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The New Mobility Agenda Fast Track: 2008 - 2012

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING ON THE COMMONS
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The New Mobility Agenda: Fast Track – 2008-2012

Journal of World Transport Policy & Practice – Vol. 14, No. 4 – Work plan

“We should not wait to cut back on burning fossil fuels until we have developed greener technology to supply our energy needs, despite what many economists are advising their respective governments. Such a waiting game may have deadly consequences.”¹

Summary: 21 June. This is the in-process workplan being developed in support of a collaborative project being carried out in the coming months by the Journal of World Transport Policy & Practice and the New Mobility Agenda, in cooperation with a network of international contributors, discussants and partners.

Title (Provisional): The New Mobility Agenda: Fast Track 2008 - 2012

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Authors/Contributors: This is to invite your comments and suggestions concerning eventual articles, topics, authors, media, supporting events. (Details on organization and submission guidelines follow.)

Central themes/building blocks:

Key 1: The time vector: Focuses on the third of the strategic pillars that underlie the New Mobility Agenda: the importance of implementing actions, measures and policies that are going to bring visible improvements the city and the planet in the short run (i.e., up and running in less than 24 months; max. 4/5 years for high direct impacts). The other two pillars: (1) the path to the rapid cross-over to high-amenity, low carbon, low cost, space-efficient new mobility modes; and (2) the creation of a coherent strategic framework as needed to bring all the necessary individual measures and improvements into a unified, synergistic, easy to understand (and test) systemic package (the New Mobility Agenda).

Key 2: The CO2 metric: We take CO2 reductions as our common target, because they lend themselves to intelligent estimates in most cases, if not always exact measurement. And because they work as strong surrogates for a number of other critical parameters (including other GHG reductions, VMT/VKT, congestion, smoothness of traffic flow, and with a little imagination also such things as accident reductions, public health impacts, economic savings (at the level of the individual and the collectivity), etc.

Key 3. Local decision making: The main groups and decision makers who are going to make these projects work are the cities themselves. Effective, adaptive local government, first-rate public/private partnerships, broad based collaboration spanning all aspects of the mobility sector, a capacity to reach beyond the traditional sectorial divides to create more effective city policies, and active citizenry are the forces that are going to shape the New Mobility Agenda in your city. Regional, national and international agencies have a role, but they are by and large supporting and facilitating roles, The initiatives and the actual work have to be carried out by the cities themselves. Likewise foundations and public interest groups have important supporting roles, but there too it is the cities that have to get the job done.

Key 4: Deep democracy: This is above all an exercise in “deep democracy”. On the one hand banding together to create an agenda for responsible collective and individual action. And on the other to do it in a way that is positive, and incites and facilitates positive individual choices made by citizens for their own good reasons and in their own good time.

Supporting project website: A working website and discussion forum has been set up for collaborators in support of the project at <http://www.time.newmobility.org/>. (In progress.)

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¹ From: “No time to lose in cutting CO2 emissions”. By Jim Giles, New Scientist, Issue 2645. 02 March 2008.

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Introduction (Draft – comments invited)

The goal of this Autumn 2008 special edition is to draw international attention to the critical importance of finding and applying measures that will bring about **major very short term changes and improvements** in the transportation sector in general, and specifically in the context of reforming the ways in which people and goods get around in our cities.

The stress on the need to achieve scale results in the very short term is critical, above all because of the high degree of urgency associated with the on-going planetary ecological crisis, now being reinforced in many of our day to day lives by the apparently inexorable move to \$200 oil. Not to say the unnecessarily high social, economic and life quality costs of today's flawed transport arrangements.

This plea for rapid change has until now been largely ignored or run by at the level of policy and practice in most places, institutions and fora. Despite our repeated efforts over the last decade to draw attention to the need to shorten radically the time window for action, the vast majority of programs and discussions, whether at the level of city, national or international agencies and decision makers, stubbornly refuse to accept this position of high urgency. While we call for action in the very tight 2008-2012 time frame, they set out scenarios, remedial programs and promised solutions running out to 2020, 2030 and even 2050. But the planet is already collapsing in many harsh respects. This issue of the Journal represents our latest attempt to address this extremely costly, dangerous and we believe entirely unnecessary oversight.

