



# Enabling active and climate-friendly youth mobility

**Mobility patterns are learnt and shaped by the social environment. In order to raise awareness of mobility issues, the topic of sustainable mobility should be regularly addressed in schools and out-of-school youth facilities. The mobility patterns of children and young people will have a strong impact on their mobility behaviour as adults.**

Young people's mobility needs change when they grow up, depending on, for example, school, education, apprenticeship and leisure activities. Over 41 percent of young people aged 15 to 19 use public transport on working days. The share of journeys walked or cycled decreases as they get older due to longer distances. The proportion of young car drivers is low until about the age of 17, when the car starts playing a role, especially in rural areas.<sup>1</sup> In this phase, independent mobility emerges. It is therefore all the more important for young people to have access to attractive and reliable transport options.

## Implementing climate protection in mobility

In Austria, 55 percent of those aged 15 to 35 say that the climate crisis is the greatest societal challenge of our time. Across Europe, 65 percent of young people aged 15 to 19 would be ready to adapt their mobility behaviour and travel only in a climate-friendly way.<sup>2</sup> This willingness can be encouraged at an early stage by transferring knowledge in educational and youth institutions and providing adequate public transport services, additional flexible transport options as well as walking and cycling paths.

Among young people aged 15 to 19, the share of those walking drops to nine to twelve percent on weekdays, compared to 26 percent among those aged six to 14. This is probably due to the longer routes to school and the accessibility of other means of transport, such as public transport, mopeds and the L17 driving licence for cars granted at the age of 17.

Young people make more than 41 percent of their trips by public transport. For 21 percent of their journeys, they drive a moped, motorcycle or car.<sup>3</sup>

### Mobility demands of young people

Young people want to be taken seriously and treated with respect – also when they are participating in traffic. Being able to be on the road without their parents is very important for them. Young people wish to enjoy a clean public space and welcome strict observance of traffic rules. They appreciate places where they have enough space to sit, chat and relax.<sup>4</sup> However, young people are also looking for variety and new experiences.

A number of factors determine which means of transport are preferred in adolescence: availability, accessibility, cost-benefit analysis, safety, reliability of the means of transport, knowledge and experience regarding use,

self-efficacy and attitude as well as the appreciation linked to the means of transport. Punctuality is rated by young users as the most important feature of public transport.<sup>5</sup>

As regards public transport, friendly staff, cleanliness and access to free WiFi play an important role. In cities, the issue of safety is more prevalent than in rural areas. Apart from safety, children in cities consider changing means of transport and overcrowded transport in particular an issue.<sup>6</sup>

### Affordable annual tickets are well received

From its introduction in October 2021 until October 2022, more than 200,000 climate tickets (KlimaTickets) valid across Austria were sold – 63,000 of which were youth tickets. The youth annual tickets of the transport associations (Verkehrsverbände) demonstrate that cheap tickets make public transport highly attractive for young people.<sup>7</sup> In 2021, for example, around 250,000 young people, i.e. about 50 to 60 percent of those aged below 24 years in the eastern region, used the Top Youth Pass (Top-Jugendticket) of the transport association for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland.<sup>8</sup>

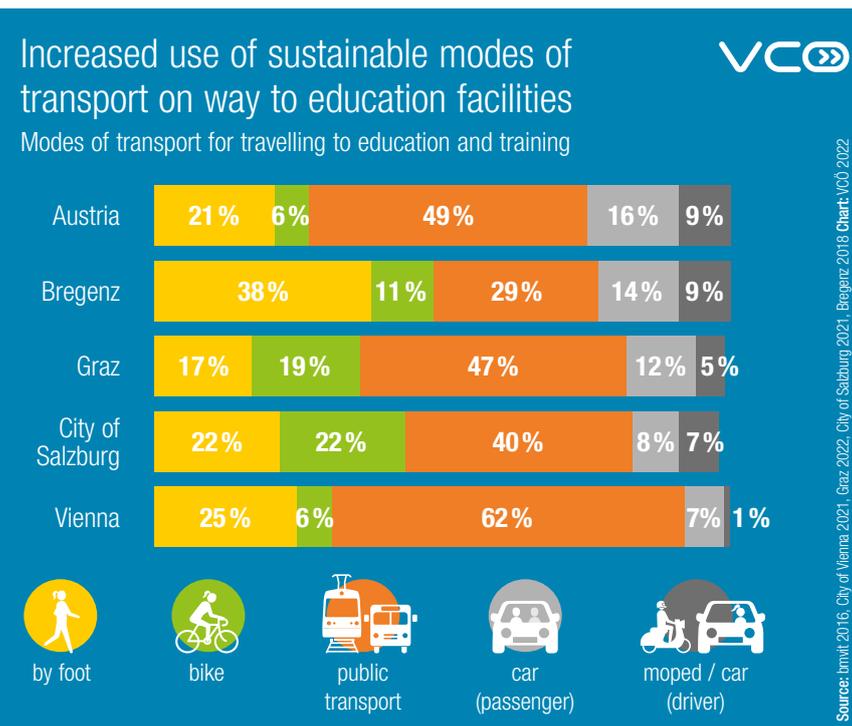
Many apprentices also use the Top Youth Pass. However, use among them declines as soon as they have their own car or moped. Moreover, in some rural regions, adequate public transport connections are often not available when needed. Apprentices in Vienna state that they like and use car sharing offers.<sup>9</sup>

