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# Walking



**SLOCAT** Partnership on Sustainable,  
Low Carbon Transport

Transport, Climate and Sustainability  
Global Status Report - 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

# Key findings



## Demand trends



- The demand for urban trips is expected to triple by 2050. Between 2020 and 2050, the share of walking, cycling and scooter use for trips of less than 10 kilometres is expected to increase noticeably.
- On average, an estimated 20-30% of all trips globally are walked, as are 85% of all trips to and from public transport.
- Without investing in improved walkability, the situation in Africa will mirror that across Latin America and Asia, which have similarly high levels of walking and increasing motorisation.
- In many parts of the world, the amount of walking is likely to decrease as soon as a viable and affordable alternative transport mode is available.
- Walking has the potential to replace a large share of short trips and to reduce the associated emissions from transport.
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been significant and sustained behaviour change in commuting patterns, enabled by the increase in digital accessibility and remote work in many countries.
- Substantive discussion since 2012 has resulted in the development of a new global indicator system for walking. The indicators attempt to compare values for four key components: the amount of walking (the activity), the risk (safety and security), proximity to public transport (accessibility) and available infrastructure for walking (comfort).

## Emission trends



- Walking and cycling are the most sustainable forms of personal transport. Enabling more people to walk and cycle safely can play a significant role in achieving climate goals and is a quick, affordable and reliable way to lower transport emissions while improving public health, strengthening the economy and supporting a fairer, more equitable society.
- The emissions increase from the shift from walking to motorised modes has not been calculated but potentially cancels out many of the benefits that can be delivered by policies that support a modal shift from cars to walking.
- Walking and cycling deliver progress towards more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals than any other transport mode; however, active mobility is still under-prioritised in the transport and mobility mix and in the wider climate agenda.

## Policy developments



- More national governments, as well as regional and city institutions, are preparing walking policies, although only 42% of countries had a national walking policy as of 2022; up to 10% more countries had sub-national policies in place.
- Proximity planning – such as the “15-minute city” in Paris, the “super blocks” in Barcelona and the “low traffic neighbourhoods” in London – is experiencing re-invigorated momentum.
- As of 2021, 48 countries mentioned walking in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) towards reducing emissions under the Paris Agreement, representing 25% of the countries that had an NDC at the time.
- National and sub-national governments have increasing opportunities to align their transport, health and climate policies more closely to enable walking – including through safe and accessible infrastructure, campaigns and land-use planning.
- In 2021, governments of the pan-European region adopted the Vienna Declaration “Building forward better by transforming to new, clean, safe, healthy and inclusive mobility and transport”, with a strong focus on walking and cycling.



## Overview



The safety, accessibility and comfort of active travel (walking, bicycling and variants such as wheelchair travel) is not sufficiently valued, planned for or invested in across the world. Ironically, it is the countries where people walk the most – in the low- and lower-middle income countries – where the value, commitment, policy and budgets are often lowest. Women, children, the elderly, those with disabilities and people on low incomes – who rely most on these active transport modes – are suffering disproportionately from the lack of policy attention and safe infrastructure. It is unsurprising that many travellers choose motorised modes, unless active travel is safe, convenient, comfortable and affordable.

Many current planning and funding practices tend to favour private automobiles over active transport. Practitioners often evaluate the performance of transport systems based on motor vehicle traffic conditions, using indicators such as the level of service of roadways, the average traffic speed and congestion delay. Planning often gives little consideration to active travel conditions, including the additional delay and risk that wider roads and higher traffic speeds impose on pedestrians and bicyclists (called the “barrier effect”).

In addition, development banks and transport agencies generally provide far more funding for motor vehicle infrastructure than for active modes. Many jurisdictions further favour automobile travel by supporting fuel subsidies, low fuel taxes, and subsidised parking, which benefits motorists to the detriment of non-drivers.

Walking and cycling deliver progress towards more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) than any other transport mode, yet active mobility is still under-prioritised in the transport and mobility mix and in the wider climate agenda.<sup>1</sup> Many transport professional organisations are

starting to recognise the unique and important roles that active modes play in an efficient and equitable transport system, and are reforming planning practices to better reflect these values.

In many communities, the demand for more walkable neighbourhoods is a visible legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, places that had an existing walking policy were more likely and more quickly able to respond to the increase in demand for safe walking every day.<sup>2</sup> The most common walking interventions during this period were reallocating road space more equitably, improving the accessibility of public transport interchanges, and defining walkable networks that linked residential areas to health care, green space, retail, and later education and work sites.

