



Sustainable
URBAN FRINGES
SURF

Hamburg Reflection Report



S u b u r b i a P r o j e c t



1. In Hamburg and its region the following changes compared to the first SWOT can be observed

- a) In the field of “**Economic competitiveness**” Hamburg and its region are developing well despite the economic crisis in Europe. This economic strength leads to a higher demand of business real estates, as well as a growing population and a higher demand for housing. These additional demands could be a threat to the fringe areas, because the development pressure might endanger qualities like free and green spaces.
- On the other hand this growing demand for business and housing areas has highlighted that there might be a need to discuss more common solutions between the City of Hamburg and the surrounding municipalities to satisfy future requirements.
- Another opportunity is the growing interest in Germany in regional products like fruits, vegetables, flowers. This trend is supported by a network initiated by the City of Hamburg. Furthermore the International Gardening Exposition Hamburg 2013 will integrate aspects of regional product cycles into its work. It will on the one hand showcase cultural landscapes around Hamburg and their regional products within the exposition area, on the other hand there will be activities in the cultural landscapes developed by regional managements.
- b) Regarding “**Governance & identifying stakeholders**” the Hamburg Metropolitan Region has integrated the issue of urban rural cooperation in its new strategic scheme as one of its priorities. This might be an opportunity to highlight urban fringes issues as well. The development of cooperation between the City of Hamburg and its neighbouring counties is very diverse. In some parts of the fringe area new actors came up who are interested in exchange and cooperation and some first meetings have taken place. In other parts of the fringe area the interest in further cooperation is rather reluctant.
- c) In the field of “**Spatial Planning**” there is an ongoing discussion about a new regional map for the whole Hamburg Metropolitan Region which might in the future be developed to a new regional spatial concept, but the process is rather slow. There are some regional development concepts in the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein, along the motorways in the North of Hamburg, examining the future development possibilities of these areas. There is a certain chance that these concepts might lead to cross-border ideas between Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein.
- d) “**Accessibility (Social & physical) and Services**” The increasing number of commuters using public transport can be regarded as a major strength; this development is due to the growing cost of individual transport and better public transport connections. An opportunity is for negotiations to further improve the public transport infrastructure by

building a new commuter train track. The public financial crisis might be a threat to a fast realisation.

There have been discussions about the possibilities of pupils going to schools across the federal state borders, but it is unclear what the solution will look like.

There are some municipalities in the northern urban fringe of Hamburg facing severe financial problems. They might be forced by the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein to cut down their offers in infrastructure and services like sport and cultural facilities. This might threaten the attractiveness of these municipalities. On the other hand it might be a chance to search for common solutions for infrastructures and services.

- e) **“Role & value of green space”**. As described at “economic competitiveness” green spaces are under growing pressure due to the demand for more business and housing areas. On the other the awareness of the value of green spaces could be improved within the Regional Parks. The project on cultural landscapes (see also a.) might also help.

2. SURF Hamburg activities

The main aims of Hamburg’s activities in the SURF project are: Firstly to produce more knowledge about and to raise awareness of Hamburg’s urban fringe areas and topics related to them; and secondly to support the governance structure between the City of Hamburg and its neighbouring municipalities and counties to tackle common problems and use synergies. The following activities have been conducted to reach these aims:

A tool to raise awareness about the urban fringe area is a **colloquium series called “Approaches to Suburbia”**. The series offered presentations from scientists, experts, and practitioners from Hamburg and other regions. The colloquium brought together different views and opinions which made the series interesting for a variety of stakeholders.

The colloquium series became a kind of regular get together of persons who are interested in urban fringe / suburbia issues. After a first colloquium series in 2010/ 2011 a further series took place in spring 2012 and another one in autumn 2012 which might be combined with an international conference.

There is a dramatic lack of information about the urban fringe zone; this might be a reason for the lack of dialogue in the region and therefore limit the chance to identify common problems. Therefore **spatial analysis / monitoring** were and still are being conducted to offer information about statistical features, current developments as well as strategies and activities. The result will be a collection and analysis of plans, policies, and programs that directly or indirectly are concerning the urban fringe. As a product of this analysis a number of maps will visualise developments in Hamburg’s urban fringe areas.

A means to support the governance building process are the so-called **intermunicipal neighborhood forums**. They will support to improve

respectively start the cross border dialogue between the City of Hamburg, its city-districts and the neighbouring counties and municipalities, as well as cross level dialogues between Federal State and municipal level. In some parts of the urban fringe area, first preparatory or unofficial meetings have already taken place. Official intermunicipal neighborhood forums will take place in some parts of the fringe area this year.

Another SURF activity to support the initiation of these forums is thematic regional workshops. These regional workshops make use of the results of the spatial analysis and focus on a certain part of the fringe area. They aim to start a communication process in order to identify common issues that might be later discussed in the intermunicipal forum.

3. Eye openers and biggest results

The peer visits have been important eye openers; the visit of the UK and Dutch partners to the urban fringe area of Pinneberg has brought some good ideas into our process. It has shown that the region could make a lot more use of its tree nursery heritage. These issues can only be faced by an intermunicipal cooperation in the county of Pinneberg and cross border cooperation together with the City of Hamburg. The peer visit to Enschede has shown some possibilities how to better connect activities in the fringe area; this might be transferred to parts of Hamburg's fringe area, especially to the regional parks.

The SURF conference and peer visit in Sweden have shown that Gothenburg region has agreed to divide and limit future growth between several municipalities. This is an interesting example of a voluntary agreement although it might not be easily transferred.

The biggest results in the Hamburg region are the growing interest in urban fringe / suburban topics with the help of the colloquium series, workshops and a new homepage section and the initiation of the first intermunicipal neighbourhood forums.