

Book Review

Encouraging transport alternatives: Good practice in reducing travel

Banister, D. & Marshall, S. (2000)
London, UK: TSO (The Stationery Office).
174 pp.

The amount of travel worldwide has been increasing steadily. This could be regarded positively as a reflection of economic growth. However, it has also resulted in various adverse side-effects, such as increasing congestion, pollution, accidents and consumption of land.

A fundamental approach to tackling the problem is to attempt to reduce the amount of travel itself. This book demonstrates that travel reduction can be achieved over a wide range of circumstances and by various means—through policies for both restraining car use and promoting viable alternatives, through land-use planning, and through technology.

However, this book does not suggest ready-made solutions that can be applied in all situations or even in one city. It systematically reviews the policy measures available to reduce dependence on the car and to encourage travel alternatives. It offers various examples of what has been accomplished and how this has been achieved, supported with evaluative findings. The case studies in this book are based on European cities, covering a range of different sizes, locations, countries, policies, organisations and strategies for transport. Some policy measures are common to more than one city, others are unique to particular cities; some measures are applied on their own, whilst others are packaged together.

The book is composed of two parts, in total comprising 13 chapters. Chapter 1, “Travel Reduction: Means and Ends”, explains various travel reduction approaches and how the concept can be achieved. Then Part I, “Policy Measures”, (consisting of chapters 2-6) describes policy measures to reduce travel, with evidence taken from a range of case studies. Chapter 2 suggests “Reducing Travel through Organisational and Operational Measures”. Then Chapter 3, “Infrastructure Interventions to Reduce Travel”, focuses on the means by which infrastructure can be better used to reduce car use. Chapter 4, “Financial Levers to Reduce Travel”, covers the range of financial measures available. Then in Chapter 5, “Travel Reductions ‘Built In: The Role of Land-Use Planning”, travel reduction is complemented by land use measures. The final chapter in Part I, Chapter 6,



“Technological Means of Reducing Travel”, explores the role that technology can play in reducing travel.

Part II, “Policy into Action” (consisting of chapters 7-13), turns to the means by which policy can be converted into action, by interpreting the knowledge and experience of good practice (Part I). Chapter 7, “Combining Measures”, discusses how several measures can be integrated as a package to achieve an overall strategy for the city. In Chapter 8, “Underlying Mechanisms” are explored, including ‘switching’ (of mode, destination or time) and ‘substitution’ (through linking trips, technology, or trip modification). Chapter 9, “Evaluating Success”, examines the quantified effects of travel reduction measures in an attempt to gauge their success. This

is crucial and important. It will be seen that it is not easy to detect ‘non-travel’ or to prove that travel reduction has taken place. Then Chapter 10, “Transferability and Compatibility Analysis”, shows the comparative strengths and weaknesses of a particular town or city in Europe. The next two chapters present barriers to policy implementation, including: “Barriers to Implementation” (Chapter 11) and “Barriers to Realising Travel Reduction Outcomes” (Chapter 12). Finally, Chapter 13 presents the book’s main conclusions.

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