

**CITIZEN TRANSPORTATION ACADEMY:**  
**COURSE CURRICULUM AND IMPLEMENTATION HANDBOOK**

Developed based on the  
Portland Traffic and Transportation Course

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## 1. CITIZEN TRANSPORTATION ACADEMY

The Citizen Transportation Academy is course curriculum that harnesses the knowledge, technical expertise and passions of practicing transportation professionals in a city to immerse a cohort of interested and dedicated community members in transportation issues over the course of two to three months. In this context, a “citizen” is “a person who lives in a particular place” or “an inhabitant of a city or town” (Merriam-Webster). The course is designed to provide course participants with:

- A basic technical understanding of how the city’s transportation system operates on a daily basis, along with what agencies and policies play a role in the system’s development and operation.
- The opportunity to meet, learn from and ask questions of the individuals who lead and staff local transportation agencies.
- The opportunity to interact with other citizens who have an interest in transportation issues.
- Course lectures and a course assignment that help the participant understand the role and impact they have as a citizen, including how to interact with transportation agencies and how to engage fellow citizens around community transportation needs.

The Citizen Transportation Academy curriculum is based on the Portland Traffic and Transportation course. Citizen planning academy courses in cities around the country are also good models to look to for how to structure and operate such a course. However, the nature of the transportation course is that it goes into much greater depth on a specific topic, allowing the participant to go deeper into transportation history and technical discussions and develop a greater understanding of the agencies and policies involved.

Key course elements include:

- A series of guest lectures from city transportation leaders, including city commissioners, transportation agency directors and managers, and other key transportation decision-makers;
- A tour of the city to gain a practical, visual impact of transportation decisions; and,
- A problem-solving assignment that asks students to identify a transportation problem and, through a series of exercises, propose a solution to the problem (as well as to explain why the solution may or may not work).

The course is jointly administered by the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and Portland State University (PSU) in an effort to meld the knowledge and experience of professional transportation agency staff with the learning environment of the university. A PBOT employee serves as a course organizer, arranging logistics and promoting the course. A course instructor is contracted to manage the course and arrange guest speakers. PSU also provides a graduate student employee to manage student participation in the class.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION WISDOM FROM THE PORTLAND COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Feedback from the Portland Traffic and Transportation course instructor with over two decades experience teaching the class yielded a number of important insights for how to produce a successful course.

- **Understand the past:** Knowing how the transportation system came about can put the current state of things into context and help avoid making the same mistakes again. The history also can convey that the system's development is not a fight between the city and the neighborhood, but rather a longstanding conversation about how the system works and develops.
- **Technical nature of transportation:** Transportation is a unique topic wherein technical understanding is very important and sometimes facts can be counterintuitive (as in the example of faster traffic speed limits sometimes resulting in lower vehicle throughput). Transportation is a field wherein knowing the facts and having access to the information in a local context is very important because it's usually not really possible to communicate in abstract terms.
- **Diversity of student interests:** Different course participants will bring different interests, passions and approaches. For example, in the Portland course, the PSU students tend to bring more of an academic and research approach to the class (and subsequently to their questions in lectures and to their course project), while neighborhood advocates bring more community-based knowledge and interest in processes needed to get things done in their neighborhood.
- **Value of the university setting:** The university setting has been invaluable to the success of the Portland Traffic and Transportation course because it brings a learning atmosphere to the process, wherein respect is accorded. It doesn't feel like a town hall meeting where people are there to push an agenda and agency staff are expected to tow the agency line. Rather, the university setting provides a neutral setting in which agendas are set aside in the interest of learning. If the class were held at PBOT's offices, the neutral setting and the benefit that it imparts could be jeopardized.
- **Participation of agency leaders:** It's important that the top talent in the city must participate by giving course lectures (for example, division managers, agency directors and commissioners, etc.). By having top leadership participate, this gives participants access to the people making the decisions, along with top expertise in engineering and the best information on the city's processes.
- **Top-level support from city leaders:** One key element to getting top talent to participate is having steady support from the city and transportation agencies.

### 3. FEEDBACK FROM COURSE GRADUATES

Feedback received from graduates of the Portland Traffic and Transportation course, along with an analysis of survey responses, highlight a few key findings:

- **Guest lectures are the most popular course element:** Guest lectures (and access to people making local transportation decisions) are viewed as the most important and valuable course elements. This highlights the importance of getting excellent guest presenters as a foundational element of the course.
- **Understanding who does what in transportation:** Participants are very interested in understanding the roles of the different agencies working in the transportation landscape, what the agencies' fiscal and policy constraints are, and what tools are and are not available to them. People really want to understand how things get done and what is and is not possible.
- **Understanding how to get involved:** Many people are participating because they want to know how they can be involved (at various levels) in transportation decision-making in their community. There is an interest in learning how to advocate within the transportation system for their community.
- **Harnessing what participants bring to the class and community:** There is an incredible amount of passion, energy and experience in the community. The course is an excellent way to provide residents with knowledge they might not get anywhere else, and to empower them to be effective citizens.

