



*Proposal* □



# SMOGBUSTERS

Ten Associative Propositions to Break the Air Pollution  
Impasse in French Cities

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PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL & DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

*Prepared by EcoPlan for the:*

Cellule de Prospective et Stratégie  
Ministère de l'Environnement  
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**Summary:**\_\_\_\_\_

Working in close collaboration with the Cabinet of the Minister of the Environment, EcoPlan proposes to develop a set of innovative action proposals for implementation at the level of a given city or place ("actions quotidiennes pour le transport") for the Minister's consideration and eventual public use within the coming month. Each sketch plan will set out an operational concept or remedial measure that in our professional view could be capable of helping achieve significant reductions of vehicle emissions in populated areas. Each proposal involves a specific citizen-based participatory project or remedial approach for local implementation. Each will be looking to achieve a balance between the urgent need for short-term improvements, including that of providing better ways of forestalling and/or dealing with air pollution emergencies of the sort recently lived through, and longer term environmental and life quality considerations of the community at large. While the proposals all have an important educational aspect as well as their emphasis on citizen participation, all will give systematic attention to the potential for the creation of good and useful jobs in the public sector, which themselves have a high educational and training component. The job focus will target not only younger qualified people, but also school leavers and older people who want and need work and are interested in making a contribution to their communities. The project will also examine some of the alternative ways in which the Ministry can organize to support such decentralized local problem-solving efforts. This also is an area that is ripe for imaginative rethinking and prudent experimentation required to develop new models of governance. Additional background materials in support of this proposal are submitted in the form of a 35 page annex volume in print form, with yet further background and references available on the EcoPlan Web site at <http://www.the-commons.org/>

**NOTA:** *Ce brouillon de projet est présenté en anglais pour ces tous premiers échanges et discussions uniquement. Toute présentation écrite et orale pour le projet même sera en français. Nous vous remercions de votre bienveillance.*

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## OVERVIEW

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The Smogbusters program is proposed to serve the Ministry of Environment and concerned local institutions and groupings across France as a timely and much needed follow-up to the recent Odd/Even Air Pollution Alert Day, which worked out to be remarkably successful (given the clear limitations of such schemes). Now, because of its success (largely unexpected) and the generally positive reactions that the Odd/Even Day got, there is suddenly an unprecedented window of opportunity that has opened up for addressing these issues with more powerful and effective approaches in a favorable public and media climate. That window cannot, however, be expected to remain open indefinitely.

It is anticipated that the Minister will shortly make some public announcements concerning measures and approaches that have the potential of making real inroads on these long-ignored problems. The immediate priority of this project is to support her in this in a timely manner: with a set of striking and convincing first statements identifying as many as ten such action proposals which she can publicly announce with confidence in the weeks ahead. (We see this effort as an addition to, not as a substitute for the other work that the Ministry may be carrying out along these lines)

The *Smogbusters* program can be envisaged as an innovative 'idea box', which takes as its point of departure a certain coherent structure of principles concerning matters of technology and society (basically, *sustainable transportation*), and behind them a process. As to the latter, most of these proposals will emphasize 'associative actions': measures, programs or approaches which key on extensive collaboration with and the active participation of the public, as opposed to the traditional method of trying to deal with the issues through centralized technocratic arrangements, laws and/or policing. (Or the even more time-blessed 'policy' of doing nothing about issues as 'trivial' as environmental quality.)

We propose that the ministerial announcement will be presented as the opening salvo in a deeply participatory process, which from the outset will invite vigorous public consideration and open debate. In a second stage this could be further extended into a highly innovative collaborative 'idea building' campaign, that could be used as a means for further developing, improving, and gaining public support for the best of these proposals. And possibly in a few select cases, to testing one or more of these concepts in specific localities or pilot situations. Or in the development of yet other ideas and remedial concepts beyond those which are to be set out in these first stages. To this extent, the SmogBusters program could be turned into a veritable trampoline or incubator for new concepts and approaches coming from many sources and places to the otherwise intractable quandary of transport and environment in cities.

There is no need to 'shoot from the hip' in this case. Any such measure or proposal that is publicly announced must of course be fully realistic, solidly based, and draw cogently on the many lessons that have been learned on these matters over the past decades, not only in France but internationally. We believe that as your consultants we are well prepared to work with you to ensure that this will be the case. (See Annex C for a short list of 438 approaches, concepts and measures aimed at the city/cars nexus which we identified and reviewed for implementation in detail in the course of a recent project here).

