Community Driven Engagement in Transportation Decisions:
A Livability Study in the District of Columbia

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Samuel Jordan, JD

San Diego, February 3, 2012
Livability applied to transportation planning

- Looks beyond traffic service function
- Focuses on all users of streets & the network
- Recognizes transportation facilities and services affect community life
  - Economic Opportunity
  - Public health
  - Housing
  - Cultural resources
  - Natural environments
- Treats streets as public places
  - Safe Passages
  - Sustainable Living
  - Prosperous Places
Interstate Highway System Legacy

- Interstate Highway & Defense Act of 1956
  - 41,000 miles limited access highway arterial
  - 1956 – 1972 largely complete
  - 90% federally funded

- Designed to evacuate central cities; the focus of metropolitan economies and people
  - Laid out “circum-linear concentration”
  - Fragmented neighborhoods
  - Through least expensive land; low lying areas, farm land
Livability: The Potential for a New Approach

- Displacement fears
  - Emergency Committee on the Transportation Crisis (ECTC)
  - Gentrification priced out renting families elsewhere

- Mixed track record of successful public projects
  - 4 Metrorail stations...
  - Cut less expensive bus service forcing a transfer

- High transportation need
  - 40% HH transit dependent
  - Few goods & services

- Structure of civic and neighborhood organization
  - ANCs & Civic Associations
The Far Northeast Livability Study Area

- 3.5 Square Miles
- 12 Neighborhoods
- Significant commuter oriented transit available
  - Two Metrorail routes with 4 stations
  - High frequency bus service
  - Streetcar planned on 2 “Great Streets” corridors with redevelopment envisioned
- Half of Ward 7’s 70,000 residents
  - 13% of households are subsidized
  - 23% of city’s public housing residents
  - 14% are seniors
Goals of FNE Planning Process

- **Provides two-way education**
  - Agency gains more complete picture of issues
  - Community learns how the agency makes decisions, what solutions can solve problems

- **Clear project benchmarks**
  - All know what decisions will be made when

- **Offers flexibility and creativity**
  - Activities tailored to community needs
  - Timeline to fit communication needs

- **Supports an effective standing community advisory committee**
  - An extension of the technical team
  - Creates organization for ongoing monitoring
  - Offers leadership potential to residents
  - Extends to other community-based needs
Livability Community Outreach Advisors

- Recently active in community planning
  - *Over 35 recent planning efforts*

- Represent full range of community geography, values and interests
  - History
  - Clean, Green & Safe Initiatives
  - Senior & Neighborhood Issues
  - Bicyclists & Transit riders

- Willing & committed to serve
  - As outreach advisors
  - To be identified with the process
  - As eyes & ears in the community

- Track record of effective outreach
  - ANC & Civic Associations
  - Bloggers & Activists

- Engaged in community projects
Defining the problem: the tradition approach

More Lanes  More Roads  System Management  Intelligent Transportation Systems

More Pavement  More Use

Move Cars

VERTICAL APPROACH
gives way to more comprehensive solutions

More Lanes
More Roads
System Management
Intelligent Transportation Systems
More Pavement
More Use
Move People, Not Cars
Move Fewer Cars, Fewer Miles
Walk
Transit
Bike
Access over Mobility
Driver-Eye View
Business Friendly
Traffic Calming
Streets as Centerpiece
Land Use
Road Network
Pricing
Telecommuting
Sizing of Destinations
In-Town Living
Lane Limits
Change Standards
Manage, Not “Solve”
Move Cars
Move, Not "Solve"

Mary T. Raulerson, KAI
Designing & Communicating the Planning Process

1. Desire

2. Discovery

3. Design

4. Discussion

5. Delivery
Phase 1: Desire

- Establishes Project Focus
- Learn issues
- Identify opportunities
- Confirm project goals and measures of effectiveness.
Important destinations nearby and beyond
Transit connections: What’s available now and what’s planned
Transit access, stops conditions & demand
Sidewalks, crosswalks & other pedestrian accommodation

