STRATEGIC PLAN FOR IMPROVING TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC IN KANDY

A Proposal Submitted to the Kandy Municipal Council and Urban Development Authority

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No detailed transport studies have been carried out for Kandy town. There are however, some traffic counts, parking counts and proposals for new roads made by various sources over the last decade or so. There is presently an on-going study within the consultancy for the Design of the Car Park for a traffic circulation and improvement plan for Kandy City. These are inadequate to formulate a holistic and overall strategy for the transport and traffic function in Kandy Metropolitan Area. Clearly such a proposal requires a complementary land use and zoning plan.

The present transport and traffic related problems in the Kandy Municipal Council (KMC) area can be summarized as follows.

(i) Space available for circulation of traffic and pedestrians, particularly in the grid-iron type road arrangement in the bazaar area is insufficient, as heavy parking takes much road space and reduces speed of movement.

(ii) The closure of Dalada Veediya near the Maligawa has resulted in the diversion of east-bound traffic causing congestion on the Lake Round Road.

(iii) The poor arrangement of bus routes requires passenger to alight and board buses near the Goods Shed and walk all over the town creating heavy pedestrian flows.

(iv) A large bus park as well as many corridors have several hundred buses parked throughout the day as the vast majority of buses serving Kandy terminate at the center and idle for many hours before returning.

(v) Due to the hilly nature of topography particularly to the south of the KMC and being bounded by the Mahaweli on all other sides, there are very few orbitally set out routes. Thus most traffic uses the corridors coming to transfer from one corridor to another thus congesting the center heavily.

(vi) The close proximity between the wholesale market, the bus terminal and the hospital, all of which attracts heavy pedestrian movements and traffic circulation causes many traffic related problems in and around the southern end of the city.

After joint site visit conducted with the UDA on 12th September 2001, the following points were arrived at for the basis of a study for developing a detailed strategic plan.

(1) To investigate the possibility of developing a set of outer orbital roads just outside the KMC area. The development of a road traversing the northern edge of the Mahaweli from
Peradeniya to Tennekumbura seems a distinct possibility, as a number of different road traces exist in most parts. On the southern side, the Rajapihilla Mawatha cannot be made part of this as it is in a highly residential area and in very hilly terrain. Investigations would be made in the study to connect through a possible gap in the Hantane range, a new road between William Gopallawawa Mawatha to the Tennekumbura road intersecting the Ampitiya Road. Accordingly the areas on the outer bank of the Mahaweli can be opened out and developed for residential and commercial purposes. This set of outer orbital roads would then take traffic between these new areas as well as provide for a by-pass to out-station traffic. It would act as a distributor and filter of traffic to Kandy town from six bridges over the Mahaweli River, namely at Peradeniya, Getambe, Katugastota, Polgolla, Lewella and Tennekumbura. A Traffic Origin-Destination survey would be necessary to determine the scope of impact and economic viability of such a proposal.

(2) To investigate the possibility of developing a set of inner orbital roads just outside the KMC core-area. Under this strategy, heavy traffic flows would be limited to a set of inner orbital roads within the city. These roads and the relevant intersections would then be required to be developed to handle such high-level vehicle flows. These roads maybe identified as comprising of Asgiriya Circular Road, Sirimavo Bandaranayake Mawatha, William Gopallawa Mawatha, Ehelepola Kumarihami Mawatha, Sangaraja (Lake Round) Mawatha and Dhamasoka Mawatha. The areas within the city would require to be zoned and an O-D matrix of travel patterns developed to determine the adequacy of the proposed orbital road.

(3) To develop a set of alternate satellite urban nodes in close proximity to Kandy Town. In the view of the above two strategies, new development areas could be located on the outer periphery of the Mahaweli especially in the areas between Tennekumbura and Katugastota and also between Katugastota and Peradeniya. Some of the present land use (considered incompatible) found say in the traffic restrained core such as hardware, household appliances, vehicle spare part shops etc) could be relocated to these areas together with supporting residential and other commercial developments such as banks, schools etc).

