

Urban Mobility

Definitions

Urban mobility is about the movement of people and goods (rather than the movement of vehicles). Urban mobility policies and plans promote transportation systems that are more benign in terms of their impact of the environment, such as non-motorized means (walking and cycling) and public transportation, as well as reduce the use of private motor vehicles. The goal is to achieve highest mobility with the least amount of traffic and effort. The measures implemented are a mixture of physical changes and user information systems that are designed to reduce traffic volumes and emissions, increase accessibility and improve safety, change travel habits and provide a better quality of life for all citizens. Urban mobility measures, therefore, fundamentally involve changing behaviour.

Context and Policies

Urban areas vary in terms of their population, area, urban form, topography, economic activities and income levels. Yet throughout the world, most urban areas share similar mobility patterns due to rising incomes, increasing motorisation, densification and the outward growth of suburbs. Mobility is on the increase and with it comes increased congestion. This is overwhelming the operational sustainability of urban mobility systems and is causing social, economic, and environmental imbalances and inequities.

The challenge for towns and cities everywhere is to enhance mobility while at the same time reduce congestion, accidents and pollution. Some urban areas are achieving some measure of success in dealing with these problems but replicating these successes is proving extremely difficult.

Efficient and effective urban mobility can significantly contribute to overall socio-economic objectives, energy dependency, or concerns over climate change. Urban mobility policies are therefore becoming of increasing importance to national governments. As recently as 2005, India drafted a National Urban Transport Policy aimed at providing a transport system that would "save lives, time and money" and enable Indian cities to realise their full potential as "Engines" of India's economic growth.

Impacts

Most cities that have implemented sustainable urban mobility plans and measures have experienced the following types of benefits:

- Decrease of traffic jams and congestion followed by a diminution of noise, atmospheric contamination, contribution to the greenhouse effect and accidents.
- Lower energy consumption.
- Reduction of travel time.
- Improvement of the public transport services.
- More public spaces available.
- A general improvement of accessibility, included for disabled.
- Reduction of external costs.
- Increased health among the inhabitants because of



Photo credits: Downtown Minneapolis Skyline © Greg Benz

Resources

Documents

- **Cities on the Move**, 2002, World Bank (USA)
- **Motorizing the Developing World**, 2004, Daniel Sperling and Eileen Claussen, University of California Transportation Center (USA)
- **National Urban Transport Policy**, 2006, Ministry of Urban Development (India)
- **Service level Benchmarks for Urban Transport**, 2009, Ministry of Urban Development (India)
- **Stuck in traffic: Urban transport in Africa**, 2008, Ajay Kumar and Fanny Barrett, World Bank (USA)
- **Sustainable Urban Mobility Measures that may be applicable in Hanoi**, 2010, Peter Midgley, gTKP (Switzerland)
- **Sustainable Urban Transport**, 2006, Anna Hadenius, Inregia; Jonas Ericson, Environment and Health Administration, City of Stockholm, CIVITAS: Trendsetter Project (EU)
- **Sustainable Urban Transport in Asia**, 2005, Partnership for Sustainable Urban Transport in Asia, Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia)
- **The Implementation of Brazil Sustainable Urban Mobility Policy**, 2003, José Carlos Xavier and Renato Boareto, Ministry of Cities (Brazil)
- **The Opportunities for Sustainable Urban Transportation in Medium-Sized Cities in Latin American and the Caribbean**, 2004, Deborah Bleviss, Inter-American Development Bank (USA)
- **Towards a new culture for urban mobility: Green Paper and Action Plan**, 2007-09, European Commission (EU)
- **Transportation in Mega-Cities: A local issue, a global question**, 2008, Nadaa Taiyab, The Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future, Boston University (USA)
- **Urban Mobility and Sustainability in Asia and the Power of Context**, 2006, Harry T. Dimitriou, University College London (UK)
- **Urban Transport in the Europe and Central Asia Region: World Bank Experience and**

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less contamination and increased use of bicycle and walking.

- Increased quality of the urban environment and quality of life among the citizens.

An important ingredient in sustainable mobility planning is the willingness of cities to try out new ideas and learn from each other. Equally important is the willingness of city authorities to consult with citizens on problems and solutions and to involve them in the design, implementation and monitoring of results.

Finally, developing sustainable urban mobility involves knowledge sharing (good and not so good experiences) and the willingness to admit "I don't know..." and to ask for help.

While cities themselves are usually in the best position to manage urban mobility and meet the challenges of increasing demands for mobility according to their specific circumstances, many cities lack the technical, human and financial resources to do the job. This is where knowledge sharing can help.

Strategy, 2002, World Bank (USA)

Media

- **Interview with Enrique Peñalosa**, 2007, Clarence Eckerson, Jr, StreetFilms.org (USA)
- **Moving forward : towards better urban transport**, 2000, Zaitun M. Kasim and Paul Barter, SUSTRAN (Malaysia)

Presentations

- **Assessing Transportation Consequences of Land Use Transformation in Urban China**, 2007, Ralph Gakenheimer and Jiawen Yang, MIT, Cambridge MA (USA)
- **Promoting Sustainable Urban Mobility with CIVITAS**, 2010, CIVITAS Secretariat (EU)
- **Sustainable Urban Transportation Development Strategy**, 2007, Prof. Lu Huapu, Institute Of Transportation Engineering, Tsinghua University (China)
- **The Millennium Cities. Data base for Sustainable Transport**, 2007, Mikel Murga, MIT, Cambridge MA (USA)
- **The quest for a more sustainable urban mobility in Brazil**, 2008, Prof. Luis Antonio Lindau, Center for Sustainable Transport (Brazil)

Recommended Links

- **Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP): Urban Mobility**
- **Sustainable Urban Transportation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region**
- **The City Fix**
- **The Sustainable Urban Transport Project (SUTP)-Asia**
- **Trendsetter: Setting Trends for Sustainable Urban Mobility**
- **World Bank: Urban Transport**

For further information

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