

Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) / City of Cape Town (CCT)

JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2016

Final project report

The influence of transport access within the urban environment:

Investigating the impact of MyCity bus routes on tourism accommodation

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ABSTRACT

As the world becomes increasingly urbanised so too does the number of tourists to cities. Cities with extensive, well-functioning intra-urban public transport offerings are believed to be more attractive to tourists. The need to provide public services for tourists and enhance their modal shift, from cars to public transports, also results from the growing concern around congestion, pollution and urban sprawling in most cities. Scholars have brought into view the link between tourists and public transport since the turn of the century. However, very few such studies has a focus particularly on intra-urban mobilities and these studies tended to be located in developed countries. This study focuses specifically on intra-urban mobility in a developing world context. A mixed-methods approach is used to examine the impact that the MyCiti Integrated Rapid Transit system has on tourism mobilities in Cape Town, South Africa. The importance of an efficient public transport system in Cape Town has been on the policy agenda since the early 1990s. The Energy and Climate Action Plan in 2010 proclaimed to develop a more sustainable transport system. Accordingly, the objective of the BRT is not so much to offer an alternative to the low-income commuters depending on the public transport services as to enhance the modal shift of the drivers. Except for the line connecting the airport to the CBD and the stadium implemented for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the network unfolded firstly in the northern part of Cape Town in 2011 as part of the Phase 1, where mostly middle-income and upper-income people live and where the main axis is regularly congested. It is also a very popular tourist area, hence the interplay between tourism and transport and how this can be strengthened warranted further investigation. BRT stops were therefore designed in order to facilitate the drivers' intermodality with parking bays nearby and access to non-motorised transports. The choice of this corridor also resulted in the overall urban restructuring of the urban space through the development of mix land-use. Since 2011 the network has been substantially developed at the neighbourhood scale – mainly through the implementation of numerous feeder lines. The Atlantic shores are also connected to the network, reaching Hout Bay for instance since 2014. The network development is now in Phase 2A, since the completion of the trunk routes connecting the townships of Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha to the CBD since 2014. These two areas gather an important part of the public transport users in Cape Town and still do not benefit from feeder services. The following steps regarding Phase2 will concern the connection of Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha – also known as the Flats – to the suburbs of Claremont and Wynberg – also known as the Southern Suburbs. Litigations about the eviction of residents in Wynberg along what was already identified as a main route for the development of MyCiti entailed delays. Phase 3 will see the expansion of MyCiti from the Southern Suburbs towards the north-east (Bellville) and also towards the north. Eventually in Phase 4, the MyCiti network will connect Cape Town to Stellenbosch while the line to Khayelitsha will be extended towards Somerset West. However these achievements are subjects to the financial viability of the current service, which might imply an ever longer period to implement the whole system. Not all these areas are necessarily tourism hotspots.

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS / QUESTIONS

It was the main aim of the study to investigate the effect of MyCiti bus routes on the tourism accommodation sector outside the city centre. To find answers for this aim, there were six objectives:

- i) A literature review on the international experience of the linkages between city-wide transport networks and the tourism accommodation sector was conducted
- ii) All tourism accommodation establishments outside the city core were mapped for the study area and overlaid with the MyCity bus routes and bus stop points in order to get a spatial understanding of the nature and extent of tourism infrastructure i.r.t. public transport infrastructure
- iii) A random sample survey among tourism accommodation establishment owners that are located within the catchment area of the bus routes was conducted to determine how the bus routes have made their establishments more accessible and affordable for short term stay guest

- iv) A survey among as many possible tourists staying at non-core area accommodation establishments was conducted to investigate how MyCiti bus impacted on their decisions to stay at the specific place and how and to what extent they use the bus service
- v) Indepth interviews with MyCiti and transport planners in CoCT were held on issues around feasibility of the routes and potential impacts and linkages to the tourism accommodation sector

The above had to culminate in either a policy brief statement for CoCT on the potential of MyCiti as transport infrastructure to play a role in advancing tourism or inform the Tourism Development department about the value of the BRT for tourism.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

A mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to conduct the research and analyse the data.

Quantitative data was collected on the frequency of daily scheduled MyCiti bus trips on routes in the study area. This data was obtained from the MyCiti website and mapped using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The mapped routes were complemented by accommodation establishment location data from the City of Cape Town (CoCT).

The accommodation data was received from CoCT's Tourism Department in an Excel spreadsheet and was populated with establishments who were members of Cape Town Tourism. A groundtruthing exercise was launched in November 2016 to determine whether the establishments in the CoCT database were still operational. It was found that 54 establishments ceased operations as tourist accommodation establishments. Subsequently, the CoCT database was updated accordingly with not only the deletion of non-operators but the addition of new establishments. The addition of new tourist accommodation establishments was done through online searches and a field survey. The final database of 201 verified accommodation establishments in the study area consists of members and non-members of Cape Town Tourism and formed the bedrock on which the qualitative data was gathered.

Qualitative data was collected through self- and person-administered surveys in the form of a structured questionnaire comprising closed- and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed in collaboration with the CoCT partners. The targeted populations were the tourists and the owners/managers of accommodation establishments. Initially the questionnaires for the tourists were placed at the check-in desks of 63 accommodation establishments in the study area during December 2016 for tourists to complete. However, upon the collection of these questionnaires in January 2017 it was found that the response rate was too low to draw valid and reliable conclusions and inferences for the research. Consequently, person-administered surveys of tourists who were lodging at accommodation establishments in the study area were conducted over a three-week period during February and March 2017. The survey questions were centred on the tourist activities and public transport choices, in addition to demographic information about the respondents. In the end a total of 244 questionnaires were completed.

