2Nite
Final report

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Introduction

The 2Nite Innovation Transfer Network has concluded its two-year European journey. Grounded in the Good Practice pioneered by the City of Turin through its UIA-funded ToNite initiative, the network brought together a diverse consortium of European municipalities to redefine urban safety.

Moving away from punitive surveillance, hostile architecture and reactive policing, 2Nite established a multidisciplinary framework that views nighttime safety as an organic outcome of active community presence, spatial justice, cultural activation and social cohesion.

This final report provides an exhaustive, multi-chapter overview documenting the journey, methodology, transnational exchanges, strategic highlights, administrative challenges and long-term Continuity and Investment Plans developed by each partner city, namely Riga, Cluj-Napoca, Pentagono Urbano and Sant Boi de Llobregat.

Working within a transnational URBACT network provided a structured, peer-reviewed environment where cities transitioned from short-term urban experimentation to permanent, funded policy frameworks. The core mechanics of the URBACT Transnational Exchange relied on continuous collaboration between peer learning cohorts, specialized Ad Hoc Experts, namely Laura Sobral and Sabina Reichart, and bilateral site visits. This structured exchange directly catalyzed municipal transformation and capacity building across three primary dimensions:

1. Methodological upskilling: cities moved beyond traditional public assemblies by adopting experiential and participatory tools. Exercises like Photo Voice, Bodystorming and LEGO® Serious Play® enabled local authorities to collect qualitative, human-centered spatial data;
2. Strategic resourcing and "matchmaking": rather than relying on single grants, municipalities learned to build resilient financial models by stacking local private contributions, municipal line-item budgets and major European mechanisms, such as ESF+ and ERDF;
3. Policy institutionalization: by translating short-term pilot actions into permanent administrative line items, cities effectively integrated experimental proximity services into mainstream urban governance.

Ultimately, this structured flow feeds directly into long-term Continuity and Investment Plans, resulting in over €14M of leveraged capital and co-managed urban governance structures across all participating regions.

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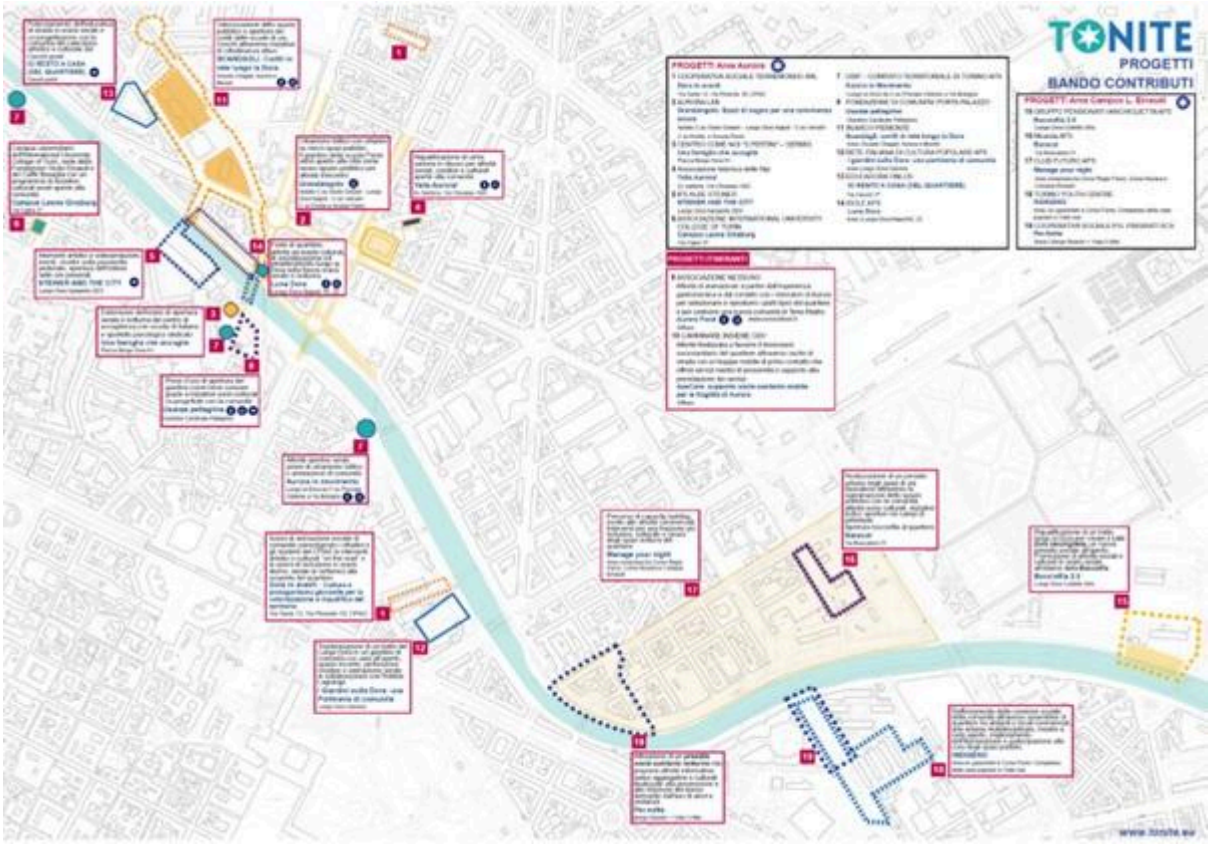
The good practice from Turin

