



## **GEODES, STRASBOURG'S GREEN COMMUTER PLAN**

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# THE STRASBOURG GREEN COMMUTER PLAN A FIRST EXPERIENCE

## 1. General background of the project

Over more than a decade, Strasbourg has been developing an ambitious transport policy

- based on the conclusion that the all-pervading automobile (in a country where automobile traffic has been increasing at the rate of 3% a year ever since the 70s) is incompatible with sustainable development and
- in keeping with an overall objective of re-establishing the balance between various means of transport.

A whole set of measures has been taken. They included the development of bus / tram network and P+R car parks, promoting the use of the bicycle, electric vehicles, setting up of safe pedestrian areas and efficient parking area management.

The Conurbation's overall objective was to discourage the use of private cars and incite users to take the various means of public transport. In order to achieve this, the following methods were encouraged:

- use of different means of transport depending upon the type of journey
- use of intermodal means (combination of several types of means of transport which may or may not include the private car).

In this context, work place-to-home commuting stood out as an important issue.

It has been observed that each reason for which people use means of transport requires a different approach. It is the case for work place-to-home commuting which is in fact the main reason for people using means of transport. This leads to phenomenon such as "peak hours" and other consequences such as congestion, accidents, pollution, stress, delays, employees demands etc. Faced with the demands of its own staff members (who pointed out the lack of parking space), Strasbourg Conurbation was keen on finding suitable solutions.

With this aim, stress was laid upon

- the guideline 6 of article 14 of the law on the quality of air and rational use of energy which serves as the basis for the Urban Transport Plan <sup>1</sup>.
- the experiments carried out abroad.

The experience was decided in 1998: in these days, the Strasbourg conurbation was a leader in the field of commuters plans in France. Today, partnerships are recommended and assistance is provided for implementation of Urban Mobility Schemes and for methodology applied to green commuters plans. This general frame should make easier new experiences in the field of green commuters plans. The latter is introduced enclosed by Maxime Jean, co-ordinator EPOMM for France.

### The triggering factor for the experiment

Challenges with which the Conurbation was faced in matters of commuting and transport became clear when the distribution of the major employment sectors within the city is analysed.

The Strasbourg Conurbation Administration is the second biggest employer of the Bas-Rhin administrative department, just behind the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Strasbourg. It employs around 6000 people at about 300 sites which are not always easy to reach, either by car or by public transport. And sometimes, these sites do not have a car park.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 14, of the law n°96-1236 of 30 December 1996 on the quality of air and on the rational use of energy replaces article 28 of the law n°82-1153 of 30 December 1982 about the orientation of in-land transport. The guideline 6 of this article, which deals with the Urban Transport Plans stipulates that "companies and local authorities should concern themselves with the transport of their personnel, especially by encouraging the use of public transport and car-pooling".

One of the most critical sites is the Administrative Centre at the Place de l'Etoile with a workforce of about 1500 (plus about 500 employees working in the surrounding areas).

There are various possibilities to reach this Centre, the first being the bus and the tram. It is easy to reach this place by car (it is close to the motorway exit) and the staff members have 2 reserved car parks, that is about 450 places, plus about 70 places around the building.

This was not sufficient. Staff members also park around the two free public car park areas (about 1200 places).

When the GEODES project was taking shape, as an employer, Strasbourg Conurbation Administration was faced with a latent crisis as the parking areas would soon disappear because there would be buildings on the site.

Several petitions were submitted to the Secretary General by the employees or by their unions. They communicated their worries concerning the difficulties in parking conditions which were likely to worsen in the future.

It may be interesting to point out that all the employees of this area and more generally, employees working in the city centre were worried at this prospective change.

Faced with these demands, the Conurbation Administration is keen on quickly finding a solution or solutions.

## **2. Introduction to the G.E.O.D.E.S. project**

### **GEODES – Organisation and management of employees commuting**

Strasbourg is one of the Eurocities which took interest in the successful experiments in the field of work place-to-home commuting and learn especially from the “Green Commuters Plan” experimented in Nottingham.

