

Traffic Operation with Comments during Beijing Olympic Games

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Abstract: Preparation and operation of the transport system for the Olympics are both complex systematic projects. In the earlier stage, the host city should accomplish such tasks as traffic demand analysis, the laying-out and designing of traffic facilities, and transportation organization management for the Olympics. During the Games, the special demands of the Olympics have to be considered, and the assembling and evacuating of each client group should be well organized. Moreover, related departments should make great efforts to coordinate the Olympics' transport system and other transport systems. In light of the heavy traffic demand, the paper introduces the preparatory activities for the Beijing Olympics from several aspects, namely, infrastructure development, transportation service, and management policy. The operation statuses of the Olympic transport system are illustrated from the aspects of command system, transportation services in Olympic venues, road traffic operation, and public transport. In the last section, several revelations from the Olympics' transportation and helpful suggestions are provided for Beijing's future transportation development.

Key Words: Olympic transport; transport operation; traffic demand management

1 Introduction

The 2008 Olympic Games was an international sport event with a wide participation of 204 countries and regions. According to the "Bidding Report for the Olympic Games,"^[1] the Olympic transportation services were aimed to "guarantee the Olympic family members, media, and VIPs to have access to comfortable, secure, punctual, reliable, and rapid special vehicles and special traffic routes, and to ensure spectators efficiency, security, and smoothness in going to venues. Public transportation means were given some priority so as to minimize the impact of the Olympics on people's everyday life. Special needs of the impaired were also taken into account in terms of traffic facilities and service items. Buses, taxis, Olympic vehicles all run on green fuel." The Olympics and the Paralympics were smoothly completed and have achieved significant success, which won compliments from all social circles. The Olympic traffic and transportation services have entirely fulfilled the commitments in the bidding report

and the hosting contract by providing very thoughtful and humanistic transportation services to various groups of clients.

In 2001 when Beijing bid successfully for hosting the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing was a fast growing city with a sharp increase in car numbers, poor transportation services, and grave traffic situation. In bidding for preparing for and hosting of the Games, the authors were able to gain new reflections and new understanding about the city's traffic and transportation development, by analyzing traffic demands, lay out and building traffic facilities, drafting Olympic traffic strategies and venue operation programs, scheming service plans for various groups of clients, making and implementing traffic policies related to the Olympics, and ensuring the flow of traffic and the drafting traffic policies after the Games. Citizens have also reached a common understanding about traffic development and traffic consumption. A sustainable traffic development mode for mega-cities in rapid motorization has been found^[2].

2 Olympic traffic demands

2.1 Huge traffic demands of Olympic events and demands derived from them

Beijing 2008 Olympics was a large-scale event. This session of the game lasted for 17 days, from August 7 to 24, with 28 athletics and 302 events included in the Game. It offered the greatest competitions in Olympic history. This session of the Games involved seven cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and so on. There were 31 competition venues in Beijing, 41 exclusive training venues, a dozen non-competition venues, more than a hundred contracted restaurants, dozens of designated hospitals, and traffic service stations all across the city. This session of the Game engaged 18 thousand athletes and officials coming with their delegation, 2.8 thousand technical officials, 26 thousand staff working for BOB relay agencies, entitled relay agencies, and accredited literal media, 40 thousand auspices staff, approximately 80 thousand Olympic personnel, around 100 thousand volunteers, and 7 million spectators. In addition to the events, plenty of domestic and international activities such as leisure activities, traveling, shopping and cultural entertainment were organized during the session. These assemblies and evacuation of large crowds featured by large-scale, high density, brief duration, and small areas need related traffic and transportation services catering to the differences of various groups.

2.2 Traffic and transportation service of varied levels needed

According to the past Olympic practices, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) divided all the participating delegations into five levels, that is, T1–T5. At levels T1–T3 were the presidents, vice-presidents, general secretaries, and officials of IOC, presidents, vice-presidents, general secretaries of all the member states, heads of delegations, group leaders of delegates, top state officials, top officials from auspices agencies, officials with the Beijing Organizing Committee of Olympic Games (BOCOG), the organizing committees of the last and next session of the Games, and officials from the bidding cities. Level T4 included athletes and officials coming with their delegations, technical officials,

BOB relay agencies, entitled relay agencies, accredited literal media, and auspices agencies. T5 refers to spectators, Olympic staff, volunteers, and visitors.

Different cars were designated to different clients' use, which are presented as below: T1—exclusive car and designated driver for a single person; T2—exclusive car and designated driver for two; T3—booked vehicle for joint use; T4—buses for exclusive use; T5—buses free of charge. Traffic and transportation services of varied ranks would be offered to correspondent clients^[3].

2.3 Higher demands on assembling and evacuating of spectators

Traffic accumulation is embodied in time and space^[4]. Within the 17 days of the Games, spectators totaled 7 million person-trips with an average daily number over of 400 thousand, which rose to more than 600 thousand person-trips on a peak day. The Olympic Green received about 300 thousand spectators in its busiest day, with most of them accumulating in the central park area. Fig. 1 depicts the volume distribution on a peak day.

3 Traffic and transportation preparation for Olympics Games

Hosting the Olympics provides an opportunity to Beijing's transportation development and construction. On the basis of the "new Beijing traffic system," the construction of traffic facilities is speeding up and the traffic functional structure is being perfected to meet the needs of the city development and the transport demands of the Olympics. An integrated pattern of the urban, suburban, and inter-city traffic has been formed, which is able to meet the increasing traffic demands and provides insurance for accomplishing the objective of "New Beijing, New Olympics."^[5]

Due to the success of the bidding for the Games, planned preparations for the planning and building of traffic infrastructure, Olympic traffic services, traffic organization and control during the Games, and the making of guarantee policies related to the Games were carried out.

3.1 Construction of Olympic traffic infrastructure

The infrastructure preparatory effort was made in rail transit, road facilities, and temporary traffic facilities at venues. subway line 13, Batong line, line 5, line 10, the Olympic line, and the airport line were put into use so that Beijing's total subway lines increased to 8 with a rise in length from 42 km when bidding for the host to the present 200 km. The opening of the Fifth Ring Road, Jingcheng Expressway (Beijing to Miyun section), and the south airport expressway raised the total length from 335 km to 804 km. In the Olympic area and its radiated areas, roads were built and renewed; road entrances and exits, overpasses and underpasses, lanes for the visually impaired and barrier-free sloping roads were transformed and built.

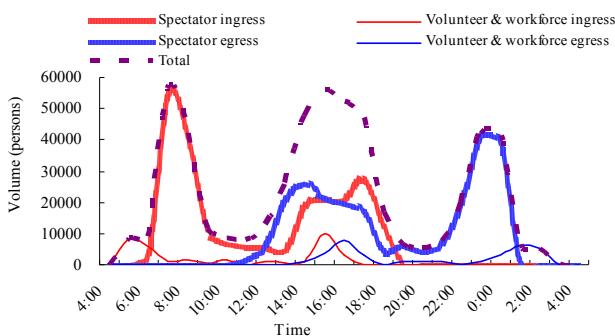


Fig. 1 Timed flow for T5 on a peak day in Olympic Green

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