

Developing Effective Active Transportation Projects and Programs

Support for Small Agencies and Disadvantaged Communities



Module 8: Effective Community Engagement



Overview

- Why Engage Residents
- Outreach Methods
- Low Cost Techniques

Why Involve Residents in the Planning Process?

- Ensure that good plans remain intact over time
 - City councils, planning commissions, city managers, city planners come and go
 - Plan developed with resident input will have long-lasting and stable constituency

These first two emphasize some of the reasons why public engagement is so critical...

Why Involve Residents in the Planning Process?

- Get Better Plans
- Engage Residents in their Community
- Good Plans Survive Political Changes
- Way to ensure that residents feel not that they have access to City Hall but that they own City Hall



When we engage residents we get better plans. The residents know their communities better than staff or a consultant who might visit on occasion. Residents can provide great insights that we otherwise might miss. Yes, technical experts might have the best solutions but residents are key to identifying the problems and prioritizing solutions. It's also a great way to engage residents in their community. As the last bullet points out this is the essence of a democratic system.

Public Outreach

- Use every means at your disposal
 - Flyers, Posters, Billboards, Signs
 - Internet
 - Newsletters
 - Community Organizations
 - Churches
- Materials in different languages
- For active transportation projects resist temptation to think that everything is on the Internet — flyers and posters are effective

This slide and the ones that follow emphasize the importance of getting the word out about public events through every means possible. One point not on this slide is that it's often very helpful to work with an advisory group that can help with outreach and also let us know who is missing, and how best to reach them. In some communities it's very difficult to get residents to come to workshops and it might be necessary to identify locations where staff/consultants can go and meet with the community. Some ideas of places to reach residents: churches, medical centers, senior centers, schools, etc.



Examples of flyers/posters in multiple languages. Important to emphasize to provide materials in multiple languages.



Banners are an inexpensive way to get the message out to a lot of residents.



In some jurisdictions changeable message signs like this one are a great way to get the word out. The signs can be put out a few days before workshops or other events.



Tools & Techniques for Public Participation

- Design Charrettes (Incorporate many of the following)
- Stakeholder Group Meetings
- Community Workshops
- Visioning Exercises
- Walkability Audits
- Mapping Games/Design Tables
- Temporary Demonstrations
- Photo Simulation
- Community Image Survey

The design charrette is an intensive, multi-day planning process that includes many of the techniques shown below.

Stakeholder Group Meetings

- Get input from different stakeholder groups
- Small group discussions
- Allow interest groups to speak candidly
- Provides design team with detailed information in short time period



Focus Groups, City of Fowler, CA

Stakeholder group meetings are an excellent way to quickly get to understand the issues. Can also be an opportunity to hear from a special interest group in a candid setting. It's also a good way to reach groups that might not otherwise come to workshops.



Focus Groups in Cutler-Orosi (Tulare County) with Property Owners, Business People, County Staff, Social Service Providers



Youth Focus Groups

- Get input from youth (5th Grade, High School)
- Have them draw their route to school
- Ask them where in their community they would like to get to by walking/bicycling

