



**Maryland State Highway Administration**

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# **Context Sensitive Solutions**

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# **Case Studies in Maryland**

Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development  
Georgia Tech ~ College of Architecture  
May 11, 2004

# Traditional State Highway Project

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# Not So Traditional Highway Project



# What is *Thinking Beyond the Pavement?*

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☞ An approach to guide the context sensitive development of projects so that:

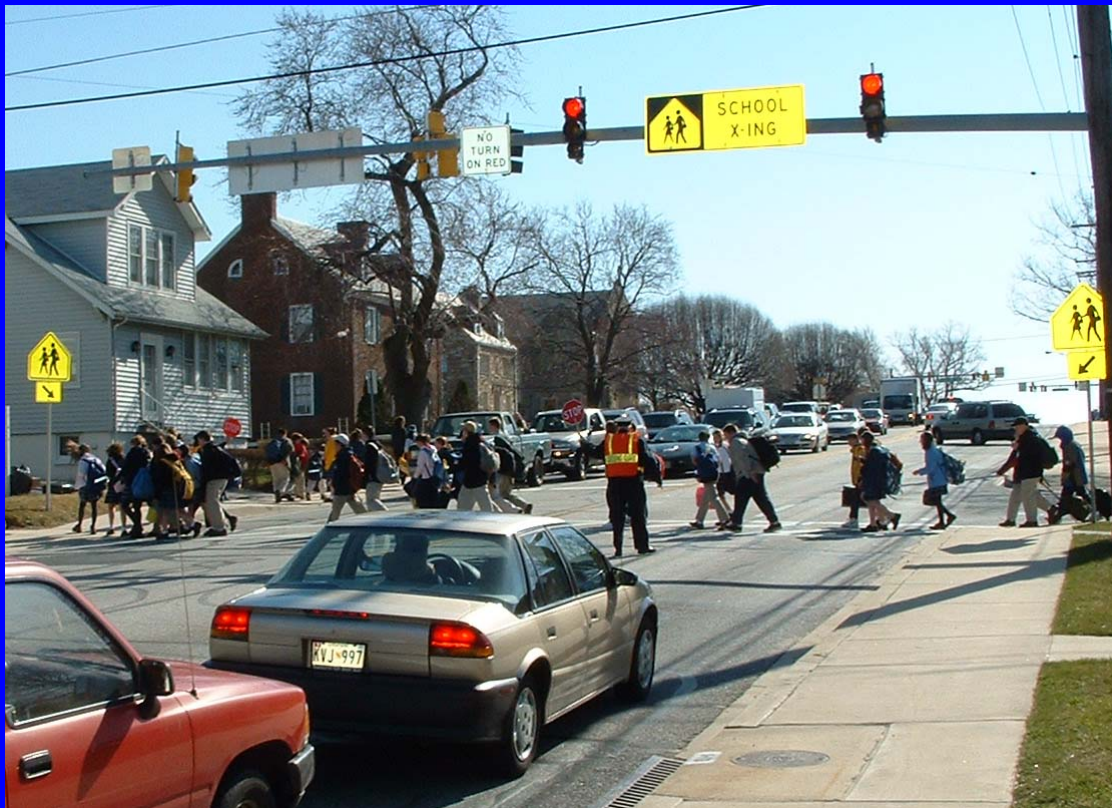
- ✓ Projects are done right the first time!
- ✓ Projects address transportation need
- ✓ Projects balance stakeholder objectives
- ✓ Projects are safe

