

Community Transformation and Ecological Restoration Portland, Oregon and Munich, Bavaria

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The establishment of sustainable development as a prime concern for politicians, urban planners, and communities has been the greatest discussion topic of the last decades. As large cities are set to accommodate around 60 percent of the world's population within the next decade and produce the greatest share of global environmental problems (such as greenhouse gas emissions), it is evident that sustainable development will become a pressing necessity.¹ As nations and cities have been developing mitigation plans for the impacts of population growth and urbanization, some pioneer cities have already developed their own strategies. For this trend to continue, it is necessary to study and disseminate successful models to facilitate and strengthen the establishment processes of sustainable development.

In light of this, the cities of Portland and Munich have been selected for this study because of their pioneering character in environmental responsibility, starting during the 1970's with unique initiatives for ecological urban development and achieving worldwide notoriety and respect. There is a lot to be learned from these cities in terms of environmental consciousness, shared identity, strategic planning, and the power of well-directed political approaches. The comparative analysis of both cities is feasible because of their analogous settings and backgrounds: both are capitals in economically developed countries, present similar size and population in a metropolitan area, have a high-technology industrial character, similar urban growth patterns, ecological features, climate, and biomes.

This interdisciplinary research will aim to investigate the historical perspectives from which the models for sustainable development emerged. Moreover, it will examine the benefits and most significant transformations that have occurred in both cities since their first initiatives. The study will aim to determine which approach has shown the best results, based on the analysis of essential qualities and particularities of each model. Furthermore, the investigation aims to provide further insights into the adoption of such models in cities of correspondent backgrounds in Germany and the United States.

¹ Wuppertal Institut für Klima, Umwelt, und Energie. *Sustainable Urban Infrastructure: Munich, towards a Carbon-Free Future*. Germany: Siemens AG, 2009.