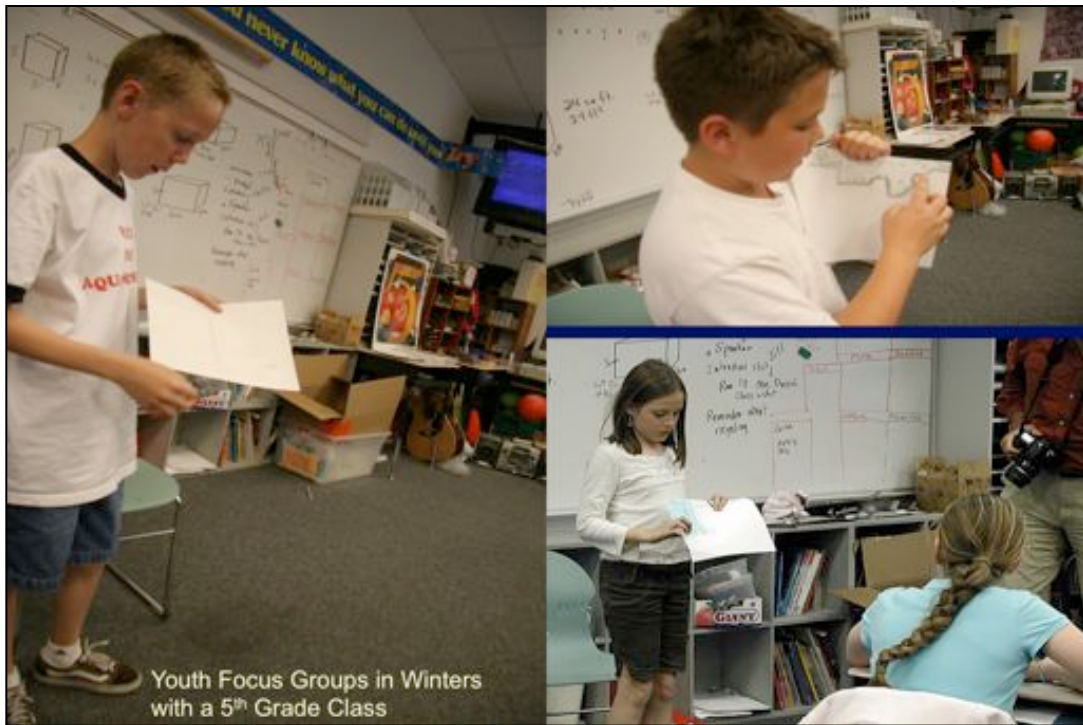


Youth Focus Groups, Cutler-Orosi, CA

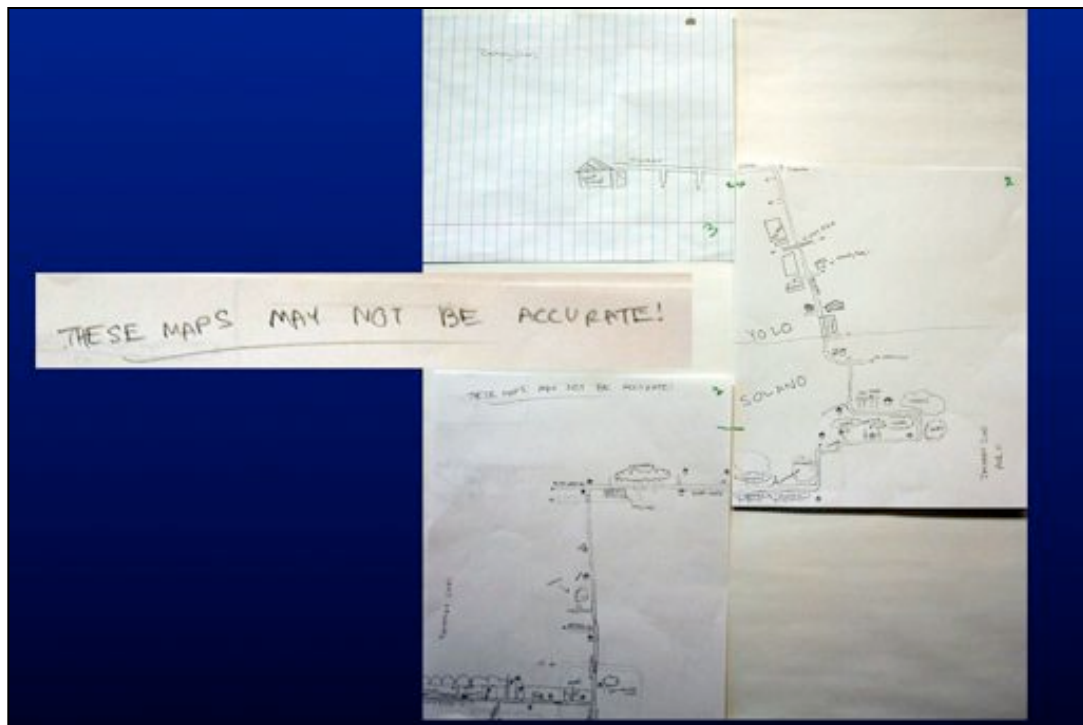
It's also important to try to reach and engage youth, the future generation. Some exercises to engage youth: Have them draw their route to school or ask them where they would like to go by walking/bicycling. Kids are creative and are not hesitant to draw.



