

→ Webinar

# The Compact City: Densification and Housing (In)Justice

26 May

10:00 - 11:30 CEST

online



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UK Research  
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State Secretariat for Education,  
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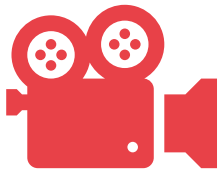
# Housekeeping Rules



Mute yourself when you are not speaking

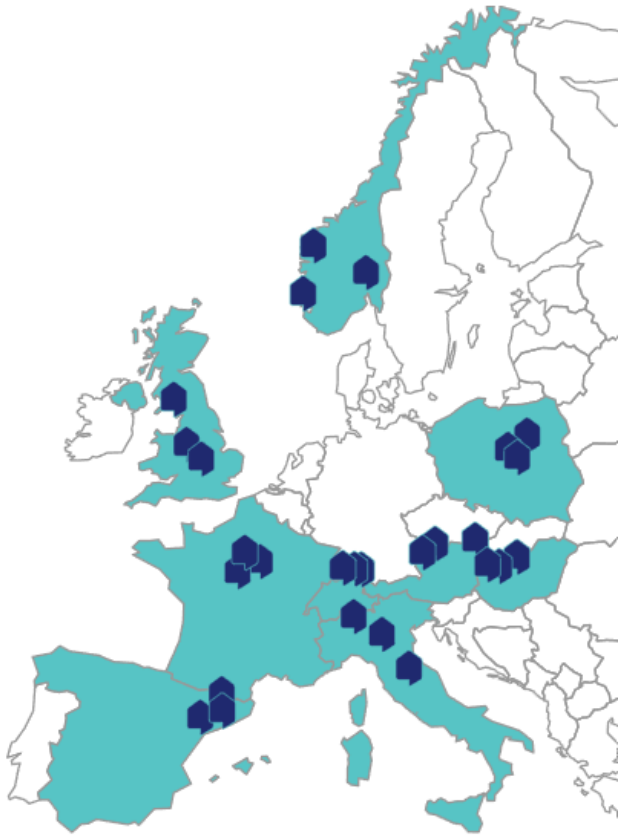


Raise your hand to ask a question (or write in the chat)



Keep your camera off if you don't want to be recorded

# ReHousIn: REducing HOUsing INequalities



## Main questions:

- How are housing inequalities evolving in the face of economic shifts, urbanisation, and the EU's green transition?
- What **policy approaches** can ensure affordability, inclusivity, and sustainability across different national and local contexts?

# ReHousIn: REducing HOUsing INequalities

**Analyses the (re)production of housing inequalities, including the impact of green interventions, across 9 countries in Europe.**

**Conducts 27 in-depth case studies in metropolitan regions, medium-sized cities, and rural areas to explore housing inequalities and local initiatives addressing them.**

**Engages policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders through workshops, webinars, and policy labs to co-create effective strategies.**

# Goals of the session

- Examine how urban densification influences housing affordability, social mix, and neighbourhood change;
- Discuss safeguards against speculative development, displacement, and exclusion;
- Identify regulatory and financial instruments that can support equitable and climate-resilient densification.

# Agenda



10:00 **Welcome and introduction**

10:10 **Introduction to ReHousIn Comparative Results**

Dr. Rebecca Cavicchia, Norwegian University

10:20 **What are the challenges and practices at the local level?** The case of Wien Nordbahnhofviertel

