Webinar

Confronting COVID-19: Making Moves
Date: September 11, 2020

00:00:10 --> 00:00:12: I'm well Herbick senior director at you allies,
00:00:12 --> 00:00:15: building healthy places team here at the Urban Land
Institute.
00:00:15 --> 00:00:18: On behalf of you, I I would like to welcome
00:00:18 --> 00:00:21: you to this global webinar on the coronavirus will have
00:00:21 --> 00:00:24: an opportunity here from a group of transportation leaders
about
00:00:24 --> 00:00:27: what our public right of ways might look like going
00:00:27 --> 00:00:28: forward.
00:00:28 --> 00:00:29: Since the onset of the pandemic.
00:00:29 --> 00:00:34: Some cities have aggressively reimagined their
transportation infrastructure by reducing
00:00:34 --> 00:00:36: speed limits and adapting their roads,
00:00:36 --> 00:00:41: parking lots, and other infrastructure is safer and more
socially
00:00:41 --> 00:00:42: distant ways.
00:00:42 --> 00:00:46: But as cities swiftly. Repurpose the roadways.
00:00:46 --> 00:00:49: It's critical that we all begin to think through responses
00:00:49 --> 00:00:52: that point us towards a long term economic recovery that
00:00:52 --> 00:00:53: is equitable,
00:00:53 --> 00:00:56: sustainable, and enduring.
00:00:56 --> 00:00:59: So today we'll hear from experts who are on the
00:00:59 --> 00:01:01: front lines of change and doing just that by asking
00:01:01 --> 00:01:03: the tough questions.
00:01:03 --> 00:01:04: So before we get started,
00:01:04 --> 00:01:07: I'd like to acknowledge that today is September 11th,
00:01:07 --> 00:01:11: the 19th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on this country.
00:01:11 --> 00:01:13: On this important day, we're honored to be gathered here
00:01:13 --> 00:01:16: with you all thinking about living in a community with
00:01:16 --> 00:01:18: one another and about the promise of cities to be
00:01:18 --> 00:01:21: a place where everyone can thrive.
00:01:21 --> 00:01:23: Will jump in in just a moment,
but first a little background.

You lie is a research and education nonprofit whose mission is to provide leadership and the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

If you’re new to you, I welcome. We hope you find this web and are helpful and that you’ll consider joining you lie as a member.

You always launched the building Healthy Places Initiative in 2013, out of recognition that places shape health through the years we work to leverage the power of you allies global networks, to shape projects in places in ways that improve the health of the people and communities.

You can always be in touch with us anytime at [email protected].

Today’s webinar is being recorded and will share with you by email. After today’s session, along with the survey.
The Web and R were also live and be archived.

Annualized knowledge vendor, not Knowledge Finder platform where you can find content from Patua live webinars, including previous sessions. From this confronting Covid.

Seminar series looking ahead. We’d like to invite you to the Randall Lewis you alive building healthy form building healthy places for him on October 7 the forum brings together leaders in health, social equity and real estate to explore housing and gentrification through the lens of Bay Area speakers.

An projects also feature a keynote from Richard Rothstein, the author of Color of Law, and now is My Pleasure to introduce our modeling for today.

Kim Lucas Kim is assistant director of policy planning and development at Pittsburgh’s Department of Mobility and Infrastructure.

Simply known as Doney. She previously worked here in Washington.

DC at the District Department transportation.

Kim has her Masters in city planning from UC Berkeley,
an undergrad degree from University Virginia.

So take it away.

Thanks will and thanks for having me.

I'm really excited to engage on this topic today and

based on the number of participants we have a lot

of interest in the in the Community.

I'm going to take just a quick minute to introduce

my panelists today,

which I'm really excited to have with us.

First is Warren Logan, who is the policy Director of

Mobility,

an interagency relations for the City of Oakland,

CA. Next, we'll have Tony Garcia,

who's a principle with the street plans collaborative.

And finally we have Doctor Destiny Thomas,

who is the Founder and CEO of the Thrive in

this group.

And today you're going to hear from each of us

on how we,

an our organizations, have been able to respond to covid

and an engaging conversation with a few questions that are

still remain now that we're about six months into this

pandemic. So I wanted to start by framing this conversation

with the City of Pittsbugh example.

So as you heard, I work for the Department of

Mobility and Infrastructure.

Our Department is relatively new under four years old,

and our mission is to provide the physical mobility to

enable the social mobility and economic mobility of the city

of Pittsburgh's residence.

We hope to achieve this mission through 5 core goals.

Our goal center around safety,

affordability, access to fresh fruits and vegetables making.

Very short trips that are less than one mile an

in distance,

enjoyable, and easily obtained without an automobile.

And also we want to make sure our streets reflect

the pride of our city and the values of our

city.

And I think a lot of what we're talking about

today is very much driven by this goal.

The primary question that we were faced with in March
when we were sent home from our office is not
to still haven't returned is how can we use public
space to better support people and businesses?
The reason that this was a question or the question
that Domi had to work with is because public space
is what we have to work with.
It is the primary tool in our toolkit as the
managers of the public space for the City of Pittsburgh,
we knew that that was what we had available and
that we wanted to figure out ways to modify how
it had previously operated that were safe,
quick, affordable and done equitably.
We had a number of initiatives that we saw great
examples from other cities and stood up here.
The first one had to do with providing more public
space for individuals to recreat safely.
We knew early on in the pandemic that physical space,
physical distance between individuals was a key to keeping
them safe,
and we also knew that with most people staying at
home,
Anne rec centers being closed and the potential for parks
and other outdoor areas to be inundated with active uses
that we needed to look at our streets in a
different way. So we stood up a slow streets program
like many of the cities that are participating in this
call today.
What that meant is that we enabled neighborhoods and
residents
to raise their hands and say,
hey, I'd like to shut down my street to through
traffic so that cars there aren't as many cars and
that the cars who are here go more slowly so
that I feel more comfortable biking and walking and skating
and anything else in the roadway.
We also knew that witnesses at first not being allowed
to have anybody enter them that we were going to
see more pickup and dropoff activity for restaurants,
especially as that was becoming a new focus for how
they were going to make their money.
And So what that means is that we needed to
look at our curbside space,
many of which near restaurants was currently regulated for parking meters with parking meters or completely unregulated, which can lead to park curves. As we all know and we wanted to make short-term pick up and drop off delivery spaces available. For exactly that purpose, for delivery drivers to be able to get in and out quickly and safely. We are working with a local app developer so that we can take this program to the next step an hopefully enable reservations for those spaces so that it's an even more predictable experience for those delivery delivery drivers.

