



Monorail at VDNkH: Hope of New Life

As a type of public transport, the monorail at VDNkH is not that important today, given that it is not very conveniently located and has a small passenger flow (about 13,000 people daily use this kind of transport). Another disadvantage of the monorail (the only one across Russia) is that this line marred the skyline in this part of the city. Vigorously discussed at present is the opportunity of MMTS dismantling and construction of a new metro line in this place, as well as the possibility to implement some other projects here. We asked our real estate market experts to discuss what project could possibly replace the monorail. Since 220m was invested in the monorail system, we suggested that our experts should not propose any structural alteration, but just think of some new designation and functions that would not require a massive redevelopment.

Detailed concept of the new project

High Line Park in
Manhattan,
New York

Polina Zhilkina, Director of Strategic Consulting CBRE

As one of the possible reconstruction options for the existing MMTS I'd propose the creation on its basis of a recreational zone on the example of High-Line Park in New York's Manhattan.

In essence this is a promenade alley that became one of the city's landmarks. This concept would ideally suit the Moscow monorail, given that the minimum reconstruction budget – the system of stations, staircases, escalators and elevators remains the same, and there will be no extra outlay on the railroad dismantling. A comfortable promenade zone could be fashioned on top of the monorail where people will not only be able to stroll, but also to have some recreation, to have a cup of coffee, a family dinner, examine a picture gallery, buy souvenirs, etc. If the city is able to offer its residents such an oasis in a sultry megalopolis, the number of visitors to this site will be way higher than the passenger traffic of the monorail at most successful times. Tranquil pastime and relaxation can be combined with elements of sports and entertainments. For example the supports could be refitted into rock-climbing tracks in imitation of natural rocks surrounded by verdure. The height of 4–6 meters can also be used to erect vertical mazes, rope towns, and as a place of small attractions. Children's playgrounds, mini museums, thematic restaurants can also be arranged at the stations.

Mobile
interactive
Museum of
Moscow History

Roman Tkachenko, Head of RD Group Representatives

Originally the monorail was built for entertaining and tourism purposes and, to a lesser extent, as an alternative to the traditional types of public transport. To turn the MMTS into one of the most popular objects of note in the city I propose to create on its basis a mobile interactive Museum of Moscow History. Trains need to be made roofless. For the museum to function at any time of the year, regardless of weather conditions, a tunnel needs to be built over the monorail, whose inner walls would be panoramic on the analogy with the well-known New York Planetarium. Thus the monorail as an attraction would be more appealing and might claim the role of Moscow's most colorful contemporary landmark. For where else in the world will you see mobile cinema museums?

Promenade
zone over the
city

Evelina Ishmetova, Partner & Vice-president of consulting GVA Sawyer

My ideal is a "promenade zone over the city." The existing monorail is covered with strips or footpaths to be planted with grass, shrubs and small trees. Extra entrances and exits will be needed from the ground level to the promenade level along with benches, game zones, etc.

Venue to host
cultural events

Alla Tigner, commercial director of the asset management complex, PSN Group

I'd suggest the following arrangement: the stations need to be made closed (by covering them with single-styled glass walls) and venues for various events are to be fashioned on each. A program renewed once a month would be most effective. Say, one month could be devoted to the World's Cuisines – during that period each station is turned into a mini restaurant, treating visitors to national dishes from well-known restaurants for a standard pay. The given concept has already been tested by well-known restaurants in Paris and I believe it is possible for this concept to be a success in Moscow as well. The next month could be devoted to a children's program, with workshops and master classes opening at each of the stations and performances for kids and their parents staged every day. The rolling stock would run in the previous mode, transporting the guests from one station to another, and on each they'll discover something new.