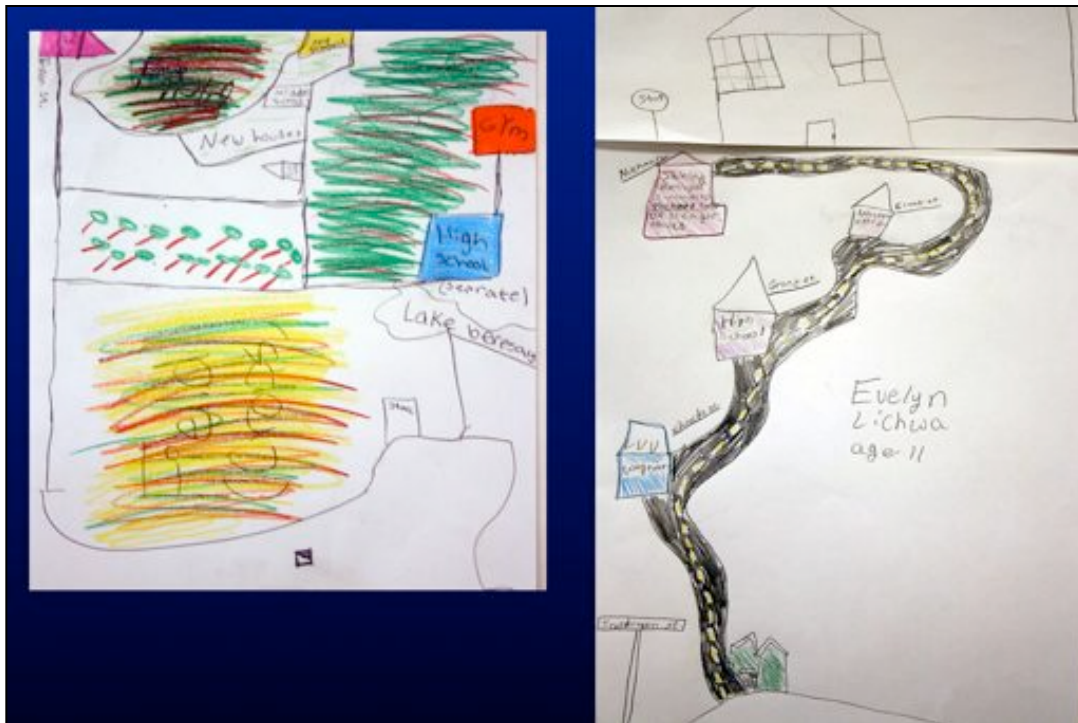
Youth Focus Groups in Winters with a 5th Grade Class



Youth Focus Groups in Winters
with a 5th Grade Class



(The youth that drew this diagram showing his/her route to school is clearly going to be an engineer!)



The youth who drew the diagram on left probably lives close to school... the one on the right has a long drive.

Community Workshops

- Turn them into a major community event
- Provide healthy food
- Provide daycare
- Provide translation services
- Make them fun!

Workshops are an opportunity to hear from residents and also to provide information. Workshops can be used to give examples of what other similar communities have done to improve walking/bicycling. Ultimately, you want to make them fun.



Example from a design workshop in Covelo (Mendocino County) sponsored by the Round Valley Tribes that included a salmon roast and great food. Made it a great community event.



Round Valley (Mendocino County) Opening Workshop — August 2008

Entertainment is another way to engage residents. An example from Round Valley of native dances.



