

## Section 4

### **Recommendations**

#### **Case study recommendations**

Effective transport policy depends on effective master planning, infrastructure provisions, and physical and town planning. Since these prerequisites are largely absent in Karachi, effective transport planning cannot be undertaken. Moreover the resources of the country are dilapidated, with the annual budget comprising only three headings: debt-servicing, defence, and salaries of the administration. The poor macro-economic conditions hit poor householders hardest, so only an approach that is based on economic realities of the poor is feasible. Whatever exists has to be built upon. Based upon these fundamental principles, developed in the study, the following list of recommendations have been generated.

#### **Improvements**

In spite of all the drawbacks, a system of public transport does exist in Karachi with almost negligible support from the public sector. It cannot be suddenly and totally replaced (in the given set of conditions), only a gradual process, spread over a period of time, is feasible. Nevertheless there is room for further improvements in access to and quality of public transport for sustainable livelihoods of the poor.

##### *Rationalisation of routes for better access to poor*

One of the major factors behind the lengthy travelling times of the present system is the unplanned and irrational distribution of routes across the city. The findings of the research revealed a number of examples of passengers having to travel long distances in the wrong direction because there are no connections or direct routes to their destinations. A comprehensive study is therefore needed to overcome this anomaly. This also indicates that there is a lack of professionals, hence there is a need for institutional training.

## The users' suggestions about flow/speed of transport vehicles

Tanvir Shahzad of Nasri Colony has suggested that, 'the distance between one bus stop and the next should be 1 kilometer'. NS-3.9

### *Reducing travel time*

Reducing travel time, particularly for women, will enable the poor to undertake alternative capital- and social-asset building activities. The flow of buses on the roads can be made smoother through the introduction of exclusive lanes in the centre of the main corridors. An existing successful and comparable example is that of Tehran, where the main routes allow unhindered and fast passage to large public transport vehicles. The cross-traffic has been cordoned off creating at least 1km-long stretches of uninterrupted travelling. This segregation must be located in the centre of the roads, otherwise turning into or from the other major corridors becomes unmanageable.

### *Improving levels of comfort*

The system could take advantage of a number of economies of scale if larger buses (with seating for 50+) are encouraged. This can be achieved through exploring possibilities for the provision of credit. Simultaneously the mini-buses can be phased-out or at least redesigned and standardized both inside and out. Also, instead of the individual-ownership system prevalent at present, the formation of large companies or co-operatives with fleets of buses should be encouraged, so that responsibilities and control can be consolidated.

## The users' suggestions about interior environment and social/behavioural issues during travel

Ms. Sarwat Iqbal, a teacher for special children who lives in Nasri Colony, is of the opinion that, 'if men have to cross through the ladies section for some reason they should at least apologize while passing'. NS-3.11

'Men should not enter from the ladies' section, even if the conductor tells them to do so...in my opinion, if the ladies refrain from sitting in the mens' section then why should the men sit on the ladies' seats...if I had a gun I would shoot those conductors who pat the shoulders of women when asking for the fare', are the views of Mohammad Ibrahim Daad who lives near Nasri Colony. NS-3.13

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### ... continued

Mohammad, who lives near Nasri Colony admits that, ‘after taking *naswar* (a type of chewing tobacco) I used to wipe my hands on the seatcovers, but then I realised that others must be disgusted [by this], so now I have decided that in an effort to contribute to the cleanliness of the vehicles, I will never again use *naswar* while travelling’. NS-3.15

‘The prohibition of using cigarettes, *pan*, and *naswar* while travelling should be strictly enforced’, suggests a student of Awami Colony named Ghulam Murtaza. A-3.11

A resident of Awami Colony, Mr. Ameer Khan has suggested that, ‘the conductors of all mini-buses and coaches should issue tickets or receipts to their passengers’. A-3.9

### *Improving infrastructure (services, terminals, depots and workshops)*

One of the main reasons for congestion on the roads in Karachi is the absence of proper arrangements for the services essential for the operation of public transport. This includes terminals, workshops, depots, rest and recreation facilities for the drivers and conductors, as well as spaces for shops and vendors to cater to passengers. At present all these functions are being carried out on the streets, and it is estimated that up to 40 per cent of street space is encroached upon by these activities in some of the busiest areas of the city. The building of proper bus stops and the relocation of hawkers and vendors in a planned manner is therefore one of the most immediate and serious concerns related to transport activity.

