

## **“Principal Voices”- Sustainable Transportation as a Third Voice A proposal**

**Principal Voices 2005:** The immediate objective of this cooperative sustainability initiative is to see what we can do to create and make heard a much-needed balancing “Voice” for the transportation component of the potentially important Principal Voices ([www.PrincipalVoices.com](http://www.PrincipalVoices.com)) project over 2005 through the participation of an ‘invisible college’ of knowledgeable, independent, world level proponents of sustainable transport in all its many aspects (or New Mobility if you like). By way of quick reminder, here is what the sponsors say about themselves: “Principal Voices is an international project aimed at provoking discussion on some of the more compelling challenges confronting our world today. Over the next 12 months TIME, FORTUNE and CNN, in association with Shell, will be presenting a series of videos, articles and round-table discussions. Themes covered will include the environment, business innovation, economic development and transport.”

**The Three-Voice Proposal:** We are proposing to work with this international forum to articulate the debate in what we believe to be a most appropriate and dynamic manner, and add a *Third Voice* in the year-long discussions, balancing in our view . .

- (1) **Transportation Voice 1:** The long established defining Voice of transportation expertise in design, engineering, construction, operation, finance, etc., that has essentially dominated and defined the transportation systems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and still remains the main operational paradigm in most places (and in any event a critical central component of the next generation transportation paradigm that must be able to call in these skills and experience). This Voice is at present most ably represented by Mr. Ellatuvalapil Sreedharan one of India's greatest civil engineers, the architect of the supposedly unbuildable Konkan Railway linking Mumbai and Mangalore, and, more recently, designer of the Delhi Metro system (See <http://www.principalvoices.com/voices/elattuvalapil-sreedharan-bio.html> for more)
- (2) **Second Voice 2?** No conversation concerning the future of the transportation sector would be complete without the vigorous participation of this important second voice. A parallel but in many ways separate but very powerful in its own right financial, institutional, political, and industrial lobby “Voice”, a good example of whose thinking can be seen with the recent WBCSD’s “Meeting the Challenges to Sustainability” report (see <http://www.ecoplan.org/wtpp/general/wbcds.htm> for report and some context) that has been actively supported by this currently formidable element of the transportation establishment.
- (3) **The Third Voice?** These are the growing number of international experts and groups who are working together to open up and define what we call the Sustainable Transportation or New Mobility Agenda. This approach to understanding and deciding about mobility matters is altogether on another plane from the older supply-oriented, specific, circumscribed problem-solving approach that has long been the dominant mode of thinking, policy and investment in the past, a time incidentally when the ‘problematique’ of transportation was vastly different from that which we face today (See Todd Litman’s recent “The Future Isn’t What It Used To Be” at <http://www.vtpi.org/future.pdf> for a good overview on this). This new and far broader, more inclusive approach to planning, decision making and even on down to implementation and operation is the next step in a cumulative long run process of intellectual, economic, social, environmental and political evolution. It is, no more no less, the world transport policy and practice paradigm of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is our view that a lively, open, high profile public dialogue between these three contrasting Voices could be a major accomplishment of the sponsors. And while we have some thoughts as to how the second Voice participation might be organized, this is of course not our domain, though we do offer a few of these in the final section of this brainstorming note below.

**The Third Voice?** What we are proposing here is to put in place a mechanism that will serve to open up the debate and thereby ensure that the many competent people and groups working on this agenda in many parts of the world (including many highly respected NGOs) can make their voices heard. The proposed mechanism for doing this: an interactive process mediated by the web and several other low cost, widely available SOA conferencing and dialogue technologies.

### Why is this so urgent? Or is it?

There are no less than two main axis of urgency to which the organizers should be giving their most assiduous attention:

