Rethinking habitual travel patterns: Is promoting *'flexi-mobility'* the answer?

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Disruption
unlocking low carbon travel

with Cass, N., Chatterton, T., Docherty, I., Marsden, G. Faulconbridge, J., Roby, H.

Kicking the habit …

Notions of **habit** and **stability** dominate the policy discourse around mobility

but

we ignore variability in our data.

Whilst aggregate level travel patterns might remain relatively stable, individual travel patterns are subject to significant **churn** (Goodwin 2009)

ROAD
CLOSED

WEST END FINAL
TUBE
STRIKE:
3-DAY
CHAOS —

FLOODING
IMMINENT

SORRY
NO FUEL

RAILWAY
AA
REPLACEMENT
COACH STOP

Disruptions reveal insights

- “Studying moments when infrastructures cease to work as they normally do is perhaps the most powerful way of really penetrating and problematising those very normalities of flow and circulation to an extent where they can be subjected to critical scrutiny”

(Graham, 2010)

Disruption

unlocking low carbon travel

Methods

- Ethnographic study (across two years) of 30 families (= 100+ interviews)
- Questionnaire survey in six UK regions (N=2,700)
- Focus groups, interviews + questionnaires to study responses to disruptive events:
  - Floods
  - Fuel strikes
  - Large office relocation/ consolidation
  - London Olympics
  - Winter Weather disruption

Why Bother?

