

OPERATIONALIZING  
EQUITY

# Collaborative Stakeholder and Community Engagement

September 22, 2025



**Mackenzie Love, AICP**

*Transportation Planning Division*

**Tracee Strum-Gilliam, AICP**

*Moderator*

**Dionne Hines, AICP**

*SOTP Co-Editor*

# Definitions and Future Events

## Equity Statement for 2025 State of Transportation Planning Report

Equity in planning starts with a broad perspective of equity as fair and just inclusion in a society where everyone can participate and thrive. Equity in transportation planning is a value-driven approach that recognizes the inequities that past discriminatory practices may have caused. These inequities need to be considered and ideally rectified in current transportation planning activities. The transportation planning community strives to provide transportation improvements through a holistic approach, recognizing that communities have unique needs and challenges. The goal of these efforts is a society where everyone shares in the benefits and burdens of the overall transportation system.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 20 – Transit and Active Transportation

January 29 - Community and Economic Opportunity

# Moderator

Traceé Strum-Gilliam, AICP



Traceé Strum-Gilliam, AICP, heads PRR's Baltimore office, and leads East Coast Business Development in her role as the East Coast Transportation Sector Lead. She also focuses on strategic planning, environmental justice analysis, grassroots outreach, and consensus building on high-profile projects throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region.

# Presenters



**Brenda Kayzar, PhD**

Brenda is the founder and collaborative strategist of Urbane DrK Consulting. She brings a hybrid of experience in finance and academia to her work navigating government institutions and nonprofits toward fair and sustainable outcomes. She recently co-authored an APA handbook on creative placemaking in rail transit corridors and co-produced a study on arts and culture's value in mitigating the impacts of transportation infrastructure on underserved communities for the Minnesota Department of Transportation.



**Katie Caskey, AICP**

Katie has over 15 years of experience in the infrastructure industry, specializing in public engagement, strategic communications, and policy planning. As HDR's director of transportation strategic communications, Katie leads a team of over 160 full-service communications, engagement, and creative practitioners who focus on connecting people to the projects and services that move communities forward.



**Grace Zheng, AICP**

Grace Zheng is a certified urban planner with experience spanning public and private sector projects across transportation, land use, and community development. As a Transportation Planner at WSP, Grace has contributed to a range of initiatives including transportation safety studies, strategic and master planning, and environmental assessments. Grace holds a Master's degree in City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania and brings a deep commitment to inclusive planning practices that elevate underrepresented voices.



**Sascha Sabaroche**

Sascha Sabaroche is a Transportation Professional with over 26 years of progressive experience in the Civil Engineering industry. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at Texas Southern University, concentrating on Transportation Planning and Engineering. Her research integrates technical, regulatory, and environmental dimensions of transportation systems.

A background image showing a group of children painting a colorful mural on a sidewalk. The mural features various patterns and colors, including yellow, blue, and red. The children are wearing casual clothing and are focused on their work. The scene is outdoors, with trees and a street visible in the background.

# Utilizing Arts and Culture to Mitigate the Negative Impacts of Transportation Infrastructure on Communities

**Research Team: Dr. Brenda Kayzar, Urbane DrK Consulting  
and Dr. Julie Cidell and Andrea Pimentel Rivera, University of Illinois**



**2025 State of Transportation Planning Webinar Series**



A background photograph showing a community art project. A large blue tent is set up outdoors on a grassy area. Several people, including children and adults, are gathered around a table. One woman in the foreground is focused on drawing or painting on a large sheet of paper. Other people are visible in the background, some looking at the artwork. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a pleasant day for an outdoor activity.

## Expected Research Outcome: MnDOT Academic Research Solicitation

- **Demonstrate that integrating arts and culture into transportation planning practice advances**
  - **Planning objectives**
  - **Ensures equity and community well-being**
- **Provide the tools to facilitate the integration**

## Project specifics

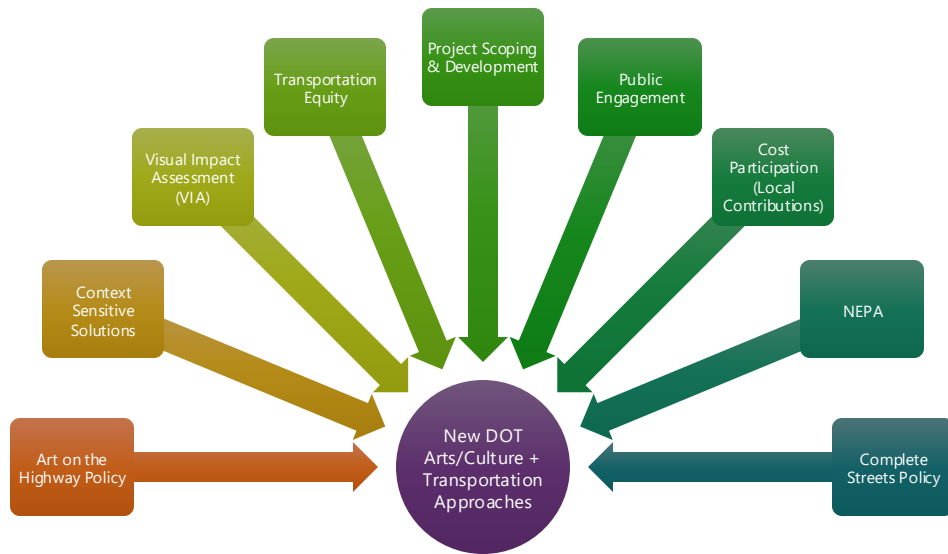
Financial, organizational, collaborative, and equity-based contexts of 9 case study projects and 4 Artist in Residence programs

- Interviews
- Archives
- Fieldwork





# Research: Presentations & Plans



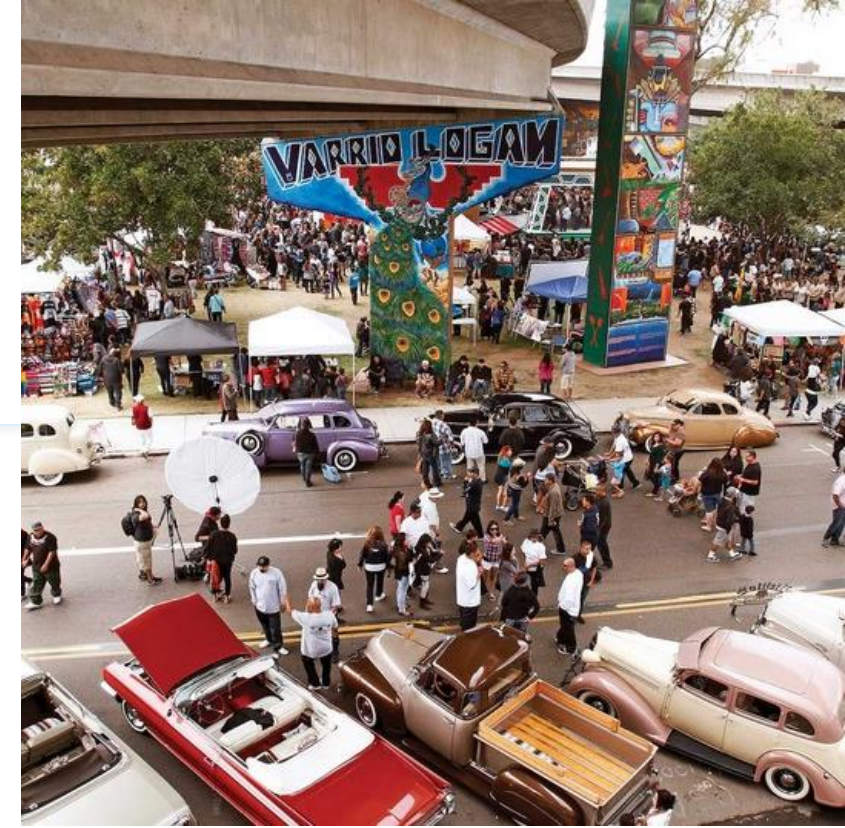




## Chicano Park

Barrier, disconnect, disruption





## Chicano Park

Community, gathering, third space,  
sense of place



## Findings

Strong evidence for integrating arts and culture into transportation planning and implementation policies and practices





