



CREATING AND SUSTAINING “PEOPLE-ORIENTED PLACES”

A TRANSIT ALLIANCE BEST PRACTICES STUDY

Released in conjunction with the Apr. 6, 2006 workshop,
Metro Denver’s New P.O.P. Culture,
making our new spaces “People-Oriented Places,”
conducted at the Colorado Convention Center.

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**Regional Transportation District
Denver Regional Council of Governments
Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation**

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Home Builders Association of Metro Denver



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Thanks to those who provided direct input to the study:	
•Bill Sirois, Regional Transportation District	
•Bill Struble, Re/Max Alliance City Living	
•Dan Burden, Glatting Jackson	
•Dean Schwanke, Urban Land Institute	
•Douglas R. Porter, Growth Management Institute	
•Eliza Prah, Continuum Partners, LLC	
•Fred Kent, Project for Public Spaces	
•GB Arrington, PB Placemaking	
•Gilda Gonzales, The Unity Council	
•Jane Jenkins, Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District	
•Jeff Seifried, City of Aurora	
•John Desmond, Downtown Denver Partnership	
•John L. Renne, Ph.D., University of New Orleans	
•John Norquist, Congress of New Urbanism	
•Kenneth Ho, Cherokee Investment Partners	
•Loretta Daniel, City of Aurora, CO	
•Peter J. Park, City and County of Denver, CO	
•Robert Dunphy, Urban Land Institute	
•Ted Knowlton, Envision Utah	
•Thera Black, Thurston Regional Planning Council	
•Thomas A. Gougeon, Continuum Partners, LLC	
•Yaromir Steiner, Steiner and Associates	

OPENING REMARKS
FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COLORADO MUST RIDE THE COMING WAVE
OF WESTERN CHANGE

There is a wave of change bearing down on the West. Metro Denver voters apparently see that wave and have made a \$4.7 billion investment in the future by passing the FasTracks transit mandate. FasTracks is a giant step toward a future that will sustain Colorado as a people-oriented place.

The future flood of seniors, singles, couples and minorities that are headed our way will create pools of opportunity for the state, region and many municipalities -- or a possible whirlpool of problems for those who refuse to act.

Some say endless automobile-centered suburban sprawl is inevitable in the West. Apparently, this isn't our father's Colorado. The future of metro Denver – *and hopefully the great State of Colorado* – is in the hands of a rapidly aging and diverse group with worldwide communications at its fingertips and a driving desire to ride the coming wave of change.

Transit Alliance and its partners believe that a statewide multi-modal transportation system is the essential element that our state needs to ride the wave. Our plan is to engage the people of Colorado in the decades-long process of coming out on top of the wave.

OPENING REMARKS FROM OUR SPONSORS

PLATINUM SPONSORS



We in metro Denver are embarking upon a new era of urban development, infill and access that is unparalleled in the U.S. We have invested in a bold new mobility infrastructure. Our preeminent challenge is to fully capture the potential represented by this transit investment. This goal must be attained through thoughtful, attractive, pedestrian and bicycle friendly planning and construction minimizing the heretofore one-dimensional emphasis on auto dominated access.

-Cal Marsella, General Manager



In Europe, it's commonplace to live in areas where people walk everywhere – to work, to shop, to attend cultural venues and to visit parks and more. And now in the U.S., people-oriented places are also gaining in popularity. Pedestrian-friendly environments pulse with energy and liveliness. The access to so many amenities in just a few short blocks can significantly increase a family's disposable income by eliminating the need for a car. Just as important, POPs help the ever-expanding elderly population to "age in place," limiting their dependency on government subsidized transportation and meal delivery. People-oriented places improve our lives, economy and natural environment.

-Jennifer Schaufele, Executive Director

PLATINUM SPONSOR



Metro Denver will be in the international spotlight now that it has invested \$4.7 billion in mass transit with an emphasis on metro-wide rail. That investment will reshape our community in a way that will make many of our suburban communities more exciting and accessible for citizens and visitors. The cumulative effect of this new development pattern will best be seen from above as nodes of opportunity begin to burgeon around strategic transit stations. Now, we need to interconnect our communities in order to maximize our investment and gain the greatest economic charge possible to sustain us into the future.

-Tom Clark, Executive Vice President

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For a better quality of life.



Metro Denver is changing. People in our metro area today are afforded a much more diverse range of housing choices today than they were just a short time ago. Likewise, their transportation choices are growing. The popularity of people-oriented places is growing in the West, which was designed and built to a large part around the automobile. Today, the trend is toward new-urbanism and people-centered living. We see evidence of that in many new and reviving neighborhoods. Our investment in a mass transit system will spur a flurry of denser more urban home choices. Does this signal the end of the suburb? Not at all. What it does signal is the advent of wider choices for the citizenry of metro Denver. Our job as a community is to make sure that we continue to provide affordable homes to all people as our neighborhoods grow and mature.

-Roger Reinhardt, Executive Vice President

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
CREATING AND SUSTAINING "PEOPLE-ORIENTED PLACES"

(The Transit Alliance study, *Creating and Sustaining People-Oriented Places*, may be downloaded at transitalliance.org.)

COLORADO MAY WELL BE READY
TO TAKE A GIANT CULTURAL STEP

- Much of the West was developed in parallel with the advent of the automobile. The resulting sprawl since World War II is apparent.
- Metro Denver voters in the fall of 2004 took a giant step forward. They elected to invest about \$4.7 billion in FasTracks, which, when completed in about 11 years, will greatly alter the transportation future of the state and the West.
- With that election, the majority of Coloradoans now turn to face the wave of change that is bearing down on the world and the West -- the coming of a growing numbers of seniors, singles, couples and minorities who want more transportation choices.
- Metro clogged highways already produce record numbers of light rail riders on the modest central system that was opened about 10 years ago. This Nov. 17 the majority of people in metro Denver will be exposed to rail with the opening of the strategic southeast corridor of the system. Over the next couple of years about 50 transit stations will begin to go under construction. By 2016, FasTracks will be complete.

TRANSIT ALLIANCE BEST PRACTICES STUDY LOOKS AT
"PEOPLE-ORIENTED PLACES"

- Transit Alliance, a non-profit organization comprised of public, private and civic organizations, is dedicated to creating and sustaining a balanced multi-modal transportation system in Colorado.
- The organization was instrumental in the FasTracks campaign, informing metro Denver voters of the benefits of a balanced multi-modal transportation system.
- On Apr. 6, 2006, Transit Alliance released its new study on national best practices in creating and sustaining "people-oriented places." Transit Alliance believes that a statewide balanced multi-modal transportation system will be essential to sustaining Colorado as a people-oriented place.



KEY FINDINGS REGARDING POPs AND TODs

- Much of the impetus for the new Transit Alliance study came from the \$4.7 billion investment made by metro Denver voters in FasTracks. However, the knowledge, gained from interviews with about 20 thought leaders across the nation is useful to any area in need of more people-oriented development.
- Successful people-oriented places start with clear vision, the ability to see well into the future and consider the rapidly changing patterns and desires of people, while incorporating the essential elements that make a place attractive to a broader population.
- The three stages of people-oriented place development, planning, implementation and management, then work in concert, in a uniquely orchestrated combination. While successful POP development requires clear vision, it also implies continual flexibility, which must be incorporated into place design.
- A powerful parallel is found in Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, as a POP is born, grows and matures in much the same way we do, requiring various degrees of nurturing before becoming a self-actualized mature place. However, even then, it will continue to change with the generations, the seasons and even the time of day.
- While the planning, implementation and management of each place must be unique, there is a hierarchy of physical and non-physical features and attributes that are common in successful POP, such as:
 - a safe and inviting atmosphere
 - a mix of uses
 - population density
 - neighborhood connectivity
 - good management
 - and a blend of pedestrian-friendly features.

