



## **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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Andrew Kohr, PLA, ASLA



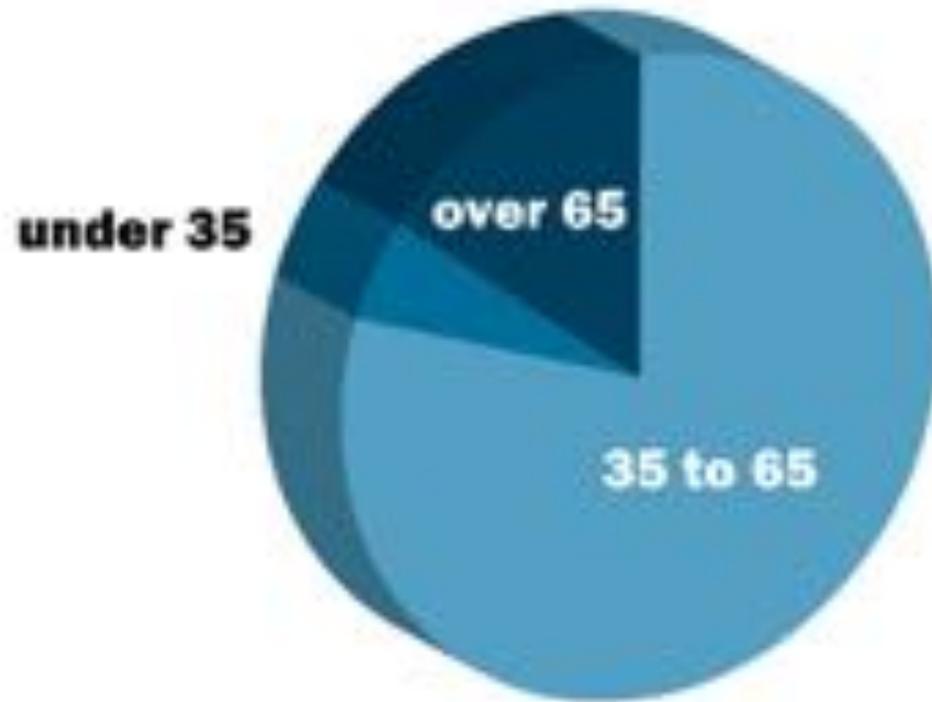


Part I

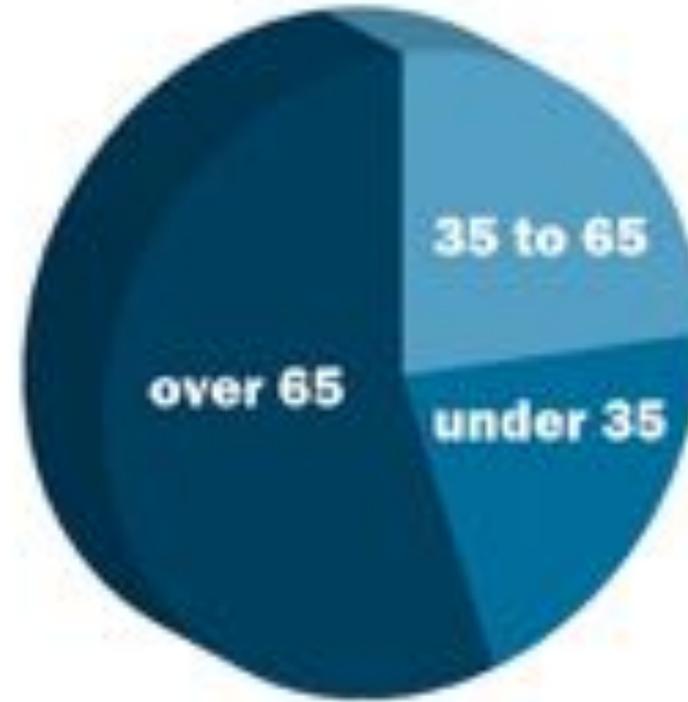
# Guiding Philosophies of Public Engagement

The **great reset**: a  
perfect storm of  
**demographic, values, and  
economic change**