Flexi-mobility

Imperatives to change how we travel

Whether we act or not

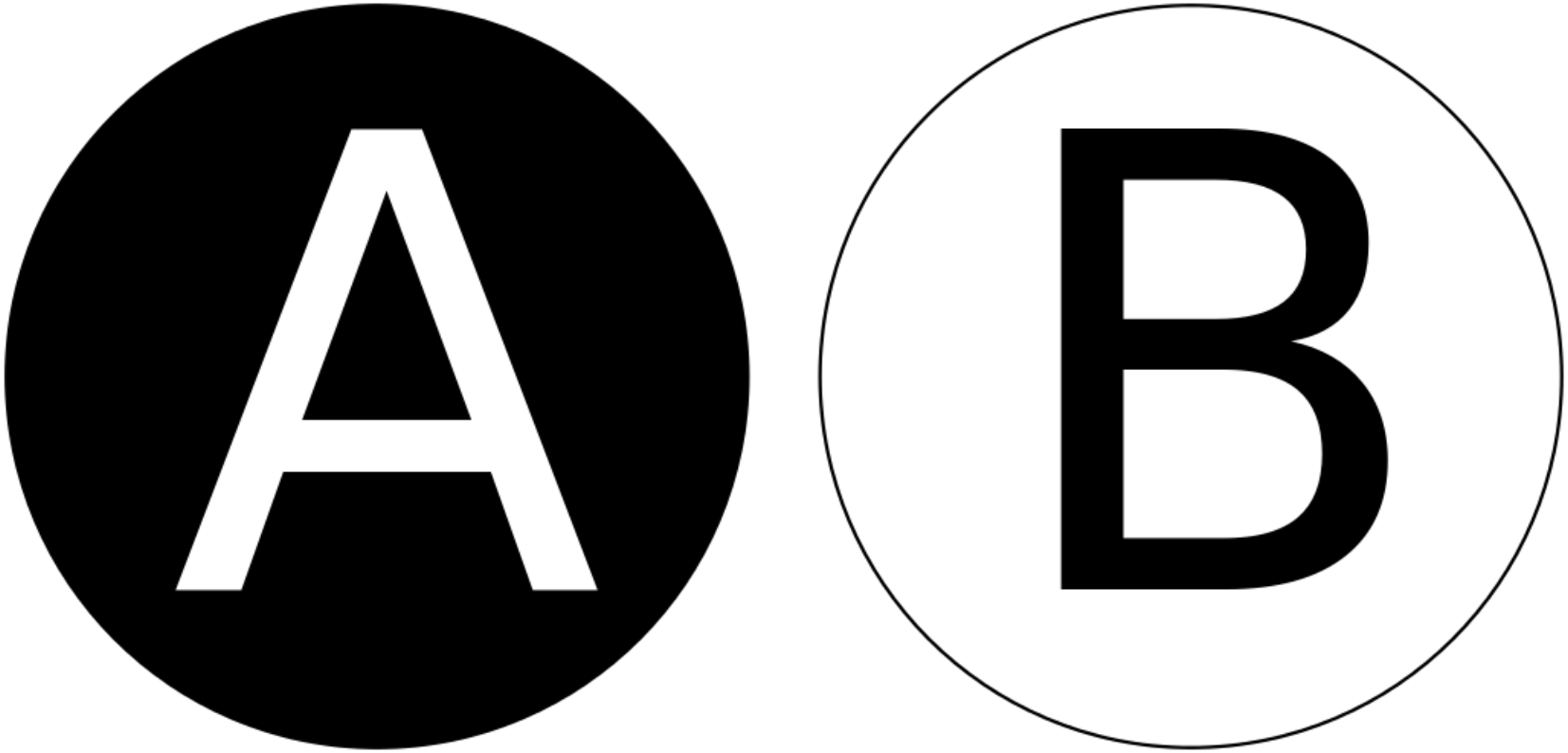
change is happening

- Pensions
- Work
- Education
- Ethnic diversity
- Technology
- Ageing

1. Change is prevalent and has not been fully recognised
2. Scale of changes dwarfs most of our transport interventions

3. To shape or to be shaped?

Not either or **BUT** what and when…



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ADichotomy.svg

Why change is not so difficult

Flexi-mobility

5 Evidence Based Contentions

We've been looking under the wrong stone

1. There is more variability…

- 76% of Londoners surveyed do not always travel to work in the same way every day
- ≈50 % of Council employees in York did not know how many days they would be in their office the next week.
- 25% of disruptions to journeys are caused by family, colleagues…
- >50% of people change their main mode to work every decade

If there is a lot of change can we build on this?

2. Doing things differently SOME of the time is acceptable

- Many people already adapt, at least in the short-term
  - Six city survey: 28% thought it would have been 'very easy' to have travelled at a different time of the day; 23% to have used a different mode and 17% to have postponed their trip.
  - 54% of people changed their journeys to work in the Olympics
  - Between 10 and 30% of Londoners also make changes to reduce stress, because they felt like a change, to avoid bad weather, overcrowding or heat
- And everyone has, at some time in their lives done things quite differently to today.

What do we have to do to create the conditions for '*a bit more*' to be acceptable?

3. The capacity for flexibility varies across social groups, family structures and life stages

- Adult caring
- Child care
- Role in organisation
- Way organisation works
- Disability
- Cultural norms

Thinking about individual choice is too narrow and building a system for the least able should provide for all

4. Skills and resources are important to people's ability to vary their travel

- Six city survey: the most multi-modal people are the best at coping with transport system disruptions.
- Olympics: Far more likely to change modes if this is something you sometimes do anyway
- Being able to map transport options to the complex lifestyles and structural constraints requires skill and resources.
  - these skills are developed and valued across a wide social spectrum;
  - they provide additional adaptability; and
  - they can be cultivated.

So we should cultivate these skills and nurture them

5. There are important differences across locations

- Rural vs Urban differences
- Cultures of mobility vary between cities

The flexi-mobility toolkit should be a way of thinking, tailored to local circumstances

Half-Time Score

- Variability in how we travel is a feature of daily life.
- Society is changing in ways which make this variability an increasing feature or possibility (partly due to technology)
- Most people are able to adapt when faced with a need to change, at least in the short run.
- This provides opportunities to think more expansively about how to change behaviour.
- Interventions could be targeted at increasing this flexibility.

