PUMA TIMES

Stories, actions and recommendations from the Plans for Urban Mobility Actions Network

A European journey towards more sustainable, inclusive, and active mobility. Nine cities, one goal – making mobility better for everyone.

December 2025

▶ Watch the PUMA Story VIDEO

LETTERS FROM EDITORS

Karolina Orcholska
Lead Expert, PUMA Network

Dear **PUMA Times** readers,

As our over two-year journey reaches its final chapter, I felt compelled to write this letter - partly as a reflection, partly as a thank-you, and partly because there are stories that deserve to be printed.

Looking back at PUMA, I see a project shaped not only by mobility plans, workshops and study visits, but by people - their courage, curiosity, honesty and quiet determination to make their cities better.

On partners who started from zero

Some cities joined PUMA admitting openly: *"We don't really know anything about mobility."* Today, these same teams talk about sustainable transport with confidence and clarity. More importantly - they identify with the topic. They understand it, they believe in it, and they can carry it forward. As a Lead Expert, I could not be prouder.

On personal transformations

Several partners told me something that stayed with me: *"I see transport differently now and finally understand what sustainable really means."* These are not project results - these are mindset shifts. And they matter more than any indicator.

On the shy voices that became strong

I had the privilege of watching people who barely spoke at the start - sometimes because of language, sometimes because of confidence - turn into active speakers, presenters and contributors. English suddenly stopped being an obstacle. The group stopped feeling intimidating. Why? Because this team made it safe to be yourself. No judgement, no embarrassment - just support and a lot of good humour. If there is one "soft result" I want to highlight loudly, it is this one.

On effort that deserves recognition

Some partners worked late nights and early mornings to complete their IAPs. They balanced jobs, family, unexpected changes - and still delivered. Every single city finished their plan. Not out of obligation - but out of belief.

On loyalty that says everything

A rare phenomenon: during the project, a few people changed jobs. Yet they decided to stay with PUMA until the end. If anyone ever asks whether this project was meaningful - this is the answer I will show them.

On the topics we touched and the ones waiting for their moment

We navigated governance, participation, safety, inclusiveness, gender, behaviour change, data, public transport, cycling, walking, night-time mobility and more. We didn't dive as deep into everything - but that is not a failure. It is a list of directions for the future.

And one last note, from me personally

Throughout the project I repeated one sentence again and again: *"At the end of the day, you need to sell your product - and positive communication is your strongest tool."*

No threats, no dramatics - just showing people what good can come from change.

And watching PUMA partners learn this, use this, and make it their own… well, that is something I will remember. As I write these words, I realise that PUMA was never just a project. It became a community. A learning space. A small family of cities trying to do something meaningful together.

Thank you for letting me be part of it, and for trusting me - and each other - along the way.

Aksels Ruperts
Lead Partner Project Coordinator, PUMA Network

Dear **PUMA Times** readers,

At the start of 2023, PUMA network had only a strong ambition: to develop mobility plans and learn from other cities. As a sustainable mobility enthusiast, it was both an honour and a great responsibility to shape the PUMA project concept and write the application from scratch.

I won't hide that the beginning was challenging. With limited project management experience, I spent countless hours studying the URBACT programme and searching for the best way to use it to advance our cities sustainability goals. Now, as we reach the end of the project, I can say with confidence - every hour and every sleepless night was worth it.

Together, we developed mobility plans for nine different cities, gained valuable knowledge, and explored ideas we had never considered before. When I first uploaded the PUMA project idea to the URBACT partner search tool, more than 20 cities expressed interest. Choosing only 9 was not easy, but my goal was clear: to build a balanced partnership where everyone could grow and learn from each other. Looking back now, I truly believe we succeeded. I am grateful for the commitment, energy, and willingness to grow that each partner brought to this journey.

Thank you for your trust and support. This project has strengthened not only my professional skills but also my character, resilience, and belief in the power of collaboration.

1

What you will find in this final edition

This edition of PUMA Times (Final product of the URBACT PUMA network) brings together the key stories, reflections and outcomes of more than two years of joint work within the PUMA network. It captures the journey from early ambition to concrete action, showing how nine European cities and regions translated shared learning into local mobility change.

In the pages that follow, you will find an overview of the PUMA journey and its main milestones, insights from partners reflecting on their experiences, and a closer look at the Integrated Action Plans developed across the network. The publication also explores key mobility themes that shaped the work of PUMA - from walking and cycling to public transport, road safety, governance, funding and communication.

Alongside project stories, this final edition offers practical lessons and takeaways for cities working towards more sustainable, inclusive and people-centred mobility. It is both a reflection on what has been achieved and an invitation to continue the conversation beyond the lifetime of the project.

AT A GLANCE:
facts and figures about PUMA

9 partners

2.5 years

100+ stakeholders engaged

10+ transnational events

9 Integrated Action Plans

7 EU countries represented

Liepāja, Latvia
Dienvidkurzeme, Latvia
Taurage region, Lithuania
Gdansk, Poland
Nova Gorica, Slovenia
Zagreb, Croatia
Cento, Italy
Viladecans, Spain
Larissa, Greece
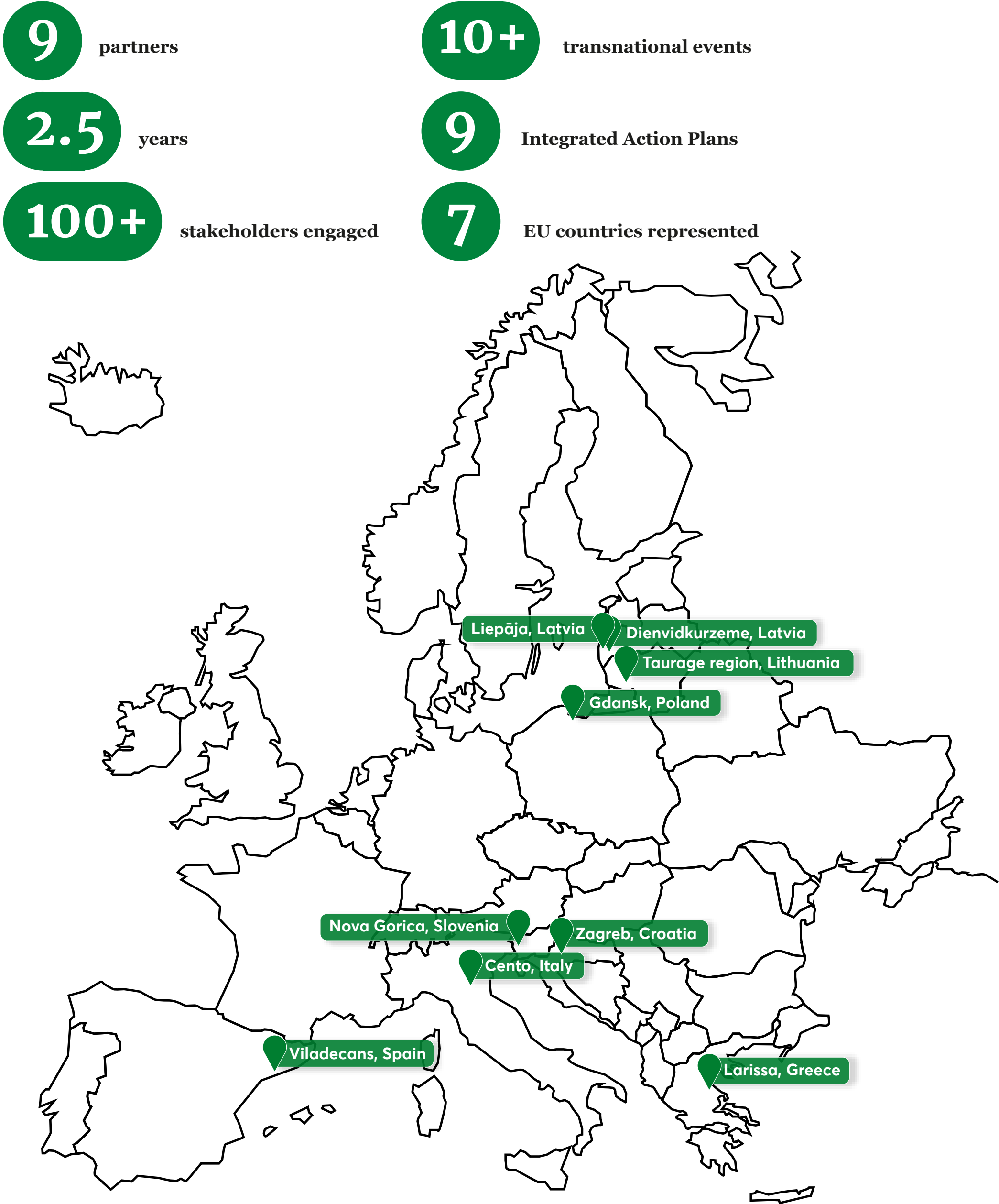
Find out more
about our network HERE

From vision to action – PUMA timeline

The journey of the PUMA network began in early 2023, when nine partners from across Europe united around a shared vision - to create more sustainable and efficient mobility in their cities. Each partner set out to develop or refine their local mobility plans while exchanging knowledge, experiences, and best practices from different corners of Europe. The PUMA journey includes 6 transnational meetings, complemented by numerous local activities and online coordination sessions. The timeline below highlights the key milestones of our collective path toward better urban mobility.

2023

●	March	**PUMA action planning network proposal submitted**
●	June	**PUMA network approval and official start**
●	August	**URBACT Summer University in Malmo**
●	October	**1st transnational meeting in Liepāja, Latvia**
●	December	**Communication plan, Baseline study and network roadmap**

2024

●	March	**Webinar on micromobility**
●	April	**2nd transnational meeting in Viladecans, Spain**
●	September	**3rd transnational meeting in Zagreb, Croatia**

2025

●	January	**4th transnational meeting in Gdansk, Poland**
●	March	**Webinar on road safety**
●	April	**URBACT City festival 2025 in Wroclaw, Poland**
●	May	**5th transnational meeting in Larissa, Greece**
●	June	**Draft Integrated Action Plans**
●	September	**Webinar on public transport**
●	November	**Final transnational meeting in Nova Gorica, Slovenia**
●	December	**Delivery of final Integrated Action Plans and Final Product**

2026

●	March	**URBACT City festival 2026**

The PUMA journey from partners perspectives

Jasmina Nikić

Regional Development Agency Nova Gorica (Slovenia), Project Manager

Nova Gorica joined the PUMA network to strengthen its capacity for sustainable mobility planning and to learn from European cities facing similar cross-border and governance challenges. For us, PUMA represents a practical learning community that helps transform ideas into coordinated, people-focused mobility solutions for the Nova Gorica–Gorizia area.