☞ An approach that will enhance *good engineering*

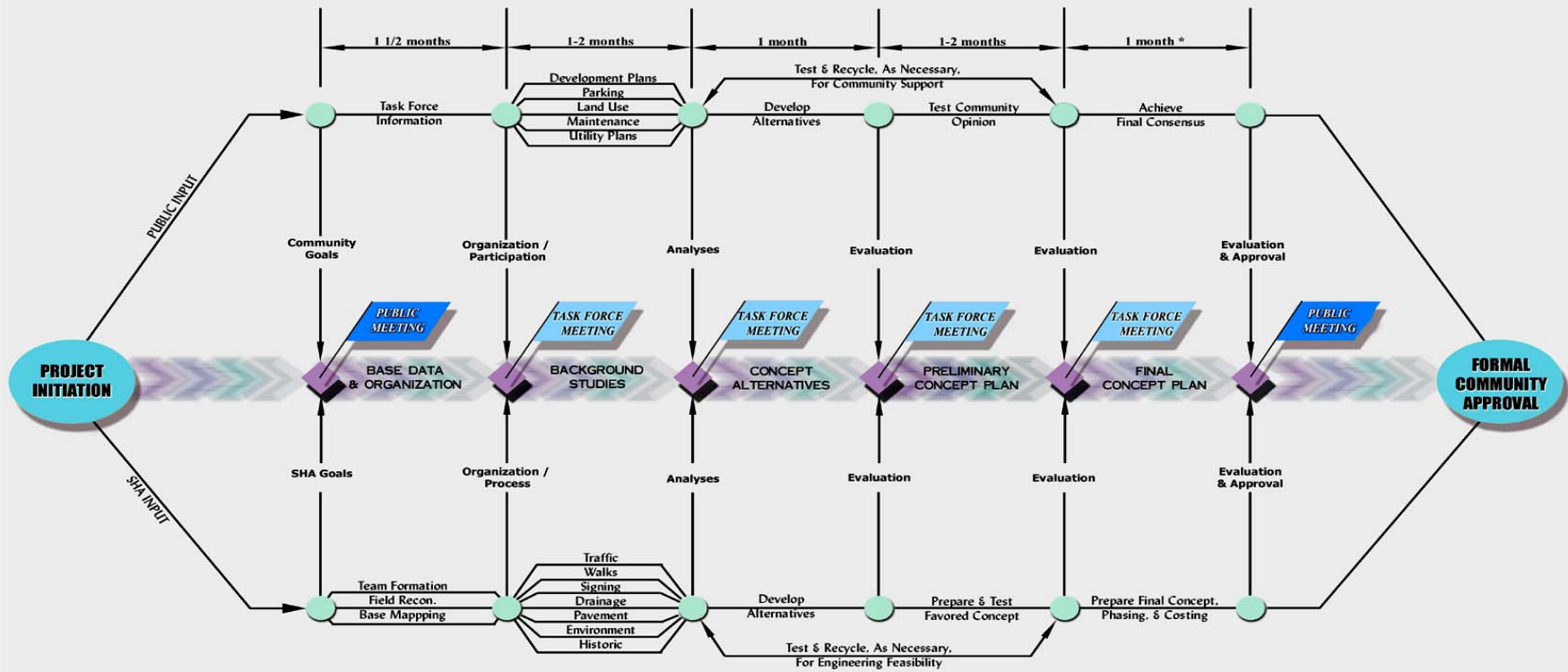


# State Highway Sidewalk Policy

Sidewalks carry local “traffic”

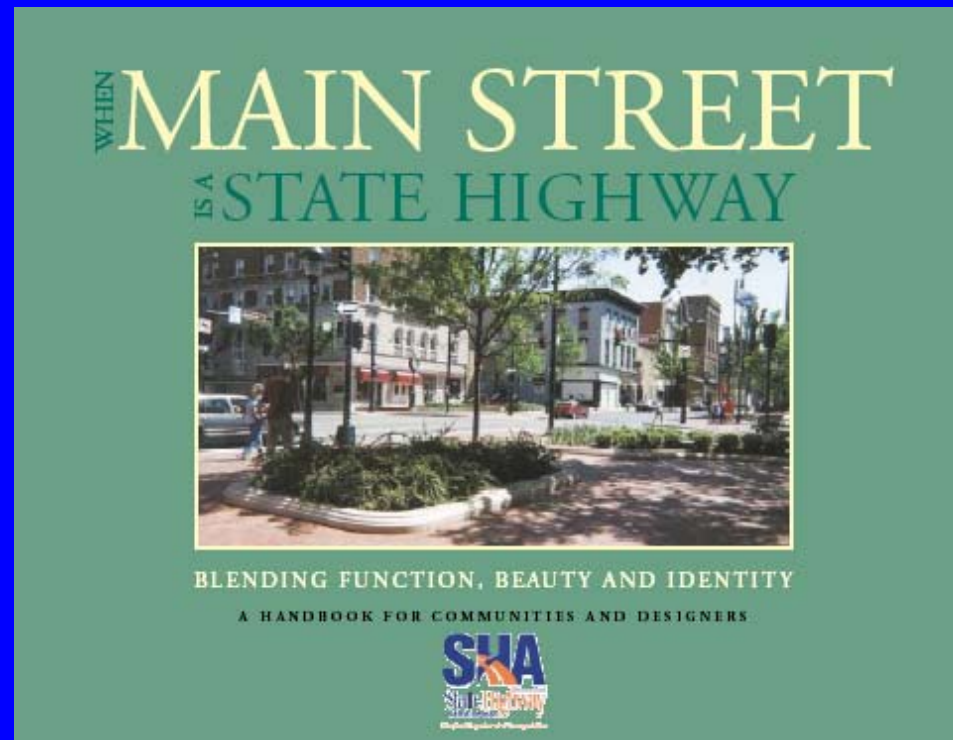


# Tools for Communication and Understanding



# “When Main Street is a State Highway..”

A major example of SHA’s efforts partnering with communities through our project development process is our handbook for Community Safety and Enhancement projects:



