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# What Matters?

An Exploration into the Factors Influencing the Planning and  
Implementation of Inclusive Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

By

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# Abstract

**Title:** What Matters? An Exploration into the Factors Influencing the Planning and Implementation of Inclusive Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

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**Key words:** Sustainable Urban Mobility, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, Social Inclusion, Strategy, Participation, Stakeholder Management, Public Governance, Civic Engagement

**Research question:** What are the prerequisites and influential factors that determine an inclusive planning and implementation process of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)?

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to provide a more holistic understanding of SUMP. Therefore, the aim is to explore the prerequisites and influential factors that determine the inclusive planning and implementation of SUMP.

**Methodology:** To fulfill the purpose of this thesis a qualitative research study was conducted, utilizing an abductive methodology. Specifically, an embedded case study was pursued through executing 15 interviews with SUM experts and participation specialists, as well as community members, all located in Helsinki, Finland.

**Theoretical perspectives:** This study's theoretical foundation and its preliminary framework are based on theories on stakeholder management, governance, social inclusion, SUM, and SUMP.

**Results and Conclusion:** Findings demonstrate a clear interconnection between the prerequisites and influential factors, justifying their integration into a single category. Consequently, this study identifies 10 factors, with their respective challenges, that influence the planning and implementation of inclusive SUMP. The final developed framework deepens the understanding on social sustainability in SUMP, inclusive SUMP practices, governance, and stakeholder management in public entities. Furthermore, the study provides practical guidance for cities in designing inclusive SUMP by emphasizing the importance of starting conditions, helping decision-makers in coordinating efforts and addressing potential implementation challenges.

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Lund, 26 May 2024,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pinja Hänninen'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and 'H'.

Pinja Hänninen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Wang'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'L' and 'W'.

Lucy Wang

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# 1. Introduction

In the next 25 years, more than 70% of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas across the world (The World Bank, 2024). This increase in urban populations will further expand the plethora of challenges that growing cities need to address in the future. One of these challenges is urban mobility, which Costa et al. (2017) describe as the movement of people within cities or larger urban areas. As more people move into cities, the challenges exacerbated by urban mobility, such as rising greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, congestion, and unequal access to opportunity, need to be tackled. For this reason, sustainable urban mobility (SUM) initiatives have been deployed by many cities around the world. According to Banister and Hickman (2013), SUM refers to more than the movement of people and goods within cities, as it includes the interplay between transportation systems, land use patterns, environmental considerations, and social equity. Furthermore, the aim of SUM initiatives is to develop urban transport systems that are safe, accessible, inclusive, affordable, smart, resilient, and emission-free (The European Commission, n.d.a). Hence, the development of more sustainable mobility solutions touches on various aspects of urban life, such as urban planning, infrastructure, public health and safety, and well-being – all factors that determine the quality of life of urban residents.

As urbanization accelerates and populations increase in contemporary cities, the demand for transportation grows exponentially (Alpermann, 2021). This surge in demand manifests in overcrowded roads, increased commuting times, and an urgent need for the expansion and enhancement of public transportation infrastructure (Costa et al., 2017). Concurrently, traffic congestion and air pollution, exacerbated by the rapidly growing number of vehicles in cities, pose significant challenges, contributing directly to the escalation of GHG emissions and posing long-term threats to public health (UNEP, 2024). Compounding these issues is the enduring prevalence of fossil-fuel-powered transportation modes, notably private cars, in both developed and developing nations, exacerbating environmental degradation and urban mobility challenges (Bastina-Molina et al., 2022; Remme et al., 2022). Moreover, the introduction of expanded public transportation networks, while a vital component of SUM strategies (Costa et al., 2017), presents its own set of challenges. Inadequate or inaccessible public transport options,



particularly in peripheral areas, impede social mobility and aggravate inequalities (Gall et al., 2023). The unequal distribution of public transportation resources results in some groups facing barriers to accessing essential services, education, and employment opportunities (Donald & Ford, 2023; United Nations, 2023), thereby deepening societal divides and fostering residential segregation. As such, the multifaceted nature of urban mobility challenges, encompassing environmental, social, and economic dimensions, necessitates comprehensive approaches to addressing them effectively.

Therefore, organizations that are responsible for planning and implementing activities within cities, such as local governments, and public and private organizations, have started realizing the urgency at which the above mentioned challenges need to be addressed. Subsequently, within Europe, cities have been endorsed by the European Union to develop sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMP). These strategic plans integrate social inclusion and SUM to address the mobility needs of people and businesses for a better quality of life (The European Commission, n.d.b). While being a relatively young research field, SUMP literature manages to touch upon multifaceted aspects, ranging from national support plans (Mladenovic et al., 2022; Cevheribucak, 2024) to the specific effects of reducing motorized traffic (Balant & Lep, 2020; Rye & Hrelja, 2020; Maltese et al., 2021). Furthermore, researchers and institutions often include participatory decision-making and a multi-stakeholder approach as integral parts of SUMP (Arsénio et al., 2016; Okraszewska et al., 2022; The European Commission, n.d.b). However, not much is known about how these influence the process of designing and implementing SUMP, as well as what may be the benefits and drawbacks of such approaches. Consequently, by focusing on the Northern-European city of Helsinki – often referred to as one of the prominent leaders in sustainable urban transportation, particularly known for its emphasis on participatory governance and stakeholder collaboration (De Gallier, 2024; MyHelsinki, 2024) – this study aims to contribute to new insights within SUMP.

## 1.1 Problematization

Since the establishment of the Brundtland Report, formally known as “Our Common Future”, in 1987 by the United Nations, countries around the world have become more knowledgeable about the accelerating consequences of environmental degradation and the dire effects it can have on

human life (United Nations, n.d). The principles outlined in the report have influenced the global development of sustainability policies and practices, including the formulation of urban mobility frameworks (United Nations, n.d). However, an exploration of such frameworks reveals a predominant focus on environmental sustainability (The European Commission, n.d.a), potentially overlooking social dimensions that may be integral for sustainable urban futures. Concurrently, Chandler (2011) emphasizes the need for adopting a holistic multi-stakeholder approach for tangibly tackling the challenges currently faced by human kind. Hence, this highlights the necessity for a focus on social dimensions in SUM, particularly about the conditions and factors influencing its social inclusivity.

Moreover, as urban areas aim to embrace more sustainable approaches in planning and implementing SUMP, the demand arises to understand the needs of various stakeholders (Arsénio et al, 2016; Okraszewska et al., 2022). However, navigating the complex landscape of stakeholder interests and objectives presents wide-reaching challenges to implement SUMP. For instance, highlighted by current literature, a trade-off occurs when diverse stakeholder relationships are managed within urban planning processes. Singh et al. (2022) further state that the conflicting and competing objectives among stakeholders can complicate decision-making and impede progress towards desired outcomes. As a result of these conflicting opinions, residents may exhibit biases towards developing their own neighborhoods or adopt a “not-in-my-backyard” mentality, which may pose obstacles to cohesive urban planning initiatives (Liu et al., 2018).

While residents present a large stakeholder group for public organizations when developing inclusive SUMP, the opinions of other stakeholders, such as policy-makers, private businesses, and environmental activists, need to be considered (Singh et al., 2022). Balancing these interests and solving potential conflicting objectives requires skillful negotiation, consensus-building, and compromise (Singh et al., 2022). Failure to adequately address these competing objectives and reconcile conflicting interests may undermine the effectiveness and legitimacy of SUMP, potentially hindering efforts to achieve SUM objectives. Hence, making it integral to understand the value of stakeholder engagement, and collaborative and participatory governance efforts within those public entities that design SUMP. As such, while stakeholder management and

engagement have traditionally been applied to profit-driven organizations, recent research suggests its potential applicability to public entities, particularly in navigating ethical dilemmas, promoting transparency, and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders (Sarturi et al., 2023). Furthermore, while stakeholder engagement, within the realm of public governance, is often regarded as the best solution for effective decision-making and policy implementation (Rusaw, 2007; Chow & Leiringer, 2020; Fernandes et al., 2021), the implications of it within the context of SUMP remain ambiguous.

Nevertheless, existing research highlights some success stories where stakeholder engagement has led to informed policy decisions and sustainable urban outcomes (Fernandes et al., 2021). For instance, participatory governance approaches have been praised for their ability to reduce conflict, foster trust, garner support for environmental initiatives (Reed et al., 2018), enhance learning processes, and promote democracy (Cornwall, 2002; Fischer, 2012). However, the comprehensiveness of stakeholder theory is far from universally agreed upon. Several studies point to instances where participatory governance processes have failed to deliver desired environmental and social outcomes, casting doubt on their effectiveness (Scott, 2011; Staddon et al., 2015). Moreover, stakeholder biases and differing perceptions of the value of engagement efforts further complicate the picture (Portulhak & Pacheco, 2023). Lastly, while the above mentioned aspects may be regarded as components of SUMP, current research on the social aspects of SUM are, as mentioned, largely overshadowed by an emphasis on environmental aspects (Mirzoev et al., 2022; Remme et al., 2022; The European Commission, n.d.a). In light of these divergent perspectives and the evolving landscape of SUMP, there is a need for further inquiry into the social dimensions of SUMP to ensure holistic and inclusive urban mobility outcomes for all stakeholders.

## 1.2 Purpose and Research Question

Based on the problematization, the purpose of the study is to give both practical and theoretical contributions. The practical contributions of this study aim to enhance a more holistic understanding of SUMP, offering strategic prerequisites and influential factors that affect the planning and execution of such plans. On the theoretical front, the research aims to nuance the understanding of the role of social inclusion in SUM and SUMP. Additionally, the study aims to

enhance the theoretical understanding of stakeholder management and governance in public entity research by detailing the various stakeholders and the complex management strategies necessary within civic processes.

The research purpose will be fulfilled by conducting a qualitative embedded case study of Helsinki, which includes in-depth interviews with employees from two public organizations and community members, who are all directly involved or affected by the city's SUM initiatives. Ultimately, our research aims to address the following research question: What are the prerequisites and influential factors that determine an inclusive planning and implementation process of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)?

### 1.3 Outline of Thesis

Continuing on from the introduction, this thesis will move to provide a comprehensive exploration and overview of the current level of research on various topics, such as stakeholder theory, governance theories, including collaborative and participatory approaches, SUM, social inclusion, and SUMP. The literature review chapter will culminate in a preliminary framework, combining the findings and assumptions made by current research. This thesis will then continue with a methodology chapter, explaining the adopted research approach and design, the data sources and their collection, as well as data analysis approaches. Additionally, the methodology chapter will include discussions of this study's validity and reliability, as well as its ethical considerations. Thereafter, this thesis proceeds with an analysis of the study's findings, resulting in a developed framework, which builds on the preliminary framework presented earlier. Subsequently, in relation to the existing literature, a thorough discussion of the findings and contributions will be presented, after which a final developed framework will be illustrated. Lastly, a conclusion will be provided, addressing the study and its framework's validity, theoretical and practical contributions, limitations, as well as avenues for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

The following chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature within the chosen research area, encompassing theories and concepts for building the preliminary framework and theoretical foundation required to address the research question. Firstly, an examination of stakeholder theory will be provided, detailing its definitions and core principles before exploring its application in stakeholder management and engagement. Subsequently, the review will extend to governance theories, with a particular focus on collaborative and participatory governance models. Thereafter, the concept of social inclusion will be discussed, particularly its significance and application in urban settings. Lastly, the review will cover SUM, its integration with social inclusion, and SUMP, resulting in the presentation of the preliminary framework developed based on the theories reviewed in this chapter.

### 2.1 Stakeholder Theory

In contemporary organizational and managerial literature, stakeholder theory has emerged as a fundamental concept essential for ensuring the success, sustainability, and legitimacy of initiatives across various sectors and industries. Emerging in the 1980s, the theory has gained prominence due to the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of the world, affecting numerous individuals, groups, organizations, and national systems (Bryson, 2007; Sarturi et al., 2023). In his 1984 seminal book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, Freeman proposes stakeholder theory as an alternative approach to managing organizations, as opposed to managerial capitalism (Goyal, 2020). Moreover, Freeman (2010, p.25) describes stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives”, emphasizing the relevance of stakeholder theory specifically for profit-focused organizations.

However, while stakeholder theory is a widely researched concept and has garnered much focus in the past five decades, Phillips et al. (2019) attest that there is still no universally accepted consensus on its definition. As such, the authors (2019), by combining ideas from a variety of well-known sources, attempt to convey the ideas that tie together stakeholder thinking and describe it as “a set of value-creating relationships among groups that have legitimate interest in

the activities and outcomes of the firm and upon whom the firm depends to achieve its objectives” (Phillips et al., 2019). Therefore, elaborating on Freeman’s definition by highlighting the importance of value-driven relationships and the concept of legitimate interests, rather than solely adhering to the conventional explanation. As such, while taking into consideration Freeman’s original definition, this research paper will use the more comprehensive description of stakeholder thinking provided by Phillips et al. (2019), as it provides a more exhaustive approach to understanding stakeholders in the contemporary organizational environment.

Additionally, as presented by Donaldson and Preston (1995), and drawing from Freeman’s early work, stakeholder theory can be divided into three dimensions – descriptive, instrumental, and normative – that all involve different types of evidence and arguments and have distinct implications. The descriptive dimension encompasses organizations’ operations, characteristics, and behaviors, the instrumental dimension identifies connections between stakeholder management and organizational performance, and the normative dimension comprises moral and philosophical guidelines managers should employ to manage stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Regarding these dimensions, Dmytriyev et al. (2021) describe the history of stakeholder theory research by explaining that early stakeholder literature was mostly focused on the descriptive and normative dimensions, while instrumental descriptions only gained prominence later, as a bridge between stakeholder theory and strategic management was established. Still, within stakeholder research, these dimensions have been incorporated with other management theories, such as the resource-based view, and used with varying explanations, combinations, and juxtapositions, due to Freeman’s original stakeholder theory being left relatively open to interpretations (Dmytriyev et al., 2021). Hence, showcasing discrepancies within research regarding which theoretical dimensions and research avenues should be used for best outcomes.

Therefore, Goyal (2020) attests that despite extensive examination of stakeholder theory in numerous papers, its adoption in core strategic management literature remains largely limited. This could be attributed to the theory’s vague and unstructured nature, as well as the distinct separation in literature between shareholders and other stakeholders, leading to insufficient consensus between researchers. Moreover, stakeholder theory has been criticized for unclear

boundaries when it comes to the definition of stakeholders, which has led to a pecking order between stakeholder prioritization, where the stakeholders that are essential to a firm's financial survival are of highest importance (Goyal, 2020). Thus, strengthening the notion that shareholders often remain the most valued stakeholders, evidently going against what Freeman (2010) aimed to achieve with his original iteration of the theory, demonstrating fundamental challenges that need to be addressed when the theory's different aspects are used in practice.

### 2.1.1 Strategies for Stakeholder Management

Within the broader theory of stakeholders, literature has focused on the strategies with which to manage the relationships with various stakeholder groups. Generally, Freeman (2010) provides an adequate starting point for organizations that wish to manage their stakeholder relationships, beginning from setting a strategic direction, to formulating strategies for stakeholders, and implementing and monitoring these strategies (see *Appendix A*). When formulating these strategies he highlights the importance of understanding stakeholder behaviors via analysis and explanation, and whether there exists any coalitions between current stakeholders. Moreover, in his description and formulation of strategies, Freeman (2010, p.141) draws inspiration from Porter's Five Forces and adds a sixth force to represent the "relative power of stakeholders". He further states that each stakeholder group should be analyzed regarding its competitive threat and cooperative potential, arguing that those who have low competitive threat and high cooperative potential should be treated differently to those with the opposite characteristics (Freeman, 2010, p. 142). Finally, Freeman (2010, p.143) develops a matrix called the 'Generic Stakeholder Strategies' (see *Appendix A*), in which he describes the most appropriate strategies for each stakeholder group – change the rules programs, offensive programs, defensive programs, and holding programs – depending on their competitive threat and cooperative potential scores. Additionally, these generic strategies are often supported by specific stakeholder programs, which may help in customizing the generic strategies to individual stakeholder behavior (Freeman, 2010, p. 144).

However, while these generic strategies may serve as guidance for some organizations, it is important to acknowledge the prevalent limitations in Freeman's work. Firstly, his strategies are heavily US-centric, meaning that the organizations he bases his examples and interpretations on

all share similar marketplace characteristics, which may not be representative of organizations in other areas of the world. As an example, companies in Scandinavia are often inherently more cooperation-driven – promoting long-term collaboration between various stakeholders and encouraging sustainable practices more efficiently (Strand & Freeman, 2015) – rendering some of the defensive programs obsolete. Secondly, the described strategies, as well as their formulation and implementation, only take into account profit-focused firms (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2004), essentially disregarding other forms of organizations that may need different types of strategic considerations for managing relationships with stakeholders. For instance, more consideration should be given to governmental organizations and other public entities regarding this issue, as they deal with large-scale socio-economic problems (Rusaw, 2007), often also called ‘wicked’ problems.

### 2.1.2 Stakeholder Engagement in Public Entities

While stakeholder theory has been mostly studied in relation to large, profit-focused organizations, Sarturi et al. (2023) demonstrate that it can be utilized as a helpful theoretical framework for public managers to handle ethical issues, foster trust and transparency, balance interests, and encourage collaboration. Furthermore, when stakeholder theory has been researched in relation to public entities, stakeholder engagement and participatory efforts are often the focus (Rusaw, 2007; Chow & Leiringer, 2020; Fernandes et al., 2021). For instance, Fernandes et al. (2021) describe how engaging stakeholders, through participatory means, has led to the success of public policy decisions in Portuguese counties. The authors (2021) exemplify key practices that are integral for this process, including building a diversified group of engaged individuals, having the presence of an independent team to make sure that participants feel psychological safety, and establishing the ‘rules of the game’ early in the process. Furthermore, Sarturi et al. (2023), by conducting a bibliometric analysis on research between 1982–2021, found that both managing stakeholder relationships and engaging stakeholders can positively affect various aspects of public organizations, such as performance outcomes, the creation of public value, innovation, and sustainability. Therefore, demonstrating the vast implications that stakeholder engagement can have on public entities’ decision-making processes.



Additionally, specifically within the domain of sustainability, Kujala et al. (2022) contend that stakeholder engagement has been studied extensively within the areas of environmental management and environmental policy, taking a much more practical perspective by focusing on explaining various stakeholder inclusion processes in decision- and policy-making. Furthermore, within environmental management and policy, Reed et al. (2018) state that participatory approaches to tackling environmental challenges have the capacity to reduce conflict, build trust, and facilitate learning among stakeholders and the public, which can lead to increasing support for project goals and implementation of decisions in the long-term. However, these positive perspectives are contested by various studies, showcasing the participatory approaches to environmental management failing to deliver desired beneficial environmental or social outcomes in both the UK and Nepal (Scott, 2011; Staddon et al. 2015). Furthermore, Portulhak and Pacheco (2023), by studying members of the Catholic Church, argue that stakeholders can often be biased towards the public organizations they are affiliated with and that the level of perceived value of stakeholder engagement is in the eye of the beholder, thus making public engagement efforts more complex. Both Singh et al. (2022) and Liu et al. (2018) further highlight this by emphasizing the possible conflicting and competing objectives among stakeholders that can complicate decision-making and hinder progress towards desired outcomes. As such, showcasing the various contradicting perspectives on whether stakeholder engagement increases the success of public decision-making.

## 2.2 Governance Theories

The exploration of governance as a theoretical concept is well-established in scholarly discourse, with numerous studies presenting the concept from multiple perspectives, reflecting the multifaceted and ambiguous nature of the concept (Levi-Faur, 2012; Peters, 2012). In fact, it is this ambiguity that contributes to the concept's widespread appeal, as it allows for a range of interpretations and applications (Zumbansen, 2012). However, according to Peters (2012) it is simultaneously this ambiguity that risks making governance into a generic term absent of definitive meaning, complicating the creation of focused and meaningful discourse among scholars and practitioners. This complexity can be attributed to the dynamic and shifting nature of society itself, characterized by continuous changes in societal values and global economy (Asaduzzaman & Virtanen, 2023).

