



## SERVEY MOVING BEHAVIOR by INTELLIGENT MOBILE (I-M).

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### HOW MANY KM DO WE RIDE MORE?

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One week prior to the publication of the "Evaluation Report Circulation Plan Gent", INTELLIGENT MOBIEL published the results of its survey via media and website on 9 March 2018. This open survey on "The travel behavior since the introduction of the circulation plan" was answered by 1600 respondents, both from Ghent, the peripheral municipalities and the region. This enabled INTELLIGENT MOBIEL to gain an insight into the experiences of both Ghent residents and Gent users who are confronted with the consequences of this circulation plan on a daily basis.

In the short timeframe between the recording of AVS (local TV channel) and before the official press conference of I-M, the responsible depute Filip Watteeuw, without taking time for thorough research, had already reviewed this survey as unscientific and amateurish. More specifically, it concerned the average daily displacement distance of 10.7 km, the resulting loss of time and the extrapolation to all those involved. The depute replied that this could not be correct, because the circumference of the Ring (R40) was only 14 km. What this has to do with it is not clear to us. In addition, he admitted that only 14% of the respondents stated that he was doing more distance with an average of 3.7 km. According to him, Intelligent Mobile considered itself rich, especially with the extrapolation on a daily and yearly basis.

INTELLIGENT MOBIEL has to admit that, due to lack of time, the extra-distance section was not analysed in detail, but after these statements the survey has now been processed more profoundly and the results can be made known to all respondents who have traveled more distance, divided according to their respective residence. The center, within the R40 (the ring around the inner city) per district, outside the R40 per district, from the peripheral municipalities and the wider region. In short, a much larger representativity in both number and distribution than the data used in the evaluation memorandum from the Mobility Department.

The average figures for all groups of respondents from each district, borough or suburban municipality, explaining that they cover more distances every day, are situated between 9 and 14 km. The target group for which this plan was intended, ie the residents of the inner city, are the largest victim in terms of more displacement (15 km per day). Those who need their car, and have to make several destinations within the city, are obliged to drive via the Ring (R40) and lose time (on average almost 47.5 min./day), and this maybe for the other side of a cut. From the peripheral municipalities to the region, the daily lake distance is always around 10 km, because the influence of ring driving on the total distance is reduced. With a ratio of car users that matches the averages that can also be found in the "Ghent Development Report Evaluation Plan", **this means that on working days by the 1,600 respondents between 18 and 80 years of the I-M survey, approximately 9,630 km or year-end 2,407,500 km (250 days counted) more is driven.** Approximately 38,000 habitants of

Ghent work outside the city every weekday, while 125.000 non-residents of Ghent come to work or study in Ghent. In addition, there are about 50.000 habitants of Ghent who move within the city to work. It was not for nothing that some years ago the total number of daily trips in Ghent was estimated at 650.000.

Since the proportion of people from the boroughs and suburbs in the I-M survey is lower than the actual figures, and the car use of this target group is considerably higher than among the residents of Ghent, the percentage of car users is even greater. **Anyone who reads this, and can count a bit, realizes that this detour indeed generates much more traffic, more distance, more-loss of time and more pollution.** The results of the multiple trips and loss of time in the Ghent Circulation Plan Evaluation Plan, after research, turned out to be the result of a single movement and not, as in the case of the INTELLIGENT MOBILE survey of the most important daily displacement. If you want to return home, this number will have to be doubled. This already results in a daily more distance of 7,8 km and in terms of loss of time the impact in this evaluation report is even greater than the results in the IM survey (34 minutes), namely between 24 and 35 minutes on average for a more limited distance (2/3).

## APPRECIATION EVALUATION REPORT CIRCULATION PLAN GHENT

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There are undoubtedly many interesting data and conclusions in this evaluation report, ordered by the Mobility Department of the City of Ghent. It is a bulky report, not easy to read, and difficult to check for accuracy. I-M requested the source data in the context of the open government, but the method of processing raw data could not be checked. We have then taken the time to thoroughly read everything (400 pages).

If we look through the figures and the sub-studies, then we will fix a few things. Many cases are repeated or are less relevant and function more as leaf filling than as effective evaluation. Other and more relevant parts are then displayed more restrictively, especially if they are negative for this circulation plan. And there is much to tell about the methodology of approach.

Below are some examples: Selection of participants One speaks of a disproportionate stratified sample, in order to avoid insufficient representative answers from the inner city. That is why the survey is limited to an equal ratio of inhabitants of the inner city (1/4 of the Ghent population) and the rest of Ghent (3/4 of the population). Referring to the figures just mentioned in terms of relocations in Ghent as the center of an important city region, it is clear that the opinion of the majority that moves in Ghent has not been consulted. A conscious choice to prevent car users from sub-municipalities, suburbs and the region, who are confronted with the inconveniences of this circulation plan in proportion to traffic participation. At this point, INTELLIGENT MOBIEL scores better with its survey by broadening the spread even beyond the region.

### Method of questioning

Also in terms of age groups and especially in terms of level of education, we see that there is focus on the target group that supports this Circulation Plan ideologically. In particular, the way in which questions are asked and the complexity of this survey contributes to this. In addition, there are also questions about your origin, country of birth, and so on ... Some of the people who have written this have undoubtedly dropped out of it. Choice menu in terms of the choice menu, everything is formulated as positively as possible, so that the expression of dissatisfaction is strategically limited and this leads to more favorable conclusions in the processing of results for the Circulation Plan.

