



*Setting a
pace for
others to
follow !*

Welcome to the Neighborhood Pace Car Program!

The Neighborhood Pace Car program is an idea originating in Boise, Idaho in June of 2000. We think this is a great program that will work well in Salt Lake City, This brochure is designed to introduce new folks to the ideas behind pace cars and more fully explain the nuances of the program to folks who have already signed the pledge. We hope that this information will begin to answer questions you may have about how to be a pace car driver and that it will provide you the information that you need to get involved or stay involved in the program. *All it takes to get involved in the Pace Car Program is to sign the pledge!* (included with this newsletter) - the hard part comes later; when you begin to implement that pledge into your driving habits and lifestyle.

The Neighborhood Pace Car Program is an exciting new citizen-based initiative that promises to slow traffic and reduce car use dramatically. Born in Boise, Idaho with the assistance of Australian traffic-reduction expert, David Engwicht, the idea is ingenious and simple;

It uses cars to calm cars, merely by encouraging motorists to abide by existing laws.

Engwicht says of the program, "I have been working for the past five years with cities world-wide to develop a process that would enable residents to solve traffic problems in their home street themselves. We have tried many ideas, but I am convinced that this is what we have all been searching for. It is a stroke of genius. Boise is destined to be celebrated in history as the birthplace of the *Neighborhood Pace Car*, the program that bought back a vibrant street life and sense of community."

The method is very simple. In exchange for pledging to drive as carefully through other neighborhoods as they would like others to drive through theirs and to minimize their own car use, drivers will earn the right to display a Neighborhood Pace Car sticker on both the front and back of their car. Rather than relying on a government fix or a slab of concrete in the road to slow down other motorists, Pace Car drivers act as a traffic calming device every time they drive on a neighborhood street. Rather than asking the highway district to widen roads and "fix" congestion and air quality problems, residents will each be doing their own part by reducing their own car use.

The beauty of the idea is that it puts the responsibility to drive responsibly back on us - the motorists - instead of on our government the police or the traffic engineers. It doesn't require physical traffic calming structures such as speed bumps and chicanes. This not only saves money, but also is easier for emergency vehicles.

Ultimately, this program may change our relationship with our car; from one of looking on it as a device to use whenever we're in a hurry as we rush from one task to another, to one of looking at our car as just one means, among many, to get from one place to another.



The Neighborhood Pace Car Story

A Street, its residents, and some



by David Engwicht

In 1987, I headed up a 'freeway' fight in Brisbane, Australia. Route 20 was to be ploughed right through our community. I had no background in transport or urban design, but was determined that we must not simply move the problem into someone else's back yard. Instead we hunted the world for long-term, sustainable solutions. I also argued strongly that we must take responsibility as a community for our part in the problem. The result, a year later, was the book *Traffic Calming* which took Australia and North America by storm.

I quickly became disillusioned by the way traffic calming was implemented and stripped of its social and cultural change elements. After writing another book to try and correct this, I began working on an alternative to traffic calming that would allow residents to solve traffic problems *themselves* – without needing the intervention of the city or highway department.

Now we need to go back in time to explain the next part of the story. I first visited Boise in 1998 to talk with the city about the Traffic Reduction Kit. Boise was in the middle of a very heated debate about traffic calming, in particular their first experimental roundabout. For some reason I sensed that Boise was the place where a traffic revolution would be born. I said to my hosts, "If it can happen in Boise it can happen anywhere." I promised to come back.

Eighteen months later, on a tour to promote the book *Street Reclaiming*, I did come back to Boise. Two significant things happened on this visit. Anne Hausrauth was on the Boise City Council, but was about to finish her term. She also had a traffic problem in her home street. She decided to be the first to implement the street reclaiming ideas in my book in a systematic way. Over the next six months, until significant restrictions were placed on her by the City, she worked with her neighbors and proved that the techniques worked.

The second significant event was a public meeting for the residents of Northview Street – site of the first experimental roundabout -- a street that had suffered a significant increase in traffic due to road improvements and nearby residents who were looking for a quick cut-through route. I was nearly lynched at a public meeting by the residents because I dared to argue that *they* must find ways of taking their street back and not simply blame the City, Highway District, and other drivers for their problems.

At the end of the meeting, after almost everyone had gone, I saw a woman talking to the organizers of the meeting. She was upset and crying. I stood on the edge and listened. Her parents had lived in this street. She had grown up in this street. When she married she built a house at the front of her parents house so she could stay in this street. But as the traffic had increased she had watched the street go to the dogs. It was a familiar tale. Then she told how she had been a victim of violent crime in her own home, the perpetrator someone from one of the adjacent run down rental properties.

Driving home I asked my host about this woman. I discovered her name was Lisa Reece and that she had headed up the community fight against the changes that had moved the extra traffic into their street. I was so moved by her story that I asked my host if he would ring Lisa the next day and promise her that I would return to Boise to do an experimental street reclaiming on Northview.

Six months later I returned to fulfill my promise. But I was told the residents were still too angry to work with me on an experimental street reclaiming. Lisa suggested that I may like to meet some of the residents over apple pie instead.

