Accelerating Multimodal Project Delivery

Sam Richardson
Agenda

Context
Challenges
Top Strategies
Local Strategies
Case Studies
Slope 8%
11% slope
Possible flooding damage
Trip Hazard
Slope of 7.1%
Sidewalk loss possibly due to flooding in 2016.
• Very large grate openings present here.
• One resident said their granddaughter was able to stick her entire leg through.
Safety Hazard for Cyclists
Context

• Charleston Area MPO - the Regional Intergovernmental Council
• Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
  • BPAC Members concerned about slow rate of Bike-Ped Plan implementation.
  • Many areas of concern for safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
  • Multimodal travel can be a challenge with current conditions.
STRATEGIES FOR ACCELERATING MULTIMODAL PROJECT DELIVERY
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Key Challenges

Does your agency or your interagency partners deal with these?
Key Challenges Overview

- Programming Delays and Funding Source Challenges
- Difficulties Competing for Limited Funding
- Inadequate Internal and External Coordination
- Inadequate Community Input
- Design Guidelines Insensitive to Context
- Lengthy Environmental Reviews
- Insufficient Staff Capacity or Technical Knowledge

Accelerating Multimodal Project Delivery
Programming Delays and Funding Source Challenges
Try producing an elevator pitch to explain the TIP, STIP, and MTP...
Difficulties Competing for Limited Funding
Inadequate Internal and External Coordination
Inadequate Community Input
Design Guidelines
Insensitive to Context
Lengthy Environmental Reviews
Insufficient Staff Capacity or Technical Knowledge
13 Strategies

Have you experienced the implementation of any of these already?
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13 Strategies (Continued)

- Apply and Leverage the Innovative Multimodal Treatments in MUTCD
- Promote Flexibility in Existing Funding Sources
- Allocate New Funding Sources to Implement Multimodal Infrastructure and Leverage Existing Programs
- Communicate Benefits of Multimodal Projects and Improve Performance Data for Evaluating Them
- Increase Staff Capacity and Knowledge
- Provide Technical Assistance to Support Small and Rural Communities
Strategy 1: Develop Prioritization Methods

- Competition for funding
- Through dedicated active transportation funding sources (TA)
- As part of a larger infrastructure project
Strategy 1: Develop Prioritization Methods

- A project may set out to compete for TA funding but turns out to be ineligible.
- A process of examining eligible projects, reviewing grant requirements, and creating a criteria will help determine viability early on and avoids wasted time.
Strategy 1: Develop Prioritization Methods

- Scoring criteria that focus on VMT or LOS unfairly limit multimodal development.
- Create a scoring criteria that favors projects that include multimodal elements to counterweight the bias of the popularity of vehicles during pre-treatment conditions.
Strategy 1: Develop Prioritization Methods

“Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities, except where bicycle and pedestrian use are not permitted” 23 U.S.C. 217 (g)(1).
Strategy 1: Develop Prioritization Methods

Federal law on National Highway System design criteria: “A design for new construction, reconstruction, resurfacing (except for maintenance resurfacing), restoration, or rehabilitation of a highway on the National Highway System (other than a highway also on the Interstate System) shall consider… access for other modes of transportation” 23 U.S.C. 109 (c)(1)(d).
13 Strategies

Develop Prioritization Methods for Multimodal Projects

Allow Flexibility in Funding Smaller Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

Identify Multimodal Needs Early in Project Development

Improve Public Involvement

Make Appropriate and Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions

Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement

Incorporate Context-Based Design Into State Design Processes and Manuals
Strategy 2: Allow Flexibility in Funding Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

• Projects can sometimes take up to 9 months or more to be programmed into the TIP/STIP.

• For smaller projects, the time it takes to get it programmed can far exceed the time it takes to construct the project.
Strategy 2: Allow Flexibility in Funding Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

- Use grouped listings to aggregate projects of a similar type.
- Projects may be grouped by function, work type, and/or geographic area using the applicable classifications under 23 CFR 771.117(c) and (d) and/or 40 CFR 93.
Strategy 2: Allow Flexibility in Funding Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

- Consider that bundled projects can support acceleration of other phases of implementation, such as the procurement of batches of traffic control devices.
Strategy 2: Allow Flexibility in Funding Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS)

• $970 million obligated to multimodal projects in 2017
• 42% came from TA
• 20% came from STBG
• 17% came from CMAQ
13 Strategies

Develop Prioritization Methods for Multimodal Projects

Allow Flexibility in Funding Smaller Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

Identify Multimodal Needs Early in Project Development

Improve Public Involvement

Make Appropriate and Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions

Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement

Incorporate Context-Based Design Into State Design Processes and Manuals
Strategy 3: Identify Multimodal Needs Early

