

# JOINT PLANNING LAW CONFERENCE

PLANNING ICONS: MYTH AND PRACTICE

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THE CAR VERSUS PUBLIC TRANSPORT

By

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**OXFORD JOINT PLANNING LAW CONFERENCE 1994**

**Planning Icons : Myth and Practice**

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**Invited Paper**

***"The Car Versus Public Transport"***

**by**

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## **C O N T E N T S**

- 1. Introduction and Scope of the Paper**
- 2. Nature and Extent of the Competition Between Cars and Public Transport**
- 3. Planning to Reduce Car-traffic : Assumptions Underlying PPG 13**
- 4. Critique of the main Policy - recommendations in PPG 13**
- 5. Conclusion : The Need for More Radical Demand-management Policies (as well as PPG 13)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE PAPER**

1. For a brief period of about 3 years (1990-1993), traffic levels in Great Britain remained almost constant and we glimpsed the prospect of a time when traffic conditions, instead of worsening year by year, might begin to improve steadily. Even on motorways, which had experienced the most rapid growth of traffic during the late 1980s, traffic increases were down in some cases to only 2% or 3% per year. If this period had been heralding the achievement of 'saturation', with all the potential demands for car-ownership satisfied, then we could be optimistic that existing policies patiently pursued would enable us eventually to accommodate these demands for car-use in an efficient, safe and civilised way.

2. In retrospect, as the economy emerges from recession, this brief pause can now be seen as the 'eye' of the storm. The current level of car-ownership in the UK, about 38 cars for every 100 people, is substantially lower than that in Germany, France and Italy (for example). To the extent that some local levels of saturation in car-ownership is evident, we are probably only about two-thirds of the way. A level of 50 cars per 100 people has already been reached in Canada and New Zealand and that in the USA is approaching 60. Up to now, the experience of all industrialised countries has been common, with rising car-ownership as the direct consequence of economic growth. For the last 30 years, almost all the problems of transport and its interaction with land-use development and the environment have been related to inexorable increases in the demand for car-ownership and use, as per capita wealth has risen.
3. Clear evidence of the statistically-strong connection between car-ownership and real income per household is provided (ironically enough) by the lull of traffic growth during the recession. For it has taken the longest recession in living memory, during which GDP per head actually fell, to level off traffic growth. The prognosis, now that economic growth is back to more than 3% per year, is for a surge in the sales of new cars. With more than 2.0 million new cars acquired in Britain during 1993/1994, the vehicle population is increasing once again at more than 10,000 per week. With average annual mileage per car remaining almost constant at 10,000 miles per year, the total traffic on the country's road network is increasing by about 100 million vehicle-miles per week.
4. The implications of this resumption in traffic growth, geared directly to economic growth and likely to persist for the next 20-25 years, until some kind of general saturation level is reached, calls into question the adequacy of existing transport policies. Certainly, the policy of merely expanding the supply of roadspace to meet the increasing demands of traffic is now being challenged widely. The deregulation and privatisation of buses, following the 1985 Transport Act, was seen as a radical policy but it has done little to stem the continuing decline in bus patronage. The impending privatisation of the railways is unlikely to do better in this respect. And yet, buses and trains are seen as the salvation, offering an attractive and efficient alternative to car-use, on a scale which must

do more than contain the growth in car-traffic but actually reverse it.

5. This paper is concerned with the nature and extent of this competition which exists between the "public" modes of transport, on the one hand, and privately-owned cars (and trucks) on the other. Under what circumstances is it realistic to expect people to forego the convenience and comfort of a private car and opt for the public transport alternative? To what extent can we expect industry to forego the flexibility and low cost of using their own trucks for distribution of goods and opt for sending them by rail or water instead? Just as we must look beyond the essentially short-term policies of ownership pricing and regulation to the longer run questions of investment in new infrastructure and impacts on the environment, we must also consider the scope for planning and development-control policies to be instrumental in reducing the need for the physical movement of people and goods, both overall and in terms of the lengths of those journeys that do still need to be made.

