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Dignity Infused Community Engagement in Los Angeles

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Dignity Infused Community Engagement in Los Angeles

PSU TREC Friday
Transportation Seminar
Caro Vera

October 16, 2020

VZ DICE Definition

A planning process that *intentionally* and *holistically* incorporates the viewpoints, lived experiences, and perspectives of those *most impacted* by a planning project. It seeks to restore and atone for historic, systemic and institutional injustices.

VZ DICE Definition

A dignity-infused planning process involves community members in the process from the beginning, weaving both their *perspectives* and *technical planning practices* into a project.

Our Approach

- Street Team **composed of local residents** who live along the corridor
- University Fellows from Creative Arts, Social Science, Transportation, and Public Health
- Accessibility Partners
 - SCRS-IL
 - Liberate
- Memorializing Victims through Rainbow Halo Campaign



Our Approach

Social Climate Analysis

- **Social science analysis methods** used to assess community context and conditions
- Customized community engagement strategy for **each** corridor
- Collaboration with CBOs as **thought** partners and **project** partners



Street Team

- Our ideal candidate had **no prior experience**
- Our ideal candidate had **a history of facing barriers to employment**, such as people experiencing houselessness, recently incarcerated, veterans, seniors, and issues maintaining employment
- Street Team **composed of 15 local residents** who live along the corridor, recruited primarily via PATH in LA
- Conducted biweekly trainings on Vision Zero, professional development, conflict resolution
- Street Team became Vision Zero and safe streets advocates



University Fellows

Created four positions:

- **Social Science Fellow**
- **Creative Arts Fellow**
- **Public Health Fellow**
- **Transportation Planning Fellow**



Christian Mendez
Transportation Planning Fellow



Ma'ayan Dembo
Arts Fellow



Paola Tirado
Social Science Fellow

Circulated the job description to thirty schools in the area

Hired based on **innovation and commitment to community engagement**

- Hiring people from different disciplines **expands our community engagement practice** and allows us to reach more people through innovative strategies



Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

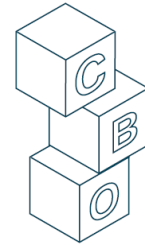
- Organized a CBO mixer where we made an invitation to all CBOs in LA area
- Opportunity to strengthen relationships with local community partners **through intentional collaboration and partnership**
- Released CBO Application to join our team:
 - No prior transportation advocacy experience needed
 - All CBOs who applied were accepted
- Goal: Bring on as many advocates as possible to **expand VZ DICE reach** and create a team of community experts committed to safer streets

Capacity-Building Institute

MARCH 14 & 15, 2019
10AM - 4PM

We are honored to provide a training program for Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Resident Leaders participating in the LADOT Vision Zero Dignity-Infused Community Engagement project. This two-day program will provide an opportunity for us to create alignment and ensure equitable access to participation as we strive toward the goals of Vision Zero and Dignity-Infused Community Engagement.

Our 2019 effort starts with our Deployment Orientation and Development Training: a fun and informative 2-day session designed to share key project details, identify common values, increase accessibility to City staff and processes, increase LADOT staff capacity to serve and include CBOs and resident leaders, share ideas, and celebrate our new citywide team and partners.