Sidewalk Gaps (2008)
Pedestrian crossing safety

Pedestrian Crash Locations (2005-2007)
Traffic safety

High Vehicle Crash Locations (2006-2008)
Expressed concerns

- Inadequate Bus stops
- Late & crowded buses
- Needed bus connections within the Ward
- High speeds on major neighborhood corridors
- Cut through traffic local streets
- Many intersections unsafe for pedestrians
- Lack of bicycle facilities
**Phase 2: Discovery**

- **Do Our Homework**
  - Review previous plans
- Develop an accurate picture of the area’s existing conditions
  - physical
  - transportation
  - land use
What we found

- Limited connections across the river funnel traffic onto a few primary streets
- Key pinch points filter problems back through neighborhood streets
- Intersection & street design prioritizes auto rather than walking, bicycling & transit
CORRIDOR LOCATIONS

Sheriff Road/Lee Street/Jay Street – 44th Street/45th Street/46th Street

Crash Data (2007–2009)

Sheriff Road/44th Street – 9 crashes
Sheriff Road/48th Street – 8 crashes
Sheriff Road/56th Street – 7 crashes
Sheriff Road/Eastern Avenue/Orchard Street – 8 crashes

Legend:
- Traffic Signal
- Bus Stop
- Stop Sign
- Daily Traffic Volume
- Speed Limit
- Other Freeway and Expressway
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local Street

* This report is based on which 80% of people drive under normal conditions.
Phase 3: Design

- Develop the Plan Together
- Informed by multiple disciplines & experiences
  - DOT Staff present
- An open public format
  - Community leaders host
- Education tools & techniques
What matters to participating residents?
# Establishing Priority Corridors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Safety/ Crashes</th>
<th>Pedestrian Generators</th>
<th>Traffic Calming</th>
<th>Pedestrian Facilities</th>
<th>Bicycle Facilities</th>
<th>Speeds</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Community Comments</th>
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## Great Streets/DDOT Project Corridors

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- **No Priority**
- **Low**
- **Medium**
- **High**

**Safety/Crashes** – total pedestrian crashes relative to corridor length
**Pedestrian Generators** – estimated pedestrian activity from transit stops, schools, churches, retail, etc.
**Traffic Calming** – presence of existing traffic calming (lower priority) or lack of calming features (high priority)
**Pedestrian Facilities** – missing sidewalks and/or infrequent crossing opportunities
**Bicycle Facilities** – level of service for bicycles (based on vehicle speeds, traffic volume, and width of outside travel lane)
**Speeds** – 85th percentile vehicle speeds along the corridor relative to posted speed limit
**Volume** – daily traffic volumes relative to roadway’s functional classification
**Community Comments** – number of comments received at public meetings and on project website
Example: Sheriff Road

- Community Concerns (High)
  - 16 (survey and website) comments
- Safety/Crashes (Medium)
  - 5 pedestrian crashes 2007-2009
- Pedestrian Generators (High)
  - 1,835 estimated pedestrians per day
- Traffic Speeds (Med)
  - 6 mph over posted speed (85%ile)
- Traffic Volumes (Med)
  - Within minor arterial threshold; limited cut-through traffic
- Bicycle Facilities (High)
  - High speeds with limited outside lane width
- Traffic Calming (High)
  - No existing traffic calming
## Establishing Priority Intersections

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<th>Intersection</th>
<th>Safety/Crashes</th>
<th>Pedestrian Generators</th>
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- No Priority
- Low
- Medium
- High

- Safety/Crashes – total pedestrian crashes at intersection
- Pedestrian Generators – estimated pedestrian activity from transit stops, schools, churches, retail, etc.
- Geometry – long pedestrian crossing distances at intersection
- Pedestrian Facilities – missing crosswalks on one or more legs of intersection
- Operations – inadequate pedestrian crossing time, long vehicle queues, or congested traffic conditions
- Community Comments – number of comments received at public meetings and on project website
Example – E. Capitol St/Benning Rd

