

# An Introduction to Mobility Hubs for Planners and Developers in Scotland



# Mobility hubs and the Scottish context

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Mobility hubs offer a new approach for Scotland's planners and developers to consider transport and use of road, building and public space. This guide provides a simple introduction to mobility hubs and shared transport.

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Mobility hubs locate shared and public transport modes together, making alternative and attractive options for seamless journeys whilst also contributing to reductions in carbon emissions and offering an opportunity to improve the public realm. The concept has grown in Germany over nearly two decades and is widely used in mainland Europe and the US. There is a growing interest for mobility hubs here in Scotland, both in urban and rural locations. It is looking likely that the first hubs in Scotland will complete development and open in 2021.

Transport is Scotland's single largest emitting sector, accounting for 37% of carbon emissions. The largest source of transport emissions in Scotland comes from cars at around 40%. Prior to the Covid-19 lockdown, two thirds of all commuter journeys in Scotland were by car and 66% of those journeys were single occupancy cars.

Shared transport, including car clubs and bike share, is well established in Scotland's cities, offering alternative travel choices to the private car and contributing to positive impacts in terms of emissions, traffic congestion, parking problems and health. CoMoUK's 2019/20 Car Club Annual Survey for Scotland shows that there were 25,000 members of car clubs in Scotland, an increase of 27% from the previous year. These schemes resulted in a reduction of 354 tonnes of carbon emissions from driving a more fuel-efficient car and a 3,620 reduction from reduced private car mileage. The average car club member in Scotland drives 527 miles a year less than a private car owner. This suggests a potential reduction of 12.8 million miles over 12 months for all members.

26% of members have reduced private car use, 16% walk more and 10% cycle more than before they joined a car club. Extrapolations from the survey suggest that members have disposed of 6,700 cars since joining their car club and 8,543 cars have not been purchased. Each car club car takes around 14 private cars off the road, having other positive effects on parking, congestion and allowing new approaches to the use of street space, giving more space back to pedestrians and cyclists.

Bike share schemes are particularly popular in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and Forth Valley with a growing interest in schemes in other locations. Bike share reduces car use. CoMoUK's 2019/20 Bike Share Annual Survey for Scotland found that 28% of bike share commuters had previously commuted by car and 36% of users reported using their own car much less often for any journeys. 44% of respondents reported that bike share was a trigger to return to cycling. Bike share also improves health and wellbeing. 52% specifically reported physical health benefits and 31% reported mental health benefits.

Mobility hubs have an important contribution to make to the growth of sustainable mobility in Scotland, to the nation's health through active travel choices and to reducing carbon emissions by offering easily accessed sustainable modes. Moreover, mobility hubs can offer the ideal alternative to the private car when planning 20-minute neighbourhoods; helping to embed shared transport to achieve a high quality, people-centred sense of place.

# What is a mobility hub?

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## Definition:

A mobility hub is a recognisable place with an offer of different and connected sustainable and active transport modes supplemented with enhanced facilities and information features to both attract and benefit the traveller.

## Key characteristics:

- Co-location of public transport and shared mobility modes which can include shared bikes, car clubs, cargo bikes and e-scooters
- Provision of facilities other than transport appropriate to the area
- The design of space to reduce private car space and improve the surrounding public realm
- Cycle and walking routes link into the hub and encourage active travel
- Street design enables easy access for all through appropriate paving, drop kerbs and crossings
- A pillar or sign which identifies the space as a mobility hub which is part of a wider network and ideally provides digital travel information



# Components of mobility hubs:

Mobility hubs can be seen as an interface between the transport network and spatial structure of an area. Mobility hubs include a range of different components. This diagram illustrates some of the most commonly used components:

## A1: Mobility components: Public transport

## A2: Mobility components: Non - public transport

## B: Mobility related components

## C: Non-mobility & urban realm improvement

### A1: MOBILITY COMPONENTS - PUBLIC TRANSPORT MODES & OTHER PICK UP /DROP OFF:

- Bus
- Tram
- Rail
- Demand responsive mini-buses (all one points)
- Ride hailing, (shared) taxis