An for residents and visitors who are just trying to support our local businesses. Guiding micro mobility and I apologize for the formatting on this particular slide, but in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Electric scooters are not street legal, and So what? You won't find, unlike many cities, is a large fleet of electric scooter scooters available for people to use. We know that they're here as well as a number of other slow speed devices, and we also know that in a time where there was general fear within the population about getting into a crowded bus, for example. Anna changing trip patterns and habits that people were going to use their personal devices more and So what we were able to do was well not make them legal, which we're still working on with the Commonwealth leaders was to at least issue some guidance because we know the devices were here and we wanted to make sure that we offered some parameters for where the best and safest places for them to be used would be. And finally, our commercial streets activation. I'm gonna go very quickly through this because it's probably close to what other cities are doing. But it's also the heartbeat of what we're doing here in Pittsburgh. We are a city who is projecting a pretty significant
operating budget gap this year and next year, and we're not sure for how long. Part of our ability to be resilient is going to be based on our businesses being resilient in being able to earn income and then pay taxes, which is our cities income. And so we wanted to do whatever we could to enable safe places for businesses, especially restaurants, to operate from a process standpoint. The first step was finding out what it was that businesses needed and wanted, and how it was that we could get them what they needed. And so we started by standing up a task force. This was a multi stakeholder task force that had representatives from the local government had representatives from the business community and had others that would come together to create this final report. To say this is what our needs are and this is the order that we want you to address them. Outreach this program wasn't going to go anywhere unless people knew about it, and so we were trying to leverage any resource we had available to us. We have a website page dedicated to this where we posted guidelines. We made sure our elected representatives knew that this was an opportunity that they could then communicate to their communities. We have door hangers. This is the design for our door hangers that we hope to stand up as well as leveraging other networks that already existed, such as business improvement districts and making sure that on a rolling basis. Through our weekly bulletins that all these stakeholders know what changes have been made to the program, and what locations have been improved coordination. So in this photo you probably can't identify any of
these people.
We have the director of Domy.
We've got representatives from public safety.
We have a council member.
We have a business owner.
We have a Business Improvement District representative and we have
a concerned neighbor.
We cannot do this in a vacuum while we manage
public space,
we know that some of our programs will affect neighbors
an other.
Concerned citizens, and so this program took a lot of
coordination,
not only with other city departments but also with other
stakeholders within the communities to make sure that we were
doing it right.
Guidelines and application. So we have an online permitting system,
but Domi wasn't in it until well into the pandemic
and so the application to become a part of this
program had to be invented.
So Domy uses a Google Doc to accept application materials
and we work with other departments that are using our
online permitting system.
And we're trying to make sure that concerned businesses have
this information available to them so that they can apply
what you see on the left is the type of
drawing that we're willing to accept.
Part of this whole rapid approach rapid response approach was
recognizing that we needed to be really flexible.
No longer can we require a stamped engineering drawing for
a sidewalk cafe.
We needed to make sure and identify what the bare
minimum information we needed was for safe implementation and to
be able to accept that because we knew.
Timing was short and resources were short for the businesses
who this would benefit most.
A question we're going to talk about today is how do all communities benefit from programs like this in the City of Pittsburgh, we don't have the resources to do a ton of proactive outreach. Are Slow Streets program is community led residents apply. Our business program is business, lead or business improvement lead. We knew that there were under resourced in underserved communities that might not benefit from that if they didn't have someone going out to them and proactively engaging them. So what we were able to do is re purpose some grant funding that we had in place and work with the local Community Redevelopment group to perform outreach in communities through data. Basically had been identified as possibly needing extra assistance. If you want to compare this drawing that has been compared as part of that program compared to the back of the napkin drawing before, I think that we've got some pretty good examples of how that extra assistance is actually generated. Better information for the city to work with. And so we think it's been successful, but it needs to be a lot bigger and enforce. I took this picture myself about a week ago of a full blade full blown band that has taken up the entire sidewalk in one of our popular neighborhoods. They don't have a permit for this, obviously, and there's a lot of people who. Under duress are doing whatever they can to get that business and to get people to them, and so our first step when we find locations like this is to educate and give them an opportunity to follow the right path and then follow up to make sure if they haven't followed the right path to the right process that we are. Is enforcing because even though we you know a huge goal of ours is that economic stability, we can't do that at the jeopardy of public space.
And so we do take those responsibilities seriously and the future. So when we issued our permits they were for 90 days. We thought this would be done in 90 days.

We realize now that we need to be thinking about not only winter in a city that gets a real winter and we'll get snow. But also 2021. So we have invited a local college student who's an honors fellow who is helping us evaluate the program to find out what worked this year for the businesses and from the City side.

What could be improved for next year and also think about how we make some of this work in the winter weather that's heaters, whether that's a little bit more substantial. Tenting in the public space and we hope to take these lessons into the future. While this was a program that was stood up as an emergency response, we know that. Some of these installations like the one you see on the bottom, which is basically a parklet that may not have been stood up under previous rules because the process was slow and arduous.

