



**European Committee
of the Regions**

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OPINION





The new Urban Mobility Framework

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- highlights that the significant modal shift towards public and active transport modes envisaged by the new UMF and the SSMS will only be possible with strengthened and coordinated support from public authorities at **EU, national and local and regional levels**; insists [...] that the European Commission should reinforce direct consultation of European cities and their associations in its ongoing and future work on indicators for SUMP;
- recalls the chronic underfunding of public transport infrastructure over recent decades, and emphasises the **need to increase EU funding** to accelerate the mobility transition and support LRAs in the investments required to meet the EU's sustainability targets;
- emphasises the environmental and societal benefits of **active mobility** such as walking and cycling, including particularly in the domain of public health, and calls for an ambitious approach in the forthcoming updated SUMP guidance;
- regrets [...] that the most polluting transport modes in cities occupy the largest part of **public space** dedicated to mobility; requests urgently that the European Commission encourage, through new financing, local authorities to give this space back to more active mobility and strong and well-structured public transport; [recalls that] about half of all motorised trips for the transport of goods within European cities could be shifted to bicycles;
- highlights the importance of the development and modernisation of **rail** infrastructure, especially in areas where there is evidence of significant deterioration, and [of] developing support schemes; insists that revenue from the **CO₂ tax** should be channelled into the rail or cycling network ;
- emphasises that the need to address **mobility poverty** is critical in the interests of social, economic and territorial cohesion; points to the need for measures to encourage the deployment of **on-demand public transport services**, especially in peripheral and outermost rural areas, and calls on the Commission to provide support; calls also for additional **support for smaller cities**;
- calls for an EU-wide exchange of best practices on the **affordability of public transport**; further asks the European Commission to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing a free public transport system across the EU in order to incentivise modal shift.

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Reference documents

[COM\(2021\) 811 final](#)

[SWD\(2021\) 470 final](#)

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – The new Urban Mobility Framework

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. welcomes the publication of the new Urban Mobility Framework (UMF) in the light of the need for urgent action to promote decarbonisation and modal shift in urban areas, which continue to be accountable for 23% of all carbon emissions from transport;
2. underscores the need for an effective multilevel governance approach based on active subsidiarity for the delivery of the objectives of the EU's Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy; calls on the EU level to reinforce direct dialogue with LRAs to this end and to reinforce the funding opportunities available under the EU budget as part of an active subsidiarity approach;
3. recalls that the economic growth of urban centres is directly linked to the fluidity of mobility, and that the fluidity of mobility is dependent on a strong public transport backbone; underlines that, in addition to the environmental impact, congestion costs EUR 270 billion per year¹ at EU level. Recalls the chronic underfunding of public transport infrastructure over recent decades, and emphasises the need to increase EU funding to accelerate the mobility transition and support LRAs in the investments required to meet the EU's sustainability targets;
4. confirms its support for the reinforced focus on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) and the objective of a more harmonised approach across the EU; emphasises the environmental and societal benefits of active mobility such as walking and cycling, including particularly in the domain of public health, and calls for an ambitious approach in the forthcoming updated SUMP guidance; calls for an integrated approach to space allocation and spatial planning drawing on best-practices in this area and a comprehensive safety approach in urban areas; stresses particularly the importance of active involvement of citizens, and in particular women and persons with disabilities, for increased ownership of changes in allocation of space and enhancement of public transport in urban areas;
5. stresses that political decisions in the field of mobility impact different genders in different ways as women traditionally use public transport more than men, while men rely more on the car; calls on local and regional authorities to assess the impact future policy proposals have on different genders before putting their proposals forward;
6. points to the need for a supportive framework to accompany the efforts of LRAs with regard to the internalisation of external costs and implementation of the polluter pays principle, as well as increased flexibility in relation to budgetary processes. In this context, it is important to consider the situation in the Eastern European countries, especially in less developed regions. These tend to have a higher number of more polluting vehicles (cars, buses). It would be important to

¹ ECA special report 06/2020: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=53246>

regulate the sale of more polluting vehicles (Euro 1-Euro 4) at EU level, as these vehicles are migrating from the Western European market to the Eastern European market. In this respect, it would also be important for poorer regions and countries to develop support schemes to help them catch up with Western European conditions. Calls for an approach to the increasing petrol prices as a result of the geopolitical context which is consistent with the Union's transport decarbonisation objectives; points to the potential in this regard of using public subsidies to support green public transport services and encourage modal shift in urban areas, as well as to combat mobility exclusion in peri-urban and outlying rural areas;

