

**SCAG Disadvantaged Communities Planning Initiative**

**Outreach Best Practices and Equity Framework**



Productive engagement is at the core of successful planning processes, but trends show that many people do not feel empowered to participate fully in these processes (Center for Active Design, 2019). According to the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), there are three pillars to public outreach – **core values**, a code of **ethics**, and a **spectrum** of public participation. IAP2’s core values for public participation help people doing public outreach make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. These values include:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence decisions made.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

IAP2 also developed a code of ethics to guide the actions of practitioners conducting public outreach. The Code of Ethics is “a set of principles, which guides us in our practice of enhancing the integrity of the public participation process” (IAP2, 2019) and includes the following standards:

Topic	Principle
Purpose	We support public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision-making body.
Role of practitioner	We will enhance the public's participation in the decision-making process and assist decision-makers in being responsive to the public's concerns and suggestions.
Trust	We will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process among all the participants.

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Defining the public's role	We will carefully consider and accurately portray the public's role in the decision-making process.
Openness	We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding and evaluation of a decision.
Access to the process	We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the public participation process and the opportunity to influence decisions.
Respect for communities	We will avoid strategies that risk polarizing community interests or that appear to "divide and conquer."
Advocacy	We will advocate for the public participation process and will not advocate for interest, party, or project outcome.
Commitments	We ensure that all commitments made to the public, including those by the decision-maker, are made in good faith
Support of the practice	We will mentor new practitioners in the field and educate decision-makers and the public about the value and use of public participation.

Finally, IAP2 developed a Spectrum of Participation to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public’s role in a process (shown below). The most equitable, effective outreach processes are on the “Empower” end of this spectrum, in which stakeholders not only feel heard, but feel their comments directly impact what gets implemented in their community.

The diagram features a horizontal red arrow at the top pointing to the right, labeled "INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION". Below the arrow is a table with five columns representing participation levels: INFORM, CONSULT, INVOLVE, COLLABORATE, and EMPOWER. The table has two rows: "PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL" and "PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC".

	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Further, according to Local Government Commission (2013), successful community planning must include the following principles:

- Inclusiveness
- Respect
- Relevance
- Clear purpose and scope
- Knowledge
- Relationships
- Trust
- Sustained Engagement
- Results

### Accessibility

Community members and other stakeholders typically have competing interests and limited time. Structuring outreach to allow different levels and types of involvement in the process can encourage greater participation overall. For example, going to places where people already gather, like a community center or a cultural event, may allow attendees to give input without a large time commitment. Meeting stakeholders in

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locations they are familiar and comfortable with can foster a trusting relationship with the project team. Other more time-intensive activities, such as focus groups, workshops, and charrettes, can be made available for stakeholders who are interested in providing more in-depth input.

When planning time-intensive outreach activities, stakeholders must be *able* to show up. The project team should consider communities' major employment types, transportation, and convenient/meaningful locations like a public school or library that is accessible for mobility devices. The project team should also provide attendees with food, particularly if the outreach event is held for long hours or during typical mealtimes. For evening meetings or workshops, providing childcare and kid-friendly activities can make it easier for certain stakeholder groups to attend.

Further, when working with communities that are multilingual or have low English proficiency, the project team should provide flyers, presentations, surveys, and other outreach materials in all alternative languages. During a focus group held on April 8, 2019, staff from the City of Santa Ana, a predominantly Spanish-speaking community, indicated that public meetings are typically led in Spanish and the fewer non-Spanish-speaking attendees are given headsets with translated information.

### Cultural Considerations

Cultural differences may be present between and among organizations and groups as well as between and among individual community members. Reaching out to different groups and organizations not traditionally involved in the planning process may help the project team identify additional challenges and opportunities, while gaining trust. According to the State Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR, 2017), understanding community norms, priorities, levels of comfort with technical language, and expectations for project completion is essential to successful outreach.

It is important to consider cultural diversity throughout the outreach process to encourage broader, more equitable, and more informed participation. OPR outlines the following factors that should be considered to ensure equitable outreach (OPR, 2017):

- **Literacy Level:** It may be more challenging to reach people with limited English proficiency or lower educational attainment, or immigrant communities. Outreach materials, activities, and events can be designed to accommodate different literacy levels and provide background information when referring to complex concepts. Use of acronyms should be avoided, where possible.
- **Socioeconomic Status:** Groups with lower socioeconomic status are often disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards and face greater barriers to participation in efforts to address them. These barriers may be addressed by considering factors such as location and timing of events, accessibility by public transportation, and availability of childcare and food.
- **Language:** All communication should be in the most prevalent languages spoken in the community. Translators should be available at public outreach events when it is likely that non-English speaking members of the community will be present. Often, local community-based organizations can provide translation services.
- **Age:** Aging populations have specific needs that should be addressed during outreach. Considering time of day and location of events, as well as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to events, will help include more senior stakeholders. The needs of young residents must also be considered,

including social media and online platforms, activities for young children, and innovative tools for discussion at events.

