



INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN ORADEA





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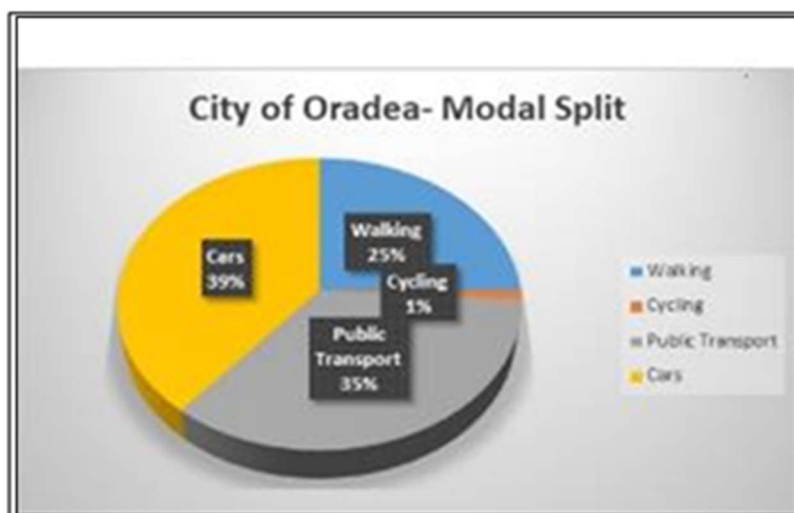
1.Context and Process

1.1. City Context

One of the fastest developing city in Romania, Oradea and its metropolitan area has approx. 275 thousand inhabitants, making it the tenth biggest urban functional area in Romania.

The local economy was rapidly growing in the past decade, transforming the city into an important regional economic centre, with a focus on trade, having an exceptionally low unemployment rate of 0,6% - 2018.

Even if there are important efforts invested in supporting and promoting sustainable mobility – and some preliminary results are already visible, the car ownership rate continues to remain high (471.5 cars/1000 inhabitants).



The historical center of the city of Oradea is rich in valuable buildings and public spaces, characterized mostly as belonging to the Art Nouveau movement from the end of 19th, beginning of 20th century. During the communist era as well as during the economically harsh 90s and 2000s, the buildings from the area degraded, and as a consequence, the city center lost its attractiveness for the community life.

As the economic situation improved, big commercial malls appeared in the city, being situated overwhelmingly in the outer areas of the city. They absorbed a big part of the commercial activities which were traditionally hosted by the city center, since the shopping malls were creating a much more stimulating environment for shops, attracting a large number of potential clients. A direct consequence was that the historical center lost its economic attractiveness, being populated with low quality commercial spaces, which also contributed to the degradation of the community spaces.

Almost a decade ago, the city started a broad rehabilitation programme, renovating the facades of the buildings, reconstructing the public spaces and restricting the

access of car traffic in several streets and squares of the area. The programme is ongoing, several large-scale investments being prepared or already under implementation. The goal is to give the historical city center back to the locals and tourists, to create a pleasant environment for living, for doing business and for leisure. Nevertheless, the infrastructural developments must be complemented by further measures meant to revitalise the central area, and one of the focal points is the development of a sustainable urban mobility approach in this area. The success of this initiative is largely dependant on the ability to attract locals and tourists in the historical center, since this will determine the shops, cafe's and restaurants to return in this area. In the end, the plan is to increase the attractiveness of the historical city center by improving the accessibility in this area by sustainable means of transportation through integrating the mobility as a cross-cutting issue in the overall policies dedicated to this neighbourhood.



As mentioned, the city management is committed towards a more sustainable urban mobility, embodied in a series of important infrastructural investments, especially in the city centre. Nevertheless, the shift is not always smooth, the local community (including businesses) being reluctant to some of the measures taken in the recent past. Therefore, the city management is facing a series of challenges, which need to be answered in the near future:

How can measures to support sustainable mobility as well as programs aimed to trigger behavioural change, complement the infrastructural developments under implementation in the city centre?

