



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

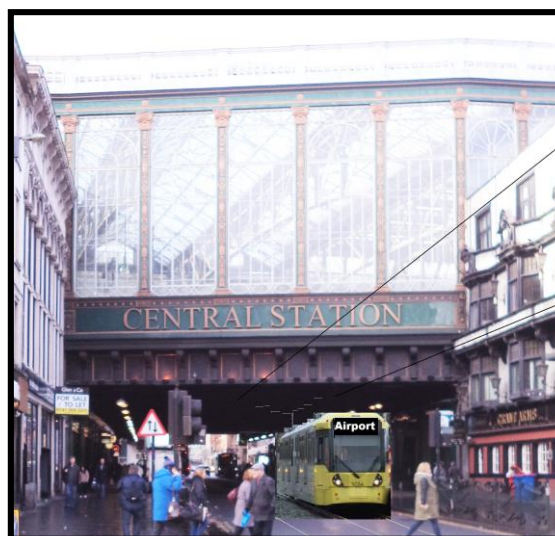
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Glasgow Airport surface access options include TramTrains from Glasgow Central (above, and Section 2). TramTrains could also be relevant for Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Abellio ScotRail maps out the Future

Abellio are the guest speakers at this year's SAPT AGM.

SAPT will give a talk on Bus Co-ordination and TramTrain Potential.

The AGM will be in Perth Library, York Place PH2 8EP

Thursday 16th April 2015 10.30 (coffee/tea) for 11.00

SAPT Members Meetings: All members welcome

Inverness Monday 11th May 2015 14.30 – 16.30

Mercure Hotel (Ambassador Suite), 33 Church Street, IV1 1DX

Latest Highland developments, reliability issues, higher speed InterCity, electrification etc

Glasgow Monday 12th October 2015 18.30 – 20.30

Mercure Hotel, 201 Ingram Street, G1 1DQ

Glasgow area electrification prospects, airport rail, Crossrail TramTrain, HS2 update etc

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A National Public Transport Network

A recent meeting of the CILT (Chartered Institute of Transport and Logistics) highlighted the contrasts between Switzerland's integrated transport system and Scottish transport. Swiss railways carry 357 million passengers per year, compared with only 91M in Scotland. The Swiss population is 7.9M, compared with 5.3 M in Scotland. There are 4.2 million cars in Switzerland. 80% of Swiss households have at least one car.

Clearly the integrated public transport system in Switzerland attracts far higher use, including by car owners, than Scottish public transport. The Swiss system provides integrated connections between bus, tram, and train throughout the country, so journeys between most cities, towns or villages can be made easily by public transport with departures at least once per hour and reliable connections all the way.

Access to the rail network is a key factor. In Scotland, the majority of the population do not live within walking distance of a station. For those people, car, bus, taxi or bike must be used to reach a station.

Car access is limited by parking capacity. This is being increased but is oversubscribed at some stations.

Cycling should be encouraged by safer cycle routes, but this is not a realistic option for many people.

Bus operators in Scotland do not generally attempt to provide convenient or reliable connections to the national rail network, or offer through tickets. So while buses are used for point-to-point school, work or shopping trips, they do not form a cohesive national rail and bus network as in Switzerland. Local bus journeys in Scotland have declined 11% from 478M journeys in 2003 to 425M journeys in 2013, while bus, train and tram journeys in Switzerland are rising.

There are two developments that could improve accessibility to Scotland's national rail system:

- **Co-ordinate some local bus services** with the national rail network. Strategic bus-rail routes could be contracted by local authorities for conurbations without access to railway stations. These should be **quality contracts** to avoid abstraction by competing buses. Based on Swiss experience, quality local bus services connecting reliably with national train services will boost overall use and revenue.
- **Open more railway stations** to serve towns without train services. A survey of towns with populations over 10,000 (table below) shows how this could be effective.

87 Scottish towns have populations above 10,000 (source: General Register Office).

Sixty six of these have at least one station.