Strasbourg drew inspiration from this concept and adapted it to its own objectives and the guidelines of article 14 of the law on the quality of air and rational use of energy in order to launch its GEODES project. It was based on a survey about the commuting habits of the Administration's employees and their expectations.

As part of this survey, 2000 employees (one-third of the staff members) filled in a questionnaire. The response rate and the expectations revealed were encouraging for the team in pursuing its project.

### **GEODES, an innovative experience**

The main issue was to deal with the cluttering of urban space at peak hours, parking problems, environmental and other forms of pollution. For this purpose, it was essential to develop alternatives to the private car, promote these alternatives among staff members, set up necessary equipment, services or advantages inciting a change in behaviour.

Several positive results were expected for the employer and for the employees – hassle-free commuting for the employees, financial benefits, better time management, productivity improvement etc.

The first move was to draw up a Personnel Commuting Plan for the employees of the Administration. Later on, based on this real experience, advise and assist public and private employers in setting up their own Personnel Commuting Plan.

In this respect, in 1998, GEODES was the first experience of its kind in France.

This decision of the Conurbation was in line with one of the main principles of the National In-land Transport Research and Innovation Programme (NITRIP).

In 1998, the NITRIP approved the GEODES project as “it aims at bringing the best solution to the transportation requirements of users whilst giving results in terms of re-establishing a balance between motorised and non-motorised means of transports, between the private car and the other modes”. The GEODES project was partly financed by NITRIP up to € 83,000 over 3 years (1999 to 2001).

### 3. Project organisation

#### A project in-charge and two mobility advisors

The External Relations Department - Transport initiated this project. Its mission was to inform, communicate and promote the Conurbation's Transport policy.

The Department included a Head, two project in-charges and secretary. Thanks to the drive "New Department, new jobs", the Department was allotted two additional "youth employment<sup>2</sup>" posts to assist the project in-charge in trying out this experiment. One of the employees dealt with the Personnel Mobility Plan for the Administration's staff and the second with other public and private bodies within the Conurbation.

#### Main objectives

The main purpose of the GEODES project was to encourage users to resort to solutions other than the private car, to promote these solutions with companies and local authorities (within the Strasbourg Administration, to begin with) and to facilitate the development of new solutions.

Furthermore, the project's aim was to set up equipment and services or advantages useful in bringing about a change in behavioural patterns which tended to turn to the "all-pervading automobile" to go to work and back.

Other than conducting a PMP on an experimental basis within the Administration, GEODES' aims was to assist other public and private bodies in drawing up their own PMPs by taking on contractor-ship. For this purpose, the team's role was two-fold

- As *mobility advisors*: That is, capable of informing and individually advising persons seeking information about their work place-to-home journeys.
- As *mobility consultants*: That is, capable of creating an awareness and then assisting companies in setting up their own PMPs.

#### The protagonists of the project: A policy guidance structure and two working groups

The policy decision which had made the launching of GEODES possible remained essential in providing the necessary support to the project team and in validating certain proposals. The project team was placed under the aegis of the policy guidance committee of the Administration.

Technically speaking, the team relied upon two groups:

- The internal technical guidance committee including the in-house departments of the Administration.
- The technical group specialising in transportation which includes various collaborators from the transport (tram, bus, train and bicycle) and car park sectors.

This two-way co-operation proved to be essential. A PMP is an all-encompassing project which can have an impact on other projects or be influenced other projects. This co-operation and exchange were the key to its success.

#### *The internal policy guidance committee.*

The PMP for the Conurbation staff was an essential first phase of the experiment.

This phase was possible only by bringing together all the departments of the Administration. In fact, certain measures to be taken depended upon the competence specific to certain departments. Their involvement was indispensable for carrying out the project. A single inter-departmental meeting was good way to ensure flow of information and increased efficiency and to know the progress of other projects which were likely to have an impact on GEODES.

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<sup>2</sup> The "youth employment" program launched by the French government aims at creating opportunities for young people to access the job market (by way of temporary contracts) whilst offering special conditions to employers who create such jobs.