# How we grow has changed dramatically—US' aging population



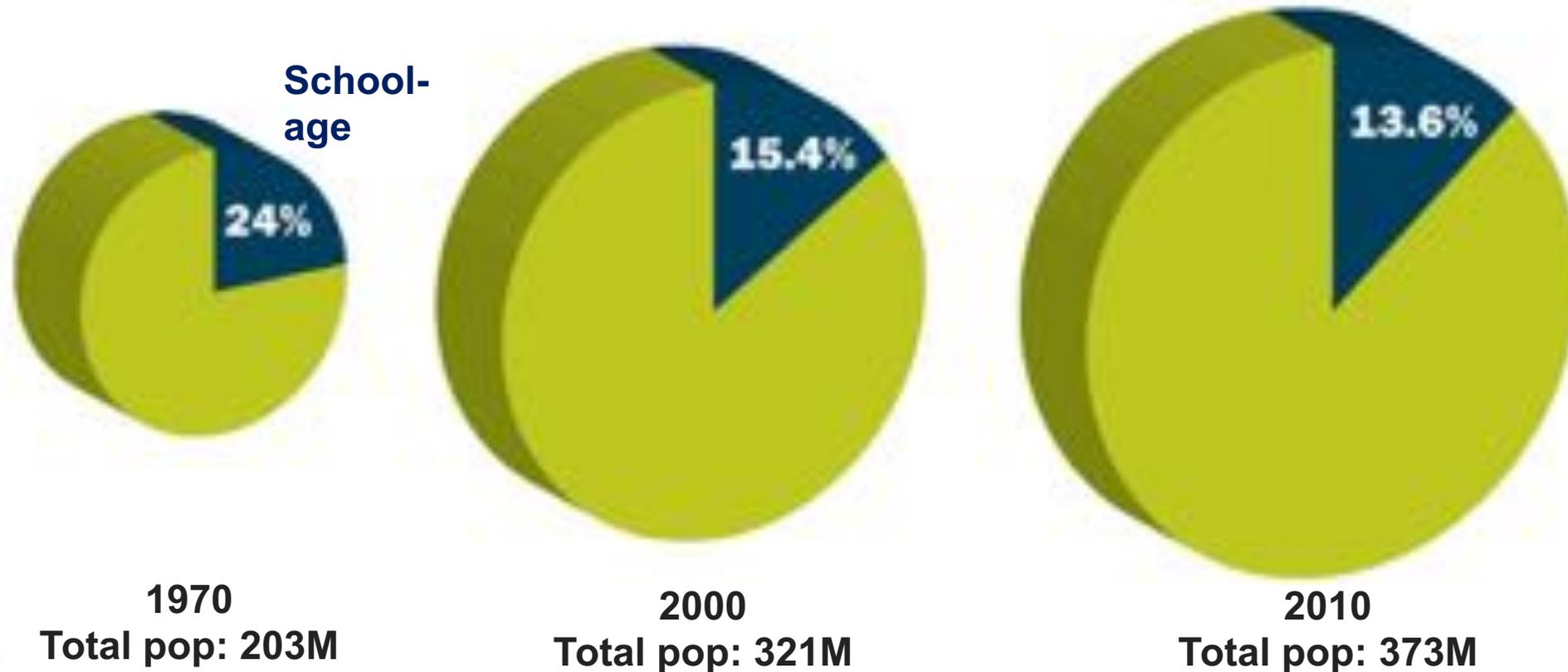
1990-2010



2010-2030

US population growth by age group

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



School age kids as share of US population

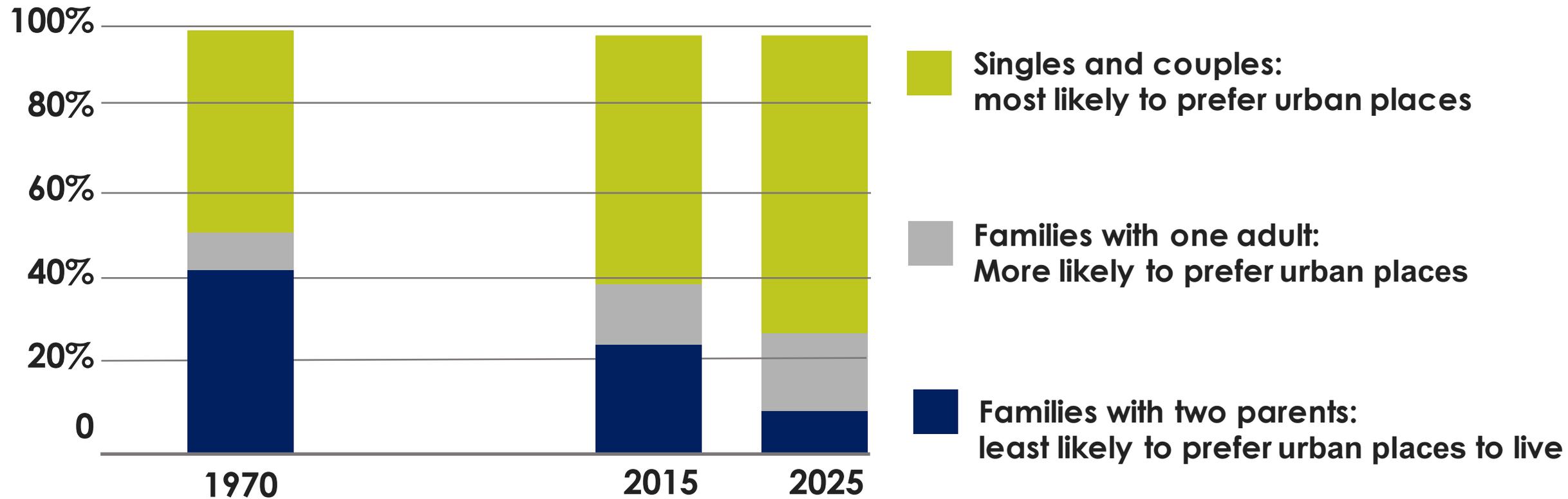
How we saw ourselves **then...**



# How we see ourselves **today**...



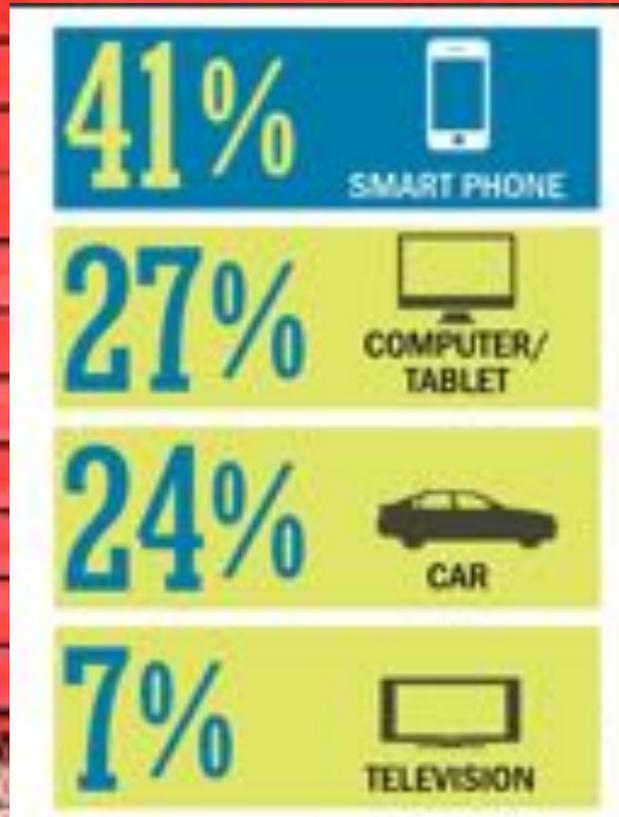
# Where do people prefer to live? Singles, couples, and families with one parent



The share of US households most to least likely prefer urban places

# VALUES ARE CHANGING

## Automobiles ceding primacy to newer technologies



Gallup asked millennials what they would miss most...



