At MOBILIZE Yichang, a Mid-Size City Takes the Lead

For three days in September, Yichang, a mid-size city in central China, was a hotbed of learning and innovation as the site of the first-ever MOBILIZE summit. 175 people from 20 countries, representing governments, development banks, urban researchers, civil society, and sustainable development and transport practitioners gathered in this emerging city for discussions, panels, presentations, and site visits on the cutting edge of international sustainable transport.

Yichang, the winner of the 2016 Sustainable Transport Award, has shown that a mid-size city can put great ideas into action and produce projects that inspire other cities. Many of today’s mid-size cities, which are greater in number than mega-cities, will be the big metropolises of the future. The way these cities plan for and manage growth can provide particular lessons for practitioners as cities like Yichang continue to grow rapidly.

“The idea of MOBILIZE is to use winning cities as a learning lab, linking research and practice to fill knowledge gaps about lessons learned and how to get great projects implemented,” says Michael Kodransky, Head of MOBILIZE at ITDP. “It’s places like Yichang, these growing, under the radar cities, that are
transforming their streets, public spaces, and infrastructure, that we want to spotlight. We can learn from their practices and use them as a place to convene an international movement. We want to researchers, practitioners, civic society leaders and others to be inspired and to transform their cities through transport.”

Participants spent their mornings discussing issues such as transit service frequency, the pedestrian as superhero, shared mobility, urban development, using data for planning and engagement, how to develop gender equitable transport, and managing demand and capacity. In the afternoons, they took site visits to see some of Yichang’s accomplishments, such as a new BRT system, cycling infrastructure, the canal park walking tour, and one of the largest urban freight centers in China.

Visit mobilizesummit.org for more info, and to register for the 2017 summit in Santiago, Chile.