

# Growing the Railways

## a Manifesto to move us forward

Endorsed by ACORP, AMICUS, The Council for National Parks, CTC, Friends of the Earth, Greater Manchester Centre Voluntary Organisation, Help the Aged, The National Council of Women of Great Britain, PTEG, Railfuture, The Railway Forum, The Ramblers, RICS, RMT, Scope, SERA, Stagecoach Group, TCPA, TSSA, TUC, Women's Design Service



## We need the railways

Britain's railways are now more important than at any period in the last 50 years. Rail underpins the prosperity and quality of life of most Britons, even those who don't use it every day. But parts of the network are already at capacity and desperately need expanding; other parts will soon reach capacity as demand for rail use continues to rise. In the next year the Government's new Rail Group will produce a strategy for the railways. This Manifesto is intended to influence the contents of that

strategy, ensuring that capacity on the railways expands to meet existing and new demand, without necessarily requiring extra public funding.

Passenger journeys on Britain's railways last year exceeded one billion, the highest since 1959, and train operators estimate that demand for rail travel will grow by 66 per cent over the next 20 years. Freight moved in 2004-05 was 20.66 billion net tonne kilometres, a level of traffic that has not been seen on the rail network for over 20 years.

Rail-freight also keeps the lights on for us in terms of electric power generation. Plus, some 85 per cent of aggregates used for construction in London go by rail and, nationally, a fifth of all building materials are delivered by rail.

Yet, despite the obvious demand for rail travel and the solutions it can bring to transport problems, there are no major plans to expand railways; indeed closures and cuts are on the agenda. Meanwhile, the Government has announced plans to expand air and road transport capacity instead.



# Why we need to go

We need the railways to expand and cater for more people and goods, for many reasons.

## 1 To relieve road congestion

Road congestion is growing, and building enough roads to cope is not feasible. Government forecasts predict that highway congestion will worsen by up to 37 per cent between 2000 and 2010, and an RAC

Foundation study suggests that even a road-building programme 50 per cent larger than that planned in the Government's Ten Year Plan would not contain congestion, and would create traffic flows in towns beyond road capacity.

To tackle this, the Government is proposing road user charging, with trials due to start as soon as 2010. But for road user charging to be effective, more rail capacity must be available so that more commuters travelling in peak time can choose public transport. Otherwise, they will add to overcrowding on existing trains or be forced to keep driving.

In urban areas particularly, rail has to be part of the solution to congestion; it can cater for large flows and has a reserved track into city centres. Cities like Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Nottingham, and smaller towns, need upgraded rail services to continue to thrive.

## 2 To serve new developments

The Government's Sustainable Communities Plan envisages 200,000 new homes in the South-east. Highways Agency studies show that there is no road capacity to cater for these new developments, and existing rail services are inadequate or overcrowded. Sixty per cent more households are planned for Cambridge, but there are no current plans to expand capacity between Cambridge and London, or reopen services to Milton Keynes and Oxford. New developments also draw in more freight, so planning to service these centres by rail, not road, is crucial. Unless rail capacity is improved in these areas, overcrowding will increase and commuters will be driven onto overcrowded roads – undermining the Government's commitment to "sustainable" communities.

## 3 To support regeneration and social inclusion

The Government also plans to regenerate run-down urban areas, especially with the Northern Way strategy. The three Regional Development Agencies for the North of England see good rail links between and within cities as critical to this regeneration. However, there are no plans for investment in Northern Rail services – studies have even been commissioned to look at reductions – and the Government has frozen or rejected plans for tram schemes in a number of northern cities. Public transport is often the only way to travel for many disabled, elderly, young people and people on low incomes. Railways also have an important role to play in reducing social exclusion in rural areas and could do more if developed.

## 4 To boost the economy

Without a growing railway network, businesses will face increasing difficulty getting their employees to work or to meet customers. If average commuting times of rail commuters in London, the South-east and UK urban centres were to double, it would cost the economy £15 billion annually. Tourist areas and attractions, already choked with traffic, increasingly want to encourage people to travel by rail and public transport rather than by car. Branch lines can help to sustain and boost rural economies, especially where they support journeys for recreation and tourism. Service patterns need to encourage more usage and maintain economic lifelines.

Rail also, importantly, supports the development of our ports – comprising 25 per cent of the traffic from the main UK container terminals. Ports would like to increase the proportion of rail traffic through their terminals but are restricted by the rail network. Rail carries not only bulk goods like coal and stone, but also consumer goods like bottled water, fridges, and overnight parcels. It needs extra capacity, long-term contracts, road-rail terminals and start-up funding to meet the initial costs of switching goods to rail.



# grow the railways...



## 5 To protect the environment

Rail makes a vital contribution to protecting the environment and helping the Government to meet its commitments to improving air quality and tackling climate change. Investment in new technologies could further increase the environmental advantages of the railways. Table 1 illustrates how polluting plane and car travel are compared with rail. Table 2 shows the significant reduction in polluting emissions that rail-freight can make compared with HGVs. Rail also uses land efficiently and can promote sustainable development.

