



TRANSPORTATION *planning*

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From the Chair

By Whit Blanton, AICP

As we move from a tumultuous 2003 into 2004, we look ahead to improving economic prosperity and the continued hope for peace in the world. The Transportation Planning Division also looks ahead to a productive and engaging year, with a number of activities planned. Reauthorization and upcoming state and national elections should make this an especially interesting time for the transportation planning profession.

In addition to our session plans for the APA National Planning Conference (to be held April 24-28 in Washington D.C.), your Transportation Planning Division is continuing to focus on several important topics this year. They include:

Airports in the Region. This fall we made considerable progress on our Airports initiative by obtaining APA Divisions Council endorsement of our proposal for a multi-year research and development program to improve the coordination of airport, land use and transportation plans. The initiative, dubbed "Airports in the Region", will examine the regional planning implications of airports and their surrounding commercial districts. The intent is to provide planning guidance to the profession and other organizations. At APA's Fall Leadership meetings in Chicago, the APA Division's Council (comprised of the chairs of all 18 APA divisions) approved funding of \$2,000 to start the program. Additional funding is being sought through other channels. Support from APA staff and the Legislative and Policy Committee is strong, and the Federal Aviation Administration along with other air-

Slow Down, You Move Too Fast...

by Jill Barrett, Joseph H. Rimiller and Kevin Burnham, P.E.

What do you do when requests from residents demanding speed bumps or unwarranted stop signs to slow traffic become a weekly refrain?

Make a plan.

That's what Bhupen Patel, Director of the City of Hartford's Department of Public Works did. Patel knew the city needed to find better ways to slow speeders than putting speed bumps on every block.

Last year the city began an 18-month process to create a citywide traffic calming plan for all of its residential neighborhoods. It was a daunting task, but as the planning team heads into its final phase, city residents are now asking for much more than speed bumps. Through extensive outreach and education, the community has learned there are a variety of ways to slow traffic, and they want to try many of them in their neighborhoods.

To help develop the plan, the City of Hartford hired a private consultant team headed by Urban Engineers, Inc., and included national traffic calming expert Dan Burden of Walkable Communities, Inc. With an easy going style, superb graphics and a clear message on how to reduce speeding, Burden led two-dozen community charrettes in city neighborhoods.



Neighbors form a "human curb extension" to demonstrate how to narrow a street opening

Public Works Director Bhupen Patel said, "We wanted to take a bottoms-up approach. Rather than having the engineers telling the community what the traffic calming plan should be, we wanted the community telling us what they thought might work best to calm traffic."

One City Councilman, who participated in designing traffic calming measures for his own neighborhood and dropped in on sessions in other neighborhoods, expressed that he was impressed with the city's coordinated approach.

Every city neighborhood had an opportunity to learn about and recommend traffic calming tools. These recommendations, coupled with review and refinement by engineers on the traffic calming team, will become part of the city's master plan for its streets.

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Traffic Calming, continued from page 1

Getting the community to attend the traffic calming sessions was a high priority for the city. The project team recognized that this would be a challenge in Hartford, a community of 120,000 with a large poor and minority population, where community organization can be limited.

Yet, for the community to support a traffic calming plan, city staff knew residents needed to know about the range of traffic calming tools available and had to believe they might work. Thus, community outreach would have to be the key component of the planning process, led by a long-time Hartford resident, planner and community organizer.

Outreach had to take many forms. The dominant newspaper in the region has poor readership in the city so the neighborhood weeklies were courted to run front-page stories. They did, even though the story line was the same for five straight rounds of community workshops.

Much of the outreach efforts centered on identifying community leaders, existing organizations and networks to get people involved in the planning. Where possible, neighborhood committees were organized to plan and sponsor the traffic calming charrettes. When this occurred, community activists designed their own yers, arranged for food at meetings and chose meeting space. The more ownership community committees had in organizing charrettes, the better the turnout.

“We wanted to take a bottoms-up approach. Rather than having the engineers telling the community what the traffic calming plan should be, we wanted the community telling us what they thought might work best to calm traffic.”

- Bhupen Patel, Director - Hartford Department of Public Works

Additional outreach strategies over the year-long period when charrettes were conducted included: taping a half-hour show on public access television that ran for months, development of a project website (www.hartfordtrafficalming.com) and updates on the City of Hartford's official website.

