Great Corridors, Great Communities

THE QUIET REVOLUTION IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Project *for* Public Spaces, Inc.

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PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES, INC.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS), in conjunction with Scenic America, is pleased to release "Great Corridors, Great Communities: The Quiet Revolution in Transportation Planning." This booklet explores the importance of an emerging corridor approach to transportation planning in which the responsibility for transportation improvements is shared by local communities, private developers and non-profit organizations, not just placed solely on the transportation or public works department. This inclusive process can yield a safer and more efficient transportation system, strengthen our communities, and protect our priceless natural and cultural resources.

"Great Corridors, Great Communities" presents a series of eight case studies that outline a variety of tools and strategies that are contributing to great corridors around the country—creating not only successful streets, but creating places in those communities. These corridor planning efforts are in various stages of implementation, and they incorporate a wide spectrum of corridor and community types.

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"Great Corridors, Great Communities" is part of a larger collaboration between PPS and AARP that includes a series of publications and training programs to improve the livability and walkability of communities throughout the United States.

BOOKS

The Quiet Revolution in Transportation Planning

HOW GREAT CORRIDORS MAKE GREAT COMMUNITIES

State departments of transportation (DOTs), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) were enormously successful over the second half of the twentieth century in achieving the transportation goals that the nation had set out for them. Their work offered clear benefits in that the modern US highway system contributed immeasurably to the growth and development of America.

As we strive to enhance the country's economic vitality, our quality of life and the environment, it is becoming increasingly apparent that we need new approaches to transportation projects that meet the shifting needs of the public in the twenty-first century. Solutions that focus only on the movement of motor vehicles are no longer viable for many reasons that go far beyond high gasoline prices. Congestion is increasing at an exponential rate in spite of major investment in building new roads and adding capacity to existing ones. Transportation funding remains flat, while fix-it-first needs are skyrocketing. Citizen resistance is mounting, as stakeholders no longer accept interstate-era designs in their communities. Sprawling patterns of land use are overtaxing the ability of governments to provide the infrastructure necessary to accommodate development and growth. Concerns about obesity and poor health among Americans are increasing, and there is mounting evidence that the sprawling development patterns of the last 50 years are a major contributing factor. Cars and trucks produce carbon emissions—a major factor in global climate change. Transportation planning that considers only the narrow context of projects, rather than broader ecosystems, is contributing to environmental damage.

It is now clear that all of the above problems are the inevitable result of approaching transportation planning and community planning as two separate processes. This practice has made it too easy to overlook the value of creating strong communities and public places, which happens most frequently when transportation professionals focus on an isolated project rather than on solutions for an entire transportation corridor.

Fortunately, new ways of transportation planning are becoming increasingly prevalent. A corridor planning approach that considers multiple forms of transportation, adjacent land uses and the connecting street network can transform the transportation planning process into one that respects and enhances our natural and human environments. This broader strategy

encourages joint planning initiatives among all interested parties, using a common set of principles. It sparks positive dialogue that focuses on the entire transportation network rather than a single spot improvement, thereby opening up a range of solutions not available when we are focused on that single spot improvement. Transportation plans can then emerge from a thorough analysis of the transportation system, the land use context and community needs. Innovative solutions arise that are usually more affordable and reflect the smart growth principles being embraced by citizens around the country. This type of corridor planning strategy will help address the goals of towns and neighborhoods.

Just as importantly, a corridor approach will help convince communities of the need to assist state DOTs in serving regional and statewide mobility goals. If a community wants to create or expand a town center on a major highway, for instance, it needs to work with its regional transportation agency to create an integrated transportation and land use plan that also addresses the needs of through traffic using that same corridor. One possible solution would be the provision of new local streets that accommodate local trips, allowing longer distance motorists to continue through or around the community at a reasonable pace.

A corridor planning approach that considers multiple forms of transportation, adjacent land uses and the connecting street network can transform the transportation planning process into one that respects and enhances our natural and human environments.

Corridor planning also helps DOTs deal with the ubiquitous issue of rising costs. Understanding current and future development in a corridor allows the DOT to identify opportunities for sharing expenses with developers, making sure that the road networks built in subdivisions and shopping malls are coordinated with the future transportation needs of the public. Communities will need to recognize that funds are limited and each transportation agency is facing significant demands for maintaining existing infrastructure. Therefore, as the cost of accommodating community goals increases, the need for the community to find ways to help fund these improvements also increases. This is particularly relevant when plans for redevelopment or new development adjacent to a highway call for downsizing or relocating a state highway.

Overall, this approach allows transportation professionals to seek solutions that are sensitive to community, environmental, land use and financial contexts, as well as transportation needs. This Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach opens the door to many innovations that result in cost savings and are greeted warmly by communities. It also takes the burden off of DOTs to fund and fix improvements all by themselves.

When applied at the level of a transportation corridor, CSS enables DOTs to view roads in their proper transportation context. Some would remain important for higher-speed, long-distance trips and, therefore, warrant investment in increased capacity. But it would also be clear that many other roads should be oriented toward local or residential traffic, and could be designed and funded at lower levels. Not every road would be seen as simply a conduit for moving vehicles. Many would begin to serve community as well as transportation functions, becoming places where people want to gather. This is the crux of the quiet revolution that is currently transforming the world of transportation planning and engineering.

In small but substantive ways, transportation professionals across the US are now adding to the conventional wisdom they have inherited. They are recognizing that design guidelines are just that—guidelines—which can and should be adapted to local context. They are also realizing that convenient access to destinations is actually a more significant measure of success than mobility. What matters is not how fast vehicles move, but how many places people can reach within a given time period. These realigned priorities are yielding new insights about how to plan transportation networks and land uses. Here, in a nutshell, is a summary of these insights:

Transportation benefits our sense of place. A highway or train system does not simply connect points along a line; if they are well-planned, roads and rails can also connect the communities on either side of them.

Our sense of place benefits transportation. Great places—communities with a good mix of people and activities, which are accessible by a variety of travel modes, including walking, biking and transit—put little strain on the transportation system. Communities with a poor sense of place, by contrast, can generate thousands more vehicle trips, creating a dysfunctional road that further worsens the quality of the place.