- **Local History:** Certain communities may have participated in previous outreach efforts that did not result in change. Over time, either not being included or participating and/or not feeling heard may affect future participation. Understanding the local context is helpful prior to beginning outreach. Fostering dialogue around racial inequities that have existed can be challenging. Jurisdictions have started to engage with skilled facilitators to have conversations that advance participation and engagement opportunities.
- **Cultural Norms:** Cities and counties across the SCAG region are comprised of different ethnic groups from around the world. Some community members may not be as familiar with the democratic form of government and the ability to openly share opinions; others may be worried about displacement. It is hard to learn all of the cultural nuances for each group in the community, but working in partnership with local non-profits or other groups skilled at working across cultures can help ensure all groups are able to participate in a meaningful outreach process

## Template Outreach Framework and Activities

The outreach framework aims to determine what activities can help best serve stakeholders and build ownership of AT Plans from community groups and the public at large. To do that, the framework is centered on partnerships with local community-based organizations, established groups that have trusted reputation in disadvantaged communities in the SCAG region.

The outreach framework has three stages – Listen, Collaborate, and Refine – which will aim to build a common understanding of existing conditions and eventual recommendations that starts with listening, is strengthened by key partnerships, and finally is fine-tuned with community feedback. The framework lists potential outreach tools that include best practices, case studies, and additional resources that can be drawn upon during the development of AT Plans.

### Outreach Phases

#### *Phase 1: Listen*

The first phase of the outreach framework is about listening to the true local experts: residents of disadvantaged communities in the SCAG region. During this phase, the project team should be:

- Hearing from residents about what community ownership of the active transportation plan development process would look like
- Informing residents on the planning process
- Soliciting feedback from community members who typically face barriers to participating in planning processes
- Understanding unique mobility needs of the focus community
- Having community members inform local government and the project team on how to prioritize projects, programs, and policies in plans and funding for active transportation infrastructure in plans.

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During this phase, plan goals and objectives are formed and existing conditions data is collected. Community needs are assessed, safety data is analyzed, and the existing active transportation environment is evaluated.

### *Phase 2: Collaborate*

From the start of a planning process, community stakeholders want to know how their ideas will be used to shape the priorities and recommendations of their Active Transportation Plan. These questions should encourage the project team to work towards a more transparent and inclusive process of developing active transportation recommendations. During this phase, active transportation recommendations are identified and a prioritization methodology is developed. Initial designs may emerge.

### *Phase 3: Refine*

Within the final phase of outreach, the project team edits, vets, and refines recommendations developed throughout the planning process. In other words, this phase is an opportunity for the project team to ask stakeholders, “Did we get it right?” and “Is there anything we missed?” During this phase, recommendations are finalized and prioritized, and an implementation plan is developed with input from community stakeholders. Note that after an AT Plan is adopted, an inclusive and collaborative design process should be used to move projects forward with ongoing community feedback and support.

## Equity Framework

The outreach framework must also consider equity to ensure that communities are regarded as local experts and all voices are heard. The equity framework aims to ensure equitable investment in active transportation infrastructure and to make clear the ways in which these investments can impact communities. The framework should be used by SCAG, local City/County staff, consultant support, community-based organizations that are partners in the AT Plans, and the broader communities.

Equity means that one’s identity as a resident of their community has no detrimental effect on the distribution of resources, opportunities, and outcomes for them as a resident. This equity framework aims to answer the following questions surrounding equity in disadvantaged communities:

- Who are the City’s most vulnerable populations?
- What is the desired condition of well-being that the City and residents want for a city’s most vulnerable communities?
- How can implementation of the Active Transportation Plan work towards achieving these conditions?

