# **ZURICH (PRIMER)**

Studio Sergison A Plan for Zurich, 1-6

Primer

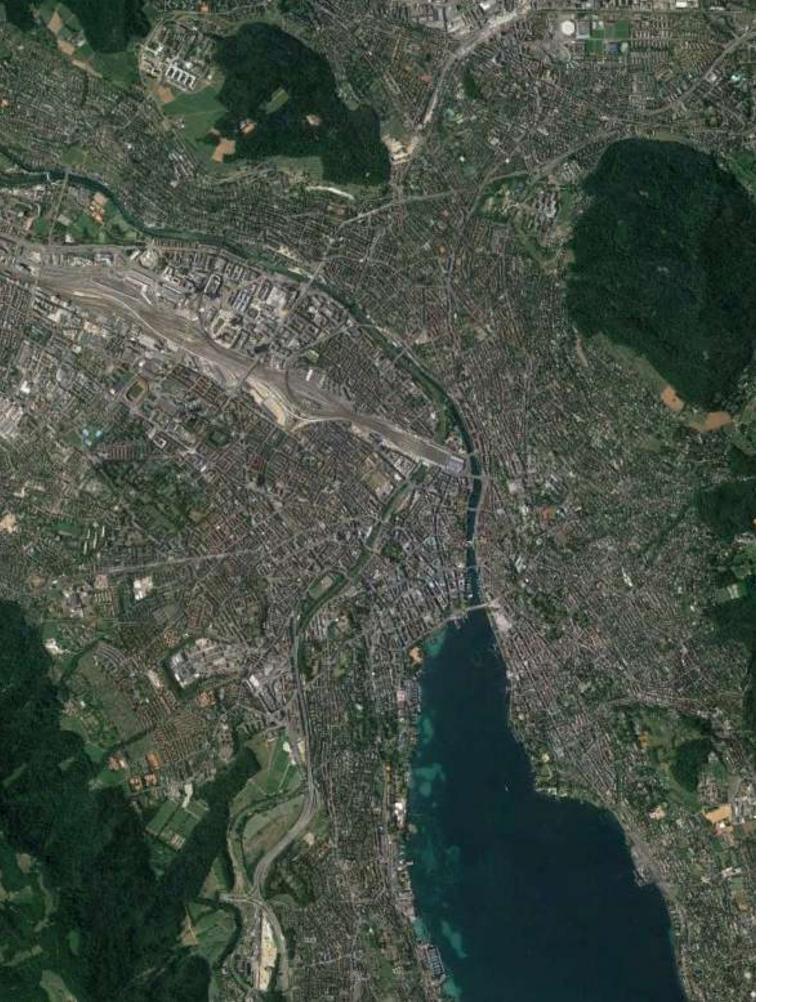


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This booklet details the general briefing document for the 'Plan for Zurich 2017-2020' and is intended as a companion to the individual semester briefs.

Over the course of six semesters the studio will undertake an ambitious and far-reaching study of the city of Zurich, considering strategies for absorbing a growing population in the context of politically sanctioned policies for densifying the existing urban fabric and preventing the further expansion of the city.

p 4 Aerial view of Zurich

Zurich as we know it today started out as a Celtic settlement on the banks of the river Limmat. Later, it became a Roman village and developed into a flourishing medieval town. By the late Middle Ages the population had increased, new quarters had been built and several monasteries had been established. A major project was the fortification of the town, which took over a century to complete and defined the borders, as well as the general appearance of Zurich for the next 300 years, until it was redesigned as a star shaped baroque fortification in the 17th century.

The size of the town remained constant until 1830, when a liberal constitution came into force and ended the dominance of the guilds, which had been in power since the middle ages. From 1857 onwards, political changes, industrialisation and the construction of the railway lead to vast population growth and changed the face of the city. The fortifications and parts of the old town were demolished. Next to the newly built main station a new quarter with luxury apartments, prestigious buildings and financial institutions were constructed on an orthogonal grid. The Bahnhofstrasse, the main street, connected the station with the newly built lake promenade, while the industrial production sites that remained in the town centre were relocated to a new industrial area outside town, to the west of the station.

By the start of the First World War, Zurich had become a thriving city, with a heterogeneous population and a cosmopolitan atmosphere, where Lenin lived next door to the Cabaret Voltaire, the home of Dadaism. In less than a century the population had tripled and in some of the adjacent municipalities it had grown ninefold. In the municipality of Aussersihl, still a village in 1860, dense urban blocks now gave the quarter its appearance, and the working class, mainly immigrants from Germany and Italy, gave it life.

But there is also a negative aspect to this success story. While a small upper class lived in new and prestigious areas such as Enge, the majority of the population lived in poverty in the Niederdorf and the municipality of Aussersihl. The merging of the city with the surrounding municipalities in 1893 allowed a centralised approach to these inequalities. Zurich had now become a city of more than 100 000 inhabitants, with tramlines connecting the new outlying districts with the centre.

In the years before the First World War, reform movements in Zurich, as in the whole of Europe, were seeking solutions to social problems. Among these, the Garden City Movement is one of the best known.

Against this background, the municipality held a competition for strategies to develop Zurich over the next 30 years. The central issues in question were: traffic management (interestingly, the first plans for a suburban railway system were drawn in 1908, but were only implemented some 70-80 years later), the development of a zoning plan, the establishing of public parks and the improvement of living conditions

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Hofwiesenstrasse around 1950, a typical cooperative housing development, 1932

<sup>2</sup> Langstrasse, Aussersihl, around 1910

Railway viaduct in the industrial quarter and Josefstrasse around

in the old town (Niederdorf and Oberdorf).

An important outcome of this were the vast housing projects built by the Social Democratic municipality during the interwar period. To this end, vast tracts of land within the city were bought (by the '30s, one third of the area was owned by the municipality). Part of this land was then distributed to cooperative building societies. But the influence of the municipality remained far-reaching: they determined the positioning and colour of the housing blocks, and even their floor plans. In contrast to the building blocks of the pre-war period, the new ones were less dense, making it possible to have green spaces in the centre (e.g. Bullingerhof). Where possible, garden cities were built (e.g. Milchbuck and Friesenberg). In addition to these housing projects, cultural facilities, schools and green spaces were planned, and infrastructure was improved.

