Integrated Action Plan

Municipality of Rethymno

SCHOOLHOODS

Schoolhoods | URBACT | Co-funded by the European Union Interreg

ABSTRACT

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the Municipality of Rethymno presents a comprehensive strategy to address the challenges of car-centric mobility around schools. Developed under the network of **SCHOOLHOODS URBACT IV**, this plan aims to foster a culture of safe and sustainable active travel (walking, cycling, scooting, and public transport). The IAP is structured to define the local context, framework, and vision. It then outlines the strategic objectives (SMART) and the specific areas of intervention for implementation. The core of the plan details the main actions, including a description of three pilot actions implemented to test feasibility, and ten selected actions planned for the near future. Finally, the document illustrates the monitoring and evaluation procedure designed to supervise progress and ensure the measurable achievement of the strategic goals.

SUMMARY

This Integrated Action Plan (IAP) sets out the strategic roadmap for the Municipality of Rethymno, developed within the framework of the European program URBACT IV in the SCHOOLHOODS project. Its core purpose is to transform the way students travel to and from school, moving away from high private car dependency towards safer, more sustainable and active modes of transport.

The IAP addresses a critical **urban challenge:** the reliance on private vehicles for school trips, which results in significant traffic congestion around school gates, elevates road safety risks for children, and discourages the adoption of walking and cycling.

To counteract this, the IAP is built upon a clear shared goal:

I. The Vision

The overarching ambition of the IAP is that "Rethymno invests in every child's right to travel to school safely, fostering a culture of sustainable and active mobility."

II. Strategic Objectives

To achieve this vision, the IAP defines four Strategic Objectives-which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART)-providing a clear framework for measuring progress:

1. Infrastructure: To ensure that 50% of schools are accessible through upgraded, safe, and protected infrastructure by 2030.

2. Active Travel: To increase the percentage of students walking, cycling, or scootering to school from 39% today to 50% by 2027.

3. Cultural Shift: Increase the number of awareness and educational campaigns for parents and students by 100% until 2027, since at the moment are at zero point.

4. Public Transport: To increase the percentage of students served by public transport or school buses from 8% today to 15% by 2027.

III. Actions and Implementation

The strategy of the IAP was developed through the URBACT co-creation methodology, incorporating lessons from:

1. The 3 Pilot Actions (Testing the Strategy)

The Municipality of Rethymno successfully implemented three key Pilot Actions to test feasibility, gather community feedback, and inform the full-scale plan:

1. Pedibus: Testing organized, supervised walking groups for students.

2. School Streets: Piloting the temporary restriction of motorized traffic around a school during peak hours.

3. Mobile Traffic Education Park: A mobile simulation designed to teach children about road safety in a playful environment.

2. The 10 Selected Main Actions (Future Implementation)

Based on the lessons learned from the pilots and prioritized using an "Impact-Effort" matrix, the IAP outlines 10 selected main actions for future implementation. These actions are categorized across the four intervention areas (Accessibility, Traffic Management, Education and Public Transport) and include:

Intervention Area	Action
Accessibility to Schools	1. School Streets
	2. Kiss and Ride
	3. Pedibus
	4. Zebra Crossings (Simple/Smart)
	5. Sidewalks
	6. Bike Parking facilities
Traffic Management	7. School Warning Signs
Education & Awareness	8. Walk to School Days
	9. Games and workshops
Public Transport	10. Increase Bus coverage

The present IAP constitutes as a tool for the Municipality of Rethymno, which defines not only the actions but also the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that will ensure measurable progress towards a safer and more sustainable school future for all.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEF: Connecting Europe Funding

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

IAP: Integrated Action Plan

NRRP: National Recovery and Resilience Plan

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

SECAP: Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan

SUMP: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

ULG: Urbact Local Croup

UMP: Urban Mobility Plan

UN: United Nations

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PART 1
CONTEXT, NEEDS AND VISION

1.1 LOCAL CONTEXT
1.1.1 MUNICIPALITY OF RETHYMNO

Rethymno, the third-largest city on Crete, is uniquely situated in a natural basin bordered by mountains to the south and a sandy seashore to the north. The city's urban area extends 10 kilometers east-west within this basin, with the Municipality covering a broader area of 28 kilometers, encompassing four Municipal units: Arkadi, Lappaion, Nikiforos Fokas, and Rethymnon. The Rethymnon unit serves as the Municipality's heart, hosting most of the population (35,763 inhabitants), economic activities, cultural events, and educational institutions.

Picture 1: Information regarding the Municipality of Rethymno

Country and region	Greece, Crete
Population and its development	55.636 (2021), stable
Pupils' share at population	10.059 (18%)
Size	397,5 km²
Density	140 / km²
City structure	West-East extension along the shoreline
No of schools	82
School choice model	Pupils go to closest school

The city's climate is mild Mediterranean, characterized by warm summers and relatively mild winters compared to mainland Greece. Although no clear trends in precipitation are visible, Rethymno experiences extreme rainfall events, posing occasional challenges. Tourism forms the backbone of the local economy, with over 4,5 million overnight stays recorded in 2023, significantly increasing the seasonal population by over 600,000. Additionally, the city is home to a university hosting 12,000 students, further boosting its urban dynamics.

Regarding the mobility conditions, the Municipality of Rethymno is characterized by high motor dependency (Figure 1 & 2), thus in order to reduce the car use and promote micro-mobility, the Municipality of Rethymno started operating a public sharing system for e-bikes and additionally a e-scooter sharing systems provided by a private company.

Additionally, education plays a central role in Rethymno, with 60 primary schools and 22 secondary schools spread across the Municipality. Most schools are located within the city center, concentrating school-related traffic volumes in this area and aligning peak school trips with the morning traffic rush. To support remote residential areas, a school bus system operated by the local public transport company (KTEL) and a private company services approximately 5,000 pupils daily at regional unit level.

Finally, in the Municipality of Rethymno, infrastructure improvements around school areas have started to be implemented, in order to promote a more safe and accessible school environment. These improvements include larger sidewalks, traffic calm measures and smart zebra crossings (equipped with speed warning radars and warning lights).

Figure 1: Modal share in Rethymno (2022)   *Figure 2: Registered vehicles in Rethymno (2018)*
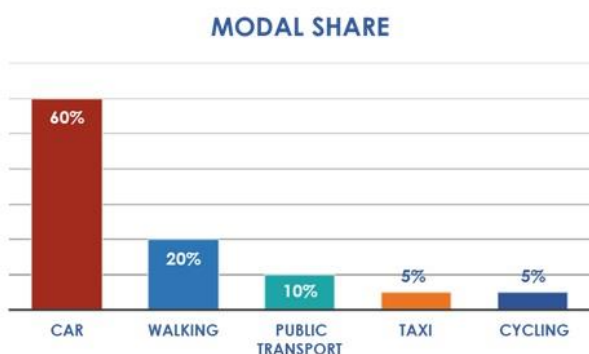
MODAL SHARE

- CAR 60%
- WALKING 20%
- PUBLIC TRANSPORT 10%
- TAXI 5%
- CYCLING 5%

REGISTERED VEHICLES

- PASSENGER CARS 39240
- TRUCKS 20490
- MOTORCYCLES 20042
- BUSES 107
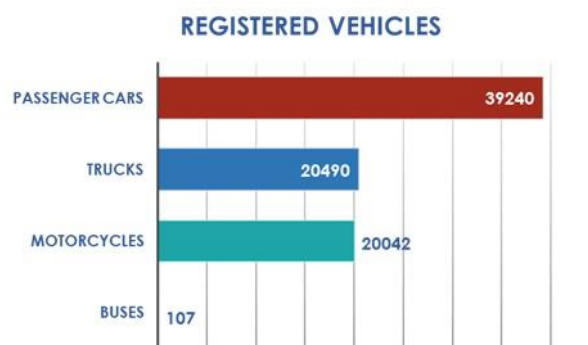
1.1.2 NETWORK THEME AND CHALLENGES

SCHOOLHOODS is a European network of cities that aims to improve school mobility by promoting safe and sustainable transport options. The theme of the network focuses on promoting active mobility such as walking, scooting and cycling to reduce car dependency and create child-friendly urban neighborhoods.

The need to promote active mobility and safer ways to approach schools is due to the fact that the last decades, motorization rates have increased dramatically. With increasing car ownership levels and the increasing modal share of cars at the total modal split, cars took a central role for coming up to our daily needs within the city fabric. Cities themselves got developed to provide roads and parking spaces for cars that connect to the spatial segregated functions of daily life, like work, education, housing, purchases and leisure.

Car ownership became an expression of freedom and free choice, which gives cars and their use a bigger weight for people than wellbeing and social status do. Additionally, regarding school trips, today more cars are involved than in the past because of "Social Convenience". Social convenience is expressed by the fact that taking the car makes trip management of children and parents alike easier and simpler. The excessive car use though creates significant challenges, including traffic congestion that undermines the sense of safety, increased environmental pollution from emissions and noise, and decreased physical activity among children. Additionally, these factors lead to negative consequences for physical and mental health, social isolation and limited autonomy of the children.

The **SCHOOLHOODS** network involves 7 cities working together to address the growing issue of school mobility. More analytically, the participating cities of the network are:

- Rethymnon (Greece) as lead partner,
- Brno (Czech Republic),
- Zadar (Croatia),
- Skawina (Poland),
- Parma (Italy),
- Turku (Finland) and
- Braşov (Romania)

Despite the different geographical, demographic, social and economic characteristics each city has to deal with, they are also facing the common challenge of school mobility and more precisely:

- The high rates of car use,
- The lack of adequate infrastructure and
- The parents' perceptions of safety.

Schools are traffic hubs at the beginning and end of the school day, as students are often transported by private cars, with negative consequences such as traffic congestion, environmental pollution and increased road safety risks. The **SCHOOLHOODS** Network addresses the challenge of transport to and from school and the configuration of public space around school facilities. The network aims to provide answers to common issues facing cities, such as traffic congestion, environmental pollution and the need for more sustainable urban infrastructure. The **SCHOOLHOODS** addresses these issues through an approach combining:

- Infrastructure improvement.
- Promoting behavior change and education.
- Working with local agencies and stakeholders.

This combination of approaches aims to create a safer and more sustainable environment for students while improving the quality of life in school neighborhoods. The main objective of the network, by encouraging active travel to school by students, and creating child-friendly urban environments, is to reduce car use and increase safety and autonomy for students, while promoting healthy lifestyles. The importance of SCHOOLHOODS lies in the fact that it addresses school mobility not only as a transport issue, but as a wider issue affecting the health, safety, quality of life and sustainability of cities. The network places children at the center of its efforts, recognizing them as a vulnerable social group requiring special attention. Improving school mobility not only enhances the safety of children but also supports their physical and mental health, while fostering sustainable habits from an early age influencing their future habits as well.

Finally, regarding Rethymno, the situation reflects many of the common challenges faced by cities in the network. The excessive use of cars to transport students to school leads to severe traffic congestion during rush hour, combined with a significant lack of infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe pedestrian crossings. Public transport options for students are also limited, as the only option is the KTEL bus service, which does not cover all areas. In addition, parents and the wider community prefer to use cars for safety and convenience reasons. The severity of this problem varies depending on the location of the school: schools located further from the city center face more acute problems with car traffic. Outside the city center, there is less infrastructure available for active modes of transport, and as a result, parents tend to be less confident about their children traveling independently.

An additional challenge is the extra traffic generated by extracurricular activities, such as private lessons and leisure programs. The situation is exacerbated by a lack of traffic regulations and narrow streets, which lack dedicated infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

Safety concerns limit parents' willingness to allow their children to walk or cycle to school, while there is also a significant lack of coordinated efforts to change parents' attitudes and promote sustainable modes of transport.

Participation in **SCHOOLHOODS** offers Rethymno a unique opportunity to address these challenges through transnational cooperation, exchange of good practices and implementation of innovative solutions.

The development of Rethymno's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) has been significantly shaped and accelerated not only by the strong commitment of the local Urban Local Group (ULG), but also by the valuable learning experiences gained through the **SCHOOLHOODS** network. Collaboration with partner cities and experts across Europe provided essential added value, ensuring that our local strategy is informed by tested practices, innovative approaches, and shared experiences — rather than developed in isolation.

