

TPS New Years' Drinks 2018

Transport planners: where are we all coming from?

Richard Walker

Transport planners: where are we all coming from?



Richard Walker

Transport Planning Society

New Year Drinks

ICE, London

11 January 2018

Objective for this talk (M. Wedderburn)

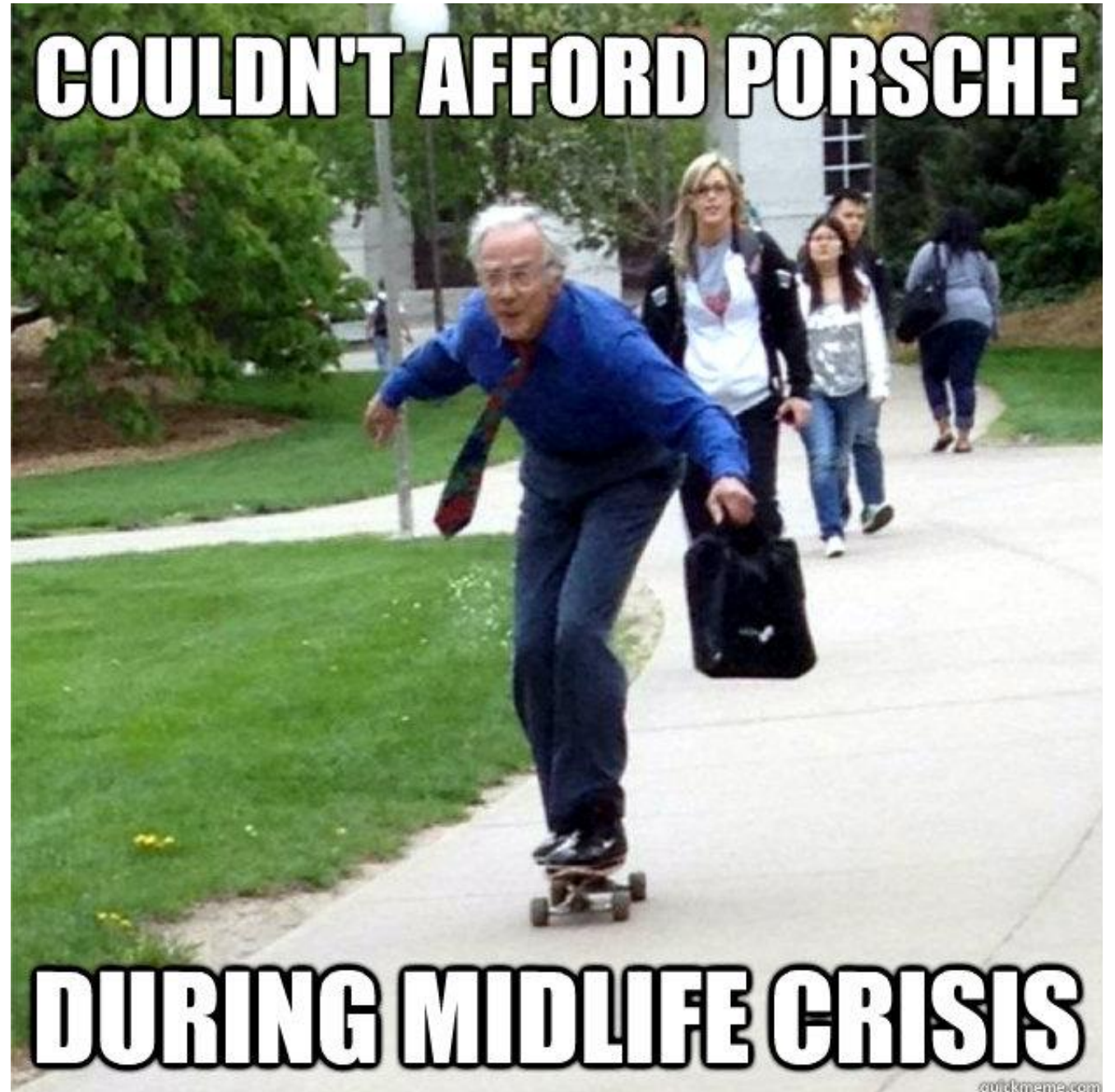
What type of transport planner are you?

- In this presentation, Richard will question the motivations and mindset of practising transport planners, offering five caricatures, which broadly correspond to four or more paradigms for transport planning...
- ...illustrate the co-habitation of 'predict and provide' and 'demand management' philosophies in the profession in the UK today...
- ... and provoke us to think about the theory & practice of transport planning to assist in setting the scene for events in 2018 on the current & future requirements of transport planning.

