



# Engaging decision-makers in the SUMP update process

## *Experiences from Gdynia*

How Gdynia built understanding for sustainable mobility from political leadership to residents

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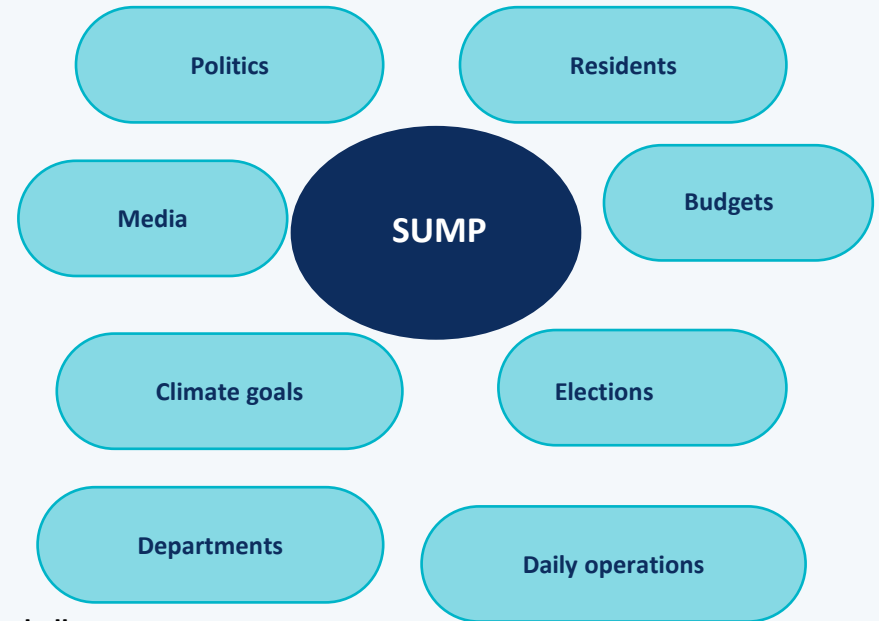
SUMPs for BSR

# The real challenge was not only mobility. It was governance.

## SUMP Update Means

Gdynia is a medium-sized port city with strong car pressure, limited central space and many mobility responsibilities divided between departments.

- Multi-department coordination
- Transport, investments, public space, finance
- Long-term planning in changing conditions
- Difficult decisions: bus lanes, car dominance,
- street space reallocation



### The challenge

Sustainable mobility decisions affect parking, public transport priority, street space, greenery, accessibility and public expectations.

*Technical arguments alone are rarely enough, we needed institutional understanding.*

# Stakeholder pyramid: why decision-makers come first

Without internal support, external engagement has limited impact.

## POLITICAL DECISION-MAKERS

Mayor, Deputy mayors, Directors, Political leadership

### need

strategic consequences,  
risks,  
investment relevance

## COUNCILLORS AND LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

City Council committees, District Councils, Youth City Council

### need

local impacts,  
public concerns,  
clear arguments

## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

Municipal departments, ZKM, spatial planning, strategy, experts

### need

data,  
responsibilities,  
coordination

## RESIDENTS AND DAILY USERS

Residents, travellers, businesses, schools, NGOs

### need

understandable proposals,  
visible examples,  
possibility to comment

We could not use the same engagement method for everyone.

# From technical planning to institutional conversation



## What we changed internally

- Stakeholder mapping & identifying internal allies
- Regular interdepartmental workshops & meetings
- Explaining mobility in non-technical language
- Linking mobility to quality of life outcomes

## What decision-makers rarely need first:

- detailed indicators,
- technical terminology,
- long diagnostic reports.

## Tools & approaches used

- Visual communication as a core tool
- Showing operational benefits to other departments
- Connecting to city strategy and investment plans
- Building shared ownership across City Hall

## What helped start the conversation:

- What problem does this solve?
- Who benefits?
- What changes in everyday life?
- What are the risks of doing nothing?
- What does it mean for investments and public space?

*“Modal split” is technical language. Travel time, safety, accessibility and quality of public space are decision-making language.*

# Plac Konstytucji: a real test case

## Main transport gateway of Gdynia

Politically sensitive: strong emotions around parking, pedestrian space, greenery & traffic.

695

survey responses collected

150+

comments at info points

6

consultation locations (EMW)

