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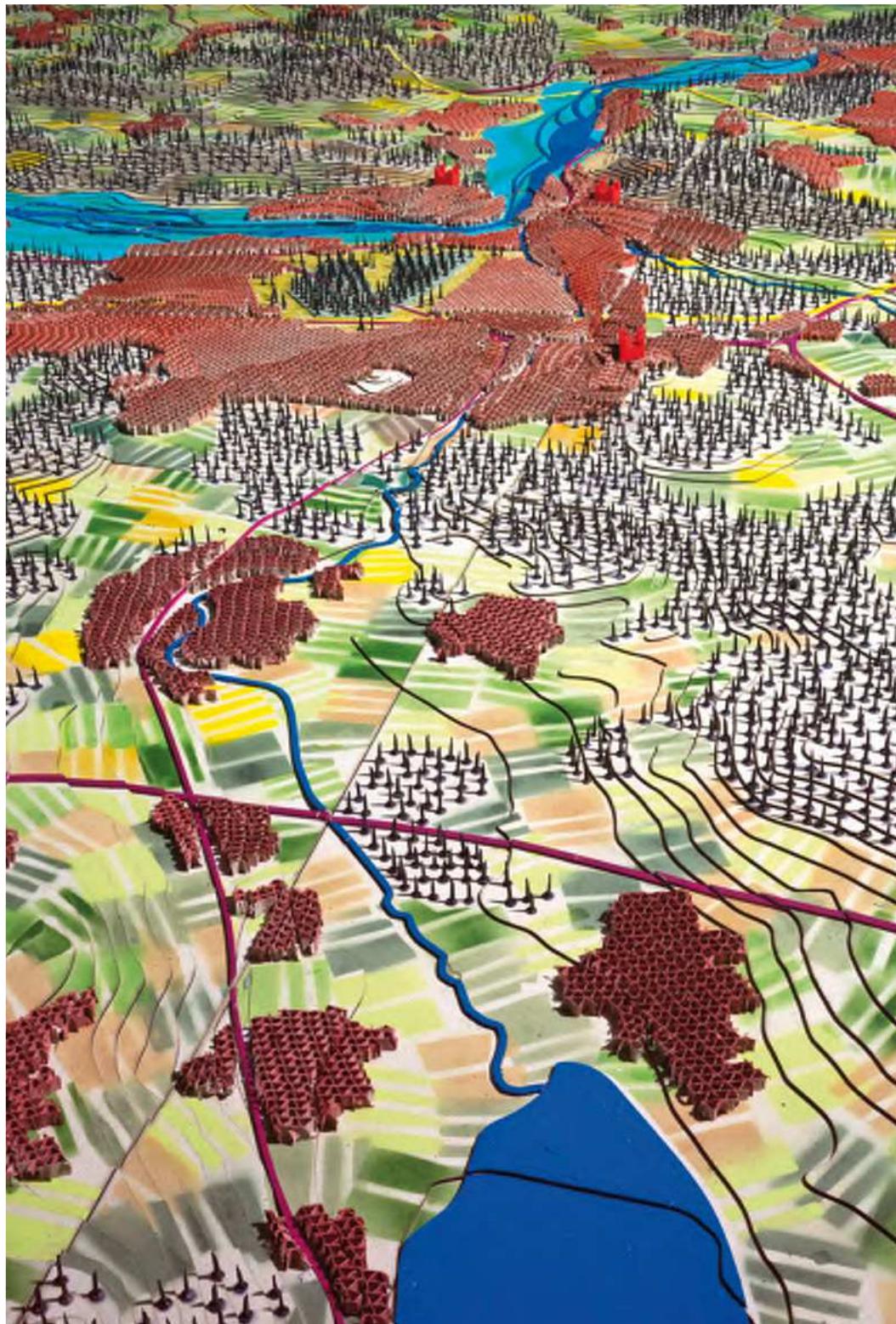
A study of the Swiss canton of Aargau by a group of architects condemned the scattered urbanisation of the landscape and showed strategies for counteracting this. In order to effectively deal with problems outside cities, however, further research is required, and it should also be of an interdisciplinary nature.