Big Idea: the boardwalk



Big Idea: the boardwalk

# Process

## INTEGRATIVE DESIGN APPROACH





**DEVELOPERS**

**MUNICIPAL GOVT**

**RETAIL OWNERS**

**VISITORS**

**PUBLIC WORKS**

**RESTAURATEUR**

**ADULTS**

**DHEC**

**CHILDREN**

**PARKS DEPT**

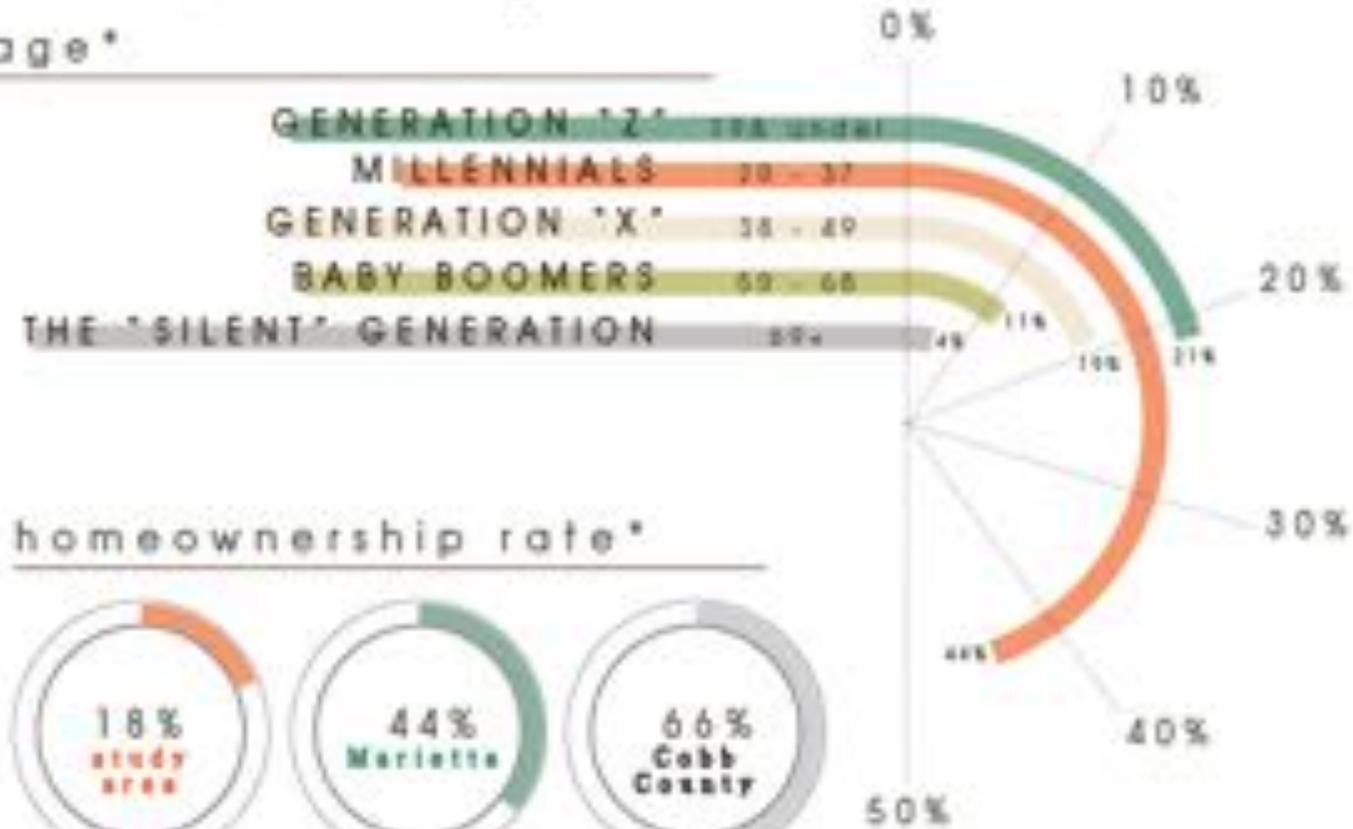


# Understanding

## 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.

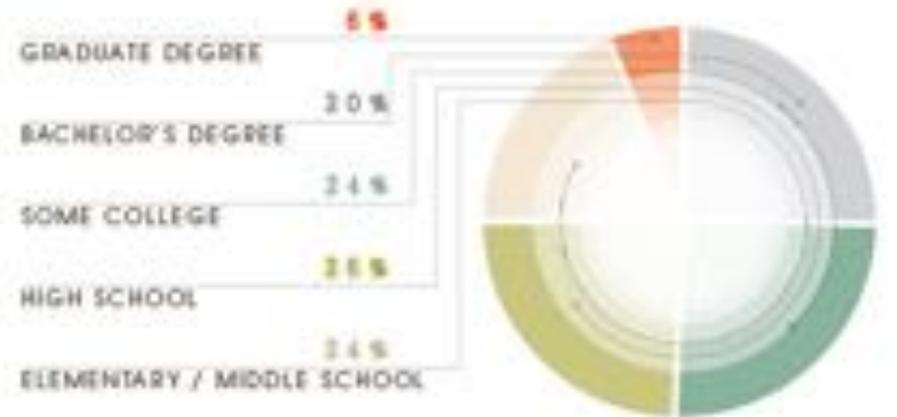
### age\*



### homeownership rate\*



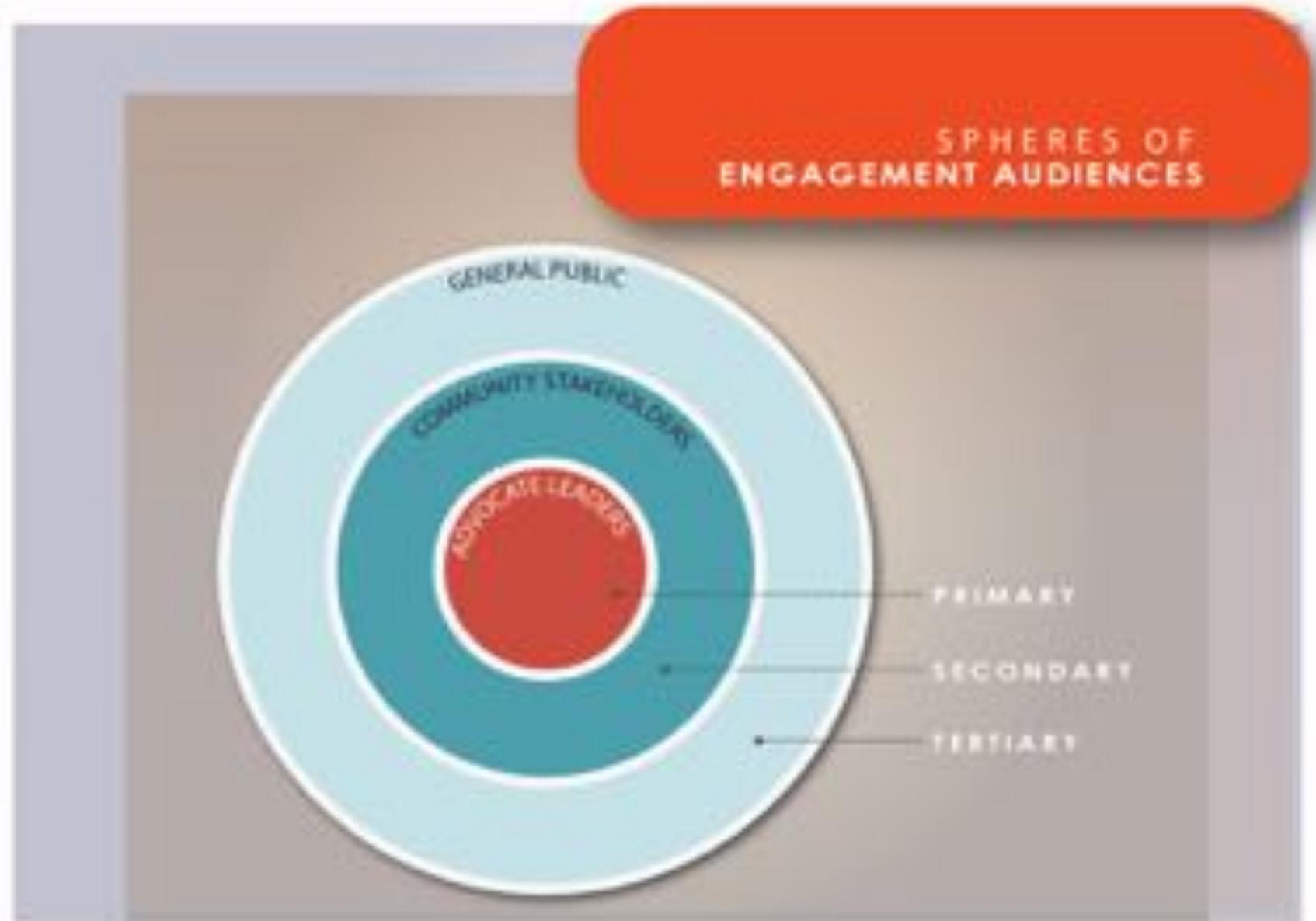
### education\*



**181**  
people commute  
by walking or  
biking\*



# Empowerment





5:45 Doors Open, Bar Open

6:10 South End Poetry Slam

6:15 Vision Plan Background & Introduction

6:20 South End Quiz Show

6:55 Stations Open

- Mobility
- Buildings
- Parks & Plazas
- Rail Trail
- Streets
- Culture
- Affordability
- Art Everywhere

# Engaging individuals different than us



**TALLER PÚBLICO**

Hacemos un llamado a toda la gente que se transporta, pasea, camina, viaja en bicicleta o maneja en la ciudad de Charleston: Queremos que **USTED** se una a nosotros en la planificación del futuro sobre cómo nos moveremos por nuestra ciudad! Venga al primer taller público para el **Plan de Transporte Integral de Charleston** y participe del movimiento!

