

# Preface

Besides rapid economic growth, Asia is also known for unprecedented growth of megacities. Despite new theoretical insights into the benefits of megacities, policy makers in developing countries are facing daunting challenges in improving the quality of life of the residents through sound planning and management of their megacities. Planning and management of transport infrastructure and services in developing megacities is one of the important agenda items that demands concerted efforts on the part of public authorities and other stakeholders. Various policy initiatives have been attempted, but the urban transport situation has not improved as anticipated and the quality of transport infrastructure and services in the majority of megacities continues to decline. The income growth to be accompanied by a concomitant growth of private vehicles in future, on the other hand, does not augur well for the urban transport system in developing countries.

The modern urban transport systems in developed megacities are indeed the result of various policy initiatives taken in the past. The systems evolved over time in response to travelers' needs, suppliers' motivation, and other practical requirements. Various policy strategies and measures have been developed and successfully applied in response to urban transport problems in developed megacities. These strategies and measures now constitute the core component of the existing knowledge base on urban transport. Despite a relatively long history of policy efforts, developed megacities are not free from transport problems. In fact, some of the policies which were once considered desirable and beneficial later turned out to be the cause of problems. The experience of developed megacities, therefore, can offer important policy lessons for developing countries.

However, a note of caution is in order here. The course of development of the Asian megacities is much different than that of their Western counterparts. Besides, Asian megacities have distinctive socioeconomic features which bring about a unique set of challenges as well as opportunities. A large-scale travel demand and its rapid growth have already overwhelmed the urban transport system of developing megacities in Asia. On the other hand, the urban form and structure in these megacities is yet to take a stable shape and, therefore, offers opportunities for developing a more integrated and sustainable form of urban transport. What is

important in this context is to adopt a new perspective that helps to design policy strategies and measures to address urban transport problems in a sustainable way while utilizing the best available options.

With this premise, an international collaborative research study titled “Sustainable Transport for East Asian Megacities” (STREAM) was undertaken. This book is a result of STREAM study. It was endorsed by the Eastern Asia Society for Transport Studies (EASTS) as one of the studies under the International Research Group (IRG). The study was conducted by a collaborative research team comprising leading academics and experts from the field. A series of international symposiums, research workshops, and special sessions during academic conferences were organized as a part of the study process. The Institute for Transport Policy Studies (ITPS), Tokyo, served as the secretariat of the study and provided administrative and logistics support.

The interim results of the research had been presented at the high-level government official meetings on various occasions. The feedback received from policy makers contributed much to focusing on policy-relevant issues. The study also included an extensive review of literature, policies, and practices for both theoretical insights and empirical evidences along with relevant cases from developed megacities from other regions. Although the study focuses on Asian megacities, the findings and conclusions may be equally relevant to the developing megacities in other regions.

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