Witnessing stakeholders from both sides of the border co-create a shared mobility vision during the cross-border workshop, proving that collaboration can overcome long-standing administrative boundaries.

Vasilis Mitsios

Development Organisation of Municipality of Larissa – OLON SA (Greece), external expert

We joined the PUMA network to exchange knowledge and co-design sustainable mobility solutions that fit Larissa's local context. For us, PUMA means collaboration, innovation, and a shared European commitment to greener, more accessible urban mobility.

Our most inspiring PUMA moment was hosting the transnational meeting in Larissa, where we shared our new controlled parking system and local mobility practices, while learning from our partners' innovative approaches.

Umberto Amoroso

Municipality of Cento (Italy), European Project Manager

The Municipality of Cento decided to join the PUMA network to take advantage of the "URBACT methodology" and of the cooperation with other partners to acquire new tools and knowledge about mobility, in order to turn the current system into an inclusive and sustainable one.

The most inspiring and touching PUMA moment was the first ULG meeting with migrant women. The participants said it was the first time that a public authority had shown interest in their opinions about the accessibility of the urban mobility system. Hearing this made us realize that we were moving in the right direction.

Edvinas Benetis

Green region (Lithuania), transport infrastructure expert

We joined the PUMA network to rethink mobility and create a more sustainable, inclusive, and connected future. For us, PUMA shows that true mobility solutions are not only technical - they're social and built through collaboration across borders.

The most inspiring PUMA moment was seeing nine diverse European cities and regions unite to co-create a common framework for action, proving that cross-border collaboration is key to developing sustainable and deeply social mobility solutions.

Marko Slavulj

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Traffic and Transport Sciences (Croatia), Associate Professor

PUMA helped us transform isolated mobility projects into a shared learning journey and a real support system for cities.

It gave us honest peer feedback, practical tools, and the confidence to scale our solutions nationally.

The first co-creation workshop in Zagreb where ministries, the city, operators, academia and NGOs sketched the National SUMP Platform together on a single sheet was the moment the Programme felt truly achievable.

Ilva Markus-Narvila

Dienvidkurzeme Municipality (Latvia), project manager

We joined the PUMA network at the invitation of our neighbouring city, Liepaja, with whom we share a common development strategy and mobility ambitions. For us, PUMA became like a big family - a place to learn, exchange experiences and work together on real solutions to mobility challenges.

Our most inspiring moment was the URBACT University 2023, where the entire network - partners, our lead partner and lead expert - met for the first time. It marked the true beginning of our shared journey toward more sustainable mobility in our cities and regions.

Juan Diego Palacios Gonzalez

Viladecans City Council (Spain), mobility officer

We joined PUMA because sustainable mobility is key to our carbon-neutral mission. PUMA has helped us unite stakeholders, strengthen our diagnosis and action planning, and prepare for renewing our SUMP.

The most inspiring moment was the first ULG meeting, which was attended by a very diverse group of around 35 people. The attendees made relevant contributions on the challenges and proposals for sustainable mobility in Viladecans.

Aksels Ruperts

Liepāja City Municipality (Latvia), project manager, Lead partner project coordinator

A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan is a key element of any modern, growing city - and Liepāja is no exception. As a member of the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral Cities, joining the URBACT programme and creating a mobility network was a natural step.

It allowed us to develop a comprehensive mobility plan, strengthen our planning skills, and gain valuable knowledge to support Liepāja's transition toward a cleaner, smarter urban future.

The most inspiring moment was in summer 2025, we held lively discussions with a wide range of stakeholders on our draft Integrated Mobility Action Plan. Together, we shaped a long-term vision, explored potential locations for mobility hubs, identified where new cycling paths are needed, and considered ways to improve public transport. It was a real teamwork! Despite differing opinions, we reached a shared agreement on the key actions and priorities.

Dorota Gajda-Kutowińska

Gdansk Roads and Green Areas Administration (Poland) Senior Urban Mobility Expert

Thanks to our involvement in the PUMA, we were able to prepare a mobility plan for one of our 35 districts. It wasn't an easy task, but our partners and the Lead Expert supported us throughout the process, particularly through joint brainstorming sessions during our virtual and on-site meetings. We gained a great deal of knowledge from the network and from other similar URBACT partnerships. PUMA is like an international family, where everyone has their own story, but we all strive to shape sustainable, safe and equal cities, one step at a time.

All capacity building events like PUMA and URBACT on-line workshops, international meetings help to discover something new that was helpful in preparing the IAP.

▶ Watch video: **Transnational meeting in Gdansk**

▶ Watch video: **Partner experience stories**

Integrated Mobility Action Plans – main deliverables of the URBACT PUMA network

The main outcome of the PUMA project was the creation of Integrated Mobility Action Plans (furthermore - IAPs). At the start, some partners admitted, "We're not mobility experts" or "We've never prepared a mobility plan before." Yet every partner delivered their plan on time.

Developing these documents was not always easy - mobility is a topic everyone has an opinion about, and local perspectives on sustainability often differ. Still, all nine partners successfully produced draft IAPs, which were thoroughly reviewed by URBACT ad-hoc mobility expert Claus Köllinger and Lead Expert Karolina Orcholska. Their insights and suggestions were integrated into the final versions.

Although each PUMA partner city started from a different point, their Integrated Action Plans share a common intention: to create safer streets, stronger neighbourhoods, better access to services and more resilient mobility systems. What differs is the scale, the geography and the local priorities. What unites them is a pragmatic, place-based understanding of mobility - not as an abstract system, but as part of daily life.

Below is an overview of how each city shaped its IAP: what it wants to change, how it plans to do it, and the character of the mobility system it is building.

Liepāja (Latvia) - active mobility by the sea

Liepāja builds on an already strong foundation of sustainable mobility. The centrepiece of the plan is the development of a Mobility Point - a multimodal hub integrating public transport, walking, cycling and car access. The IAP identifies critical intersections for redesign to reduce conflict points and improve safety. Additional improvements along key corridors enhance walking and cycling access to major destinations, ensuring smoother and more intuitive multimodal travel.

→ Read full IAP HERE

Nova Gorica (Slovenia) - mobility without borders

In this unique urban territory, mobility depends on coordination between two cities and two countries. The IAP focuses on improving cross-border public transport, strengthening walking and cycling links, and upgrading peripheral intersections to improve safety. Better coordination of timetables, improving access to public transport stops and developing a shared mobility information platform are key ambitions. The plan aims to make the border a connector rather than a barrier - enabling seamless movement across the two cities.

→ Read full IAP HERE
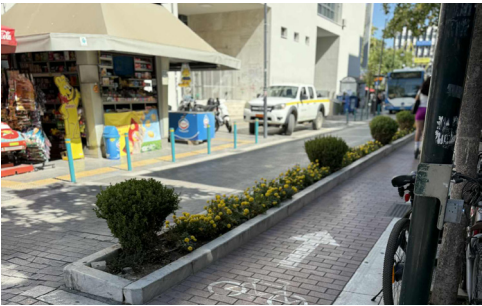
Larissa (Greece) - parking space, public space

Larissa's IAP is built around the idea that mobility must support social cohesion and serve groups who face barriers in daily life. The plan strengthens safety for pedestrians and cyclists, expands accessible routes, and integrates mobility with educational and awareness-raising activities. Behavioural change is treated as a structural component of mobility planning. Small pilot actions are included to test new approaches before larger investment, while targeted improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure aim to make movement safer and more predictable for all users.

→ Read full IAP HERE

Cento (Italy) - schools at the heart of mobility

Cento's compact historic core is the heart of its mobility vision. The plan aims to reduce car pressure, expand pedestrian-priority areas and redesign key intersections to lower speeds. Cycling connections - particularly those linking schools, greenways and the station - are strengthened, supported by awareness and education initiatives. The strategy is built on human-scale interventions: slowing traffic, reallocating space and improving safety to restore balance between mobility and the historic urban fabric.

→ Read full IAP HERE

Zagreb (Croatia) - from planning to implementation

Zagreb's Integrated Action Plan supports the creation of Croatia's first National SUMP Supporting Programme. It addresses fragmented SUMP uptake and limited national guidance by outlining a clear pathway developed with the URBACT Local Group and shaped by PUMA's tools for participation, data, and action planning. The plan sets seven key actions, including a National SUMP Platform and Office, national guidelines, a funding scheme tied to SUMP quality, a cross-sector task force, improved data and monitoring, tailored training, and legislative anchoring.

Key lessons highlight the importance of multi-level governance and targeted support for smaller municipalities. From 2025–2030, Zagreb will focus on launching the platform, testing monitoring tools, opening initial funding calls, and scaling support nationwide.

→ Read full IAP HERE

Dienvidkurzeme - walking to connect communities

Dienvidkurzeme's Integrated Action Plan charts the region's mobility vision to 2035, focusing on better accessibility, sustainability, and reduced car dependency. Covering both the municipality and Liepaja, the plan promotes inclusive, low-emission transport options. Working with Liepaja through URBACT has been especially valuable, allowing both territories to address shared mobility challenges together. The URBACT Local Group — from municipal departments to schools, transport providers, NGOs, and residents — played a central role in shaping the plan. Once approved, Dienvidkurzeme will begin implementing the actions, moving toward a more connected and sustainable future.

→ Read full IAP HERE

Gdańsk – A Vision for a Sustainable Metropolis

The Oliwa IAP focuses on detailed, neighbourhood-level improvements that directly affect daily life: resurfaced pavements, new and upgraded crossings, redesigned junctions, additional traffic calming and better bicycle parking. A significant part of the plan addresses lighting and visibility improvements aimed at making evening walking safer and more comfortable. Special attention is given to school surroundings and routes where vulnerable users face barriers.

→ Read full IAP HERE

Green region - the power of small changes

The Green region regional IAP adopts a broader, inter-municipal perspective. It prioritises cycling routes that link towns across the region and support both residents and visitors. Improvements to regional public transport reinforce these cycling connections, creating a multimodal system that reduces dependence on private cars. The plan places strong emphasis on cooperation between municipalities - essential in a region where mobility must function as an integrated network rather than isolated local systems.

→ Read full IAP HERE
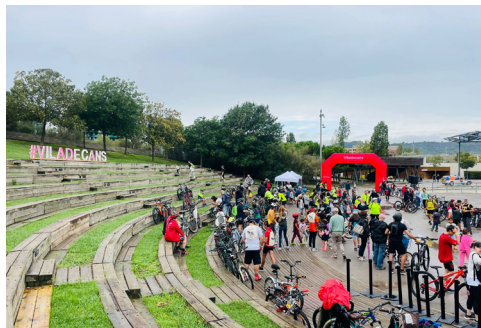
Viladecans - building safe, everyday mobility in the neighbourhoods

The Viladecans IAP sets a shared vision for sustainable and inclusive mobility, supporting the city's ambition to become carbon-neutral by 2030 and carbon-negative by 2050. Co-created with public institutions, citizens, and businesses through the URBACT Local Group, it aligns local priorities with European decarbonisation and digital transition goals. The plan reduces dependence on private cars, strengthens walking, cycling, public transport and freight logistics, and introduces digital mobility management tools. Public space activation, awareness campaigns, and strong governance ensure social acceptance and measurable environmental and social impact.