Fleximobility Propostion

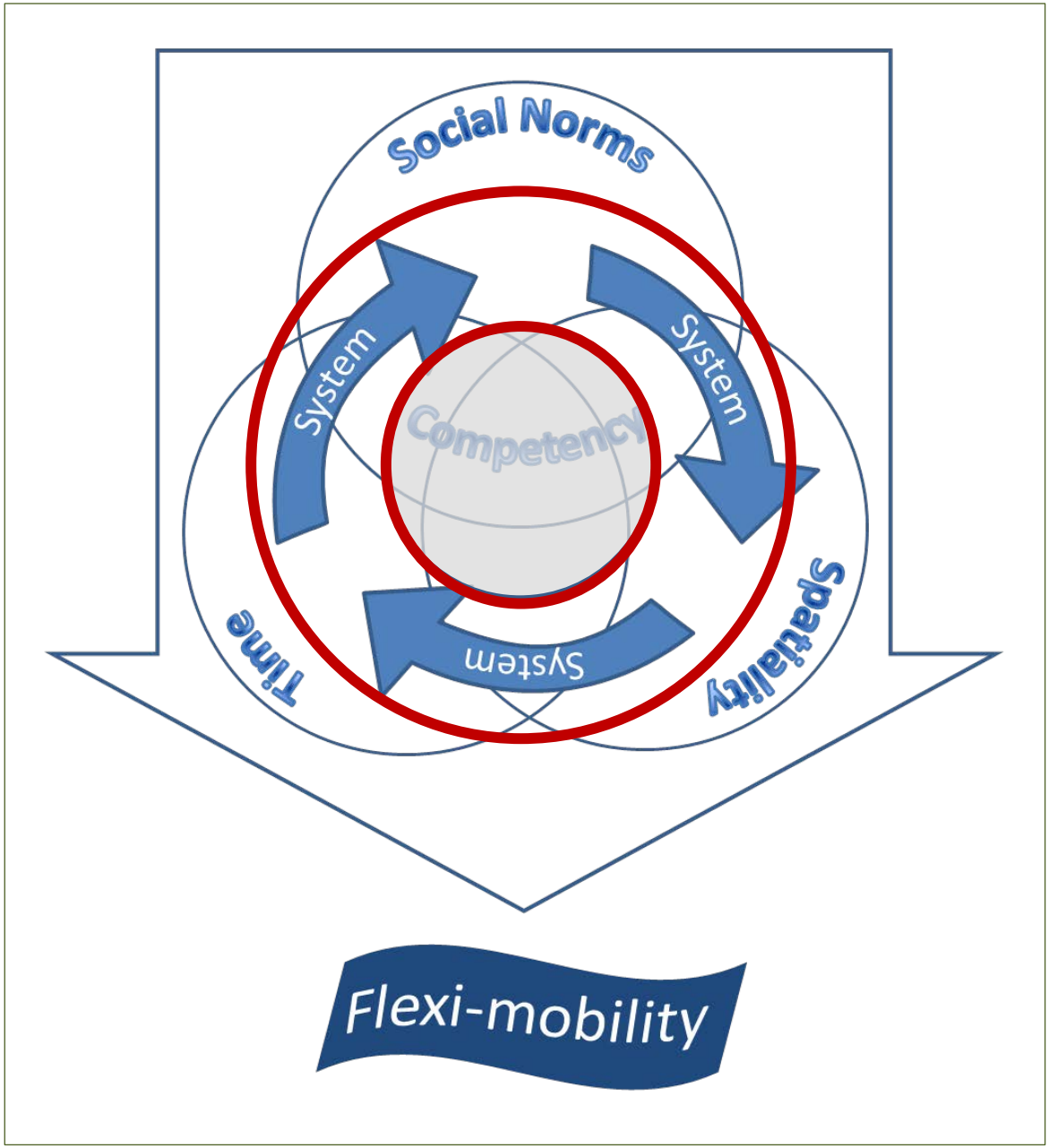
Fleximobility

Flexi-mobility

A vision for a system where it is more normal and easier to use a range of different modes more of the time in going about everyday life.

It celebrates variability and responsiveness and supports a more diverse set of travel practices.

It is a state in which the car co-exists with low carbon mobility and in which low carbon travel is less exceptional and more likely to be used in place of the car from time to time.



