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ACCOMMODATING REGULATION TO BOOST VITALITY IN RETAIL AREAS

4/5

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URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. The URBACT Programme enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT helps cites to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. The URBACT method enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe.

PRESENTATION

The legal structure governing the retail sector differs from one country to another and also between regions and cities within the same country. At the higher EU level, the 2006 Services Directive removing legal and administrative barriers to trade and the 2003 European Retail Action Plan ensuring an integrated retail market, are two instruments with a focus on the suppression of regulatory obstacles, freedom of establishment and of goods movement, and harmonizing the tax system in Member States. However, these umbrella documents fall short in addressing the specific needs and actions required for the revitalisation of the retail sector in the lower scale of cities' policy making.

Policy tools approved and managed by the local governments can strengthen the capacity to perform towards re-energizing the retail sector. As the present report will depict below, actions taken at the local level may include local tax and non-tax applicable rules, measures in urban planning and mobility, local retail regulation -opening hours, location, type of retail units-, SMEs incentive schemes, etc. What RetaiLink cities have learnt in transnational sessions dedicated to this topic is that they need to be creative and customise regulation to respond to their own particular needs and context.

RetaiLink partners foster a retail proposition that enlivens the local economic activity. They do this while trying to protect the independent local retailers. Actually, small genuine shops often contribute to the city's identity and give personality to local retail, differentiating it from other cities and from global brands that have established in every city's commercial district and offer the same product everywhere. Playing with the regulation framework to make it more suitable to the local context may be instrumental in supporting this uniqueness and counteracting global market forces.

Preparatory work undertaken with the ten partner cities previous to the transnational meeting in the City of Pécs (HU), June 2017, disclosed useful lessons:

- First, it confirmed that different levels of retail liberalisation exist in the different countries and, consequently, in the project cities Hengelo and Hoogeveen in The Netherlands have the most competition-friendly regulatory environment followed by Basingstoke in the UK. While in some other EU countries, the retail sector remains highly protected due to the aim of preserving the small retailers, which have seen big market forces and online shopping taking a large business share in the sector. This is the case of Italy, France or Spain.

- Because the regulation context tends to be static and cannot be easily changed, support through specific local measures have to do more with incentives and new policies than with restrictive application of the legal frame. In other words, encouragement plays better than coercion here.

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A survey distributed among the RetaiLink partners helped understand their challenges and ways that regulation can support or undermine the capacity to manage and enhance retail. The document included areas of interest for which regulation can play a role:

- Adapting the retail offer to suit the local retail proposition and enhancing the quality of the stores
- Boosting economic performance and viability of the retail area
- Compacting and mixing functions in defined locations
- Enhancing the image of the city centre and other retail zones
- Improving mobility to and between retail sites

It also mentioned different tools to be used in each of the areas:

- **Incentives:** tax exemptions, financial support schemes
- **Planning:** definition of urban areas, night economy, land use
- **Licensing:** limiting type of business, promoting multi-functionality
- **Quality enhancement:** competitions, grants

The survey results were compiled and discussed at the work session that the partners dedicated in Pécs. What follows is the summary of the specific regulation actions that can be considered and tailored by medium-sized cities to address retail revitalisation strategies, as well as some examples of how they are experienced and tackled by RetaiLink partner cities according to their own objectives and context:

RETAIL REVITALISATION OBJECTIVES AND USEFUL REGULATION TOOLS

1- ADAPT THE RETAIL OFFER TO SUIT THE LOCAL PROPOSITION AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE STORES

In order to shape and implement the local retail proposition, adapt it to the residents' needs and enhance the quality of the offer, RetaiLink partner cities considered and shared a set of measures to perform:

1.1 - Measures within the land use plan

For some time now, cities have seen the need to prevent shopping centres to be placed out of town. They pull footfall and relocate retail activity and employment out of the inner city, which reduces high streets' economic vitality and increases the use of private transport.

The EC Bolkestein Directive states that an administration (a country, region or city) cannot use market quantitative parameters to restrict licences on retail or other business activity. This is the reason why cities and regions have approved plans that allow them organise the territory and decide on retail allocation responding to non-economic premises.
In this respect, locally approved urban plans delimit the inner city area and are used to balance among city's polarities on the basis of environmental motives (use of cars, use of natural land), social interest (i.e. convenience of near retail), or territorial balance.

The Catalan Consolidated Urban Fabric

Under the Catalan legislation, Igualada (ES) has used spatial planning to organise urban development and balance economic poles. In 2009 the Catalan Government approved a new regulation on shopping facilities, urban space and land uses to comply with the EU legislation while at the same time trying to overcome local imbalances.

The legal instrument named Consolidated Urban Fabric (Trama Urbana Consolidada or TUC) allows cities to create their own territorial planning. TUCs are defined by a minimum housing and population density in towns of more than 5.000 inhabitants.

TUCs foster a compact city model by means of mixing and harmonising retail, services and housing. The objectives are:
· Reducing unnecessary mobility, and thus congestion and pollution
· Protecting natural landscape and agro-rural land by limiting the sprawl of economic activity and housing
· Favouring social cohesion and access to retail services to all citizens

To achieve this, the TUC concentrates commercial licences as follows:

- Medium to large commercial establishments (sales area of 800 to 2,500 sqm) can only be implanted within the TUC area
- Large commercial establishments (sales area larger than 2,500 sqm) can only be established in municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, or county capitals.
- Finally, bigger and specialised commercial establishments (cars, machinery, construction materials) will be set in any area with commercial use and required accessibility conditions.

