Today, there is no escaping the widespread adoption of social media. Similar to the rise of the personal computer, mobile phones and the internet, the ascent of social media is historic and transformative in influencing the way people think, behave and communicate. In few other places is this transformation more distinct and revolutionary than in the use of Participation 2.0 in government administration.
We are entering an era of Participation 2.0

The internet has revolutionised the world. It has changed the way people work, socialise, shop, and travel. It has changed the way companies operate, where they locate, and how they manage production. It has changed the way government provides services, how we communicate with the government, and how we influence public policy.

While most transport organisations have entered the internet age, many are barely scratching the surface of the internet’s potential. Almost all transport organisations use the Internet to disseminate information (for example, by providing public transport schedules online), many use the Internet to collect feedback and as part of public involvement programs. But there are very few who use internet applications effectively to engage the public in a collaborative process designed to improve planning, constructing and operating transport systems.¹

The involvement and participation of citizens and stakeholders in the field of sustainable urban mobility is necessary to address their actual needs and to obtain public legitimacy. New information and communication technologies have started to shift citizen participation methods more towards online environments. We are entering an era of Participation 2.0.

The term derives from the expression “Web 2.0”, meaning internet sites that allow users to interact and collaborate with each other in a virtual community and to create content rather than passively viewing content.² Participation 2.0 methods support participation through social media groups, interactive web-platforms, discussion forums, online polls and mobile applications. They can complement traditional tools and overcome their shortcomings. Participation 2.0 removes barriers of time and space and allows citizens to participate and interact with other users whenever they have time. It has the potential to reach new target groups, especially the so-called “digital natives”, the “native speakers” of the digital language of computers, videos, video games, social media and other sites on the internet.

With the right approach, social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs can help to raise awareness and encourage participation in many activities on transport and mobility. Social media has opened up exciting new avenues for public engagement and participation, yet cities are often hesitant to embrace these new mechanisms as a legitimate form of public participation. Some, perhaps, see the public’s engagement with these social platforms as a fad; others might be worried that social networks have controversial views or weaken institutional control. Despite these perceived risks, examples from around the world show that now is the time for city leaders to recognise the potential impact of social networks. They have the ability to radically change how cities collect data, implement projects, and create innovative solutions for improving the quality of life for urban residents.³

Public participation through traditional planning-commission meetings often suffers from the “participation paradox”: the meetings often reach those that are already interested and have a high level of societal participation, while a vast majority is unheard. Social media can change this planning process by giving a wider audience a voice, as well as broaden the number of planning issues considered. This allows a greater variety of urban residents to learn and actively participate in the dialogue surrounding the development of their city.

Social media technologies take many different forms including online magazines, internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro-blogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. On top of actual social media, additional services facilitate the use of social media. Social network aggregation is the process of collecting content from multiple social network services, such as Twitter or Facebook, into one unified presentation. This is often performed by a social network aggregator, which easily collects information to a single location or helps consolidate multiple social networking profiles into only one. Social network aggregation services are able to organise or simplify a user’s social networking experience by consolidating messages. They can track friends, combine bookmarks, search across multiple social networking sites or read RSS feeds for multiple social networks. They also allow users to see when their name is mentioned on various sites, let them access their profiles from a single interface, provide live-streams, etc. Even if boundaries between the different types of social media are increasingly blurred, there are a number of distinctive forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social media</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>Allows users to connect with other people with similar interests and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(examples: Facebook®, LinkedIn®)</td>
<td>backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookmarking sites</td>
<td>Allows users to save, organise and manage links to various websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(examples: Delicious®, Stumble Upon®)</td>
<td>and resources on the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social news</td>
<td>Allows users to post various items or links to external articles and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(examples: Digg®, Reddit®)</td>
<td>then start a contest to vote on the item itself. The items getting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more votes are displayed most prominently so the decision is up to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media sharing</td>
<td>Allowing the user to upload and share different media such as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(examples: YouTube®, Flickr®)</td>
<td>pictures and video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-blogging</td>
<td>Focusing on short updates displayed to anyone signed in to receive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(example: Twitter®)</td>
<td>the updates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog comments and forums</td>
<td>Online forums allow members to hold conversations by posting messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(example: CIVITAS Inter@ction)</td>
<td>Blog comments usually focus on the topic of the blog post.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Useful and original content can trigger a "viral" effect whereby users re-share content posted to their social network. Many social media sites provide specific functions to help users re-share content, for example, Twitter's re-tweet function, Tumblr's re-blog function or Facebook's share function. Public administrations, non-profit organisations and activists may have a particular interest in developing a proper content strategy. The success of a strategy must be monitored and analysed: the use of social media monitoring tools allows strategists to search, track, and analyse conversations on the web about their brand or about topics of interest. This can be useful in PR management and campaign tracking, allowing the stakeholders using social media to measure return-on-investment, competitor-auditing, and general public engagement. Tools range from free, basic applications to subscription-based, more in-depth tools.

