



## MOBILITY CONSULTING FOR COMPANIES THROUGH THE CITY OF LINZ

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# MOBILITY CONSULTING FOR COMPANIES THROUGH THE CITY OF LINZ

## 1. Initial Position

„Mobility starts in your head.“ This thesis was the root idea of the EU-project MOBILE, realized during 1997 - 2000, carried out in and by the traffic resort of the City of Linz, the state capital of Upper Austria, especially in cooperation with FGM Austria Mobility Research, the Transportation Authority Linz (ESG, now Linz AG) and EASYdrive Carsharing. The project has shown that awareness-raising measures are very important to implement in sustainable traffic policies. MOBILE has organized campaigns for many different areas of life, first of all for the **attractiveness of bicycle traffic**. The information about environmentally sound forms of mobility was presented at various events. The intention was „learning by doing“. Only through active participation and personal commitment can fixed patterns of mobility be reconsidered and restructured. The campaigns were in detail:

- shopping by bicycle
- functional work of art (development of designer cycle stands)
- space for cyclists
- children mobility in Linz (children as traffic planners)
- bicycle training (prepares 10-year old pupils for their cycle test)
- environmentally sound mobility through car sharing
- being environmentally mobile (personal of ESG talks with households)

And MOBILE gets things going! For example the share of cyclists has increased by 3 to 6 %, right of way for cyclists by means of an additional traffic light for cyclists, shopping bikes can still be rented from the representative responsible for cycle traffic and well informed users of public transport services make 17 additional rides per year with ESG.

Nevertheless you may not leave out of consideration:

The situation of traffic within the city limits of the state capital Linz, currently accounting for an approximate population of 186.000, has worsened steadily over the past several years. Congestion during morning and evening rush-hour create the near daily scenario, today. Already in the year of 1992, during the last evaluated traffic census report of the state of Upper Austria, 107.000 automobile trips were registered, an approximate 95.000 thereof belonging to daily commuters. Due to the actual increase of registered passenger vehicles since that census (from approximately 80.700 during the year 1992 to currently over 93.000), as well as the changes in demographic structure which have taken place in the meantime, specifically through the shifting of (secondary) domiciles to the outer perimeters or to adjoining communities, it can be assumed that the number of once registered automobile trips within the city limits has also sharply increased. Due to the serious traffic situation, three employees of the municipal authorities of the state capitol of Linz were enabled to complete a course as mobility consultants at the FGM Austrian Mobility Research in Graz, following the initiative of City Traffic Council Mr. Amerstorfer and City Environmental Council Mrs. Dolezal, M.D. After completing their studies, the employees set up „Mobility Consulting Linz“ in the year 2000, working together with a member of the Transportation Authority Linz – also a trained mobility counsellor.

## 2. The "Mobility Consulting Linz " and its Task Formulation

The "Mobility Consulting Linz" represents a service of the municipal office of the state capital of Linz for all companies located within the city limits. It offers consulting via according appointments for these companies and their employees concerning their mobility behaviour, especially regarding the employees' trips from their domicile to the work-place and back. This service is offered **free of charge** to the approximately 450 companies accounting for more than 50 employees, located within the city limits of Linz, therefore representing the first service of its kind in all of Austria. This poses a unique approach, as it is the first time that a

municipal authority is performing a relief of the local inner-city traffic situation through mobility consulting in respective companies, additionally free of charge.

After the employees of „Mobility Consulting Linz“ had created an internal manual with all relevant data and facts about mobility, an official announcement of the representational service was made **with the support of the Chamber of Commerce**. The first five companies were selected after feedback was received. The formulation of the „Mobility Consulting Linz“ tasks were listed as follows:

1) After contacting the according managers and the works council, an anonymous inquiry on the current mobility behaviour of the employees was conducted. Here, especially the use of passenger vehicles for trips from the domicile to the work-place and back, as well as the possible transfer to environmentally sound means of transport – such as public transportation, bicycles, or walking – were targeted. Along these lines, „Mobility Consulting Linz“ evaluated the basic situation regarding the parking-lot capacity, bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways, and access to public transportation of each company, on location.

