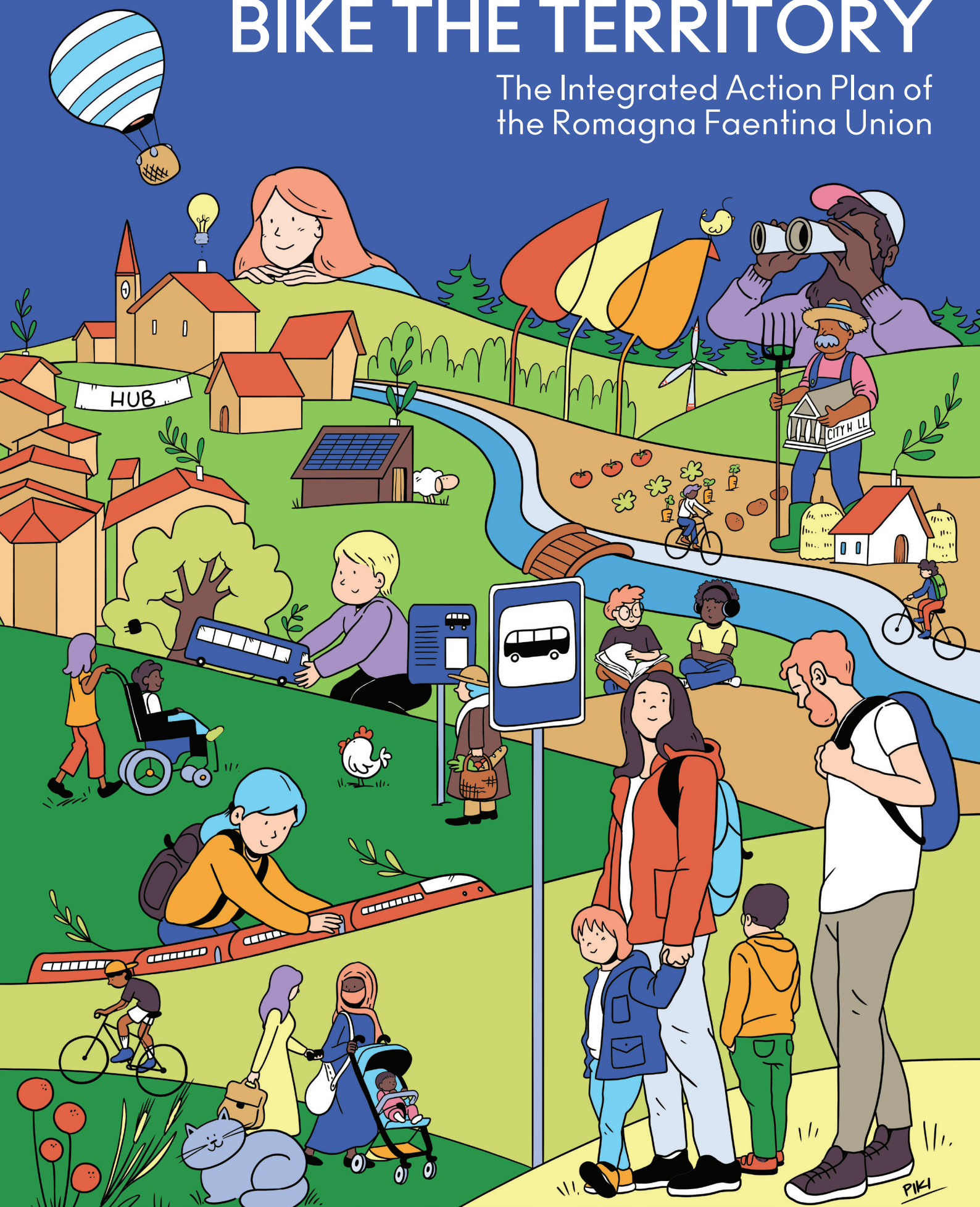# BIKE THE TERRITORY

The Integrated Action Plan of the Romagna Faentina Union

AUTHORS

Nadia Carboni, Romagna Faentina Union
Erblin Berisha, DIST, Politecnico di Torino
Elena Todella, DIST, Politecnico di Torino
Donato Casavola, DIST, Politecnico di Torino

CONTRIBUTORS

Elena Fabbri, Romagna Faentina Union
Arianna Ancarani, Romagna Faentina Union
Giuseppe Lombardo, Romagna Faentina Union
Mariachiara Di Tella, Romagna Faentina Union
Alfonso Cardella, Romagna Faentina Union
Lorenzo Mallus, Romagna Faentina Union
Filippo Fagnocchi, Romagna Faentina Union
Luca Pinnavaia, Khora Lab APS

Table of Content

Table of Content

Table of Content

The ECONNECTING Network

Lead Partner
Romagna Faentina Union, Italy

Partners
Municipality of Berane, Montenegro
Municipality of West Mani, Greece
Comunidad Intermunicipal Viseu Dão Lafões, Portugal
Ennis Municipal District, Clare County Council, Ireland
Tori Vallavalitsus, Estonia
Razvojno Raziskovalni Center Ormož, Slovenia
Municipality of Nagykallo, Hungary

Lead Expert
Roland Krebs, superwien urbanism ZT gmbh, Vienna, Austria

ECONNECTING means...

establishing strategies and actions for rural-urban functional areas, fostering the seamless integration of urban sustainable practices, well-being enhancement, and the cultivation of robust social connections through active citizen participation. This Action Planning Network brings together nine city partners from Italy, Montenegro, Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary and Spain to collaborate on shaping their „proximity territories," characterized by intricate urban-rural linkages.

At the core of ECONNECTING lies a comprehensive exploration of smart mobility solutions for public transport and mobility, coupled with the revitalization of villages, towns and their hub cities to enhance the overall quality of life for citizens. The initiative embarks on a deep dive into the intricate fabric of these regions, seeking to address key aspects such as mobility, accessibility, and urban regeneration.

By employing a dialogue-oriented planning process and leveraging the proven URBACT methodology, ECONNECTING aims to harmonize the dynamics between urban and rural areas. The focus is specifically on optimizing mobility and accessibility, while simultaneously fostering vibrant public spaces that cater to the needs and desires of the local populace. All these efforts are grounded in a commitment to environmental consciousness and community engagement, ensuring a sustainable and people-centric approach to development.

Through collaborative efforts, ECONNECTING strives to create a model that not only enhances the connectivity between urban and rural spaces but also promotes a holistic and inclusive vision for the well-being of citizens. The initiative serves as a beacon for innovative strategies that prioritize the intersection of environmental sustainability, community vibrancy, and urban-rural harmony. In doing so, ECONNECTING emerges as a catalyst for positive change, demonstrating the transformative power of collaborative urban planning on a European scale.

1
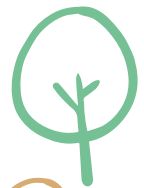
Executive Summary

The URBACT project ECONNECTING is dedicated to establishing strategies and actions that strengthen the functional integration of rural and urban areas. By fostering seamless connections between cities, towns, and villages, ECONNECTING strives to enhance citizens' quality of life through innovative approaches to mobility, accessibility, and urban regeneration. The project strongly emphasises sustainability and inclusivity, ensuring that urban practices support well-being and cultivate resilient social connections. ECONNECTING seeks to promote smart mobility solutions for public transport and individual mobility, enabling efficient, accessible, and sustainable transportation systems. It aims at revitalizing villages and towns by enhancing their integration with hub cities, ensuring a balanced and equitable development of territorial assets. To do so, the project seeks to enhance citizen well-being through participatory governance and active community engagement, empowering individuals to shape the future of their spaces.

1.1 Project Pillars

To achieve these goals, ECONNECTING is structured around four key thematic pillars:

- **30-Minutes Territories**: Ensuring that essential services, amenities, and economic opportunities are accessible within a 30-minute radius, fostering a cohesive and functional living environment.
- **Green Community**: Creating sustainable and biodiverse spaces by integrating green infrastructure, promoting eco-friendly initiatives, and encouraging responsible community practices.
- **Accessible and Welcoming Cities**: Designing inclusive, user-friendly urban environments that cater to individuals of all abilities and backgrounds, ensuring equitable access and participation.
- **Good Governance**: Strengthening participatory governance frameworks to empower citizens and foster transparent, collaborative decision-making processes.

1.2 Community Engagement Activities

ECONNECTING has engaged local communities through ten itinerant territorial animation meetings across the municipalities of Faenza (6 meetings), Riolo Terme (2 meetings), and Castel Bolognese (2 meetings). These workshops provided a platform for stakeholders to co-design solutions and align local aspirations with the project's objectives. Each thematic pillar was explored through two dedicated sessions.

In Faenza, besides the launching and the conclusion meetings, four laboratory activities have been conducted to discuss the respective topics of 30-Minute Territories and Accessible and Welcoming Cities. In Riolo Terme, the focus was Green Community, which engaged participants in discussions about enhancing mobility transport into a broader territorial vision where the municipality might become a hub of sustainable transformation. Last but not least, in Castel Bolognese, citizens and stakeholders could discuss Good Governance, facilitating dialogue on participatory frameworks that promote collaboration between residents and institutions, ensuring that decisions reflect the collective needs and ambitions of the community concerning urban and peri-urban mobility.

Moreover, the project has co-designed, promoted and implemented 3 Small-Scale Actions. The first took place in Riolo Terme, focusing on re-thinking the square ("piazza" in Italian) next to the Riolo Terme Rocca – currently a parking area. By involving local communities and different actors and using tactical urbanism approaches, the objective was to "re-design by co-designing" the potential alternative uses of the place, replacing the current parking area. The second Small-Scale Action will be implemented in Faenza in September 2025, aiming to temporarily revitalize Via Fratelli Rosselli by experimenting with tactical urbanism intervention. This feature promotes safer and more inclusive urban mobility. A third Small Scale Action is planned during the autumn 2025 and concerns an experimental night shuttle service, linking the historic city center with the main nightlife venues located along Via Granarolo. The service aims to promote sustainable, convenient, and safe mobility, even at night.

The insights gathered during these sessions laid the groundwork for the Integrated Action Plan, a roadmap that balances the territories' unique characteristics with the broader objectives of ECONNECTING. The plan reflects a commitment to creating resilient, equitable, and thriving rural-urban functional areas by focusing on smart mobility, urban regeneration, and sustainable practices.

This document serves as both a vision and a practical framework, illustrating how innovative and community-driven solutions can address territorial challenges while fostering well-being, sustainability, and social cohesion.

2

Development Context and Needs

This section gives an overview of contextualising the Romagna Faentina Union's (Romagna Faentina Union) needs and challenges, followed by defining a vision. To do that, section 2.1. presents the main project's topic by illustrating the pillars and priorities. Section 2.2 presents the current situation that characterises the Union's territory (i.e. institutional organisation, economic performance, regional connections and internal accessibility, environmental assets, etc.). This is then followed in section 2.3, exploring the existing strategies and policies, not only at the local and regional levels but also at the national and European levels. Also, relevant Operational (funding) Programs that cover the city and the institutional context of reference are presented. Section 2.4. describes the URBACT Local Group (ULG), the roles of different stakeholders in the project, and the planning process. The problem definition follows this description through emerging topics in section 2.5, and a project vision and related overarching objectives in section 2.6. Accordingly, section 2.7 explores the main strategic challenges related to URBACT cross-cutting principles and some first ideas on how to test actions are proposed in section 2.8.

2.1 Overall topic being addressed

ECONNECTING aims to establish strategies and actions for rural-urban functional areas, fostering the seamless integration of urban sustainable practices, enhancing well-being, and cultivating robust social connections through active citizen participation. At the core of ECONNECTING lies a comprehensive exploration of smart mobility solutions for public transport and mobility, coupled with the revitalisation of villages, towns, and their hub cities to enhance citizens' overall quality of life. The initiative embarks on a deep dive into the intricate territorial morphology of these regions, seeking to address key aspects such as mobility, accessibility, and urban regeneration.

This Action Planning Network brings together eight city partners from Italy, Montenegro, Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Estonia, Slovenia and Hungary. The Network aims to create conditions for fostering collaboration in shaping their territories characterised by intricate urban-rural linkages. By employing a dialogue-oriented planning process and leveraging the proven URBACT methodology, ECONNECTING aims to harmonise the dynamics between urban and rural areas.

These territories are dealing with several challenges in optimising mobility and accessibility, while simultaneously fostering vibrant public spaces catering to the needs and desires of local communities. All these efforts are grounded in a commitment to environmental consciousness and community engagement, ensuring a sustainable and people-centric approach to development. Through collaborative efforts, ECONNECTING strives to create a model that not only enhances the connectivity between urban and rural spaces but also promotes a holistic and inclusive vision for the well-being of citizens. The initiative serves as a beacon for innovative strategies prioritising the intersection of environmental sustainability, community vibrancy, and urban-rural harmony. In doing so, ECONNECTING emerges as a catalyst for positive change, demonstrating the transformative power of collaborative urban planning in Europe.

To do that, ECONNECTING identifies four pillars:

1) 30-Minutes Territories;
2) Green Community;
3) Accessible and Welcoming Cities;
4) Good Governance.

2.2 Current Situation

The Romagna Faentina Union is an intermunicipal entity founded in 2012. It comprises six municipalities in the Emilia Romagna region (Italy): Brisighella, Casola Valsenio, Castel Bolognese, Faenza, Riolo Terme, and Solarolo. Geographically, the Union bridges the Bologna metropolitan area and the cities of Ravenna and Forlì. With approximately 58,000 inhabitants, Faenza serves as its main urban settlement, contributing to a total population of 88,710 within the Union.

The Union benefits from good connectivity, being traversed by the Emilia railway and the A14 motorway and enjoying efficient links to other major cities in northern Italy. From Faenza railway station, travel times to key destinations are as follows (Figure 1): Imola, in 25 minutes, Forlì 20 minutes, Bologna in 40 minutes, Ravenna in 30 minutes, Rimini in 60 minutes, and Florence in 120 minutes.

Besides that, the Romagna Faentina Union is internally connected by four train stations (Faenza, Castel Bolognese, Solarolo and Brisighella). From Faenza, it is possible to reach Castel Bolognese-Riolo Terme station in 10 minutes, Solarolo in 10 minutes and Brisighella in 15 minutes.
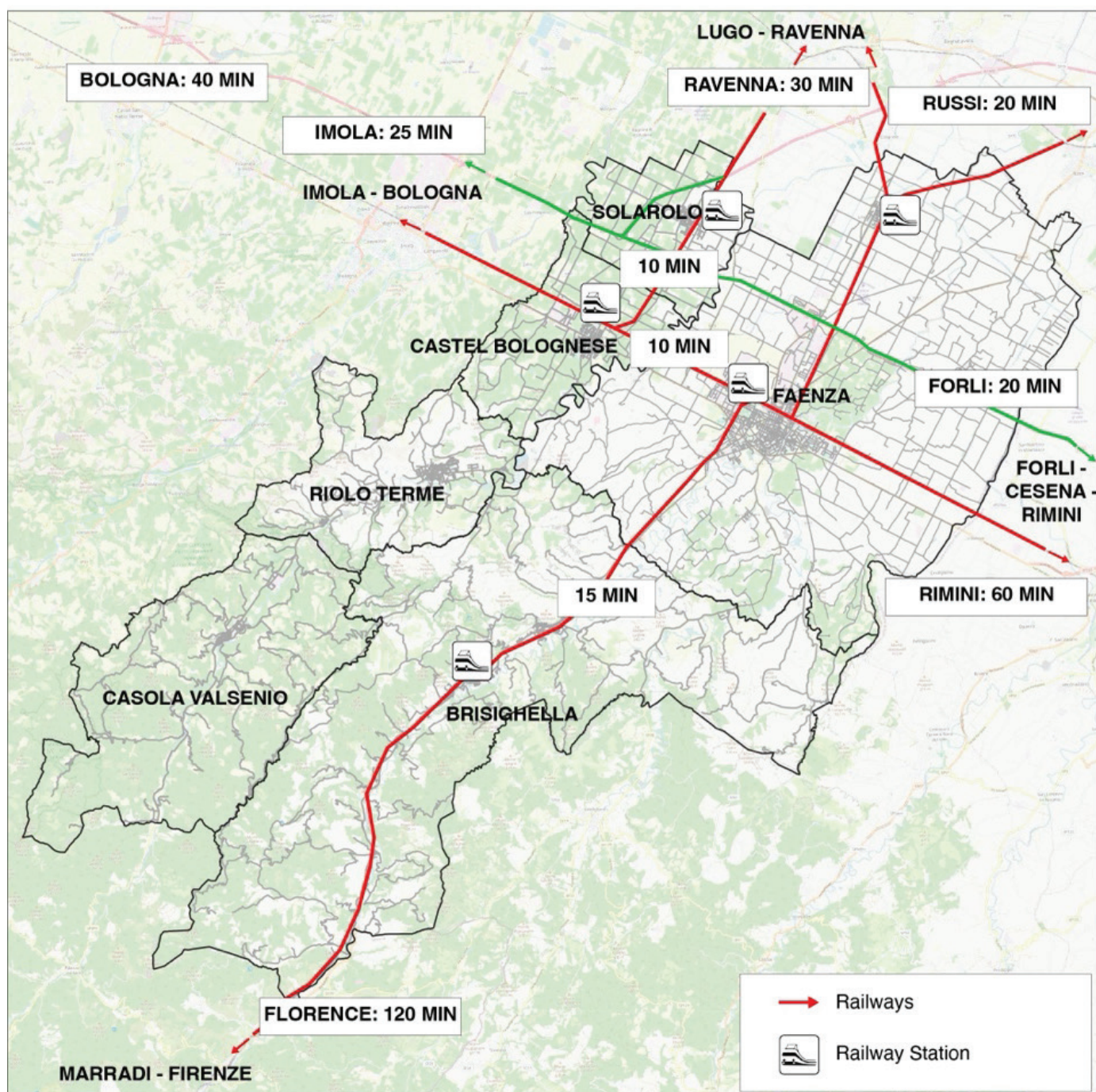
Figure 1 - Railway accessibility of the Romagna Faentina Union

Source: authors' own elaboration

Regarding internal accessibility, Faenza boasts a fragmented bicycle network. As emerged in Figure 2, the municipality has implemented several initiatives to provide citizens with cycling paths; however, the current situation denotes limits in path continuity and usability of the network. However, there is a need for improvement in the inter-municipal cycle and pedestrian network, particularly in rural areas where connectivity to urban centres is lacking. Private car usage remains predominant, accounting for 64% of trips, while cycling is also popular, comprising 19% of journeys, with public transport representing only 7% — approximately two-thirds of trips within the Romagna Faentina Union last less than 15 minutes (ECON-NECTING Baseline Study[1]).

