

Free Public Transport in Tallinn – initial progress report

IMPACTS-SUMITS
Vienna, May 17, 2013

Taavi Aas
Deputy Mayor of Tallinn
taavi.aas@tallinnlv.ee



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Basic figures

- **Population of Tallinn 425 974 (as 01.05.13)**
- **Total number of public transport vehicles (bus, tram, trolley-bus): 480**
- **2012 PT budget – 53 million €**

Total tickets revenue - 17 Mio €

5 Mio € from non-Tallinners

**Free PT for Tallinners costs
12 Mio € annually**



Fundamental question

- Cities and regions are facing with the urgent need to increase the ticket fares and thus risking further to undermine the usage of public transport. As PT is already subsidized well over 50%, it is time to ask – **why not to shift to completely free public transport to justify these heavy subsidies, to increase substantially public transport usage and decrease the car traffic.**

Why we did it?

Social aspects: guaranteeing mobility for unemployed and low income residents. Using PT facilitates sharing common space for different segments of the society

Economic aspects:
increasing labour mobility in the city limits;
stimulating consumers activity;
savings from public transport are spent for local goods and services

Green aspects: modal shift from cars to PT, cleaner air, less noise, more urban space

Fiscal aspects: strong motivation to register place of residence, thus increasing personal income tax



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In the beginning
there was a referendum

- Plebiscite on free PT 19-25 March, 2012
- Plebiscite **informed** the community **and involved** them in decision-making, thus locking the free PT decision politically - power shift in the Council cannot change it easily.

Result: Yes -75,5%, No - 24,5%



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Preparatory steps

- Expanding dedicated bus lanes network in 2012
- Merger of two municipal public transport companies (June 2012)
- City Council decision on free PT (September 2012, entered into force 1 January 2013)
- Implementation of new contactless card (started in 2012 September)



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Major source of funding

New residents –

registered population grew since
01.01.2012 by 10 000 persons
(2,5%)

thus increasing municipal revenues
from personal income tax

every 1000 residents bring
ca 1 million euros



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Modal shift

April 2013 compared to Nov 2012:

As a major mobility mode

usage of PT up 12,6% (total 67,6%)

cars down 9% (23%)

Walking minus 3%(12%);

bicycle minus 0,6% (0,4%)

Car traffic in the centre down by 15%

Better image of PT

New passengers on business days
– working age males.

Just few months ago PT users
were predominantly retired,
youth and working age females

On the evenings and weekends
more people go out to spend
free time and money.



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Political progress

- Regardless of the strong approval by local referendum in March 2012 the shift to FPT met strong opposition in the City Council even in the autumn 2012.
- However after successful implementation of FPT wide political consensus emerged in the Council and no party resist FPT any more.
- Even national police commissioner **Tarmo Miilits** in uniform praised FPT for lowering the traffic casualties, suggesting to consider same measure in other cities and nationwide.

International networking

With **Aubagne** (FR) and **Hasselt** (BE)

Tallinn is initiating the European Network of Free Public Transport to bring the issue in the EU agenda.

FPT should be reconized among other measures to achieve Europe2020 sustainable urban development goals.



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European Commissioners interested

Positive opinion by **Johannes Hahn**,
Commissioner for Regional Policy on 28
February 2013:

“This project certainly contributes that people change from cars to public transport, it reduces traffic jams, therefore improving environmental situation.”

Transport Commissioner **Siim Kallas** recent interview in Tallinn newspaper Green Capital (Roheline Pealinn) March 22, 2013:

“Europe keeps track of Fee Public Transport development with great interest.”

Finnish support

- Finnish minister of transport Merja Kyllönen was quoted in Helsingin Sanomat:

To grow new generation of PT users we have to undertake something more.

Testing FPT in Finnish cities would be definitely the idea of worth to try.

FPT in China

Developing contact with City of **Chengdu** (China) which is testing FPT since Oct 2012 until June 2013

Metropolis with population over 14 million provides FPT in combination with severe restriction of cars

Tallinn FPT was listed among 30 most deserving urban innovations for Guangzhou International Award. However FPT in **Guangzhou** lasted only 1 day during 2010 Asian Games.

China is very closely looking for Chengdu results and also for European experience

Free Public Transport Conference

- Summer school Capital of Free Public Transport in Tallinn University, August 22-24, 2013.
- Among speakers EU Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas and experts from China, France, Belgium, Poland.
- For local, regional, national and European level policy planners , NGO-s, researchers and lobby groups interested in the cross-relating issues of mobility, transport, environment, social cohesion, economy, budget, spatial planning.

We have a dream

Tallinn has the great ambition to become the
European Green Capital for 2018.

FPT is a brave step in this process.

Thank you !

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