The CIVITAS DYN@MO project found⁵ that such tools play a significant role in establishing a two-way communication between the city authorities and residents, and that it benefits both parties. It provides more channels for citizens to express their opinions and to get involved in planning processes. City authorities, on the other hand, use feedback and input from citizens for improving both planning processes and information services. While the tools attract mostly digital natives, they are becoming increasingly popular among broader audiences as the technology becomes available to everyone. Different mobility apps and platforms have huge potential. When applied in the right way, they can be valuable tools for making cities’ mobility-planning processes and services more effective. According to CIVITAS DYN@MO, there are five benefits of using such 2.0 tools. They:

1 Reach out to a wider audience and involve better new target groups in the mobility-planning process;
2 Enhance the communication between the city administration and citizens, helping to create wider acceptance towards a mobility plan and planned measures;
3 Gather feedback and public opinions on the development of mobility measures and services;
4 Offer a good way to provide citizens easily accessible mobility information;
5 Combine, integrate and link several tools such as different social media groups together.

Participation 2.0 can help to change the planning dialogue, bring data into policy discussions, and find the best solutions to difficult transport problems. Local governments should not only acknowledge but also encourage the use of social networking in governance. These new tools will likely prove vital in engaging the citizens of today to help build the sustainable cities of tomorrow.

⁵ Participation 2.0 in the sustainable urban mobility planning process – experiences from the CIVITAS DYN@MO project, accessed April 19, 2016, http://www.civitas-ec.eu/sites/default/files/participation_2.0_in_the_sump_process_dynamo_web.pdf
CIVITAS stimulates involvement for improving the quality and acceptance of urban mobility measures

Participation helps citizens to better understand the process of sustainable urban mobility planning – from vision-building to implementation and evaluation – and offers an opportunity to influence and participate in the planning and developing their own living environment. The involvement of citizens obliges transport and urban planners to explain what are often very complex planning issues in everyday language and use methods that citizens understand. It is also important for the city to get feedback at an early stage and to explore the topics that may be controversial. Active participation on the part of citizens can help to gain better acceptance of the traffic-planning measures. The CIVITAS Initiative’s Thematic Groups on Public Involvement and Mobility Management provide a number of resources, such as training resources, guidance material, policy recommendations, and learning opportunities such as trainings, study tours or workshops. The group also allows members to get in contact with the city officials and experts of the presented best practices.

Since the start of the CIVITAS Initiative in 2002, cities have been experimenting with public involvement and stakeholder consultation. For example, Berlin (Germany) was involved in CIVITAS I (2002-2006) and promoted future urban transport solutions through direct communication with potential customers and users. Within CIVITAS II (2005-2009) Krakow (Poland) underlined its strong political commitment to improving public participation in transport planning by creating a Mobility Forum. Finally, within CIVITAS PLUS (2008-2012), Ghent (Belgium) engaged with citizens because the whole area around the main train station was being redeveloped, bringing with it problems such as noise, dust, traffic rerouting and accessibility issues.