In addition to the tourist's survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with owners or managers of 75 accommodation establishments. In addition to the information about the respondent, the survey instrument recorded details of the establishment, information of the transport habits of guests, the influence of public transport on establishment location, and a request for recommendations regarding information accessibility for tourists about public transport and their opinion about the impact in the study area following the introduction of the MyCiti. The adoption of a mixed-methods approach allowed for a locational analysis and an analysis of the transport behaviours and opinions of the respondents.

The findings of the study were presented at the annual CoCT's Tourism Department (Dr Theuns Vivian) research conference (organized by the CoCT partner in this CHEC project). Discussions with the Transport Department (Leigh Stolworthy) has been ongoing.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION

Tourist accommodation establishment locations in relation to MyCiti routes were explored with a structured-questionnaire survey adding the voice of the tourist to the investigation, as well as the owners/managers of tourism establishments. The subsequent analysis reveals that the MyCiti system does not cater specifically for the requirements of tourists and a number of structural impediments are identified. Tourist respondents reported that access to the MyCiti did not inform their locational choice of accommodation and the majority did not consider using the service in spite of it being marketed by accommodation establishments. The lack of communication from the City of Cape Town limited the ability of the accommodations' owners and managers to market it properly to the tourists, impeding therefore the access to information for the latter. The majority of respondents from accommodation establishments reported that the introduction of the MyCiti in the study area has not contributed to increased occupancy rates. In spite of the findings, there remains opportunities for the MyCiti to be used more extensively by tourists through greater marketing, online visibility and other initiatives. This is even more important with the service being extended to other parts of Cape Town in the future.

The main finding of the study is that the influence of MyCiti on the tourists' decisions regarding accommodation and use of transport is minimal. It raises different observations and interpretations:

- The tourists' behaviour partly fits with the trends identified in other countries: younger people are more likely to use public transports, so as people staying longer in one place. The use of public transport at home also determines the decisions made at destination; in this regard, the few domestic tourists using or considering to use MyCiti also corresponds with this observation, as public transport is not popular in South Africa.
- The limitation of public transport might be linked with the specificity of Cape Town as being a place of both urban and natural tourism. The possibility to reach different places and remote natural places only accessible by car from the City already influenced the tourists' decision to use private vehicles.
- Other findings are also more specific to the context of Cape Town as a city of the global South. Firstly, public transport in South Africa remain mostly a commuters' service. Therefore MyCiti was designed to provide such a service in priority and even though it is more visible than the inherited transport services, it is not providing a universal service. However, the difficulties identified by the tourists and the accommodation owners and managers are mostly the same as the impediments experienced by commuters, such as the waiting time on the feeder routes. The tourists benefiting from a modal choice that commuters do not have, they are easily diverted from using the service.
- More marketing around the safety provided in MyCiti could be expressed, as it is an important concern for international tourists.
- The lack of communication underlined by the accommodation owners and managers might be representative of the absence of coordination in the City of Cape Town and its different departments, mostly between the tourism department and the transport authority. This point however is stressed in numerous papers dealing with tourists' mobilities and is not specific to Cape Town. However, MyCiti being the only public transport easily accessible for tourists, more efforts could be made. (Especially as the tourist market represents a possible source of revenue – also underlined in the literature – and MyCiti is a very expensive and highly subsidised network plus the quality of public transport influences the perception of the destination by tourists, and tourism has been used as an economic driver in Cape Town).
- More generally, the relative inadequacy of MyCiti for tourist use is representative of the difficulty to provide universal services in cities of the Global South. Public transport services are orientated towards the commuter market, and the socio-economic segmentation already existing between the different public transport modes themselves diminishes the possibilities to cater for a niche market such as the tourist ones. At the moment, these mobilities tend to be marginalised in a context of local socio-economic pressures, even though they might have a growing impact environmental-wise.

This study afforded us the opportunity to investigate an aspect of tourism-transport nexus which has not been done before in a South African context. A follow-up study would be valuable to

investigate the tourists' use of the MyCiti along the Atlantic Seaboard and Hout Bay. This may potentially yield different results from the Blouberg area and would inform key roleplayers to think differently about public transport systems and tourism.

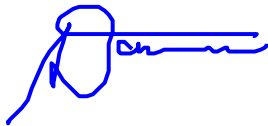
The lack of marketing among tourism establishments has been highlighted by the study and has been noted by the CoCT Tourism Department as a key intervention for them to address.

BUDGET

See attached financial statement.

A total of R9 340 was not yet used from the R50 000 grant. Two items are still outstanding (1) a final presentation/workshop – although the findings have already been presented at the annual CoCT Tourism Department's research conference is it our intention to make the findings also available nationally at an academic platform. For this we are arranging a special session on tourism development at the Society of SA Geographers' conference due to take place in 2018 in Bloemfontein –so the outstanding amount will be used for that. (2) The paper has also not been language edited – that is due to be submitted to Dr de Necker for editing soon.

Project Lead Researcher's signature



Prof R Donaldson

Date

23/9/2016