

# It's more about accessibility and mobility,

"Ivan Illich's brilliant, classic, mind-blowing essay *Energy and Equity*, written in 1974, argues (among other things) that **high speed is the critical factor that makes transportation socially destructive, that we have become dangerously overpowered by our technology.** He calls for a society based around low-speed transport, having found that, at speeds faster than 15 mph, equity declines, the scarcity of both time and space increases, and the human and natural environment are degraded. Illich thus finds a contradiction implicit in the joint pursuit of equity and industrial growth."

"Participatory democracy postulates low energy technology. Only participatory democracy creates the conditions for rational technology." **IVAN ILLICH (1923-2002)**



"The model American puts in 1,600 hours (working to pay for petrol, tolls, insurance, taxes) a year to his car to get 7,500 miles: less than five miles per hour. In countries deprived of a transportation industry, people manage to do the same, walking wherever they want to go, and they allocate only three to eight per cent of their society's time budget to traffic instead of 28 per cent. What distinguishes the traffic in rich countries from the traffic in poor countries is not more mileage per hour of life-time for the majority, but more hours of compulsory consumption of high doses of energy, packaged and unequally distributed by the transportation industry."



# than about 'transportation'



Amount of space required to transport the same number of passengers by car, bus or bicycle.

(Poster in the German city of Munster Planning Office, August 2001)

"Man on a bicycle can go three or four times faster than the pedestrian, but uses five times less energy in the process. The bicycle is the perfect transducer to match man's metabolic energy to the impedance of locomotion. Equipped with this tool, man outstrips the efficiency of not only all machines but all other animals as well."

## Access, not mobility

Movement in cities is not an end in itself. We move in order to gain ACCESS to people and things. But in car-oriented cities, activities tend to spread out. This forces people to travel further and further for the same level of accessibility as before.

## Moving people, not cars.

We need to focus on moving people and goods rather than vehicles. In dense cities, public transport saves valuable space and energy compared to private transport, and can make a healthy profit at the same time. But cities need to nurture their public transport by giving them some priority on the road over cars. If buses are always caught in traffic then a vicious cycle begins, with bus riders abandoning public transport and adding to the traffic jams.

*Sustainable Transport Action Network (SUSTRAN)*