

The bus comes first in Jönköping

By adopting an integrated approach to the transport situation, changing the transport environment and prioritising bus services, the city of Jönköping has increased the number of journeys made by bus and reduced emissions with a climate impact. Ten years after it started, this successful project is still attracting interest, especially abroad.

Jönköping's commitment to bus services is a successful example of a large-scale transport measure that has produced positive economic and environmental effects. With support from the local investment programme (LIP), commitments were made to expanding the main route network, overpasses, more stops and digital displays that count down the time until the next bus arrives. As a result of around twenty different measures, the number of bus journeys has increased by around 20%. The county public transport service (Länstrafiken) has saved around SEK 2 million on the project since it started, while the gain for the national economy has been estimated at around SEK 10 million.

POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- The number of bus journeys has increased by 20% to around 11 million per year.
- Around 60% of journeys in urban services now take place on one of the main routes.
- Actions such as overpasses and indicator lights save money and benefit the environment.
- The county transport service has saved around SEK 2 million since the project began.
- The project has saved around SEK 10 million for the national economy.

Photograph: Jan- Erik Ejenstam



IMPLEMENTATION

An integrated approach was taken to the transport situation from the outset. The municipality and the local transport company Länstrafiken cooperated on the planning, and the politicians gave their backing for the project. The slogan “Think tram – go by bus” was used to emphasise that the buses would be able to go everywhere, for example at roundabouts where the buses drive straight on. The main route network for the buses was expanded, the stops were upgraded with digital displays, the street environment was expanded to facilitate bus services and the buses were prioritised at traffic lights.

Influencing and changing public attitudes to travel has also been a feature of the project. Households have been phoned and offered trial solutions and tailored timetables. The project has had a good impact among the public, in the media and internationally. Information has been regularly posted on the Internet, and a brochure has been produced. Study visits are still being received nearly 10 years after the project started.

POTENTIAL AND FUTURE BENEFIT

Signal prioritisation for buses meant a rethink when the project began, but is becoming increasingly common. Continued development and improvement of the network of main routes and the stops will lead to more passengers in the long term. According to the new transport agreement, 40% of buses are to run on alternative fuels in 2012. Ten biogas buses entered service in the summer of 2008 as a first step.

WHY BEST PRACTICE

In order to attain the environmental targets, services need to be developed in larger towns and on routes between towns. Investments need to be made for instance in attractive and safe travel centres, stations and stops, lanes for public transport and signal prioritisation, good connecting routes for pedestrians and cyclists, good and modern information systems and good facilities for parking cars and cycles.

The municipality adopted an integrated approach to the transport situation and cooperated with the public transport company Länstrafiken on the project. “Think tram – go by bus”, i.e. all measures having to lead to prioritisation for bus services, was a key to the success of the project. It led to buses becoming the obvious choice for mode of transport in the urban environment.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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For further information on Best Practice:
www.swedishepa.se/bestpractice
www.naturvardsverket.se/mir

FACTS

Jönköping 1999
Action Nos 9 and 10
Environmental investment: SEK 12.67m
Grant: SEK 3.8m

