

Elements of an Active Community

"When cars are the primary source of transportation for a city, it is not just the air quality or road conditions that suffer. Think of those who can't afford or can't drive a car. Referred to as 'Automobile Apartheid' by Joel S. Hirschhorn, when a city lacks adequate public transportation or safe bike and walking routes, those of limited ability or economic circumstances suffer. This includes the elderly, youth, the disabled and the impoverished.

"Hirschhorn writes that, 'Automobile apartheid means that anyone who wants mobility through walking, bicycling or public transportation suffers discrimination by a built environment and government structure designed for automobiles. In the past 20 years, when sprawl has run rampant, the number of trips people take by walking has decreased by more than 42 percent. Walking to school has also decreased by a similar amount. And, yes, overweight and obesity have climbed as automobile addiction has increased'. What are the Elements of an Active Living Community?"

- Quality public transportation provides services to everyone and allows mobility to otherwise disadvantaged groups of people.
- Safe bike routes allow everyone equal opportunity to get where they need to go in town.
- Established footpaths, bike lanes, and accessible trails encourage people to use alternative modes of transportation."

Ref: Pedestrian & Pedaling Network (PedNet) Columbia, Missouri

www.pednet.org/benefits/great-equalizer.asp

Cycling

"The ABS Census for 2006 showed a strong upsurge in the numbers of Australians choosing to ride to work. Capital cities recorded a 28% increase in commuting by bicycle, with Melbourne recording the sharpest increase, at 48%! Although the growth in cycling has been impressive, significant, untapped potential exists to boost the number of Australians choosing to ride. A large proportion of car trips in cities are surprisingly short. In fact, over half our car trips in capital cities are less than 5km (Austroads, 2005; RMIT, 1999). Around 1.35 million Australians make car journeys' to work of less than 5km (ABS, 2006). These short car trips are an ideal cycling distance – helping to cut fuel, congestion and parking costs, combat climate change and boost physical activity levels."

Ref: Cycling Issue Sheet, Bicycle Sales 2008, Cycling Promotion Fund, January 09



International Air Passenger Traffic

→ International scheduled [air] passenger traffic to/from Australia totalled 2.008 million in October 2008 compared to 1.982 million in October 2007 – an increase of 1.3 per cent.

→ October 2008 was the busiest October on record, with a higher level of passenger traffic than the corresponding month in any previous year. The small positive growth in October followed a decrease in traffic for September.

→ Qantas had the largest share of the international passenger market in October with 24.5%, followed by Singapore Airlines with 11.7%, Air New Zealand with 9.4%, Emirates with 7.2% and Jetstar with 5.7%. The share of passenger traffic accounted for by Australian designated airlines has decreased from 33.3% in October 2007 to 32.3% in October 2008.

→ Low Cost Carriers AirAsia X, Jetstar, Pacific Blue, Polynesian Blue and Tiger Airways accounted for 11.2% of international passengers to/from Australia in October 2008, the same proportion as recorded in October 2007.

→ Sydney remains the dominant international gateway with 45.2% of all international passengers in the year ending October 2008 followed by Melbourne with 20.1%, Brisbane with 17.1% and Perth with 10.7%. Passenger numbers grew by 7.9% at Perth, 3.8% at Melbourne, 3.4% at Brisbane & 2.9% at Sydney.

Ref: Federal Ministerial Media Release, 6/1/09

Full Report: Bitre Aviation Statistics, Oct 08: International Scheduled Air Transport (Jan 09)

→ And Also ...

"John Travolta and his wife Kelly Preston [live in a] luxurious home in an exclusive aviation community that features a private runway large enough for commercial jetliners and private taxiways to each home."

Ref: The Age, 7/1/09

"Jumbolair [pictured] once home to three thousand crocodile, ...

is on its way towards becoming the nation's largest and most exclusive fly-in community" ... "[for] a small number of aviation enthusiast families who were willing to share that dream. Every home-site has a street in the front and taxiway at the rear. Situated in Ocala Florida, Jumbolair's generous two to four acre home-sites, rolling hills, lush green pastures and majestic oaks are a beautiful backdrop to its massive runway. The natural beauty has been enhanced by an architecturally stunning gated entrance, old world street lighting and beautiful landscaping."

