

TRANSCRIPTION PODCAST SIEMENSSTADT CALLING #7

- MOBILITY OF TOMORROW -

Michael Peter

I believe that there are substantially better offers and possible concepts available than everyone wanting to drive their own cars on the same street, in the city center. That simply doesn't make sense.

Sarah Tietze

Hello from Berlin and welcome to Siemensstadt Calling. In Siemensstadt, a whole new urban quarter is being built on 70 hectares, a piece of new Berlin, a piece of the future and a look at what living and working in the future will feel like. We talk about how tomorrow's mobility will change here in our podcast. My name is Sarah Tietze and I'm always joined on the podcast by Stefan Kögl, who, together with his team and a whole host of partners, is designing and implementing the Siemensstadt project and thus the place of the future. Hello Stefan.

Stefan Kögl

Hi Sarah. And I'm really looking forward to our seventh podcast today, especially because of the exciting guests and interesting information and opinions that we're collecting. Today I'd like to welcome Mr. Streese, State Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection in Berlin.

Ingmar Streese

Hello.

Stefan Kögl

Hello Mr. Streese. And Mr. Michael Peter, CEO, of Siemens Mobility here directly from Berlin. Hello Mr. Peter.

Michael Peter

Hello.

Sarah Tietze

Hello, from me too, of course. We would like to take a closer look today. The topic of mobility, in other words the question: How will we get from A to B in the future? Will we actually still need our own car in the future? Why should we give up our cars?

But on the other hand, people are actively working on autonomous driving. Why is one more environmentally friendly than the other? And what will a smart train station in the future, or a smart city district look like? That's what we're talking about today. I'm absolutely delighted that we're here together. Although, not quite. We're not together at all. So Corona has also forced us to keep our distance, naturally. We are connected from different places. And so that Corona can't do anything to us and we can still get into our discussion very quickly, I've prepared a little game. The game is called "1 minute and 12 questions" and it is almost self-explanatory. I ask 4 questions to each of you and we see if we can get these 12 questions answered within one minute. Are the three of you ready? That sounds good to me. I'll set my timer on my phone. And Mr. Peter, you go ahead and take off your jacket. That's wonderful. Because I'm going to start. I'm going to press start now and then we have 1 minute. And here we go. Mr. Peter, LinkedIn or Clubhouse?

Michael Peter

LinkedIn. I have never done Clubhouse. I do not know it.

Sarah Tietze

Bangkok or Sacramento?

Michael Peter

Berlin.

Sarah Tietze

Wonderful. Bicycle or e-scooter?

Michael Peter

I'd rather go cycling again here in the winter.

Sarah Tietze

And what else needs to be invented in the future?

Michael Peter

Autonomous driving.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Streese. Your turn. S-Bahn or bicycle?

Ingmar Streese

S-Bahn ... or bike? Both. Bicycle in the S-Bahn.

Sarah Tietze

Recent tech purchase?

Ingmar Streese

A new router for home.

Sarah Tietze

Own a car or share a car?

Ingmar Streese

Share a car.

Sarah Tietze

And now it gets tricky: Referendum fan or referendum critic?

Ingmar Streese

As a Democrat, I'm a referendum fan.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, over to you. You still have 11 seconds Berlin or Istanbul?

Stefan Kögl

I spent a lot of time in Istanbul, but I would answer Berlin today because the diversity and development is simply exciting.

Sarah Tietze

Last new app?

Stefan Kögl

I wouldn't say last new app, but I use a lot, for example just Google Maps because they tell me where to go and how, and especially with the different options.

Sarah Tietze

Electric or hybrid?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, the technology is evolving. At the moment hybrid. But I think in the future soon electric.

Sarah Tietze

And who would you like to meet for lunch?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, I must say that in the current situation I would like to meet my parents again. I think that would be good just now.

Sarah Tietze

We went slightly over time. 11 seconds to be exact, but I'm going to ignore that. I'm definitely warmed up. I hope you are too. And with that, we'll jump right into our discussion. We want to get really deep into the topic of mobility now. At the end of the podcast, we want to be able to imagine how we will move from A to B in 2030, and to approach this answer, Mr. Streese, I would like to start with you. You have, after all, been working on the implementation of the Mobility Act for two years. The Mobility Act virtually regulates the mobility of the future in Berlin. Can you give us a little insight into the Mobility Act? What exactly is being redesigned and what can we expect in the future?