When broadly defined, governance refers to the totality of governing mechanisms and processes, including the order, efficiency and legitimacy within them (Bevir, 2012; Levi Faur, 2012). Historically, since the late medieval times (Tricker, 2019), governance was understood to signify an action, method, or function of governing (Hanawalt, 1998). Levi Faur (2012) further frames governance as central to understanding the complexities of societal structures. Furthermore, within the context of collective action, Ostrom (1990) views governance as a dimension of jointly determined norms and rules designed to regulate individual and group behavior, hence signaling the significance of monitoring in governance. More specifically, Bryson et al. (2006) view governance as the set of monitoring actions that ensures the survival of an institution. Expanding on this, Fukuyama (2013) explains that governance is dependent on the efficacy with which agents execute the directives of the principals. Additionally, Graham et al. (2003 cited in Asaduzzaman and Virtanen, 2023) view governance as the dynamic interplay among various structures, processes and traditions that shape how power and responsibilities are distributed, decisions are made, and how citizens and stakeholders participate in these processes. Thus, fundamentally, governance involves the entirety of governing mechanisms and processes, focusing on the dynamics of power, relationships, and accountability, to establish order, efficiency and legitimacy within decision-making (Asaduzzaman & Virtanen, 2023; Bevir, 2012; Levi Faur, 2012).

### 2.2.1 Collaborative Governance

Over recent decades, academic research on governance has undergone a considerable shift, introducing new models of governance that depart from traditional adversarial and managerial approaches of policymaking. This shift reflects four decades of incremental changes within public administration and policy, particularly tracing back to reforms initiated in the 1980s, which aimed to make public administration more efficient and decentralized (Lahat et al., 2020). Collaborative governance, arising as one of these new models, represents the strategy of bringing private and public stakeholders, such as businesses, corporations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies, together to make decisions collectively (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Emerging from an interdisciplinary nature, collaborative governance is rooted in theories and disciplines from political science, public policy, public administration, sociology and economics, resulting

in a multitude of definitions and understandings, similar to the ambiguity of governance definitions (Emerson et al., 2012). At its core, collaborative governance is characterized as a “formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative” approach to decision-making (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 544), engaging stakeholders in a collective effort to achieve public goals that could not be achieved otherwise (Emerson, et al., 2012). This emphasizes shared accountability and the importance of formalized stakeholder communications within governmental forums (Ansell, 2012). According to Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance emerged as a reaction to previous instances of governance failure, notably due to inefficiencies such as high costs and politicization in downstream implementations and traditional regulatory mechanisms. Therefore, collaborative governance is seen as a means to address these shortcomings by fostering cooperation and coordination among diverse stakeholders. Moreover, given the growing complexity and interdependence of institutional infrastructure, collaborative governance has gained more prominence as it fosters knowledge-sharing and capacity-building among stakeholders (O’Learly et al., 2007; Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Based on a meta-analysis of 137 case studies, Ansell and Gash (2008) present a framework on collaborative governance, which elaborates on the key factors and processes for effective collaboration among stakeholders in public policy decision-making (see *Appendix B*). The authors (2007) assert that the efficacy and success of the collaboration is largely contingent by the initial “starting conditions and points”, such as the distribution of power among stakeholders, their incentives for participating in the process and the nature of their historical interactions. For instance, if stakeholders enter the collaboration with a history of mistrust and misaligned incentives, the trajectory towards a productive and united effort becomes notably more complicated. Moreover, integral to this model is the dynamic of leadership and institutional design, both of which are foundational to effective collaborative governance. Institutional design, the structural context for stakeholder interactions, involves the establishment of participatory guidelines, boundary setting and transparency in protocols. In the context of collaborative governance, leadership plays the role of facilitating the decision-making process among stakeholders by mediating and resolving any emerging conflicts while ensuring inclusive participation. The authors (2008) further state that effective leaders serve as catalysts for collaboration and can significantly enhance collective endeavors. Therefore, due to the

comprehensiveness of research underlying Ansell and Gash's (2008) model, it can serve as a guide for policy-makers in identifying the critical factors to consider when navigating the dynamics of collaborative governance.

### 2.2.2 Participatory Governance

While collaborative governance involves forming cooperative efforts between private and public stakeholders, participatory governance is specifically aimed at enhancing democratic engagement and the active involvement of citizens in governance processes (Ansell, 2012; Fischer, 2012). Thus, the emphasis of citizen participation distinctly separates participatory governance from collaborative governance. In particular, participatory governance is defined as the systematic and assured involvement of representatives from groups affected by policy decisions in decision-making processes (Schmitter, 2002, cited in Grote & Gbikpi, 2002). As such, participation could effectivize public outcome and support, enhance learning processes, and promote democracy (Cornwall, 2002; Fischer, 2012; Stringer et al, 2006; Gaventa, 2003). Moreover, Kotze and Kellerman (1997, cited in Murray et al., 2010) state that public participation contributes to building citizens' capacities, skills and expertise, highlighting its relevance in democratic settings.

The academic discourse on participatory governance has evolved from researching the institutional and organizational methods of participation to a focus on its impacts and substantiality (Turnhout et al. 2010). Numerous studies highlight the institutional limitations of participatory methods, pointing out a frequent mismatch between the designed frameworks and the specificities of the local context or issue (Turnhout et al. 2010). Furthermore, Cooke and Kothari (2001, cited in Turnhout et al., 2010) highlight a paradox within participatory practices, where mechanisms intended to foster inclusive decision-making and community engagement can serve to centralize control rather than distribute it equally. This is further illustrated by Bloomfield et al. (2000, cited in Murray et al. 2010), who observe that participatory initiatives often elevate citizens' expectations without a corresponding willingness from local authorities to genuinely share decision-making power. This discrepancy that occurs can trigger a state of stakeholder or consultation fatigue, where engagement becomes viewed as superficial rather than substantive (Murray et al., 2010). Stakeholder fatigue is a phenomenon that emerges from a

context where individuals or groups are over-consulted about similar issues by multiple stakeholders, which leads to a cycle where participants feel that their contributions are undervalued (Murray et al., 2010). When such a cycle occurs, Bloomfield et al. (2000, cited in Murray et al. 2010) mention that the trust between the citizens and governance structures can erode. Subsequently, this erosion of trust may manifest in public protests, illuminating a contrast between the theoretical ideals of participatory governance and its practical implementations (Murray et al., 2010). Consequently, rather than following the prevailing notion that participation is inherently beneficial, Murray et al. (2010) state that it is essential to adopt a more selective approach, where participatory governance should be applied selectively in contexts directly affecting the citizens involved.

Citizens, or agents, engaged in governance processes, are regarded as “makers and shapers”, who embody a sense of ownership and view the local government as a platform for change (Murray, et al., 2010). For effective participatory governance, it is important for citizens to recognize and leverage their role as active participants (Fischer, 2012). However, the engagement levels among marginalized community members, who stand to benefit most from participatory governance, often fall short due to a lack of awareness and opportunities for meaningful involvement (Fischer, 2012). Nevertheless, participatory projects in developing countries demonstrate that even citizens with limited formal education can engage competently. Fischer (2012) highlights the example of a participation project conducted in Kerala, India, where despite their limited education, the local council have achieved successful outcomes by ensuring broad inclusion of city residents. Furthermore, both Osmani (2008) and Fischer (2012) emphasize the role of motivation and incentives, claiming that not everyone in a community may have the capability or desire to engage, even if the individual possesses the relevant knowledge and competencies. Therefore, incorporating incentives into the design process ensures solutions that are well-suited to local resources and foster greater commitment (Osmani, 2008; Fischer, 2012). To conclude, while participatory governance aims to enhance democratic involvement and community engagement, the practical application often reveals significant challenges, which include institutional limitations, conflicting expectations, stakeholder fatigue and the risk of centralizing rather than distributing power.

## 2.3 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is a widely researched, though contested, concept within many research domains (O'Donnell et al., 2018), ranging from medical studies to educational, and business research. Within literature, social inclusion is often assumed to be the positive interpretation of social exclusion, which refers to individuals, groups, or entire communities and is often associated with poverty, unemployment, inequality, and disadvantage (Wright & Stickley, 2012). Moreover, Mirzoev et al. (2022) further develop this definition of social exclusion by stating that it encompasses unequal power relationships that interact across four dimensions – economic, political, social, and cultural – and across individual, household, community, country, and global levels. In contrast, social inclusion entails the process of improving the terms of participation in society for disadvantaged social groups, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, and respect for rights on which individuals and groups take part in society (O'Donnell et al., 2018; Mirzoev et al., 2022). Additionally, it is generally found that countries with high levels of social inclusion have more productive, cohesive, and safe societies, where individuals and groups are able to access public services and resources more easily (Gerometta et al., 2005; García et al., 2015). As such, while social inclusion and exclusion are often thought of as polar opposites, by examining these definitions and characteristics, it becomes evident that this is not fully the case. Still, it can be contended that where there are higher levels of social inclusion, the factors of social exclusion are also diminished as a result.

Moreover, a considerable amount of research regarding social inclusion has focused on its effects on public health and access to healthcare. Tugendhaft et al. (2024) contend that including lower socio-economic groups, who live in rural areas and are more vulnerable to illness, has been integral for achieving universal health care coverage in South Africa. Similarly, Birdy and McVeigh (2023), by analyzing the success of mental health policies in various low-, middle-, and high-income contexts, find that by drawing on the knowledge of decision-makers and service-providers, as well as including service-users in the planning and implementation phases, the policies are much more likely to reach their intended outcomes. Hence, high levels of inclusion has wide-reaching implications for a country's public health projects and their perceived success. Furthermore, the access to healthcare and the health, both physical and

mental, of citizens directly affects access to education and career opportunities (Donald & Ford, 2023), and may hinder the perceived productivity of workers (Hall et al., 2023).

### 2.3.1 Social Inclusion in Urban Settings

Furthermore, within the broader domain of social inclusion research, there is a growing field focusing on social inclusion in cities and urban areas. This type of research is often presented as case studies of cities in both developed and developing nations, with slightly different focus areas. In middle- and high-income cities in developed countries, research often focuses on already existing tools that aim to increase social inclusion (Tseng et al., 2023), the relationship between spatial and social inclusion (Park, 2024), and inclusion factors related to migrant integration (Zisakou & Figgou, 2023). In contrast, studies on low- and middle-income cities in developing nations have focused on factors such as urbanization (Alpermann, 2021), the effects of Covid-19 (Adebayo et al., 2022), community-related approaches for urban inclusion (Torres, 2012), and the effects of gender on inclusion (Chant, 2013). Hence, demonstrating both the differences in research, but also the various urban dimensions affected by aspects of social inclusion.

Examining the research on middle- and high-income cities in developed countries in more detail, Tseng et al. (2023) by exploring the City of Helsinki's digital participatory budgeting efforts, find that digital platform, such as Helsinki's OmaStadi, may forge democratic openings by formulating collective knowledge about urban struggles and unsettling individualistic democracy's epistemic injustices. Hence, indicating that, by increasing participation through digital platforms, fostering collective knowledge-sharing and solidarity around urban struggles can enhance the democratization of decision-making. Ultimately, making urban decision-making processes more accessible. Furthermore, a study conducted in various cities in South Korea found that spatial inclusion influences social inclusion (Park, 2024). Interestingly, the study also found that not only does housing stability affect inclusion, but the inclusivity in public spaces matters as well. Therefore, suggesting that the physical environment of cities, including access to stable housing and welcoming public spaces, can have a profound impact on residents' sense of belonging, participation, and social-wellbeing. Similarly, by studying intra-European migrant integration, Zisakou and Figgou (2023) observe that building attachment bonds to private and

public spaces can help migrants overcome feelings of isolation and exclusion, thus emphasizing the need for welcoming private and public spaces within cities.

Additionally, by examining low- and middle-income cities in developing countries in more detail, various interesting aspects can be found. For example, Alpermann (2021), who explores the rural–urban transformation in Chinese cities and how the country’s rapid urbanization has affected social inclusion and exclusion, finds that these factors have resulted in higher levels of social exclusion. He further states that this is largely due to the country’s household registration regulations and the phenomenon of ghost cities, which have had major repercussions on distinct population groups, especially as thousands of acres of farmable land has been transformed into urban construction (Alpermann, 2021) and people have been relocated from their original social contexts and connections (Rosenberg, 2014). Moreover, by studying the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on women’s housing precarity in South African cities, Adebayo et al. (2022) observe that cities are often not inclusive for lower-income women, as they experience insecurities related to health, safety, affordability, and loss of housing, factors that have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Similarly, Chant (2013) finds that women are often left disadvantaged within low-income urban contexts, where they may have decreased access to education and vocational training, as well as housing ownership. However, only preliminary responses to addressing these issues are discussed by both authors (2013; 2022), showcasing a level of immaturity within developing nation cities. Lastly, Torres (2012) provides some guidance into how cities in developing countries may increase social inclusion. The author (2012) explores slums in the Rio de Janeiro area and observes that multi-stakeholder and community-driven approaches to “re-branding” slums has shown remarkable results. As such, perhaps signaling to other cities that a participatory and collaborative approach may be the most effective way to tackle some of the issues they are dealing with.

## 2.4 Sustainable Urban Mobility

In response to the climate emergency, cities are required to pursue innovative methods to develop a SUM system that integrates into their existing urban fabric (Colombo & Djik, 2023; Gall et al., 2023). Thus, this urgency has catalyzed a rise in research of SUM (Gallo & Marinelli, 2020; Lam & Head, 2012). Referring to the Brundtland report (1987) and an European Commission paper



“Green Paper on The Impact of Transport on the Environment” (1992), Gallo and Marinelli (2020) along with Holden et al. (2020), define SUM as the ability of transportation systems to provide accessibility and connectivity in an efficient, safe and environmentally friendly manner that does not compromise the welfare of future generations. Although promoting environmentally-friendly SUM systems is essential, Gallo and Marinelli (2020) mention that it is equally important to consider their social and economic impacts, while remaining politically neutral. Contributing to this, Lam and Head (2012) argue that such a SUM system should also facilitate travel that is affordable, easy, and convenient. Hence, providing residents with a variety of mobility options along with transparent access to real-time information, enabling all to make informed choices based on time, cost and distance (Lam & Head, 2012).

However, in spite of widespread agreement on the importance of social sustainability in SUM initiatives, research has predominantly focused on the environmental dimension (Gallo & Marinelli, 2020; Remme et al., 2022). Therefore, scholars argue that this field suffers from a narrowly defined scope where social aspects such as social inequalities are not widely researched (Remme et al., 2022). In practice, despite a rise of SUM initiatives in cities, the realization of SUM systems remains a challenging task (Foltýnová et al., 2018). Rittel and Webber (1973, cited in Gall et al., 2023) describe SUM as a “wicked problem”, emphasizing its complex nature where numerous stakeholders with conflicting interests are engaged, making SUM initiatives difficult to operationalize (Foltýnová et al., 2020). Nevertheless, advancements in technology have made it possible to model the functioning of cities with considerable accuracy and unlocked new possibilities for efficient mobility systems (De Dios Ortuzar, 2019).

To conceptualize a strategy for SUM, Bongardt et al. (2019, cited in Gall et al., 2023) propose the Avoid-Shift-Improve (ASI) framework as a method for cities to prioritize mobility strategies. The core concept of the framework is to motivate citizens to avoid unnecessary trips. For instance, by encouraging the digitization of work processes, such as administrative tasks, and implementing localized urban and land use planning, most needs can be met without requiring travel. Any remaining trips could then be shifted to more sustainable modes, such as public transport, electric vehicles, or bicycles. The ASI framework prioritizes avoiding actions that reduce the need for mobility, followed by shifting transport modes from less to more sustainable

options before improving the remaining modes. The core message is that substantial progress in sustainable mobility is more likely to come from changes in behavior, rather than relying solely on technological advancement (Bongardt et al., 2019, cited in Gall et al., 2023).

#### 2.4.1 Sustainable Urban Mobility and Social Inclusion

According to Henriksson et al. (2021), well-designed public transportation fosters social inclusivity. Yet, as previously mentioned, there exists a notable absence of a social sustainability dimension in SUM research. Hence, this section aims to explore the limited body of research of the studies conducted on SUM and social inclusion. Although social inclusion is addressed in discussions about SUM, it is often treated as an independent topic rather than being fully integrated into SUM strategies, where the emphasis frequently remains on environmental sustainability (Mirzoev et al., 2022). Hence, while the focus on SUM's environmental aspects is essential, it may overlook the role that mobility plays in social development and well-being (Holden, et al., 2020).

Historically, in agricultural economies, residences and workplaces were closely located, often restricted within walking distance, which defined the spatial boundaries and limited social interactions (Stanley & Stanley, 2017). However, as societies developed, the demand for greater mobility increased, heightening the access to a broader range of global connections (Lam & Head, 2012). Therefore, Lam and Head (2012) emphasize the need to promote SUM initiatives to maintain these social benefits while addressing associated sustainability challenges. Expanding on this need, Cass et al. (2005) along with Stanley and Stanley (2017) discuss the complex relationship between social inclusion and urban mobility. Both authors (2005; 2017) emphasize how the industrial age automobile-centric urban planning often left marginalized individuals unable to drive due to economic, physical, or age-related reasons. This challenge has been particularly exacerbated in suburban areas, where the most economically accessible housing tends to be located, attracting low-income, sole-parent, and migrant families (Stanley & Stanley, 2017). However, the authors (2017) mention that it is also these communities that encounter limited public transportation options, thus inadvertently aggravating social exclusion. Research further demonstrates that mobility improvements can reduce the risk of social exclusion and enhance well-being (Stanley et al., 2011). Notably, according to Currie (2011), it is particularly

the rural and suburban areas that exhibit the highest dependence on automobiles. Furthermore, this is supported by Henriksson et al. (2021), who similarly highlight the disparities in mobility and transportation accessibility across various socio-economic groups. The authors (2021) note that individuals with lower income levels face reduced travel frequency and limited access to transportation modes, which can restrict their participation in economic, recreational and educational activities.

Case studies conducted in Cape Town, South Africa (Nelson, 2012), Costa Rica (Umaña-Barrios & Gil, 2017), and the United States (Adorno et al., 2016), have demonstrated that incorporating mobility systems with a focus on social sustainability significantly promotes social inclusion. The findings from these studies indicate that strategically planned SUM systems significantly enhance the integration of marginalized communities into the urban fabric of cities. Moreover, to increase social inclusion in line with SUM initiatives, Remme et al. (2022) stress the role of national policies. The authors (2022) argue that without an alignment between SUM initiatives and overarching national policies, local efforts to promote inclusive urban mobility may be rendered ineffective. Hence, the efficacy of SUM strategies in promoting social inclusion can be interpreted to hinge on political and governmental support, as these stakeholders possess the most capacity to drive SUM and foster social inclusion, which is supported by similar statements by Henriksson et al. (2021). For instance, in their case study conducted in Bergen, Norway, the authors (2022) describe favoritism toward automobility by the current populist political parties, which has reinforced elitist tendencies rather than promoted social inclusion. Consequently, SUM efforts need to be considered in line with the unique political climate.

#### 2.4.2 Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

Building on these insights, the implementation of SUMP provides a systematic approach to realize SUM strategies. SUMP are strategic frameworks designed to foster socially inclusive, healthier, and sustainable urban transportation systems (Okraszewska et al., 2022). Furthermore, Maltese et al. (2021) contend that SUMP are intended to address a broad range of economic, social, and environmental issues in urban transport policy from a long-term strategic perspective, thereby promoting a holistic approach to the goals of SUMP. In contrast, Okraszewska et al. (2022) emphasize that SUMP are customizable tools, whose aim is to meet the specific needs of

city residents, utilizing a participatory approach to ensure that the mobility requirements of the entire community are addressed. Therefore, clearly drawing more attention to the wider social issues within cities. Still, while the detailed focus in literature differs slightly, researchers within the field agree that SUMP's are critical tools for urban planners and decision-makers, as the emphasis of sustainable development grows ever important and cities grapple to find alternative solutions for car-centric models (Damidavičius et al., 2019; Maltese et al., 2021; Mladenovič et al., 2022; Chatziioannou et al., 2023; Cevheribucak, 2024).