A place-based approach to transportation redefines how both transportation and land use planners view their goals. Neither of these professions can succeed without actively collaborating with the other. For instance, mass transit cannot be effective if communities grow in low-density, single-use development patterns. Additionally, attempts to revitalize existing downtowns or create vibrant new commercial centers are destined to fail if land use plans are implemented without considering street widths, locations and target operating speeds.

This booklet demonstrates how an integrated and corridor-based approach to transportation solutions can help DOTs achieve their missions and better serve communities by planning transportation investments in conjunction with land use decisions.

How Corridor Development Boosts Community Development

WHAT IS A CORRIDOR?

A corridor is a multi-modal transportation network, knit together around a major transportation facility, such as a road or rail line. It encompasses all the surrounding land uses. A corridor links places together like pearls on a necklace. These places, or "nodes," are comprised of existing destinations in the community—they can be as large as a downtown or as small as a street corner with a few shops.

WHAT MAKES SOME CORRIDORS SUCCESSFUL?

In successful corridors, the transportation system unites adjacent communities. It fits into the context of each community and is accessible to drivers and non-drivers alike. In a failing corridor, transportation facilities divide communities, spawn debilitating congestion and create visual blight.

In our extensive study of a wide range of corridors, the most successful exhibit the following attributes:

They promote communities' long-term goals. Every community has a vision for itself, even if it has not been officially articulated and adopted as policy. In successful corridors, the transportation network serves to further that vision.

They offer a variety of land uses. Successful corridors provide a range of housing choices and retail stores that serve the local community, as well as offices and accessible open

space. These places relate to each other and serve a variety of community goals. Places the community feels to be special are highlighted, and they serve as guides for managing new development while conserving visual, social and historic assets.

They offer a diverse and connected network of transportation choices. Driving is not the only option. In town, people can walk or bike; in between towns, they can use transit. People enjoy an opportunity to choose from a variety of routes and modes thanks to a connected network of streets, trails and transit facilities. People's access to goods, services and one another is accomplished in a way that does not overtax any single part of the transportation system.

They provide community destinations. Compact neighborhoods with a fine-grained mix of land uses allow people to walk or bike for local trips, while making public transit more feasible for travel between destinations. Some of the land around these destinations should be preserved as open space.

They incorporate the vision of communities. Intensive and ongoing input from the community guides the growth of successful corridors. The community's vision is actively implemented through new initiatives to address issues and concerns that arise.

Best Practices, Tools & Strategies

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM EIGHT SUCCESSFUL CORRIDOR PLANNING PROJECTS

Around the country, transportation and land use professionals have been working together to create and manage corridors that work for both communities and the traveling public. Here we describe eight case studies and highlight the tools and strategies that help make these corridors great.

ROUTE 16 IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

LESSON #1: *Transportation Projects Can Only Succeed With Active Local Participation*

Route 16 is New Hampshire's major north–south highway on the eastern side of the state, connecting Portsmouth and the seacoast to the White Mountains and northwestern Maine. In the early 1990s, residents and tourists alike expressed concern over the proliferation of new commercial establishments along Route 16 and the overall deterioration of the scenic integrity of the highway. Safety and congestion along the roadway were also raised as problems. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), in cooperation with the four affected Regional Planning Commissions, responded to these concerns by conducting the Route 16 Corridor Protection Study.

When NHDOT officials realized that the mobility issues on Route 16 (reduced safety, lower vehicle speeds) were inextricably linked to the issues on either side of the road (rapid proliferation of auto–oriented land uses), they knew that their efforts to improve service on the road would fail without the active cooperation of those responsible for making land use decisions. To start, NHDOT launched regular community meetings, a quarterly newsletter and the establishment of five working groups, and then employed creative communication tools to help town officials, residents, business owners and other interested citizens better understand the issues and possible alternatives along the corridor. This included videos, interactive CD–ROMs, the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and oth–

The Route 16 corridor study concluded that "perhaps the single most important realization in developing the final recommendations was that 'we cannot build our way out of congestion.' In other words, roadway construction projects must be accompanied by other non-highway transportation improvements that can help mitigate future traffic growth."

er ways to visualize the problems. NHDOT also worked closely with the four Regional Planning Commissions and local land use boards to understand how local land use decisions affect regional transportation needs—just as transportation improvements alter land values and regional growth.

The Route 16 corridor study concluded that "perhaps the single most important realization in developing the final recommendations was that 'we cannot build our way out of congestion.' In other words, roadway construction projects must be accompanied by other non-highway transportation improvements that can help mitigate future traffic growth."

According to Ansel Sanborn, who managed the Route 16 project for NHDOT, the striking results of the study were due to groundbreaking levels of cooperation with local communities.

"Once the DOT assumed the role of partner rather than expert, the truly innovative solutions of the study began to emerge," he said. "By spending time talking together about goals that both the DOT and the community shared, we came to agree on better solutions."

As a result of its extensive research, NHDOT adopted on-road traffic mitigation strategies such as predefining and limiting access points to Route 16 and improving pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities. In parallel, many municipalities along the road adopted new land use regulations to reduce traffic generation on Route 16, such as upzoning in commercial nodes, downzoning in between nodes, and encouraging land uses that generate fewer vehicle trips.

"The study was both a topical and geographic convergence—bringing together transportation and land use planning as well as state, regional and local players," noted Cliff Sinnott, Executive Director of the Rockingham Planning Commission. "This project got the whole corridor working together."

An arguably even more important legacy of the Route 16 Corridor Protection Study is how it influenced the way in which NHDOT pursues transportation planning today—doing it in close relation with the communities that make land use decisions. New Hampshire's new Long Range Transportation Business Plan, for example, was written in 2006 by a Citizen Advisory Committee—not by transportation officials. The Committee concluded that "transportation is not an end in itself; its purpose is to serve common community aspirations for a better quality of life." What happened on Route 16 in New Hampshire marks a genuine revolution in transportation.

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- A close relationship between NHDOT, Regional Planning Commissions, municipalities and other local leaders;
- An extensive public involvement process;
- Integration of local and state planning efforts in order to make effective, long-standing changes to the land use patterns in the corridor;
- Pilot studies (funded by NHDOT) to help four communities conduct master planning and rezoning efforts.