Disadvantaged communities face greater disparities in the transportation environment. The more groups a community member identifies with, the greater their disparity. These groups may include, but are not limited to:

- People of color

- Women
- People of no- and low-income
- People with limited English proficiency
- People with disabilities
- Children and seniors
- Single parents
- People who do not own cars or do not drive

Additionally, disadvantaged communities often express concern that investments in active transportation infrastructure will contribute to displacement, gentrification, and housing unaffordability. At the same time, improved active transportation networks can help reduce transportation costs when other costs of living may be increasing. AT Plans for disadvantaged communities need to be sensitive to these concerns and to promote a collaborative decision-making process. Working with community-based organizations who have longstanding relationships and trust within their community to help facilitate outreach with residents will help ensure that active transportation investments in the community serve *existing* residents and their mobility needs first. Further, this can help make sure the AT Plan process results in:

1. Network recommendations that serve the mobility needs of existing and long-term residents;
2. Processes for community-led implementation that develops projects and programs that are tailored to existing residents' needs; and
3. Processes for Cities to pursue a comprehensive approach to housing and transportation affordability.

These community partners should be fairly compensated for their work and allowed to lead discussions and activities where appropriate.

Additionally, it is generally considered best practice to avoid scheduling outreach activities on holidays and culturally-relevant dates, or when appropriate, to coordinate with community groups to work in alignment with events occurring on these dates. Being conscious of local culturally-relevant days will help build trust and can help mutually promote the AT Plan and preservation of local cultures. Diversity Resources features a diversity holidays calendar, including holidays and heritage celebration months or days:

<https://www.diversityresources.com/2019-diversity-calendar/>

The AT Plan communities are local experts, so the project team will bring these initial findings to partners in the initial seven disadvantaged communities to confirm or reset their assumptions. To further acknowledge that these communities know best, the project team will develop solutions to these disparities in partnership with community contacts. Plan recommendations that address these disparities should be prioritized above all other prioritization factors.

Additional equity considerations are included in the following outreach activities and communications sections.

## Outreach Activities

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Various outreach tools can be used to engage stakeholders and the general public. The table below lists various outreach activities and links them to their most appropriate outreach framework phase. Following the table, these outreach activities are described in detail.

Outreach Activity	Outreach Framework Phase
Advisory Committees	Listen, Collaborate, Refine
Focus Groups and Listening Sessions	Listen
Meetings and Workshops	Listen
Public Survey	Listen
Walk/Bike Audits	Listen, Collaborate, Refine
Charrette	Collaborate
Interactive Map	Refine
Temporary Installations	Refine

### *Advisory Committees*

Advisory committees made up of a representative group of stakeholders can be used to guide planning efforts throughout the duration of a project. **Community Advisory Committees (CACs)** should represent a wide range of interests, including social service (e.g. community-based organizations), environmental (e.g. Active Transportation, Environmental Justice), economic (e.g. Chamber of Commerce), technical (educational institutions), and political (opinion leaders who are respected by elected officials) (Metro, 2018). Member stakeholders can include representatives from neighborhood councils or organizations, business districts/local businesses, advocacy groups, and should be inclusive of traditionally underrepresented or underserved populations.

At the beginning of a project, CACs should be engaged in the development of project goals, which can help advance equity in the planning process. The vision and goals of the AT Plan should reflect the needs and interests of the community. Referencing the Oakland Bike Plan (2019), example project goals that also advance equity could include:

- Increase access to community destinations such as grocery stores, libraries, schools, recreation centers, and transit stations/stops;
- Empower residents to live a more active lifestyle by providing a network of safe and comfortable bikeways and walkways for all to enjoy;

- Work to reduce the burden of transportation costs on households; and
- Foster an increased role for the community in the planning process and improved trust in the project team/City.

CACs can also provide community expertise and oversight during the development of network improvements, prioritization, and implementation. CACs are not necessarily intended to be final decision-makers, but their input deepens understanding of local concerns, and to grasp the context and implications of decisions that are eventually made by the project team.

**Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)** are comprised of technical experts such as from local planning, public works, and public health, parks, and police/fire departments, school districts, California Highway Patrol, and transit agencies (e.g., Metro, Caltrans). TAC members can assist CACs by answering technical questions, and provide technical expertise throughout the planning process.

Establishing goals and ground rules for advisory committees at the beginning of the project will help keep them on track and lead to a shared understanding. Manageably sized committees – around 10 to 15 people with an effective facilitator – should include multiple voices from the community and represent its diversity.

#### *Case Study: Step by Step Los Angeles County*

As part of the Step by Step Los Angeles County planning process, Community Advisory Committees (CACs) were formed in four communities to provide guidance to the project team on outreach efforts, existing conditions, and active transportation recommendations and implementation. Youth, senior, local business, faith-based, parent, homeowner, renter, and other community representatives participated in the CACs. Additionally, CAC meetings provided members with opportunities to learn about community data collection methods, County processes, and the connection between walkability, public health, public safety, and advocacy. In fact, during the Plan adoption meetings, CAC members from multiple communities attended public meetings to voice their support for the Plan and their appreciation of the extensive community involvement in the planning process.

