

The Gendered City

WOMEN AFTER DARK

2025
REPORT
genderedcity.org



THE GENDEREDCITY

Women After Dark Mobility After Dark

The Gendered City recently launched a questionnaire as part of its Women After Dark initiative, aiming to better understand how women navigate cities at night. This effort stems from the foundational belief that mobility is a fundamental human right one that remains unevenly distributed, especially after dark. The survey explores a range of aspects, from women's nighttime travel patterns to their emotional and physical experiences while moving through urban spaces after sunset. It asks critical questions: What routes do women choose and why? What public spaces feel safe or unsafe at night? How do intersecting identities—such as race, age, disability, or occupation—influence their choices?



www.genderedcity.org

“If women cannot move freely, safely, and confidently after dark, they are not fully citizens of their cities.”

Dr. Nourhan Bassam



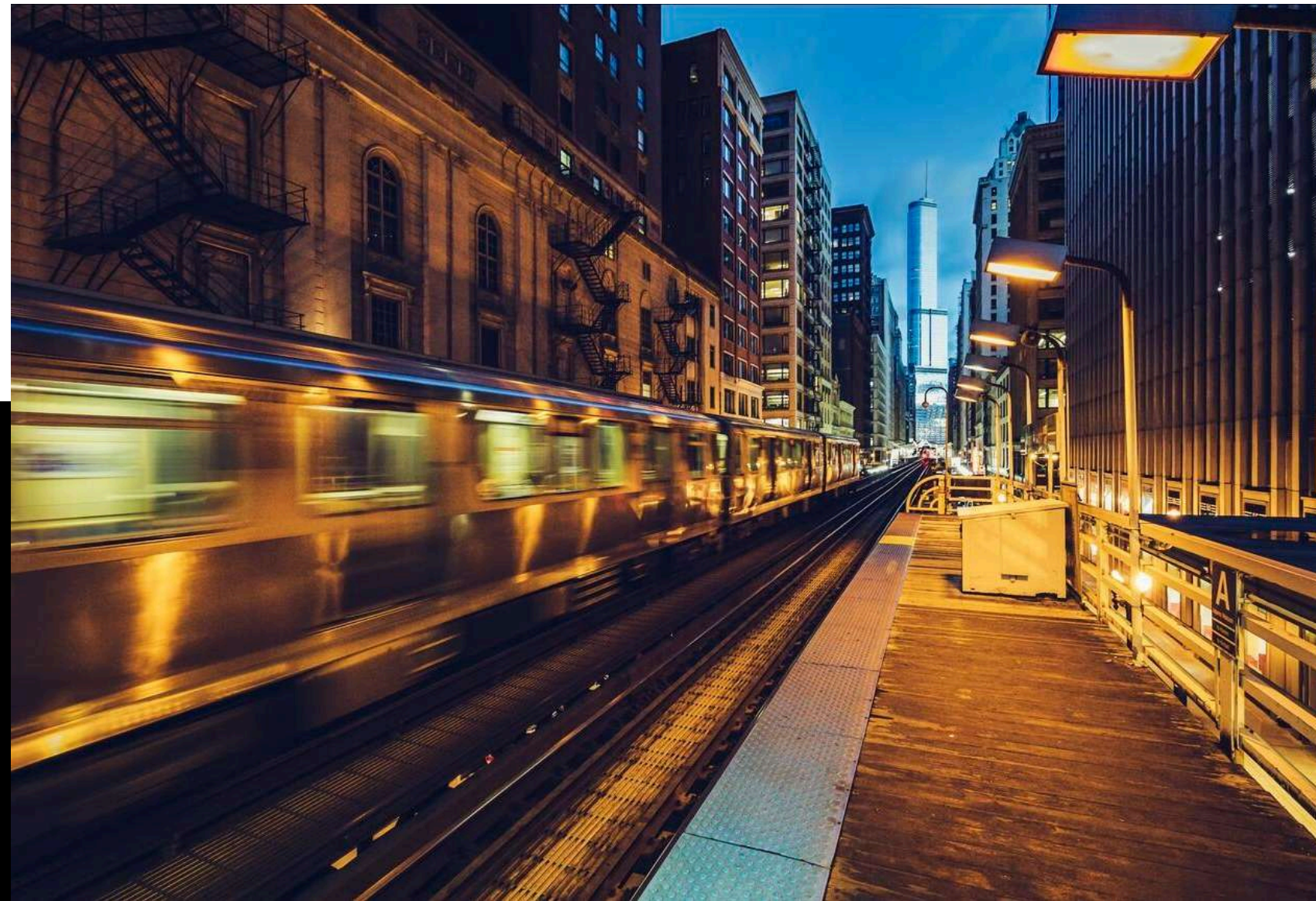
Project Scope

The Gendered City seeks to uncover the invisible barriers that restrict women's freedom of movement after dark, whether due to inadequate lighting, lack of public transport, poorly maintained infrastructure, or the fear of harassment and violence. The project also investigates the emotional labor of planning nighttime movement, the coping strategies women adopt, and the hidden toll these barriers take on their social, professional, and personal lives.

This research aims to inform gender-responsive night-time urban design and governance—pushing city leaders, planners, and policymakers to recognize women as rightful, visible, and safe users of the city 24 hours a day. The insights from the questionnaire will help craft urban policies that center care, inclusion, and dignity—ensuring that night-time citizenship becomes a lived reality for all.

THE GENDEREDCITY Where?

The Women After project was first launched in 2023 across five European cities **Barcelona, Berlin, Rotterdam, Milan, and Paris** as part of the Gendered City. This cross-city launch aimed to capture comparative insights into how women experience mobility after dark in diverse urban contexts shaped by different cultural, spatial, and governance frameworks.



“I always carry headphones and pretend to take a call on my phone when walking late; pretending visible connection makes me feel safer.”

