INTERGRATION OF THE CITY AND TRANSPORT:
WEAVING A DENSE URBAN FABRIC
(A case for compact urban structure)

by

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ABSTRACT

The decentralization policies of Singapore led to the disintegration of the tight, dense urban fabric of the sixties. Most of the population now lives in the Outer Regions while working in the Central regions. Although an efficient and extensive transport system has been put in place to link the home to the workplace and to solve the congestion problems that plagued other cities, the growing population and increasing numbers of automobiles have begun to make its effects felt on the transport system.

In addition to the continual efforts to create an integrated multi-modal transport system and improve the services of public transport, it is worthwhile to look more intensely into ways of efficient land use planning as a long-term sustainable transport strategy for a country with limited land resources. The need to travel is the real cause behind the demand for transport. A more integrated and compact urban structure with an efficient mix of different activities reduces the need to travel far for goods and services as well as other amenities and facilities. Thus, there is a corresponding reduced burden on the transport system. In the meantime, people still need to travel for different purposes. Huge spending on infrastructure for automobile usage is going to create more problems for the society. In order to reverse this trend and to make public transport a more viable alternative to car travel, an integrated multi-modal transport system and its supporting infrastructure and facilities have to be in place. Coupled with an efficient land use policy, the aim for a long-term sustainable transport solution could be achieved.

The pragmatic urban planning policies had led to a disintegration of the mixed-use heterogeneous urban environment of the past through isolation of different areas and zones for work, live and play. The result is a fragmented, abstract and homogeneous urban and social landscape. Although the concept of high dense mix use urban strategy is not new, it is argued that it could be contextually applied to Singapore to complement the current urban planning policies, not only as a viable solution to the transport problems of the city-state but also as a catalyst to increase the vitality and vibrancy of the living environment.

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