

# UTC 2016 Fall Seminar Series

“Exploring Urban Mobility: Navigating the Road Ahead”

A Tale of Three Cities: Mobility Strategies  
in Grand Rapids, Boise and Pittsburgh

**October 27, 2016**

**Great Cities Institute Conference Room**

In an era where daily changes in behavior, technology, and funding are creating transportation disruption, many cities are offering a forward-looking, yet pragmatic, approach to sustainable mobility with unparalleled technical and problem-solving expertise. City leaders increasingly aspire to re-envision their streets as places for more than just automobiles.

These three cities are excellent examples of these principles.

**Boise, ID:** The Boise Transportation Action Plan will enable this medium-sized, fast-growing city to realize its vision of a transportation system that provides mobility choices, creates economic connections, enhances social equity and encourages healthy lifestyles. Boise’s built environment ranges from a dense, walkable downtown to more traditional exurban cul-de-sac neighborhoods bisected by large arterial streets, therefore the plan likewise includes a wide range of both transportation and land use recommendations that respond to these different contexts. For example, “park once” and new mobility/shared mobility strategies are emphasized in CBD areas to further grow walk/bike/transit mode shares; recommendations in suburban neighborhoods emphasize using existing commercial nodes at major intersections as a starting point for better walking and biking networks and building towards a more urban street-level experience through both short-term and long-term interventions. A key element of the plan was the development of a project prioritization tool for the City to use in defining its funding priorities for the County Highway District, which designs, builds and maintains the City’s streets.

**Grand Rapids, MI:** Grand Rapids is a rapidly growing urban center and future success of Downtown will be supported by providing more transportation choices and integrating technology with these choices. Accessibility and urban character are both at the heart of the attractiveness and competitive advantage of downtown areas. One of the key initiatives of their award winning GR Forward Plan was the development of a new department of the City, Mobile GR, which will be responsible for managing the City's parking assets introducing new mobility options to Downtown and building their success, and working with employers to develop transportation solutions outside of parking for single occupant vehicles. This paradigm shift in Grand Rapids will occur quickly to help support future residential growth and changes in transportation demands among millennial employees and entrepreneurs. The five-year plan will introduce a number of new mobility choices, including car share, bike share, free transit, and a Downtown circulator, as well as better aligning the pricing of the City's parking assets with the demand of customers.

**Uptown Eco-Innovation District, Pittsburgh, PA:** The Uptown and West Oakland neighborhoods present many challenges but also unique opportunities. Long overlooked, the area is a convenient pass-through, shuffling a lot of traffic to both Oakland and Downtown. It is also home to one of the most heavily used transit corridors in the City. This ongoing effort has included the challenging task of working with the community on the tradeoffs of a future BRT corridor as well as identifying all of the other infrastructure and policy improvements that will be necessary to support growth in this neighborhood.

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