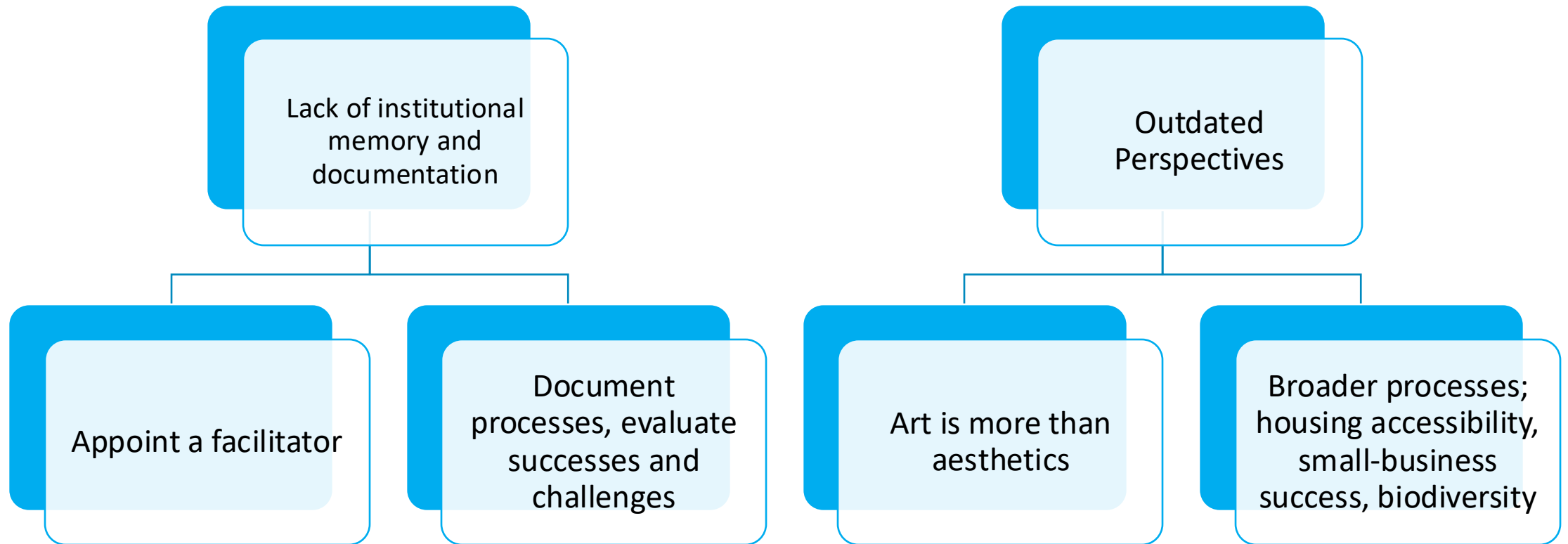


## Findings: institution-community relationships

Community trust is incredibly important and incredibly fragile

- Build better community relationships
- Improve communication
  - **Reach communities not traditionally heard from**
    - Enhance existing outreach methods
    - Educate DOT staff about local cultural knowledge
    - Gain community respect

## Findings: internal to the institution



# Thank You!

Take Aways:

Why use arts and culture?

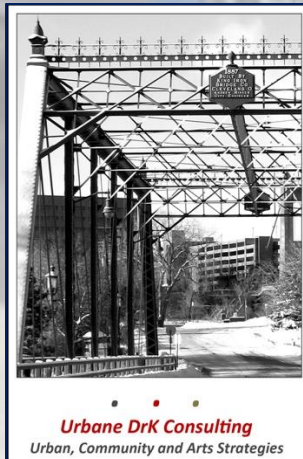
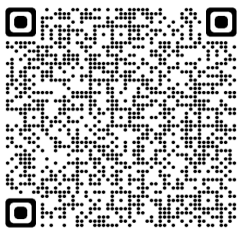
- Better connections, trust
- Past and present harms

How to do it?

- Beyond public art
- Artists as consultants
- Institutionalize policy, practice

**m** DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION

**I** UNIVERSITY OF  
ILLINOIS  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



**Urbane DrK Consulting**  
Urban, Community and Arts Strategies



# Creative Placemaking

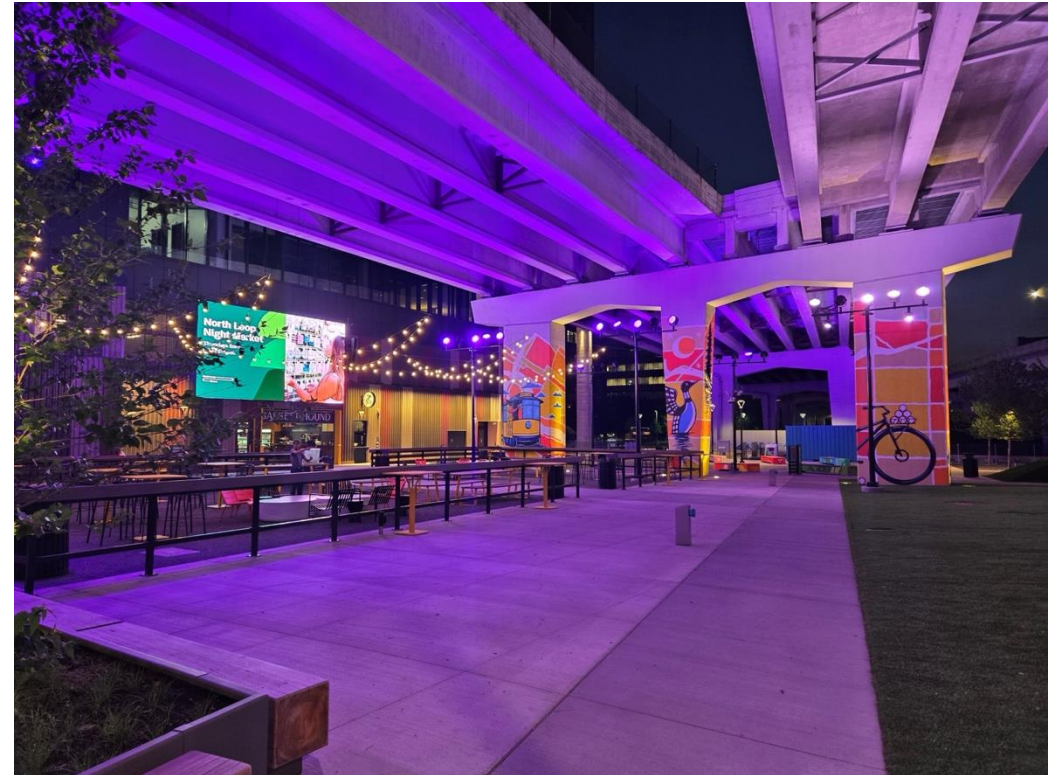
Mitigation, engagement, social and environmental justice and livability

