

Dear citizens of Erlangen,

Erlangen is a wonderful city where I have been living and working for 26 years, and which has become my home. Our blend of tradition and innovation, the university, strong businesses, the old town, green spaces and a diverse population make Erlangen a great place to live.

Yet we are facing the greatest financial crisis in our city's history. The budget cannot be approved, which means the city is barely able to act. This situation demands a decisive change of course. That is why I am standing as your mayor. Together with the city council, local businesses, associations, the many initiatives and stakeholders – and with you – I want to guide Erlangen through this period and set the course for the future. This requires a clear plan and close cooperation with the business community to build trust and create a broader base for stable municipal finances.

The crisis is also an opportunity for sustainable transformation. I will drive forward the digitalization of the administration – for more efficiency, transparency and better services for companies and residents. Equally important is modern, reliable childcare that supports families and secures our economic strength.

In my work at Siemens Energy and as a city councillor, I have seen how effective climate action can be at every level. Even with tight budgets, Erlangen can make progress: through good advice, clear procedures and by prioritising key future projects such as the Stadt-Umland-Bahn (regional light rail) and the Römerreuth wind farm.

Our city faces major challenges, but also major opportunities. With your support, I want to steer Erlangen safely through this phase and shape a strong, sustainable and innovative future. I look forward to talking with you – because only together can we move Erlangen forward.

Yours,
Eva Linhart

- Engineer at Siemens Energy
- City councilor and parliamentary group chair of GRÜNE/Grüne Liste Erlangen
- Supervisory board member of Erlanger Stadtwerke (ESTW; municipal utilities)
- Member, *inter alia*, of Turnerbund 1888 Erlangen e.V., Deutscher Alpenverein Sektion Erlangen, Energiewende ER(H)langen e.V.
- Degree in mechanical engineering, Dipl.-Ing. from RWTH Aachen
- Born and raised in Bonn
- Mother of two adult children, living with her husband in Erlangen

Economy and Administration

Erlangen is a strong center for business and science – from university and research to SMEs, large corporations, start-ups, skilled crafts and retail. To remain capable of action, we must stabilize our finances and need new economic momentum.

My Goals

By 2028, I want to achieve an approvable budget so that we can once again decide independently on investments. To achieve this, we need a service-oriented administration and an economic development department that is flexible and future-focused.

Strengthen the economic affairs department

I will separate the economic affairs department from the finance department so that it can act more agilely. By 2027, the economic affairs department will have its own website and a clear location marketing strategy. This will increase our visibility and help us attract new companies.

Intensify dialogue

I will introduce monthly dialogue formats with retail, start-ups and established businesses to identify trends at an early stage and develop solutions together.

Promote start-ups and high-tech

The IGZ and Medical Valley Center (innovation and start-up centers) will be modernized by 2027 and their services expanded. I will actively support the establishment of new tech incubators such as the ZOHO Factory so that Erlangen strengthens its profile as a high-tech hub.

Manage sites and buildings sustainably

By 2027, a municipal portal for commercial sites and properties will go online. At the same time, we will examine where new commercial areas can be designated or existing areas repurposed.

Make administration efficient and service-oriented

By the end of 2027, 100% of all standard applications should be processed digitally. Approvals will be handled according to fixed timelines, with clear communication and a genuine service mindset, so that procedures become predictable.

Advance the circular economy

I will expand take-back and repair services and present standards for circular construction by 2027.

Packaging tax – enforce it jointly with other cities

Together with other cities, I will work to introduce a packaging tax modelled on Tübingen, combined with strong support for the hospitality sector during the transition. This will create fair conditions for everyone and generate around 800,000 euros per year for important investments.

Energy and Heat

The energy and heating transition is crucial for Erlangen's future. From 2027 onwards, CO₂ prices will rise significantly – businesses and households need planning security. This transformation is both a challenge and an economic opportunity.

My Goals

Erlangen should become a pioneer of energy transition by 2030. For this, ESTW as the municipal energy utility must remain capable of investing. I therefore reject the planned annual profit withdrawal of 3 million euros; these funds are needed for investments.

