GREEN LIGHT FOR GREAT STREETS



THE AGENCY ACCELERATOR PROJECT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As cities reimagine and reinvest in their streets to meet the mobility challenges ahead, they must also re-imagine and re-invest in their own internal agency structures and processes. All too often, doing things the way they've always been done limits cities' ability to make the safety and livability changes that their residents desperately need.

Funded by Ford's Greenfield Labs, NACTO's Green Light for Great Streets project explores the structural challenges faced by transportation agencies. In Phase I of the Green Light project, NACTO developed a holistic assessment survey of its member cities, and conducted 89 additional interviews with transportation department staff in sixteen cities to gain a better understanding of typical internal processes, management structures, and project delivery challenges. Through this work, **NACTO found a wide range of structures in place in city transportation departments around the country as well as clear markers of effectiveness** for project delivery. These include:

- ► Defined and clear processes for implementation, and well-informed staff.
- ► Recurring or guaranteed funding sources.
- ▶ Project pipelines built around standardized designs that allow cities to expedite work.
- ► A strategic use of consultants to bolster efforts or train on unusual skills.
- ► A clear vision, strong political will, and defined metrics for success.

In Phase II, NACTO staff undertook in-depth Agency Accelerator work with two cities— Pittsburgh and San José—to help them work through a specific structural challenge that each city identified as a barrier to success. In San José, the work focused on developing and disseminating a survey to understand what marketing messages would work best to promote Better BikewaySJ, the city's rapid downtown protected bike lane network build-out project. In Pittsburgh, NACTO staff worked with Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) leadership to create a framework for prioritizing projects. To support Pittsburgh's efforts, NACTO spoke with seven additional cities to learn about their prioritization processes, and facilitated a series of in-person workshops to build leadership buy-in on Pittsburgh's fledgling prioritization plans. Key findings include:

- City project prioritization processes can be grouped into one of three paths, depending on local and political context. As a result, project prioritization is both **an art and a** science, and no one model guarantees success.
- ► In all cities, a **strong vision from the top** was at the core of successful prioritization.
- ► In Pittsburgh, **ongoing and upfront communication across key agencies** proved to be critical for developing buy-in on the project prioritization process.
- In San José, safety was consistently ranked as the most resonant message for bike ridership.
- In San José, the online survey captured a more diverse set of respondents than inperson surveys at public meetings.

PHASE I: UNDERSTANDING AGENCY STRUCTURES

NACTO began the Green Light for Great Streets project by embarking on a comprehensive assessment of the responsibilities, capabilities, and resources of transportation departments across the U.S. To collect input, NACTO developed a benchmarking survey and conducted indepth interviews with staff from transportation departments in 16 member cities.

Surveying the field

NACTO's benchmarking survey asked cities about their roles, resources, and responsibilities. In particular, the questions were designed to help understand what degree of operational control transportation agencies had (e.g., in-house ability to pour concrete, change signals, or repave) and to identify simple metrics (e.g., lane miles built) that could serve as a gauge of agency efficiency. Question themes included: which department takes the lead on transportation work, the extent of the agency's operational responsibilities, if and how they contract out work, what targets they set and data they collect, their budgets, the size of their street network, and some project accomplishments such as bike lane and bus lane miles built the previous year. In total, nineteen cities responded, providing insights about a variety differently-sized and organized cities across the U.S.



