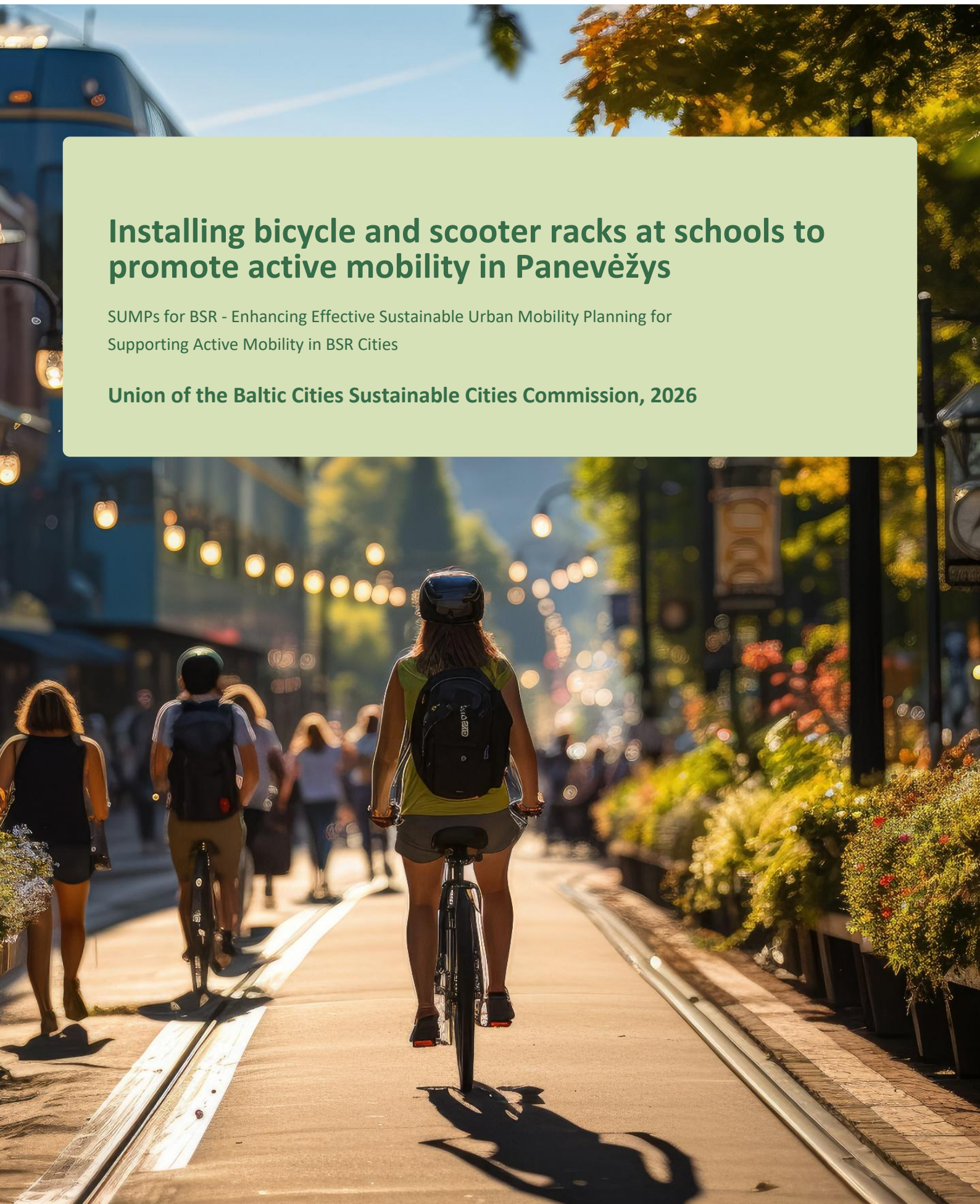


Installing bicycle and scooter racks at schools to promote active mobility in Panevėžys

SUMPs for BSR - Enhancing Effective Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning for Supporting Active Mobility in BSR Cities