→ Read full IAP HERE

PUMA IAPs at a glance

Taken together, these nine Integrated Action Plans show a network that did not search for a single model of mobility but embraced nine different realities - neighbourhood cities and rural regions, cross-border territories and historic centres, national systems and local laboratories.

Each plan addresses a specific context, yet all converge around the same principles: safer streets, better access, cleaner travel, stronger public spaces and mobility systems that genuinely reflect how people move every day. What PUMA achieved is not uniformity, but alignment -

a shared understanding that sustainable mobility grows from local needs, practical steps and consistent investment. These IAPs mark the beginning of long-term change in each city and, together, they form a credible contribution to the future of sustainable mobility in Europe.

Sustainable mobility never looks the same everywhere - but everywhere, it begins with understanding how people move, and designing cities that make those movements safe, simple and human.

9
integrated Action Plans

7
countries represented

4
territorial types: neighbourhood districts, historic towns, rural territories, cross-border systems

120+
actions proposed across the network

40+
school-area safety improvements

35+
walking and cycling upgrades

20+
redesigned intersections

1
national programme supporting SUMP development

Ten chapters of mobility

Mobility is often presented as a technical field: modes, networks, timetables, regulations. But as we learned across the PUMA journey, mobility is something much more intimate and much more powerful. It shapes how people experience their city, how safe they feel, how independent children can be, how fairly opportunities are distributed, and how welcoming public space becomes after dark.

Mobility reveals values. It shows whether a city prioritises dignity or speed, belonging or throughput, care or convenience.

These Ten Chapters of Mobility capture the essence of what matters most - not the vehicles we plan for, but the lives those vehicles shape. Each chapter is grounded in the original reflections we developed and illustrates how cities can look at mobility through a broader, more human lens. Partner examples appear after each article, based strictly on their IAPs. References provide credible sources for further exploration.

CHAPTER 1
WALKING: THE OVERLOOKED POWERHOUSE

On any ordinary morning, a city quietly reveals its truth through footsteps. Someone leaves home, pulls the door shut behind them, and steps onto the pavement. That first interaction - the curb, the surface, the lighting, the crossing just ahead - already says more about the city's values than any strategy document ever will. Walking is the first relationship every resident has with the urban environment. It is honest, simple, and deeply telling.

A walkable city is not one where people walk *because they have to*. It is one where people walk because it feels natural - even pleasant. Where the streets welcome you instead of resisting you. Walking exposes everything. If sidewalks are cracked, if crossings require courage, if vehicles dominate every corner, if lighting disappears in the wrong places, people feel it immediately - especially women, children, older adults, and anyone with reduced mobility. When walking fails, the city quietly withdraws from its responsibility to care.

Yet walking is the mode that most perfectly reflects the promise of mobility: equal, affordable, healthy, and universally accessible. It doesn't ask for money or equipment. It doesn't emit noise or pollution. It takes up almost no space and requires no schedule. And it is woven into every other mode - no bus journey exists without walking. No train ride begins without it, no cycling trip ends without a fi-

nal walk to the door. Walking is not an add-on. It is the baseline, the essential element without which the rest of the mobility system simply collapses.

But for decades, cities treated walking as background noise - something that happens naturally and therefore doesn't need attention. Streets were engineered for the efficiency of vehicles rather than the comfort of people. Pedestrians were left to navigate narrow pavements, long detours, multi-lane junctions, poor surfaces and dark corners - all reinforcing the message that walking was secondary.

And yet, walking is the one intervention that transforms a city most quickly, most quietly, and most profoundly. A shorter crossing reduces fear. A smoother pavement restores dignity. A well-lit path invites evening strolls. A canopy of trees cools a summer street. A bench creates possibility. These are small changes, but they ripple outward, turning a corridor into a place, and a movement into an experience.

The power of walking is subtle, steady, transformative. It shapes health, local economies, safety, climate resilience and the social fabric of a neighbourhood. Walkable cities enjoy stronger community ties, higher footfall for local businesses, and more vibrant public spaces. Walking isn't the slow mode. It is the human mode - the emotional architecture of a city.

Walking also reveals who the city is designed for.

Children notice the world at ground level.

Older adults measure distance differently.

Women interpret lighting and visibility instinctively.

People with mobility challenges

read the street through stability and comfort.

If a street works for them, it works for everyone. This is the hidden genius of walkability.

Across the PUMA network, this truth emerged again and again. Walking was not a separate chapter - it became the underlying theme of every conversation, every analysis, every emerging plan. Partners realised that improving walking conditions was not merely a mobility action but a social one: it dictated safety, independence, equality and the emotional experience of everyday life. Even partners who began with minimal mobility knowledge discovered, by the end, that walking was their compass - the measure of whether their future mobility vision would truly serve people.

And as these plans took shape, the network produced a mosaic of approaches that revealed walking not as a homogeneous task, but as a tailored response to each city's identity. In Viladecans, this meant creating safer pedestrian connections between neighbourhoods and ensuring crossings reflected real human desire lines. In Oliwa, Gdańsk, walking became the centrepiece of an entire IAP - from resurfaced pavements to accessible crossings and night-time comfort. Nova Gorica and Gorizia examined the edges of their cities, identifying intersection gaps that interrupted the walking experience, especially at the urban fringe. Dienvidkurzeme focused on small-town improvements - crossings, surfaces and signage that reconnect daily routines in Grobiņa, Aizpute and Priekule. Liepāja embedded new pedestrian crossings within broader intersection redesigns, elevating walkability in a city known for its long distances. And in Cento, pedestrian-priority zones in the historic

centre reclaimed the streets as social space rather than traffic corridors. Different contexts, different scales - but the same revelation: when walking is respected, the city becomes more human, more connected, and more hopeful.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

→ Walk21

→ TfL Healthy Streets

→ GDCI Walkable Cities

CHAPTER 2
CYCLING: CULTURE BEFORE CONCRETE

Cities often speak about cycling as if it were simply a matter of drawing lines on asphalt: a corridor here, a painted symbol there, a stretch of protected lane that looks convincing in a photograph. But cycling is not created by infrastructure alone. If walking reveals the emotional truth of a city, cycling exposes its structural one. It shows whether a city believes in people's ability to move freely - or whether it still expects them to behave like traffic.

Cycling is often misunderstood as a lifestyle choice, a niche activity reserved for enthusiasts, athletes, or the bravest among us. But in cities where it thrives, cycling is not an identity. It is not a statement. It is not a sport. It is simply… *normal*. A tool. An everyday freedom.

People cycle not because they are committed environmentalists or because they enjoy adrenaline - but because the city has

made cycling the easiest, most obvious option. This is what separates symbolic cycling cities from real ones. Symbolic cities have a few proud lanes that look impressive in strategy documents; real cycling cities have networks that feel intuitive, continuous, predictable, and safe.

And continuity is the key. Every break in a cycling route is a moment of hesitation - and hesitation kills comfort. Cycling thrives only when it flows. When a route doesn't disappear suddenly at an intersection. When a protected lane doesn't collapse into a dangerous merge. When a simple trip does not require acrobatics at every junction. A good cycling network is like a good narrative: it needs coherence, rhythm, a beginning, a middle, and an end.

But cultural confidence is just as important as physical continuity. A city can have the most beautiful cycling infrastructure in Europe, and still people will not cycle if they feel that cycling "isn't for them." This is why communication matters. This is why storytelling matters. This is why social proof matters.

A single joyful image of a child cycling to school does more to shift public perception than a 60-page technical guideline. A grandmother on a bike changes the debate more than any modal split statistic. When ordinary people cycle, cycling becomes ordinary. And that is when real change begins.

Cycling also has an emotional geometry. It creates a different relationship with distance - what once felt far suddenly feels accessible. A city shrinks in the best possible way. The journey becomes part of daily well-being rather than a task to endure. A five-kilometre stretch that once meant congestion, stress or time loss suddenly becomes a moment of movement, light, and fresh air.

The simplicity of the bicycle hides its revolutionary potential. Cycling advances health, social connection, climate resilience, and urban equity all at once.

A bicycle does not pollute. It does not take space. It does not isolate. It does not harm. It makes the city feel closer, physically and socially.

But cycling must also feel safe - for the confident and the cautious, for children and older adults, for women travelling alone, for people who have never cycled before. Safety in cycling is not the absence of crashes - it is the presence of comfort. It is psychological space. It is the sense that your movement is anticipated, protected, and welcomed.

Cities that grasp this move beyond engineering and into empathy. They understand that cycling is not a battle with cars, but a rebalancing of priorities. It is not about eliminating driving, but about giving people another way to move - a way that feels joyful instead of stressful.

Across PUMA, cycling became a story of cities learning to see mobility differently. Some began with almost no infrastructure; others had more experience. Some worked with children, others with commuters, others with regional distances. But all of them discovered the same truth: cycling is not a symbol of sustainability - it is a tool for everyday dignity. A tool that becomes powerful only when culture and infrastructure grow together.

And as partners developed their IAPs, this cultural shift began to take shape in concrete, grounded ways. In Viladecans, cycling routes were strengthened around schools and public facilities - not as isolated lanes, but as part of a larger rethinking of how children move through their neighbourhoods. The work around schools was not just transport planning; it was cultural infrastructure, showing that cycling belongs in the daily rhythm of community life. In Larissa, cycling emerged through education and awareness - a recognition that confidence is often the first infrastructure people need before they take their first ride. Meanwhile, in Cento, cycling became a connective fabric linking the historic centre, secondary schools, greenway and train station through new corridors and training initiatives designed to build skill and comfort. In the Green Region of Tauragė, cycling took on a regional dimension, becoming a tool that physically connects towns and villages across municipal borders. And in Oliwa, Gdańsk, cycling improvements focused on safer intersections and the continuity of local routes, realigning the street network with how people actually move.

Taken together, these efforts form a constellation of approaches - different in scale, different in ambition, but united by the same insight: when cycling feels easy, safe and normal, the city changes. And when a city changes, so do its people.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

CHAPTER 3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT: THE QUIET PROMISE OF THE CITY

Public transport is often treated as a technical system - a matter of timetables, fleet renewal, procurement, kilometres, and schedules. But at its heart, public transport is not a system. It is a promise. A promise that the city will take you where you need to go - without judgement, without cost barriers, without fear. A promise that you can move freely even if you do not drive, do not own a car, or do not wish to rely on one. Public transport is the great equaliser of urban life - but only when it is cared for as a social contract rather than a logistical challenge.

