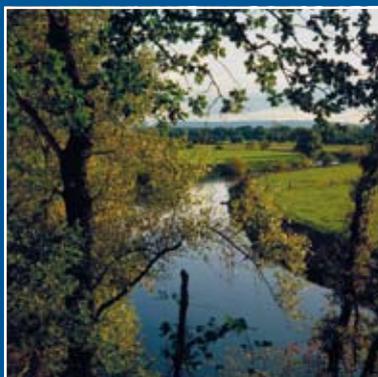


PAPERS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Region Hannover



Regional planning in the Hannover Region

No. 109b



Region Hannover

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Regional planning in the Hannover Region goes back to the early sixties of the last century. Since 1963, the year when the Verband Großraum Hannover association of local authorities was established, devising vision statements and setting objectives for the Region's development has always been of considerable political importance.

The current Regional Plan, in force since 2005, takes up and develops the concerns of its predecessor: settlement development at locations along light and heavy rail routes, retaining open and recreational space close to housing, and nature- and landscape conservation. It also, however, addresses current challenges such as development control over rural settlements for local requirements, shaping the development of large-scale retail sites, the impact of wind power on the landscape and precautionary flood protection. The new 2005 Regional Plan provides the Region Hannover authority with a planning instrument and the associated legal framework and strategic orientation for the next ten years.

In practice, regional planning is no more nor less than harmonising the social and economic demands on the land with its ecological functions. It is, however, plain that the sum of individual or partial improvements will not necessarily be the best possible option for the region as a whole. Therefore the task of regional planning is also to reach an understanding with the most diverse stakeholders on regional objectives and their implementation. This also means analysing the continual changes in our economy and society, and taking their effects and spatial consequences into account – for instance in infrastructure planning – and acting upon them.

While it will never be possible to plan the future, it is possible to shape it! Nobody can see into the future, but regional planning has a great deal of information to work with and over forty years of experience that it can use in averting the threat of inappropriate development and making an active contribution to the future of the Hannover Region.

This booklet aims to set out the tasks, objectives and instruments of our work, and to awaken your interest in this important responsibility of the Region Hannover authority.



Hauke Jagau
President of the Region Hannover



Prof. Dr. Axel Priebs
Vice Executive President

The Hannover Region

21 Communities



Population

City of Hannover	518,069	Lehrte	43,624
Barsinghausen	34,084	Neustadt	45,485
Burgdorf	30,002	Pattensen	13,946
Burgwedel.....	20,384	Ronnenberg	23,204
Garbsen	62,554	Seelze.....	33,000
Gehrden	14,661	Sehnde	22,830
Hemmingen	18,540	Springe	29,197
Isernhagen	22,933	Wennigsen	14,125
Laatzen.....	40,131	Wunstorf.....	41,586
Langenhagen	51,672	Hannover Region	1,130,039

(Figures, from Landesbetrieb für Statistik und Kommunikationstechnologie Niedersachsen LSKN, 2007)

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The Hannover Region

Facts and Figures

The Region Hannover authority

On 1 November 2001 Region Hannover was established, a new level of regional government and administration covering the City of Hannover, federal state capital of Niedersachsen and the twenty towns and local authorities of the former County of Hannover (Landkreis). Most local government responsibilities that transcend town and city borders are now met by Region Hannover. This is an innovative response to the challenges presented by the multiple and diverse relationships between the communities that comprise a major city and its hinterland. The democratic basis of Region Hannover's authority comes from direct elections of 84 Assembly members and the President, who are together responsible for shaping regional policy.

Responsibilities

Region Hannover assumed statutory responsibilities that had until then been met by the County and the Kommunalverband Großraum Hannover local government association, along with some from Hannover City Council and the Hannover District Authority (Bezirksregierung). This regional government reform, unique in the Federal Republic of Germany, is the logical culmination of almost four decades of successful inter-municipal cooperation on important regional tasks and a readiness to work for political consensus.

The Region Hannover statute passed by the Niedersachsen State Parliament created the foundation for regional policy-making by a single body. Region Hannover is, among other things, the competent body for regional planning, environmental protection, regional economic and employment promotion, local public transport, waste management, health services, and social and youth welfare. This booklet describes the regional planning responsibilities of Region Hannover.



People in Hannover

Population and Area

The Hannover Region comprises the state capital, Hannover, and its twenty surrounding urban and rural authorities. It extends for about 60 km from east to west and 55 km north to south; except for the southeast, most of the Region lies within a 25-km radius of Hannover city centre.

Around 1.1 million people live within its 2,290 km²: around 518,000 of them at the centre, the City of Hannover, and 612,000 in the surrounding communities (source: Landesbetrieb für Statistik und Kommunikationstechnologie Niedersachsen LSKN, 2007).



Pedestrian zone in Neustadt am Rübenberge

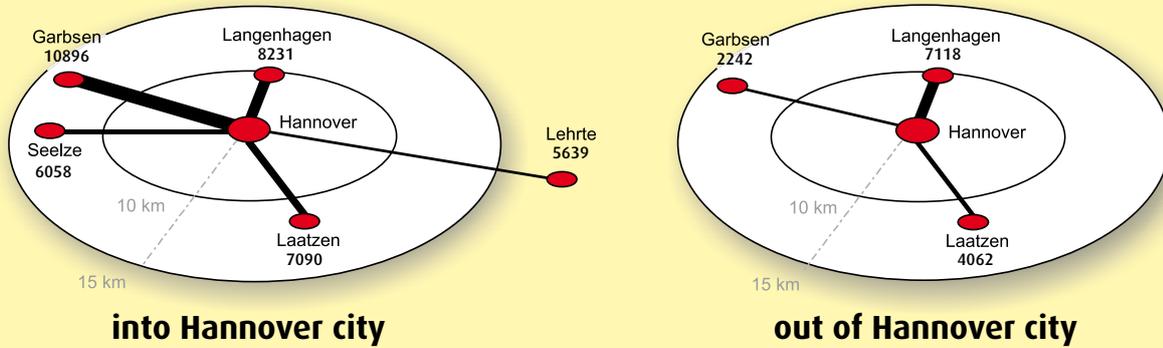


High speed rail route to Hannover

Compared to other city/region constellations, both the central metropolis and the region as a whole are of average size and population density (493 inhabitants per km²). The population distribution can be seen on the map.

