

# Breaking Down Barriers: Why Transport Operators Struggle to Evolve into MaaS-Ready Systems



Mobility as a Service (MaaS) has long promised to transform how people move—integrating buses, trains, micromobility, and more into seamless, user-centric journeys. But for transport operators, that transformation isn't just about deploying apps or adding contactless payments. It requires a fundamental shift in how operations are structured, integrated, and scaled.

The challenge? Most operators are still stuck with fragmented, outdated systems that were never designed to support real-time coordination or cross-modal service delivery. These legacy systems aren't just slowing progress—they're actively standing in the way of a more unified and efficient mobility ecosystem.

## **The Invisible Costs of Legacy Systems**

Transport operators often rely on infrastructure and software stacks that date back decades. While they may still function, these systems hide major inefficiencies. The cost of maintaining and operating legacy platforms is rarely tracked—or even understood—because it’s so difficult to quantify. Some operators have effectively given up trying.

Without a clear picture of what their systems are costing them, operators can’t make informed investment decisions. This lack of visibility becomes a critical barrier to MaaS-readiness. Legacy systems drain resources, hinder flexibility, and prevent operators from adopting modern technologies that could improve both rider experience and operational efficiency.

## **Infrastructure That Can’t Keep Up**

The software isn’t the only thing holding operators back. Many transit systems are built on aging physical infrastructure—from outdated ticketing terminals to limited connectivity hardware—that simply can’t support the demands of a digital, real-time, multimodal network.

Replacing that infrastructure can seem daunting. And for many smaller or mid-size operators, the assumption has been that modernization requires high capital expenditure. But that’s changing. Cloud-based, modular solutions now allow operators to upgrade systems incrementally, without the need to rip and replace everything at once. This shift—toward near-zero CapEx upgrades—is essential for operators trying to modernize without breaking the bank.

## **System Fragmentation Is a Core Problem**

Even where digital tools exist, they’re often siloed. One vendor handles ticketing. Another handles fleet ops. Yet another is used for planning or reporting. These systems don’t talk to each other, creating redundant workflows and slow, error-prone decision-making.

A true MaaS-ready system requires a unified platform—a single backbone that connects payments, operations, and customer relationships across the entire transit experience. Instead of simply digitizing what’s already broken, operators need to unify around platforms that are scalable, flexible, and built to grow with their networks.

## **The Role of Trusted Partners**

Getting to MaaS-readiness can’t be done in isolation. Strategic partnerships—with credible, mobility-focused technology providers—play a crucial role. But credibility alone isn’t enough. Transit operators need partners who understand the intricacies of public transit, and who can tailor solutions to specific local and operational realities.

Payments integration is a good example. Partnerships with global brands like Mastercard and Visa bring scale and trust—but to unlock real value, they must be paired with mobility expertise. The solutions must serve riders just as intuitively as paying for groceries or ordering food at a restaurant, and they must empower transit agencies to manage services in real-time.

## **Urgency Meets Opportunity**

Urbanization, sustainability demands, and rising rider expectations are all converging. Public transit is no longer a nice-to-have—it's becoming essential infrastructure. And when it fails to deliver, cities feel the strain. Mobility gaps become social constraints.

There's a growing consensus: we can't afford to wait. The shift to MaaS-readiness must happen now. Fortunately, the technology exists. The know-how is available. And the momentum is building.

The time for slow pilots and isolated upgrades is over. What's needed is a unified, all-in-one platform that minimizes capital costs, scales effortlessly, and delivers real-time visibility across the entire network—from planning to payments to passenger satisfaction.

## **Ready for the Future**

Transport operators stand at a crossroads. On one side: the burden of legacy systems, siloed operations, and invisible costs. On the other: the opportunity to deliver faster, simpler, more equitable mobility.

The path forward begins with clarity—about what's holding systems back and what's possible when software becomes the foundation for scalable, integrated service. With the right tools and partners, MaaS is no longer a vision for the future. It's a step we can take today.