Transport Policy in the Klang Valley, Malaysia: The Sustainability Agenda

Raja Noriza Raja Arifin\textsuperscript{1,a}, Rustam Khairi Zahari\textsuperscript{2,b}, Makmor Tumin\textsuperscript{1,c}

\textsuperscript{1}Department of Administrative Studies and Politics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, Malaysia

\textsuperscript{2}Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design, International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia

\textsuperscript{a}moriza@um.edu.my, \textsuperscript{b}rustam@iium.edu.my, \textsuperscript{c}makmor@um.edu.my

Keywords: transport policy, sustainable transport, Klang Valley

Abstract. There are many definitions of sustainable transport system, but generally it takes into account the three elements of sustainable development: the economy, the environment and the social well-being when deciding on policy that is affecting transportation activity. This paper examines the urban transport policy and its implications on sustainable transport agenda in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The research utilizes a combination of primary and secondary data. Interview was employed to gather the primary data, while scholarly works, government documents and archival records are the instruments used for gathering the secondary data. The findings shed light on the implications of transport policy on sustainable transport agenda in the Klang Valley. The main challenge seems to be the lack of holistic measures in tackling transport issues that are in conflict with the objectives of sustainable transport. This main factor stems from a combination of several other issues such as decision-making based on short-term result that are mostly driven by economically viable alternatives and the lack of understanding on the real meaning of sustainable transport. These scenario inadvertently influence development processes and threaten the implementation of sustainable transport agenda.

Introduction

Sustainable transport system generally takes into account the three elements of sustainable development: the economy, the environment and the social well-being when deciding on policy that is affecting transportation activity. Transport sustainability can only be achieved when policy embraces a more holistic approach, is people-oriented, takes greater account of environmental and social criteria and attempt to reduce the demand for travel by using land-use measures [1]. In contrast, Malaysia has an extremely high automobile dependence, which is regarded as a negative criterion towards achieving sustainability agenda.

Recent phenomena all over the world stress on the need of sustainable development. The concern for air quality, increasing congestion, lack of land for parking, the cost of transport infrastructure, and constraints on financial resources, has resulted in many cities exploring a range of environmentally friendly solutions to counter these emerging problems. Decision-makers and planners in the early years of Klang Valley’s development seem to overlook on the motorization trend and the impact it would bring to the environment. This paper examines the implication of transport policy on sustainable transport agenda in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Klang Valley is a region that goes beyond the boundaries of the capital city of Kuala Lumpur.

Background to the Study: The Development of Transport Policy in the Klang Valley

Road building has always been the main instrument for achieving the objective of social and economic development in Malaysia. Growing urban population and increasing household incomes have led to a rise in car ownership. Although the quality of life and the standard of living for the city’s residents have improved, the increase in population and their demands for a better life have