Domains

flexi-mobility

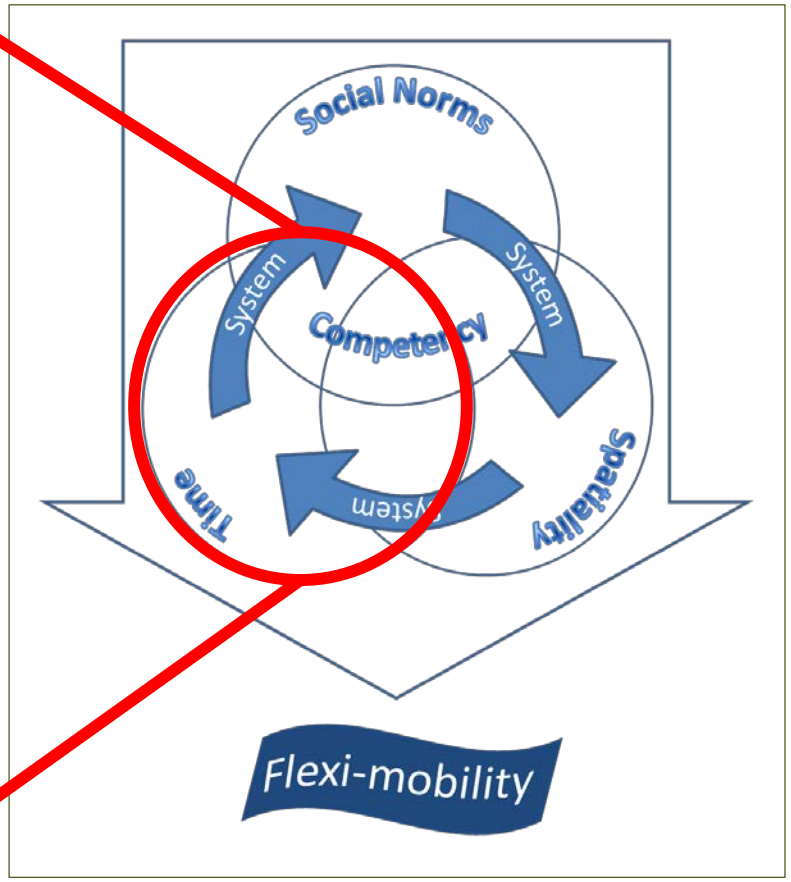
Looking beyond transport policy

"Rather than viewing this mobility as a given – as in policies of modal shift - we might intervene in the wider system of practices which produces the need for mobility. In other words, patterns of mobility, or private car use, might have nothing to do with transport policy at all, but be connected to how households are provisioned, where children go to school, how work and leisure are conducted, and so on." (Spurling et al. 2013: 29-30).

Interventions – Time Flexibility

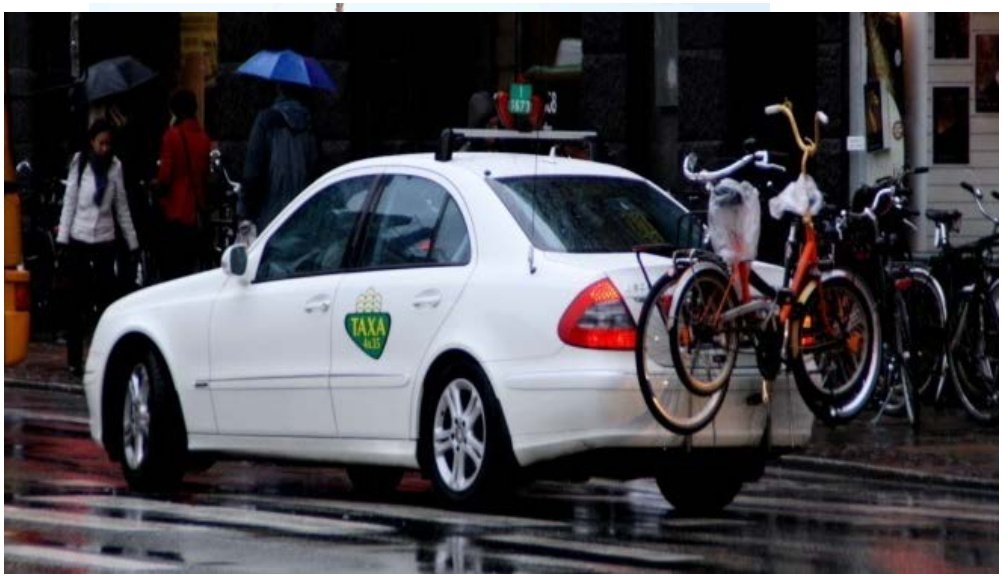
Easing rigidities that make journeys by car more likely more often

- Increasing affordable flexible car access schemes
- Universal high quality broadband
- Increasing rights to promote flexible working
- Improving the availability of childcare around schools
- Improved quality of bus routes and services to schools
- Increasing evening public transport
- Mandate organisations to offer duvet days to cope with special circumstances



