



Mayer Hillman

Senior Fellow Emeritus at the Policy Studies Institute, University of Westminster, in London. He has tirelessly revealed the inconsistencies in government policy at the local, national and international level. Trained as an architect and town planner, much of his research has been on mobility, social justice and the quality of life in cities. As he explains, his focus now is firmly about climate change adaptation, how we must change our ways, and steps we can take to make those changes.

Notes of **Mayer Hillman's 5 year walking forecast for Talking Walking**: Recorded over the telephone in September 2013 and published in October 2013 on <http://talkingwalking.net>

To mark the fifth anniversary of Talking Walking, we asked thought leaders to make their 5 year predictions about the state of walking in the fields in which they work and the places where they live. Respondents were asked to call a Skype number to leave their forecast, identifying who they were, what work they were doing that revolved around walking, and what their forecast was for walking in the next five years. We recorded these voice messages and reproduce them here: <http://www.talkingwalking.net/5-year-walking-forecast/>

Mayer kindly provided an abbreviated paper of his walking forecast.

Predicting the role and status of walking in the next five years

My name is **Mayer Hillman**. I have been engaged in research on social and environmental issues at **Policy Studies Institute** for 43 years and am now Senior Fellow Emeritus of the Institute.

Stemming from the focus of my research for roughly half of this period, I have concluded that the implications of climate change for public policy are absolutely critical to our futures and that those for walking are as profound as they are for most areas of policy – by no means just the domain of energy.

Climate change represents and is now very widely recognised as the most serious threat to the future of life on earth. Accumulating evidence indicates that the choices and quality of life of the generations succeeding us will be seriously and progressively diminished if we do not *dramatically* reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Difficult though it is to concede, without making it mandatory to do so, the current lifestyles of the population cannot be sufficiently de-coupled from this dependence within a realistic time-frame and budget. Accordingly, I have drawn the conclusion that an annual tradable *per capita* carbon allowance, based on the principles of security and fairness embedded in the Global Commons Institute's *Contraction and Convergence* framework, is the realistic way forward. It is the only strategy which has any prospect of preventing catastrophic ecological disaster and therefore must be adopted as a matter of urgency and certainly within the next five years.

Greenhouse gas emissions resulting from fossil fuel use remain in the atmosphere for many years, in the case of carbon dioxide, for well over a century. Inevitably with carbon rationing, the public would find it increasingly logical to limit their use of, and need for fossil fuels including motorised transport in order to live within their allowance. This would be especially motivational as they experienced its phasing down year-on-year from its existing level to climate scientists' calculated safe level of emissions from human-induced activities into the global atmosphere.

In the wake of this rationing would come the wider integration of walking (and cycling) into the routine of daily life and a continuing reduction in traffic as the annual ration will have to be so small as to make it increasingly illogical to own and use a car. As a consequence of growing public pressure from people increasingly dependent on the *non*-motorised forms of travel, safer, more



extensive and higher quality provision for them by central and local government will inevitably follow in recognition of the associated justifications for doing so.

The implementation of this strategy would fit in well in reflecting the outcome of a comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the different modes of travel from the viewpoints of both personal and community interest. This reveals walking as the most 'virtuous' of all the modes as it imposes the least costs on society. A rational transport policy based on prioritising transport methods according to the extent of their contribution to enhancing the quality of community and personal life generally would give pride of place to walking in the transport hierarchy *irrespective of the overriding need to do so from a climate change perspective*. It causes no noise or pollution, no danger or injury to other road users; it has exceptionally low space and public expenditure requirements; and it contributes both to the promotion of community life and to the physical fitness of the population as it can usually be tied into much of the routine of daily life.

It is obvious that walking needs to be put at the centre both of local transport and land use planning by investing a much higher proportion of public resources to revitalise communities to this end. Policy decisions have to be targeted on minimising the need for motorised travel for much daily travel and on enhancing the quality of the pedestrian environment as exposure to traffic is steadily reduced.

If the climate change-oriented strategy based on carbon rationing is not set in train and seen to be well underway within five years, the consequences for the future of life on earth will be dire indeed: a significant improvement in the quality of the environment designed to promote walking – with all the benefits that would come in its wake – may have been achieved, *but the world will be further and disastrously advanced on the irreversible trajectory towards an inhabitable planet! We are all culpable in allowing this risk to grow by not seeing our efforts in this essential over-arching context.*

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Links to further information on topics mentioned:

Mayer Hillman's website <http://www.mayerhillman.com/>

His publications on walking and cycling
<http://www.mayerhillman.com/Cycling-walking/Key-publications.aspx>

Global Commons Institute's Contraction and Convergence
<http://www.gci.org.uk/>

<http://www.gci.org.uk/briefings/ICE.pdf>

Policy Studies Institute <http://www.psi.org.uk/>