

## Car-free model housing project in Floridsdorf, Vienna, Austria

### 1. Overview

The project "Autofreie Mustersiedlung" is the first car-free model housing project in Vienna. Since the beginning of construction in 1998, 244 new apartments were built, situated in the district of Floridsdorf. As one central condition, tenants committed to not use or own a car. Instead of building parking spaces for each household, only 20 parking facilities were constructed to be used as car-sharing and bicycle space.

Initiators and partners of the project were the city councillor of Vienna, Christoph Chorherr, the building promoter Domizil GmbH and GEWOG (Gemeinnützige Wohnungsbau GmbH) and the City of Vienna itself.

### 2. Activity description

#### Background and Objectives

The aim was to create a car-free housing project within Vienna. Good access to public transport services and car-sharing facilities in the settlement should guarantee mobility to the tenants, even without car ownership. Therefore the tenants of all 250 units had to sign a statement obliging them to comply with the car free rules.

The project was enabled by a change in legislation in 1996. Developers no longer had to stick to the 1:1 rule, which obligates them to build one parking space for each accommodation unit. Enabled by this amendment the building promoter constructed parking facilities in the proportion of 1:10.

The financial savings by not building a parking garage were used to create common facilities, such as common rooms, public laundry, solar water heating or green space. By implementing these activities, the residents' quality of life was increased.

#### Implementation

A developers competition was arranged in 1996 to award the building contract over a car-free model housing concept. The winner, GEWOG and DOMIZIL started the construction work in January, 1998. From then on, 244 housing units in nine different structures/houses could be finished, taking high social and ecological standards into consideration. Beside the car-free zone, green spaces, energy saving technologies and community facilities were part of the settlement. Tenants' participation in the planning process on the one hand, and at the management of the community facilities on the other hand, were the priorities.

To attract tenants and make them commit to the car-free environment, several alternative means of transport were implemented. So called bike-ports, lockable bike storage areas, were built together with a bike workshop. An estimation of 500 bicycles should be placed there.

As a permanent offer, the in-house car-sharing corporation DENZELDRIVE, offered a 24 hours service. In addition to that, the remaining parking spaces could be used for private car-sharing businesses.

One possible negative impact of a car-free life concerns shopping. This issue was taken into account in the planning stage by including a central shopping point and by contracting various supply services, thus offering convenient access especially to heavy everyday items such as beverages, washing and cleaning supplies. Today, there are two supply services, Bio-Wichtl and Maran, offering a free delivery.

Still, if individual tenants feel compelled to buy a car as a result of professional or personal changes, the assumption is that all tenants - on their own or together with the property developers - will come up with individual solutions.

However, the property developers are committed to preserving the high quality and the general objective of the car-free model housing project and will help those tenants forced to acquire a car at some point to change apartments quickly and cheaply.

### **Regulatory framework**

The project takes use of the "Gesetz über Anlagen zum Einstellen von Kraftfahrzeugen und über Tankstellen in Wien (Wiener Garagengesetz) 2004. This law enables the project to reduce the number of car parking spaces per housing unit to 1 per 10 housing units under the precondition that they substitute the need for accessibility instead of car parking spaces by alternative modes such as public transport access, bicycle facilities and Car-Sharing.

### **Obstacles**

One possible obstacle for a car-free life concerns shopping. This issue was taken into account in the planning stage by including a central shopping point and by contracting various supply services, thus offering convenient access especially to heavy everyday items such as beverages, washing and cleaning supplies.

### **Conclusions**

The Austrian "Wohnbund" carried out a survey concerning the satisfaction of the inhabitants living at the car-free estate. In 2000, 80% of all housing units have been rented out. They found out that the majority of the households have a car-free lifestyle. Only every fifth person has got a driving license, but more than 90% owns a permanent ticket for the public transport. One of five persons is using the car-sharing facilities. A car is used especially at the weekends, for shopping or other businesses, while the bicycle and the bus are the main means of transport to and from work.

All in all, the project is seen as innovative, particularly because of the tenants' participation and the car-free zone, but also because of the sustainability. One third considers great satisfaction with their apartment.

Though, it is striking that the main reason for moving in the estate is the existence of communal facilities. Car-free living is only for about half of the inhabitants (53%) the motivation.

### 3. Additional documents/ links

[www.smile-europe.org/locxpdo/pdfs/wien\\_car\\_free\\_housing.pdf](http://www.smile-europe.org/locxpdo/pdfs/wien_car_free_housing.pdf)  
[http://www.eltis.org/study\\_sheet.phtml?study\\_id=1089&lang1=en](http://www.eltis.org/study_sheet.phtml?study_id=1089&lang1=en)  
[http://www.gewog-wohnen.at/autofrei/af\\_broschure.pdf](http://www.gewog-wohnen.at/autofrei/af_broschure.pdf)

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### 6. Data origin

see additional documents

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