



**TOO  
GETHR**

# THE TRANSITION TO MIXED-USE PROPERTY

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On the rise of mixed-use property, the demand for flexibility from tenants, and technologies that simplify building management.

WHITEPAPER





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# 1. **MIXED-USE BUILDINGS: THE FUTURE OF PROPERTY?**

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Mixed-use buildings are on the rise. Especially in major cities where sustainable urban development is a hot topic, this type of property is becoming increasingly common. The main characteristic of mixed-use buildings is that they are used for various purposes: office space, residential areas, restaurants, sports facilities – every square metre is utilised. The diversity of users demands a lot of flexibility. Tenants need to be able to flexibly manage the required office space and available parking spaces. It is then up to the managers of mixed-use buildings to facilitate this flexibility. Using technology and data to optimise management is an absolute must for them. Togethr's Smart Parking solution is a good example of this.

This whitepaper explains the function of mixed-use buildings and demonstrates how the management of this type of property can look forward to a sustainable future through the right technology.



## 2.

## A MORE SUSTAINABLE VIEW ON PROPERTY

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In 2023, we saw a significant drop in the transaction volume of commercial property, partly due to uncertainty and rapidly rising interest rates, and partly due to fewer new constructions being completed, leading to less supply on the market.

Sharply rising energy prices, unprecedented high inflation, and increasing construction costs also contributed to a lot of uncertainty. Together with the steep rise in interest rates, the values of all types of properties fell by an average of 8% to 15% in 2023.<sup>1</sup> Further depreciation of 3.5% is expected in 2024.<sup>2</sup> This applies to both new transactions and valuations. Just as we are facing the complex and urgent challenges of climate and housing, the cooling of the property market comes at a bad time.

### Sustainability as a pillar of change

The growing income inequality and increasing housing shortage have led to a lack of affordable housing. We also face the enormous challenge of meeting the targets set by the Paris Climate Agreement. For some climate goals, it is already highly uncertain whether we will achieve them by 2030. The urgency to address these issues today rather than tomorrow is greater than ever. Sustainability is the key pillar of necessary change for both the government and the property market.

By working together and promoting the optimal use of limited space in major cities, we can tackle the housing shortage. Additionally, sustainability offers the chance to partially revive the stagnant property market.

Sustainability as a connecting factor for solving the major issues of the coming years.



## Sustainable property

Sustainability in property is not new. The government increasingly imposes requirements on energy and water consumption, the use of sustainable materials in new construction or renovation, and the added value of a building relative to the immediate environment.

Moreover, organisations are being scrutinised more closely if they do not visibly engage in sustainability. This can be crucial for the corporate image, especially for the younger generation. Besides regulations and image, sustainability is increasingly driven by cost considerations. With current market developments, high energy costs are becoming increasingly important in choosing office space. Awareness of the importance of energy-efficient buildings and knowing exactly what employees and visitors expect from the office environment are essential for making the right decisions.

## Hybrid working as a game changer

Working from home is popular and this will not change. The implementation of hybrid working will differ per company, but the fact is that the topic has become discussable in every work environment. For employees, it is often a blessing, but for management, facility managers, and administrators, it is a challenge to estimate how much office space is actually needed and how it should be arranged to facilitate everyone efficiently, especially when the office occupancy is different every day and hard to predict. This development reinforces the necessity to handle office space flexibly.





## Shortage of qualitatively sustainable buildings



Interestingly, despite increased working from home, office vacancy has not increased. In mid-2023, the lowest vacancy rate in twenty years was recorded at 8.1%.<sup>4</sup> Robert Kohsiek, director of property developer Wonam, adds nuance: ‘Whether or not there is vacancy depends on the geographical location. There definitely is vacancy in industrial areas with outdated buildings. This is not the case in urban areas.’ Major cities in the Randstad remain attractive for companies to settle. Consequently, there is a shortage of qualitatively sustainable buildings in prime locations. This means that more creative use of available space is necessary for companies to follow their sustainable ambitions, even if they want to be in the city centre. Mixed-use buildings can be the solution.

“As long as space remains scarce in popular cities, new construction won't be feasible, and property will need to be redeveloped. Such projects often have a mixed-use character.”