Public Art

Community Engagement

Creative Placemaking

- “In creative placemaking, public, private, not-for-profit, and community sectors **partner** to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around **arts and cultural activities**.” ~NEA



# Defining a role for Creative Placemaking



## Public Art

- Partnering with the community to develop an artistic embellishment as part of transportation infrastructure or in the area around the infrastructure

## Engagement

- Using artistic practice to envision transportation projects, practices or policies in a different way
- Using arts and cultural activity to better engage community members
  - Enrolling artists and culture bearers in the engagement process
  - Using artistic practice to 'speak' across cultural differences

# Resources for Creative Placemaking Projects

## *Transit and Transportation Focused Studies*

- *Arts, Culture and Transportation: A Creative Placemaking Field Scan*, Smart Growth America, 7 Transportation Case Studies: <https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/knowledge-hub/resources/arts-culture-transportation-creative-placemaking-field-scan/>
- *Utilizing Arts and Culture to Mitigate the Negative Impacts of Transportation Infrastructure on Communities*, Minnesota Department of Transportation study, 9 case studies and 4 artist-in-residence programs: <https://researchprojects.dot.state.mn.us/projectpages/pages/projectDetails.jsf?id=27242&type=CONTRACT&jftfdi=&jffi=projectDetails?id=27242&type=CONTRACT>
- *Creative Placemaking in Rail Transit Corridors*, American Planning Association Handbook, 8 case studies: <https://planning.org/knowledgebase/resource/9261662/>

## Creative Placemaking Resources

- *Routledge Handbook of Urban Cultural Planning*: <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Urban-Cultural-Planning/Amirtahmasebi-Schupbach/p/book/9781032509907?srsId=AfmBOooMHj6KVYGwMNEvULgRWLB5jvb4kFY7rqQoehVGPwQ6AT7WfqCg>
- National Endowment for the Arts: <https://www.arts.gov/impact/creative-placemaking>
- Americans for the Arts: <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/arts-civic-design>





# Participant compensation

The state of the practice and recommendations for an emerging tactic in infrastructure public engagement

Katie Caskey, AICP  
Transportation Strategic Communications Director



September 22, 2025

# Background

## Types of compensation:

- Cash or cash equivalent compensation like gift cards
- Non-cash compensation like meals, childcare, or free transportation to/from events
- Paid partnerships with community-based organizations in which the CBO implements aspects of the engagement on behalf of the project

## The why:

- Updated federal guidance
- Increasing interest among agencies/infrastructure owners
- Changing expectations of community
- More questions than answers

# Findings

1. Participant compensation in infrastructure public engagement is not rare
2. It currently takes many forms
3. It has the potential to help achieve certain engagement goals and is worth consideration
4. Its effective use is complex





# Practitioner survey results

**82%**

of survey participants **agreed or strongly agreed** that participant compensation should be considered as part of infrastructure public engagement

Percentage of survey participants who **agreed or strongly agreed** that it should be considered as part of infrastructure public engagement:

**89%** CBO partnerships

**86%** non-cash

**60%** cash or cash-equivalent

## Results, cont.

The most common **top reasons** for considering participant compensation:

**24%** Increase participation from underrepresented groups generally

**23%** Increase overall participation

**18%** Increase participation from Environmental Justice/Title VI populations specifically

Most agreed upon **potential benefits**:

- Increase participation
- Acknowledge the value of people's time
- Enable participation
- Increase representativeness

Most agreed upon **potential concerns**:

- May lead to non-affected people participating
- May pressure support



## Literature review takeaways

1. Incentives generally work to increase participation in surveys and studies
2. Money is usually the most effective, especially when given upfront
3. The size of the incentive matters, but there are diminishing returns
4. Different groups will respond differently to incentives
5. How people feel about the incentive is more important than the actual incentive



# Takeaways, cont.

6. There are ethical concerns about incentives, especially with vulnerable groups or when large amounts of money are involved
7. Using incentives can change who participates in a study, which could affect the results
8. Incentives don't seem to lower the quality of responses
9. Other strategies can also increase participation and should be considered
10. More research is needed to fully understand how incentives work in different situations





# Participant compensation is complex

## Key questions

- Should the goal of infrastructure public engagement always be to maximize participation?
- Do the potential benefits of participant compensation outweigh the risks?
- Are the risks related to using participant compensation greater than the risks of not using it?
- How do practitioners best implement participant compensation if they decide to use it?

# A Decision-making framework for participant compensation in infrastructure public engagement

## Considerations for if you should use compensation:

- What are your engagement goals?
- Do you need statistically representative results?
- What incentives and barriers already exist in your process?
- Are you restricted from implementing participant compensation?

## Considerations for how you use compensation:

- Who should compensation be directed toward?
- What should be compensated?
- What type of compensation should you use?
- How large should the compensation be?
- What are the potential unintended consequence?

# Recommendations for Practitioners

## Project planning

- Be intentional and document your rationale
- Review relevant policies and laws
- Consult with the community
- Seek an independent review







## Recommendations, cont.

### Scoping and budgeting

- Understand what payment mechanisms you have available
- Include participant compensation explicitly in your scope
- Include funding for it explicitly in your budget

# Recommendations, cont.

## Implementation

- Include in your engagement plan and follow your plan
- Track all payments
- Track participant levels and characteristics, as appropriate for the community context
- Document lessons learned



A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a tan button-down shirt over a black t-shirt, is speaking and gesturing with his hands. He is holding a white marker in his left hand. The background is a blurred office setting with a laptop on a desk and a window with greenery outside.

## Recommendations for Organizations

- Establish guidance with clear direction but flexibility
- Review related policies and procedures for consistency
- Identify an internal owner
- Establish a process for independent review
- Create templates
- Provide training
- Build a library of examples

# Get in touch!

Katie Caskey, AICP

Transportation Strategic Communications  
Director

[Katie.Caskey@hdrinc.com](mailto:Katie.Caskey@hdrinc.com)

*Full research report available this fall via email  
and HDR website.*





# Realizing Equity: Acknowledgement and Participatory Tools

Milwaukee County Complete Street

Grace Zheng, AICP



# Agenda

**01** Project Contexts

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**02** Acknowledging Inequity