#### 4. FEEDBACK FROM EXPERTS IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Conversations with a number of experts from around the country on issues of citizen involvement and public participation in civic activity and decision-making highlighted a number of important factors that need to be considered when implementing the Citizen Transportation Academy.

- **Mutual understanding:** There are many constraints on planners and agencies, but city staff are not always good at making those constraints known to community members. The constraints on the planner or agency may include fiscal constraints; engineering constraints; legislative or legal constraints; and bureaucratic constraints including internal agency dynamics, concerns about image and perception, or a fear that engaging citizens/advocates will be complicated. A result of this is that, in some cases, citizens may think their concerns are not being heard or are simply being ignored, and that the citizen and planner are not able to have an open conversation about how to create a change. There is a need on both the part of the agency staff and the citizen to better understand one another.
- **Technical knowledge:** Echoing some of the reasons cited for the founding of the course - transportation gets complicated fast because of varying levels of authority, different agencies, overlapping jurisdictions and blurred distinctions between roles. Learning how to navigate these different layers is very important.
- **Understanding systems:** Citizens need to learn to think in terms of systems and the effect that one change may have on other interrelated components within the transportation system or outside of it. There are lots of consequences that planners have to consider and that a citizen advocate needs to understand in order to make the most effective and convincing argument for a proposed improvement.
- **Providing a boost, not a burden:** One internal challenge that a local jurisdiction may need to acknowledge and overcome when implementing the Citizen Transportation Academy is that some agencies and staff will view empowering residents as something that will add extra work to their load (e.g., if the course results in more people contacting city staff). However, the goal should be improving the city's transportation overall, and in most cases, citizen involvement is a cheap way to have a transportation system that serves the community better.
- **Citizen agency and trust:** Residents must have the confidence that if they engage in the transportation decision-making process, they will be heard and have some influence. For many residents, particularly in underserved communities, there is a sense that their individual action won't have any impact on community decision-making activities and won't have any effect on community outcomes. For this reason, it is important to imbue

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in citizens a sense of agency and the knowledge that they can act, and if they do so, that they will be heard. This is a hard task to achieve, and requires that citizens know how to become involved and what tools are available to them. These things can be taught in the course. However, particularly in communities where their voices haven't been heard in the past, the process will take longer. A few things to keep in mind related to this:

- In building a sense of agency among community members, it's important not to ignore or downplay successes, even if they are small.
  - However, as is taught in the Portland Traffic and Transportation course, participants will likely encounter their fair share of "no" responses from city staff, and must be prepared to deal with that.
- **Accountability:** Getting community residents involved in the course and in local transportation issues is good because it makes people more invested and gives them the right (and impetus) to demand accountability.
  - **Dialogue and active listening:** The course should promote dialogue and active listening. Many people assume they are right once they have an idea and do not truly listen after that. Other people will shut down if you just push your agenda and ideas all the time without listening to what other people around you (agency staff or other community members) want or believe. Success, even in negotiation, requires listening skills.
  - **In touch with the community:** In order for a Citizen Transportation Academy course to be successful, it will be important to know the community. In working to set up a local course, work with community members to understand their past experience with government and transportation planning, along with the community's needs and wants.
    - To be effective in pushing for positive improvement on community transportation issues, students will need both process knowledge (e.g., understanding how the transportation system works and where citizens can get involved) and community knowledge. They must know how a project affects them and their community AND must know how to do something about it.
    - Courses should use real examples from the community in order to demonstrate the value of what community members can achieve.
  - **Overcoming barriers to participation:** Low-income communities present a special challenge because often basic needs, like long work hours and taking care of kids, come first and people don't have time to get involved. Further, in some communities they may have much further to travel to get to a central meeting location for a course. Organizers may consider locating courses close to the communities in which people live, and providing food and child care if the course is in the evening. Language challenges may also be a considerable barrier.

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- **Building trust:** Not only do underrepresented groups have difficulty accessing government, but in many cases they are distrustful of government. The course offers an opportunity to rebuild trust, but must take the responsibility to do so seriously.
- **Teaching skills for effective engagement:** Most community members haven't had exposure to many of the skills necessary to advocate for improvements to the transportation system. Among these skills and experiences are giving effective testimony about a problem/need or collecting data to demonstrate the problem, organizing with fellow community members and getting a message out to the community, and numerous other skills.