The influence from our partners is clearly visible in several key actions integrated into the local approach:

- **Mobility Innovations:**

The idea of School Streets (temporary or permanent closure of roads around schools during drop-off/pick-up times) was adapted from the experience of Parma. Similarly, the Pedibus initiative, a supervised walking bus, was inspired by the successful model shared by Brasov. In addition, the concept of a Kiss and Ride station, supporting safer drop-off areas, was introduced following the good practice of Brno. These tangible measures enhance safety and encourage active mobility.

- **Data and Planning:**

The methodology for engaging with schools and collecting essential mobility data was refined thanks to Skawina's expertise in designing and conducting effective school travel surveys. This learning strengthened our local capacity to assess mobility needs and to establish a framework for monitoring progress.

- **Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building:**

Study visits provided valuable insights into integrated urban planning and transport strategies on a larger scale. Moreover, participation in thematic webinars offered crucial knowledge on topics such as gamification to encourage behavioural change, strategies for shifting mindsets among stakeholders, and other non-physical measures that complement infrastructural interventions.

Through these shared experiences, Rethymno's local strategy evolves beyond local boundaries, integrating tested and successful practices from across Europe..

1.1.3 RELEVANT DATA

To present the current situation, data were collected from questionnaires gathered by the 1st and 5th Kindergarten, the 2nd and 14th Primary School and the 3rd Secondary School. The survey took place in April and May 2024 and provided detailed insights into school commuting patterns. The main findings are illustrated below.

Figure 3: Ways of going to school	Figure 4: Ways of leaving from school
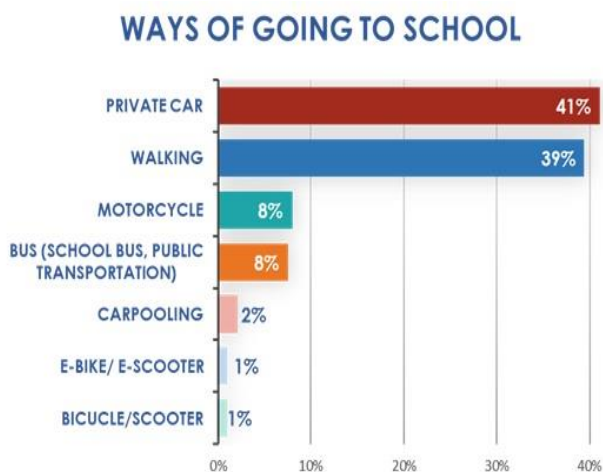
WAYS OF GOING TO SCHOOL

- PRIVATE CAR — 41%
- WALKING — 39%
- MOTORCYCLE — 8%
- BUS (SCHOOL BUS, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION) — 8%
- CARPOOLING — 2%
- E-BIKE/ E-SCOOTER — 1%
- BICUCLE/SCOOTER — 1%

WAYS OF LEAVING FROM SCHOOL

- PRIVATE CAR — 32%
- WALKING — 50%
- MOTORCYCLE — 7%
- BUS (SCHOOL BUS, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION) — 9%
- CARPOOLING — 1%
- E-BIKE/ E-SCOOTER — 1%
- BICUCLE/SCOOTER — 1%

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DISTANCE FROM SCHOOL

- less than 1 km
- 1 -2 km (less than 2km
- 2 - 5km (less than 5km)
- more than 5km

20%
43%
14%
23%

KIDS INDEPENDENCE

- Arrive at school with parents
- Arrive at school with friends or alone

34%
66%

Figure 5: Distance from school   *Figure 6: Kids independence*
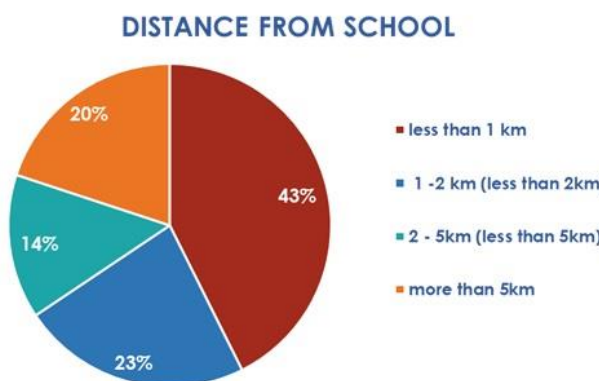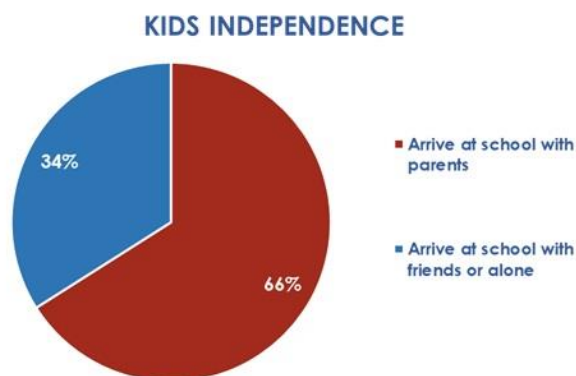
As it is illustrated in figure 3, **51% of the children rely on motorized transport** (41% private cars, 8% motorcycles and 2% carpooling groups) due to safety concerns and social convenience and **49% use active modes and public transport** (39% walking, 1% bicycles/scooters, 1% e-bikes/e-scooters and 8% bus). On the other hand, after finishing school (Figure 4), walking increased by 11% and private cars decreased by 9%.

Additionally, 66% of the students (figure 5) live close to their schools (less than 2km) and only 34% of the students (figure 6) arrive at school without accompanied by a parent. Overall it can be concluded that there is a severe need for further emphasis on promoting active and sustainable commuting options for school mobility. Finally, it should be mentioned that schools in the city centre benefit by the existing infrastructures and the location of the school itself thus the promotion of active modes of transport will be easier, but this is not the case for more isolated schools where the majority of students (more than 65%) rely on motorized vehicles.

1.1.4 EXISTING STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

Rethymno aligns **SCHOOLHOODS** with key strategies at local, national, and European levels.

Picture 2: Existing Strategies and Policies
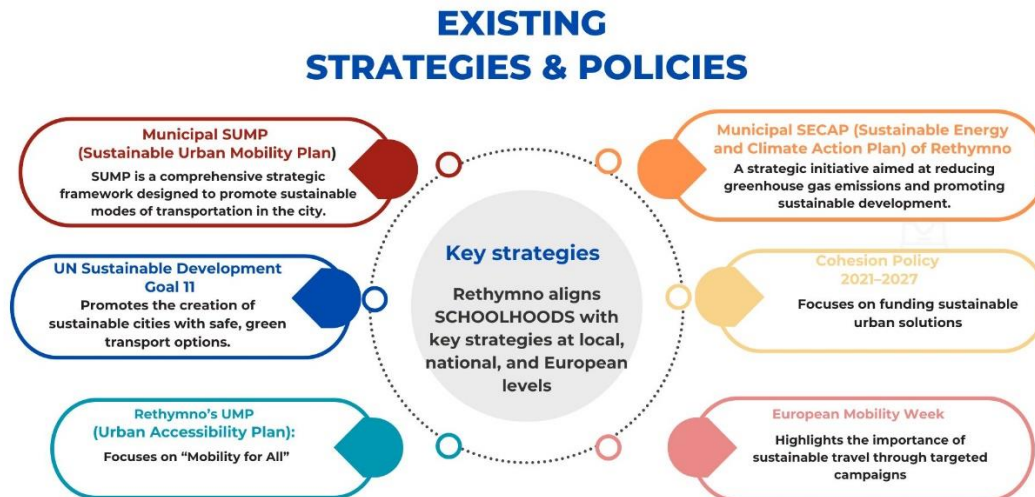
More analytically, Rethymno is addressing school mobility within its Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP).

Objectives of the SUMP:

1. **Reduce Traffic Congestion**: Develop infrastructure and initiatives to discourage private car use, promoting public transport, walking, and cycling.
2. **Enhance Accessibility**: Create infrastructure that ensures safe and barrier-free mobility for all citizens, including those with reduced mobility.
3. **Lower Environmental Pollution**: Implement measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy-efficient transportation.
4. **Improve Safety**: Implement actions to reduce road accidents and improve conditions for all users.

In a few words, this plan encompasses targeted mobility strategies to enhance road safety and promote sustainable transport. Measures include public space redesign, dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure, improved public transport routes, and cycling and scooter training programs. These actions align with the Municipality's climate change adaptation strategy, which commits to a 40% reduction in CO_2 emissions by 2030.

Furthermore, the **Key Components** of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) are:

1. **Carbon Footprint Calculation**:
   o Document emissions from municipal buildings, and traffic.
2. **Emission Reduction Targets**:
   o Set goals to reduce emissions 40% by 2030.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 addresses sustainable cities and communities. It calls on Member States to by 2030 provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems as well as to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces for all. It defines children as a special focus group. The focus on delivering these objectives is clearly at local level with support from higher level governance.

The 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy Objectives, specifically to Policy Objective 2: Greener Europe, directly address investments in sustainable urban mobility and set up respective funding mechanisms.

1.2 FRAMEWORK

The **SCHOOLHOODS** aims to improve the infrastructure around schools, to create safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly neighborhoods. Through the exchange of good practice and cooperation with various stakeholders, the network seeks to enhance active mobility for pupils, reducing the reliance on private cars for school journeys.

The cities in the **SCHOOLHOODS** network, work closely with students, parents and teachers to co-create solutions that allow students to get to school independently, safely and using active modes of transportation.

1.2.1 LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

Picture 3: URBACT Local Group of Rethymno

URBACT LOCAL GROUP
Rethymno

Schools	Core group	Municipality of Rethymno	Supporters	External
• 1st Kindergarten • 5th Kindergarten • 2nd Primary School • 14th Primary School • 3rd Secondary School	• Parents association • Teachers	• Technical Department • Department of Edution • European projects Depatment	• Directorates of primary and secondary education • Traffic police • Publlic operators	• Scooting Academy • Local Bicycle Training Academy

In order to achieve the aim and the purpose of **SCHOOLHOODS**, the approach requires the collaboration of many key stakeholders of the local community. The key stakeholders involved are:

- **Parents Associations:** Crucial in determining mobility choices.

- **Schools:** Played a pivotal role in education and promoting alternative travel options. The schools that participate are:
  - 1st Kindergarten
  - 5th Kindergarten
  - 2nd Primary School
  - 14th Primary School
  - 3rd Secondary School

- **The Municipality of Rethymno:** Responsible for creating and managing infrastructure.
  - Deputy Mayor Department of Education,
  - Deputy Mayor Technical services programming Municipal property,
  - Municipal employees from the Technical Department, from the Department of Education and from the European project department.

- **Public Transport Providers:** Essential in offering viable alternatives to private cars.

Additional support in the design and implementation of ideas is also provided, when needed, by external stakeholders such as the local Traffic Police and the Scooting Academy, even though they didn't regularly participated in the meetings. Finally, the Municipality of Rethymno has already started cooperation with the:

- Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education and
- Local Bicycle Training Academy
- National Road Safety Institute «Panos Mylonas»

Summary of ULG Meetings

As part of the **SCHOOLHOODS** project, the Municipality of Rethymno has successfully organized six ULG meetings to co-develop its IAP for safe and sustainable school mobility. The meetings followed the participatory URBACT methodology, involving local stakeholders such as policy makers, parents, educators, and technical experts.

1st ULG Meeting (6 & 14 April 2024)

Two thematic sessions took place, one with policy makers/ municipal staff and another with teachers and parents. The meeting focused on presenting the goals of the **SCHOOLHOODS** project and the URBACT method, setting the foundation for an inclusive co-creation process.

2nd ULG Meeting (26 June 2024)

Key findings from the school mobility survey were presented. The group initiated discussions around the shared vision for the development of the IAP.

3rd ULG Meeting (9 September 2024)

The meeting focused on the finalisation of the common vision, and participants worked on identifying intervention areas, objectives, and actions for the IAP.

4th ULG Meeting (18 October 2024)

During this session, the group defined strategic objectives and engaged in brainstorming and discussion of possible actions, including initial proposals for pilot activities.

5th ULG Meeting (7 February 2025)

A comprehensive list of actions was compiled and specific pilot actions were selected for implementation. This output provided the foundation for preparing the final version of the IAP.

6th ULG Meeting (29 April 2025)

The final list of actions for inclusion in the IAP was confirmed, incorporating the input and priorities of all local stakeholders.

