

Webinar

ULI Healthy Places Book Talks: Inclusive Transportation

Date: January 26, 2024

00:00:00 --> 00:00:02: Thank you so much for joining our very first Uli
00:00:02 --> 00:00:04: Healthy Places book talk.
00:00:04 --> 00:00:07: My name is Emily Jong and I'm a Senior associate
00:00:07 --> 00:00:10: at Uli Building Healthy Places, which leverages the power of
00:00:10 --> 00:00:13: Uli's global networks to help shape projects and places in
00:00:13 --> 00:00:16: ways that improve the health of people and communities.
00:00:17 --> 00:00:20: This new book talk series is an evolution of our
00:00:20 --> 00:00:23: beloved BHP Book and Film Club, which began in 2020.
00:00:24 --> 00:00:27: And with this series, we'll continue to explore critical themes
00:00:27 --> 00:00:30: and books at the intersection of HealthEquity and the built
00:00:30 --> 00:00:30: environment.
00:00:31 --> 00:00:35: We're thrilled to begin our series with Veronica O Davis's
00:00:35 --> 00:00:39: Inclusive Transportation, a manifesto for repairing divided
communities.
00:00:39 --> 00:00:43: Today we're going to be learning about Veronica's personal
and
00:00:43 --> 00:00:47: professional journey within transportation, how inclusive
practices can be embedded
00:00:47 --> 00:00:51: into our planning processes, and reflect on what inclusive
transportation
00:00:51 --> 00:00:52: looks like in practice.
00:00:53 --> 00:00:55: So whether you've read the book or not, and if
00:00:55 --> 00:00:58: you haven't, we highly recommend picking up a copy through
00:00:58 --> 00:01:00: Island Press or your local Public Library.
00:01:00 --> 00:01:03: We're very excited to kick things off after a quick
00:01:03 --> 00:01:04: agenda and housekeeping overview.
00:01:07 --> 00:01:09: So on today's agenda, we'll be looking at a new
00:01:09 --> 00:01:15: ULI publication called Transportation Transformations, how
highway conversions can pave
00:01:15 --> 00:01:17: the way for more inclusive and resilient places.

00:01:18 --> 00:01:22: Then we'll jump right into today's book talk featuring author
00:01:22 --> 00:01:25: Veronica O Davis and our facilitator Shonda Wong.
00:01:25 --> 00:01:28: And finally, we'll have some time for audience Q&A.
00:01:29 --> 00:01:31: So some quick housekeeping items for today's program.
00:01:32 --> 00:01:35: As you're tuning in, please submit your questions through the
00:01:35 --> 00:01:36: Zoom Q&A function.
00:01:36 --> 00:01:39: You can also use the Upvote feature to elevate questions
00:01:39 --> 00:01:41: that resonate with you in today's book.
00:01:41 --> 00:01:45: Talk will be recorded and posted to Uli's Knowledge Finder
00:01:45 --> 00:01:49: platform, and we'll be distributing the recording post event
now.
00:01:49 --> 00:01:51: I would like to turn it over to my colleague
00:01:51 --> 00:01:54: Matt Norris, Senior Director at ULI Building Healthy Places,
to
00:01:54 --> 00:01:57: share more about the new Transportation Transformations
report.
00:01:58 --> 00:01:58: Matt.
00:02:01 --> 00:02:02: Thank you, Emily.
00:02:03 --> 00:02:05: Good afternoon, everyone.
00:02:05 --> 00:02:09: I'm very excited to share just a little bit about
00:02:09 --> 00:02:14: Uli's new report, Transportation Transformations, which
highlights some themes that
00:02:14 --> 00:02:17: overlap with Veronica's fantastic book.
00:02:17 --> 00:02:20: So I'm just going to provide an overview of the
00:02:20 --> 00:02:24: report today of our report, which shares examples of efforts
00:02:24 --> 00:02:28: to reconnect places divided by highway infrastructure.
00:02:29 --> 00:02:30: So just a little bit of background.
00:02:31 --> 00:02:34: We know that urban highways in the United States have
00:02:34 --> 00:02:38: contributed to many of today's most pressing issues,
everything from
00:02:38 --> 00:02:44: structural inequities, racial economic segregation, increased
greenhouse gas emissions, elevated
00:02:45 --> 00:02:49: exposures, just shocks and stresses and also disparities in
health
00:02:49 --> 00:02:49: outcomes.
00:02:50 --> 00:02:53: But the good news is that there has been a
00:02:53 --> 00:02:56: push by many communities and really at multiple levels of
00:02:56 --> 00:03:01: government to advance efforts to convert highway
infrastructure to create
00:03:01 --> 00:03:06: more welcoming people centered environments that advance
equitable, sustainable and
00:03:06 --> 00:03:07: resilient outcomes.
00:03:08 --> 00:03:10: And I think it's important to note that there really
00:03:10 --> 00:03:11: is some momentum.

00:03:12 --> 00:03:14: So take a look at some of the many, many
00:03:14 --> 00:03:18: recent headlines about efforts to transform highways and to
reconnect
00:03:18 --> 00:03:19: communities.
00:03:19 --> 00:03:23: Even with the recent increased focus on repairing the harm
00:03:23 --> 00:03:28: created by highway routing decisions, though, the challenges
of advancing
00:03:28 --> 00:03:33: Community Center highway conversion projects really are
significant.
00:03:34 --> 00:03:37: And this is because they're usually quite expensive.
00:03:37 --> 00:03:40: They can present political challenges and they can be
complicated
00:03:40 --> 00:03:42: from an engineering perspective.
00:03:42 --> 00:03:45: So with this in mind, utilize new report aims to
00:03:45 --> 00:03:50: highlight some of the connections among transportation
infrastructure and health
00:03:50 --> 00:03:52: and resilience and real estate.
00:03:53 --> 00:03:57: Also to make the case for leveraging public and private
00:03:57 --> 00:04:01: funds to support efforts to reconnect communities divided by
automobile
00:04:01 --> 00:04:02: oriented infrastructure.
00:04:03 --> 00:04:06: And we also aim to again share some promising examples
00:04:06 --> 00:04:09: of efforts to reconnect communities.
00:04:10 --> 00:04:12: So a little bit of history.
00:04:13 --> 00:04:16: Planners of the Interstate highway system in the United
States,
00:04:16 --> 00:04:20: which gained momentum after the Federal Highway Act of
1956,
00:04:20 --> 00:04:24: routed many highways directly through black and brown
communities.
00:04:24 --> 00:04:26: And this was often quite deliberate.
00:04:27 --> 00:04:30: In many cases, the government took homes and businesses
by
00:04:30 --> 00:04:31: eminent domain.
00:04:32 --> 00:04:36: Some neighborhoods were targeted for new highway routes
when there
00:04:36 --> 00:04:38: were much more logical alternative routes available.
00:04:39 --> 00:04:42: And just one of the many, many examples of this
00:04:42 --> 00:04:45: was in Nashville, where Interstate 40 was built with a
00:04:45 --> 00:04:48: curve that routed it to divide the black community of
00:04:48 --> 00:04:52: North Nashville, which in the process destroyed hundreds of
homes
00:04:52 --> 00:04:53: and businesses.
00:04:53 --> 00:04:55: And the decision for the route was made at a
00:04:55 --> 00:04:58: non public meeting of all white business leaders and state

00:04:58 --> 00:04:59: highway officials.

00:05:00 --> 00:05:04: So the routing of highways in many cities really has

00:05:04 --> 00:05:09: created or worsened economic, health and climate disparities, especially for

00:05:09 --> 00:05:12: people that are living close to the highways themselves.

00:05:13 --> 00:05:17: Some of the harmful effects have included the fact that

00:05:17 --> 00:05:20: urban highways have directly displaced close to at least a

00:05:20 --> 00:05:24: half a million people, generally in communities of color.

00:05:26 --> 00:05:30: Sorry, that grade and elevated highways created barriers within and

00:05:30 --> 00:05:36: between communities which often disconnect people from economic opportunities and

00:05:36 --> 00:05:39: also access to important community amenities.

00:05:40 --> 00:05:42: And then we also know that living near a major

00:05:42 --> 00:05:45: highway has been shown to increase the risk of premature

00:05:45 --> 00:05:49: death and also increase the risk of numerous health conditions

00:05:49 --> 00:05:50: due to air pollution.

00:05:51 --> 00:05:54: And this can lead to asthma, pulmonary disease and also

00:05:54 --> 00:05:55: high risk of dementia.

00:05:57 --> 00:06:01: So what are the design approaches to mitigate the negative effects of highways and also to more importantly create new

00:06:01 --> 00:06:05: community centered places in their place.

00:06:05 --> 00:06:07:

00:06:08 --> 00:06:12: So the examples of the types of investments that are

00:06:12 --> 00:06:16: being made include stitches which are enhanced crossings over highway

00:06:16 --> 00:06:17: right subway.

00:06:18 --> 00:06:22: These types of crossings often include widened sidewalks, bike lanes,

00:06:22 --> 00:06:25: seating areas or installations and green spaces.

00:06:25 --> 00:06:29: Caps are full structural covers over highway rights of way

00:06:29 --> 00:06:33: and these can include features like green space, parks, crossing

00:06:33 --> 00:06:38: streets and buildings, and they also often strategically linked neighborhoods

00:06:38 --> 00:06:41: that a highway has separated or divided.

00:06:42 --> 00:06:46: Hybrid removals involve taking limited access roadways and turning them

00:06:46 --> 00:06:51: into lower capacity surface level boulevards, green spaces, and waterways.

00:06:51 --> 00:06:55: And removals can dramatically increase safety, reduce traffic, and also

00:06:55 --> 00:06:56: improve the built environment.

