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Combining transportation and public affairs – a data-driven approach

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8-22-2017

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Overview

- Trillions spent on transportation infrastructure, from major interstates to local paving

- Unlike some other aspects of public life, *everyone* is touched by transportation

- And therefore, everyone has an opinion

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The project process

- Planning and construction process is well understood by experts, but public opinion is less understood by technical staff

- Public input more important today, and easier to express opinions with social media

- Not getting it right can derail a project, especially in urban areas

- **Understanding (and controlling) the public needs to be part of projects from the inception, otherwise may spend lots of money and have to halt or major change up down the road**

- Conversely, getting the community involved positively, and making it seem as if they're the ones pushing for the project, can be very beneficial

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How the public can influence a project

- Call the legislator
- Commission or Board meetings
- Press strategy
- Viral or social media
- Word of mouth
- Direct action
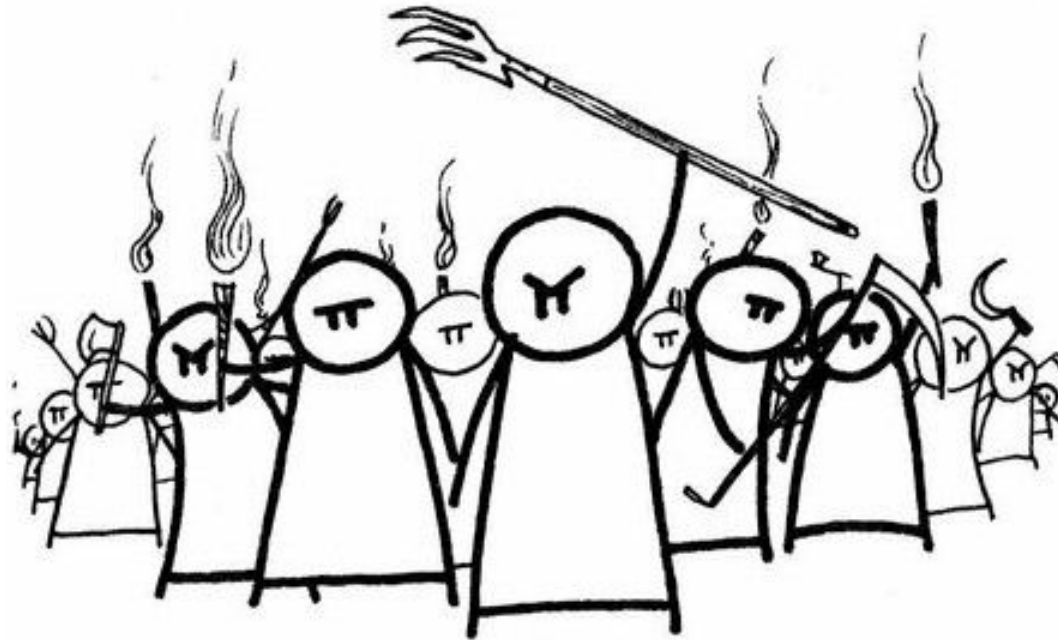
Considering the public at every stage of the project

Agency

- Identifying a transportation need
- Agency driven or public discontent?
- Listen to and communicate to the public
- Defend the process
- Putting out fires
- Post-construction messaging

Planning/engineering firm

- Needs to do homework
- Should be in the proposal
- Must understand public in designing alternatives
- Check in to gauge temperature
- *Anticipate* problems
- Selling the project *is part* of the project

The research process

- Studying communities where construction will occur

- What data are out there?

  - Electoral data

  - Market research

  - Survey data (quantitative)

  - Community meetings and focus groups (qualitative)

- General types of research for public affairs

  - Seeing what community wants

  - Testing alternatives

  - Selling a completed project

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Public affairs + construction process