To understand the emotional dimension of public transport, one only needs to think of the moment just before boarding: standing at a stop at dusk, alone or with family, perhaps tired after work, with the cold settling in or the sun dropping lower. Comfort in that moment - lighting, visibility, company, safe access - matters just as much as the service itself. If the stop feels unsafe, if reaching it requires crossing hostile intersections, if the timetable feels unpredictable, then public transport becomes a burden rather than a solution. Reliability is not only about arrival times - it is about trust.

A good public transport network is a city's quiet backbone. It holds together the everyday journeys that rarely appear in statistics: the morning commute of a cleaner, the short ride of a teenager heading to school, the evening trip of a nurse finishing a late shift, the errands of a pensioner who does not drive. These riders are the true experts of the city - they know where the sidewalk dips too steeply, where the bus shelter leaks, where lighting disappears, where the schedule no longer matches real life.

Public transport operates at this human scale, even when planners speak of systems and networks. But its greatest strength is that it allows the city to move *collectively*. In an age where urban life often pushes us into individual bubbles - cars, headphones, private spaces - public transport quietly reintroduces the possibility of proximity. The shared carriage is one of the few modern public rooms where people of different ages, backgrounds, incomes and

purposes coexist, even if silently. This proximity teaches empathy. It softens barriers. It reminds us, subtly, that we all belong to the same place.

Yet public transport faces a paradox: the people who rely on it most often have the least political power. Car users tend to be more vocal in public debates, more influential in decision-making, more present in consultation processes. Meanwhile, those who depend on public transport - young people, low-income communities, women, migrants, older adults - often remain unheard. This is why improving public transport is not just a mobility intervention. It is an act of social justice.

Another truth emerges when cities take bus stops and train stations seriously: the "first 300 metres" determine the real accessibility of public transport. If walking to the stop is unsafe, unpleasant or inaccessible, the service might as well not exist. A perfect bus line on paper loses its meaning if the stop feels isolated at night; a frequent tram loses its charm if reaching the platform requires sprinting across a multi-lane junction. Public transport lives and dies in the space between home and the network.

But where cities invest in those details, something remarkable happens: mode shift

follows. People begin choosing public transport not because they are forced to, but because it works - predictably, comfortably, safely, humanely. The journey becomes part of the day rather than an obstacle within it.

Across the PUMA network, this shift became visible. Cities approached public transport not as a matter of hardware - though hardware matters - but as a matter of dignity. Stops, access, lighting, connectivity, multimodality: these elements were no longer peripheral. They became central. Partners realised that public transport improvements are not measured only by the number of passengers carried, but by how people feel when they move through their city.

The beauty of public transport is that it contains within it both the practical and the poetic. It is, at its core, a rhythm of collective movement - an orchestra of routes, vehicles and people, all choreographed to support daily life. But on a deeper level, it is a symbol of the city's commitment to fairness: the idea that every resident, regardless of income or age or ability, should have access to opportunity.

This is why improving public transport is not the work of transport agencies alone. It is the work of society - of planners, politicians, educators, designers, citizens. It requires imagination and empathy. It requires the humility to see the city not from the driver's seat but from the bus stop at 22:00 on a cold Wednesday night.

And in PUMA, this humility came alive in many forms. Viladecans approached public transport through the lens of access and comfort, improving the streets and crossings around stops so that walking to the bus became safer and more intuitive - recognising that the journey begins long before the vehicle arrives. Liepāja developed an integrated Mobility Point that brings together buses, bicycles and parking, showing how multimodality can strengthen the identity of public transport as the central urban connector. Nova Gorica and Gorizia focused on coordinated cross-border transport, acknowledging that mobility care does not end at city limits - and that seamless public transport can stitch together two countries as naturally as two neighbourhoods. And in Dienvidkurzeme, where

rural distances shape daily life, the IAP elevated school transport and regional public transport as critical lifelines, essential for equality of opportunity in sparsely populated areas.

Different strategies, different geographies - but one shared insight: public transport is not just about moving people. It is about holding the city together.
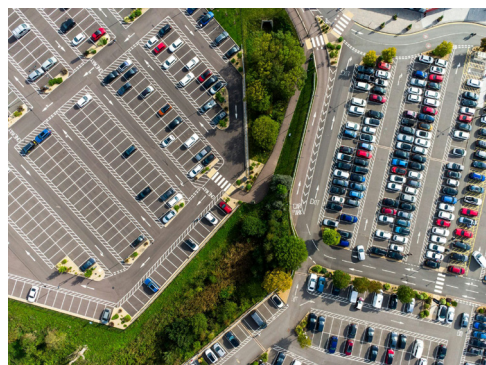
WHERE TO LEARN MORE

→ UITP

→ ELTIS

→ Transport for London

→ ITF Transport Outlook

CHAPTER 4 THE HIDDEN COSTS OF CAR DEPENDENCY

Cities rarely admit it openly, but car dependency is not the natural state of urban life. It is a manufactured condition - the result of decades of planning choices, political incentives, cultural narratives and inherited habits. It didn't arise because people prefer cars; it arose because, for many years, cities were designed as if cars were the only meaningful way to move.

But while car dependency feels convenient in the moment, its costs accumulate quietly. They accumulate in the air people breathe, in the noise that fills their homes, in the fear parents feel when their children cross the street, in the lack of independence for those who do not drive, in the stress of congestion that eats away at time and patience. These costs are rarely visible in municipal budgets, but they are visible everywhere else - on pavements, in health statistics, in the shape of public space.

Car dependency also creates a strange kind of emotional geography. Distances feel longer. Streets feel less welcoming. People feel more isolated. When every errand requires a vehicle, the city becomes a series of destinations rather than a continuous place.

Communities fragment because their edges harden: the public space becomes an in-between rather than a gathering ground.

Yet people seldom choose car dependency - they inherit it.

They inherit street networks built around throughput instead of safety.

They inherit neighbourhoods separated by wide roads that cut through local life.

They inherit cultural norms that tell them cars equal success, freedom, adulthood.

They inherit systems where the alternatives - walking, cycling, public transport - simply don't work.

This is why shifting away from car dependency is not about restricting cars. It is about restoring choice. A truly balanced mobility system is one where people can walk because it's pleasant, cycle because it's safe, take public transport because it's reliable, and drive when they genuinely need to - not because every other option is impossible.

But rebalancing mobility demands honesty. It requires cities to acknowledge that streets are finite and that space is a public good, not a private entitlement. Every square metre devoted to car storage is a square metre taken from trees, benches, crossings, children's play, active mobility, cafés, or simple breathing room. Streets designed primarily for cars inevitably push everything else - walking, cycling, social life - into the margins.

The hidden truth is that car dependency is expensive not only for municipalities, but for individuals. Running a car consumes a household budget in ways that public discourse rarely addresses: fuel, insurance, servicing, parking, unexpected repairs. And yet many people feel trapped in these costs, because the city has not offered them a realistic alternative. When mobility becomes a financial burden, inequality deepens.

But change becomes possible the moment the city chooses to see. Because streets are not destiny - they are design. And design can be changed.

The most powerful transformations often start

small: a safer crossing, a rebalanced intersection, a narrower traffic lane that slows cars without drama, a redesigned school street, a public space reclaimed from parking. These interventions do more than increase safety - they shift the emotional balance of the street. They make people feel that the city is for them again.

And when people feel that streets are for them, behaviour begins to change. Parents allow children to walk or cycle to school. Older adults feel confident crossing the street. Short errands become a walk rather than a drive. Cafés open terraces. Neighbours talk more. The street becomes a place instead of a corridor. This is not anti-car policy; this is pro-life policy - the kind of life that unfolds on foot, slowly, sociably, visibly.

Across the PUMA network, partners confronted car dependency not through ideology, but through empathy. They looked not at traffic volumes, but at people's fears, daily routines, and the hidden stress built into their streets. They realised that car dependency is often a symptom of something deeper: discomfort with alternatives. To reduce car use, one must increase comfort, dignity and trust in other modes. And this is exactly what cities began doing.

In Viladecans, the IAP addresses car pressure by reorganising traffic flows and redesigning streets to improve safety, especially near schools and public facilities - recognising that reducing car dominance is not about making life harder, but about making life safer. In Oliwa, Gdańsk, the IMAP introduces traffic calming as a tool to restore balance: narrower lanes, safer intersections, and geometry that signals people come first. In Cento, the historic centre becomes a space where cars play a smaller role, allowing the old urban fabric to breathe again. And in Liepāja, intersection redesigns introduce slower speeds and safer pedestrian crossings, proving that small geometric changes can deliver big emotional shifts.

Different contexts, different scales, different street types - yet the same learning emerges: reducing car dependency is not about banning cars. It is about giving people their streets back.

A city is healthiest when it offers freedom, not obligation. Freedom to walk. Freedom to cycle. Freedom to choose public transport. Freedom to drive when necessary. Balanced mobility does not take options away - it multiplies them. And choice is the greatest social equaliser of all.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

→ C40 Reinventing Cities

→ OECD/ITF Road Safety

→ POLIS Parking & Space Management

→ Transport for London Streetspace
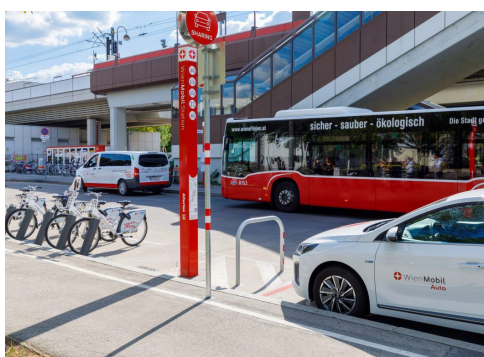
CHAPTER 5
SHARED MOBILITY: PROMISE WITH CONDITIONS

Shared mobility is one of the most seductive promises of modern transport. It arrives wrapped in optimism: electric scooters gliding through squares, sleek bike-share docks appearing near stations, car-share vehicles waiting quietly at the kerb. The imagery is compelling - youthful, flexible, sustainable. A kind of urban freedom that feels effortless, technological, future-proof.

And yet, shared mobility is rarely effortless.It is rarely technological alone.And it is never future-proof by itself. Shared mobility succeeds not because the vehicles exist, but because the conditions around them support meaningful use. Without those conditions, shared systems become decorative objects in the urban landscape - symbols rather than solutions.

The truth is that shared mobility sits at the intersection of many urban forces: land use, street design, regulations,

digital platforms, pricing, public behaviour, and cultural preference. It is neither fully public nor fully private; neither fully planned nor fully spontaneous. It works only when cities design its ecosystem with intention.