Objective
for this talk
(R. Walker)

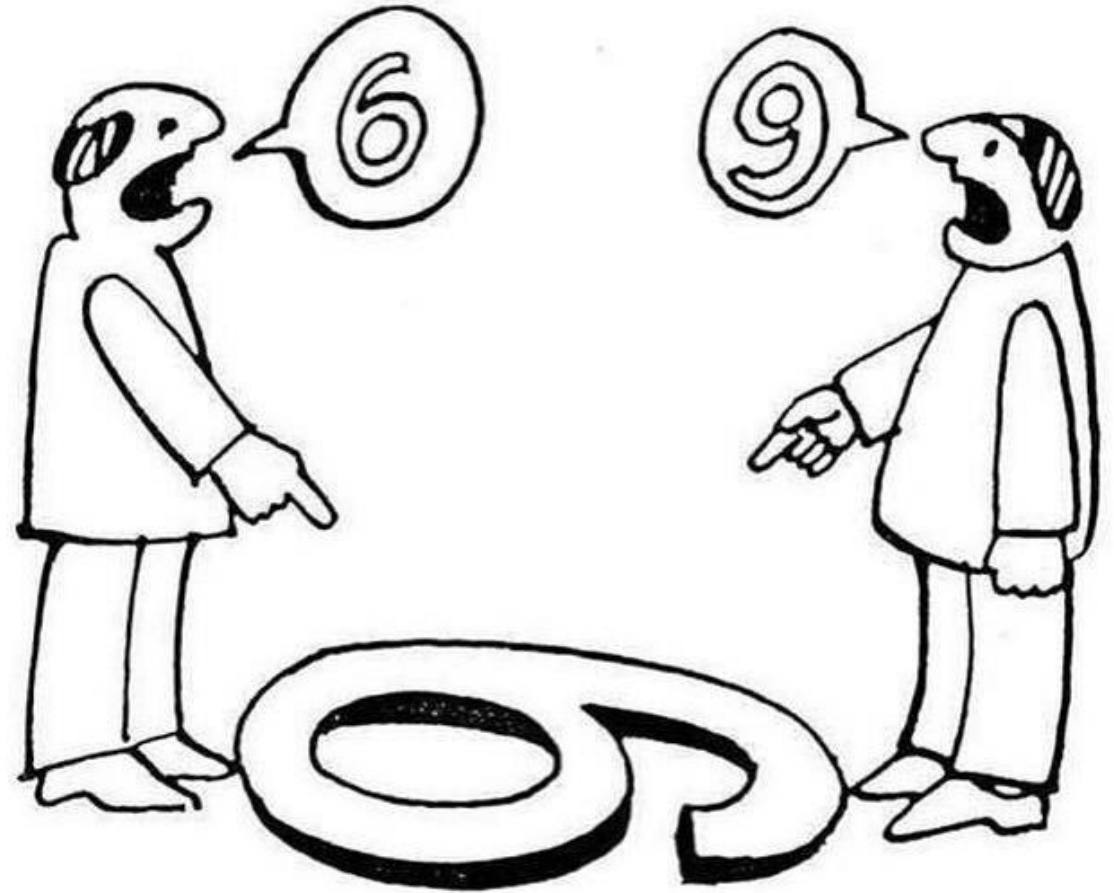


Objective
for this talk
(R. Walker)



... Objective for this talk
(agreed with client post commission...)

Where we are coming
from affects how and
what we see





Two people can look at the same
thing and see it differently..

— *Justin Bieber* —

AZ QUOTES

... Objective for this talk
(agreed with client post commission...)

Some thoughts on
'paradigms' for transport
planning
to inform our discussion on
where we as a profession
take transport planning next



...and along the way (if time...)

1. Why transport is too important to be left to... anyone!
2. Battle of the Planets – Culture Wars!
3. The Buchanan conundrum – solved!
4. Why transport planners and civil servants can sometimes struggle to understand each other
5. ... and why everyone thinks I'm mad, but I think everyone else is mad

The rider

All views expressed in this presentation are entirely my own and should not be construed in any way as representing the views of my employer

Transport planning – Wikipedia definition

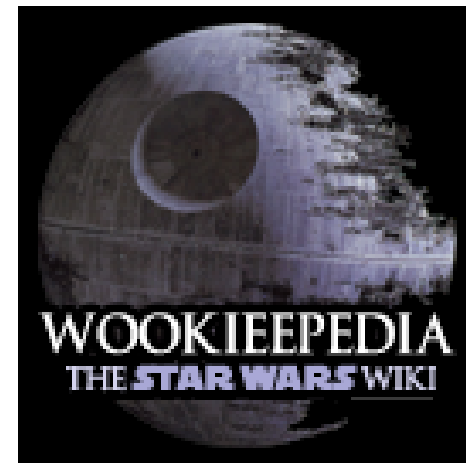


WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Transportation planning is the process of defining future policies, goals, investments and designs to prepare for future needs to move people and goods to destinations.