Dr. Michael Friesenecker, TU Wien

10:40 **Open Space and Q&A**

11:20 **Wrap up and Closing**



REDUCING  
HOUSING  
INEQUALITIES

# Green, dense and accessible for low-income residents? The Case of Nordbahnviertel, Vienna

Michael Friesenecker

future.lab Research Center for New Social Housing, TU Wien

TU Wien, 11 December  
2025



# Outline

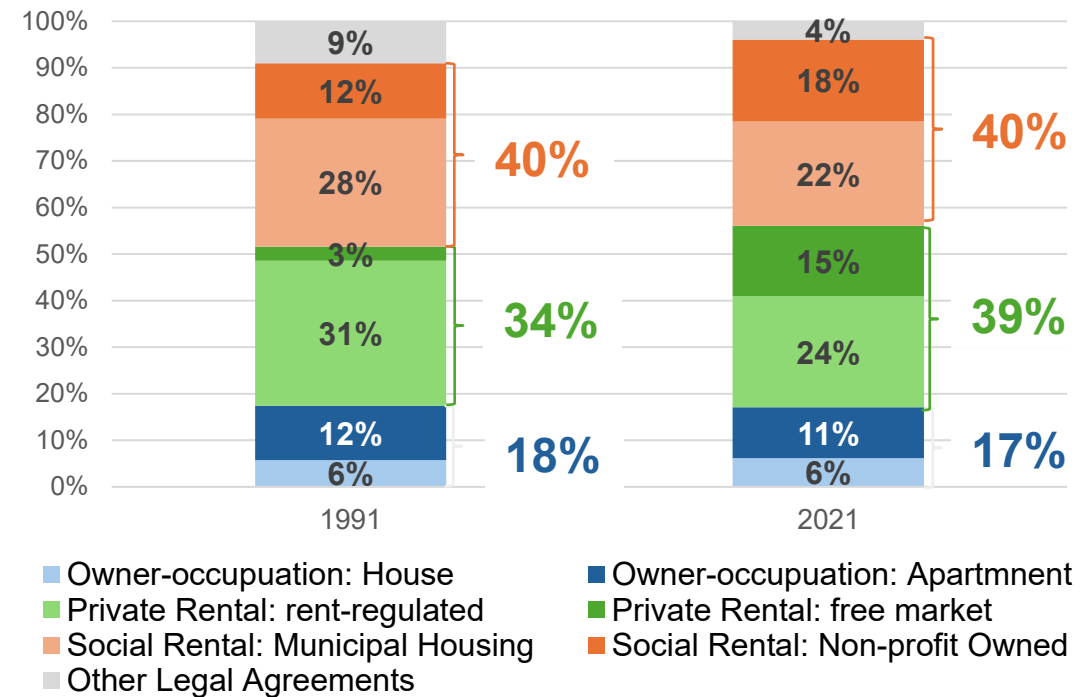
1. Brief contextualisation of Vienna and Austria
2. Case study: Nordbahnhof (NbS / Densification)
3. Conclusions

# Context, housing segments, and responsibilities within a federalist Austria

## Main context

- Strongly growing city (~500.000 since 1990s)
- Vienna = municipality & federal province
  - Full responsibility over housing subsidies since 2018
  - Full responsibility over urban planning instruments (zoning, etc.)

## Tenure structure of primary residences, Vienna



Source: compiled based on primary residences by authors, data from: STATcube – Statistical Database of Statistics Austria

# Actively expanding and maintaining it's social housing legacy

## 1. Public management and subsidised maintenance

- 220.000 municipal housing units distributed all over the city

## 2. Steering of 'Subsidised Social Housing'

- Zoning and Land Banking
- Housing subsidies: PPP, but strategic partnerships with Limited-Profit Housing Associations
- Developer Competitions to steer quality and environmental standards





# Climate mitigation and adaptation challenges and policies

- Enhancing Nature-based Solutions because of climate adaptation and biodiversity loss in new developments, via street greening and on buildings
- Densification challenges between population growth, soil sealing and the provision of NbS
- High energetic standards in new developments; in general also retrofitting and decarbonisation of the housing stock: replacing gas heating systems, energetic retrofits, etc.

