

# RETHYMNO – BUILDING A SHARING MOBILITY CULTURE



## IN BRIEF

The first dockless e-bike sharing system in Greece was launched in Rethymno, replacing the previous small scale - inefficient system to promote a modal shift towards sustainable modes of transport. This was made possible through efficient cooperation between the public and private sector. Rethymno is also promoting a shared mobility culture through behavioural change tools based on research-defined clusters and mobile apps.

### For whom is this article intended?

 This article provides practical guidance for the implementation of an efficient bike sharing system according to each city's needs. This article can be used either to get into the topic or as a practical tool for how to overcome difficulties, engage public and introduce innovative mobility solutions in your city.

 The article includes the whole process related to building a sharing mobility culture in Rethymno. More specifically, Rethymno has introduced an electric bike sharing system to operate as dockless and is planning to expand the sharing culture with a car-pooling platform. The "Site investigation" section of this article describes the base situation of Rethymno with a municipal bike sharing system and the efforts conducted to modernise and eventually withdraw it. The "Site preparation" section describes all necessary steps conducted to introduce the dockless e-bike sharing system in Rethymno with Greek legislation limitations and the last section describes all steps conducted to achieve public engagement of the new bike sharing system.

## Overview: BUILDING A SHARING MOBILITY CULTURE

A public bike sharing system was previously installed in Rethymno with limited stations and available bikes making the system less attractive and less user-friendly. On the other hand, cycling has been increasing over the last years, and therefore the need for a bike sharing system meeting the city's needs was generated. The first dockless e-bike sharing system in Greece was launched in Rethymno through the successful collaboration of public – private sector; a minimum of 300 e-bikes are available in the wider area of the Municipality for locals and visitors, promoting modal shift towards sustainable modes of transport. Useful information and new payment methods are available through the service's mobile app and cards are available for tourists in the main hotels. Rethymno also promotes the sharing mobility culture through behavioural change tools, based on research defined clusters and mobile apps.

### Working on building a sharing mobility culture for a city

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose a system suitable for the city's needs</li><li>• Legal approach to the system implementation</li><li>• Achieve public engagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Willingness of the business community to contribute financially</li></ul>

## RETHYMNO – BUILDING A SHARING MOBILITY CULTURE

Rethymno aims to promote the sharing mobility culture through the expansion of bike sharing in the city and the introduction of a web-based platform for promoting sharing in all transport modes such as car/ taxi.

With at least 150 e-bikes which cover the whole city and the hotel areas in the outskirts, Rethymno is the first Greek city to launch and test a “free – floating” or “dockless” system.



Fig1: Dockless E-Bike sharing system  
© Rethymno municipality

### Site investigation

Initially, the Municipality studied the expansion and upgrade of the previously existing bike sharing system. Activities included the identification of potential improvements based on observations and suggestions by users. Improvements were made to the system to make it more attractive and user-friendly to locals and visitors and meet their needs. However, the system was still limited, thus not so convenient for users (limited stations / bikes).

Within CIVITAS DESTINATIONS, Rethymno Municipality searched for additional funding to further enhance the bike sharing system. Therefore, Rethymno established a cooperation scheme with private bike sharing operators in order to launch a pilot investment plan for dockless electric bikes seeking to maximise the measure's impact.

In addition, the Municipality combined the measure's activities with another project for the bioclimatic upgrade of “Agios Georgios” square, in the eastern part of the city centre, with ERDF funds. The Municipality will install 9 more electric bikes and 1 electric bike for disabled people to operate as a separate system. Those e-bikes

will be based on a bike station and will be charged using solar panels.

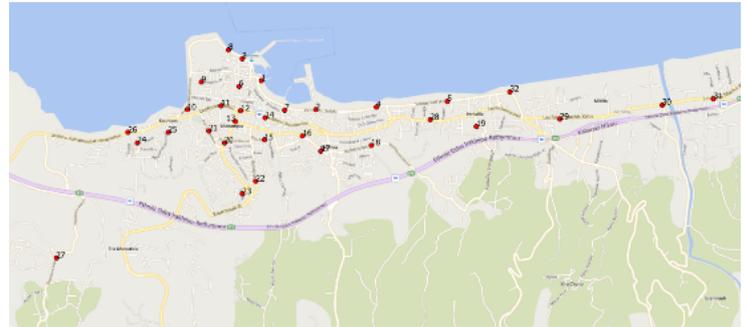


Fig2: Shared e-bikes location study © Rethymno municipality

The Municipality continued efforts to facilitate the introduction of a wider-scale system. The dockless e-bike system “bikeazy” was launched in July 2018, initially to be tested as a pilot for one month and identify any system failures before the official operation in August. The previous bike sharing system has been completely replaced by the new dockless system.

### Site preparation

Greek legislation limitations for public space were the main reference and the main steps for the site preparation to implement the new bike sharing system included:

- Recording stakeholders and users' opinion/ needs through workshops/ consultation events,
- Strategic location study based on the existing land use, key attraction points and the connection of the city centre with more distant and sub-urban areas,
- The exact locations were selected based on the available public space (squares, pavements, etc.) according to the existing legislation on public spaces and pedestrian movement. For the prioritisation of the final locations, the convenience of users was considered based on the proximity of the selected locations to landmarks/points of interest for tourists/daily routes of residents (Fig. 2),
- Analytical land surveys to extract the exact coordinates for those spaces,
- Approval from the relevant local committees for the concession of public space to be used as stations for the new bike sharing system,
- Distribution of bikes around the city in 32 spots. Cards/day passes are available through several points for sale,

- Pilot testing,
- Agreements with hotels and busy bars/restaurants.

The efficient cooperation between public and private sector achieved the first dockless e-bike sharing system in Greece. A minimum of 300 e-bikes are available in the wider area of the Municipality for locals and visitors. New payment methods available: cards available for tourists in main hotels and 1 bike sharing mobile phone application (web based) demonstrated in July 2018.

## Public engagement

The public engagement of the bike sharing system started at an early stage prior to its implementation with an initial data collection. 457 responses were received from locals regarding the mobility preferences, the perception of cycling and bike sharing infrastructure and the city's needs as part of the SUMP baseline survey. The site investigation period for the bike sharing system was during the first SUMP public consultation with the key stakeholders and the benefits of the sharing systems were presented to raise awareness and discuss alternative systems.



Fig3: SUMP workshop © Rethymno municipality

Promotional campaigns and training activities for the familiarization of public was arranged when the system was launched with an opening campaign and during the European Mobility Week.

The Municipality of Rethymno is continuously making efforts to promote the bike sharing system and sustainable mobility and to achieve public engagement. The latest activities include the demonstration of the system to school students.

The bike sharing system has been selected to facilitate data collection of system usage in order to implement possible adjustments to cover user needs, if required. The dockless system identifies the high-demand areas and potential areas outside the city centre where the

system could be expanded. Therefore, the system is continuously adjusted to match users' and city's needs.



Fig4: Bike sharing system demonstration to school students © Rethymno municipality

The Municipality of Rethymno is also planning a user satisfaction survey for summer 2019 and summer 2020 to evaluate the bike sharing system.

The efficient public engagement of the bike sharing system demonstrated that Rethymno is ready to embrace more innovative sharing mobility solutions. Rethymno is under discussions to introduce an electric scooter sharing system in the city and is also reviewing the characteristics of a car-pooling platform development.

Learn more about Rethymno's actions:  
<http://destinations.rethymno.gr/en/home/>



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