### **The users’ suggestions about infrastructure and roads**

Mr Arif Maseeh of Nasri Colony has suggested that ‘the speed-breakers in front of schools or hospitals should be of a design approved by the Traffic Engineering Bureau’. NS-3.10

### *Improving vehicle condition and maintenance*

Operators need to be aware of preventive maintenance and the benefits of routine maintenance. Generally, repairs only occur when the vehicle breaks down in operation, which leads to downtime for the vehicle and problems for passengers. A well-maintained vehicle, both mechanically and in terms of body work, can be cost effective as it can be operated more regularly. Passengers will prefer to travel in more reliable vehicles.

### *Over-crowding*

An effective mechanism for controlling over-crowding needs to be developed. Various possibilities can be explored, including the introduction of different doors and high-capacity standee only buses could be considered as well as training operators in working to safer standards.

#### **The users' suggestions about overcrowding**

Mr Mohammad Kaseer, a government employee residing in Awami Colony, has suggested that 'in order to decrease the load of passengers on the public transport system, it is necessary that the larger organizations should offer pick and drop facilities to their employees'. A-3.12

### *Pollution control*

The conversion of all public transport vehicles to compressed natural gas (CNG) an alternative fuel can be explored through credit arrangements and other mechanisms, and a study can be carried out to determine the potential. India is a good example to watch, as the government has announced a policy of compulsory conversion to CNG by the end of this year for all public transport modes in Delhi.

### *Safer provision for boarding and alighting, and for the disabled*

Footboards have to be designed and standardized to allow passengers to board and alight safely, in co-ordination with arrangements to ensure that vehicles slow down correctly and to provide proper bus-stops. In addition, appropriate arrangements need to be made for passengers with disabilities. This would mainly involve redesigned footboards and interior.

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Drivers and owners need to be trained in safety regulations. Drivers need refresher driving courses to make them more aware of safe driving. Incentives to drive safely should be offered and regular health checks need to be given to drivers. Drug addicts should not be allowed to drive. In addition the drivers should not be encouraged to drive for excessive hours or overload their vehicles as all of these could lead to unsafe travelling conditions.

### *Rolling stock management*

Minimum standards have to be set and enforced for maintenance to ensure an adequate ‘rolling stock’. A mechanism to ensure adherence to the standards also needs to be developed.

### *Institutional arrangements*

An elaborate study is required to determine the best possible institutional arrangements — enforced through an ordinance — to implement these recommendations. A separate ‘traffic force’ could be established, for example, dedicated to ensuring the free flow and safety of traffic within Karachi and in its vicinity.

#### **The users’ suggestions about police/civic agencies**

Ms Sarwat Iqbal, a teacher for special children who lives in Nasri Colony, also suggested that, “like others there should be system of accountability for traffic police, so that improvements can be introduced into the traffic system.’ NS-3.11

Commenting about the role of the police, Mohammad Ibrahim Daad of Nasri Colony said ‘our drivers are not well-trained and the police themselves also break rules, so the police department should be done away with altogether...at nighttime after travelling the area police snatch all the money that we have earned during the day...the control of the traffic system should be given to the army instead of the police.’ NS-3.13

### **Additional possibilities: The KCR**

The Karachi Circular Railway exists, along with right-of-way arrangements, and there is substantial potential in the upgrading and development of this system as part of a comprehensive integrated rapid transit system, in co-ordination with the road transport network. The present layout of tracks covers the major job-markets but does not reach a number of the main low-income settlement areas.