Consequently, and in practical terms, environmental, urban and common interest reasons guide the decisions of the local administration to allow the establishment of retail units. The Catalan is just an example of this territorial and retail organisation. Similar models have been developed in other European regions and cities. The Homogeneous Territorial Zones in Fermo (IT) or the retail size threshold approved in Hengelo (NL) respond to this same logic.

Hengelo's vision of a spacial distribution

1.2 - Uses of retail premises

Some national legal contexts allow cities to define the uses of buildings in specific areas, such as ground floors and upper floors for touristic, professional activity, retail or other uses, being the properties public or private. However some cities do not have a direct competence on this and the uses change along time according to evolving trends.

How tourism is transforming uses in city centre buildings in Sibernik

Due to the sharp increase of tourism in the last decades in the city of Sibenik (HR), owners of buildings in the historic centre have seen an economic opportunity in transforming their properties into seasonal rental apartments. The Council has no competences in setting a defined activity for buildings and, as a result, potential business activity, including retail, is replaced by tourist uses. The apartments remain empty during the low tourist season and are not used for other business purposes or housing for about 7 months a year.

As seen in other tourist destinations, this situation is not easy to redress, however a multi-partner negotiation including property owners and the Council, a joint strategy for different sectors of activity, and the provision of incentives for alternative uses of retail units, might help in balancing the tourist monoculture in Sibenik old town centre and increase economic diversification.

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1.3 - Schemes to enhance retail experience

Local consumers interviewed in some of the RetaiLink cities complained about inadequate and inappropriate retail offer in the city centre. Customer treatment, non-attractive retail offer, or low quality of the hospitality sector in the retail area, were some of the aspects referred to.

Promotional actions, business competitions and incentives for higher quality standards, and other schemes encouraging the retailers to improve their business may contribute to enhancing customer and retail services to make it more pleasant and attractive to the local consumer.

Business rating

In England, as part of environmental health policies, restaurants and bars that serve food are rated against a set of criteria to assess their food safety and hygiene standards and are given a score from 1 to 5. These establishments display a scoring sticker on their door. The local authority is the responsible for carrying out the inspections.

Similar initiatives could be approved by local governments affecting a limited area of the city thus incentivising an improvement of the quality standards. Customers themselves can be part of the rating exercise by filling short customer satisfaction forms.

A topic of concern among the RetaiLink partners is the spread of shops with low quality retail offer, in particular in the city centres: second-hand shops in Bistrita or souvenir shops in Sibenik do not contribute to the image that these cities want to show nor meet the needs of the local residents. Restrictions exist only for particular types of uses such as sex-shops, gun shops or gambling. But other than these, it is not possible to discriminate retail licenses by reasons of the type of product.

Replace opportunistic by opportune retail

Liberec (CZ) approved a zero tolerance against gambling in 2016. As a result, casinos were forced to close by the end of May 2017. The city has some good samples of local product shops in the old historic centre, but still, some empty retail units need to be filled with retail and other business activity. A suitable product offer combined with an attractive programme of activities to enliven the city centre might redirect the flow of customers, today shopping in out-of-centre malls, to the historic district.

The city of Bistrita (RO) used to have a Council regulation limiting second-hand type of stores. These shops were forbidden in the historical centre to preserve the image of the buildings. Following a decision of the Court, which considered it to be against free market criteria, the norm was dismissed. Therefore, higher quality offer in the city centre will necessarily be promoted by means of non-legal measures that favour and encourage the setting up of alternative retail rather than restricting unwanted one.

1.4 - Business hours

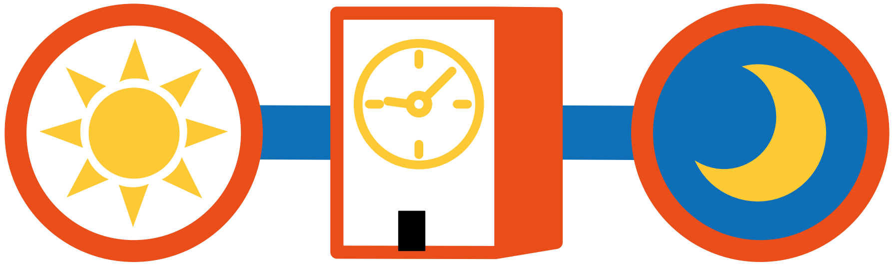
According to experts extended retail business hours seem to be a highly influence factor in city centre vitality. Opening hours are usually established at the national level, but cities can regulate within the limits.

Regulation of opening hours

In Spain, retail opening days and hours are set at the government level of the Autonomous Communities and varies from one Community to another. For example, Madrid offers complete freedom of shopping hours, 24/7 and throughout the year, while Catalonia limits the Sunday opening to a total of 8 per year. Down to the local level, most Catalan cities establish that shops with a selling area of more than 150 sqm. have limits in their business hours, while smaller shops have no restrictions. This is intended to protect the smaller retail units, usually led by the shop owner. Municipalities can only negotiate extended hours with the Catalan government in particular cases that make the city bring in high flow of visitors, for example being a touristic destination or a border municipality.