Commuters

(in occupations covered by social insurance law) 2007

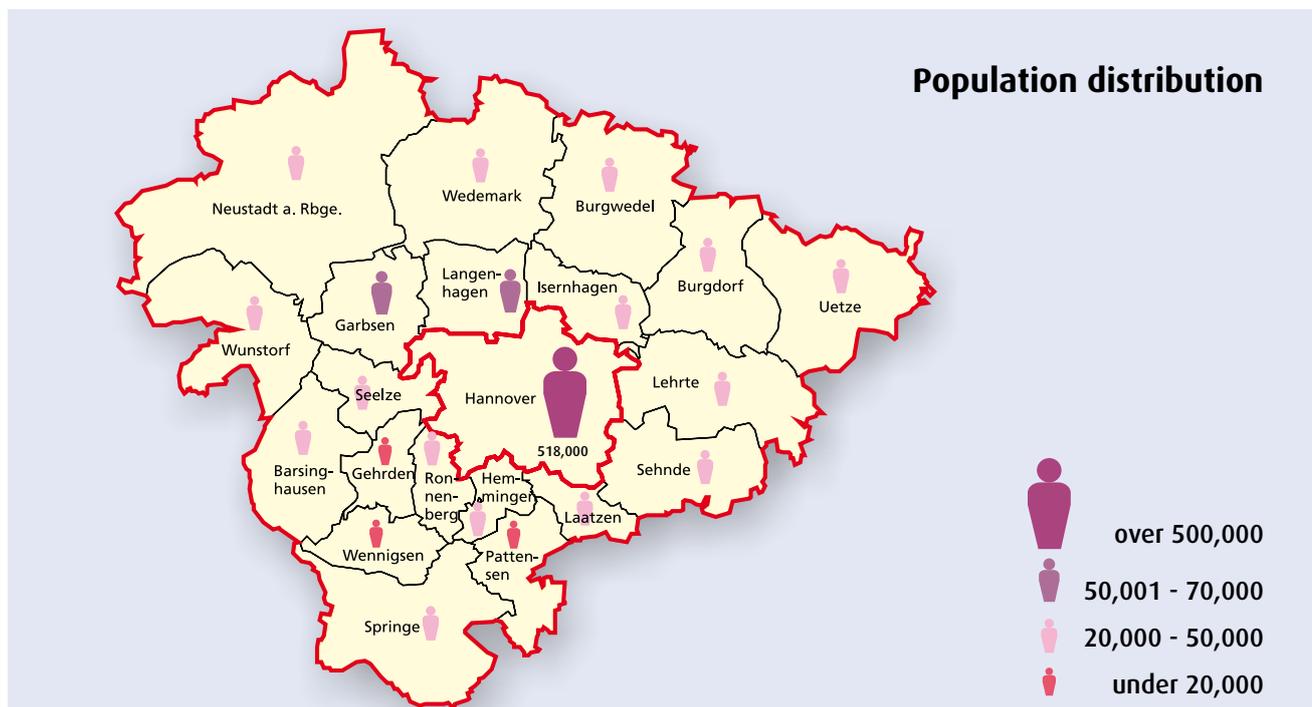


Employment and Commuting

Within Niedersachsen, because of its political, economic and cultural importance the Hannover Region fulfils an exceptional function. Home to 14% of the state's population, it generates over 25% of its gross domestic product. There were 418,000 employees paying national insurance contributions in the region in 2007, 46% of them women. Almost two-thirds of these jobs are concentrated in the City of Hannover. The close spatial-functional relationship with the surrounding area is reflected in the number of commuters: around 100,000 people travel to work from outside the Region to one of its 21 towns, while almost 40,000 of the Region's inhabitants commute in the opposite direction.

Transport Advantages

German unification and opening the borders to Eastern Europe have extended transport connections dramatically. Today the Hannover Region is repositioned at a central location in Germany and Europe, and constitutes an important transport hub at the intersection of major north-south and east-west road, rail and air transport axes. Its direct connection to German and European inland waterways via the Mittellandkanal through the heart of the region completes its excellent transport infrastructure.



Regional planning in the Hannover Region

Shaping spatial processes

Proactive design and planning for future needs by using the instruments of spatial planning has a long tradition in the Hannover Region; as far back as 1963 the Verband Großraum Hannover (Greater Hannover local government association) was founded to promote development of the association's members through unified planning and devising a common plan for the area.

Today the main concerns of regional planning are to guide and shape spatial development processes in accordance with a vision statement and to resolve conflicts on land use. At the forefront is the issue of how the very diverse demands on land can be harmonised and coordinated. Where, for instance, should new housing developments or transport routes be built? Where does nature conservation have overriding priority? In a densely populated region, especially, it is particularly important to protect and secure the basic natural resources i.e., water, soil and air, long-term as the essential needs of human beings, flora and fauna. Conversely, there has always been and will continue to be a demand for residential building land or locations for large-scale retail facilities. This is the force field within which political decisions have to be made on the basis of solid professional knowledge, determining the use to which land is put.

Within the Federal German spatial planning system, the regional level functions as the interface between state-wide planning policy and practice and municipal land-use plans (see chart).

Planning competences in Germany as exemplified in Niedersachsen

Planning authority	Type of plan	Statutory basis
Federal government	Concepts and Strategies of Spatial Development in Germany (from 2006)	Federal Spatial Planning Act (ROG)
State government: Niedersachsen Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Consumer Protection and Spatial Development	Niedersachsen Spatial Planning Programme	Niedersachsen Spatial Planning Act (NROG)
Regional authority e.g., Region Hannover, Greater Braunschweig local government association, counties	Regional Plan	Niedersachsen Spatial Planning Act (NROG)
Local authority e.g., Garbsen	Preparatory and legally-binding Land-use plans	Federal Building Code (BauGB)

Tasks of regional planning

The main regional planning tasks in the Hannover Region are:

- Devising and elaborating the Regional Plan (Regionales Raumordnungsprogramm, RROP)
- Advice to municipalities within the region responsible for land-use planning
- Comment on the regional planning aspects of land-use plans
- Managing regional planning procedures
- Application of other regional planning instruments e.g., procedures to deviate from planning objectives
- Ongoing spatial monitoring and estimation of future developments
- Devising regional planning concepts
- Mediation in cases of conflict
- Cooperation with neighbouring regional planning authorities, the EXPO Region City Network and the Hannover – Braunschweig – Göttingen – Wolfsburg Metropolitan Region.

In what follows, some of the main instruments and activities of regional planning in the Hannover Region are described.

Regional vision statement

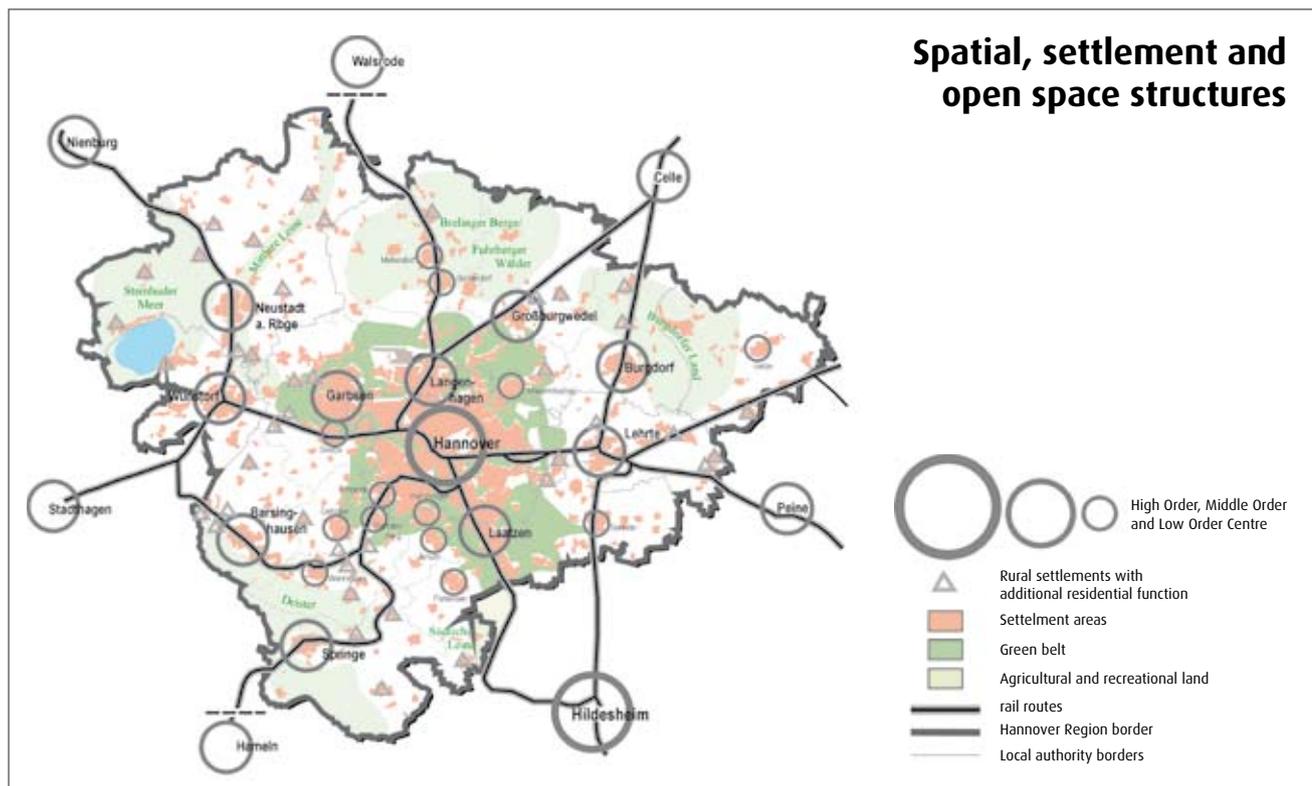
Forward-looking proactive spatial development and design needs a regional policy vision, and so the 2005 Regional Spatial Strategy is subordinated to a general spatial mission statement for the Hannover Region. Although the mission statement is not legally binding, it provides a regional policy framework for orientation and action. From this superordinate vision statement, on the one hand practical objectives for spatial development can be derived, and on the other hand regional planning objectives or decisions can be assessed on whether they serve the realisation of the overall vision.

