

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: 2 (1988-1990)
Heft: 10

Artikel: Observations on Zurich transport
Autor: Pike, Alan
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-855332>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 01.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

OBSERVATIONS ON ZURICH TRANSPORT

by Alan Pike

The Swiss general public and their administrators must surely be more intelligent than their British counterparts – with some notable exceptions who perhaps took note of what people did outside these islands. Zurich has a population of over half a million and surrounding residential areas bring the total catchment area for transport to over three quarters of a million.

Referenda in 1962 and 1973 rejected expensive tram subway and U-bahn proposals but in 1977 gave approval to a scheme which managed existing space in the urban area to better effect at far less cost. The existing road surface was re-allocated in favour of trams, buses, trolleybuses, cyclists and pedestrians. The use of private cars in the city centre is restricted to the limited road and parking space remaining.

There is now a 120 km. tram network, much of which is segregated from other traffic, while some bus and trolleybus routes have sections of reserved lanes. Two developments help to make the trams speedy and efficient. A central computer monitors the position of trams within 10 metres and instructions can be issued to speed up or slow down to even out the loading by avoiding bunching. This is aided by control of the highway traffic lights so that trams are not slowed at traffic junctions.

The overall result is that with the investment of only SFr 250 million (about £100 million) over 13 years and by the controls previously mentioned, the capacity created approaches that of the new S-bahn which, of course, has a wider scope but with a similar objective.

One of the most significant claims is that the road transport management scheme is 20 times more effective economically than the local motorways. Another apparent benefit is that local taxation has been kept low whilst land values and economic activity has risen.

I know of a top Swiss executive who goes to work on a bus; in Zurich they travel by tram.

eisenbahn-zeitschrift

MODELL VORBILO

THE TOP RAILWAY MAGAZINE FROM SWITZERLAND

- Published 10 times a year.
- Each issue covers prototype and model railway subjects in Switzerland and beyond.
- Extensively illustrated with high quality colour and black/white photographs.

One year subscription £42.00 *overseas* £45.00. Specimen copy £4.30 *overseas* £4.60.
(Regret that society discount on magazines has been withdrawn).

Sole UK distributor:

Robert Spark Railway Literature, Trafton, Evelyn Way, Cobham, Surrey KT11 2SJ