Recent reports identify the need to build compact, more walkable cities as a key action to address climate and equity goals by enabling a shift from private motorised travel to more walking, cycling and public transport.<sup>3</sup> Walking is critical to this shift for local trips and as a key feeder to public transport trips. The World Health Organization’s (WHO) *Global Action Plan for Physical Activity 2018-2030* and subsequent *Global Status Report on Physical Activity 2022* document the need for more walkable environments as key to enabling more everyday walking, and thus contributing to increased physical activity and better health outcomes for communities.<sup>4</sup>

Previous editions of the present report found very little evidence of relevant policy for walking, so the emerging trend for national governments to prepare walking policies is both helpful and encouraging. While there is work to do, the traditional assumption that walking was not treated as a transport mode, or valued in data collection systems, policies and budgets, appears to be changing.



**TABLE 1.** Countries with walking policies, by region and income level

Source: See endnote 13 for this section.

Countries with some level of walking policy	GLOBAL	AFRICA	AMERICAS	ASIA	EUROPE	OCEANIA
	103 (50%)	19 (35%)	17 (49%)	26 (53%)	34 (69%)	7 (35%)
NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITH SOME LEVEL OF WALKING POLICY, BY INCOME LEVEL						
High income	45 (44%)	1 (5%)	5 (29%)	9 (35%)	28 (57%)	2 (29%)
Upper-middle income	27 (26%)	3 (16%)	10 (59%)	6 (23%)	5 (10%)	3 (43%)
Lower-middle income	23 (22%)	8 (42%)	2 (12%)	10 (38%)	1 (2%)	2 (29%)
Low income	8 (8%)	7 (37%)	0	1 (4%)	0	0

## Demand trends



**The demand for urban trips is expected to triple by 2050.<sup>5</sup> Between 2020 and 2050, the share of walking, cycling and scooter use for trips of less than 10 kilometres is expected to increase noticeably** under the High Ambition Scenario of the International Transport Forum, which is compatible with the Paris Agreement's goal of keeping global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius (°C) by 2050.<sup>6</sup> For distances of 1 to 2.5 kilometres, the share of walking, cycling and scooters will increase from around 25% of all urban passenger-kilometres to 50%.<sup>7</sup>

**On average, an estimated 20-30% of all trips globally are walked, as are 85% of all trips to and from public transport,** thereby avoiding significant emissions through existing sustainable walking behaviour. If these walked journeys were motorised, the associated emissions would greatly increase the transport sector's impact on climate change.

**Without investing in improved walkability, the situation in Africa will mirror that across Latin America and Asia, which have similarly high levels of walking and increasing motorisation. In many parts of the world, the amount of walking is likely to decrease as soon as a viable and affordable alternative transport mode is available** (emission free or not). In most places emissions will likely only increase, unless governments choose to value and invest in walking more. Climate-responsive planning that enables and encourages walking is needed, such as compact urban planning.

- ▶ A 2011 study by the Asian Development Bank suggested that as many as 81% of people in Asia will shift from walking to motorised modes, unless walkability is improved.<sup>8</sup>

**Walking has the potential to replace a large share of short trips and to reduce the associated emissions from transport.**

- ▶ Worldwide, an estimated 60% of urban trips are shorter than 5 kilometres, and a quarter are less than 1 kilometre, yet more than half of these trips are travelled using motorised vehicles.<sup>9</sup>

**Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been significant and sustained behaviour change in commuting patterns, enabled by the increase in digital accessibility and remote work in many countries** (see Section 3.1 *Integrated Transport Planning*).<sup>10</sup> This has brought into question whether measures of commuting shares are still helpful for providing insight into the true amount that people walk. Moreover, commuting trips account for less than half of the overall demand for mobility.<sup>11</sup>

The data used in previous editions of this report, showing the modal share of walking at the national and city levels, do not provide a complete picture. They are usually based on census data focused on morning commuting trips (often long distances from home) and tend to count only walking trips of more than 500 metres or sometimes 1 kilometre in distance. Walking stages to other modes of transport, including public transport, are not included in this count. Additionally, the trips that many women, elderly and young people, and people with disabilities take outside of commuting are often not recorded.

**Substantive discussion since 2012 has resulted in the development of a new global indicator system for walking,** in part to overcome the policy inertia due to a lack of comprehensive data. The evolving International Walking Data Standard provides a measure for walking that records how many minutes per day are spent walking.<sup>12</sup> These data are also helpful for assessing physical activity and road safety. The standard includes both subjective and objective measures and also borrows from existing datasets to analyse their relevance through a walking lens.



**TABLE 2.** Average time spent walking and cycling, by region and top countries

Source: See endnote 19 for this section.

