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# INVOLVING THE PUBLIC IN DESIGN



Managing Effective Public Participation  
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# What Will Happen?

- What are the risks?
- What are the gains?
- Who should/should not be involved?
- How much does the designer or project manager need to control?

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# Lots of Options

- Computer-assisted meetings
- Web-based meetings
- Citizen juries
- Fishbowl or storefront processes
- Charettes
- Games

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# Design Charettes

- Always interactive and intense activity
- Always visual and map-based
- Often used for site planning or architecture
- Short timeframe (classic is one week)
- Three-dimensional tools help build understanding of vertical and horizontal scale

# Pre-Charette

- Advance work (maps, photos, historical documents, topography, zoning, context maps, structures, etc.)
- Pre-charette outreach





# Charette Events

- Kick-off event (community event)
  - Walking tour
- Hands-on public session (brainstorming – draw ideas)
- Synthesizing the plan (design team)
  - Scheduled “train wreck” – mid-course public review
- Town meeting (design team’s plan)



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# Post-Charette

- Follow-up tasks
- Documentation
- Very short timeframe increases post-charette work



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# Design Charettes

- Not the same as loose “visioning” or facilitated meetings, flip chart sessions, etc.
- Ends with one detailed, physical, visual plan – not a series of alternatives
- Requires a strong design leader
- Final “composite” design is responsibility of design team



## Variations on the Theme

- “Not so public” charette (by invitation only)
- “Month in residence” (storefront location)
- Can spread out process in time but will lose impact and intensity

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# Nothing Guarantees Success

- Not a panacea for political gridlock
- Consensus doesn't happen magically
- Make sure event isn't taken over by special interests
- Follow through on promises
- Act on the plan

## Role of Facilitator

- Are good communicators (nothing to teach )
- Ask questions (proactive listening)
- Listen and restate when necessary
- Maintain control but empower the group
- Ensure that all views are placed on the table
- Not tied to particular outcome
- **Charette: Design Leader plays stronger role, providing professional expertise**

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## Flexibility Is Key to Participatory Design

- System and Network Solutions
- Alignment Alternatives
- Flexibility in Roadway Cross Section
- Aesthetic Design