#### *Resources*

Metro has identified best practices for building partnerships with stakeholders, including forming advisory committees: <https://www.metro.net/projects/tod-toolkit/building-partnerships-stakeholders/>

#### *Focus Groups and Listening Sessions*

A focus group is a useful tool for obtaining more in-depth input than at a meeting or workshop and typically has a more focused agenda. Focus groups can include local elected official and staff, business owners, property owners, neighborhood activists, seniors, and more. They can be used to engage with populations who may not show up to a public meeting or workshop or may feel left out of traditional planning processes. Focus groups are most useful early in the planning process and can be conducted standalone or as part of a charrette. Focus groups should include maximum 8 to 12 people who represent the key organizations and people interested in or potentially impacted by the project (AARP, 2018). In the SCAG region, focus groups should also be help with local indigenous peoples to ensure their unique needs are met and cultural practices are respected.

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Community listening sessions are larger focused groups allow the project team and partners to hear the ideas and concerns of residents. These sessions can be used to inform stakeholders about important issues, build support for a cause, and discuss potential solutions to active transportation challenges facing their communities. They are typically larger than focus groups, but should have more targeted participants than public workshops or meetings. Listening sessions can be led by community-based organizations and/or community partners, shaping the discussion questions and inviting their constituents.

### *Case Study: Oakland Bike Plan*

In partnership with multiple community-based organizations, the Oakland Bike Plan project team hosted community listening sessions to hear stakeholder concerns and ideas. Allowing community-based organizations to lead these sessions helped build trust, allowing participants to feel comfortable sharing their personal experiences biking in Oakland.

### *Resources*

The AARP Community Listening Session Toolkit includes a sample schedule, agenda, supply list, facilitator script, and evaluation form for focus groups and listening sessions. More information can be found at <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2018/Book-2-Roadmap-To-Livability-Listening-21318-lr.pdf>

### *Meetings and Workshops*

Cities and community-based organizations use public meetings, events, and listening sessions to inform people about projects, build support, and identify potential solutions to challenges to biking and walking in their community. At meetings, listening sessions, and outreach events, it is helpful to have a team of facilitators that can relate to the demographic, linguistic and cultural characteristics of the community. Facilitators should be neutral, trusted people who can ensure that participants feel heard and respected and that the meeting or workshop is organized and productive. Well-facilitated public meetings can result in shared goals and vision, identification of community needs and opportunities, and deciding on feasible solutions.

According to Local Governments Commission (2013), facilitators can use a variety of tools to successfully manage a public meeting including developing ground rules for communication, focusing on needs and desires of stakeholders instead of personal feelings or opinions, ensuring all participants feel heard, and recording outcomes from discussion.

When asking stakeholders for feedback, a variety of collective, visible communication tools can be used to inform the planning process while showing participants their fellow stakeholders concerns and desires. For example, sticky dot polling allows stakeholders to assert their preferences (e.g., for types and locations for improvements) and yields quantifiable results that the project team can use for prioritizing recommendations.

Public meetings and government buildings can be intimidating to some stakeholders. An alternative to formal meetings and workshops is pop-up or mobile workshops, which aim to reach those that may not be

able to attend more formal workshops to intercept them in their daily lives at places such as festivals, transit stations, libraries, farmers markets, and grocery stores.

*Case Study: Step by Step Los Angeles County*

Project staff identified numerous existing community events that provided an opportunity to reach stakeholders who may not typically attend County workshops. At each event, stakeholders provided input on a map of the community, identifying barriers and challenges to walking in Lake Los Angeles, an unincorporated, rural neighborhood in northeast Los Angeles County. Education was also provided to community members on the types of pedestrian projects that could address the identified issues. Community events that the project team attended include:

- Winter Wonderland
- Parks After Dark at Stephen Sorensen Park
- Movie Night at the Park
- Career Fair at Challenger Middle School
- Resource Fair at Stephen Sorensen Park

Stakeholders were encouraged to complete a survey about their current walking habits, concerns, and desired projects. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and Antelope Valley Partners for Health staff collected a total of 46 surveys at existing community events. The survey was also available online in both Spanish and English.