Picture 4: ULG Meetings Timeline
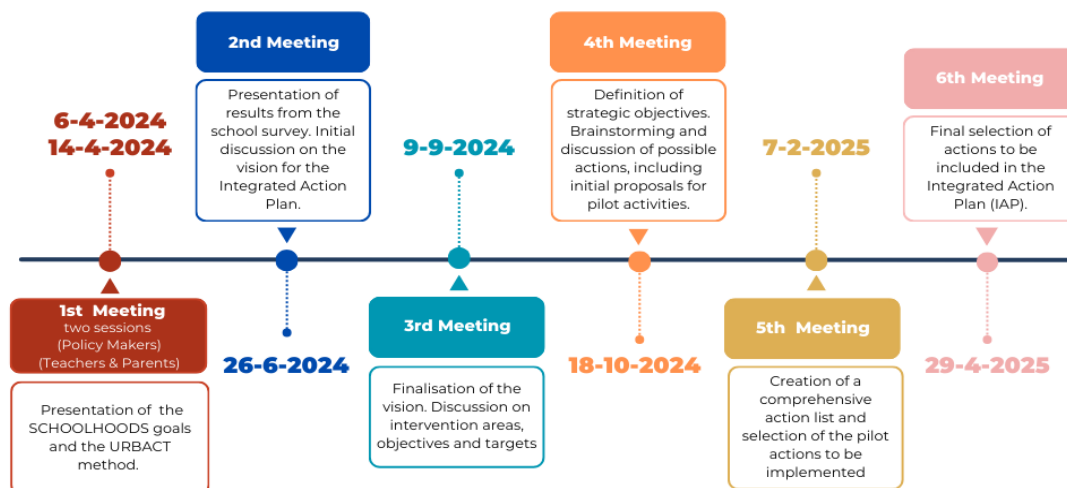
Picture 5: ULG Meetings

1.2.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

The problem:

The high reliance on cars for school streets causes traffic congestion around schools during peak hours, compounded by insufficient infrastructure such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe crossings. Public transportation options are limited, leaving families with few alternatives. Parental concerns about safety and a preference for convenience further reinforce car use, while inadequate efforts to shift mindsets and promote sustainable mobility hinder the adoption of active and eco-friendly travel modes like walking and cycling.

Picture 6: SWOT analysis

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Public space and roads mostly managed by the municipality
- Existing mobility plans for 11 school locations
- High level of social security in the urban centre, pupils go to school independently
- School bus system covers remote living places
- Traffic wardens and school guards secure manage traffic for some schools
- Traffic education and awareness initiatives during European Mobility Week
- Interest of parents to improve road safety for active modes
- Interest of (some) teachers to work on safe and green mobility

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of available public space out of narrow street layout
- Insufficient walking and cycling conditions at most locations
- Inadequate public transport except for school buses
- School bus system does not serve completely the urban area
- Strong traffic peak from after school activities in the afternoon and evening
- Concentration of school locations in the city centre
- No enforcement on parking (and traffic)
- No drop-off parking spots
- No regular traffic education in schools
- Parents convenience to take the car for time reasons
- Constraints in local budget for enforcement (no local police)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Transfer independent school trips practise as present in city centre schools
- Roll-out of mobility plans for schools taken from existing plans
- Create broad momentum for action out of joint claim of all stakeholders for better road safety infrastructure conditions
- Use knowledge on access to infrastructure funding to improve conditions
- Follow decentralisation strategy for services and schools

THREATS

- Negative reactions from residents and other neighbours to traffic calming or restrictive measures
- Budget constrictions deriving from financial crisis persist
- Choice of primary school switches from proximity based to free choice
- Free choice model reduces no. of pupils able to apply for school bus service
- Enforcement by national police stays weak
- Migration to the centre (internal and external) work against efforts
- Private sector based after-school activities work against mitigating afternoon and evening traffic peaks

1.2.3 INTEGRATION CHALLENGES

Integrated approaches are central to the success of school mobility initiatives, as they ensure that actions are sustainable, inclusive, and aligned with broader urban development goals. The following aspects are obligatory to ensure that Rethymno's IAP effectively addresses its school mobility challenges.

Integration must contain several aspects in order to conduct a successful outcome. The obligatory aspects are Stakeholder involvement in planning and implementation, Coherence with existing strategies, Sustainable urban development (economic, social, environmental) and Integration over time. Additional aspects are available in an optional form, such as for example Sectoral integration, Spatial integration etc. On the other hand, many obstacles must be overcomed during the implementation of the integration approaches. The main integration challenges Rethymno has to deal with are explained in detail but firstly, in Table 1, are illustrated and evaluated.

Table 1: Self-assessment level of integration challenges

No	Integration challenges	Self-Assessment level					Remarks
1	**Policy Alignment**	▨	▨	▨	▨		The project fits well with the existing strategies (SUMP etc)
2	**Stakeholders Coordination**	■	■	■			Need for collaboration between different stakeholders
2.1	Roles and responsibilities	▨	▨	▨			Are not always clearly defined
2.2	Competing interests	■	■	■			Risk of creating additional obstacles
3	**Resources**	▨	▨				Limited resources and budget constrains
3.1	Local budget	■	■	■			Limited local budget
3.2	Local traffic and municipal police	▨					Limited personnel of local traffic and municipal police to enforce management measures.
4	**Attitude and behavior**	■	■				No mentality for active mobility modes
4.1	Safety concerns	▨	▨				Parents prefer to drive their children to school because they have the feel that active modes of transport are not safe
4.2	Time constrains	■	■				Late departure from home is the reason to choose car instead of an active mode
5	**Monitoring and Evaluation**	▨					System for tracking the impact of the initiatives should be established

- **Policy Alignment:** While the city's SUMP and the Climate Adaptation Strategy provide a solid foundation, school mobility initiatives often lack explicit alignment with these policies. More specifically, alignment of these plans with specific IAP actions, such as Pedibus routes and School Streets, require careful prioritization which remain a challenge. Although the pedestrian and cycling infrastructures for schools are prioritized in the municipal planning, they remain a challenge.
- **Stakeholders Coordination:** Collaboration among stakeholders, such as schools, parents, and municipal authorities has always been a challenge. Feedback from the ULG indicates that roles and responsibilities are not always clearly defined, leading to delays in decision-making and implementation. Furthermore, the collaboration within many different stakeholders aligns the risk of creating additional obstacles due to competing interests and motivations.
- **Resource Limitations:** Budget constraints are a significant barrier to implement and scale up the proposed actions. Rethymno's limited local budget restricts its ability

to fund infrastructure upgrades, traffic management measures and awareness campaigns. External funding opportunities, such as those offered by the European Cohesion Policy and European Development Fund, must be actively pursued to cope with this limitation. Additionally the lack of personnel of local traffic and municipal police, in order to enforce laws and supporting actions, is exacerbating the addressed problem.

- **Attitude and behavior:** Cultural attitudes that favor car dependency pose a significant challenge. Many parents highlight safety concerns and time constraints as reasons for driving their children to school, even for short distances. Shifting these entrenched behaviors requires sustained efforts in education and awareness campaigns. Without strong community engagement, initiatives like School Streets or Pedibus may face resistance or low participation rates.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Systems for tracking the impact of initiatives, such as pedestrian safety improvements or reductions in car usage, are not yet fully developed. The establishment of robust evaluation metrics is critical in order to adapt strategies and demonstrate success.

1.3 VISION

In general, the Municipality of Rethymno has a vision towards sustainable development. Rethymno focuses towards the revitalization of the city's neighborhoods, the upgration of the quality of the urban environment and public space, the social dimension of the neighborhood with the participation and activation of residents, the preservation of the natural environment and resources and the utilization of human capital. Consequently, Rethymno invests on children since they are the future of the sustainable and active mobility culture.

The ULG taking into consideration the current situation concluded that the vision of **SCHOOLHOODS** is:

"Rethymno invests in every child's right to travel to school safely, fostering a culture of sustainable and active mobility".

PART 2
ROADMAP FROM VISION TO ACTIONS

2.1 THE INTEVENTION LOGIC

The table below summarizes the analysis of the current situation around schools, identifying the main causes of mobility problems, the key challenges, the envisaged changes and the necessary interventions. The logic of intervention is based on three main axes: promoting active travel and public transport, improving safety and convenience around school areas, and raising awareness among parents and children about the benefits of sustainable mobility. Implementing these actions is expected to reduce car dependency, ease traffic congestion, and create a safer and more welcoming environment for everyone.
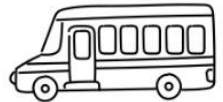
Table 2: Intervention logic

What are the causes?	What is the main challenge?	What is the change envisaged?	What do we need to do? (interventions)
Narrow street layouts, unsafe and inconvenient walking and cycling conditions	**The high reliance on cars for school transportation causes traffic congestion around schools during peak hours**	**Increase the proportion of children commuting to school using active forms or public transport**	Improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in school areas to strengthen convenience and safety
Chaotic traffic, parking problems and violations of traffic and parking regulations lead to safety risks around schools.			More active traffic management, strict enforcement of traffic and parking regulations in school areas.
The mindset of traveling by car for convenience, safety, and social status.			Raising awareness among parents and children regarding the benefits of choosing active modes of travel
Limited public transport options			Increasing school bus coverage, public transport routes and services

Based on the above intervention logic, strategic objectives have been defined. These objectives guide the planning and implementation of actions, ensuring that each measure contributes to reducing car dependency, enhancing safety and convenience around schools, and promoting sustainable and active modes of transport.

In the following Table is illustrated the overall structure of the IAP's vision.

Table 3: Overall structure of the IAP

The IAP of the Municipality of Rethymno			
➢ 1 overall vision ➢ 4 Focus Areas (areas of intervention) ➢ 4 Strategic objectives		*IAP VISION* *"Rethymno invests in every child's right to travel to school safely, fostering a culture of sustainable and active mobility".*	
Accessibility of Schools	**Traffic Management**	**Education and Awareness**	**Public Transport**
Strategic Objective 1: Infrastructure improvement in order to provide students and parents more protected routes to school.	**Strategic Objective 1:** Enhance safety around schools.	**Strategic Objective 2:** Promotion of active travel modes in order to Increase the percentage of students walking, cycling, or scooting to school. **Strategic Objective 3:** Increase the number of awareness and educational campaigns for parents and students.	**Strategic Objective 4:** Increase the number of students served by public transport and school buses.

2.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (SMART)

The strategic objectives have been derived directly from the vision, ensuring that they are aligned with the overall aim of creating safe, green, and accessible school mobility systems. Each objective addresses specific barriers to achieving the vision while incorporating the principles of safety, sustainability and inclusivity.

Picture 7: Strategic Objectives

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

01 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT- ENHANCING SAFETY
By 2030, 50% of schools in Rethymno city are accessible through upgraded infrastructure, providing students and parents with safe and protected routes to school.

03 FOSTERING A CULTURAL SHIFT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND ACTIVE MOBILITY
Increase the number of awareness and educational campaigns for parents and students by 100% until 2027, since at the moment, the awareness and educational captains are at a zero point.

02 PROMOTION OF ACTIVE TRAVEL MODES
Increase the percentage of students walking, cycling, or scootering to school from 39% today to 50% by 2027.