Create a central contact point

I will establish a central contact point for residents and businesses that bundles all advisory services offered by the city, ESTW and civil society initiatives. There you will receive clear information on refurbishments, technologies, tenant electricity and funding – saving time and creating investment certainty.

Expand renewable energies

The Römerreuth wind farm will supply around 150 million kWh of clean electricity per year from 2028 onwards – I will closely accompany this project. By 2030, 50% of households should be equipped with smart meters and 150 additional charging points for electric vehicles will be installed. By 2027, I want to convert all street lighting to LED.

Make municipal heat planning concrete

By the end of 2026, I will present specific expansion corridors for district and local heating. Large heat pumps and heat storage systems will reduce our dependence on gas. By 2030, at least 30% of district heating should be climate neutral.

Assess geothermal energy

By 2028, I will commission a comprehensive geothermal potential analysis. Thanks to the drilling risk insurance, the financial risk of drilling is significantly reduced. In 2029, together with neighboring municipalities, we will decide on a regional project.

Develop neighborhood concepts and serial renovation

For new neighborhoods such as Südquartier, Erlangen Mitte and Regnitzstadt, I will implement smart energy districts with storage and bidirectional charging. From 2027 onwards, I will launch serial refurbishments for around 100 housing units together with property owners and support them through advice and coordination. At the same time, serial renovation at the municipal housing company GEWOBAU will be consistently expanded so that the existing stock is modernized more quickly and energy savings increase.

Tourism and City Centre

Erlangen's city center is one of the most distinctive and best-preserved baroque planned cities in Germany – shaped by Huguenot architecture, a lively university atmosphere and an international spirit. Yet shop closures, vacancies and underused spaces show that we are not fully exploiting our potential.

My Goals

I envision a vibrant city center that attracts visitors from across the region. Erlangen should position itself not only as a shopping destination but as a high-quality, sustainable travel destination. Our city should be seen as a central base from which to explore Franconia and actively use its advantageous location.

A distinctive city center: active support for retail and hospitality

Businesses must be able to rely on a fast, reliable and approachable administration. I will speed up approvals, allow more flexible outdoor seating and promote greener, more attractive street design. The administration will become an active partner of local business. Together, we will develop a robust concept to strengthen the city center sustainably by 2027.

Further develop the weekly market

I will transform the weekly market into a lively "Viktualienmarkt" (food market) with tastings, regional products and a clear quality profile. By 2028, the goal is 15% more market visitors, especially at weekends, and more regional gourmet offerings.

Establish distinctive shopping quarters

Schiffstraße, the Bohlenplatz quarter and the northern old town should be able to develop their own brands – for example with arts and crafts, specialty shops or cultural offerings. I will ensure multilingual, clearly visible signage and establish neighborhood festivals that attract additional visitors.

Upgrade the station forecourt

I will turn the station forecourt into an attractive gateway to the city with cafes and greenery and reduce the clutter of improperly parked bicycles. By 2028, 150 new two-story cycle parking spaces will be created along the tracks, plus 500 bicycle parking spaces with sufficient charging points in the Regnitzstadt car parks.

Gradually expand the pedestrian zone

The Stadt-Umland-Bahn will create an opportunity to reorganize bus routes and significantly reduce traffic in the northern inner city. This will allow the pedestrian zone to be extended to Martin-Luther-Platz – with more greenery, outdoor dining and a noticeably more attractive space for people.

Digitalization and Innovation

Erlangen is a strong center for business and science – from university and research to corporations, SMEs, start-ups, crafts and retail. To remain capable of action, we must stabilize our finances and secure economic dynamism.

My Goals

Erlangen should become a digital showcase city. This requires a clear digital strategy that bundles measures, saves resources and makes the administration noticeably more citizen friendly. At the same time, we will strengthen digital sovereignty and harness the innovative power of our urban society to set our own benchmarks.

