

Public Transport and Land Values

"There is widespread agreement that transport improvements increase land values but capturing a proportion of land value uplift to help pay for the transport infrastructure is recognised as difficult. In London, the Jubilee Line extension to the tube network cost the public sector around \$10b but was estimated to have increased land values by some \$30b. In Hong Kong and Japan the transit network is financed through the development of property that remains owned by the transit authority. In Singapore land is held by the public sector and then sold to the private sector, the sale price reflecting the increased value. Woolwich Station on London's CrossRail is set to be funded by a developer in return for increased floor space ratios (FSR) which will in turn increase development profits. Linking increased accessibility to FSRs and developer contributions has the potential to increase transit oriented development outcomes and support a shift towards public transport use."

Ref: Bryony Cooper, The Flyer, April 2009
<http://www.scapestrategy.com.au/>

Transport Priorities in New Zealand

"The [NZ] Government's release of its Policy Statement on transport (GPS) details how significant amounts of funding are being taken away from sustainable modes of transport to now be spent on roads. In a snap shot, over the next three years:

- Spending on public transport services (buses, trains, ferries) will be cut by up to 23% (down by up to \$175M)
- Spending on public transport infrastructure (integrated ticketing, stations, real time information systems, new busways, new rail lines) will be cut by up to 89% (down by up to \$490M)
- Spending on walking and cycling will be cut by up to 66% (down by up to \$60M)
- Spending on travel demand management will be cut by up to 47% (down by up to \$105M)
- Spending on rail and sea freight (to get trucks off roads) will be cut by up to 100% (down by up to \$45M)

"Thankfully, the money is not going to be spent on just ordinary roads. According to Steven Joyce, these are 'roads of National Significance'. What does this mean exactly? It means that these are roads politicians want built despite being neither properly costed nor prioritised by our land transport planners in the NZTA."

Ref: Russell Norman, Frogblog, 20/5/09

Sustainable Cities

"[There is a] growing concern world wide at how to make our cities more sustainable, healthy and liveable. In the last few years this has become increasingly urgent given rising obesity levels and the risks from climate change and peak oil. In particular, the latest data on climate change indicates we may have at most a few decades to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions if we wish to avoid major climate change and its consequences, including increased sea levels and ocean acidity, major damage to ecosystems and species extinctions and further adverse changes to rainfall patterns and temperatures."

Ref: Dr Gary Glazebrook, A Thirty Year Public Transport Plan for Sydney, May 2009 See:
<http://www.dab.uts.edu.au/research/outcomes/garry-glazebrook-summary.pdf>

"Mayor Boris Johnson has outlined plans to make London 'the cleanest, greenest city on earth' by the 2012 Olympics... Johnson proclaimed himself a 'passionate cyclist' and said he would push ahead with cycle super-highways around London. He also called for 'real progress' by cities worldwide towards the electrification of municipal fleets and other vehicles. ... London's air quality problem, he said, was caused by vehicle emissions from 8,300 antiquated diesel buses which could be replaced by low-carbon vehicles. There were also 32,000 taxis running on diesel

fuel which could be replaced by electric vehicles. Johnson said there would be a substantial program in the next few years to produce a 'cleaner, greener' bus for his city. 'The age of the diesel-emitting bus has got to be over in London'."

Ref: AFP, The Age, 18/5/09



Cities are for People ...
Auckland Harbour Bridge, 24/5/09
Picture: Nicola Williams

"As part of a Department of Transportation plan to make [New York] city more livable, cars will be banned from stretches of Broadway at Times Square and at Herald Square, near the Macy's flagship department store. The city says the move will reduce pollution and pedestrian accidents and help traffic flow more smoothly."

Ref: NineMSN, 25/5/09

Peak Oil

"An energy expert says the world has already reached peak oil supply. Professor Kjell Aleklatt heads an energy research group at Uppsala University in Sweden. His team has found oil production will fall 25 per cent below a level widely accepted by policy makers and economists by 2030. Professor Aleklatt says all governments must act now to reduce the world's energy consumption. 'If we don't have the energy, society will crack, so there is not one solution', he said. 'We should use everything, we should use energy more efficient, we should use other forms of energy, renewable energy is a must of course'."

Ref: ABC News, 5/6/09

Plug-in Hybrids

"A plug-in [hybrid] recharges from a regular household socket. When the battery runs low, it will start running as a regular hybrid so drivers don't have to worry about running out of juice on the road. Automakers around the world are working on plug-in models. Recharging stations are expected to proliferate in the cities of the future, much like petrol bowsers, for recharging. The booming sales of the revamped Prius, which went on sale last month, have been a rare bright spot for Toyota. Battered by the global slump and the strong yen, the maker of the Camry sedan and Lexus luxury models recorded its worst loss in its seven-decade history for the fiscal year ended March. Toyota dealers have received 110,000 orders for the Prius in Japan. Toyota acknowledged this week an order placed this month won't get delivered until November or later. Toyota leads the world in cumulative hybrid sales because of the popularity of the Prius, now in its third generation. The first-generation Prius went on sale in 1997."

