

## Lyon: putting accessibility at the heart of city life



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### In brief

Public authorities, transport operators, civil society organisations and other public and private sector stakeholder in Greater Lyon have been successfully improving accessibility addressing it as a cross-cutting issue and investing substantially in creating a barrier-free and inclusive environment.

### Context

Many cities across the European Union are working hard to create liveable cities that are accessible to all – regardless of age, mobility or ability. The city of Lyon in France has chosen to address accessibility as a cross-cutting issue and to invest substantially in creating a barrier-free and inclusive environment.

Lyon has received international recognition for its efforts as it was awarded the Access City Award 2018 by the European Commission and the European Disability Forum. This Award recognises the activities and strategies implemented by European cities to remove barriers to mobility and make their cities accessible to all while improving the quality of life and work in the city.

Promoting independent mobility is an important part of Lyon's overall strategy to become more accessible. This is particularly important considering that 30 % of the people who use Lyon's public transport network are affected by mobility issues. This includes people with 'permanently reduced' mobility (wheelchair users, people with visual impairments and those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, etc.) and 'temporarily reduced' mobility (pregnant women, and people with pushchairs, shopping or luggage, etc.).

### In action

Urban mobility and public transport are important focal points in the 'Accessibility Programme' of the city of Lyon. The Programme has been developed by a Communal Accessibility Commission that consists of elected representatives from the city and its nine boroughs, and representatives from 62 civil society organisations and institutional partners. Besides mobility, the Programme targets the accessibility of public space and municipal institutions, and overall accessibility of life in the city (e.g. culture, education, employment and information).

Specific improvements in urban mobility are planned and guided at the level of the at the Métropole de Lyon (also known as Greater Lyon) level. Metropolitan Lyon was created in 2015 as territorial authority to coordinate the development and implementation of policies in the 59 municipalities that make up Greater Lyon. On behalf of Metropolitan Lyon, SYTRAL is the

sole organising authority of urban and intercity transport in Greater Lyon and in the larger department of Rhône Department.

## **Urban mobility planning**

The extensive and accessible transport network covering Lyon and the greater Metropolitan area is the result of 30 years of continuous planning by SYTRAL, public authorities in the metropole, transport operators and other partners. In 1997, Lyon was the first in France to adopt a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (in French; Plans de déplacements urbains abbreviated to 'PDU') after 2 years of analysis and consultation. The 1997 PDU was revised and updated in 2005 and in 2015 work began on the current PDU (2017 to 2030), which was established in 2017. With each version, the geographical scope of the PDU was adapted in order to respond to the dynamics of the Lyon agglomeration and mobility patterns of its population. As such, the 2017 PDU covers the territory of 73 municipalities: the Métropole de Lyon, the 8 communes of the Community of Communes East Lyonnais (CCEL) and the 6 communes of the west Lyon for which SYTRAL acts as transport authority.

Securing equitable accessibility for all, including those with disabilities or limited resources, has been among the key objectives of the PDUs. The PDUs are considered to be examples of a well-integrated planning approach, where the various objectives and measures identified are synergetic. For example, the current PDU (2017 to 2030) includes 122 actions along eight strategic axes. One of these is promoting access to mobility for all. At the same time, actions under other strategic axes also contribute to improving access to mobility, for example by promoting:

- the organisation of public space around soft/active modes (e.g. walking);
- high quality and service levels for public transport throughout the metropolitan Lyon;
- integrated land-use planning, with mixed land use to keep distances to services acceptable and maintain appropriate population density to support public transport services.

In this respect, it is important to note that Lyon's PDU has also been designed to align with non-mobility strategies that have also been developed at the level of the Metropole, such as those on air quality and climate, as well as the SCOT<sup>[1]</sup>. In addition, mobility is one of the strategic themes in Lyon's 'Co-Smart city development strategy'. Various innovative projects and applications to improve the accessibility of public space in Lyon have been developed, tested and implemented as part of this strategy.

## **Accessibility Master Plan and Programmed Accessibility Agenda**

In addition to the PDU, actions to improve access to mobility and the transport network have been guided by the Accessibility Master Plan (in French: Schéma Directeur d'Accessibilité, abbreviated SDA) and the Programmed Accessibility Agenda (in French: Schéma Directeur d'Accessibilité - Agenda d'Accessibilité Programmée, abbreviated SD'AP). These voluntary policy instruments were introduced in France in 2005 and 2015 respectively, specifically to improve the accessibility of the roads and public spaces as well as the public transport network.

SYTRAL was the first transport authority to adopt an SDA. This programming document, drawn up following extensive consultation with the associations representing people with disabilities, defined the actions to be taken to make the public transport network governed by SYTRAL, known as the TCL network, accessible to all by 2015 - the deadline set by law.

A budget of EUR 60 million was allocated to carry out all operations to meet this objective. This ambitious programme for the TCL network - which consists of metro, tram, bus, trolleybus and two funiculars - has been implemented by SYTRAL between 2008 and 2015.

The SD'AP was introduced as a follow-up to the SDA to enable transport authorities to continue making their networks accessible beyond 2015. SYTRAL started implementing its SD'AP programme in 2016 and this will run until 2022 with a budget of EUR 37 million.

## **Stakeholder involvement**

Stakeholder involvement is a key part of the development and implementation of the PDU, SDA and SD'AP. The PDU was developed with extensive stakeholder consultation and brought together all mobility stakeholders (public and private) to build a shared vision of tomorrow's mobility. Various consultation mechanisms were applied to collect stakeholder feedback that was used to inform further development of the plan.

