

The New Mobility Agenda

Reinventing Transport in Cities 2009-2012 Agenda for Reform (Putting our brains together)

Eric Britton, Paris, December 2008

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Transit priority/Street redesign



Shared vehicle systems



Universal mobility passes



Traffic control/enforcement



Public space renaissance



Showing the way

Reinventing Transport in Cities: 2009 - 2012

Work Plan

Draft very much in process. At this stage still incomplete, needlessly repetitive, chaotically organized, and in many places awkwardly phrased. Yes, yes, we know it. Stay tuned.

Draft status: As it stands, what you have here is a workbook. It is not at this early point meant to be read and relished as a completed book – virtually every page of the present draft needs to be rewritten. Rather it is intended for inspection and critical comment by cooperating international colleagues -- as well as providing a flexible frame to guide the author's on-going work. That said, the curious reader may find value in at least some of what thus far appears in these pages.

Target reader: Aiming at the generalist reader: specifically citizens and groups concerned with the broad challenges of sustainable development and social justice, and of course especially with those of how we can better get around in our cities. A major goal is to put this in front of busy mayors and other local government and community leaders in many cities who are going to be a central part of the solution. For these reasons, readability and illustrations are of real importance.

Title: Provisional (All suggestions welcome)

Style: Not intended as an academic research piece, not is it my intention to preach to the choir (hello!). Rather the goal is to gather between a single set of covers a readable, authoritative collection of focused background, observations, and recommendations that come out of years of work with and inspection of outstanding projects and program leading the way in many parts of the world. Basically it reports on what I have seen and learned from others in this long process during which I was helped by many people and groups around the world. Ample references are supplied for those who chose to dig deeper.

Process: (See below on "Putting our brains together" to see how I propose to make this work)

Illustrations: Going to be very important in the final edition. You will find a few here already which are placed to give the reader an idea of their usefulness in bringing these at times abstract ideas into focus. Volunteer contributions are welcome (see below).

Distribution: To get the message out, it will need support at two levels: (a), commercial publication with a house well placed to secure wide international distribution. And in parallel (b) collaboration with national and regional partners who are well placed specifically to put copies of the book on the desks of every mayor and local authority in their country.

Outreach: The contents and message need to be communicated and supported through outreach programs which include conference participation, workshops and presentations to make known, test and to refine these concepts and words. These should have international coverage.

Media support: From the outset of the New Mobility program in 1988, I have pushed hard to make use of all available media to support these ideas and projects. (You can get a feel for this at <http://media.newmobility.org>). It is my intention to be extremely vigorous in supporting this volume with a full media campaign, along with a series of city meetings and dialogues which are intended to be part of a process to translate the best of these ideas to on-street reality.

Translations: Since these are universal issues, and since people involved in local government in many places are not always at ease in working their way through long blocks of prose in what may be a second or third language, it is important that this book appear in as many languages as we can manage to inspire. To be prepared in collaboration with well placed local partners and groups who can help structure the content to respond to their culture, issues and understanding.

Timetable: It is my intention over the three months immediately ahead to complete these materials in readable form, to send sections out for comment and peer review to numerous colleagues in different parts of the world who have indicated their interest in helping out.

Critical comments/suggestions: Very welcome indeed. Please share your thoughts, corrections and suggestions with me via any of the means or addresses indicated below:

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The New Mobility Agenda

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The New Mobility Agenda

Abstract

This book-in-progress introduces an innovative public policy concept for sustainable transport in cities for the 21st century: the New Mobility Agenda. As part of this package it provides introductions, background information, insights and leads to a broad range of the cost-effective measures, services and tools now available to support the necessary deep reform of our city transport arrangements in a manner which corresponds better with the very different circumstances that characterize the sector, our cities, and our planet in this new and very different century.

The author sets out to take a "clean sheet of paper" approach to understanding the past and present realities of the sector, including both problems and opportunities. His approach is deliberately positive, inclusive, non-confrontational, and commonsensical: seeking to provide the key policy makers and other actors and change-agents involved with a practical framework for a better common understanding at the overall strategic level, as well as for the very specific actions that can now be undertaken as key building blocks of the transportation reform movement.

The recurrent theme that holds the book together is the author's firm belief that the move to sustainability is one that is rich in opportunities for not only greater well-being for all but also for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth.

A central pillar of his argument is the understanding that fully half or more of the answers to our mobility-related problems lie outside of the traditional transportation sector. Hence the reform process must involve and engage the full range of concerned actors and interests in the city.

Great importance is given to the time vector. On the one hand rapid change is needed for many reasons. But it is important too that policy makers use of time as their ally in bringing the needed reforms on line in ways that take into account that changes in people's mobility culture often cannot take place overnight. But with a strong strategy and in a matter of months or a couple of years you can get a lot done. That is one of the main lessons coming out of these pages.

The author stresses that the city is the key decision and action unit in this process of much needed transportation reform. But at the same time, this opens up an important support role for public agencies, NGOs, foundations and others with the mandate, contacts and resources needed to help bring these materials to the attention of local decision makers.



