



To: Place Directorate

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Subject: Essential Evidence on a page: No 137 Transport user needs and marketing public transport

Top line: In attracting car users to use public transport there are monetary and time savings considerations but also expenditure of physical and emotional effort which can act as a barrier to public transport use.

It has been argued for well over a decade that a better understanding of how public transport can be rendered more attractive to motorists is needed. A key paper presented findings from studies of the psychological dimensions underlying respondent ratings of car and public transport use.ⁱ Car users obtain autonomy as well as mobility from driving. There are two aspects to this autonomy - a sense of personal identity and a sense of independence - with feelings of control, confidence and safety a core component of both.

Analysis of ratings of ten features of bus and rail services showed, for both modes, two underlying dimensions of judgement, service availability and service attractiveness. Analysis of 16 aspects of interchanging bus and rail journeys found separate factors representing psychological needs (saving effort), journey needs (saving time) and cost considerations (saving money). All journeys require expenditure of physical, cognitive and emotional effort. Car commuters see a public transport alternative involving interchange as requiring unwelcome additional expenditure of physical and emotional resource. Analysis of bus and train traveller ratings of journey demands found separate factors for in-trip anxieties, personal vulnerability concerns, in-trip and pre-trip information load.

In meeting the challenge of the car, public transport needs to combat the autonomy as well as the mobility that the car conveys, either by providing comparable feelings of identity, independence, control, confidence and safety or by providing other but equally compelling sources of psychological satisfaction for public transport users. There are also drawbacks to driving a car, and public transport may be able to position itself as offering attractive alternatives to the discomfort and distress experienced by some drivers. Focusing on these sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction should assist those marketing public transport alternatives to car use. In addition, there are physical and mental health benefits associated with public transport through walking to stops and stations and these benefits are often substantial.ⁱⁱ

For those seeking to use soft measures, such as marketing, to persuade drivers out of their cars and onto public transport, a number of underlying aspects of public transport attractiveness are therefore important. As well as saving money, and time there are also psychological needs in terms of saving effort. The expenditure of personal resources on a journey can, therefore, be differentiated into the expenditure of physical effort, cognitive effort and affective effort and it is argued that an unreliable transport service is particularly unattractive because it threatens to make demands upon all three of these.

ⁱ Stradling, S. 2002 Transport user needs and marketing public transport, *Municipal Engineer*, 1: 23-28,

ⁱⁱ See <http://travelwest.info/project/ee-28-public-transport-physical-activity> and more recent studies eg Yu, C., Lin, H. 2015 Transit-related walking to work in promoting physical activity, *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 12: 483-489.