Union of the Baltic Cities Sustainable Cities Commission, 2026



Imprint

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Project note

SUMPs for BSR project supports cities shifting their planning practices towards people-centred sustainable urban mobility planning, focusing on active mobility modes to fight the climate crisis. The project aims to increase the uptake of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) as a strategic tool for sustainable mobility planning by developing tools and offering extensive capacity building for local authorities, especially in small and mid-sized BSR cities. A common framework on monitoring and evaluation for sustainable urban mobility planning will be developed to set up sound local processes suitable for smaller cities. Together with a unified model for testing and experimenting with innovative mobility solutions, it will help to evaluate the performance of the local mobility system and to provide crucial information for planning and decision-making.

1.1. Installing bicycle and scooter racks at schools to promote active mobility in Panevėžys

City profile

Panevėžys is the fifth-largest city in Lithuania, located in the northern part of the country. With a population of around 85,000, it functions as a regional centre for education, industry and public services. In recent years, the city has taken active steps towards more sustainable urban development, with a growing focus on active mobility, traffic safety and the quality of public space.

Panevėžys adopted its SUMP in 2018, setting objectives to reduce car dependency, improve conditions for walking and cycling, and encourage sustainable travel habits from an early age. Schools have been identified as key locations for intervention, as daily trips by pupils generate significant traffic pressure and offer strong potential for promoting active mobility. The small-scale experiment described in this case study contributed to these goals by testing practical, low-cost infrastructure measures combined with promotion and monitoring.

Objectives of the pilot

The pilot aimed to encourage walking, cycling and the use of scooters for trips to school by improving everyday infrastructure and visibility of active mobility options. Prior to the experiment, many schools in Panevėžys lacked sufficient or convenient parking facilities for bicycles and scooters, which discouraged pupils from using these modes even for short trips.

The specific objectives of the pilot were to:

- Improve access to secure and visible bicycle and scooter parking at selected schools.
- Support the implementation of the city's SUMP through a tangible, school-focused measure.
- Raise awareness of active mobility among pupils, parents and school staff.
- Monitor how the new infrastructure was used and perceived by the school community.
- Test a model that could be replicated at other schools in Panevėžys and beyond.

Pilot activities

The small-scale experiment focused on installing bicycle and scooter racks at selected schools (Figure 7), accompanied by promotion and monitoring activities. The pilot was designed to be simple, resource-efficient and easy to integrate into existing municipal and school processes.

Selection of schools and locations

The municipality selected ten schools representing different parts of the city, located within the SUMP priority zones, namely the city centre and key residential districts. The selection considered factors such as school type (five lower-secondary schools and five gymnasiums), the number of pupils, existing mobility conditions and proximity to main cycling routes and residential areas.

Within each school site, specific locations for racks were identified in cooperation with school staff and municipal specialists. The aim was to place racks in visible, accessible and safe areas, close to main entrances and along pupils' natural commuting routes.