Foreword

The book is more about people, cities and democracy than about transportation per se. More about services than products. And more about doing things together and not in isolation.

There is little if anything you will find dear reader that is entirely original in these pages -- other than perhaps my idea we needed to dig up an alternative phrase for what that for some years earlier had been called "sustainable transportation". The problem was that this great concept, for all its many qualities, did not seem to be getting much traction when it came to practical reforms out on the street. The concept warned us of our errors, helped us to understand the things we needed to get better hold of, and the broad directions in which policy and practice in the sector needed to move. But for all that, it was not much help in pointing the way in more specific terms as to what has to be done next in order to get the job done. Starting tomorrow.

Thus the concept of "new mobility" was born in the hope of providing some specific practical guidance, leads and insights. And with it the idea of something I decided to call the "New Mobility Agenda" as a means for tying all the various bits and pieces together. And in the process if possible to ensure that the whole turns out to be more than the sum of its parts. You will see more about all this in the volume that follows.

The basic concept is one that is positive, in that it looks especially to the web of policies and practices that can bring about more sustainable transportation systems and more sustainable cities. We know for example that suburban sprawl is a great problem-lock, that we cannot build our way out many of the problems, that destruction of place is a serious error, that we need to tackle the problems of environment, resources and social justice. But all this is well mapped terrain, so in these pages we assume that the reader has already covered this territory, leaving me free to get on to the enumeration of specific ideas and strategies that can move us and our cities in the right direction

As you will quickly appreciate as you plow ahead in these pages, this is not an academic research project nor technical study. Rather the goal is to gather between a single set of covers a readable, authoritative collection of focused information, observations, and conclusions that have come out of something like three decades of work with and inspection of outstanding projects and program leading the way in the transportation sector in many parts of the world. In this book I simply report on what I have seen and learned from others in this long process in which I was helped by many people and groups around the world. Ample references are supplied for those who chose to dig deeper

In addition to working with these projects directly and my own reading and research, I have been aided to a very great extent by counsel, information and inspiration provided by the several thousands of friends and colleagues from more than thirty counties, North and South, whom I "met", dialogued with, and learned from over the years, And while some of this was face to face or via direct contacts and collaboration, most of it took place in the approximately two dozen "knowledge groups" that I helped to set up on the internet, starting with the first of this, a news group that appeared on CompuServe in 1988. If you wish to get a feel for the topics, coverage and people and groups involved in these exchanges, I can do no better than to point you to

[Http://www.talking.newmobility.org](http://www.talking.newmobility.org)

. . . . Page to be entirely rewritten . . .

Eric Britton, Paris, November 2008



The New Mobility Agenda

Putting our brains together (Note on the open support project)

The origins of the New Mobility Agenda back in 1988 were marked in a very important way to a decision back then to see how we might do to make full and best use of the communication tools then available in order to create a broad consensus for change on our troubled topic. The idea was to take it by steps: starting by creating an open forum (first using a simple listserv), on to an unfolding process of information exchange and dialogues, from there to start to build a consensus, and through this process hopefully to create a force for change.

From the outset I believed that if we were ever going to be able to reform the guts of our transportation systems, this was going to have to be through a broad-based collaborative enterprise. And here we are twenty years later and I still believe this to be the case.

This does not mean that I minimize the importance of individual or team efforts. To the contrary. There are many wonderful examples of where these contributions have helped advance policy and practice in our troubled sector over the last two decades. But apparently not enough. Thus, if you look around on the streets of our cities this morning, you will see that despite all this hard work and undeniable accomplishment, we have made no significant progress *overall* and that the big indicators are continuing to move in exactly the wrong direction. That is our dilemma.

Each of us has her or his talents, and I had always considered that my strength lie not so much in terms of my skills as an individual author or researcher, but rather my perception that there is an enormous and for the most part largely tapped potential in our society for putting our brains and energies together to create a consensus and force for change. The town hall meetings of the past have at times been important instruments of debate, exchange and eventually forces for change. But it's suddenly the 21st century and our "town" is now the planet. And this is the theater for change that we need to address. Where to start?

This project, namely everything that is necessary to create a first rate book that we can put on the desks of mayors and local government, activists and public interest groups, researchers and students, and concerned citizens who care enough to spend time looking around for new ideas and approaches, provides a superb opportunity for putting this approach to work. How to do it?

I'm sure this is going to evolve in terms of its details, but to get started my idea is to create a new open forum, available to all, without monitoring or editing, in which colleagues, friends, curious readers, adversaries and whoever else wishes to put virtual pen to virtual paper, can come in and share with a broad public their ideas and views on both the concepts which are set out here as well the way in which I, as the self-appointed author, am laboring to pull the whole thing together.

There are a number of possible ways of doing this and in the weeks immediately ahead I will be exploring these and reporting to our permanent forum, the New Mobility Café, on progress. Then once we have a viable framework established, we can make this well-known and invite the world to come in and let us know what they think. You among them I very much hope.

If you have ideas or suggestions on this, now is exactly the time to let us know.

Let's make our grandchildren proud of us,

PS. One good way to stretch your brain is to Knoogle it: <http://knoogle.net>