6. The relevance of policies and assumptions underlying the guidance issued by the DoE in their document PPG 13 (March 1994) is assessed. The crucial questions for the next 15-20 years is whether these assumptions are valid, especially those relating to the "competitiveness" of public transport vis-à-vis the car (and the truck) and whether the policies that PPG 13 espouses will be effective in turning the tide of traffic? To date, only prolonged economic recession and falling standards of living have proved capable of doing that.

## **2. NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE COMPETITION BETWEEN CARS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

7. The title of this paper "The Car Versus Public Transport" implies a competition of some kind. Presumably, as with all kinds of competition, it will be subject to a definable set of rules, which can be altered to influence the outcome of that competition, in accordance with some predetermined criteria (in this case, either social/environmental or cost-benefit/"value for money"). The notion is a beguiling one. For, if car-traffic threatens to rise to a level that is held to be "unacceptable", then the authority responsible for the governance of the competition could tweak the criteria and/or alter the threshold values in ways which would restore an "acceptable" balance once again. Several important

questions are begged by this notion, such as: who decides on the relevant criteria? how is the acceptability (or otherwise) of prevailing traffic conditions judged and by whom? is public transport actually perceived as a competing option by car-users? is the underlying basis of competition (eg regulations, pricing, safety standards and environment controls) fair as between the competing modes?

8. Normally, in search of the competent authority, one would look to the relevant Department of State or the Local Authority or (increasingly) to a Regulatory body. As far as transport is concerned, there is no overall authority responsible for competition between modes - at least, different authorities are responsible for different aspects - and the crucial questions tend to remain unanswered. For example, despite the intention of the 1985 Transport Act to abolish regulation of all bus services (outside Greater London), considerable quality regulation still exists and rightly so; but it is concerned to ensure a basis for fair competition between different bus operators. It simply leaves to chance what is (arguably) the much more important competition, namely that between the providers (collectively) of public transport and the users of private cars.
9. Not only are the ground-rules for this competition poorly defined but it may be fatally wrong, in policy terms, to represent this as a competition other than in very specific circumstances. This is because, for most journeys that car-owners undertake, they simply do not perceive the bus as a viable alternative to their car. Evidence suggests that tracked systems (trains, super-trams and LRT) are regarded more readily as substitute modes but, of course, only for journeys to destinations which they serve. This means that for most car-owners, for much of the time, the services offered by public transport are seen as complementary to the use they make of their car.
10. The limited extent to which they are, under current policies, willing to substitute a bus for their car varies with the size and composition of their household, the relative locations of their home and work-places, the purposes of the journeys in question and the availability of public transport services (access, timing, price, etc.). Conditions of genuine competition, therefore, will be found only rarely but some form of quasi-competition can be contrived in other specific domains.

These include radial commuter journeys along high density corridors, long-distance business journeys between major cities, short-distance central-city non-home-based trips and similar journey-patterns able to generate the requisite economies of scale for transport providers. Taken together, those trips account for a fairly small and diminishing proportion of the total travel-demand. It is diminishing due to progressive decentralisation and the gradual dispersal of workplaces and to the increasing flexibility of working times and, indeed, of working practices.

11. These trends derive from current changes in the spatial arrangement of land-uses and the timetable of social and employment activities. They are further reinforced by well-known psychological predispositions of people towards the car that they have bought with hard-earned credit and the status that is conferred especially on company-car users. Even where some rough calculation is made on the basis of the generalised costs of going by bus instead of by car, there is rarely any contest (once a car is available). Not only are buses and coaches still widely seen as "inferior" modes, but strong misperceptions are evident amongst car-owners about the real costs of their car-use and amongst bus operators about the real value of the comfort and convenience of car travel. How does one allow, for example, in a generalised cost comparison, for the convenience of being able to give your neighbour's child a lift to school on your way to work by car and to call in at the shops on the way home?
12. Almost certainly, this reveals our first myth : namely, "that competition exists in a meaningful and effective way between cars and public transport." If this is largely a myth, for the reasons described above, then the implications for transport and planning policies during a period of burgeoning car-ownership are serious indeed.
13. The essence of the argument is that, even if competition does exist (or can be contrived) between different public transport suppliers, the extension of the same model to cover private transport modes (including walking and cycling?) is difficult in theory and largely unworkable in practice. To define privately-owned self-driven vehicles (for the purpose) as a "mode", in competition with commercially-operated public transport services, is to deny the functional

differences between them and the complementary role which they play in meeting the travel needs of householders who are fortunate to have the choice. Moreover, it denies the strong emotional attachment that people have to owning cars.

