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Federal Ministry
Innovation, Mobility
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Republic of Austria

Climate future made in Austria

Pioneering towns and cities leading the way

More and more Austrian towns and cities are emerging as pioneers. Blazing a trail for sustainable development fit for the future, they are aiming to reach climate-neutrality, climate change adaptation and resilience by 2040 as part of the "Climate-Neutral City" mission. To this end, they are building skills in a targeted way and actively advancing their climate, energy and environmental measures through research, technology and innovation.

Photo: buero-magma.at – Bodensee-Vorarlberg Tourismus

Towns and Cities are shaping their climate-resilient future

Electric city bus, photo: City of Dornbirn; Solar power and Ringstrasse, photos: City of Krems; cyclists, photo: City of Feldkirch

Towns and cities of all sizes are currently working on pioneering strategies and measures for becoming climate-neutral as quickly as possible. In this role as pioneering cities, they are being supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Innovation, Mobility and Infrastructure (BMIMI) and the Climate and Energy Fund as part of the "Climate-Neutral City" mission.

Ten cities of over 50,000 people have joined the mission and established a "public-public" partnership (a partnership between multiple public authorities) with the BMIMI back in 2023. They are using the initiative to build extra staffing and organisational capacity and are devising strategies and tangible solutions for the energy transition, the mobility transformation and the circular economy. The pioneering cities have already created over 50 new jobs and recruited experts who are playing a key role in accelerating climate action at local level. In this issue we are exploring the strategies and concepts that Vienna, Salzburg, Dornbirn and Wiener Neustadt are devising and putting into practice.[1]

NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES

While this process has been going on, numerous smaller towns and cities (10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants) have also prepared climate neutrality roadmaps over the past few years with support from the Climate and Energy Fund.[2] These roadmaps contain bespoke solutions and recommendations for cutting local emissions and achieving climate neutrality as quickly as possible. The Climate and Energy Fund's call "Pioneering City – Partnerships for Future-Ready Small and Medium-Sized Cities", has enabled a fresh wave of ambitious cities to launch a public-public partnership already this year, using their larger counterparts as a blueprint. 13 pioneers from all four corners of the country (Eisenstadt, Krems, Tulln, Feldbach, Kapfenberg, Gleisdorf, Gratwein-Straßengel, Weiz, Judenburg, Steyr, Altmünster, Bregenz and Feldkirch) have made this step and are keen to take action to accelerate the implementation of climate protection, climate change mitigation and the circular economy. This issue includes project managers from four pioneering cities (Altmünster, Feldbach, Feldkirch and Krems) reporting on the challenges that they are facing and how exactly they are negotiating the path towards climate neutrality.

PIONEERING CITIES AS TEST BEDS FOR INNOVATION

The goal of the "Climate-Neutral City" mission is to encourage the development of pioneering solutions to the overall problem and showcase how it is possible in practice to live and do business in a resource-efficient and climate-neutral way. The cities are devising a wide range of highly practical measures and creating their first climate-neutral neighbourhoods. Working closely with the federal government also allows them to make the best possible use of numerous funding schemes and initiatives at national and European level. One major area of focus is the systematic exchange of information amongst the cities, with targeted assistance being provided for networking and shared learning efforts as part of a comprehensive support process. This is enabling the pioneers to share experiences, tried-and-tested technologies and findings from pilot and demo projects, thus transforming them into valuable learning environments that can benefit many other local authorities in Austria as well.

klimaneutralestadt.at/en/initiatives/pioneer-cities/

orte-von-morgen.at

[1] The other major cities (Graz, Linz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, St. Pölten and Villach) were covered previously in our eia issues eia 4/24 and 4/25.

[2] Some smaller towns and cities (Lienz, Tulln, Eisenstadt, Judenburg, Ternitz, Bregenz, Gratwein-Straßengel, Steyr) were also presented in these issues.

DORNBIRN

Market square in Dornbirn, photo: Arno Meusburger/Dornbirn Tourismus-Stadtmarketing GmbH; CampusVäre, photo: City of Dornbirn

Climate protection with a healthy dose of common sense

Dornbirn is working rigorously to drive its climate protection policy forward, building on a strategy that began as many as 25 years ago. Now, the city is busy developing binding standards that will cover all areas of local government and are clearly aligned with the target of becoming climate-neutral by 2040. Dialogue with other towns and cities is providing key impetus for these efforts.