*Resources*

Local Government Commission developed a guidebook to identify outreach tools and best practices, including a section on meetings and workshops: <https://www.lgc.org/resource/participation-tools-community-planning/>

The City of San Diego conducted a series of pop-up workshops, which are summarized in this document: [https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/planning/community/cpu/encanto/pdf/sesd-encanto-pop-up\\_outreach\\_sum\\_rpt.pdf](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/planning/community/cpu/encanto/pdf/sesd-encanto-pop-up_outreach_sum_rpt.pdf)

*Charrettes*

Charrettes are a more intensive outreach event than a meeting or workshop, typically lasting multiple days to foster more detailed design ideas from stakeholders. During charrettes, stakeholders, staff, and technical consultants work together in meetings, workshops, and walk audits over multiple days to develop collaborative visions. Charrettes make good use of time by engaging people when their input will have the greatest impact and compress planning and design processes, accelerate decision-making, and reduce the likelihood that flaws will be overlooked. They allow the project team to build trust with local stakeholders in a short amount of time through ensuring transparency in the planning process. The National Charrette Institute developed a best practice three-phase process for holding charrettes, as follows:

1. **Preparation (three to six months before the charrette).** During this phase, the first step to is form a steering committee to guide the charrette planning process and ensure support from key

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stakeholders. In general, everyone who will be involved in making the charrette happen, including logistical support, should be included on the committee. A project kickoff meeting is held to begin shaping the event and a budget, scope, and schedule are developed with the committee's input. Base data research and analysis is conducted to identify active transportation strengths and weaknesses in the community. Charrette logistics are determined, including location, date, food vendors, and facilitator team.

Invitations should be sent out at least two months before the charrette, with a goal of 25-50 participants. The project team can develop and send out a preliminary questionnaire to participants for completion and submission prior to the charrette. This survey can cover many time-consuming issues, allowing for more time to focus on critical issues identified in the questionnaire during the actual charrette.

- 2. Charrette (held over multiple days, if possible).** During the charrette, support is generated by the ability of the charrette to transform any conflict among stakeholders into collaboration and a shared vision and implementation plan. A facilitator team consisting of consultants and local agency staff produces a plan, while stakeholders are involved in the design process through a series of short feedback loops or meetings. Charrettes may also include site visits or walk/bike audits, which allow participants to better understand challenges and opportunities in their community. An example charrette schedule developed by the National Charrette Institute is:

- Public meeting and community vision development
- Alternative concepts development and first community feedback loop
- Preferred plan synthesis and second community feedback loop
- Plan development and third community feedback loop
- Production, public presentation, and final community review

Establishing ground rules at the beginning of the charrette allows for the group to remain focused while encouraging free flowing ideas. Example ground rules include not criticizing ideas or people, ensuring everyone has a chance to speak, and respecting people's time.

- 3. Implementation (two to four months after the charrette).** Keeping up momentum following the charrette is critical. When presented at the final charrette meeting, the plan or design is still in-progress. Following the charrette, more in-depth testing is needed to ensure the accuracy and



*Alta staff engaging with community stakeholders at a charrette in Montclair, 2019*

feasibility of some of the plan elements. A debrief meeting should be set up with the steering committee to discuss next steps and further feedback. A brief summary report of the event can be developed and shared with the public to spread the word to the general public, indicating process, goals, and results of the charrette.

*Case Study: Charrette in Hardeeville, South Carolina*

In 2017, Alta hosted a charrette in Hardeeville, South Carolina, where planners and designers worked directly with community stakeholders. The three-day charrette involved a full day of input and public meetings as well as an open studio where members of the Alta team developed design-based solutions to community-identified needs. The resulting recommendations reflected the diversity of needs expressed during the charrette, from improved sidewalk connections and streetscape improvements in downtown Hardeeville, to a mile-long walking path around the Coastal Carolina Hospital campus, to a realignment of the East Coast Greenway through Hardeeville that will add value to the city's tourism economy. The overall network of recommended improvements stitched together otherwise isolated areas within the city and start to tie together significant community assets and amenities, making them available to residents and visitors alike



(see example from the charrette below).

*Resources*

The National Charrette Institute offers multiple resources and tools for further charrette information:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/nci/resources/>

Charrette information from the Federal Highway Administration:

[https://www.planning.dot.gov/publicinvolvement/pi\\_documents/2b-b.asp](https://www.planning.dot.gov/publicinvolvement/pi_documents/2b-b.asp)

Enterprise has developed multiple charrette toolkits for various needs, including sample facilitator materials, presentations, and activities: <https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/solutions-and-innovation/green-communities/tools-and-services/charrette-toolkit>

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### *Temporary Installations/Tactical Urbanism*

Temporary installation projects enable residents and stakeholders to participate in short-term transformations to test and experience changes to their city. These demonstrations temporarily reconfigure streets to stripe crosswalks or bike lanes with non-permanent paint, alter public space so that stakeholders can see the potential for improvement and understand the benefits of innovative design, and provide an opportunity to discuss these concepts with examples on the ground.