The most prominent research regarding SUMP's has currently focused on their effectiveness in different locations (Arsénio et al., 2016), the aspects of multi-level governance and its importance (Mladenovič et al., 2022; Cevheribucak, 2024), as well as the impacts of reducing motor-vehicle traffic (Balant & Lep, 2020; Rye & Hrelja, 2020; Maltese et al., 2021). Arsénio et al. (2016) explore the voluntary SUMP's in Portuguese cities and find varying results in how climate change targets and equity in accessibility are addressed in different cities within the same country. Further, they find that this might stem from the lack of common guidance regarding the planning and implementation of these plans. Within the establishment of common guidance and governance of SUMP's, both Mladenovic et al. (2022) and Cevheribucak (2024) advocate for the importance of multi-level governance – national and local – for the success of SUMP's, as knowledge-sharing and access to resources becomes more accessible. However, both studies also indicate that many cities have yet to adopt such multi-level approaches. Therefore, also affecting the adoption of non-motorized modes of transport (Balant & Lep, 2020). Additionally, some studies on the most impactful indicators affecting SUMP's success have been conducted (Chatziioannou et al., 2023), however research regarding this remains largely limited. Chatziioannou et al. (2023), by analyzing literature and the responses of 28 sustainable development experts, found that the most impactful indicator of good mobility plans is addressing traffic congestion, followed by providing affordability for the poorest, energy efficiency, access to mobility services, and traffic safety. Hence, combining economic, social, and environmental issues typical for SUM.

Within Europe, SUMP's have gained considerable attention, due to the European Commission driving the development and implementation of such projects by offering financial aid to cities

and establishing pilot projects (Rye et al., 2024). Still, despite the interest of SUMP in Europe, Holden et al. (2020) draw attention to the absence of specific and comprehensive policies within global contexts, indicating the need for a broader approach. Therefore, they argue for the inclusion of more actionable objectives for SUM within existing global targets and policies, emphasizing that such integration would enhance the clarity and effectiveness of SUM initiatives worldwide (Holden et al., 2020). Moreover, while a multi-stakeholder participation approach is often emphasized in the definition of SUMP (Arsénio et al., 2016; Okraszewska et al., 2022), it has not gained a lot of attention within literature. As such, clearly demonstrating a need for further research on SUMP and the importance of multi-stakeholder and governance approaches for their success in different global contexts.

## 2.5 Preliminary Framework

To synthesize the contributions of previous literature concerning stakeholder theory, governance theories, social inclusion, SUM, and SUMP, a preliminary framework was formulated, demonstrating the interconnectedness of these theories and concepts. This framework details both the prerequisites for the planning and execution of SUMP and the influential factors affecting the potential success of various urban plans. The core of the framework demonstrates the interrelatedness between SUM, SUMP, and social inclusion, where alterations in one component can lead to ripple effects on the others. For instance, a change in SUMP affects the viability of SUM initiatives, which in turn may impact the extent of social inclusion efforts associated with SUM. Hence, illustrated by a looped relationship in the framework.

Based on the literature, three prerequisites that form the foundation of SUMP were identified, which need to be acknowledged prior to the formulation of such plans. These prerequisites are multi-level governance, multi-stakeholder approach, and participatory mechanisms for public decision-making. Multi-level governance refers to the vertical level of integration between different decision-making bodies, ranging from transnational down to national, regional, and city-level authorities. On the other hand, a multi-stakeholder approach represents the horizontal level of integration and engagement between both public to public, and public to private entities. Additionally, participatory mechanisms for public decision-making emphasizes the need to

actively involve citizens in the formulation of SUMP. Consequently, these prerequisites are portrayed as three boxes leading to the creation of SUMP.

Furthermore, four influential factors were mentioned by the existing literature that may affect all previously mentioned components. However, it is important to note that the factors influence the components at varying degrees, thus illustrating their placement in a separate box, due to the literatures' limitations in describing each factor's specific relation to the components. These four factors are policy alignment, accessibility, incentive strategy, and shared accountability. Firstly, policy alignment is described as the importance of aligning policies with SUM initiative to ensure long-term success. Secondly, accessibility reflects an overarching theme important for all aspects of inclusive urban planning, describing the extent to which residents have access to mobility resources and other societal services. Thirdly, incentive strategy is explained from a resident perspective, highlighting the importance of understanding what motivates and encourages an individual or group to perform a particular action. Lastly, shared accountability refers to the degree of ownership, and thereby accountability, that different actors perceive in relation to a common objective.

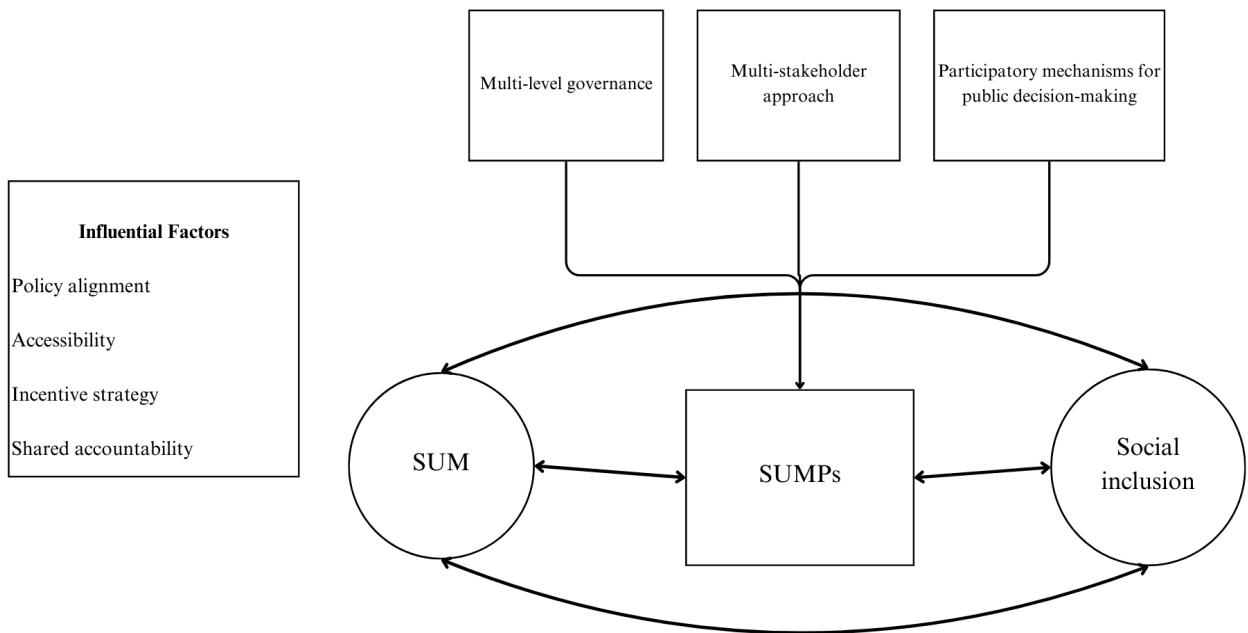


Figure 1. Preliminary Conceptual Framework

## 3. Methodology

The methodological foundation of the study will be presented in the following chapter, with a transparent rationale behind the selection of the specific research approach and design. As such, a comprehensive understanding of how the research question was addressed will be provided. The primary goal of this chapter is to, in detail, justify the research approach, methodological choice, case selection process, sampling strategy, procedure for data collection, and the methods applied in data analysis. Finally, a discussion of the study's quality, focusing on its validity and reliability, alongside with the ethical considerations connected to this research, will be provided.

### 3.1 Research Approach and Design

To address and explore the research question, which seeks to understand what prerequisites and influential factors affect an inclusive planning and implementation process of SUMP, this study has utilized a qualitative research methodology complemented by an abductive reasoning approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), a quantitative approach is suitable for studies that aim to deepen the understanding of specific variables or factors affecting an outcome, with a prerequisite of knowing the variables in advance (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Hence, considering the undefined nature of influential factors in SUMP, the choice of a qualitative methodology in this study is deemed relevant, as it has provided the flexibility to deeply explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of the stakeholders involved (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, according to Creswell and Creswell (2023), a qualitative approach is relevant when a research problem can be most effectively understood through the detailed exploration of a specific phenomenon. This study has exemplified this through the research question's exploratory nature; it sought to explore the factors and prerequisites of developing inclusive SUMP.

Unlike the limitations of both deduction, which relies on strict theory-testing without clear guidance on theory selection, and induction, criticized for its inability to build theory from empirical data alone, abduction provides a nuanced approach that overcomes these shortcomings (Bell et al., 2019). The abductive methodology is built on the dynamic back-and-forth relationship between the empirical findings and the existing literature (Alvesson & Kärreman,

2007; Bell et al., 2019). Moreover, according to Creswell and Creswell (2023), this methodological approach aligns well with the principles of qualitative research. A deductive approach typically begins with a predefined theory that is then tested, whereas an inductive approach starts with empirical observations and seeks to identify emerging general themes and theories (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In this study, a deductive method was initially employed to test the established preliminary framework. However, as the aim was to make theoretical contributions, subsequent adaptations were made to this framework based on the empirical findings, thus, incorporating the inductive element as well (Bell et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). Consequently, this abductive approach, integrating both deductive and inductive elements, enabled the exploration of different components important for SUMP in relation to existing literature and frameworks. Hence, this allowed the study to discover what Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) label as ‘mysteries’, which nuanced existing theoretical understandings.

A qualitative research approach encompasses a variety of research designs, and for this thesis, an embedded case study was conducted (Yin, 2017). Unlike a single case study that is characterized by its focus on one instance or entity, an embedded case study is particularly well-suited for this research as it allows for the examination of multiple units of analysis within a single case scenario (Yin, 2017). In the context of exploring SUMP in Helsinki, these units of analysis included various stakeholders such as organizations, community groups, and residents. This case design enabled a comprehensive exploration of how different groups and individuals contribute to, and are affected by, the mobility strategies implemented by the city. By having analyzed these diverse perspectives and experiences, a multifaceted understanding of the challenges and opportunities within Helsinki's approach to SUMP was gained. Hence, this method provided both analytical depth and enriched the understanding of the interplay between different influential components and participatory settings of SUMP. Although qualitative research methods face criticism for potential subjectivity, inherent in the researcher's interpretative role, the case study remains appropriate to this research, as it enabled a detailed exploration of social dynamics and provided more in-depth data as opposed to quantitative survey methods (Yin, 2017). In this case, the detailed exploration involved the interactions between the perceived participation by community members and the two selected organizations, which was integral to reach the research purpose. While multiple case studies are more comprehensive (Yin, 2017),



they necessitate greater time and resources, making them impractical within this study's time constraints.

### 3.1.1 Selection of Case

To address the research question and fulfill the research purpose, Helsinki was selected as the case study. As one of the leading cities in SUM development, known for its forward-thinking policies and citizen engagement (De Gallier, 2024), Helsinki provided a unique opportunity to explore different integral conditions and influential factors in SUMP. The following section presents the selected case study subjects, exploring their significance in the context of the research objective. Additionally, a detailed explanation of the sampling methods will be presented, showcasing the rationale and criteria guiding the selection process of interviewees.

#### 3.1.1.1 Case Subjects

As previously mentioned, the following embedded case study included multiple subjects to comprehensively explore the research question. To understand the factors of Helsinki's SUM initiatives, interviews were conducted with employees from the City of Helsinki, Helsinki's Regional Transport Authority (HSL), and community members residing in the city. Interviewing community members provided a grassroots perspective, as the residents could elaborate on their firsthand experiences and feedback ideas. These insights allowed for a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the city's SUMP and transport policies, and their impact on residents' daily lives. Moreover, the selected community members were residents who vary in age, ethnicity and socio-economic status, and all of whom have been impacted by Helsinki's SUMP. Such a selection provided a diverse understanding of how the city's SUMP are experienced across various social groups.

The City of Helsinki consists of the City Council – elected every four years through local elections – which is responsible for overseeing the city's operations and finances and appoints the Mayor and Deputy Mayors for each electoral term, forming the City Board, the Central Administration, and four specialized divisions (City of Helsinki, 2024a). These divisions include the Educational Division, the Social Services and Health Care Division, and two additional divisions that were interviewed: the Urban Environment Division and the Culture and Leisure

Division (City of Helsinki, 2024a). Additionally, interviews were conducted with two employees from the City Executive Office to gain further insights about the city's social inclusion initiatives. Moreover, three employees were interviewed from HSL, operating as the public transport authority for the Helsinki area, offering a diverse range of transportation options including buses, trams, an underground metro, commuter trains, city bikes, and ferries (City of Helsinki, 2024b). The organization commits to sustainable growth and strives to promote responsible mobility, reduce carbon emissions, and actively aims to develop future sustainable transportation modes for Helsinki's residents (HSL, n.d.a).

### 3.1.1.2 Case Sampling Strategy

To address the research question, 15 key stakeholders, directly affected or involved in SUM initiatives, were purposefully and conveniently sampled. Each of the participants were chosen based on their unique insights and active roles in the development, implementation, and evaluation of SUMPs. Hence, according to Bell et al. (2019), the sampling method used reflects both typical and criterion case sampling. This was due to the selection of interview participants who were considered typical representatives of individuals involved in SUMPs and also reflected that all interviewees met the specific criterion of having a direct connection to the subject matter.

All community members included in the study were selected through convenience sampling. This approach was primarily chosen due to the practical constraints of identifying and accessing individuals within the city who were both knowledgeable about and affected by Helsinki's SUMPs. While convenience sampling could limit transferability, this study aimed to understand the nuanced interactions and individual experiences that shaped participation within SUMPs, thus justifying the need for such a sampling method. Moreover, as Guba and Lincoln (1985, cited in Bell et al., 2019) and Geertz (1973, cited in Bell et al., 2019) emphasize, qualitative researchers are encouraged to provide "thick descriptions" – detailed, nuanced portrayals of specific cases or phenomena – rather than aiming for broad generalizability. Such descriptions enhance the accessibility and usefulness of the research, enabling other researchers to apply the insights gained to similar contexts (Bell et al., 2019), which in this case is urban environments. Hence, while the convenience sampling of community members does not provide broad generalizability, the detailed insights will offer a solid foundation for others to build upon, thus

enhancing potential transferability where the experiences of Helsinki are valuable for other cities implementing or planning similar mobility initiatives. Moreover, this is supported by Yin's (2014) description of analytical generalization, which is described further in section 3.4.

All organizational interviewees from the City of Helsinki and HSL, were purposefully sampled to fulfill the research's aim. According to Bell et al. (2019), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where the selection of interviewees is strategically aligned with the purpose of the study. Hence, unlike random sampling, frequently utilized in quantitative research, purposive sampling specifically targets individuals who embody specific characteristics vital to addressing the research questions (Bell et al., 2019). This method is frequently used in qualitative studies that aim to examine a phenomenon in-depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Additionally, the purposive sampling method was applied in a sequential manner (Bell et al., 2019), implying that a core group, consisting of the City of Helsinki employees, were initially selected, after which an expansion was made as the study progressed to include representatives from HSL. The choice of including HSL as a case subject was to provide a more broad understanding of SUMP's and the broader transport and mobility dynamics within the city. According to Bell et al. (2019), this sequential manner, rather than a fixed approach, allows for greater flexibility in responding to emerging data and insights.

Consequently, the selection of interviewees, both organizational and community members, was intentionally biased and purposefully selected toward individuals who could contribute to the research question. This bias, justified by our study's in-depth nature, assisted in gathering detailed insights that could potentially be transferred to other urban contexts. Furthermore, during the interviews, it was noted that the organizational employees could exhibit biases linked to their roles and interests, however, their insights remained relevant for this study in understanding SUMP's. Community members, while also potentially biased, offered critical perspectives, nuancing and enriching the findings. Still, to ensure the credibility of the findings, a confirmation of the initial data analysis was made with participants, where they were asked to clarify or correct any statements. Moreover, triangulation of the empirical data was conducted using multiple data sources, including official documents from both organizations, governmental websites, reports, and news articles, to enhance the study's credibility.

## 3.2 Data Collection

The following section refers to the data sources of the study and continues to describe the various forms of data collection used. For this thesis, the primary data source consisted of semi-structured and unstructured interviews, as well as email interviews. Moreover, both content analysis and observations were used as secondary data sources. Justifications for why these forms of data were chosen and collected, as well as the collection process will be described in the following sections.

### 3.2.1 Qualitative Interviews

As stated by Creswell and Creswell (2023), qualitative interviews are one of the many ways that data can be collected in qualitative research. Moreover, interviews of the qualitative nature are usually aimed at finding out the participants' views and opinion on a certain topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), thus a more unstructured approach is often preferred for added flexibility. Bell et al. (2019) describe that, compared to quantitative structured interviews, in qualitative interviews, the researchers are able, and even encouraged, to deviate from their original questions to ensure depth. This more flexible approach further allows for the direction of the interview to be adjusted depending on what the interviewee puts emphasis on (Bell et al., 2019), enabling for a more thorough dialogue that may uncover new aspects or factors previously unknown. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), it is this more natural setting that provides the benefits of qualitative interviews, as up-close information can be gathered by directly talking to people and observing them behave and act within their contexts. Therefore, as the purpose of this thesis was to explore the prerequisites and factors that affect the development and implementation of inclusive SUMP, qualitative interviews were regarded as a suitable collection method.

Within the qualitative approach there are two different types of interviews, unstructured and semi-structured (Bell et al., 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). To gain the appropriate information from each interviewee, both semi-structured and unstructured styles were used depending on the context and the participant. For the organizational interviews, with the City of Helsinki, and three of the community member interviews, semi-structured interviews were used

to ensure a level of cohesion between participants (Bell et al., 2019). Hence, this approach ensured that participants were asked similar questions, which made comparisons easier, and enhanced the ability to dive deeper into the nuanced insights provided by each participant for this study's specific research purpose. Contrastingly, three of the interviews with community members followed a more unstructured approach. According to Burges (1984, cited in Bell et al., 2019), unstructured interviews are very similar to conversations in character, thus allowing for a more relaxed atmosphere during the interviews with community members, especially ones that felt uncomfortable or anxious in a more official setting. Hence, following contextual cues, a conversational approach was deemed more suitable for some participants.

Moreover, due to the time constraints of the HSL representatives, all three interviews were conducted via email (see *Appendix E* for the questions), which cannot be grouped into either unstructured or semi-structured. Bell et al. (2019) describe such interviews as asynchronous online interviews and contend that this approach may cause a loss of spontaneity, as participants have more time to ponder and tidy up their answers before sending them. Whether this is a positive or negative feature is debatable, as Dahlin (2018) argues that email interviews may be especially suitable and effective in instances where rich, informative accounts are required, which calls for participants to provide more thought-out responses. Hence, as the purpose of these email interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of Helsinki's public transportation mechanisms and SUMP, more prepared answers were needed, thus justifying the use of the approach.

Prior to conducting interviews, two research-specific interview guides were developed (see *Appendices C and D*), based on the theoretical foundations of this study (referring to chapter 2). The choice of developing two interview guides was justifiable, as the questions for organizational participants and community members differed. For both interview guides, the general aim was to ensure that all of the interviews followed a similar thematic structure, thus making pattern detection later on in the analysis process possible, as each participant's answers could be mapped against the same general questions. Further, to ensure that patterns could be detected from the unstructured interviews, the community member guide was used as a basis for the starting question. According to Bell et al. (2019), interview guides often include open-ended

questions or memory prompts of topics to be covered, which allow researchers to steer clear from leading questions that may influence answers. Therefore, both of the interview guides included a number of open-ended questions, as well as follow-up questions for each participant depending on their expertise area or ability to provide relevant information. For instance, questions about biking and walking were adjusted for a community member that was wheelchair bound, showcasing the adaptability of our general guide.

Furthermore, as the empirical research progressed, adjustments were made to the interview guide, as new features of the topic were discovered through discussions with participants. Creswell and Creswell (2023) deem this a natural characteristic of qualitative research, further demonstrating the importance of beginning with general and open-ended questions, allowing participants to frame the specific phenomenon themselves. Hence, leading to findings that add substance to the topic at hand. Additionally, the organizational participants, specifically those from the City of Helsinki, were provided with a simplified copy of the guide to strengthen the dependability of the research (Bell et al., 2019). Within this simplified guide, the general topics of the discussion were provided, including topics such as sustainability projects, participatory activities, and mobility and urban planning initiatives. This allowed participants to familiarize themselves with the general direction of the questions prior to the interview. Moreover, participants were encouraged to prepare any materials or resources they felt would make them more comfortable during their interview and that would assist in reaching the research purpose.