---

1   The Baseline Study is available on the URBACT website: https://urbact.eu/networks/econnecting.

16
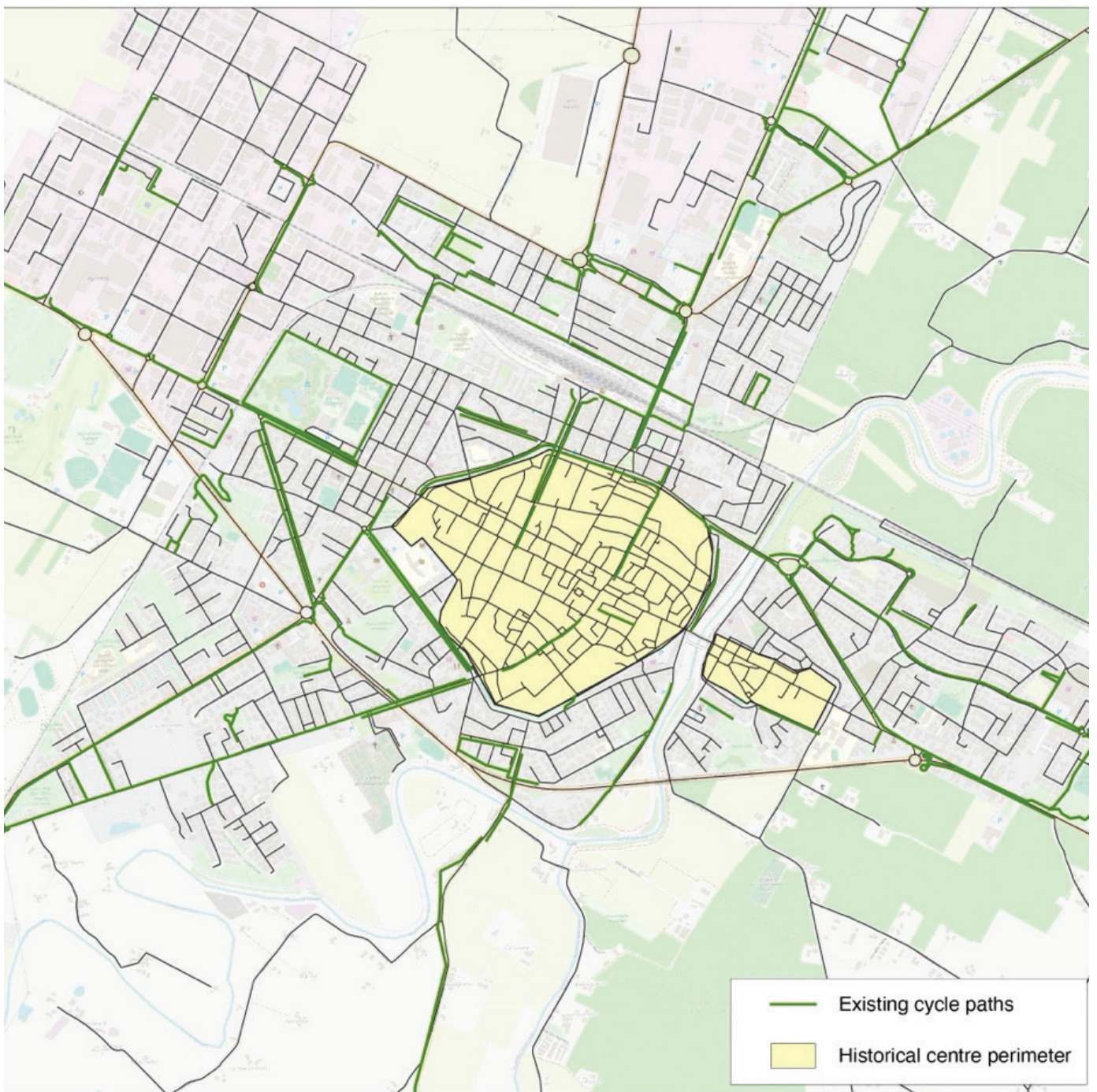
Figure 2 - Existing cycle paths of Faenza Municipality

Source: authors' own elaboration

Figure 3 shows the Union local transport network. Accordingly, it can be seen that currently the Union has several urban and intercommunal bus lines that in more or less 20 minutes can cover the entire Union. Starting from Faenza it is possible to reach the localities of Castel Bolognese, Riolo Terme, and Solaloro in about 15 minutes. While for Casala Valsenio it takes 20 minutes and 25 for Brisighella.
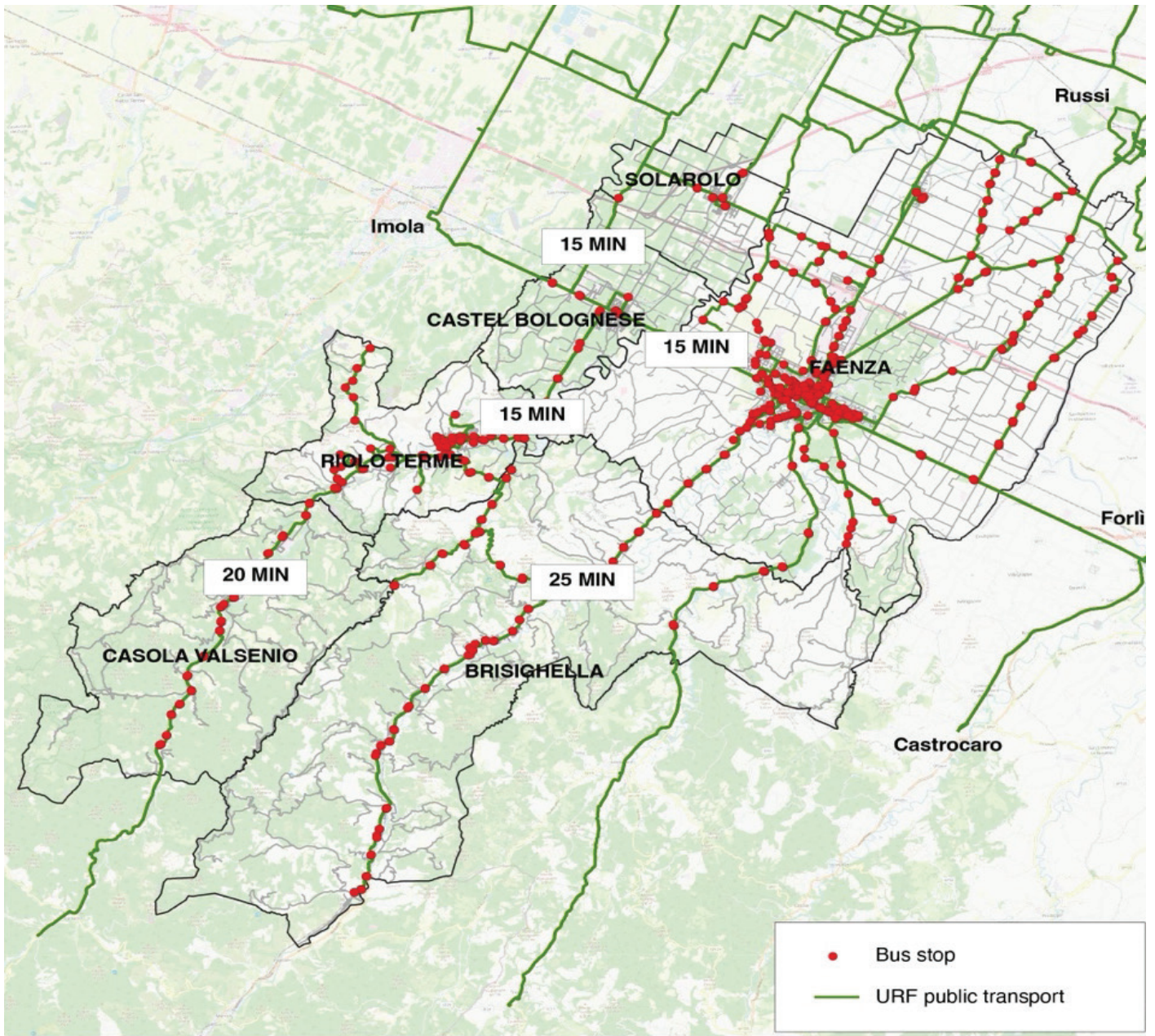
Figure 3 - Local Public Transport and Bus stops

Source: authors' own elaboration

From an economic standpoint, the region's primary industries are related to mechanical engineering and food production. The unemployment rate is relatively low, standing at 5.3%, compared to the national rate of 7.9%, according to data from ISTAT (2024).

Environmentally, the Union insists on a regional protected area, "Parco della Vena del Gesso", classified as a Natura 2000 site. This protected area constitutes an environmental asset across the Union territory, encompassing regions from Riolo Terme, Casola Valsenio, and Brisighella. It facilitates connectivity throughout the environment via designated paths tailored for tourists and citizens alike.

In 2023, Faenza and its surrounding towns and villages endured the devastating impact of a severe flood, which destroyed specific areas. The aftermath prompted immediate efforts to commence reconstruction, and significant strides are currently underway in the ongoing recovery process. The territory is anticipated to emerge from this emergency with improved territorial organisation, particularly in terms of acces-

sibility and environmental infrastructure. ECONNECTING stands poised to make a substantial contribution toward this objective.

Last but not least, Faenza's Union stands out as a remarkable example of effective multilevel governance. Unlike other unions that struggle due to poorly defined or fragmented responsibilities, Faenza's Union thrives because of its well-structured and thoughtfully distributed tasks. It successfully manages key areas such as taxation, spatial planning, and mobility, ensuring coordinated and efficient administration. In particular, the introduction of the Associated Municipal Structural Plan, as indicated by the regional spatial planning Law No. 20/2000, has enabled the six municipalities involved to address territorial development at the Union scale without fostering internal economic competition to attract external investments. So far, this has enabled better control over territorial development, further strengthened by the fact that the new planning tool - the General Urban Plan -is also being designed collectively. What makes the Union particularly noteworthy is the presence of a dedicated office that handles mobility issues. This office acts as a hinge between the various Union services and the six local administrations.

2.3 Existing Strategies & Policies

In sustainable mobility, the European Union (EU) has articulated several strategies and plans to promote environmentally friendly transportation practices and reduce carbon emissions. From 2001's Gothenburg Strategy, the European Union has aimed to develop an integrated and sustainable transport sector. A major landmark, the 2011 White Paper, entitled Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area, identified the mobility shortcomings in the EU – many still largely present today – and proposed an ambitious approach to overcome them. It included the reduction of 60 % of transport greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 against 1990 levels and by 20 % below their 2008 levels. One of the primary frameworks guiding these efforts is the European Green Deal, a comprehensive initiative launched in 2019 to transform the EU into a climate-neutral continent by 2050. Within the Green Deal, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy serves as a cornerstone, outlining key objectives and actions to achieve sustainable mobility across the EU.

Additionally, the EU has encouraged the adoption of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) at local levels. This initiative focuses on promoting alternative modes of transport, such as walking, cycling, and public transit, as well as integrating new technologies and innovations to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact. This issue is also addressed by the current Territorial Agenda 2030 and the New Leipzig Charter, which affirms that urban transport and mobility systems should be efficient, carbon-neutral, safe, and multi-modal. In addition to the EU initiatives mentioned above, the European Commission supports various funding programs, such as the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon Europe, to invest in sustainable mobility projects and research initiatives.

In recent years, the EU has intensified its efforts to accelerate the transition towards sustainable mobility, recognising it as a crucial component of achieving broader environmental and climate goals. Through strategic planning, policy development, and financial support, the EU continues to advance sustainable mobility initiatives to foster greener, more efficient, and inclusive transportation systems across Europe.

Italy is advancing towards a more sustainable mobility system at the national level. More specifically, in recent years, the country has adopted:

- National Strategic Framework for Sustainable Mobility (SNaM): Italy's SNaM provides a comprehensive framework for promoting sustainable mobility at the national level. It outlines key objectives and strategies for reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, and enhancing the efficiency of transportation systems.

- **National Urban Agenda of the Ministry for Sustainable Infra-structure and Mobility**: The plan has been thought as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan to promote a more sustainable development of cities and territories with a particular focus on sustainable mobility.

At the regional level, Emilia-Romagna promotes the transition from a private car-dependent society to an eco-friendly public mobility. To do that, the region has introduced the:

- **Regional Plan of Integrated Transport 2025 (PRIT)**: The plan outlines the long-term vision and objectives for transportation in Emilia-Romagna. It includes strategies for promoting sustainable mobility, improving infrastructure, and reducing environmental impact.

- **Regional Energy and Climate Plan (PERC)**: The Regional Energy and Climate Plan sets out goals and actions to reduce carbon emissions and promote renewable energy sources, including measures related to sustainable transportation.

- **Regional Sustainable Mobility Plan (PUMS)**: The Regional Sustainable Mobility Plan focuses specifically on promoting sustainable modes of transportation such as public transit, cycling, and walking. It includes measures to improve infrastructure, enhance accessibility, and reduce reliance on private cars.

- **Regional Bike Plan**: Emilia-Romagna has a specific plan for promoting cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation. This plan includes initiatives to develop cycling infrastructure, such as bike lanes and bike-sharing programs, and to encourage cycling as a means of commuting and recreation. One of the projects promoted is the Cycling through the Parks.

- **Regional Plan for Electric Mobility**: This plan focuses on promoting the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) and supporting the development of EV charging infrastructure across the region. It includes incentives for purchasing EVs, subsidies for charging stations, and measures to encourage the use of renewable energy in transportation.

In parallel with the mentioned documents, the region has launched, so far, several initiatives to incentivise the use of sustainable mobility solutions:

- "mimuovoincittà": from 2018, all holders of a monthly or annual rail pass with origin and/or destination in a city where there is an urban transport service (cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, i.e. provincial capitals + Carpi, Imola and Faenza) can travel free of charge on urban services in the city of origin and/or destination;

- "Grande!" and "Saltasu": the region promotes free transportation free public transportation for students.

Concerning the cycling mobility in particular, the "Sustainable Mobility Plan 2022-2025 for the ecological transition", has the ambition to:

- doubling the percentage of bicycle and walking trips in the territory, with a regional average of 20 percent (we are currently at 10 percent, about double the national average);

- reduce the region's motorisation rate, with particular reference to vehicles with combustion;

- develop new connections between existing tracks with a strong emphasis on their safety, a greater train-bike integration, including by rehabilitating railway stations and cantonment houses transforming them into service facilities.

At the local level, the Romagna Faentina Union has adopted several strategic documents to guide its development and promote sustainable initiatives:

- Strategic Plan 2030: This document outlines the main development trajectories of the Union, providing a clear vision of its future objectives and how they will be achieved. The Strategic Plan 2030 aims to equip the territory with a cohesive vision of its desired future state.

- Urban Transformative Agenda for Sustainable Development (ATUSS) of Romagna Faentina: Through the implementation of the ATUSS, the Union aims to partially realize its Strategic Plan 2030. With the support of the Emilia-Romagna Region, the ATUSS facilitates the implementation of sustainable development projects within the Union, with a budget of 8 million euros allocated for investments.

- ITALIAE Project: Promoted by the Department of Regional Affairs and Autonomy (DARA) as part of the PON Governance 2014-2020 program, the ITALIAE project aims to enhance further sustainable development initiatives within the Romagna Faentina Union.

These strategic documents demonstrate the Union's commitment to fostering sustainable development, promoting environmental conservation, and enhancing the overall well-being of its residents. Through targeted investments and collaborative efforts with regional and national partners, the Romagna Faentina Union aims to realize its long-term vision for a prosperous and sustainable future.

In addition to that, the Union has introduced the new local PUMS - Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan), jointly developed by all six municipalities of the Union, and through which identifies a new intermodal hub connecting the regional railway station, a new bus interchange station and new car parks and also makes improving cycling links between urban and rural areas a key priority. Based on this document, the municipalities of the Romagna Faentina Union are all actively involved in numerous projects, such as the new planning of the public transport system to increase the coverage of public transport not only in the urban area but also to improve services to rural communities through new suburban lines. There are already several urban and intercommunal bus lines and the Green Go Bus, an electric shuttle connecting the outskirts of Faenza with the city centre or Bike to Work – a regional initiative successfully implemented at the local level.

To conclude, it can be said that integrating ongoing strategic and post-flood recovery planning is essential to ensure the long-term coherence and impact of mobility-related measures. In this respect, the proposed infrastructure interventions - especially new cycling connections and upgraded bus networks—are conceived in alignment with existing strategic documents such as the PUMS, the Strategic Plan 2030, and the ATUSS. This allows to takes into account the challenges posed by the 2023 floods, seeking synergies with ongoing urban regeneration and territorial resilience initiatives promoted by the Region and the Union.

2.3.1 Relevant Operational (funding) Programs

As regarding the funding options, the Romagna Faentina Union can count on the following sources:

- [National Recovery and Resilience Plan](#). The Italian RRP aims to modernise Italy's economy and public administration, stimulate investment in innovation and infrastructure, and support the country's transition towards a greener and more digital future. The plan allocates significant funding from the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) to finance various projects and reforms over the coming years. Among the other investment sectors, Mobility is financed by Mission 2 – Green Revolution and Ecological Transition (M2C2 - Renewable energy, hydrogen, network and sustainable mobility) and Mission 3 – Infrastructure of a Sustainable Mobility;

- [European Regional Development Fund](#). The Emilia-Romagna ESF+ Programme 2021–2027 promotes inclusive growth and supports the twin digital and green transitions. Digitalisation is a key focus, with actions aimed at improving digital skills for workers, job seekers, and students. The programme funds digital literacy, vocational training, and the modernisation of employment services. In terms of mobility, ESF+ supports training for green jobs related to sustainable transportation, including public transportation systems, e-mobility, and smart transportation solutions. These investments aim to foster employability, innovation, and social inclusion, in line with the EU Pillar of Social Rights and climate neutrality objectives.

- [European Social Fund Plus](#) is the European Union's primary financial tool for promoting employment, social inclusion, and poverty reduction. Launched in 2021 as a merger of previous social funds, ESF+ supports initiatives that help people gain new skills, find better jobs, and improve working conditions. It focuses on youth unemployment, education, equal opportunities, and social integration, particularly for disadvantaged groups. By investing in human capital, ESF+ plays a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and reducing disparities across EU member states, ensuring a more inclusive and resilient society while driving sustainable economic growth.

Besides that, the Union can count on participating in European Territorial Cooperation Programmes that is eligible, among others:

- [European Urban Initiative](#) is a program established by the European Union to support sustainable urban development across cities and towns in member states. It aims to enhance the capacity of cities to design and implement innovative solutions to urban challenges such as climate change, social inclusion, and digital transformation. The EUI provides funding, knowledge-sharing opportunities, and technical assistance to promote integrated, participatory urban development strategies. By fostering collaboration between cities and EU institutions, the initiative helps create more resilient, green, and inclusive urban environments, contributing to the long-term sustainable development goals of the European Union.

- The [LIFE Programme](#) is the EU's flagship funding instrument for the environment and climate action, with a dedicated sub-programme on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation. It supports small-scale, pilot, and demonstration projects that contribute to the implementation of EU climate and environmental policies. Of particular relevance are projects that integrate nature-based solutions, urban greening, and resilient mobility systems, especially in flood-prone or heat-vulnerable urban areas. LIFE promotes replicable solutions that combine green infrastructure with sustainable transport, aiming to deliver co-benefits for both people and ecosystems.

- [Horizon Europe – Cluster 5 "Climate, Energy and Mobility](#)". Horizon Europe, the EU's research and innovation programme (2021–2027), dedicates Cluster 5 to accelerating the twin green and digital transitions. This cluster focuses on developing systemic solutions for climate-neutral mobility, energy efficiency, and urban resilience. The programme supports large-scale, collaborative projects—including living labs, urban demonstrators, and technology pilots—that aim to redesign transport sys-

tems, decarbonise mobility, and strengthen adaptive capacity at urban and regional levels. It promotes cross-sectoral integration, involving climate adaptation, mobility planning, and clean energy.

- Interreg Central Europe is a European Union program designed to promote transnational cooperation among regions in Central Europe. It supports collaborative projects that address common challenges in areas such as innovation, sustainable energy, environmental protection, and transportation. The program fosters partnerships between public and private entities from multiple countries, encouraging knowledge exchange and joint solutions to regional issues. By facilitating cooperation across borders, Interreg Central Europe helps strengthen the cohesion and competitiveness of the participating regions, contributing to balanced economic development, improved regional integration, and the achievement of EU territorial cohesion objectives.

- Interreg EU-Med s a European Union program aimed at fostering transnational cooperation among Mediterranean regions. It promotes sustainable development, addresses environmental challenges, and enhances innovation and social inclusion across coastal and island communities. The program supports projects that encourage the transition to a low-carbon economy, protect natural resources, and promote resilient urban and rural development. By connecting public and private stakeholders across Mediterranean countries, Interreg EU-MED facilitates collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and joint solutions to common regional issues. Its ultimate goal is to strengthen the cohesion, sustainability, and competitiveness of the Mediterranean region.

- Interreg Italy-Croatia s a European Union cross-border cooperation program focused on fostering collaboration between Italy and Croatia along the Adriatic Sea. It aims to address shared challenges and opportunities in areas such as environmental protection, sustainable transport, cultural and natural heritage, and innovation. The program supports joint projects that improve maritime safety, protect coastal ecosystems, promote sustainable tourism, and enhance economic development in the region. By encouraging partnerships between public and private stakeholders, Interreg Italy-Croatia strengthens regional integration, boosts competitiveness, and contributes to balanced and sustainable growth in the cross-border area.

Finally, the Union can count on its own (ordinary and extraordinary) funds allocated to the Union per se or can activate singular municipal funds for specific purposes.

2.3.2. Institutional context

Institutionally speaking, the Romagna Faentina Union is a collector of different functions attributed to it by the six municipalities. The Union can count on a complex governance structure where functions are combined and managed by several sectors. Sustainable mobility, in particular, is managed by the "Economic development and smart city" sector. The sector performs functions to promote and support the development of the economy of the territory of the Union, ensuring support and backing for economic and research activities that are innovative and coherent with the vocation of the Union outlined in the Strategic Plan 2030, in collaboration with economic and social forces, including through the development and management of project initiatives from the perspective of the "Smart City" strategy, focused on citizen well-being, sustainability and resource efficiency, for the realisation of an "ecosystem" of local innovation, integrated with actions in the field of sustainable mobility. Other sectors that can support the implementation of ECONNECTING are: "Territory and Environment Sector", "Public Works Sector and Culture", "Tourism, Sport and International Policies Sector".

3

URBACT
Local Group

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) is an integral component of our urban planning project, tasked with facilitating community engagement, stakeholder collaboration, and decision-making processes pertaining to urban development initiatives within our locality. The ULG serves as a platform for diverse stakeholders to contribute their insights, expertise, and perspectives to inform urban planning decisions and ensure the inclusivity and sustainability of proposed projects.