**CUÁNDO:** Miércoles, 25 de octubre de 2017  
6 pm - 8 pm

**DÓNDE:** iBoomTown!  
1505 King St  
Charleston, SC 29403  
(Proveeremos un refrigerio)

Para más información, contáctenos correo electrónico: [CTP@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:CTP@charleston-sc.gov)  
tel. 843-720-1993  
O visite nuestra página web: [www.transportcharleston.com](http://www.transportcharleston.com)

**CTP**

A graphic at the bottom of the flyer shows silhouettes of diverse people: a person on a bicycle, a person in a wheelchair, a person with a stroller, and a person walking. Above these are icons for a car, a bus, a bicycle, and a person walking.

# 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

## KEY FINDINGS

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.



# OUR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



We work with our client communities from the start of each project to apply the right tools from our Toolkit. Over the years we've learned to ensure the engagement is flexible, and always keep our eyes and ears open for meetings of all sizes and types. That's how we maintained inclusive lists of ways to engage the public.

## Controlled Environment



### Online Survey

The internet gives more people a way to comment on projects and interact with the planning team when it's most convenient for them.



### Feedback Card

After participating in a public event, people can give feedback privately, either when they leave the event or when convenient online.

## Mixed Environment



### Live/Work/Play Map

At public events we often set up participation boards and encourage people to work with them. For example, a live/work/play map helps us understand where people do those things and how they travel to, from, and among them.



### Visual Preference Survey

We set up these boards for relevant categories, like streetlights or parks, with images illustrating a range of approaches to design. Participants receive a set number of stickers to put on the images they find most appealing or appropriate for their community.



### Bubble Board

Another kind of board poses questions like "What do you love about your community?" Participants write responses on sticky notes, which we often use to create word clouds to illustrate the most common responses.

## Open Environment



### Story-telling

Usually told by people personally invested in the study area, stories offer a tool designed to help large groups of stakeholders see the community from someone else's perspective.



### Stakeholder Interview

We invite larger groups of people with strong ties to the community to meetings, typically organized around shared interests. A meeting might group small business owners, developers, and cyclists, or other groups with common concerns.



### Facilitator Exercise

A facilitator from the design team uses a large-scale base map and a set of questions to engage participants in a guided discussion and encourage them to annotate the maps.



### Social Media

We use social media channels appropriate to the intended audience to advertise events, invite public participation, and encourage engagement.



### Email Blast

Email offers a targeted way to communicate with community members. We use them a lot of stakeholders and other participants, usually chosen by the client.



### Door Hangers

Mailed or distributed in person, door hangers can reach a broad audience. We use them to publicize milestone events or to encourage people to take part in on-going programs, without the reach of social media; analogue systems can still reach people who lack easy access to the internet.



### Visioning Workshop

Designers work at a high-visibility site in an environment that encourages community members to drop in for casual discussions and to watch designs emerge in real time. A workshop typically lasts 2-3 days.



### Charette

Similar to a visioning workshop, a charette consists of an opening presentation, multiple public meetings, design sessions, evening private sessions, and a closing presentation over 4 or more days.



### Instant Polling

During some public events we pass out instant-poll devices or ask participants to download a specific polling app. People use the device/app to answer questions anonymously, then view the collected answers instantaneously.



### Walk/Bike Tour

A guided walk or bike trip through the study area, either open to the public or by invitation. Tours give participants a chance to describe problems and possibilities in unusual detail and help the planning team build a deeper understanding of the issues in the area.



### Tactical Urbanism Event

This takes place in a public space, usually outdoors. Embodying the ideas of Tactical Urbanism, it introduces on-cost, temporary changes to the space—a kind of grassroots pilot project—to open creative avenues for better permanent uses.



### Targeted Youth Workshop

A workshop geared toward younger people uses interactive activities to help participants visualize the future. In some cases, we can also offer a channel for communicating goals and ideas to parents who might not know about the planning process.

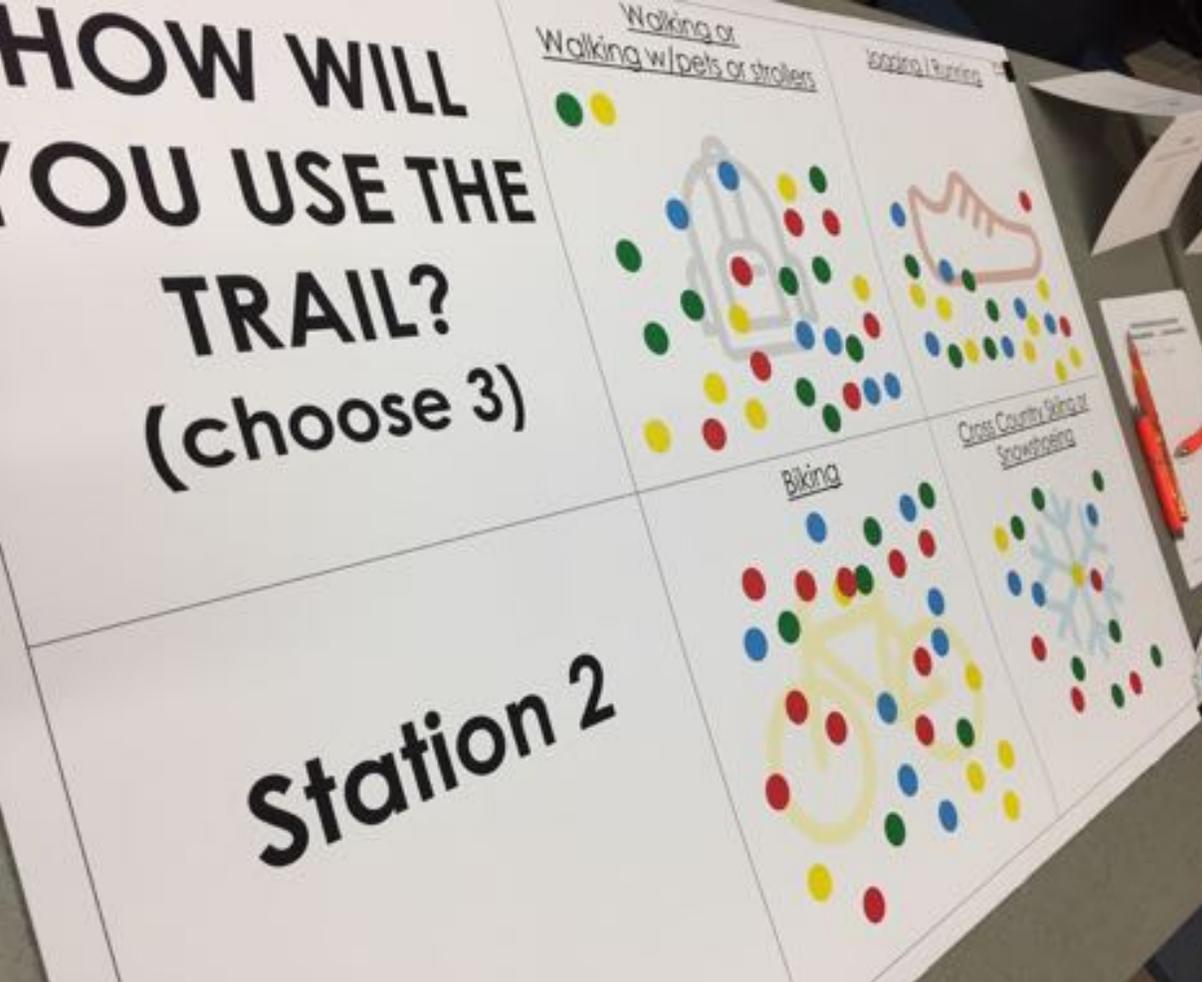
# What tools to utilize...