Climate protection and the environment have been an integral part of Dornbirn's administrative setup and policymaking for some decades now. The city adopted a dedicated environmental programme and binding environmental mission statement as long ago as 1998 and has been a certified e5 municipality under Austria's national programme for energy-efficient and climate-active communities since 2002. Dornbirn was also one of the first Austrian cities to integrate a climate relevance audit into the process for drawing up its budget. This requires all projects to be assessed for their impact on climate targets right from the outset when expenditure for the coming year is being planned.

"This is all about following the principle of economic common sense," explains Thomas Pieber, head of the Pioneering City: Mission Climate Neutrality project. "Especially when budgets are tight, it's our duty to weigh up investments not only in terms of acquisition costs but also based on their total life-cycle costs."

BUILDING SKILLS

The partnership with the BMIMI has enabled "pioneer" job roles to be created in the city's departments for structural engineering, civil engineering and urban planning. Rather than being seen as a standalone task for a single environmental department, climate protection issues are directly integrated into the city's planning processes. The newly appointed specialists are contributing specific expertise and strengthening links and cooperation between the individual departments. "We want this integrated approach to have become second nature within three years, which is how long the funding runs for," Pieber says.

DRIVEN BY DIALOGUE

Sharing experiences with other towns and cities and learning from one another are both key components of the "pioneering cities" initiative. Right at the start of the project, a delegation from Dornbirn made up of policymakers and representatives from administration headquarters visited the Dutch city of Utrecht, which is regarded as a pioneer in sustainable urban development. They returned from their trip convinced that the path to climate neutrality requires clear objectives for policymakers and administrators that will enable progress to be assessed impartially. At the same time, it is important to get active quickly and have the courage to try out new concepts. "You don't always have to unleash the technically perfect high-end solution straight away," Thomas Pieber points out. "You often get more out of putting pragmatic measures in place quickly and trying things out within the urban space itself instead of spending years at the drawing board."

CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN A PILOT NEIGHBOURHOOD

Dornbirn's Campus district is serving as a "living lab". An existing neighbourhood, it is home to the city's hospital, a number of Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences buildings, the company Meisterbäcker Ölz and the former industrial halls of the textile manufacturer F.M. Hämmerle, amongst other things. The city intends to work together with many various stakeholders to initiate solutions for the neighbourhood's sustainable development that can be easily reproduced elsewhere. The city council has purchased five of the derelict industrial halls.

A key role is being played by "CampusVäre",[1] an active municipal organisation that has been driving the renovation and sustainable use of Hall 4. It is intended to become a centre for innovation, the creative industries, art and culture – complete with offices for creative businesses as well as event spaces, bars and restaurants. The renovation of the hall stuck rigorously to a concept that is compatible with the circular economy, the aim being to reuse as much of the material already available on site as possible and to only use recyclable components. The offices were made from local timber, designed as insulated boxes and arranged in a "box-in-the-box" system around the atrium. This meant that the hall itself did not need insulating, thus saving a significant amount of money and resources.

klimaneutralestadt.at/en/projects/pioneer-cities/pioneer-city-dornbirn.php

[1] www.c-i-v.at/de/umbau-fertig-los

City of Salzburg, photo: Climate and Energy Fund/Jürgen Zacharias

SALZBURG

A climate strategy with focus on a balanced society

Salzburg City Council adopted its climate roadmap for 2040 in October 2025, and actual implementation is now getting under way. The city authorities are keen to ensure that this transformation process is socially responsible and to get housing developers, energy suppliers, businesses and the general public actively involved. In its "Goethesiedlung" pilot neighbourhood, a new neighbourhood hub will serve as a central interface for bringing projects and stakeholders together.

The major challenge here lies in moving quickly from planning to delivery. By formulating Salzburg's climate roadmap for 2040, it became clear that the implementation of many measures does not lie solely within the city's sphere of responsibility. Rather, root-and-branch structural changes require numerous stakeholders to work together and citizens to get actively involved. Salzburg's climate roadmap was deliberately designed as a "living document", meaning that it can be updated on an ongoing basis and adapted as new findings and developments emerge.

