



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The French municipality of Nort-sur-Erdre, in Loire-Atlantique, took part of the City Centre Doctor network in 2016. This project aims to revitalize the city centers of small and medium European cities localized near biggest urban areas, which in this case is Nantes. This summary intends to give an overview of the all Integrated Action Plan (IAP) which is the narrative of the all project conducted in Nort-sur-Erdre.

Nort-sur-Erdre identity card:

- **Inhabitants:** 8412 in 2014
- Part of the Erdre et Gevres *Communauté de Communes*
- **Geography and transport:** Northeast of Nantes with a train connection (35min) to Nantes' city centre. Localized close to the Nantes-Rennes highway (10-15min by car).
- **Landscape:** The Erdre River crosses the commune before it joins the Loire in Nantes. It is possible to navigate from Nort-sur-Erdre to the heart of Nantes. Therefore the city is has a port in its city centre. The River also gives an identity to the commune through its landscape.
- **Demography:** Nort-sur-Erdre has known a very strong increase the past few decades regarding its population. It is still nowadays an attractive territory: around 30% of the population was not leaving in Nort-sur-Erdre five years ago. Its population is also pretty young with a medium age of 37 years old.
- **Commercial offer:** 57 retails in 2013 in Nort-sur-Erdre, 2 supermarkets in the city centre.
- **Historical look:** the emblematic building is La Minoterie, built in 1898 and classified historical heritage now. It had multiple purposes and was used by the industry. In 1980 the SNCF closed the railroad until 2014. This had consequences on the development of the city, regarding mobility.

Visions for the future of Nort-sur-Erdre:

As we will explain later on, one of the first phases of the project was to address a diagnostic and a place analysis of the city and its centre. The city council chose to build a partnership with the University of Nantes and “hired” a group of students of the Master 2 “*Villes et territoires*” (Cities and territories) to conduct these diagnostic and place analysis. Among this



group there were students of geography, architecture, law and urban planning. They produced documents and came up with two visions, or two different scenarios they recommend as development models:

The city of proximity: mostly based on the promotion of green mobility, strengthen of social links and good commercial offer.

The Erdre river’s landscapes, parks of the city: it emphasis on the identity of the landscapes of the Erdre river and recommend to play on the notion of city/countryside as a tool in order to attract new inhabitants.

These visions were then presented by the students during a meeting of the Urban Local Group (ULG) and discussed among the members. A third vision came out, which combines elements of the two visions presented above: **a city of proximity with an appease city centre and a better living environment.** This vision is the goal that the ULG hopes to achieve by the implementation of this integrated action plan.

1. Place analysis and identification of the main challenges

The following table presents the tools, the process and the results of the place analysis and the identification of the main problems. These steps led to the definition of the priorities that the ULG wanted to work on through the project.

Tool used	Who	Process/methods	Main results	Priorities identified
Mental maps	ULG	Each ULG member was asked to draw his vision of the city centre in order to delimitate the territory that the project will focus on	The ULG concluded that the city centre was included within the city’s entry and exit signs.	
Field investigation	ULG, Students, External expertise cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ ULG members first adapted to the local situation a model of equerry given by URBACT during meetings. ULG also set the objectives of the investigation: 150 answers of a representative panel. The survey was available on the website of the city hall and the students questioned people during two days in the street. The external cabinet compiled all the results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ 162 answers _ State of the retails: lack of adaptation, gap between offer and demand, forfeiture of the available space _ High using of car in the centre _ Dangerous place to bicycle 	<p>1. Develop the living environment of Nort-sur-Erdre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Connect the port and the city centre _ Preserve and develop the living environment <p>2. Appease and question the city centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Integrate the future deviation road _ Officer the car flows _ Rethink the parking lots et the pathways _ Rethink the retails
Peer review	ULG	<p>Consist in a city walk where participants have to say what they would Start/Stop/Continue/Improve.</p> <p>The ULG was divided in several groups corresponding to a thematic: conviviality and dynamism, living environment, mobility and accessibility.</p>	See SWOT analysis	

<p>SWOT analysis</p>	<p>ULG</p> <p>Mostly based on the peer review results. The ULG divided itself in small groups to work on the SWOT analysis before compiling all the results</p>	<p>Strengths: nice living environment, the port, dynamic local services, supermarkets, geographical situation (near Nantes, Angers and Rennes)</p> <p>Weaknesses: turnover and vacancy among retails, high costs of real estate, high traffic (saturation, dangerous cohabitation between users: bikes, pedestrians...), lack of cleanliness of public spaces, bad signalization</p> <p>Opportunities: a better promotion of the city, the future deviation road, a better connection between the port and the city centre, local services, the creation of new places of social links and shared spaces, creation of a co working space, the train</p> <p>Threats: the future deviation road and pedestrian zones for the retails, commercial zones, become a dormitory-town</p>	<p>et the offer of restaurants and bars in the centre</p> <p>3. Create social links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Strengthen intergenerational links _ Create co working spaces
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2. The action planning process:

- *Establishment of the Urban Local Group (ULG):*

In order to create the group, the city hall mostly relied on identified heads of networks such as the president of the retailers association, teachers at high school, to spread the information. Then the municipality used the first ULG meeting to present the project and to encourage people to invite others. 23 persons assisted to the first ULG meeting, both citizens, elected officials and city hall staff, which was considered as a success. It is also very positive to notice that the members stayed pretty much the same all along the 2 years' project. The meetings were conducted by Eleo Conseil, an external expert cabinet.

- *Place analysis:*

As explained above, the place analysis was a very important stage conducted both by the ULG and the group of students. This step led to the definition of the priorities and thus the actions the ULG wanted to implement and the objectives the IAP intends to achieve.



- *Ideas people:*

This stage of the project aims to collect the ideas of the citizen regarding the objective of revitalizing the city centre through convivial events. In Nort-sur-Erdre, we used it a little bit differently as we set up the ideas café pretty late in the project timeline. Indeed these events were the occasion to collect global ideas of the inhabitants on the revitalization of the city centre but also to make them think and give their opinion on precise beta actions (such as a theme for a urban fresco). The ULG also used these moments to communicate on the project.

The first two ideas café were organized during the summer festival “*Les Jeudis du port*” and were targeted the children with a workshop “draw your city”. The children had the opportunity to draw what is Nort-sur-Erdre in their mind and what they would like to see in the future. It took place during two afternoons and more than 20 drawings were collected. Another ideas café was set up during the Friday’s market, targeting an older public. A stand with coffee and a totem with communication panels presented the project were installed and it mostly was the occasion of presenting the project to the inhabitants. The final ideas café was organized in the high school, we communicate on the project to teenagers, organized a workshop with a class to collect their ideas on the revitalization. It was a big success and more than 60 ideas were collected this day.

During each event, ULG members came to help setting up the stands, and to talk about the City Centre Doctor project and their personal experience as ULG member.

- *Process to choose which ideas to develop into actions:*

How did the ULG process to select the ideas they wanted to put in actions. It was mostly the resulting of negotiation and discussion during ULG meetings.

- *Implementation and thinking of the beta actions:*

In order to be more efficient and have a real control on the progress of the beta action, in link with the different stakeholders, the ULG divided itself in small commission, composed by one or several ULG referent. The first step was to divide the ULG members, each member chose a beta action to follow. Then their implication was variable: from a distant implication (just by following the progress by mail and updates), to a direct negotiation with stakeholders.



Each “commission” was also composed by city hall staff. In any cases, the process of thinking technically on each beta action was at least shared with ULG members and at best carried by them.

- *Participation to the IAP redaction:*

ULG members didn’t directly participate in the redaction of the IAP. Their role was a monitoring of the table of content and drafts during ULG meetings and of final version of the document through working sessions held in the city hall (to be confirmed).

Role of transnational exchanges in learning:

The transnational exchanges and the creation of a transnational network are some of the main achievements of the City Centre Doctor project. The study visits were great opportunities to share visions on common issues and ways of tackle them. The study visits also gave some inspiration to the ULG in terms of betas actions, and some are directly coming from partner cities.

URBACT method applied in the project:

The URBACT methods aim to gather civil society and citizens, associations, staff of the city hall, elected officials to work and think on specific actions to implement together. This is a hard method to put into action because it is innovative. In the case of Nort-sur-Erdre we can say it worked well, first because of the diversity of the profiles within the ULG. Then, depending on the betas actions, the ULG succeeded in involving external stakeholders like associations.

Then, some activities presented in study visit by URBACT experts were re-used during ULG meetings: peer review, exercise on the risk analysis related to setting up of betas actions... It gave us tools to emerge with an action plan.

