

Some introductory remarks

FARE-FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT (FFPT)

This is *the 3rd draft*, some 57.000 words: (A) *Analysis and Theory*, 18 pages, 9.500 words, (B) *'Facts'*, 96 pages, 37.000 words, (C) *'Opponents' views'*, 20 pages, 10.600 words.

You receive this as announced, with corrections and additions/deletions as sent to me by some twenty respondents. I thank everybody who read, wrote, corrected and helped!

This 3rd edition again could push some of you to offering additional corrections and other improvements to the text. Please do!

If I receive before 31 August 2015, I will look into the possibility to make use of those reactions and make them useful for the meeting in Avesta on 17-18 September 2015. In the following text the quotes in French and German are not yet translated in English. I prefer a professional translator to do that job and it is only useful if the original authors still stand by their texts and allow us to use them in this document. Most likely recipients of this document can either read those languages or have someone around who could give a preliminary translation for understanding.

The third part of this document, *Opponents' Views*, is left exactly as I found these on the internet. The texts are borrowed from earlier publications as an article or an ongoing discussion from the computer-screen. It helps to sharpen our insights.

I received confirmation from Avesta that the document will be introduced during the seminar on 17-18 September 2015. I assume that everybody will receive directly from Avesta information about the seminar. See information at website:

<http://www.avesta.se/Naringsliv--Foretagande/Konferens-om-avgiftsfri-kollektivtrafik/>

I got offered the chance to present my views on necessary steps in the further development of the concept and realization of Fare-Free Public Transport (FFPT). I will include in Avesta my proposals and questions about the legitimacy of our work, the purpose/goal of the Avesta-conference, and the possible outcomes needed for the positioning of FFPT in the European Union and with the European Commission. In this document I have added questions **in red**, if you feel well informed, please answer!

I have asked our colleagues Alexander Berthelsen to help us in Avesta with an address on *perception costs in relation to FFPT*, and Sebastiaan van der Vliet on *the economy of FFPT* (Monetarization), while I will introduce the *motivations to introduce and maintain FFPT in so many places*. I hope that these three approaches will help to promote the concept and will help make it realizable at least all over the European Union.

Be assured that we need all of you to realize the efforts which still have to be made before, during and after a good and fruitful conference on 17-18 September 2015.

Michel van Hulten. michel@vanhulten.com, m.h.m.vanhulten@saxion.nl

The 3rd Draft for Avesta

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© Michel van Hulten, michel@vanhulten.com, m.h.m.vanhulten@saxion.nl

Final editor:

Dr Michel van Hulten,
SAXION - University of Applied Sciences, School of Governance, Law and Urban Development
Enschede/Deventer, the Netherlands, Professor of Governance, michel@vanhulten.com,
m.h.m.vanhulten@saxion.nl, 0031-320 221 279, www.corruptie.org
(The website www.gratisopenbaarvervoer.nl is not active at the moment. It might be reactivated
depending on the work done on this document, in Avesta and later).

With collaboration by

- **Allan Alaküla**, City of Tallinn, Estonia, Allan.Alakyla@tallinnlv.ee
- **Lukasz Ługowski**, WZZ "Sierpień 80", Poland, luklug@wzz.org.pl
- **Alexander Berthelsen**, Planka.nu, Sweden, Alexander.Berthelsen@gmail.com
- **Judith Dellheim**, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Germany, dellheim@rosalux.de
- **Michael Brie**, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Germany, brierosalux@gmail.com.
- **Tim Vette**, Graduate student Spatial Planning at SAXION University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands, veti_110@hotmail.com
- **Paolo Vergnano**, Trentino, Italy, paolohipposvergnano@gmail.com
- **Lukasz Filipczak**, Dept of Transport Development, Warsaw, Poland, l.filipczak@ztm.waw.pl
- **Erik van Hal**, municipal transportplanner Eindhoven, the Netherlands, e.van.hal@eindhoven.nl
- **Marc Verachtert**, Manager General Affairs, Hasselt, Belgium, Marc.Verachtert@hasselt.be
- **Ming Zhuang**, Associate Researcher, Chengdu Academy of Social Sciences, China zhuangming@gmail.com and doctor researcher **Chen She** chshe168@vip.sina.com
- **Tomasz Kret**, tomasz.kret@zabki.pl, Advisor to the Mayor of Zabki
- **Roger Fowler**, roger.fowler@icloud.com. Fare Free New Zealand

Websites

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_public_transport

www.tallinn.ee/freepublictransport (Estonia)

<http://farefreepublictransport.com/category/news/> (Sweden)

<https://www.facebook.com/bezplatnakomunikacjamijskawpolsce> (Poland)

http://fr.ekopedia.org/Transports_en_commune_gratuits (France)

<http://farefreepublictransport.com/organization/fare-free-new-zealand/> (New Zealand)

Fare Free New Zealand runs the website: <http://www.farefreenz.blogspot.co.nz/>

Roger Fowler contributed English language grammar and spelling corrections to this text.

roger.fowler@icloud.com

Peter Stonham, editorial director of Landor Travel Publications publicity contributions.

See stonham.hastings@landortravelpublications.com and

Under construction: <http://www.newthinkingontransport.com>

Consulted:

Belgium:

Bernard Vancraeynest, Algemeen Secretaris De Lijn Centrale Diensten, Mechelen,
bernard.vancraeynest@delijn.be

Jan Vanseveren, Organisation: TreinTramBus, www.treintrambus.be
Jan.vanseveren@treintrambus.be, 09 233 74 39 / 0471 444 772

Stijn Lewyllie, European Passengers' Federation, <http://www.epf.eu/secretariat@epf.eu>, +32 (0)476 85 65 00,
EPF ivzw Kortrijksesteenweg 304, 9000 Gent | T +32 (0)9 223 86 12

Carlos Van Hove du Cabinet de Pascal Smet : cvanhove@smet.irisnet.be

Poland :

Bronisław Pruchnicki, b.pruchnicki@um.zory.pl. Mayor **Waldemar Socha** of Żory.
Office in Żory: **Ana Ujma**, adviser to the Mayor, Urząd Miasta Żory, bpks@um.zory.pl
Robert Perkowski, Burmistrz [mayor] Miasta Zabki; Iwona.potega@zabki.pl, sekretariat@zabki.pl

The Netherlands

Gerard van Kesteren, projectmanager Verkeer en Vervoer, Kennisplatform CROW,
www.crow.nl; gerard.vankesteren@crow.nl
Sebastiaan van der Vliet, municipal Councillor, Schiedam, sebastiaanvandervliet@hotmail.com

Germany

Matthias Kunert, www.matthias-kunert.de, info@matthias-kunert.de

Persons or organizations asked or now invited to give their opinion about, or contributions to this document and the concept 'fare-free public transport':

- European Conference of Transport Research Institutes - info@ectri.org
<http://www.ectri.org/index.html>, <http://www.ectri.org/About/Members.htm>.
- Pricing and urban mobility,
<http://www.certu.fr/spip.php?page=sommaire>
- International Transport Forum,
<http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/Irtadpublic/index.html>
- Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable et de l'énergie
<http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/-Transports,1310-.html>
- l'Institut français des sciences et technologies des transports, de l'aménagement et des réseaux, <http://www.ifsttar.fr/>

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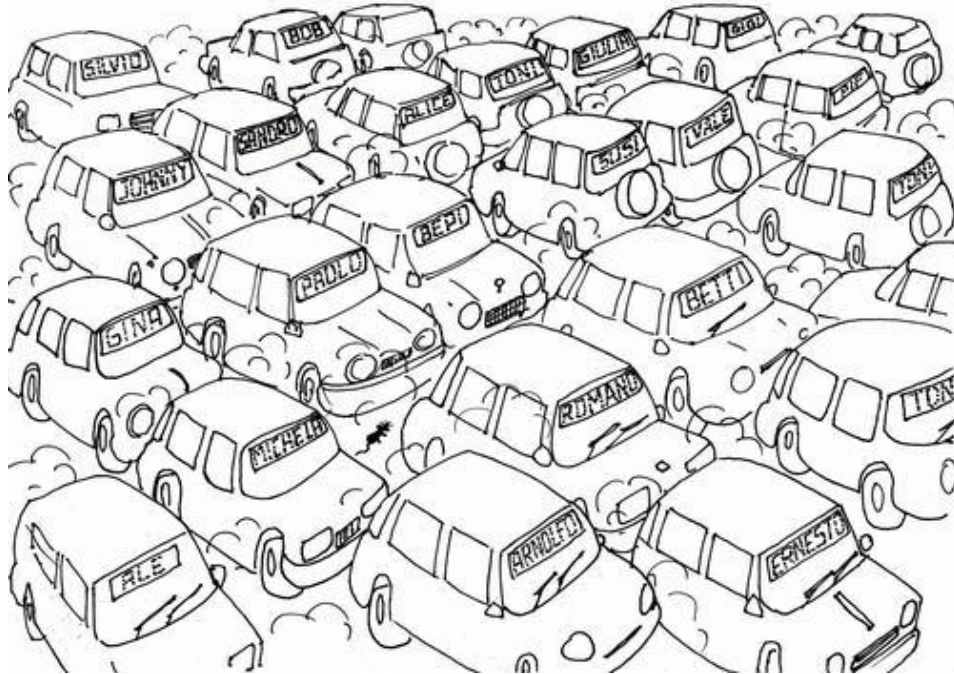
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FUTURES? WE GO ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WAY?



[3rd D R A F T \(15 June 2015\)](#)

FARE-FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT (FFPT)

A. ANALYSIS and THEORY

(Michel van Hulten)

(1) [28 December 2014]

Google the word 'free' and get 8.020.000.000 hits (nature, software, games, etc.).

Google the word 'gratis' (comes from Latin, incorporated into many languages as word for 'free'), and get 1.190.000.000 hits.

Google: 'fare-free' and get 65.300.000 hits

https://www.google.nl/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=j9SfVJ_ZO4OAUkyCgsAH&gws_rd=ssl#q=fare-free

Google: 'fare-free public transport' and get 62.000.000 hits

https://www.google.nl/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=j9SfVJ_ZO4OAUkyCgsAH&gws_rd=ssl#q=fare+free+public+transport

(2)

Google's g-mail is 'free'.

Google-maps are 'free'.

'Google Now' informs us about delays in transportation, traffic jams, the weather, etc. and is 'free'.

Search engines work 'free'. (And Google has 90 percent of the European market).

Metro, the public transport daily paper, is distributed in 23 countries in 78 editions. 'Free'.

Contrary to what most people think: the 'free lunch' obviously does exist!

Why is all this mentioned?

Obviously, the delivery of a product or service for 'free' is a good marketing concept.

Everybody understands that costs are involved in all production and consumption, also by creating mail-programs and electronic maps, data collection and information spreading. But also: everybody understands that those costs are covered from other income. It is not the users that pay, but others interested in reaching out to those users.

(3)

Wikipedia defines **free public transport**, 'often called **fare-free public transit** or **zero-fare public transport**', as 'public transport funded in full by means other than collecting fares from passengers'. It may be funded by national, regional or local government through taxation or by commercial sponsorship of businesses. The concept of "free-ness" is one that may take other forms, such as no-fare access via a card which may or may not be paid in its entirety by the user. Basically, everywhere children up to the age of 4 or 5 years benefit from free ridership if they are accompanied by a fare-paying adult.

(4)

'Fare-free public transport' seeks financial resources coming from other public or private sources represented by other stakeholders willing to pay for the costs involved in tempting citizens in need of transport not to take their own vehicle, but to take a car off the public transport system for reasons of safety, health, environment, poverty alleviation, city-planning, parking-shortages, facilitation of youngsters, elderly, physically handicapped, caretakers, volunteers, unemployed, and many more reasons.

(5)

Nowhere in the world do passengers pay the full costs of their public transport facilities.

In many places and at various times and under often quite some variations in circumstances, public transport is (fully or partly) offered for free, i.e. the passenger does not pay a fare at the moment of boarding vehicles of the public transport system, a fare which covers the full costs of these public facilities. Everywhere the means of public transport (bus, tram, metro/subway/underground, ferry, train) are (partly or fully) subsidized from the public purse or financially supported by commercial interests. This also means that non-users subsidize users. There must be reasons. What will happen in the passenger-transportation market if full-fares were expected to cover the full-costs? The system would collapse.

(6)

Vertical mobility in buildings is always fare-free. Horizontal is not.

Another interesting phenomenon in motorized traffic is that nearly all vertical mobility (elevators and escalators) is 'fare-free'. All these are 'free' for tenants, lessees and their visitors in high-rise apartment buildings. You do not pay individually for the use. Costs are absorbed in total investment costs of buildings and in the total of functional costs paid by the owner(s) of the building and/or the user(s) (dwellers, shopkeepers, institutions like schools and hospitals, business-offices, etc.).

(7)

Common goods

Once we decided that chosen parts of our social and physical environment are 'common goods'. For common goods we pay collectively according to our means/possibilities. All are happy to pay for the municipal fire-brigade in the hope never to be a client. Also the policeman is a 'common good'. We pay all together all costs not dependent on the use we make of police services, as we love to be happy about our security. Free public education, side-walks, bicycle-paths, children's-playgrounds in urbanized areas, street name-signs, house-numbering, street-lights, traffic-lights, parks, all are common goods. In some, most?, European countries citizens pay per household a radio- and television license fee, in the Netherlands citizens often are not aware that they pay for radio and TV. Since this is included in the income-tax which they pay, they may think that radio and TV are 'fare-free'. All of these 'services', all their investments and functioning costs, are paid in common. Why not the delivery of the public transportation services in the form of fare-free public transport?

(8)

Fare-free public transport (FFPT) is already wide-spread over the globe

FFPT is not a rare phenomenon in Europe. See the 'Facts'-chapter later in this document. FFPT can be found all over the continent (and the globe). And it grows.

Sometimes, the introduction of fare-free public transport has to do with traffic policies. More important is that it helps against loneliness among the growing group of elderly in all societies. It influences in a positive way the choices all of us have to make constantly between seeking transport in our private car, or going for a walk, a bicycle-ride or transport by public transport services: fewer traffic accidents, fewer travelers killed and wounded, less air-pollution, less poverty, less expensive as the costs made collectively per person and per kilometer are smaller than the costs made individually in our own car. There will be less dependency in our society of oil-imports from failed states.

(9)

Fare-free public transport helps to fight poverty

If the costs of the public transport system are paid collectively from tax-income they happen to be paid relatively more by those who make less use, and are less paid by those who make more use. Everybody is free to choose in favor of the privacy and availability charms of the private car, against less personalized answers to transportation needs by public transport. But by offering fare-free public transport to all we make alternative uses of spending income possible. It may be expected (and proof is delivered everywhere and always where FFPT is introduced) that more people will make more trips and that the use of public transport will grow. As a consequence (and logically) the use of the private car will diminish, less road-congestion, less urge to continue expensive road-construction and occupy more land for parking needs.

(10)

It helps to introduce fare-free public transport step-by-step

Depending on choices to be made, the introduction of fare-free public transport is often introduced in a step-by-step fashion as otherwise the existing transport system will become overloaded and might collapse. The shift to FFPT needs time to become adapted to an additional wave of passengers. The introduction of FFPT leads immediately to increases of the number of passengers in the next half year. (See for instance the figures given for Flanders 2002-2014, [page 36](#)).

Mostly the choice is made to begin with offering fare-free public transport to the handicapped, the very young (children below the age of 2, or 3, or 4, or 6), and the elderly mostly beginning at the age of 65, in Ireland 66, in Shanghai 70, and upwards.

Motivations vary to support decisions to give FFPT to some in the municipality and not to all. Motivations come from a great number and variety of sources. This also causes support for policies to introduce fare-free public transport to come from all corners of the political spectrum. And also the intended beneficiaries come from all layers of society. This helps in step by step growing of the number of beneficiaries. And then increase the number of beneficiaries from 'some' to 'all'.

Obviously there must be reasons to deliver so much mobility (partly) fare-free.

Is this socialism? In a market-economy?

Some theoreticians think and write that FFPT is a 'socialist' wish. Therefore it is interesting to note for a beginning that the canton and city of Geneva, a strictly market-economy oriented society, offers a 'carrot' in the form of fare-free bus, tram and train for arriving air-passengers (see for details pages 94-96) to tempt them to use the Geneva public transport system. The advantage for the canton and the city is that more travelers (tourists and other foreign visitors) come without a private car and use more the public transport and the taxi, (or walk and cycle), which diminishes the use of private cars, keeps the air cleaner, the roads safer, and the walkers and cyclists healthier. And the city makes a friendlier and more welcoming impression on newcomers.

Good for tourism. Rumors say that other airports/cities in Switzerland will follow soon.

Forgotten costs for private car-use

In our society the market-driven economy is dominant. Often economists are convinced that the market of demands by consumers, and answers by producers, is the best regulator to deliver what we need for less costs and best quality.

Experience teaches that in the mobility-market (essential for all other markets to make them function) in which the private car competes against public transport, the private car everywhere wins as private car users by far do not pay for all the direct and indirect costs of their personal and individual answers to their mobility needs. In particular indirect costs are often paid for by the public and from the public treasury: costs for health (accidents, injured and killed motorists, passengers and bystanders), environmental costs (air-, soil- and water-pollution, use of space for driving and parking cars), economic costs (extra expenses for private answers to mobility-needs over the - on average - lower collective payments for the same needs). The available means to pay for these extra expenses cannot be used any more for answering other needs. Urbanization geared towards the use of the private car, is expensive, space- and time-consuming, and makes life more difficult for non-car-users, especially women, children, the elderly and the physically-handicapped.

It is not rare to see that public money spent on parking problems (parking offered free, or nearly everywhere highly subsidized) is double the expense for all public transport in the city.

Fully-paid fares kill public transport, the vicious circle

Against this hidden-subsidized private car system, we see the in all openness-subsidized FFPT. Without doubt all transport professors agree that fully-paid public transport for all costs made, would mean dramatically fewer people using public transport and more empty seats in the vehicles, which in turn would provoke cutting of frequencies of service, of lines and of stops. This resulting diminishing service with fewer and shorter lines, fewer stops, reduced frequencies, and fewer seats, would make public transport less attractive for potential users. More people would turn to private vehicles as the mobility needs do not diminish. More private cars would enter the roads and create more congestion on the road, more kilometers of private car use, more traffic accidents, more exhaust of CO₂ and other air-pollution harming people's health, and more congestion in public car-parks.

Most likely, because of all these consequences, the transportation market cannot efficiently service all other markets. Indeed, people and goods need transportation to realize their full potential and value. The difference is that people can walk or cycle to and from their destinations, while products have to be delivered at the door.

Is fully-paid fare possible?

If the transportation market could function in full freedom to balance income against costs and make the needed profit in the market, everybody - realizing that this means that the passengers would have to pay the full-fare covering the full costs - knows that this distorts all other markets. Given the levels of subsidy paid to public transport at the moment, and if 'full-fare' had to become the norm, all tickets would cost two to three times more than they cost now for the passenger paying for a ticket to board the bus, tram, metro or train. This would set in motion the much feared vicious circle that these much higher prices would diminish considerably the demand for public transport. This in turn would cause many prospective passengers to

either make fewer trips, (in Dutch we say 'blijven zitten achter de geraniums' – 'I am not ready for to age'), or would choose more often a bicycle or private car to go to a desired destination.

This change will have two consequences:

- (a) Income for public transport companies will diminish accordingly and therefore ticket-prices will have to go up, turning away more and more of the clientele. Then the attitude develops that we can do with less public transport which eventually opens the phase in which so few vehicles are needed that it is not justifiable any more to continue with this kind of service to the citizens. That is the end for all public transport.
- (b) At the same time the influx of more drivers using a private vehicle will flood the existing roads- and car park-infrastructure, which will cost all car-drivers more congestion-hours (and their costs) and raise the demand for more investments (costs for the taxpayers) in an already expensive road/park-system.

We simply cannot afford to do so. And if we shift indeed from more private-car-use to more public-transport-use, substantial financial means become available in our societies to answer other needs we feel individually or collectively.

The answer must be "no".

Fully-paid fares in public transport have become impossible.

Subsidizing is not only acceptable, it is a need. Full-fare policies risk the disappearance of public transport.

Subsidized travel?

In most public transport systems we observe that passengers pay (1) a fare individually, as traveler, which covers only part of the real costs. On top of this all tax-payers also pay (2) collectively, to cover part of the real costs. Generally, passengers call this collective payment: subsidy. Tax-payers call this a transportation-tax.

Public transport companies deliver subsidized services to the general public. To travel subsidized on public transport is anyhow already a fact in all public transport systems. What is really under discussion is only the question whether this subsidy could rise to 100 percent of the costs, or should stay at the level we have already accepted, mostly a percentage of between 25% and 50%.

A principled practical objection against subsidized public transport is no longer possible as non-subsidized systems do not exist anymore anywhere.

But 'fare-free'?

Is this not too radical a conclusion? Why fully subsidized and not stick to partially subsidizing? In fact 'fare-free' is only a more extensively implemented subsidizing of transport. From one-third, or one-half, or two-third subsidization to pay for the full costs, we go to a one hundred percent subsidy paying for all costs. The principle to recognize and pay for the use of public transport from collective resources is already widely accepted. It is only the choice between full or partial implementation that still causes discussion and needs decision-making.

On top of other arguments in favour of fully fare-free public transport, recently, two more arguments stem from global developments. Therefor, we have to look a bit wider and further ahead, and we cannot be too restrictive and only look at today's traffic conditions and consequences.

These two developments are:

- We have to learn that our oil-dependency in our car-dominated society from so-called 'failed states' with weak state institutions, and from dictatorship-countries ('strong men'), where governments may come and go unexpectedly, has to end as we cannot rely on these dependencies for security-reasons.
- We also have to learn that today's development in which we burn more and more fossil oil has to be turned around if we want to end the dangerous climate shift, known as 'earth warming'.

It is a happy coincidence that the second motive helps also to stop our dependency for governance reasons.

Some remarks:

First of all, most passengers do not realize that they travel subsidized! Practically speaking, in all existing public transport-systems the 'normal' situation is that all of the *investment costs* (100 percent) are absorbed by a budget that originates from a public body, mostly municipal, regional and/or national public authorities. Half (50%) or more (60 to 90%) of the *functional costs* of the system are also covered from a public purse, which means they are paid by the general public through taxation.

Secondly, potential passengers obviously balance the disadvantages of the means of travel in any public transport system (privacy arguments and – very important – 'the vehicle does not pick me up from where I am and does not bring me where I have to go') against the privacy of the car/bicycle and its customer-adapted travel-moment, -places and -route.

Nevertheless, from research results we know that the price to pay is the most important choice determinant for European travellers. See at the end of this document the outcomes of *Eurobarometer 406*, (quote from page 7 of its conclusions):

'Reduced travel costs are frequently mentioned as a way to improve travelling within cities. *More than half of Europeans* believe that better public transport (56%) and *lower prices for public transport* (59%), would be the best ways to improve urban travel.' (*italics added*).

Thirdly, everyone can see that mostly - not in the rush-hours but at all other times of the day - many seats in public transport vehicles remain empty. Seats carry air. This means that all costs (investments, vehicle, energy, personnel, administration, organization and controls) have been made in vain and are not answered by manifest demand. Worse, perception-costs made to collect the fares, become proportionally more and more important until the point is reached where they surpass the receipts. And potential passengers, who cannot afford to pay, see (half) empty buses and trams which they cannot use.

Growth of ridership

The general and common experience everywhere (see later in this document the cases that are described in detail) is that offering fare-free travel in public transport immediately doubles ridership with much more passenger-growth coming in later weeks and months. (See on page 36 the impressive figures of 'De Lijn' the state-owned bus/tram/metro-company that runs all public transport vehicles in Flanders, Belgium, half their own, half contracted with private entrepreneurs). This extra ridership does not need more input in investments and functional costs as, also in most cases, in first instance sufficient empty seats are still available in the vehicles, which are now being filled up.

Often the argument is used that we should not give away for free what has cost money to produce. Adherents of this view happen to like the phrase: 'there is no such thing as a free lunch'! Indeed, this lunch is not free, but costs already paid should also not be wasted: seats carrying 'air' instead of passengers are not justifiable either.

What is the question?

Therefore the question is not: shall we introduce fare-free public transport?

The real question is: [how do you justify us heavily subsidizing empty seats in public transport?](#)

Why do we offer everywhere in public transport systems subsidized seats that are not being used, while at the same time and place people in need of public transport cannot use these seats as they cannot afford the subsidized prices, and resign from travelling?

Secondary question: if we already pay from the public purse part of the costs, why do we stick to that portion of the costs and refrain from paying all the costs collectively?

Thirdly, what criteria are used to decide which part of the costs has to be paid collectively from the public treasury as subsidy? And how much, if any, should be paid by the passengers, those persons who directly

benefit from making use of public transport? Is that because their individual benefits are more or less important than the collective benefits for the whole of society?

To pay the full costs collectively is at one end of the equation, called '*fare-free*' or '*zero-fare*' *public transport*. The other end, no subsidy at all, is unachievable (see before).

Is somewhere between the two: '*fare-free*' and '*no subsidy at all*' a useful compromise possible that will be beneficial to passengers and society alike? And what are the consequences for public transport if *all* or *only part* of the costs are paid collectively by everybody?

In developed, service-oriented, and industrialized economies, as is the case and is the normal situation all over Europe, the number of commuter-passengers each day is so high that without mass-rail-transport (in the Netherlands daily 1.2 million train passengers-commuters and as much in local and regional busses and trams, though these are not exactly the same persons) these economies could not function. Or, these economies / societies would have to change considerably their spatial organization of housing and workplaces adapting these to a situation without the public transport systems that carry so many workers to their jobs and back home again and customers to their shops and services-outlets. The road-system cannot possibly carry all those commuters, also not if they would begin to drive or to share a car in order to answer their travel-needs. Therefore also, recent efforts to get 'smart cities' to use inclusive car-sharing, are not sufficiently an answer to the needs for urban mobility.

It is time to turn to other costs and benefits related to fare-free public transport. Whatever happens in the transport-sector influences road-safety, accidents, air-quality, health, space requirements for roads and parking of cars, environment and their costs of investments and functional costs.

Social and economic policy

Many people, also most policymakers, mobility-researchers and transportation-planners, think that *fare-free public transport* is an 'unfair' proposal as people should pay for services they buy, as they also pay for rent of their house, for sustenance and pleasure.

Policy makers love to say that 'what is for free, has no value', or 'there is no such thing as a free lunch as someone has to pay'. And it does not matter much whether they consider themselves to be politically from the left or from the right, or belonging to the centre, as making public transport fare-free is a political choice. And see the opening-pages of this document that show 'free' products in a great variety of goods and circumstances, whereas also the payments are done by 'a third party', either a public body or a private company or person delivering without pay but receiving another 'price'.

Making public transport fare-free is a political choice

Few people recognize immediately that there is not much difference between:

- *on the one hand*
our collective payments for parks in the city, street lighting, free car-parking along the curb, naming of roads, including the building of bicycle- and pedestrian paths in the road-designs, free public education, the costs of the police force and the fire-brigades (the last ones in particular we are happy to pay collectively, hoping that they will never have to serve us as an individual).
- *but on the other hand*
serving all the inhabitants and users of a town by offering better access to all their needs by providing fare-free public transport, as we do already in some countries with delivery of news, entertainment, culture and reporting about sports by radio and television.

Indeed, also the national public radio and TV broadcasting is mostly paid from tax paid by all, and not depending on usage. In the Netherlands a special annual license-fee for radio and TV per household was paid (last year 1999 f194.00, some €88.00). Now radio and TV are fare-free, they are paid from the national treasury. In 2014, in the UK the radio and TV license-fee costs £145.50, in Italy it is €113.50.

In the Republic of Ireland, water piped to the homes of everybody is 'fare-free'! It is only since 2014 that the political discussion has been opened to make citizens pay for their usage of water and the main question

is 'Why should water be free from individual costs to be paid?' 'Why should water be delivered for free to everybody without entering in the equation how much water everybody is using?' Interesting to note is that since over thirty years, in Ireland all senior-citizens (over 66 years) travel fare-free on public transport. That is not questioned at the moment.

The rich can pay!

The first reproach is mostly that the rich do not need to get their public transport for free as they are rich and do not need free hand-outs. Our comforting thought is that rich people generally do not use the available public transport. They prefer anyhow to use their private car. And it must be recognized that the private car, seen as an extension of the private home, has many great advantages, the more so if a family has more than one car for other family-members (in most European countries about 20 percent of households have two or more cars available for use, however some 20 percent have no car at all). The remaining 60 percent have one car, but if the income-earner in the family departs from home in the morning with the car, the rest of the family is deprived from a private means of locomotion. We are not saying that car-owners have to change habits and should use the public transport system, use is not compulsory. Everybody remains free to make use of it or not. But some do not have that freedom.

FFPT is an equalizer

Basically, providing a city with fare-free-public-transport means that those that pay tax, or pay on average more tax, share more of the cost also for the public transport, independently from being user or non-user. Remarkable is that those that do not pay tax, or pay on average less tax, are probably - more often and more regular - users of public transport.

Fare-free-public-transport (FFPT) is an *equalizer of opportunity*: more and poorer people have a chance to satisfy their mobility needs. Chances are higher that richer people anyhow answer their mobility needs individually. This resembles that people with large gardens at home are less in need of public parks but most likely pay most of the costs of public parks. Similarly, people that exclusively use their own car for their mobility, do not need bicycle and pedestrian-paths, but nevertheless pay for them.

FFPT is more than transportation policy

This approach also contradicts the usual idea that FFPT is in the first place a transportation policy, at best influencing the modal split of users of means of transportation, more favorable for public transport and therefore saving on traffic road-space and on parking lots. All of this concerns everybody, as expensive urban space can be used more for more profitable purposes. This is in everyone's interest.

Indeed, FFPT influences the mobility-satisfaction of everybody, and in that sense it is a transportation policy that allows more people to use the buses and tramways and metro and takes at least some car-drivers off the road as they prefer, for some of their mobility-needs, to make use of the available public transport.

On average the use of public transport will rise because of FFPT, and the use of individual motorized vehicles will diminish. The great advantage of the latter consequence is that every car that does not join the traffic flow, allows the other car-drivers more traffic- and parking-space.

FFPT offers structure

If FFPT is introduced as a structural component in city-politics, over the years it will influence city-planning, location-choices for dwellings and enterprises, and mobility-patterns of residents and visitors. Health care will be cheaper as less individual motorized traffic, all other factors remaining equal, will cause fewer accidents, and fewer deaths and injuries on the road. On average, every death in traffic on the road is statistically accompanied by seven severely wounded and 21 lightly wounded casualties. Also costs can be prevented that are mostly covered collectively, including insurance-payments, which are nothing else but a collective precaution in order to level unexpected costs of life.

FFPT and health

Environmental quality will rise because of diminishing air-pollution which in turn also creates a healthier environment. From Rotterdam-data we know that the average age inhabitants of Rotterdam reach, is three years less than the average for the Netherlands. This outcome is ascribed to the air pollution in the city. A

less desired outcome is that it is likely that some of today's pedestrians and cyclists will switch to using public transport more. On the other hand, traffic research has already proven that at least some of the car-drivers will turn for part of their traffic-movements to the bicycle, or walk (which again also is healthier).

Walking is on the rise with fare-free public transport for the older citizens. As they will answer their mobility needs more per bus, tram and subway, they will make less use of a car to reach their destinations, and by definition walk more to reach the stops of the public transport. Walking has a positive effect on personal health.

Research to prove this is reflected in an evaluation of the free bus pass in England, see:

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/newsandeventspggrp/imperialcollege/newssummary/news_21-9-2012-10-10-27

'Free bus passes have health benefit, say researchers', result from research by Imperial College, London, over four years of data. 'They found that people with a bus pass are more likely to walk frequently and take more journeys by "active travel" - defined as walking, cycling or using public transport'.

FFPT is important for satisfaction of societal needs

The real significance of FFPT lies in the solution it offers to several societal needs:

- less isolation and loneliness for the elderly,
- it helps the poorer segments of society in reaching their destinations,
- it also helps the poor as available income is not spent on travel but can be used to cover other needs such as food, clothing, holidays,
- better use of public and private space,
- it helps combat environmental pollution and upholds values as clean air, water and soil,
- it helps to lower numbers of traffic accidents and road-deaths and -injuries,
- it deals for all with accessibility of all urban amenities, very important in a time of concentration in larger units and mostly single units for services to be delivered. The fewer of these services, such as healthcare, education, churches, sport-facilities remain, the longer the distances that need to be covered by the clients.

Redistribution of costs of living and incomes

Most important is that fare-free public transport diminishes the daily costs of living for the less privileged, that can spend that portion of their income that otherwise would go to bus- and tram-fares, to satisfy other needs. In fact, FFPT means that the collectivity of the inhabitants of a particular municipality, city, conurbation, or region, pays for the building and functioning costs of a transportation service, available and in reach for all, and paid by all according to their available means. Most likely the richer inhabitants may pay more and use less, while the poorer in the same jurisdiction will pay less and use more. Just as is the case with other collective goods: 'the common goods'. Most likely, money saved on transportation costs by the less-privileged will be used in the local economy, an important side-effect for all small retailshops. This in turn may cause that locally the area becomes or remains attractive for residency, stimulates the local economy, and creates sources for local tax.

Collective contracts

The survival of the local and regional public transport systems depends for a large part on collective contracts that guarantee income and passengers, like for instance the contract between the Dutch Government, the over 600,000 students of the country, and the public transport companies, guaranteeing sufficient passengers and income to the transport companies. [See the description later in this document under 'the Netherlands' (p. 60-62).] Such contracts could also be made with other groups in society such as the sick and the poor, or those suffering from physical or financial disabilities, without access to a private car. Either because they do not own a car or because the household-car leaves home early in the day to bring the money-earner in the household to his or her workplace, leaving the rest of the family without such a means of locomotion, and which makes them totally dependent on bicycle and public transport.

In general, fare-free public transport makes society less car-dependent.

'Mobility-poverty'

The latter category of the population, the other members of one-car-families, once that car has gone to the workplace of one of the family-members, is an important concern. In very rough data summarizing the presence and use of cars in households we observe that between 20 and 25 percent of households do not

have a private car at all, and another 60 percent see the one car of the family depart in the early morning hours, leaving the rest of the family most of the day without means of transportation. Among these family-members, the sick, the poor, and other dependents are overrepresented. It is a shame that we do not seem to see that this means that more or less half of the population depends totally on bus, tram and metro.

Reserve system for car-drivers

Often overlooked in considerations and decisions on transportation-needs, is the presence of a public transport system and its frequent use as a reserve system for car-drivers. The sheer fact that part of the population makes (more or less frequently) use of the available buses and streetcars or metros, keeps the network functioning with its services available also for the non-users. As long as these latter ones do not have a problem with their car, they do not need to call upon the services offered by public transport. However, if at a mostly unwanted moment or place, the car fails to move, and you have to reach a destination, you are assured of the possibility to get there because the bus, tram or metro is there ready to serve you.

No revolution. The principle of FFPT is already widely accepted

As noted earlier, an impressive part of the costs of public transport is already paid by public funds and not by the individual passenger who buys a ticket. Obviously, there is general understanding that any city, town or region needs means of locomotion physically and financially available for all. The basic idea that public transport is a common good that has to be paid by all and not only by the users is accepted worldwide.

But questions remain:

How much? If costs are paid collectively, is the answer that we will pay collectively for half, or three-quarters, or all one hundred percent of the costs?

The subsidiary question is of course: **why only part of the costs?** If there is enough reason to pay for part of the costs of public transport from the public purse, why not the full costs, just as we all pay for the lighting of the streets, the traffic lights, direction-arrows, or in other fields of common concern to the citizens like education and health care, the military to safeguard independence and sovereignty, or the police force to maintain law and order, or the fire-brigade to save our properties from burning? We pay those last ones happily hoping that we will never need them.

Where? How large is the area accommodating fare-free public transport? Free only in your own neighborhood, your own municipality, your region, the country, all the way from Dublin to Warsaw or to Rome? Why the smaller or the larger area and distances? Only in local vehicles, not in regional buses for the stretches they drive through a FFPT-area? Yes, in buses and trams, but not on the train? Mostly, train services are excluded from FFPT if a particular area is served by FFPT-buses. Or, for instance in Belgium, where seniors enjoy a low fare for any distance they travel on the train. From some of the islands near the coast of Ireland local folks may travel by air fare-free but only four times a year maximum.

When? Is it useful and practical to restrict the number of days or hours when we can use FFPT? In many places we see that the hours before 9am are excluded. Why only from 9am onwards? Why not on some days? Not on particular hours? In *Melbourne*, FFPT is used as a means to diminish the rush hour peak of travelers in the early morning hours. If you check in and out before 7am, enjoy an 'Early Bird Fare', see <http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/myki/myki-money/>. Travel is free using myki (the Melbourne PT-card) on the electrified train network before 7am on a weekday. To receive a free travel entitlement, including Early Bird and seniors free weekend travel, you need a positive myki money balance to touch on. *Chengdu* in China (over 4 million inhabitants) has a similar policy on over a hundred buslines. There is a double advantage as those passengers that come so early in the morning, make their return travel mostly in the early hours of the afternoon, and by doing so diminish also the rush later on the days. Authorities often fear that making FFPT available always, will exhaust available seats. Yes, before 9am is the rush-hour, but any senior citizen after one experience at an early peak-hour, knows that he is better off to travel at a later time and will not make use any more of FFPT before 9am. He rises at 8am, takes breakfast and will be on his way only after 09.00. There is no reason to oblige. The once-in-a-life-time-need to travel earlier will not likely be repeated after the experience in an overloaded vehicle. He or she will repeat that experience only if real need exists, but this will happen only rarely.

If FFPT is practiced in daytime, should it also be offered at night? Or should anybody boarding a bus at night (and by definition not use his or her private car) also receive FFPT to reduce accidents in the dark hours on the road? A great variety of fare-free days exist in public transport: particular market-days, holidays, tourism-weeks, special occasions - for instance when the authorities prefer to see fewer private cars coming to the city for a big sports-event and offer that day FFPT.

Who? will enjoy FFPT? Everybody, as is for instance the case in the city of Żory (see p. 75-79) in Southern Poland, or as it was in Aubagne (see p. 44-47) in Southern France, both cities with roughly 100,000 inhabitants and many visitors. Or, will it be only for inhabitants of the municipality (locally registered in the books) as is the case in Tallinn, (see p. 28) and not for visitors? Or, will it be selective for particular sub-groups in the population, as for instance children aged 0 – 2 years old (everywhere), or the physically handicapped and/or their accompanying care-givers (nearly everywhere)? Or, will public transport be made fare-free available for arriving air-passengers as in Geneva (see p. 11 and 94-96)?

All questions need to be assessed in transportation- and traffic-research. But they need also to be considered in more general economic and social terms. Travel costs show up in all budgets. For everybody, travel is part of one's life-experience. Travel impacts on your living-space, your contacts, and your future. Travel solves problems of space and time against costs that have to be paid, either individually or collectively.

However, with only transportation and traffic studies we will never learn to see all aspects of life and economy and society. Multi-dimensional and multi-sector approaches are needed. Special attention is needed for the decision-makers as well as for those that are dependent on their decisions. In particular in the case of fare-free public transport, a worrying aspect is that decisions to go or not to go for FFPT is mostly taken by those that never use public transport, those that are not dependent on public transport, and those that are not bothered by the 'how much' discussion and by the question 'whose' travel should be paid.

These studies can be done theoretically, and practically, as the answers can also be sought in the daily reality of existing FFPT as it has already been established in quite a number of cities, while in some it has been established and later on is abolished again. Later in this document, attention will go to practical realisations, under all kind of circumstances and conditions in a great variety of places. Let us first turn to some theoretical approaches.

Theoretical studies

What arguments have been used, what research has already been done in the past, to find the theoretical answers? Do we need only to make an inventory of existing studies and their outcomes? Do we need new studies as outcomes of earlier studies are contradictory?

