

Walkability in Kathmandu

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CLEAN AIR NETWORK NEPAL

Background

In most cities in developing countries, a large number of citizens walk as part of their daily social, recreational, and livelihood activities. Every trip begins and ends with a walking trip.

In Kathmandu, large section of population prefers to walk. In fact, 18.1 percent of daily trips are made entirely on foot, and of the nearly 56.5 percent of the

commuters who use different modes of public transport, a large percentage walk some or large part of their daily commute (KVMP, 2001).

Inadequate planning for pedestrians has many negative consequences, the most notable being unnecessary fatalities and injuries. For example, according to one study, pedestrians represent up to 40 percent of all fatalities in

Kathmandu City in 2001 (KVMP, 2001).

Walkability is the overall support for pedestrian travel in an area. The extent to which the built environment is friendly to the presence of people living, shopping, visiting, enjoying or spending time in an area are taken into consideration to determine road walkability.



Importance of Walking

An inconvenient pedestrian environment impedes the social and economic mobility of people. It reduces the time and energy that people could otherwise devote to work, family, and other productive activities.

Further, lack of sufficient pedestrian infrastructure creates unnecessary costs incurred from accidents and impeded economic mobility, lost tourism and investment opportunities.

- Walkable cities save lives
- Better pedestrian environment leads to poverty reduction through enhanced economic activities
- Walking is sustainable in terms of energy security
- Walking reduces emissions of CO₂ and other harmful air pollutants
- Walking benefits individuals' health

Study to Assess Kathmandu's Pedestrian Environment and Walking Condition



Poor Walking Infrastructures

The study revealed that pedestrian facility in Kathmandu is in worse condition and is not user-friendly to physically disabled people.

As a first step towards encouraging and helping cities improve their pedestrian infrastructure, the Asian Development Bank through the Clean Air Initiatives for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia) and its partner network, Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) has conducted the walkability survey in Kathmandu City to collect data about the city's pedestrian environment.

The overarching goal of the project is to improve pedestrian's safety and mobility and promote walking as a sustainable transport.

The field survey was conducted in commercial, public transport, educational and residential areas covering a total of 48 road stretches with a

combined length of 59 kilometers. About 305 pedestrian interviews were conducted to analyze travel behavior (time that pedestrians spend for each travel mode), pedestrian preference in terms of infrastructures, degrees of exposure to air pollution and socio-economic profiles.

Study Findings

The study has revealed that pedestrian facility in Kathmandu is in worse condition and is not user-friendly to physically disabled people.

- Based from the survey results, the walkability index of Kathmandu City is 559. When compared with other cities, Bangkok is 121. An index that comprises a single or lowest ranking number is regarded to be a more walkable city.
- Residential areas in Baneshwor Height, Kuleshwor, Khusibu and Lainchaur to Lazimpat has the highest walkability scores in the following variables; availability of walking paths with maintenance and cleanliness, availability of crossings per stretch, grade crossing safety, motorists obeying traffic laws and security from crime.
- The commercial area in Ason is the most pedestrian unfriendly road. It was registered that significant modal conflict in walking path mainly comes from vendors occupying the footpaths that make walking inconvenient.
- The Public Transport areas in Ratna Park and Kalanki have the highest number of pedestrian users and obtained the highest score in walking path modal conflict.
- 46 percent of the respondents said that the situation of existing infrastructures in the city is in its worst condition. There was no observed consistency in design in terms of width, height, and continuity of footpaths or road-crossings. A number of footpaths have meter width forcing the pedestrians to use the main roads. Other amenities such as lamp post and greenery occupy the footpaths and existing guard rails are in poor state. Pedestrian signboards and crossing marks are fading that gives longer waiting time for people to cross the other side of the road.
- About 94 percent of all the surveyed road stretches has no existing facilities for persons with disabilities. In terms of improvements in pedestrian facilities, this is the utmost priority perceived by majority of the respondents, followed by improved street lighting and wider, level and clean sidewalks.



Vehicles get priority for parking at footpath over people who wants to walk.

Study Findings

- Almost 80 percent of the stakeholders and government respondents said that there are no clear laws on jaywalking, traffic calming and roadside advertisements.
- The Metropolitan Traffic Police claims that traffic enforcement is regularly being implemented. However, their data reveals that the total accident for the year 2065 to 2066 (Nepali Calendars) accounts for 2765 in which the total fatality is 137; the total number of seriously injured is 720 and minor injuries reported is 2448.
- Based from the results derived from stakeholder and government surveys, the main barriers in improving the pedestrian facilities include lack of awareness on the importance of pedestrians safety, polices and investment for pedestrian friendly infrastructures and guidelines, linkages of all authorities working on pedestrian issues, poor urbanization plan and weak agency implementation.



Collection and storage of solid waste at corner and footpath of roads



Vendor shops at footpath forcing people to walk on middle of road



Our dream city : healthy and walkable city for every one

Conclusions

In many countries, methods of planning have been redesigned so that social, economic, and environmental objectives are an integral part of sustainable transportation planning. This changes both the process and the content of transportation planning and decision making.

Priorities are shifting toward less environmentally damaging modes and improved vehicle technology; optimizing the use of existing capacity; and location and design decisions that support sustainability objectives.

Nepal needs to come up with an integrated framework on pedestrian road

safety, urban planning and transport infrastructures that will promote sustainable urban modes of transport in the country. This integrated framework must coordinate all actions of government ministries and departments working on road safety, infrastructures and traffic issues.

“Integrated framework on pedestrian road safety, urban planning and transport infrastructures required to promote sustainable urban mobility in Nepal “

Ways Ahead

1. Dedicated and properly designed paths for pedestrians and cycle users are included in the construction of newly built roads.
2. Formulation and implementation of mix modes of transport, including exclusive zones for non – motorized transit on specific areas within congested urban zones.
3. Showcasing pilot projects from sample cities to demonstrate the improvements that are possible through improved usage of pedestrian facilities for other cities to replicate.
4. Provision of pedestrian amenities such as greenery, waiting sheds, crossing points, ramps for differently-able persons and street lights must be placed in strategic locations to meet the intended objectives of protecting pedestrians, walking space and promote pedestrianisation in the city.
5. Activities on footpaths such as street vendors must be properly controlled to secure pedestrian safety.
6. Strict enforcement of measures against unsafe traffic behaviors must be implemented.
7. Public awareness campaigns must be employed to strengthen motorist and pedestrian behaviors and promote pedestrian safety on the road.
8. Current allocations for road safety, infrastructures and public awareness campaigns should be adequate to implement an effective integrated policy on sustainable urban transport in the country.

Fact Sheets are produced by CANN for informing the public, media as well as decision-makers on the current state of affairs and the required actions for clean air. This Fact Sheet was prepared by Gopal Raj Joshi and Charina Cabrido in September 2010. For more information please contact us.



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Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) is a network of organizations and professionals involved in air quality management in Nepal. The goal of CANN is to increase the ability of professionals and other interested stakeholders to effectively address the problems of air pollution in Nepal. We encourage you to join hands with us to expand our campaign for clean and better Air.

CANN is a country network of Clean Air Initiatives for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia) Centre based in Manila Philippines