### A2: MOBILITY COMPONENT: SHARED MOBILITY

- Car share: back to base, one way, electric
- Bike share: back to base, one way, electric
- Cargo bike share, cargo bike logistics store
- Other future micro-mobility options e.g. e-scooters, moped share
- Ride sharing

### B: MOBILITY RELATED COMPONENTS

- EV car charging
- Bike parking, (standard, covered, restricted access, EV charging)
- Bike repair, pumps
- Digital pillar, (transport info, ticketing, way finding, walk distances, local services)
- Child car seats, bike seats & trailers
- Community concierge parcel last mile delivery

### C: NON-MOBILITY & URBAN REALM IMPROVEMENT

- Package delivery lockers
- Mini fitness or play area
- Café and Co-working space
- Outdoor water fountain
- Improved public realm, safer crossings, step free access, road repairs, adjustments for disabilities
- Waiting area space, covered seating, planting, artwork, kiosks for coffee etc.
- Wi-Fi, phone charging



## Branded pillar

Mobility hubs require a prominent sign or pillar with a common brand to make them visible to the public. The inclusion of digital elements in a pillar can provide:

- Access to a local transport website for information on services
- A journey planning service for multi-modal trips
- A way of finding options for local walking and cycling trips
- Registration and ticketing
- Customer services



# What benefits can mobility hubs bring?



A mobility hub in a residential neighbourhood in Bremen is part of a city-wide network

## Smarter sustainable transport planning

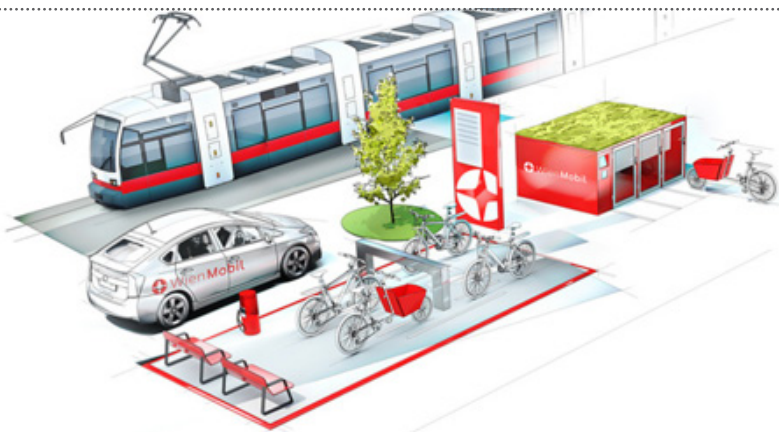
Mobility hubs can reclaim parking and road space to allow more shared and sustainable modes, reducing the dominance of the private car and the associated problems of congestion, carbon emissions and air quality, as well as improving social inclusion. A network of large hubs at major interchanges and smaller hubs in residential neighbourhoods offer an attractive, integrated and viable alternative mobility lifestyle.

Bremen has a policy to reduce space taken up by the private car and to redesign space for pedestrians and cyclists. The network has been growing since 2003, and by 2020 consisted of around 10 large hubs at major interchanges and 33 smaller hubs in neighbourhoods.

## Easy connections and accessibility

Mobility hubs provide for multimodal trips, seamless switches and improved links between the public transport network and shared services.

They also encourage active travel by offering cycle parking and being easily accessible by bike and foot.



Concept drawing of mobility hub in Vienna offering multimodal travel choices

## Multimodal travel behaviour

Mobility hubs encourage people to think multimodally and to rethink if a private car is necessary for the trip. In addition to shared bikes and car clubs, further choices can be offered as an alternative to the car, including cargo bikes adapted for various uses.

Shared cargo bikes and wheeled shopping/ cargo cases offer an alternative to using a car when encumbered with luggage or shopping in Seestadt, Vienna, where the target modal split is 80% sustainable modes, 20% private car.

# What benefits can mobility hubs bring?

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## Plugging the gaps in the public transport network

In suburban and rural areas mobility hubs can provide a sustainable, flexible, cost-effective, 24 hour 'first or last mile' connection to the nearest bus or railway services. This helps with equalities and social inclusion.