This project is to be carried out by a small team, supported by an extensive international expert network and led by Eric Britton of EcoPlan International, with the full support, collaboration, and leadership from the Ministry. The qualifications of the consultancy team are extensively identified in a 35 page background document annexed to this proposal, as well as materials available on the consultant's World Wide Web site (<http://www.the-commons.org/>)



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## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION:

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**Action Proposals:** The objective of this project is to identify a number of transport-environment action proposals for local decision, tailoring and implementation in towns and cities across France. They will not identify, as is all too often the case, all the additional research which needs to be done, nor more conferences that must be held, nor more publications to be printed, nor proposals for yet new institutions that need to be created, but will instead target actual measures and actions involving, led and implemented by individuals and groups in the areas directly concerned.

**Associative Initiatives:** These actions will be primarily 'associative' in nature, by which we mean that rather than relying on such devices as laws, decrees, policing, large infrastructure projects or massive public expenditures, they will aim at providing innovative means and tools whereby those most directly concerned with the issues will have (a) better and more credible information concerning the gravity and extent of the environmental and health-related problems they face and (b) greater autonomy in coming up with innovative new solutions.

**Environmental Initiatives:** That said, we must hasten to add that we see these as basically not transportation projects, but as environmental initiatives. To this extent, these projects turn around the traditional way of looking at local transportation issues. Their point of departure is not the traditional: 'how can we use taxpayer money, technology and/or the law to increase vehicle movements, speed or mobility?' Rather it poses the question: 'how can our town, city or neighborhood be both accessible, as it must be if the economy is to work, and clean, safe and convivial?' It is, quite literally, planning for and by people, as opposed to planing for cars and traffic.

**Short Term Impact Potential:** The proposals will all aim at achieving relatively short-term impacts and improvements, ranging from emergency measures capable of being brought on line within days in the event of a (the!) next Pollution Alert (though hopefully with proper preparation which may require some months if we start tomorrow), to proactive measures which can make themselves felt within a few months but whose full impact may span a period of one or more years.

**Longer Term Coherence:** That said, each project or program must also be 'coherent' from a longer term environmental perspective, and not be for 'quick fixes' that are likely to emerge later as a new set of problems (much as what occurred when traffic engineers traditionally 'solved' congestion problems in cities by building more and wider roads, increased central parking, etc.).

**Positive Approaches:** These proposals should be looking for positive as well as negative approaches. A concrete example may help to make this point. Last month's odd/even measure was an example of a defensive or basically negative reaction: a hastily patched together, after-the-fact adjustment in lieu of anything better. By contrast the cooperative project that led up to the *Journée sans Voiture* that took place in La Rochelle on 9 September is an example of the more positive approach which we propose to emphasize in the Smogbusters program.<sup>1</sup>

**Local/National Interface and Cross-Learning:** The way in which the La Rochelle project was planned and executed has many of the elements which we would intend to consult, perhaps improve on and

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<sup>1</sup> You of course have extensive materials on the La Rochelle project at hand. A summary of its accomplishments can be found in the September edition of Transport Public, pp. 20-23. For more depth of information, in particular on the process behind the project itself, as well as the lessons learned, an excellent source is M. Dennis Leroi, Ajoint au Maire, Chargé de Communications who led the extensive local communications program.



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insert into this proposed new national program for the Ministry.<sup>2</sup> We also feel, incidentally, that a strong "Smogbuster" program at the national level could be useful both in support of the La Rochelle initiative and its next follow-up phase, as well as to provide a practical means for ensuring that the best of these ideas and accomplishments can be made fully known, built on and put to work successfully in other towns and cities across France.

**Partnerships and Coalitions:** Most of these actions are going to require partnerships which reach across many of the long-established divisions of government, the economy and society. No one ministry, institution, group, political party, or individual will be able to claim sole position and credit for these actions when they succeed. In this respect, we believe that they are especially fitting for the Jospin Government, which is firmly committed to finding new such partnerships and putting them to work on a broad range of problems of technology, the economy and society.

**Environment Ministry Role:** In all of these projects the role of the Environment Ministry is seen as one of 'lighting the way', and then once these or some part of these new ideas are launched in doing its part to make sure that the best of them get the broad support they need (both within government and without) in order to move ahead. Given the natural resistance and entrenched habits of many of the public administrations who will be (or at least could be) natural partners in such collaborative undertakings, it will be important the Ministry itself be supported by the highest levels of government so that active collaboration will indeed ensue.<sup>3</sup>

**Information and Support Role:** These projects open up a new role for the Ministry, one that may at first view seem to be less glamorous and powerful, but we believe possibly much more effective from the bottom-line criteria against which environmental policy in the final analysis must be judged. The Ministry can play an important 'backstopping' role in helping provide local teams with guidelines and information to ensure carefully planned demonstrations and projects where they occur, while at the same time perhaps being careful to retain a prudent hands-off stance so that each experience will be fully in control of the group or area which launches the project.