Shared mobility is not a replacement for walking, cycling or public transport. It is a bridge - the mode that appears when the journey is slightly too long for walking, slightly too awkward for cycling, or slightly too fragmented for public transport. It fills the gaps between modes. It thrives in the cracks of the urban fabric. This is its power - and its vulnerability.

Cities often adopt shared mobility because it offers a shortcut. A shortcut to sustainability branding. A shortcut to modern identity. A shortcut to innovation narratives.

But shortcuts tend to bypass the foundations. And shared mobility, more than any other mode, requires strong foundations.

To introduce bike-share or scooter systems, a city needs safe and continuous cycling networks, predictable street behaviour, and curated public space where devices can be parked without chaos. To introduce car-sharing, a city needs compact urban form, reliable public transport, and clear parking policy. To introduce demand-responsive transport, a city needs data systems, fleet management, and a governance structure capable of adapting rules fast.

Shared mobility does not work in vacuum. It works only where a city already cares about walking, cycling, public transport, space management and safety. In other words - the modes that came before it.

This is why some cities jump ahead and fail. And why others move slowly and succeed. Shared mobility must complement a mobility ecosystem, not compensate for its absence.

But when it works, it can be transformative. Shared bikes increase the radius of walking trips. Car-sharing reduces the need for private car ownership. On-demand transport strengthens low-density areas where traditional buses struggle. E-scooters provide frictionless short-distance access to stations. All of this reduces congestion, reduces noise, reduces emissions - not through prohibition, but through substitution.

Yet what makes shared mobility truly interesting is not the transport effect.

It is the cultural effect.

Shared mobility subtly reshapes how people perceive ownership and freedom.

The younger generation is already shifting:

Freedom is not "having a car,"

Freedom is *not needing* to have one.

Freedom is flexibility, not obligation.

Freedom is choice, not possession.

In this sense, shared mobility is not just a transport service - it is a social conversation. A negotiation between the idea of the city as a shared space and the idea of mobility as a shared resource.

Across the PUMA network, partners discovered that shared mobility is not always about the vehicles themselves, but about what precedes and surrounds them. Without safe cycling routes, bike-sharing is meaningless. Without coordinated multimodal hubs, shared cars become redundant. Without accessible public transport, on-demand systems cannot fulfil their purpose. And without clear public space management, shared vehicles can create frustration rather than freedom.

But partners also discovered another important truth: shared mobility is not always the right starting point for small and

medium-sized cities - and that is not a failure. It is maturity. Real mobility planning begins with foundations, not flashy pilots.

And in PUMA cities, these foundations are emerging. In Liepāja, the creation of a Mobility Point brings together public transport, cycling and parking in one unified hub - a prerequisite for any future shared system to function seamlessly. In the Green Region of Tauragė, multimodality across municipalities lays the groundwork for regional shared mobility solutions that could connect small towns more efficiently than traditional bus services. And in Nova Gorica and Gorizia, strengthening cross-border connectivity opens the door for shared vehicles to operate meaningfully across two national systems rather than becoming isolated pockets on either side of the border.

Viladecans, Cento, Dienvidkurzeme and Oliwa/Gdańsk approach shared mobility more cautiously - not because they reject it, but because they choose to build the basics first: safe cycling routes, walkable streets, efficient public transport, and balanced car use. In these cities, the absence of shared mobility in the IAPs is not a missing piece - it is an intentional sequencing of priorities. Shared mobility will come when the time is right, not when a vendor happens to call.

Together, these approaches show a mature, honest understanding of what shared mobility really requires. The PUMA partners did not fall for trends. They chose to build frameworks, not icons. And that choice - quiet, steady, careful - is exactly what will allow shared mobility to succeed when it arrives.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

→ CIVITAS

→ UITP Shared Mobility

→ EPOMM MaaS

→ Polis Governance of Shared Mobility
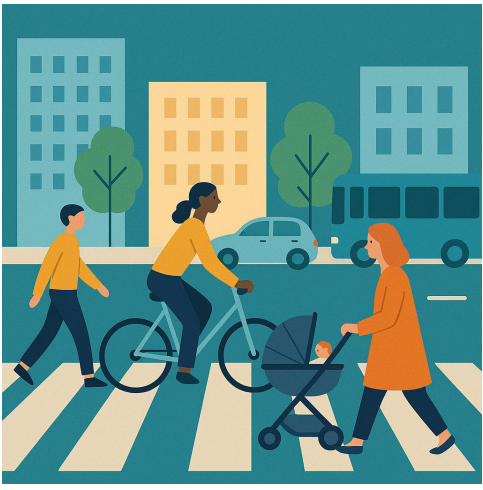
CHAPTER 6 GENDER & MOBILITY: SEEING WHAT WAS ALWAYS THERE

For decades, cities have planned mobility as if all residents move through space in the same way, for the same reasons, with the same risks, the same patterns, the same bodies, the same fears. That assumption was always false - but for a long time, it went unnoticed. Or worse, unacknowledged.

Because gender is not a detail in mobility planning. It is the fault line.

It determines who feels safe walking home at night, who combines multiple trips in one outing, who carries groceries, who pushes strollers, who accompanies children, who avoids unlit shortcuts, who pays the emotional tax of vigilance, who plans their day around other people's schedules, who feels responsible for the invisible labour of care.

Mobility has always been gendered - but mobility planning rarely was.

Women's journeys are more complex, more multi-stop, more time-sensitive, more responsibility-laden. Women walk more, use public transport more, chain trips more often, travel with children more frequently, and avoid certain places at certain hours out of necessity, not preference. And yet, transport systems were designed primarily around linear, peak-hour, single-destination trips - traditionally male mobility patterns.

The result was predictable: a system that works well for the people it was designed for, and only partially for everyone else.

What is striking is that none of this is philosophical or abstract. The evidence is everywhere, but it took a long time for cities to start looking in the right direction. Women have been quietly adapting, adjusting, planning, avoiding, waiting, worrying - building their own internal maps of what is safe and what is not, what is accessible and what is not, what is comfortable and what is not. These maps rarely appear in mobility strategies, yet they dictate behaviour more powerfully than any timetable ever written.

And the emotional layer of gendered mobility is enormous. Women move with an additional sense: a constant scanning of the environment. A calculation of risk, even in familiar places. A choreography of self-protection so habitual that many barely notice they are performing it - until asked the right question. "Do you ever feel unsafe at this stop?" The answer is almost always yes. "Would you walk here at night?" The answer is almost always no.

This is not a design flaw. It is a design failure.

But when cities finally integrate gender, something remarkable happens: they stop designing *for the average traveller* and start designing *for real people*. They stop designing from the map and start designing *from the body*. They stop focusing on movement alone and begin focusing on experience - safety, lighting, visibility, legibility, comfort, dignity.

Designing for women means designing for those who face the most barriers.

And when the most vulnerable feel safe, everyone benefits.

Gender-sensitive mobility is not about adding "a few lights" or "a campaign for women."

It is structural. It touches everything: street lighting, crossings, public transport stops, walking routes, maintenance, policing, behaviour change, community programmes, public space design, education, spatial proximity, wayfinding, reliability at night, speed management, accessibility, surfaces, and the simple question: "Would someone feel safe here alone at 22:00?"

If the answer is no, the design is not done.

Women are often the first to experience dysfunction in the mobility system, because they notice the gaps sooner. They walk more, they manage more tasks, they travel with others, they navigate the city differently. When planning incorporates their perspective, the city becomes more inclusive for everyone: children, older adults, people with disabilities, men who also dislike unsafe places, and anyone who simply wants to feel calm moving through their environment.

Across PUMA, this awareness grew naturally - not because gender was an assigned topic, but because partners began reading their cities with different eyes. They noticed where lighting fell short. They noticed where walking felt unsafe after dark. They noticed where bus stops were isolated. They noticed where comfort dissolved into fear. And they began reshaping their plans accordingly, quietly but decisively.

In Viladecans, improvements to lighting and redesigns of walking routes introduced a more gender-sensitive lens - not labelled as such, but rooted in the reality of safety and comfort for those who move on foot, especially in the evening hours. In Oliwa, Gdańsk, the IAP explicitly addressed dark corners, unsafe crossings, and the emotional experience of night-time walking - a recognition that safety is not just about crime, but about perception, light, and visibility. And in Larissa, inclusive design and attention to the needs of vulnerable groups shaped mobility actions that inherently benefit women, who disproportionately face barriers in poorly designed environments.

These cities did not "add gender as a checkbox." They lived it. They saw what was previously invisible - and acted.

What PUMA partners learned is something essential: gender-aware mobility is not a niche, not a side topic, not a specialisation. It is the foundation of a city that is safe, fair, and humane. And once you see mobility through a gender lens, you can never unsee it again.

Because the real measure of a city is simple: Can a woman move through it freely, confidently, and without fear? If not, the city has work to do. And when it does that work, it becomes better for everyone.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

→ Women Mobilize Women
→ EIGE Gender & Transport
→ FEM.DES
→ Vienna Gender Mainstreaming Manual

CHAPTER 7 CHILDREN & MOBILITY: THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL

To understand whether a city works, you only have to observe one thing: how children move through it. Their journey - to school, to a playground, to a friend's house - is the most honest indicator of whether a city's mobility system is truly safe, inclusive and humane. Children expose the truth that adults often learn to ignore: the danger of a fast corner, the hostility of a long crossing, the discomfort of a narrow pavement, the fear in a dimly lit shortcut. They show us the city at eye level - and it's not always a flattering view.

Children do not choose where they walk, cycle or wait for a bus. They inherit the conditions adults create for them. This makes the responsibility enormous.

A city that forces children to rely on cars for every journey is not a modern city - it is a city that has surrendered its public space. When children cannot move independently, the consequences ripple far beyond mobility; they shape health, confidence, social development, family routines, and the experience of growing up. Independent mobility is not a luxury of childhood - it is a fundamental part of learning to navigate the world.

But mobility systems have long been built around adults

and their assumptions about risk. For many years, safety interventions focused almost exclusively on preventing collisions rather than enabling independence. Streets were widened, not slowed. Parking encroached onto pavements. Crossings were placed to serve traffic flow, not children's desire lines. Public transport timetables prioritised commuters but not school peaks.

And gradually, the city taught children a lesson: "You don't belong here without an adult." It was never said out loud - but it was clear.

Yet the moment a city begins redesigning streets through the eyes of a child, the entire mobility system transforms. Speed becomes less of a negotiation and more of a responsibility. Pavements widen. Crossings shorten. Traffic calming is no longer controversial but obvious. Cycling becomes a right, not an extreme sport. And the city begins to resemble a place where childhood is allowed to unfold.

Children are the ultimate test of mobility because they are not afraid to tell the truth. If a street is too fast - they will not cross it. If a crossing takes too long - they will run, risking danger. If a route feels unsafe - they will avoid it, or ask to be driven.