Flexi-mobility

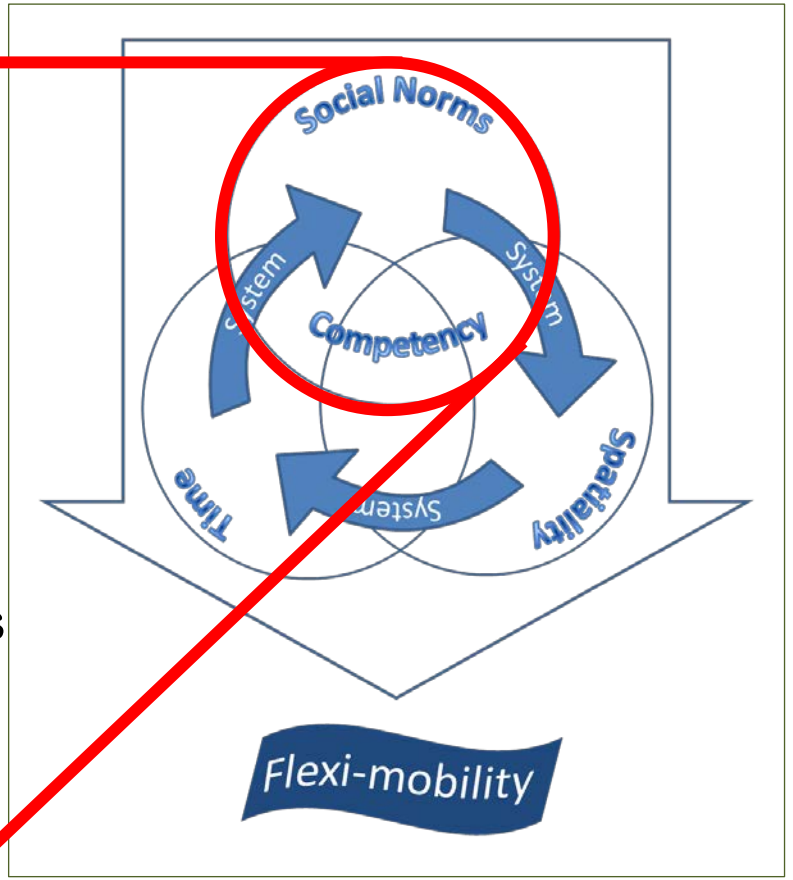
Bus in Bloomsbury: Mark Kobayashi-Hillary, Wikimedia



Interventions – Social Norms

Using a range of modes is to be experienced as normal rather than 'more difficult'

- Car park permits give access a maximum of 90% of working days (those not holding permits get free access 10% of working days).
- Contactless payment across all transport modes
- Allow cost effective single 'journey tickets'
- Free wifi on all public transport services
- Mobility proficiency training for all children
- Make employers accountable for employee transport (Carbon Reduction Commitment/Variable Business Rates)



Flexi-mobility

Flexi-mobility

YouGov Profiles People who do Cycling

Now Showing: What differentiates People who do Cycling from their comparison set | Sample size: 20006

- DEMOGRAPHICS
- LIFESTYLE
- PERSONALITY
- BRANDS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- ONLINE
- MEDIA
- FAQS

TAKE PART

DEMOGRAPHICS
- GENDER: MALE
- AGED: 40-59
- SOCIAL GRADE: ABC1

TOP REGIONS
- EAST ANGLIA
- SOUTH COAST
- THE BORDERS

POLITICS

LEFT RIGHT

TYPICAL PROFESSIONS
- ENGINEERING
- MINING AND QUARRYING
- RESEARCH/RESEARCH AND D...

