



NMT STRATEGY FOR KENYA

The Republic of Kenya has a population of 47.5 million. Twelve million Kenyans, or 31 percent, live in urban areas, and the urbanisation rate is projected to reach 46 percent by 2030. Over the last ten years, traffic congestion has worsened in many cities due to a rapid increase in motor vehicle use, inefficient public transport, and a lack of safe facilities for non-motorised transport (NMT). Going forward, street designs need to prioritise the needs of vulnerable road users.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

In Kenyan cities, NMT is fundamental to urban mobility systems. Walking accounts for 40 percent of daily trips in Nairobi, and the additional 41 percent of trips by matatu start and end with a walking journey. Similarly, in Mombasa, 45 percent of trips are by foot and 36 percent are by public transport.

Despite being the dominant mode of transport in Kenya, NMT receives little emphasis in transport plans and budgets. The majority of road infrastructure funding is channelled towards building roads and expressways to facilitate high-speed movement of private vehicles.

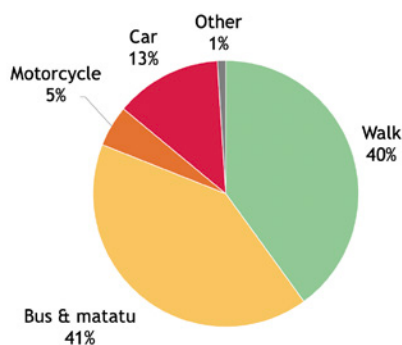
The Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) and Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) continue to invest in billions of shillings in the construction of bypasses, missing links, and flyovers in Nairobi and other urban areas. These projects often come at the expense of NMT users, as the new roads are hard to cross and lack accessible walkways. In many cases,



Many streets in Nairobi lack pedestrian walkways

this contributes to a high rate of traffic fatalities, as is the experience on Thika Superhighway and Outer Ring Rd.

Where provided, NMT infrastructure is inconsistent. Many streets in Nairobi lack footpaths and cycle tracks, and NMT users are exposed to fast, aggressive motor vehicle traffic, resulting in a high rate of traffic crashes. Where footpaths are present, they are characterised by abrupt level differences, frequent obstructions, and dangerous open pits. Footpaths often lack protection from motor vehicle encroachments, forcing pedestrians to walk in the carriageway. In an attempt to increase vehicle speeds, at-grade crossings are blocked and pedestrians are forced to use footbridges, which have steep ramps and are prone to criminal activity.



Nairobi mode split (Source: JICA)

NMT CHALLENGES



Lack of footpaths on many streets



Major corridors designed as highways rather than urban streets



Unusable cycle lanes



Pedestrian movement blocked by fences



Parking encroachments on NMT spaces



NMT access obstructed by footbridges

EARLY TRANSPORT POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

In contrast to the slow pace of implementation, NMT finds support in numerous national and local policies and development plans. The African Union and World Bank supported early research by the Africa Transport Policy Programme (SSATP), and the resulting studies led to the inclusion of NMT concepts in the Kenya National Development Plans of 1997/2001 and 2002/2008, the Kenya Vision 2030, and other strategic documents.

The Kenya Urban Transport Infrastructure Project (KUTIP) of 1996, one of the major projects aimed at addressing basic municipal infrastructure needs in urban areas, included an NMT component dealing with the construction of bicycle

paths, footpaths, intersection improvements, and pedestrian crossings.

The Kenya Vision 2030, through a road expansion programme launched in 2008, aims to enhance domestic and regional trade through the upgrading of national and county road networks. The plan calls for 1,700 km of NMT facilities. However, to date the focus has been on construction of bypasses to ease the radial traffic and missing links in Nairobi and its environs. Projects such as Outer Ring Rd and Thika Superhighway provided minimal NMT facilities and no provisions for public transport.

The Integrated National Transport Policy (2012) recognises the importance of NMT in addressing the needs of the poor as well as in promoting the health of the population. The policy also acknowledges that transport policies have largely supported motorised transport at the expense of NMT. The policy strongly recommends the integration of NMT into technical, legal, and institutional mandates of transport agencies.

NAIROBI NMT POLICY

In 2015, Nairobi City County launched an NMT Policy to improve transport system performance by promoting NMT. Developed in partnership with UN Environment, the Nairobi NMT Policy calls for a safe, cohesive, and comfortable network of footpaths, cycle tracks, green areas, and other supporting amenities. Through the policy, NCC commits to:

- Prioritise the allocation of street space to NMT and public transport over car parking and mixed traffic movement.
- Prioritise at-grade crossings rather than footbridges.
- Limit speed limits to 30 km/h in school zones and other areas with high pedestrian volumes.
- Regularise street vending to improve the management of street space.



An early NMT improvement project in Nairobi: Footpath widening along Mama Ngina St

SUCCESS FACTORS

- > Partnerships with local stakeholders such as the Kenya Alliance of Residents Association (KARA) for continued advocacy on NMT
- > Regular public forums on NMT to strengthen civil society participation
- > Formation of a Steering Committee under NCC to implement the NMT policy
- > Political commitment to fast-track NMT projects through the office of Nairobi Metropolitan Services



New footpath in Kisumu

- Increase parking fees to discourage the use of private vehicles and prevent vehicle parking on NMT facilities.
- Allocate at least 20 percent of the county transport budget to NMT and public transport facilities.
- Collect data to identify problems, prioritise projects, inform street designs, and monitor progress.

