

Pathways to transition to child-friendly urban environments – the example of miniblocks

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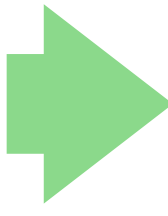
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Introduction

Current reality

- ❖ Cities are devoid of children in public spaces. This impairs the physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive development of children
- ❖ Children are additionally rarely involved in decision-making processes that affect them
- ❖ The implementation of miniblocks is a promising strategy to restore children's right to use the public space (i.e., the pacification of traffic in urban cells formed by two streets)

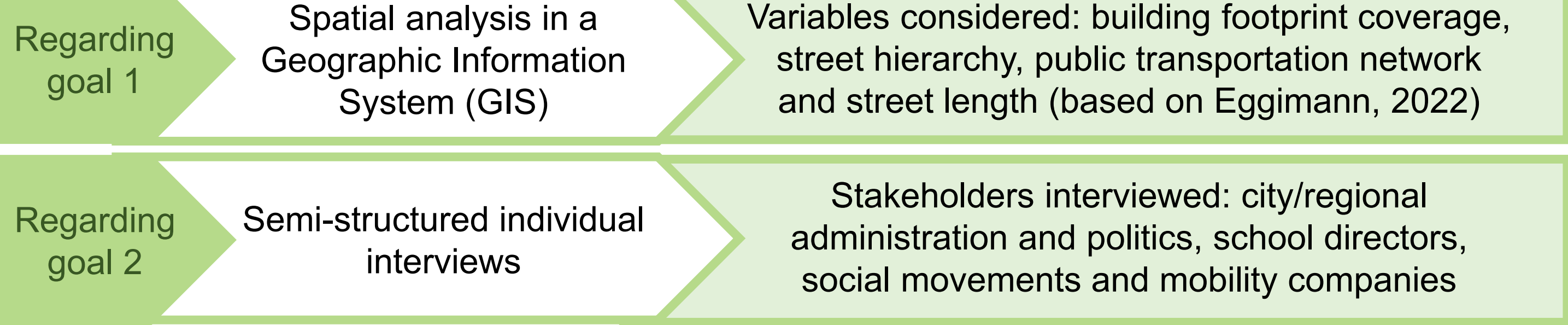


Goals

- ❖ Goal 1: Analysis of spatial patterns in the technical suitability of miniblock implementation
 - ❖ Goal 2: Analysis of socio-psychological conditions determining miniblock implementation for and with children
- Both analysis focus on an urban-rural gradient

Materials and methods

What was done?



Where was it done?

