



Movement Matters is a series of thought leadership events, presented by Steer, exploring new ideas about places, people and economies and providing a burst of fresh thinking.

Post-event summary

ACTIVE FIRST AND LAST MILE JOURNEYS

March 7, 2017

7.30am-11.30am

The Standard Downtown LA
550 South Flower
Los Angeles, 90071

As part of our Movement Matters series, our expert panel shared their first-hand experience in delivering first and last mile strategic plans, together with techniques for encouraging behavior change especially from a health perspective. The session started with Peter Piet asking for a show of hands as to how people got to work. There were several attendees who rode transit but most drove. He noted that in London, where there are more travel options in the central city, the answers would have been very different.

Ben Plowden (BP), Director, Strategy and Planning, Transport for London (TfL)

Melani Smith (MS), Consultant, NextPhaseLA and Adjunct Faculty, University of Southern California

Tracy Bryars (TB), Healthy Communities Initiative Manager, St. Jude Medical Center

Lisa Buchanan (LB), Head of US Planning, Steer

Peter Piet (PP), Associate Director, Steer (moderator)

Q1: In terms of challenges, what is the relative importance of investment in infrastructure? Are there less costly programmatic changes?

BP: Long-term behavior change requires all of it, over an extended period. Nothing worse than an empty bike lane that goes nowhere. Can't stop. To increase cycling trips to 5%, you need safe infrastructure, to combat the number one challenge (fear of being killed). Also wayfinding. Engaging schools, children safety on bikes. The reason that people are so comfortable with a car, is because we have already taken care of all those needs for them.

LB: Infrastructure is really expensive, but that should not be an excuse to not do it at all. Education can be a huge part of that.

MS: Programming component. When we want people to care about our natural resources, people can't love them without experiencing them. Same for our streets. Events, open streets like CicLAvia. Then they will demand something different.

TB: From health component, active transportation increases physical activity. But it has to be convenient. Needs to be easy, people have to feel safe. It needs to be strategic. Need to be making slow changes, and go after the low hanging fruit.



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Q2: 71% of LA County voters voted for Measure M. What investments should be made to ensure communities are not displaced?

MS: Measure M is a little different than Measure R, because there was a coalition of folks that came together to raise consciousness (TAC Members). They took a “big tent” approach, bringing together organizations like Enviro Metro and Investing in Place. They promoted this “Just Growth” concept, idea that regions do better if everyone in there does better. There has to be a focus on inclusivity – who is at the table. Metro has been pressured to open the doors and include a lot of different voices debating the “what” – where are we going to invest. Measure M came with a project list. Getting ahead of the form of development that is allowed, all different types and all different folks in the areas of the station. In addition, Measure M included Local return dollars – another pot of money besides the big list of projects. Are those projects going to serve walking and biking?

BP: This is a challenging issue. The new mayor of London is doing 3-4 things: freezing transit fares; including 50% affordable housing in new development to ensure a constant stream of housing; focusing on a mix of development. TfL has to be an exemplar of public development. There is a paradox in that transportation investment increases property values, therefore you almost have to solve the problem you have created.

Q3: Should these investments be concentrated in communities with greatest need?

TB: Absolutely. From a health standpoint, rates of preventable diseases and obesity are more concentrated in low income communities. 37% of fifth graders are obese [in low income communities], which is higher than the national average. Healthcare costs are trillions of dollars. We have a problem here. From research, active transportation does have a positive effect on health outcomes. St. Jude recognizes this and is helping cities to develop Complete Streets policies.

Q4: The City of Los Angeles has some ambitious alternative mode-share goals? What actions are most effective in encouraging active transportation?

MS: Living in cities in general, focusing on quality of life in cities, that is the best thing we can be doing. Land use change. LA is changing right now, thinking about what kinds of land use they are looking for. Mixing land use, we have known that this is important for so long. Ensuring that people can access the services they want within a reasonable distance. Safety on the roads, especially for the most vulnerable. Thinking about placemaking and using existing cultural assets (which are also economic assets) as backbone of place. Getting different people to the table. New disciplines are now sharing in this work.

LB: Personalized Travel Planning and Individualized Marketing has not caught on in LA, but we are seeing more it in other areas of the Pacific northwest and Northern CA. Providing incentives and one-on-one conversations. You can take about 10% of car trips, and encourage walking, biking and transit. Employer programming – a lot of money is spent on this type of programming- can be very effective. The SCAG Go Human campaign was all about encouraging safer walking and biking in the region. SCAG formed a lot of open streets events, to showcase cheap and effective ways to change a street.