As previously mentioned, for the overall research purpose, a total of 15 interviews were conducted; nine with organizational participants and six with residents of Helsinki (see Tables 1 and 2). Of the organizational participants, six were City of Helsinki employees and three were HSL employees. Residents, on the other hand, were from various areas within the Helsinki metropolitan area, including both central and suburban areas. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 100 minutes, with all of the longer interviews being with the organizational participants. Altogether, five interviews were conducted face-to-face in Helsinki, seven through online video calls, and three via email. Utilizing these various forms of interviews allowed for flexibility, while respecting and accommodating for the participants' varying needs and time constraints. While a field trip to Helsinki was conducted, the possibility of having the majority of

the interviews through online video calls allowed for obvious time and cost savings (Bell et al., 2019), as traveling back-and-forth could be avoided. Moreover, due to the aftermath of the global pandemic, online video interviews permitted access to some employees that were predominantly working from home and would have otherwise been less inclined to agree to be interviewed (Bell et al., 2019). Additionally, before booking the interviews, all participants were informed of the scope and purpose of the study, which was briefed again prior to the interviews' start, after which verbal consent was asked and information regarding data handling and storage was provided.

Moreover, while both researchers were present during all interviews, there were two participants who wished to conduct their interview in Finnish, due to uncertainties with the English language. Hence, only one researcher could fully participate in these interviews, as the other did not speak Finnish. According to Yin (2017), this may affect the reliability of the research, as verbal cues may be missed and biases may not be detected nor addressed appropriately. Further, the depth of the interview may also suffer, as one researcher cannot address any follow-up questions they may have (Yin, 2017). Nevertheless, while it was understood that this was not ideal, the insights of these two individuals were felt to be integral to understanding the participatory initiatives in Helsinki. Therefore, cautionary measures were taken to ensure that these interviews, their transcripts, and translations were adequately conducted to avoid misinterpretations (see 3.4 for further discussion).

<b>Company</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Interview setting</b>	<b>Interview language</b>	<b>Interview duration</b>
City of Helsinki, Culture and Leisure Division	Participation Specialist	2nd April 2024	In-person	English	100 mins
City of Helsinki, Urban Environment Division	Biking Coordinator	3rd April 2024	In-person	English	82 mins
City of Helsinki, City Executive Office	Borough Liaison 1	5th April 2024	Online video call	Finnish	39 mins
City of Helsinki, City Executive Office	Borough Liaison 2	5th April 2024	Online video call	Finnish	44 mins
City of Helsinki, Culture and Leisure Division	Special Planner	5th April 2024	In-person	English	56 mins
City of Helsinki, Urban Environment Division & Greening Cities Initiative	Project Manager	2nd May 2024	Online video call	English	34 mins
Helsinki Regional Transportation Authority (HSL)	Participation Specialist	Correspondence between 3rd April - 8th May 2024	Email interview	English	N/A
Helsinki Regional Transportation Authority (HSL)	Head of Public Transport Planning Unit	Correspondence between 3rd April - 8th May 2024	Email interview	English	N/A
Helsinki Regional Transportation Authority (HSL)	Transport System Specialist	Correspondence between 3rd April - 8th May 2024	Email interview	English	N/A

*Table 1. List of organizational interviewees.*



<b>Identifying Label</b>	<b>Community member</b>	<b>Area of Residence</b>	<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Interview setting</b>	<b>Interview language</b>	<b>Interview duration</b>
Community member 1	Female, mid-twenties, student	Pukinmäki, North-Eastern Helsinki	4th April 2024	In-person	English	40 mins
Community member 2	Male, migrated to Finland in 2015, late-twenties, employed	Pukinmäki, North-Eastern Helsinki	4th April 2024	In-person	English	31 mins
Community member 3	Male, mid-forties, early retirement due to disability	Kontula, Eastern Helsinki	11th April 2024	Online video call	English	32 mins
Community member 4	Male, early-thirties, student	Herttoniemi, Eastern Helsinki	19th April 2024	Online video call	English	44 mins
Community member 5	Female, early-fifties, employed	Hakaniemi, Central Helsinki	2nd May 2024	Online video call	English	24 mins
Community member 6	Male, early-fifties, employed	Hakaniemi, Central Helsinki	2nd May 2024	Online video call	English	29 mins

*Table 2. List of community member interviewees.*

### 3.2.2 Documents and Observations

As qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), secondary data was also acquired from both the City of Helsinki's and HSL's organizational websites, specifically focusing on their SUMP's, as well as other relevant documents provided by some of the participants. Furthermore, other sources such as governmental websites, news articles, and reports were used to provide contextual information about the chosen case. This approach saved time in the interview process, as some relevant information was already collected through these sources. Additionally, by acquiring information from these sources,

comparisons and observations were made with the data provided by participants and whether it matched what the organization had shared externally. In some instances, this approach allowed for a better understanding of the information provided by a participant. Furthermore, secondary data was also collected through observations within Helsinki, especially regarding their public transportation system, as well as the accessibility and ease-of-use of walking and biking lanes, which were kept in mind during the analysis process. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), observations may be advantageous as researchers are able to experience actions first-hand at the research site, thus allowing for a more thorough understanding of the subject being explored.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Following data collection, the data analysis process was initiated by using Bell et al.'s (2019) thematic analysis approach, which involves categorizing data into categories and themes with the aim of identifying underlying concepts or causal relationships. Specifically, in line with the research question, the data analysis process aimed to uncover how different actors plan, execute, perceive, and interact with SUM initiatives and SUMP. However, as Merriam (1988, cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2023) and Marshall and Rossman (1989, cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2023) suggest, data collection and analysis should occur concurrently in qualitative research. As a result, informal discussions among researchers were held simultaneously with the interview process to enhance data integration and interpretation. Ten of the interviews were transcribed using the transcription software Goodtape, which efficiently converted audio recordings into text. Additionally, the transcription software Turboscribe was used to transcribe and translate the two Finnish interviews, as translation services were not provided by Goodtape. While the translation service provided time savings, it was understood that the translations needed to be carefully checked, due to the high possibility of errors that could have affected the depth of the collected data. These transcriptions provided the basis for coding, where recurring patterns and topics, as well as similarities and differences related to the research question were identified, which Ryan and Bernard (2003, cited in Bell et al., 2019) describe as indications of potential themes. According to Ryan and Bernard (2003, cited in Bell et al., 2019) and Braun and Clarke (2006, cited in Bell et al., 2019), a theme is broadly defined as a category that the analyst identifies

within the data, which relates to the research focus and builds on codes derived from transcripts and offers researchers a foundation for making theoretical contributions.

To avoid groupthink (Bell et al., 2019), the transcripts were initially examined individually and coded for recurring statements, similarities and differences of stakeholder perspectives, success stories, policy impact, barriers and facilitators, environmental considerations, cultural factors, economic impact, and future outlooks. Moreover, before the coding process was started, the recommendations provided by Bell et al., (2019) were followed. This involved first reading the transcriptions without making interpretations and defining specific coding rules and criterias to ensure that each researcher applied the same methodological approach, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the analysis. Subsequently, a collaborative discussion was conducted, discussing the codes that were identified and their differences and overlaps. These discussions were guided by the abductive approach, where a dynamic back-and-forth examination between the literature and the empirical findings was conducted to understand and assess the data (Bell et al., 2019). With the aim to theoretically contribute to various research fields within SUMP, the structure of the empirical analysis was derived from the preliminary framework. The selection of quotes was based on the codings, specifically chosen to highlight interesting aspects of the identified codes and themes.

As previously mentioned, to enhance credibility, the empirical findings were triangulated with various types of documents. Consequently, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to identify any underlying themes that either supported or challenged the interview data. According to Bell et al. (2019), qualitative content analysis is a method used to analyze documents with predetermined categories and themes. However, it is important to note that this qualitative content analysis only served as a supplementary method to enhance the credibility of the findings and address the weaknesses of a qualitative research methodology, rather than as an additional primary method of data analysis.

### 3.4 Validity and Reliability

In addition to this section, validity and reliability have been discussed throughout the chapter in relation to specific actions undertaken by the researchers. According to Bell et al. (2019),

reliability and validity are the two most central criteria for evaluating qualitative business and management studies. Although replicability is also mentioned by Bell et al. (2019), it is often less emphasized in qualitative research due to the highly contextual nature of these studies, which are dependent on specific times, settings, and interactions, as is evident even in this case-specific study. Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the research findings, while validity addresses the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data and interpretations, ensuring they accurately reflect the interviewees' statements and perspectives (Bell et al., 2019). In contrast, Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Bell et al., 2019) propose another set of criteria, where trustworthiness and authenticity are described as two key elements. These elements are enhanced with four components: credibility (equivalent to internal validity), which assesses the solidity of the study's design and conduct; transferability (equivalent to external validity), which concerns the applicability of the study's findings to other contexts; dependability (equivalent to reliability), which reflects the findings' consistency over time; and lastly, confirmability (equivalent to objectivity), ensuring that the findings are solely shaped by the participants' experiences rather than the researchers' biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Bell et al., 2019). According to Bell et al. (2019), adapting validity and reliability to the researchers' context is essential for aligning with the subjective and constructivist nature in qualitative research designs, such as case studies.

To ensure dependability (Bell et al., 2019), this study maintained a consistent methodological approach throughout the whole research process, including keeping detailed records of data collection methods, formulating interview guides, and decision-making processes regarding all methodological choices. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, all interview questions have been detailed in *Appendices C and D*.

As previously mentioned, a triangulation process was conducted between the study's findings and content analysis, consistent with the abductive approach, to cross-verify the collected data. Furthermore, member checking was conducted with the official documents to validate their role and responsibilities within the planning and execution of SUMP. Moreover, whenever uncertainties about an interviewee's statement arose, clarifications were requested. Observations were also made in the case study environment to provide an additional method for triangulating

the data. As emphasized, the transferability of the data was ensured through focusing on rich descriptions over broad generalizability, enabling other researchers and practitioners to be inspired and compare these contexts with those of potential interest to them. Hence, rather than achieving broad generalizability, the aim was to, as Yin (2014) advocates, achieve analytical generalization. According to Yin (2014), the purpose of analytical generalization is to enrich and compare the gathered case study data with existing theories. Thus, in accordance with Yin's (2014) approach, the objective was to refine the preliminary framework, derived from existing theories, thereby enhancing its relevance and applicability. Moreover, by building the study on established theories in stakeholder management, participatory and collaborative governance, social inclusion, SUM, and SUMP, the transferability and broader applicability of the findings were further enhanced. However, it is important to emphasize that the study was specifically situated in the context of Helsinki as it existed in 2024. Consequently, the findings were temporal and pertinent to the particular circumstances of Helsinki during that period.

While qualitative research is critiqued for its inherent subjectivity, several measures were implemented to uphold confirmability. During the data collection and analysis process, continuous reflective practices were engaged, which involved discussing the researchers' assumptions and thoughts, allowing for examination of potential biases. Additionally, regular consultations with the study's supervisor, who provided external feedback and challenged the analytical decisions, further strengthened the study's confirmability.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

Throughout each component of the study it was important to consider and anticipate ethical issues that might arise, requiring attentiveness and the ability to actively address such issues during the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Yin (2017) describes the protection of human subjects as especially important in case study research, due to the fact that these studies focus on a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context. Hence, each of the four topics described by Diener and Grandall (1978, cited in Bell et al., 2019) – harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, and deception – were carefully considered. To avoid harming any of the participants of this research study, by creating negative consequences for their professional careers or by creating feelings of stress, anxiety, or uncomfortability,

participants were allowed to skip any questions they did not want to answer, and interviews were planned according to their preferences (Bell et al., 2019). Additionally, Gorard (2002, cited in Bell et al., 2019) describes the importance of considering the possible harm created to non-participants, especially in studies focusing on social policies, including health, housing, transport, and education, arguing that misleading information may lead to wasted resources in the future. As such, within the findings of this study, it is made clear that the influential factors identified are context-specific and should not be used as direct guidance. Furthermore, the limitations of this were adequately addressed, thus providing non-participants with an understanding that more research is needed.

Moreover, to ensure that the participants were fully informed of the research purpose, aim, and process before they agreed to participate, detailed information was provided when they were first contacted. This also guaranteed that participants were not being deceived at any time during the data collection process (Bell et al., 2019). Lastly, to protect the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of the participants, verbal consent was requested from each interviewee and inquiries about anonymity were made. In accordance with responses from participants, the names of all individuals were anonymized within this research study and no directly identifiable information was revealed. The names of both organizations were provided, however careful consideration was conducted to ensure the integrity of all organizational participants during and after the interviews. Additionally, as an act of appreciation for taking part in our research study, each participant was provided with the opportunity to receive the final research results for their own or their organizations' use.

## 4. Empirical Analysis

The following section seeks to present the findings from the 15 conducted interviews with the City of Helsinki, HSL, and Helsinki residents. The data will be structured into sections aligned with our preliminary framework (referring to section 2.5). Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that all findings presented are based on expert accounts and individual lived experiences of Helsinki's SUM modes, such as public transportation, walking, and biking, thus drawing on a largely contextual and augmented perspective of the preliminary framework. Helsinki is a medium-sized, Nordic port city, with a population of approximately 670 000 inhabitants (Helsingin Kaupunki, n.d). The city is often described as a walking city, and has a well-developed mobility network consisting of trains, buses, trams, ferries, city bikes, and a metro (City of Helsinki, 2024b). Consequently, the following findings should be regarded within the context of a highly developed Nordic city.

In addition to those provided by the preliminary framework, new sections will be added to showcase newly discovered information that previous literature has not touched upon. Furthermore, secondary data will be used to provide depth and support for the interview findings. Two larger themes will be presented – SUMP's and influential factors – with appropriate subsections for both. The first section provides an analysis of SUMP's, focusing on collaborative and participatory aspects, as well as prerequisites. The second section contributes towards the general influential factors that affect the outcomes of SUMP's and other urban environmental initiatives.

### 4.1 Prerequisites for Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

The following section will present findings related to the foundational aspects of SUMP's, focusing on collaborative and participatory aspects. Data collected from all of the interviews will be used and supported by secondary content analysis and observations. SUMP's, which serve as a bridge between social inclusion and SUM, play a role in fostering socially inclusive transportation systems, thus understanding the prerequisites (see *Figure 1*) for such plans is integral. The following section aims to provide further considerations of such factors and

pre-conditions, including the sustainability baseline, multi-level governance, a multi-stakeholder approach, participatory mechanisms for public decision-making, and the promotional strategy.

#### 4.1.1 Sustainability Baseline

A theme identified among all interviewed City of Helsinki employees was a foundational level of sustainability. Hence, an adequate sustainability baseline was regarded as foundational prior to implementing SUMP. This baseline was referred to among the organizational interviewees as commitment towards sustainable value creation and undertaking tangible measures towards that objective. Moreover, this commitment was further reinforced with policies as boundary control to ensure a baseline level of commitment among all members of the organization. From this foundation, norms and values promoting sustainability are established, shaping the organizational culture, and guiding the organizations toward their sustainable directions.

All employees, when questioned about their participation in sustainability initiatives, stressed the connection between their jobs and other responsibilities within the city's larger sustainability efforts. For instance, the Bicycle Action Plan, highlighted by the biking coordinator, is closely aligned with the city's sustainability, carbon neutrality, and suburban regeneration initiatives. In addition, the three HSL workers who were interviewed underlined that the core of their business is "the development of sustainable mobility solutions, safe and sustainable public transport services, and carbon-neutral public transport." Furthermore, stating that sustainability is the foundation of their value creation.

*Ensuring sustainability is at the core of the transport system planning, and the goals align well with HSL's [and Helsinki's] sustainability goals.* – Head of Public Transport Planning Unit, HSL

Additionally, the project manager within the Urban Environment Division and Greening Cities Initiative further emphasized that it is inevitable for organizations, such as the city, to maintain a sustainable core, as the European Union's (EU) regulations guide the organization's policies and the incorporation of sustainability into their urban mobility plans. Hence, demonstrating that the EU plays a significant role in ensuring that public organizations adopt a foundational level of



sustainability. In addition to sustainability policies, SUMP s are strongly recommended as they aim to enhance the overall quality of life for residents, where the European Commission has further provided guidelines and implemented national SUMP support programs for all EU countries to leverage on (The European Commission, n.d.b). While it seems that a sustainability baseline is common in Scandinavia<sup>1</sup>, it is notable that the baseline may not be considered in other global contexts, due to knowledge discrepancies, thus possibly rendering SUM efforts in these contexts obsolete.

#### 4.1.2 Multi-level Governance

It can be identified that the organizational interviewees within the City of Helsinki and HSL consider multi-level governance as one of the integral aspects in their SUMP work. The project manager within the Urban Environment division and Greening Cities Initiative describes the planning of traffic environments as a structured process, involving multiple governmental layers, including transnational, national, municipal, and city levels. While the project manager mentions that the vertical planning system ensures coordination and oversight, this sequential planning stage also introduces challenges. For instance, the process of translating top-level strategies into actionable plans involves often navigating the complex bureaucratic nature of governmental organizations. Hence, this can risk a delay to immediate responses to urban challenges and potentially prolong the timeframe for tangible improvements within the city.

*So if you think about implementing real sustainable improvements, you should have all these kinds of [governance levels] covered before you get something done in the real environment. – Project Manager in the Urban Environment Division and Greening Cities Initiative, City of Helsinki*

As the statement from the project manager indicates, successful implementation of sustainable initiatives requires groundwork, coordination, and consensus among different governmental layers and stakeholders. In terms of ensuring this coordination, HSL highlights its multi-level governance approach by partnering with “9 member municipalities, and transport system

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<sup>1</sup> Countries such as Sweden, Finland, and Denmark are regarded as the most sustainable in the world (Chomsky, 2024).

planning within these municipalities and the broader Helsinki region”. Additionally, HSL emphasizes the necessity of coordination with national transportation systems, including partnerships with entities like the Finnish national railway operator VR Group. Such extensive stakeholder coordination may be assumed to require time, resources, and back-and-forth dialogue. Nevertheless, while not ideal for rapid decision-making, the necessity for bureaucratic processes in governmental organizations may stem from their responsibility to the taxpayers, who fund their operations, hence, they must be ethically conducted and aligned with public interests, which may require methodical and sequential approaches.

In addition to identifying vertical levels of cooperation among different governmental layers, vertical coordination can also be observed within the City of Helsinki themselves. When questioned about the factors that ensure success in the implementation of SUMP, the participation specialist from the city emphasized the value of gaining support from top management, specifically, in terms of resource availability. Moreover, the participation specialist highlighted that top management plays an important role in fostering unified goals and work approach, as well as an organized structure. For instance, when starting a project, all employees are asked to estimate the scope and timeline using size categories such as XS and S, where all size categories are selected based on detailed guidelines that define each category. According to the city’s participation specialist this has ensured a common understanding of the project’s scale within the organization and the resource requirements from the onset.

Considering the nature of these organizations, multi-level governance is a part of the process in planning and executing SUMP. Although the bureaucratic nature slows down immediate responses to urban challenges, it also ensures the viability of SUM initiatives in line with the public’s interests.

#### 4.1.3 Multi-Stakeholder Approach

All interviewed organizational employees affirm that managing stakeholder relations is a daily aspect of their work, indicating that an extensive amount of time and resources are spent on it everyday. The employees interviewed from the City of Helsinki emphasized their collaboration with various institutions, including universities, Helsinki’s health services, daycare centers, and

youth services, to develop holistic SUMP. For instance, the biking coordinator highlights the partnership with healthcare divisions to promote biking as a healthy mode of transportation. Hence, the extensive collaborations with public organizations highlight the necessity for the city to consider ethical aspects in dealing with such stakeholders. In addition to these partnerships, the interviewees mention the significance of engaging with policy-makers and government officials when developing SUMP. Moreover, both borough liaisons underlined the involvement of NGOs and immigrant associations in organizing targeted events to celebrate diversity and foster community engagement. They further suggest that these activities may enhance the inclusion of marginalized groups into urban decision-making, thus making sure that their voices are heard also in matters regarding urban planning.

Furthermore, both the biking coordinator and project manager within the Urban Environment Division and Greening Cities Initiative elaborated on collaborations with private consultancies specializing in mobility, such as Ramboll, WSP, and Speckle, along with other urban infrastructure construction firms. The significance of collaborating and integrating activities with HSL also emerged as a significant factor in designing mobility services within the Helsinki Metropolitan area. As an extension, all three HSL representatives elaborate on their partnerships with VR Group, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, station owners, such as the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency and Metropolitan Area Transport Ltd, as well as cities. The existence of these partnerships emphasize the need for a multi-stakeholder approach for the development of public transport and other mobility services. Lastly, two of the HSL representatives underscore the value of collaborating with communities and residents, calling attention to the need for experimentation and the significance of listening to marginalized groups within these communities. As such, similarly to the City of Helsinki, it becomes evident that HSL has to manage numerous stakeholder relationships.