Are perception-costs of the collection of fares higher than the remaining income that can be used for the functioning of the system? What are the local circumstances, geographical situations as well as political networks and ideologies, which influence decision-making? Most likely, in differing circumstances, differing solutions are required.

A small bibliography

For all:

Everybody receiving this document is invited to send data and documents about the subject 'fare-free public transport':

- Who pays?
- What is paid?
- How much is paid?
- Who benefits?

in terms of solving his transport problems and in other respects: finance, work, housing, education, safety, environment, health, etcetera.

Interesting could also be any study opposing and explaining why fare-free public transport is (un-)desirable and should not become general policy in the EU, (see p.21 and at the end of this document under 'Opponents' views' the article by Nils Fearnley, *Free Fares Policies: Impact on Public Transport Mode Share and Other Transport Policy Goals*).

Please send your documents or references to michel@vanhulsten.com for review and use in this document. Please mention whether they are available to you and could be delivered and placed on the website for the conference without infringement on author's rights.

(1)

The website

<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/freepublictransport/Conferences>

offers links to the reports and data presented in 11 conferences, meetings, and a Summer School on FFPT – Fare-Free Public Transport, beginning on 27-28 March 2012, the *Eurocities Mobility Forum* held in Helmond, the Netherlands, up to 13 January 2015, *Forum Free Public Transport is Possible all over Estonia*, held in Rakvere, Estonia.

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'Many governments are willing to invest hundreds of millions or even billions of euros to improve public transport systems. But they usually fail to ensure that capacity is used to the full. One answer is to change how we pay for public transport.'

'Forty years ago, the Dutch used 100 m² of urbanized space per person. Now this is 400 m². Theoretically this means that the average distance from person to person has grown from 10 to 20 meters. It has doubled. This is the basic explanation for our growing mobility. The average person uses more space and the distances between destinations are growing. And our needs for contacts are growing.

The expansion of urbanized space is caused not so much by our growing population, but to a greater degree by our increasing wealth. Richer people have bigger houses and gardens, greater assets, more cars (in Western-Europe 20% of households have already two cars) and make more trips per day, as poorer people. As a consequence, mobility grows with wealth.

A reliable expectation is that our wealth and income will grow by an additional 45 per cent over the next thirty years. As people become richer, commuting and other journeys become relatively cheaper, while the average commuting time remains relatively constant. Now able to travel longer distances to work, people look for places to live, work and spend leisure time at ever more distant locations.

Culture is changing too. The number of single households is growing. More people of foreign descent and more women are driving instead of using public transport. Travel patterns are becoming more criss-cross, reflecting the rise in multiple purpose journeys for work, childcare, shopping and recreation, for which cars are extremely well suited. Moreover, people continue to use their cars as they get older as long as they feel healthy and fit enough. The attractions of the private car are obvious.'

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Abstract

This article investigates the merits of free public transport as a means to achieve a number of transport policy objectives, including mode shift towards public transport. It outlines some political and societal motivations behind proposals for free and low fare schemes, and presents key economic principles for public transport pricing. Examples of free fare schemes mainly from Europe are summarised and their impacts synthesised. Although free public transport at a first glance may seem attractive both from economic, social and environmental perspectives, the message learnt from a number of schemes is that free public transport offers poor goal achievement in all these respects, and at a high cost. The main effect is a huge growth in patronage, up to 13-fold increase is reported, of which the larger brunt is shifted from walk/cycle, or induced. The effects on car traffic levels are marginal and typically they are offset already after a few years' traffic growth. Successful free public transport schemes are those whose goal is mainly to grow patronage. Congestion relief, social and environmental benefits are best achieved with more targeted measures, or in combination with such measures.

See also at the end of this document his conclusions

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In 20 pages a very compact and intensive review of all diversification in fare-free public transport modalities in a great number of cities around Europe (in German).

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150121, from: Johansson Agneta A [<mailto:agneta.a.johansson@avesta.se>]

Avesta 22 000 Inhabitants.

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Anna-Lena Söderlind, Uppdragsledare

Ulrik Berggren, John Mcdaniel, Handläggare

Jan Hammarström, Granskare

Ramböll Sverige AB

Pelle Bergs backe 3, 791 19 Falun, Telefon 010-615 60 00, Fax 010-615 20 00

www.ramboll.se, info@ramboll.com, Organisationsnummer 556133-0506

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European Conference of Transport Research Institutes

ECTRI, the European Conference of Transport Research Institutes, info@ectri.org, is an international non-profit organisation that was founded in April 2003. Its [members](#) are 28 major transport research institutes or universities from 19 European countries. Together, they account for more than 4000 European scientific and research staff in the field of transport.

Practical experiences

Luckily, in some municipalities and agglomerations forms of FFPT or partial application of the FFPT-financing system have been introduced. This offers opportunities for researching this phenomenon. What theoretical considerations are recognized in the practical reality of everyday politics based on FFPT?

Sometimes, FFPT is introduced on purpose only for a limited time, for instance where it is used to prevent traffic jams on major roads because of repair-work allowing some of the regular users to make free use of public transport on condition that their cars will stay home.

Paris is one of those cities where ‘fare-free’ is announced for all modes of public transport occasionally at days of strong air-pollution like a smog weekend in 2013 and again in 2015, but also the day of the Charlie Hebdo rally recently.

Sometimes, FFPT is limited to particular groups in the population, or only to the locally registered inhabitants, or includes also visitors/tourists belonging to particular groups.

Sometimes, FFPT is limited to only some hours per day, often only after 09.00 o’clock in the morning. In Chengdu all bus lines are free for everybody between 05.00 and 07.00 a.m. with the intention that a portion of the travellers move the timing of their use of the bus from the rush hours to these very early hours of the day. It also happens that a day in the week is excluded, for instance the Dutch Rail does not allow the use of the free tickets for the elderly included in their rail-passes on Friday.

Also of interest is the experience with those cases where a municipality abolished a system of FFPT, for instance in *Tilburg* in the Netherlands, a city of 150,000 inhabitants, where the elderly had FFPT meant to be a structural change in the local transportation policies in the framework of a municipal programme for fighting poverty, and where nevertheless, after some four years FFPT was abolished because of a change in the municipal political leadership. Or *Hasselt* in Belgium where the policy of FFPT for all citizens was introduced in 1997 to stay forever and where the decision to abolish it was taken in 2012 as per 1 January 2013, also because of changing political majorities.

Mostly vertical traffic is ‘fare-free’, horizontal is not! Why?

For all people that go up or down in a more than 4 floors apartment-complex, or a high-rise office-building, shopping mall, or an industrial estate, the use of the elevator for ‘free’ is normal.

Mostly elevators and escalators offer transport to all (public transport?), and the means of transportation are collectively used. They cost money but are ‘fare-free’ for all users. The collective costs to be paid are also independent from the height of the building. Those travelling high do not pay more than those travelling to lower floors.

Nobody is inclined to pay individually for making a trip up or down with the elevator of a high-rise building. We accept elevators and escalators as fare-free for those who use them.

A railway-station is a remarkable example of mixing fare-free escalators (vertical transport) with trains waiting to bring you to your destination against an individually paid fare (horizontal transport). The costs made to construct escalators in the railway-station are comprised in the total investment-costs of the station. For the station these are costs of functioning and maintenance foreseen in the budget of the railway-company or -station as for all other investments. For the passengers they are fare-free.

The investment-budget is composed on the income-side from contributions the passengers pay for their train-tickets, mostly supplemented with contributions from public funds raised from the taxpayers. Rarely taxpayers in the train realize that they contribute to their travel costs in two different ways as buyer of a ticket and as taxpayer. Users of fare-free public transport often do not realize that they contribute to paying the costs of the public transport system as taxpayers.

But, the 'Tour Eiffel'?

Please do not say now that you know that visitors have to pay for a visit to the Eiffel-tower in Paris (also for the vertical transport), and pay a fare to mount the hundreds of steps.

Yes, this is also true for other similar touristic destinations where you have to pay an entrance-fee which includes making use of the elevator or escalator. However, is this more than to pay for the tourist-value of the place?

Customers entering a shopping mall or high-rise department store often do not realize that only if they buy anything they also pay for the use of the escalators as the costs made for the escalators are covered from the sale-profits gained from the shoppers. If they only come to watch and see and do not buy, they travel in the building fare-free and do not contribute to help cover the costs.

It is interesting to note that for instance in *France* all workplaces with more than ten employees pay a tax, depending on the total salary of those working in that establishment. This tax pays the public transport systems, it lowers the ticket-prices to be paid by workers and customers who want to reach their destinations. Keeping the fares low favors the use of public transport, and helps to reduce the use of private cars which otherwise would clog the streets and parking-lots. In fact, because of this tax paid by the entrepreneurs, the workers receive an additional income, and shoppers do not realize that the lower price of the metro-ticket is nevertheless paid by them in the costs of a product or service bought in the city.

'*Rolling carpets*' in airports to bring passengers from passport-controls to their departure gates where they board the plane (and vice versa) are the very few examples of 'fare-free' horizontal transportation, but also here the costs are collectively paid from the fee the travellers pay for their flight-tickets. Part of the proceeds goes to the airport.

A very special fare-free 'rolling carpet' exists in the *Geneva-airport* extending far into the city and canton. Each arriving passenger can obtain a fare-free travel-ticket in the arrival hall from an anonymous automat that delivers individual fare-free tickets for all public transport in Geneva with a validity of 80 minutes. After arrival in an officially recognized hotel/motel/pension/harbour at the lakeside where a tourist-tax is paid, the ticket obtained in the airport can be exchanged into a 'regular' fare-free ticket valid for extension by four days. This helps to convince businessmen and tourists not to come to Geneva by car but to arrive by air and to use public transport while in Geneva. It helps to keep the usage of cars down, creates space in urban traffic lanes and in parking-lots, helps to cut air pollution, and enhances road safety which saves lives.

And - last but not least, it gives Geneva a hospitable reputation.

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INTERMEZZO – 1, not only ‘fare-free’

In this document we deal in particular with fare-free public transport.

The emphasis on public transport does not mean that we have lost sight of walking and cycling. Indeed, together with the use made of public transport, these modes offer the best alternatives for the use of the private car.



Mobility on foot and bicycle scores best if compared with shortcomings of the private personal car. The private car scores badly in many respects: safety, health, environment, economic costs. And - often neglected - the productivity of the car diminishes quickly after a given level of road- and parking-congestion has been reached. It is not without reason that public authorities and employers, once they want cost-effective policies for answering mobility- and access-needs, look first at walkers and cyclists, followed by public transport and only then consider the private car usage.

See: <http://www.crow.nl/vakgebieden/verkeer-en-vervoer/bibliotheek/kennisdocumenten/terugblik-landelijke-bijeenkomst-collectief-vervoer>

A fear often expressed by organisations of walkers and of cyclists, is that FFPT will mean shifting travellers from going on foot or bicycle to making use of the bus and rail, and this is considered an unhealthy development. Research in the Netherlands, *the* country of cyclists, has shown that indeed some travellers make the shift in this direction but in the totality of the travellers more car-drivers shift to public transport which is the desired result.¹

¹ The report by NEA/Ministry of Transport of Dec. 2005, *Hasselt ten opzichte van het OV in vergelijkbare Nederlandse steden*, [‘Public transport in Hasselt compared with some Dutch cities’] p. 6, concludes that ‘bicycle-use in Hasselt, compared with the Netherlands, has always been at a rather low level and that the introduction of fare-free public transport did not strongly influence the use of bicycles’. On p.15 is added

Nevertheless this point needs constant attention as also on other counts (costs of health, environment, investments-costs, costs of parking- and road-space) the shift in behaviour by travellers in their choice of means of transport, is an important element in all decision making on transport modes.

In the Netherlands is developed the so-called [Sumo Effectcalculator](http://www.crow.nl/vakgebieden/verkeer-en-vervoer/bibliotheek/kennisdocumenten/sumo-effectcalculator). This is an Excel-application that allows rather quick measurement of the effects of changes in behaviour with regard to mobility. It relates kilometrage, environment, health and traffic-safety and gives indications about the cost-effectiveness of those changes in behaviour.

[<http://www.crow.nl/vakgebieden/verkeer-en-vervoer/bibliotheek/kennisdocumenten/sumo-effectcalculator>]

The emphasis on fare-free also does not mean a need to oppose other policies that try to attract more passengers to public transport by improving the quality of the vehicles, the waiting areas, and the availability, punctuality and frequency of public transport. Neither to discard efforts to make use of new technologies/social media like those that make it possible to enter into peer-to-peer car sharing, better taxi-systems, and other models of making the private use of cars cheaper by improving driving habits or sharing the costs of buying, using and parking done communally.

For all:

Any information on similar gadgets, instruments in any one of the countries participating is welcome.

If new information reaches michel@vanhulten.com before the end of August, this will be made available to the consultations on this draft of the paper in the conference in Avesta on 17-18 September 2015. The results could be placed here on changes in choices made between the possible modes of transport.

Text-proposals are cordially invited. Please forward to michel@vanhulten.com

that the introduction of the fare-free bus for everybody, multiplied the use of the bus 13 times between 1996 and 2004, 'nevertheless the use of car and bicycle did not diminish substantially'.

A later report written on behalf of the ministry of Transport, *Benchmark OV Vlaanderen* ['Benchmark Public Transport in Flanders] (21 April 2006), also concludes 'the growth in the use of public transport has not caused a decrease in making use of bicycle or going on foot'.



Space consumption: Bicycles

Bus

Cars

INTERMEZZO – 2, global issues, oil and environment

The assumption is justified that we will also have to look into the interests which (1) the car-industry (and their sales-agents) - (2) road-building and (3) oil-industry have in maintaining continuous and strong growth in the use of cars all over the world and therefore cannot be fond about promotion of fare-free public transport as this 'eats' into their part of the mobility-pie. What role plays lobbying in this respect? Role of climate change?

This leads to the question: how much do these industries influence governmental decision-making and -pending on accommodating the use of private cars?

Can a lobby in favor of public transport withstand the force of these mighty conglomerates of businesses?

Up till June 2015 no contribution has been received covering this subject

Who produces a first draft text on this issue?
Please send to michel@vanhulten.com

B. FACTS

Introduction

Most important, and therefore presented as the first country under this heading - is 'Estonia' because of the development of 'fare-free public transport' in Tallinn.

Most recent is that the *Tallinn Development and Training Centre* organised its 'Local Governments forum' on this issue of '*Free public transport is possible all over Estonia*' in Rakvere, which is a county town in Estonia, on the 13th of January 2015, using the knowledge gained in two years of practicing fare-free public transport.

Estonia was already ahead of all other countries in Europe developing public transport as a common good financed from public resources. It is clear now that the national ambitions reach even higher. Results until now are that, not only Tallinn, the capital city (for all inhabitants registered in the city), but also the municipalities Keila town since February 2013, rural Keila (surrounding that town) since October 2014, and the Otepää rural municipality from the beginning of 2015, have introduced FFPT. These latter three abolished ticketing systems all together and thus are free to everybody.

Now the ambition is to roll this out all over Estonia, also including all domestic ferry connections. That this is not a whim of the moment becomes clear as the Head of the public transport department from the National Road Administration, Ingmar Roos, provided calculations to prove how much it would cost to make county lines all over Estonia free for everybody. Current annual ticket-income is ca. 17 million euros. With an additional provision for replacing some commercial lines, and for additional capacity required to service the additional passenger-flow, total financial costs could reach 30 million euros per year. To pay such an amount from the public budget is obviously nothing else, but just a matter of political will.

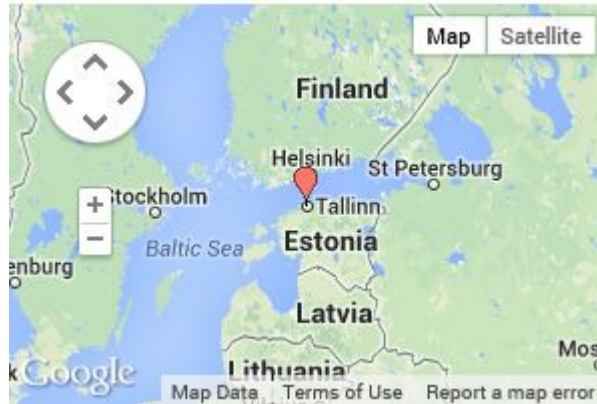
In the following pages and in alphabetical order per country after Estonia and per city/municipality, facts will be presented to show the extent of application of the fare-free public transport modality of solving citizens' needs for enhanced mobility in a more safe and healthy, and -less costly, and less unfriendly environmental way. It is most likely that the number of cities and regions presented in this document, where one or another form of FFPT exists could have been much longer, if information would have reached us. This inventory is therefore only the beginning, we continue to work on expanding and informing on all examples. The main lines of thinking, conceptualizing and implementing all over Europe is, however, already impressing.

Information about what is missing here, is most welcome.
Please send to michel@vanhulten.com

1. Estonia

(info from Tallinn, Allan Alaküla, Allan.Alakyla@tallinnlv.ee
see 130617, Tallinn capital of fare free public transport
(www.tallinn.ee/freepublictransport), and from website
<http://farefreepublictransport.com/category/news/> of Planka, Sweden

Latest: *Fare-free Public Transport is possible all over Estonia!* Go to → website:
<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/freepublictransport/Forum-Free-Public-Transport-is-Possible-All-Over-Estonia>



Eltis, the urban mobility observatory, [<http://www.eltis.org/discover/news/free-public-transport-successfully-introduced-tallinn-estonia-0>]

Fare-free public transport successfully introduced in Tallinn (Estonia)

Following a 2012 referendum, on 1st January 2013 *Tallinn* became the first European capital to provide fare-free public transport to its residents with the aim of achieving significant modal shift away from cars. During 2012, international attention was drawn to the public referendum in Tallinn, in which $\frac{2}{3}$ of the local residents voted in favour of making local public transport services free. At the beginning of this year, the measure was implemented.

It was made possible by the fact that ticket sales account for a relatively low, 33% share of the income of the Tallinn public transport provider. This means an additional cost of 12 million EUR to the local municipality, which it believes to be worthwhile if it makes people get out of their cars in favour of using the Estonian capital's well-developed public transport network.

Free travel is offered to all of the 435,000 Tallinn residents. Non-residents still have to purchase a ticket to use any of the city's public buses, trams or trolleys.

Although time is needed to evaluate if the anticipated number of car drivers really switch to public transport, the measure also aims to improve social cohesion, by providing equal opportunities for mobility for all strata of society. Improved social welfare, safer and calmer streets and cleaner air - this is what the local municipality hopes to achieve with this measure.

At the same time, on the 1st of January 2013, Tallinn began to profile itself as a strong advocate for fare-free public transport. Spreading the word about this innovation in public transport is first of all done by example, and secondly by holding conferences, and promoting studies and networking with other municipalities in and outside Europe.

A Tallinn 'zero fare' Summer School was held at the University of Tallinn on 22-24 August 2013, with guests from the FFPT-experience-cities Hasselt in Belgium, Chengdu in China, and Aubagne in France, as well as from the sister-fare-free public-transport cities of Żory and Zabki in Poland. The EU-commissioner of transport, the Mayor of Tallinn, and researchers from Tallinn University as well as from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm were also present.

(See: <http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/tasutauhistransport/>)

Tallinn: Public transport should be available to everybody

Before 2013, Tallinn subsidized local public transport by 70 percent and felt that it was hard to motivate

why such a hefty amount of public funding should be spent on an activity that is too expensive for some inhabitants to use. Instead, the city proposes now that if public transport is something that is worthy of such a large public funding, it should be available to everybody. All citizens should have the right to use it. Also, before Tallinn removed the fares in 2013, the share of public transport users had slowly but steadily shrunk. Spending a lot of money on new buses and trams did not change that trend.

After making the local public transport 'fare-free' for registered residents of the city, ridership went up by 21 percent, out of which eight percent had never used it before. The number of residents accustomed to drive cars to get around, shrunk by nine percent. Since the removal of fares in public transport, a 14 percent decrease in car traffic, as well as a 15 percent increase in public transport users, is noted. 68 percent of the citizens use public transport as their main way of getting around, a number that has grown by 13 percent. What strikes you on the streets of Tallinn is that the buses are travelling at a significant speed while the cars are stuck in traffic. This is due to the reserved bus lanes that were implemented just before the fare was abolished.

The one criticism that can be made is, that Tallinn did not make public transport fare-free *for all*, but only *for registered citizens of the city*. This limitation is explained by the motivation for the FFPT in Tallinn. If more inhabitants also register as citizens of Tallinn, the municipality gets more municipal tax revenue. This has been successful. Tallinn gained 19,000 inhabitants, the annual increase of income tax from those residents exceeds well the annual rise of costs of FFPT, which is 12 million euros.

Tallinn however has not fully publicly financed public transport. From non-residents there is still collected ticket revenue, 4,5 million euros (down from 5 million in 2012) out of 59-million 2014 public transport budget (up from 53 million in 2012).

One critique of FFPT is that people stop walking or using bicycles, once the zero-fare policy is introduced. This happens to some extent also in Tallinn, but the fact that so many people make less use of cars has a much larger impact on public health, road safety, environmental quality, and social life. And, paradoxically, car drivers are less harmed by immobility, road congestion and delays, as those who continue to drive a car enjoy more space available on the road and in parking-lots.

Tallinn becomes "capital of free public transport"

The results so far have been encouraging. The Tallinn authorities believe that, if done right, fare-free public transport schemes can encourage a shift from cars to buses and trams, can cut congestion and traffic emissions, can boost economic development, and can make destinations in town more accessible for all, also diminishing solitude in poorer sections of the urban society.

Hasselt experience

For Tallinn, the introduction of fare-free public transport came after various experiences in other countries, usually in smaller towns. One of the trailblazers was the Belgian town of Hasselt, which in 1997 made all buses within the city limits fare-free for everybody. This scheme was successful in persuading people to use public transport: passenger numbers rose from about 1000 per day in 1997 to 12,600 ten years later. (See for detailed figures later [pages 40, 43-44](#)). More attention being paid recently to the financial *costs* of the service than to the social, economic, health and safety *profits*, made the City Council of Hasselt focus more on 'fare-free' as a financial burden, and to decide a partial abolition of the FFPT at the end of 2013. Internationally this has been understood as a full departure from the fare-free public transport system, which is not the case (see the later description of the Hasselt-experience, [p. 44](#)).

For Tallinn, the motivation to go for a fully public finance based solution of all public transport in the city depended on a careful consideration of the budgetary implications for the city, balanced against social, environmental and fiscal benefits. In short, the city's annual public transport budget was €53 million. In this budget were ticket revenues included to an amount of only €17 million, €5 million of which was contributed by passengers from elsewhere, foreigners, and Estonians resident in other municipalities. The introduction of fare-free public transport for citizens registered in Tallinn actually meant an additional cost of €12 million for the city-budget. This was judged to be a reasonable price to pay when considered against the benefits of the scheme.

Mobility for all

The key issue was mobility for all. Pensioners and youths already benefited from free public transport in Tallinn. Now, the city wanted to make it easier for jobless people to travel in search of work, and for low-paid workers, to take a job not hindered by high costs of commuting that would make the income from the job less attractive.

Early observations strengthen the impression that economic development in general has been boosted. This indeed proved to be an incentive for stimulation of the local economy. Observed is also that people tend to spend more if their mobility is for free. More time is spent outdoors in the evenings and weekends.

Cleaner city air

Fare-free public transport was expected to produce environmental benefits because of a modal shift away from cars, leading to less congestion and pollution. The expected reduction in carbon dioxide emissions is 45,000 tons annually. Noise abatement is a further benefit. Tallinn already has some electric public transport vehicles - trolley buses and trams - and has worked to improve its system of bus lanes so that public transport moves more smoothly and emissions from static traffic are minimized. All this helps to gain more than the introduction of FFPT alone could do.

It is too early to fully quantify the environmental benefits, but during the first quarter of 2013, traffic congestion in the center of Tallinn was down 15% compared to the end of 2012. Since the start of the scheme, public transport use has increased by 12.6%, and car use throughout the Tallinn area has been reduced by 9%. [These data may need updating to figures for 2014].

Slight declines in walking and cycling indicate that some walkers and cyclists switched to use fare-free public transport whereas previously they might have been deterred by ticket prices and chose to walk or cycle.

Fiscal benefits

Since it became known that fare-free public transport would be introduced only for locally registered residents of Tallinn, about 19,000 people (present already in the city but not yet administered in the municipal population register) registered as Tallinn residents. They come from an estimated additional 30,000 unregistered residents in the city. The fare-free public transport scheme obviously functioned as an incentive to register. On average, every additional 1000 residents bring the city about €1 million in additional annual tax revenues. This covers already the additional costs for the city-budget of making the public transport fare-free.

A solid foundation

Residency is important because the system works by distributing contactless travel cards to Tallinners. The use of fare-free public transport continues to be monitored and enforced, and non-residents, for now, must continue to pay transport fares.

Tallinn's system covers about 435,000 people and 480 public transport vehicles, making it the largest fare-free system in Europe. From this experience, the city offers a number of recommendations to other public authorities that may be considering similar schemes.

Ensure legitimacy

Fare-free public transport in Tallinn was only introduced after a referendum in which 75.5% of Tallinners voted for the scheme, and 24.5% voted against. The result meant that there was a strong public mandate for fare-free public transport, which enabled the city to invest in the scheme, including the introduction of the contactless travel card system so that data can be collected. The evident popularity of the scheme, and the referendum result, also mean that it will be difficult for fare-free public transport to be removed for political reasons, unless there is a similar level of public backing.

Before the introduction, several Tallinn politicians were sceptical, believing the idea would be expensive or unworkable. However, since the introduction of the scheme, there has been a 'political shift'. Now, 'no party voices to abolish the free ride for Tallinners'. Because of the greater mobility brought about by the

scheme, there is the sense that Tallinn has benefited in terms of its competitiveness: It is what the municipality is all about: fighting for people.

Size of additional subsidy

The second issue for municipal authorities to consider is the degree of public subsidy that is already provided to public transport. If the subsidy is greater than half of the overall cost, then you have good arguments to introduce fare-free public transport. In cities such as *London*, for example, there is almost no subsidy. This causes that making public transport fare-free would have a huge budgetary implication. For *Hasselt* in Belgium, the ultimate stumbling block was the costs.

Expansion of the scheme

Tallinn is presently considering how it can expand its scheme, through agreements with neighbouring municipalities, or even through extension to the national level and export abroad.

Tallinn is also looking east. It has established contacts with the Chinese city of *Chengdu* (14 million inhabitants), which is experimenting with fare-free public transport, combined with limitations on driving by car in the city centre (see for more details later in this document, p. 100). The two cities have established a dialogue on the issue, and representatives have been exchanged.

Tallinn Free Public Transport Expanded to Trains

It is a very exceptional development among cities to include the train in the fare-free public transport. The train is nearly everywhere excluded from this kind of local/regional agreements. However, Tallinn city and rail service company *Elron* have signed an agreement by which, as of October 28th of 2013, the city covers the costs of train rides for the citizens of Tallinn within the city limits.

The right to ride fare-free on trains is given to registered citizens of Tallinn who submit their *Ühiskaart* along with their ID on demand. Free ride is granted on westbound trains (route Tallinn-Laagri) and eastbound trains (Tallinn-Vesse).



When entering a train, riders are obliged to present their *Ühiskaart* and tell the cabin attendant their destination. The cabin attendant then validates the trip with a ticket sales device. In case the trip extends the city limits, passengers pay, Tallinn only covers the costs of the train ride within the city zone.

The main purpose of the agreement is to improve the living environment and the quality of life of Tallinn residents by integrating different types of public transportation. It is considered not reasonable to have parallel bus and train lines competing with each other. As observed so far, many train riders changed for buses on the city border, which in turn caused a need to increase the capacity of bus lines. The optimal use of train lines within Tallinn enables better organisation of resources.

'Elron attaches great importance to the bus and train transportation being an integral whole all over Estonia,' said Andrus Ossip, the CEO of Elron. In his mind, such solutions help popularise the use of public transport and create effective alternatives to riding cars.

Evaluation of the first three months of FFPT in Tallinn

Early after the introduction of FFPT in Tallinn an evaluation was made to get facts about the results of the recent change in policies with regard to the urban mobility. The outcomes of this research have been

published in a scientific publication, details see below. Main author was Oded Cats. Go to the website to read the full paper, [<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/tasutauhistransport/g13168s70247>] reproduced here are the 'Abstract' and the chapter 'Conclusion'.

Oded Cats and the paper presented in the Tallinn held international conference on fare-free public transport was listed in the proceedings (see earlier page 17) as Oded Cats, Swedish Institute of Technology, KTH (SE), *Evaluating the impacts of zero-fare public transport: Findings from the first three months of policy implementation(.pdf)*

When transferred to this document the text had as 'title' and has an 'abstract' and 'conclusions' as follows: *Public Transport Pricing Policy – Empirical Evidence from a Fare-Free Scheme in Tallinn, Estonia*, by Oded Cats, Triin Reimal, Yusak Susilo, all from the Centre for Transport Studies, Department of Transport Science, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden, Corresponding author: Oded Cats.

Address details:

Centre for Transport Studies

Department of Transport Science, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH)

Teknikringen 10, 114 28 Stockholm, Sweden

Phone number: +46 8 7908816, Fax number: +46 8 212899, cats@kth.se

'Paper submitted for presentation at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C., January 2014 and publication in the Transportation Research Record, Journal of the Transportation Research Board,

Word Count: ca. 6,000 words + 2 Tables + 2 Figures = ca. 7,000 words

quote

'Abstract

Cities worldwide are looking for new policies to attract travellers to shift from car to public transport. Policies focused on reducing public transport fares are aimed to improve social inclusion and trigger a modal shift. The City of Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, has recently introduced fare-free public transport (FFPT) in an effort to improve accessibility and mobility for its residents. The case of Tallinn is a full-scale real-world experiment that provides a unique opportunity to investigate the impacts of FFPT policy. This paper presents a macro-level empirical evaluation of FFPT impacts on service performance, passenger demand and accessibility for various traveller groups. In contrast to previous studies, the influence of FFPT on passenger demand was estimated while controlling for supply changes. The results indicate that the FFPT measure accounts for an increase of 1.2% in passenger demand with the remaining increase attributed to extensions made in the network of public transport priority lanes and increased service frequency. The relatively small effect could be attributed to the previous price level and public transport share as well as the short-term impact. The evidence-based policy evaluation is instrumental in supporting policy makers and facilitating the design of public transport pricing strategies.'

Unquote

Local Tallinn officials, specialists in the Tallinn Transport department, drew attention of the Stockholm-based researchers to the evident anomalies in the district split of data used by them, but it did not seem to bother the researchers. Interesting to note is that the KTH-team could not sufficiently explain (see the next page) why the results in Tallinn remain so far behind the results in all other cities where FFPT has been introduced. They recognize that later analysis of the outcomes of the new policy may show a different picture. Also mentioned is that one of the main policy objectives is to improve accessibility for low-mobility and disadvantaged groups, and that this requires a more detailed analysis of changes in travel patterns for different user groups.

[...]

Quote

'5. CONCLUSION

The impacts of a free-fare public transport policy in Tallinn, Estonia were evaluated empirically based on a before-after comparison and a public transport demand model analysis. Passenger demand increased by 3% following the introduction of FFPT. An analysis of supply variables reveals that the FFPT measure accounts for an increase of 1.2% in passenger demand with the remaining increase attributed to extensions made in the network of public transport priority lanes and increased service frequency. Districts with high shares of elderly and unemployed and low motorization rates were associated with higher increase in passenger demand when public transport became fare-free.

The analysis of modal shift impacts of FFPT requires distinguishing between generation effects and substitution effects. The former refers to trips that are now carried out by public transport that otherwise would not occur, while the latter refers to trips that without FFPT were done by some other mode and switched to public transport modes. Generation effects can thus indicate greater mobility and access to opportunities but could also be the result of unnecessary trips. Substitution effects represent mode choice changes with the most desired effect being that of public transport substituting car trips. In the case of Tallinn, the average trip length decreased by 10% which indicates that FFPT has resulted with a substitution effect from soft mode. There are no indications from speed changes of a modal shift from car. Further analysis requires the analysis of traffic counts.

The impact of FFPT on passenger demand in the case of Tallinn is considerably lower than the corresponding figures reported from elsewhere by FFPT programmes. The relatively small increase in passenger demand following the introduction of FFPT in Tallinn could be attributed to one or more of the following factors:

- ▶ Public transport fare was relatively low to start with and many user groups had an exemption before the introduction of full-scale FFPT
- ▶ Public transport share was relatively high (40%) to start with compared with previous cities that have implemented a FFPT policy
- ▶ The introduction of FFPT had to rebound a two decades long negative trend in the share of public transport

The prospects of FFPT would most likely depend on the existing share of ticket revenues in financing system operations costs and the cost of alternative travel modes - in particular, the private car – compared with the current fare level. In addition to the above caveats concerning the generality of results, the results reported in this study reflect the immediate impact of FFPT while other studies have considered the mid to long term impacts of such programmes. Paulley et al. (2006) found in their meta-analysis that fare elasticities increase over time since the change of fare take place.

Some studies did not account for supply changes and hence do not distinguish the supply effect from the FFPT effect. Even though the analysis presented in this study accounts for supply changes, it might be argued that there is a lag relationship between supply change and travel demand, which is manifested at a later period. Chen et al. [10] found that changes in service levels influence ridership in the same month and four months later. The same study found that demand is influenced by public transport fare with zero and ten months lag. A future study on how ridership trends evolve in Tallinn will allow accounting for potentially lagged effects and establishing the long-term impacts of FFPT. Furthermore, the analysis of FFPT impacts for various socio-economic groups was limited to the district level. One of the main policy objectives is to improve accessibility for low-mobility and disadvantaged groups, which require a more detailed analysis of changes in travel patterns for different user groups. A series of before-after questionnaires and travel diaries will facilitate the estimation of generation and substitution effects of the FFPT policy as well as changes in mobility patterns by socio-economic groups.

Unquote

<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/freepublictransport/Forum-Free-Public-Transport-is-Possible-All-Over-Estonia>

For the next edition of this paper and as evidence for the conference in Avesta on 17-18 September 2015, Tallinn is invited to deliver more data about the outcomes of the fare-free policy. Needed is a table with comparative data on passengers and vehicle-kilometers in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

If again it would look like a growth in ridership of only 3 percent since 2012, this would be most remarkable, and would need more research as it is a result totally different from experiences elsewhere with FFPT that show growths in ridership at least doubling if not much higher than with 100 or more percentages.

Recent links to the news in English about fare-free transport in Tallinn and Estonia:

Free public transit in Tallinn is a hit with riders but yields unexpected results, January 27, 2014, <http://m.tallinn.ee/eng/freepublictransport/Forum-Free-Public-Transport-is-Possible-All-Over-Estonia>
Includes also a link to 'Free transit in the U.S., for college students'.

14.01.2015, *Tallinn is the model of free public transport for Sweden and Poland*
http://m.tallinn.ee/eng/freepublictransport/Tallinn-is-the-model-of-free-public-transport-for-Sweden-and-Poland?&filter_otsing_uudis_rubriik_id=160

13.01.2015, *Mayor Edgar Savisaar: Free public transport for Estonia!*
http://m.tallinn.ee/eng/freepublictransport/Edgar-Savisaar-Free-public-transport-for-Estonia?&filter_otsing_uudis_rubriik_id=160

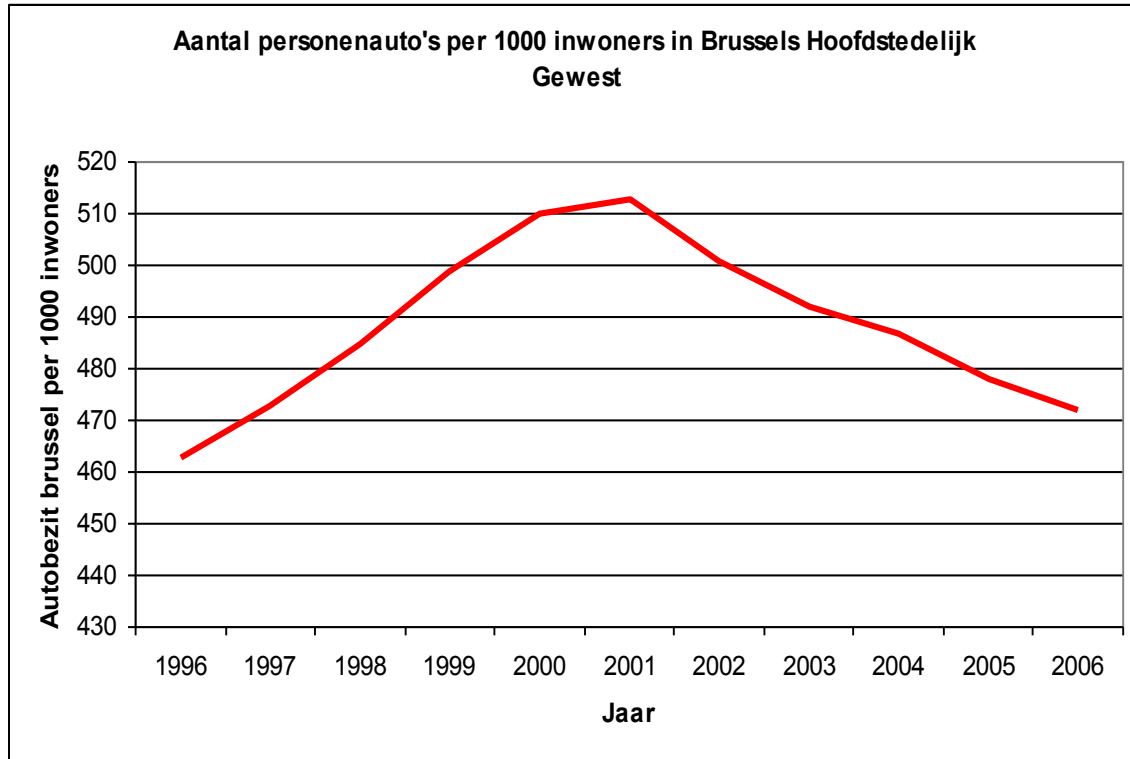
2. Belgium

Let us have a look at Belgium, in order to see a practical example that lasted more than ten years.

a) Fewer cars in Brussels

'Between 2003 and 2013 car traffic on Brussels' roads diminished by 7 percent', observed the Mobility Deputy Minister *Bruno de Lille*. 'Public transport, cycling and walking win'. (See - in Dutch - <http://www.knack.be/nieuws/belgie/steeds-minder-auto-s-in-brussel/article-normal-123768.html>, 3/01/14, 07:21 – and 07:21.) As the number of inhabitants grew in the same period by 16 percent, this development is the more interesting and important.

His message is in line with the data given in the following graph (*number of cars per 1000 inhabitants in the Brussels Region*) that was earlier published showing that if we go back more years the shrinking development of the 'car-system' in Brussels is the more remarkable. A constant rise in ownership of cars till 2001 was turned into a diminishing trend. No research was done into this phenomenon, but the assumption that it has to do with the introduction of FFPT for seniors since 2002, is not totally unrealistic.



The deputy-minister recognises that fewer cars do not mean less traffic jams on the road. More space is taken by reserved 'fast bus-lanes', trams and 'zone-30-cars' (the central part of the City of Brussels, 4.7 km²). Promotion of other means of locomotion is done in the 'Mobility week' (this year 2015 from 16 to 22 September) with on Sunday 20 September a 'car-free' Brussels agglomeration, and fare-free local and regional public transport for all.

Recent Belgian experience shows the enormous effects of fare-free public transport on mobility and in particular the rise in use of public transport once made fare-free. This is similar with other experiences in life. Everywhere, all consumers, always love 'free' products and services, the normal market-reaction is that consumption grows.

Make public transport 'fare-free' and the vehicles will begin to be fully utilized. With many varied consequences.

First introduced in 1997 in *Hasselt* and in *Brussels* in 2002, it was also extended in 2002 throughout Belgium so that the disabled, the elderly (65+), and children under six (0-6) enjoy fare-free public transport. Their travel-costs are paid by the regional governments. The Flemish Government paid €15 million for the first year of 'free' public transport in 2001 for the 1 million elderly in the Flemish Region 'Vlaanderen': €15 per senior per year.

