

**WP 1 – Act 11: Best practices**

# **Pilots in Leuven**

**[hilke.evenepoel@leuven.be](mailto:hilke.evenepoel@leuven.be)**

**Interreg**  
North Sea



Co-funded by  
the European Union

---

ShareDiMobiHub

## Introduction

**We have prepared and implemented two pilot projects in Leuven.**

**The first pilot project aimed to gauge the interest of vulnerable Leuven residents in shared mobility, given that they experience mobility poverty. We investigated the barriers they encounter when using the available shared bicycles and cars. We determined the critical success factors on the basis of interviews with users.**

**The second pilot project focused on companies in Leuven. As there is significant potential for modal shift in commuting and business travel, we surveyed this sector and conducted three tests, each focusing on a specific mode of transport. Our aim was to ascertain whether companies recognise the advantages of shared mobility and whether mixed user groups could encourage greater usage. A cargo bike was tested at five different hubs in Leuven. At two hubs, an additional electric shared car was also tested. In consultation with companies in Leuven, we experimented with a B2M sharing system for e-bikes, testing eight new hubs in the public domain.**

**Based on the experiences gained from these pilot projects, we intend to provide recommendations to the policy makers.**

**This presentation summarises the lessons learned from each pilot project in relation to the various components of the project: preparation, implementation, communication, results, insights and recommendations.**



# **1. Inclusion: shared mobility for everyone**



# Preparation

- **Context exploration**

- **Literature**
- **Consult internally with other city departments and externally with civil society organizations.**
  - **Only limited information available on mobility poverty (in Leuven) and on the potential of shared mobility to combat mobility poverty.**
  - **Useful to learn about the needs and challenges of other actors.**
  - **There are fragmented efforts and actions to tackle mobility poverty.**
  - **Good to collaborate with the Neighborhood Work Department on this project.**
  - **UitPAS\* holders with a reduced rate is an interesting way to identify “vulnerable Leuven residents” albeit in a pilot project (not structural for mobility)**
  - **Choice to be made of vulnerable subgroups (e.g., no focus on people with disabilities).**
  - **Synthesis of barriers and possible solutions**

\* **UitPAS** is a discount card for outdoor leisure activities. You can earn points when you participate and redeem them for benefits. “People living in poverty” are entitled to the reduced rate of activities.

- **Elaboration of a public contract for services: “Implementation , monitoring and evaluation of the pop-up Hoppin-hubs test project with focus on inclusion”**

- **Elaborate specifications within tender**
  - **Choice of vehicles (city bike, e-bike, e-cargo bike, and car (fuel OK)) – car also with provisional driver's license**
  - **2 target groups: disadvantaged groups + local residents (because the aim is to create a Hoppin hub for everyone)**
  - **Free for disadvantaged groups → removing financial barriers to gain optimal insight into other barriers**
- **Awarded to Velo, with subcontractors Mobiel21 and Cambio (Velo coordinates, organises, installs and manages the hubs and offerings. Cambio provides the shared cars and Mobiel21 conducts qualitative research on inclusion)**
  - **Adjustments commissioned due to limited time and resources:**
    - **analog and digital use of shared cars and bikes → exclusively digital**
    - **collaboration with 5 community centers → only 3 community centers**
    - **community worker also plays a central role in research (interviews) → Mobiel21 takes on 100% of the research (additional cost)**

# Deployment

- **It is best to allocate 2-3 parking spaces in the immediate vicinity of the community center, preferably where it is quiet and safe (close to community workers).**
- **It is best to keep the hub's layout as basic as possible (temporarily).**
- **It is good to provide a conspicuous information board (as well as a Hopplin pillar) for visibility.**
- **It is good to provide temporary traffic signs (car-sharing parking / cambio reserved) to prevent illegal parking.**
- **It is good to temporarily label bicycles and cars as test vehicles (with a QR code for more information).**
- **Ground markings for cargo bikes work well – users return the bikes to the designated spot.**
- **Opted for fuel-powered cars (cheaper and less hassle regarding charging infrastructure).**
- **Best to choose a location where there is a bus stop.**
- **Good to install a (temporary) bicycle parking facility (safer, windproof, and prevents illegal parking).**
- **Importance of clear rules for the use of shared vehicles (risk management, especially for shared cars)**
- **Good to clarify the concept of 'shared vehicles' to testers and to repeat it, especially if use is free of charge**
- **Aim for a simple registration procedure (online and with community workers)**
- **The offer was also attractive to “other citizens” → difficult for community workers to be guiding in this**
- **Enthusiastic community workers = key to success → Make sure they have them or hire interns.**