STREET DESIGN MANUAL FOR URBAN AREAS IN KENYA

The lack of appropriate standards for urban streets is a major obstacle to the implementation of NMT facilities in Kenyan cities. To address this challenge, the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development, and Public Works (MOTIHUD) launched the preparation of the Street Design Manual for Urban Areas in Kenya (SDMUAK) in partnership with ITDP and UN-Habitat with support from the Global Road Safety Fund and International Climate Initiative.

The SDMUAK seeks to mainstream good practices in NMT friendly street design. The manual outlines the following principles:

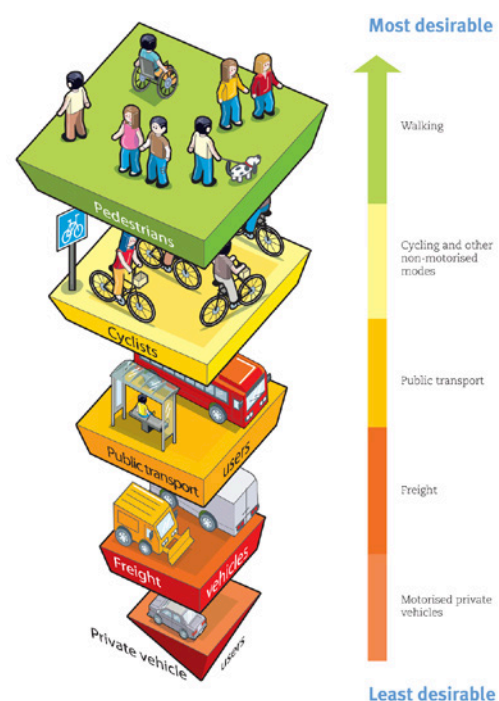
- **Safety:** Safe street design aims to encourage moderate vehicle speeds to minimise the risk of NMT user fatalities.



A street design workshop organised by NAMATA

- **Efficient use of road space:** The allocation of street space should prioritise modes that use space most efficiently, namely public transport, walking, and cycling.
- **Universal access:** An accessible environment has ample, well connected pedestrian facilities with unobstructed space for movement, consistent pavement surfaces, appropriately sloped ramps, and safe pedestrian crossings.
- **Gender sensitive design:** An integrated and safe transport system provides access to education, work, health care, cultural, and other important activities that are crucial to women's participation in the society.
- **Modal hierarchy:** To promote safe, efficient designs, the manual assumes the following hierarchy: pedestrian > bicycle > public transport > freight > personal vehicles > personal vehicle parking

Drawing from these principles, the manual defines standards



The modal hierarchy adopted in the Street Design Manual for Urban Areas in Kenya

for NMT elements such as footpaths, cycle tracks, and pedestrian crossings. The manual also offers cross sections and intersection templates for typical street widths. In anticipation of the official launch, state corporations such as KURA are already making use of the manual in some of their projects.

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The delivery of NMT facilities is influenced by the structure of institutions overseeing transport and road sectors. At the national level, the KURA and KeNHA were established through the Roads Act of 2007. The Nairobi Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (NaMATA), established in 2017 through an executive order of the President, is responsible for developing an integrated public transport strategy, planning mass rapid transit systems, overseeing public transport operations, and ensuring effective utilisation of NMT facilities. The National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) is mandated with managing public transport and minimising the loss of lives through road crashes. County governments are responsible for managing the use of street space and carrying out street improvement activities on local streets. In early 2020, Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS) was established to oversee several functions formerly handled by Nairobi City County, including transport and public works. Across these agencies, there is a need for capacity building on NMT and the formation of dedicated NMT units to ensure that all projects consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

IMPLEMENTATION

NMT has generated a significant level of interest among development partners. Walking paths and cycle tracks are a part of infrastructure improvements delivered under several World Bank projects, including the Kenya Municipal Programme (KMP), Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP), Nairobi Metropolitan Services Improvement Project (NaMSIP), and Kenya Urban Support Project (KUSP). For instance, 80 km of walkways and bicycle paths have been constructed in Eldoret under two Bank-funded programmes. Another ongoing project is the 21.7 m Nairobi Missing Link Roads and NMT Facilities Project, implemented by KURA with funding from the European Union.

Several counties are taking a leadership role in the provision of NMT facilities. Kisumu, Kenya's third largest city, is developing 1.4 km of high-quality walkways and protected cycle lanes with



A refurbished walkway in Mombasa

support from KUSP as part of the Kisumu Triangle project. The city plans to construct 5 km of additional NMT facilities in a second phase.

Similarly, the Mombasa County Government is refocusing its infrastructure development on NMT by refurbishing streets for easy access by pedestrians. So far, the county has completed 9 km of wide footpaths on major streets in the city centre. By reclaiming space previously used for parking and driving, Mombasa has been able to create wider spaces for walking. The county also is installing tabletop crossings to improve pedestrian safety and street lights to enhance security.

In Nairobi, a partnership between UN-Habitat and NCC resulted in the pedestrianisation of Luthuli Ave, a major commercial street in the city's downtown. NCC also has installed new walkways in fast-growing residential areas. These progressive initiatives by county governments illustrate that long-standing traffic engineering practices can give way to a more equitable approach to street design that improves access and safety for all road users.

MORE INFORMATION

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How to develop a non-motorised transport strategy or policy

Visit nmttoolkit.itdp.org



Nairobi's Luthuli Ave