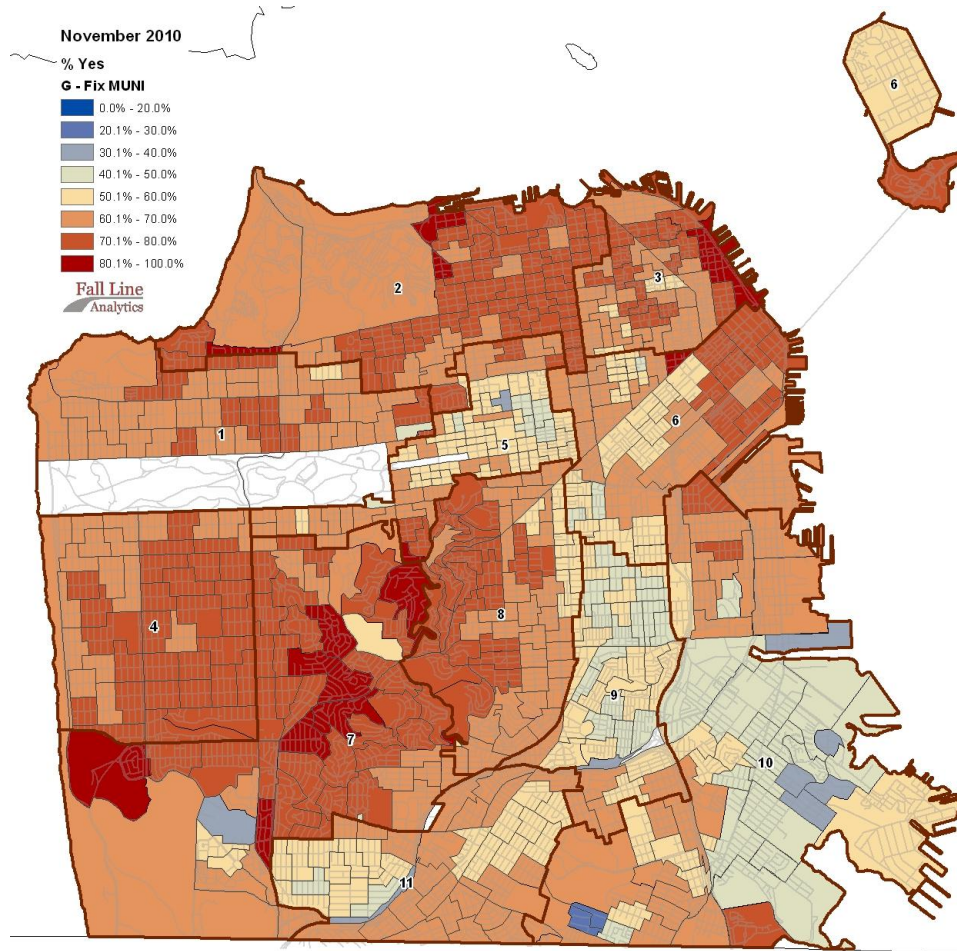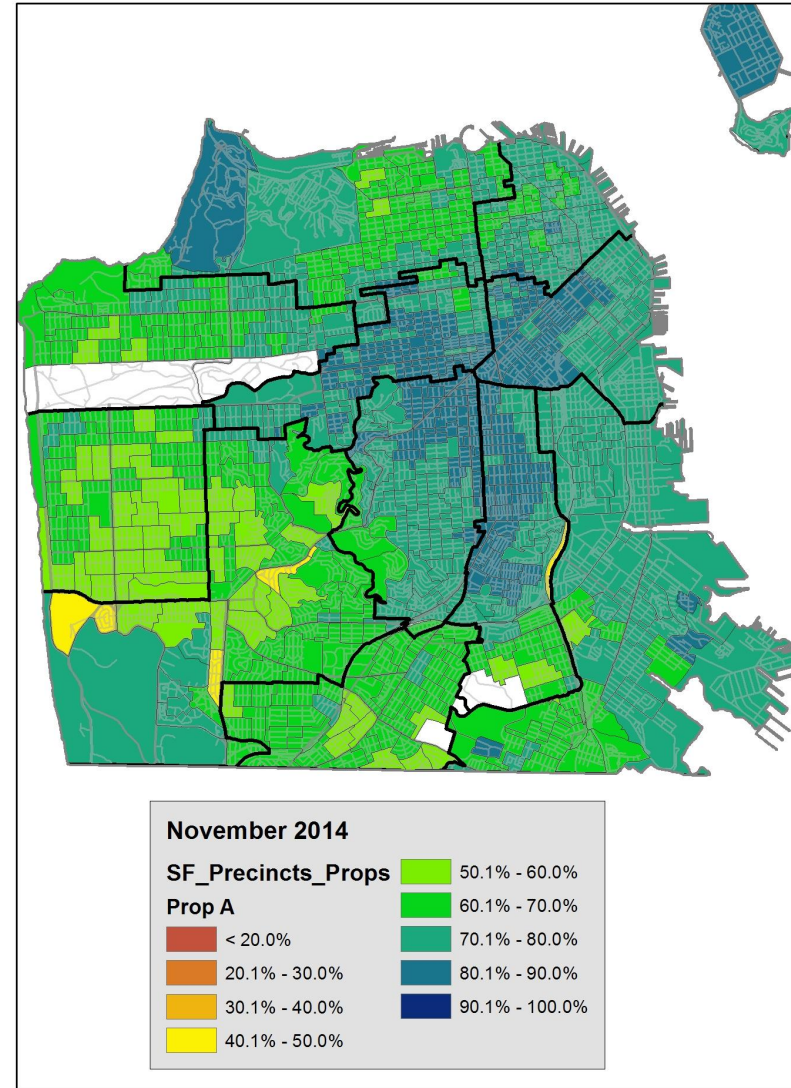| Pre-planning	Planning	Construction	Post-construction
• Research community • Gauge public opinion of current conditions • Study analogs	• Rigorous community planning process • Test alternatives if applicable • Make sure messaging is understood by staff	• Message work positively • Reinforce main reasons for construction • Stay in touch	• Sell project to community • No longer about alternatives • Accentuate success

