



CIVITAS

Cleaner and better transport in cities

MIMOSA

CASE STUDY



UTRECHT - ALWAYS ACCESSIBLE

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT



To limit the negative impacts of road works in and around Utrecht and to further stimulate the use of public transport, the City of Utrecht formed a unique public/private entity called 'Platform Utrecht Bereikbaar'. Under the brand 'Utrecht Accessible', partners worked to keep Utrecht accessible during public works. Features included the free 'Utrecht Accessible Pass', a public transport pass given to employees offering access to regional public transport, public bicycles for business and private use, some trains and Park & Ride services. What was supposed to be a two to three year project, is now in its fifth year.

MUNICIPAL PROFILE

LOCATION

Utrecht, the Netherlands

POPULATION

316,277

LAND AREA

99.3 km²

CIVITAS BUDGET

EUR 4.980.619,56

Municipal context

The historic city of Utrecht is the fourth largest city in the Netherlands, and the capital of Utrecht Province. In addition to the many tourists that visit the city each year, 50,000 students attend numerous third-level education establishments in the city, among them the largest university in the Netherlands. Its central location makes Utrecht a vital transport node in the region where major roads and railways intersect, attracting all types of enterprises.

The city's ambitious policy aimed at "Keeping Utrecht Attractive and Accessible" aims to reduce the car use growth by 50 percent by 2030, and cutting CO₂ emissions by at least 30 percent by 2020. Traditionally, the main goal was traffic management, however, during CIVITAS Utrecht chose a mix of activities that aimed at changing behaviour. Citizens engagement is vital in order to do this in a meaningful way and CIVITAS provided the opportunity to put theory into practice, generating new ideas with several participation projects.



UTRECHT IN CIVITAS

Utrecht (Netherlands) participated in CIVITAS MIMOSA, an innovative collaboration between the cities of Bologna (Italy), Funchal (Portugal), Gdansk (Poland), Tallinn (Estonia), and Utrecht (Netherlands). The motto of the project is "Making Innovation in Mobility and Sustainable Actions."

CIVITAS MIMOSA

With cities drawn from a range of geographical and economic situations, MIMOSA cities implemented a range of 69 activities, aimed at guaranteeing mobility to all citizens without burdening the environment or weakening the cities' economy. Shaping a new mentality where conscientious behaviour is perceived as rewarding rather than a sacrifice was at its heart. This effort was reinforced by a host of technical and physical measures. It ran from 2008-2012.

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'Utrecht Accessible' Pass

Introduction

Extensive infrastructural adaptations in and around Utrecht reduced road capacity temporarily on some of the most important entry routes. Due to these road works, the city and the national highways authority, Rijkswaterstaat, expected traffic delays and a reduction of accessibility in Utrecht. In order to keep the city accessible and limit economic damage, it was estimated that 2,000 to 4,000 cars would need to avoid rush hours. Utrecht, therefore, put together a variety of measures to achieve this. Private businesses acknowledged this situation and saw the necessity to act.

Taking a closer look

Under the brand 'Utrecht Accessible' the infrastructure authorities, the public transport (PT) authorities and trade & industry worked together by:

1. Providing the 'Utrecht Accessible' Public Transport Pass.

Companies bought the pass for all their employees. Only commuters who need their car or work at night were excluded. The employer bought the PT-pass at a tax-free price, as part of a wider national agreement. The pass gave access to the complete PT network in Utrecht, and public rental bicycles in the whole country, Park and Ride facilities

around the city of Utrecht and some train lines. Commuters travel for free in the region of Utrecht 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 12 months a year. 'Utrecht Accessible' assists with the registration of the cardholders, collection of photos for the pass and contacting cardholders about the use of the Pass.

The prices of the pass are shown below:

Costs/year	2009	2010	2011	2012
UB-pass	€ 75	€ 75	€ 100	€ 150
UB-pluspass	€ 250	€ 250	€ 250	€ 275

2. Rewarding motorists for avoiding rush hour.

During this pilot, motorists were rewarded for avoiding early morning rush hour. The measure targeted daily users of the A2 highway by means of license plate recognition. From the 15,555 people that were invited to participate, 4,026 car owners eventually did (26 percent of the invited people). The project shows that these participants earned an average of EUR 55 by travelling at different times.

3. Joint communications on road works and travel advice.

Before the implementation of this measure, the three infrastructure authorities involved in

public works tended to communicate separately to commuters. Now they address the target groups with one voice under the same brand. Communication focuses on brand recognition and marketing of the PT pass. Communications channels include the standard and mobile website, news alerts about road construction works, advertisements, radio spots, billboards and mutual press conferences and press releases.

The main innovative aspects include:

- One card with access to a wide range of transport options;
- A collaborative process to develop, sell, promote and produce the card;
- A free opportunity for car users to try PT;
- Collaboration of parties with various and sometimes conflicting interests;
- One Voice, One Brand makes for simple and clear messages to mobility users instead of many senders; and
- Access to 20,000 card holders for research.

Results

Impact of the mobility pass

19,120 employees owned a pass in 2012, which were in turn sold by 715 employers in Utrecht area.

