

DEMO FINAL REPORT SAXONY

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1. Objectives of the pilot

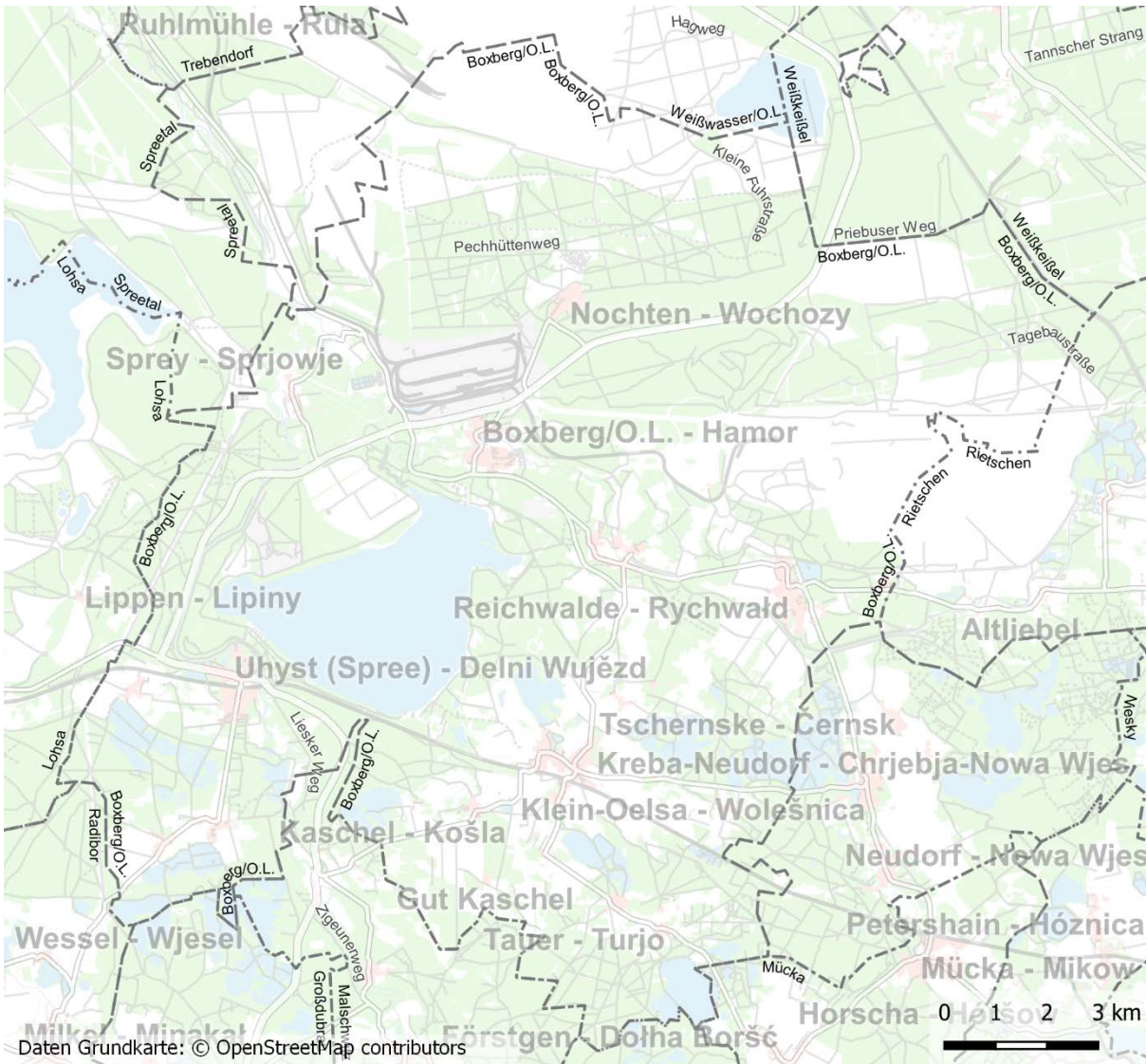
Rumobil experience for mobility solutions in rural regions (Interreg Central Europe; by PP4; to be transferred and adopted by LP)

The Saxon State Ministry for Regional Development (SMR) wanted to test a new mobility solution in two different, but comparable, rural regions in Saxony. For this purpose, discussions were held with 2 municipalities. Both were rural communities with several districts and, due to different geographical backgrounds, both had poor connections to public transport, although the objective conditions were good. For example, both communities have rail and bus services as well as all essential services of general interest. The goal of the SMR was to connect the residents of the community with the centrally located services of general interest with a fixed connection once a week. This was to be done within the framework of a variant of city lines. This means a professional offer in the context of a fixed line, which is served by a professional driver at fixed and thus plannable times.

Due to the Covid pandemic, talks came to a temporary standstill. This was due to the fact that, especially in the first year of the pandemic, demand for public transport services had dropped drastically. One reason was certainly the closed stores and other services of general interest that were difficult to access, including fixed appointment constraints or restricted, uncoordinated opening hours. After openings were foreseeable in the summer of 2021 and the demand for offers increased, the second municipality was no longer interested in a publicly funded offer because there was a private-sector initiative in the meantime. Thus, the municipality in Central Saxony fell out of consideration. This left the municipality of Boxberg O.L. in the district of Görlitz. Due to the lengthy line approval process (due to the pandemic situation, a lot of personnel in the responsible LaSuV was also tied up with fighting the pandemic), the start of the pilot action had to be postponed again and again. Among other things, this also led to the requested and approved extension of the entire RegiaMobil project.

2. Pilot area description

The municipality of Boxberg O.L. is the largest non-urban municipality in Saxony in terms of area (217.67 km²). It is located in the northwest of the district of Görlitz and is surrounded by the opencast mines Nochten in the north and Reichwalde in the east, Lake Bärwalde in the south and the biosphere reserve Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond Landscape in the west. It belongs to the Sorbian settlement area and is bilingual. The municipality currently comprises eighteen districts with a total of 4,337 inhabitants (31.12.2020). Currently, slightly more than 30% of the population is 65 years and older; according to the 7th regionalized population projection, this percentage will increase to well over 40% by 2035. The motorization rate of the population has risen continuously in recent years and in 2020 was 651 cars per 1,000 inhabitants (2010 606 cars/1,000 inhabitants), which is higher than in the district of Görlitz and in the Federal Republic of Germany.



