

Sustainable Neighbourhood Design

Energy, Mobility and Participation Concepts
in Freiburg-Vauban, Germany

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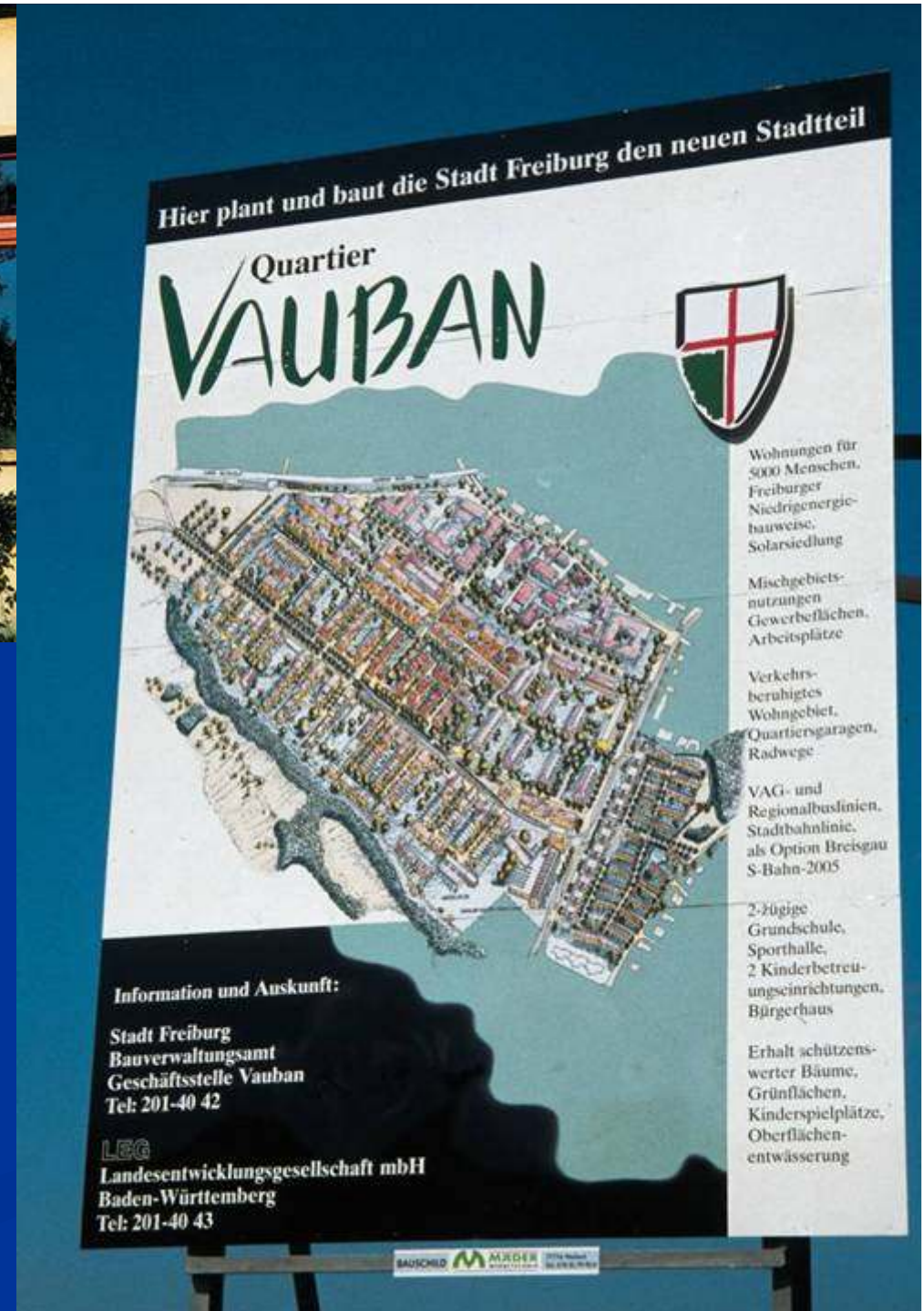
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Executive Summary

In Freiburg a sustainable city district is planned and implemented in a cooperative way. Besides CO2-reducing building technologies and energy supplies (Low Energy and Passive Solar Houses, Co-generation plant operating with wood chips) and the design of co-housing projects it is mainly the mobility concept that makes sustainable living visible.

Abstract

On the former army barrack site Vauban the new Vauban Residential Area (42 ha = 420,000 square meters) is developed. The district is designed for 2000 housing units and 5000 inhabitants.

