Cape Coast, Ghana, October 2026

PAAPAM Street Design Lab

Applying the PAAPAM Guiding Principles to Improve Street Design Standards in Africa

Context

During the first two days of the conference, participants will explore the regional vision for walking (and cycling), implementation challenges, governance opportunities, research findings, and pathways for action. Building on these discussions, this session provides an opportunity to apply this acquired knowledge to one concrete implementation instrument, the street design standards. For this session, participants will examine how street design guidance can better support walking and cycling by applying the five PAAPAM Guiding Principles: Leave No One Behind, Evidence-Based Practice, Policy Coherence, Community Engagement and Multisectoral Partnerships.

Objectives

This session aims to:

- Explore how PAAPAM's guiding principles can be translated into street design practice.
- Identify key bottlenecks and opportunities across the development, adoption and implementation and evaluation of inclusive street design standards.
- Exchange practical experiences and successful examples from different African contexts.
- Foster connections among practitioners, researchers, government representatives and development partners.
- Generate recommendations that can help inform future active mobility and street design initiatives under PAAPAM.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- Identified the major barriers affecting the development and implementation of street design standards in Africa.
- Documented examples of good practice and innovative approaches from across the continent.
- Developed a set of recommendations organised around the five PAAPAM Guiding Principles and linked to the different stages of the street design standards process[1].
- Established new connections between institutions working on active mobility and street design.

[1] Design stage, adoption stage, implementation stage, evaluation/monitoring stage

Session Programme

Time	Activity
10 min	Introduction, objectives and instructions
15 min	Round 1
15 min	Round 2
15 min	Round 3
15 min	Table leads report
5 min	Collective reflection and closing

Preparation

Required team to run this session smoothly: One moderator and five table leads

Materials required for table discussions: Flipcharts or A1 paper with red/green/blue sticky notes, pens

Indications

Given the time available for the session, participants rotate only three times through the five available tables. They can choose three tables based on their interest, but table leads should ensure that each table has a minimum number of participants for discussion.

Table hosts remain at their tables throughout the session.

Each table addresses one of the PAAPAM Guiding Principles: Leave No One Behind, Evidence-Based Practice, Policy Coherence, Community Engagement, Multisectoral Partnerships.

Discussions may address challenges and opportunities related to the design, adoption, implementation and evaluation/monitoring of street design standards, drawing on participants' own experiences and country contexts.

Rather than holding broad discussions about active mobility, a solution-oriented approach should be taken that can lead to solving the following main question: **How can street design standards better support walking and cycling in line with the PAAPAM guiding principles throughout their development, adoption, implementation and evaluation?**

To achieve this goal, the 15-minute conversations can be framed in three practical stages:

1. Identify the bottleneck: What is preventing better street design outcomes and at which stage of the process does this occur?
2. Share solutions: What examples, practices or experiences have helped overcome similar challenges?
3. Define Action: What support, partnership or action is needed to accelerate progress?

Participants are encouraged to share bottlenecks, successful practices, lessons learned and expertise from their own cities, countries and organisations.

During the reporting time, table leads can focus on presenting the most significant findings from the three rounds. With consolidated feedback from all tables, a canvas can be produced:

PAAPAM Street Design Lab	**Leave No One Behind**	**Evidence-Based Practice**	**Policy Coherence**	**Community Engagement**	**Multisectoral Partnerships**
BIGGEST BOTTLENECKS What is blocking progress?					
PRACTICES & SOLUTIONS What has worked somewhere?					
UNLOCKING ACTION What needs to happen next? Who can help?					

For each bottleneck, solution and action identified, table leads should note the stage of the process concerned: Development (D), Adoption (A), Implementation (I), Monitoring (M) or Evaluation (E).

Table 1: Leave No One Behind

Focus: Inclusive street design that works for people of all ages, genders, abilities and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Guiding question: How can street design standards ensure that nobody is excluded from safe and comfortable mobility?

Discussion Prompts

Bottlenecks (share out loud with participants)

- Which users are often overlooked in current guidance?
- Where do existing standards fail to address inclusion?
- What challenges do vulnerable users face?
- How do existing street designs affect people's ability to reach job markets, public transport, schools and health facilities?
- Which design problems have the greatest effect on women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and low-income communities?

Solutions (allow conversation to flow, share only if required as support for ideas)

- Inclusive design standards
- Universal accessibility examples
- School zone improvements
- Gender-responsive planning
- Design for people with disabilities

Action

- What support, partnership or action is needed to accelerate progress?
- What should every African Street Design Guideline require to ensure inclusion?

Table lead's closing reflection:

"An African street design standard should…"

Table 2: Evidence-Based Practice

Focus: Using data, monitoring and research to inform street design decisions.

Guiding question: How can street design standards be better grounded in African evidence and experience?

Discussion Prompts

Bottlenecks (share out loud with participants)

- What information is missing?
- Which data gaps affect design decisions?
- What standards are imported from other contexts without local adaptation?
- What evidence would help persuade governments and development partners or financiers to adopt and implement Street designs?

Solutions (allow conversation to flow, share only if required as support for ideas)

- Walkability assessments
- Road safety data
- User surveys
- Demonstration projects
- Evaluation frameworks

Action

- What support, partnership or action is needed to accelerate progress?
- What evidence should become standard practice when developing or revising guidelines?

Table lead's closing reflection:

"An African street design standard should…"

Table 3: Policy Coherence

Focus: Aligning street design with transport, health, climate, road safety and urban development objectives

Guiding question: How can street design standards become a shared instrument across sectors rather than a transport-only tool?

Discussion Prompts

Bottlenecks (share out loud with participants)

- Conflicting institutional mandates
- Design standards that prioritise vehicle movement
- Limited cooperation across ministries

Solutions (allow conversation to flow, share only if required as support for ideas)

- Integrated policy frameworks
- National active mobility strategies
- Complete Streets approaches
- Climate-responsive design standards

Action

- What support, partnership or action is needed to accelerate progress?
- Which institutional changes would most improve coherence?

Table lead's closing reflection:

"An African street design standard should…"

Table 4: Community Engagement

Focus: Embedding users and communities into street design processes.

Guiding question: How can communities help shape the design of streets before decisions are made?

Discussion Prompts

Bottlenecks (share out loud with participants)

- Lack of consultation
- Limited representation of vulnerable groups
- Engagement occurring too late in projects
- Engagement mechanisms for connecting communities with stakeholders responsible for street design

Solutions (allow conversation to flow, share only if required as support for ideas)

- Participatory design processes.
- Tactical urbanism.
- Community audits.
- School and youth engagement programmes

Action

- What support, partnership or action is needed to accelerate progress?
- What minimum engagement standard should street design projects follow?

Table lead's closing reflection:

"An African street design standard should…"

Table 5: Multisectoral Partnerships

Focus: Collaboration among all actors needed to deliver effective street design.

Guiding question: Who must work together to make street design standards more effective and more widely implemented?

Discussion Prompts

Bottlenecks (share out loud with participants)

- Siloed working practices
- Limited technical capacity in institutions developing and implementing street design standards
- Weak collaboration mechanisms
- Absence of peer learning, project-based mentoring, regional exchanges or short courses.

Solutions (allow conversation to flow, share only if required as support for ideas)

- Inter-ministerial working groups
- University-government partnerships
- NGO and community partnerships
- Regional knowledge-sharing networks

Action

- What support, partnership or action is needed to accelerate progress?
- What partnerships should be prioritised in the next two years?

Table lead's closing reflection:

"An African street design standard should…"