What a Transportation Professional Needs to Know about the Post-COVID World

Joint Western/Mountain ITE Districts Annual Meeting

June 29, 2020
Session Panel

Moderator:
Abbas Mohaddes
Econolite President/COO

Panel:
Alyssa Rodriguez, City of Henderson
Beverly Kuhn, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
Jeff Paniati, ITE Executive Director
Randy McCourt, ITE President
Roger Millar, WSDOT Secretary of Transportation
ITE Response to COVID-19

Curated Resource Page
- Transportation Resources, Transportation Impacts, Organizational Tools, Personal/Family Guidance

Deeper Dives
- Transportation Talks Podcast - Future of Transit
- Learning Hub Webinar - Open Streets for Walking and Biking
- Working Group - Traffic Counting Considerations

New Engagement Opportunities
- Virtual Drop-Ins – 30-minute, Unstructured Focus-Group Discussions  Every Tuesday and Thursday

Reimagined ITE Annual Meeting and Exhibit
- August 4-20
- Tuesday-Thursday, 11:00-5:30 EDT
- Plenary and Technical Sessions, Poster Presentations, Workshops
- Exhibitor Showcase
Prospects for Infrastructure Funding

COVID-19 Stimulus
• Discussed at various points
• Unlikely as stand-alone legislation

Surface Transpiration Reauthorization
FAST Act: $305 billion over 5 years; Expires September 30
• Senate Bill (Highway only)
  • $287 billion over 5 years
  • Developed Pre-COVID
  • Follows traditional funding/program approach
• House Bill (Surface Transportation)
  • $494 billion over 5 years
  • Developed during COVID
  • More progressive agenda
• Administration Proposal (Surface Transportation)
  • $810 billion?
  • TBD
Lessons from COVID-19

No one is safe until everyone is safe – social equity and post-pandemic transportation

- The first 6 feet and last 6 feet are the critical distances for successful economic and social interaction
- Your car won’t keep you safe, unless you stay in it – all modes need to be safe
- The pandemic showed that service workers key to a prosperous economy
- They often live furthest from employment centers
  - Few urban services
  - Longer commutes
  - Higher percentage of household income spent on housing and transportation (often more than 50 percent)
- Affordable transportation and housing options are an economic necessity, not a social service
Lessons from COVID-19

I’m going for a walk: the importance of complete neighborhoods

- Stay Home, Stay Healthy – many see their neighborhoods in the daytime
- Mixed use neighborhoods provide food security, access to services
- Sidewalks and bikeways often don’t exist, or too narrow for social distancing
- Need to do catch up on accessibility – for a person in a wheelchair, no curb cut means they aren’t going anywhere
- People staying closer to home likely to influence/increase local active transportation investments
- Complete the state’s active transportation system to complement/leverage affordable housing, transportation and telecommunity initiatives
Lessons from COVID-19

*Freight mobility at your doorstep: package delivery goes big (and small)*

- Freight industry literally delivered during pandemic
- Consumers shift to online shopping accelerated by COVID-19
- Much of the traffic in neighborhoods is package delivery
- Local businesses are jumping in – groceries, restaurants, retail stores, even car dealerships
- What is the public interest in freight door to door?
- What and where should public investment be?
- What role can e-cargo bike delivery play in the future?
Lessons from COVID-19

Traffic is down, crashes are not: a case for automated enforcement

• Traffic is down 45 percent on average
• Crash rates have gone up
  • A significant number of drivers exceeding speed limits, some at speeds approaching 200 mph
  • Endangering themselves and others
  • Fatality rates jumped 14% nationwide in March*
• We have the technology to enforce speed limits and other laws
• Develop enforcement strategy with safety, law enforcement, civil rights, social equity stakeholders

*National Safety Council preliminary estimate
Lessons from COVID-19

*Zooming in and out: telecommunity as the “new normal”*

- Suddenly forced to use technology we’ve had for a long time
  - Success is driving new thinking on worker expectations and office space requirements
  - Some will want to go back to the office, many won’t
- Helps manage demand without adding roadway capacity – flattens the peak hour
- Telecommunity – A society in which information can be transmitted or received freely between all members without technical incompatibilities
  - Investment to support telecommunity and making the opportunity more equitable – significant economic, social, environmental benefits
  - Fully ADA-accessible conferencing systems are needed and should be adopted as the industry standard
Traffic Counts and Studies in a Pandemic

What are you going to do?

• Data Sources, Types and Studies
• Ethics
• Policies
• Timing of the “new normal”
• Forecasting
• Trip Generation

Look for Task Force information in July
The rapidly changing workplace creates challenges, stress, and uncertainty for team members, partners, and clients. Maintain frequent and meaningful communication, emphasizing transparency and accountability.

Establish teams with members who can step in to lead efforts in a rapidly changing workplace environment.

Utilize collaboration tools for internal coordination and external activities to help mitigate.

Encourage flexibility and empower team members to achieve results.

Being flexible and nimble - including experimenting with new tools / techniques - helps manage uncertainty.
Rapid Adoption, Change and Fatigue

Work from home
On-line Permitting
Open Streets

Rapid Decisions
Risk Management

Problem Identification
Regression