

# Baseball, Hot Dogs, Apple Pie and Livability



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**Assignment:**

**"Potential concerns, issues, challenges, and pitfalls of transportation strategies associated with the concept of livability."**

**Disclaimer: The observations are solely those of the author and are intended to seed discussion.**

# Outline

Livability and:

1. Travel Behavior
2. Transportation Decision Making,  
Science and Politics
3. Research/Data Issues

# Social and Economic Interactions Create Demand for Travel



Travel is fundamental to the human desire to interact and socialize. Travel enables economic interaction and the transportation of products and is fundamental to the functioning of the economy. Growth in income and knowledge fuel the desire to become more specialized in employment, social interactions, consumption and time use. This creates demand for more travel.

# Social, Professional, and Commercial Relationships are Less Place Based

- Improved transportation (speed, cost, safety, choice)
- Improved communications
- Shorter tenure (jobs and housing)
- Greater work force participation (*social relationships less likely to be made over the picket fence or on the front porch*)
- Government/business replacing neighbors as safety net
- Economy of scale factors challenge neighborhood-scale businesses and enterprises.

# Activity Scale and Distribution

- The average size of an elementary school in the U.S. has grown from 155 students in 1950 to 445 in 2008.
- There are 6000 fewer grocery stores in America in 2010 compared to 2001.
- In 1970, there were 34 hospitals per million persons. In 2005 there were 24.
- In 1970, there were 30,800 car dealerships. In 2008 there were 20,770. In 2011 there will be far fewer.

# Do Business Economics Contradict Travel Minimization

- 1940 - Went to the Doctor
- 2010 - Went to the general practitioner, referred you to the specialist, sent to lab, scanning center, pharmacist, and the physical therapist (*and not the closest one but the one covered by your health plan*).

# Commuting

- Work trip commute appears to be well under 20% of trips and travel.
- Nearly 30% of households have no workers or no commuters (*workers work at home*).
- Property transaction fees, homestead tax rules, lack of portability of mortgages, high home ownership rates, etc. impede moving to minimize work trip length.



# Thus

- The ability of “Livability” initiatives to influence travel may be dampened by changes in context since the nostalgic days of neighborhood centered social and economic relationships.
- “Livability” may be desirable but the impact may be less than hoped for in terms of transportation and land use impacts. Travelers may not take advantage of the opportunity to change travel behavior.

# Americans' Mobility Aspirations?

I'm not going to Disney. I'm going to stay home and watch the Disney Channel

First thing I'm going to do is sell my truck and go for a walk

I can't wait to quit visiting friends and family and stay home in my condo



# Top National Transportation Priority

**Economic  
Development  
Transportation**



# Livability and Transportation Planning

Livability is the epitome of applying holistic thinking to transportation planning.

As we have learned that transportation affects everything and we have tried to incorporate everything into our transportation decision making.

# Conflicting Goals?

- Improve Transportation Systems and Travel Support Economic Vitality
- Protect and Preserve the Environment and Quality of Life and Promote Energy Conservation



# Towards Partisan Transportation Policy

- Does livability move us another step away from a bipartisan transportation agenda?
- Does livability exacerbate the separation of governmental functions between levels of government as it relates to land use, etc.?
- Does livability mean “nationalization” or “governmentization” as favored alternative modes are more public funding intensive?




# Livability and Transportation Policy

- Is the science behind livability sufficiently mature to form the basis for policy?
- Is livability sufficiently generalizable to be cast into national policy?
- Do the metrics exist to responsibly actualize livability in policy?
- Is there a depth of support for livability - How far will a country that can't muster the political will to increase the gas tax a dime get in influencing livability?

# Does Livability Challenge Decision Makers' Capabilities?

- The impacts of transportation policy and investment are:
  - ✓ Complex
  - ✓ Dynamic
  - ✓ Uncertain
  - ✓ Highly influenced by context
- And decision making is often:
  - ✓ Short term focused
  - ✓ Sound bite driven
  - ✓ Superficial



A photograph of two men fishing on a pier. The man on the left is wearing a dark shirt and a cap, leaning over the railing. The man on the right is wearing a light blue shirt and a hat, standing upright. The background shows a large body of water under a clear sky. Two thought bubbles are overlaid on the image, containing text in pink. The first bubble is connected to the man in dark clothing, and the second bubble is connected to the man in light clothing.

**“They said we need high density to make public transit work.”**

**“No, they said we need public transit to make high density work.”**

# Livability is not the Totality of Quality of Life

- Waiting in stop and go traffic is bad but waiting for a bus or train is ok?
- Alternative modes are dramatically slower and if time has value this has a social cost.
- More congestion, higher taxes, more controls on development, etc. are not perceived by everyone as desirable.
- Are we foregoing fixing a deteriorating bridge so we can build a bike path (opportunity cost)?

