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THE BACKBONE OF THE GLATTAL CONURBATION

AWARD
THE GLATTAL TRAMWAY

Location
Kloten–Opfikon–Rümlang–Wallisellen–Dübendorf–Zurich

Client
Canton of Zurich, represented by the Economics Directorate; Federal Office of Transport (infrastructure fund)

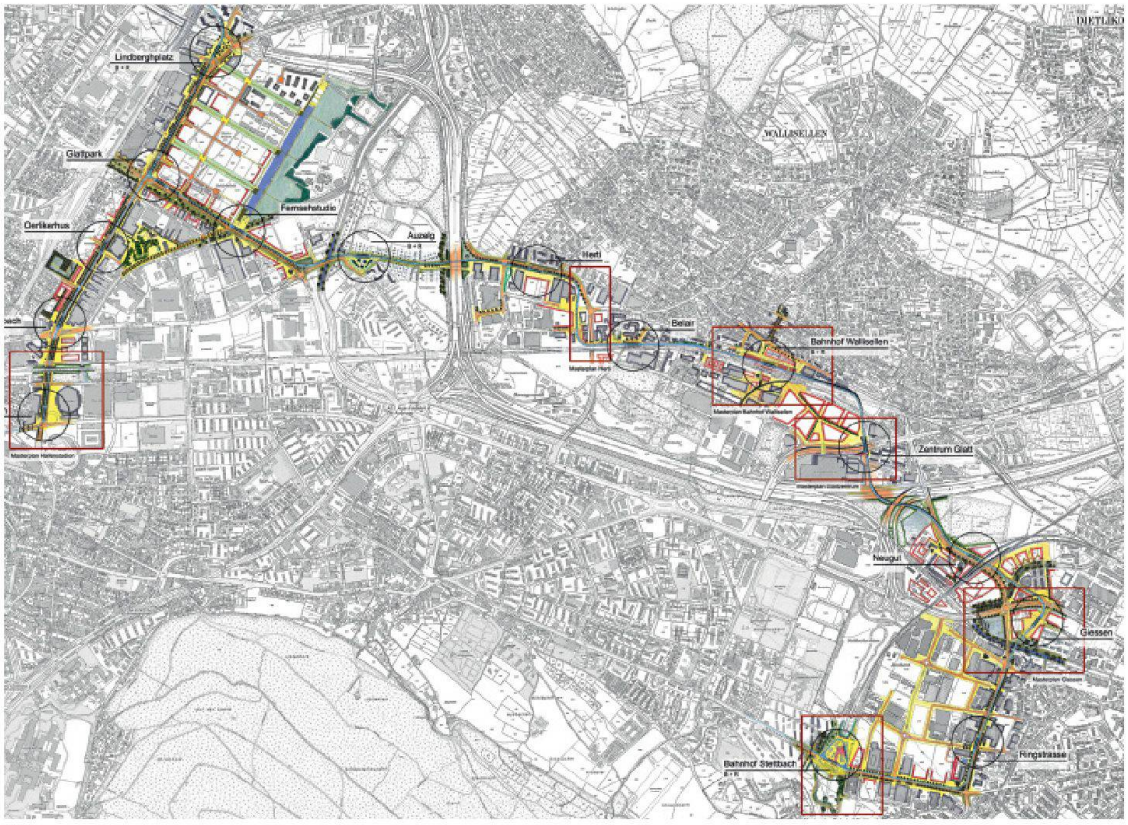
Team
Overall management: VBG Verkehrsbetriebe Glattal, Andreas Flury, Glattbrugg
Architecture: Architekturbüro Kai Flender, Ühlingen (D)
Environment: Gresch Partner, Peter Gresch, Bern
Design: Feddersen + Klostermann, Rainer Klostermann, Philipp Rüegg, Zurich
Project management: Rosenthaler + Partner, Herbert Notter, Zurich
Civil engineering: VBG Verkehrsbetriebe Glattal, Ramon Oppikofer, Glattbrugg
Rail engineering: VBG Verkehrsbetriebe Glattal, Hannes Schneebeli, Glattbrugg

Planning and execution
1990–2010

The Glattal tramway is the result of a grassroots initiative: at the beginning of the 1990s, the four mayors of the towns and boroughs of Dübendorf, Wallisellen, Opfikon and Kloten proposed a project to build a tramway that would form the backbone of a self-contained "city" in the making: the Glattal conurbation. Covering 12.7 km, the Glattal tram network acts as a "common thread", connecting the municipalities and districts of the conurbation. The project is based on three strategies from the cantonal master plan of 1995: inward development of the residential districts, expansion of the transport infrastructure with an additional public transport system and timely implementation in line with needs. The new tramway is considered key infrastructure for the dynamic economic area of Glattal. It consistently reorganises the transport infrastructure and provides impetus for the development of the conurbation.
The design of the tramway follows a holistic plan that encompasses all elements of rail and civil engineering and reflects the requirements of all users. The Glattal trams run almost entirely on their own track, which mainly consists of sound-absorbent lawns with gravel surfaces and meadow flowers. The project thus makes a substantial contribution to biodiversity and the networking of biotopes. In total, 72,160 m² of flower meadows and 4 km of hedges were created and 280 trees were planted during the laying of the track. More than 5,000 m² of ecological compensation areas offer a habitat for small animals. There was no need to make use of additional undeveloped space. The architecture of the tramway includes engineering structures and the regular features along the route such as overhead line masts and "Bike & Rail" facilities for cyclists. The 21 attractively designed stops act as windows to the town.
Because this is the first branch line in the Zurich agglomeration, both the planning process and execution are groundbreaking in nature. The project team set itself clear quality objectives and established guidelines for an exemplary flow of information between all stakeholders. The layout of the line respects the identity of the municipalities. The tramway influences commuter behaviour and working life while also having an effect on the leisure, shopping and recreational activities of the population. In this case, public transport enhances valuable urban space by offering energy-efficient mobility. The route of the track brings new perspectives on the urban space, while previously introverted areas are changing and becoming more dense. The project is making its mark: in the catchment areas around the stops, private investment is 16 times higher than the project costs.

The Glattal tramway sets standards beyond Switzerland for the lasting and sustainable development of residential areas and transport in an urban region. The design and execution of the rail project, whose exemplary cross-community planning process received an SIA "Umsicht" award back in 2006/07, rewards the high expectations associated with the work even at the planning and implementation phase.

01



02

01 The gravel lawns of the track not only absorb sound but also promote ecological continuity (photo: VBG)
02 Map (plan: Feddersen + Klostermann)

05 The Glattal tramway
(photo: Jules Spinatsch)