

Sustainable commuting plan 2015-2020: follow-up 2020

1. Framework and principles

On 10/07/2015 the Executive Council approved the corporate transport plan for Ghent University. In this plan UGent committed itself to pursue an integrated mobility policy, in which the campuses are easily accessible, traffic safety is increased and the environmental impact of the trips made by staff and students is reduced. To this end, the following strategic choices and objectives were put forward:

- The use of sustainable transport modes for commuting has increased from 48% to 65% by 2020, for daily trips by students from 83% to 90%.
- By 2020, every employee who rides a bicycle will have a high-quality bicycle shed at a maximum of 2 minutes, and every car user will have a parking space at a maximum of 15 minutes' walking distance from the main entrance.
- Every student who rides a bicycle has a bicycle parking place at max. 2 min. walking distance from the main entrance by 2020.
- Every commuter has a public or collective transport stop at maximum 10 min walking distance from the main entrance by 2020.
- If there is a shortage of bicycle parking spaces, priority shall always be given to increasing the parking capacity for bicycles over parking spaces for cars. The footpath will be preserved in any case. Any greenery lost will be compensated for in another location.
- In order to give shape to the policy objectives of the government, there is a close and constructive cooperation with the City of Ghent, De Lijn and other partners involved in projects such as the creation of cycling axes and cycling streets, the separation of traffic flows, the sharing of parking space, campaigns on courtesy and traffic safety, etc.
- By 2020, the number of accidents to and from work will be halved.

In the company transport plan (part II), the accessibility by different transport modes was inventoried per site and the travel behaviour together with the commuting distance of staff and students was mapped (dated 2015). Based on this, the potential for a shift to more sustainable mobility was estimated per site. These cumulative potential impacts per site showed that there was a potential to achieve the above general objectives.

The complete plan, i.e. the history, the ambitions, the mobility profiles of UGent and the individual campuses and the package of measures, can be consulted via [this link](#).

2. Evolution of sustainable mobility

The mode of transport for commuting ([modalsplits](#)) is mapped annually. In 2019, approx. 60% of staff members commuted to work by a sustainable mode of transport (Fig. 1). This is an increase of 23% compared to 2008 and 11% compared to 2015, the start of the company transport plan. In absolute figures, this represents a decrease from about 5,500 to 3,300 staff cars.



Fig. 1: Transport choices of employees for their main commuting route from 2008 (start of census) to 2019. The 2020 target is also shown.

The mode of transport for student journeys is monitored using surveys conducted in 2014 and 2019. The survey distinguishes between three different movements of students: (1) commuter students' movements from home to their campus, and kot students' movements (2) to their kot and (3) from there to their campus.

Figure 2 shows the modal split of the commuter students for their travel from home to campus. The use of the bicycle has increased by 10%, while the use of the car has decreased from 17% to 13%. Also the use of public transport has decreased from 54% to 47%. Since 44% of the student population travels to Ghent almost daily (same as in 2014), this means that in 2014, 7.5% of the students travel to Ghent daily by car, while in 2019 this will be 5.5%. In absolute figures, this concerns 3,100 and 2,500 students' cars respectively.

