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Tatiana Guk: Decentralization Upcoming For Moscow

Moscow is definitely becoming more beautiful and comfortable for living. Today this is a city where one could not only work, but also get proper rest, breathe freely, and this is related to development of new and upgrades of the existing recreation areas. What potential is available for further development of these areas? Are there any territories planned for building new parks? These and other questions are answered by Tatiana Guk, Moscow GenPlan Institute Director, in her exclusive interview to BM. Moscow Foresight magazine.

- Moscow has significant potential both for further improvement of the existing parks and for development of new recreation spaces. We at the Moscow GenPlan Institute love those projects, focused on building connectivity of the existing park territories. Bringing those territories together into a common recreation system opens up opportunities for new long walking routes, sports infrastructure development and new attraction points. A few years ago we proposed to consider connections between the parks along the Yauza River with these considerations in mind, and this idea was supported by the Moscow City Architecture Committee. The project proposed to connect several well-known parks in the north-east of Moscow into one continuous recreation zone, improving connectivity of this part of the city and, furthermore, linking parts of two major tourist routes of Moscow and the Moscow region. Now this concept is being implemented. The goal of these projects is comprehensive development of various types of territories to achieve a “seamless” urban environment.

Tatiana Nikolayevna, there was a time when urban planning was dominated by the infill development idea for

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Moscow. Then it was decided to abandon this idea and to go back to planning construction of new blocks at the outskirts of the city. Which idea is prevailing today? What is the key vector for Moscow's development now?



Moscow is following the path of intensive development, looking inwards. The city is paying special attention to issues of reorganization of territories and their comprehensive development, creation of new jobs, enabling growth of the economic potential of the city.

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Development of new economic activity centers has become a key priority for Moscow's city-planning policy. These centers will help reduce excessive shuttle migration, create additional jobs and attractive recreation spots outside the historic city center. Construction of the centers actively utilizes industrial area territories, located near major transport hubs: metro line crossings, the Moscow Central Ring and Moscow Central Diameters.

Generally, the idea of new growth centers with high urban development potential and transport and utility infrastructure existed both in Soviet and post-Soviet general plans. Priority development of such centers was considered key to balanced development of the city, to overcoming the imbalance of the center and the outskirts. Moscow's development today follows the historic radial ring structure, and at the same time the small old center is stretched out in space towards new growth points, providing balancing opportunities. Territorial development principles provide for combining pedestrian and transport links, building high-quality and high-technology infrastructure. City districts get new public spaces, new social and service infrastructure facilities open within walking distance.

The housing renovation program was launched in Moscow in 2017 and was planned to take 15 years. Last October, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that this program would be permanent. What was the part of your Institute in the renovation program?

Our Institute has developed 31 territory planning projects under the renovation program for the Moscow City Architecture Committee. This year we will carry on with this work. When designing our projects, we focus on finding a balance, we try to achieve an organic combination of new design solutions and retained sites.

Our Institute also organized the "Renovation Image" international architecture competition. The purpose of the competition was to develop an attractive image for housing development in the capital city and to select the best architecture solutions for renovated blocks. The idea was to have a recognizable image for each district, some sort of architectural individuality. Owing to the competition, the city has got an extensive library of visual methods, which will help the renovated blocks to get their individual architecture features.

In 2021 your Institute conducted the "Moscow-2050" foresight, which allowed for shaping up a development forecast and a list of trends, applicable to the city over the next 25 years. Could you please tell us what will the image of Moscow look like in 2050?

The goal of the "Moscow-2050" foresight project that we conducted in 2021 with the support from the Moscow City

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Architecture Committee, was to dive into the depths of the changes happening in the capital city, to envision an image of desired future and to find an understanding of how could we achieve this goal. Over the course of 5 sessions with 200 experts in architecture, city planning, sociology, economy, culture studies, marketing, IT industry and other areas, we managed to determine more than 400 trends of Moscow's development.

Naturally, we did not get to forecast everything at the time. But we see that the key trends, related to technology development and change in behavioral models of residents, which were registered under our projects, are persistent. Particularly, these are mobility change trends, remote work, electric transport introduction, unmanned vehicles, which are here to stay.

According to the outcomes of the foresight, Moscow is in for a decentralization process with new business activity spots appearing, higher self-sufficiency of districts in terms of base infrastructure and visual identification. The key trends, related to spatial development of the city, include: agglomeration, growing mutual influence of Moscow and neighbor regions, polycentricity, customization of housing and urban environment, improved efficiency of space.

How do you see the future of the transport infrastructure: will there be focus on development of public transport and car-sharing, or will there still be enough space for private car owners? Will there be development of unmanned transport, which requires setup of a relevant infrastructure?

In our view, Moscow is a live organism, and its transport system should develop in stride with the changing urban rhythm and needs of city residents. This is why the primary focus is on development of city transport. This is not just a necessity, but a quality of life issue. The Government of Moscow is striving to build a transport network to ensure comfortable and fast rides across the city, and we as designers are helping them with this.

Box:

Moscow GenPlan Institute — a research and project institute organization of the City of Moscow. The Institute operates under the authority of the Moscow City Architecture Committee. Tatiana Nikolayevna Guk has headed the Institute since 2018.

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Moscow City General Plan was developed by the Moscow GenPlan Institute at an order of the Moscow City Architecture Committee.

The Draft General Plan was proposed by Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin due to the inclusion of the former Moscow region territories into the city limits.

The Draft General Plan is based on the principle of balanced territory development. One of the priorities of the Draft Plan is creation of new jobs and business activity centers. The Draft also features a whole set of activities to preserve the system of nature conservation areas and to build new green spaces.

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