3.1 Stakeholder mapping

The Union's ECONNECTING ULG is composed of multiple actors, whose involvement in the process of co-design of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) is fundamental to identifying strategies and action plans for the Union. The categories of actors respond to the territorial needs and forms of organisations based on a four-helix approach encompassing governmental sectors, NGOs, Education Sector and Economic Sector (Figure 4).
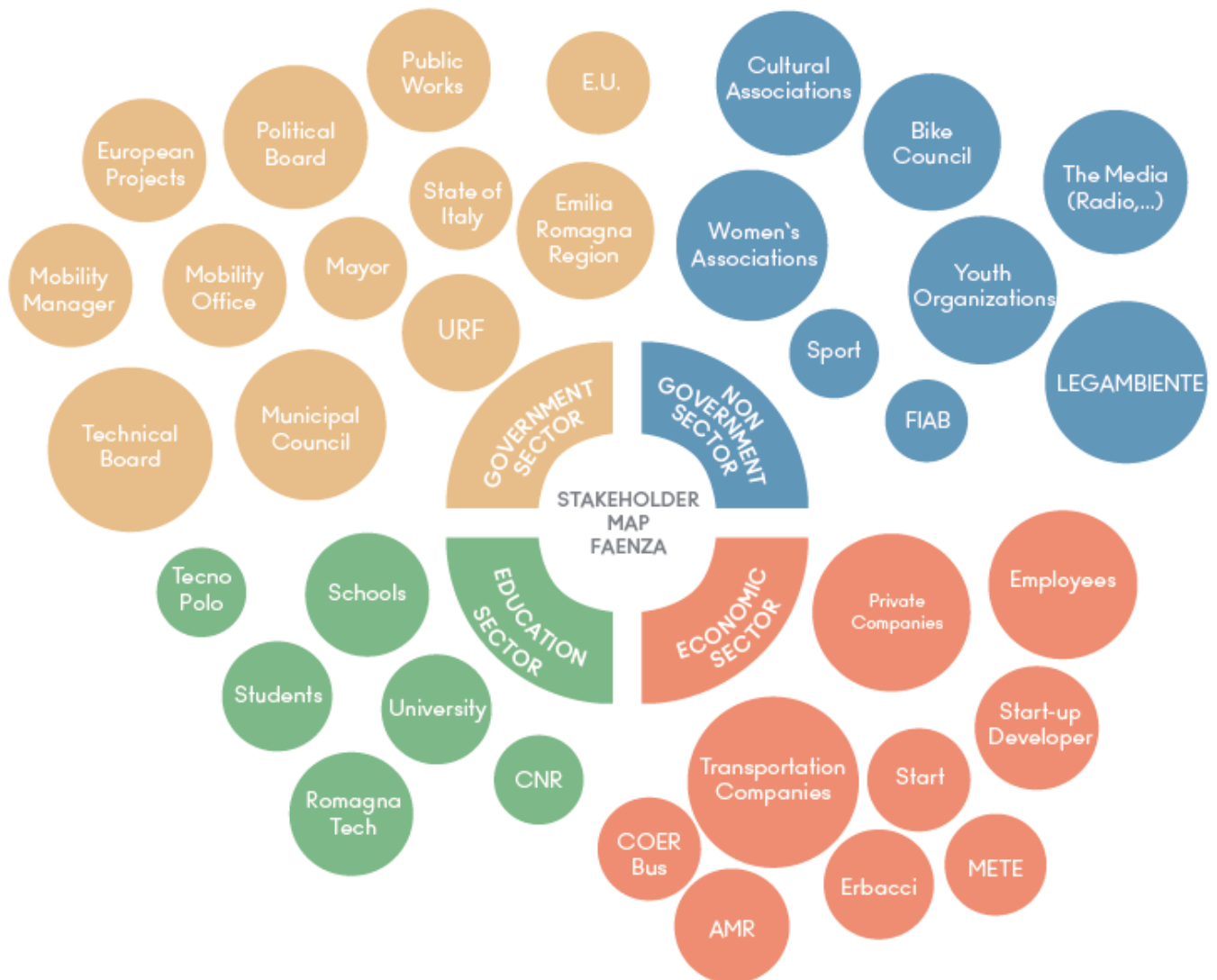
Figure 4 - Stakeholder Map of UGL of Romagna Faentina Union

Source: authors' own elaboration

After a preliminary mapping of actors, the ULG emerges as highly heterogeneous, which requests an ad hoc engagement process. The Union has intensively conducted bilateral meetings with a selection of actors to gauge their interests – by conducting semi-structured interviews, through which identifying the main thematic priorities and enlarge the mapping of actors.

3.2 Organization of ULG

The organisation of the ULG is particularly relevant. The ULG is structured in a manner that fosters effective communication, coordination, and collaboration among its members. This role is initially played by the administration of the Union in condominium with "La Consulta della Bicicletta".

Although not always necessary, the ULG might benefit from a figure who plays the role of leadership (i.e. chairperson or facilitator), oversees the group's activities, facilitates discussions, and ensures that all members can contribute their input. Even though the ULG is under construction, the approach adopted by the Union is expected to guide the ULG towards consensus-based decision-making and ensure that the group's objectives are aligned with the broader goals of the project.

As regards the role and responsibilities, the ULG benefits from identifying:
- Facilitator or facilitators: lead/s the ULG meetings, facilitate discussions, and ensure that all voices are heard (this might be the role of La Consulta supported by the Union).
- Technical Experts: provide specialised knowledge and expertise on sustainable mobility and urban planning.
- Community Representatives: advocate for the interests and concerns of local residents and communities affected by proposed urban development projects.
- Government Representatives: liaise between the ULG and relevant government agencies to ensure regulatory compliance and alignment with government policies and priorities (the Economic Development and Smart City Sector).

3.3 Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Outreach

The stakeholder engagement strategy for developing the IAP Area is designed to address diverse stakeholders, ensuring inclusive and participatory processes that amplify the voices of all beneficiaries. ULGs' participants (in particular the "Consulta della Bicicletta") are central to this approach, serving as dynamic intermediaries between local governments, citizens, and a broad array of stakeholders, including residents, passengers (i.e., students, tourists, etc.), entrepreneurs, and local institutions. By bridging the gap between technical planning and community needs, the ULG ensures that the IAP reflects the aspirations and priorities of those it seeks to serve. The Mobility Service of the Union strategically coordinates the activities internally – across the different Union functions such as public works and spatial planning – and externally by promoting active participation of the different interested groups (i.e., associations of citizens, schools, etc.).

The primary beneficiaries of the project are residents and passengers who rely on the area's infrastructure and services. Indirectly, local administration representatives, entrepreneurs, and cultural institutions benefit from the IAP as it serves as a roadmap for development. These stakeholders, alongside schools and cultural institutions, will experience enhanced accessibility, enriched public spaces, and improved infrastructure that promote social inclusion and quality of life. The action planning process and Small-Scale Actions identified during the project (the one in Riolo Terme and Faenza) have been tailored to address the needs of these groups. For example, planned interventions such as renovated spaces quality (Riolo Terme) and improved mobility infrastructure (Faenza) enhance safety and quality of life for multiple social categories.

According to the logic of the URBACT, the IAP's collaborative governance model emphasises partners-

hips between local administrations, entrepreneurs, and representatives from cultural and educational sectors. In this respect, the ULG play a crucial role in fostering this cooperation by mobilising community input, facilitating participatory consultations, and ensuring that the planning and implementation phases of the IAP remain grounded in local realities. This inclusive framework enables the development of sustainable, community-focused solutions that support accessibility, cultural engagement, and spatial improvements while fostering a sense of ownership among all stakeholders. Through these concerted efforts, the IAP not only transforms the area's physical landscape, but it also strengthens its social and cultural fabric, ensuring long-term benefits for the community at large (Figure 5).
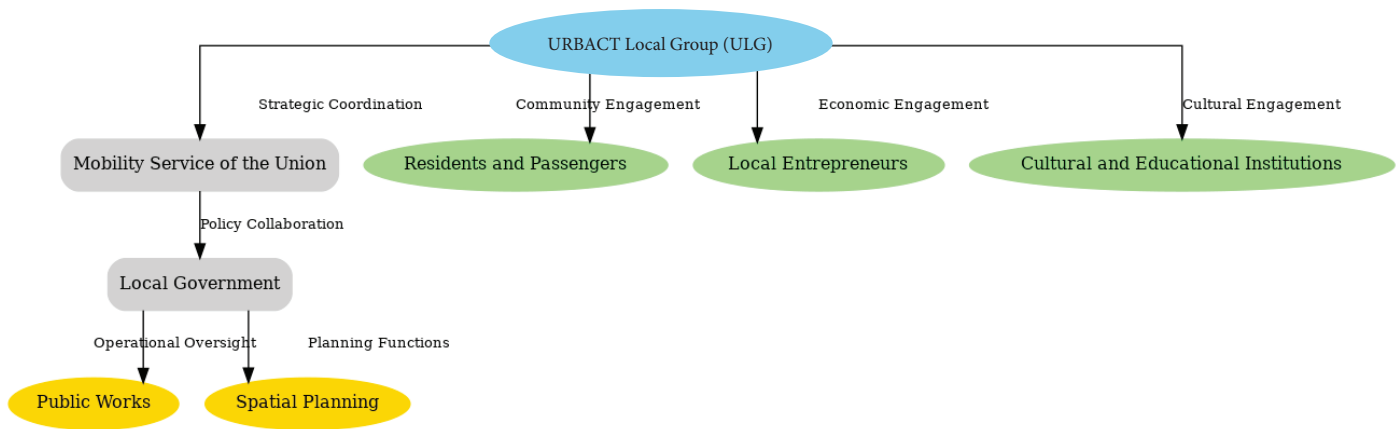
Figure 5 - Stakeholder Engagement Rational

Source: authors' own elaboration

3.4 Planning Process

The planning process that the Union activated by the ULG is characterised by a series of collaborative workshops, consultations, and deliberations aimed at gathering input, generating ideas, and formulating strategies to address urban development challenges and opportunities. These workshops typically involve a combination of presentations, interactive activities, group discussions, and brainstorming sessions to foster creativity, innovation, and consensus-building among participants.

According to the project phases (Figure 6), the key components of the planning process include:

- Needs Assessment: identifying and prioritising the needs, aspirations, and concerns of local communities through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. This activity has already started with interviewing the first actors.

- Visioning and Goal Setting: developing a shared vision for the locality's future and establishing clear goals and objectives to guide urban development efforts (here are some tools: Brain-storming, Open Space Technology, Visual design, SWOT, STEEP and mapping, CODEMA[2].

- Scenario Planning: exploring alternative scenarios and strategies for achieving the established goals, considering factors such as land use, transportation, infrastructure, and sustainability.

- Action Planning: Formulating action plans and implementation strategies to translate the vision and goals into tangible projects, policies, and initiatives.

2　　　CODEMA (Collaborative Decision Making) is a serious game that allows to explore serious game solutions for policy design, participatory processes, team building, negotiation tables and stakeholders engagement.

- Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing mechanisms for monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, and adapting plans as needed, to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.
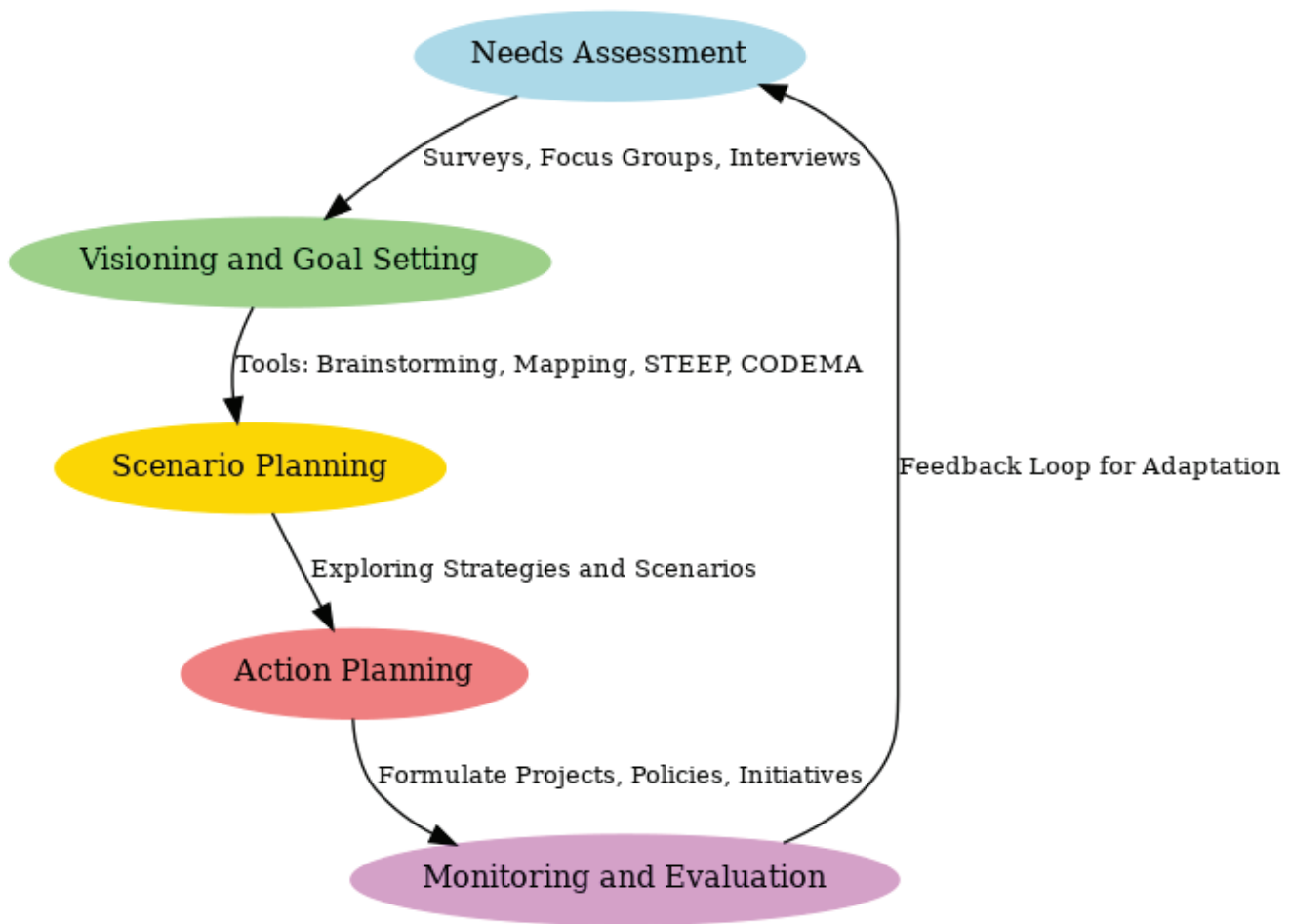
Figure 6 - Project Phases and Rational

Source: authors' own elaboration

To achieve the mentioned objectives, the ULG has agreed on the following plan of activities. More specifically, the ULG organised 10 meetings (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).

- 1 Introductory Meeting – that took place in Faenza;

- 8 Co-design workshops, 2 for each thematic issue;

- 1 conclusive Meeting, aiming at presenting the final results of the activities conducted.

1] KICK-OFF MEETING

2] Workshop 1

3] Workshop 2

January 2024

February 2024

March 2024

4] Workshop 3

April 2024

May 2024

June 2024

July 2024

5] Workshop 4

6] Workshop 5

7] Workshop 6

September 2024

8] Workshop

January 2025

October 2024

10] CLOSING MEETING

9] Workshop 8

10 TOTAL MEETINGS
↳ *8 U.L.G.'s workshops*

12 BLUEPRINT DESIGNED BY THE U.L.G.

1/2 SMALL SCALE ACTIONS
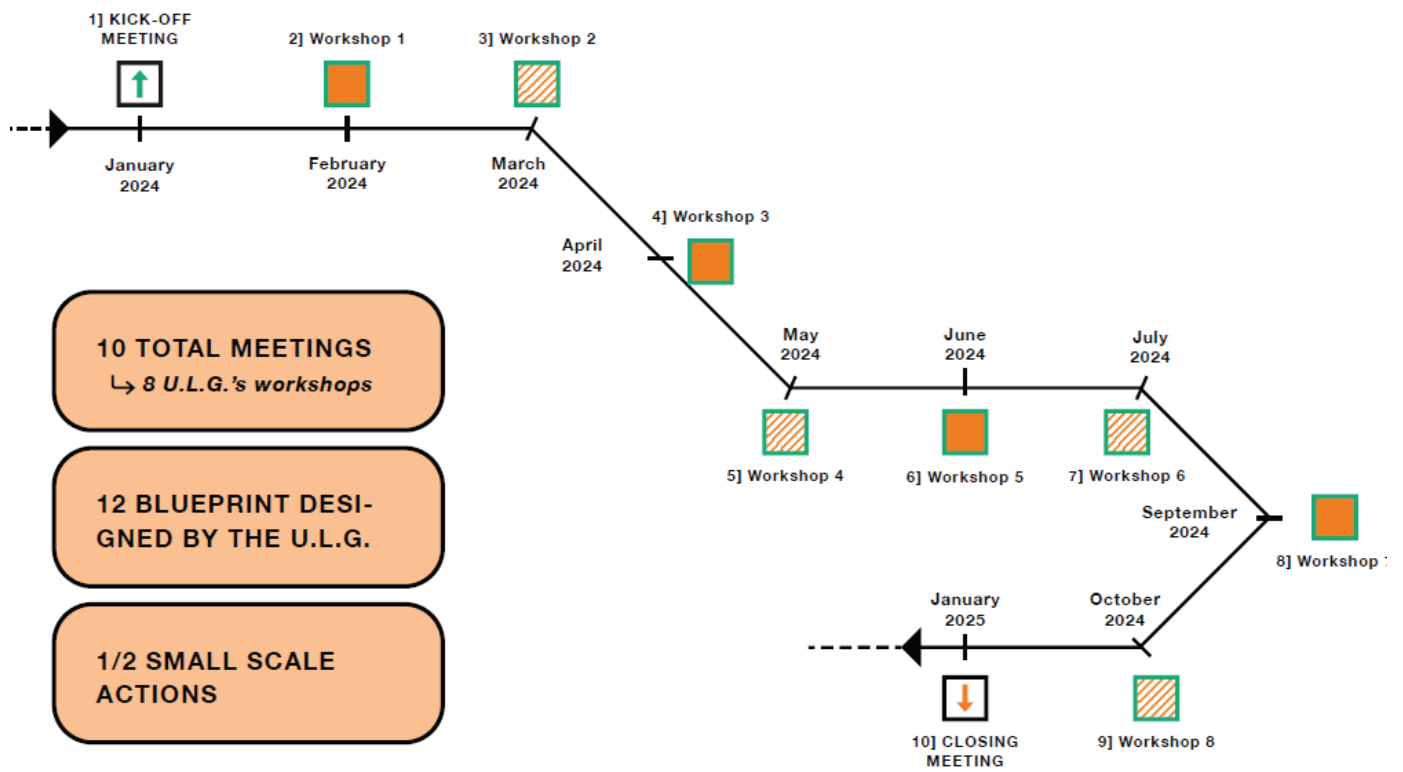
Figure 7 - Public Participation Plan and Meetings

Source: authors' own elaboration

1] KICK-OFF MEETING
Presentation of the ULG's work program and first approach to the workshop's participatory model.

A
30-minutes Territories

2] WORKSHOP N.1
Territorial analysis and co-design activation

3] WORKSHOP N.2
Co-design of three "blueprint actions"

B
Green Communities

4] WORKSHOP N.3
Territorial analysis and co-design activation

5] WORKSHOP N.4
Co-design of three "blueprint actions"

C
Accessible and welcoming cities

6] WORKSHOP N.5
Territorial analysis and co-design activation

7] WORKSHOP N.6
Co-design of three "blueprint actions"

D
Good governance for proximity territory

8] WORKSHOP N.7
Territorial analysis and co-design activation

9] WORKSHOP N.8
Co-design of three "blueprint actions"

10] CLOSING MEETING
Closure of the participatory process and presentation of achieved insights and results.

Figure 8 - Participation Process and Topics

Source: authors' own elaboration

As an example, the first event organised by the ULG had the objective to present the project to the local community and explore the potentialities of URBACT (Figure 9). The agenda included:
- A brief presentation on the URBACT Programme.
- An introduction of the ECONNECTING project.
- A list of good practices from Cesena Municipality.
- A preliminary discussion on the interviews campaign.
- Role-play and brainstorming.

ORIO DI ATTIVAZIONE DEGLI STRUMENTI PARTECIPATIVI
ALISI DEL TERRITORIO

Obiettivo: costruire cre... ...n attore
del territorio – imm... ...erosimile) – che vo...
ritenete rilevante... ...in un percorso
partecipativo

CAMBIARE IL
PUNTO DI VISTA

...olo hai nel tuo settore?

...o è quello di ....

...sindaco, ..)

...zione

URBACT

1| Settore di appartenenza:

○ Operatori econom...
(imprese, indu...
profession...

○ Terzo...
(es. a...
coop...

○ Pub...

○ Cittadini/e in generale

...o approccio rispetto alla co-pr...

Pragmatico   ○ Innovatore

Sognatore   ○ Demolitore di idee

○

Note

4

The IAP Sites and Analysis

4.1 The IAP Sites and Analysis

Considering the institutional configuration of the Romagna Faentina Union, the IAP is interested in the area that encompasses all six administrations (Figure 10). Throughout the participatory process, indeed, participants unanimously agreed on the importance of considering the entire territory of the Union. This consideration was based on the awareness that mobility and territorial accessibility cannot be solved locally (i.e., at the level of a single administration of neighbourhood) but, conversely, has to be tackled at the Union level. Here are some reasons identified:

Existing transport infrastructure affects mobility and accessibility. The spatial configuration of the existing transport infrastructure cannot be changed/modified only locally but a wider approach is needed.

