

## CITIZEN'S ATTITUDE, EXISTING CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF BUS TRANSPORTATION IN THE CITY OF ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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### INTRODUCTION

In the city of Addis Ababa, the dominant public transportation modes are city buses and taxis. A reasonable number of residents use walk as a means of transportation. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, bicycle is insignificant because of topographical inconveniency. City buses are the dominant and affordable means of public transportation for the majority of the residents. There is only one Bus Company in the city with a network of 93 lines. As the city is experiencing a horizontal growth, the bus service should be improved proportionally with the city's spatial growth. A survey on the bus preference and bus conditions reveals that bus is the preferable means in terms of cost (affordability). Since the subsidy from the government is reducing from year to year, the bus fare seems to be increased and affects the urban poor. For this, providing mass transportation is required as a part of transportation planning and management. Bus information systems development, technological advancement, pricing system evaluation, strategies that maximize the service (like separate bus lane, special tickets etc) are the planning endeavors awaits the action and further studies. Therefore, this research has an objective of analyzing citizen's attitude and existing situation (challenges and prospects) for recommending service improvement measures.

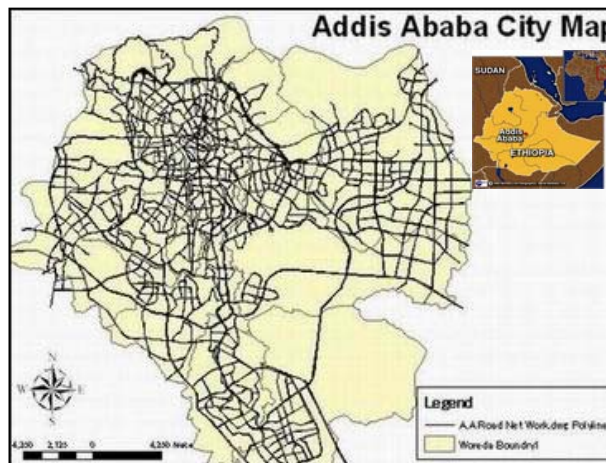


Figure 1. Addis Ababa city Map

### BACKGROUND

Addis Ababa, established in 1886 has experienced several planning changes that have influenced its physical and social growth. The area of Addis Ababa is 530.14 square km. In 1982, Addis Ababa had a population of 1.3 million, representing 4 percent of the population of the country and nearly one third of all urban dwellers. The current population of Addis Ababa is about 2.57 million, about 3.9 percent of the population of Ethiopia. It also represents about 26 percent of the urban population of Ethiopia. It is the largest city in eastern half of Africa between Cairo and Johannesburg. Addis Ababa has an aggregate population density of 4847.8 persons per square km.

### EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SITUATION

The Ethiopian transport system is not complex comprising a road network of about 31,571 km of classified roads (about .03 kilometres of road per square kilometre of area). A 681 km long single-gauge railway line is running from Addis Ababa to Djibouti. There are 82 airports with 16 paved runway and 68 with non paved runway. A total motor vehicle fleet of 117,972, of which 43879 (37 percent) are private cars, 41681 (35 percent) are commercial vehicles and 16,094 (14 percent) are government vehicles. The remaining are taxis (9 percent), and vehicles owned by diplomatic organizations and mass organizations. Public transport in Addis Ababa consists of conventional bus services provided by the publicly owned Anbessa City Bus Enterprise, mini buses operated by the private sector, conventional taxis and buses exclusively for employees of large organizations. The role of bicycles in urban transport is insignificant.

### BUS TRANSPORTATION

#### Service overview

In the city, there is only one bus company called Anbessa City Bus Enterprise. It has an objective of giving quality and reliable public transport services to the city and the surrounding habitants. Its main services are to give a regular city bus transport service to the public, contractual bus transport service, workshop services and the like. There are 1400 bus stops, 16 checkpoints and three main bus terminals. The Anbessa Bus Enterprise, a parastatal under the city council, moves around 27 percent of all public transport passengers. It operates a fleet of 415 conventional buses (102 old and 363 new), with an average age of 6 years, and provides scheduled services along 93 routes as well as non-stop rapid services (express service). About 10 routes are

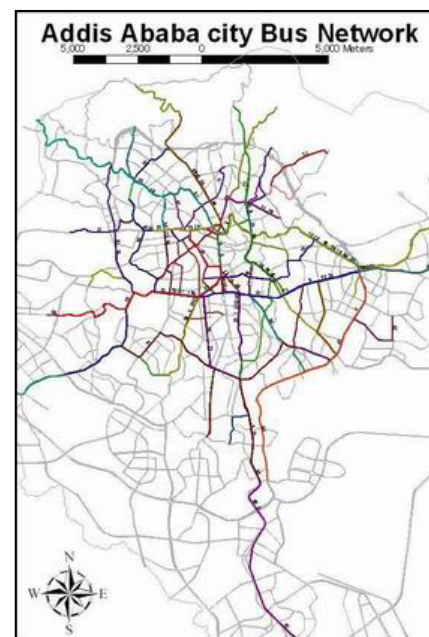


Figure 2. Addis Ababa city bus network

**Key words:** city buses, public transportation, citizen's attitude, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Challenges and prospects

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provided with additional express services. Although there is a system of flat fares, there is a range varying with distance, 25 Ethiopia cents (1Eth. Birr=100 cents) for up to 9 kilometres, 35 Ethiopian cents up to 9.9 kilometres, 50 Ethiopian cents for 9.9 kilometres up to 14.2 kilometres, and so on. The highest fare is 2.25 Birr (1US dollar =8.6Eth. Birr) for a distance of about 44 kilometres extending to the peripheral areas to the west and south of the capital. Additional 10 Ethiopian cents per trip are charged for express services. A new fare of 250 Birr has been introduced for use by government employees for unlimited number of trips over a three-month period. The local market is the public of Addis Ababa and the surrounding and the major users are workers, students and other residents of the city.