Selected results from the benchmarking survey

Selected results from the benchmarking survey

			Structure		Use In-H	ouse Crews to I	mplement	Deferrere	Protected Bike Lanes		
City	Population	Total Lane Mileage	Governance	Agency Type	Street Resurfacing	Markings & Signage	Capital/Civil Construction	Targets	Total Mileage	Miles Built in 2016	
Alexandria	155,810	500	City Mgr / Council	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		2	0	
Atlanta	472,522	1,600	Strong Mayor	DPW / Planning		\checkmark		× 1 🗞	5	3	
Boston	667,137	-	Strong Mayor	DOT		\checkmark		S	2.7	1.4	
Charlotte	842,051	5,200	City Mgr / Council	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark		~	2	1	
Denver	682,545	5,000	Strong Mayor	DPW	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	S	3.8	1	
Madison	252,551	-	Strong Mayor	Engineering		\checkmark			0.8	0	
Memphis	656,861	6,818	Strong Mayor	Engineering		\checkmark	\checkmark		7.7	2.1	
Nashville	684,410	5,000	Strong Mayor	DPW	\checkmark	\checkmark		se / 📞	5	0	
New York City	8,537,673	22,334	Strong Mayor	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	~	76	17.7	
Palo Alto	67,024	487.5	City Mgr / Council	Planning		\checkmark		¢	1	1	
Phoenix	1,615,017	13,500	Strong Mayor	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark			0	0	
Pittsburgh	303,625	-	Strong Mayor	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark		S	3.1	0.1	
Portland	639,863	4,852	Regional Council	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	¢	3.5	1.1	
San Antonio	1,492,510	4,066	Strong Council	Engineering	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		0.2	0	
San Francisco	870,887	-	Strong Mayor / Strong Council	Combined DOT / Transit Agency		\checkmark		se 1 😵	14.8	1	
San José	472,522	4,322	City Mgr / Council	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	× 1 😵	0.3	0	
Seattle	704,352	3,954	Strong Mayor	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	/	11	3.5	
Vancouver, WA	174,826	1,810	City Mgr / Council	Community Development		\checkmark		٢	5.6	0	
Washington, DC	681,170	1,146	Strong Mayor	DOT	\checkmark	\checkmark			8.3	1.4	

= Nominal implementation target, such as linear mileage or total number of project elements installed by a target year.

Mode Shift target, e.g. "% non-auto trips by a target year."

A more nuanced picture

To deepen the understanding of the challenges transportation departments face in delivering projects, NACTO also interviewed staff in sixteen cities. These interviews expanded upon findings from the survey and offered a more nuanced and candid understanding of typical internal processes, management structures, and project delivery challenges. In each city, NACTO worked to identify key staff or teams of staff at a variety of different levels of the agency, each representing a unique point along the project delivery pathway. In total, NACTO conducted 89 interviews with over 200 people, including leadership and policy teams, planners and project managers, engineers, budget offices and grant managers, and other core players depending on the local context.

Taken together, the interviews and survey responses collected during Phase I create a complex picture of the organizational structures and internal processes that help and hinder cities as they work to meet mobility goals. NACTO found a number of structural themes that tended to correlate with effective project delivery, and hypothesized about specific actions that would help agencies move toward those structural paradigms. In general, NACTO found that cities that succeed have:

- ► Defined and clear processes for implementation, and staff that understand their roles and responsibilities. NACTO hypothesizes that 1) developing a clear process for project approvals, changes and hand-offs, 2) arranging a workflow that enables a single champion to manage a project through its entire lifespan, and 3) creating opportunities for staff to meet early and often to engage on projects will all support well-defined implementation processes and clear roles and responsibilities.
- Recurring or guaranteed funding sources so that staff spend less time chasing grants, and more time actually implementing. NACTO hypothesizes that 1) consolidating grant management separately from project implementation and 2) seeking private sector funding, particularly in the absence of consistent city funding, will enable staff to focus more on project delivery.
- Project pipelines built around standardized designs and street geometry configurations that allow cities to expedite engineering work. NACTO hypothesizes that 1) developing design standards even for simple projects and 2) training planners to do engineering work can speed project delivery and reduce bottlenecks.
- A strategic use of consultants to bolster efforts or train on unusual skills, so that city staff can focus on developing the skills for core work. NACTO hypothesizes that 1) batching service contracts, 2) embedding consultants within the agency and setting up on-call contracts, and 3) utilizing consultants for specialized needs rather than routine work will reduce delays and minimize internal staffing challenges while continuing to retain qualified staff.
- A clear vision, strong political will, and defined metrics for what success means from individual projects to overall programs. NACTO hypothesizes that 1) using timebound, direct output metrics and 2) developing project measurement tools will help spur project delivery, and can shape the public process by quantifying project changes and benefits.