LES ARGOVIES

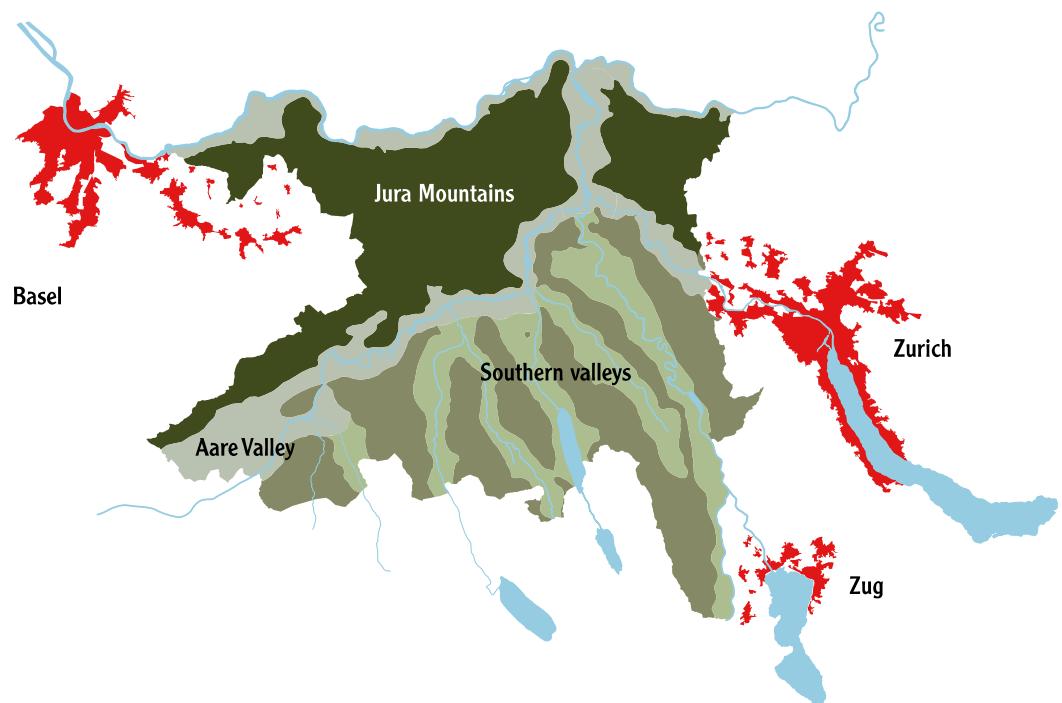
The Identity of the Intermediate

In 2005 Herzog & de Meuron, Roger Diener, Marcel Meili and the economic geographer and sociologist Christian Schmid published their comprehensive study entitled *Die Schweiz – ein städtebauliches Porträt* (Switzerland: An Urban Portrait). The unsparing investigation of the country clearly exposed the collateral damage that had occurred due to federalism and municipal autonomy: Switzerland is urbanised; there is something everywhere, but it is ultimately always the same. What is, however, the most effective way to combat standardisation, urban sprawl and the destruction of natural resources? The authors have succeeded in making politicians reflect on Alpine fallow lands, i.e. those Alpine regions whose functions have been maintained in affluent Switzerland as a result of transfer services. The 2012 spatial planning law has also been influenced by the study. And yet urban sprawl in the country continues unabated.