### **Essence of the Circulation Plan**

In order to establish that the quality of life in the city center has improved due to the decrease of through traffic, you do not have to make a study. The introduction of the cut will in any case hamper all through traffic. However, the negative effects caused by the movement of traffic flows on the quality of life on some of the main roads in the inner city and on the ring, especially in the north-east of the city, receive too little attention. The safety aspect is highlighted as a result of the introduction of the Circulation Plan, while everyone realizes that this is mainly due to the introduction of the zone 30 and that the risk of accidents greatly decreases if you are in a traffic jam every day.

### **Scientific**

Even when matters are insufficiently substantiated, and measurements are sporadic and unrepresentative, it is still possible to formulate favorable conclusions (counts only at peak hours, only two cycle paths as a reference, tram line 2 not measured, passage in few shopping streets in the traffic-free area). as a reference for the well-running middle class, ...).

The figures of measurements are not always consistent in their comparisons and decisions. In a scientifically founded report, moreover, words such as: thinking, perception, (good) indications, probably, probably, as compensation, presumption ... do not belong here.

The positive results are systematically highlighted while there are a series of words or statements that minimize unfavorable results under terms such as an incorrect perception, the opposite of what the figures prove, an error of the drivers, poor adjustment of the traffic lights, ...

In terms of presentation, the share of car as the main means of transport in the graphs and diagrams is usually represented in the same way as the proportion of pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport, which should give the impression that their importance is greatly reduced and the results are predominantly positive (use of colour GREEN).

## **CONCLUSION**

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If one looks at the results of this bulky but not representative report, one can still conclude that these are not as beautiful as hoped and proclaimed, and the desired ambitions are not met. The use of the car is counteracted by a vinegar strategy (harassing and doing whether they no longer exist today without the least transitional measures).

For non-time-related destinations such as leisure and shopping, this can partly be done by switching to the bicycle or public transport. In this category of visitors, it appears that almost 30% of the people of Ghent come to the city center much less or no longer for this type of activity (the same as the I-M survey). For work or education-related trips, the travel behavior has changed only slightly. The use of the car remains virtually identical because the current alternatives do not reach its destination in time.

The share of public transport barely increased by 8% from 9 to 9.7% (including trains?). To achieve the operational target of 13% by 2020, a miracle will have to be done (37% still to go). The capacity of the R40 (the ring) is already almost fully utilized, given the loss of time and traffic jams at rush hours. With the urban developments along the R40 of mainly apartment buildings and new neighbourhoods such as Tondelier, Oude Dokken, ... and without an urgent fundamental solution for the Dampoort (Vera Pazbrug postponed again 5 years), a real traffic accident is imminent.

Now the inner city is being relieved via the R40, but with the ambition of the current coalition to introduce circulation plans in every district, the question is where and if one will be able to move in Ghent at all without sufficient alternatives. Because urban development (a slow discipline) is not

much anticipated. Every circulation plan is an island, but unfortunately without water around it. And the Line (company of public transport) can not and will not solve it. The preconditions mentioned at the time (well-situated P + R s, bicycle parts, aligning of public transport with the need, ...) as a precondition for implementing the plan, were not introduced or weakened into flanking measures that have so far resulted in a substandard experiment from trial and error.

In terms of traffic sustainability, the decisions are also clear. Per district, the group that thinks that the traffic viability has improved is almost as large as the one for which it has deteriorated. **This proves once again that the problems were not solved, but only moved.**

In addition to the problems with permits, cuttings, municipal fines, ..., little has been said about the **changing character of our city**. The car-free zone and public domain is continuously animated with all sorts of events such as shopping Sundays, markets, food festivals and claimed by tourists, especially to prove how successful everything is. As Erwin Mortier (a famous writer) put it in the Standard a few weeks ago: *"the car has been replaced by Ryanair"*. Even as a Ghent citizen, we feel more and more as tourists in our own city. Our local character stores are disappearing and the city center, in bad weather, appears dead and empty in many places. The provision of services is on the rise and more and more inner city residents are going to get supplies of food, outfit and services outside the R40.

This is in contrast to the 'Operational Objectives' of this legislature which called for a diverse urban fabric (4.1.2) so that many destinations can be combined in one movement. Unfortunately, multitasking on the bike is not for everyone.

**A city council must take care of the interests of all its citizens and not just serve its ideological supporters. Mobility is a right for everyone. Eliminating the city or shrinking the economy to solve the mobility problem testifies to a lack of social insight. Mobility is a way of connecting, but can not be an insulated target.**

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**INTELLIGENT MOBILE does not believe in local solutions because Ghent is not an island, certainly not in terms of mobility. Reduce company cars, optimize car use and infrastructure through intelligent systems, facilitate multimodal transport, develop a bicycle network, develop a mobility budget and above all invest in adequate public transport.**

**This way, a support base can be created that will seduce citizens into more sustainable travel behavior. This can only happen with an integrated approach across all domains and administrative levels. <http://intelligentmobiel.jimdo.com>**

Thanks for your attention and time.

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