

During the last two weeks of April 2013, I had the pleasure of experiencing the cycling and transit culture of several European Cities. The focus of my research while there was to understand how Viennese developers and the City of Vienna specifically, have collaborated to create more densely populated communities, which support successful transit and bicycle infrastructure through-out the City.

Initially the *Bike-City* project (figure 1) was proposed to be the highlight of my research though the precedent development, *Car-Free Housing* (figure 2), proved to better live up to the standard *Bike-City* proclaimed to meet. Additionally, a *Bike-City II* project has been proposed to the City, which will provide an edge of town development with reduced parking spaces that forwards cost savings from minimized parking into various quality of life improving amenities. Amenities that *Bike-City II* has proposed and its predecessor's have included are: indoor/outdoor bike storage; common kitchen and living room space; outdoor gardens with children's play areas; on site car share service; and easy access to extensive transit (figure 3).



Figure 1: Bike-City



Figure 2: Car-Free Housing



Figure 3: Bike-City bike storage room

The Gesiba development company, behind *Bike-City*, worked along side Vienna's multiple planning departments to get permission to build only half the required 1:1 parking space to household unit ratio. With a shift in local government to a more left leaning party came approval of this inner city multi-family apartment, allowing a reduced provision of parking of only 50 of the 99 required stalls.

With more than 6% cycling, 28% walking and 39% transit ridership as Viennese choice mode of transportation, the private vehicle is far less prevalent in Austria's capital than any Canadian city. Even Toronto boasts a staggering 70% car ridership as the prominent mode of transportation and is amongst Canada's leading providers of transit and cycle lanes. What Austria seems to have done to support such development is create a top-down approach that encourages bottom-up solutions. Developers looking to reduce parking must propose how they will change mobility behavior for the residents of their development. Many propose a strategy of supportive infrastructure, which can take shape as a welcome package introducing the local transit and cycling access, a free one-year transit pass or simply incorporating physical linkages from the property to where existing infrastructure exists.

In addition to the collaborative process, which supports new development with reduced parking, our local governments in Canada could learn from the Viennese in terms of increased Planning authority. As their planners can over-rule City councilors when it comes to many zoning and other planning decisions at the district level.