

GLOBAL REPORT ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

E-Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 4, October 2013

UNO H A B I T A T
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

The Global Report on Human Settlements



Prepared under a mandate of the United Nations General Assembly, the Global Report on Human Settlements provides the most up to date assessment of urban conditions and trends globally. It is an essential reference tool for researchers, academics, planners, public authorities and civil society organizations around the world.

Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility: Global Report on Human Settlements 2013

Planning for efficient movement by private cars has been the dominant transport planning paradigm for more than six decades. However, the collective **costs of 'automobility'** have become abundantly apparent – including urban sprawl, air and noise pollution, climate change, road traffic accidents, and the physical separation of people by class and race.



Thus, when the Secretary-General announced a Five Year Action Agenda for the second term (2012–2016), he identified transport as one of six building blocks for sustainable development. In particular, he stressed the need for urgent action to develop more sustainable urban 'transport systems that can address rising congestion and pollution.' He noted that action was required by a range of actors including 'aviation, marine, ferry, rail, road and urban public transport providers, along with governments and investors.'

Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility: Global Report on Human Settlements 2013, which was launched worldwide 7 October 2013, seeks to highlight the transportation challenges experienced in cities all over the world. It identifies examples of good practice from specific cities of how to address such challenges. The report also provides recommendations on how national, provincial and local governments and other stakeholders can develop more sustainable urban futures, through improved planning and design for urban transport systems.

A number of key messages emerging from the Global Report, all of them anchored in the **need for a paradigm shift in urban mobility planning and policies**. The purpose of 'transportation' and 'mobility' is to gain access to destinations, activities, services and goods. Thus, **access is the ultimate objective of all transportation** (save a small portion of recreational mobility).

The Global Report argues that **urban form is an essential component of urban mobility planning**. As such, the development of enhanced transportation systems is only one (of several) policy initiatives to enhance access. If city residents can achieve access without having to travel at all (for instance through telecommuting), through more efficient travel (online shopping or car-sharing), or by travelling shorter distances, this will contribute to reducing some of the current urban transport challenges. Thus, **urban planning and design should focus on how to bring people and places together**, by creating cities that focus on accessibility, rather than simply increasing the length of urban transport infrastructure or increasing the movement of people or goods. The broadening of objectives to include accessibility, inescapably leads to a wider array of approaches to physical planning, including better land-use management.

Furthermore, a focus on more accessible cities, characterized by **sustainable urban densities**, holds promise for drawing more and more travellers out of cars and onto trains, buses, bike paths, and sidewalks. Accessible cities encourage a **shift towards more sustainable modes of transportation**.

With respect to **urban mobility planning**, the Global Report's message is that it **needs to occur at different geographical scales, incorporating a multimodal approach**. Neighbourhood scale designs can minimize movement conflicts and allow non-circuitous travel, thus promoting non-motorized transport at the local level. Regional scale planning ensures balanced growth patterns that internalize trips within sub areas and allows for efficient travel streams. Also critical, is a robust **institutional framework and regulatory and planning tools** that facilitate regional collaboration and cross-sector cooperation. Political visionaries attach great importance to inclusive planning frameworks that ensure that a voice is given to all segments of society, including vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups.

High-capacity public-transport systems – such as metros and bus rapid transport

PAST ISSUES



Cities and Climate Change - Global Report on Human Settlements 2011



Planning Sustainable Cities - Global Report on Human Settlements 2009



Enhancing Urban Safety and Security - Global Report on Human Settlements 2007



Financing Urban Shelter - Global Report on Human Settlements 2005

To download past issues visit
www.unhabitat.org/grhs

Contribute to the Global Report on Human Settlements!

Send us examples of innovative practices and policies on sustainable urban transport for inclusion in the 2013

(BRT) – are a necessary condition for the creation of sustainable urban mobility systems. However, such systems need to be designed and operated to allow seamless intermodal connections and integrated services and tariff systems. The system is the solution for urban mobility. The efficiency of an urban mobility system is not simply the sum of its individual parts. It is the efficiencies of an **integrated mobility system** that allows high-capacity public-transport systems and non-motorized transport to compete with the perceived advantages of ‘automobility’. Furthermore, in an environment characterized by scarcity, it is essential that financial resources are allocated to the travel modes that are most efficient (for the society at large), and that cater to the needs of the majority of the population. Accordingly, the highest **priority should be given to non-motorized movement and public transport**.

Cities need to envisage their long-term futures, crafting visions that are eventually articulated into spatial plans and specific-land use initiatives. **The integration of transport and land-use planning** is an essential pre-condition for sustainable urban mobility systems. A spatial framework should guide public transport and other infrastructure investments. In this respect, the channelling of higher urban densities along high-capacity public transport corridors – so called ‘transit-oriented development’ (TOD) – is of particular importance.

The report recommends the **integration of urban goods transport in urban planning and design**. In most cities, the neglect of urban freight distribution and management – both in land-use and transport planning – makes goods transportation a major impediment to sustainable urban mobility. Decisions regarding urban goods transport have, to large degree, been made within the confines of company boardrooms, rather than by urban planners. The business logic of goods transport favours fewer deliveries, with larger trucks, to destinations with larger storage areas. Thus urban goods transport has been a major driver of urban sprawl. Night or off-peak deliveries, freight stations and consolidation centres that allow shared-use of delivery vehicles, and bicycle carriers suited to the constraints of urban circulation, might be called for.

Finally, one of the challenges of moving from ‘traffic’ or ‘mobility’ approaches, and to integrate human rights and the essential component of equitable access, is that the **‘business model’ for urban accessibility is not well understood**. Empirical and technical information related to measuring access – and the quantification of the economic and social value that it creates – is still to be integrated into urban agendas for the development of sustainable mobility systems.

Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility: Global Report on Human Settlements 2013 is published in English, but an abridged version of the report will be made available in all six official United Nations languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian).

Both the main report and the abridged edition are available in electronic format at <http://www.unhabitat.org/grhs/2013>. This webpage also provides links from where you can procure hard copies of the reports.

Global Report on Human Settlements at hs-net@unhabitat.org

PAST ISSUES

To download past e-Newsletter issues www.unhabitat.org/grhs