A TRANSIT ALLIANCE BEST PRACTICES STUDY:
CREATING AND SUSTAINING "PEOPLE-ORIENTED PLACES"

CAN COLORADO ACCOMMODATE PEOPLE
AS WELL AS WE DO AUTOMOBILES?

A Note From The Authors:

Tom Boone, Market InfoMania

Ken Parks, APR, CEO, PEAK Public Relations

We began this research project with the knowledge that successful transit-oriented developments are fundamentally about people and the choices they make. Our previous study, "The Invasion of the TRUFFLES" concluded that transit-oriented developments "TODs" need to be POPs to be successful – POPs are People-Oriented Places. Naturally, we were intrigued when we were asked by Transit Alliance to apply the knowledge gained in our earlier work to their mission of developing a balanced multi-modal transportation system for the people of Colorado. "Invasion of the TRUFFLES" may be found at peakpr.com.

When Western Civilization first washed across the plains about 150 years ago it came in wagons and trains. Then followed a society that focused foremost on automobiles and built places such as suburbs, shopping malls, strip centers and big box retail centers.

The resulting exurban sprawl across the West is apparent. What also is apparent is that the West continues to grow and that we must find new ways to accommodate people and their changing needs.

The people of metro Denver have their ear to the rail and are steering down a different track. We have the opportunity to lead the West in creating and sustaining a growing number of people-oriented places. Our clogged metro Denver highways already are producing record numbers of light rail riders as we begin to invest another \$4.7 billion in a mass transit system. Soon, that system will serve more than 20 metro municipalities through more than 50 transit stations, many with the potential for transit-oriented development (TOD).

Creating and sustaining people-oriented places should be the goal of every arterial-clogged or economically challenged community in Colorado.

- The entire front-range metroplex, especially the rapidly developing northern municipal areas need an aggressive transportation initiative as effective as FasTracks will be in metro Denver.

- I-70 through the mountains soon will clog daily as it now does on peak weekends unless a solution is found to head off this economic heart attack. A permanently stalled I-70 would create a much greater Continental Divide between our eastern and western slopes and damage our tourism and trade.
- Likewise, travel from point to point across the Rockies of Colorado is slowing and future transportation solutions must be initiated, not just contemplated. Just as important, we must consider how to help our plains communities revive their economies.

It's time to act. Metro Denver already has. Now, we must complete the transportation puzzle by engaging people across Colorado to resolve how to keep people and goods moving across our state and the West in the future.

The Transit Alliance envisions FasTracks as the hub in a wheel of modern transportation choices. A complete wheel of choices would represent a balanced multi-modal transportation system for Coloradoans. That wheel of choices should include commuter rail, along with bus rapid transit, suburb-to-suburb fast connections, plains and mountain interconnections, along with adequate bike pathways, sidewalks and more.

What do we stand to gain?

As Patty Silverstein, chief economist, Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce and Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, owner, Research Development Partners says, "Metro Denver will be in the international spotlight with the construction of FasTracks. We cannot even place a dollar value on this enhancement of the community's image and character."

On the flip side, the downside is calculable. "The risk of getting this wrong is enormous," points out Tom Clark, executive vice president, Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, which is helping lead the regional charge toward smarter development choices, including rail.

TRANSPORTATION OPENS THE DOOR TO CHOICES AND OPPORTUNITY

Making smart transportation and community building choices for the future requires that we regard changes that are occurring in our society today. For one, the make up of our society is changing quickly. The new West will include many more seniors, singles, couples and minorities and less "traditional" nuclear families.

Metro Denver voters have a big stake in the future success of transit and the coming of a wider variety of smart transportation choices. As we begin to leave the automobile behind in Colorado, we need also to consider the necessary changes that go with creating "people-oriented places" for the folks who will live across our state in the future. What will future Coloradoans think of the transportation choices we are making today?

This is a question that Transit Alliance, Regional Transportation District (RTD), Denver Regional Council of Governments, Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, Home Builders Association of Metro Denver and others are asking.

Bill Struble is a middle-age modern pioneer of sorts who is helping re-invigorate the area northeast of downtown Denver where his German immigrant family once settled. Bused from the burbs to Denver East High School in the 1970s, Struble “felt a calling back” and now lives a stone’s throw from his family’s original homes and just down the street from family icehouse where he used to saw blocks of ice. Of mass transit and the urbanization of the area, Struble, a top producer with Re/Max Alliance City Living, says: “It’s bringing us together so that we may enjoy each other more.”

Struble has greeted people from around the world to Denver since his high school days.

That’s seems to be what success in people-oriented places is all about, greeting people.

It’s about glimpsing into the future and intercepting people who have yet to arrive in the place that they will one day be. Intercepting the future is closer to calculus than it is arithmetic, the experts agree.

Calculating the future, though, leads us to back to simple values. It’s about ending people’s struggle,” says Bill Sirois, transit-oriented development manager, Regional Transportation District. He says that RTD will be a willing partner in planning a future that helps resolve people’s anxiety. What’s that mean? Sirois says its about safety and comfort, transporting people from place to place quickly, efficiently, so that they can lay back and enjoy the experience. Sirois and a growing league of regional partners are setting about to brand as well as build each of the corridors of metro Denver’s emerging balanced multi-modal transportation system.

Helping interconnect the pieces is Transit Alliance.

“Green solutions and economic prosperity become synonymous,” says Matt Baker, treasurer, Transit Alliance, executive director, Environment Colorado when asked to look down the track to the future. “FasTracks is a giant step toward a balanced multi-modal transportation future,” says Baker. He invites a dialogue on state issues and encourages the community to think in terms of total solutions. “What about I-70? What about northern Colorado.”

For the time being there is plenty to do in metro Denver, according to the experts we have contacted for this study. In brief they say it’s time to get busy connecting the pieces now that regional leadership on TOD is taking shape.

Hopefully, various jurisdictions will partner to resolve major issues such as developing master plans and adopting zoning that reflect the true will and best endeavor of each community in the metro area.

Peter Park, planning director, City of Denver says, “Zoning is the key.” He points out that Denver is underway with the process and progress is being made on many fronts metrowide. But, as RTD’s Sirois says about the emerging coalition of regional leadership on TOD, “We are speeding things up.”

“Being urban means respecting our place,” says Peter Park, City of Denver. “We need to stop spending on transportation and start investing. Our focus needs to be on building great places.”

We are pleased herein to present some of the latest thought regarding how to create and sustain a growing number of people-oriented places in Colorado and the world.

ENGAGE THE PUBLIC EARLY AND OFTEN

Once the glitter of rail begins to fade one nagging question will begin to surface all across metro Denver: who will succeed in creating and sustaining people-oriented places along the various rail corridors that will snake across the region?

The same holds true for all points in between.

There is already a tremendous surge in TOD and POP interest in metro Denver, so the rising tide effect may be over and the beginning of really innovative solutions may be just around the corner as a more competitive environment takes shape and people’s choices become apparent.

Success stories are being born – packed with tales of great challenge and achievement.

The strategic Gates Rubber Company site gives us a glimpse into our future, where a community coalition, Campaign for Responsible Development, negotiated for a year with Cherokee Denver LLC before Denver City Council approved public financing and development plans could move forward.

What took place during that year?

The community, council and developer arrived at an agreement regarding “community benefits” that will be associated with the site, according to an opinion editorial published in *The Denver Post*. That’s a whole other story. But, the essence of that story should be considered in the planning of every future station. The mood of the local community is a major factor in the equation of TOD success, as is the mood of the region and the state, as this study clearly concludes.

