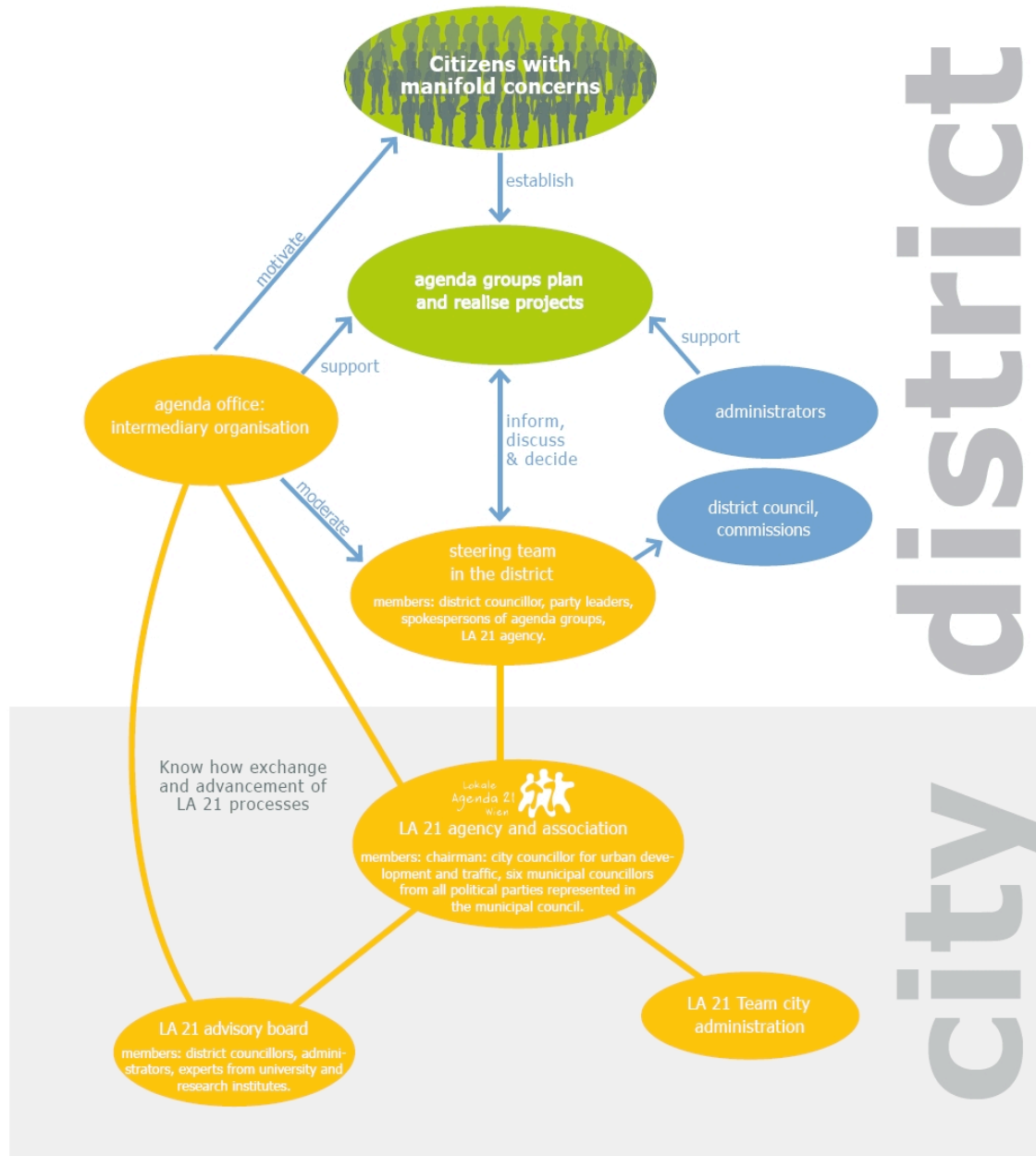


Characteristics of the Local Agenda 21 in Vienna

- Not one local agenda 21 process for the whole city, but decentralised processes at the district level (at the moment 9 „Local Agenda 21 districts“ out of 23 districts).
- District councils are elected for 5 years. They are responsible for a certain range of matters: e.g. district budget, maintenance of public buildings, streets, sidewalks, parks, markets, public lighting, ... in cooperation with the city administration – only a small autonomy for the districts.
- District council decides if they want a LA 21 process or not, if yes: 4 year process, budget approx. 440.000 Euro, 50% finance from the city budget, 50% from the district budget for the work of the agenda offices
- Main target: self organised groups of citizens („agenda project groups“) define and carry out projects for a sustainable development of the district in cooperation with politicians and the administration. Attempt to combine concepts of participatory democracy and conventional LA 21.



Characteristics of the Local Agenda 21 in Vienna

- LA 21 offices: In each district an agenda office is run by a planning agency or by an environmental institute or by adult education centers. They provide support for the citizens (knowledge, contacts, organisation, communication...) build cooperation relations, mediate between the different actors.
- Agenda projects: approx. 80 groups with projects within 3 years, ranking of topics: desing of public space, traffic planning, integration, social – cultural topics.
- Agenda project group: 5-10 people, who work very intensely. Motivation: affected by negativ developments in their neighbourhood, professional concerns and interests (architects, land scape planners,..), general interest in voluntary engagement.