But now we've proven that they can be done quickly and safely. We hope that we can make improvements that will be lasting because we do think there are a lot of benefits from what we're seeing that was stood up during this code with response. And with that, I think that was my last slide.

No, sorry guys, just real quickly. The types of things that we've been able to enable our sidewalk cafes pretty standard prior to covid this process took months and it took a councilmember signature to get a standard sidewalk cafe installed.

Now we're able to review and approve by three departments within a week sidewalk extensions. So while most of these are being done for cafe seating for restaurants to be able to operate,
we also realized that queuing space such as outside the Apple Store or. Just walking space for pedestrians is also necessary. Some of our better funded parts of the city, like the downtown area, which has a nice bid that works for them, they've been able to do even more if they were able to hire an artist and make a beautification project out of these. Repurpose space is what you'll see in the top left corner was the Penn Ave cycle track, so in some places we've had to reposition and redesign some of our cycling infrastructure or transit stops or our roadways to accommodate these changes. But thanks to the reduction in traffic, overall, we've been able to do it, and it's been very successful. And finally, full street closures. These are obviously the most impactful in terms of the space that's being reallocated. This example is in our Oakland Business Improvement District area, where we have semi permanent hardscape. We told them they needed to expand the curve line and bring up the street height and they did it and it's great. And there's been a lot of success there as well. And finally, sorry, I think I might have gone a few minutes over, but I'm glad I was able to get through some of that for you all. I wanted to pass the Mike over to Warren. Hey, good morning and good afternoon everybody. I'm Warren Logan I am a Mayor's policy director and during the Covid experience I'll call it. I also serve as our Community resilience director as well within our emergency response. I just want to spend a few short minutes describing, I think, not just the Oakland Slow Streets Program, but actually the approach we have taken to both community engagement and the way in which we have rolled out. Actually, a number of programs,
as many of you are probably aware, we not, unlike Pittsburgh, which also has an area called Oakland. I just discovered is we launched a slow streets program and unlike Pittsburgh, we actually identified 74 miles of roadway that was already adopted. An engineered within our 2019 bike plan and we went ahead and started rolling out soft closures for through traffic we recognized in many communities that we it was revolutionary for some to close the street to through traffic and many folks. We're really enthusiastic about this program. I want to recognize, though, that there were plenty of community groups. That said, we're really confused by this program. We're not really sure why this is a priority, or for that matter, why these streets were selected, and so you know, I think day three, we started rolling out an entire engagement platform to make sure that we were truly listening and engaging with community groups. I want to flag here too, and I'll talk about this during our conversation as well. Is that we also heard a lot of responses that were built around. Understandable government distrust. I had a number of people called me directly and say that they were concerned that I was tricking black people into going outside and catching covid and I just want to park that in a section of our conversation because it has to do with the use of and the exploration of uses for Publix Plate in space. Excuse me so based on early engagement with our East Oakland neighbors, we found that their priority was actually safe arterial crossings. As experts I guess would say and so we actually created.
Another program about two to three weeks into it, called Essential Places and this is built around identifying community resources. Like in this case, there's a market that's on the corner just outside this picture. Other food distribution locations at schools and community services and clinics, and helping people connect to those places more safely. Whether it's walking, biking, driving hovercraft in whatever. What we also found during this really exciting and frankly challenging time.

Is that? Oakland is really culturally vibrant and resilient. Community with or without a lot of action by the government. I think one of the greatest lessons learned early on during our slow streets program was that in some cases we need to get out of the way of our neighbors and our residents expressing themselves. So what you see here is a photo of I think the city's largest protest mural and it I can't read the whole thing, but it's it's all Black, lives matters and it documents. All of the different challenges that black people can face, whether it's trans lives, disabled, imprisoned, etc. And while this isn't specifically a city sponsored program, I bring this up as an as an additional component of what is made. Our outlook around flexible uses of space, not just slow streets because it is showcasing how important community voicing Community Action is in these types of programs.

Zooming out from our program a little bit, I highlight this as the main focus of what I want to. Showcase here is that even though a lot of people are aware of our slow streets program, it is actually an outgrowth of a model for our covid testing program,
which I helped run at the beginning of the code emergency.

And So what you're seeing here is 5 different programs rolled out in six months,

and what's so exciting about this is not that there is perhaps one program that has made everyone enthusiastic and

excited.

I think some people look at slow streets that way. And it's not what you're seeing here is that with each engagement with each conversation that we've we've connected with our neighbors with their business owners.

With council members, we've recognized that there is another strategic and creative way that we can help meet people's needs. And So what we're seeing here is as we refocus our attention and change our methodology. We're adding a new program were being more flexible, we're modifying. And So what?

I kind of want to leave with all of you, as I'm framing the conversation, moving forward with my colleagues here. Is that it is what we're taking forward from slow streets is not that we should just do more slow streets, but rather are D, OT and frankly the entire city should be looking at different ways to problem solve from a more creative standpoint from a more expeditious standpoint.

And frankly looking at it in a very simple standpoint of like are we helping people? And if we're not, let's ask them what would be most helpful and try and bring that in to the conversation as effectively as possible. I recognize as I'm looking at this that I accidentally made an acronym called Reach. So I'm just going to own that and I look forward to a conversation with my colleagues here.

Cool, that was awesome. I feel like I'm I'm going just talked about.

There's so much information overload going on in my head
My name is Tony Garcia. I am the principle of St Plans collaborative, where transportation planning firm. Thank you for having me here.

I see on our I love this intro that we got with everybody, introducing themselves and telling us where they're from. Shout out to my Florida people and my Miami person. Surprising to see on on a presentation I hardly ever see Miami folks venture out into the urban planning world.

So I wanted to start off and I’m going to make my presentation really sort of quick 'cause I want to hear what everybody else has to say and get into the discussion. Our work is primarily transportation planning.