The preparation and implementation of the SDA and SD'AP have benefited from the input of representatives from a wide variety of stakeholder groups (e.g. the elderly and people with different kinds of disabilities).

In addition, SYTRAL has a six-person panel, representing each main type of disability, which is consulted monthly for advice and recommendations, and before each new project is started. In this way, any new project can be adapted early on to ensure that it is accessible for use by people with disabilities.

[1] The Territorial Coherence Scheme (SCoT) is one of the new urban planning documents in France. The SCoT replaces the Master Plan (SD) and aims to make urban planning policies clearer, bringing coherence to the whole sectoral policies, particularly in terms of urban planning, housing, mobility and commercial amenities.

## Results

A wide variety of actions identified in the PDAs, SDA and SD'AP that steer development in the Metropole Lyon have been implemented in order to connect the various parts of the Metropole by providing mobility options that are accessible to all.

The public transport network is extensive, including four metro lines, two funicular lines, five tram lines, 1 000 buses and 6 555 stops. All of the vehicles used for public transport are equipped with a low floor, retractable ramps and wider entrance doors, while each has four seats reserved for people with reduced mobility.

All metro stations (except Croix-Paquet where the configuration does not allow its redevelopment) are now accessible. They are equipped with sound-system lifts and embossed buttons and braille to enable easy access for people with low or no vision, as well as people in wheelchairs. Seven out of 10 bus stops are equipped for people with reduced mobility. In delivering the 2016-2022 Programmed Accessibility Agenda, SYTRAL plans to ensure accessibility at 812 priority stops spread over the TCL network.

SYTRAL's policy in terms of passenger information benefits everyone by making it easier for people with reduced mobility to travel. The geo-localised dynamic passenger information system, deployed on 118 panels on the underground transport network and the funicular, provides users with waiting times to the next two trains in real time, as well as information on any delays and their anticipated resolution time. The passenger information system is also connected to the new overall traffic management system in the Lyon urban area that provides real transport data, allowing for a 10% reduction in congestion and guaranteeing travel time for 100%. A system that has been praised by [EU Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc](#) during her overview of Europe-wide notable achievements in urban mobility in 2018.

An innovative remote-control device can be used by visually impaired people to receive travel information from buses, at bus stops and at passenger information kiosks. It can also be used to automatically activate sound boxes at pedestrian crossings. Some 75 % of pedestrian crossings have been equipped with such sound devices.

SYSTRAL also organises and finances the Optibus and Optiguide services. Optibus provides dedicated transport services for people with disabilities, facilitating over 100 000 trips per year. Optiguide provides information on door-to-door travel options and individual guidance to enable people to travel independently by public transport. Furthermore, 2 500 public transport drivers have been trained to provide better services for people with disabilities.

The implementation of these actions is generally considered to have greatly improved accessibility for all within the entire metropolitan agglomeration of Lyon. In recognition of this achievement, Lyon not only received the [Access City Award 2018](#) but was named [European Capitals of Smart Tourism 2019](#) for exemplary achievements as a tourism destination in implementing innovative and intelligent solutions for accessibility, in addition to sustainability, digitalisation, cultural heritage and creativity.

## Challenges, opportunities and transferability

Lyon's extensive and accessible network is the result of 30 years of continuous effort and investment. Since 2008 SYTRAL has committed more than Euro 100 million to ensure public transport is accessible to as many as possible. While for many cities it might not be easy to match similar levels of investment, Lyon's approach to improving accessibility contains various elements that could be transferred to other cities.

Lyon's approach is in many ways an example of an integrated planning and needs-based approach. Both principles are captured in the underlying objectives of the consecutive PDUs:

- The organisation of travel must be in line with the development of the agglomeration, including the economy and its companies, with the aim of facilitating the use of the right mode of travel in the right place.
- Users and their needs should be at the heart of planning process.
- Mobility planning should promote social equity and improve access to different mobility services.
- Mobility planning should improve air quality and the quality of the overall environment.

Covering the daily urban system of the Metropole Lyon, the PDU considers the needs of the 'functioning city' and its hinterland rather being restricted by the boundaries of a municipal administrative region.

The development of the PDU requires a high level of co-operation, co-ordination and consultation between the different levels of government and relevant authorities as well as a highly participatory approach with the involvement of relevant actors, including residents, representatives of civil society and economic actors. The development of an Accessibility Master Plan also reflects both the high level of user participation and the horizontal and vertical integration of mobility and accessibility planning into wider policy.

Lyon's mobility system has been developing into a network of door-to-door routes to key destinations. Accessibility barriers are gradually, but steadily, being eliminated with the support of user feedback. This encompasses the implementation of measures to improve access to information (e.g. itinerary planning), offer mobility services and improve the physical accessibility of public space and public transport.

Even with smaller investment budgets to promote accessibility, the integrated and participatory way in which accessibility has been addressed in Lyon provides a useful example of how to effectively promote accessibility.

## **In Depth**

Visit the following links to find out more information about:

- Metropole Lyon: [SUMP – Plan de Déplacements Urbains 2017-2030](#)
- Metropole Lyon: [Accessibility Master Plan for Roads and Public Spaces](#)
- SYTRAL: [Accessibility of public transport network and 2008 Accessibility Master Plan](#)
- City of Lyon [Communal Commission on Accessibility](#)
- [European Access City Award](#)
- European Capital of Smart Tourism: <https://smarttourismcapital.eu/> and [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/helsinki-and-lyon-receive-european-capital-smart-tourism-awards\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/helsinki-and-lyon-receive-european-capital-smart-tourism-awards_en)

## **Keywords**

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