

Urban development in Zurich: towards a green city ?

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Overview

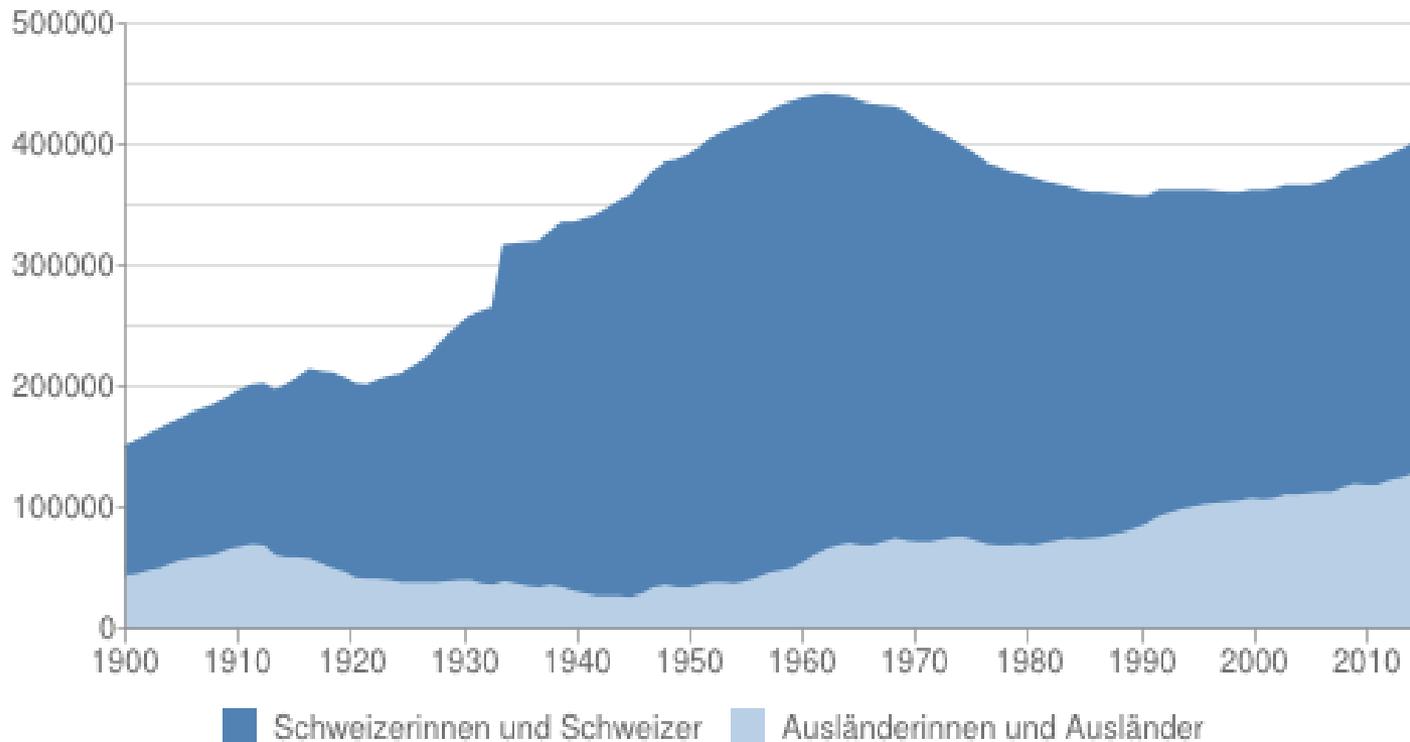
1. Spatial planning system in the canton of Zurich
2. Experience in the city of Zurich since the 60's
3. Traffic infrastructure
4. Living and ecology – a trade off?
5. Revision of the zoning regulation in 2014/15
6. Energy supply for Zurich
7. Lessons which could be learned

Spatial planning system in Zurich

- Basis: national Spatial Planning Act
- Canton: so called structure plan as basis for communities
- 2014: objective of 80'000 additional inhabitants in the city of Zurich by 2030
- City and other communities: zoning regulations with restrictions on use of area (living, green, etc.) as well as height of buildings in defined zones
- Political process for developing and deciding about the plans

Experience in the city of Zurich since the 60's

Population in the city of Zurich 1900 – 2014



Source: Statistical Office, Zürich 2015

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- Changes of the economic structure (less industry – more services) with the consequence of less area per job
- People live outside and move to the city (2015: 380'000 jobs)
- Necessity of an efficient public transport system (S Train) which is today at its capacity limits
- Less population meant less school houses and more elderly people: 2015 correction necessary
- Former industrial areas used for other purposes mainly living after heavy political discussions
- In the 90's the city of Zurich is not able to implement a zoning regulation for urban development; blocked by court decisions
- Finally, the canton decreed a new order
- Change of peoples' claims: higher demand for living area per head

Infrastructure

- Needs for infrastructure are changing over 50 years
- From car-oriented road construction to public transport and data transporting systems (glass fiber)
- Metropolitan area of Zurich: the highway concept never clearly decided: Y concept was not implemented; as a consequence highways end at the border of city; surrounding highways only partly finished in 2015
- Traffic planning depends on political priorities
- Contradictions between city and cantonal level: less cars vs. flowing traffic: political conflicts for 50 years

Living and ecology – a trade-off ?

- growing population in the city of Zurich since 2000 leads to higher pressure on land use for living
- growing area per head for living, higher living standard in the flats (e.g. kitchen equipment)
- Open green areas are protected, but more and more used for construction via political decisions
- Example of settlement Hornbach
- Fighting for cheap flats as political objective of the left/green parties since 2005; hard to argue against cheap rates for living
- Reality 2015 26% of all flats are rented at cost rent; votation obliges to reach 33% until 2050 with the consequence of increasing prices and dominating role of Government in building new flats at relatively high costs and low rents
- Question: who is getting such flats at preferred conditions ? Cooperatives: No clear conditions and almost no monitoring about e.g. income changes of the tenants

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- To build higher would be a land-saving solution (concentration)
- People do not want to have higher buildings in their neighbourhood; => blocking projects at the court
- Schizophrenic behaviour: cheap rents demanded, no high buildings, green areas for leisure, no traffic on the road but direct access to any place in the world expected
- 2000 Watt Society a realistic vision for Zurich ?

Revision of the zoning regulation in 2014/15

- Area of Zurich: 91 km² of which 45% settlement, 26% forest, 11% agriculture
- Actual reserves for construction: floor based 16 Mio m²
- Until 2030 planned: 3.1 Mio m² for living, 2.3 Mio m² for economic activities
- Political discussions about concentration
- Proposal of Government: no additional zones for concentration, use of existing reserves as given in the former regulation
- Step towards a green city or is Zurich already a green city ?

Energy supply for Zurich

- Self sufficient in electric power due to investments in water-, nuclear- and renewable power
- City must sell its shares of nuclear power stations till 2050 resp. 2034 due to political decisions
- Political decision of parliament: municipal power company sells only green power at higher price => loss of larger consumers which have the choice of power supplier
- Solar power: private investors face problems for installations due to conservation legislation
- Potential of additional local energy production ? bio gas

Lessons which could be learned

- Zoning regulations should be relatively wide
- Subsidies for living rents lead to increases of land prices
- Government should not be an investor in construction of living buildings
- Democratic control over zoning regulations is necessary
- Trade offs between conservation and dynamic urban development (taxes)
- Political decisions about price and energy policy of the municipal energy provider weakens its market position
- Too tight conservation legislation prevents investments in alternative energies in urban settlements
- National traffic planning should give priority to large urban areas with investments

Is Zurich a green city or not (yet) ?