04 ENHANCING PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPTIONS
Increase the number of students served by public transport and school buses from 8% today to 15% by 2027 by improving public transport roots and by the implementation of new services
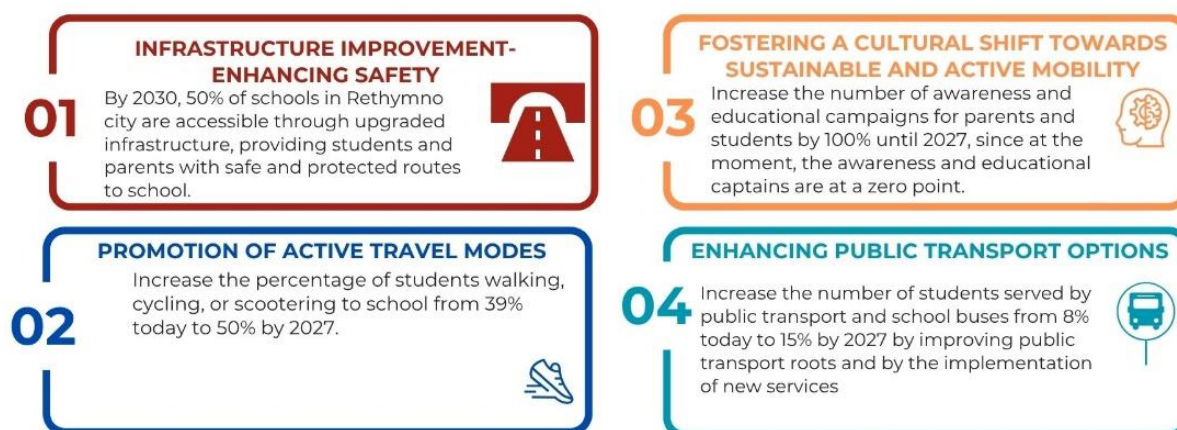
<div align="center">**Table 4: Strategic Objectives and connection to vision**</div>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND CONNECTION TO VISION
1. Infrastructure Improvement-Enhance Safety:
Create safe and comfortable routes to school by upgrading infrastructure to ensure students and parents feel secure in their daily commutes.
Objective 1:
By 2030, 50% of schools in Rethymno city are accessible through upgraded infrastructure, providing students and parents with safe and protected routes to school.
Connection to Vision:
This objective prioritizes safety and inclusivity, ensuring all children can travel to school without risk or fear.
2. Promote Active Travel Modes
Increase the share of students walking, cycling, or scootering to school, promoting active travel options.
Objective 2:
Increase the percentage of students walking, cycling, or scootering to school from 39% today to 50% by 2027.
Connection to Vision:
Encourage physical activity and foster independence, contributing to healthier lifestyles and reduced car dependency.
3. Foster a Cultural Shift Towards Sustainable and Active mobility
Encourage parents and students to consciously choose active and eco-friendly modes of transportation, promoting health and sustainability within the community.
Objective 3:
Increase the number of awareness and educational campaigns for parents and students by 100% until 2027, since at the moment are at zero point.
Connection to Vision:
Promote an attitude shift that prioritizes health, sustainability and community benefits.
4. Enhance Public Transport Options
Improve public transport and school bus services to support sustainable and environmentally friendly commutes.
Objective 4:
Increase the number of students using public transport and school buses from 8% today to 15% by 2027, by improving public transport routes and implementing new services.
Connection to Vision:
Promote environmentally friendly means of transport and support the needs of students who live far from school.

2.3 AREAS OF INTERVENTION AND ACTIONS

To achieve these objectives, the IAP focuses on **4** interconnected Areas of Intervention:

1. **Accessibility of Schools**
2. **Traffic Management**
3. **Education and Awareness**
4. **Public Transport**

2.3.1 ACCESSIBILITY TO SCHOOLS

Create safe and accessible routes for all children, ensure that infrastructures support active and sustainable travel modes.

Actions:

- **Infrastructure Upgrades:**

    - Construction of safe sidewalks around schools.
    - Improvement of bike lines network and parking facilities.
    - Improvement/New zebra crossings-installation of "smart" (zebra crossing with visual warning signs

- **Initiatives for promoting active modes**:

    - Organized supervised walking/cycling groups (i.e. Pedibus) with defined routes and stops, involvement of volunteers to ensure safety and encourage participation.

- **School Environment (Area):**

    - Establish School Streets: Temporarily close streets near schools during peak times (morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up).
    - Develop designated drop-off and pickup area (Kiss & Ride spots) to reduce congestion.

2.3.2 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Address the management of vehicular traffic near schools, reduce congestion and improve safety.

Actions:

- **School warning traffic signs-Traffic Calming Measures:**

    - Install school warning signs and speed bumpers to reduce traffic near schools.
    - Enhance enforcement of traffic regulations to ensure compliance.

2.3.3 EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Focus on mind-shift and behavioral change through targeted education and information campaigns and events.

Actions:

- **Campaigns:**

    - Organize "Walk to School Days" and competitions to encourage active travel.
    - Develop interactive games and workshops highlighting the benefits of sustainable transportation.
    - Organize in Rethymno an annual sustainable school mobility week (additional to the European Mobility Week activities).
    - Promote to parents via campaigns the use of buses (public and school buses).
    - Organize awareness campaigns and events about the health, environmental and community benefits of active travel.

- **Curriculum Integration:**

    - Introduce traffic safety and green mobility education into school curricula. Involve NGOs and local volunteers in traffic and mobility education.

- **Educational facilities**

    - Traffic Education Park

2.3.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Improve public transport services to cover the demands of the families living in the urban areas.

- **Bus coverage:**

    - Increase school bus coverage
    - Improvement of public transport routes/ services offered in urban area.
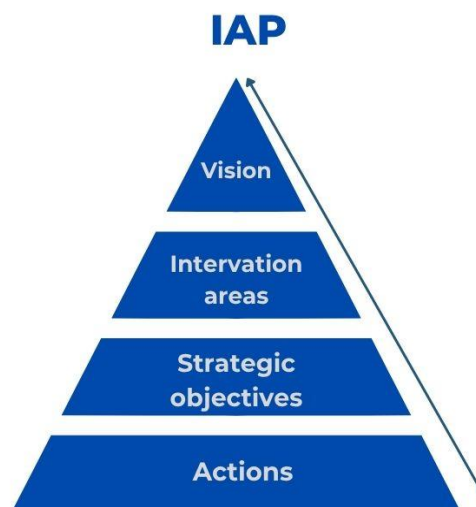
Figure 7: Road vision

Table 5: Proposed Actions

TITLE OF THE ACTION	OBJECTIVE N.	SHORT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION & SCHOOL	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	TIMELINE
INTERVETION AREA: ACCESSIBILITY TO SCHOOLS					
Sidewalks	1 & 2	Construction of safe sidewalks around schools	14th Primary school, 5th kindergarten	Municipality of Rethymno, technical department	2029
Bike lines network/parking facilities	2	Improvement of the existing bike lines network/ New bike parking stations.	2nd primary school, 1st kindergarten, 3rd secondary school	Municipality of Rethymno, technical department	2030/2026
Zebra crossings (simple/ smart)	1 & 2	Creation of pedestrian crossings with clear markings.	14th Primary school, 5th kindergarten, 2nd primary school, 1st kindergarten, 3rd secondary school	Municipality of Rethymno, technical department	2028/2028
Pedibus/ Bicibus	2	Organize supervised walking/ cycling bus as groups with defined routes and stops.	2nd Primary school, 3rd secondary school	2nd primary school ,teachers, parents, support from 3rd secondary school	2026
School Streets	1 & 2	Temporarily close streets near schools during peak times (morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up).	2nd Primary school, 3rd secondary school	Municipality of Rethymno, technical department, Traffic Police, school traffic guards	2026
Kiss & Ride	1	Develop designated drop-off and pickup area to reduce congestion.	14th Primary school, 2nd primary school, 3rd secondary school	Municipality of Rethymno, parents, school , teachers	2026
INTERVETION AREA: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT					
School Warning signs-Traffic Calming Measures	1 & 2	Install school warning signage to slow down traffic near schools.	14th Primary school, 5th kindergarten, 2nd primary school, 1st kindergarten, 3rd secondary school	Municipality of Rethymno, technical department	2027
Regulations	1 & 2	Enhance enforcement of traffic regulations to ensure compliance.	14th Primary school, 5th kindergarten, 2nd primary school, 1st kindergarten, 3rd secondary school	Traffic Police, school traffic guards	2027
INTERVETION AREA: EDUCATION AND AWARENESS					
Curriculum Integration	4	Introduce traffic safety and green mobility education into school curricula.	14th Primary school, 5th kindergarten, 2nd primary school, 1st kindergarten, 3rd secondary school	Schools, parents Municipality of Rethymno, Local organisations, NGOs	2027

Traffic Education Park	4	Is a simulation of a real word street network designed as a safe environment for children to learn about road safety	Primary and secondary schools	Municipality of Rethymno, technical department, Traffic Police, schools	2030
Campaigns	4	• Organize "Walk to School Days" and competitions to encourage active travel. • Develop interactive games and workshops highlighting the benefits of sustainable transportation. • Organize in Rethymno an annual sustainable school mobility week (additional to the EMW activities). • Promote to parents via campaigns the use of buses and school buses. • Organize awareness campaigns and events about the health, environmental and community benefits of active travel.	14th Primary school, 5th kindergarten, 2nd primary school, 1st kindergarten	Schools parents Municipality of Rethymno, Local organisations	2026
INTERVETION AREA: PUBLIC TRANSPORT					
Bus coverage	3	• Increase school bus coverage • Improve the public transport routes/ services offered in urban area	14th Primary school, 5th kindergarten, 2nd primary school, 1st kindergarten, 3rd secondary school	Public Transport operators, Municipality of Rethymno	2027

PART 3
MAIN ACTION DETAILS

3.1 PILOT ACTIONS

The ULG decided to implement three pilot actions in the Municipality of Rethymno:

- **PEDIBUS**
- **SCHOOL STREETS**
- **MOBILE EDUCATIONAL TRAFFIC PARK**

In the following sessions, each pilot action is described in detail.

3.1.1 PEDIBUS

Pedibus: Encouraging Active and Safe Walking to School

In May 2025, the Municipality of Rethymno piloted the **Pedibus** initiative-a supervised, structured walking-to-school program designed to reduce car dependency, promote physical activity, and enhance road safety for students. Based on a simple concept, Pedibus operates like a walking bus, with designated routes, "stops," and adult volunteers guiding children safely to school.

Picture 8: Pedibus logo

For the implementation, the Municipality engaged parents, teachers and municipal staff to coordinate and supervise the walking route. The action was dedicated for the students of the 2nd primary school and was supported by students of the 3rd secondary school. While the initiative received **positive attention** and enthusiasm from the local community, its overall participation highlighted both **promise and challenges.**

What Worked

- **Students responded enthusiastically**, understanding the concept and expressing clear interest in participating.
- The involvement of **older students** from the 3rd Secondary School played a crucial role, offering both safety and inspiration for the younger ones. Their presence made walking to school feel exciting, social, and even "cool."
- Creative elements, such as **student-made placards and flags**, added a festive tone and encouraged cooperation between schools.
- The addition of **Kiss & Ride stops** allowed families who usually drive to still take part, increasing the program's inclusivity.
- The initiative fostered **community spirit**, strengthened school relationships, and visibly reduced traffic around school areas during implementation week.

What Held It Back

Despite the positive response, **overall student participation remained low**. The main barrier was **parental hesitation**, largely due to:

- A strong attachment to established routines (i.e., daily car drop-offs),
- Communication methods (emails and printed forms) that failed to clearly convey how the initiative works or its benefits.

Picture 9: Pedibus in Rethymno

Key Lessons & Recommendations

The Pedibus pilot proved the concept has **real potential**, but its success hinges on **parental understanding, trust, and engagement**. Based on the pilot experience, the following improvements are recommended:

- **More interactive communication** with parents (e.g., live presentations, short explanatory videos, school meetings).
- Stronger emphasis on the **benefits for children**: improved health, safety, independence, and reduced environmental impact.
- **Gradual rollout**: Starting small and building participation over time can help shift habits more naturally.
- **Student ambassadors**: Involving older students as Pedibus promoters can positively influence younger peers and their parents.
- Friendly competition between classrooms (e.g., a reward for highest participation) can generate excitement and peer motivation.

Conclusion

The Pedibus initiative in Rethymno showed that **walking to school can be more than just transport, it can be a shared experience** that fosters health, independence, and community connection. With stronger parent engagement and a few strategic adjustments, Pedibus has the potential to become a lasting part of everyday school life in Rethymno.

3.1.2 SCHOOL STREETS

School Streets: Safer and Car-Free Zones around Schools

From May 5th to 9th, 2025, the Municipality of Rethymno launched a pilot of the **School Streets** initiative-temporarily restricting motorized traffic, around the **2nd Primary School** during peak drop-off times. The aim was simple but powerful: create a safer, calmer, and more welcoming environment for students by giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists at the school gate.

Implemented along **Dimokratias Street**, the initiative redirected traffic for just 30 minutes each morning (7:50–8:20 am), with support from municipal staff and Traffic Police. Despite concerns raised during the planning phase-such as potential resistance from parents, residents and policy makers- in reality we had a positive outcome. The community responded with full acceptance, traffic flowed smoothly via alternate routes, and the school zone became visibly safer and quieter.