MONTHLY SPARE £
- £1000 OR MORE

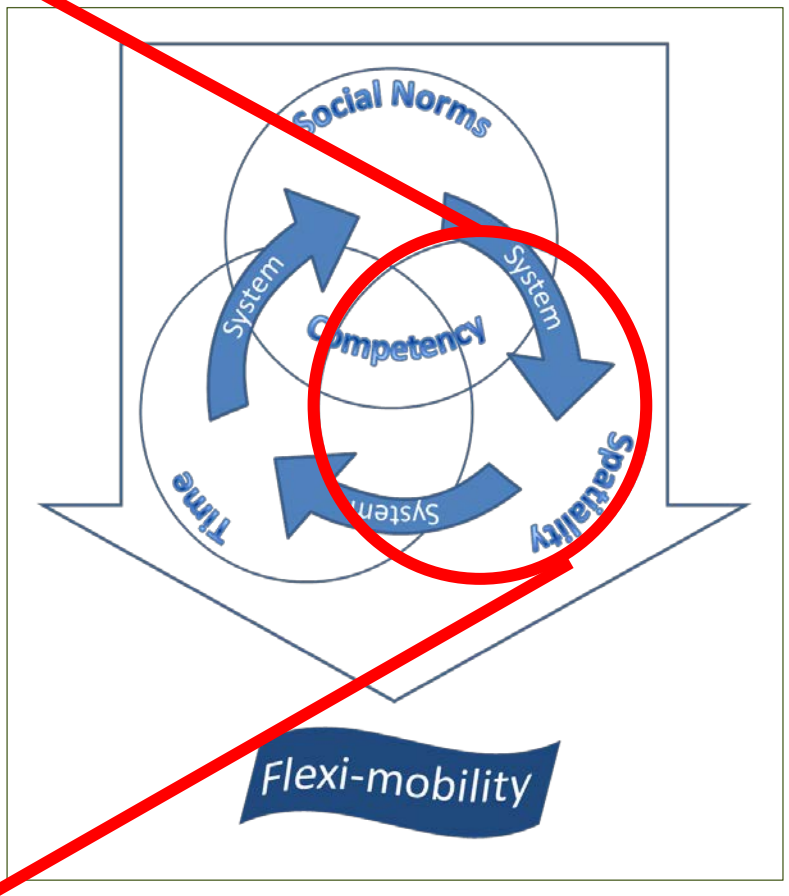
nihola.com

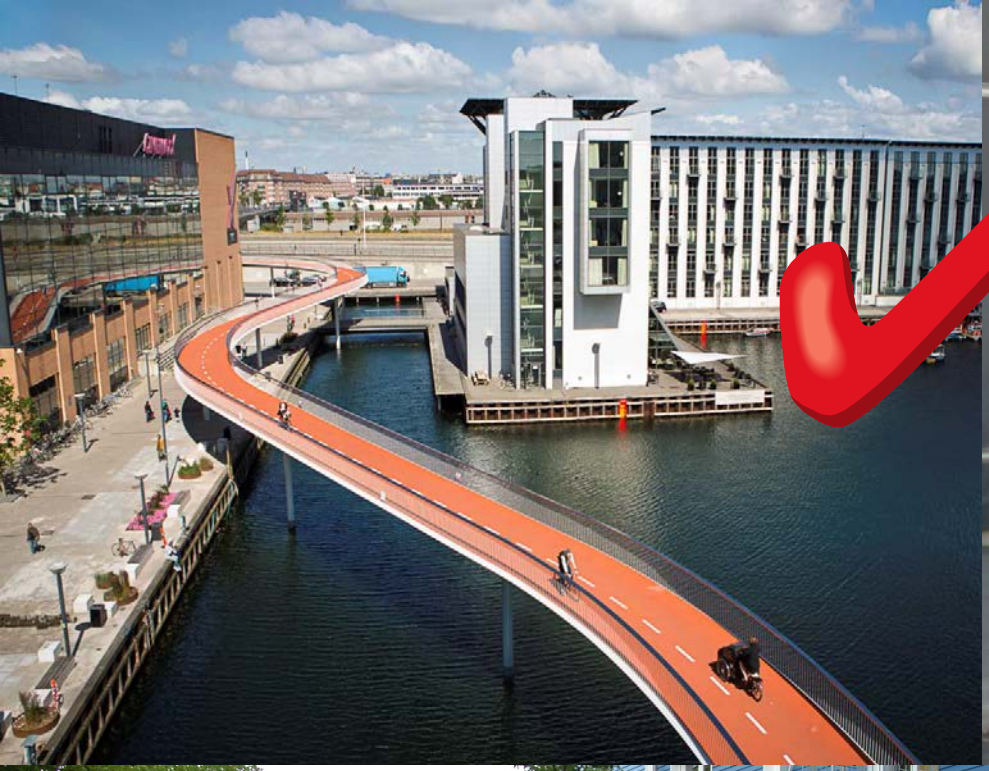
CONVERSE
ALL STAR

Interventions – Spatial

Not new, but important for reinforcing flexi-mobility

- Increase minimum service standards for bus (as with rail)
- Use planning and business rates to encourage localisation of key facilities (shops, leisure etc.)
- Continue to promote denser development
- Strengthen planning control for new developments
- Demand Responsive Public Transport in areas poorly served by other PT