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



**SWAMPSCOTT RAIL TRAIL  
DESIGN  
CHARRETTE**

**WHEN**  
Thursday, November 9  
4:00 – 8:00 pm

**WHERE**  
Swampscott High School Cafeteria  
200 Essex Street, Swampscott, MA 01907

Thank you for joining us this evening. To the right is a description of each station and instructions. Please move through the stations and instructors, engineers from our consulting firm, Stantec, will collect all responses for use and consideration during the Preliminary Design Phase of the Swampscott Rail Trail.

**WHAT IS A DESIGN CHARRETTE?**  
A design charrette is a great, interactive collaboration method that brings citizens, designers, engineers, and others together to jointly develop a vision or idea. This type of forum allows various ideas to be shared and evolved while also giving immediate feedback to the designers. This rail trail design charrette is formatted as an open house so that participants can come at any point during the charrette to share their ideas and thoughts.

  Stantec

**STATIONS**

**STATION 1**  
**Welcome Table**  
Sign in and gather materials.

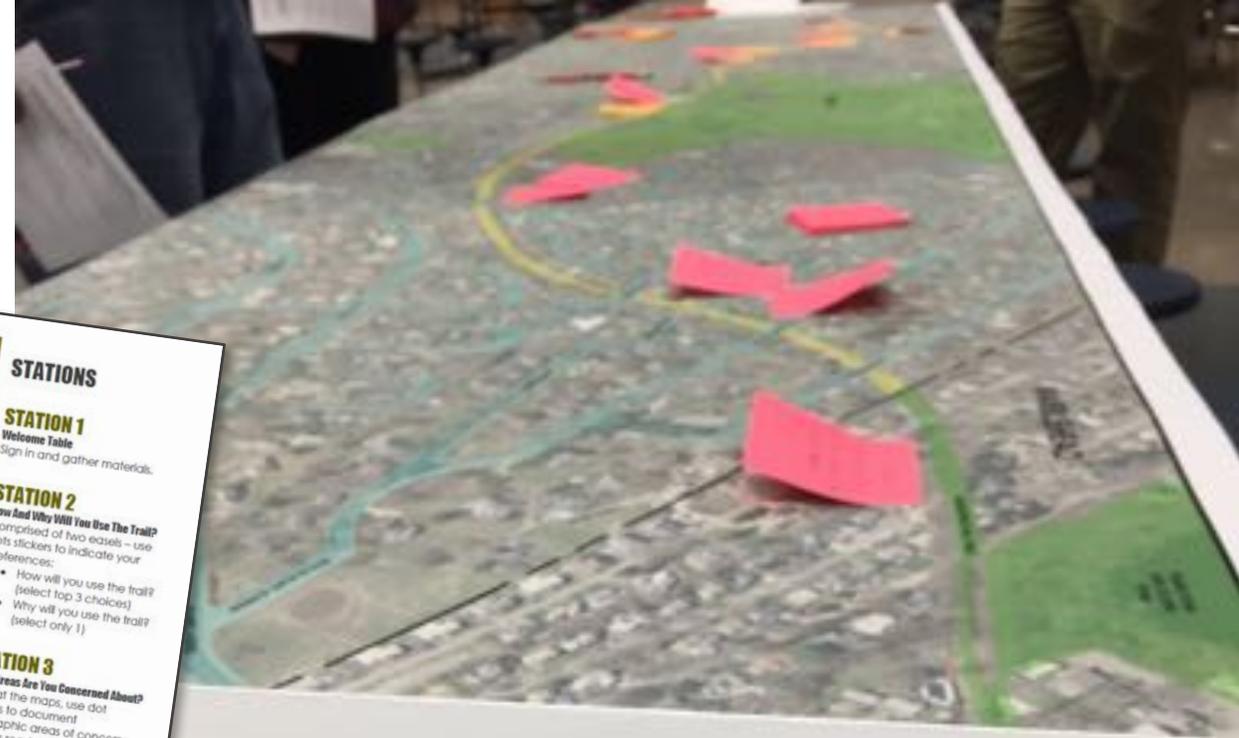
**STATION 2**  
**How And Why Will You Use The Trail?**  
Comprised of two maps – use dot stickers to indicate your preferences:

- How will you use the trail? (select top 3 choices)
- Why will you use the trail? (select only 1)

**STATION 3**  
**What Areas Are You Concerned About?**  
Look at the maps, use dot stickers to document geographic areas of concern. Such as roadway crossings, safety concerns, etc.

