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The role of Public Transport in addressing Sustainable Mobility for the Elderly Population in Malta

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**Eco-sustainability aspects of the Country-Specific
Recommendations for Malta**

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Introduction



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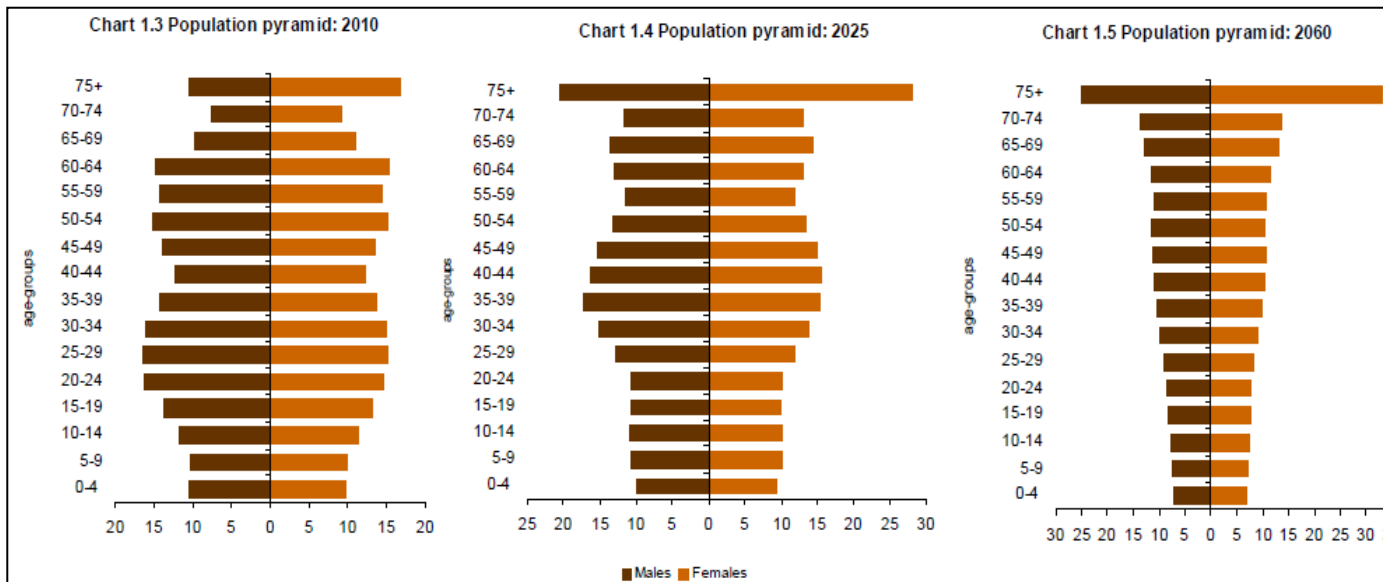
- The study focused on the social pillar of sustainable mobility.
- It centred on one of the main principles of sustainable mobility: *to meet the travel demands and needs of the population.*
- Any system of sustainable transport requires travelling by public transport. Adequate, reliable and accessible public transport is essential to attract the largest pool of users and therefore minimize those socially excluded.