2Nite aims at transferring the multidisciplinary and inclusive approach of UIA ToNite to the topic of urban security during evening and night: how the collaboration with local stakeholders and communities and the provision of new services at night-time for reviving public spaces may be crucial for improving residents' perception of safety at night.



A central action within the project is the activation and empowerment of the local stakeholders and communities. In pursuit of this goal, the project partner, SocialFare, implemented two key participatory initiatives in recent months. The first of these initiatives was the launch of a comprehensive questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to reveal the hidden qualities of the areas situated along the Dora River, specifically targeting individuals who live, work, study, or frequently visit the Aurora district in Turin. The questionnaire included a series of questions intended to elicit detailed insights into the experiences and perceptions of these individuals. The findings from this questionnaire have been compiled into a detailed report.

The second key participatory initiative was a structured participatory process, consisting of four meetings. These meetings were organized to collaboratively envision and develop future scenarios for the areas along the Dora, focusing particularly on the Aurora neighborhood, as well as the area surrounding Campus Einaudi. This process was intentionally inclusive, welcoming participation from the entire community, including citizens of all ages, residents, workers, students, and anyone with a general interest in the project. Furthermore, institutions, businesses, and associations were also encouraged to

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participate. The core principle of these meetings was collaborative work, emphasizing the importance of gathering diverse perspectives from groups of individuals with varying ages, backgrounds, and life experiences. Guided by experts from SocialFare | Centre for Social Innovation, participants were provided with opportunities to express themselves and actively contribute to the creation of new scenarios and insights. To further explore the potential opportunities within these areas, three events were held at the Cecchi Point Neighbourhood House and Off Topic. These events served to present the findings of ethnographic research and to facilitate discussions with citizens regarding the area's strengths, opportunities, and unexpressed potential."

The ToNite project has adopted a narrative-driven strategy to address concerns regarding safety, social cohesion, and community belonging within the targeted area. A cornerstone of this strategy is "The River of Biographies," a storytelling initiative that culminated in the production of ten short films. These films showcase the personal stories of ten residents with migrant backgrounds, aiming to foster understanding and empathy.

Tonite project in Turin. Source: City of Turin

The project's thematic framework centers on several key areas, beginning with the exploration of resources and uniqueness. Residents have identified distinct resources and unique elements that characterize the two areas under investigation. The project also examined work, recognizing that the two areas possess contrasting economic and work ecosystems that have undergone significant transformations in recent years.