The public was also informed about the planning workshops through tabletop displays in the neighborhood branch libraries, appearances on radio talk shows, yers distributed both door-to-door and through the schools, e-mail alerts through informal e-mail networks, placement of meeting notices and project updates in community newsletters and church bulletins, direct mail to civic leaders, and posters with balloons at polling places on election day.

Response to the outreach efforts varied. In neighborhoods where there were effective community organizers and good social networks, charette attendance ranged from 40 to 100 participants. Not surprisingly the most economically depressed and politically disenfranchised neighborhood had the poorest turnout.

The charrettes followed a careful script, designed to have participants educated, engaged and empowered. Each began with an activity in which residents were asked to identify a value they would like to see in their neighborhood. This was followed by a half hour presentation where residents got a crash course in traffic calming measures, where and why they are used, interspersed with research and anecdotal data on why speeding hurts communities. Residents were then asked to identify traffic problem areas and then prioritize them by allowing each participant a limited amount of votes to place on the problems they considered most serious.

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Finally, people attending the charrette were divided into groups, seated at tables, asked to identify problem areas by writing on maps and offer solutions based on the traffic calming measures they had just learned about. In each city neighborhood, regardless of socioeconomic status or education, everyone in the room actively participated in the charrette.

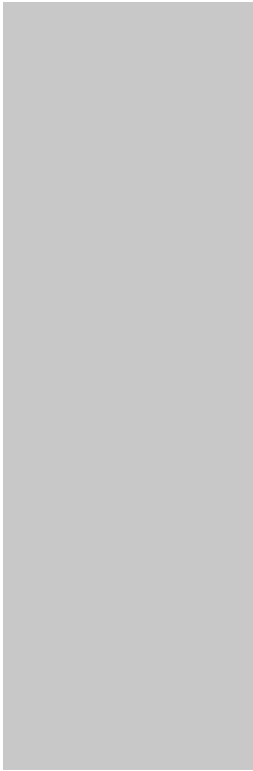
A few months later, the traffic calming team held a second neighborhood meeting where they presented a draft traffic calming plan for the area. Comments and recommendations from the first meeting had been field tested and incorporated into the draft plan as much as possible.

Since the basis of the traffic calming plan came from information gathered at the first community charrette, getting consensus on the plan should have been easy. And it was. Some adjustments were made to the draft as new information was contributed but each neighborhood voted to adopt the revised plans by the end of the second meeting.

The traffic calming plans developed with the neighborhoods had a range of treatments – curb extensions, parking chicanes, roundabouts, chokers, median islands, speed tables, and road diets. Missing were two well-known tools used to slow traffic:

Speed bumps and stop signs.

Jill Barrett is a Senior Planner at Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc and is the Project Coordinator for Public Involvement. Joseph H. Rimiller, EIT, is a Project Engineer at Urban Engineers, Inc. Kevin Burnham, P.E., is the Project Manager for the City of Hartford Department of Public Works.



Green Parking Lots at UConn’s New Football Stadium

by Norman W. Garrick and Kwesi A. Brown

The “green” parking lots at UConn’s Rentschler Field are just the latest and most visible example in Connecticut of a more environmentally sound approach for paving low trafficked surfaces. The project involved construction of a new University of Connecticut football stadium on a former airfield.

The design used at Rentschler Field was chosen as a cost effective solution for reducing the impacts from a large parking area on the environmentally sensitive wetlands located adjacent to the stadium. This particular combination of turf parking stalls with processed aggregate driveways will produce much less precipitation run-off than would be the case for a conventional asphalt pavement. Less run-off means less pollution discharging to the wetlands and less potential for erosion in the natural drainage system.



An example of turf-construction

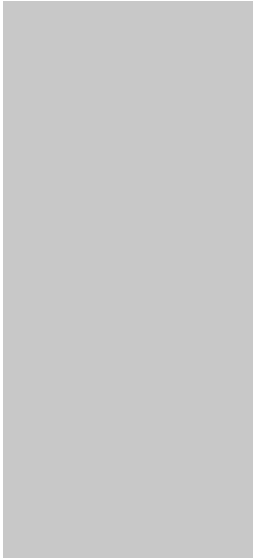
An important secondary benefit for football fans is that a grass parking lot provides a much more pleasant ambience for the tailgating picnics that traditionally accompany UConn football games.