### Shift in age of novice drivers

While in 2006 about 20 percent of all new car driving licences had been issued to 17-year-olds, the figure already stood at some 34 percent in 2021.<sup>10</sup> Especially for young people from rural regions, obtaining a driving licence has advantages. For young people in the city, it is less important. Enjoyment of driving is no longer a key motive for getting a driving licence.

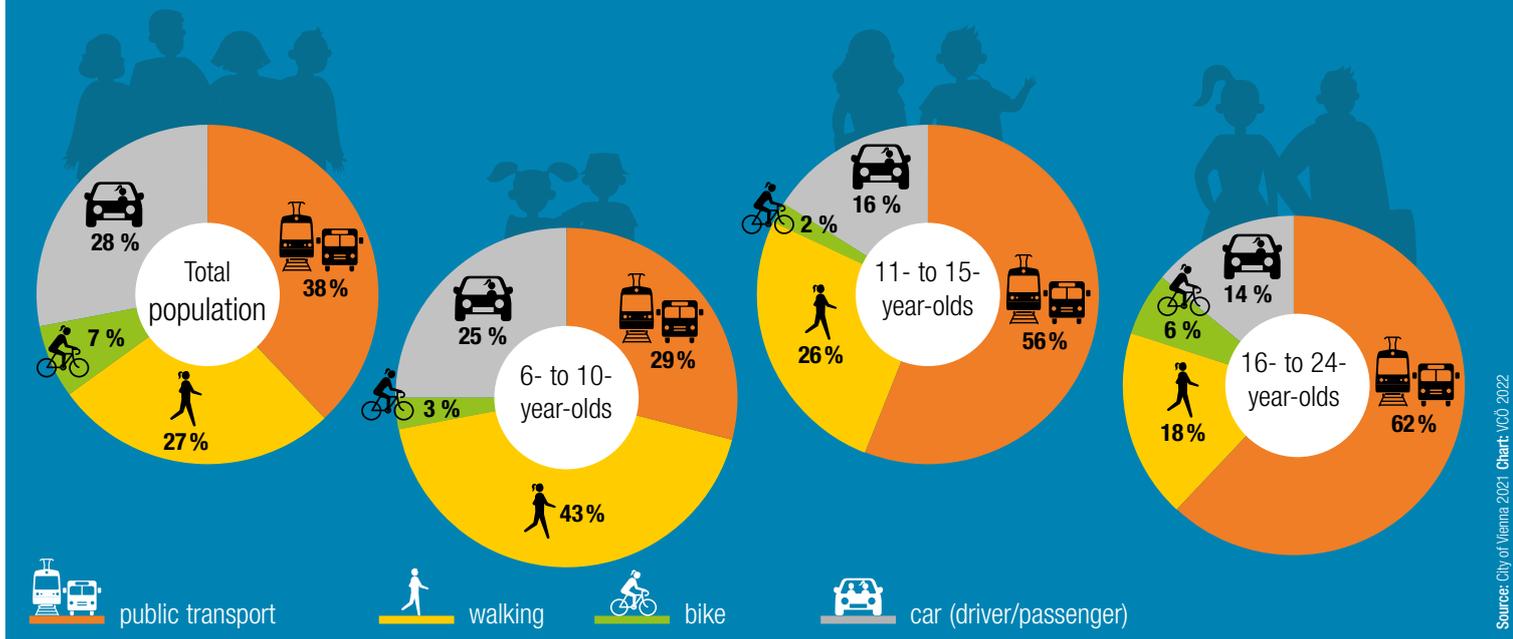
While the share of 17-year-olds among novice drivers in Vienna was a mere eleven percent in 2021, the figure was 55 percent in the province of Burgenland. The share of those who obtained their car driving licences after the age of 19 rose from 17 percent in 2006 to 30 percent in 2021. In general, it can be said that category B driving

The way to school or the place of education provides a great opportunity to integrate physical activity into daily life. In Bregenz and the city of Salzburg, the share of active mobility is especially high.