Transportation planners **apply a multi-modal and/or comprehensive approach to analyzing the wide range of alternatives and impacts** on the transportation system to influence beneficial outcomes.

Transport planning – alternative definition



- Some kind of hippy/communist plot...
- ...to impose their airy-fairy/
dangerously illiberal lifestyle
preferences on an innocent
citizenry

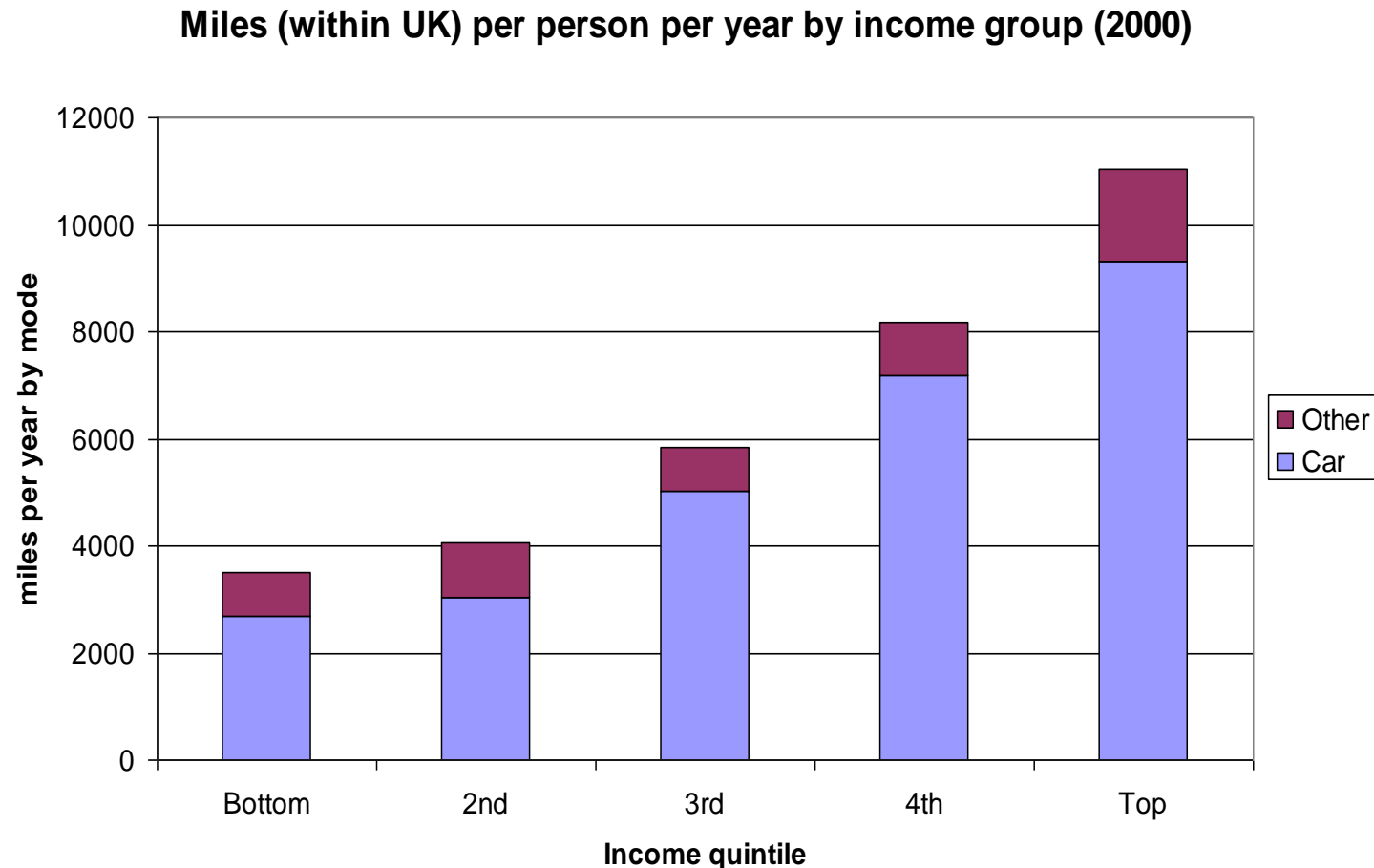


How do transport planners' minds work?

