

Fostering Communities that Attract Young People

February 6, 2012 – The Lyceum, Hartford

CMSC Staff Forum Notes

Housing

- Didn't build for young people – age restrictions on 55+ housing
- Exclusionary zoning – guided by older people.
- Apartments have a bad rep – bring undesirables
- Reduce property values
- Communities think it'll increase pressure on schools
- Apartments owned by out of town absentee landlords
- Developers build based on demand – MF housing – there's high demand for it right now. Profit
- Developers and banks are implementers
- Downtown apartments are often unaffordable
- Young people live in suburbs rather than city
- Walkability and connectivity
- Safety getting around.
- Auto-centric society – parking
- Stigma for affordable
- Home rule – 169 sets of zoning regulations
- Hartford at 94% rental
- Why are young people here? Affordability (compared to Boston, New York)
- What kind of housing are people looking for?
- Why are people here? Family, job, nucleus of things to do in New England, lots of opportunity.
- Not enough owner-occupied. Young people want granite countertops and steel appliances built in a small package. Possibility that's overlooked – owner occupied units in MF housing.
- Opportunity in CT – high housing cost and high rent. Pent up market

Transit – Does anyone use it?

- Need to have a mind shift. Get in a car to drive to the parking lot next to the train.
- Missed opportunity regarding train.
- Too long to get transit funded. Gap between primary and secondary transit.
 - o How do we get a funding mechanism? Parallel issue – no funds to maintain current infrastructure. Competing funds.
- The bus or train fare can be prohibitively expensive and not as efficient or quick as a car.
- Stigma to transit
- Bike lanes – need to educate drivers.
- In CT about 80% of funding for transit from federal funds - over reliance.
- Malloy phasing out car tax.
- CT dispersed so no central place/city. No central hub.
- Use other places as a model – like Netherlands.
- Why *does* it take so long to get things done?
- Transit is one of the best/most economical investments a city can make.
- No connectivity – Is there a threshold amount? There's not enough options. There's really only the bus.
- Housing – about retention. Transit – about attracting people.
- CT is used to silos. Don't want to give up independence.

- Many reasons for transit – need to accommodate them – going to work, staying in town.
- Feeling safe in unfamiliar areas. Unappreciated design element.
- Transit – Is it a retention issue? Don't want to be in a car.
- How do people hear about the bus/routes, etc. Access to info?
- "BRT" –Bus Rapid Transit. Bus goes rapidly and stops rapidly. More interconnected with other bus routes.
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- Some people have heard about the bus.
- A lot of people don't think it'll affect them.
- Don't know where they'll be in life at its completion.
- Send info via phone. DOT app that's interactive.
 - o Use it like a tool, make it so you don't have to think about it.
 - o Google transit – something like that.
- New Britain and Newington – Huge opportunities for the bus – Existing housing stock in abundance.
- Would you pay more for good upgrades?
- How do towns get young people involved?
- Fear factor from DOT that everyone hates them.
- How should they (the State and towns) communicate with people?
 - o Engage the public before a big unveiling.
 - o People come out when they're opposed to something.
 - o Public engagement – It seems like businesses and state want to outreach to tell them, but don't want to engage them, don't want the mix of ideas.
- Fast track – audience is so broad. DOT is doing what they can to engage people. Try to make connections for DOT and share info with others.
- Many decision makers don't grasp the concept, applications of social media.
- Be persistent, know the process and demand the change.
- Resistance to change laws re social media
- Can towns do both? Post in newspaper & on website.
- How do we reach young people as a consumer? How can they be in it as part of a solution?
- The more passionate young people are the more they'll communicate.
- How do towns get young people engaged?
- Artist in residence program.
- Young people need to communicate back – write an article for paper.
- Mixers between young people and town commissions.
- "Governing" magazine article on young mayors.
- General public want less government and a smaller number of people – less opportunity for young people to get involved/work in the state.
- Everyone wants to hear from young people but won't put them in a position to make a difference.
- Monitor social media for people already talking. It's hard to reach everyone.
- Bristol Rising – crowd sourcing. Way for people to get involved.
- Mindmixer – can vote on ideas with social media.
- Timing of events.
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- What social aspects bring people downtown?
 - Benches, quick fixes, restaurants, pedestrian signs.
 - "Park"-ing Day – Sep. 21 – CT Office of the Arts (COA) involved with this too.
 - Encourage people to be OK with waiting for a bus.
 - Arts/placemaking. States and towns should utilize public art.
 - Put artists on the design team from the beginning.

