CityConsult: SUMP-PLUS Transition Pathways

LESSON on City vision, objectives and targets

- The starting point for developing a Transition Pathway is to define a long-term vision for the future city, for the next 20-30 years.

- Thinking about and visioning for long-term city futures is sometimes called 'urban foresight', for example in the Cities of Tomorrow report published by the European Commission (EC 2011), where the insights of 50 experts and cities have been compiled to discuss the future of the European model of sustainable urban development. This document emphasises the need to build capacity for long-term visioning and strategic planning, and that foresight should be seen as being central to new forms of participatory governance – collaboration between sectors and stakeholders – needed to respond to the challenges faced by European cities.

- Beyond the traditional 'triple helix' concept, many co-creation processes are today based on the concept of the 'quadruple helix', emphasising the participation of civil society as crucial, addition to government, industry/business and academia/universities.

Starting points

- Adopting the Vision & Validate approach, vision development should not be based on analysis of forecasts and future possible trends, rather the essence of backcasting is that the vision can be trend-breaking and normative.

- We argue that mobility should be thought of as an enabler of urban living and economic activity, rather than considered as an end in itself or in a silo.

- Developing a vision thus involves asking: What do we want the city to look like, in 2040 or 2050, and how can mobility support this? Ideally, there is thus a broader vision of the future city – including land use and housing development, energy transition, health and well-being, public services – that can be used as a starting point for considering the urban mobility transition.

- If there is an existing local vision or development strategy over such a time horizon, this can be used as a starting point for further elaborating the mobility-specific aspects, to produce a vision for mobility in the future city– hence the reference to a potential review rather than a development 'from scratch'

- If an adopted SUMP includes a vision with a 20-30 time horizon, this can be reviewed and potentially adopted as a starting point for the Transition Pathway

- If existing visions for urban mobility are only articulated for a period shorter than 20 years, we recommend starting vision development 'from the beginning'.

A vision document typically includes:

- A vision statement: a short paragraph or list describing the city of the future

- Concrete images of the future: maps, plans, illustrations of future living or built environment

- Some visions also include 'personas': narratives describing the daily mobility of imaginary residents of the city, with different socio-demographic profile

In cities that do not yet have any mobility vision in place, e.g. smaller cities, cities with limited resources or cities without a sustainable mobility planning culture, a more simplified process may be appropriate. Such a process, was successfully trialled by the Municipality of Platanias (GR), as part of SUMP-PLUS

1. Inputs to developing the wider vision and transport objectives

Background briefing notes should be prepared in advance of the vision workshop, covering:

- Summary of existing policy and planning documents that are relevant to the development of a broadly-based vision.

- Data on existing conditions and expected future developments. This would cover basics such as population and employment, tourist numbers, etc; and data on air pollution, congestion, traffic accidents, as available.

A simplified vision development process

2. The vision-development process workshop

'SWOT' exercise covering aspects/topics related to sustainability

- The Strengths of the city: what do participants like about it (as residents, business owners, etc)? Why do people come to the city?

- The Weaknesses: what do they dislike about the city, maybe feel ashamed of? What might be putting people off from coming here? How do traffic and current public transport services contribute to these problems?

- The Opportunities: what are the city's potential strengths, and how might these be built upon and better exploited in the future?

- The Threats facing the city: what are its vulnerabilities? Where might future competition come from?

3. The long-term vision

(a) Show participants examples of:

➢ Similar size/functioning urban areas from around the world: which photographs do they like or dislike, and why?

➢ Vision statements from around the world: which ones seem inappropriate, or resonate with their feelings about their city?

(b) Developing a vision for the city (refer back to SWOT analysis):

➢ What type of place would people like the city to be in 20-30 years' time: o For residents and their children? o For employers and employees? o For tourists and other visitors

➢ What words would they use to describe the experience of being here then?

➢ What might it look like, visually/physically? § What types of services and quality of life would it provide?

➢ How might carbon reduction/elimination targets affect this?

3. The long-term vision

(c) The vision statement:

- ➤ Invite participants to write their own vision statement, or identify key components of a vision

- ➤ Discuss various ideas and see if can agree a short list – and, ideally, a consensus.

Once a city has agreed on its long-term mobility vision, the next step is to agree long-term objectives and targets that align with and expand on the vision.

Objectives are statements that describe improvements that the city is seeking, translating the vision into concrete directions for the development of the urban mobility system.

Targets translate these objectives into measurable form, by stating exactly what should be achieved and by what specific year, with reference to a particular indicator.

There might be existing strategies in place, including a potential SUMP, with objectives and targets. Rather than 'extending' these into the longer-term future 20 or 30 years from now, we recommend starting with the freshly formulated or updated long-term vision.

How to develop objectives and targets

The SUMP Guidelines advise on how to develop objectives and targets; the starting point should be to analyse the vision in greater detail, to identify concrete objectives. For each objective, one or more 'Targets' should be defined.

- These should be defined against a baseline: a quantitative indicator representing the current mobility conditions. For example, emission reductions of 30% by 2030, against a 2020 baseline. If you do not have a baseline figure for a particular target, some data collection might be necessary, to create one.

- Targets should be 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound). But the definition used - "based on technical, operational and financial competences available and the stakeholder arrangements/commitments that have been made" is too limited. The very motivation for developing a Transition Pathway is to envision the desired future city beyond these existing framework conditions, rather than as being constrained by them.

The European Commission has defined a set of 18 indicators under the name SUMI (Sustainable Urban Mobility Indicators) that can be used to define objectives and targets, of which the SUMP Guidelines highlight four as core indicators: (i) road safety, (ii) access to public transport, (iii) greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and (iv) air quality.

There are EU climate targets for climate-neutrality by 2050, and an interim 2030 target for GHG emission reductions.

But this is not the only city priority. Many cities or countries have also adopted a 'Vision Zero' objective for road safety, following Sweden's pioneering national policy from 1997, with an objective of zero traffic-related fatalities or serious injuries.

And the sustainable transport target under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11 focuses on achieving high-quality public transport systems for all citizens by 2030, with a focus on those in vulnerable situations, including women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.