14. The technique adopted by transportation planners to forecast demands for different modes of transport does, implicitly, rely on a competitive model; but it is expressed in terms of travellers seeking to minimise their generalised cost of travel amongst all (available) modes. To fit this model to empirical observations of mode-choice, however, only those elements of generalised cost perceived by the travellers can be incorporated. Although this results in a more realistic behavioural demand model than, for example, one based merely upon price-elasticities, it still ignores important policy-issues such as the marginal social costs of car-use, indivisibilities in public transport provision and inequity in the distribution of costs and benefits. Failure to capture these issues leads to a marked divergence between the user-optimum and the social-optimum traffic levels, particularly in the case of urban congestion. This suggests that the balance between public and private transport, even if it were determined on the basis of "true" competition, may still not be desirable. As such, it adds irony to the pursuit of the myth!

### **3. PLANNING TO REDUCE CAR-TRAFFIC : ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING PPG 13 (MARCH 1994)**

15. Although heralded as a document giving guidance on a "new" policy of applying planning and development-control to restrain traffic, PPG 13 actually gives expression to ideas current in the 1960s, concerning the interaction of land-use activity and travel-demand. These ideas were implemented in several New Towns in Britain (eg Cumbernauld, Runcorn and South Hampshire) and in contemporary developments in Scandinavia. For example, the famous "finger plan" for Copenhagen was based upon mixed-use development to minimise work-journey distances, with easy walking and cycling access to green "wedges" between the "fingers". Over the same period (1956-1964), Stockholm Underground was built with high density employment centres planned around modal interchanges. Nevertheless, what PPG 13 says seems new coming (as it does) after 15 years of



separation in the UK (if not actual divorce) between land-use planning and transport.

16. The document is in 6 parts, with most of the key assumptions in the opening section (1. Introduction), as one would expect. It is worth listing these key assumptions (I have picked 7 of them) for comment:

**"1.1 ... Traffic growth on the scale projected could threaten our ability to meet objectives for greenhouse gas emissions, for air quality, and for the protection of landscape and habitats"**

The main assumption here is that there are explicit, declared objectives for reducing concentrations of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants from transport sources. Given the almost total dependence of transport on energy derived from fossil fuels, the volume of greenhouse gases (especially CO<sub>2</sub>) is almost bound to be greater in future, even if other sectors achieve the average reduction sought. (Underlying this, in turn, is the assumption that failure to curb greenhouse gas emissions will actually matter. Despite its popular espousal, the scientific case for predicting consequences of global warming is less than secure).

17. **"1.2 There is scope for further improvements in (reducing) vehicle emissions, but in themselves they will not be sufficient"**

This assumption is only true in relation to CO<sub>2</sub> (and possibly CO as well). In the case of almost all other pollutants from internal combustion engines, the already stringent standards for controlling emissions at source should be met well before the year 2010 in the UK. By this time, the combined effects of electronic engine-management systems, lean-burn technology and the 3-way catalytic converter will have worked through, so that cars could have a specific fuel consumption of less than half (ie typically 100 miles/gallon). This reduction in pollution emitted per vehicle - km should more than offset the growth in the number of veh-kms by then, even allowing for a worsening of congestion. The exception to this, which is inescapable (unless all cars are to be propelled by nuclear electricity), is CO<sub>2</sub>.

18. **"1.3 The location and nature of development affect the amount and method of travel (chosen); and the pattern of development is itself influenced by transport infrastructure and transport policies"**

This is the nub. This is the assertion on which the whole of PPG 13 is based.