In Phase II of the project, NACTO sought to test these reflections and hypotheses while working closely with two NACTO cities to improve upon specific project delivery challenges.

PHASE II: AGENCY ACCELERATORS

For Phase II, NACTO selected two cities to participate in the Green Light project as **Agency Accelerators.** In selecting these cities, NACTO looked for agencies whose structural challenges aligned well with one or more of the hypotheses about project delivery and who were interested in testing theories of change. Two agencies emerged as clear candidates: the San José Department of Transportation (SJ DOT) and the Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI).

At the time, SJ DOT was gearing up to do public outreach about Better BikewaySJ, a largescale rapid build-out of protected bike lanes in Downtown San José. Their challenge was how to design a marketing campaign for the project that would most resonate with local residents and therefore minimize backlash about implementation. In selecting San José as an Agency Accelerators focus, NACTO tested the hypothesis that cities can shape the public process to ease project approvals by developing a messaging campaign that resonates with local residents.

In Pittsburgh, the recently chartered DOMI was in the early stages of realigning existing staff and office cultures and developing processes for how work gets done in a new agency. Initially, NACTO sought to test the hypotheses that implementing a clear internal architecture for project management and oversight would enable DOMI to rapidly implement an ambitious set of goals, and that standards for design and delivery would help avert project pitfalls and miscues. However, as the project evolved, DOMI narrowed its focus to developing a process for project prioritization, enabling NACTO to test the hypothesis that creating a well defined system for prioritizing projects would help DOMI to implement its goals and more effectively balance new needs and projects with long-term investments and repairs.

SAN JOSÉ

To test the hypothesis in San José, NACTO staff worked closely with SJ DOT to develop and disseminate a survey to understand what marketing messages would work best to promote Better BikewaySJ. Using the messaging identified in the survey, and an associated NACTO-developed engagement strategy, NACTO will work with SJ DOT through Spring 2019 as they implement 23 miles of new protected lanes. Building on the survey findings, NACTO staff worked with SJ DOT to craft an engagement strategy to help message the Better Bikeways project during the early stages of implementation.

Key Findings

- Among the primary messaging themes, Safety consistently polled the strongest across all demographic groups and breakdowns.
- Age emerged as one of the dividing lines in message acceptance, with people over age 40 less likely to respond positively to any messages other than Safety.

- San José residents who drive were mostly positive about each of the messages tested, and considerably more positive about bike messaging than non-San José drivers.
- ► The survey under-represents some demographic groups, and the City will have to work creatively to capture a demographically representative sample of the San José population.
- Online respondents were somewhat more diverse, and more representative of the city of San José, than responses gathered in person at public meetings.

PITTSBURGH

To test the hypothesis in Pittsburgh, NACTO staff worked in-depth with DOMI leadership to create a framework for project prioritization and facilitated a series of inperson workshops to build leadership buy-in. NACTO staff also conducted interviews with seven additional cities around the country to better understand how they prioritize and budget for projects, and also facilitated one-on-one conversations between DOMI leadership and four of those cities about their processes. Through this effort, NACTO was able to create a profile of the different types of project prioritization processes and identify which one best fit Pittsburgh's needs.

Key Findings

- The systems cities use to prioritize funding requests generally fall into three main categories:
 - "Opportunity Driven" cities utilize a combination of plans and opportunities to select projects they're confident can be delivered
 - "Plan Driven" citywide or agency planning documents guide prioritization
 - "Policy Driven" City Council, Mayor, or voter mandates prioritize a broad topic area (e.g., safety, equity, access)
- Project prioritization is both an art and a science, and no one model guarantees success.
- A strong vision from the top is at the core of every process that successfully supports a city's efforts to build priority projects. Focusing that vision into measurable goals is crucial to prioritization.
- Ongoing and upfront communication across key agencies is critical for developing buy-in on the project prioritization process.