## The older children and young people in Vienna are, the more often they travel without a car

Modal Split in Vienna in the period from 2015 to 2019



Source: City of Vienna 2021 Chart: VCO 2022

licences are obtained later nowadays. While the average age in Austria was 18.7 years in 2006, it rose to 19.8 years in 2020.<sup>10</sup>

### Mobility management in places of education

Mobility management should be implemented in all educational institutions. The klimaaktiv mobil programme of the Federal Ministry for Climate Action advises educational institutions and provides teaching material for all age groups. This way, it has reached out to more than 500 educational institutions by 2022.<sup>11</sup> The issue of mobility is integrated into the lessons in a variety of ways. For example, the Pollution Catcher is an experiment to measure outdoor air quality at schools.

Another practical test is the Space Consumption Experiment that illustrates the huge space requirements of cars.

An evaluation of the klimaaktiv mobil consulting programme for children and young people in the school year 2020/21 has shown that about 700,000 car kilometres shifted to other modes of transport in that school year. 83 percent of the educational institutions questioned indicated that they had observed a significant and positive effect on the students' mobility behaviour.

In addition, at 50 percent of the educational institutions, the local transport situation was improved, for example through better coordination of bus timetables with school hours.<sup>11</sup>

### Extracurricular institutions are vital

Out-of-school youth facilities also play an important role in actively involving young people and raising awareness of climate-friendly mobility. The klimaaktiv mobil consulting programme for children and young people helps municipalities, cities and regions as well as youngsters implement local traffic measures, for instance, by providing advice, financial subsidies and strengthening the competence of professionals through training opportunities.<sup>12</sup>

### Digitalisation as a game-changer

Mobility apps that integrate travel options within a region are easy to use for young people. Videos, stories, memes or comics can be used to provide information. About 95 percent of young people in Austria are using YouTube, 81 percent Instagram and 71 percent TikTok.<sup>13</sup>

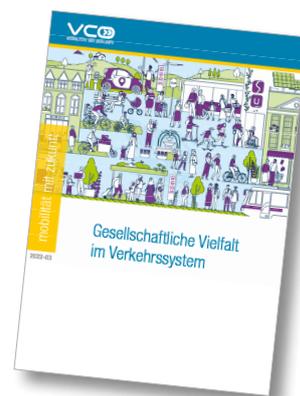
Public transport plays an increasingly important role in the development of the mobility of children and young people in Vienna.

# Introducing mobility management

The mobility behaviour of young people changes over time; their independent mobility is shaped especially up to the age of 19. The requirements for transport services vary among youngsters, ranging from personal preferences such as safety and image to accessibility. Young people consider active and sustainable mobility solutions positive and also use them. They are also more open to new technologies and new offers such as car and bike sharing. Actively involving youngsters in the design and planning processes of mobility services raises awareness of climate-friendly mobility.

## Raising awareness of mobility issues

Children, young people, parents and teachers are important groups to address when it comes to enabling the transition towards sustainable mobility. Spreading knowledge already in school and out-of-school institutions will raise awareness of sustainable mobility solutions such as public transport, cycling and walking. Digitalisation can open up new possibilities by quickly informing young people, who are digital natives, through digital platforms and providing the fastest, easiest and, if required, most cost-efficient or environmentally-friendly connection via mobility apps.



For a free download of the VCO publication „Gesellschaftliche Vielfalt im Verkehrssystem“, visit [www.vcoe.at](http://www.vcoe.at).

Sources online under:  
[www.vcoe.at/publikationen/vcoe-factsheets](http://www.vcoe.at/publikationen/vcoe-factsheets)



## »» VCO recommendations

**We can only motivate young people to travel in a climate-friendly way by educating them at an early stage and ensuring that their diverse needs are met.**

- Meet the mobility needs of young people when planning transport services, from public transport to flexible services such as on-call buses.
- Establish mobility management and formats of teaching mobility in all schools and educational facilities.
- Expand walking and cycling infrastructures to facilitate the independent mobility of young people.
- Provide more target group-specific, affordable offers for young people, such as reduced season tickets for public transport or sharing services.
- Harness digitalisation to inform and actively engage young people.
- Conduct regular surveys on the mobility behaviour of young people.



**Lina Mosshammer**

**VCO - Mobility with a future:**

„Young people see the need for a change and a shift to sustainable mobility. It is important for us to exploit this potential to fight the climate crisis.“

The klimaaktiv mobil mobility management for children and young people offers advisory services on climate-friendly and healthy mobility for educational institutions and out-of-school youth facilities throughout Austria.

For a free consultation, please contact:

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