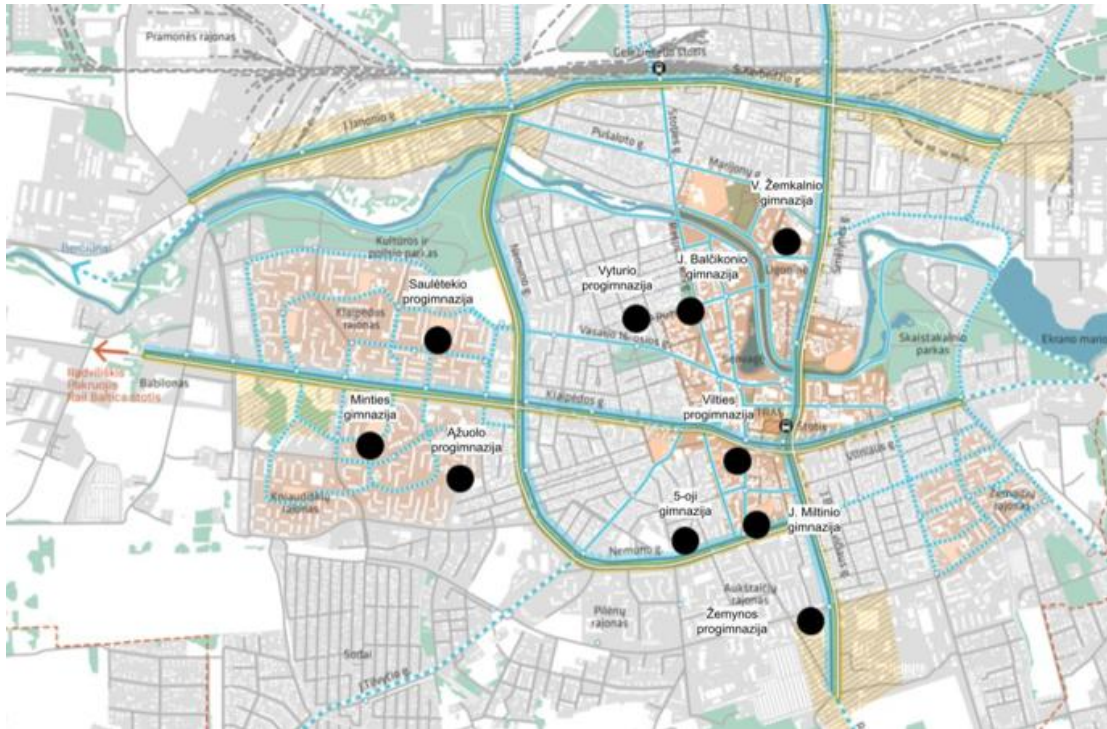


Figure 1. Selected schools and SUMP priority zones in the city graph. Source: Panevėžys city Municipality

Installation of bicycle and scooter racks

Bicycle and scooter racks were installed at the selected schools using standard, durable designs suitable for daily use by pupils of different ages. The installation process was coordinated by the municipality in cooperation with school maintenance staff, ensuring that racks did not interfere with emergency access, pedestrian flows or other school activities.

The presence of the racks made active mobility more visible in the school environment and provided a clear signal that cycling and scooting were encouraged and supported by the city.

Promotion and awareness activities

Alongside the physical installation, the city carried out promotion activities to inform school communities about the new facilities and encourage active mobility. The city has organised 2 competition-style campaigns – “Our school is moving”, where students were getting a sticker to put on the poster each time they cycle to school. At the end of each campaign, the class that had collected the most stickers was rewarded with a sustainable mobility education course.

Schools also shared information with pupils and parents through their usual communication channels, such as internal platforms and notice boards. The promotion focused on practical messages, highlighting the convenience of the racks and encouraging pupils to try walking, cycling or scooting to school where possible. This soft approach aimed to normalise active mobility rather than impose behavioural change.

Monitoring preparation

From the outset, the pilot was designed with monitoring in mind. Simple tools and templates were prepared to allow schools and municipal staff to collect information on rack usage and user perceptions. Teachers and school staff were briefed on how to observe usage patterns and support data collection without creating additional administrative burden.



Figure 2. Installed bike rack near a school. Author: Gintarė Kliučininkienė.

Stakeholders and interaction activities

The pilot involved close cooperation between the municipality, schools and external partners. The key stakeholders included:

- Panevėžys City Municipality administration, responsible for planning, coordination and monitoring.
- School administrations and teachers, who supported communication with pupils and parents and facilitated observation activities.
- Pupils and parents as primary users of the new infrastructure.
- Local NGOs and cycling advocates, who contributed to awareness-raising and provided informal feedback.

Interaction with schools was based on regular communication, short meetings and written guidance. The involvement of school maintenance staff proved particularly important, as they provided practical input on placement, safety and day-to-day use of the racks. This collaboration helped ensure smooth implementation and local ownership of the pilot.

Evaluation and monitoring activities

Evaluation focused on understanding how the pilot was implemented, how the infrastructure was used and how it was perceived, rather than on measuring long-term behavioural change. Another aim of the monitoring was to get input to plan the next activities or modify planned activities. The monitoring approach combined observations, surveys and secondary data to triangulate findings.

