People's Policy for Public Bus Transport in the NCT of Delhi[1]

"...current and future mobility/accessibility needs can be met at lower risk levels, at lower costs and wider availability of choices."

- Dinesh Mohan[2]

1. Introduction

Public bus transport (PBT) is an essential component of a truly sustainable and liveable city. In Delhi, more than 5 million passengers rely on the bus system for their daily commute and for reaching various places of importance (GNCTD, 2020). According to the latest Census of India (2011), about 25 per cent of people use buses to commute to work. Socioeconomic Survey of Delhi conducted by the Government of NCT of Delhi in the year 2019-20 had estimated the mode share of the bus in Delhi to be 55 per cent. In terms of average daily ridership, bus trips comprise about 70 per cent of all trips by public transport in Delhi even after 25 years of Delhi Metro. Buses in Delhi collectively cover more than a million kilometres daily. Clearly, the bus is the most commonly opted public transport in the capital city.

[1] **Acknowledgement**: The proposed draft of the policy has been prepared as part of and in consultation with the participants of the 'Reclaiming the Bus' campaign[1]. 'Reclaiming The Bus' is a citizen's campaign started in 2020 to achieve free, safe and reliable bus-based public transport in Delhi. The campaign was supported by Sustainable Urban Mobility Network (SUM Net), India.

[2] Mohan, D. (2015). Urban transport: Moving from the 19th century to the 21st-century concerns. Accessed at: http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/Urban%20transport.pdf

1.1 Delhi is one of the most rapidly urbanising regions in the country, and some researchers expect that Delhi will become the most populous city in the world by 2030. The general response of the planners has been to expand the urban catchment and facilitate the elite capture through a rise in land value. This narrow focus on growth (some of these planners consider cities 'engines of growth') has led to a situation where the number of vehicles has grown faster than the number of people living in cities. As a result, Delhi already has the highest car ownership per household among all Indian metropolitan areas and towns with more than one crore population. This rise in vehicle ownership and usage is a significant contributor to the worsening of local air quality. According to the data released by the Government of India, the concentration of PM_{10} had increased by 2.5 times between 2001 and 2010. It has been estimated to have resulted in the premature death of nearly 7 to 16 thousand people per year in Delhi[3]. The condition has only worsened since then. Thus, the economic growth-oriented approach is already making the urban development in Delhi highly unsustainable. Major course corrections in urban transport policy and planning vision have been pushed by people's associations and civil society at large, at least since the beginning of liberalisation in the late 80s. The past and current efforts towards alternative planning through participatory approaches must be acknowledged and adopted after democratic deliberations.

1.2 It is important to note that the National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP)-2006 of the Government of India had categorically acknowledged the need to prioritise bus transport. NUTP had recognised that the focus of the current allocation of road space is vehicles, not people. This misallocation is at the root of multiple crises of road congestion, air and noise pollution and traffic injuries in

[3] Guttikunda, S. K., & Goel, R. (2013). Health impacts of particulate pollution in a megacity-Delhi, India. *Environmental Development*, *6*(1), 8–20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2012.12.002

Delhi. On the other hand, buses occupy less road space per person and reduce the city's ecological footprint. Therefore, NUTP had rightly directed the Central Government to promote equitable allocation of road space which is possible only through prioritising bus-based public transport linked with the safe and accessible infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists and users of other non-motorised modes.

1.3 Though the NUTP-2006 is a valuable and, by and large, people-friendly policy; it has not been only selectively adhered to by government departments and planning agencies in Delhi. The Constitution of India directs that state governments hold responsibility for managing transport in urban areas. Moreover, only a state-level policy can address and accommodate the local context and challenges better. At the same time, it is crucial to prepare and adopt a different approach for 'reclaiming' the bus in Delhi to avoid giving undue focus to transition to 'cleaner' sources of energy and more 'efficient' technologies that promise better, and not fewer, private automobiles.

1.4 Thus, the draft bus policy presented here aims to make Delhi a more liveable, genuinely democratic, and ecological city and make the bus a critical organ of overall transformation in that direction. This policy aims to guide design, planning, policymaking, budget provisioning, and governing related to bus-based public transport in Delhi.

2. Vision

2.1 We envision Delhi as a city of cities connected by streets available as commons for all without discrimination and irrespective of structural privileges provided by social and technological factors. Delhi should be planned to provide for all with inclusive participation.