Of the 21 towns without a station (see table on right), **Methil/Leven** and **Grangemouth** should be priorities for extension of train services along tracks that already exist.

St.Andrews has aspirations for a rebuilt line.

Hawick could be reached if the Borders rail link is extended from Tweedbank.

Peterhead and **Fraserburgh** transport links are the subject of a Nestrans study.

Newton Mearns could be served by Tram-Train extension from the Neilston line.

The other 14 towns could be linked to the national transport network by high quality bus-rail links as suggested in the table.

There are 81 Scottish towns with population between 5000 and 10,000. 39 of these have railway stations. A further six (**Bannockburn, Bonnybridge, Cumnock, Cove Bay, Elderslie and Windygates**) are on railways and could

have stations, leaving 36 smaller towns where bus-rail quality contract links should be introduced.

Smaller regional centres should also be linked by quality bus-rail services to railheads (eg **Crieff-Dunblane, Newton Stewart-Girvan**) to widen access to Scotland's **national transport network**.

Transport Scotland and Abellio should take the lead in identifying potential bus-rail routes throughout Scotland, with local authority involvement in arranging funding and quality contracts.

<i>Towns of more than 10,000 without a railway station</i>		
<i>Town</i>	<i>population (k)</i>	<i>Proposed rail link</i>
Methil+Leven	25	Railway exists – station needed
Newton Mearns	24	Light rail from Neilston line
Renfrew	21	Fastlink
Kirkintilloch	19	Bus-rail link to Lenzie
Peterhead	18	Rail/ light rail to Dyce
St.Andrews	17	Possible rail to Leuchars
Grangemouth	17	Railway exists – station needed
Viewpark	16	Served by Uddingston station
Penicuik	16	Lothian Buses
Erskine	15	Paisley-Clydebank bus-rail link
Bonnyrigg	15	Served by new Eskbank station
Broxburn	13	Bus-rail to new Winchburgh stn
Bo'ness	15	Bus-rail link to Linlithgow
Hawick	14	Extend Borders railway
Forfar	13	Bus-rail link Dundee & Arbroath
Mayfield	13	Bus-rail link to Dalkeith
Fraserburgh	13	Rail/ light rail to Dyce
Westhill	11	Bus-rail link to Aberdeen
Tranent	11	Bus-rail link to Wallyford
Whitburn	11	Bus-rail link to Bathgate
Stenhousemuir	10	Bus-rail link to Larbert

Transport Strategy for the City Deal

Glasgow's £1.3 billion City Deal investment programme should give high priority to modernising the region's transport infrastructure. An efficient transport system is an agent of regeneration that is essential to underpin economic growth and give people access to the expected new job opportunities.

The road and rail networks around Glasgow are extensive but do not meet today's standards of efficiency and sustainability. Transport strategy needs to be updated to support and enhance City Deal developments. Three main elements should make up the **City Region Transport Strategy**:

1. A co-ordinated plan for trains, buses and subway to create an **integrated public transport system**
2. A sustainable strategy to **cut road traffic, congestion and emissions** in City and town centre streets
3. A programme to **link Glasgow Airport into the regional and national rail network**

Transport for Greater Glasgow

Planning and delivering transport infrastructure and services across the City Region involves Glasgow City, other councils, SPT, Transport Scotland, ScotRail, Network Rail and the major bus companies.

The shortcomings of current arrangements are obvious from Transport Scotland's lack of success in delivering a 1.5 mile rail link from Glasgow Airport to the national rail network. This compares badly with airports at Manchester (rail *and* tram links), Newcastle (Metro), Birmingham International, Edinburgh (tram), Heathrow (rail *and* Tube), Gatwick, London City, Stansted, and most major European airports.

