

Position paper

Prise de Position – Stellungnahme

JUNE 2013

SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLANS

As part of the future Urban Mobility Package

UITP (Union Internationale des Transports Publics) is the international organisation of public transport, it is based in Brussels and covers all urban, suburban and regional public transport modes (bus, metro, light rail, regional rail and waterborne public transport). It gathers over 3.100 members worldwide, public transport operators, their authorities and suppliers.

In the European Union, the UITP EU Committee (EUC) represents the views of the public transport undertakings of the 27 member countries. It is closely following and participating in the elaboration of the different European policies and initiatives that have an impact on urban, suburban and regional public passenger transport.

Key facts for public transport in the EU 27:

Passenger journeys: 60 billion/year, more or less equally shared between road modes (mainly bus) and rail modes (urban, suburban and regional rail)

Economic value of public transport services: € 130 - 150 billion/year or 1 – 1.2% of GDP

Employment: direct employment 1.2 million and indirect employment 2 - 2.5 indirect jobs for each direct job on average

1. Executive Summary

In mid-2013, the Urban Mobility Package is set to be published. There are currently discussions whether it should include a legislative proposal on making Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) mandatory for larger agglomerations/cities or whether they should be a mandatory condition for access to regional and cohesion funds for urban transport measures. EU public transport undertakings would like to make the following recommendations when considering such as proposal:

- An integrated SUMP embedded in a wider city plan is the key to well-organized cities ready to take up the urban challenge ahead. A SUMP with public transport as its backbone must be complemented and supported by efforts in other local policy areas such as land use planning, mobility management, combined mobility and so on.
- While cities face common challenges, cities need flexibility to tailor solutions to their own unique circumstances. As such, UITP does not support setting fixed rules for SUMP as it would stifle innovation and limit the solutions available.
- Establishing a legal framework for the establishment, validation and certification of SUMP would involve financial and human resources. EU public transport undertakings feel that these resources should be focused on addressing urban mobility challenges rather than unnecessary administrative matters.
- UITP opposes the requirement for a standardised and/or certified SUMP to access EU funding. The aim should be to support and encourage local competent public transport authorities to tackle their unique mobility challenges in a more holistic way with public transport at its core.

2. Introduction

The 2011 Transport White Paper observes that many cities have established SUMP, but it is not yet the norm. The Commission therefore proposes to establish a European framework for the development of SUMP including procedures and support mechanisms. The Transport White Paper also proposes to link access to regional development and cohesion funds for urban transport projects to the existence of validated SUMP which give due consideration to the relevant EU policy objectives as identified above.

3. An integrated approach to SUMP

In order to overcome urban mobility challenges, cities need to encourage a modal shift in favour of more sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, walking and cycling. An integrated long-term strategy, developed and implemented through a SUMP, is key to achieving significant modal shift goals.

A SUMP with public transport as the backbone of urban development and of a city's sustainable mobility system must be complemented and supported by efforts in other local policy areas such as land use planning, mobility management, combined mobility, and many more (environment, energy, social services, health care etc). Planning tools are necessary to ensure the public transport system expands in parallel with new urban development to avoid sprawl. These plans will have to be in line with other local and regional development policies and goals

to ensure the same vision is put in place and pursued consistently. This will ensure SUMP support an integrated approach not only within urban areas, it will also ensure that plans meet local and regional needs.

An urban transport system built on these principles ensures accessibility, improves safety and security and increases business attractiveness and economic growth. The list of positive effects is long, and a sustainable transport system also reduces pollution, GHG emissions and energy consumption, improves the cost-efficiency of goods and passenger transportation, and enhances the quality of the urban environment. The European Commission can do much to support and encourage cities to develop plans along these lines, with public transport at its core.

4. Flexibility of design

It will be important that action at the European level does not restrict the flexibility of cities to adopt, design, implement and, if necessary, adapt such tools according to local issues and circumstances. The Commission should not seek to prescribe top-down solutions, but to provide the competent authorities in Member States at the local level with a sound but flexible framework for urban transport planning and a strong support structure. Guidance from the Commission is useful but public transport/local authorities must be free to decide how to put this into practice.

Costly mandatory procedures could hamper SUMP development and implementation. The time and cost burden imposed by audit and certification could far outweigh the benefits of the SUMP concept. Placing disproportionate burdens on a sector that is already under substantial cuts to funding could result in these tight budgetary times lead to reduced public transport services. Pushing public transport ridership away to single-occupancy cars will have adverse implications for cities.

In addition, audit and certification does not necessarily guarantee the delivery of quality SUMP or progress towards better sustainable mobility. The existing SUMP guidelines are helpful for urban planners but the European Commission should not expect or require all local public transport authorities to produce the same type of detailed plans as this is overly bureaucratic.

5. Funding conditionality based on SUMP

UITP agrees with the need to ensure that EU funding is spent on sustainable transport projects, such the maintenance and development of public transport. At the same time, UITP opposes the requirement for a standardised and/or certified SUMP to access EU funding.

As mentioned above, the audit and certification of SUMP as a condition for funding eligibility would be counter-productive and be unnecessary red tape. The use of quality management frameworks, without making them mandatory, could be a better option to ensure that money is being well spent.

Those cities which have decided to adopt SUMP on a voluntary basis should be able to access financial support from the Commission to ensure their effective implementation.

6. Support for further initiatives to exchange best practice and information

UITP supports any actions at European level to further spread information and exchange of best practice on the introduction and update of SUMP.

7. SUMP and modification of Regulation 1370/2007

UITP would welcome clarification from the Commission on the interactions between SUMP and the Urban Transport Plans put forward in the proposal for the modification of Regulation 1370/2007.