

# Living in the Eternal City

➤ What If  
Temporary Living  
Was Designed as  
a Forever Home?

**= il prisma =**  
DESIGN HUMAN LIFE

## ↗ Context & Challenge

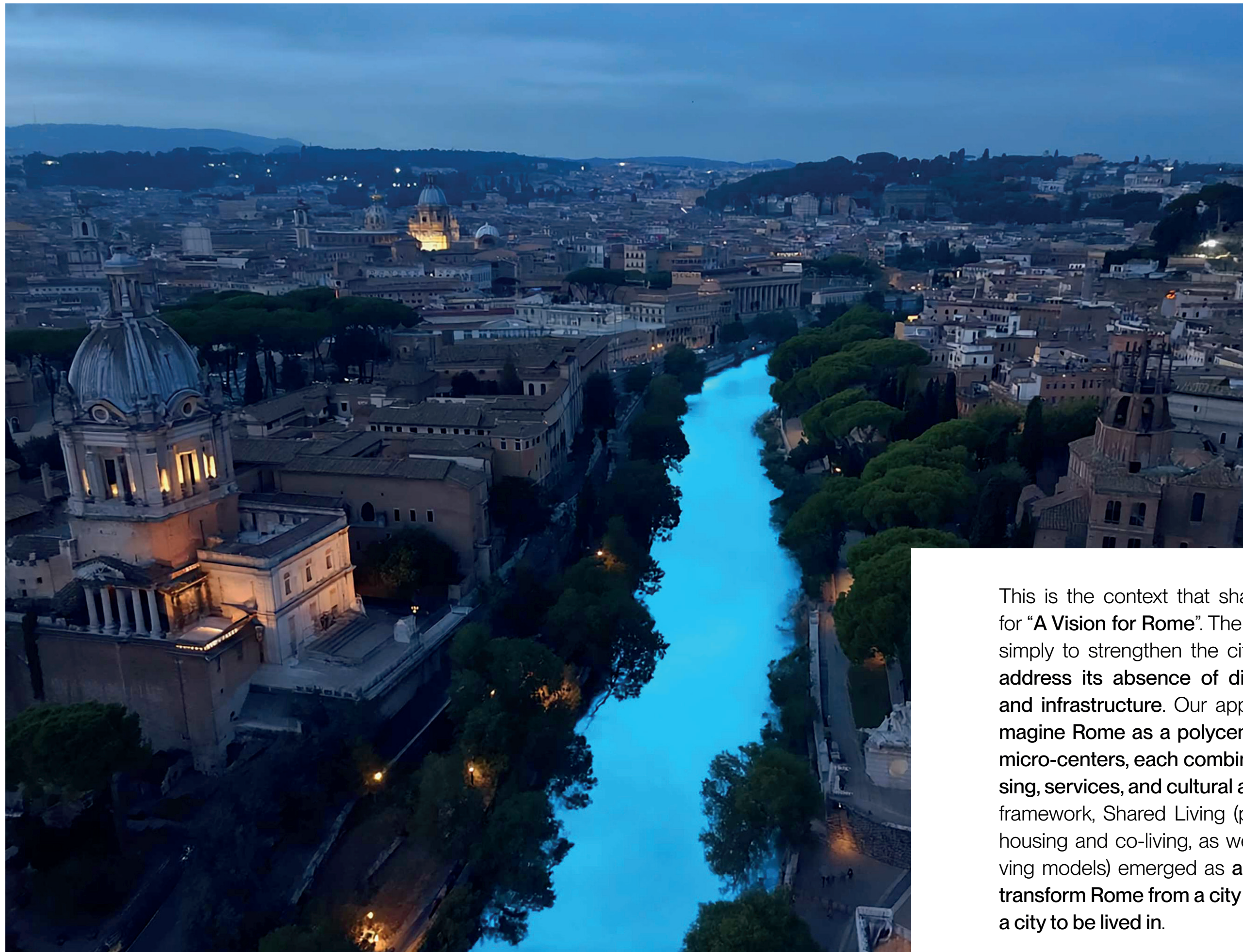
**Rome is the largest city in Italy**, home to around 2.8 million residents across a territory larger than the combined footprint of Milan, Naples, and Turin. Its historic center, with fewer than 22,527 permanent residents (Comune di Roma, 2025), **attracts a massive number of tourists**. In 2024, the city recorded a historical high of 22.2 million arrivals (Turismo Roma, 2024), with visitors staying an average of 4 nights, up from about 2.5 nights before Covid restrictions. This **imbalance between short-term tourist flows and long-term living pressures the city's housing market and risks turning many neighbourhoods into dormitories rather than active communities**.

