Urban transport systems in Russian cities: current state and management experience

The condition of urban transport systems is an important aspect of the development in modern cities. It determines the condition of cities’ economy, possibilities of territorial development and quality of life. A significant part of city budgets is usually spent on maintenance and development of the transport systems. Large companies are also showing interest in it. Projects in transportation area are usually critical for public authorities and local governments. Transport problems solving is an important public requirement.

Changes in the priorities of urban transport development have been formulated over the past few years at the level of the federal government and other public authorities, as well as expert community. These changes are represented in state policy and budget financing.

These trends have recently been expressed in the emergence of new financing mechanisms for transport infrastructure modernization projects focused not only on road infrastructure development but on the public transport systems development, including rolling stock renewal. These trends are also reflected in strategic planning at the level of federal executive authorities. Hence, federal policy priorities in this area have not changed dramatically, but they have been shifted towards multimodal urban transport system development.

However, the real condition of the cities’ transport systems and implementation of local policies do not always correspond to the prevailing approach at the federal level. Obviously, there is significant influence of the federal authorities’ point which is critically should correspond with cities’ needs and possible modernization mechanisms.

The most significant research on the topic had been done in HSE report on XXI April International Academic Conference on Economic and Social Development1. There are no other significant papers had been found in peer-reviewed journals on this topic, probably due to rapid changes in federal policy in the last 2-3 years.

The study provides an analysis of urban transport systems in a large sample of Russian cities with different size, location, status, budget opportunities and historically established features. The

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analysis of urban public transport condition in cities are based on the performance indicators of local companies and authorities, an overview of the existing local regulation, infrastructure quality assessment, planning, and the financial condition of the transport sector.

The study is largely based on the results of the survey local authorities’ administrators from several dozen Russian cities involved into a decision-making process on regional and municipal urban transportation policy (heads or deputy heads of the administration of cities, regions’ deputy governors). The survey was done in 2020 and 2021 as part of Master of Public Administration program (done by Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO in a partnership with Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture, and Design, HSE University, The New Economic School on the initiative of VEB.RF).

The data interpretation could help identify the priorities of local governments on urban transportation development, the respondents' assessment of the quality of urban transport planning and the position of city administrations regarding the prospects for the further transport development.

The results of the study show the existing relationship between the position of city administrations and the position at the federal level. The main general trends on transport systems development and approaches to their management in different cities of the country were revealed, as well as some interesting deviations. Also, some conclusions concerning gap of cities’ urban transport systems needs and existing mechanisms for the policy implementation could be done.