



# PROSPERITY



## TRAINING TOPIC SUMMARY

### Use of Public Space & SUMP

Responsible Author: Irina ROTARU | Cities on the Move (CiMo)

Date: 07.03.2018

Status: Final



# Table of Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION ..... 3
- 2 INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC..... 3
- 3 EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE .....FEHLER! TEXTMARKE NICHT DEFINIERT.
- 4 ACTIVATION/REACTIVATION OF PUBLIC SPACES ..... 5
- 5 PUBLIC SPACE AND SUMP..... 7
- 6 GAME PLAY ..... 9
- 7 FURTHER READING..... 9

# 1 Introduction

The “**USE OF PUBLIC SPACE AND SUMP**” training session is primarily aimed for local politicians and employees responsible for transport and mobility issues or related topics (like urban planning, environment, energy, public health, urban policies, and strategic development). However, it can also be very useful for those representatives of regional and national level public administration who are in charge with the SUMP’s regulation, support and evaluation as well as those who work for urban mobility NGOs and/or consultancies dealing with development and implementation of SUMPs.

## Learning objectives

1. Support the culture shift in terms of environment for SUMPs in member states and in the organisational culture of transport planning in city authorities.
2. Get more cities to take up effective high quality SUMPs that are in line with SUMP guidelines.
3. Ensure that these SUMPs contain and will lead to implementation of a broad range of innovative sustainable transport measures.
4. Build cities’ capacity to develop and implement SUMPs that genuinely reflect the spirit of the EU SUMP Guidelines, rather than being mandatory documents written to fulfil a requirement linked to major transport infrastructure documents.

Specific objectives:

1. Increasing the level of understanding and the awareness of the value of public space as an economic resource but also as urban life asset – *rising awareness*
2. Fostering the capacity of building together effective solutions enabling the sustainable distribution, configuration and use of public space – *capacity building*
3. Understanding how to develop and implement together effective mechanisms that could favour a more sustainable design and use of public space (possibly to be integrated in the SUMP) – development of *constructive thinking and innovative tools*
4. Increasing the capacity of critical analysis and negotiation – *positioning*
5. Familiarisation with the existing tools and processes influencing the use of public space as well as with their sound management and combination – *experience exchange*

## 2 Introduction to the topic

### PUBLIC SPACE AND ITS USE

Public space has always been a very controversial topic in cities. Since it is public, everybody should be able to use it, but in practice the situation is much more complex. Actually, its use is highly determined by its design and has a crucial influence on the accessibility of various places, on the urban mobility and ultimately on the quality of life. This module aims to inform on the interdependencies between the design of public spaces, their use and the sustainable urban mobility.

According to the definition of the Urban Dictionary (2015), public space is “*a place, in wide definition, for everybody to enjoy their coexistence and represent their collectivity and common interest without drowning or disaggregating their diversity*”. Hence, it is a space for meeting,

communication, representation, complexity, diversity and a space for everyone - it should not be devoted exclusively for mobility. The latter is just one of the many uses it should enable, but not necessary the main one.

Public space should offer comfort in use to all people whether they are walking, cycling, driving, watching, sitting, eating, talking and so on. At the same time, it should adapt to the site determinants and integrate the different transport modes that travellers wish to use. However, no matter how high its quality, street design alone cannot determine people's choice of travel modes nor the use of a public space. It has to be correlated with urban mobility campaigns, access restrictions, parking space management etc.

Before the generalisation of the car use as a determinant feature of the modern society, public space was simpler, but in the meantime more flexible and complex. It was easily changing its appearance and identity depending on the activities taking place there. Frequently, as many people had poor housing conditions, the public square was a kind of common living room of a community. However, this vibrant identity of multifunctional space was gradually overlooked, together with the multiplication of motorised car users and their new needs and expectations.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a clear distinction was made between footways and roadways and most of the infrastructure investments were thought for comforting the motorised traffic. Efforts were being made for reconciling high speed with safety based on a branch of statics regarding the dead weight of vehicles, the quality of pavements / asphalt, a range of dynamics concerned with the kinetic effects of the velocity and mass of multiple independently controlled objects, the time-distance separations between visual stimulus on a driver's retina, muscle activity and vehicle response, the mechanics of braking and acceleration, and the relation between speed and street geometry (curvature radius, lane's width, separation of roadways and sideways etc.). For a long time the street was seen as a space connecting destinations used only by motorised traffic. In time, this perception has however changed with some other means of transport being considered as well, together with the large diversity of the conditions and needs of the various users. Standards imposed by motorised traffic are enriched by functional, economic, social and aesthetic criteria such as: the economic vitality of the shops bordering the street; the physical comfort of the adjacent residents (especially the noise and pollution levels); the security of the children that go to school via or play on the footway/ pavement; the comfort of elderly or impaired people when crossing or walking along the street; and the ambience of the street in general.