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Electoral data

Transportation Bond 11/14

November 2010
% Yes
G - Fix MUNI
- 0.0% - 20.0%
- 20.1% - 30.0%
- 30.1% - 40.0%
- 40.1% - 50.0%
- 50.1% - 60.0%
- 60.1% - 70.0%
- 70.1% - 80.0%
- 80.1% - 100.0%

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Fix Muni 11/10

November 2014

SF_Precincts_Props

Prop A
- < 20.0%
- 20.1% - 30.0%
- 30.1% - 40.0%
- 40.1% - 50.0%
- 50.1% - 60.0%
- 60.1% - 70.0%
- 70.1% - 80.0%
- 80.1% - 90.0%
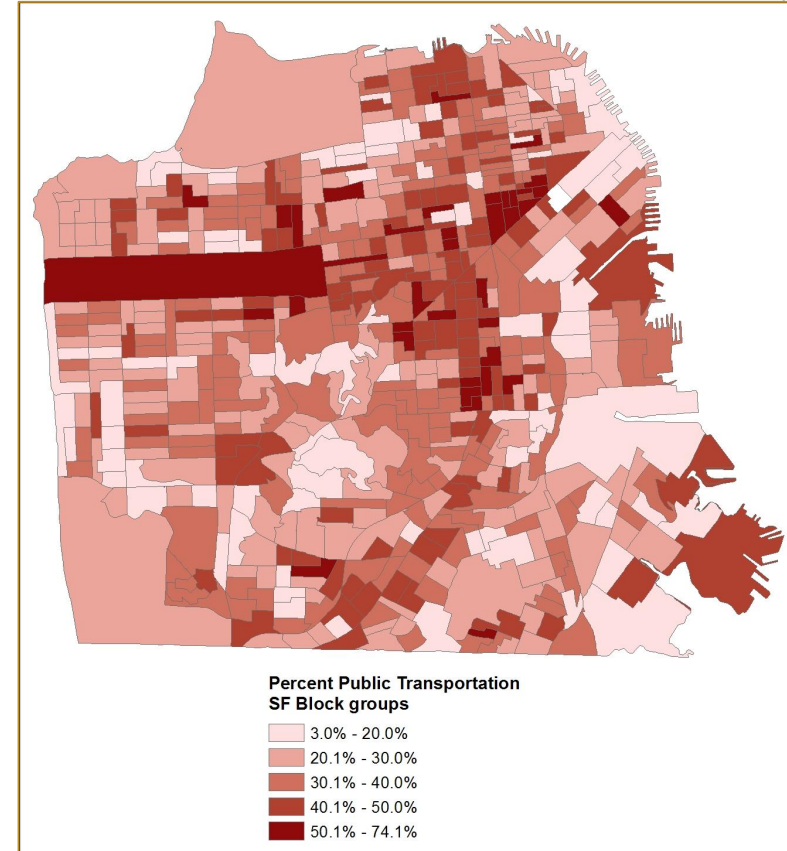- 90.1% - 100.0%