Whereas public involvement and stakeholder consultation has a high priority in CIVITAS, the topic of Participation 2.0 has come on the CIVITAS agenda only recently through CIVITAS PLUS II, especially in the CIVITAS DYN@MO project, where experiences have shown that due to the specific situation in each city, different approaches are needed.

Aachen has a recent example illustrating that the success of major development projects is highly dependent on the extent to which the public is involved in the process. A referendum in Aachen, in 2013, put a stop to the planned reintroduction of a light railway system. This is a good example of how projects “coming from above” may fail to be successful. Instead, a broad agreement, with the help of public participation, has to be reached with regard to the need for major changes to get wider acceptance and public support.

One of the key elements for creating a successful Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) is the development of a common vision that will establish the foundation for all steps later in the process. Aachen’s mobility vision for 2050 was formulated by a number of participants, such as politicians, city officials and different stakeholder groups in 2012-2013. The vision was divided into eight sub-topics that were compared against the current situation in these fields. The eight sub-topics corresponded with eight thematic commissions established to facilitate the discussion between experts and stakeholders on the SUMP.

To make the vision easily understandable, the components of the vision were visualised with 36 attractive posters. The posters, together with a video explaining the reasons for developing a SUMP, were...
In February 2014, Gdynia launched an internet platform, Mobilna Gdynia, based on a concept by the Gdansk University of Technology. The main aim was to create a tool, which would allow the city to communicate with the public and stakeholders more easily and on a wider scale, and to conduct consultations with the local community, especially during transport planning and the SUMP elaboration process.

The Mobilna Gdynia platform was not the city’s first attempt of using Web 2.0 and social media for communication with citizens. Since 2013, Gdynia has actively used its Mobilna Gdynia Facebook profile to raise awareness, inform citizens about sustainable mobility, and get public opinion on currently implemented or planned mobility measures. With the Mobilna Gdynia platform, the city decided to take a step forward and design the website in such a way that it not only provides information and raises awareness, but also encourages citizens to join the discussion on the SUMP. With the platform Gdynia hopes to learn more about the public opinion on planning issues, better understand people’s attitudes and receive concrete proposals for actions to overcome mobility related problems. This is possible with Web 2.0 tools integrated to the platform.

One example of a successful dialogue with citizens was an online survey on the closure of one of the Gdynia’s main streets for traffic. The experiment showed that this way of communicating with the public has huge potential. More than 2,700 people completed the questionnaire, and it was viewed by over 7,000 people. Some 73 percent of respondents agreed to limit car traffic on the street and more than 60 percent out of those 2,700 also agreed on closing the street for traffic. Around 200 traditional interviews supplemented the survey to reflect the less “technologically active” target groups.

The experiences of Gdynia have shown that people are willing to take part in surveys and express their opinions when a registration process is not necessary. The Mobilna Gdynia platform has the potential to become a real one-stop-shop for mobility information in Gdynia.

Proposals for how to change the visions were especially helpful and were discussed in the eight thematic commissions. Some of the changes were implemented. In January 2014 the mobility commission of the city council unanimously approved the ‘visions 2050’.

Based on the experiences, Aachen sees Participation 2.0 methods as an additional and useful way to engage citizens in the process of developing a SUMP. However, traditional participation methods also have their value. Both can develop and implement citizen-supported plans.

12 Mobility 2.0 Communication, CIVITAS Initiative, accessed April 19, 2016, http://www.civitas-initiative.eu/content/mobility-2-0-communication
Apart from the above-mentioned CIVITAS implementations, there are a plenty of further examples on Participation 2.0 in European cities. In this context, four case studies from Europe - Bremen (Germany), Tallinn and Tartu (Estonia) and Tampere (Finland) - offer insights into this particular field.