2.2 It follows from this vision that people in such a city should be able to move around using shared modes of transport without suffering for reasons such as

lack of safety, exposure to air pollution, road traffic injury and other mobility-related hazards, unaffordability, substandard quality of infrastructure and cultural disconnect.

2.3 Thus, we envision the urban transport in Delhi to become predominantly an integrated system of shared and non-motorised modes with public bus transport (including the small capacity, high-frequency services connecting the periurban and urban village areas) as the primary mass transport mode. It is possible to achieve this vision in three years of adopting this policy by taking correct steps on time.

2.4 Lastly, this policy is guided by the motivation to realise the right to the city and accompanying rights to mobility, safety, clean environment and health. For this, the policy envisions public transport as a public good. It expects decision-making on public bus transport to become more accessible, democratic and participatory, especially for socially and mobility-wise unprivileged groups, more specifically the bicyclists, pedestrians and bus users, low-income households, women, children, people with disabilities, the elderly, LGBTQ community.

3. Key Issues concerning the Bus System in Delhi

3.1 High fares

Contrary to the belief of most analysts and policymakers, the high fare of buses in Delhi is a significant factor discouraging the usage of the bus. Nearly half to one-third of the people living in Delhi find even the minimum fare of public transport unaffordable as it constitutes more than 25 per cent of their income.[4]. The marginal cost of using a motorised two-wheeler - which is anything between 1.5-

[4] Mohan, D. (2001). Planning for Public Transport: Integrating Safety, Environment and Economic Issues. *TRIPP Working Paper*, pp. 5.

2 rupees per km - is much lower than bus fare. In simple terms, travelling by bus is not as cheap as it should be. While providing a means to travel, public transport should ease the economic stress of low-income households and create strong financial incentives for private automobile users to shift to the bus.

3.2 Lack of safety

A bus user has to brave safety challenges through all the stages in a bus journey. Especially for women and the LGBTQ community, the access journey to a bus stop and struggle to navigate through a crowd of men while on-board are often very unpleasant experiences discouraging them from using buses. This is also statistically reflected in the share of women among bus users being merely 10-20 per cent.

Lack of safe boarding and deboarding is another concern due to the existing boarding and deboarding arrangement that creates a hazardous conflict between bus users (and pedestrians and bicyclists) and motor vehicles. Universal accessibility to buses remains a distant dream without all the buses being low-floor with adequate seating for physically challenged persons. Across the social groups and communities, lack of safety is one of the most significant deterrents for many potential bus users.

3.3 Inconvenience, substandard levels of reliability, and other operational issues

Before COVID, buses in Delhi were overcrowded, and the bus system underperformed in terms of waiting time at bus stops, buses following schedule, on-board travel time, connectivity and transfer time. This is owing to the fact that there has been virtually no induction of buses in the fleet of Delhi Transport Corporation in more than a decade. Nearly all the buses of DTC are past their expected service life. According to some estimates, public transport demand in Delhi cannot be served with less than 11,000 buses, but there are only about 7000 buses in the combined fleet of DTC and DIMTS. The land available for depots is one-third of the required 180 hectares of land. Lack of cooperation from DDA to

the longstanding demand to allocate land for making new bus depots has also added to the crisis. Currently, in the absence of depot space, PWD arranges for night-time bus parking on major roads. Buses should help people reach places of importance.

3.4 Privatisation and rapid erosion of public control over public transport

Public transport belongs to all the people who move or want to move around the city. Transport workers, including the drivers, conductor, technicians, and maintenance crew, keep the system running to its best capacities despite unfavourable work conditions. Apart from the public bus system run by DTC, three other public/private bus services are run in Delhi- buses run by DIMTS Ltd. under cluster scheme, feeder buses run by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), and private charter buses.

DIMTS Ltd. was formed in the year 2007 as a way to organise the highly chaotic and immensely unsafe system of private 'blueline' buses in Delhi. Under this scheme, contracts are awarded for operating on clusters of high and low demand routes rather than one single route. Operators are selected by competitive bidding, and they are entitled to get financial support from the Delhi Government to cover their operational losses.[5]. Despite the efficiency gains claimed by the cluster model of DIMTS, the number of buses has reduced, and the management structure of the model moves public transport away from general control. According to the data shared by Delhi Government, trip completion rate and on-time arrival of DTC buses were respectively 3 per cent and 27 per cent higher than

[5] Gadepalli, R., Fabianski, C., Pourbaix, J., & Singh, J. (2018). Regulatory frameworks for integrated shared mobility governance in India. *Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (Shakti) and INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT (UITP), (May)*, 40.

that of cluster buses, in the year 2019-20[6]. DTC also has slightly higher earnings per bus per km as compared to cluster buses.

