Urban space & Sustainable Mobility in Beirut

ESCWA
Thursday, May 23 - 2019
Diagnosis of the current situation

- Predominance of Private cars due to several factors (mainly a failing transit system)
- Ignoring soft modes in urban development and projects (with rare exceptions)
- General behavior of various users unfavorable to cohabitation between modes
Diagnosis of the current situation

Beirut (with some exceptions: seafront, Downtown) has become an aggressive city toward pedestrians:

*Rare developments facilitating cycling (not in dense zones):*
Diagnosis of the current situation

Malfunctions of the facilities provided to pedestrians:
Layer quality often degraded; discontinued footpaths; numerous obstacles; unsecured pedestrian crossings; Illegal parking on sidewalks...
Diagnosis of the current situation

*Dysfunctions related to traffic*

Road regulations frequently violated; total lack of consideration for pedestrians from motorized users; insecurity around schools; very low share of PT facilities ...
Encouragement of soft modes

- However, studies shows wiliness to walk - good acceptance the use of soft modes:

Acceptance of cycling

- Review Conditioned: 2%
- No: 36%
- Yes: 62%

Acceptance of walking

- Review Conditioned: 3%
- No: 10%
- Yes: 87%

Classified by importance of the barriers

- Road improvements: 38
- Security: 30
- Habit and behavior: 23
- Interaction bike/pedestrians: 15
- Weather or land: 8
The “Mobility for All” Concept

- Accessibility is a crucial parameter of a city’s image; several internal and external aspects affect accessibility.
- Importance of PT system in urban space structuring (mass transit; tramway; dedicated lanes for buses; or BRT).
- Issues of road safety and congestion stimulated actors to promote preventive actions.
- Preserving cities’ economic social and cultural potential is essential.
The “Mobility for All” Concept

- **Actors – Challenges:**

  **Economic Challenge:**
  improving the competitiveness of a city / urban area; jobs creation...

  **Social Challenge:**
  equality among neighborhoods; equity for different social classes; cultural diversity...

  **Politric Challenge:**
  cohesion; equal opportunities; development of services for all citizens
The “Mobility for All” Concept

- On the institutional and decision making level:

  Accessibility primarily reflects an urban policy and a concept of services

  Confusion and difficulties in role distribution: Governance Problems

  Various actors’ objectives are often quite contradictory. Arbitrations are increasingly difficult.

  Offering fair solutions to all users requires commitments.
Achieving “Mobility for All”

- **Geographic accessibility**
  Structuring the space and organizing multi-modal transportation.
  Priorities of transport modes will vary according to the general vision for each concerned area.

- **Physical accessibility**
  Accessibility for all users in all modes
  Eliminating physical obstacles and enabling movement and access to facilities
  Providing equal opportunities, and encouraging positive economic, social, and cultural participation

- **Social accessibility**
  Eliminating social and economic inequalities
  An urban space accessible to all modes and all users
Technical measures to secure soft modes

- **Pedestrians Zone:**
  - Authorize the use of low-speed bike,
  - Facilitate pedestrian movement temporarily or permanently

- **Mixed Zone:**
  - It allows pedestrians to walk non-stop on the route, and sets vehicles’ maximum speed at 20 km / h

- **Zone 30:**
  - Reduce vehicles’ speed to a maximum of 30 km / h to facilitate pedestrians’ and cyclists’ crossing.
Strategic Guidelines

- Geographical continuity and hierarchy of routes
- Reclassification of urban roads and public spaces
- Reduction of social separation
- Support pedestrian trips in all neighborhoods

Achieving this strategy requires:
- A clear political will
- Adapting regulations and institutional context
- Support from users
Verdun
Cornish
Action Plan to implement soft modes in Beirut - PDD -
Conclusion

- Beirut is becoming increasingly aggressive to pedestrians; streets are oversaturated, Public Transport and soft modes have been ignored.
- Contrary to common assumptions, there are real opportunities to promote a new Mobility Vision.
- Based on the PDD study surveys (2013), Beirut residents have a strong desire to practice soft modes much more frequently in their daily trips.
- Achieving “Mobility for all” will ensure social equality and accessibility for different transport modes.
- Road security, pollution mitigation, and car use reduction are prerequisites to initiate this change.
- A clear political will, users’ support, and adequate institutional environment are essential to implement this concept.