Bremen (Germany)

The Bremen SUMP (Verkehrsentwicklungsplan Bremen 2025), adopted in 2014, intends to actively promote ecomobility, to improve the quality of life in the city by optimising the transport system and reducing the negative impacts of transport such as safety risks, air and noise pollution. Bremen performs monitoring activities on both the planning process and implementation. The SUMP contains an evaluation strategy provided by an external expert, which sets the elaboration of evaluation reports once per legislative period, every 4 years. The first evaluation report is planned for 2018. Bremen involves different stakeholders in the planning process and, for transparency, publishes all documents online. Discussions with citizens and external stakeholders on the outcomes of the cost-benefit analysis in the first quarter of 2014 led the municipality to make changes in the selected measures. Bremen involved neighbouring cities, which had the opportunity to make propositions. At the transnational level, Bremen exchanged with Groningen (Netherlands) and Oldenburg (Germany) on traffic strategies. Formally, an advisory board – also in

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### One step further: Collaborating with citizens

Using social networks to interact with the public is today becoming more and more frequent even in the public sector. However, there are some concerns and limitations about the use of such technologies, which sometimes may threaten the usability and the reliability of the information gathered. At the same time, the potential of such tools is great, and there are several applications exploiting social cooperation through the web.

As the internet and its applications rapidly evolve, there are already a significant number of cities experimenting with crowd-sourced planning, which consists of five phases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collecting input</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Mainstream social media such as Facebook and Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Service status and reporting (agency websites, transport provider websites)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Survey applications such as SurveyMonkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Customised reporting applications such as SeeClickFix</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ GPS reporting applications such as MeineRadspur</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ City data (either via open data or scraped data) such as Stumble Safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Citizen-collected data (via cheap sensors, participatory sensing) such as Waycount</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Virtual meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Collaboration applications such as GreenCityStreets</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Tools for better meetings and processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Increase engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Information (for example, transit information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Real activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Crowd-sourced civic works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
charge of monitoring the evaluation reports - followed
and approved the entire SUMP process. The board is
composed of members of the local parliament and
different external stakeholders (motorists’ and cyclists’
associations, chamber of commerce, environmental
NGOs, etc.) from all political parties, which sometimes
have conflicting interests. With this innovative approach
to reach out to residents and involve them in advancing
public transport, Bremen won the 2014 CIVITAS Award
for Public Participation, Europe’s highest award for clean
urban transport, and the 2015 SUMP Award.

Tallinn (Estonia)

Tallinn gained a lot of useful information via Participation
2.0 while taking part in the European Cycling Challenge
(ECC)\. The city won the challenge twice with 500
participants, tracking their everyday bike trips with the
Endomondo sports app. ECC data provided the city
and local transport NGOs with an overview of bike use
in the city and identified the main corridors for cyclists.
This information was taken into account during the
reconstruction of streets. The app produced a lot of
feedback on where to improve cycling infrastructure
and facilities. It also facilitated communication between
cyclists. New users got precise advice on routing from
experienced users, and hints for shortcuts and safe
parking places. The Estonian Road Administration,
meanwhile, developed an online mapping programme
for schools. Children can mark their routes from home to
school, their traffic modes, and various traffic situations
and problems on their way to school. A GIS database
receives the information, which allows the data to be
analysed by traffic mode, density or other information
required for both the school mobility plan and local
transport planning.

Tartu (Estonia)

Tartu is working on the general planning of its city
centre, with the aim to devise the principles for its spatial
development-- (i.e. where to build and where not to
build). The first stage of general planning is drafting the
city-centre development strategy, including assessing
previous developments and offering possible solutions
for improving the city centre. The case explores the
public discussion about this process in the media. Local
daily newspaper Tartu Postimees initiated the discussion.
At first, the city architect published his vision of how the
riverbanks could be developed in the city centre in the
future, together with drawings and videos. This started
a major discussion in the media. Dozens of articles were
published in different media, most of them in Tartu
Postimees. Television and radio also covered the topic.
The main goal is to make the citizens think about city
development. The main targets of the discussion were
citizens, architects, city planners, city officials, etc. The
discussion affects all the above-mentioned groups,
making them think about and feel engaged in the
process.