# System Options

- Gaps
- System-wide Improvements
- Alternative Alignments

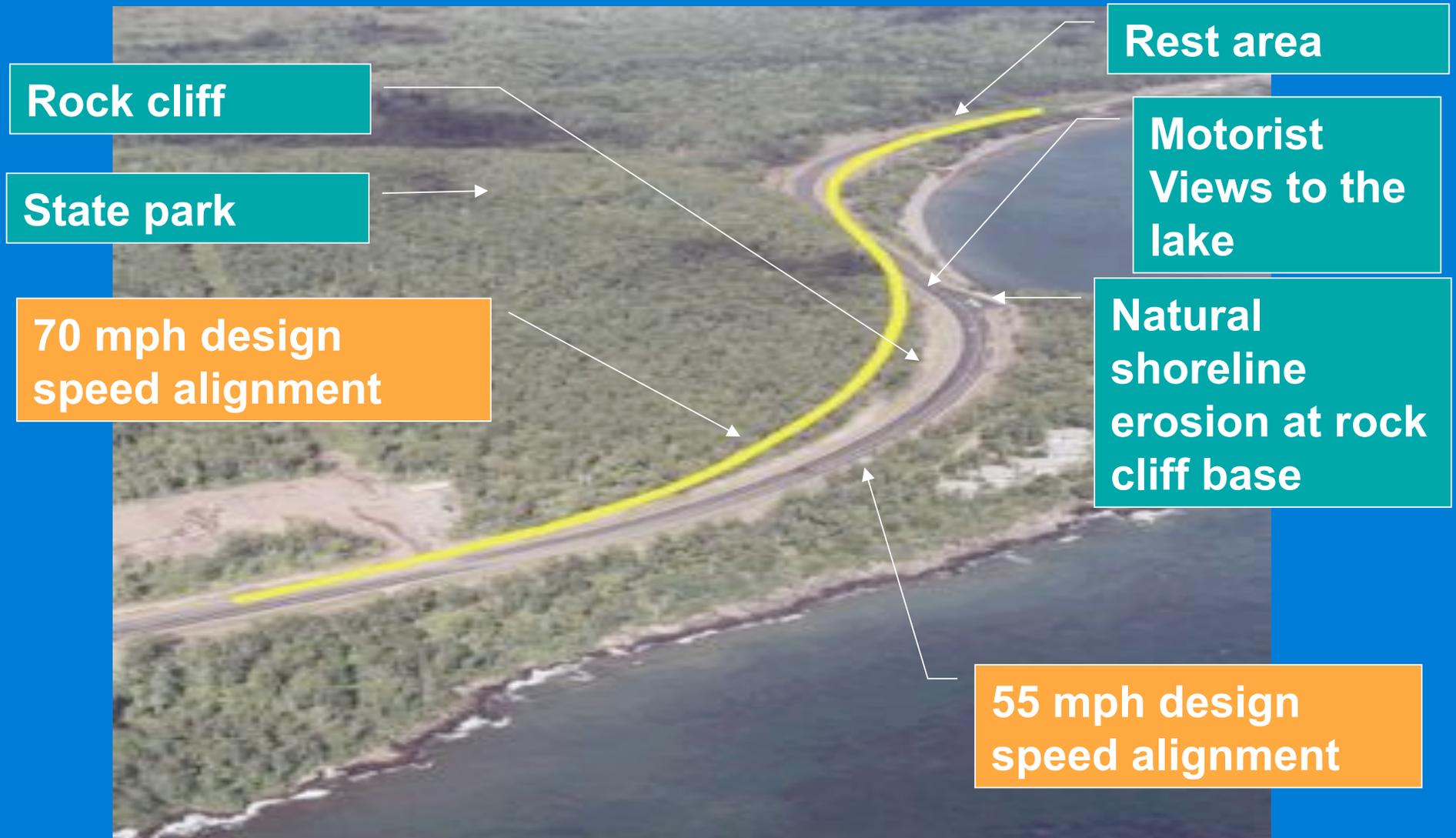