The second merging of the city with the surrounding municipalities in 1934 formed the basis for the next phase of growth, starting with the end of the Second World War and lasting until the 1960s, when population reached a peak of 440 000. This time, the city grew not only outwards, but also upwards: with Lochergut and later Hardau, high-rise structures were erected. The increase in car ownership led to new priorities in city planning. While in the interwar period the inner city was adapted to local traffic, there was now a need to connect the town to long-distance routes. Paradigmatic of this spirit was the proposed motorway junction in the centre of the town to be built over the Limmat and the Sihl, Zurich's two rivers. In the 1970s this doctrine was reconsidered and pedestrian zones were established in the city centre (e.g. Bahnhofsstrasse). But generally the population of Zurich declined, and any growth at this time occurred mainly in the suburbs.

Since the 1990s, Zurich¹s population has been growing again (today, it has reached 400 000). Cooperative and social housing projects remain one of the main tools for implementing urban planning policies. But now the focus is on the sustainable use of land: in order to prevent settlements sprawling further out into the countryside, the aim is to increase density within the existing city, and convert former industrial zones into commercial and residential areas (examples of this are Neu-Oerlikon, but also the areas along the railway-lines, such as the Europaallee). Former working-class quarters, as for example Aussersihl and Industrie, are now very popular and quite gentrified. People of different nationalities, students, professionals, 'creatives', and young families live here, attracted by the array of bars, restaurants, boutiques and galleries. As the population is expected to grow by 40 000 inhabitants by 2030, the main issue in urban planning today is how to achieve a sustainable densification without compromising the quality of life.

## Top row

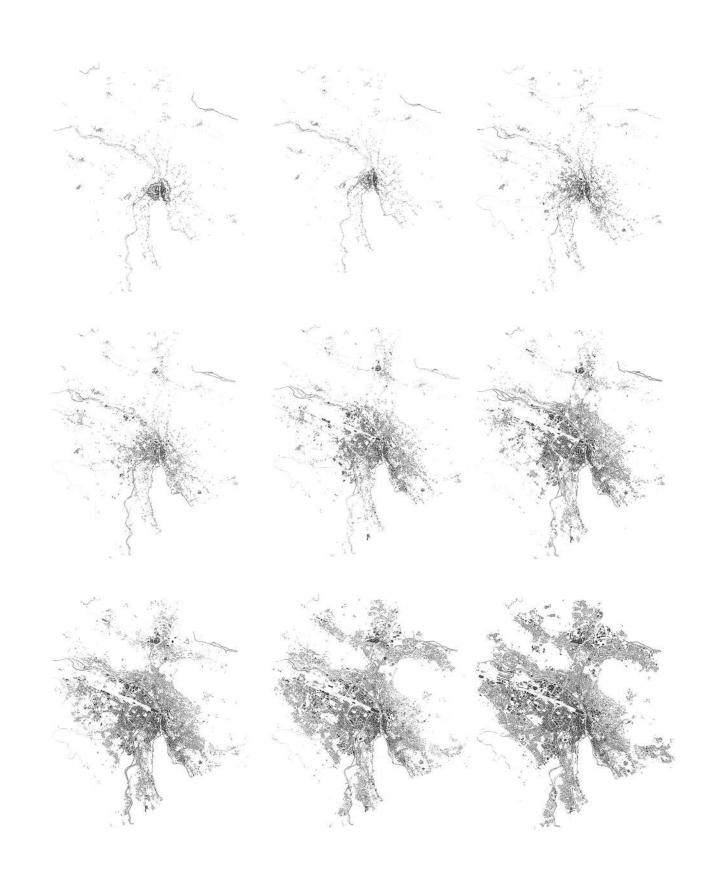
Zurich and its baroque fortification (1825), its demolition (1845) and the merging of the city with the surrounding municipalities in 1893 (1885).

### Middle row

Phases in the rapid growth of Zurich in the first half of the last century (1900, 1915 and 1930).

The development of Zurich since WW2 (1945, 1960 and 1990)

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## A livable city

Kathrin Martelli, Essays, 'Mehr als Wohnen - Gemeinnütziger Wohnungsbau in Zürich 1907-2007', gta Verlag, Zürich, 2007

Speaking about domesticity is speaking about how and where one lives. Both are shaping our lives, our everyday life, both are contributing to our sense of feeling part of a place, a neighbourhood, a city. Cosiness is not only defined by our apartment, but also by our environment. The city is dealing with this inside as well as outside aspect of living since the last 100 years.

And since dwelling is such a moulding aspect of our lives, it becomes political, it becomes an object of politics. I want to fully understand these aspects of 'how, where, and at what price one can live', as they are such important questions over which society discusses and takes decisions.

The strong position of Zurich's limited-profit housing projects is therefore no product of coincidence, but rather deliberate and (a way to) control housing politics. The city was able to secure, since early times lands for social housing, as for instance on Friesenberg (1896) or in the Wipkingen-Letten neighbourhood (1907). Family as well as children friendly apartments not only required practical plans, but also parks, playgrounds, large pedestrian pavements, green courtyards and streets, as well as well positioned kindergartens and schools. Smart urban planning was an answer to limited housing for profit (developer housing), inside as well as outside.

Already in the past city and building cooperatives where not only building cheaply, but also (in a way that is) economically reasonable. They were both seeking to offer a good life quality, which meant sufficient large green spaces. For new housing schemes they would often commission great architects to design pioneering masterpieces. Since the very beginning the limited-profit builders were investing also in art during construction: beautiful frescos, reliefs and fountain sculptures were part of the image of a new housing development. Quality in housing design, didn't stop at the entrance door: the value of an apartment is defined by its surroundings, inside as well as outside.

