

Summary

BYTRANS: Information work in relation to the rehabilitation of Østensjø metro, the Smestad- and Bryn tunnel

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This report analyzes three information campaigns initiated in relation to the rehabilitation of the Østensjø metro line, the Smestad tunnel and the Bryn tunnel. For the former, upgrading involved closure and temporary substitution with bus. For the two tunnels, rehabilitation meant longer periods of capacity reduction, with the closure of one of two tubes. We found that multifaceted information campaigns had been implemented to reach travelers and clear differences between them. Information about the rehabilitation projects and the consequences for travelers seems in large to have reached out, and especially to work travelers. The effect of the information campaign seems clear, especially for the Smestad tunnel. Here, the warning about queue and chaos led to short-term decline in traffic volume. This illustrates the importance of information work, not only in connection with the handling of temporary deviation situations, but also in the handling of transport in urban areas as such.

Between 2015-2020, a number of upgrades are carried out on the transport system in the Oslo area. Among other things, 10 tunnels are being upgraded and the metro network is being repaired. This means that travelers must adapt to new, temporary travel patterns, reduced capacity and longer travel time.

In order to prepare the travelers and to inform and guide them during the rehabilitation period, extensive information work has been initiated. This report focuses on the information campaigns related to the rehabilitation of the Østensjø metro line, the Smestad tunnel and the Bryn tunnel. For the Østensjø metro line, the rehabilitation meant one year's closure, while for the Smestad tunnel (just under a year) and the Brynstunnelen (just over a year), it involved closing one tunnel tube with two-way traffic in the other.

The study was carried out as part of the larger research project, BYTRANS. In the report, we focus on: 1) the extent to which information about the rehabilitation projects and their consequences for the transport system reached relevant groups of travelers, and 2) how public information was used to mitigate the traffic consequences in the rehabilitation period.

We found that multi-faceted information campaigns had been launched to reach travelers. There were clear differences between the three campaigns. For the Østensjø metro line, given the collective travel form, the information campaign was largely aimed at travelers on board or on the public transport stops. For the tunnel rehabilitation, a wider range of information channels and instruments were used at the Bryn tunnel, compared to at the Smestad tunnel. While large spreads in the national press featured information about the rehabilitation of the Smestad tunnel, the Bryn tunnel was characterized by advertising on digital surfaces, involvement of a marketing bureau and the use of social media.

In large, information about the three rehabilitation projects and the consequences for travelers seems to have reached out, and especially to work travelers. While editorial coverage and various forms of advertising in mass media were key sources of information for tunnel rehabilitation, posters on board bus/tram and metro seem to be most important

in the rehabilitation of the Østensjø metro line. The informants' less emphasis on editorial media coverage as a source of information in relation to the Østensjø rehabilitation can also result from the considerably lower coverage this had in local and national press compared to the Smestad and Bryn tunnel rehabilitation. The differences in the coverage of public transport and car transport in connection with the three rehabilitation projects is worth noting.

When we combine three different data sources; media coverage, traffic speed and traffic volume, we see that the major mass media warnings about possible queues and chaos when the Smestad tunnel was to be rehabilitated contributed to a strong reduction of car traffic. However, the effect was short-lived - when the capacity reduction did not result in congestion and chaos, car traffic soon returned to the previous level. In the Bryn tunnel, the reduction in traffic volume persisted during the rehabilitation period, which is more related to delays (which were larger here compared to Smestad) than the media coverage. However, a question is whether or not the delays at Bryn would have been even greater if it had not been undertaken extensive information work to inform and guide travelers about the rehabilitation and alternative transport options. Among the conclusions in the report is that well-implemented information campaigns can affect traffic volumes and that these are highly important when carrying out rehabilitation on central transport infrastructure.