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The PTI Editorial Team wishes you a very Happy New Year!
Combined Mobility as key for tomorrow’s urban mobility

The future of urban public transport lies in mobility systems that will provide bicycles, cars and other mobility services on demand. Most mobility assets will be shared instead of owned by users. Convenient and reliable lifestyle services will be offered to connected citizens who will be able to easily access these combined mobility services via their smartphones. Combined mobility services are a smart alternative to car ownership in a rapidly urbanising world, as they are more tailored to customer needs and better suited to metropolitan environments. For those public transport operators who are able to innovate and turn public transport services into combined mobility services, these developments offer a real opportunity to deliver sustainable growth over the next decades.

What will tomorrow’s urban mobility look like?

For centuries cities have been crowded places, and no doubt they will remain so in the future. But how will tomorrow’s urban mobility be different from today’s? The 20th century- when the car had a major impact on urbanisation and urban mobility- is behind us, leaving a legacy of urban sprawl. The ever-expanding suburbs would never have been possible without mass car ownership. The car made it possible to commute 30 to 80 kilometres in a generally acceptable one hour per working day. Although this still seems perfectly natural in the Western world, it may well not be the dominant solution in the 21st century.

Tomorrow’s situation is already taking shape; just look at today’s new trends. Web 3.0 and mobile internet have the greatest impact on society. Web 3.0 is about connecting assets on the net. If you hook up a fleet of cars to the internet, it is easy to share these cars with a wide variety of users- 24/7 and instantly. Smartphones, which consumers feel are the most important item to have with them at all times, are of course part of this revolution. They provide location-based services, such as indicating where the nearest shared car is.

The so-called demotorisation trend is linked to smartphones and the internet. Demotorisation is the name for a worldwide shift in consumer preferences. Young people are no longer so keen to own a car, as they would rather spend their money on a smartphone and fast internet connections. Part of this “I don’t care so much about having a car” attitude is another trend, whereby young people are hesitant about getting their driving licence. Statistics show that young people get
Tomorrow’s urban mobility

Public transport operator üstra takes the lead as service integrator

Becoming a multimodal mobility provider means offering customers complete mobility solutions and expanding into new business areas that go beyond traditional public transport products such as buses, trams and metros. In Hannover, public transport operator üstra is taking the lead role by integrating all sustainable urban mobility services and making itself the complete mobility ‘system integrator’.

üstra has launched HANNOVERmobil, which is an attractive, flexible alternative to the private car and offers hassle-free ‘one-stop mobility’. Instead of spending time and money on choosing the right solution and signing up with a multitude of providers, customers have instant access to a comprehensive ‘mobility menu’, where they can choose the right service for them at any time using their ‘all-in-one’ HANNOVERmobil card. The card covers public transport, bike services, public car services like carsharing, taxi, rail and delivery services: HANNOVERmobil really is a full mobility package. From a strategic point of view, this is a clever move for public transport, as being a complete mobility provider is a powerful tool to increase the number of customers, improve customer loyalty and broaden the product portfolio thanks to the addition of combined mobility services.

Building on the success of HANNOVERmobil, Üstra has now started a project called ‘Mobility Platform’ in collaboration with Volkswagen and IT solutions provider Cantamen to completely relaunch the idea of HANNOVERmobil on a wider scale.

The STM transportation cocktail: a sustainable approach to flexible urban mobility

The mission of Société de transport de Montréal (STM) is to develop and operate an integrated public transport system to provide safe, rapid, reliable and comfortable transport. But the STM believes it can go further and is building on its own eco-friendly actions through partnerships that promote the use of complementary and active modes of transport. Together, these make up the transportation cocktail that brings together bikes, buses, metro, carsharing and taxis. Indeed, a partnership between carsharing and public transport is a very attractive way to compete with car ownership.

The STM has signed a marketing and operational partnership called ‘DUO auto + bus’ with Communauto, the carsharing operator, to combine these two modes of transport. But that’s not all: Montreal’s BIXI bike-sharing service can also be added to the package. Moreover, the services offered by Montreal taxi companies are part of the mix of transport options that offer an alternative to the private car. This alone is a good reason to make taxis part of the transportation cocktail- but there’s more. With the help of the taxi industry, the STM is able to offer a shared taxibus service in ten areas where the low population density makes a bus service impracticable.

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Hannover, Germany

Montreal, Canada
their licence later, and some don’t aspire to get one at all. It’s hard to picture yourself living in suburbia without a car or even a driving licence. But instead of moving to the suburbs, young families stay in relatively compact housing within city centres.

Another important trend is the renaissance of the bike. It seems that the emotional relationship that consumers had with cars is being taken over by bicycles. In Western cities, especially in neighbourhoods with high property values, people see cycling, rather than a posh car, as a way to create a certain more individual lifestyle. Young mums and dads who benefit from short inner-city distances transport their children to nursery by bike.

Last but not least, virtual mobility is changing the need for physical mobility because it changes our perceptions of space, distance and attainability. Of course, videoconferencing, teleconferencing and webinars all have an impact on business-related mobility. But the retail shift from bricks to clicks is severely changing shopping-induced mobility.

As such, the general picture for tomorrow’s urban mobility will be a high degree of mobility based on fewer trips over shorter distances, without fossil fuels and with a reduced environmental impact. This can be achieved through proximity, public transport and local mobility on foot, and by using bicycles. Multimodal mobility (choosing the suitable means of transport for each journey) will replace the mono-modality of the car.

Which new services are emerging?

Not so much collective public transport but individual public transport services will emerge. Individual transportation has a major advantage over collective transport, in that individual public transport puts passengers in the driving seat. You decide where to go via which route - not the metro or bus driver. As electric mobility is well suited to the urban environment, nearly all the new individual public transport initiatives are already called ‘e-something’, from e-personal transporters to e-quadricycle sharing.