A cohesive City Transport Strategy requires a **planning body covering all aspects of transport** across the City Region, co-ordinated with land-use planning, traffic management, emissions reduction, and parking policy. Responsibility for local rail transport would logically be devolved to this body (as for London, Manchester and many continental cities). This fits with the political desire to devolve powers to local level. Changes to the bus regulatory framework are also needed. Today's piecemeal approach cannot deliver an effective City Region transport network. The transport planning body could be a reconstituted **SPT**, or a **Transport for Greater Glasgow** organisation akin to Transport for Greater Manchester.

City Deal Transport investment, including a rail link to Glasgow Airport, and Crossrail, should be planned as part of an overall long term strategy, rather than on an isolated project-by-project basis.

The following sections outline the steps needed to transform Greater Glasgow's various bus and rail routes into an integrated metropolitan network to stimulate the economic benefits of the City Deal.

Integrating Rail, Bus and Subway

Most successful City Regions in Europe have developed Metropolitan Transport Networks making it easy to travel by public transport across the conurbation to places of employment, education, retail and entertainment. London is the only UK city with the advantage of a fully integrated public transport system bringing together London Underground, Overground trains, London Transport Buses, Docklands Light Railway, and CroydonTram into a co-ordinated system. Oystercard can be used on all modes.

Glasgow has the largest UK urban rail network after London, and the world's third oldest subway system. But the full potential of the rail network to act as an efficient transport backbone, reducing road congestion and pollution, is lost due to lack of integrated planning of train, subway and bus. There are over 60 bus and coach operators in the SPT area. Many of these compete against rail, and against each other, increasing congestion and pollution in city streets. This deregulated competition compares unfavourably with high quality co-ordinated public transport that most Western European citizens enjoy.

The City Deal "Transport for a Greater Glasgow" programme should therefore include:

- A new City Region public transport strategy based on integrating and developing rail and bus networks, contributing to reduced car usage and better conditions for walking and cycling
- Bus Quality Partnerships or Contracts and investment in strategic bus priority routes like Fastlink
- New standards for road and junction design to improve safety and priority for walking and cycling

Reducing Traffic Congestion and Emissions

The Scottish Government's Low Emission Zone consultation has identified the health risks of vehicle emissions in urban streets. A City Region transport strategy providing a high quality public transport network is the effective way of tackling urban traffic congestion and pollution, based on four principles:

- Attracting greater use of public transport through better integrated services and smart ticketing
- Investment in more low emission, hybrid, and battery buses, cutting emissions on urban routes
- Fewer buses travelling across the city centre through greater co-ordination with trains and subway
- Introducing Light Rail or Metro frequent urban rail services to boost rail usage and cut road traffic

Glasgow Airport Access

The Glasgow City Deal programme has made good surface access to Glasgow Airport a priority objective. Glasgow's profile with international travellers starts with their experience of transport links from the airport. Most international airports are linked by high quality trains, eg Heathrow Express, to the national rail network giving air passengers a choice to transfer to rail for onward travel to their destination.

The bus link from Glasgow Airport to the city centre is functional but does not integrate closely with regional and national rail networks, and can be adversely affected by road congestion on the M8 which is likely to worsen. The main need for a rail link from Glasgow Airport is for a high quality service to Glasgow which gives convenient rail connections to other destinations throughout Scotland. Essential features are:

- Frequent and fast services to Glasgow from a station immediately adjacent to the airport arrivals hall
- Connections in Glasgow to destinations throughout Greater Glasgow, Scotland and Northern England
- In-station connections at Paisley for Inverclyde and Ayrshire
- Rail tickets available between Glasgow Airport and any station on the national rail network
- Rail service hours of operation must be useful for airport workers as well as airline passengers including incoming business travellers, tourists, and conference and event attendees.