- (From a 2007 talk)
- A historical perspective: 5 transport planning 'paradigms'
- **Paradigm** (OED definition): 'a world view underlying the theories and methodology of a scientific subject'

The mission of transport planning: background

- 20th century: technological advance, economic growth, increasing prosperity
- Transport - a great enabler of prosperity
- Travel - a great prize of prosperity



Paradigm 1: 'Predict and provide'

- Demand growth the result of free choice; the benefits self-evident,

so

- seek to accommodate the demand for transport with the maximum possible efficiency

Paradigm 1: 'Predict and provide'

- Build the infrastructure to provide the capacity
- Job of transport planning is to ensure it is:
 - of the right size
 - in the right place
 - best value for money within the available budget
- Toolkit: speed/flow curve, value of time

Response to P&P: 'Buchananite view'

- Not blind to the environmental impact of traffic/the transport system on the amenity of the places we live
 - *Traffic in Towns* (1963):
 - concept of the (local) environmental limit
 - speed/flow maximisation: 'a street is not a pipe'
 - And - above a certain town size & density no design solution for unrestricted car use possible
- 'You can't always build your way out of trouble'**

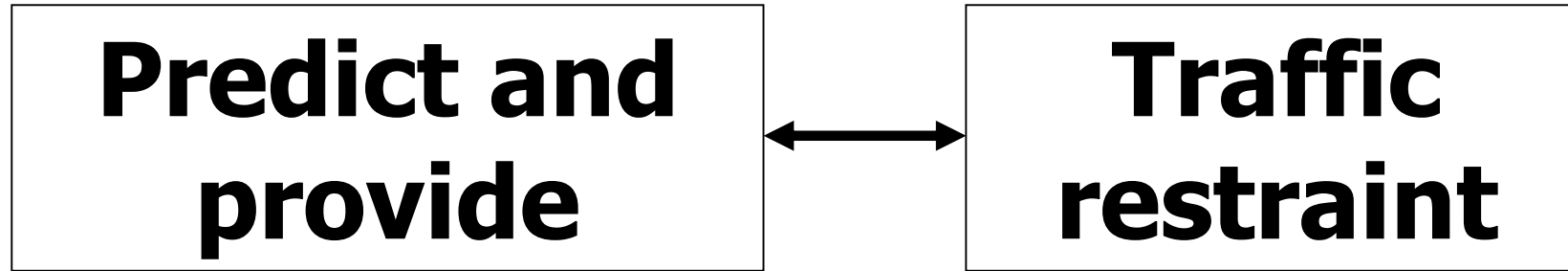
Paradigm 2: 'Traffic restraint'

- aka Transport Demand Management
- accommodate the demand for transport with maximum efficiency...yes, but also
- constrain demand commensurate with the quality of town & country living environment we as a society want

- We deliberate on what society wants through public debate and the democratic process

The 'Oxford toolkit'

- Oxford Balanced Transport Policy (1973)
 - parking control
 - traffic regulation orders
 - P&R, buses, walking, cycling, etc
 - land use planning
 - roadspace reallocation; improved urban realm
- also the London approach since 1970s



'Cohabitation' since the 1970s:

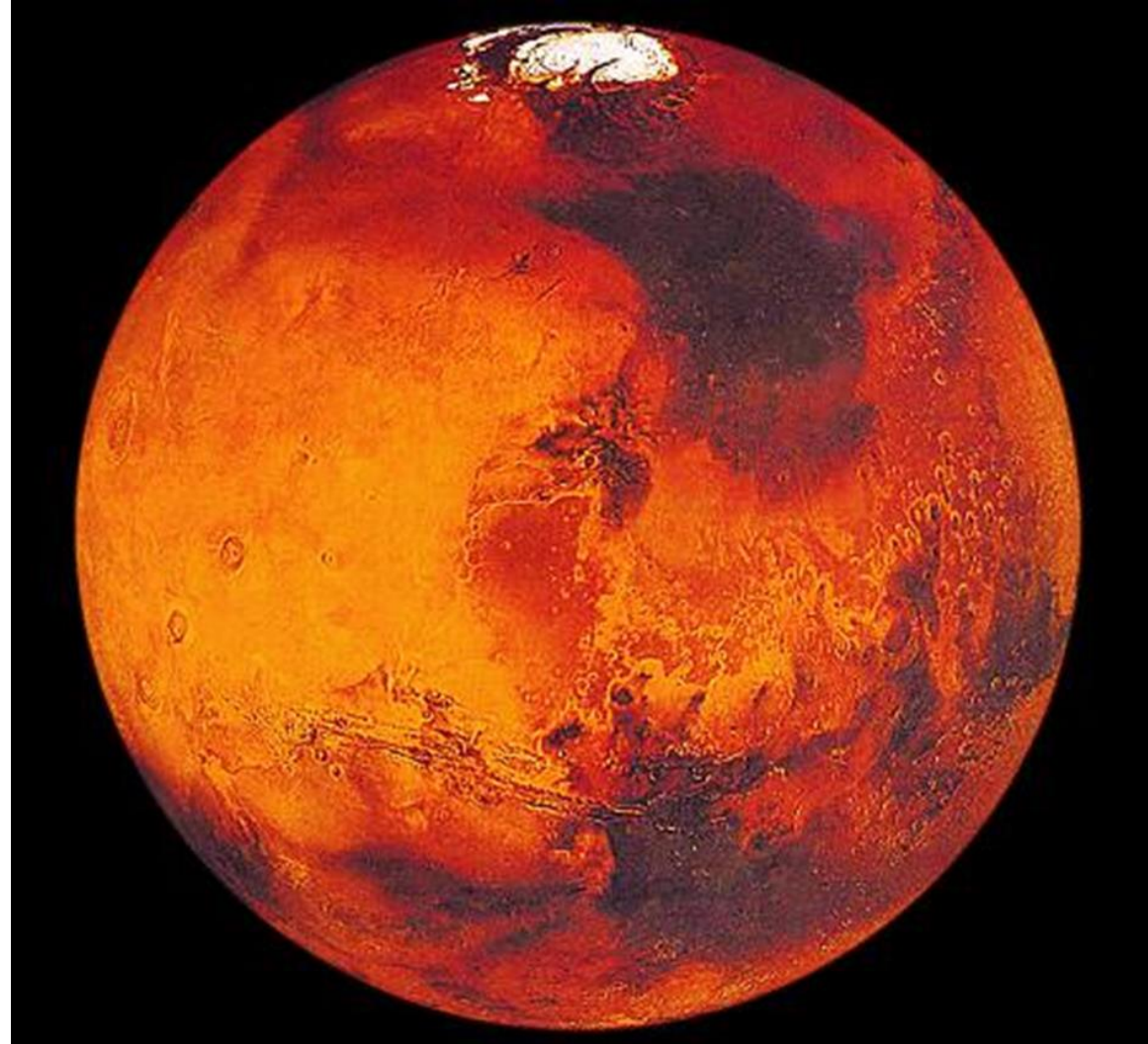
- traffic restraint for inner London & historic cities
- predict & provide for wider city-regions, interurban and international travel

