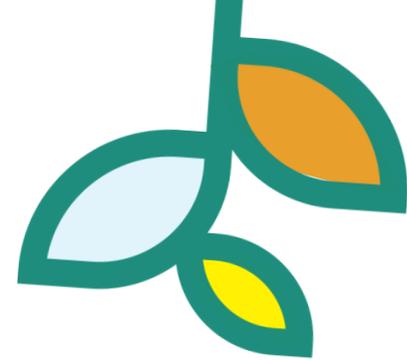




# Thriving STREETS



## Designing mobility for attractive cities

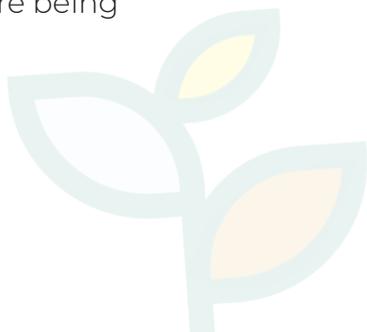
Mobility is at the crossroads of various urban policy: Thriving Streets is connecting mobility with economic prosperity, accessibility, inclusion, participation and health to encourage a change towards more resilient and attractive cities. As an URBACT Action Planning Network, this project aims to improve 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.



## DEBRECEN DOWNTOWN A PLACE FOR PEOPLE, PARKS AND PROFITABILITY

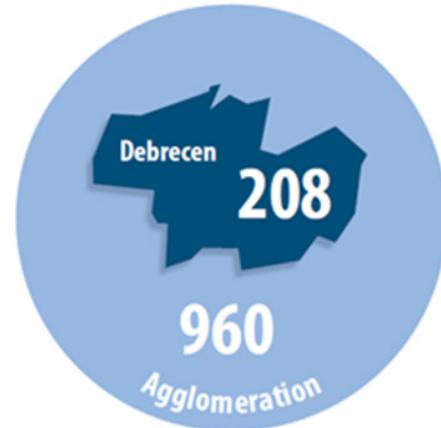
### City context

- Debrecen is the second largest city of Hungary, with a population of 208 000.
- It is a university town, with 30 000+ students, concentrating research and various knowledge-intensive activities.
- The city is going through a dynamic development phase, major public investment projects are being implemented.
- Thanks to a successful investment promotion activity, the city attracts massive amounts of FDI of large multinational businesses.
- Major population growth is forecasted for the next 2 decades.
- While the city is committed to achieve carbon neutrality, the rapid economic (and population) growth presents a range of challenges and threatens liveability.



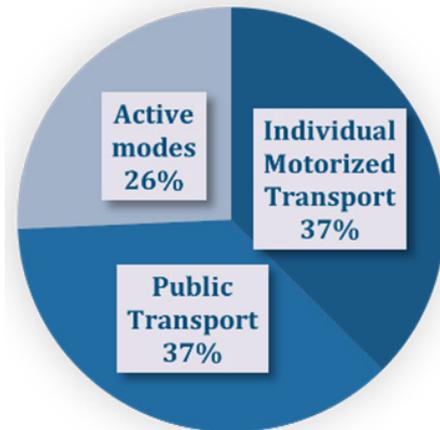


 Total population



## Challenges

- **Too many cars:** Local mobility is still very much car oriented – inner city is often paralyzed by the massive through-traffic; parking is also a major problem – large amounts of valuable public space is occupied by parking cars in the city centre.
- **Not enough green space:** Though a significant part of the city centre is pedestrianized, the downtown area hasn't got any major recreational public parks or green areas, which becomes an even more serious problem due to the adverse effects of climate change.
- **Limited purchasing power hurts local retail:** Businesses in the former shopping street struggle, there are many vacant shops, the nearby shopping mall attracts away customers.



## Ambition

Our vision is to create a vibrant, pedestrian-priority city centre - easily accessible by sustainable modes - that is attractive for people, offer a multitude of possibilities for all groups of residents and visitors to spend quality time there all year long, while also enable the profitable operation of local businesses.

## Small scale action

- Our small-scale action involved the temporary closure of the main street from car traffic during Car-free Day. A wide range of colourful programmes have also been implemented to attract residents. Many parking lots were covered with artificial grass of 700 m<sup>2</sup>, transforming the road surface and parking places into the green oasis and picnic place, allowing a glimpse into a better future for the street. The SSA also involved an opinion poll about the future of the city centre.



## Action plan

- **Improving transport conditions both in and around the city**  
Completing the small ring to reduce through-traffic, expanding coverage + improving quality and efficiency of public transport, expanding pedestrian zones, developing cycle network, encouraging active mobility.
- **Developing an efficient urban structure that preserves the built heritage**  
Inspired by the 15-minute city principles, it is planned to create 2 new transport decentrals to reduce the

need for car use; implement a plan to reuse / rehabilitate vacant prop-erties in the city centre.

- **Developing a healthy, green urban environment**  
Turning a currently degraded public space in the proximity of the intermodal centre into a public park and community place; implementing traffic-management measures to reduce car traffic and make the city centre a better place for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Lesson learnt

- Real community involvement is crucial; people are open to listen and be part of a dialogue; honest conversations can also contribute to changing mindsets.
- It is important to have clear objectives and principles behind the actions; make sure you focus on the objectives and the positive change you want to achieve in your communication – and not on the individual actions.
- Sometimes unwavering determination is necessary to carry out a change project; some actions may be unpopular but necessary to achieve a positive change. After seeing the results people often change their opinion.
- Whatever you do, there are always people who oppose; usually, they are louder than supporters. Find those who agree and get them on your side.

The city of **Debrecen**  
is a partner of the  
**Thriving Streets network**