- The first has to do with the need for doing better in all this in the advanced industrial and post-industrial economies. And perhaps most of all when it comes to reshaping our transportation set-ups in and around cities. Bottom line there: there are one billion people who deserve a better deal and all we need to get this process underway is to start to give the dialogue the profile which the circumstances literally shout for. Here are two references from the New Mobility Agenda which help make this point:
  - **What's wrong with "Old Mobility" (i.e., the one we have) at** <http://ecoplan.org/toronto/general/problem.htm#problem>; and
  - "Dysfunctional Transportation: Public Health Perspectives" at <http://ecoplan.org/toronto/general/health.htm>
- But this so-called "First World" accounts for less than 20% of the world's population, and moreover far the greatest part of building and growth in terms of the transport system and its infrastructure will be in the rest of the world, where – and here is where the full dimensions of our in-process tragedy become so very apparent and, indeed, desperate – the so-called 'western model' of transportation is the defining example.
  - If they insist on repeating our pattern and our mistakes – concerning which we are hearing little of much help from the First or Second Voices – then the planet and they (and you and I) are in for big trouble. Not just a little inconvenience but planet and society threatening disorder next to which the losses of the earthquake and tsunamis in the Indian Ocean will be related child's play.
  - Please. Never underestimate the enormous societal and environmental costs that unthought-out, unfettered transportation decisions can lead to. Want an example. Try a visit to Katmandu and ask people how the city looked a few years go. But understand this: it does not have to be that way.
  - As but one example. The New Mobility Agenda is presently trying to launch a high profile public dialogue concerning post-tsunami sustainability options in the transportation sector, that e very much hope Principal Voices will get behind.

## The Third Voice List in Process:

Here's the latest cut of our wide open working list for your comment and suggestions - see below for further background and suggestions concerning the further development of this important list. (Incidentally if you wish to know more about any of them until full profiles become available along with their approval in each case, a visit to Google will serve you well in almost all cases.)

**Who are these people?** No more no less than the hundred-plus individuals and independent committed groups who in my experience and in the views of my respected international colleagues of long date are among the leading proponents of the kind of transportation that is the most important of all for our planet and our times: sustainable transportation. If I had to turn the leading edge of transportation policy and decision making over to anyone, it would be to these people and their international colleagues, collaborators and networks in turn. And that of course in parallel with the technical and other proven skills and virtuosity of our first Voice representatives.

- A. Ables, Bangkok, Thailand
- Alan AtKisson, Stockholm, Sweden
- Ayad Altaai, Baghdad, Iraq
- Oscar Aguilar Juárez, Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico
- Paul A. Barter, Sustran, Singapore
- Denis Baupin, City of Paris, France
- Margaret Bell, UTSG, Leeds, UK
- Reinie Biesenbach, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research/ Global Research Alliance (GRA), Pretoria, South Africa
- Donald Brackenbush, Los Angeles, CA
- Christ Bradshaw, Ottawa, Canada
- Eric Bruun, Philadelphia, PA
- Enrique Calderon, Barcelona, Spain
- Sally Campbell, Eveleigh, Australia
- Carl Cederschiold, Former mayor of Stockholm, Sweden
- Robert Cervero, Berkeley, CA
- Phil Charles, Brisbane, Australia
- Robin Chase, Boston, MA
- Carlos Cordero Velásquez, Lima, Peru
- Al Cormier, Mississauga, Canada
- Wendell Cox, St. Louis, Mo.
- Philippe Crist, Saint Germain en Laye, France
- Ranjith de Silva, Colombo, Ceylon
- Carlos Dora, Rome, Italy
- Bernard Fautrier, Monaco
- Anwar Fazal, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Maria Josefina Figueroa, Roskilde, Denmark
- Duarte de Souza Rosa Filho, Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Brendan Finn, Singapore
- Priyanthi Fernando, Executive Secretary, International Forum for Rural Transport Development (IFRTD).
- Karl Fjellstrom, Surabaya, Indonesia
- Rossella Forenza, Potenza, Italy
- Jan Gehl, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Michael Glotz-Richter, Bremen, Germany
- Phil Goodwin, Exeter, UK
- Ingibjorg Guolaugsdottir, Reykjavik, Iceland
- Peter Hall, Berkeley, USA
- Sylvia Harms, Dubendorf, Switzerland
- Roger Higman, Friends of the Earth, London, UK

