Context Sensitive Solutions

Case Studies in Maryland

Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development
Georgia Tech ~ College of Architecture
May 11, 2004
Traditional State Highway Project
Not So Traditional Highway Project
What is Thinking Beyond the Pavement?

An approach to guide the context sensitive development of projects so that:

✓ Projects are done right the first time!
✓ Projects address transportation need
✓ Projects balance stakeholder objectives
✓ Projects are safe

An approach that will enhance good engineering
Aging Infrastructure

Obsolete or deteriorated conditions
State Highway Sidewalk Policy

Sidewalks carry local "traffic"
“When Main Street is a State Highway...”

A major example of SHA’s efforts partnering with communities through our project development process is our handbook for Community Safety and Enhancement projects:

Document can be viewed at www.marylandroads.com
Key Themes for MSHA Project Development

- Identify stakeholders early
- Develop a project vision
- Assemble an inter-disciplinary team early
- Project management quality is critical to project success
- Provide good communication throughout project development
- Ensure continuity in project management, team membership, use of consultants, and community involvement
- Determine schedule and budget after consensus on vision
- Document vision, decisions, and commitments
- Evaluate project with full team and stakeholders
Qualities of the Project

- Project is a Safe Facility
- Project is in Harmony with the Community
- Project exceeds Expectations of Designers and Stakeholders
- Project Involves Efficient & Effective Use of Resources
- Project is Seen as Having Added Lasting Value to the Community
- Project is Built with Minimal Disruption to the Community
- Project Satisfies Purpose and Need
Learning from the Organization
Learning from the Community
Joint Venture ~ Not a Contest

- The most important questions that arise are not matters of technical expertise.

- Values and priorities will drive the solution.
Urban Reconstruction Projects

Trees saved in Westminster road transfer

Town Square recreated in the community of Sharpsburg - an area highly significant to our national heritage
Mt. Rainier Roundabout

Existing conditions

Solution Concept Rendering

Under construction
Before: 34th Street signal crossing US 1. High travel speeds to beat the light.

After: 34th Street Roundabout reduced sight lines and slowed vehicles in the roundabout. Shorter pedestrian crossing distance.
Mt. Rainier Roundabout Construction Details

Before: Modest curb extensions sponsored by City of Mt. Rainier in front of hardware business.

After: Façade improvements, new shelters, landscaped curb extension and wide pedestrian refuge median.
Mt. Rainier Roundabout

Before: Town Hall plaza and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority bus turn around and shelter at the intersection edge.

After: Enlarged and landscaped plaza using one of the bus turn lanes, relocated bus waiting area with more prominent artistically designed shelters.
Mt. Rainier Roundabout

Before: Intersection viewed from Town Hall.

After: Notice reduced paved areas, shelters moved away from the intersection, sculptures flanking the circle, pedestrian lighting and renovated commercial buildings in the vicinity of the roundabout and Town Hall.
Mt. Rainier Roundabout Service

Before: Shelters reclaimed from previous bus bay abandonment.

After: New Shelters clustered in the public plaza at Town Hall better integrated with surroundings, includes trolley track turnaround pattern in the pavers reminiscent of DC Trolley history. Second bus bay abandoned for public plaza area.
Towson ~ County Seat

Existing conditions...

Community crossroads
Towson ~ County Seat

Enhanced safety
Eased traffic congestion
Enlarged pedestrian areas
Encouraged redevelopment
Established greater visibility for businesses

Before

After
Towson ~ County Seat

Energized County center
Burkittsville Drainage Improvements

Before: Circa Mid-19th Century

During construction: Archeologists record original carriage stand and drainage swale uncovered by contractors.

After: Redesign during construction raises historic features found to the surface grade enhanced with historic marker according to community requests.
Reisterstown Reconstruction

Before: MD 140 – Deteriorating roadway, inhospitable pedestrian pathways and invasive overhead lighting.

After: Narrowed roadway and safer turning lanes, brick paving in keeping with the historic nature of the community, pedestrian friendly street lighting, ADA accommodation, and a revitalized commercial area.
Hancock Roadway Reconstruction

Before: MD 144 near C&O Tow Path and Western Maryland Hiker-Biker Trail link.

After: Narrowed roadway at pedestrian and bicycle crossing areas, ADA accommodation, landscaping to reduce speeds through town commercial area and promote use of trail and tow path.
Community Safety and Enhancements
Context Sensitive Solutions in Maryland