# Communication



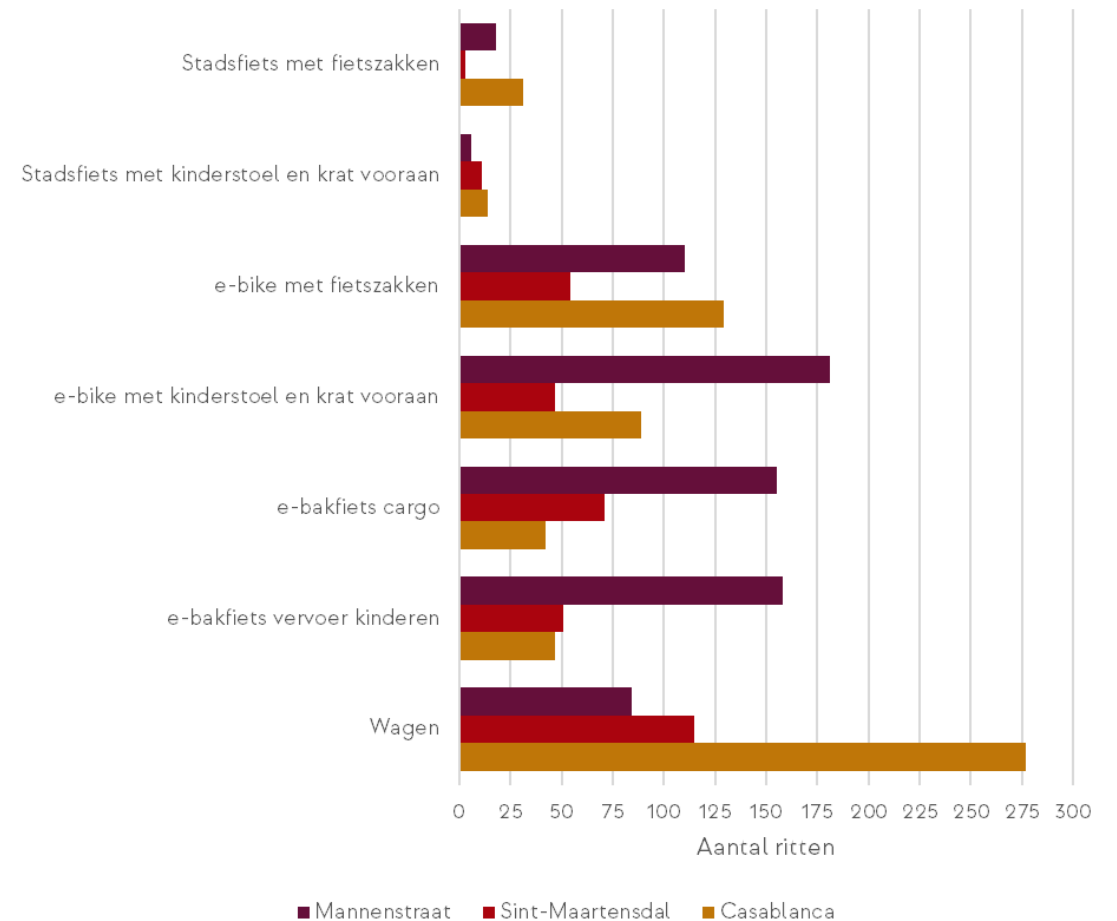
- **Extensive communication campaign helps (various media, repetition, etc.); good to have photo material in familiar surroundings and with familiar faces**
  - **Good:** URL, press moment and **press release**, information panel, flyer, posters, manuals, stickers on vehicles, social media posts
  - **Moderate:** placemats
  - **Rather weak:** idea board
  - **Points of attention**
    - Allow time to hang posters, distribute flyers, etc.
    - Encourage ambassadors to post (rather than organizations)
    - Keep the message very simple in terms of language and content
- **Communicate sufficiently outside the community center (residential blocks, children's activities, other civil society organizations active in the neighborhood, etc.). Together with Mpac an educational package was developed and tested out with a few groups:**
  - **Theory:** Introduction to Hoppin hubs and shared mobility services in Leuven
  - **Practice:** walking or cycling tour along the test hub and other hubs, with questions and assignments
- **Importance of start and other test moments; no closing events were organized due to lack of enthusiasm among testers and limited added value (too early for feedback on the way forward)**
- **Importance of enthusiasm from community workers and acquaintances/neighbors who are users**
- **Emphasize learning about other ways to get around in order to create additional opportunities**
- **Strive for a clear and simple message; this was not so easy because we had two target groups with different conditions of use**

# Results

## Disadvantaged target group

- **Approximately 90 registered first-line testers; 62 active users.**
- **Two out of three (66%) have used the shared vehicles at least once.**
- **Number of trips: 1,693**
  - **5% city bike**
  - **36% e-bike**
  - **31% cargo bike**
  - **28% car**
- **Average trip duration**
  - **80 minutes city bike**
  - **210 minutes cargo bike, e-bike, and car**
- **Enjoyment of riding, feeling of freedom**
- **Increased accessibility**
  - **Shopping**
  - **Transporting children**
  - **Social contacts**

