



actsheet

Pedestrianizing City Centres and Streets



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Urban Electric Mobility Initiative (UEMI) was initiated by UN-Habitat and the SOLUTIONS project and launched at the UN Climate Summit in September 2014 in New York.

UEMI aims to help phasing out conventionally fueled vehicles and increase the share of electric vehicles (2-,3- and 4-wheelers) in the total volume of individual motorized transport in cities to at least 30% by 2030. The UEMI is an active partnership that aims to track international action in the area of electric mobility and initiates local actions. The UEMI delivers tools and guidelines, generates synergies between e-mobility programmes and supports local implementation actions in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

SOLUTIONS aims to support the exchange on innovative and green urban mobility solutions between cities from Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. The network builds on the SOLUTIONS project and brings together a wealth of experience and technical knowledge from international organisations, consultants, cities, and experts involved in transport issues and solutions.

The overall objective is to make a substantial contribution to the uptake of innovative and green urban mobility solutions across the world by facilitating dialogue and exchange, promoting successful policy, providing guidance and tailored advice to city officials, fostering future cooperation on research, development and innovation.

SOLUTIONS_UEMI supports urban mobility implementation actions that contribute to the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda.

Sustainable energy and mobility can make positive contributions to a number of policy objectives, nationally and locally. In particular in cities there is a great potential to create synergies between for example safety, air quality, productivity, access and climate change mitigation. A UEMI resource centre will provide opportunities for direct collaboration on projects focusing on sustainable urban mobility and the role e-mobility can play in it. The UEMI will pool expertise, facilitate exchange and initiate implementation oriented actions.

UN-Habitat, the Wuppertal Institute & Climate Action Implementation Facility jointly host the resource centre for the Urban Electric Mobility Initiative, aiming to bridge the gap between urban energy and transport and boosting sustainable transport and urban e-mobility.

UEMI

Solutions

Aims

Brief

Pedestrianising city centres and streets can improve the safety, air quality and liveability of public spaces through restricting access to cars and commercial vehicles. Deliveries are typically restricted to certain access times and public transport and/or taxis may or may not be allowed depending on local access considerations.

Examples

Pedestrian zones (also known as car-free zones) are areas of a city or town reserved for pedestrians only and in which most or all automobile traffic may be prohibited. Converting a street or an area for pedestrians only is called pedestrianisation. This aims to provide better accessibility and mobility for pedestrians, to enhance the volume of shopping and other business activity in the area and improve the aesthetic attractiveness of the local environment.

A car-free development generally implies a large-scale area that relies on modes of transport other than the car, while pedestrian zones may vary in size from a single square to entire districts, but with highly variable degrees of dependence on cars for their broader transport links.

Pedestrian zones have a great variety of approaches to human-powered vehicles such as bicycles, inline-skates, skateboards and push-scooters. Some have a total ban on anything with wheels, while others ban certain categories, segregate the human-powered wheels from foot traffic, or have no rules at all.

Results

Pedestrianisation schemes are often associated with significant drops in local air and noise pollution, accidents, and frequently with increased local retail turnover and property values.

Pedestrianisation also creates new space, which can be used for café/restaurant seating, street markets or by community groups. These factors combined contribute to an increase in the 'liveability' of an area. In some instances, this can also help boost increasing tourism to a city.

Pedestrianisation is also a key component to delivering wider Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan measures such as access restrictions and cycling and walking routes.

In brief

Examples

Results

Technical and financial considerations

In some cases, traffic in surrounding areas may increase, due to displacement rather than substitution of car traffic. Therefore, those alternative routes need to be able to support that additional traffic and these potential negative impacts are considered in the decision-making process.

Cities that have carried out significant pedestrianisation projects have learned a number of lessons. These include that residents expect landscape planning rather than simple physical barriers to prevent motor vehicles from entering, and that engaging local business, installing clear signs and providing advance notice ensure that changes are made in a timely manner.

Local authorities should also address concerns from local businesses that reducing access to cars will result in a decline in sales (for many businesses, the opposite will be true). However, certain businesses could be affected.