Why be a transport planner? (caricature 1)

- You want to solve transport problems with a focus on the here & now
- You like transport & you like to build things (public transport or roads - don't mind)
- You like to build things that are good value & meet the demand for transport in a cost-effective way...

Why be a transport planner? (caricature 1)

...you are a
“transport planner
from Mars”



Why be a transport planner? (caricature 2)

- You don't particularly like transport, you like places
- Transport is a necessary evil, but you are interested in reducing its impact on our living spaces
- You perceive social problems with unlimited mobility...

Why be a transport planner? (caricature 2)

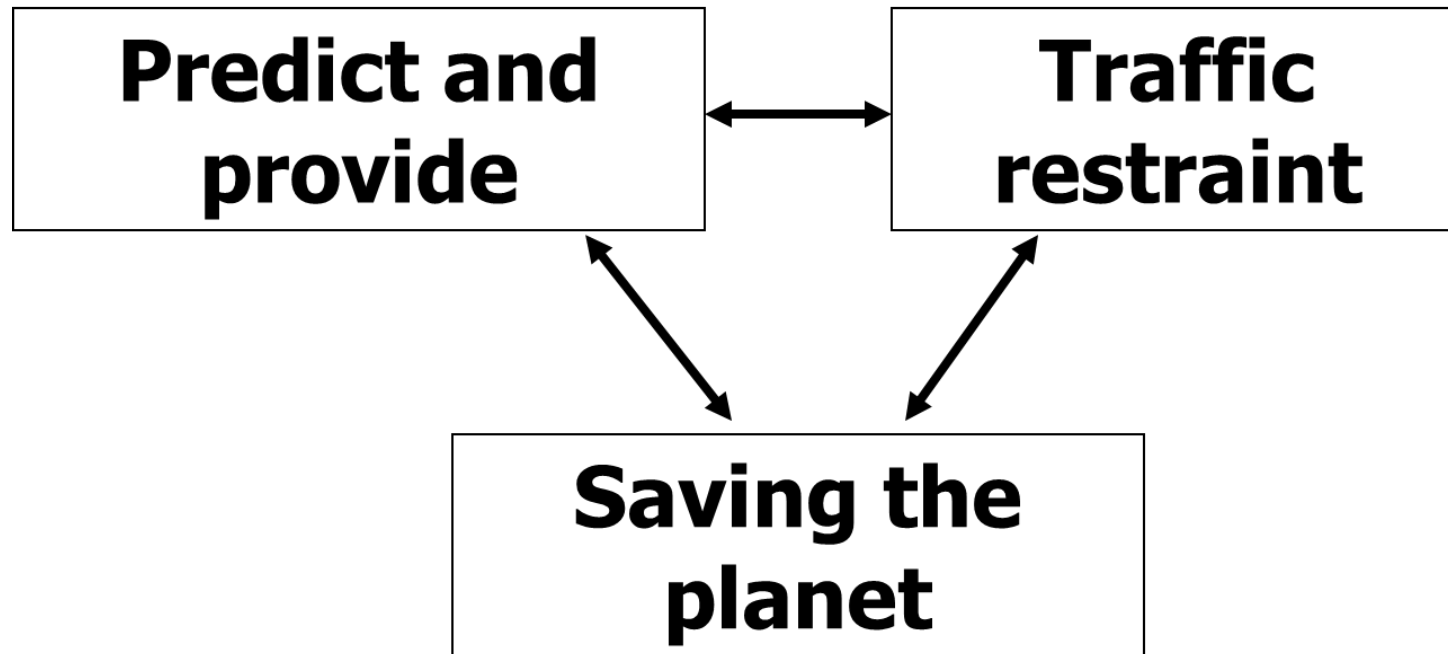
- ...you're a
"transport planner
from Venus"