Any other contracting party, such as a (public) municipality or a (private) company, can make similar agreements with the public transport companies. The Postal Service, the telephone company Belgacom, and the Federal Government, have already made such agreements for their staff, sometimes including the partners of their staff.

(In later studies in the **Netherlands** it was found remarkably enough that the same €15.00 per senior per year were the outcome of calculations in several Dutch regions and cities, if 'politics' wished to make public transport fare-free for the elderly. In any case this rather modest price everywhere satisfied the needs of the cost-calculating transport-companies that should deliver the product. Taking into account that not all elderly people make use of the privilege of fare-free public transport, on average everywhere in the

years between 2000 and 2008 the costs for the transportation companies always were on average covered sufficiently by paying some 15 euros per year per senior from the public budget.

Often played also a role that for car-parking in the same municipalities much higher contributions from the public purse were needed to keep the parking-rates low on behalf of the accessibility of shops and work-locations.

As an example I can give that in my home-town *Lelystad* with about 75,000 inhabitants, at the same time the seniors got their public transport fare-free which was calculated to cost the municipal budget €25,000, the car-parkings were short of €300,000 which was also paid by the municipality. This coincidence helped to convince city-councilors to decide in favor of fare-free public transport for seniors, 7/24).

On top of this most general offer in **Belgium** came that the Federal Government agreed to pay €79 million each year for its 65,000 employees (including railway workers), to get fare-free public transport beginning in late 2004. Gradually, private companies (the minister recently mentioned '1100 companies') began to include the offer of fare-free public transport in collective labor contracts with their staff. The companies pay 80 per cent, the government 20 per cent.

Also about 100 of the 300 Flemish municipalities have reached agreements with the regional public transport company '*De Lijn*' covering additional segments of their populations. Everywhere young people aged 12 to 24 enjoy cheap annual season tickets for local and regional lines, which have become highly popular.

We see that the Belgian model takes an approach different from the normal pricing:

Do not raise the cost of using private cars, but reduce the price of public transport.

Do not use the stick (for instance road-pricing), but offer a carrot (FFPT) if you wish the public transport to grow!

Table 1. Data from **De Lijn**, local & regional transport company in Flanders (Belgium)

Year	Person-nel	passengers	buses	Rail-vehicles (trams coast, Antwerpen, Gent, East-Flanders)	Net income from transport-activities in €	Accomplished kilometrage
1991	4.795	216.771.000			91.500.000 ²	116.645.000
1996	4.997	214.846.501			111.377.773	
2000	5.813	240.409.886			113.143.435	
2001	6.186	265.004.679			110.359.723	
2002	6.535	318.358.490	1881	305	105.421.638	163.707.090
2003	6.813	362.184.395	1962	305	102.856.755	175.331.631
2004	7.213	413.014.716	2172	328	110.624.929	193.395.622
2005	7.303	448.717.957	2190	346	113.733.250	200.158.825
2006	7.528	462.838.643	2254	360	119.460.900	202.961.595
2007	7.979	483.278.040	2251	359	126.696.900	208.843.816
2008	8.246	508.103.914	2362	359	131.478.115	218.442.850
2009	8.561	531.229.970	2290	359	133.661.079	226.296.900
2010	8.397	551.235.185 ³	2333	359	137.103.179	225.899.844
2011	8.565	549.072.673	2360	362	138.497.872	223.909.325
2012	8.307	544.033.069	2326	370	142.571.250	215.950.100 ⁴
2013	8.205 ⁵	539.512.672	2275	369	148.586.541	209.782.975
2014	8.160	532.152.567	2393	371	150.337.956	207.920.050
2015						

² Approximately equalling: Bfrs 4.026.726.000 à Bfrs 20 for f1,--, à f2,20 for € 1,--.

³ Number of passengers is up with 3,6% over 2009. 'At the end of 2010 the company counts nearly a half million long term ticketholders, nearly four times more as ten years earlier'.

⁴ Rail + 15.710.558 = total 231.660.658.

⁵ Of which 1492 women

Please pay attention to the growing 'Net income' over the years, also in the years since 2009 when the supply in vehicle-kilometers went down, a result of a deliberate political choice advocating higher costs-coverage by the company 'De Lijn'. This growing net income from passengers is remarkable when more and more passengers travel fare-free. This can be explained a.o. by the rising tariffs for paying passengers, inflation-related at about 2% per year, cumulative over the years 2002-2012 with 25%. Example: the *Buzzy Pass* for youngsters (14-24 years old) was priced at 149,90 euro per year in 2002, which went up to 178 euro in 2012, a rise of 18,7% (by the way, this seems to be less than an inflation-adjustment). The Flemish government pays the FFPT for the 65+, this is part of the total payment by the Flemish government to 'De Lijn' of about 850 million euro in 2012. In the other two regions of Belgium, Brussels and Wallonie, the 65+ lost their FFPT privilege. This also means that seniors resident in those two regions pay now the PT-fares as established in Flanders when they cross into that region, no longer enjoying the FFPT for seniors.

Belgian Railways is not included in the full fare-free public transport programme, but for the elderly (including foreigners) any return fare after 09.00 am costs only €5,00 in second class (this ticketprice has gone up in the past decade from €3.00 to €5.00).

Indeed, the results have been miraculous. Since 2002, in the five Flemish provinces with 6 million inhabitants fare-free local and regional transport was offered to all seniors, handicapped and young children. As a result the number of passengers grew from 265 million in 2001 via 508 million in 2005, to a top of 551 million in 2010, going down to 544 million in 2012 and 532 million in 2014. (A technical warning is needed: the number of passenger trips/cardholder per month or year is not the outcome of counts of trips they made, but of assumptions about the frequency they use the cards).

As in the rest of the world, also in Belgium, the time that financially everything is possible, was over with the economic crisis beginning in 2008. 'De Lijn' receives less financial support from the public purse and is politically obliged to cover more costs by collecting more and higher fares.

The 2013 political outcome of elections in the municipalities and in the regions resulted in a shift of political coalitions which was the basis of elimination of at least part of the 'fare-free public transport' on some of the titles. In many places the fare-freedom for all of the elderly was replaced by fare-freedom only for those among them recognized as poor. Given the business-results since 2002, this political swing cannot be understood.

Nevertheless, the effect of 'less FFPT in 2014' on the outcomes of the year 2014 compared with the previous years is relatively speaking rather low. 'Accomplished kilometrage' (the supply of public transport) in 2014 is down from the top of 226 million in 2009 to 208 million in 2014, 8% less. Passengers total (the demand) is down from the top of 551 million in 2010 to 532 million in 2014, 4% less. This means slightly less empty seats in the vehicles. An unanswered question is: who did not come for a ride? Who travels less with the public transport? Is it the bottom-end of the income-scales?

The following relative figures (table 2) show that the growth of passengers outnumbers considerably the growth of personnel, vehicles and the ratio of personnel per kilometer accomplished. Empty seats have been filled up, drivers served more passengers per kilometer. Some thought before the 'fare-free' experiment began, that the total net-income for 'De Lijn' from the transportation-offers would diminish, which is not the case. Obviously, 'fare-free riders' attracted paying passengers (accompanying them?).

The income from fares grew at *De Lijn* between 2002 and 2012 with roughly 2% per year in accordance with inflation figures. This is a cumulative growth for this period of 25%. The contribution received by *De Lijn* from the Flemish regional government was in 2012 roughly 850 million euro. Investment costs are not included in the exploitation budget of *De Lijn*. The exploitation costs are for 15% to 20% covered by fares paid by the passengers or by supplements received from what in Flanders are called 'third parties' ('derdebetalers'), for instance municipalities that intervene with a payment on behalf of a particular group from among their inhabitants (data privately obtained from *De Lijn*, 16 January 2015).

Table 2, relative figures based on table 1

De Lijn - Vlaanderen	2002	2010	Growth/Decline in %
Passengers	318.358.490	551.235.185	+ 73,1
Personnel	6.535	8.397	+ 28,5
Passengers per staff-member per year	48.716	65.646	+ 34,7
Vehicles (bus, tram)	2.186	2.692	+ 23,1
Kilometers	163.707.090	225.899.844	+ 38,0
Passengers per vehicle per year	145.635	204.768	+ 40,6
Net income for the company In total	105.421.638	137.103.179	+ 30,0
Net income per passenger	€ 0,33 ¹	€ 0,24 ⁹	- 24,7
Km's per staff (this is not per driver!)	25.051	26.802	+ 6,9

The political context in Belgium is such that there is a diminishing urge to offer, for instance, to seniors an extension of the fare-free public transport privilege. A rationalisation - also given in Belgium like elsewhere - is that passengers prefer better quality public transport over fare-free public transport.

For 'Avesta', is this a pointer for research?

b) Hasselt

Hasselt is a city in Belgium that has been one of the most interesting zero-fare cities. During the nineties they were to build a third bypass highway, but the costs were running wild and proposed exploitation of precious nature forced the plans to a halt. Instead the new mayor Steve Stevaert abolished fares in 1997, developed a 'Green Boulevard', banned cars from many city streets and reduced the space for cars on the second bypass. It resulted in a 1300% increase in public transport ridership!

Marc Verachtert, civil servant of Hasselt's public transportation, also mentioned the critique towards zero-fare policies. He agreed that some cyclists (10%) started using buses and trams instead, but the total number of cyclists did increase when fewer cars occupied the streets. Hasselt also decreased the number of parking lots in the city, from 1500 to 500, and the city has an interesting system called last-mile delivery to decrease the heavy transport. Around the city they have depots where freight-lorries deliver their loads. These are then packed on transport bicycles, for example.

The bad news is that Hasselt, despite the success story, has taken a step backwards and experiments again with fares. The Social Democrats and The Greens were elected 2012 on a programme to keep the zero-fare public transport policy, but still it will be brought down. Much of the conflict seems to relate to the relationship with the regional authority, which finances 75% of the programme. It seems that a major obstacle in negotiating with the region was that they lacked adequate statistics on the impact of zero-fare. Many inhabitants of Hasselt are pleased and see the advantages, and ridership was up 1300%, but this was not enough for the region.

[More research on the subject is needed. Hasselt will remain in the network of zero-fare cities, initiated by Tallinn.]

Is new research done?

In any case, it is not correct to state that Hasselt has 'lost' its FFPT:

- The seniors (65+) still travel fare-free,
- The juniors (6-) still travel fare-free.
- All those under 19 (youth) receive a Hasselt-BUZZ-pass which offers FFPT all over the region of Vlaanderen,

- For those citizens between 20 and 65 years old, travel is possible at the low rate of 6 euro for ten tickets, each valid during 90 minutes
No data are available yet about the use made of the public transport since the abolition of FFPT for all. The bus company 'De Lijn' considers the figures about the use made of their buses and trams as 'strategic information only accessible for their own needs of transport planning'.

Efforts have to be given to get anyhow those data as it would be very interesting to see what happens after such a long period of universal FFPT.
In follow-up after September 2015 ask De Lijn, Flemish Regional Government, University researchers, the Bus-Companies involved?

For the 2013 international seminar held in Tallinn, Marc Verachttert prepared a paper / power-point presentation from which some parts are quoted below. Go to the URL given below to see the full power-point presentation from which the maps and some data have been borrowed:

Hasselt from the beginning to the end

Summer School Tallinn, 22 – 24 August 2013

Marc Verachttert, General Manager

<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/tasutauhistransport/Capital-of-Free-Public-Transport>

Hasselt:

- Northern / Flemish part of Belgium
- Capital of Limburg
- ± 74.500 inhabitants
- 102,24 km²
- Shopping & fashion (150.000 visitors/week. 4th important centre Belgium)
- Employment (122% number of inhabitants 18 -64 y)
- Education (49.000 pupils & students)
- Music festivals, events, ...



Infrastructure

Easy access from other cities in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, France.

This helped traffic policies to be favouring decades long promoting a priority for cars.

In the 1990's questions posed:

- Is there a need for a third ring road? Objections:
 - => attack on nature / rural area
 - => Impossible high budget
 - => delay of traffic problems

Better solution:

- Stimulating smart mobility (walkability, biking, public transport)
 - => Starting in the city centre
 - => Public transport, fare-free since July 1997
- Starting with shuttle buses
- The entire network

Same time:

- Redesigning the network
- More comfort / quality
- Free bicycles available on loan

The growth of fare-free public transport

The figures on passengers show a remarkable jump upwards. The year 1997 is crucial: fare-free ridership began only in July. Nevertheless we see that the number of passengers jumped four-fold between 1996 and 1997. And since that beginning in the course of some years, between 1997 and 2005, again passenger numbers increased three-fold. This also shows that patience is needed also where fare-free public transport is introduced. It takes time for people to change their habits!

Year	Users / year	Times more
1996	350.000	
1997	1.498.088	4,28 more
2000	3.178.548	9,08 more
2005	4.257.408	12,16 more
2008	4.516.611	12,90 more
2012	4.398.158	12,56 more

In the profile-figures below one line is specifically highlighted in red as this one illustrates very well the most important result of the introduction of fare-free public transport.

Profile

- 16% car drivers/-users to bus
- 12 % cyclist to bus
- 9 % pedestrians to bus
- **63% more persons mobile by offering fare-free public transport.**

Obviously the need, the demand, was there, but could not be answered.

Of the 63% more persons mobile

- Newcomers
- 'one car' or 'no car' families,
- elderly people, children,

Socially remarkable are the figures for citizens going to the hospital to see patients and to the market:

	Hospital	Market
Untill 1997	26,25%	33,90%
With Free Public Transport	73,75%	66,10%

Total costs of public transport in Hasselt and how this was split over stakeholders:

Agreement: Hasselt pay's tickets / actual and expected local cost coverage

- Cost coverage 89 > 75% regional government
- 11 > 25% Hasselt about 2 % of the city budget

Year	Total cost Public Transport	% cost coverage Flanders	% cost coverage Hasselt	€ to be paid by Hasselt
1997	2,500,000	89%	11%	274,379
2000	3,400,000	77%	23%	782,849
2006	4,100,000	75%	25%	1,026,955
2012	7,000,000	75%	25%	1,750,000
2014				

Can Hasselt add here the line for 2014? Costs in Euros??

Criteria / arguments in favour of FFPT

In discussions and decision making various arguments for the citizens and for the government were used in Hasselt, Brussels, Flanders and the whole of Belgium:

Fare-free Public Transport Individual Advantages / Benefits

- Mobility
 - Safe(r) mobility
- Health
 - Reduced air pollution
 - Reduced number of accidents
- Financial
 - Reduce car use and / or the need to own a car
 - Save money
- Quality of life / Social aspect

- Meet & greet neighbours and others

Fare-free Public Transport Governmental Advantages / Benefits

- Optimized accessibility & mobility
- Quality standard cityscaping
 - Reduced need for car access and parkings
 - Additional space for trees / green areas
- Reduced cost for maintenance
 - Less road maintenance
 - Less restoration needed for buildings and monuments
- Less investments for infrastructure
 - No need to build an increasing number of parkings and car-sized roads and squares

HASSELT CHANGES MOBILITY

- Pedestrian friendly
 - Pedestrian zones, short cuts,
- Pro bicycle
 - Bike hotspots: rent a bike, guarded bicycle parking & maintenance (free)
 - Bike oriented society and companies
- Last mile delivery, Urban Freight Terminal: CityDepot
- Car sharing
- Link with a Light rail to other cities

Mobility behaviour 15 years later

- Still a high use of private motorised transport
 - Car possession (91.1% **of households?**)
 - 2,8 transfers/day (31,6 km)
- Not a complete success for public transport

The end of fare-free Public Transport ?

- Local elections 2012: discussion on FFPT
 - Open VLD (liberal) & N-VA (centre-right): against FFPT
 - CD&V (Christian democratic) willing to ask small contribution
 - SP.A (social democratic) & Groen (green): like continuation of FFPT
 - From new city council, a coalition of SP.A & Groen formed the daily city-government together with CD&V
 - Need to cut costs (and raise income) because of economic crisis and redirecting tasks from national and regional government to local government.
 - *De Lijn* (the local bus compny) increases the contribution to be paid by Hasselt with 65 % (2.8 m versus 1.8 m)
- No longer Fare-free Public Transport in Hasselt. Decision city council starting 1 January 2014.

De Lijn Flanders: Most years increase of passengers, but continued decrease of cost coverage **by sales of tickets?**

Need for cost cuts and more/new incomes.

Year	% cost coverage tickets	% cost coverage Flanders
1995	32%	68%
2000	27.8%	72.2%
2007	13.7%	86.3%
2009	12.87%	87.13%
2011		
2013		
2014		

It is difficult to find these figures. Can someone in Belgium check and give also the data for 2011, 2013, 2014?

Free Public Transport

- New contract proposal for Hasselt:
 - FFPT can be continued, but the contribution to be paid is + 65 % for 2013-2014
- **End of Free Public Transport**
 - Compensation for reduced ticket price for inhabitants (60 eurocent/fare) and free tickets for youngster (-19).
 - Senior people (+65) and low income earners are still travelling for free all over Flanders (Flanders regulation).

(Free?) Public Transport for a better future

- Impact of public transport on mobility, health, safety, environment, budget, ... has to be investigated. Task for an EU-institute or cooperation?! **Has any initiative been taken?** Need to share experiences in good, best or even next practices.

www.hasselt.eu

Hasselt cancels free public transport after 16 years (Belgium)

[<http://www.eltis.org/discover/news/hasselt-cancels-free-public-transport-after-16-years-belgium-0>]

The city of Hasselt abolished public transport fares in 1997 within the city range. For many years, this decision was the flagship of the 'politics of free'. This will now come to an end and only young people under 19 years will still travel for free.

Because of the free public transport, Hasselt got worldwide media attention and has become a success story. Both the number of travellers and the number of routes and buses has increased with time. Until June 1997, there were approximately 1,000 Hasselt bus passengers per day. Ten years later there was an average of 12,600. The 46 buses on nine lines, with promenade and centre shuttles generate an annual 2.2 million kilometres. By 2006, they had transported 4.6 million travellers annually. Travellers transferred from cars, but cyclists also started using the free bus.

Meanwhile the cost of the free bus experiment also almost quadrupled in ten years. There was criticism that thorough investigation was never conducted into the effects of the intervention on the transport behaviour of the residents and visitors of the city. The cost of free public transport in Hasselt for the public transport company *De Lijn* had risen from 967,000 euros in 1997 to 3.453 million euros in 2007.

Now, after 16 years, Hasselt has to take budgetary efforts to keep the costs under control, as in other cities and municipalities and some savings in various areas came to mind. The Town Council has therefore decided that the subsidies for bus transport are to be sharply reduced. Anyone who is over 19 years of age, will have to pay 60 eurocents per ride for a ticket. This ends the era of free public transport for all in Hasselt.

Observers state that the abolition of the free bus is not a political decision but a decision motivated by sheer financial necessity. The decision to abolish the free buses was based on a simple calculation.

The city has been paying an annual amount of 1.8 million euro to *De Lijn*. The carrier itself was struggling with rising costs and reduced income and suddenly increased the invoice for Hasselt to 2.8 million euro.

This was too much for the city in the current economic circumstances.

Travel data:

1997: 1 498 088 travellers (4,28 x more)

1998: 2 837 975 travellers (8,10 x more)

1999: 2 840 924 travellers (8,11 x more)

2000: 3 178 548 travellers (9,08 x more)
2001: 3 706 638 travellers (10,59 x more)
2002: 3 640 270 travellers (10,40 x more)
2003: 3 895 886 travellers (11,13 x more)
2004: 4 259 008 travellers (12,17 x more)
2005: 4 257 408 travellers (12,16 x more)
2006: 4 614 844 travellers (13,19 x more)

Can this list be completed also for the years 2007-2014?

NOTE: I have added a few bits of information above about Hasselt – I visited the city a few years ago. Roger

c) Brussels

As advised the 'Directie Strategie en Innovatie' under Marie-Hélène Noel was asked via NOELMH@STIB.IRISNET.BE to collaborate and present more data in particular about the latest years. With the 3rd draft of this document, this office will be approached again for detailed information on the experience with FFPT in Brussels. If possible, these will be presented in Avesta.

Brussels ended fare-free public transport for 65+ per 1 January 2014. It had been introduced in 2002. Between 2002 and 2014 some 195,000 persons had a free subscription on bus/tram/metro, of these are left now 26,000 that are still travelling for free (OMNIO, really low income). The urban transportation company offered the possibility for all to pay a 60 euro 'solidarity contribution' and to continue to have fare-free use of the urban public transport. Only 49,000 persons (29%) accepted this proposal for the next year.

3. France

Find a collaborator for France – gratuité

One contact in France was established :

Pascal ROYER, pascal.amiand-royer@wanadoo.fr

Member of a group for fare-free public transport in Grenoble (France):

'Pétition pour la gratuité des transports publics dans l'agglomération grenobloise'

lundi 3 novembre 2014, par [Collectif](#)

See/voire: <http://gratuite-transports.ouvaton.org/spip.php?article1>

He received the previous draft-text, no substantial remarks in answer have been returned.

Aubagne

"Voyageurs sans ticket : liberté, égalité, gratuité : une expérience sociale à Aubagne" de Magali Giovannangeli, Jean-Louis Sagot-Duvaurox chez Au diable Vauvert (Vauvert, France)
<http://livre.fnac.com/a4232913/Jean-Louis-Sagot-Duvaurox-Voyageurs-sans-ticket-liberte-egalite-gratuite>

Résumé

L'ÉLUE ET LE PHILOSOPHE RACONTENT LA GRATUITÉ DES TRANSPORTS PUBLICS INSTITUÉE DANS L'AGGLOMÉRATION D'AUBAGNE, une innovation sociale qui a transformé le rapport des citoyens à l'espace public, raboté les distinctions sociales et fait exploser la fréquentation des bus.

Récit haut en couleurs mais aussi réflexion sur la fécondité politique de la gratuité, ce texte a deux sources. La praticienne, par ses fonctions au coeur du choix et de la mise en oeuvre d'une révolution du service

public. Le penseur, qui interroge la gratuité de façon philosophique depuis près de vingt ans. Leur dialogue reprend les éléments les plus éclairants, émouvants ou spectaculaires de cette expérience réussie, et alimente une réflexion d'actualité sur la transformation sociale.

Née à Marseille, enseignante, Magali Giovannangeli est présidente de la communauté d'agglomération du pays d'Aubagne et de l'Étoile, et adjointe au maire d'Aubagne.

Jean-louis Sagot-Duvaurox, philosophe et dramaturge, est notamment l'auteur de *De la gratuité*, du best-seller *On ne naît pas Noie on le devient* [Albin Michel] et de plusieurs spectacles de la compagnie BlonBa. *Courier des auteurs* le 20/09/2012

Qui êtes-vous ? !

1) Un pied au Mali, où j'écris pour le théâtre. Un pied en France, où j'essaye de penser les perspectives de l'émancipation humaine. La tête en voyage.

2) Quel est le thème central de ce livre ?

Les voyageurs qui ne prennent plus de ticket. Les voyageurs qui aimeraient ne plus prendre de ticket.

3) Si vous deviez mettre en avant une phrase de ce livre, laquelle choisiriez-vous ?

Une phrase de Magali : J'aime tellement penser que Karim, Elsa, Ivane, Simon et tant d'autres, du haut de leurs 20 ans, d'ici une quinzaine d'années, n'auront pas le souvenir du bus payant, mais seulement celui de la liberté de monter, dire bonjour au chauffeur, descendre, remonter, rejoindre leurs copains du côté de l'Etoile ou vers le Var.

Versement transport

(Voyageurs sans ticket, chapitre 3)

Dans le cas des déplacements effectués pour aller au travail, [...] les entreprises retirent un bénéfice évident d'un bon réseau de transports publics, susceptible de leur ouvrir un large marché du travail et d'acheminer leurs salariés avec régularité [...] Des dispositifs légaux et réglementaires ont d'ailleurs commencé à prendre en compte la distorsion entre le paiement du transport par les transportés et la multiplicité des bénéficiaires immobiles et cachés.

Dans les territoires de plus de 10 000 habitants, les collectivités concernées peuvent percevoir, pour financer les transports publics, une contribution des entreprises : le « versement transport ». Cette cotisation, légale, que les villes et les agglomérations autorités organisatrices des transports (AOT) perçoivent si elles le souhaitent, est calculée suivant le nombre d'habitants et la nature des transports proposés. Elle est constituée d'un pourcentage sur la masse salariale de toutes les entreprises de plus de neuf salariés : 0,6 % pour les collectivités de moins de 100 000 habitants ; 1,05 % jusqu'à 400 000 ; 1,8 % au-delà. Et quand le réseau compte des transports en site propre, comme le tramway ou le métro, le taux de 1,8 % s'applique quel que soit le niveau de population. Les sommes ainsi collectées sont affectées aux transports urbains qui assurent l'acheminement de leurs salariés.

[provisional summary/translation of this first paragraph

In France territorial entities of more than 10,000 inhabitants may legally decide to apply a transportation tax to be paid by all enterprises with more than nine paid workers. The tax bracket is set at 0.6% of those territories with less than 100,000 inhabitants, 1.05% for populations between 100,000 and 400,000, and 1.06% over 400,000 inhabitants. The financial gains from this tax feed the passenger transportation means of the companies that provide their workers with transport to their working places. The justification is that enterprises enjoy advantages in having a good functioning public transport system that guarantees that their workers can reach their workplaces.]

Fare-free arithmetics

L'agglomération du Pays d'Aubagne et de l'Étoile n'avait pas attendu la gratuité pour prendre en considération le bénéfice social des transports collectifs et pour injecter de l'argent public dans son réseau. Son investissement global était à l'époque de 8,3 millions d'euros. Le versement transport y concourait à hauteur de 3 millions d'euros. Les recettes de billetterie s'élevaient à 710 000 euros, le solde étant alimenté par une subvention prise pour l'essentiel sur le budget général de l'agglomération. On se trouve là devant un mix tout à fait orthodoxe : contribution « marchande » des voyageurs (tickets et abonnements) + contribution « sociale » des entreprises (versement transport) + une part des impôts, prise en l'occurrence sur la contribution du secteur économique. En supprimant la contribution marchande des voyageurs, le passage à la gratuité modifie la structure de financement. Il va d'abord falloir honorer les dépenses

consacrées à la mise à niveau d'un réseau qui doit désormais transporter un nombre beaucoup plus important de voyageurs. Trois véhicules devront être ajoutés en 2009, quatre en 2010, deux en 2011. Cela se traduit mécaniquement par un nombre plus important d'heures travaillées. Tous les bus doivent être équipés de cellules de comptage, qui permettent de connaître la fréquentation maintenant qu'elle n'est plus mesurée par la billetterie et de fixer des objectifs à l'entreprise chargée du service. L'addition de ces frais supplémentaires s'élève à 1,07 million d'euros par an. Il faut également tenir compte du manque à gagner directement lié à la disparition des recettes de billetterie : 710 000 euros qui n'entrent plus dans les caisses. Par contre, la suppression de la billetterie et de la vente de titres de transport représente une économie de 220 000 euros. Tout compte fait : 1,7 millions d'euros de mise à niveau du réseau + 710 000 euros pour compenser la billetterie - 220 000 euros d'économies sur la billetterie et le contrôle = 1,56 million d'euros supplémentaires à trouver chaque année. En pleine crise ! Le CERTU (*Centre d'études sur les réseaux, les transports, l'urbanisme et les constructions publiques*) est un organisme spécialisé dépendant de ce qui était alors le ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement et de l'Aménagement durables. En 2011, ses experts réalisent une étude sur la vingtaine d'expériences de transports publics gratuits actuellement en fonction sur le territoire français.

[In 2011 the CERTU listed 21 municipalities with experience in FFPT. These 21 municipalities are listed with some detailed information in the next [pages 47-49](#).]

Étude bourrée d'informations suggestives, mais traversée d'un scepticisme administratif qui, en dépit des résultats très probants de la plupart de ces expériences, porte un regard plutôt mélancolique et voilé sur la fécondité du principe de la gratuité. Pourtant les faits sont têtus. Comment le Pays d'Aubagne et de l'Étoile finance-t-il son hérésie ? L'organisme ministériel vend la mèche et reconnaît la solidité du montage financier. En 2009, avec l'entrée de la commune de Cadolive dans la communauté, l'agglomération franchit le seuil des 100 000 habitants. Une aubaine, puisqu'en dépassant ce niveau de population, le versement transport peut être porté de 0,6 % à 1,05 %. Enfin, en 2010, le projet de tramway, transport en site propre voué lui aussi à la gratuité, élargit encore les ressources potentielles. Ce choix, très favorable à la fluidité urbaine et donc à l'activité économique, autorise la collectivité à faire passer le versement transport au taux de 1,8 %. Résultat : entre 2008 et 2010, la récolte bondit de 3,2 millions d'euros à 8,9 millions. La recette supplémentaire couvre largement le coût de la gratuité. Elle pourra être mise en place sans peser d'un euro sur les impôts des ménages.

Double bénéfice : la liberté des déplacements, l'augmentation du pouvoir d'achat disponible². En ces temps de vaches maigres et d'inégalités croissantes, dans beaucoup de familles, chaque euro est compté : « Vous savez, moi, ce qui m'aide beaucoup avec la gratuité ? Chaque mois, pour toute la famille, le bus me coûtait soixante euros. Le bus gratuit, c'est comme si je touchais une augmentation. » Soixante euros. Trois fois le « coup de pouce » au SMIC accordé par la gauche après sa victoire nationale de 2012. Un caddy. Le caddy manquant quand les fins de mois condamnent aux pâtes et aux patates. L'économie de la gratuité, c'est aussi ça, une redistribution non négligeable de pouvoir d'achat pour les ménages. Avec la crise, le chômage, la précarité, les bas salaires, le problème des revenus est à nouveau crucial. Mais les autorités locales n'ont ni mission de le résoudre, ni marge de manœuvre pour s'y essayer. Le Pays d'Aubagne et de l'Étoile l'a fait.

[...]

Une étude d'opinion réalisée par l'institut Carniel un an après la mise en place de la gratuité permet d'adosser quelques chiffres aux témoignages et de visualiser statistiquement les modifications que la gratuité a introduites dans la vie quotidienne. Les nouveaux usagers, ceux qui ne prenaient jamais le bus avant la gratuité, sont 20 %. Quelques-uns ont pu y venir par conviction écologiste ou, pour les jeunes, parce qu'ils entrent au collège ou au lycée. Mais la gratuité est assurément à l'origine d'une bonne part de ces conversions.

Beaucoup d'anciens usagers ont eux aussi modifié leurs habitudes. 52 % d'entre eux déclarent se déplacer davantage qu'au temps des tickets. 18 % indiquent d'ailleurs que sans la gratuité, ils n'auraient pas effectué le trajet à l'occasion duquel ils sont interrogés.

C'est chez les jeunes que l'impact est le plus fort. 40 % des trajets qui n'auraient pas été effectués « si la gratuité n'existait pas » sont le fait des moins de 18 ans. À l'élargissement des classes d'âge concernées par ces évolutions s'ajoute une diversification des usages. 44 % des déplacements en bus provoqués par la gratuité ont pour motif le travail ou les études. Aller faire ses courses (+ 15 %) ou effectuer des démarches (+ 9 %) se fait également davantage en bus depuis que ce n'est plus payant. Mais c'est sur les trajets loisirs

et les visites à des proches que l'impact a été proportionnellement le plus fort : ils sont désormais 31 % à utiliser les transports publics pour ces motifs contre 18 % quand il fallait chaque fois payer. Les indices de satisfaction sont, eux, sans appel : 88 % des personnes interrogées déclarent être « très satisfaites », 8 % « plutôt satisfaites », 1 % « plutôt pas ou pas du tout satisfaites ».

Comme on pouvait s'y attendre, 98 % des passagers jugent que la nouvelle formule est « plus économique ». La simplicité d'utilisation est très appréciée : 93 % de satisfaits.

Mais le sentiment que les bus gratuits sont « plus conviviaux » est lui aussi très majoritairement partagé.

80 % des personnes interrogées en conviennent, tandis que 84 % ne sont « pas d'accord » avec l'affirmation que les bus gratuits seraient « moins sécurisants ». Une satisfaction globale impressionnante. (Chapitre 6)

21 FRENCH MUNICIPALITIES WITH FULL OR PARTIAL FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

1. *Manosque – Alpes-de-Haute-Provence (04)*
 - Population: 22,000
 - Since January 1st, 2010
 - 4 bus lines
 - 1 shuttle from parking lots outside the centre towards town centre
 - Free for all.
 - Website: <http://www.manobus.fr/>
 - Notes: 3rd city in Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, network covers all areas (residential, commercial, etc)
2. *Gap – Hautes-Alpes (05)*
 - Population: 41,000
 - Since **when?**
 - 9 bus lines
 - 1 shuttle from parking lots outside the centre and from a suburb towards town centre from Mondays through Saturdays. Freq.: 25min
 - 1 free shuttle Gap-Bayard-Laye during holidays
 - Free for all.
 - Website: <http://www.ville-gap.fr/fr/citoyen/vivre-a-gap/transports-urbains/linea.html>
 - Notes: network covers all areas
3. *Aubagne – Bouches-du-Rhône (13)*
 - Population: 100,000 (agglomeration)
 - Since May 15, 2009
 - 15 bus lines
 - 11 bus lines on demand covering 10 low-density areas from Mondays through Saturdays
 - tram under construction.
 - Free for all, including non-residents.
 - Website: <http://www.bus-agglo.fr/>
 - Notes: network covers Aubagne and 12 other municipalities.

[The system has been dismantled in 2014, motivations? What happens to numbers of passengers? Data?]

New book about Aubagne

Posted on March 24, 2013

We have read a very interesting review about the book “Voyageurs sans ticket. Liberté, égalité, gratuité : une expérience sociale à Aubagne“. You should read it too!

<http://livre.fnac.com/a4232913/Jean-Louis-Sagot-Duvauroux-Voyageurs-sans-ticket-liberte-egalite-gratuite> Free as e-book.

4. *Aurillac – Cantal (15)*

- Population: 55,000 (agglomeration)
 - Since **when?** free for children under 5 and the person accompanying them.
 - Since September 2002, 1 shuttle from a parking lot outside the centre towards the town centre.
 - Free for all. Including non-residents.
 - Objective: reduce congestion.
 - Results: mobility strategy for the pedestrian centre, provide a local service for short trips, offer transportation towards the shops and services located downtown and reduce air pollution.
 - Costs 150,000€ per year to the transport company, from which 30,000€ come from the municipality
 - Website: http://www.caba.fr/Navette_gratuite-33-71-205.html
 - Notes: the shuttle covers a loop line with 4 stops. Freq.: 10min. 23.5% are men. 82% are 36+. 41% from Aurillac, 42% from agglomeration, 17% external. 45% for shopping, 37% for work. 3,600 people per week. 187,184 people in 2011, +6%.
5. *Châteaudun – Eure-et-Loir (28)*
- Population: 14,000
 - Since 2008
 - 2 weekday+Saturday bus lines
 - 1 Sunday bus line
 - Free for all.
 - Website: <http://www.ville-chateaudun.fr/Au-quotidien/Deplacements-et-stationnement/C-Bus>
6. *Colomiers – Haute-Garonne (31)*
- Population: 32,000
 - Since September 2008
 - Free for all.
 - 8 bus lines
 - Website: http://www.ville-colomiers.fr/index.php/Vie_quotidienne/Bus_de_ville_gratuits?idpage=114&idmetacontenu=
 - Notes: network covers all areas
7. *Libourne – Gironde (33)*
- Population: 23,700
 - Since **when?**
 - 3 bus lines
 - 1 school bus line
 - 1 local service in the downtown area. The shuttle stops on demand and at regular stops including parking lots.
 - Free for all residents.
 - Website: <http://www.ville-libourne.fr/ma-ville/transport-stationnement/80-transport-libus.html>
8. *Vitré – Ille-et-Vilaine (35)*
- Population: 16,000
 - Since May 2001
 - 7 bus lines
 - Free for all.
 - Objectives: improve service to population, limit cars in the central area, protect environment
 - Website: <http://www.mairie-vitre.com/-Transports-.html>
9. *Châteauroux – Indre (36)*
- Population: 70,000 (agglomeration)
 - Since December 22, 2001
 - 15 bus lines
 - 1 Sunday bus line

- 8 of the 15 bus lines are also on demand
- 1 flexible bus line. Goes where people need to go.
- 43 school bus lines

Free for all, including non-residents

- Objectives: facilitate commuting trips, reduce transportation cost per inhabitant, revitalize the downtown core, reduce number of cars, improve air quality, give isolated people the opportunity to leave their house and meet other people
- Website: <http://www.bus-horizon.com/index.asp>
- Notes: network covers Châteauroux and 14 other municipalities.

On the website can be found the objectives served by the introduction of 'fare-free' buses:

■ Un réseau de transport urbain gratuit

Le pari des bus gratuits

Depuis 2001, les transports en commun sont entièrement gratuits dans l'agglomération Castelroussine, une gratuité qui ne nuit pas au confort et à la sécurité des usagers. En effet les bus gratuits



sont un succès incontesté, de plus l'instauration de la gratuité répond à quatre objectifs :

- Faciliter les trajets domicile / travail en diminuant les frais de transports par habitant
- Faire bouger le cœur de l'agglomération et renforcer son dynamisme
- Fluidifier la circulation et préserver la qualité de l'air
- Rendre aux personnes isolées la possibilité de sortir de chez eux et de rencontrer d'autres personnes

See the route-map of all buses at:

<http://www.bus-horizon.com/admin/upload/PlanArretBusHorizon2013.pdf>

10. Issoudun – Indre (36)

- Population: 18,000
- Since **when?**
- 4 bus lines on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon, Friday morning and Saturday all day
- 3 bus lines in the agglomeration (22,000 people) on Wednesday and Saturday afternoon. Scheduling on Saturdays is adapted to the cinema hours.
- Free for all.
- Website: <http://www.issoudun.fr/vie-pratique/transport.html>

11. Figeac – Lot (46)

- Population: 10,000
- Since September 1st, 2003
- 10 bus lines
- 3 28-seat buses, 1 70-seat bus
- Free for all.
- Funding: Town of Figeac + companies with more than 9 employees (taxe versement transport). Initial investment: Town of Figeac + France subsidies + EU subsidies.
- Website: http://www.ville-figeac.fr/vie%20pratique/Vie_pratique_bus.htm
- Notes: 232,609 people per year

12. Mayenne – Mayenne (53)

- Population: 13,000
- Since **when?**
- 4 bus lines
- 1 bus
- Free for all. How about non-residents?

- Website: http://www.mairie-mayenne.fr/53_mayenne_informations-pratiques_transports_horaires-des-bus-a-mayenne.phtml

13. *Bar-le-Duc – (55)*

- Population: 27,000 (agglomeration)
- Since September 1st, 2008
- 5 bus lines
- Free for residents only. Need to buy a year pass for 3€.
- 1 on demand bus line which is not free.
- Website: <http://www.bus-tub.com/>

14. *Cambrai – Nord (59)*

- Population: 66,000 (agglomeration)
- Since January 2013
- 1 shuttle from Monday through Saturday. Freq.: 30min.
- Website: <http://www.villedecambrai.com/vie-pratique/transports-la-navette.html>

15. *Compiègne – Oise (60)*

- Population: 70,000 (agglomeration)
- Since **when?**
- 5 bus lines in the central area from Monday through Saturday
- 5 bus lines linking the central area to the suburb areas from Monday through Saturday
- Free for all.
- 2 bus lines on Sundays for 1€
- Website: <http://www.agglo-compiegne.fr/TIC.aspx>

16. *Noyon – Oise (60)*

- Population:
- Since October 2008
- 3 bus lines
- Free for all.
- Objectives: increase mobility and employmentability. Also reduce car traffic and create a social mix and place to meet others.
- Website: <http://www.ville-noyon.fr/Transports.html>
- Notes: 318,292 trips in 2012

The city of Noyon is not mentioned on the below following list borrowed from *ekopedia*, reason unknown, the website is still offering information on ‘fare-free’ buses.

