

TPD NEWS

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A Publication of the Transportation Division
of the American Planning Association

From the Chair

A young professional recently asked me what I look for in a new planner. GIS skills? A background in stats? The ability to write?

Yes, all of those are important, but those skills aren't what I look for. I look for the story that every transportation planner has in them. Because every transportation planner I've ever been impressed by has a great story as to why they became a transportation planner. It started their passion for our profession and keeps them going through every project. One planner was hit by a car at age 13 when he was riding his bicycle and decided he didn't want that to happen anymore. One planner just didn't understand why her father left work around 5:30 every night, but got home at 6:30 some nights and 7:30 other nights. One planner saw the city where he grew up "invaded" (his word) by parking lots, to the point where there was nothing interesting left in his city.

So, when did you say "Wow, I want to fix that" or "That's not right" or even "Man, I can't believe they'll pay me to look at maps all day long!"? Send us your story and tell us if what you're doing now answers that history. Send pictures of you as a child doing something planner-ish and something you do now that's equally planner-ish. (How many of you don't go take pictures of an interesting street or a LRT when you're on vacation?) I want all 1,200 members of the TPD to know each other and the best way to start is to hear where we came from. We'll start printing your stories and pictures in the TPD Newsletter and hopefully grow more connected from our shared pasts.

David Fields AICP, Chair

E-mail your stories to me at planman72@yahoo.com.

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Transportation Impacts on Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Atlanta

David D'Onofrio, Atlanta Regional Commission

Transportation has been a catalyst for Atlanta's growth. The movement of people and goods is vital to the region's economy. Atlanta is home to the world's busiest airport and an extensive railway and roadway network. Extreme weather events brought about by a changing climate will challenge this infrastructure. Roadways, railways and airport runways are all vulnerable to high temperatures and natural disasters.

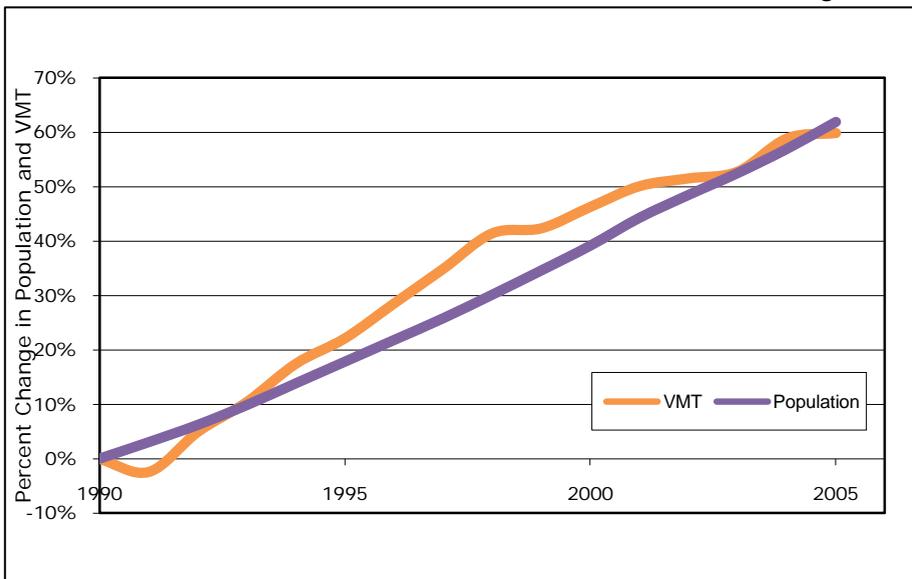
In an effort to better understand the region's contribution to climate change-inducing emissions, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has performed a climate change scenario modeling endeavor to assess the impacts of technology, land use and the transportation network on regional CO₂ emissions.

Challenges Faced by the Atlanta Region

Increase in Population & Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

The Atlanta metropolitan region has seen tremendous population growth over the past few decades. The population grew from 3.1 to 4.2 million (38 percent) between 1990 and 2000, and up to 5.2 million by 2010 (24 percent)¹. VMT in the Atlanta region has increased proportionally to population². Figure 1 illustrates the relationship in the Atlanta region between VMT and population. If VMT increases significantly without similar increases in fuel economy, CO₂ emissions will increase at the same rate.

