

For Regional Sustainability --



Think *Networks* – Not *Projects*

We Understand Highway Networks

Functional Classification System, with all parts working together:

- Freeways
- Major multi-lane arterials
- Collector Streets
- Local Streets
- Parking lots and garages

Comparison of Highway and Transit Networks

Function	Highway Network	Transit Network
High speed and capacity	Freeway	Rail transit or BRT line
Medium speed and capacity	Multi-lane arterial	Express bus
Slower speed, medium capacity	Collector street	Fixed route bus or streetcar line
Low speed, low capacity	Local street	Local bus line or paratransit

What About Transit Networks?

Most U.S. regions have incomplete transit networks:

- Mostly fixed route bus lines
- Incomplete coverage, poor schedules
- Slow operations in traffic
- No “functional classification system”
- Problems of transit access – pedestrian and bike routes lacking

Public wouldn't tolerate incomplete highway networks

- Imagine a region with no freeways; and no primary arterials
- Or a region with no connections among some parts of the highway system
- Or a region with large portions of the urbanized area having no paved streets at all
- *Yet, that is exactly the situation for transit networks in most U.S. urban regions!*

Rail is transit equivalent of freeways



Yet many US cities have no rail or BRT transit

Of the 75 largest urban regions:

- 45 have no rail or BRT in exclusive ROW
- 10 have only a single line (another 10 regions are now building either a first or second line)
- Only 12 could be judged as having a complete bus network to supplement rail lines
- *Yet every one of those 75 regions has a complete highway network, including freeways, arterials and collectors!*

Result:

- *Transit is a second-rate mode choice* for most trips, in most urban areas
- Some people can get to work by transit, but not all
- Other trips across the region aren't possible by transit
- This keeps people auto-dependent
- Regional sustainability goals are hampered

Complete transit networks are critical for regional sustainability

- Without real mode choice, regions remain auto-dependent, low in transit ridership
- Affects carbon footprint, air quality, energy use, other environmental sustainability factors
- Affects ability to develop housing choices
- Affects equity of access to jobs, services
- *Most U.S. transit planning is project-oriented, little or no system-wide network planning!*

What do we mean by “Regional Sustainability”?

- Environmental sustainability
 - Carbon footprint
 - All other environmental resources
- Energy sustainability
- Economic sustainability
 - Jobs, income and competitiveness
- Fiscal sustainability
- Livability and social equity

Research shows dramatic differences in sustainability

- Urban regions with complete transit networks have better sustainability in *every category*
- The better the transit network, the better the sustainability rankings
- Clearly shows in Canadian and European cities; some Asian cities
(See “Transit Performance Spreadsheet” by Todd Litman of VTPI)



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BART

Metro

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The world is changing

- Consistently low gas prices gone forever
- Era of primary demand for single-family housing in suburbs is also gone forever
- Economy and household composition requires travel choices, flexibility
- “Sustainability” is not just a buzz-word

Regional transit planning must adapt to changed world

- What comes after SAFETEA-LU?
- Federal trust fund is broken – and broke
- Not clear where new funds will come from
- Proposals coming from many sources
- National Commission report to Congress
- AASHTO and APTA both engaged
- *We need transit program funding*

Conclusions

1. We need transit *program* funding, like highways have had for more than 50 years
2. We need to get away from *project* thinking, and do *regional transit network planning*
3. A much stronger partnership is needed between transit agencies and regional planning agencies and MPOs
4. With new authorization bill in the works, *now is the time for action!*

Critical time for transit

- Transit can no longer cede the regional planning field to the highway agencies
- Regional agencies need – and want – transit agency leadership
- Now is the crucial time – planets aligned as they won't be again for 50 years

We must get involved!!