

Innovation & Technology Workshops Summary

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the discussions from the Innovation & Technology Workshops held on September 29 and October 6, 2020 for the Beyond 77 Study.

Summary of Workshop Discussion

I. The keynote speaker, Mr. David Howard, NCDOT Deputy Chief Secretary, noted the critical role planning plays in the transportation industry, and the Beyond 77 is helping to pave the way for new planning in the Charlotte region. He encouraged collaboration and visionary processes and acknowledged key stakeholders and elected officials present in each workshop.

II. Mr. Adam Howell, the consultant team project manager, provided an overview of the workshop purpose, objectives, and an update on progress made with the Beyond 77 during its first year. He further outlined the structure and topics for a series of virtual breakout sessions as a part of the overall workshop.

III. Below are summaries, grouped by each breakout topic-item and associated discussions in the breakouts.

NOTE: *The discussion in each breakout was initially defined by each of the 5 areas of innovation, but stakeholders were welcome to highlight ideas that may have applicability to one or more areas of innovation.*

Policymaking

- Regional coordination & formalized partnerships & political will crucial to provide authority for planning, smart growth.
- Resiliency corridor for funding.
- Major innovation and changes to policy needed with upcoming autonomous vehicles (AV) and other technology.
- Need to address disconnects between planning staff and politicians and public about land use strategies.
- Need to incentivize businesses to increase and innovate in mobility, not just government to drive change.

- Regional transit perspective needed for fares, which can help with last mile connection and boost transit use, needs funding and requires all stakeholders including utilities.
- Consider land use over past few decades and how can we incorporate it into our system.
- Transit integration and fare integration crucial to compete with car travel.
- Increase public awareness of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) benefits compared to Light Rail.
- Interoperability between systems, toll transponders could be used for drive thru, park and rides, mobility account.
- Shifting mobility goals and measures to transit/person capacity on corridors rather than car level of service (LOS).
- Remove/restrict cul-de-sacs and allow for better transportation connectivity.
- Focus on O-line opportunities along corridor.

Programming

- Need regional approach and consensus for consistent infrastructure, system technology and architecture, maintenance.
- Programming needed to address equal balance of workers entering/leaving Mecklenburg County, partnerships between the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) and providers such as Iredell County Area Transit System (ICATS).
- Use scalable design such as microhubs, complete streets, safety for all users paired with micromobility programming such as scooters.
- Need to consider equitable fare access for alternate modes for all users.
- Equitable access for all ages and abilities in bike/ped infrastructure.
- Need regional approach for transit to address rural needs as they grow into larger towns.
- Need to balance investment in land uses in key areas with actual investment in transit, and bike-pedestrian facilities and connectivity.
- Make sure transportation investment is worthwhile considering land use.
- Targeted concentration of solutions in specific areas like interchanges such as transit, technology, funding, and connectivity for bikes and pedestrians.
- Future interchanges accessible only by transit and managed lanes, target Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), and density.
- Need to have end goal as well as logical phases that make sense in the order they are implemented.

Emerging Technologies

- Need buy in from NCDOT and SCDOT to update bistate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) plans, need plans in place so ready for efficient technology deployment.
- Partnerships with utility companies such as Duke to implement Integrated Corridor Management (ICM), sustainable funding and maintenance strategies needed.

- Allow private market determine technology to implement through partnerships.
- Importance of distribution and logistics connections to ports for regional economy, use technology to speed production and freight transportation.
- Resiliency and evacuation routes for future planning can open new funding and programming opportunities.
- Need pilot projects of technologies on the ground now, not waiting for full implementation.
- Possibility for coordination with private providers such as Waze.
- Need data plan and privacy plan for efficiency and public safety and trust.
- Charlotte as test bed for new pavement technology, challenge with NCDOT controlled roads.
- Use ICM to encourage different mode choice and reduce air pollution for ozone goals.

Funding Concepts

- Consider creating new MPO based on Census and regional consensus to allow more connected approach to funding and prioritizing.
- Keep equity in mind for funding and prioritizing.
- Using local tax allows more flexibility from federal and state procedural constraints and allows targeted investments.
- Need for better and accurate cost estimates for local funding to work with public trust.
- CATS should not be a city department, should be separated and have bonding capacity.
- Strong regional authority with transparency and equal distribution of resources.
- Need to rally around 1-3 concepts as a region and strongly push and advocate for them.
- Long term strategies to change legislation for funding, can tie specific projects to them to increase public knowledge and support.
- Usage fees seem to be most palatable to public and can encourage use of other modes.
- Tolls should return funds back locally.
- Goal should be to remove dependence on gas tax.
- Need collaboration among everyone wanting funding so we are not competing for same bucket of sales tax.
- Usage fees could be a major problem with state line (i.e. how to manage sharing of revenue for those who travel/commute to a state where they do not reside, and fees may be assessed); toll or HOV could be alternative.
- Need to demonstrate value to all groups including rural communities, demonstrate economic impact.

Project Implementation

- Make park and ride lots incorporate more infrastructure such as housing, retail, solar charging.
- Private partnerships to rapidly deploy Electric Vehicle (EV) charging along corridor.

- Bike garage and park and rides could encourage first last mile connections, create destinations/amenities.
- Bike parking would make sense in uptown where there is already density and near major transit access such as gateway station or light rail line connections.
- Bike trails as economic driver and trail heads defined for future development.
- Managed lanes could be best short-term solution, need bistate coordination.
- All stakeholders at table including schools, utilities, all municipalities so not competing for funds.
- Options to disincentivize cars such as cordon pricing, no car days uptown, limited parking, parking fees.
- Existing light rail stations with density and ridership should be pilot projects for bike parking, other technology.
- Concept of allowing cars in commute from rural/suburbs, but then easy, safe, affordable transition from cars to bike/ped/transit into central urban area.
- Bake in flexibility for future forms of transit beyond bike parking, current EV technology.
- Create scooter parking and more structure around this mobility option.
- Need to coordinate BRT stops along corridor with easy transit access to destinations – use policy credits, bike advocacy.
- Consider changes in needs for vehicle storage with autonomous and electric vehicles.

For additional information, please visit our website at: www.Beyond77.com

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