Primary public services are arranged and organised at the Union level. As the spatial distribution of these kinds of services also affects the fluxes, it is paramount to ensure the correct scale.

Strategic dimensions: the IAP has a strategic nature, so – localising interventions could potentially affect its implementation. This can be done, only when it comes to work at the small-scale action level.

Figura 1.1: Unione della Romagna Faentina
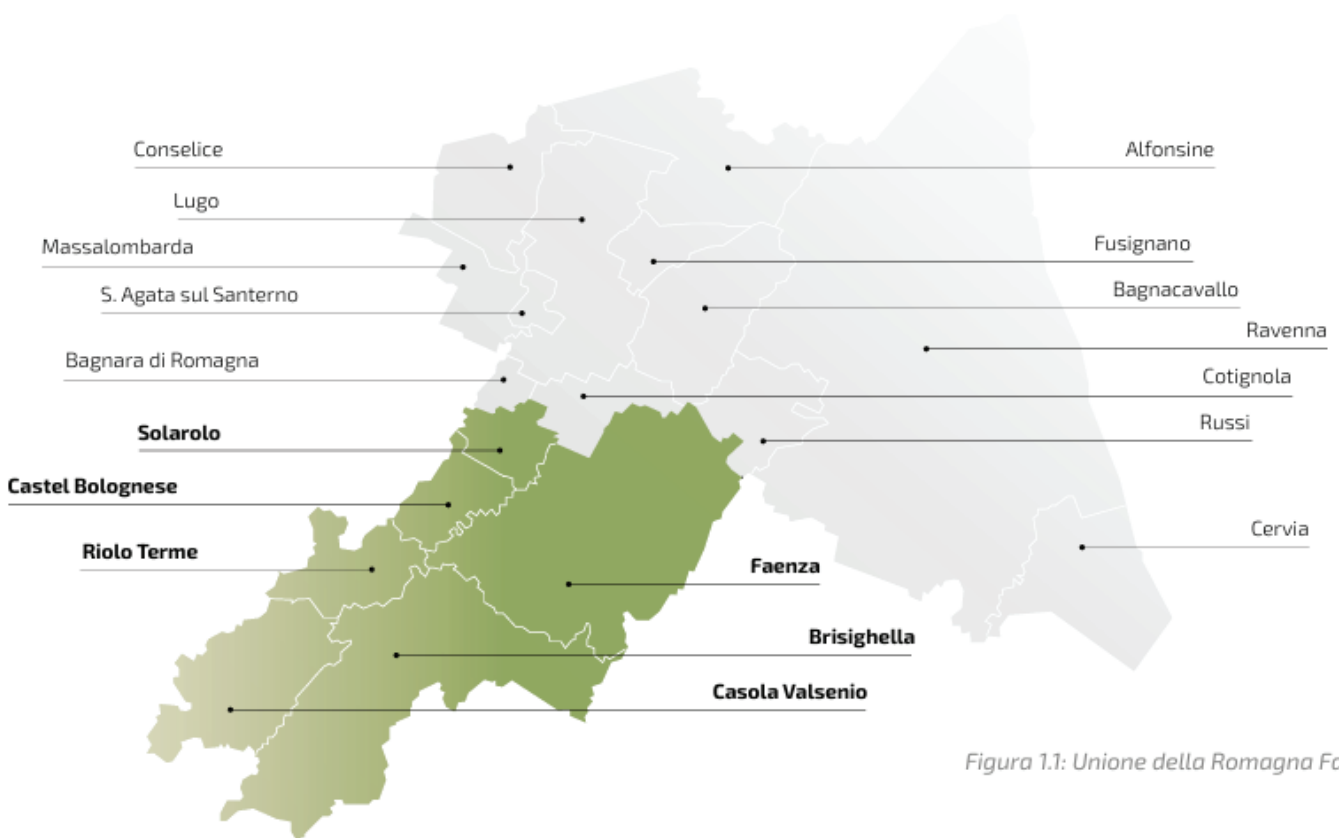
Figure 10 - Geographical coverage of the Union

Source: authors' own elaboration

The integrated approach to promote sustainable territorial accessibility is operationalised by the elaboration of multiple maps that represent its different aspects.

As the Union is activating a series of initiatives to improve accessibility, one of the focal points is to highlight the existing soft mobility infrastructure and those planned according to the current Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (see Figure 11). The figure also reports the presence of what are called green and blue infrastructure corridors aiming at identifying potential synergies to be explored.
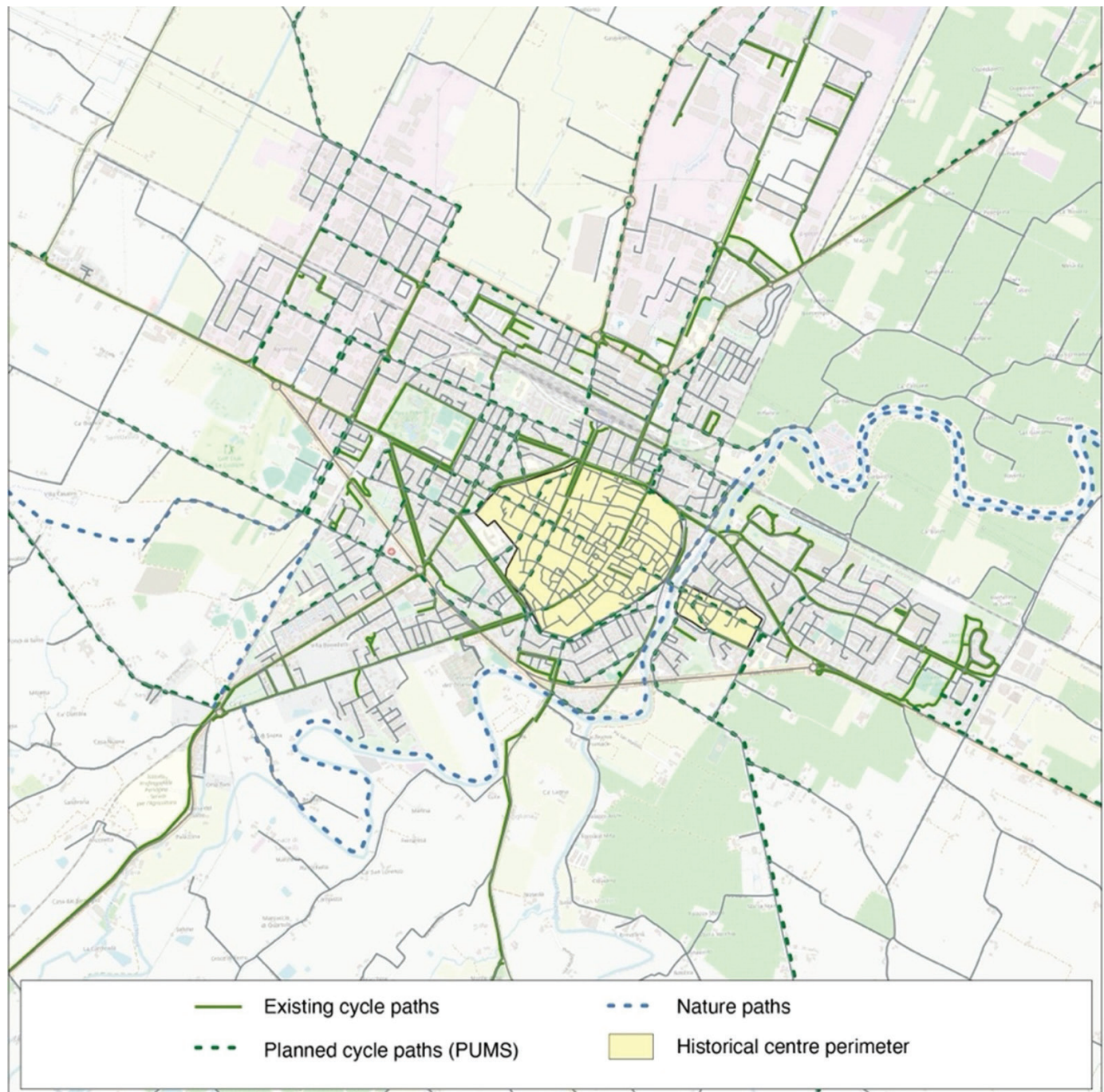
Figure 11 - Existing and Planned Cycle Paths

Source: authors' own elaboration

Mobility is influenced by several factors including the organisation of the existing public services in the territory. To understand the current organisation of the Union-based services, it has been considered highly important to map those public services that affect, directly or indirectly, the territorial fluxes by their uses, like public schools, healthcare services and sports facilities.

Public schools, ranging from kindergarten to high school, play a significant role in citizens' mobility patterns, as their geographical locations influence whether citizens opt for private cars or rely on public transportation services provided by municipalities (Figure 12).
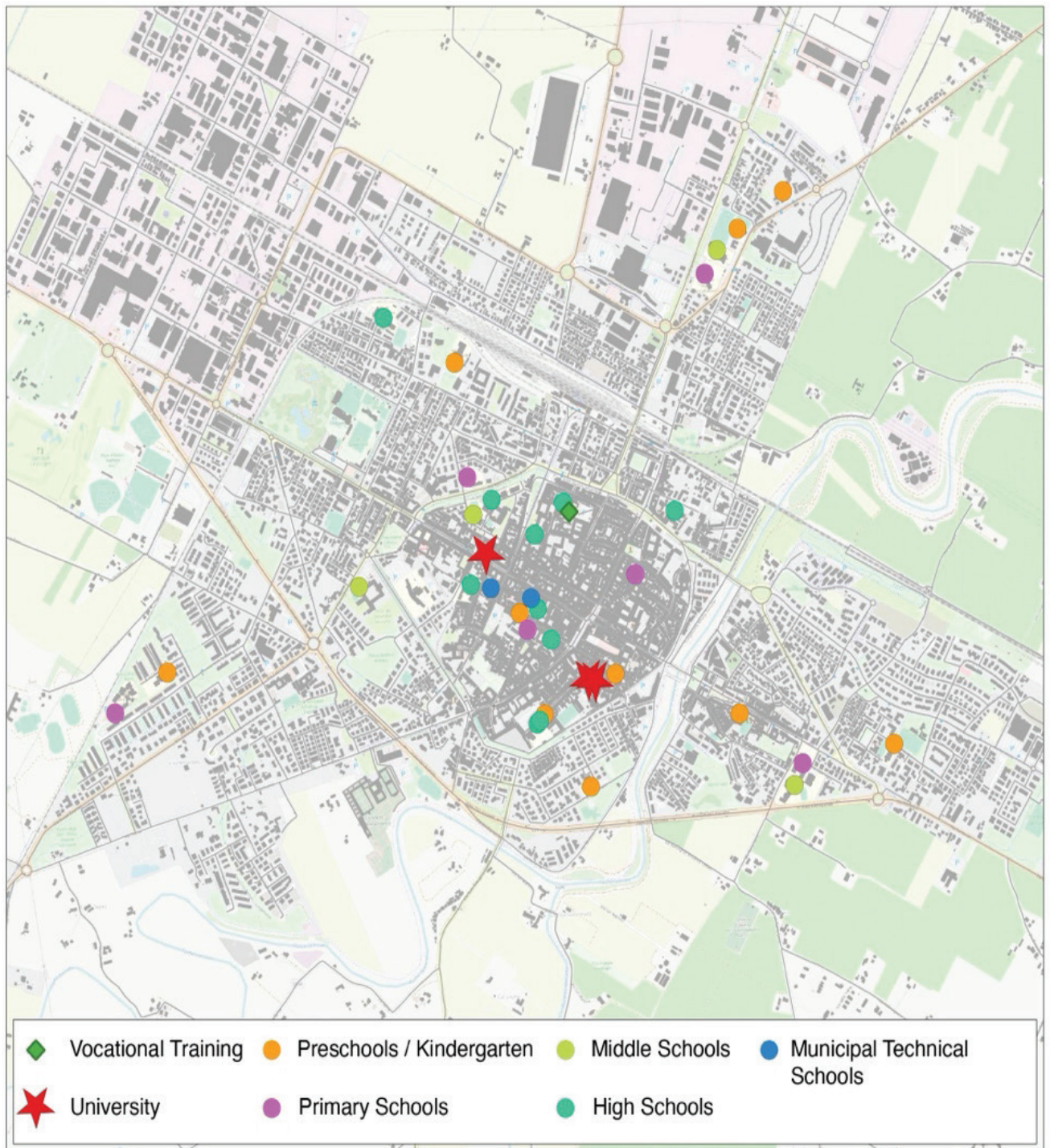
Figure 12 Main Educational

Source: authors' own elaboration

Figure 13 instead maps the primary healthcare services and sports facilities, healthcare services including pharmacies and family doctors. These services are crucial for specific categories of citizens, as the spatial distribution of these primary care services can significantly impact their daily movements, both within and outside urban areas. Yet significantly, sports facilities contribute to the daily traffic in urban areas or outside in specific parts of the day/week.
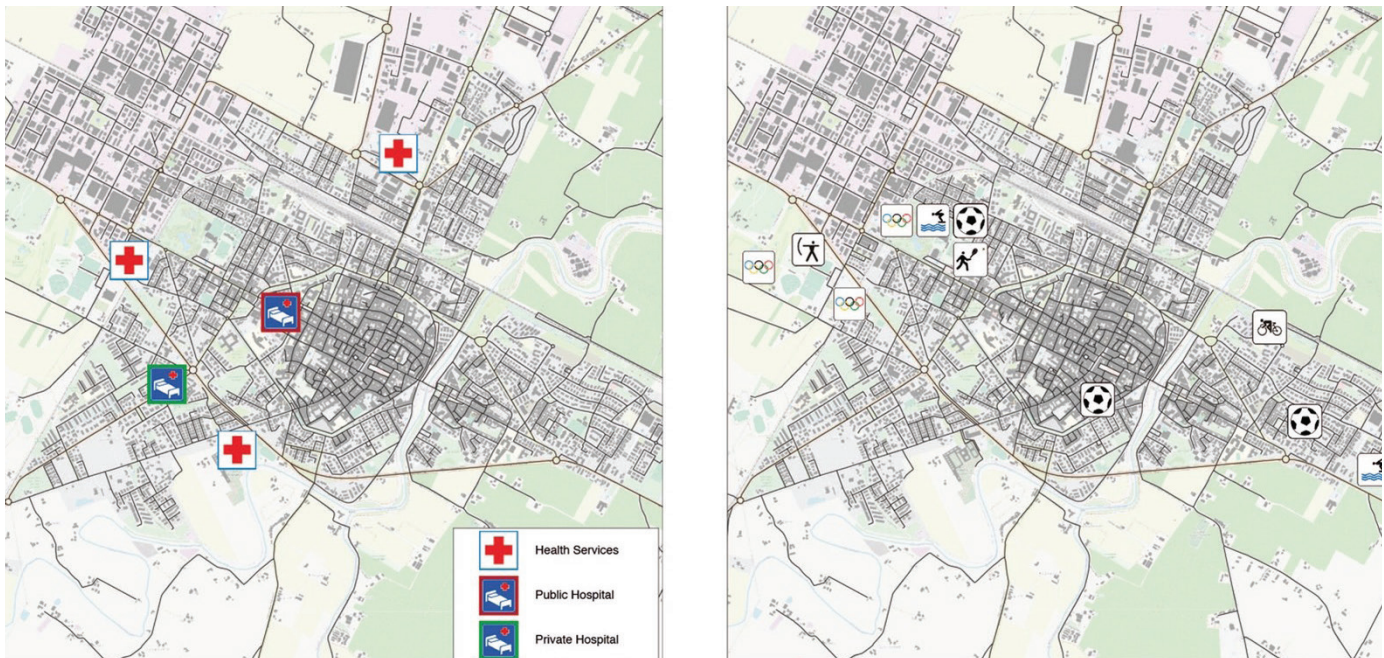
Figure 13 Healthcare services and sport facilities

Source: authors' own elaboration

4.2 Emerging Topics

During the co-creative planning process that we have conducted with the ULG, we defined the following emerging topics, that summarize the challenges and potentials of our regional territory.

To achieve the 30-minute territories, the issues highlighted are:

- Network continuity is particularly relevant within urban settlements. In the Union, it is particularly relevant to connect the industrial areas with the cities' centres and main mobility hubs/networks.

- Integrating networks with existing paths (existing ecological paths like the natural park of Vena del Gesso, for instance) is particularly relevant to the connection between urban nodes.

- Design streetscapes that prioritise pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users by providing wide sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, and well-connected pathways. This affects safety perception and might impact their usage.

- Alternative paths to main roads connecting some urban nodes (i.e. Faenza and Castel Bolognese)

To achieve a Green Community, seems necessary:

- Promote a policy integration approach towards an eco-friendlier and zero carbon society. It is not possible to have sustainable mobility in an (un)sustainable society.

- Engage community members, stakeholders, and local businesses in the planning and implementation of sustainable mobility initiatives through outreach, workshops, and public forums.

- Educate residents about the benefits of sustainable transportation choices, including improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and enhanced public health and quality of life.

- Foster a sustainable mobility culture by promoting active transportation events, campaigns, and initiatives that encourage walking, cycling, and public transit use.

To achieve an Accessible and Welcoming City, it is important to:

- Rising social awareness about social diversities and individual needs. The territory must be able to offer tailored solutions to specific usage needs.

- Rising social awareness about sustainable mobility. Activating ad hoc training measures dedicated to multiple citizens/user categories.

- Design the mobility system for urban and rural citizens, visitors (short and long-term tourists), and commuters.

Good governance can be achieved by:

- Promoting open, transparent and fair decision-making processes

- Promoting (co)responsibility and co-production of products and services. Citizens are seen simultaneously as producers and consumers of services, while public authority supervises the process.

- Promote cross-sectoral and multilevel governance integration. This former is relevant to overcome the silos approach connecting different public sectors while the latter ensures vertical integration with EU, national, regional and local priorities.

Based on the above issues, the following figure presents a short list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Effective and well-structured multilevel governance • Strong external connectivity (railway & motorway) • Active stakeholder engagement (ULG & co-design) • Aligned strategic frameworks (PUMS, Strategic Plan 2030)	• Fragmented cycling network, esp. rural areas • High dependence on private cars (64% of trips) • Weak public transport coverage/frequency • Post-flood isolation in some areas
Opportunities	Threats
• Alignment with EU/national sustainable mobility strategies • Diverse funding sources (ERDF, Interreg, PNRR) • Rising public awareness on active mobility • Tourism and natural assets (e.g., Vena del Gesso Park)	• Misalignment among needs, politics, and funding • Community resistance to car-use reduction • Digital divide limits adoption of tools • Climate shocks (e.g., flooding) • Long-term commitment challenges

Figure 14 - SWOT Analysis of the Romagna Faentina Union

Source: authors' own elaboration

4.3 Local challenges and potentials

Based on the information provided, it can be concluded that the Romagna Faentina Union faces internal disconnection, particularly from its surrounding rural areas. The lack of sustainable mobility infrastructure, such as bike lanes and sidewalks, hinders connectivity between rural areas and the center of Faenza, as well as between other urban nodes within the Union.

High levels of motorized traffic on main roads contribute to air pollution and carbon emissions, with private cars accounting for 64% of all trips. Additionally, limited bus services during peak hours and challenges in promoting public transportation further exacerbate accessibility issues, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women, low-income individuals, children, and people with reduced mobility. Certain rural areas, notably around Brisighella and Solarolo, remain isolated due to flooding in spring 2023.

5

Strategy, Vision and Goals

5.1 Project Vision

In envisioning the future, the Union aspires to activate a community where reliance on private cars diminishes, and sustainable modes of transportation flourish. This vision is one of interconnectedness, where robust infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians weaves seamlessly throughout the landscapes, erasing mobility barriers and fostering spatial continuity.

At the centre of the vision lies a commitment to promoting sustainable mobility as a cornerstone of our collective well-being. By prioritizing the enhancement of public transportation accessibility, particularly in rural areas, the Union aims to empower vulnerable groups and elevate the quality of life for all members of our community. Through inclusive planning and implementation, good and fair governance, the Union envisions a transportation network that catalyzes social equity, enabling every individual to access essential services and opportunities with ease and dignity.

In navigating this journey towards a more resilient, equitable and green future, the Union remains steadfast in its dedication to those most impacted by adversity. By directing the focus and resources towards areas affected by natural disasters, such as flooding, we pledge to address their specific mobility challenges and facilitate their recovery.

In this vision, it emerges a thriving Union where sustainable mobility transcends mere transportation — it becomes a catalyst for social cohesion, environmental stewardship, and collective prosperity. The idea is to embark on a transformative journey, forging pathways to a brighter, more inclusive future for future generations.

To conclude, the overall objectives are:

• to reduce dependence on private cars by enhancing infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, thereby bridging existing gaps in the network.

• to promote and incentivise a sustainable mobility is deemed essential, focusing on improving public transportation accessibility, especially in rural areas, to empower vulnerable groups and enhance overall quality of life.