The city is always changing, and so do the building cooperatives innovate their constructions. What may seem like a problematic renovation or building replacement that leads to frictions and political irritations, is actually indispensable on an urban level for the city. As a result, what were considered to be very cheap apartments before, upgrade to low income housing. Those who don't invest in building substance now, are not only neglecting buildings, but also counting to live out of the expenses of the next generation. Badly kept and over aging structures have a bad impact on their neighbourhoods and this is socially expensive as well as alarming. The radical renovation and restoration of housing has become a core aspect for both the city and its housing cooperatives.

People like to live more and more in the city and the demand is bigger

now than ever. This is a sign of well functioning as well as attractive atmosphere and surroundings. It is also an encouragement to organize this in a better way, according to needs. Denser settlements are in fact not only more suitable and practical but also economically advantageous. Too often though these projects that are denser and taller than the existing urban structure create feeling of resistance. This is where both City and Politics have to explain why a denser city is not necessary a worse city.

The reconstruction of old buildings is often the economically best solution to renovation. The city has set her eye for urban development on these housing schemes. The change that is foreseen needs accurate thinking and longsighted planning. It is all about developing the new, without neglecting the old and respecting its heritage. The accurate listing and protection of monuments is the starting condition to a harmonious development of the city and contributes to keeping the domestic expenses low.

Apartments that are built today have to be adequate to the ecological and social standards of tomorrow. Today we are performing very well on all that is 'minergie' standardised and are on a good way to reaching the 2000-Watt society. The good collaboration and dialogue between the city and the building cooperatives is guaranteeing high standard achievements. Also architecture competitions for cooperatives or city housing are a valid way of developing projects.

The City Planning Office has been organizing architectural competitions for over 2'500 cooperative apartments since 1998, which means active know-how transfer. At the same time there has been a respectful observing of criteria such as cost efficiency, sustainability and urban quality.

Limited-profit housing organisations have been a success for the example of Zurich. The work behind cooperatives, foundations, and city administration is made by motivated people that advocate attractive living and city spaces. The reason why Zurich has had such a success transforming into a domestic city over the years and will remain so in the future, is mainly thank to these people in both public and private developments.

















## Promoting the fundamental need of dwelling

Martin Vollenwyder, Essays, 'Mehr als Wohnen - Gemeinnütziger Wohnungsbau in Zürich 1907-2007', gta Verlag, Zürich, 2007

Dwelling, eating and clothing are core fundamental needs. Zurich is a place of work as well as a city that contains domesticity, it is very important for it to offer enough housing space. In order for social relationships to function well, there has to be a good population mix and this requires housing for different incomes. This became possible thank to housing subsidies.

For longer than 100 years the city of Zurich has undertaken promotion of dwelling, as a social political task and the result is clearly positive: about a quarter (more than 50 000 apartments) of the planned dwellings in the whole city are built respecting the limited-profit housing requirements which are based on the low rents.

Affordable apartments are necessary for low income people. The average income in the Kanton of Zurich is approximately 6 000 CHF a month. This means that at least half of the population has to live with less than a half outcome a month (because half their income goes towards rent). People that are particularly hit by this reality are the people working for public services such as construction, hotel, cleaning, refuse collecting and those working as sales assistants in shops, all people which are indispensable for our city. Low rent apartments are also of importance for young families and students, as well as people working in academic environments. It is important that these people work inside of the city, and do not need to travel a long way each day to work.

Impact on rent and standards - citywide

Affordable apartments are a means to help the city save millions in social contributions: people without a big income can pay their own rent and this gives them a certain independence as well as self esteem. Furthermore many social contributions can be lowered. The tools of housing promotion do not only help rents, but they also moderate between building costs and living area. This is for the benefit of all those who are looking for living space.

## Wide offering cooperatives

The housing cooperatives are the biggest providers of low income housing (about 38 000 out of 50 000). Private associations as well as foundations contribute to this number with 2 000 apartments. The most important contribution however, comes from the city with more than 10 000 apartments divided between 53 housing cooperatives and 3 public foundations (PWG for cheap dwelling and working space, the foundation for families with many children, and the foundation for elderly housing in the city of Zurich).

A trigger element for the construction of city housing was the severe need

of housing in the beginning of the entury. 'Limmat 1' was the first city housing complex to be built in Zurich in 1907.

Housing for all - the aims of Zurich's city council

In 1998 the new legislation aim '10 000 apartments in 10 years' created a big momentum in urban housing politics. With the motto 'housing for all' the aim was reached already in 2002 and was functioning for people that struggled to find low income apartments in the city.

This momentum impacted on private and public housing developers. The cooperatives as well as all 3 public foundations became more and more active specialised also into restoration as well as new buildings.

Promotion of housing is much more than building

Thanks to the housing promotion tools that were set up in 1907 and continued promoting housing, the city disposed of potentially influential examples that went way beyond the construction of a single apartment. The main funding instruments are a interest-free, entirely refundable loans which derive from framework loans (construction). These loans are constantly submitted to a voting system which are always voting for them with a clear preference, for instance in 2006 when about 79.2% of the voters accepted 30.0 Mio. CHF. In total there have been decided loans for over 400 Mio. CHF, which have been in part also refunded.

Public building developers can get up to 30 years loans, in depreciable amount. By doing so, the price of an apartment remains affordable in the long-term for families, students, disabled and elderly people. Those who apply for the low-income apartments have to follow many criteria regarding income and substance, which are periodically and constantly checked.

Furthermore the city gives to housing co-operatives a apart of the shared capital, thanks to which they can be admitted to the board and be granted voting. Another promotion instrument is the residual loan from the retirement found of the city of Zurich, up to 94%.

City land to be given in building right

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The most effective method for housing promotion is thought to give city owned land with building rights to developers. The fact that the city could give owned land with construction rights is thanks to the land politics of the beginning of the twentieth century. Back then, the city was in fact giving the land it owned to housing cooperatives to develop. Those who acquire land with construction rights can build on the site are subjected to a land lease interest.