Picture 10: School Streets in Rethymno

Key Outcomes

- **Improved safety**: The car-free zone significantly reduced risks for children walking or cycling to school.
- **Smooth traffic management**: No congestion or disruption occurred.
- **Positive public response**: Initial skepticism gave way to broad community support, encouraging discussion about making the measure permanent.
- **No reported conflicts**: Predicted objections from local drivers and residents did not materialize.

Lessons Learned

- Effective community engagement and **clear communication** are essential for building trust and understanding.
- Piloting the measure in a **targeted, time-limited way** allowed the city to test feasibility with minimal disruption.
- The experience showed that with the right planning, **car-free school zones are both realistic and socially acceptable**.

Recommendations

- **Scale the initiative** to other schools in Rethymno, particularly those facing congestion or safety challenges.
- **Engage school communities early**, including parents, teachers, and nearby residents.

- Combine future rollouts with **infrastructure improvements**, signage, and visibility measures to reinforce the car-free zones.
- Continue **evaluating and refining** the approach based on community feedback and traffic data.

Conclusion

The School Streets pilot in Rethymno proved that rethinking how we use space around schools can lead to safer, healthier, and more child-friendly environments. With strong public support and successful implementation, the initiative represents a meaningful step toward sustainable urban mobility and a better quality of life for school communities.

3.1.3 MOBILE TRAFFIC EDUCATION PARK

Mobile Traffic Education Park: Promoting Road Safety Awareness among Children

In May 2025, Rethymno introduced a **Mobile Traffic Education Park** pilot at the 14th and 2nd Primary Schools a portable, interactive setup designed to teach children essential road safety rules in a fun and practical way. This innovative approach brought a scaled-down traffic environment directly into schoolyards, complete with roads, intersections, traffic signs and signals.

What the Program Involved

- Children navigated the simulated streets on scooters, applying real-world traffic rules.
- Educational sessions were led by trained instructors, complemented by role-playing activities where students took on roles such as pedestrians and drivers.
- The initiative fostered collaboration among schools, the municipality, local Traffic Police, and a scooting academy providing operational support.
- Communication efforts ensured community awareness and engagement throughout the process.

Picture 11: Mobile Traffic Education Park in Rethymno

Positive Outcomes

- The program was **well-received** by students and teachers alike, with high levels of participation and enthusiasm.
- The hands-on, experiential learning format effectively helped children understand and retain road safety knowledge.
- By practicing in a safe, controlled environment, students developed greater confidence and responsibility for their safety on real streets.
- The initiative reinforced broader goals of promoting **safe, active, and independent mobility** for children.

Challenges

- Some logistical constraints occurred, such as limited availability of Traffic Police during implementation.
- Administrative preparation and contracting required significant time and coordination.

Recommendations

- Continue and expand the Mobile Traffic Education Park to more schools, ensuring the involvement of local traffic authorities for enhanced impact.
- Explore opportunities to integrate the program permanently into school curricula as a regular educational tool.
- Strengthen community outreach with clear communication about the benefits of early road safety education.

Conclusion

The Mobile Traffic Education Park pilot demonstrated that innovative, interactive approaches to road safety education can captivate children's attention and foster safer behaviors. By bringing real-world traffic experiences into a playful school environment, Rethymno is building a foundation for lifelong safe mobility habits among youngest residents.

3.2 POTENTIAL FUTURE ACTIONS

Taking into consideration the proposed actions illustrated in Table 4 of the session 2.2, the ULG meeting that was held on the 28th of April 2025 decided which actions will be prioritized. The final choices were made by using the "Impact-Effort" matrix and by taking into consideration the following 3 criteria:

1. Potential implementation in the short-run
2. Optimum solution between the Impact of the action and the effort needed
3. The necessity of the action in order to accomplish the IAP's vision.

In the following sessions the actions are presented in detail and it should be mentioned that they are categorized based on the 4 intervention areas that each action fits best. Finally, it should be mentioned that the actions that weren't prioritized will be reconsidered after 2030.

Picture 12: "Impact-Effort" Matrix

Impact–Effort Matrix

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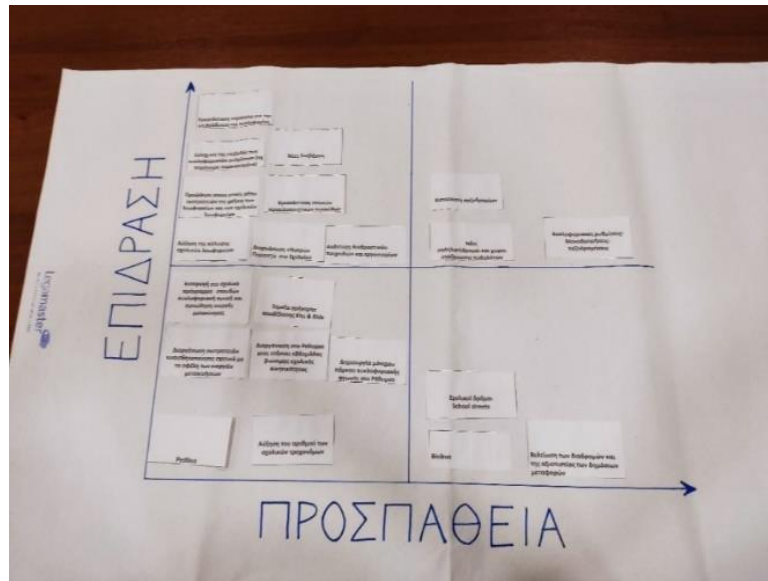
AREA 1: ACCESSIBILITY OF SCHOOLS

1. Action Title: School Streets

Short Description:
The "School Streets" involves temporarily closing the street(s) immediately adjacent to the school entrance(s) to vehicular traffic during peak drop-off and pick-up times. This creates a pedestrian and cyclist-only zone, prioritizing the safety and well-being of students and their families. The aim is to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, encourage active travel (walking, cycling, scooting), and create a safer and more pleasant environment around the school during these busy periods.

Stakeholders: Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department), Local Traffic Police, Schools (teachers and parents association)

Action Owner:
Municipality of Rethymno

Action Readiness:
The Action could be implemented in the 2nd primary school, were alternative drop-off, and pick-up points could be determined. The street layout is suitable for a temporary closure without causing disruption to the wider traffic network.

Risks:

- Traffic may increase to nearby streets
- Inconvenience to Residents and Businesses
- Resistance to change from parents/citizens
- Bureaucracy-necessary approvals

Finance Resources:
Are relatively low (<500€) and may include:

- Signage and Barriers
- Communication Materials

Link to strategy:
Ensures all children can travel to school without risk or fear and this action prioritizes safety.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Feasibility Study	Q1 2026		Monitoring existing traffic of the road		
Local Authority Approval	Q2 2026				Lack of political support
Inform citizens for the initiative	Q3 2026		Banners, announcements to the local post, social media coverage		Insufficient engagement
Measure deployment	Q4 2026				

2. Action Title: Kiss and Ride

Short Description:
The "Kiss and Ride" is a designated area near a school entrance where parents can quickly drop off or pick up their children without leaving their vehicles. This aims to reduce traffic congestion around the school, improve safety for pedestrians (especially children), and minimize idling vehicles, thereby contributing to better air quality. The goal is to facilitate a quick and efficient drop-off/pick-up process, encouraging parents to avoid parking and walking their children across busy streets.

Stakeholders:

- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)
- Parents
- Schools (teachers-students)

Action Owner:
Municipality of Rethymno

Action Readiness:
The Action could be implemented in the 2nd Primary school, 14th Primary school and the 3rd Secondary school, were drop-off, and pick-up points could be established without causing disruption to the wider traffic network.

Risks:

- Some parents may find the Kiss and Ride less convenient than their previous drop-off/pick-up routine
- Limited spaces
- Lack of compliance

Finance Resources:
Approx. 500€ per area and may include:

- Marking and Signage
- Communication Materials

Link to strategy:
Reduce traffic around schools and improve air quality, noise and lead to a more calm environment near to school entrances.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Location selection	Q1 2026		Determine the available drop-off and pick-up points		
Local Authority Approval	Q2 2026				
Inform parents for the initiative	Q3 2026		Announcements to the local post, social media coverage		Insufficient engagement and lack of compliance
Measure deployment	Q4 2026		Area marking, signs installation		

3. Action Title: Pedibus

Short Description:
The "Pedibus Implementation" action involves establishing organized walking groups for students to travel to and from school under the supervision of adult volunteers. A Pedibus operates like a "walking bus," following a set route with designated "stops" where children can join and leave the group. The goal is to reduce car traffic around the school, improve air quality, promote physical activity among students, enhance road safety awareness, and foster a sense of community.

Stakeholders:

- Parents Association
- Schools (teachers-students)
- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)

Action Owner:
Parents association

Action Readiness:
The Action could be implemented in the 2nd primary school, where the existing infrastructures can support the action.

Risks:

- Volunteer recruitment and retaining
- Changes in family schedule
- Lack of participation/ engagement

Finance Resources:
Approx. 1000€ and may include:

- Signage/stops
- High visibility vests
- Communication Materials

Link to strategy:
Encourages physical activity and supports environmentally friendly travel options.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Parents Association/ School approval	Q1 2026		Surveying all parents to gauge interest		Lack of support
Communicate the action within the parents association	Q2 2026		Identify potential participants and volunteers		Lack of support
Route Planning	Q3 2026		1.Identifying safe and efficient walking routes 2.Determine Pedibus stops		
Inform parents and promote the initiative	Q3 2026		School announcements, announcements to the local press, social media coverage		Insufficient engagement
Establishing Communication Protocols	Q3 2026	Group chats on social media/ email	Determine communication coordinator		
Measure deployment	Q4 2026				

4. Action Title: Zebra Crossings

4.1 Simple Zebra crossings

Short Description:
This action involves the planning, approval, and physical installation of new zebra crossings and maintenance of the already existing, around the school areas. The aim is to provide a safe and designated crossing point for pedestrians, particularly students and their families, thereby increasing their visibility to drivers and reducing the risk of accidents.

Stakeholders:

- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)
- Local Police/Traffic Authorities
- Parents/Guardians

Action Owner:
Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department

Action Readiness:
The Action could be implemented in the1st and 5th kindergartens, 2nd and 14th Primary Schools, as well as the 3rd Secondary School. In particular, for the 14th primary and 5th Kindergarten Schools, there is a clear need for additional pedestrian crossings.

Risks:

- Bureaucratic Delays
- Funding Limitations
- Lack of Driver Awareness
- Maintenance Requirements

Finance Resources:
Approx. 500€ per simple zebra crossing (lines and signs) and if thermoplastic materials used approx. 2500€ per crossing

- Municipal/Regional Budget

Link to strategy:
Improve school's accessibility and prioritizes safety

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Site Surveying, Design and specifications	Q1 2026				
Approvals and Permits	Q3 2026				Bureaucracy delays
Site Works	Q1 2027	Thermoplastics		Longer lifespan and reduce need of maintenance	Budget limitations
Public Awareness Campaign	Q2 2027		Communication awareness campaigns for respecting and using crosswalks		
Ongoing Maintenance	Q1 2028				

4. Action Title: Zebra Crossings

4.2 Smart Zebra crossings

Short Description:

This action involves the planning and physical installation of new smart zebra crossings (radars…visual signals) around the school areas. The aim is to provide a safe and designated crossing point for pedestrians and particularly students, by increasing visibility to drivers and reducing the risk of accidents.

Stakeholders:

- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)
- Local Police/Traffic Authorities
- Parents/Guardians

Action Readiness:

The Action could be implemented in a few zebra crossings of the surrounding area of the 1st kindergarten and 2nd Primary School, as well as the area of the 5th kindergarten and the 14th primary school. An application for funding has already been submitted under a relevant call.