In latino communities, mariachis are a great addition



In this Asian-American neighborhood in Salinas the Chinese and Japanese communities organized entertainment at the start of the workshop.



And in a Mendocino County town (Laytonville) the high school rock band played at the end of the workshop.

Visioning Exercise

- Ask participants to write down on index cards their 10-20 year vision for the project area
- Have 5-10 participants read them
- Include all of the vision statements in final report

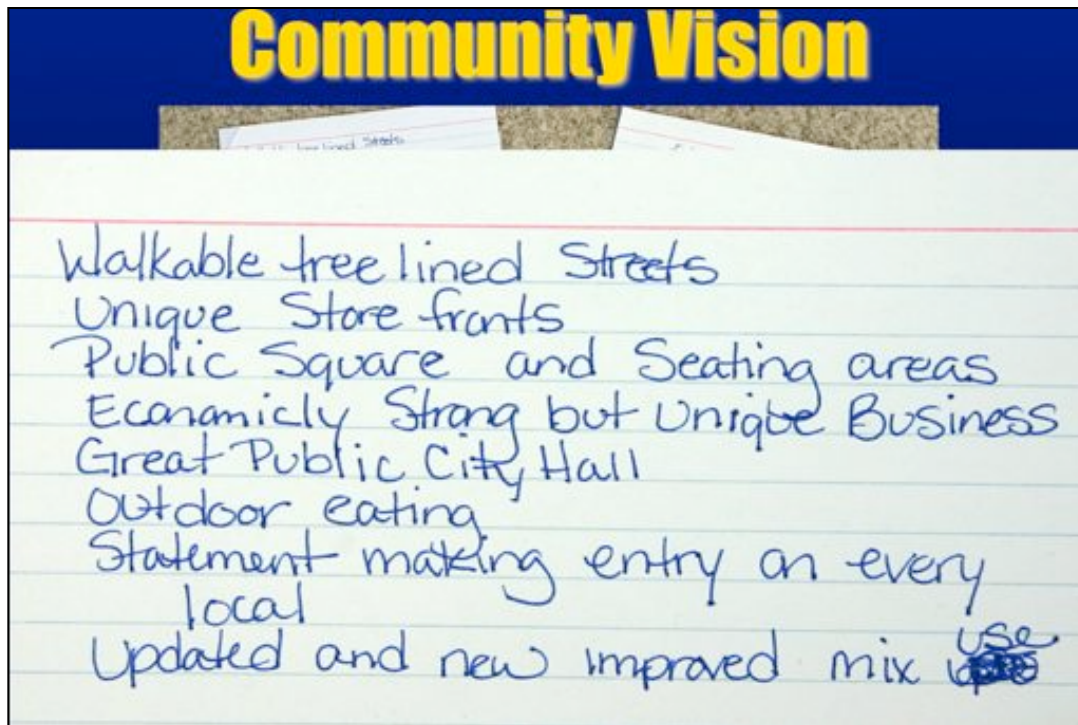
Slides that follow illustrate some exercises that can be used during workshops to get feedback.



Participants write down their vision and then share it with their neighbors.

[illegible]

Examples of vision statements



Examples of vision statements

Prioritization Exercise

- After listening to a 45-minute visual presentation on creating more livable communities, participants brainstorm key issues, concerns, ideas
- Participants vote on their six priorities using stick-on dots
- One rule: no double-dotting
- Helps identify key concerns

Prioritization exercises can be done after a brainstorming exercise with community members. They are often best done after presenting participants with some ideas of what other similar communities have done to improve walking/bicycling.