The determinant conditions of spatial development are shaped by demographic change, economic factors and continuing housing demand. This means, among other things, that

- the Hannover Region is already, today, confronted with dramatic demographic changes. While the number of children, young people and younger adults is sinking the number of elderly people continues to rise. This has implications for settlement development, the housing and employment markets and especially for the provision and take-up of various public amenities and services such as kindergartens, schools and public libraries, along with local retail facilities.
- multiple factors will determine further changes in the regional economic structure. The regional business location qualities and the Region's specific potential, such as its excellent infrastructure, education and scientific institutions and a range of suitable sites, are of growing importance. Regional planning will continue to be in demand for its development, regulatory and conflict resolution competences.
- urbanisation processes and demand for land will not lessen. Despite almost stagnant population development within the Region, all the signs are that demand for housing and thus the danger of further sprawling development will continue unabated.

In the light of these challenges, the following objectives and tasks are of preeminent importance:

- Sustainable spatial development. This vision, which is also important for the Hannover Region, means that economic demands on the land should be harmonised with its social, cultural and ecological functions.
- Integrative settlement and transport development. 'Housing and transport are one and the same issue!' – For four decades now, this principle has set a crucial orientation framework for spatial development in the Hannover Region. The objective is to create a 'region of short distances'.
- Securing and enhancing the natural resources to support life. One crucial responsibility of regional development policy is to maintain and improve environmental quality in the Region through protecting and developing natural resources and securing and enhancing open space and countryside.
- Building up the Hannover – Braunschweig – Göttingen – Wolfsburg Metropolitan Region. This inter-regional cooperation, which has been in place for decades, should be strengthened and improved. Establishing a Metropolitan Region is intended to enhance the competitiveness and innovation capacities of the Region.



Instruments of regional planning

The Regional Plan

Guidelines for the development of our region

In Niedersachsen the Regional Plan (in German: Regionales Raumordnungsprogramm, RROP) is the principle instrument for spatial regulation and regional planning. This superordinate plan sets out a medium- to long-term development vision for the Hannover Region. From spatial and settlement structure through protection of the natural bases of life, business and infrastructure, transport and recreation to securing natural mineral resources, to mention just a few concerns, the many and frequently conflicting claims on the use of the land must be reconciled.

How the Regional Plan is devised

In devising the Regional Plan, specific aims of state planning policy as set out in the Niedersachsen Spatial Planning Programme are adopted or, where necessary, more closely defined for this planning area. Supplementary regional objectives can also be set out in the Regional Plan.

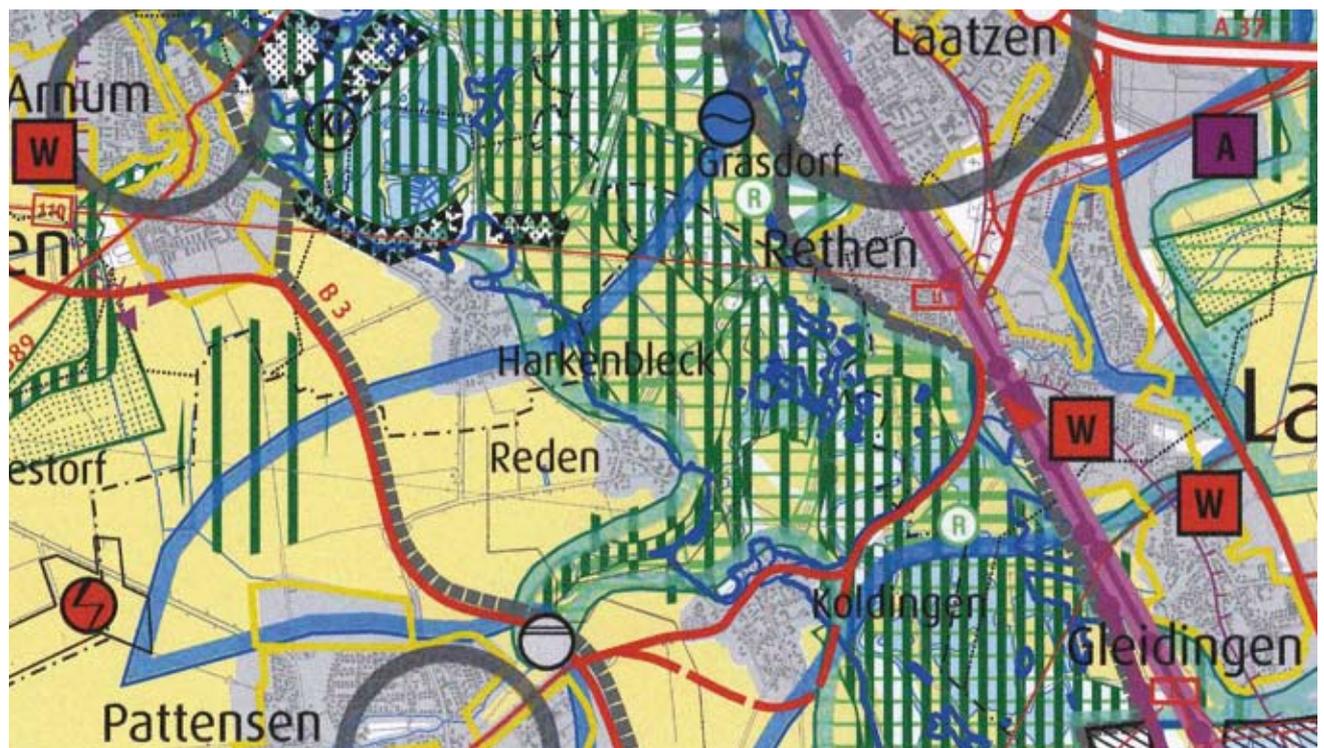
The Regional Plan is devised independently by Region Hannover as the competent regional planning authority, and drawn up through a formal procedure. After the public consultation process is concluded, the Regional Plan is debated and enacted as a statute by the Regional Assembly.

The Federal Spatial Planning Act (ROG) and the Niedersachsen Spatial Planning Act (NROG) regulate how this happens, who must be consulted, and how binding the Regional Plan provisions are.

What a Regional Plan regulates

The Regional Plan for the Hannover Region comprises all the planning and land-use policies that are significant for the region's development; especially, the large-scale land uses that must be secured in the long term such as recreation and agriculture are designated as 'reserved areas' (Vorbehaltsgebiete), where precautionary conservation principles are paramount. Wherever other planning or use projects are proposed, the designated use must be taken into account.

For particularly important or sensitive uses such as settlement development, nature, passenger airports and wind parks, 'priority areas' or 'priority locations' are designated. This classification is associated with a higher degree of protection, pre-eminence over other uses. These designations have the quality of overriding objectives in the Regional Plan and must be observed by the various planning authorities and especially by local authorities. The Regional Plan is the linking instrument between state spatial planning and municipal land-use planning.



Section of the 2005 Regional Plan (not to scale)

Further instruments and procedures of state an regional planning

Comment on land-use plans

The Regional Plan defines the compulsory framework for municipal land-use and development plans/allocation plans. In order that the provisions of the Regional Plan are actually observed by land-use planning, § 1 para. 4 of the Federal Building Code insists on conformity. In practice this means that Region Hannover, in its capacity as lower state planning authority, comments on every planning procedure, whether land-use or development.

Deviation Procedure

In specific cases it can occur that a detail of a necessary or desirable planning measure contradicts a spatial planning objective as set out in the Regional Plan. Within the framework of a planning deviation procedure under the Niedersachsen Spatial Planning Act (Niedersächsisches Raumordnungsgesetz, NROG) Region Hannover can then determine whether this deviation from a spatial planning objective can be approved. This is, however, only possible if the deviation is justifiable on spatial planning grounds and the essential planning principles are not affected. Otherwise, the Regional Plan would have to be amended in a formal procedure or the proposed planning and/or project would be refused permission.