A TramTrain link from Glasgow via the main Paisley railway, with street running from Paisley St.James to the airport, has been mooted. A feasibility study of this technology will have to consider three issues:

1. *Line capacity between Paisley and Glasgow, and track and platform capacity in Glasgow Central.* The recent £170 M investment in laying a third track between Paisley and Shields Road suggests that lack of capacity is unlikely to be an insuperable problem on this section of line. But the double track approach from Shields Road into Glasgow Central is shared with trains from Paisley Canal and carries 13 trains per hour off-peak. Additional capacity is likely to be needed here.
2. *TramTrain ability to achieve short journey time, share track with trains, and operate on street tramway.* Technical issues with TramTrains on railways have been solved in Germany where dual voltage AC/DC trams share tracks with InterCity expresses in several cities including Karlsruhe. In Britain, Manchester Metrolink trams run on-street in the city centre and use railway lines in the suburbs, though mainly segregated from heavy rail trains. The Sheffield TramTrain project is expected to resolve outstanding issues. So a custom-designed dual-voltage TramTrain for Glasgow is a realistic option.
3. *Viability of a TramTrain service from the airport to central Glasgow.* This could be improved if the scope of the project is widened to gain more of the benefits that TramTrain technology could bring to other lines in the Glasgow suburban railway network. These are explored in the next section.

TramTrain Potential: Glasgow's extensive rail network has a number of problems to be overcome including increasing pressure on terminal capacity at Central and Queen Street stations and congestion at pinch points like Partick. Cross-city travel from north to south involves walking from Queen Street to Central.

The City Union cross-city line is largely unused since St.Enoch station closed in 1966, but unfortunately it skirts the periphery of the city centre. The Glasgow CrossRail project envisaged using this line, St.Enoch Bridge and High Street curve to allow some trains from the southside to be routed to the Queen Street Low Level line. But this would prolong journey times and add to congestion through Partick, and was rejected.

Now, TramTrain technology could unlock the potential of the City Union Line by extending track from the St. Enoch bridge (below) on-street into the heart of the city centre. Converting some inner suburban lines to TramTrain would improve city centre accessibility while also alleviating congestion at Central station, but without requiring lengthy sections of street tramway construction.

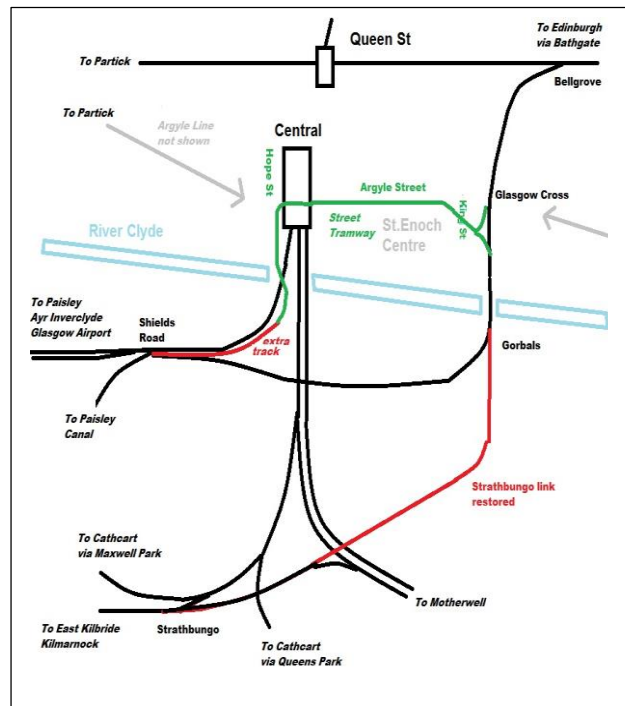


TramTrains could use the St.Enoch Bridge (above) to reach Glasgow city centre from south of the Clyde. Electrification could also potentially enable direct trains from the Paisley line to Edinburgh and the north.

ClydeMetro: Applying TramTrain Technology in Glasgow

The following scenario illustrates a potential TramTrain scheme that could add value to a Glasgow Airport transport link while transforming other local rail services and solving capacity problems on the rail network.

