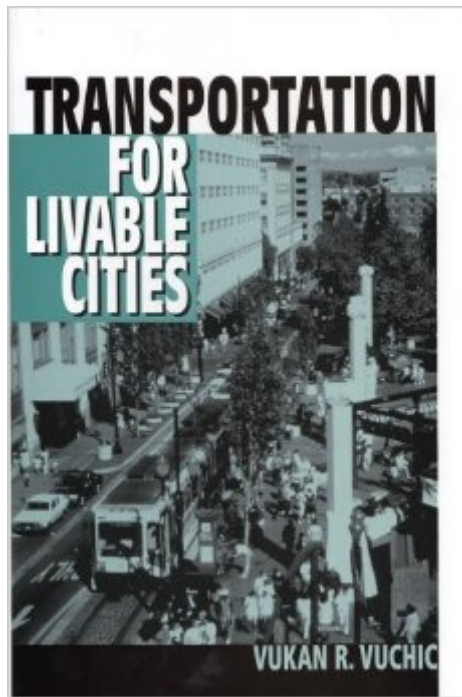


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Transportation For Livable Cities



Synopsis

The twenty-first century finds civilization heavily based in cities that have grown into large metropolitan areas. Many of these focal points of human activity face problems of economic inefficiency, environmental deterioration, and an unsatisfactory quality of life—problems that go far in determining whether a city is livable. A large share of these problems stems from the inefficiencies and other impacts of urban transportation systems. The era of projects aimed at maximizing vehicular travel is being replaced by the broader goal of achieving livable cities: economically efficient, socially sound, and environmentally friendly. This book explores the complex relationship between transportation and the character of cities and metropolitan regions. Vukan Vuchic applies his experience in urban transportation systems and policies to present a systematic review of transportation modes and their characteristics. *Transportation for Livable Cities* dispels the myths and emotional advocacies for or against freeways, rail transit, bicycles, and other modes of transportation. The author discusses the consequences of excessive automobile dependence and shows that the most livable cities worldwide have intermodal systems that balance highway and public transit modes while providing for pedestrians, bicyclists, and paratransit. Vuchic defines the policies necessary for achieving livable cities: the effective implementation of integrated intermodal transportation systems.

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Customer Reviews

Professor Vuchic is the embodiment of clear thinking and common sense. His is a voice of reason in

the midst of all the propaganda and ideology of the transportation wars that pop up in every city where people begin to question the dominance of the car culture. He's heard all the anti-rail arguments and debunks them one by one. This is an eminently readable and well organized book by one of the foremost transportation authorities in America. He compares the US to our peer countries in Europe and Asia and shows how their policies have produced far more livable cities. Our present sorry state is largely due to massive government subsidies and policies favoring the car culture. These have the effect of discouraging transit, walking, and bicycling. Vuchic says change will only come through a combination of "transit incentives" and "auto disincentives", especially the latter. The biggest obstacles are political, not technological. We must start by creating and promoting the "livable city" vision for our metropolitan regions, then planning an intermodal transportation system to fulfill this vision. Most US cities omit or neglect these steps, focusing primarily on road networks to meet car demand. If you know that something is terribly wrong with your city and that cars have a lot to do with it, this book will tell you why and what you can do about it.

Overall an excellent book. Dr. Vuchic clearly explains the history behind urban transportation planning in the United States. He gives examples of cities in "peer" countries that have done an overall much better job of transportation planning than the vast majority of U.S. cities. He clearly describes the advantages and disadvantages of virtually every mode of urban transportation; car, bus, light rail, metro, bicycle, etc. In this book Dr. Vuchic writes about the importance of integrated multi-modal transportation systems, as well as the critical need for metropolitan areas to integrate various aspects of urban planning; housing, environment and transportation. A couple minor things in the book I did not entirely agree with. Some of his comparisons between cities, I didn't feel were entirely accurate. He mentions Rome in the same sentence as Houston and Detroit when discussing cities with poor transit. Houston & Detroit have some of the worst transit in the developed world, but Rome's transit system, while not the best in Europe, is far ahead of Houston and Detroit. Dr Vuchic mentions Boston in the same sentence as Zurich when describing cities with good transit. Boston's transit system is quite poor by the standards of western Europe. When comparing major world cities Dr Vuchic tries to point to New York as having poor transit relative to London or Tokyo. While New York's transit system isn't as good as Tokyo or London, a much better example of poor transit among major world cities would have been Los Angeles. Despite what I felt were at times somewhat poor comparisons between cities, I still give this book 5 stars and would highly recommend it.

Information presented on the true costs of our transportation choices is articulately conveyed and insightful. Dr. Vuchic's clear, well-founded discussion of holistic transportation systems is a must read. The "silos" we've created for ourselves in the US transportation planning and design industry are detrimental to our citizens. We abound in 'transit' professionals, 'highway' professionals, and 'bike-ped' professionals, but people with a holistic knowledge of how to integrate these systems are rare birds.

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