## Number of trips per location and mode



## Insights

### Effects on mobility poverty

- **Driving and cycling pleasure**
- **Autonomy and freedom**
- **Practical advantages**
- **Better accessibility to various destinations**
- **Easier to make trips (large shopping trips, transporting children)**
- **Cycling more often than usual (advantages: support and load capacity)**
- **More transport opportunities**
- **Better reliability than, for example, the bus**





## Insights

### Main barriers

- **Knowledge about shared mobility**
- **Skills**
- **Functioning of the system**
- **Concept of shared mobility**
- **Visibility and location**
- **Financial**



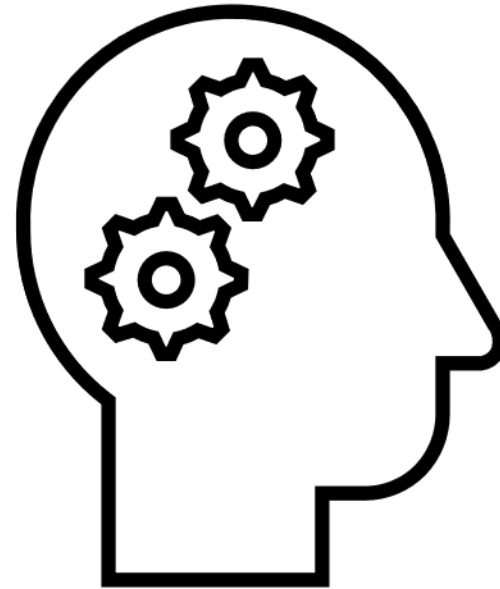
## Knowledge about shared mobility

- **A big portion does not know shared mobility**
- **Taking steps in making the target group familiar with shared mobility**
  - **Promotion in the neighbourhood**
  - **A familiar and trustworthy person who can explain things in simple language.**



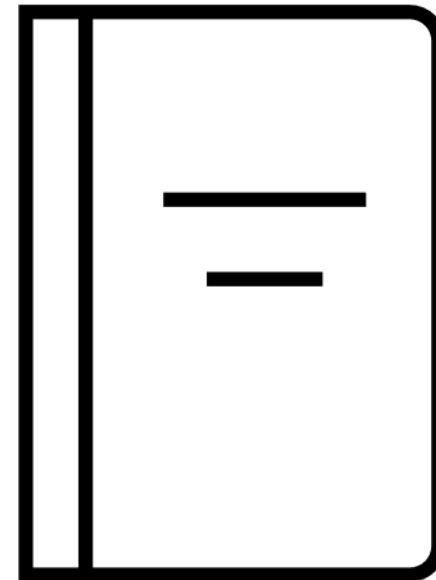
# Skills

- **Digital skills**
  - **Working with apps is not always easy**
  - **Need to have mobile internet and Bluetooth**
- **Driving skills**
  - **The majority never used an e-bike or a cargo bike before**
  - **Especially the cargo bike takes some practice**



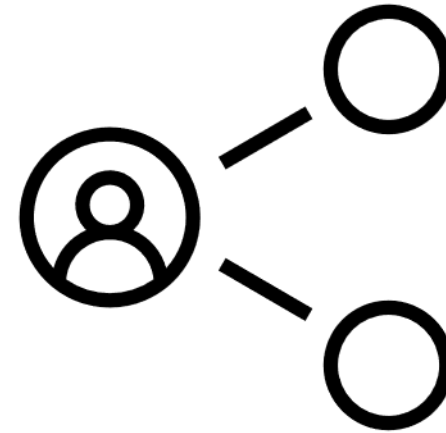
## Functioning of the system

- **Registration**
  - **Complex, especially for the car**
  - **Support from the community workers essential**
- **Reservation and planning**
  - **Using a shared car is less flexible**
  - **The bikes could not be reserved, not sure about the availability**
- **Stress and insecurity**
  - **Participants did not want to make mistakes**



## Concept of shared mobility

- **Different from owning a bike or a car**
- **Sharing vehicles = sharing responsibility**
  - **Owning a vehicle = less mental pressure, issues and problems only affect yourself**
  - **Shared mobility = no worries about maintenance or theft**