Mecca Opening Workshop — January 2008

Beauty entrance (30)	Highway to Mexico 16
Drug-rehab center Safe Parks for security (11)	C/ Para discapacitados banquetas Control de animal
Bridge over Railroad 29	Puento sobre el tren Sports + Parks (38)
	Center for Disability (8) Sidewalks (40) Animal Control (6)
	Deportes y Parques

Mecca Opening Workshop — January 2008

Priorities

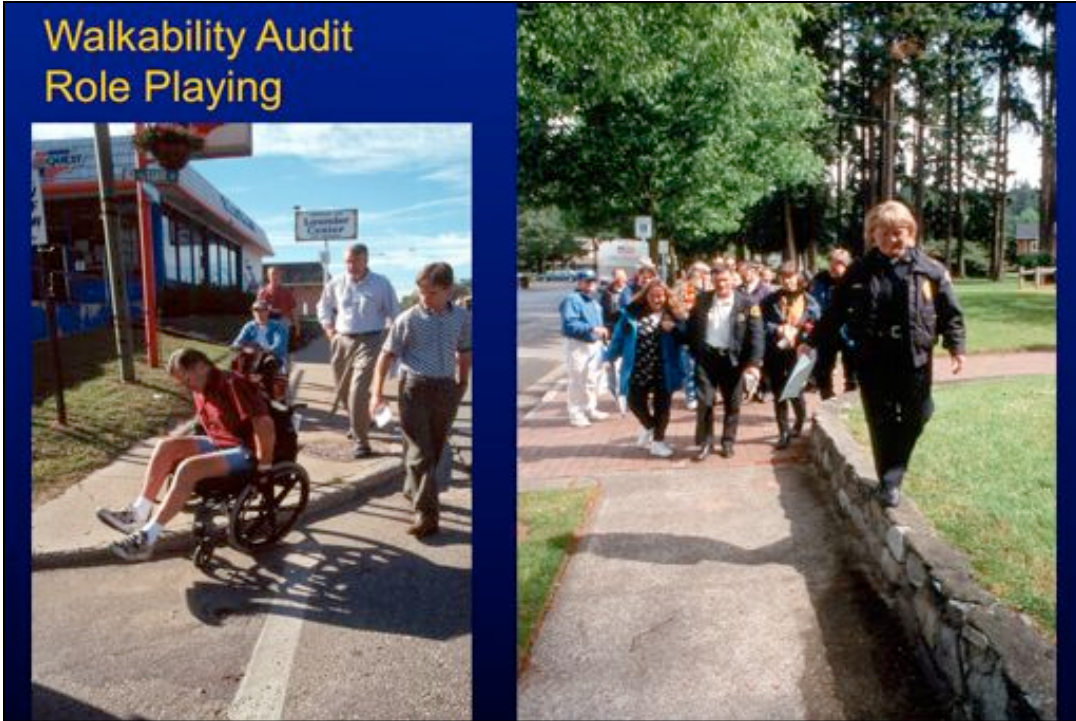
1. Shopping Center (57)
2. Gymnasium (44)
3. Sidewalks (40)
4. Sports and Parks (38)
5. University (35)
6. Beautify Entrance (30)
7. Pharmacy (29)
8. Bridge Over Railroad Tracks (29)
9. Clean-up and Fix Drainage (29)
10. School Security (20)
11. Street Repair (17)

Walkability Audit

- Technique to evaluate walkability of a community
- Efficient way to get input from residents on neighborhood problems/issues/concerns
- Fun and easy to do
- “Low Tech”

Walkability Audits or Assessments are low tech activities that help to engage residents and understand community issues. They can also be a great learning opportunity for participants.

Walkability Audit Role Playing



Walkability Audits can include role playing. In these photos the person in the wheelchair is the local traffic engineer. In photo on right, the police officer is pretending to be an 8 year old while the fire chief in the background is pretending to be an 80 year old.



Walk audits are a great way for residents to discuss challenges as well as for the facilitator to discuss different types of solutions. One approach is to ask residents to create a “human curb extension” or a “human roundabout” (on quiet, low volume streets).

