

Future of Mobility in Switzerland

Switzerland is receptive to new mobility trends; reservations toward regulatory measures are greater than those toward new technologies

April 2021

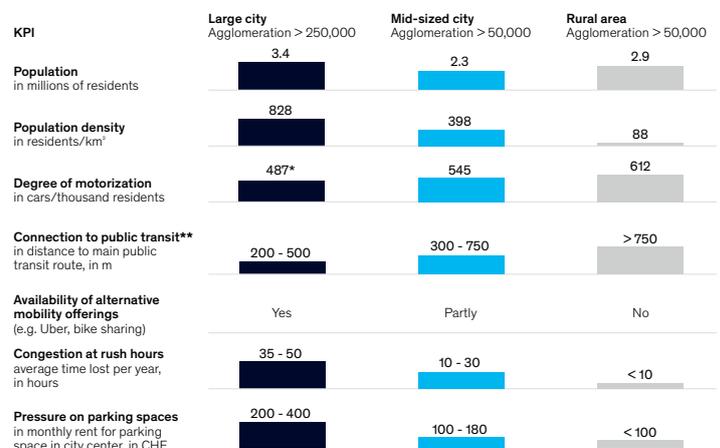
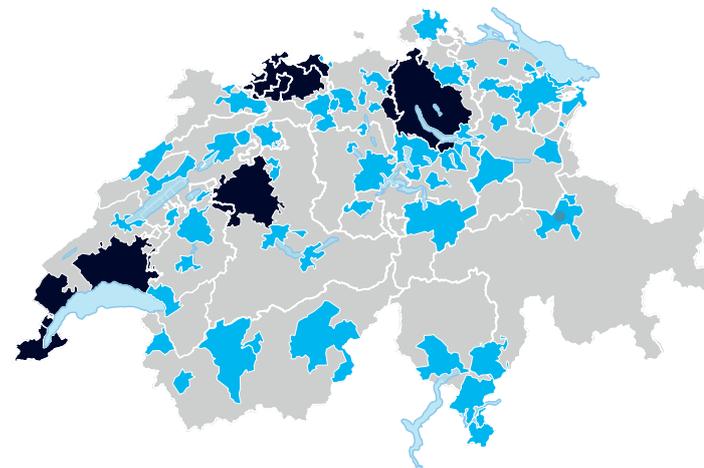
Switzerland is considered a leader in mobility in international comparison – especially in public transport. Despite this strong starting position, several challenges remain, mainly because of the strong demand growth for passenger and freight transport. Since expanding the existing infrastructure alone cannot solve these pressures, the discussion for solutions has turned to alternative approaches, such as mobility pricing. Parallel to this, new concepts and technologies – for example, micromobility or electromobility – offer new opportunities to make mobility more streamlined and efficient.

To better understand the opportunities and potential repercussions of relevant mobility trends, McKinsey & Company devised a study to find out what private individuals and companies think about the mobility of the future. For this purpose, the tried and tested McKinsey ACES survey was conducted for the first time in Switzerland in fall 2020, supplemented with questions specifically designed for Switzerland. This was expanded by a structured survey of 40 companies from various sectors and regions of Switzerland.

Key findings

1. When it comes to mobility, there is not one Switzerland – but three. There are major differences within Switzerland with regard to about how mobility is used and the challenges this poses. While high density and expensive land are responsible for traffic congestion and pressure on parking spaces in larger cities, this creates opportunities for alternative transport offerings, such as tightly networked public transit or shared mobility services. By contrast, in rural areas, which are home to 34% of the Swiss population, cars remain the most popular form of transport, not least due to a viable lack of alternatives.

Switzerland breaks down into three regions: large cities, mid-sized cities, and rural areas



* City of Zurich: 351
** Based on ARE grade: Large city A/B, mid-sized city B/C, rural area C or lower
Source: Statistik der Schweizer Städte 2020 (Bundesamt für Statistik), 2019 Global Traffic Scorecard (Ivrix)

2. Acceptance of public transport in Switzerland is very high – it is the chosen mode of transportation for commuting for 59% of Swiss. However, even the first-rate, existing public transit offering is not sufficient to serve most journeys – 65% of passenger kilometers are still completed by car.

3. Congestion and a lack of parking spaces are currently the biggest challenges facing the Swiss transport system.

Other problems such as inadequate integration into the public transport network or transport charges are only relevant for specific regions or sectors.

