ECONNECTING

Berane, Montenegro
24.645 inhabitants

Challenge

Berane lacks of public transport. Transport operators have not found it economically viable to provide services. The non-operational bus station, exacerbates the problem.

Local heroes

There is a joint effort of municipal departments for economy, development and projects and Communal Housing Affairs, Traffic and Environmental Protection, that have initialized steps in overcoming two major town's problems: the lack of public transport and the dysfunctional bus station and. With the support of experts, problems were identified and solutions proposed, setting the base for reaching the goal of ensuring sustainable, safe, and inclusive mobility for the urban core of Berane and its rural background.

Lessons learnt

Berane has learnt that participatory approaches lead to more relevant, efficient and better designed policies.

Also, sharing the best practices among project partners in terms of urban mobility is of crucial importance to Berane team and contributes to the innovative solutions in the challenges we are facing as a municipality.

Solution

Reactivation of the bus station

Within the project a detailed steps and overview of proposed measures for all modes of transport were reached. The first step was implemented and Municipality has purchased the bus station, but putting it in function will require incorporation of public transport.

The plan's cornerstone is the introduction of a public transport system, starting with a pilot project. It envisages establishing six bus routes implemented in phases: five suburban and one urban circular route. The plan outlines a viable operational model for the new bus system and a publicly subsidized service is recommended.



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БЕРАНЕ

ECONNECTING

CIM Viseu Dão Lafões Size, Portugal 259.590 inhabitants

Challenge

Population decline (-5.6% from 2011–21) and rapid ageing (Ageing Index 246 in 2021), combined with high car dependency (74%) and weak public transport, drive mobility exclusion, especially in low-density rural areas.

Solution

Mobility Hubs. Planning and Implementation

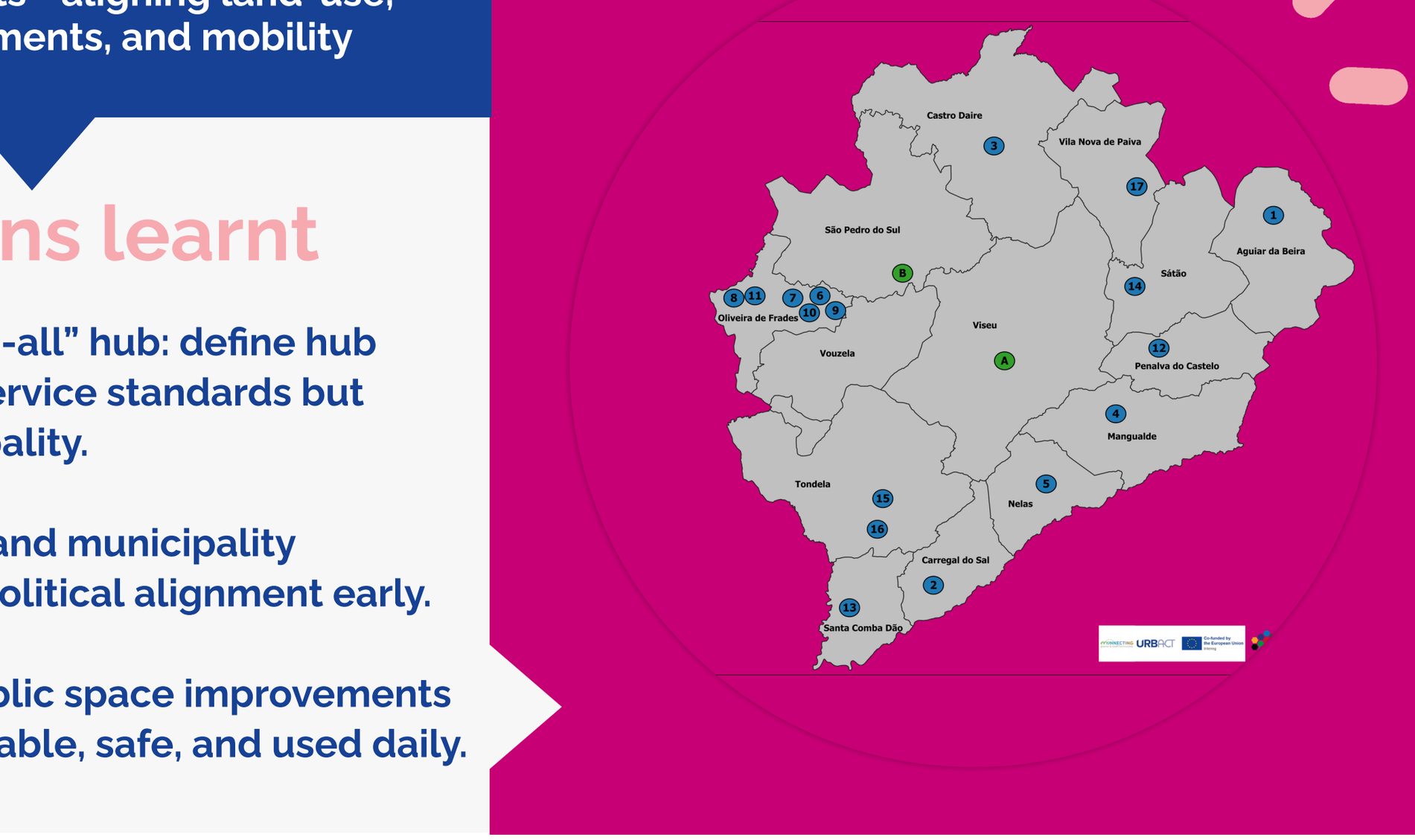
A regional network of Mobility Hubs will link urban centres and rural areas through integrated, intermodal solutions. Co-created by municipalities within ULGs, three hub models (small, medium, large) address local needs.

