

Renewal of public transportation in the historical centre of České Budějovice

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Municipal public transportation in České Budějovice is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. During the first decades, trams connected the city centre with the outskirts and the main train station. Trams were replaced in the 1950s by trolleybuses, but in the 1980s public transportation were completely pushed out of the city's historic centre. It did not return until late 2018 as part of a greater project involving parking zones, park-and-ride facilities and new municipal public transportation lines – featuring nothing less than a cutting-edge cyclic battery-charged electric bus.

After over a decade of “treading on water”, České Budějovice installed parking zones in the Pražské Předměstí neighbourhood in 2017. In spite of years of resistance from residents in this part of the city and problems with implementation, in the end everything was completed with most local residents now very satisfied with the system. Another stage is slated to be implemented in 2019, and parking zones will be finalised in all planned parts of the city in 2020 and 2021.

Along with setting up parking zones, we are also working on park & ride and park & go parking facilities. Jírovцова park & ride was opened at the entrance to a parking zone already in place and provides parking for 185 cars, which will be increased to a total capacity of 440 parking spaces later this year. The city has identified other locations at the entrance to the city where additional park & ride facilities will be installed (in connection with the opening of a motorway bypass around the city), offering a total capacity of over 5,000 parking spaces.

In addition to developing park & go and park & ride facilities, solutions for transportation from the parking areas to the city centre or to other terminals must be found. Mid-sized electric buses (8.9 metres long holding 45 passengers) travel in 10-minute intervals from the current Jírovцова park & ride facility to the city centre (Přemysl Otakar II Square) and to the train and bus stations. Transportation from the parking facility to the city centre is free of charge.

The greatest complication in implementing these measures lay in convincing the public of the benefit of these solutions. Communication with the traffic police was also quite complicated. Due to the positive results following the implementation of these measures, continuing with these plans in other parts of the city is somewhat easier. However, politicians must remain courageous enough to do new things and risk “going out on a limb”.