• to support areas affected by the flooding, prioritising efforts to address their specific mobility challenges.

• To improve the public space and walkability of the territory of the Union

In so doing, the Union aims to become a space of resilience where the multiple transitions we are undergoing can occur by ensuring no one is left behind.

5.2 Project's Goals

The project has the objective of enhancing the 30-minute territories approach. To transform the Union's existing territorial organisation towards the 30-minute territories paradigm, it is necessary to (ri)define the geographical distribution of essential services by coherently spreading them to the community needs. This reduces unnecessary travel and allows citizens to benefit from it. In addition, a 30-minute territory can be achieved by promoting interchange (i.e., a multi-modal transportation system) by facilitating sustainable mobility solutions.

Also, it promotes a shift from grey to the green community, educating residents on sustainable practices and involving them in decision-making processes. Efficient public mobility is one of the pillars of establishing and consolidating a green community, which, however, should be integrated with sectoral policies like those related to energy efficiency, green infrastructure, and waste reduction initiatives.

Also, accessible and Welcoming Cities are envisaged to create urban environments that are inclusive, safe, and accessible to all residents and visitors, regardless of their age, ability, or background. This involves increasing walkability by designing cities with barrier-free infrastructure, accessible public transportation, and inclusive public spaces that accommodate people with disabilities, the elderly, and other marginalised groups. The initiative also aims to foster a sense of community by promoting social inclusion, diversity, and equal opportunities. By prioritising accessibility and inclusivity, cities can become more livable, welcoming, and equitable for everyone.

Finally, it aims at good governance and good citizens. This goal encapsulates the reciprocal relationship between effective governance and engaged citizenship. Accordingly, while good governance involves transparent, accountable leadership that upholds the rule of law and serves the interests of all citizens, active and responsible citizens participate in civic life, hold authorities accountable, and contribute to improving their communities. This synergy between governance and citizenship forms the bedrock of a vibrant and democratic society where trust, cooperation, and collective action thrive for the common good.

5.3 Strategic Objectives

The overall objective is to promote a more efficient, place-based, integrated mobility system in the Romagna Faentina Union. More specifically, to address interconnections between urban nodes and within them, it is paramount to adopt an integrated approach that can facilitate the introduction of a strategy incorporating various models of transportation systems, infrastructure networks, technologies, and innovative policies, while ensuring comprehensive stakeholder involvement. With this in mind, the integrated approach takes into account and supports:

- **Coherent infrastructure planning.** In this respect, the geographical and geomorphological characteristics of the Union context significantly impact the possibilities of developing a comprehensive infrastructure system. To ensure efficient movement and accessibility for all users, however, it seems paramount to design infrastructure that supports multiple modes of transportation, such as dedicated lanes for buses and bicycles, well-connected transit hubs, and pedestrian-friendly pathways. The enhancement of a multimodal transportation system. Accordingly, the integration combines various modes of transportation, including walking, cycling, public transit, ride-sharing, and private vehicles, into a seamless network. This allows individuals to choose the most efficient and sustainable mode of travel for their needs. This is paramount when cultivating a more responsible and mature community that is aware of the impact of choices.

- **User-centric design.** By activating a participatory process, the Union seeks to prioritise user-sensitive policies. This approach focuses on the needs of individuals and communities to ensure that mobility solutions are accessible, affordable, and inclusive for all demographics, including seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income populations.

Coherent infrastructure, a multimodal transportation system, and user-centric design represent the principles of this strategy. Accordingly, the vision defines the following strategic objectives:

- Reduce dependency on private mobility systems by offering alternative options and solutions.

- Provide public mobility services for all territories and citizens by ensuring that all needs are covered and providing ad hoc services/solutions when possible.

- Promote a paradigmatic shift from private to public mobility services by activating ad hoc communication initiatives.

- Reorganisation of public services to reduce unnecessary travel.

Activating ad hoc communication activities as a primary objective is considered important in supporting the achievement of the four mentioned objectives. Following the principle that "we are what we communicate", the communication campaign is expected to target citizens (the consumers) and institutions (the producers) involved in mobility as a public service. Moreover, communication initiatives must be adapted according to the nature of the adopted policy, the territory involved, and the categories of citizens being targeted. The combination of the four mentioned goals and an additional one could accompany the Union in improving public transportation accessibility, particularly in rural areas, to empower vulnerable groups and enhance their overall quality of life. This approach can also serve as a solution for supporting areas affected by flooding, prioritising efforts to address their specific mobility challenges. Finally, an important cross-cutting element is the contribution of sustainable mobility solutions to the recovery and regeneration of territories recently affected by climate-induced disasters. By investing in inclusive, climate-resilient transport infrastructure, the Union seeks to both restore functionality and enhance the long-term liveability of these areas. This includes public space redesign, modal integration, and participatory approaches tailored to post-emergency contexts.

5.4 Challenges for implementation

Based on the mentioned territorial issues and potentialities of the Union concerning the topic of sustainable mobility, at this stage, the following aspects need to be prioritised:

- Building an effective ULG can become a trustworthy and operative arena when all interests are represented. Its engagement and complete operability could become a problem after the project's lifetime.

- Non-alignment between local needs emerged during the co-design of participatory workshops, political desires and funding opportunities.

- Idiosyncrasy between fast and easy solutions and complex problems. Communities should be prepared accordingly.

To overcome this challenge, the Union is taking the following countermeasures:

- In building the ULG, the Union activates an open and transparent process by creating a living room for integrating new actors (snowball approach).

- To limit the rise and fall of local activists, the Union aims to empower local communities and stakeholders by involving them in decision-making processes and giving them ownership over project initiatives and outcomes:

- To ensure alignment and consistency among objectives and effective ability to achieve them, the Union adopts a multiple and integrated perspective by creating political convergence among different levels and municipalities.

- To avoid a disconnect between local needs and project possibilities, the Union is strongly working with the ULG to identify specific priorities that are coherent with the primary sectoral documents already in place.

5.5 Integration of the URBACT cross-cutting principles

ECONNECTING has embraced the three cross-cutting principles — gender equality, digital transformation, and the green transition — to ensure inclusive, innovative, and environmentally responsible urban policies. These principles are integrated into all aspects of the project, influencing city strategies, local action plans, and governance structures.

Gender equality — throughout the project activities, ECONNECTING has ensured a gender-balanced public participation. Indeed, when possible, the project has engaged diverse stakeholders involving women, non-binary individuals, and underrepresented groups in decision-making processes.

Digital Transformation — a cornerstone of URBACT's vision for future-ready cities, the project recognizes the potential of digital tools to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and innovation in urban governance and service delivery. ECONNECTING also underscores the importance of bridging the digital divide, ensuring that marginalised groups, including the elderly and economically disadvantaged, are not left behind in the shift to smarter cities.

Green Transition — this principle aligns with Europe's overarching climate objectives, particularly the European Green Deal. To meet this objective, ECONNECTING is supposed to implement sustainable solutions like sustainable mobility systems reducing accessibility gaps.

By embracing these strategies, cities can effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the URBACT cross-cutting principles, fostering inclusive, innovative, and sustainable urban development.

5.6 Logical Framework

Emerging Topics

Give to citizens full information about different mobility modes (services & paths)

Integrating network with existing paths

Design streetscapes to prioritize pedestrians

Alternative paths to main roads connecting urban nodes

Promote policy integration for zero carbon society

Engage community members, stakeholders, and local businesses in the planning and implementation of sustainable mobility initiatives

Educate residents about the benefits of sustainable transportation choices

Foster a sustainable mobility culture by promoting active transportation events, campaigns, and initiatives that encourage walking, cycling, and public transit use

Rising social awareness about social diversities and individual needs. The territory must be able to offer tailored solutions

Rising social awareness about sustainable mobility

Design the mobility system for urban and rural citizens, and commuters

Promoting open, transparent and fair decision-making processes

Promoting (co)responsibility and co-production of products and services

Promote cross-sectoral and multilevel governance integration. Connecting different public sectors ensures vertical integration with EU, national, regional and local priorities

Strategic Objectives

Towards a 30-Minute Territory: Redesigning Mobility and Service Distribution

Fostering Sustainable Communities

Accessibility and Inclusion: Sustainable Mobility and Public Space Innovations

Governance and Quality of Proximity Places

Long List of Integrated Actions

Digital Mapping

Multi-modal Mobility Totems

We communicate: Faenza's Industrial area Mobility Network

Transport-on-demand services

Digital Rural Hub

A connected Union

Connecting knowledge

Passa e Molla – Safety School Islands

Car-free Borgo

Biking the territory: Network of velostations

Bike to work

Bike to school

New Bike Path for Via Fratelli Rosselli

NET: networks for a mobility welfare

Cooperative competition call

Biciplan

6

Small-Scale Actions

The project plans to experiment with three small-scale actions. The first has been implemented in Riolo Terme in October 2024 (section 6.1), the second will be released in Faenza in September 2025 (section 6.2) and the third will be implemented in autumn 2025 (6.3). This section presents the main characteristics and assumptions of a Small-Scale Action (SSA) within the ECONNECTING project. The main objectives of the SSA were:

- to prototype an instance that emerged from the previous participatory process by creating an initiative capable of reactivating a public space.

- to carry out the above-mentioned targeted action of reactivating a public space through an event.

- Use the stimulus of the event as an opportunity to open a dialogue and generate reflections.

6.1 Small Scale Actions "Una Piazza al Cubo"

The "Una piazza al cubo" event took place on 12th October 2024, for the entire day, in Piazza Ivo Mazzanti, in front of the Riolo Terme Fortress, through the organisation of a participatory workshop aimed at citizens and visitors of Riolo Terme to discuss and imagine possible new uses for the square. The workshop event promoted by the Municipality of Riolo Terme and the Romagna Faentina Union allowed citizens and visitors to imagine a new square for the town in a participatory manner. Therefore, for the duration of the event, a municipal ordinance completely pedestrianised the square (with the suspension of parking bays and the prohibition of vehicular passage except for frontage road users).

The challenge was not simply to remove the cars from the square for a day, but to demonstrate how the space could be experienced differently. The creative workshop consisted of the free arrangement of 200 white cardboard cubes, designed as a simple and versatile device to engage the community, with the idea to create a collective workshop outdoors, with a strong visual impact, but at the same time playful and accessible. The facilitators present invited people to interact with the cubes, freely and creatively arranging these volumes to form imaginative shapes (pyramids, tunnels, small houses), or to simulate some possible furnishings of the square (tables, benches, trees). The presence of these objects made it possible to attract the attention of passers-by and animate the sociability of this space and, as well as transforming the physical space, stimulated spontaneous interaction between the participants, including children and adults. More than 100 participants, the majority of them residents of the city centre, were thus able to interact with these shapes and try their hand at building their square, through creative and collaborative experimentation. Also, an info-point was set up to illustrate the objectives of the workshop and provide, in a structured manner, useful elements for discussion, together with a notice board allowed people to participate in the discussion about the possible future use of the square, leaving comments and suggestions. In this regard, people were engaged by the facilitators through three key questions: To make a square and a living centre, what do we need? What do we put in the square? Who is this


Figure 15 - Creative orkshop on setting up a solution for the decoration of the square in Riolo Terme

place for? Many proposals were made to make the square a living and experienced space, starting with the desire to favour pedestrian space and reduce the presence of cars on the square. All objectives to reappropriate a space to make it the 'living room of the city': a meeting point, within a beautiful and quality space for all. The event attracted interest and showed how a residual square could be transformed into a living space. Interestingly, there were no complaints about traffic closures or lack of parking spaces, a positive sign that the initiative was accepted. The first advice is to start a structured debate on the future of the space, going beyond simply removing cars. The SSA showed how it is possible, from this experience, to start a structured debate on the future of the space, going beyond simply removing cars and imagining new and meaningful uses to reactivate the square.

6.2 Small Scale Action "Via Fratelli Rosselli"
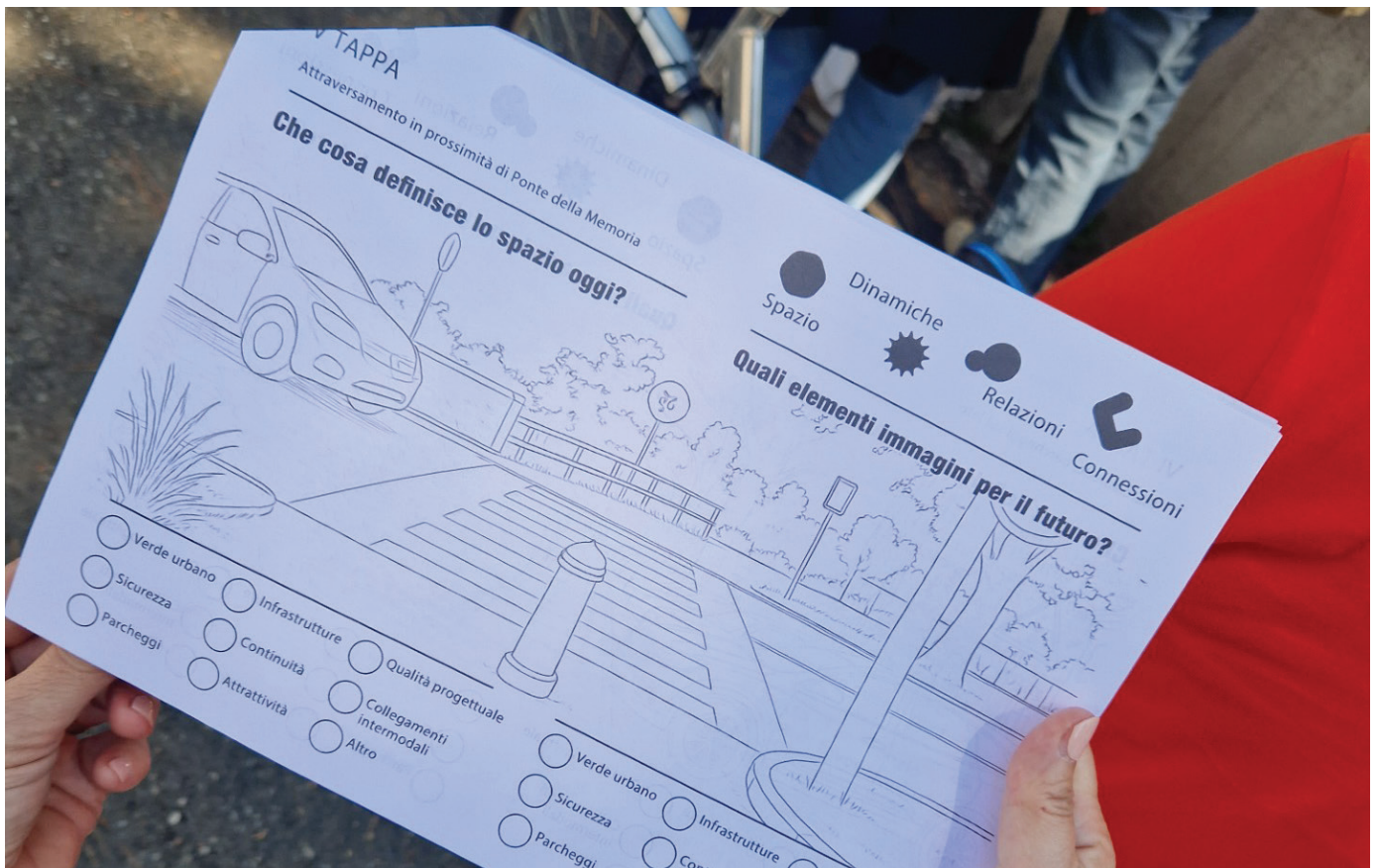
The second small-scale action aims to temporarily revitalise Via Fratelli Rosselli in Faenza by experimenting with tactical urbanism interventions. This urban segment has been frequently criticised for the poor quality and functionality of its existing bikeway infrastructure, which is often perceived as impractical, unsafe, and largely underused. These shortcomings significantly compromise the street's role in promoting active mobility and inclusive urban accessibility. The proposed action seeks to address these critical issues by engaging local stakeholders and mobilising community resources in a co-design process focused on rethinking the layout and functions of the street. In particular, the intervention will concentrate on testing a new model of bicycle infrastructure that is safe, inclusive, and truly user-friendly. The overarching goal is to transform the bikeway into a fully accessible and attractive corridor that responds to the needs of diverse users, encourages daily cycling, and contributes to a broader vision of sustainable urban mobility. By activating the street through participatory, low-cost, and reversible design solutions, the project also aims to stimulate civic engagement and support long-term improvements in urban liveability. More in detail, The collective test adopts a tactical urbanism approach to experiment with a new configuration of the street section along Via Fratelli Rosselli. The goal is to reflect together on the effectiveness of the intervention and to understand what changes in terms of cycling infrastructure and the overall quality of public space. The event aims to publicly showcase the transformative vision that emerged from the working groups during the previous phase of the participatory process. By testing the proposed changes at a 1:1 scale on a section of Via Fratelli Rosselli, the initiative provides an opportunity to collect ideas and feedback from a wider audience and local decision-makers, leaving a lasting legacy of this hands-on experience to inform the development of the BiciPlan.

6.3 Small Scale Action "Night Shuttle Service"

In autumn 2025 (October–November), Faenza will launch an experimental night shuttle service, completely free, linking the historic city center with the main nightlife venues located along Via Granarolo. The shuttle will operate on Friday and Saturday evenings, from 20:00 to 01:00, with departures every 30 minutes, coordinated with participating businesses.

Initially, a small vehicle (around 20 seats) will be used, with the possibility of upgrading to larger buses depending on demand. Stops will be located near pubs, restaurants, and the multiplex cinema, as well as at large parking areas to serve as park-and-ride facilities. The route may be flexible to cover special events, and additional branded vehicles could be activated if necessary.

The service aims to promote sustainable, convenient, and safe mobility, benefiting groups with limited transport options (e.g., young people or those without cars), people wishing to avoid driving after drinking, and those seeking relief from parking congestion in the city center and near nightlife hubs. A dedicated communication campaign on social media and in youth gathering places will support the initiative, with private businesses contributing through promotions and incentives.

The two-month pilot (eight weekends) will be closely monitored through passenger counts, surveys, feedback collection, and safety checks. If successful, the project could become a permanent urban public transport line, supported by co-financing agreements with local businesses.

7

Integrated Actions

7.1 Towards a 30-Minute Territory: Redesigning Mobility and Service Distribution

To prepare the Romagna Faentina Union for achieving a 30-minute territory status, it is crucial to overhaul the existing spatial configuration of services and mobility infrastructure. Based on discussions conducted during the participatory process, participants unanimously discussed on the following topics:

- Encourage the adoption of alternative mobility practices, such as bicycles in urban areas, while discouraging the regular use of private cars. This can be achieved through a combination of incentives, such as economic/tax incentives, and disincentives, such as increasing parking costs.

- Coordinate efforts to reorganise the distribution of public services, where feasible, to alleviate traffic congestion in urban areas.

- Rebalance the spatial distribution of primary public services across municipalities to avoid concentration and reduce traffic between urban nodes.

- Promote tailored local transport services, including on-demand options and direct lines to major public services, to provide alternatives to private mobility solutions.

Starting from these suggestions, participants suggested the following potential integrated actions:

- Mapping the territory concerning the 30-minute territory concept by using digital tools and solutions (actions 1 and 2);

- Work on involving private companies to design a communication campaign to raise awareness among citizens about territorial accessibility concerning the time/means of transport. Promote an ad hoc communication campaign for Faenza's industrial area (action 3).

The cross-cutting synergies between these actions are related to a shared focus on improving mobility and enhancing connectivity through the use of technology and community-driven initiatives. Ultimately, emerging ICT solutions will play a crucial role in facilitating the implementation of these actions. Indeed, to enhance the implementation of this action, the municipality of Faenza will explore ICT-based solutions to support the design and management of on-demand transport services. These may include digital booking platforms, real-time routing systems, and smart cost-estimation tools. The inclusion of such components enables a more comprehensive assessment of operational feasibility, user coverage, and implementation timing.

For instance, Action 1 – Digital mapping can benefit from the introduction of ICT-based solutions. The digital participatory map will serve not only as an informative and planning tool, but also as an inclusive platform that enables continuous user engagement and community-driven updates. Key features will include geolocated transport nodes and services, route visualisations, and feedback modules allowing users to suggest improvements or report issues. This participatory system will help assess infrastructure needs dynamically and foster citizen empowerment in shaping mobility policies. ICT-based solutions, however, present some operational risks. In particular, Action 2 – Mobility Totems is exposed to the obsolescence of installed digital technologies over time, which may result in increased costs for maintenance and software updates. To address this, the project will incorporate adaptive and upgradeable components where possible and ensure that long-term maintenance responsibilities are clearly defined.

7.1.1 Integrated Action 1

Action 1	Digital Mapping	Topic: 30 Minutes Territory	

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

A digital, multilayered, and evolving map that unites users. Ideally, this map will function as a collaborative system where citizens and service providers can upload data and download information in coordination with the Romagna Faentina Union. This approach promotes real-time data sharing and enhances community engagement, ensuring that the map remains current and responsive to the needs of its user.

