

Housing satisfaction in Sonnwendviertel

A study on the housing satisfaction of residents in the Viennese urban development area "Sonnwendviertel"

Executive Summary

The study examines the **housing satisfaction of residents of the subsidized residential buildings at the Viennese Sonnwendviertel** (Project period: August 2015 to December 2015).

The two **main goals** of the study were 1) to gain an understanding of certain aspects of housing satisfaction of residents, their quality of neighbourly relations as well as their use and organization of the residential environment by means of a quantitative survey of residents of seven already inhabited building sites and a qualitative survey with managers and employees of surrounding facilities. And secondly 2), to gain insights into the associated implementation of social sustainability within the subsidized housing framework, important for future planning of housing space, housing subsidy and district development.

A comprehensive online-survey was conducted with **residents of all subsidized and already inhabited residential buildings of building sites C.01 to C.03 in the Viennese Sonnwendviertel**.

A total of **379 persons** and respectively **26-29% of all households** from the Sonnwendviertel took part in the survey (the variability is the result of the circumstance that not all respondents indicated if their household already participated in the survey). The **high level of university graduates** of 59% (comparing to 23% in Vienna) and the **low level of compulsory school graduates** with/without apprenticeship of 7% (comparing to 47% in Vienna) was noticeable, when compared to the overall Viennese population. 79% of respondents have no **migration background**, thus their parents are not born abroad. Furthermore, Sonnwendviertel respondents hold more frequently the **Austrian citizenship** in comparison to Viennese residents, but also in comparison to the entire Sonnwendviertel residents (91% compared to 74% and respectively 72%). This means that persons with Austrian citizenship are slightly overrepresented in the survey, presumably also due to language reasons. In comparison to the Viennese population, the respondents account for a **much larger share of 25 to 44-year-olds** (77% compared to 37%) but are in all other categories less well represented, especially in the one over 65-year-olds.

The average **living space** of the households covered by the survey amounts to 80 m² and the overwhelming majority (59%) lives in **subsidized rental flats with ownership option**. Approximately three quarters of the survey households are composed of **up to two persons** (the average number of 2,2 persons per household lies, however, above the Viennese average of 1,99 persons per household) and just as much are households with no **children** (persons under 18 years). 74% of respondents have a **net household income** of below 3000 Euro, about the same proportion assess their apartment as good or rather **affordable**, only 6% assess it as rather not or hardly affordable.

Asking about their **satisfaction with the residential area, the residential complex and the flat**, the majority of respondents (88%) indicate to be very or rather satisfied with their flat, 79% mark that for the residential complex and 76% for the residential area. With regard to the flat, there is a positive connection between satisfaction and the size of the private living space ascertainable. In the open

questions the residents, who participated in the quantitative survey, address the long duration of construction works and the therewith related burden of dust and noise as a fundamental current problem in the Sonnwendviertel. Additionally, they describe information deficits in terms of completion of construction works (in particular of the Helmut-Zilk-Park). Several respondents experience the conception of the Sonnwendgasse – both because of the noise by heavy car traffic and due to the danger for pedestrians – as well as the partially as slow and uncoordinated perceived traffic light control, as problematic. Another described source of noise in the residential area is caused by the nearby railroad tracks.

19% of respondents have no **contact with their neighbours**. Amongst the remaining respondents, 53% indicate to have contact with two to four neighbouring households, 9% only with one household and 38% with more than five households. Persons with children are more in contact with a significant higher number of neighbours than other persons. 66% of all respondents indicate to chat with one or more persons from the neighbourhood, one third is friends with one or more neighbour/s and about one fifth helps out his/her neighbour/s occasionally or regularly. 32% of respondents are very satisfied with the current intensity of neighbourhood, while at the same time it was found that 58% wish for an intensified contact with their neighbours.

Just above half of the respondents **participate in neighbouring activities** in principle, especially with regards to celebrations, general meetings of tenants and events on common areas. Whereas 38% of respondents, who indicate that they do not participate in neighbouring activities, specify that they are not aware of neighbouring activities or initiatives or respectively that these are not offered.

About half of the respondents also indicate that they have already noticed **conflicts in the neighbourhood**, especially in the area of noise nuisance, pollution and vandalism. In the commentaries, respondents primarily complain about dirt from dogs and respectively dirt owners, while the latter demand for increased space for dog areas; also in regards to laundry and garbage rooms several conflicts of use are described. Additionally, respondents name insufficient sound insulation in some residential complexes and people who hang out in the courtyards as sources of stress and partially of conflicts.

The most frequently used form of communication between neighbours is the direct communication, followed by internet-based means of communication such as Facebook-groups and online-forums. 70% of respondents are very or rather satisfied with the quality of communication.

41% of respondents are not aware of **possibilities to participate in the planning and use of the residential environment**. The remaining respondents most frequently mention the participation possibilities with regards to green areas and the equipment and organization of shared rooms (Gemeinschaftsflächen). Concrete participation is indicated by 43% of respondents, who take part in the planning and use of the residential environment, especially in the field of equipment and organization of shared rooms. In this context of participation possibilities, most respondents (64%) state that most initiatives come directly from residents themselves. Property developers/domiciliary service, area renewal/district service (Gebietsbetreuung) and local associations were only rated as organising the most initiatives, from less than 20% of respondents.

Inquiring into the **use of different rooms in the residential complex and in the ground floor zones in the Sonnwendviertel**, most respondents (56%) indicate that the Urban's Restaurant, the common rooms within the own residential complex and the wellness area in the ground floor of the win4wien-

building were already used once. With respect to the common rooms, respondents commented on improvement possibilities of reservation system, access (and information thereof), communication of prohibitions and temporal access restrictions and express the wish of monitoring and support beyond the moving-in phase.

The seven interviewed **managers and employees from ground floor facilities** assess the location quite positively, while the customers' access by car (little parking space and unloading zones), the continuous delaying of the completion of the park and respectively the ongoing construction works are described as problematic. Furthermore, the obvious lack of restaurants, venues, tobacconists and a pharmacy are considered as problem for customer frequency. The intensity of use is rated acceptably by interviewees of childcare facilities, of the hotel and the wellness-oasis (especially on the weekly women's day). From the Urban's restaurant manager and the Inti Ethno-shop manager the intensity of use is described as still expandable. More often it is emphasised that it is too soon for an assessment of the location since the quarter will still evolve and progress. The view that the situation in the Sonnwendviertel will improve in the future is shared by the ground floor facilities' managers and employees as well as by 76% of those surveyed in the quantitative questioning.

In terms of available **facilities and infrastructure in the Sonnwendviertel** almost all of the respondents (above 80%) perceive a lack of shops and restaurants in the ground floor zones, of public libraries and of car parking possibilities outside garage spaces. More than half of the respondents assess the available offers of cultural events, cultural associations, cafés and restaurants, pharmacies and health care as insufficient. Child-related facilities, bicycle infrastructure, fitness facilities and connection to public transport are, however, from the majority of respondents (above 85%) felt to be sufficient. A lack of local shops and leisure opportunities for youths were described in respondents' commentaries. Although most of the respondents are satisfied with the offer of public transport connections and the bicycle infrastructure, individual respondents identify possible improvements in terms of extension of bus and tram lines, enhancement of pedestrian routes to the subway and call for the extension of quantity and safety of bicycle lanes and bicycle parking.

The findings of the study provide important and most current insights into how the fourth pillar of **social sustainability**, existing within the 4-pillar-modell of Viennese property developer competition, is lived and experienced by residents of the Sonnwendviertel. In addition it provides a solid basis for the (further/continuing) development of new Viennese urban development areas.