How to design these measures and programs in such a way that they generate the least resistance/highest possible acceptance from the local community?

How to deal with the new situation imposed by the COVID pandemics? What will be the new situation? How will the pandemics change the economic profile of the city centre?

1.2. Presentation of the intervention area and key challenges

1.2.1. The intervention area

As mentioned, Oradea is currently implementing a series of projects which will radically transform the central part of the city. Several streets and squares will be pedestrianized, the traffic flows will be reconfigured. This, of course, will radically

transform the city center, in terms of mobility, economic activity, general environment. Therefore, the Integrated Action Plan is focusing on the central part of the city, trying to bring its contribution to a successful transition.

1.2.2. Summary of key challenges

We've identified as key challenges the number of street-parking slots which is still too high in the city center, and the signposting for pedestrians in the central part of the city.

Even if in the past several years their number was considerably reduced, the number of the street-parking slots is still high in the central part of the city. Currently, in the very center of Oradea, there are more than 800 available parking slots. These are complemented by four parking houses, with an overall capacity of almost 800 cars. Hence, there are more than 1600 parking facilities currently available for cars in the city center. Additionally, there are another two parking houses which are planned to be erected in the near future in the immediate vicinity of the central area. This opening of new parking facilities shall be coupled with reducing the number of street parking slots and increasing spaces available for pedestrians.



One of the recently opened parking houses from the city center of Oradea – Brasovului Street

The problem of pedestrian signalling was already tackled within an EU project (CityWalk – DTP), when the city developed a design for the signposts. Several of them were installed throughout the central part of the city. Their deployment was done based on the observation and proposals of the employees of the Municipality. After a testing period of more than two years, one of the conclusions is that the positioning of the signposts is almost as important as the design itself.

Many of the signposts which were deployed do not seem to reach their goals, for various reasons: placed too close to the road pavement (which is having a negative effect on the possibility to consulting them), facing the wrong direction (the same effect as before, or they just go unnoticed).



Signposting currently in use in the city center of Oradea

Moreover, the quantity and quality of the information displayed may be subject to reconsideration. At the moment, they are just indicating the destination, without any further details (distance, time needed to reach, etc.)

1.3. Focus and Vision

1.3.1. Focus

The ambition is to reshape the historical city centre by transforming it into a vibrant part of Oradea, easily accessible by sustainable means of transportation and with a limited presence of cars in the streets.

Historical centres offer considerably limited possibilities in terms of space, since no major reconstructions can be initiated without damaging the cultural heritage. Available spaces cannot be substantially enlarged, any solution needs to be pursued through different, alternative measures.

While the infrastructural developments will reconfigure the mobility patterns in the area, the objective is to stimulate the alternative, non-motorized means of transportation (cycling and walking), keeping a strong focus on traffic safety.

Ultimately, our goal is to identify, together with the local community, measures which would contribute to the transformation of the historical centre into a liveable, likeable, socially inclusive and economically thriving part of the city.

1.3.2. Vision

Within a period of 10 years, the city center will be transformed into an area with reduced presence of cars on the streets, with generous sidewalks offering a pleasant



experience for the pedestrians and cyclists. It will be easy to find ways through the central part of Oradea, walking and cycling being the fastest ways to move around.

1.4. Description of the planning process

The core of Oradea ULG is formed of the representatives of the different departments of the City Hall (technical department, EU projects department), the representatives of the local transport company (OTL), the local tourism association (APTOR), the local DMO – Destination Management Organization, the local police department, the traffic police. We have tried to involve business owners from the central part of the city, as well as the representatives of some institutions located in the centre (as the philharmonic, or museums). They were less receptive in the beginning, without being too active in the planning phase. Nevertheless, informal discussions were carried out with them, involving also representatives of the business situated in the focus area of the Action Plan – the city center. We hope and we count on their involvement, which shall be much higher during the implementation phase of the IAP.