Elderly people and transport



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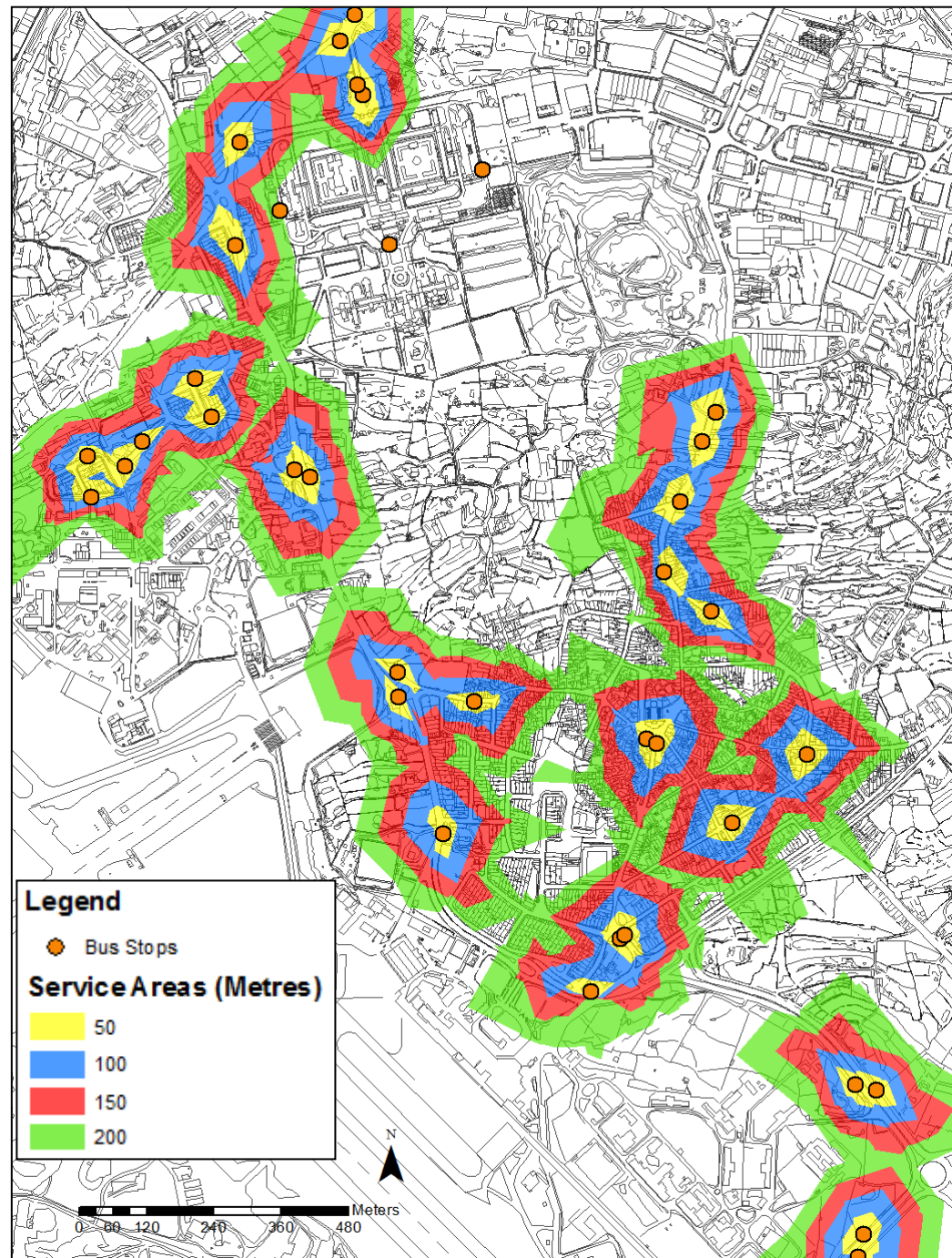
- Elderly people are one of the “transport disadvantaged groups” in society, which highly rely on public transport for their mobility needs.
- The study analysed spatial and temporal accessibility as well as the elderly people’s mobility patterns and barriers when using public transport.



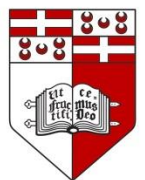
The continuous increase in the elderly population in Malta (Source, NSO, 2011)