**Project Monitoring and Feedback:** There is likewise an important national role to be played in monitoring the results of these various spread-out projects, and possibly reporting on them in a well-orchestrated, cost-efficient national information campaign (most likely by aggressive uses of Internet and related cost-effective technologies). Likewise, this program might be usefully supported by something along the lines of a good humored national "contest" wherein all good ideas will somehow be recognized and rewarded (a delicate and complex task when it comes to actually doing it, but which for now is at least worth mentioning).

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<sup>2</sup> You also may find it instructive to review this important and successful French attempt at 'social-technical' innovation, even if only for a day, in a somewhat broader context. This is provided by the materials contained in our *Thursday* program outline, that was first presented to one of the *Ciudades Accesibles* conferences in Spain, to which we invited representatives from La Rochelle. We view this as an excellent example of a spontaneous Smogbuster initiative, of which we hope to see many more in the months ahead. (See below for more on the *Thursday* program.)

<sup>3</sup> At the national level typical partners will be those ministries and groups responsible for transport, urban affairs, education, employment, social affairs, SNCF, regional development, health, traffic safety, policing, etc. At the local levels a similar broad banding of diverse interests, jurisdictions and approaches will be important to ensure a project's success, and will require the active participation of associations and other public interests groups, all transporters, local media, the business community, and non-affiliated individuals and community groups.



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## JOB CREATION & TRAINING: A KEY PILLAR OF THE PROGRAM

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The potential for creating useful, high quality jobs in association with these initiatives is considerable and should be built into the program from the outset as one of its key pillars and goals.

The reader should understand that this is not a hasty last-minute add-on to the Smogbuster proposal. We have been looking into the potential for creating new kinds of work in the public sector, transportation included, for some time now. Our first 'Transit University' proposal (see below) for example dates to 1976. The full story of our search for 'new paradigms of work organization' will be found in the European Commission report entitled *Rethinking Work: New Ways to Work in an Information Society*, which is about to be issued in an extended second edition. (This report is immediately available in our electronic library at <ftp.the-commons.org/pub>.)

At a 'micro support' level, each the short-listed projects should first be scanned and then structured so as to prove valuable training experiences for the young people whom we think should be brought into the various project support teams, both within the Ministry and elsewhere. To this extent, this whole program could perform a valuable educational and training function at quite a high level (though not only for the young people who might be directly involved, since we would all have a lot to learn from these experiences). Ideally, we would also like to see a number of young trainees (and perhaps some that are not so young) attached to the various project teams once they take shape.

On a much broader job-creation, skill-development basis, there is considerable scope for using at least some of these projects as instruments for identifying and even creating new types of public employment, which will at once provide job opportunities for younger people (and others) in cities and institutions across France, while at the same time improving the state of the environment in very specific, concrete ways. Furthermore, there is no reason that these need to be 'dead end' jobs. To the contrary.

We would note here that this job-building approach runs in fact almost directly opposite to the bulk of all technology-driven innovation that has taken place in the area of transport in cities of the last half century, where the main motive for bringing new technologies on line has consistently been to "save labor". We have indeed 'saved labor', and in the process of course have created the new levels of unemployment which today represent the most important single policy challenge that the public sector faces in France. The other result of most of these past technology projects (new and bigger roads, various techniques of traffic engineering, more parking, electronic signaling systems, etc.) have at the same time lead to more cars, more traffic, higher speeds, more accidents, considerable destruction of the urban tissue, etc.

The SmogBuster program represents a structured attempt to address and break both of these vicious downward spirals in several key ways. One of these is the emphasis that we believe should be given to the built-in on-the-job learning component, which is intended not only to lead to better and smoother task performance, but also to the continuous upgrading of the skills and capabilities of those involved. We feel that it is just such carefully developed and nurtured programs in the public sector that will prove the error of those who insist that new jobs of this sort represent 'dead ends'. To the contrary, with careful planning, these jobs could be turned into "virtual universities" (in both senses of the word).

To conclude: It is our vision that the future to the problem of work in France lies in a thorough going restructuring of the work and educational systems in parallel. It is further our contention that projects such as that outlined in these pages can provide a much-needed proving ground for these concepts. We fear that if such demonstrations are not shortly forthcoming that the opportunity will have been lost.



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## SOME DEEP BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

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**Sustainable Transportation** is a fundamental underlying theme of this proposal. For a transport system to be sustainable, it must give full consideration to each of three fundamental building blocks:

- Impact on Quality of the Environment (nature, physical, built environment)
- Impact on Quality of Life (people, neighborhoods, community)
- Impact on Quality of the Economy (business, jobs, local economy)

This balanced approach opens up a whole new world of considerations, strategies and choices. Each Smogbuster proposal is meticulously oriented to these three objectives. (Extensive background on the sustainability theme will be found in the accompanying background document and on the Web site.)

