

EXPERT PANEL SUMMARY

Getting to Seamless Passenger Travel

Wednesday 26 May 2010

Background

Seamless passenger travel in urban areas has largely been the domain of the automobile for the past 50 years but this model is reaching its limits in many urban areas. Can seamless, multi-mode passenger mobility services provide a more compelling model than the status quo? What types of innovation are necessary for these services to be implemented? Are the benefits of ubiquitous multi-modal mobility strong enough to outweigh the costs of its provision? Has innovation amongst regulatory agencies and public transport operators kept pace with innovators in other fields? In this session, discussions amongst panellists representing government agencies, transport operators and key private sector network and information service providers raised a number of key points.

The Panel

These short conclusions were drafted by the Secretariat of the International Transport Forum in consultation with the Moderator. The Secretariat is very grateful for the rich input to the discussions from the panel of speakers listed below but takes full responsibility for the views expressed here.

- Chair: Yves Crozet
- Paul Brubaker, Senior Director, Internet Business Solutions, Cisco Systems
- Rita Daguillard, Director, Research Management, US Federal Transit Administration
- Florence Diss, Manager, Strategic Partner Development, Google France
- Pat Jacobsen, Corporate Director, New Flyer and former CEO, Translink Canada
- Chang Kyun Kim, Director, Seoul City Transport Operations and Information Center
- Dominique Laousse, Director, Prospective and Innovative Design, RATP, Paris

The barriers to seamless passenger travel are not primarily technological...

The technologies that would allow for real-time multi-mode travel planning, parking reservation, toll and fare payment and multi-mode navigation exist today. The rise of the “internet of things” that will include inter-communicating cars, parking spaces, buses, tramways, metros, shared bicycles or other vehicles, streets and service providers is well

underway and is based on well-understood and mature technology. Some cities, such as Seoul and Paris, are in the process of deploying these technologies and applications to provide travellers with ubiquitous information about travel options and costs. These same systems can also be used to manage traffic on both road and public transport networks and can serve as a support platform for variable pricing should cities choose to manage congestion in this way. While the technologies necessary to aggregate and organise disparate streams of data and deliver useful information on travel options exist, they are not sufficient to support truly seamless passenger transport services. One key missing link is useable and transparent information on public transport routes, schedules and, especially, fares.

...though technology must still innovate to respond to all travellers' needs.

Significant progress has been made in delivering information on travel opportunities via the internet and mobile phone networks, however, many travellers do not have access to the internet or cannot use cell phones. Furthermore, there are significant portions of the travelling public that face real cognitive difficulties in assimilating map and trip guidance information or whose physical disabilities make it difficult for them to use multiple travel modes. Service providers and public authorities must innovate to ensure that information relating to travel opportunities is accessible and useable by a broader share of the travelling public than has been the case until now. Innovation will also be necessary in overcoming physical or sensorial barriers to transfers amongst modes - for all travellers.

The greatest barriers to the development of seamless passenger services are the slow pace of innovation in regulatory structures and transport operators.

Innovation amongst information service and network providers has generally outpaced innovation in the regulatory environment, in management structures and within transport service providers. Greater acceptance of new service concepts and adapting regulation to rapidly changing business models are necessary with some panellists pointing out that this was more the case in certain developing or recently developed countries such as China and Korea than in many OECD countries. Strong political leadership and buy-in from key transport operators is essential and new rules and management structures must be flexible enough to evolve rapidly. Combining authority for all transport modes into a single agency at the regional level can help. Vancouver's experience in this context has helped increase non-car travel from 12% to 35% in nine years of operation. Getting to "seamless" regulatory oversight and management will require new skills that are currently not taught to future regulators and managers: there is a real need for innovation training in this respect.

New revenue models and revenue allocation systems are necessary...

New mobility services will likely require new revenue models to cover their , especially when public transport services are integrated into the mix. Integrating multiple service providers and their revenue models can broaden the revenue base and lead to new revenue streams. For example, when road and public transport operators maintain and operate proprietary information networks, a seamless mobility service based on one, open and shared network reduces duplicative costs and allows for the development of new revenue-earning services. A key issue to address is revenue allocation arrangements amongst all actors involved since many

may be reluctant to reduce their current take even if new mobility services may increase overall revenues by growing the market.

... as are new partnerships and clear definitions of responsibility.

Partnerships among transport operators and network operators is essential - across modes - and ensuring that key private sector innovators can participate in the development of new mobility services will require innovative new arrangements. Defining responsibilities for service performance, investment responsibilities and potential liability issues must be at the heart of these partnerships to remove uncertainties and encourage clear and transparent participation. Managing multiple partners can be challenging and clear rules are necessary to ensure consistent, high quality service provision. Partnerships can go beyond the level of public and private service providers, extending all the way to national authorities in the establishment of a supportive regulatory framework as in the case of the Liveable Communities programme of the US Department of Transport.

Seamless intermodal mobility services cannot be deployed everywhere – Density and urban form are determining factors.

Cars and roads allow seamless passenger transport nearly everywhere. The development of seamless, *multi-modal* mobility services will require core public transport and annex services whose commercial viability requires relatively dense urban areas. In the long-term, land use planning can elevate densities in low-density urban environments and if successful, these policies can allow for broader uptake of seamless mobility services. In low density areas and when considering inter-urban transport, care needs to be given to the interface between seamless multi-modal services and other transport networks.

Travellers must be at the heart of the development of seamless passenger travel services

Travellers' needs, concerns and abilities must be at the heart of the new seamless mobility services if these are to be successful. Information on mobility services must be delivered to travellers in a form they can use, when and where they can use them. Consultation with potential users is also important and will not only allow for greater uptake but can also help determine important system design elements. For instance, consultation with users about how to pay for these services may lead to innovative payment arrangements - like paying by slice of time to access all transport services in a region (parking, toll road, bus fare etc...).