Ref: AP, NineMSN, 4/6/09

Best Airports

"Seoul's Incheon International Airport has been named the world's best in the annual World Airport Awards. Incheon beat out last year's winner, Hong Kong International, which fell to second place. Singapore's Changi came third. Australia's airports were nowhere to be seen, with Auckland named the best airport in the Pacific region, coming in at number 10 over all. ... The survey evaluates traveller experiences across 39 different airport service and product factors - from check-in, arrivals, transfer through to departure at the gate." **Ref: The Age, 9/6/09**



Eco-driving

"Well, if you're not cycling or walking you better be eco-driving because new research shows changing gears smoothly and not revving your cylinders can save fuel and the environment. Researchers at Melbourne's Monash University say eco-driving 'holds significant promise' for wider implementation across the nation. Eco-driving is a simple concept. Drive more smoothly, slower, accelerate softer and brake less. All of it means motorists save fuel and ultimately push out less emissions. It might also help cut the road toll. The researchers trialled eco-driving with two B-Double cement trucks over a 30 kilometre circuit around Melbourne's outskirts. Ninety per cent of the transport required to make and send cement out to building sites is on roads. The results were promising. 'On average, the fuel consumption of the drivers who completed the full (eco-drive) course decreased by 27 per cent between the pre-course drive and the post-course drive', said the report, released by the federal government on Wednesday. 'Importantly, those drivers maintained these lower levels of consumption at six and 12 weeks after the training, suggesting a potentially long-term, robust effect'."

Ref: Peter Veness, The Age, 3/6/09

Electric Trike



"We're always excited to see more sustainable transportation options for consumers, especially when they go from concept to completely available. The TRIAC, designed by Green Vehicles, is a three wheeled highway capable plug-in electric vehicle that is ready to achieve up to 80mph on the open road. ... The TRIAC is essentially a large, covered trike. The 20kw electric motor can achieve a very reasonable 80mph, and will take you on travels up to 100 miles on any given charge. It takes about 6 hours for its lithium-ion battery to recharge fully and, as with most electric vehicles, it comes with a regenerative braking system."

Ref: Jorge Chapa, Inhabitat

www.inhabitat.com/2008/05/20/transportation-tuesday-the-80mph-triac-goes-on-sale/

Buses – Incentives per Passenger

In the UK, the Commission for Integrated Transport (CfIT) *“believes that the passenger should be at the heart of bus policy and that bus policy should reflect clear and logical objectives for transport policy as a whole. CfIT recommends that Incentive Per Passenger (IPP) replace the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). This payment allocates public subsidy on the basis of passenger travel, not fuel burn. The passenger therefore becomes the focus of the subsidy and not the running of bus miles. IPP is not about maintaining the status quo. The historic national decline in bus travel has been slowing for some years, and many areas have seen growth. But the trends are patchy, with areas of very high growth in London and the ‘cathedral cities’ being offset by decline elsewhere. IPP is about helping to reverse the average decline in bus patronage in England (outside London), and growing patronage will have a positive effect on network design and service provision.*

“Because IPP is about growing patronage, it will give the most benefit to populated areas with the greatest scope for socially beneficial passenger growth. It is therefore focused on areas that have the greatest potential benefits from modal shift, decongestion, improved environment and accessibility. Under our proposal, tendering authorities will benefit from extra funding to buy back marginal services that may become non-commercial as a direct result of IPP. We have examined in detail the operational practicalities of implementing IPP. We have concluded that a system based on audited returns from Electronic Ticket Machines (ETMs) is viable, would be better and cheaper than the current BSOG system, and would provide a robust platform from which to count passengers for IPP. Any fraudulent operator behaviour can be limited and the threat of competitive reaction from other bus companies will keep ‘in check’ actions that are designed to inconvenience the passenger.

“IPP is closely aligned to Government goals for transport (e.g. economy, climate change, equality of opportunity), but the benefits that are possible with IPP will require additional funding, determination, innovation and closer working partnerships. The DfT is prioritising its initial BSOG reform to tackle climate change, with later reform targeting the introduction of technology it believes will allow for an easier transition to IPP (e.g. smartcards and Global Positioning Systems: GPS). We differ in our opinion on what infrastructure needs to be in place for IPP to become a reality. We think IPP could be

implemented in three years using the existing installed base of ETMs.”