00:06:57 --> 00:07:01: And then also creating public spaces beneath elevated

roadways can
00:07:01 --> 00:07:05: involve creating parks, enhanced public realms, and trails
beneath active
00:07:05 --> 00:07:06: roadways.
00:07:07 --> 00:07:09: And there are many potential benefits of these types of
00:07:09 --> 00:07:10: Hwy.
00:07:10 --> 00:07:14: transformations and these include everything from improved
air quality to
00:07:15 --> 00:07:19: increased access to gathering spaces to an opportunity to
incorporate
00:07:19 --> 00:07:24: green infrastructure and nature based solutions to promote
resilience.
00:07:26 --> 00:07:29: So with this increased focus on Hwy.
00:07:29 --> 00:07:33: conversions, there are some new related funding programs in
the
00:07:33 --> 00:07:34: United States.
00:07:35 --> 00:07:37: One of the ones that's been talked about the most
00:07:37 --> 00:07:41: is the Reconnected Communities Program, which is a \$1
billion
00:07:41 --> 00:07:45: grant program through the bipartisan Infrastructure law to
fund planning
00:07:45 --> 00:07:48: and capital construction grants to reconnect places that have
been
00:07:48 --> 00:07:50: burdened by past infrastructure decisions.
00:07:51 --> 00:07:54: The Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants program.
00:07:54 --> 00:07:56: This is part of the Inflation Reduction Act.
00:07:56 --> 00:08:01: It's a \$3.2 billion program that supports projects to address
00:08:01 --> 00:08:05: environmental harm and also to support walkability and
transit.
00:08:06 --> 00:08:09: But I also just wanted to note, you know, well,
00:08:09 --> 00:08:14: these are undoubtedly great opportunities for communities to
attempt to
00:08:14 --> 00:08:18: reconnect communities that have been divided by highways.
00:08:20 --> 00:08:23: Even with this focus from the federal government, it's really
00:08:24 --> 00:08:27: important to note that still around 80%, sorry, 87% of
00:08:27 --> 00:08:32: federal funds that state departments of transportation receive
come from
00:08:32 --> 00:08:33: formula funds.
00:08:34 --> 00:08:36: And these funds can be used for almost all types
00:08:36 --> 00:08:37: of transportation projects.
00:08:38 --> 00:08:41: So in twenty, 2143% of all Federal Highway funding went
00:08:41 --> 00:08:45: to repair and reconstruction of roadways, but close to 1/3
00:08:45 --> 00:08:48: went to build new roadway capacity.
00:08:49 --> 00:08:53: Up to about half of many Federal Highway funding programs

00:08:53 --> 00:08:56: can be moved into other programs and can fund improvements

00:08:57 --> 00:08:59: to support transit and walkability.

00:08:59 --> 00:09:02: But for context, only 4% of eligible Hwy.

00:09:02 --> 00:09:06: funds that can be spent on transit or eligible Hwy.

00:09:06 --> 00:09:07: funds are spent on transit.

00:09:08 --> 00:09:11: And only two point 1% of funds supported walking and

00:09:11 --> 00:09:13: biking projects between 2012 and 2016.

00:09:14 --> 00:09:18: So these figures show that the status quo really does

00:09:18 --> 00:09:23: still favor spending on roadways and projects that are really

00:09:23 --> 00:09:26: not working to reconnect communities.

00:09:26 --> 00:09:30: And efforts to convert highways to reconnect communities are still

00:09:30 --> 00:09:33: the exception rather the rule rather than the rule.

00:09:35 --> 00:09:39: So to quickly run through just two very quick examples

00:09:39 --> 00:09:43: of projects that are featured in the report, the 1st

00:09:43 --> 00:09:47: is the I7071 Long Street Bridge project in Columbus, OH.

00:09:48 --> 00:09:52: When I 71 was originally constructed in the early 1960s,

00:09:52 --> 00:09:56: the King Lincoln neighborhood of Columbus had been one of

00:09:56 --> 00:10:00: the most dynamic black communities in the United States with

00:10:00 --> 00:10:02: 100 local businesses and many residents.

00:10:03 --> 00:10:07: But after the highway construction in the 60s, the neighborhood

00:10:07 --> 00:10:12: suffered from disinvestment that led to population decline, also served

00:10:12 --> 00:10:14: to increase poverty and unemployment.

00:10:15 --> 00:10:18: And the highway also separated the community from downtown and

00:10:18 --> 00:10:21: the economic opportunities associated with downtown.

00:10:22 --> 00:10:25: So the Long Street Bridge Stitch project, which was completed

00:10:25 --> 00:10:29: in 2014, was a partnership among community leaders, the Ohio

00:10:29 --> 00:10:32: Department of Transportation, the City of Columbus and others.

00:10:33 --> 00:10:36: And the goals identified in community meetings for the project

00:10:36 --> 00:10:40: were to connect nearby communities to hide the highway, to

00:10:40 --> 00:10:44: improve multimodal connectivity and also, very importantly, to reflect the

00:10:44 --> 00:10:45: neighborhood's culture.

00:10:46 --> 00:10:50: So the bridge now includes park space and enhanced public

00:10:51 --> 00:10:55: realm and multi multi multi modal connections to downtown.

00:10:55 --> 00:10:59: Also notably it includes a 240 foot long cultural walled
00:10:59 --> 00:11:02: mural which was the first project of its kind for
00:11:02 --> 00:11:05: the Ohio Department of Transportation.
00:11:05 --> 00:11:08: So this public art piece also was actually designed by
00:11:08 --> 00:11:12: two local artists from the community and that celebrates the
00:11:12 --> 00:11:15: local neighborhoods, people, places, history, and future.
00:11:17 --> 00:11:20: So in the interest of time, I'm actually going to
00:11:20 --> 00:11:22: skip past the next project and just share a few
00:11:23 --> 00:11:26: overarching lessons learned that we gleaned from Hwy.
00:11:26 --> 00:11:28: conversion efforts that were explored in the report.
00:11:29 --> 00:11:31: So I just want to highlight a few of these.
00:11:31 --> 00:11:35: First, it's just essential to understand and acknowledge the
00:11:35 --> 00:11:38: current
00:11:38 --> 00:11:42: and historical context to build trust.
00:11:42 --> 00:11:45: Urban highways are often just truly infamous as markers of
00:11:46 --> 00:11:49: physical, racial, and economic divides, and they also shape the
00:11:49 --> 00:11:54: way that many people view and experience their cities.
00:11:54 --> 00:11:58: So efforts to convert highway infrastructure into spaces that's
00:11:58 --> 00:12:03: instead
00:12:03 --> 00:12:04: serve communities must first start with understanding the
00:12:05 --> 00:12:09: specific historical
00:12:09 --> 00:12:11: context and how consequences of previous transportation
00:12:11 --> 00:12:15: decisions affect communities
00:12:15 --> 00:12:17: today.
00:12:17 --> 00:12:22: It's also important to understand that highway
00:12:22 --> 00:12:25: transformations can serve
00:12:26 --> 00:12:30: to enhance environmental resilience.
00:12:30 --> 00:12:35: Through thoughtful design strategies that mitigate acute
00:12:35 --> 00:12:39: shocks such as
00:12:39 --> 00:12:40: extreme heat and flooding.
00:12:41 --> 00:12:45: Transformations can further address chronic stresses as well
00:12:45 --> 00:12:48: by supporting
00:12:48 --> 00:12:52: daily quality of life and improved resident health outcomes.
00:12:52 --> 00:12:52: And then the last point that I'll just highlight is
00:12:53 --> 00:12:57: that the fact that projects can integrate local storytelling and
arts and this can be truly valuable for local community
members.
Highway transformation efforts provide significant
opportunities to really just collect
and also elevate stories of area residents and to share
them through the incorporation of art as a significant project
component.
And by honoring the perspectives and the culture of

community,
00:12:57 --> 00:13:02: residents through Art highway Conversions can again
acknowledge the past,
00:13:02 --> 00:13:07: the current and also provide information about the goals for
00:13:07 --> 00:13:10: the future of the area for those with ties to
00:13:10 --> 00:13:11: the local area.
00:13:12 --> 00:13:13: So I'm going to leave it there.
00:13:13 --> 00:13:16: I know we have a packed agenda and but I
00:13:16 --> 00:13:20: will be on and excited to explore more of the
00:13:20 --> 00:13:21: discussion.
00:13:21 --> 00:13:24: If you want to reach out to me, my e-mail
00:13:24 --> 00:13:27: is there on the screen, but I am now going
00:13:28 --> 00:13:31: to pass it over to our host for today, Shonda
00:13:31 --> 00:13:31: Wong.
00:13:31 --> 00:13:34: She's the partner with SVN Architects and Planners, and I'm
00:13:34 --> 00:13:37: going to hand it right over to Shantit right now.
00:13:37 --> 00:13:38: Take it away.
00:13:42 --> 00:13:43: Thanks so much Matt.
00:13:43 --> 00:13:46: And first of all I just wanted to say how
00:13:46 --> 00:13:48: excited I am to be with you all today.
00:13:48 --> 00:13:52: It sounds like we've or seems like we've been able
00:13:52 --> 00:13:56: to gather really fantastic group and really thrilled to join
00:13:56 --> 00:13:59: you all as we get to know Veronica Davis and
00:13:59 --> 00:14:01: her book Inclusive Transportation.
00:14:02 --> 00:14:05: It's a book which we're going to learn a lot
00:14:05 --> 00:14:08: about today and really encourages us to be reflective about
00:14:08 --> 00:14:12: our own transportation story and then how we can then
00:14:12 --> 00:14:15: through our work center people in transportation decisions.
00:14:16 --> 00:14:20: Veronica Davis, just a few intro remarks about her is
00:14:20 --> 00:14:23: a self-described transportation nerd.
00:14:23 --> 00:14:26: She believes all people should have access to safe, reliable
00:14:27 --> 00:14:28: and affordable transportation.
00:14:29 --> 00:14:32: She has a really interesting background with over 20 years
00:14:32 --> 00:14:35: of experience in civil engineering and planning, and she's
currently
00:14:35 --> 00:14:39: the Director of Transportation and Drainage Operations for
the City
00:14:39 --> 00:14:40: of Houston.
00:14:41 --> 00:14:44: While Veronica has this role with the city, I will
00:14:44 --> 00:14:47: pause briefly to note that Veronica is here today to
00:14:47 --> 00:14:50: share her personal views, experience and thoughts.
00:14:51 --> 00:14:53: So just wanted to make a note of that.
00:14:54 --> 00:14:59: Prior to the City of Houston, Veronica was a managing

00:14:59 --> 00:15:04: partner at Inspire Green, which she Co founded in 2009.

00:15:05 --> 00:15:09: She oversaw all transportation and urban design program and had

00:15:09 --> 00:15:13: projects in cities such as the District of Columbia, Philadelphia,

00:15:13 --> 00:15:16: Pittsburgh, Grand Rapids, Charleston and Detroit.

00:15:17 --> 00:15:19: She has also worked with several counties along the East

00:15:20 --> 00:15:20: Coast.

00:15:20 --> 00:15:23: She is one of the Co founders of Black Women

00:15:23 --> 00:15:23: Bike.

00:15:23 --> 00:15:27: She's the vice president on the board for America Walks.

00:15:27 --> 00:15:31: And she earned her dual master's degree in both engineering

00:15:31 --> 00:15:35: management and regional planning from Cornell University.

00:15:37 --> 00:15:39: She is a registered professional engineer.

00:15:40 --> 00:15:40: Welcome, Veronica.

00:15:40 --> 00:15:43: It's great to be with you here today.

00:15:43 --> 00:15:43: Yeah.

00:15:44 --> 00:15:45: Thank you for having me.