It embodies the notion that land-use activities and travel-demand interact and belief in this notion has sustained the art (black-science) of transportation planning over the last 30 years.

19. **"1.5 To maintain the effectiveness of the transport system, there are good reasons to place more weight on policies to manage (traffic) demand, especially in urban areas..."**

Despite the euphemism of "managing demand", where what they really mean is "traffic restraint", this assumption acknowledges the fact that the user-optimum balance between private and public transport will not be either socially desirable or (in the end) politically acceptable. It is a call to intervention. The three policies identified as requiring "more weight" are: (1) promoting acceptable (sic) alternatives to the private car; (2) enabling people to reach everyday destinations with less need to travel; and (3) reducing local traffic on... through routes. The first of these invoke the myth of competition and beg the questions "promoted by whom?" and "acceptable to whom?" that were discussed earlier. The second and third of these policies are innocuous enough, assuming practical ways can be found of achieving them.

20. **"1.11 ...In accordance with the polluter pays principle, the Government is putting particular emphasis on steps which will bring the costs to the user of transport more closely in line with optimum full costs. This... will be more economically efficient"**

As an assumption, this is fully in accord with the economic theory of efficient pricing based upon marginal cost. The "full costs" referred to, in this case, should more strictly mean the marginal social costs (including congestion costs) to the community arising from car-use in urban areas. The political sensitivity which surrounds the road-use pricing argument is evident in the cautious (almost weasel) wording of this paragraph - "more closely in line with," etc... What the authors of PPG 13 have not said here, but it needs saying, is that road-use pricing based upon marginal social costs will also be fairer as well as more efficient.

#### 4. CRITIQUE OF THE MAIN POLICY-RECOMMENDATIONS IN PPG 13

21. In terms of what PPG 13 recommends, there are four main sections, covering the following: (1) location of development; (2) complementary transport measures; (3) provision of infrastructure; and (4) transport priorities and access to development. Space here does not allow consideration of all the recommendations but the more important ones under the first two of these sections are reviewed. The most of these come under location of development, as this is seen as the most effective way of using planning powers to reduce the need to travel, and parking policy, as this is seen as the most powerful way influencing the choice of mode.

##### 4.1 Location Policies

###### HOUSING LOCATION

22. **"3.2 ...allocate the maximum amount of housing to existing larger urban areas... including (3.3) on vacant, derelict or underused land ... capable of being well served (3.2) by rail or other public transport..." and "...(3.2) avoid any significant incremental expansion of homes in villages and small towns... likely to result largely in car-commuting to urban areas"**

This policy is laudable and, if successful, could reduce the total veh-kms for any given level of car ownership. The trouble is that it goes against the grain of the private housing market on 3 counts: (1) vacant, derelict or 'underused' land in existing larger urban areas is rarely seen as a "desirable" location for middle class housing; (2) expansion of housing in villages and small towns is often seen as desirable by prospective home-buyers, particularly if they can commute easily to an urban area by car; and (3) for the policy to have any chance to succeed considerable public subsidy would be needed to bridge the difference in development costs in the two locations (everything else being equal).

###### EMPLOYMENT LOCATION

23. **"3.4 Concentration of (high trip-end density) land-uses (at) urban and suburban (nodes)... to increase the potential for use of public transport"**

Again, this is a sensible policy notion, with a long antecedence. Stockholm Underground (mentioned above) and Toronto Subway are two excellent examples of this principle being applied in a thorough-going way in the 1960s.

By contrast, almost all of the Underground/Metro building in the UK over the last 30 years (London/Tyneside/Glasgow) and all the "supertram"/LRT building now (Manchester/Sheffield) has happened independently of any development initiative. In almost every case, they have been built to serve existing development, often utilising former BR rights of way through established, generally low-density, residential areas. The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) in London is the exception but even that has been provided out of kilter with the development it was planned to serve.