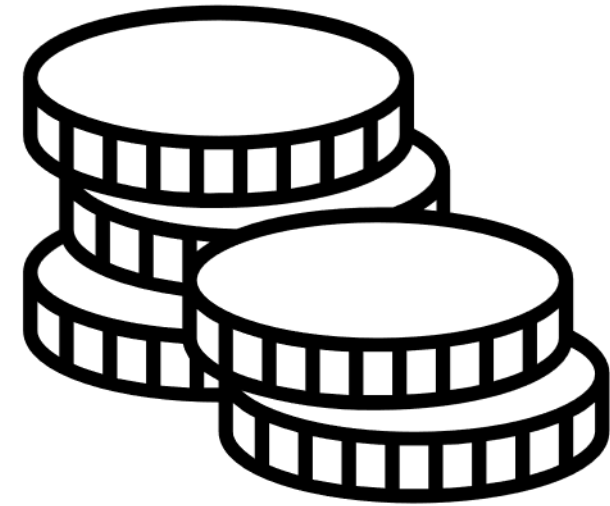
## Visibility and location

- **Proximity is very important**
- **Good to have different options**



## Financial

- **Testing was free**
- **Future use highly dependent on the cost**
  - **Current costs are too high for a lot of the participants; there is no concrete information about how much this group would be willing to pay.**



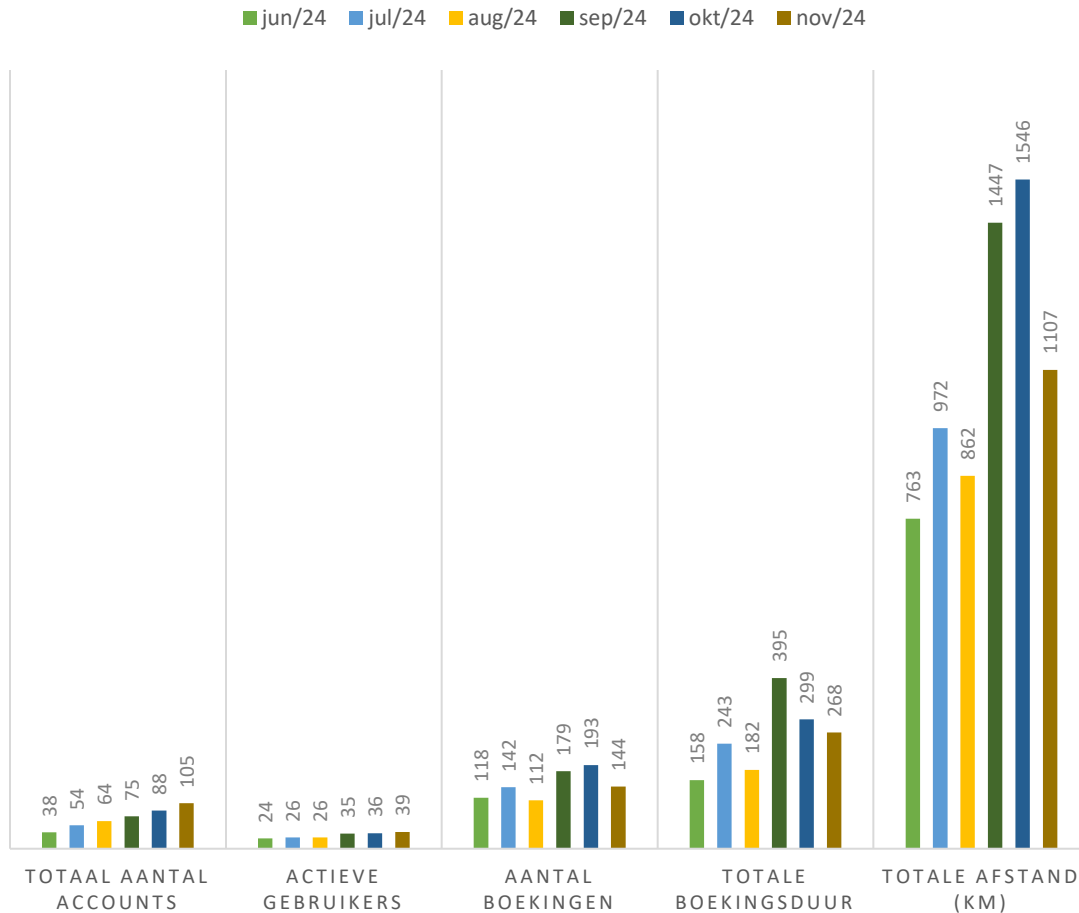
## Recommendations



- **Communicate broadly and in understandable language.**
- **Focus on personal guidance.**
- **Organize practice sessions with the vehicles.**
- **Choose a familiar location and tailor your offering to the neighborhood.**
- **Simplify the registration process.**
- **Provide alternatives for digital access.**
- **Ensure an affordable and balanced pricing model.**