- Robert Kohsiek, Directeur Wonam

### 3. **MIXED-USE IS BECOMING THE NEW STANDARD**

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The famous Bertrand Goldberg was already involved with multifunctional buildings in urban areas in the 1960s. His modernist towers in Chicago were described as 'a city within a city.' While there was criticism of the closed nature of the built infrastructure at that time, the current functionality of mixed-use buildings is much more outward-oriented.

A carefully chosen location is essential to bring together living, working, and livability. The densification of the city is, for municipalities, investors, and users, reason enough to embrace so-called function mixing.

#### **Types of mixed-use buildings**

In the context of area development and increasing attractiveness, many cities see the use of mixed-use buildings as the flagship of their city. These buildings are almost automatically found in locations where many people come together to live and work, such as the city centre, close to the station, or on a popular route into the city. Perfect locations for employers to have an extra advantage in attracting young talent. Robert Koshiek: "We see that larger companies are moving back to the city to attract talent."

While the locations for mixed-use buildings are obvious, the usage can vary. Living and working is the most common combination, but the mixed-use functionality is rapidly increasing. We are seeing more often a mix of office and residential space above commercial ground floors. Social and infrastructural functions are also becoming more popular. The restructuring of the old post office on the Neude in Utrecht is a good example, with a library, auditorium, retail space, and bicycle parking giving the location a new purpose.



Another great example of mixed-use is the transformation of Het Zandkasteel in Amsterdam-Zuidoost. This old ING building has been converted by developers Wonam and Zadelhoff and architectural firms Alberts & Van Huut and Mecanoo into a location where living, working, and studying come together. The ground floor features catering facilities and the central entrance. Everyone will also have access to the public dining and food court, which spans nearly 1,500 square meters.



## Why is mixed-use in demand?

Sander Willems, co-founder of Sowebuild, sees several clear advantages. "Looking specifically at why more and more business tenants are choosing mixed-use, it's the immediate availability of a turnkey office with well-appointed workspaces and a short or flexible lease on the intended location. This also includes the service that comes with managing a mixed-use environment for amenities and services that would otherwise need to be arranged by the tenant themselves. This not only offers more flexibility in organisation and accommodation but also an attractive working environment for employees. Additionally, it provides more opportunities to create office space alongside the main office, ensuring flexibility and a workplace closer to home.

Another advantage is that as a tenant, you can switch to fewer workplaces and less office space because the flexibility of labour means the office is used less often, and with shared facilities like meeting rooms, fewer square metres need to be rented."

Besides practical advantages that tenants can consciously choose, there are also developments that promote the use of mixed-use. Consider the new construction that has become significantly more expensive due to rapidly rising construction costs.



For a project developer, this may be a reason to choose redevelopment with mixed-use characteristics rather than a new construction project. Jacqueline Hougee, Commercial Real Estate Manager at Boelens and de Gruyter, also sees the features of a new generation reflected in the rising demand for mixed-use. "The younger generation is more accustomed to sharing. There is a significant flexible component, making them much more open to working in a mixed-use environment. Employers increasingly inquire with their employees, making the needs of younger employees more visible. Additionally, there is the direct financial benefit of renting fewer square metres since all amenities are already provided by the property manager."

## Why not choose mixed-use?

The benefits of mixed-use are undeniable. But are there any downsides? "You target a broad audience with mixed-use, so you can never fully satisfy everyone," says Jacqueline Hougee. Sander Willems sees the biggest challenge on the investor side. "You have to invest significantly in facilities to turn an object into a mixed-use building. Investors sometimes find it difficult to participate without knowing what returns to expect."



Developing mixed-use buildings is often a large, cost-intensive project, usually the domain of institutional investors. The issue is that they still often have separate portfolios for living and working, and are not set up for a combination of functions. Investing in mixed-use buildings no longer meets their conditions for participation.



**4.**

# **THE DEMAND FOR FLEXIBILITY AND THE NEED FOR DATA AND TECHNOLOGY**

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The biggest challenge of a mixed-use environment is the complexity of servicing various tenants. As a manager, you deal with many stakeholders, each with their own needs and wishes. This complexity requires efficient management of all facilities and flexibility for every user of the property.

## **Flexibility for tenants and employees**

One of the main reasons companies choose mixed-use is its flexible nature. Tenants take advantage of this flexibility by entering into short lease periods, avoiding long-term contracts. They also want the freedom to scale office and parking space up or down as needed.