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Assistance to municipalities in the development of land use plans that do not strain Route 16:
  - Upzoning to encourage development in higher density nodes;
  - Downzoning to reduce strip development between nodes;
  - Land uses that generate fewer vehicle trips;
  - Emphasis of the great destinations along Route 16 and creation of new ones, such as a boardwalk along the Androscoggin River.
- Context-sensitive design along Route 16:
  - Roadway access management with defined and limited access points and median locations to guide the location of new commercial development;
  - A new multi-use path along the road to improve walking and bicycling conditions in certain locations;
  - National Heritage Corridor Designation for the road.

ROUTE 29 IN TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

LESSON #2: *Plan and Manage Projects with Community Outcomes in Mind*

Built in the 1960s as a limited-access expressway along the Delaware River in western New Jersey, Route 29 isolated once-lively downtown Trenton from the riverfront Stacy Park and the water itself. The highway also took over much of the riverfront park, relegating it to an isolated and virtually unusable strip of grass. Route 29 has also been the site of an inordinate number of traffic accidents. As a result, the road has been a sore point for Trenton's community leaders for years.

In 2004, New Jersey Department of Transporation (NJDOT) started listening to their concerns, and today, a wide consortium of players is partnering to create a corridor that works for everyone.

All parties agree that the minimal loss of time on the new road will be more than made up for by improved safety, enhanced connectivity and better multi-modal access.

An extensive public involvement process led to a plan in which Route 29 will continue to serve through traffic, but will provide improved pedestrian access to Stacy Park and be better integrated into Trenton's network of local streets. Freeway-style interchanges will be replaced by pedestrian-friendly intersections with traffic lights or roundabouts and crosswalks. The highway's 12-foot-wide lanes,

designed for 55 mph traffic, will be narrowed to make way for on-street parking, sidewalks, street trees and pedestrian-scale lighting. A cloverleaf interchange and large surface parking lots in the downtown will be redeveloped into a new district of mixed-use buildings.

After this transformation, driving the three-mile corridor will require only two additional minutes of travel during the morning rush hour. NJDOT and community leaders agree that this minimal loss of time is more than made up for by improved safety, enhanced connectivity and multi-modal access throughout the corridor. Construction is set to start in 2011.

"The passion and the need [to improve downtown] have always been there, but without the passion of the DOT, we'd still just be talking," said Trenton mayor Douglas H. Palmer. "Now we're talking and moving towards implementation. This will transform the city."

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- A major public involvement process;
- Strong, constructive partnerships between neighborhood groups and agencies that have been "enemies" in the past;
- Integration of the Route 29 transportation plan with other ongoing planning efforts in Trenton;
- Provision of funding or in-kind technical expertise from NJDOT for land use planning and traffic management at the local level;
- A focus on community outcomes (safety, pedestrian access to the park), instead of conventional asset management (bridge maintenance, etc.).

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Transformation of a regional expressway into an urban boulevard with lower vehicle speeds:
  - Reduction of vehicle lane widths, and use of created space for a landscaped median, on-street parking and sidewalks;
  - Provision of pedestrian amenities including crosswalks, trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting;
  - Development of a grid of neighborhood streets to improve local access and enhance route choice;
  - Additional intersections of the highway by local streets;
  - Replacement of grade-separated interchanges with pedestrian-friendly at-grade intersections complete with traffic lights or roundabouts and crosswalks.
- Space for new mixed-use development through removal of a large cloverleaf interchange and conversion of surface parking lots to parking structures:
  - Adoption of new downtown zoning plans to attract development;
  - Requests that developers fund some local street improvements;
  - Relocation of Route 29 into downtown at the request of the City.

ROUTE 57 IN WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LESSON #3: *Improve Transportation by Not Widening a Highway*

The Route 57 study area, encompassing 21 miles and eight municipalities in northwestern New Jersey near the Pennsylvania state line, was the focus of an innovative four-part planning process that sought to ensure the long-term viability of the rural corridor as a two-lane roadway. Community participation was vital to the success of each part of the process. In addition to the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), team members included municipal and county governments, the Department of Environmental Protection and the State Office of Smart Growth, as well as residents, business owners, farmers and civic organizations. An advisory group was formed among these partners to initiate the planning process and work through the phases of the plan.

During the first part of the process, the team discussed what its preferred growth scenario for the corridor would look like. Workshop participants decided that development and redevelopment along Route 57 should focus on existing centers, minimizing points of congestion as well as future land consumption. The immediate goal was to avoid sprawl, which would overburden the state highway beyond NJDOT's ability to remedy. Perhaps equally important, the process helped the region's communities develop their own practical and sustainable vision plans.

Citizens decided that development should focus on existing centers, minimizing points of congestion and avoiding sprawl.

The second part of the process was the creation of a Conceptual Corridor Plan, which included recommendations for economic vitality, environmental preservation, and transportation safety and efficiency. Public participation steered how each of these strategies would be implemented. In the next step, the team developed design guidelines to illustrate the appropriate density, scale and general characteristics of buildings, streets and public open spaces.

The fourth and last part of the Route 57 project produced an Implementation Toolkit, which can be used by municipalities and counties for planning future development. It includes information on street connectivity, scenic byway designation, tourism, pedestrian trails and greenways, particular issues about farms and other strategies.

This project was beneficial not just for the communities that live along the corridor, but also for NJDOT, which has very limited resources for capacity expansion and has other competing needs throughout the state. "In recent decades, NJDOT has found itself in a 'catch-up' mode, trying to retrofit capacity or operational improvements into corridors which have already been heavily built up," said NJDOT Project Manager Laine Rankin. "It was time to get ahead of the curve and to make improvements that would actually forestall congestion rather than try to fight it after the fact."

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- Intervention in the land use development curve, preempting the sprawl cycle before it is too late;
- Collaboration with host communities on land use planning to prevent the need for large-scale highway capacity investment;
- Provision of technical planning expertise to communities so they can develop a shared corridor vision, and assistance with developing planning tools and design guidelines to assist them in the implementation of their plan.

