

From the Planners' Bookshelf...

Transportation for Livable Cities

Vukan R. Vuchic, Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers, 352 pp., 1999.

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Conclusion.

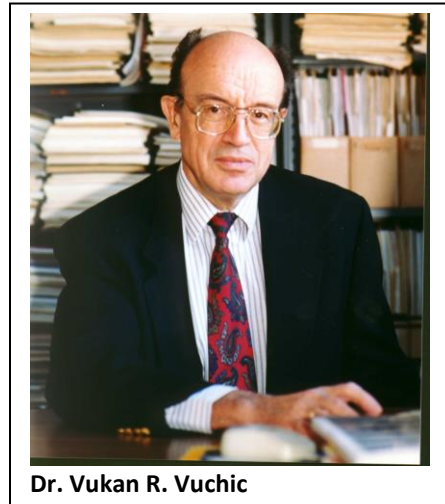
Though this book is somewhat dated, now being 20 years since production, the thoughts are clear, well organized, fundamentally sound and still relevant. This is one of those books that leads to note-taking and list-making. A very useful work for those interested in understanding how we got to this tenuous place and how we might transcend our own lethargy to create a better nation.

Summary.

Profession Vuchic has produced a useful book that examines the history and current [1999] state of livability transportation thinking. His use of photos, lists and figures greatly facilitates an understanding of his ideas and conditions affecting the topic. His extensive use of the experiences of international peer cities emphasizes his point that we in America can easily do better.

Right from the start, he prefaces his work by stating: *"No single mode of passenger transportation can satisfy the diverse needs of a metropolitan area."* He goes on to promote balance as the key. Among his many useful insights:

- "80 to 90 percent of the user cost of driving are fixed, independent of individual trips...[therefore], the only significant deterrent to excessive driving is congestion." [pxxi]
- He appreciates the mobility needs of those without access to a personal vehicle: the young, the old, the infirmed and the impoverished. [p36]
- Transit, like parks and public schools, has the effect of democratizing the system since they are accessible by everyone, regardless of socio-economic status. [p37]
- The size of a city matters:
 - Small cities and towns have fewer trips and less congestion therefore transit systems can be designed to serve as a social service. [p50]
 - Larger cities have different needs; "transit should play the dominant role in carrying major passenger flows" [p51].
- Understanding the problem is necessary and Dr. Vuchic discusses "Causes and Consequences of Traffic Congestion" [p52], "Travel Costs, Charges, Open and Hidden Subsidies" [p65], "Federal Policies 1956-1991: Highway Domination" [p93] and "ISTEA: Progress and Major Obstacles" [p109].



Dr. Vukan R. Vuchic

Vukan R. Vuchic is a public transport expert, a professor of the University of Pennsylvania, a former consultant for the United States Department of Transportation on planning, design and operations of transport systems. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: January 14, 1935

[Belgrade, Serbia](#)

Books: [Urban transit systems and technology](#), [Transportation for Livable Cities](#), [Urban public transportation](#)

Homepage:

<http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~vuchic/>

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- In Chapter 4 [p128], Dr. Vuchin analyzes peer cities in Germany, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, East Asia, Australia and Canada. His insights are instructive as are his comparisons with the United States condition.
- Professor Vuchin also spends Chapter 5 [p188] discussing “Common Misconceptions in Urban Transportation”. Many of which you have heard, but his presentation is compelling.
- Chapter 7 is devoted to solutions, “Transportation Policies for Livable Cities”. He observes [p233]: “A livable city is difficult to define precisely, but one can recognize elements that contribute to making an urbanized area livable.” “Consequently, within the overall goal of achieving a livable city, three major sets of objectives can be defined as characteristics of such a city:
 - Human-oriented and environmentally friendly,
 - Economically viable and efficient,
 - Socially sound.”
- Dr. Vuchin starts from the point that the purpose of transportation is to move people, not vehicles; and he discusses the land use connection. Today a common thought, but still gaining traction in the late 1990s; and he uses this as the base for launching his approach [p253] to *Street and Freeway Networks, Transit, Paratransit, Van pooling, Car pooling, Bicycles, and Pedestrians*.
- His chapter on implementation, Chapter 7 [p259] focuses on:
 - Traffic engineering,
 - Transportation system management [TSM],
 - Travel demand management [TDM],
 - Intelligent transportation systems [ITS],
 - Networks and traffic control, and
 - Methods for reducing car trips and vehicle miles traveled [VMT] through car-use pricing, organizational measures, congestion pricing and urban planning and design.
- The “Measures for Achieving Intermodal Balance” comprise Chapter 8; and they are extensive, sophisticated, practical and aggressive. His point is that if you want to create a livable town, you need to take congestion seriously. Serious problems require serious solutions.

The final chapter is entitled: “Cities and Transportation: What is the Future?” Dr. Vuchin strikes this reader as a visionary thinker, grounded with an international view of the mobility system essential to successful urban life with a deep concern about the future of American cities.

- The point of it all is the character of our cities and quality of our lives, not the mode of mobility.
- The discussion of problems and attitudes from 1999 echoes the chatter of today without the intervening decades of the growing trend of privatization and individualization.
- Dr. Vuchin's analysis and palliatives are still relevant, but time is a'wastin'.

American Planning Association

Transportation for Livable Cities is listed by APA on their list of:
[100 Essential Books of Planning: Decade Nine](#)

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YouTube: In addition to the reviews cited below, check out:

Dr. Vukan Vuchic speaking at the Lunch Time Lecture
at the Georgia Transportation Institute University Transportation Center.
Published on Apr 10, 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtKX1REMLf0>

Published Reviews

The Goodreads logo, featuring the word "goodreads" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The "oo" in "good" is stylized with a vertical line through it.

Transportation for Livable Cities

by [Vukan R. Vuchic](#)

3.78 of 5 stars 3.78 · [rating details](#) · 23 ratings · 2 [reviews](#)

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 [...more](#)

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Transportation for Livable Cities

by [Vukan R. Vuchic](#) (Author)

[6 customer reviews](#)

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.

<http://www.amazon.com/Transportation-Livable-Cities-Vukan-Vuchic/dp/0882851616>