Keolis pilots NaviLens technology in Versailles

Île-de-France Mobilités has launched an ambitious policy to improve the accessibility of public transport.

Behind me is this multimodal hub, a very fine achievement of recent years, and for us it's essential that everyone should feel comfortable here, especially people with visual impairments. One of Keolis's core purposes is to improve everyone's quality of life day to day. To that end, we have rolled out a pilot at Versailles-Chantiers station for people with visual impairments, to make it easier and simpler for them to move around this intermodal space.

This pilot was carried out thanks to the involvement of several stakeholders, notably the Association Valentin I, the Versailles-Grand Pas urban community, SNCF Réseau, and Yarek Connexion.

The aim of this pilot is to test the use of the NaviLens app for people with visual impairments. The solution consists of enhanced QR codes and a dedicated mobile application. It's an app you install on your mobile phone.

You hold your phone out in front of you to scan the codes and then follow the instructions you're given. "To reach platforms B and C, follow the guidance strip on your right up to the ticket gate."

From what I've tested, the directions are good; it does give you the right way to go.

It means you can, in a way, do without an escort, so you gain independence and come and go as you please.

The information provided by NaviLens is very clear and, as I use a guide dog, it complements my dog's work.

So I give him the information and he immediately carries it out.

"Intermediate landing on the staircase descending towards platforms B and C. 19 steps to go down, then continue to follow the handrail."

It's really very helpful to be able to access bus timetable information because, of course, we can't read the signs,

and seeing it there in the app is truly extraordinary.

"Next departure, line 1 towards Louis-Pelin. Departing in 5 minutes."

Just with the NaviLens app you can get around completely independently, and if all stations were equipped it would certainly make travelling easier for me.

The NaviLens solution really enables greater independence for people with visual impairments.

I would recommend this app; I'd even say that without having a visual impairment, I'm thinking of older people. It could help them a lot.

What’s interesting about the approach taken here is involving end users in the testing process. Bringing in people concerned, and the voluntary sector that also works on visual impairment, seems to me a strong guarantee of success.

Accessibility also means innovations like NaviLens, launched by Keolis—so a set of ongoing trials which will, by the end of the year, make it possible to decide which pilots will be generalised across the whole of Île-de-France.

The initiative taken by Keolis seems to me an excellent one.

In a few months we’ll know whether we should go further, and if we should, this process will be rolled out more widely.