## **5. WHO WILL PARTICIPATE**

There are many people with a variety of interests who may be interested in learning more about their local transportation system. The course functions best when it is inclusive:

- Is it for advocates? Yes!
- Is it for concerned citizens? Yes!
- Is it for those curious about transportation? Yes!
- Is it for people working in transportation who want more information? Yes!
- Do you need to commit to being there and interested? Yes!

That last point is an important one because a 10-week course requires a level of commitment from the student that they want to be there.

## 6. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The following are a set of operating principles to be successful in developing a Citizen Transportation Academy in your city:

- **Find a champion:** The Academy will need someone willing to fight to get funding to get the class off the ground, to rally city and agency leadership to support the class and to promote the class in the community. This may or may not be the course instructor, and could be a small coalition of champions as well.
- **Recruit top agency staff to participate:** It will be important to have students interact with the people who have the experience and are making the decisions on transportation topics in the city. These should be agency and department leaders, and should be willing to take the time to make their presentations interesting and engaging.
- **Foster communication between community members and agency staff:** The course should help citizens and city staff to develop a common language of understanding around transportation issues. This requires citizens to learn some technical aspects about transportation and how decisions are made, but also for staff to be open, engaged and available to students.
- **Develop a sense of agency in course participants:** An important lesson for students is not only how to get involved in transportation decision-making, but also that they can have an impact. This lesson is sensitive because it requires that students be prepared for inevitable frustrations (they won't always, or even usually, get all the change they want, and they'll be told "no" often). It also requires that cities and agencies have systems that respect citizen participation, and in which there are ways for citizens and communities to shape transportation decisions and improvements. The course assignment should promote this principle.
- **Establish a neutral setting:** A university offers an academic setting that allows community members and city staff to meet and talk on neutral ground. It is important that city staff, decision-makers and community members are able to openly express their own opinions in the course setting. The open atmosphere of a university allows clear and open communication. It also allows participation from university students in transportation-related fields, in addition to community members.
- **Establish an alumni network:** The Academy offers many students an opportunity to connect with other like-minded citizens with an interest in improving transportation in local communities. Develop an alumni network with regular opportunities for alumni to share information about what they are working on in their communities and meet new graduates. The network could take the form of an email listserv, happy hours, or other types of activities that connect course graduates.

## 7. CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

### 7.1 COURSE CHECKLIST

Once you decide to carry out a Citizen Transportation Academy in your city, you'll need to undertake several tasks:

- **Develop champions of the course:** Course champions should be passionate about transportation and harnessing the knowledge, energy and interest of citizens in the community. They should be able to rally support around the course, help secure commitments from city transportation leaders to participate (and to have their agency leadership participate as well), and have a long-term commitment to promoting the goals of the course.
- **Find the course instructor:** The course instructor should also be a champion of the course. They should have a deep understanding of transportation issues and players in the city, and have the time to dedicate to teaching, organizing guest lectures and helping develop course materials.
- **Find presenters:** Secure commitment from local transportation leaders to present on the key topics identified in the session's list. Assign presentation topics in coordination with the presenters, provide them with the presentation template, and make sure they are able to put together presentations by the session date. In addition to a lecture format, consider incorporating panel presentations and discussions which may help to elucidate multiple angles of complicated agency operations.
- **Decide on a budget:** Budget your course costs and secure funding. You will also have to determine how/if you will charge for the course, and what will be included in the course (such as meals, child care, etc.).
- **Arrange a meeting time and location:** Generally, midweek evenings will work best for the greatest number of people. In securing a classroom, remember to try to find a neutral location, such as a university or community classroom.
- **Find a panel:** Identify a presentation panel for course participants and schedule a final presentation time.
- **Develop course materials:** Course materials will need to be developed specific to the city. These include a local transportation resource list/guide (to identify local transportation resources, such as plans, reports, histories or other documents that can help students to understand the local transportation system), and the course syllabus.
- **Recruit students:** Identify how you will advertise the course to get your intended enrollment.

## 7.2 COST

**Cost to Implement:** The cost of citizen academy courses has been shown to be relatively modest. A survey of 74 municipalities offering citizen leadership academies found that the average cost to hold the classes was around \$2,000, though this did not include staff time (Huggins, 2014). The Portland Traffic and Transportation course costs PBOT about \$6,500-8,000 per year factoring in instructor fees and administrative costs, while PSU provides the meeting room.