Prohibition of plans that controvert spatial planning regulations

An instrument that is seldom applied in practice and often called the 'last resort of spatial planning' is prohibition, under the Niedersachsen Spatial Planning Act, of planning and development that goes against the Regional Plan. In disputed cases Region Hannover as the lower planning authority within its area could prohibit a significant planning or development proposal to ensure that overriding regional planning aims are adhered to. During procedures to set up or amend the Regional Plan, for example, it can avert the

problem that proposals at land-use level (such as natural mineral extraction or erecting wind turbines) go against the spatial aims that are being drawn up. Generally, whenever planning proposals deviate from regional policy it is possible to find consensual and workable solutions in discussions with the respective planning authorities.

Spatial planning procedures

What are known as 'spatially significant planning and development measures' whose consequences transcend municipal borders must, as a rule, be coordinated and harmonised with the aims, principles and other requirements of spatial planning. For this, Region Hannover as the lower state planning authority initiates a regional planning procedure in good time, in which among other factors the environmental compatibility of a project with regard to its planning stage is evaluated. The Federal Spatial Planning Ordinance (Raumordnungsverordnung des Bundes, RoV) regulates in which cases this formal instrument should be applied. Spatial planning procedures have been instituted in the Hannover Region for major natural mineral extraction projects, bypasses, golf courses and pipeline construction, or for major extensions to a furniture warehouse.

Spatial planning contracts

Somewhere between the 'formal' and 'informal' instruments (see diagram) lies the 'spatial planning contract'. Such a contractual arrangement usually comes about through cooperation between a regional planning authority and one or more local authorities and a property developer, with the intention of implementing regional planning objectives and a specific project. Under Region Hannover's regional planning procedures, the following planning contracts have been concluded: relocation of and an option for extensions to a Do-it-yourself – superstore, and control the development of a rural settlement for local requirements.

Regional planning instruments in the Hannover Region

Formal (statutory) instruments

- Regional Plan (binding objectives)
- Comment on municipal land-use plans and technical planning
- Procedure for measures deviating from planning objectives
- Prohibition orders
- Spatial planning procedures

Informal instruments

- Advice and persuasion
- Support for feasibility studies
- Development concepts
- Mediation on controversial issues and problems
- Ongoing spatial monitoring

Regionalplanning contracts

Principle themes of the Regional Plan

Settlement development

A region of short distances

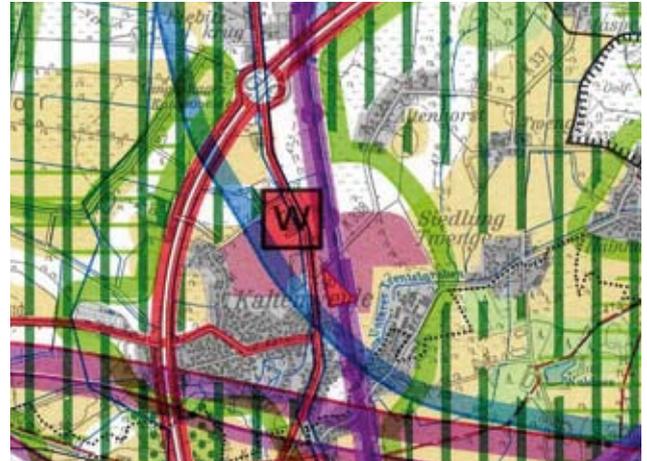
Guiding the development of settlements is one of the crucial tasks of regional planning in the Hannover Region. 'Coordinating settlement and transport' is a principle from the earliest days of planning for the Hannover Region, already cited, is as true today as ever. New residential areas should be built where an attractive public transport service is available or can be provided; these preconditions are best met by settlement areas close to a tram stop or local rail station. Settlements must be planned so that kindergartens, schools, doctors, shops and other public and private amenities are available, and these infrastructure assets are concentrated at 'central places'. One overriding regional planning objective is that infrastructure and utilities are maintained long-term and are easy to reach. Short distances to as many necessary everyday facilities as possible make it easier, especially for the growing numbers of elderly, to lead an active life. This also applies to families with children, as a 'region of short distances' helps people combine family and employment, and improves everyone's quality of life.

Guiding settlement development

Places that are particularly suitable for residential and commercial development because of their location and the way they fulfil the infrastructure requirements are designated and secured as 'priority settlement areas' in the Regional Plan. In guiding settlement development it is also important to avert the many and varied negative effects on the environment and people that would be caused by disorderly regional development, known as urban sprawl.

This requires a workable regional framework concept for the future development of the many smaller settlements around the larger towns and rural centres in the Hannover Region, many of which have retained their village character. The Regional Plan distinguishes between rural residential locations that can be developed – the 'rurally structured settlements with additional housing function' and those villages whose growth is to be limited to 'appropriate internal development' (Eigenentwicklung). The Regional Plan formula states that smaller rural communities (around 150 of them in the Hannover region) may grow by between 5 and 7 percent (based on the existing settlement) over 10 years. More extensive development is permitted in 42 suburbs or villages in the region. Because of their transport connections (access to rail services, good local public transport) and infrastructure amenities (schools, local retail facilities) in these rural settlements, growth above 7% is permitted.

From Planning to implementation



Regional planning designation of the Weiherfeld development from the 1996 Regional Plan



Langenhagen town council framework plan for Weiherfeld, 1998



Implementation: aerial view of Weiherfeld in 2005

Retail development

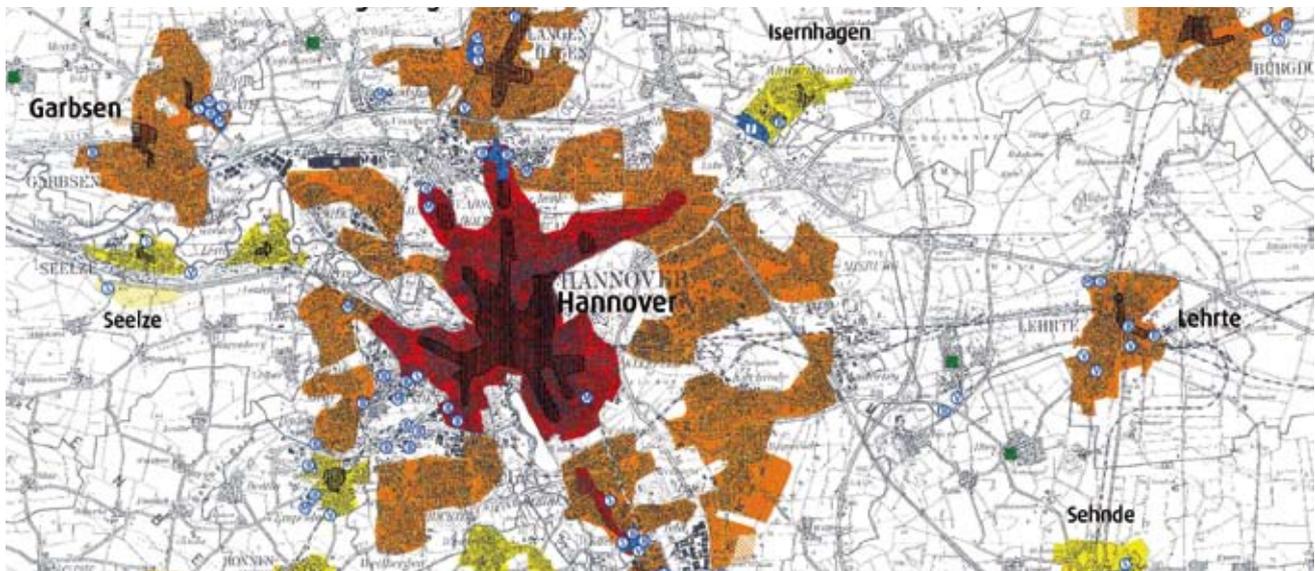
Greenfield or downtown?

Vibrant town centres are where public life comes together; this is where people shop, stroll, meet up, eat and drink. Department stores, specialist shops and boutiques are what makes a town centre attractive – but traditional shopping centres are being drained of their lifeblood as more and more retail centres spring up at locations away from town and district centres, where parking is easy and businesses needing large areas are viable. The growth of such specialist outlets and retail superstores means loss of income and a steadily sinking share of the market in town centre shops, leading to closures and empty shops in central locations, and worse local provision.

