

Plenary: Transport enhancing economic growth – Local and regional perspectives

26 May 2023, 11:00-12:30 | [Session outline](#)

The third Summit plenary examined the transformation of transport and mobility, and policies to shift the focus from the throughput of vehicles to the delivery of access, through local and regional lenses.

Martin Dulig (State Minister for Economic Affairs, Labour and Transport, Saxony) opened the session, outlining Saxony's involvement in the multimodal evolution of the transport sector, including manufacturing and research for automotive and rail industries. He also highlighted the importance of planning sustainable mobility for small towns, not only large cities. Then followed a panel discussion focused on a vision for the future of transport from various perspectives.

Michael Tse (MTR Corporation, China) highlighted the importance of "building communities, which is far beyond building railways". Stientje van Veldhoven (WRI Europe) echoed this sentiment, focusing on the need to build our cities differently to be "better for climate, better for nature, better for people". Spatial planning is a core component of that, and moving away from the perspective that more cars on the road is good for the economy.

Rumaih Bin Mohammed Al Rumaih (Vice Minister of Transport and Logistic Services, Saudi Arabia) emphasised the role of target setting as part of delivering a vision. He pointed out that Saudi Arabia has developed an overarching strategy to deliver its vision, with a plan for every transport mode and clear targets and environmental criteria.

Lisa Mangcu (Deputy Minister of Transport, South Africa) highlighted target setting for every sector to deliver a vision for "transport [to be] the heartbeat of South Africa's economic growth and social development". He also focused on the need to integrate all modes and the role of transit-oriented and mixed-use development in improving access and sustainability.

Andreas Marschner (Amazon) spoke about the goal to serve customer needs but also the closing window of opportunity for action – Amazon has set its own targets for 2040. He also highlighted the need to allow for use cases changing in how you design facilities, so it is not always a demolish and rebuild approach.

The panellists also discussed financing the solutions. Questions from the audience focussed on retro-fitting existing solutions, not only building from new, and on how to start the spatial planning. Burkhard Jung (Mayor of Leipzig), Juan Carlos Muñoz (Minister of Transport and Telecommunications, Chile) and Victoria Sheehan (Executive Director, US Transportation Research Board) then joined the moderator on stage to discuss the policy responses.

Mayor Jung identified that people have become accustomed to the image and beat of the city is dictated by cars, but this needs to be changed. Minister Munoz highlighted design choices for streetscape and land-use planning. Reform of bus concessions allows investment in electric vehicles, and integrated public transport is important. Meanwhile Ms Sheehan outlined how regions continue to suffer the unintended consequences of prior land-use decisions, meaning local authorities have inherited a much more expensive transport system to maintain.