PriestmanGoode reveals design solution for social distancing on public transport

As rail networks face the challenge of re-starting services as lockdown conditions ease, PriestmanGoode, the leading transport design consultancy, has responded with a new rail interior solution. With services running to revised timetables and passenger capacity reduced to as low as 10%, the flexible new design makes optimal use of space blocked-off to ensure social distancing. It potentially alleviates pressure on bus and underground services, used to complete journeys, that are also under severe capacity constraints and that commuters may be reluctant to use.

Paul Priestman, designer and chairman of PriestmanGoode explains: “As transport designers, the “first and last mile” have always been important considerations for us as our design approach considers the entire customer journey. People typically use their own car, buses or underground services to start and end their journey, but many would prefer to use bikes as a lower-cost and more flexible alternative. We have found a way to adapt our ‘Island Bay’ seating design so that more bikes can be easily and safely accommodated onboard commuter trains. The space the bikes occupy helps with social distancing onboard and enables the passenger to continue or complete their journey at either end.

“The design was originally part of a brief set and funded by RSSB that we answered to find innovative solutions for overcrowding on suburban services. Our winning layout features regular seats during off-peak and a higher-density configuration during peak hours resulting in 15-20% more seats and increasing standing capacity. The flexible nature of the design has allowed us to adapt it very quickly to a different set of circumstances and accommodate bikes safely within each carriage as well as restricting seating to enforce social distancing measures. By installing flexible seating, train operators are able to adapt to changing customer needs from extra space needed for luggage, bikes or buggies to extra standing space at peak time.

The role of design is to solve problems and improve the
overall experience for customers. We understand that passengers coming into London are looking to travel at a safe distance during their commute, but the prospect of a crowded bus or underground carriage may put them off making the entire journey. As urban planners in our major cities close roads to traffic to ease pressure on public transport systems and move people on to alternatives such as bikes, the revision to the Island Bay seating configuration supports that goal too. We also detect that commuters will be making healthier choices for the first and last mile of their journey as a consequence of this crisis.”

Other key features of the seat include aisle rests with padded backs for passengers who would otherwise be standing unsupported and twin USB ports at every seat. The configuration complements existing seating in other carriages to meet the needs of the widest range of passengers.

The seat is manufactured by Transcal Engineering.

More about the Island Bay seat

Island Bay is a flexible seating solution that provides regular seats during off-peak, and a higher density configuration during peak hours resulting in 15-20% more seats and increased standing capacity.

Features of Island Bay include:

• A flexible seat - a double seat layout during off-peak hours transforms into a higher density configuration at peak times to increase seating and standing room
• Increased seat width
• Dual purpose table/window seat
• Additional end of bay seat with padded back rest gives previously standing passengers a more comfortable position
• When in high density mode, foot rests accommodate passengers of different heights and provide a fully supported position
• The seating layout provides wider than average aisle access, making it more accessible to wheelchairs, buggies, large luggage and folding bicycles
• New layout is more family friendly/social and can accommodate wheel chair positions
• Anti-theft/pick pocket shield
• Twin USB port at every Island bay seat
• Adaptor port in headrest to allow for bike stowage fitting two bikes across a double seat width.
NOTES TO EDITORS

About PriestmanGoode
PriestmanGoode is a design studio dedicated to designing a better future. The London and China based company specialises in large scale projects in infrastructure, aviation, transport, hospitality and product design. Their work is used by millions of people around the world, every day.

www.PriestmanGoode.com

About RSSB
PriestmanGoode was a recipient of an award from the RSSB (Rail Safety and Standards Board) in 2014 in response to our entry in the Tomorrow’s Train Design Today competition to develop Next Generation Interiors. The purpose of this challenge was to develop entirely new concepts for the interior fitment of a train in order to increase passenger capacity. PriestmanGoode worked closely with RSSB and the Department for Transport in the development of these new innovative products. They offer more flexible solutions for train operators to adapt to the changing behaviours of passengers in light of external factors such as technology or the current global pandemic.

Website: www.rssb.co.uk
Twitter: @RSSB_rail

For press information please contact:
Anna Meyer
anna@PriestmanGoode.com
+44(0)7747 000 898