The MODE CHOICE Conversation in Your Community

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A Bewildering Array of Choices...
I am a streetcar going through an existential crisis.
How Mode Choice Conversations Often Start...

“The business community will only accept ______ as a solution.”

“The Mayor just got back from _____ and wants a ______ in our downtown.”

“We need to make a BOLD STATEMENT with this investment.”

“We want the cheapest system to build and maintain.”

“The neighborhood will never accept [mode].”

“We need to make a BOLD STATEMENT with this investment.”

“The neighborhood will never accept [mode].”

“Buses are all we know how to operate.”
The Challenge: How to have a meaningful conversation about mode choice?
Transit Quality of Service Fundamentals

- Service Frequency
- Hours of Service
- Capacity
- Cost of Service Delivery

But What About...

- Economic/Urban Development
- Aesthetics
- Partnerships
- Politics
- Stigma/“Cool” Factor?
Strategy 1:

Identify Common Attributes and Differentiators among Candidate Modes
Transit Speed and Reliability
Substantial Stations
Distinctive Branding
Operations and Maintenance
Strategy 2:

Use specific elements of the community’s transit vision to identify desirable modal attributes
Reducing Environmental Impact...Alternative Fuels?
Strategy 3: Dispel Preconceived Notions of Modal Attributes
How else might we...
...Provide a quality rider experience?
...Support economic development?
...Convey a sense of permanence?
Strategy 4:

Integrate Specific Mode Decision Drivers into your Planning Framework
Quantitative Criteria

- Capital Costs
- Operating Costs
- Performance Characteristics
- System Capacity
- Productivity
- Emissions Reductions
- Costs of Expansion/Build Out
- System-Wide Service Impacts
Decision Tools and Communications
Can we quantify specific tradeoffs or value adds?

How is our funding competitiveness affected?

What are the impacts for the quantity of service we can afford to provide?

Is there a willingness to pay for perceived benefits?

How do choices impact cost of ownership?
A community’s needs, vision, values, and pocketbook drive mode choice