00:15:48 --> 00:15:51: You know, I wanted to just start by first of

00:15:51 --> 00:15:55: all saying this is for me personally, so fantastic that

00:15:55 --> 00:15:58: we get a chance to to connect here for this

00:15:58 --> 00:16:02: next hour with the group of participants we have.

00:16:02 --> 00:16:05: I know we're all so busy in our day-to-day lives

00:16:05 --> 00:16:08: buried in our work that it's nice to kind of

00:16:08 --> 00:16:12: step away from that for a moment and reflect on

00:16:12 --> 00:16:14: how we can do things better really.

00:16:14 --> 00:16:19: And so before we dive into that, I just thought

00:16:19 --> 00:16:24: we could start by thinking about this concept of our

00:16:24 --> 00:16:26: own transportation stories.

00:16:27 --> 00:16:29: And in your book, you urge readers to think about

00:16:29 --> 00:16:32: their formative experiences with transportation.

00:16:33 --> 00:16:36: Can you start by sharing with us What's your transportation

00:16:36 --> 00:16:36: story?

00:16:37 --> 00:16:38: Absolutely.

00:16:38 --> 00:16:41: So first of all, thank you all for having me

00:16:41 --> 00:16:42: excited to be here.

00:16:43 --> 00:16:46: So my transportation story, so I do share it in

00:16:46 --> 00:16:48: the book and there's two pieces of it.

00:16:48 --> 00:16:52: So is Matt just eloquently laid out the way communities

00:16:52 --> 00:16:56: were separated and divided by roadway infrastructure?

00:16:56 --> 00:16:59: That is part of my story, not my necessarily lived

00:16:59 --> 00:17:02: experience, but the lived experience of my mom.

00:17:03 --> 00:17:06: And so I do share that my mother's house, which
00:17:06 --> 00:17:09: is also my grandparents house, who I should pay for
00:17:09 --> 00:17:09: it.
00:17:10 --> 00:17:13: And my great grandmother's house was taken in order to
00:17:13 --> 00:17:16: construct I-10 through East Baton Rouge.
00:17:17 --> 00:17:20: And the impact of that, you know, even our family
00:17:20 --> 00:17:20: church, St.
00:17:20 --> 00:17:23: Francis Xavier Catholic Church is right there.
00:17:23 --> 00:17:25: And so where my family was able to walk to
00:17:25 --> 00:17:28: church, now they're in a place where they have to
00:17:28 --> 00:17:31: drive to church because they live further out away from
00:17:31 --> 00:17:32: that community.
00:17:33 --> 00:17:34: And so I do share that story.
00:17:34 --> 00:17:37: And you know, it's just a reminder, as even as
00:17:37 --> 00:17:40: you know, Matt so eloquently kind of laid out, it's
00:17:40 --> 00:17:43: very easy for those of us that are younger to
00:17:43 --> 00:17:45: look at these images and it can feel like it
00:17:45 --> 00:17:47: was something that's far away.
00:17:48 --> 00:17:50: But it is a reminder that many of the communities
00:17:51 --> 00:17:54: that were working, working in, they remember what it was
00:17:54 --> 00:17:56: before the highway was there, before Rd.
00:17:56 --> 00:17:57: got expanded.
00:17:58 --> 00:18:02: So making sure that we're honoring kind of that history
00:18:02 --> 00:18:04: from a personal perspective.
00:18:04 --> 00:18:06: And it's funny, someone asked me how I got in
00:18:06 --> 00:18:08: transportation and I was like I was born in it.
00:18:09 --> 00:18:12: My dad used to work for UMPTA, which is Urban
00:18:12 --> 00:18:18: Mass Transportation Administration, the predecessor to the
Federal Transit Administration
00:18:18 --> 00:18:18: today.
00:18:19 --> 00:18:21: And my mom went in the labor outside of the
00:18:21 --> 00:18:22: building.
00:18:22 --> 00:18:24: So she made it.
00:18:24 --> 00:18:25: We made it across the Potomac.
00:18:25 --> 00:18:27: And I was born in Virginia.
00:18:27 --> 00:18:29: But yes, that's where I went in the labor.
00:18:29 --> 00:18:32: And so both of my parents were in the transportation
00:18:32 --> 00:18:32: industry.
00:18:33 --> 00:18:37: And so it formed a lot of my childhood toys.
00:18:37 --> 00:18:40: I had a Lionel train set.
00:18:40 --> 00:18:43: I had all of the Tonka trucks.
00:18:43 --> 00:18:44: I had a bus.

00:18:44 --> 00:18:46: I had an airport with an airplane.

00:18:46 --> 00:18:51: So with both parents and transportation industry informed a lot

00:18:51 --> 00:18:54: of my toys or even just on days off from

00:18:54 --> 00:18:59: school spending that time at my parents office place.

00:18:59 --> 00:19:00: So it was just one of those things.

00:19:00 --> 00:19:01: It was destined to happen.

00:19:01 --> 00:19:04: And then I I do share about a lot of

00:19:04 --> 00:19:07: what I open up the book is how most of

00:19:07 --> 00:19:12: our children today couldn't navigate confidently any community.

00:19:12 --> 00:19:15: And I'm not talking you know, young young child, but

00:19:15 --> 00:19:16: just let's take a 10 year old.

00:19:17 --> 00:19:18: Most of us wouldn't let our 10 year old walk

00:19:18 --> 00:19:19: to the grocery store.

00:19:20 --> 00:19:21: And why?

00:19:21 --> 00:19:22: Because it's unsafe.

00:19:22 --> 00:19:25: They have to cross this street or they have to

00:19:25 --> 00:19:27: navigate this parking lot.

00:19:28 --> 00:19:32: But you know, I grew up in Maplewood, NJ and

00:19:32 --> 00:19:33: I share that.

00:19:33 --> 00:19:37: You know, I actually had a really great childhood because

00:19:37 --> 00:19:40: it is an older suburb, it's a bedroom community of

00:19:40 --> 00:19:43: New York, but an older suburb largely built before cars.

00:19:44 --> 00:19:47: And so I remember at 10, you know, getting on

00:19:47 --> 00:19:50: my bike and biking across town and meeting my friends

00:19:50 --> 00:19:52: to hang out at the park and then going to

00:19:52 --> 00:19:53: get ice cream after.

00:19:54 --> 00:19:57: But four people drove very slow.

00:19:57 --> 00:20:01: People were very mindful of kids just being around.

00:20:01 --> 00:20:03: And so that was the environment that I grew, I

00:20:03 --> 00:20:04: grew up in.

00:20:04 --> 00:20:07: And so to me it forms my a lot of,

00:20:07 --> 00:20:08: a lot of how.

00:20:08 --> 00:20:10: I think because I know we can do it because

00:20:10 --> 00:20:14: there are many communities like that where kids can actually

00:20:14 --> 00:20:17: confidently get themselves to the park and home.

00:20:19 --> 00:20:21: But there's the majority of us live in communities.

00:20:21 --> 00:20:22: That is not the case.

00:20:22 --> 00:20:24: We can barely get to the park with an adult.

00:20:25 --> 00:20:28: And so it's it's really just thinking of what is

00:20:28 --> 00:20:31: the type of a community and future that we want.

00:20:33 --> 00:20:36: I love that it's it's helping me better understand for

00:20:36 --> 00:20:38: sure and maybe I'm I'm guessing a little bit and
00:20:38 --> 00:20:42: filling the dots obviously in your not just your transportation
00:20:42 --> 00:20:43: but your life story.
00:20:43 --> 00:20:45: But you know, you did write this book, and so
00:20:45 --> 00:20:48: I wonder if you could just elaborate for just a
00:20:48 --> 00:20:51: little bit more about who you wrote this book for.
00:20:53 --> 00:20:53: Yes.
00:20:53 --> 00:20:57: So the genesis of the book was 2018.
00:20:57 --> 00:21:00: I was speaking at a conference about justice in public
00:21:00 --> 00:21:03: spaces and it was really kind of tackling this idea
00:21:03 --> 00:21:06: of equity and we just the equity gives everyone what
00:21:06 --> 00:21:07: they need.
00:21:07 --> 00:21:11: But everyone knows, and I know many of us particularly
00:21:11 --> 00:21:15: that work in government, whether local or county or state
00:21:15 --> 00:21:16: resources are finite.
00:21:17 --> 00:21:18: You have a finite amount of staff, you have a
00:21:18 --> 00:21:21: finite amount of money, You have a finite amount of
00:21:21 --> 00:21:21: time.
00:21:21 --> 00:21:24: So we can't give everyone what they need.
00:21:24 --> 00:21:27: That's why we had these trillion dollar and billion dollar,
00:21:27 --> 00:21:30: you know, funding coming from the federal government.
00:21:30 --> 00:21:32: And even then we know that that does not address
00:21:32 --> 00:21:33: the need.
00:21:33 --> 00:21:35: And so I was presenting on just spaces and it
00:21:36 --> 00:21:38: was really grappling with what the idea of justice looks
00:21:38 --> 00:21:39: like.
00:21:39 --> 00:21:40: And so that's when the the, the genesis of the
00:21:40 --> 00:21:41: book came about.
00:21:42 --> 00:21:47: But really my target audience, it's written for planners and
00:21:47 --> 00:21:48: engineers.
00:21:48 --> 00:21:50: It's kind of the primary audience.
00:21:50 --> 00:21:53: But I also wrote it in a language and a
00:21:53 --> 00:21:58: tone that is accessible to people in that journalism space,
00:21:58 --> 00:22:04: you know, the journalists that are covering these
transportation conversations,
00:22:04 --> 00:22:07: because language becomes very important.
00:22:07 --> 00:22:10: It is targeting the advocacy community.
00:22:10 --> 00:22:12: And I pick on them a little bit.
00:22:12 --> 00:22:15: They're they're sometimes the Champions as I talk about
different
00:22:15 --> 00:22:19: stakeholders, but you know, targeting that advocacy
community, giving them

