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**MAINE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
**8/04 \* ME**  
**Strings & Ribbons Techniques**  
**Anne Morris, Darla Zakuluzny**

**Moderator:** We're going to start Strings & Ribbons. Our first speaker is going to be Anne Morris from PBS & J Corporation. Anne's a senior project manager with PBS & J. It's a [consultation] group in Columbia, South Carolina. Her Bachelors Degree is in architecture, and her Master's degree is in city and regional planning. She has 30 years of experience in highway corridor planning, environmental documentation, public involvement, and land development planning. She's been the principal author of more than 25 environmental documents and projects in 15 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, she has provided environmental justice training for MPO state and federal agency staffs. Currently, she is a member of Transportation Research Board's Subcommittee on Community Impact Assessment, Environmental Justice and Transportation Task Force, and Contact-Sensitive Solutions Committee.

Anne's transportation projects have been selected by FHWA for inclusion in their 2000 and 2002 Transportation and Environmental Justice Publications, and her Lessons Learned in preparing the US17 Community Impact Assessment is on FHWA's website.

Anne's presentation is based on a nationwide survey that she and [Lori Padilla Brown] have conducted for the FHWA on how to identify and engage world literacy, in limited English proficiency populations.

Please welcome Anne.

**Audience:** [Applause]

**Anne Morris:** When we were doing the project for FHWA on how to identify and identify low-literacy and limited English proficiency populations, it was at the same time that Darla came up to me in Orlando last February and said that Volusia County was doing Strings & Ribbons.

I had first met the Strings & Ribbons process in December 2001 with [Lee Lane], in North Carolina. Lisa Beever, at that time, made a small presentation on it. She really didn't quite give me all the clues and pieces I needed in order to really understand how to do it. So when Darla came up to me in Florida and said, "We're going to do this," I said, "Let me know when." She called me up and she gave me a list of things.

There was one on a Saturday, so I flew down to Orlando to see it, because of the dynamics of the individuals as they play the game. None of that comes out when you're looking at the directions and the things that you need to do. But seeing how people caught onto this game, and how they enjoyed it, and how civil they were to each other -- which I don't know about some of your meetings, but some of my meetings are not all that civil. And how much fun they really had doing it! I thought, "This needs to be given a lot more publicity." So I invited her to come to this, and Judy was kind enough to give us a spot. I'm just going to take about 5 minutes to go over why I think this as a tool -- a public involvement tool -- is a godsend.

Who created this game? Lisa Beever and Nancy Wagner, when they were both with Charlotte County Punta Gorda MPO came up with this, and they deserve all the credit in the world. I don't want to make it appear or to gloss over what they did. They were phenomenal in taking this technique. I don't think at the time they were doing it that its time had come. I do think that time is here, now.

Why was it created? It was created in 1997, when they did a re-evaluation of their public-involvement programs and how effective they were. And what they came up with, as a result of their survey that they undertook was that only general issues were being identified. Who likes transit? Okay. Everybody likes transit. Who likes buses? Okay. We like buses. That's not the kind of information that you really need in order to do your long-range transportation plan. Or any kind of plan.

So what they found was that they needed a survey of specific needs, in the context of cost and available revenue. Isn't that what we have to deal with all the time? And Strings & Ribbons was born.

The reason we call it Strings & Ribbons is because those were the tools that were used to stick on maps to identify projects that were important to people. This is a low-tech -- it's about as low as you can come in this technical world -- of how to engage the public. Because you're looking at the lowest common denominator of tools, this can be used with any level of the public.

Here's one of the first little maps they used. It dealt with sidewalks. Where do you put sidewalks? Where do you put trails? Where do you put landscaping? Where do you put public transportation?

You have little buses on there. You have little ribbons that represent sidewalks and stuff like that. I mean -- low-tech. It was originally proposed that you use two or three people, or three to four people in a group. We have used -- and Darla will tell you -- you've used it in much larger groups than that -- going up to 8 or 9 people around a table.

What happened? Participation increased. Events were more fun for citizens and staff, and they weren't screaming at each other. Complicated information was easily transferred between the citizens and the staff. It takes a very complex and mumbo-jumbo that we use in transportation and makes it very basic and very easy-to-understand. The diversity of participation increased.

I was particularly struck by that, because of what I found when I did our survey of DOTs and MPOs and the fed and even consultants. I said, "How do you identify low-literacy and limited-English proficiency populations?" Not infrequently, the response came back, "We don't even consider those. That's not on our radar screen."

It's democratic. That's one of the things I like about it. Because everybody's given an equal piece of the pie and equal money. When you play the game, your vote counts as much as anybody else's. It doesn't matter whether you're poor, whether you're rich, whether you speak Spanish, whether you speak English, whether you can read or not, whether you're old or young -- your vote counts just as much. It's visual.

