

Optimising Traffic Operations at Signalised Intersections via Transit Signal Priority

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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April 2021

Required wording for the certificate of original authorship

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, *Mina Ghanbarikarekani* declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of *PhD*, in the *School of Civil and Environmental Engineering/Faculty of Engineering and IT* at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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Date: 26/04/2021

Journal Papers

❖ Published

- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Qu, X., Zeibots, M, Qi, W., (2018), “Minimizing the average delay at intersections via pre-signals and speed control”, Published in Journal of Advanced Transportation.

❖ To be submitted

- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Wijayaratna, KP., Zeibots, M., Qu, X., Slack-Smith, D., (2020) “A Novelty in Transit Signal Priority System to Reduce Private Vehicles’ Time Penalties through Speed Optimisation of Light Rail Vehicles”.
- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Wijayaratna, KP., Zeibots, M., “Incorporation of the Speed Optimisation of Light Rail Vehicle Algorithm with SCATS”.
- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Wijayaratna, KP., Zeibots, M., “How to Implement the Transit Signal Priority Algorithm on Australian Traffic Light Systems”.

Conference Papers

❖ Published

- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Zeibots, M., Qu, X., (2019), “Optimization of Signalized Intersections Equipped with LRV Signal Priority Systems by Minimizing Cars’ Stop Time”, 2019 IEEE Intelligent Transportation Systems Conference (ITSC).
- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Zeibots, M., Zou, Y., (2019), “An Algorithm for Reducing Vehicles’ Stop Behind the Bus Pre-signals”, Conference of Smart Transportation Systems 2019.
- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Zeibots, M., Qu, Q., Arab, A., (2019), “Minimizing the stop time of private vehicles at intersections with LRT signal priority systems”, World Conference on Transport Research – WCTR 2019.

❖ To be submitted

- Ghanbarikarekani, M., Wijayaratna, KP., Zeibots, M., “A Novelty of Transit Signal Priority System: Introduction to Implementation”.

Awards

- ❖ My paper titled ‘An algorithm for reducing vehicles' stop behind the bus pre-signals’ was selected as Best Student Paper – Runner Up (Road Transport) at KES International Conference on Smart Transportation Systems 2019 (KES-STIS-19), Malta, 16-19 June 2019

Acknowledgement

There are a number of people and organisations that made this research project a reality. Firstly I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Michelle Zeibots, Dr. Kasun Wijayaratna and Professor Xiaobo Qu who have sacrificed their valuable time and passed on their vast knowledge in guiding me through the PhD process. I am incredibly grateful for their invaluable suggestions, detailed explanations and constructive criticism of the work. They have been amazing mentors whom I will always look up to. Research is a collaborative process. The University of Technology Sydney, iMOVE Australia and Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW) played a vital role in paving the way toward accomplishing this research. I am also fortunate to be a recipient of an iMOVE CRC doctoral scholarship involving financial contributions from TfNSW. I would also like to specifically thank my wonderful parents for their enduring support, encouragement and patience. This research would never have been possible without them.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	1
1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Public transit	3
1.2. Public Transport Prioritisation Solutions.....	6
1.2.1. Bus pre-signal.....	8
1.2.2. LRV signal priority.....	10
1.3. Scope of this study.....	12
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1. Bus pre-signal.....	17
2.2. LRV signal priority.....	21
2.2.1. Coordinating traffic signals and real-time policies.....	23
2.2.2. Predicting the arrivals of public transport vehicles.....	25
2.2.3. Adaptive traffic control systems.....	27
2.3. Summary.....	28
3. NOVEL BUS PRE-SIGNAL DEVELOPMENT AND MODELLING	30
3.1. The Procedure of the IQD Model.....	31
3.2. The procedure of the TIQ Model.....	38
3.3. Results and Discussion	42
3.3.1. IQD Model Tested on the Study Intersection.....	42
3.3.2. TIQ Model Tested on the Study Intersection	45
3.3.3. Comparison of IQD Model and TIQ Model.....	47
3.4. Conclusion	48
4. NOVEL LRV SIGNAL PRIORITISATION ALGORITHM DEVELOPMENT AND MODELLING	50
4.1. Stakeholder Engagement	52
4.2. SOLRV Algorithm Formulation	53
4.2.1. Green extension	58
4.2.2. Red reduction.....	59
4.3. Numerical Analysis	61
4.4. Algorithm Testing: Microsimulation Modelling.....	64
4.5. SOLRV Algorithm Application: Single Intersection Case Study	67
4.5.1. Study Area Description.....	68
4.5.2. Modelling Parameters Set and Scenario Testing Approach	69