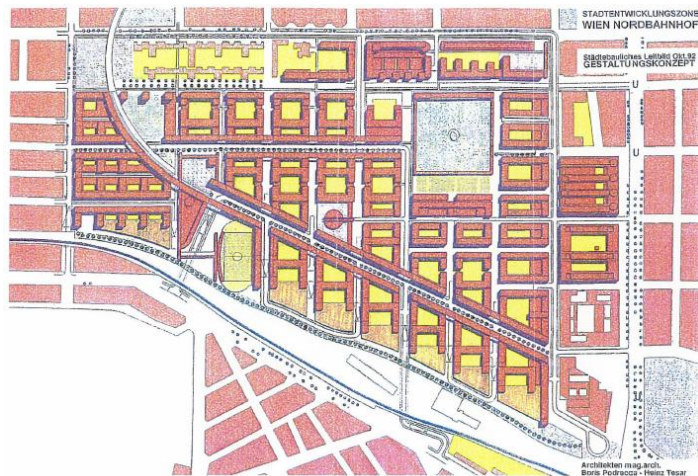
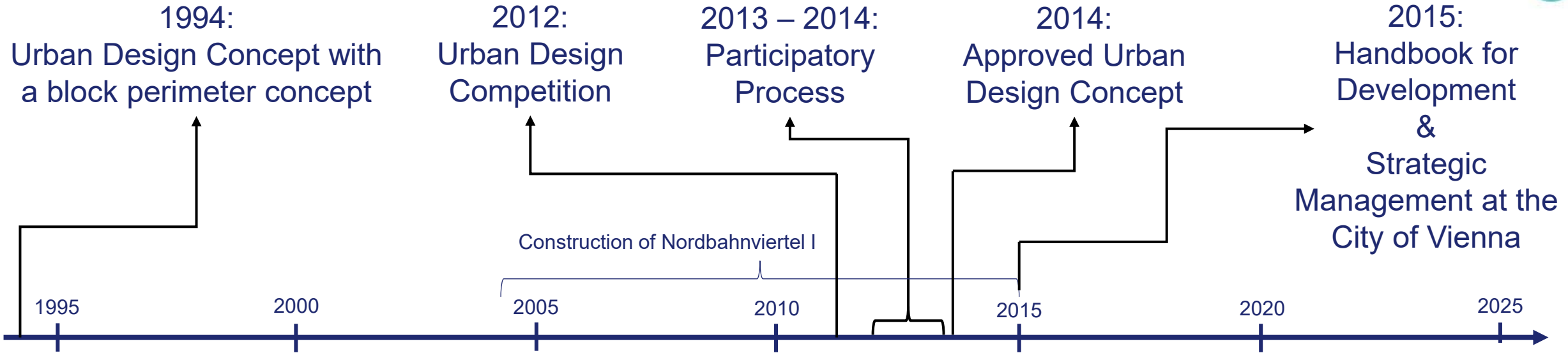


Source : Stadt Wien - ViennaGIS ; Kartengrundlage : Stadtvermessung (1.12.2025)

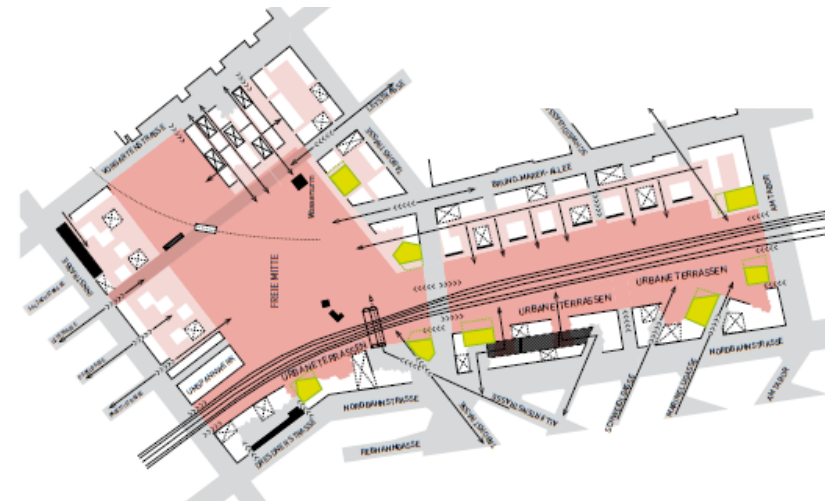
# Brownfield development: **NORDBAHNHOF**



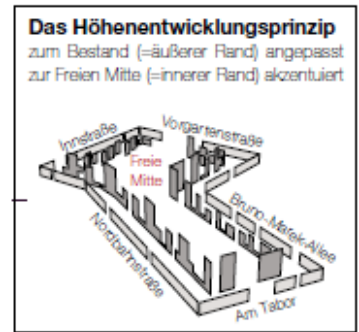
# Starting Point: Revision of Urban Design Concept



<https://www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma21/nordbahnhof-leitbild-1994.pdf>



<https://www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma21/nordbahnhof-leitbild-2014-lang.pdf>