Much more, many cities started to focus not only on the active means of transport and their dedicated infrastructure, but also on the public spaces as multipurpose urban facility and main determinants of the quality of a neighbourhood, and of the life of people living there.

### 3 Experience exchange

#### **NAME, BACKGROUND, STORY, KEYWORD**

The presentation of each participant is combined with the learning experience, thus providing trainees a variation of activity as well as the opportunity to relate a name with a story, while also continuing to accumulate professional information relevant in the economy of their daily work.

Therefore, each participant is not only asked to tell his/her name, professional background and institution of provenience, but also to think of a relevant situation and summarise it through one keyword used afterward in the subsequent exercises.

## 4 Activation / reactivation of public spaces

### PUBLIC SPACES TODAY

Being public by nature, urban spaces are supposed to be taken care of by the local administration. However, given the multiplication of the challenges that a city is confronted with in the conditions of progressively limited resources during the past decades, many derelict public spaces regained their vibrancy thanks to various NGOs, individuals, groups of activists, charities or private projects motivated to improve their life environment. In most of the cases, these initiatives are not to be interpreted as critics brought to the public administration or protests, but as own contribution for the improvement of the quality of their life environment and implicitly to the wealth of a neighbourhood, of a community and ultimately of a city. Therefore, different ways should be found to capitalize them as much as possible by integrating them into the official policies, plans and projects.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF ORGANISATIONS & INITIATIVES

**Collectif Etc.** is a French group of young professionals with different backgrounds (generally related to arts and social disciplines) that are identifying abandoned public spaces and are analysing them through direct interaction with the residents of the respective neighbourhoods. They are testing together with locals involved in a co-creation process, different potential uses in an attempt to identify the best vocation of these leftovers of the urban development. Their projects are opened, targeting a random urban audience and are materialised through various temporary artistic interventions, urban furniture, workshops and conferences. The main interest of those urban experiences is in the process that is steering new social environments and behaviours.

The first actions of the collective were done completely “spontaneous” since 2009, without any official information or approval, but given the success of their idea since January 2011, they constituted into a legally recognised association and are frequently called by various public administrations to develop initiatives meant to initiate the regeneration of derelict public spaces and neighbourhoods while enhancing the community spirit.

Also in France, **aaa** conducts explorations, actions and research on urban mutations and cultural, social and political emerging practices in the contemporary city. **aaa** acts through ‘urban tactics’, encouraging self-management of disused urban spaces. It proposes nomad and reversible projects, through which explores the potential of the contemporary city (in terms of population, mobility, temporality etc.). The intent is to advance towards a more democratic and ecologic city with more accessible proximity spaces less dependent on top-down processes.

Temporary urban installations and micro-events started to be progressively used also in Italy to make people notice various problems, test and develop solutions. An experience of this kind has been implemented in Italy in 2013, in Piazza Leonardo Da Vinci from Milan. Named **RiconquistaMI**, the project was initiated by Politecnico di Milano in collaboration with the municipal public administration and the sector council (Zona 3). Previously a huge parking space in front of the university, the square was liberated of cars to make place for a series of urban performances (contemporary dance, drawing, collaborative shows, experimental theatre, concerts, exhibitions, and workshops), all of them freely open to the general audience and questioning in some way the possible future of this place. This highly interactive experience succeeded in convincing both

authorities and citizens of the potential and utility of this square which was thus, transformed in a pedestrian area.

**Small Ideas for a Big City** exhibition and conference is an applied research event developed by **ZEPPELIN Association** (Romania) and includes 16 alternative projects meant to improve public spaces in Bucharest. These cost-wise proposals estimated to have great impact in the optimisation of the use of urban space and the improvement of the quality of life, addressed various places from abandoned sites to the residual areas of large housing neighbourhoods, and spaces in the heart of the historical centre. They were designed by the members of Zeppelin and by some young invited architects and submitted to authorities and to the wide audience.

<https://e-zeppelin.ro/en/small-ideas-for-a-big-city/>

The same association conducted, as well the **MAGIC BLOCKS** project consisting in the study and minimal interventions on the derelict public spaces from a pilot socialist housing estate. The initial sociological, anthropological and urban research done by the steering group, together with associated foreign and Romanian professionals, was followed by the proposal of different low cost solutions. In response to the needs and expectations of the local residents, the team designed and produced some multipurpose removable urban furniture made out of recycled materials and serving to the reconfiguration of the target areas. These elements were installed in different ways, being moved from time to time from one area to another, while continuing to observe the interactions and reactions of people as an input for subsequent larger interventions on public spaces.