The turf parking at the Rentschler Field is noteworthy, not just because of its prominent location and size, but also for its innovative design. The design consultants on the project chose to use a fiber reinforced turf system called Turfgrid. In this system, propylene fibers are embedded into topsoil and laid down to a depth of 4 to 6 inches. The soil is then seeded with grass. Once



A toast to green parking...or the football game?

see “Green Parking”, page 5



Join Us at TRB Reception



For those of you planning to attend TRB in January, **please join us** for our semi-annual Transportation Planning Division (TPD)

business meeting and reception.

All Welcome!

When: Sunday, January 11, 2003, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Where: Washington Hilton Conservatory

What: TPD Business Meeting (short) and Reception (long)

TPD's other semi-annual meeting will also be in Washington D.C. in April at APA's National Conference. Stay tuned for details in the March newsletter.



Smart Growth Needs Smart Rail

by Lawrence J. Fabian

A national debate about ground transport priorities and funding for our country happens every five years around Federal appropriations. This is healthy. We should every so often pause and think forward at least five years. Where are we headed and where do we want to go?

There are serious concerns about chronic highway congestion, sprawl, and loss of momentum in our gains at cleaning the air in and around cities. Do we need greater highway capacity? What about Amtrak and mass transit for dense urban corridors? What is the right balance between highway and rail?

Rakesh Tripathi in last week's Viewpoint argued that the first step if to create a viable national rail network – for cargo, but especially for passengers – and that we must fully comprehend that rail is not just another kind of road. Those involved in advanced forms of urban transit would add something very significant – but also difficult to fully comprehend. Tomorrow's rail can be more than faster, spiffed-up versions of 20th century railroads.

Automated Trains Are Safer



Breath-taking gains have been made in the full automation of rapid transit movements over the last two decades. This was at first at a "light" urban scale, mostly in Europe but also in Vancouver and a few Asian cities. Recent openings – the Meteor in Paris and Singapore's North East Line, for example – are "heavier" so that the label of Driverless Metro is applies.

These driverless metros have staff well-placed in a fully wired control center. Mobile attendants also roam the trains and stations. They actually provide a greater security presence to the public than drivers bored by repetitive routines in their booths. This arrangement gives metro managers a great deal of flexibility to respond to spikes in passenger demand or other operating conditions. Today driverless metros have become the norm for new starts in industrial countries – except the U.S.

Removing the labor cost of each "run" also means that frequent service is more affordable. Heavy loads can be carried in shorter trains (serving smaller – i.e., less obtrusive and expensive – stations). If stations are off-line – like the service plazas on turnpikes – then a very dense flow of vehicles can be accommodated. Off-line stations unlock whole new ways to operate a rail system. Some argue that you can't really think of it as rail. You aren't dealing with lines, but integrated networks.

Non-Stop Service

The implications are exciting. Not only can we have frequent service, but it can also be non-stop. If a station is off-line, any given train doesn't have to stop at it. In urban markets, this leads to concepts that are labeled PRT – short for Personal Rapid Transit. It's an idea that first emerged in the 1960s, only to fade away in the 1970s. Several companies – without governmental support, except in Australia – are quietly working on PRT today.

This higher level of service possible with a system reconfiguration of the old subway paradigm can be envisioned for inter-city transport as well. In fact, its implications for the future of national rail systems are compelling. Can you picture the day when we can have on-demand service all day and night between any pair of stations? What would it be like to take Amtrak from Syracuse and Pittsburgh non-stop, as opposed to today's awkward trip on Amtrak? No wonder most people drive or fly. Same for Sacramento-Boise or Charlotte-Huntsville, and through America.

Today Amtrak is bleeding in red ink trying to provide at least one scheduled train along major routes. Stuck in 20th-century (some would even argue 19th) thinking, Amtrak's only hope is to beg for more subsidies at a time when government coffers are empty. It is a long, long way between today's desperation and the cyber-reality of the future, when passengers will input their trips, and The Network will schedule a non-stop service without need to transfer. But shouldn't decision-makers in Washington pause and contemplate a better future?