Design Tables

- Allows residents to work in small groups with aerial photos of project area
- Participants are able to
 - Listen to their neighbors
 - Arrive at a consensus
 - Identify issues/problems to address
 - Put down their ideas
 - Develop specific recommendations

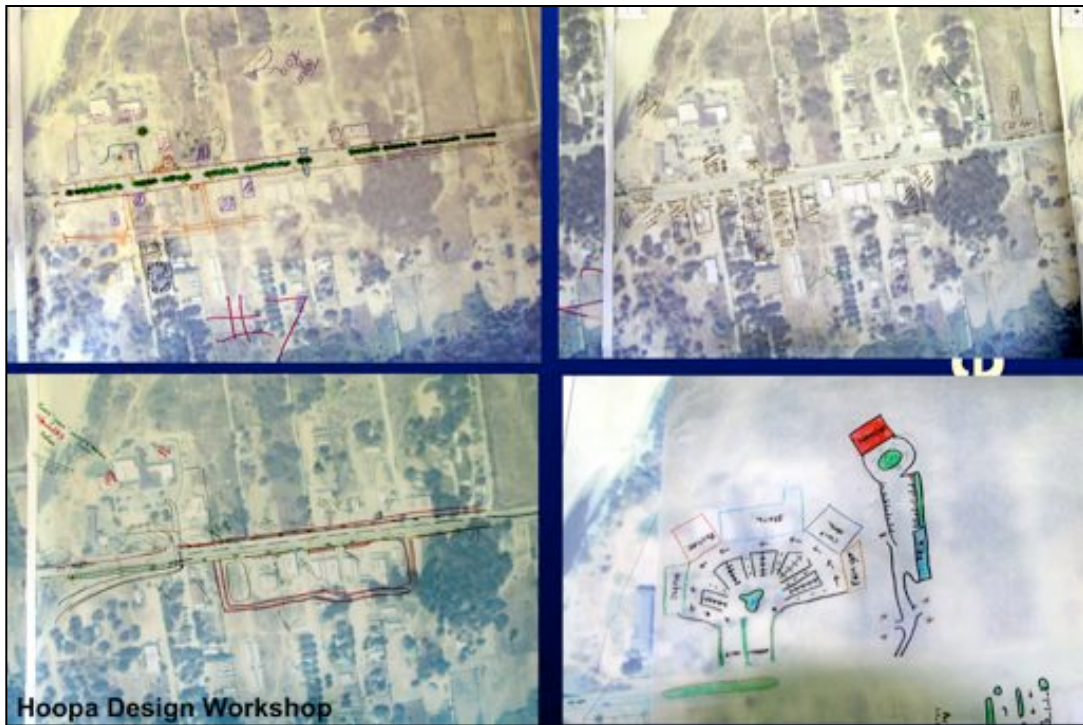
Design tables are a great way for residents to provide input... and also begin to identify solutions.



Participants in a workshop with the Hoopa Indian tribe work in small groups to write and draw on aerial photos of their community. This is a great way for residents to identify challenges and communicate them to staff/consultants. It's also an opportunity for residents to provide ideas and possible solutions.



After writing/drawing on the aerial photos each table shares its ideas with the rest of the participants. In this way everyone gets to hear what was discussed.



Sample maps from Hoopa showing what residents wrote/drew on the maps.

Temporary Demonstrations

- Help public visualize and experience change
- Locally sourced solutions.
- Short-term commitment and realistic expectations.
- Low-risks, with possibility of high reward.
- Development of social capital between residents.
- Organizational capacity building.