Countries with data	GLOBAL 55 (26%)	AFRICA 19 (35%)	AMERICAS 8 (22%)	ASIA 26 (53%)	EUROPE 3 (6%)	OCEANIA 8 (40%)
<b>LEVEL OF WALKING AND CYCLING ACTIVITY</b>						
Average daily activity (in minutes)	44.0	54.7	40.2	40.1	61.8	23.2
Highest daily activity (in minutes) by country	141.0 Niger	141.0 Niger	140.8 Trinidad and Tobago	56.9 Bhutan	79.8 Republic of Moldova	100.8 Papua New Guinea
Lowest daily activity (in minutes) by country	4.9 Timor-Leste	15 Egypt	20.9 British Virgin Islands	4.9 Timor-Leste	33.1 Turkey	13.2 Niue

**TABLE 3.** Walking safety, by region and top countries

Source: See endnote 20 for this section.

Countries with data	GLOBAL 204 (98%)	AFRICA 54 (100%)	AMERICAS 35 (97%)	ASIA 49 (100%)	EUROPE 46 (94%)	OCEANIA 20 (100%)
<b>LEVEL OF SAFETY</b>						
Average road fatalities per 100,000	14.9	18.8	14.5	17.1	7.4	16.5
Road deaths per day	14.5	12.0	17.0	43.1	0.53	0.03
Average pedestrian fatalities per 100,000	4.8	6.7	4.9	5.4	2.3	4.8
Pedestrian deaths per day	5.0	4.3	3.0	17.4	0.27	0.01
% of pedestrians among road deaths	30%	36%	31%	40%	17%	28%
Highest road fatalities	59.7 Saudi Arabia	44.2 Lesotho	27.2 Ecuador	59.7 Saudi Arabia	15.9 Ukraine	30.6 Nauru
Lowest road fatalities	2.97 Singapore	8.3 Cabo Verde	6.7 Canada	2.97 Singapore	3.3 Iceland	6.5 Australia
Highest pedestrian fatalities	23.5 Central African Republic	23.5 Central African Republic	12.5 El Salvador	17.7 Oman	6.1 Ukraine	9.2 Nauru
Lowest pedestrian fatalities	0.51 Iceland	2.5 Nigeria	1.6 Canada	0.83 Singapore	0.51 Iceland	1.1 New Zealand

The indicators attempt to compare values for four key components: the amount of walking (the activity), the risk (safety and security), proximity to public transport (accessibility) and available infrastructure for walking (comfort). The component data sets are explained below, and Table 1 presents the available data so far by region.<sup>13</sup>

- ▶ The 2022 publication *Walking and Cycling in Africa* pioneered this approach for Africa and concluded, based on available data, that the average person in Africa walks for 56 minutes per day and that 31.7% of people in urban areas live within convenient access of public transport.<sup>14</sup>
- ▶ The analysis found that 95% of roads in Africa fail to meet an acceptable level of service for pedestrians and that 36% of road casualties in 2019 were pedestrians.<sup>15</sup>

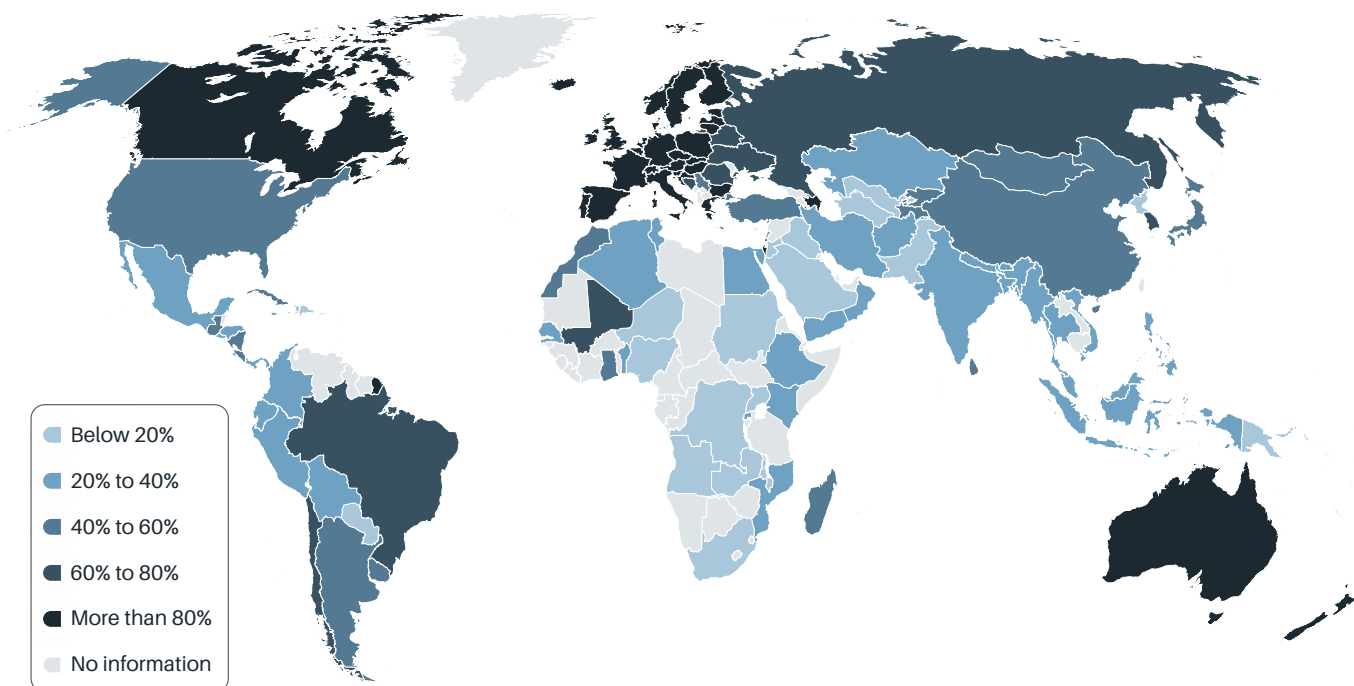
- ▶ In many African countries, as much as 78% of trips are walked.<sup>16</sup> Africa has the least amount of walking infrastructure for pedestrians and is also the least safe region for walking.<sup>17</sup>

