

Atlanta Center for Regional Leadership Development

MINI-Technical Assistance Panel

Presented May 7, 2010 to:



CI THE REAL



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Your Mini-TAP Team



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Target Area of Study







The Buc – Buckhead Uptown Connection

4 routes serve amenities surrounding Piedmont, Lenox, and Peachtree Roads

- Hours of Operation Mon through Fri
 - Morning Rush 7a to 10a
 - -Lunch Rush 1130a to 130p
 - Evening Rush 330p to 7p
 - -15 to 20 minute headways

- Number of total buses per day:
 - 18 Blue Line
 - -18 Green Line
 - -13 Purple Line
 - -54 Red Line



ULD Urban Land Institute Atlanta Center for Regional Leadership Development



To improve land development and redevelopment in employment centers to promote transit usage through the creation of pedestrian friendly environments and more effective circulatory shuttle systems.

Assess the barriers

created by the current land development patterns and policies in Buckhead that cause low transit ridership and auto-preferred transportation

Research Successful Examples

of metro employment centers that have achieved highridership transit

Lay the groundwork

for the creation of a model that can be implemented in Buckhead and other Community Improvement Districts in metro Atlanta

How can we create a more pedestrian friendly environment in Buckhead that fosters a more effective shuttle system and results in higher ridership of MARTA (trains and buses)?





What's wrong with Buckhead?

- Auto-centric community built within urban context
- Large super-blocks with limited connectivity between major nodes
- Abundance of free or inexpensive parking makes driving to destinations attractive and easy
- Singular points of ingress and egress to major developments force traffic onto clogged thoroughfares
- Series of "vertical" cul-de-sacs (high-rises) add to the funnel-effect of traffic flow (source: Krier, Leon: Architecture of Community)
- Wide streets encourage automobile use and increase the number of accidents (source: Virginia Dept. of Transportation)







Barriers to Success

- Inconsistent enforcement of land use and development plans that emphasize and prioritize transit oriented development.
- Lack of cooperation and communication between government agencies.
 - An example where such cooperation is occurring is in Charlotte, NC, where the planning department and housing authority are housed together.
- Lack of centralized and continuous leadership.
- The ARC has the expertise to address traffic issues and develop effective development standards and policies but no authority to enforce its recommendations.
- Dept. of Transportation does not seem to place a priority on connectivity:
 - In an interview, it was suggested to **close curb cuts** on Peachtree Street to force connectivity between parcels and limit the entrance to the parcels to a point controlled by a traffic signal.
- An interviewee described Buckhead as "corporate" and uninviting to pedestrians because:
 - no benches or other places for pedestrians to sit,
 - little to no public green space or park areas,
 - no shaded areas for pedestrians to rest in,
 - lack of bike racks, and
 - the need to walk through parking lots or garages to access buildings.





Barriers to Success - Zoning

VDOT

Problem Today

Current development patterns often rely on isolated street networks which result in:

- Increased congestion
- Wider streets
- Discourages other modes of transportation
- Impacts on neighborhoods
- Unsustainable burden on major roadways









Barriers to Success - Zoning

Current zoning anticipates that every lot's highest and best use is a skyscraper. This creates an enormous amount of pressure on each parcel to develop and inflates the value of the raw land. The "tower" becomes the only financially feasible development type resulting in the development pattern illustrated in Scenario 1 below:



Development Scenario 1 (current Atlanta model)

- 900 new units
- 1 Building
- 8 undeveloped blocks with very high land values

Development Scenario 2 (proposed model)

- 900 new units
- 9 Buildings
- Fully developed blocks and streetscape





Voters overwhelmingly feel they have no choice right now, but a majority would like to spend less time in a car.



Agree Disagree



Source: T4America





Why do we care? Because WE do care...

Transportation for America Preference to Reduce Traffic Congestion

Future of Transportation National Survey



"In small towns and big cities alike, Americans are saying loudly and clearly that their lives would be better, and their nation stronger, if we had world-class public transportation and more options for walking and bicycling."