## Improving safety and comfort

Mobility hubs by design offer a safer and more comfortable dwell time which will lead to an improved experience for all and particularly for more vulnerable users.

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## Designing to be inclusive

Mobility hub design can follow design guidance on access for people with disabilities (e.g. drop kerbs, visual cues in paving for pedestrian priority and for cars), designing for the elderly and those with dementia or autism (e.g. spoken information as well as digital, not overloading the signage and using icons rather than words for less clutter). Design can also take account of gender mainstreaming, the needs of everyone including children and engagement and consultation with the community to tailor design to local needs.

This could include safer crossings, a water filling station, no screening, good lighting to enable lone travellers to feel safe, seating and other positive features. Many of these features can often be incorporated in the design stage with little extra cost or time.

Mobility hubs can also provide space for adapted and inclusive modes as part of overall transport solutions enabling people with different travel requirements to access travel choices.



Ghent, winner Car Share Regional City Award 2020

## Raising the profile

Mobility hubs raise the profile and visibility of shared and sustainable travel modes, providing a new status and appeal, with the associated benefits of reducing car use.

By encouraging shared transport Ghent reduced car journeys from 55% to 27%, creating a more peaceful and people-friendly urban environment.





Streets for people  
at Seestadt, Vienna  
(Aspern Seestadt)

### Improved public realm

Mobility hubs allow space to be reorganised for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and business owners, addressing parking problems and creating a more pleasant urban realm.

### Improving the quality of the hub dwell time and the locality

Enhancing features can be tailored to the local environment and can involve the community.

#### These features could include:

- Community features such as a notice board or a local planting or urban food growing project
- Solar panels, eco-grass roofs, moss or green walls, community food gardening planters, pocket parks and other features bringing nature into the area, reducing noise and pollution and generally improving the ambience of the hub and its sustainable lifestyle message

### Supporting densification of developments

Mobility hubs provide an impetus for change in reducing parking provision, which can enable higher density development.

### Management of emerging services

Mobility hubs help solve the issue of managing 'street clutter' from dockless or free floating micro-mobility services and provide a natural home for EV charging infrastructure.

### Community services at mobility hubs

Mobility hubs can reduce the need to travel long distances, particularly in rural areas, and helps community cohesion.

By linking mobility hubs to redundant or existing facilities such as a shop, parcel collection point, GP visiting room, church hall or a closed petrol station, journeys to more distant towns can be reduced. Through this community cohesion can be maintained and even grow through other facilities such as meeting rooms, shared workspace hub and leisure facilities.

## Further help and support from CoMoUK

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CoMoUK is the national charity for the public benefit of shared mobility. Founded in 1999, CoMoUK enters its third decade with a depth of expertise and research into shared transport and the built environment.

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CoMoUK has produced the UK's first introductory guidance to mobility hubs, as part of our work with partners in the EU Inter-reg project 'SHARE-North'.

CoMoUK can provide bespoke guidance on planning mobility hubs for specific contexts. This includes providing expertise and advice on the design, planning, consultation, implementation and monitoring phases, informed by the experiences of our SHARE-North partners and by our contacts with authorities and organisations in Scotland that are embarking on exciting projects.

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To find out more about how we can help you, please contact [scotland@como.org.uk](mailto:scotland@como.org.uk) for details.

Please also see our website [como.org.uk](https://como.org.uk) for further information and to sign up to our newsletter and forums.

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### Further reading

- **How to plan for Mobility Hubs: a guide for Planners and Developers in Scotland, CoMoUK** – a follow on guide from this introduction to mobility hubs
- **CoMoUK Scottish Co-Mobility Forum: Implementing Mobility Hubs in Rural Areas. 21 July 2020.**  
[Click here to view](#)
- **How Shared Mobility is helping create high density, high quality living with a focus on sustainable travel.**  
[Click here to view](#)
- **Mobility Hubs Guidance.**  
[Click here to view](#)

Find out more about CoMoUK and collaborative mobility online at [como.org.uk](https://como.org.uk)

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