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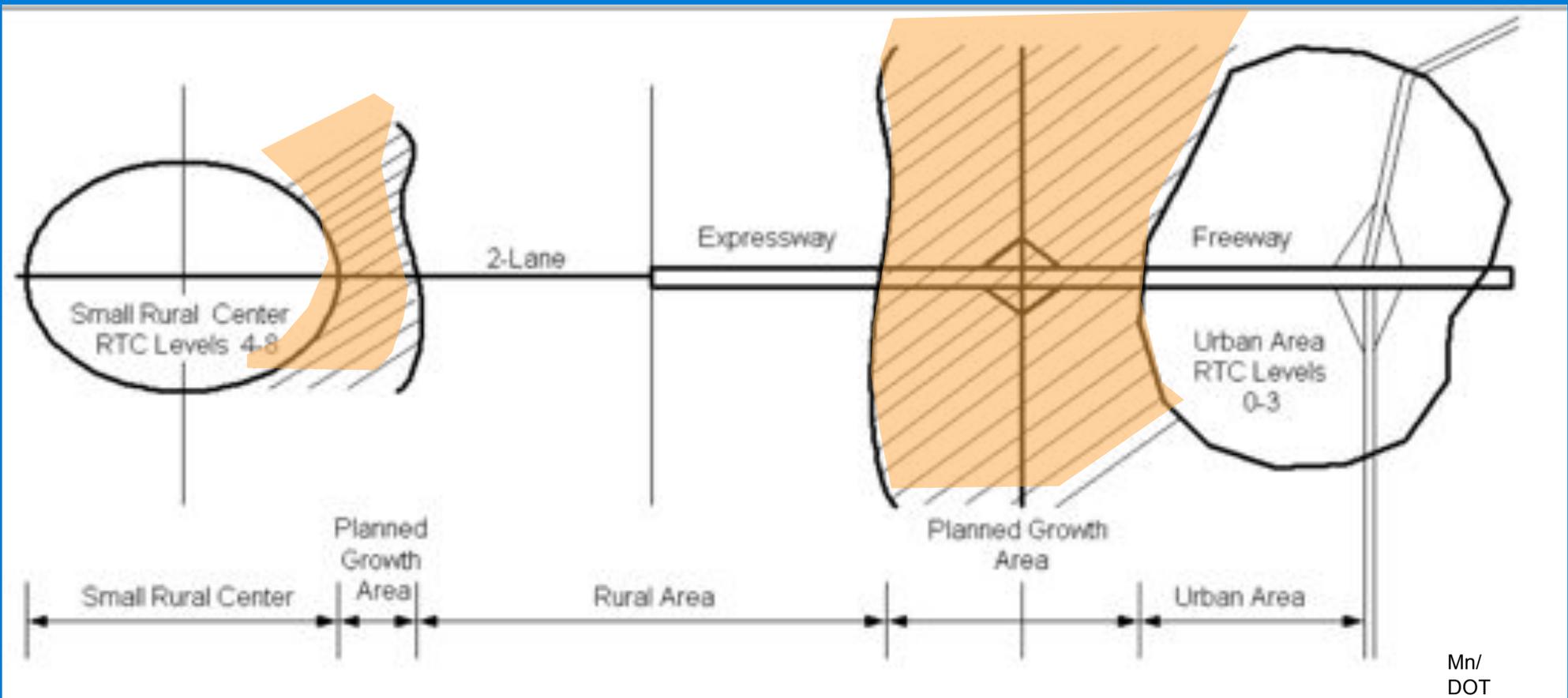
# Alignment Alternatives: Stillwater Bridge



