

Transportation and Community

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A year ago I was visiting family in the Bronx, NY, and we were heading out for lunch. Someone asked, “Are we taking a cab, or the train?” Fast forward to this past weekend, and those same family member are visiting N.C. This time, when we left for lunch, the question was, “who is driving?”

The story was more than just a display of the difference in the two cities, but a difference in the culture. Transportation is as much a part of the cultural DNA, as any other facet of life. However, **because the transportation culture isn’t often challenged, we don’t spend a lot of time**

thinking about it.

Large cities within the southern region of the country have been experiencing the growing pains of providing services to an ever-growing number of people. Further, it goes beyond providing an increase in existing services, but creating new services with options. **How people decide upon their transportation is woven into the fabric of a person's DNA**, and should be considered when engaging the community.

Transportation choices are as much about the make-up of a community as the home they live in. As more and more cities in the south are faced with the difficult task of providing a diverse form of transportation for a diverse population, there should be an understanding of the impact on the existing culture. **It's more than the nuts and bolts of the infrastructure**, the analysis of ridership, or the perception of coverage. Transportation options impacts citizen's day-to-day decision-making.

In order to effectively engage citizens around the subject of transportation, it should be understood that changing the culture takes quality time, sincere engagement, and high levels of trust.