

13.1 Road Sharing Movement



The car-mania has resulted in the paving over almost all of open lands with concrete and in the great injustice of depriving people proper places to walk.

What if instead of paving land with concrete, we break up concrete and returned it into land and soil?

The Ruse of Roads

In the 20th century, another form of compressed carbon in liquid form was discovered and put into increased use – oil. During this period, the metallic contraption that increased human mobility was also invented and put into mass production – the car. The manufacture and use of motor vehicles running on the oil-fueled internal combustion engine increased even more after the mid-20th century.

In 1945, at the end of World War II, the military-industrial complex in a victor country that might that produced the armaments during the war -- had idle capacity and nothing left to do after.

One man came up with an idea. He was then the Secretary of Defense of one of the victorious countries. He also happened to be the ___ president of one of the biggest armament manufacturing facility for the WW II, and example of what is now an excellent example of conflict of interest. Together with other car manufacturers, they decided that to continue their business, they should turn from the making of armaments to the making of cars.

There were two obstacles to this idea. One was that the trolley and train system in this country was very good. The City of Angels, the city where they shoot movies, had 400 miles of rail lines which served ___ million riders a year. The other obstacle was that roads were not many, because trains and trolleys were efficiently moving people.

To address these obstacles, this man came up with two solutions. First, the consortium of car-makers bought up most of the trolley and train lines, ripped out the rails or simply paved them over with concrete. Thus, an effective competition of mass transportation was eliminated. They were accused and found guilty of ant-trust violation, for which they were made to pay the princely sum of five hundred ... dollars.

The second solution was even more creative. In the wake of the paranoia of World War II, Mr. Conflict-of-Interest Secretary advised that as a matter of national security, federal funding must be given to build massive roads to connect the cities and the states. In hindsight, how that ruse was believed by some of the most intelligent people on the planet is an example of a great marketing strategy. It uses one of the most powerful emotional motivator -- fear.

And so more and more cars were made. And people of this country became used to the convenience of individual mobility. This country vast open spaces that allowed for wide open roads. Because the City of Angels is where the films are shot, Despite that, and because of waste of that space for the very inefficient individual mobility, the worst traffic jams – and the accompanying stress, waste of time and fuel -- are not experienced by this country. This is in addition to the tremendous cost of the oil importation and production.

What makes it even worse is that this kind of mobility – the car-based system propagated by the movies made in the city that has become notorious for the worst traffic jams in the country -- has become the model for countries that cannot afford the space nor the money to spend for fuel.

Revolutionary Review of the Roads

What are roads for, and for whom are roads? Are roads meant to move motor vehicles? Or are they meant to move people?

If it is to move people, why are we devoting so much space for motor vehicles, to the exclusion of people?

We earlier saw how the entire road system of a powerful and wasteful country was designed to cater to the ruse (___) of the motor vehicle industry. This marketing ploy that goes on to this day. For this reason, we have cars filling up the roads resulting in people no longer able to move. This mindset is the source of much of urban and human maladies today. These societal illness include, among others,

- a. social alienation and the loss of a sense of community,
- b. utter waste of space, water, steel,
- c. stress in the pressure to make money to pay for car amortizations, gas, insurance and maintenance,
- d. loss of permeability of the soil,
- e. accidents resulting in deaths or severe injuries,
- f. air pollution,
- g. lifestyle diseases of the sedentary.

Consider also the impact of the cars and motor vehicles in its entire life-cycle:

- a. mining and smelting of ore to make steel,
- b. mining, refinery, and distribution of oil,
- c. mining of aggregates to make cement for concrete roads,
- d. clearing of forests to plant rubber trees to make rubber tires,
- e. emissions of gasoline
- f. Use of HFCs (the super-greenhouse gases used for mobile air conditioning units)
- g. Use of plastics.
- h. Urban heat islands resulting from concrete roads and from the emissions of motor vehicles.

The carbon footprint of the entire life-cycle of the motorized transportation system powered by the internal combustion engine is the main source of the climate-disrupting gases. This may be found in a Judicial Affidavit in a petition filed in the *Perlas* Supreme Court in February 2014 to compel government to divide all the roads by half.