MS: Package of programs, it is so much easier to implement when you have a city that is a more manageable size, e.g. Glendale can control the whole system top to bottom. LA cannot do that as easily.

Q5: In terms of safety challenges, the number one killer for children now is traffic collisions?

MS: Safe Routes to School (SRTS) works with public works and planners. Students identify their own barriers, do audits. Amazing how quickly public works will react to the information they generate. Community engagement...low income children are walking and biking to school more.

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BP: We have been successful in bringing down the death rate and rate of serious injury. TfL asked themselves, where are these crashes taking place, what vehicles are involved, and who is involved? They identified a problem with big trucks and cyclists and started a conversation with truck manufacturers to change how they are designed. They also focus on education, particularly for preschoolers. You can't engineer everything; education is very important.

MS: Repaving programs can also include buffered bike lanes. Some people don't know what those markers mean. How do you get the word out?

BP: Ben gave an example of segregated bike lanes on bridge in London. They had reconfigured the road for a two-way cycle lane, separated from vehicle traffic, but car drivers were turning the wrong way and going into the bike lane. They needed to re-educate drivers how to handle the intersection.

TB: Tracy talked about another example of a Bike Blvd. in Fullerton, CA. It began as a six-month pilot project, just to educate the users, and see if it would work or not. Now it is going to become a permanent bike boulevard. Go Human is also a great way to promote safety, also the Vision Zero campaign.

Q6: What are successful strategies from other cities?

BP: If you have the data, start with the data you have got. Where are people riding? Where are potential walking journeys? Start with types of trips, users that you know it will work.

MS: We tried to do that in LA, with the My Fig corridor, hopefully that is exactly that idea. We focused on centers of population at USC and DTLA, already seeing folks on that street.

Open Q&A

Matt Benjamin, Fehr and Peers: Question for Ben, what is the policy mechanism that you are able to employ to motivate manufacturers to modify truck vehicles?

BP: London saw a spate of appalling cycle deaths, where people were killed by trucks. They investigated whether this was just a horrible coincidence, or if something was going on with construction trucks? Research showed that they were way more likely to be involved in accidents with cyclists. Construction sites have a lot of safety protocols, but they don't typically leave the worksite. They tapped into the construction logistics and safe cycle campaign. Through voluntary engagement, they pointed out the difference in safety standards on and off-site. Design standards for trucks are outdated. The Mayor has said that he will ban any lorry that doesn't meet new technical standards by 2020. The vehicles have to have more direct visibility. That is the limit of the mayor's powers.

Geoff England, Steer: What is a successful pilot project?

TB: Fullerton got a grant for a pilot project to go from downtown station to Fullerton College. Very unsafe and heavily travelled bike route. They did a lot of roundabouts, they slowed down traffic. Also looked at what was the economic gain? How many people are visiting downtown? Also, trying to do more open streets events, for example the Tamale Festival in La Habra.

MS: Broadway, in Downtown LA. We have been working on this since 2009. Wanted to give it a road diet, make it a better place for pedestrians. It was almost like the first time we were given permission to experiment. We did the whole street with temporary materials: paint, bollards, moveable furniture. We had to say to stakeholders that it's not permanent, and if it doesn't work we will change it.

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Jason, City of Santa Monica (audience member): Mango, the neighborhood greenway. We did a pop-up event, on one day, were able to get 400 people out to see what the roundabout would look like. Demonstrated four different treatments. 85% of the people were in favor of traffic circle.

BP: Legible London. The city was plagued by too many wayfinding systems that didn't make sense together. They did a pilot in West End, put 13 signs around station (within 1 mile). They monitored people very closely, transformed how they understood the area. Served as proof of concept. Now it has been implemented throughout London. They did user testing, proof of concept, then rolled it out to scale.

Jason, City of Santa Monica: Do you have examples of campaigns around the world where they present information about pollution around corridors (referenced a new study about health costs associated with pollution in LA)?

BP: Mayor of London is an asthmatic. Air quality is a big deal for him. Campaigns like no idling. Previous mayor proposed clean air zone in congestion charging zone. If your vehicle doesn't meet standards, you are fined. This will be extended to be a much larger area, to all different vehicle types. The Mayor has powers to charge or prohibit vehicles that don't meet certain criteria. Using fiscal route to influence people.