#### *Branch extensions*

The necessary branch extensions of the track could be laid, such as:

- 3km into Baldia Township
- 3.5km into Orangi Town
- 5km into the New Karachi area

#### *Speed and punctuality*

Possibly double-decker buses could enable better speed and punctuality, as would rationalized bus routes.

#### *Possibility of light rail and bus ways*

An inner-city tramway is also needed to cover a 5km stretch between Saddar and Jinnah Bridge/Kaemari. The track layout can continue to be at grade, however the possibility of conversion to light rail can be explored, on the basis of advantages/disadvantages. Before reaching any conclusions options for designated bus lanes and grade-separated bus lanes should also be considered.

#### *The KMTP proposal*

It has been observed by the URC that the corridor identified in the KMTP proposal does not generate traffic on its own, it is all through traffic. For this reason the passengers should be able to be accommodated on the KCR.

### **The users' suggestions about fares**

Tanvir Shahzad, a BA student of Nasri Colony, has suggested that 'the fares should be in whole numbers, because the conductors tend to keep the change if it is only 25 or 50 paisas...in our home six people use public transport daily, and our total monthly expenditure on transport is about Rs2500 to 3000, whereas the income of the household is Rs12,000'. NS-3.9

### **Master planning issues**

A number of recommendations deal with medium-term planning concerns:

#### *Traffic plan*

A full-scale traffic plan needs to be developed and implemented.

#### *The Northern Bypass (NBP)*

The NBP proposal has been accepted and is being implemented by the government, and it will help remove congestion from the inner city. The NBP proposal includes shifting the wholesale markets and related labour colonies that are along the sides of the bypass, so this portion of the proposal needs to be implemented to maximize the full benefits of the project.

#### *The Southern Bypass (SBP)*

The SBP proposal also needs to be implemented, but the residents presently settled along the proposed alignment have objected. These objections can be negotiated by offering incentives, such as permission for the commercialization of residential plots.

#### *Oil pipeline*

An oil pipeline needs to be laid from the National Refinery to the National Highway. At present, because there is no pipeline, 23,000 tankers have to ply through the city every day.

#### *Inter-city passenger traffic*

Proper terminals are needed at the three road-entry points of the city. A proper link with the railway also needs to be provided to serve this traffic. A fully integrated system needs to be planned and implemented using all forms of public transport.

### **The users' suggestions about profit-making tactics of drivers and conductors**

'Drivers should not be allowed to wait for too long at any stop during the journey', suggested Mohammad Ibrahim Daad of Nasri Colony. NS-3.13

### *Taxi stands*

Proper taxi stands need to be provided throughout the city and at railway stations and bus terminals.

### *Pedestrian- and cycle-friendly city planning*

The overall planning of the city should be re-oriented towards achieving a pedestrian- and cycle-friendly traffic system. Bicycles can be encouraged by providing well-designed cycle-stands at the railway stations, for example in Calcutta there is provision for hundreds of bicycles with security at every railway station in the city. The central part of the city can be made pedestrian only with only public transport feeding certain well-defined areas in the centre.

### *Encroachments*

The areas with exceptionally high pedestrian traffic can be developed in a proper manner, including the regularization of space for vendors and hawkers. Plans already exist, they just need to be considered for implementation.

## **Long-term policy-level proposals**

At the policy level certain decisions are required for long-term solutions to the existing problems.

### *University-level transport education*

Academic institutions are teaching western theory, and therefore not producing professionals who understand the users' point of view and the grassroot issues. The curriculum needs to be revised to re-focus attention on the socio-economic realities of the country. There is a need for more transport related course and also for course that could link sustainable livelihoods with transport.

### *Licensing policy*

Licensing policies and mechanisms need to be strengthened, with adequate attention paid traffic and road signs. Drivers need to be educated about following signs and the design of signs needs to be standardized.

