

THE WIENER MASTERPLAN PARTIZIPATION – A RELIABLE SET OF RULES FOR PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING PROCESSES¹

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This article presents an overview of the Masterplan for Participatory Urban Development, which regulates informal citizen participation in urban planning and zoning processes in the city of Vienna. The regulations ensure opportunities for participation and early access to information. So far, the masterplan has been applied to over 70 projects and schemes, 165 events for citizens have been organized, and 1.3 million citizens have been reached.

Citizen participation on the basis of the Masterplan Participation has now become an elementary and standardized component of planning processes in Viennese District Planning. The application criteria formulated in the **Masterplan für eine partizipative Stadtentwicklung**² (Masterplan for Participatory Urban Development) allow for a comprehensible and transparent implementation of participation procedures in connection with urban planning; at an early stage, long before the formal prescribed information and formal opportunities to comment established by the Vienna building regulations. Citizens can contribute their needs and suggestions as early as the concept phase and city planners benefit from the local knowledge of those involved.

External factors require innovation

In recent years, there have been both technical and general external factors that have strongly influenced participation processes and necessitated innovative adjustments.

In technical terms, the **Stadtteilentwicklungskonzept** (District Development Concept) has established a new standard for the planning of districts which takes several development areas in consideration. It has already been implemented in many areas of the city. The Masterplan Participation proposes corresponding innovative formats such as

neighbourhood workshops accordingly to the complexity of the planning level.

Digital formats have become increasingly important as a result of the coronavirus crisis (physical distancing) and are now one of the standard participation tools used in planning-processes. This means that target groups who do not have the opportunity to attend an on-site event can also participate.

Those who are well informed can participate in a qualified manner

The underlying approach to public relations and participation processes today is an integrated approach that uses

analogue and digital methods in equal measure. This „cross-media combination“, which has been developed and optimized in recent years, ensures that as many target groups as possible are reached and can get involved.

Based on the methodological standards and extensions recommended in the Masterplan Participation the Viennese District Planning has built up an extensive analogue and digital toolbox that can now be used in a targeted manner and adapted to the respective project. This toolbox is constantly being developed further. Applied methods are reflected on and evaluated in a joint debriefing once the procedures have been completed.



In Rothneusiedel, the local population is closely involved – this ensures even better planning results

¹ Český překlad článku je uveřejněn na webových stránkách časopisu.

² <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/partizipation/masterplan/>

New digital tools open doors

Viennese District Planning has responded to the increasing use of the internet and significantly expanded and improved the digital information and participation offerings. **The Newsletter Beteiligung**³ (Newsletter Participation) makes it possible to stay up to date on specific projects. When registering, you can select the projects you are interested in. The Viennese District Planning uses the newsletter to send out invitations and documentations of citizen dialogue as well as updates on the respective project.

The digital toolbox also includes the **Online-Infostunde** (On-line Information Session), an interactive webinar format that is particularly useful in combination with an on-site event. The on-line format, which usually takes place the day before the on-site event, can be used to create a common information platform.

The Masterplan Participation mentions to provide an up-to-date and clear list of projects as a suitable measure for a continuous information base. The redesigned and improved **Vorhabenliste**⁴ (Project List) has been in place since autumn 2022. This ensures user-friendly information for citizens.

Broad scope of application at all levels

From January 2017 to October 2023, informal participation was carried out in 72 urban development projects (some of which ran for several years), 165 events were planned and organized for this purpose. As a result, over 1.35 million households received invitations and information on planning and participation processes.

Neighbourhood planning goes where the people are

Stakeholder participation is increasingly being supplemented by Viennese

The Viennese Toolbox for district planning includes the following analogue and digital methods:

Analogue methods	Digital methods
Dialogue exhibition with expert support	On-line survey
Outdoor exhibition with expert consultation hours	On-line dialogue event
Neighbourhood workshop	On-line information session
Neighbourhood walk – Field trip/Excursion	Newsletter Participation
Dialogue bike tour	Project list
Citizens round table	Participation platform of the city of Vienna
Future Team	
Information brochure/folder	
Project newspaper	
Invitation card with return option	

District Planning through outreach methods in order to directly address groups that do not attend events. Examples of low-threshold on-site events are dialogue bike tours or themed walks to the respective projects. Here, citizens can get involved spontaneously and in a low-threshold manner.