- T4America Co-Chair Geoff Anderson

Source: T4America











- The <u>SMARTRAQ</u> study (managed by Georgia Tech) found that people who live in neighborhoods with a mix of shops and businesses within easy walking distance are 7% less likely to be obese than those living in a mix level equal to the lower regional average.
 - -"Although this difference appears small," says the report, "the relative decrease in the actual probability of obesity is much greater - approximately 35 percent. A typical white male living in a compact community with nearby shops and services is expected to weigh ten pounds less than a similar white male living in a low density, residential-only cul-de-sac subdivision." - source-NRDC
- SMARTRAQ also found that every additional hour spent in a car each day translated into a 6% greater chance of being obese.







Transit Oriented Development	Transit Adjacent Development
 Grid street pattern Higher densities Limited surface parking and efficient parking management Pedestrian- and bicycle–oriented design Mixed housing types, including multi-family Horizontal (side-by-side) and vertical (within the same building) mixed use Office and retail, particularly on main streets. 	 Suburban street pattern Lower densities Dominance of surface parking Limited pedestrian and cycling access Segregated land uses Gas stations, car dealerships, drive-through stores and other automobile-focused land uses.

Source: John Renne (2009), "From Transit-Adjacent to Transit-Oriented Development," Local Environment, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 1-15.





A true TOD will include most of the following:

- Within a 5-minute walk of a transit stop or about a quarter-mile from stop to edge. For major stations offering frequent high-speed service this catchment area may be extended to a 10-minute walk;
- Contain places to work, live, learn, relax, and shop for daily needs, which help generate 24-hour ridership;
- Place-based zoning codes that generate buildings that shape and define memorable streets, squares, and plazas, while allowing uses to change easily over time;
- An average block perimeter of not more than 1,350 feet;
- No minimum, but rather maximum parking requirements;
- Parking costs are "unbundled," and full market rates are charged for all parking spaces. The exception may be validated parking for shoppers;
- Roadway space allocated to, and traffic signals timed for the convenience of walkers and cyclists; and
- Roads designed to limit speed to 30 mph on major streets and 20 mph on lesser streets to calm traffic.

Source: Adam Millard-Ball and Patrick Siegman (2006), "Playing The Numbers Game: When It Comes To TODs, Trip-Generation Figures Can Make All The Difference," Planning Magazine (<u>www.planning.org</u>), April 2006.





Why Connectivity Matters

- Road widening is costly and is only a short-term solution.
- Bus and Circulator traffic offers no speed advantage over personal vehicles
- Increased pedestrian connections will promote walkability to transit and to nearby destinations
- Quicker response time for emergency services











The Relationship Between Density and Transit

- As of June 2009, Atlanta's density is about 3647 people per square mile, or roughly 4.5 units per acre.
- Buckhead registers slightly less than this, at just under 3,000 people per square mile, or slightly less than 4 units per acre

Mode	Service Type	Minimum Density (Dwelling Units Per Acre)	Area and Location
Dial-a-Bus	Demand response serving general public (not just people with disabilities.	3.5 to 6	Community-wide
"Minimum" Local Bus	1/2-mile route spacing, 20 buses per day	4	Neighborhood
"Intermediate" Local Bus	1/2-mile route spacing, 40 buses per day	7	Neighborhood
"Frequent" Local Bus	1/2-mile route spacing, 120 buses per day	15	Neighborhood
Express Bus – Foot access	Five buses during two-hour peak period	15	Average density over 20-square-mile area within 10 to 15 miles of a large downtown
Express Bus – Auto access	Five to ten buses during two-hour peak period	15	Average density over 20-square-mile tributary area, within 10 to 15 miles of a large downtown
Light Rail	Five minute headways or better during peak hour.	9	Within walking distance of transit line, serving large downtown.
Rapid Transit	Five minute headways or better during peak hour.	12	Within walking distance of transit stations serving large downtown.
Commuter Rail	Twenty trains a day.	1 to 2	Serving very large downtown.