00:22:19 --> 00:22:22: Chapter 6 is my love letter to the advocates.
00:22:22 --> 00:22:24: That is my charge, my call to action to the
00:22:25 --> 00:22:28: advocates in every, in every sense of the word.
00:22:28 --> 00:22:32: And then, you know, really also making it accessible for
00:22:33 --> 00:22:36: the lay people who are, you know, they know that
00:22:36 --> 00:22:41: they want something different and may not have the
language
00:22:41 --> 00:22:42: to express that.
00:22:42 --> 00:22:45: So being able to write it in a way that
00:22:45 --> 00:22:48: is accessible so that as they're going to a community
00:22:48 --> 00:22:51: meeting, they have the language that they need to express
00:22:51 --> 00:22:53: what it is that they desire.
00:22:55 --> 00:22:55: Yeah.
00:22:55 --> 00:22:57: And I'd love to speak a little bit more about
00:22:57 --> 00:23:00: that, how we work in the context of the various
00:23:00 --> 00:23:04: conversations we're in, whether we're in these one-on-one
conversations or
00:23:04 --> 00:23:06: facilitating a group conversation.
00:23:07 --> 00:23:08: And I'll do that in a minute.
00:23:09 --> 00:23:12: There is something really interesting that you just sit there
00:23:12 --> 00:23:15: and this is concept of just spaces and how that
00:23:15 --> 00:23:17: was part of the genesis of writing this book.
00:23:17 --> 00:23:21: And I think that's so fascinating because and I, I
00:23:21 --> 00:23:24: will say I, I actually have a personal background as
00:23:24 --> 00:23:27: a social worker before I went into community development
and
00:23:28 --> 00:23:29: now urban design, city design.
00:23:31 --> 00:23:35: And you know, this is, I'm going to put it
00:23:35 --> 00:23:37: in such a simple way.
00:23:37 --> 00:23:41: But you know, creating just spaces really requires us to
00:23:41 --> 00:23:44: be able to think and approach our work, thinking of
00:23:44 --> 00:23:46: the city as a whole system, right.
00:23:47 --> 00:23:50: And we're not experts in that whole system necessarily.
00:23:51 --> 00:23:55: But it's interesting, Veronica, to me because you have such
00:23:55 --> 00:24:00: an interesting background in bringing both planning and
engineering together.
00:24:01 --> 00:24:03: You've worked, you were sharing with me and I I
00:24:03 --> 00:24:04: thought this was so interesting.
00:24:04 --> 00:24:08: You've worked in long range planning and waterfront
development and
00:24:09 --> 00:24:13: helping to form what developer contributions would be for
neighbourhood
00:24:13 --> 00:24:15: amenities etcetera.

00:24:15 --> 00:24:20: And that crossover, disciplines, crossover of disciplines is so necessary.

00:24:20 --> 00:24:23: I know that we experience in that in my work

00:24:23 --> 00:24:26: at SVN, what we're planners, designers and architects.

00:24:27 --> 00:24:30: And what I find in our experience is that really

00:24:30 --> 00:24:34: helps us to, you know, really develop a unique expertise

00:24:35 --> 00:24:39: in bringing, in our case, transit planning and real estate

00:24:39 --> 00:24:41: and housing development together.

00:24:42 --> 00:24:45: And when you're able to bring more than just one

00:24:45 --> 00:24:48: part together and stitch it together as a whole system,

00:24:49 --> 00:24:53: that's where you can really see solutions that become catalysts

00:24:53 --> 00:24:54: for broader transformation.

00:24:55 --> 00:24:56: Does that make sense?

00:24:56 --> 00:24:57: Yeah, it does.

00:24:57 --> 00:25:00: And I'll and I'll say that one of the things

00:25:00 --> 00:25:05: that I think, particularly the transportation and the housing industries

00:25:05 --> 00:25:09: are gonna have to grapple with is we're gonna have

00:25:09 --> 00:25:11: to be experts outside of our expertise.

00:25:11 --> 00:25:14: And what I mean by that is for so long

00:25:14 --> 00:25:17: transportation, we go, Nope, Nope, Nope.

00:25:17 --> 00:25:18: We're just the roads.

00:25:18 --> 00:25:19: We're just the roads.

00:25:19 --> 00:25:21: And housing says Nope, we're just the buildings.

00:25:22 --> 00:25:26: But they're, to your point, there's so many social issues

00:25:26 --> 00:25:32: that the people working on those issues don't necessarily have

00:25:32 --> 00:25:33: the funding.

00:25:33 --> 00:25:36: So right, when it comes down to money, there's always

00:25:36 --> 00:25:39: there's money for housing, there's money for transportation, but it's

00:25:39 --> 00:25:42: all that squishy stuff that becomes hard to fund.

00:25:42 --> 00:25:44: Social work is, I'm sure, I don't know if there's

00:25:44 --> 00:25:47: any social workers on here, but as you know, it's

00:25:47 --> 00:25:50: probably one of the most underfunded, you know, professions we

00:25:50 --> 00:25:50: talked about.

00:25:51 --> 00:25:52: I think Matt mentioned art.

00:25:52 --> 00:25:55: Art is an unfunded, you know, profession.

00:25:56 --> 00:25:59: And more and more our industries are going to have

00:26:00 --> 00:26:03: to grapple with the bigger social challenges.

00:26:03 --> 00:26:06: And I'll give a very tangible example.

00:26:07 --> 00:26:10: Let's talk about the unhoused population for so long.
00:26:10 --> 00:26:14: The transportation industry just said that's not us.
00:26:14 --> 00:26:15: We just build the sidewalks.
00:26:15 --> 00:26:16: We just build the road.
00:26:16 --> 00:26:18: We just put benches where you tell us to put
00:26:18 --> 00:26:18: benches.
00:26:18 --> 00:26:20: And we threw our hands up.
00:26:20 --> 00:26:25: And even at Transportation Research Board, the annual
meeting we
00:26:25 --> 00:26:28: just had in DC, I at least appreciate this grappling
00:26:28 --> 00:26:31: with what does it mean for our industry.
00:26:31 --> 00:26:34: We can't just say not our problem when you have
00:26:34 --> 00:26:37: people sleeping on our sidewalks, when you have people
sleeping
00:26:37 --> 00:26:42: underneath our bridges, when you have people that our
infrastructure
00:26:42 --> 00:26:43: has become their home.
00:26:43 --> 00:26:46: How do we now begin to grapple with this and
00:26:46 --> 00:26:49: not just say not a transportation issue?
00:26:49 --> 00:26:52: And so I think more and more we're going to
00:26:52 --> 00:26:54: see us grappling with that.
00:26:54 --> 00:26:55: And same with housing.
00:26:55 --> 00:26:57: It's very easy to say, well, we just built the
00:26:57 --> 00:26:59: housing, but it all has to fit together.
00:27:00 --> 00:27:03: And the housing needs to be where people can get
00:27:03 --> 00:27:05: to school or people can get access to jobs and
00:27:05 --> 00:27:07: transit and all those things.
00:27:07 --> 00:27:10: And it's not to say that we have to completely
00:27:10 --> 00:27:14: step outside of our expertise, but I think it's going
00:27:14 --> 00:27:17: to be the recognition that our industries are going to
00:27:17 --> 00:27:20: have to truly begin to grapple with some of these
00:27:21 --> 00:27:21: things.
00:27:21 --> 00:27:24: And that's really kind of the bigger system of justice.
00:27:31 --> 00:27:34: Yeah, I feel like I'm having a little tech difficulty.
00:27:34 --> 00:27:35: Hear you can still hear me, Veronica.
00:27:36 --> 00:27:36: I can hear you.
00:27:37 --> 00:27:37: OK.
00:27:40 --> 00:27:41: And you can maybe see me now too.
00:27:41 --> 00:27:42: OK.
00:27:42 --> 00:27:43: Yeah.
00:27:43 --> 00:27:46: No, that's I, I, I certainly have noticed a shift
00:27:46 --> 00:27:49: in the way a shift, it's slow, but a bit
00:27:49 --> 00:27:52: of a shift even in the last five years I'd

00:27:52 --> 00:27:56: say where it's one thing for us to acknowledge how
00:27:56 --> 00:27:58: we work and want to work.
00:27:59 --> 00:28:02: But having said that, I have noticed where we've seen
00:28:02 --> 00:28:06: the most transformative outcomes have been really with
clients that
00:28:07 --> 00:28:09: are willing to step outside of their lane.
00:28:11 --> 00:28:14: And it's one thing to participate with a stakeholder, it's
00:28:14 --> 00:28:17: another to bring that stakeholder right in early enough in
00:28:17 --> 00:28:17: the process.
00:28:17 --> 00:28:18: Right.
00:28:18 --> 00:28:23: And this traditionally how transit, residential space, public
space, all
00:28:23 --> 00:28:26: of these things being thought of in silos and then
00:28:26 --> 00:28:31: unintentionally creating these back of house spaces that just
don't
00:28:31 --> 00:28:35: work, these conditions don't conflict with each other.
00:28:35 --> 00:28:38: But but it's clear that we need to be able
00:28:38 --> 00:28:41: to take the time and invest the time to bring
00:28:41 --> 00:28:45: them together to open the doorbell to actually do some
00:28:45 --> 00:28:47: meaningful community planning.
00:28:47 --> 00:28:47: Absolutely.
00:28:49 --> 00:28:53: I wondered if we could speak a little bit about
00:28:53 --> 00:28:58: in your experience, Veronica, how you work with agencies or
00:28:58 --> 00:29:03: cities or communities to in the conversations you're having.
00:29:04 --> 00:29:07: You know I'll use streetscape design as one example, but
00:29:07 --> 00:29:09: it could be really any type of project brief.
00:29:10 --> 00:29:13: How do you determine the priorities that you need to
00:29:13 --> 00:29:15: focus on in those projects?
00:29:15 --> 00:29:18: I know that's a big question, but I raise it
00:29:18 --> 00:29:22: because you do in your book talk about this concept
00:29:22 --> 00:29:26: of an emergency room and these triage questions that you
00:29:26 --> 00:29:27: ask.
00:29:28 --> 00:29:31: So I think you know from priorities at a big
00:29:31 --> 00:29:35: picture level there's going to be the priorities of whatever
00:29:35 --> 00:29:38: the jurisdiction, city, county, whatever it is.
00:29:38 --> 00:29:42: There's the bigger picture priorities and theoretically you
know equity
00:29:42 --> 00:29:45: and all those things should be baked into that And
00:29:45 --> 00:29:48: and a lot of times the priorities are going to
00:29:48 --> 00:29:51: be very obvious and I'll, I'll I'll you know tackle
00:29:51 --> 00:29:52: something like Vision zero.
00:29:53 --> 00:29:56: We talk about Vision zero and zero traffic related deaths
00:29:56 --> 00:29:57: and fatalities.