**The Pattern Break:** The approach set out here represents a sharp turn-around from the traditional practices and values that have driven transportation decisions and investments in the past. Now, while there is certainly every reason to remain discrete on this score -- extensive public discussion of these matters before we have 'proved the new model' might prove to be diverting and even destructive -- it is timely to recall that the 'old model' stressed mainly cars and those who own and drive them, to the point of marginalizing other groups and interests in our cities. This has led to the two-edged problem of technology and society that we now have to face. The first half of this is that car-friendly cities have worked out to be not so people-friendly. And this of course is what lies at the base of the air pollution issues that we now propose to address with these innovative measures.<sup>4</sup>

The extent to which this approach represents a break with the largely technocratic, overly centralized, essentially authoritarian tradition of decision making and implementation of the past cannot be too strongly stressed. Previous administrations have made occasional noises about public participation, but in almost all cases these proved to be no more than minor window-dressing, not real public involvement. Thus, the tradition was that transport policy was something that *happened to* citizens, not something that was made by, for and of them. The proposals to be set out here essentially represent a major and massive shift in thinking and practice in the sector.

**The Importance of Technical Competence:** It is critical to establish right here at the outset that while many of these environmental actions may on the surface appear to be easy to think up, trumpet, plan and implement, this is in point of fact most definitely not the case. The transportation system of a city or region is complex, many-faceted and vital to its economic and social well being. As a result, it is important that any attempted remedial approach be a positive one that takes fully into account the delicacy and complexity (and importance!) of the transportation function. Any intervention in the sector from an environmental perspective must therefore be extremely carefully prepared and technically competent, as the price of failure (such as breakdown of the whole system or some of its parts) can be very high indeed. Failure of any such environmentally driven actions can in fact have two high costs: The first is that of the inconveniences and costs that the community could suffer during any poorly prepared project itself. The second is that poorly prepared, unsuccessful projects will most certainly divide the community, weaken the

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<sup>4</sup> We realize of course that all urban air pollution is not totally the result of motor car use, but are also aware that this is the component that (a) is now before us and (b) perhaps the area in which it is going to be most easy to make rapid progress. Indeed, one of the arguments behind the approach set out here is that once a given community has been able to get together to sort out the relatively solvable problems of air pollution generated by traffic, they will have habits and organizational structures (and self-confidence) that can then help them in figuring out how to approach and solve these other, perhaps more intractable sectors and issues.



hand of the environmental movement and those who care about these matters, and set back further attempts at innovation by at least months, possibly years.

We have, therefore, a most complex and fragile environment for experimentation. Fortunately, in the cities and regions across France, we also have considerable resources of expertise and capabilities that can be mobilized to ensure the success of such projects. SmogBuster projects realize this, and from the outset will try to ensure that all the expert sources and key player are brought to the table and given an opportunity to make their contribution to the success of the project or program.

**Learning Projects:** There is every reason that these should be developed from the outset as 'learning projects'. They lend themselves perfectly to it. We would contrast such an approach in this respect from, say, the traditional highway engineering traffic solution to the transport and environment problems of the past, which invariably would center on laying concrete roadways with a fixed local and hundred year life expectancy. As *learning* projects it is important that whatever we propose be designed to permit careful on-the-spot monitoring and fine tuning on a continuing basis as new information comes in and becomes available to those concerned. This important feedback process has two components, and it will be important to keep both in mind: One is the need and usefulness of relatively low-cost feedback *technologies*. These are many, cheaper every day, and potentially very powerful for feedback and control purposes. The second is the belief that this feedback should to a much greater extent than in the past, broadly available to the local population and others concerned, on the grounds that "if you count it yourself, you are more likely to do something about it". (See page 6 in the attached Backup Annex for more on this.)

**The Cost of Failure:** Politicians and administrators have traditionally been loath to innovate in the areas of technology and society for a number of reasons. Part of this has to do with one's political philosophy. If you really believe that the market provides the answer to all the problems of society, then there is no reason for government, at any level, to get between the people, their problems and the market that is going to fix them. A second reason is that it is usually far safer for them to look around for short term marginal 'solutions' (even if they are demonstrably capable of accomplishing little) than to set up a deeper process of questioning and the perhaps radical experimentation that will probably go with it). Finally, there has also be a certain wariness concerning innovation, including in the transportation field, in that it usually came with a high price tag (although for some such price tags had their own charm).