If a cycling path disappears at an intersection - they will not improvise; they will stop. If a bus stop is dark and isolated - they will feel it before we do.

Designing for children is designing for the future. It is also designing against inequality.

Because the long-standing myth that "parents should just drive their children if it's unsafe" only works for families who own cars, who have flexible schedules, who live near schools, who can afford time. For many households, driving is not an option. For others, it is a heavy burden. For some, it is simply impossible. Children who rely on walking, cycling or public transport deserve the same safety and dignity as those driven door to door.

School mobility is the most predictable element of the daily transport rhythm - and therefore, the most solvable. Every child walks the same route every weekday. Every neighbourhood

knows where their school is. Every street on that route can be redesigned with clarity and intention. School mobility is not complex; it is just chronically neglected.

But when cities finally turn their attention to it, something beautiful happens: the street becomes a social space again.

Parents meet, neighbours talk, children learn independence, mornings slow down, noise decreases, stress lifts. The route to school becomes a safe corridor - a shared public asset rather than a daily battleground between cars and bodies. And as school mobility improves, the entire neighbourhood benefits: crossings get safer, pavements get repaired, trees get planted, roads get calmed. Children lead the way, and adults follow.

Across PUMA, children's mobility became one of the most emotional and unifying themes. Partners realised that designing for children is not a technical agenda - it is a moral one. It changes how planners frame problems, how politicians justify investments, how communities respond to change. Once a city decides that a child should be able to walk or cycle safely, almost every other decision aligns with that vision.

And this understanding is reflected powerfully in the IAPs. In Viladecans, one of the strongest pillars of the plan focuses on safer school access - redesigning streets, slowing traffic and improving pedestrian and cycling links so that children can move independently and confidently through their neighbourhoods. In Dienvidkurzeme, the dispersed rural geography makes school mobility a lifeline, and the IAP strengthens connections for pupils who travel long distances by foot, bicycle or public transport. In Oliwa, Gdańsk, school surroundings become priority zones for improvements - raising the standard of crossings, sidewalks and traffic calming around educational institutions. And even in cities where the school network is smaller or more compact, the idea of designing mobility around children quietly permeates the rest of the plan: if the street is safe enough for a child, it is safe enough for everyone.

Different geographies, different distances, different

challenges - but one shared conviction: children are the most meaningful benchmark of a city's mobility system.

If they cannot move freely, the system is not working.

If they can - the city has done something extraordinary.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

CHAPTER 8 THE POWER OF SMALL: HOW LITTLE THINGS CHANGE EVERYTHING

Cities often dream in megaprojects. New tram lines. Major bridges. Multimillion-euro regeneration schemes. And yes - these projects can be transformative. But for most people, the quality of the city is not decided by grand infrastructure. It is shaped by the small things: the crossing that finally feels safe, the pavement that no longer breaks your step, the corner tightened so cars slow down, the desire line turned into an actual path, the bus stop moved 10 metres so people no longer wait in the mud.

These are the kinds of actions that rarely make headlines - but they quietly change how the city feels. They make daily life softer. More predictable. More dignified.

Small interventions carry a special kind of power because they are close to people's lives. They are tangible, visible, immediate. They don't require years of political negotiation or massive budgets. They don't wait for a funding cycle. They don't depend on perfect conditions. They simply ask one question: *What can we improve today?*

And in that question lies the real magic of city-making. The

"power of small" is not about doing less. It is about doing smart. It is about recognising that dozens of tiny improvements can create more comfort, more safety, and more trust than a single large investment. Big projects change networks. Small projects change streets. And most of life happens on streets.

Small interventions also carry emotional weight. They show residents that the city sees them - their routines, their fears, their frustrations. Paint on a crosswalk, a tree planted near a bench, a barrier removed, a curb lowered - these details say: "We care about how you move. We care about how you feel." The human scale of these actions builds trust. And trust is the currency of change.

This is why tactical urbanism became so influential. A few cones, planters or temporary bollards can test an idea before committing to permanent works. Fast, reversible, inexpensive actions allow cities to learn quickly, adjust when needed, and build momentum instead of paralysis. Tactical urbanism is not improvisation - it is prototyping. It's how designers work. It's how children learn. It's how cities should evolve.

But the real strength of small actions is that they multiply. One safer corner makes an entire walking route easier. One cycle rack makes a neighbourhood feel connected. One raised crossing changes the behaviour of drivers. One shade tree makes a summer afternoon bearable. One metre of widened pavement makes a busy street humane.

And when small actions multiply across a city, something profound happens: the city's emotional temperature changes. People start choosing active modes naturally. Parents feel calmer sending children to school. Older adults walk more. Residents take pride in their neighbourhoods. The city becomes a place for people, not just for vehicles.

Small actions are also where medium-sized cities - like those in PUMA - have a unique advantage. They can move faster than metropolises, with fewer layers of bureaucracy and fewer political bottlenecks. They can trial ideas, observe the results, and adapt quickly. Their compactness is a strength: a single intervention can shift behaviour

for an entire neighbourhood.

Across the PUMA network, partners embraced this philosophy with impressive clarity. They realised that their mobility visions did not have to wait for large-scale funding or national programmes. They could begin with the street in front of them. The corner they pass every day. The route children take to school. The intersection that everyone complains about. The small discomfort that, once fixed, improves the entire experience of moving through the city.

And this understanding became visible in their IAPs. In Viladecans, tactical and phased improvements allow neighbourhoods to experience change early - not years later. Small redesigns, safer crossings, and gradual upgrades begin shifting behaviour immediately, preparing the ground for larger transformations still to come. In Cento, incremental improvements along key mobility corridors demonstrate how even modest investments can reorganise everyday routes and slow down traffic in the historic centre. In Oliwa, Gdańsk, a series of quick, targeted interventions - especially around schools and intersections - show that when safety improvements accumulate, they reshape not just movement but emotion. And in Larissa, small pilot activities test ideas in real time, allowing the city to adapt solutions to local behaviour before scaling them.

Together, these interventions form a mosaic of meaningful change. None of them singularly redefining mobility - but collectively shifting the entire system. This is the quiet beauty of small actions: they remind us that improvement does not always require a revolution. Sometimes it requires a paintbrush, a planter, a bollard, a conversation, a moment of political courage - or simply a willingness to listen to how people actually move.

The power of small is, ultimately, the power of care. A city that invests in the little things shows that it is attentive. A city that is attentive becomes a city that is loved. And a loved city is always easier to change.

CHAPTER 9 NIGHT-TIME MOBILITY: WHEN THE CITY REVEALS ITS TRUE SELF

Cities are not the same places are not the same places by day and by night. The urban landscape changes its atmosphere, its rhythm, its meaning. The familiar becomes uncertain; the busy becomes empty; the shortcuts that felt convenient at noon may feel threatening at dusk. Night does not simply darken the city - it transforms it. And how a city behaves after sunset reveals more about its mobility system than any peak-hour traffic model ever could.

Night-time mobility is not just about schedules or streetlights. It is about **trust**. Trust in the path you take. Trust in the space around you. Trust that someone, somewhere, thought about your safety before you stepped outside.

For many people - especially women - the city becomes smaller at night. Certain streets shrink from the map. Certain stops feel off-limits. Entire neighbourhoods become territories to be skirted rather than entered. Night-time mobility is therefore not simply a technical challenge; it is an emotional and psychological one. It shapes who feels welcome in the city after dark. It determines whether culture, community life, and social connection are evenly accessible or concentrated only where people feel safe.

What planners often underestimate is how deeply perception shapes behaviour. A dark corner is not just a lighting problem - it is a threat to freedom. A bus stop with no visibility is not just an infrastructure gap - it alters how people choose to move. An unlit path through a park is not an aesthetic flaw - it is a barrier. At night, mobility becomes less about movement and more about vulnerability.

But the measure of a safe city is not simply the number of cameras or police patrols. It is the presence of people. The warmth of light. The legibility of routes. The predictability of public transport. The visibility of others who are also moving. Safe cities feel alive - even when quiet. Unsafe cities feel abandoned - even when technically monitored.

Night-time mobility also reveals inequity. People who work late shifts, young people returning from evening activities, migrants, students, low-income workers - these groups rely heavily on safe and reliable night travel. A city that functions only from 7:00 to 19:00 is not a city built for real life. It is a city built for the fortunate few.

But when cities begin designing with the night in mind, the transformation is profound. Suddenly lighting becomes strategy, not decoration. Public transport becomes a social guarantee, not a daytime service. Land use planning becomes a matter of safety, not zoning. The concept of "night-time economy" expands beyond bars and restaurants and becomes a question of dignity and access: can people return home safely after participating in the city's cultural life? Can they work late without fear? Can they move through their own neighbourhoods without hesitation?

Across the PUMA network, partners explored these questions with increasing awareness. Night-time mobility did not sit as a separate chapter in their plans, but it appeared in the details - the lighting strategies, the pedestrian improvements, the intersection redesigns, the focus on perception and safety. They understood what progressive cities around the world are now realising: night-time mobility is not a luxury issue; it is a justice issue.

And the IAPs reflect this emerging sensitivity. In Oliwa, Gdańsk, night-time walking comfort is addressed explicitly - acknowledging that darkness transforms the mobility experience and that lighting, visibility and clarity matter deeply for safety after sunset. In Nova Gorica and Gorizia, improved cross-border public transport and coordinated schedules create safer evening connections, ensuring that movement across two cities - and two countries - remains predictable even after the last daylight fades. And in Larissa, mobility improvements target vulnerable groups whose needs become particularly acute at night, recognising that inclusivity cannot be limited to daylight hours.

These interventions may seem simple, but they carry enormous weight. They show residents that the city cares not only about how they travel, but **when** they travel - and how they feel while doing so. They recognise that the right to participate in society does not end when the sun goes down.

A truly safe, inclusive city is one that people can inhabit without shrinking their world after dark. A city where streets remain legible, where movement remains possible, where fear does not dictate routes, and where the night is not a boundary but simply another dimension of urban life.

Night does not need to be feared. It needs to be planned for. And when it is, the city becomes whole - not just by day, but all the time.

CHAPTER 10 CLIMATE & RESILIENCE: CITIES THAT BREATHE AND ENDURE

Climate change is not a future scenario - it is the present tense of urban life. Heatwaves, sudden storms, flooded streets, degraded infrastructure, disrupted public transport, eroding coastline, unpredictable seasons

- these are now part of the daily vocabulary of cities. Mobility planning is no longer only about movement; it is about resilience. About designing systems that endure, adapt, and protect.

When the climate changes, mobility becomes both the victim and the solution. Extreme heat makes walking unbearable. Floods disrupt bus routes. Storms damage cycling paths and rail lines. Traffic congestion worsens air pollution. Car dependency amplifies emissions.