<http://www.publicspace.org/en/works/q202-magic-blocks>

An example of urban activation initiative directly connected to urban mobility issues and eventually integrated in the dedicated local policy, is the so-called Street Delivery movement in Romania. **STREET DELIVERY** started as a private initiative meant to render Bucharest more people friendly by connecting and comforting the use of its central public spaces. It took the form of a cultural event, testing alternative vocations of urban spaces than dedicated to motorised traffic. Its goal was to enable the creation of a pedestrian itinerary in the central area of Bucharest, linking a series of urban parks, public spaces and cultural facilities. The concept dates back since 2005, when it was officially launched by the Order of Architects from Romania, together with Cărturești Foundation as “Pictor Arthur Verona Street Cultural Itinerary”, which continued in 2006 under the title “Your Street Is My Street”, to adopt since 2007 its actual name of Street delivery. It accompanied an approved Zone Urban Plan (ZUP) for the area Episcopiei Street - Pictor Verona Street – Icoanei Gardens, in order to render it operational. The cultural event was conceived as a method to make people understand the variety of mobility options they have, and to become aware of the diversity of possible uses of public spaces and of the potential of pedestrian spaces in general. It survived the changes of political power and continued to play the role of a powerful instrument of communication and education of people for sustainable urban mobility and lively cities. It was progressively enriched in content and attendance and was also replicated in other Romanian cities (Cluj, Timișoara, Iași, Baia Mare).

More details, images, reviews and statistics concerning street delivery and its evolution, may be found at: <http://street.delivery/>

<http://blog.carturesti.ro/category/proiecte/street-delivery/>

<http://www.bucharest-tips.com/places/388-culture-cultural-centres-street-delivery>



## 5 What cities can do to create better places for sustainable mobility & social interaction

Even if well managed, grassroots initiatives tend to have a rather limited impact if not supported by local authorities and integrated in the general urban policies and strategies. Therefore, public administration should consider new ways of working in the actual conditions and get to sustainably capitalize these bottom-up energies through new forms of partnerships and mechanisms. These kinds of genuine ideas and initiatives, currently named activations of public spaces, could be successfully correlated with the urban mobility projects of a city and also included in the SUMPs.

A notable effort of integration of these new ways of regenerating public spaces and city life in the current public plans, policies and programmes was provided by the “Reinventer Paris” (Reinventing Paris) action, the success of which encouraged the subsequent replication into the “Reinventer la Seine” program and “Reinventing cities” international initiative. Starting in 2015, “Reinventer Paris” aimed to generate new funding sources and promote value in the conditions of a reduced time for the implementation of public projects. Thus, the municipality organised a project competition for 12 derelict sites in its property. In order to ensure the feasibility of the project, there was not a simple design competition, but a contest of complex urban operations implying the detailed presentations of ideas, together with the associated operational, financial and time planning aspects. Each team had to associate architects, urban planners, backers, construction companies, NGOs and civil society representatives. For each site, a jury was set up that included, along with the usual urban regeneration professionals, different other intellectuals (such as philosophers, journalists, artists and so on). The city of Paris gains as some abandoned areas will be revived in a relatively short time (maximum 5-7 years) for such important works with no public investment, while the public budget will be supplemented by money coming from the sale of the respective areas, as well as from the different taxes corresponding to the selected real estate developments. Last but not the least, the publicity around this innovative initiative fostered the image of Paris as an international level reference.

In order to be effective, the initiatives regarding the rehabilitation of the public space have to be correlated and integrated into a coherent urban policy reflected into the planning documents like the SUMPs. Public space use and design can be at the core of such document orienting the local strategy of the field. Some relevant examples in this sense have been provided for instance by cities like Vitoria Gasteiz, Paris, Bordeaux and Vienna.

Vitoria Gasteiz based its SUMP on the Superblocks concept, an innovative urban planning scheme to reduce the amount of public space taken by private cars and allocate it for other uses fostering social life in neighbourhoods. Totalling a surface of 400 m on 400 m, a superblock is an urban island including many urban blocks in the interior of which all the spaces are accessible only to pedestrians, cyclist and emergency vehicles. Motorised traffic (private cars and public transport) is restricted to the perimeter streets surrounding these superblocks, the so-called main roads.

In Paris the basic idea that guided the urban mobility policy and the SUMP elaboration was the same, namely the reduction of the surface allocated to moving or parked cars and the use of the resulted areas for other activities which can share the space with soft mobility and are considered essential for the life and wealth of the city. The context being different here, each area was studied individually being proposed personalised solutions for each site. Among the best known interventions that raised a lot of negotiations and debates, were those concerning the main squares

(like Place de la République already redesigned or Place de la Bastille, to be ready until 2020) and the pedestrianisation of the right bank of the Seine River.