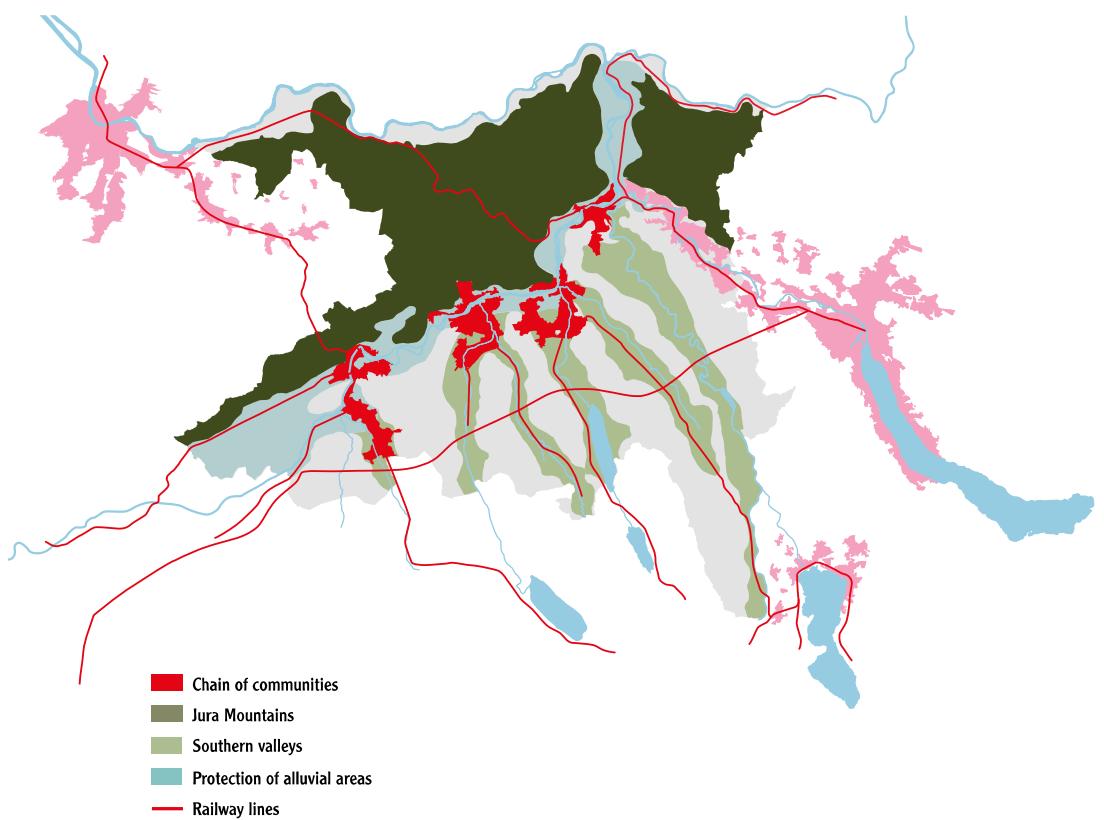
It is nevertheless a welcome development that in the past few years other architects have begun to think about the future development of the country on their own initiative, without any state financial support. The group Crocodile from Zurich is planning the *Glatttalstadt* (Glatt Valley City) to the northeast of Zurich and Bibergil has also been active, presenting its project *Les Argovies – Identität des Dazwischen* (Les Argovies – Identity of the Intermediate) at the end of 2015, which addresses the issue of future development in the canton of Aargau. The group's initiators – the name refers to the glandular secretions of beavers

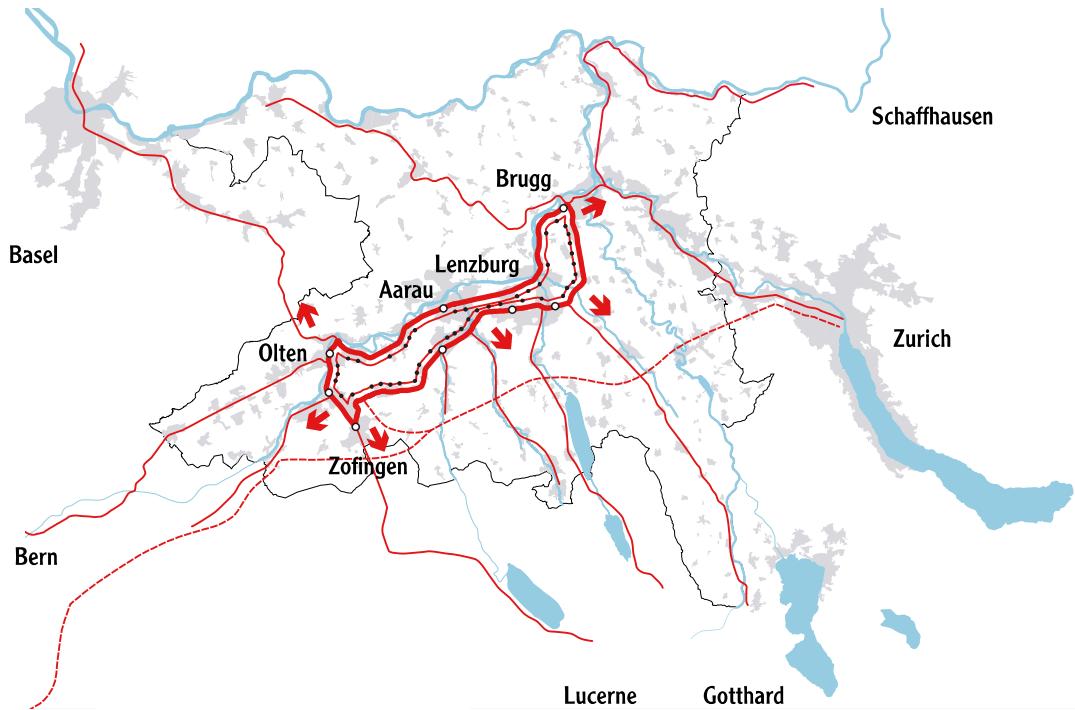


The Group Bibergel developed a strategy for the Aargau in Switzerland to manage the sprawl of the steadily growing agglomeration of the region's cities.