2) From the returned questionnaires, the potential for a transfer from passenger vehicles to public or other environmentally sound means of transportation was calculated.

3) As an incentive for shifting to public transportation, the **employees of the first five companies** will be granted a **try-out period of two months**. As many as fifty interested candidates with the desire to shift per company will receive according tickets for the entire scheduled routes of the Public Transportation Authority of Linz, **free of charge**. Along with the tickets, the participants of this test-run will receive personalised schedules for trips between their homes and their places of work at the onset of the programme. The test subjects were asked create individual reports for a period of (at least) two weeks, additionally commenting on their experiences during the two month long test-run in the course of a feedback session.

4) The entire collected company-related data will be summarized in a final report, and will also be analysed and interpreted. Possible points of changes regarding the mobility behaviour of the employees were displayed for each company.

5) In the following, „Mobility Consulting Linz“ offered the companies support in realising the proposed measures, as well as for managing and organising any planned internal company activities (e.g. „day of public transportation“ or the „day of the bicycle“).

6) After a primary check, an evaluation of the entire situation after the first year should take place.

### **3. Experience Report**

At first, it should be mentioned, that the selection of the companies took place exclusively according to the order each of the registrations were received in. The array of affected fields of business included a school-like institution with an adjoining apprentice work-shop, a construction company, an electronics firm, a steel-processing plant, as well as the Linz headquarters of an insurance company. Finally, a business for construction and visualisation operating in the field of mechanical engineering was admitted to the municipal service.

### **4. Motivation for co-operation**

The participating reasons of all companies were founded on the serious traffic and parking situation. The according managers were interested in a mobility plan for their businesses and in a more of information about environmentally sound means of transportation, especially compared to other companies. And – it's a fact – the „Mobility Consulting“ is offered free of charge.

### **5. Measurement**

All of these companies have in common, that free parking space at the company facilities, as well as in nearby public areas directly adjacent to the concerning companies are available.

Individual links of each business to the public transportation system and to bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways generally exist. Shifting from a passenger vehicle to environmentally sound means of transportation by the employees is, therefore, generally a possibility. So, there are ideal and interesting basic conditions for a business mobility consulting.

From the returned questionnaires the potential for a transfer from car to public or other environmentally sound means of transportation was calculated. Generally regarding all vehicle users, who can reach their place of work with public transportation within 30 minutes (from door to door), having to change busses a maximum of one time.

## **6. Outcomes**

### **General notes**

After over one full year of consulting it can be stated, that currently four businesses have been investigated thoroughly and in detail. Due to a necessary internal agreement between the management and the works council of one company, its definitive participation in free mobility counselling was delayed until November of last year; the analysis has not been completed as of yet.

One business could not be investigated as proposed. We had to acknowledge, that a mobility counselling for the long-run cannot take place without the consistent support of the according managerial level. After the evaluation of the questionnaire and the company specific infrastructure data, which took place in full accordance with the management and the works council, we found there to be a relevant potential for switching from passenger vehicles to environmentally sound means of transportation. As there were no participants for the free test-run among the employees who live within the city limits of Linz, „Mobility Consulting Linz“ made a proposal to contact and follow-up the range of employees, who were in the question for possibly switching means of transportation, directly, via a complementary correspondence. This intention was not able to be realised, however, due to the lack of support coming from the managerial level („The employees should not feel forced to participate in the test-run, free-of-charge.“) The report forwarded to the management of the company, concerning the already evaluated data and the optional measures for a change in the mobility behaviour of their employees, has remained unanswered up to this day. The counselling activity for this business has, therefore, been regarded as a closed matter.