A key approach to establish a robust evidence base for outlining the current status of walking and for informed and appropriate action on walking is by looking at the “time spent walking”:

- ▶ The World Health Organization’s (WHO) STEPwise approach to risk factor surveillance of non-communicable diseases provides helpful insight into the levels of walking and cycling for transport.<sup>18</sup> The STEPwise approach is disaggregated by gender, ability, age and income and represents a simple, standardised method for collecting, analysing and disseminating data in WHO member countries.

**FIGURE 1.** Average share of urban population with convenient access to public transport, by country

Source: See endnote 25 for this section.



- Specifically, the WHO's Global Physical Activity Questionnaire asks, "How much time do you spend walking or bicycling for travel on a typical day?" As a result, the WHO has collected mean minutes of travel time from 55 countries (see Table 2).<sup>19</sup> However, this dataset has limitations for comparability, as it does not provide the same year for each country, is only a partial dataset for a region, and does not clearly disaggregate between walking and cycling (although it is hoped that future editions will).

For measuring **safety**, the most recent data available are from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (see Table 3).<sup>20</sup>

- Pedestrians accounted for 36% of the 264,526 people killed on African roads in 2019, based on analysis of the Global Burden of Disease.<sup>21</sup>
- In addition to deaths, a further 25,908,698 road traffic injuries were recorded in Africa in 2019, and 38% of the injuries were suffered by people walking.<sup>22</sup>

UN-Habitat collects information on transport **accessibility** trends, using mapping data to understand the distance to public transport and to show the areas reachable within a travel time limit. UN-Habitat is the custodian of SDG 11 on Cities and Human Settlements, which in Target 11.2 calls for universal access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems.<sup>23</sup>

- Target 11.2 has a systematic and reliable methodology and dataset for universal comparison, including Indicator 11.2.1, which measures progress on the share of the population that has convenient access to public transport, disaggregated by age group, sex and persons with disabilities.<sup>24</sup> This core indicator helps cities identify areas that are under-served by public transport.
- This indicator is measured by the walking access threshold to public transport stops (either 500 metres or 1,000 metres, depending on the carrier capacity of the transport system) (see Figure 1).<sup>25</sup> However, proximity to transport alone does not ensure accessibility.<sup>26</sup> To inform policy and investment decisions, there is also a need for information on transit system performance (such as frequency, comfort, safety, affordability) as well as considerations of the quality of the walking infrastructure, which is key to ensure door-to-door accessibility. However, existing data are often inconsistent or non-existent.

Measurements of **comfort** are based on the International Road Assessment Programme's (iRAP) Star Ratings, which provide a simple and objective measure of the level of safety provided by a road's design (see Table 4).<sup>27</sup> iRAP's Star Ratings are the global guideline for road infrastructure safety and are embedded into the UN Road Safety Targets.<sup>28</sup> Star Ratings greatly improve awareness of pedestrian safety for those designing, building and

**TABLE 4.** Walking comfort, by region and top countries

Source: See endnote 27 for this section.