General Objectives

Develop a mapping model

of the territory to increase its knowledge in digital and flexible forms, facilitating future mobility transformations.

Specific Objectives

S.O.1 – Networking and disseminating the knowledge about sustainable transport services available at the local scale

S.O.2 - Develop a dynamic analysis of the territory and the evolution of mobility services

Main actions

A1 – Define which PA offices are competent and involve them

A2 – Identify the actors that can be involved in the mapping of services and gaps (i.e. collaborative mapping)

A3 – Establish the mapping model and useful tools to be used

A4 – Test it and periodic incremental feedback

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – digital divide (mitigating measure: offer the same information also in an analogic manner)

R2 – stakeholder dissatisfaction (mitigation measure: ensure authorship and political commitment)

R3 – lack of users (mitigation measure: activate ad hoc communication campaign to sensibilise citizens/users)

Actors and responsibility

- PA takes the responsibility for initiating the process and to make it functional and effective
- The Consulta delle Bicicletta could be the engine content actor, considering their interests in influencing citizens' behaviour
- Other actors (regional mobility transport offices, private companies, transport cooperatives, etc.) can be involved in designing the mapping phase, particularly for information gathering and regular updates.

Funding Resources

- ERDF (mainly based on regional calls)
- ERDF/ETC programmes (mainly based on transnational and cbc programmes like ADRION or/ and CBC Italy-Croatia
- Local funds aiming at implementing the SUMP

Implementation Timeframe

12 months

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 1 influences the activities envisaged in Action 2, since the mapping activity can directly feed into the digital guide, ensuring that users have accurate and up-to-date information on transportation options.
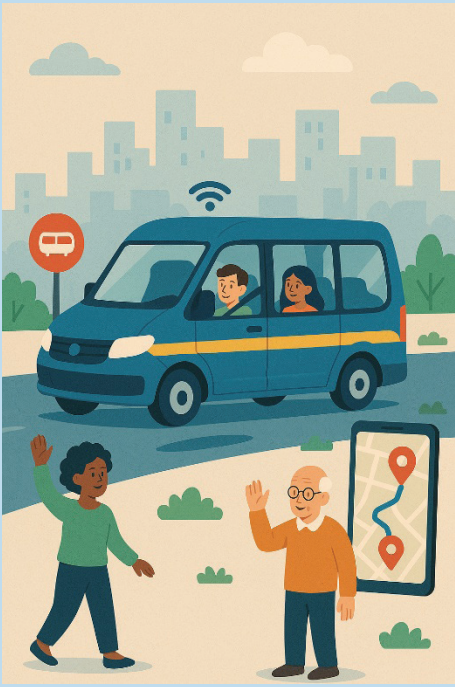
7.1.2 Integrated Action 2

Action 2	Multi-modal Mobility Totems	Topic: 30 Minutes Territory	
 AI's Evocative Illustration	**Action description** Starting with the mapping of places and services, an interactive digital guide will be developed that is accessible and usable by the majority of the population. This guide will be in the form of TOTEMs strategically placed throughout the territory, with a special focus on key locations within the Romagna Faentina Union. These TOTEMs will ensure widespread access to information, enhancing connectivity and service awareness across the community.	**General Objectives** Developing an interactive guide of local mobility **Specific Objectives** S.O. 1 – Dissemination of mobility-related information to all citizens S.O. 2 – Optimisation of travel time and modes	
Main actions A1 – Mapping of strategic places and services A2 – Algorithm development/evaluation of existing open-access tools (when possible) A3 – Implementation of the interactive totem layout A4 – Activating an inclusive communication A5 – Sponsorship to ensure sustainability	**Risks and mitigating measures** R1 – underused/misused of the service by citizens (mitigation measure: activate an informative communication campaign) R2 – outdated information (mitigation measure: implement self-updated tools in cooperation with local stakeholders)		
Actors and responsibility - PA plays the role of an organisational platform supporting the coordination of activities - Local stakeholders (i.e. those dealing with mobility services) might be interested in gathering info, updating it and promoting a service communication campaign	**Funding Resources** - Local funds from the local budget. - Private/Public companies dealing with transport services		**Implementation Timeframe** 24 months
Action's cross-cutting synergies Action 2 can be implemented benefitting from Action 1 activities. Indeed, synergies can be created at the level of design and service maintenance. Also, Action 2 works together with Action 3 in promoting alternative mobility options.			

7.1.3 Integrated Action 3

Action 3	We communicate: Faenza's Industrial area Mobility Network	Topic: 30 Minutes Territory

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

The communication campaign promotes and facilitates soft mobility in the industrial area of Faenza. This initiative aims to facilitate mobility usage in industrial areas, raising awareness about the benefits of alternative transportation methods, such as cycling and walking, and encouraging their adoption among workers and residents.

General Objectives

Increasing knowledge of the territory and sustainable mobility in the industrial area of Faenza

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Integrate 'non-resident' employees of companies with the territory

S.O. 2 – Facilitate the experience of visitors/guests of the industrial zone

S.O. 3 – Support the attractiveness of enterprises

Main actions

A1 – Create Pilot Teams (testers) that test mobility and communication in the territory (e.g. administrators, tourism operators, mobility operators, company employees, recruits, and university students).

A2 – Mapping points of interest within a 1km walking distance and 5km cycling distance (map available online and for smartphone access in Italian and English)

A3 – Place billboards at strategic points with QR codes to access the page and indicate the city's key hubs (railway station, historic centre, hospital)

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – underused of the service by employees (mitigation measure: activate an informative communication campaign in each company interested)

R2 – lack of return of investment. The potential users are limited in numbers (mitigation measure: tailor the campaign in relation to the number of potential users – offers target service)

Actors and responsibility

- Private companies (i.e. those that are located in Faenza's industrial areas) can play the leading role in designing and offering this service
- The PA can accompany it with administrative support (ensuring administrative permission, etc.)

Funding Resources

- Mainly private funds (i.e. each company can support based on the number of potential users)
- Ad hoc public support, if needed

Implementation Timeframe

18 months

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 3 can be integrated with Action 2, since one totem can be located in the industrial area, providing interactive, user-friendly access to information, with a potential raising of awareness and encouragement of the use of alternative transportation in the industrial area.

7.1.4 Integrated Action 4

Action 4	Transport-on-demand services	Topic: 30 Minutes Territory

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

Transport-on-demand services are a flexible transportation solution that adapts to real-time travel demands from users, providing shared rides—usually through smaller vehicles—based on requested pick-up and drop-off locations. It aims to complement traditional public transport, particularly in low-density areas or during off-peak hours, improving accessibility and efficiency.

General Objectives

Enhance the inclusivity, efficiency, and adaptability of local mobility systems in peri-urban areas.

Specific Objectives

S.O.1 – Provide flexible, accessible mobility options where conventional transit services are lacking (e.g., rural areas, suburban peripheries, nighttime services).

S.O.2 – Integrate digital booking, routing, and vehicle dispatch systems.

Main actions

A1 – Map mobility needs and identify target areas/populations (e.g., elderly, students, low-income residents).

A2 – Deploy digital platforms (apps, call centers, interfaces for mobility managers) to collect ride requests and optimise routing in real time.

A3 – Operate a fleet of adaptable vehicles (e.g., minibuses, electric vans, taxis).

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – Low adoption due to limited digital literacy.

Mitigation: Ensure inclusive access channels (e.g., phone booking), and involve local communities

R2 – Operational inefficiencies or high costs due to low demand or poor coordination.

Mitigation: Start with pilot projects in high-potential zones, adjust service dynamically using data, and integrate with existing public transport

Actors and responsibility

- Local Authorities / Municipalities: Planning, coordination, regulatory framework, and alignment with sustainable mobility strategies.
- Transport Operators / Mobility Service Providers: Service delivery, fleet operation, and maintenance.
- Technology Providers: Development and maintenance of the digital platform.
- Users / Local Communities: Active role in demand signaling, co-design, and feedback.

Funding Resources

- National/Regional Mobility Innovation Funds and municipal budget
- European programs (e.g., Interreg Central Europe)
- Public-private partnerships

Implementation Timeframe

Short-term (0–1 year): Co-design with stakeholders, platform development, and pilot planning.

Medium term (1–3 years): Pilot operation, real-time data monitoring, and adjustments.

Long term (3–5 years): Scaling the service, integrating with MaaS

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Synergies can be created with the action 1 and 2

7.2 Fostering Sustainable Communities

Green Community is a multifaceted concept that must be considered holistically. Therefore, initiatives in this direction should be coherent with local assets, community needs, and sustainability. Based on the participatory workshops, the ULG has focused on the following aspects:

- Explore the relationship between sustainable mobility and urban regeneration and how these two aspects can contribute to defining paths for increasing the sustainability of communities, particularly in rural centres and marginal areas of the Union.

- Develop efforts to regenerate historic city centers' socio-economic and spatial environments through sustainable tourism, energy production from renewable sources, and integration of mobility services.

- Promote sustainable mobility to make local communities more sustainable and capable of collectively building visions of their future.

Starting from these suggestions, participants suggested the following potential integrated actions:

- Promote a connected and accessible space in augmented mode - physically and digitally - in collaboration with private partners and integrated with local services (action 5).

- Promotion of collaborative models for sustainable mobility, exploring the functions of participatory teams through mutual engagement and capacity-building between the network's subjects (actions 6 and 7).

The cross-cutting synergies between these actions consist of a focus on fostering community development while promoting sustainable mobility, mainly through knowledge-sharing.

7.2.1 Integrated Action 5

Action 5	Digital Rural Hub	Topic: Green Community

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

Creating a Community Digital Hub that is connected and accessible in an augmented manner—both physically and digitally. This hub will be developed in one of the cities of the Union, selected based on the collaboration with private local partners able to provide the physical and digital infrastructure, and the commitment to integrate it with local services, to foster community development and inclusivity ensuring comprehensive connectivity and accessibility for the community.

General Objectives

Increase territorial competitiveness and attract highly skilled workers/citizens

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Offer attractive alternatives for citizens in terms of digital services

S.O. 2 – Regenerate disused or underused space.

S.O. 3 – Create a network of Digital Rural Hubs

Main actions

A1 – Map the territorial needs in terms of service needs and human resources

A2 – Involving private entities and bodies in defining and managing spaces.

A3 – Identify the buildings that can be easily transformed

Action 4 – co-design the functioning of the Hub with the local communities

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – difficulty in guaranteeing the return on investment of public resources (mitigation measures: experiment mix public-private cooperation solutions in managing the hub)

R2 – Objective difficulties in altering car directions (mitigation measures: experiment with flexible private mobility fluxes)

Actors and responsibility

- Public Administration (PA) should provide the space that can be transformed/adapted
- Private actors/companies can contribute with their knowledge/expertise
- Local associations can be involved in designing, functioning and managing the hub

Funding Resources

- Public funds (ERDF and ESF+)
- DUT calls
- Private funding support

Implementation Timeframe

36 months of activities

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 5 is related to Action 6, since both emphasize the importance of engaging community through digital infrastructures and communication strategies.

7.2.2 Integrated Action 6

Action 6	A connected Union	Topic: Green Community

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">

AI's Evocative Illustration
</td>
<td colspan="1">

Action description

A specific communication campaign aims to raise awareness, inform and involve different actors (within the Romagna Faentina Union on crucial issues related to the project, such as sustainable mobility, inclusiveness, and connections between urban and rural territories.
</td>
<td>

General Objectives

Create awareness of the importance of participatory governance in terms of knowledge sharing, communication and collaboration facilitating future mobility transformations.

Specific Objectives

S.O.1 – Inform about how the project contributes to sustainable mobility

S.O.2 – Raise awareness of the need for sustainable mobility solutions that efficiently connect different territories

S.O.3 – Promote the active participation of citizens and communities in planning and implementation
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Main actions

A1 – Identify the targets that can be involved in the communication campaign

A2 – Articulation of the different campaigns (institutional, generic) each focusing on a different target audience

A3 – Defining campaigns with specific targets (e.g. young people and students, or entrepreneurs and start-ups)

A4 – Campaign monitoring and evaluation (e.g., analysis of engagement metrics, feedback surveys,)

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – resistance to change (mitigating measure: offering free experiences or incentives to test new mobility services, such as discount passes or free rides)

R2 – social exclusion of certain targets (mitigation measure: ensuring that all platforms and events are accessible and considering vulnerable groups)

R3 – lack of funding (mitigation measure: seek different sources of funding, including public-private partnerships, crowdfunding, or access to European or national funds)

Actors and responsibility

PAs promote the institutional campaign through press releases, public events and conferences, official social media and website

The Consulta delle Bicicletta organises the generic campaign through social media, collaborations with activists and testimonials, and organisation of street events and community meetings

PAs also monitor and evaluate the engagement of targeted groups

Funding Resources

- Public local funds
- Central Europe and ADRION

Implementation Timeframe

24 months of implementation + inclusion in regular communication strategies

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 6 is connected to Action 5, since the communication campaign complement the Digital Rural Hub digital/physical space by informing and involving the community on key issues.

7.2.3 Integrated Action 7

Action 7	Connecting knowledge	Topic: Governance

	Action description	General Objectives

AI's Evocative Illustration | A training pathway starting from the project opportunity provides local administrators, urban sector professionals, citizens and communities of the Romagna Faentina Union with a reference framework on sustainable mobility policies and solutions. The training pathway consists of modular courses to be followed independently, as dedicated to different targets, but with some common modules, favouring the exchange of experiences among administrators, citizens and professionals. | Increasing knowledge on sustainable mobility topics and practice, both in terms of dissemination of results of the project and skills development.

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Increase awareness among administrators and professionals in the design of integrated policies for mobility and urban regeneration.

S.O. 2 – Strengthen the capacity of citizens to participate in the creation of targeted mobility integrated systems. |

Main actions	Risks and mitigating measures	
A1 – Definition of the targets for the training pathway (e.g., public administrators, professionals, citizens and local communities, companies and private sector operators)

A2 – Proposals of targeted modules

A3 – Structuring the course in modules, with interactive workshops, webinars and case study sessions, on experiences and good practices from cities that have implemented innovative policies

A4 – Certificate of participation, recognising the competence acquired in sustainable mobility policies, with training credits for professionals and public administrators | R1 – low participation (mitigation measure: offer training credits, recognised official certification for participants)

R2 – resistance to change (mitigation measure: offer specific modules and case studies that are relevant to the local context of each participant) | |

Actors and responsibility	Funding Resources	Implementation Timeframe
PAs launch and present the training pathways to the targeted potential participants

PAs and "La Consulta della Bicicletta" collaborate in coordinating and formalizing the training pathway with professional networks and associations | - Public local funds
- Regional Funds (ESF+) | 1-week intensive modules per year |

Action's cross-cutting synergies		
Action 7 supports both Actions 5 and 6, since it provides training and education to stakeholders – local administrators, professionals and citizens – to effectively contribute to the already mentioned activities.		

7.3 Accessibility and Inclusion: Sustainable Mobility and Public Space Innovations

Addressing the issues of accessibility and welcoming abilities in cities and territories is an excellent opportunity to rethink those schemes, design, and culture, which have effects on the use of public spaces and in the approach to sustainable mobility. With these premises, the ULG of the Union has undertaken a territorial analysis, defining positive and negative aspects regarding the hardware and software state of the art of sustainable mobility in the Union and focusing on the following aspects:

- Address the inclusion of fragile targets of citizens, collectively reflecting on the sub-themes of gender equality, social inclusion, marketing and territorial narratives

- Broaden the thinking on how the concept of accessibility and reception in urban and rural areas can be interpreted and how these aspects can be generative from the point of view of the solutions to be adopted in the field of sustainable mobility.

- Highlight the need to offer a new idea of cycle infrastructure, addressing the topic from the perspectives of both mobility hardware (e.g., infrastructure, equipment, technologies) and software (e.g., cultural models, sustainability aspects).

Starting from these suggestions, participants suggested the following potential integrated actions:

- Create a safe and fun area for entering the school, where access mobility does not dominate the role of the car and space is available for student movement (action 8[3]).

- Experimenting with an urban "living room" of soft mobility, enjoying car-free spaces and activating the development of participatory and flexible regeneration processes of parts of the city (action 9).

- Creation of the "Biking the territory: Network of velostations". The velostations are disseminated in all municipalities of the Union, serving as a node of the mobility multimodal interconnections strategically located (action 10).

- Strengthen the "Bike to Work" and "Bike to School" initiatives by ensuring synergic cooperation between private companies, employers, and local administrators in designing, coordinating, supporting, and monitoring its effectiveness (Actions 11 and 12).

- Rivitalisation of Fratelli Rosselli street through the realisation of a new and more modern bike path (Action 13)

The cross-cutting synergies between these actions refer to creating safer and more sustainable environments for active mobility, promoting a shift toward sustainable transportation.

---

3   The project could also draw inspiration from successful practices such as the "Scuole Aperte" model developed in Milan, recognised as a URBACT Good Practice. This model combines infrastructure improvement with community engagement and school-based activities, and could enhance the impact of the Passa e Molla initiative, particularly if integrated with complementary actions like Pedibus.

7.3.1 Integrated Action 8

Action 8	Passa e Molla - Safety School Islands	Topic: Green Community	

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

Passa e Molla is a space-transformative project aimed at creating a safe and fun area for school entrances, where access mobility does not prioritize cars and ample space is available for the movement of students. This initiative seeks to foster a more welcoming and secure environment, encouraging walking, cycling, and other forms of active transportation for students as they arrive and depart from school.

General Objectives

Promoting safe access to the school without the pressure of cars and people.

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Reducing traffic congestion around schools

S.O. 2 – Create a 50-metre 'no-car' zone around the schools

S.O. 3 – Educating on sustainable mobility and active citizenship

Main actions

A1 – Identification of the "action area" and selective road closures

A2 – Defining the interchange parking space

A3 – Colouring the street with road markings by activating a creative path with students and citizens

A4 – Disseminating and informing about the ongoing process and its purpose and possibilities

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – difficulty in changing citizens' behaviour (mitigation measures: educate children to educate their parents)

R2 – Objective difficulties in altering car directions (mitigation measures: experiment with flexible private mobility fluxes)

Actors and responsibility

Public Administration (PA) can offer operational support, such as closing streets and ensuring safety.

Schools can actively promote and implement the initiative. Students can participate in a co-design process to creatively enhance safe areas by adding coloRomagna Faentina Unionul markings.

Local Associations can assist in managing peak times, particularly during school entrance hours, to ensure smooth and safe operations.

Funding Resources

- Crowdfunding among parents/ local associations
- Limited public support

Implementation Timeframe

6 months of activities (that includes: conceptualisation, organisation and implementation)

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 8 interacts with Actions 9 and 10, since all these activities aim to encourage sustainable modes of transport which are safer and people centric.

7.3.2 Integrated Action 9

Action 9	Car-free Borgo	Topic: Green Community

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

Car-free Borgo is a temporary experiment that creates ,an urban living room` in an Faenza neighbornood where people can enjoy car-free spaces. These lounges aim to foster the regeneration of city and street sections on a human scale, offering flexible and experimental approaches. The initiative is designed to positively impact retail and promote sustainable mobility

Objectives

Improving access to and use of a community space in the neighbourhood

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Reducing the impact of traffic and freeing up space occupied by cars in the identified area

S.O. 2 – Increasing pedestrian and cycle accessibility of the neighbourhood

Main actions

A1 – Integration the area with a more efficient public transport

A2 - Activation of participatory processes for the collective regeneration of spaces

A3 – Co-design of mobile and fixed street furniture

A4 - Gradual closure of traffic

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – reduction of commercial activities (mitigation measures: subsides local commercial activities in case they effectively lose clients – carry out an assessment to this purpose)

R2—citizens`reluctance to change their habits (mitigation measures: activate and incremental closing area approach: 1 day, 1 week, etc.).

Actors and responsibility

- Public Administration (PA) can support local initiatives by offering studies, alternative solutions and possible mitigation measures
- Associations, schools and any other civil organisation body can be involved in designing and implementing the project
- Local commercial activities can become the sponsors

Funding Resources

- Public funds (from the local budget)
- ETC programmes (i.e. Urbact)
- Private funding support

Implementation Timeframe

12 months of activities (that includes: conceptualisation, organisation and implementation)

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 9 interacts with Action 8, since they both involve transforming and regenerating public spaces according to safer and more inclusive envronments.

7.3.3 Integrated Action 10

Action 10	Biking the territory: Network of velostations	Topic Accessible and Welcoming Cities	

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

Velostations as models for the development of sustainable mobility and proximity hubs. It defines a replicable and scalable mobility hub model that, starting with the velostations, allows the regeneration of city spaces by facilitating and improving the sustainable mobility experience in a recognisable way in the Union's territory. The Velostations should be located in areas with ample space for the installation of Velostations, and the infrastructure to support sustainable mobility.

General Objectives

To create a replicable model that facilitates commuters and tourism and activates a virtuous process of regenerating urban spaces.

