Plan to Accelerate: Scaling Up Public Transport and Sustainable Transport in Cities

Axis: 4. Building Resilience for Cities, Infrastructure and Water
Key objective: 13. Resilient urban development, mobility and infrastructure
Solution: Scaling Up Public and Sustainable Transport in Cities: Sustainable Urban Mobility
Host initiative: Initial lead initiative - UITP Declaration of Climate Leadership (permanently of/on rotation).
Scope:

- ➔ Geographic: Global
- ➔ Sectoral: Sustainable Urban Mobility - Focusing on Avoid/Shift Pathways to Reduce Road Transport Emissions
  - ◆ In line with the recommendations of the first Global Stocktake (GST), sustainable urban mobility strategies should prioritise “avoid” and “shift” pathways to deliver deep and sustained emissions reductions from road transport. With a focus on public transport and active mobility, the top three sub-solutions are:
    - Infrastructure investments (i.e. cycle and walking paths; public transport and rail systems etc;)
    - Low and zero carbon fleet and service investments (i.e. low/zero emission bus expansion, rail, metros and light rail etc)
    - Sustainable urban transport policies (i.e. economic, regulatory, information / awareness policies and governance reforms)

Levers assessment:
High-priority levers are highlighted - indicating those with the greatest enabling effect

- **Risk-informed decision-making:** Medium maturity
  - *Rationale:* Risk-informed decision-making involves leveraging tools, data, and institutional processes to anticipate and manage climatic, financial, geopolitical, operational, and social risks that may affect urban transport systems. By integrating geospatial mapping, climate and air quality models, real world vehicle emissions data, socioeconomic data, and advanced decision-support tools, urban planners, transport authorities and operators can design sustainable multimodal urban mobility infrastructure and fleet investments that are both resilient and inclusive, with particular attention to vulnerable populations.
  - Strong governance, policies, cross-sector collaboration, and active community participation are essential to ensure that investments in integrated multimodal urban mobility infrastructure and fleets are sustainable, equitable, and adaptive to future uncertainties. Building through sustainable, low-carbon urban transport policies not only mitigates the impacts of climate change but also improves access to essential services, reduces economic losses from disruptions, and enhances the uptake of sustainable urban mobility and overall city resilience.
- **Technology shifts:** High maturity
  - *Rationale:* Technology shifts currently witnessed in sustainable urban mobility infrastructure and fleets reflect the maturity, cost-effectiveness, and readiness of both core and supporting technologies that enable large-scale implementation. Key innovations include electric fleets (such as e-buses, BRT, light rail and commuter rail systems), renewable energy integration, real world emissions testing technologies, digital platforms for mobility management, dynamic pricing and smart infrastructure and information systems, that facilitate a shift to rail, public transport and active mobility.