3. Focus and objectives for IAP

Long-term strategic goal or vision for the city centre:

As said previously, the vision for the future of the city centre is a mix between the two scenarios the students made up: **a city of proximity with an appease city centre regarding mobility and an improved living environment.** In order to achieve this goal, and after the series of exercises and diagnosis presented above, the ULG defined 3 priorities:

- appeasing and questioning the city centre



- to developing the living environment
- to creating social link

Description of objectives:

Once the priorities defined, the ULG divided itself in 3 groups (on per priority) during the 5th ULG meeting, in order to reflect on more specific objectives. The ULG members had to file their ideas in 3 categories: ideas of project mentioned for the first time, ideas of short term projects (6 months), ideas of long term projects (several years). 8 specific objectives came out of these reflections:

- **to restore the function of main square of Champ de Foire**; which is a square used on Fridays morning for the market, and punctually for events such as funfairs. The rest of the time it is mostly used as a parking lot. The idea is to restore its function of Main Square by giving the wish to people to hang out on this spot. It goes through creating a new function on the square and improving this environment which is not so green and attractive right now.
- **to open and dynamize the Church Square by giving it back its function of meeting place**. This square is the very heart of the city centre, but is not so used as a meeting place right now for several reasons. It is the same problematic as the previous objective.
- **to support and encourage the commercial dynamic;**
- **to strengthen the solidarity the social relationships and the living together;**
- **to strengthen the cultural and artistic dynamics;**
- **to visually improve the city centre;**
- **to strengthen the connections between the port, the river and the city centre by taking advantages of the river;**
- **to redefine the shared spaces between bikes, cars and pedestrians in link with the users;**

Some of these specific objectives defined by the ULG also match some of the projects and the strategy the city hall already planned for the development of Nort-sur-Erdre, such as the creation of a multimedia library in 2018, the creation of a co-working space in 2017, the creation of path ways for bikes and pedestrians, the creation of the “house of the port”, the new deviation road... These projects were not imagined within the ULG but they match its objectives and participate to the revitalization of the city centre.

	Beta action	Description of the action	Specific objectives under which the actions take place	Department of the city hall to work with	Considered stakeholders
1	Urban gardens	Setting up of shared plant boxes on the Champ de Foire	to restore the function of main square of Champ de Foire to visually improve the city centre	Parks and public spaces	_ Association AL'TERRE NORT _ AJICO
2	Graffiti workshop	Organization of an intergenerational graffiti workshop on several afternoons in order to create a fresco on the wall of a building in the city centre.	to strengthen the cultural and artistic dynamics to visually improve the city centre to strengthen the solidarity the social relationships and the living together	Childhood and youth	_ AJICO _ PickUp Production et 100 pression
3	Setting up of a signalization promoting the use of soft mobility from parking lots	Implementation of a signalization from 3 parking lots of the city in order to encourage people to go to the city centre by foot.	to strengthen the connections between the port, the river and the city centre by taking advantages of the river to redefine the shared spaces between bikes, cars and pedestrians in link with the users	Parks and public spaces Road department	Pedestrian and cyclers
4	Workshop during the "rallye citoyen"	Participation to the "rallye citoyen" targeting young people on the 1st of June in order to talk	to redefine the shared spaces between bikes, cars and pedestrians in link with the users	Police Childhood and youth	Secondary schools

		about the CCD project to them and on problematic to be defined;			
5	Solidarity logos	Installation of solidarity logos on the shop front of bars/restaurants/retails in order to indicate to people in need where to beneficiate from a free coffee, free water, free baguette... Also you can prepay these articles in these shops.	to strengthen the solidarity the social relationships and the living together to support and encourage the commercial dynamic	Social services Communication department	L'association "Les vitrines nortaises" bars/restaurants/bakeries... Association Le Carillon ? Tout en attente
6	Transformation of the old phone booth in book-crossing booth	Giving a new function to the old phone booth by creating a book crossing place where people borrow/take/let books freely.	to strengthen the solidarity the social relationships and the living together to strengthen the cultural and artistic dynamics	Building department	Library
7	Creation of a giving box	Installation of a small furniture in the centre in order to allow people to give things they don't use anymore and others to take it freely.	to strengthen the solidarity the social relationships and the living together	Social services	L'association "la recyclerie"

Indicators selected and data to be collected to measure results:

Ideally the measure of the results will constitute one of the missions of the post-project group. Therefore, the post-project group will have to choose the right indicators to measure the success of the action plan. Since some of the objectives have a subjective character (such

as beauty) it would be very interesting to make a new survey within the population. Also it is planned to address again in one or two years the first survey we did during the place analysis phase. In this way, the city hall will be capable to compare the answer and to measure the evolution regarding the vision the population has on the city centre.