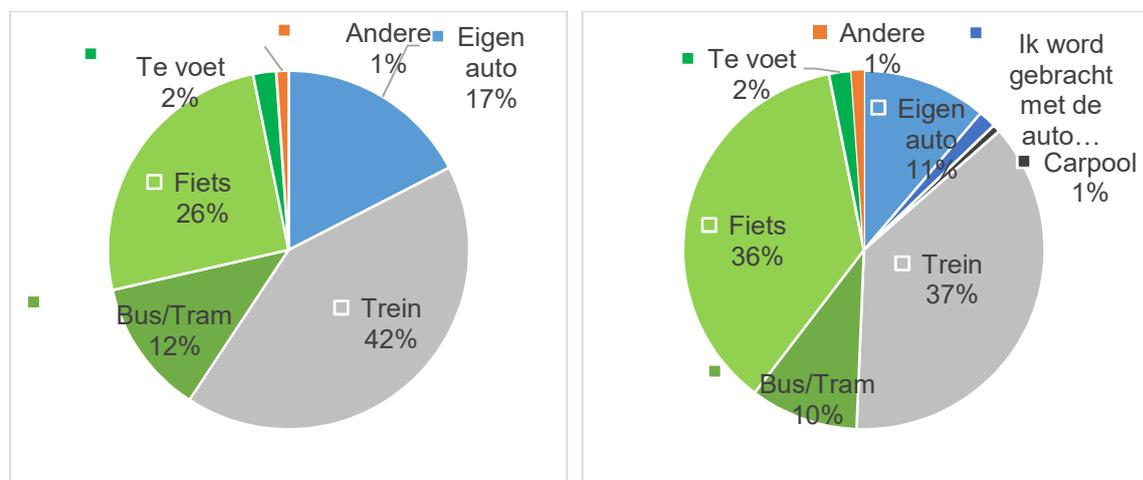


Fig. 2: Commuter students' choice of transport for the route from their place of residence to the campus in 2014 and 2019

The modal split of students moving from home to their digs is shown in figure 3. The number of cyclists has also increased significantly for these trips, at the expense of the use of public transport.

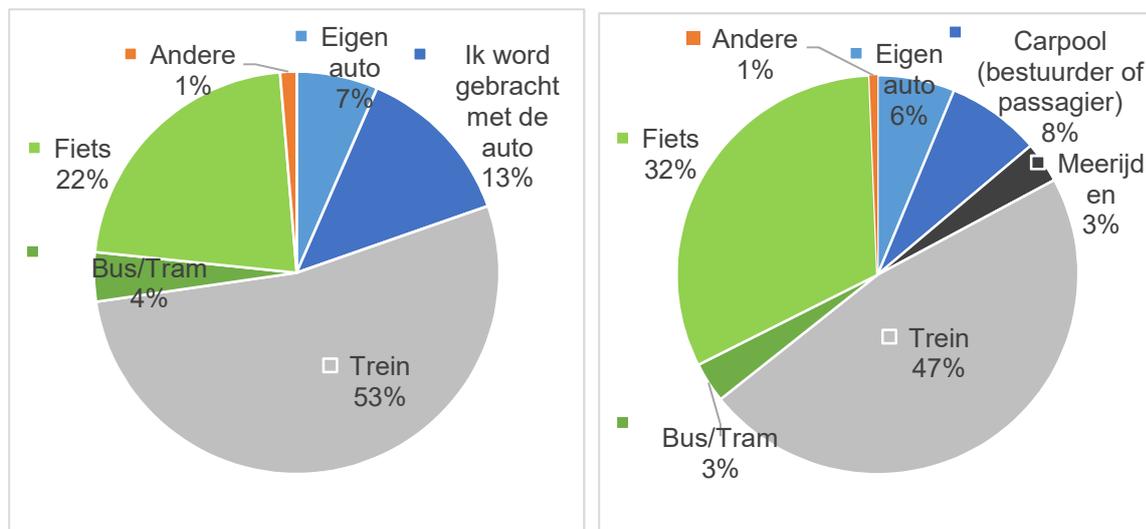


Fig. 3: Commuter students' choice of transport for the route from their place of residence to the campus in 2014 and 2019

There is no change in the way students travel from their digs to the campus. Almost all of these trips are done in a sustainable way; the share of cars in these trips is less than 1%. 77% of these trips are done by bike.

The number of accidents to and from work is reported annually in the Integral Welfare Report (see Table 1).

	On foot	Bicycle	Public transportation	Car	Other
2015	7 (1)	39 (275)	3 (61)	6 (18,5)	2 (10)
2016	7 (134)	46 (475)	1 (6)	7 (13)	-
2017	9 (55)	51 (400)	1 (0)	16 (108)	1 (0)
2018	14 (309)	42 (323)	-	7 (79)	2 (129)
2019					

Table 1: Overview of annual accidents to and from work, with the number of days of incapacity in brackets

3. Action plan: evaluation and adjustment

Based on the company profile, the information from the mobility files per campus (the mobility profile, the accessibility profile, the commuting distance, the potential estimate, ...) and the expertise of the mobility experts, an action plan was drawn up to achieve the intended objectives. In addition,

suggestions and remarks were collected from mobility surveys¹ and workshops were organised² in the central administration and in various faculties to refine and adapt this action plan to the specificities of UGent.