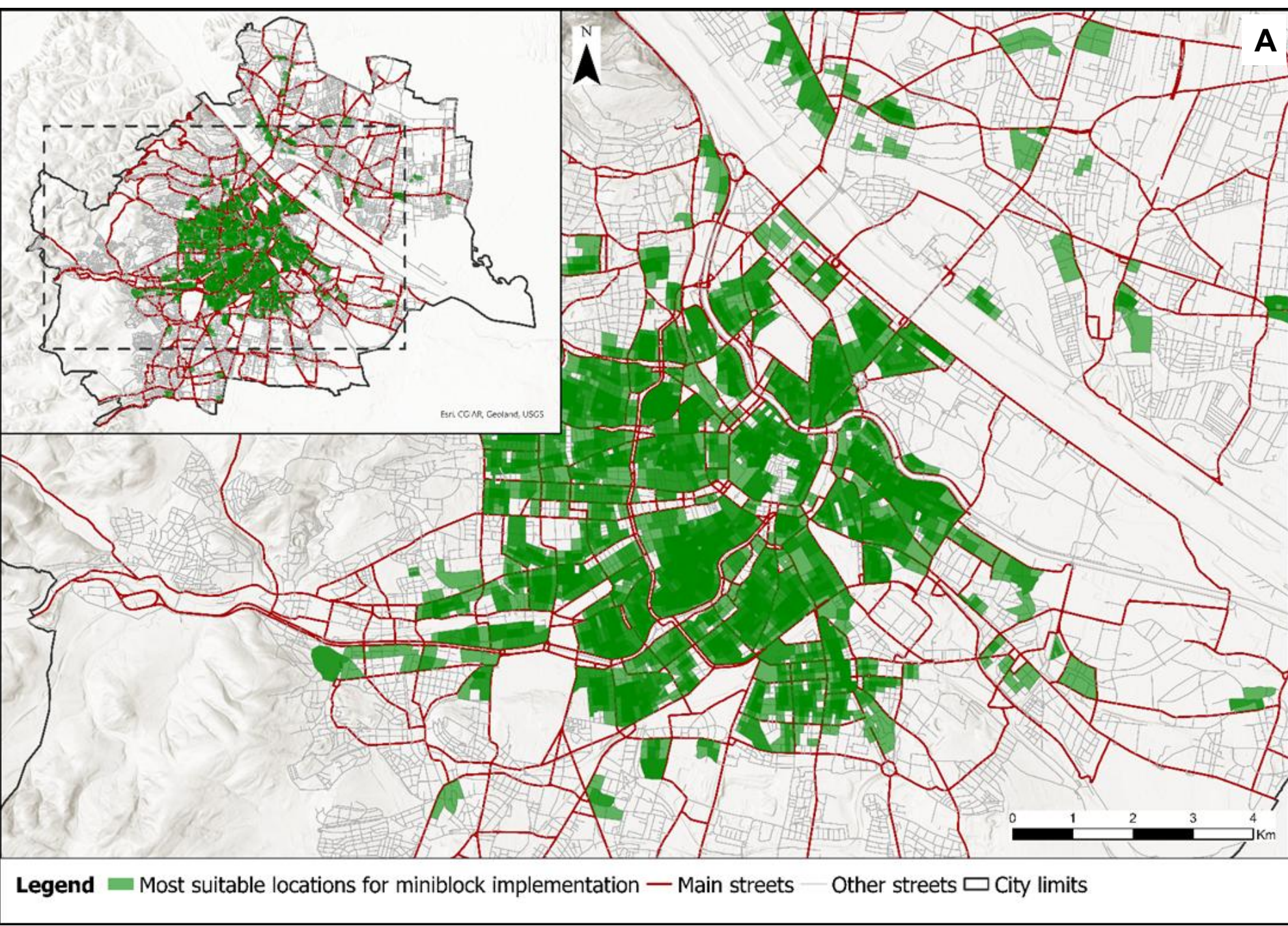


Results

Technical feasibility (goal 1)