Countries with data	GLOBAL	AFRICA	AMERICAS	ASIA	EUROPE	OCEANIA
	45 (22%)	9 (17%)	10 (28%)	10 (20%)	12 (24%)	4 (20%)
LEVEL OF COMFORT						
Highest		Senegal	Costa Rica	China	United Kingdom	New Zealand
Lowest		South Africa	Chile	Indonesia	Bulgaria	Papua New Guinea

maintaining roads. If used at the design stage for road upgrades, they will highlight where a design lacks sufficient safety measures for pedestrians. Star Ratings also can be used at the network level to track safety progress and performance over time.

- ▶ Star Ratings represent the infrastructure-related risk of death or serious injury. A five-star street is the safest and most comfortable for people that walk, while a one-star street is the least safe.<sup>29</sup> A three-star score (the minimum acceptable standard for pedestrians) ensures that the roads have sidewalks, pedestrian refuge, street lighting and traffic of maximum 50 kilometres per hour.<sup>30</sup>
- ▶ With every incremental improvement in Star Rating, a person’s risk of death or serious injury is approximately halved.<sup>31</sup> The World Road Association (PIARC) catalogue of design safety measures estimates that investment in pedestrian facilities can reduce crashes by 13-90%.<sup>32</sup> Star Ratings are very sensitive to traffic speeds, so even if a road has pedestrian facilities, a change in the speed will greatly affect the safety outcome.

- ▶ iRAP has partnerships with 104 countries to work with government and non-governmental organisations to inspect high-risk roads and develop Star Ratings and Safer Roads Investment Plans; develop Star Ratings for Schools; provide training, technology and support to build and sustain national, regional and local capability; and track road safety performance so that funding agencies can assess the benefits of investments.<sup>33</sup>

Another assessment of walkability is performed by Walk Score, which calculates the number of common destinations (shops, schools, parks, public transport, etc.) located within convenient walking distance.<sup>34</sup> Residential and commercial property values tend to increase with a location’s Walk Score, indicating that people want to live and work in walkable areas, and studies find positive relationships between walkability indicators and public health and safety.<sup>35</sup>

## Emission trends



**Walking and cycling are the most sustainable forms of personal transport.<sup>36</sup> Enabling more people to walk and cycle safely can play a significant role in achieving climate goals, and is a quick, affordable and reliable way to lower transport emissions while improving public health, strengthening the economy and supporting a fairer, more equitable society.**

- ▶ According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), providing support for walking and cycling infrastructure can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from urban transport by 2% to 10%.<sup>37</sup>
- ▶ Cities that have a high-density walking fabric emit half the transport greenhouse gas emissions compared to cities that

have an automobile-centred fabric.<sup>38</sup>

- ▶ The IPCC projects that walking and cycling activity (expressed in passenger-kilometres) will increase at least 1.4 times above 2020 levels by 2070, in scenarios aligned with keeping global temperature rise below 1.5°C.<sup>39</sup>

**The emissions increase from the shift from walking to motorised modes has not been calculated but potentially cancels out many of the benefits that can be delivered by policies that support a modal shift from cars to walking. If walked journeys were motorised, the associated emissions would greatly increase the transport sector’s impact on climate change. However, most emission models focus on the value of shifting to cleaner vehicle modes, rather than calculating**



the increase in emissions that would occur with a shift from walking to motorised modes.

**Walking and cycling deliver progress towards more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals than any other transport mode (see Box 1); however, active mobility is still under-prioritised in the transport and mobility mix and**

**in the wider climate agenda.<sup>40</sup>**

Enabling walkability – the extent to which the environment supports and encourages people to walk for a reasonable amount of time and effort – will play a significant role in reducing carbon emissions and encouraging better health outcomes by supporting citizens to make the best transport choices.

### BOX 1. Leverage effects from active mobility

Improvements in active mobility (walking and cycling) often leverage additional reductions in vehicle travel, resulting in wider societal benefits:

- ▶ *Shorter trips.* A shorter active trip often substitutes for longer motorised trips, such as walking or biking to local shops rather than driving to regional shopping centres.
  - ▶ *Reduced chauffeuring.* Poor walking and cycling conditions cause motorists to chauffeur non-drivers, which generates empty backhauls (kilometres driven with no passenger). For such trips, a kilometre of walking or cycling often reduces two vehicle-kilometres of travel.
  - ▶ *Increased public transit.* Walking and cycling improvements can support ridership on public transport, since most public transit trips involve active mode links. Improving walking and cycling access is often one of the most effective ways to increase public transport travel.
  - ▶ *Vehicle ownership reductions.* Improving alternative modes allows some households to reduce their vehicle ownership. Since motor vehicles are costly to own but relatively cheap to use, once households own a vehicle they tend to use it, including for relatively low-value trips.
  - ▶ *Lower traffic speeds.* One of the most effective ways to increase active travel is to reduce urban traffic speeds. This makes walking and cycling trips more time-competitive with driving and reduces total automobile travel.
  - ▶ *Land-use patterns.* By reducing road and parking space requirements and creating more livable neighbourhoods, walking and cycling improvements help create more compact, multi-modal communities, which reduces vehicle travel.
  - ▶ *Social norms.* More walking and cycling can help increase social acceptance of alternative travel modes.
- Not every improvement in active transport modes has all these effects, but many small changes can help make a community more multi-modal and therefore reduce total vehicle travel. Conventional planning often ignores these indirect impacts and so underestimates the potential impacts and benefits of active improvements to achieve objectives such as reducing congestion, crashes and pollution emissions.

Source: See endnote 40 for this section.



## Policy developments



**More national governments, as well as regional and city institutions, are preparing walking policies, a trend that is both helpful and encouraging, although there is work to do.**

- ▶ In the *Global Status Report for Physical Activity 2022*, the WHO found that **only 42% of countries had a national walking policy** (listed as walking and cycling, so not exclusively for walking); **up to 10% more countries had sub-national policies in place** (see Table 1).<sup>41</sup>
- ▶ The WHO also found that 73% of countries had a national policy on public transport and 80% had a national road safety strategy, both of which support walking.<sup>42</sup>

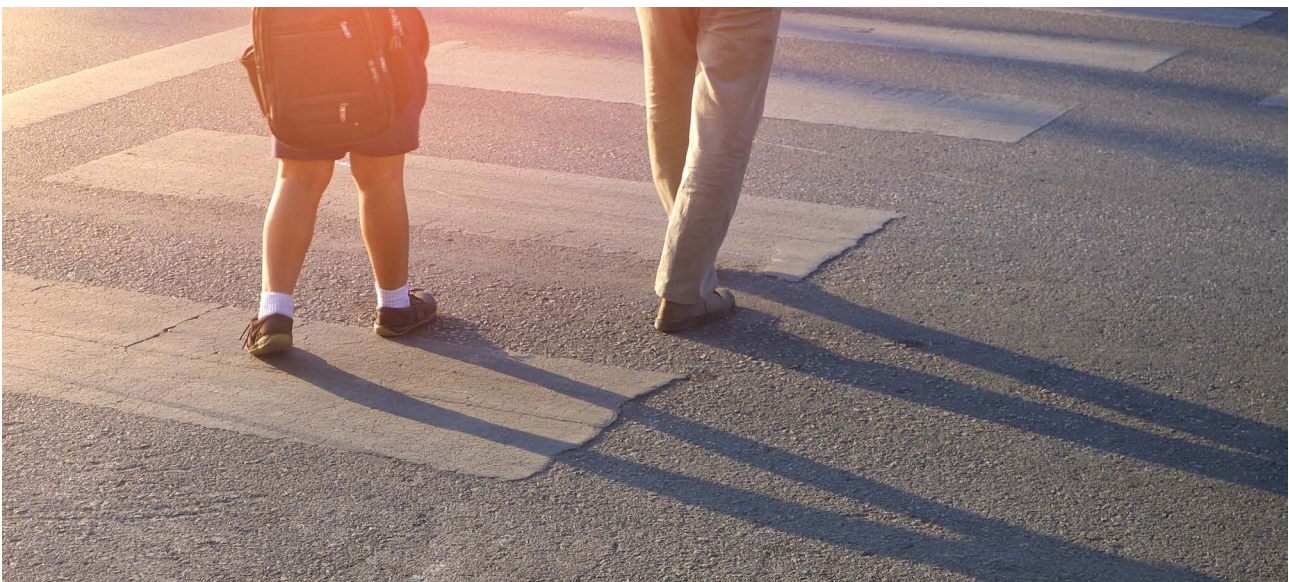
**Proximity planning - such as the "15-minute city" in Paris (France), the "super blocks" in Barcelona (Spain) and the "low traffic neighbourhoods" in London (UK) - is experiencing a re-invigorated momentum.**<sup>43</sup> Effective "Shift" and "Improve" measures related to walking include targeted behaviour change campaigns, supportive land-use policies, investment in pedestrian infrastructure and facilities design, and better-quality catchments for public transport. The places having the most success in shifting people from their cars are combining these measures, with additional restrictions on vehicle use and parking. Other identified national policies or legislation that enable more walking include infrastructure assessments and those that seek to manage or limit vehicle speeds and poor driver behaviour.

