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Concept Note on Supporting Walkability and Cyclability in Old Town of Chiang Mai

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Background:

City of Chiang Mai has only 130,000 registered inhabitants but with massive tourism, a number of tourists, visitors, workers and non-registered laborers can add up the total population to 450,000 to 500,000 inhabitants. This rapid urbanization leads Chiang Mai city to experience various problems like other large cities including traffic jams, inadequate public transport and unfavorable and unsafe pedestrian and bicycle paths. Increasing private vehicles also consequently affects the volume of greenhouse gas emissions and sustainability of Chiang Mai city. This current situation and future trend call for innovative solutions that make an inclusive, productive, efficient and resilient city. To speed up the search for solutions, mobilization of practical experience in sustainable urban development for joint learning with urban stakeholders between Thailand and Germany is helpful.

Chiang Mai Municipality in collaboration with Connective Cities and Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) jointly organized *the Project Planning Workshop on Low Carbon Mobility Planning (LCMP)* in Chiang Mai during 12-14 July 2017. The workshop provided a better understanding of the LCMP concept and its local application learning from successful models in other places, especially Leipzig, Germany. By means of practical concepts, transportation and traffic infrastructure for Chiang Mai was conceptualized towards a long term integrated and sustainable mobility system including intelligent traffic planning and considering settlement development as well as land use issues. Furthermore, the workshop supported consensus building in the current infrastructure planning process in Chiang Mai Municipality and enhanced working relationships between and among different stakeholders that would lead to a more sustainable urban development.

Challenge and gap:

The workshop in July pointed out 4 major challenges and gaps:

- (i) Increasing traffic congestion and applied approaches were car restriction and enhancement of use of public transportation with recommended solutions including providing more bus parking space and strengthening enforcement to private providers, provision of facilities to support park and ride scheme, development of new and improvement of existing modes of public transportation
- (ii) Inefficient traffic management and applied approaches were traffic rule enforcement with recommended solutions including regulating parking space for red bus,

- strengthening law enforcement, provision of regular trainings and capacity building for traffic control officials
- (iii) Lack of financial support to develop efficient public transportation system with applied approach of obtaining supports from the national government to promote e-mobility with recommended solutions including support of private sector in the form of public-private partnership
 - (iv) Problems in cycling, for example, local people are not accustomed to cycling in daily life, inner city roads cannot expand to provide space for bike lane, existing bike lanes are occupied by motorized vehicles. The applied approach is concept of car-reduced city center and strategic cycling development to prioritize cycling in the city such as in Leipzig.

Since Leipzig (and other German cities) has been implementing car reduced city center approach, 81% increasing of the citizens using environmental-friendly modes of transport and other results include increasing value of building and numbers of “walking by” customers. The participants strongly convinced to follow this path. Key successes of Leipzig includes the importance of the stakeholders’ involvement and pilot areas to initiate temporary activities (that can be evaluated) and make successful activities permanent. Other supporting facilities include bicycle master plan, a planning body responsible for public relations and marketing, as well as consultation for technical plans and traffic regulations, interconnected tools for cycling development. Chiang Mai Municipality has built significant stakeholders’ involvement through the provincial committee on Chiang Mai Old Town and other initiatives such as Rotary Club project on tri-cycle revitalization, bicycle renting, bike lane development in the old town area. However, Chiang Mai Municipality has not yet developed pilot areas to initiate temporary activities and other facilities.

Objectives:

- To develop a roadmap on car reduced city center of Chiang Mai
- To initiate short-term activities/projects/programmes, especially improvement and expansion of existing, on-going facilities/initiatives
- To plan for long-term activities/projects/programmes (5-10 years)

Expected outcomes:

- Initial walkability and cyclability in the Old Town Chiang Mai by
 - o reduction of cars into or through city center (about 20 % within 3 years) and
 - o increased non-motorized mode (about 20% within 3 years)
- Developed walkability and cyclability in the Old Town of Chiang Mai by
 - o reduction of cars into or through city center (about 50 % within 10 years) and
 - o increased non-motorized mode (about 50% within 10 years)
- Other outcomes, pertaining to holistic urban development of the Old Town (such as improved public spaces, pedestrianized business and tourism areas, increased energy efficiency/renewable energy in buildings; to be determined later)



Key activities:

- (i) Develop a roadmap and action plan on car reduced city center of Chiang Mai with key stakeholders including bicycle master plan
- (ii) Develop baseline data and preparation process such as needs' assessment of pedestrians, car users and bicycle riders
- (iii) Identify and define entire pilot area of Old Town Chiang Mai
- (iv) Initiate and implement short term measures:
 - a. Revitalization of local economic and business development
 - b. Infrastructure and facilities for cyclability and walkability for different target groups such as tourists, local people, local officials, local students
 - c. Public relations and marketing for behavior/attitude changes
 - d. Financing of public services and facilities
- (v) Planning for long-term measures in the Old Town area such as housing, social services, tourism facilities

