

MinRejseplan and Plustur – two ways to maximise mobility in rural, Northern Denmark

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The mobile application 'MinRejseplan' or *My travel plan*, is a Mobility as a Service (MaaS), or rather a combined mobility solution currently being developed by the Transport Authority of Northern Denmark (Nordjyllands Trafikselskab). In addition to *MinRejseplan*, a Travel on Demand (ToD) solution called *Plustur* is now available across Northern Jutland.

Preconditions, inspiration, nurture

For the past 15-20 years, *Nordjyllands Trafikselskab* (NT) has been working to improve mobility in their rural areas by focusing on responsive solutions for elderly and for others which are also better coordinated with public transport. Another issue was how to transport users the last mile, to and from the main bus routes and stops to people's homes. For a long time, the goal was to increase public transport as a share of the total number of rides in the region, and reduce CO₂ emissions. Lately this has changed to enhancing residents' sense of mobility by offering more and smarter mobility services. This in turn is assumed to increase the attractiveness of the region as a place to live.

By developing *MinRejseplan*, NT aims to make it easier for users/residents to plan their journeys from A to B while also making more options available – both public and private. Albeit not too many options. Surveys show that when a system gets too complex it loses usability. Options that were added besides regular public transport were ToDs (*Flextur*, *Plustur*), taxis and *GoMore*, a carpooling company. Another vision was to develop an app where users could pay all parts of a trip in one go. This is still not going to happen since it's easier said than done.

Implementation

Flextur was launched in 2003 as a modern version of *kørsel med ældre*, a public mobility service for elderly residents. It is still coordinated with the service for elderly but can be used by all residents in Northern Jutland on any chosen route from A to B. The municipalities pay the journeys but users must pay a fee, which in turn can be used to curb demand if needed. *Plustur* was launched more recently as an option to transport users the last mile from their homes to the nearest main bus stop or train station. *Plustur* is only available in designated rural areas, as a way to keep the number of users within the budget limits of 4 MDKK annually. This is peanuts compared to the total budget of NT's public transport services.

At the launch of the *MinRejseplan* application in May, *Flextur* and *Plustur* will be included, i.e. possible to book via the app, together with the ride sharing service *GoMore*. This European company is specialized in providing carpooling or ride sharing services and is currently running marketing campaigns to increase awareness about the benefits of ride sharing and attract more users across

Denmark. One of their messages is that people who use their service as drivers can raise money to pay for their new cars. GoMore has a formal partnership with NT, which means it had to invest in the development of the app as well.

The main barrier has been related to the development of a common payment system, due to lack of interest among the different transport providers to share data about their customers, and difficulties in pooling payment systems between private and public actors. NT needs to convince them that if the new app can be a fully-fledged MaaS solution, it is not going to increase competition. Instead it will increase the number of travelers by making sure different travel modes can be combined. In other words, it is not a zero-sum game. The cake that transport providers will be sharing will get larger over time, according to NT.

Resources are another barrier. It is very expensive for a single transport authority to develop a MaaS system. The budget for MinRejseplan is ten million DKK. Therefore, all the regional transport authorities in Denmark have founded a company, *Rejseplanen A/S*, which will own and run the application in the years to come (following the launch). This is also to ensure that MinRejseplan will be available across Denmark by the end of 2019.

Legal aspects of the sharing economy in general are currently high on the agenda in Denmark. E.g. how should sharing economy services be taxed? Since MinRejseplan includes ride sharing and a mix of private and public transport providers, a remaining question is whether it is OK for a public entity such as NT to handle payments to and from a private company like GoMore? This issue is currently under investigation by the Danish Ministry of Transportation.

NT has conducted a market analysis to identify the potential users of new forms of mobility such as car sharing and car-pooling, and the users of MinRejseplan. The market analysis showed that the main user group are young people and the middle-aged, so that the age factor seems to play an important role in adoption of new mobility solutions.

The outcomes, effects and further development

The app launch in May 2018 is anticipated to be a success. This is not only because a recent user expectations survey points in that direction, but because the current travel planning application, *Rejseplanen.dk*, is the 5th most down-loaded app in Denmark. Still, it is too early to tell. Especially since the new app will be launched as a complement, separated from the existing travel app. But hopefully, by 2019, *Rejseplanen A/S* (the regional transport authorities' company) will have merged them into one national app, available across Denmark.

Flextur and Plustur are also expected to be sustained over the long-term, thanks to their financial models using fees and geographical limits are to curb costs.

As mentioned earlier, the long-term goal of NT is on par with MAMBA's goal: to maximize mobility, or rather maximise their clients' – both urban and rural – sense of being mobile. For NT, this is regardless of means of mobility. If clients use private cars, busses, ToD, ride sharing services or

anything else doesn't matter. They just want their clients to feel that they live in a region that is well connected, offering residents a high degree of mobility and accessibility. An interesting aspect is how NT intends to monitor and measure this feeling or sense of mobility. Together with consultants, a **new mobility index** is being developed, encompassing a mix of subjective and objective indicators such as; sense of mobility; access to a car(s) or a bike; or a bus, etc. Users' expectations and suggestions on how to further improve mobility will also be captured.

References

Sørensen, Nicolai B, the Transport Authority of Northern Denmark (Nordjyllands Trafikselskab), interview, 28 February 2018