- John. Holtzclaw, Sierra Club, San Francisco, CA
- Walter Hook, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, New York
- Nguyen Trong Thong, Hanoi, Viet Nam
- Ursula Huws, Analytica, UK
- Taiichi Inoue, Tokyo, Japan
- Virgil Ioanid, Bucarest, Romania
- Jane Jacobs, Toronto, Canada
- Jiri Jiracek, Prague, Czech Republic
- Dave Holladay, Glasgow, Scotland
- Per Homann Jespersen, Roskilde, Denmark
- Sharif A Kafi, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Richard Katzev, Portland
- Isam Kaysi, Beirut
- Fred Kent, Partners for Public Spaces, NYC
- Jeff Kenworthy, Perth, Australia
- Gadi Kfir, Tel Aviv, Israel
- Adam Kowalewski, Warsaw, Poland
- Charles Kunaka, Harare
- Stefan Langeveld, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Agnes Lehuen, Le Vesinet, France
- Corinne Lepage, Paris, France
- Graham Lightfoot, Scariif, Ireland
- Todd Litman, Victoria, Canada
- Stefan Lorentzson, Gothenburg. Sweden
- Harun al-Rasyid Sorah Lubis, Bandung, Indonesia
- Kenneth Orski, Washington, DC
- Dojie Manahan, Quezon City, Philippines
- Naoko Matsumoto, Kanagawa, Japan
- Suzanne May, London, UK
- Segundo Medina Hernández, Havana, Cuba
- Kisan Mehta, Bombay, India
- Michael Meyer, Atlanta, GA
- Nobuo Mishima, Kyoto, Japan
- Dinesh Mohan, New Delhi, India
- Mikel Murga, Bilbao, Spain
- Peter Newman, Sydney, Australia
- Simon Norton, Cambridge, UK
- Margaret O'Mahony, Dublin, Ireland
- Richard Ongjerth, Budapest, Hungary
- Carlos F. Pardo, Bogota, Colombia
- Sujit Patwardhan, Pune, India
- Enrique Peñalosa, Bogota, Colombia
- Maria Elvira Perez, Colombia
- Rudolf Petersen, Wuppertal, Germany
- Stephen Plowden, London, UK
- Robert Poole, Reason Institute, Los Angeles, CA
- Danijel Rebolj , Maribor, Slovenia
- Ernst Reichenbach, GTZ, Katmandu
- Michael A. Replogle, New York
- Gabriel Roth, Chevy Chase
- Hamid Sardar, Ulan Bator, Mongolia
- Preston Schiller, Huxley College of the Environment, Bellingham, WA
- Lee Schipper, EMBARQ/World Resources Institute
- Bodo Schwieger, Berlin, Germany
- Derek Scrafton, Adelaide, Australia
- Dimitris Sermpis, Athens, Greece
- Leena Siilfverberg, Helsinki, Finland
- Robert Smith, Dorset, UK
- Ivan Stanic, Ljubljana, Slovenia

- Linda Steg, Groningen, Netherlands
- Martin Strid, Borlange, Sweden
- Craig Townsend, Montréal, Canada
- Robert Stussi, Lisbon, Portugal
- Robert Thaler, Vienna, Austria
- Geetam Tiwari, New Delhi, India
- Tony Verelst, Zonhoven, Belgium
- Vukan Vuchic, Philadelphia, PA
- Conrad Wagner, Stans, Switzerland
- Bernie Wagenblast, Cranford, NJ
- Yngve Westerlund, Gothenburg, Sweden
- Dave Wetzel, London, UK
- John Whitelegg, Lancaster, UK
- Johnny Widen, Lulea, Sweden
- Peter Wiederkehr, Hamburg
- Roelof Wittink, Utrecht
- Kerry Wood, Wellington, New Zealand
- Guiping Xiao, Beijing, China
- Muhammad Younus, Karachi, Pakistan
- Christopher Zegras, Cambridge, MA
- Sue Zielinski, Toronto, Canada

**Note:** By the way, I do not as yet have permissions to use most of these names.

- So if you are on the list and agree to participate in principal, please send us a quick note with your full title, contact information, etc. so that the sponsors can see just how distinguished this group is.
- Participation, by the way, being always a matter of your personal convenience with no requirements other than to indicate your interest to look in from time to time and if the circumstances move you to pitch in with comments and suggestions.
- **Key question:** Can we, together, handle such a large list and still get a meaningful "Voice"? Answer: We have managed to do so on a number of occasions in the past with no great problems. I am confident that we can to it now.

#### **Next steps with this working list:**

**Do you have a nomination** for another highly qualified authority/networker suitable and ready to help round out this fine list?