Similar rules applies to most of the other countries and regions. In England and Wales, small shops (up to 280 sqm.) can open any day or time. Opening Sundays for large shops include only for 6 consecutive hours between 10am and 6pm, and must close on Easter Sunday and on Christmas Day.

In the city of Pécs, when surveyed, residents and visitors stated that, instead of going to malls, they would probably go to the city centre for shopping if the stores opened longer hours and offered a better customer service and attractive proposition. The Municipal government has tried to convince retailers to stay open till later but they don't see a need for this. Actually the retail offer in the historic centre is still too old fashioned for the young population of students commonly using this area. A new and more varied retail offer would probably encourage old retailers to renew their business with more adapted and suitable proposals.



1. See RetaiLink report *2/5 Adapting and reshaping retail in the city*

2- ENHANCE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND VIABILITY OF THE AREA

Although retail cannot be left alone in the economic revitalization of the city centre, it can play a major role in driving economic activity in the area. In view of this, legal and regulatory measures that city councils can typically approve and implement as part of their urban development policies to reinvigorate the retail sector include:

2.1 - Creating an appropriate environment for new entrepreneurs

Physical retail units are decreasing for a variety of reasons, e-shopping being a major one. The once-shops in a city retail district are emptying and need to be filled with other activity that still brings footfall to the site and complements the retail sector. Therefore any professional activity that starts up in the heart of the city or close to the retail and leisure area, can contribute to make the area multifunctional and keep it dynamic. Some proposed measure by the group of RetaiLink partners included:

· Opening SMEs incubators
· Enabling free WiFi zones
· Reusing empty spaces for start-ups in the city centre
· Negotiating temporary uses with property owners

2.2 - Tax exemption schemes

Tax regulation can be adapted to favour and incentivise economic activity and to encourage new entrepreneurs to set up in an area so as to contribute to diversify and revitalise it.

Communal and activity tax

Taxes collected and managed at the local level are the ones that cities can most use support their local policies:
Sibenik reduces a 60% the communal tax for shops and professional activity in the city centre.
Igualada foresees the exemption of the two first years of business activity tax and a 50% reduction of tax liability over the following 5-years.

2.3 - Simplification of administration procedures

Retail SMEs can benefit from support schemes that help them navigate through bureaucracy and access public and private funds. Local programmes may enable one-stop business services, approve public grants, or mediate to facilitate access to ERDF, among others.

Easing the path through paperwork

Liberec has very bureaucratic administrative procedures for new entrepreneurs and in addition, the Czech Republic has recently introduced the obligation for all retailers -and all companies- to register turnovers electronically. This has increased overall costs and makes it burdensome and expensive, particularly for smaller retailers. Some relief in administrative work and support from local administration to smaller business would help.

2.4 - Training for independent retailers

In some cities retailers associations take care of the retailers' training needs. They offer courses on a variety of topics such as business digitalization, marketing tools, customer treatment, etc. Also local policies can undertake sector support through agreements with education and training institutions and open support programmes in this area.

Making expertise available

In Basingstoke, as part of a support scheme to local businesses, retailers can apply for business support grants. They are allocated a professional consultant's time to the value of £500 to look at a specific issue: marketing, merchandising, social media, etc.

2.5 - Promoting innovative proposals

Finally, it is important to notice that innovative and attractive retail propositions are more viable and likely to cope with global retail trends than old traditional retail. Proximity and eco-products, click and collect solutions, combining product selling and leisure activity… are examples of new trends with an increased demand that can enhance the vitality of a retail area. These type of activities can be encouraged and facilitated with different instruments and public-private schemes.

Promoting innovative retail in Bilbao

Comercios Innovadores de Bilbao (CIB, Innovative Retail Bilbao) is a local initiative between traders, consumers, service companies, associations and professionals, which aims to create a favourable climate for the introduction of innovations in shops in Bilbao. The ultimate objective is to bring innovation to the physical shop in the city.

The community seeks to share ideas and information, select suppliers, participate in collaborative projects between retail and other sectors: hospitality, leisure, tourism, technology and art, and take advantage of the synergies that occur between commerce and these sectors.

One of the most successful campaigns of the CIB is the Bilbao Living lab on retail that consisted in pairing retailers and artists to create innovative proposals at the physical shops (http://cibilbao.com/tag/living-lab/ only in Spanish).

3- COMPACT AND MIX FUNCTIONS IN DEFINED RETAIL AREAS

3.1 - Compacting

Visitors and customers tend to avoid too large walking distances whatever the shopping purpose they have -leisure shopping, everyday purchases... This is the reason why cities define and compact urban areas.

Retail reallocation

In Hoogeveen, as part of the strategy to compact and revitalise retail in the city centre, the City Centre BID and the local Council, with the economic support of the Regional Government, approved a grant scheme for retailers in 2017. The grants are addressed to support retailers' relocation to the city centre designated area (the BID area) and help retailers to transform and enhance retail businesses in order to adapt to the local DNA.

In practical terms, the grant scheme approved for a period from January 31 2017 to December 2019, provides as follows:

1. Relocation:
Finances 105% of the depreciation of the premises, with a maximum of € 50.0000; and removal expenses, max € 20.000.