Notably, however, the biking coordinator emphasized the City of Helsinki's self-sufficiency, stating that the organization "is unlike other cities, a very independent organization, when we hire private consultants, it is mostly about getting approval for plans". Therefore, emphasizing the City of Helsinki's commitment to building a strong and resilient organization, which can be interpreted to provide a solid foundation for effective collaboration with numerous stakeholders

and managing stakeholder relationships. For instance, when asked about the City of Helsinki’s approach to collaboration within the organization, all interviewees stated that the city's four divisions work together to achieve the city’s common goals, as well as to implement participatory mechanisms. The biking coordinator and project manager specifically described how the Urban Environment Division collaborates with the Culture and Leisure Division to develop SUM initiatives that are holistic, align with social values and promote active living. The City of Helsinki’s participation specialist expands on the city’s internal collaboration by showcasing a framework during the interview. This framework, visualized as a rocket, symbolizes the collective knowledge of residents at its base, aimed to build a better and more inclusive city. The decision-making component in the framework advocates for establishing trust, transparency and direct communication between residents and the City of Helsinki employees. Ultimately, the model aims to represent the dynamic process of the city’s workflow to make decisions that prioritize the best interests of the people. The establishment of Stoa Gallery, for instance, showcases a project where multiple levels of City of Helsinki organizations collaborated to create a cultural center. As such, drawing from the patterns of stakeholder collaboration within the City of Helsinki, a perceived prioritization list of stakeholders was created (see *Table 3*), demonstrating the indirect importance of each stakeholder group.

<b>Perceived prioritization of stakeholders</b>	
Priority 1	Internal organization (self-sufficiency)
Priority 2	Governmental departments and policy-makers, mobility service providers and station owners, cities and municipalities
Priority 3	Private consultancies and urban construction companies, research institutions
Priority 4	NGOs and community associations, health care services
Priority 5	Communities and residents, schools, daycares, youth services

*Table 3. Perceived stakeholder prioritization in Helsinki SUMP.*

Overall, it can be identified in the collected data that public organizations often have many stakeholder relationships to navigate, which can create challenges in balancing diverse opinions and approaches. Additionally, this challenge can lead to difficulties in achieving consensus in decision-making processes, which both organizations highlight as a specific challenge. One of the representatives from HSL further elaborated on how the issue of conflicting objectives among member municipalities can potentially hinder the effectiveness of developing public transportation networks. However, no conflict resolution strategies were addressed by either organization, potentially indicating that they might have difficulties in identifying the root-causes of the conflicts effectively. Therefore, this demonstrates the complex nature of managing stakeholder relationships within public entities. As a result, self-sufficiency may sometimes be preferred, requiring less time and resources, as only the most essential stakeholders (see priority 1 and 2 in *Table 3*) are included in decision-making processes. Thus, potentially also alleviating the extent of bureaucratic processes involved.

#### 4.1.4 Participatory Mechanisms for Public Decision-making

While the HSL representatives did not discuss specific participatory mechanisms during the email interviews, content analysis reveals that their participatory strategies are similar to the City of Helsinki's (HSL, n.d.b), thus most findings in this section focus on the City of Helsinki's strategies, as they provided more contextual information. Moreover, due to the two organizations' close partnership, it may be assumed that similar factors that affect the City of Helsinki's participatory strategies, also affect HSL's strategies. According to the six interviewed employees of the City of Helsinki, it became evident that the city envisions to actively involve its inhabitants and create inclusive, participatory policies that foster a sense of belonging within the increasingly diverse community. Borough liaison 1 expressed, "I would hope that the city would be a city that looks like its inhabitants", a sentiment that the special planner reinforced by adding, "We really want to make it possible for everyone to be able to move".

To create a participatory environment, diverse communication strategies and participatory mechanisms are described to be implemented. Borough liaison 1 highlighted the significance of executing a multichannel communication strategy, which includes communication through various social media platforms, podcasts, the city's website, and tailored events that enable

residents to interact and offer ongoing feedback to the City of Helsinki. One example of a participatory action is the establishment of the Stoa Gallery<sup>2</sup>, initiated by the City, which aims to enhance the feelings of inclusion. The participation specialist describes Stoa Gallery as a multilingual creative outlet where the residents of Helsinki, with diverse backgrounds, are encouraged to express feedback and concerns of the city's development. Ultimately, this is explained to let the residents foster stronger feelings of participation and ownership in the city's urban initiatives.

*Art has the power to unite us, allowing us to engage, whether by listening to or participating in artwork, or through other interactions such as interviews or surveys.*

– Participation Specialist, City of Helsinki

*[...] it seemed as if people truly felt acknowledged and seen when they saw their native languages [...].* – Participation Specialist, City of Helsinki

As highlighted by the participation specialist, Stoa aims to provide residents with a distinctive platform for nurturing a sense of community, feedback, and fostering citizen engagement. Additionally, as Stoa does this by encouraging participation in arts and crafts, it allows for non-verbal communication, which ultimately may increase “the feeling of togetherness” among non-native residents. Therefore, apart from traditional participatory mechanisms, the Stoa initiative can be interpreted as an innovative participatory method. The participatory specialist of the City regards Stoa as a successful participatory initiative, due to the attendance rate of non-native residents, and describes that the City will continue investing in its development. However, this acknowledgment came amidst discussions about the challenges of securing funding for participatory projects, connecting to the necessity of receiving approval from top management addressed in section 4.1.2. Hence, the Stoa initiative could be interpreted as a preventative measure against Helsinki's rising amount of youth crime<sup>3</sup>, which can stem from feelings of exclusion.

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<sup>2</sup> Stoa Gallery, funded by Helsinki's taxpayers, is one of many cultural centers in Helsinki and is located in Itäkeskus, Eastern Helsinki. The source of revenue mainly consists of ticket sales in theater, art, circus, and music exhibitions. (Stoa, n.d)

<sup>3</sup> The youth crime rate (offenses committed by individuals under the age of 15) in Helsinki of both native and non-native residents has been rising since 2020 (Yle, 2024).

One of the platforms within the City of Helsinki’s multi-channel communication strategy is *Kerrokantasi*, which translates to “Voice Your Opinion”. This platform provides recent updates on the city’s SUMPs, such as urban and traffic planning, and other projects in Helsinki that impact local citizens (City of Helsinki, 2024c). It encourages residents to anonymously share their perspectives and provide feedback. Most posts focus on gathering opinions on SUM initiatives, including street designs, area design principles, and the development of the tram network (City of Helsinki, 2024c). Other users can read and comment on these opinions, which are then compiled and summarized for the policy- and decision-makers (City of Helsinki, 2024c). Each posted initiative receives between 30 and 350 comments, where residents debate, like each other’s posts, and engage in constructive discussions. The participation specialist explains that the goal of *Kerrokantasi* is to establish a democratic participatory platform that enables residents to have a greater voice in decision-making processes that impact their daily lives and mobility.

#### *Participatory Budgeting: OmaStadi Survey*

When asked about participatory mechanisms, all city employees highlighted Helsinki’s participatory budgeting initiative, *OmaStadi*, which has been in place since 2018 (City of Helsinki, 2024d). Additionally, a common theme identified was the appreciation for *OmaStadi* as a platform for residents to share their opinions and shape the future of their neighborhoods.

*OmaStadi is a great example of effective participation because it allows people to contribute their ideas in workshops and strategize how to garner support for them. After the voting, we've organized workshops in different parts of Helsinki to discuss where outdoor projects should be located. In our culture and leisure division, we have a strong framework for determining when and how participation should occur, ensuring that it's well executed across the city. – Special Planner, City of Helsinki*

As highlighted by the City of Helsinki, *OmaStadi* is a survey distributed to all Helsinki residents that allows them to directly influence resource allocation for neighborhood projects (City of Helsinki, 2024e). With a budget of €8.8 million, the city encourages residents to propose and vote on suggestions regarding urban planning, SUM initiatives, city aesthetics, and youth

services, to ensure these funds are used effectively to enhance their local communities (City of Helsinki, 2024e). Furthermore, according to borough liaison 1, the survey was offered in seven different languages. In OmaStadi, the proposals that generate the most votes within a given regional budget are implemented. The voting lasts for one month and all Helsinki residents above the age of 13 can participate (City of Helsinki, 2024e). Voting is regional, implying that each resident can solely vote for proposals within the major district they belong to and all have five votes to cast on different proposals (City of Helsinki, 2024e). Currently, there have been three OmaStadi voting rounds, with initiatives and proposals formulated one year and voting taking place the following year: 2018-2019, 2020-2021, and 2023-2024. The number of proposals has ranged from 296 to 698 since the first round. *Table 4* showcases the three OmaStadi rounds and their respective number of participants.

Year	Number of Participants
2018-2019	66 865 (City of Helsinki, 2024f) <sup>4</sup>
2020-2021	94 128 (City of Helsinki, 2024g) <sup>5</sup>
2023-2024	41 926 (City of Helsinki, 2024h) <sup>6</sup>

*Table 4. Demonstrating the number of participants in every round of OmaStadi.*

The participation rate increased between the first and second rounds, likely due to growing awareness of the OmaStadi initiative and improved community engagement. However, participation declined in the latest round, possibly due to several factors, including post-pandemic shifts in public behavior, reduced promotion, or awareness of OmaStadi, and potentially other competing priorities. This decrease may suggest that the city’s communication strategy has become less effective since the second round. All interviewed city employees note that voters are primarily focused on the urban environment, striving to make spaces more livable, cleaner and sustainable. Hence, a general trend can be identified where residents seek to create

<sup>4</sup> Equivalent to approx. 10.23% of Helsinki’s city area population 2019, 653 835. (Helsingin Kaupunki, n.d)

<sup>5</sup> Equivalent to approx. 14.30% of Helsinki’s city area population 2021, 658 457. (Helsingin Kaupunki, n.d)

<sup>6</sup> Equivalent to approx. 6.16% of Helsinki’s city area population 2024, predicted number 680 445. (Helsingin Kaupunki, n.d)



more sustainable and comfortable urban areas and neighborhoods. According to borough liaison 1 and the biking coordinator, OmaStadi participants have specifically expressed a desire for better winter maintenance, as well as more public and natural spaces, advocating for areas where biodiversity can flourish, allowing humans and animals to coexist.

### *Navigating Discrepancies of The Varied Perceptions of Participation*

Despite the City of Helsinki's extensive communication strategy and vision, challenges remain. Four out of six residents identified a communication gap between themselves and the city administration, expressing concerns that their voices and suggestions might not be acknowledged or reflected in the final decisions. One community member highlighted the perception that the city prioritizes opinions on amenities like parks over addressing deeper societal challenges, due to the perception of non-inclusion of marginalized residents.

*They are interested in hearing maybe 'oh, it would be nice to have a park,' but not necessarily the bigger social issues. [...] I don't feel that they are open to hearing about the social injustice or segregation problems. – Community member 4*

Hence, while mechanisms may exist for residents to provide input, Community Member 4's perspective reveals a disconnect in addressing broader social issues. Similarly, Community Member 2's assertion that "the city has overlooked certain suburban areas" highlights this concern. As a result, the City of Helsinki's communication and participation strategies may risk to be perceived as superficial and not fully engaged with the root issues affecting residents.

*I think they [the City of Helsinki] have many initiatives, and I know they're trying, but they should just try to get more out there. Because nobody knows about them. To people who don't participate or actively have an interest in societal affairs. [...] I have always wondered why I don't get any mail-advertisements from the City or why they don't advertise themselves on the public transports [...]. – Community member 1*

Moreover, as mentioned by Community member 1 there is a need for the City of Helsinki to expand the visibility of its initiatives and ensure that information reaches a wider audience

beyond those already interested in public initiatives. This gap in participation is contrasted by Community Member 6, who identifies as an active participant in the city's initiatives, such as *OmaStadi* and *Kerrokantasi*, and acknowledges Helsinki's communication strategy. However, several city employees perceive, based on feedback from residents, that they have communicated sufficiently to the point where some feel overwhelmed.

*I have also received comments where some residents feel like the city's employees ask their opinion too much, and they feel like they just answered the same question yesterday.*

– Borough Liaison 2, City of Helsinki

*Sometimes I feel that there are even too many questionnaires and too many happenings and that people get tired.* – Project Manager, City of Helsinki

This perception is validated by Community Member 6, who observes that the city's frequent requests for participation can be perceived as overstimulating and exhausting. Due to this perception, it can be interpreted that the City of Helsinki may have inadvertently been exhausting its most active stakeholders, while assuming that further communication is unnecessary. As a result, this can risk leaving less active residents feeling disconnected, as their voices are not adequately considered, creating a perception that the city's engagement efforts are superficial. Consequently, the City of Helsinki might risk overlooking the perspectives and needs of less active residents, which often consists of more marginalized groups. Furthermore, borough liaison 2 noted that areas with higher socio-economic status tend to show greater engagement in surveys and in-person events. This observation aligns with those made by other community members, suggesting that the results of surveys and feedback sessions may be biased and lack equal representation of Helsinki's residents. Ultimately, this indicates the presence of systemic bias, where those with higher socio-economic status are overrepresented, leading to SUMPs that may be perceived as elitist. Moreover, the lack of representation can negatively affect participation initiatives, reducing them to impression-management and lip-service interactions rather than meaningful exchanges, thereby potentially feeding a cycle of ingenuity in participatory SUM measures.

#### 4.1.5 Promotional Strategy

An interesting perspective that emerged from the interviews with both organizations was the strategy with which sustainable urban mobility is promoted internally and externally to residents and other stakeholders. While Helsinki does not have a singular SUMP, but instead has a collection of plans that are intertwined, the city has been able to bring forth its overarching SUM theme of a “healthier and equal Helsinki”. Such promotion is seemingly done on both the strategic level, but also close to the point of contact with residents.

*[...] We have a strategic document to get people in Helsinki moving more, because lately, as we know, people have more hobbies [...] but actually everybody moves less all the time, because our society is built in a way where we don't even have to go to the store anymore. [...] The idea was to actually promote people to move more by walking, biking, and public transport [...] and now we've had physical activity as a goal in a few of the city's strategic documents. – Special planner, City of Helsinki*

*When people go to the doctor in poor health, the doctor could tell them you could use your bike to go to the store and back every day, but we know that doesn't happen [...] and we want to turn that around. – Biking coordinator, City of Helsinki*

These examples showcase that Helsinki's SUMP's are largely focused on fostering a cultural shift towards healthier and more active lifestyles, which also support the development of a more inclusive urban community. As can be inferred from the biking coordinator's statement, biking and other sustainable mobility modes need to be made easily accessible and comfortable for residents, regardless of age. Enablers of such objectives are collaborative actions and mobility integrations, highlighted by the HSL representatives with statements, such as “walking and public transportation support each other and improving walking conditions is essential [...] this is done in collaboration with cities and with governmental agencies” and “in order to enable fluent travel chains, you're allowed to carry your bicycle with you in trains and metros”. Hence, inclusivity, safety, and comfort are at the forefront of planning and implementing SUMP's that truly aim to enhance the sustainability of urban areas.

These ideas and opinions are supported by the Helsinki City Strategy and various separate SUMP, including the Bicycle Action Plan, the Physical Activity Programme, the Walking Promotion Programme, and the Transport Service Plan. All of these include clear strategic objectives, whose aim is to increase the overall health and well-being of Helsinki's residents, with special targeted tactics for residents in different age groups. For example, the Helsinki City Strategy for 2021-2025 states "All of us, regardless of our age, should be able to live a good life in Helsinki" (City of Helsinki, 2021). Moreover, the Physical Activity Programme outlines the benefits of increased physical activity, including reduced marginalization and loneliness (City of Helsinki, n.d.a), which are further highlighted within each modality specific SUMP. Hence, this indicates that the city aims to address societal challenges holistically, by aligning various plans with trends in the urban environment. Therefore, suggesting a forward-thinking approach aimed at creating more livable and sustainable cities.

Therefore, these considerations indicate a crucial interconnectedness between public health and SUM, and if promoted appropriately, cities may be able to both reduce congestion and environmental pollution and address wider societal challenges associated with sedentary lifestyles. Furthermore, by promoting sustainable mobility options from the perspective of public health, cities may be able to reduce traffic poverty, thus providing more people the opportunity to move around safely, comfortably, and at a low-cost. Hence, it may be suggested that adopting a public health perspective in the development and implementation of SUMP enhances the holistic ability to impact all three areas of sustainability – environmental, social, and economic. Nevertheless, this promotional strategy is currently still ongoing, hence the actual effect on public health of this campaign is unknown. Assessing the consequences on public health is a long process that spans multiple decades and is affected by various external factors that could either enhance or impede public health outcomes.

## 4.2 The Influential Factors

Presented in the following subsections are findings collected from all the interviews that relate to the multitude of influential factors that may affect the planning, implementation, and realization of SUMP, as well as other urban environment initiatives. Furthermore, some factors are supported by secondary data to provide further clarity and depth to the interview findings. Five

themes of influential factors will be discussed: policies and regulations, aspects of accessibility, level of shared accountability, alignment of incentives, and aspects of safety.

#### 4.2.1 Policy Alignment

Evidence is found that suggests that policies must be coordinated with transnational, national, regional, and city-level actors. When this alignment is achieved, these policies play an integral role in urban environment planning processes. Therefore, the empirical data collected suggests that policies aligned with SUM initiatives are linked to multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder collaboration. For example, the participating organizations highlight how directives from Finnish national policies drive their mobility development efforts. Such policies, or acts, include the Road Traffic Act (Traficom, n.d), the Road Safety Act (Liikenneturva, n.d), as well as road transport taxation and subsidy policies (Ministry of Finance Finland, n.d). Moreover, examples of city-level policies that support the planning and execution of SUMP include the Carbon Neutral Helsinki Action Plan (City of Helsinki, 2022) and the Helsinki City Strategy (City of Helsinki, 2021). The project manager of the Urban Environment Division and Greening Cities Initiative further stresses the significance of EU-driven transnational SUM policies, such as the SUMP guideline and decision-making summary (The European Commission, n.d.c), noting how important these policies have been in shaping and effectivizing their work, as well as the city-level SUMP. For instance, the alignment of national and city-level policies has influenced Helsinki’s ability “to develop car-free zones, advanced cycling infrastructure, and a modern national railroad network to enable residents to use modes other than personal gasoline-powered cars” (OliverWyman Forum, 2024).

Nevertheless, challenges remain. The biking coordinator notes that incorporating SUM policies, specifically concerning biking, into a citywide strategy requires raising awareness among policymakers about the benefits of such initiatives. Hence, indicating that while policies and regulations play an integral role, their full potential may not yet be recognized or effectively integrated without further advocacy and understanding. Policymakers may still need convincing about the multiple benefits of enhanced biking infrastructure, e.g. biking’s relationship with boosting public health, infrastructure, and equity, as it results in enhanced health among residents, reduces the need for costly road expansions for automobile transportation, and offers

low-cost mobility options accessible to all socio-economic groups. Moreover, while there is a legislative push to reduce automobile dependence to comply with Helsinki's 2030 carbon neutrality act (City of Helsinki, 2024i), the biking coordinator emphasized the continued need to advocate for the benefits of bicycles and developing more bike-friendly infrastructure.

*I'm heavily involved in political advocacy within the city itself to get everyone to understand that, okay this is actually like a really fundamental part [SUM and biking] of the city that we're trying to build. – Biking Coordinator*

Therefore, as the biking coordinator says, it appears relevant to provide guidance and help governmental officials to understand the broad societal implications of SUM initiatives in their work. However, as community member 4 points out, the effectiveness of SUM policy advocacy is dependent on the current political party and context. While Helsinki has been governed by a conservative party (National Coalition Party)<sup>7</sup> for many years that has cut national subsidies on public transportation (YLE, 2023), the Greens could potentially implement more policies that support sustainable modes of mobility, due to their ideological focus<sup>8</sup>. Community member 4 believes that a green party would potentially bring “greater investments in public transportation in Helsinki” and prioritize creating more urban areas that would make the city feel “more accommodating”. Hence, the extent of SUM initiatives is affected by the leading political party's sustainability agenda, which is further complicated by the change of power structures within the government every four years.