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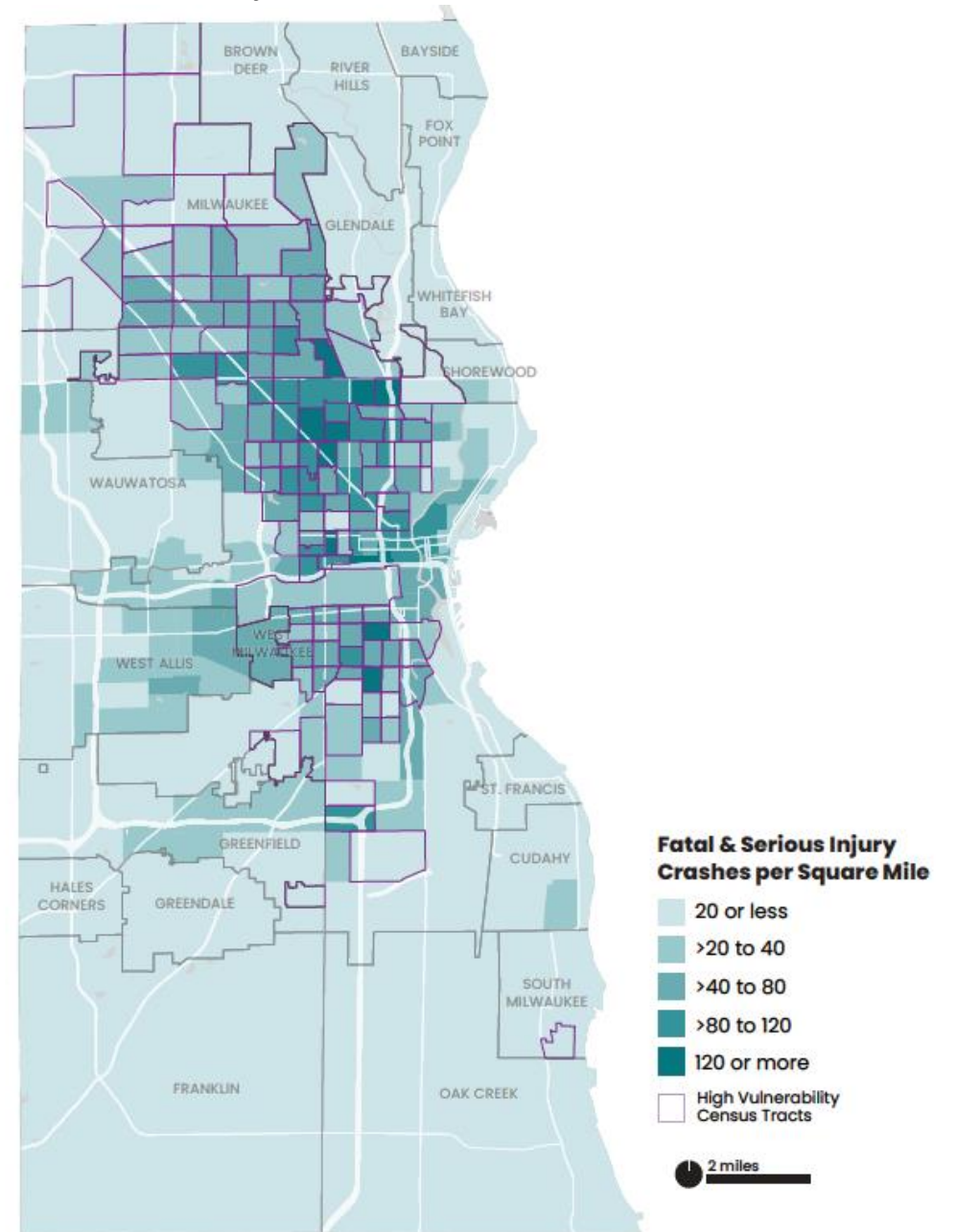
**03** Participatory Tools for  
Engagement

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**04** Take-aways

# Project Context

- Roadway fatality and serious injuries are stagnant in Milwaukee County
  - **81** People Die Every Year in Milwaukee County Crashes
- Reckless driving is also a pervasive **equity issue**
  - Communities feel uneven impacts



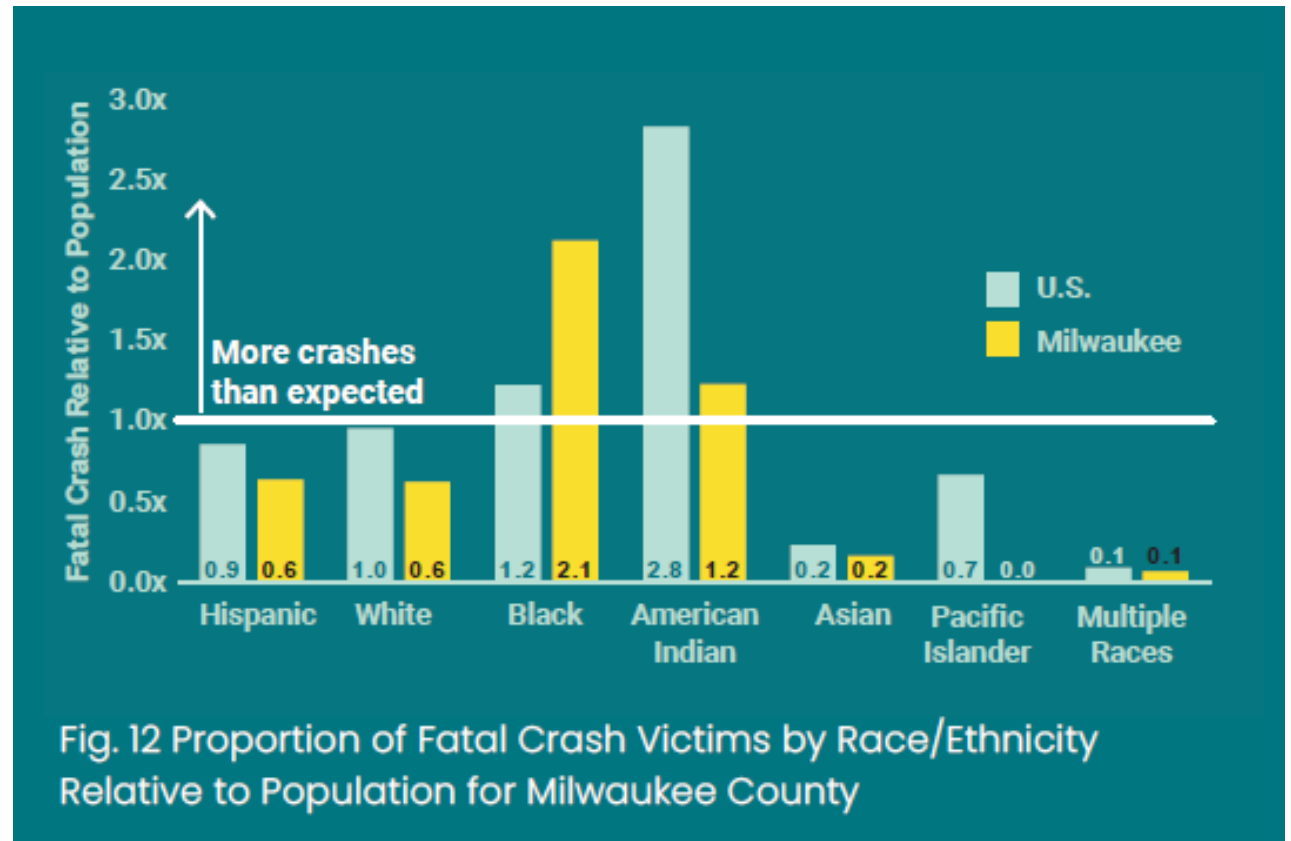


# Project Context



# Acknowledging Inequity

- Be honest and clear on the facts by acknowledging existing inequity in the system
- Provide platform for people to share their sorrow and grief, so that community could build trust and have more active participation



