

Prioritizing strategic policies for transportation-oriented development in cities (Tabriz metropolis case study)

Sadegh Rezahpour

Department of Geography and Urban planning, Maran.,C. Islamic azad university, Marand, Iran.

Nader Zali*

Corresponding author, Department of Urban Planning, Faculty of Art & Architecture, University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran. Mail: nzali@guilan.ac.ir

Bakhtyar Ezatpanah

Department of Geography and Urban Planning, Maran.,C. Islamic Azad University, Marand, Iran.

Extended Abstract

Introduction:

Urban transportation and traffic management are among the most pressing issues facing large cities worldwide. The inefficiency of urban transportation systems is one of the key barriers to economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social well-being. In this context, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) has emerged as a strategic approach to address transportation challenges in metropolitan areas. This study aims to investigate the challenges of the urban transportation system in Tabriz and propose strategic policies for implementing TOD principles to enhance the city's livability, sustainability, and efficiency.

Methodology:

The main objective of this research is to prioritize strategic policies that can facilitate the transition from car-dependent urban models toward transit-oriented and sustainable urban development in Tabriz. The study adopts a descriptive-survey and analytical research design, employing a researcher-made questionnaire distributed among 100 experts and professionals in the fields of urban planning, transportation, and environmental management. Data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and regression analysis to examine the impact of five main dimensions—economic, physical-infrastructural, social, environmental, and technological-management—on the implementation of TOD in the city.

Findings:

The findings reveal significant inefficiencies in Tabriz's current transportation system, characterized by excessive dependence on private automobiles, inadequate public transit infrastructure, and limited pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly spaces. These shortcomings have contributed to severe traffic congestion, increased air and noise pollution, and reduced quality of life. Regression analysis demonstrates that the environmental dimension exerts the strongest positive influence on TOD implementation (standardized coefficient: 0.434), followed by the economic (0.259) and social (0.226) dimensions. Conversely, the technological and managerial dimension shows an unexpected negative impact (-0.345), while the physical-infrastructure dimension exhibits the weakest and statistically marginal effect (0.110).

Discussion and Conclusion:

This study concludes that the successful implementation of Transit-Oriented Development in Tabriz requires a holistic and integrated approach that addresses environmental sustainability, economic feasibility, social acceptance, and managerial efficiency simultaneously. While environmental and social aspects show strong potential, infrastructural deficiencies and weak governance structures remain critical barriers. By prioritizing sustainability-oriented investments, regulatory reforms, and participatory planning, Tabriz can transition toward a more efficient, livable, and resilient urban system. The findings of this research not only provide a roadmap for urban policymakers in Tabriz but also offer valuable insights for other Iranian and Middle Eastern metropolises facing similar challenges.

Future research is recommended to expand the sample size, explore long-term economic impacts, and incorporate mediating variables such as institutional coordination and public participation. Ultimately, the study highlights that Transit-Oriented Development, when properly localized and supported by strong governance and public engagement, can serve as a transformative strategy for achieving sustainable urban mobility and enhancing overall quality of life.

Keywords: Transit-Oriented Development, Public Transportation, Urban Sustainability, Tabriz Metropolis, Cultural Promotion.

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