Furthermore, the project manager within the Urban Environment Division and Greening Cities initiative also described that policies and regulations differences exist both between and within divisions, indicating that regulatory rigidity only applies to specific plans.

*Our planning system in Finland puts the frames for planning and the planning processes [...] the process is very regulated by the law [...] it's a very linear process of how you get*

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<sup>7</sup> The National Coalition Party's Programme of Principles does not specifically state SUM as a part of their sustainability agenda (National Coalition Party, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> The Greens' political program for 2023-2027 includes seven aspects, of which one focuses on sustainable mobility (The Greens, 2022).

*to plan the traffic environments, but then the greeneries don't have the same regulations, so it's a bit unbalanced.* – Project Manager, City of Helsinki

This example illustrates the possible limitations of too many policies and regulations, as they may be interpreted as barriers for more innovative and sustainable urban plans. It may also affect the pace at which the city is able to reach its sustainability goals, as policies may take a long time to revise and update. Furthermore, as the example suggests, there is an imbalance in policies within SUM, where, for instance, the regulation of green spaces is not as rigid as the planning of traffic environments. Moreover, the project manager stresses the complication that arises when strategies and policies are established without addressing the details needed for practical implementation. These discrepancies in SUM policies result in a gap between policies and operational processes, which the interviewee compares to “water and oil”. Hence, an inherent contradiction exists where the policies serve as a guiding framework, only for specific SUM initiatives, but also lack the instructions to translate them into actionable and implementable steps.

#### 4.2.2 Aspects of Accessibility

Various aspects of accessibility emerged as detailed discussion topics in all fifteen interviews, including discussions about accessibility policies, affordability, and access to resources and services. Both city employees and HSL representatives regarded accessibility as an all-encompassing influential factor, for which both organizations follow the City of Helsinki's Accessibility Policies 2022–2025.

*We have an accessibility policy and it's very detailed, and it's implemented in everything we do.* – Project Manager, City of Helsinki

An analysis of the City's Accessibility Policy reveals the connection of urban mobility planning for wider accessibility goals, for instance, the policies related to street and park planning, reveal that SUM is a key element in achieving accessible urban environments (City of Helsinki, n.d.b). Furthermore, all three interviewees from HSL articulate that different parts of their service networks are examined from the point of view of accessibility, which residents participate in.

However, they do acknowledge that more needs to be done, as they state “our aim is to find more ways and channels by which different groups can be included in our planning processes”. Hence, indicating that, while accessibility has a central role in urban mobility planning in Helsinki, a mindset for continuous improvement and adaptation is needed to ensure that diverse accessibility needs are met now and in the future. As a result, accessibility is seen as an overarching phenomenon that needs stakeholder collaboration, participatory mechanisms, and policies to ensure a more inclusive and functional urban environment for all residents.

### *Affordability*

All six community members touch upon their thoughts of the affordability of Helsinki’s public transportation system. The findings present varying opinions and considerations that are affected by wider socio-economic factors and individual circumstances. Further elaborated on by HSL representatives, ticket prices remain one of the biggest barriers for people to access public transportation.<sup>9</sup> Table 5 below presents the community members’ varying opinions.

<b>Community member</b>	<b>Quote</b>
Community member 1	<i>I would say it's quite affordable [...]</i>
Community member 2	<i>It's expensive.</i>
Community member 3	<i>It's free for me and my assistant.</i>
Community member 4	<i>[...] it's less affordable than before.</i>
Community member 5	<i>The prices could be cheaper [...]</i>
Community member 6	<i>[...] The prices are just fine for me.</i>

*Table 5. Resident perceptions of the affordability of Helsinki’s public transportation*

From these examples, it may be interpreted that the satisfaction level of residents regarding public transportation is largely linked to an individual’s socio-economic status, yet exceptions exist. For example, community member 3, who is a wheelchair user and requires an assistant to

<sup>9</sup> The revenue split of HSL in 2023 was; 43% ticket revenue, 53% municipal contributions (funding from tax-payers), and 4% others (incl. government subsidies, ticket inspection revenue, and revenue from rent) (HSL, 2024).



move around, does not have to pay anything to use Helsinki's public transportation network, a condition that extends to his assistant. This indicates that people with disabilities can use Helsinki's public transportation free-of-charge<sup>10</sup>, confirmed by an exploration of HSL's website, where they have clear descriptions of who is entitled to free travel – a group, which includes blind people, wheelchair users, companions and assistants, mothers and children in prams, as well as war veterans (HSL, n.d.c). Hence, highlighting the value of inclusivity policies in ensuring equitable access to public transportation. While affordability remains a considerable factor, aspects of accessibility and inclusion also play significant roles in shaping public transportations experiences for residents.

However, for community member 4, considerations of public transportation affordability extend to wider affordability reflections of living in Helsinki. He expresses his worries by stating “I think it's really becoming a problem that certain areas are a part of Helsinki, but it takes more time to come to the center from those areas than from, for example Lahti [one-hour away from Helsinki]”. He continues by stating that the public transportation ticket prices from the periphery areas are so expensive that “you can just add it to your monthly rent”. Community member 2 confirms this by saying “the monthly ticket is like over 100 euros for the ABCD ticket [the most extensive ticket type]”. Hence, suggesting that the affordability of public transportation is not only a matter of individual transportation costs, but also a reflection of wider urban realities that may affect inclusion and accessibility.

### *Access to Resources and Services*

From the interviews it appears that all participants consider access to resources and services as valuable, and community members, regardless of socioeconomic factors, praise Helsinki's mobility options for providing them with good and easy possibilities to reach wanted services with their preferred mobility mode. Generally, it appears that the hardest way to reach resources and services in central Helsinki is by private car, due to limited parking spaces and the presence of various public transport options that limit the availability of driving space. However, while

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<sup>10</sup> There are also groups that are entitled to discounted travel, including students, children between 7-17 years, pensioners receiving a pension from Kela, people over 70 years, and people with reduced mobility who live permanently in the HSL area. (HSL, n.d.d).

this may be the case, the City of Helsinki's biking coordinator stresses the significance of integration and the interconnectedness of different modes of transport.

*One thing I communicate a lot is that we're not hating on cars, quite the opposite. We know that many people and many services are dependent on the car. So we need to have bicycle infrastructure, because when you make sure that all people who have the option to bike, most of them will. And then the people who need a car have more space to do so, which also improves the functionality of the car system [...] – Biking coordinator, City of Helsinki*

This statement not only emphasizes the crucial role that proper integration plays for the development of SUM initiatives, but also highlights the value of a holistic understanding of how different modes of mobility affect the quality of life of urban residents. Hence, fostering integrated transportation systems, while acknowledging the diverse needs and dependencies of residents, can be seen as essential for the creation of successful SUM initiatives and the enhancement of overall quality of life.

#### 4.2.3 Shared Accountability

The level of shared accountability emerged as an all-encompassing influential factor in SUMP's with community members, city employees, and HSL representatives. Interviewees from the city and HSL stressed having a mindset of "togetherness" when formulating inclusive plans for urban development, implying thinking from a resident perspective and considering their opinions and contextual knowledge. Both borough liaisons from the city highlighted the value of working together towards common goals within specific areas and neighborhoods of Helsinki. This was seen to increase the level of shared accountability between organizations, service operators, associations, residents, both young and old, and city employees. Additionally, being clear and transparent, and fostering a safe environment, where individuals feel important and trust that they can voice their opinions, were deemed important for "togetherness". However, while togetherness also seemed to be prominent for the three HSL representatives, it was clear that the emphasis remained on vertical integration among various public organizations, while the same level of shared accountability was not demanded from residents.

Furthermore, similarly to findings in section 4.1.4, the level of shared accountability experienced by community members seemed to be related to their activity levels. Community member 6, who is an active member within the city, expressed his keen interest in contributing to the city's initiatives within his area of residence and was well knowledgeable about what his contributions would have an impact on. Moreover, he went on to state "I've actually voted for these urban environment plans that provide more accessible, cheap, easy to do activities, that work for a lot of people", indicating that he feels a certain ownership and accountability for making Helsinki a place where different kinds of people are comfortable and can enjoy their time. In contrast, this sense of shared accountability was not felt among more inactive residents, demonstrated by community member 2 saying "I heard that the city doesn't care about what they [immigrant residents] want or what they're thinking about", boosted by community member 4 expressing "The city is not interested in hearing, especially these kinds of people's [marginalized residents] thoughts". Hence, suggesting a lack of inclusivity in decision-making processes, which indicates that not everyone feels or is heard about urban planning and development. Thus, this exclusion may lead to a discrepancy in shared accountability, where responsibility and accountability are not distributed evenly between stakeholders, thus undermining the effectiveness of participatory efforts. Additionally, negatively affecting the trust felt towards the city.

On the other hand, it was perceived that some of the inactive community members had not attempted to participate in the city's surveys, events, or other initiatives, yet they still expressed dissatisfaction with the city's efforts to include them. Therefore, drawing a parallel to community member 6's simile "[...] you can lead a horse to the water, but you can't force her to drink.", demonstrating the complexity and disparity of engaging citizens in such democratic contexts where they have the freedom to participate, opt not to, and yet express dissatisfaction. Consequently, highlighting the challenges that arise from this non-reciprocal relationship for fostering active civic engagement. The following section will discuss the use of incentive strategies for such relationships, explaining potential discrepancies that may influence SUMPs.

#### 4.2.4 Incentive Strategies

All nine organizational interviewees directly or indirectly mention incentive strategies and their effect on successful resident participation. Generally all participants regard incentive strategies as something they need to think about, especially for more “disadvantaged groups” or “marginalized people”. Furthermore, employees from the City of Helsinki also touch upon the value of planning incentive strategies with other city departments and relevant stakeholders. For instance, borough liaison 2 mentions that, when planning strategies to incentivize immigrant residents, “we plan together with Helsinki’s immigrant associations”. Similarly, the special planner highlights the need for planning incentive strategies together, especially when it comes to understanding why different residents would choose to travel by more sustainable means of transportation, such as walking and biking. Hence, it may be assumed that incentive strategies are linked to a multi-stakeholder approach and effective participatory mechanisms in fostering public decision-making, suggesting a significant association with these elements in the development of SUMP.

However, while the creation of incentive strategies was regarded as an important component, further elaboration of such strategies were often left out by both the City of Helsinki and HSL participants, generating a contradiction between its perceived importance and its actual operationalization. Hence, this creates a feeling of ingenuity and could possibly indicate organizational inertia, where all members of both organizations rely on maintaining the status quo and avoid addressing their performance shortcomings and the required resources to confront these inactions.

Moreover, the findings suggest that this contradiction has contributed to the challenges that both organizations face when planning and executing participatory mechanisms, as evidenced by both community members and content analysis of the organizations’ participatory methods. It seems, therefore, that the city and HSL use largely similar participatory approaches, such as surveys, observations, workshops, and interviews (City of Helsinki, 2024j; HSL, n.d.b), which are only regarded as useful and interesting by active residents. Hence, indicating an inherent flaw in the incentive strategies of both organizations. Even borough liaison 2 notes this by stating “I don’t even know if they receive any information about our events and such”, clearly casting doubt on

whether incentive strategies are properly planned and implemented in actuality. Consequently, while incentive strategies are seen as important when fostering engagement, discrepancies exist between thought and operationalization, which especially affects the level of engagement that is required in formulating equitable SUMP.

#### 4.2.5 Aspects of Safety

Aspects of safety arose as an all-encompassing influential factor regarded by community members, City of Helsinki employees, and HSL representatives. However, differences prevailed in the way organizational interviewees and community interviewees communicated these aspects. Both safety in urban transportation planning and the perceived sense of safety were highlighted in all interviews as factors that may influence the success of SUMP and the perception of inclusion.

##### *Safety in Urban Transportation Planning*

Within urban transportation planning, safety was regarded as one of the most important pillars, highlighted by both the City of Helsinki and HSL, emerging as an outcome of proper infrastructure and the adequate maintenance of that infrastructure. Furthermore, these discussions also revealed the organizations' overall objective of making sustainable mobility options attractive for residents.

*Proper infrastructure. That's the most important thing. It's like when you look at the safety pyramid of a factory. The biggest thing that they always need to remove is: what causes the safety concerns [...] So it's building forgiving infrastructure, making sure that you have proper separation from cars when needed, you need to have proper timing for the signalization. You need to make sure that it's intuitive. You've got to be able, as a planner, to consider the safety that the people using this infrastructure will face, and if you feel like a mistake could be done here, it most likely will happen, and you need to make sure [...] to prevent that. – Biking Coordinator, City of Helsinki*

*An attractive and safe walking environment, accessible routes and stops, and smooth*

*public transport are all important factors in improving the attractiveness of public transport. During winter the role of maintenance in both public transport streets and walking connections to stops is emphasized.* – Transport System Specialist & Head of Public Transport Planning Unit, HSL

These samples can be interpreted to showcase the underlying factors that are regarded as one of the important factors for the safety and attractiveness of SUM in Helsinki. Hence, it is essential to build flexible infrastructure, in which the emphasis lies heavily on the adequate separation from cars, proper signalization, and intuitive design to enhance safety for residents. Additionally, the significance of accessible routes, well-maintained streets, and smooth public transport services are highlighted as one of the key factors for improving the attractiveness of public transport. As such, proper infrastructure has an essential role in promoting safe and more sustainable urban transportation options.

Similarly, community members regarded proper infrastructure as something important for safety when moving around in Helsinki. Community member 4 gave an example “That bridge to Kulosaari here, I think only has this small bike lane on the car path, but of course no one bikes there, because they don’t want to die, so they bike on the walking path, but then you have walkers and bikers on the same lane and that becomes quite difficult”. This example was further confirmed by the researchers’ observations conducted during the field trip, not just in Kulosaari, but elsewhere in Helsinki. Hence, indicating that where there is no proper infrastructure in place, walking and biking become increasingly difficult and unsafe.

### *Perceived Sense of Safety*

Moreover, the perceived sense of safety was discussed in detail in all interviews with community members and was also a recurring theme in the interviews with the City of Helsinki’s participation specialist and borough liaisons, as well as with HSL’s representatives. Generally, all community members perceived Helsinki as a safe city, demonstrated by both community member 2, saying: “I feel safe, yes” and community member 6 voicing: “In general, I don’t feel unsafe in Helsinki at all, if I just use a bit of common sense for where to walk and when”. However, this general sense of safety seems to be more prevalent amongst the male community

members, whereas female members communicate a discrepancy between being, and feeling safe, especially on public transportation. Community member 1 provides an insight saying: “If I go from the city center to Pukinmäki by bus in the middle of the night, I would probably be safe, but I wouldn’t maybe feel safe”. Similarly, community member 5 specifically states that she avoids moving around Helsinki during the night, both by public transport and by foot. Nevertheless, while gender discrepancies exist, all community members voice recommendations for future improvements, directed at the city and HSL, highlighting the significance and need for urban spaces to be perceived as safe by the residents.

From the perspective of the HSL representatives, it is understood that perceived safety cannot be improved by organizations alone, as it is a broad societal theme and an individual experience. This is supported by all three HSL interviewees, who state that “we work with various stakeholders to develop and improve perceived safety”. Among these stakeholders are the residents, whose understanding of unsafe places is continuously monitored, along with the things that increase insecurity in public transport. Hence, it may be interpreted that enhancing the perceived sense of safety in urban transportation is a collaborative process involving various stakeholders, among them organizations and residents. Further, the enhancement of safety perceptions cannot be pinned on any single organization, thus adding to its complexity. As such, transportation organizations may be able to, by actively involving residents and monitoring their perceptions, identify and address concerns to improve overall safety perceptions in public transportation.

Providing additional support for enhancing the perceived sense of safety through collaborative and participatory approaches, the participation specialist at the City of Helsinki explains:

*[...] there may be some “not-so-safe” areas in Eastern Helsinki [...] Safety is like a mega trend that is talked about, but you also need to understand that there are people who feel sorry for Eastern Helsinki, because it has such a bad reputation. I mean it's their home and they like it there and they enjoy it, and don't see it as unsafe [...]and in Kerrokantasi you can see a lot of people from Eastern Helsinki proposing ideas to the planners, such*

*as nature initiatives, celebrating the many cultures of the area, and ensuring services remain free or inexpensive [...] – Participation Specialist, City of Helsinki*

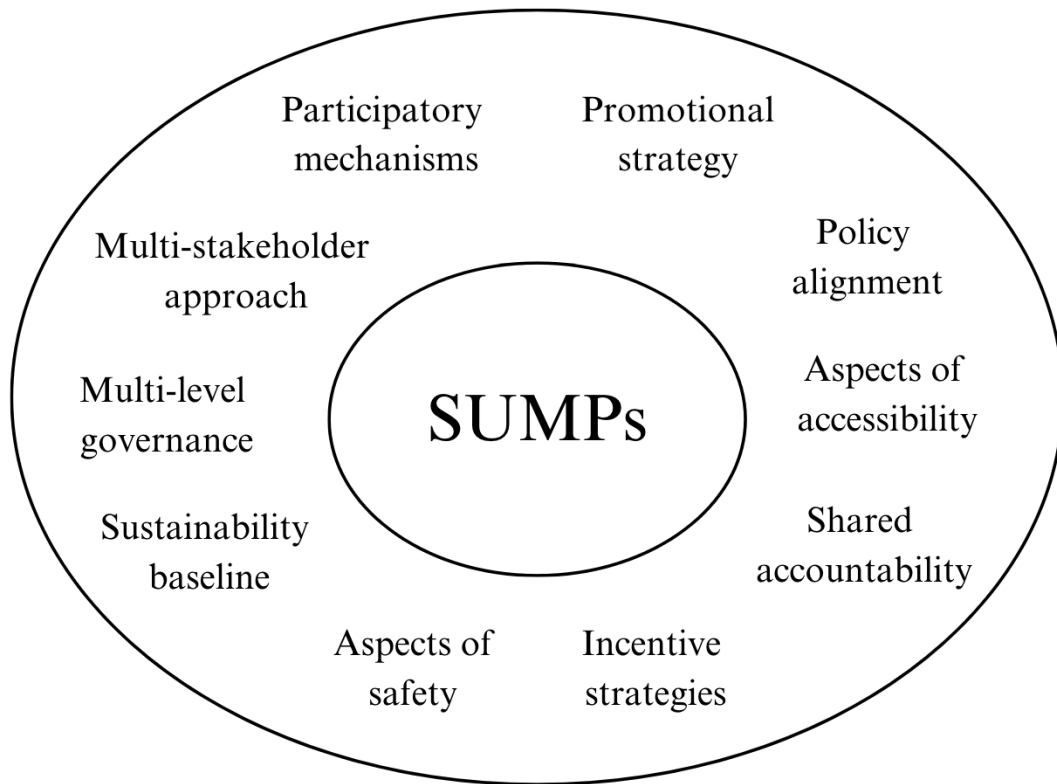
This example demonstrates the wide reaching implications of perceived safety, which may arguably yield insights into how segregation and social exclusion are enhanced within larger urban communities. However, it also provides support for participatory approaches in urban decision-making, which may contribute to creating more vibrant, safe, and inclusive urban communities. As further highlighted by borough liaison 1 “when we understand each other, it often leads to an added sense of security”. Hence, highlighting the role of open-mindedness and awareness for enhancing perceptions of safety.

### 4.3 Summary of the Key Findings

To conclude this chapter and summarize the key findings, a new version of the preliminary framework is presented (see *Figure 2*). While the aim was to nuance the preliminary framework, the empirical findings elucidate another relationship between the prerequisites and influential factors of SUMP, illustrated in the developed framework. As evident in this chapter, the interconnectedness between the prerequisites and influential factors, with their non-static nature, was revealed. Hence, it was deemed more suitable to merge these factors together, illustrating this relationship in a layered model, which recognizes the variability of the factors’ influence in regards to fostering inclusive SUMP. At the core of the framework lie SUMP, which are the plans that encompass both SUM and social inclusion in urban contexts. The second layer incorporates all the factors, including previously identified prerequisites and newly discovered elements from the empirical findings, that influence SUMP.

Therefore, the aim of the developed framework is to assist in identifying all the factors affecting the planning and execution of SUMP, recognizing their interconnectedness while evoking a comprehensive understanding of each factor’s influence. Furthermore, while the findings present some indication of prioritization between each factor, the data was sufficient for some and not for others, thus making a definitive prioritization list hard to establish. Moreover, a generalizable list could not be formulated, due to the varying resources and competencies possessed by different cities and contexts, which subsequently influences how factors are prioritized.





