

# Mobility and public spaces for sustainable urban neighbourhoods

Special Issue of *Scienze Regionali - Italian Journal of Regional Science*



## Call for Abstracts

### Guest editors

Luca Staricco, DIST - Politecnico di Torino - [luca.staricco@polito.it](mailto:luca.staricco@polito.it)

Elisabetta Vitale Brovarone, DIST - Politecnico di Torino - [elisabetta.vitale@polito.it](mailto:elisabetta.vitale@polito.it)

### Background

Impacts of car traffic on the quality of life in urban neighbourhoods have been widely acknowledged: they concern safety, air pollution, noise, streetscape, waste of space, etc. The friction between driveability and liveability in urban neighbourhoods emerged already in the early 1900s, when levels of car ownership rapidly began to increase. To face this challenge, planning models, such as the neighbourhood unit, were proposed, aimed at discouraging and limiting motorised mobility inside neighbourhoods by diverting it to main thoroughfares outside them and, at the same time, at assuring pedestrian accessibility to main basic services such as schools, libraries, medical centres etc.

In the last two decades, these models have been the subject of renewed interest. On the one hand, low traffic neighbourhoods, 30 km/h zones, eco-districts, superblocks, etc., re-propose and re-interpret the traffic separation principle: they try to reduce car traffic inside neighbourhoods, and separate it from footpaths, with the aim to improve walkability, liveability and social interactions in public spaces both in newly developed areas and in retrofitting existing ones.

On the other hand, strategies promoting 15-minute city in Paris and other European cities (or 20-minute neighbourhoods in low-density urban contexts in USA and Australia) focus more on accessibility by proximity to basic services, by improving walkability and cyclability inside neighbourhoods, but also through the relocation of service facilities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to give further traction to these models. As a matter of fact, the introduction of stringent health protocols, social distancing, lockdowns and movement restriction revealed the vulnerability of many urban environments and made evident the necessity of a minimum set of proximity-based services that should be accessible by walking or cycling, so to allow citizens to meet some of their basic needs at the neighbourhood level. Moreover, the pandemic highlighted the importance of freeing up outdoor public spaces from circulating and parked cars, where to perform some of those activities that turned out to be no longer feasible in restricted closed spaces.

Despite being embraced in a growing number of scholars' and city mayors' agendas, these models present – according to some authors – a few criticalities. The relationship between the neighbourhood and the rest of the city is often neglected, even if it can be crucial (as in the case of the superblocks promoted in a few Spanish cities). Different forms of conflicts can emerge during their planning and implementation process, related to the use of public spaces, the limitations to car traffic and parking and so on. Gentrification and ghettoization processes are sometimes feared as potential critical issues.

## Focus of the special issue and themes

This special issue seeks to bring together a collection of critical perspectives on sustainable mobility for liveable urban neighbourhoods. In particular, the special issue will seek to publish contributions that stimulate further debate and improve our understanding of how mobility and land use planning processes at the neighbourhood level can be analysed and assessed, from the multiple perspective of regional sciences (that is, using approaches from regional, urban and transport economics, spatial planning, economic geography, urban sociology, environmental economics, etc.).

Topics can include (but are not limited to):

- Superblock approaches
- 15-minute city and 20-minute neighbourhoods
- Street experiments and tactical urbanism
- Pedestrian areas and walkability
- Liveability of public spaces
- Planning tools for sustainable mobility at the neighbourhood levels
- Governance, participation and conflicts in neighbourhood mobility planning
- Neighbourhood and urban accessibility for vulnerable populations

All articles will undergo a double-blind refereeing process.

## Important dates

Manuscript submission deadline (8,000 words):

September 30, 2022

Publication with *Scienze Regionali - Italian Journal of Regional Science*:

March 2023\*

For more information about the aims of the journal and submission guidelines please see: [Rivisteweb: Journal Details](#)

\* Publication of the special issue. Papers will be published online in the early access section upon final acceptance.