**STATION 4**  
**Connectivity And Development**  
Use dot stickers to indicate areas on the maps where you want to see connections, further development, and more.

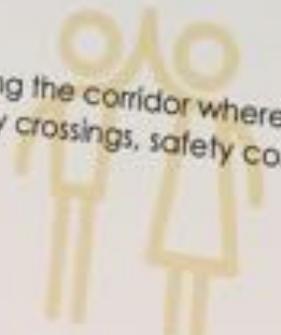
**STATION 5**  
**Amenities**  
Review styles and various types of amenities and help identify design considerations along the trail (benches, maps, bike racks).

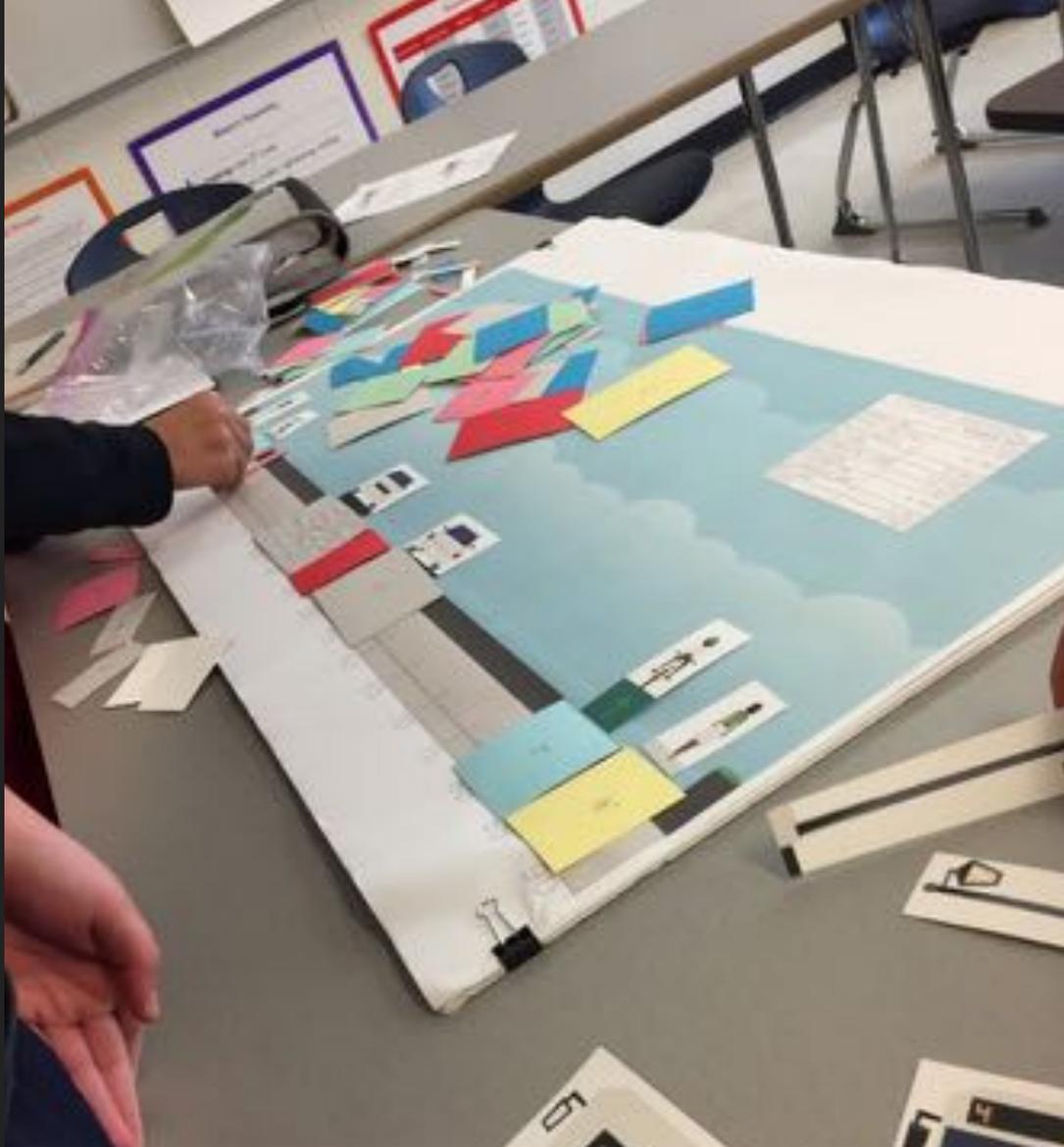


**Station 3**

What areas along the future Swampscott Rail Trail are you concerned about?

Please identify areas along the corridor where you may have concerns (i.e. roadway crossings, safety concerns, etc.)