Why be a transport planner? (caricature 3)

You're on a mission from God to save the planet





You are seeking a 'demand management to save the world' paradigm:

'to accommodate the demand for transport with the max. efficiency... commensurate with conserving the global atmosphere such that the damage from global warming is contained'

- ...you're a
**“transport planner
from Gaia”**



Since 2007...



NO STONE UNTURNED



Why be a transport planner? (caricature 4)

- You are very concerned about UK economic performance
- You have been taught that only supply side measures work
- “More transport = more jobs, more GVA” feels plausible to you
- You don't know much about the three other paradigms and their acquired wisdom...

Why be a transport planner? (caricature 4)

- ...you're a
“transport planner
from an economics
department”



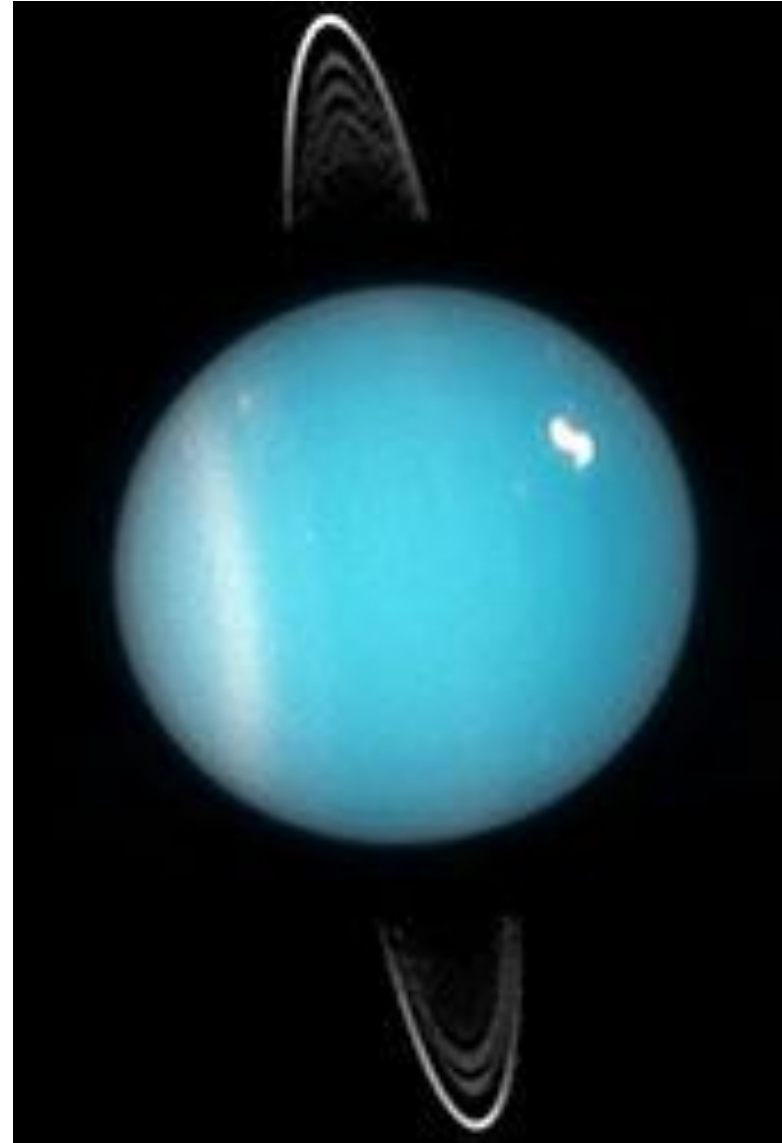
Why be a transport planner? (caricature 5)

- You needed a job & transport seemed to have a low barrier to entry
- You haven't had much formal training but have picked up bits of all 4 paradigms on the job
- You've tried your best to synthesise it all but it's all pretty confusing
- There are too many demands and not enough hours in the day, but you know it's always better to bung out something than nothing, even if it makes little sense...

Why be a transport planner? (caricature 5)

- ...you're a
"transport planner
from Uranus"

Join the club!