The departments and directorates which were invited to participate in the committee as the contractor or as the project manager are as follows:

- **Transport Directorate:** For its overall supervision of projects related to transport, the “higher-up” which technically validates the team’s proposals and submit it to the elected representatives approval, if necessary.
- **Transport Department:** Constantly in touch with outside collaborators.
- **Urban Traffic Department:** For keeping track of bicycle-related action.
- **Vehicle fleet and Workshops Department:** Managing the Administration’s official car fleet
- **Legal Department:** For taking care of the legality of the GEODES project and for seeking out solutions suited to the status of local authorities.
- **Computer and Network Departments and General Services Department:** Logistics
- **Personnel Management Department:** Chief contact for unions and personnel.
- **Internal Communication Department**

The GEODES project team’s role lay in motivating this committee’s action, draw maximum benefit from the expertise of collaborator, co-ordinate the actions initiated by certain Departments in the context of setting up the Administration’s PMP.

Not all departments were as deeply involved or are as frequently called upon throughout the project.

It may be pointed out that apart from the Administration’s PMP, the services of the various departments could be warranted in assisting the project team in the contractor-ship of PMPs other than bodies other than the Conurbation itself.

But this aspect was not really “a contractual clause”. It remained quite secondary. It was up to the project team to mobilise the talents available among the Administration’s employees to constitute an experience basis for itself.

#### *The technical group specialising in transportation*

This group, constituted at the same time as the previous one, was in charge of the technical contractor-ship which could be necessary or called upon for drawing up the Administration’s PMP and for PMPs of outside bodies.

The following bodies were represented in the group:

- **The Compagnie des Transports Strasbourgeois**<sup>3</sup> (A contractor managing the bus and tram network over the entire Conurbation)
- **Network 67** (Company managing the suburban bus network)
- **Parcus** (Company managing all the car parks controlled by the Administration)
- **Vélocation**<sup>4</sup>, directly under the Administration managing bicycle rent and care taking.
- **Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français (The French Railways)**, a collaborator in matters of regional transport.

This group closely followed the GEODES project, could put forward proposals, reorientate the functions of various departments or even test new concepts on an experimental basis within the framework of the project.

The GEODES cell was in charge of co-ordinating the ideas put forward and works carried out amongst each of the two guidance groups. The cell then formulated work instructions based on the above for carrying out actions in order to implement the project.

It was the overall “contractor” for

- The whole project
- For the PMP of the public body to which it belongs, that is, the Strasbourg Administration.