A phased, mixed-funding plan supports delivery, aiming for at least one accessible, user-friendly Hub per municipality, combining public transport, active and shared mobility, and improved public spaces.

Local heroes



The local heroes are the 14 municipalities (political and technical teams) coordinated by CIM VDL, together with the local stakeholders, forming the ULG. They co-designed hub concepts, assessed feasibility and priorities, and are key to turning plans into built projects - aligning land-use, public space improvements, and mobility services.



Lessons learnt

- **Avoid a "one-size-fits-all" hub: define hub types and minimum service standards but adapt to each municipality.**
- **Use co-design (ULG and municipality technicians) to build political alignment early.**
- **Plan surrounding public space improvements to make hubs comfortable, safe, and used daily.**

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COMUNIDADE INTERMUNICIPAL
VISEU DÃO LAFÕES

ECONNECTING

Ennis, Ireland
27.000 inhabitants

Challenge

The medieval town of Ennis is surrounded by a wide rural hinterland, with many residents commuting daily for work, education and services, mainly by car. Additional challenges include underused public spaces, fragmented green and blue infrastructure, and limited accessibility for vulnerable groups.

Local heroes

The local heroes of this initiative are:

- parents and volunteers that supervise walking and cycling buses, ensuring children can travel to school safely while reducing traffic congestion
- Schools that actively promote sustainable travel and engage families in changing daily habits
- Ennis Municipal District that supports these efforts through coordination, safety improvements, and partnership with strategic partners

Lessons learnt

- Small-scale measures can have high impact
- School travel is a leverage point for wider mobility change: it delivers immediate congestion and safety benefits
- Clear tools for management, communications and monitoring makes it easier to replicate the model across additional schools

Solution

Walking/Cycling Buses for Schools

Currently, only 2 out of 10 primary schools in Ennis operate walking or cycling buses, while school-related traffic remains a significant contributor to urban congestion. The objective is to expand the Safe Routes to School programme by involving at least 2 additional schools. This initiative aims to reduce car dependency, improve road safety awareness, and foster children's independence. Expected outputs include weekly monitoring of pupil participation, a measurable reduction in car drop-offs, improved safety perceptions along audited routes, and a scalable model supported by a termly communications pack to enable further expansion.



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COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONNECTING – Greener & Closer Communities

Nagykálló, Hungary
9 000 inhabitants

Challenge

Due to the main roads running through the city, walking in the city center is dangerous and unhealthy. The city center can only be accessed on foot from the high schools on the sidewalk next to the main road, so residents mostly use cars for transportation within the city, which makes the city center even more unhealthy.

Local heroes

We received a lot of help from local high school students and their teachers, as well as members of local retired civil society organizations.



Lessons learnt

Involve the residents to know their needs
Find solutions to build connections with generations Y and Z.

Solution

Linear Public Space (Apple Promenade)

For several years, the municipality has been thinking about an alternative connection for pedestrians, which would reach the city center via the route High School-Greek Catholic church-Roman Catholic church-town center. The ECONNECTING Project helped us to develop this project with the involvement of the local community. We organised a mini festival to know the needs of the youth, the elderly and wide groups of inhabitants. Now we are working hard on the implementation to make Nagykálló more attractive for future generations.



