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The urban destination: walking and tourism

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Abstract

Walking and tourism in cities has not an important aspect of tourism development. This is hardly surprising. Most tourism studies focus on large projects featuring air travel, highway access and car parking. Thus, it is firstly important to establish why walking is key within the tourism system. It is the missing ingredient, which enables integration in terms of the journey, or whilst at the destination-without walking there is only virtual tourism. With regard to the latter, walking is often the sole form of transport suitable for a multiplicity of short trips to the beach, bars and restaurant. Regardless of this, walking and other forms of non-motorised transport tend to be excluded in discussion of tourism policy (Page, 2005). At the destination, developers clearly provide for walking but this tends to be on an enclave basis in order to facilitate a higher density of visitors, which can be directed, slowed and encouraged to spend at transport terminals, shopping centres, and visitor attractions.

This approach ignores the need for open spaces and walking routes, where people can walk or dwell; the element of city life which is crucially important in retaining an appeal to the visitor and resident. Studies report a continued increase in walking for leisure but this is in relation to an overall background of decline in walking trips in cities so there is reason to be concerned (Tolley, Lumsdon and Bickerstaff, 2000).

This casual recreational activity is best described as walking for pleasure. In this context, walking enhances the tourist experience by allowing interpretation of the built

environment and public spaces at close proximity and by providing opportunities to share cultural and social dimensions in a way that other forms of transport cannot readily facilitate. Thus, walking becomes an integral part of visiting the city. In order to facilitate this experience the tourism planner seeks to present or interpret dimensions of the destination such a historic theme, a musical or gastronomic experience, local cultural attributes or a similar aspect which might be of interest to the visitor.

Thus, when planning tourism and transport at a destination it is important to integrate walking for tourists in the process. The paper discusses four strategic dimensions which are key to this:

- (1) Walking Routes as a means of travel reduction
- (2) Walking Routes and open spaces as a tourism experience
- (3) Walking as part of image development
- (4) Monitoring and tourist impact

References

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Tolley, R., Lumsdon, L. and Bickerstaff, K. (2001) The future of walking in Europe: a Delphi project to identify expert opinion on future walking scenarios, *Transport Policy*, 8, 307-315

Biography

B.Sc (Econ) Hons, London University
M.Sc Transport Operations and Planning, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education), Bristol University
PhD by publication, Staffordshire University

Membership of Professional Bodies

Mr. Lumsdon received the Membership Award of Tourism Society, is also member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing [Diploma award] and of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport.

His main research areas focus on the relationship between transport and tourism. The direction of the work, in the first instance, has been towards providing a definition and critical analysis of tourism transport. This has been within the context of the visitor experience rather than simply referring to tourism transport as being a means of travelling from originating zones to destinations. The research embraces all forms of transport but in particular, there has been a focus on the planning, development and marketing of trails for non-motorised transport such as walking and cycling. He has also been involved in research in tourism marketing and tourism development in Latin America.

Recent Publications

Les has published over 30 refereed articles in journals and conferences proceedings. A selection of the main publications follows:

LUMSDON, L., 1996. Evaluating the National Cycle Network .The Environmental Papers Series, 1(2), 2-10.

TOLLEY, R.S. and L.LUMSDON, 1999. Techniques for planning local networks: Developing a walking strategy, World Transport Policy and Practice, 5(1), 17-23.

LUMSDON, L. and J. MITCHELL, 1999. Walking, Transport and Health: Do we have the right prescription? Health Promotion International. 14(3), 271-279.

LUMSDON, L., 2000. Investigating the needs of the recreational cyclist: the experience of the Peak District National Park. Transport Planning Review, 71(3), 379-389.

LUMSDON, L., 2001. Transport and tourism: a sustainable tourism development model. Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 8(4), 1-17.

DOWNWARD, P.M. and L.LUMSDON, 2001. The development of recreational cycle routes; An evaluation of user needs. Managing Leisure 6(1), 50-60.

LUMSDON, L., and R.S.TOLLEY, 2001. The National Cycling Strategy in the UK: to what extent have local authorities adopted its model approach? Journal of Transport Geography 9(4), 293-307.

TOLLEY R.S., L. LUMSDON and K. BICKERSTAFF, 2001. The future of walking: A delphi exercise. Transport Policy, 4(1), 301-315.