Policy/legislation

Many countries and major cities have developed common design guidelines on implementing changes to the public realm, such as pedestrianisation schemes. These typically include common standards for materials, signage, drainage etc.

As with any sustainable transport measure, ideally these should be designed and developed in line with the local Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan rather than in isolation.

Institutions

The lead agency is usually the city, in association with the local transport authority (if a different organisation). In some locations, nearby major landowners may be involved and may provide co-funding if it is in their commercial interests to ensure the scheme is implemented.

Cities also need support from local stakeholder groups/organisations including those representing older people, the partially sighted, taxis, public transport and freight/delivery companies to ensure the design sufficiently meets the needs of these different groups.

Technical and financial considerations

Policy/Legislation

Institutions

Transferability

Many cities in Europe and other parts of the world have implemented such solutions and they can be easily transferred to other cities. Substantial pedestrianisation requires strong political support and extensive local stakeholder engagement to address and manage any concerns.

Pedestrianisation is a key solution suitable for all cities, especially those keen to promote walking, retail and tourism or address issues such as crime, poor air quality and road safety.

Case study: Istanbul (Turkey)

Context

Istanbul's Historic Peninsula has been at the centre of the 8500-year-old capital city through the Byzantine and Ottoman empires and modern times. During the 1950s and 1960s, rapid urbanisation, industrial growth, immigration and illegal construction made it nearly impossible to create holistic plans for the area. Traffic volume was high, especially on the roads along the coastline and surrounding the peninsula, and parking spaces are in serious demand.

The peninsula's daytime population and traffic flow was a significant cause for concern and careful transport and urban planning required. In 2011, the Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board warned that vibrations by heavy vehicle traffic were damaging the ancient Basilica Cistern.

In action

In 2010, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality produced a study that looked into various perspectives concerning public spaces on the peninsula and the interactions between vehicles and pedestrians. It mapped the current problems and potential of the peninsula, and presented a framework for a more people-orientated planning approach. Thanks to the information provided by the report, Istanbul started pedestrian-only transformation projects.

First, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality began work at Sultanahmet Square in 2010. This was followed by the pedestrianisation of 295 streets by the Fatih Municipality and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality between 2010-2012 in Eminönü, Tahtakale, Beyazıt, Laleli, Gedikpaşa, and Hocapaşa.

Transferability

Case Study: Istanbul (Turkey)

In action

The municipality also repaved the newly pedestrianised streets with granite pavestones, updated signalisation and reorganised waste management services. Hydraulic vehicle- stopping barriers were installed, and streets lights and waste containers were renewed. New car parks were also built for tourist buses (each with 150-160 capacity).

Istanbul also introduced a number of general rules to be followed for the new streets:

- During daytime hours (10:00 – 18:00), the streets and roads are accessible to pedestrians only. During the rest of the day, vehicular traffic is limited;
- Only official vehicles, such as embassy, police, postal service, bank, fire service and hospital vehicles are allowed access during daytime hours;
- Vehicles with commercial licences are allowed access for loading/unloading outside the hours of 10:00-18:00;
- Street vendors are prohibited from accessing some streets and roads;
- Inspections and enforcement are conducted by the municipal police forces of Fatih Municipality;
- Tourist buses will use only specially designated routes and stops.

Results

Half of local businesses said that the pedestrianisation benefited their delivery and collection activities, although 37 per cent disagreed. The increase in street dealers after the pedestrianisation was a significant cause of concern with 77 per cent of businesses expressing their displeasure. Seventy-six per cent of total respondents felt that the pedestrianisation had a positive impact on road safety. Residents said they were pleased with the increased visual quality (58 per cent), strengthened attraction of historical buildings (56 per cent) and improved walkability (52 per cent). There have also been considerable positive changes in the area's air quality. NO₂ levels have decreased by 42 per cent, while SO₂ levels have reached negligible levels and have fallen below urban baseline levels. The average SO₂ levels are reduced by 80 per cent across the peninsula, comply with the urban ambient air- quality background measurements in Istanbul and show parallels with European cities.

Source: Eltis.org

Results



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More Information

Implementing
Partners

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