**As of 2021, 48 countries mentioned walking in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) towards reducing emissions under the Paris Agreement, representing 25% of the countries that had an NDC at the time.**<sup>44</sup>

- ▶ Walking was mentioned by 30% of Asian countries that had an NDC, 24% of European countries, 22% of countries in the Americas, 18% of African countries and 15% of countries in Oceania.<sup>45</sup>
- ▶ However, only 33 of the countries that mentioned walking in their NDCs also had a walking policy at some level, meaning that 15 countries mentioned walking but had not yet taken policy action.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, as many as 70 countries were found to mention walking in a policy but not in their NDC.<sup>47</sup>
- ▶ Among countries' commitments to walking in their NDCs, nearly three-quarters (73%) mentioned improving walkability (infrastructure), which includes creating sidewalks, paths, walkways, crossings and pedestrian zones, and sometimes escalators (Monaco) and bridges (Azerbaijan).<sup>48</sup>

**National and sub-national governments have increasing opportunities to align their transport, health and climate policies more closely to enable walking - including through safe and accessible infrastructure, campaigns and land-use planning.** Investment in walking is a climate solution as well as a solution to improving road safety, reducing non-communicable diseases, strengthening urban resilience and enhancing equity, regardless of gender, ability, age or income. Effective support for walking in everyday life requires a set of integrated, coherent and funded actions for:

- ▶ infrastructure that not only enables safe, accessible and easy walking, but also encourages comfortable, attractive and enjoyable walking;
- ▶ campaigns to support a shift in people's mobility habits;
- ▶ land-use planning to ensure proximity and quality of access to everyday services on foot;







- ▶ integration with public transport to underpin sustainable mobility for longer trips and
- ▶ capacity building to enable the successful delivery of effective walking strategies with measurable impact.<sup>49</sup>

A broad range of countries, regions and cities around the world have taken action recently to support walking.

- ▶ In 2022, the Minister for Transport of Ireland announced EUR 289 million (USD 308 million) in funding for local authorities to develop more cycleways and walking infrastructure, among the largest such allocations globally.<sup>50</sup> The funding, equally distributed between walking and cycling projects, will be allocated by the National Transport Authority and will contribute to nearly 1,000 kilometres of new and improved walking and cycling infrastructure across the country by 2025.<sup>51</sup>
- ▶ In British Columbia (Canada), the Ministries of Health and Transport provided Vision Zero funding of more than CAD 500,000 (USD 370,000) to support local road safety projects, recognising the link between sustainability, activity and safety outcomes. The small grants scheme will fund

priority improvements and access for active and green modes, including safer crossings, better lighting and traffic management.<sup>52</sup>

- ▶ Siem Reap (Cambodia) has built substantial new road infrastructure – including sidewalks, street trees, lighting and separate bike lanes – to create safer and more attractive walking networks.<sup>53</sup>
- ▶ In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Barcelona (Spain) carried out numerous interventions to secure more space for pedestrians, such as widening sidewalks and narrowing roadways at intersections.<sup>54</sup>
- ▶ Since 2020, when Brussels (Belgium) implemented the Good Move plan outlining its mobility ambitions, walking has increased significantly in the city, alongside a drop in car use.<sup>55</sup> The sharpest decline in car travel has been among young people (18-34 years old), with the share of car kilometres travelled falling from 55% in 2019 to 45% in 2022, over the first six months of each year.<sup>56</sup> The share of walking grew from only 7.2% of kilometres travelled in the first half of 2017 to 12.0% in the first half of 2022.<sup>57</sup>



Globally, a key policy priority should be to develop infrastructure to make walking safe, accessible and easy to do for everyone. Footpaths and safe crossings are the essential, minimum infrastructure dedicated to walking. The design of high-quality infrastructure must be based on specific standards that guarantee all users adequate levels of safety, accessibility and comfort.

A road is not only a connection between two points. It is public space, and its characteristics can greatly influence people’s quality of life and mobility choice. Well-designed public spaces connect where people live to everyday services, offices, public and private activities, and can be experienced and enjoyed at different times of day and night. Well-designed roads and streets allow the safe co-existence of multiple users in the same space, usually by moderating motorised traffic. Examples include pedestrian streets, districts with low vehicular traffic, the Dutch “woonerf” and pop-up piazzas.<sup>i</sup>

**In 2021, governments of the pan-European region adopted the Vienna Declaration “Building forward better by transforming to new, clean, safe, healthy and inclusive mobility and transport”, with a strong focus on walking and cycling.**<sup>58</sup> The declaration is part of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) and features several objectives for 2030, including greatly increasing cycling and walking by extending and improving related infrastructure, developing relevant national policies, and increasing safety and connecting it to health policies.<sup>59</sup>

Also important are campaigns to support shifts in people’s mobility habits, including through improved communications, awareness and persuasion tactics. In many cases, the infrastructure might be there, but people may not use it, whether because they are unaware of it, they are not motivated to use it, they lack the capability to use it, or it is of poor quality. Campaigns to promote more walking can be undertaken at every level (local to national to global) and are paramount to ensure that investments in infrastructure, innovative policies, urban planning and capacity building achieve their potential to shift mobility habits.

