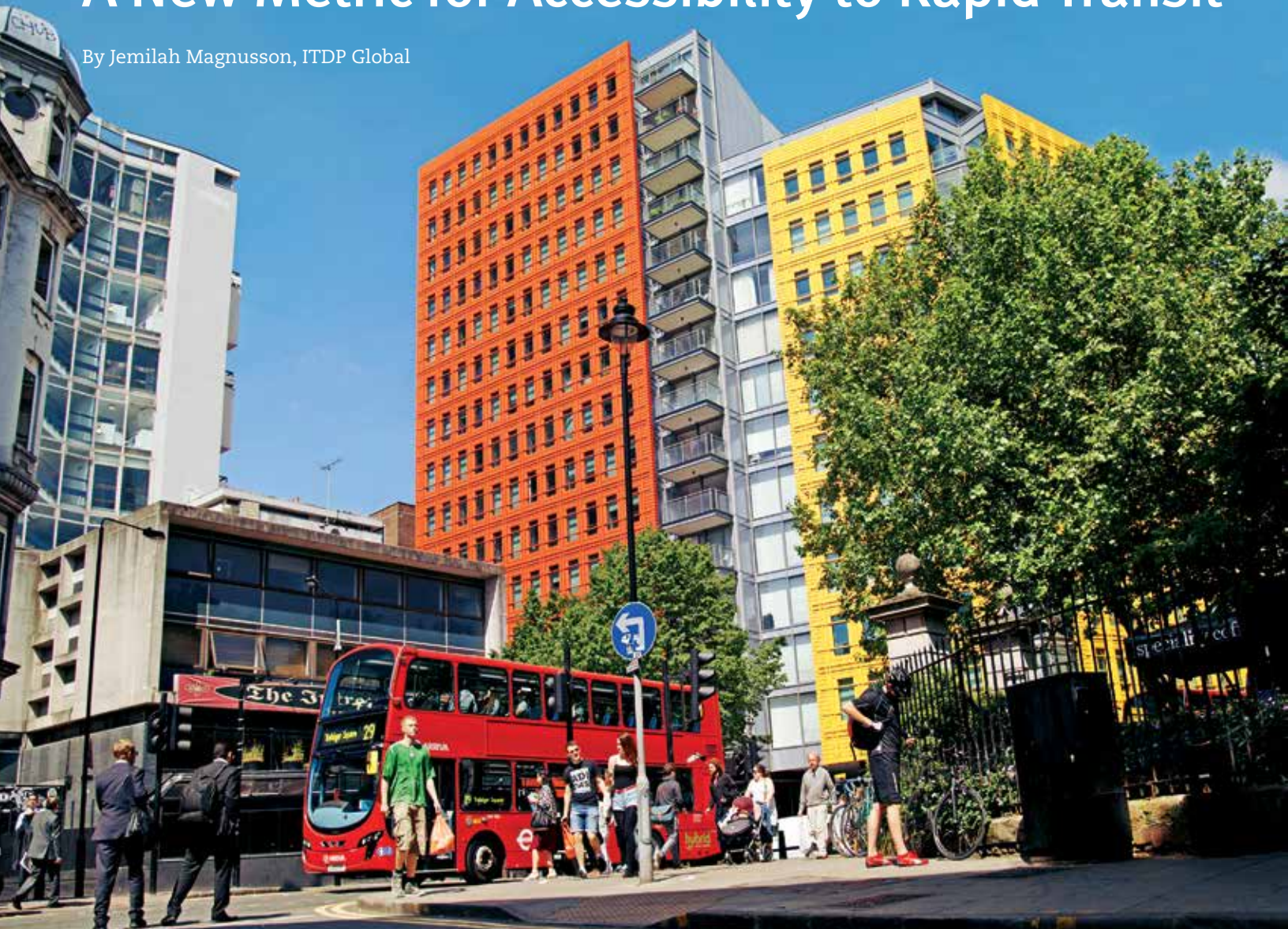


People Near Transit: A New Metric for Accessibility to Rapid Transit

By Jemilah Magnusson, ITDP Global



The city of London has some of the best PNT scores, due to an extensive, high-frequency transit system of trains and buses, and dense, transit-oriented developments such as Central Saint Giles.

As we all know by now, our cities are growing rapidly. Increasingly, the outlying regions of cities are home to less wealthy communities. A recent report from the Brookings Institution found that the poor population in US suburbs grew faster than anywhere else in the country, surging 64 percent in the past decade. Similar trends have already emerged in most countries around the world. Without a corresponding increase in rapid transit access, the poverty in these areas becomes entrenched, as the lack of transportation limits access to jobs and education in other parts of the cities.