Figure 1: VMT and Population Change for the Atlanta Region



Fleet Efficiency

Fleet efficiency refers to the average fuel economy of a fleet. Because of the long-term changes required to alter patterns of VMT growth such as land use changes and investment in alternative transportation modes, improving fuel economy is the first step in addressing CO₂ emission challenges. In 1990, 69 percent of the national vehicle fleet was comprised of light duty cars. By 2007, that share shrank to 53 percent, due to the surge in popularity of light trucks and SUVs³. These vehicles are generally less fuel efficient than cars and as a result have led to an increase in overall emissions.

¹ US Census Bureau. Data retrieved 2010.

² Georgia Department of Transportation. Data retrieved 2010.

³ United States Department of Transportation. (2010). *National Transportation Statistics*.

On-Road Freight Traffic

Heavy-duty diesel engines are a primary contributor to greenhouse gas emissions⁴. They have, on average, a much lower fuel economy than light duty vehicles and waste significant amounts of fuel and emit large amounts of CO₂ by idling at distribution centers and truck stops.

Metro Atlanta ranks fifth in the nation in transportation and logistics employment. Trucks are the primary mode of freight transportation in the region, accounting for approximately 84 percent of all freight movement⁵. Truck VMT in the Atlanta region is expected to increase 55 percent between 2005 and 2030⁶.

Congestion

Congestion and its associated impacts, including wasted time and fuel, decreased regional economic competitiveness, and worsened air quality, are among the most significant problems facing the Atlanta region. In 2010, ARC estimates that congestion resulted in \$6.5 billion of annual delay costs, representing over \$1,200 per person in wasted time and fuel. Low travel speeds, inefficient accelerations, and idling also lead to decreased vehicle efficiency and increased CO₂ emissions.

Modeling Results

Taking into consideration the challenges the Atlanta Region faces, ARC sought to modify transportation, land use, and fuel economy variables to test their anticipated impacts on CO₂ emissions through the year 2030.

The analysis was performed using the ARC travel demand model and the U.S Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) MOBILE6 emissions model. The tested scenarios are listed below and the results are illustrated in Figure 2. The scenarios are ranked from highest to lowest carbon emissions.

⁴ US EPA. (2005). *Emission Facts: Average Carbon Dioxide Emissions Resulting from Gasoline and Diesel Fuel*.

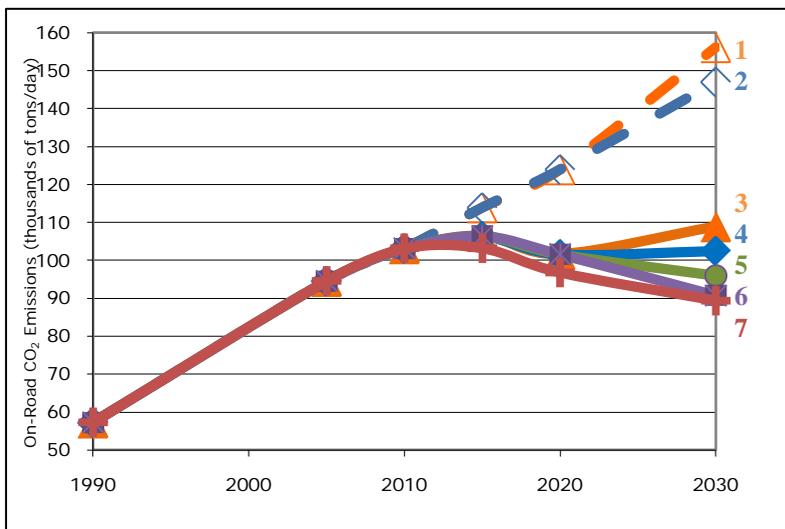
⁵ ARC Freight Mobility Study, 2008

⁶ ARC Travel Demand Model

Future Local Plans (Trend): This scenario continues the development patterns and technology trends seen in the region over recent decades through a compilation of local development plans.