Example redesign of the Augustin_Place

Actors/Action/time	Summer 03	November 03	December 03 -March 04		April 04
Steering Team		Decision to make this project in the frame of agenda ↓			Discussion of basic concept. Main conflicts: closure of a frontage road, loss of parking sites, worse conditions for the bus.
Agenda Office		Agenda office invites all neighbours to a first meeting			↑
Agenda Project Group			Interested citizens start an agenda group: discussion of problems and possibilities of improvement. 3 more meetings to deepen analyses, targets and solutions: catalog of questions for experts		Basic concept is elaborated
Administration				↓ Written answers	↗
Public transport enterprise					
Politics	All district parties want a redesign of the place	↓			
Public		First meeting of citizens			

Augustin Place (2)

Actors/Action/time	April 04	Mai 04 - September 05		Nov 05	December 05
Steering Team		Reports about ongoing discussions			Decision that this proposal is accepted by all of the members
Agenda Office		Several round tables with district councillor, representatives of parties, administrators, Vienna public transport enterprise to find a solution which satisfies all actors conflicts between politicians in June: district politicians make a collective decision that the frontage shall be closed			
Agenda Project Group					
Administration					
Public transport enterprise	Strongly resists the concept, fears hindrances for the bus				Proposal: closure of frontage road, remote controlled traffic lights operated by the bus driver
Politics					
Public		Meeting on the place to discuss several alternatives			

Augustin Place (3)

Actors/Action/Time	February 06	March 06	April 06	Mai 06	June 06
Steering Team				First discussion of alternatives for the surface design	Discussion of blue print
Agenda Office					Several meetings to discuss technical difficulties
Agenda Project Group	Prepare a exhibition about the history of the place Start discussing their ideas for the design of the surface	Inspection of the place to discussion the ideas for the surface redesign			
Administration					
Public transport enterprise					
Politics	Celebratory opening of the exhibition		Assigment of a landscape office to make detailed plans		
Public			Breakfast on the place to inform the neighbours about the traffic solution		

Augustin Place (4)

Actors/Action/Time	Sept. 06	Nov . 06	March 07	Nov 07
Steering Team	Discussion of surface design concept		Plan of last steps for realisation	
Agenda Office				
Administration				
Agenda Project Group				
Public transport enterprise				
Politics				Public protest of the peoples party against design concept
Public		Forum of neighbours and residents to present the more or less finished surface concept		Completion of new design, opening ceremony



Fotoquelle: MA28, Foto: Julius Silver

Governance aspects: LA 21 Steering committees as new institutions

- New places for dialog: steering committee consisting of politicians and spokespersons of agenda groups. Same number of politicians and citizens, decision making in consensus or majority in number.
- Tasks: information exchange between politics and citizens, decisions on start and end of agenda projects, decisions in the development of projects, prearrangement of decisions, which have to be taken by the district council.
- Problems:
 - × agenda steering committee is considered as a „shadow district council“, members of the district council fear to lose power and influence. Conflict between representative politics and participatory politics. One possibility to ease it: more interfaces with politics than the steering committee to build up trust.
 - × Lacking participation of politicians in the steering committee.
 - × Lack of time for discussion and commitment

Governance aspects: Exclusion – Inclusion - Empowerment

- Setting and topics (e.g. traffic planning) cause social selection: easier for people who can articulate their needs, have experience in negotiating, have a high frustration tolerance, are able to deal with unfriendly and unwilling civil servants, dispose about background knowledge concerning the topic, have a lot of time and access to computer/internet. Therefore educated middle class people play an important role in the process.
- The targets and content of the projects incorporate much more the needs of different social groups and life styles. But it is difficult to address subjects beyond the responsibility of the district e.g. planning of highways.
- Setting tends to intransparency: informal networks are very important and citizens who can not work so intensely on agenda projects are cut off.
- Empowerment: „personal empowerment“ citizens appreciate more knowledge (functional and social skills) and more social contacts in the district, „structural empowerment“: higher chance of realisation of projects in the setting of LA 21.

Governance aspects: imbalance of power and conflicts

- LA 21 is a top down organized setting, where politicians surrender power, define the scope of action and can withdraw their cooperation. It is not a network of equal partners.
- Strategic position of politics: governance helps us (politicians) to get new ideas, voluntary engagement and understand that politics are difficult. Little reflection concerning new power distribution between politics and civil society.
- Local Agenda 21 setting is highly consensus orientated. Intensive, normative conflicts like conflicts about the location of e.g. highways, garages, mosques... need other settings to be solved.
- Competitive democracy needs conflicts to raise awareness for party positions. Often there is not much interest in rational discourse and consensual solutions.

Important topics for the advancement of LA 21 in Vienna

- What are the adequate decision modes for the different agenda projects?
(e.g. modification of procedures in dependence of the subject....)
- How to get a broader political commitment for good urban governance or will only islands of good governance exist?
- What is the role of intermediary organisations in governance processes, what are the new competence needs?
- How to implement a stronger partnership between city and district for the further development of the LA 21