Addressing 4 Key Barriers to Downtown Redevelopment

RMLUI 2015 Annual Conference

*Denver University Sturm College of Law*

3/12/15
Today’s Itinerary

Introductions (by way of existential questions):
  Who are you?
  Why are you here?

Addressing 4 key barriers to downtown revitalization:
  Creating value with transportation investments
  Catalyzing downtown living
  Connecting opportunity sites with developers
  Coordinating ongoing stewardship

Questions & discussion
A Little About Me

15+ years experience as a planner
Dilettante: land use, urban design, transportation
Last 8 years as a multimodal transportation planner

Started REgeneration Development Strategies
Focus on catalytic redevelopment projects

My family splits our time between Durango & SF
Small Downtowns = Wicked Problems

“A wicked problem is:

**a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve** because of...

incomplete, contradictory, and **changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize**, moreover...

because of complex interdependencies, **the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems**.”

- Wikipedia
Technical Problems
Regulatory Problems
Political Problems
My experience…

The **fundamental** Wicked Problem facing small downtowns is…

Sustainable
Economic
Development

All other wicked problems are linked to this one.
Planning = Economic Development

- Must create positive tax yield by...
  ...catalyzing private economic investment

Source: Joe Minicozzi, www.urban-three.com
### Planning = Economic Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Asheville Wal-Mart</th>
<th>Downtown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Consumed (Acres):</strong></td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Property Taxes/Acre:</strong></td>
<td>$6,500</td>
<td>$634,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City Retail Taxes/Acre:</strong></td>
<td>$47,500</td>
<td>$83,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residents per Acre:</strong></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jobs per Acre:</strong></td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Joe Minicozzi, www.pubintproj.com
Planning = Economic Development

- Minimize new infrastructure costs
- Maximize ROI from existing infrastructure

Source: Charles Marohn, www.strongtowns.org
Transportation = Value Creation

- Think of transportation $ as a means to an end that...
  ...can and must catalyze private sector reinvestment and redevelopment.

Source: SF Planning Dept.

Source: Denver Public Works

Source: http://blogs.westword.com/cafesociety
Transportation = Value Creation

- Countless studies of this relationship
- Examples from communities of all sizes

Source: www.cardcow.com/220702  
Source: www.fortlewis.edu
Transportation = Value Creation

- Roads can create economic value *and* still move a lot of cars...
Adopting new policies is not enough!

- Encourage alternative modes
- Create “ped-friendly” streets
- Promote bicycle safety
- Reduce vehicle travel
- Honor motherhood
- Enjoy apple pie...

Image source: Diabetes Daily
Mixed message?

*Image source: Diabetes Daily*

*Image source: Carbolic Smokeball*
5 Key *Principles* of a Value-Creating Transportation Strategy
Congestion = Economic Activity
Demand management = Fiscally conservative
Emphasizing *access* + placemaking = Success
Emphasizing mobility + ever expanding auto capacity = Failure
Transportation (like life) = Tradeoffs
To balance the tensions and tradeoffs in a strategic way...

...you need a DAM* strategy!

(*Demand and Access Management)
Streets = Humans as the Design Vehicle

Source: SF Planning Dept.
Slow Streets = Fewer Dead Pedestrians

Source: US and UK Departments of Transportation, 1999
More walking = safer walking

![Graph showing relationship between Relative Risk Index and Journey to Work Share for walking and bicycling.](Image source: Peter Jacobsen)
Parking = A District Approach
Parking = A District Approach
Transit = Walking Accelerator
Transit = Shared Mobility
Thank you!

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