Ingmar Streese

Yes, I'm very happy to do that. The Berlin Mobility Act is a pioneering law throughout Germany. It has the goal of people and city-friendly traffic. It puts traffic safety very high on the agenda. We want to take "Vision Zero" very seriously in Berlin. Among other things, by redesigning intersections, especially accident-prone intersections with serious injuries or even fatalities. Redesigning traffic signal systems, i.e. traffic lights. Making right turns safer, so that trucks and cyclists do not meet at the same time when turning. But at the same time, the law also promotes climate and environmental protection, among other things by decarbonising the electric bus fleet of the BVG. Ultimately, this law promotes a so-called environmental alliance of local public transport, bicycle traffic and pedestrian traffic. In public transport, we actually have the largest investment program of all time in Berlin, with 28 billion by 2035. It must also be said that in recent years, little has been invested in public transport in Berlin. You can see that in the old suburban trains and the old subways. We want to expand new streetcars, new S-Bahn lines, tighter intervals, the one or other subway addition or extension. At the same time, we will simplify the fare system. In the area of bicycles it is important that we actually get wide, comfortable bike lanes everywhere along main roads, which are also safe. In part, protected with bollards. We want to build a network of 3,000 kilometres of bike paths in Berlin. We want to build 100 kilometres of high-speed bicycle connections by 2030, so that commuters who want to use bicycles can also get to their jobs faster. Bicycle lanes are to be promoted, as well as bicycle parking garages, parking bars. Around 100,000 parking spaces by 2025. The last point we have already adopted is pedestrian traffic. We want to make it easier for pedestrians to cross through longer traffic lights.

That you no longer have to wait at the center island. That you can also cross at all arms of an intersection when the traffic light turns green. Some have only three or two traffic lights. We don't want that any more either. We want to make it barrier-free, the traffic in Berlin, altogether more human-friendly, more city-friendly. A section of the law for new mobility and commercial traffic is still in the works. It is not yet in parliament. But basically, it's about making delivery traffic more environmentally friendly, micro-mobility, but also securing space for delivery traffic and enabling new mobility through data and the like, but also providing a framework.

Sarah Tietze

Wow, that was quite a big and wide frame now. I'd like to take a quick stab at it. They called it "Vision Zero." For those who don't know, that means "zero traffic fatalities". Through change, right, in the future?

Ingmar Streese

Yes. Exactly.

Sarah Tietze

The mobility law has been in effect for two years now and I think 1500 km of bike lanes are planned. So far 100 have been implemented. There's still room for improvement, of course. Will you get things going as planned?

Ingmar Streese

We will probably get things going a little more. A large program like this always needs some start-up time. Through job creation, budget allocation, planning... You don't build a bike path in 3 months. Especially if it is a longer bike path. But as you said, we already have over 100 km. Plus the 27 km of pop-up bike lanes from last year, of which all, or almost all, will be converted into permanent bike lanes during this year. And of course there are more planned, so by the end of the year we will have another 50, maybe even 100 km. And that will continue for the next few years. So expanding even further. You're right, we're actually aiming for 3000 km of bike lanes. By 2030, which means that we all, the state and the districts, have to change up a gear, or two, or three, in terms of personnel, in terms of planning, so that we can achieve that. But I'm optimistic, because the mood in the city has changed. Everyone is noticing. Cycling is more environmentally friendly, faster in some cases, and healthier, but it also needs the space. And we want to create that space now.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Peter, 3,000 km of new bicycle routes in Berlin, extended traffic light times for pedestrians, a safer bicycle policy. That sounds very, very exciting. Of course, I know you are an absolute technology fan and very enthusiastic about technology, and in your job you are of course also entrusted with many digital solutions for the mobility revolution. Do you see any other trends coming our way?