From the website on 20/01/2015:

La Ville de Noyon propose, depuis octobre 2008, un service de transport en commun gratuit. D’abord composé de deux lignes, une 3e ligne a été inaugurée en février 2010, desservant ainsi la zone commerciale du Mont Renaud, la zone industrielle et l’espace d’excellence, Inovia (sur l’ancien site militaire).

Plus écologique, le service de bus gratuit a pour objectif de favoriser la mobilité et donc l’employabilité des Noyonnais. Il s’agit également de limiter l’utilisation des véhicules personnels et de créer du lien social.

17. *Le Touquet Paris-Plage – Pas-de-Calais (62)*

- Population: 5,000
- Since **when?**
- 1 central area bus line: every day
- 1 broader bus line: weekend, holidays, Thursday morning (market)
- Free for all.
- Website: <http://www.lestouquettois.fr/index.php?id=42>

18. *Cluses – Haute-Savoie (74)*

- Population: 17,000
- Since February 2009
- 4 bus lines
- Free for all.
- Website: <http://www.cluses.fr/fr/ville/acces.php>

19. *Castres/Mazamet – (81)*

- Population: 85,000 (agglomeration)
- Since 2008
- 10 bus lines
- Free for all.
- Website: <http://www.libellus.org/>
- Notes: 2,000,000 people

20. *Levallois-Perret – Hauts-de-Seine (92)*

- Population: 62,000
- Since **when?**
- 2 bus lines
- Until 6.20pm from Monday through Saturday. Sunday morning.
- Free for residents only
- Website: <http://www.ville-levallois.fr/pratique/transport/>
- Notes: linked to the Paris bus system

21. *Boulogne-Billancourt – Hauts-de-Seine (92)*

- Population: 110,000
- Since **when?**
- 2 bus lines
- From Monday through Saturday
- Free for all. **How about non-residents?**
- Website:
http://www.boulognebillancourt.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=208&submid=2&mpid=3&leftid=451&submid=1&Itemid=453?&leftid=451&mpid=3&submid=2&Itemid=451

See:

European Conference of Transport Research Institutes,

<http://www.ectri.org/index.html>

Pricing and urban mobility,

<http://www.certu.fr/spip.php?page=sommaire>

International Transport Forum,

<http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/Irtadpublic/index.html>

Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable et de l'énergie

<http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/-Transports,1310-.html>

l'Institut français des sciences et technologies des transports, de l'aménagement et des réseaux,

<http://www.ifsttar.fr/>

Abandoned projects: Boulogne, Castellon de la Plana

A list with slightly different information per city can be found at:

http://fr.ekopedia.org/Transports_en_commun_gratuits

Liste des villes et agglomérations proposant un système de transports en commun gratuits par pays (chiffres 2010).

4. Germany

141223, Michael Brie and Judith Dellheim. Contribution to paper on free public transport.

Experiences with free public transport

There are no cities in Germany which have the experience of sustainably offering free public transport. But in present time the public discussion on this issue is increasing. The reasons for this are different, but not at least connected with social movements and regional organisation of parties like DIE LINKE, Bündnis90/DIE GRÜNEN and DIE PIRATEN. The activists use two experiences realized in the East German state Brandenburg more or less – the Templin and Lübben cases.

Templin

Templin is a city with about 16,500 inhabitants. It has an old historical centre and is located in a recreational zone. The system of public transport was not very well developed. There were four city lines and several regional lines. The share of cars in the city traffic was very high. It came to 90 per cent. 17,000 cars entered the city daily. Public transport was subsidized by 86 per cent, but only 41,000 passengers used the public buses yearly. The region Uckermark, the public transport corporation *Uckermärkische Verkehrsgesellschaft* and the city decided to introduce free public transport starting in December 1997. The higher costs were paid by the city of Templin. The project was scheduled for two years. [1997-1999] With the introduction of free public transport the number of bus stops was significantly increased (from 27 to 42) and the frequency of busses has been raised (since May 2000 [this means that the project was extended? In time? For more than the original years 1997-1999] every 20 minutes). The stops were reconstructed and became more attractive. In the city centre, at the old market, a transfer point was established. The public bus got its own logo and the city advertised for its public transport and the system of lines and stops. The increased cost (from 50,000 to 177,000 German Mark) for the city was covered by a higher tourist tax, business advertisement in the public transport system and by parking fees.

The summarized effect of these measures was very strong. In the first year of free public transport the number of passengers has increased by 750 %. [Over seven times more than the 41,000 mentioned above? Give also absolute data]. This was due not so much to a behaviour change by the car drivers, but of that by pedestrians and cyclists. Only 10 to 20 per cent of the new passengers of (free) public transport were people who had used their private car, 35 to 50 per cent were former pedestrians and 30 to 40 per cent were former cyclists. One factor was the high share of young people (too young to drive a car and without cars).

Another factor was that a few restrictions for private car traffic were introduced. [Please give the source from which these data have been taken].

The unforeseen increase of passengers has created higher cost than expected. The city had to find new ways to cover it. The free use of public transport by a citizen was bound to an annual tourist card which was 44 Euro in 2007. Visitors who have bought the card had to pay only a small fee. As the result the number of passengers has decreased. Nevertheless, in 2009 it was still around six times higher than before 1997. [And in 2013/2014?]

Lübben

The city of Lübben has 14,500 inhabitants. Facing the closure of its only bus line (for low demand and the problem of funding) it introduced free public transport in 1998. Public transport in the city was subsidized by 90 per cent.

But free public transport alone was not sufficient to increase the number of passengers. An additional bus line (to a rehabilitation centre) and a higher frequency of public transport was necessary to increase the number of passengers up to 500 per cent in the first years. This success has created an unforeseen financial burden. Free public transport was cancelled after four years. [1998-2002?]

New initiatives

In the last few years some new initiatives were started to introduce free public transport. Research in the

field has sharply increased. The *Verkehrsclub Germany* published its own study⁶. The *German Institute for Urban Studies (DIFU)* has done research on different models on funding free public transport⁷. For the city of Tübingen a larger empirical research was made by *Katrin Eisenbeiß*⁸. The department for integrated transport planning at the Free University in Berlin presented a research paper on the concrete problems cities face while introducing free public transport⁹. Two state organizations of the left party DIE LINKE have free public transport as objects in their election programmes. Some local organizations of DIE LINKE., Bündnis90/DIE GRÜNEN and DIE PIRATEN have the topic as a highlight in their local election programmes.

At this moment the strongest movements for free public transport in Germany are based in Tübingen (university town in the Southwest of Germany) and in Erfurt, the capital of the federal state of Thuringia. Several other cities are discussing proposals of the introduction of special taxes or universal fees for public transport in exchange for an annual ticket for all citizens. [Are there data on Tübingen and Erfurt documented? Can a list be given of the cities that are discussing proposals? Addresses to mail this document?]

The half-year (semester) ticket for students in German regions

The semester ticket was developed in the early 1990s. It is based on an agreement between the students associations among themselves and the corporations responsible for public transport. In some cases the *Studentenwerk*, a public organization supporting the economic, social and cultural life of students, reached the agreement on behalf of the students. Based on a contribution by each student to a half year (semester) the further use of the semester ticket in the city and/or in the whole region – financed on a solidarity principle – is free or (for longer distances) sharply reduced. Often the transport of bikes is free too or is included for a reduced fee.

The first agreement on a semester ticket was reached at the Technical University of Darmstadt in 1992. At the current moment these agreements are more or less ordinary for students in all regions of Germany. Each agreement is individual. Sometimes public transport in the whole federal state is covered. In most universities all students have to pay an obligatory fee for the semester ticket independent of their own use of public transport. Some groups may be exempted like students with disabilities or hard social problems. [Maybe there exists a flyer on these student-cards with information, eventually in German? Please forward to michel@vanhulten.com]

Several court cases were started to fight for this model as a compulsory system, but all these cases have been defeated. The courts have decided that the students associations have an obligatory universal membership and the advantages of the ticket should be measured by the gains for the students in total. The baseline of the reduced costs legitimates the payments by all students independently of their personal need. Side effects like better parking possibilities or improved environmental conditions should be taken into account. The city state of Berlin has an own regulation by the federal state law.

[Is more information on Berlin available?

⁶ Verkehrsclub Deutschland, *ÖPNV zum Nulltarif – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen*. VCD Hintergrund 07, VCD Hintergrund 07 (Berlin: VCD, 2012).

http://www.vcd.org/fileadmin/user_upload/redakteure_2010/themen/nahverkehr/20120911_OPNV-Hintergrund.pdf

⁷ Tilman Bracher u. a., *Finanzierung des ÖPNV durch Beiträge. Ist das Beitragsmodell eine Handlungsoption zur Finanzierung eines attraktiven ÖPNV-Betriebs?* Difu-Papers (Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik, 2014).

⁸ Katrin Eisenbeiß, *Ticketfreier Nahverkehr im Stadtgebiet Tübingen. Möglichkeiten, Chancen und Probleme eines umlagefinanzierten ÖPNV und Wege zur Umsetzung*, Bd. 22, Global Studies Working Papers (Tübingen: Institute of Geography der Eberhard Karls Universität, 2014). 193 +XLII, https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10900/50008/pdf/GSWP_Eisenbeiss_2013_Ticketfreier_Nahverkehr.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁹ Marvin Gehrke und Stefan Groß, *Fahrscheinfrei im ÖPNV*. IVP-Discussion Paper 03 (Berlin: Fachgebiet Integrierte Verkehrsplanung der Technischen Universität Berlin, 2014).

Would anyone be interested to work on the subject of FFPT? Could a student be recruited to write his/her master-thesis on the subject?

[AUSTRIA]

Who has information on Austria?

Please look at response questions being asked.

Please find also sources of information with URLs of where to find.

For example, in the Swedish data contributed below, you will see that they are full of references.

Readers will appreciate.]

Berlin

06.03.15 Berliner Morgenpost

Alle Berliner sollen für Bus und Bahn zahlen.

Grüne und Linken schlagen ein Bürgerticket vor. Bezahlen müsste das jeder, egal ob er Bus und Bahn nutzt. Dafür würde es nur 15 Euro kosten.

Von Thomas Fülling

<http://www.morgenpost.de/berlin/article138154426/Alle-Berliner-sollen-fuer-Bus-und-Bahn-zahlen.html>

Dresden

(e-mails from Matthias Kunert, www.matthias-kunert.de, info@matthias-kunert.de)

03/04/2015, from Kunert

Using the Dresden-documentation calculated costs as high as €178 (or 182 EUR according to newer data in the report (<http://d-nb.info/1061126749/34>) per head and year have been mentioned. This 'is just a calculation example: how much it would cost per person to cover the current costs of public transportation in the total transportation area (*Verkehrsverbund Oberelbe*) [...]. This is of course only a theoretical figure, since it is absolutely necessary and intended to improve the offer of public transportation (with higher costs) after introducing a fare-free public transport'. (That is why Kunert recommended 25 EUR per head and month). Besides, the current revenues of ticket sales include all tickets sold to non-resident visitors, too, and it is also possible that a city decides to introduce a fare-free public transport only for residents. Finally, the density of transportation-offer decreases rapidly towards the fringes of the Verkehrsverbund, whereas it is the highest in its core - the City of Dresden. That is why it is hard to imagine people from the periphery of the *Verkehrsverbund* pay the same amount per person as people in the city-core.

From Dresden came the request to study and calculate more how this pricing issue is handled in other cities? He recommends a kind of feasibility study to closer examine the costs and benefits of the FFPT.

Quote

[...] 'There was a municipal online-dialogue on the subject of the longterm integrated urban development concept (INSEK Dresden 2025) in June 2014, in which I [Kunert, MvH] participated actively. This integrated development concept contained a lot of traffic-related problems (pollution of noise, oxides of nitrogen, finedust) and a nice objective called "liveable city for all citizens", but in my opinion no effective measures to solve the traffic problems at all. Therefore, I brought in the proposal of introducing a citizen ticket for public transport, which has obligatorily to be bought by all adults and in return offers fare-free public transport to everybody. [...] I wrote down my vision of an almost car-free city and my corresponding action proposals in an article ("*Die fast autofreie Großstadt – Utopie oder machbare Zukunftsvision? Ein Gedankenspiel am Beispiel der Stadt Dresden*"). You'll find the link to this article on my website, <http://d-nb.info/1061126749/34>, unfortunately it is only available in German. It contains also an exemplary calculation - I estimate that for about 25 EUR per adult such a citizen ticket in Dresden could be realized.

[Title of the article in provisional English translation: *'the nearly car-free city – utopia or a realizable future? A 'playful thought experiment' as example for the City of Dresden?'*
To read, please go to the article <http://d-nb.info/1061126749/34> at his website.]

Auto & Verkehr

Dresden lehnt Bürgerticket für ÖPNV ab – Verkehrsexperten empfehlen Straßenverkehrsabgabe, by
Dominik Brüggemann
[<http://www.dnn-online.de/dresden/web/dresden-nachrichten/detail/-/specific/Stadt-Dresden-lehnt-Buergerticket-fuer-oePNV-ab-Verkehrsexperten-empfehlen-Straassenverkehrsabgabe-3277181077>]

Auto & Verkehr

Dresden lehnt Bürgerticket für ÖPNV ab – Verkehrsexperten empfehlen Straßenverkehrsabgabe

Dominik Brüggemann

© DNN-Online, 06.11.2014, 09:32 Uhr

Dresden. Ein Bürgerticket für den Dresdner Öffentlichen Personennahverkehr (ÖPNV) für mindestens 250 Euro pro Person im Jahr – bezahlt von allen Einwohnern der Landeshauptstadt: Die Grundidee wird von Verkehrsexperten zumindest durchgespielt und führte in Leipzig zu hitzigen Diskussionen. Im estischen Tallinn ist das Bürgerticket für alle Stadtbewohner bereits Realität.

In der 420.000-Einwohner-Stadt können Tallinner die Straßenbahnen und Busse ohne Ticket nutzen, bezahlt aus dem städtischen Finanzhaushalt. „Das gesamte Budget für den Öffentlichen Nahverkehr liegt im Jahr 2014 bei rund 59 Millionen Euro. Rund 5 Millionen Euro Erlösen wir aus den Ticketverkäufen von Besuchern“ so Tiit Laiksoo, Mitarbeiter im Verkehrsamt der Stadt Tallinn, auf Anfrage von DNN-Online.

Ein Vergleich mit Dresden wäre haltlos, da das Netz der Tallinner Verkehrsbetriebe „Tallinna Linnatranspordi AS“ wesentlich kleiner ist. Die vier Straßenbahnlinien bedienen Haltestellen auf einer Gesamtstrecke von nur 19 Kilometer, die DVB-Bahnen befahren in Dresden rund 210 Kilometer. Die alleinigen Betriebskosten der DVB lagen im Jahr 2013 bei 172,7 Millionen Euro, wie der Lagebericht der DVB auflistet. Trotz Einnahmen in Höhe von rund 134,8 Millionen Euro bleibt ein Defizit in Höhe von 39,2 Millionen Euro. Hier greift seit Jahren die Finanzspritze der Technischen Werke Dresden, deren Umlage aus dem Drewag-Überschuss für finanziellen Frieden bei den DVB sorgt. Das heißt, ein Minusgeschäft ist der Fahrbetrieb der DVB ohnehin.

Angesetzt bei diesem Defizit müsste jeder Dresdner im Jahr deutlich über 240 Euro zahlen, um einen fahrscheinlosen Verkehr, wie ihn Befürworter positiv betiteln, zu ermöglichen. Die Kosten könnten sich jedoch deutlich erhöhen. „Wegen der höheren Nachfrage müssten wahrscheinlich mehr Fahrzeuge beschafft und mehr Personal eingestellt werden“, ordnet Gerd-Axel Ahrens, Professor für Verkehrs- und Infrastrukturplanung an der TU Dresden, die Folgen ein. Hierfür fehle dann das Geld oder die pauschale Abgabe müsse erhöht werden. Ein paar Vorteile sieht der Dekan der Fakultät Verkehrswissenschaften "Friedrich List" ebenfalls. Die Fahrgastzahlen würden steigen, der Straßenverkehr entlastet und die Attraktivität Dresdens angehoben.

In Tallinn haben sich diese Effekte bereits ausgezahlt. Dort habe der steuerfinanzierte ÖPNV zu einem Zuzug in die estnische Hauptstadt gesorgt. „Wir gehen von rund 1 Million Euro zusätzlich aus, die je 1000 neuer Einwohner für den städtischen Haushalt verwendet werden können“, berichtet Tiit Laiksoo, dessen Stadt in den vergangenen zwei Jahren einen Zuzug von rund 17.000 Menschen aufweisen konnte. Er betont dabei auch die Zielsetzung für das Tallinner Angebot: „Der abgabefinanzierte ÖPNV ist in erster Linie eine soziale Leistung, die bessere Mobilität für Menschen mit Durchschnittseinkommen und geringen Einkommen ermöglicht.“

Auch Martin Randelhoff, Betreiber des [Fachblogs 'Zukunft Mobilität'](http://www.zukunft-mobilitaet.net/) [<http://www.zukunft-mobilitaet.net/>], sieht die Zielsetzung eines steuerfinanzierten ÖPNV als notwendige Ausgangsfrage an. Was in Tallinn die Mobilität als Daseinsfürsorge ist, könnte in Dresden beispielsweise das Ziel von weniger Pkw im Zentrum sein, um den Luftreinhalteplan umzusetzen. „Die Leistungen und Vorteile müssten für alle Dresdner transparent präsentiert werden“, sagt Randelhoff im Gespräch, denn zu häufig würden von Politikern und auch den Verkehrsbetrieben nur die Kosten und zusätzlichen Aufwendungen genannt“, sagt Randelhoff.

Für den aktuellen Zustand der Verkehrsbetriebe und den Dresdner ÖPNV hat Randelhoff nur Lob übrig. „Wir leben in einem ÖPNV-Paradies“, spitzt er zu und nennt als Argumente eine moderne Flotte, ein umfassendes Netz und eine relativ hohe Taktung. Die stünde seiner Meinung nach auf jeden Fall auf dem Spiel, da die Investitionsgelder für neue Bahnen langfristig fehlen würden.

Das gesamte Modell eines steuerfinanzierten ÖPNV ist für die Landeshauptstadt Dresden auch maximal eine Theorie. „Dresden kann und darf keine Insellösung innerhalb unseres Verkehrsverbundes ernsthaft anstreben. Die Rahmenbedingungen unter denen dieses Szenario zu betrachten ist, sind weit zu stecken. Sie gehen über die Belange der Verkehrsplanung im Stadtplanungsamt weit hinaus“, teilt der zuständige Bürgermeister Jörn Marx (CDU) auf Anfrage von DNN-Online mit. Der Umgang mit dem "Gut" ÖPNV könnte sich laut Marx deutlich verschlechtern. Diese Überlegung sollte als negatives Votum sehr ernst genommen werden, mahnt Marx und nennt somit die gleichen Argumente wie Ahrens und Randelhoff. Auch Christian Schlemper, Sprecher des Verkehrsverbundes Oberelbe (VVO), winkt ab. Die Überlegung komme überhaupt nicht in Frage (DNN berichteten).

Professor Ahrens, der auch in den wissenschaftlichen Beiräten des Bundesverkehrsministeriums und des VVO sitzt, empfiehlt einen anderen Finanzierungsansatz für den ÖPNV: „Für den entlastenden Nutzen des ÖPNV für den Straßenverkehr sollten meines Erachtens auch die Nutzer des Straßenverkehrs einen Anteil an den städtischen ÖPNV entrichten.“ Eine weitere Steuer wäre die Folge, aber nicht jeder Dresdner müsste Geld für den ÖPNV bezahlen, dessen Leistung er im Zweifel gar nicht nutzt. Auch dies sei bereits eine Finanzierungsidee, die der Wissenschaftliche Beirat für den Bundesverkehrsminister empfohlen hat. „Besonders hier braucht aber gut Ding sehr viel Weile“, kommentiert der Professor seine persönliche Meinung.

© DNN-Online, 06.11.2014, 09:47 Uhr

Leipzig

Leipziger Internet Zeitung: Am 26. März im Pögehaus

<http://www.l-iz.de/wirtschaft/mobilitaet/2015/03/richtige-diskussion-ueber-die-finanzierung-des-oepnv-81904>

24. März 2015

BÜRGERTICKET FÜR LEIPZIG?: LEIPZIGS GRÜNE WOLLEN EINE RICHTIGE DISKUSSION ÜBER DIE FINANZIERUNG DES ÖPNV

Da war die LVZ am Samstag, 21. März, mal richtig forsch und titelte "Bürgerticket für Bus und Bahn: Berlin macht mehr Tempo als Leipzig. Gemeinschaftsfahrschein wird konkret / Mitteldeutscher Verkehrsverbund plant Expertenrunde". Und das beim Thema Bürgerticket. Da staunten nicht nur die Leipziger Grünen.

<http://www.lvz-online.de/leipzig/citynews/buergerticket-fuer-bus-und-bahn-berlin-macht-mehr-tempo-als-leipzig/r-citynews-a-279896.html>

Opinion poll / Stern-Umfrage: *Deutsche bei ÖPNV-Flatrate uneins*

25.03.2015 – 09:05 **LOGISTIK**

Hamburg (ots) - In einigen deutschen Großstädten und Regionen wird über eine solidarische Finanzierung des Öffentlichen Personennahverkehrs (ÖPNV) diskutiert. Dabei sollen alle Bürger je nach Leistungsfähigkeit eine ÖPNV-Abgabe zahlen und dafür im Gegenzug kostenlos in Bussen und Bahnen fahren dürfen. Nach einer Forsa-Umfrage für das Hamburger Magazin stern befürworten 48 Prozent der Bundesbürger diesen Vorschlag, wenn die Abgabe deutlich billiger wäre als eine Zeitkarte. Etwa genauso viele, nämlich 47 Prozent, lehnen ihn ab. Vor allem unter den Anhängern der SPD (59 Prozent), der Grünen (56 Prozent) und der Linken (55 Prozent) findet ein solches "Bürgerticket" Zustimmung. Abgelehnt wird es dagegen mehrheitlich von den Sympathisanten der AfD (63 Prozent) und der Union (52 Prozent). Erst Anfang März hatte die Linksfraktion im Berliner Abgeordnetenhaus eine "Öffi-Flatrate" für die Hauptstadt angeregt, um die Schadstoffbelastung durch den Autoverkehr in Grenzen zu halten. Danach soll die monatliche ÖPNV-Abgabe etwa um die Hälfte billiger sein als ein reguläres Monatsticket.

Datenbasis: Das Forsa-Institut befragte am 6. März 2015 im Auftrag des Magazins stern 1001 repräsentativ ausgesuchte Bundesbürger, die durch eine computergesteuerte Zufallsstichprobe ermittelt wurden. Die statistische Fehlertoleranz liegt bei +/- 3 Prozentpunkten.

Diese Vorabmeldung ist nur mit der Quellenangabe stern zur Veröffentlichung frei.

Pressekontakt:

stern-Redakteur Werner Mathes, mathes.werner@stern.de, Telefon 030 - 20224 239

<http://www.presseportal.de/print/2981375-stern-umfrage-deutsche-bei-pnv-flatrate-uneins.html>

5. Ireland

More and recent information is needed on the FFPT for everybody above 66 years of age as it exists already some 30 years in Ireland as a social measure.

6. Italy

Paolo Vergnano has been asked to find someone doing the needed research for Italy. He mentioned already that in Italy there are no experiments. Obviously, except his own proposal as a candidate in the elections for mayor for the city of Rovereto to put the fare-free public transport in his own election-manifesto.

Question: no one in the academic world or among the transport-interested researchers thinking about this issue has picked this up?

Any-one else?

7. The Netherlands

150323, OV dichtbij (Verkeersnet)

More and more people have public transport nearby

(Steeds meer mensen hebben openbaar vervoer in de buurt <http://www.verkeersnet.nl/14943/steeds-meer-mensen-hebben-openbaar-vervoer-in-de-buurt/>).

Accessibility of public transport has gone up in the Netherlands. Despite national governmental measures of economy, *CROW-KpVV* (an independent think-tank on public transport) observes that between 2003 and 2013 accessibility of public transport has gone up (contrary to what most people think).

To conclude that 'public transport' is nearby, use is made of the yardstick that people have a busstop available within 500 metres, and/or a subway- or tramway-stop within 1,000 metres, and/or a railway-station within a perimeter of 2,000 metres, or an intercity-railway-station within 3,000 metres. In 2013 only 7.6 percent of the population had neither of these. In 2003 this percentage had been 8.3 and in 2008 it was 7.8.

Not counting the railway-stations, the percentage of the population with a bus-, tramway- or subway-stop within a 500 metre distance went up from 88.7% in 2003 to 89.2% in 2013. And within 1,000 metres it went up from 96.3% in 2003 to 97.1% in 2013.

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Road Congestion growth continues

(<http://www.verkeersnet.nl/13988/filegroei-zet-door/>)

Another factor that could influence the use made of public transport is road congestion for private vehicles. The Dutch minister of Transport was rather proud in 2013 that after some years of financial and technical efforts she had succeeded in forcing down road congestion.

It now appears that most likely this had more to do with economic developments, in particular the stagnating economic growth, as with roadbuilding and finding solutions for the most notorious congestion nodes in the system.

In 2004, since April, continuous growth has been noted, in total more than 8 percent expressed in number of congestions. And this is not only in rush-hours but through all day. The professional magazine for traffic (*Verkeersnet*) found it remarkable that also older congestion-points - where the problem seemed to have been solved - return now on the map of congestion points, like the motorway A2 from Den Bosch to Utrecht between Empel and Kerkdriel, and the A4 from The Hague to Amsterdam between Leidschendam and Zoeterwoude. Both are back again in the top ten of congested roads. The ANWB (Automobile Association) expects continued growth of volumes in truck-traffic and more congestion in 2015.

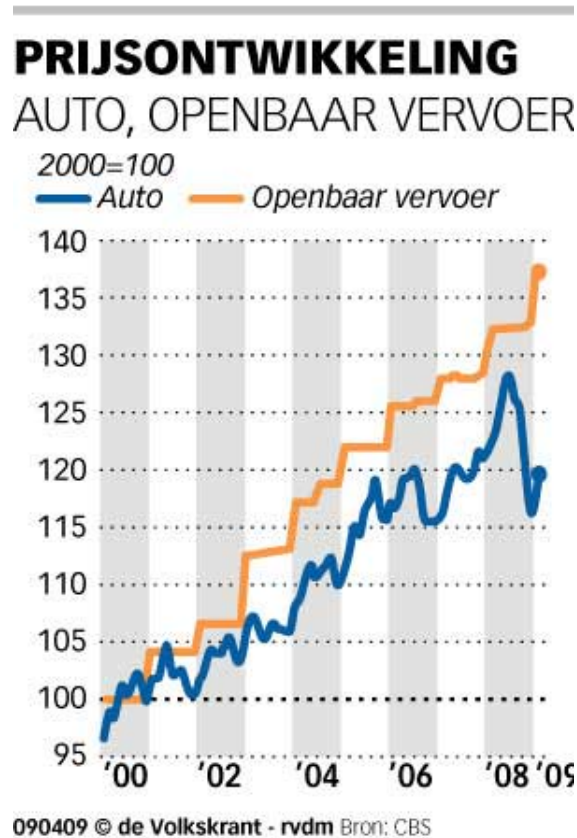
If not for other reasons, the understanding grows that full dependence on road-transport could become a serious problem and cannot be guaranteed as a possibility for solving mobility-needs. This makes it the more urgent to find solutions in the public transport sector to pull car-drivers from their individual car and push them into the public transport. This could help to free roads from passenger-traffic in order to have more room - which is badly needed - for the trucks. Men and women can walk, bicycle or make use of the public transport, whereas loads have to be delivered at the door.

Nevertheless, there is much resistance against manipulation of the price of a public transport ticket as a stimulus to bring potential passengers to prefer public transport instead of their own private car. Historical developments in the last quarter of the century have already brought down the price paid by the passenger to some one third of the real costs. The latter one third of the costs is paid (with some exceptions as by senior and very junior citizens) by the passenger as a sign of market-behavior, which is strongly advocated by the government.

It's interesting to see the 'rather normal' market-behaviour by travellers. The numbers preferring public transport diminish as the costs of travelling individually per car in comparison lowers. What would have happened if cost development between car and public transport had been reversed? Would the modal split turn more towards public transport?

Graph

Travel cost per traveller respectively per private car and per public transport vehicle 2000-2009.



(091104-05, p.3 Grafiek Prijsontwikkeling auto, OV sinds 2000)

a) Fare-free public transport card for Dutch students

Students' fare-free public transport card (national)

MA-thesis by Tim Vette (Saxion), title in Dutch: *De maatschappelijke effecten voor de stad Deventer als gevolg van de afschaffing van de OV-studentenkaart. Onderzoeksrapportage*. Summary for this document in 141127, 5, nieuwe tekst, Tim Vette, 'FFPT-card for Dutch students and socio-economic consequences for the City of Deventer' by Tim Vette, Graduate student Spatial Planning at SAXION University of Applied Sciences, Deventer, the Netherlands.

Since 1 January 1991, Dutch students enjoy the use of a fare-free public transport card ('student OV-card'). With this OV-card, university-students travel, free of charge, by public transport. In the earlier years after the introduction of the OV-card, students could travel fare-free any day of the week on buses, trams, trains and the metro without paying fares. Since 1994, students have to make a choice either fare-free travel on weekend-days (obviously to go home and return to the university) or on Monday through Friday (daily commuting). For the other days of the week, students travel with a discount of 40 percent.

Objectives

Two main reasons are given for the introduction of the fare-free student OV-card.

First, it was a political response to obviate individual travel cost reimbursements for students from the 80s. Second, the government could save money. Dutch university students are entitled to a grant. Living at home these grants are lower than living away from home. In 2014 the grant for students living at home was €100,25 per month, for students boarding at university it was €279,14 p/m. The assumption is that with a fare-free pass on public transport fewer students would live in student housing, saving the government money on the non-resident grant. Students indeed chose more to live at home, which was financially more attractive.

The government financed the introduction in 1991 of the fare-free card for students by cutting their basic grant. In exchange for a public transport subscription students received 60 guilders less per month as a study-grant, even if students did not use the fare-free public transport pass.

Implications for public transport

The student OV-card proved to be a great success for public transport. The number of students travelling by train in the morning doubled and due to the increase, rail transport had to deal with a capacity problem in the early years.

The student OV-card has now a major share in the public transport sector. In 2012, 668,000 students in the Netherlands used the fare-free OV-card. They travelled a combined amount of 6.7 billion kilometers of free travel. These 6.7 billion kilometers of fare-free travel amounts to one quarter of all passenger-kilometers on public transport in 2012 in the Netherlands.

By contracting the public transport companies to carry students fare-free, the Government offers these carriers a steady and guaranteed income. In 2011 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Ministry of OCW) paid €700 million to the public transport industry. This amount is roughly 10 to 20% of the total revenue for the combined public transport in the Netherlands. Without this guaranteed student travel the public transport companies would miss an important source of income and would therefore be forced to charge other passengers higher ticket prices or reduce their services, for instance by cutting lines or the frequency of service on some transport lines. These measures would make public transport less attractive and would hurt all travellers.

Social value of the student OV-card

In addition to the effects that the student OV-card has on the public transport sector, several other social effects occur. Above was mentioned already a stronger tendency among students to continue to stay at their parental home if the fare-free card would be abolished. On 29 October 2012 the current Dutch Government 'Rutte II' presented its coalition agreement including the announcement that the student OV-card would be abolished. This was prevented in the House of Representatives in 2014. One of the arguments in favor of continuation of the card was that in a situation without free student travel, this would make an additional 50,000 more students would be looking for a room to rent. The already tight Dutch housing market would get more crowded, with further rent-increases. Also an increase in students switching from public transport to the car is expected with, as a consequence, more crowded Dutch roads, more traffic accidents, more urban air pollution, and more parking problems near educational institutions. All of these adverse effects combine to increased costs to society.

Tim Vette found in his survey of 7,000 students studying in the Dutch city of Deventer, that of those who now travel by public transport, 20% would switch to using a car if the alternative in the form of a fare-free card for students on public transport was to be abolished.

The fare-free student card for public transport indirectly also benefits the Dutch higher education system. The student union praises the student OV-card as it creates an accessible education system. Towering travel expenses or costs of student housing is avoided if students can travel for free. This helps to make higher education accessible to all and – at least as important – the student's choice for a particular study is likely

to be more based on personal interest. In his research among the students in Deventer, Tim Vette also found that at least 28% of those now studying in Deventer would not be able to do this without the student OV-card. The majority of these students (85%) would be forced to choose a study closer to the family home, although this study is not the most desired one.

Arguments against the fare-free student travel card

Despite the advantages of the student OV-card there are also critics heard in the Netherlands. The Government argues that the fare-free student travel costs the government too much. See above the amount of €700 million paid by the Education Ministry to keep the card. By reducing its use the government could save an annual amount of approximately €425 million. Economizing on the student OV-card could also diminish the peak hour traffic within the public transport system. In 2011, 30% of all travellers in the peak hour were passengers with a student OV-card. If this figure could be lower, this would save on needed public transport capacity which has to take into account the high occupancy in rush hours causing as a side-effect daytime overcapacity in empty trains and buses. Another common argument against the student OV-card is that it encourages students to use it for short trips, which discourages walking and bicycling.

Recent developments

28 May 2014 the continuation of the student OV-card was announced for students attending higher education in the Netherlands. Additionally, the card will be available from 2017 for all students in secondary education (mbo). This decision was the result of negotiations between the coalition and some of the opposition parties in the Dutch Parliament. The student OV-card was used as a bargaining tool in a larger underlying debate about the shift in the funding of higher education in the Netherlands. It is to be regretted that this shifted the real political debate away from the social value of the card. The student OV-card will remain in the meantime so that students can continue to use fare-free the public transport system for the next few years at least.

Resource list:

- Bakker, P., & Zwanenveld, P. (januari 2009). *Het belang van openbaar vervoer, de maatschappelijke effecten op rij*. CPB & Kennisinstituut voor mobiliteitsbeleid.
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- Vos, A. d. (2011). *OV-studentenkaart is de kurk van het OV*. OV magazine.
-

b) Amsterdam

- 'Free' guarded parking for bicycles

Source: METRO (31 December 2013): the 'free' daily paper mostly distributed at railway- and bus/tramway-stations all over the Netherlands. (METRO is the largest daily paper in the world with 73 editions in 23 countries and 18 million readers. Most important characteristic: it is free for the readers).

Travellers can leave their bicycles in guarded custody for the whole day for free at the railway-stations in Amsterdam-Amstel, Den Bosch, Breda and Utrecht CS. This is advocated as an experimental solution to the alarming large number of bicycles left in the public space around the stations by train-passengers arriving in the morning hoping to find their bike again late afternoon.

The general practice is that at all places where paid guarded custody is offered that (counting for all stations) some 30,000 available guarded but paid places remain unoccupied, while ever more bicycles each morning arrive for which the owners seek a place which is for free, unpaid.

Obviously, to have to pay is a barrier to make good use of the official places reserved for stationing bicycles. Yet another example how important a fee can be. If you can avoid paying, the normal attitude seems to be rather to take the risk of a stolen bicycle than to pay.

- **Fare-free public transport to the city theatre**

Locally in Amsterdam, everybody who buys a ticket in advance for the City-Theatre (*Stadsschouwburg*) to see a play or to attend another event, travels 'fare-free' from any bus/tram-stop within the municipal borders to and from the theatre from four hours before the event begins till the end of public transport services on that day.

- **Fare-free Public Transport for seniors with minimum-incomes**

Source: 'Introduction' to the 'evaluation-report' made by the Amsterdam Municipal Transport company in 2014, 22/08/2014. (<http://www.verkeersnet.nl/12630/gratis-ov-voor-65-plussers-met-minimuminkomen-slaat-aan/>) and Report: '*Gratis OV voor minimaouderen*', 2e meting, http://www.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages635933/08_19_rapport_evaluatie_regeling_gratis_ov_minimaouderen_def_2_1.pdf

In general people get less mobile with age. If they are also short of financial means ('they are poor') the risk is that they stay more/too much at home, do not move enough, and are short of social contacts. They suffer loneliness. This development was the starting point for a decision taken by the Municipal Council of Amsterdam to offer fare-free public transport to the elderly of over 65 at minimum-support level of incomes (i.e. 110% of official 'legal social minimum', since 2015 it is 120%), and are registered as citizens of the city. Fare-free periods are daily from 09.00 a.m. onwards and on Saturday/Sunday all day.

It is assumed that by making public transport fare-free these 'minima-elderly' will become less isolated in the community, will be more active, and will diminish the use of the private car in the city. All these are declared good goals. The experimental period ended 31 December 2014. It is the intention of the city-government to continue this service. 14,000 people applied for the entitlement-card. They claim that with the card they leave home more often, make more use of public transport, and have more social contacts. Elsewhere in Dutch cities this kind of experiment has also proven to be successful as it also resulted in more frequent use of the available public transport.

The evaluation shows that the experiment is successful.

From the surveyed people 85 percent used public transport at least once a week. From those few also owning a car: 77% leave the car more often at home. More people feel happy 68%, for 17% that is partially also true. An important sign is that asked what people would prefer if again money would become available for poverty alleviation, 62% chose for continuation of fare-free public transport.

c) Den Bosch - Fare-free bus in the inner-city

20/11/2014

From 14 December 2014 onwards, the contracted bus-company Arriva will experiment in order to keep the inner-city in reach for the public by public transport. From that day most local lines will not enter any more the inner city. In addition small, environment-friendly buses will carry passengers and link with the local and interlocal lines in and around the city-centre. The experiment will last for two years to allow for a study whether and how citizens will make use of this new service. The municipality still needs the agreement of the province in charge of the budget of the public transport.

d) Eindhoven

figure 1: press releases following the fall of FFPT in Eindhoven



Ups and downs of Fare Free Public Transport in Eindhoven, The Netherlands By Erik van Hal (Municipality of Eindhoven, Department of Urban Planning)

Summary

Since March 2007 the city of Eindhoven is familiar with forms of FFPT. It began as an experiment, later it was standing policy. Up till 2009 FFPT was available for all citizens up to the age of 12, or 65 and older. Since January 1, 2014, the arrangement has changed and is linked to citizens with a low income regardless of age. Over the last seven years several studies have been carried out on the effects of FFPT.

1. History

How did it begin?

FFPT was first put on the political agenda in 2002 by a central-liberal coalition in the municipal council. Research was done in cooperation with the city of Utrecht. Unfortunately FFPT was fire extinguished due to budget cuts by the end of 2003.

'Free bus for 12- and 65+'

In 2006 the fire was poked up again by the new left-wing coalition. A budget of half a million euros was made available annually by the municipal council to implement forms of cheap or fare-free public transport. Research was done by the urban planning department in cooperation with the regional public transport authority. Out of different scenarios, fare-free public transport for children under 12 years and seniors (65+) in off-peak-hours was chosen. This was a clear concept and executable within the budget limits.

The following targets were set:

- Modal shift car to bus
- Better use of the regular public transport facilities instead of more expensive demand responsive transport
- Mobilising the elderly
- Introducing public transport to children (our mobilists of the future)
- Improving the image of public transport

The target groups consisted of some 20,000 children and over 30,000 seniors.

A direct contract was made up with the private transport company to pay compensation for the loss of revenue. The 'Eindhoven Citypass', which every citizen receives by mail, was established as the FFPT ticket. This pass includes a passport photo and date-of-birth, and just simply has to be shown to the bus driver.

The principal of equality: discrimination?

Even before the start a discussion began on discrimination. If FFPT was only available for Eindhoven residents, this could be seen as discrimination based on place of residence, which is forbidden according to EU rules. To avoid this, FFPT was made available to all regional residents under 12 and 65+ who are cardholders of Eindhoven public facilities as the ice dome, swimming pool and library. Their subscription is affixed to the Eindhoven Citypass and thus they also had a FFPT ticket. As a result the target groups did grow by another 17,500 to a total of 67,500 people.