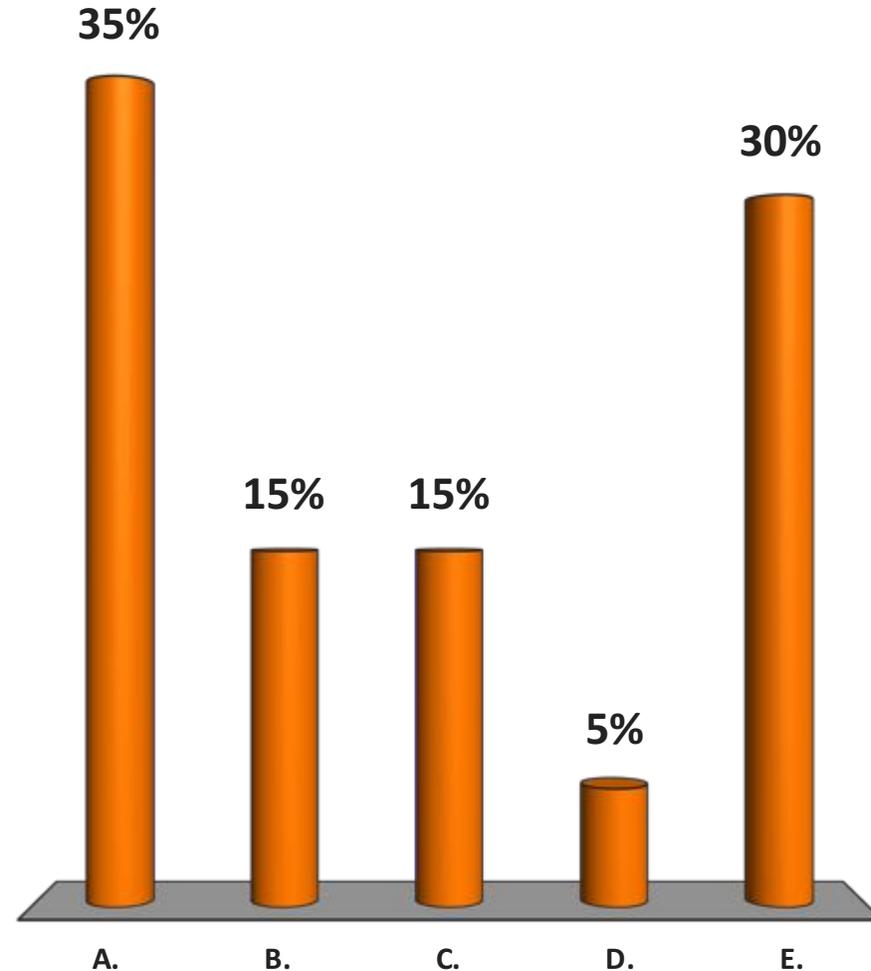


Don't forget the kids...

# 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



# Site Visits

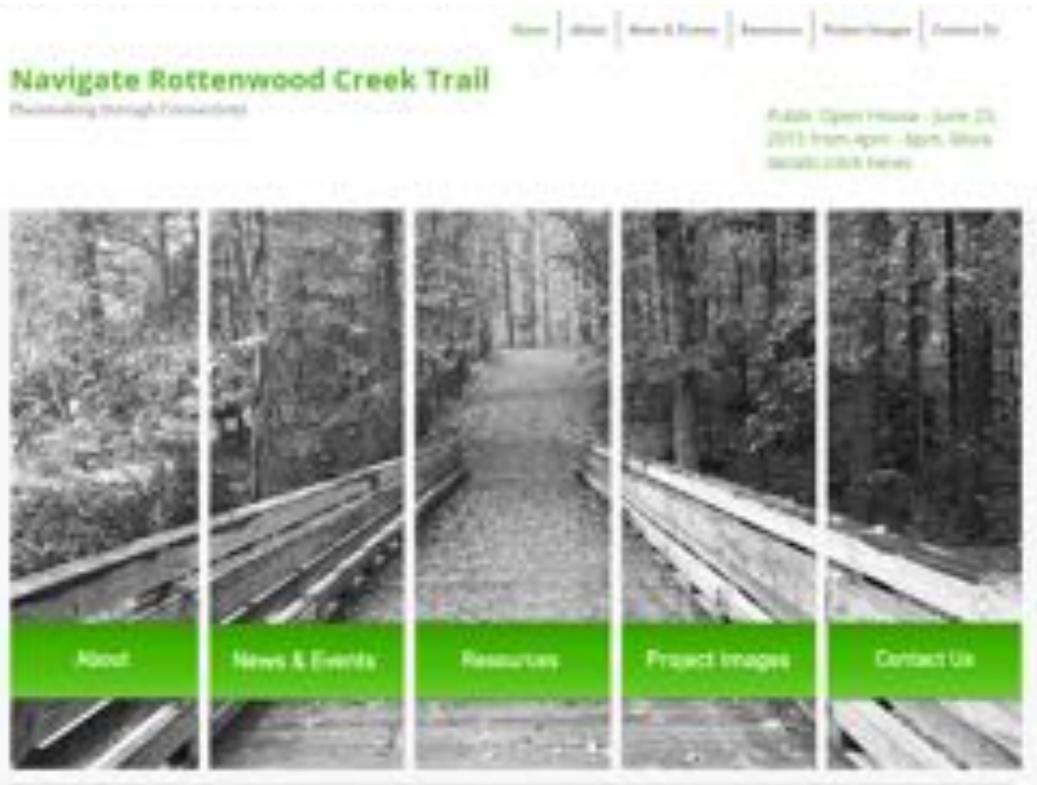
- Advocacy groups
- Municipal Departments & Commissions
- Stakeholders



East Point Atlanta Cycle Track

# Web-based Communication

- Maintaining transparency throughout Planning/Design
- Easy to communicate across multiple platforms
- Cost effective and convenient



# Branding



Live Rotten...



Marietta, Georgia



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**