So the citizens that speak another language or who cannot read can play it with no trouble at all. It eliminates the traditional citizen versus the DOT conflict, because it makes the decision-makers the public. So they have to decide among themselves. So the DOTs are taken out of it. There isn't that tension; and so it's fun! People laugh. They want to play it again. I mean it really is interesting.

It makes the citizens reach consensus among themselves. It educates the citizens about the cost of the improvements. Very few citizens realize that it costs about \$130,000 - 150,000 to put in a traffic signal. Who would've thought? And once you pass that money, if you really want those traffic signals there, it's going to cost you \$450,000. Then all of a sudden, they begin to rethink. Just ask people who have to make those decisions every day at city councils or county councils or that DOTs have to make.

It produces visual documentation, because the end-product of every session is a map with what you want -- the improvements that you want -- on it. It provides an explanation of why they selected what they selected, because they have to stand up and tell you why they did what they did. And it provides a ranking mechanism,

so that you can arrive at what the public's alternative would look like. Darla's going to go into some specific information about this.

Where can I get more information about this. Here are three good sites I think I'd look at. The first one is a paper that Lisa Beever wrote. The second one is Appendix A in Florida's ETDM process -- Efficient Transportation Decision Making -- which goes into not only this game, but also other games. And then last is the Volusia County site. This shows you. And here it is. It's a transparent process. After every event where this game is played, the final product -- that map and the citizens -- have a portion of the page -- the web page. So it's a very transparent process.

What I would say is we can come up with very creative public involvement techniques and games and God knows whatever else. They're playing bingo next door, and we're doing this. But there are two things that are very important, and until those two things happen, we're not going to get very far, regardless of how good we are at doing public involvement.

One of those is, "How do you use the information that the public gives you?" We have to show the public that, in fact, all that effort they went through -- somebody's going to be doing something with it. If it just goes in the trash and somebody checks the box and says, "Yes, we did public involvement," the next time you come back to them, they're not going to show up.

The other thing is, because you can use it at the planning level, at the project development level, at the long-range transportation level -- it has a long history in any kind of group, in any kind of neighborhood, in any kind of community. Until -- and this is my "tough love," talk, here. Until we approach the public in terms of long-term relationships, and quit treating them like they're one-night stands, we're not going to get the public to come out and participate. But we're going to show you a great little public-involvement technique. And then we're going to make you play it, so that you will understand the dynamics of it and how easy it is. When we approach people with a game, they roll their eyes. You're going to see how important this can be in getting good public involvement.

Now I'd like to introduce you to Darla Z.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** I guess I need to change my name.

Let's see if I can do this without blowing it up. We're using the Strings & Ribbons game for our long-range plan update, and we are happy -- more than happy -- to admit we stole it from Lisa Beever and Nancy Wagner. It's been an amazing technique for us.

Why did we choose Strings & Ribbons? It engages the public beyond your traditional mile-post meetings. It educates the public on the long-range plan and the process. And it educates the elected officials as well as the city and county staff on the needs that the public want. And it provides the concrete examples of the projects that the public selected. It also avoids the typical process, and we avoid lecturing to the public.

As a matter of fact, we just do a little presentation beforehand, and then they're immediately jumping on the game. And they sure have some lively ones, as well. We get the true public involvement, and as I said, immediate hands-on participation.

What is Strings & Ribbons? It's an easy exercise with universal applications. It's a simple format to set up and play and advance at. It's very inexpensive. It's a process requiring minimal materials and expense, and it provides a great concrete feedback mechanism. Some of the game pieces are a small calculator, the ribbons of different colors are yarn. You can also probably use markers. A ruler -- play money -- scissors. We found that

scotch tape works much better than glue. We have a tally sheet that we list all the projects that are purchased by the players. And then we have our various stickers. And a large map of the area.

And we give them a little notepad, in case they want to do a tally sheet of their projects before they put them on the map. Some pens and markers. Then we also to save time developed a mileage conversion sheet. Because when you have to sit and do it, the mileage conversion sheet helps cut back some of your time. And the price sheet.

There are some of the game pieces. There's a little calculator. Little inexpensive things. Scissors. I wanted to make sure you could see the stickers that we use. That's our map. Also, on the map, we show the projects that have been funded or that have been planned. We try to make it as detailed as possible. We had to tweak the map several times before we were happy with it.