That's that's how we describe our firm and we really over the past 15 years now, have backed into this practice called Tactical Urbanism, that we call tactical urbanism.

And it's really all about using short-term, low-cost materials to try to advance our, you know, planning goals, whether those be better crosswalks, bike lanes, public spaces, or redefining the geometry of.

Intersections and we do that with asphalt art projects like some of the pictures you see here. We worked extensively with with the Bloomberg Associates.

We're working with him right now on asphalt art projects all around the country. We also worked with with them and Mac to to create a guide that helps cities. Come up with programs like the ones that that came in Warren,

where were explaining to you. So where we come in right now. I think we're helping cities.

Not only do the designs for these things, but also think through some of the items that that Kim finished with. Like how do you take this to the next level? How do you go from something that's very, very temporary to more hardened or or permanent?
And how do you also take those lessons learned?
That all cities are going through right now in terms of learning how to be more flexible and responsive to the population and not lose that.
That learning that that's happened right now where we're where our head is at right now and mine has been really from the beginning was we saw a lot of cities do the easy thing to us seemingly easy and I would love to hear some feedback on that of taking that curbside space to make the sidewalk extensions an.
And and say what seating for cafes that all makes a lot of sense.
It seems to me an easier political sell than this image that I'm showing, which is I think the phase that we're in right now. We've been in for awhile, is needing to improve our transit access and and routes to accommodate for both who don't have the ability to stay at home like you know, presumably we all are right now and not have to use transit to get to their job and. Right now with traffic lower than it's always been than it's ever been. This is the moment to take bold action, and some cities are doing this not nearly enough, not only in the United States, but around the world. So this, to me, is our Ground Zero for where we can take tactical urbanism next, beyond just the sidewalk seating and the cafe seating, which I think is is hugely important. But it also brings up issues of public versus private. I really cringed at that image came that you showed of the band on the sidewalk. It's a pet peeve of mine. That's our public space Ann. And we shouldn't be using that for for, you know things that I'm sure going to draw folks to that,
that establishment. But there's other space that we can use.

At the same time, I feel like this approach this you know. Tactical Transit approaches, one that's really smart and seemingly inexpensive

At the same time, I feel like this approach this you know. Tactical Transit approaches, one that's really smart and seemingly inexpensive at 1st and there, you know, the costs escalate from there, but there are some cities that have been doing this for some time like Somerville, Everett and and others. But I hope that the folks on this on this presentation take away that that this is a critical moment for transit and doing it fast and inexpensive is OK for right now and then thinking about.

What happens beyond? At the same time, we're also thinking about the election, and though it's seemingly unrelated to this topic, it's actually very related because, as we've seen in the last several interim elections, most recently in early August. You've got people who are physically distancing to go and going to the polls physically in person and facilities that are really not set up for this type of long queuing and wait times. And honestly, this is not for me, a problem that is just for this moment. It happens to have been made more difficult by this moment, but I remember both times I voted for Obama. I sat in line for. You know three or four hours, so this is something that we need to confront, and the way that we're adding to the conversation is how do we apply that tactical urbanism mindset to this challenge?

How can we empower Elections Department's in cities to think about the resources that they can give to people like these folks, as simple as seating and shade and marking where they should be standing and things that that are not hard or expensive at all.
But that's going to make the voting process that much easier. And safer for folks as they go out in November, so that's a grant funding project that we're working on right now and working furiously to try to have ready for elections Department as they gear up for November. And then finally I saw those somebody from Hawaii. This is this is a crosswalk that we did last year in November and 100 on in Honolulu in front of a high school and. You know, just thinking about how we did this project and the conversations that have already happened and what we're going to discuss right now. We are are adopting our practice and I think this is the challenge of this moment of you know who plans are neighborhoods. Who are these projects for and what is the end goal? So part of what we say with tactical urbanism, it it's about the process. How you get to that end goal is as important as what it is that you're doing, so we have. Over the past year really shifted towards looking to our local partners and and just folks who live on the ground to help Co create these projects rather than us kind of helicoptering in doing a design and popping it on the ground. I know a lot of people do that and it's never really been our Mo, but even more so now we are carving away parts of our scope to say this is not for us to do. We we should not be the public outreach folks coming in from Miami or New York. To Honolulu we should have somebody in Honolulu that knows what's happening there, and that can actually ties back into a conversation that's real and authentic and get what people need rather than what we as urban planners think that they need. Which I think a lot of consultants get in that mindset,
so I'd love to push back on my consultants here in the in the audience that start to challenge your clients more in in rethinking how they arrive. Project ideas and also who is at the table when you're actually thinking about and actually implementing these projects. And I think you'll find if you're critical about it, that you're missing a lot of important voices and simply don't have the resources to do some of the work that needs to be done. Find the people whose voices you can elevate and bring into that conversation, because that's going to be as important, if not more important than what the physical design actually looks like. So that's all I've got in terms of slides for right now, and I can't wait to hear what Doctor Thomas has to say. So take it away. Thank you Tony and thank you all for giving me the space to share my viewpoints on this really important subject.