Michael Peter

If you now address a general field of activity, then there are of course two trends that are changing the world right now. One is simply climate neutrality, which we are striving for. So with global warming, you have to remember, transport produces 25 percent of greenhouse gases. So there will be no climate neutrality without clean transport. And you could almost say that the second contradictory point is urbanisation. In 2050, 70 percent of people will live in cities. That means the need for mobility will continue to increase and the complexity of transport will also continue to increase. That means we need smart solutions. Today, we assume that it won't be possible without a backbone. That means the subway, the S-Bahn, which we also love here in Berlin and which is to be expanded as we just heard. And of course it has to run on electricity, logically. But also the passenger cars, which will continue to exist, which also have functions. Especially interurban areas in smaller cities - they will certainly also drive electrically. And yes, smart then means, when it comes to urbanisation, avoiding gridlock, avoiding gridlock in the cities. That means we must then be able to serve the last mile from this backbone. That means when I leave the subway, I have to somehow get where I want to go. The secretary of state just said it. The best way to do that is to have your bike with you on the subway. But there will be many, many other options, namely renting a bike, renting an electric scooter. Certainly the autonomous minibuses that you mentioned. Those are really a huge piece of the solution to then be car-free. In the end, it is a theme that I always find very exciting. A city and its citizens must ultimately decide and think about how they want to use the space that is available. Because one thing is clear, we won't be able to build unlimited traffic lanes for all modes of transportation. Then there will be no space left for ourselves, the people. And especially here in Siemensstadt, when I think of the S-Bahn, when I get off there, there should first be coffee, a kindergarten, but not necessarily an extremely large parking garage or six-lane connecting roads. And I think many cities today have reached the point where they are consistently taking the path of saying: What do I want to do with my space? So, that starts in cities like Singapore that don't give out license plates anymore. There are cities in China where I'm only allowed to enter the city on a certain day with an odd license plate, i.e., the last digit is odd. London has a city toll.

New York is introducing a congestion charge. And we've just heard, if I want to build new bike lanes, that costs space. And this decision is a very important one, that I think about how my city should function. And ultimately, however, I then also need an orchestrated system. I need a system that works together and that I, as a citizen, can control with my app, BVG app or Google Maps, so that I can say I want to get from A to B and how that works. These are the rough ideas that we are thinking about. It has to be said quite clearly that the car also plays a role in this. Perhaps not necessarily in the urban center, where we are already fighting for the last square meters of available space, but the art is actually to create the connections in such a way that driving a car is fun where it makes sense. And I assume that driving will also be green, in terms of electro-mobility.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, Mr. Peter talks about the App for Everything and smart technologies that then help us go that last mile, are these also ideas that you guys are developing that are important in Siemensstadt right now?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, of course. Well, I would say that it is first of all an advantage to plan a city in advance, because the past is very strongly oriented towards the car, the individual car, in cities that were built 100 years earlier. So, where there were no passenger cars yet. And of course we have the opportunity, Mr. Peter has already described it a bit, to redesign this district with the possibilities that exist in the future. The challenge is, of course, that we are starting now, which means that in the next five or six years we will still have regulations, especially in terms of actual time, and at the same time we will have to think in terms of 20 or 30 years. That means we also have to retain a certain flexibility. Some parts of the site will not be built on for another ten years. By then, we will be much, much further ahead. And that's what we need to sound out now. But in principle, we also see the possibility of digital development, which has already been mentioned, combining different mobility concepts. That was often the difficulty in the past - you arrived somewhere by train and didn't know how to get from A to B. Yes, you first had to find your way around the city. Yes, you first had to find your way around the city in order to find a bus, for example. So these are the things that function very, very smartly today, that are implemented very conveniently for the individual.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Peter, if I can pick up on what Mr. Kögl said. I imagine we'll arrive at the newly opened Siemensstadt S-Bahn station. How will that feel? What will have changed?

In contrast to the feeling when I arrive at a normal S-Bahn station in Berlin today.

Michael Peter

Well, I'm not the city planner, so I can only dream about what I would like to see.

Sarah Tietze

We dream here. You are in the right place.

Michael Peter

Wonderful. It could now be Berlin or Singapore or somewhere in the world. But of course we imagine that I arrive at the airport and want to go to a certain place in Siemensstadt. That means I can already see on my app where I'm getting into the train car, in the subway, people may already be congregating there who ultimately have the same final destination for the trip. In other words, people are already sitting next to each other who then want to get off in Siemensstadt and get on the same minibus. This is the classic, what we call 'rendezvous problem'. I get out of the station, oh my God, where do I have to go? Where is the cab waiting? I have to call there, went the wrong way. So all this, there should not be then, but I sit with people who want to go in the same direction. I go in minibus and there I have now the whole advantage of these minibuses. So they can be what we call demand-responsive. That means they can be ordered according to need. It is waiting there because that is where 20 people are. There are 5 minibuses with 4 seats. People are in a group who want to go to the same destination. That is, I have no more intermediate stop. I actually have the comfort of the cab. I have a pre-booked seat. But I have the cost of public transport. Because, of course, we must not forget that the buses we use today are characterised by the fact - I'm not talking about Berlin, I'm talking about the world - that the driver usually accounts for half the cost of a bus. And that makes the buses long so that they can transport a lot of people. But there I don't want to stop at every 100 meters. That means people have to walk to the station. That becomes very inconvenient. I could solve all this in a completely different way with the minibuses. And I can plan the minibuses in advance, of course, if the people plan their trip, and that's where it begins, I can plan it in advance, the minibuses. I know, for example, that there is a high demand to continue from Siemensstadt to Tegel. That means I have the right number of buses available and I have them available and electrically charged when I need them. That's how it could work.