Having in mind similar priorities, in Vienna there was the so-called promoted “city-compatible planning”, standing for “*offering sufficient space to pedestrians and cyclists as well as public transport, and attractive design which invites people to linger*”. The idea behind it was not only to favour clean means of transport, but also to see the mobility infrastructure as a resource for the city instead of a barrier able to comfort other uses as well, and transform the travel experience into a richer and more pleasant one. Public space was put at the head of the list of the measures included in the SUMP, the general principle pursued in this field being to share streets in a fair way.

## 6 Game Play

This experience is meant to enable trainees to better understand and apply the theory in practice, and learn how they can get inspired by the best practices examples and measures taken in other cities to efficiently address their own concrete situations. The project areas are in the host city so that everybody can visit them before the training and provide more authenticity to the experience. Additionally, given the participation of the local representatives of the public administration, this exercise can provide valuable insights for the public space management and be the starting point of possible measures.

## 7 Further reading

**Christophe Najdovski, Deputy Mayor of Paris for transport, street network, mobility and public space (March 2017):** Roads and Mobility. Parisian Policy

Presentation regarding the regulation of the space for mobility in Paris and the recent measures taken by the local administration in order to promote the sustainable use and development of the city.

Available at: [http://www.eltis.org/sites/default/files/sump\\_conference\\_2017\\_ops2\\_1\\_najdovski.pdf](http://www.eltis.org/sites/default/files/sump_conference_2017_ops2_1_najdovski.pdf)

**Octavia Stepan & Irina Rotaru (2012):** Street design, streetscape and traffic calming

Training module developed in the framework of Transport Learning European project (Intelligent Energy Europe) – provides a brief history of the trends in the urban mobility design and explains the different theories and elements used in the street design and streetscape configuration [www.transportlearning.net](http://www.transportlearning.net)

**Timo Hämäläinen’s blog** – articles regarding different urban mobility measures and their impacts

*Presentation of some urban mobility measures in Naples and Potenza:*

<https://urbanfinland.com/2017/08/24/urban-lessons-from-naples-potenza-and-matera/>

*Insights about the public space in Hong-Kong & Tokyo*

<https://urbanfinland.com/2017/02/06/urban-lessons-from-hong-kong-and-tokyo/>

*bottom-up urban mobility initiatives meant to render the city centre of Helsinki more people friendly*

<https://urbanfinland.com/2016/04/15/making-downtown-helsinki-more-walkable-its-time-for-a-grassroots-revolution/>

**Monica Oreviceanu (2013):** Enhancing the Sump’s Role as a Monitoring, Evaluation and Control Tool of Urban and Regional Sustainable Development Annual Polis conference December 2013

Source: <https://www.polisnetwork.eu/publicdocuments/download/1305/document/monica-oreviceanu---enhancing-the-sump-s-role-....pdf>

**Zeppelin Association (2009):** Magic Blocks. Scenarios for socialist collective housing estates in Bucharest

Magic Blocks Project publication Source: [https://issuu.com/zeppelin\\_magazine/docs/magic\\_blocks](https://issuu.com/zeppelin_magazine/docs/magic_blocks)

Further information: <http://www.aedes-arc.de/cms/aedes/en/programm?id=374074>

**Comparative Research Network (2017):** Our Neighbourhoods’ Heroes. Stories on Citizen Participation in Local Development in European Cities Publication developed in the framework of the European project Urbanities (Erasmus+) – contains many case studies on the grassroots initiatives regarding the use of public space [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319968315\\_URBANITIES\\_-](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319968315_URBANITIES_-)



[collected experiences Our Neighbourhoods Heroes - Stories on Citizen Participation in Local Development in European Cities](#)

**Center for London (2017):** “Making good – shaping places for people” Edited by Richard Brown, Kat Hanna and Rachel Holdsworth Available at: [http://www.centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CFLJ5081\\_collection\\_essay\\_placemaking\\_0217\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.centreforlondon.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CFLJ5081_collection_essay_placemaking_0217_WEB.pdf)

**Urban mobility measures implemented through tactical urbanism:**

Movie available online at: <http://www.streetfilms.org/transform-your-city-with-tactical-urbanism/>

**Wei-Hsiang Tseng:** “How to intensify the urban relation to the Danube through the installation of 15 play structures” The story and illustrations of the project Braïla Parasitism meant to revive the waterfront of the Danube River in Brăïla by playing with some simple forms and proposing different useful or symbolic structures.

Available at: <http://www.urbanmarkers.ro/actions/how-to-intensify-the-urban-relation-to-the-danube-through-the-installation-of-15-play-structures/>