Thriving STREETS

Designing mobility for attractive cities

Mobility is at the crossroads of various urban policy: Thriving Streets is connecting mobility with economic prosperity, accessibility, inclusion, participation and health to encourage a change towards more resilient and attractive cities. As an URBACT Action Planning Network, this project aims to improve sustainable local policies through integrated action planning and an organised process of exchange and learning among cities across Europe. It is a network of ten cities working together to improve sustainable mobility in urban areas from an economic and social perspective.

SANTO TIRSO
MORE STREET LIFE

City context

Location	Porto Metropolitan Area, Portugal
Population	67 700 (decreasing)
Area	136,60 km2
Age split	10% younger than 15 23% older than 65

Ambition

"Our vision is to live in a city where people laugh and play, and where people use the city and public space in their free time, where they enjoy living."

Challenge

Car dependency is growing:

- Increasing traffic, unsafe speed
- Illegal parking without control: cars often park on sidewalks or in second row
- Poor pedestrian infrastructure: narrow, irregular sidewalks (often occupied by cars), difficult to move especially for people with mobility issues

- Undeveloped cycling infrastructure: protected bike lanes are short, disconnected, bike-parking facilities are lacking
- Streets are empty in the evenings and on weekend afternoons
- Struggling retail shops (attributing the lack of customers to insufficient parking places)

Moving... to the wrong direction?

Transport share	2001	2017
car	44,5%	76,4%
walking	30,8%	14,1%
public transit	20%	7,5%
cycling	0,4% (2011)	0,5%

Small scale actions

Our Small Scale Action: Viva a Rua ("Live the street") - was an open streets event. The main axis of the city was closed for cars on 2 Saturdays between 10 am and 6 pm and various events were organized to demonstrate how the area would work as a pedestrian zone.

Action plan

Our objectives:

1. **Decrease car dependency / share of car in modal split**
Physical redesign of streets, increasing pedestrian space, introducing Tempo 30 zones, promotion of e-bike share, introducing parking management, revision of public transport network, better conditions for cycling.

2. **Increase the modal share of walking and cycling in school trips**
"Hands Up" mobility survey at schools to learn mobility habits of children, extending cycling lessons to more schools, cycling "trains", bike-to-school initiatives.

3. **Improve accessibility, make public spaces more inclusive**
Developing Inclusion and Accessibility Plan, training public servants and PT bus drivers to better understand the unique needs of people with disabilities, walkshops with various target groups to initiate dialogue.

4. **Attract more visitors to the city centre**
Regular "Viva a Rua" (Live/enjoy the street) events, connecting Santo Tirso with neighboring cities with trails, opening a new art centre, working with retailers.

Lessons learnt

- Don't be afraid to talk to people. Involve them.

- Change is actually possible – you need to combine clear vision, political will and technical competence...

- ... plus it does not hurt if you have strong local allies.

- It is important to have hard data to debunk wrong assumptions.

- A good parking policy not only regulates parking but also generates revenues for the city.

The City of **Santo Tirso** is a partner of the **Thriving Streets network**

URBACT — Driving change for better cities

European Union — European Regional Development Fund

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