

3k: Transport

Preamble

This policy area encapsulates the aspirations of the Rakyat for a transport infrastructure that facilitates physical and social mobility in all settings, whether urban or rural.

An efficient, accessible and affordable public transportation—and even active transportation, i.e. all human-powered forms of travel—is crucial to ensure economic growth and connectivity across Malaysia. Town planning, however, has been influenced by a strong car dependency—86.8% of households own a car, according to 2019 Household Income and Basic Amenities Survey by Department of Statistics Malaysia—with a sizeable minority owning multiple cars per household, compared with public transport use of around 25%. The focus on car-centred infrastructure has led to negative impact on the air quality in urban areas and concomitant damage to residents' health, on top of stunting the economic development of semi-urban and rural areas. This is not an economically, environmentally and socially responsible way to grow our cities, regions and country. As Malaysia's population is expected to peak in 2068, with an estimated annual growth of 1.3%, car-free alternatives to transport are a crucial factor in creating liveable and accessible neighbourhoods for people of all ages, abilities and economic backgrounds.

I: Decentralisation of Transport Planning

Transport services and infrastructure are highly location-sensitive. Every region in Malaysia has differing dynamics and needs based on the economic activities and social structures in place. Decades of transport planning under federal agencies, however, have degraded the quality of life, especially in the cities—Klang Valley residents, for example, waste up to RM20 billion annually on traffic congestion, according to a 2015 World Bank report. Decentralisation of transport planning is therefore needed to address these local transport issues.

1. Devolve the management of transport services from the federal government to the state government and/or regional authorities.

Allow the latter institutions to create an integrated transport system and services that cater to local needs, aided by the Land Public Transport Agency and specialist staff.

(Chong Yong Wai, Transit Malaysia, Proposal 3K-1)

2. Revise the National Transport Policy towards meeting the broader urban goal of 20-minute neighbourhoods to reduce car dependency in cities and regions.

This goal of ensuring self-sufficient neighbourhoods whose living and working needs are catered for within a 20-minute walk must be incorporated into the National Physical Plan, state planning guidelines and standards, as well as local structure plans.

(Chong Yong Wai, Transit Malaysia, Proposal 3K-1)

3. Upskill public staff who work on urban transport planning with continuous and professional training.

Give incentives for staff to work in regional areas and offer grants to regional councils to improve the public and active transport networks in their areas.

(Chong Yong Wai, Transit Malaysia, Proposal 3K-1)

II: Equitable Development

Development of transport infrastructure, especially public infrastructure, has been centred on the Greater Klang Valley, resulting in massive inequality in transport capacities among the capital, secondary cities and tertiary cities. The Government must rectify this developmental injustice to Malaysians living and working outside the Greater Klang Valley, who are forced to spend more on transport compared with those living in the capital.

4. Create a national transport funding framework to ensure equitable regional development.

- i. Establish an inter-parliamentary working group with the sole purpose of creating a transport funding mechanism based on the population of the local area, district and state towards equalising the price per resident in all areas. The funding mechanism should consider existing infrastructure, area density and economic land uses.
- ii. The new funding mechanism will work in line to fund the proposed regional transport planning authority, based on principles set forth by an updated National Transport Policy.

(Ir. Dr. Tai Tuck Leong, Monsoon Malaysia, Proposal 3K-2)

III: Progressive Policies for Sustainability

Many outmoded practices and planning-related policies, guidelines, regulations and laws have contributed to outdated, detrimental urban planning and design, leaving a negative effect on the liveability and accessibility of residences. These non-progressive policies and practices also hamper the growth of active and public transport as cars are prioritised in planning. Such policies should be revised to embed sustainable transport in planning documents.

5. Integrate state and local planning guidelines and policies into a revised National Transport Policy and National Physical Plan that encourage the growth of sustainable transport options.

6. Embed new urban planning best practices in our state and local planning policies.

The following are some suggestions:

- i. Fast-track the development of car-light development schemes that comply with revised goals in the National Transport Policy and National Physical Plan. This can be done through streamlined Development Applications assessment processes.

(Cameron Kang, Penang Public Transport Users Association, Proposal 3K-3)

- ii. Impose parking maximums to limit the construction of off-street car parking in public/active transport-rich areas.
(Cameron Kang, Penang Public Transport Users Association, Proposal 3K-3)
- iii. Increase residential densities and build affordable housing near public transport corridors.
- iv. Improve rights-of-way for public transport vehicles to ensure service quality, and create safe networks for cyclists and pedestrians.
- v. Create ‘superblocks’ of shared streets, streets with reduced speed limits, or pedestrianised local streets to create more accessible open spaces.
- vi. Set universal access guidelines to ensure footpaths, public transport stops and open spaces are accessible to all.
- vii. Develop sustainable urban design principles for neighbourhoods, to encourage permeability, access to businesses, transport, services and safer streets through passive surveillance.
- viii. Incentivise car-light developments with development fee waivers in recognition of the public benefit to public and active transport modes.