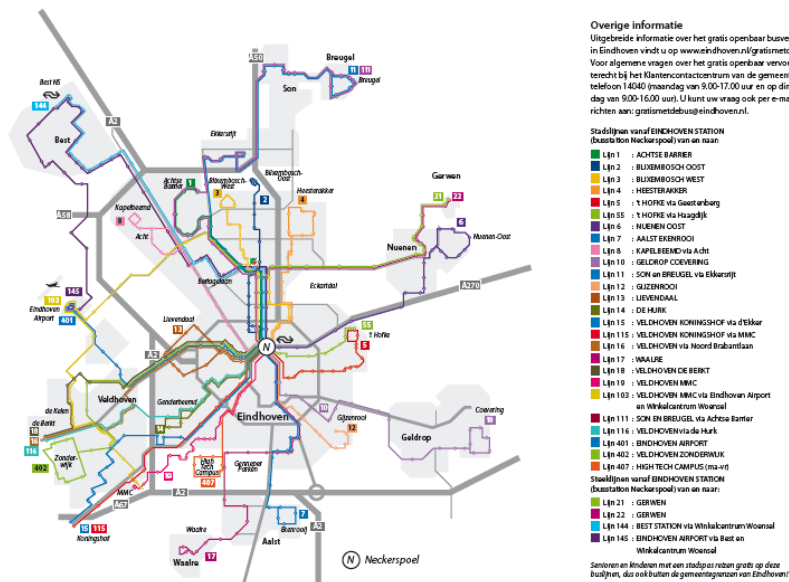


figure 2: the available FFPT network in Eindhoven

Evaluation 2011 and search for alternatives

In 2011 the liberals participated in the urban political coalition again. The coalition agreement specifically asked for an evaluation of the 'Free bus for under 12 year olds and 65+' in 2011.

It could only be a success if it had a relevant positive effect on the accessibility of, and air quality within, the urban area. Surveys showed within the target groups strong sustainable mobility effects and social effects. But, the FFPT - as an off-peak hour measure – had minimal effects on the urban traffic system as a whole.

A proposal to stop with FFPT by the coalition was turned down by the city council and research for alternatives was imposed. Alternatives had also to be found because the transport company was pushing up the price for compensation for loss of revenue.

This research was done in 2012 and resulted in proposals for an alternative revenue model for FFPT. The alternative was based on a contribution by the users and agreements with city centre entrepreneurs, employers and flanking policies by the municipality.

FFPT would develop in several steps from a subsidised instrument to a marketing tool. A proper agreement with the transport company on the contribution by the users could unfortunately not be reached. At the last moment the end of FFPT was postponed for another year in search for a solution.

Transformation to 'FFPT for low income'

An affordable alternative was found in linking the right to FFPT with the municipal poverty alleviation policy. One of the original goals was after all to mobilize people and encourage social participation. This led to the agreement that FFPT should be available for citizens with incomes up to 120% of the set social minimum. Also the FFPT ticket was now linked as a fare-free travel product to the public transport chipcard, which is the common means of ticketing and payment now in public transport in the Netherlands. With this development the target group decreased from about 65,000 potential travellers to about 25,000. The granting of the right to fare-free public transport is associated with an existing contribution scheme for people with a minimum income. As a result of this, additional administration and costs are avoided. This form of FFPT has now been active since January 1, 2014. At the end of 2014 there were about 10,000 active users.

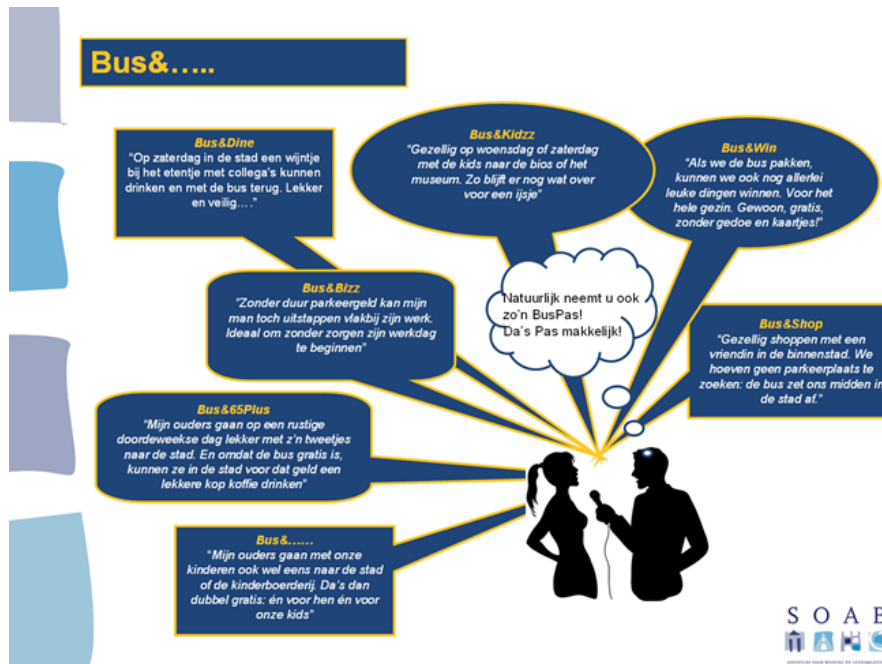


figure 3: the alternative revenue model 'Bus&....'. (2012)

2. Financing

Multi-year contracting

At the start a budget of half a million euros yearly was made available for a pilot period of two years. This had to cover the total of the project: ticket development, compensation for loss of revenue to the transporter, communication and evaluation. After a succesfull pilot this budget was set available for another four years (2009-2012). The amount to be paid for compensation for loss of revenue was set on the basis of the national standard registration of public transport income at the time (WROOV), in consultation with the public transport authority and the transporter. To avoid yearly financial discussions a four-year contract was drawn up.

Increase of the requested price over the years

After this four-year period there had to be agreed on a new contract for the years to come. Unlike before the transport company now demanded not only compensation for loss of revenue for the original target group, but also full compensation for the increase in the number of travellers and trips as an effect of the introduction of FFPT. As the number of bus trips within the target groups doubled, this did explode the requested price in 2013 to almost a million euros a year. The costs up to 2013 were financed by traffic and mobility budgets.

For 2014 FFPT was linked to the low-income target group. As the ticketing was done by the PT-chipcard, monitoring of use was relatively easy. On the basis of these monitoring facts the price was set on 600,000 euro yearly (up to 2017), in which the municipality will pay compensation for loss of revenue for the original target group and the amount involved with the increase of travelling as an effect of FFPT was split, half on the account of the municipality, half on the account of the transport company.

Transition 'free bus for under 12 years and 65+' to 'free bus for low income'

In this transition phase two matters were at hand:

How can we keep the old target groups (under 12 and 65+) enthusiastic in using public transport now they have to pay again?"

How can we introduce FFPT succesfully in short time within low income groups?

For 12- and 65+ a discount travel product is now available. These 12- and 65+ do already have a standard 34% discount. For 11 euros a year this can be added up to a 60% discount on the travel fare (off-peak). The

low income group had to be informed about the new scheme and the manner in which they can redeem their right. For both roadmaps are developed, available on websites, in flyers and distributed by direct mail. Also they can be personally assisted at the travelshop of the transporter at the Eindhoven city bus station.

4. Monitoring results

Fare-free Bus for 12- year olds and 65+ (2007 – 2012)

These target groups have been monitored over the years. The most important results are listed below.

The portion of children who never use a bus was halved (49% 2007 → 23% 2011).

The portion of seniors who never use a bus decreased from 35% to 11%.

Increase of bus trips of 68% (12-) to 82% (65+); new travellers or more frequent.

36% of the target group 12- has a modal shift from car to bus; about 5% from bike to bus.

75% of the target group 65+ has a modal shift from car to bus; 32% from bike to bus (in 2008 these percentages still were 37% respectively 13%; seniors did seriously leave their cars, but also their bikes more times).

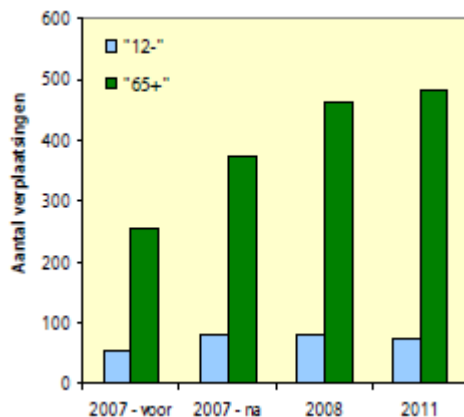


figure 5: development bus trips target groups
2007 before and after, 2008, 2011

Calculated on the given frequency of bus-use by the respondents, the average number of bus trips by seniors has increased from about one to almost 2 trips per week. Even five years after the introduction of < FFPT 12- and 65+ > the effects still continue to rise.

Cheap bus for 12- and 65+ (2012 - present)

Two-thirds of the respondents indicate that they use the bus less, now they have to pay for it again. Regardless the availability of discounts.

Table 1: average number of bus-trips within the target group 65+ over the years

	No FFPT	FFPT			Discount
	2007	2007	2008	2011	2014
Avarage number of bus trips per week	1,08	1,61	1,93	1,96	1,00

These figures indicate that the disappearance of FFPT for 65+ has cut the average number of bus trips in half, and is globally at the level of the period before FFPT.

20% don't make the bus trip anymore

alternatives for the bus are: 50% car, 40% bike, 20% walking (to a destination nearby); there is no relevant statistic connection found with car ownership

besides fewer bus trips, seniors make shorter bus trips than in their FFPT period

80% make use of the PT-chipcard, but only half of them have bought the discount proposition (60% discount off-peak)

nevertheless the share of seniors that never use the bus stayed at about the same level as in the FFPT period (12%). Before FFPT this was 35%.

Low income groups

The majority (78%) of the low income group indicates they are making more use of bus transport. Over 40% make a bus trip once a week. Only 10% travel once a month or less.

Table 2: average number of bus-trips within low income groups

	No FFPT	FFPT
	2013	2014
Avarage number of bus trips per week	0,65	1,82

- the average number of bus trips per week has about tripled
- in 50% a modal shift of bike to bus is involved, in about 25% car to bus
- besides more bus trips, low income groups make longer bus trips than before

Motive and social participation

As well for the earlier target group (under 12 and 65+) as for the new target group (low- income), social, medical, recreational and shopping activities were the dominant trip motives. Within the low-income group the social motive was more dominant, within the senior-group shopping. Half of the low-income respondents indicate feeling less lonely, and have easier access to activities and to be less dependent on others.

5. Finally

Since the introduction in 2007, FFPT has had a structural and positive contribution to the social participation of the target groups in Eindhoven.

The contribution of FFPT to sustainable transport within the target groups is also structural. There is a strong modal shift from car to bus; but in the Netherlands, as a cycling country, unfortunately also from bike to bus.

The contribution of FFPT to urban accessibility and air quality has been marginal in Eindhoven, because of the small share of the target groups in the total mobility. And due to the fact that off-rush hours are concerned within the FFPT arrangements.

To have more success on an urban scale one must search for smart applications.

Literature:

- Hal, E., van (2008), Gratis OV is OK!, Nationaal Verkeerskunde Congres
- Hal, E., van (2011), Evaluatienotitie 'Gratis met de bus voor 12- en 65+', Eindhoven
- Munckhof, L., van den, Kalle, I., Spapé, I. (2012), Nieuwe verdienmodellen in het OV,

e) Maastricht

Reward for students not to travel in rush-hours

From Maastricht it is reported that many students travel daily to the city by car. Those shifting to other times are rewarded. Those travelling by public transport to the City-centre or Randwyck, a secondary centre of the city, before 07.30 a.m. or after 09.00 a.m. and those using a bike or e-bike cash each time €4.00. Students already travelling by public transport at least two times a week and who switch to travelling before the morning hours of 07.30 a.m. and after 09.00 a.m. are also rewarded. Those students that already bike can earn their bike for a low price if they use the bike more often than before.

The experiment will be evaluated after June 2015 with the intention to see whether it is useful to continue and to remake this into a structural measure in order to promote travelling by public transport outside the rush-hours and to enhance the use of bikes.

f) Rotterdam [Requested is a Rotterdam-input, not yet received]

In 2014 the fare-free public transport policy for the elderly in the buses, trams and subway in the region, already existing for registered citizens of the region since 2010, as far as stretches the Metro-system of Rotterdam (the region from Capelle aan de IJssel till Hook of Holland, is continued by the City Council which overruled early in 2004 the City of Rotterdam municipal government's proposal to abolish this privilege from 1 January 2015 onwards, but the age-limit is moved up from 65 years to 67 years in accordance with the lifting of the age to receive pensions.

The Rotterdam municipal public transport company RET began with 'wifi for free' in all 256 buses already since 2012, in 2015 to be followed by all 113 tram- and 145 metro-cars. On the window-screens is the wifi-logo. An experiment at the metro station Beurs with free-wifi proved successful: daily usage by some 5,000 passengers, sometimes 1,000 at the same time. From the summer of 2015 all ten busiest metro stations will have been provided with free wifi. The company claims to be the first one in Europe with this free service for all passengers. The declared purpose of 'wifi for free' is: 'to make travel nicer for passengers'. (Copyright © 2015 VERKEERSNET, 29/01/2015)

RET begins with fare-free wifi in trams and metros



g) Tilburg

The municipality had free local buses for four years for citizens aged 55 and older. The system had been introduced as a poverty-alleviation measure, and is discarded because of a political shift in the city-government.

h) FFPT for particular groups in the population

A fresh review of existing/past schemes of fare-free public transport in Dutch municipalities or regions, is forthcoming by CROW/KpVV, research.

A nominal list of 59 cities/regions is available, [See: *Tabel Gratis en Goedkoop Openbaar vervoer*, 141212 at FFPT site]. This list mentions various cheap and fare-free public transport modalities. The list does not seem to be complete and also dates from the end of 2011 or beginning of 2012. Motivations for free/lower rates are given under headings: Participation, age (seniors), accessibility, tourism, promotional activities.

[Search for update.](#)

8. Poland

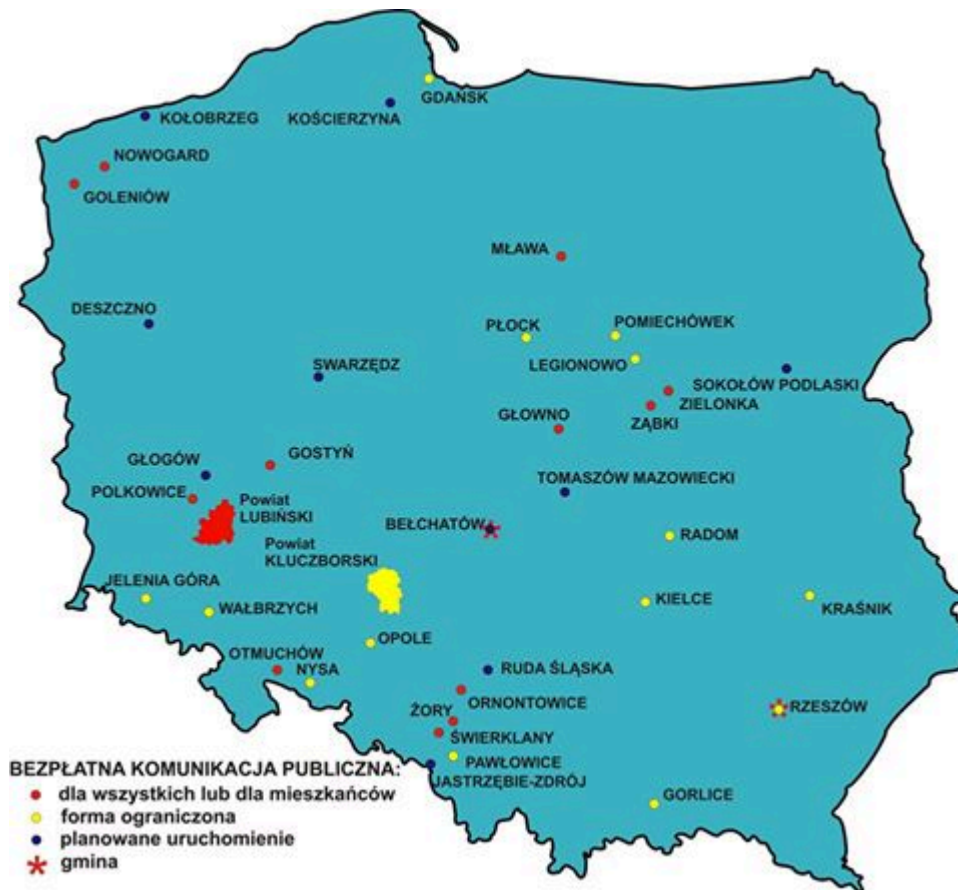
Łukasz Ługowski, (WZZ "Sierpień 80", Poland, luklug@wzz.org.pl) delivered input and completed data on Polish fare-free public transport. See at the end of this chapter. Additional requirement: Could there be found an academic to write a solid paper on FFPT in Poland? Certainly, since after the municipal elections in October 2014, so many new municipalities have begun to introduce FFPT.

Map of Poland with FFPT municipalities (October 2014)
<https://www.facebook.com/bezplatnakomunikacjamiejskawpolsce>



See for
Situation in January 2015:
<https://www.facebook.com/bezplatnakomunikacjamiejskawpolsce/photos/a.1640692596155076.1073741828.1640168009540868/1764089587148709/?type=1&theater>

New situation (after elections in October 2014) in May 2015, more FFPT



- for all or for local registered citizens
- for a limited privileged group
- for organized transport
- municipality

Introduction 17 municipalities

Spread all over Poland exist municipalities where fare-free public transport has been implemented, but mostly not for all users. That it is fare-free for all passengers is exceptional. City-governments have their own reasons to provide for all or only partly fare-free public transport: for instance to tempt non-registered citizens to opt for registration, and/or to lower the number of cars on the road.

Legionowo

From March 15 2010 Legionowo (55 thousand inhabitants, Mazowsze region) has got few bus lines free for all. The lines are available both on weekdays as well as Saturdays. Courses are tailored to the train schedule. Other information mentions **Legionowo** (województwo mazowieckie) with two fare-free lines only for local citizens since 15 March 2010.

Kraśnik

Unemployed in Kraśnik (35 thousand inhabitants, Lubelskie region) get special passes with single tickets for free travel by public transport from 1 September 2011. They can be used only for the purpose of seeking

employment. Currently unemployed from Kraśnik who are looking for work, do not have to buy tickets. From h. 7 to 15 (??) they can ride buses for free. For identification they show certificate issued by the employment office.

Pomiechówek (municipality)

From March 2014 the municipality of Pomiechówek (Mazowsze region) has started its own public transport. It's not FFPT but it is very cheap - the residents pay on municipal lines for a 1-day ticket only 1 złoty. The monthly ticket on one line costs 15 złoty and on all lines 30 złoty.

Lubin (municipality)

Like the nearby city of Lubin (Dolny Śląsk region) the municipality made public transport fare-free for residents on 1 August 2014. Fare-free will last until mid-2015. Then the local authorities will decide whether to go on with the experiment. The nearby city of **Ścinawa** and municipality of **Rudna** have FFPT from July 2014.

Zielonka

The city of Zielonka (Mazowsze region) has got fare-free transport for residents (who have a special pass) from 1st September 2014. For a short period from September to December 2014 it was free for all.

Ornontowice (municipality)

Free public transit for residents in Ornontowice (Śląsk region) started on the 2nd of September 2014.

Związek Gmin Podkarpacka Komunikacja Samochodowa (Boguchwała, Głogów Małopolski, Chmielnik, Trzebownik, Czarna)

This Association of Municipalities Car Communication of Podkarpacie is created by 5 cities and municipalities which together have about 80 thousand inhabitants which makes it one of the biggest free public transport systems in Poland. It has existed from 7 September 2014 and is restricted only for residents who have a special pass.

Jelenia Góra

Public Transport is fare-free in Jelenia Góra (Dolny Śląsk region) for residents on every first day of the month, 1 November (All Saints Day) and 22 September (Car-Free Day). The city council took the decision on 30 September 2014.

Mława

Fare-free public transport in Mława (Mazowsze region) began on 10 October 2014. It's restricted to residents who have a special city pass.

Rzeszów and 3 nearby municipalities (**Tyczyn**, **Świlcza** and **Krasne**)

Rzeszów is the capital of Podkarpacie region. Fare-free public transport for unemployed residents of the city and nearby municipalities exists from 24 October 2014. For identification they show certificate issued by the employment office.

Nowogard

Nowogard (Zachodniopomorskie region) has fare-free public transport from 1 December 2014. It is restricted to citizens of the city.

Polkowice

Polkowice (Dolny Śląsk region) is one of few cities in Poland where fare-free public transport is available for all users. FFPT was implemented in Polkowice on 4 December 2014.

Głowno

Głowno (a small city in Łódzkie region) has only one bus line which will be fare-free for residents from 1 February 2015.

Swarzędz

The new mayor of Swarzędz (Wielkopolska region) Marian Szkudlarek wants to make public transport fare-free for some groups – children, students, seniors and large families. There's no specific date set for implementation.

Nysa (woj. opolskie) – FFPT for car-drivers since early May 2012.
45.000 inhabitants

Jastrzębie-Zdrój

The new president of Jastrzębie-Zdrój (Śląsk region) Anna Hetman promised FFPT in her electoral campaign. In an interview with website <http://jasnet.pl/> after the elections she said that FFPT will be implemented in 2016 or 2017 and she considers it to be just a few fare-free lines at the beginning, or restricted to some groups – people over 60-years old, residents, and youth.

Ruda Śląska <http://rudaslaska.com.pl/>

FFPT was one of the electoral promises of the president Grażyna Dziedzic. It will be implemented in the second half of 2015 or in the beginning of 2016. It will be restricted to residents. Ruda Śląska will be the biggest city which has FFPT in Poland.

- Ruda Śląska (Bezpłatna komunikacja miejska), has 142.000 inhabitants. Since 1990 (170.000) population shrinks.

<http://www.fakt.pl/katowice/darmowa-komunikacja-bedzie-za-rok-w-rudzie-slaskiej,artykuly,514532.html>

b) Warsaw

Warszawa has a policy that makes all public transport in the city (agglomeration – 4 million inhabitants) fare-free for the 65+. All registered city-tax-payers receive a chip in their Polish identity-card which allows them to travel on urban public transport with a reduction of 20% on the regular fare.

All information on Warsaw needs to be checked, the urban Transportation Council has been asked to deliver a correct description of the local transport policies with regard to 'fare-free'.

To be addressed:

Łukasz Filipczak, Inspector

Department of Transport Development, Warsaw Transport Authority, Poland

e-mail.: l.filipczak@ztm.waw.pl

The following text translated from Polish came already from Poland/Ługowski:

Since 2012 the independent trade-union "Sierpień 80" fights to get fare-free urban public transport. More and more cities in Poland decide in favor of FFPT. All taken together, in various forms FFPT functions in tens of cities globally.

(See: <http://freepublictransports.com/>).

c) Żory

(Ambition: 'to become the leading free public transport city in the country').

Żory is a small town in southern Poland, but it is also a town with big ambitions: the intention is to become the leading free public transport-city in the country. Żory is the first Polish city in which the bus is fare-free. This new policy was introduced beginning the 1st of May 2014. No document is needed. Not only locally registered citizens (as in many other fare-free-cities) but really everybody including occasional visitors, tourists, either Polish citizens or foreigners, all travel fare-free on the local buses. Seven local buslines are included. Other lines that cross the borders of the municipality are not included in the new policy. The zero-fare public transport locally will be implemented as one of several measures to stop the population decrease.

The city-administration calculated that if a fare should be paid on the local lines, this would cost the city one million złoty (€250.000) per year to control the sale and use of the tickets. In recent years the costs of the local bus system to the city reached 2.4 million złoty per year. On Żory, see later below more details.

Source:

Żory z darmową komunikacją miejską. Dla każdego (Żory has fare-free urban public transport, for everybody) [<http://www.transport-publiczny.pl/wiadomosci/zory-z-darmowa-komunikacja-miejska-dla-kazdego-2265.html>] byJakub Dybalski, published 2014-05-02 15:23.

The municipality has some 60,000 inhabitants. Users of the local buses are predominantly the children and the elderly. In particular for the families which have many children, this is a considerable support for the family-budget. An additional consideration for the introduction of fare-free local buses was that the city is quickly developing and growing and that new city quarters are constructed some distance from the city-centre. The fare-free policy helps the shops and services in the city to attract and retain more clients. Another reason to make the bus fare-free was the gradually diminishing number of paying passengers before 2014, causing the costs to be paid by the city-government anyhow to rise.

141119, Żory FFPT

Free Public Transport

Żory: a few words about location

- A city in the South of Poland
- Silesia Region
- 60 thousand residents
- 65 km², square kilometers
- Mayor of Żory: Waldemar Socha

Public Transport in Żory before 1st May 2014

From 1993 Żory was a member of an intercommunal transport union – a group of 10 cities in control of the common public transport. Members of this union are the neighbours of Żory – Jastrzębie Zdrój, Suszec, Pawłowice and some others.

Before May 1st 2014 there were 6 bus lines within the city that didn't cross the boundaries of the city and 6 regional buslines that connected Żory with other cities.

Experiences as member of the intercommunal transport union:

- On average, twice a year ticket-prices increased, people didn't have enough money to pay for tickets that's why they discontinued bus travel;
- Buses started to become empty;
- Lower company income from ticket sales meant that the city had more to pay from public funds to the intercommunal transport union for maintaining the public transport;
- The prices of public transport were increasing and increasing - Żory had to pay 72% of the costs of the carrier - total costs 2,5 million złoty - 625 000 Euro and the prospect was that the ticket-prices would continue to rise;
- The transport costs started to be unjustifiable because more and more money was needed from the city budget and still there were few passengers in the buses – we had start to think what to do next, how to solve this problem?

At the same time in the Transport Union:

1st January 2014 two municipality-members decided to resign from the intercommunal transport union: these were Wodzisław Śląski and Świerklany, but Żory stayed.

Żory had an agreement with the transport union which ended not before 30th of April 2014. The decision had been taken to stay in the intercommunal transport union but the rules changed, and the corporate philosophy in Żory also changed. Mayor Waldemar Socha of Żory found the best solution for the municipal public transport problems – Fare-free Public Transport.

Żory decided to try fare-free public transport for all, but on its own terms.

A tender for companies interested in realising fare-free public transport in Żory was organised. From the tendering companies the best one with the lowest price per km for fare-free public transport was chosen, a

company called “A2I”. Żory signed the agreement continuing to be a member of the transport union now but even though the transport was mixed in part.

[Text as received is not too clear! Must be reviewed (by Żory?)]

Conclusion:

Fare-free public transport is cheaper than transport with the Union.

Another reason why we have stayed in the Union is because of grants from European Union for transport. The Common Transport Union got financial assistance from a subsidy which European Union can give for new technology in buses for cameras, a system which will count passengers, for the card which will replace tickets, and for points where you can fill your card etc. And if Żory had decided to leave the Union they would have lost this money from European Union – so it was a political issue.

Free Public Transport in Żory - 1st May 2014

Żory became one of the few cities in Poland which started the fare-free public transport project

- 1) Price: 3,54 zł/km [€ 0.88/km] which is **less** than the transport union price by almost 1 zł per km;
- 2) Fare-free public transport is for **everyone** – not only for residents. You don't need any cards, any ID card, even if you are not from Żory, you travel for free;
- 3) 7 buslines - the bus numbers from 01 to 07 - go for free;
- 4) The public transport is fare-free only within the city limits of Żory;
- 5) The company responsible for the implementation of the fare-free public transport was chosen in the public tender and signed the agreement for 10 years;



PROS:

- many more passengers in the buses,
- fewer cars in the city,
- less air pollution from exhaust fumes, which is better for the environment;
- fewer traffic jams in the city;
- more free parking sites in the city;
- the revival of the city has begun, residents are eager to enjoy cultural goods, recreation centres, sports. They also began to use the free buses to go to markets. Families began to visit each other, friends drop in on their friends, mothers with children and with prams start to visit the city-centre more often;

- one of our residents made a free mobile application with the bus-timetables, many got these from the Internet shop: Google Play. That resident volunteered this contribution as he wanted to say thank you to the Mayor, because four of his children use free public transport and he knows how to do this as he is a programmer.

The pros and cons of 0 = zero zloty bus-travel, no fares to be paid.

- the city gained a good reputation all over the world as media and journalists from everywhere did interviews - even Reuters came - so it became the biggest promotion in history of Żory.

CONS: none

- The general feeling is that this was the best idea to do for Żory and its residents, to start fare-free public transport and to get more passengers in the buses, which was our aim.



Don't try to figure it out – just go for free!
Nie Kombinuj – Jedź za darmo!
'Bezpłatna' = 'fare-free', literally: without paying

Why, and why for all?

The question is often raised why Żory's fare-free public transport is for everyone and not only for residents, which is the way it is organized in Tallinn in Estonia. It is free for everyone because we want the cheapest and the simplest system. We don't want ticket controllers on our buses.

Of course from the beginning of the project we informed our residents that they can express their opinion about fare-free public transport, and exchange their views on it. We knew that it would help us to improve the system. And the residents did. They wrote e-mails, and started to come to our offices to talk with us, and started to write letters. And after three months of dialogue we decided to use all ideas to change the system, the bus-lines, locations of bus-stops and timetables, as we want to have the perfect system for our residents. There is still a lot of work to be done, but we are not afraid of that. People are helping us so we will do it.

Source in Polish: *Żory, Bezpлатna komunikacja miejska od 1 maja 2014 r.* See: <http://anna-hetman.pl/files/docs/bkm.pdf>

Żory: Świat jeździ bez biletów [Żory: the world travels without tickets].

6 listopada 2014, w Żorach, odbyła się 'Międzynarodowa Konferencja dotycząca bezpłatnej komunikacji miejskiej na świecie. Celem spotkania było upowszechnianie wiedzy na temat tego rozwiązania.'

<http://anna-hetman.pl/czytaj/21/zory-swiat-jezdzi-bez-biletow>

[6 November 2014, in Żory was organized the International Fare-Free Urban Public Transport Conference. The purpose of the meeting was spreading knowledge on this transport-solution.]

d) **Ząbki**

Re-edited and supplemented by Tomasz Kret (tomasz.kret@zabki.pl), Advisor to the Mayor of Ząbki in Transportation System and Public Transport System.

In Ząbki (approx. 60.000 inhabitants) bordering the Polish capital of Warsaw, fare-free public transport is a privilege given only to travelers formally registered as citizens of the city. In Ząbki only 30.000 persons are registered. Many commute to Warsaw for work or studies, and the zero-fare policy was a measure to get more people to register as inhabitants. That is important as it broadens the local tax base. In short, Warsaw has its own policy for urban public transport and it made it profitable for inhabitants of Ząbki to register in Warsaw (and to become taxpayer in Warsaw) so they could profit from better conditions. Now they have a reason to register in Ząbki.



Ząbki is a small town (11,13 km²) bordering the capital Warszawa with 60.000 inhabitants, although only 30.000 persons are locally registered. The proximity of the capital (the distance between the center of Ząbki and the center of Warsaw is about 9 km) attracted thousands of new residents. Some residents emigrated to the suburbs of Warsaw. Within 15 years, the number of inhabitants in Ząbki doubled. In the Polish tax system, a municipality gets more funds, the more inhabitants it has registered, therefore fare-free public transport is the means to tempt locals to register in Ząbki instead of the previous place of residence.

The population is generally young, very mobile, and in productive age.

but

Ząbki has the highest birth rates in Poland. Most inhabitants live in Ząbki, work, study and spend their spare time in Warsaw. Ząbki are covered with Warsaw public transport network. The eighth bus lines connect Ząbki with Warsaw with regular fares (1st zone). Only three lines are passing through the center of Ząbki, five are passing on the north-western edge of the so they are difficult to access for the residents of the densely populated southern part of the town. Efficient, convenient, fast and reliable public transport to Warsaw is their mayor need. Most of the Ząbki inhabitant use long-term tickets for public transport in Warsaw. But the Warsaw Public Transport Authority (ZTM) wasn't able to appease transport needs of fast growing Ząbki. Especially the problem was on the southern part of the city where intensive housing has been developed.



Map – location of Ząbki



Map - Ząbki borders Warsaw

That were the main reasons why Ząbki decided to organize her own additional transport system (bus lines) complementary and supplementary to Warsaw lines.

Remarkable is, that the urgent budget problem of the Ząbki municipal authorities could be met by making the local public transport fare-free, at the same time answering the most acute problem of the commuters to Warsaw. The introduction of the zero-fare policy was a measure to get more people to register as inhabitants. The other reasons why Ząbki decided introducing zero-fare policy transport buses in Ząbki as an additional transport offer:

- fast increasing demands for public transport caused by settlement in Ząbki,
- congested trains and buses (the cooperation with Warsaw was not enough to satisfy this demand),
- the need of improvement of integration with Warsaw public transport system and to bring the inhabitants from the southern part of Ząbki to the railway and bus lines in the north running by the bus-lane,
- congested town road network (caused mainly by transit traffic),
- solution for environmental problems: air pollution, noise,
- increasing the time availability (higher frequency of buses) and the spatial availability (distance from the nearest bus stop) of the public transport,
- need for interior public transport in the town:
 - ▶ many areas of the town was beyond range public transport,
 - ▶ schoolbus was needed because bringing pupils for school by their parents cars caused serious traffic problems in the surroundings of schools,
 - ▶ reducing the impact of urban and spatial barrier caused by the railway line crossing the center and the better spatial integration the northern and southern parts of the town,
 - ▶ facilitating access to public facilities, in particular for the elderly and impaired mobility.



Map of the transport network in Zabki: train, Warsaw regular lines, free fare lines

Local bus lines „Zabki-1” (since 1st of September 2011) and „Zabki-2” (since 1st of March 2012) are fare-free available for owners of the citizen card „Jestem z Ząbek” (I’m from Zabki) or for everyone with one single-pass ticket.



Every citizen who is registered and/or tax payer in Zabki, i.e. who declared as place of residence the city of Zabki in his or her tax declaration, is entitled to get the “Jestem z Ząbek” (I’m from Zabki) -card. Since 1st of January 2012 the card is issued to over 21.000 citizens. On top of free ridership, card owners also enjoy discounts at over 80 local service points and shops. Since February 2014 the “Jestem z Ząbek”-card gives 25% discount to the swimmingpool and bowling users.

Two bus lines are routed to avoid traffic jams and connect big settlements with nearest and attractive interchange places to the two nearest railway lines and efficient bus-lane corridor on the north (in the peak bus in every 3 minutes) which allow to get to the center of Warsaw very fast. The lines connect Ząbki public places: school, city hall, commercial center, clinics, swimmingpool.

The Ząbki free fare lines:

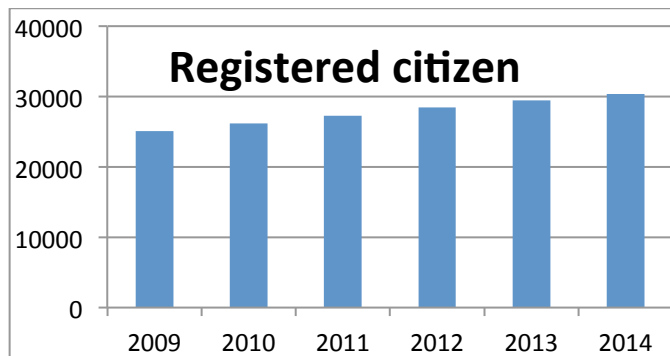
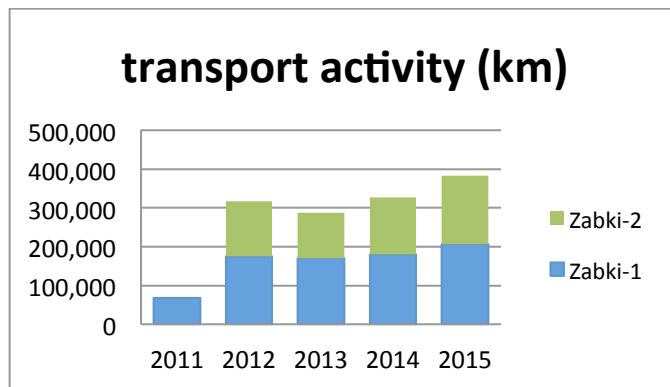
„Ząbki-1” - route looped 17 km long, 38 courses during labor day, 20 courses in weekends operated by 2 10 meters buses.

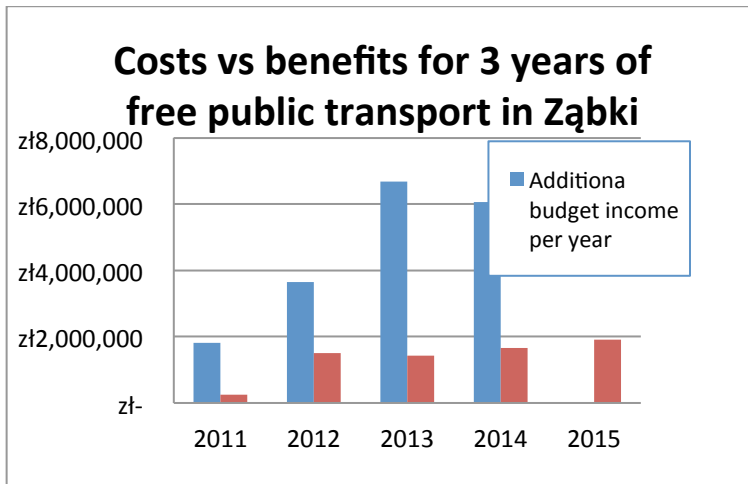
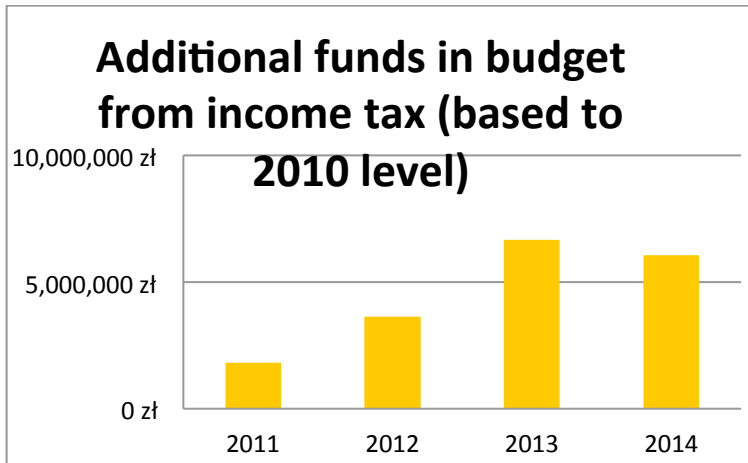
„Ząbki-2” rush hour line 28 courses in labor day, route is looped 24 km long, operated by 4 - 12 meter long buses.

A 70 bus-stops are located on the routes of the Ząbki lines and 40 of them is used by the Warsaw bus lines too. In 2014 the carrier work of these lines was 326 500 km and we transport about 700 thousand passengers. The filling rate in rush hour reaches nearly 90 percent of buses capacity. Because the limitation of road network geometry does not allow to increase the size of busses Ząbki has to increase frequency or start another line in the following year. In 2014 Ząbki expenditures on free transportation exceeded the amount of the grant aid for Warsaw lines in Ząbki.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
transport activity [km]	68 574	316 338	287 520	326 519	383 022
cost [PLN]	253 724	1 503 036	1 424 638	1 655 341	1 909 562
Numer of buses	2	5	5	6	6

Table: The Ząbki free fare lines in numbers





Profits from fare-free transport for city residents:

- reduced transport cost = reduction of living cost for families - Ząbki transport system is economically neutral to registered inhabitants and taxpayers.
- increased accessibility and flexibility in routing daily travels (employee, students) with no additional costs,
- easier access to attractive interchange places, 1-2 changes allow to get to the center of Warsaw or to metro system, 3 changes allow to get anywhere in Warsaw,
- better coverage and improved public transport accessibility,
- free social interior transport for pensioners, children, students, unemployed (Previously there were only Warsaw lines and was Warsaw ticket needed to every interior travel. Now no Warsaw ticket is needed to travel inside Ząbki).
- boosted mobility of elderly people and people with mobility difficulties (e.g. disabled people, mothers with prams) previously,
- easier access to public, educational, health, schools, facilities.