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Create an interconnected network of hubs of mobility

S.O. 2 – Activate, also by regenerating disused spaces, places dedicated to sustainable mobility and social aggregation

S.O. 3 – Define a network management model for the provision of services

Main actions

A1 – Identify the potential areas for installing velostations (mobility nodes)

A2 – Develop a management model for gathering spaces: bike cafés bike shops and rental points

A3 – Create a network of bicycle shops and manufacturers to offer tailor-made rental at velostations

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – difficulty in building an integrated network of velostations across the six municipalities due to funding constraints (mitigation measures: start with those that already have the infrastructure)

R2 – difficulties in justifying the economic effort (mitigation measure: involve private companies in advertising the service to their employees)

Actors and responsibility

- Private enterprises
- FSI s.pa.
- Bicycle manufacturers and shops (for the city, treaking and sport)
- Bicycle repair shops

Funding Resources

- Public funds
- Private funding support

Implementation Timeframe

36 months of activities

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 10 can be considered related to Action 8, since the hub can collect different initiatives, including velostation service, and help defining the replicable and scalable hub model.

7.3.4 Integrated Action 11

Action 11	Bike to Work	Topic: Accessible and Welcoming Cities

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

The Bike to Work initiative encourages employees to commute by bicycle, tracked through a mobile app that promotes competition and global rankings.

General Objectives

Encourage sustainable commuting by promoting cycling as a primary mode of transport for employees and students, contributing to environmental, health, and mobility goals within the Romagna Faentina Union.

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Increase the number of employees using bicycles for daily commutes.

S.O. 2 - Strengthen collaboration between local governments, companies, and schools to create a supportive environment for cycling.

S.O. 3 - Integrate the Bike to Work initiative into broader regional mobility strategies to support sustainable transport.

Main actions

A1 - Launch and Promote using existing apps to track commutes, promote the initiative through local campaigns, and offer incentives for participants.

A2 - Engage companies, schools, and local authorities to support the initiative.

A3 - Public Recognition and Rewards: Organize public events to celebrate top performers

A4 - Integration into Local Mobility Plans: Align the initiative with local and regional mobility strategies to ensure long-term support and expansion.

Risks and mitigating measures

R1- Low Participation

Mitigation: Increase awareness through targeted marketing campaigns, offer appealing incentives,

R2- Safety Concerns for Cyclists

Mitigation: Improve cycling infrastructure, such as bike lanes and secure parking.

R3- Inaccurate Tracking or Technical Issues with the App

Mitigation: Provide technical support, and offer alternative tracking methods in case of app malfunction.

R4- Insufficient Long-term Funding or Support

Mitigation: Secure funding through local government budgets, corporate sponsorships, and partnerships.

Actors and responsibility

Local Government: Coordinate, fund, and integrate the initiative.

Companies: Promote participation and offer incentives.

Participants: Track commutes, engage in challenges, and adopt cycling for daily transport.

Funding Resources

Local Government: Budget allocations for sustainable mobility initiatives.

Corporate Sponsorships.

Private Contributions.

Implementation Timeframe

Short-term (1 year): Strengthen the current initiative.

Medium-term (3-5 years): Expand participation.

Long-term (5+ years): Ensure sustainability, evaluate impact.

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 11 is strictly related to Action 12, since both actions aim to normalize and promote cycling as a sustainable – and healthy – mode of transport, even with different target groups.

7.3.5 Integrated Action 12

Action 12	Bike to School	Topic: Accessible and Welcoming Cities	

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

The Bike to School initiative encourages students to choose cycling as a sustainable and healthy mode of transport for their daily commute. By using a mobile app, students can track their journeys, earn points, and participate in friendly challenges. Local governments will reward the top performers with public recognition and prizes.

General Objectives

To promote cycling as a sustainable and healthy mode of transport for students, encouraging collaboration between schools, families, and local authorities.

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Increase the number of students commuting by bicycle, promoting cycling as a healthy transport option.

S.O. 2 – Foster a culture of sustainability and physical activity among students through competitions and rewards.

Main actions

A1- Launch a Mobile App: Develop and implement a mobile app to track students' cycling journeys, offer rewards, and promote friendly competitions.

A2- Collaboration with Schools: Engage schools to promote the initiative, organize events, and encourage student participation.

A3- Public Recognition and Rewards: Reward top performers through certificates, prizes, and public recognition at local events.

A4- Integration with Local Mobility Plans: Align the initiative with regional mobility strategies to ensure long-term sustainability and support for cycling infrastructure.

Risks and mitigating measures

R1- Low participation

Mitigation: Increase awareness through school campaigns and provide appealing incentives.

R2- Safety concerns

Mitigation: Improve cycling infrastructure and provide safety guidelines for students.

R3- Technical issues with the app

Mitigation: Ensure thorough testing and offer alternative tracking options.

R4- Insufficient funding

Mitigation: Secure funding through local government support and private sponsorships.

Actors and responsibility

PA: Coordinate, fund and the initiative.

Schools: Promote participation, organise events, and encourage student involvement.

Students: Track commutes, participate in challenges and adopt cycling for daily transport.

Parents and Families: Support and encourage students to participate and use cycling as a regular mode of transport.

Funding Resources

- Local Government: Budget allocations for sustainable mobility initiatives.
- Private Sponsorships

Implementation Timeframe

Short-term (1 year): Strengthen the current initiative.

Medium-term (3-5 years): Expand participation.

Long-term (5+ years): Ensure sustainability and evaluate impact.

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 12 complements Action 11, in terms of strengthening the cross-generational community awareness and engagement – e.g., students and adults cycling to school and work.

7.3.6 Integrated Action 13

Action 13	New Bike Path for Via Fratelli Rosselli	Topic: Accessible and Welcoming Cities

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

The project includes the revitalisation with the installation of a new and modern bike path that increases the accessibility of public services in the area. This action aims to create a continuous and safe cycling corridor along a significant residential and school-access route.

General Objectives

To improve urban accessibility and safety by providing high-quality cycling infrastructure

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Increase the daily use of bicycles for school and work commutes along Via Fratelli Rosselli.

S.O. 2 – Improve road safety for cyclists and pedestrians by reducing conflicts with motorised traffic

Main actions

A1- Design and Planning: engage local stakeholders (schools, residents) to co-design the bike path layout, ensuring safety and usability.

A2- Infrastructure Development: Build a continuous bike lane with clear sRomagna Faentina Unionace markings, signage, and protective measures at road crossings.

A3- Public Engagement and Awareness: Launch a communication campaign promote the new bike path and encourage its use, especially as part of the "Bike to School" program.

A4 - Integration with Mobility Plans: Align the project with the Faenza Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PUMS) and the city's Active Mobility Strategy, ensuring long-term policy coherence and support.

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – Construction Delays:

Mitigation: Develop a clear project timeline, conduct regular monitoring, and ensure close coordination with contractors.

R2 – Safety Risks During Works:

Mitigation: Implement temporary safety measures for pedestrians and cyclists during the construction phase.

R3 – Low Initial Use by Target Groups:

Mitigation: Combine infrastructure investment with promotional activities and behavior-change campaigns, leveraging the Bike to School initiative.

R4 – Budget Overruns:

Mitigation: Conduct detailed cost estimation during the planning phase and establish contingency funds.

Actors and responsibility

PA: lead the project, secure funding, coordinate procurement, and oversee construction.

Schools: Promote participation, organise events, and encourage student involvement.

Students: Track commutes, participate in challenges and adopt cycling for daily transport.

Local Cycling Associations and Citizen Groups: Provide input during the design phase, promote safe cycling behavior, and support communication campaigns.

Funding Resources

- Local Government: Budget allocations for sustainable mobility initiatives.
- Regional and National Sustainable Mobility Funds (where applicable)

Implementation Timeframe

Complete participatory process, design, launch construction, and deliver the first segment of the bike path (18 months)

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 13 complements Action 16, in terms of building or renovating city bike-lines in Faenza.

7.4 Governance and Quality of Proximity Places

Governance and quality of proximity places are extended to reflect the entire territory of the Romagna Faentina Union, outlining development guidelines and replicable and/or scalable models. Defining good and effective governance models is paramount in identifying responsibilities. To do so, it is important
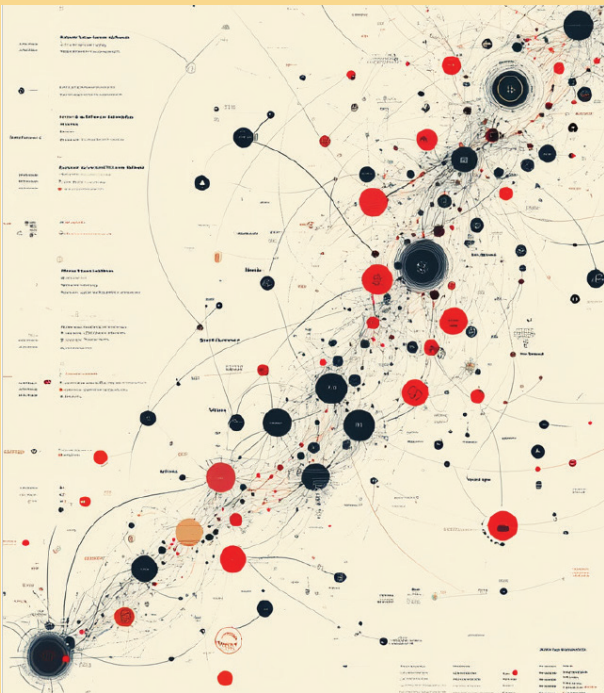
- To analysis of the weaknesses and strengths of the current governance models related to mobility and, more generally, the cooperative relationship between the administration and citizens regarding mobility culture

- Launch a communication campaign on the relationship between sustainable mobility and the idea of enabling organisational formulas capable of developing services and added value of proximity

Starting from these suggestions, participants suggested the following potential integrated actions:

- Definition of a "territorial network" model for multi-actor governance dedicated to implementing a mobility welfare system (action 14).

- Connecting physical transformations and regeneration with more organisation and governance issues in processes capable of supporting innovation. This can be done by promoting a fair, competitive environment (organisation of local competitions, promoting solidarity, etc.) (Action 15).

- Regenerative transformations of spaces for mobility by offering places for aggregation, leisure, and exchange through temporary uses and structures by adopting a BiciPlan as an institutional tool to better the quality of cycle paths as well as increase their uses (Action 16).

The cross-cutting synergies between these actions relate to fostering collaboration, innovation, and co-ordination through the creation of a unified, inclusive and accessible transport system.

7.4.1 Integrated Action 14

Action 14	NET: networks for a mobility welfare	Topic Governance	

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

Responding to the need for organisation, coordination and management of actions and projects in support of sustainable mobility, aiming at the transition to an experimental mobility welfare model.

General Objectives

Create a network of pro-active stakeholders, involved in defining the actions and governance of sustainable mobility in the territory of the Union.

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Provide the NET network with a model of involvement that can be varied according to specific topics and interests of different stakeholders

S.O. 2 – Harnessing the strength of the network for new organisational and economic resources

Main actions

A1 – Engage the territorial actors with whom to form the network by defining the modalities of participation and the geometry of the network

A2 – Activating the participatory pathway in support of the NET network

A3 – Mapping the sources of funding to support the network and the actions it intends to activate

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – Lack of interest or participation – Stakeholders might not see the benefits of joining the network (mitigation measure: Communicate a clear value proposition, tangible outcomes and benefits for participants)

R2 – Low engagement – Some stakeholders might not actively participate in the process (mitigation measure: fofer flexible participation options (e.g., in-person, online), and keep the process streamlined to maintain interest.

Actors and responsibility

- Local PAs
- Private companies
- Universities and/or research institutions for in-depth studies and thematic support

Funding Resources

- public,
- private, and
- hybrid (crowdfunding, private donors

Implementation Timeframe

2025 (72 months of activities)

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 13 is connected to Action 14 and 15, since it provides the necessary coordination and management framework to ensure that such activities are integrated in a unified strategy.

7.4.2 Integrated Action 15

Action 15	Cooperative competition call	Topic: Governance

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

A competition related to the project aims at involving associations, individuals, start-ups, but also students and groups of young people, creating a collaborative space in which co-creating solutions that address the challenges of sustainable mobility in cities and neighbouring territories. The focus will be on the development of proposals that can help strengthen the connections between the urban and rural areas of the Romagna Faentina Union, integrated with the already established networks and ongoing projects.

General Objectives

Develop projects of a cooperative nature, where participants are invited to work together in partnerships to develop integrated solutions

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Involve multi-target and multi-disciplinary teams to foster the creation of more comprehensive and effective solutions

S.O. 2 – Promote education and awareness-raising among youths on sustainable mobility through creative solutions

Main actions

A1 – Definition of the targets for the competitions by the PAs (e.g., local and non-profit associations, start-ups and enterprises and students and young people's grou2 – Discussion and proposal of the topics to be developed (e.g., accessible and shared mobility systems, digital platforms, ...)

A3 – Organisation of the competition in terms of modes and deadline and launch

A4 – Evaluation and selection of the proposals

A5 – Implementation of the ideas through a seed funding and collaboration with PAs

Risks and mitigating measures

R1 – low participation (mitigation measure: facilitation of participation through mentoring sessions)

R 2 – dependence on seed funding (mitigation measure: encourage the creation of strategic partnerships that can help ensure the long-term success of the project)

Actors and responsibility

- PAs launch and present the call to the targeted potential participants
- Local stakeholders might be interested in gathering info through a mentoring service, to better develop the ideas

Funding Resources

- Public funds form local budge
- Private contributions

Implementation Timeframe

2025 (6 months: 3 months for the call + 3 months to use the seed funding)

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 14 is related to Action 15, since the solutions defined in the competition can be applied and integrated in the BiciPlan, improving the cycling network.

7.4.3 Integrated Action 16

Action 16	BiciPlan	Topic: Governance

AI's Evocative Illustration

Action description

The Romagna Faentina Union's biplane aims to develop a cycling network that effectively connects urban and rural areas, facilitating daily commuting in an eco-friendly and safe manner. The plan involves designing cycling paths that integrate with other modes of transport, improving accessibility, and promoting a more sustainable and inclusive transport system.

General Objectives

To develop an integrated and sustainable cycling network that connects urban and rural areas within the Romagna Faentina Union

Specific Objectives

S.O. 1 – Design and implement safe, interconnected cycling paths linking key urban and rural areas.

S.O. 2 – Promote cycling as a sustainable transport option by improving infrastructure and fostering a cycling culture.

S.O. 3 – Ensure accessibility for all citizens by creating inclusive, well-maintained cycling routes.

Main actions

A1 – Design of new safe and interconnected bike paths linking urban centres and rural areas, with attention to signage and road safety.

A2 - Improvement of existing cycling infrastructure by upgrading existing bike paths.

A3 - Promotion of sustainable mobility culture by organising awareness campaigns and events to educate the community

A4 - Create multimodal interconnections with other sustainable transport options

A5 - Monitoring and evaluation of the biciplan's effectiveness

Risks and mitigating measures

R1- Funding shortages

Mitigation: Secure diverse funding sources, including grants and partnerships, with phased implementation.

R2 - Public resistance

Mitigation: Conduct awareness campaigns and engage communities in planning and decision-making.

R3 - Safety concerns

Mitigation: Design separated, well-maintained cycling paths and enforce safety regulations.

R4 - Lack of integration with transport systems

Mitigation: Ensure seamless connections between cycling infrastructure and public transport networks.

Actors and responsibility

Local authorities: Responsible for planning, financing, and implementing cycling infrastructure.

Community groups and associations: Key in organizing events and engaging the public in sustainable mobility efforts.

Citizens and cyclists: Essential for using, testing, and providing feedback on the infrastructure.

Businesses and start-ups: Contribute innovative solutions in bike-sharing and mobility technologies.

Schools and universities: Play a role in raising awareness and promoting cycling among students.

Funding Resources

- Public funding: Local and regional government budgets.
- ANCI call "Bici in Comune"

Implementation Timeframe

Short-term (1-2 years): Planning, securing funding,

Medium-term (3-5 years): Construction of key routes

Long-term (5+ years): Completion of the full network, continuous maintenance, and evaluation of the plan's impact on mobility and sustainability.

Action's cross-cutting synergies

Action 15 is related in particular to Action 13, in terms of organizational structure provided, and can be influenced by Action 14, if innovative ideas are generated in the competition.

8

Implementation Strategy

8.1 Implementation Strategy

The prioritisation of actions within the IAP has been shaped by stakeholder inputs and previous project experiences. However, to strengthen the evidence base of decision-making, a multi-criteria analysis methodology will be considered. This will allow for a more transparent and robust prioritisation framework based on indicators such as social impact, implementation cost, environmental benefit, and alignment with recovery strategies.

GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The governance structure of the Integrated Action Plan for the Romagna Faentina Union is grounded in an existing robust inter-municipal framework. Since its establishment in 2012, the Union has successfully integrated responsibilities across six municipalities, enabling coordinated action in strategic areas such as taxation, spatial planning, and mobility. A notable strength of the Romagna Faentina Union governance model is the presence of a dedicated Sustainable Mobility Office, which serves as a central coordinator among the various departments of the Union and local administrations. This office plays a pivotal role in aligning local actions with broader sustainable development goals, especially in the domain of sustainable mobility.

The Economic Development and Smart City Department leads the implementation of ECONNECTING within this governance ecosystem. It promotes innovation and citizen-centred strategies, in coordination with other key departments such as Environment and Territory, Public Works and Culture, and Tourism and International Relations. This inter-sectoral collaboration ensures that actions related to sustainable mobility are not isolated but embedded within a broader vision of innovative, inclusive, and environmentally responsible development.

STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders' engagement is a cornerstone of the IAP development process in the Romagna Faentina Union. The URBACT Local Group already comprises a diverse network of actors following a four-helix model that encompasses public administrations, civil society organisations, the education sector, and private enterprises. This diversity reflects the complexity of mobility and accessibility issues in the area and allows for a comprehensive co-design process grounded in local knowledge and needs.

The Union employed a tailored engagement strategy to activate the ULG. This included preliminary stakeholder mapping, bilateral interviews, and the organisation of ten participatory events across Faenza, Riolo Terme, and Castel Bolognese. Each event was linked to one of the four thematic pillars of the project: 30-Minute Territories, Green Communities, Accessible and Welcoming Cities, and Good Governance. The participation of local associations such as the "Consulta della Bicicletta" was instrumental in mobilising citizens and bridging technical planning with everyday mobility concerns. Engagement activities also involved school mobility managers, tourism actors, cycling advocacy groups, and local businesses, ensuring a cross-sectional representation of interests.

The inclusive approach adopted by the ULG fostered a sense of co-ownership among participants. This was particularly evident in the co-design and implementation of the first small-scale action: the temporary reimagining of a square in Riolo Terme and the planned introduction of "bike boxes" in Faenza. These pilot projects not only tested ideas in real-life settings but also served as entry points for broader community dialogue on urban transformation and sustainable mobility.

The future of the URBACT Local Group in the Romagna Faentina Union is envisioned as a dynamic and evolving governance platform, rather than a temporary project structure. Although initially established to support the co-creation of the IAP, the ULG has laid the foundations for a more permanent collaborative ecosystem that could continue beyond the project's lifetime thanks to the Consulta della Bicicletta activity. Sustaining the ULG will require strategic actions to consolidate its role, including institutionalising its functions within the governance architecture of the Union. The Union is already taking steps in this direction by adopting an "open room" approach, which allows new actors to join through a snowball effect and ensures transparency in decision-making. One key challenge will be maintaining the momentum of civic engagement, especially once the external stimulus provided by ECONNECTING diminishes. To address this, the Union plans to empower local stakeholders by entrusting them with specific responsibilities in future mobility projects and by promoting training pathways to enhance technical and civic capacities. Another priority is aligning the long-term activities of the ULG with the Union's strategic documents, such as the 2030 Strategic Plan and the Urban Transformative Agenda. This will help maintain policy coherence and political commitment. In addition, the ULG is expected to continue functioning as a participatory forum supporting the implementation and monitoring of integrated actions, such as transport-on-demand services and the deployment of digital rural hubs. Ultimately, the goal is to evolve the ULG into a lasting interface between citizens, institutions, and technical experts—capable of shaping local policies on mobility, accessibility, and urban transformation in an inclusive, democratic, and forward-looking manner.

8.2 Project Prioritisation, Gantt Chart and Milestones

The integrated action plan unfolds across three years, following a deliberate sequence that combines early mobilisation, infrastructure development, service deployment, and long-term consolidation. Rather than isolating actions, the timeline encourages synergies among projects, creating a coherent path toward a more connected, inclusive, and sustainable mobility ecosystem.

Based on a multicriteria analysis, the defined 16 actions have been listed according to what extent the action contributes to achieve the IAP objectives, how relevant is in terms of political support/priority and technical feasibility (see table above).

Criteria	Weighing (in %)
Goal 1: Towards a 30-Minute Territory: Redesigning Mobility and Service Distribution	30
Goal 2: Fostering Sustainable Communities	20
Goal 3: Accessibility and Inclusion: Sustainable Mobility and Public Space Innovations	15
Goal 4: Governance and Quality of Proximity Places	10
Political Priority	15
Tecnical Feasbility	10

The assessment conducted has allowed us to list the actions as shown in the following table. Some of the actions have already been activated, others are in the process of being implemented, and others are planned but not implemented.