At the same time, **Rome also stands out as one of Europe's greatest academic hubs**, with more than 336,000 enrolled students in the 2023/2024 academic year—significantly more than Milan's 210,822 (Comune di Roma, 2025). These students are distributed across 17 main universities and higher education institutions. Despite this, students, as well as young professionals and researchers, face a **chronic shortage of affordable, well-connected housing options, ultimately pushing many into temporary or unsafe living solutions**.

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This is the context that shaped our proposal for “**A Vision for Rome**”. The challenge was not simply to strengthen the city’s identity, but **to address its absence of distributed housing and infrastructure**. Our approach was to **reimagine Rome as a polycentric ecosystem of micro-centers, each combining adaptive housing, services, and cultural anchors**. Within this framework, Shared Living (particularly student housing and co-living, as well as short-term living models) emerged as **an essential tool to transform Rome from a city to be admired into a city to be lived in**.



# ➤ Designing Belonging



Cities thrive when people belong, yet too often urban life creates distance. Rising costs, fragmented neighbourhoods, and social isolation leave residents feeling like guests rather than participants in their own city. Adding to this, the rise of short-term living, from temporary contracts to transient student stays, makes **designing belonging even more challenging**.

In our proposal, **we addressed this challenge by envisioning the city as a polycentric ecosystem of micro-centers rooted in local vocations**. At the heart of that vision were Shared Living models such as student housing, co-living, and short-term living designed for students and young professionals seeking affordable, flexible homes.

Shared Living is not just a response to housing shortages or affordability pressures, but a way to **design for human life**. By creating spaces where residents share resources, experiences, and stories, Shared Living fosters communities that are inclusive, resilient, and connected. A kitchen or common room is never just functional: it is where neighbours meet, networks form, and belonging begins.

This paper explores how our **NWL (New Ways of Living) Shared Living framework informed our proposal for Rome, and why it continues to matter as cities everywhere seek to reconcile growth with humanity**. Shared Living, together with short-term living, shows that the way we design homes is also the way we design cities, shaping not only how people live but how they thrive.



# ➤ Shared Living in Rome:

## From Typology to City Vision

In “A Vision for Rome”, Shared Living was the mechanism that allowed new micro-centers to thrive. We proposed student housing projects that leveraged Rome’s extraordinary university network, making students active citizens rather than temporary visitors. In parallel, co-living offered young professionals and creatives affordable, **flexible homes that also foster collaboration and exchange**.

Short-term living models, meanwhile, provided adaptive solutions for this arriving in the city for study, research, or temporary work ensuring that even transient populations could find a sense of connection rather than disconnection.

Together, these models addressed affordability, strengthened local identity, and created the social glue that turned micro-centers into real communities. Within our vision, **Shared Living was not only a housing typology but a strategy to make the city more inclusive, attractive, and resilient: a capital worth choosing**.







## ➤ Shared Living: Share, Care and Belong

*Keywords:*

Community & Convenience

*Development model:*

Build-to-Rent (B2R), enabling medium-term flexible living

*Audience:*

People open to shared spaces, social living, community, and affordability.

The needs of students and young professionals were the real starting point of our proposal. By creating distributed university hubs and Shared Living communities across the city, we envisioned new centralities that could rebalance growth and strengthen neighbourhoods. Acting small (through targeted housing interventions) becomes **a way to heal the city at large.**

Our NWL Shared Living typology captures the spirit of collectiveness and convenience. It is designed for individuals and groups who are open to sharing, adapting, and engaging with others in their daily lives. These spaces respond to practical needs such as affordability, flexibility, and medium-term housing while also addressing a deeper cultural challenge: the rise of loneliness and disconnection in cities.

**Shared Living repositions housing as a place not just to stay, but to belong.** By combining private rooms with shared kitchens, living spaces, and communal areas, it encourages interaction and mutual support. For younger generations, it offers a lifestyle that values experience over ownership. For seniors, it provides dignity and companionship. For students and professionals, it creates vibrant hubs of exchange and growth.

## ➤ Sub-Typologies of Shared Living

- **Student housing:** Anchors educational districts as active urban nodes. It transforms universities into magnets for culture and innovation while giving students affordable, community-based homes.
- **Co-living:** Provides young professionals and creatives with flexible, cost-effective housing that encourages collaboration, shared experience, and new networks.
- **Short-term living:** Offers adaptive housing solutions for students, researchers, and professionals staying in the city temporarily, ensuring that mobility does not equal disconnection.
- **Mixed-use buildings:** Combine living, working, and leisure functions in dynamic environments that reduce commuting and increase convenience.
- **Senior housing:** Reimagines aging with dignity, autonomy, and social inclusion by fostering intergenerational connections and mutual care.