"We want to devote more attention to social sustainability this year," explains Pia Schauz, head of the "pioneering city" project. "This all-encompassing project will only be a success if we take all the locals along on the journey with us and if everyone is able to afford this transformation, e.g. in the areas of building renovation and mobility."

BUILDING CAPACITY AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

The partnership with the BMIMI has enabled the city administration to recruit extra staff, who are building capacity in a targeted way and driving key issues of the climate transformation. The new roles are based in various specialist departments, including Construction (energy, buildings), Spatial Planning (neighbourhoods, mobility) and Operations (waste management, circular economy). In terms of the administration's day-to-day work, therefore, the climate targets are being placed front and centre.

"Besides this start-up financing, the other national and international funding and innovation programmes are also proving very helpful for us. We're using them for RTI projects, in order to achieve the energy and mobility transformation faster," Schauz says. Another key benefit of the public-public partnership is the dialogue being conducted about innovative solutions, examples of best practice and new standards as part of the support process.

"The integrated approach and the sharing of knowledge amongst the pioneering cities are making the project particularly valuable for us."

A DIGITAL TOOL FOR CARBON FOOTPRINTS

The City of Salzburg is currently trialling Climate View, a web-based planning and monitoring tool that provides a standardised method for logging climate neutrality roadmaps digitally and structuring them so that they can be reviewed efficiently using KPIs and updated if there are any gaps in their implementation. Greenhouse gas emissions are mapped in a structured way by sector, while various scenarios and reduction pathways can be simulated, linked to specific actions and quantified in terms of their carbon emissions. On this basis, progress can be monitored using key performance indicators, and measures can be adjusted as needed. As Pia Schauz explains: "This gives us the evidence we need to see where we have to adjust course or pick up the pace in order to achieve our climate targets."

Recycling centre open day, photo: City of Salzburg, Susi Berger/Camera Suspicta

Goethesiedlung, image: City of Salzburg

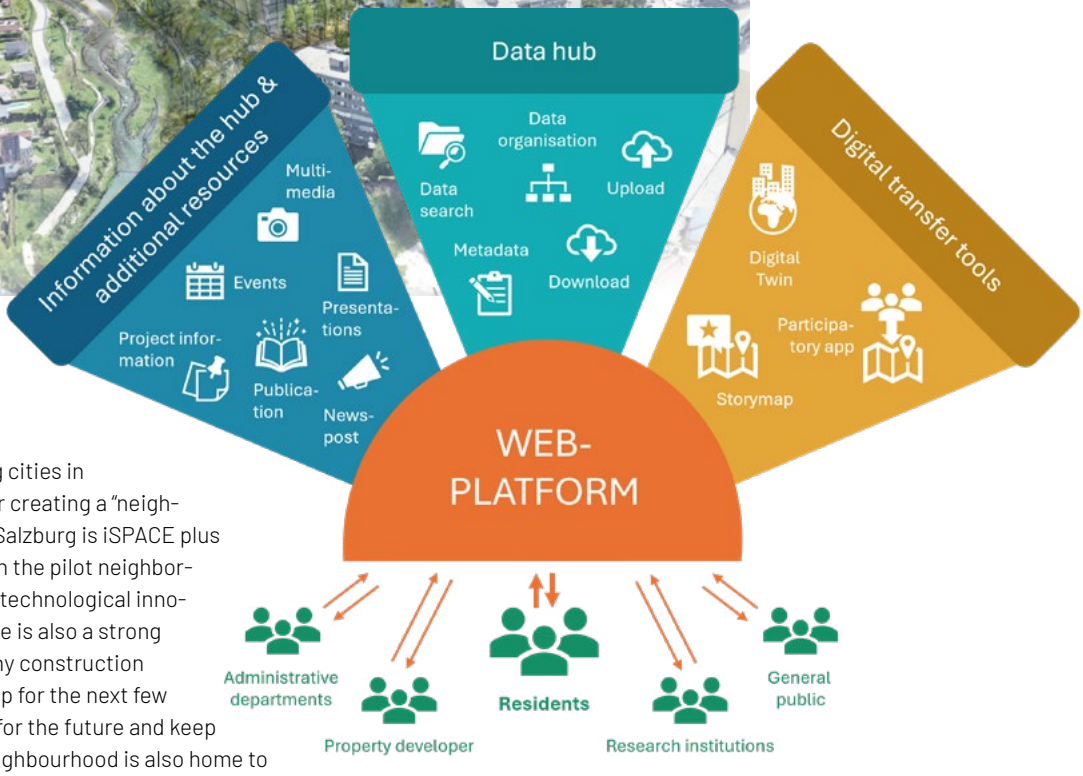
CONNECTING IT ALL: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HUB