**Cost to Participants:** The cost to students should be as affordable as possible. The cost structure also should offer the opportunity to incentivize students to attend the bulk of the classes. For example, Portland offers scholarships to students that commit to attending 80% of the classes.

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## 7.3 GETTING MORE VALUE OUT OF THE COURSE

**Promote student work:** One way to promote student work while getting the word out about the class is to work with local journalists, bloggers or city staff to document and share stories about the project students have been working on. This can be an exciting opportunity for students to show what they've achieved or to highlight an issue they want more people to hear about. At the same time, it can show the value of the course and advertise for future courses.

**Develop alumni networks:** Alumni and current students of the Citizen Transportation Academy course share similar interests in transportation. Additionally, many students may be participating in the course because they want to connect and network with other like-minded citizens. Consider inviting course alumni to attend student presentations or to celebrate at a reception or happy hour afterward. Encourage students to develop an alumni listserv to keep each informed about transportation-related news, events and campaigns.

**Coordinate with a Citizen Planning Academy:** A Citizen Transportation Academy could be a good synergistic fit with a Citizen Planning Academy for cities that have one. The two courses could be offered in alternative seasons (e.g., one in the spring and the other in the fall), and offer students the opportunity to go into greater depth on transportation topics if they so choose. Each course could promote the other and further develop students' civic and technical knowledge and skills.

**Maximize relationships with university or college partners:** A strong relationship with a college or university can offer many advantages for the Citizen Transportation Academy. As mentioned earlier, the neutral academic setting of the university can serve to moderate tensions between citizens and agency staff (which may exist in agency public meetings). The relationship can offer the university the opportunity to share topical expertise with citizens through professors or researchers presenting alongside agency staff. The university may gain future students if course participants decide they want to pursue further studies in the area. Some colleges or universities may also consider offering credit for the course, or otherwise incorporating elements of the course into a degree program or capstone.

## **7.4 EVALUATING AND IMPROVING THE COURSE**

The course instructor should always look for ways to strengthen the course from one year to the next. Course evaluation should be completed by students at the end of each year to understand what is working well and what needs improvement. These evaluations may be shared with presenters to help them and motivate them to improve their presentations.

## **8. TIPS FOR COURSE ORGANIZERS, INSTRUCTORS AND PRESENTERS**

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### **8.1 COURSE ORGANIZER**

As the course organizer, your role is to handle the logistics of the course, from handling any paperwork and payment needs, organizing and securing a meeting location, recruiting students, and making sure that the instructor has the information and material they need.

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### **8.2 COURSE INSTRUCTOR**

As the instructor of the Citizen Transportation Academy, you have several important responsibilities, including:

- Stay focused on presentation quality. Make sure presentations are of a high level of professional quality.
  - In a sense, this is a “great lecture series,” and it’s your responsibility to make the presentations great.
  - Have all presenters start their presentation by succinctly stating what exactly their department, agency or group does. This helps students to wrap their heads around the different roles in government and what the specific responsibilities are.
- Guide students through the project process.
- Be capable of running a tour / onsite experience for students.
- Be willing and able to advocate for the best interest of the class, and push partners (transportation agency, university, etc.) to fulfill their obligations.

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### **8.3 GUEST PRESENTERS**

At its core, the Citizen Transportation Academy should be a sort of “great lecture series” with top-quality and experienced transportation leaders. Presenters should:

- Start their presentation by very succinctly stating what exactly their department/agency/group does. This helps students wrap their heads around the different roles in government and what the specific responsibilities are.
- Prepare their presentation in advance, and share their presentation (or their plans) with the course instructor for feedback on how to best engage students.
- Update and improve presentations annually. Allowing for a feedback mechanism (e.g., a course survey during the final class) can be a good vehicle for constructive feedback for both presenters and the course instructor.

## 9. COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The course assignment is designed to achieve a few goals. These include having the student observe how transportation works (or doesn't) in their community, and identify a transportation problem or issue (no matter how big or small), collect information about the identified issue, and interact with city staff regarding the concern. Finally, students are expected to propose a solution and identify whether their proposed solution can or will work. The suggested assignment steps are also included in the course session pages. Note that allowing students to form groups for the course assignment should be considered, as it may allow for more in-depth projects.

***Assignment for week 2:*** Identify a transportation-related problem or issue that you've observed in your community or city. This could be a safety problem, inefficiency or missed opportunity.

***Assignment for week 3:*** Devise and implement an observation / data collection scheme to obtain more information and insight into the problem or issue you have identified. In-person observation is preferred, but interviews with people who have experienced the problem or research into how other communities have handled the problem may also be used.