### **Special results**

In summary it need to be stated, that the 4 investigated companies – vocational company, electronic facility, steel-processing business and a business for construction and visualisation operating in the field of mechanical engineering – operate with near total 900 employees. The evaluated potential for switching from passenger vehicles comes to an average of 40 %. Putting the figure of the actual amount of participants in the free two-month long test-run (total of 56 people) in relation to the employees, who, in course of the feedback session, stated, they would completely switch (as often as possible) from using their car to get from their homes to their places of work – even, for a part, in their time off – to using public transportation (a total of 30 employees), an absolute amount of those people switching of just over 50 % of the test subjects can be calculated. This amounts to approximately 9 % of all employees evaluated in the preliminary course of the test-run, who were possible candidates for switching from their vehicles.

This scope may seem rather minor at a first glance, according to our views, however, this displays a not quite unsatisfactory success regarding the short period of our counselling, so far. Adding up the number of actual people switching in relation to passenger vehicle trips within the city limits of Linz, a total of as many as 13.000 trips per year could be conserved.

Furthermore, if, based on the feedback from the companies, we consider that several measures proposed by „Mobility Consulting Linz“ will be realized, such as introducing parking-lot management to two of the four businesses or/and installing/improving the internal infrastructure for cyclists, we can assume this will result in a further increase of the above mentioned percentage of people switching from their vehicles. Especially the proposed linking of the parking-lot management with the introduction of a fee for parking spaces, partially redirecting the income to an internal mobility fund lends support to our conception.

A reduction of parking spaces in the companies at present is not possible, because the number of parking-lots has to satisfy the requirements of a law. Here the politicians have to move an amendment.

In the course of the evaluation of the questionnaire, it is interesting to see that a large portion of the employees would be willing to accept an introduction of parking-fees. Generally, the maximum limit for these parking-fees was set at approx. € 15,00 per month. In comparison, it should be mentioned, that the costs for an annual pass for inner-city public transportation in Linz calculate to a monthly fee of € 24,75.

### **Reactions of the companies/employees**

In summary however it must be stated that the companies have displayed a very positive attitude towards the counselling activities conducted by the City of Linz. In part, businesses have actually ordered assistance on our behalf, for the realization of several planned internal actions concerning the topic of mobility.

The hand out of personalised schedules for trips between their homes and their places of work to the participants of the test-run was a success. Also the chance for the employees, to assert some points of criticism in the course of the test-run concerning the public transportation system (e.g. non-existent bus connections to some parts of the city during evening hours and bus transfer times which are not in accordance with one another, nor the various routes) and several proposals for modifications regarding the design of fees (such as the introduction of a cost benefit for an annual pass for a spouse, if one family member has already purchased an annual pass at a full fee).

## **7. Future Tasks of the „Mobility Consulting Linz“**

Finally, in conclusion, we can further refer to the general positive attitude of consulted political representatives on our behalf, who showed general consent in basically continuing the counselling activities for businesses located within Linz, free of charge. Some businesses have even tried vehemently to be included in the mobility counselling of the City of Linz; now it is possible to offer the service to all these companies until further orders.

Furthermore, mobility counselling for the employees of the municipal offices of the state capitol Linz will continue to be intensified, in order to display and „live“ an environmentally sound transportation behaviour in this area, accordingly.

We have also thought about conducting individual activities regarding the topic of a passenger vehicle-free mobility within Linz, at the same time aiming to include the aging part of the population, trying to close out any possible fears these people might have in regards to utilising the inner-city public transportation system (e.g. in connection with purchasing tickets via a chip-card, the modernisation of the fleet of the Transportation Authority of Linz, the expansion of the existing transportation routes within Linz, as well as the correct handling of the timetables). With these incentives, full mobility for senior citizens shall be guaranteed, even as the technological circumstances are changing. They should be able to put the improvements of the public transportation services to a better use.

In the end I can state, that the "Mobility Consulting Linz" will get a fixed component in the new traffic concept of the City of Linz; a mobility management with mobility consulting and a mobility central office will be established. Therefore our future will be very interesting.