This is our price sheet. We give each player one of these price sheets, and we tell them it's just an estimate on some of the costs. We had it converted into Spanish, because this is the only written portion that they would have to have. And in creating my contact lists, it was quite a chore. I then began hitting up the board members, the committee members, begging for names and contacts. I went to our mailing database. I went to the phone book. I also pestered people that used to be in the MPO process. Like some of the former commissioners, or whoever I could think of. We made an announcement at our board and committee meetings.

Some of the groups that've played -- we've had churches, the Happy Wanderers Walking Club, we've had the handicapped and sight-impaired. The high school students. Each of the municipalities were asked to host a session. We've had the colleges. Bethune-Cookman college, as well as Daytona Beach Community College. The Hispanic Association. I hate to say it, but our housing authority participants -- Hurricane Charlie kind of put a crimp in that one -- so we didn't get to play. The Friends of the Library, school board transportation staff and a transportation institute. And this is a small church in Oak Hill. This is a larger group that we had in Deltona. And I'll tell you, all the people were wonderful. They just had a great time.

One lady -- I tried not to snicker too loud, because my boss was telling her, "Okay, we have five more minutes," and she said, "Sir, I've got money to spend. I'm not ready to quit, yet!" So I was snickering behind his back when he wasn't looking.

This is our Handicapped Adults of Volusia County. Three of those gentlemen at the table are blind. So we made sure somebody was there, and they were still able to get there and put in their... That's me, right there. But I said, "Okay. What do you all like to see?" The one gentleman on the other side of me goes, "You know, I don't go anywhere." He says, "I don't even know what my neighborhood is like." Basically, he felt he was stuck in his home.

The high school students. This is the Long Government Academy at Atlantic High School. We have been invited back this school year, because they thought it was such a great tool for the kids. So we are going back to them this year.

Bethune-Cookman College. As I said, we also had Daytona Beach Community College. The Hispanic Association. The Transportation Institute. This is through the Bethune-Cookman College. But it's a program that's sponsored by Federal Highway. We have the training with the Florida DOT. Those are 14- and 15-year old kids. There are some adults there that helped. But they came from all over the state. I thought they were just for the Volusia County area. But they came from Miami, Tallahassee -- they weren't familiar with our area. But they were still able to spend their money.

Municipalities. There's Anne when she came down to watch one of the games. You can see, we had a great turnout. I think we had 32 people on a Saturday afternoon for that session. Some of our healthful practices.

We maintained flexibility when it came to scheduling the sessions. We did them Saturdays, we did them at night. We did them during the day. Whenever they wanted to hold them, we held them.

We iterated that there's no cost for hosting the session. If they weren't quite sure what the MPO was, or what the Strings & Ribbons was, we went to give presentations before scheduling a session. That helped a lot. We distributed our layman's guide. There are copies out there, and it's a little humorous brochure that our executive director developed to help people better understand what the MPO is.

Providing food and drinks? We left that up to the hosting agency. It worked well. It got staff there, for sure. We were fed great. But it works. We also encourage the hosting agencies to decide who they wanted to participate at the sessions. Some of them we had they limited the number of participants because of the size. We wanted to make sure we had adequate numbers of facilitators. The game is fun as well as educational. We always try to post the photos and the maps on our website within 10 days. I gave them copies of the pictures on a CD, so they could share it with everybody.

The advantages? It provides the participants with a concrete and interactive method of participating in the planning process. You don't need any specific skills to play. You just need to spend some money -- and I'm sure we all know how to do that.

It teaches participants. If there are more transportation needs than there is money to meet those needs... And it promotes civility and politeness in a relaxed environment. I have to say, some of the sessions did get a little heated, but no bloodshed. It also helps promote the different modes of transportation. It reflects the concerns of the different communities. It offers solutions to address the concerns. We fit the game to the needs of the hosting agency. If they only have an hour to play, then we shorten the timeframe. We had a spokesperson highlight each of the groups. They told which of the projects they picked, and why.

Advantages? It provides an excellent tool for the long-range plans, which is, as I said, what we're using it for. The short-term plans. Project-specific plans. It can also be used for planning purposes, and it overcomes the barriers of literacy and language.

The benefits? Advance that it takes DOT and the MPO and everybody out of the process. It encourages the consensus among the players, and it gives them a mechanism to prioritize. And it provides a formal presentation of the decision-making. It's enjoyable and easy to play. And it makes it more personable.

That's one of the benefits. That's from the high school. They served us cake and Olive Garden for lunch. So we had a royal feast. We had three sessions with the high school. On the second session, they presented us with certificates.

How we'll use the information -- Strings & Ribbons projects will be included in the database. And the database will be used to identify how each project was selected and prioritize the improvements. We're going to identify a core set of projects that were common at the sessions. Those projects will be tested and reviewed by the MPO board. Then the results are going to be compared to the technical and citizen committee alternatives.