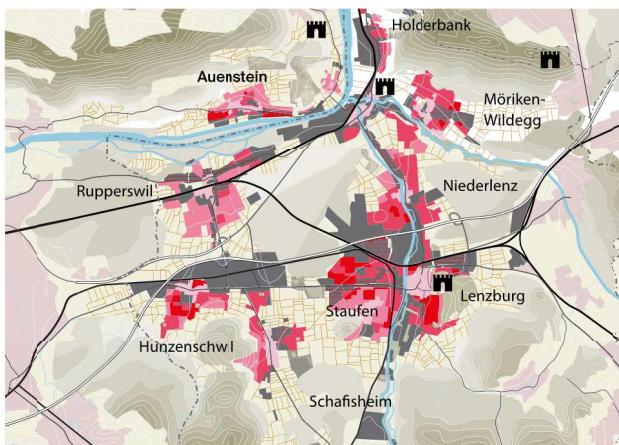
The analysis of the Aargau resulted in the objective of concentrating development and preserving and strengthening the landscape.





that are used to maintain their fur and mark their territory – are the architecture offices of Liechti Graf Zumsteg in Brugg, Meier Leder in Baden, Schneider & Schneider in Aarau and the Zurich Studio Vulkan Landschaftsarchitektur. These two groups became active as a result of official prognoses published at the end of 2013 which stated that the residential population in the canton would increase by approximately 30 per cent by 2040. Bibergiel does not want to prevent this demographic development but has instead developed strategies for preventing increased sprawl as a result of it. Aargau, part of the Swiss plateau, already serves as a transit corridor between the larger cities of Basel, Zurich, Bern and Lucerne and generally lacks its own identity. This perception is misleading, however, as Aargau, as opposed to the neighbouring Limmat Valley, does not have infrastructure axes along the Aare River basin, and with the Jura Mountains and the south-facing valleys along the river's tributaries does indeed have attractive landscape resources that need to be protected. The basic idea of the *Les Argovies* project involves the idea of selective growth. This should be concentrated in and around the towns of Brugg, Lenzburg, Aarau and Olten along the Aare River, as their agglomeration areas offer potential for increased densification. Lenzburg could become a forest city with the Rapperswil Forest as a green centre that links the four towns in the chain of communities. This chain would be connected via a suburban train ring that would extensively make use of existing railway lines.

The Metro Loop: Existing railway lines should be linked in a ring in order to more effectively connect urban areas.



Analysis: The city of Lenzburg and its eight neighbouring communities.



- Maximum residential density
- Minimum residential density
- Historical centre
- Forest
- Renaturation
- Agriculture
- Parks
- Protection of alluvial areas
- Industry
- Trees
- Motorway
- Railway lines

