

The Role of Tourism Destinations in the Development and Acceptance of Soft-mobility Tourism Products - Summary by Manfred Pils -

Soft Mobility – an asset for the future of tourism destinations

Traffic congestion and the negative impact of transport on environment and residents are counted among the biggest risks of tourism development. The re-orientation of tourism towards soft mobility is intended to raise both the quality, or in other words, the value of tourism destinations and the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Longer holiday stays help to reducing the general impact of transport

Tourists who stay longer at a destination travel less kilometres per year. The general aim of soft-mobility tourism is that guests use public transport to access the destination, use during their stay local public transport and that they stay longer. A focus on event- or weekend-tourism is clearly the wrong direction.

In addition to transport services for access travel, local mobility has a strong bearing on the choice between motoring to a destination or using public transport

The best access to public transport lines does not help if the tourist cannot enjoy the tourism experience without local transport.

The types of tourism amenities available at a destination strongly impact on local mobility (and, due to luggage transport, also on the access journey)

When tourism attractions and accommodations are scattered in the destination and when the tourism activity needs heavy equipment tourists prefer individual available mobility at local level. Car owners perceive the costs of public transport added to the fixed costs of their private cars as additional expenses and consequently opt for their own cars, whenever access by car is possible;



Favourable conditions for soft-mobility tourism

have destinations with good access to public transport lines, destinations with a densely structure of tourism attractions and accommodations, destinations along interregional hiking or cycling routes, destinations focussing on sports, spa and wellness. A careful analysis of strength and weaknesses concerning soft-mobility is a precondition for every destination development.

Key elements of a soft-mobility tourism management at destination level are on short-term

- the cooperation with all stakeholders, which can be best achieved by launching a Local Agenda 21 process;
- the cooperation with tour operators and travel agencies is a defining element when it comes to implementing a soft-mobility policy;
- to gear marketing towards promising target groups;
- the creation of car-free zones;
- a consistent parking management;

on medium-term and long-term:

- to enhance soft mobility on local level
- to integrate destinations into interregional soft-tourism infrastructure
- to orientate the tourism amenities and activities towards soft-mobility products

The successful re-orientation towards soft mobility needs also a change of prevailing socio-political conditions, as these conditions decisively influence the fares and comfort of transport means (taxes, subsidies, building of infrastructure) or the vacationing behaviour of travellers (time of year, length and distribution of annual holidays).