E-mobility is very much in its infancy. But let’s take a closer look at bicycle-sharing, which has been around since 2004. With a track record of just 10 years, there are already more than 500 cities in 50 countries with a public bicycle-sharing system, and not only in European capitals where the idea took off. In North America, 21 schemes can be found and the largest number of shared bikes are in China, where there are 370,000 bicycles. In these three regions, the schemes are growing fast. And this is not so much a profit-driven development; just like collective public transport generally, all public bicycle-sharing schemes are operated with government support. Not so new after all.

Today’s carsharing systems date back to 1987 and most began as grassroots initiatives. But in the last five years, major automobile manufacturers have caught on. Although the various carsharing concepts differ, they tend to have between 20 and 100 users per car, so all of them are space-efficient enough for an urban environment. What’s common to bike-sharing and carsharing is that they offer ‘mobility as a service’, rather than ownership of the product. This has been made possible thanks to Web 3.0 and smartphones.

**Combined mobility: a sustainable urban strategy**

Whilst the new emerging services are individual public transport, this doesn’t mean that collective transport modes will be any less important. Trains, metros and buses will be the core of the future urban mobility system. But we will have more ‘flavours’ on offer. The ambition of public transport operators should be to enable citizens to choose the most suitable means of transport for each journey and combine different modes in one trip. At the core of this strategy is combined mobility, conventional public transport expanded to include individual public transport services. Putting passengers in the driving seat by giving them the ability to choose will replace the mono-modality of the car that we became used to in the 20th century.

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Decision-makers are recognising that current patterns of city consumption are no longer viable for economic and societal growth. Emissions, particularly those from urban buildings and transport, are at the top of the priority list of things to improve. For example, the European Union—through the European Smart Cities and Communities Initiative—has targeted significant emissions reductions in these areas to increase Europe’s competitiveness and achieve a significant decarbonisation of the economy through innovation.

With cities around the world growing at a rate of two people a second, a massive expansion of urban capacity will be required to accommodate more and more people. Urban infrastructure is already under strain and rapid urbanisation could significantly increase traffic congestion and pollution, which in turn could make cities inefficient, undermine competitiveness and seriously affect quality of life. At the same time, urban citizens are increasingly demanding high-quality city services, while city budgets are shrinking. Urban infrastructure—from energy, transport, buildings and so on—will need to be made more efficient to meet these challenges.

What is a smart city?

Smart city initiatives are springing up across the globe on an almost daily basis, but what exactly are they? One definition is that a smart city collects and analyses data to monitor, measure and manage the complex systems that facilitate life in urban environments. Cities and their citizens can understand how transportation, water and energy systems function and interact, so that they optimise their operations, individually and collectively. For example, they can predict the impact of changes to the transport system on adjacent systems, such as energy, waste and social services. As a result, they can make confident, informed decisions that will reduce costs and improve living conditions, with the ultimate goal of making their city more sustainable.

The market for smart cities is estimated at around USD 400 billion by 2020 (EUR 297 billion), with transport accounting for around a quarter of this figure, but this
is not simply a technical challenge. Organisational change in governments- and indeed society at large- is just as essential. Making a city smart is therefore a multidisciplinary challenge, bringing together city officials, innovative suppliers, national policymakers, academics and civil society. Forward-looking cities are not waiting for better times; they are taking action now and building effective partnerships to bring about transformational change in the way that their city operates. With a mixture of the right data, policies, partnerships and interventions, cities will be able to do more with less.

The case for smarter transport
Congestion is a major barrier to becoming a smart city- it wastes billions of hours of time, huge amounts of money and produces tonnes of CO₂ and emissions, all of which affects quality of life. With the number of cars on our urban roads set to double by 2020, it is clear that cities need to develop new, more sustainable forms of smart mobility to continue to be drivers of growth.

The current emergence of new technologies is one part of the move towards smart sustainable mobility and promoting cleaner urban transport, particularly public transport. With analytical tools, public transport operators will be able to predict demand, align capacity, integrate modes, deploy and share assets, and continuously adapt and link operations across the entire network, thus improving the way people and goods move around the city.

Public transport customers will benefit from an enhanced journey experience thanks to a whole host of innovative technology solutions. Traffic managers will gain citywide visibility to help alleviate congestion and rapidly respond to incidents. Urban planners will have a holistic view of transport demand and strategic planning by better understanding interconnections with related city and regional systems, helping to better manage city assets and operations, as well as enabling city authorities and stakeholders to advance their approach to becoming a smarter city.

Intelligent transportation systems will help improve capacity, enhance travel experiences and make moving anything safer, more efficient and more secure. Integrated, smarter mobility solutions with public transport at their core will mean less congested roads, better infrastructure and more pleasant commutes. This will be the hallmark of the smart cities of the future.

1 Smart, More Competitive Cities, IBM Corporation, 2012.

Launch of the European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities Initiative

UITP Secretary General Alain Flausch, alongside CEOs from major corporations and regional leaders from across Europe, launched the Strategic Implementation Plan for the European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities at their High Level Group meeting on 14 October.

The High Level Group was established to formulate a technological transformation agenda and advise European decision-makers, national governments, city leaders as well as business on the strategic orientation and the necessary action to support wide-scale deployment of innovative technologies in the areas of sustainable urban mobility, energy generation, distribution and consumption, and information and communication technologies for smart cities.

Full implementation of the plan will begin from 2014 onwards and the European Commission is expected to initially invest around EUR 200 million to create smart cities in the next two years.

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