Both the landscape and the commercial situation in Boxberg O.L. are shaped by the existing lignite deposits, their mining and processing. The German phase-out of coal-fired power generation by 2038 at the latest, probably even earlier, will be accompanied by extensive structural change in the municipality of Boxberg O.L. as well. Boxberg itself is home to the Boxberg power plant, which employs about 800 people (2019). In December 2015, 403 businesses were registered at the industrial site of Boxberg, including 25 industrial companies, 80 craft enterprises, 82 trade establishments and 231 service providers and others. Due to its location on Lake Bärwald and the Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve, the municipality is a destination for vacationers and day trippers. In and around the Bärwalder See there are a lot of recreation and accommodation possibilities, which are interesting for water sportsmen and active vacationers. In addition, there are other excursion destinations; examples include the Nochten erratic boulder park and the "Theater im Ohr".

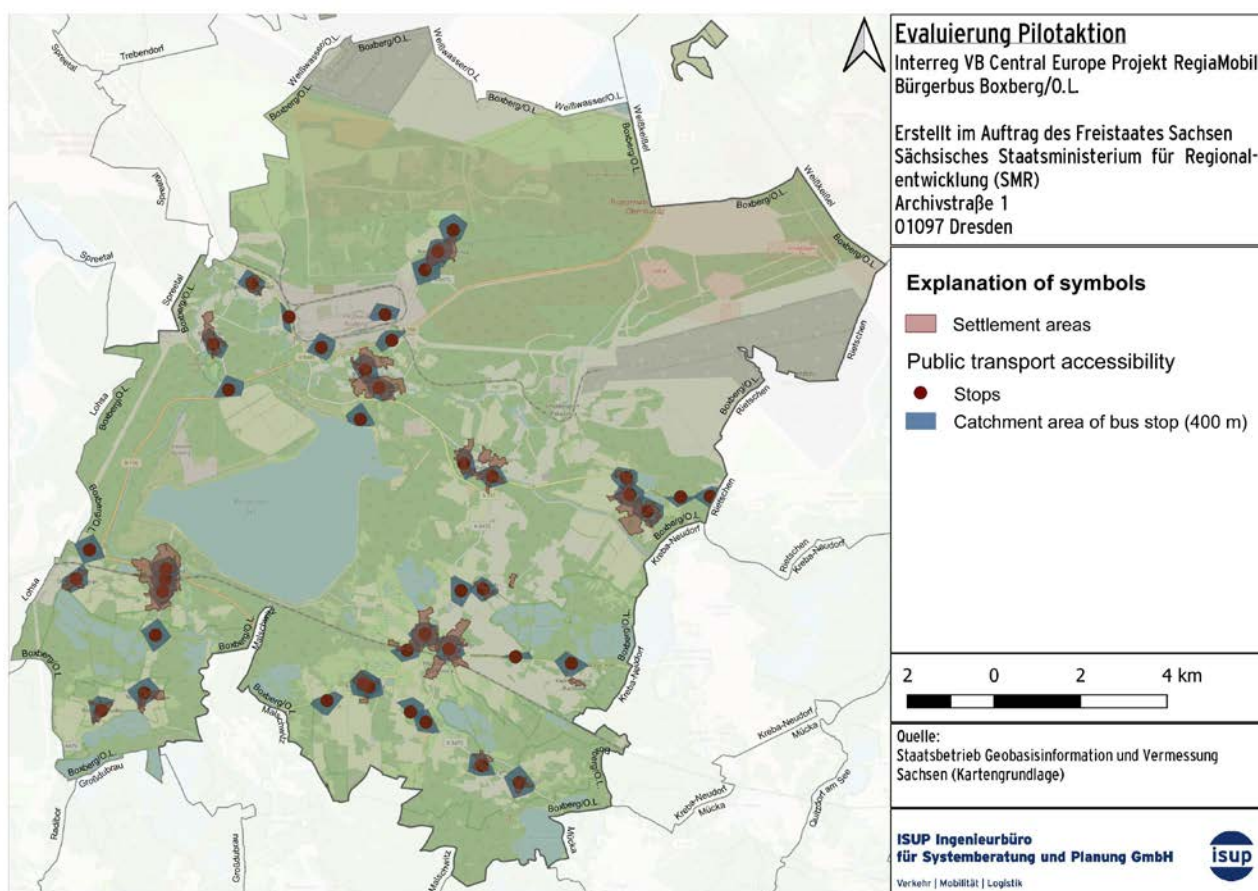
For the Free State of Saxony, the Act on Local Public Transport in the Free State of Saxony (ÖPNVG) stipulates that "local public transport is a task of general interest". This is to be taken into account appropriately when structuring the budgets of the public transport authorities in accordance with Section 3 (1) ÖPNVG. Local public transport should be available throughout the Free State in the interests of environmental protection, transport safety, the improvement of transport infrastructure and the creation



and safeguarding of equivalent living conditions. The public transport service shall be oriented to the needs of the population and shall take into account the principle of economic efficiency and economy.

In the Free State of Saxony, there is the peculiarity that the authorities responsible for public transport are the districts, while the local transport plan is drawn up by the transport associations for the region as a whole. One of the objectives defined was the improved and systematic connection of the Bärwalder See (Foundlingspark Nochten, Boxberg, Uhyst/Spree) to the train station Weißwasser with the aim of synchronization and bundling of existing offers between Weißwasser, Boxberg and Uhyst, if possible, connections to the SPNV and to the bus line to Bautzen in Uhyst. The implementation of the measure for the connection of the Bärwalder See is to be subjected to a detailed examination, whereby a coordination of all involved partners (ZVON, administrative district Görlitz, municipalities, tourism partners etc.) is necessary. The railroad connection Görlitz-Hoyerswerda is to be included, which will make a significant contribution to the development.

According to the local transport plan, a municipality is considered to be developed if 80% of the inhabitants have a maximum walking distance of 1,000 m as measured from the nearest public transport stop. A maximum catchment area of 1,200 m to the SPNV and to the superordinate bus network is to be provided; but only in the case of municipalities with a special function. All areas of the local transport area with contiguous development that have more than 200 inhabitants or a significant source/destination potential are to be made accessible.