  - Smart transport technologies play a critical enabling role in advancing Avoid Shift pathways and achieving sustainable urban mobility goals. By leveraging digitalisation, data analytics, and intelligent transport systems (ITS), policymakers can design, implement, and monitor evidence-based interventions that optimise efficiency and reduce emissions (e.g. congestion relief policies).
  - Assessing these technologies and fleet investments is essential to determine their scalability, affordability, and alignment with long-term sustainability and climate objectives. A range of tools and resources now support the tendering and procurement process for low- and zero-emission vehicles - particularly electric buses - helping cities streamline procurement and adopt solutions that are sustainable, efficient, and cost-effective.
  - Advances in information systems and open ticketing solutions also enable more seamless connectivity across transport modes, improving the user experience and thereby encouraging greater modal shift towards public and active transport. Complementary policies also assist cities in controlling vehicular emissions, accelerating the transition to electric mobility. These efforts not only deliver climate benefits, but also address air quality and public health concerns, creating a strong case for a faster and more equitable shift to cleaner sustainable urban mobility.
- ***Knowledge & Capacity building - High Priority:*** Medium maturity
  - Rationale: Training and capacity building ensures that the necessary skills, technical expertise, and institutional capabilities are in place to support the deployment, operation, and maintenance of effective rail, public transport and active mobility infrastructure and fleet investments. This involves strengthening proficiency in urban planning, technology, and governance reforms - for example, through the establishment of integrated city and public transport authorities or dedicated mobility agencies - while promoting cross-sector collaboration, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning to enhance the implementation of proven solutions, including comprehensive sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMP) that advance Avoid Shift pathways.
  - The development of mode-specific Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) guidance and templates can provide a foundation for technical assistance and capacity-building, supporting countries in implementing rail, public transport, and active mobility policies outlined in their latest NDCs. It can also support regional cooperation, policy advice and technical assistance to help countries implement sustainable urban mobility infrastructure and fleet investments and translate their NDC commitments into practical transport policies and interventions to advance Avoid Shift pathways.
  - Conducting systematic reviews of NDC policies and measures on rail, public transport, and active mobility can help identify gaps in knowledge and capacity. Strengthening local and national expertise in response to these gaps will enable the effective design and implementation of high quality policies, fleet upgrades, and infrastructure investments. This, in turn, will enhance climate ambition by advancing Avoid Shift pathways.
  - Additionally, the use of independent vehicle emissions data, rigorous analysis, and expert guidance enables cities to accurately map mobility challenges, prioritise policy interventions in favour of public transport and active mobility, and identify solutions that deliver cleaner air and lower emissions, advancing both environmental sustainability and public health. All such policies require good data on which to evaluate progress.
- **Inclusive decision-making governance & design:** Medium maturity
  - *Rationale:* Inclusive decision-making, governance, and design in SUMPs requires the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, with particular attention to the needs of vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons, throughout

planning and implementation. This approach ensures that sustainable urban mobility policies and investments prioritises social equity by addressing accessibility, affordability, better health and safety for diverse populations while contributing to emissions reduction through a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport.
    - Embedding transparency, participation, and accountability in decision-making governance and design fosters shared ownership and creates urban mobility investments that are both sustainable and widely adopted. Scaling up implementation depends on empowering local governments to pursue urban development policies that reduce reliance on private cars and enhance access to sustainable urban transport. Achieving this requires the coordination of active mobility, public transport, and rail across departments and agencies.
    - Creating partnerships between public transport operators and authorities and managing the public realm ensures that greater priority and infrastructure investment are given to the walkability of rail and public transport catchments. This integrated approach recognises the value of policies spanning urban and transport planning, health, environment, and climate, enabling coordinated strategies that enhance Avoid Shift pathways. To support implementation, door-to-door trip surveys can be conducted to capture travellers' experiences, using on-site data to consistently assess the quality of catchment areas and their impact on accessibility to rail and public transport.
- **Standards & Taxonomies:** Medium maturity
    - *Rationale:* Standards and taxonomies encompass the establishment, alignment, and application of norms, classifications, and guidelines that ensure rail and public transport infrastructure and fleets are interoperable, traceable, and compatible. They provide common frameworks for investments in technologies, data, and operations, facilitating integration across modes and supporting Avoid Shift pathways. Robust emissions standards and shared taxonomies enhance transparency, accountability, and public procurement processes, creating the conditions to evaluate, replicate, and scale proven sustainable urban mobility solutions. These measures also strengthen interoperability, reduce barriers, and promote system-wide efficiencies.
- **Supply:** High maturity
    - *Rationale:* Supply refers to the availability, accessibility, and reliability of infrastructure, technologies, and rail and public transport fleets and services that enable a large-scale transition to sustainable transport modes. It encompasses the capacity to implement these systems effectively and at scale. For rail and public transport - covering both urban passenger and freight services - this involves ensuring adequate fleet size, service frequency, network coverage, and maintenance standards to meet growing demand while ensuring equitable access across urban and peri-urban areas. The implementation of clean transport zones, fuel and emissions standards, inspection programmes, and fleet monitoring systems further enhances reliability, efficiency, and safety.
    - Strengthening supply requires investments in integrated multimodal infrastructure, clean and zero-emission fleets, renewable energy, and operational systems that guarantee dependable service delivery. Beyond quantity, quality is essential alongside sustainable transport policies to encourage modal shift. Reliable schedules, safe vehicles, and user-friendly systems further builds trust and encourage ridership, while seamless multimodal integration - linking walking, cycling, public transport, and rail - maximises efficiency and accessibility. Enhancing these connections through improved station access, transit-oriented development, intermodal hubs, and integrated ticketing and information systems delivers system-wide benefits, further advancing Avoid Shift pathways.
- **Demand:** High maturity