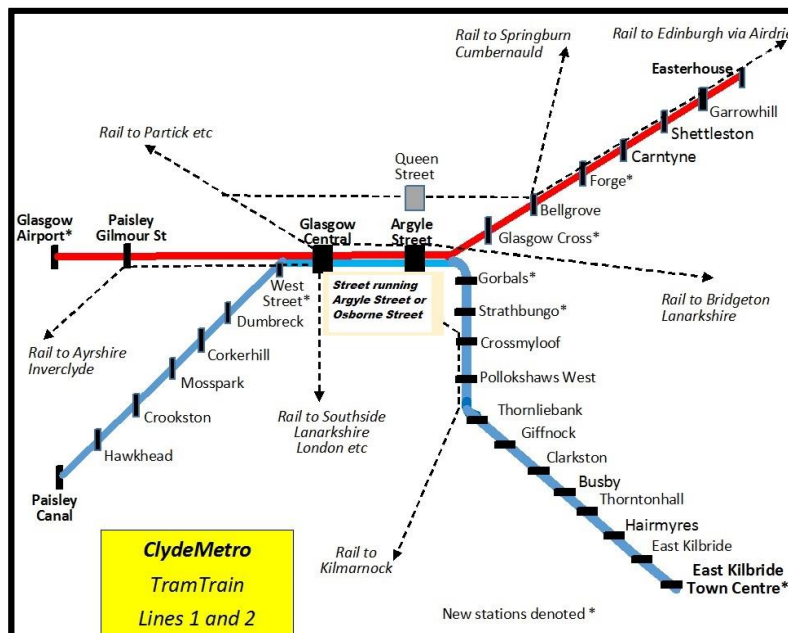
1. A city centre tram route would be built from Oswald Street along Hope Street and Argyle Street to Stockwell Street (approximately 1 mile). On-ramps to the City Union line (pointing both south and east) would be built at King Street. An on-ramp would also be built from Osborne Street towards the Central-Cook Street railway, with an extra track onwards to Shields Junction, enabling TramTrains from Glasgow Airport and Paisley Canal to operate from the Clyde bridge on-street via the "Hielanman's Umbrella" along Argyle Street or Osborne Street to King Street
2. The already safeguarded Strathbungo link to Gorbals Junction would be re-instated, creating a route for TramTrains to run from Strathbungo Junction via the St.Enoch bridge and King Street off-ramp to Argyle Street
3. The City Union Line would be electrified from Shields Road to Bellgrove, as would the East Kilbride line (see diagram right, not too scale)



Two "ClydeMetro" cross-city services could operate over this reconfigured rail network, possibly as follows:

Line 1: Glasgow Airport-Paisley Gilmour St-Central - Argyle Street - Glasgow Cross-Bellgrove-Easterhouse
 Connections: Paisley for Ayr, Bellgrove for Cumbernauld, Easterhouse for Airdrie/Edinburgh, plus Central Links Glasgow Airport and Paisley to Glasgow Central and across the city to a wide range of connections

Line 2: Paisley Canal- stations to Glasgow Central-Argyle St.-Gorbals -Strathbungo- stations to E. Kilbride



ClydeMetro TramTrain diagrammatic map

This shows what **could** be done. Work is now needed in option evaluation, engineering and funding issues.

A Greater Glasgow Transport Study is needed, bringing together Councils, SPT, Network Rail and Transport Scotland to develop a City Transport Deal supporting economic growth.

Benefits of **ClydeMetro** Tramtrains:

- Trams every 15 minutes on each line (frequency doubled)
- Quicker journeys
- Good Airport connectivity
- More city centre stations
- New cross-city journeys
- Business stimulated by new station at Glasgow Cross
- Capacity released at Central (tramtrains to East Kilbride & Canal)
- Complementary changes to core bus routes to reduce road traffic and pollution
- Queen St Low Level service recast to free capacity through Partick for more Argyle line trains from Shotts etc
- Rail viability improved

FERRIES

Transport Scotland have confirmed that a tendering team has begun preliminary procurement for the Clyde and Hebridean ferry services from October 2016. The contract notice is being published in early 2015, with the existing CalMac routes being tendered as one bundle. SAPT has recommended that ferry schedules should provide good connections to the improved train service now offered at Oban, together with railheads at Mallaig, Ardrossan, Wemyss Bay and Gourock. The Road Equivalent Tariff formula should be adjusted to reduce the fare for active travel by public transport or bike, and increase the rate for vehicles. The higher vehicle cost could be partially offset by the lower cost for driver and passengers.

