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New "People Near Rapid Transit" Metric Shows the World's Biggest Metro Regions Serve Only Half Their Populations—At Best—with Mass Transit

New ITDP Study Measures Percentage of Residents Who Live Close to Rapid Transit, A Major Factor in Limiting Climate Change and Making Cities More Equitable

NEW YORK (October 11, 2016)—Many of the world's most important cities are expanding rapidly without adequate transportation planning, according to a new report released today by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP). The report measures the number of urban residents who are within a short walking distance to rapid transit with a new metric, People Near Rapid Transit (PNT), and applies the metric to 26 major cities and their greater metro regions around the world. Of the cities surveyed, the city of Paris earned a perfect score and the metro regions of Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles were among the worst.

"The PNT metric illustrates how unplanned urban and suburban growth focuses on automobiles and only those who can afford to drive," said Clayton Lane, ITDP's chief executive officer. "Washington, DC, Paris, and Beijing are major examples of cities that have expanded beyond prescribed political boundaries without effective regional transport plans. Larger integrated rapid-transit networks serve more people and limit climate change—but they don't grow without foresight and planning."

The PNT metric was established by ITDP researchers to measure the number of residents who live within 1 km of rapid transit. The report, *People Near Transit: Improving Accessibility and Rapid Transit Coverage in Large Cities*, released in advance of the United Nations' Habitat III conference, applies the metric to 26 cities around the world with high-capacity mass transit systems and the greater metropolitan regions anchored by these cities.

The report establishes five basic criteria for high-quality rapid transit, drawn from ITDP's *BRT Standard* and other publications:

- Passengers purchase their fare in the station before boarding;
- Transit has consistent distances between stations that does not exceed 5km;
- Passengers have at most a 20-minute wait at every station between 6am and 10pm;
- For bus transit, vehicles must have their own lanes and a dedicated Right-of-Way; and
- For rail transit, tracks must have a dedicated Right-of-Way physically separated from street traffic.

A representative sample of scores include:

- London
  PNT 91% within the city
  (population 3.2M),
  PNT 61% within the metro region
  (population 10.0M)
- Paris
  PNT 100% within the city
  (population 2.2M),
  PNT 50% within the metro region
  (population 12.1M)
- Beijing
  PNT 60% within the urban core
  (population 15.9M),
  PNT 46% within the municipality
  (population 23.7M)
- Seoul
  PNT 83% within the city
  (population 9.8M),
  PNT 45% within the metro region
  (population 25.1M)
- New York
  PNT 77% within the city
  (population 8.4M),
  PNT 35% within the metro region
  (population 19.9M)
- Mexico City
  PNT 47% within the city
  (population 8.8M),
  PNT 31% within the metro region
  (population 19.1M)
- Sao Paulo
  PNT 25% within the city
  (population 11.2M),
  PNT 19% within the metro region
  (population 19.6M)
- Jakarta
  PNT 44% within the city
  (population 10.0M),
  PNT 16% within the metro region
  (population 28.0M)
- Washington DC
  PNT 57% within the city
  (population 0.6M),
  PNT 12% within the metro region
  (population 5.9M)
- Los Angeles
  PNT 24% within the city
  (population 3.9M)
  PNT 11% within the metro region
  (population 13.1M)
- Johannesburg
  PNT 25% within the city
  (population 1.0M),
  PNT 9% within the metro region
  (population 4.4M)

Very few cities are investing in the rapid transit systems that serve the less wealthy communities living outside of the urban core, even in Europe and especially in North America. For the 13 cities in industrialized countries that were scored, the average PNT was 68.5%, while those cities' metropolitan regions averaged 37.3%. The metro regions of the six US cities averaged a score of 17.2%.

"Mass transit systems should grow as cities grow; yet in most cities, governments still rely on automobile traffic as the primary way of getting people around," noted Lane. "In today's megacities,

road space is already massively congested with car ownership presently at only 10-30 percent, yet building more roads remains a misguided top infrastructure priority. Governments need to better serve the other 70-90 percent of the population without cars, and provide better mobility choices for everyone."

The rapid transit systems of Seoul and Beijing, the two largest cities in the survey, served the most people by far. Almost 11 million people live within 1 km of each system and their scores reflect the population density.

Rapid Transit is Vitally Important for Lower Income Communities

Increasingly, the outlying regions of cities are home to less wealthy communities. A recent report from the Brookings Institution found that the poor population in US suburbs grew faster than anywhere else in the country, surging 64 percent in the past decade. Similar trends have already emerged in most countries around the world. Without a corresponding increase in rapid transit access, the poverty in these areas becomes entrenched, as the lack of transportation limits access to jobs and education in other parts of the cities.

For the cities measured in low- and middle-income countries, the average PNT score was 40.3%, while the metropolitan regions averaged 23.7%. Of these cities, the rapid transit systems in Jakarta and Quito did not extend past the city borders. Almost all of the other systems only served a small fraction of the population living in these outlying areas.

"In many cities, it's far too easy for municipal governments to ignore the problems on the other side of their borders," Lane observed. "But cities today do not exist in a vacuum. All metropolitan regions have an urban core, as well as surrounding communities. People in the outer regions cannot thrive without better transportation connections to the core and other outer communities. Government relationships across city and state lines are crucial to meeting the needs of their populations."

A Critical Tool in Efforts to Limit Climate Change

Expanding and optimizing rapid transit is also critical to achieving climate change targets. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, cars, light trucks and SUVs generate one-fifth of all carbon dioxide emissions in 2014 that result from burning fossil fuels in the US.

Governments cannot limit these emissions without rapid transit and compact urban development. In a report released two years ago that ITDP produced in collaboration with the University of California, Davis, researchers estimated that more than $100 trillion in cumulative public and private spending, and 1,700 megatons of annual carbon dioxide (CO_2)—a 40 percent reduction of urban passenger transport emissions—could be eliminated by 2050 if the entire world expands public transportation, walking and cycling in cities.

“The impacts from climate change could still be mitigated if there is enough political will,” concluded Lane. “The continuing construction of car-oriented development found in metropolitan regions all over the world is a perfect example of this tragedy. Rapid transit integration, including rail, bus, cycling, walking, and shared car networks could connect these places sustainably to a wealth of opportunities.”

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The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy works around the world to design and implement high quality transport systems and policy solutions that make cities more livable, equitable, and sustainable.

ITDP is a global nonprofit at the forefront of innovation, providing technical expertise to accelerate the growth of sustainable transport and urban development around the world. Through our transport projects, policy advocacy, and research publications, we work to reduce carbon emissions, enhance social inclusion, and improve the quality of life for people in cities.

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