24. Without a strong strategic policy that recognises the interdependence of high density corridors of development and high capacity urban rail systems, the traffic-saving potential of this recommendation will never be realised. Tyneside Metro provides an excellent example. Forty of its 56 Kms network length is on the line of old BR track (dating back to about 1910 when it was first built - interestingly, as an overhead electric railway). Only the underground sections beneath the centres of Newcastle and Gateshead and the most recent extension to the International Airport are on new alignments. Barely a third of the 49 stations on the network are "new", the rest have replaced old BR stations, serving existing catchments. Since the Metro first opened in 1981, apart from Regent Centre, there has been almost no high-rise development at or near any of the stations. Indeed, all the emphasis on commercial development and renewal on Tyneside has been concentrated along the banks of the Tyne, in the Team Valley and in green-field development around the periphery of the conurbation. None of these areas is served by the Metro.
25. Despite this, the Metro had managed to attract a record 60 million passenger-trips by 1985, when it was fully open with an "integrated" policy including purpose-designed bus/Metro interchanges and park 'n ride stations. This achievement has been whittled down by subsequent bus deregulation (from 1986 onwards), such that the Metro now carries only 40 million passengers annually and has some difficulty in meeting its operating costs out of revenue.

## FREIGHT

26. **"3.7 Local Authorities should encourage the carriage of freight by rail or water rather than by road, wherever it can provide a viable alternative"**

Financial incentives for the building of railway sidings, in the form of Section 8 grants (Railways Act, 1977), have been available for years. The take-up (such as it is) has had an imperceptible effect on road freight traffic, with more sidings falling into disuse each year than are replaced. However desirable the policy of "putting" freight back on the railways may be, the economic case for doing so (ie its viability) is confined to very few commodities. The most favourable conditions for this are: (1) concentrated origins and destinations; (2) long haul-distances; (3) regular consignments; and (4) heavy, loose, bulk loads. The reality is that Railfreight already had a dominant role in these corners of the freight market (eg steel products, aggregates and "merry-go-round" coal shipments from pits to power stations) but together they amount to barely 10% of freight tonne-kms. For sure, privatised rail-freight operators will be even less interested in "general merchandise". They would have to be paid handsomely to adopt any kind of General Carriage Obligation.

27. Our Continental competitors achieve higher proportions of freight by rail, through the combined virtues(?) of substantially longer haul-distances and massive state-subsidies for their railway networks. On the first count, the opening of the Channel Tunnel may provide a few golden opportunities for (privatised) rail freight companies, but I suspect the general growth of trade between Kent and the Pas de Calais will more than offset any transfer to rail. On the second count, even if a return to massive State-subsidy of railways were either realistic or desirable, it is not something that Local Authorities could possibly do, either singly or collectively. "Putting the freight back on the railways/waterways" is certainly a widely-revered icon : its feasibility is just as certainly a myth. So, this policy-recommendation of PPG 13 is, I suspect, still born.

## RETAIL LOCATION

28. **"3.9 Shopping should be promoted in existing centres ...and (3.10) where central locations are not available, "seek edge-of-centre sites" ... which can be served by a variety of transport means"**

Although it was first promulgated in PPG 6, this policy is seen as the volte-face, as (so-called) out-of-town shopping centres of recent years are regarded as potent sources of induced traffic and one of the main causes of city centre decline. Indeed, so popular have the first crop of out of town developments been that the applications "pipeline" is full, with each round of permissions producing even larger floor-areas of retailing, even larger car parks and a host of ancillary uses (multiplex cinemas, hotels, leisure complexes, business parks).

29. On the narrow issue of traffic generation, it seems clear that, for any given volume of consumer goods sold, more vehicle-kms are generated with these centres than without. The effect is a net one, however, with the (sometimes valid) argument that traffic in the old congested centres can be relieved by promoting out of town development. Moreover, it is claimed that, by dispersing the pattern of trips, concentrations of traffic are reduced and will tend to occur where a good road system either exists or can be provided to accommodate it. Judging by the impact of the largest, the Gateshead Metro Centre, which most people suppose (wrongly) to be served by the Metro, the net volume of induced traffic is very considerable. For, despite a grade-separated interchange (built at the developer's expense), the A1 Gateshead Western By-Pass is now severely overloaded and a by-pass to the By-pass is planned.