Observation of rack usage

School staff and municipal representatives carried out regular observations of bicycle and scooter racks at different times of the day. These observations recorded the number of parked bicycles and scooters, peak usage periods and differences between schools.

Photographic documentation was also used to support observations and ensure consistency. This low-cost method allowed the city to gather comparable data across multiple sites without specialised equipment.

Surveys and feedback from school communities

Surveys were conducted among pupils, parents and school staff to gather feedback on travel behaviour, perceptions of safety and satisfaction with the new racks. The surveys were distributed through the existing school communication platform, which enabled efficient outreach and good response rates.

Questions focused on how pupils travelled to school, whether the availability of racks influenced their choices and what further improvements they considered necessary. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to highlight issues such as weather protection, lighting or the need for additional racks.

Triangulation and internal reflection

The municipality combined survey results, observational data and qualitative feedback in internal review meetings. By comparing different data sources, the project team assessed whether observed usage patterns aligned with reported behaviour and perceptions.

This triangulation helped identify differences between schools and highlighted contextual factors, such as surrounding infrastructure or traffic conditions, that influenced the effectiveness of the racks. The reflective process also supported learning for future roll-out.

Success stories and best practices

- + The pilot demonstrated that simple, low-cost infrastructure can make active mobility more visible and attractive in school environments.
- + Cooperation with schools ensured smooth implementation and strong local support.
- + Using existing school communication platforms reduced administrative effort and improved survey reach.
- + Combining infrastructure with light promotion proved effective without requiring intensive campaigns.
- + Schools were a good target group to nudge travel behaviour of the broader population as the project got the attention of children, their parents, teachers and also the broader public.

Challenges and deviations

- Engagement activities with school administrations show that the needs for racks were different, which would have complicated the implementation process, and therefore, there was a need to find a compromise in the requirements for racks.
- Usage levels varied significantly between schools, reflecting differences in location and surrounding infrastructure.
- Seasonal weather influenced pupils' willingness to cycle or scoot.
- Some schools expressed a need for covered or more secure parking.
- Observation-based monitoring required coordination with the school staff's availability.

Results and impact of the pilot

The pilot provided Panevėžys with concrete evidence on how school-based infrastructure can support active mobility. While not all pupils changed their travel behaviour, the experiment generated clear learning outcomes for planning and implementation.

Key results and impacts included:

- Increased visibility of cycling and scooting as normal travel options to school.
- Positive feedback from pupils and staff on the convenience of the racks.
- Identification of schools with particularly high demand for bicycle and scooter parking.
- Better understanding of complementary measures needed, such as safer crossings or weather protection.

The findings informed discussions within the municipality on how to prioritise future investments and integrate school-focused measures into the wider SUMP framework.

Sustainability and scalability

The pilot was designed to be sustainable with limited resources. The racks require minimal maintenance and can remain in use long after the pilot period. Schools expressed willingness to continue monitoring usage informally and to support further promotion activities.

From a scalability perspective:

- The approach can be extended to additional schools using the same procurement and monitoring model.
- Data collection tools and templates can be reused and refined.
- The pilot provides a strong basis for seeking national or EU funding for wider roll-out.

The pilot created a practical model that can be easily replicated at other schools.

Lessons learned

The Panevėžys pilot highlighted several lessons relevant for other municipalities:

- Simple infrastructure improvements can remove practical barriers to active mobility.
- School engagement is critical for both implementation and monitoring.
- Combining observations with surveys provides a richer understanding than relying on a single method.
- Context matters: surrounding infrastructure and traffic conditions strongly influence outcomes.
- Starting with a pilot helps test assumptions before scaling up citywide.
- To decrease the risk that bikes are stolen, instructions about different bike locking methods are needed.

If repeated, the city would place greater emphasis on weather protection, earlier involvement of parents and closer alignment with broader traffic safety measures near schools.

For more information about this case study, you are welcome to contact Panevėžys City Municipality:
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