I arrived at the gathering to find about 20 very angry residents. That day the Highway District had again made decision that would put another 4000 vehicles per day onto Northview. One resident was

the middle of the road and they will have to carry me away". I listened to this outpouring of anger for about half an hour, then Lisa spoke.

"When David was here 6 months ago, like you I was angry when he suggested *we* must find a way of solving this problem ourselves. I began thinking about what I could do. I wasn't prepared to do the things he suggested on his earlier visit, like letting my kids play on the sidewalk or even take my chair out onto the sidewalk. In the end I decided the only thing I could do to take back some control was to get in my car during peak traffic times and drive up and down my street at the speed limit and stop to let my neighbors out of their driveways. If there are no cars on the street, I wait for them at the corner and escort them down the street."

Almost everyone at the meeting responded that they would join Lisa in this strategy. As I listened I remembered that I had made a similar decision 12 years earlier during the freeway fight because of a realization that my own car use was impacting the neighborhoods through which I drove. I have met many other people since that had made the same commitment. Immediately I recognized the seeds of a great idea.


"It is no use having these drivers think they are just stuck behind some slow-coach," I said. "They need to know they are behind another one of these vehicles that acts as an escort. We need some kind of emblem on the back of the car. And we need you to not only be an escort vehicle in *your* street but in *everyone's* street. And we need to get people on the other side of town to reciprocate with you and be an escort vehicle in your street. That way you won't need to drive up and down the street needlessly. The whole city will be calmed to the speed limit."

I could not sleep that night. This was the simple 'entry-point' I had been searching the past five years for. It contained all the elements of the original Traffic Reduction Kit (taking personal responsibility, inter-street treaty, etc.) but was so much more eloquent. *It used the devil to tame the devil!* At the same time it gave a name and purpose to the strategies that my hosts in Boise had been working on themselves since my first visit.

The next morning I had breakfast with a number of people including the head of the Chamber of Commerce. He could see a lot of sense in businesses supporting the scheme and having their company vehicles become pace cars. It also just happened that this day was the second day of a two day course I was conducting on finding solutions to traffic problems. At the course we had members of the city council, city engineers, planners, highway commissioners, community police, fire department people and concerned residents. The second day of the course was supposed to focus on developing some new solutions for Boise. I mentioned what had transpired overnight and immediately the group chose to work on developing this "escort car" idea further. It was a city official who suggested we call it the Pace Car Program. The participants came up with bumper sticker suggestions and designed the overall structure of the program.

Over the next three days we had working groups develop the pledge, design the Pace Car logo, etc. Within four days of conceiving the idea we had 200 residents who had signed the pledge and were ready to launch the program officially.

I am therefore not the inventor of the Pace Car. Nor is Lisa or the 70 other people in the workshops who developed the ideas and added their own bit of genius. It only seems fitting that this community-based strategy was conceived and born out of an experience of community—people working together to build a new future in the here and now. It is a story of compassion and the creative potential in us all.



Maintaining the “Spirit” of the Pace Car Program –

What does the Pledge really mean?

If the Pace Car program is going to be successful, we all must do our part to maintain the integrity of the program. All of the elements in the pledge are essential and must be preserved if the program is to work properly.

Accepting personal responsibility – striking a better balance

One problem with traditional approaches to managing traffic (such as traffic calming) is that we have been able to externalize the blame for traffic problems. While traffic on our street may be exacerbated by drivers cutting-through, or out-of-neighborhood drivers using our street to get to work, it is also true that our own car use erodes the quality of life for residents whose streets we drive down. Almost everyone in the city would like less and slower traffic in their home street. Finding a way of giving **all** residents a better quality-of-life by reducing the impacts of traffic in **all** streets is a community-based solution that can only start with people accepting the responsibility for the contribution they make to the overall problem.

The Pledge therefore starts with the words “Recognizing that my car use impacts the livability of other residents streets, just as theirs impacts mine, I hereby pledge to...”. The pledge is a kind of treaty between neighborhoods; we will act as a guest in your neighborhood if you act as a guest in ours. However, the pledge is also a treaty between our own paradoxical desires. We all have a desire to travel – to move, explore and discover (the ‘hunter-gatherer’ that still lives in our psyche). We also have a desire for home or to ‘reside’ – to put our roots down and feel nurtured and grounded (the ‘gardener’ that still lives in our psyche). However, excessive movement (particularly in automobiles) ultimately destroys our home environment. We must find a better balance between these paradoxical desires so we can maximize *both* our ability to move *and* our ability to have a quality residential environment.

The central core of this program is accepting responsibility for our part in the overall imbalance between ‘movement’ and ‘home’ and finding a better balance.

Working together – building community one car at a time

The city, by very definition, is a *cooperative* enterprise. We agree to cooperate with other residents because, working together, we can all get more out of the cooperative enterprise than we put in. The city was founded on notions of *citizenship* – the idea that as members of the cooperative enterprise we must pull our weight in creating the kind of environment in which we get back more than we put in. The Pace Car Program is built on the notion of good citizenship. One Pace Car can do very little on its own. But using the simple approach of “you scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours”, a movement is born that can make the whole city a much more enjoyable place to live.