The MPO Board will be presented with four alternative scenarios -- three from the [inaudible] citizen's committee process, and one from the Strings & Ribbons games. The Strings & Ribbons is the only truly citizen-driven alternative. The other alternatives will be heavily-based on input from the city and county staff reps. Then the MPO board will choose projects from these four alternatives.

The outcome of our efforts? I'm just happy with what we've gotten. We've gotten over 1,700 projects identified. Over 80 maps were developed. And over 600 people have played. It would be closer to 700 if it wouldn't have been for Hurricane Charlie. It's just been amazing. We've had great feedback. There've not been

any negative ones. Everybody has just enjoyed it. Our increase in the MPO planning process was increased big-time because we have more public at our meetings than we ever had before.

Lessons Learned. I won't go into all of those, but the map should be clear and easy. When you have it with the visually-impaired, you always need to make sure that if they need help or if somebody is disabled, to be there to help them. One thing we've learned is that the facilitators need to make sure everybody's participating. Some people will just sit there and not say anything. You want to make sure that everybody's being able to give their input. No two sessions are going to be the same. Encourage them to put the game pieces on the map.

Here's how we play. We use about 6-8 people as our players. We've had more, depending on the number of people. You also need a facilitator at each table. We explain the purpose of the game and how we're going to use the information. That's [Mike Hardstadt]. He's our senior transportation planner. He's also our project manager. So he usually does all the talking. We distribute the play money equally. A lot of people want to keep the money. I think one guy was even going to lick on it so he didn't have to give it back to us. But we were hoping he didn't do that.

Here's a cost sheet we give to everybody. We found it makes it easier, instead of them having to share. We laid out all the game pieces on the table. As you can see on that map, there weren't a lot of details on that map -- so we've changed it a lot.

And the players measure the length. Here's where they can develop their own. Or some people just hop right in and start buying projects. This group decided they were going to list everything they wanted beforehand. Then the facilitator calculates the cost of the project and reports it on a tally sheet. That information is put into the database.

Then you have to pay for your project. Then they put their game pieces down. Here, somebody doesn't have enough money for a project. So they talk to the other ones and sweet-talk them out of some money, and they all contribute. And they can express whatever they want on the map. This one says, "No widening at bike paths." They didn't want any roads. The final outcome? Their money was gone. The group spokesperson explains the projects purchased. Then we developed our website for the long-range plan. It was created to display the maps and photographs from the sessions. We list every group and the date that the session is played. We provide information on the MPO, as well as a link to our main website. And we ask them to contact us if they have any questions.

That's our website information. The one link is for Strings & Ribbons. We also have a Virtual Budget game on our website, where you can go in and spend how you want to spend \$100. Then you can see how your choices compared with other people. For the website, you just click on the Strings & Ribbons link, or on the Citizen's Input. It worked for us. That's a group from Deltona. It can work for you. It's a great public involvement tool. I just can't stress that enough. I really encourage everybody to use it. That's it!

**Speaker:** So now we're going to have you play. [inaudible]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** They're going to put the projects through a model. I don't know the specific details. The MPO board has to select the project, and they haven't selected that. We were going to do a total of 40 sessions of the Strings & Ribbons, and then some of the projects the MPO board will have to pick which projects are going to be tested and selected. But they're going to be tested in a model. Don't ask me any technical stuff.

**Speaker:** Yes. I understand about the modeling process. Yes. I understand about the modeling process. I'm just trying to -- it's a brilliant game. It's wonderful. It uses all the excellent techniques that help create ownership. And that's wonderful. What I'm trying to figure out is on the pragmatic side of it, how to take the information that you get out of this -- the data -- and incorporate it into the transportation decision-making

process. There are a couple of things that... The testing part, I wasn't very clear on. Then the other part was you said there were four alternatives. Three that were generated through, I guess...

**Darla Zakuluzny:** The technical and citizen's committee. Those are... [inaudible]

**Speaker:** The technical and citizen's committees. Then, one. So somehow you come up with one plan that comes from all this data. That's confusing to me.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** The Strings & Ribbons games are all going to be put together. That's going to be one alternative. We're using this at the start of the plan. We're not waiting 'til the end. So we're getting all the input, now. Then the citizen's and technical committees will start doing their alternatives. Hopefully by the end of next month, we should have all the Strings & Ribbons sessions finished. But then those alternatives are going to be tested.