***Assignment for week 4:*** Continue observation / data collection scheme if more time is needed. Alternatively explore case studies in course-suggested readings for communities that have dealt with similar problems / issues.

***Assignment for week 5:*** Propose a solution to your observed problem or issue. Be prepared to briefly discuss your proposed solution.

***Assignment for week 6:*** Talk to someone at a relevant transportation-related agency about your observed problem or issue. Try to get insight into why the problem exists and what challenges your solution might have.

***Assignment for week 7:*** In small groups of 2-3 students in class, discuss your observed issue/problem, proposed solution and experience with city agencies. Identify potential next steps.

***Assignment for week 8:*** Work on presentation of your transportation issue/problem and proposed solution.

***Assignment for week 9:*** Prepare a 3-5 minute presentation on your transportation issue/problem, proposed solution, and why your solution will or will not work.

## 10. PROPOSED COURSE SESSIONS

The course is designed to be about transportation in a local place. Because of this, the sessions will need to be adapted to the local context. In the interest of including the most engaging and experienced city leaders and agency staff, the suggested sessions should only be used as a rough guide. The interest and expertise of presenters should take precedence over strict adherence to a recommended session topic.

The course sessions are structured to provide students with a mix of:

- **High-level transportation understanding** and background (Session 1 on History, Session 2 on Major Issues and Decisions, and Session 3 on Planning for Transportation);
- An introduction to **top-level city leadership and their decision-making processes** (Session 2 on Major Issues and Decisions);
- **On-the-ground experience with transportation issues** (Site Visits and course assignment);
- A solid understanding of **the challenges, tools and approaches taken by specific agencies and staff working in transportation** (Session 5 on Transit, Session 6 on the Department of Transportation, and Session 7 on Active Transportation);
- Information about **how to be involved in the transportation process** (course assignment, each agency/department session, and Session 8 specifically on how to be involved in transportation decision-making); and
- The understanding that, **as a citizen of the city, they should be involved** in order to improve transportation in their community (course assignment, Session 8 on how to be involved, and course presentations).

Suggested readings and assignments for the next week are listed at the end of each session's overview.

## Citizen Transportation Academy

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### *Session 1: History of Transportation Shaping the City*

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**Recommended presenter:** City planner or course instructor

**Possible session topics:**

- Role of transportation and geography in city location
- Street layout
  - What type of layout (e.g., grid, etc.)?
  - What type of hierarchy was built into the system (e.g., main streets, arterials, alleys, etc.)?
  - What are the block lengths/sizes? Why were these sizes chosen?
- Land development and influence on transportation
  - Where are job-dense neighborhoods? Has that changed over time?
  - Where has residential development focused? Has that changed over time?
  - Demographics, communities and transportation – where have communities of different ethnic or racial backgrounds lived? Different income levels? How have those differences influenced transportation?
- Early public transportation
  - What did it connect and why?
  - What type of transit and why?
  - What route/streets did it travel and why?
- Highway/freeway influence on city development
  - Were the highways/freeways built before or after the city was originally laid out?
  - If after, how did their construction change the city?
- Current public transportation system
  - When was it planned?
  - How was it funded?
  - What challenges were encountered during construction?

**Suggested reading for next week:**

- 1) National League of Cities - “Understanding Urban Transportation Systems”
- 2) City of Seattle – “Vision Zero plan” or alternate Vision Zero plan
- 3) Local transportation system history document, if available

**Assignment for next week:** Identify a transportation-related problem or issue that you’ve observed in your community or city. This could be a safety problem, inefficiency or missed opportunity.

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### *Session 2a: Major Issues and Decisions: Major Issues Facing the Transportation Department*

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**Recommended presenter:** Transportation department director

**Possible session topics:**

- Upcoming challenges for transportation in the city, and how the department of transportation expects to address the challenges.
- Factors that the department must consider when making decisions, including policy and fiscal opportunities and constraints.
- The available tools the department can use to address transportation and traffic issues.

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### *Session 2b: Major Issues and Decisions: Major Decision Points in the City Transportation History*

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**Recommended presenter:** City commissioner or other leader involved in transportation policy

**Possible session topics:**

- Major decision points that shaped the current transportation system
- How those decisions were made, both in terms of process and content
  - Who were the key decision-makers? What information did they have? What resources were they working with?
  - How was the public involved in the decision?
- How the city would have been different if a different decision had been made

**Suggested reading for next week:**

- 1) City/regional transportation plan overview document, if available
- 2) Sam Schwartz Engineering and America Walks - "Steps to a Walkable Community: A Guide for Citizens, Planners, and Engineers," pages 39-60 on Land Use Tactics

**Assignment for next week:** Devise and implement an observation / data collection scheme to obtain more information and insight into the problem or issue you have identified. In-person observation is preferred, but interviews with people who have experienced the problem or research into how other communities have handled the problem may also be used.

