

THE URBAN TRANSPORTATION MONITOR

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VOL 24, NO 3

APRIL 5, 2010

Downtown Improvement Districts Play a Role in Transportation and Parking

Supplement Municipal Services, Provide Input, Advocacy, Marketing and Promotion

Throughout the United States, many cities have instituted downtown improvement districts (DIDs) or downtown management districts (DMDs) to help revitalize city centers. These districts focus on a variety of issues but for many, transportation is a primary concern. They know that the availability of transit, parking and safe streets can have a major impact on a city's economic vitality.

In general, the districts represent the efforts of business and property owners to overcome the limits of public resources and transform their downtown areas into interesting places for other businesses to locate and to work, shop and visit. But no two downtown improvement districts are alike because each is an attempt to respond to the needs of a specific area.

Discussions with representatives of several DIDs reveal that many play a role in transportation planning and policy. Some concentrate closely on bus service, others on rail, some on commuter access, and others on transportation options for visitors. Many focus on parking availability. These organizations represent the interests of their members, and often provide municipalities with technical assistance or funding for projects. For example, The Downtown Denver Partnership, which manages the Downtown Denver Business Improvement District, works closely with the Regional Transportation District and the city and county of Denver. It has been particularly successful as a participant in the planning process for the rehabilitation of the landmark 16th Street

Mall, and in creating innovative programming to promote sustainable transportation options, such as *Get Downtown Unconventionally* and *Drive Less Denver*.

The Houston DMD describes its transportation role as that of a participant in planning the city's next five-year plan.

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Hawaii Uses "Sharks Teeth" Road Markings to Slow Traffic

Inspired by Hawaiian War Club

Speeding is a problem on many roads, and traffic engineers have many standard ways for dealing with it. But a traffic engineer in Hawaii County has developed a new, cost-effective way of getting motorists to slow down: Mark the roads with bold stripes like "sharks' teeth" to get motorists' attention.

According to Ron Thiel, head of the Hawaii County Department of Public

Work's Traffic Division, the first markings were finished being installed on Leilani Avenue on December 15, 2009. According to news reports a blind curve just before the Leilani Avenue-Kaupili Street intersection used to be the site of car crashes about once a month. Since the installation of the markings, there have been no new incidents.

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Sharks' teeth installed along a high-accident location on Big Island, Hawaii. (Photo: Courtesy of Aaron Takaba, Hawaii County Department of Public Works)

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GM Unveils the EN-V: Claimed to be a Vision for Future Urban Mobility

General Motors and its strategic partner, Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp have announced that they share a common vision for addressing the need for personal mobility through a radical change in urban travel. One of the most promising is a new vehicle form called EN-V.

EN-V, short for Electric Networked-Vehicle, maintains the core principle of personal mobility – freedom – while helping remove the motor vehicle from the environmental debate. EN-V is a two-seat electric vehicle that was designed to alleviate concerns surrounding traffic congestion, parking availability, air quality and affordability for tomorrow’s cities.

By 2030, urban areas will be home to more than 60 percent of the world’s 8 billion people, putting tremendous pressure on a public infrastructure that is already struggling to meet the growing demand for transportation and basic services. According to a General Motors press release, EN-V is suited to this future environment.

Three EN-V models were unveiled March 24 in Shanghai. They represent three different characteristics that emphasize the enjoyable nature of future trans-

portation: Jiao (Pride), Miao (Magic) and Xiao (Laugh). The concepts will be showcased from May 1 through October 31 at the SAIC-GM Pavilion at World Expo 2010 Shanghai. Shanghai is expected to become one of the epicenters for the establishment of personal mobility solutions for the future.

“EN-V reinvents the automobile by creating a new vehicle DNA through the convergence of electrification and connectivity. It provides an ideal solution for urban mobility that enables future driving to be free from petroleum and emissions, free from congestion and accidents, and more fun and fashionable than ever before,” said Kevin Wale, President and Managing Director of the GM China Group.

EN-V’s platform has evolved from the platform of the Personal Urban Mobility and Accessibility (P.U.M.A.) prototype that was developed by Segway and debuted in April 2009. Segway has worked collaboratively with GM to develop and deliver multiple copies of the drivetrain platform that seamlessly connect to and power the EN-Vs.

EN-V is propelled by electric motors in each of its two driving-mode wheels. Dynamic stabilization technology gives the EN-V its unique ability to carry two passengers and light cargo in a footprint that’s about a third of a traditional vehicle. It can literally “turn on a dime” within its own operating envelope. In addition, everything in EN-V is drive-by-wire, supporting its ability to operate autonomously or under manual control. The motors not only provide power for acceleration, but also bring the vehicle to a stop.

Power for the motors is provided by lithium-ion batteries that produce zero emissions. Recharging can occur from a conventional wall outlet using standard household power, allowing EN-V to travel at least 40 kilometers (approximately 25 miles) on a single charge. EN-V can also improve the efficiency of the public electric infrastructure since the vehicle can



GM EN-V Jiao (Pride).
(Photo: Courtesy of General Motors)

communicate with the electric grid to determine the best time to recharge based on overall usage.

By combining the Global Positioning System (GPS) with vehicle-to-vehicle

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GM EN-V Xiao (Laugh) exterior.
(Photo: Courtesy of General Motors)

The Urban Transportation Monitor, ISSN 10404880, is published monthly, except during January and August (10 issues per year), by Lawley Publications, 6813 Jeremiah Ct., Fairfax Station, VA 22039, Tel: (703)764-0512, Fax: (703)764-0516, e-mail: editors@lawleypublications.com. Subscriptions \$295 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Fairfax, VA. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to The Urban Transportation Monitor, P.O. Box 12300, Burke, VA 22009-2300.

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