

M E M O R A N D U M

DISINCENTIVES TO THE AUTOMOBILE

This staff memorandum on Disincentives to the Automobile has been reviewed by Commissioner Goldschmidt and is now being circulated to stimulate discussion on the role of the automobile in the Downtown Plan. Decisions for the Plan on parking, building density and land use relate directly to proposed programs for mass transit and continued reliance on the automobile. We are looking for reactions to the ideas in this paper, considering each item separately for both positive and negative projections. Please send your responses to Alan Webber of Commissioner Goldschmidt's staff, Room 314, City Hall.

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While labelled "Disincentives to the Automobile", the concern of this paper is really the creation of a comprehensive transportation system, offering real alternatives to the private automobile. In that sense, whatever is an "incentive" for mass transit, buses, pedestrians, trucks and bicycles is a "disincentive" against the automobile. The overall goal is to arrive at a more favorable balance between the city and the car, between the erosion of the city by cars and the attrition of automobiles by the city.

We have reviewed the transportation goals stated in the Downtown Plan by the Citizen's Advisory Committee. In general, the goals that they propose are sound with regard to the development of mass transit, the encouragement of walking in the core area, the use of bicycles as alternative transportation, and the development of a better traffic circulation pattern. With regard to parking, the goals are vague and ambivalent, depending upon the De Leuw - Cather study for direction. The second working paper of the De Leuw - Cather parking study indicates a need for 23,300 long-term and 12,500 short-term parking spaces based on "transit service and usage at present levels." The study also stipulates that short-term parking requirements could be satisfied by placing the parking supply only within two blocks of the location and long-term only within three blocks, totally unacceptable assumptions from which to begin such a study.

In this paper, we are suggesting some alternative assumptions and alternative directions in which to move toward implementing the goal of a comprehensive transportation system.

I. DISINCENTIVES TO THE AUTOMOBILE

"Attrition of automobiles by cities is today almost always happenstance," says Jane Jacobs. "Attrition, unlike erosion, is seldom practiced as policy." The purpose of creating disincentives to the automobile is to adopt, as City policy, the attrition of the auto, to promote mass transit and alternative transportation by removing convenience and expense as arguments for the car, and to encourage diversity, freedom of movement, and a positive environment for people in the downtown core area.

A. PARKING

1. review and renew with necessary revisions the ban on the construction of downtown parking facilities; this should be done immediately; suggest permanent standards and criteria for the placement of future parking facilities; define the area to be covered by the ordinance;
2. make an inventory of present downtown parking spaces and set an absolute limit on the number, in effect placing a lid on both on and off street parking, both private and public; make the definition of "downtown" a working one, designed to discourage peripheral parking facilities that increase commuter traffic, rather than using merely a geographic definition of "downtown";
3. create City Council appointed Portland Parking Authority to regulate fees, recommend future trade-offs involving parking spaces, and supervise the City's interest in controlling parking; institute higher fees for people entering parking lots between 6:00 and 10:00 a.m., thus specifically discouraging commuters while encouraging midday shopping, in effect levying a commuter parking tax; increase meter fees with rates scaled up closer to downtown core area; give Parking Authority responsibility to oversee taxing and placement of parking facilities;

B. LICENSING AND MAINTENANCE

1. monitor more closely the issuance of driver's licenses and raise the demands of the testing process;
2. approve increases in gas tax and vehicle license fees;
3. institute annual and spot automobile inspections with rigid safety, pollution, and performance standards; dedicate tax funds received for approval sticker toward the development of mass transit;
4. continue monitoring filling station construction to prevent unnecessary stations; inventory stations within the city and set an absolute limit on filling station construction;
5. encourage merchants and banks to accept as proper identification papers and cards other than driver's licenses;

C. TRAFFIC FLOW

1. halt freeway construction in the urban area;
2. halt all street widening;

3. re-regulate traffic light frequencies and no longer stagger them for smooth traffic flow;
4. dead-end streets in nearby residential neighborhoods that tend to become heavily used as "alternate routes"; use traffic diverters where busy streets enter residential areas;
5. designate specific core area streets as inaccessible to private automobile traffic;
6. maintain a close watch on downtown carbon monoxide levels with the stated intention of closing the city to automobiles at the first violation of permissible levels; publicize the extent and frequency of lesser violations; according to one De Leuw-Cather study of downtown air quality there were 182 periods of violation of carbon monoxide standards at one sampling station alone;
7. increase stop light and stop sign positions in all neighborhoods and along presently uninterrupted streets; pay particular attention to neighborhood arterials where speeding complaints are frequent;
8. add toll booths to major entrances to the city, collecting a one-way toll on all single and double occupancy automobiles with funds received to be spent on financing and developing mass transit;
9. make it a violation of City code, punishable by police ticket, to enter the city from 7:30-9:00 A.M. with less than three persons in any standard size automobile;
10. install street bumps on all streets adjacent to schools not used as thoroughfares, with signs to warn motorists;