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### *Session 3a: Planning for Transportation: Overview of the Regional Transportation Plan*

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**Recommended presenter:** Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) director or planner

**Possible session topics:**

- Benefits and limitations of regional transportation planning
  - Factors considered include:
    - Travel demand
    - Relationships of modes
  - Coordination process between cities and entities in the region
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### *Session 3b: Planning for Transportation: City Transportation Plans*

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**Recommended presenter:** Planning or transportation department planner

**Possible session topics:**

- Plans that affect transportation
- Comprehensive Plan
- Transportation System Plan
- How do land use plans affect transportation?

**Suggested reading:**

- 1) Local information related to site visit locations and project, if available

**Assignment for next week:** Continue observation / data collection scheme if more time is needed. Alternatively explore case studies in course-suggested readings for communities that have dealt with similar problems / issues.

## Citizen Transportation Academy

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### *Session 4: Class Field Trip and Site Visits*

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**Site visit leader:** Course instructor

**Possible site visit locations and topics:**

- Recent street redesigns or infrastructure improvements
- Problem areas
- Transit-oriented development
- Visit sites of problem areas identified by class members

**Suggested reading for next week:**

- 1) Review local transportation map and identify how you would travel from your home to work, to downtown, to a grocery store, to a restaurant, to a library, and to the airport using public transit
- 2) Good Jobs First -“Organizing Transit Riders: A How-To Manual”

**Assignment for next week:** Propose a solution to your observed problem or issue. Be prepared to briefly discuss your proposed solution.

*Session 5: Transit Agency: Analysis and Planning*

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**Recommended presenter:** Transit agency director or planner

**Possible session topics:**

- Transit types in the city – which and why?
- Planning to identify primary transit networks
- Integration of transportation and land use
- How is transit paid for in the region? What are the long-term forecasts for the funding stream?
- What capital investments in transit are needed and what investments are planned? How do regional entities coordinate on transit planning?

**Suggested reading for next week:**

- 1) Schlossberg et al, “Rethinking Streets,” especially pages 5-10, and then an additional 3-4 case studies (each is a quick read with lots of visuals).
- 2) Sam Schwartz Engineering and America Walks - “Steps to a Walkable Community: A Guide for Citizens, Planners, and Engineers,” pages 61-116 on Design and Engineering Tactics.

**Assignment for next week:** Talk to someone at a relevant transportation-related agency about your observed problem or issue. Try to get insight into why the problem exists and what challenges your solution might have.

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### *Session 6a: Transportation Department: Planning and Services*

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**Recommended presenter:** City transportation planner

**Possible session topics:**

- Travel demand management
- Right-of-way management
- Coordination with planning department and transit agency
- Role of freight in the transportation system
- Major projects identification and planning
- Streetscape redesigns

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### *Session 6b: Transportation Department: Engineering and Systems*

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**Recommended presenter:** City transportation engineer

**Possible session topics:**

- The systems used to manage city transportation
  - Signals
  - Detectors
  - Data management
- City's role in parking management

**Suggested reading for next week:**

- 1) US DOT / Federal Highway Administration – “A Resident’s Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Biking,” pages 1-26 and 1-2 community success stories (starting page 33).

**Assignment for next week:** In small groups of 2-3 students in class, discuss your observed issue/problem, proposed solution and experience with city agencies. Identify potential next steps.

*Session 7a: Active Transportation: Bicycling in the City*

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**Recommended presenter:** Bicycle coordinator

**Possible session topics:**

- Benefits and barriers to cycling
  - Accomplishments achieved in improving the city for bicycling
  - Challenges and needs for improving the city for bicycling
  - New or planned bicycling facilities – what been done and what’s needed?
  - Policies and programs for encouraging cycling – what been done and what’s needed?
    - Encouragement; Education; Enforcement; Evaluation
  - Funding for bicycle projects
  - Goals for bicycling in the city
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*Session 7b: Active Transportation: Walking in the City*

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**Recommended presenter:** Pedestrian coordinator

**Possible session topics:**

- Everyone is a pedestrian
- Interaction with other modes
- Universal design – designing for children, adults, the elderly, etc.
- Role of walking on health and urban vitality
- Efforts to improve the safety at crossings, schools, etc.
  - Benefits of reduced crossing distances and to achieve this goal
  - Those that have been built (including any results)
  - Those that need to be built