4. Swiss are receptive to electric vehicles. 32% of Swiss are considering buying an all-electric vehicle and companies are even willing to absorb the higher costs involved in converting their fleets to electric. In addition, 71% of the population would like to see diesel heavy goods vehicles banned from entering cities.

5. 53% of the population in large agglomerations are in favor of a congestion charge. 57% of rural residents and also a majority of the businesses surveyed are against such measures, especially as they often lack attractive alternatives to private road transport.

6. 56% of the companies surveyed expect their profitability to suffer due to mobility pricing. Many companies are skeptical because although they expect higher costs for road use, it is difficult to estimate the tangible advantages, such as time gained.

7. Industries depend on mobility in very different ways.

Only very specific sectors are directly dependent on mobility, such as logistics, retail, laborers, or catering. Together these industries employ just over 30% of the workforce.

8. Regulatory uncertainties have a direct impact on willingness to invest, especially among smaller companies.

Companies are much more critical of further regulatory intervention in the transport system than private individuals. However, it is not only the specific interventions themselves that place a burden on companies; the uncertainty regarding the direction of medium-term mobility policy (with regard to concerning parking restrictions, CO2 taxes, etc.) is already prompting some of the companies surveyed to postpone investments.

9. COVID-19 has provided some short-term relief to the transport system, with 20% fewer hours of congestion in Zurich in 2020.

As the companies surveyed expect to continue to make increased use of home offices in the future, part of the relief this has provided could continue. However, this does not constitute a sustainable solution to the traffic problems currently facing the country.

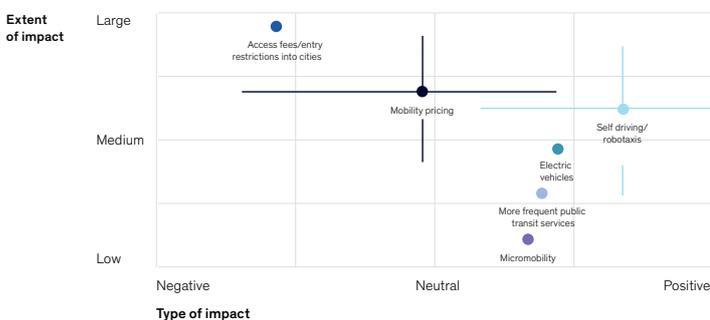
Opinions are more divided among companies than they are among individuals

The opinions are more divided among companies than they are among individuals when it comes to the challenges facing mobility. Besides, perception differs from one sector to the next. While new technologies and offerings are generally seen positively, companies take a more critical view of regulatory measures – especially when it is difficult to predict the tangible benefits for companies (e.g., time saved).

Companies recognize the opportunities offered by new technologies, but are wary of negative repercussions in terms of regulation

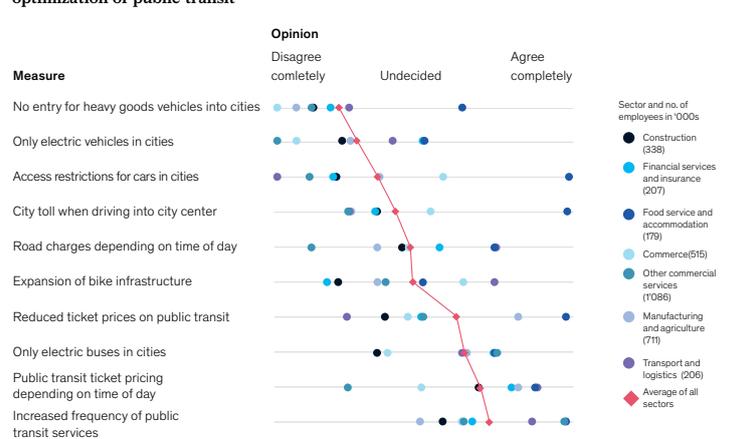
Analysis from company survey

What impact will new mobility trends have on your company?



Note: The bars show the dispersion of the answers (where relevant).
Source: McKinsey-Unternehmensbefragung in der Schweiz 2020/21

Companies take a critical view of additional charges or restrictions – support for optimization of public transit



Source: McKinsey Unternehmensbefragung in der Schweiz 2020/21

Authors

Henrik Becker, Associate, Zurich | Thibaut Müller, Partner, Geneva | Florian Nägele, Partner, Zurich | Marco Ziegler, Senior Partner, Zurich

Media contact

Dominic Baumann | Head of Communication | McKinsey & Company, Zurich | +41 44 876 8777 | Dominic_Baumann@mckinsey.com