Larry Fabian is the director of Trans.21, an international clearinghouse of planning information on automated people movers. He can be reached at lfabian@airfront.us.

Green Parking, continued from page 3

the grass grows, the root system interlocks with the fibers to provide the strength and integrity needed to support traffic.

The Turfgrid system was attractive for this job because of its low cost. The drawback is that it takes a full growing season to achieve full strength. This was not a problem at this site since stadium parking was not needed until the fall of 2003, when UConn inaugurated play at their new home for football. For projects with a shorter construction timeline, the need for a seasoning period would pose a problem. However, there are many other options available for green parking. For example, the over low parking lot at the Westfarms Mall is also a green pavement but one that is based on a very different technology from that at Rentschler Field. The pavement at nearby Westfarms Mall uses plastic lattices with grass infill. Other common techniques include open graded paving blocks, open-celled paving grids, porous concrete, porous turf and porous asphalt. These systems all have different costs, strength and permeability characteristics to suit a wide range of paving needs.

Here at UConn in the Civil Engineering Department, we are currently working on developing a guide to help municipalities sort through this array of choices to develop green paving solutions that they can tailor to their needs. This work is sponsored by the Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program at the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Norman Garrick is Associate Professor of Transportation at the University of Connecticut. Kwesi Brown is a Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Connecticut.

APM Logo Design Contest Deadline Extended!

The Automated People Mover (APM) Committee of the American Society of Civil Engineers has been planning milestone APM conferences since the mid-1980s. The Call for Abstracts will be issued soon.

The APM05 Organizing Committee has decided that the 10th conference presents an ideal opportunity to update the APM logo. They are offering a modest \$200 prize (with \$50 for the runner-up) for the best submission. They want to retain the old logo, shown here, but upgrade or enhance it in some way to reflect the APM05 theme of “Moving to Mainstream.” The new logo should reflect the fact that APMs have shed their experimental and risk-prone aspects and are now mature technology readily available for consideration by MPOs, transit officials and others for incorporation into public and private projects. **Submission of logo redesigns are now due March 31st.** For more information, contact Larry Fabian at (617) 825-2318 or lfabian@airfront.us.



Correction

In our last issue (Summer 2003) in the article entitled “Federal Transportation Dollars A Key Factor For Smart Growth” by Hannah Twaddle, reference was made to the GR~~T~~A as the “Greater Atlanta Regional Transit Authority”. Hannah wishes to thank reader Art Sheldon for pointing out that GR~~T~~A really stands for “Georgia Regional Transportation Authority”. Our apologies for the error.

Attention Students and Professors!

Student Paper Competition

The Transportation Planning Division is looking for outstanding student papers on current transportation planning or policy issues. Two awards will be presented: one for the best graduate student paper with a **\$600 prize** and another for the best undergraduate paper with a **\$400 prize**. Papers must have been originally written by a single author for a class in an accredited planning program in a US college or university during calendar years 2002 and 2003. A signed certification of this by the department chair or AICP liaison must accompany each paper submission. A paper may be submitted only once; papers may not be revised and resubmitted a second time. Each accredited program may submit only two graduate and two undergraduate papers. Papers by multiple authors will not be accepted. Papers may be no more than 20 typed and double-spaced pages long, including references (plus up to 5 pages of tables, maps and other diagrams) with margins of at least 1 inch and a font of at least 12 point. Title page should include student name, address, degree program, date when paper was originally submitted, and phone number. No name, program or other form of identification should be included with the text of the paper. Papers will not be accepted via FAX or e-mail. Send submissions to:

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Airport Development Snippets

Indianapolis, Indiana: (6.9m/yr)

A new \$310m midfield terminal has been designed as a civic plaza, a “powerful gateway” that will define the future of this Heartland capital. Security is a top priority. An APM link to the existing terminal has been studied, but is not part of the current \$974 expansion.

Greensboro, No. Carolina

(2.5m/yr): FedEx in 1998 picked the Piedmont-Triad Airport as a north-south package hub to relieve its east-west hub in Memphis. Local officials hope to attract high-tech just-in-time delivery firms with up to 20,000 jobs. This is a small but dynamic place: a conference room next to baggage claim can be rented for \$50.