(4) Traffic Restrained Core in Kandy City. In order to develop Kandy as a Heritage City and to give prominence to the Maligawa and other building of historic value in the city, the presence of traffic in the vicinity should be reduced drastically. The surrounding area should be mostly pedestrianised for this purpose. Hence, the strategy involves, restricting through traffic on DS Senanayake Veediya and Dalada Veediya. The traffic circulation in the adjacent bazaar area would be re-routes to ensure a system whereby the through traffic stays on the periphery on roads such as the Yatinuwara Veediya, the southern part of Raja Veediya and the Asgiriya Circular Road. There could be a physical control of entry to this area, with service vehicles allowed only outside busy hours. The roads could be redesigned as pedestrianised streets with more space for walking (and standing and looking) and to facilitate retail shopping and restaurants sought after by tourists (both local and foreign) presently found in the area. This area may be initially extended to the block formed by Dalada Veediya, Bennett Soysa Veediya and Raja Veediya. Thereafter it may be extended to include other appropriate areas. A land-use survey in this area would be required for this purpose.

(5) Location of Vehicle Parking Sites. It is assumed that the proposed Car Park project located behind the Laksala would provide for around 800 parking spaces. Following a determination of the sustainable amount of parking within the city, (in terms of circulation capacity available) two or three more vehicle parks would be proposed so that they are located
between the inner orbital road (discussed in (2) above) and the traffic restrained core (discussed in (4) above). These may ideally be located either on sections of presently available roads not to be used for traffic (such as the northern end of Sangaraja Mawatha, just before the junction with Dalada Veediya, for traffic coming to the Maligawa), on Yatinuwara Veediya (Army Building) and say one other site on the approach closer to DS Senanayake Veediya, located due north of the core area. This would mean parking sites would be located on the north, east, west and south of the core area. Walking distances to any address within the traffic restrained core would be not more than 150 meters. A supplementary parking survey and analysis of parking requirements and locations would be required for this purpose.

(6) Improvements to the Lake Round Road (Sangaraja Mawatha). This strategy would be aimed at ensuring a free flow of traffic so that delays and pollution that is presently experienced especially during school opening and closing hours is minimized. In this respect the following improvements will be considered, (a) easing of the curves (without filling the Lake), (b) building of the lake embankment and redeveloping the side walk to accommodate a 1 to 2 meter increase in carriage-way width, (c) a new short-cut across the western end which will reduce distance by nearly 1 km, so that an elevated section of road is constructed from the beginning of the bend prior to the Lakeside Hospital and passing between the Lake and Kandy Club to fly over the Sangaraja Mawatha on the northern end, reaching the Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha somewhere near the Louis Peiris Mawatha. This would eliminate the congestion experienced at intersection with Ampitiya Road and Mahamaya Mawatha, Louis Peiris Mawatha as well as reduce the impact due to the parking of vehicles to Mahamaya School. A conceptual design would be provided for any or all of these improvements found feasible.

(7) Re planning and re-routing of Buses coming into Kandy City. The large number of buses terminating in Kandy has resulted in two major transport related problems. In the first instance, the lack of through routes for bus passengers, causes large amounts of pedestrian travel through the city and secondly, a large space is required for parking of buses. In order to minimize both these, bus routes will be re-planned to begin and end outside of Kandy according to demand patterns identified in a passenger O-D survey required for this purpose. The bus routes that are found to be suited to run through the city will be mostly set out on the inner and outer orbitals (discussed in (1) and (2) above) so that Kandy city is served from outside to inside rather than the present practice of radiating bus services from the center outwards. This will also reduce a large amount of unnecessary pedestrian movements across the town.

(8) Public Transport Terminal Development. According to preliminary discussions, two bus terminals could be located on ether side of the railway station, that is (a) on William Gopallawa Mawatha (on the western side) and (b) at the Goods Shed site (on the eastern side, where the bus stand exists at present). The two terminals could be designed to suit the new routing plan and also supplemented with two drop off/pick up platforms on either side, so that buses running through the city can touch the terminals as well. A pedestrian bridge and walkway at around 6 meters height above the railway line would connect Sirimavo Bandaranaike Mawatha (on the eastern side) and the Hospital (on the western side) across both the proposed bus stands and the railway station. This then would form the center or hub for public transport passengers. In addition to providing a convenient inter-modal and within mode transfer, the pedestrian trips resulting from alighting bus passengers can be grade separated and distributed across the town. A further extension of the walkway in the north-easterly direction across SWRD Bandaranaike Mawatha into the market premises would
reduce the pedestrian-vehicle conflicts there as well. The market site if to be redeveloped as a retail market would be then strategically located in terms of connectivity to public transport.

(9) Improved Traffic Flow. A system of traffic circulation will be proposed to improve movement between the city. Intersection improvements and control methods, widening and construction of missing road links where required will be investigated. However, no major road projects are considered feasible, within the KMC core.