The action plan contains measures towards both staff and students and is structured around six pillars:

- Mobility coordination
- Mobility communication
- Optimisation of the bicycle infrastructure
- Optimisation of the parking infrastructure
- Optimisation of the movement of services
- UGent experiments

The implementation of the action plan was divided into two phases. In the first phase, the measures are considered for which a budget has already been provided in the investment plan or in the operating funds, or which are relatively easy to implement.

In a second phase, those measures were proposed that required more far-reaching efforts and, in certain cases, even greater support.

The entire action plan is evaluated below and, where necessary, adjustments are suggested for further elaboration.

3.1 Pillar I: mobility coordination

The sustainable mobility policy is coordinated from the Environment Department by the mobility coordinator (approx. 0.8 FTE). Links are made from the department to the Personnel and Organisation Directorate (including reception information, reimbursement of commuting expenses), the Buildings and Facilities Management Directorate (including drawing up MOBER studies and master plans, organisation of parking facilities, development of cycling infrastructure, parking access, etc.), the Student Facilities and Students Directorate (including student mobility) and internal and external experts. In addition, sustainable mobility is a frequently recurring agenda item in Transitie UGent and in the environmental and sustainability committees and working groups of faculties and student associations.

UGent also cooperates in different areas with the City of Ghent, Max Mobiel, Cambio, De Lijn, Cargo Velo, the Fietsambassade, mobility coordination centre Gent-Zuid SPITS, ... All these organisations have ambitions in the field of sustainable mobility and benefit from harmonising their plans and striving for the same level of ambition.

The contact point is mobiliteit@UGent.be.

In the Business Transport Plan, the following specific action points were listed:

1st phase	Reinforcement of UGent Mobile working group.
	Support of mobility coordinator by sustainability office.
	Strengthen cooperation between mobility coordinator and Institute for Sustainable Mobility (IDM), Centre for Sustainable Development (CDO), Urban Planning Research Group, etc.

¹ General surveys of staff and students were conducted in 2004, 2008, 2011 and 2014, the conclusions of which were presented at the BOC / PBW subcommittee.

² Workshops on 28 April 2015 (fac. EB), 18 May 2015 (ATP-café), 26 May 2015 (fac. RE and PS), 28 May 2015 (CA), 1 June 2015 (fac. LW and BW), 2 June 2015 (fac. DI), 4 June 2015 (fac. PPW), 11 June 2015 (fac. WE-INW), 15 June 2015 (fac. WE-Sterre) and 23 June 2015 (fac. WE-Ledeganck); general invitation via 'bericht in de kijck' and specific invitation to trade unions to join above workshops; individual discussions with mobility manager UZGent and campus Kortrijk.

	Close and constructive consultation between UGent and stakeholders on bicycle infrastructure, public transport services, traffic generated by students, mobility and circulation plan of the City of Ghent, etc.
	Present an annual follow-up report of the company transport plan to the UGent management.
Evaluation	<p>Over the years, the umbrella working group Mobiel UGent was replaced by a fixed agenda item on the faculty environmental committees.</p> <p>In addition, sustainable mobility was a recurring theme at the Transition UGent meetings and concrete issues (mobility vision for the Sterre campus, Ardoyen campus, Proeftuin campus, etc.) were discussed in ad hoc working groups. Cooperation was always sought (and facilitated) between policy, expertise and commitment and - if relevant - external stakeholders.</p> <p>The sustainability office supported the mobility coordinator for communication, sensitisation, experiments, ...</p> <p>The follow-up of the company transport plan was integrated into the annual reports of the environmental coordinator and the sustainability reporting.</p>
Adjustment and planning (proposal)	<p>The company transport plan is coming to an end (2015-2020). Within the framework of the climate plan, this plan will also have to be brought into line with the climate objective and short, medium and long-term policy objectives will be formulated, the realisation of which will be monitored in the interim.</p> <p>This approach should accelerate the current policy, thanks to the guiding role of the RVB.</p>

3.2 Pillar II: good 'mobility' communication

All mobility information for staff members is collected on the portal page www.UGent.be/mobiliteit. This concerns internal information about home to work travel, service trips, access to car parks, etc., as well as links to route planners, the NMBS, De Lijn, etc.