1. Slowing down – calming the entire city

Slowing down will help in a number of ways. The most noticeable is the simple reduction of noise and intrusion that traffic creates in a neighborhood when it moves slower. Slower traffic is safer – not just for pedestrians, cyclists and residents, but also for other drivers. Driving within the speed limit will help you focus on the communities you drive through – not just on getting to your destination. As our cities sped up, we forgot how to enjoy the unplanned encounters which were such a rich part of traditional city life: Stopping to watch a group of children play in the street; chatting with an elderly person and hearing their story; watching a bird build a nest; watching people walk past; meeting an eccentric who makes us laugh; exchanging neighborhood news with neighbors we meet when walking to the store. If we are to enjoy a rich community life, then we must slow down and reclaim our streets for these community-building activities.

2. Reducing car use – tackling the root problem

The problem of traffic in our home street relates to both *speed* and *quantity*. To tackle the root causes of traffic problems we must tackle both. Also, reducing the amount of traffic on the roads will do more than make your home street more livable. Most people can reduce their car use significantly by organizing it more efficiently. Strategies such as: saving trips by combining them; walking or biking when possible;

car-pooling or ride sharing; using services closer to home and using public transportation when convenient all contribute to reducing the quantity of traffic. The tangible rewards are a saving in time and money. Rewards that are less easily quantified can include a more relaxed pace of life and a quieter more friendly neighborhood street.

3. Being courteous – creating a better walk and cycle environment

By reducing your speed, stopping to let pedestrians cross, and by giving way to cyclists, you are helping to create an environment in which it is safer for everyone to walk and cycle. Eventually this will help reduce overall traffic levels and help create a more vibrant street life. However, the benefits go much deeper. For example, under current conditions, many parents will not allow their children to walk to school because they perceive it to be too dangerous. This puts extra traffic on our streets and robs our children of independent mobility. Many psychologists and health professionals are worried about the impacts this trend is having on the well-being of our children with a large percentage of children not getting enough exercise to maintain minimum health levels. By creating a more courteous and safe street environment, parents can begin to regain their confidence and allow their children to walk and cycle again. There are many other people in our community who will enjoy greater levels of independent mobility by creating a more courteous street environment -- those with disabilities, those who chose not to own a car, and those who are elderly.

4. Humor – humanizing the street environment

David Engwirth stated “that as a cyclist, I have been the victim of road rage. Some time back I put some red devil horns on the sides of my bike helmet. The effect was amazing. Motorists rolled their windows down to talk with me. People smiled and waved. Kids pulled faces. Over the past two years, I reckon I have sent about 10,000 to work a little happier because of the horns on my bike helmet. But also I have had no incidents of road rage. Humor breaks tension and puts us in a better frame of mind. Studies show that people are more likely to do nice things for other people and to be far more creative when they are in a good mood. Humor changes the mood of the streets to something more festive and celebratory.”

What does the Pledge really mean? *Continued*

5. Street Reclaiming – creating a vibrant street life

As traffic volume and speed has increased we have retreated from our streets – intimidated psychologically. Children once met at the sidewalk to play games. As traffic increased these activities moved to front yards and porches. In really busy streets, some people have even retreated from their front rooms, using them as a ‘buffer zone’ to the street. In some streets, residents don’t even park in the street anymore, which encourages the traffic to go even faster.

It is not enough to simply reduce traffic volume and speed. This may stop the erosion of neighborhood life, but it may not give us back what we have lost. To do this we must reverse the process of erosion by reclaiming our streets.. Street reclaiming is to reclaim your street as an extension of your property in which a rich community life can be nurtured. There are two ways you can reclaim your street. You can reclaim your street by moving everyday activities near the street or by changing your street from one that feels like a ‘corridor’ into one that feels like an ‘outdoor living room’. Street reclaiming sends a message to motorists that the street is a *shared* space and a space in which they should be acting as your guest.

6. Celebration – live today as you want to live tomorrow

Let’s face it, in the past most attempts at creating a better world have been hard work. We spend so much time trying to create a better world that we never have time to actually enjoy it! One wise person once said that we must live today as we want to live tomorrow. The methods we choose to create a better world should be that better world in seed form. If we want our streets back for community building activities, then the methods we choose must build the community we will enjoy tomorrow. There is something incredibly powerful about creating a better world through fun and celebration rather than sheer hard work.

Maintaining integrity of the program

This program is built on residents taking responsibility for the problems that all drivers create. Its success rests with resident initiative, otherwise it runs the risk of returning to the situation of everyone blaming everyone else for the problem.

If you would like to become a pace car driver you can sign up on the web at <http://www.ci.sl.c.ut.us/transportation/pacecar.htm>. We can be reach directly at 535-6630 or you can write to us at The Neighborhood Pace Car Program 349 South 200 East Suite 450 Salt Lake City, Utah 84111. Remember safe driving begins with you!



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