A central role for active mobility

7. highlights that walking entails no costs for the pedestrian, and is healthy, and sustainable; stresses that cycling is a carbon-neutral and affordable transport alternative that can easily be combined with other transport modes; therefore encourages the Commission to promote awareness-raising measures on the benefits of active mobility over the use of private vehicles, putting particular emphasis on how active mobility can prevent diseases linked to sedentary lifestyles, such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity and diabetes;
8. regrets, in this regard, that, despite, these advantages, the most polluting transport modes in cities, i.e. individual petrol and diesel vehicles, occupy the largest part of public space dedicated to mobility; requests urgently that the European Commission encourage, through new financing, local authorities to give this space back to more active mobility such as walking or cycling and strong and well-structured and integrated public transport;
9. points out that walking and cycling are beneficial to a neighbourhood's or community's micro-economy as pedestrians and riders tend to frequent businesses and services located within a smaller radius from their residences; also points out that these trips are beneficial for people's health – especially for certain diseases such as cardiovascular diseases – and therefore lead to considerable savings for the community;
10. highlights the role micromobility can play as a flexible and affordable solution for first and last-mile journeys and beyond, underlines the importance of good accessibility conditions for active modes of transport, including secure bicycle parking facilities at public transport nodes (such as stations), and shared-use last mile solutions; and calls for the deployment of micromobility to be encouraged also in peri-urban and rural areas;
11. underlines the relevance of incentivising the purchase of bikes, including e-bikes, by individuals for decarbonisation and decongestion; reiterates the need to encourage a gradual phase-out of private-sector measures such as company car allowances and to replace these with more sustainable mobility alternatives;
12. requests the Commission to accelerate their work towards a European Cycling Strategy, as first discussed during the informal Council of Transport Ministers in 2015, in order to provide a European framework and guidelines for cycling policies;

13. recommends promoting active mobility by reducing space inequalities, and improving street safety and infrastructure; further recommends increasing bicycle parking (both at the destination and point of origin), public stations with pumps, tools and charging stations, and bicycle repair facilities; points out that the cost to construct and maintain quality bicycle paths is much lower than the cost of constructing new roads and/or widening existing ones;
14. underlines that systems such as congestion charges and ultra-low or zero-emission zones help to reduce motorised individual transport in cities, decrease air pollution from nitrogen oxides and particulate matter, improve local public health, and can also provide essential revenue for the development and improvement of public transport and active mobility infrastructure and services; by reducing motorised individual transport they also encourage greater ownership by citizens of their immediate environment and create space for social interactions and decreasing isolation, while promoting physical activity and sport;
15. regrets that the Commission's TEN-T proposal does not currently provide for bike-sharing/storage facilities and direct access routes into the multimodal hubs of TEN-T urban nodes;
16. proposes an EU-wide 'safe active mobility strategy' to encourage a coordinated European response to the challenge of making walking and cycling as safe as possible;
17. calls for another Euro emission standard for cars, vans, trucks and buses (Euro 7/VII) in order to reduce the emission of toxic pollutants (i.e. nitrogen oxide, ammonia, carbon monoxide and particulate matter PM 10-2.5) and to avoid tens of thousands of premature deaths each year; deeply regrets the European Commission's decision to again delay the Euro 7/VII proposals in its 2022 Work Programme, which casts doubt over its "Zero Pollution Ambition" and its commitment to the European Green Deal, and jeopardises the industry's ability to plan engineering changes;

Accessible Mobility for All

18. requests a public transport system accessible for all citizens, through inclusion by design, especially taking into account persons with disabilities; stresses the benefits of including users from an early stage of planning of infrastructure and transport services; confirms the importance of accessibility outlined within the framework of the European Disability Strategy 2021-2030 (EDS) and the European Accessibility Act; points out the importance of projects such as the "Access City Award";
19. calls for a more comprehensive approach to ensure accessibility throughout the journey;
20. emphasises that the need to address mobility poverty is critical in the interests of social, economic and territorial cohesion; calls therefore for a multimodal and integrated approach to combat mobility exclusion and ensure equal access to urban centres; welcomes in this regard the Commission's commitment set out in the new UMF to tackling 'inequalities in accessing the public transport network, including improving access to train stations'; calls also for additional support for smaller cities, peri-urban, and dependent rural and mountainous areas, especially in

less developed regions, to ensure the connectivity of these territories and equal access to the sustainable mobility transition for their citizens;