Battle of the Planets – culture wars!



Battle of the Planets – culture wars!



The Buchanan conundrum

Buchanan Report of 1963 correctly predicted the number of cars there would be 2013

Said that this left a choice: either comprehensive rebuilding of British towns to accommodate the car, or severely restrict the car and offer things like free public transport – or face total gridlock.

Yet - neither transpired, and here we are, having muddled through.

The Buchanan conundrum – solved!

By P Buchanan and P Headicar, separately

- People say Buchanan missed the option of urban sprawl
- But he didn't – he ruled it out *a priori*
- His ToR said, what can we do with traffic in towns if we reject the obvious solution of urban sprawl? Which the Americans have done, and have proved is a bad thing.

The Buchanan conundrum - implications

- Non-neutrality on the land use response and spatial development outcomes is **hardwired into the Buchananite or transport planner from Venus's DNA.**

Meanwhile

- Not thinking (much) about the land use response and spatial development outcomes is **hardwired into the transport planner for Mars's DNA.**
- Both will tend to struggle should the spirit of the age become **the active support of sprawl** for GDP purposes.

Bonus slides

- If time..

Why transport planners and civil servants can struggle a little to understand each other

1. Here & now problems –v- the long term
 - transport as an operational issue;
 - transport as an accessibility surface determining land use
2. Dealing with the actors
3. The pipeline
 - The IKEA syndrome?

**Transport:
operational
emphasis**



**Transport as a
part of
*aménagement
du territoire***

**Transport
as
business/
service
industry**

**Transport
as public
service
delivery**

**Transport
as part of
our living
space**

**Transport as
part of the
national &
regional
economic
system & its
development**

Transport as a business/delivery issue

**Companies
selling**

Fixed capital

Operational
staff

Working capital

**Transport as a
service product**

Public regulation/
consumer
protection

Shareholders

Investment business
case appraisal

Financiers

**Consumers
buying**

Transport as part of *aménagement du territoire*

Economists

Investment cost-
benefit analysts

Economic development
specialists

City & regional planners/
urban managers

Landowners/
land developers

Financiers

Engineers/
project
managers

**Transport as part of
wider economic
infrastructure**

Construction
industry

Government
officers

NGOs/civic conservationists/
environmentalists

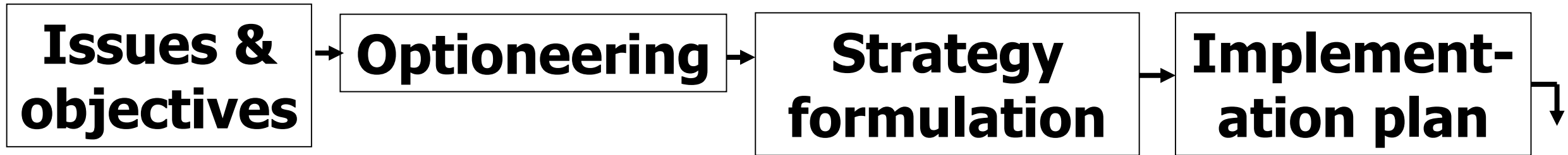
Lawyers

Elected
representatives

Citizens/
taxpayers

Transport
users

Stages in the 'rational planning process'



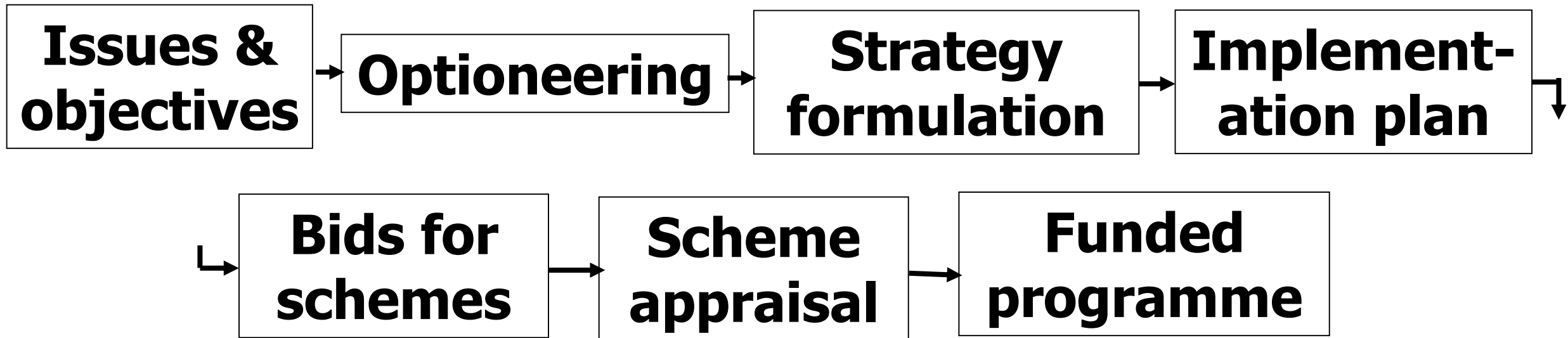
"The pipeline"

Why DfT civil servants and spatial planners may struggle a little to get along

Civil servant: “This WebTAG summary is a neutral appraisal of the impact and value of this transport proposal.”

