

## Kyoto World Cities Challenge Initiative

**Media Release:**

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### ***Partnership call to help create high impact emergency program to show world cities how to become "Kyoto Compliant"***

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Source: The New Mobility Agenda at <http://newmobilitypartners.org>, Paris, France

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#### **Kyoto Treaty Needs Support in Cities**

Today, after the better part of a decade of hard work on many sides, the Kyoto Treaty finally enters into effect, and with it the obligation of some 140 nations on this beleaguered planet to do something about their emissions. For the advanced industrial economies, the 1990 targets are going to be very hard to meet. But at least there is now a process in place which is starting to point the way. In some parts of the economy that is.

However when it comes to transport in cities, there can be no grounds for optimism. Transport accounts for as much as 50%, and often more, of all air pollution in our cities. However, and despite the many useful improvements made by the leading innovating cities, all the trends are harshly moving in the wrong direction: each year and in every city on the planet we are seeing more traffic, more lost time, more pollution, more accidents, more unnecessary deficits, and more urban amenity and quality of life washed away by aimless short-sighted policies.

But where is the program that is going to deal with this challenge? A challenge which until now, by the way, has been not only unanswered, but unasked.

#### **The Problem in brief**

The most effective way of understanding the full extent of the dysfunctionality and costs of our current transportation arrangements is to view it as a broad based 'public health' problem, to our minds more useful and powerful than looking at it as one more transportation or even environment challenge.

- (Click to <http://www.ecoplan.org/wtpp/challenge/health.htm> for more.)

Any city can, if it decides to, make significant near term inroads in congestion, pollution and life quality on its streets, without waiting for more international treaties to be signed, new technologies to appear from heaven, draconian anti-car policies from 'eco-terrorists', or leveraging large piles of hard-earned taxpayer money to build yet more new roads, elaborate intersections, metros, LRTs or continue to dumbly fund costly, deficitary public transportation operations that invariably end up either half empty or stuck in traffic.

The core of the problem - and which by the way, once we understand it also gives us a significant leg up on the necessary solution path -- is that our present transportation arrangements are above all not "space efficient". We are thus suffering in many ways are above all a problem of **incompatible geometry**: i.e., far too little mobility throughput in a grossly over-sized, egregiously underutilized and unnecessarily costly infrastructure that could indeed be restructured to give everybody concerned a lot more bang per buck. And in this process which targets major reductions in traffic, we will also start to clear the air and get our cities moving toward Kyoto Compliance.

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## The Response: Kyoto World Cities Challenge Initiative

After the better part of a year of ground laying work and a steady diet of international communications with experts in many places, the New Mobility Agenda announced today a Call for a collaborative, independent world wide program and action plan to achieve "Kyoto Compliance" in participating cities and region.

- (The full text of this announcement is available at <http://newmobilitypartners.org>.)

The 20/20 Kyoto World Cities Challenge Initiative is a policy proposal based on a targeted "Kyoto-complaint" reduction of 20% of traffic/pollution in a 20 month period, after an intense 3 month planning and negotiation preparatory phase has laid a solid base for success. (It is understood that the careful preparatory program in each city may lead in each case to some strategic adjustments of the targets to reflect local realities and possibility. However, the idea of specific, public and ambitious targets holds the key to the concept.)

The proposed means for achieving these ambitious objectives lies in the creation of a (a) targeted, (b) aggressive, (c) locally-driven, (d) coordinated, (e) now-oriented (f) pattern-break commitment on the part of local government and all concerned with the transport sector and its extensions and their impact on the target city.

The four keys to the Kyoto Cities program:

- (1) Strong commitment of local leaders from the top.
- (2) A highly committed local implementation team with the technical virtuosity needed to get the fine detail planned carefully, executed and then consistently fine-tuned
- (3) Careful setting clear, understandable, ambitious but safely meetable performance targets. .
- (4) A very broad base of public support and participation and the open community spirit and orientation needed to get the job done.

**Infrastructure reorganization:** One of the central pillars to this approach is the steady, strategic shifting over the target period of the scarce, fixed transport infrastructure to favor higher capacity carriers (i.e., not single occupancy vehicles).

**More and new shared transport systems:** In parallel, the program strikes out both to improve the performance of existing public and shared transport carriers, and at the same time to open up the city to possible new kinds of carriers capable of using new technology to provide new levels of service.

As a result of significant innovation at the leading edge in recent years new tools, projects and approaches, an extensive range of tools and approaches are now available to all cities, and it is important that in each case the full spectrum be examined and put to work in a carefully coordinated package approach.

What is useful about this concept is that it is at once short term results oriented, far-reaching, affordable and realistic. No less important, it targets highly ambitious near term efficiency and visible environmental improvements without requiring massive injections of hard earned taxpayer money.

It also, with the right kind of preparatory work and support, can offer a very powerful political tool for mayors and city counsels who wish to offer a better, safer, cleaner and more affordable city to their electorate.

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### Win/Win Policies – And “Car-like Mobility”

The crux and indeed a rather unusual feature of the 20/20 proposal and strategy is that it targets “car like levels mobility” for the target cities, which offer better and faster service for the great majority of the population, mainly as a result of getting some of the old debilitating barriers and practices out of the way. This is unusual, since most ‘green proposals’ key on traditional public transport; but the organizers of the 20/20 initiative feel that is not enough to get the level of public support (and result) that are needed.

We are confident that once a first group of pioneer cities show the way, this approach will catch the attention of many others and will spread like wild fire. Why? Well, because it will have very high public visibility and because too over these last several decades we have built up our shared knowledge and competence at the leading edge to make it work. What is needed now is a first set of high visibility, high impact city programs. The rest will follow.

### For more information on the Kyoto World City Challenge:

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