

INTEGRATING RAIL TRANSPORT WITH OTHER TRANSPORT MODES AND OPERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Historically, there has been an underinvestment in public transport in general and in passenger rail transport in specific, which lead to too few stations functioning well as transport interchanges. Most of the existing stations can be described as 'sinkholes' since they are often inaccessible, inconvenient, unattractive and unsafe. This leads to disinvestment or lack of investment in adjacent properties and the surrounding areas. This also scares off potential commuters who can afford private transport.

Without efficient and attractive stations and public transport interchanges, it is not possible to increase efficiency of public transport, reduce travel time and make public transport a mode of choice. The key to this lies in integration, being a combination of *inter alia* transport integration, land-use integration and integrated management of the operations of a station.

The integration of passenger railway systems mostly takes place at stations. By integrating passenger rail well into the rest of public transport system, it firstly has the result of the rail system becoming the "backbone" of the public transport network of services and it "stretches" the potential passenger rail market through enhanced access. Transport integration at stations generally has two components, namely network integration and the integration of interfaces as stations. The main aim of network integrations is to make modes "work together" as an integrated public transport network of services. This will then enhance the user's experience of seamless movement, the optimal deployment of resources, obtaining a balance between mobility and accessibility, as well as coordinating timetables and integrating tickets to enhance user convenience. Well functioning interfaces further enhance seamlessness of transfer between modes, passenger convenience and safety.

The result of good land-use integration at and around stations is that these facilities become not only places of interchange, but also origins and destinations in their own right, in other words "ant heaps" of activity. It unlocks investment potential and acts as catalysts for development. This then also enhances access to stations and passengers' ability to "walk" into the railway system and the general effectiveness and functionality of stations.

Integrated management of all transport related operations at and around stations and their precincts are essential to firstly protect the investments made in the infrastructure, but also secondly, to promote the effective functioning and provision of safe and secure environments for passengers.