Regional retail concept

Regional planning aims to provide town centres and city district shopping streets with good prospects for develop-

ment, and to limit the location options for large-scale retail outlets. The regional retail concept embodied in the Hannover Region Regional Plan contains regulations to prevent random growth of retail facilities on urban margins or greenfield sites. New outlet stores are restricted to a few clearly defined locations and the proportion of wares that are traditionally offered in town centre shops (clothing, shoes, gifts, books etc.) is limited. To achieve this, the planning area is subdivided into various development zones according to different retail functions (see map). In this way the location of a proposed large retail outlet can be assessed almost at a glance – as a ‘positive area’ (central urban location or extension – colour coded – or designated large retail outlet location) or a prohibited zone (white areas). The statutory obligation to abide by these criteria and conflict mediation are central elements of the retail concept.



Part of the regional retail concept: area and location categories



Lister Meile
pedestrian zone in Hannover



Supermarket in Wennigsen
town centre



Retail outlet development
in Altwarmbüchen

Principle themes of the Regional Plan

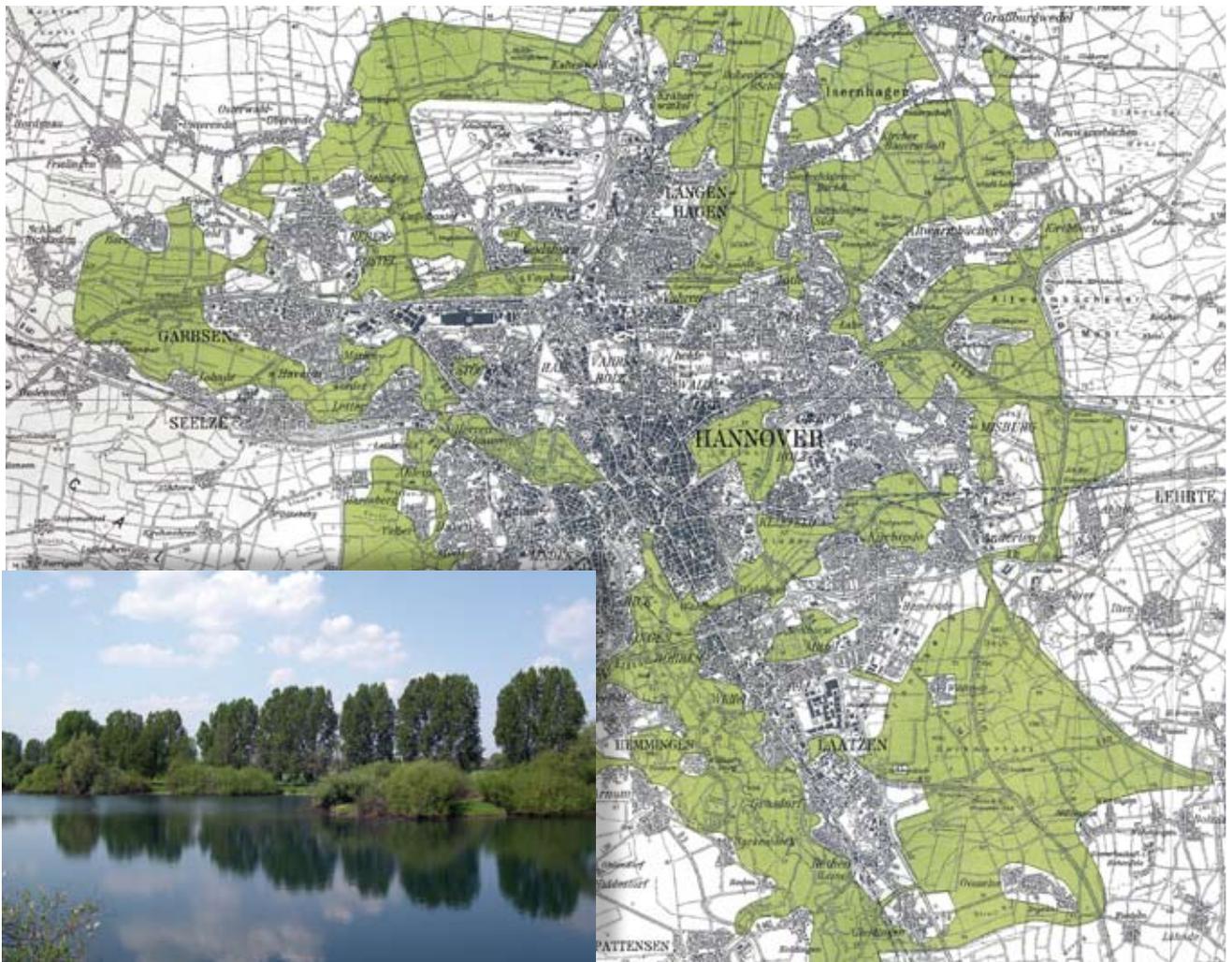
Open space conservation and enhancement

Close-to-home open spaces are an important aspect of the quality of life and the environment in the Hannover Region. However, despite all the efforts and successes in limiting land-take, open spaces are still being consumed by housing estates, commercial developments, transport, leisure and infrastructure amenities even though it is precisely these undeveloped open spaces that provide the ecological counterbalance to development, fulfil important nature and landscape conservation functions, and offer recreational space.

On the borders between the City of Hannover and its neighbouring towns and communities, the 'open countryside' is a shrinking resource that must be protected. This was realised by regional planners early on, and the 1990 Regional Plan embodied open space conservation as a binding obligation of regional planning. The 'priority areas for open space functions' designated in the present Regional Plan may not be degraded in their ecological and social quality by built

structures or other uses. Statutory protection of regionally important open spaces at regional planning level is a crucial prerequisite for retaining and enhancing them long-term as diverse flora and fauna habitats and attractive recreational areas. This is supported by nature conservation measures on the one hand and a commitment to local recreation programmes such as the 'Green Ring' on the other. This cycle-way system with information points, artistic features and opportunities for activities along the way makes a strong contribution to creating a sense of regional identity.

The extensive rural and recreational areas in the Hannover Region, such as the Deister wooded hills, Steinhuder Meer inland sea, Fuhrberg woods and the rolling hills of Burgdorfer Land, are protected in the Regional Plan by additional planning designations (e.g., as reserved recreation areas); see 'Local recreation', page 14.



Koldinger lakes

Regional open spaces system in the Hannover Region

Nature and environmental conservation

The Hannover Region is remarkable for its diverse countryside and precious animal and plant habitats. Particularly important are the areas covered by the 'NATURA 2000' European ecological protection system, above all Steinhuder Meer inland sea, the Leine river valley and the high moorland of the north Hanoverian Moorgeest. Aiming to establish a chain of biotopes, these habitats are linked through designation of 'landscape structure enhancement areas'.

The Regional Plan also designates protected or precious landscapes by reason of their diversity, uniqueness and beauty as 'reserved areas for nature and landscape' and protected or precious species and biotope conservation areas as 'priority areas for nature and landscape'. Under this conservation system, around 44% of land in the region is designated as landscape conservation area and around 3.5% as nature conservation area.

Regional planning also pursues sustainable spatial development to harmonise the social and economic demands on the land with its ecological functions. By following this principle, it is intended to conserve and enhance the high environmental quality of the Hannover Region.

Flood protection

The rivers in the Region should be allowed more space – serious floods in recent years have made it plain that preventive flood protection demands more attention at regional planning level. The Regional Plan designates the natural flood plain of the River Leine and, in future, other rivers, as 'priority flood protection areas' and the settlements affected by flooding as 'precautionary flood protection areas'. In the priority areas further development is prohibited, while in the precautionary areas flood protection measures must be implemented. At the same time land uses that would help with floodwater retention must be preserved and/or promoted.



Flood protection map in the 2005 Regional Plan



Altwarmbüchen Lake



2002 bird of the year – the sparrow



Nature conservation area at Steinhuder Meer inland sea



Flooding from the River Leine

Principle themes of the Regional Plan

Local recreation

Recreation priorities

In a 'region of short distances' recreational amenities close to home are also an important concern of regional planning. This was recognised over 40 years ago in the Hannover Region and a start was made on planning and improving the large, and above all regionally significant, recreational areas such as Steinhuder Meer inland sea, the southern Leine river valley and the Deister woodland hills.