1. **Envision6:** Represents the land use changes brought about by the region's last development plan in 2007.
2. **Trend + EISA:** Incorporates the Energy Independence and Security Act's (EISA) Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standard improvements on miles per gallon (mpg) on to the trend baseline.
3. **Envision6 + EISA:** Envision6 development with EISA mpg increases.
4. **Density Land Use + EISA:** This scenario alters regional land use to only develop the areas in the region with the highest density.
5. **Concept3 (C3) Transit Vision + Transit Focused Land Use + EISA:** This scenario fully implements the region's planned transit vision, Concept 3. Future development is maintained only in the region's most dense areas and areas around transit stations.
6. **C3 + Transit Focused Land Use + 2009 CAFE Standard:** This final scenario is identical to scenario 6 except that it incorporates the additional fuel economy increases introduced through the 2009 Obama administration CAFE standard.

Figure 2: Total On-Road CO₂ Emissions Scenario Testing Results



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Lessons Learned

By combining technology and land use strategies, the Atlanta region can see a major reduction in total CO₂ emissions from the on-road transportation network. Improved fuel economy will play a key role in reducing emissions in the future. Modeling work shows emissions-sensitive land use and transportation planning can provide an additional 18 percent reduction in CO₂ by 2030, below the best results from projected fuel improvements.

Even with the best anticipated new technology and the most extreme modeled land use changes, the region's total CO₂ emissions are expected to be approximately 50 percent above 1990 levels. A large portion of this increase is due to the region's anticipated growing population. Per capita emissions are expected to drop from 15 to 30 percent below 1990 levels between scenarios 3 and 7 by the year 2030. Decarbonizing transportation will continue to be an important topic in the future.

Climate Change Mitigation Policy Recommendations

As a result of this scenario testing process, the following goals and actions were developed in order to maximize land use and transportation efficiencies and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Atlanta region.

Goal 1: Promote sustainable development through integrated land use and transportation strategies.

Goal 1 Actions:

- Shift from sprawl to compact development.
- Support development around transit stations.
- Promote infill development.

Goal 2: Reduce VMT by supporting alternative modes and implementing transportation pricing measures.

Goal 2 Actions:

- Increase programs and incentives to maximize carpooling and vanpooling
- Adopt transportation pricing policies that discourage SOV travel (congestion pricing, parking pricing, mileage-based user fees, etc.)
- Increase safe, reliable public transportation.
- Target bike/pedestrian projects in areas that will reduce the number of automobile trips. Make improvements in sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle lanes, and lighting.

Goal 3: Support the use of cleaner, more fuel-efficient vehicles and alternative fuels.

Goal 3 Actions:

- Support Federal and state investments in R&D to decarbonize transportation vehicles and fuels by 2050.
- Encourage conversion of public fleets into clean efficient vehicles.
- Continue to fund retrofits for cleaner diesel engines on buses, heavy-duty trucks, and locomotives.
- Outlaw and enforce unnecessary idling.

Goal 4: Work with stakeholders to set meaningful and realistic emission reduction targets and include CO2 in the planning process.

Goal 4 Actions:

- Add CO2 emissions as a criterion in transportation decisions.
- Align regional goals with local governments.
- Engage the general public.
- Increase public awareness.
- Measure and report progress regularly.
- Develop useful tools for local governments to identify best practices.
- Investigate carbon offsets.

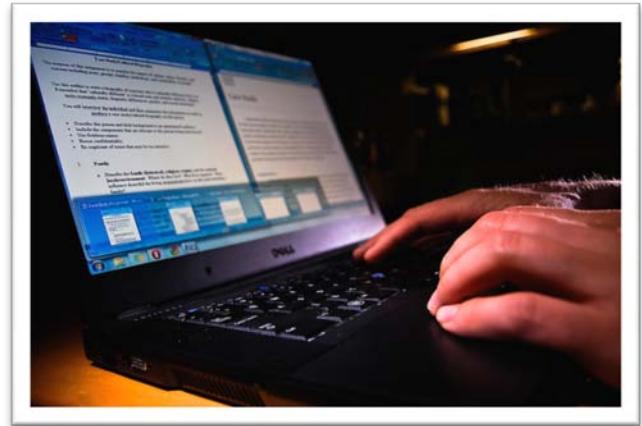
Goal 5: Consider adaptation responses.

