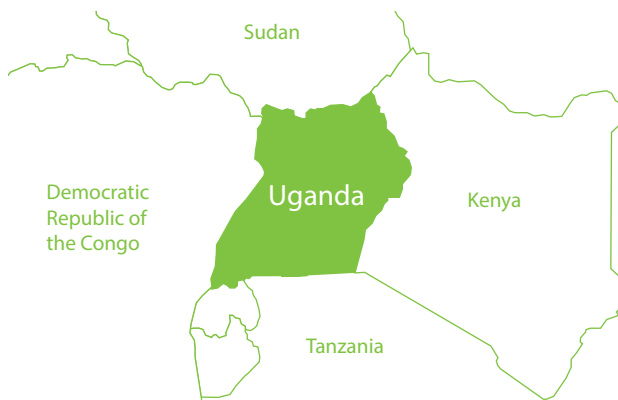


Improvement of Traffic Congestion/Flow in Kampala City

Uganda

November 2014

Matovu George
Best Africa Consulting Limited
E-mail: matogeorge@yahoo.co.uk



Background Information

In Uganda, the road transport being a major player in promoting economic and social development compared to other modes of transport like air, water and railway. Improving the traffic congestion in the city is one way of increasing productivity considering the time people spend in traffic jams. Expanding the transport sector is an important factor in achieving poverty eradication, sustainable economic growth and improvement of public service delivery (Adam Smith Int., 2005 and Jan Holm Pedersen, 2014).

Traffic Congestion in Kampala like any other African cities is a very serious problem which has resulted into prolonged travel times, high vehicle operating costs and environmental degradation. Consequently, traffic congestion has resulted into high costs of doing business and a disincentive to investors. Government of Uganda and Develop-

Quick facts

Zone	Kampala Urban Area
Topic	Traffic System Sustainability
Implementing Agency	Local Government



Improvement of Traffic Congestion/Flow in Kampala City

Uganda

November 2014

ment Partners are working to address the problem. If this challenge is not addressed quickly, Kampala will ground to a halt and majority of foreign investors might relocate to other better organised cities/countries (Adam Smith Int., 2005; Jan Holm Pedersen, 2014; Godfrey.o.Wandera 2014, and Joel Ogwang).

Having successfully completed the Northern Bypass, the Government, in collaboration with its stakeholders like World Bank, JICA, local governments, taxi and bus operators, automobile associations, transport unions, civil society organisations and the public, planned to introduce the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Kampala by 2014 (Minister John Nasasira).

The Bus Rapid Transit is by far the most effective city transportation system that can tackle traffic jams, road congestion, accidents and air pollution (traffic jam: the new health and economic disaster) in cities. BRT systems have successfully been implemented in cities like Bogota in Congo; Jakarta Indonesia, and many more. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Lagos in Nigeria have had the implementation of BRT systems (Minister John Nasasira).

Project Definition

Road transport is the dominant mode of transport in Uganda, carrying over 90 per cent of passengers and freight traffic. The total vehicle population in Uganda is about 450,000. An estimated 50 per cent of all the vehicles are in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area. The Kampala area is composed of Kampala City and its neighboring urban centres which include Entebbe and Mukono Municipalities, Wakiso, Kira and Nansana town councils. The Government is taking Kampala area as one unit in planning Uganda's strategy for urban transport improvement (KCCA 2012 and Godfrey.o.Wandera 2014).

Kampala area is about 970 square kilometres. The maximum east-west distance is about 43km, while the maximum north-south distance is about 55km. Kampala area's current population is 2.7 million people and it is growing at a rate of 4.5 per annum,

which is greater than the national average of 3.0 per annum. This is a huge challenge to the Government. The public transport services in Kampala area are provided by private operators mainly with 14-seater mini-buses commonly known as matatu or kamunye and motor cycles commonly known as boda bodas. Traffic congestion is very common and is worse during peak periods whereby travel speeds reduce to about 15km per hour and below. Road safety in the Kampala area is also a serious challenge (Adam Smith Int., 2005; Jan Holm Pedersen, 2014; Joel Ogwang and Godfrey.o.Wandera 2014).

The reliability of public transport modes in Kampala area is very low at present. This results from various causes which include the following; small 14-seater vehicles, unsafe infra-structure and driving leading to many traffic accidents, unauthorised parking and on-street loading and unloading, non-motorised vehicles sharing carriageway with motorised vehicles. Some ongoing measures to improve transport system in Kampala area include the following; turning of some roads in the city central business district into one-way roads. The other step is removal of roundabouts in the city business district and turning them into signalised junctions. There are bigger buses on the roads and there is periodic maintenance and reconstruction of some roads in the city (Adam Smith Int., 2005 and Godfrey.o.Wandera 2014).

Another measure is road safety improvements through use of traffic Police and traffic wardens to direct movement of vehicle during peak periods is in full force. However, despite all these measures, traffic congestion and accidents have persisted. It is anticipated that the BRT system will reduce traffic congestion, reduce accidents and improve air quality and general mobility in the Kampala area. Uganda's BRT technical committee visited Bogota and Pereira in Colombia in September 2008 and learnt good insights on the BRT systems (Minister John Nasasira).