Ref: <http://www.jumbolair.com>

Transit Lanes

"With Melbourne's ever-increasing population and subsequent traffic congestion, the road to reducing gridlock and cutting travel times is clear according to public transport and road lobbyists: create more transit lanes during peak hours. Advocates say expanding the number of lanes dedicated to vehicles carrying two or more people will cost virtually nothing, while generating immediate benefits to Melbourne drivers. They say while Melburnians sit fuming in freeway car parks on weekday mornings, Sydneysiders are enjoying access to 10 times more transit lane space. Melbourne's 7.5 kilometres of transit lanes run on the Eastern Freeway during the morning peak and Hoddle Street in the afternoon. The lanes are also used by buses and taxis. Supporters argue that more lanes would cut travel times and reduce crippling congestion by encouraging more people to travel together — a move that would also cut carbon emissions. Monash University's chair of public transport, Graham Currie, said overseas experience showed the lanes were a cheap, effective way to ease traffic on arterial roads. 'The only costs for the lanes are paint and enforcement', he said. 'It's a very obvious thing to do and one that must be done if we're serious about reducing congestion. It means we can use the lanes more efficiently and give those that are willing to share their vehicles an advantage'. ... Drivers who illegally enter transit lanes face an \$85 fine." **Ref: Reid Sexton, The Age, 11/1/09**

Comment: This is a proven way to make traffic disappear but will the government encourage the police to enforce this measure?

→ And Also ...

"A Japanese tourist who spent three months living in Mexico City's airport has returned home. Airport spokesman Victor Mejia said Hiroshi Nohara left on Monday on a flight for Japan via San Francisco. Nohara arrived in Mexico City on

September 2 and spent the next three months at a food court in Terminal 1 of Benito Juarez International Airport. His residency there made him a local celebrity and Mexican news programs ran regular updates on his life."

Ref: The Age, 13/1/09



'We're very glad he's back. But don't ever mention tortillas.'

Who Killed the Electric Car?

"The atmosphere at the 2009 Detroit [motor] show may not have been electric but the majority of its star cars were. America's embattled car makers – General Motors, Ford and Chrysler – have gone electric-car crazy as they aim to convince US Congress that Detroit has a viable future."

Ref: Jez Spinks, drive.com.au, 12/1/09

"The U.S. Army on Monday announced an initiative to potentially replace up to 28,000 gas-powered vehicles at more than 155 Army installations with Neighbourhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) in the coming years. NEVs are not highway-legal electric vehicles, but rather light-use electric vehicles with a maximum speed of 25 mph. The Army intends to use them for nontactical things like on-base transportation for visitors, or maintenance personal and their equipment, according to Paul Bollinger, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Energy & Partnerships. ... 'No one from the Air Force has told me face-to-face that they would like to move in this area, but I've heard it in back channel communications. But the Navy has told me. They are interested in piggy-backing on the Army's order', said Bollinger."

Ref: Candace Lombardi, CNet News, 12/1/09

More on Trams & Trains {#92}

"Some initial comments on costings they are probably including operating costs of trams. It takes about 3 drivers to keep a tram on the road all day, plus the maintenance costs. You may also note that no trams are due till 2012 (and that's just the start). Although they will be larger, how many will just replace existing trams? Therefore don't expect an increase in frequency for a long time unless we can achieve some dramatic travel time improvements." **Ref: 'Insider' 12/1/09**

"Transport Minister Lynne Kosky ... revealed that some of the 18 trains the [Victorian] Government had ordered to cope with demand could instead be used as replacements. ... The Government has committed to providing 70 new trains, but has funded only 18."

