



TRANSPORTATION SPOTLIGHT

PROFESSIONAL: CALVIN ABRAM

NAME: Calvin Abram

COMPANY: TDOT Office of
Community Transportation (OCT)

TITLE: OCT Region IV Supervisor

COLLEGE: University of
Alabama at Birmingham

DEGREE: BS in Criminal Justice, Master's of
Public Administration specializing in Urban
Planning and Community Development



Q: How did you select your certification program?

A: UAB was close in proximity to where I grew up in Birmingham and they allowed me to transfer my military training and experience to University semester hours.

Q: What was the biggest influence in your selection of major/career pathway?

A: I always had a fixation on the built environment and how I could better the quality of life of others through our social and physical environments.

Q: What attracted you to the transportation industry?

A: I wandered into planning by "luckenstance." The area of planning I am involved in is more so concurrency planning and that is essentially how both land-use and transportation planning integrate with each other to decrease congestion and improve the air quality as well as promote more healthy life options to the people.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?

A: I love the ability to travel and meet new people from all walks of life and socioeconomic statuses.

Q: How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

A: TDOT does direct outreach and public engagement which better assists the State of TN to identify with both the wants and needs of its citizens, thereby allowing us to provide products, assistance, projects and programming that are specially tailored to individual jurisdictions and/or situations.



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Q: What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?

A: Hmm... This is a difficult question to answer. I would say working on a project that is located in Arlington TN along the Columbia Pike area. This project was special—I had to utilize the Formed Based Code and work with State, Local, Federal and public entities to create the concept and design for the project. The project was to raise an outdated community center and to construct an underground parking garage, a mixed use building that included a recreation center, retail components, luxury apartments, outdoor mall for activities, walking trails and incorporate transportation demand management measures that further reduced congestion to the area as well as improved air quality and improving the sight distance issues at the busy intersection. This project was involved and had feedback from the public, elected officials and the business community as well.

Q: What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A: My inspiration is that I work with great people and I know I am helping to create a product that will improve the quality of life for my children in the future.

Q: If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

A: That course would be Spanish.

Q: What advice would you share with K-12 students that are considering your profession?

A: The advice that I would offer is to immerse yourself around others who are interested in the field and to seek a mentor that understands your plight both professionally and socially.

