



Stadt Zürich  
Stadtrat

**Strategies Zurich 2040**

# Dedicated to a common future



**April 2024**

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In 2024, three-quarters of Europe's 750 million population live in cities. A host of social, economic and political developments converge there. Cities are places of innovation, as they are usually confronted with the demands of a globalised world before anywhere else: growth; rising land prices and living costs; the absorbing of climate change and the migration thronging to the cities; and the digital transformation, which is defining more and more areas of life. This all has to be done in a sustainable, future-proof way: it is not about small steps or grand utopias, but about implementing concrete, effective measures.

The circular economy begins in the city: local production – be it food, raw materials or space – is key to disrupting the behavioural patterns of a linear economic system. Social development begins in the city: the mixing of cultures, social systems, religions and ethnicities calls for new social contracts at all levels – between politics, business, administration and civil society. And the urgently needed reduction in greenhouse gas emissions begins in the city: in construction, transport, supply and waste disposal.

To maintain the high quality of life in a growing city and to structure the necessary growth in economic productivity in a sustainable way, Zurich City Council has set itself guidelines and a framework for action in the form of the «Zurich Strategies 2040».

Sustainable urban development combines future economic viability with social and societal integration and ecological consequences. With the «Zurich Strategies 2040», we lay out how we in the City of Zurich's administration propose to tackle the tasks and challenges of the coming years. We describe the various endeavours we are launching to achieve the ambitious goals of climate neutrality in a liveable, integrative and prosperous city.

**Corine Mauch**  
Mayor, City of Zurich

# Framework conditions on the path to the future

The wellbeing of people in the City of Zurich is not a law of nature; it has to be worked out afresh daily. Not only is the community confronted with a growing, ageing and more diverse population, but it is also necessary to factor global developments, such as the climate crisis or geopolitical tensions, into local decisions. The City Council's Zurich Strategies 2040 outline the guidelines for the next two decades. Although the framework conditions of the future can be predicted only to a limited extent, well-founded assumptions can nevertheless be made to establish a framework for the strategic alignment of the City of Zurich.

## Global aspects

Climate change is jeopardising the stability of the Earth's ecosystem with rising temperatures and extreme weather events. Exposed living environments contribute to the intensification of regional conflicts. However, new technological and social developments are also opening up opportunities: new markets are emerging, particularly in urban areas, that reinforce the circular economy. The transformation towards digital and increasingly cycle-oriented value creation offers scope for innovation. Technologies from the field of artificial intelligence are opening up new areas of employment.

The flipside of the positive trend towards an increasingly healthy life expectancy is the growing pressure on social institutions. Age- and lifestyle-related illnesses and limitations are on the rise. Healthcare and care systems, the labour market, education and public spaces have to cater to the needs of growing numbers of older people.

International isolationist tendencies and conflicts are not only leading to increasing migration, but also hindering the development of the global economy. The conflicting priorities of ecological and economic requirements are polarising public debate.

### **Local aspects**

The population of the City of Zurich is likely to exceed 500,000 in 2040 – and that does not include growth in the surrounding urban area. Zurich is becoming increasingly attractive as a place to work, a place to live, a tourist destination and a cultural centre. This is leading to rising demands on space for housing, culture, leisure and recreation, on mobility services, health services and emergency care, on the provision of energy, educational opportunities and political participation. The intertwining of business, society and politics at a national and international level necessitates a commitment to make our voice heard in international networks and maintain stable relations with the European Union.

As a hub for education, research and business, the City of Zurich bears responsibility in the canton, in Switzerland and worldwide. Key development-related issues can only be addressed in collaboration with the surrounding region. Through its additional networks, the city is able to make its voice heard at a cantonal, national and international level.

## **Mission Statement of the City of Zurich**

The City of Zurich is committed to people's wellbeing. It bears responsibility for the sparing use of resources and works actively to develop sustainable solutions for the population and the business sector on a partnership basis. It tackles conflicting priorities collaboratively with all those involved.

# **Preparing the ground for a common future: stable livelihoods**



**Zurich is striving for an innovative, circular economy that harnesses the potential of digitalisation as effectively as possible. Thus, the City of Zurich's first strategic action area is to secure the fundamental requirements for life and business activity:**

### **Business and innovation**

Investment in research and innovation forms the foundation for jobs, productivity and prosperity. The City of Zurich supports the business sector with a reliable fiscal policy, offerings and services tailored to the needs of business and efficient, transparent planning and approval processes. This keeps the location attractive for companies and nurtures economic resilience.

### **Climate, environment and biodiversity**

Zurich wants to be climate-neutral by 2040 – the city is implementing measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within its sphere of influence by 2035. It is harnessing the potential of business and science for the transformation towards climate-neutrality, including the potential of negative emission technologies to remove carbon from the atmosphere. As part of the implementation of the «Settlement, Landscape, Public Buildings and Facilities» municipal structure plan, refurbishments and construction are carried out in a resource-conserving manner.