***For more details, see final report (Velo, Mobiel21 and Cambio) – in Dutch only***

## Subproject with shared cargo bikes by UiTPAS-holders with reduced tariff Usage



- **105 accounts (gradual increase)**
- **39 active users/month**
- **888 trips**
- **1.545 hours driven**
- **6.698 km driven**
- **Monthly usage (e.g. October)**  
→ **average per active user**
  - **5 trips**
  - **8 hours driven**
  - **43 km**

## **Subproject with shared cargo bikes by UiTPAS-holders with reduced tariff**

### **Recommendations**

- **Shared cargo bikes = interesting additional transport option for this target group**
- **Introduce social tariffs for disadvantaged groups (structurally binding on individuals) (Third-party payment system)**
  - **Preferably through automatic linking**
  - **Consider payment methods (for subscription formulas from shared mobility providers (Cambio, Blue-bike, etc.)) based on the principle of solidarity: “Pay what you can,” fork, or ask for an extra donation**
  - **An alternative approach is to introduce location-specific reduced rates**
- **Work towards a comprehensive offering (close to home) – with a few priority locations**
- **Communicate clearly and repeatedly (on site and via various channels)**
- **Organize test moments: link them to “good” events (preferably with a diverse audience), with a little fringe entertainment**
- **Try to bridge the digital divide: both in terms of “equipment” and skills (digital also has advantages: anonymous, non-stigmatizing).**
- **Consider pricing: lower rates if you pause (or possibly B2M network); night rates.**
- **Preferably offer a diverse range of services (priority = passenger transport; additional: cargo); extra accessories such as rain covers add value.**
- **See if reservation options are possible, as they add value.**
- **Provide sufficient oversized bicycle parking (especially in Leuven center)**
- **Extend the concept of social pricing to a wider range of shared bicycles (e-shared bicycles)**





## **2. Combined use of shared mobility solutions (with focus on companies)**



# Preparation

- **Context exploration**

- **Internal consultation with other city services.**
- **Survey of SMEs and larger companies (platforms) to gauge context and interest + consultation.**
  - **Interest in shared bicycles and cars.**
  - **Best and most feasible to set up tests per vehicle type (different locations, timing/space makes joint testing more difficult, etc.).**

- **Seeking cooperation with providers of e-bike sharing, cargo bike sharing and (electric) car sharing**


- **E-cargo bike sharing**

- **Developing a public service contract to rotate a cargo bike sharing scheme across six test locations over the course of a year.**
  - **Refining the type of cargo bike → focus on cargo in addition to the regular Cargoroos offering (rather passenger transport).**
  - **Choice of target group: 4 central locations with a focus on SMEs and 2 peripheral locations with a focus on larger companies (platforms)**
  - **Free of charge for target group → remove financial barrier to gain optimal insight into other barriers**

- **E-bike sharing**

- **The city of Leuven has got a cooperation agreement with Blue-bike within a federal subsidy project in which Leuven is committed to testing around 70 e-bikes at seven locations in the period 2023-2025**

- **E-car sharing**

- **Best to limit to recognized commercial car-sharing organizations (Cambio and BattMobility) (so no tendering because of low enthusiasm among providers, no more budget, insufficient time)**
  - **Cambio dropped out of the subproject process because the financial risk was too high for the selected locations.**
  - **BattMobility is placing two shared EVs: one at a central location with the idea to combined use by SMEs and local residents, and one in the periphery aiming to be used by employees of large company + local residents.**
- 

# Deployment

## • Shared cargo bike

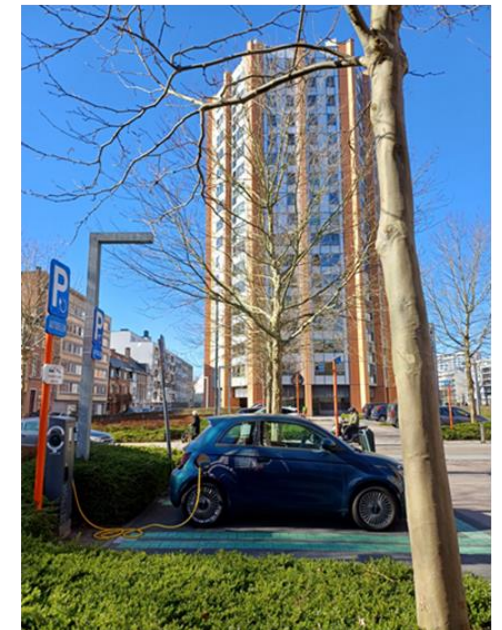
- **Selection of locations: finding the right balance between proximity to businesses and avoiding excessive parking pressure (based on survey)**
- **The ground markings work well – users return their bikes to the designated spot**
- **Stickers with clear reference to the project were good; however, it is important to choose high-quality stickers.**
- **No information panels were placed at the test locations; this would add little value and would also be difficult in terms of space**