- Avoids re-working design, right-of-way elements, or a NEPA review later for larger projects with multimodal elements.
- While legally able to do so, most states tend to avoid ROW for multimodal projects.
- Focusing on multimodal early prevents multimodal elements from being unpaired from a larger project’s ROW to a multimodal-specific ROW purchase.
13 Strategies

9/3/20XX

Presentation Title

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Develop Prioritization Methods for Multimodal Projects

Allow Flexibility in Funding Smaller Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

Identify Multimodal Needs Early in Project Development

Improve Public Involvement

Make Appropriate and Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions

Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement

Incorporate Context-Based Design Into State Design Processes and Manuals
Strategy 4: Improve Public Involvement

- Well-coordinated, innovative, and engaging public involvement that occurs early and often during the NEPA phase of project development can prevent having to rework a design to address a community complaint.
1. Develop Prioritization Methods for Multimodal Projects
2. Allow Flexibility in Funding Smaller Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements
3. Identify Multimodal Needs Early in Project Development
4. Improve Public Involvement
5. Make Appropriate and Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions
6. Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement
7. Incorporate Context-Based Design Into State Design Processes and Manuals
Strategy 5: Make Appropriate Use of Categorical Exclusions

- Most bicycle and pedestrian projects may be processed as Categorical Exclusions (CE) under NEPA if they meet the regulatory criteria under 23 CFR 771.117.
Strategy 5: Make Appropriate Use of Categorical Exclusions

- A categorical exclusion (CE) is defined as “a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment ... and ... for which, therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required” (40 CFR 1508.4).
Strategy 5: Make Appropriate Use of Categorical Exclusions

Examples of project types eligible for a CE under FHWA processes are given in 23 CFR 771.117 (c) and (d).

- Construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, trails, and facilities (23 CFR 771.117 (c) (3));
- Acquisition, construction, maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvement or limited expansion of stand-alone recreation, pedestrian, or bicycle facilities, such as: a multiuse pathway, lane, trail, or pedestrian bridge; and transit plaza amenities (23 CFR 771.118 (c) (2));
- Projects that would take place entirely within the existing operational right-of-way (23 CFR 771.117 (c) (22), 23 CFR 771.118 (c) (12)); and
13 Strategies

Develop Prioritization Methods for Multimodal Projects

Allow Flexibility in Funding Smaller Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

Identify Multimodal Needs Early in Project Development

Improve Public Involvement

Make Appropriate and Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions

Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement

Incorporate Context-Based Design Into State Design Processes and Manuals
Strategy 6: Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Needs Statement

In the case that your agency is driven to integrate a multimodal element into a larger project, don’t wait to do it later. Include it in the original documentation and throughout the lifecycle of the project early and often. Adding it later will be very difficult.
13 Strategies

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- Make Appropriate and Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions
- Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement
- Incorporate Context-Based Design Into State Design Processes and Manuals
Strategy 7: Incorporate Context-Based Design Into Processes and Manuals

- Some states have too rigid design requirements that can hinder the rate of project delivery.
- One example provided was a design requirement that called for bike lanes even where a shared-use path was already present.
- Some states can consider relaxing these types of requirements.
Strategy 7: Incorporate Context-Based Design Into Processes and Manuals

- Context-based designs may recognize that slower vehicle speeds are needed in areas with high bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
- Design exceptions may be created, but some may avoid using them due to lengthy approval processes or negative stigmas. Some states encourage using context-based exceptions.
13 Strategies (Continued)

Apply and Leverage the Innovative Multimodal Treatments in MUTCD

Promote Flexibility in Existing Funding Sources

Allocate New Funding Sources to Implement Multimodal Infrastructure and Leverage Existing Programs

Communicate Benefits of Multimodal Projects and Improve Performance Data for Evaluating Them

Increase Staff Capacity and Knowledge

Provide Technical Assistance to Support Small and Rural Communities
Strategy 8: Apply and Leverage Innovative Multimodal Treatments in the MUTCD

- The MUTCD has not been updated since 2009, but some new and innovative devices have been given interim approval.
- FHWA welcomes new design requests from state and local agencies.
- Section 1A.10 of the MUTCD described the process.
- Evaluation of the pre- and post-treatment conditions is required.
Flowchart Describing FHWA’s Experimentation Process for New Traffic Control Devices

Apply and Leverage the Innovative Multimodal Treatments in MUTCD
13 Strategies (Continued)

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Strategy 9: Promote Funding Flexibility in Existing Sources

- FHWA has created a short 7-page document to dispel myths that hinder funding flexibility.
Myth 1

• “Bicycle and pedestrian projects must be within the existing Right of Way (ROW) to be eligible for a Categorical Exclusion.” This is false.