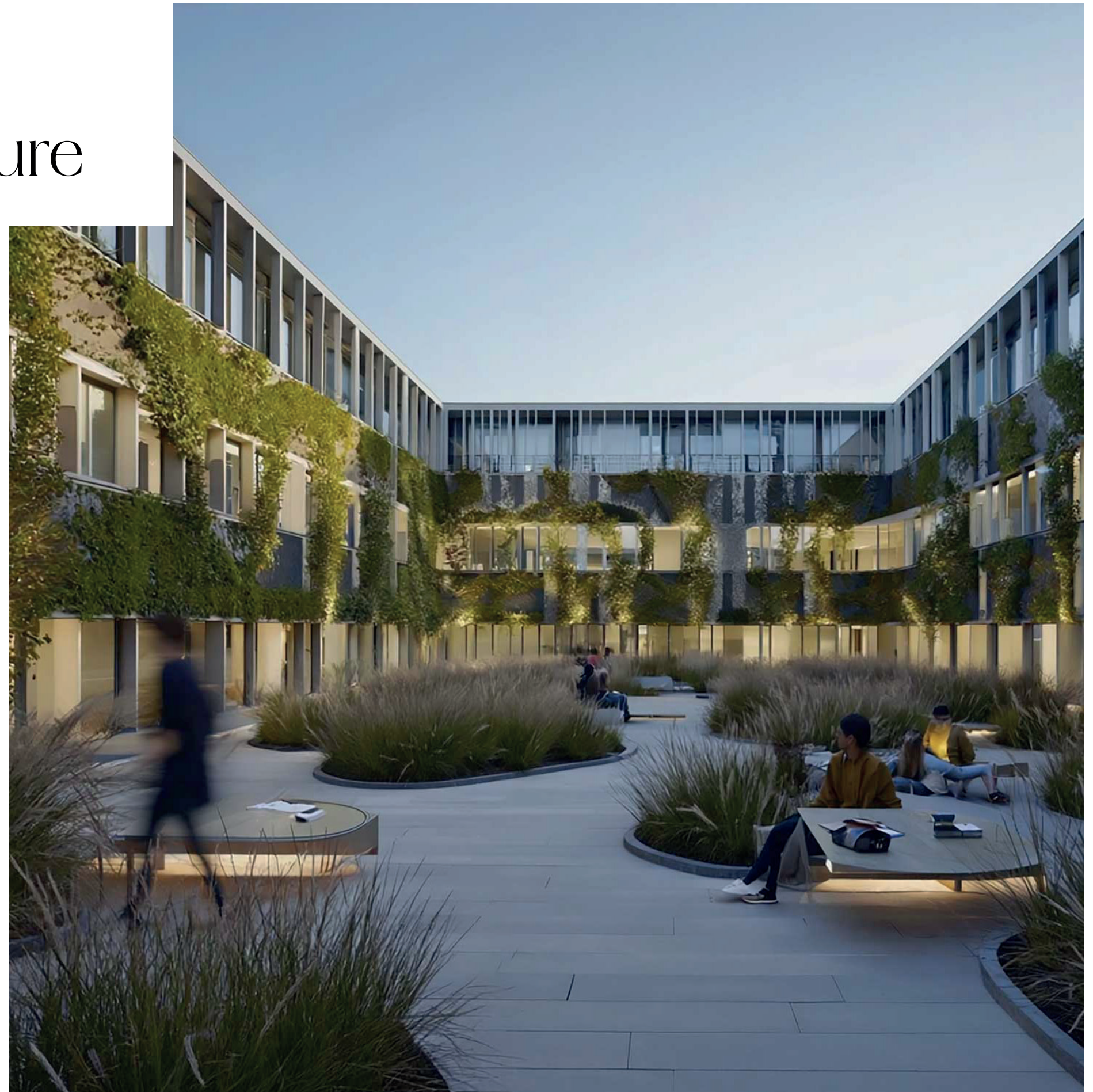


# ➤ Shared Living as Social Infrastructure

Shared Living transforms housing into social infrastructure, where kitchens, study areas, and common spaces become catalysts for trust and collaboration. It ripples outward, **turning buildings into communities and communities into more liveable cities.**

Our proposal used Shared Living as the bridge between the city's heritage and its future. **By embedding student housing, co-living, and short-term living within adaptive micro-centers, we showed how the city could attract and retain residents, nurture local life, and unlock value for both public and private stakeholders.**

As cities face pressures of affordability, demographic change, and shifting lifestyles, Shared Living offers a scalable and deeply human solution. It proves that when we design for connection, **we design cities that endure.**







# Conclusion: The Collective Power of Shared Living

Shared Living shows how intimate spaces can spark collective change. Around a kitchen table, neighbours connect. In a student residence, culture takes root. In co-living, networks grow and extend into the wider city. **In short-term living, even temporary stays become opportunities to feel part of something larger.**

By embedding collectiveness into housing, we create not only better homes but stronger cities. Shared Living is at once a strategy for affordability, a tool for inclusion, and a vision for liveability. **Within our NWL framework, it embodies our ethos of designing for human life, shaping spaces where people do more than live: they share, care, and belong.**



## ↗ Contacts

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