Since the 1980s close-to-home recreational spaces such as Altwarmbüchen Lake, the Wietze river valley, Benther Berg woodland hills and the middle Leine valley have been supported and enhanced. One highlight in the history of local recreation planning was the EXPO 2000 World Exposition in Hannover; the impetus generated by this event created several projects both in the City of Hannover and the Region that made long-lasting improvements to their recreational infrastructure quality. The Kronsberg countryside to the southwest of Hannover, close to the EXPO and trade fair grounds, was reshaped as a recreational landscape, and long-distance links to other recreational areas were also



Altwarmbüchen Lake

created. Furthermore, the attractiveness of Steinhuder Meer Nature Park was markedly improved with important nature conservation, recreation and tourism projects.

The entire local recreation system in the Region with its priorities and spatial designation in the form of reserved and priority areas is set by the Region Hannover's 2005 Regional Plan. Among the 'priority areas for recreation', which are further distinguished as areas for quiet recreation and areas which are heavily used, are precisely those spaces that have been enhanced to a clear plan. Additionally, various spaces in an urban and rural context – sports grounds, 'Kleingärten' (allotment gardens) and green open space – are designated as 'reserved areas for recreation'.

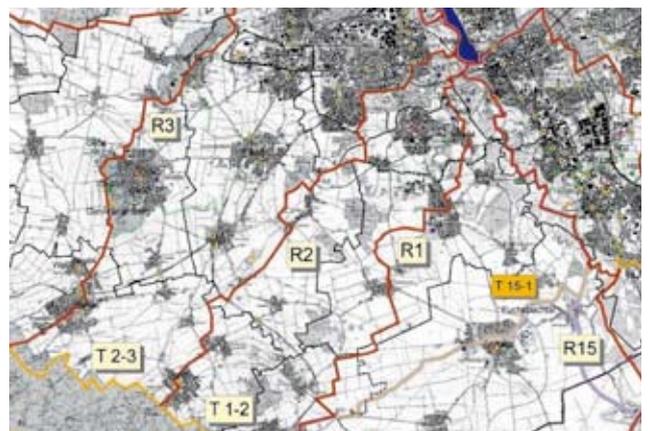
Cycling region

Leisure cycling has become more and more popular in recent years, and this trend coincides with the objectives of sustainable local recreation planning. To promote local recreation and cycling tourism, between 2003 and 2005 Region Hannover worked closely with its 21 member local authorities to develop a regional cycleway network comprising some 1,000 km of cycleways. Under the 'FAHRRADREGION' brand, the network is currently being signposted in collaboration with the local authorities.

The starting (or finishing) point of the FAHRRADREGION network is the northern shore of Maschsee Lake near the centre of Hannover, from where 15 routes radiate into the surrounding communities and are linked by the 'RegionsRing' orbital cycleway. The routes take cyclists through the North German Plain and – with an easy gradient – to the foothills of the Central German Uplands. This network also includes the very popular 'Green Ring' with its information points, works of art and opportunities for activities along the way.



Cycling in the Hannover Region



Part of the FAHRRADREGION cycleway network

Mineral extraction

Mineral resources

The Hannover Region's economy is dependent on supplies of natural minerals extracted close to where they are needed. There are large gravel reserves in the southern Leine river valley, in the Wietze river valley and around the Brelinger Berge hills, and sand/gravel mix is to be found across the north of the Hannover Region. To the east of Hannover in Misburg and Anderten, around Sehnde and Höver and to the south of Wunstorf are reserves of limestone marl. The peat industry is exploiting reserves in the Totes Moor, and potassium salts are mined around Steinhuder Meer.

Controlling mineral extraction

Planning has a special role in reconciling the demands of natural minerals with those of competing spatial and use claims, as reserves can only be exploited in situ. It is the task of regional planning to designate sufficient 'priority areas' for short- to medium-term extraction, following the requirements of state and regional planning on the basis of mineral resources maps compiled from geological surveys, and to secure long-term extraction areas (reserved areas). In this, the concerns of settlement development and environmental and nature protection must be particularly addressed. For the southern Leine river valley and the Wietze river valley

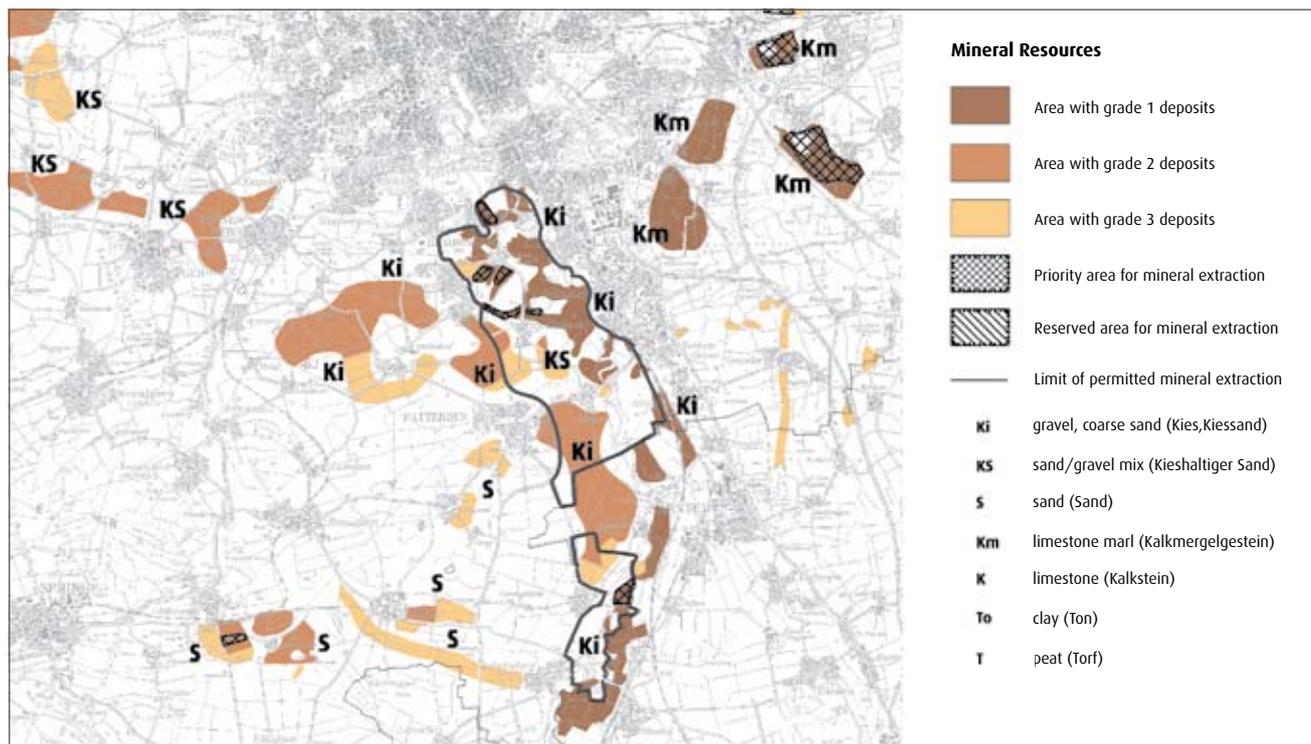
reference is made to a general extraction plan devised in consultation with local authorities, public soil research bodies and extraction industry representatives.

Post-extraction uses

When a priority area for natural mineral extraction is designated, the desired post-use is also generally defined. If a gravel pit floods naturally, for example, the resulting lake can serve the purpose(s) of recreational and/or nature conservation through biotope development.



Gravel extraction at Brelinger Berg



Section of the 2005 Regional Plan, mineral resources

Principle themes of the Regional Plan

Wind power

Wind power use – balancing climate and landscape protection

Wind power protects the climate, and the German Renewable Energy Sources Act and Federal Building Code (Baugesetzbuch) promote its expansion. The task of regional planning is to designate suitable locations for wind power plants and to prevent wind power development at inappropriate locations, thus concentrating wind farms at specific sites and preventing sprawling wind turbine blight over large areas of countryside.