One of the questionnaire respondents

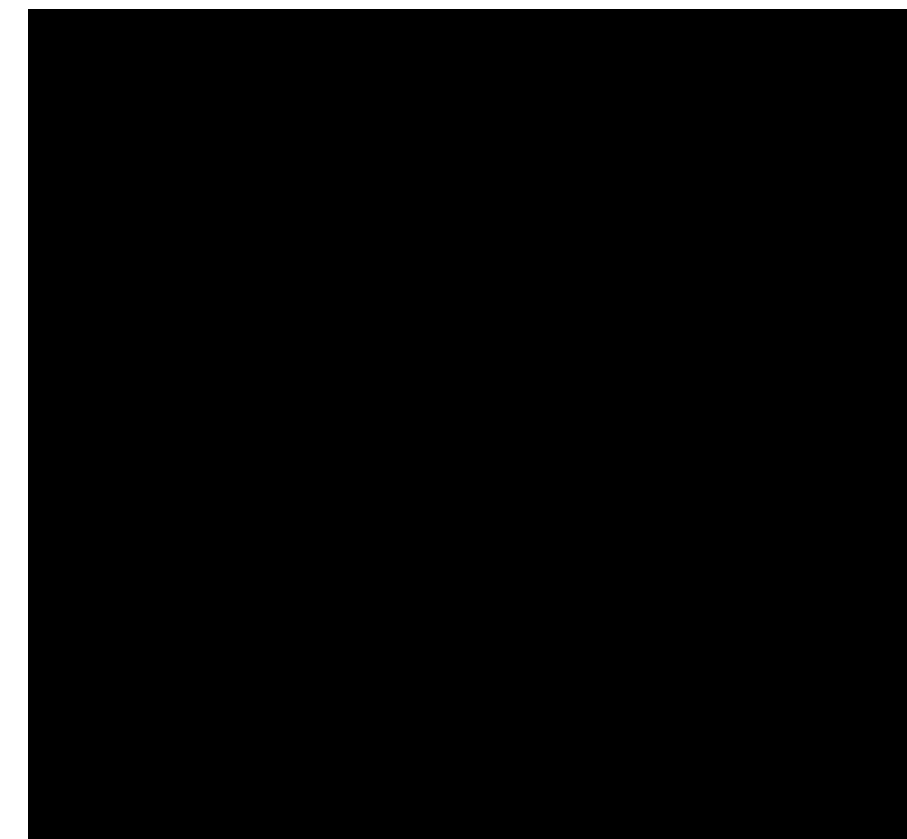