- ▶ Of the countries that mentioned walking in their NDCs as of the end of 2022, 37% committed to promoting walking through campaigns, community encouragement and related means; this was sometimes presented alongside parking restrictions (Barbados and the Republic of North Macedonia), vehicle import controls (Togo) and a desire for safer and healthier communities (Cabo Verde, Lesotho, Malawi and Moldova).<sup>60</sup>

- ▶ Colombia’s new national strategy for active mobility, the ENMA, includes guidelines and actions to stimulate citizens to travel by bicycle and foot, and also takes a gender and differential approach to ensure that “no one is left behind”, one of the postulates of the Paris Agreement.<sup>61</sup>
- ▶ In Islamabad (Pakistan), the Capital Development Authority is promoting active transport to address pollution and encourage physical activity, including by adding sidewalks on all major roads and integrating road signs and street furniture for pedestrian use.<sup>62</sup>

Land-use planning is key to supporting and encouraging walking as a daily mobility choice, as it can help ensure greater proximity and quality of access to everyday services on foot. Spatial planning determines the use of city areas (for example, as services, public spaces, industrial districts, retail, and residential neighbourhoods) and how people move around these. Dense urbanisation can greatly increase the potential to move by public transport, walking, and cycling, and thus have positive effects on energy consumption, carbon emissions and physical activity. When there is a viable and affordable option for public transport, whether people choose to walk is strongly influenced by the quality of the built environment and distances. *(For examples of land-use planning policies, see Section 3.1 Integrated Transport Planning.)*

- ▶ Of the countries that mentioned walking in their NDCs, 17% referenced changes in land-use planning to support and encourage walking; this includes vehicle-free zones (Fiji), pedestrian communities (Tajikistan) and greening programmes (Jordan and Suriname).<sup>63</sup>

Integration with public transport is also key. Walking is among the best choices when considering short-distance trips, but it is also a viable option for long trips when coupled with public transport. An effective integration of walking with public transport can lead to multiple benefits, including lower climate and environmental impacts, reduced congestion, and higher accessibility for youth and seniors.

However, one of the weak points in public transport systems is accessing the stop or the station. Many potential users are instead choosing private vehicles due to the lack of an effective solution for the first and last mile. Proper infrastructure, pricing mechanisms and policies that allow for multimodal trips are crucial to provide citizens with an effective alternative to private vehicle use. *(For examples of public transport policies, see Section 3.4.1 Public Transport.)*

- ▶ Of the countries that mentioned walking in their NDCs, 12% referenced improvements to walking for connecting to public transport.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>i</sup> A woonerf is a living street, as originally implemented in the Netherlands and in Flanders, Belgium. The term woonerf has been adopted directly by some English-language publications. In the UK, these areas are also called home zones.

## Partnership in action



- ▶ In 2021, the **African Network for Walking and Cycling (ANWAC)** was created as a space for organisations and experts to convene and collaborate under the auspices of a common goal: making the life of people who walk and cycle in African countries safer, healthier and more comfortable through combined action, expertise and influence.<sup>65</sup>
- ▶ In 2022, the **Partnership for Active Travel and Health (PATH)** coalition was launched, calling on governments and cities to make a real commitment to walking and cycling as a key solution to climate, health and equity challenges.<sup>66</sup> The PATH coalition seeks to unlock walking and cycling's potential to accelerate the achievement of climate goals and other benefits, through greater prioritisation and investment, including through national transport, health and environment strategies and through NDCs and Voluntary National Reviews. PATH comprises leading organisations in the sustainable mobility community and is co-ordinated by the FIA Foundation, Walk21, the European Cyclists' Federation and the UN Environment Programme. SLOCAT is a partner of the initiative.
- ▶ In 2022, the **Volvo Research and Educational Foundations (VREF)** initiated a research programme on walking as a mode of transport, seeking to build a broad, international and interdisciplinary community of learning that encompasses researchers and other stakeholders in this area, as well as to support and contribute to new knowledge among "next-generation" scholars in walking research.<sup>67</sup>



## 3.2 WALKING

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