- I feel that despite the enormous quality of the group as it stands we are still a bit uncreatively short in the following areas: females, young people, people with mobility impediments, youth and school programs, and people struggling with genius and resolve with rural transport, in particular in the poorest parts of the world.
- We also could use more "point expertise" in the following areas: local government, land use planning, road pricing and economic instruments, human powered transport, local government and decision making, public space management, access for people with mobility impediments, techniques of low cost infrastructure modification, transport/environment interface, electronic substitutes for physical movement, behavioral psychology, public administration, economics, sociology, social work, law enforcement and policing, new techniques of micro-modeling, public outreach, genuinely participatory planning, new media, and the list goes on.
- Disaster relief and rebuilding
- One technology based area that needs further definition and support is new forms of shared transport better adapted to the public's demands in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including those which offer 'car like' or better mobility, with much more emphasis on the interface with mobile telephony, taxis and paratransit,

- Another importance vector to be brought in here: non-transport uses and users of the road and supporting infrastructure: peddlers, window shoppers, playing children, people meeting and talking, beggars, lonely people, street people (homeless) and once again the list goes on.
- Finally, we could use a few more mayors and local leaders, who are after all among the defining forces for decision and change in the sector.

#### **How is the proposed process going to work? (Draft notes)**

- Further background on our proposed collective contribution to this potentially important project is being drafted and will be available shortly. (Draft notes follow below which are intended shortly to provide a fuller view of what we have in mind here.)

#### **Notes on the Third Voice Panel/Nominations:**

- This panel does however, at least I hope, have a very definite common orientating – which is to sustainable development and social justice. And sustainable development, just to be sure that we are very clear on this, is not something that we can put on the back burner and wait for another day. It's 2005 and sustainability requires immediate, priority attention. It is not a luxury. It is an essential and a central priority.
- Each of these people is a considerable personality in her/his own right, highly respected, known for the quality and independence of their views, and their brains, energy, accomplishments, long term commitment and ethics.
- They have very different backgrounds, experience, areas of expertise, and at times even visions of their sector and the future. To this extent they complement and enhance each other by their very differentness.
- These people understand that the task of making their voices heard in a world in which old ideas and practices often continue to hold the stage is not an easy one, and that success depends on their ability to deal with the challenges. They are accustomed to arguing their case in the face of considerable opposition and indifference, but they also are for the most part world level experts in listening (not always a strong point in a sector long dominated by people who had decided what was going to be best for the others).
- Each fully understands the full remit and complexity of the sector, and the fact that policies there must stretch far beyond the usual transport remit.
- They provide between them coverage of and sensitivity to the full reach of the complex interface between transport and its greater context. Important since well more than half the decisions and actions that need to be motivated to move toward a better transportation system come in fact from outside the traditional transport nexus.
- Tone of the exchanges: Informed, exploratory, caring, disputatious, and respectful (even when it hurts)
- Here by way of quick example are some of the fields they bring into the decision nexus, in addition to the more conventional transportation, engineering, planning, etc. skills: Land use planning, electronic substitutes for physical movement, human powered transport, local government and decision making, public space management, access for E&H, transport/environment interface, behavioral psychology, public administration, economics, law, policing, new techniques of micro-modeling, public outreach, genuinely participatory planning, much more emphasis on the interface with mobile telephony, new media, and the list goes on.
- The international coverage of the group is exemplary.

- We are making a special effort to secure a much higher proportion of female members than normally encountered in transport circles (notoriously male dominated... and that is a good part of their problem). As of end 2004 we were at about 15%. We have to do better.
- There are a fair number of young people – but we can try to do better.
- Another thing they have in common, a word that we do not hear all that often in the traditional transportation decision dialogues, is compassion. Important word.
- In some cases these individuals do have an institutional affiliation, in most cases institutions and NGOs which are well known for their independence of views. Moreover we have seen in virtually all cases over the years, these particular people have meticulously preserved their independent point of view and are given over to plain speaking and not varnishing or projection of a specific interest or point of view. In short, they are thoroughly ethical.
- In this context, the list is actually considerably longer than what you see here. In the interest of economy and efficiency we have made a practice of naming just one person per group or working cluster, in the knowledge that each will in turn work to ensure the participation of the others in their grouping.