Stadtraum (Urban Rooms) is an anchor point for communication

In order to better support long-term planning projects, the Viennese Dis-

trict Planning sets up a **Stadtraum**. This place serves the population for information and participation in the planning process. For example there is the **Stadtraum am Nordwestbahnhof**⁵ (Urban Space Nordwestbahnhof) with a 3 × 3 meter digital model which plays a central role in the exhibition, showing the developments Nordwestbahnhof and Nordbahnhof (former Northwest Station and North Station). This „Urban Room“ can be used for meetings, workshops and citizen participation processes.



Photo © Stadt Wien

An important exchange of knowledge takes place during joint walks with experts through the urban development area

³ <https://www.wien.gv.at/newsletter/buergerinnenbeteiligung/>

⁴ <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtplanung/vorhaben-und-projekte>

⁵ <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtplanung/ausstellung-stadtraum-nordwestbahnhof>



Exhibitions during early planning stages support project communication and allow the public to actively participate and provide feedback

Participation formats with co-creative potential increase mutual understanding

For projects with many committed interest groups, a long-term planning horizon and several planning steps, a **Zukunftsteam**⁶ (Future Team) is set up. Citizens drawn by lot in a transparent process consult with representatives from science and civil society on the key issues of the planning project. The future team also acts as an interface between citizens and planners, for example by making representatives of the future team part of the jury for the urban planning competition.

The Future Team's innovative composition, including both nominated and randomly selected members, ensures a diverse representation of the community.

Local stakeholders, including citizen initiatives, and neighbouring associations, contribute their unique perspectives to the planning dialogue. This inclusive approach ensures that the Future Team reflects the demographic and social fabric of the planning area.

The Team serves as a vital bridge between the general public and urban planning authorities, with citizens acting as both mediators and multipliers within their communities. Through their active involvement in the planning process, team members share their experiences and knowledge, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities of urban development among residents.

One of the most significant achievements of the Future Team has been its ability to humanize the planning pro-

cess, giving a continuous face to community voices in the eyes of planners and jurors. By ensuring that individuals are represented rather than just their suggestions, the practice supports mutual understanding and empathy between stakeholders. This approach not only empowers citizens by demonstrating that their voices are heard but also enables planners to gain valuable insights into community priorities and concerns.

Quartierswerkstatt⁷ (Neighbourhood Workshop „Mitte 15“) has proven its worth for complex participation steps with a co-creative character. Here committed citizens can work on topics in small groups with the experts and contribute their concerns and ideas directly. The direct dialogue highlights different interests and increases mutual understanding.

Conclusion

As a set of rules, the Masterplan Participation anchors standards and principles such as the participation loop with invitation – participation – feedback. It makes neighbourhood planning decisions comprehensible for citizens. At the same time, the standards and principles make it possible to include innovative elements in the toolbox.

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ČESKÝ ABSTRAKT

Participace na územním plánu města Vídně (Wiener Masterplan Partizipation) – osvědčený soubor zásad pro participaci na územně plánovacích procesech, Andreas Baur, Alexandra Rupp-Ebenspanger

Tento článek prezentuje rámcový náhled na participativní územní plán rozvoje města, který upravuje neformální participaci občanů na procesech územního plánování a tvorbě územního plánu města Vídně. Pravidla zajišťují možnosti participace a včasný přístup k informacím. Participativní územní plán byl dosud uplatněn u více než 70 projektů a návrhů, bylo uspořádáno 165 akcí pro občany a osloveno 1,3 milionu obyvatel.

⁶ <https://rothneusiedl.wienwirdwow.at/zukunftsteam/>

⁷ <https://www.mitte15.at/rueckblick-auf-die-quartierswerkstatt/>