

Carfree China Initiative Report

January – March 2005

Prepared by: Ramses Rashidi, CARFREE Project Director, Beijing, China

1. Materials and Resources

- A. Made an outline of concepts and related information to make presentations among media, government to promote CARFREE concepts and their advantages. In preparation of material had several meetings with a number of people including the media and talked about the idea of how to promote the CARFREE concept and establishment of ZONES. Suggestions were made to focus on development of China's cities and the well-being of the people and their connection to proper measures and concepts such as CARFREE Zones. Received lots of materials from Debra (WBB) and what she has developed in Bangladesh.
- B. Worked with a website designer to create the CARFREE website in Chinese. The content was prepared in consultation with Debra and Joel Crawford (Carfree.com). Based on the feedback from the Chinese and my experience of Chinese ways of doing things that we would utilize the Balanced (sustainable) Development approach in reaching out to the leaders of government and decision-makers.
- C. Worked with Debra to prepare the outline for an audio-visual CD-ROM to be used as an educational tool and for making presentations to introduce the CARFREE concept (attached).

2. Media Advocacy

- A. Started working on newspaper articles about CARFREE ZONES.
I used to write regular twice-weekly for a Chinese Newspaper in Southern China. I'm using the same format for the CARFREE articles. Basically, every article starts with a scenario or skit which points to an issue that is caused by the presence of automobiles and then looking at the possible alternatives, statistics and future prospects.
- B. Met with a producer/director of CCTV (China Central TV) and discussed about CARFREE. There are a number of TV and Radio programs which I have been a guest and I'm preparing a list of topics that they can choose from.
- C. Called and E-mailed my contacts in the media including, print, TV and Radio. Talked about my plan to promote CARFREE in China and there is a great deal of interest.
- D. Media Advocacy Ideas (based on Debra's booklet)
 - Passage of legislation on banning, taxes
 - Write articles (talk to editor, use occasions like new year, target audience)
 - Briefing seminars (speaker panel at university or somewhere, breakfast)
 - Celebrities (Athletes, actors, artists, musicians, sympathetic to the cause)
 - Creative "epidemiology" (use statistics to magnify the problem)
 - Demonstration of the problem through models

- Events (mini-marathon, youth rally, cycling rally, closed street for fairs)
- Experts (academic, economist, medical, engineers, environmentalists)
- Fact Sheets (effects, disease, research, websites)
- Free ad space (visuals)
- Good practice from other countries and places ?
- Press release (2 pages max.) research?
- Industry documents and events (play with posters)
- Media alert (4 paragraphs)
- Knowledge of Issues (research, make it short, factual and effective)
- Check newspapers, TV and radio programs
- Letter to the editor (facts, response agree or disagree, debate)
- Make news (opportunity, learn from others, positive, signs and emblems)
- Newsletters (monthly, developments, news, jokes, art, music, drama)
- Opinion section of newspapers (opinion editorials, 500 words, statement)
- Opinion polls and surveys (ask people, places, industries)
- Piggy backing on other organizations
- Pitch letter (introduce yourself or project to gov. org.)
- Press conference (who?, What?, When?, where?, Why?) call to confirm
- Public Service Announcement (30-60 seconds on cable, radio, ..)
- Radio programs
- Recycled articles from international sources or other papers
- Reports (survey, scientific, economic, environmental,
- Drama or Stunt (street drama or event to get attention)
- Timing (find out from reporters, other major events)
- Video (from other sources or make one)

3. Government Relations

- A. Met with the President of Future Trends, a leading grass-roots government consulting Company. He is going to introduce the idea to his respective government contacts in the 2nd and 3rd tier cities throughout China about the importance of the CARFREE concept as a critical component of local development and project planning at the municipal level.
- B. I have had good relationship with a number of educational institutions and universities in China. Particularly with the Government Officials Training Bureau where I had devised a lecture outline “Systematic Municipal Planning and Development” {SMPD} (attached). As part of this concept of SMPD I had also explored the possibility of a hiring a SMPD manager (attached) to work closely with the government to assess and plan development projects. I’m making adjustments to this outline to include a section on CARFREE.
- C. Working on a presentation for government officials has began. The idea is to meet with officials in the “State Environmental Protection Agency” (SEPA) and “Beijing City Planning Bureau” to discuss about CARFREE zones and establishing pilot projects.

- D. Talked to an attorney who has contacts in the Beijing Foreign Entity Registration Bureau about the legal issues involved and choosing the best channel for presenting CARFREE project and register in China.
- E. Talked with my assistants to develop a campaign of “Green Olympics” events for the “China 2008 Olympics Committee” to prepare for the games by declaring certain zones and areas in the city as CARFREE areas on specific dates or days of the week.