Agenda

FEBRUARY 19, 2019

Vision Zero Dignity-Infused
Community Engagement

Approach
3PM-3:25PM

Let's Mingle
3:25PM-4:15PM

Call to Action
4:15PM-4:30PM

Meet & Greet
4:30PM-5PM

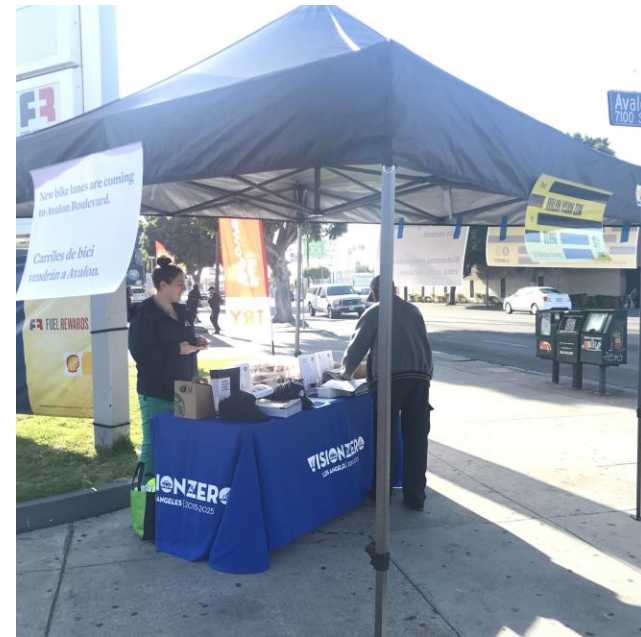
Social Climate Analysis

- Assess and understand social and cultural factors on a project corridor and surrounding community
- Opportunity for planners and engineers to work with community members to **identify meaningful ways to preserve community assets** and address socio-cultural barriers a proposed project might create
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods to develop a community profile
 - Demographic Information
 - Collision history
 - CalEnviro Screen 3.0 Analysis
 - Displacement Analysis via rent burden
 - Qualitative assessment of existing community assets and amenities
- Conduct **three rounds of walk audits** with City staff, CBO partners, and community experts
- *You can't plan for a community without understanding local dynamics and reaching community members*

If you want
vulnerable
communities at the
table, **start
with dignity.**

Avalon Boulevard

- LADOT collaboratively developed events that uplifted cross-racial and intergenerational perspectives on the Avalon Blvd corridor.
- Approach focused on **creating a series of culturally-significant events** that would engage residents.
- Efforts were grounded by VZ Street Team
- Engaged local street vendors
 - Intentionally activated local economy and provided local vendors the opportunity to participate in events that might otherwise only be accessible to larger catering companies.



Southern Commuter Day Engagement on intersection of Avalon Blvd and Florence Ave.

Avalon Boulevard

Thirty-Five Day Avalon Blvd Engagement

Some of the events held over the course of the Avalon 35-day Activation

- 52nd & Avalon Block Party
- After Church Lunch
- Instagram Live Discussion on Traffic Violence in South Los Angeles
- Street Team Business Canvassing
- SRTS Bike to School Day
- Commuter Days & Street Pop-Ups
- Mother's Day Zumba
- Eloteros for Vision Zero
- Youth Engagement
- Interfaith Outreach & Events
- Active Streets Los Angeles (ASLA) Neighborhood Walks
- Bike Days on Avalon
- Intergenerational Walk and Fitness events
- Dog Day at the Wetlands Park
- Senior Bike Ride



Bike Day on Avalon with free Raspados and Elotes from local street vendor Don Victor



After Church Lunch with CBO partner, Mt. Salem Church

Eloterros for Safer Streets

- Partnered with local elotero on Avalon corridor
- Don Victor had been biking the corridor as a street vendor for **20 years and was known to the community**
- Most effective engagement strategy of Avalon Corridor
- Averaged 200 surveys for every event



Eloteros for Safer Streets



South LA Open House

- Culminated 35 days of community engagement
- Involved different LADOT departments and local projects in South LA
- 1100 Attendees
- 12,000 residents engaged along Avalon
- 700 resident surveys submitted





Avalon Boulevard Outcomes

- 90% of community residents **supported the implementation of a bike lane on Avalon Boulevard**
- 96% support the installation of **more crosswalks and signals along Avalon Boulevard**
- 78% were willing to add **3+ minutes to their trips on Avalon Boulevard** for improved safety conditions

Engaging communities historically siloed from the planning process requires unique, customized, and culturally relevant approaches.



Numbers-At-A-Glance

- **55** events attended/hosted
- **17,670** local residents engaged
- **36** local vendors and artists involved
- **42** Community Members directly hired



Key Takeaways

- Community engagement should be **culturally relevant** and reflect the community being served.
- Transportation projects can **negatively impact communities** if residents aren't involved in the engagement process.
- **Partner, build, and pay** community partners as they are local experts.
- Community engagement requires building trust, **starting with a willingness to innovate, intervene, and invest.**
- It's the City staff's and Consulting team's **responsibility to build trust** with community.

Q & A