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Nagykálló

ECONNECTING

Ormož, Slovenia
11.849 inhabitants

Challenge

Ormož faced limited public transport, particularly outside peak hours and at weekends, leaving rural residents poorly connected to the town centre. High car dependency increased CO_2 emissions and limited access to services, events and social life.

Local heroes

RRC Ormož was the key local hero behind the flexible transport action, acting as initiator, coordinator and facilitator throughout the process. It led stakeholder engagement, pilot testing, data collection and learning. In cooperation with the URBACT Local Group, local transport providers, rural community representatives, local media (Radio Prlek) and with the support of the Municipality of Ormož, the action was designed to respond directly to real user needs.

Lessons learnt

Flexible transport solutions must be tailored to local demand and tested in real conditions.

Pilot actions help build trust and awareness.

Strong stakeholder cooperation and clear promotion are essential to generate usage and ensure long-term sustainability beyond the project phase.

Solution

Development of Flexible Transportation

The Development of Flexible Transportation introduces demand-responsive transport services connecting rural settlements with the town of Ormož. The action addresses gaps in public transport, especially outside regular schedules and during events. By testing flexible routes and timetables, it improves accessibility for residents without private cars, reduces car dependency and emissions, and supports participation in social and economic activities. The pilot showed strong potential for further implementation with effective promotion and stakeholder cooperation.



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Razvojno raziskovalni center RRC Ormož

ECONNECTING

Romagna Faentina Union, Italy
89.000 inhabitants

Challenge

The Romagna Faentina Union shows high car dependency even for short trips and limited use of active mobility options. The 2023 floods exposed the territory's vulnerability to climate risks, showing the urgency for low-impact, sustainable transport.

Local heroes

Our key stakeholders are: the Union's Mobility Department, the local Bicycle Committee, mobility managers from private businesses and schools and universities, local sports and cultural associations, Pro Loco, health and prevention agencies, chambers of commerce and business associations, the University of Bologna and a research centre.



Lessons learnt

Bike to Work highlights the opportunity to explore new funding options and to introduce technological improvements (such as IoT sensors or integration with existing applications), as well as to strengthen the social acceptance of commuting by bike. It also points to the potential of supporting the circular economy by transforming financial incentives into vouchers to be spent at local businesses.

Solution

Bike to Work

This initiative encourages employees to commute by bike, throught a mobile app that traks in real time journeys, distances covered and CO2 savings. The employees earn 0,20€ per km travelled and compete with their colleagues and other companies in global rankings.

A shared mobility culture is promoted through the collaboration between municipal authorities, private companies and civil society actors.

Bike to work exemplifies how medium-sized cities can act as innovation incubators for sustainable, just and people-centred urban transformation!



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UNIONE della ROMAGNA FAENTINA

ECONNECTING

Tori Vald, Estonia
12.603 inhabitants

Challenge

With demographic pressures, limited access to services, and weak mobility infrastructure, Tori struggles to maintain quality of life for its residents, especially in rural villages. The current road infrastructure is designed primarily for vehicles, without dedicated lanes for non-motorised transport.

Local heroes

The main stakeholders include:

- the Regional Transport Agency, to ensure integration with regional mobility plans
- local residents, to provide feedback and co-create solutions during the consultation phase
- schools and parents, as they advocate for safer routes for schoolchildren
- environmental experts, to ensure the project aligns with sustainability goals

Lessons learnt

- Healthier community: active lifestyles through walking and cycling opportunities.
- Economic opportunities: improved connectivity can attract visitors and boost local businesses.
- Environmental benefits: lower emissions contribute to a cleaner and greener environment.

Solution

Safe Pedestrian and Cycle Path to Tori

The goal is to provide a secure, sustainable, and accessible mobility option for residents, especially children and families. The project will develop a 6 km paved pedestrian and cycle path connecting Jõesuu village to Tori borough, supported by a feasibility study, stakeholder engagement, and integration with existing road infrastructure. Safety features such as reflective barriers, lighting, and clear signage will be included, along with rest areas equipped with benches, bins, and small shelters. Further improvements include added greenery along the route and direct links to the public transport system.



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Tori vald

ECONNECTING

West Mani, Greece
5.875 inhabitants

Challenge

The residential environment in West Mani is divided between the coastal area and mountain settlements. West Mani is also experiencing a decline in population and has many underused public spaces and buildings. The isolation of certain settlements means fewer people have access to essential services.

