

“However, dynamic and visionary leadership by the mayors of London, New York, Paris and Munich, just to name a few, revealed that well-conceived and well-implemented policies that sought to deliver better-balanced transport options in those cities were met with unexpectedly strong support from citizens,” he said.

OTHER MEASURES NEEDED

The Government had previously announced that over the next three years, the annual vehicle growth rate will be lowered from the current 0.5 per cent to 0.25 per cent. The rate would probably go down to zero in future, the authorities have indicated.

One way to wean people here off cars would be to make the driving experience less ideal, the analysts said. People in many cities do not drive because it is a “very painful experience”, said Asst Prof Theseira.

Dr Erath said compared with cities such as London, Paris or New York, driving in Singapore is attractive as it is much faster and more convenient than public transport, and parking is relatively cheap. He suggested that the authorities relook the allocation of road space, such as implementing more car-free pedestrian zones on major roads, as well as incorporating trams — which have bigger capacities than buses — in the public transportation system.

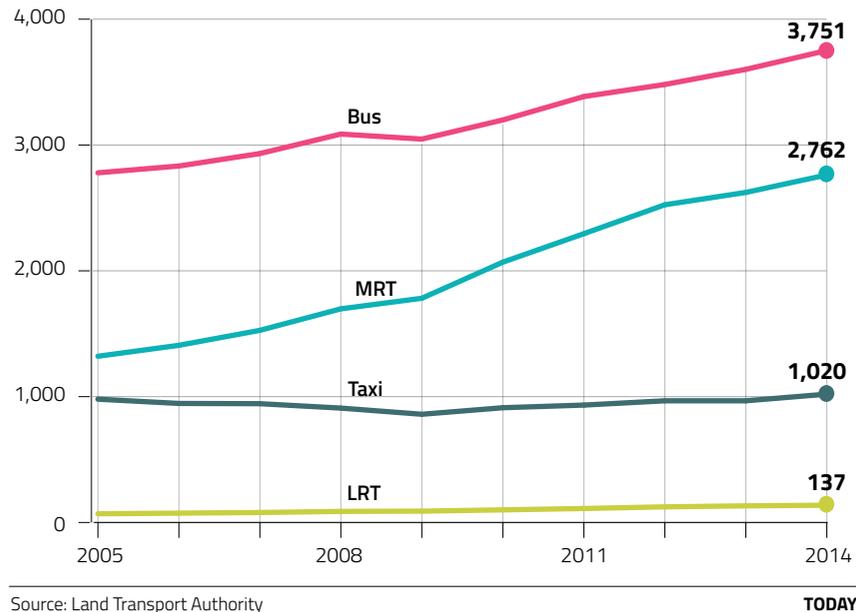
UniSIM adjunct professor Park Byung Joon said that in Seoul, for in-

“Pedestrians still need to wait for too long in the tropical heat at traffic lights, have too few options to safely cross the road, are too often forced to use overpasses and seldom are the walkways settled in a context that makes walking a joyful experience.”

Dr Alexander Erath
TRANSPORT RESEARCHER AT THE SINGAPORE-ETH FUTURE CITIES LABORATORY

Public transport ridership

(’000 passenger-trips per day)



Source: Land Transport Authority

stance, parking is expensive and scarce. Thirty minutes of parking there could set a motorist back by around S\$6, he said. He added that thanks to comprehensive MRT lines, a well-structured bus service and the rapid growth of car-pooling clubs, many people in Seoul do not drive to the city.

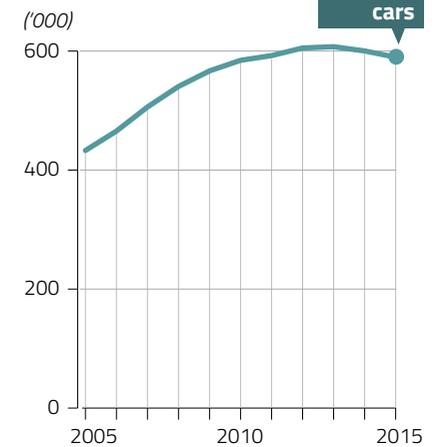
Mr Crist said the idea is to make public transport so good that it becomes the “obvious, natural and convenient choice”. Not only do alternatives to driving have to actually deliver better service, they must be

perceived by commuters to be doing so, he said. “This may be easy to do when car traffic is congested, when car ownership and operating costs are high and when alternatives are seamless and straightforward,” he added.

Dr Erath noted that Singapore lags behind in walkability. “Pedestrians still need to wait for too long in the tropical heat at traffic lights, have too few options to safely cross the road, are too often forced to use overpasses and seldom are the walkways settled in a context that makes walking a joy-

Car population

2015 (as of June)



Source: Land Transport Authority

TODAY

ful experience,” he said.

Another hurdle the authorities here need to cross is the strong aspirational component attached to car ownership. Pointing out that this is a culture unique to Singapore, Dr Park said: “I think (the aspiration to own a car) is something we should grow out of.”

Ultimately, cars still have a place in cities, said Asst Prof Theseira. But to get more on board public transport, the authorities need to “keep working on the issues that make public transport too ‘costly’ to use, in terms of time and convenience”. “Until the time-cost differentials are addressed, it’s going to be hard to convince more people to use public transport,” he said.



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+65 6781 2288

contact@patschoolhouse.com
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