Cities cannot afford to treat mobility as a neutral actor. It is either fuelling the problem or mitigating it.

But the climate conversation often arrives wrapped in abstraction - carbon budgets, emission curves, regulation packages, distant targets. Meanwhile, the real experience of climate change is intimate, physical, personal: the feeling of a scorching pavement underfoot; the fear when a flooded underpass blocks the school route; the frustration of a cancelled bus during a downpour; the silent exhaustion of breathing polluted air.

Urban mobility systems must therefore become instruments of resilience - not only through mitigation (reducing emissions), but through adaptation (enduring impacts). And this dual purpose becomes most visible in the design of streets.

Shaded sidewalks protect people during heatwaves.

Permeable surfaces reduce flooding.

Tree canopies cool microclimates.

Continuous cycling networks reduce reliance on cars.

Reliable public transport keeps cities functioning when roads are disrupted.

Compact land use shortens journeys.

Slower traffic reduces heat trapped in asphalt.

The climate crisis is not solved with one big gesture. It is solved with thousands of decisions made at the scale of everyday life. Streets, intersections, crossings, pavements, bus stops - these are the nodes where resilience becomes tangible.

But resilience is not only ecological; it is social.

A resilient city is one where mobility remains possible for everyone - not only for those with private options. It is one where the system absorbs shocks rather than transferring them to the most vulnerable. When floods disrupt a route, cycling and walking offer alternatives. When heatwaves strain people's health, shaded walking paths become lifelines. When fuel prices rise abruptly, public transport prevents exclusion. Mobility is therefore a social safety net as much as a transport tool.

Across the PUMA network, the climate conversation grew naturally - woven into actions on safety, walking, cycling, public transport, and public space. Cities began recognising that every improvement in sustainable mobility is also an investment in resilience. And that resilience is not a peripheral concept but a lens through which the entire mobility system must be redesigned.

This shift is clearly visible in the partner IAPs. In Viladecans, mobility actions are tied directly to climate neutrality goals, embedding emissions reduction and environmental sustainability into the logic of every intervention. In Larissa, mobility is treated as part of the city's green transition, with improvements that support both ecological goals and social wellbeing. And in Nova Gorica and Gorizia, cross-border sustainable mobility - particularly public transport and cycling - strengthens resilience by ensuring that people can move efficiently between two closely linked cities, even in times of disruption.

These are not climate chapters added for compliance.

They are climate actions embedded in mobility because cities understand that they cannot plan the future without addressing the atmosphere in which that future exists.

Climate resilience is not something a city "achieves." It is something a city practices, over and over. In every redesign. In every policy. In every tree planted. In every kilometre shifted from car to sustainable modes. In every piece of infrastructure that helps people move safely, even when the world becomes less predictable.

A resilient city breathes. A resilient city adapts. A resilient city protects. And mobility - surprisingly, powerfully - is the thread that binds all these qualities together.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

→ IPCC AR6

→ C40 Climate Action Planning

→ EEA Urban Adaptation

→ UN-Habitat Resilient Cities

PUMA: How nine cities reimagined mobility by putting people back at the centre

Karolina Orcholska
Lead Expert, PUMA Network

Cities rarely get the chance to pause and rethink how people move. Daily routines, political pressures, urgent repairs and long-standing habits keep mobility trapped in a cycle of "solving the next problem." When PUMA began in 2023, nine European partners arrived with different concerns - congestion, unsafe crossings, rural isolation, weak public transport, car dependency, night-time fear, cross-border complexity - but one shared instinct: mobility was not working well enough for their people.

Over two years later, something significant has changed.

Not only do these cities now have Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) ready for implementation. They also share a deeper, more human understanding of mobility - one that looks beyond vehicles and traffic flows and starts with dignity, comfort and safety.

This is the real story of PUMA: mobility as a reflection of how cities value their people, and people as the key to designing mobility that actually works.

Mobility as a human experience - not an engineering problem

From the very beginning, it became clear that PUMA was not going to treat mobility as a neutral technical issue. Mobility is emotional. A parent letting a child cross the street is emotional. A woman deciding whether to walk home after dark is emotional. An older person choosing between a difficult bus stop or staying home is emotional. A teenager cycling to school on a safe lane is emotional - in the best possible way.

When mobility is uncomfortable, people retreat. When mobility is safe, intuitive and welcoming, people participate fully in city life.

This human dimension became the backbone of PUMA. And once partners started looking at their cities through people's eyes - not through traffic models - the gaps, opportunities and solutions became much clearer.

The URBACT method: a framework that builds capacity, not just plans

PUMA's progress did not happen by accident. It happened because URBACT gives cities a method, and an atmosphere, where honest learning is possible.

Cities relied on URBACT tools to build a more grounded and confident approach to mobility planning. They learned to analyse their systems using real evidence rather than assumptions, to involve residents in ways that genuinely shaped priorities, and to break long-standing silos between departments. The network created a space where partners could discuss barriers openly with peers, test their thinking, and turn insights from study visits into concrete actions. Most importantly, cities learned how to translate their local challenges and needs into integrated, realistic plans that reflect both the complexity of their territories and the lived experience of the people who move through them every day.

The network meetings - Liepāja, Viladecans, Zagreb, Gdańsk, Larissa and finally Nova Gorica - were not milestones for reporting. They were stepping stones of a learning process: diagnosis, visioning, goal-setting, action development and final consolidation. Each meeting strengthened the IAPs, but more importantly, it strengthened the people creating them.

This is the essence of the URBACT method: cities do not just write plans - they grow through the process of writing them.

What the IAPs delivered: mobility shaped around people

As the IAPs took shape, a clear pattern emerged across the network: despite their different sizes, geographies and constraints, the nine cities converged around a shared ambition to make mobility systems safer, fairer and more accessible. Walking, once the overlooked foundation of urban life, was finally treated as a mode that requires care and protection. Cities examined pavements, crossings, lighting and street geometry with a new sensitivity, recognising that the ease of a simple walk often reflects the overall quality of the mobility system. When partners assessed their streets from the perspective of those most at risk (children, women, older adults and people with reduced mobility) walking stopped being an afterthought and became the standard by which every other mode was measured.

Cycling followed a similar shift. Instead of focusing solely on infrastructure, cities began to understand cycling as a culture that grows through continuity, visibility and trust. Their IAPs now include routes that connect schools, neighbourhoods and key public facilities; intersection redesigns that remove dangerous gaps; and training efforts that help people of different ages gain confidence. By treating cycling as a normal, everyday form of movement rather than a niche activity, partners created the conditions for long-term behavioural change - even in places where cycling had never been a natural choice.

Public transport gained new clarity as well. Cities realised that the real barrier is not always the timetable but the journey to the stop. The "first and last 300 metres" became a guiding concept, prompting improvements to lighting, crossings, access routes and multimodal hubs. In regions with dispersed populations, like Dienvidkurzeme or the Green Region of Tauragė, public transport was reframed as a lifeline rather than a convenience. And in Nova Gorica, cooperation with neighbouring Gorizia demonstrated how mobility can cross borders quietly and effectively, bringing communities together rather than separating them.

Streets and intersections, the places where conflicts are most visible, received particular attention. The IAPs show a more mature understanding of how street design influences behaviour: narrower lanes slow traffic without drama, redesigned junctions reduce risk, and pedestrian-priority zones restore balance in historic areas or busy neighbourhoods.

Instead of treating cars as adversaries, partners focused on sharing space more intelligently, calming speeds and creating environments where people feel safe enough to walk, cycle or use public transport without hesitation.

Innovation and shared mobility were also approached with a clearer eye. Rather than rushing toward fashionable solutions, cities evaluated whether conditions were genuinely ready for car-sharing, bike-sharing or on-demand services. Their plans integrate these tools only where they can meaningfully strengthen the mobility system, not as decoration or branding.

Perhaps the most transformative outcome, however, lies in governance. Every IAP identifies structures that will sustain mobility work beyond the project: cross-department teams, clearer mandates, stronger political communication and cooperation with schools, institutions and residents. Behaviour change and communication strategies were embedded across the network, reflecting an understanding that mobility transition requires trust - and trust is built through dialogue, not infrastructure alone.

Safety, especially night-time and gender-sensitive safety, became an entirely new dimension of mobility planning for several cities. Thanks to Gdańsk's work in Oliwa, partners recognised visibility, lighting and perceived safety as essential components of access - particularly for women, teenagers and older adults. This is a major shift in the DNA of local mobility policy, and one that will shape how cities design streets and public transport in the coming years.

Looking ahead: plans that will outlive the project

As PUMA draws to a formal As PUMA draws to a formal close, the work it set in motion is only beginning. The IAPs are not documents to be archived; they are strategic roadmaps that will shape the next decade of mobility in each partner city. They set out decisions that affect the most ordinary but consequential parts of daily life: how children get to school, how older residents reach essential services, how rural communities stay connected, how safe a woman feels walking home at night, and how easily people can choose modes that are healthier for themselves and for the planet.

Implementing these plans will require determination, political support and ongoing cooperation across departments, but the foundation is now in place. The URBACT process has equipped local teams with a sharper understanding of their own mobility systems, a clearer sense of priorities, and a set of tools they can continue using long after the project ends. The network has also built something less visible but equally important: a shared confidence that change is possible, even in cities with limited resources or difficult starting points.

What remains after PUMA is a group of cities that learned to look at mobility through the eyes of the people who depend on it most. They now approach mobility not as a technical task but as a responsibility - one that requires empathy, evidence and long-term thinking. The plans they produced are grounded in this mindset, and that is what will make them durable. Nine cities joined PUMA with different challenges. They leave with a shared perspective, a stronger capacity to act, and a commitment to building mobility systems that are safe, fair and genuinely usable for everyone. Projects end but mobility does not. And the choices these cities make in the coming years will determine how their residents experience their streets, their neighbourhoods and their daily lives.

If PUMA proved anything, it is that **mobility has the power to transform cities**, not through grand gestures, but through the steady work of making everyday movement easier, safer and more human

Why communicationmatters in mobility: a lesson running through PUMA

Mobility projects often succeed or fail long before the first pedestrian crossing is redesigned or the first cycling lane is painted. They succeed when people understand why change is needed, how it will benefit them, and what the city is trying to achieve. They fail when communication is unclear, too technical, or disconnected from the real experiences of those who use the streets every day.

A Practical Guide Born Inside PUMA

Taking these aspects in consideration, at the middle of PUMA project, URBACT ad-hoc expert Luca Arfini developed a Communication Handbook. It is a practical guide designed to help URBACT partners share their project stories with clarity, creativity, and impact. It shows how effective storytelling, smart use of social media, and accessible design can turn technical results into engaging narratives that reach diverse audiences.

