

Participant's additional questions with Dan Burden's responses from the
**Emergency Response, Service Provision and
Traffic Calming Workshop**
November 20, 2008 – Commerce City, CO

Transportation Professionals

1. Where can we get researched data for vertical geometry restrictions for fire equipment such as max grade (Anita Riley, aariley@bouldercounty.org)

Equipment Manufacturers provide limitations of equipment and can help steer communities to a broader range of equipment that meets the demands of physical terrain. Asheville, North Carolina has purchased a number of small 4-wheeler first response units that can climb 45 degree slopes without using a road.

Despite this availability of equipment information, it is amazing how many times we learn of towns failing to purchase the best (size or mix) equipment for the context of their place and mission.

2. Who said Rodel was outlawed? I don't think you should say statements like that which aren't true. (no name)

Your criticism is accepted.

Sidra is one of the most preferred software tools for designing roundabouts. The software is documented as having superior capabilities to provide gap acceptance. A recent National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) research report cautions designers to use software systems that maximize this design feature.

3. Finding a compromise between more drive cuts to provide maneuverability when parking is saturated and decreasing motor vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. (Michelle Mahan, mahanm@bouldercolorado.gov)

Motorists need access to parking; but reasonable access levels should not complicate the comfort and safety of pedestrians.

4. You didn't address ADA requirements; 5-foot sidewalks are required. Roundabouts provide difficulties for blind people. (no name)

It is difficult in a 3 hour session covering many topics to give adequate coverage to ADA topics. ADA does not require 5 foot sidewalks (but it does require frequent passing zones). We recommend 5-foot walks as a minimum for other reasons, such as for two people to walk together. There have been significant discussions about blind people having difficulty with roundabouts. Studies are underway or completed. In general, roundabouts are a safety, convenience and efficiency boost to all pedestrians, including people with visual restrictions.

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The key point related to the blind and roundabouts is not whether they work or not; but that roundabouts need to be designed for low speeds that work for all people of all abilities.

5. Emergency vehicles' (fire engine/ladder) width is 9.5'-10' . Emergency vehicle horizontal clearance is typically 16'. What is the basis for the 18'6" ? (Chad Shroeder, cshcroeder@bouldercounty.org)

Certain street types (alleys, lanes) do not allow for 18' 6" of width. Fire administrators point to the need for an operations (deployment) area on residential or principal streets. The use of heavy protective clothing, air tanks, accessing large equipment in side cabinets, and other rescue maneuvers call for a reasonable buffer and width. This temporal use must be made in consideration with the everyday needs of a street; primarily to select street widths providing affordable costs, compact land form, sustainability, safety and livability.

Planners

6. I'm wondering how the up front costs of walkable communities compare to those of conventional communities, and if there is a difference, how is it managed?

We checked with Todd Litman, with the Victoria Transport Policy Institute. Smart Growth research has demonstrated that conventional building practices do not "pay their way." Conventional land use patterns have numerous hidden (invisible) governmental costs. Land use patterns affect the costs of providing public infrastructure and services such as roads, water, sewage, garbage collection, school transport and mail delivery. Various studies show that these costs tend to increase with sprawl (dispersed development outside existing urban boundaries), and can be reduced with Smart Growth (compact, planned development within existing urban boundaries). www.vtpi.org/sg_save.pdf

We maintain that the cost of development should be transparent – no hidden, deferred or invisible costs. This is necessary if Smart Growth, sustainability and walkability are to be understood.

Emergency Responders

7. How do you justify the statement made earlier in the day that "traffic congestion is growing 5 times faster than population growth"? (no name)

(Data compiled for a report to the U.S. Department of Transportation in 2006 written by Stephen Polzin, (transportation researcher at the University of South Florida in Tampa.)

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Public/Environmental Health Professionals

8. I would like to see more communities interfacing emergency preparedness and walkable communities. What about funding streams? Where can we do test pilot or find pilot projects? (no name)

You are not alone. Many people would like to see emergency preparedness be linked with walkable, sustainable, Smart Growth futures. There is good evidence that those cities that have followed the principles of Smart Growth and Walkability have become safer, more secure places. Funding good governance is easier when densities are not light. There is interest being shown by the EPA Smart Growth staff. Interest is expected to increase in the next several years, especially with commitments being made for better science related to global warming, sustainability and with greater focus on urban living.

9. In an arid region that must evaluate every water usage especially as drought continues, how will water be used and stored to supply the proposed sprinkler systems in every home, also considering how water quality is impacted by storing stagnant water for this purpose? (Hope Dalton, hdalton@tchd.org)

As we come to place higher value on correct use and management of open space, improve irrigation techniques and direct populations toward Smart Growth and sustainable land/housing forms the issue of water being stored in sprinkler systems will be evaluated and kept in perspective.

Other – Elected Town Trustee

11. How can visionary and courageous elected officials and professional staff get a fearful electorate to embrace and support smart growth and traditional neighborhood design? (Evelyn/Keith Baker – not sure which one – trusteebaker@buenavistaco.gov)

The same way all other successful towns achieve these ends, with a lot of hard work. This is not meant to be trite; but a true reflection that the complex problems we have not correctly addressed are coming back to haunt us. Our original approaches led to even more complex and costly problems. Sustainable and Smart Growth solutions require intense, holistic, collaborative, integrated hard work. The best approach uses highly engaging, empowering public process. Each community must hire, train and retain the best staff, then devote hours of time and talent to informing its public, getting a broad and diverse enough group to take part to address their future needs. This is not easy. It is essential.

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