

Stepping in Sustainability: Walkability an Upcoming Design Parameter for Transit Based Communities in Lahore, Pakistan

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Abstract : The consideration of walkability as an urban design parameter in conjunction with transit-oriented development is an established trend in the developed countries but an upcoming trend in developing countries. In Pakistan, the first Bus Rapid Transit (locally called as Metro Bus) has been introduced in the city of Lahore in 2013 where around 40 percent of the riders access to transit stations by walking. To what extent the aspect of walkability has been considered in the local scenario? To address this question, this paper presents an account of urban design parameters regarding pedestrian provisions and quality of walking environment between Metro Bus stations and users' destination in the transit neighbourhoods (areas up to 500-meter radius). The primary and secondary data for objective and subjective walkability measurements has been used for neighbourhoods of five selected transit stations ranked against the predefined critical assessed factors (CAF). The multi-criteria approach including visual and geospatially-based parameters at street level, along with walkability index score at selected sites linked with CAF evaluation were the selected methods for this study. The acceptability of walkability as an urban design parameter for transit planning in terms of connectivity and social implications of the concept has also been analysed in the local context. The paper highlights that the aspect of walkability in Lahore is being derelict owing to the focus of government on other initiatives such as park and ride and feeder bus services for mobility of passengers. However, the pedestrian-friendly design parameters as a part of future transit planning can enhance social, liveable and interactive walking environment within transit neighbourhoods.

Keywords : walkability, sustainability, transit neighborhoods, social communities

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