Ref: Kate Lahey & Clay Lucas, The Age, 15/1/09

More on Japanese Culture {#91}

"Japanese culture is different and they suffered badly in the 1973 Energy Crisis as they were totally dependant on fuel imports for transport. There is also the fact that (flat) space is limited and roads between houses are narrow. We are unlucky to have abundant fossil fuels and lots of flat space here in Australia. We waste energy and space here."

Ref: Paul Judd, 25/12/08

More on Shared Spaces {#93}

"I was waiting at the lights the other day; wondering why we were being held up when there was no opposing traffic. The pedestrians and cyclists beside me gave it up as a bad joke and just ignored the red signal. Finally we got the green light and the impatient motorist on my right screeched off, barely missing an elderly pedestrian whose slow pace had left him in no-man's-land. There has to be a better way, I thought. And it seems there is. The first step is getting rid of most traffic lights. They diminish road safety, increase congestion, add to environmental pollution and compromise public space. Contrary to the trend of 20th-century planning, which assumed that efficient traffic flows and road safety depended on separating vehicles from the civic spaces, progressive cities around the world — including Bendigo — are removing traffic lights and gratuitous road signs.

"Planners are finding that rather than resulting in chaos, 'naked' streets create shared spaces, which produce lower speeds for motor traffic, shorter trip times, fewer serious crashes and an increase in the number of pedestrians and cyclists. The logic behind 'shared space' theory is that traffic lights make us bow mindlessly to technology and lull us into a false sense of security, meaning we pay less attention to pedestrians, cyclists and other such 'movable hazardous objects', as traffic engineers like to call us. On the other hand, if you create uncertainty on the roads, they actually become safer because we compensate for the perceived risk by behaving more cautiously and being more alert. You don't have to do away with every set of traffic lights. The shared space philosophy distinguishes between the slow network hubs and the fast network, which uses traditional traffic engineering to allow traffic to reach outlying destinations quickly. But in many cases we would be better off with nothing, or with a roundabout.

"As well as the safety and congestion issues, traffic lights are also environmentally unsound because they force vehicles to stop and idle. In a US study published earlier this year, researchers from Kansas State University found that intersections with roundabouts, rather than traffic lights or stop signs, generated between 55 and 61 per cent less carbon dioxide, depending on

the time of day. Emissions of hydrocarbons, also greenhouse gases, dropped by more than two-thirds. Next time you are at lights, take note of how much time is spent waiting while an empty stretch of road has priority; and how much traffic could have moved through if logic prevailed. You can also see this whenever traffic lights are 'out'. Rather than chaos, we approach slowly and take it in turns.

"Reclaiming shared space is good for business, too, as economic regeneration has been closely linked with the quality of streetscapes. A classic example of this is Bogota, the capital of Colombia, best known for its drug cartels and hostage-taking guerrillas. In 1995, Bogota had 3363 murders and about 1400 traffic deaths. As a result of the traffic congestion, drivers parked on footpaths and the air pollution was among the worst in the world.

Workers from the ghettos at the city's edge spent up to four hours a day commuting. Everyone was

unhappy. When Enrique Penalosa became mayor he introduced reforms that gave priority to public spaces, including creating the world's longest pedestrian street, a 17-kilometre path lined with trees, lamps and benches through some of the poorest neighbourhoods, and a 45-kilometre bike

path and greenway along an intra-city route that had been zoned for an eight-lane highway. By the end of his term in 2003, the murder rate had fallen by 40 per cent and has decreased ever since. Traffic deaths fell to about 600 a year and peak traffic now moves three times faster.

"According to Penalosa, taking a stand for shared space is taking a stand for democracy because we are saying that a person on foot, or on a \$40 bike, is as important as a person in a \$40,000 car. Moreover, it means that we are treating drivers as intelligent citizens who are capable of making rational decisions, rather than as bogans who must be controlled by a traffic robot. If you watch riders at a skate park you can see the difference between chaos and anarchy in action. The skaters don't need regulation, just eye contact and the odd nod, and they flow seamlessly together. Or at the other extreme, Place de la Concorde in Paris during peak times, when traffic from six different directions streams through, with barely a line marker in sight. If schools of fish and flocks of birds can be trusted to yield and merge co-operatively, surely we can, too?"

