



## Car-Free Sundays - Heidelberg - Germany

The City of Heidelberg has organized car-free Sundays once a year since 1995. For this purpose, the city's streets have been closed off and given over especially to the children.

Target Groups	Sector	Field
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local authority</li> <li>- Decision makers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information</li> </ul>

### ANALYSIS

#### CONTEXT

The City of Heidelberg (140,000 inhabitants) provides employment for approximately 93,500 people, of whom 55% are commuters. Approximately 25% of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Heidelberg are generated by traffic. The Transport Development Plan was adopted in 1994. At programmatic level, the significance of an ecologically acceptable local transport strategy and the necessity to make a contribution to climate protection have been emphasized. This is reflected in the fact that public transport with its ambitious objectives as well as cycling and pedestrians have been given absolute priority in the plan.

#### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CAR-FREE SUNDAYS

The City of Heidelberg has organized car-free Sundays once a year since 1995.

The 21 September 1997, one km of the road along the river Neckar was closed off for the action "City on the River". Almost 40,000 people used the car-free river embankment for taking part in the action. An attractive program had been prepared in co-operation with a large number of organizations to demonstrate the advantages of an unobstructed access to the river embankments. The car-free Sunday was celebrated in seven other parts of the city at the same time.

In 1998, the car-free Sunday coincided with the International Children's Day (September 20th). Road sections in eight different parts of the city were closed off on that day. The program was especially adapted to children's interests.

In 1999, the car-free day was part of the nationwide action day "mobile without car". A 6 km section of a trunk road north of the river Neckar was fenced off for the event, with another 4 km being added between noon and 9 p.m. Many of the individual activities at the 40 information stands, run by local organizations, contributed to the attractive program that was intended to convince the people to move around town without their cars - at least in leisure time.



MAIN PEDESTRIAN STREET

Source: <http://www.heidelberg.de/verkehr/ventwpl.htm>



VIEW OF THE CITY

Source: <http://www.emscon.de/images/blick.jpg>

## COST AND BENEFITS

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More than 50,000 people showed up at the 1999 action day.

The action day cost some 12,500 euros, of which the largest share (8,500 euros) was spent on the road blocking measures and the power supply for the information stands. Further costs were incurred for posters and leaflets (1740 euros) as well as for hiring the solar-powered boats (1330 euros), rickshaws (280 euros) and mobile toilets (767 euros). In this amount the personnel costs for co-ordination, municipal authorities, police, etc.) are not included.

## PARTNERSHIP

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These Sundays have been organized and co-ordinated by local and neighbourhood organizations together with the city's administration. The organizers had about 6 months to prepare the action day, in which apart from the co-ordinating Department of Environment and the Councillor for Environment other departments of the city's administration, the police, the fire department, THW, environmental, transport and sports associations, schools and youth organizations, political parties, the regional public transport company, health insurance companies, gastronomy and individual residents. Several meetings (both internally in the administration and with the protagonists involved) as well as a press campaign organized prior to the event were to ensure that the day itself became a success. 20 additional staffs (police, fire department and municipal authorities) were on duty in the area bordering on the fenced-off parts of the city to control the traffic.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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According to data gathered in 1997, the traffic density on the closed off roads along embankments amounts to between 26,000 and 30,000 vehicles/day (southern embankment, action day 1997) and 15,000 vehicles/day (northern embankment, action day 1999). These numbers are average values, which might not be reached at weekends (no commuters, more tourists), although a quantification seems impossible. Although no traffic censuses were carried out on the action days concerned, the police did not record any traffic jams or unfavourable traffic conditions for the motorized traffic around the closed-off areas. In other words, it can be assumed that the traffic volume was considerably lower on these days. The positive response in the press has been another result of the event, which has motivated the organizers to repeat the action day.

The car-free Sunday went off smoothly, above all because the 2,000 residents in the areas concerned had been informed about the event well in time. Not only did they all get a letter prior to the actual day, companies, schools and institutions were personally visited by the organizers' representatives. All residents were offered special regulations, of which only a small number of people took advantage in the end and if so, mainly for prophylactic reasons. The city advertised the action day with 300 posters as well as leaflets put into private letter boxes and left on parking cars.

## TO KNOW MORE

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Name organisation [City of Heidelberg](#)

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Phone number : [+49 6221 58 1825](#)

E-mail :

Website : [http://](#)

## USEFUL INFORMATION

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List of Internet sites

[English and French / http://www.22september.org/](#)

## THIS CASE HAS BEEN REALISED BY

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