D. TRUCKS

1. recognize the significant role played by trucks as a major disincentive to the automobile; trucks function primarily as collectors, gathering goods and services in central locations, thereby decreasing the need for private automobiles; trucks not only are disincentives to the automobile but are also one of the strongest incentives for the city;

2. specify exclusive ramp approaches to freeways and bridges for trucks and buses;
3. designate priority truck routes into and through industrial areas;
4. permit trucks to share the exclusive lane privileges of buses;
5. give trucks free passage at highway toll booths;

## II. INCENTIVES FOR TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Without a fully developed alternative transportation system, a series of implemented disincentives to the automobile may prove punitive to lower-income citizens exclusively. The goal here, therefore, is to develop an alternative transportation system, based on the theory that it will take a series of transit options to counter the singleness of the automobile. The advantages of such a system, which might initially include walking, full-size and mini buses or vans, taxis, car-pools, and bicycles, are the encouragement of choice in mobility, the breakdown of the boredom of the private automobile, and the disruption of downtown dullness.

### A. PEDESTRIANS

1. Initiate a pro-pedestrian traffic light campaign so that at regular intervals WALK signs show all directions, permitting cross-intersection pedestrian traffic;
2. along specific key "Promenades" widen the sidewalk area, thus narrowing the street surface, and plant double tree strips along the newly widened walkway;
3. designate pedestrian paths both between neighborhoods and downtown and within downtown areas;
4. increase pedestrian amenities including:
  - a) inclement weather shelter along sidewalks and paths
  - b) benches
  - c) water fountains
  - d) public toilet facilities
  - e) street lighting;
5. provide pedestrian routing across bridges;
6. question skyway concept as abandoning primary street level to the automobile;

B. BUSES, MINIS AND VANS

1. create exclusive bus lanes along streets, highways and express-way ramps;
2. designate specific streets as exclusive passageway for buses and mass transit service;
3. provide commuter buses free passage at highway toll booths;
4. enable buses to control traffic lights, basing signal changes on numbers of passengers rather than number of vehicles;
5. provide long distance park and ride commuter facilities, preferably at dual use sites rather than newly constructed facilities;
6. install bus token pre-sale devices at bus stops for convenience;
7. re-route bus service to minimize transfers;
8. provide more effective displays of available bus routes and services;
9. color code buses and matching routes for instant identification, added color and charm;
10. introduce mini or van service, offering computerized dial-a-bus service for short-term transit; equip system with an automatic vehicle locator;
11. designate express routes to specific destinations, including the airport, park buses, stadium buses, Lloyd Center;
12. provide all buses and mini vehicles with special equipment for elderly and handicapped;
13. involve consumers in planning bus service;

C. TAXIS

1. integrate taxis into the bus and mini system by introducing tokens applicable to all three forms of travel;
2. deregulate taxicabs; the city now limits the number of medallions taxis can work to reduce the need for private autos if they are made more readily available and less expensive; studies show that more taxis mean lower rates and higher ridership; compensate curi taxi companies and drivers for loss of monopoly;

D. CAR POOLS

1. allow cars with three or more persons into express lanes on highways;
2. permit free passage through toll booths of automobiles carrying three or more persons;
3. offer free parking or parking at reduced rates for car pool users;
4. offer free computerized car pool information service;

E. BICYCLES

1. get the various bike path parties working together rather than competing in the expenditure of bike path money; design a system of bike trails and paths to enable the bicycle to compete with the auto; this means commuter use from residential neighborhoods to downtown area, and not only recreational use of the bicycle;
2. provide new "bike lights" along bike paths to regulate automobile and bicycle traffic separately;
3. create bike paths across major bridges to encourage commuter use;
4. set up stations with loaner bikes available for walk and ride use;
5. make bicycle parking available downtown;

"Attrition, too, must operate in positive terms, as a means of supplying positive, easily understood and desired improvements, appealing to various specific and tangible city interests. This is desirable not because such an approach is a superior persuasive and political device (although it is), but because the objects should be the tangible and positive objects of increasing, in specific places, city diversity, vitality and workability."

- - Jane Jacobs