Plan to Accelerate: Scaling Up Public Transport and Sustainable Transport in Cities

  - *Rationale:* Robust transport demand and supportive policies provide clear market signals, drive innovation, and enable long-term investment and large-scale deployment of rail and public transport services and fleets. The overarching goal is to reduce the perception of distance and travel time by making active mobility, rail, and public transport more convenient and attractive than car journeys.
  - Prioritising investment in active and multi-modal sustainable urban mobility infrastructure and services involves designing streets that place walking and cycling at the forefront while ensuring convenient access to public transport and rail. This includes embedding public transport in land-use policies, prioritising investment in quality rail and public transport and implementing behavioural and transport demand management (TDM) measures to encourage mode shift and avoid unnecessary polluting travel. This also involves improving public transport infrastructure, service quality, integration, affordability, and supportive policies to make public transport faster, reliable, and more attractive than private cars.
  - Closing the gap between real-world and regulated vehicle emissions incentivises demand for zero-emission public transport and rail fleets, while pricing and subsidies further promote sustainable travel choices. The potential of rail freight can complement sustainable urban logistics, enhancing efficiency and reducing emissions.
  - Urban policy design should identify preferable walking routes and effective footpath networks that are direct and convenient, particularly to public transport and rail, while reviewing crossings to minimise the barrier effect of car traffic. Providing infrastructure and services that protect against adverse weather, mitigate irregular terrain, and ensure high-quality street lighting enhances both safety and comfort. Crossings should prioritise pedestrians with direct routes, short waiting times, and clear wayfinding signage, essential for tourists and occasional users. Pathways must remain obstacle-free and spacious, including during maintenance works, while recognising the value of sidewalk life, active frontages, and access to shops and services, supporting both Avoid Shift pathways and urban vitality.
  - Creating reliable, efficient, and attractive freight options - through investments in rail terminals, multimodal hubs, and digital logistics - can stimulate market uptake and reinforce sustainable mobility demand and reduce emissions from cargo transport coming into cities by road.
- ***Public/private finance - High Priority:*** Medium maturity
  - Rationale: Adequate climate financial instruments enable the de-risking, scale-up, and long-term investment of rail and public transport infrastructure and fleets while reducing investment risks. Attracting people to rail and public transport requires investment in high-quality, efficient, low- or zero-carbon operations and services, focusing on availability, frequency, reliability, punctuality, safety and quality. While national budget allocations are critical, this does not necessarily require increased overall spending; rather, it calls for a shift from road-building, which exacerbates urban sprawl and congestion, toward rail and public transport and infrastructure for walking and cycling.
  - Strong, well-structured financing - leveraging Article 6.2 (cooperative approaches) and Article 6.4 (carbon markets) - offer a unique opportunity to ensure that investment in integrated multimodal transport infrastructure and fleets are de-risked and become bankable, enabling implementation at the necessary scale. Investments should be complemented by policies that advance Avoid Shift pathways that promote active mobility, public transport, and rail, which mitigates the negative effects of car use, and expands the catchment area around public transport and rail networks by enhancing the quality of the public realm.
- ***Partnerships and collaboration - High Priority:*** Medium maturity
  - Rationale: Partnerships and collaboration involve formal or informal cooperation mechanisms among stakeholders across sectors and geographies to enhance alignment, knowledge sharing, and coordinated action. Such collaboration is particularly critical for scaling up policies and initiatives that advance Avoid Shift pathways, as it enables the pooling of resources, expertise, and influence to overcome