## • Shared e-bikes

- **Good to work in phases:**
  - **Dec 2023: 15 e-bikes at Leuven station**
  - **Aug 2024: 56 e-bikes at 1+6 locations**
  - **June 2025: 76 e-bikes at 1+8 locations**
- **Selection of locations: combination of public transport locations, proximity to businesses, and central locations (based on survey)**
- **The temporary locations will have a basic layout: ground markings, safety posts, and information panel; a bicycle parking facility is not essential → no issues with incorrectly parked bicycles; no bicycles falling over (sturdy stand)**

## • Shared E-cars

- **Despite shown interest from entrepreneurs in survey, this test was not successful.**
  - **Little enthusiasm from car-sharing organizations (too high a risk) – general stagnation in car-sharing usage.**
  - **Difficult to find suitable locations (where there is combined user potential, with charging infrastructure, without excessive parking pressure).**





# Communication



- **Cargo bike sharing: extensively communicated, unfortunately without the desired effect on registration and use of the cargo bike**

- **Press release**
- **Launch event**
- **Creation of specific URL**
- **Articles in newsletters for entrepreneurs**
- **User testimonial**
- **Item on trade council**
- **Mailings in commercial districts**
- **Stickers on the bike**
- **FB posts**

- **E-bike sharing: use of multiple communication channels, both by the city of Leuven and by provider Blue-bike, is working well**

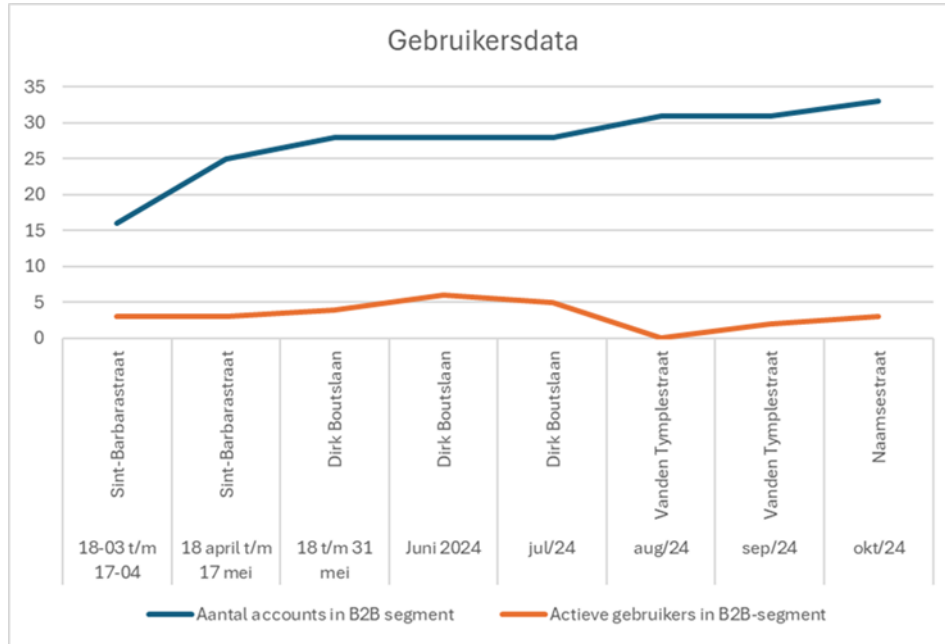
- **Press events and press releases**
- **Information session and further consultation with companies → internal communication**
- **Information panels and ground markings**
- **One-pager**
- **Flyer with incentive of free membership**
- **Demo and test events**

- **E-car sharing: pilot project struggling to get off the ground, insufficient response from provider for communication**