Profits from fare-free transport for the town

- reduced private traffic generated by local citizens,
- reduced air pollution and noise,
- higher accessibility of public transport (over 90% population of Ząbki is in 5 minutes isochrones to the nearest bus stop),

- reduced parking demand and pressure,
- increased attractiveness of Żabki among other sub-Warsaw cities as a settle place – the – the lowest cost of transport for passengers, shorter travel time to the center of Warsaw,
- new taxpayers and additional budget income,
- better spatial integration and reduced “barrier effect” caused by railway track,
- schoolbus and social transport functionality.

Over time this fare-free public transport becomes more popular. Żabki had to increase frequency and bus capacity because the buses were crowded in the rush hours. Żabki introduced free fare public transport as something new, something extra, an additional offer for citizens. Citizens have additional better coverage, accessibility and frequency of busses without additional cost. Zero-fare policy meant that public transport is more competitive to individual travel by car. The case of Żabki is an example of a local fare-free transport system that is complementary and supplementary to the metropolitan transport system but without tariff integration. Żabki is an example of an ‘evolutionary’ model of introducing fare-free public transport (FFPT). Each successive year the fare-free bus lines play a more important role and are more popular in the Żabki transportation system. At the same pace Żabki increases the funds for the fare-free transport, the funding level corresponds in the budget with the increasing income.

e) Łódź

[In the elections of 2014, some candidates for the Presidency of the City presented their intentions with regard to fare-free public transport. The city will be asked to provide more information. In other words did John Godson win?].

‘Pomysły kandydatów na prezydenta Łodzi: Drugi tunel, bezpłatna komunikacja, usunięcie samochodów z centrum’. [Thoughts of the Łódź presidential candidates: Second tunnel, fare-free public transport, car-free inner city.]

Candidates in the 2014 local elections for President of the City answered some questions about traffic and transport in the city in the next years. One of the three candidates was former council member John Godson who declared that

‘After reimbursement of the debts the city owes, fare-free public transport on local lines should be introduced for those having a card as citizen of Łódź’.

[‘Po wyprowadzeniu Łodzi z długu, chcę wprowadzić bezpłatną komunikację miejską dla każdego posiadacza Karty Łodzianina – **bezpłatne przejazdy dla łódzkich podatników.**’]

The condition he puts forward ‘after paying debts’ is an interesting one! And he intends to do both!

9 Romania

Information about ‘Fare-free Public Transport’ in Romania is barely available.

Except that it exists in the cities of Ploiesti (population 200,000) and Lugoj (ca 70,000) that have already some form of FFPT and that the city of Timisoara has also started preparations for FFPT.

Ploiesti (200 000 inhabitants)

FFPT is introduced since spring 2013 for those with a net income below €700 per month, to last till the end of 2015. Discussion is ongoing on whether to have a referendum in autumn 2015 about continuation.

Motive for introduction was easing traffic during reconstruction of tramways.

Deputy mayor Iulian Teodorescu (now acting as mayor).

Iulian.teodorescu@ploiesti.ro

Contact to him in using English is head of PR Alina Istratescu, alina.istratescu@ploiesti.ro

+40 7 5309 8144

Lugoj (45 000 inhabitants) also FFPT city.

Lugoj has a public transport fleet of only 5 vehicles, each one on a different route, PT operating only in morning peak, afternoon rather as a school bus and evening rush hour. People and the mayor, are heading bravely with that for next year's local elections.

Mayor Francis Boldea.

francisboldea@yahoo.com

francisboldea@primarialugoj.ro

+40 256 352 240

Timisoara, 350 000 residents, had FFPT test in Dec 2013-Jan 2014, 7 weeks altogether. Deputy mayor promised to send translated synopsis of this trial. (not yet received).

They informed that they had been directly inspired by Tallinn. The reason for stopping was that the traffic situation did not change (according to the deputy mayor). The Deputy mayor also explained that rules for EU funds for a public transport national operation program somehow forbid fare-free public transport. This is in worst case the interpretation by the national government. Anyway, Tallinn received EU-funding for tram-network renovation, and was not asked to stop its FFPT.

Dan Diaconu, deputy mayor

Dan.diaconu@primariatm.ro

+40 256 494 657

Sharing costs of a funeral

In a totally different sector of society we find however a similar activity, as the costs of a funeral are, at least partly, paid for everybody by the state via different institutions that cover with a 'funeral allowance' the costs of the funeral.

Who from Romania will fill in needed information on fare-free public transport municipalities?

Also here, we see that 'fare-free' only means that the financial answer to an individual need is provided by the collectivity of those who contribute to the national social insurance system. Recently the amount of the payment went up. See the following information coming from Romania.

150107, State pays for funeral

Romania-Insider.com daily news, Added on January 7, 2015 07:04 pm

State ups funeral payment in Romania + local funeral customs



Romania has recently increased the funeral payment that citizens who contributed to the social insurance system are entitled to. The state added an extra RON 117 – or some EUR 26 – to the payment, which in 2015 will be of RON 2,415 – or some EUR 542. The funeral payment is equal to the gross average salary, which also increased at end 2014.

This amount is paid by the state, via different institutions, depending on the status that the deceased had. If the deceased person was employed, or a family member of an employee dies, the employer will make the

funeral payment. In case a pensioner dies, the Pensions House makes the payment. In either case, the funeral payment can be made to the surviving spouse, child, parent, guardian, or any other person who can prove they covered the funeral costs. Payments are made within 24 hours of submitting the needed documents.

Unlike in other countries, everyone who contributed to the social insurance system, and not just low income citizens, are entitled to the state-backed funeral payment – which is always made after their death. In some countries, like the UK, such an amount will have to be repaid to the state if the person who made the funeral payments inherits anything from the deceased's estate.

In Romania, the funeral payment can cover most of the funeral costs, depending on the level of detail chosen. Orthodox funerals can involve many customs, depending on the region of the country. One of them is organising the last alms for the deceased, which consists of a multi-course lunch called *Pomana* or *Pomenire* in Romanian- which includes the special dessert called *coliva (in picture)*, (made only for funerals and the *Pomana* events), usually organised after the funeral. The event, during which a priest will bless the food, is usually attended by relatives and friends of the deceased.

Similar events are organised 40 days, then 6 months, and a year after the death. In rural areas, the *Pomana* is typically organised at home, and food is cooked by the family with the help of neighbours, so they only have to pay for the ingredients and sometimes for the cooks. In cities, such events are organised in restaurants, which create a typical menu for such kind of events. They tend to be costlier, and most often these costs are not covered by the funeral payment.

editor@romania-insider.com

10 Sweden

Announcement of the Avesta-conference on the internet:

<http://www.avesta.se/Naringsliv--Foretagande/Konferens-om-avgiftsfri-kollektivtrafik/>

From correspondence:

As regarding the situation in Sweden:

* There's no national "price" policy here,

* It differs from county to county whether youths and other groups are given free public transport.

Lessons from Sweden

<http://farefreepublictransport.com/2014/07/16/fare-free-public-transport-lessons-from-sweden/>

Some information was received already from:

Alexander Berthelsen, Planka.nu, Sweden,

Alexander.Berthelsen@gmail.com

He will update and complete this early information

<https://planka.nu/eng/>

Is there any national policy on FFPT?

Do students enjoy it?

Do members of the military forces have FFPT?

Or in general: public officials? Politicians, MPs?

More information from Sweden would be welcome.

What about Denmark and Norway?

Rail pass Sweden

Use a rail pass for hop on/hop off travel through inland Sweden. The pass gives two weeks of unlimited

travel.

The *Inlandsbanan Card* costs SEK 1,795 during the period 15th of June–9th of August 2015. You can also buy an extra week for SEK 400 (= €42,68 – 6 April 2015). Seat reservation costs SEK 30 per day per person.

Two children up to and including age 15 travel free when accompanied by an adult, while young people aged 16–25 receive a 25% discount. *Inlandsbanan card and Interrail passes are only valid during the summer.*

141106, FFPT, Sweden in Żory

[July 16, 2014]

This summary will primarily focus on places where there is or have been a general fare-free public transport, and not discussing all the places with partial FFPT for certain groups of residents. The latter is quite common, especially concerning young people. All school children that cannot walk to school are granted free bus passes.

A few cities that have a small yearly fee are also mentioned. It should be noted that almost all of these examples are from rural areas where few people are using the public transport, so making it fare-free has been a way of increasing ridership, since the municipalities by law have to provide basic public transport. A few interesting examples are how car users are given a year of free travel with public transport, if they promise to stop using the car. This has been done in for example **Lund** and in municipalities outside Gothenburg.

In **Gothenburg** all retired inhabitants ride for free, except during rush hours, which has resulted in many news articles of how happy and active the retired people have become.

Almost all public transport in Sweden nowadays is operated by private companies on public contracts, earlier it was mostly by public companies. In 2012 a new law was passed that made it possible for private corporations to start new lines within an existing public transport network.

In the following text, the numbers refer to paragraph-titles:

- (1) possible effects and side-effects of free public transport (social, environmental, culture and life style, city planning etc.),
- (2) costs, perception-costs, savings and the financing of free public transport (subsidies from overall taxes or a special tax/rate/contribution),
- (3) target groups (all public transport users or registered residents),
- (4) the problem of avoidably increased demand (pedestrians and cyclists becoming idle),
- (5) the (long term) process character of the FFPT projects,
- (6) the property respectively ownership relations concerning the infrastructure, transportation companies, service providers,
- (7) agents involved in the decision making, evaluation, control processes on local and regional public transport.

a) Ockelbo

<http://www.ka.se/har-ar-det-gratis-att-aka-buss>

E-post: kommunalarbetaren@ka.se , webbred@ka.se , För debattartiklar: asikter@ka.se

5900 inhabitants, fare-free public transport in Ockelbo has operated since 1995, created by opening up all public transport and the specialized transport for school children and elderly to everyone by making it fare-free.

(1) Ridership of passengers not going to school went up from 9,500 to 45,000 in the first year. Increase in new lines and adjustments of time tables made it possible to commute to work. Some households stopped using the car, and many others needed only one car instead of two.

Many people could continue to live in the rural areas, and elderly and young people gained more freedom of movement. A lot of the basic services have been centralised from the villages to the cities, the increase in lines made it possible to make quick visits just as with a car.

(2) Overall taxes pay for the public transport. The driving force of the reform was drastic increases in costs for transports for elderly and disabled people. The increased efficiency of the existing public transport therefore didn't increase the total costs at all.

(3) All users could ride for free.

(4) No decrease in pedestrians and cyclists was noted.

(6) Only local buses are fare-free, not the regional buses to other cities passing through Ockelbo.

(7) Principal agent was an elderly lady complaining about how half-empty buses travelled the same routes but she was only allowed to use a few of them, which got a planner in Ockelbo to propose the idea.

The current lines and the time schedules are a result of many years of discussions with the local communities of different villages, to satisfy their needs and wishes.

An evaluation was made with 800 randomly selected inhabitants: 51% of the riders could have taken the car instead, 75% said that they would use the public transport less or not at all if fees were reintroduced.

Martin Gunnarsson, *Avgiftsfri kollektivtrafik i praktiken – En studie av Kuxabussarna i Ockelbo kommun*, 38 p. Kulturgeografiska institutionen Uppsala universitet, February 2012, ISSN 0283-622X.

See: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:503888/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Fredrik Quistbergh *Gratis kollektivtrafik – visst lönar det sig*,

<http://www.quistbergh.se/view/63>

fredrik@quistbergh.se – Mobil: +46-(0)73-6262896, +46-(0)73-6262896

b) Hallstahammar & Surahammar

15,300 inhabitants. Just like in Ockelbo, both the regular public transport and the specialized public transports are fare-free, and there is also an on-call flexible line that is fare-free.

(1) The main argument here is the efficiency gained with coordinating rural public transport, school buses and specialized transport. The costs are high and the usage is low, so by increasing the ridership it results in a positive cost-benefit-analysis. The local lines are scheduled with the regional buses and trains to facilitate travelling without a car.

(2) Overall taxes pay for the public transport.

(3) All users ride for free.

(4) No problems with decrease in pedestrians and cyclists was noted since it's a very rural area.

(6) Only local buses are fare-free, not the regional buses to other cities that pass through Hallstahammar & Surahammar.

(7) – Hallstahammar municipality: [“Bussar och tåg”](#)

Ramböll *“Utvärdering av avgiftsfri kollektivtrafik i Avesta”* 2013.

<http://www.kungsbacka.se/Gator-trafik-och-utemiljo/Kollektivtrafik/Bussar-och-tag/>

Catarina Nyberg, kollektivtrafikstrateg, 0300-83 42 30, 0300-83 42 30

catarina.nyberg@kungsbacka.se

c) Ånge

In the small village of Kölsillre with 100 inhabitants, in Ånge municipality, a fare-free flexible on-call bus line named “Kölsillre Byabuss” (Kölsillre Village bus) was created when the traditional bus line was cancelled, due to costs and low usage.

The bus is self-organised by the inhabitants via the webpage www.byabussen.se. People can schedule when

they want to use it, and other people can tag along on the same ride.

The bus is primarily used for transportation from the village down to the city of Ånge, but other trips are possible, it can only be used within the municipality of Ånge.

(1) The people of Kölsillre proclaim that they now visit more cultural activities compared with earlier days, go more to the theatre and cinema, and eat at restaurants. Elderly people are very frequent users, have more social life and can be more active.

“People have come closer to each other, and people that didn’t meet before, started to socialize.”

“After the school was closed we began to feel that we couldn’t stay here, but the village bus gave us easy access to all the things we lacked, so we could stay here.”

“It made it possible to commute to work without a car.”

(The quotes are from the documentary)

(2) The village bus in Kölsillre was part of a project called “Rural Transport Solutions” and funding was provided from the European Union’s “European Regional Development Fund”, via the “Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013”.

(3) Everybody can use it, including visitors. And its users range from families with children to elderly people.

(4) Due to long distances, walking and cycling wasn’t an option before the project started.

(6) The regional transit authority is responsible for the project together with the municipality of Ånge. The bus is rented from a private company. The bus is driven by the inhabitants of Kölsillre themselves.

(7) The regional transit authority initiated the project by asking the village residents if they were interested in this solution, since it would be cheaper in maintenance compared to a regular busline.

The initial plan was that after the project ended, a fee was to be collected from all travels, but a law concerning professional drivers made that impossible so the bus is still fare-free.

Short documentary: [“Byabussen – med svensk text”](#)

→ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekKHhkuDhc>

SVT news: [“Gratis byabuss”](#)

Northern Periphery Programme [“Rural Transport Solutions 4.5”](#)

SVT news: [“Gratis kollektivtrafik i Kölsillre”](#)

[Webpage of Byabussen](#)

d) Kristinehamn

23,700 inhabitants. In 1997 a fare-free public transport was initiated and after 4 years it was cancelled.

(1) In the city the traffic almost doubled, and in the rural area of the municipality the increase was 8%. The reintroduction of fares resulted in a decline in ridership with 40%, but it was still 15% more than before the introduction of FFPT. The increase in ridership was largest among people working.

Parts of the public transport in the city were very crowded, and fares were increased to finance new lines, but that still resulted in fewer passengers.

(2) Overall taxes paid for the public transport.

(3) All users could ride for free.

(4) Kristinehamn is often mentioned in media as an example of how walking and cycling decreased due to FFPT, but no numbers were found for this summary.

(6) Public transport is administered by the regional public transit authority and the municipality of Kristinehamn. Parts of the public transport is on-call flexible lines. Only local buses was fare-free, not the regional buses to other cities that passed through Kristinehamn.

(7) In a survey 24% of the inhabitants said that they would have used the car instead of the bus, if it wasn’t fare-free. The increase of ridership in the city gave the overall project a positive result in the cost-benefit analysis, although the small increase in the rural areas was alone a negative result.

Magnus Welroos [“OM AVGIFTSFRI KOLLEKTIVTRAFIK”](#), Left Party – Region of Skåne, 2011

e) Avesta

Ramböll [“Utvärdering av avgiftsfri kollektivtrafik i Avesta”](#) 2013

Rapport Avesta Kommun, 2013-11-01

[Avesta (near Stockholm) Venue for FFPT international conference 17-18 Sept. 2015]



22,000 inhabitants. The politicians in Avesta decided that all citizens under the age of 19 should have free access to the public transport, previously it was only granted for young people that lived outside the city of Avesta and relied on buses for going to school.

The traffic planners in Avesta then made a cost-analysis of different scenarios which concluded that it was equal to shift to fare-free public transport for everyone rather than just for people under the age of 19. All city lines and rural lines within the municipality are free and there is also an on-call flexible line for areas not covered by regular lines. Regional lines that pass through the municipality are not free.

(1) 106,800 rides by car have been made by bus instead, which resulted in 40 tons less carbondioxide per year.

Overall there was an 80% increase of ridership the first year, and in the two cities Avesta and Krylbo the increase was 130%. Mainly workers, students and elderly have increased their use of public transport, but also asylum seekers for whom the costs of buses was very big have increased their ridership alot. The day with the largest increase was Saturdays, where ridership went up 150%.

39% of the increase in bus rides were made with a car before FFPT was introduced. New lines were introduced and more buses during the morning rush hour were added.

Bus drivers say that their work is more fun nowadays, but it can also be more stressful with more people getting on and off. The local union is working on the issue, proposed is to have more personnel on the buses.

Results: Travellers after reform



(2) Overall taxes pay for the public transport.

Costs before FFPT: 24 million SEK

Costs for FFPT for all students: 34 million SEK (+14 million SEK)

Costs for FFPT for all: 24 million SEK (+0 million SEK)

(3) All users could ride for free.

(4) 22% of the increase in bus rides were by pedestrians or cyclists before FFPT was introduced.

(6) Public transport is administered by the regional public transit authority and the municipality of Avesta. Part of the public transport is on-call flexible lines. Only local buses are fare-free, not the regional buses to other cities that pass through Avesta.

(7) The decision of a partial FFPT for all students were made by local politicians, and then local civil servants made the analysis that showed that money could be saved by introducing FFPT for all. An evaluation was made by a consulting firm named Ramböll after one year.

Ramböll ["Utvärdering av avgiftsfri kollektivtrafik i Avesta"](#) 2013

Kommunalarbetaren News ["Här är det gratis att åka buss"](#), 2012

SR News ["Bussvärdar ska hjälpa förarna i Avesta"](#)

f) Hedemora

In Hedemora municipality, also in the region of Dalarna, just beside Avesta, I was part of a study in a hypothetical introduction of FFPT and a comparison with Avesta.

A survey showed that one third of the people not using the public transport today would start using it if it was fare-free. All students said they would use public transport more, several women imagined a decrease in the need for giving children a ride (to and from school) and almost all men claimed that they had no need for public transport and always had to take the car.

(2) Overall taxes and fees pay for the public transport.

Costs before FFPT: 20 million SEK

Costs for FFPT for all students: 36 million SEK (+16 million SEK)

Costs for FFPT for all: 24 million SEK (+4 million SEK)

(7) The planners of the municipality, interviewed as part of the study, spoke strongly against FFPT. At the time of the study FFPT was just about to start in Avesta and the civil servants in Hedemora were sure that their focus on more buses would increase ridership more than in Avesta.

Marcus Finbom, Sara Öhman och Roberth Fri *“Bussen, bilen och beteendet – En jämförande studie av kostnader och attityder mellan avgiftsfri kollektivtrafik och privatbilism i Hedemora kommun”*, Institution of human geography, Stockholm University, 2012

g) Säter

10,800 inhabitants. In the same region as Avesta and Hedemora. In the early 1990s the municipality of Säter tried FFPT a few years, but the regional transit authority Dalatrafik forced them to shut down since they couldn't find a system for collecting statistical data of all rides.

Local politicians declared that as Avesta made it work they are now interested to try again, since their experience with FFPT was very good, although no statistical evaluation was made of the results.

Dalarnas Tidning: [“Säter har redan provat gratisbussar”](#), 2012-05-13.

h) Övertorneå

4800 inhabitants. In 2001 fare-free public transport for the rural area only was launched in Övertorneå. All school children already had free bus rides. During the same period a population decrease continued which should have decreased the number of rides by 2% if the share of bus rides would continue to be the same.

(1) Half a year after the start the ridership had increased from 1% of all adults to 5%. The number of rides increased with 90% overall from 30,000 rides to 58,000 rides, one line was a big exception and increased with 313%.

58% of the increase in rides was made with a car before the FFPT project.

The cost-benefit analysis showed a positive result of just above 700,000 SEK.

(2) Overall taxes and fees pay for the public transport.

(3) All could ride for free. Now all residents can buy a yearly travel pass.

[They have to pay? If so, how much? Can you call this FFPT?]

(4) No problems with decrease in pedestrians and cyclists is noted since it's a very rural area.

(6) All bus lines are administered by the regional transit authority. The local municipality paid for all earlier used seats on the bus lines to make them available fare-free for everyone. Total cost was 300,000 SEK for one year.

(7) A local party called “Övertorneå Alternativet” (Alternative for Övertorneå) advocated for FFPT in 1994 as a way to decrease car use in rural areas. It was turned down, but the idea lingered until it was tested in 2001.

An evaluation and analysis was made by Luleå University of Technology after 6 months on behalf of the municipality, who wanted to know if it was worth the cost to continue.

In 2008 it was changed so a small yearly fee for a travel pass had to be paid for, and since then it has steadily increased in price. [What was the price? What is the price now?]

Övertorneå Municipality, [Traffic information](#)

SVT news [“Project with free buses in Övertorneå continues”](#) 2004

Haparandabladet news [“Linda Ylivainio wants to stop free busrides in Övertorneå”](#), 2009

Staffan Johansson [“Nolltaxa för busstrafiken i Övertorneå. Konsekvensanalys.”](#), 2002

i) Jokkmokk

5100 inhabitants. A similar system as in Övertorneå has existed in Jokkmokk since 2007, although the price is much lower for the travel pass. The municipality is sparsely populated but as big as the three Swedish regions of Skåne, Halland and Blekinge put together.

(1) Increase access for all services and decreased car usage was the main goal according to left party politicians that initiated it.

(2) Overall taxes and fees pay for the public transport. The budget for the project was 0,5 million SEK, but it ended up costing 1,6 million SEK, since it became more popular than expected. Number of trips doubled from 1500 to 3000 per year.

(3) All residents can buy a yearly travel pass.

(6) All bus lines are administered by the regional transit authority. The travel pass can be used on all 10 bus lines that pass through the municipality.

Jokkmokk Municipality, [Travel pass information](#)

Göteborg Fria Tidning ["Cheap buses made northerners to leave the car at home"](#), 2008.

j) Kiruna

23,000 inhabitants, although many mine workers live here but are registered in other municipalities.

(1) In May 2011 – before fares for residents were abolished – the number of bus rides was 12,551. In May 2013 this number was 32,118. The yearly trips have more than tripled from 120,000 in 2010 to 387,000 in 2013.

Even middle-aged miners, who before had never used the public transport, have started to use the buses.

(2) Overall taxes and fees pay for the public transport. The yearly cost for the fare-free buses is 3,3 - 3,5 million SEK, but it was calculated to cost 5 million SEK before it started.

(3) All residents can buy a yearly travel pass for a small symbolic fee of 100 SEK.

(7) Members of the left party demanded it, after they won the election [when?] together with the social democrats and a local Sami party Samilistu.

Kiruna municipality, [Traffic information](#)

Göteborgs-Posten, ["Zerofare is still a hot topic"](#), 2014

Left Party ["Free buses was a success"](#)

11. Switzerland

Geneva

'Fare-free tickets' are available for public transport by bus, tram, and train in City [and Canton?] Geneva for all passengers arriving by plane at Geneva Airport, after arrival and once boarded on a public transport vehicle valid for 80 minutes. On arrival at hotel reception desk, this ticket may be replaced by a follow-up fare-free ticket for the next 4 days (i.e. any desk where the passenger is also paying tourist tax on his room-fare, also in pensions, or a boat in the harbor) offered by the hotel.

Billet gratuit – Fare-free ticket



Booth in the arrival hall at the airport where a simple button has to be pushed in order to receive a fare-free ticket (offered by Geneva Airport?).





12. Turkey

<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turkiye-deki-kuba-ovacik-gundem-1929977/>

Ovacik – First fare-free public transport municipality in Turkey

Posted on [December 3, 2014](#)

After the 30th of March 2014 local elections, the first thing the new Mayor did in Ovacik was to make the public transportation fare-free. A ticket was for sale at one Turkish lira, but now it is 'free'. However, some passengers insist to pay. So they drop a lira in a box next to the driver. They claim that if the municipality runs out of money nobody helps them.

Ovacik in Tunceli province Eastern Turkey is located on a 1500 square-kilometer area. The bus runs through the county every one hour. The population is 3700.

<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turkiye-deki-kuba-ovacik-gundem-1929977/>

13. United Kingdom

A new text is needed about the fare-free policy on local and regional buses on which seniors travel fare-free in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Special arrangements for young people. Details?

14. EU

Savisaar: EU's urban policy should green-light public transport



19.02.2014

<http://www.tallinn.ee/eng/pilet/Savisaar-EU-s-urban-policy-should-green-light-public-transport>

The mayor of Tallinn, Edgar Savisaar, spoke at the European Commission forum '*Cities of Tomorrow: Investing in Europe*', stressing the importance of the lowest possible public transport fare and the significance of a common urban policy for the European Union.

Forum's participants included the mayors of Rome, Vienna, Sofia, Zagreb, Warsaw, Bratislava, Riga, Bucharest, Nicosia, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Lisbon, Athens, Valletta and Amsterdam. They met with the President of European Commission José Manuel Barroso and the European Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn.

Savisaar noted that 'according to a special research by *Eurobarometer*, published in mid-December, Europeans consider the most important measure of improving mobility in cities (is) lowering the public transport fare. Especially noteworthy is that lowering the fare is considered the most important measure by people in some of EU's richest countries like Sweden (79%), Denmark (75%), Germany and the Netherlands (both 73%)'.

"Unfortunately, Estonia is not among the five richest European countries but our capital Tallinn has a year-old experience of keeping public transport fare at its lowest, i.e. zero. And I assure you that fare-free public transport does strengthen society's social ties while stimulating local economy and sparing the environment. This is, indeed, smart policy. Green-lighting public transport is certainly one of the goals that the urban policy of European Union should support more effectively than the EU policy thus far".

Among other things, the mayor of Tallinn drew his listeners' attention to the fact that EU capitals' *common plan of action* would improve the well-being of people and EU's competitive performance. [' ... '] "For this we need an EU Common Urban Policy just like we have a Common Agricultural Policy."

"The idea of European Green Capital, which was born in Tallinn, is an element in the formation of a common urban policy. But it's time to move on from exchanging titles and banners, because Europe's common urban policy has to meet people's actual needs. European capitals are, without exception, the countries' largest cities both by population and economic power. To define EU urban policy, it is extremely important to engage capitals as the most important cities," said Tallinn's mayor.

EU Common Urban Policy

At the moment it does not seem likely that 'Europe' will soon move into the direction of thinking about 'fare-free public transport'. Under various names financing is available for projects that will come under the umbrella of SUMPs - "*Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans*" or SURFs – "*Smart Urban Regions of the Future*". Budget reservations are available under the name 'Horizon 2020'.

A SURF is defined as a consortia of researchers and practitioners in urban regions who will collaborate in joint efforts in development of knowledge and in spreading of resulting insights related to space, habitat, accessibility, economy and governance.

Of what is known about the development of these consortia, their research deals more with physical aspects of mobility (road, rail, vehicle, energy, and emissions) as with behaviour of the participants in mobility, in particular the passengers in public transport vehicles, and the decision makers in public transport, and their considerations with regard to the future of (urban) transport. 'Sustainability' and 'Smart' are not well understood concepts! This is all the more 'strange' as costs to becoming more sustainable and smarter seem to be much lower if related to behaviour as to physical improvements of products.

The common reaction is that for projects substantially presenting FFPT as a solution to urban mobility-problems and accessibility-needs, it will be difficult to qualify. The reason is that in the documents which have been published by the European Commission, this way of thinking about mobility and accessibility is not mentioned and no questions related to the use of public transport as a common good are asked. Therefore it will be difficult to get a project-proposal accepted that will answer the project requirements.

The most positive reaction received mentions that it might be possible in a next round of internationally oriented SURF-calls (2016/2017) to find a place in the Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe (JPI) as an international knowledge consortium could become a basis for such a JPI Urban Europe call.

The advice is (in any case for the Netherlands) to keep constantly an eye on websites of VerDuS (<http://www.verdus.nl/voorpagina>) that give information about SURF and JPI Urban Europe. In other countries, others could do the same [and someone has to coordinate?]

15. World

a) Australia

[from Wikipedia, all parts need to be scrutinized, [edit](#),] [Who will do this?](#)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_free_public_transport_routes#Australia

- [Adelaide, Australia](#) has free travel on the [Glenelg tram](#) between South Terrace and the Hindmarsh [Entertainment Centre](#) and between Brighton Road and Jetty Road in Glenelg.^[1] A free bi-directional loop route 99C and 99A also operates in the CBD, alongside the 98C and 99A (formerly called the Adelaide Connector), which operated in the CBD and North Adelaide.^{[2][1] [3]} In addition, free community bus services operate in the suburbs of Glenelg and Port Adelaide. Many years ago, a city service known as 99B used to ply King William Street from North Terrace to South terrace, but this was terminated after the Tram extension.
- [Brisbane, Australia](#) has free bus trips around "The Loop" in the CBD on two routes mirroring each other, varying only because of Brisbane's one-way street grid.^[4] The service is smaller than that of other cities.
- [Manly, New South Wales, Australia](#) – Four routes of free "Hop, Skip & Jump" minibus services throughout the municipality.^[5]
- [Mandurah, Western Australia](#), Australia - a free shuttle service operates between the local [railway station](#) and the eastern foreshore in the city centre.

- [Melbourne](#) in [Australia](#) has a free tram around the city centre, and a free bus to popular tourist attractions. Both of these connect to other public transport. Free public transport is sometimes offered on major holidays such as Christmas and New Year's Eve.
- [Newcastle, New South Wales](#) in [Australia](#) has a free bus service that operates in the CBD area between 7:30 am and 6:00 pm.
- [Perth, Western Australia](#) has free bus and train trips around the city centre (the "Free Transit Zone"), including three high-frequency [Central Area Transit](#) (CAT) bus loops. This is also in Fremantle and recently added in Joondalup. [See in next paragraph].
- [Sydney](#) in [Australia](#) Free downtown city bus loop, also offers occasional free public transport travel to and from events at particular times, notably New Year's Eve celebrations in Sydney CBD, or to ANZAC War Memorial Services for veterans. The rationale is a mix of traffic reduction and cultural recognition.
 - The Sydney council of [Willoughby](#) also has a daily free bus loop route that connects the [St Leonards](#) railway station with the [Artarmon](#) industrial area..
 - The same council also has five routes that operate on one different day of the week connecting different suburbs to a convenient shopping centre.
 - [Ryde City council](#) provides a free local bus service.^[6]
- [Willoughby, Sydney](#) The Loop - a free bus that operates a different circular route each weekday (Mon-Fri) every 45 minutes.^[7]

Perth, Fremantle and Joondalup (Australia)

Website of Perth Free Public Transport shows the slogan: The best things in life are free.

[<http://www.lookatwa.com.au/Transport/cats.html>]

‘Perth has a free bus service that operates around central business district. These buses are called CATS (central area transport service) and service the [free transit zone](#) (FTZ). The buses have a low ground clearance which make it easy for people of all ages to hop on an off the buses. The buses have a set route and arrive approximately every 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the route, time of day and day of the week. The CAT routes are either a red or blue route from Monday to Friday, and a special modified route for weekends.

The CAT bus stops are clearly marked throughout the FTZ and have an audio announcement telling you when the next CAT is due. Supplementing the CAT service is the normal Transperth buses, and the Fasttrack trains which also offer free travel within the FTZ. ‘

SENIORS

Your Seniors SmartRider gives you free travel on all Transperth services between 9.00am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday, all day Saturday and Sunday, and on public holidays concession fares at other times. For free off-peak travel on Monday to Friday, start your journey by tagging on after 9.00 am or before 3.30 pm. Your Seniors SmartRider card is free. If you want to use it outside the free travel hours, you need to buy a minimum \$10.00 initial value. Perth city has a Free Transit Zone for buses and a SmartRider Free Transit Zone for trains. And ‘concessions’ for some eligible groups among travelers:

Free Travel Concessions (You might be entitled to free travel because of your age or personal circumstances. Find out if you are eligible for free* travel. Go to:

<http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/tickets-fares/free-travel/travel-concessions>

For

- Children four years old and younger
- Seniors SmartRider cardholders
- Aged and Disability Pension SmartRider cardholder
- Veterans SmartRider cardholders
- Vision impaired passengers
- Support persons travelling with someone carrying a Companion Card

(*Free travel is subject to conditions. For more information go to [Concessions Guide.](#))

CAT Buses

Central areas of Perth, Fremantle and Joondalup have free, high frequency bus services. Central Area Transit (CAT) buses are free. You may get on and off them as often as you like without paying a fare. CAT routes are serviced by accessible buses.

Go to the map to see the extent of the 'free area':

http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/Portals/0/Asset/Documents/Tickets%20&%20Fares/PERTH_CAT_Map_2013-2.pdf

140815, FFPT in Perth CBD

<http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/about-us>

<http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/tickets-fares/free-travel>

Transperth's CAT buses offer you a free, fast and convenient means of travelling around the Perth CBD. Choose a Red CAT to travel east and west in the CBD, a Blue CAT to travel north and south in the CBD, a Green CAT to travel from Leederville Station into the CBD, or a Yellow CAT to travel from East Perth to West Perth.

Whether you are in the CBD for shopping or travelling to an appointment, our CAT services help to reduce the expenses associated with driving and parking in the city.

All CAT buses are colour coded for your convenience. Each bus stop includes an audio recording of service times. Simply press the information button at the stop to find out when the next bus is due to arrive.

Travel for free on all Transperth services located within the Free Transit Zone (FTZ) for buses and the SmartRider Free Transit Zone (SFTZ) for trains. When travelling on the train within the SFTZ, you must tag on and off using a SmartRider.

The FTZ boundaries are shown on the map.

The SFTZ train boundaries are City West on the Fremantle Line, Claisebrook on the Midland and Armadale/Thornlie Lines, and the Esplanade on the Joondalup and Mandurah Lines.

Free travel is only permitted within the FTZ or SFTZ with a SmartRider for train services.

If you are travelling outside this zone normal fares apply.

b) China

Chengdu

To begin with a summary of 3 pages, then the full text (with questions inserted)

SUMMARY

150608, Chengdu text (only English, slightly corrected)

成都公交免费定价策略及其启示

The Strategies and Revelation of Free Buses in Chengdu

Chengdu, located in the central area of Sichuan in China, is the capital of Sichuan Province. By the end of 2013, its urban population has reached 5.54 million, with total economic output up to 910 billion yuan. *Chengdu Bus Group Company* [in short *Chengdu bus*] is the only existing bus business entity in the central area of Chengdu, a state-owned enterprise with 62 years of history. By the end of 2013, it has become a system with 10,677 buses, 351 bus lines, the total length of which are 4975 km. It has 22,754 employees, with total assets of 10.876 billion yuan. In 2013, the total bus mileage was 382 million kilometers, with

1.64 billion passenger trips, and 1.69 billion yuan operating income, and its split rate reached 28.12%; its public financial investment and subsidies amounted to 1.89 billion yuan; the annual operating loss was 1.212 billion yuan.

In recent years, *Chengdu bus* has been developing rapidly, and the degree of people's satisfaction of the bus services has been enhanced greatly.

I share with you the practices of Chengdu buses from three major perspectives, subsequently I will give my own points of view.

First: the strategies of free buses of Chengdu;

Second: the groundwork to be done to ensure the implementation of free buses strategies;

Third and last one: the revelation that I get from the free buses of Chengdu.

The strategies of free buses of Chengdu

Since 2007, Chengdu buses have launched 6 ticket reforms.

1. Introduction on June 6, 2007, to implement the strategy of discount for taking bus with IC card, with the starting charging level of money of 50 yuan for 100 times usage, to that of 10 for 20.
2. From January 1, 2008, people 70 years old and above can enjoy free buses for 100 times a month.
3. From May 1, 2008, people can enjoy free transfers within two hours, which effectively solved problems like the upgrading and integration of the network of bus lines, increasing the rate of high-level air-conditioned buses and so on; the rate of traffic sharing of buses have also been greatly increased. However, the infinite free transfer led to invalid trips as well as some adverse reactions from society.
4. From Sept 1, 2010, since when the starting charging point of IC card is changed from 10 yuan to 1 yuan and the infinite free transfer to 3 times within 2 hours.
5. On Oct 10, 2012, an action began in concert with the municipal construction to solve the Vehicles Restriction rules between the second and third ring road, with 44 free bus lines open, no need of cards or coins.
6. The sixth reform introduced is the ending of the 44 free lines with the introduction of another three new free policies:
 - a) In order to abate the traffic peak in the morning, all buses are free from 5 to 7 a.m., so as to divert passenger trips to low usage hours;
 - b) In order to develop the new lines, buses are free on these lines for the first two months, expending the publicity to lines' loading rate;
 - c) 100 free community buses are provided to eliminate blind bus service spots, facilitating to take passengers to large stations or big buses for transfer.

The groundwork to be done to ensure the implementation of free buses strategies

First of all, the reservation of the transporting capacity of *Chengdu bus* is sufficient. Chengdu municipal party committee and government continued to increase investment, to deeply practice the bus priority policies. The newly increased bus terminal area is about over 1000 mu, and the opened-up bus lanes reaches 700 km; since 2007, about 1000 to 2000 high-grade and large-volume buses were bought. The number of Chengdu buses is constantly increasing. At the moment, the total number of buses is over ten thousand, which means more than 20 buses can be used for every ten thousand people in central city. Besides, the efficiency of buses has been enhanced with the upgrading of lines network; all in all, the reserve of bus transportation is sufficient.

Secondly, rational public spending has become common practice. Since the implementation of those beneficial policies like unmanned ticketing, free transfer within 2 hours, free trips for the old and so on, passengers all became not sensitive to bus prices any more but accustomed to waiting buses in line and using IC card consciously, which have been a view of this civilized city. Rational public spending and the obvious increase of people's civilized level of behavior have provided the carrying out of free buses with the necessary human environment. There won't be invalid flash demand coming from the free bus policy.

Thirdly, intelligent management promotes efficient supply. Since 2010, *Chengdu bus* has been in full application of intelligent scheduling system; after the opening of free bus lines, operations control center

promptly sent the passengers' flowing situation to the line dispatcher via GPS and car video surveillance systems, so as to adjust models, grid frequency to ensure that the bus capacity is in balanced configuration.

Fourthly, enterprises' assessment mechanism becomes scientific and effective. *Chengdu bus* is based on public interest, and stick to the implementation of "separating" management; the operating units execute the departure plan in the line network center, and abolish of the assessment of the drivers' economy tasks. The driver does not have the motivation of reducing service quality, thus the quality of services of free bus lines is ensured.

Lastly, each design of free policies is able to increase the attractiveness of public transportation and to ease congestion in the city so that the overall operational efficiency could be improved; released public transport capacity can meet the operational needs of free lines. Under the conditions of not excessively occupying or consuming of public resources, letting the public enjoy a guaranteed free bus service, is a beneficial social welfare arrangement.

The revelation that I get from the free buses of Chengdu

I like to share some of my feelings about the free buses strategies of *Chengdu Bus* and its corresponding groundwork as those are successful in practice.