Goal 5 Actions:

- Develop emergency management plans.
- Create an inventory of infrastructure vulnerable to extreme weather events.

Preparing Clear and Concise Planning Documents

Linda Amato, AICP. Principal, The Resource Group



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About ten years ago, while managing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a major transportation project, Linda Amato realized the local community really didn't understand the project, the terms, or the analyses. Using cues from web design, Ms. Amato developed a clear and visually enhanced EIS with the intention of creating a more publicly accessible document. The document was so well received, it resulted in a new approach for preparing and writing transportation planning and environmental documents in Washington State – a clear and concise document is now recognized as an integral part of a project. The following are tips for improving technical documents.

What is a clear and concise document?

A clear and concise document is:

- **Easily Understood.** If you lose your audience on page one, the document will not be read.
- **Visually inviting.** Your document should not intimidate your non-technical reader.
- **Logically organized.** Your document should lead the reader through the information from start to finish.

Why is it important to produce clear and concise documents?

In recent years, transparency has become increasingly important for government agencies, especially in their written communication. Clear and concise documents are by nature transparent, accessible, and truthful. They contain relevant information that everyone can understand.

Producing clear and concise documents has provided measurable benefits and added value on many levels. Technical documents that are written for a general audience can:

Build trust with the community. If a document is written using technical jargon, complicated terms, and detailed explanations, chances are that only the technical team that wrote the document will be able to understand it. How can you hope to build a relationship with the community (or get funding from your city council!) if your audience cannot understand your proposed project or plan? If your audience can understand the facts and realize how you came to your conclusions, they are more apt to feel that you are being honest with them.

Result in more relevant public comments. Readers will focus less asking questions regarding technical jargon or lengthy and confusing sentences, and will spend more time addressing the real issues of the plan or project.

Save time and money. Avoid misconceptions that can lead to conflicts, causing delay.

How do we create clear and concise documents?

Three elements must come together to create a clear and concise document:

- **Readability:** Clear language.
- **Visual Quality:** Charts and illustrations can significantly help explain a process or vision.
- **Process Management:** The document must have a strong structure, which can be established during the initial outline and concept development phase.

What are the basics for writing a clear and concise document?

Know your audience. Keep in mind that your document will be read by a myriad of individuals—not just technical experts. Community members and legislators will all be

Join the TPD Editorial Team!

The Transportation Planning Division is only as good as its members! We are looking for member support and volunteers to help produce the newsletter. And of course, we are always interested in member submissions.

Email Catherine Duffy for more details at vice-chair-or@apa-tpd.org.

reading your document. Identify from the beginning the issues and information that are most important to the readers. When you write your document, focus on these concerns.

Identify an initial outline. The basic “Who, What, Where, When, and Hows” often help to develop the initial outline to keep your document focused.

Clear Headings. Clear headings can help the audience skim the report and quickly find information. Question and answer style headings can also help pinpoint important issues or anticipated questions from the audience.

Additional Tips

- Minimize the use of acronyms. Always spell out an acronym prior to its first use.
- Avoid or explain technical terminology.
- Use short sentences.
- Use the active voice.
- Use a professional editor when available, or at least a second staff reviewer.
- Write short sections and separate them with headings (or questions).

Resources

A number of books and materials are available which can provide guidelines and examples of clear, concise writing. The following are a good starting point.

Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace (Joseph M. Williams), has been acknowledged as one of the best how-to books on writing clear and concise documents.

Chicago Manual of Style. When in doubt, chances are this reference source will provide the needed answer.



TPD & Railvolution 2011: Cool Things in Washington, DC

Noel P. Comeaux, AICP, PMP

Past-Chair, Transportation Planning Division

As you probably know, TPD will be once again at Railvolution. Last year's experience in Portland, OR was spectacular.

As such, there are a number of things to do in Washington, DC. The foremost obvious is being a tourist. This includes seeing every one of the exhibits in the Smithsonian, catching the National Cathedral, or the Basilica. The bad news is that you will never have time for the conference. However, the transportation exhibit in the American History Museum, notably the maritime portion, is really nice and expanded from its former layout prior to two years ago. (Yes, you can see – not touch - the Hope Diamond at the Natural History Museum.)