CYKELPARKERING

+

=

www.flikr.com, Carol: A new store opening soon IMG_7762

Interventions – Shifting the Debate

Ways to develop *acceptable* change

Example 1 – Seasonality

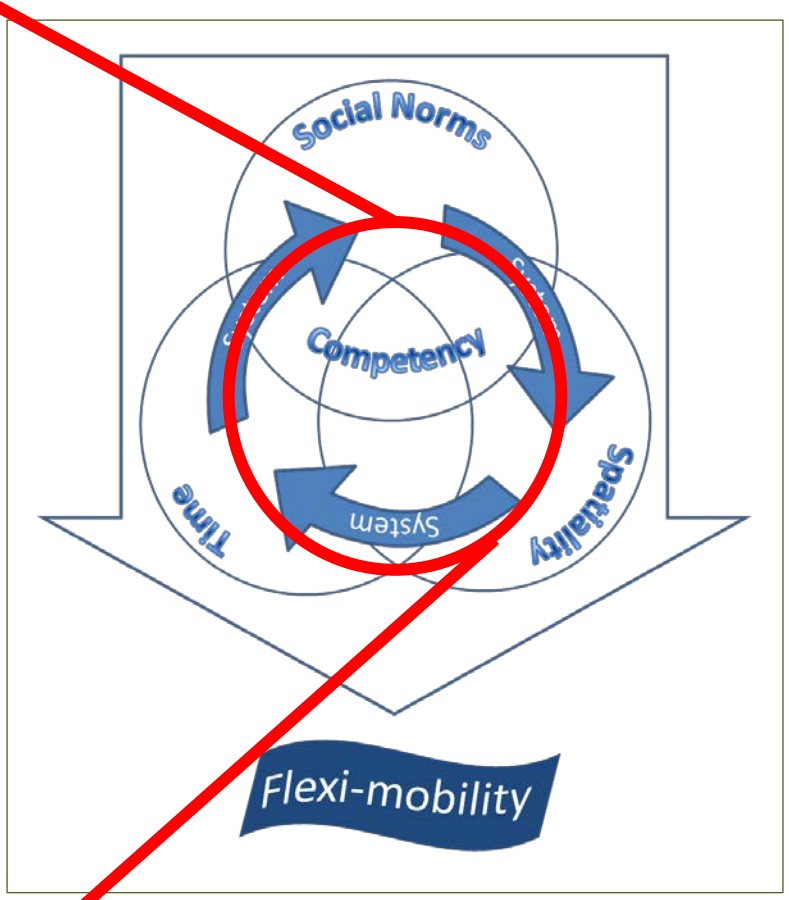
- Seasonal reallocation of road space to non-motorised transport
- Differentiated fuel duty in winter (lower) and summer (higher) recognizing the greater reliance on motorized travel in the winter

Example 2 – 'Street Blitz'

- Have a monthly car free day for part of the city (rather than annual)
- Introduce quality public transport days where additional provision is put on

