

The Impact of Rapid Urbanisation on Public Transport Systems in the Gauteng Region of South Africa

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Abstract : This paper seeks to illustrate the impact of rapid urbanization (in terms of both increase in people and vehicles) in the Gauteng region (which includes Johannesburg, Pretoria and Ekurhuleni). The impact that existing transport systems and options place on the capacity of residents from low income areas to travel and conduct various socio-economic activities is discussed. The findings are drawn from a 2013 analysis of a random transport household survey of 1550 households carried out in Gauteng province. 91.4% of the study respondents had access to public transport, while 8.6% had no access to public transport. Of the 91.4% who used public transport, the main reason used to explain this state of affairs was that it was affordable (54.3%), convenient (15.9%), Accessible (11.9%), lack of alternatives (6.4%) and reliable at 4.1%. Recommendations advanced revolve around the need to reverse land use and transportation effects of apartheid planning, growing and developing a sustainable critical mass of public transport interventions supported by appropriate transport systems that are environmentally sustainable through proper governance. 38.5% of the respondents indicated that developing compact, smart and integrated urban land spaces was key to reducing travel challenges in the study area. 23.4% indicated that the introduction and upgrading of BRT buses to cover all areas in the study area was a step in the right direction because it has great potential in shifting travel patterns to favor public modes of transport. 15.1% indicated that all open spaces should be developed so that fragmentation of land uses can be addressed. This would help to fight disconnected and fragmented space and trip making challenges in Gauteng. 13.4% indicated that improving the metro rail services was critical since this is a mass mover of commuters. 9.6% of the respondents highlighted that the bus subsidy policy has to be retained in the short to medium term since the spatial mismatches and challenges created by apartheid are yet to be fully reversed.

Keywords : urbanisation, population, public, transport systems, Gauteng

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