4.6.	SOLRV Algorithm Application: Corridor Case Study	71
4.6.1.	Description of Study Area.....	71
4.6.2.	Modelling Parameters Set and Scenario Testing Approach	71
4.7.	Results	74
4.7.1.	Hunter Street/Darby Street Intersection	74
4.7.2.	Hypothetical 4-leg Intersection.....	86
4.7.3.	Newcastle Light Rail Corridor Case Study	98
4.7.4.	Summary	108
4.8.	Conclusion	109
5.	CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	111
	REFERENCES	114

List of Tables

Table 3.1 - Assumptions for parameters used in the model	43
Table 3.2- Hypothetical values of parameters used in the model	46
Table 4.1 - Assumptions for parameters used in the model	62
Table 4.2 - The seed values suggested by RMS (RMS Modelling Guideline, 2013)	67
Table 4.3 - Intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street delay for the current traffic volumes based on different replications	75
Table 4.4 - Traffic parameters of the intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street for the current traffic volumes modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	76
Table 4.5 - Intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street delay for case 2 (25% increase) based on different replications	77
Table 4.6 - Traffic parameters of the intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street for case 2 (25% increase) modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	79
Table 4.7 - Intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street delay for case 3 (50% increase) based on different replications	80
Table 4.8 - Traffic parameters of the intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street for case 3 (50% increase) modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	81
Table 4.9 - Intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street delay for case 4 (100% increase) based on different replications	82
Table 4.10 - Traffic parameters of the intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street for case 4 (100% increase) modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	83
Table 4.11 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for the current traffic volumes	85
Table 4.12 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for case 2 (25% increase)	85
Table 4.13 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for case 3 (50% increase)	85
Table 4.14 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for case 4 (100% increase)	85
Table 4.15 - Delay of 4-leg intersection for current traffic volumes based on different replications ..	87
Table 4.16 - Traffic parameters of the 4-leg intersection for the current traffic volumes modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	88
Table 4.17 - Delay of 4-leg intersection for case 2 (25% increase) based on different replications....	89
Table 4.18 - Traffic parameters of the 4-leg intersection for case 2 (25% increase) modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	91
Table 4.19 - Delay of 4-leg intersection for case 30 (50% increase) based on different replications..	92

Table 4.20 - Traffic parameters of the 4-leg intersection for case 3 (50% increase) modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	93
Table 4.21 - Delay of 4-leg intersection for case 4 (100% increase) based on different replications..	94
Table 4.22 - Traffic parameters of the 4-leg intersection for case 4 (100% increase) modelled in base scenario, TSP and SOLRV algorithm with best $L_{detector}$	95
Table 4.23 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for the current traffic volumes	96
Table 4.24 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for case 2 (25% increase)	96
Table 4.25 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for case 3 (50% increase)	97
Table 4.26 - Pedestrian signal timing for 10-minute intervals with traditional TSP and SOLRV algorithm for case 4 (100% increase)	97
Table 4.27 - Average delay of the tested replications from modelling the Newcastle Light Rail corridor in three operational scenarios and under four demand conditions	98
Table 4.28 - Delay results of modelling the Newcastle Light Rail corridor in three scenarios in base demand case	101
Table 4.29 - Delay results of modelling the Newcastle Light Rail corridor in three scenarios for case 2 (25% increase).....	103
Table 4.30 - Delay results of modelling the Newcastle Light Rail corridor in three scenarios for case 3 (50% increase).....	104
Table 4.31 - Delay results of modelling the Newcastle Light Rail corridor in three scenarios for case 4 (100% increase).....	106