Moderator Notes

Housing

Ignored housing

- Zoning – exclusionary (local rules, complex)
- Apartments have a bad reputation
 - o Undesirable
 - o Renters don't care
 - o Value of land
 - o School enrollment will go up
 - o Absentee owners
 - o Stigma for affordable housing, not section 8
- Demand
 - o Developers follow demand
- Few options in downtown Hartford
- Profit (developer/lender/investor)
- Cost of affordable housing
- Safety (housing/neighborhood)
- Walkable, connected
- Connection to autos, shopping, etc.

Consistency of Housing

- Vacancies
- Risk of investing

What we want

- Ownership (do others want it?) (SFR [single family residential] – 30 yr purchase)
 - o More demand?
- Education
- Walkable/transit
- Safe – know neighbors/block party
- Parks
- Taxpayer expectations (HGTV effect)
- Less maintenance issues

Job

Family/friends

Lot to do

Opportunity

Nucleus of New England

Fascinating place to live

School

Grew up here, stayed/came back

Affordable compared to Boston

Transit

- Disconnect – should be easier to get around without car
- Lack of a comprehensive program
 - o Buy in
 - o Development patterns
 - lost connectivity
 - not enough money
 - not a priority
- Not just auto/bus – walking

- CT's a little too big, little too small
- How to change it?
- Light rail – missed opportunity
 - o Freight lines not used for passengers
 - o Asset (unused)
- Knowledge, capacity, desire missing
- Cultural change?
- Great job building highways; rail gets lip service. Need more rail/connections
 - o Commuter bus express
 - o People that here going in cars don't want to be in them.
- Types of transit
 - o Major systems
 - o Feeders
 - o Take too long
 - o Big leaps
- Just as expensive
- Convenience (time management, kids)
- Stigma
- Bike lanes too dangerous
- 80% of transit money federal, 20% from state
 - o Almost removed
 - o Underrated at federal level
 - o Buy SUVs - gas tax
- What is the vision/way of life that we desire? Build it before we know what we really want.
- 2.3-.5 = \$5 billion
- Car home ownership
- What is Rhode Island doing? Netherlands
- No premier central city; various gravities
- What would you do differently?
- Why *do* things move so slow?
- An attraction issue (what is the goal)
- Different use groups – who is it designed for?
- SAFETY – undervalued design element, get youth involved
- Young people moving to places where cars are not needed
- BRT more comprehensive
- Google transit
- Opportunities
- Focus on easy to adopt
- Outreach – how do we get them show up and engage in the process?
 - o Start at high school (when students start thinking about their future)
 - o Especially to hear support for issues
 - o Medium (what tools are you using)
 - o Forum for people disagreeing
 - o Towns
 - Audience is broad
 - Signs at stations
 - State tools need to change
 - Re: legal notices OR we do more
 - Hearings are not popular with the under-40 crowd

- More outreach with less delay
 - Artist in residency at city hall
 - Those passionate are vocal
 - Integrate live meetings with new media
 - Communication is a two-way street
- Governor's generation was into politics; new generation won't
- Monitor by media
- Empower
- Young professionals for public officials.
- Bristol rising
- Mansfield CT hired community engagement person using mind mixer
- Young people trust to engage
 - Late day, early
- Creative placemaking, DECD
- Coffee shops – WIFI
- Restaurants, food, more than hanging out
- Eating out more
- Benches
- Safe crossings for pedestrians
- Park(ing) Day –Sep. 21
- Make people comfortable in the space
- Create experiences through art
- Fun
- Who is the audience? What are the problems?