1.4.1. The planning process

Operation of the ULG

The Urbact Local Group in Oradea was set up and was operating under the specific circumstances of COVID. As the different waves of the pandemic were striking, several rounds of restrictions were introduced by the government, limiting the personal interactions and discouraging gatherings. Therefore, it was challenging to organize meetings of the ULG. Based on the experiences of other URBACT partners, we applied a new strategy, approaching the ULG members through bilateral meetings. The big advantage of such an approach is that there is sufficient time to discuss in depth all the topics, so each member of the ULG is having the possibility to express in detail his/her view on the subject. This is especially valuable when it is compared to a classic meeting, where there are always silent partners as well. On the other side, such fragmented meetings make it difficult to create a real debate. It is nearly impossible to generate a dialogue between the different participants, since there is a significant difference in time and space.

Participatory process

Overall, we consider the participatory planning process as being satisfactory. The members of the ULG were consulted in every stage of identifying the problems, defining the vision, and planning the actions. Their cooperation and support was most visible during the implementation of SSA, when they have actively contributed to the success of the event. Moreover, the core members are committed to continuing being active members of the local Thriving Streets community.

Horizontal issues

Given the integrated character of the Action Plan, we tried to keep a very strong focus on horizontal principles, as gender equality, non-discrimination, or accessibility. We have involved women in the activity of the ULG, whenever this was possible. Hence, we have benefitted of the contribution of Mariana Macovei, the representative



of APTOR, which was of big help and support during the preparation and implementation of the SSA.

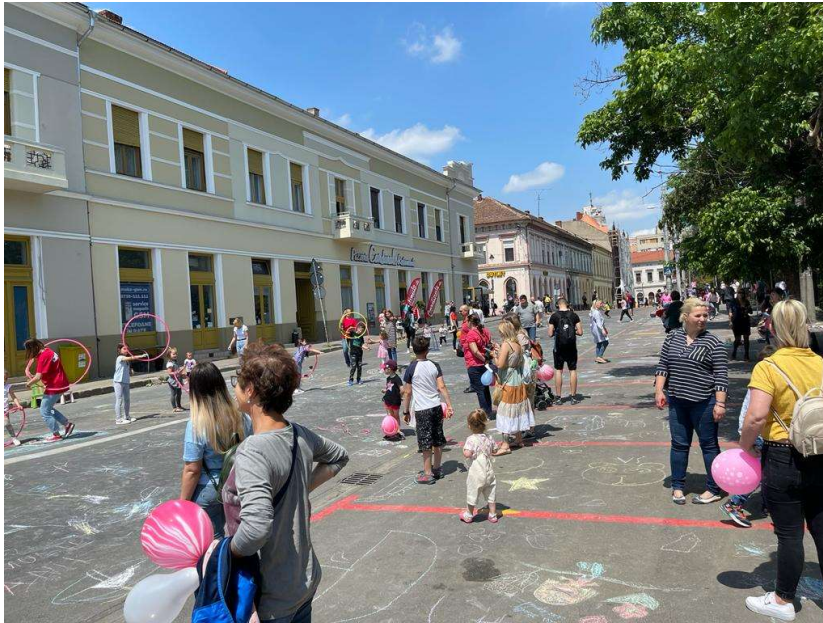
In the planning phase, we have tried to take into account the needs of the persons with special needs. Hence, when discussing about actions related to the improvement of the signposting in the city center, we were considering the needs of visually impaired people. Likewise, when discontinuing parking slots and proposing alternative usage for the newly available public space, we were taking into account young mothers with strollers, or people with physical disabilities etc.

1.4.2. Role and impact of transnational learning

The transnational learning process was instrumental for defining the content of the IAP. While the online meetings and masterclasses, as well as the virtual site-visits were useful and inspiring, the impact of the participation in the visits to Santo Tirso and Nova Gorica was definitely greater. The knowledge, experience and inspiration which was gathered during these two events represented an important contribution to the definition of the final content of the Integrated Action Plan (including the SSA). For example, the SSA implemented by the partners in Santo Tirso inspired the stakeholders from Oradea in designing the final program of its own SSA. Moreover, the radical transformation of the city centers in Pontevedra and Ljubljana, represent an inspiration for Oradea. These represent living examples, proving that courageous decisions in mobility management, even if they may look very risky in the beginning, are bringing important benefits and are strongly appreciated and embraced by the communities.

