Door-to-Door: Improving Last Mile Connectivity

GEORGIA PLANNING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
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Today’s Panel

Moderator: Erin Thoresen, Transportation Planner, Gresham, Smith and Partners

- **Rosa Evans, Director of METRA/Transportation**, Columbus Consolidated Government
- **Kristen Wescott, Transportation Planner**, City of Sandy Springs
- **Spencer Stoleson, Service Planner**, MARTA
- **Megha Young, Transportation Planner**, Gresham, Smith and Partners
What is “Last Mile Connectivity”?  

- **Improves the connections** between transit stops and key destinations in a community.
- **Gives people choices** other than the automobile by offering **safe, comfortable, and convenient** options for traveling between origins/destinations and transit service.
- Makes it easier for people to **make short trips on bike or on foot** and more convenient for people to **take advantage of existing transit service**.

![Diagram of First Mile and Last Mile](image-url)
Why Last Mile Connectivity?

Offer choices and options to workers, residents, and visitors other than personal vehicles
Reduce roadway congestion
Provide opportunities for healthier lifestyles
Enhance communities as desirable destination for workers, residents, and visitors
Ensure economic competitiveness
Provide safe and comfortable transportation options
Fill Sidewalk Gaps

- Particularly at bus stops and at key origins and destinations (apartments / condos, office towers, etc.)
- May need to coordinate with property owners

Signage

- Wayfinding signs around transit stations, downtowns, malls/retail areas, hospitals, and other key destinations
- Transit stop signage should be clear and informative with route information
Complete Streets
• Provide full complement of bike and pedestrian facilities along major corridors that serve key destinations

Transit Station/Stop Improvements
• Signage
• Facades
• Shelter
• Pedestrian accessibility
• Internal circulation
• Lighting
Last Mile Improvements: Programs

**Bikeshare Program**
- For residents, workers, and visitors
- Launch following provision of adequate bicycle facilities

**Ridesharing and Carsharing Programs**
- Partnership between transit systems and ridesharing services
- Also applicable for paratransit and senior transit services
- Designated pick-up and drop-off areas

Source: GS&P
Last Mile Supportive Strategies (Short to Mid-Term)

**Standardize Stop Amenities**
- Shelters
- Signage
- Real-time information

**Technology and Infrastructure**
- Transit signal priority

**Improve Walkability and Bikeability**
- Wider sidewalks, internal sidewalks
- Street shading
- Cyclist amenities

**Private Shuttles**
- Minimum hours of service
- Real-time data for mobile application
Land Use and Urban Form
Direct connections to transit stations and between uses
Thresholds for residential and employment density
Provide a range of housing types within close proximity of transit

Parking Management Policies
Subsidies and other incentives for transit users
Pass parking costs to users

Design Guidelines to Foster Active Streets
Wider sidewalks
Smaller minimum setbacks
Street trees, benches, and other amenities
Other Communities: BaltimoreLink

- Wayfinding and signage around stops and stations
- New bus stop signs with route information
- Improve crosswalks and sidewalks around transfer facilities
- Coordinating with Baltimore DOT to install 10 bikeshare docking stations
- New bike racks at 83 MTA rail stations
- Bike racks on all buses
- Partnering to locate Zipcar at all rail stations
- “Microtransit pilot program”
Other Communities: Denver

Denver

• Primary focus has been on expanding transit and building new stations
• Strategies aimed at “increasing the reach of a station into the community”
• Art and amenities to making walking more pleasant
• Technology to improve reliability and legibility
• Mobile app to collect data on walking infrastructure and identify barriers such as poor sidewalk conditions and crossing locations – WALKScope.org
• Connect bike lanes to rail stations via on- and off-street facilities

45% of older adults in Colorado’s urban areas indicate that the distance to a stop is a barrier to using transit

Despite the focus on new transit, WalkDenver, Mile High Connects, and other partners find a lack of direct investment in “first and last mile connections” - http://www.walkdenver.org/first-last-mile-connecting-people-to-transit/
Discussion
MARTA
CONNECTING BUSINESS & TRANSIT
The Last Mile
New Bus Stop Signage

Key Benefits

- Tiered system, adaptable by stop
- New and improved route information
- New access to “next bus” information
- Regional design – for use by any/all agencies
METRA

USING SPLOST TO IMPROVE LAST MILE CONNECTIVITY
New Vehicles

- Hybrid-electric fixed route buses equipped with bike racks
- Accessible Dial-A-Ride vehicles
Stops and Signage
Improved bicycle infrastructure
Sandy Springs
City of Sandy Springs, GA

Profile

- Incorporated in 2005
- Population (2016): 105,703, making it the 7th largest city in Georgia
- Employment (2015): 117,000
- Major employers (2016): IBM Corp, Cox Communications, Airwatch, Cisco
- 303 centerline miles of paved roads
- MARTA Heavy Rail Redline w/ 3 stations
- Contracted Services Delivery Model (all departments except management and public safety are private contracts)

Image Source: theNext10 Comprehensive Plan, 2017
Last Mile Connectivity

Planning Efforts to Support Last Mile

• TheNext10 Comprehensive Plan
  Completed in 2017 with 4 Subarea Plans:
  • Roswell Road
  • Perimeter Center
  • MARTA Stations
  • Powers Ferry

• Last Mile Connectivity Studies (2017)
• Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trail Plan (2014)
• 3 Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Studies:
  City Center, Roswell Road, and Perimeter Community Improvement Districts
Thank you!

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