

RAC Transportation Systems Committee Discussion

Summation: Central Arkansas' transportation investments are not balanced between modes. People expect walkability, trails, and alternatives to driving and more investments are needed. The more we invest in alternatives, the more our residents will use them. We cannot forget about freight movement as key to our regional economy. Technology may greatly impact our transportation needs as revenue streams may be altered. Most importantly, our system should be connected in every facet. We must consider a project's impact on the entire system, rather than just its localized effect. We cannot piecemeal our transportation investments.

Question 1: How can our transportation investments be used to best improve and maintain the regional transportation system?

Key Discussion Points

1. Current investments are too auto-centric and lack for multimodal options.
2. Culturally we now recognize multimodal transportation as important, how should we look to the next 20 years?
3. Invest in a more balanced regional network over localized issues.
4. Balanced system is ability to live without being restricted by transportation.
5. Our investments are piecemeal, projects must consider impacts to the entire connected system.
6. Greater investment in alternatives will bring more attention to their proper use, such as cars yielding at crosswalks because they have gotten used to doing it.
7. Streets should be safer for all modes.
8. Added roadway capacity and sprawling growth is expensive to maintain, the region must focus on land development patterns that limit the need for new and expanded facilities.
9. 20-year traffic forecasting leads us into unnecessary capacity investments in the near term. Conway has met most capacity needs with smaller cross sections and roundabouts.
10. Be realistic about transportation, recognize that most commute by car, discuss reasonable distances for walking and biking.
11. Policies like complete streets should be not only adopted but adhered to afterward.
12. Understand the context of a particular facility and design a solution accordingly.
13. Problems include inconsistent roadway cross sections, roadway improvements are piecemeal, short term minded projects, lack of connected walk and bikeways/frequent gaps, freight loading accommodations.
14. Connected bike and pedestrian facilities could enhance transportation beyond just recreational. These are often cheaper to build and maintain than roads.
15. Walkable and bikeable communities are important for economic development and livability.
16. Bike-share, e-bikes, scooters can serve as innovative solutions in smaller geographies (last mile).
17. Walking and biking increases interaction more than driving amongst different groups foster community.
18. Collaboration between agencies and communities must help to increase access to funding for bike and ped investments

19. Utilize “low hanging fruit,” like utility easements, to create a trail system, as opposed to more expensive roadway expansion. The trail system will eventually grow in to a usable transportation network.
20. Commuter transit should be continually evaluated as an option.
21. Cities should use pavement management systems and be proactive in maintenance, like crack sealing.
22. “Last mile” logistics for freight and people (non-auto) including intersection design need improving.
23. Conflicts between bikes, autos, trucks exist particularly where freight mixes in, these areas need to be improved.
24. Consider separate lanes for auto vs freight drivers.
25. Autonomous vehicles could impact capacity and commuting patterns in the near future. Also, fuel tax revenue may be impacted from EVs and other efficiencies. Innovations in telecommuting, online services and education, which may have effects on commuting. Revenue will have to be reexamined.

*Question 2: How are transportation issues similar between urban, suburban and small communities?
How are they different?*

Similarities

NONE IDENTIFIED

Differences

1. Large cities have more to maintain, so have more costs.
2. Small city residents are more likely to drive more often than others.
3. There are more roadway standards expected in urban areas than small communities.