

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

The new approach to transport planning

Why S.U.M.P.?

The European Commission widely promotes the creation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (S.U.M.P.). But if your city already has a transport plan, why do you need yet another plan? The answer is that S.U.M.P. is not an entirely new plan. It builds on the existing transport plan, but it uses a different approach in order to overcome the shortcomings in traditional transport planning.

A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan is a strategic plan designed to satisfy the mobility needs of people and businesses in cities and their surroundings for a better quality of life. It builds on existing planning practices and takes due consideration of integration, participation, and evaluation principles.

Source: Guidelines – developing and implementing a sustainable urban mobility plan. P.8

Traditional Transport Planning	Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning
Focus on traffic	→ Focus on people
Primary objectives: Traffic flow capacity and speed	→ Primary objectives: Accessibility and quality of life, as well as sustainability, economic viability, social equity, health and environmental quality
Modal-focussed	→ Balanced development of all relevant transport modes and shift towards cleaner and more sustainable transport modes
Infrastructure focus	→ Integrated set of actions to achieve cost-effective solutions
Sectorial planning document	→ Sectorial planning document that is consistent and complementary to related policy areas (such as land use and spatial planning; social services; health; enforcement and policing; etc.)
Short- and medium-term delivery plan	→ Short- and medium-term delivery plan embedded in a long-term vision and strategy
Related to an administrative area	→ Related to a functioning area based on travel-to-work patterns
Domain of traffic engineers	→ Interdisciplinary planning teams
Planning by experts	→ Planning with the involvement of stakeholders using a transparent and participatory approach
Limited impact assessment	→ Regular monitoring and evaluation of impacts to inform a structured learning and improvement process

The main differences between S.U.M.P. and traditional transport planning

Source: Guidelines – developing and implementing a sustainable urban mobility plan. P.7

In large cities the S.U.M.P. approach has led to ambitious high-profile planning processes. However, the approach also helps small communities and medium-sized cities to address mobility planning in a systematic and sustainable way.

Detailed guidance is available in several languages in the brochure [Guidelines – developing and implementing a sustainable urban mobility plan](http://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans) on www.eltis.org/mobility-plans.

Ten important benefits of S.U.M.P.

1. IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

There is strong evidence that sustainable urban mobility planning raises the quality of life in an urban area. Well-coordinated policies, as defined by a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, result in a wide range of benefits, such as more attractive public spaces, improved road safety, better health, and less air and noise pollution.

2. SAVING COSTS – CREATING ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Mobility is a major enabler for a local economy. A healthier environment and reduced congestion helps to substantially reduce costs to the local community and attract new businesses. In the global and national competition of urban centres, a well organised and sustainable city is also a more attractive city for investors. A sustainable city simply has a much better “business case” than a city without a clear forward-looking mobility policy.

3. CONTRIBUTING TO BETTER HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

More sustainable mobility directly translates into better air quality and less noise. Travelling more actively (by walking and cycling more often) is good for citizens’ health. For a city it clearly pays off to invest in less noise and better air quality in the medium to long term. Cities need to play their part in reducing greenhouse gases in the transport sector. Sustainable urban mobility planning is a core element of any climate policy.

4. MAKING MOBILITY SEAMLESS AND IMPROVING ACCESS

Sustainable urban mobility planning is an excellent tool to create multi-modal door-to-door transport solutions. Bringing different actors together ensures that particular access needs of citizens and businesses are effectively provided for.

5. MAKING MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES

At a time when financial resources are limited, it is even more important to ensure that the solutions adopted make the most cost-effective use of the funds available. Sustainable urban mobility planning changes the focus from road-based infrastructure to a balanced mix of measures including lower cost mobility management measures.

Adopting the polluter-pays principle also introduces an additional revenue stream which can be used to finance alternatives to car use.

6. WINNING PUBLIC SUPPORT

Involvement of stakeholders and citizens is a basic principle of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan. A city government that shows that it cares about what its citizens need and want and that involves its stakeholders appropriately is in a much better position to obtain a high level of “public legitimacy” it reduces the risk of opposition to the implementation of ambitious policies.

7. PREPARING BETTER PLANS

Planners, especially when traditionally focused on developing infrastructure, can better understand the mobility needs of different user groups when receiving early feedback. Stakeholders sometimes come up with very effective solutions, because they may be more familiar with a specific situation.

An integrated and interdisciplinary approach to planning (with different departments bringing in their expertise) helps to put a mobility plan on a broader basis. It ensures that the plan fosters a balanced development of all relevant transport modes, while encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes. It thereby caters for all users with regards to their access and mobility needs.

8. FULFILLING LEGAL OBLIGATIONS EFFECTIVELY

Cities have to meet many, sometimes competing legal requirements. The legal obligations for air quality improvement and noise abatement are only two examples of a range of national and European regulations. A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan offers an effective way to respond through one comprehensive strategy.

9. USING SYNERGIES, INCREASING RELEVANCE

Urban mobility problems often span administrative boundaries, relate to multiple policy areas or concern a wide range of departments and institutions. Sustainable urban mobility planning seeks solutions for the “functioning city” with its connections to surrounding areas and the national and European transport network. A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan inspires a collaborative planning culture across different policy areas and sectors and between different governance levels within the “functioning city”. This cooperative planning culture supports the finding of solutions that reflect the connected nature of urban mobility.

10. MOVING TOWARDS A NEW MOBILITY CULTURE

As examples of many cities show, the outcome of continued sustainable urban mobility planning is a common vision of a new mobility culture: a vision, that is agreed by the major political groups and shared by the institutions and citizens of an urban society; a vision that goes beyond electoral cycles and that can include less attractive elements when they provide long-term benefits.

Source: Guidelines – developing and implementing a sustainable urban mobility plan. P.11-12