**Table 1: CO<sub>2</sub> outputs per mode of passenger transport**

Mode	CO <sub>2</sub> produced London to Edinburgh	CO <sub>2</sub> produced London to Bristol
Rail	11.9	10.6
Car*	71	21.3
Plane	96.4	

Figures show average emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger kilometre  
 \* Car emissions are based on loading of 1.56 people per car  
 Source: Department for Transport/National Atmospheric Emission Inventory 2004

**Table 2: Freight pollution per mode of transport**

Mode	PM10	CO	NO <sub>x</sub>	SO <sub>2</sub>	VOC
Rail	0.004	0.032	0.31	0.016	0.021
HGV	0.048	0.33	1.74	0.005	0.15

Figures show emissions in grammes per tonne-kilometre  
 PM10 particulate matter of less than 10 microns  
 CO carbon monoxide  
 NO<sub>x</sub> oxides of nitrogen  
 SO<sub>2</sub> sulphur dioxide  
 VOC volatile organic compounds  
 HGV heavy goods vehicle

Source: Strategic Rail Authority paper for Institute of Mechanical Engineering conference 2005

## 6 To help transport safety

Overall, travel by rail is at least nine times safer than by car, per passenger mile. Rail travel eradicates many of the threats and dangers on the road, such as inappropriate driving and speeding, which can lead to collisions and fatalities. In 2003, not a single passenger was killed in rail accidents, yet 3508 people were killed on the roads, and there were 28,674 accidents involving HGVs and LGVs.



## If the railways don't grow...

Unless action is taken, rail capacity will soon hit the buffers. Without extra capacity, operators have made clear that fares will be increased, with severe impacts for the environment and the economy – driving people onto already overcrowded roads. Most importantly, opportunities will be lost to un-jam our cities, reduce impacts of new development and reduce social exclusion.



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# Checklist to ensure the future of rail

Transport 2000 and supporters of this Manifesto call on Government to include the following measures in its strategy for the railways:

## 1 Reduction of costs

The Government is already investing significantly in rail, but at present this is mostly about renewing what is already there; very little is being spent on new capacity. This Manifesto does not call for extra public funding at this time. Instead, **Government should ensure that the money already being spent is used more efficiently** by bringing unit costs down. Network Rail is already committed to bringing down overall costs by 30 per cent; further falls across the industry are needed so that unit costs, especially for additions to infrastructure such as longer/new platforms and extra lines, are comparable with international averages.

The means to achieve this include greater transparency of rail costs, better procurement (standardising components), better planning and management of works. Major projects such as Crossrail and a new North-South high speed line should be treated separately, as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link has been.

## 2 Proper, long-term planning

The railways need a **long-term investment planning framework**. This would bring costs down, encourage investment from outside parties, give users and others confidence in the future of rail, and provide a framework for other spatial planning, such as ensuring that new housing and commercial developments, and ports are well served by rail from the start. This framework should feed into shorter term decisions on investment, franchising and track access contracts for freight operators, and be linked to wider transport policy, for example on road charging. Local authorities should apply spatial planning in order to plan, protect and promote rail. They should use Planning Policy Guidance 13 to make the case for protecting rail alignments and transport land, and input into Regional Planning Strategies and Route Utilisation Strategies.

## 3 Promotion of partnerships

Within this planning framework, **the Government should promote partnerships between the rail industry and other interests**, such as councils, developers, employers, trade unions, tourism bodies and development agencies, to improve the railway network locally, without neglecting safety standards or staff training. This partnership approach is already being applied on community railways and by some local authorities, and has succeeded in levering in significant extra funding from other sources, reflecting the wider benefits of local rail improvement projects. The Government is already considering new funding regimes, for example through a form of enhanced land value tax, which could be applied to the railways, especially in growth/regeneration areas.

## 4 Fair analysis

Research for Transport 2000 suggests that current appraisal of rail projects does not include the full benefits while inflating likely costs. **The Government should review its appraisal methods** so that rail and road projects and any rail closures are assessed on the same basis, and include the full benefits of rail, including reductions in congestion, environmental damage, and increased economic and quality of life benefits. Risk assessment should be used to make forecast costs realistic.

## 5 A more integrated transport network

**The railways should be integrated with other transport modes** to promote seamless and attractive door-to-door travel. This means a greater emphasis on information, interchanges, accessibility and intelligent fares, by introducing, for example, a national railcard and regional travelcards free from competition rules, joint bus/rail

tickets, measures to integrate cycling and rail (like cycle parking and on-board cycle carriage facilities), and the development of smartcards for bus and rail. Such schemes would particularly benefit those on low incomes, people with disabilities and socially excluded groups.

## 6 Investment and promotion

With this framework in place, **the Government should plan for an expanding railway network**. It should actively promote its use for passengers and freight as a core element of its response to congestion and climate change, and as part of its sustainable communities plan. Money saved through greater efficiency could be invested in new passenger and freight services and fully accessible stations to serve new developments and un-jam pinch points on the network. This investment should maximise the value of the railways, particularly for local travel as well as long distance, and should make rail the centre of local transport planning.

## Conclusion

The UK needs a growing and successful railway network. The challenges set by growing road congestion, the demand for sustainable communities and urban regeneration, and the need to protect the environment whilst continuing to transport people and goods, require a strategy for the railways that focuses on expanding rail capacity. In the longer term, new high-speed lines may be needed; in the short term, we need to see plans to lengthen platforms and trains, put in extra lines and signals and build new stations and freight terminals to serve new and growing markets. **Transport 2000 and supporters of this Manifesto call on Government to consider and include all these measures in its strategy for rail.**

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Written by Meera Rambissoon

Published by Transport 2000 Ltd (Registered Company No. 1512347), The Impact Centre, 12-18 Hoxton Street, London N1 6NG

Telephone: 020 7613 0743  
Fax: 020 7613 5280  
E-mail: meera.rambissoon@transport2000.org.uk  
Website: www.transport2000.org.uk

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