Employees of tenants also need flexibility. The younger generation especially wants to control how they organise their workday. Reserving a workplace and parking spot, booking meeting rooms, and efficiently using all available services are crucial for their office experience. In a mixed-use environment, the number of available square metres and supporting facilities are precisely aligned with the number of users. Employers and facility managers want continuous visibility and the ability to adjust as needed.

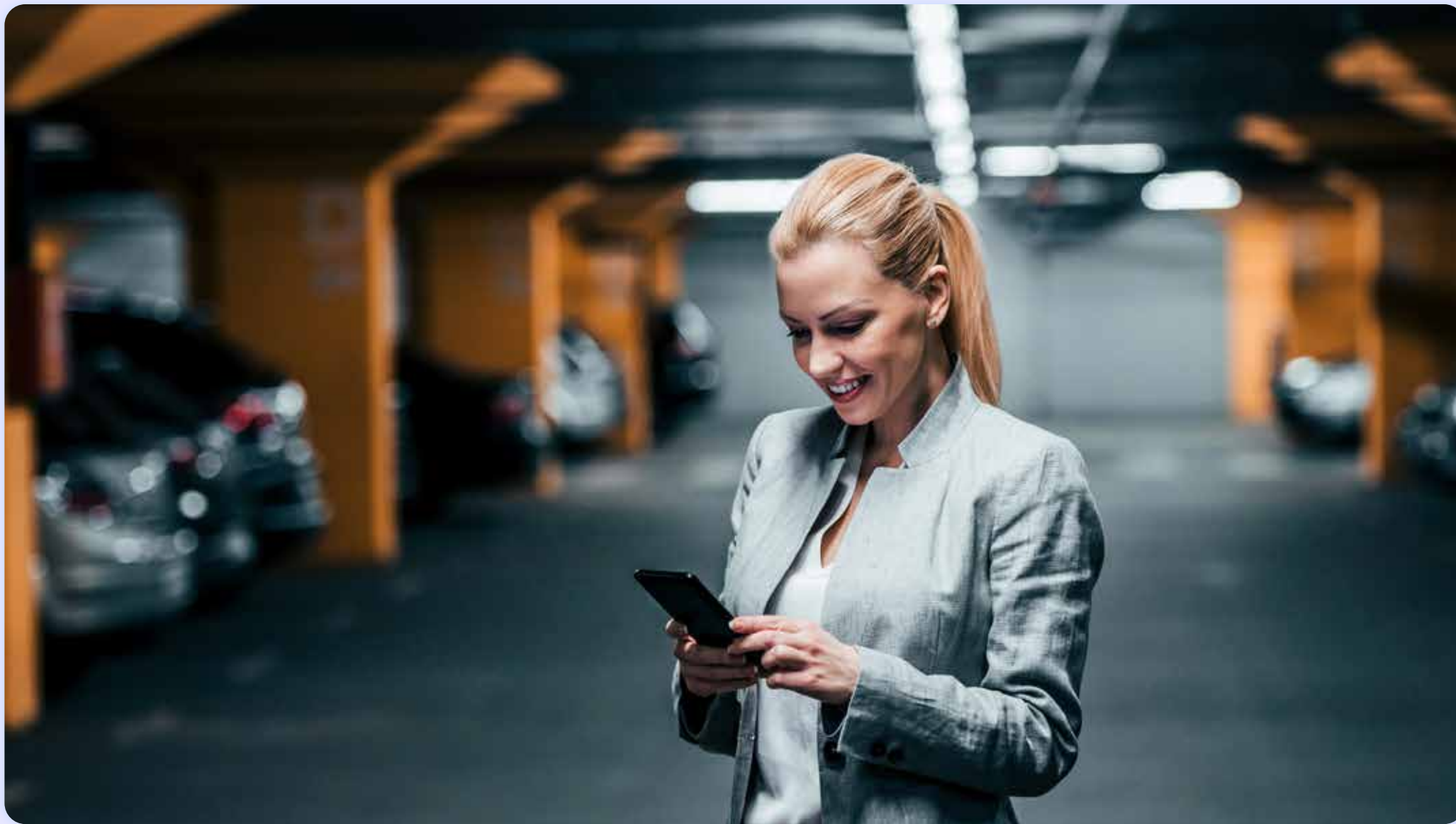


## Technology optimises office and parking space

To make the best use of space in a mixed-use environment, business tenants need insight into the use of office space and additional facilities. Having the right technology is necessary to generate useful data, enabling targeted decisions and steering towards set goals.