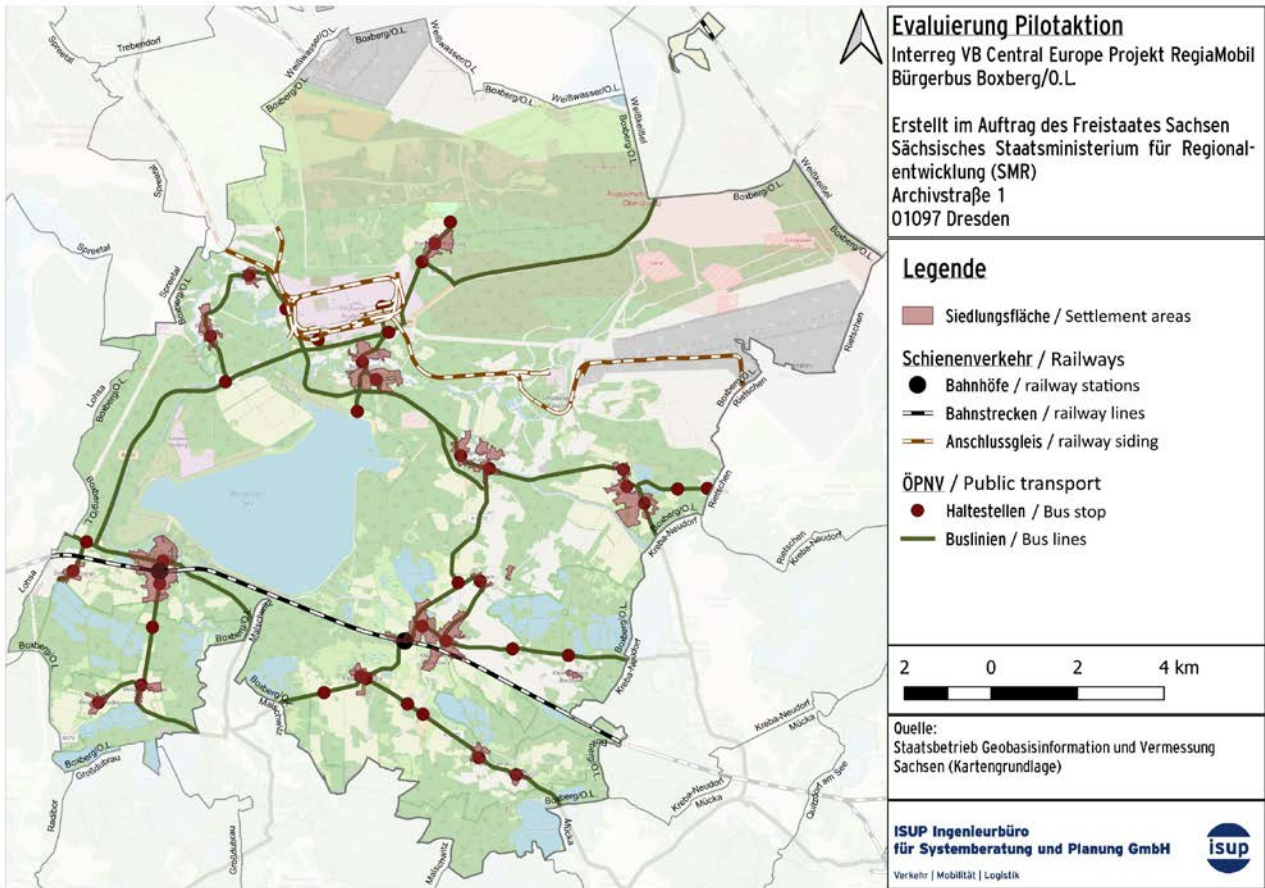


According to the local transportation plan, the districts of Boxberg, Jahmen, Klitten, Kringelsdorf, Nochten, Reichwalde and Uyst are to be developed. The districts with lower population figures are therefore not entitled to a public transport connection in the Everyman service. Districts with small populations are dependent on their own cars for participation in social life.



The districts of Uhyst and Klitten are located on the regional train line RB 64 Hoyerswerda - Niesky - Görlitz, which offers a connection to Hoyerswerda and Görlitz every two hours. This frequency is supplemented by four additional trips on Mondays to Fridays and one evening trip on Saturdays. On Mondays to Fridays, the first train leaves Hoyerswerda at 5:32 a.m. and Görlitz at 5:35 a.m.; the last train (except on Saturdays) leaves Görlitz at 8:33 p.m. and Hoyerswerda at 8:32 p.m. The Plusbus on route 503 runs every hour from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; every two hours from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays and from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays and public holidays. It thus ensures accessibility to the regional center of Bautzen from the southern part of the municipality. Line 256 connects the municipality with the middle center and former district capital Weißwasser and crosses the municipality from south to north. In addition to its importance as a school line, it also operates during rush hour from Monday to Friday. On Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, isolated trips, primarily as a call bus, are offered between Weißwasser and Boxberg Sparkasse. From May to September, the line is extended on weekends to Bärwalder See and somewhat condensed, on Sundays to a limited two-hour interval. The lines 105 and 255 serve primarily the school traffic and operate only on Mondays to Fridays. Bus line 105 serves the districts of Boxberg, Kringelsdorf, Dürrbach. Uhyst, Tauer, Zimpel, Klitten, Kaschel, Klein-Oelsa, Klein-Radisch to the schools in Kreba and in Mücka; with the bus line 255 Boxberg, Kringelsdorf and Reichwalde with Kreba school; Mücka school and Niesky Förderschule. Line 776 connects the southern part of the municipality (Uhyst, Mönau, Rauden and Drehna) with Hoyerswerda primarily in school transport and also only on Mondays to Fridays. Line 254 connects the district of Reichwalde with Rietschen and Daubitz on Mondays to Fridays with only a few pairs of trips and almost only during school hours. Only Uhyst, Klitten and Mönau also have regular public transport services on weekends via the regional train or the Plusbus; Boxberg and Nochten are involved in weekend transport to a lesser extent. For most districts, school transport is the backbone of the public transport service.

According to the State Development Plan of Saxony 2013, Boxberg is classified as a municipality with a special municipal function - trade. Bautzen, Hoyerswerda and Görlitz are the nearest major centers, Weißwasser and Niesky the nearest medium-sized centers. The state capital Dresden can be reached via Bautzen and Hoyerswerda. Görlitz is the responsible county seat, branch offices are located in Weißwasser (among others with job center and youth welfare office) and in Niesky (with job center, youth welfare office, social welfare office, public order and road traffic office including vehicle registration office and driver's license authority). The district capital Görlitz is about 50 km away from Boxberg and can be reached by car in an average of 48 min.



The closest mid-sized center is Weißwasser, the former district capital, which can be reached by car in an average of 23 minutes; Niesky can also be reached easily by car in an average of 27 minutes.

With the RB 64 there is a very good connection to the two major centers Görlitz and Hoyerswerda as well as to the middle center Niesky. This applies in particular to the two districts of Klitten (with Jahmen, Kaschel, Klein-Radisch and Klein-Oelsa) and Uhyst (with Drehna, Mönau and Rauden). All other districts are connected to the two districts of Klitten and Uhyst - primarily via lines 105 and 256 - and are thus basically connected to the SPNV.

