

Press release

City/urban district/rural transformation – key topic at BAU 2025

How do we shape the future of our living spaces?

17. July 2024

- Sustainable land use as a challenge for cities, urban districts and the countryside
- Portfolio transformation as a lever
- Affordable housing and new forms of living

Statistically speaking, around 56% of the world's population currently lives in cities, a figure that is set to rise to 70% by 2050. The resulting social, economic, and ecological challenges can already be felt today. The demands on space and its use are constantly increasing, leading to conflicts of objectives between the different sectors. Forward-looking planning is therefore essential in order to make cities, rural areas, and the areas in between fit for the future. BAU 2025, from January 13 to 17, 2025 in Munich, will show what answers already exist and where new approaches need to be developed.

Traditionally, urban and rural areas were defined by clear geographical and functional boundaries: cities as population, industrial, and service centers, and the countryside as an agricultural space. However, these boundaries are becoming increasingly blurred, and the challenges for the city, the countryside, and the space in between are becoming more and more similar: from demographic change and the necessary infrastructure and mobility to sustainable spatial planning and inward settlement development.

Spatial planning and spatial development

The tasks of spatial planning and spatial development are central to the sustainable design of our living spaces. They range from sustainable land use,

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avoiding land sealing through settlement development, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting social integration, to participatory planning processes in order to anchor the acceptance of measures in the population. An important component is the development of the "New Leipzig Charter" as a policy document of the National Urban Development Policy, which addresses innovative and sustainable solutions in city planning and urban district development in the three dimensions of a just, green, and productive city. After all, the digital transformation, and changing demands in terms of consumption and mobility require a new mixture of production, working, and living to create vibrant urban districts.

Portfolio transformation

Adapting and upgrading existing buildings is a key future task for the construction industry. It calls for intelligent concepts that enable flexible conversion and continued use in order to preserve the cultural identity and minimize further emissions. One example is converting former industrial sites into lively urban districts that integrate housing, commerce, trade, leisure, and culture while preserving the historical significance of the locations. The concept of inner development in rural areas also aims to revitalize and use existing buildings and unused areas within existing town centers instead of designating new building areas on the outskirts. In addition, innovative projects link public infrastructure and social services that not only promote the sustainable use of resources but also contribute to revitalizing town centers.

The ecological transformation of our cities, rural areas and neighborhoods is a genuine investment in the future. It not only leads to improved, climate-friendly living conditions, but also offers considerable economic added value for everyone involved. "The holistic view of building structures in a social context is a competence that architects, interior and landscape architects and urban planners rightly claim for themselves. Their work combines ecological, social, economic, functional and design aspects and supports the harmonization of individual interests with the common good. With this "KlimaKulturKompetenz", the guiding concept of the Bavarian Chamber of Architects, our members assume their responsibility and promote the ecological transformation in planning and (re)building," says Prof. Lydia Haack, President of the Bavarian Chamber of Architects.

Affordable housing

Affordable housing is critical for stabilizing local communities and the economy. The discrepancy between the creation of 400,000 apartments agreed in the coalition agreement and the decline in residential building permits for the past two years is a major challenge. However, there are also new strategies for innovative approaches. In locations with high settlement pressure, converting existing buildings of other types, such as office buildings or hospitals, can be an approach to creating affordable housing and linking it to the existing urban district through clever interventions. Another approach is to create new forms of living that focus on community and openness. These projects aim to explore new ways of living together and interacting through flexible and adaptable architecture. Expanding use beyond purely residential serves not only to revitalize and utilize existing structures, but also as a social meeting place that promotes community.

New formats and processes

Sustainable development in urban, spatial, and regional planning requires new processes, methods, and instruments so that it can respond quickly to current challenges and proactively shape future developments. In view of the rapid digitalization and technological progress of the last 20 years, dynamic processes must be continuously adapted and reviewed. That includes developing scenarios as well as innovative participation formats that promote new ways of co-design and acceptance. Best practices and scalable momentum will be presented at BAU 2025, as will the product and system innovations they require.

Click [here](#) for more information

About BAU

BAU, the world's leading trade fair for architecture, materials and systems, is the largest and most important event in the industry. Unique worldwide, BAU brings together the industry's market leaders in this multi-trade exhibition every two years and is regarded as an innovation driver and industry network. The range of exhibits is broken down according to building materials, products and topics. Everyone involved internationally in planning, constructing and designing buildings comes to BAU: architects, planners, investors, industry and trade representatives, tradespeople, and many more. As one of its USPs, BAU combines know-how from all sectors and trades at a high international level. The numerous events in the supporting program, including high-profile forums with experts from around the world, round out the trade fair program.

Messe München

As one of the world's leading trade fair organizers, Messe München presents the world of tomorrow at its more than 80 international trade fairs. These include eleven of the world's leading trade fairs such as bauma, BAU, IFAT, electronica, and ISPO. Its portfolio comprises trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, as well as for new technologies. Together with its subsidiaries, it organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the U.S. With a network of over 15 associated companies and almost 70 offices worldwide, Messe München is active in more than 130 countries. The more than 150 events held annually attract around 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors in Germany and abroad.