00:29:57 --> 00:30:00: When when you turn on a high injury network of
00:30:00 --> 00:30:03: any community, it's going to be very obvious where people
00:30:03 --> 00:30:06: are dying on your roadways, they're going to be roads
00:30:06 --> 00:30:09: that light up and then if you throw on, you
00:30:09 --> 00:30:13: know, ethnicity and race and income, it's super obvious
where
00:30:13 --> 00:30:15: you have to invest your funding.
00:30:15 --> 00:30:18: So that's like kind of a big picture macro level
00:30:18 --> 00:30:20: of here the priorities.
00:30:20 --> 00:30:22: As you look at the micro level, it's going to
00:30:22 --> 00:30:25: be a balance, going to be a dance because there
00:30:25 --> 00:30:26: is a why are you doing this project to begin
00:30:27 --> 00:30:27: with.
00:30:28 --> 00:30:29: So let's say it is a safety project.
00:30:29 --> 00:30:32: We're looking at this corridor because it's unsafe.
00:30:32 --> 00:30:33: And so then all things come on the table.
00:30:33 --> 00:30:37: It's the urban design, It's the sidewalk with it's the
00:30:37 --> 00:30:39: context of that particular street.
00:30:39 --> 00:30:41: Is it a residential street?
00:30:41 --> 00:30:42: Is it a commercial street?
00:30:42 --> 00:30:45: Is it a mix like what is going on?
00:30:45 --> 00:30:49: And I think that's where you've identified that, hey, we
00:30:49 --> 00:30:51: have to address this street For these reasons.
00:30:52 --> 00:30:55: But the priorities come down to working with the community
00:30:55 --> 00:30:57: because we can't be a road can only do.
00:30:57 --> 00:30:59: But so much I know that we'd love to make
00:30:59 --> 00:30:59: a road.
00:30:59 --> 00:31:00: We want a road to do everything.
00:31:00 --> 00:31:03: We want to road to have unimpeded traffic.
00:31:03 --> 00:31:05: If I'm driving in a car, but the bus can
00:31:05 --> 00:31:07: go and then there's a bike lane and wide enough
00:31:07 --> 00:31:08: sidewalk.
00:31:08 --> 00:31:10: And then we want green infrastructure and we want trees
00:31:10 --> 00:31:12: and we want a bench and we want a sidewalk
00:31:12 --> 00:31:12: Cafe.
00:31:12 --> 00:31:14: Space is finite.
00:31:14 --> 00:31:17: And so therefore it really comes down to working with
00:31:17 --> 00:31:20: the community to say this is how much space you
00:31:20 --> 00:31:21: have available.
00:31:21 --> 00:31:25: And more importantly, what I have found in my experience
00:31:25 --> 00:31:28: is you have to get the community outside.
00:31:28 --> 00:31:30: I don't care how you do your math.

00:31:30 --> 00:31:33: I don't care how many little tool games that you
00:31:33 --> 00:31:35: come up with and the, you know, the online stuff
00:31:35 --> 00:31:37: where people can build there right away.
00:31:38 --> 00:31:39: It doesn't matter.
00:31:39 --> 00:31:43: People cannot understand the context of distance, and I don't
00:31:43 --> 00:31:47: care if they're engineer, I don't care if they're a
00:31:47 --> 00:31:47: nurse.
00:31:48 --> 00:31:50: I don't care if they're stay at home parent.
00:31:50 --> 00:31:52: It doesn't matter.
00:31:52 --> 00:31:54: People don't understand the concept of different distance.
00:31:55 --> 00:31:57: So it is also equally important to have meetings at
00:31:58 --> 00:32:01: the block that you're discussing so that everyone can
physically
00:32:01 --> 00:32:03: see, oh, you know what, this isn't as wide as
00:32:03 --> 00:32:06: I thought it was, or this isn't as whatever as
00:32:06 --> 00:32:07: I thought it was.
00:32:08 --> 00:32:10: And so those are ways to really begin to start
00:32:10 --> 00:32:13: tackling, OK, what are we going to do this?
00:32:13 --> 00:32:15: How much space we have, how we're going to prioritize
00:32:16 --> 00:32:17: the use of this space.
00:32:19 --> 00:32:23: Can you can you share with us you you speak
00:32:23 --> 00:32:27: in the book about the power of narratives and storytelling,
00:32:28 --> 00:32:30: which I totally agree with.
00:32:30 --> 00:32:33: I know that there are a handful of stories that
00:32:33 --> 00:32:35: I've heard from 20 years ago when I've been in
00:32:36 --> 00:32:39: public meetings that stick with me today and in fact
00:32:39 --> 00:32:42: have been really helpful for me to be able to
00:32:42 --> 00:32:45: share on those examples in other contexts to help people
00:32:45 --> 00:32:48: kind of understand a point I'm trying to make.
00:32:48 --> 00:32:51: But I wondered, is there a compelling story that stuck
00:32:51 --> 00:32:54: with you and can you share that with us?
00:32:54 --> 00:32:54: Absolutely.
00:32:56 --> 00:32:58: And I'd love to hear also tied to that story
00:32:58 --> 00:33:02: like any outcomes that resulted or something that you might
00:33:02 --> 00:33:04: have done to pivot the way that you were the
00:33:04 --> 00:33:07: team or the context of folks were working or how
00:33:07 --> 00:33:09: they were working based on hearing?
00:33:09 --> 00:33:12: That I have a really great story.
00:33:12 --> 00:33:15: So we were working on the Vision Zero plan for
00:33:15 --> 00:33:19: the District of Columbia and at that time, so for
00:33:19 --> 00:33:23: in case listeners don't have no idea what I'm talking
00:33:23 --> 00:33:23: about.

00:33:23 --> 00:33:27: So as I mentioned, Vision Zero is 0 traffic related
00:33:27 --> 00:33:28: deaths and fatalities.
00:33:29 --> 00:33:30: It's not crashes.
00:33:30 --> 00:33:33: It's understanding crashes are going to happen, but no one
00:33:33 --> 00:33:35: should die or be seriously injured from that.
00:33:35 --> 00:33:38: And it's a concept from Sweden that was brought to
00:33:38 --> 00:33:40: the US I believe New Yorker.
00:33:40 --> 00:33:43: One of them was the first kind of city to
00:33:43 --> 00:33:46: be a, you know, US based Vision Zero city and
00:33:46 --> 00:33:49: at the time we were doing the DC Vision Zero
00:33:49 --> 00:33:50: plan.
00:33:50 --> 00:33:52: It's only been about eight other plans at that point.
00:33:52 --> 00:33:54: But DC was the first that actually had community
00:33:55 --> 00:33:55: engagement.
00:33:56 --> 00:33:59: We did a summit with a bunch of summer youth
00:33:59 --> 00:34:03: employment program because one, it was great because
00:34:03 --> 00:34:04: they were
00:34:04 --> 00:34:06: a captivated audience.
00:34:06 --> 00:34:07: They had to be there to get their, you know,
00:34:07 --> 00:34:09: funding for the day.
00:34:09 --> 00:34:12: And so it was about 203 hundred young people that
00:34:12 --> 00:34:16: we had in A room and went through several different
00:34:16 --> 00:34:18: things to get to Vision 0.
00:34:18 --> 00:34:21: So we had a station where they did a redesign,
00:34:21 --> 00:34:23: we had a survey, we had all these things, but
00:34:23 --> 00:34:25: specifically the redesign.
00:34:25 --> 00:34:28: So I was at the redesign table and I specifically
00:34:28 --> 00:34:32: remember this, this young, young, young child because he
00:34:32 --> 00:34:35: was
00:34:35 --> 00:34:37: on a, he was a younger teen and we were
00:34:37 --> 00:34:40: going through the design.
00:34:40 --> 00:34:43: And so one of the things that he had talked
00:34:43 --> 00:34:44: about was it was we were talking about the concept
00:34:45 --> 00:34:48: of walking against traffic.
00:34:48 --> 00:34:52: And so he made the point of, hey, I am
00:34:52 --> 00:34:55: a young black child, you know, or young black teen,
00:34:55 --> 00:34:58: you know, walking through the neighborhood.
00:34:59 --> 00:35:03: And so if I go visit my grandmother, if I'm
00:35:03 --> 00:35:07: jaywalking, I'm trying to avoid getting, you know, getting
00:35:07 --> 00:35:09: jumped
00:35:10 --> 00:35:13: or I'm trying to avoid confrontation with a group of
00:35:10 --> 00:35:13: guys or, you know, a group of people.
00:35:10 --> 00:35:13: And I have done my calculated risk that walking against

00:35:13 --> 00:35:16: traffic at this point is safer for me than going
00:35:16 --> 00:35:20: to the corner and having to interact with this other
00:35:20 --> 00:35:21: group of people.
00:35:21 --> 00:35:25: And so with that, I think it really was this
00:35:25 --> 00:35:30: person sharing their lived experience, sharing what they go
to,
00:35:30 --> 00:35:34: sharing their concept of what safety looks like.
00:35:35 --> 00:35:37: And it really caused us.
00:35:37 --> 00:35:42: We actually went back through Vision Zero and basically
removed
00:35:42 --> 00:35:45: anything enforcement related to pedestrian.
00:35:45 --> 00:35:46: We removed all of it.
00:35:47 --> 00:35:50: And it was for that reason of, you know, a
00:35:50 --> 00:35:55: person telling their story and the impact of the action.
00:35:55 --> 00:35:55: And they're not.
00:35:55 --> 00:35:57: They're like I'm look, I'm not trying to be intentionally
00:35:58 --> 00:35:59: disrespectful, I am just trying to survive.
00:36:00 --> 00:36:00: And so that is a.
00:36:01 --> 00:36:02: That's the example that I have.
00:36:03 --> 00:36:03: Mm hmm.
00:36:03 --> 00:36:06: You have some great tools in your book.
00:36:07 --> 00:36:10: I know that since reading the book and finishing the
00:36:10 --> 00:36:13: book, I've shared specific excerpts of that book with my
00:36:13 --> 00:36:16: own team here at the studio that are very much
00:36:16 --> 00:36:20: involved in community engagement and consultation tied to
transportation work.
00:36:21 --> 00:36:24: And what I appreciate is that you're trying to set
00:36:24 --> 00:36:29: out a framework for really where different people and
different
00:36:29 --> 00:36:33: stakeholders including those that are the clients or the
owners
00:36:33 --> 00:36:36: in the process, you know really helping to map out
00:36:36 --> 00:36:40: and articulate where are you coming from, what are people's
00:36:40 --> 00:36:44: fears, not just the general public, but even your own
00:36:44 --> 00:36:48: fears in the work, your needs, your requirements and others
00:36:48 --> 00:36:49: as well.
00:36:49 --> 00:36:51: And and bringing that together.
00:36:52 --> 00:36:54: You even had this really helpful graph.
00:36:54 --> 00:36:56: I can't remember what page it was on, but it
00:36:56 --> 00:36:59: was towards the end of the book and I remember
00:36:59 --> 00:37:01: a series of questions that you can kind of ask
00:37:02 --> 00:37:03: and I I love that section.
00:37:03 --> 00:37:06: I just wanted to to share that with you, but

00:37:06 --> 00:37:07: I also just.

00:37:08 --> 00:37:10: Want to say on the community engagement and then the

00:37:10 --> 00:37:12: book and and I I know I've gotten some feedback.

00:37:12 --> 00:37:15: Some people are like, I feel like you're missing some

00:37:15 --> 00:37:17: steps and it's like, it's not to be prescriptive.