### **Welfare**

In the interest of people with less financial resources, the city considers the social impact of all its decisions. It supports people in precarious situations. To safeguard the common good, it is in continuous dialogue with civil society organisations and other cities.

### **Housing**

The city subsidises non-profit housing in cooperation with building cooperatives, foundations and associations. It also works closely with private property developers and the real estate industry to ensure the provision of sufficient living space for all sections of the population. The city is committed to social diversity in its various neighbourhoods and promotes socially responsible inward growth.

### **Education**

The City of Zurich is directly responsible for compulsory education. It understands vocational education and training as an important socio-political mandate and contributes to the training of skilled workers by offering an attractive range of apprenticeships. It is continuing its dialog with the universities, which offer a wide range of study options and facilitate the transfer of in-depth knowledge.

# **Making space for a common future: attractive urban space**



**The population of the City of Zurich will grow significantly by 2040, becoming older and more diverse. This will not only boost demand for living and working spaces, but also for public spaces that can adapt to social change. Quality of life in the city should continue to develop despite growing mobility requirements. In the action area «attractive urban space», the City of Zurich is therefore prioritising the following:**

### **Urban space**

The public urban space in Zurich takes a variety of forms and offers a high amenity value that can be guaranteed even with an increase in the intensity of its use. The private urban space should fulfil the same high design standards. Planning proposals are required to incorporate the creation of new green and open spaces.

### **Security**

People in Zurich have a strong sense of security. This represents part of their quality of life and is to be maintained even as the city grows. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. With its emergency services, the city protects the population and prepares for potential crises and disasters. Measures are taken to combat crime in the digital space.

### **Mobility**

Efficient, climate-neutral mobility is geared towards the needs of both people and local businesses. Walking, cycling and public transport together form the pillars of urban mobility. Motorised private transport is being reduced to an acceptable level. In addition to passenger transport, the city supports efficient freight and logistics transport.

# **Shaping the common future: successful coexistence**



**The increasing diversity of the population is both an opportunity and a challenge for the cohesion of society. Zurich is open, liberal and caring, is committed to social stability and opposes isolationist tendencies. The city has therefore set the following priorities in the action area «successful coexistence»:**

### **Participation**

Coexistence is becoming increasingly important in an ever more heterogeneous population. The harmonious coexistence of people with different gender, family or lifestyle orientations is a key component of quality of life. The City of Zurich offers a wide range of cultural, play, sports, leisure and recreational activities. Voluntary engagement contributes to social cohesion.

### **Involvement**

The involvement of diverse population groups in social and political processes is a positive thing and strengthens social cohesion, education, culture and economic development. The City of Zurich encourages the inclusion of people with and without a migration background through appropriate programmes.

# **Working together at the service of the future: efficient city**



**The high quality of municipal offerings and services is just as important for the population as it is for business. Given current demographic trends, there is competition for skilled labour across all areas of expertise. The City of Zurich has therefore set the following priorities in the action area «efficient city»:**

#### **Offerings and services focus on users**

The City of Zurich regularly reviews and improves its offerings and services and adapts its organisational structures. It is also committed to global sustainable development and poverty reduction within the framework of international cooperation.

#### **Staff in the city administration**

Municipal employees are qualified and motivated and reflect the diversity of the population. The city administration is committed to efficient and modern application procedures. It guarantees optimum training and continuous professional and personal development. Fair wages and good working conditions are other important elements for the city as an attractive employer.

#### **Stable public finances in the long term**

The financial policy serves the city's economic, social and environmental objectives. A long-term investment policy aims to ensure a balanced financial budget underpinned by a good equity base in the medium term. This safeguards the city's capacity to act and to provide offerings and services. To this end, the city takes a proactive approach to tackling financial policy challenges.

#### **Healthcare**

The City of Zurich – in cooperation with the canton – ensures the provision of medical, nursing and other healthcare services. Healthcare is accessible to everyone at the city hospital's four locations, as well as at health centres for the elderly and in the area of outpatient care.

#### **Supply of basic amenities**

The city maintains its roads and railways, public spaces, building stock, underground infrastructure, energy and water supply, waste disposal, wastewater treatment and drainage to the highest standards. Demographic, economic and technical developments are exploited to develop these infrastructures further. The provision of safe and efficient services is ensured by actively working towards an appropriate regulatory environment.

### **Digitalisation**

When it comes to digitalisation, the city takes the needs of the entire spectrum of users into account. The ongoing digitalisation of the city administration is being implemented in a disabled-friendly and barrier-free manner. Internal processes are consistently simplified as part of the digital transformation. The digitalisation projects within the administration promote collaboration and a culture of learning among staff.

### **Representation of interests**

As the centre of Switzerland's largest economic region, the city maintains a network of regional, cantonal, national and international relationships. To improve the representation of interests in a national context, collaboration with other cities is indispensable. The City of Zurich is strengthening dialogue and cooperation with the canton, companies and other partners in order to adequately represent the interests of the population and the economy. An active international relationship network makes it possible to collaborate on finding solutions to global challenges.

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