Risks:

- Bureaucratic Delays
- Lack of Driver Awareness
- Maintenance Requirements

Finance Resources:
Approx. 20.000€ per smart zebra crossing

- Municipal/Regional Budget
- Government Grants

Link to strategy:
Improve school's accessibility and prioritizes safety

Action Owner:
Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Site Surveying, Design and specifications	Q1 2026				
Approvals and Permits	Q2 2026				Bureaucracy delays
Site Works	Q1 2027				Funding approval, delays in tendering procedure
Public Awareness Campaign	Q1 2027		Communication awareness campaigns for respecting and using crosswalks		
Ongoing Maintenance	Q1 2028				

5. Action Title: Sidewalks

Short Description:
This action focuses on ensuring the presence of safe, accessible, and well-maintained sidewalks leading to and surrounding the school premises. The aim is to create a safe and comfortable environment for students, parents, teachers, and staff who walk to and from school, encouraging active travel and improving overall pedestrian safety in the school zone.

Stakeholders:

- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)
- Schools (teachers-students)

Action Owner:
Municipality of Rethymno

Action Readiness:
Very limited infrastructures of the urban area near the 14th primary school which leads to low readiness to promote active modes of transport.

Risks:

- Budget limitations
- Bureaucracy delays
- Maintenance Requirements
- Space limitations

Finance Resources:
The complete area renovation is required and thus the action requires approx. 500.000€

- Municipal Budget
- Government Grants/ ERDF funding/ European projects

Link to strategy:
This action promotes safety and active mobility, ensuring all children can travel to school reducing travel risks.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	**DATES**	**INPUTS**	**RELATED ACTIVITIES**	**OUTPUTS**	**CONCERNS**
Planning and design	Q1 2026		Determine the needs and develop plans for sidewalk upgrades, roads redesign, new sidewalks construction, ensuring accessibility standards are met		1. Space limitations, 2.landscape challenges, uneven surfaces etc. 3.limited public space available 4. Additional budget for compensation of private properties
Approvals and permits	Q2 2028				1. Bureaucracy delays
Site Works	Q2 2029				1. Securing funding 2. Delays in contracting procedure 3.Traffic may increase to nearby streets 4..Residents/ businesses near the installation works might be affected

6. Action Title: Bike Parking facilities

Short Description:
This action involves the planning, funding, and installation of secure and accessible bike parking facilities on school grounds. The aim is to provide students, teachers, and staff with a safe and convenient place to lock their bicycles, thereby encouraging cycling as a viable and sustainable mode of transportation to and from school.

Stakeholders:

- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)
- Schools (teachers-students)
- Parents

Action Owner:
Municipality of Rethymno

Action Readiness:
The Action should be implemented in the 3rd secondary school and in the 2nd primary school, giving priority to schools in the center where infrastructures can support biking.

Risks:
None

Finance Resources:
Approx. 500€ per parking base

- Municipal Budget

Link to strategy:
This action promotes cycling and reduces concerns regarding the bike-security during lessons.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Needs Assessment and Planning	Q2 2026		Determine the required quantity, and exploring different types of bike parking solutions		
Local Authority Approval	Q3 2026				
Procurement/ Installation	Q1 2027				

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AREA 2: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

7. Action Title: School Warning traffic Calming Signs

Short Description:
This action involves the strategic placement of signage around school zones to warn drivers of the presence of children and to encourage slower speeds. This includes installing conventional school warning traffic signs. Flashing lights under investigation. The aim is to increase driver awareness, reduce vehicle speeds, and improve safety.

Action Owner:
Municipality of Rethymno

Action Readiness:
The Action could take place at all schools involved

Risks:

- Budget limitations
- Permits delays

Stakeholders:

- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)
- Schools (teachers-students)
- Drivers
- Local residents

Finance Resources:
Approx. 500€ per school.

- Municipal Budget

Link to strategy:
Enhance safety around schools.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Location selection/ signs type selection/ specifications	Q2 2026		Determining the optimal locations for signage and selecting appropriate types of signs		
Local Authority Approval	Q3 2026				
Procurement and Installation	Q1 2027				
Ongoing Maintenance	Q3 2027		Ensuring the signs remain visible and in good condition.		

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AREA 3: EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

8. Action Title: Walk to School Days

Short Description:
"Walk to School Days" are organized events where students are encouraged to walk to school on designated days. These events aim to raise awareness about the benefits of walking (health, environment, community), promote road safety, reduce traffic congestion around the school, and create a fun and engaging experience for participants.

Stakeholders:

- Schools (teachers-students)
- Parents
- Parents associations
- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)

Action Owner:
Parents associations

Action Readiness:
The Action could take place at all schools

Risks:

- Low participation
- Safety concerns
- Lack of sustained Impact

Finance Resources:
Estimated budget approx. 2000€

Link to strategy:
This action promotes attitude shift towards sustainable and active mobility

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	DATES	INPUTS	RELATED ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	CONCERNS
Parents/School approval	Q1 2026		Surveying parents to investigate interest		Lack of support
Communicate the action within the parents association	Q2 2026		Identify potential participants and volunteers (if needed)		Lack of support
Inform parents and promote the initiative by a competition reward	1 month before the action		School announcements, announcements to the local news, social media coverage		Dissemination of the action
Implementation	Proposed dates: European Mobility Week (September 16–22) World Car-Free Day (September 22) World Sustainable Development Day (September 25) World Day for Climate Change (November 4) World Children's Day (November 20) World Day for Physical Activity (April 6) World Environment Day (June 5)				

9. Action Title: Games and workshops

Short Description:

This action involves organizing interactive games and educational workshops (such as Simulated Traffic Parks) for students to promote active mobility and enhance their understanding of traffic safety rules. The games will be designed to be engaging and fun, teaching children about safe behavior as pedestrians and cyclists. Workshops will provide more in-depth knowledge about road safety, the benefits of active travel, and responsible mobility habits. These activities aim to cultivate a culture of safe and sustainable mobility from a young age.

Stakeholders:

- Schools (teachers-students)
- Parents associations
- Local Authorities (Municipality of Rethymno–Technical Department)
- Directorates of primary and secondary education

Action Owner:

Schools/ Parents association

Action Readiness:

The Action could take place at all schools

Risks:

- Low engagement
- Available time limitations
- Lack of promotional material
- Lack of long-term Impact

Finance Resources:

Estimated 1000€ per school, per year.

Parents association

Municipal budget

Link to strategy:

Promotes an attitude shift that prioritizes health, sustainability, and community benefits.

ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	**DATES**	**INPUTS**	**RELATED ACTIVITIES**	**OUTPUTS**	**CONCERNS**
School approval and permits	Q1 2026				Lack of support/ Teacher Interest
Game and workshops determination	Q2 2026	Supporting material	Board games, competitions, crafting, pc games, traffic parks		
Inclusion in school teaching schedule	Q3 2026		Include games and workshops within schools activities		Insufficient engagement
Implementation	All school year				

NO.	TITLE	CONTEXT	MAIN STAKEHOLDERS	COST-FUNDING PROPOSAL
1.	Road Safety Material & Games	A comprehensive road safety toolkit is designed for pupils aged 4 to 14, including a board game, a sensory path mat, road behavior cards, activity sheets, and necessary classroom props for practical lessons.	Road Safety Institute "Panos Mylonas"	Cost 1,700 € per box (The Municipality of Rethymno can initially provide 1 box, available free of charge to schools via a reservation form)
2.	Digital Creation Contest & Teacher Training	2.1 Digital Contest on road safety topics (pedestrian, cyclist) for Primary & Secondary schools. Online training seminars for teachers and digital tools for the Digital Creation Contest. 2.2 Annually, more stable and certified training Seminars (for Primary and Secondary) providing Certification to teachers.	Road Safety Institute "Panos Mylonas"	2.1 Free of charge 2.2 Annual teacher training: €1,000 per year
3.	Mobile Traffic Education Park	This program offers practical education for Primary School students through a Mobile Traffic Park simulation built directly in the schoolyard. The park is equipped with building models, special traffic signage, automatic lights, crossing mats, and essential equipment (scooters/helmets) to allow students to practice safe routes and traffic rules once per year.	Rethymno Scooting Academy, in cooperation with Traffic Police	Parents' Association (Cost: €700 per school)
4.	Bicycle Training Lessons & Traffic Education	This program's goal is to establish bicycle-training groups and provide practical instruction in safe urban commuting. **Level 1:** focus on creating tailored learning groups based on the specific age and skill level of the students. **Level 2:** provides advanced lessons on safe commuting within the city, covering essential traffic education rules and practices for cyclists. Duration from October to May.	ATLAS Rethymno Cycling Club	Parents (Cost coverage per student/monthly)
5.	Volunteer Team & Annual Material Production	The goal of this action is to establish and maintain an annual, updated digital database of educational material (including activities and games) for teachers across the schools to utilize and disseminate through organized events.	Volunteer Teachers & Cooperation with the University of Crete, Dpt. of Education, School Students (Supported by Directorate of Primary Education)	Municipality of Rethymno (Cost: €500 for potential material)

10. Action Title: Increase Bus coverage

Short Description:

This action aims to improve public bus services for students by introducing or extending routes near schools, increasing frequency during school hours, and aligning schedules with school times. The goal is to offer safe and reliable transport, reduce car use for school commutes, ease traffic congestion, and promote sustainable mobility habits.

Stakeholders:

- Municipality (Rethymno)
- Bus Operators
- Schools

Action Owner:

Bus operators

Action   Readiness:

The initiative to enhance bus coverage for the 14th Primary School of Rethymno is currently at a conceptual stage. Although no formal steps have begun, the need has been clearly identified. Improving school bus access is expected to ease commuting challenges and reduce traffic congestion around the school area.

Risks:

- **High implementation cost:** Expanding or adjusting bus services may require significant financial resources, especially without external funding.
- **Multi-stakeholder coordination:** Involvement of various actors (municipality, transport authorities, school, parents) increases complexity.
- **Bureaucratic delays:** Administrative procedures and differing institutional priorities may slow down progress.
- **Infrastructure limitations:** Road conditions or lack of space for safe bus stops near the school may hinder implementation.

Finance Resources: TBD

Link to strategy:

Sustainable Urban Development: Reduces carbon emissions and promotes eco-friendly transportation.

Improved Accessibility

Reduced Traffic Congestion

| ACTIVITIES SUMMARY:					
ACTIVITY	**DATES**	**INPUTS**	**RELATED ACTIVITIES**	**OUTPUTS**	**CONCERNS**
Needs Assessment & Data Collection	Q1,2 2025	School data, student addresses, surveys	Route Planning, Financial Planning	Map of student residences, identified mobility gaps	Data availability, survey response rate
Route & Schedule Planning	Q3 2026	GIS maps, traffic data, school hours	Needs Assessment, Pilot Design	Draft routes, stops, timetables	Route feasibility, alignment with existing services
Resource & Budget Planning	Q1 2026	staff status, cost estimates	Route Planning, Approvals	Resource plan, draft budget	Funding availability, capacity limits
Regulatory Approvals	Q2 2027	Permit applications, regulations	Implementation Required permits secured		Bureaucracy stakeholder coordination
Communication & Engagement	Q3 2027	Info materials, Awareness campaign, feedback channels			

PART 4
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 GOVERNANCE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The implementation of the SCHOOLHOODS IAP is coordinated by the Municipality of Rethymno, primarily through the Technical Department and the Programming & European Projects Department, which oversee planning, contracting and monitoring of all actions. Schools and Parents' Associations play a key role in educational and awareness activities, supporting communication with families and contributing to the organization of campaigns and mobility-related initiatives. The Local Traffic Police and other competent authorities provide essential support for the design and enforcement of traffic-related measures such as School Streets, Kiss and Ride, warning signs and zebra crossings. Public transport operators collaborate on actions related to school bus coverage and service improvements. In addition, NGOs and the University of Crete can offer expertise in education, engagement and volunteer mobilization, ensuring strong community support. The URBACT Local Group (ULG) continues to function as the main coordination platform, meeting regularly to review progress, identify and overcome implementation obstacles and ensure alignment with wider municipal strategies.