barriers. Strong partnerships support the effective implementation and scaling of interventions, improve efficiency and facilitate continuous knowledge exchange.
    - Establishing collaboration platforms as well as global and regional gatherings are critical to peer learning, partnerships and collaboration which can help to support better policy development and enhance the overall impact and long-term sustainability of urban mobility solutions, while supporting the scaling up and implementation of Action Agenda initiatives. This approach can help translate the outcomes of the first GST on road transport into actionable progress toward the 2028 second GST. Systematic NDC reviews can also facilitate partnerships and collaboration between public and private stakeholders, enabling the alignment of implementation with identified needs, which will help ensure better policy making to advance Avoid Shift pathways and strengthen overall climate ambition.
- ***Policy & regulatory - High Priority:*** Medium maturity
    - Rationale: Policy and regulatory frameworks refer to the quality, maturity, effectiveness, alignment, and implementation of policies, planning instruments, and regulations that enable or accelerate the deployment of Avoid Shift pathways. NDCs and national urban transport policies provide a clear vision for cities and metropolitan areas, offering guidance, setting standards, developing regulations (e.g. Low Emissions Zones), and creating an enabling environment for investment and innovation.
    - Effective policies and regulations ensure that sustainable urban mobility solutions are scalable, low- or zero-carbon, safe, socially inclusive, and resilient. This underscores the importance of policies and regulations in NDCs that enable the local level to support the provision of safe, accessible, and pleasant walking routes to high-quality rail and public transport stops, stations, and services, particularly for people with reduced mobility, children, older persons, and women.
    - The development of mode-specific NDC templates and guidelines that advance Avoid Shift pathways can provide support to national and local governments on critical policies and investment decisions that are needed to scale up implementation and deliver actionable progress toward the second GST.
- ***Public opinion - High Priority:*** Low maturity
    - Rationale: Public opinion and political will reflect the level of societal support for, and prioritisation of, sustainable urban mobility by political leadership at all levels of government. Strong public backing, combined with awareness-raising on the benefits of public transport, active mobility, health and clean air, as well as committed political leadership, drives policy adoption, financial resource allocation, and long-term implementation of sustainable urban mobility policies, infrastructure and fleets in NDCs. High levels of societal and political engagement enhance legitimacy, accountability, and sustained impact, thereby strengthening the ambition and effectiveness of Avoid Shift pathways.

Expected impact of this plan on the 2030 targets (if any): High

This Plan to Accelerate Solutions (PAS) builds on the Road Transport: Avoid & Shift 2030 Breakthrough launched at COP29, which set the goal of doubling the share of energy-efficient and fossil-free land transport for people and goods by 2030. This builds up on the Call To Action launched by SLOCAT and other sustainable transport stakeholders at COP28. It further highlights the enhanced potential when combined with renewables and zero-emissions energy, and brings an agenda of actions needed for capacity, finance, policy and ambition. By combining a shift toward sustainable transport modes with a rapid transition to renewable and zero-emission energy sources, transport sector emissions could be reduced by more than 50% by 2035.

Plan to Accelerate: Scaling Up Public Transport and Sustainable Transport in Cities

This approach aligns with the findings of the first Global Stocktake, which underscored the urgency of accelerating emissions reductions from road transport through multiple pathways, including enhanced infrastructure investments and the rapid deployment of low- and zero-emission vehicles (para. 28 (g)). Accordingly, this PAS prioritises the scaling up of infrastructure investments (e.g. cycling and walking networks, public transport and rail systems), low and zero carbon fleet investments (e.g. bus expansion and electrification), and the implementation of sustainable transport policies (e.g. economic, regulatory, and information or awareness measures) to advance Avoid Shift pathways for sustainable urban mobility.

Beyond urban transport decarbonisation, this PAS also supports the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 11.2, which aims to ensure by 2030 universal access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport, notably by expanding public transport, and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons.

The PAS provides a framework for countries and cities to monitor progress toward the Avoid & Shift Breakthrough using key performance indicators (KPIs):

- **Urban access:** Percentage of the urban population with convenient access to public transport (SDG indicator 11.2.1).
- **Network coverage:** Active transport and public transport network lengths / capita.
- **Investment priorities:** Share of transport spending allocated to active mobility, rail, and public transport relative to total transport spending per capita.
- **Policy alignment:** Proportion of rail, public transport, and active transport measures included in NDCs.