30. On the wider issue of the impact of such developments on the vitality of existing centres, the evidence is less clear. Indeed, it can be argued that they are exactly the shot in the arm that our torpid town centres need; and that, in due course, dynamic, fully pedestrianised, highly accessible, modernised town centres will emerge to rival the new "malls". If so, then the worry about back-tracking on policy now is that the worst aspects of both may be perpetuated.

31. In any event, if this policy reversal is pursued vigorously, it will probably not produce any noticeable reduction in overall traffic growth for some time, due to the momentum of planning approvals for further development of out-of-town

centres already given. It is a phenomenon I have likened to the steering of a super-tanker! Furthermore, the pressure for new and improved roads in the inner areas around city centres will intensify and the implications for parking policy could seem contradictory. This is discussed next.

#### 4.2 'Complementary' Transport Measures

##### PARKING POLICY

32. **"4.4 Some studies suggest that levels of parking can be more significant than levels of public transport in determining means of travel, even for locations very well served by public transport"**

This startlingly frank admission, that restriction of parking availability is often more effective as a traffic restraint mechanism than providing excellent public transport, seems to support the case of there being a lack of genuine competition between the use of cars and public transport. However, the statement has an obverse, which is more important in policy terms; namely that, if a more accessible alternative destination is available, with plenty of parking, then car-users will often prefer that despite the good public transport to the existing centres. Because the freedom to choose destination varies with journey purpose, the parking policy for an existing urban/suburban centre must be different for different journey purposes. Moreover, control over the use made of parking spaces extends beyond the granting/denying of permission to build it in the first place, to operational issues such as times of opening, tariff-structures, pricing and enforcement.

33. In a series of confused statements (4.4 - 4.10), this strategic responsibility for what is arguably the key to traffic restraint is both acknowledged and denied:

**"4.4 ...Car parking policies should support the overall locational policies in the development plan"**

Quite so.

**"4.5 .. Standards in local plans should be set as a range of maximum and 'operational' minimum ...for broad classes of development and location."**

Fine, in principle, but there is no discussion about the relationship between parking provision for different journey purposes generated within each class of development (eg shop-workers vs shoppers).

**"4.6 A certain level (sic) of off-street parking provision may be necessary for a development to proceed without causing traffic problems..."**

A series of weak and vague recommendations follow, including "(to) ensure parking requirements in general are kept to an operational minimum." Since the actual requirements for parking are not known until people have made their choices not only of destination and travel-mode but of timing and duration, the statement is either no more than a vain exhortation to limit car-use or (more likely), it is a misprint - "to ensure that operational requirements are kept to a minimum" would make more sense.

34. **"4.7 The level of car parking charges may also be used as an instrument to encourage the use of alternative modes..." and yet:**

**"4.8 Parking charges ...should not appear in development plans as policies..."**

Several contradictions are to be found here. Either the parking facility is owned and operated by the Local Authority (or an agent on its behalf), in which case the tariff-structures and parking prices are important matters of policy, or it is operated privately, in which case the Local Authority is as powerless in this matter as it now is in influencing bus-fare levels. The levers of operational control over all forms of urban parking have got to be (put back) in the hands of local authority, if a coherent strategic parking policy is to be implemented. As things stand, with Metropolitan Authorities abolished and Shire Counties likely to be broken up, the prospects of comprehensive public control over the provision and pricing of urban parking seem remote.

35. One spark of encouragement is to be found in the reference (4.7) to Special Parking Areas under the Road Traffic Act, 1991, which could allow local authorities outside Greater London to assume responsibility for control and enforcement of on-street parking facilities (London Boroughs already have these powers). Moreover, the income from parking charges could soon be used "to support public transport and highway improvements" under S.55 of the Road Traffic Regs. Act 1984. The naivete is evident, however, in the same paragraph where it says "Authorities should agree appropriate (sic) levels and charges for parking, broadly to maintain existing competitive positions between competing local centres." Why on earth should they? The District which approved the



brand new out-of-town centre has not, so why should the rest (especially in the light of 4.4 above)? If this is intended as a new strategic dimension of planning to regulate competition between all the various Districts/centres, in the same region, it is based firmly on the assumption that the existing competitive position is the optimum one. The truth is, whatever balance is best, there is no Strategic Authority to bring this about.

