

MBD15: MOBILITY BENEFIT DISTRICTS

Travel and Liveability Impacts, Acceptability, and Governance of New Tools for Accelerating Transitions in the 15-minute City

Project background

Car parking occupies a substantial amount of urban land and is often provided free of charge to users, despite being expensive for municipalities and private operators to maintain. Repurposing parking spaces for alternative uses like wider pavements, cycling lanes or seating areas can enhance the liveability in a neighbourhood and increase the attractiveness of alternative modes of transport. The prevalence of free on-street car parking, on the other hand, encourages car use and ownership, thereby posing challenges to achieving climate-neutral cities. Despite these issues, municipalities are often reluctant to implement parking policies due to concerns about public resistance. Additionally, legislative and planning constraints further complicate the introduction of parking policies. The MBD15 project aims to address these challenges by investigating the role of citizen engagement in the decision-making process, aiming to increase acceptability of measures such as parking charges and the reallocation of parking spaces for other uses. The project involves collaborations with three cities: Vienna, Austria; Darmstadt, Germany; and Stockholm, Sweden. Each city operates under different regulations governing the pricing of on-street parking. For instance, in Germany, residential parking fees are only permissible in urban areas experiencing significant parking shortages.

Objectives

The aim of the project is to investigate whether Mobility Benefit Districts (MBD) can contribute to a transition towards sustainable mobility and liveable cities. MBD is a concept where revenues from car parking charges are used to finance mobility services locally. Furthermore, residents living locally are involved in selecting the mobility services that are financed. The goal is to increase acceptability for parking charges whilst giving residents alternatives to private cars through mobility services and new use of public spaces (when parking spaces are removed). The project will build knowledge on how MBD can be a tool in creating better cities, with particular focus on how MBD (i) contribute to reduced car ownership and car use as well as to improved liveability in urban areas, (ii) increase acceptability for (on-street) parking charges, and (iii) if there are any governance challenges to implement the MBD and how they can be solved. The project generates insights into the acceptability of MBD among different resident groups and what increases acceptability with an experimental living lab design in different spatial and governance contexts.

Methodology

The overarching aim of MBD15 is to generate new knowledge through case study research (with learning cases and living labs). In order to generate this knowledge, the project uses different methods such as focus groups, surveys and interviews with stakeholders. Furthermore, the research uses co-creation elements that involve different stakeholders. The co-creation activities are also used to learn more about the cases and collect information. This context-specific knowledge created during the project will then serve to inform municipalities that want to implement a similar approach. The project also includes elements of policy research.

Funding



Project partners

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StetePlanung, Planning Office, Germany
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