

Better Together: How Planners and Engineers Can Advance Pedestrian Safety



Carly Haithcock, PE
Associate Principal
Engineer



Michael Kiel
Program Manager II



Nicholas Samuel
Senior Regional Planner

The Silo Problem

Siloed Approach

- Planner creates concept
- Hands off to engineer
- Engineer identifies 'problems'
- Concept changes

Collaborative Approach

- Joint problem definition
- Mutual understanding and iteration
- Engineer identifies constraint
- Concept refined

Siloed work produces worse safety outcomes because neither discipline alone sees the full picture.



What Planners Bring

Context & Vision

Understanding intersectionality of land use, demographics, destinations, and equity

Community Voice

Engaging stakeholders and translating needs into design

Long-term Thinking

Policy frameworks and future-oriented planning

Place-making

Designing for human behavior and public space quality

Big Picture

Seeing the street as more than infrastructure



What Engineers Bring

Technical Standards

Regulatory requirements and design guidelines

Safety Analysis

Quantifying risk through crash data and metrics

Operations

Understanding performance, capacity, and traffic flow

Durability

Designing for long-term maintenance and resilience

Problem-solving

Creative solutions within real-world constraints



Who Else?

Public Health

Health determinants of built environment

Researchers

What does the data say?

First Responders

They see the aftermath of crashes and they write the reports

Children

Where do they feel safe and what can they understand

Neighbors

Experience the street each day

Maintenance Crews

What lasts?

Political Representation

Support, prioritize, and preclude policy options

Activism

Organizes latent or overt desires from residents

Finance

Weighs finite resources and benefit-cost



Open Forum

- What each panelist sees
- Where perspectives differ
- What opportunities emerge when we see together
- **What do you see?**

SCHOOL

SPEED
LIMIT
20

7:00AM - 9:00AM
2:00PM - 3:30PM

CELL PHONE
USE
PROHIBITED
UP TO \$200 FINE





PLEASE BE KIND TO CYCLISTS

← Yaupon DR 8300









END
ROAD WORK

SPEED
30

SOUTHWEST
DESTRUCTORS
512-878-...

Final Thoughts

Two of these conversations get us partway. **Only one gets us to the breakthrough.**

NOT ENOUGH ON ITS OWN

PLANNER-LED · ENGINEER PRESENT

The Context Conversation

What's the community need and vision? Who are we designing for? How does the project connect to other infrastructure?



ENGINEER-LED · PLANNER PRESENT

The Constraints Conversation

What are the technical requirements? What's feasible? What isn't feasible (and why)?



WHERE BREAKTHROUGHS HAPPEN

The Creative Conversation

Co-led. Given context AND constraints — what is possible? Where can we innovate? What trade-offs are we willing to make?