4. Actions and time schedule

	Beta action	Sub-action	Starting date	Finishing date
1	Urban gardens	Workshops to build the boxes	Dec. 17	Jan. 18
		Implementation of the garden	March. 18	
		Launch of the garden	April. 18	Continuous beta action
2	Graffiti workshop	Workshops led by the artist (4 afternoons)	April. 18	April. 18
3	Setting up of a signalisation promoting the use of soft mobility from parking lots		March/april. 18	Continuous beta action
4	Workshop during the "rallye citoyen"		On 1st June .18	
5	Solidarity logos		To be defined	Continuous beta action
6	Transformation of the old phone booth in book-crossing booth	Installation	On 17th January. 18	Continuous beta action
7	Creation of a giving box		To be defined	Continuous beta action

Timeframe for the whole action plan should be presented in a Gantt Chart (to be done).

5. Resources

The most important resource regarding the implementation of the betas actions was the people: staff of the different services of the city hall, ULG members, external stakeholders etc. The success of the setting up of some beta actions reside in the gathering of these different actors, as it is shown in the beta action table. The staff of the municipality often brought a technical expertise on the setting up of the beta actions. For example the book-crossing booth was renewed by the building department and firstly supplied in books by the



library. The department of parks and public spaces furnished tools, raw material and a space to organize the workshops on the construction of the garden boxes... Financially speaking, most of the small amounts dedicated to the setting up of the beta actions were financed on the different budgets of these services.

The communication department of the city hall was also an important resource for the entire project: it helped us to communicate on the project to the population through the city hall newspaper, through social networks and so on. This department followed entirely the project and helped a lot in its realization.

Possible funding of the actions: (still have to be defined).

Link of the City Centre Doctor project's goals with other public policies:

At national level: The project City Centre Doctor matches a new national program called “*Action coeur de ville*”, launched in January 2018 which aims to revitalize the city centers of the medium cities. Nort-sur-Erdre is a priority too small to apply to this program but still it shows that the project inserts in national strategies.

At local council municipality level: there again some aspects of the City Centre Doctor project are matching priorities of the local council municipality (CCEG). For instance a global renovation of the signalization of the territory will take place in 2018. This plan would be able to rely on the beta action on the signalization to promote the use of soft mobility.

6. Risk analysis

This chapter aims to define the potential risks that the action plan may face in the future, after the City Centre Doctor:

Political changes: this is maybe the bigger risk. In 2020 municipal elections will be organized and the political strategies may change with it. This risk must be tackled by communicate on the project to the population after its end and by keeping a strong and active post-project group.

Demographic changes: a change in the demography of Nort-sur-Erdre might affect the political strategies and therefore the action plan. Indeed, the action plan is based on the fact that Nort-sur-Erdre is an attractive city which is growing year after year. If this evolution stop or collapse, then maybe it will be necessary to change the perspectives of the action plan. This



is also where post-project monitoring is important in order to adapt the strategy to the current situation.

Economic risks: the setting up of an ambitious action plan requires funding; therefore the economic risk might be taken in account. A way to minimize this risk might be to rely on different funding sources from different actors and institutions.

Disappearing of the ULG resource: there is a risk of a drop out of the project by the ULG members after its end. If a clear structure is not build out before the end of the project with tangible missions to manage and clear objectives the ULG might disappear. The challenge is to give the will to keep on going with a new structure to the members.

7. Monitoring and communication

The post-project structure still has to be defined within the ULG. Although, some possibilities have been stated, such as the integration of the members of the ULG in an already existent intergenerational citizen group.

Therefore the schedule of the activities of this new structure has also to be defined in the last stages of the project. But ideas of activities have already emerged in the ULG, in order to evaluate and monitor the action plan: evaluation of the continuous beta actions, field investigation based on the first enquiry of the project and analysis of the compared results and so on. These activities could lead to adjustments of the action plan.

Communication plan at the end of the project:

In order to communicate on different levels (local and regional, national and European) on the action plan, and more broadly, on the City Centre Doctor project in Nort-sur-Erdre we planned a communication strategy with the help of the communication department of the city hall.

Locally, after the end of the project the ULG will hold a stand during an annual fair in the city centre dedicated to the presentation of the action plan and the project. It will be a great occasion to talk about the project during a joyful moment, in the end of April 2018. We will also use the usual tools we used during the entire project: the Facebook page of the project, of the city hall, the local newspaper edited by the municipality and so on. Also, the beta action “rallye citoyen” will be an opportunity to present the project to a youngest audience and the opportunity to come back on the beta actions. The English summary of the



action plan will be also traduced in French and available on the city hall website. The entire version will be on URBACT website. A printed and designed version will be available within the city hall to the public.