I before folks start reading what's on the screen, I just want to take a moment to ground everything that I'm about to say an you know, I think it is amazing that my colleagues have done such a great job being responsive and innovative prior to COVID-19, but definitely during COVID-19 an I recognize how difficult that is, especially in communities like. Um Oakland, where I'm born and raised, and you know there are so many compounding issues happening in our built environment. And so I wanted to take the time today to talk about some strategies for what I call repaired reparative urbanism, which is my way of suggesting that transportation planning. And you know how we design and evolve the public
realm or built environment can't happen in a vacuum. Man has to happen within the. Broader context of the compounding issues facing the communities that are using those spaces and so that the irony. Of all of this, is that I made a decision at the end of last year to step into my own Lane professionally to start to create solutions. An opportunities for city agencies and implementing agencies to evolve their thinking about transportation planning. And so I created a three year strategy to help colleagues an help cities and help transportation departments. Expand their capacity to be more reparative in their approach, and I'm using the term reparative because COVID-19 reminds us that we need to be considering frameworks like harm reduction, right, which is a public health term that tells us that when we have absolutely no control over all of the factors at play, our priorities should be rooted in reducing hardware. The most harm is being caused first. And so this three year strategy includes building my own organizational capacity to serve as an adviser. As a creator and as a designer to cities and municipal agencies that are leaning into this. This kind of thinking. Our second year we worked to expand capacity across the field, so those are some of the events that you see us do at Drive Inns group, like the Dignity Institute, an urbanist assembly. And then in the third year, we're moving into what we call innovation and implementation, and so while folks are thinking about how to be tactical and how to move at a rapid pace, we really are thinking about the long term implications of the decisions that are being made. Today and so some of the things that we're doing at the Drive-in's Group to be responsive in a long term are supporting municipal projects that have the potential
worsen the effects of harm communities are already experiencing,
like displacement. So we're also working on an anti displacement
Calculator to support agencies that want to do tactical urbanism
and quick build projects to at least be able to have a solid analysis around what the effects of that work will be.
We're also in the process of putting together a package of policy recommendations that we call CPR UI love, you know, acronyms as much as Warren CPR, you stands for comprehensive package for reparations to urbanism.
And then we're working on what I think is our most innovative project, which is Mobility Hub, Co OPS, and so I sit as sit on a number of boards an serve a number of clients who are in the tech industry who who run micro various micro mobility programs and their wrestling with how to maintain level of service and keep communities connected during an post COVID-19.
And so we've developed. Community ownership model for these kinds of startups to tap into so that we don't lose the value of interventions that you know. Probably we could have done a better job of rolling out to begin with.
And then Lastly, we're incorporating things like oral history work into everything that we do.
We often hear folks complain about not having the resources to do the type of engagement. I think we all wish we could do an so one of the things we work with cities to do. Is tap into 211 directory's. Looking at eviction rolls. All of these different databases that tell us a broader picture of the pinch that communities are filling and so expanding our understanding of what community engagement is to include listening to residents and reviewing
that they've already submitted an having archives on the books.

Official city archives on the books so that we are not constantly going back to the drawing board.

To understand the community called Culturali or the history that

they have so one of the tools we use is called social climate analysis.

It's a three phase process that we recommend at the beginning of literally any project we do so whether we're working on affordable housing development,

whether we're working on a streetscape project,

or whether we're just working on policy design,

we take these three steps really seriously,

and so I won't go into great detail because of in the interest of time.

But I will say that our first phase is a strike team effort similar to what our planning firm would do,

but we actually bring out direct service providers and safety net providers to provide context about land use and behavior in the space.

In our second phase we bring community out to validate the data in assumptions that we made in phase one and then in the third phase we literally.

Retrace all of our steps so that the Community an our service providers have an opportunity to explain their observations with the shared language in a shared narrative.

With implementers and decision makers,

an elected officials so common partners that we engage in a social climate analysis include employment access advocates,

implementers, infrastructure investment partners, not patterns,

Housing Authority, authority staff, racial justice advocates,

and so on and so forth.

We often come up at through all those phases with a very common list of opportunities for what we call opportunities for deeper understanding.

And so these opportunities actually shape the development of our
ongoing community engagement processes as well as the design interventions.

that we’re moving toward and so understanding the labor profile

and underground economy in a space is important.

Understanding what phase of displacement and gentrification is currently underway

in the community.

I’m thinking creatively about how we redraw zoning laws

so that we’re not being harmful in our actions.

Understanding folks. I attitudes and perceptions of mobility,

so I think the example Warren gave about.

People feeling like they might be tricked into coming outside

is an important is an important one to lift up

that I hope we can talk about a little bit later. We can never leave youth out.

An by youth, I mean young people,

you know, from from the cradle to 26 years years old,

many young adults are still entangled in juvenile justice systems

and don’t get the benefit and privilege of owning their adulthood when they turn 18.

Uh, another core pillar for us is making sure that our partners have an activated anti displacement strategy and so

this is a screenshot of the strategy that we created for the City of Oakland about a year and a half ago.

I’m not sure who’s seen it at Oakland,

but as a community partner we created this strategy that you see the colors at the top.

We were able to lift up the values that were expressed to us through Community and we combine that.

Those values with an analysis of the phases of the commonly known phases of displacement and which types of strategies

make sense during those phases.

And then we recommended really specific engagement in planning activities

to meet the needs of the moment.

So oral history and archival work,

which I mentioned earlier, so I won’t go into tremendous
But we look to capture peoples oral history to understand the legacy of things like displacement, culture, music, visual art, who's who's visible in this space? Who's been erased from the space an from public discourse and civic engagement? Understanding the space from a multi generational perspective?

Who's moved in, Who's moved out and then also sits entering race. In a way that's disaggregated so so not relying solely on Blanket statements like black community or Brown community and really drawing the nuances out of those categories to make sure we're being responsive to the actual context.