• The environmental review process is only necessary if there will be a significant impact on the environment regardless if the project is in the existing ROW or not.
Myth 2

• “Curb extensions, trees, and roundabouts cannot be used on the NHS.” This is false.

• There is no prohibition on incorporating these features on NHS projects.
Myth 3

• “Nonmotorized projects cannot compete effectively for CMAQ funding.” This is false.

• States have funded more than $1.5 billion in bicycle and pedestrian accommodations with CMAQ Program funds since 1993.
Strategy 9: Promote Funding Flexibility in Existing Sources

- Transit funds may be used to improve bicycle lanes and sidewalks if they provide direct access to transit;
- CMAQ funds must be used for projects that benefit air quality;
- HSIP projects must be consistent with the State Strategic Highway Safety Plan and address a highway safety problem;
- NHPP-funded projects or activities must be associated with an NHS facility; and
- FLAP funds could be used for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on, adjacent to, or within Federal lands.
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Strategy 10: Allocate New Funding Sources

- Use of public-private partnerships (P3s) to leverage new funding.
- The creation or use of local funding mechanisms to cover the 20% required match for TA.
- Adopt new policies where implementation will require updating multimodal treatments, such as California with Leading Pedestrian Intervals codified into traffic signal policies.
- Plan to update pedestrian infrastructure along with resurfacing projects.
13 Strategies (Continued)

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Strategy 11: Communicate Benefits and Improve Performance Data and Evaluation

- Multimodal elements of larger projects may be subject to elimination if challenges involving them arise or if it will drive up costs too significantly.
- If decision-makers fully understand the benefits, this is less likely to happen.
Strategy 11: Communicate Benefits and Improve Performance Data and Evaluation

• Multimodal can
  • Reduce congestion
  • Expand mobility options
  • Address equity concerns
  • Improve public health
  • Reduce pollution
  • Support people-centered land development
Strategy 11: Communicate Benefits and Improve Performance Data and Evaluation

• Collecting local and state-based data before and after the application of multimodal treatments, and making that data available to the public will make results feel close-to-home and be more likely to create community buy-in.
13 Strategies (Continued)

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Strategy 12: Increase Staff Capacity and Knowledge

- U.S. DOT’s Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
- Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program’s (TPCB)
- The State Smart Transportation Initiative
- The Governors’ Institute on Community Design®
13 Strategies (Continued)

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Strategy 13: Provide Technical Assistance to Support Rural and Small Communities

- Small towns have limited staff, technical knowledge, and engineering resources.
- Develop local-aid programs to assist these types of communities in implementing context-based design and communication of multimodal benefits.
Key Challenges – How do the strategies address them?

- Programming Delays and Funding Source Challenges
- Difficulties Competing for Limited Funding
- Inadequate Internal and External Coordination
- Inadequate Community Input
- Design Guidelines Insensitive to Context
- Lengthy Environmental Reviews
- Insufficient Staff Capacity or Technical Knowledge
Programming Delays and Funding Source Challenges
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Develop Prioritization Methods for Multimodal Projects

Allow Flexibility in Funding Smaller Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements

Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement

Promote Flexibility in Existing Funding Sources

Provide Technical Assistance to Support Small and Rural Communities

Allocate New Funding Sources to Implement Multimodal Infrastructure and Leverage Existing Programs

4/27/2022
Accelerating Multimodal Project Delivery
Difficulties Competing for Limited Funding
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Inadequate Internal and External Coordination
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Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement

Inadequate Internal and External Coordination
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Improve Public Involvement

Make Appropriate and Effective Use of Categorical Exclusions

Integrate Multimodal Elements in the Project’s Purpose and Need Statement
Insufficient Staff Capacity or Technical Knowledge
Insufficient Staff Capacity or Technical Knowledge

Apply and Leverage the Innovative Multimodal Treatments in MUTCD

Increase Staff Capacity and Knowledge

Provide Technical Assistance to Support Small and Rural Communities
Local Strategies

The Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) has already implemented or is increasing its efforts to implement some of the strategies that are applicable to our organization.
Local Strategies

RIC primarily utilizes these three “top strategies.”

