

Traffic Management

Definitions

Traffic Management is the process of adjusting or adapting the use of an existing road system to meet specified objectives without resorting to substantial new road construction.

Context and Policies

The goal of urban traffic management is to make the most productive use of the existing road based transport system by adjusting, adapting, managing and improving the system. Specifically, traffic management is designed to improve the movement of people and goods; to improve the quality and safety of the traffic and transport system; and to contribute to the improvement of the urban environment.

Traditionally, traffic management has been involved with the development and application of measures directed at optimising the efficiency of urban road infrastructure. Recently, the emphasis has been more towards promoting a modal shift in favour of public transport and other environmentally friendly modes.

Traffic management can assist poverty reduction by improving travel for "people" (as against "vehicles") and "walk-bicycle-bus" measures are highly relevant to poverty reduction.

Traffic management improves the flow of traffic and enhances mobility, thereby reducing emissions and fuel consumption. Area Traffic Control (computerized control of traffic signals) systems are the most common traffic management instruments to secure traffic flow objectives. Segregation of traffic, including bus priority systems (such as dedicated bus lanes), can decrease variability of traffic speed, enhance safety, and, equally important, increase the efficiency and attractiveness of public transport.

Issues

Although traffic management measures are relatively cheap and quick acting, traffic management is not a guaranteed, one-time cure for traffic congestion. It needs constant adjustment and enforcement to be effective. Traffic management requires effective planning, implementation and enforcement skills that tend to be in short supply, especially in developing countries. Although traffic management measures may improve traffic flow, this can generate increased traffic and additional travel.

Actions

Traffic management is a local government activity. It requires the establishment of a consolidated authority with the capacity and resources to plan and implement a range of traffic management measures. These would be tailored to the local urban mobility system and would comprise some or all of the following types of measures:

- traffic circulation;



Traffic Management Diagram © Peter Midgley

Resources

Documents

- **Experience in Urban Traffic Management and Demand Management in Developing Countries**, 2000, John Cracknell, Department for International Development, UK.
- **Impact of Better Traffic Management**, 2002, ESMAP, World Bank (USA)
- **Traffic Management and Streetscape**, 2008, Department for Transport (UK)
- **Urban traffic management and restraint**, 2003, Alvaro Seco and Anabela Ribeiro, PORTAL (EU)

Presentations

- **Methodology for the creation of a Traffic Management plan**, 2001, Leonor Berriochoa, EC Directorate-General for Energy and Transport (EU)
- **Traffic Management and Transport Demand Management**, 1995, Gladys Frame, Consultant Traffic Engineer, The World Bank (USA)
- **Transport Management in Bangkok**, 2004, David Poo, Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (Thailand)
- **Urban traffic management**, 1997, Peter Midgley, The World Bank (USA)

- public transport (buses and paratransit) on-street operations;
- management and control of parking, servicing and access;
- demand management;
- enforcement of traffic regulations;
- road safety;
- facilities for pedestrians and non-motorised vehicles;
- commercial vehicles management; and environmental management (such as traffic calming).

For further information

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