2. Transformation:
Finances 70% of the costs for making a transformation plan, with a maximum of € 5.000.

3. Shop façade renovation/refurbishing:
Finances 30% of the investment, with a maximum of € 5.000

The total amount is € 3,5 million (more than 50% funded by the regional government).

3.2 - Multifunctionality

Experts agree that a retail area that is clearly defined, easy to reach, and with a diversity of functions (services, cultural activity, bars and restaurants) is more likely to attract visitors. Multifunctionality is thus, a key influence factor that keeps the vitality and viability in an urban area. In light of this, besides creating an appropriate environment for new entrepreneurs (see previous section) a mix of activities can be achieved by regulating on the uses of space. Some actions to promote:

· Encourage activities that bring new footfall to the area, from cultural or social project and organisations to public housing, i.e. using empty ground floors and upper floors for businesses and living, thus preventing the bad image that vacancies give to the city centre.

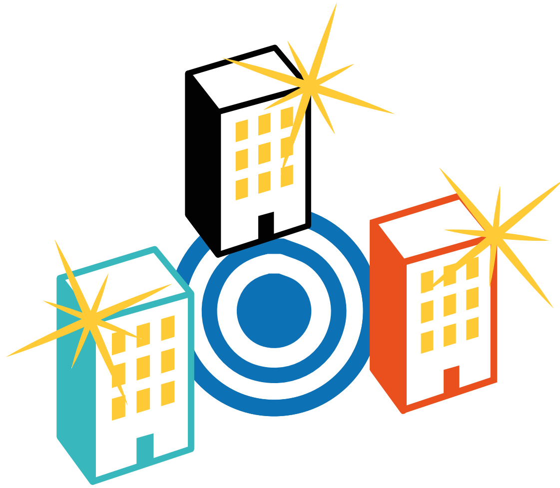
· Locate public and administrative services within the area

· Allow seasonal occupation of public space for terraces, which often attracts visitors and enlivens streets.

Street terraces

In the past years, in Bistrita (RO), the trend of having a terrace in the historic area is on the rise. It has become a positive influence factor for tourism attraction and city promotion. Bars and restaurants using public space have managed to keep the area quiet and respect the decisional frame set by the local council: working hours, placing, serving staff, etc. Policies to regulate location, opening hours and, at the same time improving the quality of night-time economy can help to pacify urban areas.

However the conviviality of living and hospitality may sometimes bring a certain degree of conflict. For example, the setting up of terraces in the city of Hengelo (NL) had an unexpected negative reaction from area entrepreneurs. The local government approved rules on the setting of terraces (size, materials, location) in 2015. With an interim period to adjust to the new rules and to have time to invest in new materials, the regulation came into effect in January 2017. Since then a lot of entrepreneurs have voiced their opposition. They say that terraces in the street influence negatively their turnover and consider that it is not beneficial for the image and a feel of the city centre and its visitors.



4- ENHANCE THE IMAGE OF THE CITY CENTRE AND OTHER RETAIL AREAS

The retail location, being it the city centre or any other shopping district, highly benefits from an overall image that is pleasant and attractive to the visitor, and suitable for the retail offer. This turns to be a particularly sensitive aspect in old historic city centres with preservation rules that make it especially expensive for building owners to keep premises in good repair.

4.1 - City centre refurbishing

To encourage retailers and building owners to renew their buildings and keep façades attractive, local policies can offer licenses and grant schemes. Many cities introduce some sort of compensation, i.e lower communal tax.

Dealing with historic legacy in different partner cities

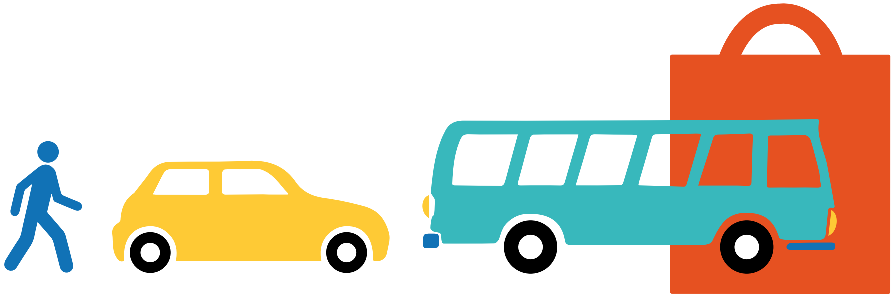
In the city of Sibenik, when a building is within a protected area, the Ministry of Culture must approve any intervention. This has a great impact in the historic city centre where the majority of the buildings are heritage-listed building. Retailers have larger costs for façade renovation and sometimes they cannot use modern decoration and techniques.

In Basingstoke, parts of the town centre are in a conservation area, which means that certain improvements or refurbishments are restricted to preserve the historic nature of the area. The Top of the Town grant scheme provides capital funding to new and existing businesses for their refurbishing. This covers shop front and back of buildings and internal fit outs. Levels of funding vary and are limited to 50% of total costs with a limit of £5,000 for shop front, £7,500 for whole building and £3,500 for internal fit out.

In Bistrita, in order to renovate a façade or refurbish a building, besides the "Construction authorization" the buildings located in the city centre must have an approval from the Ministry of Culture. All private owners are reminded every year that they are obliged to take care of the building façades. However, because renovation of the historical centre buildings can turn to be extremely expensive, the vast majority do not invest in the building appearance.