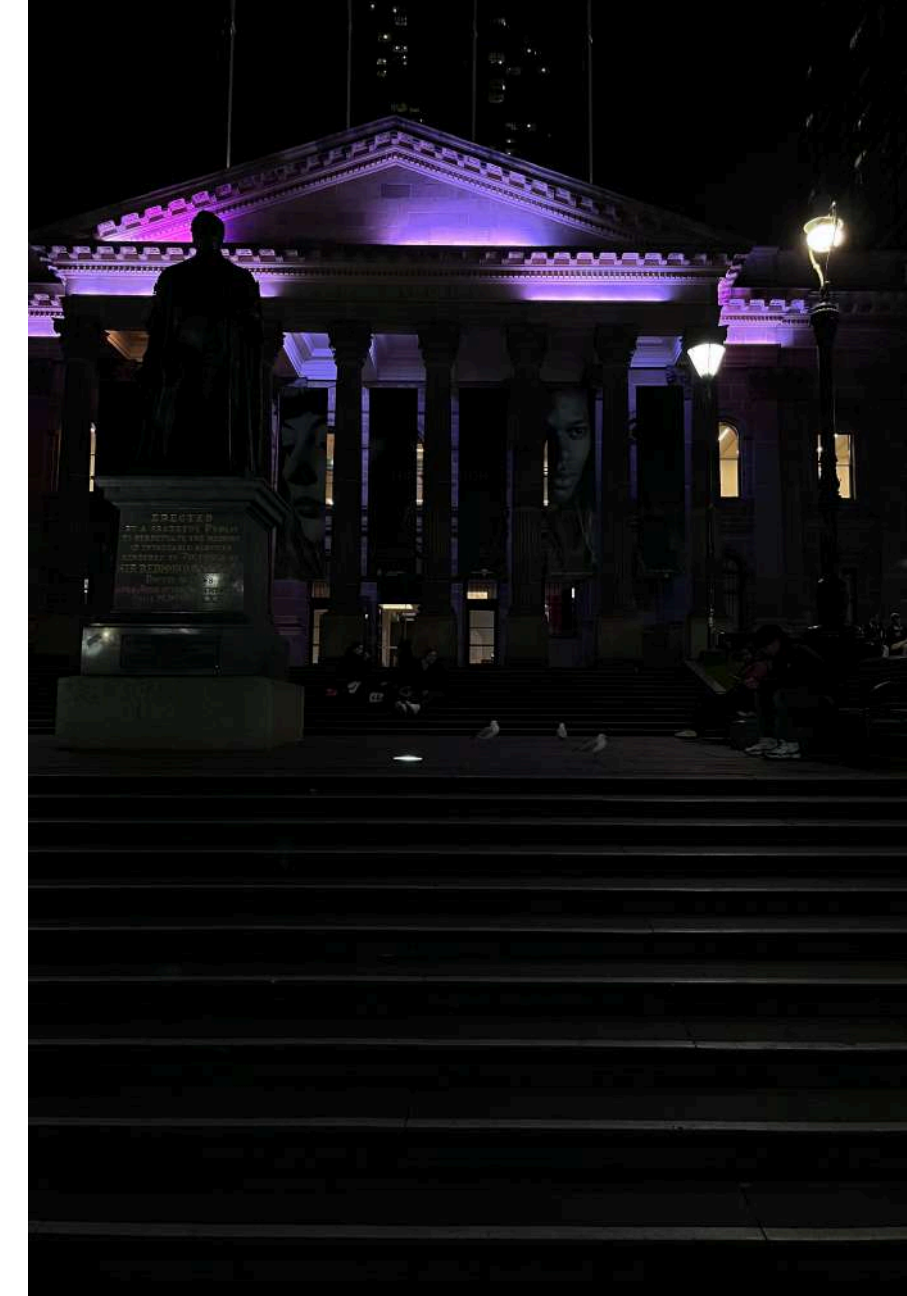
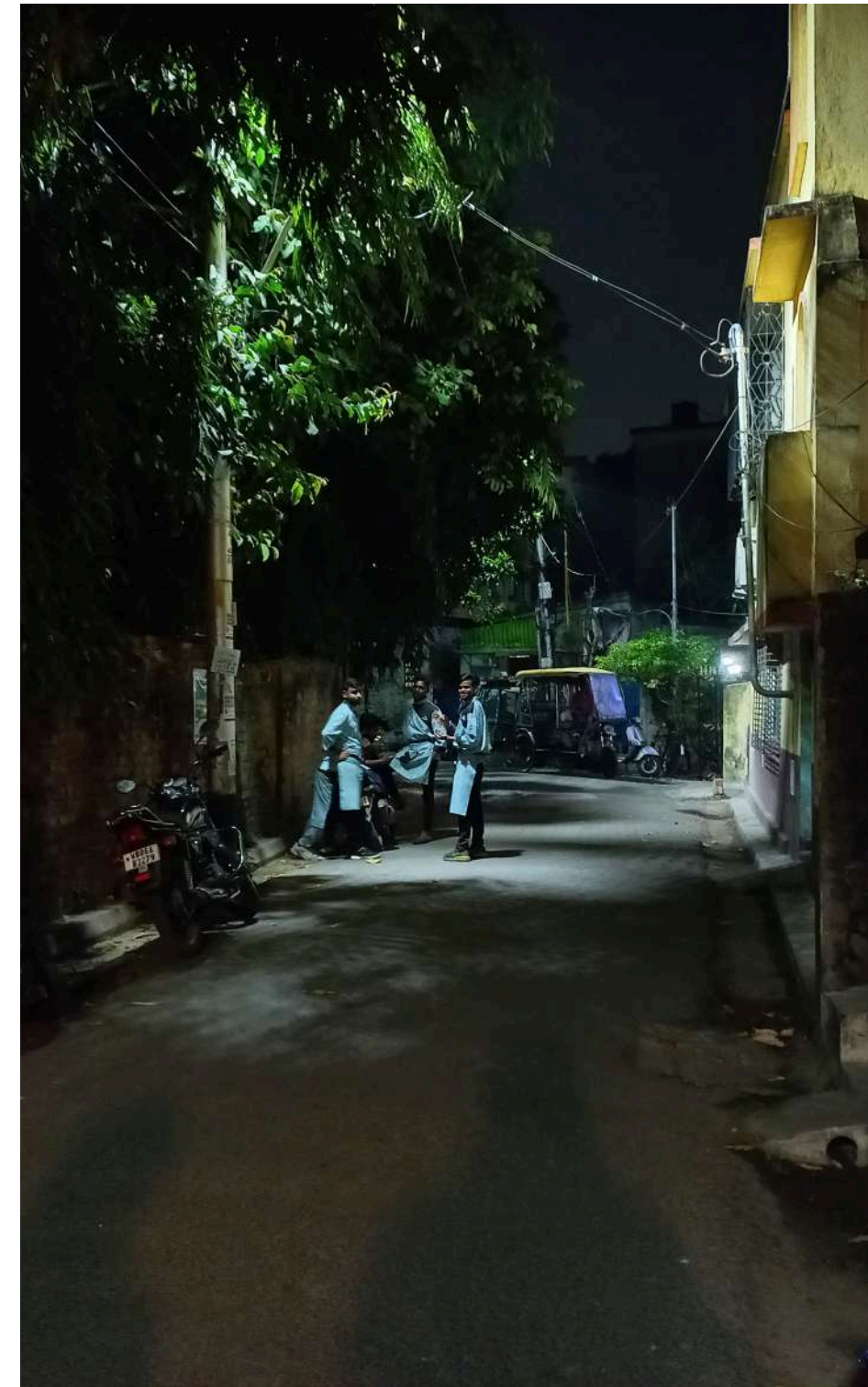
THE GENDEREDCITY