**Software, Not Hardware - And Above All, People and Education:** But what exactly are we proposing to invest in with the Smogbuster program? Building on this base, the measures to be put forth and examined under this program involve basically two types of investment. In the first place, we are casting about for ways of making better, more convivial use of the existing urban infrastructure and all the past investments that have gone into it. For the most part this is a retrofit strategy: involving relatively less expensive hardware and infrastructure-related investments that will allow us to use our urban systems in ways that are more environmentally friendly, without losing any of the economic and other advantages that are important for the community's viability. The second path of investment is in people and education (this last in the broadest sense of the term). Thus, even a given project were to fail to reach some of its immediate environmental targets, the place in question would have already improved both the quality and education levels of its population, as well as its ability to mobile to deal with the complex challenges it faces. Some failure! Beyond that there is the fact that with careful preparation and broadly participatory planning -- and perhaps a little help from others who have already trod this path -- any great or costly failure would appear to be unlikely. (Contrast that with the famous "Laser" proposal for a labyrinth of underground roadways and parking silos as the solution for the transport/environmental of the Paris region.)



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## A PROVISIONAL SHORT LIST OF CANDIDATE MEASURES - (FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY!)

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The selection of the measures for further attention in the planned second stage of this program will be the result of the *process* that it proposes to set in motion. To gain an understanding of what these might eventually consist of, the background materials submitted in support of this proposal can be helpful as a point of departure. However, as we look together at some of this background for familiarization purposes, we feel it will not be advisable to try to narrow this list any further at this early point, on the grounds that that this will best be done by the collaborative process which is now to be set in motion.

To get a first feeling for the scope and range of the potential candidates, you are referred to the listing of 400+ different transport/environment measures which we developed and screened for the *Access Bilbao* program. (We might further add that this in-house inventory has been extended to more than 600 techniques, measures and alternative approaches since the Bilbao program was completed.) As you review this listing, you will quickly see that the challenge is not that of finding ideas that might conceivably be useful in these respects, but that of choosing those which are going to have the levels of impact and support that are going to be required if this proposed program is to rise fully to the challenge.

At a much greater level of detail, we would refer you to that brief first presentation we made to the Ministry of three not-dissimilar action proposals last year at the time of our October brainstorming session with the Comité de Pilotage of the Cellule de Prospective et Stratégie (see Annex A). Of the three we would draw your attention in particular to the information contained therein on the 'Global Laboratory: School Pollution Monitoring and Education Program', which we propose to advance as one possible candidate for development in this next stage.

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### Two Prototype Projects Worth Considering by Way of Example

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With all due caution, we can here at least give some first clues to the sort of examples and *paths* that we feel might usefully be explored. Let us start here by introducing briefly here two candidate ideas for which we have considerable hopes and for which there is a substantial amount of background and experience already available to be built upon should they be selected for these purposes.

#### The Global Lab School Proposal

This proposed project offers a combination of (a) a curriculum and (b) a handy kit of materials and routines that can be implemented by science programs at lower and middle schools, which can permit the children to monitor and report environmental conditions in terms of a dozen or more key indicators.

The Global Lab program also permits the participating schools to log their measurements onto local, regional and national (and an international) maps of quasi-real time pollution indicators on the World Wide Web. (These indicators can in turn be linked to other pollution and related information sites on the Web.) The Global Lab Curriculum also provides an opportunity for the participating students and their families to make proposals for environmental actions. It also can be opened up to non-school groupings, as well as to other groups of all ages.

For present purposes what is particularly interesting about this approach is that all the basic elements already exist (including the institutional support framework) so that it could be put on line within weeks, at least in a limited group of cooperating schools and institutions on a pilot basis (which is doubt-



less the best way to begin anyway). A first outline on this proposal will be found on page 8 of the Annex volume. Further background on the program can be found on The Commons Einstein "New Learning" site at <http://www.the-commons.org/einstein>, and at [www.terc.edu](http://www.terc.edu)

#### Thursday: Breakthrough Strategies For Transport in Cities

This program presents an outline plan showing several ways in which a city, town or neighborhood could begin to revise local attitudes towards car use -- and how such efforts can best be supported at the national and regional levels. The materials already available to support this project provide tested guidelines showing how a community can spend one carefully prepared day without cars, and then reflect on the results. The proposal stresses (a) explicit radical targeting, (b) a far-reaching effort of preparation and consensus building within the concerned communities, and (c) meticulous monitoring of results with a view to follow-up and fine tuning. (The approach behind this proposal is described at length in Annex D of the accompanying volume, in a separate submittal, and in the STEP (Sustainable Transportation Emergency Program) home page at <http://www.the-commons.org/step>.)

There is, of course, nothing that is particularly novel about a proposal for a car-free day. In addition to a large number of small city center closure projects and pedestrian zones of varying sizes and sorts, over the last two decades there have been hundreds of cases of cities that have banned car traffic for a single day, some special event, or during some particular (usually crisis) period. What all these projects have in common, however, is that in virtually all cases they have been handled as once-off exercises. Typically they are done, endured and quickly forgotten, and no effort is made to follow up or build on the experience in a systematic way. Nor are they planned for with any great precision. Talk of them to most of the people who have lived through the experience, and they will either laugh (aggressively) or smile (perhaps somewhat ruefully). The consensus is almost always however that these are obviously approaches which can't work in *our* city, at least not on any regular basis.