# Participatory Tools for Engagement – Phase 1



Mapping Mobility Tool



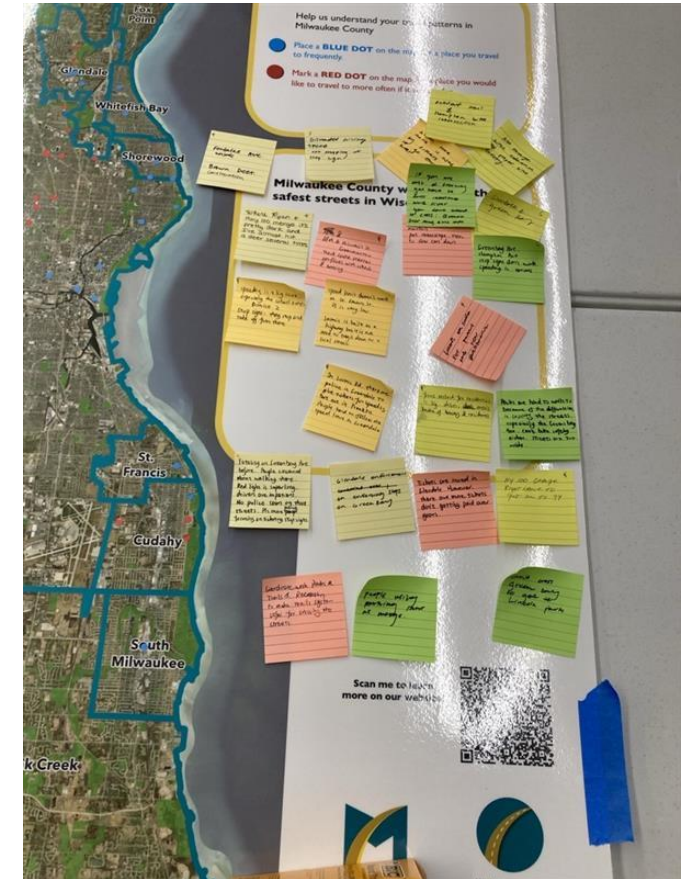
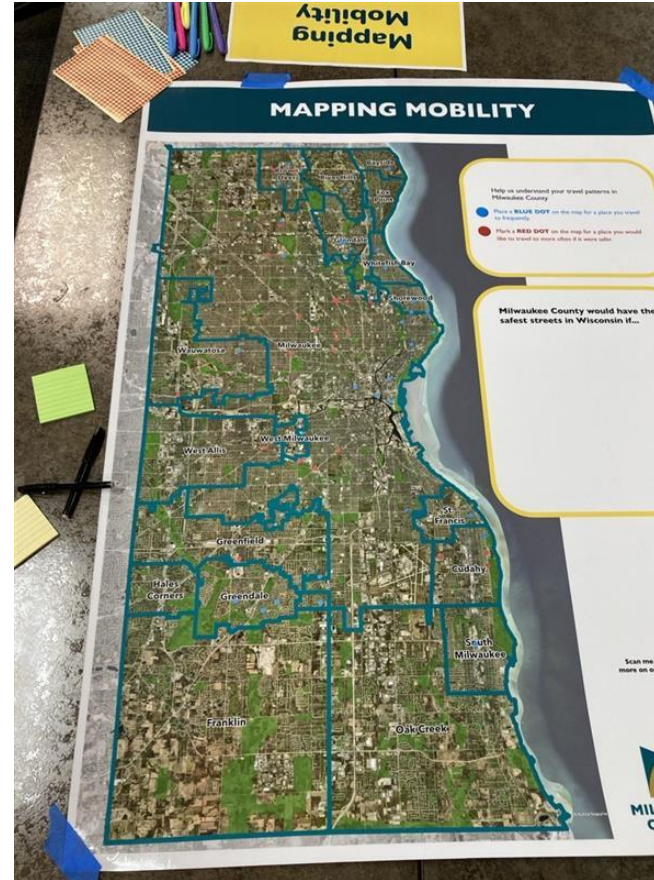
Corridors of Concerns  
Questionnaire



Safe Street Discussion



Design a Roadway



Mapping Mobility Exercise



# Participatory Tools for Engagement – Phase 1



Mapping Mobility Tool



Corridors of Concerns Questionnaire



Safe Street Discussion



Design a Roadway

Hoja de ejercicios de seguridad vial: Milwaukee

1 Usando un marcador, identifique la calle o los pasillos donde se siente inseguro mientras viaja.

2 Marque una "X" en el mapa donde haya sido testigo de una conducción imprudente. Puede marcar tantos como desee.

3 ¿Qué modo se siente más inseguro cuando se viaja?

☐ Coche (manejando) ☐ Coche (Pasajero) ☐ Bici

☐ Caminar/rodar ☐ Tomar el autobús ☐ Patinete ☐ Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