Salzburg is one of three pioneering cities in Austria to have secured funding for creating a "neighbourhood hub". Project partner in Salzburg is iSPACE plus GmbH. In the district of Itzling, with the pilot neighborhood Goethesiedlung, not only are technological innovations tested in practice, but there is also a strong focus on social issues. A great many construction and renovation projects are lined up for the next few years in order to make the area fit for the future and keep it so over the long term. Yet the neighbourhood is also home to many people from particularly vulnerable groups that will be directly affected by the changes that are planned. This means that inclusive solutions are needed, e.g. for residents who will need to move out of their homes temporarily during renovation work.

An extensive analysis of the social environment was carried out for the Goethesiedlung before the project even got under way, and a number of fundamental recommendations for mobility, green spaces and social cohesion in the neighbourhood have already been identified based on a residents' survey. The plan is for the neighbourhood hub to act as an innovative link between the administration, neighbourhood management, businesses and the general public and support both the implementation of measures and the processes of participation.

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY – A CROSS-CUTTING TOPIC

When the climate roadmap was being drawn up, it became clear that the issue of the circular economy affected all areas of the city. There are numerous overlaps, e.g. with regard to sharing models, the use of recyclable materials and product life-cycle analyses. One priority will be to establish sustainable, circular procurement firmly across the board, an area in which Salzburg is keen to learn from other pioneering cities and devise and implement suitable criteria and processes.



Knowledge and innovation transfer at the Itzling neighbourhood hub, source: iSPACE plus GmbH

LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD HUBS

Capacity and skills are being built up in local neighbourhood hubs in a targeted way to help bring about climate-neutral, climate-resilient urban quarters. These hubs are creating a productive environment for innovation, trials, networking, monitoring, data management, research and knowledge transfer. They are serving as a central point of contact for all stakeholders as well as facilitating RTI, trial and practical projects, enabling learning and experimentation in a hands-on context, and allowing knowledge to be shared with other urban quarters.

klimaneutralestadt.at/en/projects/pioneer-cities/salzburg.php

City Hall, photo: Markus Wache, City of Vienna

Photo: Bubu Dujmic, City of Vienna

WieNeu+ neighbourhood event, photo: Markus Wache, City of Vienna

VIENNA

Innovative impulses for a climate-resilient and socially equitable development

Within the "pioneering city" initiative, Vienna is focusing on leveraging synergy effects in order to lend maximum support to the city's ongoing projects and develop them further. The topics range from calculating municipal greenhouse gas balances, refurbishment, phasing out fossil fuels and how to make the administration climate-neutral through to long-term process changes in the administration's structure.

With the Smart Climate City Strategy adopted in 2022 and the Vienna Climate Roadmap, Vienna has defined how the city aims to become climate-neutral and climate-resilient by 2040. Its partnership with the BMIMI as part of the "Climate-Neutral City" mission is being delivered jointly by politicians and administrators via the "Vienna – climate pioneering city" programme and managed by the Chief Executive Office - Director's Office for Climate Affairs.

"We're focusing on municipal governance that's relevant to the climate, on innovative concepts for transforming neighbourhoods and on learning together quickly and systematically," explains Pia Minixhofer, who heads up the "Vienna – climate pioneering city" programme. "Everything we're doing is aimed at gradually making Vienna energy- and resource-efficient, entirely in line with its climate targets."