### Citizen's attitude

The survey has been made on the modal usage in general and citizen's mode preference and satisfaction on the bus service in particular. The majority of the citizens are using bus as means of transportation (figure 3). According to the survey, the major preferred mode of transportations of the residents is identified to be buses. Buses are an affordable motorized means of transportation bearing in mind the economic condition of the residents. According to the survey on the transportation preference (out of 733 respondents) 44% of the respondents said that bus is strongly preferable in terms of cost. 47%, 7% and 2% said it is preferable, less preferable and non-preferable respectively when cost is concerned. In terms of convenience, only 2% say bus is strongly preferable. In terms of delay or punctuality (satisfying in reaching the destination on time), 53% said it is preferable even though a reasonable number (29%) says it is less preferable. According to the survey out of 710 respondents on the bus service condition, 43% and 47% said their general satisfaction on the bus service is fair and good respectively. Bus stop facilities and boarding convenience are considered as a bad attributes of the condition where as bus design and the networks as the good ones.

### Challenges and prospects

The absence of up-to-date structure of the enterprise and low salary scale are the biggest challenge for the service improvement. The costing system is not convenient for decision-making. Shortage of finance and the reduction of subsidy from government is other challenge. Absence of well-defined performance parameters to evaluate the operational efficiency of the bus company, the huge amount of income tax imposed by government that does not consider the enterprise's small revenue are also constraints for development. The prospects are the year-to-year increase of the number of bus users. In addition, the new structure of the enterprise is underway so that it will produce a new change.

### CONCLUSION

As the Addis Ababa city bus service is for the urban poor, providing mass transportation is required as a part of transportation planning and management. The existing bus company is not financially sustainable and it is a parasite under the city council. Therefore, encouraging government subsidy or improving urban life could make the company financially self sustainable. Participation of the private sector in public transportation industry should be encouraged so that market competition would bring quality service. Network development and route re-adjustment for the newly developing expansion areas is needed as an immediate action plan. Bus information systems development, technological advancement, pricing system evaluation, strategies that maximize the service (like separate bus lane, special tickets etc) are the planning endeavors awaits the action and further studies. For the regular city transport service, using connected buses and double deck buses, introducing different types of tickets (which can be used in specific time and places),

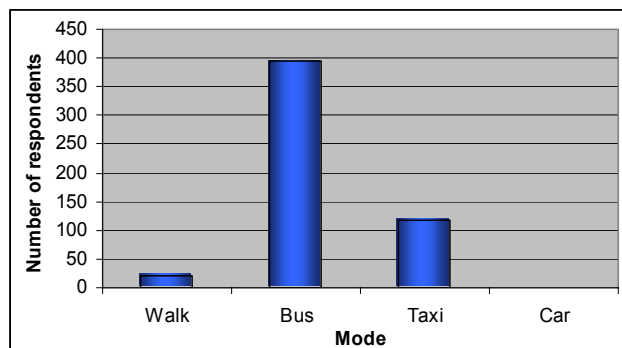


Figure3. Mode of transportation

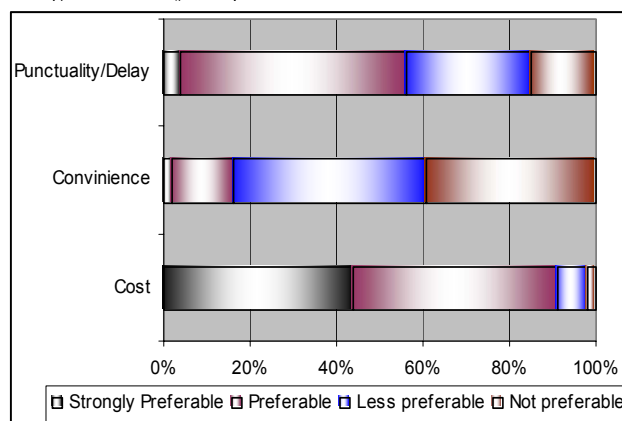


Figure 4. Citizen's bus preference

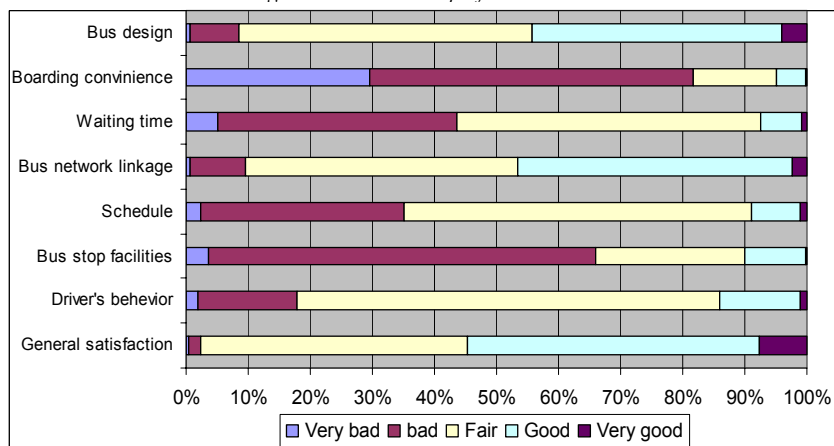


Figure 5. Citizen's satisfaction on the bus service

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