Communication as Part of the Mobility System

Communication is more than a support activity. It becomes part of the mobility system itself - shaping expectations, building trust, reducing resistance and helping residents see themselves in the future city you are trying to create. The communication guidance prepared for PUMA partners reminds us that mobility transformation is not only about geometry, safety audits or network continuity. It is also about telling the story in a way that resonates with people's daily lives.

Human-Centred Stories Build Support

What stands out most clearly is the emphasis on human-centred storytelling. Mobility plans often speak the language of infrastructure, but people connect to emotions, situations and relatable examples - the parent walking their child across a busy street, the teenager cycling to school, the older person deciding whether a bus stop feels safe. When cities communicate these real experiences instead of abstract indicators, residents are more willing to support new ideas, even when they require behavioural change.

Clarity, Honesty and Transparency

Another core insight is the need for clarity: avoiding jargon, explaining choices, and being honest about trade-offs. Many mobility debates become polarised simply because people don't understand the intention behind a decision. Transparent communication helps shift the narrative from "the city is taking something away" to "the city is trying to make everyday life safer and easier."

Knowing Your Audience

The communication booklet also highlights something many cities underestimate: audience matters. A message that works for a mobility expert won't work for a local café owner or a parent worried about the school run. Effective communication means adjusting tone, examples and platforms to match the needs of different groups. Not everyone reads strategy documents - but almost everyone understands a clear, simple story about how mobility changes can improve their daily routines.

Consistency Builds Trust

Finally, the material reinforces the importance of consistency. Whether on social media, in public meetings or through visual materials, the message must be recognisable, trustworthy and aligned. Fragmented communication confuses people; consistent communication builds confidence. In mobility, confidence is everything.

Better Communication = Better Mobility

For PUMA cities, these lessons are not abstract. They are tools for the next phase: implementing the IAPs. The plans are ready, but their success will depend on how well cities explain the benefits, invite participation and create space for dialogue. The communication guidance is not an add-on, it is a reminder that mobility change happens not only on streets, but also in the conversations and stories that surround them.

In short, better communication leads to better mobility. Because when people understand the purpose of a change, they are far more willing to walk with it - and that, ultimately, is the foundation of any successful mobility transition.

The handbook walks readers through every step - from understanding their audience and crafting human-centered stories to managing social media, using AI tools for videos and visuals, and maintaining ethical communication standards. Packed with best practices, examples, and resources, it's an inspiring toolkit for anyone looking to make sustainable mobility communication more authentic, innovative, and visually compelling.

Unlocking mobility change: How PUMA cities are learning to fund the future

How do cities turn their sustainable mobility plans into reality? For many, the biggest challenge isn't ideas or motivation - it's funding. Recognising this, the PUMA network organised a dedicated online workshop on 30 April 2025, bringing partners together to explore financial strategies for implementing their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs). The session, led by URBACT ad-hoc expert Simone d'Antonio, offered a deep dive into funding opportunities, EU instruments, and creative approaches for financing mobility transformation.

At its core, the webinar helped cities connect their long-term mobility visions with practical, achievable funding pathways. Partners examined how financing decisions shape quality of life, social inclusion, economic opportunity, and climate action - proving that sustainable mobility is not just a transport issue, but a driver of broader urban change.

Overcoming Common Barriers

The workshop acknowledged the reality many municipalities face: limited budgets, fragmented governance, insufficient coordination between departments, and complex procedures for EU funding access. Smaller municipalities, in particular, struggle with administrative capacity and long-term investment planning.

Yet the conversations also revealed a shared desire to break these patterns. Partners highlighted the need for better internal coordination, stronger links between mobility and other policy areas, and more strategic use of EU and national funding. The message was clear: funding mobility is not only about money, but about governance, collaboration, and shared responsibility.

Learning from EU Funding Successes

The webinar guided partners through the EU's evolving mobility agenda - from traditional transport investments to integrated, people-focused mobility solutions. Cities explored opportunities within ERDF and Cohesion Funds for public transport, cycling networks, ITS systems, and multimodal hubs. Horizon Europe opened doors for innovation, pilots, and partnerships with research institutions, while Interreg offered pathways for cross-border and transnational collaboration.

Examples from France, Spain, and Italy showed how cities have successfully used these instruments to modernise mobility systems, accelerate decarbonisation, and redesign public spaces for active travel. Partners were encouraged to align their IAPs with national Recovery and Resilience Plans and upcoming post-2027 Cohesion Policy priorities, ensuring long-term strategic fit.

Creative and Community-Driven Funding Models

Beyond large EU funds, the webinar spotlighted innovative local funding models that empower communities:

Crowdfunding for quick, visible projects like bike racks, parklets, or tactical urbanism.

Participatory budgeting to give residents a direct voice in mobility decisions.
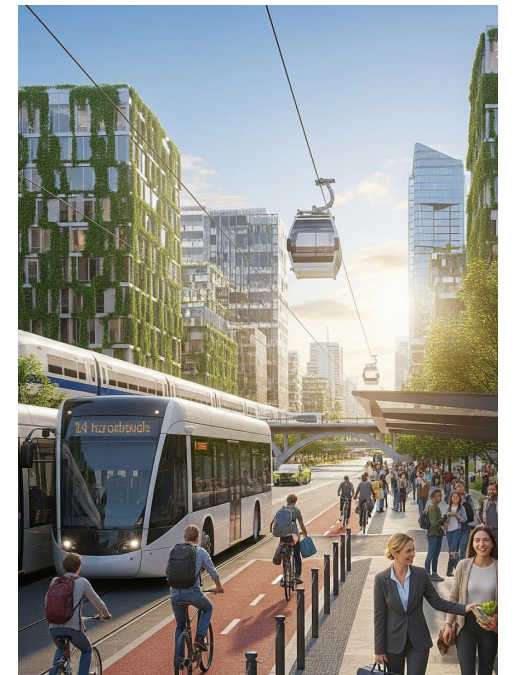
Public-private sponsorships for shelters, repair points, greenery, or charging stations.

Hackathons and competitions to generate digital tools, campaigns, and prototypes.

NGO and foundation grants supporting early-stage pilots and engagement activities.

These approaches help cities test new ideas, build local ownership, and complement bigger investments.

Toward Blended Strategies

The workshop concluded with a strong message: sustainable mobility requires blended funding strategies. No single source can deliver the full transformation cities envision. Instead, impact grows when municipal funds, EU programmes, private support, and community engagement are combined.

For PUMA cities, this mindset marks a shift from isolated project financing toward long-term, resilient investment planning. By strengthening their capacity, embracing innovative funding tools, and aligning with evolving EU policies, partners are better equipped to turn their Integrated Action Plans into real change on the ground.

With the right mix of vision, collaboration, and strategic financing, PUMA cities are proving that sustainable mobility is not only achievable - it is already underway.

→ Read full report and recommendations HERE!

Recommendations: What cities need to deliver sustainable mobility

Karolina Orcholska

Lead Expert,
PUMA Network

The work done within PUMA makes one thing very clear: small and medium-sized cities cannot deliver meaningful mobility transitions without stable, long-term support. The expectations placed on cities are growing - climate goals, safety standards, accessibility requirements, new EU regulations - yet the resources available at the local level have not kept pace. If integrated mobility planning is to become a genuine standard across Europe, several structural needs must be addressed.

First, cities need predictable funding.

Developing and implementing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan requires investment not only in infrastructure, but in analysis, participation, communication, monitoring and behaviour-change measures. Many PUMA partners work in contexts where even basic staff capacity is limited. National and regional authorities should guarantee long-term financing streams for SUMPs and IAPs, including planning funds and implementation budgets. Without this stability, cities are forced into short project cycles that do not match the long-term nature of mobility change.

Second, cities need access to flexible financing tools.

Small and medium-sized cities often struggle to bundle projects, prepare investment pipelines or secure co-financing. National SUMP support programmes - now mandated across the EU - should provide grants, loans, and assistance in packaging smaller interventions into larger, fundable portfolios. Well-prepared projects stand a much better chance of being implemented; cities should not be left alone in navigating this complexity.

Third, technical assistance must become a standard, not an exception.

Cities need experts who can support data analysis, feasibility studies, stakeholder processes, scenario modelling, and monitoring frameworks. Many mobility departments are small, overstretched or relatively new. National and regional actors should provide technical guidance, quality control, and on-demand support so that cities can produce credible, implementable plans rather than simply formal documents.

Fourth, capacity building is essential.

Sustainable mobility planning requires new skills - integrated thinking, communication, behavioural insights, gender and safety considerations, and climate literacy. Cities need training programmes, peer networks and learning spaces where teams can grow continuously. PUMA demonstrated how powerful this can be when done well. This type of learning should not end when projects end.

Finally, responsibilities must be shared clearly across governance levels.

Local authorities lead the planning process, but national and regional levels must create the conditions that allow cities to succeed. National SUMP support programmes should coordinate standards, provide stable resources and ensure consistency between local actions and regional strategies. The EU sets the framework and supports cooperation - but effective implementation happens only when all levels work together.

PUMA cities now hold action plans that reflect real needs, real streets and real people. But transforming mobility requires more than ambition: it requires systems of support that recognise how much is being asked of cities. If Europe expects safer, cleaner, fairer mobility, then cities must be equipped - financially, technically and institutionally - to deliver it.

A look back at our PUMA Journey

The PUMA network began as a simple idea: nine cities, each facing its own mobility challenges, choosing to learn, grow, and dream together. What followed was a journey filled with curiosity, courage, and countless moments of connection. Partners who once doubted their expertise became confident mobility planners.

Cities that started as strangers became a community.

We shared stories, asked hard questions, challenged old habits, and celebrated every breakthrough - big or small. We listened to residents, walked through neighbourhoods, tested ideas, and shaped mobility visions grounded in people's real lives.

At every meeting, online or in person, we weren't just exchanging knowledge - we were building trust, empathy, and a shared belief that change is possible. And step by step, draft by draft, this belief became nine Integrated Action Plans that reflect the heart and hopes of our cities and regions.

PUMA is more than a project. It is a journey of growth, friendship, and collective ambition. And although this chapter closes, the road ahead is already open - paved with new skills, stronger partnerships, and a shared commitment to creating mobility systems that truly serve people.

Thank you for walking this path together with us!

If you could describe PUMA in one word, what would it be?

PUMA in numbers & memories

6 transnational meetings

3 webinars

10 Summer Series weeks

9 IAPs completed

100+ stakeholders engaged

1 European community

Because mobility connects more than cities - it connects people.

Content produced and edited by
Aksels Ruperts and Karolina Orcholska,
design by Karlis Volkovskis

If you have any questions or cooperation proposals,
don't hesitate to contact Lead partner (akselsruperts@gmail.com) or
Lead expert (wisinska.karolina@gmail.com)