

## Reading Area Transport Information Network

A planned travel communications system aimed at providing commuters with up-to-the-minute travel information and helping to keep Reading on the move is launched by Reading Borough Council today. (Thursday March 10).

The £1.8M state of the art trial project will be half funded by a private sector consortium led by Peter Brett Associates and half funded by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), who are sponsoring the project.

The Reading Area Transport Information Network will soon allow residents to pay for their bus tickets or car parking from their mobile phone or on the web. Drivers will also be able to access the latest traffic information, either from their home or from their cars, helping them to better plan their journeys and avoid jams.

The project will also allow the Council to better manage traffic flow at times of high demand and would provide bus passengers with more accurate journey times by enhancing Reading's current Real Time Passenger Information System.

Reading is hosting this project and will be running trials of the system in the town centre and along the A33 corridor to the south. The project funding comes as a result of SEEDA seeking to match fund private sector innovative transport projects.

The strong private sector consortium is led by Peter Brett Associates, a leading international consultancy and includes wireless system suppliers Metranet, equipment suppliers Alvarion, Connexionz on bus equipment suppliers, Telematix providing on-foot and in-vehicle navigation software, EBSA providing secure payment systems, COMS providing Voice over Internet services, Transept public transport consultants and Orange, who will be supplying smartphones and supporting services for the trial. The University of Southampton's Transport Research Group will be undertaking an evaluation of the project.

At the core of the project is an enhanced communication network which will use emerging wireless communications technology (WiMAX and WiFi) and the latest 3G mobile phone services. As it develops, the project is expected to further enhance Reading's position as a vibrant economic centre of the Thames Valley by maintaining an efficient and effective transport network which in turn will help sustain economic success.

David Sutton, Leader of Reading Borough Council, said: "This is a really exciting step forward for transport and for public information in Reading. It is also an excellent example of the private sector and the public agencies getting together to make our town work better."

SEEDA's Knowledge Transfer Manager, Colin Baldwin said: "This project powerfully illustrates the benefits of embracing new technologies that will accelerate the deployment of innovative new services to tackle the transport challenges that we face. This pioneering and ground-breaking project places Reading in a strong leadership position in terms of making public transport a more attractive and preferred option of travel. It aligns with the wider Government agenda on transport and shows clearly both the value of collaboration with key partners and how to successfully exploit the knowledge base of the private and public sectors to drive imaginative transport solutions

Rob McDonald from Peter Brett Associates stated 'we see this project as an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of the public and private sectors working together to provide innovative solutions to our transport challenges'.

### **Notes to Editors:**

*At the core of the project is an **enhanced communications network** which will use emerging WiMAX wireless radio communications technology in combination with Wi-Fi and the use of the latest mobile phone 3G communications services.*

*Supported by this communications network there are a series of sub-projects which will demonstrate the potential for this communications infrastructure to deliver transport strategy objectives and these include:*

- *A Urban Traffic Management and Control Communications project which focuses on the use of the WiMAX/Wi-Fi metropolitan network (Metranet) as a unified solution to communication with UTMC on-street equipment such signal controllers, variable message signs, CCTV, enforcement equipment etc. This has the potential to provide significant revenue cost savings for RBC.*
- *An on bus communications project which will focus on the use of WiMAX/ Wi-Fi and 3G services to communicate with moving buses to transfer the existing GPS based locational information used in Reading's Real Time Passenger Information System. This has the potential to improve system reliability and also to offer improved information services to the buses such as real time on-screen passenger information.*
- *A UTMC Information dissemination, journey planning and navigation project which includes:
  - *the use of real-time network performance data to assist freight deliveries avoiding congestion in central Reading;*
  - *An On-foot navigation trial where you can be seamlessly navigated to your destination in Reading by software on a mobile phone which will include town centre pedestrian routes and some public transport services.**

- *Voice over IP services for council workers.*
- *A secure payment project enabling web-based payment systems for transport facilities including pilot projects to assess:*
  - *Off-bus ticketing to mobile phones using smartcard emulation to integrate with the current ticketing systems in use in Reading.*
  - *Use of web-enabled mobile devices to pay for car parking in RBC controlled car parks.*