An awareness-raising campaign about sustainable mobility is organised regularly and new initiatives are communicated via the faculty sustainability and environment committees, social media, etc.

New staff members receive the information via the DPO information form and the well-being and environment guide and during the welcome for new staff members. New students are reached via the information brochures, the Green Guide, ...

In the Business Transport Plan, the following specific action points were listed:

1st phase	Mobility information during a welcome for new staff members, personal advice at an information stand at a welcome breakfast, communicating about the accessibility of the workplace in job application notices or in the recruitment procedure.
	Mobility information in welcome brochures for (international) students.
	(Social media) platform on sustainable mobility.
	Greater focus on public transport, multimodality, and alternatives to cycling in communication.
	Campaign on courtesy and road safety.

	Communicate company transport plan and pillars in attractive way (brochure) and distribute widely.
Evaluation	<p>Mobility information for staff members and students is provided on the website, welcome brochures, social media, etc. Vacancy announcements refer to incentives to promote sustainable commuting (e.g. bicycle allowance, etc.). During the intake interview, new staff members receive a fluorescent jacket from Ghent University if they commit to commuting in a sustainable manner. An information sheet refers to the UGent mobility page and each new staff member receives a sheet with detailed information on commuting.</p> <p>Multi-mobility is also addressed in the communication, with information about park & ride, park & bikes and commuter bikes, shared cars, etc.</p> <p>There were various awareness campaigns about "courtesy and traffic safety among students", "what moves you?" with the introduction of the circulation plan, the offer of the bicycle ambassador, the annual Mobility Weeks at the Technology Park, the test caravan, ...</p> <p>Communication about the UGent mobility policy takes place via the sustainability report, the many presentations, ...</p>
Adjustment and planning (proposal)	<p>With the introduction of a parking management policy, a campaign will be organised that highlights the entire sustainable mobility policy and offer and clearly explains 'the why'.</p> <p>The integration of staff mobility opportunities during the intake interviews of new staff members is an important tool. It is important to maintain this measure and to provide further guidance to DPO in this regard.</p>

3.3 Pillar III: optimisation of cycling infrastructure

On the campuses, there are covered and locked bicycle sheds for staff members. In addition, staff members can make use of a mobile bicycle repair service, commuters can park their bicycles in a reserved bicycle shed at the station, there is a bicycle allowance and service trips can be made with service bicycles. Staff members can rent or lease an (electric) bicycle at a very favourable rate at the Bike Embassy and borrow an electric bicycle free of charge for a month.

There are also many bicycle parking facilities for students. Students can rent a bicycle cheaply at the Bicycle Embassy and make use of the bicycle repair shops and repair posts. The new UGent auditorium management system tries to minimise the trips students have to make to attend classes.

In the Business Transport Plan, the following specific action points were listed:

1st phase	Bicycle stands must be adapted to today's requirements: also room for carrier bicycles, bicycle trailers, etc., charging points for electric bicycles, etc.
	Increase the number of showers, close to bicycle stands, with the possibility of leaving clothes.
	Necessary expansion of bicycle parking facilities, centralised, easily accessible, without cutting into green areas.
	Negotiating smart bicycle connections.
	Negotiating a discount for breakdown assistance and insurance for UGent cyclists.
	Close and constructive cooperation with the City of Ghent for the design of bicycle streets, the design of bicycle storage facilities on public roads, separation of traffic flows, sharing of parking (allowing for less parallel parking and creating more space for vulnerable road users), widening and accessibility of footpaths, etc.
Evaluation	<p>(New) bicycle sheds are becoming increasingly spacious and have charging points for electric bicycles as standard, space for special bicycle models and (in the newest ones) access control.</p> <p>There is/was cooperation with the City of Ghent and other authorities for the provision of a bicycle connection Schelde-campus Proeftuinstraat, the cyclist bridge to campus Ardoyen, the completion of climate axis 4 (Muinkkaai) and 5 (De Pintelaan), the sharing of parking, the provision of bicycle parking on public property, ...</p>
Adjustment and planning (proposal)	In various zones, the capacity of bicycle parking for students is insufficient (around S9, campus UFO, ...). The City of Ghent wants to find solutions for this on the premises. This means, for instance, that car parking spaces on the UFO campus will have to be replaced.