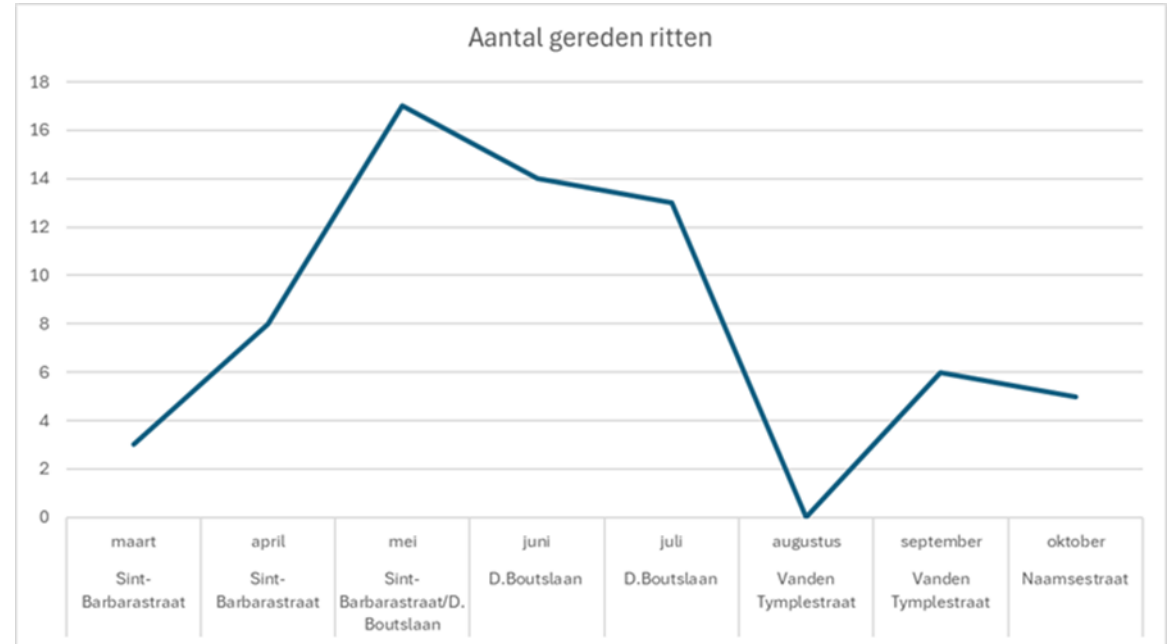
- **Information session: canceled due to insufficient registrations**
- **Resident letters**
- **One-pager in preparation**

# Results

## Cargo bike sharing



- **33 accounts (slow increase)**
- **3-6 active users/month**



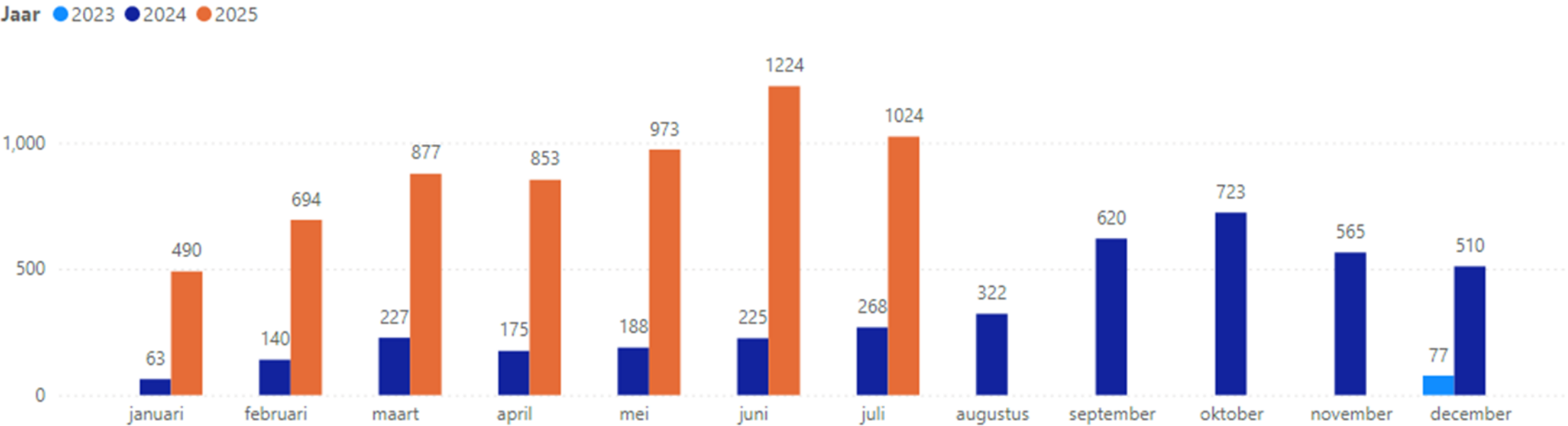
- **66 trips in total → average of 8 trips/month**
  - **5% occupancy**
  - **427 kms**
  - **237 hours**
  - **Weekdays: fairly distributed**
  - **Duration: mainly short trips (<1 hour)**
- **Weak usage**



# Results

## E-bike sharing

Aantal E-bike ritten per maand (YTD)



## **Results**

### **E-car sharing**

- **Effective start of testing in March 2025**
- **Very low usage figures (only a few trips)**
- **One test location discontinued early, in June 2025, due to low usage (and reports from local residents about undesirable pressure on charging infrastructure due to stationary vehicles)**
- **Another test location planned for 6 months (until the end of September 2025)**



# Recommendations

## General

- **There is definitely still room for growth in shared mobility solutions for commuting and business travel.**
  - **Continue to inform and encourage companies to replace the use of (private) cars for commuting and business travel with sustainable mobility solutions.**
  - **Continue to focus on a more extensive, user-friendly, and digitally integrated range of shared vehicles (whether or not in combination with public transport)**
- **Continue to work on policy measures that make car use more difficult (including parking)**
- **It is good to continue with a kind of learning network on this subject; a basis has already been laid by a group of motivated representatives of companies (platforms)**
- **In the city center, combined use by citizens and businesses is feasible due to proximity; in the suburbs, this is a challenge**