In the Thursday variant, the car-free day is redefined as a collective learning experience with a view to providing new visions of how their city or neighborhood could be organized. In such cases, careful prior study, extensive consultation and concertation, and meticulous monitoring and evaluation could provide some potentially valuable insights and support for future policy changes of perhaps a more permanent nature. This extremely conservative approach can be carried out at a relatively low level of cost and disruption. The great advantage of this approach is that it can help all those involved to see their city and their daily lives through an entirely different set of lenses -- on the condition that the community's planners, administrators, but above all its citizens are ready to take advantage of this unique situation. Despite the relative modesty of its objectives, it must not be assumed that such a project is of only limited value. All by itself it could make a major contribution!

If you are looking for an example that demonstrates some, but not all, of the elements of a typical Thursday project, the 9 September Journée sans Voiture in La Rochelle provides an excellent starting place. And where this really begins to be interesting is when we begin to look at the possibilities for creative interaction between the two, with the Thursday program providing a carefully thought out national framework for this and similar efforts across France. And such a framework is badly needed!

#### SOME BRAINSTORMING CANDIDATES

In addition to the above, the following provide some further ideas of the sorts of concepts that might be considered for the short list of selected measures in this next stage. Note that while each targets a set of measures or approaches for local implementation, each suggests the need for a broader support frame and capability as well. These open up areas in which the Ministry could be of real help.



**Cycling Strategy Frame:** The active intervention of cycling associations and groups, in close concert with the police and traffic authorities, to provide either emergency, exceptional (e.g., car-free day or other holiday) or eventually extended normal bicycle access paths and support facilities. May also usefully have an associated educational program aimed both at cyclists and other road users, in particular of course motorists, to ensure safe sharing of the street. As has been seen in many demonstrations, including the recent Journée in La Rochelle, this shift is not one that can be made without such support.

**Non-Motorized Transport** There is, as we all know, an enormous amount that could be accomplished in most cities through the systematic facilitation and support of non-motorized transport. It is in fact the unasked question of urban transport policy and practice. A major shift to non-motorized modes in any given place is, if it is to succeed, going to be accompanied by a requirement for trained people who can help the innovating community make the transition to a new way of moving around... a new culture really.

**Car Sharing:** A strategic approach to car sharing, perhaps first on a limited trial and/or emergency basis.

**Low Occupancy Vehicles:** A complex of measures that will render low occupancy vehicle use in emergencies somewhere between difficult and impossible for all those who do not vitally need them.

**Taxis:** An alternative (voluntary) plan for new taxi uses, both in emergencies and more generally.

**New Public Transport Services:** A city without cars, or with many fewer and less intrusive cars, is likely to open up a whole universe of new transportation possibilities beyond the relatively poor and limited 'binary' choice that exists today in most places (i.e., either versatile and comfortable door to door service by car, or waiting in the rain for a fixed schedule, fixed route bus or tram system). It is inconceivable that any city which moves to a low-car formula would overlook the full gamut of services that could become available once the city's streets are freed up and new kinds and qualities of transportation demands need to be satisfied. The bottom line is that, if the right approach is taken, we can expect to see both many more different types of services and service providers than the presented limited mix.

**Local Transport/Environment Round Tables:** Establishment of an options-open 'do-it-yourself kit' for the creation of local transport-environment Round Tables, which could bring together a wide array of local interests in a long term associative framework.

**Transit University:** The potential for job development combined with an ambitious program of continuing education in the public service area, transportation included, could be very great indeed. The "Transit U" is radically different from most on-job training programs, to the extent that it is (or could be) aimed at providing each worker/student with a broad range of skills and capabilities, well beyond those that are required in order to be able to perform the mechanics of their immediate work assignment.

**Rural Transport:** We also would like to see if we might be able to include at least one proposal for a ru-ral transport/environment scheme that will make its own small, but in social terms not so trivial, contribution (including on the grounds that the more extensive the mobilization of the population, the better the prospects of getting a really broad base of support).

These are just first rough ideas to get the brainstorming process underway. While already perhaps too long and too specific for this pre-planning stage, it is also notable for its omissions (for example nothing on the vital goods transport problems). We have taken this preliminary listing this far, however, to give you confidence that there are indeed some useful, practical things that can now be done following this line of planning, consultation and eventual implementation. Once the project begins, however, it will be important that the broader process described here be put in motion, so that the final short list of ideas and measure will reflect, not your consultant's experience and desires, but the full richer universe of those who will be actively involved in the process behind the project.



