

SP 2000-01

FUTURE URBAN TRANSPORT: LEARNING FROM SUCCESS AND FAILURE

CARMEN HASS-KLAU

HOST ORGANISATION: ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORT PLANNING, BRIGHTON, UK

ABSTRACT

This book considers 24 light rail systems. They include examples of both long-established and completely new light rail networks, some widely agreed to be successful, others less so. The analysis investigates the reasons for the differences in success, including operational characteristics, the demographic and social context, and the complementary transport policies in place.

“Success” is of course a multi-dimensional concept, and closely linked to the statement of objectives and aspirations. Underlying all these different considerations is a simple requirement that the system should be well used; unless a light rail system is capable of attracting a good number of passengers, it is difficult for it to contribute well to any of the broader objectives.

According to six indicators we used to measure success, seven cities emerge as being particularly impressive as models namely Freiburg, Zürich, Basel, Köln, Strasbourg, Hannover and Düsseldorf. There is also interesting and important experiences in Rouen, Calgary and Portland.

The most striking finding from our statistical analysis has been the relative importance of marketing through travel cards, city centre traffic restraint and light rail corridor density structure.

The relative unimportance of physical features related to the performance of light rail vehicles and services is perhaps surprising. Our examination also revealed an interesting connection between ample city centre car parking and poor relative performance in light rail and public transport.