Sarah Tietze

Is such a multimodal app like this really realistic, with all players joining in?

Because that also means that now in Berlin, for example, the BVG and all the sharing concepts would have to dance to the same tune.

Michael Peter

Yes, we build such apps as Siemens. We have a company that makes them, we have equipped entire countries with them, we have equipped entire cities with them, including all means of transportation that exist. We've done it in Switzerland, including ski lifts. There you can also pay for the ski lift in advance, in the same app. It's also a political issue, of course. It occurs very often in the world that the transport associations say: well, that's my distribution channel. And which company wants to give away their sales channel? And then you also need a political decision to say that you have to be able to sell tickets across the board. It has to be possible that when I buy a Deutsche Bahn ticket, I can also buy the S-Bahn at my destination. Otherwise it's not possible. Yes, of course, you said it, I am technology-savvy and have a lot of hope. I saw during Corona that many people also ended up saying: planning my trip has advantages, if I don't wait around at the station but know where I'm going and can reserve a seat. And to that extent, I think the overwhelming advantages will naturally prevail.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Streese, what is the city of Berlin doing to underline and support this implementation in a timely manner?

Ingmar Streese

So an app for everything is helpful, of course, but it's not everything. Mr. Peter has already said that if he arrives by airport bus or train in Siemensstadt, he also needs means of transport. That can be pooling, that can be minibuses, cabs. Of course, that can also be the rental bike or also the well presented footpath, which hopefully is not so large. What makes sense in such contexts is actually also these mobility stations or Jelbi Hubs, as this BVG product calls itself. Say for instance, I arrive at a major S-Bahn station, U-Bahn station or similar and have various options there. From e-trek scooters to rental bikes to cars to connecting to other modes of transportation. That's where apps help, of course. Whether it's an app from the BVG or the transport association or something private - we'll probably see what catches on. The one-for-all app, that's what many have already tried in various places, but so far it hasn't quite worked out. I'm still optimistic that it can work. Because I think it's very helpful. So in that respect, we are open. We are also open to autonomous transport. You just mentioned autonomous buses. We are also testing this on the Euref campus and in Tegel at various locations with small, slow-moving buses.

Of course, over the years and decades, this could actually be a model, a supplement, to local public transportation in Berlin.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, autonomous driving buses also in Siemensstadt?

Stefan Kögl

Yes, of course. I would paraphrase it like this. We are currently considering and playing through all the possibilities. We are still relatively early in the project. I think essential, first of all regarding urban planning, is that we don't have this rigid footpath, bike path, road, street/car road system, but so-called multimodal streets, so that depending on the development. You can also use the places or better said, the driving or road networks differently. And of course, over the years, we want to integrate everything and implement opportunities that present themselves to create the best possible connections. What will be fundamentally different is, of course, is that we now consider and regulate the distribution of, for example, individual car traffic. Yes, via appropriate systems. Via parking hubs, not parking hubs, sorry, mobility hubs, which will be located at certain points in the area. So not really in every house a comprehensive parking garage. But it also goes so far that in later planning phases we have elevated garages in the city plan right now, which may not be implemented then. So we deliberately don't work with underground garages everywhere, but leave developments open.

Sarah Tietze

Can I interrupt you once more? You just said multimodal roads, i.e. a road that is no longer separated into a bike lane and a car lane, but a road for everyone. Isn't that totally dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians?

Stefan Kögl

It is not dangerous if the current individual traffic drives accordingly slowly, and of course only in certain places. So rather than the city being mainly planned according to car traffic, it is now planned according to the question, how I can from A to B? So, this example, I arrive at the Siemensbahn S-Bahn station, for example, and have to get to the other end of the district, how do I get there without needing a car? And various options have already been mentioned here, which can then also be driven safely. Perhaps I would like to use another metaphor here. If we think about urban planning in particular, signs are a very important aspect that ruin urban development, that's how I would put it.

So, who hasn't stood in front of a big building and always somehow had a street sign in the picture? If we imagine that all cars drive autonomously, we don't really need any more signs or traffic lights.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Peter, why is the autonomous driving car more environmentally friendly than a self-driven car?

