



Designing sustainable tourism mobility services: Insights from customer experiences



Kirsikka Kaipainen, Tampere University



Sustainable Tourism Mobility Action Plans & Building sustainable tourism mobility services

How are our service trials placed in the big picture?

Findings from an interview study with destinations: From an idea to a trial to a sustained service

THE TOOLS

1. The process of building an action plan

- Defining required actions and services need to be accompanied with workshops that bring essential operators and stakeholders together

2. Trials and pilots

- Concrete trials and pilots combined with gathering feedback from actual customers create a firmer foundation for building viable service solutions

3. The sustainable tourism mobility action plan

- Serves as a “backbone” for mobility development and as a tool for communicating with potential partners and stakeholders

HOW TO KEEP GOING

1. Ensure to stay in touch

- Workshops created a basis for collaboration that can be maintained by e.g. forming a platform to keep track of progress, goals and impact

2. Test the service and learn from it

- Find new ways or modify the old ones to access the customer experience as your services evolve – collecting feedback is important

3. Commit and convince

- Include essential parts of the plan to other tools and processes used in the organisation – use the work to convince potential partners



"Excellent service,
have been waiting for such for years now!"

Outdoor Express: Utilization & feedback

- In summer 2022, about 380 passengers on four weekends
 - Utilization rate on average 84% (42/50 seats sold per bus)
 - Possibility to stay overnight was appreciated a lot
 - Highly positive feedback, "Really pleasant experience"; "Please make the routes permanent on all weekends";
- In summer 2023:
 - 46% of passengers were repeat customers, had used Outdoor Express before according to feedback
 - Positive feedback also from entrepreneurs at destinations: "We are more than satisfied [...] The passengers have been downright happy at times"; "Passengers have left a lot of money at the cafe and been nice"

Passenger comparison 2022 & 2023 (preliminary)

	2022 summer (n=127)	2023 summer (n=84)
Did not own a car	61%	71%
Largest age groups	25-34 (34%) and 35-44 (23%)	25-34 (26%) and 35-44 (40%)
From outside Pirkanmaa	9%	6%
"Price is too high"	4%	5%
"I'd use OE again"	97%	95%

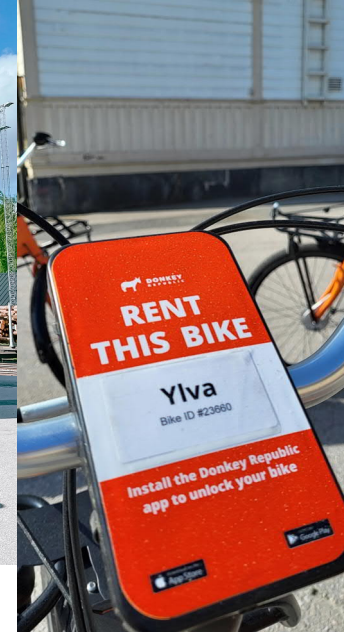
"Wonderful concept, hope it will continue!"

Outdoor Express: Success factors

1. Simple concept and branding, coordinated communication
2. Affordable pricing
3. High-quality bus (e.g. good air conditioning)
4. The driver's knowledge and friendly disposition
5. Serves a real need – access to nature without a car

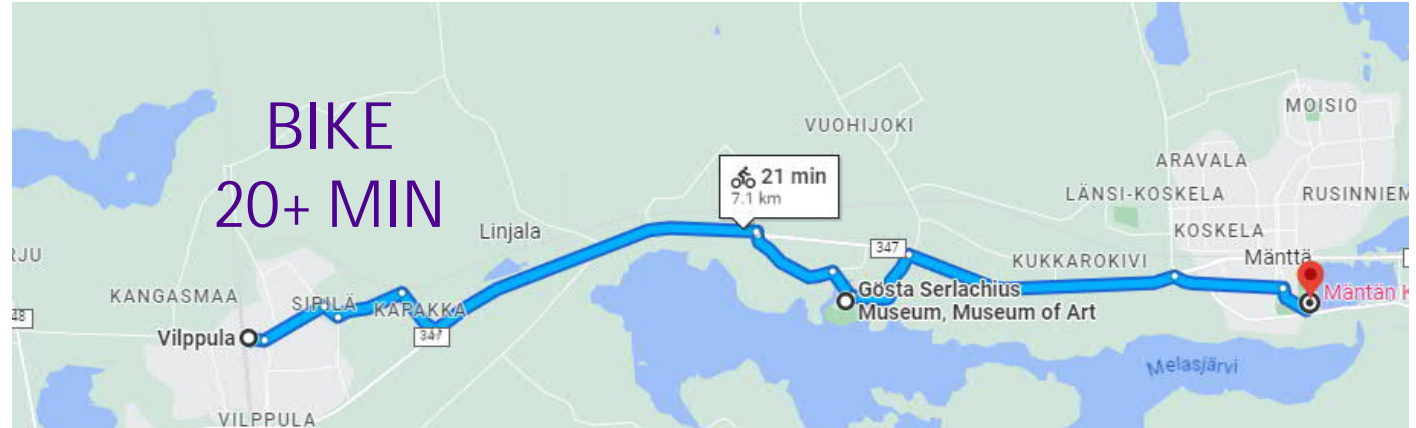


A similar concept "Art Express" was also tested this summer – promising results



Bike & Rail

“Bike is convenient for short distances, if there isn't a lot of luggage”



POSITIVES & CHALLENGES



PLANNING

Uncertainty about weather: "Finnish weather (rain + wind) may dampen the experience"

One-size bikes: "Could children somehow be brought on?"

Confusion: "More unified branding, now there are several brands getting mixed up"

Inspiration: "We decided to take our own bikes to train instead of coming by car"

BOOKING

Uncertainty about getting a bike: "12 hour pre-booking is good, otherwise I wouldn't dare to rely on city bikes when there's only two stations"

Usability: "Renting a bike is difficult on the first time"

BIKING

Experiences: "It's nice to enjoy the landscapes and get some exercise"

Guidance: "Cycling map with nice routes and destinations would be nice"

Safety: "Need to remind people to bring their own helmets"

RETURNING

Fear of missing the train: "For a day trip the train schedules are slightly challenging. What to do if you miss the train?"

Different services – different customer profiles:
Sustainability very seldom the main motivation,
communication about benefits is crucial



Ease and
smoothness of
the journey



Bike&Rail: Exercise,
experiences



E-Car rental:
Freedom and
flexibility