Spatial Accessibility

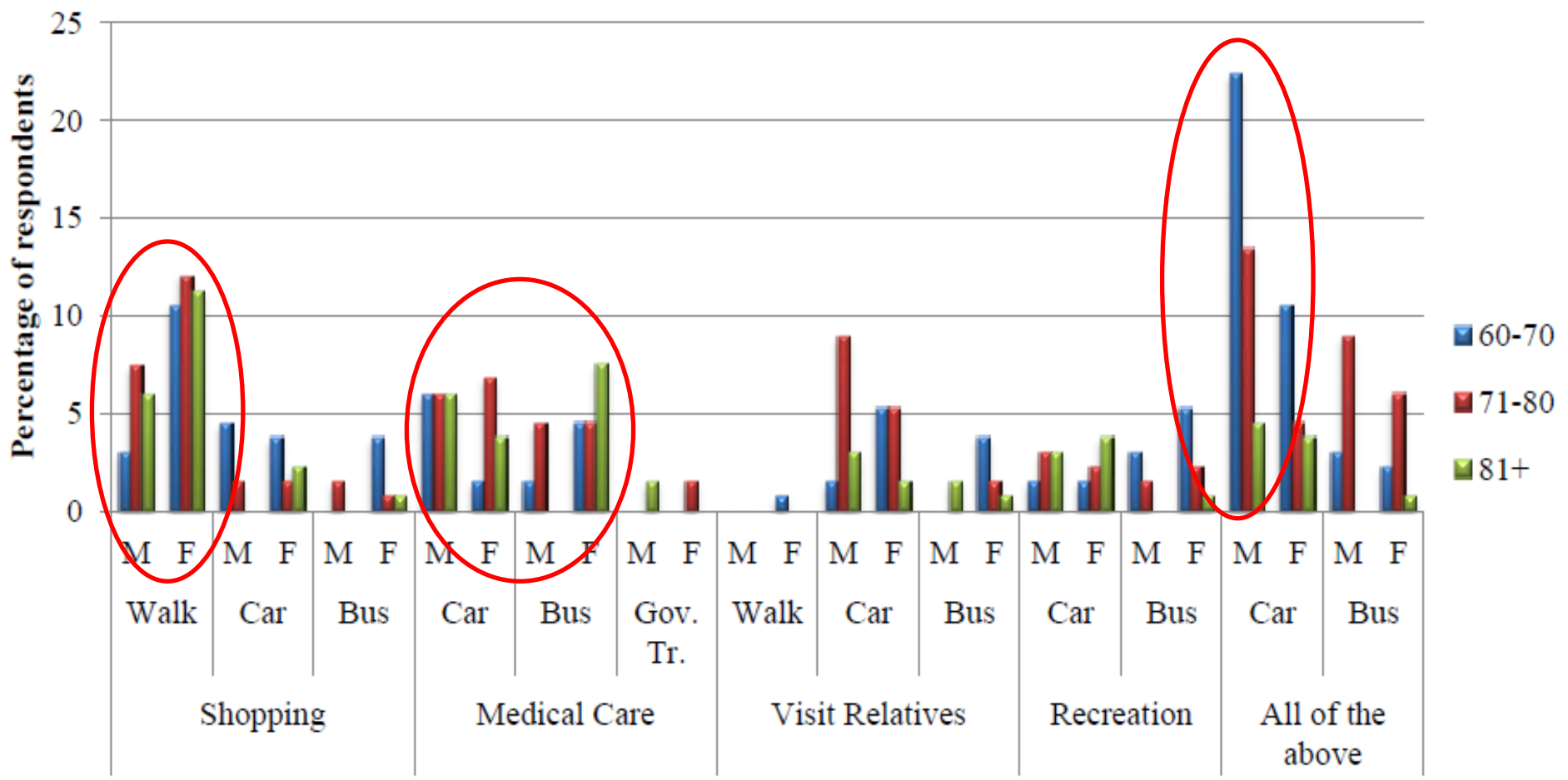
- Service Areas of 50, 100, 150 and 200 metres were created around each bus stop in Luqa.
- The absolute majority of the elderly people lived within the 200 metres service area. This means that the 150 metres national threshold was exceeded (MEPA, 2003).
- The majority of the frequent bus users (daily and weekly users) lived within the outer buffers.



Mobility patterns of elderly people



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Travel purpose by gender and mode of transport used

Barriers encountered by elderly



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- 72 per cent of the frequent bus users claimed that they encounter several barriers when using public transport.
- The principal barriers encountered were:
 - Long waiting times on bus stops and at interchanges;
 - Difficulty to access the bus stop due to lot of traffic passing by;
 - Fear of getting lost;
 - No bus shelters or seating;
 - Very low frequency of buses;
 - Bus stop too far away from home;
 - Inappropriate coverage of routes; and
 - Inaccessible, non-updated and difficult travel information.

