

Policy Brief

Promoting the low carbon economy in the EU: planning for sustainable urban mobility

This Policy Brief highlights Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans as a modern planning concept to promote low carbon urban mobility.

1. Introduction

Cities and urban areas are a particular focal area for action to promote low carbon, resource-efficient transport. Most journeys begin and end in cities. Cities, towns and suburbs provide home to almost three quarters (72.4%) of the EU-28's population and account for some 85% of the Union's GDP.

In many urban areas, however, increasing demand for mobility has created a situation that is not sustainable. Congestion is costing the EU about 1% of its GDP every year and it is primarily concentrated in urban areas. Some 69% of road accidents and 38% of Europe's road fatalities occur in cities. And, while cities in virtually all Member States are struggling to comply with the legal requirements for air quality, urban transport is responsible for about a quarter of CO₂ emissions from transport and up to 70% of other pollutants from transport.

Improving accessibility of urban areas and providing high-quality, sustainable mobility and transport in these areas, has therefore become one of the major challenges for cities in Europe. To deal with this challenge, the need to apply more sustainable and integrative planning processes has been widely recognised.

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) have gained considerable momentum in recent years as the planning concept to address the transport-related challenges and problems of urban areas.

2. What is a SUMP?

The 2013 Urban Mobility Package sets out a concept for Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). The concept reflects a broad consensus on the main features of a modern and sustainable urban mobility and transport plan.

A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan fosters a balanced development of all relevant transport modes, while encouraging a shift towards more sustainable ones.

It considers the functional urban area and proposes action on urban mobility as part of a wider urban and territorial strategy.

In contrast to traditional transport planning approaches, the new concept places particular emphasis on the involvement of citizens and stakeholders, the coordination of policies between sectors (transport, land-use and spatial planning, environment, economic development, social policy, health, road safety, etc.); between authority levels and between neighbouring authorities.

It requires rigorous analysis of the current context and problems related to urban mobility and an understanding of how these factors change and grow in time.

Measures in the SUMP include organisational, operational and infrastructure matters that would typically address

- public transport
- walking and cycling

- intermodality
- urban road safety
- road transport (flowing and stationary)
- urban logistics
- mobility management
- Intelligent Transport Systems

Measures in the plans are selected based on evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of their potential to reach stated goals and objectives. The importance of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the measures, and of the SUMP in general, is highlighted in the SUMP concept.

3. Why prepare a SUMP?

Cities have been developing SUMPs for a variety of reasons. The most frequently stated ones include:

- Improving quality of life, the environment, and/or better health, insofar as there is clear evidence that sustainable urban mobility planning can help improve air quality, reduce noise and increase safety and security and the overall quality of life in urban areas
- Saving costs and creating economic benefits: Mobility has a strong influence on local economies. Reduced congestion and a healthier environment help to sustainably reduce costs to the local community and attract new business and investors

In addition to the above-mentioned, other reasons relate to making mobility seamless and improving access; promoting public and active transport (i.e. walking and cycling); creating a new mobility culture, etc.

Most of these reasons are often also used to justify individual projects or measures or 'conventional' urban transport plans. So, what are the more specific reasons for the adoption of the SUMP concept?

From experiences in various cities it has become evident that there are specific benefits related to application of SUMP. These benefits mainly relate to the application of the structured, integrated (i.e. area, sectors, measures, stakeholders) and participatory approach adopted in the SUMP. Specific benefits or advantages of SUMP include:

- **Increasing relevance:** a SUMP inspires a collaborative planning culture across different policy areas and sectors, and between different governance and geographical levels. This ensures that the proposed measures are actually relevant to multiple areas, stakeholders etc.
- **Winning public support:** Transparent, structured problem analysis and involvement of stakeholders is a basic principle of a SUMP. It ensures a high level of "public legitimacy", thereby reducing the risk of opposition to the implementation of specific measures.
- **Increasing effectiveness:** there is ample evidence that specific measures can affect each other both positively and negatively. For example, providing (online) information on public transport (e.g. route planner) can help promote the use of public transport in which the city has invested. On the other hand, for example, maintaining abundant (cheap) parking facilities in the inner-city could negatively impact on the use of public transport, park and ride facilities, etc.