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Polling and survey data

- Community or regional poll to test general attitudes
  - Strength of opinion – who cares enough to be active
- Polling to test project alternatives
- Polling to test a community's, um, price
- Field surveys to target *specific* Project Area users
- Conjoint studies to test values
- Post-project testing (for future use)
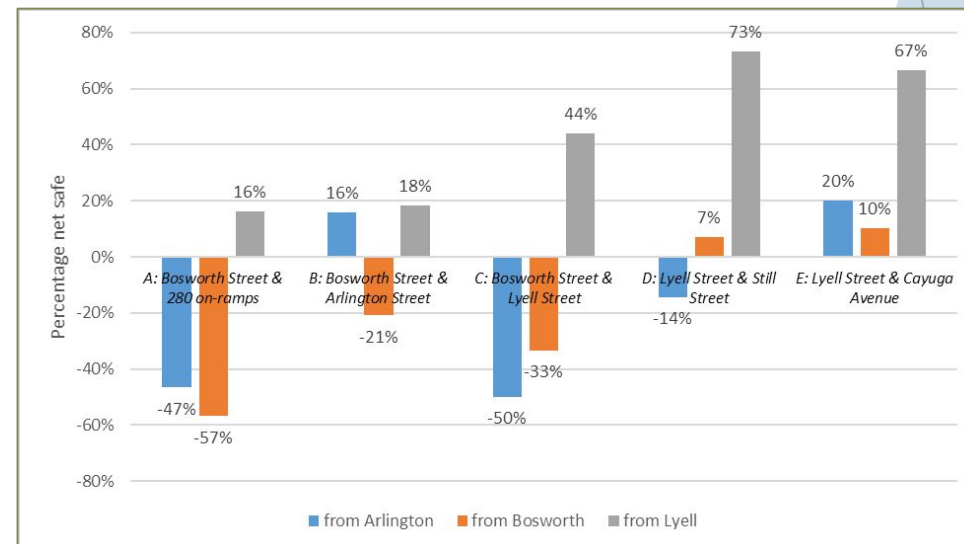
Other data sources

- Census data on commutes and transportation, often to the block group level

- Statewide social science surveys (often academic)

- Third-party market research and data appends

- Voter registration data – not all adults but a good overview

- City-specific databases (i.e., Transbase)

- Demographic/pop modelling datasets

**Percent Public Transportation
SF Block groups**

- 3.0% - 20.0%
- 20.1% - 30.0%
- 30.1% - 40.0%
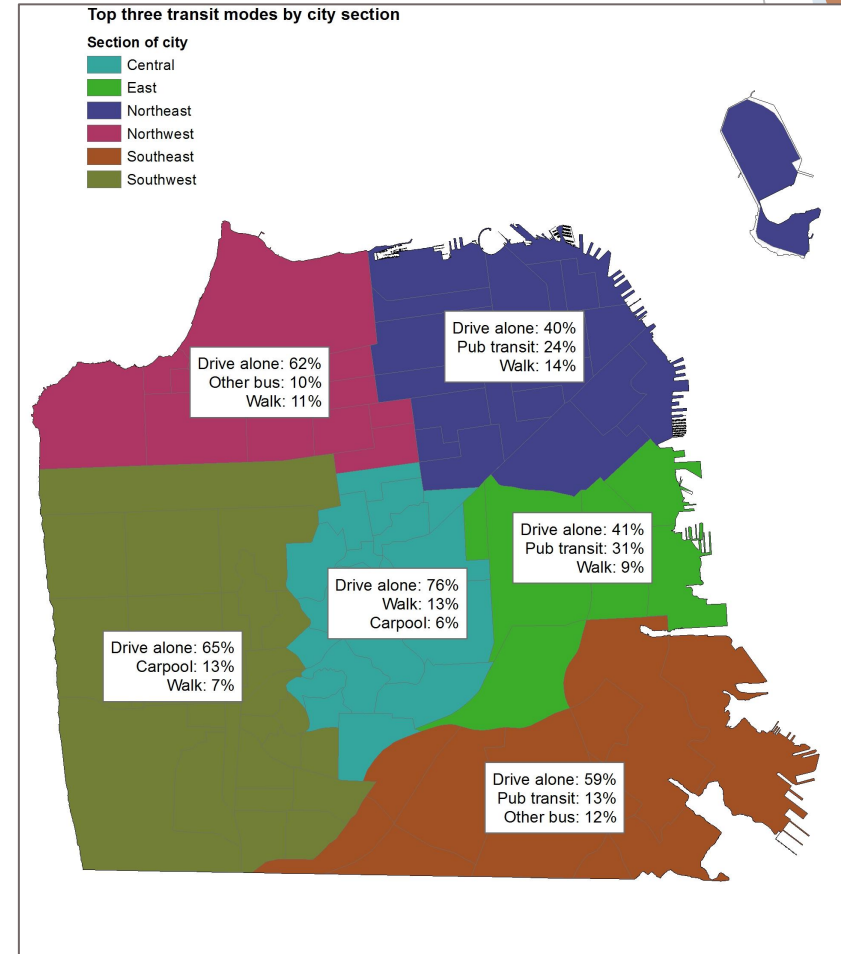- 40.1% - 50.0%
- 50.1% - 74.1%