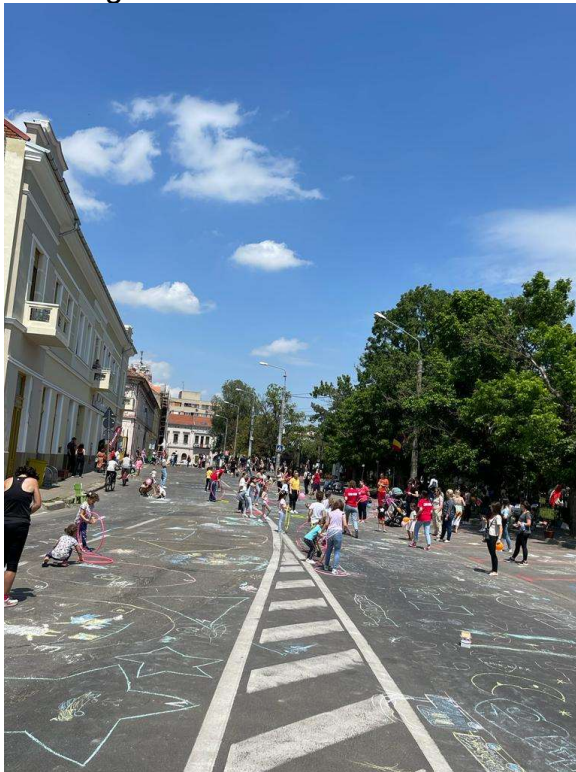
1.4.3. SSA implementation and key learnings

After an intensive planning period, when several different scenarios were taken into account, the decision was to implement an SSA which would focus on testing the car-free streets. As mentioned, the study visit to Santo Tirso had an important contribution to defining the program of the events in Oradea. The experiences of the partners from Portugal, helped in fine-tuning the different activities, which were adapted in such a way that include elements which proved successful in Santo Tirso. Therefore, on the 1st of June 2022, one important street in the city center – Piata 1 Decembrie - was closed to traffic and many interesting programs for children (and not only) were organized there. The location was important, since it is a busy street, with many parking slots, situated very close to one of the biggest underground parking houses of the city. For the SSA, the street was completely closed to traffic and parking was forbidden on the street on that day. The members of the ULG took an active part in the organization of the event, with a special mention for Oradea City Hall, the local police department and the tourism organization of the city – APTOR. The program of the SSA was put together in such a way that it attracts families, highlighting the value of the spaces which are usually occupied by cars (moving, or parked). The event included different types of games (treasure hunts, badminton, hula-hoops, etc.), photo shootings and a sensory corner organized for children under 3 years of age. There were more than 250 people participating in the event, exceeding the initial expectations.



Children games during the SSA in Oradea – 1st of June 2022

Before organizing the event, the expectation was that there will be a certain reluctance from the shop owners in the area because of the parking lots which were blocked for that specific day. The surprise was that the reaction was positive, the local businesses being very satisfied since the number of clients increased due to the massive presence of pedestrians in the area. The owners were even helping with cleaning the area at the end of the event.



Children games during the SSA in Oradea – 1st of June 2022



Lessons learnt

This reaction represented one of the most important lessons drawn after the implementation of the SSA: if the number of pedestrians is increasing (as a consequence of less space occupied by cars), the streets are becoming more vivid, and the shops will witness an increase in the number of customers. This is contrary to the general belief (at local level) that the economic vitality of an area is supported by the availability of parking lots in the immediate vicinity. This finding will be very useful for the municipality in its communication related to the future areas where the street parking will be discontinued.

Another important lesson was that involving citizens in such experimental actions would result in making them more open about changes in the infrastructure of the city. The general public would accept easier certain measures if they are tested beforehand, by presenting alternative use of public space. Hence, an important take-away for the municipality is that it is definitely worth involving the community in experimenting alternative use of public space, since it will increase the acceptance of the measures.

