Affordable Development Patterns

Ryan Wozniak, AICP

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Who Am I?

I wear a lot of hats. I like to keep learning. All this affords a lot of opportunities to learn from new perspectives... I can’t stop now.

- Senior Planner (2014...)
  - City of Maricopa
- Active Transportation Committee Member (2014...)
  - Maricopa Association of Governments
- Transportation Advisory Board Member (2018...)
  - City of Mesa
- Incoming Director At-Large (2020-21)
  - American Planning Association, AZ Chapter
- Podcast Co-Host (2017...)
  - Main Street Mesa
- Community Organizer (2012...)
  - RAILmesa
Why am I here?
To assemble more perspectives.

“Knowing in part may make a fine tale, but wisdom comes from seeing the whole.”
(together)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sta9xdOvSBU
Unsustainable Development

Land Use + Transportation Policy Perspective
In My Opinion...

Planners: Best when allowed to explore policy

- **Commonly, Planners aren’t our best when we are limited to:**
  - Review proposed development
  - Ensure it follows a defined public review process
  - Assess how the proposal meets Zoning & Subdivision regulations (and repeat)

- **Industry Standards for Zoning & Subdivision regulations**
  - Allows / Promotes large land areas to have one same use
  - Single-Family Residential covers a lot of land, suburbia rules
  - Provide road capacity for the anticipated vehicle volumes (“solving for traffic”)
  - Oftentimes, results are: unrestricted urban sprawl

- **Urban Sprawl = Runaway Car-Dominated Landscapes over Expansive Areas**
  - Quality of life suffers + Environmental degradation
  - Cost-Burdens (for covering the expansive areas) are high
  - Health/ Job-Access/ Educational/ Social Capital Outcomes suffer
“Solving Traffic”

With just one more lane...

Engineers: We’ve done the math!

*Policy work is required to define the problem to be solved*
To compete in the global economy, the U.S. needs a world-class transportation system. Some of our most critical transportation infrastructure is crumbling.

- 58% of U.S. roads are in less than good condition
- 23% of U.S. bridges need significant repair or can’t handle today’s traffic
- 50% of U.S. locks and chambers are more than 50 years old

What if you solve for this?

ADOT Long-Range Transportation Plan & USDOT State of Repair
Phoenix, like many 20th century American cities, is built on the assumption of

\[ \text{1 person} = \text{1 car}. \]

If you/we don’t challenge this equation makes cars exceptionally needy.

Each car gets 4 parking spaces along with plenty of roadway to move between them.

As a result, \( >50\% \) of the surface area of car-centric US cities is covered in pavement.

In the desert, this means hot sweltering pavement ...

the “fry an egg on the sidewalk” type of pavement.

Adapted from Introducing Culdesac: Building car-free neighborhoods from scratch

https://medium.com/culdesac/introducing-culdesac-3fbfe7c4219c
Better Unsustainable Development

Keep the bad, sprinkle in some good, Policy Perspective
Technology will save us!...?

- Electric Vehicles
  - No more tail pipe emissions
  - Autonomous driving reduces human error
- Pavement performance
  - Recycled materials
  - Longer lasting
  - Lower costs
- “Solutions” without public policy to frame trade-offs / outcomes
  - Measures of success lost in a promotion
  - Horse to Car = Jaywalking
  - Car to Autonomous = Super Jaywalking?
Does it solve the cost-burdens of the typical household?

**AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD SPENDING ON TRANSPORTATION**

Middle- and low-income American households spend, on average, nearly **20 percent** of their income on transportation and **40 percent** on housing.

**Household Expenditures as Percentage of Household Income**

- Other: 4%
- Clothing: 4%
- Entertainment: 6%
- Healthcare: 10%
- Food: 16%
- Transportation: 20%
- Housing: 41%

**H+T Costs % Income: 49%**

- Housing: 26%
- Transportation: 23%

**Housing + Transportation Costs % Income**

- Average: 49%
- Range: 31 - 101

64%+ of Mesa Neighborhoods per H+T index = cost burdened
Transportation = Economic Geometry
“Induced Demand”

Can’t solve this with typical inefficient land-use and car-use
We end up back here

Just one more lane... please!

What if your cardiologist took the same approach?
Dr. McBacon, MD

Tests are back:
High Cholesterol!

A high-cholesterol diet is approved with conditions. Patient shall mitigate the impacts by:

1. Widening arteries
2. Increasing heart rate
3. Taking blood thinners to keep things flowing (prescription is refillable weekly)
4. Attempt to make this affordable by taxing all food, even the vegetables
5. Ensure a steady supply, no matter the environmental impacts (antibiotics, factory farming, GMOs... go-go-go)
...the automobile has mostly been given free rein to distort our cities and our lives...

the car has reshaped our landscape and lifestyles around its own needs.*

It is an instrument of freedom that has enslaved us.

* It’s done this is less than 3 generations (my note)
THIS’LL GET RID OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN MY CITY.
Real Solutions
Enhance the Good

NOT BLINDLY
Mitigate the Bad
Sustainable Development
Land Use + Transportation Policy Perspective
“Access-by-Mobility”... typical.
“Access-Rich Areas” (or Corridors)... sustainable.

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Imagery adapted from Ted Knowlton’s presentation from WFRC @WasatchCouncil
A good paving project offers RIO

The pavement industry, to have a healthy place in the market, should be concerned about the part they play in the marketplace of city-building.

https://www.verdunity.com/blog/whats-in-your-citys-wallet
Once a city knows what provides ROI, they can regulate towards that outcome.*

*Unless prohibited by state law
City of Maricopa: trying/doing the little things…
(pending update)

- Narrow curb to curb
  - 10-11’ travel lanes
  - Omit center turn lane, if possible
- Comfort for walking/biking
  - Shared-Use Path
Know the **difference** between Mitigating a Problem vs. Measure(s) of Success

**Solve for traffic/mobility**
- Highly convenient, if affordable (often subsidized)
- Spatially inefficient
- Pushes development out
- Distorts land economics
- Environmental impacts
- Speed = Fatalities
- Cost-burdensome, fiscally straining

**Solve for access**
- Less distance driving, less cause for speed
- Spatially efficient
- Promotes diverse communities
- Walking, biking, transit becomes useful
- Lower Environmental impact opportunities
- Land market at the edge less desirable
- Equitable, fiscally productive
A Sustainable Development transition requires a broad coalition

• Firmly recognize the limitations of unsustainable development

• Recognize the goals of sustainable development

• Be skeptical of “gizmo green solutions”

• A Sustainable solution is a stable marketplace that provides a quadruple-bottom-line benefit

1. People
2. Place
3. Planet
4. Profit

Unsustainable Development

Better Unsustainable Development

Sustainable Development

Mutual = Returning Benefits = Customers
Thank You!

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