**Suggested reading for next week:**

- 1) Arnstein – “A Ladder of Citizen Participation”
- 2) Project for Public Spaces – “A Citizen’s Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency”
- 3) Transportation Alternatives – “Neighborhood Traffic Monitoring Toolkit”

**Assignment for next week:** Work on presentation of your transportation issue/problem and proposed solution.

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### Session 8a: *How to be Involved in Transportation Decision-making: The Role of Neighborhood Associations, Community Boards or Other Local Community Governance Entity*

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**Recommended presenter:** Neighborhood association (NA) or community board (CB) transportation chair/liaison

**Possible session topics:**

- What type of transportation concerns do NAs or CBs deal with?
- What are the local mechanisms to handle concerns?
- Where should residents take concerns?
- How can residents get involved in influencing transportation decision-making through NAs or CBs?

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### Session 8b: *How to be Involved in Transportation Decision-making: Transportation Advocacy and Campaigns*

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**Recommended presenter:** Transportation advocacy group representative

**Possible session topics:**

- Why campaign for a transportation issue?
- What type of evidence is needed to demonstrate a problem, and how do you collect evidence?

**Assignment for next week:** Prepare a 3-5 minute presentation on your transportation issue/problem, proposed solution, and why your solution will or will not work.

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### *Session 9: Student Classroom Presentations*

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**Recommended presenter:** Students

**Student presentations on projects:**

- Classroom discussion on problems identified by students, their proposed plan to address the problem, and their experience navigating the transportation system to address the problem
- Effective methods employed to engage agency staff
- Class discussion/reflection on course project process

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### *Session 10: Student Presentations to Panel of City Transportation Leaders*

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**Recommended presenter:** Selected student projects

**Student presentations on projects:**

- Students ideas and proposals
- Challenges encountered along the way

## 11. SUGGESTED/SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS:

The following readings offer a variety of opportunities for interested students to delve into greater depth on the topics covered in the course. The readings have been selected to provide general context and applications to interested citizens. Some are more applied and others more theoretical. Some cover broad topic areas, while others focus on specific transportation subareas. An effort has been made to select electronic resources available to freely download or print.

Course instructors should also work to include relevant local information in the suggested readings, including information about local development, transportation history and navigating local agencies, if available.

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### *THE ROLE OF THE STREET*

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Robert Mantho – “The Street” (2015), pages 8-47 in “Urban Design: Tools & Resources for the Planning Practitioner”

For those interested in a more theoretical overview of the function of the street, this offers a discussion of the important players (including advocacy and professional organizations) who are involved in the discussion and negotiation about the meaning of the street as a place. The article discusses the key elements that make up the street, and how each element contributes to the overall experience of the street. The article also addresses key thinkers and works in the discussion of the street, and provides many good jumping-off points for people wishing to delve into great depth on these topics.

A free PDF download of the book “Urban Design: Tools & Resources for the Planning Practitioner” is available from Routledge Publishing:

[http://www.routledge.com/planning/articles/download\\_urban\\_design\\_tools\\_resources\\_for\\_the\\_planning\\_practitioner/](http://www.routledge.com/planning/articles/download_urban_design_tools_resources_for_the_planning_practitioner/) or

[http://tandf.msgfocus.com/k/Tandf/freebook\\_urban\\_design\\_tools\\_resources\\_for\\_the\\_professional\\_practitioner](http://tandf.msgfocus.com/k/Tandf/freebook_urban_design_tools_resources_for_the_professional_practitioner)

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### *READINGS ON TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS*

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National League of Cities - “Understanding Urban Transportation Systems” (2011)

This report, subtitled “An Action Guide for City Leaders,” seeks “to provide a broad overview of the causes of urban transportation problems, and of the implications for finding good solutions. It addresses five big issues: The role of the public sector in urban surface transportation; Characteristics of the existing urban transportation system; How

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the urban transportation system is likely to change in the future; Characteristics of the process through which transportation policy is made; and Actions city leaders might take.” Although it is designed for top-level decision-makers, it provides a concise overview of urban transportation issues and can help frame a class discussion over what actions cities can take to improve transportation.

A PDF version of the report is available for free on the National League of Cities website:  
<http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/Research%20Innovation/Infrastructure/understanding-urban-transportation-systems-gid-mar11.pdf>

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### *READINGS ON SAFETY*

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City of Seattle – “Vision Zero – Seattle’s Plan to End Traffic Deaths and Serious Injuries by 2030” (2015)

A number of large American cities have adopted plans to end traffic deaths. These plans demonstrate ambitious goals to change the streetscape in a dramatic way, placing user safety above speed. Seattle’s plan is one example, but look for other cities’ plans if you are interested, including New York, Portland, Chicago and Los Angeles.