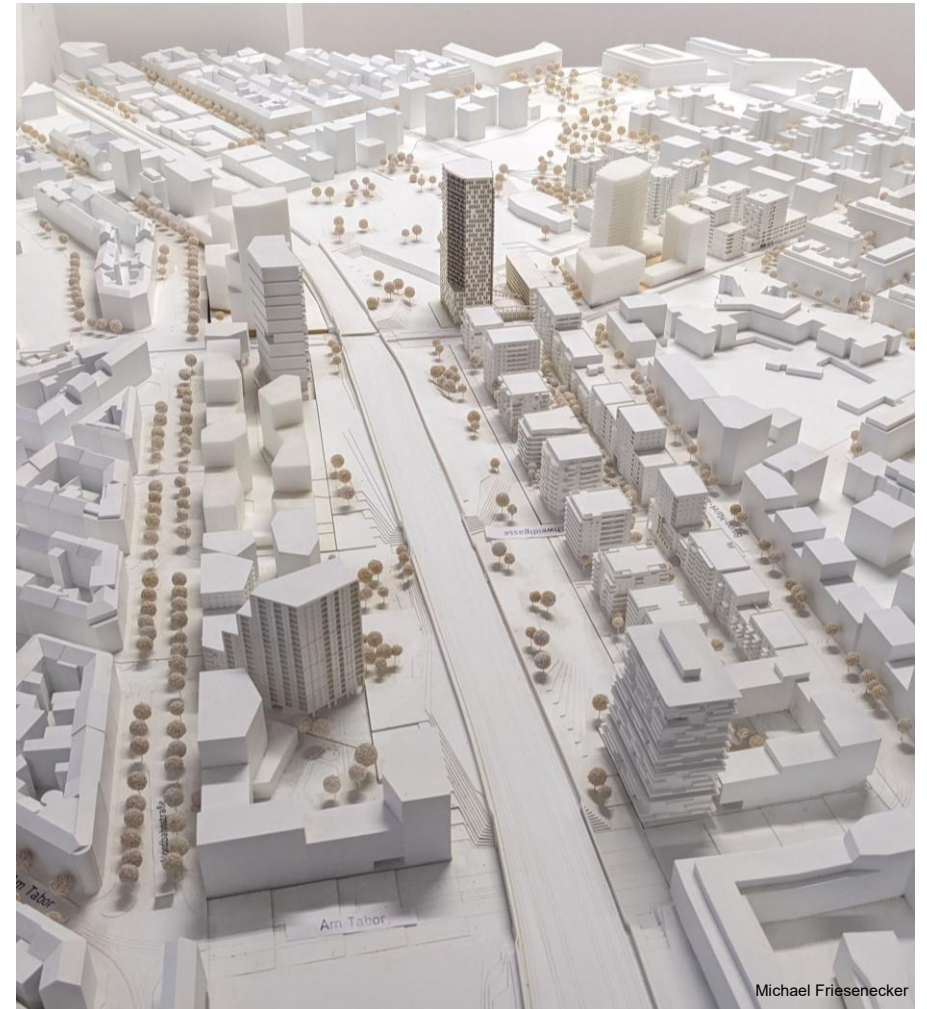
# Development of the “free centre”

- Revised concept argued that savings in road construction can be used to invest in the park → 10 ha of green space
- Detailed landscape planning concept in 2017/2018, with participatory elements = layered approach between wilderness and urban (landscaped) park
- Crucial role of residents and neighbourhood initiatives to demand coherence with the urban design concept
  - e.g., preservation of wilderness and historic landmarks where liability issues often dominate the discourses
- Administrative challenges between financing and ‘urban park’ and nature protection categories