Reinforcing public transport as the backbone of urban mobility

21. welcomes the intention signalled by the Commission to "work with national and local administrations and all stakeholders to ensure that [public transport] remains the backbone of urban mobility"; highlights the need to coordinate all available tools and resources to that end, including the important role of Public Service Obligations (PSOs) in ensuring connectivity with urban centres;
22. highlights the urgent need for overall capacity increases for public transport, both in terms of geographical coverage and increased frequencies, to accommodate the expected increase in passenger volumes; recalls the chronic underinvestment over recent decades and the investment gap facing public transport operators, as highlighted by the European Court of Auditors;
23. underlines that public transport must be complemented by alternative offers and multimodal concepts; calls in this regard for flexible and demand-driven first and last mile solutions; and equally stresses the importance of promoting active mobility, especially cycling;
24. points out the need to provide and expand sustainable public transport infrastructure, including appropriate charging systems for electric buses that allow inter-urban travel on and in adverse terrain and climate conditions, and increased commercial speed;
25. calls for the strengthening of multimodal hubs to provide for smooth transfers between different modes of transport, including improving accessibility for active mobility and the provision of secure parking facilities for bicycles, in order to ensure a faster and more effective transfer of people and goods;
26. emphasises the importance of peri-urban linkages, including cross-border links, since commuting does not stop at city limits and must also be facilitated within rural areas and beyond national boundaries in border regions, such as providing park and ride facilities connected to the transport network;
27. points to the need for measures to encourage the deployment of on-demand public transport services, especially in peripheral and outermost rural areas, and calls on the Commission to provide both support for trialling such solutions and a system for financing and subsidising this type of service;
28. points out that the outermost regions, due to their terrain and small surface areas, suffer significant traffic congestion in their main cities, especially in coastal strips. However, projects to make transport more sustainable and clean in these areas are being developed and can serve as good practice for other EU regions and for their neighbouring countries;

29. highlights the importance of multimodal ticketing in order to make sustainable transport modes as accessible and efficient as possible for users, while comprehensively protecting passengers' rights associated to delays and other service shortfalls;
30. calls on the Commission to explore the possibility of supporting joint public procurement for public transport operators or LRAs wishing to join forces in this area in order to achieve more sustainable and standardised buying processes; calls for a renewed EU funding mechanism to support the procurement of clean buses and highlights the need to ensure that EU budgetary rules are compatible with the realities of rolling stock purchases;
31. points to the need to support the re-training and upskilling of public transport operators and LRAs in the context of increasing digitalisation of public transport services and systems;
32. highlights the importance of the development and modernisation of rail infrastructure, especially in areas where there is evidence of significant deterioration and in this respect develop support schemes;

Vision Zero

33. highlights the critical importance of a more ambitious approach to ensuring the protection of vulnerable road users to encourage further modal shift to active transport modes;
34. stresses that a renewed approach to the allocation of road space in urban areas will have the most decisive impact on the safety of vulnerable road users, while also encouraging behavioural change and reducing both air and noise pollution, as well as congestion; welcomes European Commission's intention to provide guidance on this in connection with the implementation of Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management;
35. highlights the significant impact of introducing overall speed reductions for improving road safety in urban areas as first formulated by the Commission of the European Communities in their Communication on "Speed Limits in the Community"²; reiterates the European Parliament's call on the European Commission to issue a recommendation for the Member States³ for a 30 km/hour speed limit on relevant streets in urban areas and highlights the positive impact this policy change has shown in different cities by reducing road casualties and generally having a positive impact on health in cities, as also endorsed by the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in February 2020 and subsequently by the General Assembly of the UN;
36. underlines the positive impact car-free days have on cities, as they offer opportunities for citizens to explore alternative modes of transport and help citizens to re-claim ownership of public spaces; calls on the European Commission to put forward a proposal to invite cities in the EU to designate at least one harmonised day per year as a car-free day;

² COM(86) 735 final

³ European Parliament resolution on the EU road safety policy framework 2021-2030

37. stresses the need to design streets for low speeds and better visibility of the most vulnerable users of the public space; highlights the effectiveness of infrastructure traffic calming, as well as nudging measures;
38. calls on the Commission to take up these recommendations in its forthcoming guidance on quality infrastructure for vulnerable road users.

