COMMUNITY FORUM #1 SUMMARY

October 2, 2019 | 6:00–9:00pm | Civic Arts Plaza – Janet & Ray Scherr Forum

On Wednesday, October 2, 2019 the City of Thousand Oaks hosted the first community forum to discuss big picture trends affecting the City as part of the General Plan Update, Thousand Oaks 2045. The focus of the forum was on how to create happy and healthy communities. The forum took place at the Civic Arts Plaza in the Scherr Forum from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. The forum's keynote speaker, Charles Montgomery, award-winning author and journalist, presented thoughts and ideas behind what aspects of the built environment make people happy within their City. The event had roughly 65 participants sign in using the attendance sheet and many other attended the forum without signing in, not including City staff. The estimated attendance was over 100 people.

The forum began with an introduction by Councilmember Al Adams, who discussed the history of the City’s General Plan. Matt Raimi, the lead consultant for the General Plan update, then provided context for the presentation including that the presentation was based on research but not all concepts would be applicable for Thousand Oaks. He also asked community members to complete a feedback form with three questions:

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

Individual responses to these questions can be found in Appendix A.

Following this introduction, keynote speaker Charles Montgomery detailed scientific research connecting the built environment (the design of our streets, buildings) with measures of happiness including physical health outcomes, exercise levels, obesity, mental health, and connections with other residents. The overall conclusion of the presentation was that how we build our cities has an impact on the physical and mental health of residents.

Following the presentation, there was a question and answer session with Charles Montgomery. The topics of the questions included housing, neighborhood preservation, transportation safety (with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian safety), growth, and preservation of the scale and character of the community.

Twenty-three community members also completed the feedback form. The following is a summary of the responses organized by each of the three questions.
Key themes are summarized below:

**What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?**

- Attendees who completed the comment form overwhelmingly mentioned the need for creating a more walkable community and a safer pedestrian experience. Specific ideas that resonated included: more pedestrian crossings, pedestrian-only streets, slowing traffic in high traffic areas and traffic calming.

- The second most mentioned comment was the desire to increase cycling in the City by constructing a safer and more complete bike network. Many people like the idea of creating protected bike lanes (switching the location of bike lanes and parking to protect bikes).

- While not universal, the exploration of mixed use and higher-density communities was frequently mentioned as a positive concept to explore in the General Plan update. Along with this, some people mentioned a desire to create mixed use along Thousand Oaks Boulevard, to create a downtown and to explore a “village” concept by redeveloping older malls with mixed use and locating more commercial development near residential areas.

- Housing was mentioned a number of times including the need for new housing types (such as the “missing middle” [e.g., townhomes, fourplexes and walk-up apartments] and modular housing), more affordable housing, senior housing and how opposition to housing in the City has contributed to the lack of affordable housing.

- The desire for more gathering spaces was also mentioned as an important idea to explore in the General Plan update.

- Other ideas there were identified by respondents included the following:
  - Reduce isolation and bring people together.
  - Keep all existing open space, increase the amount of open space and only allow infill development.
  - Explore steps to encourage public transit.
  - Expand arts and culture, including tourism.
  - Reduce parking.
  - Involve children in planning.
  - Make the City fossil free by 2030 and address climate change.
  - Explore equitable planning and environmental justice.

**What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?**

- Majority of participants either did not fill in a response or responded that nothing presented was inappropriate for Thousand Oaks. One commenter said: “Good discussion with positive ideas – what’s inappropriate about that?”

- Approximately one quarter of responders mentioned that higher density development is not appropriate for Thousand Oaks. The reasons provided were that there is too much traffic, fire
trucks don’t reach above 3 stories, the community should remain suburban and lower density and there are already too many people living in the City.

- Two people mentioned that affordable housing (or housing for people who cannot afford the high housing costs in the City) should not be considered in the General Plan. One commenter said: “We are out of room, sorry. And it’s not our job.”

- Two commenters were concerned about civic engagement process for the General Plan. One said that the GPAC is not representative of the community and the other was concerned that the process would be dominated by white, male, homeowners.