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Preservation of open space and viewsheds by strategic purchase and compact development;
- Installation of pedestrian amenities, including crosswalks, trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting in existing town centers;
- Agreement on the desired location and design principles for different land uses including towns, villages and open space;
- Development of local master plans that mandate street connectivity and mixed-use development.

EL CAMINO REAL IN CALIFORNIA

LESSON #4: *Cooperation Helps Revitalize Communities*

"It is important to create places to go to, rather than places to go through."

The El Camino Real corridor is centered on an historic road that originally linked Spanish missions from Mexico City all the way to San Francisco. But over the last 50 years in San Mateo County, south of San Francisco, El Camino Real had become a drab, nondescript state highway, characterized by traffic congestion and high accident rates. The road runs parallel to commuter-rail tracks and is dotted with well-used train stations. It also runs through both downtown commercial districts and suburban, car-dependent strip developments. Although towns along El Camino Real have long recognized the potential of revitalizing the corridor to improve their quality of life, local planning efforts were largely uncoordinated. The pressing need to build affordable housing in San Mateo County and the sheer quantity of prime land for redevelopment along El Camino Real prompted the county's transit operator and a county economic development association to start an extensive program of collaboration that now includes all of the agencies sharing responsibility for the 43-mile roadway from the San Mateo/San Francisco County line to San Jose.

Cooperation in this corridor led to an initiative to transform El Camino Real into a "great asset," starting with the revitalization of areas around the rail stations. That effort has since evolved into collaboration among 19 cities, two counties, two transit operators, local and regional agencies, residents, business owners and other stakeholders, all united to improve not only El Camino Real but the commuter rail stations and surrounding downtowns. The primary goal is to re-create El Camino Real as a "grand boulevard of meaningful destinations." This goal will be realized by balancing regional transportation needs with local aspirations to redevelop business districts, revitalize neighborhoods, create community gathering places and promote new opportunities for housing and economic development.

The El Camino Real task force recently adopted guiding principles, for considered by each of the member agencies. Coordinated policy decisions that are embraced by all jurisdictions will help the corridor to function better as a place to live, work and travel. "The boulevard project is a catalyst for encouraging cities to make land use decisions consistent with larger corridor planning goals," said Ian McAvoy, Chief Development Officer of the San Mateo County Transit District. "It is important to create places to go to, rather than places to go through."

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- A partnership between all the entities with an interest in the corridor: 19 cities, two counties, transit providers, congestion-management agencies, California DOT (Caltrans), commercial associations, residents, business owners and other stakeholders;
- Creation of a task force that meets on an ongoing basis to share information and make policy recommendations;
- Diagnosis of assets and challenges through community workshops and research of existing conditions;
- Adoption of "Vision, Challenge Statement and Guiding Principles" for the corridor as a whole that guide municipal Master Plans and other planning efforts;
- Awards to recognize exemplary projects and plans that support the Vision and Guiding Principles;
- Significant federal funding ($3.5M) for demonstration projects in two cities;
- A public information campaign through a series of reports, promotional materials and a website.

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Concentration of new growth around transit stations:
  - Redevelopment of vacant and underused lots into mixed-use, transit-oriented development;
  - Expansion and diversification of the retail mix, and encouragement of new Business Improvement Districts (BIDs);
  - Implementation of a comprehensive transportation plan that includes traffic calming, dedicated bicycle lanes and convenient pedestrian paths to the train stations;
  - Improved bicycle and pedestrian access to stations;
  - Provision of community amenities in and around the train stations;
  - Incentives for new buildings that face the stations.
- Transformation of El Camino Real into a context-sensitive urban boulevard:
  - Better traffic flow management using context-sensitive design solutions;
  - Improvement of pedestrian amenities, including textured crosswalks and bulbouts at key intersections;
  - Incentives for new buildings along El Camino that face the street rather than parking lots.
- Improvement of transit stations:
  - Development of a Multi-Modal Transportation Corridor Plan;
  - More attractive bus and train stops that are well connected to one another, including the relocation of bus stops when necessary;
  - Support for development of community shuttles that run from train stations to town centers and residential areas.

ROUTE 15 IN VIRGINIA, MARYLAND AND PENNSYLVANIA

LESSON #5: *Paying Attention to Context Makes All the Difference*

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground, which follows US Route 15 and Virginia Routes 20, 231 and 22 from Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, offers unparalleled significance in American history. It holds thousands of years of Native American history and hundreds of years of European-American and African-American history. Along the Journey lie two World Heritage Sites; 49 National Historic Districts; 1.5 million acres, 9,349 buildings and 1,225 structures on the National Register of Historic Places; the largest concentration of Civil War battlefields in America; sites of significant Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battles; nine presidential homes, including our founding fathers Jefferson, Madison and Monroe; the greatest concentration of Rural Historic Districts in America; 16 National Historic Landmarks; 13 National Parks; 20 Main Street Communities and Historic Downtowns; and numerous scenic roads, rivers and landscapes.

More than 150 organizations throughout the region are raising awareness about the cultural and historical significance of the corridor.

In 2005, a partnership of national, regional and grassroots non-profit organizations embarked on a campaign to balance economic develop-

ment, heritage tourism and historic preservation of the corridor. Named The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, it has since grown to include more than 200 regional and local entities throughout the region.

Over the course of the past several years, The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership has raised awareness about the significance of the corridor with a series of public education tools that include community workshops, educational materials and a targeted media campaign. Today, the Partnership is preparing a Corridor Management Plan to promote appropriate land uses in the corridor, investigate management strategies to conserve the long-term integrity of the corridor, prepare context-sensitive alternatives for planned safety improvements to Route 15 and have the corridor nominated as a National All-American Road.

"It is not often that engineers get to design national treasures," said Cate Magennis Wyatt, President of The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership. "Design solutions exist. It's a matter of getting everyone to sit down at the table and determine what we want the road to be 30 to 50 years in the future."

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- A strong network of local, regional and national partners to develop a common vision for the conservation and enhancement of the scenic, historic, recreational, cultural and natural characteristics of the corridor. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership has received hundreds of formal resolutions of support from local and county governments, as well as private citizen and business interests;
- Awareness building:
  - Map of historic sites along the road;
  - One-on-one interviews with key leaders in the region;
  - Briefings with Main Street communities, workshops with National Park Service representatives and a summit meeting and workshops for educators covering heritage tourism and heritage sites;
  - A targeted media campaign with local, regional and national press;
  - A project website;
  - A heritage tourism program that provides economic development opportunities through regional branding and cooperative marketing;
  - National Scenic Byway and National Heritage Area designation;
  - An education outreach program for students of every age and teachers.