Consistent implementation of the Online Access Act

All important administrative services should be fully available online by 2027 – accessible and easy to understand. A central platform will bring together all forms; data will only have to be entered once. The goal is shorter processing times and less paperwork, while personal advice remains possible.

Fully digitalize administrative processes

Processes will be networked across departments. Digital workflows will replace duplicate work and increase speed. By 2028, 80% of all standard processes should be fully digital.

Use artificial intelligence sensibly

AI will be used for standardized processes to handle routine tasks and free up capacity. From 2027 onwards, the goal is to use AI support in all areas with high case numbers, under clear rules for transparency and traceability.

Strengthen IT sovereignty

We will rely on open standards and open-source software wherever possible. By 2028, at least 50% of new software solutions should be based on open technologies – for more security and independence.

Develop Erlangen into a smart city

Together with the university and companies, I will implement an intelligent parking guidance system, environmental and traffic monitoring, networked building energy management, and an Erlangen app. By 2028, 50% of street lighting should be smart-controlled, and by 2030 the fiber-optic network should be fully expanded across the city.

Mobility and transport

Hardly any other topic moves Erlangen as much as transport - from morning traffic jams and crowded buses to safe walking routes and the question of sufficient parking. A balanced mix is crucial. Everyone should be able to get around safely and efficiently, whether by car, bicycle, on foot or by public transport. With the Stadt-Umland-Bahn (StUB) we have the chance to better connect Erlangen with Nuremberg and Herzogenaurach.

My Goals

I will focus on intelligently networked transport that does justice to all modes of mobility. The StUB will be the backbone of a modern overall system that reconciles environmental requirements with individual needs.

Advance the StUB and optimize public transport

The StUB will reduce journey times and - thanks to the bridge across the Regnitz valley - relieve the northern inner city. It is crucial for the university and local businesses. My goal is to complete the planning approval process by 2028 and move quickly into construction so that the first section can run every 10 minutes from 2032. In parallel, I will optimize the bus network, improve connections in all districts and gradually convert buses to zero-emission vehicles – for clean and reliable public transport.

Make cycling safer and more attractive

With a cycle garage in Regnitzstadt and a cycle highway to Nuremberg and Herzogenaurach, cycling will become faster and safer. By 2030, all main routes in Erlangen should be continuously safe to ride. I will also introduce winter maintenance routes for cycle paths and additional green-arrow rules for cyclists. Safe routes to schools are particularly important to me.

Improve footpaths and protect pedestrians

I will use planned roadworks specifically to widen pavements and modernize sensitive crossing points. From 2026 onwards, I will consistently introduce 30 km/h speed limits on all eligible sections near schools and childcare centers – because lower speed saves lives.

Improve e-mobility, car sharing and parking

To push ahead with e-mobility, I will install two hundred additional charging points and lamppost chargers by 2029. My goal is intelligent parking management with low-cost parking on the edge of the city center and sufficient short-stay parking and loading zones in the core area. Special parking permits for tradespeople and businesses should be easy and quick to obtain. I will expand car sharing with new locations and integrate it into the VAG app for bus, rail, and rental bikes. By 2029, at least ten additional new car-sharing locations will make sustainable mobility available everywhere in Erlangen.

Youth and Schools

The future of our city begins in nurseries, schools, and youth centers. A modern educational landscape needs well-equipped schools, flexible childcare, and close cooperation with families. Erlangen offers young people many opportunities, but growing demand means schools must be modernized faster, gaps in childcare must be closed and more spaces for young people created. Whether meeting places, leisure activities, or career orientation – young people should feel heard and have a real say.

My Goals

I will consistently develop Erlangen into a youth-friendly city where education, childcare and participation go hand in hand, and all children have the best opportunities to develop.

Renovate and modernize schools

With the help of federal infrastructure funds, I will push ahead with school renovations to create modern learning environments. I will gradually implement digitalization, energy-efficient refurbishment and contemporary spaces. I will accelerate planning for urgent projects – Gymnasium Fridericianum, Pestalozzi School, Stadtteilschule Büchenbach-Nord and other primary and secondary schools – so that funding programs are used optimally. By 2030, I will have launched at least three new projects.

