

Special Issue 1.2026

Living and Walking in Cities Mobility, Public Space and Spatial Justice

The Special Issue of TeMA results from the XXVII International Conference "Living and Walking in Cities", held in Brescia (Italy) on the 11-12 September 2025. Over more than thirty years, the LWC conferences promoted an interdisciplinary platform for discussing among researchers, practitioners and decision-makers engaged in the fields of transport and urban planning. The Special Issue contains ten articles that deal with an integrated mobility perspective as a spatial, social, and environmental planning issue, with a focus on spatial justice, health, and urban regeneration processes.

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TeMA

Journal of
Land Use, Mobility and Environment

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Living and walking in cities: Mobility, Public Space and Spatial Justice

Published by

Laboratory of Land Use Mobility and Environment
DICEA - Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering
University of Naples "Federico II"

TeMA is realized by CAB - Center for Libraries at "Federico II" University of Naples using Open Journal System

Editor-in-chief: Rocco Papa
print ISSN 1970-9889 | online ISSN 1970-9870
Licence: Cancelleria del Tribunale di Napoli, n° 6 of 29/01/2008

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Living and Walking in Cities: Mobility, Public Space and Spatial Justice

Contents

- 3** EDITORIAL PREFACE
Maurizio Tira, Martina Carra, Gerardo Carpentieri, Carmela Gargiulo, Michele Pezzagno, Anna Richiedei, Michela Tiboni
- 7** **Walking access to public facilities in the touristic historic centre of Bologna: gaps and unbalances for residents and tourists**
Fangyu Chen, Elisa Conticelli
- 21** **Assessing socio-spatial equity in access to coastal areas of italian island cities**
Mana Dastoum, Tazyeen Alam, Reza Askarizad, Tiziana Campisi, Chiara Garau
- 37** **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and active mobility. An assessment through the lens of justice**
Aida Shaneh, Elisabetta Vitale Brovarone, Francesca Blanc, Giulia Melis
- 51** **Bologna Città 30. Experiences and perspectives**
Valentina Orioli, Luca Bellinato, Cleto Carlini
- 65** **Intermediate railway stations in medium-to-low density areas. An analysis of five European metropolitan contexts**
Ludovica Dangelo, Marika Fior, Paolo Galuzzi
- 79** **The archipelago of urban health. A vision for Milan from the railway yard regeneration**
Giovanna Fossa, Federico Mistò, Quying Wang, Giulio Zilli

- 93** **Walking in the heat. A pedestrian-centric heat exposure modeling framework**
Nicola Colaninno
- 105** **Citizen science and biodiversity in urban planning. Enhancing public spaces through the URBioPark project**
Michela Tiboni, Anna Bertolazzi, Michela Nota, Achille Amatucci, Filippo Gallese, Giovanni Maifredi, Anita Maienza, Luciano Massetti, Elena Pivato, Vera Ventura, Claudia Zani
- 119** **The regeneration of public housing neighborhoods: the Italian case of the hills of western Genoa**
Francesca Pirlone, Ilenia Spadaro, Federica Paoli
- 133** **Innovative policies and practices for sustainable rural mobility across Europe**
Muhammad Junaid, Maddalena Ferretti, Giovanni Marinelli

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

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Living and Walking in Cities: Mobility, Public Space and Spatial Justice

Maurizio Tira**, Martina Carra**, Gerardo Carpentieri*, Carmela Gargiulo*, Michele Pezzagno**, Anna Richiedei**, Michela Tiboni**

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The Special Issue of TeMA results from the XXVII International Conference “Living and Walking in Cities” (LWC 2025), held in Brescia (Italy) on the 11–12 September 2025. Over more than thirty years, the LWC conferences promoted an interdisciplinary platform for discussing among researchers, practitioners and decision-makers engaged in the fields of transport and urban planning (e.g., Pezzagno & Tira, 2018; Tiboni et al, 2024; Maternini et al., 2024; Tira et al., 2024a; Tira et al., 2024b). The 2025 edition further reinforced this mission by focusing on smart mobility and shared urban spaces (Tira et al., 2026). Smart mobility is increasingly understood not as a merely technological construct, but as a user-centered and a service-oriented approach, aiming at integrating modes, data and travel experiences to support sustainable mobility alternatives. At the same time, shared urban spaces highlight the crucial role of public areas as a mobility enabler, where quality, safety, and accessibility become essential conditions for promoting active and equitable mobility. Two keynote speakers proposed their perspectives for urban planning. Angela Barbanente, Professor of urban and regional planning at the Politecnico di Bari and President of the Italian Society of Urban Planners (SIU) addressed the topic of “Promoting active mobility in car-dependent regions: a great urban planning challenge”, and Jens Dangschat, Emeritus Professor of urban and regional sociology and demography at the TU Wien Faculty for Architecture and Planning, discussed about “Just a re-organisation of Urban Public Space, or a just re-organisation of UPS?”.