“Engage the public early and often,” says Peter Park of the City of Denver. “There is a great deal more up front work if you are going to get it right,” says Eliza Prah, marketing director, Continuum Partners, LLC. Continuum is dedicated to creating and sustaining people-oriented places, such as Lakewood, Colorado’s Belmar District, which is the first downtown for the suburban city born in the 1960s. “What you do is avoid a lot of problems later on,” she says. One problem Prah avoided at Belmar was a lack of power. “For two years I kept saying, we need more power,” says Prah of designing the district after seeing others come up short. Today she points out the district’s large-scale festivals are able to handle the power demand that comes with such events. “3-D thinking instead of 2-D thinking,” says Tom Gougeon, partner, Continuum Partners, LLC, of the definitive difference between successful POP planning and not so successful. “You need to think about the whole neighborhood,” he said, adding that a POP needs to be a fundamental building block of the larger community.

Considering all the challenges, though, how do you create and sustain a place that is oriented toward people?

Is it all in the 4D's (Pedestrian and Bike Friendly DESIGN, DENSITY, DISTANCE to transit and DIVERSITY)? While design is important, interviewees told us the physical environment is not enough. It sets the stage. It establishes the framework. But, it does not guarantee success. Several interviewees cited firsthand examples of places that had been built to exacting standards – incorporated all the “right” elements and were failing to live up to expectations.

As author and new urbanist Doug Porter says, it all distills down to choices, connections and collaboration. We couldn't agree more and we encourage you to study Porter's work, along with the work of other POP thought leaders.

THE PEOPLE OF THE WEST ARE CHANGING DRAMATICALLY

It has always been about people and the choices they make. But the people are changing and as a result, the choices they are making are changing, too. From the end of World War II until today, the choices for most people have been limited. “Drive till you qualify,” was the advice. When the car first became king in the 1950s, metro Denver was ripe for road and a sea of suburbs came pouring across the plains.

But now, urban villages, town centers, transit-oriented developments and main streets are becoming a popular option for many people in the West. We see that trend growing steeply in the metro Denver area with the advent of FasTracks.

For the time being, the term build it and they will come applies to metro Denver's rail stations. But, that is only because rail for the moment is new and people are curious. That will all change this fall when the I-25 rail corridor into the southeast metro region opens and the majority of our population is exposed to the lifestyles associated with rail.

The glitter will be gone and the competition will begin to heat up as over the next several years more than 50 transit stations emerge and consumer expectations shift radically.

This leads to a complex community development question: what do you build, where do you build it and how do you get the community to support what you are doing, so that you can build it and how long will all that take? That is why RTD is preparing a guide to TOD development and other organizations are stepping in to coach the community through the process of utilizing mass transit to its fullest potential. “This is going to take a level of cooperation and partnership that we simply have not yet experienced together,” says Jennifer Schaufele, executive director, Denver Regional Council of Governments, one of the leading groups in the push to make the region more people-oriented.

According to the book *“Place Making,”* published by the Urban Land Institute, demand for residential properties in town centers continues to exceed expectations in a wide variety of markets. Most surprising of all is the strong demand for housing above retail shops and offices.

The people who are attracted to urban centers whether they are town centers, main streets, urban villages or transit-oriented developments are making a choice. They are choosing the benefits of an in-town lifestyle and associated urban amenities over a suburban lifestyle.

The neat thing is that about 20 metro Denver municipalities are about to have the opportunity to support denser more urban centers, when a short time ago they were for the most part just bedroom communities to Denver.

The question is who will succeed and how will that change affect our entire marketplace. Transit Alliance believes that those who provide smart people-oriented choices will have the most to gain.

WHAT DOES THIS WAVE OF CHANGE BODE FOR THE BURBS?

Suburban living is far from going the way of the stegosaurus.

The critics of urban centers, such as Joel Kotkin of the New American Foundation, cite studies that provide evidence that demand for suburban living and single family homes is still strong. “The preference for suburban-style living continues to be particularly strong among younger families,” he wrote in a January 14, 2006 editorial in the Wall Street Journal. He also cited recent studies that estimate roughly 51 percent of Americans prefer to live in the suburbs.

“No single type of housing can serve the varied needs of today’s diverse households,” according to an article published by the Smart Growth Network. Suburbs continue to fulfill a need for many people and they are still in strong demand.

That’s fine.

Fortunately, every metro Denver suburb soon will have the opportunity to create urban centers and even whole downtowns where none have ever existed or where they have nearly died.

In the future metro Denver when you say you are headed downtown, you will need to clarify which one.

BEGIN WITH PLACE

Have you ever seen a cow path on a university campus?

Those are the trampled dirty strips across grassy areas where planners should have put pedestrian-oriented sidewalks. Experts agree if you want to succeed in creating and sustaining a people-oriented place, then get up and move around.

Get up high. Move around the region, the district. Walk down the streets. Drive. Observe patterns. Talk to people. Get to know the community. Watch the evolution of place across the span of the day; consider the seasons. Study the area culture and the true wants and desires of people who come and go. Look at demographics, but, just as important, look at values and shifting moods and beliefs.

Keep in mind, too, it's a lot easier to intercept people where they are than to change their patterns altogether.

CONSIDER THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Incorporating the 4 Ds – Pedestrian Friendly DESIGN, DENSITY, DISTANCE to transit and DIVERSITY – is critical to the success of a POPs. People-oriented places must be designed for people to move about freely – gather, shop, mingle, work and unwind.

They need to become activity centers or “destinations,” be accessible by all modes of transportation and provide “linkages” deep into surrounding communities.

That is why metro Denver train stations are popular; they provide a growing group of people with a choice they desire.

Everyone who gets off a train, or bus or out of a car is a pedestrian.

Our job is to create a physical environment that entices them.

How people feel and where they go after they get off the train – or other mode of transportation -- is critically important to the success of people-oriented places.

Do people feel safe?

Do they feel comfortable in the environment?

Is the mixed-use development near the station welcoming and inviting, or do people feel the need to make a bee-line for their car?

How conducive is the environment to multiple modes of transportation?

Are there right-sized bike and pedestrian paths into surrounding communities?

Or, do local streets become congested with automobile traffic as people race from the parking lots and head for home?

If they go straight from mass transit to their cars, a large social and economic opportunity is missed.

According to the knowledgeable group of leaders interviewed for this study, getting the physical environment right is important – “it sets the stage.” But it is no guarantee of success. In fact, getting the physical environment “too right” could actually limit its success.

LEAVING YOUR POP "UNFINISHED" MAY BE KEY

There needs to be some sort of "unfinished" characteristic in a people-oriented place because people evolve over time and life is dynamic, society is dynamic, people are dynamic. If something is the same all the time and it is finished, that implies that there is nothing else you can add to it that makes it unique and makes it yours."

One interviewee told us that when you are designing and building a place, design it to somewhat less than 90 percent. The amenities, the seating, the type of seating should be left undefined and flexible.

Another interviewee explained that he had tried to figure out what teenagers would enjoy in a place. He explained that what they learned is that with teenagers you leave the space under-designed, because no matter what you design they will want to tailor the space to their needs.

Flexibility should be designed into the place also to accommodate changes associated with seasons, holidays, occasions and even the changes associated with each day.

MAKE YOUR PLACE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY

How to create a pedestrian friendly physical environment has been well researched and documented.

How to make sidewalks and streets walk-able, how to create outdoor living rooms, how to calm traffic, and the importance of way-finding signage and a host of other tactics are available in numerous books, articles and research papers. At a recent conference on smart growth, more than 100 books and pamphlets were on sale offering advice on how to get the physical environment right. We've also included in the appendix a few of the "to do lists" we found in the literature.



A TRANSIT ALLIANCE BEST PRACTICES STUDY: KEY FINDINGS

YOUR PLACE MUST BE UNIQUE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

When we asked respondents to rank the most important physical attributes, many expressed struggling with which were “most” important.