The massive drive of contractualization in the last two decades has come to deny the public transport workers 'equal pay for equal work'. Contractual conditions such as target-based payments for drivers[7] They are harsh on workers and have severe implications for the reliability of service and passenger safety.

4. Policy Directives

4.1 Abolish fares

To reduce the fraction of household budget spent on transport necessity – which can be as high as 30 per cent in the case of economically weaker households – this policy recommends the gradual abolition of bus fares in Delhi. Travel in buses is already fare-free for all women in Delhi. In the first round of revisions, the scheme should be extended to cover all children, physically challenged persons, senior citizens and students, or on certain days in a week. After implementing the first round, the fares should be abolished for all.

4.1.1 The basic idea of abolishing fares is that the rich can and should pay for universal public services. Still, the question of financial viability is raised by many to dismiss the idea. Therefore, the concept of fare-free public transport offers an opportunity to rethink our understanding of costs and benefits. In a car-oriented urban transport system, benefits are privatised while costs are socialised. If a proper accounting of the social cost of cars is done and if the cost-benefit analysis of fare-free bus transport considers the less tangible and long-term benefits in public

[6] http://delhiplanning.nic.in/sites/default/files/6.1%20%20Transport.pdf

[7] According to the Workers' Unity Centre, a union of DTC workers, drivers have to often work for more than 12 hours a day to complete their daily targets.

health, climate resilience and democracy in cities, it is perfectly possible to make public transport fare-free and invest in other public services.

4.1.2 Moreover, there is no public transport system in the world which recovers all costs from its users because it will make public transport simply unaffordable. Public bus transport in Delhi is already subsidised through collective payment of taxes by all citizens. There is no economic reason why the subsidy amount cannot be increased to cover all costs (See the Financial Consideration section).

4.1.3 Fare-free public transport exists in more than 100 cities, though many are small cities and only partially abolished fares. Delhi is the only megacity where public bus transport is free for all women. In public meetings organised by concerned citizens, women have reported that bus staff and male co-passengers see them as 'freeloaders travelling purposelessly'. Notwithstanding the divided male opinion, the scheme has successfully brought back into discussion the idea of public transport as a vehicle for social transformation. Absolute abolition of fare will end whatever disagreements on the scheme remain between the men and the women belonging to the poor and working-class of Delhi.

4.1.4 Fare-free public bus transport is a crucial requirement if mobility planning has to be reimagined to achieve free and purposeless travel for all citizens, irrespective of their social identities. Abolition of fare should not be considered a sufficient measure but only a necessary one. Fare-free transport will change the perception of public transport from a commodity to a shared resource. It will open up many opportunities for different sections of society to mix up and bring together for interaction. Total abolition of fare will weaken objections against the 'free travel for

women' policy. It will create a more supportive environment for *everyone* to travel leisurely and reclaim the public spaces.[8].

4.2 Moving around safely

All buses must be low-floor buses. Currently, buses operated by DIMTS under cluster scheme are semi-low-floor buses that pose difficulty in boarding and deboarding for children, physically challenged and the elderly.

4.2.1 Safe access to public transport is strongly associated with improving women's access to public spaces. Sexual harassment of women in public transport, including while waiting at the bus stops, is a significant deterrent for the use of buses, and this is reflected in the large gender gap in the use of bus transport. 'Request stop' should be considered for implementation to allow women to request deboarding at any convenience and not just bus stops. The installation of CCTV cameras does not improve safety, and the government should redirect the funds to more effective solutions which will enhance the visibility of women and vibrant streets.

4.2.2 Section 41 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 must be complied with when redesigning and retrofitting the bus stops and other user facilities under the bus system.

4.3 Buses as a reliable companion

4.3.1 Delhi has almost 25 buses per lakh people while the needed minimum by some standards is 50 buses per lakh people. Though the average ridership of DTC and DIMTS consistently have increased over the years, this has also resulted in system overload due to chronic underinvestment

[8] In their seminal work '*Why Loiter?*, authors Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan and Shilpa Ranade argue how loitering can be an act of reimagining public life. Though they do not explicitly discuss the idea of fare-free public transport in their work, the implications of their arguments can be extended to favourable conclusions in support of abolishing fares.

and archaic methods of operations and planning. After adopting this policy, the number of buses with DTC should be doubled and tripled from their current status in two and five years, respectively.