3.4 Pillar IV: Optimising the movement of services

There are almost 350 service bicycles in use across the various campuses. These are not only city bikes but also electric and delivery bikes. In addition, the use of Blue bike is being promoted (train + bike) and pool cards for the use of cambio trolleys can be requested.

For its own fleet, the Executive Council approved on 13/12/2012 a centralised fleet policy, according to which cars must be shared and must meet a number of sustainability criteria (e.g. electric service cars for use mainly in the city).

In the Business Transport Plan, the following specific action points were listed:

1st phase	Increase the supply of service bicycles on demand (electric bicycles, folding bicycles, delivery bicycles, etc.).
	Central purchase and management of service vehicles for the central administration. In this way, the sustainability criteria can always be respected and it can be ensured that the cars are included in a pool (cf. BC decision dated 13/12/2012).
	Open up the pool of service vehicles for occasional use by faculties.
	Efficient use of current fleet (shared use, most environmentally friendly cars run the most, most polluting cars run the least and are gradually replaced)
	Drawing up a framework contract for a courier service, which stipulates that trips in the Ghent area (e.g. 9000, 9040 and 9050) must be made by bicycle or in a CO ₂ neutral way (only, first and last mile).
2nd phase	Centralised purchase of each service vehicle (with possible ventilation of costs based on use). In this way, the sustainability criteria can always be respected and it can be ensured that the cars are included in a pool.
	No mileage allowance for service < 3 km.
	Construction of an own CNG filling station for service vehicles.
Evaluation	<p>Service bicycles are provided on request. In addition to city bikes, the pool now also includes 18 electric bicycles and 5 cargo bikes (3 of which are electric). On the Coupure campus, an online management system with an electric bicycle lock is being tested.</p> <p>Service vehicles for the central administration are purchased centrally (with sustainability criteria) and can be used occasionally by the faculties. The use of cambio share cars is also increasing (approx. 185 trips per month) and negotiations are ongoing about a cooperation with Battmobiel (share cars for service trips and private use).</p> <p>The central administration's vehicle fleet was made greener. The Euro 4 standard cars have disappeared from the fleet. However, the number of service cars has increased.</p> <p>A framework contract was concluded with Cargo Velo for courier services within the City of Ghent. In addition, a pilot project is running as part of the LOOP project for a central delivery of office materials in a CityDepot, from where they can be further distributed to the services in a CO₂-neutral way (last mile CO₂-neutral).</p> <p>A revision of the central fleet policy is proposed (see 'New steps towards sustainable mobility'), whereby the sustainability criteria are adapted and guidelines are developed on who can and cannot purchase a car for private use.</p>

	An equalisation of service trips by bicycle and car is proposed (see 'New steps towards sustainable mobility'), whereby service trips up to 5 km (between starting point and destination) by private car are not reimbursed by default, but are insured. A similar approach is taken to journeys of up to 5 km made by private bicycle. No reimbursement is provided, but they are insured. This also means an administrative simplification. For
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	<p>work-related travel to destinations further than 5 km, an allowance is provided both with the employee's own car and with his own bicycle.</p> <p>It no longer seems opportune to build our own CNG station, as the market is shifting towards electric driving and the intermediate step of CNG is no longer necessary. There are still some models of cars that are not available electrically, but that will change soon. For large delivery vans, too, it is to be expected that reasonable alternatives will be available in the fairly near future that are electrically powered.</p>
Adjustment and planning (proposal)	<p>Further efforts are being made to make the UGent fleet greener and steps are being taken to share this fleet with the neighbourhood during off-peak hours (cooperation with Battmobiel).</p> <p>The new measures on fleet policy and equalisation of travel by private car and bicycle are implemented and monitored.</p>

3.5 Pillar V: Optimisation of parking infrastructure

UGent has its own parking facilities and rents several external parking spaces where there is no parking facility of its own. The allocation of parking rights is decentralised, at the level of the faculty or department where the car park is located.