The land value underlying the building right is in these cases quite low, for the rents

to be affordable. Housing cooperatives as well as public foundations have to commit 1% of the GIA to public functions such as a kindergarten or a crèche. Moreover land with building rights requires an architectural competition, so that the city can secure urban and architectural quality. This is a very strong instrument for promotion, though it is difficult to think that it could work much longer, owning the city not having as many land sites as before.

A successful project which promotes collectivity

The promotion of housing development has been a successful project for Zurich for 100 years. Thanks to its diverse strategies it was able to offer the city a wide range of different income-based apartments which created a good mix of different collectivities. The many socially active housing cooperations in Zurich developed housing projects which are not only very interesting from an architectural point of view but also from a social one: they have all promoted also small private initiatives which were of a big importance for the community life - from elderly's care to cultural and common spaces.

The fact that in housing developments one can find apartments for different incomes is not casual. This way people with different incomes, jobs and life styles can live together, exploiting interaction and strengthening social solidarity, which is very important for the times we are living in and a quality that Zurich can offer.

p 19 Street view, Kreis 4 Jonathan Sergison, from 'One a day' series



## Living and Enabling Diligence in Urban Planning

Building Zurich: Conceptual Urbanism, Prologue, Angelus Eisinger, Iris Reuther, Franz Eberhard, Regula Lüscher, Birkhäuser Verlag, Zürich, 2007

Many people have an interest in the city of Zurich, in its endless building, rebuilding, and expansion: planners, architects, lawyers, entrepreneurs, investors, skilled workers, laborers, owners, users, the executive, the legislative, the voting citizens, and the Office for Urbanism — the authorities within the municipal administration that are meant to ensure that the world city makes productive use of its local geographic features and architectural resources.

## What does that mean precisely?

Franz Eberhard, director of the Office for Urbanism, and Regular Lüscher, his closest colleague and vice director, discussed in two interviews their ideas of their own role, of urbanism, of the city as a whole, and of Zurich.

They are well aware that their views of themselves as professionals is reflected in how they fill their offices and that their work is done in the field of tension between various interests. They also reflected on the thorough reorganization of their office and the changes in the way it has worked since the late 1990s.

## On the Basis of Ambitions

The two architects are, as is clear in every meeting with them and palpable even in public, of one mind in the fundamental questions of their activity. More than that, they supplement each other in an almost ideal way in both human terms and with respect to their abilities. Such complementarity stood them in good stead during the massive processes of change that Franz Eberhard initiated at the beginning of his term in office, prescribing new guidelines for the Office for Urbanism. The basic rule of this redesign were: less bureaucracy, more partnership. Or to put it more polemically: less security, more risk.

Formerly the municipal architect in Saint Gall, Franz Eberhard was called to Zurich at a time that was still characterized, as in Switzerland as a whole, by ideological trench wars, hardening of positions, and paralysis. It was a leap in scale and at the time the chance to try out on a larger playing conditions. It was by all means a satisfying experience, according to Franz Eberhard, to find that his central preoccupation — improving the essential qualities of a city, both in detail and as a whole — could certainly be applied to the situation in Zurich.

Regula Lüscher came to the Office for Urbanism a little later, after a career change. She says it was not easy to settle in to working in a administration office after years of passionate activity in her own architectural office. Everything was different; she missed the creative surroundings, to say nothing of the alternating hot and cold baths of the atmosphere. And what she found most difficult to understand:

nobody drew; no designs and no images were produced. Urban planning was done in the abstract, disembodied, without any ambition to design.

## Earning Trust

The need for action was thus considerable. On the one hand, structural measures to reorganize the patchwork of the office were forced upon them. On the other, it was necessary to develop new ways of thinking and new networks of paths to values, beyond the beaten paths secured by authority, that would enable this administration office to find a role suited to the times and based on partnership.

He has tried with all his might, Franz Eberhard emphasizes, to encourage learning from examples and processes. A culture of discussion based on ideas of content had to emerge as the core of this new self-image. Moreover he felt the qualification in terms of project management and down-to-earth expertise had to be improved continually so that there could be an eye-to-eye debate with the outside — property owners, developers, planners, and architects, the construction business as a whole — that would make both trench warfare and dogmatic regulations superfluous.

The office's task remained the same throughout all these transformations. Even in an environment that was increasingly determined by the demands and mentalities of private enterprise, its job was to perceive and focus the public interests relating to urbanism and urban development in order to provide an example of the accuracy that must distinguish all of the work on and for the city that the leadership of the Office for Urban Planning does. One example of this is a more rigorous integration of historical preservation, by means of which history becomes a part of the present and the future.

Trust is the indispensable foundation for any such redefinition: the administration's trust in itself, but also trust in the possibilities of concerted agreement and concerted action. Such concerted action should not result in a premature and all too eager balance of interests, and the building of trust should not become an end in itself, like a simple feature of a path that is confused with the goal.

## Reorganizing

All these movements could only be achieved with the necessary rigor because Franz Eberhard and Regula Lüscher could count on having the indispensable backing of their political superiors. The Guideline Planning, Land use Planning, and Architecture Consulting divisions were quickly brought together to ensure that urban planning practice conformed optimally to today's requirements. Naturally the reorganization

provoked some uncertainty. One aspect of their common motivation to push the project through energetically nonetheless, Regula Lüscher emphasizes, was the belief that the potential of this administration office could be developed over the long term and at the same time become attractive for new employees.

The most essential result of this persistence, many of the office's partners confirm, is a management culture that has taken shape in the meanwhile.

A culture that seeks to stand out for its respectful, customer-oriented approach that seeks active control and support, that combines great latitude for maneuver with high expectations for performance, and that understands how to employ internal resources that are necessarily limited in well-directed and efficient ways.

## Satisfying Growing Demands

What precisely, on closer inspection, are these demands? Franz Eberhard and Regula Lüscher come to the same conclusion. The pressure to invest and turn over in Zurich is very high, with considerable consequences for the tempo of all planning and development processes. The parliament also plays an important role: the dramaturgy of the calendar of elections determines many medium-and long-term construction projects. That means, Regular Lüscher notes, that both the formal and the informal networks of relationships between the agendas of those involved and the politicians take on particular meaning. Here too trust is a key category; after all, the point is to anticipate in time the possible loss from friction in the process of deciding democratically and to negotiate with feasibilities without losing urban planning clarity.