4.3.2 The Electric Vehicle Policy, 2020 of the Delhi Government, recommends that 50 per cent of all new buses (with a seating capacity of 15 or more) being procured should be pure electric buses. This policy suggests that priority should be given to the procurement of CNG low-floor buses if electric buses are likely to create delays.

4.3.3 Operators and governing bodies should bring urgent improvements to bring down the waiting time and reduce the variability in the schedule to less than 5 minutes, minimise the breakdowns, provide separate bus lanes to increase the carrying capacity measured in terms of persons per hour per direction (PPHPD), and set up official channels for communicating with bus users as equal stakeholders in planning and running of buses.

4.3.4 The number of bus routes of DTC has fallen from 556 in 2009-10 to 437 in 2018-19. Government should bring the number of bus routes operated by DTC back to the 2009-10 levels as more buses are inducted into the fleet.

4.3.5 Existing and new resettlement colonies and periurban neighbourhoods must access frequent public bus transport to connect them with different industrial and commercial hubs in the city.

4.3.6 All buses should be installed with a public announcement system to inform the passengers about the upcoming bus stop while travelling.

4.3.7 Planning for a new metro rail line should be preceded by a comparative analysis of alternative bus-based modal combinations, which was also recommended in the National Metro Policy, 2017. However, this comprehensive study should be conducted by a high-powered committee of qualified researchers and subject experts rather than the

agency working feasibility reports and detailed project report (DPR) of the proposed metro project. All metro rail stations should be integrated with the bus route network to achieve dense public transport connectivity in all its neighbourhoods in the catchment radius of 2 kilometres. Planning for Regional Rapid Transit Systems (RRTS) should also follow the same principle.

4.3.8 DDA should immediately allocate the minimum required 160 hectares of land area for bus depots. There should also be clarity regarding the design of depots in the development norms. Every new infrastructure project and urban development plan must consider the current state of the public bus system and contribute to its improvement.

4.3.9 Delhi Government and Delhi Transport Corporation must put the practice of using DTC buses for detaining protestors and carrying police personnel to an end. Diverting buses for these non-civil usages creates a scarcity of buses for passengers and stands against the stated vision of public transport as a vehicle for achieving the right to a free and democratic city.

4.4 Reclaiming the Public Bus Transport Workers' Rights

4.4.1 Workers employed by any of the operating agencies will be considered Public Bus Transport Workers. The employment of all public transport workers should be regulated to ensure their safety, health and access to all welfare entitlements.

4.4.2 Only permanent, well-trained, well-paid and experienced workers working in a safe and relaxed environment can be expected to contribute fully towards achieving the vision stated in this policy. Drivers should be entitled to fair compensation for their services. The system that ties wages to vehicle kilometres must be put to an end. With a transition to the fare-free public bus system, the role of conductors can be redefined as caretakers rather than fare collectors. Timekeeping workers have an

essential role in ensuring the punctuality of bus services and they should be given due weightage in new hirings and employee benefits. Efforts should be made to reduce the policing and surveillance in the bus system, and the Department of Transport should critically review the necessity of deploying civil marshals in buses. Transport workers' unions should be recognised and considered equal stakeholders in urban transport planning and decision-making.

4.4.3 Public bus transport should also be seen as a climate-desirable sector providing meaningful employment while transitioning to a 'green economy. Current bus staff members are predominantly men. One of the main barriers for more women to join as staff members is the lack of infrastructures such as separate changing rooms and toilet facilities. Active attempts should remove gender-related barriers for women to participate as drivers, conductors, technicians and other staff positions. Operating agencies should ensure that public transport workplaces (including depots, workshops, buses) become safe, equal and gender-responsive workspaces.

4.5 Break free from the monopoly of cars on road space

4.5.1 A large part of Delhi has been reshaped and destroyed to make way for cars. Cars do not just lead to high emissions and environmental degradation, but they also take away and monopolise a large amount of urban space. The future of the city demands learning from the mistakes of the past and correcting them. Setting aspirational targets to run all the cars on electricity is counterproductive without committing to an overall reduction in the number of vehicles and the amount of space exclusively controlled by cars.

