Creating Livable Streets and Corridors (S526)  
Washington State’s Experience

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Key Topics

• Creating livable streets – Washington example
• Working with State DOT’s
• Recent projects – success stories

What steps are we taking?

• Developing new policies and guides (planning, design, construction and maintenance)
• Restructuring procedures to accommodate all users
• Offering workshops and other trainings
• Instituting better ways to measure performance
• Developing a project funding mechanism

Milestones in State Policy

• WSDOT Livable Communities Policy, 2000
• CSS Executive Order, 2003
• Design Guidance and Training, 2005  
  — Understanding Flexibility in Transportation, Washington
• State Funding for Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety, 2005
• AASHTO Environmental Excellence Award, 2006  
  — Best Organizational Integration of Context Sensitive Design
• State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan adopted, 2008
• Complete Streets Bill (ESHB 1071) passed, 2011
• Flexible Design Bill (HB 1700) passed, 2012

Recent Milestones in Federal Policy

• Federal Highway Administration Issues Livable Communities Policy, June 2009  
• USDOT Policy on Biking and Walking, March 2010  
• 2010 FHWA applies Livable Communities criteria to all discretionary grant programs:
  —Provide more transportation choices.
  —Promote equitable, affordable housing.
  —Enhance economic competitiveness.
  —Support existing communities.
  —Coordinate policies and leverage investment.
  —Value communities and neighborhoods.

WSDOT Community Design – Developing Streets for Everyone
Typical “Complete Street” Elements

Source: Association of Washington Cities

2008-09 Study:
State Highways as Main Streets

The Issues
• City streets operate as state highways
• Design affects community livability and safety
• Scope, schedule and budget changes on these streets/highways

The Research

1. System Analysis
2. Case Studies

Storefront Studio Program
University of Washington
College of Built Environments
Department of Architecture

Variables Units of Measure
State Route within City Limits Y, N
Highway of Statewide Significance Y, N
National Highway System Y, N
State Access Control Classification Y, N
Federal Functional Classification Principal arterials, Minor arterials, Collectors, local streets
Design Speed MPH
Posted Speed MPH
Year of Incorporation Year
Freight Classification T-1 more than 10 million tons per year; T-2 4 million to 10 million tons per year; T-3 300,000 to 4 million tons per year; T-4 100,000 to 300,000 tons per year; T-5 at least 20,000 tons in 60 days
Collision History Number of collisions involving bicyclists and pedestrians

Step 1: Screening

Variables Units of Measure
Proportion of visible buildings that are commercial Percentage (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)
Proportion of street frontage with dead space Percentage (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)
Proportion of street frontage with parked cars Percentage (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)
Proportion of street frontage with tree canopy Percentage (25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)
Number of travel lanes Number both directions
Average travel lane width Feet
Average shoulder width Feet
Average sidewalk width Feet
Total curb to curb width Feet
Total back of sidewalk to back of sidewalk width Feet
Posted speed limit MPH
Crosswalk spacing Feet
Visible curb extensions Y, N
Average building setback Feet
Average building height (stories) Stories
Uniform building height (y, n) Y, N
Number of pedestrians visible N
Average daily traffic Volume
Visible bicycle lane Y, N
Visible buildings that are historic Y, N

Step 2 –
Defining Main Street Highways

What's a Main Street Highway?
Findings

• Scope changes:
  -- More common on Main Street Highways
  -- 46% of all projects vs. 38% on other parts of the state system

• Retrospective review:
  -- 40 projects or 20% of WSDOT’s scope, schedule and budget
    changes could have directly benefited from additional community
    design

• Average estimated saving per project:
  -- Over $9 million dollars or 30% of project cost

Implementing the Research

• New Funding Program – Complete Streets
  (2011 Washington Legislation – ESHB 1071)

• New Design Approach
  (2012 Washington Legislation – HB 1700)

Working with State DOT’s on joint projects

• Locate your advocate within the State DOT
  - Often the office administering federal aid

• Communicate early and often
  - Understand what is in plans and standards

• Anticipate a review process

• Involve the public in your project

• DO NOT give up
  - Where there is a will there is a way

• Clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities
  - Different goals?
  - Who is the general contractor?
  - Use a master contract for joint projects

Recent Success Stories

Before After

Haxton Way, Whatcom County, WA

State Route 99 - Des Moines, WA

Factoria Trail – I-405 - Bellevue, WA

Before After

Before

After
WSDOT Resources & Contacts...

WSDOT’s Complete Streets website
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Programs/Planning/MainStreets.htm

UW Storefront Studio website
http://www.storefrontstudio.org/

State Highways as Main Streets: A Study of Community Design and Visioning
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Research/Reports/700/733.1.htm

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Before

State Route 203 - Carnation, WA

After