Second, you have to eat! There are so many restaurants, from Ris which is "white tablecloth" in Foggy Bottom, to The Bottom Line near the Farragut West Metro to Tortilla Coast near the South Capital Metro. If you want to venture outside the beltway, you can sign up for the Commuter Ferry mobile workshop, because it will leave you in Old Town Alexandria. Or you can head there yourself by way of the King Street Metro and the Old Trolley or DASH bus system. You can take a ghost tour (They're kinda fun!), grab a sandwich at 815 Southside and see who's playing upstairs at 219 King Street (Great jazz when the weather is nice and they open the window.). You can venture further out to historic Virginia, past Reston (a planned community centered on the Reston Town Center) to Middleburg and Upperville. I suggest Hunter's Head Tavern for a truly historic experience in an English Pub which dates back to the Civil War. (Just look for the red phone booth on the right of Route 50.) Or head the other way (east) to Annapolis and check out the Naval Academy or the harbor with a pubs with a local brew. By the way, there is a now a brewery (DC Brau) in Washington, DC.

Finally, back in DC, the Metro gets you almost anywhere. Bethesda has a nice selection of restaurants on the north end of the red line. Or stop on the way at the Woodley Park-Zoo Metro for breakfast at Woodley Café. You can stop in Chinatown for lunch, see the current exhibit at the historic National Building Museum, and then head down to Washington Nationals Baseball Park and take a tour. (Sorry, it will be football season, we hope!) The park is next to the Potomac Yards Park, part of the new mixed-use development in Southeast DC.

Enjoy, and see you here in the fall.



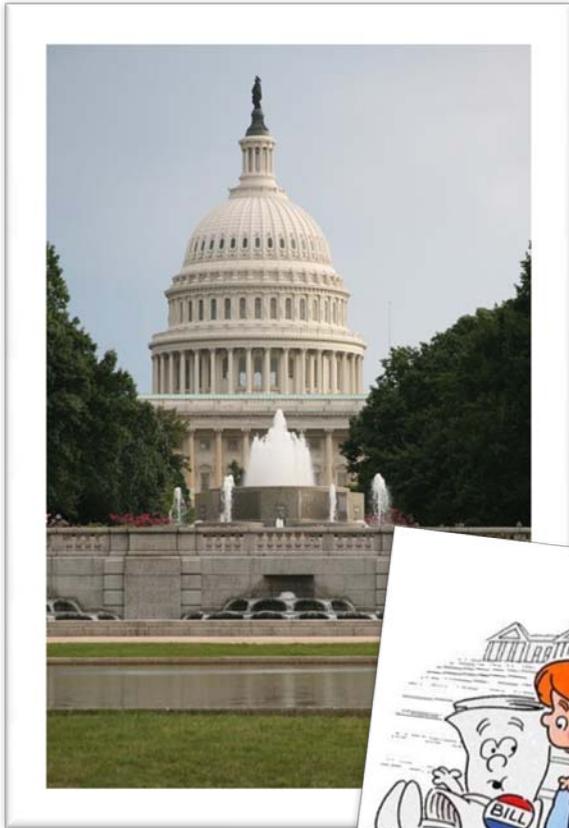
And don't forget the TPD Division Business Meeting!

Join us for updates on the division and learn more about how to get involved.

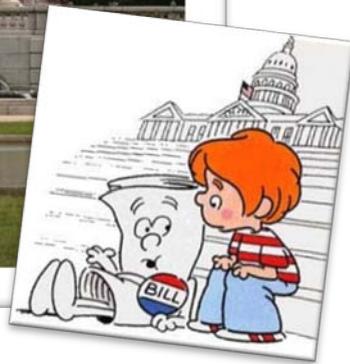
Date: Monday, October 7, 2011

Time: 6:00PM - 8:00PM

Location: [Washington Marriott Wardman Park](#)



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U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works - Boxer-Inhofe Principles