## Recommendations

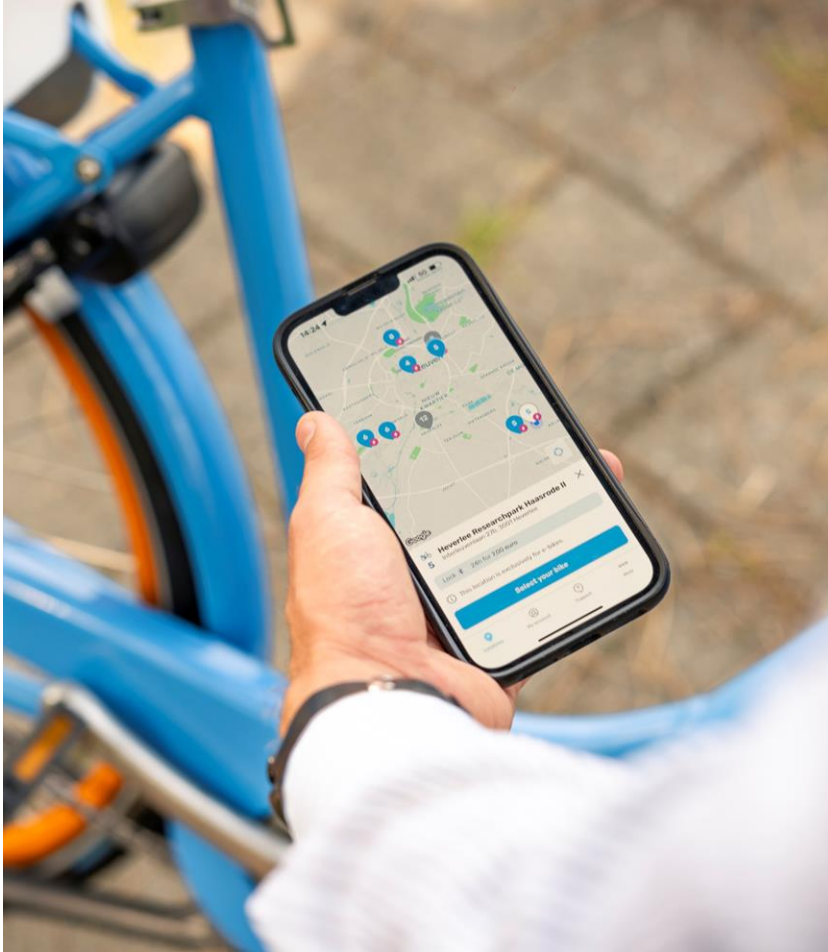
### Cargo bike sharing



- **Cargo bikes are an interesting additional transport option for businesses**
- **Make the test more user-friendly**
  - **Registration**
  - **Limit surveys**
  - **Longer test locations**
  - **Make advance reservations possible**
- **Keep track of the preconditions of entrepreneurs.**
  - **Cargo-friendly (rather than passenger-friendly) – various types of cargo bikes.**
  - **Easy to use (also the app)**
  - **Close by; sufficiently dense network**
  - **Access with cargo bikes in shopping streets (also outside opening hours)**
- **Cost = less important precondition, but please keep it low (up to €5/hour)**

## Recommendations

### E-bike sharing



- **Business potential is still untapped**
- **Diversified tariff structures drive adoption (especially for B2B)**
- **1-on-1 dialogue with companies is key**
- **Proximity and network density matter**
- **Deep digital integration unlocks seamless journeys**
- **Integration within regional mobility strategy is essential (preferably the same sharing system for bicycles and cars at the level of the transport region)**
- **E-bikes enable both local and regional trips and pay off in hilly regions**
- **Shared bike provider considers active rebalancing & buffer capacity**
- **Reflect about docking stations vs battery swap:**
  - **Pro battery swap: minimal downtime, consistent range, easier peak-hour availability**
  - **Con battery swap: infrastructure costs, logistics complexity, reliance on technical partners**
- **Consider circular economy & social economy collaborations**



## Recommendations

### E-car sharing



- **The test itself did not progress sufficiently to draw conclusions. Unfortunately, the context was not conducive:**
  - **In 2022 and 2023, Leuven experienced significant growth in the use of shared cars (15-20%).**
  - **However, since 2024 and continuing into 2025, that growth has stagnated – there was no good momentum for this test.**
- **Location is key – one of the locations stopped earlier because too far away from company → challenging to find locations nearby citizens + companies**

**Thank you**

