Journal of Transport Geography 18 (2010) 195–196

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Transport Geography

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jtrangeo

TGRG page

Transport Geography Research Group (TGRG) committee

Kate Pangbourne (Aberdeen) was elected as TGRG Secretary at the Annual General Meeting in Manchester in succession to Jon Shaw (Plymouth). Iain Docherty (Glasgow) remains as Chair and Brian Graham (Ulster) as Treasurer.

RGS-IBG annual conference, Manchester 2009

The annual Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) Conference was held in Manchester from 26th to 28th August and TGRG sponsored three sessions on Alternative Travel Futures, Transport and City Region Regeneration, and the Geographies of the Passenger, the latter jointly with the Social and Cultural Geography Research Group. These sessions contained many stimulating papers delivered by researchers from across Europe and beyond and by specially invited practitioners in the regeneration field. The internationalisation of our TGRG sessions is an established feature of RGS-IBG conferences. A selection of papers on Alternative Travel Futures will be considered for inclusion as a Special Issue in the Journal of Transport Geography (JTG) whilst some of the individual papers from the Transport and City Region Regeneration and Geographies of the Passenger sessions will also be considered for publication in general issues of JTG.

Transport and city region regeneration field trip

The TGRG also ran a related field trip on transit-oriented development during the RGS Conference, arranged by Richard Knowles (Salford). The field trip visited a selection of eight new large scale employment and activity sites in Greater Manchester and examined their relationship to investment in a strategic network of Metrolink light rail routes. Manchester and its nine neighbouring district councils in the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) have adopted an economic development strategy aligning investment in new transport systems with employment sites of regional significance and linked to their Local Development Frameworks. From the late 1980s a series of public and/or private sector regeneration initiatives focussed mainly on Manchester city centre but included Trafford Park and the Manchester Ship Canal's disused docks (Law, 2001). The development of Metrolink light rail from Altrincham and Bury to Manchester in 1992 was the start of a network of light rail lines (Knowles, 1996).

Manchester's CBD is the largest outside London and employment has increased by a half to about 120,000 since the late 1980s. City centre resident population has grown from about 500 in the 1980s to 20,000 today and has helped to create a 24 h economy. Rail and Metrolink traffic have grown sharply and major investment is now needed to provide extra capacity. In July 2004 Government rejected a grant application to part-fund a five route expansion of the Metrolink light rail network (Knowles, 2007). A later 'U-turn' reinstated funding towards sections of three of these routes from Rochdale & Oldham, Droylsden and Chorlton to Manchester which are currently under construction and open in 2011/2012 The bid to Government in 2007/8 for a £1.5 billion Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) Grant to expand the Metrolink network and bus and rail services was conditional on the introduction of congestion charging. This TIF bid failed when a public referendum in December 2008 rejected with a 'No' vote of almost 80% the proposal for peak-period congestion charges when crossing either of two cordon rings (GMPTE, 2008). AGMA agreed in May 2009 to create a £1.5 billion Greater Manchester Transport Fund (GMTF) financed locally in the absence of any specific Government grant (GMPTE, 2009). The GMTF will finance completion of new Metrolink routes to East Didsbury and Manchester Airport, Ashton under Lyne, and through Oldham and Rochdale Town Centres and a Second City Centre Crossing in Manchester; three Cross-City Bus Routes; a £20 million investment in Park and Ride sites; and help pay for two new bypasses in Cheadle (Stockport) and Mottram (Tameside) (GMPTE, 2009).

The eight regeneration sites visited on the Field Trip were:

- GMex Metrolink station which opened in 1992 and provides a focus for extensive urban regeneration on the southern edge of Manchester's Central Business District (CBD). The surrounding area includes numerous apartment and office developments in converted mills and warehouses and new buildings. The area is dominated by the iconic Beetham Tower, containing a Hilton Hotel and up-market apartments. Its distinctive, slim stepped outline is visible for miles and is Britain's tallest building outside London. The adjacent Manchester Central (Exhibition and International Convention Centre) includes a converted railway station and new building. This has placed Manchester high in the national conference, convention and exhibition market and generates customers for an extensive range of new hotels. The nearby Bridgewater Canal Basin and a network of barge canals were at the core of Manchester's development as the world's first industrial city. After a long period of industrial decline and dereliction, impressive waterfront regeneration has recently transformed this area and its heritage buildings. MOSI (Museum of Science and Industry) is located nearby in former railway buildings and includes but underplays the world's first passenger railway station on Liverpool Road where the original station building survives from 1830. It is hard to imagine a North American city failing to fully exploit such a unique opportunity for city boosterism.
- Manchester Victoria Railway Station, the city's second major passenger railway terminal, is located on the northern edge of Manchester's CBD. Economic recession has delayed plans

doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2009.09.009

for a major retail and office-led regeneration of the station and adjacent land. However this part of the CBD has been transformed since the 1990s with the opening of Metrolink in 1992, of a 20,000 seater Indoor Arena above the rail tracks in 1996, and the adjacent new Urbis Museum in 2001. Nearby, the city's main retail area has been largely rebuilt since the devastating IRA bomb damage in 1996 and includes a new up-market shopping area (Law, 2001).