4.5.2 It is a myth that any action against cars will hurt the economy.[9]. A bus carries at least 50 times more people than a car. Removing vehicles from roads will only make more road space available for *all* people to move safely and comfortably. It will not bring the urban economy to a halt but will only expand and equitably redistribute the benefits. Moreover, this policy recommends that the government facilitate the automobile manufacturing industry to transition from accelerating the production of cars to producing more buses and bicycles. Less tangible and long-term benefits in terms of public health, fuel, reduced expenditure on urban infrastructure can compensate for the apparent loss of GDP.[10].

4.5.3 Government should stop funding any new flyovers, bypasses, road widening, parking lots, and other vehicle-centric projects that claim to 'solve' traffic congestion problems. These types of infrastructure do not just concentrate mobility/accessibility in the reach of few car users but also make it further inconvenient to provide and use public bus transport.

4.5.4 In its annual outcome budgets, Delhi Government has set targets to increase the new registration of vehicles by almost 20 per cent which goes against the goals of making Delhi sustainable. The target should be chosen in such a manner as to reduce the annual rate of sale of cars by at least 5 per cent.

4.5.5 Global evidence suggests that constructing metro rails is neither necessary nor sufficient to reduce private vehicles or increase access to public transport, whereas a high-capacity bus system can achieve better

[9] Roy, D. (2013). Car Sewa: The Iconography of Idle Worship. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *48*(48), 90–94.

[10] Ibid.

outcomes at much lower costs. Detailed studies should be conducted to identify roads suitable for a high-capacity bus system in Delhi.

4.6 Dedicated Lane and Other Such Supportive Infrastructure

4.6.1 A large area of Delhi is used as roads, and there is enough space on most routes to easily make space for dedicated bus lanes, bicycle and cycle rickshaw lanes and wide sidewalks with space for street vendors. For street vendors, bus stops are obvious places to get customers and their presence is beneficial from the viewpoint of public safety too[11]. However, their presence on roadside and near bus stops is deemed illegal by authorities and attracts harassment by the police and the car drivers. Their place should be legitimised and bus system design should integrate their concerns.

4.6.2 To democratise road spaces, buses should enjoy dedicated lanes/corridors on all high-volume arterial roads in Delhi. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems should be planned for different stretches and integrated (including fare integration, if applicable) with the regular bus network. BRT should have at-level boarding arrangements and should be prioritised over other modes at intersections.

4.6.3 Going against the High Court and Supreme Court orders, the BRT corridor in Delhi was demolished in 2016 by the Delhi Government. Various studies have revealed that, even as a small-scale experiment, BRT had increased access to buses, made the bus a more attractive mode choice and brought down the pollution levels.[12,13]. In plans, necessary

[11] Tiwari, G. (2007). Urban Transport in India: Policy Guidelines. *Proceedings for the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies*, *6*.

[12] Hazards Centre (2012). *The Bus Rapid Transit System in Delhi: An Independent Evaluation*. Hazards Centre New Delhi.

[13] Centre for Science and Environment (2008). *The perception survey: Bus rapid transit system (BRT).* Accessed at: https://cdn.cseindia.org/userfiles/BRT%20survey%20apc.pdf

measures should be put in place to ensure that the BRT or other such infrastructure is not scrapped under the pressure of the car lobby.

4.7 Achieving the environmental benefits of public bus transport

4.7.1 In the era of the climate crisis, planning for bus-based public transport should be informed by the latest scientific evidence on environmental degradation and climate crisis. However, the bus policy should learn from the shortcomings of previous disruptions in the public bus system of Delhi, which had taken a narrow environmentalist approach to address the issue of ambient air pollution exclusively. It needs no emphasis that public bus transport (along with the network of paratransit modes) is *essential* for social reproduction in Delhi. The environmental benefits of bus-based public transport can be realised in a just manner only when it matches the social realities. Entirely subsiding the bus system has to be a primary component of any strategy to reduce air pollution in Delhi.

4.7.2 Strengthening and investing in the public bus system is an inseparable part of any sincere climate action strategy for Delhi. In this sense, making public transport fare-free should be understood as an instrument for ensuring climate justice in transport-related climate action programmes. The government could also explore finances to operationalise the free public bus system through local taxation and carbon market and climate finance avenues.