*Figure 2. Developed Conceptual Framework*

## 5. Discussion

The following chapter aims to discuss the empirical findings in relation to existing literature regarding stakeholder and governance theories, social inclusion, SUM, and SUMP. Additionally, this chapter aspires to further enhance the developed conceptual framework presented in section 4.3. As such, the structure is based on the interconnectedness of each factor in relation to SUMP, encompassing both SUM and social inclusion. To facilitate discussion, the ten factors will be divided into three domains, where four factors are identified as leaning more towards influencing social inclusion, three are regarded as “middle” factors directly affecting SUMP, and the last three are seen as leaning towards influencing SUM. While this division is not exhaustive and some factors may be assessed to lean more towards either direction based on the unique perspective taken, it allows for the discussion to follow a structure based on the developed framework, enabling the examination of each factor from the angle that is deemed most relevant at present.

### 5.1 Factors Leaning Towards Social Inclusion

The factors presented in this section – participatory mechanisms, incentive strategies, shared accountability, and perceived sense of safety – are all deemed to influence the social inclusion aspect of SUMP. In urban mobility planning, effective engagement and well-designed participatory mechanisms, supported by appropriate incentive strategies, can foster a culture and climate of shared accountability. This synergy fosters a cycle that leads to the development of inclusive SUMP, representing the ideal outcome of participatory actions in urban mobility planning. Furthermore, perceived safety within the broader urban environment affects the inclusionary qualities of some communities and neighborhoods, thus influencing broader well-being. Similarly to the common scenario explained by Murray et al. (2010) and Turnhout et al. (2010), discrepancies between communication and action persist within the findings, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the inherent challenges within participatory approaches related to SUMP.

*Participation: The Synergy Between Mechanisms, Incentives, and Shared Accountability*

While participatory mechanisms have shown to enhance the integration of marginalized communities into urban areas as evidenced by case studies in Cape Town, Costa Rica and the United States (Nelson, 2012; Umaña-Barrios & Gil, 2017; Adorno et al., 2016), the findings in Helsinki present a contrasting scenario. Despite the city's participatory practices, there remains a gap between the intended inclusivity and actual stakeholder feelings of inclusion. Hence, as noted, this discrepancy suggests a potential superficiality that might be perceived as mere lip-service or tokenistic. According to Bloomfield et al. (2000, cited by Murray et al., 2010), excessive engagement can lead to stakeholder fatigue, where active stakeholders feel their contributions are not genuinely valued. This theoretical perspective may explain why Helsinki's approach could be perceived as superficial, as it stems from a cautious strategy aimed at avoiding fatigue among active participants. Consequently, the city's attempt to balance engagement and avoid fatigue may have inadvertently contributed to the very superficiality and exclusion it sought to prevent. Furthermore, similarly to a perspective described within Remme et al.'s (2022) research about the reinforcement of elitist tendencies in SUM initiatives, it is found that Helsinki's active participants predominantly come from more affluent socio-economic areas, which may reinforce existing social divides rather than bridge them, further emphasizing the need of engaging non-active participants to create inclusive SUMP.

However, contrary to existing literature that emphasizes shared accountability within governmental forums (Ansell, 2012), the findings demonstrate the importance of fostering shared accountability among residents to enhance engagement. Furthermore, it was revealed that inactive residents who had not even attempted to engage in the city's participatory initiatives, still expressed dissatisfaction with the city's attempts at inclusion. This situation may reflect a broader issue of civic disengagement, where residents could carry certain skepticism in civic processes, possibly perceiving that these efforts are not designed for them or fail to address their genuine concerns. Hence, suggesting that participatory governance efforts should be aligned with research in institutional and legitimacy theories, and theories of civic engagement to enhance their likelihood of success. Such theoretical integration is underemphasized in current literature, which highlights a need for a more comprehensive research approach when studying the practical implementation of participatory mechanisms.

Additionally, this civic disengagement points to an engagement barrier between the city and its residents, which is further exacerbated by a lack of implicit incentive strategies, as revealed in the empirical findings. Literature on participatory and collaborative governance both emphasize the necessity of considering incentives to boost participation. As highlighted by Osmani (2008) and Fischer (2012), incorporating incentivization into the design process is crucial for engaging inactive residents. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the consequences of inadequate incentive strategies and the lack of integration between thoughts and operationalization, present in both researched organizations, could have a domino effect in the process of planning and implementation (Fischer, 2012). Hence, taking all these factors into account, it can be assumed that incentive strategies are one of the components to consider in the planning process of equitable SUMPs, explaining its presence in the developed framework (see *Figure 2*). In particular, incentive and nudging strategies, with thoughtful design, could play a role in addressing the potential underlying causes of civic disengagement, thus enhancing the overall inclusiveness of SUMPs.

### *Perceived Sense of Safety*

While the influence of traffic safety is understood well in literature and is often seen as one of the most impactful indicators of good mobility plans (Chatziioannou et al., 2023), perceived sense of safety has garnered less attention. The findings of this study contend that perceived sense of safety takes a resident point of view, indicating that physical safety may not always be enough for an urban space to be perceived as safe. Interestingly, similar findings to Adebayo et al. (2022), who observe that cities, specifically in South Africa, are not inclusive for women, as they experience insecurities related to safety, can be detected in the findings. The findings suggest that women feel more unsafe in spaces where there is no physical danger, indicating a difference between genders that may further affect feelings of inclusivity. However, as opposed to Adebayo et al. (2022), whose findings relate to physical safety, this study contributes to the understanding of how individual perceptions may affect the continuum of inclusion and exclusion, demonstrating the need for wider societal discussions among diverse stakeholders about how this may be improved.

Similar findings are presented not just between genders, but between community neighborhoods in larger urban areas, where entire communities and areas of a city are perceived as unsafe, due to preconceived notions and lack of understanding. As mentioned during the analysis, this may lead to the enhancement of segregation and exclusion, drawing on Wright & Stickley's (2012) description of exclusion, where entire communities are associated with poverty, inequality, and disadvantage. Such perceptions are dangerous for the creation of equitable SUMP, as they may hinder the creation of participatory approaches for these communities, which affect the development of lively neighborhoods, and thus prevent individuals from accessing public services and resources easily (Gerometta et al., 2005; García et al., 2015). Hence, only exacerbating the problem and deepening the societal divide between urban communities. Therefore, understanding and appropriately addressing safety perceptions in cities is a factor that public entities should consider when designing SUMP, as these may yield insights into broader societal themes that need to be confronted before such plans may be operationalized.

## 5.2 The Existence of “Middle” Factors

The empirical findings present three factors that directly affect SUMP (i.e. both social inclusion and SUM) and are, therefore, described as “middle” factors that do not clearly lean to either side. These factors are identified as sustainability baseline, promotional strategy, and accessibility, which all provide further insights into the intricate considerations and preparatory actions that need to be taken when planning and implementing SUMP. Both sustainability baseline and promotional strategy are seen as something new for the concept of SUMP, demonstrating the need for a sustainability understanding and commitment, while broadening the view on how urban mobility affects wider society. Moreover, the exploration of accessibility highlights the complex relationship between inclusion and urban mobility, and considers the balancing act that links affordability and cost effectiveness together.

### *Sustainability Baseline*

Although authors like Gallo and Marinelli (2020) emphasize the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions into SUMP, there remains an absence of research discussing the necessity for establishing a foundational sustainability baseline, which involves a sustainability understanding and commitment prior to executing SUMP. For instance, as highlighted in the

findings, some countries have less developed sustainability practices integrated into their urban planning processes. Ultimately, this could result in SUMP that fail to resonate effectively within society and among residents, potentially being perceived as mere lip-service or redundant.

The establishment of a sustainability baseline is further supported by Ansell & Gash (2008), who argue that the success of collaborative efforts depends on establishing common starting conditions. Thus, in this context, a sustainability baseline could act both as a starting condition and a sustainability and knowledge baseline. Establishing this baseline is essential prior to initiating collaboration within SUMP, as it ensures that all participants are aligned and well-informed from the outset. Such a sustainability baseline in an organizational setting is exemplified by policies that function as boundary control, which ensures a foundational level of sustainability commitment across all levels in the organization. Hence, despite limited emphasis of a foundational sustainability understanding and commitment in existing literature, this study's findings highlight the value of a sustainability baseline prior to planning and implementing SUMP, a factor that impacts a nation's or city's holistic sustainability efforts solely in a positive way.

#### *Promotional Strategy: An Augmented View of Urban Mobility*

To better understand the process of how SUMP succeed, the empirical findings emphasize the existence of an effective promotional strategy, which provides a holistic appreciation for the role urban mobility plays in the larger societal context. However, such a promotional strategy has not been extensively discussed, if at all, by SUMP literature. In the case of Helsinki, the promotional strategy focuses on a public health perspective, which aims to promote a “healthier and equal Helsinki”, hence taking inspiration from broader societal themes. While clear connections cannot be drawn from SUMP literature, both social inclusion and SUM literature discuss aspects that may provide insights for the creation of a promotional strategy that focuses on public health. Drawing on such insights is deemed appropriate, as SUMP are the bridge between social inclusion and SUM initiatives (Maltese et al., 2021; Okraszewska et al., 2022).

As evidenced by existing literature, the social inclusion research field extensively discusses the connection between public health and inclusion. For instance, Tugendhaft et al. (2024) and Birdy

and McVeigh (2023) contend that by including a diverse set of residents and service-users into the planning and implementation phases of matters that affect public health, the likelihood of reaching intended outcomes increases. Somewhat similarly, the findings suggest that by promoting SUM as an enhancer of public health, more diverse community groups have been reached and the objectives of SUMP are more easily accepted among residents. Hence, making it potentially influential for the success of SUMP.

Moreover, by connecting the creation of an effective promotional strategy for SUMP to the behavioral point of view advocated within SUM literature, a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of a cultural and behavioral shift can be obtained. The choice of a public health promotional strategy, described in the findings, bears close resemblance to the ASI framework proposed by Bongardt et al. (2019, cited in Gall et al., 2023), which advocates for a change in the behaviors or mindsets of residents to achieve substantial progress in sustainable mobility initiatives. In choosing such an inclusive promotional strategy, the mindsets of residents may shift more easily, as the health of the wider community affects individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status or background. Therefore, as cities aim to develop and execute successful SUMP, close attention should be paid to the way they are promoted at the city-level. However, it should be noted that, while the findings of this study focus on a public health promotional strategy, cities who wish to succeed in their SUM efforts should carefully analyze and select the promotional strategy that best fits their local context and unique societal themes, for instance in connection to the prevailing level of sustainability understanding within the city or nation.

#### *Accessibility: The Domino Effect of Affordable Public Transportation*

In the selected case study, accessibility emerged as a dominant theme in the data, indicating its overarching role in SUMP. Overall, Helsinki was recognized as an accessible SUM city, guided by well-defined policies. However, despite broad support for accessibility, affordability remains a concern, which existing literature regards as a key indicator of well-designed mobility plans (Chatziioannou et al., 2023). Hence, suggesting that it has a profound connection to both inclusion and the economic side of designing public transportation.

In Helsinki, the interviewed residents viewed public transport as costly, with ticket prices being a barrier to accessing this service. As mentioned in the findings, this concern contributes to a domino effect, impacting the general well-being and livelihood of the residents, particularly those from marginalized communities. Additionally, this reflects a paradox in public funding; despite public transportation being largely funded by municipal contributions (i.e. taxpayer money), the costs of ticket prices remain relatively high. Therefore, it can be conferred that public transportation, which is funded by the residents, should be financially accessible to them as well. Looking at public transportation in this light would also align better with Gallo and Marinelli's (2020) and Holden et al.'s (2020) definition of SUM, which they describe as affordable, safe, and accessible modes of transport. However, it should be noted that, while it is easy to advocate for affordability in the context of inclusive SUM, there will always be costs associated with public transportation that someone needs to pay for in the end. As such, to offer affordable transportation and simultaneously remain cost effective, decision-makers should promote public transportation in relation to the residents – those who travel, and those who do not, but still contribute towards covering costs through taxes – giving it the status of a welfare service. Doing so would further assist in bridging the relationship between social inclusion and SUM, allowing for the creation of truly inclusive SUMP.

### 5.3 Factors Leaning Towards SUM

This section of the discussion aims to examine those factors that lean more towards SUM in relation to existing literature. Such factors were identified to be multi-level governance, policy alignment, and multi-stakeholder approach. It should be noted that these factors are heavily interconnected, thus they will be presented and conferred as such. Moreover, the findings suggest that these three factors perhaps require more consideration than the others, due to the existence of an optimal level or “sweet spot” after which their effectiveness declines. For instance, it is found that too much multi-level governance, policy alignment, and stakeholder engagement can greatly hinder the creation of more sustainable and innovative SUM initiatives. As such, this section also provides insights into a novel approach, namely self-sufficiency, that may be preferred in some instances.

*Optimality: A Hidden Flaw in SUM*



Perhaps unsurprisingly, current literature has focused on the benefits that multi-level governance (Mladenovič et al., 2022; Cevheribucak, 2024), policy alignment (Holden et al., 2020; Kujala et al., 2022; Remme et al., 2022; Birdy & McVeigh, 2023), and a multi-stakeholder approach (Rusaw, 2007; Sarturi et al., 2023) can have on SUM initiatives and SUMP, further advocating for their applicability to public entities. However, the empirical findings suggest that the benefits gained from these factors may not be perceived as helpful in all situations and contexts. For instance, while Mladenovič et al. (2022) and Cevheribucak (2024) advocate for both national and local governance for the successful execution of SUMP, due to it making knowledge-sharing and access to resources more attainable, the findings of this study suggest that multi-level governance only increases bureaucratic processes, which may as a result hinder the success of SUMP. The existence of multi-level governance processes within public entities – from transnational to city-level – seem to be an unavoidable characteristic of such organizations, yet, as cities aim to create more sustainable urban futures, these very processes create an environment where bureaucracy hinders rapid responses to novel urban challenges and prolongs the timeframe for tangible improvements. As such, demonstrating that too much of something beneficial can lead to adverse and unintended outcomes, especially when addressing “wicked” problems (Rusaw; 2007; Rittel & Webber 1973, cited in Gall et al., 2023), which require new and innovative solutions.

Furthermore, while existing literature has largely placed policy alignment on a pedestal, this study reveals its relationship to increased rigidity and bureaucracy. For instance, as opposed to being a purely positive and beneficial aspect that amplifies social inclusion, like Kujala et al. (2022) and Birdy and McVeigh (2023) claim, or something that ensures the clarity and effectiveness of SUM initiatives (Holden et al., 2020; Remme et al., 2022), it is found that policies may act as a hindrance. The findings demonstrate that, even if policies are aligned, they may serve as barriers to more sustainable actions and innovation, which challenges the predominant view of policy alignment, where policies are primarily described as a supporting factor or a facilitator for better urban engagement. However, it should also be noted that the establishment of common guidelines is still crucial for the effective planning and execution of SUMP, like Arsénio et al. (2016) argue, hence highlighting the importance of understanding and acknowledging the optimal level of policy alignment that should be employed. Therefore, this

showcases both the interconnectedness of multi-level governance and policy alignment and supports the need for a comprehensive understanding of how, and in which situations, policies may negatively affect the flexibility and resilience of public organizations.

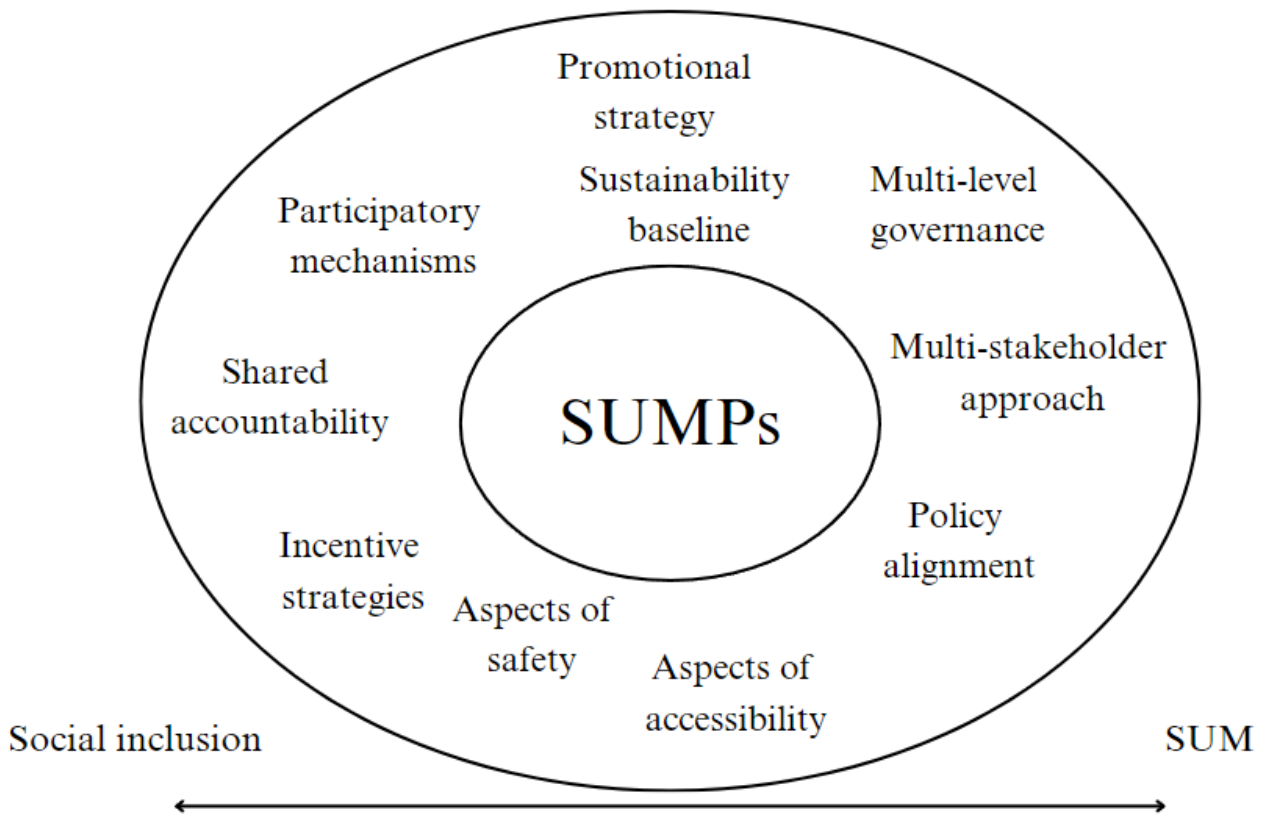
Similarly, the findings related to a multi-stakeholder approach deviate from the generally positive remarks of previous studies. While Rusaw (2007) and Sarturi et al. (2023) have emphasized the potential applicability of stakeholder theory to public entities, discussions about its usefulness have remained largely limited, only alluding to its helpfulness in handling ethical issues and fostering trust and transparency. The findings of this study partly subscribe to these remarks, suggesting that a multi-stakeholder approach can be seen as helpful for creating equitable SUMP in certain contexts, such as in designing mobility networks, increasing the perceived sense of safety, and fostering diversity. However, as Liu et al. (2018) and Singh et al. (2022) contend, with fostering diversity comes the management of a vast range of opinions and objectives, which was found to create challenges for both participating organizations. While no clear tactics were expressed to solve such issues, due to the inability to identify root causes, this indicates that in many cases Freeman's (2010) generic strategies for stakeholder management may be too vague to address such diverse objectives, especially in public entities. Consequently, demonstrating the difficulty of managing stakeholders in the context of SUMP.

Interestingly, a new concept – self-sufficiency – seen as a countermeasure for managing stakeholders emerged during analysis. This concept has been largely neglected by literature, yet it provides a novel approach to planning and executing SUM initiatives and may serve as a supporting characteristic for stakeholder management in some contexts and as a separate condition in others. Showcased as priority one in *Table 3* (referring to section 4.1.3), self-sufficiency was found to be the preferred approach in some projects and contexts, as it requires less time and resources, enabling the public entity to focus only on those stakeholders that are absolutely needed in formulating SUMP. Furthermore, self-sufficiency was seen to increase resiliency, which is evidently a needed quality as cities tackle “wicked” SUM challenges. Hence, due to enhancing flexibility and resilience, self-sufficiency may alleviate the extent of bureaucratic processes involved, thus also tackling some of the challenges created by too many policies and governance procedures.