Earlier this year, ITDP introduced a new metric, People Near Transit (PNT), which defines, in the simplest terms, what planners and activists already know, which is that cities everywhere are expanding rapidly without adequate trans-

portation planning. Even cities known for great transport systems, such as Paris, London, and New York, are serving half of their population, at best, with transit.

In October, ITDP released a report, *People*

Near Transit: Improving Accessibility and Rapid Transit Coverage in Large Cities, which measured the number of urban residents who are within a short walking distance to rapid transit with our new metric, People Near Rapid Transit (PNT). Of the 26 major cities surveyed for the report, the city of Paris (but not the metro region) earned a perfect score and the metro regions of Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles were among the worst.

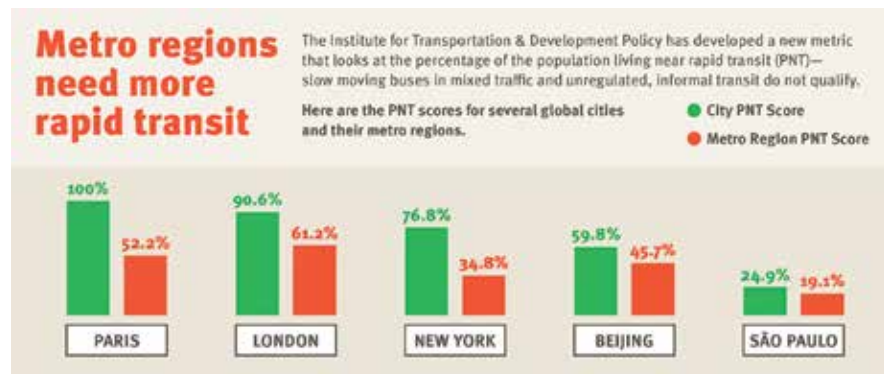
The PNT metric was established by ITDP researchers to measure the number of residents who live within 1 km of rapid transit. The report, *People Near Transit: Improving Accessibility and Rapid Transit Coverage in Large Cities*, released in advance of the United Nations' Habitat III conference, applies the metric to 26 cities around the world with high-capacity mass transit systems and the greater metropolitan regions anchored by these cities.

Very few cities are investing in the rapid transit systems that serve the less wealthy communities living outside of the urban core, even in Europe and especially in North America. For the 13 cities in industrialized countries that were scored, the average PNT was 68.5%, while those cities' metropolitan regions averaged 37.3%. The metro regions of the six US cities averaged a score of 17.2%.

"Mass transit systems should grow as cities grow; yet in most cities, governments still rely on automobile traffic as the primary way of getting people around," said ITDP's CEO Clayton Lane. "In today's megacities, road space is already massively congested with car ownership presently at only 10-30 percent, yet building more roads remains a misguided top infrastructure priority. Governments need to better serve the other 70-90 percent of the population without cars, and provide better mobility choices for everyone."

The rapid transit systems of Seoul and Beijing, the two largest cities in the survey, served the most people by far. Almost 11 million people live within 1 km of each system and their scores reflect the population density.

For the cities measured in low- and middle-income countries, the average PNT score was 40.3%, while the metropolitan regions averaged 23.7%. Of these cities, the rapid transit systems in Jakarta and Quito did not extend past the city borders. Almost all of the other systems only served a small fraction of the population living in these outlying areas.

