Healthy Corridors

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Urban Land Institute
Nashville, TN
What’s Wrong with this Corridor?
• Ugly
• Unsafe
• Unhealthy
• Unwalkable
• Under performing
• Un-Connected
Why Are Corridors Unhealthy?

- Safety – Lots of accidents
- Few sidewalks or pedestrian amenities
- Little connection to surrounding neighborhoods
- Poor air quality/Poor visual quality
- Lack of Shade/Urban Heat Island
- Poor Access to Healthy Food
- Stressful and depressing
Characteristics of Commercial Corridors

- Spread out/low density
- Single-use/auto-oriented
- No sidewalks or landscaping
- Lots of signs
- Big parking lots
- Little or no public transportation
- Frequent congestion
- Cheap, cookie-cutter architecture
Corridor Redevelopment: Not a New Issue

“The effect of lax highway zoning is to create ‘road towns’, instead of centers with no beginning and no ending. Such development does not meet the conception of a true town.”

Benton MacKaye, 1930
Ten Principles for Reinventing Suburban Strips

1. Ignite leadership & nurture partnerships
2. Anticipate evolution
3. Know the market
4. Prune back retail-zoned Land
5. Establish pulse nodes of development
6. Tame the traffic
7. Create the place
8. Diversify the character
9. Eradicate the ugliness
10. Put your money (and regulations) where your policy is
Historic Approaches to Corridor Enhancement

- **Retain Vehicular Focus and Beautify** (Landscaping, signage, façade improvements)
- **Balance between Vehicles and Pedestrians** (Sidewalks, street furniture, cross walks, plus above)
- **Manage vehicles and & Focus on Pedestrians** (zoning adjustments, incentivize mixed uses & increased density. Traffic calming & transit upgrades)
- **Redevelopment** (A new vision & complete makeover – might include road reconfiguration, private site clearance, lots of new construction, connections to neighborhoods, a new image.
- **Infill Redevelopment** (A variation of the above, with new infill on a smaller scale)
Eight Steps for Reshaping the Strip

1. Put a limit on the length of any commercial district.
2. Limit curb cuts and consolidate entrances.
3. Unify the streetscape with street trees and landscaping.
4. Build sidewalks and crosswalks.
5. Create a street frontage.
6. Provide incentives.
7. Encourage a mix of uses.
8. Eradicate the ugliness.
Infrastructure Improvements
Private Investments
More Vibrant & Healthy Community
Walkability = Low Cost Health Care

- “Walking is a miracle drug”

- US Surgeon General has asked communities to build trails.

- President’s Council on Physical Fitness – “build more trails.”
Healthy Places Create Real Estate Value

- Numerous studies show that the demand for walkable, mixed use design far outstrips current supply.

- There is a growing demand for small town/village/urban living especially among retirees, empty nesters, young professionals and single people.
Walkability Boosts Value & Health

- Walk Score is a walkability index assigned to a particular address.

- Carol Coletta, CEO’s for Cities says” each additional Walk Score point increases housing prices $600 to $3000”.

- CDC says “each 10 point increase in Walk Score results in 16 minutes per day more walking”.

[Image of Walk Score website]
Bicycling is Booming!

For cyclists of all stripes, there’s nothing like Bike to Work Day — our annual celebration of active transportation. Caravans of excited new riders enjoying their commute like never before. Veteran bicyclists rekindling and connecting with old friends over free breakfast and live entertainment. Thanks, in part, to encouragement efforts like BTWD, the number of bike commuters is on the rise — especially in Bicycle Friendly Communities. Since 2000, bicycle commuting rates in large BFCs increased 14 percent — far above the national average of 57 percent and more than double the rise in non-BFCs (31 percent). Here are just a few key cites where bike commuting is growing by leaps and bounds.

**THE GROWTH OF BIKE COMMUTING**

Produced by

The League of American Bicyclists

www.bikeleague.org

Designed by Gerez Donnelly, studio d
Why Bike?

• For Better Health
• For Recreation
• For Transportation
• To Save money
• To Run Errands
• To Get to School
Bicycle Economics

• The US bicycle industry sold $6.1 billion in bicycles and equipment in 2014

• In 2002 there were 7 bike share systems worldwide. Today there are 750

• In 2014, Americans bought more bikes (18 million) than cars & trucks (16.8 million)

• Bicycle infrastructure is cheap, particularly compared to motor-vehicle infrastructure.