# Effect of Design Speed



# Corridor Characteristics



# Impact of Edges



55 mph



50 mph

- Edge treatment changes perception of roadway

35 mph



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# Visual Cues through Design



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# Pedestrian Experience



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# Character of Place



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# Development Opportunities



*Hiawatha/38<sup>th</sup> St.*

# Urban Settings



# Example: Excelsior Blvd.

- Reduced speed
- 11 foot lanes – no shoulders
- Shorter turn lanes
- 6 ft parking bays (+ 2 ft reaction)
- Street furniture
- 150+ trees



# Pedestrian Improvements

- Wide, patterned concrete sidewalks
- Colored pavement on crosswalks
- Medians/wide boulevards
- Pedestrian-level lighting
- Count-down timers at signals



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# Adjacent Development

*Before*



*After*



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# Modal Priorities



# Aesthetic Design Elements



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# Visual Context



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# Color



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# Materials



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# Public Art



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# Vegetation

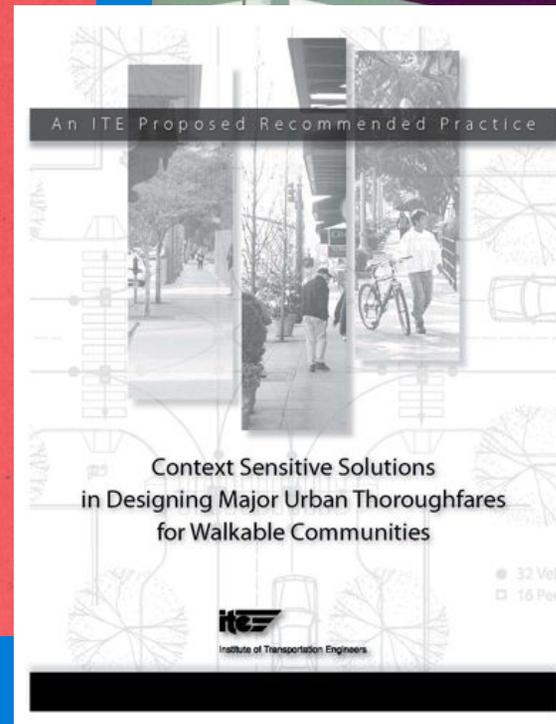
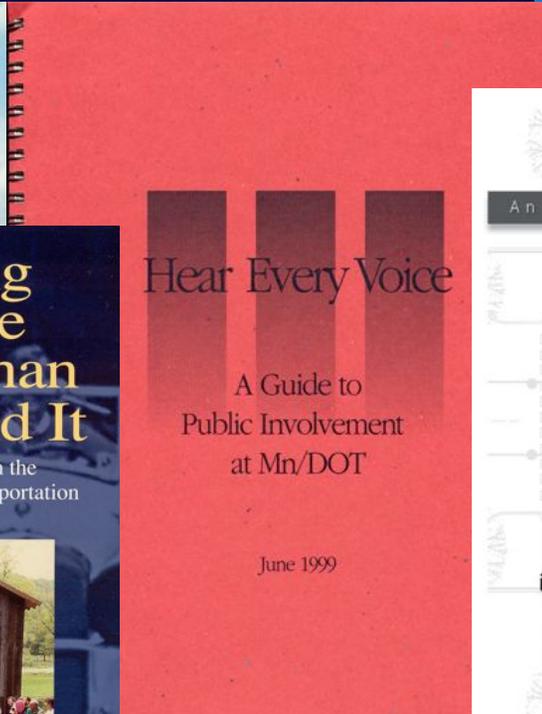
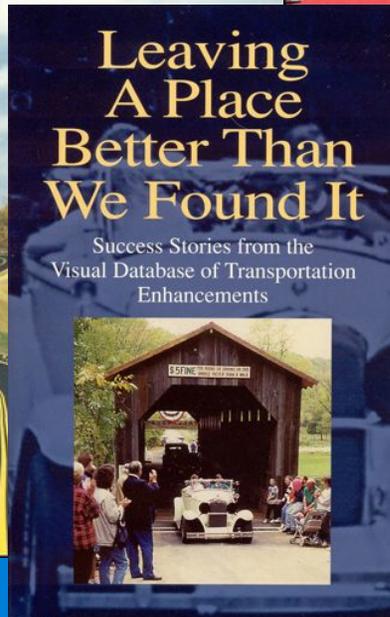
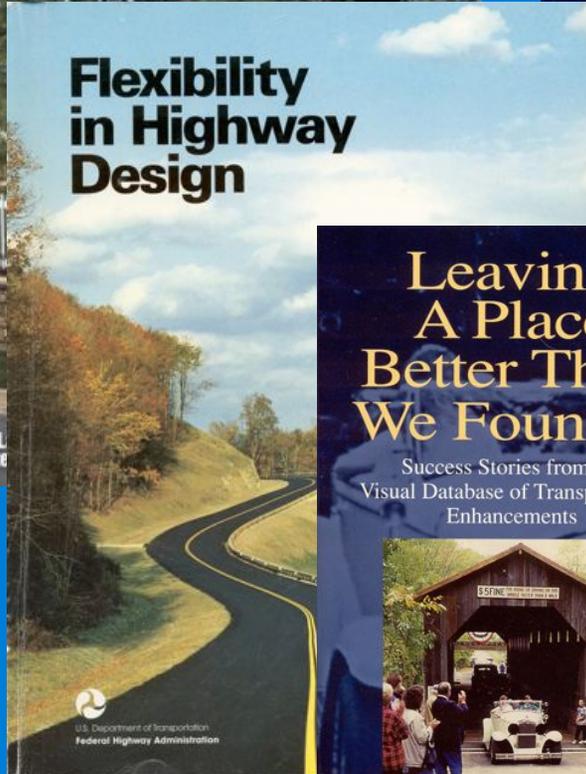
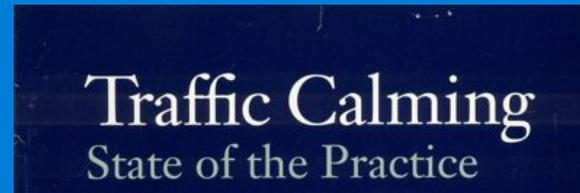


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## Balancing Competing Interests

- Facilitation and negotiation are necessary skills
- Transportation is always important but may not be the most important outcome
- Participation makes it easier to accept a less than perfect solution

[www.contextsensitivesolutions.org](http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org)



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# Questions?