- Other comments included that embracing diversity will be challenging for Thousand Oaks residents and that bike lanes are not needed.

**In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning–related topics?** *(Note that 5 of the 23 respondents did not complete this question.)*

- Like question one, the most mentioned concept was about bicycle and pedestrian transportation and the need to reduce automobile use. Some specific comments mentioned are listed below:
  - “Relieved to hear that there are models to draw from to reduce auto dependence syndrome.”
  - “Reinforced the walkability goals of design that I am familiar with.”
  - “Planning for a less auto-centric community.”
  - “How ‘speed kills’ – pedestrians as well as an opportunity for connectivity, which is what fosters a sense of community.”

- Many respondents mentioned a changed or modified view of mixed use for Thousand Oaks, but several qualified their statement by limited the height or location of mixed-use buildings. Specific ideas included constructing mixed use in hubs, locating mixed use along Thousand Oaks Boulevard and the benefits of mixed use to building community interaction, reducing traffic and increasing the tax base. Some quotes from respondents included:
  - “Some combination of residential/retail/commercial that does not increase density and noise; not over 3 stories.”
  - “Business and housing ‘core’ can help tax base + reduce traffic”
  - “I’m more open to 3-5 story mixed use (business + residential) buildings.”
  - “The importance of mixed use building to build community.”
  - “Perhaps the boulevard as appropriate to build multi use buildings...”

- Several respondents generally agreed with the direction of the ideas presented by Charles Montgomery. Specific comments included:
  - “No change. Support the concepts presented.”
  - “I agree with the speaker”
  - “No change – validation.”
• Housing was mentioned multiple times including the need to address the issue of affordable housing.

• Other new concepts mentioned included
  - Redesign the front of Civic Arts Plaza and parking in front of The Lakes shopping center.
  - Thousand Oaks is for everyone/all kinds of people.
  - Build connections and ways to be involved in the community.
  - Involve children in the visioning process.
  - Do not give up any parks or open spaces.
Name: [redacted]
Address: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Questions
1) Who started the discussion to form T02045 plan?
2) When was it officially launched?
3) Why were business leaders consulted first?
4) Why update now—is it a reaction to WC2035?
How would you address the growing homelessness issue in cities like ours?
Name: [Redacted]
Address: [Redacted]
Email: [Redacted]

Question: Will part of the new general plan include provision for 5-10% of all developments to be designated for affordable housing for seniors, families, teachers, young professionals, etc?
Name:  
Address:  
Email:  
Question:  1 have a 28, 18, 14 and 4 year old.  
What are their plans to include their (children) contribution to the general plan for this city? Tell me to bring them to the next forum, and I will. Thank you.
Name: [Redacted]
Address: [Redacted]
Email: [Redacted]

Question: Will more affordable housing be built so our children can live in the City they were born in?
What type of density is being proposed for the Royal Oaks Neighborhood? (Southwest corner of Hampshire / Tosh Blvd)
Question: Since there are about 40 empty stores in the Oaks Mall, what kind of plans are being made for it?
2 Can affordable housing be spread over different developments rather than being all in one location?
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How do you plan for the next generation of taxpayers/potential residents (millenials in our case), when the current population is largely 50+ and in a much higher income bracket?
What future do you see for shopping malls?
Question: How important is it to approach city design as an economic ecosystem, giving every stakeholder a role and reason to collaborate and support one another and the health of the community?
How can we support that goal?

How important is it to first define the purpose of each goal and strategy?

How often should we ask, "how does this support our purpose?"

How important is it to create a city that supports residents working where they live?