Voices from the Night

The Price We Pay

**“I always plan for the worst.” “I walk with keys in my hand.”
“I prefer to be in a city that doesn’t empty out after 10
p.m.” One respondent confessed, “Sometimes I just don’t
go out. I rearrange my life around light and crowds.”**

The recurring theme was not just fear, but cost in every sense. Women described a price they pay nightly: in money, mental load, altered routines, and opportunities lost. Many called for more frequent public transport after dark, citing long waits at bus stops that feel isolating and vulnerable. Others asked for e-scooters and bikes to remain available past midnight, noting how these could close the “last-mile” gap between stations and home. One participant highlighted a solution from Innsbruck: a subsidized Women’s & Children’s Taxi, with fixed pricing, tracking, and a waiting system designed to ensure riders enter their destination safely.



the Gendered City

Data Talks

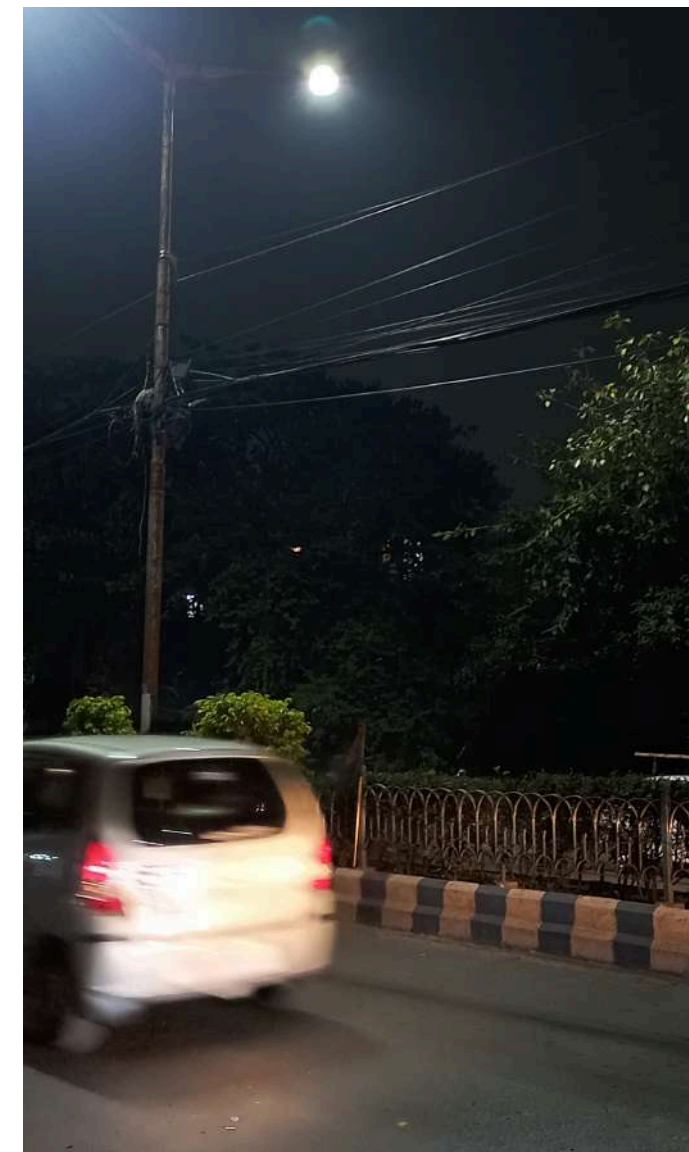
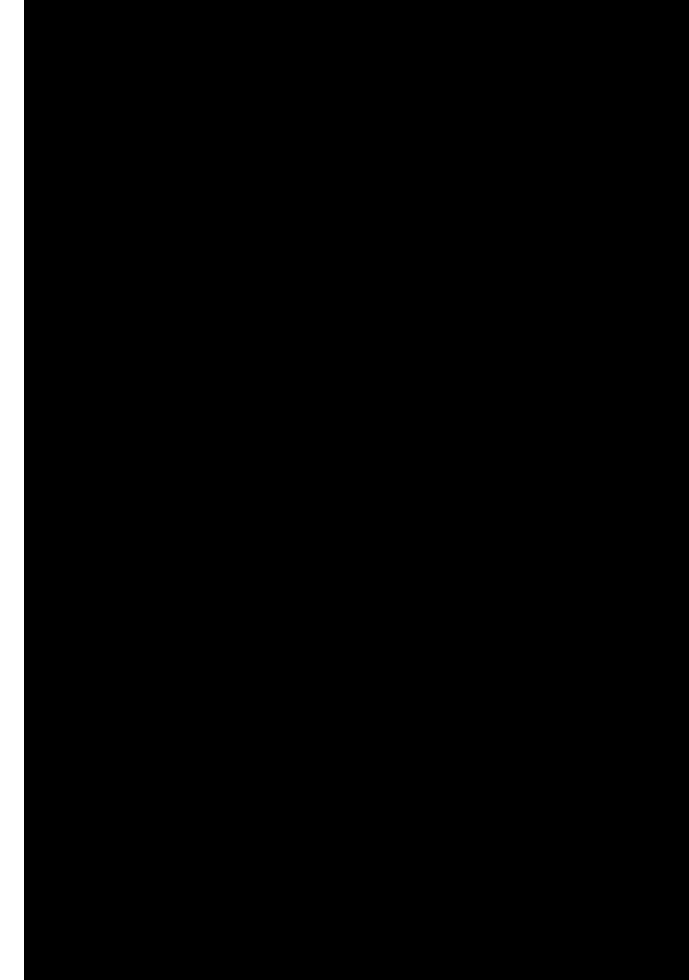
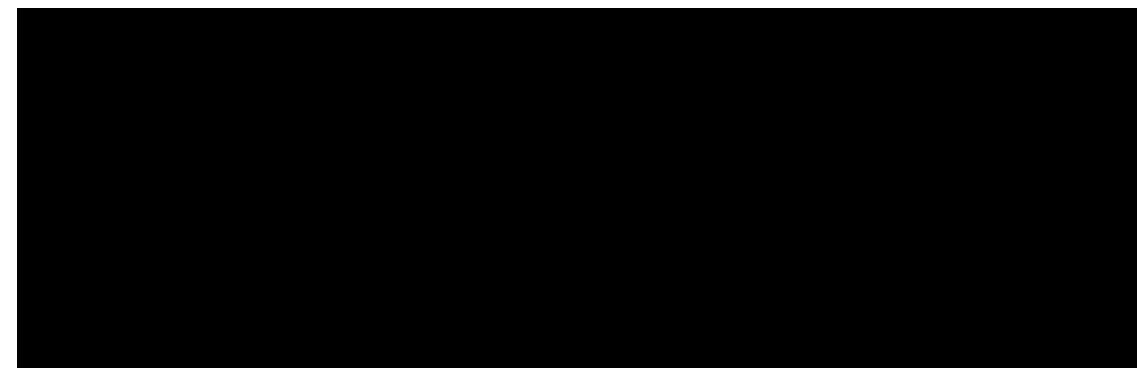
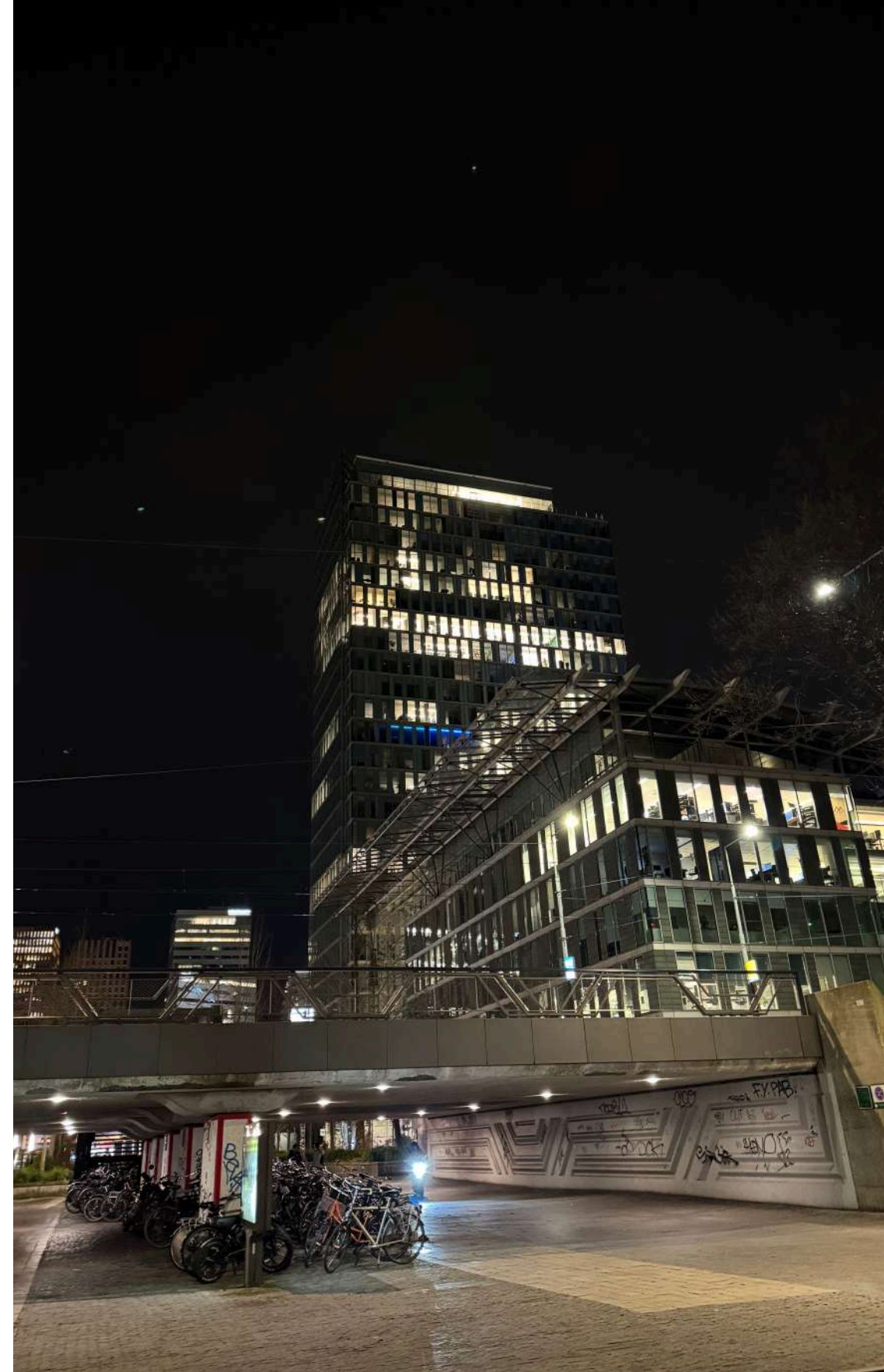
Over 97% of women surveyed reported feeling unsafe in their cities after dark.

