

1. Opinions



Manifesto : Preparing the mobility transition

December 2012

Mobile Lives Forum

As the Mobile Lives Forum's website goes live, we present you our manifesto.



Mobility is a vehicle for community development and offers a strong basis for personal freedom. Current policies are designed primarily to facilitate access to transportation and communications, in order to expand regional competitiveness and reduce inequality. However, this ongoing quest for greater mobility, overwhelmingly dominated by the automobile, is bringing us to an impasse. We are faced with a physical impasse, insofar as increased mobility is leading to serious traffic congestion. We must also confront an energy impasse: in the future, the most essential form of energy—oil—will be scarcer, more expensive, and more difficult to extract. We are at an environmental impasse, prompted by the CO₂ emissions that are changing the climate and accelerating natural catastrophes. Finally, we find ourselves in an ethical and political impasse. Together, these phenomena could yield a society in which only those with the greatest wealth would still be able to still move about freely. There seems to be an urgent need for companies, politicians and community members to reflect on how to prepare

for the mobility transition and create better mobile lives for the future—and that's the goal of the Mobile Lives Forum, an institute for research and dialogue on mobility.

Will we ultimately become mobile people—nomads? Or with the relocalization of business based on new industrial processes and reduced production-to-market circuits, are we heading back towards sedentary lifestyles centered around local ties and communities? Will future generations be able to use the innovations offered by information and communication technologies to partly replace physical mobility with virtual mobility?

We must ask ourselves about the plans being made. What kind of balance must we find between mobility and immobility? Will we need to legally impose standards, or should we focus on mobility education? Who will be entitled to particular kinds of mobility? At what cost and in which geographical areas? Will the regional development planning depend on the restriction on speed? Will we emphasize dense urban development, or will we plan urban sprawl? Above all, what kind of criteria could we adopt to underpin tomorrow's mobile lives, responding to individual aspirations and yet remaining sustainable for the community and its ecosystem?

These are just some of the questions that the Mobile Lives Forum hopes to address on this site. This can be done with the help of all those who wish to learn more about our mobility-based society and are willing to contribute to mapping out a new future. We hope you enjoy your visit, and we thank you for all your contributions.

Mobility

For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.

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