High Line Park
in New York's
Manhattan

Mikhail Kurnev, CEO of Storm Properties

Very many urban-development innovations, thought to be the latest achievements in the world of real estate, often represent but a plagiarism of what was happening in the West several years or decades ago. I suggest that a very successful US project be examined, since the history of High Line in central New York is very exciting. An overland industrial railroad built back in the 1930's had functioned nearly 50 years. The last train ran over it in 1980 and it took two more decades to decide on its future fate. Certain groups insisted on the High Line being dismantled or rebuilt, but that would require huge investments from the city. A very unusual proposal was put forward in the 1990s: to redevelop the High Line into an urban public garden – "a new version of the hanging gardens"! The railway project champions were named "Friends of the High Line" and the debates ended only after Michael Bloomberg, a well-known businessman and talented steward, took the mayor's post. He gave his OK to the city financing the first phase of the public garden. The construction works that started in the 2000s resulted in the opening of the first length in 2009 and of the second section – in 2011. Now the third phase is under construction to be completed in 2015–16. The platform is somewhat narrow, but its edges are protected by dependable parapets, with flower-beds, benches and pergolas set up inside. The public garden offers a bird's eye view of the city, which makes it very popular both among the New Yorkers and among the tourists from different parts of the world.

Target audience



Roman Tkachenko
Роман Ткаченко

High Line Park in Manhattan, New York

Polina Zhilkina

Talking about the public garden zone at the site of MMTS, the target audience will depend on the infrastructure. Ideally this will be Muscovites of all ages, with and without families as well as inland and foreign tourists. If the project is indeed realized as unique leisure and entertainment space and a competent PR campaign is conducted, its popularity will be comparable with that of other well-known "tourist routes" in the capital city.

Mobile interactive Museum of Moscow History

Roman Tkachenko

I believe at least once in their lifetime each Moscow resident will want to visit such a museum; also it should be remembered that every year Moscow is visited by more than 3.5m tourists, let alone foreigners who come to the capital city on business and do not know what to do after a business meeting. The museum should operate in tune with the megalopolis, until late at night – only in this way will it be possible to reach the most difficult audience – office clerks who can seldom afford visiting any exhibitions because of their tough schedules. The cars should be reequipped with upholstered, reclining chairs. Thanks to a video projector it will be possible to upgrade the walk-through video on a regular basis, change the program, and use 3D and 5D effects. Given that VDNkH is the terminal station of the MMTS, the entry ticket should also give an opportunity to visit the exhibition venues of VVC.

Promenade zone over the city

Evelina Ishmetova

Residents of the nearest apartment buildings, Mums with babies, couples, kids, visitors to VVC (All-Russian Exhibition Center) and Ostankino Estate can all be part of the target audience.

Venue to host cultural events

Alla Tigner

The target audience of the first conceptual development option is youth and middle-aged people, families with kids. The cultural concept might attract a vast audience including numerous tourists. This may turn the monorail into one of the most remarkable elements on the Moscow tourist map. Close proximity to VVC implies great prospects of collaboration with the monorail: a large part of the VVC audience might also be the monorail audience.

High Line Park in New York's Manhattan

Mikhail Kurnev

Any public garden in the megalopolis becomes a magnet for all people, regardless of their age, professional activity or social standing. Mums with their babies, schoolchildren and students after their classes, retired folks, tourists and many others would be delighted to spend some time in a green "oasis" with amenities in the midst of urban jungle. The comfort of different groups should be addressed and there will be no problem with the audience.



Mikhail Kurnev
Михаил Курнев

On monetization

High Line Park in Manhattan, New York

Polina Zhilkina

The outfit of the stations and placement of small points of sale and catering outlets on the line will bring rental proceeds which will reach their maximum during the "high" tourist season – from May to October. The conduct of various events, sponsorship and the placement of ads will be other sources of revenue for a management company.

Mobile interactive Museum of Moscow History

Roman Tkachenko

A regular entry ticket to the MMTS Museum should not cost more than 450–500 rubles, with special prices for schoolchildren, students, retired folks, and people with disabilities. Suppose that 200 tickets will be purchased to a 40 or 60-minute seance. This means that the museum will be able to earn more than 1m rubles a day, whereas now the maximum daily return of the monorail is about 260,000 rubles.