SAN JOSÉ: MESSAGING BETTER BIKEWAYS

In San José, NACTO's Agency Accelerator explored the hypothesis that cities can increase the likelihood that a project will succeed if they run their implementation like a campaign, tailoring messaging strategies to the concerns and experiences of different types of stakeholders, and building public support based on the most resonant local themes. Using the opportunity created by the Better BikewaySJ project—a large scale build-out of San José's downtown, protected bike network—NACTO worked to unearth those messages and position San José to run a more effective project campaign, create a smoother project delivery path, reduce political turbulence, and garner public support for big change.



THE WORK

During the winter of 2018, NACTO conducted a research scan of messaging strategies across North American cities, and identified six common themes used to promote and measure bikeway and other street design projects:

- Safety
- Health & Fitness
- Cost Savings
- Time Savings
- Environmental Impact
- Economic Impact

Between February and May 2018, NACTO and SJ DOT conducted an online survey of residents and workers in San José to test messages about these six themes that are commonly used to promote cycling, along with one more theme that the City of San José identified as locally relevant: Access to Destinations.

The survey tested each theme with a "fact" statement and a "feeling" statement to explore if themes had different resonance depending on how they were presented. It also included demographic questions—age, race, gender, income, San José residency, owner/renter, trip mode—to shed light on which messages would have strongest local resonance and if different audiences would find specific messages more or less persuasive.

The survey was distributed online through social media, in-person at public meetings & events, via printed flyers distributed to community partners and local businesses, and on the City of San José's project website. It was offered in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese languages. In total, over 600 San José residents and workers participated in the survey.

Survey	
Responses	n
Total	603

		% of	San losá
Age (18+)	n	Responses	Actual %
18 - 29	46	11%	22%
30 - 44	184	46 %	30%
45 - 59	121	30%	27 %
60 & over	51	13%	22%
Gender			
Male	228	55%	50%
Female	172	41%	50%
Other ID	7	2%	-
Prefer not to say	10	2%	-
Race			
White	257	62 %	27 %
Latinx	47	11%	33%
Asian	41	10%	34%
African-American	2	0.5%	3%
Pacific Islander	6	1%	0.4%
Two or more races	27	7%	3%
Other	8	2%	0.4%
Prefer not to say	29	7%	-
Income			
< \$25k per year	19	5%	14%
\$25 - 75k per year	61	15%	29 %
\$75 - 150k per year	110	26%	31%
> \$150k per year	170	41%	27%
Prefer not to say	56	14%	-



Among the primary messaging themes, Safety consistently polled the strongest across all demographic groups and breakdowns (e.g., mode used for last trip, San José residency, etc.). Respondents in all demographic groupings rated Safety messages higher than other themes, suggesting that San José should focus on creating a compelling narrative around how the new protected lane network will enhance personal safety. Additionally, Time Savings, Economic Impact, and Access to Downtown Destinations scored positively among most audiences, though responses were nearly uniform in support of Safety messages. Importantly, Cost Savings, which is sometimes suggested as a strong case-making message, scored worse than the other six message options.



- ► Age emerged as one of the dividing lines in message acceptance, with people over age 40 less likely to respond positively to any messages other than Safety. Literature review of cycling acceptance suggests that older people are less likely to support cycling infrastructure or respond positively to bicycle messaging. This was borne out in our survey with the exception of Safety messages, reinforcing the idea that as San José markets the Better BikewaySJ project, **Safety** should be a prime message, especially with older populations.
- San José residents who drive were mostly positive about each of the messages tested, and considerably more positive about bike messaging than non-San José drivers. In general, respondents who live in San José were similarly receptive to all messages as non-San José residents. However, people who drive to work and do not live in San José rated messages ~16% lower on average (and rated individual messages between 7 and 20% below the mean). Drivers living outside San José are an outlier among demographic groups, as drivers living in San José scored messages nearly at the mean for all responses. Economic Impact and Cost Savings messages tested the lowest among drivers.