Michael Peter

Well, it's only more environmentally friendly if several people sit in the car together. Of course, as I said, I assume that all cars will eventually drive cleanly, whether it's hydrogen or electric. Eventually. But nonetheless, there's an energy balance, and if there are multiple people in the vehicle, it is of course cleaner. The self-driving vehicles will have virtually no benefit to personal transportation at all for now. So what do I gain from driving in a car from here to, let's say, Brandenburg? To be honest, I even like driving there. Me personally, Michael Peter, because driving a car is fun - a bit of steering. That is, there's no change at all. Of course, the progress becomes striking when we look at mass transit. And I have a self-driving vehicle there, simply because the bus driver currently accounts for half the cost. That's why I have cycle times of 10, of 20 minutes at night. The buses are very long. I have stops that are very far apart because now I have so many people in there that need transport. And I just can't drive demand-responsive. I can't, if there's somebody at the stop, send my bus out earlier. But if I have vehicles in the future that are self-driving, and I think that's why these companies like Uber etc. are researching like crazy, then we don't have the bicycles there anymore, then I can start a route when it's needed. The classic example for me is where I would start: Kurfürstendamm. If the bus no longer has to be subsidised, then I can go there as a company and say that I can offer 'Ku'damm' as a route, just as much as public transport. And if people use their app and say: I want to go from here to the KDW or the cross route to Bahnhof Zoo, then I'll look for four people who are standing close to each other, they'll be approached, they'll all get into this vehicle, and they'll go directly to Bahnhof Zoo without stopping in between. Of course, this takes up more space than the bus does today. That means I end up back at the argument of what I want to do in my city. Let me give you another example. We had some interesting discussions in Singapore. The question was: should another car-sharing company get a license? And then they said: well, what problem does that solve? By the way, when the autonomous cars start driving, it will be even worse. We'll have even more cars. And then they thought about linking the license to the fact that if I drive to a subway station, the price has to be half.

And if I drive above the subway long, then it's double. Or I'm only allowed to drive if there are at least three people in the car, because I'm basically draining the blood out of the local transport system. And these are quite interesting ideas about how you can ultimately create coordinated traffic even with licenses for such services. And this last kilometre problem solves all that. With a self-driving vehicle, of course, that would be very easy to do and could even be profitable. But that would make the cities we have very different. By the way, is also the reason why we assume that self-driving transport will come first in mass transit, because then we have the opportunity to support it with - hence the Ku'damm example - we have the opportunity to support it with appropriate infrastructure. And if you look at how the automotive industry is talking about fully autonomous vehicles today, you'll be happy if you can drive autonomously for 2 minutes on the highway. Maybe with better technology, then autonomously from on-ramp to off-ramp, but in downtown Berlin - and tomorrow with the same technology in a completely different downtown - that is far, far away. And that's why I'm equipping the Ku'damm with infrastructure and additional sensors. And I have created the space so that this minibus always travels along a predefined route and has 20 options, but the route is determined. That reduces the complexity by many, many orders of magnitude, which is why it will probably be in operation 10 years earlier. And that's why I think we'll see fully autonomous driving coordinated in mass transit. In the cities at first.

Sarah Tietze

Exciting. That's certainly also a good way to greatly decongest delivery traffic for the last mile, isn't it?

Michael Peter

That's not really my topic. I read a lot about drones and all kinds of things. I think it would certainly be necessary. Because if you look at how our consumer behaviour has changed, now also during Corona, it's become a real problem. That's certainly the case. Whereby I assume that if you do it this way, automated, we will be talking about time windows. Then the delivery traffic is just in the morning from 3 to 5 o'clock and after that the city is free and liveable.

Ingmar Streese

Ms. Tietze, I would like to contradict Mr. Peter on two points.

Sarah Tietze

Go ahead.

Ingmar Streese

Pooling, for one thing. That is attractive, of course. But you really also have to consider that at least in the traffic trials we had in Berlin, we found that pooling doesn't primarily take people from other cars, but from public transport. Or people who were previously walking. So it doesn't necessarily create less traffic, it can actually create more traffic. And the version they just had, Ku'damm instead of buses, pooling traffic in the future. That's cherry picking, of course. There will then be a few, probably lucrative routes, because so far pooling has not been lucrative, at least not in Berlin.... A few lucrative routes are then perhaps selected, perhaps also awarded. So I would not award it, because public transport has an important role. But that also has disadvantages. I think it's exciting to learn from cities like Singapore, under the motto: what works, what doesn't work. What could be transferred to Berlin, what not? We should be careful not to throw the baby out with the bathwater and not to weaken what is well-organised and actually better-equipped - we want to invest heavily into the public transportation system by bringing competition into the city, which would also bring many new vehicles into the city. And then we have rather toned down the vision of car-free neighbourhoods a bit. And that's actually where we want to go.