That's that's on. We then do a policy gap analysis and our preliminary findings usually include assessments of the need for immediate interventions and so, in some cities that's us recommending that there's like a moratorium on development or a moratorium on quick build. One of the things that triggers this type of recommendation is the data that we pull out of eviction rolls in that same project area. So we found a direct linkage between all types of transportation related investments and displacement an in under invested and divested communities, so we're working on solutions to that problem. We're not proposing that we don't develop, but we're proposing that we develop with this in mind. We also deploy we call info hubs, and so we tap into essential businesses, which is a category that came about during COVID-19. We tap into our service. Our safety net service providers and we create digital access points so that residents can engage through low stakes engagement opportunities and not feel like they have to attend this one meeting that happens once every four months wait to share their opinion for three hours an and then hope that someone has heard them.
So we create opportunities across an entire geography. Many touch points and opportunities for residents to give. Preemptive feedback, so they're not just responding to a project, but sharing, sharing their views and experiences about just what it's like to live their lives. In the streetscape. We then take that information, and we host will be called Dignity Labs, which are, in a nutshell, of three phase opportunity for residents to to inform recommendations for projects and policies themselves. And and that is all I would. I wish I had more time to go into greater detail on these things, but what I want to leave folks with is. Really, the importance of making sure that in all of our innovation and all of our desire to be responsive during COVID-19 we cannot forget about the legacy of racism in our field and the fact that so many people are still feeling the impacts of that. And if we're not careful, we can worsen those impacts. Thank you.

Great thank you doctor Thomas. So with that we have about 1/2 hour left for questions. I do invite everybody to use the Q&A box. If you have questions that you'd like to ask of our panelists, I think we heard a lot of interesting themes today. You know this is a shifting landscape. It you know, there are requirements and changes coming down from counties from States and all the way down to individual cities and neighborhoods. And this is a really dynamic environment from day to day and from city to city. In context is so important. For our first question, an I'd like to have Warren take a first stab at this one.
What are you seeing as the largest changes in transportation planning?

An approach is in the short term, given that we're in such a shifting and dynamic moment.

Thank you Kim. That's a great question in the short term, I would, well. I'll start by saying the definition of short term has also changed. I think that for traditional city planning or transportation planning, short-term might even mean in the next two years or five years, right? Like if you look at a regional plan, we're looking at 50 year capital improvements.

Short-term now means are we doing this next week? And I think that that in of itself that definition changes actually kind of important because it spells out all of the difference requirements that both the city and its partners need to organize in a very short amount of time.

It also spells out too. Then I think this gets to Doctor Destiny. Thomas this point that you can't have a conversation for three hours, then wait for months, then come back and talk about it more.

You're having a conversation about what are you doing next week and that means, and I think this perhaps gets everybody's point as well. Is that the stakes might be a little lower because you're not saying, OK, this is going to be here for 50 years, it's. Are we all willing to try something for a week or so?

And what does it take for us to gain alignment on that conversation? The other part that will share too though, and I think this is kind of come from. The way that we've looked at Covid is that so much of what like what's the worst that could happen has happened,
and so, at this point we are frankly pulling out a lot of stops that we otherwise would put up and rethinking whether or not we should be using this much St space for certain things, or whether or not you know public space can't be used for covid testing only because of zoning, right? Like just to give you a quick example this morning right before this.

You know conference call. I was on a phone call with their city attorney's office and they said, hey, you know our zoning doesn't allow for covid testing on these properties or like. But maybe shut and let's just go ahead and like move that forward and I share that with all of you. Just as a framing for the ways that we're looking at planning writ large in the ways that government is taking,

I think a more proactive and engaged approach in the short term and in the long term. And that.

Add onto that that I feel like from our point of view, what's changed is actually that city government has. Figured out that this is an important thing because we've been talking about the shorter timeline for a long time and it just so happens that city processes have started to adapt themselves. That to me, is what Warren was actually trying to get out, but cities have caught up to this. What the short term actually mean.

It doesn't mean like in the next five years, which to me is very exciting, that we are actually in a place where we can all talk about advancing things right now and then. The next part of that which has not hit yet. And I think it was.

You cannot mention this the the financial element of this is going to be brutal next year. When the tax revenue start to actually impact everybody's budgets, and there's no choice but to do some of these
things because, you know. You're not going to have as much staff or resources to to actually help. I think that's a really valid point. There are serious constraints already in a lot of our cities, and who are the human beings that can actually bring these programs forward? I think in some cases Covid has offered a lot of opportunity. You know? In Oakland Warren, you guys are using this as an opportunity to fast track. I believe your bike plan and to maybe make some infrastructure changes in a quick way that can. Can last until for Tony. What about the long term? We started to talk about this? Are these solutions only responding to the current health challenge or will they forever alter how our transportation infrastructure functions? I know as someone who previously worked in TDM that you know the number one reduction of congestion and air quality problems of people driving to work is people not having to go into work and being able to push Tele work? We're in a moment where a lot of businesses and organizations that previously said no, we could never survive if our staff work from home. All of a sudden their staff are working from home and I think something like that is going to have a lasting impact. So what are your thoughts on the other solutions that are probably going to stay even when covid hopefully goes? Yeah, I mean, I think there's going to be cities that go back to normal. You know their their normal or as close to it as possible and the cities that that don't and learn to adapt. Like Oakland or Pittsburgh, if you if you retain the lessons learned from right now and a doctor process is moving forward,
you're going to be better off.
And this whole dialogue that's happening right now about big cities dying,
right? New York City or San Francisco,
Los Angeles. Wherever I just think that that narrative has never played out in the history of humanity.
Like people come back to cities and we're just not at a point where people are going to leave cities like.
In droves like that. So the cities that that are taking this moment adapting to what they can do to rethink about their public spaces and their transit networks are going to be better off for it and then the others are just going to continue to struggle,
I think.
I think it is a great opportunity and just like I gave the sidewalk cafe example,
we took a process that previously took months and a lot of oversight an we shrunk it down to a few days and so this is a really good opportunity for us to evaluate, take that data and hopefully make a compelling argument moving forward,
right? And I'm thinking also not only about the internal processes becoming more.
I don't know Dreamline. Yeah yeah,
but also what are the applicants do like the next step?
What does that look like for everybody else?
The materials have to start looking a little bit more elegant.
You get into something that's a little bit longer term.
You move away from clones like I love that.
That shot that you had warned of the dude crossing the street in the wheelchair with all the cones around like that.
To me, that's the first step.
That's the first week, right?
And we've already replaced those I'm sure see.
So that said, there's already thinking about how you.
So from the very short term to the intermediary to the longer term,
that's where I think everybody's head should be at moving forward.