During temporary installations, the project team has an opportunity to engage stakeholders and evaluate the success of potential future improvements before making higher-cost, more permanent changes. Successful installations rely on strong partnerships. Getting key stakeholders involved early in the demonstration planning process can be helpful for building community-wide support and for getting the word out. Key stakeholders to engage include, but are not limited to:

- Business Improvement Districts
- Resident / neighborhood associations
- Walking and bicycling advocates and organizations
- YMCA or similar service providers
- Arts and culture groups
- Media
- Schools and universities
- Community leaders
- Faith-based groups
- Indigenous Peoples groups and tribes
- Transportation Department
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Public Health Department
- Elected Officials

Temporary installations typically maintain vehicle access so community members are able to experience how an existing roadway could function with projects such as wider sidewalks, new crossings, bike lanes, and more. However, they can be planned as part of a larger open streets event. Open streets are a great opportunity to showcase temporary installations while bringing people together and promoting various transportation options, placemaking, and public health. Open streets events can also serve as a tool to engage with the public more generally about how their roadways can better serve their needs. As part of their Go Human campaign, SCAG hosts demonstration events across the region using a reusable kit-of-parts that includes temporary materials such as bollards, AstroTurf, branded banners, spray chalk and stencils (e.g., bike lane markings), seating, and tents.

*Case Study: SCAG Go Human Demonstration Projects*

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In 2017, Alta Planning + Design and Streets Plans teamed to design and implement ten events as part of the SCAG Go Human region-wide safety and encouragement campaign. The primary goal of these events was to promote region-wide walking and biking, while allowing local residents to temporarily experience roadways that are designed for people, not just cars. The projects were implemented in 11 cities across the SCAG region. Project types ranged from open streets events to temporary installations (such as pop-up bike lanes and temporary traffic circles or curb extensions), depending on each city's goals.



One of these events, Connect the Loop, took place in partnership with multiple jurisdictions in Orange County, CA, and local community organizations. Connect the Loop gave community members an opportunity to explore bicycle and pedestrian improvements that will eventually close a key gap in an existing trail network. Connect the Loop showcased pop-up parking protected bike lanes (shown in the photo below) and improvements to an existing shared-use path.

### *Resources*

Street Plans Collaborative developed a Tactical Urbanism Guide to Materials and Design, which presents an overview of materials that can be used for temporary installations and case studies where these materials have been used: <http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/>

The Open Streets Project, a collaboration between 80 Cities and Streets Plan Collaborative compiled an Open Streets Toolkit that lists best practices: <https://openstreetsproject.org/open-streets-toolkit/>

### *Walk and Bike Audits*

Conducting outreach onsite allows stakeholders to notice details that may not have occurred to them in an indoor workshop or meeting. Walk and bike audits enables participants (who may include local residents, community-based organizations, and city staff/elected officials) to observe conditions and discuss their findings and ideas for improvements. Participants may observe street lighting, sidewalk width and conditions, traffic volumes, presence and quality of bicycle facilities, and presence of trash and debris.

In addition to evaluating infrastructure and conditions currently in place, audits can be used to examine proposed development plans or other projects that will introduce change into a neighborhood. Typically, technical professionals such as City staff take notes during the audit, though maps can be handed out to participants for notetaking as well. As part of an audit, hosting a PhotoVoice activity will encourages stakeholders to take photos of existing conditions and document their concerns or ideas.

*Case Study: Step by Step Los Angeles County*

As part of the Step by Step Los Angeles County project, walk audits were conducted in multiple communities to identify opportunities for enhancements related to the safety, access, comfort, and convenience of the walking environment. Training was provided to residents prior to the walk audits, and participants broke up into small teams to conduct audits of assigned corridors in their communities. Then, participants regrouped to talk about issues that they noticed while on the walk audit. The corridors included in the walk audit were identified through community feedback received from surveys, community events, and Community Advisory Committee meetings.



In Lake Los Angeles, community members participated in a PhotoVoice activity, in which they submitted photos and discussed the need for additional pedestrian paths and maintenance of existing paths, and uncomfortable crossings near schools and in the community center.