Sarah Tietze

Thank you very much for your comments. I also have a question for you: we are planning a completely new ecosystem in Siemensstadt. This means that a traffic network and a road network will be completely rolled out from scratch. How is the city involved in the dialog with Siemens? What is its role in the development of a completely new ecosystem?

Ingmar Streese

So the new ecosystem depends, on the one hand, on whether it is a municipal neighbourhood or a private investor? In this case, of course, we coordinated with Siemens at an early stage. We also coordinated the competition tender accordingly with our partner, the Senate Department of Urban Construction and Housing (SenSW). With the goal of making it relatively car-free. This is not a car-free neighbourhood - there are others in Berlin that are currently being planned in this way - but it is relatively car-free. With a parking level that is significantly lower than in the past. And based on this, you can of course say that if you want to establish or develop a car-free or low-car neighbourhood, what do you need? What do you need? Actually, it has already been mentioned. We certainly need parking facilities on the outskirts, so that people don't drive their cars directly into the city, because I thought that was an important aspect, this mixed traffic area.

Where children, adults, cyclists, but also those who need the car, mobility-impaired people drive at low speeds. But in general, such neighbourhoods should then be free from through-traffic and actually also from traffic that is not absolutely necessary. As I said, the severely disabled or the like, of course, need to be able to drive close to their housing. You also have to create exceptions for moving or the like. But otherwise you could - we are currently planning this for the Kurt Schumacher Quarter, for example - we also say that we will make bollards on the outside, which can then be reached by certain services, the emergency services, garbage collection or the like, so that they can lower them and then drive in. Driving at low speed in the neighbourhood and otherwise parcel services, for example, can set up their parcel boxes on the edge of the neighbourhood. It's already an increasing market that people don't have everything delivered directly to their door, even if they're sometimes not at home. Perhaps in home office a bit more often, but that will change again for many people. That would also reduce traffic in the neighbourhood. So there are many exciting ideas and possibilities. It's important that the administration and the investor actually work together so that there's no friction, but so that they complement each other.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, many people will now be asking themselves: Do I really want to give up my car? It's actually quite comfortable to drive from home to work every morning. And back again. I have my privacy. Especially in Corona times I meet no one, have my peace, germ-free ... wonderful. Why do we also have to adapt?

Stefan Kögl

So, I think that what you have described is perhaps not important to everyone. We have to take that into account as well. At the end of the day, it's about getting a grip on the enormously overflow of individual traffic and traffic in general. And of course the large number of people in the cities plays a role. It has to be said that they don't multiply, but there are more and more of them. Hopefully they will also multiply. And with greater significance over the next 50 years, or 20 to 30 years. This must be solved. We have to ask the questions today in order to have the answers in 20, 30 years. And that's what this is ultimately about. And what we are doing that right now... The bottom line is that many topics show that if the individual is offered a certain level of comfort in how things can be done and doesn't have to go through the hassle of combining several approaches, then it's usually okay for the individual or he likes to use it. And that's what we're doing right now or what's also developing in mobility right now. In order to then achieve, yes above all, lower-emission inner cities. So let me give you an example.

If I just take noise. There has also been a change in values. Whereas in the past a very loudly roaring car on the Ku'damm used to move people's eyes, today it is perhaps actually the case that when a car drives by with a buzzing noise, people take a look. And of course it's also much more pleasant in terms of the soundscape. So I'm quite sure that in 10 years there will be a completely different atmosphere and also a different perception.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Peter, in 10 years, would you take another driver's license?

Michael Peter

I don't know whether it will still be necessary. I think I would do it, because I don't think we should think that Berlin represents the whole of Germany just now. I even still think of Germany as an exception because we have very many urban spaces. But there is also the country. There are the vacations. It's already the case today that cars are predominantly used to get around during leisure time. But I think something important has just been said. In the city, people may not take the car because there are better offers. I think ultimately that's more the bandwagon effect that will force the change. And I think there are much better offers and possible concepts than everybody wanting to take the car to the same street downtown. It just doesn't make sense.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Streese, do you also believe that there are already better offers than the car today and especially in 10 years?

