Sustainable contributions made by urban planning for the benefit of all citizens by people is planned future
Who are they?

Vienna’s future is planned by people? Vienna is growing and rejuvenating itself. Soon it will be Austria’s federal province with the youngest population. Urban development and urban planning play a decisive role in reconciling this future-oriented dynamism with the citizens’ desire for high quality of living. Already today, Vienna occupies a top position regarding metropolitan quality of living on a worldwide scale and is considered one of the smartest among “smart cities”. The staff of Vienna’s urban planning departments have contributed significantly towards this goal. It will remain their task to find human-scale solutions for the upcoming challenges. Thus “Vienna’s future is planned by people” means working steadily towards a successful future for all inhabitants of the city.

The dynamic development of metropolitan Vienna is complemented by efforts to preserve and further improve the city’s attractive quality of living for the benefit of its citizens.
Quality of Living and Satisfaction

The plan I am holding looks almost like a tourist map. However, on my map, every detail must be accurate for every line or letter entails legal consequences – they show where construction is permitted and what types of construction are possible. Even the tiniest deviation from the map would change the proportions of a planned project and lead to errors in its implementation. This basic instrument of legal planning is called a “land use and development plan”. In its precisely charted “boxes”, which stand for individual blocks, I can recognise every building, passage and turn in a road. The plan drafts are created by Municipal Department 21, for which I have been working for the past twelve years.

People are at the centre of my work, and sensitivity is often called for to reconcile different interests, so that the needs of the population as well as those of the metropolis will be served equally well. Citizens are enabled to codetermine and have a say already in an early phase of many construction projects. Organising and mediating such citizen participation procedures is another one of our tasks.

The 1st municipal district is largely comprised of the World Heritage site “Historic Centre of Vienna”. Here, priority must not only be given to the preservation of the historic building stock, but also to the creation of lively urban space. In my planning work, the two things closest to my heart are quality of living and the satisfaction of Vienna’s citizens – a goal I embrace wholeheartedly and do my best to attain.

Gerlinde Stich, Municipal Department 21, District Planning and Land Use
An Ecological Model District

“In der Wiesen”, a part of Vienna’s 23rd municipal district Liesing, is famous for its market gardens. In the context of the “Target Area Liesing” project, it is to be transformed, together with the industrial zone of Liesing and the centre of the Atzgersdorf neighbourhood, into an ecological or smart-city model quarter. The “Target Area Liesing” project addresses all challenges of urban planning and design, i.e. housing, ecology and economy. The long-term objectives of our work are to reduce CO2 emissions to zero by 2050, to decrease energy and resource use and to attain full energy coverage from renewable sources. At the same time, the quality of living in dwellings, at workplaces and in leisure zones is to be significantly improved. For this purpose, we are planning a large urban gardening project for “In der Wiesen”. Subsidised flats will be combined with areas that can be cultivated by residents planting their own vegetables. Vienna’s biggest industrial zone is located in Liesing. Our plans provide for sustainable development. Liesing is to remain an industrial and commercial hub while also scoring as an attractive residential area. Vienna is considered a model city of innovation. The Liesing target area could become the site of a “triple smart” concept: smart infrastructure, smart spaces and smart social design, which means innovative solutions for technology, spatial design and communication – another milestone along Vienna’s trajectory towards becoming a “smart city”.

Volkmar Klaus Pamer, Municipal Department 21, District Planning and Land Use
Public Transport on the Fast Track

The Vienna Underground is the citizens’ favourite means of transport. The network is being constantly enlarged and also extends to new urban expansion zones.

Ensuring sustainable mobility in a growing metropolis is one of the tasks of our department: we design transport planning concepts and lay the ground for tomorrow’s mobility. Our work is guided by the Transport Master Plan for Vienna. In this document, we prioritise environmentally friendly mobility: public transport, walking and cycling.

Now in its fourth enlargement phase, the Vienna Underground network is currently being extended, which confronts us, the planners, with the question of whether further network enlargement is actually viable. Many planning issues of this kind are easier to address when accompanied by an exchange of experience with other cities, e.g. with Munich regarding the Underground network extension or with Strasbourg for the upgrading of the tram network.

Even if the trend to forgo car ownership is more and more widespread in Vienna, our efforts to ensure “city-friendly” mobility remain a key issue, as many people from the environs of the Austrian capital still commute to Vienna by car. Thus it is essential to inform the population about alternative mobility options, such as car sharing, and to promote awareness of a car-free lifestyle.

I have been working for Municipal Department 18 for the past fifteen years. My three children, too, have taught me a lot about the qualities of public transport.

Beatrix Rauscher, Municipal Department 18, Urban Development and Planning
Open and Highly Integrative

Gründerzeit neighbourhoods such as Yppenplatz with the Brunnenmarkt open-air market in Vienna’s 16th municipal district Ottakring are currently living a period of transformation and valorisation. People who move here are looking for urban life in public space, affordable rents and a colourful, multifaceted living environment. Numerous cultural initiatives, too, have located to Ottakring, creating an entirely novel dynamic in the process.

