

29 September 2025

Québec Roadmap: Towards a New Urban Project

COLLABORATIVE NETWORK:

Management of Tourist Bus Traffic in Historic Centers

Pilot city: Québec (Canada)

Action plan - Proposal

Introduction

Collaborative Networks—true “communities of practice”— provide a flexible, creative space where participating cities work together to identify the best ways to protect the habitability of historic city centres. This is achieved through four strategic axes: Requalify Habitat, Refresh the City, Transform Mobility and Regenerate the Urban Landscape. By promoting exchange and mutual learning, they are building a shared culture ahead of the 18th OWHC World Congress in Marrakech in 2026.

Concept and Objectives

The historic centre of Old Québec receives more than 4.3 million visitors each year, despite having only 4,600 residents. Day to day, heavy motor traffic — intensified in peak season by the arrival of tourist coaches — creates congestion, higher emissions and strain on everyday life. The site's topography, narrow streets, ongoing construction projects and increasing freight and delivery flows exacerbate these issues.

As these mobility issues are widespread in many cities, Québec City is proposing the creation of a collaborative network to develop solutions for managing tourist buses in historic city centres. The network's three main objectives are:

1. Reduce the number of tourist buses through a strategy that integrates automated regulation, alternative transport modes and renewed interest in Old Québec from the metropolitan area.
2. Develop viable and socially acceptable solutions through coordinated engagement between municipalities, residents, tour operators and economic stakeholders.
3. Create an updated model for managing tourist mobility that is based on consensus, innovation, communication and change management.

Presentation of the challenges

The Collaborative Network will compile the experiences and analyses of the participating cities. The following questions will be considered, among others:

- What methods can be used to quantify and qualify the impact of tourism on the liveability of historic city centres?
- Which management models are most effective in distributing tourist flows across time, space and transport modes?
- How can awareness and commitment be built among operators and other economic and social stakeholders to support more heritage- and resident-friendly mobility?
- What innovations can improve bus management in heritage areas while preventing social conflict and economic loss?

Role and responsibilities of the pilot city

The pilot city organises virtual meetings and sets the agenda with the network cities. During the international workshop in Québec City (CityLab), the pilot city is responsible for arranging local transport, catering and simultaneous interpretation (in agreement with the General Secretariat).

Role and responsibilities of participating cities

Each city designates a technical team and/or relevant experts to contribute to the issues that are most pertinent to their case. These individuals will also participate in virtual meetings and the study visit/international workshop. The participating cities will cover the travel and accommodation costs, unless otherwise agreed with the General Secretariat.

Schedule and timetable

From October 2025 to March 2026, there will be five two-hour virtual meetings (one per month) to launch and monitor the new Collaborative Network. These meetings will be used to validate the action plan, define responsibilities, confirm interpretation needs and prepare the CityLab.

In April 2026 (date to be confirmed), a study visit will review two reference projects: Amsterdam's Touringcar Agenda and Bruges' electric microbus service.

In May 2026, an international workshop in Québec City (CityLab) will bring together the participating cities and the Old Québec advisory committee for working sessions to share experiences and co-construct recommendations to be integrated into the OWHC's New Urban Project. The date is to be confirmed.