

Build a Better Burb

SPRAWL RETROFIT TOOL

**CONNECTING TRANSPORTATION
AND LAND USE**

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This document is one of a series of created for Build a Better Burb, CNU's Online Journal of Suburban Design. The series emerged from the Build a Better Burb Sprawl Retrofit Council in Miami, Florida, in March, 2016—an event aimed at expanding transportation choice, sense of place, and sustainability of the Suburbs.

The Problem

Metropolitan Planning Organizations have historically focused planning and funding allocation solely on transportation needs, without critically considering implications of other closely associated factors (environment, economic development, land use) that influence and are influenced by transportation.

Discussion

Barriers exist for Metropolitan Planning Organizations to have collaborative discussions and support local governments with land use, economic development, and environmental decisions. However, these discussions are critical in order for mutually beneficial relationships between land use and transportation to occur. Decisions regarding either transportation or land use directly impact each

other, and ultimately all together determine the quality of life places provide. By failing to deeply consider land use implications, metropolitan planning organizations have the capability to encourage spending transportation funds in traditional ways that can potentially contribute to sprawl.

Many metropolitan planning organizations are finding themselves in a new position with the option to promote transportation decisions that incentivize the creation of centers for communities and economic development. There is potential to mitigate sprawl by providing alternative transportation options, bolstering economic development, encouraging housing choices, and overall enhancing quality of life.

Metropolitan planning organizations should consider opportunities to incorporate and support land use planning as a regional planning agency. Land use, both current and envisioned, is greatly affected by transportation decisions, and therefore should be a key influencing factor on those decisions. Considering land use and transportation development and planning as codependent processes will result in more efficient allocation of resources to the built environment overall.

A Solution

Metropolitan Planning Organizations are taking creative and innovative approaches to incentivize and support land use planning, and to integrate it into their

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transportation planning process. Through a collaborative regional partnership, the Transportation and Land Use Connection Program (TLC) was established by the Wasatch Front Regional Council, Salt Lake County's Office of Regional Development, and the Utah Transit Authority. The program encourages communities to integrate their land use and regional transportation plans through the use of the region's long range (30 year) vision, the Wasatch Choice Vision. TLC seeks to help local governments develop in a way that works best for them, supporting their efforts to create livable and vibrant communities. In turn, the region benefits from more sustainable travel patterns and productive development. The program awards technical assistance and grants to local governments within the region to provide assistance for land use transportation planning, and economic development through planning, implementation, and visioning efforts that proactively address anticipated growth.

The program utilizes FHWA Surface Transportation Program funds along with contributions from partner agencies. Over \$900,000 is programmed annually, comprised of Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds and contributions from Salt Lake County and the Utah Transit Authority. Funding is distributed based on a competitive application process conducted in the two urbanized areas within the region. Previous awards include funding to support master plans, small area plans, transit-oriented development plans, form based codes and design standards, active transportation plans, and other innovative projects.

Projects have increasingly become more regionally significant as neighboring communities have collaborated on applications. The program is in its early years and is seeing rapid growth as well as drawing broad attention. A method to define and analyze progress measures is currently being developed to better understand the impact this unique assistance is having on our growing region.

Program Goals

- Help local governments create desired livable communities and focus growth in centers
- Foster a prosperous and livable region as outlined in the Wasatch Choice for 2040 growth principles
- Encourage coordination of land use plans with existing or planned regional transportation
- Reduce travel demand by enabling shorter commutes, providing more travel choices, and cultivating alternative land development strategies
- Promote multi jurisdictional collaboration and regional impact
- Support local outreach and engagement efforts that promote broader stakeholder involvement

More Information

Many resources are available for suburban

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communities seeking revitalization and diversity in their built environments, including the websites for Build a Better Burb (buildabetterburb.org) and CNU (www.cnu.org), in addition to books such as Retrofitting Suburbia and Sprawl Repair Manual.

WFRC.org/TLC

To view an interactive map of funded projects, click [here](#).

WasatchChoice.com

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Sustainable Better Burb Retrofits require a multi-generational fiscal dynamic depicted in the reinvestment cycle (pictured above).