

# Borgarlínan – a breakthrough in public transport in Reykjavík

The Borgarlína project is a BRT system that runs through several municipalities in the capital region. Not only is it a system which will contribute to less traffic, but it also serves as the core for the urban planning of the area. The project showcases new ownership models and the possibilities of cross-municipal collaboration.

## BACKGROUND AND MAJOR SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE ADRESSED

Reykjavík has faced challenges with transport due to high levels of car dependency in the city, which is also the case for Iceland in general. Therefore, the interest for improving the public transport system has been growing in recent years. The municipalities in the capital area have worked on a new regional plan for the area which is centered around the implementation of "Borgarlínan"; a bus rapid transit system. Not only does this system aim to increase the use of public transport, but also serve as a pillar for the urban development of the region. The planning is centered around transit oriented development and signs of that are already starting to show in the city, even though construction of the Borgarlína itself has not yet started. Thus, Borgarlínan is not merely a transport project, but the core of the future urban development of the capital region in Iceland.

## PROCESS AND RESULTS

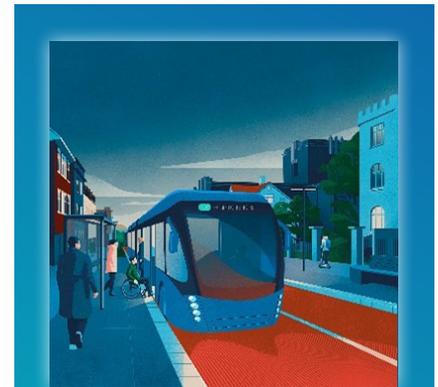
In 2019, the state and six municipalities in the capital region signed a "Transport Pact", inspired by a Norwegian example, which was a big milestone for the development of transport infrastructure and public transport in the capital region. This included the commitment to establish and fund an association (Betri Samgöngur) that oversees the execution of the pact's contents.

## SOLVED AND UNSOLVED CHALLENGES

The obvious challenge that Borgarlínan seeks to solve is the congestion problem. However, there are multiple challenges that the project itself faces, that are unsolved. Understandingly so, as it is in its initial stages. Firstly, it is to gain the common understanding of why this is necessary and why business as usual is not an option. This both applies to all relevant actors but also the citizens. Secondly, there are still some organizational aspects that remain unsolved. In Iceland, the state is not legally obliged to offer the service of public transport, so ownership, funding and responsibility distributions within the project are an ongoing debate.

## FUNDING

The funding is divided by the state and the participating municipalities.



**REYKJAVÍK, ICELAND**  
133.262 inhabitants

### CONTACT PERSON

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**SUSTAINABLE  
TRANSPORT**

**URBAN  
PLANNING**

**STAKEHOLDER  
COLLABORATION**

## GOOD PRACTICE AND LESSONS LEARNED

The establishment of Betri Samgöngur and that kind of multi-stakeholder collaboration is what has been a turning point for a project like Borgarlínan. Additionally, as Betri samgöngur now exist, there is an actor that can develop a long-term strategy as well as ensure development in the project – responsibilities that were scattered between many different actors before.

The Borgarlína project has focused on learning from others. The experiences, trials and errors of other cities implementing similar solutions has been of great value to the project. Additionally, Borgarlínan is an example of the successful integration of different objectives in one project, something that could be applied to other projects as well.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL:

Borgarlínan's website with multiple reports: <https://borgarlinan.is/utgefid-efni/skyrslur>