



## TUMI INITIATIVE'S TRANSFORMATIVE STORIES

### CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA: PROMOTING NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT THROUGH OPEN STREETS

Cape Town's citizens are experiencing the negative impacts of a city planning legacy that prioritizes cars over people. The Open Streets Exchange in October 2018 invited African stakeholders to discuss non-motorized transport (NMT) and learn about how street closures and other measures can help raise public awareness of the importance of designing streets for people, so that rich and poor alike can move safely through the city without cars.

#### ABOUT CAPE TOWN

Located at the southern tip of Africa where the mountains meet the sea, Cape Town is often admired for its outdoor lifestyle and quality of life. However, in 2015 it was identified as the most congested city in South Africa (TomTom Global Traffic Index 2015). The combination of apartheid-era spatial planning, continued development of new residential areas far from economic opportunities and the deterioration of the passenger rail service has resulted in a growing dependence on cars that is negatively affecting life for residents, particularly for the poor (Transport Development Authority 2016).



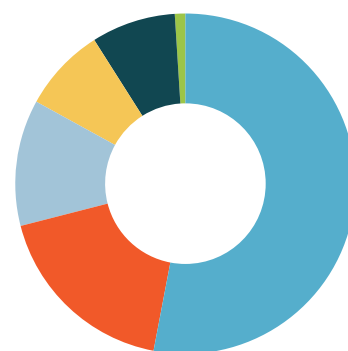
**Population:** 4,004,793 (2015)

**Area:** 2,461km<sup>2</sup>

**Density:** 1,627 persons/km<sup>2</sup>

#### MODAL SPLIT<sup>1</sup>

53% private transport  
18% passenger rail  
12% minibus taxis  
8% buses  
8% walking  
1% cycling



*Source: Transport Development Authority, 2016*

#### TARGETS

The City's cycling strategy: Grow utility/commuter cycling from 1% to 8% between 2013 and 2030.



## MOBILITY IN CAPE TOWN

Cape Town's public transport system is inadequate for meeting the needs of its growing population, and this has been made worse in recent years by the decline in its commuter rail service. The most serious impacts are felt by the poor, who cannot afford cars and have no choice but to use unreliable and unsafe trains or minibus taxis. 95 percent of public transport users in Cape Town are in the low and low-medium income groups. Low-income public transport users spend an average of 45 percent of their monthly income on direct transport costs, which is more than four times the internationally accepted norm ranging from five percent to ten percent. Additionally, since crime levels are highest in low-income areas, public transport users are exposed to multiple safety risks on a daily basis.

In many cases, walking and/or cycling is not an option due to vast distances between home and work and the vulnerability of these modes to crime. There is a lack of a continuous NMT infrastructure between low income residential areas and economic centers, and transport modes are not integrated to allow for easy journey planning or efficient payment. There is a dire need for more affordable housing in well-located areas, and more job opportunities in poorer areas. While transit-oriented development (TOD) is an important part of the City's long-term development strategy, the pace of land use change and legislative reform is slow.

Cape Town has a strongly entrenched car culture, and in many cases those who use public transport or NMT only do so because they cannot afford a car yet. Societal aspirations are tightly linked to the acquisition of a private car, but this needs to change significantly if the City is to reach its goal of being carbon neutral by 2050. Since 2010, the MyCiTi bus rapid transit system (picture below) has helped to improve the image of public transport and shift some private car users to buses, but it currently serves a relatively small percentage of the population, and roll-out to new areas has been slow.







## OPEN STREETS EXCHANGE 2018

Open Streets Cape Town is an NGO founded in 2012 which seeks to create a new mindset around urban mobility so as to create shared spaces and help bridge the City's social and spatial divides. It does this through regular activities including advocacy campaigns, street closures, temporary interventions (to test concepts before adopting them permanently), dialogues and guided city walks that get citizens out of their cars, raise awareness and spark public debate to drive behavior change around the role of streets in the life of the city.

In 2018, Open Streets hosted an Exchange program in Cape Town from 22-28 October, with funding support from TUMI. Nineteen participants from 11 countries across Africa attended, along with representatives from the Exchange's co-hosts, UN-Habitat and GIZ. The Exchange aimed to facilitate practical knowledge sharing amongst individuals working in mobility and transport, and to create a platform to explore the potential for street closures, placemaking and similar initiatives in other African cities.

Activities were held each day, and were aimed at introducing the participants to every aspect of devising, planning, and implementing an Open Streets day. It enabled the group to become fully immersed in the thinking behind Open Streets as an organization. The Exchange culminated in an Open Streets day in Woodstock on Sunday 28 October, which offered the participants a behind-the-scenes experience of what holding such an event entails.

Since the Exchange, the newly formed network has been communicating via WhatsApp, and negotiations are already underway for two of the participating cities to hold Open Streets events. Over the years, a number of Capetonians who have participated in Open Streets days and activations have increased their personal use of NMT over private cars, and Open Streets has been included as an example of how Cape Town can prepare itself for the future in the City's new Resilience Strategy.



## PROMOTING NMT IN CAPE TOWN

The Open Streets Exchange highlighted the issue of NMT, which has been actively promoted in Cape Town since 2009 via the city-wide NMT Program. This has involved investments in sidewalks, cycle lanes, dropped curbs, tactile paving, bicycle storage and relocation of signal poles, etc. to make it easier and safer for those on foot or bicycles and those with special needs to move through the city, while also serving those with special needs. These investments focus on public transport, public facilities, and employment areas. Between 2011 and 2016, 32 projects were completed and an additional ten projects are scheduled for completion by 2020.

Linked to this is the City's Cycling Strategy of 2017, which focuses on growing utility/commuter cycling from its current one percent to eight percent by 2030. Thus far, 440 kilometers of cycle lanes have been built.

The City's new Travel Demand Management Strategy aims to reduce the number and/or length of trips, increase vehicle occupant levels and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport as alternatives to private cars.





## KEY CONTACTS

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## ADDITIONAL READING

Cape Town's Transport and Urban Development Authority website:  
[www.tda.gov.za](http://www.tda.gov.za)

Open Streets Cape Town website:  
[www.openstreets.org.za](http://www.openstreets.org.za)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The [Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative \(TUMI\)](http://transformative-mobility.org) enables leaders in developing countries and emerging economies to create sustainable urban mobility. It offers technical and financial support for innovative ideas. In TUMI the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has brought together some of the world's leading institutions working on sustainable mobility with city networks and think tanks to implement projects on site where they are needed most. Partners include ADB, CAF, WRI, ITDP, UN-Habitat, SLoCaT, ITDP, ICLEI, GIZ, KfW and C40. [transformative-mobility.org](http://transformative-mobility.org)

The ICLEI Case Stories series ([iclei.org/en/publications.html](http://iclei.org/en/publications.html)) focuses on urban sustainability activities of cities, regions, and towns that are part of ICLEI projects across the world. Email: [urban.research@iclei.org](mailto:urban.research@iclei.org) © TUMI/ICLEI 2018-2019.

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