

1.9 Texelhopper DRT (NL)

The **Texelhopper Demand Responsive Transport** service is a combination of a regular bus line and the flexible use of smaller buses. The Texelhopper offers demand-influenced stop-to-stop flexible transport service on the entire island of Texel, in the Netherlands.



1.9.1 About Texel, The Netherlands

Country	Region	Target Area	Population	Population density
The Netherlands	Isle of Texel	162 km ²	13.783 inh.	85 inh./km ²

Texel is the largest of the Wadden Islands and is located in the North Sea about 40 kilometres from Amsterdam. The island is characterized by small villages, immense beaches and nature that grows luxuriantly in profusion.

1.9.2 Description of the Mobility Solution

The demand for transport in Texel is seasonal based, making it complicated to offer fixed time schedules and transport offers on the island. The Texelhopper has been created to make the public transport system in Texel cheaper and more flexible. The Texelhopper service is a combination of a regular bus line (n° 28) and the flexible use of smaller busses and offers stop-to-stop flexible transport on the entire island.



Figure 24 Texel DRT

The service addresses the lack of public transport on the Isle of Texel after the 2012 budget cuts that suppressed many rural buses. The main objective of Texelhopper is to provide public transport to everybody, at a reasonable cost for the province. Furthermore, it enhances intermodal coordination between ferry, train, and bus, and increases ridership. The service was part of the regional public transport vision (Visie OV 2020) that required better public transport in Texel by using innovative pilots. The Texelhopper was recommended as being a pilot under the regional public transport strategy.

Target user groups and needs

The service is available for everyone. During the summer months, a fair share of users is made up of tourists. Locally, the main users are students and young people. The share of elderly is normal compared to the population. Minibuses are also accessible by wheelchair.

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Involved Bodies

During the setting-up phase, the bodies involved were the province, the municipality, the Public Transport Users associations, the tourism sector, and n° 5 local taxi companies. No Ministries at state level are involved in the service.

During the pilot phase, the Municipality of Texel was the main actor who organised the transport system and had the responsibility of the Texelhopper; the province only financed the service. The operation was shared between the PT operator, Connexion-Transdev, for the standard bus line and the taxi operator for the demand-influenced service. Since July 2018, the Texelhopper is part of the new concession. Now, since July 2018, the service is completely subcontracted to the local taxi company by the PT operator (Connexion-Transdev, which still remains the organizer). All services are provided by the local taxi operator as a subcontractor of the public transport operator.

Mobility services provided/addressed

The service encompasses:

- 1 A free bus (one way) between the railway station of Den Helder and the ferry to Texel Island, as well as said ferry to the island;
- 2 A main bus line, served by standard buses, between the ferry and the main municipalities of the island;
- 3 A demand-influenced minibus service served by 8+1 minibuses;
- 4 Bookings of the bus can be made in an app & the website;
- 5 Payments can be made to the driver or with the *OV-chipkaart*;
- 6 All Texelhopper buses and stops are wheelchair friendly (with exception of the Buurtbus).

The usage of the Texelhopper costs €3,05 per ride. Combination ticket with the ferry used to costs €3,25. Some membership fees are applied. The table (Figure 26 – *Tariff structure Texelhopper (beside single tickets)*) reports the different ticket prices. The membership is not limited to the Texelhopper, but the conditions are for all Transdev-Connexion busses

Type of ticket	Name of the ticket	Price
Day ticket	Day-ticket	€ 7.70
	Family-ticket	€ 18
Week ticket	Week-ticket	€ 38,50
Discounts	Yearly Discount (40%)	€ 215,50 per year
	Monthly Discount (40%)	€ 21,55 per month
	65+ Discount (free usage outside of rush hours)	€ 135 per year
Membership	Yearly membership	€ 2.214 per year
	Monthly membership	€ 221,40 per month
	Monthly membership limited to the region of North-Holland-North (which includes Texel)	€ 87,04 per month

Figure 26 – *Tariff structure Texelhopper (beside single tickets)*

Ridership and other key metrics/results

The use of PT has increased since the introduction of the Texelhopper, especially in the touristic summer months with lots of tourists. From 11 000 in Aug 2015 to 16 000 in Aug 2017 (+45%) and from 6000 in Dec 2015 to 6400 in Dec 2017 (+7%). The expectation is that, in future, the use will further increase as the (mini) bus frequency will be doubled in 2019 to on average 2 (mini) buses/year. As indicated by the increase in users of the service, people are satisfied. Initially, surveys among locals showed a less positive view; while tourists have a much more positive opinion. The COVID pandemic affected the service, resulting in numerous flexible bus lines in the region to be discontinued. The Texelhopper still stays active in its current form and managed to bounce back after the COVID-pandemic.