Not the least, the SSA also proved that the car drivers are able to find alternative routes. Therefore, if measures are taken in the sense of closing down sectors of public space, these will result in a re-configuration of the traffic flows, which will definitely not be interrupted for good.

2. Action Plan

2.1. Specific objectives and strategy

Summary table of specific objectives

Specific objective	Result indicator	Baseline value	Target value	Source of information
SO1 To improve signposting in the city center as a measure to increase walkability	50% of the signposting in the city center are replaced	100%	50%	City Hall registry
SO2 Further reducing the parking places on the streets in the central area by 2024	Reduction with at least 10% parking places the parking facilities on the streets in the central area	863	10% less	City Hall registry



2.2. Proposed actions

Action tables

Specific objective	SO1 To improve the signposting in the city center, as a measure to increase walkability			
Action	Short description	Necessary resources	Responsible body and partners	Timescale (From-to)
Action 1 Assessing the needs	<p>The quantity and quality of the information included in the signposting will be revised. Additionally, the positioning of the signposts is subject to revision, since they are not covering the entire focus area and are not too user-friendly. The aim will be to offer a better orientation for the pedestrians, including information about the directions and distances to be covered.</p> <p>Concretely, this activity will consist of a series of meetings with the ULG members, where additional relevant stakeholders will be invited – e.g. representatives of visually impaired persons, or associations of the persons with physical</p>	Human resources – members of the ULG	Oradea Metropolitan Area, who will convey the meetings	Second half of 2022



	disabilities.			
Action 2 Designing the new content and proposing new locations	The outcome of the consultations would be translated into slightly improved design and content of the signposting. The design will be proposed to Oradea City Hall, which shall take it into account during the future developments of the signposting in the city. Besides design, the proposal will include contributions to which shall be the best locations for placing the signposts.	Human resources – members of the ULG	Oradea Metropolitan Area Oradea City Hall Members of the ULG	2023 January – 2023 April
Action 3 Conducting the necessary changes	The City Hall will place the new signposts with improved content and design, taking into account the proposals formulated by the ULG. The new signposts will contain information which will encourage walking in the city center, including estimated walking time to the most important destinations in the area. The production and placement of the signposts will be carried out by the City Hall, and the activity will have a continuous character, starting with the summer of 2023.	Human resources – members of the ULG Financial resources of the City Hall	Oradea Metropolitan Area Oradea City Hall	2023 December



Specific objective SO2 To rec Further reducing the parking places on the streets in the central area by 2024				
Action	Short description	Necessary resources	Responsible body and partners	Timescale (From-to)
Action 1 Identification of the streets where parking places can be discontinued	<p>The activity will consist of a careful analysis of the areas of the city center where parking could be discontinued in the near future. The analysis will be based not only on the existing situation, but it will take into account the future plans of the city, included in the updated SUMP.</p> <p>The activity will be carried out mainly with the support of the technical department of the City Hall, and the active contribution of the local police and traffic police departments. The consultation process was already started within the ULG, the core members having already some proposals in mind. Nevertheless, these shall be carefully analysed and correlated with the city's future plans.</p> <p>An important part of the activity is to propose alternative usage</p>	Human resources – members of the ULG	Oradea Metropolitan Area Oradea City Hall Members of the ULG	2023 January



	of the public space which is made available. Lacking this step, the success of the action is endangered.			
Action 2 Implementing the administrative procedures for eliminating the parking places on the identified streets	<p>The results of the previous analysis will be taken on board by the relevant departments of the City Hall, which will prepare the necessary administrative procedures to translate them into reality.</p> <p>The elimination of the parking slots may take the form of simple regulations which would forbid parking, but it may also represent complex reconstruction works, which would re-shape the public space – including extending the sidewalks.</p> <p>Therefore, whenever relevant, this step includes the delivery of technical documentations for works needed for reconstruction and obtaining the necessary preliminary permits.</p>	Human resources – representatives of the City Hall	Oradea Metropolitan Area Oradea City Hall	2023 June
Action 3 Eliminating at least 10% of the parking places on the streets in	The activity will consist of the physical elimination of the parking slots in the city center.	1 000 000 Eur (includes reconstruction	Oradea Metropolitan Area Oradea City Hall	2025 June