This PAS' Action Plan, led by the AG13 initiatives, aims to address the high-priority levers with the greatest enabling effect on Avoid Shift pathways: knowledge & capacity building; public/private finance; partnerships & collaboration; policy & regulation; and public opinion. In doing so, it can accelerate the adoption of best-practice solutions, strengthen capacity to enhance ambition, support NDC implementation, scale up initiatives, engage the public and build partnerships, which can support governments at all levels to deliver tangible progress toward the second Global Stocktake. Annual progress of each initiative and their contribution to the below Action Plan will be provided via the Global Climate Action Portal (a.k.a NAZCA) and MPGCA transport thematic meetings. Each action will be delivered within existing and planned resources.

AG13 Initiatives:

- Road Transport: Avoid & Shift 2030 Breakthrough
- Partnership for Active Travel Health (PATH)
- The Real Urban Emissions Initiative (TRUE)
- UITP Declaration of Climate Leadership (initial lead)
- UIC Low-Carbon Rail Challenge

Endorsing Initiatives / Entities:

- SLOCAT Partnership

Plan to Accelerate: Scaling Up Public Transport and Sustainable Transport in Cities

Action Plan

Output	Action Scope	Action	Type of action	Implementation Lever	Responsible	Time horizon	Stakeholder engagement[1]	Committed Stakeholders
Action 1: Advance the Avoid & Shift Breakthrough	Global (national & local)	Partner with selected cities and countries (circa. 50), identified through NDC3.0 reviews, to accelerate Avoid and Shift strategies. The program will promote NDC best practices and provide targeted capacity building support based on mode-specific NDC templates and guidelines.	New action	Knowledge & …	UITP, PATH, UIC	Novemb…	Countries	UIC, UITP, TBC - CAF in LAC to an extent and also, partly, with EBRD in Eurasia + AfDB in Africa. PATH, FIA Foundation.
Action 2: Build Sector Capacity at Scale	Global	Double current training levels, targeting emerging and rapidly urbanising cities, with the aim of reaching approximately 2,000 public transport professionals annually[2]. Expand active travel training through regional networks: LAC, ANWAC, and PEP, reaching 500 practitioners across 140 countries.	New act…	Knowledge …	UITP, WALK21	Novem…	Cities and l…	UITP, WALK21, TRUE.
Action 3: Enable Sustainable Transport Investments	Global	Develop technical report translating Article 6.2 and 6.4 standards into actionable guidance for governments, financial institutions, and sustainable	New act…	Public/privat…	UITP & UIC	Novem…	Investors	UITP, UIC & Alstom, WALK21, PATH

[1]

[2] Linked to a UITP voluntary commitment to train at least 20,000 public transport professionals during the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035)

Plan to Accelerate: Scaling Up Public Transport and Sustainable Transport in Cities

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		transport organisations, helping enhance access to climate finance, de-risk transport investments, and improve the bankability of rail, public transport, and active mobility.						
Action 4: Strengthen Public and Political Support	Global & Local	Launch multi-year global awareness raising campaigns: ● World Public Transport Day (2026, 2027 and 2028) to engage citizens, policymakers, and showcase public transport benefits. ● World Cycling Day and potential World Walking Day to promote health, wellbeing, and cost-saving benefits of walking and integrating with public transport.	New act…	Public opinion	UITP, Walk21	June 2…	Cities and I…	UITP (public transport authorities, operators and business supply industry) PATH

Plan to Accelerate: Scaling Up Public Transport and Sustainable Transport in Cities

Output	Action Scope	Action	Type of action	Implementation Lever	Responsible	Time horizon	Stakeholder engagement[1]	Committed Stakeholders
Action 5: Support NDC Ambition	Regional	Support regional commissions in developing transport NDC templates (based on mode-specific NDC guidance), helping to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to help countries scale up rail, public transport and active mobility solutions in transport NDCs in order to advance Avoid Shift pathways	Existing …	Policy & reg…	UITP, UIC	June 2…	Countries	UITP, UIC, PATH, FIA Foundation.
Action 6: Foster Global Peer Learning	Global & Regional	Annual (2026, 2027 & 2028) and biannual global and regional gatherings will showcase innovations, foster knowledge exchange, partnerships and strengthen collaboration among national and local governments, development partners, and industry stakeholders on rail, public transport, cleaner vehicles, and active mobility.	Existing a…	Partnerships …	UITP, WALK21	June 20…	Cities and loc…	UITP, WALK21, PATH, TRUE, FIA Foundation