ENSHRINING CLIMATE NEUTRALITY IN LAW

Vienna became Austria's first province to pass its own Climate Act in 2025. The law enshrines the twin targets of achieving climate neutrality and a climate-neutral administration by 2040 and comprises three main pillars: climate protection, climate change adaptation and the circular economy. This has given the city's existing climate policy strategies and instruments a legal framework. The law also emphasises the cooperation between research institutes, civil society, the private sector and regional authorities.

TOOLS AND MEASURES OF RELEVANCE TO THE CLIMATE

The City of Vienna has already come up with a wealth of climate-related tools and measures and is actively working on embedding these in its administration on as broad a basis as possible. They include a dedicated climate budget and climate council as well as "climate checks". The city council uses its climate budget to decide which climate-related actions and instruments it will include in its next budget cycle.

Vienna's Climate Council[1] was formed to advise the city's policy-makers and administrators on devising climate policy initiatives. It is made up of three groups ("boards") that work together in different combinations and includes more than 40 active members

in total. The core consists of an independent group of high-ranking Austrian and international experts from academia and research (the "advisory board"). They advise Vienna's mayor and the city councillors on climate policy challenges and potential countermeasures.

The aim of the climate check for laws and regulations[2] is to assess impacts on climate-relevant areas already during the drafting stage. A readily accessible and easy-to-use tool that draws on the work done jointly with the federal provinces and the Environment Agency Austria helps the department responsible conduct its review. The aim of the climate check for construction projects[3] is to ensure that Vienna's climate targets are taken into account as early as possible when large-scale building projects are being planned and examine whether they can be optimised to this end.

Another key project covered by Vienna's Climate Act is the city's Climate Alliance,[4] which is geared towards securing long-term cooperation amongst the city administration, local businesses

Thaliastraße, photo: Martin Votava, City of Vienna

and other key stakeholders on the ground. The focus here is on devising solutions that help to meet the climate targets and that can be directly influenced by the companies and municipal entities taking part.

PILOT NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR THE ENERGY AND MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION

Selected neighbourhoods in Vienna are being evaluated against a number of climate criteria and a joint effort made to determine how to accelerate their transformation. Besides the energy transition, Vienna also needs to achieve a transformation in mobility and resource use. And, since the measures required vary from place to place, the pilot neighbourhoods have set themselves different priorities.

Cycling in the city, photo: Peter Provaznik, Mobilitätsagentur Wien

"The overarching teamwork that's going on in the programme is particularly evident at neighbourhood level," Minixhofer says. "One of the key benefits of the 'Vienna – climate pioneering city' programme lies in its integrated approach: insights are examined collectively, and we're all learning together how to achieve the necessary transition to a climate-neutral, climate-resilient and resource-efficient future."

One of these neighbourhoods is the "Alliiertenviertel"[5] in Vienna's 2nd district. As part of the WieNeu+ urban renewal programme, regular fact-finding events and local walks are being organised on the topics of building renovation, funding schemes, housing improvement, expanding and upgrading district heating, and depaving inner courtyards. The aim is to give the area the best possible preparation by 2028 for meeting its climate neutrality target through tailored measures and direct dialogue with tenants and homeowners. The "Climate Pioneers" campaign implemented in 2025 in the Alliiertenviertel highlighted these efforts and selected neighborhood projects.

Alongside financial support for innovative construction measures as part of the WieNeu+ local funding scheme, property owners are personally advised and supported with their renovation and decarbonisation projects. The aim is not only to encourage them to switch from gas to alternative energy carriers but also to strengthen social cohesion at community level.

klimaneutralestadt.at/en/projects/pioneer-cities/klimapionierstadt-wien.php

[1] www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/klimarat

[2] www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/klimacheck-gesetze

[3] www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/klimacheck-bauvorhaben

[4] www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/klima-allianz

[5] wieneuplus.wien.gv.at/alliiertenviertel-ist-klimapioniergebiet

Solar panels covering spaces at the Aqua Nova car park, city hall, cycle training track, photos: City of Wiener Neustadt/Michael Weller

WIENER NEUSTADT

Setting the course for a climate-neutral future

Wiener Neustadt has already done some important groundwork and has devised its own climate neutrality roadmap. As part of the partnership with the BMIMI, more staff have been taken on who are devoting all of their time to climate neutrality in a range of areas: urban development, transport, environment, climate and energy. The city wants to create conditions conducive to climate-friendly development while also preserving a high quality of life for its residents.