Transit Density Requirements

This table, based on research by Pushkarev and Zupan (1977), indicates typical residential densities needed for various types of transit service. Such requirements are variable depending on other geographic, demographic and management factors.





According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers (1989), the average density of U.S. urbanized areas is slightly below the threshold for local bus service.

A minimum level of local bus service (20 daily bus trips in each direction or one bus per hour) is often provided in residential areas averaging 4 to 5 dwelling units per acre. Typically, these residential densities correspond to gross population densities of 3,000 to 4,000 people per square mile. – A Toolbox for Alleviating Traffic Congestion, p. 93

Even more suitable for this level of density is paratransit (any type of service that does not use fixed routes). Paratransit includes carpools, vanpools, subscription buses, jitneys, shared-ride taxis and on-demand (route-deviation) services.

For paratransit service modes activity levels and densities lower than the thresholds described above are likely to be more suitable. These modes often depend less on the particular land use pattern found in an area and more on the initiatives of the affected parties. ... these modes can be effective, particularly if institutional support is present from large employers with many persons working at one site with identical (and regular) working schedules. — *Toolbox*, p. 94

Source: Victoria Transport Policy Institute











Corridor is in transition; area had deteriorated and had not seen any significant redevelopment since 1960's. Sidewalks, intersections and building fronts were in need of significant repair.

Evaluation included assessment of existing and future transportation system, population and employment needs in the project area.

"The overarching goal of the BRT construction chosen was to impact the pedestrian environment positively."

9.4 mile route serving the area between downtown Cleveland and University Circle, the area's two largest employment centers:

- "Allowed for landscape, streetscape, lighting, communications, public art, center median stations and stations throughout the project area to create better travel and walking connections."
- Improvements included "building face to building face revitalization;" The entire 100' ROW in coordination with the Euclid Avenue Rehabilitation Project.
- Dedicated bus lanes created; additional ROW acquired as needed.
- Developed cost effective solutions to rehab and reconstruct aging infrastructure, streetscapes, buildings/storefronts and address pedestrian safety.
- Entire construction project along corridor was completed in 4 years.

Silver Line		
Technology	Bus Rapid Transit	
Route Miles	6.8 Miles	
Study Area	Along Euclid Avenue from Pub- lic Square in downtown Cleve- land to East 107th Street, to the Stokes Rapid Transit Station at Winderemere, in the city of East Cleveland	
Vehicles	60 feet long; 100 passenger car- rying capacity; ADA equipped	
Ridership Forecast	Base 200,000 current weekday riders	
Number of Stations	54	
Development Forecast		
Commercial	7.9 million square feet	
Residential	4,000+	
Service Frequency		
Weekday/ Saturday	5 minute peak	
Sundays/ Holidays	15 minute headways	
Capital Investments		
GCRTA Annual Sales Tax Revenue	\$1.98 million	

Source: AECOM report: A User's Guide to Best Practices, Cleveland, Ohio, Euclid Avenue Corridor The Health Line, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line



Coordination between Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency and the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County (Collaboration and Coordination were key to success) and the public.

- TOD guidelines developed and published by GCRTA with significant community involvement and collaboration between GCRTA, citizens, developers, decision makers;
- \$135 Million estimate for construction, utility upgrades, landscape and streetscape improvements.
- GCRTA coordinated with adjacent property owners for utility, landscape and streetscape improvements. Over \$100 Million spent on
- Partnerships with the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals of Cleveland.
- Priority signaling technology installed to improve traffic flow in favor of transit.
- "Significant pedestrian zone enhancements were also necessary to encourage transit usage"
 - Sidewalk design
 - Passenger shelters
 - Enhanced and more clearly visible signage
 - Street trees
 - Street furnishings and public art
 - Lighting
 - Landscaping
 - Enhancements to pedestrian safety and compliance with ADA

Keys to Success



Land Use and Growth Policies

The existing land use throughout the corridor is mixed use and consists of residential, institutional, commercial, industrial, open space, parking and vacant land. Because Euclid Avenue is already a major commercial and transportation thoroughfare in the Cleveland region various local land use plans and goals of local jurisdictions had to be incorporated from the outset in planning for the BRT corridor enhancements.





