



Summary | Annual Conference

Zurich, 13-15 October 2021

„How to win the future: livable cities with sustainable mobility in 2050“



On the invitation of IMPACTS president **Rupert Wimmer**, the annual IMPACTS conference in 2021 took place in Zurich. **“How to win the future: livable cities with sustainable mobility in 2050”** served as the umbrella theme for the conference. Zurich as a dense and growing city with a lot of challenges concerning sustainable mobility for the city and the region was the perfect place for hosting this year’s IMPACTS conference dealing with **different perspectives on our task to develop our cities in the direction of more livability regarding mobility and transport**. As almost all big cities, the member cities of IMPACTS are facing challenges like the following addressed in the conference:

- How can we reach the necessary consensus in society for the necessary changes? How do we close the gap between cities and suburban communities in this regard?
- How can city and region work together in a better and more efficient way to make necessary transport more sustainable?
- Supply and disposal of goods are very important for livable cities. How can we maintain and improve conditions for freight traffic when streets are crowded and capacity is reduced? Are delivery hubs an efficient solution? And what about mobility hubs in general – how can they contribute to sustainable urban mobility?
- Density and high demand for mobility cause problems if public space is a scarce resource. What does that mean for the design of public space if sustainable transport modes like walking, cycling, and micromobility become more important?

Opening and introduction

The conference was officially opened by **Simone Rangosch**, City of Zurich, Head of Department for Civil Engineering, not only welcoming the participants of the conference but also already giving first insights into the big challenges the Zurich Region is currently facing regarding sustainable mobility and the issues of the conference.

The keynote speech to set the frame for the discussion during the following days was given by **Angelus Eisinger**, Head of the Planning Association Zurich Region: "Permanent transition. Structural differences and factual common grounds in mobility policies in the functional region. The Zurich case". As Angelus couldn't join the conference in person he had prepared a video with a presentation on his topic. Angelus described the current challenges the Zurich region is facing regarding further densification and traffic demands. He explained the "clash of cultures" meeting at the city border: the citizens of Zurich being used to public transport and policies to reduce car traffic – and the people living outside the city with a very car-oriented lifestyle. The biggest challenge is how to change the process of "permanent transition" into a rethinking of urban development and transport strategies, implementing new concepts and measures that help to improve climate and environmental conditions and foster a change from grey to green infrastructure. All this has to be based on intense and open dialogue between city and region, between politics, stakeholders, and citizens.

This keynote was followed by a panel discussion with the headline How do we get our visions implemented? Why does change take so long? moderated by IMPACTS Secretary **Burkhard Horn**. The panellists (**Lola Ortiz Sanchez**, Madrid; **Brendan O'Brien**, Dublin; **Michèle-Angelique Nicol**, Paris; **Simone Rangosch**, Zurich) picked up on Angelus' positions and discussed the challenges from the view of their cities along these questions:

- How can we convince the broad majority of society that change is necessary? How can we reach those parts of society that feel neglected in the current discussion concerning their interests and needs?
- What governance structures do we need to accelerate planning and implementation of the crucial measures?
- How can we improve the relationship between city and region, knowing that we share some of the problems but do not always have the same interests?
- Which are the most important fields of action to implement the change needed?



The discussion has clearly shown that all cities share similar problems, be it the different views of people living inside and outside the cities or the problems of consistent policies of urban development and transport. All panellists agreed that political leadership, positive visions, and open dialogue are the basis for the necessary change.

Session 1: Mobility and logistic hubs: how can they contribute to sustainable urban mobility?

After this very broad and strategic approach to the general topic of our conference, the first session (chaired by **Burkhard Horn**) with inputs from the IMPACTS member cities Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna took a closer view on a field of mobility planning which is by some considered as an issue with big potentials: urban mobility and logistic hubs.