LES ARGOVIES, AARGAU, SWITZERLAND

Authors: Gruppe Bibergeil

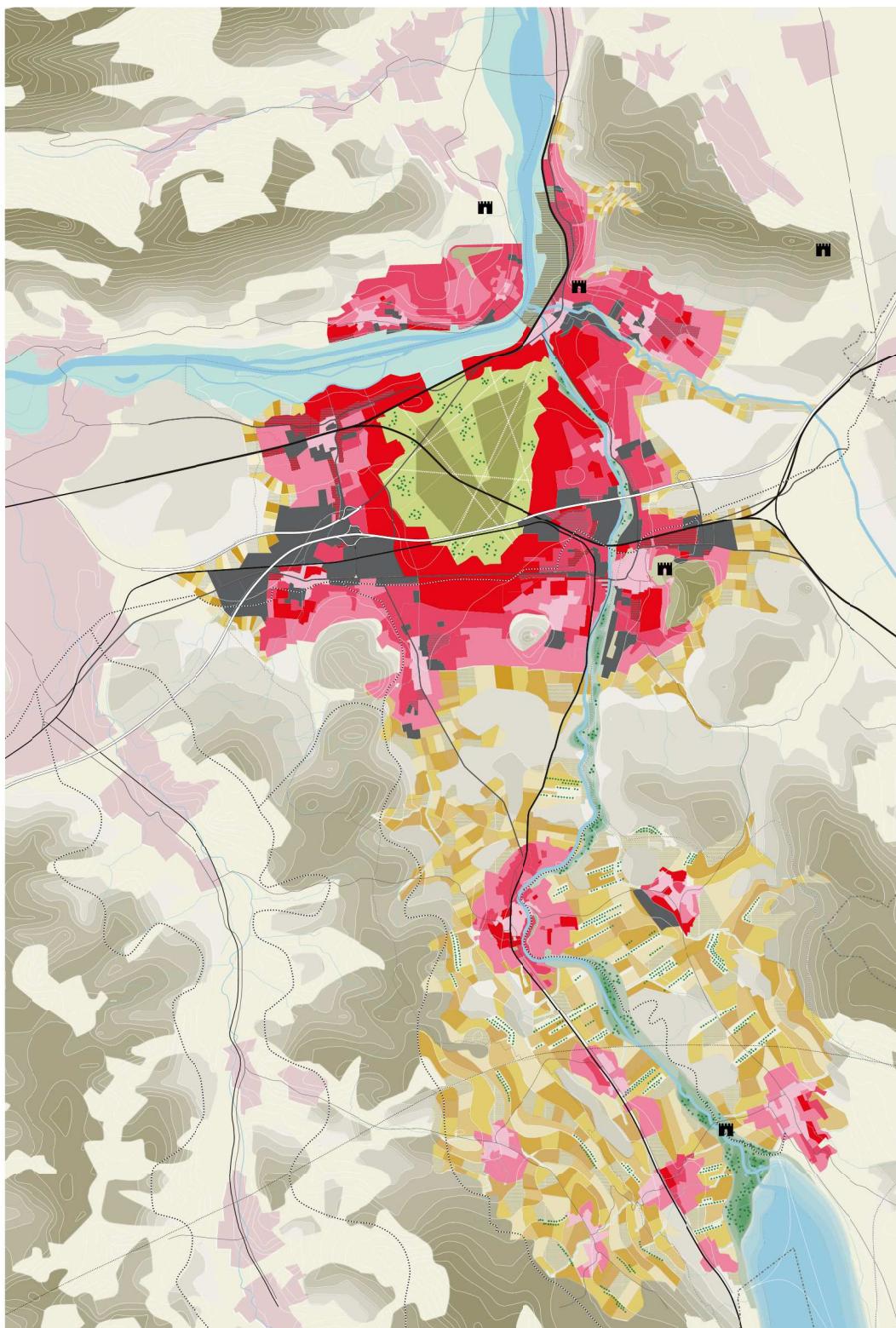
Liechti Graf Zumsteg, Brugg; Meier Leder Architekten, Baden, Schneider & Schneider Architekten, Aarau; Studio Vulkan Landschaftsarchitektur, Zürich

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With Olten, the authors have included a part of the neighbouring Solothurn Canton in their reference area, while Baden and the Frick Valley have been excluded. Aargau, as perceived by Bibergeil, does not correspond exactly to legal cantonal boundaries.

The scenario of densification in the canton's cities and agglomerations is supplemented by the principle of shrinkage in Aargau's rural southern valleys. The reduction of existing building areas and the high-quality densification of village centres are measures for increasing the distinctiveness of individual communities and preventing the further development of rural areas. In this context, Bibergeil wants to use agriculture as an economic basis for rural regions and likes to refer to the "Hero Principle", where contracted farmers once delivered their produce to the nationally known Lenzburg cannning factory Hero. In the future, farmers should provide organically produced food for a growing urban population. As appealing and fundamentally welcome as the study's demands may be, their feasibility is still questionable. The Hero Principle, as one example shows, appears to be of little practicality. It presupposes that a majority of urban inhabitants will buy regionally produced foodstuffs in new market halls and not at supermarkets and discounters. It may be that there are a sufficient number of people the architects are in direct contact with who nourish this hope, but finding a necessary critical mass is hardly likely. While the concept within the urban zones (chain of communities, densification, metro loop) is based on well-known and – assuming there is the political will – achievable measures, dealing with rural regions outside the agglomerations may prove to be more problematic. An exodus, shrinkage, or, at the very least a freezing of settlement activities and densification of the centres would require either a substantial change in mentality or measures from above – neither of which can be expected in Switzerland.

The countryside and the village have now almost become *terra incognita* to those in the cities, and this is not only the case in the Aargau. Urban and spatial planning tools are developed by urban planners in urban regions and then applied ubiquitously. And thus, one day the village becomes a place for commuters to live in, while the next it is idealised as a potential organic farming community. Reality could prove to be much more complex. Field research on site is necessary as well. Pure phenomenological perception is not sufficient and it would no doubt be helpful for the continuation of Bibergeil's study if experts from other disciplines were included and a dialogue with locals was sought. It is only natural that architects undertaking this kind of private initiative will run up against the limits of their financial and personal possibilities. Changing their approach is the only way to obtain data and information that would allow them to underpin their postulates with more substance.



The group analysed the agglomeration of Lenzburg as an example: The town could become a forest city with the Rapperswil Forest as a green hub for the surrounding communities. This chain of towns would be connected via suburban rail.