- Fundraising from foundations and individuals;
- Establishment of a stewardship structure to implement the corridor management plan.

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Creation of a branded identity for the region with signage, visitor information centers and GPS-based interpretive programs;
- Collaboration among all jurisdictions in the corridor to foster sustainable land use planning and development practices, as well as conservation of valuable natural, scenic and historic resources;
- Creation of a Corridor Management Plan for Route 15 that facilitated the planning and development of safety improvements including the implementation of context-sensitive roadway design guidelines. This was the result of 36 public/community meetings.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

LESSON #6: *Successful Corridors Need Vigilant Management*

Arlington County, across the Potomac River from Washington, DC, was an early proponent of transit-oriented development (TOD) as a strategy to reverse significant declines in both population and commercial activity along a three-mile corridor running from Rosslyn to Ballston. Three decades of continual effort by a wide range of partners has resulted in the revitalization of a once-declining, auto-oriented corridor surrounded by low-density neighborhoods, into one of the most active and successful commercial centers in the country.

The integration of land use and transportation planning has been a success. Dynamic economic growth has been achieved with minimal increase in vehicle traffic.

When the Washington region's Metro rail service reached Rosslyn in 1977, Arlington County envisioned development of dense and vibrant "urban villages" around Metro stations, surrounded by lower-density residential neighborhoods. The County adopted a General Use Plan that has resulted in enormous amounts of new development through the years. Since 1980, more than 17 million square feet of additional office space, 2 mil-

lion square feet of retail, 21,000 housing units and 1,500 hotel rooms have been built, all within two square miles. More development is still in the works.

Arlington County's land use development efforts have been successful in large part thanks to its balanced transportation strategy. The County has succeeded in creating and managing a transportation system in which transit, driving, walking and bicycling complement each other. Four boulevards and a grid of local streets serve the corridor and connect it to adjacent neighborhoods, providing travelers with a choice of routes and making the system as a whole remarkably efficient and effective. Few commuters drive to the Metro because nearly all the streets in the corridor are pedestrian-, bicycle- and bus-friendly, and parking throughout the area is limited. The County has actively promoted transit use through management policies, including websites and "Commuter Stores," which provide customer service and information about transit options and routes. Importantly, the County continues to rethink these strategies in order to improve them and adopt new ones.

Arlington County's successful integration of land use and transportation strategies, as well as its careful and continuous management of the corridor, has resulted in dynamic economic growth, a minimal increase in vehicle traffic and a 38 percent increase in transit ridership since 1997.

According to Christopher Zimmerman, a member of the Arlington County Board, community involvement has been essential to the corridor's success.

"Community members are heavily involved in both comprehensive planning and the site plans of particular developments, through civic associations and citizen advisory commissions that meet on a regular basis and have a formalized role in the approval process," he said. "This promotes a high degree of awareness and support for the overall County vision."

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- Intensive and ongoing involvement with local citizens. Stakeholders have several avenues for involvement, and as a result, there has been minimal conflict throughout the redevelopment process;
- Involvement of a range of players in planning and implementation of the redevelopment initiative, including the County Board, the staff of several County departments, citizen commissions, other community representatives, developers and property owners, each with a different role, for example:
  - The County Board sets policy and provides leadership on issues including development and capital investments;

  - The citizen commissions review development and infrastructure projects, provide feedback on new policy initiatives and help forge community consensus on difficult issues;
  - The developers have funded significant public infrastructure improvements (burying utilities underground, redesigning intersections, providing pedestrian amenities) and other elements of the master plan in exchange for being allowed to build at higher densities.
- An understanding that challenges continue to evolve, so initiatives can be re-focused accordingly. In the 1990s, for instance, Arlington County began addressing the issues of historic preservation and transportation demand management. In recent years, a residential parking permit program has been overhauled, and the County has begun promoting a "complete streets" approach to accommodate walkers and bicyclists.

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Adoption of a General Land Use Plan that encourages node development:
  - Concentration of dense, mixed-use development directly around the Metro stations (18- to 20-story residential buildings and 10- to 12-story office buildings);
  - Lower building heights farther away from the stations;
  - Preservation of established neighborhoods and natural areas at the edge.
- Specification of a mix of uses in the General Land Use Plan:
  - Requirements that developers, if necessary, build those uses that are not currently in high demand in order to build more of the preferred use.
- Development of sector plans to encourage the area around each train station area to maintain a distinct sense of community:
  - Goals for type of land use, open space, infrastructure and design;
  - Emphasis on pedestrian access and safety and incorporation of public art, pocket parks, wide sidewalks with restaurant seating, bike lanes, street trees, traffic calming and street-level retail.
- Creation and management of an integrated transportation system:
  - Fast and efficient rail transit;
  - Additional local bus service;
  - A pedestrian-, bicycle- and transit-friendly network of local streets;
  - An actively managed parking supply, including higher priced on-street parking, adoption of a neighborhood parking sticker program, reduction in parking requirements for new development, and requirements that developers charge market rates for private parking and allow shared use of off-street parking among businesses;

- Dedication of the road parallel to the rail line to high-occupancy vehicles at peak times;
- Assistance to employers in the creation of transportation demand management programs;
- Requirement of transportation management plans for all major commercial and residential developments that go through the site plan review process;
- Establishment of "Commuter Stores" where staff provide transit information, help plan travel and sell fare cards;
- Management of a field sales force that works with hotel, office building and apartment building managers to provide transit information;
- Maintenance of websites that provide comprehensive commuter information.

ROUTE 9 IN OCEAN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LESSON #7: *Integrating Land Use and Transportation Planning Revitalizes Communities*

The Route 9 corridor project involved 30 miles of the state highway, which serves the needs of 12 seashore communities along the coast of central New Jersey. Land use patterns in this corridor have changed dramatically over the past few decades. Seasonal homes are being replaced or upgraded to year-round residences as more people seek to live at the seashore. In turn, property values have skyrocketed, and rampant congestion has followed.

