

RENAISSANCE: Testing Innovative Strategies for Clean Urban Transport – Bath

Background

CIVITAS (CITY-VITALity-Sustainability) is an initiative promoting cleaner and better transport in cities, co-funded by the European Union (EU). The initiative aims to *'generate a decisive breakthrough by supporting and evaluating the implementation of ambitious integrated sustainable urban transport strategies that should make a real difference for the welfare of the European citizen'*.

The overall objectives of CIVITAS are:

- to promote and implement sustainable, clean and (energy) efficient urban transport measures
- to implement integrated packages of technology and policy measures across eight categories of measures in the fields of energy and transport
- to build up critical mass and markets for innovation



RENAISSANCE is one of a number of projects within the CIVITAS program, in this instance with a specific focus on the special needs of 'historic' cities. The five

such cities from across Europe involved in RENAISSANCE are: Bath in the UK, Perugia (Italy), Szczecinek (Poland), Gorna Orjahovitsa (Bulgaria) and Skopje (Macedonia). All of these cities have a reliance on heritage and tourism, and all are determined to respond to environmental concerns when addressing mobility and economic development needs. RENAISSANCE will provide an opportunity to demonstrate and share practice between these specific cities (and beyond), with some €15 million of EU funding available for the program.

RENAISSANCE in Bath

The Centre for Transport and Society (CTS) is involved in designing, implementing and particularly evaluating the €7 million package of RENAISSANCE policies for more sustainable mobility being deployed in Bath, (€4 million of the funding being provided through CIVITAS). The four-year programme will involve ten different, but often linked measures:

- The setting up of a freight transhipment depot on the edge of Bath where retail goods bound for the city can be consolidated, reducing the number of HGVs delivering into the city centre
- The introduction of hybrid, or alternatively-fuelled vehicles for the city car club
- Cycle hire initiatives involving conventional and electrically-powered bikes (a world first)
- A trial of a 'low-emission' public transport vehicle suitable for use in historic cities
- Improved 'wayfinding' information and signage
- Demand management of HGVs and other vehicles in the city centre
- Improving the environment of a demonstration area in the city's main shopping streets
- A study into a personal rapid transit system for the central part of the city
- Satellite bus-tracking technology (using the new EC GALILEO satellite system) to help provide real-time information for travellers.

The main delivery partner in Bath is the local authority, Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES). In addition, there are six private sector partners engaged with delivering specific measures within the project.

Evaluation

CTS has the task of 'evaluating' RENAISSANCE measures in Bath (each city having its own implementation and evaluation partners). This evaluation will be across three areas, 'impact', 'process' and 'policy'. Considering the actual impacts of the measures, for example, on people's mobility or the environment, how the implementation of a measure (and its level of success) has been impacted by the processes around that delivery, and finally what wider effects, for example on tourism, or employment might be seen. Evaluation will take place at measure and city level, with wider opportunities for cross-city and cross-program comparisons.

One research issue of particular interest given CTS's wider academic programme is whether the new transport modes (hire bike, electric bike) or more environmentally friendly modal variants (hybrid cars and buses) have high psychological salience for travellers in Bath, and whether this motivates greater use of the new systems.

In addition, it will be important to test the hypothesis that changes in the perception of Bath's city centre as a result of reduced heavy vehicle levels, general motor traffic restraint, improved streetscapes and clearer signage enhance the quantity and quality of social and economic activity in the city, whilst reducing Bath's environmental footprint.

Current Status

RENAISSANCE has now been active for approximately one year (Sept 2009), and the partners are well advanced in their planning for the demonstration phase of the project – generally due to begin from April 2010. Several members of CTS are individually engaged with the planning of the evaluation of one or more of the ten measures being deployed in Bath. In conjunction with the relevant delivery partners, they have developed 'Evaluation Templates', which lay out the proposed scope and content of the evaluation for that measure. These documents are based around a common set of evaluation 'indicators' supplied by the EU, and the templates themselves have also been used consistently across all five of the cities.

Evaluation Plans have now been drawn up for each of the five cities, as well as for the entire Renaissance program (a further partner, NEA a consultancy based in the Netherlands, is coordinating this Europe-wide element).

Next steps

Individual measures are progressing at different rates, but for most there will be a need to collect some 'baseline' data in advance of implementation of demonstrations / pilots. This data will be both qualitative and quantitative, involving CTS, B&NES and the other RENAISSANCE partners in its collection. The evaluation team will also continue to monitor the 'processes around the delivery of the measures.

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