Case Study - Central Avenue Corridor, Albuquerque, NM - The Rapid Ride

- Began in 2004, "changed the face of public transportation in Albuquerque"
- Developed in coordination with the City of Albuquerque in concert with the goals of the Albuquerque Comprehensive Plan and Planned Growth Strategy; the Federal Transit Administration; Midregion Council of Governments (MRCOG)
- Overall goal of the service was "to achieve the land use and development objectives included in the MRCOG Comprehensive Plan and planned growth strategies.
- Goal to decrease travel time throughout Central Avenue Corridor.
- Goal to improve ridership and access to employment centers, mitigate traffic congestion and improve quality of life for current and future population growth.
- 11 mile route, with goal of providing efficient transportation alternatives and access to employment, "mitigate current traffic congestion and provide a transit system that could help preserve a quality of life for future population growth"
- "City of Albuquerque has several overarching transit-supportive policies intended to direct type and location of development, most of which is focused on more compact urban form that supports transit service."

Rapid Ride		
Technology	Enhanced Bus Service	
Route Miles	11 Miles	
Study Area	Central Avenue from Unser to Louisiana, then north on Loui- siana to the Uptown shopping district	
Vehicles	18; 60 feet long; 86 passen- ger carrying capacity; ADA equipped	
Ridership Forecast	Base 350,000 per month (2005) ; 1 million+ per month (2009)	
Number of Stations	10	
Development Forecast		
Commercial	х	
Residential	х	
Service Frequency		
Weekday/ Saturday	10 minute peak; 15 minute off peak headways	
Sundays/ Holidays	20 minute headways	
Capital Investments		
FTA	\$4.8 million	

Source: AECOM report: A User's Guide to Best Practices, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Central Avenue Corridor Subject: Rapid Ride



Case Study – Central Avenue Corridor, Albuquerque, NM – The Rapid Ride

- Station locations were set approximately ½ mile to 1 mile apart to facilitate the maximum number of riders.
- Each station or stop located along the Rapid Ride route is located near a major intersection and "has a specific set of planning guidelines..."
- Rapid Ride stops are equipped with amenities (Wi-Fi, LED clocks showing estimated time of arrival of the next bus) and provide weather protection and "iconic architecture"
- City Council resolution R-70 (adopted in 1998) included provisions to "invest in improved transit service supporting the concept of centers and corridors, encouraging a more compact urban form and improving the viability of transit as an alternative mode of travel."



Rapid Ride Stop





Case Study - Central Avenue Corridor, Albuquerque, NM - The Rapid Ride

- Rapid Ride routes and stop locations allow for:
 - Connections to employment centers;
 - Easy access for riders of necessity;
 - Development of the system in a cost effective manner.
- Stops were designed with branding in mind and have become "iconic" fixtures along the streetscape.
- Ridership increases far exceeded expectations. Opening in December 2004, ridership hit 1 million by November 2005 and in 4 years the routes hit 5 million passengers and expanded to Nite Ride service.
- The enhanced bus model has met the goals of decreasing travel time through the corridor.



Rapid Ride Bus





Downtown Decatur

- Dense mix of multifamily residential, commercial, local government and public uses;
- Sidewalks are the public realm where people congregate, dine, walk, socialize and interact;
- Building fronts along sidewalk create human scale;
- Multimodal transportation facilities (MARTA train station, MARTA bus, CLIFF);
- Pedestrian friendly environment;
- Street grid pattern on a human scale that works for vehicles and transit (no "superblocks");
- Major arterial roads relatively narrow (4 lane maximum).







