

PLANNING EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL

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ABSTRACT

Effective transport and good accessibility are vital for sound economic and social functioning and addressing environmental issues. South Africa's current transport system is failing in most of these respects. Deteriorating public transport, spatial dislocation, and an increased reliance on private and informal motorised travel that drives urban sprawl together contribute to ever-declining urban functioning. The social, environmental and economic costs are significant with poorer citizens faring the worst, widening already vast levels of inequality and increasing environmental impacts. The shifts required to meet local access needs in an equitable and sustainable way, as well as changes needed in how streets are planned and managed, are not yet happening quickly enough in spite of policy direction that requires this.

Meanwhile, cities and towns around the world are succeeding in switching the focus of transport intervention away from road infrastructure expansion towards managing demands, using space and the available capacity far more efficiently. Many cities are improving accessibility while reducing private vehicle use and tailoring spaces in favour of people over vehicles through promoting effective public transport, cycling and walking.

For South Africa, as for developing countries in general, enabling and ensuring more trips by non-motorised means is even more critical because of extensive poverty. A great number of citizens have no means of affordable access, with many situated remotely given the extent of spatial dislocation.

This presentation briefly describes the broader issues and the role of walking and cycling and the approaches needed to create and embed the changes that are so urgently required to start the shift towards equitable access for all.