Vienna, Austria (12.0m/yr):

A 26,000sqm office park for international businesses is being added. Construction of an airport station for the new rail service is also underway. No APMs.

Reprinted courtesy of Larry Fabian and TransitPulse

port-related organizations are eager partners in this effort. TPD will spearhead the initiative, beginning with a Symposium planned for the APA National Planning Conference this coming April in Washington, D.C. Many of you have already expressed interest in working on this project, and I expect things to begin moving rapidly in January under the leadership of both Mike Callahan and Larry Fabian.

Reauthorization. Bills have finally begun to emerge from the House and Senate, and what looked like a fairly bleak prospect of multiple TEA-21 extensions through the November 2004 elections may yet turn into actual legislation sometime in early 2004. APA is taking a keen interest in Reauthorization, the committee activities on potential bills are being closely monitored by APA’s Governmental Affairs staff in Washington, D.C. The TPD continues to serve as a sounding board for APA staff on a wide range of issues being discussed, notably potential legislation for “scenario planning,” timing for long range transportation plans, Transportation Improvement Programs and conformity determinations.

Your vigilance and assistance remains important, particularly as real Congressional proposals float to the surface and begin to gather momentum. Our core interests – strengthening the planning framework established through ISTEA and TEA-21, expanding funding and achieving greater balance in transportation spending, promoting Smart Growth principles and promoting innovative approaches to land use-transportation relationships – requires that we as an organization lend our expertise and be fully engaged in deliberations. I’d like to thank those of you who responded to requests for assistance from APA. It will get interesting after Congress returns from its recess; please stay closely tuned and check the website for updates.

Mentoring. One of the TPD’s objectives is to promote the transportation planning profession as a valuable and rewarding career and nurture the development of young planners just entering the profession. This year I would like to establish a more formal mentoring program in partnership with the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, the APA Student Representative Council and AICP. The idea is to identify mentors from within the division in each state where an accredited planning program exists. Those mentors would make themselves available to students interested in transportation planning as a career and offer guidance from a practical perspective. Ideally, the mentoring program would extend into a professional’s first year or two of work after graduating, to help ease the entry into the work environment. I would like to form a mentoring committee that will develop a formal framework for this program and begin its implementation. If you are interested in serving or just would like to be considered as a mentor, please contact me.

Miscellany. We are planning to conduct a survey of TPD membership early in 2004 to obtain your views on a range of issues we have been discussing lately, including: research topics for APA and/or graduate students, newsletter content/format, development of a “core curriculum” and enhanced education for practicing planners, and potential specialized certification in transportation planning. Part of the impetus for these considerations is APA’s increasing focus on divisions’ having an expanded role in providing education and training to members and even allied professions. If you have any thoughts about the survey or guidance on our upcoming activities in 2004, please contact me at your convenience.

Wishing you enjoyable holidays, and success and happiness in 2004...

Whit Blanton, AICP

Engineer/Transportation Planner

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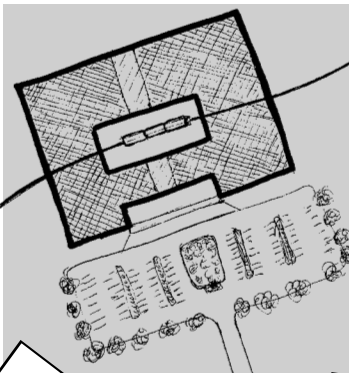
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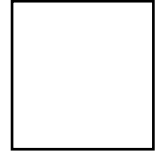
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Join us in Washington to kick-off TPD's "Airports in the Region" project

Our Airports in the Region collaborative research and development effort features a symposium at APA's National Planning Conference in Washington, D.C. The symposium, sponsored by TPD and APA's Divisions Council, is set for Sunday, April 25, 2004, from 1 to 4 PM. This half-day seminar will explore the regional impacts of airports and their surrounding communities through case studies of how urban areas at different



scales are approaching airport planning and its regional impacts. The seminar combines perspectives from APA's various divisions and the Federal Aviation Administration in an effort to find common ground and set a course for development of planning guidance on airport-land use relationships. Check our March, 2004 newsletter for meeting room information or go to our division website at www.apa.tpd.org.



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