City tourism is a thriving income source for local economies. Innovative local authorities will make the most of recent “shared economy” opportunities, from increased employment as rentals and goods’ hire boom, to technology jobs for app-makers to design better city mapping, travel scheduling, weather forecasting and navigation tools.

What mainstream trends are improving tourists’ experience?

Urban tourism leverages significant earning capacity and growth of jobs in cities’ economies. It provides employment in the leisure, retail, information and hospitality sectors as well as in transport. Effective marketing can persuade visitors to widen their tourism perspective to include a city’s neighbouring area. Once their accommodation has been found, tourists can benefit from convenient help and guidance as to how to spend their time and money on city highlights.

Amsterdam makes a compelling offer to tourists to explore the wider city surroundings, reconciling the aim of geographical spread and the reduction of congestion and local disturbance caused by larger volumes of noisy tourists. With the project “Amsterdam bezoeken, Holland zien” (“Visit Amsterdam, See Holland”) Amsterdam Metropolitan Region epitomizes a strategy to frame cultural sites in the wider region as assets belonging to the capital’s heritage.

Canals, rivers and sea harbours represent an obvious niche, as most cities from historic ages originate as settlements for trade along the riverbanks or as a seaside delta with
harbour facilities. Waterborne transport harnesses a different perspective on the city’s characteristics. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to provide a sustainable transport network, using clean propulsion and efficient energy for a liveable city. Some commentators suggest that conventional public transport modes are less likely to be future-proof. Perhaps Personal Rapid Transit solutions also provide an answer. The option to lease, rent or hire goods in the “shared economy” offers new perspectives for transport and tourism, like Holland’s Cycleswap, enabling tourists to use unused city dwellers bikes.

Municipal transport can be more conducive to providing market concepts for moving tourists over the city grid in an attractive way. Although public transport will never be the decisive factor when choosing a city destination, city transport operators need to be better poised to take advantage of the growth of tourism. It’s mostly private businesses that forge smart commercial services reaping benefits from city visitors. For example, dense city networks with good connectivity via rental bikes represent market niches waiting to be exploited.

Link here to the full paper.

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