Franz Eberhard identifies the current focuses of urban planning: Main Train Station Urban District, the University District, the Police and Justice Center, Zurich West, Zurich North, the Convention Center. They are isolated neuralgic cases of a complex urban structure that is always subject to short-term rhythms and interventions. Zurich owes its true identity to other, longer-term features like the fact that the core city dovetails very closely with the region and Greater Zurich and is still marked by a characteristic structure of its neighborhoods. That becomes the basis for a perspective that tries to do justice to the unique qualities of these neighborhoods. The goal is to reposition them gently in order to integrate them logically into considerations and preliminary work on prominent individual buildings according to typological views of the townscape and urban planning.

This way of thinking finds programmatic expression in a metaphorical interpretation of the neighborhoods of the city of Zurich as "Zurich rooms". A

workshop of cadres that also sought to activate the design potentials on a strategic level provided the impetus for this idea. The Office for Urbanism is currently devoting a great deal of energy to these rooms. With citizen involvement, the office is designing urban planning concepts specific to each neighborhood in order to derive the rules of the game for the future development of the city in those neighborhoods.

At the moment the focus is on the Letzi District, Schwamendingen, or Affoltern, for example, where profound changes like those of the 1950s and 1960s are on the horizon.

## Readings and Learning Areas

From behind such elucidations a visual idea of the city of Zurich emerges — for Regula Lüscher it is the "urban body" that she sees as her responsibility, while for Franz Eberhard speaks of an "urban organism", which leads its own postindustrial life. In both images of the city, people are not simply a population but also a part of the urban plot that gives the city meaning. In the living concept of the urban organism, the people are just as inseparably inscribed as in the view of a body, to which they lend their essence. In any case, it is the residents, through their history and present lives, who make Zurich's rooms a residence for the public in the neighborhoods.

Such a city cannot, in essence, be controlled. Its discourse and its real transformation can be guided, provoked, or moved, but it can never be forced into political obedience. Hence Franz Eberhard and Regula Lüscher see processes everywhere to which the Office for Urbanism has to contribute to do justice to the city in various modalities and speeds. That is another reason that process-based learning needs appropriate examples, and in retrospect Zurich West has proved to be a prototype for an area of learning in which both officials and private parties were in demand.

## Crossing Boundaries in New Ways

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Interim goals have been reached, but there is room enough for desires and plans. Moving beyond the existing forms of cooperation, Franz Eberhard is hoping to create over time a stronger, sounder and more emotional connection between those who interpret and plan and those who build and pay.

A higher degree of cohesion should enable Zurich to form effective alliances at all levels on urban issues in order to create features in architecture, the design of public space, and living models that will endure.

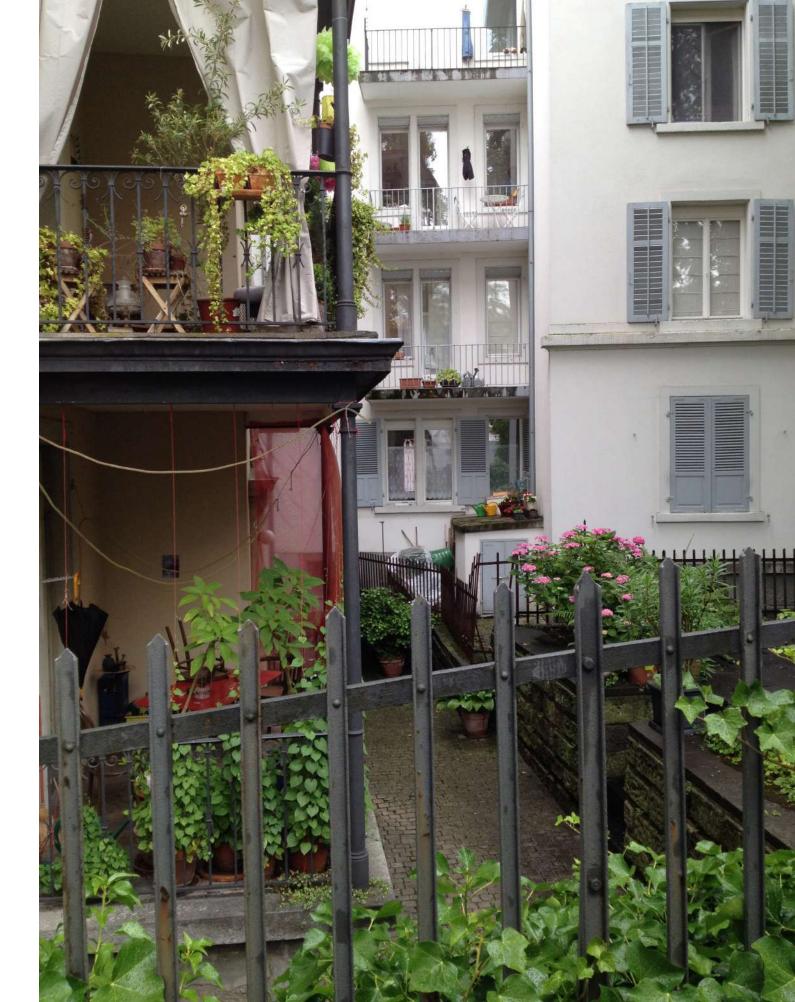
Such tours de force cannot be achieved solely through the procedures

for planning and architectural policy that are currently in place. Other, more flexible instruments and actions, based on possibilities not on limits, must be found and implemented. There is a need for the courage to experiment, to determine the possibilities situationally. Although it involves continuing to develop structures that were once declared as mistaken plans, like the Hardbrücke in Zurich West, which has since become an urban landmark, or establishing new maps for neighborhoods, what matters is not the free play as determined by the legal system but the mentality of the players.