Lastly, this study contributes to the understanding of stakeholder theory in public organizations by demonstrating its drawbacks in specific contexts and provides helpful insights into how stakeholder theory and governance theories, both collaborative and participatory, should be combined in public entity research. Furthermore, this study enhances the literature regarding stakeholder management in Scandinavian and Nordic countries by offering further validation to the locational and cultural differences that influence management approaches.

## 5.4 Final Developed Framework

As becomes evident from the discussion above, the factors – divided into three domains – showcase characteristics of being on a continuum, in which some influence social inclusion more, some affect SUMP's directly, and others influence SUM. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to enhance the framework presented in section 4.3, to include a continuum that has social inclusion in one end and SUM in the other. Furthermore, the factors within the second layer were also moved to illustrate their respective positions on this continuum. These developments are presented in *Figure 3* below.



*Figure 3. Final Developed Framework*

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to enhance the understanding of the factors affecting the planning and implementation of inclusive SUMP. To fulfill this, the following research question was formulated: What are the prerequisites and influential factors that determine an inclusive planning and implementation process of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)?

Based on an embedded case study of Helsinki, including interviews with nine employees from two public organizations and six community members, it was found that the original research question and preliminary framework did not fully represent the extent of interconnectedness between the influential factors. For instance, some prerequisites, identified in the existing literature, could be grouped as an all-encompassing influential factor, and vice versa. Therefore, it was deemed suitable to integrate prerequisites and influential factors to solely factors that influence inclusive SUMP. This finding was illustrated in the final framework, where the core represents SUMP, encompassing both social inclusion and SUM. The outer layer includes the various factors that need to be considered in these plans – with some factors leaning more towards SUM, others towards social inclusion, and some leaning in the middle of these two – which is illustrated with a continuum at the end of the diagram.

To answer the research question based on the discussed findings, this study argues that there are numerous factors, along with their respective challenges, that play a role in determining the planning and execution of inclusive SUMP. Four factors were found to lean towards the social inclusion aspect of SUMP: participatory mechanisms, shared accountability, incentive strategies, and perceived sense of safety. These interconnected factors highlight the participatory aspects of SUMP, discussing how inclusivity can be fostered and addressing the challenges that arise in such processes. Furthermore, an additional three “middle” factors – sustainability baseline, promotional strategy and accessibility – were identified that directly affect SUMP and, therefore, do not lean to either side. These factors all provide insights into the intricate considerations and preparatory actions for SUMP. Lastly, three factors were identified to lean more towards SUM: multi-level governance, policy alignment and multi-stakeholder approach. All these factors may require more consideration than others, due to the existence of an optimal

level after which their effectiveness declines. For example, an excess of these factors can greatly impede the creation of more sustainable and innovative SUM initiatives. All of these identified factors determine the inclusivity of SUMP, nevertheless, more research needs to be conducted to motivate the factors' interconnectedness and their influence on SUMP.

## 6.1 Framework Assessment: Validity, Contributions and Limitations

The following section will assess the final developed framework in relation to Lincoln and Guba's (1985, cited in Bell et al., 2019) validity criterias: credibility (equivalent to internal validity) and transferability (equivalent to external validity), as presented in section 3.4. Since the focus is on elaborating the framework's credibility and transferability, the measures taken to ensure the study's reliability, previously detailed in the methodology section, will not be considered here. Additionally, as this evaluation of the framework's validity unfolds, the contributions and limitations of the study will also be addressed.

### *Credibility*

Credibility involves assessing the integration and consistency of the framework (Bell et al., 2019). The preliminary framework was derived from an extensive review of existing theories on stakeholder management, governance, social inclusion, SUM and SUMP. By synthesizing insights from these established theoretical foundations, the framework provided a solid foundation for the empirical analysis and its subsequent refinement. Hence, given this solid foundation, this section will not further delve into the credibility of the framework, as it has already been demonstrated through the integration of theory and empirical evidence. Furthermore, the framework has not contradicted the theories reviewed, and solely minor adjustments were necessary for the completion of the final developed framework. As such, these refinements tested the theoretical integrity and contributed to a more robust and credible framework.

### *Transferability and Contributions*

When assessing the transferability of the framework, it is essential to discuss its general value and generalizability, along with its theoretical and practical contributions. In terms of theoretical

contributions, it is important to demonstrate how the final developed framework advances existing theories and knowledge to support its transferability. Additionally, the practical implications indicate the framework's relevance and, thus, generalizability in other settings.

The final developed framework represents a refinement and expansion of the preliminary framework, enhancing the existing literature in relation to SUMP. As such, the theoretical contributions derived from this study are three-fold. First, this study adds depth to the existing academic discourse on SUM, specifically by researching SUM within a social sustainability emphasis, demonstrating influential factors beyond the environmental focus. Second, as an extension of the first contribution, this study elaborates on the planning and implementation stages of SUMP, increasing the understanding of the level of inclusivity demanded to address the mobility needs of all residents. For instance, contrary to other studies researching the indicators and characteristics of successful SUMP (Mladenovič et al., 2022; Okraszewska et al., 2022; Chatziioannou et al., 2023), this research identifies factors that serve as both challenges and influential elements, demonstrating that their impact varies based on context and application. Third, the study expands on the understanding of stakeholder management and governance in public entity research, by detailing the different stakeholders and the intricate management tactics required within civic processes. In particular, focusing on the locational and cultural differences found in Scandinavia and Nordic countries. In contrast to existing literature, self-sufficiency was also found to contribute to the understanding of public entities' stakeholder management. Accordingly, a prioritization list was proposed to further extend the understanding of how they should organize their civic efforts in relation to their stakeholders.

When discussing the relevance and generalizability of this study and its framework, it is clear that it offers practical guidance for cities and nations on the key factors to consider when designing inclusive SUMP. In particular, the findings highlight the practical considerations such as the importance of establishing an inclusive promotional strategy and sustainability baseline, highlighting the necessity of a foundational sustainability understanding and knowledge prior to implementing viable SUMP. These considerations extend to various stakeholders, including politicians, decision-makers, and organizations involved in the SUMP-formulation process. In particular, for managers within public organizations, the prioritization list of stakeholders has

significant implications, as it can contribute to better coordination within their civic efforts. Additionally, by utilizing the framework as a guide, and examining the identified examples within the findings, stakeholders within SUMP's can gain a more nuanced understanding of potential challenges that may arise when implementing SUMP's.

### *Limitations*

While the study offers insights on key factors influencing SUMP's, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. This research was conducted in a specific city at a particular time, which may affect the transferability of the findings. If the same study was to be conducted in five years, the results might differ due to changes in the political landscape, economic conditions, and societal shifts. For instance, four years ago in Helsinki, the political environment was more liberal, whereas it is now more conservative. These political fluctuations can influence the execution and success of SUMP's. Moreover, focusing this case study on Helsinki means that the findings are influenced by the city's unique history, and political systems. These factors can vary significantly across different regions, potentially affecting the framework's applicability elsewhere. Additionally, the availability of resources plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of SUMP's, as cities with limited resources may struggle to implement the initiatives for such plans.

In summary, the framework's effectiveness in Helsinki is contingent on a combination of historical, political, and resource-based factors. For other cities or nations to successfully apply this model, similar supportive conditions would need to be present, including a strong commitment to sustainability, sufficient resources, and a stable political environment dedicated to fostering inclusive urban mobility.

## 6.2 Future Research

Three areas remain open for future research to deepen the understanding of the factors and further refine the final developed framework presented. Firstly, to investigate the relationship between the identified factors, a quantitative study could be conducted, which could provide statistical validation and demonstrate correlations between factors. For instance, large-scale surveys along with statistical assessments could quantify the impact of specific factors like the sustainability baseline or participatory mechanisms on the success of SUMP's. Secondly, future



research could be conducted within other research fields or with interdisciplinary approaches. For instance, a similar study within political science (e.g. utilizing the GAL-TAN scale) could explore how different political climates impact the implementation of SUMP. Additionally, psychological research could examine the motivational drivers, barriers to participation, and reasons for civic disengagement. Lastly, future research could involve a multiple case-study approach to gather new empirical data from various cities and regions, further validating the usefulness of the framework. For instance, a comparative study across multiple cities with diverse socio-economic backgrounds and governance structures could reveal additional factors or modify existing ones. Such an approach would also allow for an exploration of resource constraints by investigating how cities with limited resources can adapt SUMP to their specific contexts.

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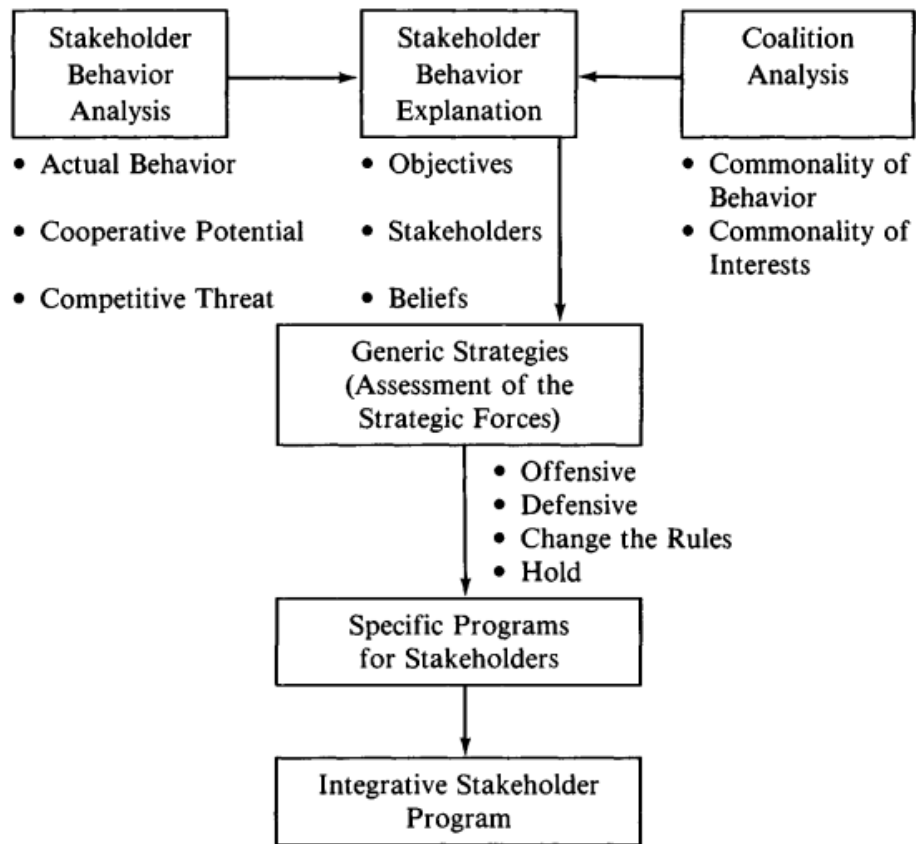
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# Appendices

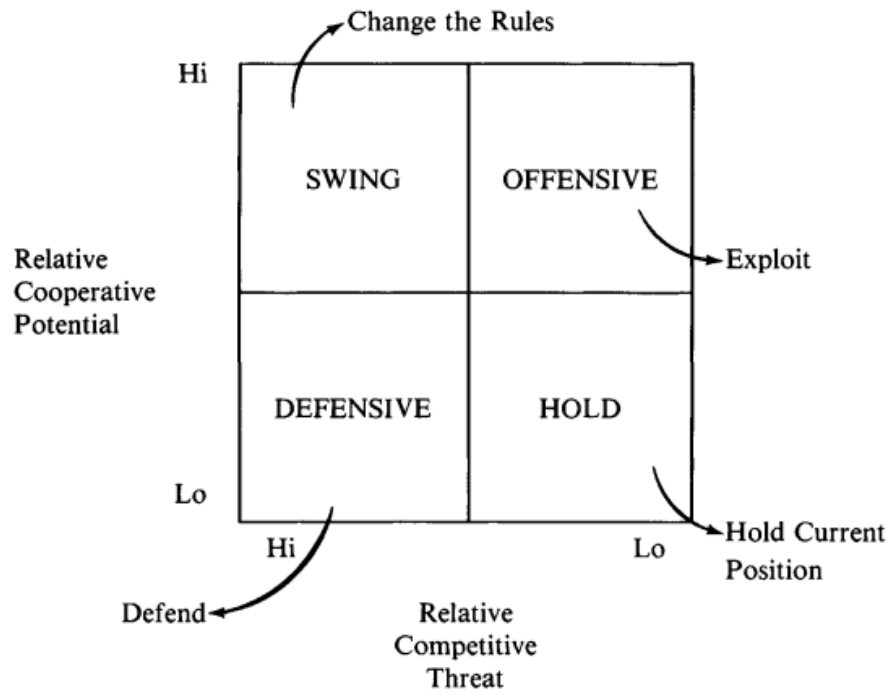
## Appendix A

*The process of formulating stakeholder strategies developed by Freeman (2010) in his seminal book on stakeholder management.*



*Freeman's (2010) Stakeholder Strategy Formulation Process*

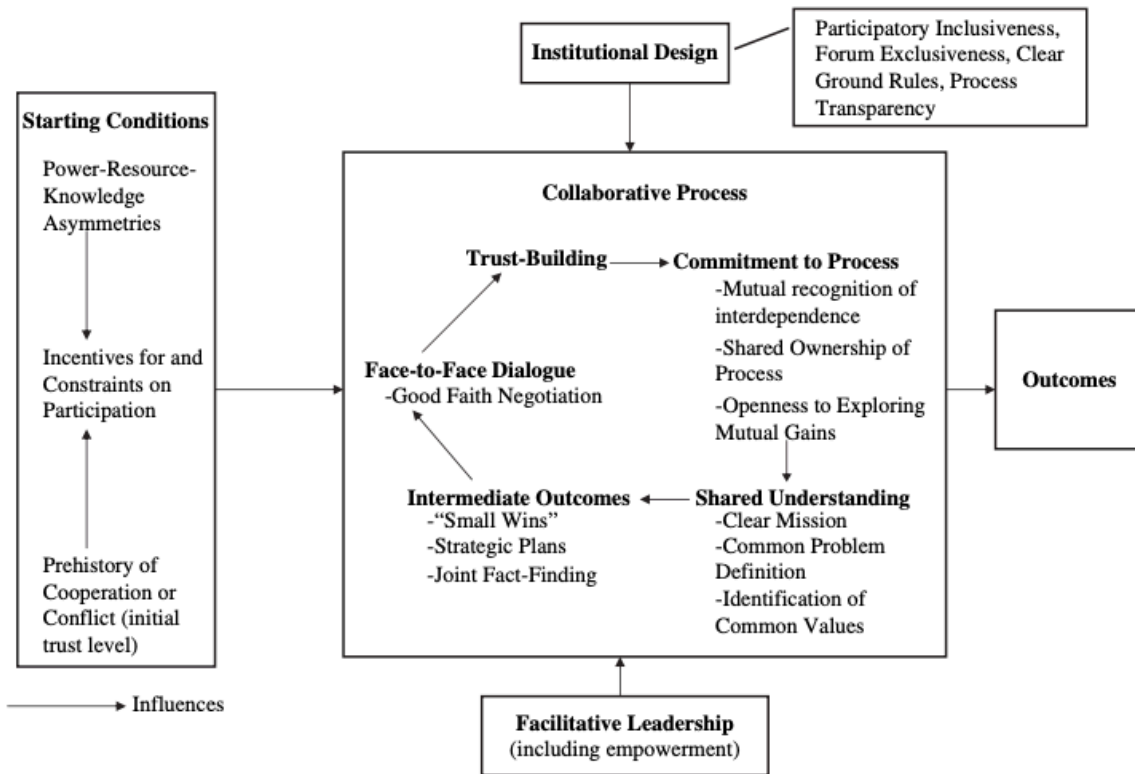
*A matrix grid showcasing the four generic stakeholder strategies developed by Freeman (2010) in his seminal book on stakeholder management.*



*Freeman's (2010) Generic Stakeholder Strategies*

## Appendix B

A model developed by Ansell and Gash (2008) showcasing the components to consider when collaborating with stakeholders.



*Ansell and Gash (2007) Model of Collaborative Governance.*

## Appendix C

*Interview guide for organizational interviewees, City of Helsinki and HSL – due to our choice of a semi-structured interview format, it is important to note that we occasionally deviated from the prepared interview questions to facilitate a more natural conversation.*

1. Can you describe your **role** and **responsibilities** within the City of Helsinki? (especially in relation to Sustainable Urban Mobility initiatives?)
  - a. Can you elaborate on how your role has evolved over time, particularly in response to changing priorities in sustainable urban initiatives?
  - b. Within your own work do you see any connection with the suburban regeneration initiatives? Do you see any connection between your project and the suburban regeneration project?
2. How have you been involved in formulating and implementing sustainability work?
  - a. Could you share an example of a specific sustainability challenge you faced and how you addressed it?
3. Could you provide an overview of your recent and ongoing projects?
  - a. What are or what were the primary goals of these projects? How do these initiatives align with broader **urban development** and **sustainability goals**?
4. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that made your project successful (makes the project you are currently in succeed)?
  - a. What are your achievements within these projects?
5. In your opinion, what is the level of sustainability understanding within your division and the City of Helsinki?
6. Have you noticed any obstacles in any projects? And how these challenges/obstacles affected the completion of your project?

7. What are some important safety aspects that must be considered for SUMP?
  
8. As we are looking specifically at lower-income residents, what are your actions to involve and include lower-income residents in your projects?
  - a. How does the city approach the inclusion of diverse community needs, especially those of lower-income residents?
  
9. Is there anything else you would like to share or want us to cover?

## Appendix D

*Interview guide for community members – due to our choice of a semi-structured interview format, it is important to note that we occasionally deviated from the prepared interview questions to facilitate a more natural conversation. Furthermore, the first question was used as a starting point for those interviews that followed an unstructured format.*

1. What are your general thoughts
  - a. about the City of Helsinki’s social inclusion initiatives?
  - b. about the City of Helsinki’s urban mobility initiatives? For example, increasing accessibility in public transportation etc.
2. How accessible do you find the current public transportation options in your area?
3. Are there any particular mobility challenges you face in your daily life?
4. How affordable are the transportation options available to you?
5. Have costs impacted your ability to access essential services or employment opportunities?
6. Have any recent urban development or transportation initiatives positively impacted your community? How?
7. Conversely, have there been any negative impacts or concerns?
8. Do you feel safe using public transportation or other mobility services in your community?
9. Are there improvements you wish to see that would make your daily commutes feel safer?



10. What are the most critical transportation needs in your community that you feel are currently not being met?
11. How well do you think the current urban development plans address the needs of lower-income residents?
12. Have you ever been invited to participate in urban planning or transportation improvement discussions?
13. Do you feel that the concerns of your community are adequately represented in urban development decisions?
14. What suggestions do you have for making urban mobility more inclusive and beneficial for your community?

## Appendix E

*Interview questions for the email interviews conducted with HSL representatives.*

1. Can you briefly describe the roles of the experts who will answer our questions?
2. How has HSL been involved in formulating and implementing sustainability work? (it could be social, environmental or economic).
  - a. Could you provide an example of such work and how it aligns with urban development and Helsinki's sustainability goals?
3. What are the most important factors that make new public transport projects succeed in Helsinki?
4. What are the most prominent obstacles that HSL faces when planning and implementing more sustainable public transport modes?
5. How does Helsinki's public transport system contribute to social inclusion, particularly for marginalized citizens in suburban regeneration areas?
6. What are the most significant barriers to accessing public transport for marginalized groups, and how is HSL addressing these issues?
7. Can you describe the processes used to engage diverse stakeholders, including marginalized citizens<sup>1</sup>, in the planning and improvement of public transport services?
8. What current and future measures are being taken to ensure the safety of passengers, how do these measures build up trust?
9. How does HSL ensure that different modes of public transport (buses, trams, metro, and ferries) are integrated seamlessly to provide ease of transport for residents of Helsinki?
  - a. Do you collaborate with any other organizations to make this happen?

10. How does HSL ensure that other sustainable mobility modes, such as walking and biking, are made compatible with public transport?
  - a. Do you collaborate with any other organizations to make this happen?
11. What are the future plans for making urban mobility (especially regarding all modes of public transport) in the Helsinki metropolitan area even more sustainable?
12. How important is the maintenance of HSL's physical infrastructure in ensuring efficient public transport?