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SYSTEMIC COMPLEXITY, DIVERSITY, OVER-SPECIFICATION & OWNERSHIP

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The project 'dossiers' that result from this proposed first stage should be concise, simply stated, easy to read and understand, and of course developed so as to be able to stand tough professional scrutiny. They should *not* attempt to nail down all of the myriad and important technical and procedural details that will eventually need to be treated in each implementation, on the grounds that this process is one that should be the result of the open exchanges and interactions that are to follow. In fact, even in the next development stage, it will be important that the various 'dossiers' of measures and approaches be kept as 'open' as possible, on the grounds that each city, each town, each coalition of local interests will have its own peculiarities and priorities, and these in turn will shape the final package of measures and approaches selected and implemented in that place. Put in other words, we are not proposing either at this or in any future stage to propose minutely detailed 'cook books' which can then be mindlessly replicated in Place A, B and C, without regard to their unique qualities and differences.<sup>5</sup>

The reader will appreciate that there is a certain very real tension between the concept of a set of ideas or initiatives for local action that may have their point of origin in a centralized national institution such as the Ministry of Environment, and the fact that their eventual implementation must be carried out in many different places, each of which quite unique in its own way. In the case of these measures, this uniqueness extends not only to the size, shape and specifics of the city, its physical geography and its transportation system, but also of all the very different human and institutional circumstances of each place.

It will be important to take this great variety into consideration in several key respects. There are several pitfalls which we can see must clearly be avoided. One of these is the concept of premature, over-specification of the basic idea and its key elements. Concepts such as these should be left free to develop as the result of a nurturing process, that will come about when it has been picked up and begins to be developed by a team or place. The job of the clever planner at the center, thus, is not to try to sort out all the details for those who are directly concerned, but to give them some provocative raw materials and support for their own remedial and innovative programs. In a phrase, not only are people almost always smarter than planners, but they are also far better placed to figure out what they need and what can be made to work in their immediate environment. One of the best ways to kill a good concept is by attempting to define and hem it in by an inappropriate level of detail at the outset. Thus, our 'idea team' will do well to bear in mind that our various statements of the selected concepts should be put forth in a way that stimulate the imagination and inputs of many others, rather than imprison them in some sort of 'bright idea frame' in which the possibilities for organic growth and evolution have been reduced from the outset.

Finally, there is the critical issue of ownership. These are difficult projects that depend entirely on the local commitment and enthusiasm that they manage to engage. Thus, if the project is allowed to develop in such a way that those concerned locally regard it as 'their project', and not that of some distant bureaucrat or expert, an important precondition of success is thus established.

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<sup>5</sup> For those with memories long enough to recall, there was about a decade ago a program wherein the Dutch government decided to codify and facilitate for local implementation what they call 'woonerf' (basically, street calming projects). Originally, these woonerfs had been the result of entirely *local* initiatives and actions. A collective learning process was engaged and was working out quite well. Unfortunately the government program of codified schemes eventually had a deadening effect on the streets and neighborhoods in which they were implemented, precisely because, in my view, they were heavily over specified, thus effectively removing the possibility of real adaptation and 'ownership' of the concepts.



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## PROPOSAL

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### Method:

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The consultant proposes to carry out this project under a very tight schedule, drawing on the capabilities, archives, past work and networks of his group and others which offer extensive international coverage of the issues under consideration. The project team will make extensive use of the expert fora (standing conferences and databases) which EcoPlan and its international associates have established or been closely identified with on Internet (WWW) over the last several years, for the purposes of brainstorming and preparing these dossiers. It is to be hoped that the Ministry will actively support the project.

### Deliverables:

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The final 'product' of this assignment will take four forms:

- An Executive Summary of approximately 7-10 pages, which will set out the main intentions of the project, together with the needed supporting materials for the Minister's eventual public announcements and discussions.
- A print report for in-house use consisting of: an introduction setting out the basic principle and intentions of the project, ten 'dossiers' outlining the candidate measures and actions, and a set of annexes presenting useful background and supporting information. (The objective of this report, we would note, is not to impress either by its length or erudition, but rather to provide a clear, convincing statement showing that there are indeed creative responses to the targeted problems of technology and environment.)
- It might be useful if the consultant were also to develop an illustrated PowerPoint presentation which could be used by the Minister and the Ministry for these purposes. (The quality and coverage of this presentation will depend in part by the extent and quality of the collaboration between the consultant and the Minister's staff. It could also serve as a first step toward a good video support package for the program.)
- An additional 'deliverable' might be the first step of setting up a special WWW site in support of this program. (Note: It is our experience that for a Web site to do its job, it should be 'content led', and not be permitted to become just one more product of a computer or public information office of a public agency).