Wiener Neustadt has been benefiting from an exchange of knowledge with other Austrian cities ever since the "pioneering city" project got under way. This network is extremely important, as project manager Raimund Wiesinger emphasises: "As part of the accompanying process, we're working together in focus groups on issues like neighbourhood development and sustainable mobility with the support of our scientific partners."

"This is enabling us to find out what other cities know about relevant issues and apply it to Wiener Neustadt very quickly, and vice versa. In my opinion, this is the great strength of the 'pioneering cities' partnership," explains Raimund Wiesinger.

LAYING THE PERFECT FOUNDATIONS

Wiener Neustadt had already developed a climate neutrality roadmap in the previous project with support from the Climate and Energy Fund[1]. This roadmap sets out numerous measures relating to mobility, energy, waste management and the circular economy as well as planning and governance. One key finding from this process has been that, although the city is unable and unwilling to interfere in the everyday lives of its citizens, it has a duty to foster the best possible environment and incentives for them to live a climate-friendly life.

[1] Wiener Neustadt initially began developing a climate neutrality roadmap as part of a Climate and Energy Fund's call for small and medium-sized cities. As its population at the time was just near to 50,000 inhabitants, the city then took the opportunity to enter into a Pioneering-Cities-Partnership for major cities with the BMIMI.

DRIVING THE ENERGY AND MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION

In the transport sector, the city prioritizes the development of offerings that facilitate a more convenient shift from private car use to sustainable mobility options. This includes promoting cycling and expanding the local bus network.It is currently working on a city-wide mobility app that shows users ride-sharing options at a glance. The energy transition is a key area of focus. Wiener Neustadt has significantly intensified its efforts to harness more solar power in recent times, including building a large open-space PV system on an old dumping site for railway ballast and covering the parking spaces outside the municipal indoor swimming pool with solar panels. The city currently generates a total of 2,200 kWp from solar and is aiming to gradually decarbonise its energy requirements even further over the next few years. Work is also under way on a municipal energy plan so that future fields of action can be identified and measures conducive to a sustainable energy supply can be planned.

FLAGSHIP PROJECT: ALTES RATHAUS

The city centre has been chosen to serve as a pioneering neighbourhood. At its heart is the "Altes Rathaus", or "Old City Hall" – a historic building that is to undergo extensive renovation in the next few years to make it climate-friendly. The big challenge here lies in ensuring that the requirements associated with the building's listed status are met. Together with the city's construction department, innovative solutions and measures are currently being devised that will preserve the listed building while enabling modern energy standards and a high level of user comfort. With the renovation of its "Altes Rathaus", Wiener Neustadt wants to deliver a flagship project and thus serve as a blueprint for other owners of listed buildings in the city centre.

klimaneutralestadt.at/en/projects/pioneer-cities/wiener-neustadt-klimaneutral.php

ALTMÜNSTER

New paths for the energy transition

Photo: Alexander Strobl

The market town of Altmünster is one of the first local authorities in Upper Austria to have devised a comprehensive municipal climate strategy. A central area of action within this is the transition of heat supply to renewable energy sources. The municipality is currently weighing up the option of a geothermal heating network, which also includes investigating whether it can harness heat from the Traunsee lake.

The current climate balance clearly shows that phasing out fossil fuel heating systems is one of the most important tasks for Altmünster. Many of its homes and public buildings still use gas. As part of the work done on its climate neutrality roadmap, the town council therefore analysed various scenarios for achieving a sustainable heating supply. Whilst a local heating network could prove economically viable in the city centre, individual heat pump systems are regarded as a potential alternative in other parts of the market town.

"We're keen to sound out the potential for a future local heating network in Altmünster as part of a research and implementation project," explains Alexander Strobl from the Environmental Department, lead on the "pioneering city" project. "This also includes establishing whether lake heat from the Traunsee can be used to heat buildings."

PROGRESS IN RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY

In recent years, Altmünster has achieved a great deal in terms of clean electricity and has done much to drive forward the expansion of solar power. With an installed capacity of some 459 kWp, the city of 10,000 can cover a significant proportion of its local electricity needs itself. The market town belongs to an energy community together with four of its neighbouring municipalities in Upper Austria. Nearly 300 households are already members of this network and are able to use and share renewable electricity across municipality boundaries.

FOCUSING ON E-MOBILITY AND STORAGE SYSTEMS

At the same time, the municipality is also working on another project for the future, namely developing an integrated energy system. The focus here is on coming up with a smart way to link charging infrastructure for electric vehicles with energy storage systems so that surplus electricity from the PV systems can be stored temporarily and fed into the grid to support it when needed. The long-term objective is to develop a charging and storage infrastructure with intelligent control, a project that would also involve the energy community. Various models, including some with focus on civic participation, are being explored to secure funding.

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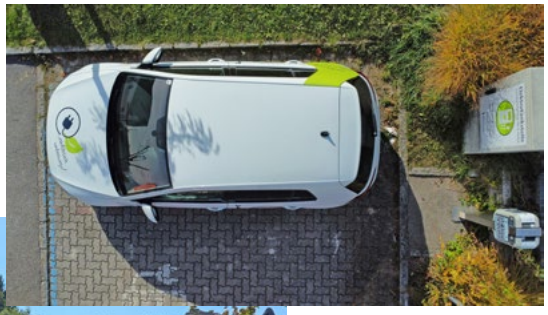
230 kWp PV system, Neukirchen primary and nursery school, photo: Alexander Strobl



E-charging station, photo: Alexander Strobl

Cyclists, photo: Alexander Strobl

Pop-up event on Hafnerplatz, photo: City of Krems

KREMS

New tools for climate protection

The city of Krems wants to make its administration climate-neutral by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality in all areas of life and the economy by 2040. One milestone along the way has been the development of a climate relevance tool for assessing municipal decisions, which has also been rolled out across Austria.

"Our climate neutrality roadmap has enabled us to identify what the main levers are, giving us a strategy to pursue over the next few years," says Stefanie Widhalm, head of the "pioneering city" project. "The roadmap is designed as a living document and shows us where we're at now, what we want to achieve and where we need to start."

As part of its "pioneering city" partnership, Krems is setting up a climate office and recruiting additional specialists in construction and the circular economy. For several years now, Krems has been using a new tool – developed together with the Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria – to review all municipal council and city council decisions in advance for the impact that they will have on the climate.

DRIVING THE ENERGY AND MOBILITY TRANSFORMATION FORWARD

With the human factor playing a key role in the transformation process, the city is sharpening its focus on raising awareness, not least through measures aimed at its council staff. A great many steps have also already been taken on the infrastructure front, with several council-owned buildings being fitted with solar panels in recent years. The electricity generated is used as locally as possible via an energy community, while electricity storage systems and energy management systems could help to optimise the system further in the future. Another priority is refurbishing public buildings to make them more thermally efficient. In the mobility sector, meanwhile, the transformation is beginning with the city's fleet of vehicles, which are to be gradually converted to electric.

POP-UP EVENTS AS A TEST

The planned redevelopment of Hafnerplatz in Krems city centre was initially broached with a pop-up event that made use of "tactical urbanism" methods in collaboration with the University for Continuing Education Krems. To enable locals to see for themselves what the planned traffic-calming measures would look like, one street was closed temporarily and the "Hafnerfest" festival was put on alongside various hands-on activities. Residents were also asked about what they thought and what they wanted to see. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and the city is now planning to use this method to trial other projects in advance.

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FELDBACH

Keeping quality of life high while minimising energy and resource consumption

Photo: Municipality of Feldbach

With its climate action model, the municipality of Feldbach is facing up to the challenges presented by the climate and energy transition. Its integrated approach encompasses numerous measures relating to buildings and energy, water, sustainable mobility and the resilient city.

Feldbach is now starting to implement the climate prevention model that was developed together with the Lokale Energie Agentur (Local Energy Agency, or LEA) and that contains 33 specific measures across four fields of action. The city's long-term target is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to almost zero by 2040, a process of transformation that is involving all departments on the town council.