Future-proof urban mobility

39. stresses that while new technological solutions play an important role in making cities more liveable, existing technology such as electric (cargo) bikes or electric (trolley-) buses, trams and trains should be the backbone when aiming for zero-emission freight and passenger transport;
40. emphasises the importance of accelerating progress towards integrated ticketing across all public transport modes; calls on the Commission to envisage the development of a standardised EU app, under a common rule, in order to facilitate access in cities across the EU and promote the use of public transport, positively impacting both rail tourism and commuting;
41. calls for close and early cooperation with LRAs on the potential use of European Digital Identity Wallets, by transport operators and passengers, as signalled in the new UMF;
42. recalls that shared mobility is a solution to reduce traffic in cities and the problems associated to congestion, and its development should be encouraged;
43. points out that data collection is an important means for the planning of transport infrastructure and consequently all collected data should be made available for all relevant actors; while it is important to facilitate easy-to-use solutions including all-in-one mobile apps, data protection must also be ensured; a common and coordinated methodology for data collection that facilitates the exchange of good practices and the comparison of reliable mobility indicators needs to be implemented in the various regions;
44. emphasises the need to properly take into account the gender dimension when designing sustainable mobility policies, taking into account the specific needs of women and their additional vulnerability towards mobility poverty, as well as those of other collectives;

SUMPs as a key tool for decarbonisation of urban mobility

45. confirms the CoR's support for the reinforced focus on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs), in the context of the UMF and, as a mandatory requirement for the 400+ urban nodes defined under the proposed revision of the TEN-T Regulation. However, cities/municipalities that have already developed plans that meet the requirements for SUMPs should be able to use those plans;

46. also supports the recommendation, that cities adopt SUMP; however, stresses the need to draw up SUMP that can be extended to areas with various municipalities that function as metropolitan areas or urban agglomerations;
47. welcomes the Commission's intention to request Member States to implement long-term SUMP support programmes in order to help build capacity and implementation of SUMP in compliance with EU SUMP guidelines and calls for mandatory close cooperation with LRAs in that context; calls on the Commission to work towards close cooperation between the envisaged SUMP national programme managers and representatives of local and regional authorities on the ground, and to monitor this cooperation in practice;
48. emphasises that to address the mobility transition in urban areas, it is critical for SUMP to efficiently cover functional areas as a whole; calls on the Commission to consider ways of incentivising improved connectivity and access to mobility services in suburban, peri-urban and surrounding rural areas;
49. welcomes the announced streamlined set of indicators and benchmarking tools scheduled to be published by the end of 2022, as well as the planned CEF Programme Support Action to support TEN-T urban nodes in this area. However, it is important to ensure that the development and monitoring of indicators does not result in an excessive workload for cities/municipalities;
50. stresses the need for harmonised data collection in key areas (e.g. cycle lane kilometres, daily users, accidents, type of networks) in coordination with LRAs in order to better inform future decision-making and investment choices on active mobility, including in the context of SUMP; the administrative burden for collecting, providing and maintaining data must be kept to a minimum;
51. highlights the new UMF inclusion and accessibility objectives, and welcomes the indicator on the affordability of public transport in connection with the updated SUMP guidance; this can help mitigate potential risks stemming from mobility poverty;
52. insists, while supporting the development of SUMP, and in order to respect the subsidiarity principle, that the European Commission should reinforce direct consultation of European cities and their associations in its ongoing and future work on indicators for SUMP. The CoR duly notes the involvement of some 50 cities in the recent pilot project on the development of sustainable urban mobility indicators (SUMI), and points out in parallel that many European cities have already developed quality SUMP with operational indicators. Wider outreach and more direct information flows between the EU and LRA levels could be facilitated in future by the CoR, in order to ensure that indicators proposed by the European Commission do not create red tape or unnecessary burden for local and regional authorities;
53. welcomes the focus in the new UMF on urban freight and the proposed integration of urban logistics into SUMP, in particular in view of the significant increase in e-commerce and changes to freight distribution patterns triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic; emphasises the important potential of zero-emission solutions, technologies and vehicles for urban logistics; encourages the use of modern cargo bikes and bike trailers, since about half of all motorised

trips for the transport of goods within European cities could be shifted to bicycles; recalls that this objective was already set out by EU transport ministers in their 2015 "Declaration on Cycling as a climate friendly transport mode";