Ref: Public Subsidy for the Bus Industry, The Case for Incentive per Passenger, Commission for Integrated Transport (March 2009) Report:
<http://www.cfrit.gov.uk/docs/2009/psbi/pdf/psbi.pdf>

Car Pollution in Afghanistan

“Kabul’s population is now nearly five million and its air is so dirty that an estimated 3,000 people die from pollution-induced illnesses each year, environment officials say. ‘Old cars make up one of the biggest problems and are the source of much of the pollution’, said Dad Mohammad Baheer, deputy director of the National Environment Protection Agency. The traffic department in the capital registers some 9,000 old cars every month, he added, and the crumbling city infrastructure adds to the problem. Road-building in Afghanistan is a notoriously corrupt business and the cheap workmanship that results can rarely withstand the country’s extreme weather. ‘Cars travelling along the filthy and mostly unpaved Kabul roads throw up large amounts of dust which is very harmful for the public’, Mr Baheer added said.”

Ref: ABC News, 9/5/09



Kabul WMD

The Crushing Car Debate

“The RACQ says giving people money to scrap their old cars will not necessarily reduce fuel consumption or greenhouse gas emissions. The Motor Traders Association of New South Wales has written to the Federal Government asking it to pay car owners \$3,000 to send their old cars to the wreckers. But RACQ spokesman Gary Fites says offering a rebate on new environmental friendly cars would be a better policy. ‘One of the problems we see with simply giving people \$3,000 to go and buy whatever they like as far as a new vehicle is concerned, is that although certainly safety standards have improved, a lot of the new vehicles available in Australia these days aren’t really any more fuel efficient than some of those older cars’, he said.”

Ref: ABC News, 24/3/09

European Passenger Rail (Part 1)

“September 2008 announcement by Air France, describing plans to inaugurate high-speed passenger trains with service from Paris to London and from Paris to Amsterdam, is evidence of the growing role of passenger rail in Europe.

“High-speed trains are the glitz and glamour of Europe’s rail systems, but high speed rail is only part of the story. New policies, technology, and investments have dramatically changed rail passenger services in Europe. Faster trains are increasing in number, and not just on new, dedicated high-speed corridors, but on main lines and secondary routes throughout the European continent. Passenger trains have become major components in the transportation network and are better connected than ever to other modes, including air, intercity and regional bus, local transit, international ferries, and lake and river boats.

“Policy changes have occurred at both the national and international levels and the creation of the European Union (EU) has resulted in a common approach. Integrated planning and investment recognizes the important contributions of passenger rail to meeting mobility, economic development, and environmental goals. EU development funds have enabled upgrades, the expansion of national systems, and enhanced Europe-wide system integration.

“Major shifts in rail ownership and finance have taken place in many European countries; thirty years ago, almost all rail systems were government owned and operated. Today, that situation has changed. In the United Kingdom, infrastructure is publicly owned - as it is in all European countries - but train operations have been franchised out for almost 12 years. The 18 current operators have acquired new rolling stock and have developed service that is unprecedented in both quantity and quality.

“In 2006, a new record was established in the United Kingdom when over one billion passengers were carried by train - the highest number since 1950. Some regional services in Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland are now handled in a similar manner. To operate international passenger services, new companies and brand names have appeared all over Europe. Some are connected with high-speed rail, including Eurostar (London–Paris and London–Brussels); Thalys (France, Belgium, and the Netherlands); and Cisalpino (Switzerland and Italy).

“Sleeping car services in Western Europe have been greatly reduced as faster daytime trains have reduced travel time and as low-cost airlines have eaten into the long-distance market. International sleeping car trains have been almost entirely taken over by private operators, often with partial ownership by national railroads and redesignated as hotel trains offering meals, snacks, showers, and other amenities included in the ticket price. City Night Line, a German–Swiss company, operates 29 overnight services connecting France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy, as well as all internal sleeping car trains in Germany. Other companies operate similar services between Spain and Portugal; France, Switzerland and Italy; and France and Italy.

“EU rules have encouraged open access to independent operators of both freight and passenger services on the state-owned railway lines. In summer 2008, announcements were made by Air France and by Nuovo Trasporto Viaggiatori - a new company that will compete with Trenitalia on the Italian high-speed network linking Milan, Florence, Venice, Rome and Naples in 2011.

“Recognizing the importance of local travel and commuting that is increasingly unfettered by international borders, local and regional governments have established new joint operating ventures to provide local services - Switzerland–Italy, Switzerland–France, Belgium–Netherlands, Switzerland–Austria - branded with new names, logos, and paint schemes. New technology has played a major role in the growth of passenger rail in Europe; high-speed train sets that have evolved out of the original Spanish Talgo, French Train à Grande Vitesse (TGV), Swedish X2000, and German ICE have brought new levels of speed and comfort that have extended beyond major corridors.

“Locomotive or power-car hauled trains have given way to new distributed-power modular sets that allow the entire train to generate passenger revenue. The newest high-speed train successor to the TGV - the AGV - is an example that already has customers outside of France.” {Cont. in #109}

Ref: Ron Sheck, Intercity Passenger City Update #14, January 2009 Full article at: http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/irps/irps_14.pdf

And Also ... (Strange Laws)

“In Michigan, it is against the law for a lady to lift her skirt more than 6 inches while walking through a mud puddle.”

Ref: www.strangefacts.com/laws.html