00:37:18 --> 00:37:19: It's a framework.

00:37:19 --> 00:37:22: And a framework is something that can be modified based

00:37:22 --> 00:37:25: on the context of whatever you're doing, 'cause I'm very

00:37:25 --> 00:37:29: clear about public engagement, I just want to make this

00:37:29 --> 00:37:29: point.

00:37:30 --> 00:37:33: I'm very clear that public engagement can be AI, am

00:37:34 --> 00:37:35: telling you what I'm doing.

00:37:36 --> 00:37:37: That is perfectly fine.

00:37:38 --> 00:37:41: It's being honest about it 'cause I think sometimes we

00:37:41 --> 00:37:43: already know what we want to do and we pretend

00:37:43 --> 00:37:46: we come up with this whole pretend public engagement to

00:37:46 --> 00:37:48: end up back at the same result.

00:37:49 --> 00:37:50: And it's not going to be for every project.

00:37:50 --> 00:37:52: But you know, and I'll I'll take an example, I

00:37:53 --> 00:37:53: don't.

00:37:53 --> 00:37:57: At every place that I've ever worked, sidewalks are the

00:37:58 --> 00:38:00: single hardest project to do.

00:38:01 --> 00:38:02: Every community, it doesn't matter.

00:38:02 --> 00:38:08: Rich, poor, black, white, Latino, Asian, it doesn't matter.

00:38:09 --> 00:38:11: Sidewalks are the single hardest project.

00:38:12 --> 00:38:16: And so and that's a case where depending on what

00:38:16 --> 00:38:21: the law is for that jurisdiction, it's not a conversation.

00:38:21 --> 00:38:24: There are going to be times when, hey, should we,

00:38:24 --> 00:38:26: should we not but a sidewalk, if the law is

00:38:26 --> 00:38:28: there's a sidewalk on one side of the street, that's

00:38:29 --> 00:38:29: the law.

00:38:29 --> 00:38:30: So we are here to tell you we're going to

00:38:30 --> 00:38:31: install a sidewalk.

00:38:31 --> 00:38:34: Now what is up for debate is we put on

00:38:34 --> 00:38:37: this side or this side how we connect, you know,

00:38:37 --> 00:38:38: those type of things.

00:38:39 --> 00:38:41: And in some cases that isn't even up for debate.

00:38:41 --> 00:38:43: You know, like I know that some jurisdictions now have

00:38:43 --> 00:38:45: changed the law so you have to have a sidewalk

00:38:45 --> 00:38:46: on both sides of the street.

00:38:46 --> 00:38:49: So we're not really here to have an engagement of

00:38:49 --> 00:38:51: should we do a sidewalk or not.

00:38:51 --> 00:38:52: That's not the question.

00:38:52 --> 00:38:54: And I think it's about being honest of we are

00:38:54 --> 00:38:56: here because we're going to install this sidewalk.

00:38:58 --> 00:38:59: Yeah, I hear you.

00:38:59 --> 00:39:01: We we we think a lot about that too and

00:39:01 --> 00:39:05: encourage our like just even when we're walking into conversations

00:39:05 --> 00:39:07: to be as transparent as possible.

00:39:08 --> 00:39:11: And that includes like you know and I'm an urban

00:39:11 --> 00:39:14: designer but that doesn't mean every project allows me to

00:39:14 --> 00:39:15: blue sky everything.

00:39:15 --> 00:39:18: There are very clear constraints and parameters and all this

00:39:18 --> 00:39:21: to say is trying to be as open and transparent

00:39:21 --> 00:39:24: about these are the open doors today and these are

00:39:24 --> 00:39:25: the closed doors.

00:39:25 --> 00:39:26: But For these reasons, no.

00:39:26 --> 00:39:27: Yep, absolutely.

00:39:28 --> 00:39:30: We have a few minutes before we turn to the

00:39:30 --> 00:39:33: group and take some questions, but I would love to

00:39:33 --> 00:39:36: be able to spend a few moments to talk about

00:39:36 --> 00:39:36: climate.

00:39:37 --> 00:39:39: So top of mind and should be for all of

00:39:40 --> 00:39:42: us and certainly I just think about the group of

00:39:42 --> 00:39:46: participants here today and land development and city design and

00:39:46 --> 00:39:49: how we and our professions really have a great influence

00:39:49 --> 00:39:53: and how we're going to ultimately decarbonize our cities and

00:39:53 --> 00:39:53: our planet.

00:39:55 --> 00:39:58: You know, we we know that the largest emitters of

00:39:59 --> 00:40:03: carbon are both well buildings, big emitter both in terms

00:40:03 --> 00:40:08: of embodied carbon new construction but also gas emitting vehicles.

00:40:08 --> 00:40:10: And so I bring this back.

00:40:10 --> 00:40:14: To our conversation today about inclusive transportation.

00:40:14 --> 00:40:17: And I wonder, does this topic come up in your

00:40:17 --> 00:40:18: practice, in your conversations?

00:40:19 --> 00:40:20: Absolutely.

00:40:21 --> 00:40:24: So my title is transportation and drainage operations.

00:40:25 --> 00:40:26: It you know, absolutely.

00:40:26 --> 00:40:29: I think that what we see now it's I think

00:40:29 --> 00:40:32: there's climate is a lot of things.

00:40:32 --> 00:40:34: So there is the emission side of it.

00:40:34 --> 00:40:37: And so we say, oh, EVs will, they're going to

00:40:37 --> 00:40:39: come and everything will be fine and we can move
00:40:39 --> 00:40:42: forward and it's like as long as electric vehicles.
00:40:42 --> 00:40:46: So but even with EVs, the energy has to come
00:40:46 --> 00:40:48: from somewhere.
00:40:48 --> 00:40:53: It's just moving it away from the city to somewhere
00:40:53 --> 00:40:53: else.
00:40:53 --> 00:40:56: And so that's still a part of a conversation we
00:40:56 --> 00:40:59: need to have and even the disposable of the batteries,
00:40:59 --> 00:41:02: right that becomes a challenge or you know now we
00:41:02 --> 00:41:06: recognize as they catch on fire the firefighters don't even
00:41:06 --> 00:41:08: have the tools to put them out.
00:41:08 --> 00:41:12: So conversation if you had, but you know there is
00:41:12 --> 00:41:16: the overall emission side of it and while cars are
00:41:16 --> 00:41:22: getting cleaner, there's still, there's still emissions from you
know
00:41:22 --> 00:41:24: gas powered vehicles.
00:41:24 --> 00:41:29: And then when you think about our roadways, our weather
00:41:29 --> 00:41:31: is becoming more intense.
00:41:31 --> 00:41:35: Whether you believe in global warming or not, there is
00:41:35 --> 00:41:39: no denying that we are experiencing extremely intense
weather.
00:41:40 --> 00:41:43: You know in Houston we now have three winters back-to-
back
00:41:44 --> 00:41:47: that we have been well below freezing, you know and
00:41:47 --> 00:41:51: even including below 0 Houston, you know you have San
00:41:51 --> 00:41:54: Diego that they just this week we're underwater.
00:41:54 --> 00:41:57: San Francisco was underwater.
00:41:57 --> 00:42:00: You have an intensity that is happening more and more
00:42:01 --> 00:42:04: that you have to recognize that you know it's, it's
00:42:04 --> 00:42:07: impacting our right of ways because that's largely where
we're
00:42:08 --> 00:42:09: going to hold the water, right.
00:42:09 --> 00:42:11: The pipes that are either underneath.
00:42:11 --> 00:42:14: You have places like you know Texas and Florida and
00:42:14 --> 00:42:17: some of the Midwest that have open drainage systems as
00:42:17 --> 00:42:17: well.
00:42:18 --> 00:42:21: And so we absolutely think about it and have to
00:42:21 --> 00:42:22: think about it.
00:42:22 --> 00:42:25: And it's why I'm not saying we should do it,
00:42:25 --> 00:42:29: but we should consider a bolder future that says, well,
00:42:29 --> 00:42:32: what if we got rid of half of the pavement
00:42:32 --> 00:42:33: on our roads up?
00:42:34 --> 00:42:37: You know, what if we took that space and we

00:42:37 --> 00:42:40: turned it back to trees or greenage?
00:42:40 --> 00:42:44: And I know it's not going to be perfect everywhere,
00:42:44 --> 00:42:47: but we just have to begin thinking about are we
00:42:47 --> 00:42:50: using our right of way that's most effective as the
00:42:50 --> 00:42:52: future keeps marching forward?
00:42:52 --> 00:42:54: Because as long as we have all this pavement, we're
00:42:54 --> 00:42:57: just going to continue to see flooding as these storms
00:42:57 --> 00:42:58: become more intense.
00:42:59 --> 00:43:00: Well, completely.
00:43:00 --> 00:43:03: And I just think about this is, you know, it
00:43:03 --> 00:43:05: was one thing for us to have our conversations and
00:43:05 --> 00:43:08: it's even hard enough for some people to keep up
00:43:08 --> 00:43:09: with this concept.
00:43:10 --> 00:43:10: Of.
00:43:10 --> 00:43:14: Streets being what you're you know their public rights of
00:43:14 --> 00:43:18: way meaning they're increasingly important civic spaces.
00:43:19 --> 00:43:19: There's that.
00:43:20 --> 00:43:23: But there's also from an environmental and and time
00:43:23 --> 00:43:26: perspective we have associated with that.
00:43:27 --> 00:43:30: We need to work at a clip to really rethink
00:43:30 --> 00:43:34: like dramatically rethink the standards that we're upholding
00:43:34 --> 00:43:39: and create
00:43:39 --> 00:43:40: new standards, new standards for streetscape design, for
00:43:40 --> 00:43:42: stormwater management
00:43:42 --> 00:43:46: for all of that.
00:43:46 --> 00:43:47: Yeah, I I totally hear you there.
00:43:47 --> 00:43:52: And just I wondered if we could wrap with one
00:43:52 --> 00:43:57: final question.
00:43:57 --> 00:44:00: And I wondered if you could share one story, Veronica,
00:44:00 --> 00:44:04: in or one example really about great leadership.
00:44:04 --> 00:44:06: Because in your book you talk about your experience, being
00:44:06 --> 00:44:09: a woman, being black, being a planner, engineer, all of
00:44:09 --> 00:44:12: these components of what makes you who you are.
00:44:13 --> 00:44:14: And you say something to the effect of I realize
00:44:15 --> 00:44:17: that the largest barrier to equity is leadership.
00:44:17 --> 00:44:18: Absolutely.
00:44:19 --> 00:44:19: I would love to know a time that you have
00:44:20 --> 00:44:20: leadership or were.
00:44:21 --> 00:44:24: You know you.
00:44:24 --> 00:44:27: Know.
00:44:27 --> 00:44:27: I I was on an interview panel for an executive
00:44:28 --> 00:44:28: and one of the things they asked me was, you

00:44:27 --> 00:44:30: know, what does it take to be a good leader?

