

Bhutan

1. Transport and relevant national level policies

Transport Sector development in Bhutan is largely driven by the overarching guiding document, Bhutan Transport Integrated Strategic Vision 2040 that incorporates all existing transport related plans, policies, initiatives, and actions to create a long-term comprehensive strategy for the country. Along with this, several other strategy documents and plans ensure a safe, sustainable and reliable transport sector in Bhutan.

Title of Policy Document	Publication Year	Status	Goal 1c Air pollution	Goal 3 Economic Sustainability	Goal 5 Urban Access
Road Sector Master Plan (2007-2027)	2007	Under implementation		✓	✓
Bhutan Transport Integrated Strategic Vision 2040	2013	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
Bhutan Electric Vehicle Initiative	2014	Implemented	✓	✓	
Economic Development Policy	2016	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
National Transport Policy 2017	2017	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
12th Five Year Plan 2018-23	2019	Implemented	✓	✓	✓
Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	2021	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
Second Nationally Determined Contribution - Bhutan	2021	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓

2. Policy Targets

Derived from the guiding strategic policy documents and master plans, Bhutan's policy targets and its implementation status for the transport sector are as follows:

Target (Text)	Target Year	Title of Policy Document	Status	Goal 1c Air Pollution	Goal 3 Economic Sustainability	Goal 5 Urban Access
>75% of urban roads should be covered with dedicated NMT tracks Construct min. 10 km of footpath every year	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓

Target (Text)	Target Year	Title of Policy Document	Status	Goal 1c Air Pollution	Goal 3 Economic Sustainability	Goal 5 Urban Access
Launch PBS system in Thimphu city	2025	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓
1 public charging point for 6 EVs	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
6 trains on 182 km route connecting all urban towns	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓
18,515 public bicycles by 2050 1,850 docking stations by 2050	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓
100% taxi imports to be EVs by 2035	2035	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓		
100% light vehicles and buses imports to be EVs by 2045	2045	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓		
25% heavy vehicles (freight) imports to be EVs by 2050	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓
20% of the state owned and 10% of the private vehicle fleet shall be encouraged to run on clean and green fuels by 2025	2025	The Alternative Renewable Energy Policy 2013	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
Establish minimum 1 neighbourhood node with basic amenities and facilities close to growing cities - Thimphu, Paro, Phuentsholing, and Samtse	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
Develop and implement parking 'de-growth' plan in consonance with a target of no more than 5,500 new vehicles per year, post 2030, permitted to register.	2030	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓		✓

Target (Text)	Target Year	Title of Policy Document	Status	Goal 1c Air Pollution	Goal 3 Economic Sustainability	Goal 5 Urban Access
Achieve 50% of parking 'de-growth' in preparation for gradual phasing out ICE passenger vehicles. 100% parking slots with parking turnover more than 5 in major urban areas should be digitised by 2030						
314 intra-city and 358 intercity buses. Out of the 314 intra-city buses, 96 BRT Buses to be deployed on 126 km route. The remaining buses would operate as conventional bus systems on secondary routes.	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
13 passenger trains on 120 km route	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓
Hydrogen pilot (Fuel cell based and Combustion based) with Light, Medium and Heavy vehicles	2050	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓
Improve vehicle occupancy in light vehicles and taxis by 50% and 25% respectively by 2035	2035	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
25% modal shift for short (<3.5 km) trips from light vehicle, 2-W, and taxis to bicycling by 2040 50% modal shift for short (<2 km) trips from light vehicle, 2-W and taxis to walking by 2040	2040	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
Prepare DPR and secure funding for the feasibility study for: A) LRT on Thimphu - Paro route B) Passenger train on Thimphu - Phuentsholing route	2025	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓
Implement passenger trains on 97 km Thimphu Phuentsholing route Implement LRT between Thimphu-Chuzom-Paro	2030	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	✓

