

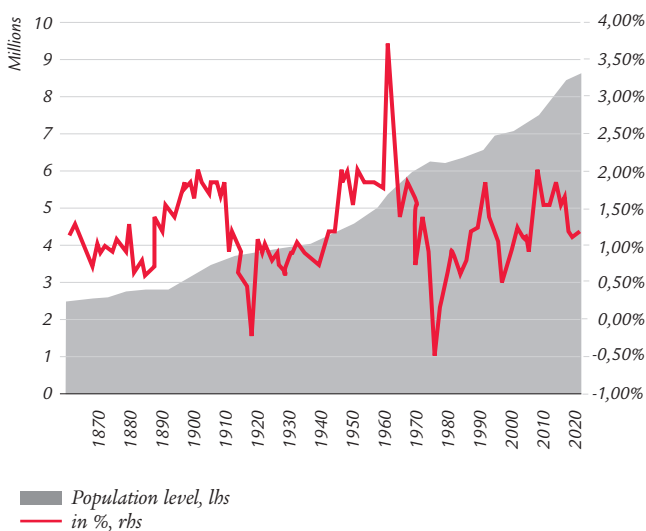
Real Estate to go

Densification: time to embrace compact living in Switzerland?

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Steady population growth within the same settlement area

The population of Switzerland is growing steadily. The permanent resident population has now reached over 8.7 million, while Switzerland's land area remains unchanged. However, 60% of it is uninhabitable due to the Alps, and the Spatial Planning Act prevents new land being allocated for development, which should keep the settlement area roughly the same.



Building upwards

There are around 4.7 million apartments in Switzerland comprising a total floor area of around 470 000 000 m². To realise this entire living space in the form of high-rise buildings, you would have to erect around 11 900 Prime Towers*. Or in American terms: two to two and a half times Manhattan.

The floor area of all flats in Switzerland is about

2.5 times the floor area of **Manhattan**



* tallest office tower in Zurich

Inhabitants require fewer building zones but more living space

For a long time, the space designated for settlement and building grew faster than the population. This has now changed. The average building zone area per inhabitant has fallen from 309 m² in 2012 to 282 m² per inhabitant in 2022. This did not usher in an era of more compact living, however. The occupied living space per person increased from 45 m² in 2012 to 46.6 m² in 2021.



building zone area / person

2012  309 m²
2022  282 m²

Living space / person

2012  45 m²
2021  46,6 m²

Capacity in building zones for more than 10 million

According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, existing and as yet undeveloped building zones still offer space for 0.9 to 1.6 million people in 2022 (roughly the population of the Canton of Zurich). This means that 10 million inhabitants can be easily accommodated without any further alteration of zoning plans. A large proportion of these residents could also make use of the existing internal utilisation reserves: according to estimates by ETH Zurich in 2017, the entire population of the Canton of Aargau (700 thousand) could live here.

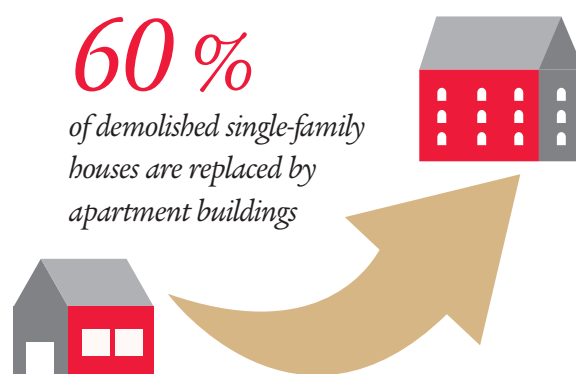


In existing and undeveloped building zones, there is still space for another whole population of the Canton of Zurich or

>1,5m
inhabitants

Single-family homes becoming a rare commodity

Increasing housing density makes compromises necessary, and single-family houses may gradually become a thing of the past. According to Zürcher Kantonalbank (ZKB), 60% of demolished single-family houses – and almost all terraced houses – are replaced by apartment buildings. Although the number of single-family homes is currently still on the rise, planning restrictions will put additional pressure on this type of home.



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