But I think this gets to Doctor Destiny.

Thomas is point though and I want to bring her into this, which is that I heard you say two things.

Tony and I would love to get Destiny's comments on this is that one?

I don't think and I agree with you, that government is organized to function this way.

Normally that's issue 1. The second is,

I think that there is a type of Anna level of engagement that Doctor Dustin Thomas is talking about. That is, that has to be included and seminal in the intersection of all of these.

Iterative approaches, it's not that we threw something out and then we threw something else out.

We threw something else out without any dialogue around that.

So you know, Doctor, I'd love to kind of bring you into that as well.

Yeah, I I think. I do think that community engagement is something that has to exist before the idea of a project comes about.

Anne Anne again, folks are constantly questioning. Well. Where do you get the money and the resources for that?

And my answer is, you know, I'm living and just was recently working in a city where I saw them rip out a $30,000,000. Pop up bike Lane. Because the community privileged one pushed back on it, right? So a project that was financially feasible, backed by data actually had support from the Community an from the implementing agencies was snatched out overnight because somebody said so, and no one griped about the waste of money on that.

That could have funded 15 years of adequate community engagement.
in this city.
And so I don't buy it that we don't have the resources for it.
We were able to engage the very broad geography of South Los Angeles of for two years with $1,000,000 with a staff of 87 people.
Engagement sack. And that money most of that money went into the community so that staff was a team of folks that lived in the project area.
This is doable. I think we need to be thinking about community engagement as a policy and not as a step on a checklist.
And I also think when we talk about finding it, let's take a look at some of the funding mechanisms that just start working the then this is gonna upset some folks,
but the the bus fleet electrification? Model for funding is not working.
We're not seeing those projects get implemented in a timely manner.
And then we're not seeing the communities who were indicated as priority populations being the ones to benefit from the electrification of those buses and warehousing the bus depots in black and Brown communities that are already experiencing massive amount,
massive amounts of environmental racism,
wasting money, wasting money there are.
There are endless sources to find the type of community engagement that I'm talking about.
The city of Los Angeles, for example, has an entire earmark for the for the Los Angeles Police Department out of the Vision Zero budget,
Why and when and that that number is larger than the amount that's allocated to infrastructure?
You know, it's interesting though, what you didn't say, which I think is top of mine is that we spend so much money on our reach as it is,
except it's that type of stillborn.
Exactly, let's have an open house on Wednesday night and have everybody come and either show up or not an get upset or not, but that's it that drives me bonkers. Anne Anne. Your word. Spending that money that's already money help so that public meeting and I'm going to cosign both of you 'cause I think this is a really critical point that we're touching upon here. I'm sorry Kim, we're going this way is that I'll say a couple of things here. One, those types of meetings cost 10s of thousands of dollars because you have to bring. Every staff member to stand there and get shouted at for four hours, right? Like that's expensive. Doctor Dustin Thomas. You are exactly right that that money exists and I'm going to share it. I don't think this is a secret. I guess you could find this out the entire slow St program costs us to date. I think maybe $250,000, probably less. And to be clear, most of that is just staff time. Doing their jobs anyway, so. I think to your point Dr. Like it's kind of funny because we are also those same people are also respectfully having the same conversation about removing a bike Lane project on a different part of town. Because a few people are very upset about I should be honest, their impression of a loss of business activity which is ironic 'cause we're in the middle of pandemic. But sorry, but the amount of money that we're going to spend just talking about removing that bike Lane project could pay for even more. A central place is so streets you name it right, the amount of money it will cost to potentially remove that bikeway. That one bikeway project which is less than a mile could also pay for.
Then again, triple maybe quadruple the amount of social programs and I just want to correct Kim just really carefully here.

So streets is not an outgrowth of our bicycle plan, like there's it's not, we just pulled the streets from that because the community said we want these streets to feel safer.

So I just want to clarify that.

Anyway, back to your questions. Thanks, second moderate are that was actually my point is that compared to the City of Pittsburgh, whose first bike plan in 20 years was published in June of this year, Oakland had a plan that my understanding is you guys had to stop at the beginning of the development of it because you got a lot of pushback on the equity side of it and the engagement side of it. And you restarted. And now you have a great plan that went through a very well vetted public process and identified those corridors and so. Covid gave you an opportunity to already look at something that you'd already identified and work on it and put those signs up.

By contrast, other cities that didn't have that Playbook already published that hadn't already had that investment. We had to rely on our communities to raise their hands and say we would want this to come to our neighborhood. And with that it it. It's lost some of that sort of strategy behind it because it was stood up almost in duress and on my map that I showed earlier. You can see how disconnected a lot of those slow streets are.

And our city, but we're getting there. We have our new bike plan. We're trying to build it out so we have a lot of questions in the Q&A and I think a lot of them were actually addressed in the informal conversation.

