

Travel demand management at the London 2012 Olympic Games (London, UK)

Transport demand management for the smooth running of major events

How communication and relatively modest changes in behaviour could help make the most of the available capacity on transport networks. The case of the London Olympics.

Event: London 2012 Olympic Games

Location of the event: London

Country: UK

Implementation body: Transport for London

Level of implementation: national with focus on London

Topic: mobility management for major events – focus on information measures

Target group(s):

- spectators
- local citizens
- local businesses

Stakeholders involved:

- London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Olympic Delivery Authority
- Transport for London (TfL)
- Highways Agency
- Network Rail
- Department for Transport



INTRODUCTION

Transport is key to the success of an event such as the Olympic Games and vital for avoiding heavy disruptions to the normal functioning of a city. In the case of London, a city already characterized by extremely high travel demand, the 2012 Games presented a significant logistics challenge. A number of measures were taken, including hard (e.g. infrastructure) and soft ones (e.g. incentivizing public transport use) and travel demand management initiatives. Travel demand management was undertaken in order to deliver a travel behavioural change in businesses and regular travellers and allow the transport system to run well during the Games.

OBJECTIVES (TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, 2012A)

- Overall London 2012 Games objective: London 2012 to be the first 100 per cent public transport and walking and cycling Olympic Games.
- Travel demand management objective: provide robust and authoritative information to businesses, spectators and regular travellers to help them plan ahead and keep the system moving.

MEASURES IMPLEMENTED (TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, 2012A)

■ Spectators:

- London 2012 Spectator Journey Planner: a planner dedicated to the spectators of the Games. The planner was fed with journey patterns modelled to identify optimal routes from across London to all Games venues. Spectators were advised of routes that maximized available capacity, not necessarily the most obvious one.

■ Public:

- A nationwide publicity campaign was made to alert people to the situation during the Games including messages such as: "Cycling could be the quickest way during the Games" and "Walking part of your journey may be quicker during the Games"
- GetAheadoftheGames.com, online platform that provided:
 - Information about public transport hotspots across the UK
 - Alternative routes and options
 - An interactive tool to help people understand changes on the road network
- Public messaging: transport related messages were delivered to the public before and during the Olympic Games through a variety of channels including advertisements on the radio, press, online and outdoors, leaflets, station posters, maps, website, social media, rail station information screens, etc.

■ Businesses:

- 550 large businesses (600,000 employees) in locations affected by the Games were given direct planning support
- 3,000 businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, attended planning workshops
- A range of business planning toolkits were made available
- Presentations, events, letters and advertising were used to inform businesses and ensure they could continue to operate during the Games.

■ Freight operators:

- A freight forum, led by business, was set up to identify key issues
- A freight journey planner was created to help operators select optimal routes and avoid the busiest spots.

- **Additional information through staff and volunteers:** easy to identify staff and volunteers equipped with smartphones and tablets were located at key points of the transport network in order to assist travellers with transport information.

RESULTS (TRANSPORT FOR LONDON, 2012B)

- Travel demand management contributed to the smooth running of the London 2012 Games, with around one third of Londoners reporting a change to their weekday daily travel during the Olympic Games.
- Travel demand management during the Games proved an important experience for TfL that gathered important lessons for transport system management the following the Games:
 - Communication and relatively modest changes in behaviour could help make the most of the available capacity on transport networks
 - Travel demand management could provide benefits during planned closures of the underground metropolitan or rail network for upgrade works
 - The importance of digital and social media channels for the provision of real-time travel information and advice.