
# RWANDA NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY

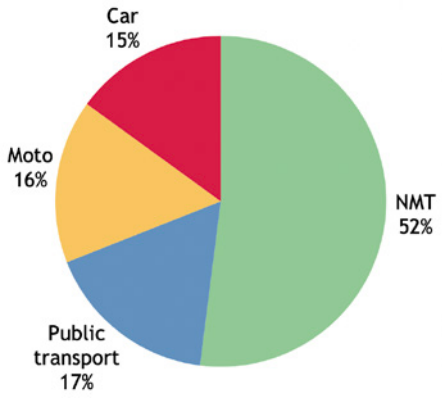
Many urban residents in Rwandan cities walk, cycle, or use public transport to go to work, shopping, or recreational centres. By redoubling efforts to promote walking and cycling as part of a comprehensive sustainable mobility agenda outlined in the new National Transport Policy, Rwanda can become a model for sustainable urbanisation in the region.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, with a density of 414 inhabitants per square km. The population is projected to increase to 16.9 million by 2032. The percentage share of non-motorised trips in Kigali is around 52 percent, and this rate is even higher in secondary cities.

A majority of urban streets in the city of Kigali and other Rwandan cities have basic pedestrian footpaths. The city governments have implemented quality footpaths observed on both sides of many newly constructed paved urban streets. Some new urban streets have one-sided footpaths and a concrete slab covered drain used as a pedestrian path on the opposite side. While notable efforts to improve the walking environment were observed in the cities of Huye, Musanze, Rubavu, Nyagatare, and Kigali, many urban streets in these cities, especially older ones, lacked proper footpaths. These are characterised by open drains which force pedestrians to walk on the carriageway or on dusty surfaces next to the streets. Where they are present, footpaths are often inaccessible. The footpaths have major gaps, deformities, and obstructions. Most crossings lack physical measures to reduce vehicle speeds.

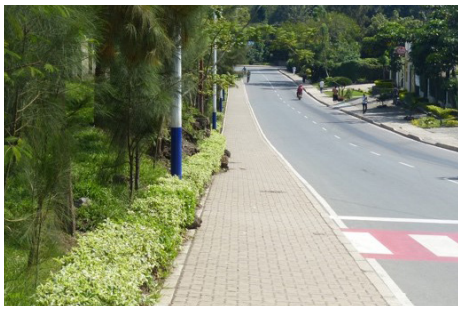

A street in Kigali




Kigali mode split

Nearly all Rwandan cities have a considerable number of bicycle taxi operators known as “Abanyonzi.” Despite having a good number of cyclists, most cities lack dedicated bicycle facilities. A few urban streets with cycle tracks were observed in Kigali, Rubavu, and Huye, while in the cities of Musanze and Nyagatare cycle tracks were completely absent.

# OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



Well constructed footpath in Rubavu

Parking obstructs pedestrian mobility

Lack of footpaths in Musanze

Large turning radii at intersections contribute to fast vehicle speed

Speed bumps in Kicukiro

Streets with open drains

# POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

To guide efforts towards improving the walking and cycling environment, UN Environment tasked the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) with assisting the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA) in developing the non-motorised transport (NMT) elements of the National Transport Policy (NTP) under the auspices of the Share the Road initiative.

ITDP observed road corridors and streets in cities of Huye, Musanze, Rubavu, Nyagatare, and Kigali to understand issues faced by NMT users and met with district officials from these cities. ITDP also participated in meetings with MININFRA and the city of Kigali.

MININFRA organised a stakeholder workshop for the validation of the draft NTP from 27-29 May 2018 at Hill Top hotel in Kigali. The workshop attracted over forty participants from different government institutions and non-governmental organisations. Participants included senior technical staff from ministries; senior engineers from RTDA, CoK, RURA, and CoK districts; public transport operators; NGOs; development partners such as World Bank and JICA; practitioners; and civil society organisations among others.

A policy validation workshop

Footpaths in central Kigali

The workshop provided an opportunity to share information on the ongoing NMT initiatives based on the NMT policy component of the draft NTP and an opportunity to share best practices in providing safe, sustainable, and equitable transport systems.

ITDP had an opportunity to make a presentation on the findings from the consultative field visits on NMT existing conditions in secondary cities and the city of Kigali. The presentation highlighted major challenges in existing street designs and also touched on complete streets and best practices for inclusive street designs.