Greenock Cruise Terminal expects a record 109,000 passengers in 2015, 14% up on 2014 and with 56 ships calling over the year. A London businessman is considering £10m plans to bring a restored TS Queen Mary back to the Clyde from Tilbury.

The £42m new Loch Seaforth has started service on the Ullapool-Stornoway route but will carry passengers only until a new link-span is completed at Ullapool by May. Kintyre continues to campaign for a restored vehicle ferry from Campbeltown to Northern Ireland

The Herald of 23 Jan contained a special supplement on Scottish ports. Since January, ships in the North Sea have to use more expensive low sulphur fuel. Some extra business is expected from off-shore wind farms but oil activity is falling. Argyll and Bute Council is seeking amended Campbeltown-Ardrossan summer sailings to allow a day's shopping. Montrose harbour reports a terrific year for agricultural business plus continued oil-related activity. Girvan has spent £700,000 to expand yacht activity at this previously neglected Clyde harbour.

Arran has been affected by increased cancellations of the Brodick-Ardrossan ferry and is seeking greater use of diversions to Gourock in bad weather. Rebuilding of the former winter terminal at Fairlie is not considered feasible but harbour works at Ardrossan may improve the reliability of this terminal.

CalMac has been commended for high-quality food on the larger vehicle ferries. Following local opposition, fare rises on the Corran ferry have been deferred by Highland Council

AVIATION

Glasgow Chamber of Commerce feels that Glasgow will gain from early approval for an additional runway at Heathrow but Edinburgh Airport, now owned by Gatwick, favours a second runway at Gatwick. Edinburgh has announced a £50m plan to triple capacity for long-haul air travel. A new service to Abu Dhabi starts on 8 June 2015.

NATS anticipates that future fuel use per passenger or tonne kilometre may be cut by changing rules for ascents and descents, permission for shorter inter-point routes and flying some 8000 feet higher than at present. High winds caused a Loganair flight to veer off the Stornoway runway in January

Given poor rail services, NESTRANS and Transport Scotland are investigating proposals by Eastern Airways for Glasgow/Edinburgh-Aberdeen flights. These would require support from public funds. A better option may be the improved rail services as proposed in the Abellio franchise.

The Flybe Inverness-London City air service introduced in October 2014 was withdrawn in February due to low use. Planes are being redeployed to increase frequency from Edinburgh/Belfast to London City

Chancellor Osborne and Shetland MSP Tavish Scott are seeking faster cuts in air fares as oil prices fall. Ryanair has promised price falls from 2016 but warns that greater competition between airlines may erode profits. Under EU law, a retired police officer has won a two-year battle with Ryanair for £600 compensation for a delayed Prestwick flight, opening up prospects of claims from other passengers

RAIL

High winds, snow and flooding had adverse impacts on rail services in January. Network Rail and train operators were criticised for excessive service withdrawals in Scotland. Local weather forecasts were less severe. Poor information was available on the timings and location of withdrawals and on alternatives.

Stagecoach/Virgin have taken over the East Coast franchise in March though some have questioned why this service was not kept in the public sector. The Competition and Markets Authority raised questions about Stagecoach operating both East Coast and West Coast Anglo-Scottish services, East Midlands train services in the Peterborough area, and Citylink buses on the Edinburgh-Aberdeen/Inverness routes also served by East Coast trains. Stagecoach have successfully answered these concerns. Mark Lazarowicz, MP is seeking greater improvements on the East Coast services to London and other cities pending the development of HS2 services. Virgin trains saw an 11% rise on Anglo-Scottish services in 2014. Traffic is now three times the 2009 level though Glasgow-London trips by air are still four times higher than by rail.