How much impact does that have on traffic?
QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   Higher-density, walkable, welcoming cities
   Protected bike lanes, promotion of bike traffic!
   Slowing traffic speed in highly-commercial areas.
   Adding non-residential islands in the middle of the residential sea.
   More pedestrian crossings! Narrow car lanes.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   It made me less interested in public transportation relative to walking/biking. (I still like both, but the balance has shifted.)
TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

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If you live in Thousand Oaks, how long have you lived here?
- 1 year or less
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31+ years

What is your zip code? 91320

What is your age range? (select one)
- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-64
- 65 or older

What best describes your background? (select all that apply)
- White (Not Hispanic)
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- Multiracial/Two or more Ethnicities

How did you hear about the presentation? (select all that apply)
- E-mail from City or City Newsletter
- City social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Attended the General Plan Community Workshop
- Newspaper Ad or Article
- Word of Mouth
- Other: LAPC Member
QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   
   "Villages concept pulls everyone together. Safe walking. Many people walk only in the Oaks Mall to be safe."

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   
   N/A

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   "No change. Long held and supported concepts learned through Conojo Future Foundation Vision 2020 project and program."
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- Other: Email from Library Director
Questions

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   Mixed use on Downtown TO Blvd.
   We need more bike lanes & more pedestrian crossings
   Working on Farms Marketplace to bring it back to life.
   Pay attention to dead streets

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

   Towers

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   I agree with the speakers.
   I do see Thousand Oaks as a place where people are happy.
   We must address the issue of affordable housing.
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- Other: ____________________
1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - reducing isolation
   - bringing people together
   - more crosswalks

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   - Higher density
   - Increase in traffic
   - Over 3-story structures
   - NO

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   - Some combination of residential, retail/commercial that does not increase density over 3 stores
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Community Forum #1
Worksheet / October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   more pedestrian-only streets
   in the new city center

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   increased housing density we have enough people living here already. I have lived here 50 years, I stay because it is a warm friendly community - a heal

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   Not a high rise city, suburbs
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Community Forum # 1
Worksheet / October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - Bringing us together as a city to accomplish this
   - Building on the great work that we’ve done to date
   - The Arts + Culture
   - Tourism + Cultural Tourism
   - Gathering spaces + Zoning Changes + multi-use blogs,

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   - I’m not sure that the advisory group is representative of our community—but it’s an impossible task.
   - Enough of the bike lanes—commuters don’t use them. Only people with logos & emblems on their butts.
   - Affordable housing—We’re out of room, sorry, our job,

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   - We need to redesign the front of this building.
   - We should remove the parking in front of the Zellers.
   - Add street side seating + activities.
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- Other: 

Community Forum #1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   Communication about low income housing, versus affordable housing, and how NIMBY contributes was eye opening to me.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
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QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

- Missing middle
- Higher density by 3-5 floor above commercial

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
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Community Forum # 1
Worksheet / October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - Bike & Ped Friendly
   - Public Gathering Space
   - Reduce parking to encourage transit, bicycle & walking
   - More mixed use & higher density
   - More affordable housing & apartments
   - Narrow lanes + more bike, crosswalks
   - Make villages from malls & parking lots

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks? Nothing
   - Keep all open space - only infill
   - Make T.O. Fossil Free by 2030
   - Involve children in planning
   - Mix affordable & luxury housing

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   - T.O. is for everyone/all kinds of people
TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

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Community Forum #1

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QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   ![Diagram](image1)

   - Village planning
   - Density to support village life
   - Equity planning
   - Importance of contact

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

   I am very concerned that the civic engagement process will not consciously, creatively, and effectively counter the dominant view to influence.

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   Relieved to hear there are models to draw from to reduce auto-dependence-syndrom.
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QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - Keep open space
   - Environmental justice - happiness for all residents design for all generations & income levels
   - Climate change
   - Affordable housing/mixed use 3 story caps
   - Redesign roads for slow down areas
   - Safe walking/biking spaces
   - Modular housing
   - Encourage exercise - pedestrian crossings, narrow lanes to get more use out of roads - bikes/walking/transit

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   - Tall towers for housing

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   - Build connections + ways to be involved
   - Find ways to insert hubs in neighborhoods
   - Business + housing core can help tax base + reduce traffic
   - Invest in the “broken tooth” in the center
   - Reach out to include children in visions
   (Thousand Oaks named by a teenager)
TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF!

