

SPACE, SAFETY, CLIMATE PROTECTION



Baden-Württemberg's target is to reduce transport-related CO2 emissions by 55% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels and reach climate neutrality by 2040. To this end, parking management plays a central role, and for this reason, the State's Ministry of Transport supports local authorities in effectively implementing it.

INTERVIEW WITH
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POLIS: Parking management as a climate protection instrument: what does it mean and how is the region involved?

Elke Zimmer: Parking management contributes to the fulfilment of climate targets in the transport sector in a valuable way — we believe it significantly affects mobility behaviour. Nevertheless, parking management must be implemented in combination with the expansion of climate-friendly modes of transport like cycling, public transport, and car-sharing. In this way, we enable climate-friendly mobility without reducing freedom and flexibility for people.



Elke Zimmer

Secretary of State
Ministry of Transport
Baden-Württemberg

When parking is no longer free of charge and parking fees reflect the value of public space, parking management becomes a powerful tool to influence the way people organise their daily mobility.

Implementing cost-covering parking fees can reduce the usage of private cars and encourage the shift towards more climate-friendly modes of transport. In addition to that, parking management can decrease the overall number of private cars, leading to a fairer allocation of space for sustainable mobility, residential, and recreational areas.

Besides the fact that parking management acts as active climate protection, it improves road safety and enhances quality of life by reclaiming public spaces previously occupied by traffic.

Local authorities play a central role in the implementation of climate protection measures — that is also true for parking management. To support these efforts, the State of Baden-Württemberg offers a wide range of programs to help local authorities accelerate climate protection initiatives in mobility at a local level.

POLIS: You mentioned the supporting instruments offered by the State of Baden-Württemberg. Can you give some more details on that?

Elke Zimmer: Our support for local authorities in Baden-Württemberg focuses on three main areas.

Firstly, we established the Kompetenznetz Klima Mobil, comprising fifteen employees who serve as a point of contact and expertise hub for climate protection in mobility across the State. The network advises cities, municipalities, and districts on specific issues related to parking management and integrated traffic planning.

One of the new instruments offered by the Kompetenznetz Klima Mobil is the Park.Raum.Dialog, which allows municipalities to swiftly and strategically adopt a participatory approach to parking management.

In addition, Baden-Württemberg promotes parking space concepts and conducts surveys on parking space use. The State also supports municipalities by funding personnel positions for stationary traffic and data collection management related to parking.

Moreover, Baden-Württemberg empowers local authorities to implement parking management measures with a degree of flexibility. For example, in 2021, Baden-Württemberg was one of the first federal states to grant local authorities the power to determine residential parking fees themselves, considering factors such as real costs of parking.

POLIS: You mentioned the new instrument called Park.Raum.Dialog. What exactly is it and what is the background of the instrument?

Elke Zimmer: The Park.Raum.Dialog brings together stakeholders from public administration, the private sector, politics, and civil society. The aim is to enhance local parking management to make the municipality more attractive. Participating municipalities can swiftly tackle local parking issues and develop targeted measures for integrated and climate-friendly mobility planning by combining different perspectives, needs, and ideas.

The Park.Raum.Dialog builds upon the ParkPAD audit process, which was piloted in fifteen European countries through the Park4SUMP project, an EU-funded project running from September 2018 to March 2022.



In this context, the Kompetenznetz Klima Mobil successfully implemented ParkPAD processes in several municipalities, including Heidelberg and Kehl. Together with local authorities, the instrument was further developed into the state-owned participatory process called Park.Raum.Dialog, which is specially adapted to the needs of local authorities and aligns with the targets for the transformation of the transport sector in Baden-Württemberg.

The initial application phase has concluded, and the launch of Park.Raum.Dialog is scheduled for the second half of this year.

POLIS: How does the process work? What experiences have been made in Baden-Württemberg so far?

Elke Zimmer: The process begins with a survey on the current state of local parking management. Subsequently, two half-day meetings are held in the municipality to brainstorm ideas and devise solutions for parking challenges.

The results are summarised in a report and presented to the municipal council. The report outlines concrete measures to better align parking management with the transformation of the transport sector. Alongside strategic approaches, the immediate implementation of different measures, such as the adjustment of parking fees, plays a key role.

The Park.Raum.Dialog, being a short and intensive process, has garnered positive feedback from municipalities in Baden-Württemberg due to its rapid and participatory approach. Key aspects praised include the structure of the process, the constructive working atmosphere, the open exchange, the willingness to compromise, and the development of innovative and creative ideas. Thanks to its well-founded and discussed ideas, the process serves as a starting point for further decisions on parking management measures and helps streamline municipal processes.

By involving various stakeholders, the Park.Raum.Dialog also contributes to the legitimacy of developed solutions and helps mitigate conflict in parking management.

The Park.Raum.Dialog in Baden-Württemberg focuses on the involvement of local communities

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POLIS: What issues and questions on parking management are local authorities currently facing, and what support is offered on these topics?

Elke Zimmer: Residential parking is a key topic under discussion. Due to various legal inquiries, the Kompetenznetz Klima Mobil offers extensive information on residential parking regulations on its website. Another important issue is parking on pavements, which is generally prohibited due to its impact on traffic safety and walkability, yet often tolerated: an increasing number of municipalities in Baden-Württemberg, like Heidelberg, are enforcing these rules through effective parking control measures.

The Kompetenznetz Klima Mobil supports these efforts by assisting in the implementation of digital parking control systems to ensure the effectiveness of parking management measures and fair space allocation.

Regardless of specific measures, effective communication must be considered in parking management. Some parking management measures, such as raising parking fees or reducing parking spaces in public areas, often spark controversial debates and emotional arguments.

To foster understanding and acceptance of such measures, targeted communication is required. Hence, the Kompetenznetz Klima Mobil has developed the communication initiative 'Platzgewinn fürs Klima' — in English, 'Saving space for the climate', which supports local authorities in communicating with citizens. This initiative includes informative charts, templates for press releases, and a communication guide. When communicating parking management, it is important to emphasise the expected positive impacts on individuals, the city, and the climate.



**Successful parking space management
in Pforzheim and Heidelberg,
Baden-Württemberg**

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