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ATTN:  
Local Advisory Board (North) Members, Advisory Committee, and Tübingen Municipal Council Parliamentary Parties

### **Master Development Plan for Waldhäuser-Ost**

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Dear Sir or Madam,  
Dear Residents of Waldhäuser-Ost,

Since 2017 we, in cooperation with the community, have been extensively discussing as to whether the district should undergo restructuring now, 50 years after its establishment. Many good reasons in favor of this suggestion have been discussed during our past meetings. Many responses from the district were also integrated into our current concept.

However, large changes understandably come with fears associated with deliberations, conflicts, and construction activity. In the last few weeks we have received several emails and letters from WHO citizens. Some of the responses pertain to various individual aspects of the project, while some completely reject most of the major changes, or suggest protection for WHO as a historical district. Lastly, some letters were unfortunately based on incorrect fundamentals of the process.

Answering each letter and email individually is not possible and, furthermore, we believe that, reasonably, not everyone has the same level information currently. That is why we are writing directly to all residents today: We want to tell you first-hand which goals we consider important, where we are in the process right now, and what the next steps will be. That being said, please excuse the length of the letter - we want to discuss your feedback and answer your questions on the one hand, but on the other hand also inform those of you who have only received limited information thus far.

With this letter we invite you to actively participate in this discussion. We are convinced that much of Waldhäuser-Ost can and should remain the same as it is today, because of its already great qualities. We are just as convinced that suggested changes are useful in some areas in order to set up Waldhäuser-Ost for success for the coming decades.

### **What are the goals for the development?**

**Creating a wide range of housing options:** In many parts of the city and also in Waldhäuser-Ost, there is a lack of housing - affordable housing, barrier-free housing, housing for the elderly, and housing for families. These housing offers will not exclusively be, but, also directly intended for the people who already live in this district. Many residence have told us that they would like to remain in the district, but cannot find any suitable offers. In many cases it is not possible or sensible to create new living spaces due to the ownership of the structures and land. However, especially if we want to protect the natural areas around our city by not building on them, it just makes more sense to use the available options.

**Improving quality of life and access to public spaces:** Our needs for open public spaces have changed over the past decades. We want to create new availability for recreational areas in many places in and around Waldhäuser-Ost. This includes lively areas such as playgrounds and exercise spaces, but also quieter areas. A development such as this offers many new opportunities - also in regard to the Berliner Ring. For instance student housing and the shopping center, which are currently separated by large areas for heavy traffic, could also be reimaged in a completely different way.

**Contributing to climate protection and adaptation:** The greatest challenge of our time is climate protection. Tübingen has therefore decided to become climate-neutral by 2030. Climate protection plays a major role in almost all areas in and around the city. Of course, the world's climate will not be saved solely by the efforts of WHO - but on the other hand we will not successfully make changes without local action. The development will offer the opportunity to make structures more sustainable, for example in the case of transportation. Waldhäuser-Ost will never be a car-free district, as some suspect, but it can become a part of the city where there are more available opportunities for cyclists, pedestrians, and alternate modes of transportation.

**Securing social infrastructure:** The shopping center in its current form is not sustainable, and WHO deserves better and safer local supplies. The social and community infrastructure can also be significantly improved: Options for childcare and assisted living, or rooms for collectives and groups are among some of the small-scale improvements to be made in many different areas that would strengthen the district and social coexistence.

These goals can only be reached by creating an overall concept, which cannot arise overnight, but is developed through many discussions and planning session - precisely because the topics in question are often socially, spatially, and economically bound. To summarize the plans:

### **What has already happened and what is the current status?**

In 2017/2018 we developed an integrated urban development concept (Integriertes städtebauliches Entwicklungskonzept - ISEK) for WHO with widespread participation from citizens and several meetings with the local advisory board and municipal council. It highlights the qualities, deficits, and the potential. In 2020, with this as base concept, we launched an urban development competition in

which external planners developed designs that were later revised in a second competition phase. Rough ideas arose at this stage as to what should be preserved and how somethings could possibly change - in public spaces, in traffic areas, at construction sites. However, the result of the competition from spring 2021 is not to be seen a concrete, feasible plan. It is an image that we can only turn into a real concept through many adjustments and revisions: a so-called “master plan.”

As it currently stands, the local advisory board and municipal council do not make decisions about the master plan, as is often assumed. By the same token you also do not decide how the competition will be implemented as a planning tool in the way you know it to be - on the contrary: You decide if and how the competition design should be changed and developed further. Without going into too much detail in this letter: Template 241/2021 can be found on the city's website ([www.tuebingen.de/who](http://www.tuebingen.de/who)) which lists, with full transparency, where and with what aim the planning process should be continued. It also mentions topics that, from our point of view, should not be pursued further, for example collective parking garages or the development of private housing areas in the east within the Berliner Ring.

### **What are the next steps?**

After the municipal council has decided to draw up a framework plan, the actual master plan can begin: Practical concepts must gradually be developed from the competition “images.” Each area will be examined in detail, alternative plans will be drawn up, and these will be presented to the public and discussed. This process takes time, both for the planning and alternatives as well as for the discussions. That is why we have allocated at least one year for this step: the master plan can be approved at the earliest in fall 2022. For that matter, the master plan does not only consist of building plans, but is a comprehensive concept in which the goals and projects are described. It also consists of much more than just “building blocks”: The traffic concepts, the public spaces, the recreational nature areas, and the social infrastructure are also presented here. The master plan is intended to be a transparent and reliable guideline for the next ten years.

This is also the reason why, from our point of view, a motion to adjourn, as is often requested, makes little sense: We can only talk meaningfully about the individual topics through planning, consideration, and discussions. Nobody can definitively say today how and where to build, how traffic structures will be organized, or where certain community facilities will be located afterwards. This requires planning and dialogue. In addition, this then only makes sense when the local advisory board and the municipal council have given the order to do so. Otherwise, there is no basis for planning and discussing.

After the creating the master plan, approximately 2023/2024, there will then be several smaller **development plans** created and not, as some may fear, a large new development plan for WHO. Most of the areas in the district will not even be part of a new development plan. In the vast majority of cases, the actual construction projects will only begin thereafter, i.e. starting 2025/2026. Additionally, this will not be in all the locations at the same time, but in individual sections. Building and planning take time and must be carefully considered before starting.

Let's come back to the beginning of our letter: Changes are usually time-consuming, conflict-ridden, and associated with risks. Altering everything is therefore often the wrong impulse, but not changing anything is usually not a good solution either. We believe that after 50 years it makes sense to

make changes in many areas to Waldhäuser-Ost. We are also convinced that there are issues, such as climate change or the housing shortage, that have to actively be dealt with.

These changes can then bring new opportunities when they are in the right areas and with the right planning. This requires an in-depth dialogue between the various groups within the district and us. In order to do so, we are offering a variety of opportunities - large events, planning session, walks, workshops, and much more. We are looking forward to your participation and to the contributions from your own knowledge, ideas, and suggestions. We are also happy to make ourselves available for direct dialogue through, for example, the newly founded citizens' initiative.

Sincerely,



Cord Soehlke  
Director of Planning and Mayor

Links for further information:

- Template 241/2021 at [www.tuebingen.de/who](http://www.tuebingen.de/who)
- Documentation from the informational event on the 22nd of July 2021 as well as questions and answers about the competition results at [www.tuebingen.de/who](http://www.tuebingen.de/who) under the tab 'City Urban Development Competition' (Städtebaulicher Wettbewerb)