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Contextual characteristics were considered to provide background for the critical issues identified, though these factors were not deemed to directly influence perceptions of insecurity and livability. Education and cultural capital emerged as crucial elements for the successful integration of individuals into the urban and social fabric.

The ToNite project prioritized creating safer urban spaces through co-designed interventions with residents and end-users. This led to the completion of three significant urban regeneration projects in previously neglected areas. Firstly, an abandoned space near the University was transformed into an accessible pedestrian and cycling avenue. Secondly, a long-closed garden was revitalized with new street furniture and children's play equipment. Lastly, the riverbanks, perceived as unsafe at night, received multifunctional street furniture combining seating, lighting, and signage for local landmarks. In total, over 7,000 square meters of public space were regenerated.

Tonite project in Turin. Source: City of Turin

The ToNite project aimed to enhance livability and perceived safety during evening and nighttime hours by activating new proximity services. This was achieved through a call for proposals that successfully engaged 59 local organizations, forming 19 distinct projects. These projects, supported by technical and financial resources, focused on social innovation and local service delivery, targeting strategic actors such as universities, schools, migrant communities, community hubs, and grassroots associations.

The call for proposals, which allocated €1 million in non-repayable contributions, sought to improve public spaces along the Dora River, particularly during evening hours. Fourteen projects were selected for the Aurora district stretch of Lungo Dora, while five were chosen for the Campus Einaudi area. These projects employed diverse strategies, including socialization and inclusion activities (tactical urbanism, video projections, sports), area care initiatives, and the activation of cultural, socio-educational, and socio-healthcare centers. A unifying element was the active involvement of local residents and frequent visitors in these spaces.

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Network partnership

The network brought together five distinct urban realities, demonstrating how proximity-led security can be adapted across vastly different legal, spatial, and social environments:

1. City of Turin (Italy)
   - Urban context: peripheral, fragile districts, including Barriera di Milano, Aurora, Mirafiori and San Salvario.
   - Primary focus: scaling the ToNite practice via the IMPATTO program and formalizing long-term co-governance tables to build systemic social resilience.

2. City of Riga (Latvia)
   - Urban context: high-density soviet-era apartment block estate in the Purvciems neighborhood housing over 52,000 residents.
   - Primary focus: addressing complex private-shared courtyard ownership barriers, addressing post-soviet resident apathy and navigating long northern dark winters.

3. Sant Boi de Llobregat (Spain)
   - Urban context: Peri-urban metropolitan node in the Barcelona functional area, targeting districts like Marianao, Rambla and L'Olivera.
   - Primary focus: mitigating youth leisure conflicts, preventing gender-based harassment and balancing youth rights to leisure with seniors' fundamental right to rest.

4. Cluj-Napoca (Romania)
   - Urban context: rapidly transforming post-industrial Iris district.
   - Primary focus: bridging social divides between long-term residents and newcomers through narrative urbanism and community intelligence.

5. Pentágono Urbano (Portugal)
   - Urban context: intermunicipal network uniting Barcelos, Braga, Guimarães, Vila Nova de Famalicão and Viana do Castelo.
   - Primary focus: transforming social housing complexes and public transit hubs via polycentric intermunicipal co-funding and youth-led placemaking.

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Continuity and Investment Plans

Turin

Torino's Continuity Plan outlines the city's strategic transition toward becoming a "City of proximity" rooted in the 15-minute city framework. Evolving from the legacy of the EU-funded ToNite project, Torino reframes urban security away from traditional policing toward public liveability, community activation and sustained social presence. The intervention targets peripheral, fragile areas such as Barriera di Milano, Aurora, Mirafiori and San Salvario, converting public parks, pedestrian streets and squares into inclusive community nodes.

The operational backbone of this transition is the IMPATTO program, funded through the National Operational Programme for Metropolitan Cities (PN Metro Plus). IMPATTO supports third-sector non-profit organizations to deliver localized proximity services, cultural programming and social care to disadvantaged groups. The program addresses three core challenges: re-activating underused or perceived unsafe locations, animating community hubs adjacent to existing facilities like schools or libraries and providing alternative nighttime cultural options outside over-congested nightlife zones. The overall public grant budget stands at €2.4 million, providing up to €240,000 per initiative across 11 selected projects involving 65 non-profit organizations over a three-year timeline from 2025 to 2027.