4.8 Focus on promotion of and integration with non-motorised transport and paratransit

4.8.1 Pedestrians and bicyclists are the most vulnerable to traffic injury and pollution risks. Notably, more than 60-70 per cent of people using bus

systems take to walking from the origin point of a trip to access the bus stops.[14].

4.8.2 Many neighbourhoods in Delhi have relatively lower population density, and their mobility needs are better catered by low-capacity but high-frequency public transport services. In these cases, Grameen Seva (RTVs), minibuses, and other paratransit modes have a pivotal role, and transport planners must integrate these services with the leading public bus transport network to reduce inequalities of access.

4.9 Financial Considerations

4.9.1 Public bus transport faces a hostile tax policy regime. According to some studies, the total tax burden for public transport vehicles per vehicle km in Delhi is almost triple that for private cars (CSE, 2010). While Metro enjoys various tax favours, including exemption from GST, bus and bus operators do not. Challenges for financial viability in running the public bus system should not be overcome by 'fare rationalisation' or cost-cutting through contractual hiring or procuring 'low-cost' semi-low-floor buses but by minimising the unnecessary tax burdens, high-interest rates in procurements, outstanding debt repayments and fuel costs currently borne by operating agencies. Subsidies to the public bus system in Delhi should at least be at par with, if not more than, the per-passenger subsidy provided to DMRC. In any cost rationalisation exercises, care must be taken to ensure that the public bus system's ability to perform social obligations like running services on 'unprofitable' routes and services to carry school children must not suffer.

4.9.2 The Central Government should bear the responsibility to earmark adequate funds for the regular induction of buses every year. Delhi

[14] Lakhotia, S., Lassarre, S., Rao, K. R., & Tiwari, G. (2019). Pedestrian accessibility and safety around bus stops in Delhi. *IATSS Research*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iatssr.2019.07.001

Government should explore financing options that redistribute the access to opportunity for the benefit of bus users, bicyclists and pedestrians. Delhi Government should complete the pending process of constructing bus shelters and commit to the budget provision to identify new bus stops to bring the bus routes as close to the residences as possible. At the same time, the government should not get distracted by impractical and ineffective policy options like system-wide congestion pricing.

4.9.3 In line with the recommendations of NUTP, an Urban Transport Fund should be created with systematic contributions from the Union Government and the GNCTD. UTF should have explicit provisions for a specific fraction of it being used for public bus transport.

4.9.4 Delhi Government should seriously consider fuel taxes (petrol and diesel tax), special road tax from car owners, parking charges, employment tax from employers, gentrification tax from landowners, and other such options for pilot implementation followed by system-wide application. There should be no budget allocation for constructing new flyovers, signal-free corridors, foot over bridges and other such car-centric infrastructure, and Delhi Government should divert these funds to improve the environment for buses and different people-friendly modes.

4.9.5 Planned expenditure currently being directed towards elevated roads/flyovers, road widening, underpasses, parking lots and smog towers – all of which implicitly prioritise vehicles over people and increase the emissions – must be directed towards a dedicated fund for public bus transport. Usage of existing parking spaces should be charged to make cars less attractive than the use of public transport. The government of NCT of Delhi should direct Gains made by increasing parking charges to improve the state of public bus transport further.

4.9.6 Proposals seeking private or public-private partnership (PPP) investments in public transport provision should be avoided as these arrangements distort the welfare objectives by seeking profit from public transport. PPP arrangements in bus operation (DIMTS is one such arrangement in Delhi) should be allowed only when there is strong evidence of the success of such an arrangement, and it should go through transparent public scrutiny of contracts.

4.9.7 A relevant insight into public bus transport in Delhi can be drawn from the balance sheets of DMRC. Consultancy fees and earnings from other metro projects form a significant share of the annual revenue of DMRC. DTC and DIMTS should put efforts into capacity building for knowledge creation. Delhi Government should proactively engage with other governments and municipalities to offer the training and consultancy services of DTC and DIMTS for strengthening the public bus system in other cities and generating revenue.

5 Policy Implementation and Administration

5.1 It has been argued that the planning of transport in Delhi is a mess because 18 departments and agencies of the Union and Delhi Government are involved in different capacities to manage various components of transportation in the city. Constituting an umbrella body such as Urban Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA) to simplify the governance and decision-making on transport in Delhi has been a longstanding demand. This policy recommends the constitution of the Council for Sustainable Urban and Regional Transport in Delhi (CSURT) to prepare a Comprehensive Mobility Plan for a period of five years. This Council should have a separate 'Public Bus System' wing for making and reviewing proposals relevant for improving public bus transport.