THE GENDEREDCITY

More Findings

Over 74% of women reported taking different routes after dark, not because they want to but because they have to.

“I avoid alleyways, tunnels, and areas without people. Even if it takes longer, I choose where I feel watched.”



More Data

only 25.3% said they felt safe enough to use the same routes at night as during the day. Even among them, some qualified their answer: only when with others, or in familiar neighborhoods.

58% avoid walking and choose taxis or rideshares, often at high personal cost.



THE GENDERED CITY

Recommendations



Improve Public Lighting and Visibility

Invest in uniform, bright, and well-maintained street lighting, especially along common pedestrian routes and public transport access points.

Prioritize lighting in parks, alleyways, and other currently poorly lit areas identified as high-risk by women users.

Implement lighting designs that reduce shadows and blind spots to increase visibility and perceived safety.



Increase Active and Passive Surveillance

Promote “eyes on the street” through increased pedestrian traffic, community policing, and mixed-use development that encourages activity during evening hours.



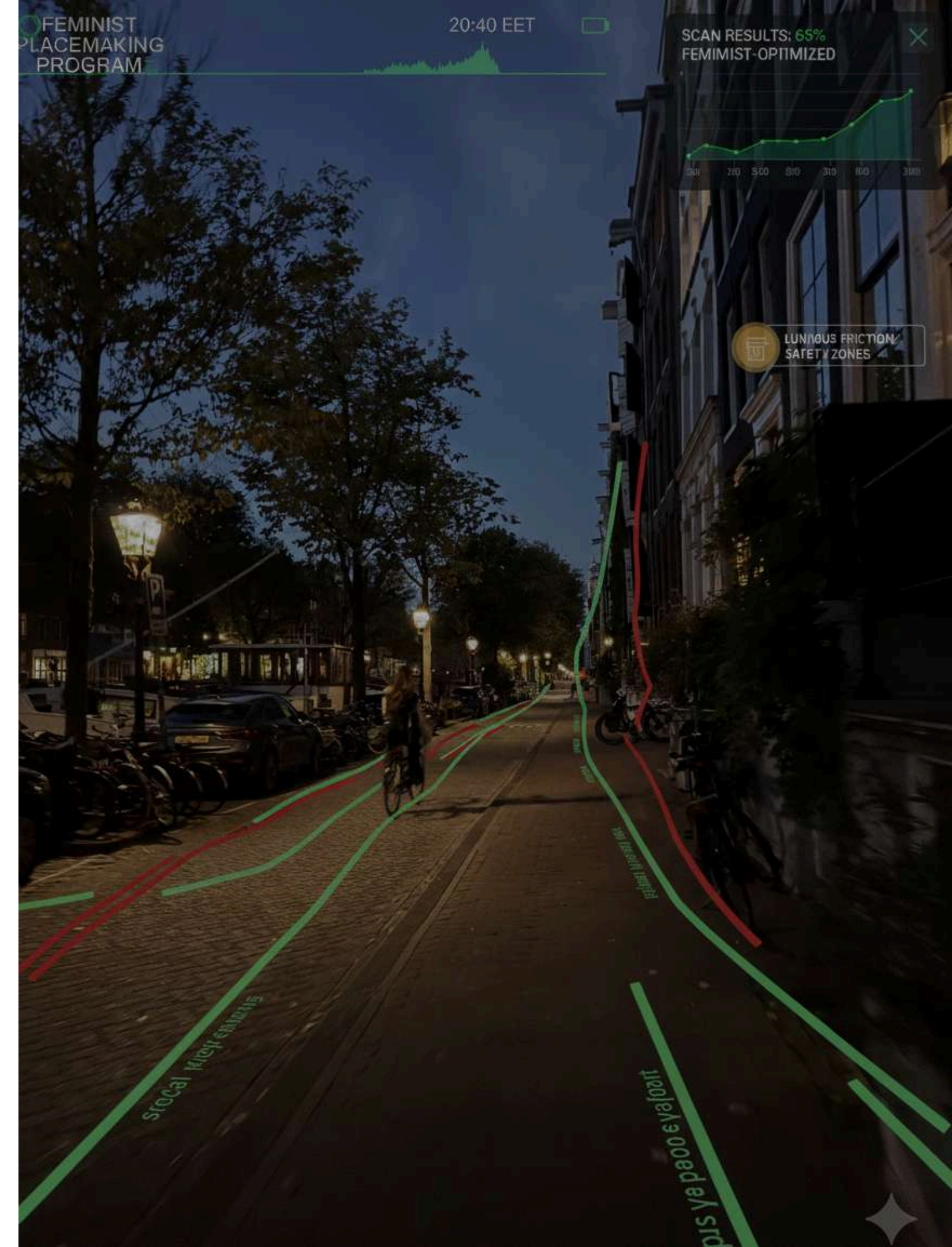
Design for Inclusive Urban Mobility

Develop safe, accessible, and connected pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that is well-lit and regularly maintained.

