Summer 2016

The Railway Consultancy Ltd
Specialists in Planning Economics and Management

Around the World

Much change is currently occurring to Light Rail Transit Line 1 in Manila. A new PPP concession including operation and maintenance of the existing line has been let, with the contract based on achieving 20 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The monitoring of these KPIs is being carried out by staff from the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA), the Government agency who used to operate the line 1, with their findings being passed to the Department of Transport and Communications (DOTC), who adjust payments to the Concessionaire accordingly.

Unfortunately, a number of problems had arisen, which the World Bank Group and PPIAF provided assistance to the DOTC and LRTA to address. Some of the KPIs were not very well-defined, whilst it was unclear how others would be measured. Following on from our support of RTSC's urban rail benchmarking work at Imperial College, we were asked to assist in solving these problems, as part of a team led by independent consultant Robert Cochrane. The most significant task was the joint drafting of a manual to provide guidance to the LRTA monitoring staff, both in terms of detailing the processes to be carried out, and the approach to be used - for instance, how to decide whether stations are clean or not, and in what circumstances to issue the appropriate Citation and Failure notices. However, because the KPIs are included in contracts already signed, it is not possible to amend the scope of existing KPIs (or, indeed, to add new ones) without mutual agreement from all parties, which may take some time so, in addition to the manual we also submitted a range of recommendations for monitoring which would bring the process up towards world best practice standards. For instance, the contract set up a KPI on station cleaning which seems to be limited to the interiors of stations, but not the exteriors, which include pillars in the street which support the line, much of which is above ground. Delivery of a two-day workshop in Manila enabled many of these issues to be discussed face-to-face with all parties, enabling them to put forward their concerns before finalisation of the manual.

Manila Line 1 train at Balintawak

Comment

It is ironic that this version of our annual newsletter is shorter than usual, because we have been busier in the last year than for many. We have been involved in a number of high-profile and commercially-confidential projects which we are, at present, unable to share with our wider client base. But, when we can,…

In the meanwhile, we are still very much open for business (Brexit notwithstanding) and look forward to helping you with the commercial or operational planning of your railway.

Nigel G Harris

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Project News: National

Planning for Development

A Class 450 calls at Hedge End

Developers Miller Homes, Gleeson and Welbeck had submitted a planning application to Eastleigh Borough Council for a new housing estate of 680 homes directly adjacent to Hedge End station, but had had their application somewhat surprisingly turned down. They decided to appeal, and engaged a number of expert companies to support their case. One of those experts was the Railway Consultancy. We prepared evidence on the ability of the railway to accommodate the expected traffic increase, and the value the railway could create by making the development (and other local housing) more sustainable, by providing a more environmentally-friendly method of transport than the private car.

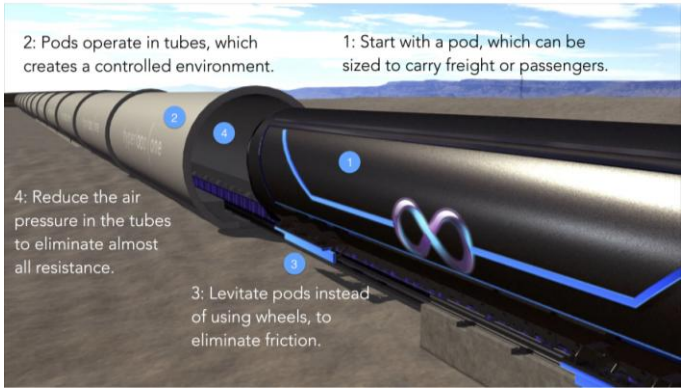
Managing Director Dr Nigel G Harris then gave this evidence in person at a Planning Inquiry held at the Hampshire 'Rosebowl' cricket ground, which is near Hedge End. At the time of writing, the planning Inspector's decision is still awaited.

Project News: International

New Technologies: Hyperloop

Hyperloop technology involves the transport of people and/or goods in a tube, using levitation and reduced air pressure, in order to achieve speeds of several hundred miles per hour. Such transportation would certainly provide competition for existing modes, including air. The concept for Hyperloop was originated by entrepreneur Elon Musk in California, and the company now developing it is Hyperloop-One; more details are available on their website, at https://hyperloop-one.com.

As it is a fixed-link system, The Railway Consultancy has been providing assistance to Hyperloop-One as it considers corridors for potential development, with work already carried out on a possible link between Sweden and Finland, and on another route in the North of England. As well as providing some operational advice, our main workstream has been in demand forecasting, although this creates some theoretical problems which we have had to solve. The use of our GCOST™ model for estimating conventional changes in demand has had to be accompanied by consideration of the expected responses to the huge time reductions which Hyperloop can bring. However, adjustments to elasticities are insufficient, so we have been supported by Dr Yaron Hollander of CTthink in the development of choice models to consider a range of market segments where major changes to personal behaviour might take place.



The basic technology (image courtesy Hyperloop-One).

For instance, if a journey of 100 miles could be undertaken in just a few minutes, it would become possible to commute easily, whilst businesses might consider travelling to meetings little different to those in the next suburb. We have also been working with partners Volterra to understand the impacts on land-use changes of such demand, and the feedback loop into more yet demand. The resulting revenues help to make the case for Hyperloop in the right corridor a compelling financial one. The Hyperloop One Global Challenge is designed to elicit the best corridors for the technology, and we will be supporting Hyperloop in their analysis of the corridors now putting themselves forward.

Consultancy

The Railway Consultancy provides services across areas such as demand forecasting, operational planning, strategy and business development; for more details see our website www.railwayconsultancy.com

Publications

“Designing and Maintaining the Urban Railway” and “An Introduction to Railway Operational Planning” have both been published recently – get your copies from www.anharris.co.uk.