Abellio, the new ScotRail franchise operator from April 1st 2015, has been criticised for low passenger satisfaction scores on services operated in England. Under extended devolution, the Scottish Government will be able to award franchises to non-profit distributing company operators. Jim Murphy, the new Labour party leader in Scotland, has promised a return to publicly operated rail passenger services taking advantage of the 5-year break clause in the Abellio franchise.

Disruption is expected due to a 6-week closure of the Winchburgh Tunnel in June/July for electrification work. This will affect Glasgow Queen St-Edinburgh services and access to the Open Golf Championship at St Andrews due to Glasgow train diversions affecting capacity on the Edinburgh-Fife line.

Further disruption will come from renewal of track on the approach tunnel to Glasgow Queen St High Level while delay in the supply of electric rolling stock will prevent full electric working on the Glasgow-Falkirk-Edinburgh line until late in 2017. Redevelopment of Queen St station will not be complete until 2019, by which time the Glasgow Central-Shotts-Edinburgh line should also be electrified along with the routes from Queen St to Dunblane and Alloa. Queen St HL will have capacity to take 8 coach trains.

Track-laying has now been completed on the Edinburgh-Tweedbank rail route. Work on stations and signalling and on driver training is on schedule for opening of the route in early September.

In the Central Belt, Jim Murphy (Herald 10Feb) has called for Labour to take the lead in committing to work to adapt the existing St Enoch Bridge route as Glasgow Crossrail unifying the Scottish rail network and linking with plans for a Glasgow Airport Rail Link. The long delayed report on this link has now been published as a result of a Freedom of Information request. Compared to the existing express bus link, it finds little time advantage in a rail link and also capacity issues on the Paisley Gilmour St-Glasgow line which would make it hard to provide extra airport services without inconvenience to passengers already using this route. A tramtrain approach may offer solutions but limited funding is presently available under City Deal proposals. Glasgow Central is the preferred terminus (but see Section 2 above).

Rail franchise companies have agreed a new code obliging them to inform passengers of the cheapest tickets for proposed trips – at present two different sets of tickets covering a planned journey can be cheaper than a through ticket. The new code will also include a notice on ticket machines saying that cheaper tickets may be available via the internet or through ticket offices. Better publicity is being sought on rights to passenger refunds when trains run late.

Automatic barriers to stop fare dodgers are to be introduced at Edinburgh Park. There are fears of difficulties if, under devolution proposals, the British Transport Police (in effect the Rail Police) are absorbed in Police Scotland

The 05.20 Glasgow-Oban and 05.21 Oban-Glasgow (introduced in May 2014 and running Saturdays and Sundays excepted) will also run on Saturdays from the May 2015 Scotrail timetable. An hourly Sunday service will be introduced on the Edinburgh-Newcraighall line (ahead of the Borders line opening in September). Sunday calls will be made at Duke Street, Alexandra Parade and Barnhill stations by Balloch-Springburn-Cumbernauld trains from May 2015.

The DfT has issued the TransPennine Express Invitation to Tender. This invites bidders to offer options for new Liverpool-Scotland services, and possible extension of Manchester-Leeds-Newcastle services to Edinburgh. These initiatives were suggested by SAPT in our submission to the TPE refranchising consultation. SAPT suggested that extending Manchester-Leeds-Newcastle services to Edinburgh, supplementing Manchester-Carlisle-Edinburgh trains, would double Edinburgh-Manchester frequency. Edinburgh-Newcastle-Leeds-Birmingham hourly Cross-Country trains could then be routed directly via Doncaster and Sheffield, giving Edinburgh faster services via Newcastle to Birmingham, supplementing the two-hourly service via Carlisle. (Leeds calls could be transferred to Newcastle-Birmingham XC trains). Bids have to be submitted by May 28th, with services to start in April 2016. Shortlisted bidders are Keolis Go-Ahead Ltd, Stagecoach Transpennine Express Trains Ltd, and First Trans Pennine Express Ltd.