4. Research & Monitoring

- A. Researched into material on alternative models of urban planning and transportation in Beijing (attached).
- B. CARFREE day in Shenzhen, a city in Southern China, was observed in 2004 and hundreds of people took bicycle or walked to work.
- C. Found out about the city of Gu Lang Yu which is a CARFREE city.
- D. Found out information on a development by the government to create a CARFREE Zone in Sanlitun embassy district.
- E. Subscribed to MASS TRANSIT magazine published in the US focusing on rail and bus systems and hardware.
- F. Here is a recent document from CARFREE Times:
Car ownership in Beijing has climbed from 564,000 in 1993 to 2,350,000 today. By the year 2010, ownership of private motor vehicles may reach 3,800,000, and possibly 5,000,000 by 2020, reaching a level of 0.8 cars per household. To make matters worse, it seems that newly-motorized Chinese tend to use the car far more than residents of New York or London, and this is a major cause of the terrible traffic in Beijing. A recent proposal to deal with the crisis includes four main points:
 - Continue the "bus first" policy. By 2010, 90% of riders should be walking less than 8 minutes to their halts.
 - The capacity of rail systems will be increased from the current 1,300,000 daily passengers to 4,000,000 or more by 2010.
 - By 2010, 13 large park & ride lots will be built along the Fifth Ring to support rail and high-capacity bus lines.
 - Six new north-south routes will be built. (The article does not specify whether these are road or rail.)

5. Networking

- A. Met with the director of Bad'i Foundation, that has been involved in education and environmental projects in the rural areas of China where they have been working very closely with government officials. They have offered their whole-hearted support of the CARFREE initiative. I need to work on how we can provide them with educational modules that can be included in their materials.
- B. Met with Joe Carter, a Canadian architect who has been living in China for 20 years and has been approached by a number of Chinese cities to create a commercial

CARFREE plaza similar to Xin Tian Di in Shanghai, which is developed in an old neighborhood and some of the old buildings and passages have been preserved and renovated. A large collection of famous brand shops and restaurants have been built in this area and it has become a popular place for shopping, dining and just walking around.

- C. Talked to Charles Tang, a business consultant in Beijing and explored the possibility of working with him to develop and establish the CARFREE zones.

6. Administration

- A. Office in Da Shan Zi at YingFeng JiaYuan

Set up a temporary office while looking for permanent facilities. There are a number of options available where I have to choose from depending on our relationship with some of the NGO's in Beijing and how we can register and establish a legal entity.

- B. Communication

E-mail/computer, phone and cell phone were set up.

- C. Assistants

Placed an ad at the University of Beijing and had about 50 graduate students applying for the position of CARFREE project assistant. Hired two Assistants after careful interview of 7 potential candidates. Two assistants were hired and one of them has been in touch with me via E-mail while I've been here in the US.

- D. Travel

I had made trips to Shanghai and Guangzhou and some trips locally in the Beijing area to meet and introduce the CARFREE concepts. The trip to Budapest did not happen and so that part of the budget (\$750) is still unused.

- E. Literature and magazines

We have now several books and magazines on the subject of city planning, mass transit and CARFREE. The CARFREE book written by Joel Crawford was sent to me to translate and publish in China.

- F. Misc.

There are lots of receipts that I need to organize and put in order.

7. Project Assessment and Reflection

- A. China at this point in time is going through an economic prosperity unlike anything throughout its 5000-year history. The newfound wealth has meant a new middle class and new dream of owning a home, having a child (one child policy) and a car. Where it used to be a goal to own a good bicycle has been replaced by the dream of owning a car to impress the friends and family while at the same time meeting a "necessity". The SARS epidemic further strengthened the idea of "must" own a car as the Chinese associated the idea of riding over-crowded buses and public transportation as a sure means of catching the virus. At the same time the overcrowded roads and highways and steady stream of new cars being pumped into the already polluted large

metropolitan areas is not only taking its toll on people's health but also is making it more and more difficult to get from A to B. Where it used to take only 15 minutes to go into central Beijing; now might take as much as an hour or more. Beijing with 2 million cars is so over-crowded now that even building the 5th and 6th ring-road is not going help but to add to the problem as more housing and development go to the outlying areas which means more people try to get into the central business district.

- B. My own health took a quick dive between January and March of 2005, as I was positioning myself and preparing to implement the CARFREE project. From the time I met Joel Crawford back in the Mid 90's in Shanghai and heard about the CARFREE solution, I have been promoting the concept in China and referring people to the CARFREE website and it's ironic that just as I start to address the project in a systematic and meaningful way; I got sick and felt best to come back to LA to take care of my health. However, I've now come to the point where my health is fairly stable and I can return to China to continue the project.

Attachments:

- *Carfree CD-ROM outline*
- *SMPD*
- *SMPD manager*
- *Research materials*
- *Article topics*