00:44:30 --> 00:44:32: I'm going to say this and this is going to

00:44:32 --> 00:44:34: be something you probably none of you have probably ever

00:44:34 --> 00:44:34: heard.

00:44:35 --> 00:44:36: As a leader.

00:44:37 --> 00:44:41: You need to one at all times make sure your

00:44:41 --> 00:44:43: financial house is in order.

00:44:44 --> 00:44:46: And what I mean is you need to live below

00:44:46 --> 00:44:47: your means.

00:44:47 --> 00:44:49: No matter as you go in leadership, you get more

00:44:49 --> 00:44:49: money.

00:44:50 --> 00:44:51: Live below your means.

00:44:51 --> 00:44:55: You always need to have a cushion of money that

00:44:55 --> 00:44:57: you don't need this job to live.

00:44:58 --> 00:45:02: And it's important because the minute you need any of

00:45:02 --> 00:45:05: these jobs for your survival, for just living.

00:45:05 --> 00:45:08: And I know this, it's a very privileged statement to

00:45:08 --> 00:45:11: make, but the minute you need this job to live,

00:45:11 --> 00:45:13: you cannot make the decisions that you sometimes need to

00:45:13 --> 00:45:14: make.

00:45:14 --> 00:45:18: You cannot fight the battles that sometimes you need to

00:45:18 --> 00:45:18: fight.

00:45:18 --> 00:45:19: And I'm not.

00:45:19 --> 00:45:21: And I don't mean in a adversarial way, right?

00:45:21 --> 00:45:23: You know, you got to, you know, be able to

00:45:24 --> 00:45:25: adjust to who you're talking to.

00:45:25 --> 00:45:26: And I talked about that in the book.

00:45:27 --> 00:45:30: But that's what I really mean by that, especially should

00:45:30 --> 00:45:33: you ever want to be in a seat like I

00:45:33 --> 00:45:33: have.

00:45:33 --> 00:45:37: If you want to be over Department of Transportation, transit

00:45:38 --> 00:45:42: agency, whatever, you really need to keep your financial

00:45:42 --> 00:45:45: house

00:45:42 --> 00:45:45: in order so that you can show up every day

00:45:45 --> 00:45:48: and not need this job to survive.

00:45:48 --> 00:45:50: I need this job for my lifestyle.

00:45:50 --> 00:45:53: My lifestyle is I got to leave the country every

00:45:53 --> 00:45:54: so often.

00:45:54 --> 00:45:57: But my life is taken care of because of the

00:45:57 --> 00:46:01: financial decisions that I've made, even as I've moved

00:46:01 --> 00:46:01: through

00:46:01 --> 00:46:01: my career.

00:46:02 --> 00:46:04: And that is how you can get to the point
00:46:04 --> 00:46:05: of being a bold leader.
00:46:08 --> 00:46:11: I know that's not what anybody expected, but that's to
00:46:11 --> 00:46:15: me a very important leadership lesson, especially for the
young
00:46:15 --> 00:46:19: planners, Engineers, you know, designers on here, just grow
your
00:46:19 --> 00:46:22: career and always make sure you have a cushion available
00:46:22 --> 00:46:25: to you because this is, this work isn't easy.
00:46:26 --> 00:46:30: You know, I've had to go to the powers that
00:46:30 --> 00:46:34: be and state my case and and and hold my
00:46:34 --> 00:46:36: position sometimes.
00:46:36 --> 00:46:39: And with that and I was, I've fortunately been in
00:46:39 --> 00:46:42: a position of support from leadership.
00:46:42 --> 00:46:45: But I also recognize there's many of my colleagues around
00:46:45 --> 00:46:48: the country that aren't in that position and they get
00:46:48 --> 00:46:50: thanked for their service.
00:46:50 --> 00:46:52: So that is, to me, the the biggest way to
00:46:52 --> 00:46:53: get to bold leadership.
00:46:54 --> 00:46:56: Thank you so much, Veronica.
00:46:56 --> 00:47:00: We've got questions to get to.
00:47:00 --> 00:47:02: And so I would love to open up the floor
00:47:02 --> 00:47:04: to some of the questions.
00:47:04 --> 00:47:06: And I'm seeing them come in right now.
00:47:07 --> 00:47:11: I see one from somebody that I know.
00:47:11 --> 00:47:13: Actually, I'm not gonna say her name to put her
00:47:13 --> 00:47:15: on the spot, but it's a great question.
00:47:15 --> 00:47:16: I'm gonna read it out.
00:47:16 --> 00:47:16: OK.
00:47:16 --> 00:47:21: Veronica, it says transportation's become a highly politicized
issue, influencing
00:47:21 --> 00:47:25: local elections, posing challenges for professionals in the
field as
00:47:25 --> 00:47:26: we navigate our work.
00:47:27 --> 00:47:30: Can you, Veronica, provide an example of how of how
00:47:30 --> 00:47:33: you have confronted this issue in pursuit of a safer
00:47:33 --> 00:47:36: and more equitable transportation system?
00:47:37 --> 00:47:40: I'm laughing because as you know what I'm hand dealing
00:47:40 --> 00:47:42: with, but I don't want to bring that up.
00:47:43 --> 00:47:47: I will say this, I think that as an industry
00:47:47 --> 00:47:51: we are going to have to learn to be extremely
00:47:51 --> 00:47:54: nimble and very quick with our language.
00:47:55 --> 00:47:57: And I'll give a very specific example.

00:47:58 --> 00:48:02: You know, as we we live in our world and
00:48:02 --> 00:48:06: we have, you know, our vision Zeros and and all
00:48:06 --> 00:48:07: of these things.
00:48:07 --> 00:48:11: But that's not sometimes we can be, I won't say
00:48:12 --> 00:48:16: dogmatic in our language, but we live in our language
00:48:16 --> 00:48:20: and it's not in a way that the public can
00:48:20 --> 00:48:21: understand.
00:48:21 --> 00:48:25: And sometimes we have to use language to present
something
00:48:25 --> 00:48:26: different.
00:48:27 --> 00:48:28: And so like I'll just pick on bike lanes.
00:48:28 --> 00:48:31: Bike lanes get people like really emotional, right?
00:48:31 --> 00:48:32: And it's the bike lane.
00:48:33 --> 00:48:36: And we have to remove the focus from the bike
00:48:36 --> 00:48:39: lane and say this is a safety project and here's
00:48:39 --> 00:48:42: how people are going to be able to get across
00:48:42 --> 00:48:43: the street.
00:48:43 --> 00:48:46: And for people walking, this is a great benefit because
00:48:46 --> 00:48:50: you now have a separation between you, more separation
between
00:48:50 --> 00:48:51: you and the cars.
00:48:51 --> 00:48:55: And for people driving from a traffic perspective, it's actually
00:48:55 --> 00:48:58: going to be a lot easier to navigate because you'll
00:48:58 --> 00:49:01: have you know, a curb there and you know maybe
00:49:01 --> 00:49:01: one lane.
00:49:02 --> 00:49:05: So it's it's I have found more and more I
00:49:05 --> 00:49:10: have to evolve my language quickly because especially what
I
00:49:10 --> 00:49:13: find is people will Co opt your language and use
00:49:13 --> 00:49:15: it against you.
00:49:15 --> 00:49:17: And I talk about a little bit in the book
00:49:17 --> 00:49:20: like you know, woke and equity is critical race theory.
00:49:20 --> 00:49:21: So, OK, great.
00:49:21 --> 00:49:22: So now we're going to change the language.
00:49:22 --> 00:49:25: We're going to keep changing, and we have to learn
00:49:25 --> 00:49:25: to be nimble.
00:49:26 --> 00:49:29: You know, as these things, these things and systems
continue
00:49:29 --> 00:49:30: to get attacked.
00:49:31 --> 00:49:31: Mm hmm.
00:49:34 --> 00:49:36: Next question, Veronica.
00:49:37 --> 00:49:41: So this person asks, I'm a community engagement
professional, not

00:49:41 --> 00:49:44: yet a planner, and in your book you give how
00:49:44 --> 00:49:47: to do community engagement as a planner and engineer.
00:49:47 --> 00:49:50: In my job, this person's job, we often end up
00:49:50 --> 00:49:54: having to do box checking because engagement or box
checking
00:49:54 --> 00:49:58: engagement because the planners and engineers have
immovable deliverables.
00:49:59 --> 00:50:02: How do you, as a planner and engineer, make room
00:50:02 --> 00:50:06: for true Co creation with the community when you have
00:50:06 --> 00:50:08: immovable deliverables?
00:50:09 --> 00:50:11: It's not about the deliverable, right.
00:50:11 --> 00:50:13: And so a lot of what I talk about in
00:50:13 --> 00:50:17: Chapter 5, it's how you bring these things together.
00:50:18 --> 00:50:21: It is whatever the deliverable is, you got to just
00:50:21 --> 00:50:24: back off to say, all right, so if the deliverable,
00:50:24 --> 00:50:27: if it's due April 1st, then on March 1st we're
00:50:27 --> 00:50:31: going to have the community meeting and here's specifically
what
00:50:31 --> 00:50:34: we are going to ask the community in order to
00:50:34 --> 00:50:35: feed into that deliverable.
00:50:36 --> 00:50:39: I think what tends to happen and I talk about
00:50:39 --> 00:50:42: this, but what tends to happen is we have to
00:50:42 --> 00:50:45: hit these these goals, these milestones and we may do
00:50:45 --> 00:50:49: check the back and get engagement, but it's not informing
00:50:49 --> 00:50:50: anything.
00:50:50 --> 00:50:53: And so it's about creating a process where the engagement
00:50:53 --> 00:50:56: is actually informing what you needed to inform.
00:50:57 --> 00:50:59: But it's going to come down to how, What questions
00:50:59 --> 00:51:01: are you asking the public?
00:51:02 --> 00:51:05: I personally hate meetings where it is.
00:51:05 --> 00:51:07: Tell me all your problems.
00:51:07 --> 00:51:08: You know their problems, right?
00:51:08 --> 00:51:11: And so I even share the framework of like go
00:51:11 --> 00:51:14: pull every 311 for the last 2-3 years.
00:51:14 --> 00:51:16: You know every every city has some type of a
00:51:16 --> 00:51:17: complaint system.
00:51:17 --> 00:51:20: Go pull the information for that neighborhood for a certain
00:51:20 --> 00:51:22: amount of time and see what they're saying.
00:51:23 --> 00:51:25: You poll your colleagues to see what they're saying and
00:51:25 --> 00:51:28: so therefore you can go to with your first deliverable,
00:51:28 --> 00:51:29: which is usually existing conditions.
00:51:30 --> 00:51:33: So you can go to your first meeting with your
00:51:33 --> 00:51:36: existing conditions and saying hey community.

