



Public Transport in New NDCs 3.0 – An Initial Analysis



At COP 30, with the submission of the third round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0), countries are expected to raise their climate ambition beyond current commitments, setting enhanced targets for 2035 or later. Informed by the outcomes of the Global Stocktake (GST), NDC 3.0 should outline concrete actions that prioritise the urgent reduction of emissions from road transport on a range of pathways, including through development of infrastructure and rapid deployment of zero- and low-emission vehicles.

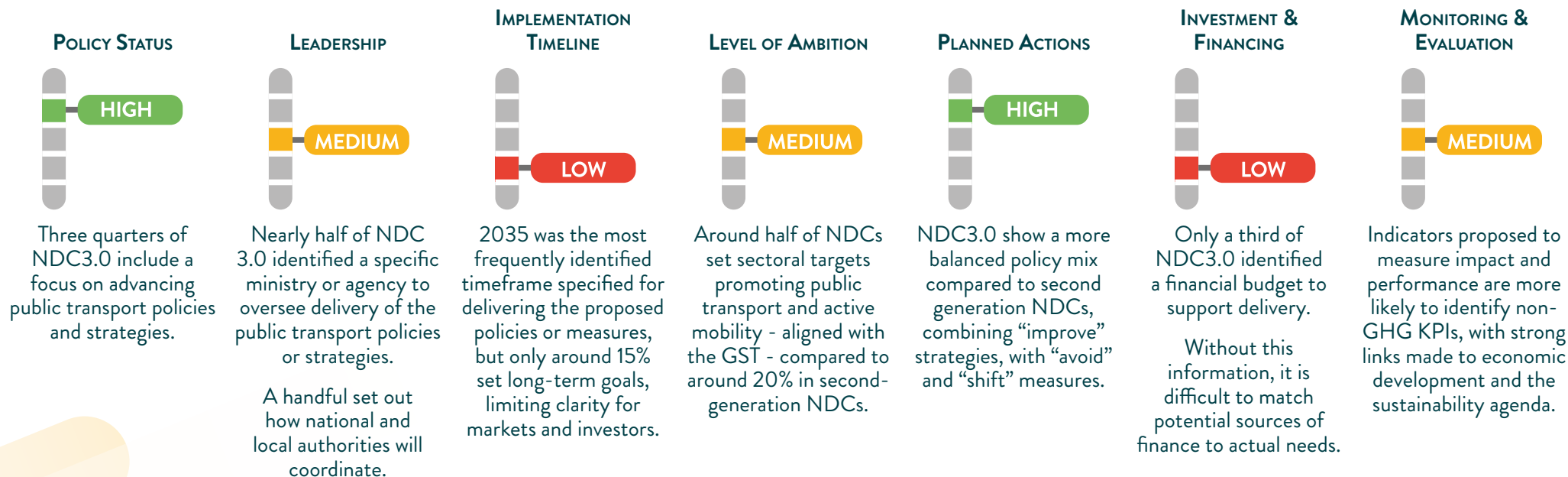
UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Given that urban transport accounts for 40% of global transport emissions, integrating sustainable urban mobility and public transport into NDC 3.0 is critical. Achieving this requires comprehensive strategies to reduce dependence on private vehicles, promote public transport and active mobility, enhance urban transport planning through effective governance frameworks and stable funding mechanisms. Scaling up these measures has the potential to double the share of public transport, which could reduce urban transport emissions by up to 50%.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

This initial analysis evaluates the extent to which NDC 3.0 submissions, published on the UNFCCC NDC registry by 17 October 2025 (total: 67), advance public transport and align with the GST recommendations for road transport. The assessment considers only official NDC documents submitted since COP29 and does not consider broader national policies or strategies.

UITP developed an NDC 3.0 template ahead of COP30 to help countries strengthen urban mobility policies and public transport actions within their climate plans. Based on this framework and UITP's review of second-generation NDCs¹, the following headline findings have been identified.



¹ <https://www.uitp.org/publications/public-transport-national-determined-contributions-template/>

PROGRESS ON PUTTING PUBLIC TRANSPORT AT THE HEART OF URBAN MOBILITY AND CLIMATE POLICY IN NDC 3.0

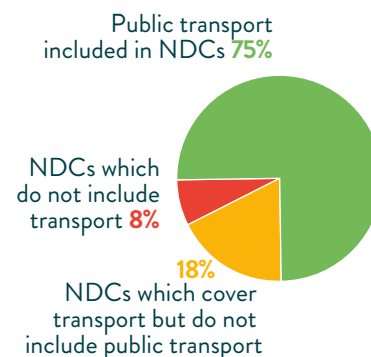
While individual passenger transport continues to dominate the focus of many NDC 3.0 submissions, there has been notable progress in recognising public transport as a central pillar of climate action in the transport sector. Public transport policies and strategies are now included in 75% of NDC 3.0 - up from two-thirds in second-generation NDCs - with the majority coming from lower- and upper-middle-income countries. Moreover, over 90% of countries articulated forward-looking visions that position public transport and active mobility at the heart of their climate and urban mobility strategies. Government-led visions are critical for elevating ambition and establishing the strategic foundations for local transport policies that align stakeholders, direct climate finance, and enable effective implementation of the GST.