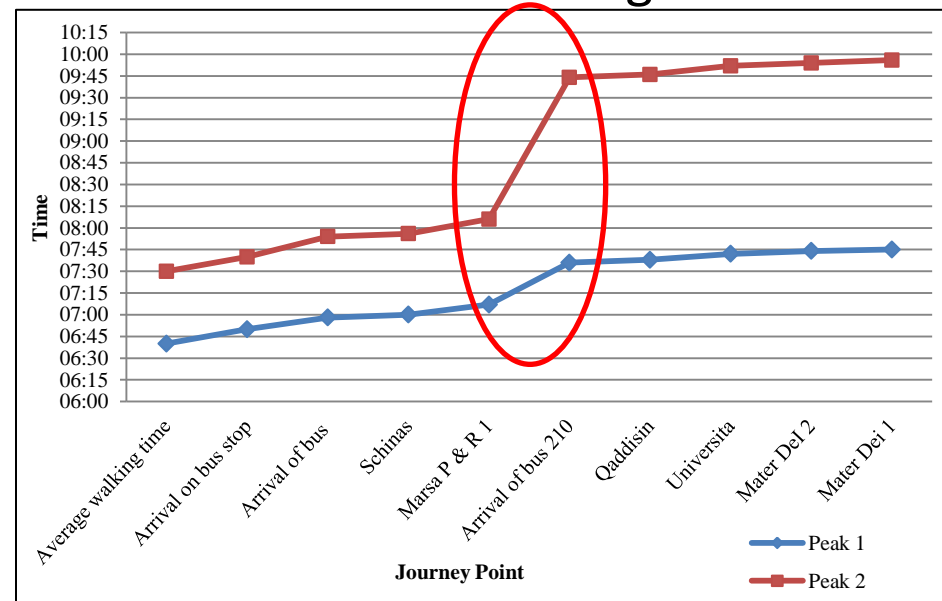
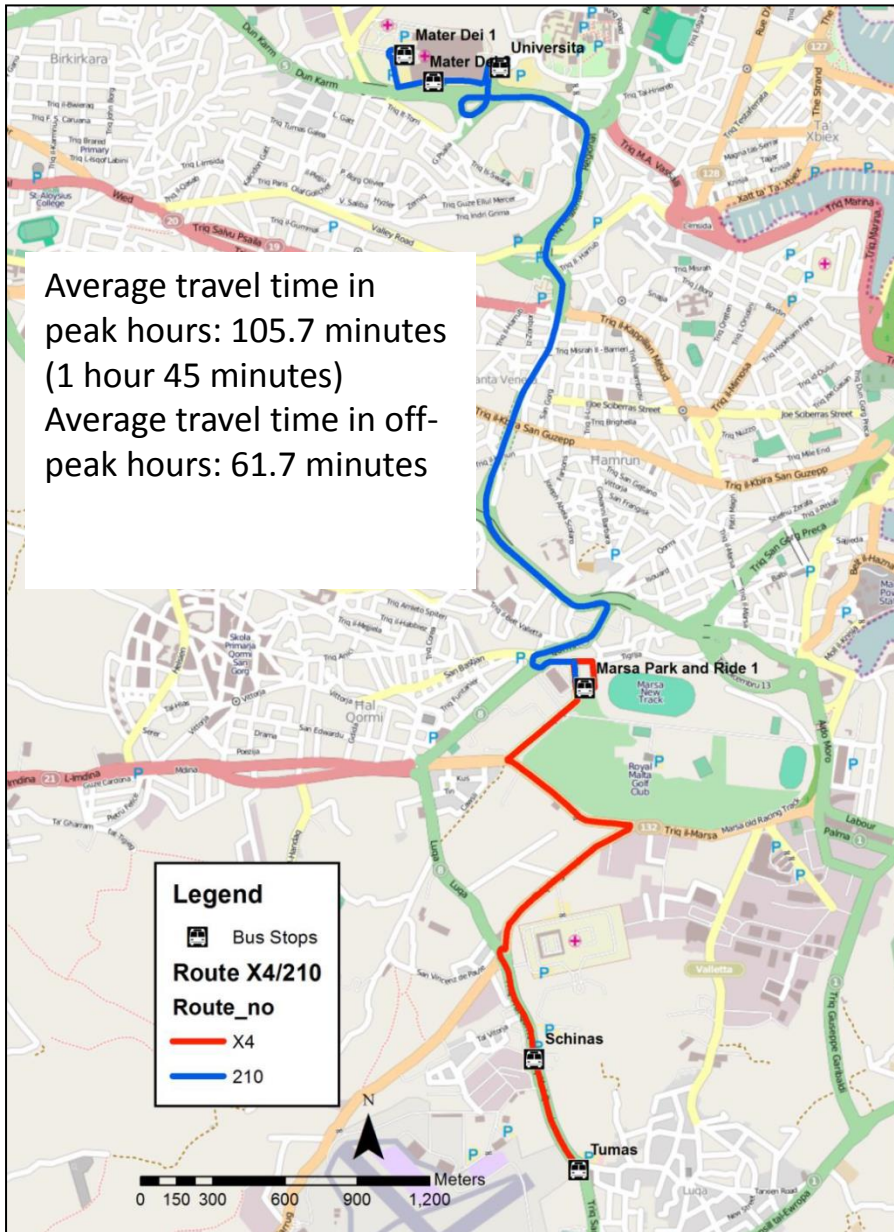
Temporal Accessibility



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- All the routes going from Luqa to Mater Dei Hospital exceeded the desired time budget of 30 minutes.
- From all the journey time, the longest time was spent waiting on bus stops, particularly at the Marsa Park and Ride Interchange.

Average travel time in peak hours: 105.7 minutes (1 hour 45 minutes)
Average travel time in off-peak hours: 61.7 minutes



Improvements



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- Improve the bus stops design, accessibility and comfort;
- Minimise the barriers that elderly encounter when using public transport mainly related to long waiting times and lack of coordination at interchanges;
- Improve the travel information;
- Introduce more safety measures;
- More Government initiatives, policies and research targeted towards an ageing society;
- Transport needs of elderly should be incorporated in the National Policy on Active Ageing 2014-2020, drafted by the National Commission for Active Ageing (announced in May 2013); and
- Elderly people should be more actively involved in planning and decision-making procedures.



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References

- MEPA (Malta Environment and Planning Authority), 2003. *Transport Topic Paper*. MEPA, Floriana, Malta.
- NSO (National Statistics Office), 2011. *Demographic Review 2010*. NSO, Valletta, Malta.