FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL & URBAN CHANGE AND CITY INSTITUTE PRESENT

Expanding the Greenbelt in an Expanding City:

Changing Regulation, Demands and Actors in Vienna's Greenbelt

Eva Schwab, Faculty of Architecture, TU Graz, Austria

Commentator 1: Laura Taylor (EUC, York) on Greenbelt Ontario

Commentator 2: Camilla Perrone (University of Florence, Italy) on Terrain Vague

September 23, 2026, 12.30–2:20pm, HNES 140

The Vienna Green Belt was established as early as 1905 and has since been regarded as a key tool for managing urban growth. However, in more than 120 years of its existence, it has not only been an important planning tool but also a highly valued common good that has been continuously developed over the years, engaging local, regional and national policy levels. In recent years in particular, various forms of protest and bottom-up planning have reacted to the challenges presented by a growing population, ongoing suburbanisation, depleted local authority budgets and additional challenges posed by the climate crisis, and thus have not only helped to expand the Vienna Green Belt but also to make it more relevant than ever. The talk brings into conversation experiences from Vienna and Toronto.

Main Speaker Biography

Eva Schwab

Eva Schwab is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture at TU Graz, Austria, and is currently Deputy Head of the Institute of Urbanism. Trained as a landscape architect, she embarked upon a career in research with a PhD on public space-based upgrading programmes of informal settlements in Medellìn/Colombia. Her doctorate won both the Landscape Research Dissertation Prize and the Talent Award of the City of Vienna in 2016. Employing a spatial justice lens, she since has engaged in critical urban studies about the politics of public space production and use, especially at the urban periphery and/or relating to marginalised social groups. Recently, her research also engages a territorial and more-than-human perspective in the investigation of urban peripheries and the conflicts between man-made structures, administrative regimes and ecological logics. In the past years, she coedited the books Territorial Justice (Jovis, 2019), Basics of Urbanism (Park Books, 2021), Territorial Urbanism Now! (Jovis, 2024) and Courage – Transformation of Mobility Spaces: Process, Actors, and Design (Jovis, 2026).

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