¿Por qué? \_\_\_\_\_

4 Moverse por mi comunidad sería seguro si... \_\_\_\_\_

Community Questionnaire



Engagement Findings

# Participatory Tools for Engagement – Phase 1



Mapping Mobility Tool



Corridors of Concerns  
Questionnaire



Safe Street Discussion



Design a Roadway



Safe Street Discussion

# Participatory Tools for Engagement – Phase 1



Mapping Mobility Tool



Corridors of Concerns  
Questionnaire



Safe Street Discussion



Design a Roadway



Kids Designing Roadways



# Participatory Tools for Engagement – Phase 2



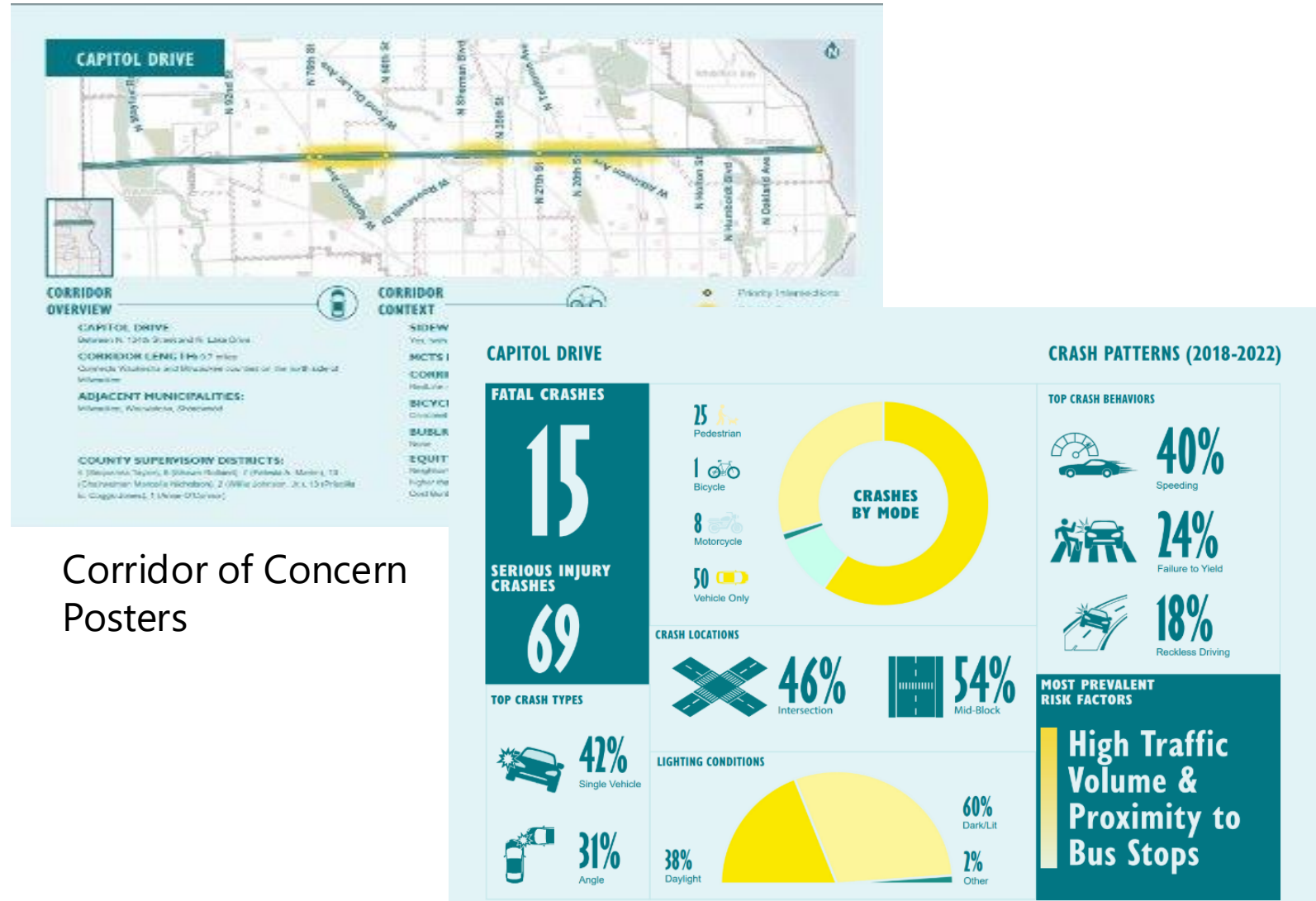
## Community Corridor of Concern



# Safety Toolkit Boards



# Questionnaire



# Participatory Tools for Engagement – Phase 2



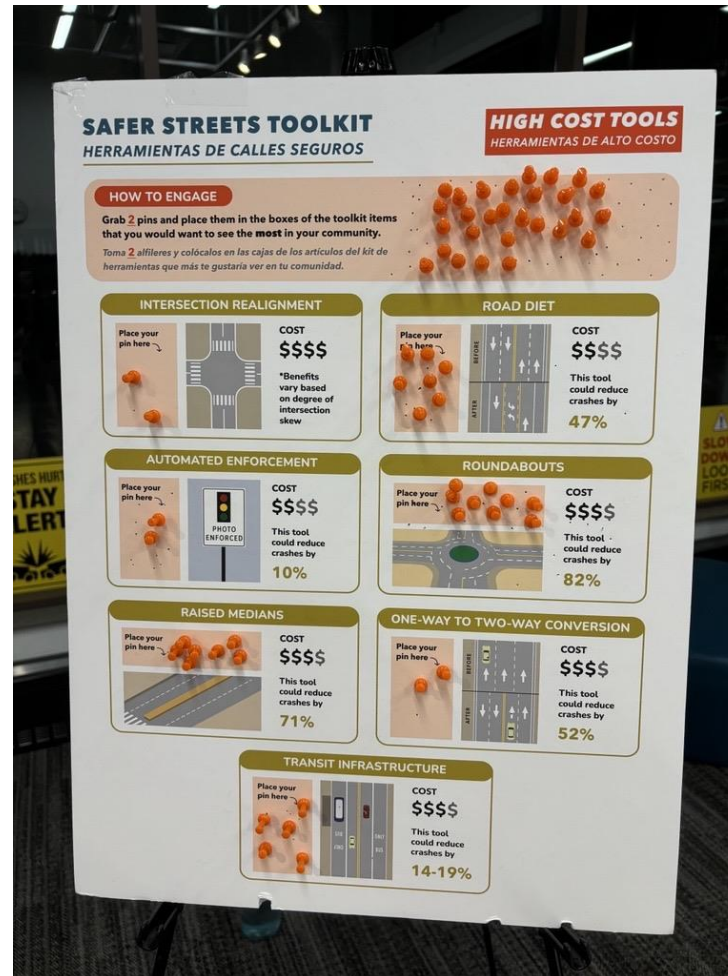
Community  
Corridor of Concern



Safety Toolkit  
Boards



Questionnaire



Safety Toolkit (high-cost tools)



Voting for Safety Tools

# Participatory Tools for Engagement – Phase 2



Community  
Corridor of Concern



Safety Toolkit  
Boards



Worksheets

## Getting Around Your Neighborhood

Let's talk about the fundamentals of transportation: how you get around. The decisions you make about how to get around your community are useful for building a system that works for everyone.

Fill out the questions below to tell us more before completing the exercise on the back of this sheet.

1 How do you typically get around your community? Circle all that apply.



I walk/roll



I bike or  
scooter



I drive or  
get a ride



I take transit

2 Why do you choose these transportation modes to get around your community?

3 Is there another way you would like to get around your community (but don't currently)?

☐ No

☐ Yes (circle which mode(s) you would use more):

Walk/roll

Drive, carpool, or get a ride

Bike or scooter

Transit

4 If you answered yes to Question 3 above, what would make you use this mode?

A commitment to traffic safety requires all of us to do our part.

### I drive safely for...

Share this with your neighbors and see how they contribute to safer streets!

A commitment to traffic safety requires all of us to do our part.

### I make my streets safer by...

Share this with your neighbors and see how they contribute to safer streets!



# Takeaways

- 1. Acknowledge inequities upfront – build trust to allow active participation
- 2. Use engaging and interactive participatory tools - invite instant communications for deeper feedback
- 3. Translate feedback into action – keep momentum for multi-year projects

Share of Projects in High Vulnerability and/or Disadvantaged Census Tracts

	High Vulnerability Census Tracts	USDOT Disadvantaged Census Tracts
% of Projects (by Number)	56%	64%
% of Priority Projects (by Number)	56%	64%
% of Projects (by Cost)	52%	64%
% of Priority Projects (by Cost)	58%	66%
% of Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes	49%	60%



Intersection Projects

#	Intersection	Safety Project Opportunities	20-Year Crash Cost Savings	FSI Crashes	Injury Crashes	Owner (s)
1*	76th St.	Traffic Calming / VRU Improvements	\$ 1.4 M	2	25	WisDOT CTH
2*	Appleton Ave.	Traffic Calming / VRU Improvements	\$ 3.5 M	2	23	WisDOT CTH
3*	60th St.	Traffic Calming / VRU Improvements	\$ 7.9 M	5	32	City of Milwaukee, WisDOT CTH
4	Sherman Blvd.	Systemic Traffic Signal Improvements	\$ 2.8 M	1	47	City of Milwaukee, WisDOT CTH
5	35th St.	Geometric Realignment	\$ 7.3 M	2	32	WisDOT
6*	27th St.	Traffic Calming / VRU Improvements	\$ 4.0 M	9	40	City of Milwaukee, WisDOT
7	Teutonia Ave.	Traffic Calming / VRU Improvements	\$ 2.1 M	3	25	City of Milwaukee, WisDOT
8*	Lake Dr.	Traffic Calming / VRU Improvements	\$ 5.6 M	2	3	WisDOT