Midtown Atlanta

- Dense mix of residential, commercial, institutional and public uses;
- Multimodal transportation facilities (MARTA train and bus, the BUZZ);
- Pedestrian friendly environment;
- Street grid pattern on a human scale that works for vehicles and transit (little if any "superblocks");
- Good connectivity of thoroughfares, connectors and arterial streets.







What now?

So how do we get from here....



...TO HERE?

Non-transit supportive uses generate little to no ridership, consume large areas, and can create bleak or unsafe environments for pedestrians. Large format wholesale stores, warehouse storage, car dealerships, auto service centers and regional sports fields are examples of uses that are not transit supportive.

Transit supportive uses are high pedestrian generators that directly promote greater transit ridership. They also provide opportunities for multi-purpose trips that can be made as a pedestrian.





We should design our cities and neighborhoods for the pedestrian first!

Paths Should Be Intelligible

-People should know where they are going

- Paths should be Well Used
 - -More "Eyes on the Street"
- Paths should be Linked
 - -A vibrant network will generate more activity and interest
- Paths should be Connected
 - -Links to transit and major thoroughfares will reduce traffic flow
- Pedestrian Route Design Considerations: Short, continuous, direct = **Convenient**

But why does this matter?





...Because Pedestrian Friendly Environments are Awesome!









- Consider Bus Bays or Dedicated Bus lanes
 - Consider parallel parking on each street with no parking bus "bays" at the end of the block
- Signal preference for buses
- Require connectivity between adjacent parcels, open and un-gated access
- Consider conducting a study to determine the cost of creating a separate roadway network dedicated to shuttle bus services



Above, Singapore's Land Transport Authority implemented a Mandatory Give Way to Buses Scheme to aid buses in re-entering flowing traffic.





Suggestion – Signage and Accessibility

- Provide easily visible real time information for things such as arrival times, emergencies, delays, etc.[1]
- Clearly mark bus stops so that they are easily seen by pedestrians.
- MARTA bus signs, as illustrated below, are small and face the street and thus not easily or quickly visible to pedestrians.
- Provide bus stops, shelters, and boarding pads that are accessible to all riders.[1]
- Consider accessibility for all passenger types and their needs in boarding and disembarking from buses when planning landscaping.

- For example, along Peachtree (e.g., between Sovereign and Terminus, illustrated below) landscaping boxes along the street impede bus access by passengers in wheelchairs. In addition, there is a curb drop off at the immediate stop.







^[1] Source: Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation) website: <u>http://projectaction.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ESPA_homepage</u>.

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Suggestions – Design and Materials

Factor usability in to sidewalk design and materials. Brick and patterned sidewalks are attractive but can be difficult for people, such as the physically challenged and those wearing high heels. The struggle to maneuver this surface will discourage certain pedestrian traffic which in turn reduces potential bus riders.



In the photo above, a combination of small and large pavers were used, providing an easier walking surface on the right hand side for those in heels or walking with the assistance of a cane or a walker.





Where the Sidewalk Ends...



Another end to the sidewalk (it continues across the street) Central Parkway, Sandy Springs



MARTA bus stop at Hammond Drive East of Peachtree Dunwoody





Design Elements of Walkable Communities

Goals of Proposed Recommended Practice:

- Identify the inherent flexibility in design guidelines to meet local objectives;
- Improve compatibility between thoroughfares and surrounding context;
- Balance the land use and transportation functions of corridors;
- Design thoroughfares that support and enhance the activities of adjacent land uses;
- · Ensure truly multimodal facilities; and
- Create streets that are quality public space.
- Create an inviting atmosphere where pedestrians feel welcome and comfortable.
 - Clearly delineate cross walks including reflectors along the walkway and proper street lighting.
 - Require developments to provide bike racks.
 - Implement traffic calming measures.
 - Provide seating and shaded areas for pedestrians.