The transfer is characterized by not always optimal connection relations and is only possible on weekdays. In addition, there is a distance of 270 m as the crow flies between the Uhyst train station and the Bautzner Straße bus stop.

For Klitten station, the nearest bus stop is Klitten Jahmen (approx. 600m walk). For the northern districts (Boxberg, Nochten), the connection to Görlitz via Weißwasser with the RB 65 (Cottbus - Görlitz - Zittau) is more convenient; in Weißwasser, the bus station is right next to the train station.

Looking at the ideal travel times for the individual districts, the times vary greatly due to the connections. For example, the fastest possible connection from Klitten to Hoyerswerda is 21 minutes, whereas the fastest possible connection from the main town to the upper center (in this case Görlitz) is 64 minutes.





Reisezeit ÖV (min)	Oberzentrum	Oberzentrum	Oberzentrum	Mittelzentrum	Mittelzentrum
Anbindung an	Hoyerswerda	Bautzen	Görlitz	Weißwasser	Niesky
Boxberg O.L.	01:06	01:29	01:04	00:29	00:36
Bärwalde	00:42	01:02	00:59	00:37	00:40
Drehna	00:49	01:42	01:17	01:28	00:58
Dürrbach	00:42	01:06	00:47	00:35	00:28
Jahmen	00:29	01:09	00:40	00:38	00:19
Kaschel	00:45	01:07	00:50	00:40	00:37
Klein-Radisch	00:51	01:33	01:05	00:53	00:32
Klein-Oelsa	00:30	01:04	00:52	00:42	00:30
Klitten	00:21	00:59	00:32	00:47	00:13
Kringelsdorf	01:22	01:16	00:51	00:47	00:32
Mönau	00:35	00:45	01:09	00:56	00:36
Nochten	01:40	01:34	01:15	00:27	01:01
Rauden	00:33	00:57	01:16	01:01	01:13
Reichwalde	00:49	01:13	00:46	00:35	00:28
Sprey	01:39	01:14	00:58	00:35	0:43
Tauer	01:01	00:59	00:58	00:47	0:29
Uhyst (Spree)	00:23	00:52	00:35	00:53	00:23
Zimpel	00:54	00:50	00:56	00:45	00:45

The main challenge of the municipality, however, is to connect the districts with each other. Due to the lack of a uniform "community line", this is only possible through various transfers. Older residents in particular therefore shy away from these connections - especially since the rush hours are based on school times, resulting in very long stays at the destination before there is a return option. In addition to the long travel time, the lack of sanitary facilities en route is certainly also a major problem - again especially for older residents.

3. Pilot implementation

3.1. Realization of the pilot

In rural areas, the use of public transport is significantly rarer than in urban areas. There are several reasons for this. In recent years, the SMWA and the SMR have conducted various studies and pilot actions with different state, municipal and private-sector actors. Different approaches to solutions have been investigated, such as citizen buses, temporary free public transport use, e-mobility solutions and others. Often, the user surveys revealed that the convenience of owning a vehicle combined with low car cost awareness ensured that public transport services were not used. As a result of the low use of public transportation, services have been thinned out in the past and as a result, more and more people in rural areas are using public transportation services. In urban areas, this trend is not observed to the same extent. Here, in addition to the convenience factor, the cost factor plays a more decisive role.

This is where the SMR intended to focus its pilot action. The aim was to investigate whether a tailored solution that focuses on the convenience factor would result in an increase in the acceptance of the entire public transport service. Suitable municipalities were sought as partners for this purpose. The municipality of Boxberg O.L. offered itself, since it had already planned such a project, albeit in a significantly weakened form. In the district of Central Saxony, the research revealed another interested municipality.

Due to the onset of the Covid pandemic, talks and planning were interrupted.



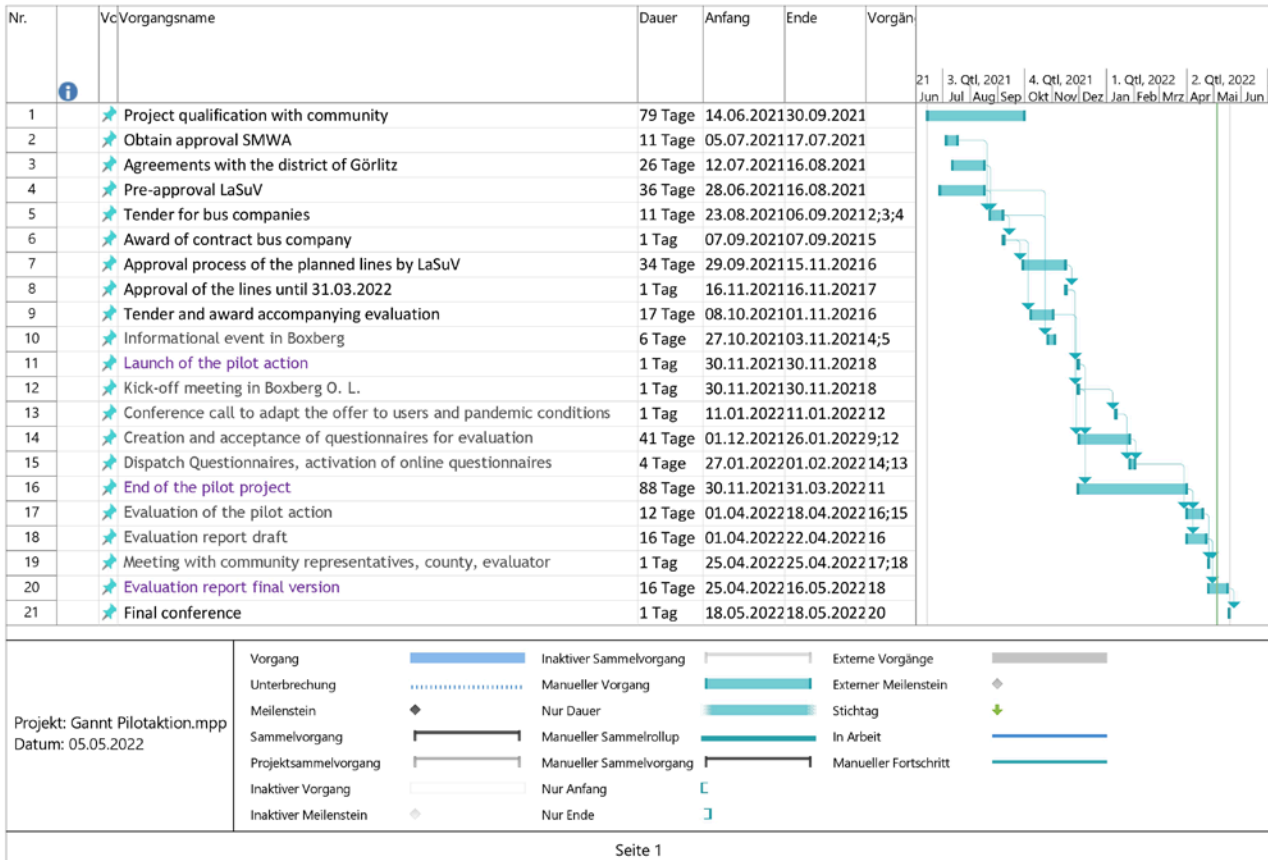
Only at the end of spring 2021, the talks could be resumed due to the emerging relaxation of the pandemic situation. Because of the difficult legal situation - the SMR is not responsible for public transport - many discussions were held over the summer with the municipality and the association, Furthermore, there was a meeting with the responsible persons of the district of Görlitz in Dresden and several telephone calls with the responsible officers in the SMWA and LaSuV to obtain a quick approval of the routing.