- Two year bill
- Funding at current levels
- Duplicative program reduction
- Creation of a freight program
- Creation of “America Fast Forward” an improved version of TIFIA
- Expedited project development
- Performance Measures
- Some argument over whether the Senate bill will include a provision to maintain current bike/pedestrian provisions

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Framework

- Cuts funding by about 30%
- Safety funding will not be cut
- Consolidates or eliminates approximately 70 programs
- More state flexibility, ensured by performance measures
- Permits tolling new interstate lanes
- Encourages state infrastructure banks (No national bank)
- Continues the current TIFIA program.
- Highway funding will become more formulaic
- Removes “barriers” for private sector public transportation
- Focuses transit program more on suburban and rural areas
- Stops Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund diversion
- Eliminates “double-taxing” of shipments between domestic shipping ports.
- Removes current bike/pedestrian provisions
- Maintains 80/20 matching

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Update

Daniel Haake, AICP, Vice-Chair for Policy (7/8/2011)

Over the past few weeks, a lot has been happening (relatively speaking) with the reauthorization bill, granted it has been in fits and starts. While a bill hasn’t been introduced in either chamber, both Senator Boxer and Chairman Mica have released outlines of what their bills will include. The Mica framework has been the rather controversial, and many policy experts have suggested that the House bill will not be formally introduced during this session. With next year’s election, we may continue in the continuing resolution holding pattern for the near future.

A Planner Rides the Train in Hong Kong

Ya Wang, Senior Transportation Planner, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

On a trip to Hong Kong, Ya Wang, a planner from California, found her means of exploring the city as interesting as the sights themselves. The following is brief record of her impressions from a planner's perspective.

Most of our travel in Hong Kong was via MTR trains. The MTR trains we rode during both peak and off-peak hour were fully packed. The experience is strangely refreshing or even enriching, with the camaraderie of standing close to perfect strangers, the fun of people watching (and the annoyance of being watched), and the guilty pleasure of eavesdropping others' conversation.

About 90% of daily travel in Hong Kong is made by means of public transit. The mass transit railway is operated by the MTR Corporation, a public company listed on the Hang Seng Stock Exchange with Hong Kong government owning the majority stake. Besides being a transit operator, it also develops property. This dual character enables it to accompany its extension of MTR system with high density development to ensure high ridership; in addition, it can always extend MTR system to new development to satisfy its transportation needs.



Kowloon MTR Station

The Causeway Bay MTR station, (the "Time Square" of Hong Kong) demonstrates the integration of transit and land use development. The station is a huge commercial and transit complex with station platforms extending three levels below the ground, and two additional underground levels with shops immediately above the station. 12 floors above the ground are filled with shops and restaurants. In addition to the commercial space directly above the



station, there are two high rise residential buildings connecting to the station complex. Most basic needs such as eating, clothing, commuting, working, and sleeping etc can be satisfied inside or in the immediate precinct of the MTR system.

Sophisticated information technology for wayfinding and transactions contribute to the popularity of the MTR trains.

Riders can access the train system using an electronic payment card called the Octopus, which can be used on trains, buses, and taxis. It can also be used as a credit card or a phone card! Its universal acceptance makes it easy for riders to access the city across multiple modes, without the use of multiple payment systems.

The electronic information board above doors in MTR trains also helps riders navigate the trains. In addition to lights indicating the upcoming stop, lights above the doors indicate which doors will open.

Two other important components of the transit system in Hong Kong are buses and trams. Though not as highly used as MTR trains, with their lower fare, trams and buses are favored by more cost conscious market.

MTR, bus and tram together cover the major portion of urban area in Hong Kong. The more expensive public transit alternatives like small buses and taxis serve the remaining market. Together, they provide diverse transit choices to the people of Hong Kong.

Walking Into a Good Investment

Joseph D. Cutrufo, Program Coordinator, WalkBoston



© Andygeek

According to the National Association of Realtors' *Community Preference Survey* published last April,

- 56 percent of respondents said they prefer smart growth neighborhoods over neighborhoods that require more driving between home, work, and recreation
- 77 percent of respondents said they prefer neighborhoods with sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities, and
- 50 percent would like to see public transportation improvements rather than more roads and developments.

