

# MOBILITY MANAGEMENT PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CHOICES

Fuel costs, increasing congestion and emissions and the escalating financial squeeze on central and local government and business require us to get the most out of existing transport networks. Smarter travel planning or mobility management can play a key part in promoting more informed travel decisions and helping to address these issues, writes Sinead Flavin.

**D**eveloping a shared vision must be the starting point. We need to understand what we are working towards. A vision statement provides focus, helps us to 'see the wood from the trees' in working towards a shared goal, whilst avoiding short term distractions. The economic down turn can be seen as a reason more than ever to move towards a healthier and more sustainable future vision, one that supports more cost-effective and sustainable solutions whilst preventing us from being further locked into ever more costly oil dependency.

## Curitiba, Southern Brazil

Faced with a burgeoning population in the 1960s and a desire to strengthen the city's economic opportunities, architect and planner Jaime Lerner, who would later become mayor, developed a master plan for Curitiba. Some of it was controversial. He believed in managing demand, creating spaces for people and developed a bus rapid transit system (called 'speedybus'). This is a system that each year takes more cars off the road so that, in spite of a doubling of population since 1974 and a rate of car ownership higher than in São Paulo, the volume has declined by 30% ([www.epa.gov/innovation/international/transportation.htm](http://www.epa.gov/innovation/international/transportation.htm); [www.solutions-site.org/artman/publish/article\\_62.shtml](http://www.solutions-site.org/artman/publish/article_62.shtml)).

## Civilising urban spaces

Change is happening. There is a realisation in the air that the era of relentless sprawl is costing us. On a local scale, Jan Gehl's much referenced report 'Towards a Finer City,' has illustrated how improving the quality of streetscape and public realm can bring many social and economic benefits and a stronger sense of local identity. The UK Department for Transport 'Manual for Streets' demonstrates the local benefits gained from good design that appreciates the role of streets in creating a sense of place while providing guidance on how to do so. The case studies

in the report 'Paved with gold, the real value of good street design' by Cabe demonstrated the direct links between street quality and residential and retail property prices. Stuart Reid, MVA director and contributing author of Manual for Streets, stresses the importance of creating 'permeable' networks that "encourage walking and cycling and make places easier to navigate through". He adds that "recent MVA findings demonstrate that quality streetscape can add real value to homes and retail rents and we can now put a figure on this effect". (The MVA Consultancy was commissioned by Design for London to develop a methodology to quantify the benefits of urban realm improvements to businesses and the associated impact on land and property values.)

## Push and Pull

Travel behaviour change can be helped by engaging in a mix of push factors to provoke a change in travel behaviour with pull factors designed to influence organisations and cause residents to rethink travel habits. The pull factors can combine improved streetscape and transport delivery measures with management and promotional techniques in the form of travel planning. The softer side of travel demand management can play a role in engaging the community and in achieving a desired return on investment with travel behaviour changes following infrastructural and other transport improvements.

## Change through mobility management

When it came to sharing his vision, the former Mayor of Curitiba, Jaime Lerner, kept his message simple: "The people understand that they can change the situation for the better if they can act locally... I always say if you want to help the environment try to do just two things. First: use your car less. And second: separate your garbage. The problem is making people understand the impacts



of their actions. I believe if every city in the world could do the same, the global problems would be very much diminished." (Cities that don't cost the Earth, Town and Country Planning Association, June 2008, Vol. 77 ) Increasingly, local authorities, businesses and other organisations are recognising the need and wider benefits to reducing the negative impacts of travel and congestion that impact on the economy, the environment and health. In response to this need, the field of travel planning is growing rapidly. For an organisation such as a business, school or hospital, a travel plan will include a package of measures to improve site access, travel choice, free up car parking or localised congestion, improve business efficiency, support active healthy travel, and make a positive contribution to the community and the environment. Conrad Haigh, MVA Smarter Travel director, formerly manager of Transport for London's (TfL) Workplace Travel Planning programme, said, "While managing the programme in TfL we achieved a 13% point mean average mode shift or a 27% relative shift away from car journeys as a result of our workplace travel plan initiative. More and more businesses have been signing up as evidence was showing a range of benefits that included reducing overheads, helping to create a healthier workforce, increasing productivity, improving staff retention and increasing the organisations profile. The increase is to the extent that 10% of London's workforce is now supported by a workplace travel plan. To assist in managing this data, MVA have worked with TfL to incorporate the valuable journey data from London's 1,400 workplace travel plans into TRAVL, London's transport assessment tool, this in turn feeds back the data from travel plans to improve traffic prediction data used in the development planning industry." Travel planning strategies help populations move from a general awareness of alternatives to rallying them into action and maintenance. (Application of the Transtheoretical