• Portland has created a 300 mile network of bike trails, bike lanes and bike boulevards for about the same cost ($60 million) as one-mile of 4 lane urban freeway
Bicycling & Retail Sales

• Installing a mile long protected bike lane on Ninth Avenue in New York City resulted in an estimated 49% increase in retail sales among merchants located along the route.

• And a 58% reduction in injuries to all street users (cyclists, pedestrians, & drivers)

• Source: NYC Dept. of Transportation, “Measuring the Street”, 2012
Basic Bicycle Infrastructure

- Bicycle Routes
- Bicycle Lanes
- Bike Trails
Protected Bike Lanes
Bicycle Boulevards

- A bicycle boulevard is low traffic neighborhood street that has been optimized for bicycling.
- This is accomplished through traffic calming measures and special signage.
- Bike Blvds. are extremely safe and welcoming to kids, families and novice cyclists.
Bicycle Roundabouts
Bicycle Friendly Community

- Enforcement
- Education
- Engineering
- Encouragement
- Evaluation
Corridor Retrofits Face Impediments

- Street standards
- Euclidean zoning
- Mandatory setbacks
- Road networks (arterials & collectors vs. street networks)
- Rules that favor traffic flow over pedestrians & connectivity
- Stormwater regulations
- Fear of change
We’re Overbuilt on the Strip

- Ten fold increase in retail space from 1960-2000.
- From 4 to 38 square feet per person.
- US has more than double the retail space per person as Europe.
- There is now more than 1 billion square feet of vacant retail space (mostly in empty big box stores)
Retail space grew 5X faster than retail sales
Corridors Are Being Redesigned

• “The largest retail trend of the next generation will be the conversion of dead or dying strip commercial centers in the suburbs into walkable urban places.”

• Source: Chris Leinberger, The Brookings Institution
Our Love Affair With Malls Is on the Rocks
The future belongs to town centers

Despite the recession, retail analyst Robert Gibbs predicts that commercial town center developments will proliferate as the growth in conventional malls stalls.

In recent years, one of the most prominent trends in the shopping center industry has been the emergence of “hybrid malls,” large retail centers that incorporate an open air main street with shops, offices, and in some cases housing. Some of these experiments — like Valencia Town Center in California — have been successful, but according to Gibbs, industry trade publications have expressed doubt that the model has staying power.

Gibbs disagrees with this assessment and suggests that conventional malls will have to adopt ideas from the New Urbanism to stay competitive.

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- No new malls, since 2006
- 10% of existing malls have closed
- 30% of existing malls being repositioned
- 1 Billion square feet of vacant retail space
Downtown Rockville, MD

• Mostly demolished in 1970
Downtown Replaced by Rockville Mall
Mall Replaced by Rockville Town Center
The New Promised Land?
Tear Up Parking Lot, Rebuild Paradise

- Large, flat, well drained site
- Major infrastructure in place
- 4 lane highway frontage, transit ready
- Saves rural land
- Committed to mixed use
- Can turn NIMBY’s into YIMBY’s
- 2.8 million acres of greyfields will be available in next 15 years
We Can Have This:

Spread Out
Single Use
Drivable Only
Or This!

Compact Mixed-Use Walkable
Barnes & Noble – Rockville Pike

One story
Single use
Lots of parking in front
Barnes & Noble – Bethesda Row

Multi-Story
Mixed Use neighborhood
No Parking in front
Which one is more profitable?

1 Way to get here:
- Drive your car

4 Ways to get here
- Drive your car
- Take Metro
- Ride your bike
- Walk
Waffle House – Which one makes more money?

Strip Waffle House
• Located next to Interstate
• Lots of Parking
• No housing nearby

Downtown Waffle House
• Located on walkable street
• No dedicated Parking
• Housing upstairs
“Walkable Waffle House outperforms Strip Waffle House by 15%”

Source: City of Fayetteville and ISR Working Group
September 22, 2011

The downtown, mixed use project also produces:
More taxes per acre
More jobs per acre
More residents per acre
More people walking to and from the restaurant
Place Making Dividend

People stay longer, come back more often and spend more money in places that attract their affection.
Charlotte Avenue is a Gateway to Downtown Nashville