Amenageur des territoires: “No transport intervention is without spatial development consequences! Without the land use response, the appraisal is worse than useless!”

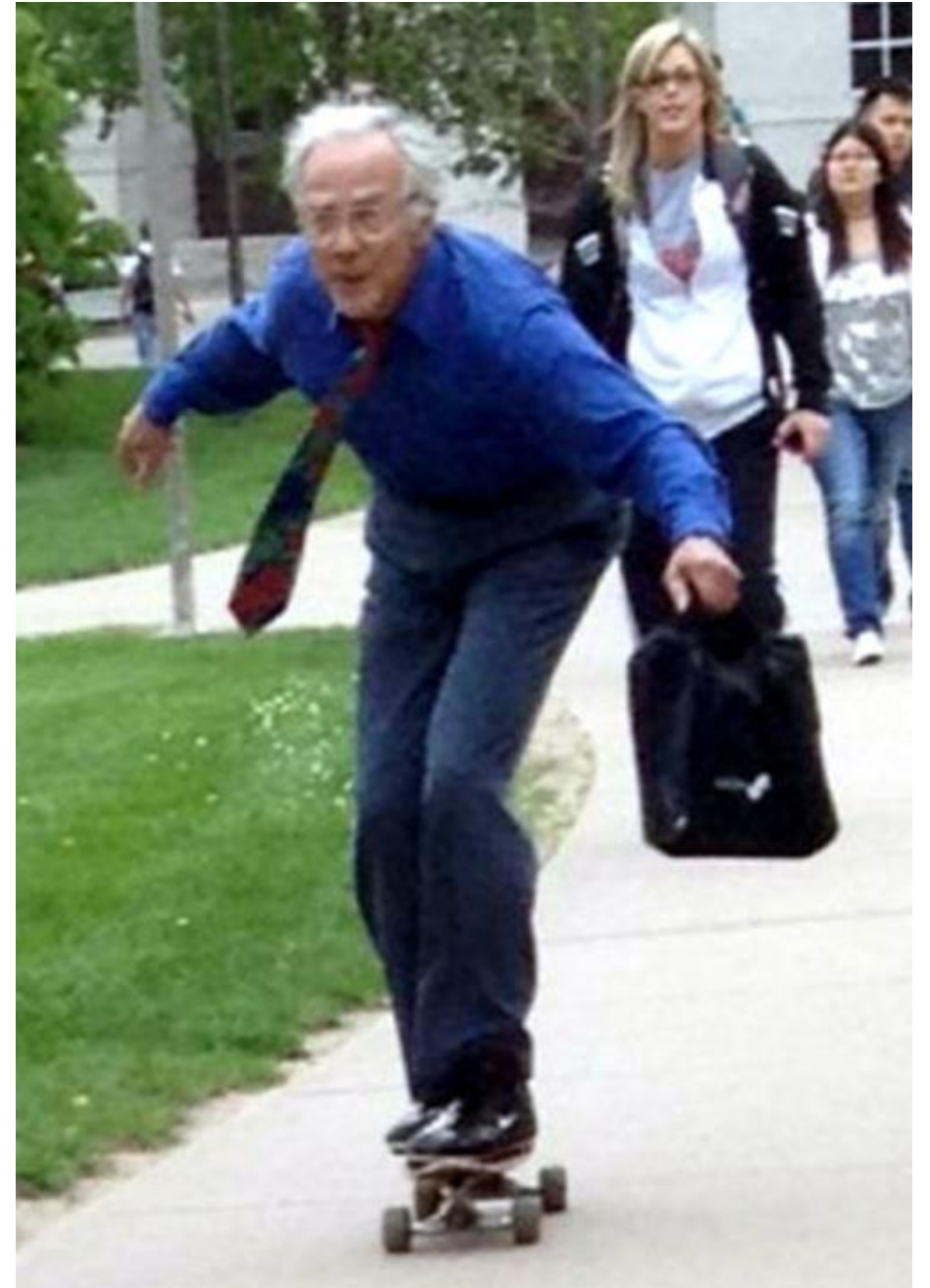
Is it a problem?



With our appraisal system for schemes but without an overarching plan, are we buying the best value individual piece of furniture in each different department of IKEA then throwing them together in the room without a pre-planned design theme?

And now, at last

Why everyone thinks I'm
mad, but I think
everyone else is mad...



Thank
you!