The business-as-usual solution to this growing congestion and feverish real estate development would entail a major widening of the northernmost 20 miles of this stretch of Route 9. However, with development immediately adjacent to the roadway, the widening would incur staggering right-of-way costs, and the effect on local communities and the natural environment would be devastating. Simply put, the cure would likely kill the patient. A widening project would require an estimated $150 million for property acquisition and more than $500 million for construction. The New Jersey Department of Transportation realized in this case that the conventional approach to congestion management was neither a responsible nor affordable solution.

If NJDOT had not been honest about its inability to widen Route 9, local jurisdictions would have continued to approve development proposals based on the unrealistic expectation that NJDOT would someday find a way to fund widening the road. This would have created a situation where local communities would continue to believe that the State of New Jersey would eventually reward unsustainable development patterns in the corridor.

Instead, NJDOT embraced an integrated transportation and land use approach, which helped state agencies and the 12 affected seashore communities recognize the need to work together to address the emerging problems. The project participants all signed a Partnership Agreement that supports solutions which balance the need for development with the need to maintain community character, protect natural and historic resources and improve quality of life.

Since then, NJDOT has been helping communities along Route 9 improve their overall transportation infrastructure as well as apply a better land use framework so that they can respond effectively and responsibly to the challenges and opportunities of growth. NJDOT has also promoted solutions that optimize the resources of the state and offer far-reaching—rather than temporary—solutions to traffic congestion.

The first major milestone in this process was the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan, which established the following six guiding principles for the area:

Balance Regional Mobility and Local Access Needs
Focus on Improving Capacity Where It Counts
Reconnect and Enhance the Transportation Network
Strengthen Community Character
Provide Alternatives to the Car
Match Growth to Infrastructure Limitations

In order to implement the Route 9 Corridor Master Plan and turn these visions into reality, the Route 9 Corridor Coalition was formed. State and regional agencies and townships and boroughs, located throughout the corridor, comprise the coalition which meets periodically to share information and discuss issues.

The widening of the road would incur staggering costs. The effect on local communities and the natural environment would be devastating. Fortunately, another solution was found.

Some early successes have emerged from the process. One of the Route 9 communities, Ocean Township, received approval for improvements to its town center, which will provide an area for new economic development in an appealing and environmentally appropriate manner. This concept will likely enhance mobility by providing a new grid of streets for through, local, and non-auto travel. "The goal of our town center is to give peo-

ple alternate travel routes and to lower speed limits to be compatible with pedestrian activity," said Ocean Township mayor Daniel Van Pelt. "We need to help enhance our sense of community by getting people to walk more and interact with each other."

In another community along the corridor, Berkeley Township, a defunct strip mall is slated for redevelopment into a compact, multi-use town center. This plan also involves establishing a grid of local streets and protecting important environmental features from future development.

According to the NJDOT Project Manager Gary Leach, "The communities are now in a better position to create town centers and increase density because of more recognition by the state agencies involved in the Route 9 study."

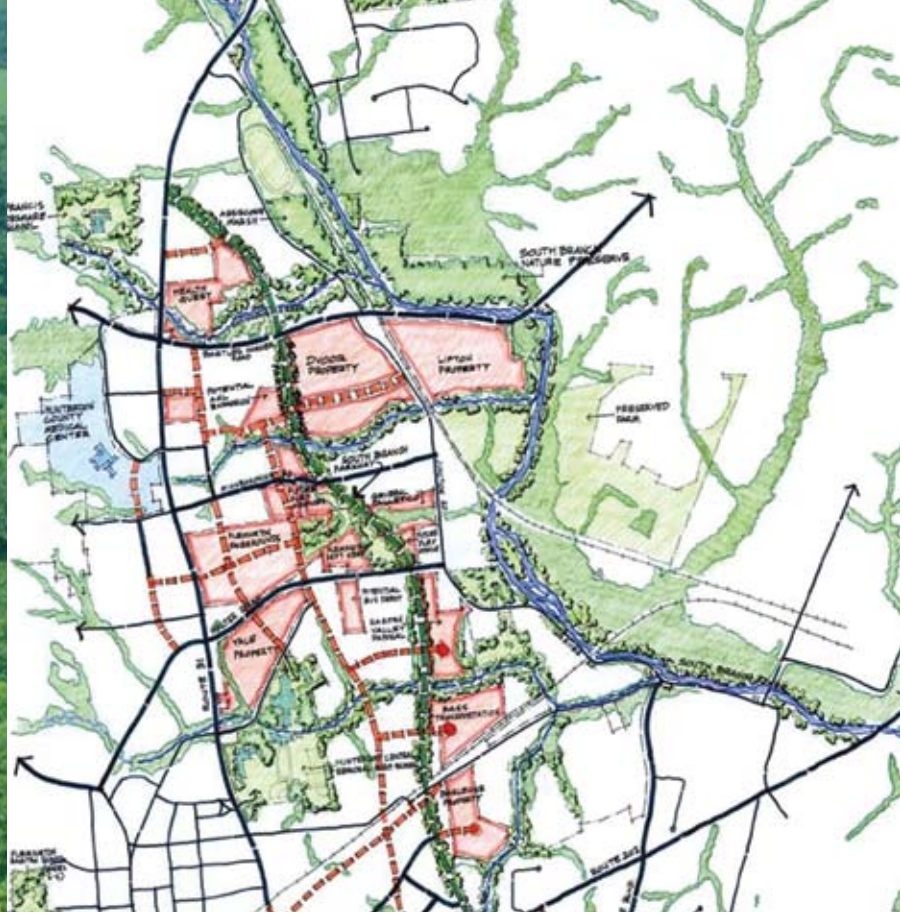
TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- Collaboration between adjacent communities on land use planning;
- Inclusion of regulatory agencies in the planning process to achieve a realistic and shared vision for the corridor;
- Aid to local communities that do not have the resources and expertise to deal with development pressures through financial resources from NJDOT and technical assistance for land use planning and traffic circulation at the local level;
- A Partnership Agreement for all participating stakeholders to sign;
- Creation of an ongoing regional planning entity to implement the shared vision plan fostered by DOT.

