

# Swiss have a plan for improving transit

BY KEVIN CUDDIHY, TIMES COLONIST    JANUARY 20, 2010

You can pay for transit by increasing ridership. You can increase ridership by reducing the variability and uncertainty of the existing service.

1. Speed up journeys by reducing the number of stops -- walking a few extra metres is a fair exchange for a shorter journey.
2. Have detailed schedules for each and every stop. The bus departures should never be early or late. If buses are ahead of schedule, they should wait. There should be targets for departure variability that are measured and published so users have confidence in the schedules.
3. Where there is ongoing variability in departures (due to traffic), more investment in signs that provide the estimated departure time would give users more control over their journey.

The goal should be that users are able to know the schedule, and know they can depend on it.

I lived in Switzerland without a car for several years. It was easy -- I had a printout for the relevant bus-stop schedules on my wall at home and in the office, and I could count on these schedules every day.

If buses were late, the signs indicated how late things were, and I could plan alternate routes. It really did not matter how frequent the service was -- only that the service was reliable.

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