**Speaker:** So the common links are the ones that have the most...

**Anne Morris:** [inaudible]

**Speaker:** Okay, Anne. Great.

**Anne Morris:** The ranking mechanism that's provided here is you take your tally sheet -- and we'll show you what a tally sheet is -- and every time a specific project is addressed, it gets a little scratch by it. So if widening of [Taibol] Boulevard from X to Y was mentioned 98 times and it was the most-frequently mentioned, it goes to the top of the board. So you're pulling things off of each one of these little tally sheets. The number of times it's mentioned provides its ranking. Then you take the amount of money that you've set aside for your 20-year plan, and you go down that ranking until it's over. That's the public's alternative.

[inaudible]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** We gave them \$640m to spend for 20 years.

**Speaker:** The other question is, but I'm not sure that you've gotten to this point yet, so I'm not sure that you can answer this. But we have four alternatives. You go through the LRTP process. You come out with, of course, a recommendation. Let's say that that recommendation doesn't include the Strings & Ribbons alternative. Maybe it includes some of it. Maybe not all of it. How do you then deal with the feedback, back to the public? In terms of things that weren't accepted, and the explanations? Have you gotten to that point, yet?

**Darla Zakuluzny:** No.

**Speaker:** Okay.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** It's like I said. We just started this. The MPO board will decide what we're going to do. But the board is amazed. Each month at the board meetings, we give them an update on how many sessions -- how many people have played. They are just tickled with the amount of the participation.

**Speaker:** These questions are not meant to dissuade anybody. I'm just picking at details, because I have to. I do a lot of teaching, and people ask me. [inaudible]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Yes. Some of them I'm not able to answer on the questions, because the board hasn't gotten that far, yet. But it's great.

**Speaker:** It sounds like you have a lot of information on costs and location of projects. Do you also provide information on environmental impacts? Of impacts on restored properties or other community impacts?

**Darla Zakuluzny:** No. We didn't get into some of that detail. No. We tried to answer any questions they may have had, regarding a particular area. But we didn't get into the nitty-gritty.

**Anne Morris:** One area. That's the [State] 75. The wetland preservation and conservation area. If an alternative went through that, it had to be on bridge. So they realized that it was going to cost them \$6m a mile if they wanted to connect A and B through that conservation area.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Okay. You're probably talking about this SR442? They want it from the East side to the West side. That was a hot topic.

**Anne Morris:** But as far as going out and doing a survey of your entire county and identifying where wetlands were and identifying where cultural resources were -- no -- they didn't do that. It was simply a preference survey of, "Do you want roads widened here? Do you want a transit link put here? Connect it to A&B? Do you want landscaping done in the downtown? Do you want new connections made between this road and this road?" It was basically things like that.

**Speaker:** [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** Yes. Right. And I have seen it used by housing authorities. Where, if you've got this much money, what kind of appliances do you want? Things like that. Are you willing to trade off an appliance for another 10 square feet? Things like this. If we can gather together around some tables, how about eight people at each table? Can we do that? We just need to take off the stuff on the tables, and just kind of put them someplace.

One of the critical issues that we could not replicate was, we could not replicate a situation which each of you was familiar with. That's what you would have if you were all residents of a county. You would be familiar with specific roads and things like that. So please keep that in mind, and have an open mind as we pass these out. We have given you a situation that you are not familiar with. That's the only drawback to trying to show you how this is played.

You'd come up with appliances and what it costs, based on this information. So we'll have a running list of those projects that we'd prioritize.

This is a shopping center in Columbia, South Carolina. This project is an old shopping center in Columbia, South Carolina. It's for the most part vacant now. What we're looking at is ways to reinvigorate it. We've got a single railroad track all the way to Yorktown that's going to be turned into rails to trails. On that side of the railroad track is a very exclusive, predominantly white area. And also, the University of South Carolina.

You've got a pedestrian crossing. Tim, I think you're covering it up, right now. Right there. That comes down from the University of South Carolina into an area where you've got all this business and community activity. Movie theatres, bars, and clothing stores and stuff like this. This was the first area that developed outside of the central business district back in the late 40s.

You've got a bus stop down here, Kim. Yes. A bus line comes by. You've got an existing traffic signal. One of the things we need to think about is the potential for a transfer center for buses and things like this. This is an area big enough to handle something like that, where you need additional traffic signals at one of the other intersections in order to provide access.

We're looking at perhaps removal of some of the asphalt, and changing some of those areas over to perhaps a central park or a landscaped area -- a large enough landscaped area in this predominantly asphalt area and commercial area, in order to draw people in for exhibits and stuff like that, and then feed off with people -- with clients -- in the old, abandoned shopping center. Do you want to tear it down? Do you want to put a pedestrian bridge across the 5-lane road? The hard street? In order to get to... You've got some low-income, predominantly minorities, on the other side of the 5-lane hardened street.