4.2 - Standardize city centre image

The Municipality of Fermo has recently approved a new plan for urban décor. Local retailers in the historic centre must comply with the regulation concerning, among others, the shops signs.



5- ENHANCE MOBILITY TO AND BETWEEN RETAIL AREAS

Retail and mobility are two highly interrelated topics. Retailers generally consider car accessibility and close parking places a key success factor for retail footfall and business turnover. On their side, local authorities – and urban planners- tend to suggest pedestrianizing as a means to enliven the retail area or the city centre.

Most cities at some point have gone through the argument on whether pedestrian precincts in the city centre increase footfall or not. Some RetaiLink cities are immersed in this on-going debate. Retailers blame the lack of car parking areas to be the reason for the recent negative business performance. However, mobility studies have revealed that closer or cheaper parking places to the city centre have a zero influence in retail turnover[2].

There are different options to regulate on mobility in the city, which can be instrumental in facilitating accessibility, extend the use of the city centre and retail areas as well as enliven retail districts.

2. See presentation *Parking and the High Street*, Giuliano Mingardo, Regionale Economie, Haven-en Vervoerseconomie (RHV), Erasmus University of Rotterdamm

5.1 - Car parking

Solutions to enable new parking lots. Instead of expensive infrastructure investment, allocate private vehicles in unused areas or brownfields and negotiate a low-cost or temporary use with owners.

White Areas in Igualada

Igualada's City Council has created the so-called white areas in order to ease car parking for retail customers. The local government has borrowed privately-owned empty land and created more than 800 free car parking spaces available 24/7, located within 10-15 minute walk from the city centre, with the commitment of returning it back to the owners at the moment they request it for their own private use.

Offering discounts is often a solution adopted when car park areas are public: in Basingstoke a 1-hour free parking in the town centre car parks, property of the Council, facilitates access to the city centre shopping mall.

5.2 - Connecting city retail areas

Solutions to enhance the mobility experience within the inner city and to ease movement from out-of-town to the city centre may be useful to guide and increase footfall in these urban areas. Semi-pedestrianising streets that connect different zones, bike-parking schemes, and adapting public transport (i.e. relocate bus stops closer to a commercial street)… are some of the proposed solutions.

5.3 - Regulation of traffic in the city centre

Setting a specific schedule for fright delivery helps avoid interferences between vehicles and pedestrians in a commercial area. Also, regulation for low speed traffic areas or traffic restrictions in some hours can also contribute to pacify urban areas and make them more customer-friendly.

Restrictions for vehicles in the city centre

In Basingstoke, deliveries in the high street are restricted and must take place before 10am or after 4pm. Delivery load bays are available at the back of buildings where there are no restrictions.

In Hengelo, delivery transport can enter the car-free zone between 7.00am and 12.00pm. An exemption permit (temporary or permanent) is available for companies and residents under certain conditions, i.e. persons with restricted mobility. The centre of Hengelo is a car-free zone. Signposts point out where cars are allowed to go and when. A number of streets are closed with bollards.

Igualada has renewed some streets in the city centre to make them single level and prioritise pedestrian walking over cars use.

5.4 - Piloting and testing

Temporary mobility measures, with further analysis of the impact and opinion of the area users can bring about valuable information to decide on more permanent solutions. Piloting with reversible solutions may be a way to both test and convince users and retailers of the appropriateness of some measures.

MOBILITY - A HEADACHE OR A PANACEA FOR CITY CENTRE RETAIL

By Wessel Badenhorst
Lead Expert of the City Centre Doctor Project

This is a guidance note written as a follow-up after the working session of the RetaiLink Project exploring the effect and influence of urban mobility on retail in the city centre. The session took place on 7th June 2017 in Pécs, Hungary.

The following questions were discussed:

· What are the transport problems for the city centre?
· What is urban mobility?
· Why does urban mobility matter for retail in the city centre?
· How can things change to improve mobility in the city centre?
· What are the 'takeaways' - the ideas which participants can take to their ULGs to consider?

The city centre of the host city of Pécs has been an excellent context for learning with a range of settings such as the restored cultural centre which is pedestrianised; the long narrow streets of residential areas in the centre with limited capacity for car traffic; and the fringes of the centre with heavy car-centric traffic flows.

Participants were able to discuss mobility issues in small groups and thereafter walk the city centre and compare and contrast the mobility challenges with those experienced in their own cities.

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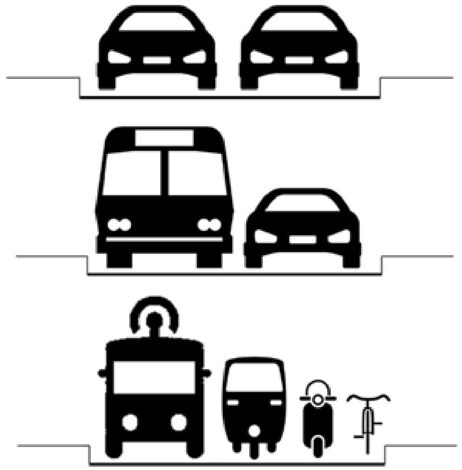
1 - WHAT ARE THE TRANSPORT PROBLEMS FOR THE CITY CENTRE

All cities are dealing with the aftermath of the over-saturation of their centres with cars. There is a growing realisation that having more cars and spaces for cars in the city centre does not solve mobility challenges but quite the opposite – it diminishes people's opportunities to enjoy their city safely and serves as a deterrent for people to come to the city for purposes such as retail and leisure.

