Traffic Pilot Project

A Traffic Pilot Project is a temporary real-world experiment in public space in which new traffic measures or street redesigns are tested for a limited period of time. The aim is to evaluate how these measures affect traffic flow, public space use, safety, and the overall quality of the urban environment, and to assess whether they should be implemented permanently.
Rather than discussing proposed changes only in theory, a Traffic Pilot Project allows residents and stakeholders to experience and evaluate them under everyday conditions.

Participation Depth	Inform, Participate, Have a say
Project Phase	Project Planning
Goals	Decision-Making
Format	Analogue, Digital, Hybrid
Duration	Several Weeks, Several Months
Target Group	Directly Affected, Interested Public, Hard-to-Reach Groups
Group Size	As Many as Possible
Characteristics	Structured, Activating

GOAL OF THE METHOD

The goal of a Traffic Pilot Project is to test new traffic or public space concepts under real-life conditions and make their impacts visible. The temporary implementation allows planners to collect practical experience, identify conflicts, and gather feedback from residents and other stakeholders. This provides a stronger evidence base for future decisions and long-term changes to public spaces.

PROCEDURE

Preparation

1. Define the objectives and scope
Begin by considering:

- What should be tested?
- Which change is the focus of the pilot project?
- Which insights are needed?

Examples include:

- "What are the effects of a car-free street?"
- "Does a temporary cycle lane improve road safety?"
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"How does the use of a public square change?"

Also define:

- the duration of the pilot project
- the affected area
- the implementation schedule

2. Coordinate with responsible authorities
A Traffic Pilot Project usually requires:

- coordination with transport authorities
- official approvals
- technical planning

Depending on the project, involve relevant stakeholders at an early stage, such as:

- transport planners
- the public works department
- parks and green space departments
- the police
- public transport operators
- policymakers

Important:

Clarify responsibilities and decision-making procedures as early as possible.

3. Develop a participation strategy
Consider:

- Who will be affected?
- When should participation activities take place?
- What types of feedback are needed?

Possible participation methods include:

- Walking Tours
- Surveys
- Online Participation
- Workshops
- on-site conversations

Plan information activities, participation opportunities, and feedback mechanisms early in the process.

4. Prepare the communication
A Traffic Pilot Project requires clear and transparent communication.

Explain:

- why the pilot project is taking place
- what is being tested
- how long the trial will last
- how people can provide feedback

Communication channels may include:

- websites
- social media
- flyers
- local newspapers
- public notices

Important:

People directly affected by the changes should receive information at an early stage.

5. Organise a launch event
Plan an event at the start of the pilot project.

The event can be used to:

- explain the objectives
- answer questions
- present maps
- introduce participation opportunities

Large maps and visualisations of the affected area are particularly helpful.

Execution

1. Implement the pilot project
The planned measures are introduced temporarily within the public space.

Examples include:

- temporary road closures
- new road markings
- temporary street furniture
- cycle lanes
- public seating or gathering areas

Important:

The temporary changes should be clearly visible and easy to understand on site.

2. Provide information on site
People should be able to easily identify:

- what is being tested
- how long the pilot project will run
- where they can provide feedback

Helpful tools include:

- information boards
- QR codes

- contact details

3. Collect feedback
During the pilot project, collect experiences and opinions through methods such as:

- surveys
- conversations on site
- online feedback
- observations
- workshops
- Walking Tours

Important:

Document both positive and critical feedback.

4. Monitor the impacts
During the trial period, observe aspects such as:

- traffic behaviour
- quality of public spaces
- patterns of use
- safety
- conflicts
- noise levels and environmental impacts

Useful monitoring methods include:

- traffic counts
- behavioural observations
- interviews
- photographic documentation

5. Communicate throughout the process

Provide regular updates on:

- the current status of the pilot project
- preliminary findings
- any adjustments
- upcoming steps

Transparent communication helps build trust and public confidence.

Evaluation

1. Analyse the results
Evaluate:

- participant feedback
- observational findings
- patterns of use
- conflicts
- identified improvements

Helpful evaluation questions include:

- What worked well?
- Which challenges emerged?
- What impacts were observed?

2. Document the findings
Present the results in a clear and understandable format.

Possible formats include:

- maps
- charts
- photographs
- participant quotations

- summary reports

3. Develop recommendations
Based on the findings, determine whether the tested measures should:

- become permanent
- be modified
- be discontinued

Important:

The final decision should be explained transparently.

4. Publish the results
Make the findings publicly available.

Possible channels include:

- project websites
- social media
- public events
- reports

This demonstrates how public participation and lived experience have informed the decision-making process.

Source: https://mobilitaetsplanung-hessen.de/methodenkoffer-partizipative-planung/

WHEN USEFUL?

- new traffic measures should be tested in practice
- proposed changes to public space are controversial
- the impacts of a measure should be evaluated before permanent implementation
- addressing issues such as traffic calming, cycling infrastructure, or the quality of public spaces
- gathering real-life user experiences
- making discussions more tangible and evidence-based

WHEN NOT USEFUL?

- temporary changes cannot be implemented
- legal or technical requirements cannot be met
- there is insufficient support from public authorities or policymakers
- there are inadequate resources for evaluation and communication

TIPS

- Communicate early and transparently throughout the entire process.
- Ensure that people directly affected by the project receive clear and timely information.
- Allow sufficient time for collecting feedback and conducting a thorough evaluation.
- Conflicts and critical feedback often provide some of the most valuable insights.
- On-site observations are just as important as surveys and interviews.

NOT SUITABLE FOR

- purely theoretical questions
- short-term decisions without a testing phase
- measures where there is no genuine scope for change
- projects without sufficient staff or financial resources

View online: https://methoden.urbankit.de/en/methods/verkehrsversuch