GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A QUALITY SPATIAL ENVIRONMENT

A quality spatial environment is a balanced aggregate of the artificial and natural environment, which includes both outdoor and indoor space. The planning and creation of a sustainable and integrated living environment (spatial design) includes planning and designing activities (incl. spatial planning, architecture, landscape architecture), construction activities and the spatial coordination of other space-related decisions (e.g. traffic and mobility possibilities, services, forest management, etc.), with the goal of improving the living environment for as many people as possible in the long term through spatial decisions. Well-considered spatial development choices, in other words informed spatial governance decisions are a prerequisite for high-quality spatial solutions. The following list includes the principles of a good solution, to be taken into account when making spatial decisions.

**Timeliness and relevance**

Good spatial solutions are **knowledge-based** and consider the currently available and most suitable best knowledge as well as develop new knowledge and skills. **Fostered spatial education and awareness** helps the society to better plan good spatial solutions. Spatial competence includes expertise and accountability when making and implementing decisions that impact spatial development. When making spatial decisions (incl. spatial planning), planners make sure that their methods are up-to-date and the developed spatial solutions can be adapted in the future, since they have a long-term impact on development of built environment.

**Practicality**

The basis for a good solution is the conformity of the space to the needs of the user and the recognition of various purposes. Single-use spaces are exceptional, good spatial solutions are based on the interaction of various uses and the needs of various space users. The solution needs to be well-suited for the intended purposes. In the case of interior space, good usability generally means a comfortable, appropriate division of space, placement of furniture, lighting conditions, and control of the indoor climate. The rooms and
areas are of a suitable size and logically related to each other. For instance, a residence is well-suited for living; a theatre is well-suited for preparing and giving performances; streets are suitable for both automotive and human traffic; and also provide an opportunity to spend time there. The purpose of a building or urban space may change over time, and therefore, both flexibility and practically are important.

**Adaptability**

Good solution can be adapted based on the specific needs of the client, as well as the social or economic situation. Altering spatial solutions is expensive. Therefore, a good solution is one that can be used for a new function after minor changes. Since the client, architect or local government cannot foretell the future, sustainability can basically be achieved at the cost of specialised functionality, by diversifying the possibilities for use.

**Economy and efficiency**

The solution uses economic resources sensibly and minimises the lifecycle costs of the structure, without making concessions in spatial quality. The costs of a spatial solution include expenditures related to planning, designing, construction, utilisation, maintenance, and demolition; as well as indirect costs that are necessary to ensure mobility, energy and food production, education, health care and defence, and many other related costs. The savings resulting from a spatial solution become evident when taking a cumulative view of as many cost groups as possible. The accurate and comprehensive planning of all the lifecycle processes must be conducted prior to construction in order to achieve the best spatial quality under economically reasonable conditions. The collaborative methods that support quality and efficiency are considered in the early stages of the space creation process. Good spatial solutions add economic value by creating more durable development projects of better quality, as well as favourable conditions for economic development.

**Climate and environmental friendliness**

Good spatial solutions take climate change into consideration. Good solutions are environmentally friendly, and view the natural environment as a valuable resource. They support maintaining, developing and amplifying the natural components of the spatial environment, as well as provide solutions for preservation and promotion of biodiversity. Among other things, wastelands are utilised for the produc-
tion of renewable energy, and are made into human-friendly landscapes, where there is room for both site-specific nature and people. In the context of a shrinking population, settlements are designed to be more compact.

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<th>Safety and Health</th>
<th>Good spatial solutions ensure healthy, safe and secure living environments, as well as promote healthy lifestyles.</th>
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<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Good spatial solutions are accessible and usable by all members of society throughout their lives. Good spatial solutions provide access in various ways to people of all sizes and ages and with varying mobility requirements. Good solutions are suitable for everyone; the division of spatial volumes and functions is clear and understandable. Good solutions support the use of public transportation and healthy environmentally friendly means of exercise. Good solutions provide <strong>sustainable living conditions</strong> and strengthen social resilience, by creating high-quality, available and accessible living space. The design of <strong>user-friendly</strong> spaces means considering the comfort and functional needs related to the use of the space, and solutions that, for instance, can be linked with various exercise opportunities, connecting roads, recreation areas, etc.</td>
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<td>Social cohesion</td>
<td>Good solutions develop common values. Good spatial solutions not only fulfil functional, technical and economic demands, but also connect people and promote social communication.</td>
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<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Good spatial designs support lively and mixed-use neighbourhoods and help prevent segregation. They create environments, using modern means, which, in addition to honouring the cultural legacy also create new cultural values and support biological diversity.</td>
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<td>Distinctiveness and the sense of place</td>
<td>Good spatial solutions create places which are specific and fit into the local context, and which have distinctive features that create a sense of place. Built environments require comprehensive, culture-centred approaches and humanist views on how we design the places in which we live, and the legacy that we leave behind.</td>
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**Heritage-friendly**

Good solutions consider the historical contexts, the nuances of the material and spiritual culture and utilises these as important resources and tools. Good spatial solutions support finding new uses for objects of heritage value.

**Aesthetics**

Architectural quality has an artistic dimension, in which spatial conformity, the perception of a suitable scale and sensitive use of material have a direct impact on our quality of life. Good spatial solutions provide beauty, inspiration, enjoyment and satisfaction for the vast majority of users. Aesthetics are achieved through sensitive design and skilled construction. From the perspective of society, the aesthetics of the public space is particularly important.