## NTP PRINCIPLES

- **Coordination**: Rwanda recognizes the importance of harmonising national, regional and continental development plans in the context of Agenda 2050.
- **Competition:** Transport infrastructure and services will be operated by private, public, or private/public economic operators in a regime of open and transparent competition. In the public transport sector, the government will encourage competition for the market rather than competition in the market to improve safety.
- **Cost recovery:** The paramount purpose of the transport system is to enable economic development and social inclusion. Pricing of transport services should encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling, and public transport.
- **Efficiency:** This policy aims to deliver a national transport system at the lowest sustainable long-term cost. Streets in urban and rural areas should be designed to move people, not vehicles.
- **Safety:** The NTP seeks to improve safety for urban and regional travel. Within cities and towns, street space must be designed so that it caters to all modes of transport, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Universal access**: All Rwandese have the right to safe and efficient transport services and infrastructure.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Transport sector investments will be driven by sustainability considerations including long term environmental and social impacts.
- **Resilience to climate change:** Considering and planning for climate change and extreme weather events will be required to ensure long-term reliability of transport systems.
- **Leveraging the private sector**: Rwanda aspires to be a private sector-led economy in line with the vision 2020 and NST1. Transport sector investments will as much as possible leverage additional private sector financing.
- **Accountability and transparency**: Service providers in urban transport infrastructure and services shall ensure the best use of available resources and account for their utilisation.

Kigali car-free zone

- **Value for money:** All transport projects, regardless of how they are implemented, shall deliver optimal value for money and contribute to growth by maximising efficiency through better selection, preparation, and management of investments.
- **Autonomous decision making by city authorities/districts:** Following the principle of decentralisation, transport infrastructure management at the level of local governments will be autonomous as provided by the decentralisation policy.

## NTP INITIATIVES

The NTP outlines a number of initiatives to strengthen green modes of transport:

- **Road networks:** Develop road networks to improve access for people and goods while prioritising modes that are space-efficient, non-polluting, and healthy, such as walking, cycling and public transport. Implement road designs that enhance safety, particularly that of non-motorised transport users. Achieve cost recovery in the road transport system through the introduction of user tolls, congestion fees, parking fees, and other mobility pricing mechanisms.

Public transport terminal in Kigali


Cycle track in Huye

- **Non-motorised transport (NMT):** Safe, high-quality, universally accessible facilities for walking, cycling, and other NMT modes should be developed on all streets in cities and towns, along with adequate street lighting and bike-share systems.
- **Public transport:** Bus movement should be prioritised in the design and operation of urban streets. Gross-cost bus operating contracts and well-calibrated subsidies should be introduced to establish a public transport system that is convenient, reliable, secure, affordable, and accessible to all users, regardless of physical ability.
- **Mobility pricing:** The NTP calls for a new approach of ensuring that motor vehicle users pay the real cost of the resources, facilities and services that they use, through measures such as parking fees.
- **Traffic management:** Use mobility pricing mechanisms, including parking pricing and enforcement to reduce congestion, discourage the use of private motor vehicles, improve the utilisation of the available parking supply, and avoid parking encroachments on footpaths, cycle tracks, and public spaces. The overall supply of parking should be reduced to help accomplish sustainability goals. On-street parking spaces should be re-purposed for higher-priority uses, such as the movement of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport vehicles.
- **Land use-transport integration:** Fine-grained street grids can improve connectivity and facilitate orderly urban expansion. Compact, mixed-use development and informal settlement upgrading along public transport corridors can help maximise the number of people with access to frequent public transport.
- **Communications and outreach:** Planning authorities should ensure broad and economically diverse citizen participation at all stages of planning and implementation. Project designs and system performance data should be open for public scrutiny. Popular initiatives like the city of Kigali's biweekly Car-Free Day can be scaled up to the country level.

Bicycle taxis in Huye

Footpath in Kigali

## SUCCESS FACTORS

> Bi-weekly car-free days in Kigali

> Kigali car-free zone established in 2015

> Basic footpaths on most new streets

## NTP IMPLEMENTATION

The planning and operation of transport systems requires dedicated agencies with skilled and professional staff with field experience in similar areas of work. A major exercise of training and skill development among public officials and practitioners is urgently needed. As part of the exercise of skill development, academic programs in transport, especially at the post-graduate level, will be strengthened to nurture a nucleus of qualified transport professionals in the country. Suitable collaborations with leading institutes abroad will be established.

## MORE INFORMATION

Carly Koinange
Global Programme Lead, Share the Road Programme
UN Environment
carly.koinange@un.org

### How to develop a non-motorised transport strategy or policy

**Visit nmttoolkit.itdp.org**