Messaging Themes by Demographic Group

																	- .			·
	Ger	Fe- male	Ag Under 40	ge Over 40	White	Race Latinx	Asian	\$25 - \$75	\$75 - \$150	Over \$150k	Bike	Com	mute Transit	Multi	Bike	Car	Transit	Walk	Live	IN SJ No
ghest inked	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Envr.	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety
1	Time	Dest.	Time	Dest.	Time			Time		Time	Time	Safety	Time	Econ.	Time		Time	Time	Time	
	Econ.	Time	Econ.	Time	Dest.	Time	Dest.	Dest.	Time	Econ.	Dest.	Time		Time	Dest.	Dest.	Dest.	Envr.	Dest.	Time
	Dest.	Envr.	Dest.	Envr.	Envr.	Dest.	Time	Cost	Dest.	Dest.	Health	Dest.	Dest.	Cost	Health	Envr.		Dest.		Dest.
	Envr.	Health	Envr.	Health	Econ.	Health	Health	Health	Health	Envr.	Econ.	Health	Health	Dest.	Econ.	Health	Envr.	Health	Envr.	Envr.
	Health		Health		Health	Cost	Envr.	Econ.	Envr.	Health	Envr.		Envr.	Envr.	Envr.	Time	Cost	Econ.	Health	Health
west	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Envr.	Cost	Envr.	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Health	Cost	Cost	Health	Cost	Cost	Cost

Legend:

Safety	Time	Access to	Economic
	Savings	Destinations	Savings
Health &	Environment	Cost	
Fitness	Impact	Savings	

- The survey under-represents some demographic groups, and the City will have to work creatively to capture a demographically representative sample of the San José population. The survey was disseminated both online and in-person, with online participants comprising two-thirds of all responses and responses generated at public meetings and through flyering representing the other third. In spite of this mix of engagement methods, the responses gathered do not fully reflect the residents of San José. For example, about 43% of San José residents earn less than \$75,000/year but only 22% of survey respondents do. A disproportionately small number of people who identified as Latinx (12% respondents vs. 33% citywide) or Asian (11% respondents vs. 34% citywide) responded to the survey, suggesting that considerably more engagement work is necessary to create an accurate portrait of San José resident preferences.
- Online respondents were somewhat more diverse, and more representative of the city of San José, than responses gathered in person at public meetings. While still over-representing white and wealthy, responses generated through social mediabased engagement performed better than in-person responses in representing the racial composition of San José (36% non-white respondents from social media vs. 30% from in-person outreach, compared to a 73% citywide composition), and was less skewed toward the highest-income group (50% of in-person responses vs. 44% of social media responses, compared to 27% citywide). Social media extended the reach of engagement in crucial ways, but still possesses limitations for reaching a fully representative sample of San José residents.

NEXT STEPS IN SAN JOSÉ

Building off the survey findings and experiences from other cities, NACTO & SJ DOT have developed an Outreach Plan to align the Better BikewaySJ project delivery schedule with engagement and messaging opportunities. In particular, this plan is mapped over a "political valley" curve — an analysis of the arch of public opinion toward similarly transformative projects in other cities — to help SJ DOT anticipate and prepare for public reactions to the project.

Through additional funding from the Knight Foundation, NACTO and San José will continue to work closely on the implementation project phase, with construction commencing in summer 2018. NACTO is advising on design, evaluation, and engagement activities and will apply the lessons of the BBSJ survey to summer, fall, and winter outreach, to help San José stay the course and build continued public buy-in for the project.

Outreach Plan





Retter **Bikeway**SJ

Choose your language / Elija su idioma / Xin chọn ngôn ngữ của quý vị:

- 📀 English
- O Español
- 🔘 Tiếng Việt

Knight Foundation

San Jose survey opportunity! The City of San Jose - City Gov't wants to make downtown more inviting & safe for bicyclists 🚴 & pedestrians 🗼 What do you think of the city's streets and bike routes?



