



On the occasion of my nth birthday, a few words with my friends

Eric Britton, World Streets, Paris. 27 June 2019

Dear friends, colleagues, planners, policy makers, students, professors, reporters, people working with local government, engineers, accountants, and above all those of you as active citizens and participants in civil society, whom I have met, not met, collaborated, swapped ideas with, argued, modifying my position and then arguing some more . . . Because as you and I know well, nothing ever stays fixed and final in the 21st century world of transport and mobility.

Okay. It's my birthday and here from this end is the state of play in World Streets and my own work program for the year(s) ahead. It all started one year ago to the day. A brief look back:

When you turn eighty, I can guarantee that it is likely you are not going to be around for eighty more, . . . So, time being a bit short, it's a good occasion to take stock and figure out where one might go from here.

And as I was pondering how I might best reorganize to make a contribution with my future work; the conundrum of Sir Isaiah Berlin came to mind. You remember the one? "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows but one big thing." Okay, if I now must tighten my focus – after years of being a fox – best I find and concentrate on that one big thing. Which in our case in this chaotic and out of control 21st century must be CLIMATE! More than that, THE WORLD CLIMATE EMERGENCY.

Fair enough, but what could this one person sitting in a chair in Paris do to start make a difference? Well as I have long worked in the world of ideas, needs, hopes, conflicts, plans, strategies, policies and implementation in one sector: namely how people get around for better or worse in their day-to-day lives. We call it "mobility", and beyond that single word the fascinating challenge of creating and implementing a New Mobility Agenda that faces up to the challenges of exactly this time.

Now for the record, taking our definition of local mobility, our slice accounts for roughly 10% of total world greenhouse gas emissions. That is not trivial. Happily, with half a century of hands-on experience in the field in cities around the world we have much to build on!

So now what? What about a Challenge? A Climate Challenge. A Five Percent Climate/Time/Space/Mobility Challenge? And what about OPEN COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING. Hmm. Since it's my birthday, please hang on and let's take a quick look at how all this might all be brought together.

* And please, do not let yourself get put off by the often crude, inevitably unfinished nature of what follows. It's still very much work in progress. So, there are many places here where you will be obliged to use your imagination, make a little order and fill in the dots. Einstein is said to have put it like this: *If we knew what it was we were doing, it wouldn't be called research, would it?*

CLIMATE ATTITUDES

Ignore, Confused, Denial, Pretend, Miss, Excuse, Abandon . . .





THE FIVE PERCENT CHALLENGE

The World Climate Emergency & the New Mobility Action Plan
An open, international, collaborative project: 2019-2020

1. CLIMATE: The greatest challenge civilization faces today is that of dealing with the unrelenting, unmet, ever-accelerating nightmare of climate chaos.
2. TIME/SPACE/MOBILITY: The day-to-day mobility sector accounts for roughly ten percent of all greenhouse gas emissions threatening our planet. That's huge! And as luck would have it, it happens to be right in the middle of our skill set. (For more on that see <http://bit.ly/2QBKhHb>)
3. ALTERNATIVE: Given the unmet goals, there is every reason to try ready-to-go alternative approaches to the dire need of reducing emissions, significantly and quickly. We have one ready for your comment.
4. FIVE PERCENT? Because a 5% GHG reduction at the individual level is very doable, if it does require real technical competence. But when done en masse the miracle of aggregation means these relatively modest individual efforts show the way and combine to effectively turn the tables on global warming. We can do this, and we can urge others to do this because the sacrifice is minimal but the stakes huge.
5. COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING: Organized as an open collaborative problem-solving project being shaped by the invited participants and work partners. All communications, materials, content, tools, results posted online, wide open for comment, and shaped together from the beginning
6. INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL brings world level oversight, expertise & experience to the open project - see <http://bit.ly/2wc09as> (Being updated)
7. REACH: Where do our ca. 15k W/S readers come from - <http://bit.ly/2DxcYjx> (149 countries)
8. TOOLKIT 2020: Tools, measures, strategies ready to be put to work -- <http://bit.ly/2VUsbkR>
9. START NOW: The Challenge project is getting underway: (a) Climate/Space/Mobility 2020 Action Plan (<http://bit.ly/2SGXWNu>, and (b) The 2020 Five Percent Challenge (<https://wp.me/psKUY-5AO>)
10. OUTREACH? [Watching Brief](#), Continue research, outreach, peer reviews, public presentations, debates, contacts/discussions with eventual partners, sponsors, cities, rural communities . . . (and the list goes on.)
11. INVITATION. . . to step forward to join the Five Percent 2020 Climate Emergency Challenge - Drop a line to Climate@NewMobility.org And make your grandchild proud.
12. FAILURE? And if we fail this first time? Well, fail early, charge ahead, don't hesitate, learn by doing, don't worry, share widely, openly & freely. On to something better: <https://wp.me/psKUY-5Ar>

STEAL THIS IDEA! *It is our firm hope that this collaborative call will not only bring some much-needed fresh ideas to the climate table, but that others will come in with their own hopefully even better ideas, skills, projects and resources, and make the difference. World Streets stands ready to follow, support and report on this wave of new thinking and action as best we can. COURAGE! IT'S OUR ONLY BRAVE CHOICE.*



Challenging thought (when we need it most).

To understand how we get from the present unfair mess to the future our children need and deserve, we are obliged to challenge our usual ways of thinking, seeing, reacting, deciding, and finally doing. Here are some thoughts worth pondering as we try to make our way to a better future.

- *Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody. Mrs. Jane Jacobs*
- *Scientific principles and laws do not lie on the surface of nature. They are hidden and must be wrested from nature by an active and elaborate technique of inquiry. John Dewey*
- *Every tree, every plant in the meadow seemed to be dancing; those which average eyes would see as fixed and still. – Rumi*
- *The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man. - G.B. Shaw*
- *Why spend a billion dollars if a five million dollar solution is better overall? Rethinking Malahat*
- *Education is not the filling of a bucket – it is the lighting of a fire. – W.B. Yeats*
- *The power of a new mobility concept depends not on how well it solves a given, targeted problem. But on how many problems it (partly) solves. – Marko Te Brömmelstroet*

And finally, to end with these telling lines from Buckminster Fuller:

- *You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.*

That's what we are aiming at. So now, if you are still with us, let's roll up our sleeves and have a look at the proposed *new model* we now propose to articulate, build, test, demonstrate with you over the coming year.

Start here for the 2020 Challenge - - - > Climate.Time.Space.NewMobility.org