markets and retail centres) and implemented in land use plans. A relationship of trust must be established between the administration and “those on the outside”, which provides for continuity while allowing enough scope for the necessary stimuli and innovations.

XII. Cooperation, Participation and Partnership

The complex tasks of urban development and planning are shouldered by many different parties. The city is dependent on collaboration between private and public players and on the ideas contributed by them. The citizens in each neighbourhood are an indispensable part of integrative urban development. Subsidies can create incentives for private investment by providing part financing, and can also control this. (Prior) measures by the local government, for

example in urban design, can instigate private activities and initiate dynamic processes. Agreements and contracts with stakeholders, as well as support and calls for civic involvement, enable comprehensive urban remodelling measures to be pursued. Research institutes, universities and industry, as well as industry associations and the urban region, become involved by sparking important ideas for innovative urban development.

CONCLUSION: THE WAY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE CITY

Dimension/Scale



Village/settlement

up to 3,000
inhabitants



Small town

up to 50,000
inhabitants



Medium-sized town

50,000 – 150,000
inhabitants



Small city

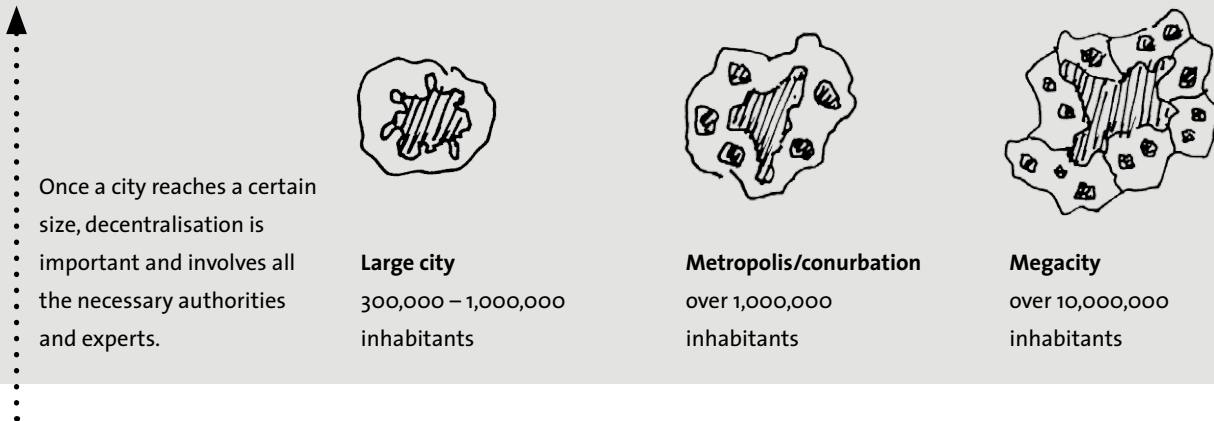
150,000 – 300,000
inhabitants

Cities are the result of their political culture, their expertise and creativity, their citizens and their institutions committed to the common weal.

The following objectives are of paramount importance to the responsible development of cities and regions, and are based on the 12 principles:

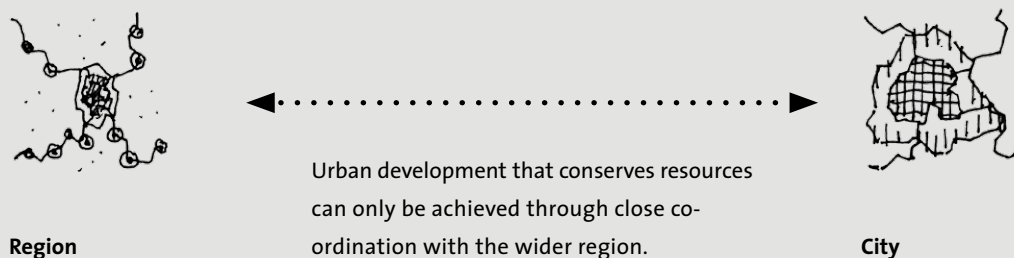
- ☐ preserving local identity, strengthening neighbourhoods and promoting cultural diversity and differentiation
- ☐ strengthening and expanding public transport networks and dovetailing these with the development of settlements
- ☐ carefully managing resources, restraining construction in previously undeveloped areas and developing adequate urban density
- ☐ identifying, maintaining and linking green areas
- ☐ ensuring high quality in construction and preserving public spaces
- ☐ securing social peace and promoting an overlapping of social and functional use
- ☐ creating a variety of accommodation options (housing provision) for all groups of the population
- ☐ securing jobs and creating new, innovative ones
- ☐ improving dialogue and participation

12 PRINCIPLES



The following principles must be applied using a differentiated approach depending on the relevant settlement typology:

- I. CITY OF DIVERSITY, SAFETY AND TOLERANCE
- II. CITY OF NEIGHBOURHOODS
- III. CITY OF SHORT DISTANCES
- IV. URBAN DEVELOPMENT ALONG PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES | HIGH-DENSITY MODEL
- V. CITY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE
- VI. CITY OF COMMERCE, ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT
- VII. CITY OF NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT
- VIII. CITY OF QUALITY DESIGN
- IX. CITY OF LONG-TERM PLANNING
- X. CITY OF COMMUNICATION
- IX. RELIABILITY, OBLIGATION AND FAIRNESS
- XII. CITY OF COOPERATION, PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP



Cities and their regions are inextricably interwoven and interdependent. It is essential that common features be established and developed in order for urban planning and development to become viable.