Promenade zone over the city

Evelina Ishmetova

By and in itself this object is not for profit, but like any quality public zone with amenities, it will push up housing prices in this area, so it's difficult to calculate the direct effect.

Venue to host cultural events

Alla Tigner

Suppose the entry ticket to each of the exhibition venues will cost 150 rubles – then even under the current scanty passenger traffic of the monorail (13,000 people daily, according to the statistics for October 2012 provided by RBC) the monthly proceeds for the investor will reach about 59m rubles.

High Line Park in New York's Manhattan

Mikhail Kurnev

Getting back to the High Line experience, the following thing is obvious: changing the project's designation, the city came into possession of considerable land assets – the plots of land which could not earlier be used because of their close proximity to the railroad turned into attractive construction spots. Once the public garden was finished, the value of adjacent real estate was markedly appreciated and, selling it to private developers, the city could earn a pretty penny and recoup its investments. Shopping centers, feeling their chance to harness the traffic generated by the public garden, also emerged. Extraordinary residences with views of and exits to the former platforms were developed. At present ways of further infrastructure refinement are being debated – the matter concerns the construction of restaurants and sports facilities. Surely the task is exacerbated by the structural peculiarities of the railroad, but it is not that difficult to widen it at some spots. What is important, New York's High Line operates 24 hours a day; it is well-lit and guarded during the nighttime. Therefore there is a daily flow of visitors who enjoy their time there.

Problems with concept realization and ways of overcoming them

High-Line Park in Manhattan, New York

Polina Zhilkina

The key challenges include: 1) working out the strategy of project development and 2) correct positioning of the project both for partners and for the end user. Finding investors and/or allocating budgetary funds, conducting minimum redevelopment, ennobling the adjacent territories, developing an effective marketing campaign and putting professional management in place are more applied issues, whose successful settlement depends on the first two points.

Mobile interactive Museum of Moscow History

Roman Tkachenko

The main problem with the delivery of such an unprecedented project will be the search of investors, ready to stake on the bright future of the economically depressive project (at present). The project appears to be feasible from technological perspectives, for the world abounds in the case studies of interactive museums that could share their experience and know-how. The main thing is ensuring the thermal resistance of the tunnel and a worthy level of the project operation and services.

Promenade zone over the city

Evelina Ishmetova

We already mentioned the first problem, which is financing; the second problem is operation. It won't be easy to create and upkeep a promenade zone where people would feel comfortable even during the cold season. Roofing part of the zone and placing FMCG goods, children's goods and small cafes there is an excellent idea.

Venue to host cultural events

Alla Tigner

The key problem is realization of the cultural concept and in finding investors ready to run the risk of investing in an innovative project which in turn is fraught with the risk of possible conceptual upgrade, given that such measures require certain flexibility from the investor.

High Line Park in New York's Manhattan

Mikhail Kurnev

I see the main problem in passing respective regulations. Even the elaborate project economics are in need of some support from the government. In other words, for private money to be invested into the project it must be promoted by the authorities. Another problem is structural peculiarities and surroundings. For instance, High Line does not represent an extensive, never-ending public garden: the railroad was partly dismantled at those spots which the city needed. Its extension is only 2.3 km, with 1.5 km already converted to a public garden. The Moscow monorail is twice as long and the platforms are narrower. The fact that there is only a motor road running near and no edifices are available can be both an advantage and disadvantage in the process of overhaul. Another important aspect is people's psychology. High Line in New York was never an unsuccessful or ill-thought project: a railroad had existed during a century at this location, an overland monorail operated 50 more years and is now perceived by New York residents as a landmark or a "veteran" – it's like a vessel whose service life is over and it is anchored forever. Our monorail is a new build, an unsuccessful project whose very looks evoke negative associations. So regardless of what emerges at this site, the new project will be in need of very strong positioning and public support.

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