So this really is your challenge. We can tear down part of the old thing -- the old structure. We can leave it just the way it is. We can come up with a list of clients we think that should be in it. Do you want to put a transit station there? Or is there some other way? Do you want to use it as a park-and-ride lot, and just try to do additional transit lines?

We've given you a cost for a bus of \$7m. That includes maintenance, bus, salary...

**Speaker:** And the difference between highway and community dollars.

**Anne Morris:** Yes. And the difference between highway and transit dollars. Because transit, you've got a 50/50 match. Highways, you've got an 80/20 match. If you don't use your transit money, we subtract it. You don't get to use it. It's not money that can be transferred back and forth between highways or anything else. So there's a down side to not using your transit funds. So we're going to... Have you given...?

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Yes.

**Anne Morris:** We have somebody who's going to be writing down? Kim? You're going to be doing it?

**Darla Zakuluzny:** I volunteered Kim.

**Anne Morris:** Who, back there?

**Darla Zakuluzny:** The facilitator, back there. I'll let them choose. I didn't want to get shot.

**Anne Morris:** Barry, you -- you be the facilitator.

**Voice:** Does the facilitator get to spend money?

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Well, not at the actual game, but since this is... [inaudible / crossing] And we've got \$15.3m.

**Anne Morris:** \$15.3m. That's what you've got.

**Speaker:** This is [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** No. All together. You've got \$15.3m at each table.

**Speaker:** Now what's in the rules? Do we have it ourselves or common, pooled money?

**Anne Morris:** This is what we assume -- we assume there are going to be 10 players. So we put little packets aside for 10 players. You can divvy that up any way you want to. You can [report] it yourself, or...

**Speaker:** Anne, what did you say money-wise? Same for highway transit?

**Anne Morris:** Transit, it's 50/50 split. You have to have 50 percent matching.

**Speaker:** Oh, you mean that Bush thing.

**Anne Morris:** Yes. The Bush thing. And then the highway is an 80/20 match. But you can't transfer them back and forth.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Want to give them an hour to play?

**Anne Morris:** We're going to give you about 30 minutes to play.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Oh. Okay.

**Anne Morris:** So you guys spend \$5.3m in 30 minutes.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Do we need [cross] sheets?

**Anne Morris:** That's a Hardy's. This is your project area. Saluda Avenue on one side, Hard Street on one side. Green Street on one side and a track. Yes. Yes. That's part. It used to be an old grocery store. This is your project.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Hold on. My microphone's tangled. I can't move.

**Anne Morris:** So you can think about what we can do with that one bus line through here right now? Maybe two lines. How can we revitalize this? How can we improve transit, if we want to improve transit? We could tear down everything over there and just make it one big parking lot, if you wanted to do that.

**Speaker:** We're going to determine if there's some given out... [inaudible] economic development thing that we have.

**Audience:** [laughter]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** I'm still stuck, but go ahead.

**Anne Morris:** How can we utilize redevelopment of this area, for not just people coming in and not getting another little strip shopping center?

**Darla Zakuluzny:** [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** University of South Carolina's up here [with 40 thousand streets].

**Voices:** [crossing / inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** Yes. You've got sidewalks along both sides. But you've got five lanes.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** I'm stuck.

**Speaker:** [inaudible] a little bit more detail and what [inaudible]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Do we have a shopping center?

**Speaker:** Is the center available?

**Anne Morris:** Right now it is. Yes.

**Speaker:** Okay.

**Speaker:** And what's the plan for it?

**Anne Morris:** There is no plan for it. It's [abandoned]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** So you need to decide.

**Voice:** Is this abandoned, though?

**Anne Morris:** The track is going to be abandoned. It will be Rails to Trails. There is an active airline right now. It's going to be abandoned. So we will assume it is abandoned.

**Voice:** When you said Rails to Trails, does that mean we don't have to worry about investing in it? Or is that part of our job, too?

**Anne Morris:** No. There will be a trail, here, but it will be done by somebody else. Yes.

**Voice:** That's a good thing.

**Voice:** That's a [inaudible] mistake, and he knows that?

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Voice:** [inaudible] different question.

**Anne Morris:** You can talk among yourselves. You can say, "Well..." And this is the part, if you'd lived here, you'd have that background knowledge. But what can we do to this thing, relative to the fact that you've got a bus stop here. You've got a huge parking area that you can use as a parking lot. Or you could use it as something else. You could come back in and do some creative...