According to Minister John Nasasira in January 2009, a grant was secured from the World Bank to finance the pre-feasibility study for the proposed





Improvement of Traffic Congestion/Flow in Kampala City

Uganda

November 2014

BRT for Kampala area. In February 2009, a BRT sensitisation workshop for political, technical and public transport operators was carried out. More sensitisation and awareness creation workshops are planned.

Minister John Nasasira, the pre-feasibility study was planned for November 2009 to February 2010. Design for the priority corridor was done in 2010-2011. Infrastructure development and purchase of buses and other traffic systems was done 2012. Introduction of one way Traffic:- Signalizing and channelling of road junctions; Computerised Driving Permits were introduced to reduce forgery; Public Sensitisation; Licensing of City Buses Ben Conolly Pejj Ltd, City Bus and the pioneer Easy bus, Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) cancelled its decades-old long contract with UTODA and is phasing out 14-seater commuter taxis in preference for vehicles with bigger capacity to decongest the city, Managing street parking in the city [contracted out to Multiplex] (KCCA 2011/12).

KCCA is also razing poorly planned structures, ensuring that only buildings within its approved plans stand in the city. But with most city roads outliving their usefulness, KCCA finds itself constrained financially, gets only small in billions of its shilling in trillion budgets submitted to the Government almost every financial year. KCCA has a grand plan requiring sh200 billion annually for the total overhaul of city roads to decongest traffic and restore an effective public transport system comprising buses and passenger train (KCCA 2011/12).

Godfrey.o.Wandera (2014) in addition "KCCA is trying everything possible to ensure to have a city that has a good road network, drainage system and is well lit." This will also involve relegating boda bodas and commuter taxis to the periphery of Kampala Central Business District and levying a heavy fee on private car users to force them into the public transport system. "The roads, with less than three lanes, should not accommodate street parking. Transport experts must also be employed and allowed to plan for a better Kampala"(Tatenda Chenjerai Mbara, 2002 and Adam Smith Int., 2005).

KCCA tried to enter in Partnership with The pioneer Easy bus, and introduced a fleet of buses as an alternative to the current commuter taxis but later the project failed to take off. The strategy is to encourage High Volume public transport system to enhance the mobility of goods and services in the city. This strategy can only be achieved through PPPs with private sector, which can invest in high volume public transport systems i.e. have a fleet of buses, construct railway lines within the city and encourage the population to reduce on using private cars. For reduced pressure of private cars, a tax can be levied and/or batch car number system can be given different days to enter the city (Adam Smith Int., 2005; Jan Holm Pedersen, 2014 and Tatenda Chenjerai Mbara 2002).

Outcomes

According to Minister John Nasasira (...), the BRT system was expected to be operational by 2014. All stakeholders, namely local governments, taxi and bus operators, automobile associations, transport unions, civil society organisations and the public were urged to embrace the BRT system. It would bring the much needed improvement in the traffic flow in Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) Uganda. Unfortunately the PPP with City Buses Ben Conolly Pejj Ltd, City Bus and the pioneer Easy bus, did not take off.

About 200 KMs of roads in the City have attained the traffic threshold of 300vpd and Public Disclosure Copy need to be upgraded to bitumen standard. In addition, to reduce traffic accidents the design of these roads needs to make provision for non-motorized transport (NMT) within the city.

The reductions of traffic jam in Kampala city will be a gradual process and through PPPs arrangements that will require strict implementation of laws and cooperation from the public. If successful, BRT system will serve as a model for future public transport and traffic congestion management projects both in Kampala City Council Au-



Improvement of Traffic Congestion/Flow in Kampala City

Uganda

November 2014

thority and other municipalities in Uganda as part of the National Green Growth roadmap, and in other developing countries agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through Green Growth (Godfrey.o.Wandera, 2014 and Joel Ogwang).

References

The following documents informed the development of this paper:

Adam Smith Int. (2005) A Study of urban Transport Institutional, Financial and Regulatory Frameworks in large Sub Saharan African Cities; Executive Summary, November.

Godfrey.o.Wandera (2014) Urban traffic congestion in African cities – an overview of Kampala, Ministry of Works and Transport, Uganda

<http://www.independent.co.ug/supplement/103-jica-support-to-uganda/1444-jica-partnership-has-improved-ugandas-roads#sthash.Z0flq8AI.dpuf>

Jan Holm Pedersen (2014), Improving traffic conditions around Kampala city centre, Uganda; August.

Joel Ogwang (.....) Public Transport Management and Traffic Congestion (traffic jam: the new health and economic disaster) in Kampala City Council Authority – Uganda.

John Nasasira (...) The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Kampala Article. The writer is the former Minister for Works and Transport

Kampala KCCA Annual Report 2011-2012

atenda Chenjerai Mbara (2002); Transport: How have African Cities managed the Sector? What are the possible options? Paper presented at the Urban & City Management Course for Africa UMI, Kampala, Uganda, 4-8 March.

Photo Source

Fred Inklaar (Edited). Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/inklaar/9592590495>