Key Design Issues for Urban Thoroughfares

- Major thoroughfares are defined as facilities that function as collectors and arterials.
- Urban environments with development intensity and mix of land uses and design features.
- Create opportunities for walking, transit and biking to be <u>efficient</u> and <u>attractive</u> transportation choices.
- Establish a narrow range of target speeds (25-35 mph) for urban context zones for walkable communities.
- Recommend 11' lanes in thoroughfares; 9' and 10' wide lanes for collectors and arterials respectively;
- Maximum of 6 lanes, but recommend 4 lanes for boulevards and avenues within urban walkable zones.
- Consider traffic projections and levels of service <u>but</u> <u>stress the need to balance the needs of all users.</u>
- Mid block pedestrian crossings where practical.
- Recommend bike lanes on all streets where bicyclists need to travel.



Source: Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities - Institute for Transportation Engineers





"Good" Street Design Standards

- Narrowing of streets; parallel parking along streets where appropriate;
- Consistent sidewalks in good condition, with landscape/planting buffer between sidewalk and curb;
- Crosswalks at regular intervals, with median islands as appropriate for wide boulevards and thoroughfares;
- Ample shade trees;
- Street furnishings and street scaping (benches, waste receptacles, planters, etc.);
- Comfortable transit stops/shelters with protection from elements;
- Street level retail and building design elements to create a human scale;
- Public spaces, pocket parks;
- Treat sidewalks as plazas.







U.S. Dept. of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation

- Signed on March 11, 2010
- Primary goals include the establishment of well-connected walking and bicycling networks.
- The U.S. DOT believes the design of walking and bicycling networks should be a part of Federal-aid project developments.
- Among the reasons behind the policy are that walking and bicycling foster safer, more livable, familyfriendly communities; promote physical activity and health; and reduce vehicle emissions and fuel use.
- Key Recommendations Include:
 - -Consider walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes
 - -Ensure that there are transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities
 - -Go beyond minimum design standards: Transportation agencies are encouraged, when possible, to avoid designing walking and bicycling facilities to the minimum standards
 - -Encourage bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on bridge projects including facilities on limited-access bridges with connections to streets or paths
 - -Collect data on walking and biking trips
 - -Set mode share targets for walking and bicycling and track them over time
 - -Improve non-motorized facilities during maintenance projects

Source: http://www.dot.gov/affairs/2010/bicycle-ped.html





Example in Metro-Atlanta Where These Lessons Can Be Implemented

Where the Sidewalk Ends...



Central Parkway, Sandy Springs



Hammond Drive

...and what pray tell lies beyond where the sidewalk ends?





Example in Metro-Atlanta Where These Lessons Are Needed



Another end to the sidewalk (it continues across the street) Central Parkway, Sandy Springs



MARTA bus stop at Hammond Drive East of Peachtree Dunwoody





To The Future...And Beyond!

- To make the community more efficient, we must retrofit connectivity into established areas.
- An increase in pedestrian activity will lead to an increase in transit and circulator use.
- Buckhead will not be New York, but it's a start!







Transit riders start and end their trips as pedestrians. Whether riders arrive on foot or via bus, private vehicle or even bicycle, every transit trip includes a walking component. Creating a pedestrian friendly environment that makes the transit trip easier and more enjoyable is therefore paramount in planning a transit oriented community.

Often the first public transit vehicles that will be available to a transit oriented development are buses. Thus, when planning for the development, in addition to pedestrians, access and mobility of circulatory buses should also be accounted for.

With strategic planning and cooperation of the stakeholders a successful transit oriented development is achievable!

Go from this....

To This!









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- 2. Jaimye Bartak, Program Manager, Livable Communities Coalition
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- 4. DeWayne Herbert, Mall Manager Phipps Plaza, Simon Property Group
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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Thank you for attending our ULI Center For Regional Leadership Development Mini-TAP Team Presentation