*"There will be more greenery, not more concrete."*

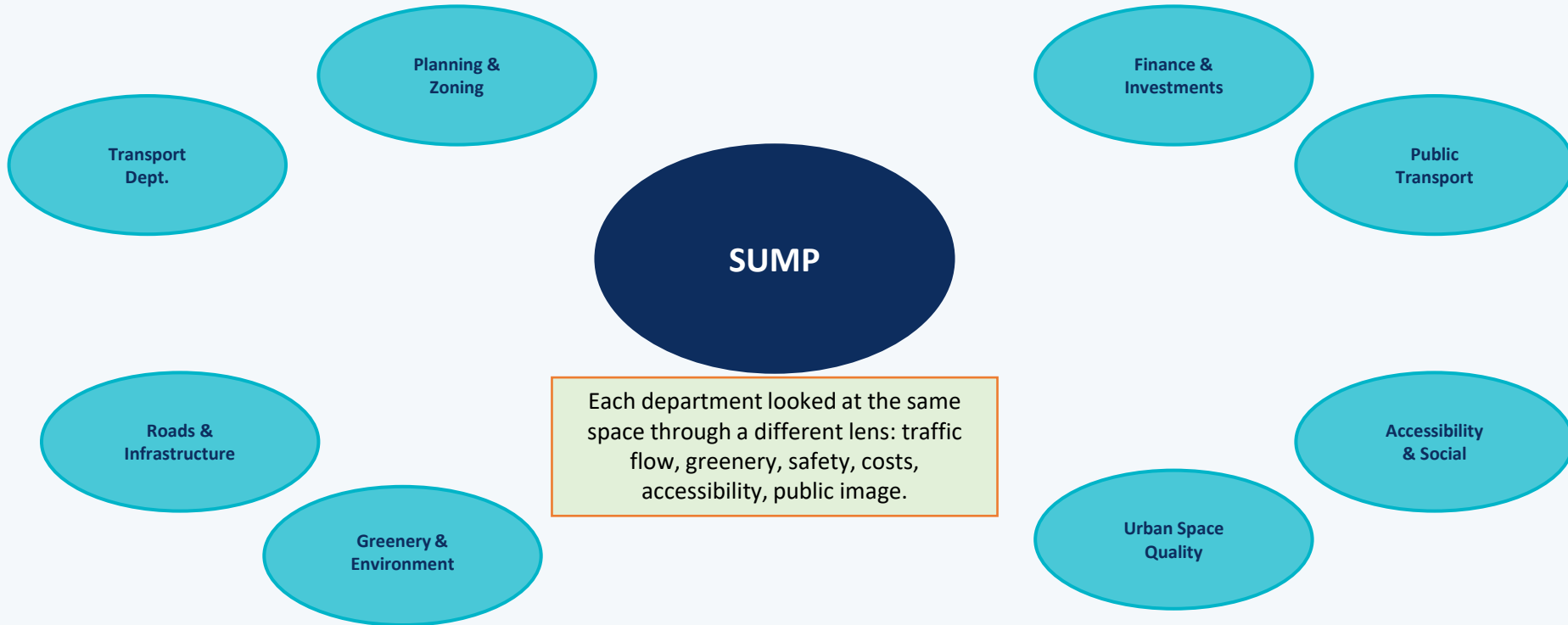
## 3D FLY-THROUGH VISUALIZATION



→ scan QR code to view full fly-through video

Visualization helped decision-makers and residents discuss a concrete future space, not only abstract traffic changes

# A large part of engagement happened inside City Hall



*Sometimes the hardest conversations were internal — especially when mobility affected existing habits.*

# People support change more easily when they can see it

## DATA

- 695 survey responses
- 150+ Miro comments
- ZKM transport study (2024)
- European Mobility Week surveys
- AI camera monitoring

## VISUALIZATION

- Plac Konstytucji 3D render
- Fly-through video
- Conceptual before/after views
- Mobility Week sketchnotes
- Interactive info points

## DISCUSSION

- Bus lane strategy workshops
- Interdept. working groups
- 12+ consultation meetings
- City Council presentations
- Youth Council engagement

**Visualization was one of our strongest engagement tools — it moved discussions from abstract fear to concrete understanding.**

# Small mindset changes created larger institutional shifts

## ✓ What helped

- Regular cross-department communication
- Showing resident feedback internally
- EU project support (SUMPs for BSR)
- Evidence from pilots & data
- Linking mobility to city strategy

## → Internal outcomes

- Stronger inter-dept. cooperation
- More openness toward sustainable mobility
- Greater multimodal thinking
- Growing acceptance of PT priority

⚠ Honest note: Not full success: resistance, competing priorities, political pressure and resource limits remain. Sustainable mobility is continuous institutional learning.

*We are still in the process. This is continuous institutional learning.*

# What we learned in Gdynia

Internal engagement = as important as public consultation

Pilots build confidence before full investment

Engagement must be continuous, not episodic

Data alone is not enough - language and framing matter

Interdisciplinary cooperation is non-negotiable

Sustainable mobility is also organizational culture change

Visualization reduces abstract fear and resistance

Trust takes time but one success builds the next

SUMP is a governance tool, not just a transport document

# Advice for other cities

- 01 Start with internal allies before going public
- 02 Involve decision-makers early in the process
- 03 Don't focus only on the transport department
- 04 Explain benefits in simple, human language
- 05 Connect mobility with quality of life
- 06 Use pilots and visualizations to reduce fear
- 07 Show real examples not only data
- 08 Create shared ownership across departments
- 09 Accept that engagement takes time plan for it

For us, engaging decision-makers was not about convincing them once. It was about creating conditions for better decisions every day.

*"A SUMP is is a process of building shared understanding inside the city."*

# Thank you!

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