Willem van Heijnigen, City of Amsterdam, strategist in the Department of Mobility & Public Space gave a general introduction to the topic of the session. He described hubs as “effective centres of activity, network or region” creating a chance to be essential links in the ongoing transformation process towards sustainable urban mobility. Referring to Amsterdam Willem showed examples for different types of mobility hubs and mentioned the requirements future hub systems would have to fulfil. Regarding logistic hubs, he pointed out the specific demands due to the logistic chains. However, the city should always play a major role in the process of establishing hubs of different kinds: developing, cooperating, framing, and facilitating. A short Mentimeter survey showed that the participants of the conference agreed with this view. However, only a minority has already developed a strategy for mobility hubs, while more than half of the cities have done this for logistic hubs.

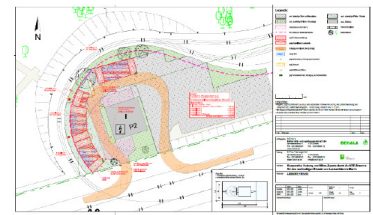
Michèle-Angélique Nicol, City of Paris, Directorate of Roads and Transport, Mobility Agency, presented the Parisian logistics strategy. After describing the challenges (like the increasing demand of space for logistics) she explained the concerted approach of the city of Paris carried out for almost 20 years involving all important stakeholders, adopting a “Freight Charter” and developing an action plan. The range of challenges addressed in this strategy extends from the real estate issue and the organization of public space to logistics for construction sites and the energy and environmental transition process. The new logistics strategy is supposed to be adopted by the Paris City Council at the beginning of 2022.

In the third input, **Julius Menge, Berlin, Senate Department for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection, Head of Unit for Commercial Transport**, shared the experiences with two projects in Berlin: the “Jelbi” mobility hub run by the city-owned transport company BVG (bringing together all kinds of mobility options from traditional public transport to different sharing offers) and “KoMoDo” – a micro hub used by five major German delivery logistic companies (last mile delivery by cargo bike), funded by the national government and run by Berlin’s state owned logistics company BEHALA. Both projects have been successful enough to be upscaled now. The most important success factor is the coordinating role of the municipality.

Project KoMoDo in Berlin



Start in 2018, five major parcel companies, 10 month (official) field test, about 11 cargo cycles in daily service, 3 - 5 km radius, 160.000 parcels delivered using cargo cycles, about 28.000 vkm saved (11 t CO₂)



Finally, **Angelika Winkler, City of Vienna, Deputy Head of Department for Urban Planning and Transport Planning** introduced to the audience the “Wien Box”, a project initiated by the city of Wien and the city-owned “Wiener Stadtwerke” to establish a network of white label delivery boxes throughout the city. This project aims for a logistics networking platform for Vienna, a contribution to the reorganization of transport routes in the city reducing the traffic volume, and an environmentally friendly and practical alternative to home delivery for customers. The project has been quite successful: the share of white label delivery boxes is already more than a third of all boxes and still growing. However, proprietary systems from Amazon and others are also steadily expanding. The next step will be establishing a digital “Wien Box platform” integrating all important stakeholders.



In the concluding panel discussion, all participants agreed that mobility and logistic hubs can play an important part in the transformation process to establish more sustainable transport structures in our cities. However, there always should be an overall strategic approach coordinated by the municipality and involving all important stakeholders in an open dialogue. This strategy has to include different aspects of integration (data, tariffs, architecture/public space...). And always an important question: How can it be ensured that public interests are sufficiently considered, regardless of who operates the hubs?

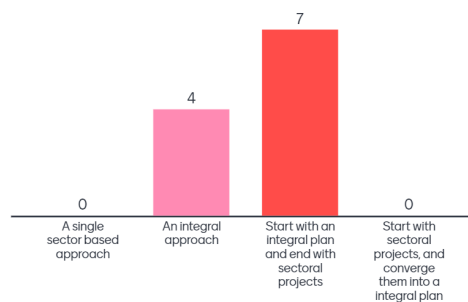
Session 2: The city and the region - common problems, common interests?

In the second session, chaired by **Rupert Wimmer, head of traffic and urban space planning from the department of civil engineering in Zurich** the panellists introduced very different examples of challenges and strategies for solutions concerning the relationship between city and region.

