



Design

JUNE 2018

Project Title:

UTC - Bringing a Community Health Lens to Highway-to- Main Street Conversions, (UCCONNECT)

Task Number: 2866

Completion Date: May 31, 2016

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Bringing a Community Health Lens to Highway-to- Main Street Conversions, (UCCONNECT)

Identify metrics and community engagement procedures for assessing potential problems and benefits of converting state highway segments into community main streets, addressing transportation, public health and other community development goals.

WHAT WAS THE NEED?

In response to changing transportation patterns and community priorities, many communities are considering converting segments of state highways passing through their communities into main streets. This project will use a public health lens and methods, such as health impact assessment, to assess opportunities, barriers, risks and benefits of converting urban state highway segments into community main streets.

WHAT WAS OUR GOAL?

The goal of this project is to identify metrics and community engagement procedures for assessing potential problems and benefits of converting state highway segments into community main streets, addressing transportation, public health and other community development goals.

WHAT DID WE DO?

This particular focus is chosen because it represents the confluence of two problems confronting the state and local jurisdictions: (1) legal issues of ceding responsibilities for maintain a roadway, and (2) technical and political issues involved in repurposing roadways.

Phase 1 is to review generalizable research and guidelines and work with officials and community members to glean lessons learned from Highway to Community Main Street projects that have been completed or that are underway.



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Phase 2 involves assembling, reporting and applying tools and metrics for Highway to Community Main Street conversions.

Phase 3 involves case-study application of the metrics and tools developed in Phase 2 to Highway to Community Main Street conversion in a low income community in Los Angeles County.

Phase 4 focuses on refining tools and metrics from Phase 2 in consultation with California Department of Transportation and project panel.

Phase 5 is to present results through webinars and reports.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Our review of metrics showed that there is definitely no shortage of metrics that can be used to assess the transportation and non-transportation functions of roadway conversions. Most, however, are exceedingly long and complex and yield results that are difficult to compare across different domains. Only a few of the assessment tools are simple enough and have sufficient documentation for community members to use. That said, across all the domains we found assessment tools that community groups could use. Offering workshops and technical assistance to community groups as part of the roadway conversion planning process so that they can collect their own data could be a viable strategy for increasing community participation and collecting data on issues that are priorities for community groups.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

1. Provide alternative metrics, beyond Automobile Level of Service (LOS) and vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) to guide Department design and maintenance decisions affecting surface street highways under State jurisdiction in urban areas, in order to better meet performance expectations beyond vehicle mobility and traffic safety;
2. Help local jurisdictions to identify and respond to opportunities for state highway relinquishment so as to mutually benefit the State and local jurisdictions;
3. Support Department efforts to provide guidance to local jurisdictions on how to assess, improve and monitor the transportation and non-transportation functions of community streets, ranging from surface street highways and arterials to community main streets.