

Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize 2020 Laureate

Jury Citation¹

Vienna, Austria

Vienna is lauded for reinventing itself for success in the 21st century without losing its distinctive identity as a capital of culture, music and history. In particular, Vienna has taken on a leading role in addressing the global challenges of climate change. This remarkable success is achieved through steadfast dedication to constant and consistent improvements that are skilfully woven together to sustain the highest quality of life for all its inhabitants now and into the future.

The Austrian capital is the epitome of a holistic planning approach that establishes a clear and shared vision that is succinctly summarised in STEP 2025, the Urban Development Plan of Vienna. Before the framing of this plan, the city had completed a 21-kilometre-long flood protection channel in 1989 that now doubles as a closed waterbody for recreational activities during non-flood times and a large public park for everyone in the heart of the city. The environmental stewardship improved the flow and water quality of the Danube not only within the city, but also for the surrounding region. This has led to even stronger links among the city and neighbouring areas in meeting environmental goals while also generating a more competitive regional position in international markets.

Vienna has earned a singular reputation for its commitment to social housing which began in the mid-19th century, and continued through to the present day. The city is creating a broad variety of affordable housing choices and new communities as demonstrated in the redevelopment of Aspern Seestadt and Nordbahnhof. The active promotion of cycling and walking is complemented by an extensive public transit network that presents a wide spectrum of commuting options in the form of metro, trams and buses. By setting the price of an annual public transportation ticket at a very

¹ Facts and figures provided are accurate as of 2019.

affordable €365, or €1 per day, more people have chosen to give up their cars. As of 2018, there are more people owning an annual public transport ticket than a car. Today, to get around the city, 28 per cent of inhabitants walk, 7 per cent cycle, 38 per cent use public transport, and 27 per cent use motorised transport.

The Smart City Wien Framework Strategy initiated in 2011 is an exceptional, overarching blueprint that guides the sustenance and advancement of Vienna's distinctive high quality of life. The city has taken an enlightened view in integrating emerging technologies within the goals of the Strategy – which emphasises Quality of Life, Resource Efficiency and Innovation – by harnessing technology as an enabling tool to achieve long term social and environmental objectives. Vienna recognises the importance of social integration and thus puts the needs of its inhabitants at the forefront of priorities. The substantial efforts of the city to involve citizens and stakeholders in its development process from an early stage is applaudable. Creative ground-up efforts in the form of initiatives such as Grätzloase (Neighbourhood Oasis) provide platforms for citizens to shape public spaces, for example by transforming parking lanes into parklets that serve as communal anchors. The modest scale of these individual projects has considerable impact in helping to establish a durable culture of cooperation at the community level that complements the broad vision for Vienna and its region.

Despite its many successes in the past, Vienna continues to build on the strong foundations that have made it an attractive city where businesses and young people from the region are settling in. With a clear vision and well thought-out strategies for the short, medium and long term, Vienna is poised for many further decades of success and is truly an exemplary role model for cities looking to develop comprehensive and sustainable urban ecosystems.