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 – The location of a bus pre-signal in advance of the main intersection	9
Figure 1.2 – Thesis Structure.....	13
Figure 2.1 - Methods proposed for the bus pre-signal disadvantages.....	20
Figure 2.2 - Transit Signal Prioritisation Classification.....	22
Figure 3.1 - The buses’ approach for changing lane and reaching the stop line.....	34
Figure 3.2 - The schematic intersection components.....	35
Figure 3.3 – Comparison of private vehicle delays for the current situation and the proposed pre-signal’s model with different V/C ratios at $g/c=0.5$	45
Figure 3.4 - Comparison of each vehicle’s time-in-queue before and after implementing the proposed model in different V/C ratios.....	47
Figure 4.1 - Flow chart describing methodology used to develop novel TSP algorithm, “Speed Optimisation of Light Rail Vehicle” (SOLRV).....	51
Figure 4.2 - Comparison between traditional TSP procedures and the novel TSP procedure that accounts for adjustments in speed (basis of SOLRV).....	52
Figure 4.3 - The positioning of the LRV’s detectors upstream of the stop-line on LRV route.....	54
Figure 4.4 - SOLRV algorithm flow chart - Real-time control procedure for prioritising LRVs at signalised intersections	57
Figure 4.5 - Sample of minimising the green extension of the LRV’s phase on its remained green signal and maximum acceptable speed of LRVs using SOLRV algorithm.....	63
Figure 4.6 - Sample of minimising the red reduction of the LRV’s phase on its remained red signal and minimum acceptable speed of LRVs using SOLRV algorithm.	64
Figure 4.7 – The procedure of testing the SOLRV algorithm.	66
Figure 4.8 - Hunter Street/Darby Street Intersection	68
Figure 4.9 - Hypothetical 4-Leg Intersection	68
Figure 4.10 - Current cars’ volume at the intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street during AM peak hour from SCATS data	70
Figure 4.11 – Traffic signal phasing at the intersection of Hunter Street/Darby Street from SCATS data.....	70
Figure 4.12 - The study area at Newcastle light rail corridor.....	71
Figure 4.13 - Traffic signals phasing from SCATS data.....	73
Figure 4.14 - Change in average delay of the tested seeds between TSP and SOLRV for cars and trams	84
Figure 4.15 - Comparing the SOLRV and TSP results in Aimsun modelling.....	100

Abstract

Sustainable urban transport systems can only be achieved with a balance between private and public transport modes. Though private transport options are necessary for certain trip purposes, it is imperative to ensure that the mass transport of people using public modes achieves an acceptable level of service. Integrated road networks contain links that utilise private, public and active modes of transport. Intersections serve as the primary method of control to maintain safety and functionality of the network. However, as a result of the control, inefficiencies may occur, compromising the effectiveness of a multi-modal transport system. In particular, congestion may negatively affect public transport performance. The following dissertation develops novel strategies for the prioritisation of public transport vehicles to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of service of the transport system as a whole.

Prioritisation of public transport can be achieved through the provision of dedicated road infrastructure (lanes), and operations — especially of intersections managed through a variety of signalisation strategies. Two widely used options for prioritisation of public transport can be through using pre-signals (for buses) and Transit Signal Priority (TSP). The focus of this thesis is TSP for Light Rail Vehicles (LRV)s. Pre-signals can be installed near an intersection to give priority to buses by stopping vehicles before the main intersection. LRV signal priority is a timing strategy that gives priority to LRVs at signalised intersections. It is based on changing the sequence of phases, extending the green time and reducing the red time of the LRV's phase to limit delays to the vehicle.

Bus pre-signals and LRV signal priority systems are becoming more popular in cities, reducing the average delay per passenger and making public transport more attractive.

However, they also impose additional stops, delay and travel time to private vehicles, compromising their overall efficiency.

The research conducted in this study focuses on improving pre-signals and LRV signal priority systems by changing the approach speed of public transport vehicles in order to reduce the green time needed to give public transport priority. The pre-signal model reduces the number of stops behind them so that vehicles can adjust their speed based on traffic conditions as well as the speed and approach of buses. The revised model for LRV signal priority systems minimises the green extension and red reduction of LRV phases by estimating the optimal speed needed to reach the stop line. As a consequence, the priority of LRVs and buses is maintained while at the same time improving the performance of private vehicles by keeping the red time to an absolute minimum.

This thesis advances the evolution of TSP in this way via two methods. First, a set of algorithms is developed to optimise the approach speeds of public transport vehicles to signalised intersections. Second, the algorithm set is then applied to a set of functioning, on-street light rail intersections in the city of Newcastle in the state of New South Wales in Australia. This second phase of the research has sought to test the algorithms by putting them through the early stages of testing and development that would be undertaken as part of an implementation process. This work has been undertaken in collaboration with professional technical staff from Transport for NSW with support from the agencies Research Hub.