Furthermore, some of the biggest names in real estate, like Zillow.com, RE/MAX and Zip Realty are partnering with the website WalkScore.com which rates the walkability of a specific address or neighborhood on a 0-100 scale based on what's within walking distance.

As the nation's demographic profile changes, the demand for homes in dense, walkable communities continues to increase. Millennials – who grew up watching the Manhattan-dwelling characters of *Seinfeld* and *Friends* – seem to be more comfortable with city life than their parents – who grew up watching the suburban families of *The Brady Bunch* and *Leave It To Beaver*. But even these Baby Boomers are downsizing, trading in their three-bedroom homes and acres of lawn for smaller homes in cities.

Properties in walkable communities are not only more desirable, but also more valuable. Christopher Leinberger, author of *The Option of Urbanism: Investing in a New American Dream*, says his home in Washington DC's highly walkable Dupont Circle neighborhood is worth 70 percent more per square foot than a home in the less walkable

suburbs of Northern Virginia. Leinberger, who is also a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, has recently been making headlines for his research that tosses aside the city versus suburb debate, and instead focuses on the differences between walkable and not walkable places. According to Leinberger, a home built in a walkable neighborhood will have a higher value than an identical home in a non-walkable neighborhood. This is true not only for central cities, but for suburbs as well.

A 2009 CEOs for Cities study *Walking the Walk: How Walkability Raises Housing Values in U.S. Cities*, which analyzed data from 94,000 real estate transactions in 15 major metropolitan areas, found that in 13 of the 15 markets, homes in neighborhoods with higher Walk Scores command a premium – \$4,000 to \$34,000 over homes in less walkable neighborhoods. For example, in Charlotte, North Carolina's Ashley Park neighborhood (Walk Score 54) the median home price was \$280,000. With all other things being equal, an identical home in the Wilmore neighborhood (Walk Score 71) would be worth \$314,000 – 12 percent more. At the same time, homes in walkable areas have experienced less than half the average decline in value since the real estate peak in the mid-2000s. The economic benefits of walkability go beyond property values.

According to the Urban Land Institute, vibrant, walkable retail areas attract people to stay longer, spend more money, and visit more often. According to Marlon Boarnet, director the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California-Irvine and author of *Retrofitting Suburbia*, the most walkable, densely-built shopping districts in Los Angeles have four times the retail activity of "strip mall" shopping centers in less dense areas. Walkable, higher-density neighborhoods cost taxpayers less: a home built in a low-density suburb requires, on average, \$10,000 more in infrastructure than a home built in an urban core.

Some of the country's most popular tourist destinations – like the National Mall in Washington DC and the Freedom Trail in Boston – are also some of the most pedestrian-oriented places around. In Massachusetts, the \$15.6 billion tourist industry thrives not just in Boston, which Frommer's lists among the 10 most walkable cities in the world, but also in the compact, historic town centers across the state.

It's not news to anyone that walking is good for your health and good for the earth. It's becoming clear though, that walkability, though once an overlooked investment, can pay off in retail sales, real estate values, and a stronger bottom line.

Student Paper Competition

The Transportation Planning Division (TPD) is looking for outstanding student papers on current transportation planning or policy issues. Our purpose is to recognize and reward work completed for courses in accredited masters and undergraduate planning programs. Please nominate and encourage your students to participate in APA's student paper contest. Winners will be announced at the APA National Conference in Los Angeles, CA.

Submissions are due in February 2012.

Email eduardo.serafin@berkeley.edu for details.

Get Involved!

We are always looking for newsletter content, volunteers, ideas and suggestions about our involvement in transportation policy and programs. Email David Fields for details.

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APA Webinars

Our Transportation planning division is working together with Utah Chapter to provide CM credits for its members through its second webinar. The first division sponsored webinar was held on June 11th, 2010: "Bus rapid System – The inside story of New York BRT". More details about upcoming webinars can be found at <http://www.utah-apa.org/webcasts.htm>

TPD is working towards sponsoring more webinars with CM credits through the Utah Chapter and the National Highway Institute (NHI). We are looking for volunteers to put together webinars for through these different portals. If interested, please contact Madhu Narayanasamy, Membership Committee Chair at mc.apatpd@gmail.com