Ingmar Streese

Oh yes, I think so. There are already quite good offers, and there are also many Berliners who don't have a car at all. Far fewer than half of Berlin's households own a car. In that respect, we're making good progress. Of course, there's a difference between the city and the countryside. That is quite clear. Together with Brandenburg, we are of course trying to place greater emphasis on regional trains and the like in the transportation network, including the 20/30 rail expansion program, which also includes the Siemens line. But I could imagine a life without a car, if there is car sharing, if you want to transport something from time to time. If I have good bike paths, we'll work on that. Having good public transport, we'll work on that too. The sidewalks are also getting better. Also in terms of their width. In this respect, I think it's quite possible to live without a car in a city like Berlin. In some areas, we still have to improve public transportation, the connections, that's true. But we're working on that, too.

But I think there are of course a lot of people who need a car for work reasons or who have a disability or something like that. And for them it will be more pleasant if there are fewer cars. They can get through better and the delivery traffic, too, of course. They also need the space and the times when they can make deliveries. In a city with fewer cars, that would certainly be easier for those who really need it.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Peter, I have another question for you. How is Berlin actually positioned in on the global stage? If I compare with other major cities, we have a dense rail network. Are we particularly efficient and particularly advanced, or are we more in the middle or lagging?

Michael Peter

Of course, Berlin has an excellent subway network, also a good S-Bahn network, a good bus network. So public transport is well developed here. Of course, you can always ask yourself the question: How much did the company want to invest in vehicles in recent years? A Swiss person spends three times as much on rail transport as a German. There is always more. And certainly the vehicles are not all the very latest available. Today you may expect air conditioning, but in terms of the network, first of all, it's very, very densely equipped. I think, to give another number, most of the subways in the world are running at 20 percent occupancy these days. What efficiency is gained by that. You know the subway is overcrowded in the morning during rush hour, and you know it's empty for the rest of the day, and what you can still get out of it in terms of efficiency to make a city like Berlin really modern. That is quite outrageous. And in that respect, I think also these minibuses that I mentioned, I actually saw as a part of public transport. That you can optimise this overall system.

Sarah Tietze

But how do you make the S-Bahn more efficient? How do you make the capacity utilisation better?

Michael Peter

The classic, of course, would be to make it possible to drive autonomously again. I can then, for example, travel at night with shorter trains. That's what happens in some cases, and I can maintain the intervals. I can send even more trains on the line in the morning, because I of course don't have to schedule as much and I can couple more easily. Corona is a huge opportunity in this respect, when not everyone goes to work at the same time in the morning, but simply looks when the next train is empty. Today, of course, I can do that quite easily from a technical point of view and simply adjust my schedule slightly.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Streese, anyone thinking about Siemensstadt is naturally also very much looking forward to the new S-Bahn connection. What can we expect there?

Ingmar Streese

Yes, we want to work on the Siemensbahn as a priority, and we are already doing that by co-financing the first feasibility studies as a state. We have also received encouraging signals from the federal government that it would certainly finance a line. Once we will have completed the feasibility study in the course of the first half of the year, we will actually take the next steps. We will then move on to the planning approval process, so that we can start tendering and construction over the course of 2024. Of course, this will all take a few more years. But we also know that Siemensstadt will not be completed by 2023. In this respect, we hope that it will be completed within a reasonable timeframe. And at the same time, we are already planning the continuation in the direction of Hakenfelde, which will of course be a bit more difficult with the river Spree crossing. But there, too, we are at least looking at what and how that would be possible.

Sarah Tietze

Hakenfelde. How many more stations would that be from Siemensstadt?

Ingmar Streese

That's also has something to do with planning. Two or three stations must be built. It also makes sense because Spandau is getting a lot of new residential and development areas - not just Siemensstadt - so we have to strengthen the public transportation system in Spandau as a whole.

Sarah Tietze

And especially for the companies that will and should then settle in Siemensstadt, the connection to the airport is certainly not irrelevant.

Ingmar Streese

That is correct. And the Siemensbahn of course then ideally connects this neighbourhood to the other train connections for BER. We already have various lines of commuter trains, such as the Airport Express and, in the future, the Dresdner Bahn. In this respect, there are many ways to get from Siemensstadt to BER relatively comfortably and quickly.

Sarah Tietze

You just made reference to the timing.

In the press they wrote that the S-Bahn station is scheduled to open in 2028. Why is that taking so long?

Ingmar Streese

Yes, such planning process naturally takes time. On the one hand, we first have to check whether the existing routes can be used at all. We very much hope so. Where do we still need planning approval? Hopefully not in all places. One or two bridges will certainly be needed. And then, of course, there will have to be a Europe-wide tender invitation. A major construction project. It will take three quarters of a year to put out the tender. And then, of course, build it. So I think a time frame of 6 to 7 years is realistic.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, you said in our introductory game that you still drive hybrids today, but will certainly drive electric cars in the future. I've heard you laugh before about the power cable which you always have to drive from A to B. I hear that you have a better idea and believe that it will soon be replaced.

