

## USER: Lessons Learned

There are numerous action groups and stakeholders within the area willing to advocate a sustainable redevelopment. Adding to pre-established concertation arrangements on urban development issues, the crucial point regarding the USER approach consists of how to address common goals, methods and procedures, e.g.

- How densely should current void spaces be overbuilt in the future? Does the pre-war building fabric represent an appropriate pattern for future development?
- What should be the amount, connection and quality of green and open spaces to be safeguarded or redeveloped?
- How to ensure the usability of accessible green and open spaces for everybody, with respect to specific groups, intergenerational solidarity, educational aspects, and specific needs such as urban gardening or various leisure time activities?
- Will well-designed open spaces help reduce the volume and nuisances of traffic?
- How to maintain open and green spaces while respecting budgeting restrictions?
- How to ensure an active role for residents in the maintenance and improvement of accessible open space?

- What suggestions are there for temporary and/or permanent art installations as well as any kind of visual enhancement that residents may look after?

The USER Local support group (LSG) brings together stakeholders from various issue-focused associations as well as municipal staff from different departments and residents. The members of the USER LSG have formed six working groups on specific aspects (maintenance, photography, place making issues) or small-scale geographical hotspots (railway embankment area, Schützenstraße, semi-public spaces). They are currently finalising the analysis of public space and drafting recommendations for future development. Draft suggestions and plans for improving specific spots are due to be submitted by the end of 2014 in the Local Action Plan. Its final version will be submitted to the City Council's Planning and Building Committee by April 2015, taking into account the assessment provided by the partner cities and USER's advisors.

Dresden is looking forward to using the lessons learned within the USER city network and to engage in more effective dialogue with the public about urban transformation.



Underused plots give way to residential town houses in the Wilsdruffer Vorstadt neighbourhood (2012-2014)



## USER: Partner Meeting in Dresden



USER workshop in Dresden, 5 May 2014: Dresden's USER LSG meeting their partners from Copenhagen and Pescara

Through the series 'In Dialogue about Urban Transformation' we present urban experiences and good practise collected by EUROCITIES working groups (WG). Many European cities are faced with the challenges of (rapid) growth and socio-demographic change. To achieve and ensure sustainable development, cities focus on inward development with densification, energy efficiency, and socially-balanced solutions. The ways of reaching these goals vary between the cities. Nevertheless, each example provides guidance or inspiration for others to improve dialogue and participation. The tools, methods, and approaches we present include outstanding visualisation, involvement, co-design, GIS-modelling, and more.

**WG Integrated Urban Development (Economic Development Forum)**  
We exchange on integrated and cross-sectoral approaches, using peer-exchange to improve day-to-day practice in projects and urban development. Our focus on urban transformation and densification includes emphasis on participation, dialogue and multilevel governance, carbon neutral planning/renewal and its social impact, as well as resourcing integrated projects. These complex issues often overlap: therefore, we seek exchanges with other working groups!

**WG Housing (Social Affairs Forum)**  
WG Housing gathers representatives from more than a dozen cities. Our objective is to raise awareness of the importance of housing for social cohesion in European cities by comparison of national/local housing policies and development of recommendations with regard to: affordable housing, social housing and housing of special target groups, mixed-use urban developments, housing and social cohesion, rehabilitation of existing housing stock, transfer of know-how.

[www.eurocities.eu](http://www.eurocities.eu)

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## Urban Development Planning

### Dresden In Dialogue about Urban Transformation

Opening Space for People along with Redensification



In Dialogue about Urban Transformation is a joint publication of the City of Munich and other member cities of EUROCITIES

## Dresden Recovering

### Dresden – old burdens – new dynamics

With a total population of 530,000 Dresden is the 12th biggest city in Germany. From 1989 to 1997, it has lost more than 80,000 inhabitants (owing to substantial outward migration, following German reunification as well as to a temporary decline in birth rate). Since then, the city has recovered about 90,000 inhabitants due to the incorporation of neighbouring towns as well as the recovery of migration gains and a natural population increase.