First, the basic orientation of *public welfare* should be held up. History continues to prove that the development of public transport should take social welfare as the fundamental element, and the public welfare as the basic orientation, and that any reform that harms the public interests of the society is doomed to fail. The bus system is an open system, focusing on sharing of passenger traffic with other modes of urban transport. To improve the attractiveness of public transport is the bus company's mission. From 2006 to 2013, in the environment of increasingly congested traffic, the bus passenger traffic of Chengdu still maintains the tendency of increasing year by year, making a positive contribution to the ensuring of smooth urban traffic and the slow block.

Second, buses' *price elasticity* should be well managed. At a certain stage of development, public transportation demand has certain price elasticity. At the early stage of the buses prices changing in Chengdu, the coefficient of the price elasticity of demand is 3.5; it is of extremely high-degreed price elasticity. Buses in Chengdu are in accordance with the "small profits but quick turnover" management strategy, and have achieved a double growth in both the passenger traffic and the revenue under the situation of reducing the cost of public travel. From 2006 to 2013, Chengdu buses have launched several times the reforms of bus-price system for public welfare, with its passenger traffic revenue increasing year by year. Growth of the passenger traffic revenue is demonstrated in the figure. At present, people in Chengdu became insensitive to bus prices. Lowering the prices has very limited role in increasing buses' attractiveness, so new creative buses supplying ways are needed, like opening internet buses, customer-made buses etc., to increase its attractiveness.

Third, we should *meet the needs* of more travelers. Bus resource is in shortage; our judgments of value and selection criteria are the sum of individual welfare. When the bus resource is in allocation, to meet the needs of more travelers should be considered in priority.

Fourth, *Free of charge does not mean free of management*. Without the driving force from fees, does not mean you can reduce the quality of management and services. With the absence of management, or unscientific management, the result of free prices is often doing harm to the public instead of benefiting them.

Ending: To endow public city buses with the attributes of public goods, promoting the progressive realization of the city bus being enhanced from the quasi-public goods to public goods, is not only a useful exploration to *solve the problem of urban congestion*, but also the effective entry point and support point to realize the *principle of being people-oriented*, benefiting the public.

As long as we firmly grasp the three key points, namely: ample supply, rational demand, and effective control, while increasing the configuration of the factors of production of buses (right of way, land, capital,

energy and other security conditions), "Free bus" is possible to be carried out. That, is the revelation that the phenomenon of "Free Buses of Chengdu" has brought to us.

Full text Chengdu

Chengdu is a central city in the Sichuan-province of China. The city has 5 million inhabitants and is the transport hub of a region with 15 million. Since 2012 fare-free bus lines have opened, to this date 44 lines. Also implemented is fare-free public transportation between 5-7 AM. Many local buses have also abolished fares. Shi Tao, vice chairman of the Chengdu Bus Group, concluded that the zero-fare experiment is successful and will be extended to yet more bus-lines. In his view, everything they did "benefited the people very much".

Among the presentations given during the Summer school organized by Tallinn City government, Tallinn, August 22-24, 2013 (see page 12 above) was the following given by mr. Shi Tao, Vice General Manager of Chengdu Bus Group (CN) [The Measures&Experience of Implementing Free Public Transport in Chengdu \(.doc\)](#)

Chengdu

The question is now to update this information,
have any of the mentioned in-depth studies been carried out. Are figures
available of changes in passengers-volume?
Some detailed questions have been inserted in the next pages.
Please have a look at the rest of the Chengdu-text and improve in the same way?

The presentation of Chengdu in Żory (Poland) on 6 November 2014:



130822-24, Chengdu FFPT as presented in Tallinn
The Measures & Experiences of Implementing Free Public Transport in Chengdu

1、 Brief introduction to Chengdu and Chengdu Public Bus Group

Chengdu, provincial capital of Sichuan province and one of China's sub-provincial cities is located in the central part of Sichuan. It is designated by the State Council as the science and technology, commercial and financial centre of southwest China, as well as the transportation and communication hub for the region.

Chengdu, specifically designated for the economic and social development in the state plan, is also the political, economic, cultural and educational centre of Sichuan province. It is also historically and culturally a renowned city of China. Chengdu covers an area of 12,400 square kilometers with 441 square kilometers central urban area, administers 9 districts, 4 county-level cities and 6 counties. By the end of 2012, Chengdu had a resident population of over 14 million and urban population of 5.29 million. In 2012, Chengdu's GDP hit 813.89 billion RMB, ranking top 3 among all sub-provincial cities in China. (100.00 Chinese Yuan Renminbi = €14.8343, 6 April 2015).

Founded in 1952, Chengdu Public Transport Group is the only main body of public bus operation in the central urban area of Chengdu. By the end of 2012, the group boasted 8,915 buses, 269 public bus lines of 4,319 kilometers. The group has total assets of 8.688 billion RMB, gross liabilities of 5.743 billion RMB and 20,967 staff members. In 2012, the miles of public bus travel was 333 million kilometers with passenger traffic volume of 1.5 billion and operating revenue of 1.56 (billion?) RMB. The trip sharing ratio hit 26.46%. The public finance allocated and subsidized 1.768 billion RMB and the operation losses hit 480 million RMB.

2、 People-benefiting Policies of Chengdu over Last Five Years

In accordance with the development strategy of building "public bus metropolis" by the state, Chengdu Public Transport Group adheres to the development concept of building "public bus metropolis" to satisfy the trip demand of citizens, ease traffic congestion and build eco-friendly city over the recent years.

On 1st, June, 2007, Chengdu took the lead to implement policy of swiping IC cards: students enjoyed 20% discount by swiping monthly cards and adults 50% discount. By the end of 2012, Chengdu had issued more than 5.2 million IC cards.

Senior (what is 'senior', is this age 60? 65? 70?) citizens could apply for old age free card since 17th Dec, 2007. Senior citizens in the central urban areas of Chengdu began to apply for and get old age free bus cards (not for seniors living outside of the central urban areas?). By the end of 2012, nearly 270,000 senior citizens had applied for and got the card (how many did not apply?) and 33.41 million senior citizens have benefited every year. (What does this mean? Each year? Also in 2011, 2010, etc?)

On 1st May, 2010, free bus transfer policy within urban areas in Chengdu was implemented to make urban public buses more attractive. Consumers taking buses in the urban areas by swiping IC cards could enjoy preferential policy of fare-free bus transfer of three times within two hours. Statistics show that 950,000 people enjoy free bus transfer everyday.

Since 1st of May 2010, bus-passengers making use of swiping IC-cards benefit from three fare-free transfers within two hours.

From October 11th 2012 to June 30th 2013, 44 free bus lines between the 2nd and the 3rd ring roads were opened to the public to match the massive urban infrastructure construction. During this period, 97.51 million person-times (trips?) traveled by free buses.

Since July 1st, 2013, free bus policy from 5am to 7am was also implemented. Passengers could take free buses by swiping cards, which would encourage citizens to travel avoiding peak hours after 7am.

New public bus lines in the central urban areas have been launched since 1st July 2014. Passengers could take free buses by swiping cards. 17 free community buses were also launched. Passengers could

take community buses within one kilometer radius of their residences. This policy aimed at encouraging passengers to travel by bus and raise proper suggestions on the line directions and operation schemes.

3、Implementing Process and Effective Analysis of 44 Free Bus Lines

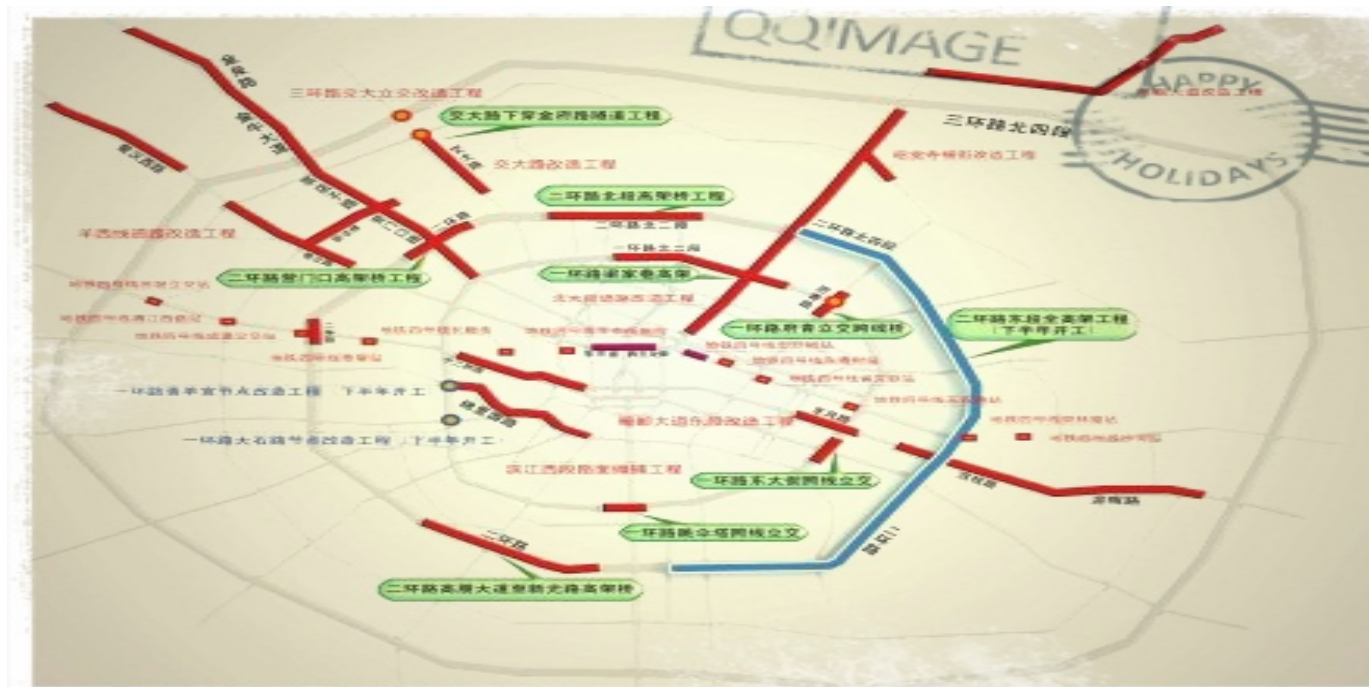
(1) Background for the implementing 44 free bus lines

In 2012, multiple radiate and loop lines in Chengdu were undergoing transformation and 25 projects were about to be initiated, most of which were concentrated within the 3rd ring road. According to the report, there were about more than 5,000 kilometers traffic lanes in the central urban areas and it was estimated that all the construction projects would occupy more than 1,000 kilometers traffic lanes in the first half of 2012. That was to say one fifth of the road resources would be occupied.

Besides, as the traffic artery of the urban area, the lane capacity of the 2nd ring road during peak hour can be more than 5,000 vehicles per hour. After construction, the lane capacity is about to decrease by 50%~70%.

In light of urban transport development strategy of “priority given to public transport” and “addressing people’s well-being” and concept of “public transport benefiting the people”, the Chengdu Municipal Government implemented traffic restrictions based on the last digit of license plate numbers within the 2nd and 3rd ring roads from October 2012.

Six policies were also initiated from October 10th 2012 to June 30th 2013 including 44 public free bus lines in the traffic restriction area, connecting bus lines with stations of Subway Line 1 and Line 2 for the convenience of citizens. Theses policies benefited the people and optimized public transport services.



(2) Rules for implementing free public transport in Chengdu and its influence

Due to the traffic restrictions based on the last digit of license plate numbers, some citizens are prevented from travelling by car. The purpose of the 44 free bus lines is to attract citizens to travel by bus and satisfy the trip demand of the majority of the group in the area. Therefore, more than 70% of the preferred line orientation is within the traffic restriction areas.(between the 2nd and the 3rd ring road)



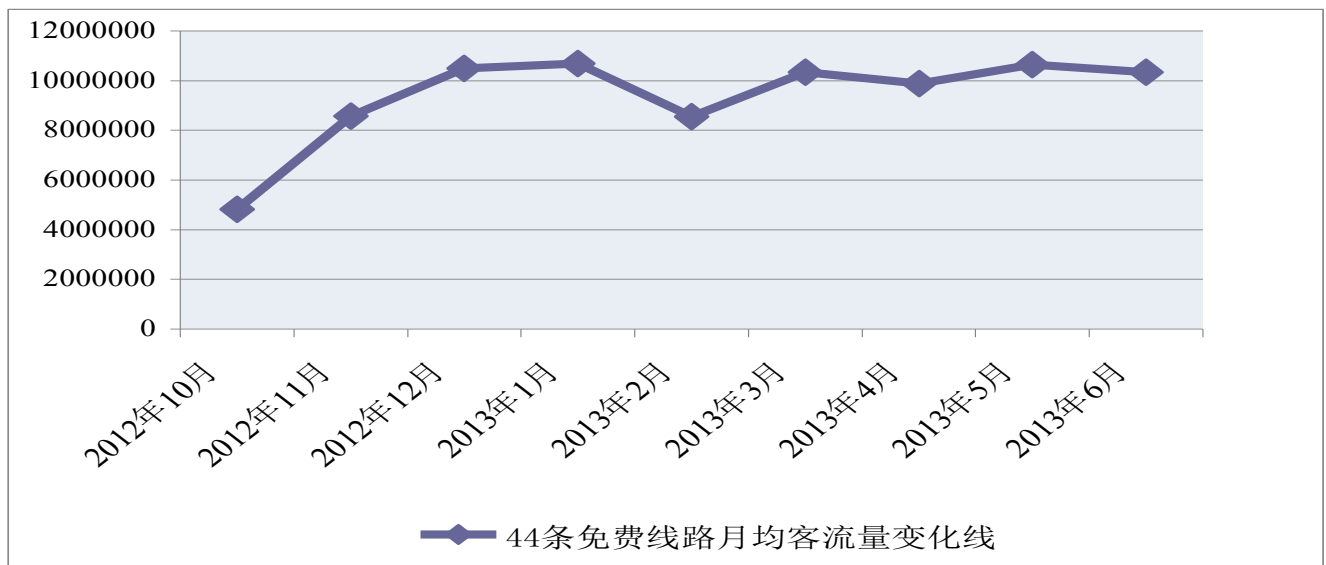
Restrictions based on the last digit of license plate numbers:

- Monday 1 , 6
- Tuesday 2 , 7
- Wednesday 3 , 8
- Thursday 4 , 9
- Friday 5 , 0

Operation benefits

Chengdu municipality has allocated 536 buses for the 44 newly-opened free bus lines, which is almost 6.26% of the total number of buses.

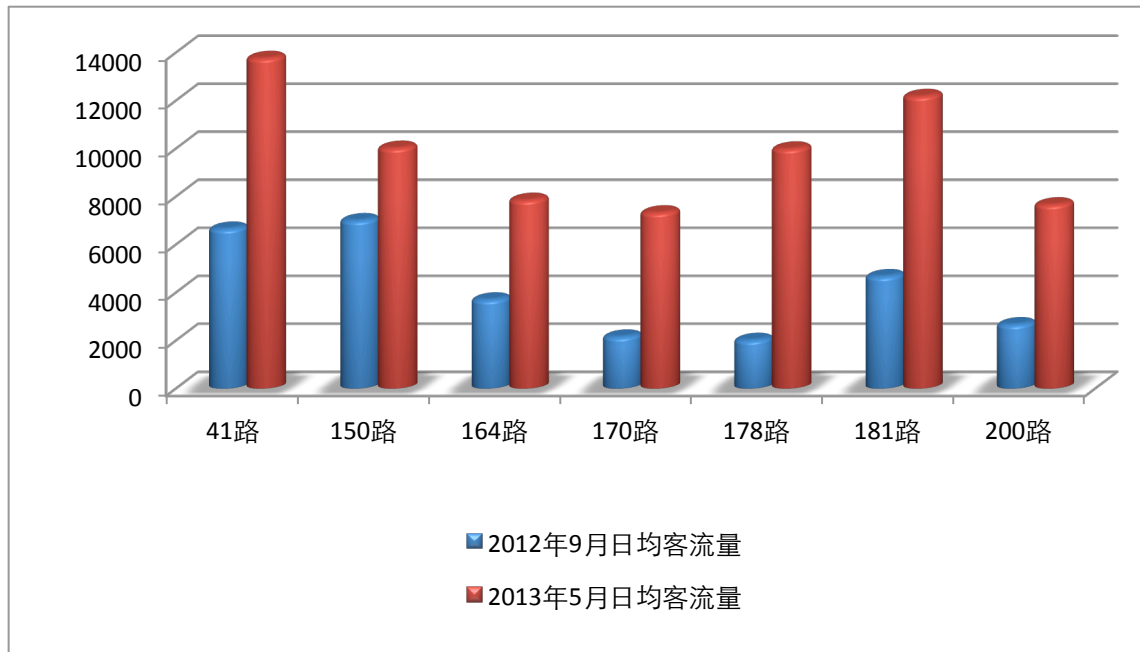
Due to the traffic restrictions based on the last digit of license plate numbers, the daily passenger flow volume of buses in Chengdu is 4.45 million person-times, among which the free public buses occupy 344,900 person-times, about 7.75% of the total capacity. Compared with the data before the free bus launching, the daily increase of 250,000 person-times of free lines would cause a daily increase of 310,000 person-times total passenger flow volume.



Monthly passenger flow change line of 44 free bus lines

(From October 2012 to June 2013)

3、 Overall Assessment of Chengdu Fare-Free Public Transport



(1) Realizing anticipated objective of replacement of traveling by car with travelling by bus

■ Daily passenger flow volume in May 2013

■ Daily passenger flow volume in September 2012

Traffic restrictions and free public transport had little impact on the group of walking and non-motor vehicle modes. The increased passenger flow mainly comes from the motor vehicle mode: 250,000 divided by 1.2 is 170,700. That is to say 204,840 passengers of 170,700 vehicles of 248,300 restricted vehicles have chosen free transport. Fare-free transport has replaced the restricted vehicles and satisfied the trip demand of this special group.

(2) Optimizing traffic structure and easing urban traffic congestion

3-1 Related Data

Public bus transfer coefficient	1.22
The population in main urban area	5.29 million
Per-capita trip density	2.58 person-time

Note: the above-mentioned data comes from micro-blog of Chengdu.

According to the monthly report of public transport group, the daily passenger capacity of 4.14 million person-times in September 2012 can generate following outcome:

Trip person-times before public transport was launched
4.14 divided by 1.22 is 3.3934

Trip person-times in the main urban area in Chengdu
5.29 million multiple 2.58 is 13.6482 million

Trip sharing ratio before free public transport was launched
339.34 divided by 1364.82 is 24.86%

Trip sharing ratio after free public transport was launched
4.45 million divided by 1.22 is 3.6475 million

Trip sharing ratio after free public transport was launched
311.2 divided by 1502.2 is 26.73%

The above-mentioned statistics show that the sharing ratio of public bus has increased by 1.87% after the free public bus was launched.

More people chose to travel by buses after free public bus was launched. Every time one person is added by public bus, two or three even ten times of per-capita trip road area is saved. Therefore, rising sharing ratio of public bus can save more road area, optimize urban area traffic structure and ease urban traffic congestion.

(3) The direct and indirect social benefits generated by fare-free public transport.

The fare-free public bus covers a wide range of issues among which financial support is the most important. Stable financial support requires rational social benefits generated by free public transport. The daily passenger capacity of Chengdu free public transport is 344,900 person-times with two yuan fare per person-time. 44 free public bus lines during the traffic restriction period saved 182 million RMB for the public which seemed a huge financial expenditure. However the free public transport has generated tremendous benefits.

The free public transport directly saved energy fees of 2.474 billion.

3-2 Related data on energy fees

Car quantity in the central urban area of Chengdu	1.24million
Daily restriction	Divide 1.24 million by 5 is 248,300
Average number of person	1.2persons
Sharing ratio of public transport	26.73%
Days of restriction	273days
Supposed daily travel miles of cars	50km
Miles decreased by restriction	3.389billion km

Free public transport can save fuel cost of 7.3 yuan per litre at the fuel consumption of 10 litres per 100 kilometers.

$33.89 \times 100000000 \times 10/100 \times 7.3 = 24.74$ 亿元 ;

33.89 multiply 100000000 multiply 10/100 multiply 7.3 is 2.474billion RMB ;

Social benefits

It seems that public transport undertaking has suffered from free transport policy. However, transport undertaking has benefited from the policy: the policy enhances city capacity, addresses people's well-being and eases urban traffic pressure. Passengers travel by free buses, leave their private cars at home, cut carbon dioxide emission and advocate low-carbon travelling. The policy brings the role of city into full play by enhancing core competitiveness of the transport and promoting city development. Therefore, the city becomes more beautiful, the society more resilient and the traffic more smooth.

4、Experiences Conclusions on the 44 Free Transport Lines

(1) Three necessities for implementing free public transport policies.

Successful launching of free public products: implementing free transport policy requires three necessities.

Second, we must ensure rational consumption. Recent years have witnessed multiple people benefiting transport policies by Chengdu municipality. After years of free bus transfer, citizens have become rational demanders of free transport. That is to say free transport attracts effective travel rather than invalid travel, which lays a solid foundation for the implementation of the policy on 44 free bus lines.

Second, we must ensure ample supply. Passenger flow volume will inevitably increase after the launching of free public transport. Supporting policies on vehicles and vehicle types must be implemented. Statistics show that the number of allocated buses has increased from 236 to 536 at present and the daily bus frequency has increased from 1,837 to 3,131. But for the ample transport reserve capacity of Chengdu, the public free transport policy would be aborted just like free transport policy in Guangzhou.

There must be effective control method. After the launching of free transport, vehicle allocation and depart frequency must undergo a process of adjustment. The public transport group has also established a supervision team to monitor the operation of free bus lines and address the passenger flow, passenger capacity, passenger volume during peak hour, cycling time and the driver and service personnel's demand of the free transport so as to ensure the smooth operation of free transport.

(2) The free transport policy is a supporting policy during traffic restriction and control period. It is an effective means to match urban infrastructure construction and ease traffic congestion which can be duplicated in the similar situations of other cities.

(3) Implementing free transport policy with territorial restriction and time restriction, we must clarify the start-time and end-time so as to ensure social equity.

At present, free public transport policy is a special means of the government and enterprise to promote smooth traffic and ease congestion and there is a gap between truly implementing free transport policy and the current policy.

Since public products serve the public, every citizen should theoretically enjoy this policy.

If the free transport policy is implemented just as a means of traffic control and the municipal finance can't support free transport of all the city lines, extensive publicity by media must be done to all the citizens in advance. Citizens who can't enjoy free transport should understand and identify this policy. We should clarify the purpose, method and time-bound of the policy especially the end-time. Before initiating the policy, the Chengdu Municipal Government carried out extensive publicity to the public. Therefore, all the citizens accepted the outcome when the policy ended.

(4) Free Public Bus Requires Public Fiscal Support

It has been nine months since the fare-free public transport policy was launched by Chengdu and 91 million person-times have benefited with 182 million RMB saved. The above-mentioned analysis shows that the continuing fare-free public transport policy as an ideal urban traffic mode will save energy, protect environment and ease urban traffic pressure. However, the 44 lines are only one sixth of all public traffic lines in Chengdu and the daily passenger flow volume occupies only one tenth of the total. We need to be rational in implementing free public transport policy and take the status quo of Chengdu into consideration including public finance, overall economic strength, traffic condition, public transport input cost and extent of public bus demand. The government departments must ensure the supporting policy and financial support. On the other hand, we also ensure the normal operation of the transport group and improve the public transport services. Only by properly combining market rules and city status quo can the free transport policy function.

5、Implementing Fare-Free Public Transport Policy by Chengdu: The Advantages far outweigh the Disadvantages

The free public system covers a wide range with interwoven factors. There have never been mature theories and experiences home and abroad. We must draw lessons and conclusions from practice and gradually improve the policy. Any free public transport policies at present are kind of exploration of early mode. How long it will persist and how many benefits it will generate call for in-depth study. The free transport policy of Chengdu is a specific means in the certain period of public transport construction. The main purpose of the policy is to provide guidance to the citizens on travelling by bus.

As important component of urban public transport, free public transport will inevitably generate social benefits. From the ecological and environmental perspective, it improves road utility, reduces energy consumption, eases congestion and reduces government fees on urban transport and environment treatment. From the political perspective, it improves city profile and investment environment and to some extent promotes overall economic development. Therefore, free public transport can generate huge social benefits that are difficult to estimate.

With improving public transport system and related services, its social benefits are gradually on the rise. When the operation benefits far outweigh the operation costs and the public finance can support all the development demands, vehicle input, operation costs and the infrastructure construction of free transport, we can gradually improve the service capacity and level of the public bus service and do our utmost to launch more people benefiting policies of public transport. For a developing city like Chengdu, there is a long way to go.

Shanghai

Actually in all major, or all, Chinese cities, 70 years old and above enjoy fare-free public transport. You need to be registered as a local resident, foreigners are not entitled.

Who from China could assist in order to get more
information about FFPT in China. Ask Chengdu?

c) Malaysia

Free 'buses for the people' link three cities in Malaysia

BY PRIYA MENON, The Star (star.com.my), 28 May 2015

Shah Alam, Subang Jaya and Klang city residents' dream of enjoying free public transportation will come true in July [2015] when the Selangor (State) government starts its free bus services in the three townships. The bus service will enable about 24,000 people to travel around those three areas for free and with ease. Selangor Investment, Industry (SME) & Commerce and Transportation committee chairman Datuk Teng Chang Khim said the project would cost RM3.6mil a year.

The money is from the transportation committee budget, costing RM1.2mil for each 10km route, he added. "The possible routes have already been identified with one each in Shah Alam, Subang and Klang," Teng said, adding that the free bus service was decided after studying the free bus service in Petaling Jaya, known as the PJ City Bus.

The proposed routes, designed by the Shah Alam City Council (MBSA), Klang Municipal Council, and Subang Jaya Municipal Council (MPSJ), he said, had been submitted to the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) for approval.

Teng added that the bus was expected to pass through busy areas including government buildings, schools, commercial districts and KTM Komuter stations.

"The routes planned by MPSJ will also run along the new Kelana Jaya LRT extension. We will not pass through areas that are being serviced by commercial bus operators because we do not want to compete with them," Teng said.

The three townships, he said, were chosen since they were the largest areas with serious traffic problem. Teng added that the service provider would supply 10 buses and the state government would pay a lump

sum for the rental, services and maintenance of the vehicles.

There were two options for the bus services, namely renting the vehicles or buying and maintaining them, he said.

He added that the ideal move would be to rent the buses and get the companies to maintain them.

He said a reputable firm, to be revealed later by Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali during the launch, had been chosen to spearhead the pilot project.

All three councils will begin the bus service simultaneously to make it easier to make any changes along the way.

When asked about the poor ridership on PJ City Bus and the possibility of the same problem in the new areas, Teng said it was only a hiccup at the initial stage.

“It is difficult for people who have been driving all the while to start using public transportation, but more people are aware of it and are starting to use the services,” he explained.

Teng said PJ City Bus that was launched on May 14 last year, catered to about 9,000 passengers a day. It covers a 28.2km-route from the bus terminal in Jalan PJS 3/11 and services the Kampung Dato Harun KTM station, Asia Jaya LRT station and Sections 14, 16 and 17.

Other areas covered include Universiti Malaya Medical Centre and PJ Old Town.

It is aimed at getting more people to use public transport to get around Petaling Jaya, especially during peak hours in the morning and evening.

The operating hours are from 6am to 9pm daily to cater to schoolchildren and working adults.

MBSA corporate communications deputy director Shahrin Ahmad said the council already had an existing free bus service but it ran only three times a day — at 7.30am, 11.30am and 4.30pm.

The bus routes with 25 stops, runs from the Shah Alam city bus station in Section 14, and passes through Sections 2, 7, 11, 16, 17 and 18.

He hoped to incorporate new routes under the new proposal to the existing stops. “This will definitely help the lower income group we targeted when the community bus rides were first introduced,” he added.

Welcoming the move, Selangor Wanita MCA chief Ong Chong Swen said its effectiveness could be measured only after its implementation. “I welcome anything that is beneficial for the people, whether the idea comes from Pakatan or Barisan Nasional,” she said.

Ong suggested that the cost of the project be checked to ensure it was cost effective and matched the running costs of the bus operators.

USJ 6 Rukun Tetangga (KRT USJ 6) deputy chairman Juan Lee said they had waited for the free bus service for some time.

He said USJ 2, USJ 6 and USJ 5 were home to many senior citizens and free transportation would be ideal for them.

“Most senior citizens find it a hassle to drive and find parking when they run errands. The bus will make the journey fuss-free,” he added.

Juan also suggested that the bus service catered to the rush hour traffic to ease congestion in the bustling neighbourhood.

A bus service at peak hours, he said, would be useful for residents working and studying within the Subang Jaya area, especially in crowded places like SS15 and Taipan.

d) New Zealand

The New Zealand Herald

Free weekend travel plan welcomed

By [Mathew Dearnaley](#) , 5:00 AM Saturday May 16, 2015

Children riding with Hop card users and a simplified zonal fare system would ease travel around city.

Public transport Britomart and downtown Auckland bus terminal. Photo / Jason Dorday

Auckland families will be big winners in a public transport fare overhaul including free weekend bus and train travel for children accompanied by adults with Hop cards.

The proposal - associated with a simplified zone system Auckland Transport intends rolling out next year - will allow two children under 16 to travel free with each paying adult at weekends and public holidays.

It has been welcomed by the youth organisation Generation Zero and the Campaign for Better Transport, which has promoted the idea for several years as a way of normalising public transport for young people while making more use of spare capacity at weekends.

It is also seen as an extra incentive for more Aucklanders to use Hop cards rather than cash and avoid holding up others queuing to board buses.

CBT convener Cameron Pitches said it would be a valuable contribution to the life of Auckland, while giving families an alternative to getting stuck in weekend traffic jams which were increasingly common. "It's a good way to encourage patronage, because at the weekend there's always the temptation to take the station wagon or family car."

Generation Zero spokesman Sudhvir Singh said it would complement existing free public transport at weekends and after 9am on week days for older Aucklanders carrying SuperGold Cards.

Auckland's Grey Power zone director, Bill Rayner, called it "a neat idea" making it more affordable for pensioners to take their grandchildren on outings.

He is alarmed, however, by fine print in a proposed variation to Auckland's regional public transport plan suggesting a review of concessionary fares will consider removing free travel for seniors during evening peak periods.

An Auckland Transport spokesman assured the Weekend Herald "there is no proposal to change any aspect of the SuperGold travel concession" as part of its fares package.

But Mr Rayner said he was distrustful of the council body as the suggestion was "completely specific as a point of consideration".

Auckland Transport says its new zonal scheme will make it easier for passengers to travel using Hop cards without having to pay separate fares for each journey leg.

The proposal - open for public consultation until June 5 - includes 14 zones through which people making radial trips of similar distances will be charged identical fares, no matter how many connections are made between trains and buses. It will also allow people to travel as much as they like for up to two hours within a single zone for \$1.70 to \$1.80.

But a shrinking minority of passengers, now down to about 25 per cent, still wanting to pay by cash will have to buy a new ticket for each trip leg.

The new scheme gets worse for cash users as Auckland Transport intends increasing the discount for Hop users from about 20 per cent at the moment to at least 33 per cent.

An extreme example of the widening gap will be noticed by passengers taking bus and train trips between St Heliers and the airport.

Although cash fares for the three legs totalling \$11.50 are already almost twice the \$6.70 Hop equivalent and will remain largely unchanged, the new scheme will allow card holders to make the 24km trip for \$3 to \$3.30.

Auckland Transport says that if it chooses the low ends of indicated fare ranges, 96 per cent of Hop card users will be no worse off or will pay less than they do now.

But a commuter who drives from Meadowbank to park her car at the Orakei railway station and catch a train the rest of the way to downtown Auckland is incensed at a proposal to increase her Hop card fare from \$1.70 to at least \$3 for the 4km leg, a prospect shared by others making short trips across zone boundaries

elsewhere in the city.
Ferries have been left out of the scheme for now.

Free kids travel the cherry on top

Auckland life is just getting rosier for Londoner Keith Ward, who brought his family here for better times and is looking forward to free weekend public transport for his children.

"I reckon it's a marvellous carrot to dangle," the former City of London money broker turned primary school teacher says of Auckland Transport's plan.

Mr Ward admits that catching buses is still a novelty for Luke (9) and Emma (7) as he usually drives them from their Point Chevalier home to visit his Kiwi wife Astrud's parents in central Auckland at weekends.

"But we'll definitely contemplate using the bus for trips into downtown more than we do now," he said.

Despite popular criticism of Auckland's traffic, Mr Ward says it is nowhere as bad as the gridlock common in London, where he carried a public transport Oyster card whenever he left his house and never drove.

He believes Auckland is already "definitely a liveable city", but expects the children's travel concession will put icing on the cake.

"It's a good thing if it gives people more chance to get out and experience what's going on in Auckland," he said.

"We came here for a quiet life - it was all a bit busy in London - we're loving it."

For more details, visit www.at.govt.nz/simplifiedzonefares

e) USA

Los Angeles (Other USA- and Canadian cities?)

Austin (Texas)

A Proposal for Free Public Transit and Improved System Efficiency in Austin, Texas

Authored by the Bus Riders Union of Austin, Texas, April 2008, <http://www.busatx.org/farefreeproposal>

Introduction

This report proposes making all transit modes operated by the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority fare-free for all passengers.

The goals of the plan are to:

- Increase ridership,
- Alleviate traffic congestion,
- Reduce pollution and improve air quality,
- Eliminate litter from expired daypasses,
- Increase overall productivity,
- Expedite the transit system and transportation overall,
- Maximize mobility for all residents of Austin, and
- Provide overall net monetary and public health gains.

The Bus Riders Union of Austin, Texas is a city-wide advocacy organization for transit riders, who are the true owners of the public transportation system.

Online at www.busatx.org.

See: <http://www.busatx.org/archives/freefareperiod>

Pittsburgh

<http://www.visitpittsburgh.com/plan-your-trip/transportation/public-transportation/>

Bus service between 4 am and 7 pm is FREE within the Downtown area known as the Golden Triangle.

The Free Fare Zone includes stops within the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers to Ross Street, Penn Station and Liberty Avenue at the railroad overpass and 11th Street. Travel within Downtown and the North Shore is also free 24/7 on the "T," Pittsburgh's light rail system.

Special Eurobarometer 406

ATTITUDES OF EUROPEANS TOWARDS URBAN MOBILITY

REPORT, Fieldwork: May - June 2013, Publication: December 2013

(see: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_406_en.pdf)

This survey has been requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport and coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication.

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.

The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

Special Eurobarometer 406 / Wave EB79.4 – TNS Opinion & Social, 98 pages.

Quote (page 7) '**Reduced travel costs**' from the conclusions:

'Reduced travel costs are frequently mentioned as a way to improve travelling within cities. More than half of Europeans believe that better public transport (56%) and lower prices for public transport (59%), would be the best ways to improve urban travel.'

'Respondents in Sweden are most likely of all Europeans to report that transport could be improved within cities by lower public transport prices (79%), better public transport (84%), improved cycling facilities (65%) and charges for road use (24%).'

Page 15, **Public transport users**

Europeans aged 15-24 are by far the most likely group to use public transport at least once a day (38%). This is 21 percentage points more than the next most common group, 25-39 year-olds (17%).

A different set of divisions is seen for public transport use. Students are the occupational group who are most likely to use public transport at least once a day, nearly half of students reporting this level of use (49%). The next most likely occupational group to use public transport are white-collar workers (20%), followed by manual workers (17%) and managers (16%).

Unlike in the case of driving, respondents who are not working have different patterns of public transport use from students. Just 13% of those who are unemployed and 7% of those who are homemakers or are retired, use public transport at least once a day.

Respondents who have difficulties paying bills most of the time are 5 percentage points more likely to use public transport at least once a day than respondents who almost never have difficulties paying bills (19% and 14% respectively).

Respondents living in single households without children are more likely to use public transport at least once a day (23%) while those in single households who have children fall slightly below (18%).

Respondents in two-person households and in households with children are the least likely to use public transport at least once a day (12% and 11%, respectively).

Using public transport at least once a day is much more common among respondents in large towns (31%) than among those who live in small/mid-size towns (13%) or rural areas (8%). Four out of ten of those who live in rural areas never use public transport (40%), compared with fewer than one in five of those who live in large towns (14%).

B. OPPONENTS' VIEWS

(1)

Author Nils Fearnley

Nils Fearnley is a transport economist and senior researcher in urban and passenger transport at the Norwegian Institute of Transport Economics (TØI). His research interests include the financing of public transport; financial, economic and social aspects of transport; market analyses; and transport policy.
http://www.sersc.org/journals/IJT/vol1_no1/5.pdf

International Journal of Transportation Vol.1, No.1 (2013) Copyright © 2013 SERSC

Nils Fearnley, *Free Fares Policies: Impact on Public Transport Mode Share and Other Transport Policy Goals*, Institute of Transport Economics, Norway, naf@toi.no, International Journal of Transportation Vol.1, No.1 (2013), pp.75-90 <http://dx.doi.org/10.14257/ijt.2013.1.1.05>, ISSN: 2287-7940 IJT Copyright © 2013 SERSC

Go for the full article to the website, an abstract is placed above **on page 21**. Here are only the paragraph on 'conclusions and discussion' and the list of references.

'4. Conclusions and discussion

Fare levels affect many people's finances directly. Like any other product, the price also shapes expectations and attitudes. There is a general attitude that public transport should be "cheap", both of social, environmental and efficiency reasons.

While proposals to introduce free public transport are generally optimistic with respect to its potential to deliver environmental benefits, congestion relief, social distribution, and so on, there is great scepticism in the scientific literature that free public transport is suitable for achieving any goals other than massive patronage growth. For all other goals and purposes free public transport offers no, or low, goal achievement at very high costs [38; 39; 13]. Transport and social policy goals can be met more effectively and at a lower cost with more specific measures. van Goeverden *et al.*, [30] is a possible exception. They see a potential role for targeted use of free public transport for specific groups like off-peak free travel for students and the elderly. Neither can it generally be said to be true that local public transport systems exhibit sufficient levels of off-peak free capacity or scale economies to justify free fares.

The principle of specificity is an insight shared by all social sciences. As far as possible, policy measures must target a problem or a policy objective directly. Goal achievement is greatest when a policy measure directly addresses the defined problem. This means, for example, that reductions in car traffic are best obtained through restrictions on car use. It follows that public transport fares are well suited to influence public transport passenger demand volumes, and less effective in changing anything else. There is a clear limit as to what public transport fares—and service quality—can do to change car use or the environment.

However, it appears that mode change can be obtained between public transport on the one side and walk and cycle on the other.

Free public transport can greatly improve public transport modal share, not by taking passengers from other motorised modes, but through the generation of substantial amounts of new travel and by substituting walk and cycle trips.

So, when can zero fares policies be justified? The Danish Board of Technology [38] assessed the implementation of free public transport in different areas in Denmark. They conclude that the free public transport is best suited in larger cities where the potential for mode shift from car is greatest. Cervero [39] also finds that experiences with free fares are better in central city areas, although the effects are in general small. In contrast to this, Hodge *et al.*, [12] find that the free fares create crowding problems in larger cities, and less so in smaller towns. Therefore, they see a greater potential for free public transport to succeed outside of the big cities. TCRP [24] argues that free public transport is a relatively good measure during off-peak periods. Off-peak passenger growth can be handled by spare capacity in the public transport system. Free public transport appears, however, to be rational and effective in two particular cases:

► The first is promotions of limited duration. A new route or a new service can gain momentum if it is launched in tandem with free travel—for a limited time. A zero fare campaign can, likewise, make the population aware of existing public transport (see, *e.g.*, Strand [47]). The Danish Svendborg Railway introduced free fare a month in 2004 as an apology following a period of numerous service interruptions [38].

► The second case is when the cost of operating a ticketing system and related activities exceed ticket revenues. Free public transport may be a pragmatic solution when the ticket income is very low. Several examples that ticketing is removed altogether, both in Sweden and in Denmark, are the result of such a situation.

