



Images Copyright © Mairie de Bordeaux 2024

• DURATION

Ongoing since 2020

• POPULATION 2024

850,000 (Growth rate 1%) M.A.

• URA SCOPE

ECOLOGY. Green Urbanism.

• TOPICS

ETHICAL
ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS
INCLUSIVITY
COMMUNITY

• MAIN ACTORS

Mairie de Bordeaux
Bordeaux Metropolitan Area



Bordeaux Breathes, Bordeaux Inspires!

Pierre Hurmic had one priority as he stepped into his role as mayor of a city with 250,000 inhabitants and a sprawling metropolitan area of 850,000: to declare a state of climate emergency. This wasn't just a symbolic gesture—it was a call to action, grounded in an unshakable conviction: ecology delayed is ecology denied.

From the outset, the administration made its intentions clear. Prioritize meaningful initiatives that centre on the needs and well-being of the community. Transform Bordeaux into an innovative and exemplary city by 2026—a city reimagined hand in hand with its residents. The Bordeaux of tomorrow would be one of solidarity, where nature thrives alongside creativity. A Grandeur Nature city, it would celebrate biodiversity, foster human connection, and embrace new ways of living and working. To achieve this ambitious transformation, the municipal team laid out a roadmap centred on three key pillars:

1. Adapting to Environmental Challenges

Bordeaux would become a *natural and peaceful city*. Urban spaces would be re-naturalized to create cool islands of greenery, bringing biodiversity back into the heart of the city. The car's dominance would give way to alternative forms of mobility—bikes, trams, and shared transport—all part of a broader effort to stop the artificialization of land.

Initiatives for food resilience were also on the agenda, focusing on local market gardening and the joy of eating fresh, locally produced food. Housing and construction would turn toward decarbonization, and the city would nurture local circular economies. Every step, no matter how small, aimed at ensuring Bordeaux's resources were used wisely and sustainably.

2. Encouraging Lifelong Emancipation

In this vision, no resident would be left behind. The city pledged to stand with its most vulnerable citizens, from supporting young parents to empowering children and youth to become engaged, active members of society. Housing, too, would be reimagined—affordable, high-quality, and socially inclusive, creating neighbourhoods that reflect Bordeaux's diversity.

3. Responding to Democratic Aspirations

Democracy would not be confined to the ballot box. Bordeaux sought to embody *permanent democracy*, inviting its residents to co-create the city's future. Through participatory initiatives and international collaborations, the city would strive to be both a local and global model of innovation and responsibility.

The journey is one of reinvention, resilience, and hope—a gentle revolution "*bold actions today will lead to a brighter, greener tomorrow*".



Impact

Bordeaux is reshaping itself into a *life-size city*, where sustainable development, community well-being, and inclusivity converge. The city's actions over recent years showcase a steadfast commitment to creating a greener, safer, and more vibrant urban landscape that thrives in harmony with its residents.

Greening the city has been a cornerstone of this transformation. In 2023, 6,079 trees of future heritage interest were planted, a remarkable increase from 846 in 2019, alongside 32 micro-forests. These efforts are complemented by 16 new garden streets and 4,658 planted ditches, which not only enhance biodiversity but also improve local aesthetics and urban cooling. Programs like the *rues aux enfants* ensure safer access to schools, empowering families to embrace walking and cycling as part of daily life. Cycling infrastructure has expanded significantly, with a 38% increase in parking spaces and an extensive bike network now stretching 376 km. Energy efficiency efforts have also borne fruit, with a 13% reduction in public lighting consumption saving 13.3 GWh annually.

As a *ville solidaire*, Bordeaux has prioritized care and equity. Over 208,812 meals have been delivered to seniors, addressing their nutritional and social needs. School catering has shifted towards sustainability, with 57% organic and 47% local produce. Housing for young people has seen a 25% increase since 2021, providing 3,196 affordable units to date, ensuring stability and opportunity for the next generation.

In meeting *democratic aspirations*, Bordeaux fosters active civic participation. Neighbourhood councils saw 2,127 participants engaging in co-creating their city's future. Public contracts worth €3.4 million have been awarded to social economy organizations, ensuring that investments also benefit the broader community.

Finally, as a *city in common*, Bordeaux invests in culture and sports to unite its residents. Initiatives like teaching 1,000 pupils to cycle, supporting 23 Olympic athletes for Paris 2024, and funding €400,000 for artistic education across 32 schools underscore the city's dedication to enriching lives through shared experiences.

These actions go beyond surface-level improvements. By prioritizing its residents and the environment, Bordeaux is setting a powerful precedent for what a truly future-ready city can achieve.

Challenge

Bordeaux, a city celebrated for its history and culture, has faced mounting challenges in adapting to the demands of a modern, sustainable future. Road traffic and its associated pollution have strained the city's air quality and contributed to noise and congestion, affecting residents' health and overall quality of life. The dominance of cars in urban spaces has left limited room for alternative forms of mobility, impeding progress toward a greener, more accessible city.

Rising temperatures, exacerbated by climate change and urban heat islands, have become a pressing concern. These effects are particularly felt in densely built areas with limited greenery, leaving residents vulnerable during extreme heat events. Addressing this requires innovative urban planning and a strong commitment to increasing biodiversity.

Social inequality presents another critical challenge. Access to affordable housing has become a growing issue, especially for students and low-income families, under financial strain.

Cultural and social inclusivity also needed attention. Ensuring equal access to sports, arts, and education, while fostering civic engagement, became vital for creating a sense of shared purpose and community.

Tackling these interconnected challenges required bold, innovative actions to reimagine Bordeaux as a city that prioritizes sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience in the face of an evolving world.

Solution Proposed

The *life-size city* project envisions Bordeaux as a sustainable, inclusive, and forward-thinking urban environment designed to enhance residents' quality of life. The initiative addresses key challenges through innovative solutions that prioritize community well-being and environment.

A major focus is reducing car dependency by promoting alternative transportation options and lowering traffic pollution. Cooling the urban landscape is also a priority, with micro-forests inspired by Akira Miyawaki planned to reduce temperatures and improve local biodiversity. The "vegetation permit" encourages residents to cultivate their own gardens, strengthening community engagement and shared responsibility for urban greening. Solar energy adoption is another cornerstone, aiming to equip municipal buildings with panels while encouraging private property owners to follow suit. Social and economic solidarity underpins the project's vision. Bordeaux will host the World Forum on the Social Solidarity Economy in 2025 and is committed to zero-waste strategies, accessible housing, and a regulated rental market to foster equity. The *ville en commun* approach emphasizes transparent governance, gender equity, and cultural inclusivity. By supporting universal access to culture and sports, integrating artistic education, and encouraging civic participation, the project aspires to position Bordeaux as a global model for sustainable, equitable urban living.

<https://thebayawards.com/>