The start of the measure was planned after the end of the autumn vacations from 04.11.2021. Unfortunately, the approval was delayed - also due to the necessary provision of personnel to the health offices - and so the line operation could only start on 30.11.2021. The end date of the approval remains 31.03.2022.

No	Task	Start	End	Comments
01	Project qualification with community	Jun 2021	Sept 2021	
02	Obtaining approval of SMWA	Jul 2021	Jul 2021	
03	Agreements with the district of Görlitz	Jun 2021	Aug 2021	
04	Pre-approval LaSuV	Jun 2021	Aug 2021	
05	Tender for bus companies	Sep 2021	Sep 2021	3 companies contacted, 2 offers,
06	Award of contract to bus company	28.09.2021		19.000,00 Euro
07	Approval of the planned lines by LaSuV	Sep 2021	Nov 2021	Despite prior approval and permission from the county, approval of the lines under the experimentation clause was delayed
08	Approval of the lines until 31.03.2022		Nov 2021	
09	Tender and award accompanying evaluation	Okt 2021	01.11.21	After extension of deadline only one bidder, award 01.11.2022; 24,300 Euro
10	Information event in Boxberg O.L.	27.10.2021	03.11.2021	by Perspektive Boxberg e. V. in several districts of the municipality
11	Launch of the pilot action	30.11.2021		First day of the new line offer
12	Kick-off meeting in Boxberg O.L.	30.11.2021		Meeting with deputy mayor, association Perspektive Boxberg, SMR, ISUP GmbH, media representatives
13	Conference call to adapt the offer to users and pandemic conditions	11.01.2022		
14	Drafting and approval of questionnaires for evaluation	Jan 2022	Jan 2022	
15	Dispatch Questionnaires, activation of online questionnaires	Feb 2022	March 2022	Questionnaires are available in vehicles, online and in paper from the association Perspektive Boxberg e. V.
16	End of the pilot action		31.03.2022	
17	Evaluation of the pilot action	Nov 2021	May 2022	
18	Evaluation report draft		April 2022	



19	Meeting with community representatives, county, evaluator		May 2022	
20	Evaluation report final version		May 2022	
21	Final conference		19.05.2022	Final Conference with Live Audience in Brussels



In order to make the offer better known, different channels were used in the run-up. For example, announcements were made on the homepage of the association Perspektive Boxberg e. V., events were organized by the association to publicize the offer in various parts of the town, announcements were made in the official gazette of the municipality of Boxberg O.L., and the local press was also involved.

3.2. Involved stakeholders

Boxberg Community Initiative e.V.

The association has been intensively involved in the preparation and implementation. The association itself is an initiative founded by the citizens of the community in order to improve the living conditions and social interaction in the community. One component of the association's activities is the better networking of the local districts and the exchange of information between the residents. This is of great importance for the very fragmented community with large distances between the villages.

In the project, the association played an important role in the coordination of the offer and was the contact for the bus company, the evaluator and also for the SMR. An important aspect was the public relations. Announcements were made on the homepage of the Perspektive Boxberg e. V. association and events were organized by the association to publicize the project in various parts of the town.



Municipality Boxberg

The municipality works closely with the above-mentioned association. This ensured that the interests of the municipality were represented by the association. In addition to organizational measures, the municipality also took over parts of the promotion such as the publication in the official gazette and on the homepage of the municipality as well as the coordination of the press work. Furthermore, the good relations of the municipality with the traffic authority of the district of Görlitz were decisive for the good cooperation.

Görlitz district

The transport authority of the district of Görlitz was a decisive factor for the approval of the line permit, as this can only take place in agreement with the district. Due to the good cooperation between the district and the municipality, approval for the pilot action could already be firmly promised in advance. The district was also involved in the development of the questionnaire, so that the essential aspects for the district could also be worked out through this and hopefully the results obtained in the survey will provide assistance for the district in future network planning. The district has also declared its willingness to be available as a contact partner in the exchange with the project partners.

LaSuV

The LaSuV is the responsible upper authority for the approval of lines in the Free State of Saxony. In this context, LaSuV was involved in the preparation of the pilot action and agreed to shorten the lengthy approval process by using the experimental clause. To this end, the essential arrangements were already made in advance. Approval would thus have been possible very quickly following the bus company's application - however, due to the staffing situation resulting from the Covid pandemic, there were nevertheless slight delays in the approval process. Otherwise, LaSuV is not involved any further, since the content of network plans is the responsibility of the district itself.

SMWA

The SMWA, as the highest transport authority of the Free State of Saxony, directly supervises the LaSuV - which is why it was involved at an early stage and gave its consent. The SMWA also responded favorably to the pilot action and assured the support possible within the legal framework.

SMR

The SMR as lead partner and responsible project partner for this pilot action was of course strongly involved in planning, implementation and organization.

However, the SMR was also a stakeholder in this pilot action. An essential aspect of regional development and government goal in Saxony is the creation of equal living conditions. However, in the view of the SMR, equal living conditions also include that people everywhere should have safe and usable access to public transport. This access should enable people to obtain everyday necessities and to use regional cultural facilities without their own car, even outside the school transport system.

Kolchmeier bus company

The Kolchmeier bus company is already active in the district, but not in the municipality itself. The main task of the company was, of course, the implementation of the tours. But also the planning of the routes - in consultation with the municipality and the citizens' association - as well as the obtaining of the route permits and the agreement with the main bus company for the joint use of the bus stops were the main tasks. Furthermore, the bus company kept statistics on the passengers carried and their boarding and alighting points and made them available to the evaluator.

Users of the final service

In one term: "The people." The essential group of stakeholders was and is the population of the Boxberg community and the employees of the Boxberg power plant complex commuting into the community. Any



public transportation service stands or falls with the residents of the region. Therefore, from the point of view of the SMR, it is always advisable to redesign offers together with the inhabitants and to adapt them to the real demand - however, in doing so, to weigh up between desirability and economic as well as ecological sense. Therefore, in this pilot action, special attention was set to the involvement of the local residents.

3.3. Promotional activities

In order to make the offer better known, different channels were used in the run-up. For example, announcements were made on the homepage of the association Perspektive Boxberg e. V., events were organized by the association to publicize the offer in various parts of the town, announcements were made in the official gazette of the municipality of Boxberg O.L., and the local press was also involved.

Furthermore, the pilot action was also referred to on the homepage of the municipality of Boxberg and the SMR. The official Facebook account of the municipality also provided information about the pilot action.

In view of the pandemic, the initiators had decided against a print campaign in the form of flyers - this could only have reached interested parties as a mailshot, since many public facilities could only be entered by appointment. Here we did not find a sufficient cost-benefit ratio. Other conceivable promotional activities such as TV advertising, radio spots, etc. did not seem to us to be effective in view of the relatively short duration of the pilot project.

In retrospect, it can of course be questioned whether the selected promotional activities and advertising channels were sufficient. However, we are sure that a large part of the relevant target group was reached and that the low use of the offer was not due to the way of advertising but to other reasons.

3.4. Final service

Based on the existing public transport offer and the analysis of the existing weak points, it is - as in many rural areas - difficult to reach essential facilities of basic services (work, school, shopping, offices, health care, bank ...) by public transport. Under substantial commitment of the association perspective Boxberg/O.L. e.V. the citizen bus Boxberg O.L. was developed. The aim of the citizens' bus is to improve the mobility of the residents of the 18 districts during off-peak times. It connects all 18 districts with the place in the municipality where most errands can be done centrally - shopping (supermarket), official business (municipal administration), doctor and pharmacy as well as savings bank.

The duration of the project is from 30.11.2021 to 31.03.2022.

The community bus runs - adapted to the opening hours - always on Tuesdays and guarantees the accessibility of Boxberg from all districts with one outward trip and one return trip two hours later (timetable see Annex 1). For this purpose, five partial routes were formed, which are served by two minibuses:



**Boxberger Bürgerbus
– Linienplan**

Perspektive

Rauden – Mönau – Uhyt –

Drehna – Boxberg/O.L.

8:30 Uhr	Rauden
8:33 Uhr	Mönau
8:35 Uhr	Uhyt – Forsthaus
8:36 Uhr	Uhyt – Bahnhof
8:37 Uhr	Uhyt – Bautzner Straße
8:39 Uhr	Uhyt – Gaststätte
8:44 Uhr	Drehna
8:52 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse

Boxberg/O.L. – Drehna – Uhyt

Mönau – Rauden

11:00 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse
11:08 Uhr	Drehna
11:13 Uhr	Uhyt – Gaststätte
11:15 Uhr	Uhyt – Bautzner Straße
11:16 Uhr	Uhyt – Bahnhof
11:17 Uhr	Uhyt – Forsthaus
11:19 Uhr	Mönau
11:20 Uhr	Rauden

Nochten – Boxberg/O.L.

9:00 Uhr	Nochten – Bautzner Straße
9:01 Uhr	Nochten – Ortseingang
9:06 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Am Schöps
9:07 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse

Boxberg/O.L. – Nochten

11:40 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse
11:41 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Am Schöps
12:00 Uhr	Nochten – Ortseingang
12:01 Uhr	Nochten – Bautzner Straße

Sprey – Bärwalde – Boxberg/O.L.

9:20 Uhr	Sprey
9:22 Uhr	Bärwalde – Ortszentrum
9:23 Uhr	Bärwalde – Gemeinschaftshaus
9:31 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Am Schöps
9:32 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse

Boxberg/O.L. – Bärwalde – Sprey

12:10 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse
12:11 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Am Schöps
12:19 Uhr	Bärwalde – Gemeinschaftshaus
12:20 Uhr	Bärwalde – Ortszentrum
12:22 Uhr	Sprey

Der Boxberger Bürgerbus fährt ab dem 30.11.2021 immer am Dienstag. Die Nutzung ist kostenlos.



**Boxberger Bürgerbus
– Linienplan**

Perspektive

Tauer – Zimpel – Klitten – Kaschel –

Klein Radisch – Dürrbach – Boxberg/O.L.

8:35 Uhr	Tauer – Bstst.
8:37 Uhr	Zimpel – Bstst.
8:40 Uhr	Klitten – Junkerkreuzung
8:41 Uhr	Klein Oelsa – Bstst.
8:43 Uhr	Kaschel
8:48 Uhr	Klitten – Jähnen
8:50 Uhr	Klitten – Kirche
8:54 Uhr	Klein Radisch – Wendeschleife
9:02 Uhr	Dürrbach Milchrampe
9:10 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse

Boxberg/O.L. – Dürrbach – Klein Radisch –

Kaschel – Klitten – Zimpel – Tauer

11:00 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse
11:08 Uhr	Dürrbach – Milchrampe
11:16 Uhr	Klein Radisch – Wendeschleife
11:20 Uhr	Klitten – Kirche
11:22 Uhr	Klitten – Jähnen
11:27 Uhr	Kaschel
11:29 Uhr	Klein Oelsa – Bstst.
11:30 Uhr	Klitten – Junkerkreuzung
11:33 Uhr	Zimpel – Bstst.
11:35 Uhr	Tauer – Bstst.

Reichwalde – Kringelsdorf – Boxberg/O.L.

9:29 Uhr	Reichwalde – Ziegelei
9:30 Uhr	Reichwalde – Busplatz
9:31 Uhr	Reichwalde – Schullandheim
9:35 Uhr	Kringelsdorf – Waage
9:36 Uhr	Kringelsdorf – Denkmal
9:40 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse

Boxberg/O.L. – Kringelsdorf – Reichwalde

12:15 Uhr	Boxberg/O.L. – Sparkasse
12:19 Uhr	Kringelsdorf – Denkmal
12:20 Uhr	Kringelsdorf – Waage
12:24 Uhr	Reichwalde – Schullandheim
12:25 Uhr	Reichwalde – Busplatz
12:26 Uhr	Reichwalde – Ziegelei

Der Boxberger Bürgerbus fährt ab dem 30.11.2021 immer am Dienstag. Die Nutzung ist kostenlos.



For the community bus, the corresponding route traffic permit was applied for and issued by the State Office for Road Construction and Transport of the Free State of Saxony. The bus company Kolchmeier from Weißwasser is responsible for the implementation after a call for tenders. The public transport service is free of charge during this pilot phase.

The pilot action will be externally evaluated. The evaluation is intended to enable the Ministry of Regional Development (SMR) and the Ministry of Economics, Labor and Transport (SMWA) to assess new public transport services for rural areas. Furthermore, the results for the district of Görlitz serve as a data basis for a better supply of public transport services from the new line allocation 2022/2023. The municipality hopes for arguments for a better public transport supply of the community and the association Perspektive Boxberg O.L. e.V. hopes for a contribution to the improvement of the quality of life within the community.

In order to include citizens in the pilot action, a written survey of Boxberg residents will be conducted. No representative sample will be formed, but all residents are free to participate.

The standardized questionnaire can be completed both online and, if required, on paper. The citizens are informed via the official gazette and the website of the municipality as well as via the citizens' initiative.

Furthermore, decision-makers such as the municipality and the district are involved in the evaluation. The results of the evaluation are also included in this report under 4. (Evaluation finished at the end of April – the pilot action is still running).

3.5. Changes

The start of the pilot action had to be postponed several times due to the pandemic. Due to this postponement, it was also no longer possible to start the second pilot action, as there was already a private-sector initiative by the local discount grocery store within the municipality and no competition was to be built up. The private-sector initiative works similarly to the mobility solution we offer. The municipality with 5 districts also has a considerable geographical extension (S-N 14 km, E-W 7 km) with a centrally located discount store and further offers of public services (municipal office, savings bank, doctors/pharmacy, etc.). The operator of the discounter offers a ride from all OT to the community center with subsequent return



trip every Friday for a fee. Due to the time delays, the SMR is no longer involved in this project, so that no results can be named here.

The start of the community bus took place under difficult conditions, in particular due to the Corona pandemic and the associated restrictions (3G regulation - vaccinated/recovered/tested). At the same time, the time of year and weather conditions were a hindrance to the pilot action in the initial phase.

Thus, there were not too many passengers in the first 8 weeks of the pilot action. Journeys 3 and 5 have not been used at all so far; the connection to/from Uhyst and Nochten was the most frequently used. Almost all passengers used the round-trip service.

In discussions with passengers, it was raised as an issue that the selected two-hour stopover time in Boxberg was felt to be too long. 2 trips per day offered to shorten waiting times.

This measure led to a significant increase in satisfaction with the service - but not in conjunction with a significant increase in usage figures. The exact reason for this and whether the usage figures would have increased with the modifications if the pilot had continued for a longer period of time could not be investigated.

4. Pilot evaluation

4.1. Results

In the Demo Launch Report, we assumed a test phase largely free of Corona restrictions with several interested regions. This resulted (with 2 trips per week) in a usage figure of 320 people per week in 8 test regions. This would still be 20 people per week based on the one test region (with now only one weekly trip).

Unfortunately, the additional bus service was not accepted as we expected. In total, the service was only used by 54 people (for a duration of 19 weeks), i.e. slightly less than three per week. However, these passengers then also used the service several times during the project period. Passengers were asked to complete a questionnaire during their ride to provide feedback on their experience of the service. As expected, users consistently rated the service positively and would have been willing to pay a small amount of money. The evaluation showed that 80% of users were retirees, 20% were employees. Only 20 % of the passengers were regular users of public transport.

This shows that we were definitely able to reach the important target group of non-public transport users with our offer. In addition to the Covi restrictions (see below), the short-term nature of the offer certainly also played a role. For the short term, many people did not want to change their habits and get used to a service that would soon be eliminated.

One reason why the free offer was not used was the "3G" obligation in local public transport in force throughout Saxony at the time of the pilot campaign. For various reasons, a relevant proportion of our potential target group had not been vaccinated or recovered. However, a test center was not available in most of the districts. In order to be able to do the required daily Corona test, the users had to travel by car to one of the larger towns. However, since they could then also run their errands there or take trains to the larger stations for onward travel, our offer did not represent any added value for them.

Other reasons for non-use were that the travel times took place during the working hours of the respondents, the better flexibility with the car or that there was simply no need.

Potential users of the service were also given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire (digital or print). Only 40 questionnaires were completed in full. Even though these are of course not representative, some interesting results emerged. For example, the accessibility of the individual districts and the rail connection



by car was rated as good or very good by over 90% of the participants, while accessibility by public transport was rated as poor or very poor by 94%. This is another reason why the pilot offer was not used. Despite the fact that the routes were designed in such a way that connections to trains and important bus lines were ensured, the more extensive public transport connections were apparently not attractive enough for potential users to prefer the pilot service to the car, at least on a test basis. The assessment of the poor quality of the existing public transport within the municipality was thus the same among the passengers surveyed and the participants in the citizens' survey. However, only the passengers surveyed could confirm that the citizens' bus would meet their needs, so that a third of respondents would feel more independent and would travel more frequently by public transport if the service continued to exist.

In the resident survey, 80% said they used their car within the community because it was the fastest mode of transportation and there was always plenty of parking. At the same time, however, 73% said that they would be happy to leave their car at home more often if public transport were more attractive. Although the cycling services were described as predominantly good, they were not considered suitable for everyday use due to the long distances within the municipality. Here, a special study on individual e-mobility offers could possibly provide further insights.

Only 8% of the survey participants felt that the public transport service within the municipality was sufficient. 65% of participants said they would use public transportation more often if buses ran more frequently or longer in the evenings. 75% felt that the prices of public transport were too high. This discussion is more common in tariff associations, as prices in larger cities are usually just as high as in rural communities, but usability in cities is often better due to shorter intervals and longer operating hours.

4.2. Target groups

Local public authority: 1 (30) (municipality of Boxberg O.L.)

The most important target group reached was certainly the municipality of Boxberg O.L. itself. The municipality had been planning to launch a similar project for some time - but due to limited financial possibilities, this would have been limited to only a few trips. Thus, with the pilot action, we were able to test more precisely whether the offer would be accepted as expected by means of a longer and more intensive test period.

Regional public authority: 1 (20) (district of Görlitz)

For several years now, the district of Görlitz has been interested in various ways in testing innovative mobility solutions and implementing them if they are successful. This project is another building block towards a comprehensive mobility solution. Testing new offers for local public transport is part of the future orientation of the local transport authority.

Infrastructure and (public) service provider: 1 (5) (Kolchmeier bus company)

The Kolchmeier company, which is also active in regular public transport in the region, continues to see a fundamental need for citizens' buses or similar services in the region, especially for senior citizens who can no longer or no longer want to drive their own cars. The utilization of the offered connection was assessed as unsatisfactory. However, the company sees the existence of a demand in particular by the fact that many passengers use the offer regularly. The company's drivers also could not understand why the service was not used; at least for shopping, the alternative transport service offered free of charge would have been suitable.

