



EURO  
CITIES



## Gijon's Citizen Card

# Gijon fits in your pocket

Imagine a single card that allows you to pay your bus fare, hire a bike and take out a library book: that's Gijon's 'Citizen Card'. Today, 250,000 of Gijon's citizens – 80% of the city's population – carry this card, unlocking services and facilities across the city.

### Key to city services

The Citizen Card was born out of a desire to develop an integrated identification and payment tool, making it easier for citizens to use and pay for everyday services like libraries, swimming pools, buses and parking.

Launched in 2002, the card initially gave access to the most popular city services, including sports facilities and public transport. New services are continually being added and cardholders can now use it to rent a bike or to visit a museum.

Each card is unique to its user, which means it can be used to identify citizens eligible for discounts, such as the elderly, the disabled and young people. This 'social bonus', which gives reduced-rate access to public transport or sports facilities, helps promote social inclusion in the city, allowing vulnerable groups to get out and about and enjoy the city's services.



When living in Gijon, you use the Citizen Card every day and think it's convenient. It's only when you visit another city that you see the enormous advantages of the card. With a single card we can access many municipal services, while in other cities you need a different card for different purposes.



*a Gijon citizen*

cities in action

May 2014

where: Gijon, Spain  
what: knowledge society  
when: 2002+

## An environmental impact

What's more, the card has allowed the city to regulate traffic in its historic centre. Every evening, between 9pm and 7am the following morning, the area is restricted to incoming traffic, a move designed to minimise noise, deal with limited parking spaces and avoid damage to narrow city streets. Only residents can enter, and the Citizen Card makes it simple for the system to automatically recognise who's behind the wheel.

Travelling by public transport is easier with the Citizen Card, too. The automated payment system means there's no need to check you've got the right change; the control simply deducts what you owe. This simplified payment system has the added bonus of making bus circulation faster. And users can easily recharge their cards at any of the municipal cashpoints around the city.

There are also the free of charge 'cyclocity' bikes: cardholders can pick up and deposit a bike at any of the stations dotted around the city.

## Connect with the city

The Citizen Card connects citizens directly with their city council. They can do this from home, using the 'city council at home' service, or via one of the 'citizen cashpoints', where they can pay their municipal charges directly.

The information gathered from the usage of the cards gives the city useful feedback on the behaviour of its inhabitants. As a result, Gijon can design policies that better meet the needs of citizens.

## Financing the card

The cards are free and available to anyone using Gijon's public services, resident or not. As well as the convenience the card provides, there are also financial benefits for cardholders: a cardholder, for example, can use the public toilets for free, while a non cardholder must pay €0.30.

For the city, the cost is relatively low. Initially, the cards cost €2 each to produce, but that has since been reduced to €0.50.

In total, the city has invested €1,200,000 over 12 years, which works out at €100,000 a year for a target population of 300,000.

Once the card is up and running it is a cost effective project, as new services can easily be added. There are now plans to integrate NFC (near field communication) technology so the card can be used via a smartphone or tablet, and Gijon is working with other cities on ways to develop an interoperable payment system for public transport across different locations.

Meanwhile, the Citizen Card is going from strength to strength, with plans to include access to electrical vehicle charging points as part of the 'smart city' phase.



We are very proud of our Citizen Card, because not only does it reach 80% of Gijon's citizens, but they are using it around a million times a month!

**Gijon city council**