Some 105 papers were accepted and presented in 12 parallel sessions at the conference. All contributions underwent a rigorous double-blind peer-review process prior to conference acceptance. Based on the outcomes of this process and on the thematic coherence with the Journal’s scope, a selection of authors has been invited to publish their papers in this Special Issue.

The Special Issue contains ten articles that deal with an integrated mobility perspective as a spatial, social, and environmental planning issue, with a focus on spatial justice, health, and urban regeneration processes. A first group of authors focused on spatial equity concerns, discussing how planning tools and urban layouts can either exacerbate or mitigate inequalities. Chen and Conticelli (2026) examined pedestrian accessibility to public facilities in the historic centre of Bologna (Italy), revealing spatial disparities between the needs of residents and tourists, and providing actionable recommendations for land-use regulation and public space

management in touristic settings. Dastoum et al. (2026) analysed the correlation among urban morphology, connectivity, and accessibility to coastal territories in Italian island cities. The study demonstrated that spatial arrangements and physical barriers often impede the enjoyment of coastlines; consequently, it frames coastal accessibility as an issue of public rights and spatial justice, moving beyond the scope of mere environmental enhancement. Shaneh et al. (2026) examined Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) through the framework of mobility justice, evaluating the resources for active mobility in terms of distributional and procedural equity across eight European cities. Their study showed potentialities and limitations of SUMPs in advancing mobility justice, and how street space allocation and participatory processes reflect fairness and inclusivity. Orioli et al. (2026) offered an institutional ex-post reflection on the "Bologna Città 30". The authors illustrated how reduced speed limits could produce effective and encouraging results in terms of reduction of road accident severity and broader urban transformations. These transformations extended beyond mobility, encompassing the reconfiguration of public space within a comprehensive vision of sustainability and urban innovation.

A second group of articles focused on urban mobility-oriented regeneration, as an enabler to addressing urban health, climate adaptation and environmental quality. D'Angelo et al. (2026) examined the strategic role of intermediate railway stations in urban regeneration processes within medium- and low-density metropolitan areas. The analysis highlighted the significance of these nodes when embedded in integrated spatial strategies, by showing how they can generate different regenerative outcomes. Therefore, the authors underscored the relevance of accounting for local characteristics and dynamics when classifying and planning railway node reorganisation at the national scale. Fossa et al. (2026) proposed a design-oriented vision for the city of Milan (Italy) based on the urban regeneration of railway yards as an "archipelago of urban health", where walking infrastructures and open spaces are conceived as a strategic public health system. Health concerns also characterised the study of Colaninno (2026) and Tiboni et al. (2026). The first focused on extreme heat events exposure and implemented a pedestrian-centred model to assess heat exposure along urban routes. By linking high-resolution microclimate modelling to pedestrian mobility patterns, the study allowed fine-grained analysis of heat exposure, offering significant insights for heat-resilient planning strategies. Tiboni et al. (2026) addressed an ecological and participatory perspective and explored the role of biodiversity and citizen science in enhancing public spaces through the UrbioPark project. Their results highlighted how green infrastructure planning can simultaneously support active mobility, urban health and environmental awareness and foster participatory governance processes.

The last two articles concentrated on peripheral and regional contexts. Pirlone et al. (2026) centred their study on the regeneration of public housing neighbourhoods (ERP) in Genoa (Italy), showing how the redesign of public spaces and soft mobility infrastructures can contribute to social inclusion and territorial rebalancing in peripheral contexts. Finally, Junaid et al. (2026) analysed innovative approaches to sustainable rural mobility in Europe from grey literature sources. The results showed an assortment of rural transport practices and how flexible, community-oriented, and digitally-enabled approaches may have an important role to play in disseminating and making more effective territorial cohesion policies.

The editors hope that this collection will further strengthen the interdisciplinary dialogue between urban and mobility planning, so reinforcing the mission of TeMA and the long-standing experience of the Living and Walking in Cities conference series.

Acknowledgements

The LWC 2025 chairs express their sincere gratitude to all the authors, the participants, and the contributors, whose efforts triggered the success of the conference. They also extend their gratitude to the session chairs, the reviewers, and the members of the scientific and organizing committees for their significant contributions, which ensured a high level of interest and scientific quality of papers, presentations, and discussions along the conference. Last but not least, a great thank to the Editorial Board of TeMA for the opportunity to publish this special issue.

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