Implementation began in 2025 with the launch of the 11 multi-partner project hubs, utilizing tactical urbanism, mobile advice desks, open-air culture and social assistance services. Continuous co-governance is maintained through URBACT Local Groups (ULGs) across decentralized city tables to resolve operational challenges and share resources. The city engages in peer-learning exchanges with European partner cities while institutionalizing civic space management through formal Collaboration Pacts signed between district municipalities and local associations.

First-year achievements as of June 2026 demonstrate significant impact, including 3,012 hours of one-on-one social care support delivered to 836 citizens across 883 days. Over 6,500 hours of recurring structured activities were hosted, alongside 372 public events reaching more than 16,000 participants. The ecosystem generated 239 new external partnerships, 45 new project proposals, 3 formal Collaboration Pacts and engaged 148 continuous volunteers, aligning local outcomes with the New European Bauhaus vision of sustainability, inclusion and beauty.

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Cluj-Napoca

The "Reconnecting Iris" initiative in Cluj-Napoca focuses on addressing the fear of dark and underused public spaces in the rapidly growing, post-industrial Iris district through targeted social and governance interventions rather than major physical redevelopments. The primary goal of the project is to strengthen perceived evening safety and neighborhood cohesion while bridging the social divide between long-term residents and newly arriving populations. To ensure long-term sustainability, Cluj-Napoca is institutionalizing community intelligence by embedding participatory tools, such as local storytelling, citizen diplomacy and perception monitoring protocols, directly into the city's municipal governance frameworks.

2Nite site visit to Iris neighbourhood. Source: URBACT

Financially, the direct project budget allocates approximately €27,000 from URBACT and local funds to support baseline research, storytelling workshops and pilot frameworks. For long-term continuity, an estimated post-project funding strategy of €60,000 to €85,000 will be drawn from municipal and European Union sources to handle procurement mechanisms and territorial upscaling. These social actions are closely aligned with broader public physical investments totaling over €2.37 million, which cover lighting system upgrades, green space rehabilitation in Parcul Feroviarilor, cycling infrastructure expansions and CCTV installations.

The structured implementation plan began in January 2026 with baseline safety perception surveys and participatory spatial mapping. Between February and April 2026,

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qualitative evidence was gathered through storytelling workshops designed to map neighborhood assets and reduce social distance between demographics. Public testing of these social activations took place in May and June 2026 via tailored cultural programming at District City Hall and Parcul Feroviarilor during the Cluj Days festival. During the summer of 2026, identified resident needs are being matched with existing community resources alongside minor spatial improvements. The final phase focuses on scaling these protocols to the broader metropolitan level via the Urban-Rural Hub and introducing public procurement options for citizen perception services.

Site visit in Cluj. Source: URBACT

Through these efforts, Cluj-Napoca expects a longitudinal increase in perceived night-time safety and a stronger sense of neighborhood belonging across diverse age and gender groups. The initiative will result in a standardized Community Storytelling Toolkit utilized across various municipal departments. Furthermore, it establishes a formal Community Intelligence Ecosystem managed by the Citizen Information Centre Department to continuously inform future urban design choices.

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Sant Boi de Llobregat

Sant Boi de Llobregat is implementing "The Caring City at Night" to transform urban nightlife safety by addressing uncivil behavior, perceived insecurity and gender-based harassment. A key objective is fostering youth and intergenerational harmony by shifting traditional leisure activities into earlier hours, effectively recovering the night through late-afternoon programming to balance young people's right to leisure with older residents' right to rest. The strategy seamlessly combines large-scale urban regeneration projects with social proximity initiatives to create safe, welcoming public spaces.