Needs-based childcare

I will expand childcare places where they are lacking, for example in Alterlangen, and plan ahead. By 2028, I will ensure reliable childcare for all primary school children and provide flexible early-morning and late-afternoon care. I will support municipal and independent providers as fair and dependable partners.

Expand cooperation

I will strengthen networks between schools and cultural and educational institutions. By 2028, I will establish permanent partnerships with the music and youth art schools and with clubs so that cultural education and club experiences are accessible to all children.

Playgrounds

I will keep all playgrounds in good working order and modernize them as a priority in densely built-up neighborhoods, such as around the town hall square, or in areas with high social deprivation indices like Odenwaldallee.

A strong youth parliament

I will strengthen the youth parliament by expanding its scope for action and reforming the election process. By 2027, I will anchor binding youth participation in all relevant committees so that young voices carry real weight in Erlangen.

Housing and Construction

Housing has become a serious burden for many people in Erlangen. At least 3,000 homes are missing, property prices have almost doubled over the past twelve years, and many households cannot obtain subsidized housing even if they are on the waiting list. For care workers, young families, students or employees of our companies, Erlangen is becoming increasingly unaffordable – a clear locational disadvantage that makes skilled workers move away and increases commuter traffic. Our growing city urgently needs more affordable housing that keeps pace with dynamic development.

My Goals

I want to slow the rise in housing costs, revive residential construction, and create more affordable options. More affordable housing stabilizes rent levels – as shown by the example of Vienna. I want to trigger a similar development in Erlangen so that housing becomes affordable again for everyone.

Create more housing and accelerate new districts

To catch up, I will enable on average at least 500 new homes per year by 2032. I will simplify internal procedures, speed up planning and approval processes, and ensure better cooperation within the administration. At the same time, new districts such as Südquartier on the campus, Siemens-Mitte and Regnitzstadt must progress significantly faster. The first of these projects should be ready for construction by 2027 so that affordable and mixed-use housing can be built quickly.

Expand affordable housing together

GEWOBAU and private housing companies should create additional, including barrier-free, housing through new construction, rooftop extensions, and moderate densification.

Support flat swaps and "housing for help"

I will support voluntary flat-swap models in which people move into smaller apartments at the same rent per square meter – a major potential that is still underused. I will also actively promote the "Wohnen für Hilfe" (housing in exchange for support) program across the city.

Diverse living – activate existing space

I will specifically promote cooperative housing, multigenerational houses, and cluster apartments, as well as shared flats for single parents following the Berlin model. I will enforce the by-law on misuse of residential space consistently so that vacant properties are available to house our citizens.

Safety and public order

Safety is the basis for good coexistence. Erlangen is a safe city – and it should stay that way. At the same time, there are challenges: vandalism, conflicts in public spaces, areas where people feel unsafe, confusing traffic situations or a lack of support in crises. Safety arises from prevention, social stability, reliable emergency services, and urban design that makes safety visible. A clean, well-lit, and barrier-free city strengthens both the sense of security and social cohesion.

My Goals

I want everyone in Erlangen to feel safe – in public spaces, in traffic and in their personal situation. Strong support services, prevention, accessibility and well-coordinated cooperation between all emergency services create safety.

Strengthen fire and rescue services

Despite the difficult financial situation, I will bring forward construction of the Eltersdorf fire station to 2026 and, during this council term, start conversion and expansion of the main fire station. I will strengthen cooperation between emergency organizations through regular joint exercises and situation briefings.

Ensure violence prevention

I will secure the long-term future of the women's shelter, the youth and children's support house and their counselling services. The new Violence Protection Act opens up additional funding opportunities that I will use specifically to expand safe spaces and better support those affected. At the same time, I will ensure that comprehensive protection concepts against violence are available everywhere: by 2028, every school in Erlangen should have a complete prevention and emergency concept. To enable early prevention, every school will have access to school social work by 2030 – a key contribution to de-escalating conflicts and reliably supporting children and young people.