### *Phasing-out of auto-rickshaws*

Auto-rickshaws can be replaced with more environment friendly vehicles.

### *Proposed actions to follow up*

On the basis of the above recommendations the following immediate actions are proposed:



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1. The initiation of a lobbying effort, thereby facilitating policy decisions which favour access to quality public transport for the poor. The sustainable livelihoods approach can be used to develop policy actions.
2. The preparation of detailed proposals for the Northern Bypass and the revival of the Karachi Circular Railway with a view to improving public transport for the urban poor.
3. The collection of further data and preparation of monitoring and update mechanisms to explore further the linkage of public transport and livelihoods issues. The mechanisms could be used by the administrative agency on transport (including graphical charts, plans, and diagrams).
4. More forums and workshops should be conducted to initiate the small-scale model partnership projects which can later be used to develop larger self-help ventures.
5. Identify expertise to work on the recommendations that have emerged from this study, such as academic institutions, the private sector, NGOs, and government facilities, such as the Heavy Machinery Moghulpura Factory (Lahore).

## Concluding remarks

### Approach

The application of an innovative, partnership-oriented, problem-solving approach, derived from the latest development concept of sustainable livelihoods (SL), is the hallmark of this research. The research process established a rapid result-yielding link between the various stakeholders involved in public transport activity in an effort to facilitate a service which would offer better access to and quality of transport services for the urban poor.

This is a relatively new approach to an already much-discussed and documented topic, the innovation being the more realistic and down-to-earth concept of sustainability, which advocates a logical and systematic derivation of solutions from within the context of a problem.

### Application of core principles of SL

It can be deduced that the core principle of the sustainable livelihoods approach can be applied to the issues of urban public transport. There is scope for further refinement in the framework and its application.

### *Poverty-focused*

This research focuses on low-income communities and issues related to transport which influence the livelihoods of the poor. The focus has moved from a general inert systems to a lively environment where actors are taking active part in resolving the issues.

### *Responsive and participatory*

The research was conducted using participatory approaches and in response to the demands of the urban poor. This approach has yielded information that is qualitatively richer than would have been obtained using non-participatory approaches. The participation of the community and local partners has greatly enhanced the understanding of the problems and has driven the suggested actions.

### *Multi-level, micro, and macro*

The research explored the macro-level factors which have influenced the livelihoods of the urban poor, and also the micro-level, which has a bearing on macro-level policy making and operations. The linkage between policy and practice was also explored. The historical perspective was taken into account to illustrate that these linkages not only work now, but they also worked in the past.

### *Conducted in partnership*

Perspectives from the urban poor, regulators and the operators were explored. The key actors did discussed the problems in an open way which is in itself a positive step towards solution of the problems.

### *Sustainable*

Special attention was given to learning from past and present policies and from operations that both worked or did not produce sustainable development in this case. It is highly likely that if the recommendations are followed a more sustainable transport system will emerge.

### *Dynamic*

The socio-political dynamics in the past and in the present, linkages between changes at micro and macro levels, changing pattern of the city, and changing political context were also explored to understand which mechanisms might improve access to and quality of urban transport to the poor through partnerships.

### **Inadequate transport service**

The findings show that the existing transport services in Karachi are inadequate, and the effects of this severely lack of transport impact alarmingly and directly on the livelihood opportunities of 30 to 40 per cent of the already deprived lower-income segments of the city (who in turn constitute more than 50 per cent of the total population). The long distances between the major blue-collar job markets and most of the squatter settlements leave residents with no alternative but to improvise with whatever is affordable and available – even at the current heavy cost of at least two deaths and scores of injuries per day.

### **Understanding contributions of public transport in sustainable livelihoods**

Some of the key findings indicate that SL can be used to explore the contribution of public transport in:

- capital asset building by the poor;
- better understanding of vulnerability contexts in relation to transport;
- understanding of transforming structures (layers of organizations both in the private and government sectors) and how they effect poor; and
- understanding how processes (laws, policies, incentives) impact on the livelihoods of the poor.