The psychological impact of this car-centric system is even worse. People cooped up in the steel box (cars) are transformed into individualistic and rude creatures. Thus the rise of the phenomenon called 'road rage'. In cars, people do not see one another as they see only metallic monsters that barrel their way as fast as they can on the roads. People become so angry in their cars and motor vehicles that when they bump and scrape at each other, they shout, fight, and sometimes even kill each other.



An example of a shared road with wide walkways, safe and ample bike lanes, and an efficient collective transportation system.

Roads have transformed human beings into the creatures that we are on the road -- individualistic, rude, arrogant wasteful, and selfish.

In like manner that roads can turn society for the bad, roads can be the catalyst to transform human society to good. By changing the road and transportation system, human beings can be kinder, gentler, more cooperative and more generous.

How can this happen? By a 180-degree mind-shift:

1. From roads that are meant for motor vehicles to roads designed for people to move.

2. From favoring individualized and inefficient transportation to favoring collective/public transportation that is safe, reliable, efficient, convenient, comfortable, inexpensive and fun.
3. From road-widening to road diet.
4. From wasting road space to making efficient and productive use of open space.
5. From fighting over every square inch of the road in traffic jams to a system of sharing.
- 6.
7. This is the philosophy behind the Share the Roads Movement.

These are the working principles of the Road Sharing Movement in the land of *Perlas*.

Restrict the use of motor vehicles only to one half, or less, of the road space.

When roads are opened and become public spaces instead of almost exclusively for private motor cars, people are able to interact with one another, and see each other as human beings.

Transforming the road system to make it more pedestrian and bicycle friendly brings about a cascade of benefits:

1. Renewed sense of community and vitality of human relationships;
2. Reduced transportation expenses;
3. Healthier lifestyles;
4. Availability of more space for use as r community gardens and affordable housing;
5. Less air pollution;
6. Eliminating car expenses, e.g., mortgages, fuel, maintenance fees, insurance,
7. Greater disposal income,
8. Reduced energy use in the mining and making of steel, oil, rubber, roads;
9. Reduced use of super greenhouse gases (HFCs);
10. Less accidents and road rage,
11. More productive time;
12. Less stress
13. Predictable travel times;
14. Reduced water use (from the washing of cars);
15. More time with friends and family instead of sitting in traffic
16. Less criminality from restored social reconnections and people watching each other's backs.



What if we divided the road by half— half for people to walk, bike, and plant edible landscaping and the other half for use of efficient collective motor vehicles.

17. More space for rain gardens as anti-flooding antidote and to restore water into the aquifer (groundwater table),
18. Spark local creativity and industries in the making transportation systems (eg, solar and pedal-powered trolleys, self-contained renewable energy transportations systems, bamboo bicycles, etc.)

The benefits are almost endless. All it takes in shifting our thinking -- from thinking of cars to thinking of good public transportation, from concreting land to breaking up concrete to restore to land to plant vegetables.

How can this happen? Slowly but surely. Start on Sundays. Divide the roads on Sundays where there is less traffic, and show how the road sharing principle will work. If it works on Sundays, people will begin to clamor for it to be done on Saturdays and Sundays, then on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and so on. Any revolution that happens overnight will not last. A good revolution must happen slowly, incrementally, without people hardly noticing it, but in time, will ask for it. This is the task of 'social marketing.'

Bayanihan Sa Daan (Road Sharing Movement, Filipino-style)

In Filipino, there is an appropriate term for it: *Bayanihan sa Daan*. '*Bayanihan*' comes from two beautiful Filipino words: *bayan* – community and cooperation, *bayani* – heroism. *Bayanihan* is 'heroic cooperation'. This is the spirit that enabled the ancestors of Perlas to build the greatest rice terraces in the world 2,000 years ago – the man-made wonder of the world that was not made by slave labor. It was done by the bare hands of the people acting in the spirit of heroic cooperation.

Roads with more than three lanes must set aside at least one lane -- about 3 meters, or 10 feet wide – break up and transform it into an edible landscape and urban vegetable garden.

This is not a dream. In the land of Perlas, there is already a law (see section 9, Executive Order 774, 2008).

“__ Cite provision in law on the road sharing movement EO 774, section 9 and 12”

An action plan to implement the law may be found in
<__ www.oposa.ph/bayanihancaneasetrafficjams.>

(-- Put side-by-side picture of Congested EDSA and an artist's sketch of what it can be.

Picture of congested EDSA- Guadalupe bridge __ area
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