Bremen Declaration on Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning in Europe

Mayors, political representatives and transport experts of numerous municipalities and regions in Europe and beyond, are assembled in Bremen on April 12-13th, 2016 for the 3rd European Conference on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.

While recognising that European guidance documents exist on sustainable urban mobility planning, Bremen and other European cities demonstrate that it is possible to breathe life into a planning document by grounding the plan in the experience and context of a city with all of its large and small challenges. The purpose of this document is to place the EU's sustainable urban mobility planning guidelines firmly in the context of the reality of European cities.

The third annual SUMP conference focusses on an efficient and people-focussed city as a core objective of Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning. Following on the conference themes, this declaration emphasises some cornerstones of content and process:

1.   *When talking about transport efficiency, look first at efficient use of street space.*
Street space is a limited and precious resource. Efficient transport means providing accessibility for people and for business activities with a minimum of technical infrastructure. Congestion data demonstrate that walking and cycling are extremely space efficient and cycling cities have low congestion levels. We need to look more closely at more efficient use of space as a starting point for efficient urban transport.

2.   *Put people ahead of vehicles.*
Decades of car-oriented development has claimed more than its share of public space. Liveable streetscapes put walking and cycling at the forefront and the movement of people ahead of the movement of vehicles. Data is often lacking on non-motorised modes of transport – particularly walking. We need to understand what motivates people to use non-motorised modes of transport to foster their use.

3.   *Address the changing transport challenges for business.*
Cities are nodes of business development. Trade and services are core activities in cities – requiring transport of people, goods and information. Increasing e-commerce is creating new challenges for delivery transport. We need to combine good logistic concepts, intermodal transport and a range of old and new concepts for clean vehicles – including pedal-powered delivery services – to innovations such as 3-D printers in order to deal with the current and future problems of freight transport.

4.   *Plan your city and its mobility together.*
Spatial planning and urban design strongly impact mobility patterns. SUMPs are not a repair shop for car-orientated spatial planning but a foundation for future development. A certain density and an orientation toward the needs of sustainable transport modes are pre-requisites for environmentally-friendly travel behaviour. Low-car housing developments can play a role in affordable housing strategies –by reducing the costs of parking infrastructure and removes the running costs of car ownership. We need to better integrate mobility into spatial planning and urban design.

5. ***Consider simple solutions first and use technology appropriately.***
Technology should be used as a tool to achieve goals, not as a driver or as a goal in itself. Wise cities use technology to serve the needs of their citizens. For example, while electric cars can help to achieve climate goals, they do not solve the problems of congestion and space consumption. We need to support and enable the use of the simplest, most efficient modes of transport before promoting less efficient modes. Sometimes no-tech and low tech may be the smartest solution.

6. ***Put use ahead of ownership.***
Urban space suffers under the number of private cars – both moving and parked. Public transport is one form of shared transport but, thanks to new technology, other forms exist today such as ride sharing, bike sharing and car sharing that can help improve transport efficiency, save street space and reduce transport-related emissions. Car sharing helps to reduce the number of cars in our cities. The potential at the European level is huge but unexploited: 500,000 cars could be taken off the road in European cities – but it is not incorporated in European strategies. We need to better integrate the concept of use over ownership into local, national and European strategies.

7. ***Enable people to participate in shaping their city.***
The ultimate goal of SUMP is creating the kind of cities in which people want to live, work, raise families and grow old. In order to achieve this, planning processes should involve as many groups and individuals as possible, ensuring that the needs of under-represented groups are accounted for. New online tools and creative outreach methods can help to make the process more transparent and relevant and to connect people with decision-makers. The process needs to be honest so as not to raise false expectations and so that goals are realistic and achievable. As transport is a politically sensitive subject we need to explain objectives and involve citizens in a transparent way.

8. ***Be prepared to face future challenges.***
Urban mobility constantly faces new challenges. Ongoing digitalisation carries both potential and risks. Autonomous cars are currently being developed but the potential impacts of these technological development s on urban transport systems, which are widely discussed by the media, are not being discussed by municipal and regional governments. Without the early involvement of policy makers, these developments could thwart the goals of many SUMPs. Use of scenarios in plan-making can support the establishment of strategies for dealing with these developments and set a framework for their application. Cities need to be involved in the debates around new technology and its impact on cities in the future.

This declaration was presented at the 3rd Annual European Conference on Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning in Bremen, Germany, 12-13 April 2016 and will be available for further electronic discussion by a wider audience at www.eltis.org until Friday, 13 May 2016.