Like any other urban system, the well-being of Karachi and the transport activity in this city are linked through a web of cause and effect relationships. This exercise has confirmed that the lifeblood of this city is essentially the port activity and the resulting gradual proliferation of industry, which has attracted and continues to sustain a total estimated population of at least 10 million people (unofficially believed to be close to 13 million). The port and industrial activity cannot survive without the directly transport-dependent availability of a huge blue-collar labour force. This labour pool is housed in the low-income squatter-settlements, colloquially called *katchi-abadis* and estimated to contain more than 50 per cent of the population of the city. These settlements are located so far from the major job markets, that there is virtually no other way to link them other than a mass-transit system. Public transport activity therefore clearly occupies a centre-stage, functioning as a two-way lifeline between the fundamental employment and residential activities which sustain Karachi.

### **Partnerships among key actors**

The point of view of the users of public transport has evolved through this work, which is a significant contribution to the research. This proved to be the foremost source of understanding the nature and extent of the problem as perceived by the different actors. Relationships among actors, both formal and informal, were clarified during the research. A platform was created for different actors to share their views and understand each other's perspectives. This understanding could lead to more sustainable interventions at both policy and operational levels to improve public transport for the poor. The large buses are the cheapest transport at the moment and represent the only portion of the public transport activity which operates as a system, supposedly consisting of set routes and timings. The users of this so-called system are undoubtedly the party which has the most at stake. As they are largely low-income people whose livelihood opportunities are directly dependent on access to and the quality of the set-up. The secondary data available before this research was carried out was found devoid of any documentation of the point of view of the users. This further confirms the significance of this project's innovative approach.

### **Access and quality**

Access and quality emerge as the basic criteria for evaluating whether the transport system (in its present form as well as in any of its future proposed forms), is helping or will be helping in the development of the city in a way which contribute towards the sustainable livelihoods of the urban poor. These two issues, by virtue of their own definitions, represent the experience of the users, who also possess the most tangible will to see improvements. (The public sector have almost completely withdrawn from this activity, while the overall unfavorable operating conditions restrict the transporters and operators to be worrying about little more than the survival of their business and related issues). Hence the underlying premise of this whole project – that the existence or non-existence of public transport activity is a direct determinant of the availability of sustainable livelihoods at all three levels: transit and the related support activities are a major source of blue-collar employment by themselves; there is a direct link between residential and livelihood-related activities of low-income people; and is therefore one of the foremost factors affecting the well-being and sustenance of the whole city, which includes citizens of other income levels as well.

### **Policy and practice**

The root causes consist of certain grand policy decisions taken in the past. An analysis of the cause/effect inter-relationships provides important clues as to

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what should be avoided or included in future planning, while the Current Situation Analysis highlights further details about all the participants (and hence potential partners), in the existing activity.

It is clear that the policymakers lacked vision and an understanding of the reality on the ground. The transport sector is one of many sectors which suffers from this problem. It has also been demonstrated that the sustainability issues are inter-sectoral. Examples have been given about how the physical planning in the past is effecting the transport today.

Unstable democratic processes in the country have contributed to the continuation of out-dated and incompetent administrative practices. Frequently reported traits are poor coordination, duplication, incompetence, and corruption. These factors, whether actual or perceived, have led to a common perception that the civic institutions have collapsed. The transport sector, along with other sectors, has also suffered from the effect of poor governance.

### **Conclusion**

The research team feels strongly that this project has been useful as a first step in a more innovative and productive direction. This further accentuates the need for follow-up exercises, however, and the findings included in the report bear witness to the severe and immediate need to address the situation.

This exercise can therefore prove useful as a demonstration of the need for further exploration and intervention along the lines set out in the first phase. Phase 2 will facilitate further work in exploring the use of the sustainable livelihoods approach in other urban contexts.