Designating locations for wind turbines happens within the framework of the overall spatial plan: suitable sites are identified by working from a catalogue of exclusion criteria such as nature conservation areas and sufficient distance from settlements and woodland. Further consideration of effects on the landscape's appearance and economic factors such as wind probability and grid connection leads to the final designation of possible sites.

Regulation of wind power

The 2005 Regional Plan designates more than 40 'priority sites for wind power', which today have a total generating potential of over 300 MW. Upgrading wind plants – repla-



Wind turbines in Laatzen-Meerberg

cing weaker turbines with more technically sophisticated and efficient ones – can raise this capacity long term to an estimated 400 MW. Going beyond the location criteria in the Regional Plan, the locational and environmental compatibility of wind power sites can be ensured through further stipulations in land-use planning and technical approval for plants. Possible nuisance factors such as noise and shadow flicker can be minimised by imposing operating conditions and taking appropriate technical precautions.



Transport

Responsibilities

Ensuring mobility oriented on sustainability principles is an important task for the future of the Hannover Region. It is the constant objective of sustainable transport policy and planning to enable all sections of the population to participate in the community's social, economic and cultural life and, where necessary, to improve their participation. Transport development policy strives to raise the proportion of journeys made without using a car. Pedestrians, cycling and local public transport together make up the 'environment alliance'. Varying claims on mobility, the interaction between settlement and transport planning, but also the negative effects of traffic, all require coordinated regional action. This also holds true with regard to applying new EU directives on particulates and traffic noise.

Integrated transport development planning

Influencing and guiding the Hannover Region transport scenario happens within the framework of integrated transport development planning. The measures of this outcome-oriented overall transport plan promote traffic reduction, transferring journeys to more environmentally friendly modes, and reducing the impact of unavoidable traffic. If mobility is to be delivered in an environmentally friendly way whatever the future framework conditions, and the attractiveness of towns and communities as habitats and economic locations is to be retained, close cooperative action between all transport stakeholders is essential.

Local public transport

The local public road and rail transport system (Öffentliche Personennahverkehr, ÖPNV) in the Hannover Region has been developed into an attractive alternative to private car use. Inauguration of the S-Bahn regional rail system in 2000, especially, represented a major advance in service quality; modern rolling stock, welcoming stations with good disabled access and improved timetables make it the flagship of passenger-friendly local transport. As part of these measures, Hannover Airport in Langenhagen was connected to the S-Bahn system and can now be reached directly from Hannover Central station.

The light rail network (tram/subway) is the main system serving the City of Hannover and its immediate neighbours. To make local public transport even more attractive and increase its share of the total transport volume further exten-

sions and improvements to the services are planned. The 2005 Regional Plan designates stretches for possible extensions of the light rail network to Garbsen town centre and Hemmingen.

Road and cycle traffic

In general, the existing inter- and intraregional road network provides adequate connections to and within the Hannover Region. New road developments will only be considered in the light of the consequences of demographic shift and the prospect of stagnating or decreasing private car volumes, if road safety is threatened, or if the quality of life and the surroundings can be permanently improved, e.g. with a local by-pass.

A Hannover Region cycleway need survey for all classified roads has been drawn up in consultation with all local authorities and, together with a priority listing, provides the action framework for improvements to and construction of cycleways alongside county roads.

Air traffic

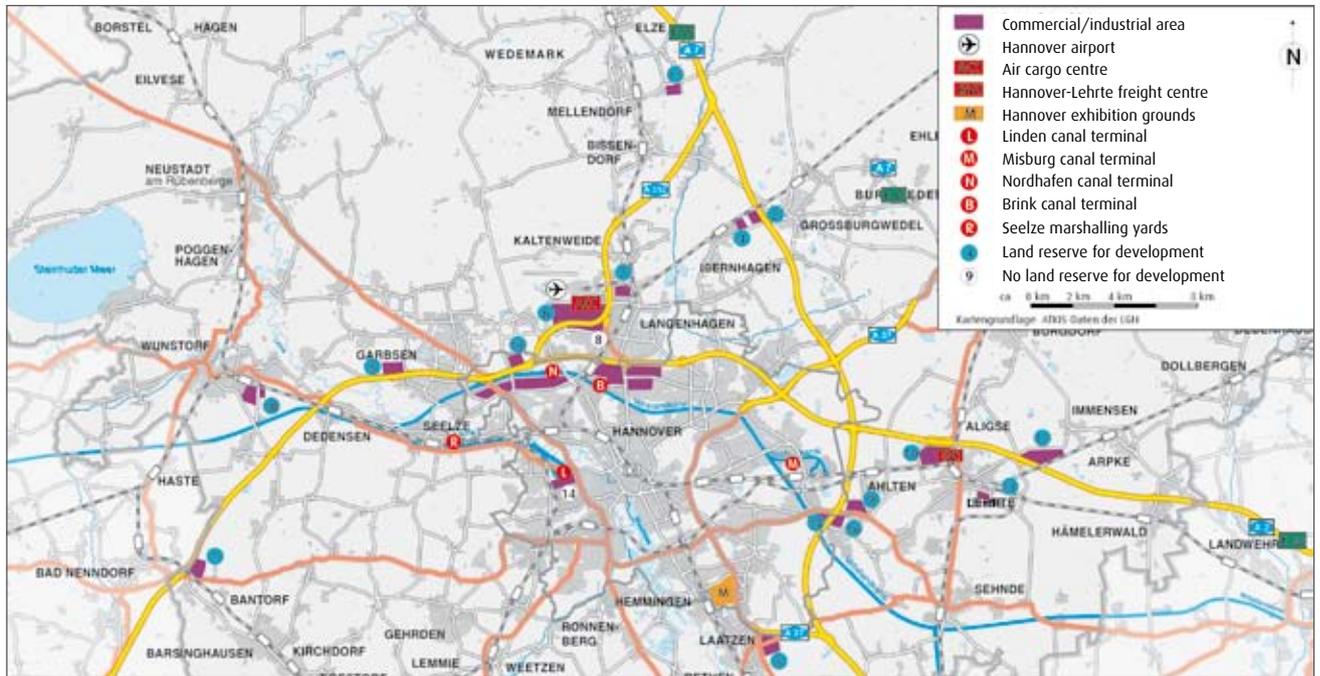
With 5.6 million passengers in 2007, Hannover Airport is one of the eight most important international airports in Germany, with excellent ground transport connections via a direct rail link and airport link road to the national highway network. With its operating capacity spread over two parallel take-off and landing runways and spare slots, Hannover Airport has excellent prospects for both passenger and freight traffic. The landing and take-off flight paths have been determined under noise and safety criteria for the local settlement structure, so that noise and pollutant burdens for the surrounding population are reduced and/or minimised.



S-Bahn train near Ronnenberg

Principle themes of the Regional Plan

Business



Regional commercial development concept

Providing sufficient industrial and commercial development land is a central prerequisite both for the survival of the Region's businesses and for new inward investment, contributing to building the economic strength and competitiveness of the Hannover Region. In this, the imperatives of sustainable development and low land-take through utilisation and/or reclamation of brownfield sites are particularly important. Consequently, the 2005 Regional Plan designates regionally important industrial/commercial areas that combine locational advantages and transport connections with adjacency to existing and/future settlement areas.

Trade fairs

Probably the most distinctive economic factor – both nationally and internationally – of the Region and even more so of the City of Hannover is derived from the staging of major international trade fairs; foremost among them, it is Hannover Messe Industrie and CEBIT, the world's largest computer fair, upon which Hannover's reputation as a trade fair city is founded. One of the largest and most modern exhibition grounds in the world, with almost half a million square metres of hall space, hosts these and many other international-status specialist fairs all year round. This activity does much to explain the exceptionally high 'gateway' factor of the Region, offering access to markets and to the world. Hannover as a trade fair location is thus an important economic motor and image factor for the Region.



Godshorn trading estate



Hannover exhibition grounds

EXPO Region City Network

With the emergence of more complex tasks that transcended municipal borders and of new challenges, the mid-1990s saw the establishment of numerous 'city networks' as egalitarian voluntary associations for cooperation between local authorities. The benefits are twofold: combining and complementing the partner's skills and potential, and overcoming unproductive competitive attitudes. This brings advantages both for participating municipalities and for the region as a whole.