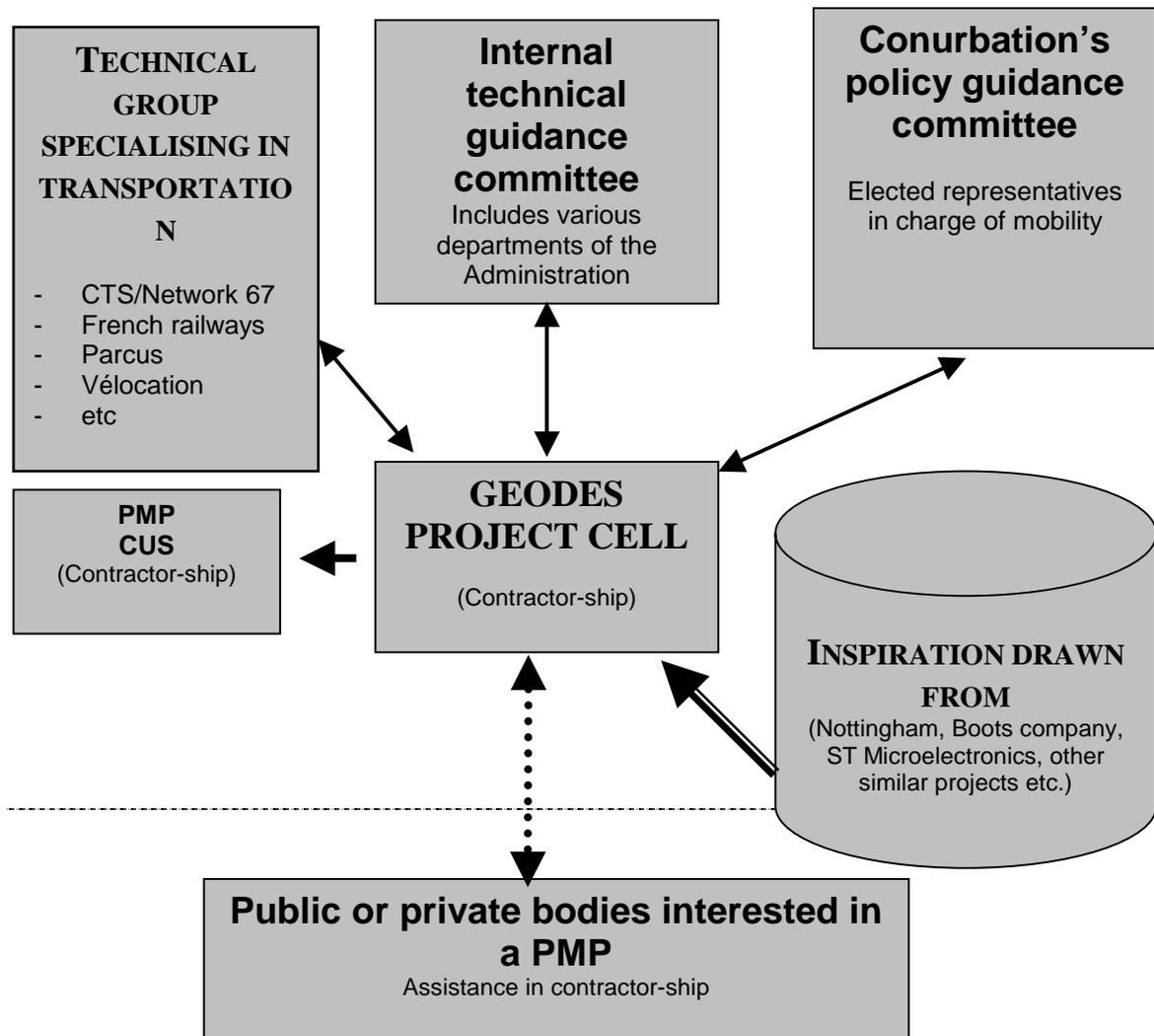
It was considered as the “contractor’s assistant” for the PMPs of other public or private bodies.

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<sup>3</sup> The Strasbourg Transport Company

<sup>4</sup> Bicycle rent service

## Functional diagram of the project



## 4. Main results

The results of this experiment conducted over three years may be summarised under three headings\* :

- Methodological experience
- Evolution in commuting habits (The Administration's PMP or initial results of the assistance in contractor-ship)
- Perspectives in the field of mobility advice missions

### Methodological experience

Apart from the problems related to the carrying out of the project for the Conurbation staff, the cell has encountered difficulties linked to two aspects of this PMP.

On the one hand, it was a major project aiming at "bringing about transformation" by changing commuting habits (which implies, above all, the way the users relate to their own car), which is a highly "individual" issue.

\* Given the aim of this document and its scope, only major outlines may be found hereafter. For further details documents are available at the Administrative offices.

On the other hand, the PMP for staff was in fact a PMP for the employees of an Administration. Consequently, the interaction between various collaborators was often more complex than the functional diagram had given to understand. Moreover, even after the decision was taken, the simplest of actions took more time than expected (order for and set up boxes for bicycles in a car park should have been done in 3 months time maximum. It took as long as a year.).

Thanks to lessons learnt from this experience, the GEODES cell reviewed its methodology, for carrying out the PMP project within an administration and for assisting in the contractorship as well as for playing its role as a mobility consultant for public and private bodies within the Conurbation.

Finally, it was clear that the public employer had very little room for manoeuvre when it came to motivating employees and inciting them to change their habits. GEODES has made the most of the preparatory efforts made for the passing of the law on "Urban Solidarity and Revival" in order to obtain a fundamental amendment for the project (public employer's participation, even outside the Ile de France region, in the cost of their employees season tickets has become legal in December 2000).