Target (Text)	Target Year	Title of Policy Document	Status	Goal 1c Air Pollution	Goal 3 Economic Sustainability	Goal 5 Urban Access
Implement BS-VII/ Euro VII by 2026	2026	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓		
Phase out import of ICE passenger vehicles after 2030 Cap annual import of 2- wheelers and light vehicles at 700 numbers and 5,500 numbers respectively after 2030	2035	Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) - Surface Transport	Not yet implemented	✓		
Private vehicle demand management through shared mobility, traffic system management, carpooling, ride sharing and rental services, import restriction on internal combustion engine cars from 2030 and introducing an annual import quota system.	2030	Second Nationally Determined Contribution - BTN	Not yet implemented	✓	✓	
Frequency of urban transport services during rush hours increased = 10 mins (15 mins - 2017)	2023	12th Five Year Plan 2018-23	Implemented - 8 mins	✓	✓	✓
Low/zero carbon emission vehicle penetration/ uptake increased = 0.04% (0.01% - 2017)	2023	12th Five Year Plan 2018-23	Implemented - 0.46%	✓	✓	✓
Towns with urban transport system introduced = 4 (3 - 2017)	2023	12th Five Year Plan 2018-23	Not implemented	✓	✓	✓
Gewogs connected by public transport services = 153 (2017 - 148)	2023	12th Five Year Plan 2018-23	Implemented		✓	✓
Increase in public transport ridership = 10% (1.07% - 2017)	2023	12th Five Year Plan 2018-23	Implemented		✓	✓
Improvement of feeder roads (Annex 1-3)	2027	Road Sector Master Plan (2007-2027)	Under implementation		✓	✓
Development of Second/Southern East-West National Highway (Annex 4)	2027	Road Sector Master Plan (2007-2027)	Under implementation, two missing links that are Lhamoizingkha - Sarpang and Gelephu - Panbang		✓	✓
Introducing new Inter-Dzongkhag Highway connectivity (Annex 5)	2027	Road Sector Master Plan (2007-2027)	Not implemented		✓	✓

Target (Text)	Target Year	Title of Policy Document		Status	Goal 1c Air Pollution	Goal 3 Economic Sustainability	Goal 5 Urban Access
Construction of major realignments (Annex 6)	2027	Road Sector	Master Plan (2007-2027)	Implemented		✓	✓
Introduction of tunnels (Annex 7)	2027	Road Sector	Master Plan (2007-2027)	Not implemented		✓	
Provide targeted subsidies to operators in remote areas where public transport is un-economical due to low volume of passenger flow		Economic Policy (2016)	Development	Implemented		✓	
Promote establishment of clean, safe, affordable and reliable mass transportation, starting with the major cities		Economic Policy (2016)	Development	Implemented	✓	✓	✓
Explore possibilities of introducing electric/hybrid public transport system in major urban centres	2017	Economic Policy (2016)	Development	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
Develop inland container depots or dry ports including railway links together with supporting facilities such as customs, immigration, quarantine etc. at the border crossings		Economic Policy (2016)	Development	Under implementation	✓	✓	✓
Multipurpose helicopter operations shall be introduced for search and rescue, medical evacuation, emergencies, disaster management		Economic Policy (2016)	Development	Implemented		✓	✓
To enhance quality of transport services, connectivity to seaports in India, Bangladesh and to the Asian road network shall be included as a strategic part of the country's transportation network		Economic Policy (2016)	Development	Under implementation		✓	✓
The Royal Government shall promote the use of hybrid and electric vehicles through suitable policy interventions.		Economic Policy (2016)	Development	Implemented		✓	✓

3. Programs and Projects

In support of environmentally sustainable transport, Bhutan is currently implementing the following projects:

Project/ Program name	Approval Year	Status	Goal 1c Air Pollution	Goal 3 Economic Sustainabi lity	Goal 5 Urban Access
Bhutan Green Transport Project	2026	Project preparatory phase completed	✓	✓	✓
Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in Eastern South Asia – Bhutan Phase 2 Project (ACCESS project)	2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preliminary engineering design of Gelephu – Tareythang roads and bridges completed - Draft Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (Biodiversity Management Plan, Environment and Social Management Plan, Cumulative Impact Assessment, etc.) disclosed (Pelosi Amendment) - Development of Railway Masterplan 		✓	
Master Plan for National Highways Connectivity	2022	<p>The project is expected to complete by the end of 2024 with the following deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 year periodic maintenance plan up to 2029 - Long term Investment plan for until 2040 - Long term maintenance plan for until 2040 - Strategic Environmental Assessment report 		✓	✓
Government of India – Project Tied Assistance	2024	<p>This 3 year project is under implementation with the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalization of Electric Vehicle Roadmap - Built a model for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission from the transport sector - Procurement of 45 e-buses for urban transport in Thimphu and other suitable inter-district routes - Procurement and installation of 30 nos. of heavy-duty charging machines for e-buses - Procurement of 10 EV (light vehicle) for government fleet - Capacity building of engineers/technicians 	✓	✓	