# Urban Issues & Challenges: Freiburg

Freiburg is a city in the south of Germany. In the 1970s, the local government set the aim of becoming more sustainable in all aspects of life.

There are a few reasons why Freiburg wanted to adopt sustainable lifestyles:

➔ Freiburg has the youngest population in Germany; 10% of the population is university aged (18-24 years old)
➔ Freiburg's old town is cobbled, which reduces the amount of car traffic in the city
➔ 9 month protest in 1975 showed how passionate the local residents are about protecting their environment
➔ The city is surrounded by the Black Forest - a famous picturesque forest in Germany



Looking at how beautiful Freiburg city is - you can understand why residents are protective of their city:



*Source: Wander and Wish*



*Source: Planetware.com*



*Source: Itinari.com*



*Source: European Castle Tours*

Freiburg's sustainability plan can be split into three categories: social, economic and environmental sustainability.

## Social Sustainability

Social sustainability means the residents as well as politicians have a **voice** in changes in the local area. Everyone should have an **equal input**, rather than decisions just being made by the local government. To encourage everyone's input into Freiburg:



- **Groups of children** are involved in giving feedback and offering their opinion for all new developments in the city - new building constructions, housing developments, etc.

- Financial **investors** are given free football seasonal tickets, as a **thank you gift** for investing into the city.

*Source: Visit Freiburg*

## Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability can involve different aspects:



- ➔ Providing **jobs** for families so they can afford to live
- ➔ Businesses have an obligation to be **responsible** for their impacts to the environment
- ➔ **Green technology** and environmental industry

*Source: Upper Rhine Valley*

**10,000** residents are employed in a green industry. One example of green industry is the large cluster of solar panel manufacturers, nicknamed the '**Solar Valley**'. The business requires a variety of people, of different levels of skills and education. The solar panels produced here can be used on important large public buildings or individual houses.

## Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability means all developments and day-to-day living **doesn't damage the environment**. In fact, Freiburg is trying to improve and expand the natural environment in many cases!



There are twice as many bikes as there are cars in Freiburg. This is because the streets aren't built wide enough to allow a large volume of traffic, as well as the expensive cost of parking in Freiburg!



Freiburg hosts a daily farmers market, where most crops are grown using organic farming practices. By buying local produce, residents are reducing their food miles and so minimising the carbon emissions produced transporting food across the world.



The local football stadium is powered by solar panels, as well as the Town Hall. Any surplus energy is transported to local offices and houses, so minimal energy is wasted.



Any building developments must be balanced with an environmental project. For example, when the city expanded its rail network, it also expanded the river to introduce more birds and wildlife back to the city.

## Housing in Vauban

Vauban is one of the **greenest communities** in the world and every aspect of its development has been designed for sustainability.

Every building in vauban has solar panels

Local shops are co-operative, meaning that they tend to be run by locals. They are all found on the ground floor, for easy access for the block of residents.

There are few parking spaces available in vauban. In fact, you will be negatively judged for owning a car

Trams run regularly so residents can travel freely and the town never feels empty

Tram tracks are green with low lying vegetation, to help rainwater infiltrate the ground

Spare land is converted into parks and children's playgrounds

Ownership is mixed – some people buy their house whereas others rent at an affordable cost

Energy is generated using wood, but more trees are replanted than felled.
The roofs are covered in solar panels for additional energy

Grey water is filtered and reused, whereas sewage is broken down in biogas digesters

Workshops are ran for locals to reduce conflict and create a sense of community

There are shared gardens and pantries between houses, so space and food is never wasted!