### **Evolution of commuting habits (the Administration's PMP)**

The GEODES project carried out with the framework of NITRIP was launched based upon a survey on commuting habits. A survey recapitulating the material means mentioned in the first has further clarified the concrete results of the PMP carried out with the administrative staff\* Various operations and measures mentioned below have been carried out. It was now a question of evaluating the changes which occurred over the three years in connection with the PMP. As in 1998, one-third of the employees replied

The following trends were noticed:

- the use of the private car for work place – to – home journey was reduced by 12%
- the use of public transport increased by 12% the use of the bicycle increased by 4%.

Apart from providing new offers made available by the Strasbourg Transport Company by laying tramlines B and C, the financial contribution of Strasbourg Administration to the cost of the season tickets was instrumental in increasing the use of public transport from 13 to 25% by the Administration's employees.

The setting up of urban structures for the bicycle such as arches to lock on the bicycles to, shower facilities and boxes for bicycles at the main sites of the Administrative offices, especially at the Etoile Administration Centre, have been partly responsible for increasing the use of the bicycle from 8% to 12%.

### **Perspectives in the field of mobility advice missions**

Contacts with the Conurbation's employers have led to some beginnings of PMPs and other less significant measures.

They were detrimental in establishing

- an interaction protocol between the GEODES project in-charges and companies
- a working methodology that may be applicable to our interlocutors to manage their PMPs.

At the same time, the team has helped its interlocutors in solving specific and urgent problems relative to commuting. These problems may well be categorised as being part of an overall approach to the PMP.

Problems faced by the customers or suppliers in accessing a particular site, sudden variation of workforce, works period management, removals, setting up are only examples of situations which underlined the importance of "mobility advice" type of service for companies.

Apart from PMPs, this service can be useful in the overall transportation management in a company.

GEODES has also made it possible to prove that the rapport between local authorities and companies could be positive and promising on an issue which is known to be delicate.

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\* (same note as above)

*In the current legislative context in France, which wants to be inciting for the development of actions for mobility management, we propose here to present two types of active partnerships: one concerning the development and implementation of the urban mobility plans ("PDU" in French), one concerning the building of the methodological framework which is necessary for the implementation of travel plans in companies.*

## **5. PDU: partnership for its development and its implementation**

### **Context**

The French general law on transport ("LOTI" law), upgraded by the air quality and rational use of energy ("LAURE" law) and the law for urban solidarity and renewal ("SRU" law), asks to the urban transport organisation from conurbations of over 100 000 inhabitants to implement an urban mobility plan ("PDU") which defines the principles of organising the transport of people and goods, traffic and parking policy in the urban area. The PDU must guarantee the sustainable harmony between mobility, health and the environment.

### **Development of PDU**

In June 2001, 39 conurbations of over 100 000 inhabitants had got their approved PDU and 6 one their pronounced PDU which is in progress of consultation or public inquiry. For about 20 conurbations, the studies are still in progress. In addition, more than 20 agglomerations with less than 100 000 inhabitants decided voluntarily to develop a PDU.

The PDU succeeded in initiating a reflection on all the modes of transport. For the first time in France, mobility is apprehended in a coherent, total way and for the future, and articulated with studies on the environment, the road safety, etc... With the PDU, we help to "weave links" between transport modes, and mobility and urban planning policies.

The PDU development allowed to make links between different jobs and cultures: elects, transport authorities, towns services, state services, public transport companies, parking companies, etc. It developed new competences in public institutions and consultants. The LAURE law then the SRU law boosted the wake up of the necessity of articulation between urban planning, mobility and their environmental results. Thus, consultation and partnership born of the PDU is a important result of this development step.

### **Implementation of the PDU**

After this development step perfect soon, institutional partnerships have to be perpetuate for the future of the PDU. It is necessary to have a better coordination between the urban planning and mobility institutions to harmonize the management of the road network, to coordinate the public transport operation and to implement evaluating tools for the public policies.