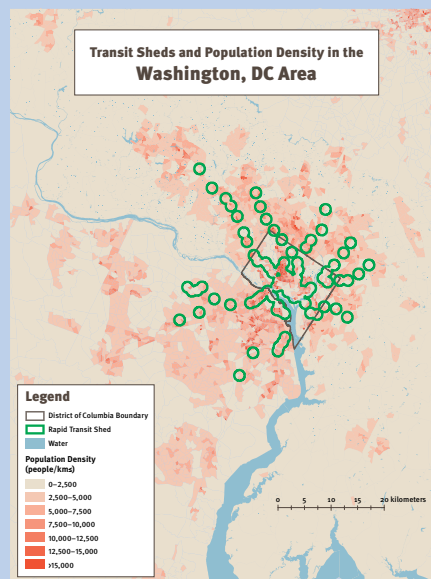
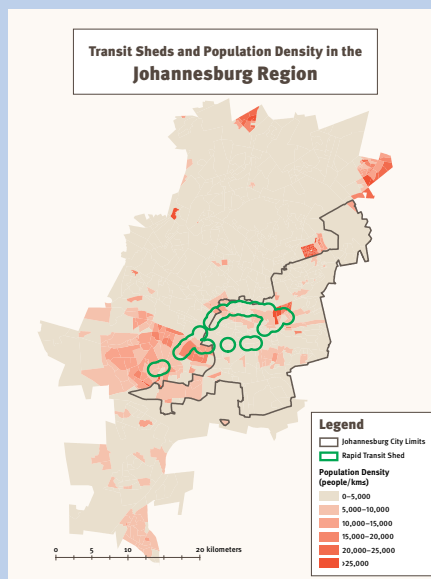
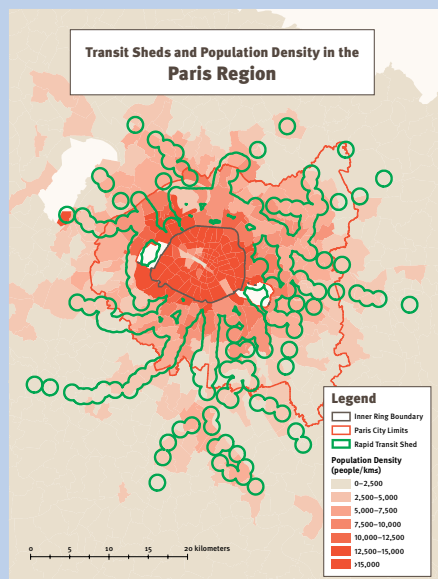
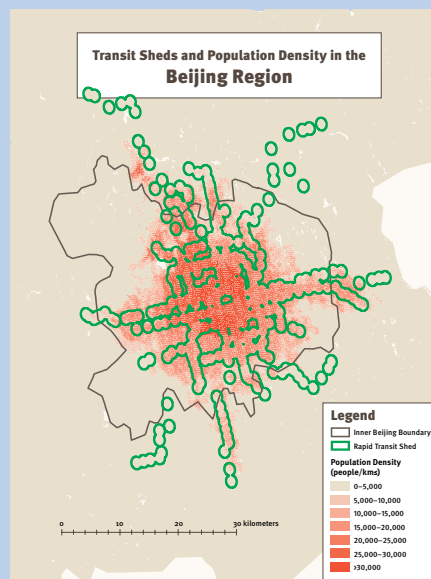
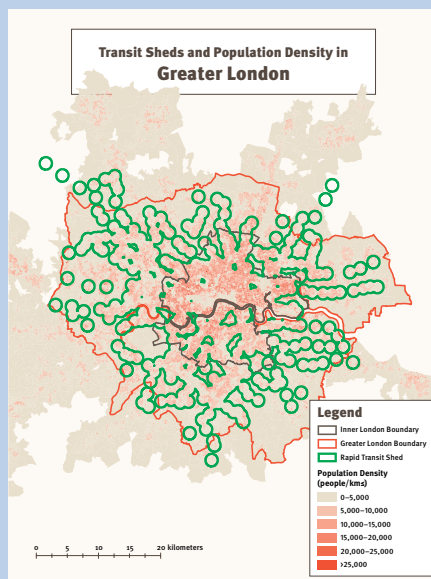
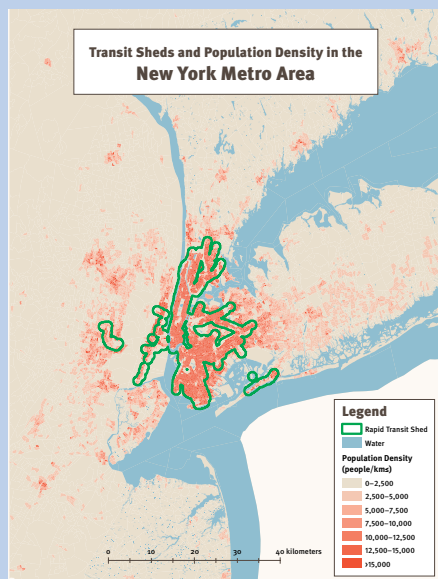


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“In many cities, it’s far too easy for municipal governments to ignore the problems on the other side of their borders,” Lane observed. “But cities today do not exist in a vacuum. All metropolitan regions have an urban core, as well as surrounding communities. People in the outer

regions cannot thrive without better transportation connections to the core and other outer communities. Government relationships across city and state lines are crucial to meeting the needs of their populations.”



The city and metro area boundaries, showing population density and transit sheds, indicating areas where there is less than 1 km distance to a rapid transit line.