Stefan Kögl

Oh dear. I don't have a better idea, but you don't carry a tank hose around with you. So I think that's just the.... It's emblematic of the transition period for me. And now, when I see the development of the charging options or the charging power, I would assume that in 10 years we will be charging so quickly that there will be charging stations and there will be a cable hanging there and I won't have to drive around with the car, but I will drive there. There's a cable, I plug it into the car and five minutes later it's 80 percent full. Or something like that. Or maybe it will even work inductively. We'll see what the actual issue is. But I just wanted to make one point about what Mr. Peter just said, which I think is a very important aspect, the changing world of work, because of course we are also very much concerned with this. And this has not been mentioned in passing, so to speak, but by Mr. Peter in an incidental comment. However, we believe that it will have a considerable influence if employees are no longer bound to 9 to 5 and travel to the office very individually at different times of the day for this meeting or for this topic. So we believe that even after Corona we can experience a big difference compared to the past.

Ingmar Streese

So, I would like to confirm or support what was just said. Making working hours more flexible is, I think, a great thing. In general, the roads are not so crowded, the public transport is not so crowded, i.e. more evenly utilised. I think that helps a lot to avoid rush hour in all means of transport. I think it is also more pleasant for the individual people.

I hope that the companies will keep this tendency for the time after Corona. Many have flexible, more flexible working hours. Maybe it's also an approach for Siemensstadt to plan something like this right from the start, so that the 9-to-5 model doesn't actually become the permanent model, but a flexible model at home. Then you come in sometimes or you start later, you start earlier, I think that would help overall.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Peter?

Michael Peter

At Siemens, we have set ourselves the goal of being able to work at home 60 percent or 40 percent of the time after Corona, wherever that is possible, of course, but there are many, many, many people for whom that is possible. It makes the job more compatible, makes family life more compatible. It makes the partner's career more compatible. And I don't think productivity suffers as a result, but rather improves.

Sarah Tietze

Exciting aspect that we can definitely look forward to. And that brings me to my final question, which is the same question to all of you: What are you looking forward to when you think about the future? The future of mobility? Mr. Streese?

Ingmar Streese

I'm looking forward to getting around in an environmentally friendly, climate-protecting way and, above all, with very little noise. I also have a special expectation and hope that drones, when they come more strongly into the world, will fly as quietly as possible.

Sarah Tietze

Stefan, what will change your life in a positive way?

Stefan Kögl

So yes, a lot of things have already been mentioned, but I think I'm looking forward to seeing the picture that was drawn earlier by Mr. Peter. For example, I arrive from a flight and have already ordered an autonomous car somehow. Maybe there are still two or three standing around and it will drive me directly to where I want to go. I don't have to search around, I don't have to think about it. I find this vision interesting and am excited to experience it.

Sarah Tietze

Mr. Peter?

Michael Peter

You asked earlier, Sacramento or Bangkok? I said Berlin. I like people. What I like about Berlin is when I walk, I see cafes, restaurants everywhere, I see parks, I see children's playgrounds. And that's where I actually hope in the future that exactly with what we just discussed, we have the possibility to make our streets look very different. I often think to myself when I walk through Berlin, the most beautiful streets, when I look at Kantstrasse - that is one of the most beautiful streets - the apartments would be three times as beautiful if there were urban traffic, large bicycles, bicycle paths, playgrounds in the middle. You have to consider which streets of Berlin you regard as valuable today and which you don't. It's really just about where there's traffic and where you can live. And I see that as a huge opportunity, the way we just discussed it, that our city could become even more beautiful and even more liveable. And I'm looking forward to seeing that in the next few years.

Sarah Tietze

A nice closing word. Thank you very much, Mr. Peter. Thank you very much, Mr. Streese. Thank you very much, Stefan. I definitely got excited about the future, too, about a greener future, more cycling, less congestion and less stress. Thank you very much for the interview. If you enjoyed listening, be sure to tune in again next time. In our next episode, we'll have Berlin's mayor as our guest. And if you've always wanted to ask Michael Müller a question, feel free to send it to us at zukunftsart@siemens.com. Thanks for listening. Bye from Siemensstadt and see you soon.

S-Bahn announcement

Next Stop: Siemensstadt.