The following are examples of the aspects that should be considered:



Region

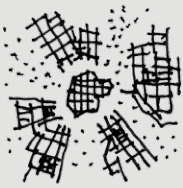
- ☐ System of “central areas”
- ☐ Integrated public transport concept
- ☐ Concept of settlements and open spaces
- ☐ Concept of markets and retail centres/coordination of services from basic to national level
- ☐ Energy concept
- ☐ Concept of green areas and countryside with integrated footpaths and cycle routes
- ☐ Participation programmes – for experts and citizens

The city has a duty to draw up compelling, overall concepts for the planning tasks that fall within its remit. Individual buildings are thus merely stepping stones on the path to a responsible strategy. Taking a holistic approach – based on this charter – is the key to success.

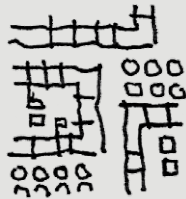


City

- ☐ Discussion of guiding model – centralised/decentralised
- ☐ Concept for meeting universal needs (housing, work, leisure, education, culture, etc.)
- ☐ Diversity (integration versus segregation) – practical and social
- ☐ Concept for urban development along public transport routes/high-density model
- ☐ Managing retail trade – particularly to boost decentralised development
- ☐ Urban climate/air circulation – maintaining extensive, effective open areas
- ☐ Energy concept – centralised/decentralised
- ☐ Taking into consideration social, cultural and utility infrastructure, both private and public
- ☐ Services for public and private educational establishments
- ☐ Providing a diverse range of housing options for all sectors of the population
- ☐ Developing open spaces and recreational concepts/networking footpaths and cycle routes
- ☐ Careful resource management
- ☐ Citizen participation schemes



Neighbourhood | Quarter



Group of Buildings | Public Space



House | Building



Neighbourhood | Quarter

- ❑ Providing a wide range of housing and jobs for all sectors of the population
- ❑ Managing retail trade – particularly to boost district centres
- ❑ Safeguarding the provision of basic services close to residential areas
- ❑ Integrating private, public, social, cultural and utility infrastructure
- ❑ Providing spaces for educational establishments
- ❑ Concept for reducing motorised personal transport/public transport network within walking distance
- ❑ Energy networks and distributed supply of renewable energy
- ❑ Maintaining, developing and linking recreational areas and natural spaces
- ❑ Preserving distinctive characteristics/identity/neighbourhood culture
- ❑ Providing areas for innovative forms of accommodation
- ❑ Concept for designing public streets and squares (accessibility)
- ❑ Developing a concept for a differentiated citizen participation scheme



Group of Buildings | Public Space

- ❑ Mix of uses/structure of numerous small plots/diversity
- ❑ Neighbourhoods/communication/social spaces
- ❑ Accessible/convenient to reach
- ❑ Private and public care infrastructure
- ❑ Access to tangible natural spaces (nature in immediate residential environment)
- ❑ Quality of design – designing residential areas/streets/squares (airy, shaded spaces)
- ❑ Giving consideration to local climatic conditions
- ❑ Formulating concepts for personal transport/prioritising pedestrian and cycle
- ❑ Energy concept
- ❑ Citizen participation schemes



House | Building

- ❑ Low energy/passive house/solar plus house/summer shading/cooling
- ❑ Accessibility of every part of the building, from entrances to bathrooms
- ❑ Proposals for new forms of accommodation (multigenerational living/building complexes – a 'city within a house')
- ❑ Structure of numerous small plots/architectural variety/creating distinctive places to live
- ❑ Developing variable, flexible layouts/adaptability
- ❑ Management of resources/soil/water/energy/materials

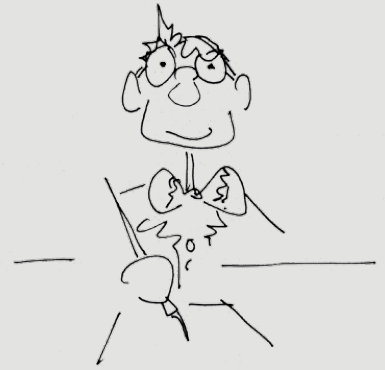
The correlations here are becoming ever more clearly recognisable.

Statistical evidence shows that just 12% of the world's population possesses almost 85% of all wealth. On the one hand this means that we live in a time of unprecedented abundance, and on the other that many face a relentless struggle for survival every single day. The abundance is evident in the continual, virtually uncontrolled growth of many cities around the world, particularly its metropolises.

This applies to both private and professional environments, and is relevant to all aspects of daily life, including:

- Every single one of us is required to contribute to this. Many things are possible, we simply have to do them! Last year, for example, each German citizen threw away food worth around €300. If this level of wastefulness were to be equalled by the entire global population, we would need to triple the area of land cultivated throughout the world.

18



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