2Nite site visit to youth centre in Sant Boi de Llobregat. Source: URBACT

The overall investment for this comprehensive plan stands at €11,650,000. Financing is structured through a co-financing split where €4,640,000 is funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to cover 40% of infrastructure and digital initiatives. The remaining €7,010,000 is supplied by the municipality's own budget, which funds physical construction alongside a dedicated €50,000 allocation reserved specifically for youth engagement, community storytelling and proximity grants.

Execution of the plan started with an early-phase Testing Action and Connection Event that brought together local youth, police officers, nightlife business owners and non-profit organizations to form a unified vision for nighttime governance. Following this, the municipality formalized a permanent Youth Nightlife Table to serve as a co-governance body tasked with reducing intergenerational friction and guiding policy decisions. Yearly calls for proposals are being launched to grant funds to local entities offering evening

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cultural, social, and athletic events. Concurrently, four major Integrated Action Plan (PAI) urban regeneration projects are being executed using gender-sensitive urban design, such as exploratory marches, improved street lighting and clear sightlines across the Marianao-Reconecta accessibility project and a new community library hub.

Visit to Fundaciò Marianao. Source: URBACT

The anticipated impact of the project includes a 25% increase in women reporting feeling very safe when walking alone at night. The Youth Nightlife Table will maintain a permanent operational standing with at least 50% female or non-binary representation. Additionally, the physical transformation of the four PAI sites is expected to yield significantly higher community activation and public space usage.

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Riga

Riga's intervention strategy, titled "Activating Purvciems," targets the dense soviet-era apartment block district of Purvciems to overcome systemic challenges such as missing "eyes on the street," a lack of human-scale spaces and social isolation among residents. The main objective is to rebuild community ties and transform transit-only outdoor areas into cozy, communal and safe neighborhood meeting points. Drawing inspiration from Turin's ToNite model, the city relies on a balanced approach that pairs physical courtyard upgrades with immaterial, community-bonding actions.

The implementation of the Purvciems plan is anchored by URBACT Innovation Transfer Network funding, supplemented directly by municipal resources from the Riga City Council. The delivery model also relies on strategic civil society partnerships, drawing support from local non-governmental organizations and international institutions such as the British Council in Latvia.

2nite final conference in Riga. Source: City of Riga

The intervention roadmap began with comprehensive safety and environmental assessments, including 108 street surveys conducted by the municipal police and spatial assessments by the State Police across target pilot locations like the undeveloped Andromeda Courtyard. Targeted explanatory walks were subsequently carried out with women, youth and senior citizens to identify specific spatial factors driving night-time insecurity. Grassroots activation initiatives were then introduced, featuring educational architectural tours, disposable camera distributions to capture local "coziness" and stairwell engagement campaigns across individual apartment buildings. Before initiating physical construction, community events such as jam tastings, solar-powered tree jar

painting and participatory mapping workshops were held in the courtyards to generate local momentum. These activities directly inform the physical upgrades being made to pilot spaces like the Andromeda Courtyard.

2nite partnership in Riga during the night walk. Source: Urbact

The project expects to achieve a marked improvement in how residents perceive their personal safety, driven by strengthened neighborly relations and mutual trust. Previously neglected, municipally owned courtyards will be transformed into active, co-designed public gathering spaces. Ultimately, the initiative aims to establish a repeatable model for boosting civic participation and neighborhood pride across high-density residential districts.

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Pentágono Urbano

The "Belonging Creates Safety" (BCS) Investment Plan, created by Associação Pentágono Urbano is a multi-city civic innovation program serving the Portuguese municipalities of Barcelos, Braga, Guimarães, Vila Nova de Famalicão and Viana do Castelo. The mechanism departs from top-down surveillance and heavy physical infrastructure. Instead, it adopts a human-centered approach that builds safety through social presence, civic engagement and evening public space activation.

The program focuses on re-activating underused spaces during evening and nighttime hours through cultural programming, tactical urbanism and youth initiatives. It empowers civil society organizations, informal collectives and residents to co-design and co-manage placemaking projects. Governance is structured to shift municipalities from sole managers to facilitators of a polycentric intermunicipal network, reducing perceived insecurity by fostering trust and social interaction.