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Case study 1 – Using data to sell streetscape improvements

- Large 2014 study of economic effects of SFMTA streetscape improvements

- Retail tax data, vacancy data, business registration data

- Showed improvements do no harm, and help in most cases

- This needs to be used in selling current and future projects to offset local merchants where street improvements are necessary

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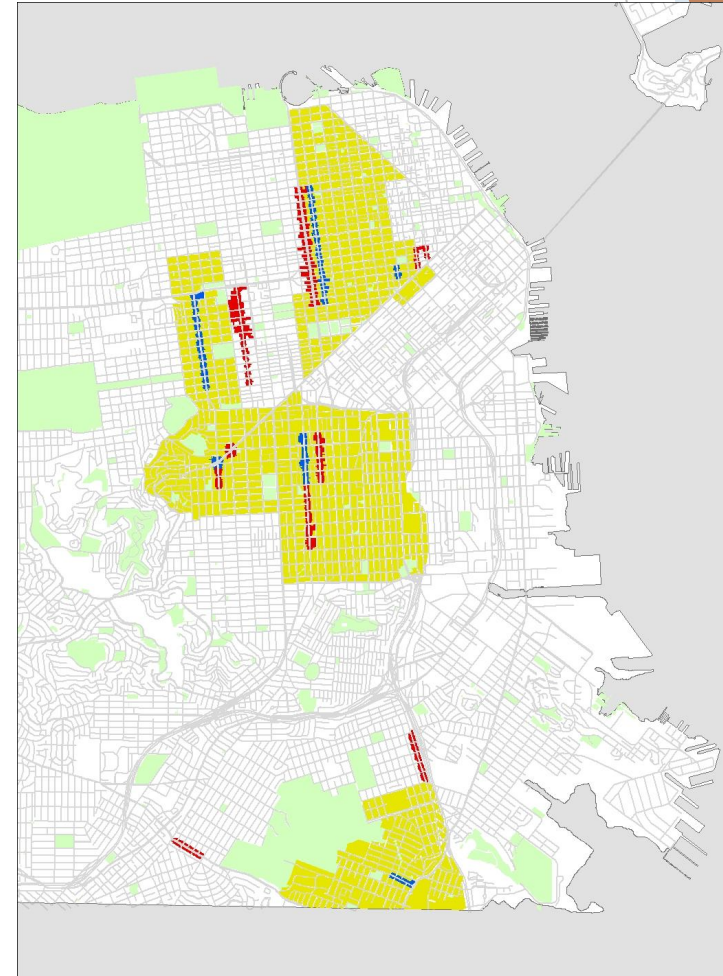
Case study 2 – Child transportation

- The city is considering how to make school transportation easier

- And how to get cars off the road

- Researching scope of the issue and alternatives

- Examining shuttles and carpools

- Large implications for traffic with an eye towards the future (driverless shuttles?)

Top three transit modes by city section

Section of city
- Central
- East
- Northeast
- Northwest
- Southeast
- Southwest

Drive alone: 40%
Pub transit: 24%
Walk: 14%

Drive alone: 62%
Other bus: 10%
Walk: 11%

Drive alone: 41%
Pub transit: 31%
Walk: 9%

Drive alone: 76%
Walk: 13%
Carpool: 6%

Drive alone: 65%
Carpool: 13%
Walk: 7%

Drive alone: 59%
Pub transit: 13%
Other bus: 12%

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Case study 3 – Geary BRT

- Over a decade-long saga in bringing BRT to the most traveled bus line in the US

- Countless surveys, meetings, forums

- Despite support from the neighborhoods, a few loud naysayers held undue sway

- Public support was never correctly leveraged

- Recent survey to test messaging, NOT alternatives

Geary survey locations and routes with valid responses

Agenda

- Public participation

- When and why

- Constraints and challenges

- Planning and implementation

- Measure success

- Using the results

Who is EnviroIssues?

