Disadvantaged Communities Active Transportation Planning Initiative

TRB Annual Meeting | P21-20284

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Launched in the beginning of 2019, the Disadvantaged Communities Planning Initiative (DCPI) seeks to make active transportation plans and their implementation accessible to all jurisdictions within the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region. The DCPI involved background research on best practices, data automation, and better understanding community needs to devise a preliminary Active Transportation Toolkit ("Toolkit"). The project team then piloted the Toolkit in seven disadvantaged communities within the SCAG region, developing seven adopted plans and refining the Toolkit along the way. The DCPI found a large appetite for active transportation improvements throughout the seven communities, and reiterates the importance of robust, tailored engagement approaches, including partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs). The Toolkit includes all materials needed to help under-resourced communities envision and implement their own plans for walking and biking, but still requires resources and staff commitments that may be in short supply. The Toolkit will be released for public use in spring 2021.
Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

- Ventura
- Los Angeles
- Orange
- Riverside
- San Bernardino
- Imperial

- Nation's Largest MPO
- 191 Cities
- 6 Counties
- 18.9 Million People
- 16th Largest Economy in the World
Fatalities and serious injuries disproportionately impact people walking and bicycling

66% of SCAG’s High Injury Network is in disadvantaged communities

Disadvantaged communities face a greater pollution burden and worse public health outcomes than other communities throughout the state

56% of jurisdictions within SCAG meet the thresholds for disadvantaged status

Of these communities, less than 26% have existing active transportation plans
Project Background

- SCAG’s Disadvantaged Communities Planning Initiative (DCPI): 2 year planning effort (2019-2021)
- Develop an Active Transportation Plan Toolkit
- Toolkit approach was piloted in 7 communities
  - Urban, suburban, rural
- Project Team:
DCPI Goals

1. Develop **low-cost model** for delivering active transportation plan in low-resourced communities;

2. **Expand use and value** of SCAG’s existing active transportation resources;

3. Ensure approach is **applicable in a variety of contexts**, recognizing the diversity of the SCAG region;

4. Align planning products with the requirements of the **California Active Transportation Program for funding**;

5. Go beyond the current state-of-practice to produce **data-driven and innovative planning solutions**;

6. Design for **long-term sustainability**; provide guidance and recommendations to support use of the Toolkit beyond the life of the project.
Toolkit Preparation

- National Scan of Best Practices
- Outreach + Equity Framework
- Expert Focus Group
- Data Analysis Tools
  - Includes public health assessment

= Preliminary Toolkit
Toolkit Piloting Process

- Community Advisory Committees
- Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Engagement Activities
  - Interactive Web Map
  - Walk Audits
  - Art Installation
  - Project Website
  - Social Media Advertisements
  - Community Surveys
  - Virtual Town Hall
  - Curbside Displays
Toolkit Piloting Process - Go Human

- SCAG’s community outreach + advertising campaign to reduce traffic collisions and encourage walking/biking
- Hosted 2 capacity-building trainings per community
- Planned community demonstration events

= Capacity Building + Public Input
Cancelled Activities
○ Bicycle + Pedestrian Counts
○ Go Human Demonstration Events

Transition to Virtual Engagement
○ Social Media Advertisements
○ Recommendations Survey [Online + Print]
○ Virtual Town Hall
○ Call-in Office Hours
○ Curbside Displays

Paper / In-Person Activities
○ Support from CBOs

= Importance of Partnerships with CBOs
7 adopted Active Transportation Plans (expected by Feb 2021)

Roadmap for securing funding, implementing recommendations

Lasting community support for walking and biking

Allowed for continuous improvements to Toolkit
Key Lessons Learned

1. **There is a big appetite for AT improvements.** All 7 communities saw a strong desire for improvements to make walking and biking more comfortable, convenient, and safe.

2. **City staff are resource-constrained.** Even with Toolkit, cities may not have the resources to complete their Plans without additional support (especially mapping and network development).

3. **Successful community engagement approaches included partnerships with CBOs, social media advertisements, and going to the people.** Engagement needs to be tailored for each community and take a variety of approaches (i.e., high / low / no tech).

4. **Planning efforts can adjust to a pandemic** while still engaging vulnerable residents.
Toolkit Final Components

1. MANUAL
   - DCPI Background
   - How-to Guide
   - Planning Tips

2. TEMPLATE
   - Customizable Plan
   - Spanish Executive Summary
   - Template Tutorial

3. RESOURCES
   - Data Analysis, Outreach
   - Graphics Library
   - Recommendations
   - Adoption, Implementation
   - + more

Manual
Active Transportation Plan Toolkit User Guide
December 2023
Prepared by the Planning+Design for
San Mateo County Association of Governments (SMCAG)

Recommendation Maps - Change data elements in the maps to suit your
specific community."
 Toolkit Launch

● Coming Spring 2021
● Includes all materials for jurisdictions to develop their own active transportation plans
● Visit scag.ca.gov to learn more!
Questions?

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