2Nite site visit to Famalicão bus station with mixed services. Source: URBACT

The 5-year implementation plan operates on a total budget of €250,000, representing an annual cost of €50,000, with €25,000 specifically reserved to support pilot phase projects. Funding is assembled through municipal co-funding, Associação Pentágono Urbano, ERDF / NORTE 2030, European grants, private sponsorships and in-kind contributions from local stakeholders.

The rollout follows a four-phase framework. Phase one in 2026 centers on governance

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setup, eligibility definitions and ecosystem mobilization through URBACT Local Groups. Phase two in 2027 launches open calls across the five municipalities aimed at non-profits, youth groups, and informal collectives. Phases two and three provide technical mentoring and speed-design sessions to refine project feasibility, leading to a public Demo-Day for collective pitching and evaluation. Finally, phase four in 2027 sees the rollout and monitoring of selected pilot initiatives in real urban settings.

2Nite site visit to inter-generational centre in Famalicão. Source: URBACT

The expected outcomes include an increase in grant applications and active involvement from informal collectives and youth groups. The plan aims to drive higher evening foot traffic and recurring community activities in underutilized spaces. Ultimately, the program targets measurable improvements in perceived safety, reduced urban isolation and the creation of transferable policy methodologies across the intermunicipal network.

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Next steps: towards a safe and inclusive public space

As 2Nite network, our final thoughts aim at developing a process-oriented roadmap designed to bridge the gap between municipal administration and civic action across European cities in order to create safe and inclusive public space. We believe an opportunity to reach this goal is based on the three core pillars of the New European Bauhaus (NEB): sustainability, aesthetics and inclusion. By anchoring urban transformation in inclusion, the framework demonstrates how public open spaces can be transformed by activating ground-floor edges, designing for intergenerational co-living, embedding rigorous gender inclusivity and exceeding baseline accessibility standards. It bridges this social focus with sustainability by addressing the intersection of spatial planning with environmental and cultural realities through multicultural representation, climate equity, resilient social infrastructure and the active role of art and culture in public life, bringing aesthetics into the everyday texture of neighborhoods as a high-quality, culturally enriching experience.

This framework redefines urban inclusivity and safety by steering completely away from a securitarian perspective focused on heavy-handed policing, surveillance, and defensive architecture. In alignment with the NEB vision of beautiful, harmonious, and accessible spaces, it positions safety as a natural byproduct of a participatory and empowering dynamic. True spatial security is not achieved by restricting behavior or closing off the public domain, but by maximizing civic presence, establishing overlapping uses, and fostering a deep sense of mutual care among diverse urban communities. By focusing on natural stewardship, visual transparency, and flexible spatial design, this approach empowers historically marginalized groups, including women, youth, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, to actively claim their right to the city, transforming vulnerable urban zones into safe, vibrant, and collectively activated environments.

At its core, this framework rests on the premise that public space is the primary physical platform for neighborhood democracy and a tangible expression of NEB values. Rather than treating urban transformation as a top-down technical exercise, it provides municipalities and residents with the vision to establish robust, shared co-governance structures and public-civic partnerships. By balancing vibrant night-time economies with residential amenity, and replacing sporadic public consultation with sustained co-management, this framework empowers citizens to claim equitable ownership over their environments. Ultimately, by improving the inclusivity, safety, and ecological resilience of the everyday public realm, it aims at strengthening the fabric of local communities and revitalizing democratic engagement across Europe.

Interaction urban voids and local services

Urban spaces do not exist in isolation. The spatial, economic and social performance of public open domains relies fundamentally on the configuration and programmatic nature of the ground floors that frame them. This spatial interface, the "urban edge", dictates the levels of passive surveillance, perceived safety and socio-economic vibrancy experienced by pedestrians.
As demonstrated by the City of Turin's ImpatTO framework, this interface can be systematically revitalized by co-designing physical public squares in direct harmony with the activation of adjoining ground-floor thresholds. When public open spaces are

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dynamically interlinked with surrounding indoor community hubs, the active lifecycle of the neighborhood naturally extends into the evening. This structural interaction replaces restrictive, top-down securitarian strategies with a participatory model of continuous civic presence and natural stewardship. By converting abandoned or underutilized indoor spaces into transparent social safeguards, the public realm becomes porous and highly resilient against social isolation.