Cities in Denmark and the Netherlands were 'first movers' to change the rules in their city centres to diminish the overbearing impact of cars on public spaces. The effects were dramatic as shown in the pictures below of 'before' and 'after' in the city of Utrecht, Netherlands.

The excessive use of cars in the city centre is problematic for city leaders because of the inconvenience for city centre users with impediments to freely move around; the increased danger to their safety and health; and the 'crowding out' of other transport modes such as cycling and bus transport. Moreover, the economics of a car-centric transport system shows inefficiencies which makes city centres less competitive and thus less attractive for visitors and investors. A case in point is the inefficient use of roads if the transport mode is car-dominated as illustrated below:



Clearly if on the same road width more modes of transport, in particular those modes with capacity for more passengers/commuters, can be accommodated, volumes can be increased leading to more flow in a given time period. The cities that are able to diversify their transportation systems to accommodate more modes of transportation are also the cities with more traction in footfall and vitality indicators in their city centres.

The exercise below can help your city to determine where you can improve your mode share, i.e. the mix of modes of transport used in the city centre. First complete the table with your calculations of the current situation in your city. The Share % is calculated as the number of users of a specific mode as a proportion of all transport users commuting daily into the centre. The Estimated Cost € is calculated by making assumptions on the average cost for a user of each of the mode options per trip. The assumptions for the cost for the car user should include a 'fixed' cost per day of the average purchase price spread out over three years as a reasonable period of car ownership (e.g. €12,000/3/365 = €10.96 per day) plus an estimate of fuel cost per km and the average daily distance travelled by car users to the city. Similarly, costs of other modes of transport which the users own (e.g. bicycle and motorcycle) should be 'averaged out' of a period of three years. Convenience of the mode of transport could be a score given out of 10 where inconvenience scores low and comfort scores high. The Environmental Impact similarly should be scored on a scale of good to bad, where the value (10) is assigned to the mode of transport with the least negative environmental impact.

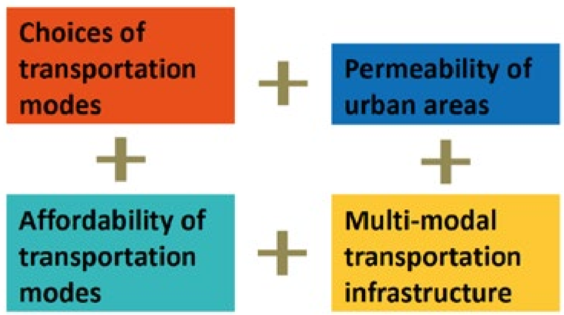
Mode	Share %	Estimated Cost €	Convenience	Environ. Impact
Cycling (including bikeshare)				
Walking				
Train				
Car				
Bus (including BRT)				
Tram				
Motorcycle				
Taxi (including Uber/Lyft)				
Car share (including Zipcar)				
Other?				

Also, it is useful to repeat the exercise with a purpose to gain a future target for improvements on mode share and environmental impacts.

The question remains however will a change in the mode share have a positive effect on retail sales.
We will look at that in more detail in a later section of this discussion document.

2 - WHAT IS URBAN MOBILITY?

To understand what is meant with urban mobility, we should approach the concept from a practical perspective. First it should be described in an urban context. It is not for instance about the general mobility issues that relate to larger infrastructure systems such as rural bus transport services, the reach of the rail network etc., but more about the transport options and culture in cities. The graph below highlights four aspects that are important to understand urban mobility.



As discussed in the previous section, the choices of modes of transport that exist for residents, especially in the city centre, are often judged as an indicator of better or worse mobility when comparing cities. For example, if it is possible in your city for residents to use a train or tram service to easily get from their homes to other parts of the city, or to cycle or walk with ease anywhere in the city centre, the judgement is usually that people enjoy a high level of mobility in your city.

It is however not only the choice of modes of transport in your city that is important, but also how affordable these modes are for residents, workers and visitors. If, for example taxi services are very expensive, it will only be a mode of transport used by the wealthy. If trains and bus services are not subsidised, the ticket prices could become too expensive for students and lower paid workers. It is thus an important ingredient of transport policy for the city to make especially the main public transport modes more affordable to increase mobility in the city.

Good transport planning is directly related to the level of urban mobility enjoyed in a city. The rollout and integration of the infrastructure for different transport systems should be well researched and implemented. It requires resources, both quality and quantity. It requires coordination. In particular, the transport hubs where for instance commuters transfer form rail to bus and coaches are critical for a well-functioning system. Or put in another way, if the train station is on the outskirts of the city centre and it is difficult to get to the centre with another mode of transport, then it is a weakening of mobility in the city.