- Sportcity was developed on former industrial land about 1 mile east of the CBD for the 2002 Commonwealth Games. The centrepiece is the 48,000 seater City of Manchester Stadium, now the home of Manchester City Football Club. Other facilities include the National Squash Centre, Manchester Regional Arena, English Institute of Sport, a Tennis Centre and a large Asda/Walmart superstore which employs 800 people. The nearby national Velodrome opened in 1996 as part of a failed Olympic Games bid. Plans for a new Metrolink route were delayed by funding problems (Knowles, 2007) but it is now under construction and opens in 2012.
- Ashton Moss is a major sub-regional employment site on the A635 Ashton to Manchester corridor located in the neighbouring borough of Tameside around the M60 Manchester Orbital Motorway's Junction 23 which opened in 2000. It includes offices, warehouses, retail stores, a cinema, restaurants and hotels. Ashton Moss is adjacent to the only IKEA store in Greater Manchester and to Snipe Retail Park. Metrolink opens through here in 2013.
- Hollinwood Junction is an employment site on the A62 Oldham to Manchester corridor in the neighbouring borough of Oldham around the M60's Junction 22 which opened in 2000. It includes the headquarters of Northern Counties Housing Association and the Mirror Group Newspapers Printing Presses. Housing Units Retail store is nearby. The existing heavy rail line closed for conversion to Metrolink in October 2009 and reopens with the addition of a large Park & Ride facility in 2011.
- Central Business Park is being developed on the site of the former Monsall Hospital in Manchester on the A62 corridor 1.5 miles from the CBD. It already includes offices and a university hub and science park. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Headquarters is being relocated from Stretford to a new building which will open in 2011 with 1400 staff. A new Metrolink route opens in 2011 although the iconic station building has been ready since 2005. Metrolink was a key accessibility requirement in GMP's decision to relocate to this site.
- The largest sub-regional employment site outside Manchester's CBD is at Salford Quays (formerly Salford Docks) on the Manchester Ship Canal. It includes offices, houses and apartments, hotels, the Lowry Arts Centre and the Lowry Outlet Shopping Mall and cinema complex and is across the Ship Canal by footbridge from the Imperial War Museum North and Manchester United's football ground. Total employment at Salford Quays exceeds 10,000. A new Metrolink extension opened in 1999 to the CBD and in 2000 to Eccles.
- MediaCity UK is the latest development at Salford Quays and is owned by Peel Holdings who also own the Trafford Centre and Liverpool Airport. Representatives from Central Salford Urban Regeneration Company and Salford University explained to field trip participants that MediaCity is currently the second largest development site in Britain. It is anchored by the BBC with 2500 staff moving from London and Manchester in 2010 and includes seven TV studios and two audio studios. A new £20 million Metrolink spur and station will open in summer 2010 and was a key accessibility requirement in the BBC's decision to relocate to this site. A shuttle bus service is also planned to link MediaCity with Salford Crescent Railway Station and the A6 corridor bus services. Salford University are opening a MediaCity Campus in 2011.

The field trip demonstrated to an international group of researchers the importance of transit-oriented development and the scale of regeneration along corridors into Manchester's CBD as well as in the city centre itself.

References

GMPTE, 2008. Greater Manchester Future Transport, <www.gmfuturetransport.com>.

GMPTE, 2009. Momentum Issue 1 <www.gmpte.com>.

Knowles, R.D., 1996. Transport impacts of Greater Manchester's Metrolink light rail system. Journal of Transport Geography 4, 1–14.

Knowles, R.D., 2007. What future for light rail in the UK after Ten Year Transport Plan targets are scrapped? Transport Policy 14, 81–93.

Law, C.M., 2001. Discovering Cities: Manchester, Geographical Association, Sheffield.

Richard Knowles
School of Environment and Life Sciences,
University of Salford,
Greater Manchester M5 4WT, UK
Tel.: +44 161 295 4994; fax: +44 161 295 5015.
E-mail address: r.d.knowles@salford.ac.uk