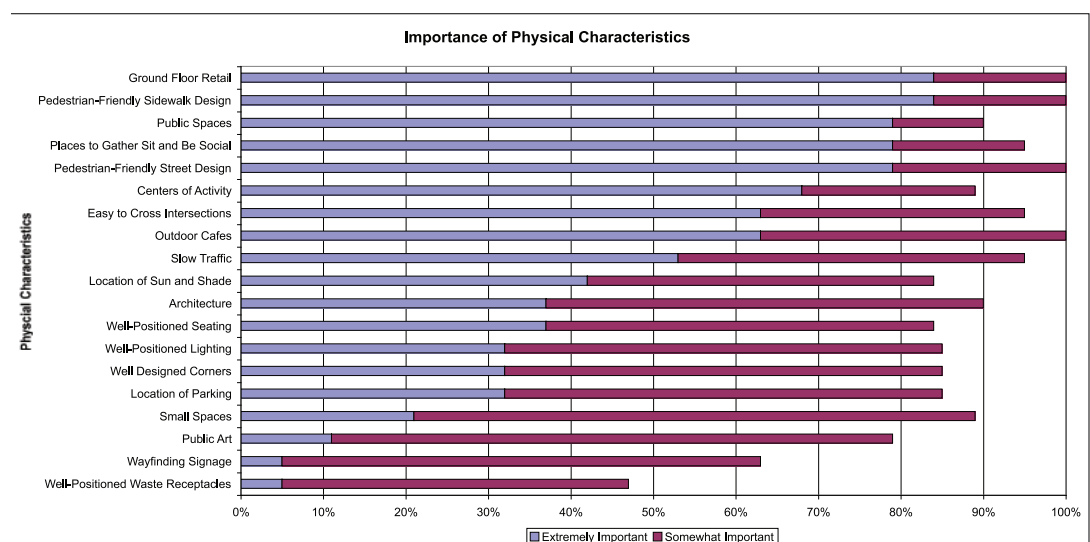
Which physical characteristics are most important largely depends on the place, we discovered in our interviews. It varies from place to place, we found.

A cookie cutter approach is growing in popularity according to the experts we interviewed.

Communities should beware.

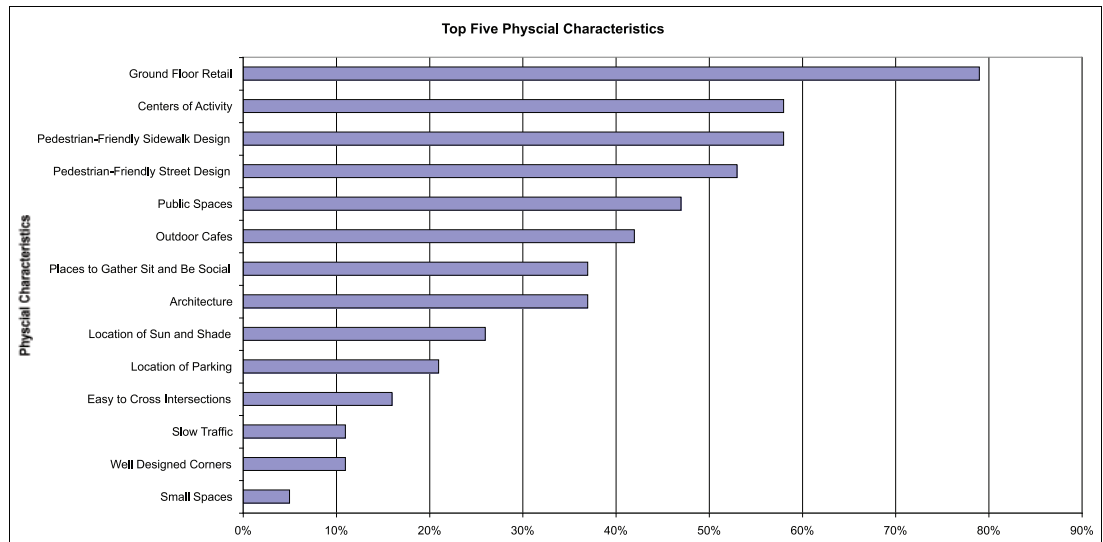
The experts tell us that without a truly unique and memorable sense of place, the cookie crumbles.

Albeit reluctant, respondents did rate physical attributes in terms of importance. In response to the question, “In your opinion, how important are these characteristics to making a place people oriented?” Respondents provided the following ratings.



A few respondents added other attributes they felt were extremely important or somewhat important including: residential units, urban landscaping, water features, parallel parking, clean streets and sidewalks, colorful and discreet signs for shops, texture and layering, successful retail, good sight lines and absence of graffiti.

Respondents were asked to rank the top five physical characteristics and ground floor retail, pedestrian friendly sidewalk and street design, centers of activity and public spaces were ranked in the top five most often. The following graph shows the percentage of times respondents placed each attribute in the top five.



While these physical characteristics were rated highest, it is very important to understand that no single formula works. We heard over and over in the interviews that there is not one physical design formula that fits every situation.”

- “Start with the place. Each is different.”
- “You have to deal with the hand you are dealt.”
- “The physical environment of the successful places I’ve been wasn’t all the same.”

THE LIFE OF A COMMUNITY IS AKIN TO THAT OF A CHILD

Nearly every person we interviewed, at some point compared creating and sustaining a sense of place with organic growth. “You have to bring the place to life,” was perhaps the most common metaphor. Others include:

- “When you look at it from a grand enough scale you can see that it operates like an organism.”
- “It is important to have healthy streets.”
- “Sense of place goes beyond the words. It’s the soul of the place. The community’s soul is what people are looking for.”

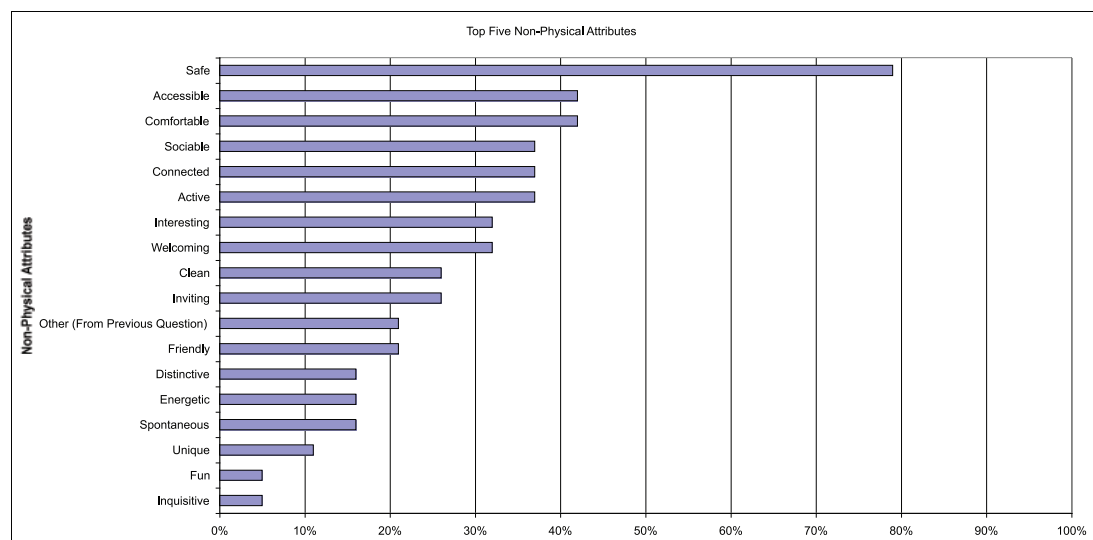
Words that are often associated with people we like to be around are used to describe places. Project For Public Spaces, in its book, *“How to Turn a Place Around,”* states that “when people describe a place they enjoy, words like ‘safe,’ ‘fun,’ ‘charming,’ and ‘welcoming’ tend to come up repeatedly.”