The Gründerzeit quarters along the western Gürtel, the Favoriten areas closest to the city centre (10th municipal district) and the Karmeliterviertel neighbourhood in the 2nd municipal district as well as the zone around Wallensteinplatz in the 20th municipal district were socially disadvantaged for a long time. In recent years, a wind of change has set in. Dwellings were rehabilitated in the context of the “gentle urban renewal” strategy. Gradually, this upgrading of the housing stock has begun to attract new denizens in the form of students and employees. As urban researchers, we observe these processes and analyse aspects such as quality of living, citizens’ satisfaction with the housing situation and other local facilities as well as development trends of specific neighbourhoods as compared to others. Our observations also comprise the evaluation of data and statistics, studies and fundamental research. This enables us to analyse and communicate an overview of the urban structure and of its spatial and social developments – an aspect of crucial importance for future planning projects.

Rainer Hauswirth, Municipal Department 18, Urban Development and Planning
Schools for Our Future

The two primary school buildings you see behind me are located in Mannagettagasse 1 in the 19th municipal district and offer a good example of part of my department’s remit, i.e. planning public schools, kindergartens, offices and other institutions of the City of Vienna. The school shown in the photo is only one of over 240 primary and secondary schools of the City of Vienna for which measures to preserve the building stock and increase safety – by e.g. improving fire protection – are being implemented in the context of the “School Rehabilitation Package for 2008–2017”. The City of Vienna is committed to preserving and rehabilitating existing school buildings. At the same time, new schools are being planned and built as well. Among these construction projects, the multifunctional campus type that combines kindergarten, school and leisure activities enjoys increasing popularity. The City of Vienna aims for a balanced distribution of such projects to reflect the demographic trends of the individual municipal districts. Detailed space schedules ensure that schools and kindergartens present the same facilities and appointments overall. These construction projects are handled by our team. Monitoring the planning work is hence also part of our tasks. My family is originally from Croatia; I have been living in Austria since the age of 17. After studying architecture, I participated in urban renewal projects. My work on behalf of the school planning division of Municipal Department 19 enables me to get to know Vienna even better.

Anita Vrabec, Municipal Department 19, Architecture and Urban Design
Planning for Sustainable Development

“Open-minded thinking and future-oriented steering” is the motto of the Executive Group for Construction and Technology. Here you see me in VIERTEL ZWEI, which is part of the target area “Donaurama Leopoldstadt – Prater” in Vienna’s 2nd municipal district.

At the moment, two co-operative planning procedures – one around the velodrome and one in the Krieau zone – are underway in this area. The results will underpin the land use and development plan for this part of Vienna.

The 13 target areas defined in the 2005 Urban Development Plan present very diverse development strategies and can be roughly divided into three groups: already fully developed inner-city zones that are to be upgraded by improving existing structures and public space; former railway properties that, surrounded by historically evolved neighbourhoods, are now to be built up as well; and new urban development zones, such as aspern Vienna’s Urban Lakeside, that will further enlarge the Austrian capital.

In addition to steering and co-ordinating these target areas, one of our tasks lies in defining instruments and processes for urban development projects of varying dimensions – one might call these instruments the toolbox of Vienna’s urban planners. We serve as a hub for internal and external co-operation activities with other administrative bodies, politicians, the business community and scientists. We initiate new developments, provide impulses and co-ordinate the various departments and divisions to make sure that both citizens and enterprises will have access to the resources they need.

Georgine Zabrana, Chief Executive Office of the City of Vienna – Executive Group for Construction and Technology
Relaxing in Public Space

No object that is part of public space – be it kiosks, outdoor zones of cafés and restaurants or advertisement carriers – is there just by chance. Even the number and design of sales stands at Vienna’s Underground stops are evaluated by our department regarding their aesthetic standard. Public space offers room for social contacts as well as atmospheric quality and an opportunity to rest and relax on our everyday trips, thus reflecting the vibrancy and uniqueness of a city. However, people will linger in public spaces only if they feel at ease. For this reason, public spaces are planned with the same care as buildings. Our planning work is supported by social space analyses, citizen participation procedures and evaluations. In designing such spaces, many aspects beside user-friendliness must be taken into account, e.g. aesthetic appeal, flexibility and robustness over time.

Our department is essentially in charge of organising design competitions, commissioning plans and developing expert opinions for approval procedures. Much-coveted sites such as the redesigned and upgraded Praterstern attract more and more enterprising individuals since public space in these locations is significantly cheaper to rent than conventional shop premises. However, the needs of the population are always given priority. Thus a balance between individual requests and public interest must be struck.