## **Is Livability a Rebadging or Branding of Long-Recognized Transportation Policy Issues?**

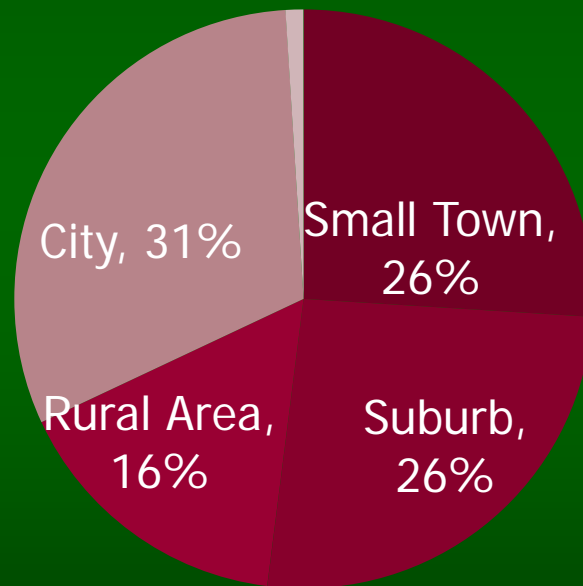
- Sustainability, Travel Externalities, Multimodalism, Transportation/Land Use , Interactions, Cost of Sprawl, , Travel Behavior, Etc.

**If so, is there any value in embracing it as a basis for defining a research agenda?**

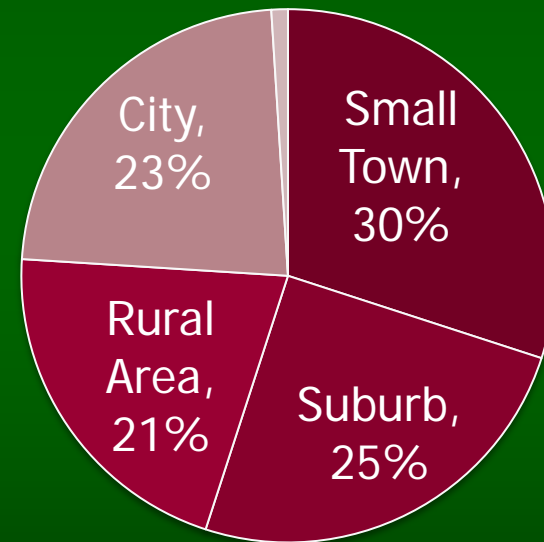
# Where We Live and Where We'd Like to Live

by community type

Current



Ideal



■ Small Town

■ Suburb

■ Rural Area

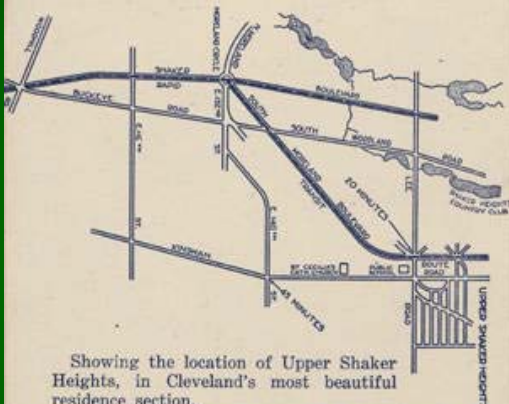
■ City

■

Note: "Don't know/Refused" responses are not reported

Source: Pew Research Center, January 2009

# Livability and Transportation/ Land Use Issues are Not New



Showing the location of Upper Shaker Heights, in Cleveland's most beautiful residence section.

All improvements, consisting of storm sewer, sanitary sewer, city water, graded streets, stone sidewalks, etc., are being installed and paid for by the Company, and are now nearly completed, so that you may build here as soon as you wish.

This property is two minutes walk from the new Rapid Transit Railway, soon to be completed. Millions of dollars have been spent to provide this electric railway which will take you from Upper Shaker Heights to 105th Street car line in five minutes, to 55th Street in ten minutes, and to Public Square in twenty minutes.

When you buy in Upper Shaker Heights you know you are getting the best that Cleveland can ever have to offer in residence property.

The formal opening of Upper Shaker Heights will be announced soon.

See the property and make your selection at once in order to secure the choicest lots, which always are the first ones sold.

**UPPER  
SHAKER HEIGHTS**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**  
TO THOSE WHO WANT  
THE BEST AT THE  
SAME PRICE AS  
THE ORDINARY

**DUNHAM & COMPANY**  
900 MARSHALL BLDG.  
ON THE SQUARE  
BELL PHONE, MAIN 4527 OHIO STATE PHONE, CENTRAL 4962 W  
BRANCH OFFICE:  
CORNER LEE AND KINSMAN ROADS  
BELL PHONE, BROADWAY 2078 J CUYAHOGA UNION 937 W

*Call Mr. G.B. Matthews*

Officials at all levels of government are demonstrating an increasing awareness of the need for balanced transportation systems. The Federal Housing bill recently passed by Congress provides for emergency loans to communities for rail, bus, subway and other facilities ... State and local government are also giving increased attention to the matter of improving transit service by coordination with other modes.

Wilbur S. Smith,  
ASCE Annual Meeting  
October 1961



# Implementing Livability

- Constituency -  $\approx$  30% TTF from commercial and freight travel,  $\approx$  30% from non-urban person travel. Can livability appeal to more than core urban constituencies?
- Can a political constituency be sustained long enough to realize some of the admittedly long term hypothesized benefits of Livability focused planning.

# Implementing Livability

Livability benefits from multijurisdictional, multiagency collaboration or consolidation of agencies/functions.

- What is the cost in governmental responsiveness?
- What is the cost of equity?

# Implementing Livability

Integrating Livability into decision making requires information and data.

- The challenge of quantifying travel externalities
- The dynamics of those externalities
- The need for more disaggregate data in time and space – typically the province of the local governments





# Implementing Livability

How could you afford this nice new boat?

I Explained to my banker that if I had money for a new SUV, boat, motor, trailer, fishing gear and gas -- I could bring home free fish for diner.



# Thank You