Some even compared creating and sustaining a people-oriented place to raising a child.

- “Think about a space like a small child. As it grows it has to be nurtured and it’s got to be disciplined at times and it has to be encouraged at others. You don’t treat the child the same way at age two as age 12. You don’t communicate with it the same way, you don’t punish it the same way and you don’t reward it the same way. You give it more independence and autonomy as it grows up.”
- “When you have a child, you adjust the physical environment to make them safe and feel safe.”

PEOPLE-ORIENTED PLACES FEEL SAFE AND SECURE

When we asked respondents to rank the most important non-physical attributes, one non-physical attribute stood out -- “Safe.” Safe was ranked in the top five by 79 percent of interviewees, twice as many as any other attribute.



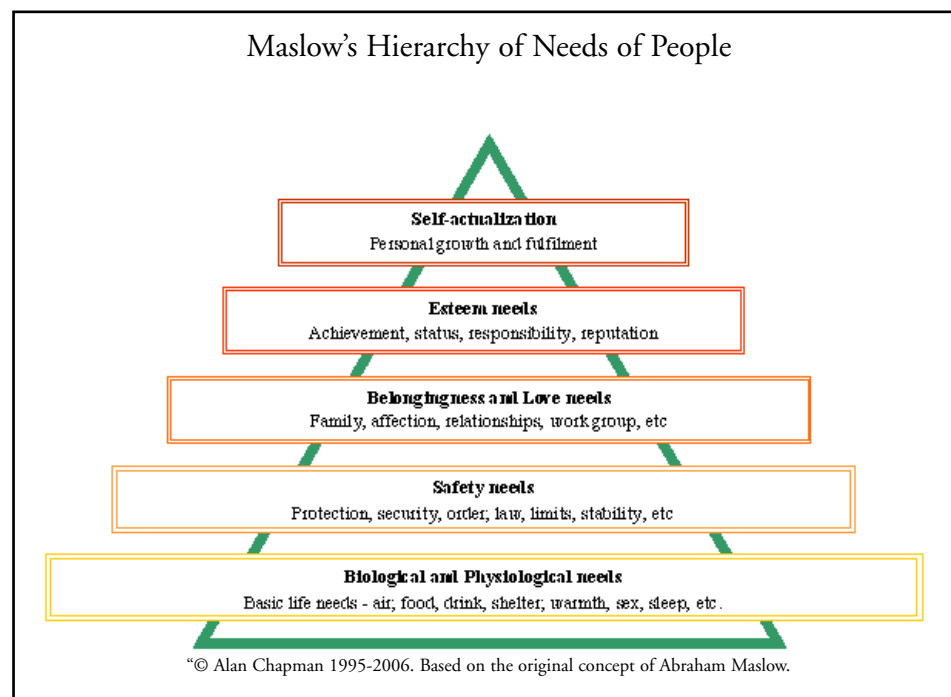
In interviews, respondents validated safety as the most important non-physical attribute. There comments included:

- “The most important issue for anything to become a place is always safety and security. Nothing else comes close.”
- “Obviously the first fundamental thing is safety. Do you feel safe? Safe is more than am I in danger of crime. Safe is familiarity and comfort.”
- “What makes people comfortable is safety.”
- “There has to be the perception of safety.”
- “I think safety is huge.”

One respondent went on to say that “safe” is a relative term. He used the example of how some “people might venture into an unsafe people place, places like Greenwich Village. There was a time when you wouldn’t take your wife and kids down there. But, if you were out with the guys you might wander into Greenwich Village. The fact that it is not as safe as another place isn’t a consideration. Safe is relative.”

MASLOW POINTS THE WAY TO GO

As we learned of the basic physical needs of a place and learned how important safety is, it reminded us of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

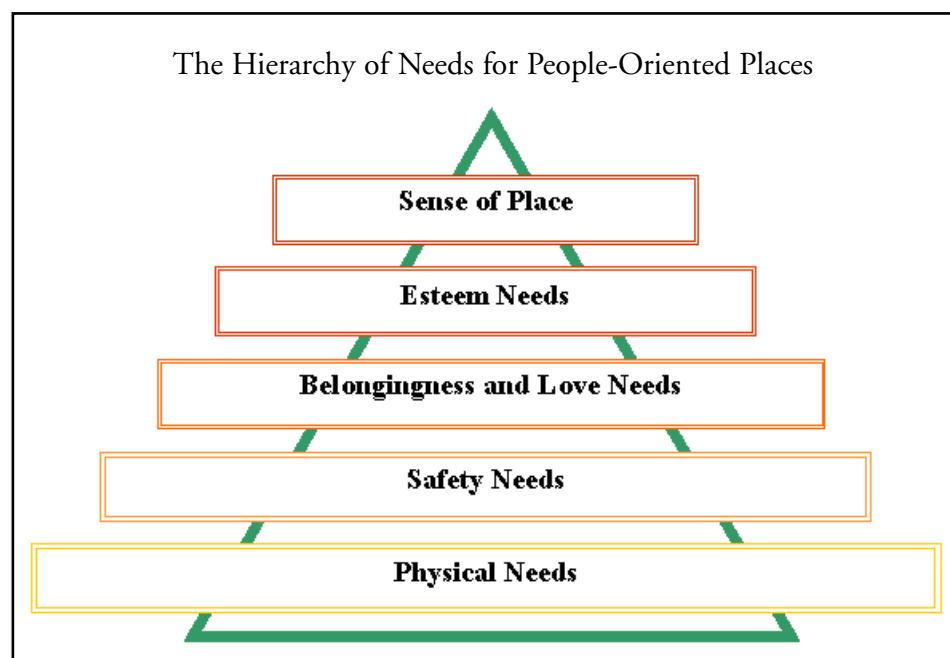


First presented in “*A Theory of Human Motivation*,” in 1943, Maslow hypothesized that once a person’s basic survival needs were met, other “higher order” needs that lead to “self-actualization” come into play. Maslow separated these needs as “D-needs” (deficiency) and “B-needs” (being).

“The underlying thesis is that those who have satisfied their D-needs and are motivated by B-needs are actualizing the deeper potentials of being human.” He believed that the D-needs – or deficiency -- take precedence over B-needs – or sense of being. And, before a person can take care of their B-needs, their D-needs have to be to a large extent, satisfied. The order of needs that Maslow identified for people are:

- **Biological and Physiological Needs** – the basic needs of life – air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
- **Safety Needs** – The need to feel protection, security, order, law, limits, and stability.
- **Belongingness and Love Needs** – The need to be accepted by family and friends. The need for affection and relationships.
- **Esteem Needs** – The need to feel valued, achievement, status, responsibility. To have a good reputation.
- **Self-Actualization** – Personal growth and fulfillment. This stage is described as the continuous desire to fulfill potentials, to “be all you can be.” People who achieve this level continue to become the most complete, the fullest people they can be.

To achieve this stage, you must have your lower needs satisfied, at least mostly. If a person’s lower needs are unmet, they can’t fully devote themselves to fulfilling their potential.



PLACES ARE BORN AND MATURE; OTHERWISE, THEY DIE

We found through the study that there are striking similarities between a person attaining self actualization and a place self actualizing or attaining a true sense of place.

