

Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) and Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) in cooperation with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH announces Low Carbon Mobility Plan for Bhubaneswar

~A bilateral partnership to improve planning and implementation of sustainable transport ~

Bhubaneswar, Date: Bhubaneswar is rapidly developing – with a decadal growth rate of 29.4 per cent as per the 2011 Census. This growth has brought in its wake an increasing dependence on private vehicles (especially two wheelers), mounting congestion and road crashes affecting pedestrians. The statistics from Bhubaneswar’s transport sector indicate that more than 80 per cent of users depend upon private vehicles for commuting. The total number of registered vehicles in the city, which was pegged at 14 lakhs by the Regional Transport Office in 2019, exceeds its total population (estimated ten lakhs in 2019). With the city’s population expected to double in the next 20 years; there needs to be a careful planning to cope with the rapid growth in travel demand needs. This will also help ensure Bhubaneswar remain a healthy, beautiful, thriving, and livable place for all.

So far Bhubaneswar had an inadequate long-term strategic vision document to set goals and strategies for creating a sustainable mobility system for the city. To address this challenge, the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD), Government of Odisha and the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), in cooperation with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, are jointly creating a Low-Carbon Mobility Plan (LCMP). This will serve as a strategic vision document and mobility blueprint for the city of Bhubaneswar to develop and monitor its urban transport sector.

Having a Low-Carbon Mobility Plan becomes a necessary tool for any city to prepare itself and plan for rapid growth. It guides the city’s development so that, despite of an increase in travel over time (in terms of the total number of passenger kilometers traveled), energy consumption and emissions are reduced, public spaces are preserved, and the city offers a safer and better quality of life for its residents. The decision to develop an LCMP is also aligned with the recommendation by the Indian Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) that cities create a Comprehensive Mobility Plan as the basis for identifying and approving transport-related projects, plans and regulatory measures within the city.

Preparation of this LCMP is being supported by the Integrated Sustainable Urban Transport Systems for Smart Cities (SMART-SUT) project implemented jointly by GIZ, HUDD and BDA in Bhubaneswar as a part of Indo-German Technical Cooperation.

The LCMP primarily envisions the mobility of people and goods in Bhubaneswar to be secure, reliable, affordable and efficient while also enhancing the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the city. The plan focusses on:

- Optimising the mobility patterns of people and goods in Bhubaneswar
- Measuring and monitoring the performance of municipal transport service levels
- Improving public transport, cycling, pedestrian infrastructure, and shared mobility options
- Serving as an effective platform for integrating land use and transport planning

- Prioritising accessibility, inclusivity, safety, and reducing harmful impact on the environment

The plan will provide a 20-year vision with goals and targets updated every five years from 2019 to 2040. These will be aligned with the vision identified under the Smart City Mission of Bhubaneswar and endorsed by citizens and other key stakeholders which is to make Bhubaneswar a transit-oriented, livable, and child-friendly eco-city and regional economic centre.

Currently, different departments and agencies manage distinct but interrelated aspects of urban transport like land management, parking, bus services, road infrastructure, and traffic management. This can result in projects being prepared and rolled out in a piecemeal manner, and in the absence of a common agreed vision and road map, this could lead to delays, lack of integration and an unfavorable user experience. LCMP aims for a holistic approach to planning and implementing urban transport projects in Bhubaneswar.

To help draft the plan, a working group including representatives from various key agencies like Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Bhubaneswar Smart City Ltd. (BSCL), Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), Bhubaneswar Urban Knowledge Centre (BUKC) and Public Works Department has been formed. In addition, the final LCMP draft will be tabled in front of a multi-stakeholder Mobility Plan Co-ordination Committee (under the chairmanship of BDA) to solicit feedback from a larger stakeholder group including civil society, academic institutes and various government agencies. Feedback and suggestions from the agencies, as well as public input obtained through focus groups discussions and surveys for commuters in the city over the next few months, will be incorporated in the final plan before it is submitted to BDA.

Regarding the low carbon mobility plan for Bhubaneswar, Shri Prem Chandra Chaudhary, Vice Chairman, BDA says, 'LCMP is a strategic vision document taken up by BDA with support from GIZ to guide the city's mobility in a low carbon sustainable manner for the next 20 years. Considering this, LCMP becomes an important input to the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) of Bhubaneswar, which is also a long term (15-20 years) visioning and planning document. It can be a guide to CDP in planning the development of the city in a manner which places clean modes like public transit and non-motorised transport at the heart of the city's mobility projects and proposals.'

Addressing the current transportation challenges in Bhubaneswar, Mr Laghu Parashar, Senior Technical Advisor in GIZ adds, 'As per the data from RTO, each year a total of 80,000-100,000 vehicles are added in the city. Clearly, this trend is not sustainable. LCMP is the first step and has to tie-in with the city's various development initiatives to realise a shared vision of sustainable mobility. The measures and strategies identified in the plan will need to be made a part of the DNA and fabric of the city's planning processes, and future mobility related proposals.'

Recommended strategies in the mobility plan will include: investing in projects that reduce the share of trips made by private vehicles and increase the share of trips made by cleaner transportation modes like buses, walking and cycling; putting in place development strategies like integrated land use and introducing parking control measures.