There are many similar synergies between the broad range of measures and sets of measures typically included in SUMPs. By adopting the integrated approach to SUMPs the synergies of these measures can be better explored and contribute to their greater effectiveness. In addition, SUMP offers opportunities to reach more people and respond better to the needs of different user groups. This also increases the effectiveness of the measures.

- **Increasing efficiency:** Selection of measures is guided not only by effectiveness but also by value for money. In times of tight city budgets, including for urban transport and mobility,

it is crucial to get the maximum impact of the resources spent. This requires a basic assessment of options with an eye on costs and benefits, including those that cannot be easily measured or valued, like those related to greenhouse gas emissions or air quality impacts. Such assessment of costs and benefits, through multi criteria analysis and/or CBA (cost benefit analysis), is embedded in the SUMP methodology.

The potential for creating these benefits is such that various authorities in Member States as well as international funding agencies have made the development of a sustainable urban transport plan, or specifically of a SUMP, a condition for funding of urban transport projects. In various Member States the existence of a SUMP would fulfil an ex-ante conditionality for receiving European Structural and Investment (ESI) funding for urban transport measures.

4. How to develop a SUMP?

Urban mobility planning experiences, and furthermore, exchange of the lessons from these experiences among professional planners, policy makers and stakeholders, have provided valuable input for the development of guidelines on SUMP.

Two frequently used guidelines on overall development and application of SUMP have been developed by the EU and by JASPERS. Both offer concrete suggestions on how to apply the SUMP concept and prepare a sustainable urban mobility strategy based on a long-term vision.

Each method results in an integrated and sustainable urban mobility (SUMP), but the steps followed during the design process slightly differ. The EU SUMP guidelines put more emphasis on the participatory aspects, whilst the JASPERS guide puts more emphasis on the application of appraisal-, impact assessment and CBA methods to select the most cost-effective package of measures.

Various other guidelines have been developed for specific parts of the planning process (e.g. stakeholder involvement, selection of measures, etc.), and on the design and integration of specific measures in a SUMP. Most of these have been prepared as part of cooperation projects funded under different EU programmes, such as CIVITAS, Intelligent Energy Europe programme (STEER), and H2020. Further good practice examples have been identified and documented within programmes like European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Smart Cities and Communities, URBACT and Interreg. Apart from the dedicated project and programme sites, information on many of these projects, as well as best practices, news stories and training material, can be found on ELTIS, the European web portal on urban transport and mobility.

Overall, these sources provide valuable opportunities to collect and exchange information on what works and what not as concerns sustainable urban mobility planning. Participants in Interreg Europe projects on sustainable urban mobility can both use and add to this experience.

5. Interreg and SUMP

Fourteen Interreg Europe projects work on developing and implementing sustainable urban mobility measures. Six of these projects were launched in 2016, eight should start shortly in 2017. The projects cover broad range of topics related to sustainable urban mobility planning, such as:

- SUMP planning and process (i.e. SUMP concept, analysis, policy, public and stakeholder involvement, scheme appraisal, M&E)
- public and shared transport
- accessible transport
- clean and energy-efficient vehicles
- demand and traffic management
- mobility management (i.e. sustainable transport awareness)
- non motorised transport
- urban logistics

The Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platforms are facilitating the exchange of lessons learned among regional actors and helping them develop tailor-made approaches to their particular challenges. Information about the experiences and results of Interreg Europe projects will increasingly become available on Low-Carbon Economy Policy Learning Platform.

Further links:

EU policy:

- [EC, Communication "Urban Mobility Package" COM \(2013\) 913](#)

Key information portals:

- [ELTIS](#), the European web portal on urban transport and mobility
- [European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans](#)
- [The CIVITAS Initiative](#) has tested and implemented over 800 measures and urban transport solutions Europe-wide as part of demonstration projects in more than 80 Living Lab cities

Guidelines

- [SUMP guidelines](#)
- [The CH4ALLENGE](#) project offers guidelines on four pressing challenges in sustainable urban mobility planning: participation, cooperation, selection of measures, and monitoring and evaluation
- [The ENDURANCE](#) project has published fact sheets from cities that have implemented Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. Topics covered by fact sheets include citizen participation, institutional co-operation, and monitoring and evaluation
- [The Poly-SUMP](#) project provides guidelines for the development of SUMPs in polycentric regions
- [The Sustainable Urban Logistics Plan \(SULP\) Guidelines](#) developed by the Enclose project aim to promote sustainable city logistics in small and medium-sized cities

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