The order of needs of a place appears to be:

- **Physical Needs** – The basic needs of a place are the physical characteristics that provide the foundation from which a place can become people-oriented.
- **Safety Needs** – The importance of safety was clearly validated by respondents as the most important non-physical characteristic. It seems simple enough, if people do not feel safe in a space, they will not stay there and they will not likely return.
- **Belongingness and Love Needs** – A place we chose to be in will make us feel a sense of belongingness. In the survey, the attributes of accessible, social and connected rounded out the top five non-physical characteristics. Why? Because people are attracted to people and it is through being around other people that we satisfy this need.
- **Esteem Needs** – A place needs to achieve a level above simply being safe and loved – a level of derived value. Respondents explained this by saying, “If I derive value from being there, I’m more likely to return” and “Places need to stimulate the senses. When you remember a place, you remember what you saw, smelled, heard, touched or tasted.”
- **Sense of Place** – It became evident in the process of conducting the research that a place becomes a people-oriented place only if it is never considered finished. If you consider a place being finished, then you are saying it can’t self-actualize anymore. And few of us will admit that we are done as a person. There is always room for growth in every individual and every place.

The basic needs of a place are the physical characteristics of a place that provide the foundation from which it can become a people-oriented place. Respondents validated this in both the survey and in the interviews. In the interviews, they explained their survey rankings by stating:

- “The physical characteristics set the playing field. It has to have the right size, scale and frame. If those things don’t work, nothing else will.”
- “The physical characteristics can either help or hinder the development of non-physical attributes.”
- “A well designed place will create the opportunity for all of the non-physical attributes to follow suite.
- “The physical characteristics of the place support the non-physical attributes and features.”

The physical characteristics do appear to be the “basic needs” of place making.

Safety was clearly validated by respondents as the most important non-physical characteristic. Eighty percent of respondents placed safety in the top five – twice as many as did any other non-physical attribute. It seems simple enough, if people do not feel safe in a space, they will not stay there and they will not likely return.

But, delivering in this area can be tall order and must be fully calculated into the equation of sustaining people-oriented places.

PEOPLE WANT TO BELONG AND BE LOVED

A place we choose to be in would make us feel a sense of belongingness and love. This is validated in the interviews as well as in the literature. People are attracted to people. Why? Because it is through other people that we satisfy these needs.

In many of the interviews, respondents stated these attributes came after the need to be “safe.”

- “A welcoming environment implies that it is already safe and secure.”
- “If a place is not safe, it is not welcoming. People will not return.”
- “If I go to an interesting and inquisitive place, a place where I might even feel welcomed, that might not make me feel safe. I’m probably not going to go there very often.”

WE WANT TO EXCHANGE GOODS, SERVICES AND IDEAS; AND STIMULATE OUR FIVE SENSES

A place needs to achieve a level above simply being safe and welcoming for people to want to return to it frequently according to our interviews. They expressed that above and beyond the levels of safe and welcoming is another level – a level of derived value or exchange.

- “If I derive value from being there, I’m more likely to return than if I am simply safe and comfortable.”
- “Why should I come there? If there is nothing I get out of it, then why be there.”
- “You need to stimulate the senses of smell, sound, taste, touch, and vision.”
- “People remember places that stimulate the senses.”
- “When you remember a place, you remember what you saw, smelled, heard, touched or tasted.”

One respondent pointed us to the writings of David Engwicht of Creative Communities International who espouses a theory that the purpose of a city is for exchange. Exchange can be as simple as being in a place and enjoying the sensory aspects of the place. “Even a person who goes to place alone, just to watch people and ponder their own existence is involved in exchange. Their very presence attracts other people, so by being there they are giving something of themselves and gaining as well.”

EVENTUALLY A POP WILL MATURE AND SELF-ACTUALIZE

It became evident in the process of conducting the research that a place becomes a people-oriented place only if it is never considered finished and continues to become the most complete, the fullest place it can be.

- “The unique, interesting and spontaneous are the fundamental reasons people would come to the place.”
- “Maybe subconsciously we manifest that we need to see growth and self-actualization in our cities and if we look at a place that is finished like a Disneyland, sure it is interesting to visit once, twice maybe three times, but when we come back and see the same thing every time then you are looking at something that is static and stagnant and humans are all about movement and growth.”

And, if all these are developed and managed, the place can self actualize.

- “Creating a great place is not about developing an award winning design. It is primarily based on a community’s vision and an excellent management plan. We estimate that about 80 percent of the success of any public space can usually be attributed to its management. No matter how good the design of a space is, it will never become a true place unless it is well managed.”



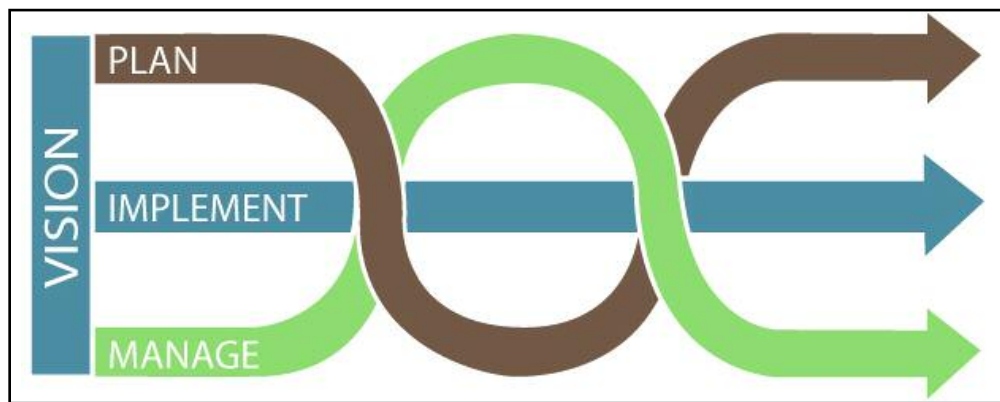
THREE STAGES OF POP DEVELOPMENT MUST COINCIDE

The key to understanding the process of creating and sustaining people-oriented places – to actually succeed in nurturing them to self-actualize – is to understand the stages are sequential, yet happen in parallel.

To manage a place well, you first must be able to envision what it takes to manage it well before the place is created. Then, in turn, you must take the steps necessary to implement that vision across the three stages of successful people-oriented placemaking: planning, implementing and managing.

If a place should never be considered finished, then we safely can say that visioning, planning, implementing and managing are never complete.

Plan, Implement, and Manage Coincidentally



While seemingly simple in its concept, ponder the implications of the three stages of successful people-oriented placemaking working in parallel and continually evolving, wrapping around each other and creating strength. Each stage of the process is of critical importance and must be employed over the life of a place.

- **Visioning:** The vision, we were told, is certainly the first step. However, respondents stated that “You don’t know what you’ll end up with.” This is because as people become attracted to the area, the community grows and changes. “New ideas are introduced and the new visions emerge.” However, the process begins with a clear end in mind. However, as you plan, implement and manage you will amend that design constitution accordingly.
- **Planning:** Contrary to popular belief, planning does not end when building begins. Over and over in the interviews were heard about how “things change as places are developed.” Entrances and public spaces don’t look or work like they were intended. As things change and especially as the community grows and new visions emerge, planning continues.

- **Implementation:** Some respondents stated that “building is finite. You build it and then you are done.” Others countered that because a place is never “done” implementation or the building of a place is never done. Buildings get torn down, new buildings are added, and public spaces are altered or completely transformed.
- **Management:** Decisions about how a place will be managed need to be made very early in the process, respondents told us. “It begins in the visioning and continues in perpetuity.” “You can’t have a sequence of phases without management.” one said. Most importantly, over the life of a place, decisions have to be revisited as the population, the economy and events change perspectives.

VISION IS DERIVED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PEOPLE

Clearly an important step in the process, the people we spoke with and the literature we reviewed all spoke of the value of including the community in the process of creating and sustaining people-oriented places. As stated previously it is best if the community is involved from the visioning and then throughout the life of the place.