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Preservation of environmental resources and revitalization of commercial areas by fostering compact development and new town centers;
- Installation of pedestrian amenities including crosswalks, trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting;
- Development of grids of neighborhood streets to improve local access and enhance people's choice of routes.



ROUTE 31 IN FLEMINGTON, NEW JERSEY

LESSON #8: *A Better Kind of Bypass Serves Both Travelers and Towns*

For many years, the New Jersey Department of Transportation worked on developing a freeway bypass around the town of Flemington—providing an alternate path to Route 31 in the western part of the state. A related proposal was construction of a flyover at Flemington Circle. In 2004, NJDOT reviewed these projects and came to the following conclusions:

- Due to cost and environmental impacts, it would be many years before the Flemington bypass could be built as originally conceived;
- Given current patterns of traffic and sprawling land use development, the bypass and flyover probably would not solve the congestion problems predicted for the future;
- Constructing either of these massive highway projects would not help to improve transportation access and circulation around planned development; and
- These roads would not be consistent with local residents' wishes for the future of their community.

Consequently, NJDOT began a series of intensive discussions with local citizens and elected officials, initiating a dialogue about how the Flemington area was developing and how the transportation system could be redesigned to meet local needs.

As part of this process, NJDOT and its local partners envisioned a more context-sensitive bypass that would provide motorists an additional option to the existing Route 31 while enhancing the transportation network and promoting the area's natural, historic and cultural resources. Called the "South Branch Parkway," this two-lane, 35 mph parkway will connect Route 31 and Route 202, defining a clear edge between Flemington's urban/suburban and rural/agricultural zones.

"We need to approach planning with more outside-the-box thinking. The way it has always been done does not work."

The Parkway will also connect to an expansion of the local street network, adding new route options for local traffic and minimizing pressure on Route 31. These street network enhancements will provide a more balanced transportation system, increasing connectivity and mobility at about half the cost of the original bypass plan. The new network will include sidewalks and other amenities to encourage pedestrian and bicycle movement throughout the area. More direct routes between areas of housing, employment and retail will also be provided.

During the first few years of operation, the Parkway will not move vehicles from point A to point B as fast as a 55 mph freeway, but over the 50-year life of the project, it is expected to provide superior service due to better local road connections and fewer incentives for sprawl. Furthermore, the revised project will likely be completed sooner than the original bypass plan and will be more sensitive to the region's history and environment.

The local project partners are initiating an access management plan to further enhance the accessibility of future development. They are also updating zoning codes to facilitate a better mix of land uses, encourage the concentration of development in compact centers and boost the overall tax base in the area. Building the transportation network over time, while planning ahead for future development and incorporating context-sensitive solutions, will ensure that this area can accommodate growth and maintain the valuable character of the community.

Another key advantage of the project is the focus on protecting the South Branch of the Raritan River, which includes many acres of preserved open space extending 22 miles through Hunterdon County. In addition to being a unique environmental and scenic resource, the South Branch was the site of early settlement in this region, and surviving remnants of this history can be found along the river. The Route 31 Land Use and Transportation Plan supports the idea of a recreational and historic greenway to preserve and promote these historic and environmental qualities.

"A traditional bypass has traffic dictating land use, whereas the South Branch Parkway, which combined open dialogue with all stakeholders and sound planning practices, will allow the land use to dictate traffic," said Mary Melfi, former mayor of Flemington. "We need to approach planning with more outside-the-box thinking because obviously the way it has always been done does not work."

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

PROCESS:

- Revision of conventional approaches to alleviating traffic congestion;
- Development of an access management plan to help control future congestion;
- Partnership between host communities and private developers to integrate transportation and land use planning;
- Facilitation of planning coordination between adjacent communities;
- Gradual implementation of the plan to allow for diverse funding sources.

PLANNING & DESIGN:

- Roadway designs that fit into community and environmental contexts;
- Streets that safely accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel;
- Development of a neighborhood street grid to improve local access and route choice;
- Collaboration with developers to ensure internal development streets also serve a public purpose;
- Development of local master plans that mandate street connectivity and mixed-use development.

Conclusions

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

It is becoming increasingly apparent that transportation agencies need to take a leadership role in the integration of transportation and land use planning. It may not be immediately obvious that it is a department of transportation's responsibility to create great corridors by encouraging local smart growth planning, coordination among adjacent communities and the success of local circulation plans, and in the long run it may prove not to be. However, the absence of integrated and coordinated planning at this level is creating insurmountable challenges for transportation agencies: creating daunting and ever increasing vehicle-miles traveled (VMTs), dumping local traffic on the state highways and rendering transit infeasible. Arguably, no other agency is more affected than DOTs; virtually their entire congestion relief programs are generated by this void between local land use decisions and regional transportation planning. No other level of government is in a better position to intervene—local governments are strapped for planning resources, and regional agencies often do not have enough power.

Transportation departments can engage citizens, policymakers and the transportation industry at-large to reshape the planning and design of transportation networks to promote and support economic vitality, civic engagement, human health, and environmental sustainability, while simultaneously meeting peoples' mobility needs. By treating streets as public spaces, DOTs can transform the design and construction of streets into places that

improve the quality of the human and natural environment, rather than simply move vehicles.

Localities must also contribute to successful corridors by using placemaking to proactively plan great communities. In addition to a fine-grained mix of land uses and a local transportation network that serves local trips and non-motorized travel, high-quality destinations foster the kind of walkable neighborhoods that do not overburden the state highway system. A sustainable corridor connects successful communities, each made up of great neighborhoods with great places.

This pincer strategy for corridor planning works from both the top-down and the bottom-up. The following are recommendations to assist transportation providers and communities as they navigate this new approach to transportation planning.

INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS EARLY AND PROVIDE THEM WITH MEANINGFUL ROLES

Department of transportation staff must shift away from being the subject-matter experts that feed solutions to communities and wait for their reaction. Rather, they need to see themselves as facilitators of transportation and land use plans that help achieve the goals of all participants, including the state DOT. In this role, the DOT provides resources and expertise when called upon by stakeholders. This will help shift the process from "DAD: Decide, Announce, Defend," in which the community is only allowed to react to developed plans, to "POP: Publicly Owned Projects" that involve the community in problem identification, visioning, and decision making.