Example 3 – Moments of change

- Incentives for flexi-mobility as part of house moves and job changes



New York City's Interim Public Plaza Programme

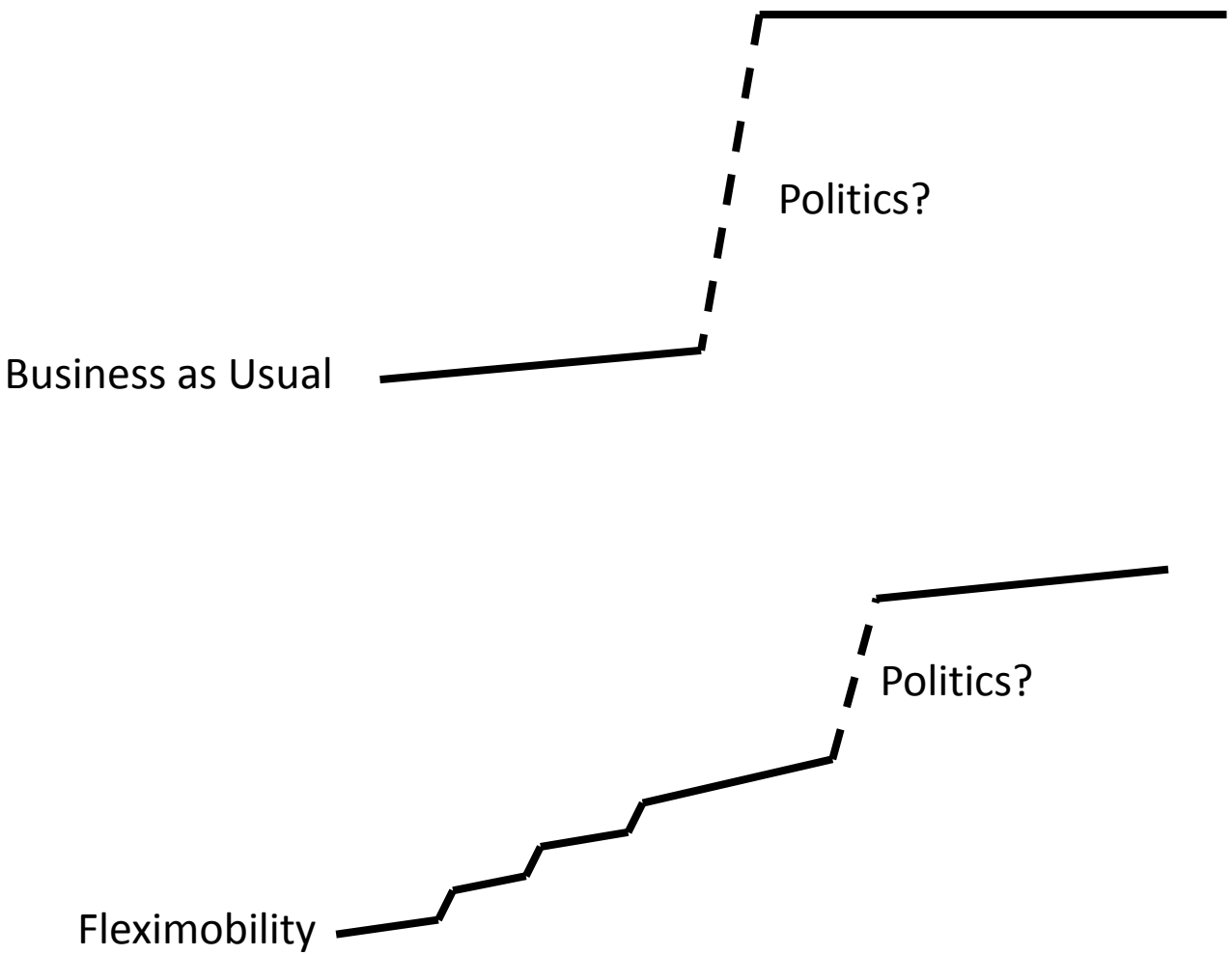
http://nacto.org/usdg/interim-public-plazas/

“I admit it, I was wrong. My misgivings were misplaced... Sunday was a great day in Hebden Bridge...above all, what made the day so delightful was the absence of traffic.

...And kids could play or use their bikes on the streets without fear of being run over.
For those of us who live in or close to the centre Sunday was a day of relief from the usual weekend siege. We enjoyed our freedom. Let's have more.”

NOT SO
SPECIAL EVENT
ROAD CLOSED
SUN 10 AUG 2014
3.30 AM TO 12 MID DAY

Capacity for Bigger Change



Thank You – Any Questions?

Engagement process to end July 2015

Engagement Website
www.fleximobility.solutions

Green Paper & consultation survey

#fleximobility on Twitter

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Disruption: the raw material for low carbon change,
funded under the RCUK Energy Programme,ESPRC Award No. EP/J00460X/1.
www.disruptionproject.net