We were told that visioning begins with a process of educating the community.

- “First, everyone has to understand what the language is, what the tools are. Always do it up front. You can’t have a vision until people know what they are going to talk about.”
- “Outreach and education are such an important part of what needs to happen. Often, for whatever reason this doesn’t get done very well.”
- “Community outreach is very hard and very important. We all know we can do better if we communicate with the community.”
- “Community outreach and education go on throughout the lifetime of a community.”
- “You educate them throughout the place making exercise.”

The visioning needs to include discussions of what type of a place people want to create. It begins with a discussion of values.

- “You have to go through an exercise in which you elicit from people their values. They [their values] vary based on where you are. They are based on why they live there. It all begins with the value.”
- “Establish what you want for an area. For example: Do you want a highly successful retail mainstreet? Or do you not have that appetite? You build a strong level of support for that and then discuss how you are going to make that happen.”

During the visioning process, you deal with fear and misperceptions.

- “People will come to workshops planting fear. You need to make sure people focus on what they value. This provides a compass. What we value is where we are going to go with the design.”
- “Visioning is where you can help them understand the relationship between density and some of the macro physical characteristics as well as the site design characteristics. You are creating the buy-in to make changes that without the visioning effort would become controversial.

A critical aspect of visioning is market assessment, with a strong caution to “not get too caught up in how many square feet of retail a place can support.” We heard from our interviewees that the most important things to understand about the market are the cultural and demographic makeup of the area as well as the demographic shifts that are likely to take place.

- “I feel that anyone who gets so involved in measuring what the market will support doesn’t understand how quality of a place will draw people from far, far, far away.”
- “Adding a main street or creating other types of public spaces will change the whole dynamic of the area – give it a whole other aura. Do you do a marketing study for that? I don’t think so.”

IMPLEMENTATION MUST BE STAGED FOR YOUR SITUATION

Respondents told us that during implementation, things won’t work out like you thought they would in the visioning and planning process. Their advice:

- “Don’t blow the vision because you weren’t realistic. It’s important to understand the importance of the quality of the details.”
- Start with small successes: “The fabric is the most important thing. Don’t try to hit home runs. You try to get on base by walking or by a single or whatever. You can’t go in with a fixed development model of this many uses and this many stories of buildings. You have to tailor it to the place and the opportunities that you have. You’ve got to be able to react and you have to acknowledge that your model is going to add things on. You don’t want the place to be finished.”

We were also told how important it is to begin to attract people to the area as soon as possible so you can watch and see how they interact with the place.

- You need to build in such a way that starts to attract immediately. Build around an intersection and halfway down a block. Build toward a central element. Get the corner right. If you don’t have something interesting across the street the glass is half full.

MANAGEMENT MUST BEGIN WITH YOUR VISION

We were also told that there is danger in over-managing or over-programming a space.

- “We have to draw the line. The more we make a place so well managed, so clean we never see our own teenagers, we’ve just made America a lousy place to be. We have to train a lot of managers to put the risk back in. It’s not always the bottom line. The best places are going to be those where we’re not focused on risk management. We need places where people can blend.”
- “People will tell you where they are comfortable sitting and gathering. If you over-program a public space – here’s the conversation pit, here’s the performance area – it tends to drive people away and they won’t use it for what it was programmed.”

You have to think about how a place is going to be managed from the time you begin to plan the place and it has to evolve over time.

- “Ask who is using the place, how it is used and how do people feel when they use it. What resources do you have? Lighting – what is the appropriate level of lighting, what happens at different times of the year with that lighting. You can’t just think about it statically. You have to think about it dynamically and evolving over time.”

And, the management structure has to be of a scale that is appropriate.

- “You have to have an entity or organization that is invested personally as well as financially in that place. You need a governance model that is small enough to be understandable and large enough to have the resources.”
- “It has to be the appropriate size so that it has the resources both financially and enough personnel. It also has to have a structure so the development of a place is not personality driven.
- “Like a child needs a parent. It’s much easier to neglect that child when you have a small group of individuals that are responsible for its nurturing. No one has accountability.”

And, you have to pay attention to the details.

- “You’ve got to manage it to the flows. People like to move. They don’t need to move fast, but they need to have freedom of movement whether it is walking or on a bicycle or in a vehicle and they want to have options. And so, you have to make those movements comfortable.”
- “It takes open mindedness and thoughtfulness to say; okay this is what is happening. How do I respond to that? How do I learn? There are certain things that happen differently every day and every year. You have to step back from that and know there are certain patterns of behavior.
- “When we add or replace elements on the mall it either has to be bullet proof or easily replaceable. It needs to either be timeless and durable or recognize that certain elements are going to be broken or damaged and need to be easily replaced.”
- “When it comes to managing it has all the maintenance, safety, programming the space, other business considerations in mind. Security. Trash. How are you going to get trash trucks in?”

A CONCLUDING THOUGHT
ABOUT "PEOPLE-ORIENTED PLACES"

IT'S TIME FOR A POP RENAISSANCE IN COLORADO

"We've learned a great deal over the past 10 years," observes RTD's Bill Sirois, referring to the core light rail line that has served Denver over that time, as well as the soon-to-be-unveiled I-25 southeast corridor.

As we apply that learning and speed up the process of sustaining a more people-oriented Colorado, we in metro Denver have a great deal going for us. We are a forward-looking people willing to invest rather than just spend on transportation.

The challenge now is to intensify the dialogue with the people of metro Denver and Colorado. We need to more fully inform them of the benefits associated with what Denver's Peter Park calls "being urban." Naturally, people have a what's-in-it-for-me attitude toward all new proposals.

Transit Alliance and a legion of partners envision a people-oriented renaissance in Colorado, one that accommodates people, as well as their automobiles. We hope that this study will bring focus to that vision and more balanced multi-modal transportation choices to the people of our state.

¹ Kotkin, Joel, "The War Against Suburbia," *The Wall Street Journal*, January, 14, 2006.

² Smart Growth Online, "Principles of Smart Growth, Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices." Online. Viewed February 6, 2006.

³ Kazden, Alan E., *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Oxford University Press, 2000. Volume 5, pp.118 – 120.

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APPENDIX

Key Principles of Building Healthy Communities (summarized).

Burden, Dan. "Building Communities with Transportation." Distinguished Lecture Presentation. Transportation Research Board. Washington, D.C. January 10, 2001