In order to establish the usage frequency of the pass and the actual decrease in car usage, Stichting Utrecht Bereikbaar conducted a



survey among pass holders. A response rate of 34 percent was achieved, with 5,833 of the 17,369 pass holders replying. 95 percent of the respondents use the pass to travel to work. 40 percent of the respondents said they travelled by car before they had the pass.

The estimated impact of the pass is that former car drivers made 1,125 less car trips per day during peak hours on the south-western roads in Utrecht. Rijkswaterstaat calculated a decrease of 2,880 car trips in peak hours on the total roads. It can certainly be concluded that the pass led to a significant decrease in the car usage.

Furthermore, 96 percent of the respondents said they use the pass to travel by public transport and 35 percent used it on the bus lines four times per week or more. Two percent used the pass daily to travel by PT rental bikes and 3 percent weekly. The actual number of trips completed on PT-bikes made by pass owners shows a significant increase, from about 1,400 in January 2010 to 12,100 trips in September 2012.

Impact of rewarding motorists on car trips

On average there were 500 to 700 less private vehicles on the roads per working day.

Number of cars on the south-western roads of Utrecht

The number of cars on the main roads to the city centre in 2012 increased compared to 2006. However this was expected, as traffic is growing every year: the Business as Usual (BaU) scenario estimates a growth of 1.5 percent each year. Compared to the BaU, in this scenario the traffic during peak hours on main roads to the Utrecht city centre decreased by 1,200 vehicles.



Bike parking facilities around the main station

Other CIVITAS measures also addressed traffic reduction, so it is difficult to say what the precise impact of this particular measure was on this figure.

Communication results

The mobile website received over 200,000 visitors per year. The weekly news alerts registered 14,000 subscribers, while the Twitter account had 941 followers.

A survey among commuters and citizens showed that people were satisfied with the communication. 'Utrecht Accessible' has a brand recognition of 75 percent. 82 percent of citizens surveyed understand that road construction works come with delays.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

'Utrecht Accessible' is a collaboration between organisations drawn from three infrastructural authorities, several public transport authorities and Utrecht Trade & Industry.

Surveys among card holders now provides parties involved with knowledge of transport trends, ideas for improving the public transport system and figures of how many people travel by PT instead of the car.

Lessons learned

Establishing a strong brand and joint communications between multiple organisations demands expert management and time. Be aware of the various partners' interests to decide upon a strategy, operational management parameters and communication tactics. The main issues seem to be in the longer term and at a strategic level, as stakeholder objectives can often change. Therefore, a periodic assessment of the future of the pass is justifiable and necessary. A clear time schedule is also required to ensure efficient operational management of the pass and to guarantee a high quality of the mobility pass for the users.

The advantage of involving a separate organisation, like the *Stichting Utrecht Bereikbaar*, is that an independent entity is created. This avoids repeated discussions and leads to easier administration of operational budget, targets, and joint communication strategies.

In distributing the card, start with a few, but large employers; others smaller companies will then follow. The sales process is relatively costly and work intensive, especially with smaller clients. Most of the organisations and contacts with the clients are by phone or even better "online". The client companies pay up front and update their employees' registration and profiles, reducing the amount of administration work for the association itself considerably.



The Accessible Pass gives commutes access to Park and Ride facilities



Once a new client (i.e. company) is on board, in general they continue to stay a loyal customer.

Try to avoid too many staff changes and ensure the creation of a collective memory for consistent operation management.

Companies situated close to the central station or who have their own public transport pass contract tend to be less interested.

Pay attention to the growth of pass holders in relation to the costs of extra buses or trains.

Preconditions for a UB-pass are: a good PT system, publicity (emphasising the big participating companies) and an intensive effort to enlist big companies.

Pass holders particularly like that the pass is easier to use than the PT chip-card.

Upscaling and transferability

'Utrecht Accessible' was a three year programme. Due its success, it has been extended and is now in its fifth year. A similar programme has been started in the city of Amersfoort, the second biggest city in the Province.

The pass also exists in Maastricht, and Brabant. Malmö, Sweden, is also going to implement it as a pilot scheme.

'Utrecht Accessible' generates a lot of free publicity and provides local and national

mobility management organisations with news, results and knowledge.

Decisions on extension will be taken by the PT operator in 2014. Joint communications on road construction works will be continued.

Companies are keen for 'Utrecht Accessible' to continue into the future. The organisation is now self-supporting and is in the process of expanding, whilst governmental control is stepping back. New services include shuttles, electric cars and temporary working spaces. Within CIVITAS, the City exchanged information on the project with Funchal, Portugal, and Bologna, Italy, who are interested in the way companies became involved.

Budget and Finances

In total, the costs of this measure came to approximately EUR 15 million. This, however included the infrastructure and realisation of Park and Ride facilities, campaigns, back office for PT Pass, dynamic traffic management.

In terms of the contributions made by the main bodies involved, the following share can be observed:

National Road Authority:	39 percent.
Public Transport Authorities:	12 percent.
City of Utrecht:	49 percent.

Businesses invest in 'Utrecht Accessible' by buying the Pass and promoting the use of the Pass among their employees.

Key contacts

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References or sources

<http://civitas.eu/content/utrecht>



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Increase of PT-bikes use by UB-pass owners