We engage the public and decision-makers in conversations that define our communities

When should you the community?

Early and often

Public involvement

Planning → Design → Construction

When should you involve the community?

## TOO LATE

Why should you do it?

Build trust

Improves outcome

Cost effective

Accountability

Fremont Siphon Replacement Project

1. The building wall incorporated as part of the fence to create a simple appearance from NW 36th St

2. A window shaped and sized like the underground pipeline with view ports into the facility

3. Lighting directed upward on the building wall to provide soft lighting on NW 36th St

4. Pervious pavement to infiltrate stormwater runoff

5. A rain garden adjacent to the park to capture and infiltrate stormwater

6. Landscaped area outside of the facility fence and new benches on NW 36th St

7. Vegetation that, when mature, will screen the facility from the park while allowing views to the Ship Canal from NW 36th St

8. Predominantly native plant palette with drought tolerant plants that support local wildlife

9. A single driveway on NW 36th St to reduce visible pavement and traffic on 2nd Ave NW and Canal St

10. A mow strip along the south side of the property to reduce visual obstruction of a fence on the property line
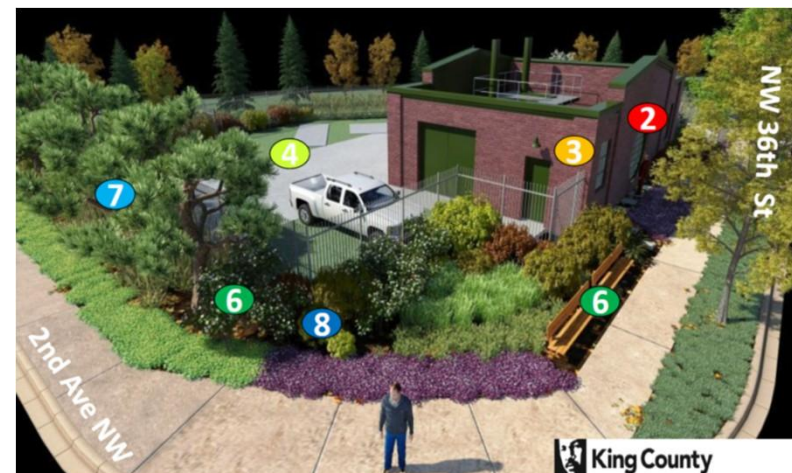
What are the challenges and constraints?

Takes time

Costs money

May not hear what you want to hear

How should you implement public participation?

Conduct stakeholder research

Set goals and objectives

Identify tailored approach
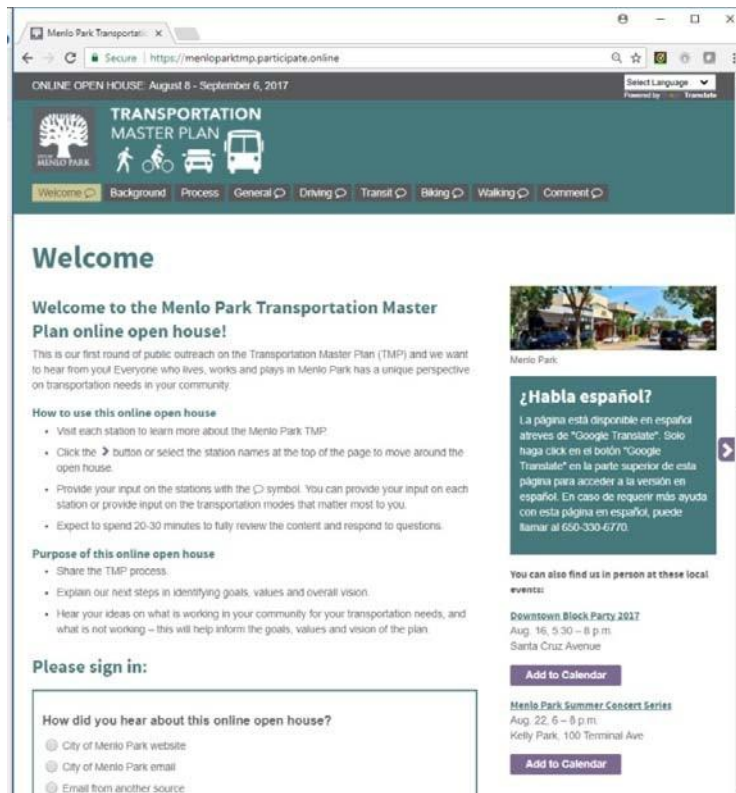
This meal brought to you by Seattle's regional freight networks!