Reinhard Wolfbeiszer, Municipal Department 19, Architecture and Urban Design
Farsighted Planning

From the bahnorama tower at the construction site for Vienna’s new Main Station, I am overlooking large parts of the city. Alongside the large-scale projects, the attention of the Executive Group for Construction and Technology is focused on the whole city and its development. We make sure that urban development mechanisms function smoothly.

One of the main tasks of the Planning Group as the division administering the urban planning sector lies in steering, coordinating and optimising the work of the individual planning departments, which must be constantly fine-tuned due to new knowledge or novel frame conditions at the national and EU levels.

Another task is to address the future of urban development. This is done centrally on the basis of the Urban Development Plan (STEP). We prepare strategic contributions, adjust the plan and monitor its implementation. Due to the input of politics, administration, many private actors and its population, Vienna is the world capital of high quality of living.

Quality of life is also closely tied to favourable conditions for the economy and sustainable investments.

STEP creates the framework required for this purpose. Many questions of urban development – such as traffic and transport – can only be dealt with by involving the surrounding regions. Thus regional development co-operation with Lower Austria and Burgenland is an important strategic aspect, as is national and international collaboration with other cities, city networks and institutions.

Otto Frey, Chief Executive Office of the City of Vienna – Executive Group for Construction and Technology
I am not watching “The Hobbit – An Unexpected Journey” in 3D with these funny glasses – rather, I am looking at an aerial photograph model combined with the data of the Multi-purpose Map, the digital city map of Vienna. The Multi-purpose Map (MZK) is based on two data sources: aerial photograph evaluation for the internal parts of urban blocks and terrestrial surveying for streetscapes.

My specialty is the evaluation of aerial photographs. Current aerial photos help me to revise the MZK by checking if anything has changed since the last version. I then add new buildings, fences, lawn edgings, light poles, trees and other objects and delete old, no longer existing content from the MZK. This is truly fascinating work. It demands precision because the MZK is the most important planning basis of the City of Vienna and hence continuously updated. Starting from the data stock generated by the MZK, our department creates other comprehensive databases for Vienna, such as the digital terrain model, the block model and the 3D city model.

The MZK provides the basis for the land use and development plan and the city map search function of the wien.at website that is used by many Viennese citizens. Evaluating aerial photographs is a strain on the eyes. Therefore I am always delighted when I get an opportunity to provide personal or phone advice to people turning to us for information.

Sandra Kieser, Municipal Department 41, Surveyors
Being a Part of Vienna’s Growth

One of the most important instruments of my work is a surveying device called the tachymeter, which serves to measure directions and distances. For all civil engineering projects, the surveyors are the first and last people on the construction site because no building can be properly erected without correct surveying.

At the outset of every construction project, the surveyors deliver the planning basics necessary for the planning and project phase and make sure that all relevant building regulations and land law provisions are complied with. Before and during the actual construction phase, we contribute to correct project execution by means of setting-out works and control measurements. And after completion of the construction phase, we survey the new building for documentation purposes.

We are also active on behalf of Vienna outside the city itself, since we monitor the Vienna Spring Water Mains by means of settlement measurements in areas prone to landslides. Another task of our department lies in legally ascertaining and defining the boundaries of properties owned by the City of Vienna. We conduct or assist in partition proceedings and boundary surveys. The documentation of provincial and district boundaries and the drawing-up of easement and compensation plans complement our remit in the field of land law-related surveying.

My work is very varied and enables me to proudly witness the continued growth of Vienna.

Dominik Kuzmits, Municipal Department 41, Surveyors
Vienna is growing, and so does its demand for dwellings, workplaces, green and open spaces as well as mobility. We see this as an opportunity to render Vienna even more liveable through a wide variety of measures. Behind the concepts, strategies and projects of Vienna’s urban planning departments, there are people – staff members – who discharge their duties with great passion. In offering concrete examples of the different fields of work, this brochure does not focus on urban planning projects but rather on the people who make them possible. Urban development is not an exclusively technical task. It calls for social competence, awareness of trends in society, a sound business sense, environmental consciousness as well as understanding for the great diversity of lifestyles in a city. If you want to learn more, please consult the supplementary information on the last page.

Maria Vassilakou, Deputy Mayor

Urban development and urban planning have a strong impact on the quality of life in our city. This brochure presents some of the people working in the field of urban planning who strive, through unceasing commitment and joy in their work, to safeguard Vienna’s standing as a prospering and dynamic city. Obviously, this cannot be done merely from the office but often requires direct, on-site involvement in a dialogue with experts and citizens. The tasks of Vienna’s urban development departments are much more varied than shown in this publication and range from interregional co-operation with the neighbouring federal provinces on key planning issues to the protection of valuable green and open spaces, from the drafting of strategic visions and superordinate concepts to diversified information and communication activities. The objective is to lay the foundations for tomorrow’s Vienna, so that future generations will continue to enjoy the same high quality of life.

Thomas Madreiter, Director of Urban Planning
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