**Also:**

- At the outset I had been targeting a considerably shorter list, but as a result of the feedback received in the last days from our lists and as the concept of what we perhaps should be targeting to do in this case, I became aware that it was going to be necessary to reach out in order to make sure that the full complexity and variety of the challenges of sustainable transport are properly covered. In the event, I see this as a dynamic, ever evolving group.
- I have decided (unless pushed to the contrary) to omit from this list all people with strong bureaucratic, institutional and economic ties and interests, and specifically proponents of unproven technologies and major infrastructure developments that are not fully and assiduously cross-checked with the full range of sustainability criteria).
- Here is a quick and very personal characterization of the two other voices which I share with you by way of further introduction, based on a number of years of observation and, quite often, direct collaboration in a variety of programs and projects. (And here too your comments are earnestly solicited.)
  - The first Voice, that of the professional transportation establishment, is in the main highly conservative – natural enough since they are the ones who are most directly effected by success or failure of what they do – but not unamenable to change. To the contrary in most cases rightfully proud of the technical virtuosity they appreciate technical challenges, new techniques and in general any opportunity to do more and better; however they need to be reassured by clear examples and steady support from the top.
  - Our second Voice, the financial, industrial and political establishment, is by contrast considerably more change-resistant, especially if the changes represent a paradigm threat to the established way of doing things in the sector and its upstream ramifications (energy among them). Without wishing to make this into a Green or proto-Marxist diatribe, think of it this way: with each day that passes and the old, current transportation paradigm remains in place – despite whatever it may cost in lost lives, illness, resource depletion, environmental impacts, destruction of community, cost to users, etc. etc. – tens of billions of dollars of income continues to move into these corporations uninterrupted.

On the side of the political establishment, the resistance to basic order change is more subtle, including not least of which fear of being punished in the polls, including for changes that ruffles the feathers of many entrenched interests, at least during the interim period that they take old and show that indeed their overall impact is largely positive. This is not to say that any of these groups will not get behind changes when needed and possible, but that by and large their time horizon for change is considerably more, let us say, leisurely than that of, actually, either of the other two voices. Fortunately, the attitude of the various individual members of this voice are far from uniform.

- Incidentally, it is perhaps in these terms that the 2005 debate might usefully focus – bearing in mind that the ultimately objective is not to win points or drag anyone through the mud publicly, but to get moving ahead on the New Mobility Agenda without unnecessary delay. For this to happen there has to be a certain level of harmony among the voices. And all three must be vigorously and openly present.
- I intend to propose that they invite the WBCSD ‘Sustainable Mobility’ team – or possibly some kind of composite voice which brings together the usually well orchestrated performances of such important entrenched forces such as the automotive and energy industry, and such generally concordant groups as the IEA, ECMT, IAA, and the various well placed lobbies -- to come in as the third major voice/vision of the sector. This means they can cover the interests of the auto and transportation industry, very long term stuff, big expensive infrastructure projects, the lurch toward things such as the hydrogen economy, and their list goes on.
- **Tipping Point Objective:** The goal of the initiative set out here is no less than to use this high profile international debate to bring to the fore the competence and views of this important and thus far insufficiently recognized current of world transportation expertise. (“Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference”, Malcolm Gladwell.)

#### **Draft notes to be incorporated into final piece:**

This will be a moderated debate and sometimes our chair (that’s me until we find someone better... which should not be hard) will cut off speakers, presenters who in his humble views are taking up too much of our valuable time and wondering a bit too far afield from our bottom line.

Why not bring in here representatives of organizations such as the various concerned units of the WBCSD, ECMT, EC, UITP, APTA, World Bank, UN ,and the list goes on and on as well as our outstanding individuals? Well because we have seen over the years how such people act in these circumstances. In truth they of the kinds of divided minds and responsibilities that inevitably occur when anyone has to keep weighing their personal/professional views on the one hand and what the mother organization might have in mind or have to worry about. So we are sticking to individuals in this college.

Out: anything that can be covered by other Voices as they chose: unproven systems that require large investments and extensive, expensive and inevitably slow new infrastructure development

All have extensive international experience – especially US and UK, Sweden, Germany and a few others in which there are more than one person cited.