In the Business Transport Plan, the following specific action points were listed:

1st phase	<p>Draw up a centrally managed parking policy, in which the parking must be able to be used by all faculties and a central parking manager grants access rights.</p>
	<p>More efficient use of available (underground) parking and converting vacant ground level parking into green spaces, plazas/outlets, bicycle storage, storage space, etc., where useful and opportune, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the Technicum inner courtyard free of cars (end of blocking entrances and evaluation routes) and give cars access to the Rector's car park (+ lay-out in cooperation with students and DGFB); - Make the Muinkschelde verge a car-free zone and give cars access to the Economy or Kantienberg car parks (+ planting on the verge in collaboration with students and the City of Ghent); - no longer make parking spaces in Sint-Michiels available, but give cars access to the Ramen parking lot; - Eliminate reserved parking spaces near the main entrance of the Pharmacy Campus; move cars to a parking space along the access road; partly reserve the vacated space for service vehicles and technicians and partly allocate it to bicycle parking.

	<p>Communicate that Sterre campus can be used as a peripheral car park with a bicycle allowance / commuter bicycle or regular season ticket for the onward journey.</p> <hr/> <p>Parking reserved for necessary vehicle traffic, thus reducing the need for parking. There are 2 ways to do this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Systems where, for example, standard access is not given to people who live nearby, or where people can choose monthly to have their parking card active (and paying) and inactive are financially feasible. 2. Systems with maximum flexibility, e.g. paid daily parking or introducing a certain number of mobility credits per month, require a new access control system and are therefore expensive. <p>Not giving access by default to people who live nearby, combined with a number of mobility credits per month for these people (e.g. for rainy days, service trips, ...), is the formula with the most chance of success.</p> <p>First measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Non-standard</u> granting of parking rights to staff members with a commuting distance < 3 km (exceptions have to be requested from central parking manager and can be obtained by parents of young children, less mobile staff, ...) (immediate effect for new staff members, transitional period for others). - Experiment on campus Coupure and campus Ardoyen, in which all staff members with a commuting distance < 5 km do not <u>have standard</u> parking rights (exceptions must be requested from the central parking manager and can be obtained by parents of young children, less mobile staff, ...), combined with a number of mobility credits (parking turns) per month (e.g. for rainy days, service trips, ...).
Evaluation	<p>There is a lot of residual capacity in a number of (underground) car parks. By means of a steering policy, this can be better utilised and freed up ground level parking can be transformed into greenery, squares/outlets, bicycle storage, storage space, etc. This remained very limited, without steering but by setting up ad hoc experiments: Some 20 parking spaces on the Dunant campus were turned into gardens, some 40 parking spaces on the Sterre campus were turned into pop-up gardens, the inner courtyard of Technicum was made car-free, etc. There are, however, concrete plans (with a budget) to green the ground-level car parks of Home Bertha, Rectorate and Muinkschelde, and no more parking spaces will be rented in the Sint-Michielsberg car park.</p> <p>The reserved parking spaces for ZAP on the Pharmacy campus have still not been eliminated. The shift of the parking spaces to the main entrance of the campus has been planned, but the implementation and the budget are not yet foreseen.</p> <p>For new building and renovation projects, the 2020 target for the number of cars, which is specific to each campus and varies according to its location, has been in place since the approval of the company transport plan in 2015. This means that no additional parking will be provided if there is still sufficient capacity within 15 minutes' walking distance according to this 2020 target. This has been included in the design guideline.</p> <p>The Sterre campus was designated as a park and ride.</p> <p>A parking policy was drawn up.</p>