Allocate New Funding Sources to Implement Multimodal Infrastructure and Leverage Existing Programs

Increase Staff Capacity and Knowledge

Provide Technical Assistance to Support Small and Rural Communities
Local Strategies

Increase Staff Capacity and Knowledge

- RIC offers free trainings through LTAP to local communities.
- RIC staff participate in continuing education and invite local constituents to participate.
- RIC conducts sidewalk inventories for local communities or equips them with the knowledge to do so on their own.
- Collaboration is the key.
Local Strategies

Provide Technical Assistance to Support Small and Rural Communities

- Many of the municipalities RIC works with have very small limited budgets with no room for financial flexibility.
- RIC services them with our staff’s technical knowledge to assist in TA grant applications, primarily for ADA-related improvements.
- RIC assists municipalities with the development of ADA transition plans, even when they aren’t required.
Local Strategies

Allocate New Funding Sources to Implement Multimodal Infrastructure and Leverage Existing Programs

- Possibly RIC’s most impactful strategy.
- The biggest issue is oftentimes money, particularly the 20% match for TA projects.
- Organizations such as the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation can assist with this, but under certain eligibility requirements.
Case Studies

Each case study is tied to a strategy or two. Try to guess which ones.
13 Strategies

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4/27/2022
Accelerating Multimodal Project Delivery
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Washington State DOT

• In 2009, WSDOT and FHWA executed an MOU for categorical exclusion approvals.

• The MOU delegates FHWA’s responsibility to process CEs to the State for project types listed in 23 CFR 771.117 (c) such as bike lanes or pedestrian pathways.

• WSDOT is required to document the project type and determine that there are no unusual circumstances warranting environmental analysis.
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Arizona DOT

- Arizona DOT’s long-range plan is structured as more than just a list of projects, but as a policy document.
- Projects are assigned to three broad investment categories
  - Preservation - activities that preserve existing infrastructure.
  - Modernization - upgrades to efficiency and safety
  - Expansion - improvements that add capacity through the addition of new facilities.
- Each category has its own criteria and budget, so multimodal projects don’t have to compete with large expansion projects.
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Florida DOT District 4

- Uses a Multimodal Screening Checklist (MMSC) to identify the full range of multimodal needs prior to developing the scope or budget for all projects on state roadways.
- MMSC gathers and documents information by working with local governments and other agency partners related to passenger access to transit, corridor lighting, accommodations for individuals with disabilities, multimodal safety problems, school access, railroad crossings, freight patterns, etc.
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Virginia SMART SCALE

- Mandated by a 2014 law.
- “Virginia’s data-driven prioritization process to fund the right transportation projects that generate the greatest benefit for taxpayers.”
- 14 measures grouped into 6 factors
- Factors weighted differently by land use type (rural or urban)
- Measure A.3, Access to Multimodal Choices gives projects that provide multimodal treatments a boost in points.
- The dashboard also tracks the progress of all projects in terms of schedule, project delivery, and budget.
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Florida DOT

• Developed a Context-Based Design Manual that uses a context-sensitive approach to identify users of a facility and inform on the facility's design speed and criteria.
Florida DOT

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Identify Multimodal Needs Early in Project Development

Incorporate Context-Based Design Into State Design Processes and Manuals
Maine DOT

• Batch Procurement and Dissemination of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB)

• Maine DOT has embraced the RRFB as its most common pedestrian safety countermeasure.

• Maine DOT works with local governments who pay for installation and determine site selection.
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Allow Flexibility in Funding Smaller Low-Cost Projects and Project Elements
Chicago, Illinois Vision Zero West Side

• Received funding from national Road to Zero Coalition to ensure a community-driven approach when implementing road safety programs in neighborhoods with unique challenges.
• Developing neighborhood profiles
• Holding listening sessions to develop plans driven by community input
• Conducted pilot tests of safety improvements
• Monitoring progress and outcomes and communicating results to local stakeholders
Chicago, Illinois Vision
Zero West Side

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City of Portland, Oregon

- Portland, in partnership with Portland State University, pioneered the bicycle box to help cyclists move through intersections.
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Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

- Partnered with Alliance for a Healthy Orange County (AHOC) and Safe Routes to School
- Authored the Active Transportation Health and Economic Impact Study and initiated the Go Human campaign to “tackle the region’s auto-centric reputation which discourages walking/bicycling in their communities and increase awareness of community-wide benefits of walking and bicycling.”

- The study quantified the benefits of multimodal investments and found that “for every $1 spent implementing the Active Transportation Strategy… the regional economy will see an addition $8.41 in sales output, $2.65 in personal income, and $5.20 in value added.”
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Summary

• Overall, moving any project forward, particularly a multimodal-centered one can be a challenge.

• Hopefully, this presentation provided you and your agency partners with some insight into the innovative ways agencies across the nation are addressing these challenges.
Final Credits

Photo credits: Dan Burden of www.pedbikeimages.org

Thank you to our private sponsors!
Thank you

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