Document can be viewed at [www.marylandroads.com](http://www.marylandroads.com)

# Key Themes for MSHA Project Development

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- ☑ Identify stakeholders early
- ☑ Develop a project vision
- ☑ Assemble an inter-disciplinary team early
- ☑ Project management quality is critical to project success
- ☑ Provide good communication throughout project development
- ☑ Ensure continuity in project management, team membership use of consultants, and community involvement
- ☑ Determine schedule and budget after consensus on vision
- ☑ Document vision, decisions, and commitments
- ☑ Evaluate project with full team and stakeholders

# Qualities of the Project

**Project is a Safe Facility**

**Project is in  
Harmony with  
the Community**

**Project exceeds  
Expectations of  
Designers and  
Stakeholders**

**Project Involves  
Efficient & Effective  
Use of Resources**

**Project is Built with  
Minimal Disruption to  
the Community**

**Project Satisfies  
Purpose and Need**

**Project is Seen as  
Having Added Lasting  
Value to the Community**



# Learning from the Organization



# Learning from the Community



# Joint Venture ~ Not a Contest

- \* The most important questions that arise are not matters of technical expertise
- \* Values and priorities will drive the solution



# Urban Reconstruction Projects

**Trees saved in  
Westminster  
road transfer**



**Town Square recreated in the  
community of Sharpsburg -  
an area highly significant to  
our national heritage**

# Mt. Rainier Roundabout



Existing conditions



Under construction



# Mt. Rainier Roundabout



**Before: 34<sup>th</sup> Street signal crossing US 1. High travel speeds to beat the light.**

**After: 34<sup>th</sup> Street Roundabout reduced sight lines and slowed vehicles in the roundabout. Shorter pedestrian crossing distance.**



# Mt. Rainier Roundabout Construction Details



**Before: Modest curb extensions sponsored by City of Mt. Rainier in front of hardware business.**



**After: Façade improvements, new shelters, landscaped curb extension and wide pedestrian refuge median.**



# Mt. Rainier Roundabout



**Before: Town Hall plaza and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority bus turn around and shelter at the intersection edge.**

**After: Enlarged and landscaped plaza using one of the bus turn lanes, relocated bus waiting area with more prominent artistically designed shelters.**



# Mt. Rainier Roundabout



**Before: Intersection viewed from Town Hall.**

**After: Notice reduced paved areas, shelters moved away from the intersection, sculptures flanking the circle, pedestrian lighting and renovated commercial buildings in the vicinity of the roundabout and Town Hall.**