BUS, TRAM & TAXI

New Transport Minister Derek Mackay has told *Scotland on Sunday*: "We are not anti-tram. If it fits in with public transport networks, we would support it." He said he would consider tram schemes and other projects on their merits.

SPT has approved plans for a £3m modernisation of Buchanan St Subway station. Contracts for new driverless subway trains are expected to be approved later this year. J Bryce of Glasgow has suggested that the 'stillborn' Bus Fastlink should be adapted to provide a tram route from central Glasgow to the Airport via SECC, the new South Glasgow Hospital, Braehead and Renfrew. But trip times would be longer than on the present airport express bus route.

Glasgow City Council is consulting on standardised rules for bus lanes. A related issue is whether many bus lanes are required if other measures are used to reduce total volumes of motorised traffic in city centres in association with greater use of 'bus gates'. There continue to be delays in deciding on the best means of reducing bus trip times in central Glasgow and on principal approach routes. Herald editorial of 17 Jan concludes that bus lanes are not the only issue in securing an improved network. *'Glasgow's buses are too often dirty and inadequately regulated. They frequently appear to be the cause of city centre congestion as rival operators crowd popular routes'*. The Herald commended Iain Gray's proposed Holyrood bus regulation bill.

Further criticism of the failure to establish integrated city public transport networks has come from the slow progress made in establishing an effective network to serve the 10,000 workers plus visitors to the new South Glasgow University Hospital with the first staff arriving within weeks. While adequate parking for visitors will be provided, it has long been known that only a minority of staff will be able to use on-site parking yet essential alternatives are not yet clearly established and have been inhibited by the current weak system of bus regulation. SPT has given assurances that the first section of Bus Fastlink will be open as far as the Hospital by late May though there are still unsettled issues on frequency, quality, and the route used in the city centre.

Claims by NHS bosses that all workers at South Glasgow will be within an hour of their work by public transport have been disputed by nursing representatives. McGill's have confirmed that they will run the flagship Glasgow bus Fastlink route from the city centre to South Glasgow Hospital as specified by SPT. Service will operate 7 days a week from 11 May and between 6am and midnight. McGills will also run a 12 minute service passing Cardonald rail station on the way to the South Glasgow South Hospital.

As part of the case for Crossrail services avoiding the present walk between the main rail stations in Glasgow, RailQwest claims that Hillington East station could be adapted to provide good links to and from the South Glasgow Hospital (H19Feb)

McGill's buses are to be paid £9.1m by SPT over 3 years to take over most of the contracts formerly held by the defunct Henderson Travel. Costs will be £132,000 a year higher than the previous contracts.

Cole's Coaches of Falkirk have been fined £1,500 for failing to run timetabled bus services and banned from registering any new services until October. This is a second offence. FirstGroup has warned that users should not expect falls in bus fares after the recent fall in oil prices. It is committed to buying oil at higher prices until next year while Stagecoach has also expressed concern that lower fuel costs for car users could make it more difficult to attract them to use buses.

Scottish Government has reached a new deal with bus operators awarding them £414m over the next two years to secure free bus travel for the elderly and disabled. 1.2m people take advantage of free travel. Compensation to operators is being reduced from 58.1% of single adult fares to 56.9%

MSP Colin Keir has urged taxi and private-hire firms to give priority to single-women passengers. He also urges people to use only reputable private-hire firms.

Wheelchair users in Edinburgh are angry that a £20 charge is being proposed to register as part of schemes to reduce fares for residents whose mobility is severely impaired. At present, Edinburgh City Council pays the first £3 of taxi charges to the severely impaired up to a limit of 104 trips per year but is being forced to look for economies due to budget cuts.