Accompanying such processes requires decisiveness, even a certain radicalness vis-à-vis design approaches, says Regula Lüscher. That does not mean thinking in black and white; in her view radicalness is an attitude that in everyday life deals with the compromises that it hopes to avoid in the result. Such pragmatism is the ideal precondition for interpreting the power of authority such that the Office for Urbanism can avoid unnecessary confrontation and still met the double challenge that every urban planning effort necessarily confronts: political responsibility and architectural form.

A courtyard in Zurich Jonathan Sergison, from 'One a day' series

Street view, Kreis 5 Jonathan Sergison, from 'One a day' series













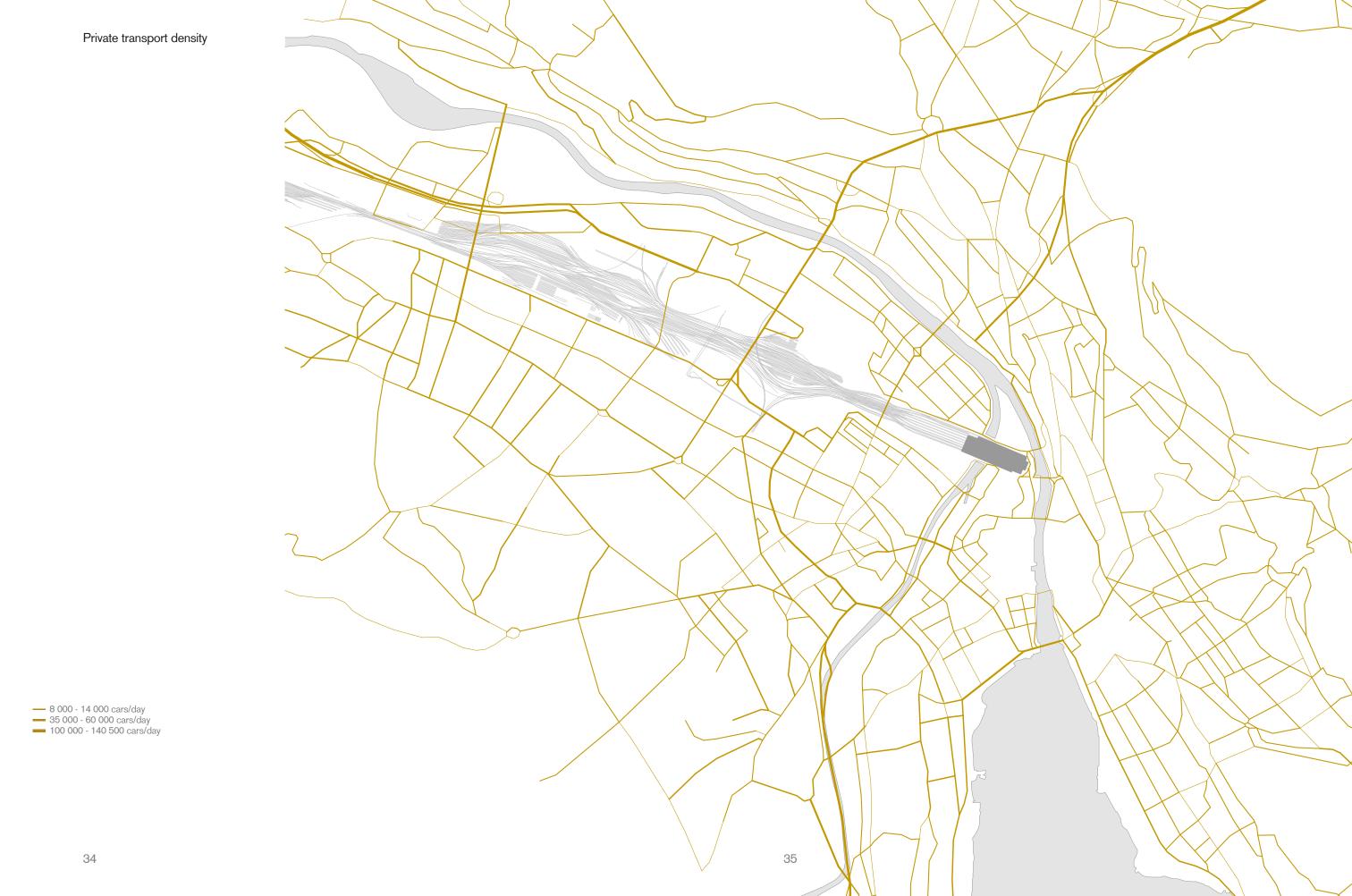




1-6 Zurich as found Jonathan Sergison, from 'One a day' series

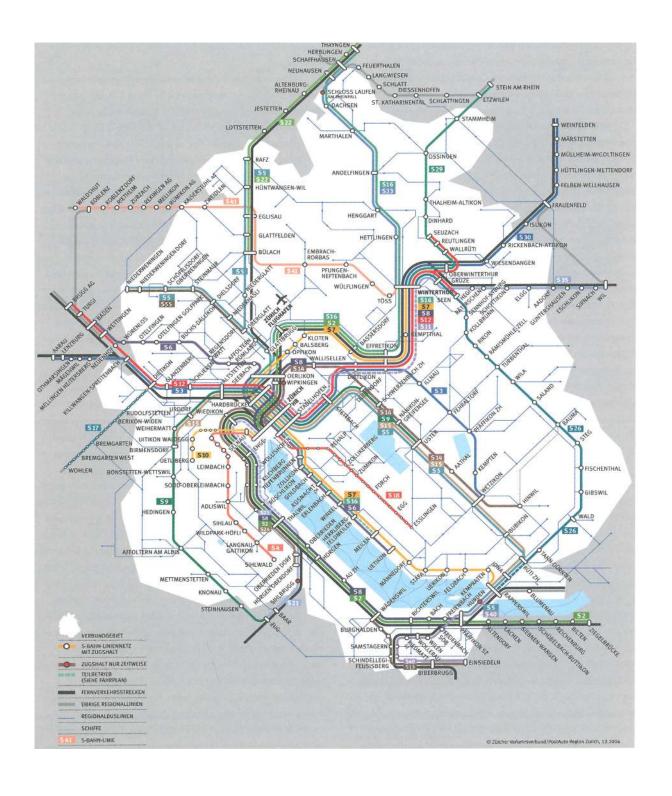


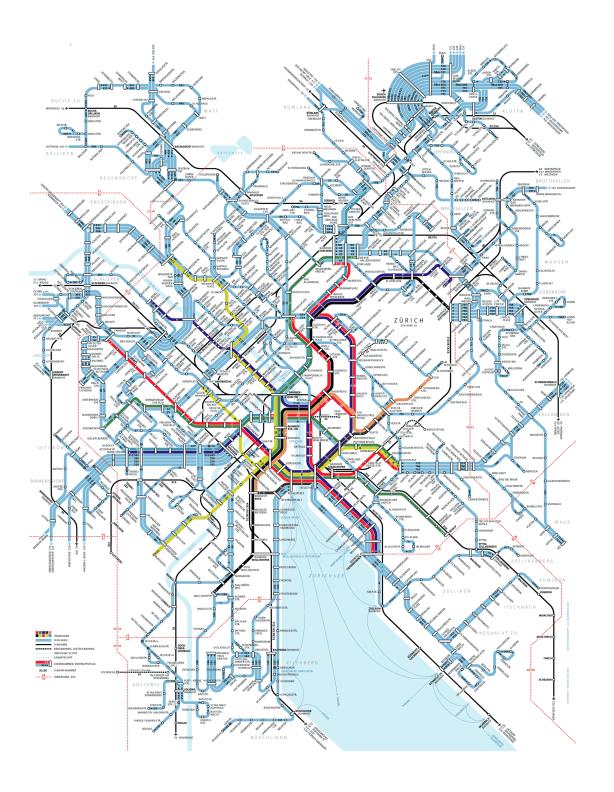


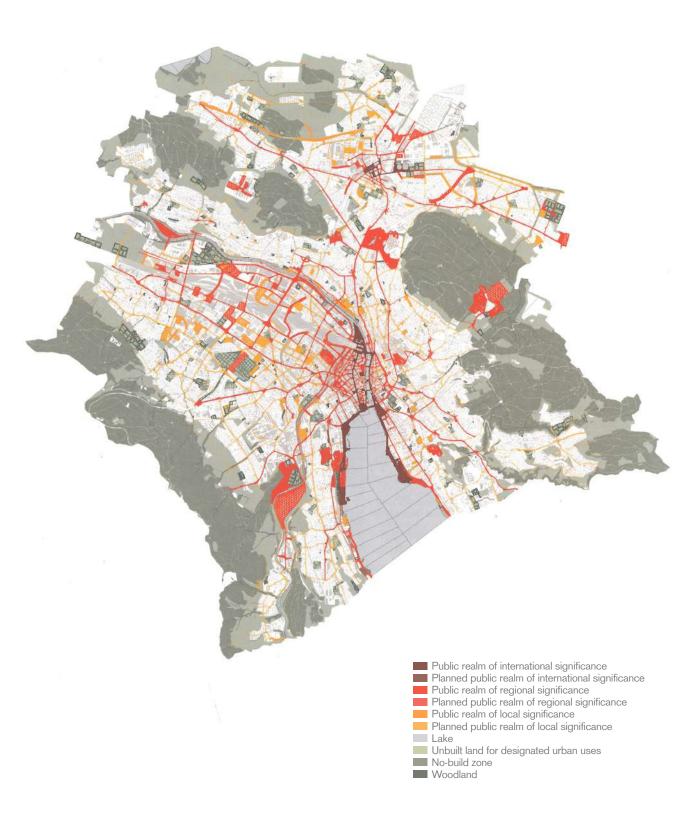


Public transport: greater Zurich

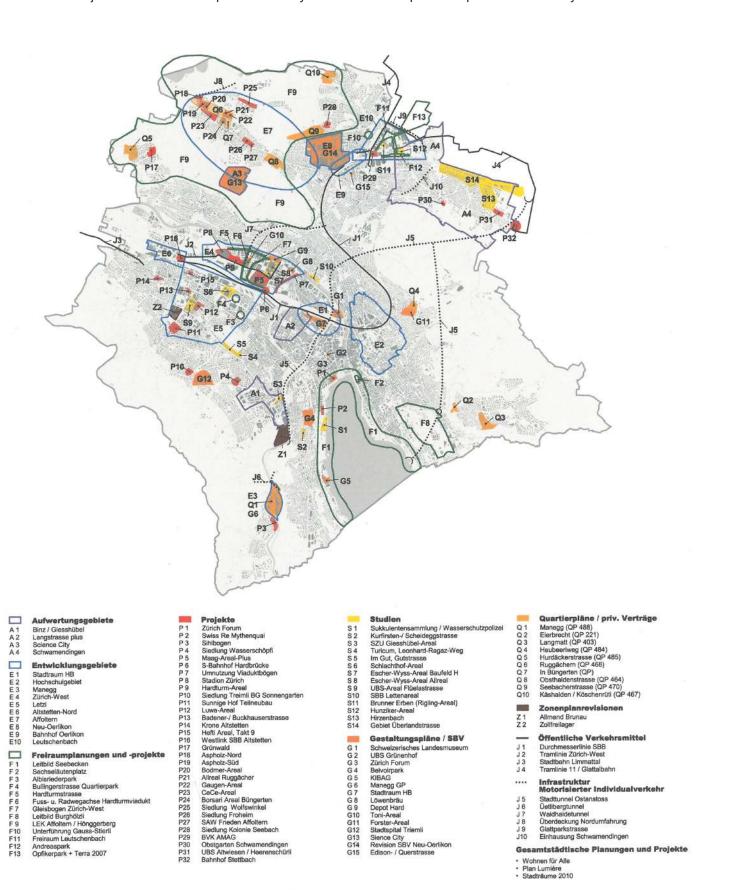
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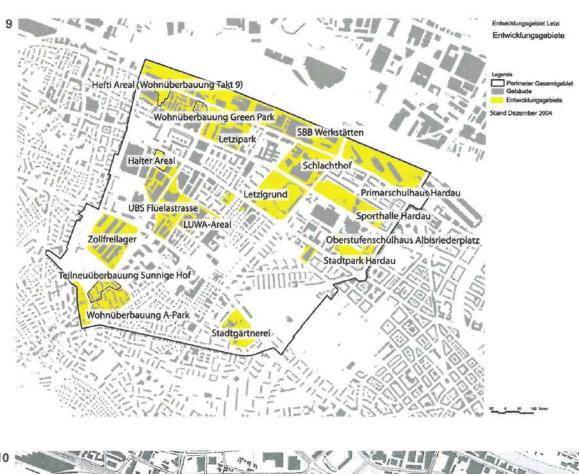