A PDF version of the plan is available on the City of Seattle webpage:  
<http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/beSuperSafe/VisionZeroPlan.pdf>

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### *READINGS ON IMPLEMENTING CHANGE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD*

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Project for Public Spaces – “A Citizen’s Guide to Better Streets: How to Engage Your Transportation Agency” (2008)

This practical guide focuses on how average citizens can become involved in decisions affecting streets in their communities. It serves as a much needed “how-to” supplement to the course curriculum. In addition to basic background on transportation processes and agencies, the guide also has practical, in-the-weeds type sections such as “Dealing with Government Bureaucracies” and “Understanding Transportation Engineers.”

A PDF version of the guide is available for free on the Project for Public Spaces website:  
<http://www.pps.org/reference/a-citizens-guide-to-better-streets-how-to-engage-your-transportation-agency/>

Transportation Alternatives – “Neighborhood Traffic Monitoring Toolkit” (2011)

This toolkit, while designed for New Yorkers, contains many practical tips and useful forms and examples for carrying out a traffic monitoring exercise in your neighborhood.

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The toolkit includes suggestions and implementation help for conducting pedestrian intercept surveys and carrying out traffic counts.

A PDF version of the toolkit is available for free on the Transportation Alternatives website: [http://www.transalt.org/sites/default/files/news/reports/2011/TA\\_Neighborhood\\_Traffic\\_Monitoring\\_Kit.pdf](http://www.transalt.org/sites/default/files/news/reports/2011/TA_Neighborhood_Traffic_Monitoring_Kit.pdf)

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### *READINGS ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION*

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Sherry R. Arnstein – “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” (1969)

This canonical text in the field of public involvement details eight “rungs on a ladder of citizen participation,” ranging from various degrees of non-participation (manipulation, therapy) and tokenism (informing, consultation, placation) to citizen power (partnership, delegated power, citizen control). Arnstein notes that the typology “does not include an analysis of the most significant roadblocks to achieving genuine levels of participation. These roadblocks lie on both sides of the simplistic fence. On the power-holders’ side, they include racism, paternalism, and resistance to power redistribution. On the have-nots’ side, they include inadequacies of the poor community’s political socioeconomic infrastructure and knowledge-base, plus difficulties of organizing a representative and accountable citizens’ group in the face of futility, alienation, and distrust.”

A PDF version of the original article is available for free on the American Planning Association website:

<https://www.planning.org/pas/memo/2007/mar/pdf/JAPA35No4.pdf>

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### *READINGS ON COMPLETE STREETS*

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Marc Schlossberg, John Rowell, Dave Amos & Kelly Sanford – “Rethinking Streets: An Evidence-Based Guide to 25 Complete Streets Transformations” (2013)

This highly visual and attractive collection of case studies provides numerous examples of streets that have been redesigned to accommodate all users. Each case study includes numerous before-and-after pictures, cross-sections and maps, including innumerable ideas for changes that can improve a streetscape and community.

A PDF version of the book is available for free at <http://www.rethinkingstreets.com/>

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### *READINGS ON BUILDING WALKABLE AND BIKEABLE COMMUNITIES*

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US DOT / Federal Highway Administration – “A Resident’s Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Biking” (2015)

This guide provides straightforward information about the things that residents can do to improve their community for walking and biking, who they can turn to for help, and where they can turn for more information and resources.

A PDF version of the guide is available for free on the FHWA website:

[http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped\\_bike/ped\\_cmunity/ped\\_walkguide/residents\\_guide2014\\_final.pdf](http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_cmunity/ped_walkguide/residents_guide2014_final.pdf)

Sam Schwartz Engineering and America Walks – “Steps to a Walkable Community: A Guide for Citizens, Planners, and Engineers”

This 180-page guide outlines dozens of tactics that citizens and professionals can use to transform their communities into walkable places. Tactics are organized into categories, including land use, and design and engineering tactics, among other types. Each tactic is presented in a quick two-page overview, which includes the benefits, considerations, appropriate contexts, guidance and a case study for each tactic.

A PDF version of the guide is available for free through America Walks at the following website:

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/261463434/Steps-to-a-Walkable-Community>

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### *READINGS ON TRANSIT*

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Good Jobs First – “Organizing Transit Riders: A How-To Manual”

While this manual is designed to help local advocates organize transit riders to push for improvements to transit service, it also offers a good look into how transit policy and decisions affect transit riders through a series of case studies. In addition, it provides a good list of transit-related resources.

A PDF version of the manual is available for free through the Good Jobs First website:

<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/transitmanual.pdf>