# Development of the „built edge”

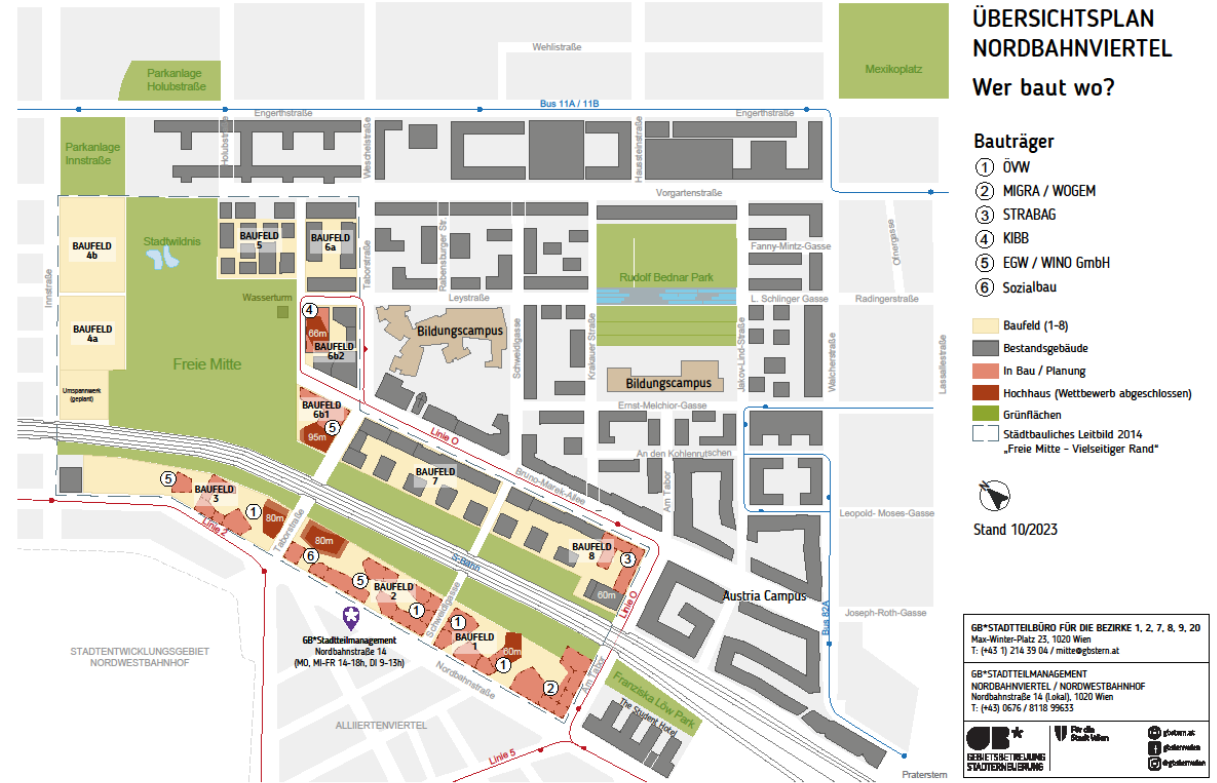
- **2016: Contractual foundations**
  - Framework agreement between the City of Vienna and Austrian Federal Railways (as property owner)
  - Contract between Austrian Federal Railways and property development consortium (consisting of housing developers)
- **Since 2017: Property development consortium gradually acquires and develops land from Austrian Federal Railways**
  - Detailing the development structure for 8 building lots in summary -> renegotiations led to a reduction of high rises to 6 instead of 8 originally planned
  - Introduction of architectural competitions and accompanying quality assurance advisory board
  - Zoning of plots following outcomes of architectural competitions supervised by an quality assurance advisory board



# Outcome: Mixed Housing Tenure?

## Aim: mixed-tenure for the whole Nordbahnhof

1. One-third free-financed
2. One-third 'affordable rent'  
Negotiated agreement with City of Vienna on rent cap (indexed with 2017 and higher in high-rises) but with unlimited contracts
3. One-third 'classic' subsidized rent including smart apartment



[https://www.gbstern.at/fileadmin/gb/mitte/\\_Archiv\\_18\\_23/2\\_STM\\_Nordbahnhof/el/Bauprojekte/UEbersichtsplan\\_Bautraeger\\_im\\_Nordbahnhof\\_v10\\_2023.pdf](https://www.gbstern.at/fileadmin/gb/mitte/_Archiv_18_23/2_STM_Nordbahnhof/el/Bauprojekte/UEbersichtsplan_Bautraeger_im_Nordbahnhof_v10_2023.pdf)