The project started in 1993. According to the official plan it will be completed by the end of the year 2006. Current discussions and the financial situation lead to the expectation that the project might be prolonged for one or two more years. The defining of a start and a closing date responds to the way the project is managed and financed: The project managing group, lead by the City of Freiburg, works with an own budget which is separated from the municipal budget. All Vauban related legal expenses (such as the entire infrastructure - except parts of the tram connection) shall be (re-) financed by the selling of the building lots. The City aims to close the Vauban budget with result 'zero'.

This presentation is focusing on the cooperative process which includes the planning, the building and the "operating" phase. 'Cooperative' does not mean harmonic - not all! The process had (and still has) to deal with high ambition, big demand, huge restriction, protest, conflict, pressure, even frustration, and there is always the need to get together again and negotiate, to integrate different actors and viewpoints and to find pragmatic, even synergetic solutions.

I will mainly reflect viewpoints of committed citizens who took part in the planning process, formed their pressure group(s), organized an NGO-structure (and even -culture) and in many cases became serious partners of the legal authorities during the building and implementation process (e.g. co-housing projects, carfree living, neighbourhood centre and market place initiative, etc.).

Here are some key points which refer to the special quality of the process:

- The City of Freiburg set up the principle "Planning that Learns" and allowed an extended citizen participation organized by the NGO "Forum Vauban". The structures of planning and decision-making were considerably transparent and even included the Forum as a consultative partner.
- The Forum was partly funded by the City but – additional to that – made available further human and financial resources to play an independent, substantial part and to receive (almost) equal opportunities (at least in some key aspects). The relation between the Forum and the City can be - all in all - described as "competitive but fair".
- During this process the master plan was updated several times, ecological (energy) standards were improved, green spaces were designed together with neighbours, 50 co-housing groups and a new housing co-operative were formed etc. I personally regard the 1996 publicity campaign, which saw the City and the Forum side by side promoting sustainable living and transportation concepts, as the "ice breaking" event. This was followed by a long consultation-process. which resulted into a unique mobility concept.

One result is the unique mobility concept with the key aspects:

- Private cars of Vauban residents shall be parked in two car parks which are situated in the periphery of the district. Each household who owns a private car has to buy or rent a parking lot there.
- Additional, there is a limited number of parking space in the central axis "Vaubanallee" (30 km-Zone, no through traffic). They are reserved for visitors and business and for residents who are coming home late in the evening.
- There is no parking space in the residential streets which belong to pedestrians and cyclists. Cars have access but only short stops for delivery are allowed. All residential streets start and end at the main axis.
- About 40% of the inhabitants agreed to live without an owned car. The NGO "Association for Carfree Living" provide the necessary area where a multi-storey car park could be build for all (ex-) carfree inhabitants in the worst case (this is required by a state law). Until now, no single additional parking lot was necessary but the area became a popular place for meetings, barbecue, small concerts ...
- People can choose if they want to live with or without a private car and they can change their status if required.
- A convenient car sharing system, a tram connection and several bus lines provide serious alternatives to private auto-mobility. The district also offers good infrastructure such as a primary school, several kindergarten, cafés, shops, (super)markets, public green spaces, (almost) carfree streets etc. That's why it is easier in Vauban to refrain from car driving and to enjoy carfree living. This "green way of life" is not hidden, it can be experienced, it's visible! In Vauban, the density of private cars is only 150 per 1000 inhabitants.

Participation Process - Overview: 10 years in 1 minute ...

1995: start and first ideas ...

- planning & consultation structures established
- **working groups** disseminate sustainable ideas
- initiatives start to refurbish 10 army barracks

1996: first concepts & public campaign

- ideas -> first concepts -> campaign
- parallel: first master plan is completed
- communication / involving future inhabitants (Forum Vauban)



1997-99: how can we put it into practice?

- **marketing**: Vauban becomes a resort for „co-housing“-projects
- **consultation**: how to implement sustainable concepts? (e.g. mobility c.)
- **special design topics**: green spaces, residential streets, neighbourhood center

since 2000: first phase finished, let's go on ...

- after the pioneer-phase: integration of new inhabitants („neighbourhood work“)
- **continuing** with phase 2 and 3 (marketing & design topics - see above -, master plan changes, planning and building the tram connection, ...)

Vauban - Main Objectives

City of Freiburg

2000 housing units (5000 inhabitants)

high quality building spaces for young families on the city's territory

dense urban design concept

preferences for private builders instead of commercial investors

low energy standard for all houses and central co-generation plant

good public transport (incl. new tram)

social and commercial infrastructure (e.g. child care and primary school)

green public spaces

Public Participation (Forum Vauban)

promotion and support of building within self organized groups (co-building/co-housing groups)

design of special areas for passive houses, preferences for builders with advanced energy concepts

CHP with wood chops

car-free project combined with

- a specific traffic concept and
- alternative mobility offers

centrally located market place and neighbourhood center

Vauban - District Map