Smart technology not only helps optimise office occupancy but also makes decision-making about the flexible use of available space much more efficient.

Technology supports optimising the space and facilities of a mixed-use building. It can also facilitate building communities that connect users with similar objectives. Sowebuild develops software that helps create social cohesion and provides the building with a recognisable identity.





## 5. **SPACE IS LIMITED, EVEN IN CAR PARKS**

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Mixed-use is a perfect solution for the lack of urban space. However, creating sufficient parking spaces remains a significant challenge in the mixed-use concept. It is somewhat less complex to 'go up' than to dig down to create more space. The increasing electrification of the vehicle fleet also raises the question of whether the charging infrastructure can meet the need for flexibility and charging guarantees for employees.

Jacqueline Hougee acknowledges the challenge but emphasises that integrating technology can be a solution. "In all our projects, we deal with a shortage of parking spaces. The standard question is whether parking can be rented elsewhere. For some parties, this can be a stumbling block. They don't yet realise that technology can help manage the parking location more efficiently."

Robert Kohsiek also points out the need for insight into usage to address parking issues effectively. "Our parking challenge is twofold. On one hand, there are municipal requirements for the maximum number of parking spaces and a mandatory number of guest spaces. On the other hand, there is a lack of insight into who parks when and how often."



## 6. TOOGETHR SMART PARKING OFFERS THE SOLUTION

Toogethr's smart parking management system perfectly matches the characteristics and needs of tenants and managers in a mixed-use environment.

### With Toogethr Smart Parking:

- ✓ **Your tenants manage their parking space themselves**

The tenant handles the parking process from a clear and easy to use platform. Each tenant can implement their own parking policy.

- ✓ **You increase the return on your asset**

It is cost-effective because you can use parking spaces more efficiently. Additionally, you can generate more revenue by commercially renting out empty parking spaces through our collaboration with EasyPark.

- ✓ **You offer tenants flexibility**

Parkers can reserve a parking space and charging station and enter via licence plate recognition.

- ✓ **You generate relevant usage data to improve decision-making**

With real-time insight into capacity, you can optimise parking occupancy at any time.





