

Best Practice 01 SUMT



Promoting Bike Ridership: bergamoinbicicletta.it

For decades, urban mobility challenges have been closely linked to environmental concerns, and recently, the transport sector's contribution to **CO₂** emissions has become central to public debate. In the European Union, **the transport sector accounts for approximately 25% of total CO₂ emissions, with 70% coming from road transport¹**. Despite varying contexts, public administrations continuously strive for the right balance between different modes of transport, such as public transportation, light mobility, shared mobility, and private vehicles. One of the most effective proven policies is strengthening bike ridership.

Many municipalities study successful models from Northern Europe to find their path to more sustainable mobility. For example, Copenhagen boasts an impressive modal split, with **63% of trips made by bike or on foot²**. However, for countries like Italy, where many cities still heavily depend on private cars, this goal remains a challenge, resulting in northern Italy being one of the most air-polluted regions in Europe³.

Bergamo, a small city of **120,000 inhabitants** in a larger province of **1.1 million inhabitants in 2,722 km²**, also confronts the challenge of a complex topography that significantly impacts local mobility. According to the latest studies, the province records **1.85 million daily trips: 70% by private car, often with just the driver onboard; 16% by public transport; and 2.5% by bicycle**. Within the city, there is a better balance: **50% by private vehicles, 14% by public transport, 21% by bicycle, and 9% on foot, although private vehicles still dominate⁴**.

As part of its overall strategy for renewing urban mobility, the Municipality of Bergamo approved the General Mobility Plan (PUMS 2030) in 2023, which strongly supports policies promoting bike ridership. Bergamo also integrates these policies into its Climate City Contract 2030 as part of the global strategy to reduce CO₂ emissions for the EU's NetZero Cities mission and to improve air quality.

A CYCLING ECOSYSTEM

In 2022, the Municipality launched the bergamoinbicicletta.it project as the focal point of its new agenda. The idea is straightforward: bike ridership can only be increased by treating this form of mobility as a "system" or "ecosystem."

As a result, effective policies must address numerous interconnected elements, with parallel progress in all areas necessary for overall success. The public debate often revolves around a single main topic: the demand for new infrastructure and the expansion of dedicated cycling paths. While infrastructure is crucial, it requires time and financial resources and, most importantly, should be complemented by other equally significant actions. Furthermore, it's essential to provide citizens with a comprehensive overview of initiatives, as demonstrated by several online polls conducted by the municipality over the last four years.

[Bergamoinbicicletta.it](https://bergamoinbicicletta.it) is not a single project but a combination of many. It is a "project of projects" and serves as the framework for several actions. It represents the municipality's general policy to increase bike ridership. It is also a website, a portal specifically created to engage citizens in a shared vision, providing live updates, practical information, FAQs, documents, maps, and more.

OBJECTIVES

Various areas of intervention have been identified to enhance bike ridership. The selection of these areas stems from both scientific literature and direct consultations with citizens. The main sectors are:

- **Increasing** safety through dedicated routes and paths;
- **Expanding** clear and legible road signage;
- **Providing** digital navigation tools and dedicated software;
- **Building** bicycle parking services and enhancing theft prevention;
- **Promoting** riding responsibly and safely;
- **Offering** financial incentives and rewards for users;
- **Introducing** shared mobility services.

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Consequently, bergamoinbicicletta.it includes the following specific actions which are replicable in different cities, incremental, inclusive, always adaptable, and interconnected:

- **The new Biciplan** (Strategic Municipal Plan for Cycling Mobility), approved in 2022, outlines the future development of the cycling network, with the ambitious goal of creating 23 km of bike paths and 40 km of bike lanes within three years;
- **New dedicated signage across the city**, designed for cyclists, featuring both large panels ("totems") and smaller signs;
- **New maps for navigating the bike network**, including route-planning software and online map services;
- **New parking structures** (two "Velostations" for 250 bikes and 40 bike boxes) offering safe parking for private bicycles near railway and tram stations;
- **A promotional campaign** on social media and billboards to raise awareness of the benefits of cycling (less traffic, reduced pollution, improved health, cost savings, etc.);
- **A social media campaign** to educate citizens on the proper use of e-scooters;
- **The PinBike project**, which offers monthly financial rewards for bike-to-work users based on the distance covered (€2 per day and €30 per month maximum);
- **The creation of an integrated sharing system**, including both bicycles and e-scooters.

MAIN OUTCOMES

- Bike ridership within the municipal area increased by 38% from 2019 to 2023 (excluding the pandemic), reaching a 29% share of the modal split⁵ ;
- Over the same period, the bike-sharing system expanded from 24 to 70 stations, from 100 to 450 bikes, and from 4,000 to 15,000 daily uses⁶ ;
- The e-scooter system achieved nearly 2,000 daily uses⁷ ;
- The city added 30 km of new bike lanes and 10 km of dedicated paths over the last two years, with the network now totaling 93 km (0.77 meters per inhabitant)⁸ ;
- Over 2,500 citizens (3.3% of the active population) participated in the financial reward program⁹.

[Bergamoinbicicletta.it](https://bergamoinbicicletta.it) was selected by ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) and won the Urban Award 2022 as the best project for Sustainable Urban Mobility in Italy.

1 European Environment Agency - 2019

2 Mobility facts and figures - City of Copenhagen - 2021

3 European Environment Agency - 2024

4 PUMS of Bergamo (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan) - 2023

5 According to a survey by ATB, the municipal mobility company, and L'Eco di Bergamo, a local newspaper - 2024

6 Data from NextBike

7 Data from Bit Mobility and Lime

8 Data from Biciplan monitoring - 2024

9 Data from PinBike final report - 2024



'This factsheet was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of ICF S.A. and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union'



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