The Agenda and the Journal have since the Journal's founding in 1993 worked diligently to get support for the argument of stressing the need for short term change, defining this in a first instance as projects, measures and actions that can be implemented and start to get on-street in-lung results in a matter of months -- while taking 4-5 years as the upper limit cut-off point for the focus of this particular program.

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”. - Gandhi

This is not to turn our backs on the need for long term thinking, but certainly does go strongly against the grain of present discussions in most places which inevitably when they talk about change push out to much longer term time horizons, 2020 and even 2050. While what we really need is a massive refocusing of policies, practices, and expenditures bring about major changes in the very short term.

The simple fact is however that as we are and as we act today we cannot even imagine what we could make of the future if we were to really try. But we are – admit it! – not really trying.

As a consequence, it is our view that at the present state of knowledge it is simply not possible for anyone – you, me or the agency or think-tank of your choice -- to have an adequately strong and innovational view of the potential for the very large changes that are needed in the medium or longer run. In a way we have run out of gas. That is to say that we cannot even envisage the future since we are so firmly prisoners of the past, above all in our heads. However, if by shortening our time focus for action and getting results, we ourselves are inevitable going to change. And our vision of the future, of our collective potential for making the changes that are needed in the time horizon of responsibility, we will, as a result of the process of change we have set off by our actions and results, have an altogether different vision of what needs to be done, what can be done and how we can do it. In other words we cannot today realistically expect to be able to envisage a future, since we are still so thoroughly grounded in the stasis of the past. And the passively accepted, but unacceptable, results show this all too clearly.

We must become the change we wish to see in this world.

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Topics/Coverage:

We are looking for authoritative, readable (if possible, illustrated) articles of two to five thousand words reporting on strategies, projects and measure can be deployed in months and are capable of having real environmental and other impacts within a period of a couple of years, 4-5 max. Based entirely on proven technologies and actual hands-on experience, albeit perhaps lesser known and even on a smaller scale. It is their potential for ready, relatively low cost replication in other cities and situation that holds the key.

A few examples of the sort of thing we have in mind which we list here not to narrow the scope but to broaden it through your thoughts and suggestions: Carsharing, ridesharing, transport cycling, public bike programs, TPS (Transport Priority Systems: BRT, HOVs, etc.), slow streets and zones, TDM, tele-mobility, telework, teledelivery, pay your way/ charging, economic instruments (for both moving and parked vehicles), xTransit (shared small vehicle systems), organized & digital hitchhiking, “free” public transport, unified access systems, “NewDriving” projects (helping drivers adapt to new environment), “paydrive” meter, New Mobility Hubs, New Mobility/Smart Growth action partnerships, short term modeling tools, managing short term chaos, behavioral analysis, “playing the future”, new media strategies, etc. (For more click “Action measures” on the top menu above)

Other media:

It's 2008 and not all good ideas are necessarily communicated only in print, ink or virtual, so it makes sense to invite contortions making good use of the full range of available media. This may be photographs, renderings and other images, and of course videos and other internet tricks and tools that can help get these important points across. Brevity is of course great advantage – see <http://www.dothetest.co.uk/>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQASVz4xun8> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YF4Q2badOng> for three brilliant examples.

Cooperating events, outreach:

To maximize outreach and impacts, the tam intends to present partial findings, interim results, complete pieces, in cooperation with meetings, conferences and other public events both during and upon completion of the project. And to the media. Get in touch with the organizers if you have ideas for us.

Partners & Sponsors:

It is our intention to find cooperating partners and sponsors not only to ensure the quality and the speed with which we get out this latest WTPP collaborative effort on line (that's important too), but also to seek out the media and international contacts and sources that can help us get this vital message out to key players and to responsible citizens and groups around the world. The New Mobility Agenda approach shows us how literally to reinvent transport in our cities in time to make a difference -- but we are going to need the understanding and support of well placed groups to help ensure that this message gets out as it should. (Note: The Vol. 2, No. 1 title in this series was co-sponsored by Information Society Program of the European Commission, ensuring that the report was widely circulated and discussed in conferences, projects and programs across Europe. This is a good model we will do well to replicate here.)



For further information and to discuss your project or eventual article

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