Sanneke Bolderheij, City of Amsterdam, Department of Mobility & Public Space, talked about the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area and the several approaches for better collaboration on issues like inclusion, sustainability, urbanisation, and mobility. As there is no separate entity for regional cooperation in the Netherlands each region has to find its own solutions including the necessary governance structures. Regional cooperation in the Amsterdam area is embodied in different programmes and projects, also including the national government. Regarding mobility, issues like future mobility plans, subway lines, and housing development are addressed. However, in “real life” there are still a lot of problems to solve: A fruitful cooperation including decisions about priorities for investments is not easy when the interests of the participants are very different.

Answering a short Mentimeter survey at the end of the presentation the participants agreed that this kind of cooperation needs an integrated strategy before discussing specific projects, with a focus on livability, sustainability, and accessibility.

When designing an investment/policy, how do you design the process?

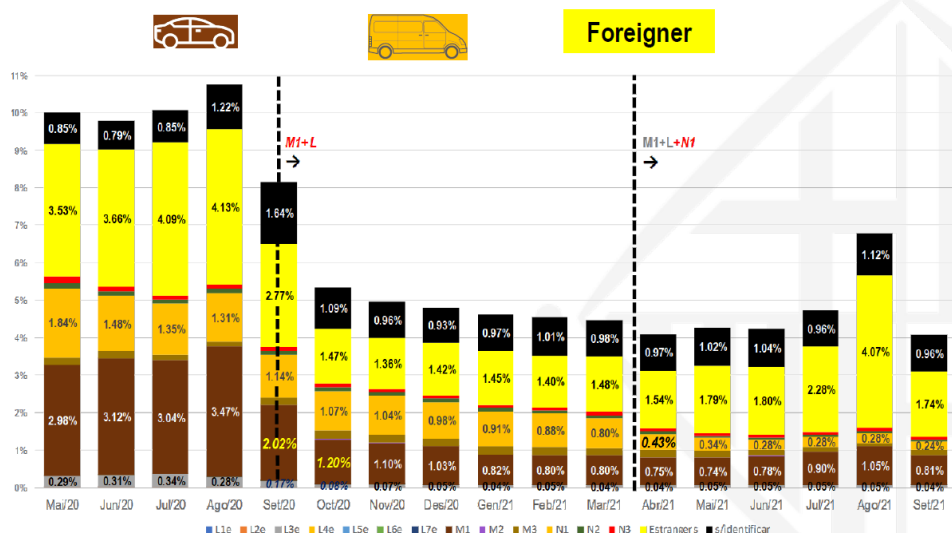


The session was continued with a presentation by **Adrià Gomila, City of Barcelona, Mobility Services Director** about a concrete example for regional planning regarding the environmental aspects of mobility: the low emission zone (LEZ) in the Barcelona region. Adrià showed in detail how the LEZ was established, how the regulations are enforced, and what progress could be observed concerning the environmental standards met by the vehicles. The LEZ is supposed to be developed further in the future with a special focus on collaboration among the public administrations.



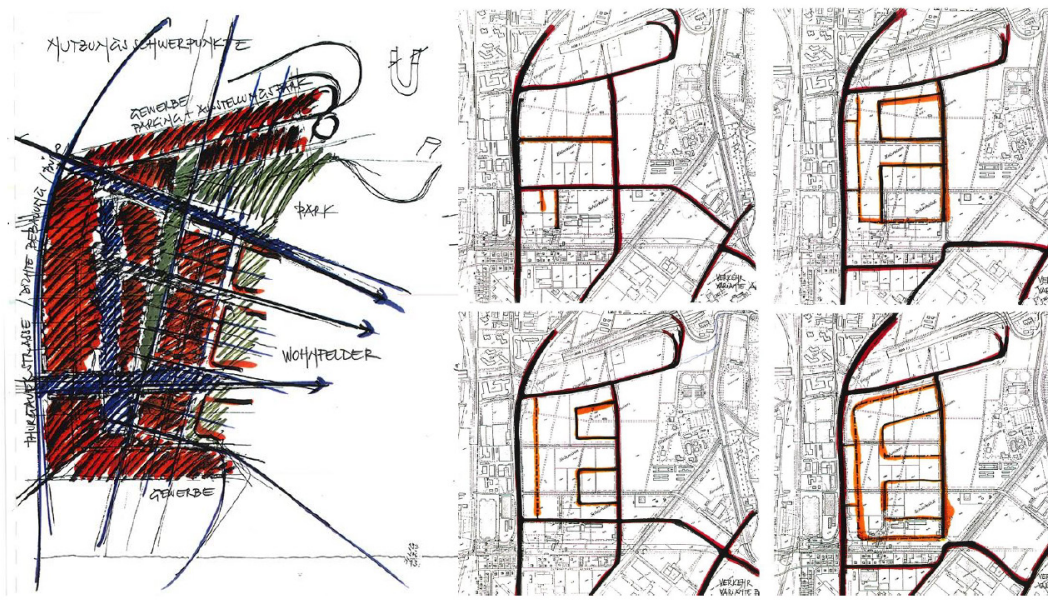
Barcelona LEZ

Evolution since 2020: vehicles without environmental sticker badge



Jaagup Ainsalu, City of Tallinn, Transport Department, Head of Smart Mobility, described in his presentation Tallinn's challenges between its "golden circle" and the passenger ports in the city centre. Based on the Tallinn 2035 development strategy and the Tallinn Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan 2030 the city has developed a broad range of measures dealing with long-distance travel (connections to Helsinki, Rail Baltic initiative...) as well as commuter traffic from the region Harju county (priority bus lanes, improving of P&R...) and inner-city transport (new tram lines, car-sharing, self-driving buses...). Innovation and digitalization are crucial parts of the strategy, heading for smart mobility in a smart city.

Concluding the session, the urban planner **Stephan Schubert, Planpartner SA, Zurich** talked about urban development and transport on the border between city and region, taking the Glattpark area right behind the city border as an example (also the focus of the site visit right after this session). Glattpark as “a place in-between” was developed in a long process by the municipality of Opfikon with several changes in the concept, from an industrial area to a new mostly car-free quarter with a mix of housing and workplaces. One important lesson learned in this process: Planning such a big and complex development needs not only time but courage to change the concept if the first ideas have proved to lead in the wrong direction. The biggest problems identified while developing such a project should always be solved first.



Site visit at Glattpark Area

The site visit took place at the Glattpark area, a development in Opfingen right behind the border of Zurich. After a tram ride through Zurich **Stephan Schubert** lead the participants of the conference through parts of the development. The general outline of the development was very much appreciated: the mixture of housing, workspaces and necessary infrastructure (shops, social infrastructure...), the mostly car-free public space



within the area, the high quality of public transport (connection via tram to the city centre of Zurich, additional bus service along the central, mostly car-free axis) and the intensely used public park including a small lake on the eastern edge of the development. However, the site visit also demonstrated that the details are often most important for creating the livable spaces sought for. In the case of Glattpark, for example, the location of the big supermarket would have been far better if it was oriented to the car-free axis within the area, not to the street with heavy car traffic west of Glattpark. And there is a need for improvement in parts of the street design along the car-free axis and in some of the green spaces belonging to the residential areas.



Session 3: “Walking seminar”: New demands on public space

The second day of the conference started with the third session taking place as a “walking seminar”: **Rupert Wimmer** gave a guided tour through the district of Wiedikon. During the last years, quite a lot of streets in this district had been redesigned to reduce the space for private cars, following the realization of a highway project in the West of Zurich which had led to a redistribution of car traffic. The measures Rupert presented to the participants ranged from car-free areas and reduction of car lanes to new cycling infrastructure and generous space for pedestrians at squares and the stops of public transport. The guided tour ended at the small city quarter of Kalkbreite, a newly built small development with housing and workplaces combined with a tram depot on the ground floor level.