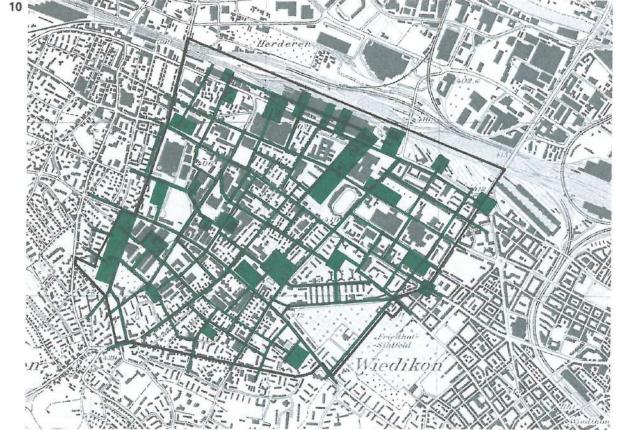




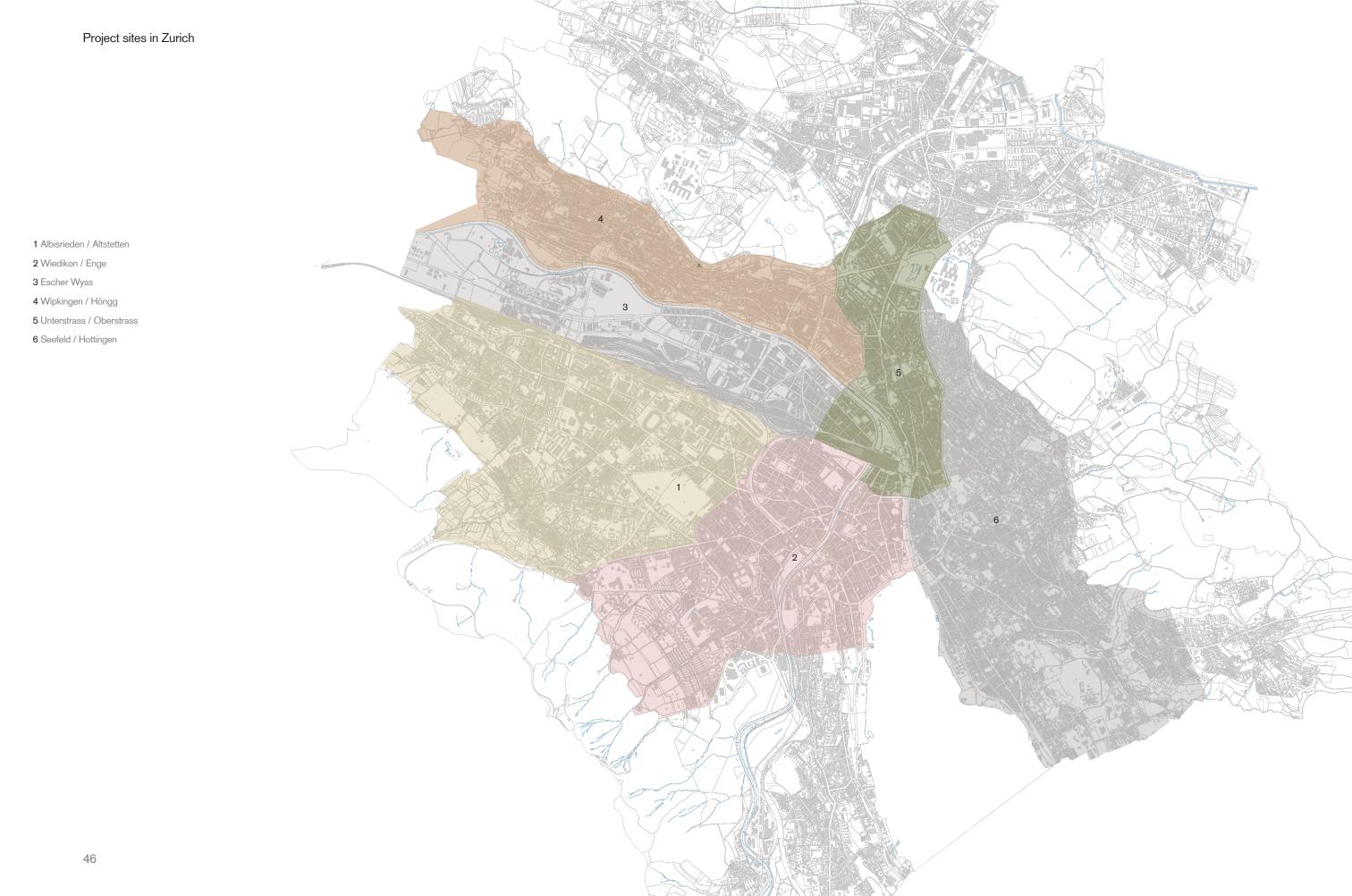












## Experts Panel (to be confirmed)

Patrick Gmür
Anna Schindler
Pascal Hunkeler
Andreas Hofer
Bruno Krucker
Annette Gigon
Mike Guyer
Roger Diener
Marianne Burkhalter
Christian Sumi
Daniel Niggli
Roger Boltshauser
Irina Davidovici
Vittorio Lampugnani

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