

REMAKE CITY FORM AND FUNCTION: NEO-TRADITIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGN APPROACH IN COALITION WITH LAHORE METRO BUS SERVICE

By: Sadaf Saeed

ABSTRACT

Developing countries are facing various challenges of urbanisation and urban mobility is one of them. Particularly mega cities are struggling with increased rates of motorisation along with dilapidated conditions of public transport systems. To overcome these mobility hurdles the adoption of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is considered an optimal option for countries with limited financial and technical resources. Likewise, the policy makers of Pakistan introduced the first BRT named the Lahore Metro Bus (LMB) in 2013. This research examines the role of LMB under the lens of urban planning.

To determine the potentials of BRT (LMB) in terms of urban development this research paper is organised into two sections. In section one the nature of executed metro bus service in Lahore is explored and in section two the potentials of this service from the perspective of urban planning are discussed. The methodology adopted in this study is a mixed method research structured on an exploratory sequential framework. The semi structured interviews are conducted with planning professionals of Lahore explaining the role that the service has or ought to have in terms of urban development. The acuties of planning professionals highlight certain discourses explaining the current planning process of transit service and future policy implications.

The study concludes that metro bus concept is executed as a stand-alone mobility component in Lahore. Therefore, the benefits are limited to move people from one place to another. However, if the metro service were envisioned as a component of urban policy then it could have had a wide potential to impact the urban form of the city. It was further determined that the adapted measures as a part of this concept are narrowly engineering focussed towards the technical aspects of this service while the socio-cultural components of the city are neglected.

To enhance the benefits of LMB service from the perception of urban planning, the concept of neo-traditionalism is suggested in conjunction with the existing transit facility. The application of Neo-Traditional Neighbourhood Design (NTND) approach would be the first step to turn the transit neighbourhoods into neo-traditional communities. These communities appear and function like old styled environment friendly towns. A Neo Transit Lahore Model (NTLM) is derived as an outcome of this paper. This model would curtail the negative impacts of urban sprawl by promoting the use of public transport and non-motorised travel in the transit neighbourhoods of Lahore. In this study the contemporary transit infrastructure is used as a tool to revive the conventional features of Lahore.

The parameters of this approach are analysed in three selected neighbourhoods along the LMB corridor. The neo traditional transit model approach will have social, economic and environmental implications.

Keywords: New Urbanism, Neo-traditional neighbourhoods, Connection between communities, Lahore Metro Bus Service