the city center	<p>The activity will be carried out by the City Hall, using its own resources. As mentioned, this step may include only regulatory measures (forbidding parking), or more complex reconstruction of the public space.</p> <p>The goal is to eliminate 10% of the existing parking slots which are on the streets. This would account to approximately 90 cars less on the streets in the city center by the end of 2024.</p>	works)		
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2.3. Summary Gantt Chart

Specific objectives / Actions	2022 Sem II	2023 Sem I	2023 Sem II	2024 Sem I	2024 Sem II	2025 Sem I
SO1 Improving the signposting in the city center						
Assessing the needs						
Designing the new content and proposing new locations						
Conducting the necessary changes						
SO2 Further reducing the parking places on the streets in the central area by 2024						
Identification of the streets where parking places can be discontinued						
Implementing the administrative procedures for eliminating the parking places on the identified streets						
Eliminating at least 10% parking places on the streets in the city center						

3. Implementation framework

3.1. Framework for the delivery of the IAP

The IAP will be delivered in close cooperation with the main stakeholders involved in the ULG. Definitely, one of the most important actors will be the different departments of Oradea City Hall, but the activities must be carried out with the involvement of the other local actors. The tourism stakeholders (APTOR and AMD Bihor) will play central role in conducting the changes related to the signposting, assisting the municipality both regarding their visual appearance and informational content. This action will require an intensive consultation process, which will be delivered by using the ULG framework developed during the planning process. Additionally, other relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate in the reconfiguration of the signposting system of the city. Hopefully, we will manage to attract in this process the main actors in the local tourism (e.g. restaurants, hotels, cafe's)

As for reducing the parking slots, the local and the traffic police will have a very important contribution. Of course, the different relevant departments of the City Hall will be instrumental in delivering the assumed indicators.

3.2. Resourcing and funding

The resources needed for the implementation of the IAP will be mainly provided by Oradea Metropolitan Area and Oradea City Hall. The City Hall will provide in its annual budgets the financial resources needed for the realization of the activities included in the Plan. Moreover, it will provide the administrative support for the implementation of the different actions – public procurements, preparation of regulations, conducting the relevant procedures, etc. The Metropolitan Area will provide the human resources needed in order to keep the ULG framework operational throughout the period of implementing the activities. It will ensure that the members of the ULG will meet regularly and that they will have the chance to contribute to the implementation.

3.3. Monitoring framework

The monitoring of the implementation will be provided by Oradea Metropolitan Area. A dedicated person within the organization will be in charge of monitoring the implementation of the activities included in the IAP. Based on the agreement reached during the planning process, the ULG will continue its activity. Therefore, the monitoring activity will be done also through the feedback of the members of the ULG throughout the provisional timeframe of implementation.



3.4. Overview and analysis of risks

Risk assessment table

RISK	PROBABILITY ¹	IMPACT ²	MITIGATION PLAN
Emergency situations induced by COVID or other circumstances	Medium	High	The consultations among the ULG members will be continued even during emergency situations - especially based on the experiences related to COVID. Nonetheless, the activities which impose physical realization (placing the signposting, reconstruction of parking slots) can be considerably delayed if this risk occurs.
Lack of involvement of the ULG members	Low	High	The core members of the ULG are committed towards the goals of the IAP, therefore their involvement is secured. We have tried to include various representatives of the organizations involved in the ULG, so that in case someone leaves the job, he/she can be replaced.
Lack of funding	Low	Low	The approach in designing the IAP was to include activities which would not require a considerable amount of funding. Even for the elimination of parking slots, the estimation is that the 10% reduction is achievable if funding would not be available for important reconstruction works.