



Vision 2050 competition – March 2020

By Ryan Cogan

Time well spent...

The future of the transport system and the way it develops to 2050 will be a decisive moment for transport. A fresh perspective from the emerging generation will be vital in shaping this transport system and ensuring that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Changing attitudes and behaviours amongst this emerging generation has seen a shift in private car dependency. The development of information technology has given young people more independence in the way that they travel, but above all a greater sense of control and confidence over *how* they travel. Future policy makers should aim to exploit this cultural phenomenon and seek to provide improvements to public transport and the transition between different modes.

Young people are aware that despite the benefits that the private car may provide, particularly in rural areas, other modes have managed to bridge the gap between flexibility, comfort, reliability and speed, that the private car has previously dominated.

Additionally, this generation are well informed of the disadvantages of the private car and more aware of the impact that using this mode has on both their local and wider community. One of the disadvantages of the private car is wasted time. An increase in the value of time amongst young people, particularly the working population, is highlighted by the desire for services that meet their time-poor lifestyles and the opportunities to work away from the traditional desk.

Public transport services should build on their successes, supplying consumers with greater information and reliability when planning their journey, but now also provide a service that allows consumers to take control of the time they're spending not driving. This has contributed to the perception of time spent using public transport being much longer, as consumers feel they do not have control.

But, if consumers believe that this time can be spent efficiently or leisurely, their perception of time spent on public transport could shift to be more positive than that for the private car, as individuals may now feel restricted using private vehicles as they previously did with public transport.

Urban areas are making steady improvements all the time and are miles ahead of their rural counterparts, however these areas should be included in a forward-thinking plan, especially as high density urban areas push business and other amenities out to the rural urban fringe.

Public transport needs to be flexible and use information technology to cater to demand in rural areas, perhaps by introducing adaptable routes that increase accessibility. Other modes such as cycling need to factor in that rural users may want to use the mode for a single journey, therefore public bikes much like in cities should be provided with. Such cycling infrastructure should be supported by a platform that lets users know availability, as reliability will be key in retaining users.

Looking forward it's important to understand that the rural traveller has similar needs to their urban counterpart, the difference is the landscape in which they both operate.

Ryan Cogan, Graduate Transport Planner, WSP