

How To Eliminate Congestion on Third Mainland Bridge (2)

This is a follow up article to a first article published on the above subject on 5th October 2010. A version of which can be accessed online at the following web address: <http://www.punchontheweb.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art201010051162423>. In the first article, the use of Travel Demand Management (TDM) techniques as a congestion mitigation tool on Third Mainland Bridge (TMB) was introduced. Specifically, the article highlights the role that organizations located on the Island can play to ensure a reduced peak hour travel demand on TMB. TDM approaches such as the introduction of flexible working arrangements and staggered opening and closing times were recommended for implementation by these Island based organizations. If implemented, the effect of mass daily transit to and exit from the Island at fixed time periods which is an obvious contributor to the traffic problems on TMB could be countered. Also in the first article, other TDM approaches such as the implementation of car sharing/car pooling schemes and the introduction of a benefit and reward system to encourage more staff to share their ride with others who travel similar route to work were proposed. By implementing these recommendations, organizations with business interests on the Island would be contributing positively to the environment and lifestyle of their workers while also helping to reduce congestion on TMB. In today's article, more TDM recommendations are presented to help combat this wicked congestion problem on TMB.

One TDM measure that is probably the most effective for eliminating traffic bottlenecks is the provision of car parks and ensuring their effective use by car owners. Since cars parked either intentionally or otherwise such that they obstruct the path of other vehicles could easily become a congestion seed point, creating dedicated spaces for parking cars should be desirable. And as an additional requirement to get the best result, car parks located for this purpose must also offer bus shuttle services to and fro the Island. These bus shuttle (Park & Ride) services should be efficient, operate frequently, be fairly priced and be of suitable comfort standard to majority of car owners in order to maximize patronage. More so, to ensure a positive effect on traffic congestion, car parks should be located at entry points to the most congested areas. An example of a good location for a major car park would be at areas closer to TMB's entry point from the mainland. As more people embrace the use of these car parks and associated Park & Ride services on a daily basis, traffic levels on TMB can only experience a downward trend.

Perhaps the most striking travel demand management approach is modal shift. That is, by refocusing on and developing other modes of transport such as the use of the water ways and rail. In Lagos, most of the businesses and commercial interests are located on the Island while the majority of the population live on the mainland. It logically should follow that a good percentage of daily commuter journeys from the mainland to the Island and vice versa ought to be based on water transport. We however know from current situation on ground that this is not so. Other major cities around water such as New York, Hong Kong and Rotterdam have capitalized on this resource for years and there is no reason why Lagos shouldn't as well. The time is now for ongoing efforts by the current Lagos state administration to develop the waterways to start producing visible results. At the moment, the players in Lagos water ways are too few and are not big enough to make meaningful impact on lessening the reliance on road based transport or reducing traffic congestion. The call is out for bigger, more ambitious, private sector

lead water transport undertakings that can project water based transport into the mainstream with adequate support and concessions provided by the Lagos state government.

Above all, to ensure the success of Travel Demand Management approaches in Lagos, the majority of the commuting public not only need to subscribe unreservedly to the idea but they must also be actively involved. This could be quite tricky and challenging as it involves some commuters having to change their orientation about transportation and some others giving up a travel style they have adhered to for years. One way by which the government has helped to facilitate the rapid adoption of TDM approaches among the commuting public in other countries is by promoting *smarter choice* initiative. The whole idea behind *smarter choice* initiative is to create conditions that would cause car owners to seriously consider the most suitable journey option to the Island at all times. For example lone driving to the Island could be discouraged in favour of more sustainable options by introducing a daily congestion charge for all vehicles driving to the Island. Such charges must be appropriately and strategically determined such that the decision to either subscribe to a Park & Ride service, to car share or use an alternative travel means such as the BRT or a staff bus when weighed against the convenience of lone driving and paying the higher daily congestion charge and associated Island parking fees should be tilted in favour of one of the more sustainable travel options; the *smarter choice*. Should such economic measures be considered for implementation in Lagos, it should be backed up with superb enforcement and revenue collection strategies to ensure maximum compliance and prosecution of offenders. On the issue of revenue collection and management, the use of technology can completely eliminate the manual handling of cash which has always been a general cause of concern in Nigeria. The prepaid revenue model seems to have worked well for Nigeria's telecom industry and this model is strongly advised should congestion/car park charges be introduced at any time anywhere in the country.

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