Rank	Prioritised Action Name	Score	State
1	BiciPlan	1000*[4]	Ongoing
2	New Bike Path for Via Fratelli Rosselli	1000*	Ongoing
3	Bike to work	910	confirmed
4	Bike to school	900	In the process
5	NET: networks for a mobility welfare	865	planned
6	Biking the territory: Network of velostations	835	planned
7	Digital Rural Hub	780	planned
8	Car-free Borgo	745	planned
9	Transport-on-demand services	720	planned
10	We communicate: Faenza's Industrial Area Mobility Network	700	planned
11	Cooperative competition call	655	planned
12	Connecting knowledge	650	planned
13	Multi-modal Mobility Totems	600	planned
14	Passa e Molla - Safety School Islands	590	planned
15	Digital Mapping	590	planned
16	A connected Union	560	planned

Based on this, it is possible to determine a preliminary list of actions, subdivided into IAP implementation phases.

PHASE 1 – LAYING THE STRATEGIC AND DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS

The first year is characterised by a strong emphasis on establishing strategic direction and digital infrastructure, focusing on the highest-priority actions that will shape the programme's trajectory. Central to this phase is the BiciPlan, which emerges as the flagship planning tool for cycling mobility in the area. Its development starts immediately, laying down a comprehensive and evidence-based vision for infrastructure and policy interventions to be implemented over the next three years.

In parallel, tangible steps towards spatial transformation begin with the New Bike Path along Via Fratelli Rosselli. This high-impact project signals early action and demonstrates visible institutional commitment to active mobility through the rehabilitation of one of the contested bike paths in the city of Faenza. Behavioural change is another cornerstone of this phase. The Bike to Work initiative will be relaunched as a priority intervention to promote sustainable commuting habits among the working population. At the same time, Bike to School begins its implementation process, engaging younger generations and fostering a culture of active travel from an early age.

Digitalisation efforts are also accelerated. The Digital Rural Hub discussion is initiated as a strategic response to overcome digital divides, enabling data-driven mobility services in both urban and peripheral

4　　　　* indicates those actions that have been already activated after the participatory process of Econnecting.

contexts. Simultaneously, the Digital Mapping process is activated, providing critical spatial intelligence to support evidence-based decision-making across the entire programme lifecycle.

On the communication front, the launch of "We communicate: Faenza's Industrial Area Mobility Network" marks the beginning of a sustained effort towards transparency and stakeholder engagement. This is complemented by the Cooperative Competition Call, designed to stimulate community participation and generate innovative, bottom-up ideas for sustainable mobility solutions. The first phase also sets the groundwork for future inter-institutional collaboration through the preparatory activities of Connecting Knowledge and A Connected Union, both of which are designed to strengthen governance capacity and build long-term partnerships across municipal boundaries.

PHASE 2 – SCALING UP SERVICES AND PUBLIC SPACE TRANSFORMATION

Building on the solid foundations laid during the phase, the second shifts towards implementation and spatial transformation, guided by the strategic vision provided by the BiciPlan and enriched by insights from the ongoing pilot initiatives. Infrastructure expansion continues with the advancement of the Network of Velostations, creating a distributed set of mobility hubs that support intermodality and encourage cycling across the territory. This network becomes a key element in operationalising the cycling strategy, offering facilities that integrate with both public transport and active travel modes.

Service innovation is also a defining feature of this phase. Transport-on-Demand services are launched, providing flexible, user-oriented mobility solutions tailored to the needs of peripheral and low-density areas. In parallel, the first Multi-modal Mobility Totems are deployed, offering real-time travel information and promoting multimodal transport behaviours among citizens. Spatial transformation gains further momentum with the rollout of Car-free Borgo, a high-visibility intervention that reclaims parts of the urban core for pedestrians and cyclists, reinforcing the cultural and physical shift away from car dependency.

Behavioural change campaigns continue to expand their reach. The success of Bike to Work and Bike to School during the first year provides the basis for broader community engagement and deeper integration with local policies. Meanwhile, governance capacity is strengthened as Connecting Knowledge and A Connected Union transition from preparatory to operational phases, fostering knowledge exchange, peer learning, and institutional cooperation across different levels of government.

PHASE 3 – CONSOLIDATION, INSTITUTIONALISATION, AND SYSTEMIC INTEGRATION

The final phase focuses on consolidating the programme's achievements and ensuring their long-term institutionalisation. The BiciPlan, developed and tested over the previous two phases, is formally adopted as the central policy document for cycling infrastructure and mobility management in the area. Its guidelines become reference points for future investments and regulatory frameworks.

By this stage, all major infrastructure projects — including the New Bike Path along Via Fratelli Rosselli and the Network of Velostations — are fully operational and integrated within the local mobility system. The Transport-on-Demand services are stabilised and fine-tuned through continuous monitoring and user feedback, ensuring their responsiveness and efficiency.

Digital tools reach full maturity. The Digital Rural Hub becomes a permanent platform for delivering smart mobility services, while commuters and residents actively use the Multi-modal Mobility Totems for real-time travel planning. Behavioural change programmes such as Bike to Work and Bike to School are now embedded in local policies, supported by ongoing communication campaigns and institutional partnerships.

The governance dimension also becomes fully operational. Both Connecting Knowledge and A Con-

nected Union evolve into enduring governance mechanisms that facilitate policy coordination, data sharing, and collaborative decision-making among municipalities and stakeholders. However, rather than marking the end of a project, this third phase represents a strategic transition — from experimental and project-based activities to a fully integrated mobility governance framework. The combined outcomes of these three phases establish a solid foundation for long-term sustainability, enabling the territory to adapt proactively to future environmental, social, and technological challenges. The following GANTT diagram combines the actions foreseen in a preliminary timeline.

Table 1 - IAP GANTT

Integrated action	Timeline		
	Phase 1[5]	Phase 2	Phase 3
Digital Mapping			
Multi-modal Mobility Totems			
We communicate: Faenza's Industrial Area Mobility Network			
Transport-on-demand services			
Digital Rural Hub			
A connected Union			
Connecting knowledge			
Passa e Molla - Safety School Islands			
Car-free Borgo			
Biking the territory: Network of velostations			
Bike to work			
Bike to school			
New Bike Path for Via Fratelli Rosselli			
NET: networks for a mobility welfare			
Cooperative competition call			
BiciPlan			

5   One phase rapresents two years.

8.3 Cost estimation and funding strategy

The Integrated Action Plan of the Romagna Faentina Union envisages a comprehensive and multidimensional set of interventions aimed at strengthening sustainable mobility, social cohesion, digital inclusion, and territorial integration. These actions—ranging from infrastructural solutions to communication campaigns and digital innovations—require a coordinated funding strategy capable of mobilising diverse financial sources at the local, regional, national, and European levels.

The Funding Strategy (Table 2) outlines the financial planning associated with each action, identifying indicative costs and potential funding sources. The proposed co-financing scheme combines structural European funds (notably the European Regional Development Fund, or ERDF), local resources allocated by municipalities and the Union, and, where applicable, private or public-private partnerships. Specific actions, such as communication campaigns and rural digital hubs, are also aligned with programs like ESF+ and Interreg initiatives, as well as other EU programmes[6].

The allocation of preliminary costs among multiple sources reflects the Union's commitment to financial sustainability, risk mitigation, and resource integration. Additionally, the table facilitates informed planning by detailing the percentage contribution expected from each source, ensuring transparency and facilitating match-funding applications when necessary.

By articulating needs and matching them with credible funding channels, the strategy provides a solid foundation for the IAP's implementation and scalability, fostering long-term resilience and integrated rural-urban development in line with the principles of the URBACT ECONNECTING network.

---

6   For a detaild illustration of the European Territorial Cooperation programmes in wich the Union is formaly eligible, please refer to section 1.3.1

Table 2 - Funding scheme

#	Actions	Action Cost (€)	Funding Source (1)			Funding Source (2)			Funding Source (3)			Monitor progress
			Source	% of total Cost	Lead Organisation	Source	% of total Cost	Lead Organisation	Source	% of total Cost	Lead Organisation	
1	Digital Mapping	100.000	ERDF (regional calls)	50	URF	Local budget	30	URF	ETC Programmes (ADRION/ CBC IT-HR)	20	URF	
2	Multi-modal Mobility Totems	150.000	Interreg Adrion	80	URF	Local funds	0	URF	National funds	20	URF	Call applied
3	We communicate: Faenza's Industrial area Mobility Network	150.000	Private funds (companies)	50	URF	Public support (if needed)	30	URF	—	20	URF	
4	Transport-on-demand services	200.000	ERDF/ETC (Central Europe)	50	URF	Local funds	30	URF	Private partners	20	URF	
5	Digital Rural Hub	250.000	National digital inclusion funds	50	URF	ERDF/DUT	30	URF	Private sponsorship	20	URF	
6	A connected Union	150.000	ERDF	50	URF	Romagna Faentina Union budget	30	URF	Private actors	20	URF	
7	Connecting knowledge	90.000	ESF+ (Erasmus)	80	URF	Romagna Faentina Union Funds	20	URF	-	-	-	
8	Passa e Molla – Safety School Islands	120.000	ESF+ (Erasmus)	80	URF	Romagna Faentina Union Funds	20	URF	-	-	-	
9	Car-free Borgo	70.000	Local budget	50	URF	Tourism funds	30	URF	Urban Regeneration Funds	20	URF	

Actions	Action Cost (€)	Funding Source (1)			Funding Source (2)			Funding Source (3)			Monitor progress
		Source	% of total Cost	Lead Organisation	Source	% of total Cost	Lead Organisation	Source	% of total Cost	Lead Organisation	
11 Bike to work	210.000[7]	Urbact	65	URF	Local budget	35	—	—	—	URF	
12 Bike to school	210.000[8]	Urbact	65	URF	Local budget	35	—	—	—	URF	
13 New Bike Path for Via Fratelli Rosselli	900.000	Regional Budget	80	Faenza Municipality	Local budget	20	—	—	0	Faenza Municipality	started
14 NET: networks for a mobility welfare	300.000	ESF+ (Social Inclusion) - ERDF - PNRR Mission 5 (Social Infrastructure)	80	URF	Private sponsorships	20	—	—	0	URF	
15 Cooperative competition call	150.000[9]	ESF+ (Erasmus)	80	URF	Romagna Faentina Union Funds	20	—	—	0	URF	
16 BiciPlan	5.0000.000[10]	Local budget/Regional Budget	80	URF	Local/regional budget	20	—	—	0	URF	started

Total IAP Cost €	13.120.000

7   It includes at least 3 years of cost implementation (70.000 per year)

8   It includes at least 3 years of cost implementation (70.000 per year)

9   It includes at least 3 calls (biannual) with an amount of approximately 50.000 each

10   The cost indicated is a proxy that includes the BikePlan elaboration costs and preliminary costs for its implementation (i.e. rehabilitating existing paths, building new paths etc.).

As emerged from above, the realisation of the Integrated Action Plan for the Romagna Faentina Union relies on a diversified and strategic funding strategy. Given the multidimensional nature of the proposed actions—ranging from infrastructure to communication, from digital innovation to inclusive governance - the Union must mobilise resources from multiple sources across different territorial levels. The funding strategy is grounded in three key principles: integration, diversification, and sustainability.

INTEGRATION

The strategy integrates different levels of funding, combining:

- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), notably the ERDF and ESF+, aligned with the Emilia-Romagna Regional Operational Programmes and the objectives of the European Green Deal;

- European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, such as Interreg Italy-Croatia, Interreg Euro-MED, ADRION, CENTRAL EUROPE, URBACT for actions with a cross-border or transnational dimension;

- Other EU funding schemes such as DUT - Driving Urban Transition and similar that support urban transitions.

- National and regional sources, including the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, regional mobility and sustainability strategies (PRIT, PUMS, Regional Bike Plan), and sector-specific calls;

- Local budgets of the Union and its member municipalities, particularly for enabling infrastructure and match funding;

- Private resources, especially in actions related to industrial areas, service management, or where public-private partnerships (PPPs) can be leveraged.

This multi-level funding mix ensures resilience against dependency on single sources and enhances strategic alignment with regional and EU priorities.

DIVERSIFICATION

Each action within the IAP has been matched with at least two different potential funding streams to increase feasibility and reduce financial risks. For example:

- "Digital Mapping" and "Mobility Totems" are planned under ERDF and local funds, with co-funding from ETC programmes.

- "Transport-on-demand", "Bike to Work" and "Bike to School" are aligned with Urbact, ERDF, and regional/national innovation funds.

- Communication and participatory actions (e.g., "We Communicate", "A Connected Union", "Connecting Knowledge") are eligible for ESF+ and URBACT-type resources.

- "Digital Rural Hub" and "Passa e Molla" combine digital inclusion, regeneration and safety, making them ideal candidates for multi-sectoral investment packages.

SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the actions:

- Maintenance and operational costs are considered from the design phase;

- Public-private partnerships are encouraged, particularly in the management of digital infrastructure and services;

- Scalable actions are prioritised, with pilot initiatives (e.g., transport-on-demand) planned to be tested in specific areas and scaled up through future funding.

The Union has also planned the progressive integration of these projects into regular municipal planning tools, ensuring continuity and institutional commitment beyond the project lifecycle. An example of this is the BiciPlan, which is currently an ongoing project that has been partially financed by the local budget of Faenza Municipality (i.e. the drafting of the plan is covered while the rehabilitation of existing paths or the building of new roads is not yet covered).

8.4 General Risk Assessment

Based on the various and articulated integrated actions presented in the previous sections, it is possible to identify several overarching risks that may emerge during their implementation. These risks reflect the complexity of engaging diverse stakeholders, aligning objectives, and maintaining consistent momentum.

One significant risk is resistance to change, which often arises when stakeholders are hesitant to embrace new collaborations or adopt different working methods. This resistance can be attributed to deeply rooted preferences for independence or existing workflows that stakeholders may find challenging to alter. Convincing all actors, particularly those with conflicting priorities or interests, to converge toward shared solutions requires substantial effort. As previously observed, some stakeholders may perceive individual action as more advantageous than collaboration, which can limit the overall effectiveness of the initiatives.

A related and critical risk is a lack of coordination, which can manifest in several forms and significantly hinder progress:

- Poor coordination among participants: Ineffective communication or collaboration between stakeholders can lead to delays, redundant efforts, or even contradictory actions.

- Fragmented initiatives: For instance, private actors may launch measures, such as sustainable mobility projects, to comply with legislative requirements. However, these initiatives are often implemented without coordination—neither with each other nor with the public sector—resulting in isolated efforts that fail to achieve broader systemic impact.

- Limited synergy in complex projects: Projects requiring an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach may lack the necessary alignment of resources, objectives, and timelines, ultimately compromising their success. Effective collaboration across sectors and levels is crucial to avoid these pitfalls.

In addition, the importance of stable political will cannot be overstated. Consistent political commitment ensures the long-term focus and alignment needed to achieve strategic objectives. However, economic or political instability poses a significant threat, as external disruptions—such as changes in government priorities, economic downturns, or political upheaval—can derail action plans, reduce funding opportunities, and stall progress.

Another pressing challenge is resource constraints, encompassing both financial and human resources. Insufficient funding can restrict the scope of actions, delay implementation, or even force stakeholders to deprioritise critical initiatives. Similarly, lacking adequately skilled personnel can limit the capacity to manage and execute projects effectively. Addressing resource limitations requires careful planning and innovative strategies to leverage existing resources more efficiently and secure additional support.

Lastly, a clear and shared vision or objectives is a fundamental risk. Without a well-defined and collectively agreed-upon vision, stakeholders may experience confusion, misalignment, and a lack of motivation. This lack of clarity can influence the attitudes and engagement of territorial actors, reducing their willingness to collaborate and jeopardising the overall success of the integrated actions. A unified vision is essential to align efforts, inspire collective action, and provide a roadmap for achieving long-term goals.

8.5 Monitoring Strategy and Indicators

A comprehensive monitoring strategy is essential to ensure the successful implementation and continuous improvement of integrated actions. This strategy will enable the identification of progress, alignment with objectives, and timely adjustments to address challenges or emerging needs. The following narrative outlines the key components of the monitoring framework.

The first step in the monitoring strategy is to define clear, measurable objectives aligned with the initiative's overarching goals. These objectives must be supported by quantifiable indicators across key areas, including stakeholder engagement, coordination efficiency, resource allocation, vision alignment, and milestone achievements (see Table 1). The list of identified indicators provides a structured basis for assessing performance, identifying bottlenecks, and evaluating the impact of interventions. The monitoring strategy must foresee the regular reporting intervals. Indeed, it is essential to provide updates on progress, highlight achievements, and address any deviations from the plan (every 6 months). These reports will serve as a basis for stakeholder discussion, fostering transparency and collective accountability during the meetings and public debates organised to communicate achievements. This way, feedback loops will be integrated into the reporting process to capture stakeholder input, enhance decision-making, and ensure the strategy remains adaptive to changing circumstances. The monitoring strategy emphasises adaptive management to address uncertainties and emerging challenges. Regular risk assessments must be conducted to identify potential barriers to success, as indicated by the identified indicators. Proactive mitigation measures, informed by monitoring data, will ensure resilience and continuity in the implementation process. This monitoring strategy is designed to be a learning process. Insights gained from monitoring and evaluation will inform decision-making, enhance the design and implementation of initiatives, and contribute to the development of institutional capacity. This iterative approach ensures that the integrated actions evolve to remain relevant and impactful.

Based on the above, a list of indicators to be monitored has been identified - Table 3.

Table 3 - ECONNECTING Monitoring Indicators (Source: authors' own elaboration)

Macro Indicator	Description	Micro Indicators	Source
Stakeholder Engagement	Measures the depth and effectiveness of involvement by relevant actors (public, private, civil society) in decision-making and implementation processes.	Number of stakeholders actively participating in initiatives	List of participants to the event
		Frequency and quality of stakeholder meetings	Number of meetings organised by the Consulta della Bicicletta, and any other public initiative on the topic
		Percentage of stakeholders reporting satisfaction with collaborative processes	A biannual satisfactory questionnaire will be distributed among the participants
Coordination Efficiency	Assesses the ability of institutions and actors to coordinate across sectors and governance levels, reducing fragmentation and maximizing synergies.	Number of joint initiatives across the public and private sectors	Project description scheme
		Instances of resource sharing	Project description scheme
		Reduction in project duplication or conflicting actions	IAP
Resource Allocation	Evaluates the adequacy and efficiency of financial, human, and technical resources mobilized and used for implementation relative to project demands.	Amount of funding secured versus required.	Project description scheme
		Utilisation rates of allocated budgets	Project description scheme
		Availability of skilled personnel relative to project demands.	Sustainable Mobility Office human resources database
Vision Alignment	Captures the extent to which stakeholders share a common strategic vision, and how regularly this vision is updated and internalized across institutions	Percentage of stakeholders aligned with the strategic vision	A biannual satisfactory questionnaire will be distributed among the participants
		Frequency of updates and refinements to the shared vision	Unione of Municipalities
		Stakeholder satisfaction with strategic alignment efforts	Unione of Municipalities
Implementation Milestones	Tracks the progress and timeliness of executing planned actions or projects, and the ability to resolve delays and implementation barriers.	Percentage of actions or projects completed on schedule	Monitoring Plan prepared by the Unione of Municipalities
		Milestone achievement rates	Monitoring Plan prepared by the Unione of Municipalities
		Documented barriers or delays and resolution effectiveness	Monitoring Plan prepared by the Unione of Municipalities

Credits

This Integrated Action Plan was made possible thanks to the participation and contribution of a broad set of people and entities that greatly supported the development of this project. The Romagna Faentina Union sincerely acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of all.

RRC ORMOŽ
Dominik Bombek
Nina Prelog
Matej Rogac
Matjaž Kosi
Tina Koler

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL
Sean Lenihan
Niamh O'Connor
Kennas Fitzsimons
Caroline O'Connor
Eamon O'Dea
Leonore O'Neill

TORI VALLAVALITSUS
Kaire Ilus
Ave Lääne
Kärt Linder
Helle-Triin Hansumäe
Sigrit Kasemets
Toomas Parm
Kati Saagim
Veronika Pikkur

CIM VISEU DÃO LAFÕES
Ricardo Riquito
José Carlos Almeida
André Costa
Amadeu Vieira

MUNICIPALITY OF WEST MANI
Georgios Chioureas
Anna Nickitopoulou
Christina Nifakou
Costas Karberis
Maria Peristeri
Adriana Nikoloudi
Peggy Theodoropoulou
Ioulia Exarchoulea

MUNICIPALITY OF NAGYKÁLLÓ
Henrietta Herbák
Sándor Véghseö
Mária Bereczki
László Török

MUNICIPALITY OF BERANE
Tatjana Malisic Delevic
Danka Golubovic
Maja Djurisic

URBACT enables cities to work together to develop new and sustainable solutions to major urban challenges, through networking, sharing knowledge, and building capacities for practitioners.

URBACT is a European Territorial Cooperation program fostering sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe.

URBACT

Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

eCONNECTING
greener & closer communities

UNIONE della
ROMAGNA
FAENTINA