

## Asian Mayors' Policy Dialogue for the Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Transport in Cities

23-24 April 2007 Kyoto International Conference Center, Kyoto, Japan

### Report from Session 3-b

Kuching, Malaysia

Matale, Sri Lanka

*Reported by Cornie Huizenga*



Asian Mayors' Policy Dialogue for the Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) in Cities

### Key points of presentations (1) Kuching, Malaysia

- Profile: 431.5 km<sup>2</sup>, Pop. 510,000
- Overview:
  - Promotion of private vehicles (motor cycles and cars) for economic growth
  - Lack of PT: national car policy vehicles more affordable
  - growth of private vehicles, congestion
  - environmental problems: physical, social, health impact,
  - overall quality of life is affected, not a sustainable model
- Current Policies to address EST:
  - decentralised development around CBD, Kuching Healthy City, public transport exchange station, pedestrian's street, road safety campaign, ramps, black smoke & noise control, consolidation of PT
- Benefits & Difficulties:
  - improvement of PT is central to the strategy; in-depth examination of successful practices is helpful; no time to lose to avoid choking roads
- Future Visions:
  - reduce transport demand; improve PT; reduce travel time & congestion; ameliorate environmental effects, promote NMT, improve safety.

## Key points of presentations (2)

### Matale, Sri Lanka

- Profile: agricultural area predominant. Economic growth expected to be associated by several environmental problems, especially congestion
- Policies:
  - eased traffic congestion by the construction of a bypass highway and expansion of the city streets
  - tree planting in the public park and along the streets
  - a new program for garbage collection, lacking a garbage recycling plant, looks for help in this dialogue.
  - a new program "Gama Neguma" Building the Village has been started by the government with the special attention to the road infrastructure.
- Goal: more beautiful, clean and healthy city, keeping the greenery and reducing the environmental pollution

## Summary of discussions

- Visions: how do we know what the people (really) want? Are experts projecting our views on stakeholders?
- Technocratic approach to EST often involves blaming the people and the political leaders for lack of insight.
- Where is the private sector (car/motor cycle manufacturers) in the EST forum?
- Public transport needs to be accompanied by restraint of car use
- Decentralization – Hong Kong experience: "we failed badly". New townships – will result in additional travel to the "old" city center
- EST can be health driven, but to do it properly you need Air Quality data
- Road widening to be accompanied by allocating road space to public transport otherwise you end up in a vicious circle.
- Traffic demand management – urban structure
- Worldwide trend: people are willing to travel longer

## Conclusions/Recommendations (1)

- **Evolution of the public transport system:**
  - How to move from informal public transport into a formal modern system?
  - Is consolidation of informal public transport an essential step?
  - Forward, transparent planning is required for public transport operators to make their rational investment decisions
  - *How to break the pattern: – pedestrian – cyclist – motor cycle – individual car, which erodes support for public transport?*
- **Relationship political decision makers and “Experts”**
  - A balance is required between technocrats/experts and politicians
  - Information generated by experts not taken up by politicians is lost
  - Finding a balance between bottom up planning and projecting a long term vision. How can decision makers pursue a long term policy
  - *“Planners, who enjoy being driven by chauffeurs are the worst decision makers on urban transport”*

## Conclusions/Recommendations (2)

- **Urban structure/land use planning**
  - Urban structure analysis needs to be actively taken into consideration in designing the public transport system
  - Process of urban expansion/ decentralization requires further discussion on the effects it has on mobility. Experiences have been mixed. (transportation should not be seen in isolation).
  - *What kind of city do we want to live in?*
- **Awareness**
  - Decision makers have a responsibility to convince people to actually use public transport and Mayors should take the lead in raising public awareness.
  - *Selling cars through sexy girls has been effective in increasing the number of cars. Should we learn from this in promoting EST?*

**Any further delay to take remedial action will lead to further clogging of the roads**