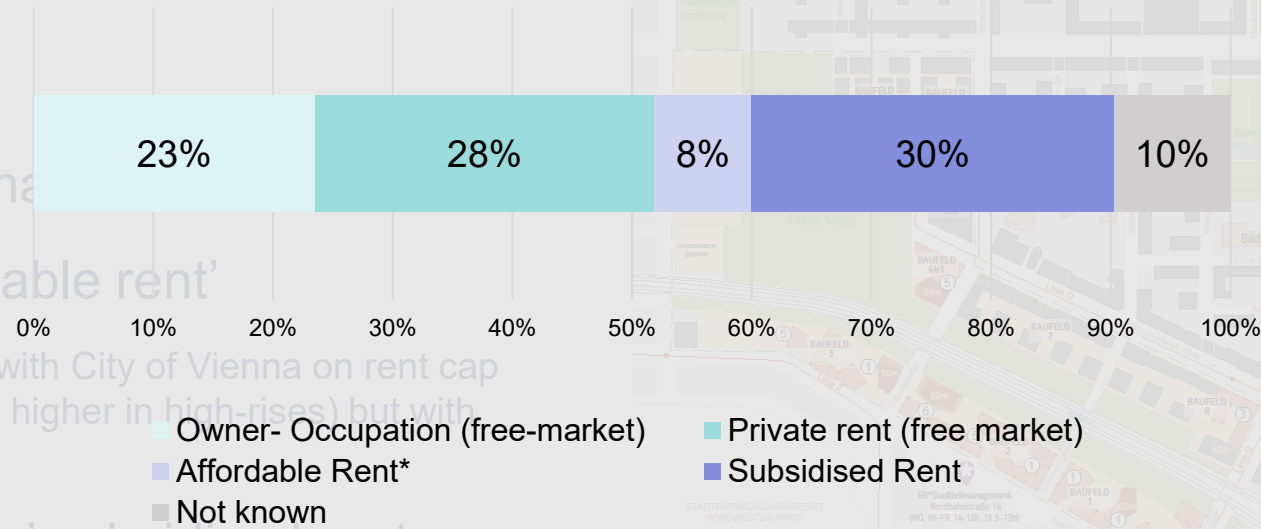
Source: own calculation, based on: <https://www.gbstern.at/themen-projekte/stadtteilmanagement-in-neubaugebieten/stadtteilmanagement-nordbahnhof>

# Outcome: Mixed Housing Tenure?

**Aim:** mixed-tenure for the whole Nordbahnhof

**Estimated tenure outcomes:**

1. One-third free-financed
2. One-third 'affordable rent' negotiated agreement with City of Vienna on rent cap (indexed with 2017 and higher in high-rises) but with unlimited contracts
3. One-third 'classic' subsidized rent including smart apartment



Source: own calculation, based on: <https://www.gbstern.at/themen-projekte/stadtteilmanagement-in-neubaugebieten/stadtteilmanagement-nordbahnhof>



[https://www.gbstern.at/fileadmin/gb/mitte/\\_Archiv\\_18\\_23/2\\_STM\\_Nordbahnhof/el/Bauprojekte/UEbersichtsplan\\_Bautraeger\\_im\\_Nordbahnhofviertel\\_10\\_2023.pdf](https://www.gbstern.at/fileadmin/gb/mitte/_Archiv_18_23/2_STM_Nordbahnhof/el/Bauprojekte/UEbersichtsplan_Bautraeger_im_Nordbahnhofviertel_10_2023.pdf)

Source: own calculation, based on: <https://www.gbstern.at/themen-projekte/stadtteilmanagement-in-neubaugebieten/stadtteilmanagement-nordbahnhof>

# Accessibility for lower-income groups?

Through the combination of location and tenure provided, accessibility...

... is skewed towards middle- and higher-income residents

... but an awareness and commitment by the developer consortium to provide housing to low-income residents

... a basic level for those groups is mostly realised via the instruments of 'subsidised' housing provided by limited-profit housing

... high quality and overall satisfaction with NbS and housing conditions





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# Thank you!

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## Learn more:

[www.ReHousIn.eu](http://www.ReHousIn.eu)



[ReHousIn - Reducing Housing Inequalities](#)



# Next events

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PRE FIGURE

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HOUSE INC  
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**The New European  
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housing in Europe**

BRUSSELS + ONLINE,  
JUNE 12, 09:30 TO 11:30

COME AND JOIN  
THE MAHERS OF CHANGE

These projects have received  
funding from the European

**12<sup>th</sup> of June, 2026, 09:30 – 11:30 CET**

**The New European Bauhaus and Housing  
Inequality: towards fair, inclusive and climate-  
resilient housing in Europe**





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# Thank you!

**Learn more:**

[benedetta.buccolini@iclei.org](mailto:benedetta.buccolini@iclei.org)

[www.ReHousIn.eu](http://www.ReHousIn.eu)

<https://www.youtube.com/@ReHousIn>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/rehousing/people/>



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