SURVEYMONKEY.COM Better BikewaySJ Su Web survey powered by	Irvey SurveyMonkey.com. Crea	Learn More
ြို Like	Comment	分 Share
25		
6 Shares		
Write a comment.		00

"Việc tách rời khỏi luồng lưu thông xe cộ tạo ra được sự khác biệt lớn lao. Tôi cảm thấy an toàn hơn khi đạp xe trên làn đường mới." -Kelley, cư dân San José



PITTSBURGH: CREATING A PROCESS TO PRIORITIZE PROJECTS

In Pittsburgh, NACTO's Agency Accelerator work focused on two simultaneous efforts: providing Pittsburgh with a window into how other cities approach project prioritization, and supporting Pittsburgh as they develop their own process. The Pittsburgh transportation context—a recently formed Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) with new leadership and a long list of potential (and backlogged) projects formed a unique scenario to explore the benefits and drawbacks of existing systems elsewhere, and the opportunity to build a process in Pittsburgh to fit their evolving needs.



THE WORK

Between January and June 2018, NACTO interviewed key project development and leadership teams in seven North American cities to better understand how they prioritize street transportation projects. The purpose of these interviews was to learn what system those cities use to prioritize projects, how prioritization is tied to stated city goals or strategies (e.g., Council goals, Mayoral goals, agency goals, etc.), and whether those strategies successfully support a city's efforts to build priority projects. Learning about how project prioritization is structured in other cities was valuable for thinking about how to create a system in Pittsburgh.

Cities interviewed:

- ► Cambridge, MA
- ► Portland, OR
- Los Angeles, CA
- Seattle, WA
- Minneapolis, MN
- Vancouver, Canada
- Oakland, CA

At the same time, NACTO also worked closely with DOMI leadership to **create and facilitate two in-person organizational design workshops** to take key staff through the process of creating a project prioritization framework and build consensus and buy-in between leadership and the budget office about priorities. The workshops served to build internal DOMI alignment in advance of a prioritized project list. Building on discussions with DOMI staff and leadership, as well as in-depth conversations with several other cities about their systems, the Assistant Director of Planning, Policy, and Permitting developed a system and mapping application to prioritize projects using three key data points: equity, safety, and state of good repair.

WORKSHOP DESIGN

Workshop Workshop Setting the Framework Building Consensus DOMI leadership, Project managers, DOMI Who? leadership, Budget **Budget office** office Articulate a prioritization Hear from experts and Purpose process and build practitioners with experience agreement between creating prioritization processes the department and the about the value of utilizing a budget office on the framework—e.g., safety, health, adopted methodology access, equity-to set priorities Gather input from staff on challenges and opportunities Outcome General agreement among Understanding of staff DOMI leadership about challenges & needs priorities Guidance for DOMI Assistant Strong agreement between Director to begin building budget office and DOMI prioritization criteria leadership about proposed

prioritization process & future

needs

WHAT WE LEARNED

City structures for prioritizing transportation projects generally fall into three main categories that we named **"Opportunity Driven," "Plan Driven,"** and **"Policy Driven,"** as diagrammed on the following page. The cities interviewed for this project use creative and evolving methods to prioritize transportation projects. While most cities use parts of all three structures, grouping the approaches into these three categories helped us to best describe the loudest and often most influential forces driving project prioritization.

Interviews with project prioritization teams in other cities also made it clear that project prioritization is both a science and an art and no one model guarantees success. A quantitative system (ranking, scoring, weighting) using existing data sources is valuable for culling down a long list of projects. But getting to a true shortlist requires qualitative review by city staff who consider everything from local politics to neighborhood context to community support when finalizing their department's project requests.

NACTO found that a strong vision from the top was at the core of every process that successfully supported a city's efforts to build priority projects. In most cities, this vision is demonstrated through strategic documents that communicate to the public, agency staff, and other city agencies the priorities for the transportation agency. Decisions about projects are most easily made when agency leadership can prioritize broad visions into clear, measurable outputs - e.g., "reduce fatalities to zero," "increase percent of residents within ¼ mile of transit," etc. Explicit support and goal-setting from City Council or the Mayor can set a direction for the agency that it can lean on over the course of several years of budget requests.