00:51:36 --> 00:51:37: So here's how we've heard from you.

00:51:37 --> 00:51:39: So here's everything that you've said in the past.

00:51:39 --> 00:51:42: We've mapped it in here and it's informed our existing

00:51:42 --> 00:51:42: conditions.

00:51:42 --> 00:51:43: Did we miss anything?

00:51:44 --> 00:51:47: So it's still not a it gets you still beyond

00:51:47 --> 00:51:49: the check the box, but it is pulling what the

00:51:49 --> 00:51:53: community has already told you into that specific deliverable.

00:51:53 --> 00:51:55: So it can be done, you just have to budget

00:51:55 --> 00:51:56: the time for it.

00:51:58 --> 00:51:59: More engagement.

00:52:02 --> 00:52:05: So next question, do you see a lot of these

00:52:05 --> 00:52:08: same issues showing up in the same way for older

00:52:08 --> 00:52:09: adult populations?

00:52:10 --> 00:52:14: Are there ways that this conversation changes when we shift

00:52:14 --> 00:52:17: the demographic focus to an aging in place theme?

00:52:19 --> 00:52:21: Yes and but no.

00:52:21 --> 00:52:24: And so I'll say this, I think that there's a

00:52:24 --> 00:52:28: very, very interesting thing happening to older adults.

00:52:29 --> 00:52:33: You are having some that are realizing, huh I'm getting

00:52:33 --> 00:52:37: older and I need to be active in a different

00:52:37 --> 00:52:37: way.

00:52:38 --> 00:52:38: I will.

00:52:39 --> 00:52:43: You know here there's an electric bicycle company here that

00:52:43 --> 00:52:46: has like a huge, they're like they it's right by

00:52:46 --> 00:52:49: my house and it's like a little older person like

00:52:49 --> 00:52:50: biking gang.

00:52:50 --> 00:52:53: And so they all meet up at this bike shop

00:52:53 --> 00:52:56: and they all have these electric bicycles.

00:52:56 --> 00:52:59: And so it's been great in that electric bicycles allow

00:52:59 --> 00:53:02: older adults to be active, but to be able to

00:53:02 --> 00:53:05: bike further than if they were on just a regular,

00:53:05 --> 00:53:06: you know, analog bike.

00:53:06 --> 00:53:08: I guess it was what you call it a pedal

00:53:08 --> 00:53:11: bike, you know, if you were just on a regular

00:53:11 --> 00:53:11: bike.

00:53:12 --> 00:53:14: And so that is where people are like, hey, I

00:53:14 --> 00:53:15: could be active in a different way.

00:53:16 --> 00:53:18: I think that as the boomers start to get a

00:53:18 --> 00:53:21: little bit older, because a lot of them are, because

00:53:21 --> 00:53:25: they are probably in better health than the previous

generations,

00:53:25 --> 00:53:28: you know they're still driving and I think they're still
00:53:28 --> 00:53:29: holding on to that.
00:53:30 --> 00:53:32: I think it'll be interesting to see what happens as
00:53:32 --> 00:53:35: they start getting a little older, the site gets a
00:53:35 --> 00:53:38: little bit harder and and and all of those things.
00:53:38 --> 00:53:41: But we also see in some, in some cities the
00:53:41 --> 00:53:45: trend that older adults, empty nesters, they're actually
tending to
00:53:45 --> 00:53:48: navigate to some of the denser areas so that they
00:53:48 --> 00:53:51: can have a better experience where they can walk to
00:53:51 --> 00:53:55: the grocery store and library and all of those things.
00:53:56 --> 00:53:57: So I think it's different.
00:53:57 --> 00:53:59: I think it's just that group in the middle, that's
00:53:59 --> 00:54:03: just, I don't know, they're holding on where they're they.
00:54:03 --> 00:54:05: They are older adults, but I don't know that they've
00:54:05 --> 00:54:06: acknowledged that they're older adults yet.
00:54:07 --> 00:54:08: Sounds like me.
00:54:10 --> 00:54:13: One final question here, Veronica, and I think this is
00:54:13 --> 00:54:13: a good one.
00:54:13 --> 00:54:16: It seems very popular with those that are listening here
00:54:16 --> 00:54:17: with us today.
00:54:17 --> 00:54:20: And that's if you could talk a little bit about
00:54:21 --> 00:54:24: the tensions between moving at the speed of trust and
00:54:24 --> 00:54:28: the urgency, the urgency of work on climate saving lives
00:54:28 --> 00:54:30: through safer Rd.
00:54:30 --> 00:54:32: design and all these things that we're talking about today
00:54:32 --> 00:54:33: that are so important.
00:54:34 --> 00:54:37: This person asking is saying this feels like a tension
00:54:37 --> 00:54:41: that exists in progressive transportation circles, but it's really
hard
00:54:41 --> 00:54:42: to discuss bluntly.
00:54:44 --> 00:54:47: Yes, there is definitely a tension and part of it
00:54:47 --> 00:54:50: is, I think it goes back to you think for
00:54:51 --> 00:54:53: a lot of so think about our world.
00:54:53 --> 00:54:56: So we sit on this webinar, right, and we're getting
00:54:56 --> 00:54:59: all this data and information and then we're going to
00:54:59 --> 00:55:02: continue education classes to get the latest in urban design.
00:55:02 --> 00:55:03: We live in it every day.
00:55:04 --> 00:55:07: So things that are very clear to us, you know,
00:55:07 --> 00:55:11: the use of chicanes, you know the green infrastructure, all
00:55:11 --> 00:55:13: of these things that are an aid to us.
00:55:13 --> 00:55:16: You have we have to understand we're dealing with the

00:55:16 --> 00:55:16: public.
00:55:16 --> 00:55:18: They cannot see what we're taught.
00:55:18 --> 00:55:19: They have no idea what we're talking about.
00:55:20 --> 00:55:23: I'll never forget I was in a community in Grand
00:55:23 --> 00:55:26: Rapids and we had mentioned apartments on top of a
00:55:26 --> 00:55:29: grocery store and it was like mind blowing.
00:55:29 --> 00:55:31: And for those, for the rest of us, we're like,
00:55:31 --> 00:55:33: yeah, of course you could put a grocery store on
00:55:33 --> 00:55:34: top of a Walmart.
00:55:34 --> 00:55:34: Why not?
00:55:35 --> 00:55:37: But for them, it was mind blowing.
00:55:37 --> 00:55:38: They'd never seen it.
00:55:38 --> 00:55:41: So part of it is helping the community see what's
00:55:42 --> 00:55:45: possible and that can help move a little faster.
00:55:45 --> 00:55:47: A good pilot project.
00:55:47 --> 00:55:49: It is a great way to move things faster.
00:55:49 --> 00:55:52: I know that we've we've, I've done that you know
00:55:52 --> 00:55:56: throughout different neighborhoods throughout my career of
just using a
00:55:56 --> 00:55:59: little paint pylons to just show what a ball bat
00:55:59 --> 00:55:59: looks like.
00:55:59 --> 00:56:01: Because if I say we should do curb ball bat,
00:56:01 --> 00:56:03: the community members will be like, what are you talking
00:56:03 --> 00:56:04: about That means I can't park.
00:56:04 --> 00:56:05: No, you can still park.
00:56:06 --> 00:56:08: So it really is taking that time to do, you
00:56:09 --> 00:56:12: know, even with just chalk so that people can see,
00:56:12 --> 00:56:13: OK, this is what you mean.
00:56:14 --> 00:56:16: And so some of that helps to build the trust
00:56:16 --> 00:56:18: and allows you to move a little bit quicker.
00:56:19 --> 00:56:20: Yeah, I I love that.
00:56:20 --> 00:56:21: I think there's a lot to it.
00:56:21 --> 00:56:26: There's definitely the room for the conversation, but it needs
00:56:26 --> 00:56:29: to not only start early, but then be ongoing in
00:56:29 --> 00:56:29: that.
00:56:29 --> 00:56:32: You know, our cities are constantly evolving as are all
00:56:33 --> 00:56:34: the component parts of it.
00:56:35 --> 00:56:38: So there's a point in time where you need to
00:56:38 --> 00:56:41: not just think and talk but also jump, you know,
00:56:41 --> 00:56:44: like do it, try it, but also be willing to
00:56:44 --> 00:56:48: be open to pivot through continued, you know, how's this
00:56:48 --> 00:56:49: going and evaluation?

00:56:52 --> 00:56:54: I have had just like the most wonderful time in
00:56:54 --> 00:56:56: this conversation with you, Veronica.
00:56:56 --> 00:56:57: Thank you.
00:56:57 --> 00:56:58: Thank you so much.
00:56:58 --> 00:56:58: Thank you.
00:56:59 --> 00:57:01: Thank you for everyone listening.
00:57:01 --> 00:57:03: Lots of great participants here.
00:57:03 --> 00:57:04: Yes, thank you to everybody.
00:57:04 --> 00:57:07: I'm just going to pass the mic back to Emily.
00:57:14 --> 00:57:15: Great.
00:57:15 --> 00:57:16: Thank you, Shonda.
00:57:16 --> 00:57:17: Thank you, Veronica.
00:57:18 --> 00:57:21: Let's give them a virtual round of applause.
00:57:22 --> 00:57:25: I know I really enjoyed listening to them, Chad, and
00:57:25 --> 00:57:27: if it were up to me, we could listen to
00:57:27 --> 00:57:28: them chat all day long.
00:57:29 --> 00:57:32: But as we wrap up, I would really appreciate if
00:57:32 --> 00:57:36: you could take a moment to open up this survey
00:57:36 --> 00:57:39: link to tell us what you thought about today's program.
00:57:40 --> 00:57:43: Your feedback is really important to us as we use
00:57:43 --> 00:57:46: it to shape our future Uli Healthy Places events and
00:57:46 --> 00:57:46: offerings.
00:57:49 --> 00:57:51: And then a final word of thanks to all our
00:57:51 --> 00:57:54: participants and for engaging in the audience Q&A.
00:57:54 --> 00:57:56: Thank you so much for joining today.
00:57:56 --> 00:57:58: We hope you enjoyed today's program.
00:57:58 --> 00:58:01: We also hope that you'll join us for the next
00:58:01 --> 00:58:04: Uli Healthy Places book talk, which will be held this
00:58:04 --> 00:58:05: summer in July.
00:58:05 --> 00:58:07: So stay tuned For more information on that.
00:58:07 --> 00:58:09: We hope you enjoy the rest of your day.
00:58:10 --> 00:58:10: Thank you.

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