General public: (Passengers + inhabitants municipality): 54 + 25.000

In addition to the passengers -54- all inhabitants of the community have been reached by this pilot project. This was done by early information and participation events as well as by actively addressing the population through the official gazette, association activities and notices at some stops. Furthermore, the minibuses



used were identifiable by a sign with the Interreg logo that was carried along. Since the official municipal channels are open to all citizens and the municipal gazettes have a high degree of awareness and readership within the municipality due to their public announcement character, it can be assumed that all inhabitants of the municipality have at least taken note of the project. The participation of the residents in the evaluation can also be taken as an indication that large parts of the population have taken notice of the pilot project. 40 people participated in the survey. 9 passengers participated in the passenger survey and qualified interviews were conducted with representatives of the bus company and the municipality.

National public authority: 1 (5) (LaSuV)

The State Office for Roads and Transport (LaSuV) is the upper transport authority in the Free State of Saxony and is responsible for approving local public transport network plans and lines. The LaSuV must always try to reconcile the interests of the communities, the regional transport operator and the interests of the Free State in an economically and ecologically sensible way. The LaSuV was informed of the nature of the trial prior to the pilot project - together with a request for approval. Furthermore, the LaSuV will be provided with the final report of the evaluation of the pilot project.

4.3. Feedback

The pilot action was evaluated by ISUP Ingenierbüro für Systemberatung und Planung GmbH on behalf of SMR. The methods used were passenger surveys, online questionnaires and interviews.

Passengers gave the service a consistently positive rating. It helps them to run errands or attend appointments more independently of others. The majority wanted the service to be maintained or extended to other weekdays. Alternatively, a call bus system could be imagined for some of the passengers.

The potential users of the service were also given the opportunity to fill out a questionnaire (digital or print). Only 40 questionnaires were completed in full. Even though these are of course not representative, some interesting results emerged. For example, the accessibility of the individual districts and the rail connection by car was rated as good or very good by over 90% of the participants, while accessibility by public transport was rated as poor or very poor by 94%. This is another reason why the pilot offer was not used. Despite the fact that the routes were designed in such a way that connections to trains and important bus lines were ensured, the more extensive public transport connections were apparently not attractive enough for potential users to prefer the pilot service to the car, at least on a test basis. The assessment of the poor quality of the existing public transport within the municipality was thus the same among the passengers surveyed and the participants in the citizens' survey. However, only the passengers surveyed could confirm that the citizens' bus would meet their needs, so that a third of respondents would feel more independent and would travel more frequently by public transport if the service continued to exist.

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Asked about the greatest need for action from the point of view of the survey participants, the better linking of all places, including small districts, with the community center and the connection to long-distance traffic via the community-owned train stations Klitten and Uhys or the regional hub Weißwasser were named. Beyond these connection problems, there was a wish for better connections within the vacation periods, on weekends and in the evenings or at night.

In the interview with the municipal administration and the Perspektive Boxberg e.V., it was first noted that the merger of the municipality from 18 districts, which belonged to 3 different counties, did not create a homogeneous community. The out-of-town orientation of the inhabitants thus continues to go to the former district towns. Due to the urban sprawl and the lakeland, open-cast lignite mining and military training area, long distances between the districts are created. The community has no locational advantage, except for the lignite-fired power plant (end of lignite mining in 2038 at the latest). The municipality's objective with the pilot was therefore the general improvement of the mobility of the inhabitants, the strengthening of the center of the main town of Boxberg and the strengthening of the inner-municipal connection to the community center of Boxberg. The pilot was highly welcomed and supported by all stakeholders. The service offered a solution to the community's main mobility problems.

The interviewees were also disappointed by the low usage during the pilot phase, but cited fear of contagion in minibuses in addition to the aspects already mentioned. This was likely especially with regard to the older target group.

4.4. Post-pilot plans

In addition to the district, other communities in the Görlitz district also showed interest in this project. For example, there were initial expressions of interest from the municipality of Rothenburg. Here, a future potential for further cooperation could be found. If, for example, it were possible to provide a pool of vehicles and drivers via a haulage company that could be used on different days of the week in different communities, significant savings could be achieved and the mobility offer in several rural communities could be improved in the long term.

The municipality of Boxberg plans to use the results of this project to implement a ring line. This means a bus line, which connects the different parts of the village with the public transport system at regular times. However, the costs exceed the financial possibilities of the municipality, so that the public transport authority would have to build this ring line. The data collected during the pilot project, the public's awareness of this issue and the results of the evaluation carried out by ISUP provide the municipality with arguments for the establishment of this ring line.

The poor accessibility of the stations in the districts of Klitten and Uhyst, which was also mentioned by passengers and survey participants as a result of the pilot project, is already the subject of a further investigation in which ISUP, the municipality of Boxberg and the transport association are involved. However, the investigations are proving difficult due to differing ideas. In particular, the installation of bus shelters, Park+Ride and Bike+Ride facilities including charging structure are the subject of the analysis.

5. Lessons learned

The main finding was: In the future, do not carry out public transport projects during a pandemic. In addition to the challenges described above due to the pandemic itself, which complicated and probably made the pilot more expensive, there is the major problem of uncertainty about the extent to which the results are relevant and generally applicable.

It is not possible to determine whether the low demand was due to general reasons or because the pandemic situation caused people to forego using the service. In particular, the restrictions due to the mask



requirement, which is often inconvenient for older citizens in particular, could explain a decision not to use public transport services. It must also be noted that during the main project phase, the two Omikron waves also resulted in absolute peak infection rates in Saxony. Since the target group of our offer was precisely the vulnerable groups, it cannot be ruled out that the potential for using the offer is higher than the actual use during the offer period.

Nevertheless, important insights were gained for future planning of transport services. In addition to the previous (confirmed) assumption that short travel times to the destination, which must be competitive with the travel time of passenger cars, are important, it turned out, especially with the target group, that short stay times at the destination are also an important aspect. The originally calculated 2 hours proved to be too long and were shortened to one hour. This led to a higher acceptance of the offer.

There is no universally valid solution for the further development of local transport in rural areas. There are a lot of already proven means and methods, but they always have to be carefully adapted to the respective challenges. Acceptance by users can only be achieved if they are involved in the planning process at an early stage. Care must be taken to ensure that as many aspects as possible are taken into account, such as accessibility of connections, return options, opening hours of services and cultural offerings, and passenger safety. But the basis, such as the accessibility of stops, their comfort and safety, is also essential for the acceptance of local transport services.

6. Annexes