

GROWING PUBLIC TRANSPORT MARKET SHARE BY GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

R CHETTY

eThekwini Transport Authority; PO Box 680, Durban 4000; Tel: 031 311 7403;
Email: robin.chetty@durban.gov.za

ABSTRACT

Growing public transport market share in South Africa requires a return to fundamental principles to address persistent challenges and enhance adoption. But what do we mean by “growing market share”? It entails increasing the proportion of commuters choosing public transport over private vehicles to reduce congestion, emissions, and costs.

This presentation examines strategies to boost usage in cities like Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town. What are the fundamentals, and what issues are affecting them? Core elements – reliability, affordability, safety, vehicle quality, integration, awareness, and sustainability – are undermined by delays, high costs, crime, outdated fleets, disjointed systems, poor perceptions, and limited green initiatives. How do we fix it to improve mobility? We propose GPS tracking, dedicated lanes, and AI scheduling for reliability; subsidized, smart ticketing for affordability; CCTV and policing for safety; modern, accessible buses; unified ticketing and multi-modal coordination; digital campaigns; and electric vehicles with cycling infrastructure.

Drawing on Rea Vaya, Go!Durban, and MyCiTi, plus global best practices, competition from minibus taxis via regulatory reforms and route optimization is explored. Land use, fares, and subsidies shape ridership, with transit-oriented development being key.

This presentation offers actionable insights for policymakers and stakeholders to build an efficient, accessible, and sustainable public transport system in South Africa.