Local heroes

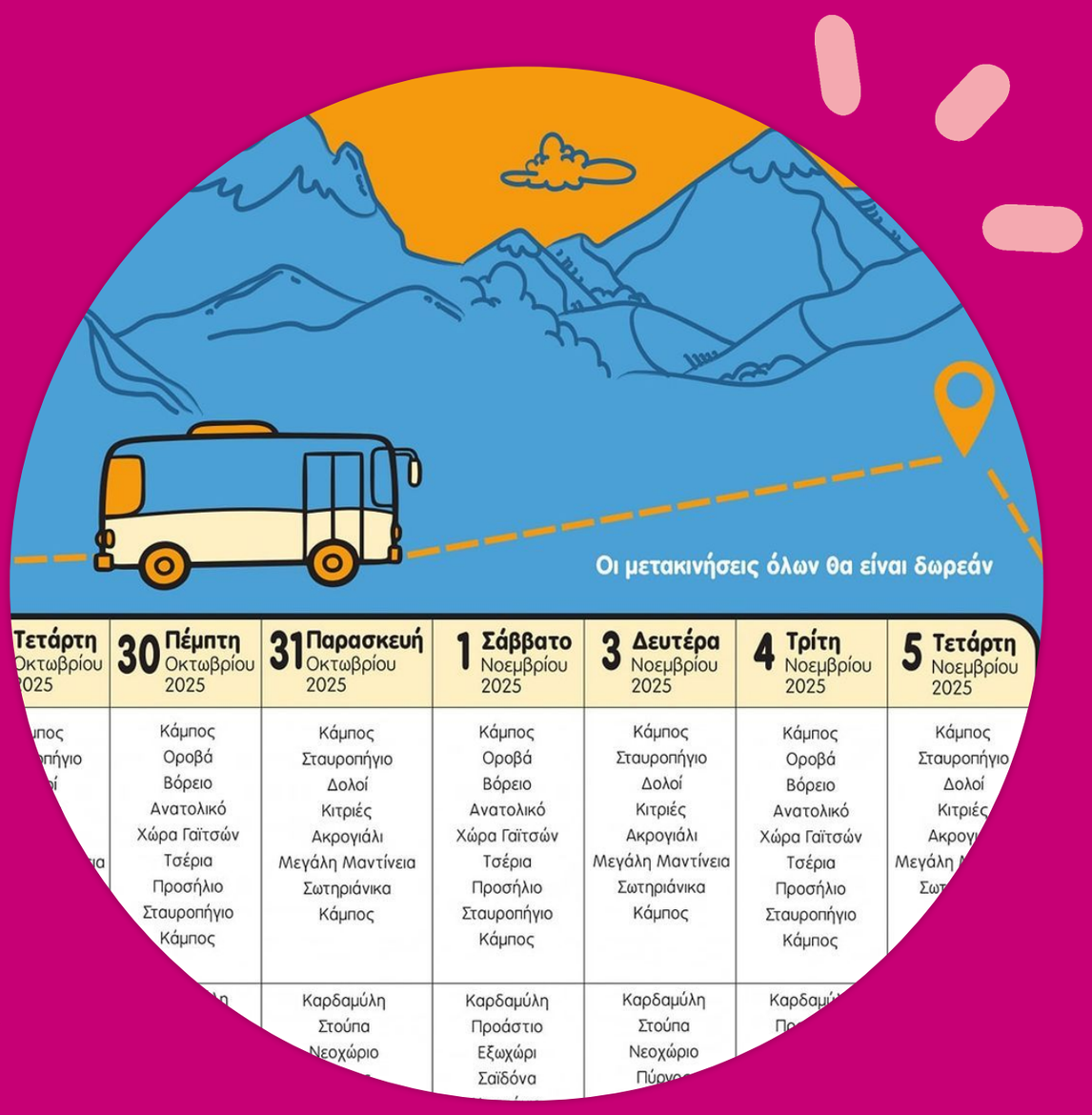
The Municipal Technical Department of West Mani is the local hero in this initiative, working in collaboration with the Department of Transportation of the University of Western Attica, local business associations and groups of residents involved in the consultation processes.

Solution

Municipal Bus Service

The proposal is for the creation of a municipal bus service between the mountain and coastal settlements.

The service will utilise small or medium-size electric buses. Municipal transport services will operate circular routes on two primary routes, with student transportation also being provided. There will be four routes per day in each direction.



Lessons learnt

The municipal bus transport will have a significant impact on the attractiveness of the settlements to residents and businesses.

A feasibility study is essential to determine the frequency, number of buses needed and itineraries.

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