- 1) **Build for Everyone.** The health of a place is determined both by numbers of users, and by the diversity of people coming and going, lingering and exchanging. Urban centers should have many young children and teenagers present. Many older adults and disabled people should be common.
- 2) **Scale For People.** People should be able to reach most primary destinations within a five-minute walk. It should be possible to get completely across the entire area in 10 minutes.
- 3) **Create Many Linkages.** Make it easy to get around. New streets should be kept short, 400 to 600 feet long. By keeping block lengths short, as well, traffic speeds are also held in check.
- 4) **Streets have multiple uses.** Both main streets and neighborhood roads serve as "outdoor living rooms." One of the greatest challenges to any town or city is identifying, funding, and bringing together a coalition of stakeholders to revive decaying and unhealthy streets."
- 5) **Sidewalks Must Be Comfortable.** Sidewalks need adequate width, buffers, continuity, connectivity and edges. Sidewalks cannot be narrow. Sidewalks require buffers and edges. Sidewalks require maintenance.
- 6) **Streets must be crossed with ease.** Pedestrians seek means to cross streets without going more than 150 feet out of the way.
- 7) **Keep Urban Traffic Dispersed and Low Speed.** A general reduction in quality of life and property value has resulted from overly high urban traffic speeds.
- 8) **Keep Traffic Moving.** Motorists are less bothered by speed at which they travel than the numbers of times they must stop and wait.
- 9) **Build Green Streets.** Pedestrians have great need for green, shade and ambiance.
- 10) **Build Bike Lanes.** Bike lanes are an essential component of healthy streets.
- 11) **Build Compact Intersections.** Make them easy and safe to cross for pedestrians. They should be compact and produce low turning speeds.
- 12) **Provide ADA Access.** Not only a U.S. Civil Act requirement; it is the best way to meet the needs of all people of all abilities.
- 13) **Build Public Space.** All humans seek, crave and need places near their work and living quarters offering pleasant settings for interaction and storehouses of events and memories. These places can be simple, such as well-designed corners, intersections, or they can be elaborate centrally located parks. Public space is where we celebrate being alive; share anniversaries and birthdays, assemble for neighborhood or town festivals.
- 14) **Build with Proper Size and Scale.** New, mixed-use neighborhoods are designed to capture many daily trips, using the concept of the corner store, the friendly barber, the small, well-managed hardware. Of greatest importance is sensitive placement and sizing of schools and community centers.
- 15) **Provide Mixed Uses and Mixed Incomes.** New neighborhood designs mix shopping, residential, play and even many work centers. People of various income levels live in different sized homes through careful site planning. The added diversity and ability of people to live in cosmopolitan neighborhoods, where everyone has access and the ability to go places and do things is vital to a walkable setting and healthy community.

Ten Common Sense Rules for Transit Oriented Development

Liedstrand, B. "Ten Common Sense Rules for Transit-Oriented Development."
Planetizen www.planetizen.com/node/17471 Online. Viewed January 13, 2006.

Many people don't have a clear understanding of the fundamental elements of Transit Oriented Development. These Ten Common Sense Rules can help.

1. **Urban Form.** Transit Oriented Development (TOD) must have an urban, rather than a suburban pattern of development. A TOD isn't just a denser suburban mixed use that is located at a transit stop. It is a different kind of a place; a different development pattern governed by a different set of rules. Generally, suburban forms are "loose", horizontal and spread out, and urban forms are "tight", vertical and compact. Here are a couple of examples from recent California TODs, only one of which is successful:
2. **Urban Uses.** The uses in the area immediately adjacent to the transit stop should be limited to those that are compatible with and supportive of the transit stop and those living and working there. What products and services are needed by the people who live and work in the TOD and those who are passing through? In addition to normal downtown retail, is there a need for day care, cleaners, convenience retail, etc.? Large automobile oriented uses, particularly those that draw from a large catchment area (big box, auto dealers, power center tenants, etc.) should be prohibited.
3. **Urban Intensity.** Sufficient development intensity must be clustered immediately adjacent to the transit stop. The vitality and success of the TOD are dependent on having enough people using it at all hours of the day. If you are not sure how many people are needed, put in too many rather than too few.
4. **Mixed-Use.** Allowing people to live, work, shop and play within the walkable area. If you live or work there, can you find everything you need on a regular basis without getting into a car?
5. **Retail Location.** Retail is dependent on access to enough customers, whether they come by train, bus, car, bike or on foot. Don't try to force retail into a location that won't give it that necessary customer access. Where possible, the retail should be placed so it is able to draw customers from both the TOD and a major street.
6. **Reverse the normal parking rules.** Instead of worrying whether there will be enough parking, make sure there is not too much. You may need parking maximums instead of parking minimums. Don't surround the transit stop with parking. That area is reserved for high density mixed use. If the commuters who use the transit for "park and ride" park a few blocks away and walk on the sidewalk past the retail shop fronts, they become potential customers for the retail. If land values justify it, put the parking in structures or underground. At-grade parking lots adjacent to the transit stop can destroy a TOD.
7. **Walkability.** Everyone who gets on or off public transit is a pedestrian regardless of how they get to the area. Comfortable, convenient walkability is essential. Before a TOD plan is approved, imagine yourself walking in it. Are the important destinations within a comfortable walking distance? Can you get all the products and services you need on a regular basis by walking? Will kids be safe there? Will a woman feel comfortable walking there alone at night?
8. **Transit Connectivity.** The transit stop needs to give the rider access to a convenient, integrated regional transit system that will connect him or her to the important destinations throughout the region. That integrated system needs to include coordinated feeder systems as well as main line systems.
9. **Neighborhood Connectivity.** The transit stop needs to be connected by a network of streets and pathways to adjacent neighborhoods and allow direct access to the transit stop without relying on the arterial street system. Convenient, easy flow of people from adjacent neighborhoods will add to the success of the TOD.
10. **Value Capture.** Transit is expensive to construct, but adding transit can substantially increase the value of adjacent properties that are served by the transit. A portion of that increase in property values needs to be captured and used to help fund the transit.

Rail-Oriented Development: Strategies and Tools to Support Passenger Rail.

Charlier, J., Jacobsen, M., Hernandez, C., Herman, B., Ellis, L., "Rail-Oriented Development: Strategies and Tools to Support Passenger Rail." Colorado Department of Transportation, March 2002.

Other studies have refined our understanding of pedestrian-oriented design, to the extent that a fairly detailed list of pedestrian planning and design principles can be articulated.

1. Direct, convenient on-site walkway grid connecting all portals on the site.
2. On-site pedestrian grid has a grain (connection spacing) of 200' or less.
3. Direct sidewalk connections to the external sidewalk grid at safe, convenient points.
4. Sight lines, view planes and orienting landmarks provided to support visual wayfinding.
5. On-site sidewalk widths are adequate for social use (6' to 20' depending on type).
6. Internal pedestrian plazas provided to create "places" and tie buildings and uses together.
7. Direct, continuous, buffered sidewalks across any large parking areas.
8. No parking barriers to major cross-site walkways or sidewalks.
9. Needs of disabled and physically challenged travelers are fully addressed.
10. External sidewalks are buffered from streets with a landscaping strip or on-street parking.
11. On-site driveways and adjacent streets provided with modern crosswalks.
12. Curb cuts and ramps cut at 90° to the roadway with adequate width and landings.
13. Canopies, awnings and arcades used to provide shelter from sun and rain.
14. Wayfinding information provided at key pedestrian intersections.
15. Appropriate furniture and lighting on major walkways.

Finally, it is clear that pedestrian-oriented design is of significance primarily within the station catchment areas of urban and suburban light rail lines. It is also important, although somewhat less so, in the catchment areas of commuter rail stations. However, pedestrian-oriented design is of little importance in suburban and rural park-and-ride facilities that are isolated from other land uses.

Ten Rules of Thumb for Designing Sustainable Streets

Renne, J., Porta, S., "Linking urban design to sustainability: formal indicators of social urban sustainability field research in Perth, Western Australia." URBAN DESIGN International, 2005.

- 1) Design streets as narrow as possible (to accommodate the pedestrian over the automobile).
- 2) Do not isolate buildings (especially institutional buildings) in lots; buildings should line the streets.
- 3) Do not allow setbacks: building fronts should be as continuous as possible along the street.
- 4) Make many small buildings instead of a few large ones.
- 5) Design retail at the ground floor wherever possible.
- 6) Avoid parking lots: on-street parking is better, provided that retail is located at the ground floor facing the street and the façade of the parking deck is disguised to blend into the architectural environment.
- 7) Design porticos, arcades, low fencing, stoops, shelters and the like: everything that can provide a soft transition from the street to the building is crucial.
- 8) Avoid blank walls. Avoid large billboards, traffic lights, large on-street trash dumpsters, high light poles, but especially: avoid blank walls!
- 9) Put trees on wide streets: trees are very often the only thing we can do for making existent streets more lively and friendly, but they can make a big difference.
- 10) Places for sitting are all-important; provide sensible arrangements wherever possible.