#### *Resources*

SCAG developed a quick how-to guide for walking and biking audits as part of their Go Human campaign: [http://gohumansocal.org/Documents/Tools/ToolBox\\_Audit.pdf](http://gohumansocal.org/Documents/Tools/ToolBox_Audit.pdf)

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership developed a toolkit for conducting walk audits that includes best practices and sample materials: [https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/walk\\_audit\\_toolkit\\_2018.pdf](https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/walk_audit_toolkit_2018.pdf)

AARP developed a Walk Audit Tool Kit for people to assess their communities' streets, which includes many example materials: <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/livable-documents/documents-2016/Walk-Audit-Tool-Kit/AARP-Walk-Audit-Tool-Kit-100416.pdf>

#### *Community Surveys*

Surveys are most often used in the beginning of the planning process to help identify community concerns, opportunities strengths, and weaknesses of a community. A good survey includes the public early in the process, broadens the range of participants by including residents who may not come to meetings or workshops, and gets the message out about the project. Including demographic questions in a survey will help identify any inequities in response rates and detect important differences in opinions among groups.

There are a number of methods available to increase access and improve equity to surveys. Pilot testing the survey instrument with the community advisory committee can help catch any flaws, particularly with translations to alternative languages. While this may add time to the outreach process, it can ultimately yield more accurate survey results. Surveys can be offered both digitally and in print format to capture the widest audience. When budget allows, door-to-door surveying may also be an effective outreach method to reach community groups who may have a harder time accessing online surveys or attending in-person meetings or

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events. Door-to-door surveying is best conducted by a local trusted community-based organization with alternative language-speaking capacity if necessary.

It is important to survey a statistically representative sample of community members to get a well-rounded understanding of who is walking and biking, the conditions of existing infrastructure, and community needs and desires. At the same time, relying solely on quantitative data over the knowledge and experiences of disadvantaged communities can lead to incomplete decision-making. The project team should work closely with community partners (i.e., local community-based organizations and the project CAC) through the planning process to clarify, dispute, and enhance the data from collected surveys in order to prioritize the knowledge and contribution of community residents.

### *Interactive Technologies*

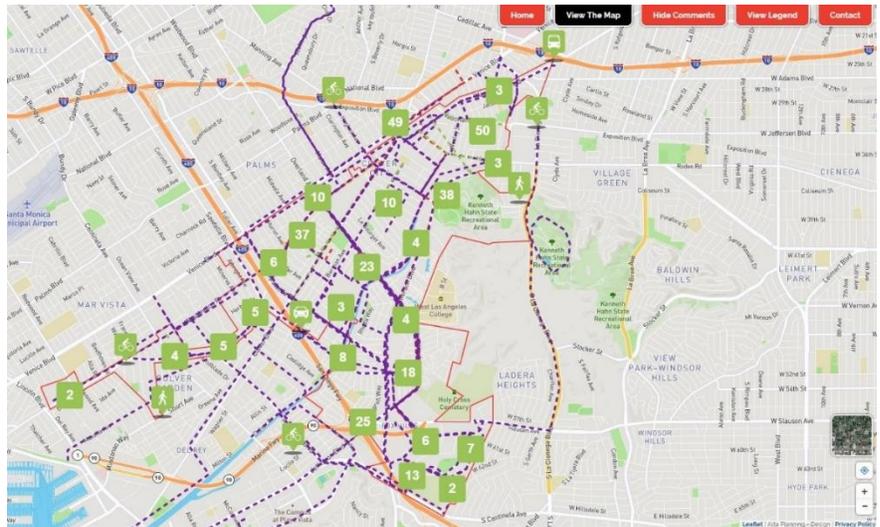
As technology advances, various digital tools have emerged, giving stakeholders an opportunity to provide input when it is most convenient to them. Tools like online surveys and interactive maps can complement in-person outreach events by allowing participants to contribute additional comments that may arise at a later time and capturing input from stakeholders who may not be able to make in-person events.

Outreach strategies can go beyond traditional methods, such as public meetings or workshops, and focus on incorporating interactive tools to make it more engaging. New digital technologies can help facilitate and streamline the outreach process and increase participation and interaction. Some of these interactive technologies and tools include:

- **Poll Everywhere**, an online service for audience polling. In a community outreach context, it allows facilitators to create poll questions that participants can answer by using their mobile phones to text their responses. Live results of each poll question can be displayed onscreen during presentations. It is a unique way to incorporate interactive and live activities during a presentation, such as at a public meeting.
- **Web-based public input maps** allow community members to identify key locations on a map and leave comments. They can be useful to identifying problematic and unsafe areas, as well as communicating desired infrastructure improvements.

*Case Study: Culver City Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan*

As part of the Culver City Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan outreach process, an online interactive map was made available to the public so they could provide comments and identify preferred routes. Nearly 600 comments were collected, including requests for improvements at intersections and along corridors, new bicycling and walking routes, gap closures in the existing bike network, and connections to key community destinations.



