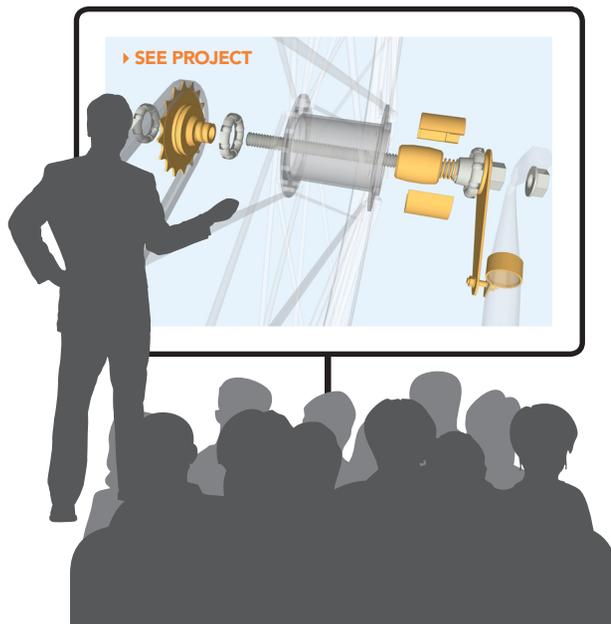




## GRAPHICS ADVICE FOR TRANSPORTATION *by* FAT PENCIL STUDIO THE VALUE OF PICTURES



You've heard the cliché: a picture is worth a thousand words. It may be trite, but it's true that a single image can convey a great volume of information. Pictures make it possible to explain complex details without demanding an excessive amount of attention or expertise from your audience. In crafting a powerful message, pictures are especially effective in leaving a lasting impression.

*In short, visuals are the key to sharing a story your audience will understand and remember.*

People can absorb information in different ways, but humans have always been visual communicators. Cave paintings are the oldest surviving examples of human expression. And every one of us learned about the world through pictures before we could do so through language. Have

you ever read a picture book to a young child? Even babies can connect with a story through images long before they understand the words.

Your target audience probably isn't cavemen or children, and yet a primal resonance with images persists in all of us. This tendency is reinforced by today's media-saturated culture which conditions us to consume information in short, visual chunks.

*When you need to explain complex ideas, graphics provide clarity.*

This clarity is achieved through the simple expression of **context** (chronological, geographic, etc.), **hierarchy** (which details are primary; which details are supportive?), and **relationships** (in 3d space, of function, among people, etc.).



## GRAPHICS ADVICE FOR TRANSPORTATION *by* FAT PENCIL STUDIO TIPS AND TRICKS



*Start with a canvas.*



*Add content.*



*No special software required.*

Transportation concepts are complex and can be difficult to explain. Project documents are typically full of technical jargon and abstract drawings.

*The challenge in communicating this information to a general audience is to structure it into a story supported by compelling graphics.*

This may seem like a daunting task, but even if you don't have any graphic training, these tips will help you incorporate visual communication into your practice:

1. **The goal of any explanatory graphic is to be clear and concise.** Don't be fancy; be unambiguous. Don't "make it pretty;" make it unmistakable. Include relevant context, but eliminate extraneous information and avoid distracting elements.
2. **You don't need fancy software to create effective graphics.** With the simple combination of PrintScreen and PowerPoint or Keynote, you can create annotated images to explain your project.
3. **Convey only one message per graphic.** Create a sequence of graphics to make a series of points, or to build up to a more complex graphic.
4. **Use some old-school handouts or poster boards!** You won't have to plug them in or worry about projector issues. Physical media can alleviate PowerPoint fatigue, be referred to at anytime, and provide reference for an audience even when you aren't there.



## GRAPHICS ADVICE FOR TRANSPORTATION *by* FAT PENCIL STUDIO A WELL-TAILORED APPROACH



*3d base models can be integrated into Vissim traffic simulation software to create compelling studies of traffic flows.*



*What do the lines on a technical drawing mean? A 3d illustration makes it clear.*

As good as you might get at creating graphics for your projects, there will always be a time when it makes sense to seek professional help.

As an analogy, consider your expertise with clothing. Can you iron a shirt or sew a button? These are useful skills, right? With practice, you could probably learn to hem a pair of pants, perhaps even make a whole garment. But would you wear this garment for a public appearance?

*When it comes time to look and feel your best, you want something tailored by a professional.*

With both garments and graphics, quality gets noticed. First-rate graphics signal to your audience that you are serious and well-prepared. Visual aids become touchstones in a project. When you provide them,

you define the issues on your terms, which helps shape perception and guide the public conversation.

*In fact, the benefits of quality transportation graphics go well beyond aesthetics. The process of creating these graphics (we call it visual thinking) also helps you better understand your project.*

Carefully designed graphics can reveal the essential narrative of complex projects, answer questions, provide context, address different perspectives, and even inform project design.



## GRAPHICS ADVICE FOR TRANSPORTATION *by* FAT PENCIL STUDIO REAL-TIME MODELING



*"Fat Pencil Studio's ability to show real-time 3D graphics definitely made a contribution to the success of the project, and the quality of their deliverables, their responsiveness to deadlines, and their willingness to go above and beyond was impressive."*

*- Ellen Vanderslice, Project Manager, Portland Bureau of Transportation*



*Real-time modeling allowed Team Red to quickly refine their concept for a mobility hub.*

Graphics for transportation projects are often based on digital 3d models. These models are used to create project images from different angles. They can also serve as rich, interactive tools for live presentations and project collaboration. This process frees you from having to overcome comprehension barriers with technical drawings and engineering reports. Being visually immersed in the project allows for productive conversation among stakeholders and project team members.

For 3d modeling, we use a program called SketchUp that is technically robust and can also function as an effective presentation tool. Models can be organized to quickly juxtapose existing and proposed conditions, and scenes can be pre-set to create an animated presentation narrative. With careful modeling techniques, the model can be navigated in real-time without needing to re-render. This means that the audience can seamlessly evaluate

project issues without needing to connect the dots in their own imaginations.

Real-time modeling has been used effectively to promote goodwill between transportation agencies and the public on contentious projects, to facilitate productive conversations by answering questions and addressing issues immediately, and as a resource for multi-disciplinary project teams to communicate and test ideas.



## GRAPHICS ADVICE FOR TRANSPORTATION *by* FAT PENCIL STUDIO INVEST IN VISUAL THINKING



*“Both URS and the client were very pleased with the work products Fat Pencil Studio provided. They did an impressive job on every deliverable, working diligently to meet the project’s tight deadlines, despite frequent and multiple last-minute design changes.”*

Katharine Brendle, Senior Transportation Project Manager, URS Corporation

At this point, you may be thinking, “I get it—graphics are important, but when is the right time to start working on them?” It might seem like a good idea to wait until design is complete to produce public-ready images.

*If you apply visual thinking throughout the project, you stand to reap significant benefits. You’ll understand the issues better, you’ll communicate them more clearly, and you’ll empower stakeholders and project teams to collaborate.*

When visual thinking is applied throughout the project, the resulting graphics will be better developed and more compelling than anything that could be created at the eleventh hour.

*We see visual thinking as an investment that pays off in better engagement and project communication.*

If you are interested in discussing visual presentation ideas for an upcoming project, please give us a call. There is no charge for this initial consultation and all discussions are kept confidential.

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