54. calls for enabling measures to support the use of urban rail for freight transport;
55. welcomes the intention to encourage dialogue and collaboration between all parties including local authorities, and to support data-sharing on urban logistics as the basis for monitoring progress and long-term planning; calls for the active involvement of LRAs with regard to the reporting requirements envisaged linked to the streamlined SUMI indicators;

Funding

56. highlights that the significant modal shift towards public and active transport modes envisaged by the new UMF and the SSMS will only be possible with strengthened and coordinated support from public authorities at EU, national and local and regional levels, and notably more targeted funding;
57. calls on the Commission to provide a more detailed overview of the funding sources available for urban mobility and on the ways in which these resources may be accessed by LRAs; underscores in parallel the critical importance of long-term strategies and long-term budgets to provide a stable framework for urban mobility planning and investment;
58. expresses concern that the funding available for urban mobility under EU instruments is either rather limited in practice, difficult to access or unsuitable for LRAs and/or dependent on arbitrary factors such as favourable cooperation between national and subnational governance levels; calls for an increase, within the next MFF, and in line with national regulations with the same objective, in the amounts of programmes and tools accessible as direct funding for LRAs;
59. expresses concern that certain aspects of the rules provided for in the EU system of national and regional accounts (ESA) may be difficult to reconcile in practice with significant infrastructure investments by LRAs, notably the requirement to record such expenditure in a single financial year, which creates an excessively high deficit in the corresponding regional accounts; recommends optimising the potential of available EU funding by enabling LRAs to record such expenditure in their accounts progressively over the lifecycle of the infrastructure;
60. points to the expectations of many LRAs for the EU level to provide for stronger measures to encourage the internalisation of external costs in the transport sector and more systematic application of the polluter pays and user pays principles; points to the need for a supportive framework to accompany the efforts of LRAs in this regard;
61. insists that revenue from the CO₂ tax should be channelled into the rail or cycling network and other sustainable infrastructure projects – necessary for a transition of the transport system. Overall, an effective and sensible CO₂ tax is a central component of a climate-friendly mobility policy;

Governance and exchange of best practice

62. underscores the need for an effective multilevel governance approach based on active subsidiarity; welcomes the Commission's intention to associate LRAs more closely in the reformed Expert Group on Urban Mobility (EGUM) alongside Member State representatives, and calls on the Commission to associate the CoR in this context; emphasises the importance of reinforcing the representation of the main active mobility actors (pedestrians and cyclists), as well as public transport users, in urban mobility planning;
63. calls for the exchange of best practices with a focus on an adequate infrastructure that provides for safe and comfortable spaces for active mobility such as walking and cycling; in that regard highlights the importance of separated lanes for pedestrians and cyclists;
64. with regard to road safety, calls for an exchange of experience to date and best practices to ensure an approach which is conducive to triggering behavioural change;
65. welcomes the high level of interest expressed by EU cities in the EU Climate-neutral and Smart Cities Mission, reflecting both the strong commitment of many EU cities to delivering on the mobility transition, but also the need for additional support – financially, technically and strategically – from the EU level; calls on the Commission to maintain this momentum by providing for as active an involvement as possible of all EU cities wishing to be associated;
66. insists, in particular, that the EU Climate-neutral and Smart Cities Mission and the "100 climate-neutral cities" should not increase inequalities and divergences between the most advanced cities and the ones lagging behind; calls for close attention to be paid to the Mission's objective of supporting all EU cities in the green transition;
67. calls for the EU institutions to lead by example and adopt similar programmes to the "100 climate-neutral cities";
68. calls for an EU-wide exchange of best practices on the affordability of public transport; further asks the European Commission to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing a free public transport system across the EU in order to incentivise modal shift. This study should address both social and financial aspects, incl. the current role of ticket sales in offsetting increasing running costs borne by LRAs and public transport operators.

Brussels, 11 October 2022

The President
of the European Committee of the Regions

Vasco Alves Cordeiro

The Secretary-General
of the European Committee of the Regions

Petr Bližkovský

II. PROCEDURE

Title	The new Urban Mobility Framework
Reference(s)	COM(2021) 811
Legal basis	Article 307 TFEU
Procedural basis	Rule 41(b)(i) of the CoR's Rules of Procedure
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter	-
Date of Bureau/President's decision	-
Commission responsible	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER)
Rapporteur	Linda GAASCH (LU/Greens), Member of the Community Council of the City of Luxembourg
Analysis	June 2022
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Previous Committee opinions	
Date of subsidiarity monitoring consultation	