

# VIENNA

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## Smart Climate City Vienna Strategy

- **DURATION**

Ongoing

- **POPULATION 2024**

**1.990.000 (Growth Rate 0,76%)**

- **URA SCOPE**

**ECOLOGY.** Green Urbanism

**SOCIETY.** Staying Human

**ECONOMY** Urban Prosperity Beyond GDP

**STRATEGY.** Shared Vision

- **TOPICS**

**SUSTAINABILITY, INCLUSION,  
INNOVATION, CLIMATE NEUTRALITY**

- **MAIN ACTORS**

City of Vienna, Urban Planning and  
Development



In a world grappling with rapid urbanization, the climate crisis, and various modern challenges, the pursuit of sustainability requires more than isolated efforts. It demands a shared vision and a collective strategy that brings together everyone—residents, stakeholders, and policymakers. In a vibrant, bustling city, this "everyone" includes a diverse array of voices and perspectives. This shared vision evolves into a guiding framework—a target picture that outlines the path for change. Without clear goals, implementing meaningful measures, seizing opportunities, or navigating inevitable conflicts becomes impossible.

This is where the Smart Climate City Vienna Strategy comes in: a blueprint for a sustainable future. This ambitious initiative goes beyond being just a plan; it represents Vienna's comprehensive approach to sustainability, integrating every aspect of urban life. At its core is a bold commitment: to achieve climate neutrality by 2040. This year marks a significant milestone—the tenth anniversary of the initiative. Its latest evolution, adopted by the Vienna City Council in 2022, has made the strategy legally binding. With this endorsement, the Smart Climate City Vienna Strategy transitions from aspiration to action, establishing itself as a long-term framework for transformative urban development.

The mission of Smart City Vienna is to enhance the quality of life for all residents through social and technological innovation, while maximizing resource conservation. It aims to maintain Vienna's high living standards as the city introduces resource-saving innovations.

The message is clear: sustainability is not about sacrificing comfort; it is about redefining how we live, work, and innovate. At the heart of this strategy is a complex interplay of 74 goals across 11 target areas. This holistic approach does not just address isolated challenges; it integrates solutions that tackle the complexities of urban life. From mobility to energy, and housing to public spaces, each goal contributes to a larger vision. Supported by strong governance and a range of accompanying documents, this strategy creates a cohesive roadmap that bridges policy with practice. Every step taken brings us closer to the ultimate vision: a climate-neutral Vienna by 2040.

Vienna is not just liveable but a model for sustainable transformation. The Smart Climate City Vienna Strategy highlights the essential truth that the future of cities depends on collective ambition, innovation, and a commitment to a better tomorrow.



## Impact

Since the adoption of the Smart Climate City Vienna Strategy, Vienna has made significant strides in sustainability and climate action:

**Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions:** The strategy has effectively lowered greenhouse gas emissions by promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency, resulting in an approximately 85,000-ton reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for Vienna in 2023.

**Enhanced Public Transportation:** Investments in electric buses and new bike lanes are encouraging residents to use public transport. Twelve new subway stations will enhance connectivity, with the U5 line opening in 2026 and the extended U2 line in 2028. In 2023, €35 million was allocated for bike paths, with more projects planned for 2024.

**Increased Green Spaces:** Vienna is enhancing urban green spaces to boost biodiversity and recreation. A €100 million fund from 2021 to 2025 supports 228 climate adaptation projects, including new parks, more trees, and improved water features.

**Waste Reduction and Recycling:** Vienna's waste management reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 330,000 tonnes annually, with Department 48 effectively managing household waste through recycling and energy recovery.

**Water Management and Climate Protection:** The E\_OS project has transformed the Ebswien facility into an energy-positive wastewater treatment plant, generating more green energy than it consumes and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions by about 40,000 tonnes annually.

**Digital Transformation:** The BRISE project streamlines building permit processes using Building Information Modelling (BIM), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Augmented Reality (AR), leading to a fully digital approach that cuts processing times and costs.

**Community:** The Vienna Climate Team pilot project engaged citizens to collect 2,400 ideas for climate-friendly initiatives. A jury selected 53 projects for implementation, including green facades and energy communities.

**High Quality of Life:** By integrating technology with environmental and social considerations, Vienna maintains a high standard of living and sets a benchmark for sustainable urban development.

## The Challenge

Vienna faces significant challenges as it works towards a sustainable and inclusive future under its Smart City Strategy. One of the main challenges is reducing the city's greenhouse gas emissions, particularly in sectors not covered by the Emissions Trading System (ETS). Achieving ambitious reduction targets in these areas demands systemic change. The city's reliance on fossil fuels and its high per capita energy consumption makes the goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2040 even more difficult.

Another pressing issue is the city's material footprint. High levels of consumption and resource use mean that reductions of up to 50% are necessary by 2050. This presents challenges in balancing economic activity with environmental sustainability.

Vienna is committed to social inclusion, ensuring that its policies support all residents, especially children and young people, while addressing inequality.

The city aims to become a global innovation leader and Europe's digitalization capital by 2030, requiring substantial investments in technology, education, and infrastructure to stay competitive.

Lastly, Vienna must strive to preserve its globally renowned quality of life amidst rapid urbanization and climate change. The city needs to adapt while ensuring liveability and social cohesion for its residents.

## Solution Proposed

Vienna was one of the first cities to adopt a Smart City strategy that emphasizes not only technological advancements but also resource conservation and the quality of life for its residents. True to its people-first tradition, Vienna prioritizes inclusivity, ensuring that no one is left behind. The strategy outlines 74 goals across 11 target areas, providing a clear roadmap for a sustainable, innovative, and socially inclusive future. Among these goals, nine headline objectives serve as guiding principles for Vienna's transformation:

1. Enhance global quality of life and satisfaction.
2. Promote social inclusion in policymaking.
3. Make Vienna ideal for children and youth.
4. Cut greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2040.
5. Limit local emissions to 60 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents annually from 2021.
6. Decrease material footprint per capita by 30% by 2030 and 50% by 2050.
7. Reduce energy consumption per capita by 30% by 2030 and 45% by 2040.
8. Become a global innovation leader by 2030.
9. Position Vienna as Europe's digitalization capital, aligning with the UN 2030 Agenda and monitoring progress towards Smart City goals and SDGs.