Public Communication about Local Road Systems Resilience

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Data Collection & Analysis

- Interviews with a number of stakeholders
- Observations of transportation committees
  - County Commissioners
  - 2013 House and Senate Transportation Committees
- Literature and media review
Findings

- There is a problem with sustaining local road systems.

- There is a lack of public engagement.
  - Road systems are very complex.
  - The work to sustain the roads is not very visible.
Some misunderstandings are getting in the way of solving the problems.

Ex. The gas tax is not enough!

Many elected officials are unaware or skittish about some possible options.

Ex. Excess weight vehicle fees, changing road service levels
Public Communication Tool

Our Road System
Main storylines

- We have a financial problem. Gas tax is not enough. There are several possible solutions.
- Regular road repairs and maintenance is critical for safety, extending the life of roads, and saving money.
- It may be necessary or beneficial to do some re-aligning of roads (who is responsible for them, the service level, and how they are maintained).
- Highway departments use data to guide when to pave, plow, and mow roads.
Lessons for related efforts

- Visualizing specific kinds of audiences and creating an entry point for them (in the landscape view) significantly improved the communication tool.

- Consulting with stakeholders has been indispensable to craft the messaging so as to make complex issues understandable without over-simplifying.

- This tool is designed as a warm up to interest and inform people about the issue. It’s only the first step in an engagement effort.