WORK WITH DEVELOPERS

In this era of limited public funding for infrastructure, the public sector needs to learn how to capture the capital that developers invest in internal road infrastructure. DOTs and local governments can no longer sit idly by and watch adjacent developers build roads which do not connect across property lines. Early involvement and coordination can help lay out new local streets that parallel and support the state highway system. This principle is also critical when working with transit and transit-oriented development. Stations can be developed as market-driven projects with little or no financial investment from the community. DOTs and transit agencies need to maximize the value of alliances with developers. This process can simultaneously maximize private profits and public value.

BUILD TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE INCREMENTALLY

Improvements in both land use strategies and transportation planning are easier to manage, more affordable and deliver greater effectiveness if each project is implemented in-

crementally, as needed. In Trenton, New Jersey, the state DOT is rebuilding Route 29 as a boulevard in sections, as funding becomes available and as understanding of the project's potential improves. The last section to be rebuilt will be the one in downtown Trenton. This will be the most complex segment of the project, and saving it for last will give planners the benefit of more experience, stronger public support and better collaboration with the development community. The product of corridor studies, therefore, needs to be viewed as a program of investment priorities for both transportation and land use by all levels of government and the private sector over a period of at least 20 years.

ENCOURAGE LEADERSHIP TO CONSTANTLY AND CONSISTENTLY ARTICULATE THE VISION OF THIS NEW APPROACH TO TRANSPORTATION

It is important for the project leadership to constantly and consistently articulate a clear vision with clearly stated goals and objectives of the corridor study for the benefit and education of both external project stakeholders and internal agency management and staff.

CREATE AND EXECUTE A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

A communications strategy is important in assuring that the coordinating agency collects, manages and disseminates important information throughout the project. Open communication engages local communities in multi-party dialogue over extended periods of time, from the conception of the vision through the planning and implementation stages of these projects. The notion of dialogue is important, connoting much more than the conventional approach of one-way communication.

EVALUATE OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF INITIALLY ARTICULATED GOALS

Success should be measured in terms of articulated goals, with those goals always subject to adjustment as the transportation community becomes better informed about the actual consequences of holistic corridor planning. Moreover, a focus on outcomes elevates the importance of implementation of planning outcomes.

CONTINUE CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT

Transportation departments and transit agencies have historically viewed themselves as providing a one-time investment and then leaving the project behind until a major problem erupts. However, corridors function best when the transportation system is continually refined and improved. The new business model in transportation planning should be to constantly manage the system to avoid the need for major capacity investments. In this approach, a local process is developed for implementing ongoing infrastructure improvements, which ensures that the agreed-upon vision is not abandoned through "everyone

for themselves" decisions. The state DOT would ideally not lead this process, but it is critical that the DOT sees itself as responsible for leaving behind an easily implemented process. From this perspective, transportation agencies will have failed at their mission if the local vision falls apart after they leave: creating pressure to widen a road or replace an interchange.

Corridor studies need to be thought of as progressing through the following stages:

Public Education and Outreach A number of one-on-one and public forums to raise public awareness of the inadequacies of conducting "business as usual" and the importance of finding new and innovative ways to address traffic concerns;

Community Consensus-Building Individual and group interviews with identified stakeholders, the application of consensus-building tools, the employment of external consultants, and information-sharing with the ultimate goal of shaping a set of shared values through community dialogue;

Community Codification and Alignment Revisions to local plans, ordinances and regulations to reflect local community needs; may also include memoranda of agreement among participants, developed through a process whereby a shared understanding of the new approaches to addressing traffic congestion are readily acknowledged.

UPDATE HUMAN RESOURCE PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT NEW APPROACHES TO TRANSPORTATION

Working with local stakeholders and land use decision makers is a paradigm shift for large transportation organizations. It is necessary for them to assess and manage staff skills to ensure that management and project staff possess the necessary knowledge and skills base to implement what is now being expected of them. The appropriate skills will now not only include an adequate knowledge of engineering and innovative transportation-planning techniques, but also skills tied to negotiation, conflict resolution and mediation, and consensus-building to manage and communicate more effectively with stakeholders.

REGULARLY ASSESS THE CORRIDOR STUDY PROCESS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The agency leading the corridor study effort should regularly assess the process in order to identify and clarify valuable lessons learned by project participants. Assessments should be made with respect to the challenges of corridor planning efforts and the ways that those challenges were met. These lessons should be incorporated back into the planning process to continuously improve this corridor approach.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Every planning decision provides an opportunity to promote a community's vision. When the Washington, DC Metro rail system was being expanded in the 1970s, Arlington County, Virginia, lobbied hard for the Metro to be built underground along its main thoroughfare rather than in the median strip of a nearby interstate highway. They knew that easy pedestrian access to the stations was necessary for successful development and an urban renaissance.

A sustainable corridor connects successful communities, each made up of great neighborhoods with great places.

COORDINATE EFFORTS TO CREATE SYNERGY

You'll achieve far better results if you work with partners. California's El Camino Real highway, running south from San Francisco in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, passes through more than a dozen municipalities, and their coordinated planning efforts are yielding a far more effective outcome than would emerge from the efforts of any individual municipality.

REMEMBER THAT MORE IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

Sometimes reduced speeds, reduced capacities or reduced levels of service at strategic locations can improve the overall performance of a corridor. In many contexts, transportation outcomes should not be the only measure of success.

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The year 2008 marks the 33rd anniversary of Project for Public Spaces as an internationally recognized nonprofit organization offering technical assistance, research, education, planning and design. PPS's mission is to create and sustain public places that build communities. It operates programs based on transportation, parks, plazas and civic squares, public markets, community institutions and public buildings. Since the organization's founding in 1975, PPS staff have worked in more than 2,000 communities, in 26 countries around the world, to help turn public spaces into vital community places—with programs, uses and people-friendly settings that highlight local assets, spur social and economic rejuvenation and serve common needs. In improving these public environments, PPS focuses on creating places that enrich people's experience of public life, through their distinctive identities and their integration into the community fabric.

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