Picture 13: Governance and Stakeholder Engagement
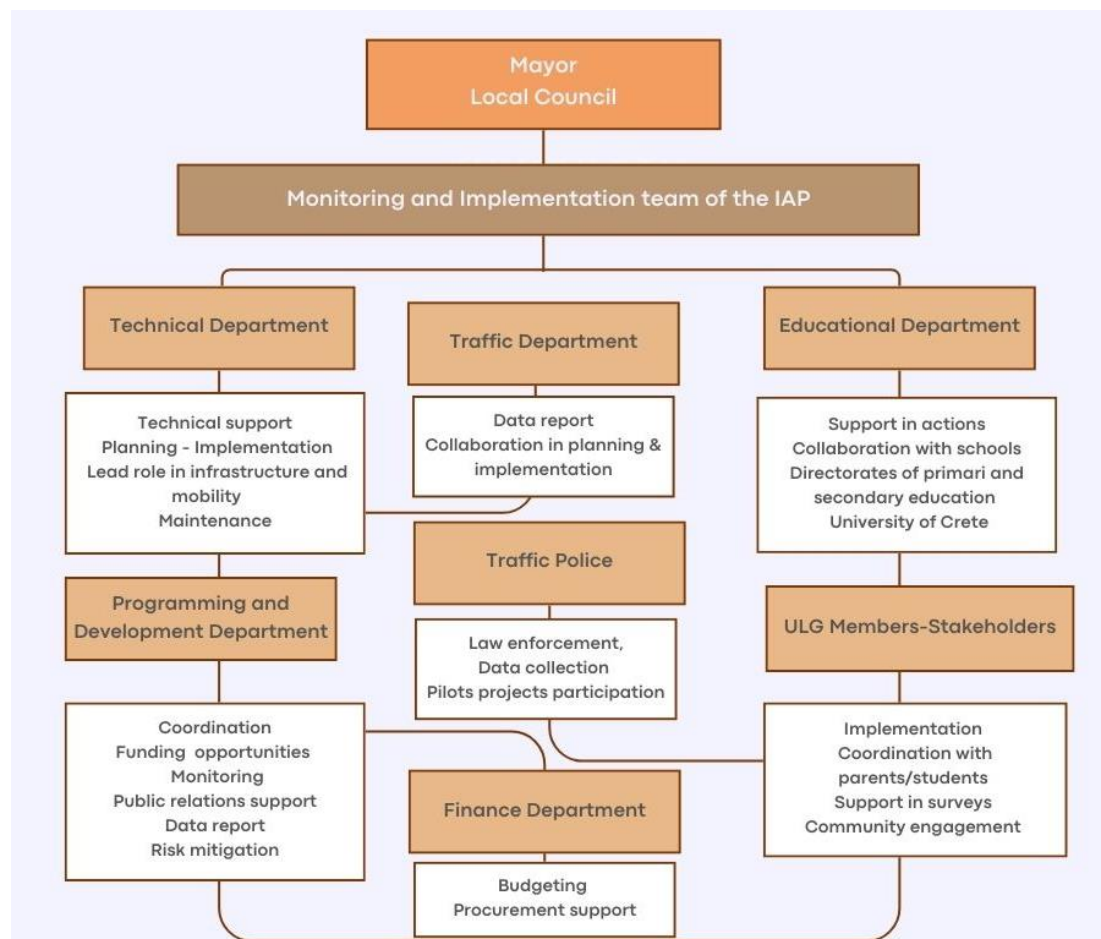
4.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation framework is designed to systematically monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the actions described in the IAP of Rethymno. It provides a structured approach to assessing progress against the defined objectives and ensure the desired results. Monitoring focus on key outcome and performance indicators, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. By defining clear responsibilities, reporting mechanisms, and monitoring activities, the framework ensures transparency, and an evidence-based approach to promoting safe and sustainable school mobility in Rethymno.

4.2.1 MONITORING CANVAS-OBJECTIVE 1

INTERVENTION LOGIC & RESULT INDICATORS

SITUATION: Some schools lack in infrastructure in order to promote/support safe modes of mobility

CHANGE:
Infrastructure improvement and enhance safety.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: By 2030, 50% of schools in Rethymno city are accessible through upgraded infrastructure, providing students and parents safe and protected routes to school.

RESULT INDICATOR: percentage of increase in infrastructures

BASELINE VALUES: 40%

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

Reporting of improved infrastructure

TARGET VALUES: 50%

Table 6: Monitoring-Objective 1

OUTPUT INDICATORS				
ACTION	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
Sidewalks	Km sidewalk	**1km**	+ 0.5Km	Municipality of Rethymno
Zebra crossing	Number of zebra crossings	**10**	15 (1 additional per school area)	Municipality of Rethymno
School warning traffic signs	Number of traffic signs	5	20(4 per school area)	Municipality of Rethymno
Kiss and Ride	Number of drop of and pick up points	0	1 per school area	Municipality of Rethymno
MONITORING FRAMEWORK				
RESPONSIBILITIES	REPORTING		FOLOW UP - ACTIVITIES	
Coordination: Municiplaity of Rethymno (technical department)	**Frequency:** 1 per year		1) Scale up action for other schools	
Data/ Information Collection: Report	**Format/Content:** Yearly report			
Report Preparation: Municipality of Rethymno (technical department)	**To whom:** Public, policy makers , parents			

4.2.2 MONITORING CANVAS-OBJECTIVE 2

INTERVENTION LOGIC & RESULT INDICATORS

SITUATION: Almost half of the pupils commute to school using motorized means, indicating a high level of car dependency.

CHANGE:
Increase the number of pupils walking, cycling, or scootering to school, promoting active travel options.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Increase the percentage of students walking, cycling, or scootering to school from 39% today to 50%

by 2027.students and parents with safe and protected routes to school

RESULT INDICATOR: percentage of increase in infrastructures

BASELINE VALUES: 39% (2024)

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

Survey

TARGET VALUES: 50% by 2027

Table 7: Monitoring-Objective 2

OUTPUT INDICATORS

ACTION	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
Pedibus	Number of participants/ of lines	0	20 per school/ 1 per school	School data
School Streets	Number of streets	0	2	Municipality of Rethymno/ Traffic Police
Sidewalks	Km sidewalk	1km	+ 0.5 Km	Municipality of Rethymno
Bike Parking Facilities	Number of bike parking bases	4	8	Municipality of Rethymno
Walk to school days	Number of actions	0	Min 1 per year/ per school	School data

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

RESPONSIBILITIES	REPORTING	FOLLOW UP - ACTIVITIES
Coordination: Municiplaity of Rethymno (technical department, Programming & European Projects Dpt)	**Frequency:** 1 per year	1) Scale up action for other schools
Data/ Information Collection: report	**Format/Content:** Yearly report	
Report Preparation: Municipality of Rethymno (Programming & European Projects Dpt)	**To whom:** Public, policy makers , parents	

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4.2.3 MONITORING CANVAS-OBJECTIVE 3
INTERVENTION LOGIC & RESULT INDICATORS

SITUATION: Lack of awareness regarding active modes. Lack of standard educational programs.

CHANGE:
Increase awareness and foster cultural shift toward sustainable and active modes.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of awareness and educational campaigns for parents and students by 100% until 2027,

since at the moment, the awareness and educational captains are at a zero point.

RESULT INDICATOR: percentage of increase in infrastructures

BASELINE VALUES: Zero (0)

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

Reports from school & Municipality

TARGET VALUES: three (3) per year

Table 8: Monitoring-Objective 3

OUTPUT INDICATORS				
ACTION	**OUTPUT INDICATOR**	**BASELINE**	**TARGET**	**SOURCE OF INFORMATION**
Campaigns & workshops	Number of events	0	3	
Pedibus	Number of participants/ of lines	0	20 per school/ 1 per school	School data
Walk to school days	Number of actions	0	Min 1 per year/ per school	School data

MONITORING FRAMEWORK		
RESPONSIBILITIES	**REPORTING**	**FOLLOW UP - ACTIVITIES**
Coordination: Municiplaity of Rethymno (technical department, Programming & European Projects Dpt)	**Frequency:** 1 per year	1) Scale up action for other schools
Data/ Information Collection: Report	**Format/Content:** Yearly report	
Report Preparation: Municipality of Rethymno (Programming & European Projects Dpt)	**To whom:** Public, policy makers , parents	

4.2.4 MONITORING CANVAS-OBJECTIVE 4
INTERVENTION LOGIC & RESULT INDICATORS

SITUATION: Low use of public transport and lack of coverage in some schools.

CHANGE:
Increase the share of public transport, promoting sustainable school mobility.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of students served by public transport and school buses from 8% today to 15% by 2027 by improving public transport roots and

implementing new services, (i.e. on demand school travel services in the urban area).

RESULT INDICATOR: percentage of usage

BASELINE VALUES: 8%

SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

Survey/report from schools

TARGET VALUES: 15%

Table 9: Monitoring- Objective 4

OUTPUT INDICATORS				
ACTION	**OUTPUT INDICATOR**	**BASELINE**	**TARGET**	**SOURCE OF INFORMATION**
Campaigns promoting school buses & public transport	Number of events	0	1 per school	Municipality of Rethymno ,School data
Increase Bus coverage	Number of children served	70	130	School data, Survey

MONITORING FRAMEWORK		
RESPONSIBILITIES	**REPORTING**	**FOLOW UP - ACTIVITIES**
Coordination: Municiplaity of Rethymno (technical department, Programming & European Projects Dpt)	**Frequency:** 1 per year	1) Follow up survey 2) Scale up action for other schools
Data/ Information Collection: Survey	**Format/Content:** Yearly report	
Report Preparation: Municipality of Rethymno Programming & European Projects Dpt	**To whom:** Public, policy makers , parents	

Table 10: Monitoring- Objectives summary

Strategic objectives	Indicator(s)	Baseline value	Target value	Source of information
Increase the percentage of students walking, cycling, or scootering to school from 39% today to 50% by 2027.	Percentage of students walking, cycling, or scootering to school	39% (2025)	50% (by 2027)	Survey among school/children
By 2030, 50% of schools in Rethymno city are accessible through upgraded infrastructure, providing students and parents with safe and protected routes to school.	Km, sidewalk	1km (2025)	1.5 km (2030)	Municipality of Rethymno, technical department
Increase the number of awareness and educational campaigns for parents and students by 100% until 2027, since at the moment, are at a zero point.	Number of events	0 (2025)	3 (2027)	School data
Increase the number of students served by public transport and school buses from 8% today to 15% by 2027 by improving public transport roots and by the implementation of new services (i.e. on demand school travel services in the urban area).	% of students served by public transport or school buses	8% (2025)	15% (2027)	School data

The table above present the strategic objectives, corresponding indicators, baseline and target values, as well as sources of information for Rethymno's Integrated Action Plan. It is provided a clear framework to measure progress and assess the effectiveness of the planned interventions. Each strategic objective is linked to specific, measurable indicators, allowing the municipality to track changes over time. Baseline values indicate the current situation, while target values set the expected outcomes by a given year. The sources of information ensure that monitoring is evidence-based and that data collection is consistent and reliable.

4.3 FUNDING STRATEGY

The IAP will be financed through a combination of local municipal budget, national recovery and mobility funds, and EU structural and thematic instruments. Public-private partnerships and community-based co-financing will also be explored where relevant.

Approach and Guiding Principles

- **Pilot-to-Scale Logic:** Pilots like the Pedibus and School Streets act as demonstrators for future replication.
- **EU & National Synergy:** Leverage the 2021–2027 EU programming period and Greek National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).
- **Community Buy-In:** Local schools, associations, and parents will support some actions (e.g. awareness campaigns, volunteer-led pedibus).

Low-cost, high-impact focus: Initial actions are affordable (<5.000–15.000 €) and can unlock long-term systemic change

Table 11: Strategic Funding Clusters

STRATEGIC FUNDING CLUSTERS		
Cluster	Included Actions	Potential Funding Sources
Child-Centered Road Safety	School Streets, Pedestrian Crossings, Kiss & Ride Zones	ERDF, Greek National Mobility Grants, Local Budget
Active Travel Promotion	Pedibus, Scooter/Bike Parking,	URBACT (pilot), Interreg MED, Horizon Europe Missions, CSR
Mobility Education & Culture	Mobile Traffic Park, School Campaigns, active games	Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Local Education Funds
Public Transport & Equity	Improved bus access for students	Greek NRRP, CEF, ERDF for rural/urban transport

4.4 COST OVERVIEW AND FUNDING SOURCES

The table below provides a comprehensive financial overview of the key actions selected for the Rethymno SCHOOLHOODS IAP. It details the estimated cost for each intervention, the recommended funding sources demonstrating a blended strategy leveraging local municipal resources, national programs and European funds.

The rationale for fit column justifies the selection of each measure, explaining how the action directly contributes to the IAP's Strategic Objectives and ensures consistency with existing municipal strategic documents, such as the SUMP.