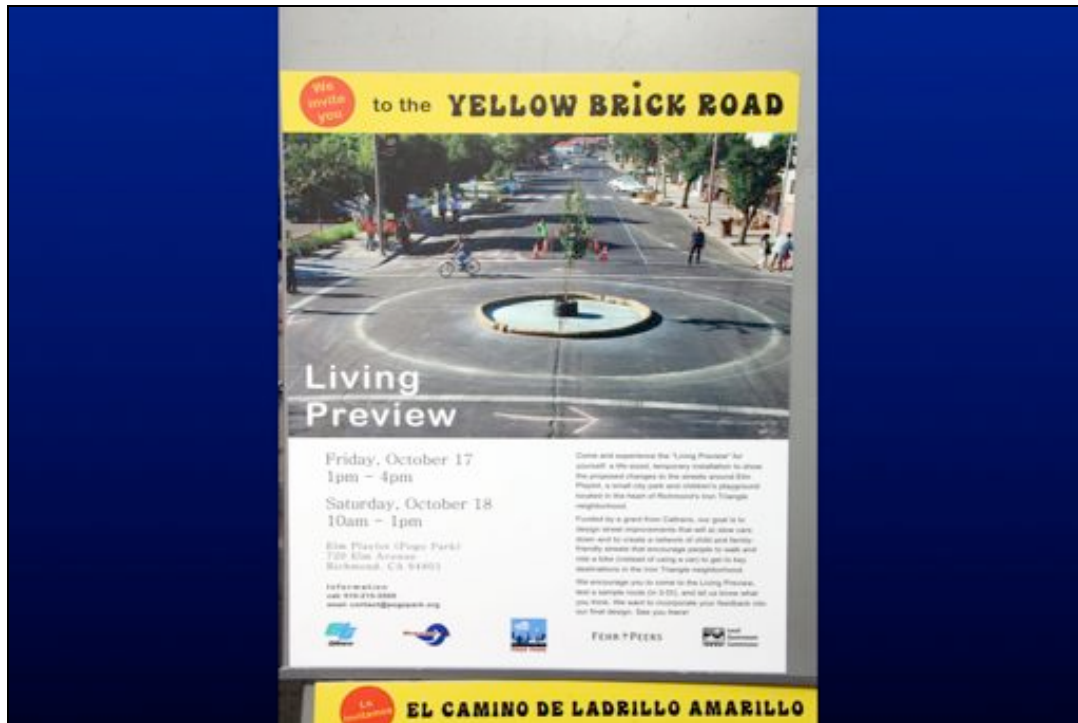
Tactical urbanism is a relatively new approach that has emerged in the last few years. It's a great way for residents to participate and also experience and experiment with different treatments. It is low-tech but does require a significant commitment from community-based organizations, city staff and consultants to do.



Example from Livingston, CA (small city in Merced County) from 2013 looking at how to improve conditions for walking, bicycling and economic activity on Main Street. City closed the street over the weekend and allowed project team to set up a mock roundabout at one intersection and curb extensions and back-in angled parking on one block (visible in distance). Residents got to try these treatments out and gave design team feedback.



Some of the temporary treatments in Livingston, CA.



In the City of Richmond a community-based group called Pogo Park, worked with the Local Government Commission and the City to coordinate and engineer the demonstration prior to the Living Preview installation. This type of effort requires a lot of work prior to the demonstration. While all demonstration projects require coordination, setup, purchasing materials, and thinking through the project, the scope of the Yellow Brick Road project (four blocks total) and the length of the installation (48 hours, including leaving some elements up overnight), required additional engineering and coordination.



Consultants and volunteers set up the treatments



And the design was modified during the demonstration to meet the needs of the largest fire vehicles while retaining the traffic calming benefits with adequate vehicle deflection and small dimension intersections.



Participants celebrate!



Children also had a chance to participate.

Photo Simulations

- Help public visualize change
- Get feedback on alternative development scenarios
- “Medium tech”
 - Need consultant to develop
 - Has gotten easier/faster

The photo simulations that follow are relatively low tech and could be done with help from community college students or volunteers that know Photoshop. They help residents envision the changes.