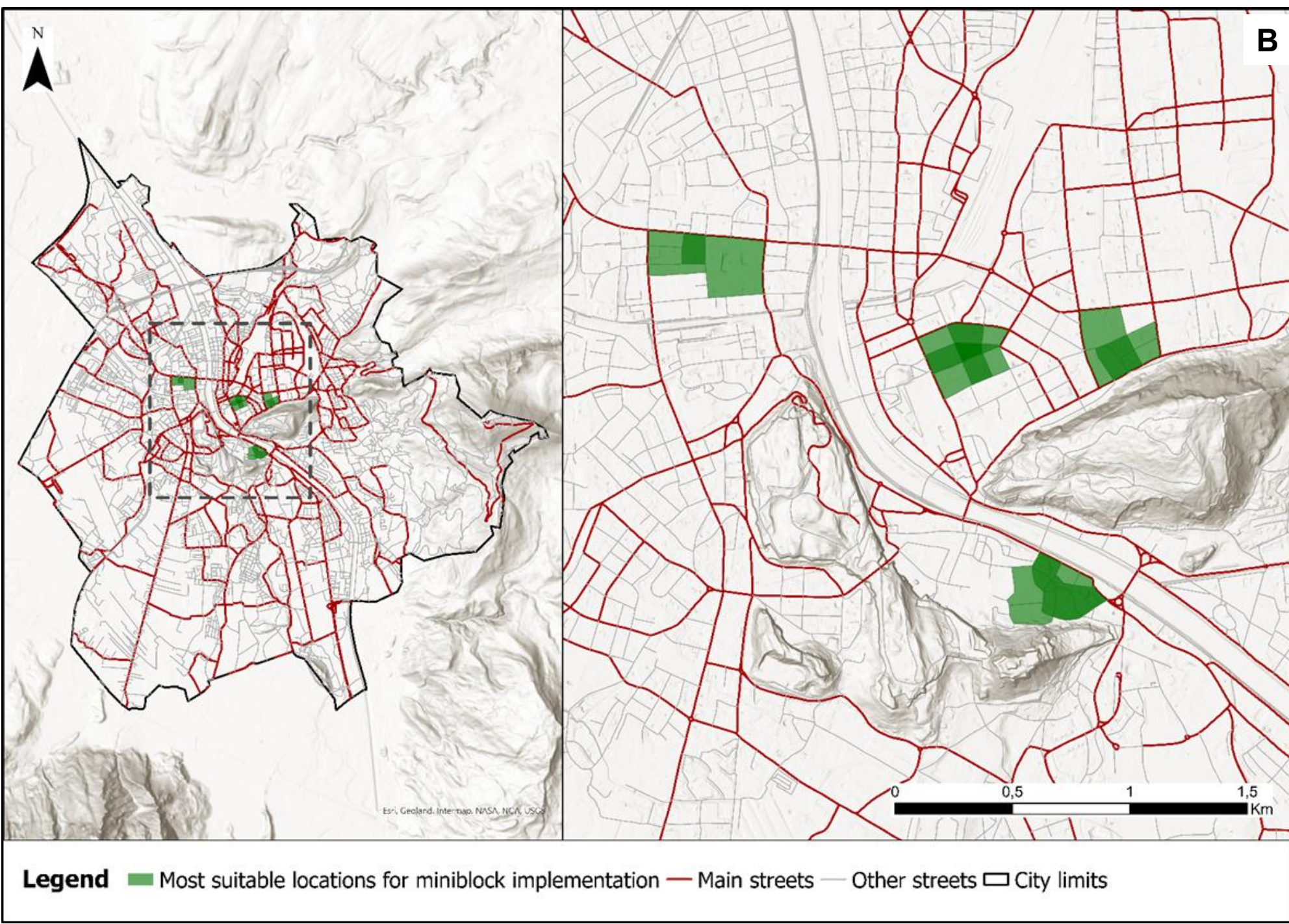
Vienna

- ❖ 1735 suitable locations (most of them in the central districts)
- ❖ 16% of the street network is very suitable to be converted
- ❖ 75% of the schools can be located within or within a 500m radius of a potential miniblock



Salzburg

- ❖ 11 suitable locations (all of them in the central districts)
- ❖ 0.5% of the street network is very suitable to be converted
- ❖ 27.5% of the schools can be located within or within a 500m radius of a potential miniblock



Seekirchen am Wallersee (small city in Salzburg (region))

- ❖ 0 suitable locations (if all criteria are considered)
- ❖ More flexible approaches for miniblock implementation are needed if miniblocks are to play a role in the transformation towards child-friendlier cities