*Resources*

Metro’s Transportation-Oriented Development Toolkit includes outreach tools. An overview of various technologies available are listed: <https://www.metro.net/projects/tod-toolkit/outreach-tools/>

Communications

Getting people to actually participate in outreach activities requires an understanding of the local stakeholder environment. Not only does the project team need to know who to target, but how to do so. Local Government Commission (2013) stresses the importance of “values-based messaging” when reaching out to potential stakeholders to encourage them to participate. Values-based messaging communicates information to community members in a way that is meaningful and accessible by basing it on their values and letting people know how a project affects them.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that what communities want may not always align with active transportation ambitions. Good communication throughout the outreach process can help the project team understand what changes a community would like to see, anticipate any pinch points, and prioritize their concerns as best as possible within the project framework. Providing cultural competency and disability sensitivity training to the project team can help prevent community pushback. Sensitivity trainings aim to increase awareness and educate employees on how to effectively and sensitively communicate with people from different backgrounds, racial identities, religions, cultures, sexual orientations, physical abilities, and more. Understanding the semantics, norms, and preferences specific communities have allows for more inclusive outreach and a final plan that is more likely to be supported and reflect community wants and needs.

Communicating this information early on will help to reinforce participation and encourage stakeholders to continue to be active as the plan evolves. It is also important to communicate on how stakeholder input has

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influenced, contributed to, or improved the plan. Other topics community members may have questions about include:

- How and when input will be collected
- How and when decisions will be made
- Additional opportunities for community participation and how they can stay informed after the final plan is developed

The project team should use highly visible outreach methods such as flyers, posters, social media posts, public boards at community destinations, and more, and translate materials to all languages spoken locally to capture the widest audience. Outreach materials should be free of planning, design, and engineering jargon to avoid confusion. They can also use examples or case studies of how challenges or opportunities could affect different populations. Using existing community networks and forms of communication to publicize events and identify opportunities to align or hold combined events can make outreach more successful. Prioritizing community-level outreach, such as door-to-door outreach and geo-coded social media, can also assist with getting the attention of a wider range of stakeholders.

The branding used on outreach materials and project deliverables should reflect the goals, values, and culture of the community, and should be relatable to all audiences. Branding can be developed with the help of Community Advisory Committees, discussions with local community-based organizations, and stakeholder interviews. The project team can also survey the general public to get input on branding, asking questions such as:

- What part of your city are you most proud of?
- When you think about walking or biking in your community, what are the first words, images, or phrases that come to mind?
- Are there any specific cultural icons, color palettes, or language that should be reflected?

Additionally, city public information officers, communications staff, and graphic designers should attend charrettes and planning meetings for larger workshops or demonstration events to inform the project team on internal processes and timelines for branding and marketing. This will help the project team develop a communications strategy, which should include both print and digital media. The table below lists types of digital media and their purpose for outreach. The content and materials created for these outlets can also be printed and handed out at outreach activities, public meetings for other projects, key community destinations like libraries and schools, and more.

Media	Purpose	Key Features
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Project Website or Webpage on City Website	Provide general project information; direct user to additional resources; post project deliverables	Calendar, project background, contact information
Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)	Target populations who may not be engaged via traditional outreach methods; advertise outreach events; provide content to stakeholders already engaged with cities' social media	Photos of outreach events, Facebook event invites
Online Forums (e.g., NextDoor)	Gather input from the public	General information, communication with general public
Newsletter	Reach stakeholders, announce outreach activities	Upcoming opportunities for engagement, key deliverables updates
Press release	Raise public awareness about the project and upcoming outreach activities via local news outlets	Highlight project progress and engagement process

The project team can share these communications with stakeholder groups, such as the CAC and community-based organizations, to share with their networks. Additionally, they can be shared with local school districts who can distribute to their stakeholders to help reach a wider audience.

The following table lists outreach activities and their associated suggested communications timing (i.e., when target audiences should be first notified).

<b>Outreach Activity</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Advisory Committee Meetings	2-3 weeks prior, reminder week of meeting
Focus Groups and Listening Sessions	2-3 weeks prior, follow up multiple times during week leading up
Meetings and Workshops	2-3 weeks prior, follow up multiple times during week leading up
Public Survey	Start during Listen phase, keep open for 2-3 months in conjunction with other outreach activities

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Outreach Activity	Timing
Walk/Bike Audits	3-4 weeks prior, follow up during week leading up
Charrette	At least one month prior, with consistent follow-up communications leading up to the event
Interactive Map	Start during Collaboration phase, keep open for 2-3 months
Temporary Installations	3-4 weeks prior, follow up during week leading up

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