5.2 The role and powers of this Council for effective coordination among multiple agencies should be decided through extensive considerations and

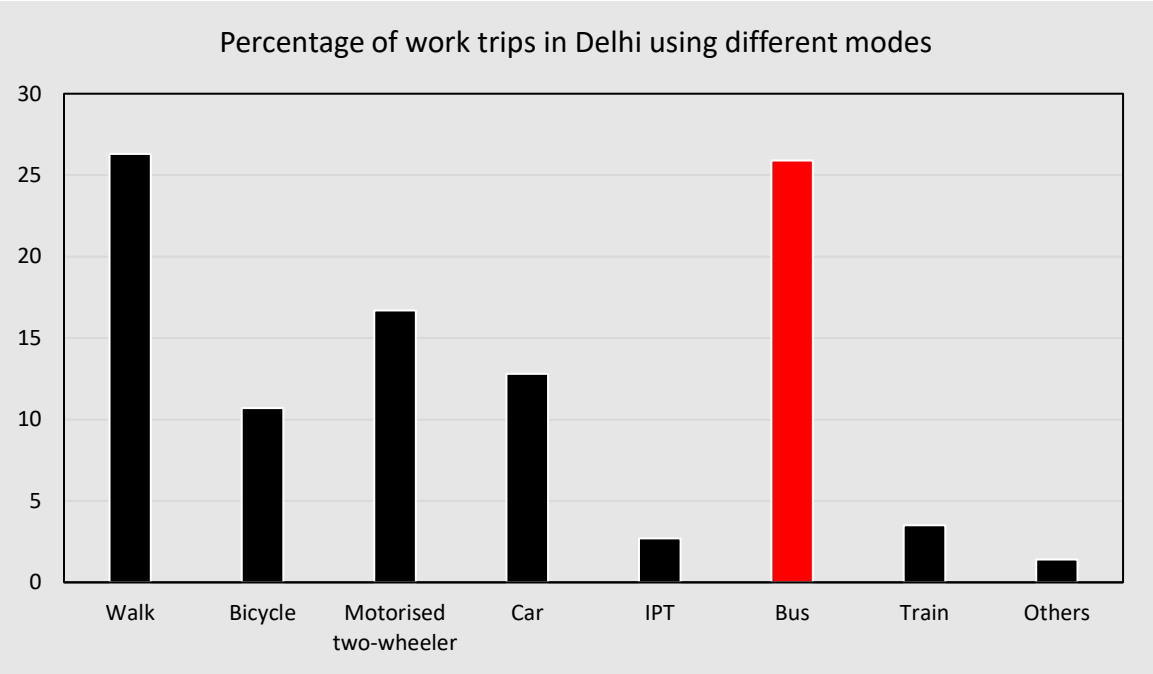
deliberation with all stakeholders, and the government must set accountability mechanisms in place to ensure that Council remains accessible and answerable to bus users, NMV users and pedestrians. Council can also establish and manage a Sustainable Transport Fund to receive earmarked funds from Delhi Government and secure finances from innovative, non-farebox methods.

5.3 This Council should be directly accountable to the public. It should have sufficient representation from workers' union (including but not limited to *DTC Workers' Unity Centre*) and bus users' union (including but not limited to *Delhi Bus Yatri Union*) among its board members, and any sub-councils might be created.

5.4 The Council should ensure that regular routes are regularly reviewed and operators address the commuters' suggestions for creating new routes. Regarding the creation of new bus stops or relocation of existing bus stops, Council should develop a process of receiving requests duly signed by the elected representatives and taking timebound decisions.

