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What drives success where road and rail projects intersect? The Octavius approach

Transport infrastructure projects where road and rail networks intersect can be among the most complex to deliver, but Octavius have the skills and experience necessary to deliver these projects successfully. For a start there will be two infrastructure owners to consider, each with their own technical requirements and regulatory framework.

A project solution that allows a highway to cross rail lines can be the key that unlocks economic development. As well as new infrastructure, sometimes there are existing assets such as bridges and crossings that need to be improved or maintained.

Seamless, streamlined project delivery in these circumstances calls for more than technical competence. Strong relationships, collaboration and a relentless focus on identifying and achieving the best outcomes are essential.

Increasingly, we find that by applying Lean principles we can achieve not just efficient delivery but better outcomes across a range of dimensions: economic, timing and environmental. Our approach is also underpinned by our values of Quality, Integrity, Openness, Caring and Progressive, as well as our four key pillars of Assured and Safe Delivery, Exceptional Value, Learn, Grow & Thrive and Sustainable Legacy.

Here we look at some of the critical factors that drive successful delivery where highways and rail networks intersect.





Solutions developed from objectives

Technical competence and trust-based relationships offer vital reassurance to infrastructure owners. This is vital when we deliver multi-modal projects. But there's often a stage before this where we go back to the basics of what the project sets out to achieve.

We might, for example, be asked to build a tunnel so that a road can cross a rail line. If we can see that a bridge would be a cheaper and easier solution that could still be delivered with minimal disruption to rail services, this would be the alternative we'd propose. This would be supported by all the technical detail needed to prove feasibility and secure approval from Network Rail.

Building trust

Trust has to be earned and built progressively. It's something Octavius has always valued and invested significant time in. There are no shortcuts. It takes time and commitment to understand what drives our customers' decisions and what's important to them.

The payback is that we can then deploy our technical competence to deliver better solutions that work for all stakeholders. Our customers keep coming back because they enjoy the experience of working with us. They trust us to deliver exactly what they need.

When a highway needs to cross a rail line we understand what each asset owner expects in terms of technical standards. We know that it's essential to keep any line and road closures to an absolute minimum. We have the required technical skills, we understand each stakeholder's priorities and have the collaborative approach needed to achieve consents and approvals.

Design and innovation

A transactional mindset rarely leads to the best solution and is more likely to result in contractual disputes. It's far better to coordinate the input of road and rail specialists into an integrated design process.

The Leigh Road Bridge project is a good example. The project aimed to create a new road bridge linking areas of land owned by SEGRO to unlock further economic development.

Our engineers came up with a design solution that minimised the number and duration of line closures that would be needed to build it. The design solution also recognised Network Rail's priority of minimising future maintenance needs. This, together with the excellent working relationship we've established with Network Rail ensured rapid approval for the scheme.

Aligning priorities

Rapid and successful project delivery is usually the result of listening, fully absorbing what different stakeholders tell us about their priorities, and then co-creating the most beneficial all round solution, which also incorporates environmental and social value factors. This is as much about culture as it is about processes and technical expertise.

A similar collaborative approach ensured the successful delivery of a traffic and pedestrian overbridge at Apsley. The project was commissioned by Bovis Homes who recognised the need to upgrade a narrow traffic bridge and separate footbridge over the electrified West Coast Mainline near Hemel Hempstead.

We managed all Network Rail approvals, including temporary and permanent works proposals in line with NR standards. Our in-house management team arranged all possessions to simplify the entire process for our customer. When it comes to unfamiliar technical standards and approval processes it's a huge reassurance to be told: 'you can safely leave all of that to Octavius.'

During the project, monthly review meetings between our site team, Mott MacDonald, Bovis, Network Rail and Hertfordshire County Council addressed any issues and discussed proposed methods and temporary works designs for upcoming activities.



Delivering confidence

Developing collaborative working relationships is the most effective way to deliver the priorities of all stakeholders and asset owners and operators. The diverse nature of desired outcomes - from efficient delivery to sustainability - make the Lean methods we bring to all major projects increasingly essential.

We're past the point where these benefits are simply desirable, they're now 'must haves.'

Our approach simplifies projects, improves outcomes and delivers the confidence needed to secure rapid scheme approval where different transport modes intersect. It can even be the difference between schemes happening or not.



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To learn more about our approach to project delivery across the whole of the UK, visit our [Transport Infrastructure Resource Centre](#) or contact us by email at hello@octaviusinfrastructure.co.uk