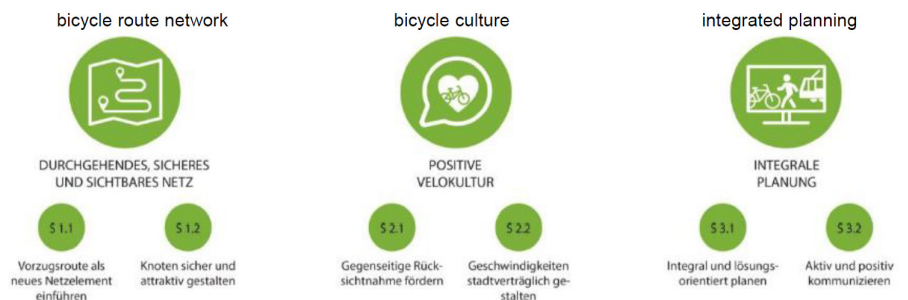


Session 4: Creating attractive public space: conflicts and strategies

The fourth and last session of the conference (chair: **Julius Menge**), directly followed the experiences during the “walking seminar” and dealt with one of the key issues of sustainable urban transport policies, the question of how to create a high-quality public space taking into account all the different demands and need of the people living in the city or being visitors.

The first presentation was given by **Rupert Wimmer (Zurich)** who put up the question of how urban design and traffic planning could be brought together to get the best solutions for the city. Starting with the traditional engineering approach (safety and

New bicycle strategy



transport function first, design second) Rupert pointed out that design should be more than “nice to have”. It’s an issue of human scale, good proportions and orientation, integration of greenery, and the necessary durability. In other words: “The whole is more than the sum of its parts”. This applies in particular to the cycling infrastructure. We need integrated planning and not a separation of traffic modes at all costs.

Brendan O’Brien, Dublin City Council, Environment and Transportation Department, Head of Technical Services, added a lot of interesting examples from Dublin how to deal with kerbside parking in residential areas aiming at more space for greening, mobility sharing, and other new uses in existing neighbourhoods. Regarding the multiple competing new demands (like charging infrastructure, bike- and scooter-sharing, small logistic hubs, and others) the design of public space has become much more complex (including the question if the kerbside area is public or private). Efficient parking management is the pre-condition for gaining space for other uses. The measures implemented in Dublin include new green spaces and trees, new cycling infrastructure including parking facilities, outdoor dining areas, and virtual loading bays. But the implementation isn’t always easy: “The people who are against change know who they are and are really against it. Those who would benefit from change don’t know who they are and wouldn’t believe you anyway.” (Professor Stephen Goldsmith, Harvard University)

After a short discussion about these two presentations (with strong support for integrated street design), **Sanneke Bolderheij** (Amsterdam), **Lola Ortiz Sanchez** (Madrid) and **Michèle-Angélique Nicol** (Paris) gave short reports on how their cities currently deal with the issue of

lower speed limits as a possible contribution for more integrated public space and more livable cities in general. Whereas in Spain a strong national regulation provides a clear framework for reduced speed in the cities, Amsterdam and Paris have implemented regulations specifically developed for their cities. But all share the same approach: 30 km/h (or even less in some streets) is the rule, 50 km/h is the exemption. And all agree that the first experiences also regarding the acceptance are quite positive. The short discussion afterwards showed that the speed limit issue is on stage in almost every IMPACTS member city.

Closing Remarks

Rupert Wimmer and **Burkhard Horn** closed the conference, thanking everybody for their participation and the various contributions. The exchange of views and experiences between the cities provided by the IMPACTS conferences has again proved to be very valuable. To meet face to face in Zurich has offered another quality compared to the video conferences carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intense discussions have shown that all cities share similar problems concerning the topics raised during the conference. And even if the frame conditions are sometimes different, the solutions are often applicable to other cities. Concerning mobility and transport, in the end, it is the quality of public space where livable cities become visible. This discussion will be continued at the next IMPACTS conference in Dublin in June 2022, with a special focus on the challenges of the ongoing climate change.

