Car sharing in the city of Bremen

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Why did we select this case?

Bremen is a pioneer city when it comes to car sharing. Already back in 1990 the first car sharing initiative started. A few years later the city included car sharing in their public transport pass (Bremer Karte). In 2009 Bremen was the first city to introduce a municipal car sharing action plan , the city has won many awards and is attracting a lot of attention as an exemplary city in their approach to stimulate car sharing and sustainable transport.



A car-sharing station with bike racks in Bremen (Citylab)

About the case

What?
Bremen in Northwestern Germany is a city with 550.000 inhabitants. It is the 10th biggest city of Germany. It is a historical, medieval city but also has a sea harbour at 60 km distance. The city is reachable for sea ships through a wide river. Bremen is a compact city with narrow historical streets and the city is quite flat. This makes the city not car-dependent and friendly to other modes of transport like walking and cycling.

Bremen has a strong vision and ambitious plans to reduce daily city journeys made by car as well as car ownership in the city. Even though 60% of the daily journeys are not made by car, they still think 40% is too much. It is noteworthy that their municipality looks at the full picture and has anchored their shared mobility plans into their sustainable urban mobility plans. Open data (data sharing) is also part of their sustainable mobility plan and Bremen has a very interactive way of involving citizens in their plans.

Stimulating car sharing

At the end of 2016, Bremen had 260 cars and 12.600 users. This means 45 users per shared car. Their main ingredients for growth are:

- Visible Space for Car-Sharing stations (on-street) enhancing awareness of this alternative.
- Make car sharing stations into mini mobility points, meaning a dense network of 2-car stations in densely built neighbourhoods
- Integration new developments (housing projects and city development)
- Integration with Public Transport (multimodal)
- (Own) Fleet Management
- Awareness + Information
- Amendment of parking regulations for new construction projects in order to integrate car sharing from the beginning.

City/neighbourhood planning
The city of Bremen has a parking norm for housing development of 0,8 cars per house and 2 bike parkings per house. A parking space generally costs about € 30.000-40.000. Not investing this money lowers building costs and makes living in the city cheaper. Sometimes project developers are forced to integrate car sharing. In other cases, if the developer decides to build with a different (lower) norm, they get choices. They pay the city a one off fee (equal to the saved building costs) or use the budget to offer the inhabitants either 1. public transport vouchers, 2. membership of car sharing (so only usage is paid by inhabitants) or 3. investment into the building of car sharing stations. In a newly to be developed area: Hulsberg, they have lowered the norm from 0,8 to 0,4. There will be no street parking at all, but two garages at the edges of the area.

Open data / data sharing
With its traffic management centre, the City of Bremen has access to an extensive pool of data on traffic volumes, disruptions and construction sites in the road network. The city wants to make this data available to third parties as an incentive to develop Internet services and apps that can be used by citizens via smartphone or navigation device. Following a similar motivation, they believe that traffic data (e.g. motor vehicle traffic, local public transport, regional passenger rail, taxi, car sharing) should be made available by the City of Bremen and the state of Lower Saxony — if possible in real time. Such a pool of data creates the possibility to generate a multi-mobility route planner, which would offer users the opportunity to call up and compare different route options and mobility chains.

So far the following has happened: The project with Lower Saxony has been deferred in preference of a national project, the MDM (Mobilitätsdatenmarktplatz), to which Bremen has been contributing along with all the other Länder – the focus of that project is on motorised transport. Bremen has also been contributing to a project called DELFI (electronic passenger information for public transport) as well as a voluntary initiative of the Federal Transport Ministry called the mCloud (Mobility Cloud).

Multi-mobility planner and card
Bremen has concentrations of businesses within the boundaries of Bremen and just outside of them such as the University and Technologie Park, the big Mercedes Plant, the “Güterverkehrszentrale” (freight village) and the typical shopping centres (Ikea and co). There are comprehensive strategies for improving commuter accessibility to these centres and the city in general using rail, public transport, high-speed cycling connections and bridges. These strategies or mobility management actions geared toward these centres from are not managed by the municipality/public side – except for the public transport ‘Job Ticket’ available to companies and all organisations in public service. The mobility management that does take place is initiated from the side of the businesses. The University of Bremen, for instance, has developed a mobility management strategy which also includes car sharing. Bike sharing was deemed as having no potential, because most staff and students already have their bike on campus when they need it.

How?
Bremen’s sustainable urban mobility plan is based on a good process; a thorough analysis of the city’s transportation strengths and shortcomings, developing of test scenario’s that were examined on effects and costs related (and some other influencers that could not be left out) after which choices on measures and an implementation plan was made. Different stakeholders and knowledge partners as well as citizens were involved in the process. Even in the analysis phase, travellers and citizens were involved through asking their opinion about “where are things running badly?” and “where are things running smoothly”. A website was set-up to collect all opinions on a map and with a voting system, so other citizens could help prioritise feedback. A game was developed to let Bremenites experience the complexity of certain choices and decisions city planners take. Finally several scenario’s were evaluated, including measuring all goals and subgoals as well

as important information and budget.

Why?
Bremen's main reasons/goals for the whole mobility strategy:

- To enable social inclusion of all people and to strengthen the equality of all transport users
- Increase transport safety and security
- Offer and optimise alternative transport options in the entire city
- Improve the connection of the systems and services for walking, cycling and public transport between Bremen and the surrounding region
- Strengthen Bremen as an economic centre by optimising commercial transport
- Reduce the effects of transport on people, health and the environment in a lasting and perceptible way

Michael Glotz-Richter, the city's senior project manager for sustainable mobility, is a firm believer in car sharing, because:

> "a distinct advantage of car sharing is that it relieves public street space of parked cars in a relatively inexpensive manner — thus promoting higher quality local mobility in densely built neighbourhoods." - Michael Glotz-Richter

Eventually the city wants to give way to other modes of transportation than cars, which should be doable as Bremen is a city of short distances, meaning it has great potential to strengthen walking and cycling.

Succes factors

- The station based car sharing model has proven to be a success. Every new car sharing station means removal of private street parking (residence permits) and visibility of shared cars.
- Bremen has a good relation with the main operator, Cambio.
- Bremen has a a very good transit system and an ingrained cycling culture. As Michael emphasized:

> "We are a real cycling city, and I need a car only from time to time. Then it's really a stop-gap. The paradox of car-sharing is that it works best in places where you don't really need to drive." Michael Glotz Richter

Challenges

- It became even more clear in the plan making process that bicycle transport plays a major role in Bremen. However in the cross-city comparison on the use of public transport, Bremen shows room for improvement. One reason for the relatively low use of public transport — apart from the settlement pattern of the city — is the comparatively slow travel speeds in public transport.
- The share of traffic from outskirts of town remains a big issue. Interest in electrical cars remains low, because diesel is so cheap. Car drivers complain about a shortage of parking and bikes about not getting preference in traffic.
- The existing station distribution and planned network densification are geared toward neighbourhoods close to the city centre, whereas neighbourhoods in the outskirts are connected selectively or not at all to car sharing. The car sharing network in Bremen is not yet comprehensive, but expansion is planned.

Impact of the idea

- A survey among members of the main operator (Cambio) shows that 33% of all users have replaced their private car with car sharing. Bremen has found that each shared car replaces 15 cars, which means that with 12.600 users, a total of 4000 private cars replaced
- The target for 2020 is to get to 20.000, which would mean 6000 cars replaced.

Sources and more information:

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