As part of preparations for the EXPO 2000 World Exposition in Hannover, the cities and towns of Hannover, Celle, Hameln, Hildesheim, Nienburg and Peine formed the Städtenetz EXPO Region, later joined by the towns of Stadthagen and Walsrode. In the early phases Kommunalverband Großraum Hannover (Greater Hannover local government association) was a co-opted partner, and Region Hannover has been a member since 2004.



In the course of their cooperation several important projects have been carried out such as the prize-winning competition entry in 2000 as 'Region of the Future' at the international 'Urban 21' urban planning conference in Berlin, while others have focused on environmentally compatible regional freight traffic and truck routing proposals, and reaching consensus on large-scale retail facilities.

Hannover – Braunschweig – Göttingen – Wolfsburg Metropolitan Region

Aiming to promote the economic competitiveness and innovative capacities of the Region, going beyond its statutory mandate Region Hannover also works for the development of a far larger area within the State of Niedersachsen, the Hannover-Braunschweig-Göttingen-Wolfsburg Metropolitan Region. This constellation was officially recognised on 28 April 2005 by the responsible federal and state body, the Ministerial Conference for Spatial Planning. The Metropolitan Region is conceived as a voluntary cooperation association and thus does not create a new administrative level. Rather, intra-regional collaboration at metropolitan region level aims to exploit and combine the existing potential in order to apply it more effectively in pan-European competition between business locations.

Metropolitan regions are defined as areas whose functions are exceptional on a national scale and exert an international influence. There are three principal functions that a Metropolitan Region must fulfil:

- **Decision-making and control**

This means that a significant number of important organisations are located within the metropolitan region, such as national and/or international business enterprises (banks, insurance companies etc.) and large public institutions (federal agencies, ministries, courts etc.).

- **Competitiveness and innovation**

Creation and dissemination of knowledge and products is the touchstone of this function, particularly with regard to research and development institutions (universities in Göttingen, Hannover and Braunschweig, extra-university research facilities such as the Max-Planck-Institute), but also cultural facilities (museums, opera houses and theatres).

- **Gateway**

This is above all to be understood as the region's qualities as a transport and communications hub, offering access to people (e.g. Hannover airport, north-south and east-west rail intersection), access to knowledge (media facilities such as television and radio studios, publishing houses and libraries) and access to markets (e.g. the CeBIT and Hannover-Messe trade fairs).

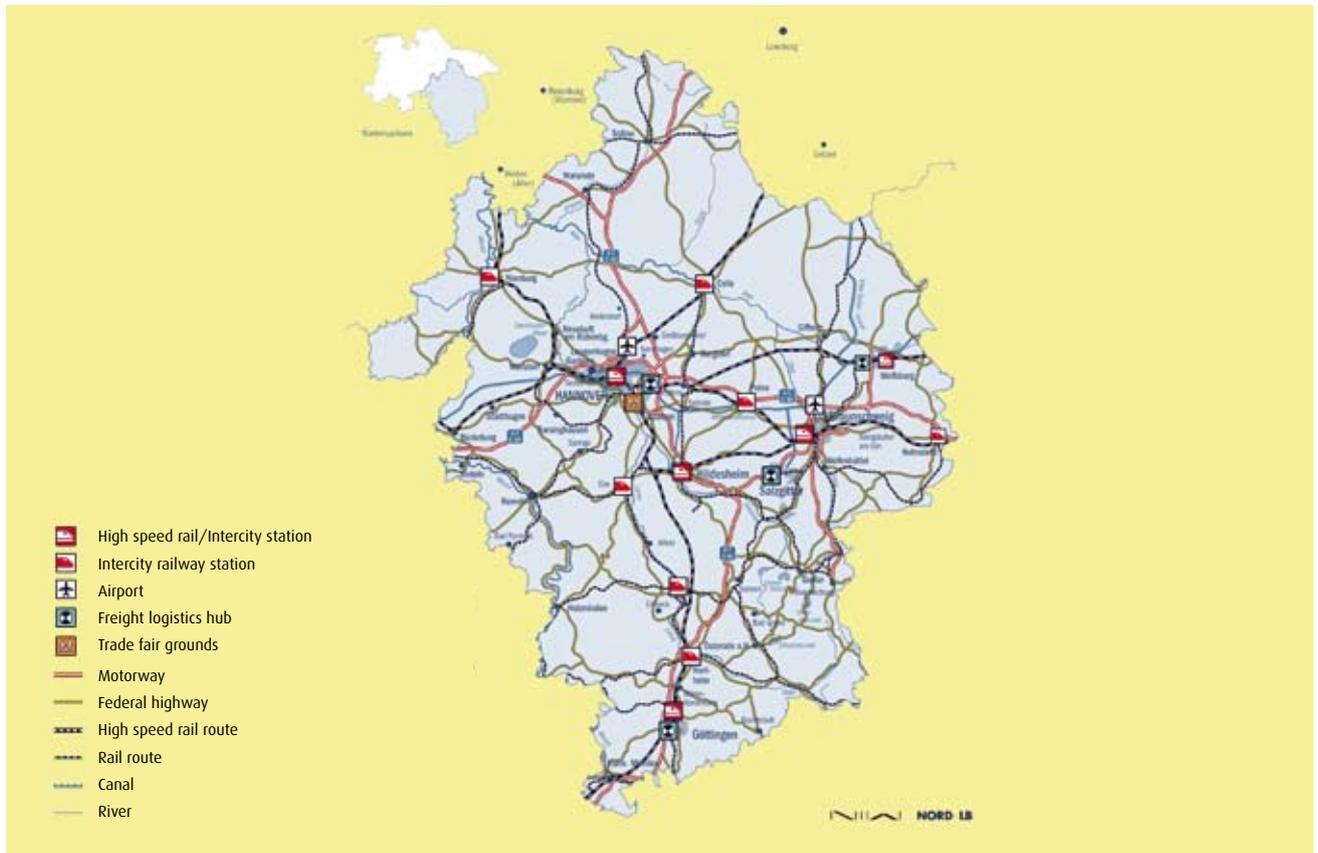
To establish the Metropolitan Region's profile, both internally and externally, specific projects are developed that vary in their content, size and effect. Some take on the crucial task of building up intra-regional cooperation and networking structures, while others aim, along with internal benefits, at external effects that will emphasise the Region's qualities in international competition. Both internal and external projects are essential to the Metropolitan Region's further development.

In order to give the work and organisational form of the Metropolitan Region, four years after its establishment, an even more professional structure, it is intended to convert it into a Limited Company (GmbH) in the first half of 2009. The shareholders will be four groups, known as boards, representing local authorities, academia, private sector business and the State of Niedersachsen.

A map of the Metropolitan Region is on the next page.

Transregional cooperation – prospects

Hannover – Braunschweig – Göttingen – Wolfsburg Metropolitan Region



Looking to the future

Demographic change

Changes in the age structure and population decline that can be expected long-term are already-evident factors of demographic change in the Hannover Region. While the number of children and young adults is falling, the number of older people continues to rise. Fewer children will need fewer educational facilities, a shrinking number of young households will lead to less demand for residential space, the higher number of older inhabitants and the significant proportion of limited-mobility people will need different accommodation and living surroundings with good infrastructure access.

From the early stages of devising the 2005 Regional Plan, the associated potential spatial planning consequences of demographic change were taken into account. Above and beyond this, it is one of regional planning's responsibilities to devise long-term strategies and to recommend action for settlement and infrastructure development in the Region. Now is the time to face up to the multifarious challenges of demographic change – for an innovative Hannover Region with a good quality of life for all.

Regional Plan

Demographic change, global economic change and the demands of environmental protection and resources conservation present Region Hannover with crucial regional policy challenges; the future framework conditions for spatial development make long-term and cross-disciplinary planning essential. The 2005 Regional Plan sets the binding framework for the next ten years of sustainable spatial development in the Hannover Region. As a spatial design instrument, it has enough flexibility and update capacity e.g., through procedures to deviate from planning aims or planning supplements. This is particularly important if the strategy is to respond to sudden developments or new planning proposals that require regional planning consultation. Into the future, however, informal approaches to conflict resolution and spatial control like cooperation, mediation, monitoring and concept development will still have a major role to play.

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