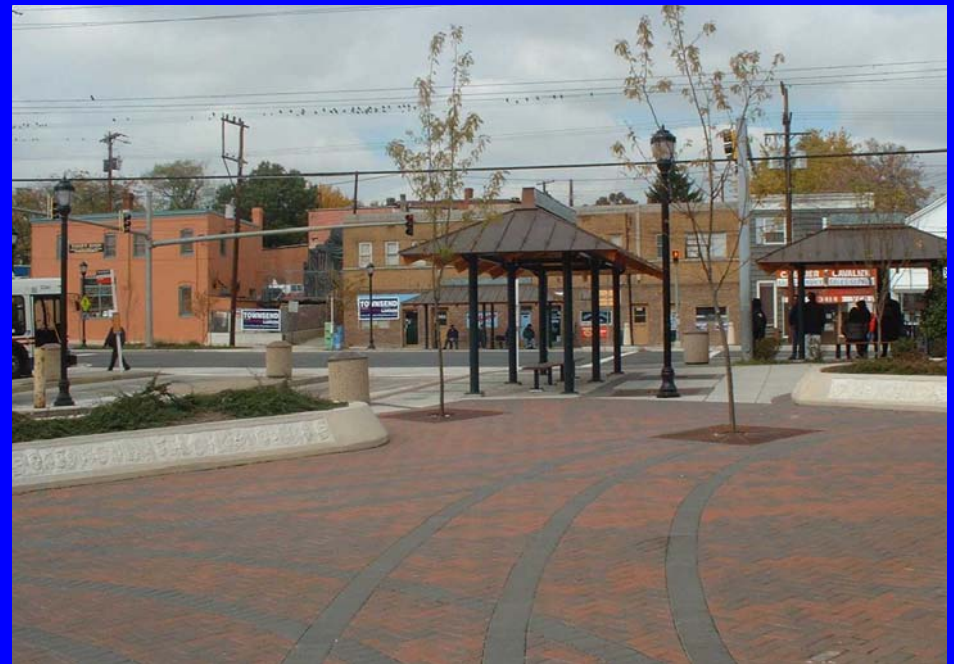


# Mt. Rainier Roundabout Service



**Before: Shelters reclaimed from previous bus bay abandonment.**

**After: New Shelters clustered in the public plaza at Town Hall better integrated with surroundings, includes trolley track turnaround pattern in the pavers reminiscent of DC Trolley history. Second bus bay abandoned for public plaza area.**



# Towson ~ County Seat

Existing conditions...



Community crossroads



# Towson ~ County Seat



Before

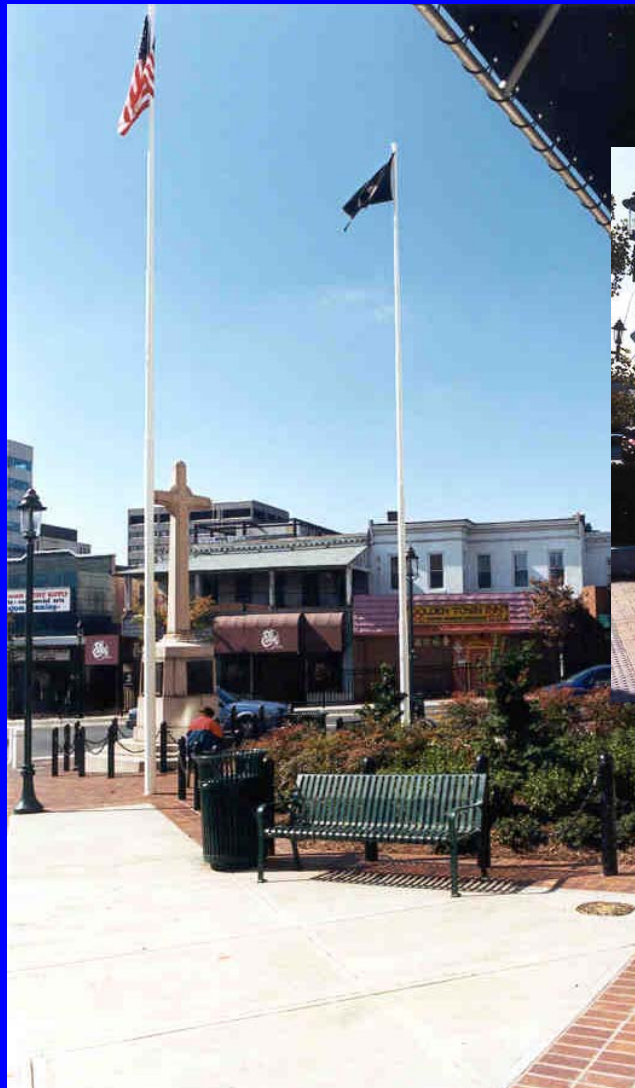
Enhanced safety  
Eased traffic congestion  
Enlarged pedestrian areas  
Encouraged redevelopment  
Established greater visibility  
for businesses

After



# Towson ~ County Seat

Energized County center



# Burkittsville Drainage Improvements

**Before: Circa Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century**



**During construction: Archeologists record original carriage stand and drainage swale uncovered by contractors.**



**After: Redesign during construction raises historic features found to the surface grade enhanced with historic marker according to community requests.**



# Reisterstown Reconstruction



**Before: MD 140 – Deteriorating roadway, inhospitable pedestrian pathways and invasive overhead lighting.**



**After: Narrowed roadway and safer turning lanes, brick paving in keeping with the historic nature of the community, pedestrian friendly street lighting, ADA accommodation, and a revitalized commercial area.**

# Hancock Roadway Reconstruction



**Before: MD 144 near C&O Tow Path and Western Maryland Hiker-Biker Trail link.**

**After: Narrowed roadway at pedestrian and bicycle crossing areas, ADA accommodation, landscaping to reduce speeds through town commercial area and promote use of trail and tow path.**



# Community Safety and Enhancements Context Sensitive Solutions in Maryland