# 7. Client case

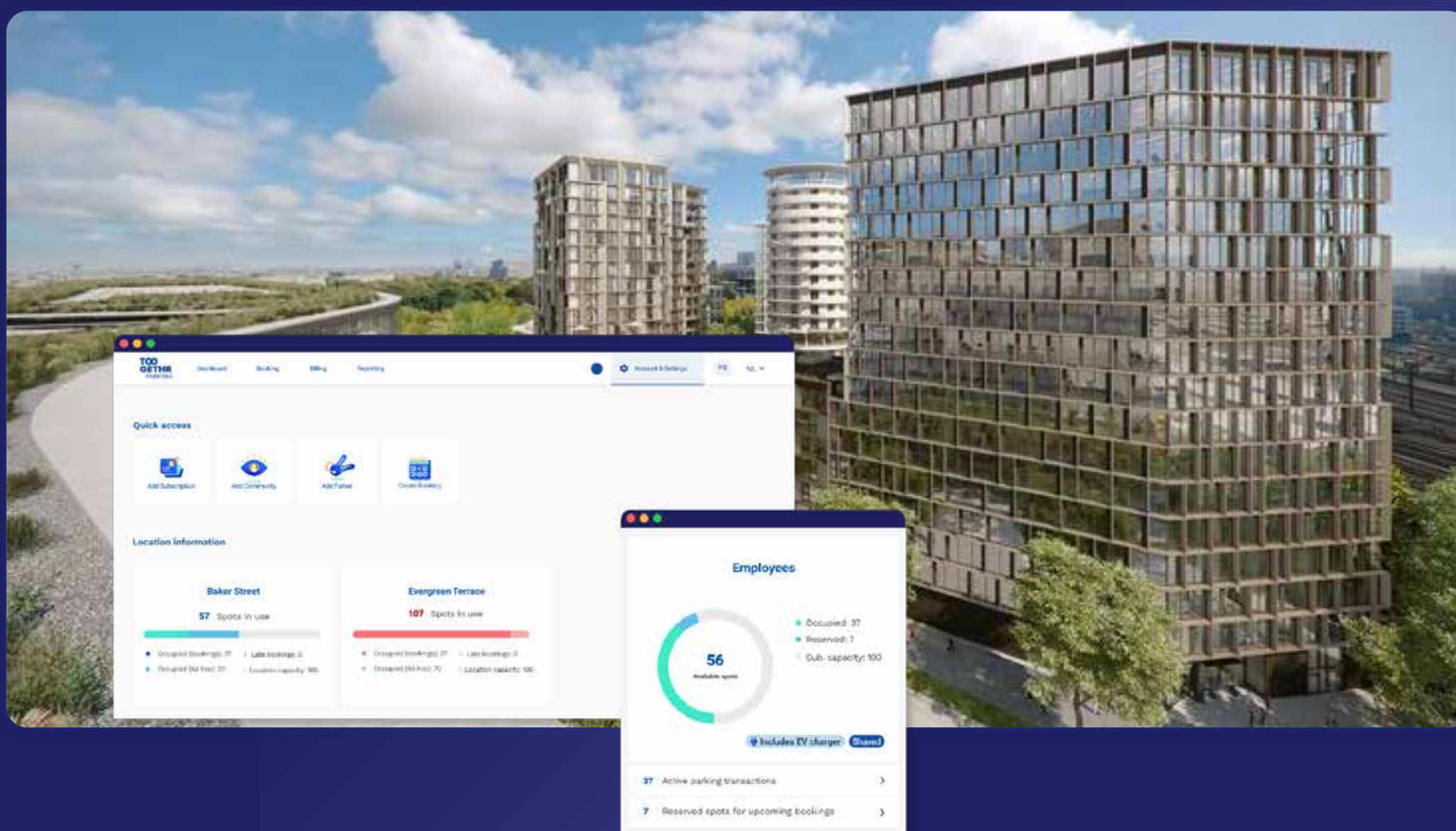
## 45 PARKING SPACES FOR 170 PARKERS

### Challenge

The companies in the Canetti tower in Vienna faced a significant shortage of parking spaces and high parking costs. This led to daily frustrations at the barrier and tenants spending a lot of time on parking management.

### Solution and result

With Toogethr's parking management system, the parking area has been optimised. Employees can reserve a parking space, and tenants have insight into occupancy. The result: 170 people can use 45 parking spaces, with a monthly cost saving of €2300 and a smile at the barrier.





## 8. Conclusion

# MIXED-USE BUILDINGS ARE THE FUTURE

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By realising a more efficient use of scarce urban space, they meet the need for more qualitative office and residential space. Additionally, they fulfil a growing need for employees to live closer to work and help companies attract young talent. For municipalities, it is also a perfect solution to address the housing shortage sustainably and improve the livability of the area by combining different functions in one building.

A crucial condition for the success of mixed-use is providing flexibility to different stakeholders. Insight into the use of office space and parking spots is essential for making the right decisions. Togethr Smart Parking is an important part of the available technology to maximise your parking location as a tenant and manager!





# DO YOU RECOGNISE THESE CHALLENGES?

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In the conversations we have daily with property owners, asset managers, and developers, we often hear the following challenges:

- ✓ Spending **unnecessary time** on parking management
- ✓ The **lack of parking spaces** at property locations
- ✓ The challenges of **hybrid working**
- ✓ The **electrification** of the lease fleet

Do you recognise these challenges? Are you curious about how our parking software can increase the appeal of your property and improve return on investment?

Contact one of our parking specialists or schedule a personal demo of our platform.

[CONTACT US](#)

[BOOK A DEMO](#)



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**Jacqueline Houge**  
Real Estate Manager



**Robert Kohsiek**  
Director



**Sander Willems**  
Co-founder



## SOURCES

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## ABOUT TOOGETHR

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Since 2016, Toogethr has been helping companies like Heineken, CBRE, and Red Bull optimise their parking areas and promote sustainable commuting. With Toogethr's smart parking software, we help companies gain insight, reduce parking pressure and increase profits.

Toogethr is part of the AutoBinck Group.



# TOOGETHR

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