Table 12: Timeline and Readiness

| Action	Estimated Cost (€)	Recommended Funding Sources	Rationale for Fit
School Streets	~500 per school	Municipal Budget, ERDF	High visibility, low-cost intervention aligned with SUMP
Kiss & Ride	~500	Municipal Budget	Safety and space management enhancement
Pedibus (Pilot)	~1.000	URBACT Pilot	Volunteer-based, awareness-building activity
Pedibus Scale-up	~3.000/year	Municipal Budget, School Grants	Low-cost mobility and health investment
Zebra Crossings	500 simple/2500 thermoplastic materials	Municipal Budget,	Safety infrastructure; directly supports strategic objectives on safe routes and accessibility
Smart Zebra crossings	20.000	NRRP: National Recovery and Resilience Plan	High-tech solution to enhance pedestrian safety and driver's awareness
Sidewalks	500.000	Municipal Budget, Government Grants/ ERDF	Intervention for accessibility and establishing contiguous safe walking routes

		funding/ European projects	
Scooter/Bike Parking	~500 per school	Municipal Budget, CSR Sponsors	Encourages modal shift and safe storage
School Warning traffic Calming Signs	~500 per school	Municipal Budget,	Low-cost, high-impact visual intervention
Mobile Traffic Park	700 per school	Municipal Budget	Portable, replicable safety education tool
Awareness Campaigns	~5.000/year	Erasmus+, Municipal Budget, EU Funding, Green Fund, School Grants	Promotes long-term behavioral change
Increase Bus Coverage	To Be Defined	NRRP, CEF	Promotes equity and reduces car reliance

4.5 OVERALL TIMELINE

The overall implementation timeline of the IAP reflects both the prioritization of low-cost, quickly deployable measures and the longer preparation period required for large-scale infrastructure projects. The main actions are planned between early 2026 and 2030, with early years focusing on behaviour-change and organisational measures, while heavier construction works take place later in the period.

The Gantt chart below synthesises the information for each of the 10 selected actions. It shows the period from the first preparatory activities (feasibility, approvals, planning) to the main implementation phase.

Figure 8: Gantt chart for the actions
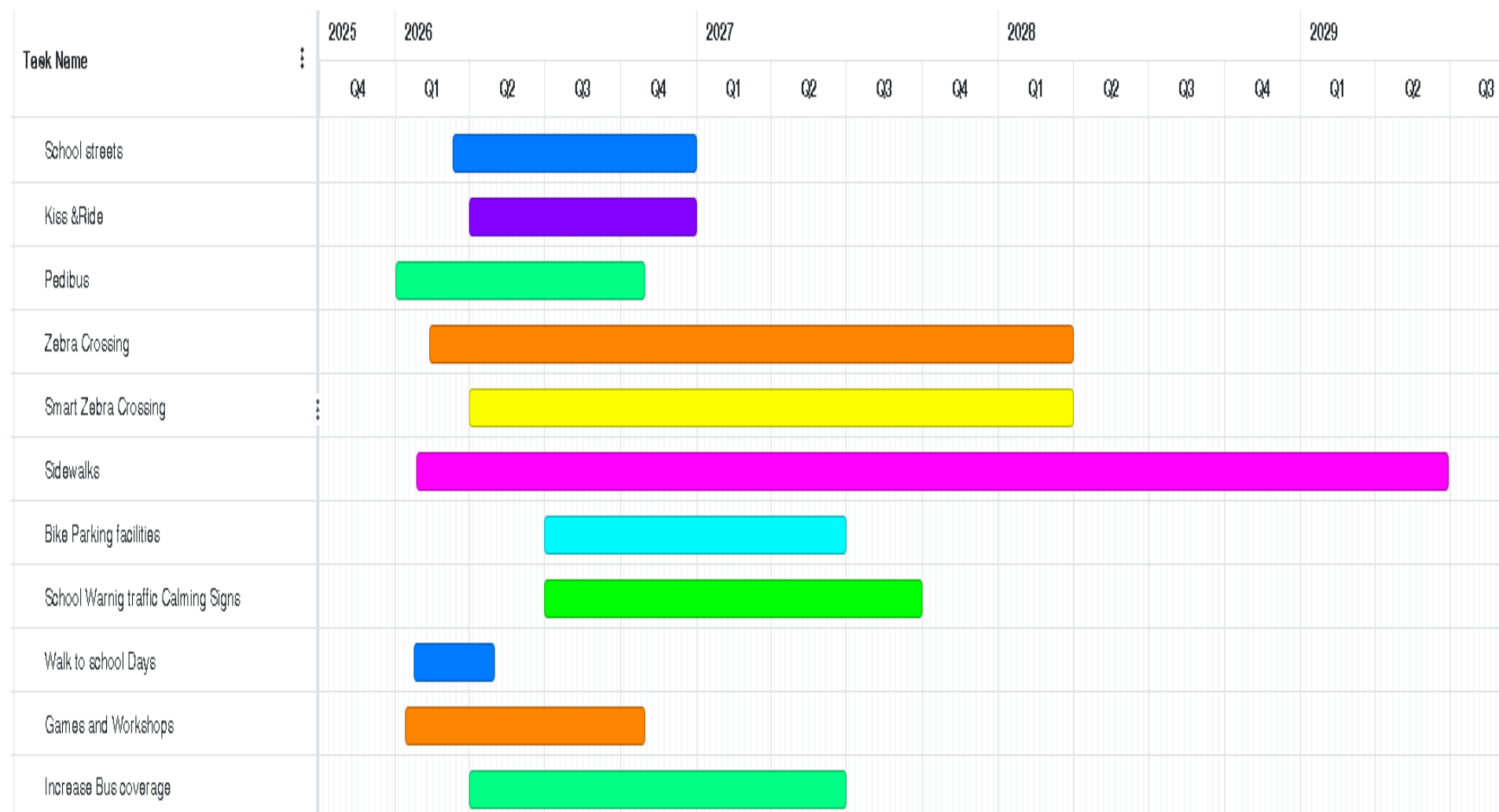
In summary:

•2026: preparation and first implementation of soft measures (Pedibus, Walk to School Days, Games & Workshops, Kiss and Ride, early planning for bus coverage and campaigns).

•2026–2027: deployment of traffic management measures (School Streets, School Warning Signs, Zebra Crossings - simple and smart-, first adjustments in bus services).

•2028–2030: Heavier infrastructure projects around schools (Sidewalks and related area redesign).

•Continuous: monitoring, communication and minor adjustments based on feedback from schools and families.

Table 13: Action-Readiness

Action	2026	2027	2028	2029	Readiness
School Streets	🟡	🟢			Design phase, pilot test done
Kiss & Ride	🟡	🟢			Easy implementation with local funding
Pedibus	🟡	🟢			Pilot complete, ready for scale-up
Zebra Crossing	🟡	🟢	🟢		Requires some design and funding.
Sidewalks	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	Requires substantial funding and lengthy technical design and procurement.
Bike parking facilities	🟡	🟢			Easy implementation with local funding
School Warning traffic Calming Signs	🟡	🟢			Easy implementation with local funding
Mobile Traffic Park	🟡	🟢			Successful pilot; scalable with funding
Awareness Campaigns	🟡	🟢			Partially underway, needs expansion
Increase Bus Coverage	🟡	🟢			Requires external financing for scaling

🟡 Initiated/Pilot

🟢 Implementation Phase

4.6 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Risk Assessment identifies potential threats to the successful implementation of the IAP, estimates their probability (Likelihood) and severity (Impact), and outlines mitigation strategies. The identified risks are grouped into five key categories to ensure comprehensive coverage of all implementation aspects.

Table 14: Risk Assessment

Identified Risk categories	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Prevention Plan	Mitigation Plan
A. Financial	Budgetary constraints/Failure to secure full funding: High implementation costs, budget limitations, or failure to secure external funds for physical works.	High	High	Proactive planning of funding applications (ERDF, national calls), phasing of investments, prioritize low-cost/high-impact measures	Re-scope actions (e.g. focus on most critical school areas), use temporary/low-cost measures, seek co-funding from partners
B. Administrative	Bureaucratic/Procedural Delays: Significant delays in securing necessary permits, approvals, or lengthy public tender/procurement processes.	High	Medium	Prepare documentation early, standardise technical specifications, establish clear internal institutional priorities.	Adapt the timeline, use temporary solutions (e.g. paint, cones)
C. Social / User Acceptance	Resistance & Safety Concerns: Resistance to change from residents/businesses/parents due to traffic displacement, parking loss, or perceived safety concerns.	Medium	Medium	Run awareness campaigns before physical changes; use pilot/temporary designs (tactical urbanism) to test acceptance, use success stories from the implemented pilots.	Increase communication to highlight safety benefits; provide temporary alternative parking/loading solutions, gather feedback and simplify participation rules.
D. Operational / Technical	Low Compliance & Participation: Low adoption rates of new schemes (Kiss & Ride, Walking Bus) or difficulty in recruiting volunteers.	Medium	Medium	Implement incentive programs (rewards, gamification) to encourage participation; work closely	Focus resources on the most successful schemes; simplify participation; reduce reliance on volunteers for key tasks;

				with schools to embed active travel in school routines	increase promoting efforts in schools.
E. Systemic / Long-Term	Lack of Sustained Impact & Maintenance: Failure to secure long-term funding for maintenance of new infrastructure or lack of long-term impact leading to routine reversion.	Medium	High	Ensure all new infrastructure has a clear maintenance funding line in the municipal budget; formally integrate successful measures into permanent municipal policy and planning documents	Reduce the scope of new infrastructure to what can be realistically maintained; prioritize resources for the most critical safety features, increase awareness campaigns to shift mentality.

To provide an overview, the following matrix shows how many of the identified risks fall into each combination of likelihood and impact. This confirms that most risks are concentrated in the medium-to-high impact categories, underlining the importance of active risk management throughout implementation.

Figure 9: Risk Matrix
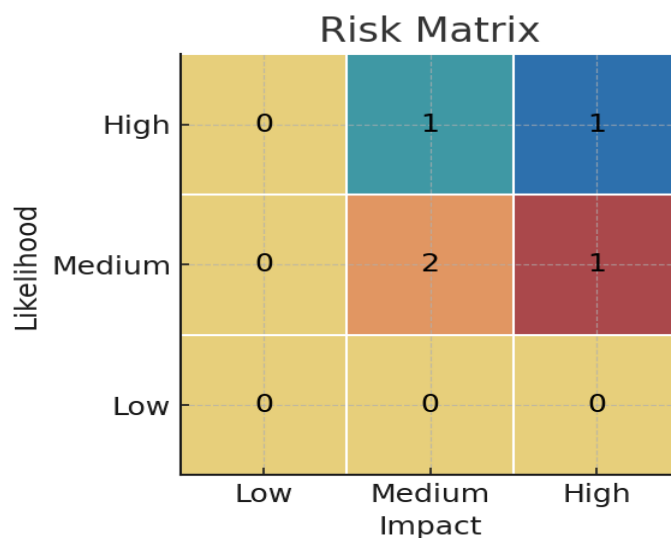
Risk management will be integrated into the regular ULG meetings and into the annual monitoring cycle described in the monitoring canvases. Critical risks, especially those related to funding, permits and social acceptance, will be tracked with specific milestones and, where needed, escalated to the political level for decision.

CONCLUSION

The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Rethymno's SCHOOLHOODS is a commitment to transitioning towards a sustainable and active school mobility culture. It provides a robust, consensus-driven roadmap to deliver safe, accessible, and vibrant school environments.

The IAP's development is rooted in the structured URBACT IV methodology, which fundamentally shaped the plan's strategic content. This framework provided the essential tools, training, and expert support needed to transform local aspirations into integrated, feasible actions. Crucially, the process fostered intensive transnational cooperation, allowing Rethymno to exchange good practices and experiences with partner cities, enriching the plan's strategic content.

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) served as the central engine for co-creation. Guided and supported by the Lead Expert and Ad Hoc Experts, the ULG's multi-stakeholder composition ensured the plan's local relevance and community ownership. The successful implementation of the initial Pilot Actions was crucial, as it locally validated the proposed measures. This evidence, combined with the ULG's dedicated work, secured the strong commitment and cooperation of political bodies and departmental heads, guaranteeing institutional continuity. The functional engagement of the ULG and its stakeholders remains the core mechanism for ensuring successful long-term implementation.