

AUDIO CHRONICLES

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Return of the Tramways, what have the results been?

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Considered virtually obsolete at the end of the 1960s, tramways are now being introduced in most of France's major cities. What have the consequences been of this revival in popularity upon transport modes?

The author

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Transcription translated into English

In 2011, 2012 and 2013, a tramway has either been opened – or is due to be opened – at Angers, Dijon, Le Havre, Mulhouse and Tours. Despite the somewhat rash predictions made at the end of the 1960s that this form of transport was on the verge of extinction, a process that started with the reintroduction of trams in Nantes and Grenoble is continuing apace. Today, almost no major French city is without a tram system – or plans to introduce one. Tramways “French-style” have been comprehensive urban projects that involve reconfiguring public spaces and, more broadly, a city’s overall urban development.

That said, what’s been the effect of citizens’ use of their urban public transport network? Not only in terms of the usage itself, but also in the decision to make certain journeys by public transport instead of a privately-owned car?

Given the age of the first tramways to be revived, it’s possible now to examine those effects over time: and the results show an increase in public transport usage that would

...over time, and the results show an increase in public transport usage that would have been impossible by simply improving the bus services. On average, the number of customers using the network increases by 30% over the two years following the introduction of a tram system. Its effect on the split between modes of transport is more difficult to identify: cities have developed in a way that supports car usage, a phenomenon that is only offset to a limited extent by park-and-ride schemes and joint ticketing for parking and public transport. However, the latest studies on journey habits have shown a marked fall in the use of the car for journeys in urban areas, whereas the figures for public transport have either remained stable or increased, albeit often in modest proportions. However, it's been a fairly remarkable reversal of the trend since the 2000s, one that's occurred in an overall context of a reduction in geographic (population) density and economic and social desynchronization.

Keywords : History of mobilities, Planning, Public Policy, Collective transport, Sustainable development, Service users



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