Site visit to the social centre of Lameiras in Famalicão. Source: URBACT

Key operational steps include coordinating local structural plans to pair public square or park renovations with the strategic programmatic activation of adjacent indoor properties, deploying public-civic concession frameworks or impact-driven leases to turn vacant storefronts or abandoned kiosks into open thresholds, and using physical upgrades like transparent storefronts to ensure indoor civic activities visually project onto the sidewalk. Furthermore, municipalities must institutionalize neighborhood roundtables uniting Third Sector organizations, schools, businesses, and residents, while explicitly designing spatial calendars to favor the representation and continuous safety of vulnerable demographics.

Public space for all

Modern urban and environmental planning has long treated public space as neutral, inadvertently reinforcing patriarchal, car-centric layouts that separate zones of economic production from spaces of social reproduction. This systemic division creates deep-seated urban inequities, disproportionately impacting women and marginalized populations,

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including ethnic minorities, children, elderly residents and people with physical or cognitive disabilities, who navigate cities through the lens of care routines, distinct safety vulnerabilities, and unpaid community labor. Genuinely inclusive social infrastructure actively counters these structural imbalances by cultivating overlapping, diverse use patterns. Grounded in an ecofeminist, transformative and intersectional approach, designing for true accessibility requires a fundamental shift: moving away from rigid, single-use spaces toward dynamic, multi-generational environments where the daily schedules, caregiving responsibilities, physical mobility needs, and spatial requirements of all residents naturally converge with broader neighborhood life.

As emphasized by feminist urbanism and gender mainstreaming, addressing inequality cannot merely be a matter of adjusting headcount statistics or offering surface-level access. True urban justice targets the deeply ingrained social norms and power structures that dominate public life. Coexistence is a transformative process, the shared civic capacity to dismantle spatial dominance, build localized networks of trust and establish respectful environments that actively prevent exclusion based on gender, race, age or ability. When care-oriented routines, accessible multi-generational activities and inclusive leisure occur within the same visual field, public spaces transition from vulnerable urban voids into safe, equitable meeting points. This dynamic prevents spaces from being monopolized by a single demographic cohort, rebalancing local power dynamics and anchoring the neighborhood as a truly intersectional, "Caring City."

Site visit to the Negarville project in Turin. Source: URBACT

Key steps to achieve this include conducting gender-disaggregated behavioral mapping that captures explicit data on how different genders, age brackets, and caregivers navigate the environment throughout the day, as well as formalizing structural gender budgeting within municipal fiscal management. Municipalities must deliberately overhaul

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public signage, iconography, and spatial setups to disrupt traditional gendered roles—actively visualizing men's participation in care work. Spatial configurations that induce anxiety, such as dark pedestrian paths or isolated alleys, must be reconfigured through expanded visibility, targeted lighting campaigns, and optimized transit connections. Furthermore, cities should shift urban layouts away from car-centric zoning toward polycentric 15-minute programming, positioning critical care infrastructure like child care, markets, and social hubs within pedestrian-friendly proximity.

Balancing night-time life and residential amenity

Modern urban planning has frequently treated the city after dark as a localized compliance issue, isolating evening leisure zones from residential quarters or mismanaging the intersection where they meet. Genuinely sustainable public spaces actively counter this friction by cultivating collaborative, multi-stakeholder governance frameworks. Designing for a balanced nightlife means moving beyond a reactive, enforcement-only posture to treat the night as a dynamic ecosystem where cultural vibrancy, residential comfort and economic sustainability naturally live together. Coexistence requires shifting from a binary view, where residents and the night economy are in constant conflict, toward a model of mutual trust and proactive mediation.