It will neither be necessary or appropriate that all identified proposals need be fully 'implementation ready' at the end of the proposed first stage. However there is every reason to ensure that the key concepts are (a) well and clearly expressed, (b) convincing and capable of standing critical scrutiny, and (c) of a nature that will mobilize public opinion and support. They must, if they are to succeed, be seen as positive, even convivial approaches to the problems they address (bearing in mind, for instance, that a large part of the success of the Odd/Even measure was that it was viewed as not only a wise and useful thing to do under the air emergency, but ultimately a rather nice one. This same atmosphere of conviviality and community was among the most noted accomplishments of the La Rochelle demonstration).



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## Schedule and Progress Reports:

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- We propose that under the circumstances a highly compressed schedule should be organized for this first stage.
- With the full support of the Ministry, it should be possible to deliver the following list of deliverables within four weeks of go-ahead.
- If the project is to be ready in the intended form by end November, authorization must be received no later than 24 October.
- We suggest that any further delay or watering down of this schedule might have negative impacts on the intensity of the work effort and the quality and impact of the final deliverables. This is, after all, not just one more leisurely research project.
- We propose that a short progress report and discussion of the project be scheduled on a weekly basis, and hopefully will provide an opportunity for the consultant to present progress, ideas and problems to the small SWAT team who hopefully the Minister will name for this short period. The first such session should probably take place on Friday the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- As soon as the project is approved, a detailed schedule of activities and deliverables should be worked out.

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## Fees:

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- The fee for this project as outlined here will be FF 100,000.
- Any eventual travel and all related communications, Internet, WWW, and other materials and support expenses will be covered by EcoPlan.

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## Confidentiality

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There are strong arguments for keeping these first stages of work quite discreet and confidential, at least until such time that the basic ideas have been developed to the point where more public discussion can be encouraged with confidence. On the other hand, it could be extremely useful for the project to open up some aspects of it to at least limited public discussion, for example via one or more specialized sites on the WWW<sup>6</sup>. It may be possible to chart a course that would allow us to achieve both these objectives. We would like to discuss this matter carefully with you, and then come to a concrete agreement.

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## References:

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See attached background dossier, together with information on EcoPlan and the various related projects and programs that are fully identified at <http://www.the-commons.org/>.

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<sup>6</sup> It might be very useful to create a French language discussion group under the Zero Emissions Strategy Conference (at <http://www.the-commons.org/zero-ems>). Such a forum could not only be very helpful for the present project but it could also provide valuable feedback for an eventual dedicated Web site for the eventual full scale program.



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## AFTERWORD: SMOGBUSTERS AND KYOTO

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We propose that the Smogbusters program might, assuming we can get it moving along quickly enough now, possibly be of use to your Minister in the case she wishes to announce some positive news concerning measures being taken here in France to try to lower air emissions levels. We suspect that there will be a real need for credible news in this respect, and further would go on record here by suggesting that the "French Smogbuster model" could usefully be looked at and adapted by many of the other nations and institutions attending and following the meeting. In the following we provide some first background on this meeting and the possibility that it might open up in this respect.

### Background Note on Kyoto

As we all know the French Government is shortly to join something like 170 other high level national delegations in Kyoto to attend the 3rd Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which is scheduled to take place in December. The announced objective of this meeting is to reach agreement on measures against future "Global Warming", with a protocol expected to be adopted by this conference setting out target figures to reduce green-house gases after the year 2000.<sup>7</sup> This, from the perspective of anyone who genuinely cares about the environment or is there to represent her government, is likely to prove a most embarrassing occasion.

We know in advance what is likely to take place. The world will divide into two, with a few rare exceptions. On the one hand will be the representatives of the advanced economics (roughly the OECD nations) who will by and large be counseling 'moderation', despite the fact that they themselves have not been successful practitioners over the last years. The motivation of this 'appeal to reason' is of course their great (and entirely justified) fear that the developing nations are now about to stoke their new levels of economic growth and energy with the worst possibly mix of technologies, practices and results.

Our involvement over the last four years as consultants to the OECD Environment Directorate's Committee on Environmentally Sustainable Transportation provides no grounds for optimism in any of these respects. As the program statistics make clear, despite the ambitious objectives and high professions by almost all of the 155 countries that signed the original convention at the Rio "Earth Summit" in 1992, the emissions situation is substantially worse today than it was then. Not only have the (usually most modest) targets that were set in Rio almost universally not been met, but in many cases there has been not only a negative trend but even an *acceleration* of the rate of emissions proliferation.

This is the sad reality that we will face in Kyoto. The policies, the practices and the numbers are all going in the wrong direction. On the other hand, our Smogbuster initiatives, modest though they may be in comparison to the world's problems, just might serve as a small model for making the transition from energy and pollution profligacy to a more sustainable planet. That could be a real contribution.

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<sup>7</sup> By way of brief reminder, I would remind you of the stated objective of the United Nations Framework Convention in its own words from Article II: " The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner."