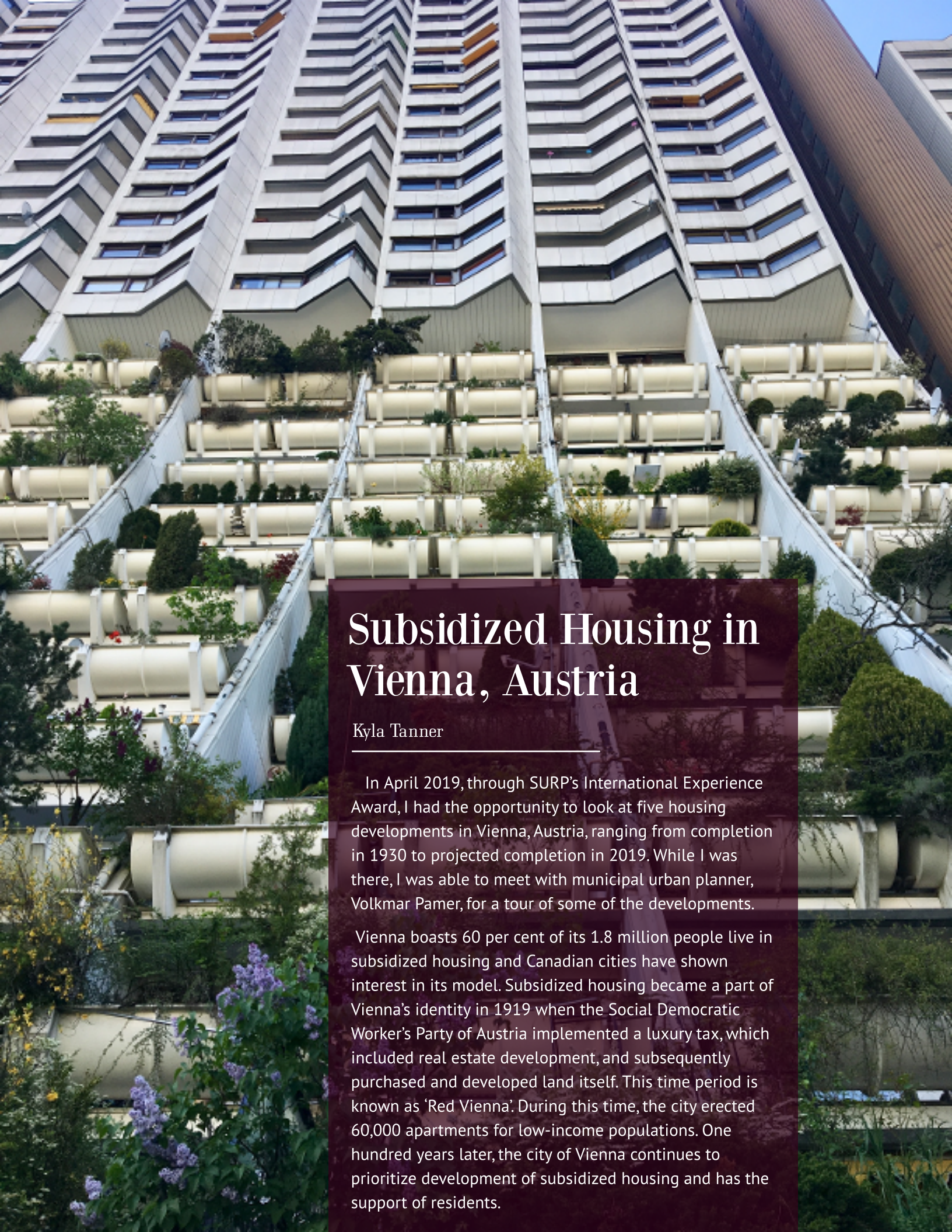




Subsidized Housing in Vienna, Austria

Kyla Tanner

In April 2019, through SURP's International Experience Award, I had the opportunity to look at five housing developments in Vienna, Austria, ranging from completion in 1930 to projected completion in 2019. While I was there, I was able to meet with municipal urban planner, Volkmar Pamer, for a tour of some of the developments.

Vienna boasts 60 per cent of its 1.8 million people live in subsidized housing and Canadian cities have shown interest in its model. Subsidized housing became a part of Vienna's identity in 1919 when the Social Democratic Worker's Party of Austria implemented a luxury tax, which included real estate development, and subsequently purchased and developed land itself. This time period is known as 'Red Vienna'. During this time, the city erected 60,000 apartments for low-income populations. One hundred years later, the city of Vienna continues to prioritize development of subsidized housing and has the support of residents.



Kabelwerk

Kabelwerk was completed in 2010 and has 1,320 units in total. The project has been lauded for its cooperative planning process that included strong involvement from residents. It is located on the site of a cable factory that was in operation from 1897-1997, which employed many of the nearby residents. The factory's closure hit residents hard, resulting in apprehension of new development. Two of the former industrial buildings were restored, one of which was used to host theatre productions and art exhibitions. There is a metro station adjacent to the site and the entire area is car-free. A variety of building forms make up Kabelwerk, including: subsidized rental units, subsidized home ownership, assisted housing, apartments for refugees, and temporary housing.



Alt-Erlaa

Alt-Erlaa was completed in 1985 and consists of six 23 to 27 storey buildings. It was controversial in terms of its size and design, but residents living in the 3,172 units love living there, reflected in the low vacancy rate of the buildings and low turn-over. I spoke with a woman who has lived in a unit since its construction and has numerous friends that have done the same. Every unit has a private balcony and roof top pools are located on each building. The site includes a church, kindergartens, numerous gardens and playgrounds, a small shopping centre, and a metro station.



In der Wiesen Ost

In der Wiesen Ost is still under construction with scheduled completion in 2019. There are to be 172 units in total, each with a balcony and planters for urban gardening. Additionally, the outdoor space will include gardening opportunities for the tenants, including green roofs. The interior streets are devoted to pedestrians and it is located within walking distance of a metro station.



In der Wiesen Süd

In Der Wiesen Süd was completed in 2017. "In Der Wiesen" translates to "In the Garden". It has 156 residential units across five buildings. This area was a neglected part of suburban Vienna, offering great opportunity to increase density, particularly due to proximity to a metro station. There are numerous parks throughout the development that connect to one another and balconies face onto the park space.



Karl Marx-Hof

Karl-Marx Hof is an iconic housing development in Vienna, completed in 1930, during the Red Vienna time period. Karl-Marx Hof is a one kilometre in length linear development with large courtyards and parks located centrally all along the buildings. There are 1,382 residential units as well as laundromats, baths, kindergartens, a library, doctor offices, and business offices. It is located next to both a metro stop and a bus station.





>kabelwerk<

A key lesson from Volkmar Pamer with was that Viennese urban planners place emphasis on **six considerations** when developing subsidized housing, outlined below. These were developed by the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) Working Party on Multifunctional and Intensive Land Use (MILU).

1. **Identity:** Residents are drawn to a development based on an identity that it portrays. For example, In Der Wiesen Ost's identity is urban gardening.
2. **Critical Mass:** Many of the developments are mixed-use, but to attract businesses with storefronts in the development there must be enough people living in the vicinity to support it.
3. **Connectivity:** In addition to physically moving through the space with ease there should be a connection to the surrounding urban and natural fabric.
4. **Human Scale:** Buildings should be at a proportional size so that they foster feelings of safety and comfort, and support social interaction.
5. **Promotion and Marketing:** Promotion of the development can go hand-in-hand with the identity consideration.
6. **Process Architecture:** Consider when and how stakeholders should be involved in the strategy.