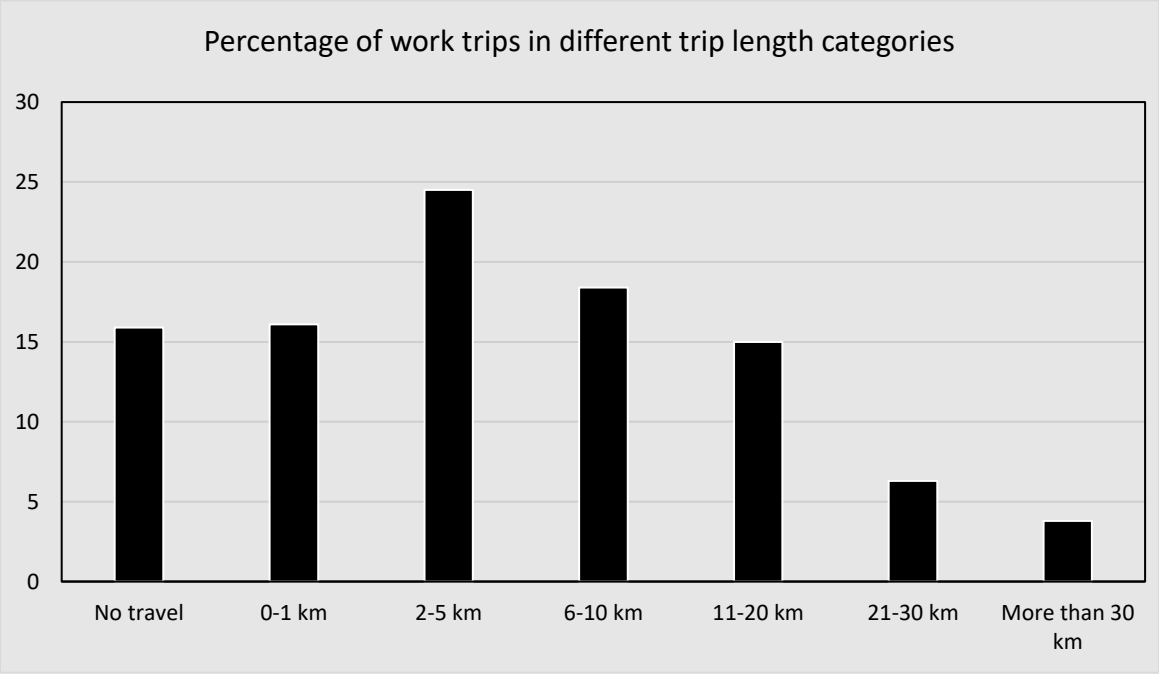
5.5 The Council should mandatorily organise a public consultation process every year to review the policy's implementation and modifications according to the emerging needs.

Appendix 1. Modal share in work trips in the NCT of Delhi



(Source: Census of India, 2011)

Appendix 2. Trip length distribution in work trips in the NCT of Delhi



(Source: Census of India, 2011)

Appendix 3. Bus age profile and sources of finance for bus procurement in DTC (2016-17)

		Standard buses	Low-floor buses
Scrapping Target	Years	8	12
	Lakh-km	5	7.5
Average Age of buses	Years	7.1	N/A
	Lakh-km	4.8	N/A
Number of over-aged buses above target		239	N/A
Percentage of over-aged buses		5.95	N/A

(Source: Central Institute of Road Transport)

Appendix 4. Sources of finance for buses purchased in DTC (Mar 2017)

	State Government	
	Equity capital	Plan loan
Loan amount (in crore rupees)	1983.85	511.3
Period of loan (Yrs.- Months)	-	13-0
Interest Rate (%)	-	10.5-14.5

(Source: Central Institute of Road Transport)

Appendix 5. Tax Rate for Commercial Passenger vehicles

Type of Passenger Vehicles	**Amount in INR/year**
Not more than 2 excluding the driver	305.00
More than 2 & Upto 4 exc. Driver & Conductor.	605.00
More than 4 & Upto 6 exc. Driver & Conductor.	1,130.00
More than 6 & Upto18 exc. Driver & Conductor.	1,915.00
More than 18 & above exc. Driver & Conductor.	1,915.00+ @ 280/- per passenger.

(Source: Transport Department, Government of NCT of Delhi, 2018)

Annexures

1. Delhi Road Transport Authority Act, 1950. A copy of the act can be accessed at: http://dtc.nic.in/content/drta-delhi-road-transport-authority-act1950

2. The Road Transport Corporations Act, 1950. A copy of the act can be accessed at: https://indiacode.nic.in/handle/123456789/1541?view_type=browse&sam_handle=123456789/1362

3. The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961. A copy of the act can be accessed at https://pblabour.gov.in/Content/documents/pdf/acts_rules/motortransport_workers_act_1961.pdf

4. Act 071 of 1971: Delhi Road Transport Laws (Amendment) Act, 1971. A copy of the act can be accessed at: https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/14080/1/amendment_act_1971.pdf

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