**Voice:** Is this owned by the public? I mean, like...

**Anne Morris:** No, it's private.

**Voice:** It's private?

**Anne Morris:** It's private.

**Voice:** Is it up for sale?

**Voice:** It might be. Why demolish it?

**Voice:** It's the simplest for the community.

**Voice:** That's true.

**Anne Morris:** And the hurricane, its way.

**Voice:** Is there a civic center somewhere where I can...

**Anne Morris:** Civic Center would be over there on that table. That's the main downtown, right there. Right where Jack is sitting is one of the main highway links to the downtown.

**Voice:** That's important.

**Voice:** Do we know where the heavily-traveled part is?

**Anne Morris:** It's a [inaudible]

**Voice:** That doesn't necessarily mean [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** [inaudible] No. And I wouldn't say it would be congested. No.

**Voice:** So we're going to look at this as how do we shape the transportation investment?

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Voice:** Well, not hope, but try to encourage. Since we don't know what the other plans are. [What the facilitator's doing.

**Anne Morris:** This is a Hardy's. This is Alcoholics Anonymous. They're operational. But we could buy this.

**Voice:** Where's the university?

**Anne Morris:** University's right where [inaudible] 30,000 students. This is a gas station.

**Voice:** This is a gas station?

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Voice:** Well we need the gas station.

**Anne Morris:** [Ortho's] is a fitness club. We've got some little small restaurants right in here. We've got a shop that would do repairs on sewing machines. We've got like a little Eddy Bauer shop, there.

**Voice:** Low income?

**Anne Morris:** Low income, minority there. [Hardy's Street] really is the dividing line between the black and the white communities. For the purpose of this, we assumed it was black. It's not, but we don't even know that.

**Voice:** [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** This is your...

**Voice:** [inaudible] comes to the public to ask what to do?

**Anne Morris:** Decision.

**Voice:** The owners of... But what does the city have to do with this if we don't okay it?

**Anne Morris:** The city's going to acquire it, if you guys can come up with a...

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Good project.

**Anne Morris:** Yes. For use of it.

**Voice:** In addition to the money to acquire this [inaudible]

**Voice:** You're reacting to the department of transportation [inaudible]?

**Voices:** [crossing / inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** They're saying there are transportation or transit funds available if you want to use them.

**Voice:** It's going to be abandoned. [inaudible / crossing]

**Anne Morris:** I don't think it would help us. It runs from 5 Points, which is about here. It's this little area outside of the central [inaudible] to develop, to [inaudible], and that's [Gervey], and it runs right into the downtown area. So it's probably 8 blocks from the downtown.

**Voice:** [inaudible]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** I don't think so. No.

**Anne Morris:** You might want to consider this if you wanted to come in here and make a park-and-ride lot.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Yes. One is [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** Then you could take this area...

**Darla Zakuluzny:** I mean we found at two sessions that those people sat down and they were looking at the map --

**Anne Morris:** Put in a signal there...

**Darla Zakuluzny:** [inaudible] Yes.

**Anne Morris:** Since you don't have a congregation of people here.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Yes. But the whole [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** [inaudible] Downtown Columbia is not thriving.

**Voice:** Is it close enough to the university to [inaudible]?

**Anne Morris:** That might be a potential for it; yes. Of course, they have eminent domain. So...

**Darla Zakuluzny:** I don't know what that is. I know one of the buildings is a Hardy's.

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** That was the Hardy's. And then there was a gas station.

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Voice:** Outlet malls. Yes.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** That might be the gas station right there. You can draw it on the map to get a better idea of what...

**Anne Morris:** Make it work for a community center. Does it have...

**Darla Zakuluzny:** [inaudible] Yes.

**Anne Morris:** You could use it as a small police station.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** Yes. This is an abandoned building.

**Anne Morris:** It's kind of gone from the one police station to -- I can't remember -- it was some Japanese name they used to describe little satellite stuff.

What can we do with this? We're coming to you, the community, saying, "We the city want to do something with this project. We have transit funds. Do you want to spend transit funds. Do you want to do obligation bonds or whatever you want to call it? We've got \$15.3m." Sears. That was a huge Sears. It originally was Sears. They had, in addition to the Sears, this was a grocery store. This is a little bar. Then there's a volleyball court where kids can go and play.

**Voice:** Grocery store?

**Anne Morris:** No. [That's as high as they do the rails].

**Darla Zakuluzny:** That's a pedestrian bridge. Put a pedestrian bridge in there.

**Anne Morris:** I don't think it's here. This is a predominantly elderly area.

**Voice:** [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** There are two black colleges about six blocks this way. Out in the [inaudible] This really is the dividing line between the minority community and the white community -- all the way up [Barton] Street.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** In some of our sessions, as somebody said...