\*Indicates priority location

Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- Corridors of Concern
- Vulnerable Tracts
- Intersection Projects
  - Traffic Calming & VRU Improvements
  - Systemic Traffic Signal Improvements
  - Reduced Left-Turn Conflict Intersection
  - Geometric Realignment
  - Multi-Lane Roundabout
  - Single-Lane Roundabout
- Segment Projects
  - Road Diet
  - Road Diet & Access Management
  - Traffic Calming & VRU Improvements
  - VRU Improvements & Access Management
  - Raised Median & Access Management
  - Road Safety Audit & Improvements

# Thank you

Milwaukee County Complete  
Communities Transportation  
Planning Project

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# **URBAN PLANNING THAT INCORPORATES THE OPTIMAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONNECTIVITY FOR BLACK SOCIOECONOMIC BENEFITS.**

2025 State of Transportation Planning Report (SoTP)

Transportation Focus Topic

By

Sascha S. Sabaroche, M.S, PhD Student

Texas Southern University



**American Planning Association**

*Creating Great Communities for All*



# AGENDA

- Introduction
- Community Engagement
- Citizen Science (CS)
- Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR)
- How will you expand justice, equity, and environmental justice into organizations and systems in the community?

# **PRESENTER**

Sascha Sabaroche is a Transportation Professional with over 26 years of progressive experience in the Civil Engineering industry. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Environmental Policy at Texas Southern University, concentrating on Transportation Planning and Engineering. Her research integrates technical, regulatory, and environmental dimensions of transportation systems. Her multidisciplinary career spans transportation planning and engineering, construction, oil and gas, land surveying, and academia, supported by more than a decade in senior leadership in various roles.

Ms. Sabaroche's work centers on public safety, environmental sustainability, and systemic resilience. She applies a systems-thinking approach to complex mobility and infrastructure challenges, contributing to the advancement of equitable, data-driven, and regulatory-compliant solutions. She is committed to the Transportation Industry because she recognizes its importance to safety, the environment, and human welfare. As she keeps up with the newest technological advancements, she plans to use her knowledge, abilities, and experiences to inspire and guide others and serve as an example for young women entering the field.

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# INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION

## Issue:

To create transportation planning that is both equitable and environmentally sustainable, because it is essential to achieve social cohesion and promote inclusivity.

## Research question:

How have historical efforts and public engagement in transportation planning shaped planners' recognition of the need for adequate and equitable connectivity in underprivileged communities, particularly those surrounding Texas Southern University in the Houston Metropolitan area?

**Keywords:** community, data, equity, environment, network, planning, system, transportation, urban



# NEIGHBORHOOD BACKGROUND

## Disadvantaged Communities near TSU (Houston Metro Area)

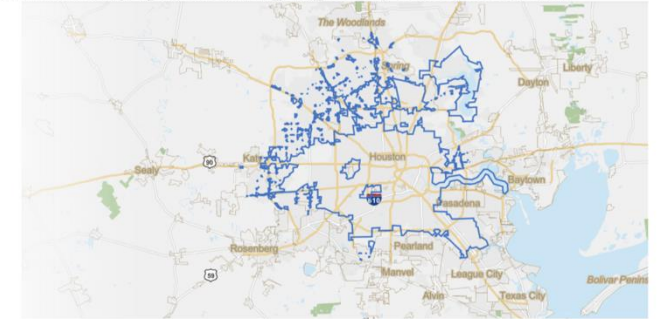
## 1. Houston Metropolitan Area

- Total population: ~7.5 million
- Racial/Ethnic Composition:
  - White (Non-Hispanic): 37.8%
  - Hispanic/Latino: 35.9%
  - Black/African American: 17.2%
  - Asian: 7.3%
  - Other/Multiracial: 1.9%

## 2. Third Ward (ZIP 77004)

- Total population: ~34,197
- Racial/Ethnic Composition:
  - Black/African American: 49.1%
  - White (Non-Hispanic): 33.1%
  - Asian: 7.1%
  - Other/Multiracial: 10.7%

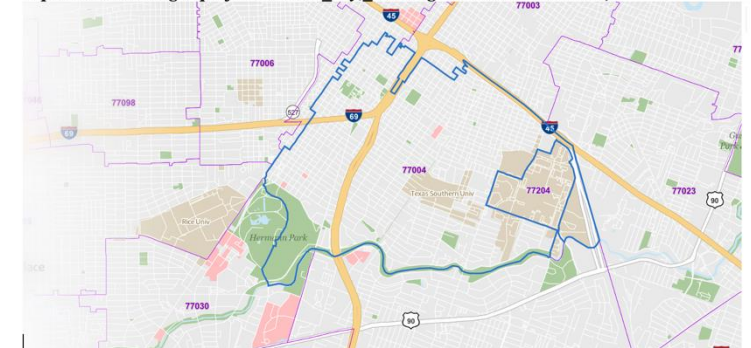
**Fig. 1: Houston Metropolitan Area Map (Reference: [https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston\\_city,\\_Texas?g=160XX00US4835000](https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston_city,_Texas?g=160XX00US4835000))**



**Fig. 2: Houston Metropolitan Area Demographics Summary (Reference: [https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston\\_city\\_Texas?g=160XX00US4835000](https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston_city_Texas?g=160XX00US4835000))**



**Fig. 3: ZIP Code 77004 (Houston's Third Ward) Map ((Reference: [https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston\\_city,\\_Texas?g=160XX00US4835000](https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston_city,_Texas?g=160XX00US4835000))**



**Fig. 4: ZIP Code 77004 (Houston's Third Ward) Demographic Summary (Reference: [https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston city, Texas?q=160XX00US4835000](https://data.census.gov/profile/Houston%20city,%20Texas?q=160XX00US4835000))**







# COMMUNITY DISCUSSION



# Vulnerable Population

- ❑ **Health Disparities:** Higher rates of chronic illness, mental health conditions, and infectious diseases.
- ❑ **Barriers to Care:** Limited access to preventative care, quality healthcare services, and health information.
- ❑ **Community Context:**
  - Surrounding TSU's Third Ward → predominantly African American
  - Historical underinvestment and environmental injustices (Richardson, 2023)
  - Cuney Homes public housing → affordable housing for low-income residents and students
- ❑ **Compounded Vulnerabilities:** Socioeconomic, environmental, health, infrastructure, accessibility, and historical challenges.
- ❑ **Local Initiatives:**
  - **TSU's S.H.A.P.E. Initiative** – free screenings, education, and resources
  - **Community partners:** Rebuilding Together Houston, Third Ward Community Cloth Cooperative, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church

# Vulnerable Communities

- ❑ **Definition:** Greater risk from disasters, environmental hazards, and socioeconomic challenges due to systemic barriers (Houston Housing Association; Urban Institute, 2025).
- ❑ **Key Characteristics:**
  - Socioeconomic disadvantage
  - Geographic isolation
  - Experiences of discrimination
- ❑ **Examples (NCD, 2018):** Low-income populations, racial/ethnic minorities, Indigenous groups, seniors, individuals with disabilities, immigrants.
- ❑ **Third Ward Context (near TSU):**
  - Predominantly African American community
  - Challenges: limited healthcare access, food insecurity, high poverty & unemployment
  - Public housing (e.g., Cuney Homes) underscores the need for affordable solutions
- ❑ **Environmental Factors:** Pollution, inadequate infrastructure, and historical disinvestment.
- ❑ **Community Response:** TSU and local organizations provide educational, healthcare, and economic development initiatives to promote stability and well-being.