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Community Forum # 1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - Updated bike lanes - swap parking/bike lanes to have parked cars protect bike lanes
   - A central core or heart of town being created/being an important part of community
   - More pedestrian-friendly streets & crosswalks

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   - The importance of mixed-use buildings to build community
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Questions

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - Soft social edges or sidewalks in commercial/residential areas
   - Encouraging walking, biking, public transportation usage

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   - I'm more open to 3-5 story mixed-use (business + residential) buildings
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Community Forum #1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   TRAFFIC CALMING TO HELP PEDESTRIAN SAFETY; BUILDING NEW, AFFORDABLE HOMES IN THIS TOWN FOR LOCALS; MORE SOCIAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES (ESP. LATER IN DAY); EXPANDING OPEN SPACE.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

   N/A - GOOD DISCUSSION WITH POSITIVE IDEAS - WHAT'S INAPPROPRIATE ABOUT THAT?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   REINFORCED THE WALKABILITY GOALS OF DESIGN THAT I AM FAMILIAR WITH.
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1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

Gathering places, Encouraging cycling, "Friendly streets
Values to determine solutions
Kids want to walk to bike to school.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

Perhaps too much density without enough traffic flow.

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

Line diet food, slows down traffic but doesn’t lead to smooth traffic flow.
More access walk.
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Community Forum #1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   
   Switch the bike lane and parklet area so the parklet area protects bike riders. Perhaps some of the multi use housing on the corner should include housing for our elderly.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

   Since our Ventura County fire trucks in T.O. can only reach 3 stories for the safety of people we should not allow anything higher than 3 stories!

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   Perhaps the boulevard is appropriate to build multi use buildings, but we should not give up any of our parks or open space because that's where you can actually decompress and it does make you happier.
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Community Forum # 1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   Bike lanes inside parked cars.
   Slow down traffic in walking areas.
   More crosswalks
   Village housing undergoing slope analysis

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   Planning for a less auto-centric city.
   Affordable housing should be a percentage of new developments.
   Emphasis on condos rather than apartments
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Community Forum #1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - Build residential housing on top of retail establishments.
   - Have more crosswalks with flashing yellow lights on major streets.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   - Perhaps some open space should be rezoned for low/moderate income residents.

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
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Community Forum #1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   I love reversing bike lane and street parking
   to create safe lanes for cyclists.
   Creating walkable happy streets and recessing parking is greater.
   Mixed use and concentrating on TO Blvd.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   This has reinforced and further expanded my perspective and I feel better informed on the topic. I look forward on reading the book.
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QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   Plan for more mixed use community development that could result in more trust for the community.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   Having grown up on a farm in the Midwest, the concept of urban land use is a new one for me to consider.
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QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?

   ALL of them!

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?

   Nothing!

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?

   No change. Validation!
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Community Forum #1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   
   Increased density. More walkability.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   
   Walkability may be only sparsely applicable.

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
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Community Forum #1
Worksheet | October 2, 2019

QUESTIONS

1. What ideas or concepts did you hear tonight that resonated with you and should be considered in the General Plan visioning process?
   - SLOWER is better?
   - Walkability + bike-friendly = CONNECTIVITY, a sense of "healthy, happy, thriving for everyone."
   - Promotes TRUST in community, which improves relationship with local government. Everybody's happy, might not be.

2. What ideas or concepts did you hear that you feel are not appropriate for the City of Thousand Oaks?
   - "URBANIZATION," in general. Especially if it's designed to accommodate many people who can't afford to costlier housing/living. Building individual "pods" for our homeless population. Expecting people to walk & bike to where they need to go (it's often too hot outside). Embracing DIVERSITY, suddenly will meet fierce opposition.

3. In what ways, if any, did the concepts presented change your views about land use, transportation or other planning-related topics?
   - How "speed kills" - pedestrians as well as opportunity for connectivity, which is what fosters a sense of community.
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