

Walk the talk on the mainstreaming of non-motorised transport in South Africa

Labuschagne, FJJ and Ribbens, H

ABSTRACT:

In South Africa, the integration of Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) facilities into spatial development and the streetscape has not yet received sufficient attention by the different spheres of government and their implementation agencies. Therefore, urban development and structure has significant deficiency with regard to the provision and quality of NMT infrastructure, facilities and services. As a further consequence, NMT users are at risk using the road network and pedestrian and cyclist fatalities, leading to a major proportion of the road casualties in South African cities, towns and villages. The authors' point of view is that the 'rhetorical' paradigm shift in the planning, implementation and operation of NMT-relevant infrastructure needs to be revolutionised. This is necessary to effect rapid change of the status quo in South Africa by practicably mobilise the proverbial "walk the talk". Various international examples of good practice exist where conceptual thinking and renewed focus on the needs of NMT users have led to a paradigm shift in major cities with regard to NMT policy formation and infrastructure provision; and in the process creating more friendly NMT environments. This includes design concepts that can assist in NMT and public transport implementation opportunities such as 'Universal Design', 'Complete Streets', 'Road Diets', 'Modal Hierarchy', 'Last Mile', 'Liveable Communities', 'Walkability Indices and Greenways, amongst others. The paper covers the various concepts and show how they may assist in reshaping planning and implementation strategies, policies and operational frameworks in South Africa over the short-, medium- and long term. NMT is formally recognised as an independent and primary transport mode in transport planning circles, but it also serves as feeder system to public transport services. The paper highlights the different opportunities that currently exist in South Africa to include and integrate NMT conceptual thinking into transport planning practice. Firstly, this includes the current process of implementing BRT systems and optimally linking the surrounding communities to these routes. Secondly, the need exist to provide much needed and well-designed NMT feeder systems from communities to other existing public transport operations including municipal bus, rail, Gautrain, BRT, future light rail and minibus taxi operations. Thirdly, the Strategic Land Transport Frameworks, e.g. Integrated Rapid Public Transport Network and Integrated Development Plans are to be updated on a five yearly cycle. Fourthly, NMT infrastructure still needs to be provided in many instances where NMT serves as a primary transport mode between destinations. The paper concludes that the above-mentioned transport planning processes and planning documents must reflect and support the NMT-relevant conceptual thinking that will embrace Universal Design and Complete Streets principles to its fullest practicable extent with particular reference to integration with IRPTN 2030 planning. In addition, the institutional and financial

means to implement, monitor and evaluate the implementation of these concepts are considered as an essential and integral component of the process.