

Love Your Car or Love Your City

By James Leather

- **Unrestrained growth of cars is destroying livable cities**
- **Equitable mobility is required**
- **Place people first**

A vision for urban transport is to create livable cities implementing

- integrated services for public transport and non-motorized transport;
- demand management measures, such as congestion pricing, parking fees, vehicle registration; and
- equitable allocation of road space, which means prioritizing mobility of people and not vehicles.

To be consistent with the objective of Strategy 2020 to fight poverty, ADB's urban transport should be pro-poor. Only 20% of Asians have private vehicles: thus the focus should be mobility of the poor and low income groups. The challenge at hand is to

- make public transport a viable alternative to private cars and motorcycles in cities, and
- help politicians develop a sustainable transport strategy rather than favor quick and visible solutions like ring roads or grade separated junctions.

A focus on inclusive and environmentally sustainable transport systems to promote continued economic growth while minimizing negative externalities is required. Indeed, it is being requested by cities across the region.

Five things you should know

You cannot build your way out of congestion with more roads. Addressing congestion by expanding or building new roads is a vicious circle that encourages city sprawl and car dependence leading to ever more demand for road space.

Sustainable transport requires a holistic solution. It involves changing the way you plan your cities and organize your transport. It will include a combined strategy of improving public transport, restoring the importance of non-motorized transport, restricting private transport, and implementing measures to ensure the safety of people. For example, more than the provision of necessary physical infrastructure, it is equally important to implement specific measures to solve safety, traffic management, and environmental issues.

Defining a city's future directions requires an understanding of its current problems. It requires dialogue with the different levels of government. Paul Barter's model of transport and urban structure development scenarios suggests policy choices



A Muenster Planning Office poster shows the amount of space taken up by cars, a bus, and bicycles used to transport the same number of people

that are appropriate for specific city types (e.g., traffic-saturated bus cities, walking/cycling cities, transit-oriented cities, etc.).

Implementing urban transport changes will always require political leadership. More than implementing technical solutions to urban transport problems, there is a need for champions who can help change attitudes to transport.

Urban transport is really about making a choice between your love for your car or your city. It was love for the city that prompted the city government of Seoul, Korea to demolish an elevated highway in the city center to restore the Cheonggyecheon stream. With footpaths and green spaces, the restoration project did not just bring an environment-friendly ecosystem to the area; it gave new economic life.

For further information

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