More than concrete:
How effective collaboration and engagement in trail design can create long-term value.

2018 New England Bike-Walk Summit

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Part I

Guiding Philosophies of Public Engagement
The great reset: a perfect storm of demographic, values, and economic change
How we grow has changed dramatically—US’ aging population

US population growth by age group
How we grow has changed dramatically—
School age kids = less than 2% of US growth since 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total pop:</th>
<th>School age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>203M</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>321M</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>373M</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School age kids as share of US population
How we saw ourselves then...
How we see ourselves today...
Where do people prefer to live? 
Singles, couples, and families with one parent

Demographics are destiny 
Growing share of households likely to choose urban lifestyles

Where do people prefer to live? 
Singles, couples, and families with one parent

Families with two parents: least likely to prefer urban places to live
Families with one adult: More likely to prefer urban places
Singles and couples: most likely to prefer urban places

The share of US households most to least likely prefer urban places
VALUES ARE CHANGING
Automobiles ceding primacy to newer technologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Device</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>SMART PHONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>COMPUTER/TABLET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>TELEVISION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gallup asked millennials what they would miss most...
Big Idea: the boardwalk
Big Idea: the boardwalk
INTTEGRATIVE DESIGN APPROACH

- Walkability
- Transportation
- Urban Form
- Urban Infrastructure
- Public Involvement
- Leveraged Investments
Big Idea: the boardwalk
COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The statistics below represent the census tracts that the trail passes through. The results are typical of college communities, with a high proportion of millennials, rental units, alternative commuting, and educational achievement.

**Age**

- GENERATION "Z" 16 - 24
- MILLENNIALS 25 - 37
- GENERATION "X" 38 - 49
- BABY BOOMERS 50 - 64
- THE "SILENT" GENERATION 65+

**Homeownership Rate**

- 18% study area
- 44% Marietta
- 66% Cobb County

**Education**

- GRADUATE DEGREE 5%
- BACHELOR'S DEGREE 30%
- SOME COLLEGE 24%
- HIGH SCHOOL 26%
- ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL 24%

181 people commute by walking or biking.
Empowerment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:45</td>
<td>Doors Open, Bar Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10</td>
<td>South End Poetry Slam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15</td>
<td>Vision Plan Background &amp; Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:20</td>
<td>South End Quiz Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:55</td>
<td>Stations Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parks &amp; Plazas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Rail Trail</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Affordability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Art Everywhere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greetings from future
Engaging individuals different than us
Ownership
Part II

A Toolkit for Public Engagement
Let’s reframe the conversation
Trails are really about humans, something we can own.
Trails help to create and/or maintain equitable places.
Trails offer opportunities for relationship building.
Trails are dynamic spaces of play, work, leisure, and rest.
Trails can have a smaller footprint, but offer greater flexibility.
Trails help to generate economic reinvestment. Trails generate the highest return on investment, over $50 of new development per $1 of trail capital invested. Dallas should continue to expand the trail system to increase impact.

1-100 acre neighborhood/community parks across the city create approximately $94 million in annual value to Dallas residents. Dallas should continue to invest in the value that neighborhood parks create for all Dallasites.

Linking programming to parks via a trail system connected to itself and other parks could create enormous economic value and bolster social equity. From a value creation point of view, we believe it to be the single most important investment Dallas could make.
Every municipality and every project is different. It’s important to develop an engagement plan that fits you.
What tools to utilize…

Develop a plan that maximizes public input and reaches multiple generations.

And so many formats to choose from…

• Internal Engagement
• Focus Groups
• Public Meeting Forums
• Site Visits
• Web-based Communications
• Branding
Internal Engagement

It’s critical to have agreement and an internal strategy between municipal departments and project sponsors prior to addressing the general public.

Focus Groups

Identify stakeholders and focus the conversation on their interests.
Public Meeting Forums

- Listening Sessions
- Design Charrettes
- Information Meetings
Don’t forget the kids…
Touchpoint Technology

If Money WAS no object and you could enhance one item on the trail, what would it be?

A. Bike parking/lockers, water fountains, bathrooms, etc.
B. Signage/ wayfinding
C. Lighting
D. Landscaping
E. Trailheads and plaza spaces

- A: 35%
- B: 15%
- C: 15%
- D: 5%
- E: 30%
Site Visits

• Advocacy groups
• Municipal Departments & Commissions
• Stakeholders
Web-based Communication

- Maintaining transparency throughout Planning/Design
- Easy to communicate across multiple platforms
- Cost effective and convenient
Big Idea: remove THAT BRIDGE!

Lenox, Georgia
Multi-Community Trails

Adds another level of engagement + communication to the process.

Internal agreement on an engagement plan.

Consistent planning and design approach.
Last thoughts

- Projects must be reframed around creating two-way relationships with the community **People + Place**

- Cities must be willing to invest more in community engagement **Invest resources wisely**

- Avoid **Public Meeting Fatigue** by creating meaningful interactions that yield real solutions

- Public engagement is also about **public empowerment**

- **Design** is about **relationships**
In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks.

John Muir