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Supporting technologies

Technology allows for journey reservation, e-ticketing and real time monitoring. Already in 2015, 50% of trips were booked via app, while nationwide it amounted only to 10%. Furthermore, an algorithm, ICT, calculates the best routes to propose based on past experiences. Since 2018, the national Dutch OV card can also be used on Texelhopper vehicles.

Engagement aspects

The Texelhopper is an initiative from inhabitants of Texel to better match the supply and demand for transport. An important principle is that the service is run by professionals and not by volunteers. The service is fully integrated within the Public Transport system/concession.

1.9.3 Timelines and Milestones

Milestone no. 1: 2014 - Launch of the service

The Texelhopper was first implemented as a pilot from December 2014 for 2 years.



Milestone no. 2: 2018 - New ticket payment

In July 2018, it became part of the new concession. Since 2018 it is also possible to pay with the national transport card (OV-chipkaart). This was a strong wish from users since the beginning of the Texelhopper.



Milestone no. 3: 2022 - Public transport lines reduction

In 2022 Transdev announced to discontinue numerous lines in the region of North-Holland. Transdev estimated that certain lines would never be break-even. The Texelhopper was not discontinued.

1.9.4 Long-term assessment

Success, Durability and Expansion

The service seems to be a stable addition to the public transport system in the wider North-Holland region. The line is (just as other bus lines) subsidized and the operator receives ongoing financial support from the province. The number of travelers has increased by 20% since the founding of the service in 2014. The concept has expanded throughout the region of North-Holland. On the mainland the Texelhopper is called OV Flex.

Funding and Financing

For the start of the pilot, there was a one-time funding of € 1.7M to set up everything. At the beginning, a budget of € 300.000 was foreseen to supplement the fare of €3/journey; therefore, 100.000 journeys were necessary to consume the whole subsidy budget. Above that sum, demand was calculated to be sufficient

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for the operator to cover the costs. The main funding source is the Province subsidy and revenue from ticket sales (approx. 50% / 50%).

Why is it considered a Good Practice?

Starting from a pilot, Texelhopper succeeded increasing the use of a rural transport system, without increasing the public money invested, by reorganising all existing transport services. A good partnership between the public transport operator and the five local taxi companies has been put in place for the operation of the service.

1.9.5 Transferability considerations

CONTEXT PECULIARITIES	TRANSFERABILITY CONDITIONS
<p>The service finds its origin in a rethinking of the previous PT system with only two “traditional” bus lines and lots of small services for target groups among those workers in the tourist sector. The service is successful in Texel due to the presence of numerous tourists who use it.</p>	<p>Key conditions for the transfer of the solution is a big demand for the service, e.g. presence of tourists. To be implemented, the service needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Preparation & communication with local people to overcome fear for change. • A modification in the legislative framework (A taxi company provides the transport services while normally a PT company should do). • Rethinking the whole system, and not just bringing some changes at the margin of the existing system • The environment with a lot of tourists facilitated the pilot success
DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED/WEAKNESS	LESSONS LEARNT
<p>Initially, there was an opposition by local citizens; therefore, budget for communication was spent in engaging with this group. Furthermore, there needed to be a revision of the legislative framework to enable the organisation of the pilot. Lastly, the involvement of the province led to some side effects such as overshooting of problems and consumerisms within the stakeholder groups and original initiators.</p>	<p>The main achievement is that this service increased the use of a rural transport system without investing more public money. In fact, it finds its origin in a rethinking of the previous PT system with only two “traditional” bus lines and lots of small services for target groups among those workers in the tourist sector. One traditional bus line and the scattered small services were combined into a demand influenced service. This resulted in the increase of PT ridership by 7 to 45% over 2 years depending on the month.</p> <p>ICT algorithm allows to propose the best timetable based on previous experience; in that way the minibuses can combine 5 trips on average per bus trip.</p>

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Florien Molendijk set up the Texelhopper pilot, Hans Meyer followed the pilot from the municipality

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