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City of Ghent: “City of People”

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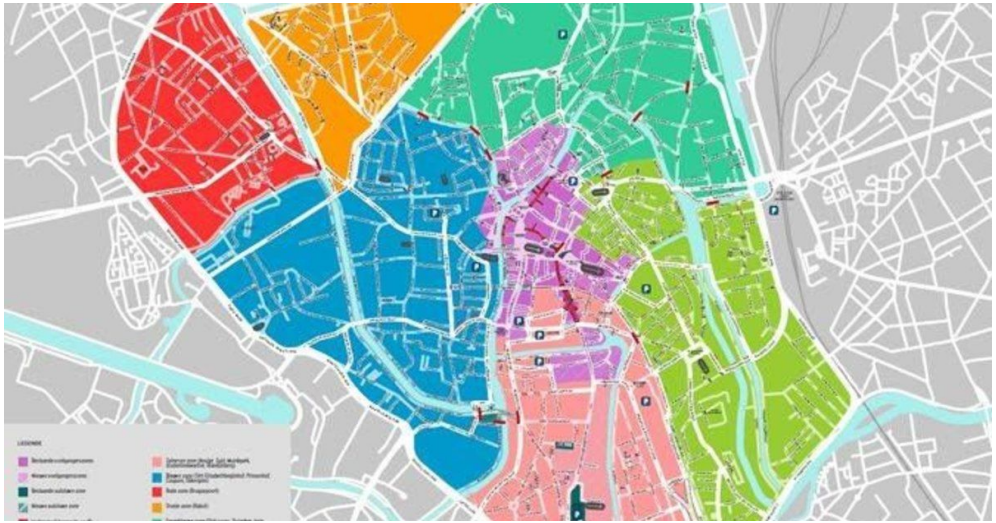
Introduction

- **Ghent**
- City in Belgium
- 260.000 people: 70.000 students
- Strong focus on participation

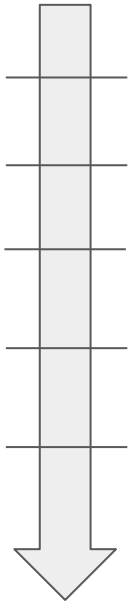
“The City of Ghent aims to be a City for the People, whereby everybody (citizens, businesses and SMEs, institutions and NGOs) is involved and included in the city’s life and the city’s policy-making process.”

Circulation Plan

- Since 2017
- “Knip”zones (car free zones)
- More focus on public transport
- Living standards and accessibility of the city centre
- Reflection in Citizens Cabinet



Timeline



- End of 2016: Announcement of the Circulation Plan
- April 2017: Launch of the Circulation Plan
- May 2017: Launch of the ‘Burgerkabinet’: evaluate and advise
- August 2017: Focus group: different stakeholders
- March 2018: Only ⅓ of the ‘Burgerkabinet’ attended the meeting

- TO DATE -

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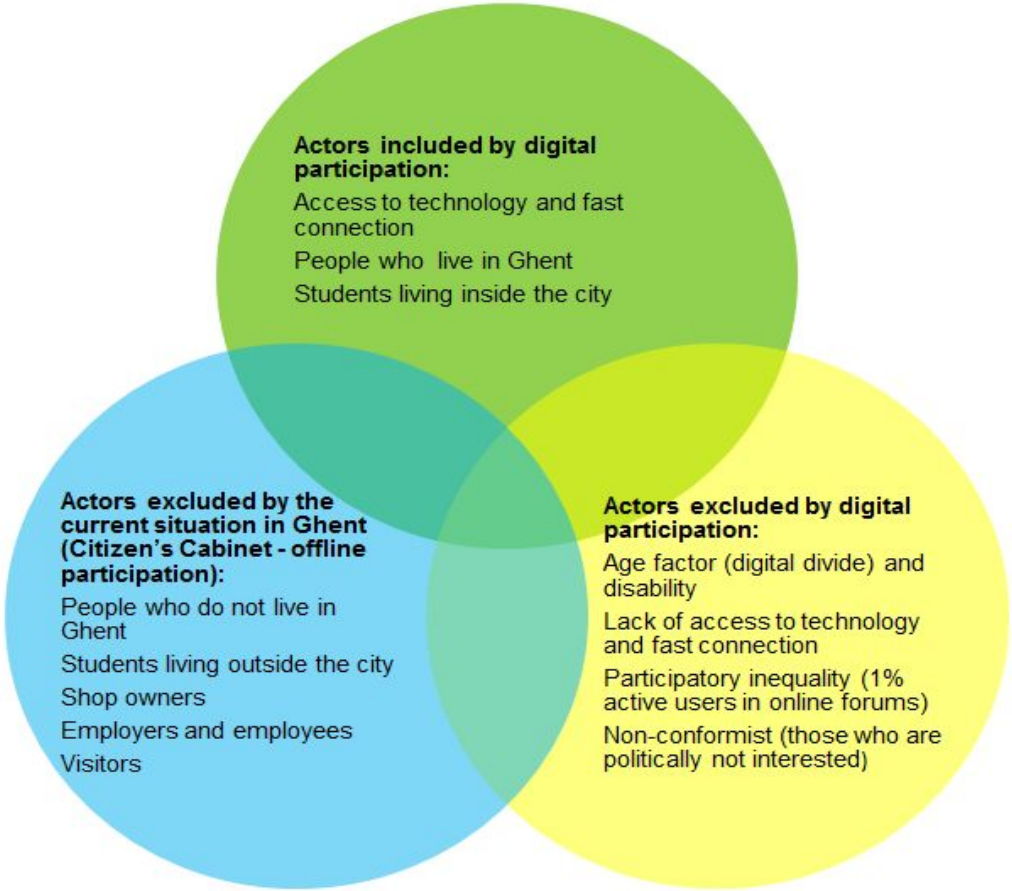
Different stakeholders

1. 90 year old great-grandmother (in a wheelchair) inside the city center
2. 18 year old student who lives just outside the city center
3. An organic farmer, also a shopkeeper inside the city. The Belgium ‘stadsakker’
4. Owner of an IT company with offices through whole of Flanders, HQ in Antwerp, but second office in Ghent.
5. Daughter of an elderly couple whose parents live in the center but works just outside of the city center.
6. Prominent liberal party politician with two studying children in Ghent
7. A japanese tourist coming traveling through Europe with the train
8. German tourist coming by car (preferably a BMW)
9. Foreign student on exchange from Groningen: bachelor Biology
10. Scientists and students visiting Ghent for conferences, seminars, and workshops (For example Tropentag expected in September 17-19, Ghent)

Problems with citizen participation



Our solutions

- **Digital participation as complementary to offline participation**
  - Holistic approach: based on Horizon 2020 for Eco-City
- **One example of how:**
  - Common platform for interactions: marketplace on: stad.gent.be
  - Forum where different stakeholders could discuss their reservations
  - Proposition from the online platform: creating the possibility to vote
  - Offline focus group on specific propositions that are voted and overall topics
  - Bringing the results of the focus groups back online

Creating a climate for change: online and offline participation interacting and are complementing each other.

Thank you for your attention!

Appendices

Ghent E-Inclusion Initiatives

The City of Ghent has already offered some solutions:

1) digital talent points in Ghent
2) digital lending services
3) annual digital week and interactive fair
4) new public library with a digital twist
5) digital media programs for the mentally challenged

References

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