The local mobility observation office allows the pool of databases, the evaluation of the actions of the PDU and their possible reinforcement to achieve the goals. These offices will be operational soon thanks to the active participation of all the institutional partners. Moreover, partnerships are implemented for the citizen awareness before each new implementation of PDU's actions.

## **6. Travel plans: partnerships to built the methodology**

### **Context**

One of the aims of the PDU registered in the LOTI law concerns the encouragement of travel plans implementation in private and public companies and the encouragement of using sustainable transport modes -public transports, cycling, walking, carpooling- to reduce individual car trips.

Moreover, should be implemented a mobility consulting service in all the conurbations of over 100 000 inhabitants for employers and managers of sites which generate a lot of trips.

In addition, any employer with more than 9 employees and located in the area of the transport organisation authority ("AOTU"), can have to pay the transport tax ("VT"), a specific tax from 0,5 to 1,75 % of the salaries, depends of the area and the public transport infrastructure. This tax finances about one third of the urban public transport costs, the two other thirds are financed by the local community and the users.

## **Profile of the partners and point of view**

Mobility management is a new concept in France. Local communities and companies are two worlds which don't work together and have strongly different goals. AOTU don't know how to assist the companies to study and implement their travel plan and in particular don't know which sort of marketing to develop to convince them. On their side, the companies don't consider employees and users mobility as their priority for the output. They pay the transport tax and delegate the organisation of trips to the local community.

## **Partnerships**

The Surface transportation directorate of the ministry of Transport ("DTT"), author of the legislative texts voted by the Parliament, wishes that the AOTU implement as soon as possible their mobility consulting service for the employers and managers of sites.

The public transport authorities association ("GART") wishes to reinforce the knowledge of the AOTU and to bring them a technical assistance for the mobility consulting.

GART and DTT have just order Certu, studies centre on urban planning, transport, utilities and urban environment, to develop and publish a methodological directory for mobility consulting. The control of this publication is under a large partnership with people from State services, transport organisation authorities, employers, public transport companies and users, environment agency and the Chambers of commerce and industry federation ("ACFCI").

The aim of this partnership is to propose to the AOTU the most effective methodology to approach the employers and managers of sites, to improve their awareness about benefits of people mobility and goods transport and to involve them in a travel plan scheme. The marketing to convince the employers of the travel plan is the core of this methodology.

Parallel to this mobility consulting methodology, it is necessary to have a methodology for the travel plan implementation in public and private companies. To complete the information in French language provide by the European project Toolbox and to adapt them to the local context, the French agency for the Environment and energy management (Ademe) is working on a publication for the employers and managers of activities sites. This guide comes from studies on experiments and exploration works in companies both from public and private sectors: it will show the employers perception on mobility of their employees and users.

Taking part in the second reading of this guide, Certu with the other institutions involved in this work will be able to capitalize the knowledge and harmonize the simultaneous drafting of these publications.

## **Prospects**

The public authorities measured the efforts to do to improve our mobility management practices to the level of others European countries. We think that PDU is a very efficient tool to serve strong policies in the field of mobility, urban planning and the environment. The implementation of its actions, step by step, and its regular reviews will permit an increment of implementing means to reduce car use in urban areas and to take part in international greenhouse agreements.

For travel plans scheme, the legal framework contents only incentives. With only a few dozen of travel plans just now, we are still in the experiment step and we expect to go to the development step. With the both technical guide which are going to be published next year and with the improvement of the mobility management network federated by the EPOMM platform, the principal request of the institutions in charge of encouragement of travel plans will be satisfied. We have nevertheless to complete the legislation with others incentives, fiscal conditions for example, and to federate more and more public institutions to obtain synergies for a sustainable mobility in urban areas.

## **7. Information**

EPOMM: [www.epomm.org](http://www.epomm.org)

CERTU: [www.certu.fr/transport](http://www.certu.fr/transport) and [www.certu.fr/transports/epomm.htm](http://www.certu.fr/transports/epomm.htm)