In Pittsburgh, scheduled and structured conversations between DOMI leadership and the budget office improved transparency about the budget office's constraints and DOMI's priorities. Conversations like these, which this year have occurred prior to the budget cycle, and have happened on an ongoing basis, are critical for developing buy-in on the project prioritization process. A structured discussion between both agencies helped to reveal that the budget office supports DOMI's priorities, but relies on DOMI to provide concrete justification for their requests and accurate budget estimates. In the same vein, both agencies agreed about the value of and need for developing planning documents—something that had previously seemed unlikely.

Pros:

Flexible;

evolving

Cons:

Subject to

(politics,

external forces

advocates, etc.);

not strategic

Project Prioritization: "Opportunity Driven"

In an "Opportunity Driven" system, cities often utilize a series of plans, external funding opportunities, and paving schedules to **select projects that they know can be delivered** within a given time frame. The driving force behind which projects are prioritized or selected for delivery may vary from year to year based on opportunities and politics. But cities are making it work, and are getting projects done despite having no clearly defined system for prioritizing projects.



Project Prioritization: "Plan Driven"

In a "Plan Driven" system, cities are heavily **guided by citywide and agency planning documents** that often clearly define transportation priorities and may even identify a long-list of projects. Sometimes these plans exist because of previous policy decisions, and often plans allow for opportunistic decision-making. But a strong plan lays out clear goals and strategies that cities can lean on year over year.





Project Prioritization: "Policy Driven"

Cities that utilize "Policy Driven" systems often **rely on City Council, Mayor, or voter mandates** to prioritize a specific but broad topic (e.g., safety, equity, access) that drives an agency prioritization process that is developed through that frame. In a "Policy Driven" system, transportation departments are often tasked with developing plans that cement combined agency and city goals and create a roadmap for future work.

Pros:

High priority; relevant; often accompanied by funding; strategic

Cons:

Broad; unstructured; open to interpretation





Pittsburgh's newly minted prioritization process will be modeled during the 2019 budget cycle. NACTO plans to follow DOMI's progress closely and provide guidance and support as appropriate. DOMI's goal is to submit a list of projects or parts of projects that could feasibly be completed within the following fiscal year that are prioritized to accomplish broad equity, safety, and state of good repair goals.

Once a prioritized list is submitted and projects are funded, DOMI wants to evaluate whether a stronger prioritization structure supported DOMI's efforts to prioritize projects that aim to accomplish agency goals. In addition, by the beginning of next year's budget cycle (July 2019), DOMI is interested in evaluating whether prioritized projects were delivered and, if not, why not. Further, they are interested to see whether prioritized projects advanced agency goals as planned.

NEXT STEPS FOR GREEN LIGHT FOR GREAT STREETS

Addressing the sustainability and mobility challenges ahead will require cities to think creatively and strategically about their capacity, resources, and tools. In exploring and analyzing the structural challenges faced by transportation agencies across North America, NACTO hopes to shed some light on ways that cities can meet these challenges with increasing clarity, efficiency, and vision.

Throughout the course of this project, many cities expressed interest in receiving continued support in thinking and working through their thorniest structural challenges. The questions explored in this work have direct implications for the challenges facing city transportation departments across North America, such as: What agency structures or project delivery processes can help (or hinder) project delivery? What resources do DOT directors need to increase agency efficiency? How should agencies communicate, internally and externally, about goals and priorities? Is there a "secret sauce" for creating an effective transportation agency? When does it make sense for a city to create a DOT or otherwise consolidate transportation functions?

In addition to facilitating ongoing knowledge-sharing opportunities like the **Designing Cities Conference**, and capacity-building programs like **Leadership NACTO**, NACTO would like to develop a resource document designed to identify big structural questions, highlight existing practices, and recommend theories of change. NACTO proposes convening a group of cities that have successfully implemented processes that support effective project delivery to guide the development of that resource, and plans to hold workshops and trainings for other cities on how to use it. Through this and all of NACTO's work, the organization continues to look for opportunities to expand and develop cities' expertise to build safer, more sustainable, vibrant streets.

NACTO thanks the Ford Greenfield Labs team for funding and providing valuable insights on this work, our gracious and enthusiastic city partners in San José and Pittsburgh, and the innumerable people we spoke with throughout the NACTO network who shared their time and knowledge with us in the execution of this project.