

Topic Sheet No. 1

PARK+RIDE

(P+R)

Park+Ride is seen as a useful way to reduce the number of cars entering a city. Sites established at existing railway stations have had varying amounts of success, many being in conjunction with new Parkway stations where they are linked to longer distance travel.

➤ Attention has been paid to provision of sites on the outskirts of cities in conjunction with a dedicated bus service. Their success depends in part on security arrangements at the site, and the frequency of service.

➤ Although generally considered successful Park+Ride does have its problems. Foremost among these is a tendency to cause passengers who would have used the bus for their whole journey, to drive to the Park+Ride site instead.

➤ This can cause local bus services to deteriorate, and in the longer term harm those who do not own a car. It is because most Park+Ride services in Britain are separate under-takings with fare levels set to attract the motorist, and may often be below the standard bus fare.

➤ Also it is likely that the Park+Ride service will not stop between the site and the city centre while the local services although benefiting from any bus lanes installed for the Park+Ride service, still have to make frequent stops. The larger the city, the greater the problems are to ensure that the service is regular, with bus lanes being required on both inward and outbound legs.

➤ Despite the undoubted success of Park+Ride schemes, there is little evidence of any reduction in congestion within the cities they serve. Instead, studies show that they do attract more people to City centres. With locations on the edge or just outside the built up area, the distance travelled on public transport may be short compared to the length of the car journey. It may be that the benefits of Park+Ride come more from helping to achieve a change of attitude towards public transport than in direct environmental benefits.

➤ Light rail is a mode ideally suited to providing Park+Ride services in a way that can overcome some of the problems. It is sometimes said that due to the size of the vehicles it would not be economic to provide the frequent enough service required. Light rail can however combine the Park+Ride passengers with the general passenger load and with its high quality of ride accommodate standing passengers in reasonable comfort when sudden surges occur.

➤ The ideal fare structure enhances the properties of the mode, allowing interchange at both ends on a single ticket. This reduces the abstraction from local services, using them as feeders to the direct service to a city.

➤ It is quite practical and common to have more than one Park+Ride site serving a light rail line and bus service interchanges can occur at the



PARK AND RIDE in action: Karlsruhe.

Michael Taplin



PARK AND RIDE in action: Portland.

Michael Taplin

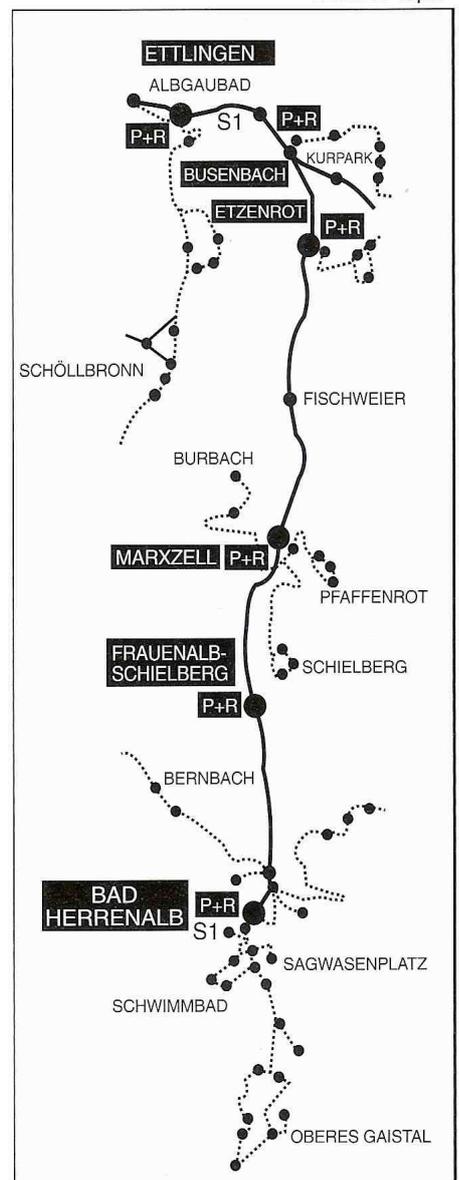
Park+Ride site as well as at other stops along the route. This can happen in urban and rural locations. Where a light rail line links two urban centres, such as Portland and Gresham in the USA or Düsseldorf and Krefeld in Germany, there is the opportunity to provide Park+Ride sites further out, and therefore increase the public transport element proportion of the journey. Travel may be to either terminus, giving a balanced loading.

➤ Park+Ride sites can be of varying size from the very small to the very large, depending on conditions. Connecting buses relieved of their line-haul duties enable vehicles more suited to their task to be used.

➤ By careful use of the fare structure, it can be arranged so that there is little or no financial inducement to take a car to a Park+Ride site when there are local services available at the same cost as from the transfer point. This may permit use of smaller sites than would otherwise be the case. All these measures strengthen the viability of the trunk route.

➤ Light rail can provide rapid, congestion-free access to city centres in attractive vehicles with easy and rapid boarding, giving a smooth ride and accommodating shoppers, purchases and sudden surges of passengers at peak periods. Its high capacity and need for rapid boarding requires fare structures to match, which if applied across the board can bring improvements to public transport as a whole.

BRIAN LOMAS



KARLSRUHE: Multiple Park+Ride sites and bus interchanges. The light rail route is marked in black. Other transport links are represented by dotted lines.