At the time of German reunification in 1990, large parts of the old housing stock as well as public spaces were in an appalling state of disrepair and lacked basic amenities. Since that period, most of Dresden's formerly neglected neighbourhoods have undergone

considerable refurbishment and modernisation. So far, urban redevelopment projects have largely benefitted from federal and regional subsidies; since 2000, European Regional Development funding (ERDF) has additionally been allocated in four specific neighbourhoods. However, cutbacks are expected over the coming years.

Prior to 2004, the area 'Historic Friedrichstadt & Wilsdruffer Vorstadt', also called the 'Western Fringe of the City Centre', had not been included in the local regeneration programmes, despite obvious structural deficits and neglect which were further aggravated by flood damages in 2002. Although next to the city centre and featuring several prestigious buildings, this area did not achieve a self-supporting redevelopment.

## Western Fringe of the City Centre

The 'Western Fringe' area is currently characterised by:

- predominantly refurbished dwellings dating from various periods
- an increasing number of newly built blocks
- a couple of brownfields and 'brown buildings' (run-down buildings, partly with damages caused by WWII)
- an elevated railway track that divides the two sub-areas from one another
- rather poor retail structures
- large healthcare facilities and retirement homes which represent the main economic activities

### Urban redevelopment – public tasks and urban challenges

For this area, public renovation schemes were launched several years ago. While residential redevelopment projects are predominantly up to the private sector, upgrading and management of open and green space remains a crucial task for public authorities in the context of urban redensification. The area features a lot of green and open spaces including obviously unplanned and disorganised plots. Nevertheless, in addition to claims for upgrading, residents frequently advocate the creation and extension of additional green and open spaces and corridors. Does this mean that the City is confronted with an 'unrealistic' perception? Or does this trend coincide with upcoming needs in terms of adaptation to climate change, resilience, appropriate residential density and social interaction? Despite the still inadequate attractiveness of the area, many inhabitants appear to be afraid of future developments likely to result in the loss of open spaces (being equivalent to their familiar residential environment), a rampant gentrification and increasing rents, noise and traffic.

If available and affordable, the municipality regularly strives to redesign and connect open spaces as user-friendly spaces for leisure time activities. On the other hand, objections are raised as to some of those redesigned green recreational areas not meeting the public's demand (oversupply) and/or resulting in excessive maintenance costs. In any case, the City is challenged – there are still plenty of vacant lots waiting for either near-natural or building (re)development.

### Public and green spaces as a main focus for public participation

Dresden, like many other cities, regularly aims at ensuring public participation in the context of land-use planning or major redevelopment schemes – either as part of binding procedures or in addition, as various kinds of civic involvement in urban planning. The latter include for example joint 'walking diagnoses' by planners and stakeholders across key areas for innovative master planning, or a couple of fora for discussion according to the 'Dresden debate' format.

## Opening Space for People



Residents mapping comfortable/uncomfortable places (on the occasion of the annual celebration of the Friedrichstadt neighbourhood, 2013)

In 2012, the city seized the chance to join the URBACT network 'USER – changes and conflicts in using public spaces'. Nine cities from eight European countries set up their respective local support groups. They have been drawing up local action plans addressing methods and actions likely to improve the quality, sustainability, security and conviviality of public places. Dresden's 'Western Fringe of the City Centre' was assigned as USER pilot site.

While the final report will be presented in 2015, a couple of valuable outcomes have already been realised, like the mapping of spots where people feel comfortable/uncomfortable and a survey of the perception and uses of public spaces, conducted by Dresden's University of Technology – General Economic and Social Geography.

For more information about the project: <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/urban-renewal/user/homepage/> <http://userplatform.lametro.fr/>

Pinpointing of comfortable/uncomfortable places – as a result of residents' assessment, 2013

