

Thematic Session: S16 - Sustainable Real Estate

Future urban food systems: impacts on the built environment and real estate

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The need for sustainable futures and transitions is challenging societies and requires systemic approaches across fields. An example of this is how a transformation of food systems might affect the built environment and real estate: Because food is consumed to an increasing extent in cities due to urbanization, studies are suggesting local and decentralized solutions to complement the food system and to add resilience. This is posing pressure on the built environment to adapt but also providing an occasion to tackle complex issues of environmental, economic, and social nature, and to re-imagine our cities and societies.

To enable an effective transition towards resilient urban food systems, incorporating knowledge on the built environment is crucial. Therefore, we examine novel opportunities and their impacts, especially on the built environment and real estate in Helsinki Metropolitan Area. To explore both direct and indirect impacts, a Futures Wheel workshop was held with a group of experts, based on the outcomes of a previous cross-sectoral stakeholder workshop with professionals of the food industry and the built environment. Several solutions and innovations bring new opportunities for the built environment to renew amid topical challenges concerning e.g. vacant space and real estate markets. Sustainable and feasible approaches are found through collaboration between fields and by utilizing futures research methods.

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