Ref: Debra Mayrhofer, The Age, 5/1/09



Bendigo's Hargreaves Mall (30/12/08)

The Next Wave (Part 2)

“Crashes in our industrial cities have occurred before, generally after a boom based on a particular set of technologies that have reached a limit.

“The First Wave began in traditional walking cities where new industries began to develop along rivers and canals using water power to manufacture textiles. The cities that resulted were dense and filled quickly with the new wave of urban immigrants. These cities were never more than 5 to 8 kilometres across, (the distance you can walk in one hour which is the universal average travel time budget in cities). Dominated by the smoke and waste of industry the new industrialism quickly overwhelmed the traditional walking cities which were not built for such activity. The crash of the 1830s and '40s, saw an end to this kind of urban development.

“The Second Wave of industrialism then used the new technology of steam trains to build new cities which spread out along the railways of the steel and steam era. These cities had dense, industrial and population activity in their main centres built along these rail lines as people walked within each centre or sub-city. These also became limited in the wastes and human activity that could be accommodated so that by the 1890s the crash of investment provoked a new way to build cities to absorb the continually growing urban population.

“This emerged in the Third Wave of electricity which saw lighting and power delivered without the immediate smoke of the old coal-fired boilers and enabled the transport system to be electrified as well. It saw electric railways and tramways built as the basis of most cities, enabling their residential estates and commercial activity to be spread along its streetcar and electrified rail systems. These cities followed the trains and trams which spread 30 kilometres or so. These all crashed in the 1930s as urban fringe speculation collapsed. The Great Depression meant cities had to invent technology that would enable them to expand further.

“So the Fourth Wave was dominated by cheap oil and cars which enabled cities to spread and sprawl for 50 to 80 kilometres or so in every direction. Thus the automobile city was invented enabling houses to be built in successive ring, absorbing each new wave of immigration or urbanisation. These cities could not have contained their growing populations if they had continued to be based around the

industrialisation of petrochemicals and manufacturing. Thus by the 1980s a new kind of downturn occurred and the cities of the modern western world moved to find a new basis for their economies.

“The Fifth Wave of internet and digital technologies has replaced the old industrial manufacturing parts of central and inner areas with knowledge jobs, thus helping to minimise some of the sprawl and start the renewal of these older industrial sites from the previous Waves. However the Fifth Wave still had cheap oil, enabling cars to dominate the transport system and to build suburbs further and further out.

“Travel time limits began to undermine these scattered developments, leaving them vulnerable to financial vagaries. The shift in oil prices exposed this underlying vulnerability of highly car and fuel dependent urban development from the Fourth and Fifth Waves. Once the fuel price increased, the loans which were used to form these scattered urban areas became toxic. At the same time a more global limit was reached with climate change; the cities of the world now faced a new limit whereby they must phase out all fossil fuels. Although not yet part of the main marketplace, the undermining of confidence in the long term future of heavily fossil fuel-dependent industry and land development is already underway. The crash of September 2008 signals the end to the urban economy based around oil in particular, but all heavily fossil fuel-dependent urban development as well.

“Am I overstating the energy problem, especially oil? The new international Energy Association World Energy Outlook suggests that oil will decline per year by between 6% and 9%, leaving the world to find a Saudi Arabia every two years. We need different cities for this kind of future.”

{To be continued next issue}

Ref: Peter Newman, Ockham's Razor, ABC Radio National, 21/12/08 See the full transcript: www.abc.net.au/rn/ockhamsrazor/stories/2008/2445159.htm

Green Stimulus

“[US President-elect Barack] Obama's proposed stimulus package is expected to total at least \$US775 billion (\$A1.1 trillion). ...It calls for a green building program to improve water and energy efficiency of commercial, residential and public buildings, and maximise short-term economic benefit by stimulating the construction industry. Investment in sustainable infrastructure across public transport and rail networks for freight to reduce carbon footprints is also critical, the statement says.” **Ref: SBS World News, 9/1/09**