### The issues... what they say

"Since 1990, emissions from transportation in Ireland have risen about 140 percent, the most in Europe... As traffic increases, governments build more roads, encouraging people to buy more cars and move yet farther away." *New York Times January 7th, 2007, Car Boom Puts Europe on Road to a Smoggy Future*

"The city's [Dublin's] road network is at capacity. In this context, it is necessary to encourage as much travel as possible by sustainable means: that is by public transport, walking, and cycling" *Irish Independent October 24th 2008*

"The cost of congestion to the Greater Dublin Area in 2005 was €2.5bn. This is the single greatest threat to future investment in the region and the competitiveness of the capital city" *Dublin Chamber of Commerce Transport 21: Future for Dublin, January 10th, 2005*

"In 2001, congestion was quantified to have cost the [Dublin Bus] company €34m. In 2003 that figure had jumped to €49m. In the latest report for 2005, it has hit €60m." *RTE News January 2006 www.rte.ie/news/2006/0106/traffic.html*

"With a sense of urgency bordering on desperation, the IEA has begun calling for radical changes in the way the world drives its cars ... Indeed, even as the slowing economy and falling oil prices make it harder to justify huge new investments in a green economy, there's a strong counterargument that now is precisely the time to make them." *Newsweek, "Why it's time for a 'Green New Deal'" from magazine issue dated November 10th, 2008*

"I am thrilled to see such high levels of enthusiasm among employees for walking," he said. "Let us not forget that trips to work are one of the major causes of congestion on the road network in the greater Dublin area." *John Henry, CEO Dublin Transportation Office, The Dublin People, September 24th, 2008*

Model, developed by Prochaska and DiClemente in relation to behaviour change in the public health sector [see for example [www.uri.edu/research/cprc/TTM/detailedoverview.htm](http://www.uri.edu/research/cprc/TTM/detailedoverview.htm)]. It has been widely adopted in the context of travel behaviour, see for example Mutri *et al*, [www.jech.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/56/6/407](http://www.jech.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/56/6/407) and [www.epomm.org/newsletter/epommNL7.pdf](http://www.epomm.org/newsletter/epommNL7.pdf). Travel planning is also sometimes referred to as mobility management, soft travel demand management or smarter choices. A travel plan or mobility management plan when applied to a particular destination or site (such as a workplace, a hospital or a school) is done so as part of a phased management strategy supported by clear objectives, usually with a baseline survey, modal shift and other targets, as well as agreed implementation measures. Implementation measures might include car sharing schemes, a commitment to improve cycling facilities, a bicycle user group, car parking allocation, a dedicated bus, etc.

### Personal touch

Personal travel planning (PTP) is another form that shares the objective of encouraging more sustainable travel choices but engages directly with individuals, usually in a particular target residential community, though it can be applied as a component of a workplace or other destination based travel plan. PTP provides personalised information, incentives and motivation to help individuals or households make more informed travel choices. The delivery differs from project to project but will usually include a one-to-one conversation either at the door step or by telephone.

The approach can usefully promote and encourage the use of other improvement measures taken on the ground. These might be improved streetscape with better accessibility for walking and cycling, new public transport measures or to support other integrated land use and transport improvement measures planned or already taken.

### Workplace travel plans in Ireland: One Small Step

To kick start a new momentum in Irish workplace travel plans, the DTO ran a 'pedometer challenge' in September of this year under their One Small Step branded travel awareness initiative. Teams of employees from some of Ireland's biggest firms, which included AIB, IIB Bank, RTE, Dublin City Council, the Department of Transport, the Department of the Environment and Vodafone, all recorded their daily footstep counts. The DTO have since taken 'One Small Step' further, by partnering with IBEC in encouraging more businesses to discover the benefits.  $\Phi$

**Sinead Flavin is a principal consultant at MVA Consultancy working on integrated transport feasibility studies and mobility management. She has significant policy experience in the area of sustainable travel, and while working for Transport for London managed an extensive personal travel planning programme. She was also involved in the delivery of London's congestion charging scheme and was Transport Policy Officer for UK Cyclist Touring Club. MVA Consultancy provides advice on transport and other policy areas, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.**