Increase safety and accessibility

I will reduce fear-inducing spaces by improving lighting, clear routing, and thoughtful design. By 2027, I will introduce a digital reporting platform where citizens can easily report problem areas and barriers.

Improve cleanliness

Cleanliness creates safety and quality of life. I will modernize street cleaning with intelligent emptying cycles, sensors on bins and more efficient structures. Hotspots will be serviced according to demand, and reports of littering should be dealt with within 48 hours.

Nature and biodiversity

With the "Klimaaufbruch" (Climate awakening) process, Erlangen has jointly developed effective measures for climate protection and adaptation together with the scientific community and broad public participation. Heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and loss of biodiversity are already clearly affecting us today. With around 50,000 street and park trees and many green spaces, we have good starting conditions – but important potential remains unused: reports in the tree radar remain unanswered, and the pace of unsealing is too slow. This is where I will start to make our city more climate-resilient and nature-friendly.

My Goals

I will anchor nature and biodiversity protection as a fixed component of urban development. My aim is to strengthen green spaces, visibly promote biodiversity and better protect Erlangen against heat and extreme weather – with clear priorities, transparent measures, and tangible results in the urban landscape.

Protect and care for urban trees

By 2028, I want to double the number of tree sponsorships through active promotion. I will strengthen the existing tree radar: in future, every proposed site will be reviewed and decided upon within six months, with the aim of realizing as many suitable locations as possible and planting climate-resilient tree species there.

Implement the sponge-city concept consistently

To retain rainwater locally, I will implement sponge-city concepts in new neighborhoods. Zollhausplatz should become the first "climate square" to be unsealed as soon as funding or financial leeway is available. I will support unsealing wherever it can be implemented together with schools, initiatives, or associations. With targeted support, even small projects can have a substantial impact.

Bring more greenery into the city

I will strengthen insect-friendly greening by informing builders early on about green roofs, facade greening, and garden planting and by anchoring corresponding requirements in urban development contracts. This will improve both the urban climate and biodiversity – even with a limited budget.

Effectively tackle heat and flooding

All municipal fountains will be back in operation by summer 2027 at the latest. I will also create more shaded places to stay at heat hotspots, particularly on playgrounds and sports grounds. I will write to property owners in municipal flood-risk areas, such as along the Eltersdorfer Bach, to inform them about risks and concrete options for precautionary measures.

Culture and Sport

Erlangen thrives on places where people come together, create and exercise. Culture and sport strengthen community, health, and quality of life. Yet many institutions are working at their limits, and the strained budget makes necessary investments difficult. I want to keep culture and sport accessible to everyone and enable their continued development – even under difficult financial conditions.

My Goals

I will safeguard cultural and sports activities, strengthen creative potential and make every day exercise easier. My aim is a lively, inclusive Erlangen, where culture and sport are close to where people live.

Preserve and strengthen cultural diversity

I will secure cultural venues such as the theatre, city museum, KuBiC, ZAM, Lesecafé, E-Werk, Kunsthalle, city library and district centers and maintain them in their current scope despite financial pressures. I will implement a modern children's and youth library by 2027. I want to facilitate interim cultural uses of vacant spaces through a digital matching platform. My goal is to stabilize our major festivals – the Comic Salon, international figuren.theater.festival and Poetry Festival – through additional long-term sponsorship partnerships.

Relieve sports clubs

I will support clubs with clear contact persons, advice, and simplified procedures. A small coordination office will help with funding applications for modernization and renovation. In addition, I will introduce a city-wide online platform for all sports and exercise facilities and simplify the use of school sports halls at weekends so that more training times are available.

Enable exercise for young people

I will strengthen cooperation between schools, the adult education center and clubs and support primary schools in offering additional sports activities directly in the afternoon. I want to secure existing events such as the school triathlon, "Leichtathletik macht Spaß" (Athletics is fun) and the swimming festival despite tight budgets – also with the help of sponsorship.

