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Developing an integrated transport terminal for Colombo

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Developing public transport systems to face the current traffic issues is a major concern targeting the overall development of the country. Terminals play an important role in the effectiveness of such systems. At present, Colombo Pettah appeared to be the main hub for major transactions and several scattered bus stations in the area fulfill the current demand. These are mainly established based on the requirement of different operators. However, these have created difficulties to passengers and regulators in maintaining and monitoring the system properly and by causing delays in traffic. Further it has caused problems with city architecture. There are several proposals to combine the scattered bus stands, railway and the proposed monorail for better traffic management and to improve city architecture. An integrated terminal will be able to provide better facilities for passengers and can facilitate transfer from different transport modes and will be helpful in attracting more people to use public transport. The objective of this study is to identify the current traffic situation and the possible traffic related impacts due to proposed development. A traffic survey was conducted from 07:00 to 19:00 to collect the data, as schedules are not properly maintained for some routes. Data collection focused on the time of entrance, origin/destination, operator, class and loading of busses. From the survey it was found that nearly 1,800 long distance busses and 6,000 short distance busses enter the city from 07:00 to 19:00. For both short and long distance busses entering Colombo the peak hour is 8.45 a.m. to 9.45 a.m., for short distance busses leaving Colombo it is 8.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. while for long distance busses it is between 4.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. Further, according to the current locations of bus stands, all the long distance busses leaving for the northern part of the country and all the busses entering Colombo from the southern and northern directions have to make at least one right turn. Based on the results, recommendations were made to incorporate only the long distance busses to the proposed development and to establish a central ticketing system with facility for seat reservation, to handle pedestrians in a separate floor level, to schedule short distance busses such that no waiting time is given in Pettah and to provide space for loading around the terminal. Further, establishing a one-way system in the roads adjacent to the proposed development is recommended.