

PROSPERITY Political buy-in training workshop outline

Divide into groups of four people from different cities if possible.

Part 1: key political barriers to SUMP (internal and external).

Here is a list of barriers that we the trainers have come up with from our experience. Please take 15 minutes to add to it and to highlight which of these are the most important 3 barriers to SUMP buy-in in your city.

1. People are afraid of change.
2. People think SUMP is all about getting people to give up their cars and make huge lifestyle changes.
3. Small retailers don't like anything non car-based.
4. Road space reallocation away from moving/parked vehicles gets a lot of objections.
5. People think it will cost them more and/or take more time to travel.
6. SUMP's emphasis on a range of solutions, not just infrastructure solutions, disappoints those who like to build big infrastructure projects and who make a lot of money from building those projects.
7. People are worried that SUMP will damage the city's economy by reducing travel speeds or making it less attractive to car-focused investors.
8. The people who think the above tend to be the most powerful people though not necessarily the most representative of general views and they are the people who travel most by car.
9. Politicians just aren't interested at all – it's not that they see SUMP as a threat or unpopular, they just don't care about it at all and so won't put any effort, positive or negative, into it. They don't see that it's worth any risk or effort.
10. Planning departments within cities are quite conservative and don't understand the SUMP concept so fight against it, seeing it as a threat to their power.

What to do first

Counter arguments to as the points above. First, the trainers will present some evidence-based (rational) counter arguments. Then in your group take up to 40 minutes to discuss, record and prepare to report back on:

1. Any other counter arguments that you have used or are aware of to the points above.
2. How far evidence-based arguments carry any weight/can be persuasive, and whether they are more or less persuasive with certain types of decision-maker or stakeholder.
3. Your experience of using "emotive" or "non-rational" arguments to try to make the case for SUMP measures (for example, by getting kids to do speed measurements outside a school and then publicising this and the number plates of drivers who are speeding).

Part 2 – making "non-rational" or "emotive" arguments more effective

4. Each group will be allocated at least one example of a "non-rational" or "emotive" argument for SUMP (meaning one in which the main argument is not completely evidence-based, but plays on people's emotions and feelings). For your allocated case, take 15 minutes in your group to develop some ways in which you might make your "non-rational" or "emotive" argument more effective and more visible.

Part 3 – what after all this you still have no political buy-in to your SUMP?

5. Discuss in your groups for 20 minutes and prepare to report back for up to 3 minutes: what do you do if you don't have a clear political vision and strong support for SUMPs? What are the little things that technicians can achieve without high level buy-in? How much is really possible?