Finally, a key factor in the experience of mobility in a city is the permeability of the city centre. This term refers specifically to how easy it is for users of the city centre to move from one point to another. If for example it is difficult to walk across a busy street in the city because there are only a few pedestrian crossings; or it is not possible to walk through a park because the gate is closed; or if the pavements (or sidewalks) are too narrow restricting the number of people that can use it at a given time, then there is limited permeability in the city centre reducing the mobility of the residents, workers and visitors in the city.

The city of Pécs had two specific examples where permeability could be improved. Firstly, the long streets in the residential areas of the city centre could be examined to find possible places and spaces between and in plots to develop new walk and cycle paths. On the main streets, the traffic signal system is currently geared for cars with a switch-to-green counter for cars at the traffic lights!
Change that to counters for pedestrians and add more pedestrian crossings across the busy streets forming the ring around the city centre.

To conclude, when we refer to urban mobility it is actually an aggregate of a number of factors which improve the users' experience of 'moving around' the city centre. It has become a major 'talking point' when city centres are compared to other destinations for shopping and leisure.

3 - WHY DOES URBAN MOBILITY MATTER FOR RETAIL IN THE CITY CENTRE?

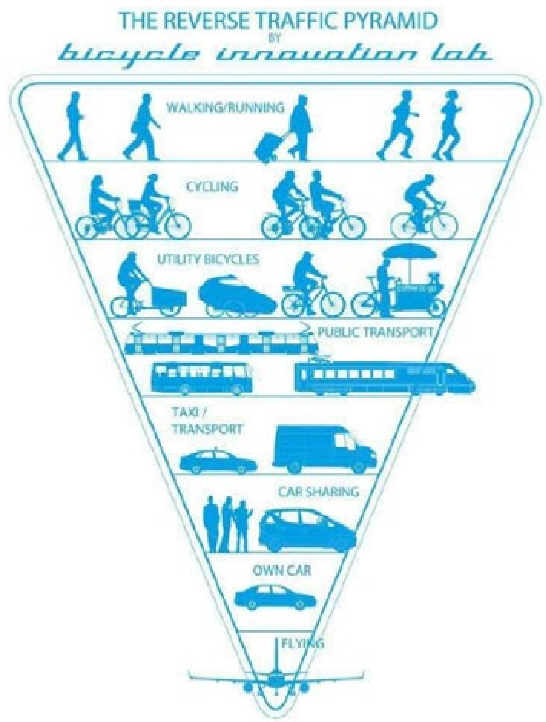
In a single word - it matters because it increases **footfall** in the city centre.

The question is how? The evidence from several cities that have made significant changes to improve their mobility, for instance the city of San Dona di Piave in the Veneto Region of Italy (which is a city partner in the City Centre Doctor Project), is that if mobility improves, then footfall increases often with double digits and also into night-time.

This is challenging for retailers who rely on customers doing a 'large shop' at a time – and therefore using a car to transport the goods purchased. The online retail culture has had an interesting effect though with more and more customers expecting their purchases to be delivered at home. This is now also the case with big item purchases in retail outlets and warehouses. It is thus entirely possible for retailers in city centres to still sell the large quantities per customer without relying on access by car if there are efficient logistics and home delivery systems.

More importantly though, increased mobility requires more walkable and liveable city centres. The 'friendlier' city centres enhance the ambience and experience of users. It also puts the city centre retailers as a collective in a more competitive position viz-a-viz the shopping malls and retail outlet stores on the outskirts of the city.

The strategy for retailers is to ensure that the transport system in the city centre follows the reverse traffic pyramid in the adjacent graphic. The priority is to advocate for the majority of city centre users to be able to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and traverse the city centre. With less car dependency, cities can remove more on-street parking, widen pavements and improve urban design of public spaces, thereby making the city centre a much more attractive destination. This should be the goal for all city leaders and stakeholders including retailers.

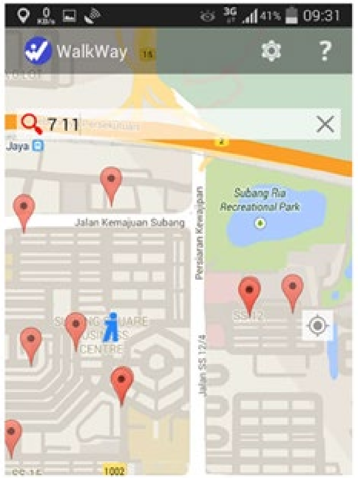


4 - HOW CAN THINGS CHANGE TO IMPROVE MOBILITY IN THE CITY CENTRE?

Often bringing about change is about doing many small actions that have a cumulative effect. Improving mobility is as much about cultural change than introducing new technologies and the design of a better urban environment. Herewith some examples of practical actions that could be considered by partner cities:

Map the permeability of the city centre

Idea:
How easy is it for a customer to walk from point A to point B in the city centre? Get volunteers to identify and describe the obstacles they encounter as they walk the city centre. This could be done in groups. Use GIS and smart phone GPS to build routes.



Maybe a retailer will sponsor the activity with a free icecream after the 'walkabouts'!

Prepare and discuss options to improve permeability such as new walk ways, pedestrian crossings, signage and changes to existing routes.

Cost:
Pennies and the time of volunteers.

