

# thought leadership 2009

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## Technology and changing travel behaviours

London Transport Museum's Thought Leadership programme of business breakfasts and debates will continue with this second business breakfast on technology and changing travel behaviours. This event unveils the findings of a major five year research programme funded as part of the EPSRC's Sustainable Urban Environment programme, involving a consortium called 'FUTURES' (Future Urban Technologies: Undertaking Research to Enhance Sustainability). The research spans engineering, technology, environmental science and social science. Representatives at this breakfast session will be drawn at senior level from industry, government and academic institutions and industry bodies and the event will be chaired by Steven Norris.

Since the seminal report of Buchanan – 'Traffic in Towns' – in the 1960s the challenge of coping with if not solving congestion in our urban areas has persisted. Traffic volumes have increased as society's seemingly voracious appetite for individualised motorised mobility has endured. The days of building our way out of urban congestion have long passed. Increasingly we now look to fresh thinking and innovation in terms of where, when, how and indeed if we travel in order to address the traffic problem – a problem now defined not only by congestion but by carbon impacts.

New technologies are playing an increasingly important part in facilitating new means of running our transport systems as well as enabling the traveller

to make better informed travel choices and smarter travel choices. Increasingly the choice not to travel may also exist thanks to telecommunications.

This event is intended to focus upon leading edge thinking and developments in relation to how technology in tandem with travel behaviour is bringing and could bring about changes to urban transport that offer a sustainable future. It will draw upon findings from a major research initiative across several universities and a number of stakeholders in urban transport. FUTURES has given attention to three key 'actors' on the urban transport stage – systems, vehicles and people. Systems concern the transport network itself, the urban traffic control systems that manage traffic and the information systems that support travellers. Vehicles represent the manifestation of society's demand for travel and the performance of each vehicle and their collective movements affect levels of noise and air pollution. Last but not least, at the heart of urban transport are people – individual travellers whose decisions about where, when, how and how much to travel ultimately dictate the levels of demand imposed on the systems and vehicles.

Discussion at the business breakfast will be in the hands of those attending and steered by a series of key questions such as the following:

1. Are we taking full advantage of what technology has to offer in tackling urban transport, including the role of telecommunications in substituting for travel?
2. Are we at risk of presuming technology represents solutions rather than acknowledging that it facilitates solutions defined by the decisions of politicians and of the travelling public?

3. Are the challenges to progress principally technical, political or behavioural?
4. How unsustainable is urban transport economically, environmentally and socially and are we taking sufficient drastic steps to address this?
5. What specific developments hold greatest promise for better urban transport?

By means of a backdrop to the discussion a short introduction to the findings from the FUTURES research programme will be offered at the outset. FUTURES has examined what navigational support pedestrians in particular use or would benefit from in being better able to make unfamiliar journeys without relying on the car in urban areas. It has sought to gain new insights into the opportunities and challenges of liftsharing which has the potential to address the 'wastefully' underutilised passenger carrying capacity of cars. The programme has been examining vehicles and urban traffic in terms of noise and air pollution impacts. Travellers now have at their disposal a myriad of information services to support their journey planning and execution – and yet such services seem often to be overlooked in people's travel decisions. FUTURES has examined the barriers to information use. Technologies are indirectly affecting travel with their impacts on the spatial and temporal patterns of work a good example. FUTURES has been examining in-depth the phenomenon of part-day homeworking. Roadspace is a scarce resource in our urban networks and the programme has been examining innovative means of using this with a

specific focus upon the use of bus and toll lanes. A major development in recent years has been the mass market penetration of in-vehicle satellite navigation systems. FUTURES has considered in what ways this represents new opportunities for urban traffic management.

These issues are of central concern to local authorities and transport operators tasked with the efficient running of transport systems and services. However, such issues have wider implications for all businesses for which there is a dependence upon access to people, goods, services and opportunities that the transport network (and indeed telecommunications network) provides. Customers, employees and suppliers face new challenges and opportunities in how they can utilise the opportunities of technology to reshape their travel behaviours. This event provides a valuable opportunity to join with other leading thinkers to reflect upon these issues.

**Attendees should give consideration to the questions above in advance of the event and draw upon their own work to contribute to the lively discussion.**

**The breakfast will take place in London Transport Museum's Cubic foyer from 8.00–10.00 on 6 May 2009.**

At a later dinner discussion on the evening of 2 June the opportunity will be taken to focus more specifically upon why the development of the UK's transport strategy appears to be ignoring the substantial potential role of telecommunications to substitute for some travel and thus reduce pressures on our transport network while supporting economic prosperity.

Eversheds LLP is an international law firm, with specialist groups of lawyers from every discipline, experienced in advising across the transport sector – dealing with passenger and freight modes and including rail, road, aviation, airports, ports and shipping. Eversheds is delighted to be working in partnership with the London Transport Museum to establish the Thought Leadership Programme as part of the firm's engagement with and commitment to the sector and its future.

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