Cluj by night. Source: Urbact

Achieving this equilibrium requires integrating night-time planning into the core of municipal policy, when nightlife venues, evening commercial spaces and public infrastructure are managed through shared civic accountability, public zones transition

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from spaces of friction into safe, well-regulated community assets. This approach ensures that nocturnal activity does not monopolize or degrade neighborhoods, but instead fosters a collaborative environment where cultural expression is protected alongside a resident's right to rest.

Key implementation steps include establishing multi-stakeholder mediation roundtables that unite city departments, police, residents, and nightlife operators to build a common language and defuse misconceptions early. Cities should conduct acoustic auditing and provide municipal subsidies for venue soundproofing, backed by proactive noise audits in nightlife districts. Planning regulations must institutionalize Agent of Change principles that place financial responsibility for noise mitigation on incoming property developers rather than pre-existing cultural venues. Furthermore, municipalities should mobilize specialized night stewards, youth workers, and civic mediators to manage public spaces after dark, while synchronizing extended public transit routes, night buses, and demand-responsive transport networks with nightlife schedules.

Community Concierge project in Turin. Source: URBACT

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Conclusions: a caring city for shared co-governance and neighborhood democracy

At the core of creating inclusive, safe and sustainable public spaces is the institutionalization of shared co-governance and neighborhood democracy. Transforming the everyday public realm requires moving permanently away from sporadic, top-down public consultation toward sustained, legally backed public-civic co-management models. When municipalities provide formal frameworks, such as collaboration pacts, impact-driven leases and decentralized neighborhood councils, citizens transition from passive consumers of municipal infrastructure into active co-creators and long-term stewards of their urban commons.

Sustained co-governance ensures that physical, social and cultural interventions remain deeply anchored in the evolving needs of the local community. By bridging municipal administration with Third Sector organizations, localized civic groups and marginalized residents, shared governance structures establish a resilient foundation for civic trust. Ultimately, embedding neighborhood democracy into spatial planning transforms public spaces into accessible, empowering arenas where rights are negotiated, diversity is celebrated and local democratic engagement across European cities is continuously renewed.

Developing a caring city begins with creating a seamless network of safe, inclusive public spaces that directly interface with essential local services. By moving away from isolated, single-use developments, urban design must integrate parks, plazas and pedestrian corridors with healthcare, childcare, public transit and community hubs. This connected framework ensures that public spaces function as accessible social infrastructure rather than empty transit zones. When everyday services are embedded within walkable, high-visibility public environments, the spatial burden on caregivers, elderly residents, children and marginalized communities is drastically reduced, transforming the city into a supportive, multi-generational ecosystem.

To truly serve every resident, these connected spaces must synthesize universal accessibility, aesthetic dignity, and environmental sustainability. Physical design must accommodate the full spectrum of human ability, from wheelchair users and strollers to individuals with cognitive or sensory sensitivities, ensuring that inclusion is built directly into the terrain rather than treated as an afterthought. Beyond pure utility, incorporating high-quality green infrastructure, biophilic elements and vibrant public art enhances emotional well-being and fosters a genuine sense of civic pride. Blending climate-resilient landscaping with beautiful, intuitive design turns shared spaces into healthy micro-climates where diverse communities naturally gather, interact and build mutual trust.

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Madama Chiosco project supported by ImpatTO in Turin. Photo by Roxana Olariu. Source: Urbact

Finally, sustaining a caring city requires expanding this inclusive framework into round-the-clock urban planning anchored by strong civic-public partnerships. Urban life does not cease at sundown and a truly liveable city must actively manage its 24-hour cycle through gender-responsive lighting, vibrant night-owl programming and reliable late-night transit options. Achieving this dynamic, safe night-time environment depends on continuous collaboration between municipal authorities, local businesses, community organizations and residents. By sharing governance and decision-making, civic-public partnerships ensure that public spaces remain vibrant, well-maintained and safe for everyone, day and night, establishing a durable foundation for long-term social equity.

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