Volunteer your city centre to become a smart city solutions test bed

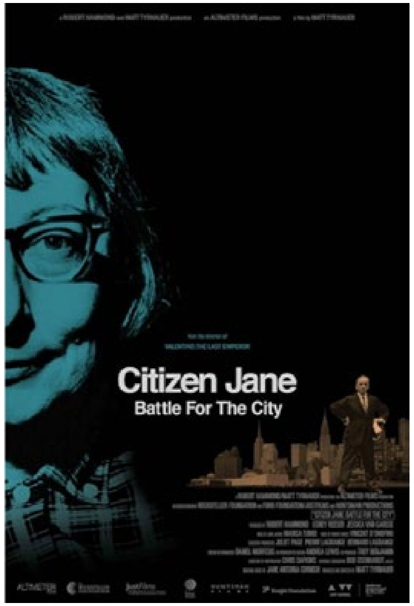
Idea:
Define an area in the city centre which can be a testbed for companies who want to bring new smart mobility options to the city centre.

For example, contact Gogoro (www.gogoro.com) to come to your city (Move over Vespa). Since starting to make and sell electric scooters in Taiwan in 2015, the company has entered into agreements with cities such as Berlin and Paris to create scooter-share rental schemes. They also support their scheme with easy-to-reach battery-swap services.

Or contact a company like EasyMile (www.easymile.com) or Navya (www.navya.tech) to demonstrate in your city centre their new driverless shuttles that could perhaps add to your city's public transport options.

Cost:
Permission for change (political implications) from the authorities and time to negotiate with shareholders and to plan a beta action. It may also require installation of Internet of Things technology.

Do Jane Jacobs walks and talks



Idea:
Create a series of talks for the citizens and for stakeholders (e.g. schools, retailers, local authority officials) about 'new urbanism' and the re-appreciation of living, working in and respecting the city centre environment. The themes that are most associated with such talks are walkability of the city centre; use of public spaces; good urban design; greening of the city; or citizen participation in design, build and maintenance of city amenity. Many of these themes are influenced by the work of Jane Jacobs. Why not order the documentary film Citizen Jane to show at a talk event?

Every year in cities such as New York, Toronto and Dublin citizens organise Jane's Walks (www.janeswalk.org). It is a way for people to explore their city and neighbourhood and share stories and interests. Why not start one in your city?

Cost:
The time of volunteers and a persistence with events, even if the numbers are small at the first events.

Contract cargo bike companies for deliveries

Idea:
Meet with retailers in the city centre to examine the advantages and constraints for them to switch deliveries to companies using cargo bikes.

Consider aspects such as the cost-benefits, jobs, environmental and energy changes, customer services and impacts on mobility.
Why not invite cargo bike companies to present their services?

Cost:
Time of retailers to consider options.

Develop a smart accessibility plan for your city centre

Idea:
Improve city centre accessibility in your city centre for people with disabilities by installing this app. Work with Route4U to identify blockages in your city that lowers accessibility. Map these blockages to alert users and start projects to improve accessibility.

Cost:
Not so much if all partners pool their contribution to contract this great Hungarian social start-up.

Facilitate parklet temporary installations

Idea:
Organise with your Municipality and retailers for one or two parking spaces to be changed to parklets on a specific day (e.g. a Saturday afternoon or a Sunday). Put up a notice to show permission was given. Organise a social media campaign to invite residents to visit and linger in the parklet.

Why not ask local retailers to give a discount for parklet visitors? Why not create a writing wall for residents to share their ideas?

Cost:
Recycled materials and the time of volunteers.

Calculate walkability scores for different parts of the city centre

Idea:
Read Jeff Speck's book on Walkable City or better still, play the TED video of Jeff at your ULG event: https://www.ted.com/talks/jeff_speck_the_walkable_city.

Give places in your city a 'walk score' using this method: https://www.walkscore.com. Map the walk scores.

Cost:
Pennies and the time of volunteers.

Develop a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)

Idea:
Initiate the development of a SUMP to steer mobility policies of your city. Learn from other cities that have successfully implemented their SUMPs.
Learn from the living labs established by CIVITAS.

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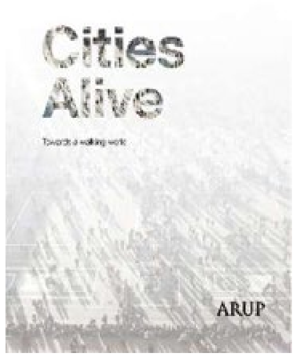
Cost:
Commitments to multi-annual funding.

Study the case studies compiled by Arup for improved mobility in cities

Idea:
Read the global engineering firm Arup's research on improving walking and cycling in cities. 80 case studies of cities plus 40 recommended actions.



Cost:
Nothing, but ensure all ULG members make the time to read the report.

CONCLUSION

Retailers know that being competitive and responsive to their customers are their lifeblood. Any change to their trading environment can have a positive or negative outcome that they should promote or prevent.

Better mobility in the city centre has been proven to be a positive outcome for the trading environment of city centre retailers for two reasons: (1) It is a much more pleasant environment for customers and (2) the trend in customer preferences is to seek enhanced in-shop retail experiences because comparison buying can be more easily done on the Internet.

The proof is in the pudding, namely increase in footfall and extending the shopping hours.

To get to a point where your city centre will be embodied with enhanced mobility options will require a high level of collaboration. It all starts however, with stakeholders taking the first steps together by implementing a number of agreed small actions such as those suggested in this guidance note.