Expand neighborhood-based sport

In the western part of the city, I will expand exercise opportunities at schools and in the neighborhood. Instead of expensive large facilities, I will focus on small, immediately effective measures such as safe running routes and fitness points. Events like the SkateNight, inclusive sports week or city championships will be organized with sponsors. As soon as finances allow, a pump track, fitness trail or cricket pitch will broaden the offer.

Support new forms of culture and sport

I will actively promote e-sports, digital art and innovative forms of exercise to keep Erlangen attractive and open to new developments.

Diversity and Integration

Erlangen is a diverse city: 25% of residents have a foreign passport from 145 nations, and around 13% live with a disability. This diversity shapes our coexistence and enriches our urban society. Diversity is not a problem but a strength of our democracy.

My Goals

My goal is for everyone to feel welcome. I want an Erlangen in which every person can participate – in everyday life, in housing and employment and in political and social life. This works best if those affected are consistently involved in decisions. I will therefore work to ensure that the diversity of our city is reflected in the city council and all municipal bodies. This is how we create an inclusive, non-discriminatory city for all.

Apply accessibility standards

All municipal information must be available in several languages and in easy-to-understand language, including within municipal companies such as Erlanger Stadtwerke and GEWOBAU. Accessibility standards for events, apps and digital services will be binding.

Improve welcoming culture

My goal is transparent, swift procedures in the immigration office. Decisions should be dependable and free of unnecessary waiting times. Naturalization applications should generally be processed within six months. At the same time, I will ensure there are enough low-threshold German language courses – as the foundation of successful integration.

Ensure accessibility

For all projects in public spaces – buildings, paths, junctions and stops – accessibility must be considered from the outset. Sensible rules, such as designated parking areas for e-scooters, will improve mobility for people with impairments.

Facilitate digital participation

I will rely on accessible apps, clear pictograms in public transport, clear announcements and digital tools like speech recognition, navigation aids, and easy language via AI. Digitalization should open doors, not create new barriers.

Consistently involve those affected

The queer center, the equal opportunities office, anti-discrimination counselling and the foreigner and integration advisory council will receive clear participation rights and stable funding. I will develop the "Forum Behinderte Menschen in Erlangen" (Forum for People with Disabilities in Erlangen) into a strong municipal advisory body.

Social Affairs and Volunteering

Erlangen is strong because we stand up for one another. Our city thrives on committed people, social organizations and associations that help ensure nobody is left behind. I want to strengthen this togetherness – with clear support for volunteering, targeted promotion of social participation and reliable services for people in special life situations.

My Goals

I want an Erlangen in which all people have equal opportunities – regardless of income, origin, age, or disability. I will create reliable structures that foster civic engagement, strengthen social neighborhoods and provide participation and security for all generations.

Strengthen volunteering

I will support the volunteering center in better connecting, training and accompanying volunteers. Volunteers will receive practical assistance from municipal departments – from lending tools and materials to professional advice. I will also make targeted use of the expertise of people who wish to contribute their knowledge after their working life. Over the next two years, I will expand volunteer opportunities especially in organizational, technical and IT fields so that Erlangen is well equipped for the future.

Take participation seriously

I will ensure that district and local councils as well as specialist advisory boards – such as the sustainability and senior citizens' councils – are systematically involved in planning and given enough time to provide well-founded statements.

Targeted support for districts

Supporting our districts is central to me. I will strengthen existing community centers and ensure that the new district center West in Büchenbach launches next year with a diverse range of activities. I will actively push ahead with construction of the combined district and fire station building in Eltersdorf. I also firmly have smaller districts like Hüttendorf, Kriegenbrunn and Steudach in mind – a strong city grows in all its neighborhoods.

Create meeting places

I will promote community-oriented housing such as multigenerational houses, community gardens, and inclusive meeting places for people of all ages. I will also expand the education program for older people so that lifelong learning and social contacts remain easily accessible for everyone.

Ensure safety and social infrastructure

Defibrillators should be reachable city-wide within 3–5 minutes. I will equip professional and volunteer fire brigades according to needs. I will support the wide range of social institutions in Erlangen reliably and on a long-term basis.