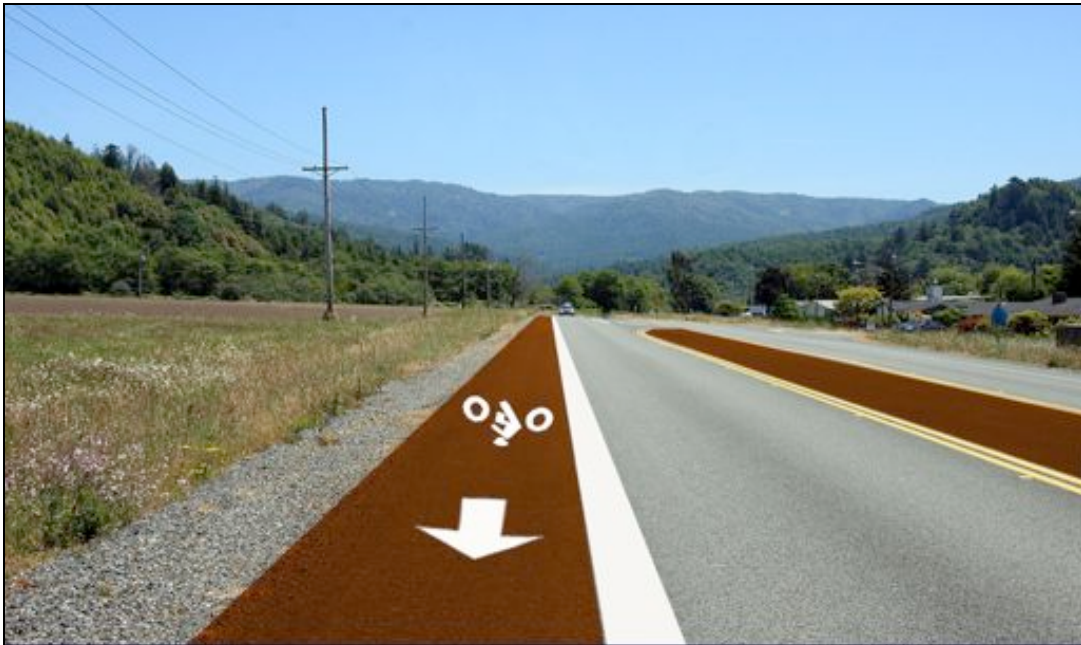


Cutler-Orosi: Highway 63 in front of Grade School



Cutler-Orosi: Highway 63 in front of Grade School

Developed by Dan Burden



Smith River — U.S. 101

Developed by Dan Burden



Smith River — Indian Road and U.S. 101

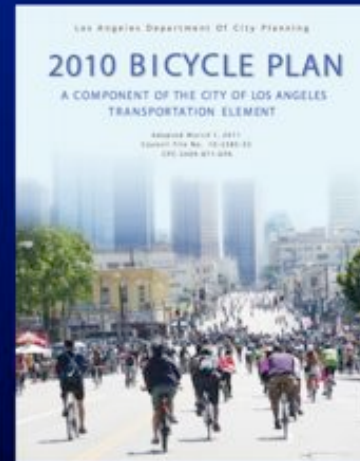
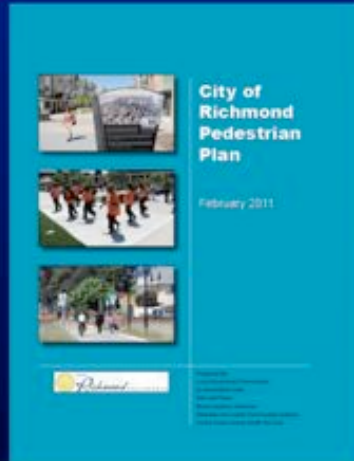
Developed by Dan Burden



Streetmix.net is an online tool that allows you to quickly try out different street cross-sections.

After the Charrette: Community-based Plan

- Result of public engagement
- Owned by community



Community Engagement Resources

Free online resource

Prepared in 2014
includes:

1. Getting the People Out
2. Events and Processes
3. Tools for Engagement:
In the Room
4. Tools for Engagement:
In the Field

Participation Tools for Better Community Planning



www.lgc.org/participation_tools

Community Engagement Resources

FHWA Resident's Guide:

- Updated in 2015

Includes:

- How to Assess Pedestrian/Bicyclist Safety Issues
- How to Engage Residents & Collaborate with Agencies
- Community Success Stories
- National Resources & Research

A Resident's Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Biking

January 2015



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_cmunity/ped_walkguide/residents_guide2014_final.pdf

Questions/Comments?