<p>2nd phase</p>	<p>More efficient use of available underground parking and conversion of vacant surface parking into green spaces, plazas/outlets, bicycle storage, storage space, etc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving access to parking PPW to staff members fac. BW; - general use of underground car park for sports research centre and provision of proper bicycle parking facilities for students on vacant parking spaces at GUSB (to be considered together with Arteveldehogeschool in new building project); - access to parking Kantienberg for staff Plateau - Rozier (< 15 min walk); - Use Padua car park optimally and make the Rommelaere complex largely car-free (to be seen when moving from VIB departments); - ... <p>Provide access control on Sterre campus so that students and outsiders are excluded; generally consider Sterre campus as perimeter parking.</p> <p>Introducing a general parking policy on the inner city sites: not giving access <u>by default</u> to people living within a 5 km radius, combined with a number of mobility credits (parking turns) per month for these people (e.g. for rainy days, service trips, etc.).</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>There is a lot of residual capacity in a number of (underground) car parks. A steering policy would make it possible to make better use of this capacity and to transform freed up ground level parking into green spaces, squares/outlets, bicycle storage, storage space, etc. This remained very limited, without any real steering. The Dunant car park was made available for staff members of the Coupure campus, but there is still a lot of space planned for ground level parking on the Coupure campus, while there is still a lot of residual capacity in the Dunant car park and the sports research building. The Kantienberg car park is still largely empty, but in time it will be able to accommodate the cars of staff members working in Plateau campus or the Rector's office. A large part of the ground level parking on the Rommelaere campus could disappear, if parking were provided in the Padua car park. This movement can be included in the redevelopment of campus Rommelaere.</p> <p>Access control was introduced on the Sterre campus and the plans for the Ardoyen campus are taking concrete shape.</p> <p>A centrally managed sustainable parking policy is proposed (see 'New steps towards sustainable mobility'), whereby staff members who live less than 5 km from their workplace no longer have access to a UGent car park <u>by default</u>.</p>
<p>Adjustment and planning (proposal)</p>	<p>More steering policy is needed to use the existing (underground) car parks more efficiently and to reduce parking at ground level (cfr. biodiversity policy, water policy).</p> <p>The centrally controlled sustainable parking policy is implemented and monitored.</p>

3.6 Pillar VI: UGent experiments (along)

Although many people are won over by the idea of an efficient and sustainable mobility system and know that this means a drastic system change, there is often insufficient support for the actual implementation. Small-scale experiments that make the change visible on a small scale, that shed a positive light on the change, ... can help in this respect.

Several of these experiments have already taken place: cutting streets, designing pedestrian streets, sharing parking spaces, using bicycle couriers, etc. And although the initial reaction, even on an experimental scale, is often reluctance (because practical objections, different from what we are used to, etc.), lessons can be learned and it brings sustainable mobility into the spotlight in a positive way.

In the Business Transport Plan, the following specific action points were listed:

1st phase	Cutting streets and decorating as student square: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H. Dunantlaan (near the PPW building); - Ledeganckstraat (after the renovation of the Ledeganck complex).
	Temporarily design lower part of above-ground car park as 'rest area / green zone' (experiment during joker week Urban Design and Architecture), cars in underground car park Rectorate.
	Inner-city station by bicycle.
	In the case of framework contracts, make the delivery of smaller materials in Ghent as CO ₂ -neutral as possible (only and last mile), draw up delivery plan.
	Sharing of parking during living street project.
	Establish a low-traffic Muinkschelde towpath (when cyclist passages have been realised).
	Permanent sharing of parking (e.g. for residents of Ekkergermstraat, which eliminates long-term parking and makes Ekkergermstraat safer, for Boudewijn House).
Evaluation	Together with Transitie UGent, Green Office Gent, faculties and students, several experiments were set up. Some of these have already been put into practice, such as distributing the internal mail by bicycle, cutting the Ledeganck at the Ledeganck campus, making deliveries in the city using sustainable means of transport, the plans to green the Rectoraat and Muinkschelde car parks, etc. Others are still (recurring) experiments, such as organising parking makeovers, sharing parking spaces during the organisation of Leefstraten, etc.
Adjustment and planning (proposal)	Experimenting together to make this sustainable future visible on a small scale has always met with great approval and has already proved useful. However, we must be careful not to experiment for the sake of experimenting. We test out to show that something is possible, and then scale up those projects and roll them out more quickly.