- Community Concerns (High)
  - 11 survey and website comments

- Safety/Crashes (High)
  - 62 total crashes from 2007-2009

- Pedestrian Generators (High)
  - 2,358 estimated pedestrians per day

- Intersection Geometry (High)
  - Average of 75 feet to cross the street

- Pedestrian Facilities (Low)
  - Marked crossings on each leg with pedestrian refuge

- Intersection Operations (High)
  - Capacity and queuing issues; limited pedestrian crossing time
Phase 4: Discussion

- Test and refine solutions that are
  - buildable
  - fundable
  - consent-driven.
Phase 5: Documentation

- Blueprint for action
  - Projects
  - Performance measures

- For both sides of the partnership
  - Agency leads
  - Livability Community Outreach Advisor Partners
Thank You

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DDOT Project Manager

http://www.farnortheastlivability.com/
Department of Transportation
The Evolution of Planning through the Decades

1916 – US Bureau of Public Roads
1956 – Federal-Aid Highway Act
1962 – Federal Highway Act Amendments
  - Mandate for Long Range Transportation Planning: 3 C’s of Planning: Cooperative, Continuing and Comprehensive
1964 – Urban Mass Transportation Act & Housing Act
1966 – US Department of Transportation
1970 – Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act
  - Requirement for public hearings on the economic, social and environmental impacts of proposed projects
1973 – Federal –Aid Highway Act
  - Required MPO’s is all urban areas
Department of Transportation
The Evolution of Planning through the Decades

1970’s – New Rail Systems
- Washington, DC
- Atlanta, Georgia
- Cleveland, Ohio
- San Francisco, California

1980’s – Suburban Economy
- Traffic
- Congestion
- Shopping Malls
- Suburban Job Growth
- Sprawl
Department of Transportation
20 Years of Livability Initiatives

1991 – Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Federal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program
- Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Livable Communities Initiative

1998 – TEA-21

2005 – SAFETEA-LU
2009 – American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- Transit Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER I)
  - Over $48 Billion in Transportation Recovery Act Funds
  - $27.5 billion for highway and bridge construction projects;
  - $8 billion for intercity passenger rail projects and rail congestion grants;
  - $6.9 billion for new equipment for public transit projects;
  - $1.5 billion for surface transportation discretionary grant projects;
  - $750 million for new public rail and fixed guideway transportation systems.

2010 – TIGER II
- $600 million surface transportation discretionary grant projects
  - $35 million for Planning & Preparation

2011 – TIGER III
- $526.955 million surface transportation discretionary grant projects
  - National Infrastructure Investments
2011 – Livability Expansion Initiative under the Sustainable Communities Partnership
  ➢ $175 million from DOT

2010 – FTA Sustainability Initiative
  ➢ $81 million Clean Fuels Grant Program
  ➢ $75 million Transit Investment in Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) III Program

2011 – FTA Sustainability Initiative
  ➢ $51.5 million Clean Fuels Grant Program
  ➢ $49.9 million Transit Investment in Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) III Program
  ➢ $750 million State of Good Repair Initiative
What we’ll cover

- The value of meaningful public engagement in transportation
- Its history: the role of NEPA
- Current trends & techniques
- Livability Planning Approach
- DC’s Far Northeast Livability Study
  - Organizing outreach & communications
  - Identifying concerns, issues & opportunities
  - Designing solutions & selecting priorities
Federal Funding Is Linked to Meeting NEPA Requirements

- FTA cannot release funding for final design and construction until the environmental review process under NEPA is complete.

- Prior to completion of NEPA environmental review, no federal action is permitted that would:
  - Have an adverse environmental impact
  - Limit choice of reasonable alternatives

- NEPA process concludes by one of three environmental findings:
  - Categorical Exclusion (CE) or
  - Record of Decision (ROD) on an EIS or
  - Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on an EA

- Project sponsors seeking federal funding should coordinate with FTA early.