# Impacted Residents

## Recognizing Historical Context

- ❑ Third Ward communities near **TSU** have been **underserved** by past transportation infrastructure (*FTA, 2013*)
- ❑ Residents near Texas Southern University (TSU) in Houston face pre-existing vulnerabilities due to historically underserved transportation infrastructure, limiting access to essential resources (FTA, 2013).
- ❑ Awareness of past and present transportation injustices is critical before planning new projects.
- ❑ Implementing new transportation network systems can have both positive and negative effects:
  - **Positive impacts:** Improved connectivity can increase access to employment, healthcare, and educational opportunities.
  - **Negative impacts:** Potential displacement, increased traffic congestion, and heightened environmental pollution if projects are not carefully planned.
- ❑ Prioritizing community engagement ensures residents have a meaningful voice in planning and implementation.
- ❑ Engaging the community can help mitigate negative impacts and maximize benefits of transportation improvements.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# IMPORTANCE

## 1. Importance of Community Engagement

- Houston communities near TSU have experienced historical underinvestment and marginalization, creating a need for trust and collaboration.
- Ensures transportation solutions are technically sound and responsive to community needs.

## 2. Effective Engagement Strategies

### ☐ Build strong relationships with:

- Local organizations: TSU, Yates High School, Young Women's College Preparatory Academy
- Government: Harris County Precincts 1 & 4, City of Houston, METRO, HGAC, TxDOT
- Faith-based institutions: Wheeler Baptist Avenue Church, Holman Street Baptist Church, Lily Grove Baptist Church, Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church, TSU Wesley Student Center, Christian Home Missionary Baptist Church
- Stakeholders & policymakers and Federal agencies

### ☐ Prioritize community-driven approaches to foster ownership and empowerment.

## 3. Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA)

- Promotes responsible development and positive community-business relationships (EPA, 2023).
- Essential for transportation projects in low-income areas to build trust and resolve issues.
- GNAs can address: environmental impacts, traffic and safety, community benefits, and displacement concerns (USDOT, 2016).





# CITIZEN SCIENCE (CS)



# Citizen Science & Transportation near TSU

## ❑ What is Citizen Science?

- A **collaborative, data-driven approach** that shifts from top-down planning to **community-led solutions** (*Levy, 2021*)

## ❑ How It Works:

Residents collect real-time data using smartphones/apps to report:

- **Traffic congestion hotspots**
- **Unsafe pedestrian crossings**
- **Transit service gaps**
- **Sidewalk and bike lane conditions**

## ❑ Key Benefits:

- **Localized insights** traditional data may miss
- Empowers residents as **co-creators** of transportation solutions
- Fosters **community ownership, trust, and collaboration** with agencies
- **Outcome**
- Creates more **responsive, inclusive, and effective** transportation planning near TSU

# Citizen Science & Transportation near TSU

- ❑ **Collaborative Approach:** Shifts from *top-down planning* to community-driven, data-informed solutions (Levy, 2021).
- ❑ **Real-Time Data Collection:** Residents document transportation issues using smartphone apps.
- ❑ **Examples of Data Collected:**
  - Traffic congestion hotspots
  - Unsafe pedestrian crossings
  - Gaps in public transit coverage
  - Sidewalk and bike lane conditions
- ❑ **Community Benefits:**
  - Provides localized insights that traditional methods may miss
  - Fosters ownership and empowerment among residents
  - Ensures projects reflect community needs and priorities
  - Builds trust between residents and transportation agencies



# COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH (CBPR)

# Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) near TSU

- **Collaborative Approach:** Researchers and community members work together to ensure research addresses community needs (Wallerstein et al., 2017).
- **Relevance to TSU Area:** Supports efforts in **environmental justice, health disparities, and infrastructure development.**
- **Community Empowerment:** Engages residents in all phases—defining questions, conducting research, and sharing results—fostering ownership.
- **Applications near TSU:** Investigating environmental pollution, healthcare access, and transportation inequities.
- **TSU Examples:**
  - Center of Excellence for Housing & Community Development Policy Research
  - Center for Biomedical & Minority Health Research





# JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

# HOW WILL YOU EXPAND JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INTO ORGANIZATIONS AND SYSTEMS IN THE COMMUNITY?

## Accessibility, Sustainability & Equity in Transportation

- **Justice & Equity:** Design systems that advance justice and environmental equity near TSU
- **Affordable Transit:** Expand bus routes, protected bike lanes, and efficient public transit for underserved communities
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** Prioritize historically marginalized neighborhoods to promote economic mobility and reduce barriers
- **Equitable Policies:** Discounted fares for low-income individuals and investments in pedestrian-friendly streets
- **Green Infrastructure:** Electric buses, solar-powered transit stations, and shaded/tree-lined walking and biking paths
- **Environmental Benefits:** Encourage public transit and non-motorized travel to reduce emissions and improve air quality
- **Community Engagement:** Collaborate with TSU stakeholders and local organizations to ensure projects meet community needs





**CONCLUSION:  
IMPROVED OUTCOMES**

# Equitable & Sustainable Transportation Network Improved Outcomes

- **Community Engagement at Texas Southern University (TSU):** Facilitated dialogue between transportation planners and TSU students, faculty, and local residents, ensuring that roadway redesigns reflected the needs of a historically Black academic community rather than only commuter traffic priorities.
- **Equity-Based Data Analysis:** Conducted demographic and mobility analyses showing disproportionate impacts of road widening and highway expansion on Black neighborhoods in Houston, which led to planners reconsidering alignment options to minimize displacement.
- **Historical Policy Review:** Used archival planning documents and policy papers to highlight past inequities (e.g., freeway construction displacing Third Ward residents), reframing the discussion around avoiding repeated harm and strengthening accountability in current projects.
- **Advocacy for Road Diet Feasibility Studies:** Advanced the conversation by analyzing safety and traffic-calming benefits of road diets near TSU and surrounding neighborhoods—an approach not previously prioritized by agencies—which opened opportunities for pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented improvements.
- **Comparative Urban Case Study Insights:** Applied lessons from other metropolitan areas (e.g., Atlanta’s equity planning initiatives, Detroit’s freeway removal debates, and Los Angeles’ transit justice movements) to demonstrate how equity-focused transportation strategies could be adapted to Houston’s underserved neighborhoods.
- **Bridging Academic and Policy Arenas:** Positioned academic literature on transportation equity within real-world Houston planning decisions, creating a stronger evidence base for city and regional planners to integrate equity principles beyond compliance checklists.



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