Can free public transport still be a part of an effective and efficient package of measures? The general answer to this is most likely ‘no’. However, the situation can be greatly improved if an existing free-fare scheme is supplemented with more specific measures. The Danish Board of Technology [38] mentions that goals for car reduction can only be met with policy packages that include “stick” measures in addition to ‘carrots’. This means, for example, that reduced car use and mode shift towards public transport can be obtained more effectively if zero fare schemes are accompanied with restrictions on car use and car parking. The example of Bergen calls for another type of policy package. The evaluation showed that free public transport had negative impact on the local environment – 160 passenger cars per day were replaced by 160 buses per day. This negative side effect could in part have been remedied by the use of more environmentally friendly buses, like in Stavanger, or through full electrification of the bus fleet. In cases where the goal is to improve the situation of mobility impaired people, like in the UK, free buses only tackle one part of their problem. Clearly, focus must also be on accessibility of bus stops and stations, which may be a necessary condition for their bus use, and on other factors affecting their need, willingness and ability to travel. Free buses can only contribute to improve mobility for disabled people if the entire package of such measures is in place.

Proponents of free fare schemes undoubtedly always will be found and they are sometimes quite visible in the public – not least in social media. The idea is captivating to many and indeed to those who will benefit from it. Free public transport gained broad public support in Tallinn and is likely to enjoy similar popular support most places. Free public transport as a political goal in its own right is of course legitimate. But when free fare schemes are advocated and justified as a means to meet environmental, social or efficiency goals, the evidence presented here suggests that the arguments are largely misguided.

A further challenge with free public transport is related to market orientation. The price paid is a good indicator of passengers’ needs and preferences and an incentive for the operator to win new passengers and keep the existing ones. With no ticket revenues it is easy to imagine that services lose their customer orientation. The problem must be solved by way of market and performance monitoring, customer surveys, management by objectives and others.

Free public transport is a costly policy. The costs will further rise as patronage levels soar. This means that free public transport necessarily must displace funds from other policy areas or increase public budgets in one or another way. There is some evidence that free-fare schemes have been abandoned because of their high and rising costs. While the current global economic downturn puts more strain on public budgets which again may prompt authorities to abandon freefare schemes, there is a rising amount of evidence that fare increases have larger effect than similar fare reductions. See, *e.g.*, Lin *et al.*, [48] or Dargay and Hanley [12]. This means that the total outcome of introducing free fares and later withdraw the scheme can be negative. This means that successful free fare schemes require broad political support and long term commitment.’

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(2)

Convergence: The Politics of Transport in Cities

WORLD STREETS: Thinking out loud about sustainable transport, sustainable cities and sustainable lives – and the importance of immediate action

WHY FARE-FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS A BAD IDEA?

From the website:

<https://worldstreets.wordpress.com/2010/07/07/why-free-public-transport-is-a-bad-idea/#more-2908>

There are a good number of proponents around the world supporting the idea that public transport should be free. And if we here at World Streets have our own thoughts on the subject (stay tuned), it is always good practice to check out both sides of the issues.



Just below, you will find four short statements taken from the Wikipedia entry, setting out arguments *against* FPT. More to follow on this but in the meantime we are interested in hearing from our readers and colleagues around the world both with (a) their comments on these criticisms and (b) yet other critical views. (This is sure to be a bit exciting.)

* Note: See numerous, extensive comments below.

But before we dig into this, permit me as editor to make a basic point. And that is that the concept of “free public transport” is not a “bad idea” per se.

A bad idea is, for example, to undertake to do anything that will increase capacity for car traffic in cities, or something really stupid like spending public money to build high-tech elevated systems in cities in the Global South (or pretty much anywhere else as far as this observer is concerned). Those are bad ideas.

Free public transport, on the other hand, is rather an *interesting idea*, and one which we can all benefit from if we take the time and trouble to examine it serenely from the necessary multiple points of view. Now on to a typical critical, negative assessment.

Arguments Against

In later issues we will look at this from more positive angles, with the intention of developing a range of views and recommendations on this important topic. Today however, we want to hear from you about the arguments *against*. Let’s have a look at what we have thus far (and please do take the time to review the comments just below which enrich this first draft considerably):

The fact that most public transport is not “zero-fare” is evidence that there must be arguments against this policy option. Some of these arguments include:

1. **Fairness.** Some people’s transport needs may not be well-served by the public transport network, and yet they (as tax-payers) are forced to contribute to the cost of the service. At least in ideal economic models, user-pays systems lead to the most efficient allocation of scarce resources. Could the cost of paying for the public transport be better spent elsewhere?
2. **Financial sustainability.** Any extension or improvement to the public transport service must be fully funded from the public purse: being free, it cannot recover part of its cost from increased farebox revenue. As patronage on the system increases, so does the cost of provision. This may create resistance to measures to improve public transport or promote public transport use.

3. **Crowding.** Fares can be used to moderate demand. If cheaper fares are available off-peak, then people with more flexibility have an incentive to travel at off-peak times. This results in more effective use of limited resources. (Demand management is also used in telecommunications and energy markets.) It could be anticipated that a free service would be particularly crowded at peak times.

4. **Impact on car industry.** Greater public transport means that people use fewer cars; as a result, car manufacturers and service providers (e.g. mechanics, gas stations, etc.) can go out of business.

* Source : http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_public_transport

But don't stop there

Most consulted W/S articles on FFPT since 2009 (And not over yet!):

- * [No FTP without SCR \(Systematic Car Reductions\)](#)
- * [To support Tallinn FTP project, W/S readers comment on FPT](#)
- * [Free Public Transport! \(But hey, are we talking about the same thing?\)](#)
- * [What is the right price for Free Public Transport?](#)
- * [Free-for-all: Organizations supporting free public transport](#)
- * [All W/S coverage of "Free" "Public Transport"](#)

#

Thank you for pitching in on this side of the debate. Of course we are also interested to hear from you with other comments and suggestions on this important transport policy issue.

See <https://worldstreets.wordpress.com/2010/06/22/should-public-transport-be-free-stay-tuned/> for an earlier World Streets article on this topic. Also note the handful of articles looking at FPT from different angles at <https://worldstreets.wordpress.com/category/free-public-transport/>

*** But above all continue reading the extensive comments that follow.**

#

About the editor:

Eric Britton

9, rue Gabillot, 69003 Lyon France

Bio: Trained as a development economist, Eric Britton is MD of EcoPlan International, an independent advisory network providing strategic counsel for government and business on policy and decision issues involving complex systems, social-technical change and sustainable development. His forthcoming book, "Convergence: Toward a General Theory of Transport in Cities", is being presented, discussed and critiqued in a series of international conferences, master classes, workshops and media events over 2015. You can contact Britton via email at eric.britton@ecoplan.org. Tel: +336 50888 0787. Skype: newmobility/
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38 thoughts on “Why Free Public Transport is perhaps a bad idea”



1. *Anzir Boodoo* says: [09/07/2010 at 10:52](#)

Eric,
I think you are forgetting a couple of other major reasons...

5. **Free public transport creates modal shift from walking** (and possibly cycling). For example, the free city centre bus in Leeds (UK) has mostly replaced trips on foot, not trips by taxi from the railway station (as intended) or even short hop trips by bus. Free public transport can thus be a loser on public health grounds (people should be walking and cycling more), and CO2 emissions (which are higher by bus than on foot)

6. **Free public transport may encourage people to travel more**, since the only cost is their time. This will also increase individuals' level of emissions, not to mention pollution from diesel buses (as they will stop more and we will need more of them)

7. **Free public transport may encourage people to use their city centres more** than local suburban centres (I don't have any evidence for this!), or large out of town hypermarkets instead of their local suburban centres or local shops.

8. **Free public transport is unfair on the “polluter pays principle”**. All transport produces CO2 emissions, from breathing when you walk or cycle, to the fuel use of motorised transport. Are we allowing people to burn fuel and not pay for the damage this causes?

9. **It's well known anecdotally (from observation, if not from studies) that people value things they pay for**, and not necessarily things they get for free (see “the tragedy of the commons”). What about respect for drivers, vehicles and infrastructure?

Before you ask, I'm all for cheaper public transport, and believe we should be subsidising it to an extent, but I don't think making it free is the answer. I know the mayors and officials of towns like Hasselt in Belgium (where buses are free) would disagree...

Lori says: [26/07/2010 at 02:24](#)

Anzir points out that mass transit, being somewhere between human power and car culture in both carbon footprint and physical fitness, means it is a step in the wrong direction from walking or riding a bike. I'm coming from a suburban American perspective, where walkability and bikeability is a distant dream. Walking and biking are leisure activities here. They have almost no practical application under conditions of extreme sprawl. The vast majority of people who would switch to free or nominally cheap mass transit would be switching from cars.

Brendan Finn says: [09/07/2010 at 11:34](#)

Here are my five reasons for not making transit free:

- 1) **Needlessness:** People are willing to pay a fair price for a reasonable quality product. It makes no sense to give it away and lose all the income customers were willing to give. The people transit most needs to attract – car-users – pay a lot of money to buy and run their car. They have already shown a willingness to pay for quality, so why focus on free rather than quality?
- 2) **Effectiveness:** Free transit means that a lot of public money goes on provision of the basic service. For a city of 1 million people, this is likely to require 300 to 500 million Euro per year just to keep what we have going. That consumes all the money that could have been spent on extra services, better quality, transit improvement schemes such as BHLS/BRT, terminal/stop upgrades, etc.
- 3) **Social balance:** Transit would need an extra 200-300 million Euro per year in a typical city just to fill the gap for what people were paying already. This is serious money, and would fund a wide range of educational, health, social support, urban improvement and other things that would improve the daily lives of the citizens. While transit subsidies should remain, it is hard to make a case that the marginal benefits of making it free outweigh the other worthy uses of public funds for the same group of citizens.
- 4) **Dependency:** Free transit means complete dependency on the public purse, and the political support for such a policy. Expensive programs get cut sooner or later, it is inevitable as government philosophy changes. The Horn of Plenty dries up. Reintroducing fares and a slew of service cuts to balance the books seriously transit attractiveness and ridership. If making transit free attracts riders, it stands to reason that charging for it again will drive them away.
- 5) **Loss of business focus:** Transit is a business. It works well and efficiently because people remember that it is a business. Even if the public purse is a significant customer who pays for those extra services, affordable tariffs, extra quality, etc., it is still run as a business. You work hard for your buck, and you make sure the job gets done right and gets done safely. If you forget that it is a business, the discipline goes and everything gets sloppy.

I can also give five reasons to justify public subsidies to transit (which I believe in), but that's not the same thing as making it free.

Eric Britton, editor says: [12/03/2011 at 12:02](#)

Anmol. Glad to try to help but would you explain a bit better exactly what you would like from me?

Eric Britton, editor says: [23/11/2012 at 10:44](#)

Dear Brendan, We are digging up the foundations of free public transport, and back in 9 July 2010 you wrote some great lines on this, at the end of which you mentioned: "I can also give five reasons to justify public subsidies to transit (which I believe in), but that's not the same thing as making it free." I would like very much to see them, as well as anything else you might have to share with us on the subject. You can

see the latest (and the oldest) at <https://worldstreets.wordpress.com/category/free-public-transport/>. I look forward to this. Best/Eric

[free transit](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 12:08](#)

Why not discuss free highways? Free carbon dumping? Free polluting? Free fossil-fuel subsidy? The list of freebies for autosprawl goes on forever.

Public transport is a public investment, not a business [though privately operated in the UK]. It benefits all. Do you call school subsidized?

The autosprawl industry, however is highly subsidized. The most powerful subsidy is the restrain-of-trade tariff on usage [fares]. The fares serve mainly to discourage use.

The auto-system retains critical mass only through extreme subsidy including destruction of the biosphere and military force.

[Walter Hook](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 12:44](#)

Pricing should be used more to optimize system performance. What system that is free works well?
Walter Hook, ITDP

[Lloyd Wright](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 12:50](#)

While I am somewhat neutral on this topic, I would note that many of the arguments put forth would apply equally to sidewalks, cycle ways, public parks, public toilets, etc.

And yet, I doubt most of us would advocate charging a fee for use of these (although there are cities that do charge for access to parks and toilets).

We don't generally advocate charging a fee for using the sidewalk because it is viewed as a public good.

And hopefully we all support walking as public policy (as well as cycling and public transport).

I am struck by the fact that in many cities with free public transport, the Armageddon suggested in some of the comments does not happen. The systems are well maintained and operated. There are still pedestrians and cyclists. And they do not become too crowded because they are sized to meet the demand, which should be a design principle regardless of the fare level.

The free transport business model can also be sustainable. For example, Orlando (FL) has a very nice free inner city BRT service paid for by fees on private vehicles (which has a nice bit of justice to it). Miami has a truly wonderful free People Mover.

Obviously, the examples from Florida and Belgium are not representative of what would happen in developing Asia. But I am not sure that free public transport is out of the question for these contexts.

And hopefully, we can continue to use sidewalks, cycle ways, parks, and toilets before the economists demand a strict application of user/polluter pays.

[Randall Ghent](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 14:23](#)

Like Lloyd I'm also somewhat neutral on this subject. I've heard that in some cases the fare-collection equipment and staff cancels out the fare income — in which case I'd be in favour of free public transport. Just because people are willing to pay a fair price doesn't mean that fare collection infrastructure is a good use of that money.

I'd also point out that most of the arguments would apply equally as arguments against monthly passes. In Prague you pay about 15 EUR a month (basically free as far as I'm concerned) for your pass, and you can use buses, trams, metros and trains as you please. The system is highly subsidised of course — even with the fares. When living in Prague I didn't get the impression that I or others used public transport more (and walked or cycled less) just to get more value from the system. A monthly pass doesn't regulate crowding either, unless you restrict the times of day that it can be used (like the UK's Student Rail Card).

Ivan Illich argued back in the 1970s that free public transport would increase the dominance of transport over our lives, but the Prague example convincingly counters that argument, in my view anyway.

I'm not sure that public transport should be a business any more than public libraries and schools are

businesses.

The fairness argument has little validity in cases where public transport is subsidised, and where public transport accommodates people with disabilities.

I didn't understand the fourth argument about impact on car industry. Fewer people in cars can only be a good thing. The car industry is in a phase of down-sizing, which I'd like to see continue as we shift to a focus on greener industries.

[*Lee Schipper*](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 14:39](#)

I disagree with Lloyd on the analogy. Public transport systems have very high running costs/variable costs. While it is not free to maintain cycleways or sidewalks, costs are small. And many of us DO advocate charging for using roads!

Lee Schipper, Ph.D, Project Scientist Global Metropolitan Studies

[*Randall Ghent*](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 15:17](#)

Replying to Lee:

Public schools also have very high running costs, yet it is all taxpayers rather than just parents who pay for it.

[*Foraker*](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 23:02](#)

And all citizens benefit from subsidizing public schools. Better public schools generally bring higher property values, and the existence of public schools means that lower class youth will have a better chance of making more meaningful contributions to the community.

[*Carlosfelipe Pardo*](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 14:44](#)

Maybe the problem is the either/or of free or full costs, and not thinking of options between the two and progress towards the second. I propose the following:

- Charge road users as close as possible to the real costs of their car/motorcycle use and earmark it for public transport
- Do your best to reduce as much as possible the price of public transport operation (or increase frequencies etc) by use of the funds collected via polluter pays in cars etc.
- Maybe at some point it will be possible to have zero cost for public transport use?

[*Josip Rotar*](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 15:01](#)

I think it is hard to say that free public transport is good or bad idea.

In the Slovenian town Velenje, for example, there is free public transportation and still most of the people use their cars. Even those who live only 500 meters from their jobs, would rather take their cars and park them in front of the companies. If the city want to implement free public transport, than restriction on car use is necessary.

People would use mass public transportation only if quality would improve and if they will be forced not to use their cars everywhere. The prices are important, but with secondary focus.

We have to think how to turn car drivers into bus users, and not how to turn pedestrians or cyclists into bus users.

[*Todd Edelman*](#) says: [09/07/2010 at 15:42](#)

Implementing fare-free use of collective or individual public transport is quite context-specific. There are many current metro systems in the U.S, Europe etc. which could not handle the extra burden without massive investment and/or shift to home working, bicycles and so on.... but then again many public bicycle systems are nearly fare-free as a way to promote cycling, so why not the same for public transport systems which are new or have the capacity?

The 30min fare-free model for public bikes can be inspiration for further fare-free travel using collective means, but of course only in dense urban areas. (I am not advocating for fare income to made up by advertising deals).

Bottom line, public transport provision is a major part of any developed or developing economy, and it seems unfair or silly to look for some/too much fare income there whilst huge amounts of money are spent on areas outside the mobility or urban livability sectors, such as on military arms. Can we please make sure that the question to ask here is not “Buses or bikepaths?” but “Buses or bombs?”

Rory McMullan says: [10/07/2010 at 11:04](#)

“Can we please make sure that the question to ask here is not “Buses or bikepaths?” but “Buses or bombs?””

In principle this is what we should be calling for, but in practice my experience is that even when transport spending is bringing about genuine and measurable social benefits, this does not bring about more budget for transport from other departments.

Peter Lutman FCILT says: [09/07/2010 at 16:34](#)

Public Transport operators do (or certainly should) constantly monitor demand, which is easiest done from the farebox, so that adjustments may be made to service frequency, hours of operation and introduction of new routes where transfer demand becomes significant. Free travel removes these data sources and would require replacement by costly surveys of Origin – Destination, journey purpose, required arrival, departure or dwell times and the like.

In places where it is cold, people will ride public transport just to keep warm (I remember this happening in Norwich, England in the 1970s where the 5p City Circle which took an hour to go round attracted significant numbers of the elderly (and vagrants) in winter to warm up for an hour.

In places where it is hot, and transit has air-conditioning, the same sort of thing will happen.

Far from attracting people out of cars and damaging the car and fuel supply industries, it seems to me that it would have the reverse effects, as the overcrowding and less salubrious members of society would soon discourage those with an alternative available from using public transport at all. I recall that 40% of the Tyne & Wear Metro’s passengers actually had a car available for the journey they were making on the system – most of these would revert to the car rather than be squashed in with the unwashed!

In the UK people over 60 (soon to be raised to 65) currently have free travel on all bus services in their specific Country; England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Has any research been carried out into their change of behaviour? If so this might indicate what might happen with the rest of the population. In the Transport for London area everyone under 18 has free travel on buses – again what change has occurred since this was introduced?

Certainly with the efforts the coalition Government is making to reduce public expenditure and to balance the Nation’s books, there is absolutely no way in which the loss of revenue could be funded, let alone the huge potential cost increases. There are no longer savings to be made (buses don’t have conductors any more so they can’t be got rid of) and Government already supports public transport with subsidies to the tune of about £10 billion annually if my memory serves me.

Fare free public transport is dead in the water so far as I can see.

André Soares, ViaCiclo/Brasil says: [09/07/2010 at 17:21](#)

I think even those who do not use public transport should pay for it, because public transportation is an essential service to keep the whole town working – and all people need the entire urban system.

Roger Gorham, USA says: [09/07/2010 at 20:47](#)

I agree with the sentiment expressed here by some that it depends heavily on the local context and the objective for which “free” public transport (that is, someone other than the user pays all the costs) is being proposed. But for most of the usual-suspect-objectives that people have already cited — support a public good, bolster public transport’s mode share, or reduce private car use — removing from the user all burden of cost-sharing will generally prove to be ineffective.

In time-sensitive environments (e.g. developed-country cities), free public transport will generally slow the system down (artificial “congestion” from higher frequency of stops, more people boarding at stops) which would further incentivize private vehicle use. (Lloyd mentions a couple of exceptions, but these seem to be highly niched circumstances, with minuscule mode share, I would imagine.) In developing country cities, the very immediate logistical problem is that “public” transport is provided by thousands of small operators — there is no way to contemplate creating a “free” system under these circumstances without generating a myriad of other problems that would be too horrible to think about. So the larger question is how to transform these systems into more manageable, sustainable, and organized public transport delivery systems, which is what we are all grappling with.

In short, “user-doesn’t-pay” systems may be ok in a limited number of circumstances to meet specific objectives, but it should not be an abstract goal we should be striving for.

Karthik Rao Cavale says: [09/07/2010 at 20:48](#)

There are times when implementing fare-collection would make the system costlier than not implementing fare-collection. Collecting fares needs investment in fare-collection machines, but it also makes entry and exit time-consuming (as only the front door of the bus can be used). In places where the buses make short trips with a lot of people getting in and out at each stop, sometimes fare-collection is simply not worth it. A good example is my Rutgers university bus system, which does not collect fares (of course the money comes from the fee we pay). For the 5-10 mile trips it makes, fare collection would significantly impact the time taken to complete one trip. But I also remember my IIT madras bus system, which had a 1 Rupee fare. To collect the fare, they had to keep a conductor – who could have otherwise been more gainfully employed as a driver.

Service frequencies were terribly low, so they could have used more drivers to up the frequency. And it is unlikely that the fares collected even covered the costs of employing a conductor.

As for an increase in demand, that can be managed by restricting supply. The buses at Rutgers rarely run with a headway of more than 10 minutes, so students are unlikely to use the bus short walkable trips of a mile or less. I cannot speak with any certainty about other situations where this would work, but for short trips with a lot of ridership, I think fare-free systems do make sense, even from a strictly economic viewpoint.

Foraker says: [09/07/2010 at 23:03](#)

The issue of the cost of fare collection is an important one.

Simon Norton says: [10/07/2010 at 09:40](#)

I am by no means convinced that it should be an important goal, but I would like to reply to the arguments that have been given against it.

Creates modal shift from walking/cycling: Yes, though it can also create opportunities for people to make leisure walks and return by public transport. However I am concerned at the appropriateness of making public transport users (who do at least have to walk between their home/destination and bus stop or station) walk further while most motorists expect to park within or just outside their homes and at destinations such as supermarkets.

Encourages people to travel more: Yes, but mainly through filling seats that would otherwise go empty and which therefore do not significantly increase emissions.

May discourage people from using their local shops: Yes, but if the local shops offer poorer value for money is it right that sustainable travellers should be forced to use them ?

Unfair on polluter pays principle: As stated above in most cases it involves use of otherwise empty seats so in a sense it should be free.

People value things they pay for: In many cases this just means that those who don't value the service cease to use it. If this means leaving seats empty while they congest the city with their cars it's not an advance.

Needlessness: The fact is that in many places public transport is failing and radical initiatives are needed to keep it going.

Effectiveness: The same money has to be paid whether it's by farepayers or taxpayers. In fact because of the cost of collection (e.g. delays to buses — even with London's Oystercard they don't board travellers instantaneously) the cost will be greater if paid by way of fares.^a

Social balance: Ditto.

Dependency: The effect of making transport free is that decisions have to be made politically rather than commercially. If the political process is democratic this strikes me as a good thing. I think most UK citizens prefer decisions on health spending to be made this way, isn't that similar?

Loss of business focus: In the UK most public transport is run either purely commercially or mainly commercially but with public support. I for one don't regard the result as a good advertisement for this method.

Fairness: In many cases if public transport doesn't fit a person's needs that is because of a conscious decision made by that person, e.g. to live where the journey to work needs a car. In other cases (e.g. those who are severely disabled) it would be better to compensate the relevant people in other ways. Our health and education systems run on the basis that those who don't use the public system still have to pay for it. There are some who feel that even this isn't adequate; if influential people were forced to use the same schools as everyone else they would ensure that they were adequately resourced. How much stronger this argument would be if applied to transport.

Crowding: This is a legitimate argument and one answer may be that free travel should be restricted to off peak services. (This already happens to some extent in the UK, e.g. free concessionary bus passes in many parts of the country are not valid in the morning peak.) But there is a counter-argument about "fairness". There are many places from which people making a day trip to (say) London have to return in the evening peak (which can cost perhaps 3 times as much) because after the peak their buses home from the station have either stopped completely or drastically reduced in frequency. How can it be fair to charge public transport users 3 times as much as motorists?

Impact on car industry: How can it be a good thing to maintain employment in an industry that is destroying our environment?

Rory McMullan says: [10/07/2010 at 10:50](#)

There are cases where free public transport is a good idea and cases where it is a waste of money. Almost all the arguments are listed above so I'll just post some anecdotes...

On many levels free public transport for pensioners in the UK has been a huge success. Ridership is high, and senior citizens generally love their 'freedom pass', this ticket is correctly named for it allows older people who may not be able to afford to travel that often the freedom to go where they want, when they want.

In my opinion this ticket is a correct use of public subsidies, as it targets a largely low income group and therefore serves the public good in more ways than in just purely transport terms. In that we are closing

local post offices and other places for old people to socialise, this pass will probably help provide considerable social welfare benefits. I wonder if visits to the doctors or social service costs for the elderly may have been reduced since the introduction of the pass.

However even for this type of well targeted intervention cost is an issue; in many cases concessionary fares is one of the highest budget items for increasingly stretched public transport departments. We may reach the point where there is little money for anything else.

Where free public transport is a waste of money is when it is used as a carrot to drive patronage and modal shift away from cars or motor-bikes. I've been informed by some travel planners that car drivers tell them they wouldn't use public transport even if they were paid to do so.

In Taichung City in Taiwan where I once lived, a city of over 2 million people with practically no public transport, free buses was tried on two occasions when they introduced a city bus system.

With no priority lanes the buses were slow, and by their very nature did not run door to door, and since motor scooter parking and pretty much car parking was unregulated, (sidewalks were for scooter parking certainly not for walking), even when free only a handful of people used the bus.

Interestingly also in Taichung, when the high speed rail station was built 5 miles from the city centre the free shuttle buses have been extremely well used, as there is almost no free parking near the new station.

So in conclusion there are occasions when free public transport would be a justified use of money, such as for the old or young, or on feeder lines to MRT or HST stations, but in many cases spending on bus priority would be a better use of limited funds.

Katie Alvord says: [10/07/2010 at 16:12](#)

Thanks for raising this issue, Eric. I agree with several who've already commented: local context is important.

For a time I was a frequent user of a free bus system in the resort town of Ketchum, Idaho, and believe the town's traffic conditions and air quality would have suffered without the system. The fare-free feature definitely encouraged its use. In this situation, where road space was limited and the valley subject to air inversions, local agencies had decided it was well worth supporting a free bus. The service was used both by tourists and locals, including several disabled residents.

I would argue that free public transport should be at least considered as an option much more frequently than is currently done. And I agree that both positives and negatives of this approach should be carefully examined.

As for #4 on the list of arguments against free public transport, well — the fact that came from Wikipedia says something but you might also argue that if car manufacturers and service industries converted to building transit equipment and providing transit-oriented services, then free transit would be GOOD for business. The sort of saving-jobs argument represented by #4 is always specious. For instance — most civil societies don't encourage heroin consumption in order to keep poppy farmers employed.

Peter Smith says: [10/07/2010 at 22:34](#)

Making public transport free would allow more people to roam even further afield to commit crimes. This is what happened when cars came into use.

Making public transport free is just a way of increasing the relative cost of driving, but does it very indirectly, thus very ineffectually. The more appropriate policy response would be to have drivers pay for the full cost of driving — probably somewhere on the order of \$100,000 per gallon of gas.

As for the skepticism of free (ie taxpayer-supported) systems that are successful — there are myriad — national defense and healthcare systems in most modern industrialized societies, to name just a few hundred of the largest examples. California used to have a free university system that used to be the envy of the world. The public library system in the US is an astounding achievement. The public parks system is largely free. The list goes on and on.

Simon Bishop, Delhi, India says: [12/07/2010 at 08:02](#)

Focusing on the impact of free public transport on public transport use is missing the point, as unpopular politically to swallow as it is.

Measures to rein in car use, principally by raising its cost have a disproportionate impact on encouraging greater transit use than lowering the costs of public transport. That's because using a car/motorcycle (the case in nearly all countries/cities of the world) is more convenient than using transit.

In case the table figures from Mayer Hillman below seems 'Londoncentric', Professor Mohan at IIT-Delhi has found that up to distances of 12km (most urban journeys) the car is faster than both Metro and BRT. Given that time is now almost out to reduce transport's contribution to climate change perhaps our emphasis should shift accordingly?

"It can be seen from the table below [\[the table could not be reproduced, go to the original website to see\]](#) that car drivers' travel time is far lower than bus or rail, from which it can again be observed that it is wholly unrealistic to anticipate a future in which public transport could compete in door-to-door speed with the car on journeys up to 10 miles, accounting for 86 per cent of all journeys. Moreover, when attention is turned to the influence of the costs of travel, it is apparent that, unless the real and perceived costs of car travel, for instance in relation to speed, parking and fuel prices, are dramatically increased, holding down fares is likely to have only a minor effect on this particular modal choice: a modeling exercise has revealed that halving public transport fares would only reduce car traffic by two per cent (Dasgupta et al., 1994), and if public transport were free, car use would be reduced by no more than 6 per cent (Norris, 1995)."

Mayer Hillman (Senior Fellow Emeritus, Policy Studies Institute) in Chapter 8 in The Greening of Urban Transport (ed. Rodney Tolley), John Wiley and Sons, 1997.

[\[instead descriptions are given\]](#)

UK Trends since 1995/97

Between 1995/97 and 2013 there was a steady falling trend in trip rates. In 2013, on average each person made 923 trips per year, compared with 1,094 in 1995/97 – a fall of 16% and the lowest trip rate recorded. For trips over one mile in length, there was a fall of only 6%.

The average distance travelled per person per year was 6% lower in 2013 than in 1995/97 – 6,983 miles compared with 6,584 miles. Distance travelled peaked in 2003 at 7,202 miles.

The average trip length increased by 12% from 6.4 miles in 1995/97 to 7.1 miles in 2013.

Time spent travelling has remained fairly static over time at around an hour a day. In 2013, residents of England spent an average of 364 hours per year travelling compared to 372 hours in 1995/97. Average trip time has increased by 16% over the period, from 20.4 minutes to 23.7 minutes.

Of all trips made in 2013, 18% were less than one mile in length, 67% less than 5 miles and 95% were less than 25 miles. Chart 4 shows how mode share varies by length of trip.

[Mark Kirkels](#) says: [12/07/2010 at 10:29](#)

In my view, the important argument against FTP is the non-inclusion of environmental costs. Public transport, albeit to a lesser extent than private MT, burdens non-renewable natural resources and requires carbon sink capacity. Policy makers consider FTP as an option in competition with private MT in the price of which environmental costs aren't included either.

We should strive at mobility pricing systems with proper inclusion of environmental costs in each option. In other words: Fuel should become far more expensive rather than making PT even cheaper.

Senior policy officer
I-CE, Interface for Cycling Expertise
Trans 3, 3512 JJ Utrecht, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 30 2304521, Fax: +31 30 2312384
Email: i-ce@cycling.nl, Web: <http://www.cycling.nl>
NGO registration KvK41265203

[*free transit*](#) says: [14/07/2010 at 22:29](#)

Maintaining the system critical mass of the auto-system is costing the biosphere and the subsidies are enough to bail out every government on earth. So even if you don't care about the future of life on earth, you can be against subsidizing waste. When there is enough free transit to break the critical mass, the subsidy will be exposed and rejected by all.

Eric Bruun says: [15/07/2010 at 14:59](#)

No wonder I keep reading this listserve. There is a lot of informed opinion out there. I want to add two perspectives that haven't been covered so far:

1) There are lots of places in the US where the farebox only covers 10 to 20 percent of the operating cost and the effort to collect fares even adds a few percent to operating cost. At the same time, there is not really a peak demand problem causing overloading. (This would be a good problem these operators would like to develop.) In this case, I think having zero fare is OK. It makes little difference to the subsidy required, it helps generate ridership and familiarity with public transport, it subsidizes those at the bottom of the income scale, and it helps the 32 percent of the population that don't have driver's licenses. In the US this about 100 million people.

2) It isn't always true that driving is faster for trips under 12km. Especially when one must hunt for parking. I could drive to Center City Philadelphia from my house, but I might have to circle for 10 minutes just to find parking. And if I want to save time, the odds are that I would pay \$6 for one hour if I gave up hunting for on-street parking. The streetcar takes me there in a few minutes longer but I have no worries once I get there. The trick is to make this true in ever-larger parts of the city. Due to total stagnation in PT development for decades, the size of this area hasn't been expanding in my city, or in most US cities. But in European cities where the median income is far higher than in Philadelphia like Munich, Helsinki or Stockholm that have seen ever-expanding systems and systems where service is reliable and frequent, there is a large part of the city where PT outperforms the car. Hence ridership per capita of PT exceeds 400 per year.

[*Gail Jennings*](#) says: [15/07/2010 at 17:33](#)

Free public transport can be an equity issue more than a getting-cars-off-roads issue. In the South African metros, for eg, where it is enormously difficult to overcome apartheid spatial planning, poorer people live a long way from where they work (sometimes 120km round trips a day!) and spend up to 40% of their incomes on transport. Although public transport is heavily subsidised, there are calls by, among others, the largest trade union coalition (COSATU) for public transport – where it specifically functions to overcome the spatial divide – to be free. Or at least have free days, where job-seekers or pensioners can travel, and free travel for school learners (who again often drop out of school because of the high proportion of transport costs)...

[*laura machado*](#) says: [16/07/2010 at 14:08](#)

Hi Eric: I send to you text published at the diary Tribuna do Norte about the reclamations caused for free-pass bus in RN-Brasil.

cans you see more at: <http://tribunadonorte.com.br/noticia/passe-livre-gera-criticas-de-usuarios/154316>

Passe-livre gera críticas de usuários:

O sistema do passe-livre implantado pela Secretaria Municipal de Mobilidade Urbana da capital do Rio Grande do Norte (Brasil) tem surtido efeito contrário em alguns pontos da cidade. Segundo relatos de usuários de transporte público, o prazo de uma hora entre as passagens nas catracas do primeiro e segundo

veículos – no mesmo percurso – é insuficiente para se deslocar entre bairros da zona Norte aos da zona Sul da capital. A demora impede usufruir da gratuidade e aumenta as despesas no final do mês. No bairro Potengi, o atraso na saída dos ônibus do Terminal do Conjunto Soledade também é motivo de reclamação. No percurso, o circular gasta de 15 a 20 minutos. “A gente espera até 40 minutos para o ônibus sair”, disse a vendedora Manuela Pinheiro, que trabalha no Centro.

Simon Field says: [16/07/2010 at 16:30](#)

I am torn on this issue. I agree with the point about valuing what we pay for, and there is evidence to suggest anti-social behaviour [1] has increased significantly on buses in London since teenagers were granted free travel on Oyster. I also subscribe to the ‘user pays’ and ‘polluter pays’ principles.

I am all in favour of changing the balance between passengers and all taxpayers regarding paying for public transport, and would also like to see the Swiss GA card model used elsewhere: a single annual sunk cost, then free travel at will. Just one of the many reasons why PT has a modal share of 22% of pass km, and it is incredibly easy to live without a car in Switzerland. Does anyone know the proportion of operating costs covered by the average mileage GA card holder?

One could argue this isn’t fair, as card holders travel a range of distances. However, low-mileage Swiss passengers can opt for the half-price card instead. Regional versions could be introduced in larger countries, together with peak and off-peak variants. The latter would add complexity, and arguably should not be applied unless private car users also pay variable road access charges by time of day and/or congestion level. I should add that there is now a debate in Switzerland about the growing problem of accommodating commuters into Zurich and Basel: tiered pricing according to demand would appear to be the way forward even for the Swiss. It is not economically sustainable to over-subsidise long-distance commuters, who of course have among the greatest theoretical willingness to pay, even if it is environmentally sound on a 95% hydro-electric powered railway.

I find the idea of public transport passes offering a limited number of ‘free’ km / trips, perhaps within a city region, then charging on a pay-as-you-go basis, very attractive in principle, but would it be practical? A number of papers have found that service quality elasticities are generally greater than those of fares, although it is not clear that this applies in both directions, especially with regard to reducing the cost to zero.

Finally, I wonder whether it will be necessary to introduce free PT once car users – sooner or later – pay their external costs and are faced with massive demand-induced pump price increases. We heard it said a number of times at the TCC conference that “internalise external costs and the rest will follow”. I tend to agree.

In summary I would rather see private motoring costs increase significantly – justified largely as a carbon reduction measure, in which case fuel is the obvious target – than free PT. A range of sunk-cost mobility passes would provide the alternative or ‘carrot’: there is a debate to be had about simplicity vs demand management and avoiding PT-fuelled hypermobility, and the proportion of costs borne by the passenger vs the general population. Having said that, I would be warmer towards free PT if visitors as well as residents were taxed to pay for it, via hotels for example: this would apply equally to domestic and international leisure travellers. I do not see why residents of popular tourist areas should bear the cost of carrying visitors.

[1] This could be a discussion topic of its own – who can say they managed an urban public transport journey recently without encountering some sort of low-level anti-social behaviour? This is a serious deterrent, seemingly widely ignored.

Simon Norton, Cambridge UK says: [16/07/2010 at 17:42](#)

I have thought of one possible argument against it — that it might undermine public transport in adjacent areas where it is not free.

This can also happen where there are large differences in the quality of public transport, and I believe it has

happened around the Greater London boundary.

Incidentally I was interested to see free public transport in cities as one of the wishes of Oliver James in his well publicised book “Affluenza”.

Pingback: [At Any Cost? The hidden costs of charging for public transport | World Streets / Open Edition](#)

Jeroen Buis says: [26/07/2010 at 19:09](#)

I would say that, although there might be exceptions, free public transport is in most cases not a good idea. I remember when, many years ago, here in the Netherlands students, including myself, got a free public transport pass. The result was that many students who always cycled to the lectures started taking the local bus. Some used always the bus, but particularly in rainy days suddenly buses that used to be rather empty were overfull. I know of students who hadn't fixed their flat tire for weeks because there was the free bus. I am not sure if they added capacity to the fleet (which would mean more costs and pollution) but even without this this led to overcrowded and less attractive bus travel for those who already used it (with the chance that they would shift to cars) and it meant missing the positive health effects of cycling for those that shifted from bike to bus and maybe continued with their inactive travel behaviour even after graduating.

Someone already mentioned induced travel. That certainly happened with the free country-wide public transport pass. We used to travel around the country for fun and I know of students who used the train to study, just traveling back and forth while reading the study material.

As a train user now I love it when there is a lot of space in the train. So if a free public transport policy would be used to fill up the off-peak hours to capacity that would make PT less attractive for me, for some people it might even lead to shifting to the car.

Motorised transport which always pollutes and comes with a price for society should, as a default, not be free of charge. Special cases might be those where it is a temporary thing to attract new users.

I would say that if your PT system is underutilized, look at how to improve the service and for policies to make car-use more expensive and less attractive in relation to PT. And if you have tax money available to make PT free isn't there almost always a better way to invest it? Maybe in an extra PT-line, making PT truly more competitive, or in better facilities for walking and cycling?

Jeroen Buis, Consultant for Interface for Cycling Expertise
The Netherlands

Paul says: [02/12/2012 at 23:27](#)

I arrive at this from the outside, as a free thinker. It dismays me that there are so many unstated assumptions extending over all of the contributions. There is an assumption that public transportation is synonymous with buses and trains. That public policy is the engine for change. That costs for buses is a major driver. And that cars are more or less evil. I would challenge these and have on my website at http://zerowasteinstitute.org/?page_id=1536. One of the claims you will find there is that there is an enormous existing investment in the automobile and it is better to make use of it, if possible, than to discard it. I also can't understand the assumption that it is merely an unfortunate side effect of bus scheduling that they cruise with empty seats. I realize that most people lament those empty seats but what is it that causes them? That is the most important question. Can we afford to have empty seats just because we need to run buses on time? I propose a system of on-full departure rather than on-time departure and I discuss it at length. Check out the website.

Eric Britton, editor says: [03/12/2012 at 08:50](#)

A quick note to thank you for your comment and challenges. I have posted your message to our two concerned FB sites to draw the attention of our readers to the work you are doing. I like your approach.

Pingback: [Why “Freeways” and “Free Parking” Are a Bad Idea | Cycling Unbound](#)