"The funding scheme is enabling us to provide staff to handle the overall design for the programme's implementation over the next three years and kick off a learning process across the entire administration and amongst the general public," explains Robert Schmidt, who heads up the Property Management, Energy and Climate department.

REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

The municipality's 72 properties consume around 3 GWh of electricity and 6 GWh of heat, and targeted measures – such as insulating ceilings – are aimed at reducing this energy demand. The biggest energy consumer is the city's indoor swimming pool, which is to

>>>> continued on next page

undergo extensive refurbishment over the next three years to make it more thermally and energy-efficient.

With its photovoltaics masterplan, the city intends to ramp up the expansion of its PV systems even further and cover most of its electricity demand itself in the future. It currently boasts an installed output of 1.23 MWp which equated to around 1.01 GWh of electricity generated in 2025. Some 490 MWh of this was used directly on site, with a further 270 MWh being sent to other municipal buildings within a local energy community.

FOCUSING ON QUALITY OF LIFE

Feldbach is stepping up its focus on measures designed to improve the microclimate and avoid heat islands. This includes numerous projects for adding greenery and shade to the town centre and creating retention areas for storing rainwater.These projects are receiving scientific support from 4ward Energy Research, a research company based in Graz. Aside from technical solutions, project manager Peter Köhldorfer also considers nature to be a decisive factor: "In terms of heat islands, it's clear that there are a great many good technical measures out there. Ultimately, however, nature offers the best protection, because nothing is as effective as a tree."

klimaneutralestadt.at/en/projects/pioneer-cities/feldbach.php

FELDKIRCH

Heading towards climate neutrality with the help of scientific expertise

Aided by scientists, the city of Feldkirch has analysed various development pathways to underpin preparation of its climate neutrality roadmap. It is currently focusing on expanding the local heating network, promoting sustainable mobility and starting to plan its Magdalenastraße pilot neighbourhood.

Bus in Feldkirch, photo: Udo Mittelberger

Stadtwerke Feldkirch, Illspitz power station; photo: Dietmar Walser

The "pioneering cities" partnership is helping to embed the issue of climate protection even more firmly among Feldkirch's policymakers and specialist departments, thus forging closer links and strengthening cooperation in a targeted manner. Experts from the Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT) helped the city to come up with tangible ways to meet its climate targets.

"Our scientific partner AIT applied various models for drawing up energy balances and added flesh to the bones of our energy master plan," reports Christina Connert, lead on the "pioneering city" project. "This showed us what developments are needed in terms of the individual energy carriers if we are to become climate-neutral by 2040."

klimaneutralestadt.at/en/projects/pioneer-cities/feldkirch.php

HYDROPOWER AND LOCAL HEATING

Hydropower has long been a key component of the local energy supply. Three hydroelectric power plants on the Ill River supply electricity to the city; however, their expansion potential has largely been exhausted. With one major challenge being how to refurbish many historic listed buildings in the Old Town to make them energy-efficient, the authorities are focusing on expanding local and district heating networks to ensure a sustainable heat supply to these buildings. The sewer system in the historic centre, which is over 100 years old, is also undergoing refurbishment.

STRENGTHENING ACTIVE MOBILITY AND E-MOBILITY

The city also wants to get closer to its climate targets in the transport sector. In addition to the local public transport network, which is already extensive and will be electrified further in the coming years, active mobility – such as walking and cycling – will also be a priority. Electric mobility, as an alternative to using private petrol or diesel cars, is another important concern, and efforts to expand the charging infrastructure are to be ramped up.

SPOTLIGHT ON A PILOT NEIGHBOURHOOD

Magdalenastraße, an existing neighbourhood, is being assessed as part of an exploratory study. The area is highly diverse: alongside residential buildings, there is also a farm, the city's plant nursery, care homes, a nursery school and more besides. The pilot project is covering a wide range of aspects, from energy efficiency and energy supply through to mobility and social issues. The aim is to create a climate-adapted, energy-efficient neighbourhood, improve people's quality of life and establish a framework for a strong community spirit.

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