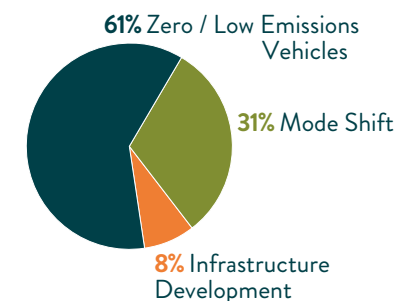
INCREASED BUT UNBALANCED TARGET SETTING

More countries have included public transport sectoral targets in NDC 3.0, rising from approximately 20% in second-generation NDCs to roughly 50% in the latest round. Around two-thirds of these targets focus on zero- and low-emission vehicles (notably electric buses). However, ambitions are not always aligned with renewable energy deployment, which limits their transformative impact.

POLICY STATUS: NDC3.0 that include public transport interventions



LEVEL OF AMBITION: Public Transport GST Aligned Targets



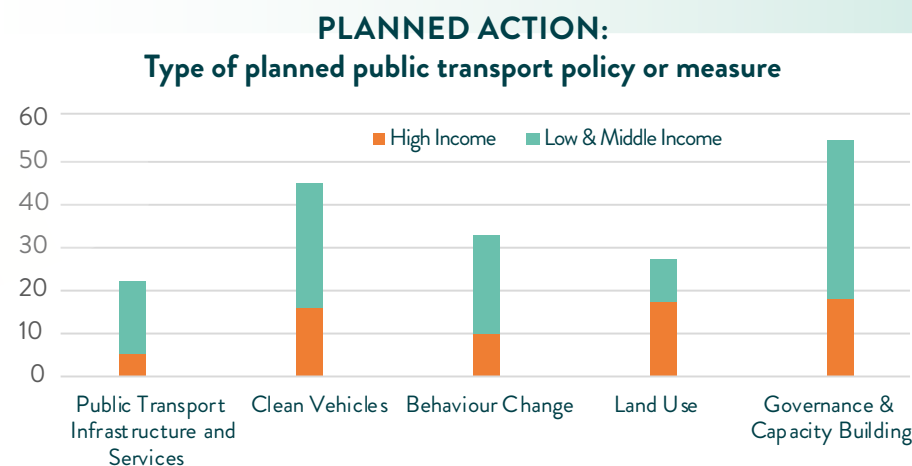
Mode shift targets toward public transport in NDC 3.0 submissions have increased markedly, rising by over 70% compared with second-generation NDCs. However, few submissions specify target dates for completing public transport infrastructure projects such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, tram lines, or metro developments. This gap largely reflects the complexity, scale, and inherent uncertainties associated with major infrastructure investments.

Encouragingly, countries have started linking mode-shift targets with zero-emission public transport vehicle goals, representing the most cost-effective and rapid pathway to decarbonise people's daily mobility. However, long-term targets extending beyond 2040 remain limited, despite being crucial for attracting investment and ensuring policy continuity. Ideally, more countries would establish long-term targets that integrate the scaling up of zero emissions public transport vehicles, alongside ambitious mode shift goals and the expansion of investment in public transport services and infrastructure. This would align with the GST's call for an integrated approach to reducing emissions from road transport on a range of pathways.

BROADER AND MORE DETAILED POLICY MEASURES

While previous NDCs often lacked specificity, NDC 3.0 submissions provide considerably more detail on the national-level actions designed to support cities in delivering sustainable low-carbon urban mobility. The most frequently cited individual measure in NDC 3.0 is the electrification of public transport vehicle fleets, referenced in 62% of submissions. However, NDC 3.0 also incorporates a broader suite of measures, including transport demand management, reducing car dependency, strengthening urban planning, building local capacity, developing integrated mobility plans, and improving coordination among implementing agencies and private sector stakeholders.

This represents a more balanced policy mix compared to second-generation NDCs, combining “improve” technical strategies with “avoid” and “shift” measures that more effectively support a transition toward public transport and active mobility. Nevertheless, adopting a fully balanced Avoid–Shift–Improve (ASI) approach - underpinned by effective and coordinated governance - remains essential to maximise emissions reductions, support GST implementation, and achieve broader sustainability outcomes. In this context, it is encouraging that NDC 3.0 places greater emphasis on a range of capacity-building initiatives and governance arrangements.



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STRENGTHENED LINKS TO THE SDG AGENDA BUT FINANCIAL GAPS REMAIN

Urban mobility in NDC 3.0 is increasingly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with approximately a third of submissions referencing specific SDGs and including plans to track progress. This integrated approach enhances policy coherence, while also aligning climate action in public transport with broader development objectives.

Nearly two-thirds of NDC 3.0 submissions do not specify budgets for public transport projects, making it difficult to match available finance to project requirements. Clear budget allocations are essential to support ambitious targets and fully capitalise on opportunities under Article 6 (carbon markets and cooperative mechanisms).



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This initial analysis indicates that NDC 3.0 submissions are significantly more ambitious on public transport. Nonetheless, major gaps remain, including limited financing commitments and weak alignment with renewable energy goals. Achieving the public transport and urban mobility objectives in NDC 3.0 will require close collaboration among cities, national governments, and public transport stakeholders. Aligning local mobility strategies with national climate objectives, while building knowledge and capacity, will be essential to raising ambition and driving significant emissions reductions through public transport.

UITP will continue to support these efforts through a comprehensive set of advocacy initiatives over the coming year, including engagement with local and national decision-makers, a full review of NDC 3.0, strengthening capacity via the UITP NDC 3.0 template and contributing to the COP30 Action Agenda. Access UITP's full suite of NDC resources on our website.



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