**Anne Morris:** Gary, I think they ought to take...

**Darla Zakuluzny:** They don't want to think about the other [part of the community].

**Voice:** [Use the synergy].

**Anne Morris:** You write that down.

**Voice:** Okay. Yes, dear.

**Voice:** One of the things I might suggest is [inaudible]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** [inaudible] which would encourage more [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** This is just a big, vacant [inaudible] This was originally created as a Sears. The whole, entire building was Sears. Way back when it was that. This was a grocery store. There is no grocery store now in this entire area. So if you're low income and you have limited mobility, this is where you have to go to the grocery store.

**Voice:** Wow.

**Anne Morris:** In reality, FoodLion just moved into and renovated it.

**[tape turn]**

**Speaker:** This is a parking lot?

**Anne Morris:** Yes. For Sears. This little area is a little bar. You come down and you play volleyball.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** The grocery store is no longer there, so the lower-income don't have a place to go.

**Anne Morris:** Nobody's ever used it for anything. It's just a little parking lot right in here.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** This is a body firm area, where you can go and do exercises and stuff.

**Anne Morris:** After drinking Margaritas. This is Alcoholics Anonymous – after you go and drink your Margaritas.

**Speaker:** Are you serious?

**Anne Morris:** Yes. This is Hardy's. This is a gas station. These are parking lots for rest areas that are along the road that comes here. One that's Green Street, Cardinal Street, Saluda and the railroad tracks. This is not a pedestrian bridge. It's on foot, now, you're crossing that track.

**Speaker:** Oh, it's on foot.

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Speaker:** What are these over here?

**Anne Morris:** Those are shops or little restaurants. You've got an Outfitter wilderness kind of place.

**Speaker:** [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** Yes. And then you've got H&R Block. You've got a vet that's right in here. You've got a place that takes old appliances and fixes them, and stuff like that. This is the area that first developed outside the central. It would've had a bunch of those things. Those are just other shops.

**Speaker:** This is AA.

**Speaker:** So those are just other shops, there.

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Darla Zakuluzny:** This is the general [inaudible]. My guess is that there's something else they're going to build. [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** This was the only grocery store in the entire area, and it's gone away.

**Speaker:** Where do all the rich people shop?

**Anne Morris:** They go here. Yes.

**Speaker:** Where do they work at?

**Anne Morris:** The rich people?

**Speaker:** Yes.

**Anne Morris:** A lot of them work at universities. You're sitting where the university is. A lot of them work just any old place. It's an old family kind of area. We've got the big old 3-story houses.

**Speaker:** [inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** They're family. Elderly.

**Speaker:** Elderly?

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Speaker:** So they're not

**Anne Morris:** No.

**Speaker:** Are they using the transit; the buses?

**Anne Morris:** Yes. In many cases, it's the only way to go to the grocery store – the bus.

**Speaker:** Are they right along the street? Or is this a mix of commercial and residential? Is there some [access]?

**Anne Morris:** They're in the second tier, right here. You've got little restaurants. You've got like a little wilderness Outfitter. You've got an H&R Block. You've got a vet. You've got a place that fixes and repairs appliances. You have a little bakery over here.

**Speaker:** [It's more commercial].

**Anne Morris:** Yes.

**Speaker:** But not on this side. There's nothing on this side.

**Speaker:** I think what we need to do is to go up to [Trenton] and take the investments that we provide, and maybe make this more attractive.

**Speaker:** Absolutely.

**Speaker:** Or something. And then...

**Speaker:** Why is this – is this just the traditional – somebody's investing money somewhere else?

**Anne Morris:** Sears. They built a bigger place out in one of the suburbs. Yes.

**Speaker:** [inaudible] make it attractive.

[speakers crossing over inaudible din]

**Speaker:** [inaudible] some examples of...

**Speaker:** You could spend \$25,000 [inaudible]

[crossing / inaudible]

**Anne Morris:** There are houses here and houses here, and somebody just punched through a [inaudible]

[inaudible / crossing]

**Anne Morris:** We can use it for anything.

[inaudible / crossing / laughter]

**Speaker:** We've got to use it for something.

[inaudible / crossing]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** It depends on what you want to buy. Yes. That way you can show what you purchased.

[inaudible / din]

**Darla Zakuluzny:** If there's a project that's on there that's some type of project you don't see on there, think of what you think the adequate price would be. That's what we do. At one of the sessions, they wanted 911 call boxes. We said, "Okay. They're about \$10,000." So they bought 20 of them. We just wrote them on there. So you can add to your list and come up with a price.

**Speaker:** [Are we putting in [meters] or taking out a lane to allow access to here? We can make it four lanes so that we can get across]. That's what I would do if I had enough money. We could [inaudible / crossing]

[crossing / inaudible / din]

**[too inaudible to continue]**