Provide affordable, reliable, and safe public transport options with increased frequency and coverage during nighttime hours.



- ✓ **Increase visibility and sightlines:** trim vegetation, avoid hidden corners, improve transparency of building edges, and reduce visual barriers.
- ✓ **Activate ground floors:** encourage cafés, shops, and community uses that create passive surveillance and a sense of presence.
- ✓ **Create clear and continuous pedestrian routes:** avoid dead ends, isolated shortcuts, and poorly maintained paths.
- ✓ **Provide safe waiting areas:** bus stops, taxi pick-up points, and entrances should be visible, sheltered, and well connected.
- ✓ **Add rest and refuge points:** benches, open businesses, staffed facilities, and safe indoor places to enter if needed.
- ✓ **Ensure maintenance and cleanliness:** neglected spaces often increase fear and signal lack of care.
- ✓ **Support multiple escape routes:** avoid enclosed spaces with only one way out.
- ✓ **Include emergency support:** visible help points, clear contact information, and access to assistance.
- ✓ **Address social behavior and governance:** combine design with policies on harassment, transport safety, policing, and maintenance.



Stay In Touch

All data is the intellectual property of The Gendered City. Any quote or reproduction must be clearly accredited. For permissions or collaborations, please contact us directly.

info@genderedcity.org

genderedcity.org

Let's keep the conversation going.