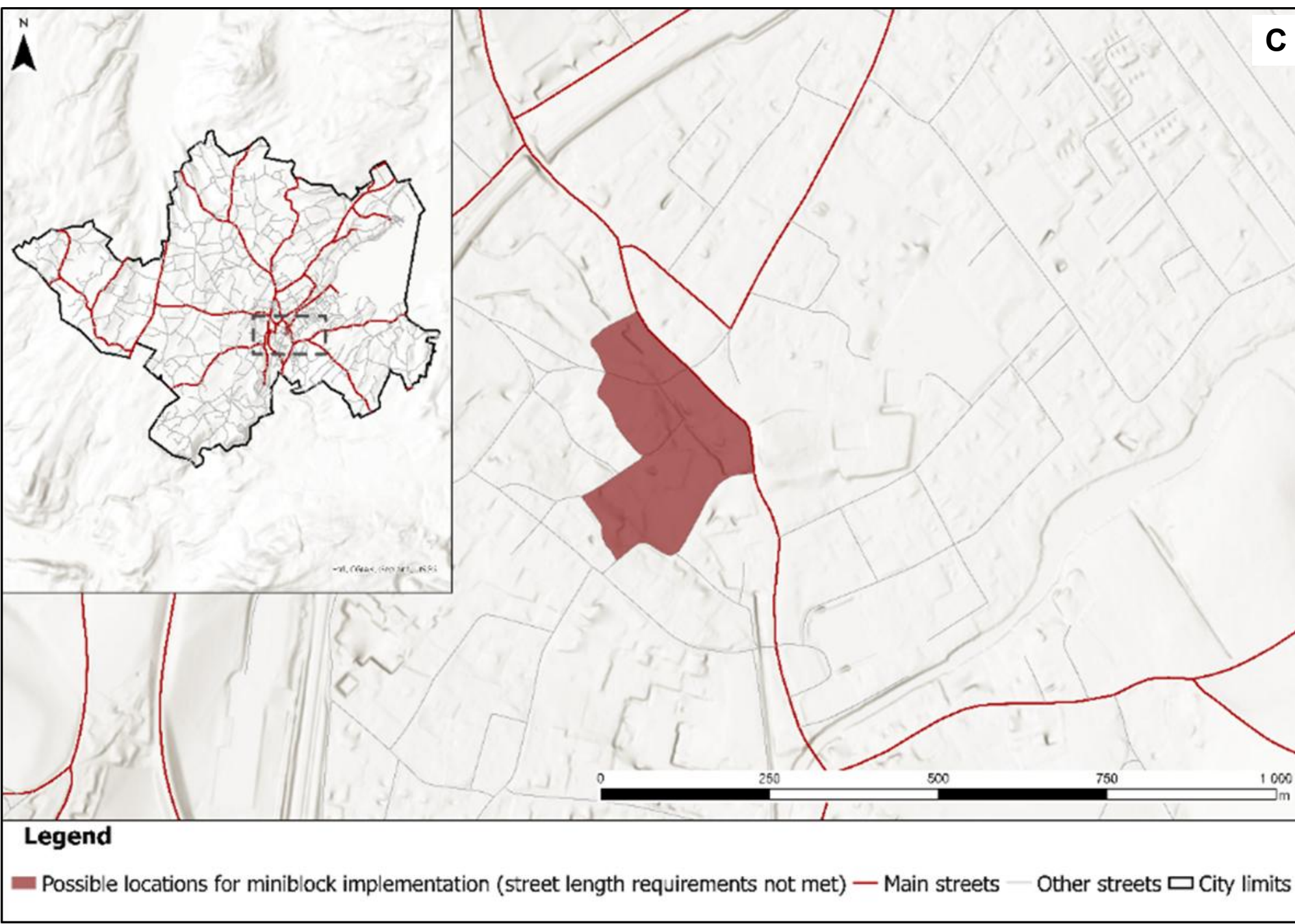
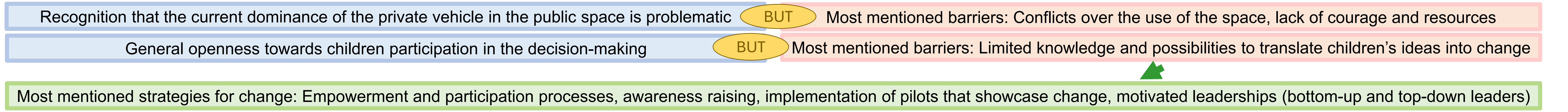


Figure 1: Most suitable locations for miniblock implementation in the city of Vienna (A), in the city of Salzburg (B) and in small cities in the region of Salzburg (C) (source: own elaboration, based on cartographic data in Geoland (2024), Land Salzburg (2024), Stadt Wien (2024) and Bundesamt für Eich- und Vermessungswesen (2024))

Socio-psychological conditions (goal 2)

- ❖ General openness to change, but numerous prevailing barriers hinder the realisation of projects leading to child-friendlier urban environments
- ❖ Traffic safety concerns are the main drivers of change. There are differing perspectives on the necessary strategies for creating a child-friendlier urban space



Vienna	Salzburg	Small cities in the region of Salzburg
Resources Technical conditions Motivation and leadership Power relations Mindset/social norms Governance Motivation and leadership Technical measures Legislation	Power relations Prevailing mindset Bureaucracy Resources Technical measures Mindset/social norms Motivation and leadership Legislation Governance	Prevailing mindset Technical conditions Power relations Motivation and leadership Resources Technical measures Mindset/social norms Motivation and leadership

Figure 2: Word clouds showing the biggest challenges for the transformation towards child-friendlier cities and the implementation of miniblocks (red boxes); and areas where changes appear more urgent/are already underway to enable the transformation (green boxes) in the city of Vienna, the city of Salzburg, and small cities in the region of Salzburg (source: own elaboration)

Conclusions

- The three studied urban contexts are strongly influenced by a historically developed car orientation, which affects everyday life and the mobility of children
- The need for child-friendlier cities is recognised. However, actual implementation remains fragmented and is caught in the tension between competing interests
- Courageous leaders, changes to governance, and increased awareness are crucial. This also includes flexibility in the technical approaches used, so that they can be adapted to local needs

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