Cod caught in Alaska

Port of Seattle's Fishermen's Terminal is home to the North Pacific Fishing Fleet – the folks who bring you the fish in your fish and chips!

1,500 miles

Fishermen's Terminal

10 miles

Value Added Processing

10 miles

10 miles

Distributor

10 miles

Cold Storage

This meal has to travel nearly **2,000 FREIGHT MILES** to get to your plate

(and that doesn't even include the glass, paper plate and more!)

Hops from Yakima Valley

165 miles

142 miles

Malts from Vancouver, WA

Seattle Brewery

17 miles

Warehouse

0-5 miles

Little known fact: a frosty beer needs a strong freight network. Before your beer makes it into your glass, the ingredients travel from across Washington to Seattle and then to your neighborhood pub.

Potatoes grown in Eastern Washington

20-100 miles

Processor

15 miles

Distributor

5-10 miles

In order to make it to the big leagues (your plate) Washington potatoes depend on trucks to get them to a processor, a fryer, and finally to their place of honor next to your fish.

SDOT is updating the city's Freight Master Plan and we want your input. Please visit seattle.gov/transportation/freight_fmp.htm to learn more.

SDOT
Seattle Department of Transportation

How should you implement public participation?

Follow the plan – adapt as needed

SOUND TRANSIT 3 — **STRATEGY**

Working the Strategy: Tactics and Metrics

Tactic	Approach	Metrics
In-Person Engagement	• Travel the region for hosted public open houses	1,250 open house attendees 50+ presentations, resulting in 90+ stakeholder/ jurisdictional letters
Public Input Opportunities	• Online survey (primary tool) • Email • Letter	34,706 online survey participants, Up 40% from 2015 *See table below*
Direct Marketing	• Direct mailer to all registered voter households • Emails to 30,000+ individuals on existing Sound Transit distribution lists (4)	25% reported of learning of online survey through mailer, 35% email open rate
Advertising	• Online; print, including outlets reaching targeted age and ethnic communities; TV; and in-app advertising channels (e.g., Pandora)	60+ outlets used, with 7% of online survey participants reporting learning of survey through advertising
Web: Microsite	• Overhaul interactive map page with links to project details to highlight draft plan • Ensure process is front and center • Add translated content	183,800 unique views in six weeks
Social	• Sponsored and organic posts, focused by geography and language	Total impressions reached 500,000, 30% reporting of learning of online survey through social media
Earned Media	• Achieve coverage in major regional and local outlets	200+ local and national media articles
Third Party Partners	• "Outreach toolkit" distribution of canned social content, how to use project hashtag (#ST3), email and newsletter blurbs	Observed use of #ST3 by third parties and directing to agency website for participation; 7% of survey respondents reported hearing of the online survey via "other organizations"
Reaching Diverse Audiences	• Expanded "outreach toolkit," including translated content • Translated social ads • Advertising in non-English channels, with direct tie to translated content on website • Translated posters and posters in service agencies/ community gathering places	1,000 clicks on translated social ads, 100+ translated comments on draft plan, 100+ non-english posters placed

- Evaluate
- Measures of success: quality and quantity
- Check back with community
- Compare results to objectives

What do you do with the results?

- Improve the process

- Make changes that reflect input or explain why input cannot be used
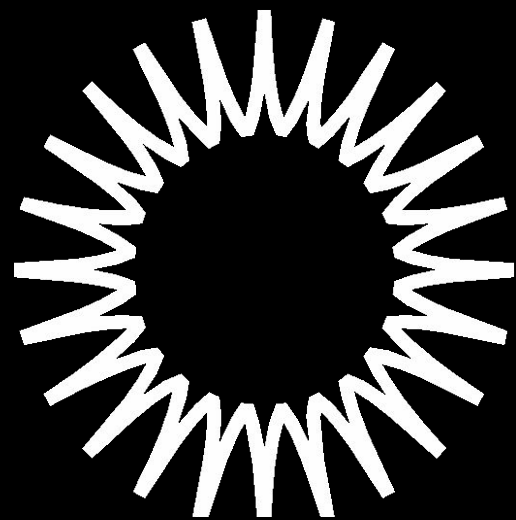
- Report back

Questions?

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