36. **"4.9 Authorities should seek to encourage ...redevelopment or re-use of existing private (off-street) parking to bring them down to revised standards."**

This is the sole reference to the PNR (private non-residential) parking problem, whereby a large proportion of all off-street parking space in many city centres is to be found in parking facilities approved by earlier generations of planning control. PNR accounts typically for 40% - 60% of all off-street parking spaces. Unless and until the use of these PNR parking spaces is either converted or brought under effective operational control by a strategic authority, determined to achieve overall traffic restraint, most of the rest of these policy-recommendations on parking are of little worth.

5. **CONCLUSIONS : THE NEED FOR MORE RADICAL DEMAND-MANAGEMENT POLICIES (AS WELL AS PPG 13)**

37. PPG 13 is, without doubt, a step in the right direction. Its eventual effectiveness, though, with the tide of car-ownership running so strongly against it, must be in doubt. Moreover, in the context in which it operates, PPG 13 cannot deliver powerful positive restraint-policies against dispersed car-oriented patterns of development. Instead, it must rely on essentially negative policies of development-control and general exhortations to maintain density and to foster public transport use. The main reasons why this will probably be insufficient to stem the tide (let alone turn it) are that few mechanisms exist now for positive intervention at the strategic level, the price-mechanism both for parking and for road-use itself is largely ignored and the policies that are proposed centre on the myth of competition between cars and public transport.

38. As we have seen, there are some areas of competition between cars and public transport but they are patchy, confined to a few specific domains and heavily-weighted (under present policies) in favour of car use, wherever and whenever

cars are available. Even where such competition can be contrived, eg for radial journeys in the inner areas of large cities, there is a built-in asymmetry. That is to say, public transport passengers switch much more readily to private transport than they will switch back.

39. Moreover, acceptance of the idea of a competitive model carries with it an obligation to accept the outcome of that competition. Thus, if the land-use, social and environmental consequences of the car winning "hands down" are so serious that we would (in the end) have to intervene to remedy it, then the sooner we intervene the better. Proper pricing of road-use is the key to this. How can we expect privatised deregulated bus companies, locked in competition with each other, to fend off the predations of car-owners continuing free-for-all use of the road system? The economic, regulatory and safety ground-rules for public/private competition are simply not in place.
40. A "pay as you drive" system of urban congestion pricing, on the other hand, with the net revenues being channelled to support public transport as a complementary service, would provide a self-financing, self-regulating balance of transport, at prices which properly reflected the marginal social costs of the different modes. This is true at current traffic levels. When traffic has doubled, it will be more so. There is even a chance that restraint of car-use for journeys to work in city centres might delay the time when households acquire a second or third car. However, this restraint cannot be achieved without a much more sharply-articulated parking/pricing policy than PPG 13 has to offer.
41. What is needed, in addition to the well-intentioned land-use policies espoused by PPG 13, is a more radical set of policies getting to grips with the demand-side of travel. The scope for this lies in current (European) research into (so-called) Transport Telematics ie zone-access control, urban congestion pricing, automatic toll-collection, "integrated" ticketing using smartcards and much better travel-information systems. The potential response to these new "informatics" systems is likely to be greater and certain to be more immediate than a land-use policy, however patiently pursued. Nevertheless, the real contribution of PPG 13 lies in the belated rediscovery that planning and transport interact. The notion (by one Department of State, at least) that transport need not be planned but can

and should be "left to the market" has cost us almost exactly 15 years, during which time the car population has grown from 14M to 22M. What we have to contemplate now is the prospect of this becoming 30M-33M by the year 2020. It calls for more than PPG 13.

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