Tampere (Finland)

The Valma preparation forum complements the
practice of representative democracy in Tampere.
The aim is to give people a better chance to directly
participate in making decisions. The Valma forum allows
Tampere residents to express opinions about issues
under preparation. Residents can have an early say in
matters and throughout the preparatory process. This
makes public participation an integral part of the city’s
preparatory process. Officials in charge of the preparation
and decision-makers receive the submitted opinions as
emails, and can then follow the opinions while forming
their own views on the issues. Valma is therefore an
e-participation tool or forum for preparatory work. The
information is published alongside official data, which
means that the processing phase of the subject matter,
electronic documents and decisions can be viewed in
the same electronic environment simultaneously. There
is a connection to the GIS service so that Valma users
can search issues of interest. People can register to
Valma and subscribe to bulletins on interesting topics
and areas. Public consultation and residents’ feedback
is an integral part of high-quality preparatory work.
Valma offers a complete and user-friendly approach to
collecting feedback in very different cases.
Social media platforms and applications are evolving rapidly. Cities believe that the importance of observing and analysing social media conversations will continue to intensify in local governments as more and more people share information online. The public turns to online networks first to receive up-to-date information on major political and international news. The two main trends are:

- Using mobiles with social media will only continue to increase: With a growing adoption of mobile smartphones comes a change in the way people interact with web-based information and social media platforms. More and more people access the internet via smartphone devices. As such, city websites and social media will need to be increasingly mobile-friendly.

- Integrating social media into core government services is on the rise: Social media can be seen as a service, and as more people use social media, integrating social media tools into core government operations will become even more prevalent in the years to come.

An overarching goal that can guide the assessment of current activities and development of future efforts is the creation of a "connected community." There are three kinds of connection: citizens to each other, citizens to the local government, and the local government to citizens.

Large numbers of people seek out associations based on shared interests and activities, but they do not necessarily use these links to address civic concerns or to contribute to the governance of the jurisdiction where they live. Local governments have a special interest in fostering these broader connections. Governments are likely to be the "keepers" of community as a jurisdiction above the level of the primary associations that individuals form on their own. To be sure, governmental boundaries in fragmented urban regions can be arbitrary, but unless there is a connection between a government and the people who live in its boundaries, community governance cannot be achieved. The characteristics of the connected community can be defined more precisely to include the following:

- Citizen engagement activities are connected to what citizens perceive to be important.
- Citizens are connected to each other and to local government through engagement activities.
- Citizens are connected by electronic and traditional links that permit the generation of information, consideration of alternatives, and joint actions.
- Participants in various citizen engagement activities are connected to each other to expand civic capacity, activities are linked and support each other, and new ventures build on previous ones.
- Organisations in the community are connected to citizens and the local government as partners in engagement.

The extent of citizen involvement cannot be based simply on the preferences of officials if a commitment to citizen engagement is going to be met. Officials do not give up control of how issues are considered, but if citizens are going to have a limited say in the outcome of a decision, that limitation should be clear from the beginning rather than imposed at the end of the process. It may be “smart” for officials to retain control and limit involvement, and doing so may reflect their view of the public interest. Still, being smart does not mean using citizen engagement only when it is “convenient” or limiting it to situations when it is safe.

Local government officials can take many initiatives to advance citizen engagement. It is a mistake, however, for officials to feel that they can control the process or that they are the only originators of action. Increasingly, citizen-initiated engagement activities will arise. Citizens will ask government to collaborate with them.

The result of these connections is to change the perception residents have of how they relate to each other. And Participation 2.0 can be an excellent tool to foster this approach.

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19 Ibid
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