But one of the questions,
and this is for Doctor Thomas and for Tony specifically had to do with financing. We've heard that, you know, with city budgets, if you don't have money for a project, it means it's not the cities priority. I know in some cities that are projecting major budget deficits that they might not get to all their priorities. So what are some sources of funding or financing ideas that you guys have identified or? Think could be on the horizon to help support some of these initiatives. Well, I would just say that you know Community engagement is the most scalable step in a project development process. Because you know, in the context of the city, folks aren't living their lives, just thinking about what their experiences on Avalon Blvd. There's an entire network of mobility that connects into that space, and so being scaling your approach is one way to preserve and leverage funds that you already have dedicated to things like community engagement. And that just means communicating with other implementing agencies and public Works Department's. In the area, so that when they're going out to talk about, you know new new drainage. A new drainage program. They can also be talking about what it would take to reconfigure or reconstruct the roadway. I think again, I, I think it is a falsehood that there is an existing funding funding for this work, and I think that you know at least my experience in California has been that all of the capital funding projects actually require an fund community engagement. I'm along with the infrastructure dollars and so it's just a matter of being true to the spirit in which that requirement or mandate was was added to your project to begin with. And I and I think what we are sounding like, we're afraid to say here is that we don't want
community engagement in public discourse to slow us down,
and then I would just push back on that and
ask why.
What are we afraid the community is going
to say?
And what is that fear say about the
incompleteness of the projects you're proposing?
Nice I had two things actually.
One is related to what Kim was originally saying,
but just to respond to what you're saying,
Destiny, I think a lot of us in the consulting
field and even on the City side,
it's not a question of trying to skirt the responsibility
of doing that outreach,
but of you know not even knowing how to start
to approach that in the manner that you described,
which is very thoughtful and careful.
And honestly, most consultants are not set up to do
that.
They are set up to check the boxes and do.
Those public meetings. So again,
I don't think it's a money thing.
I think it's actually a training thing.
It gets to a conversation that we were having before
about,
you know, even going back as far as school like
what are we learning and what are we teaching?
Our upcoming urban planners about how to approach that
subject
on this subject of money.
I know that those budgets are going to get
tight,
but to Doctor Thomas is point I think.
When the city wants to fund something,
they're going to fund it.
We have highways. They're going to continue to get funded
next year.
No question, because that money has already been allocated
because
it's only for highways.
Whatever you want to call it,
we have an Interstate redesign that's happening right now in
a historically black neighborhood where the first Interstate
came
in and destroy the neighborhood.
They're just going to make it bigger and wider,
and, you know, fans here,
that money, that money alone.
I mean, you're talking about several hundreds of millions of
dollars.
There's money there, so I don't have a silver bullet
for places for folks on on this call,
I know there's a lot of foundations that are that
are working in this space locally in different cities,
but the amount of money that we're talking about,
it's like 10s of thousands of dollars compared to like
normal projects,
so I would also challenge our cities,
stop funding bad planning projects that don't go anywhere
that
is unnecessary.
Let's let's think about what people need and start funding
that one.
Tony, I'd add to your point.
That, and it's funny because this is again sort of
the mindset that we took from slow streets are now
injecting it back into our regular programs the way the
Doctor Thomas is talking about,
which is like, OK, we have a set amount of
funding.
Either we can go get more funding or think about
how to creatively use this amount of funding.
So I'm going to give you a concrete example,
but concrete example, which is that through our paving
program
we also in some cases are subject to adding bike
lanes actually,
and one of the Community groups within.
West Oakland I'm pointing indiscriminately West right now
has said,
you know, we like the idea of obviously making the
streets safer,
but a lot of people who live over here really
wants to feel like they can walk around and the
sidewalks are only about 5 feet and they have,
you know, intermittent posts in between them.
So obviously it's not an ideal urban landscape.

And our engineer said, hey,

you know, we can't really do that because each block would cost us $1,000,000 extra to move the curb.

And I'm like that's true technically,

if you did it that way.

It would cost that much money.

What is a way to allow for more walking space and to narrow the street in a safer manner?

And then how much money would that take,

right? And so I think the reason I share that as an approach standpoint is that I think that planners and engineers especially are taught that the problem has a solution, and that there's an ETA,

a relationship, whereas I think one of the important important parts that I think we need to be better trained about is to ask what is the goal,

right? Like, what is the objective that we're trying to achieve?

And then what are the plethora of ways to get there and not shoehorning in a solution that we feel is best,

right? Like, right? The case of the sidewalks I suggested.

OK, well, those parking stops that you all have seen at the edge of each parking spot.

Cost about $200 a pop.

Could we line those up right?

Yeah, could we line those up?

Make a fake urban, narrow the street and suddenly at least for the time being,

we are giving more walking space to this community.

And better yet, we can continue the conversation with them addressing their needs in the interim while we go look for more money to make it more prominent.

I just would add that in order even for us to be having this conversation and there is a comment in the chat box that gets at this,

we have to stop infantilising communities like we this idea that it's it will take an overwhelming amount of conversation in a community to put an intervention and is absolutely bonkers to me. Look at the maintenance request that they've already put in.
Look at years and years of public comment on. On City Council meetings that we all you know that not me personally, but that we ignore that we laugh at like there are literal city records and County records that document Community asking for what they want.

Telling you what they need, explaining to you what their experience is. When we went to study displacement in the Highland Park Community, there was a senior senior Houma senior residential facility run by all women who are also seniors. An it housed women Ann. When I met with him for coffee. She came to me with a 300 page report, a spreadsheet full of their notations of walking conditions that they had been compiling for the last five years. Like there are community groups who have already done this, an if you would just let them in the room and believe them when they speak. Like that's free. That didn't cost any money, and all of the solutions are right there. Turn on, I love your point too though. Doctor Thomas about meeting for coffee right?

Like that's that's the thing that's so critical here and for personally, I hate public meetings. I think that they're not a useful like sense of time because it puts everyone in this very adverse aerial position, like right. One of the things that I pride myself on, is that I use calendly and you should that's under endorsement to allow anybody to look at my calendar and say, hey, I'd like to literally grab coffee with you, and one of the questions on there is where am I meeting you, right? Like where do you want me to meet you?

And sometimes people will say.
Well, you know, grab lunch with me or like I had a meeting with a walk Oakland bike Oakland a couple of times to just have breakfast and I think it's really critical to not only literally meet people where they are. We've all heard that but meet people in a space that they feel safe and I think Doctor Thomas you mentioned this earlier because City Hall is not a comfortable space for most people. It's barely comfortable for me. It's very cold, literally and figuratively, and meeting someone almost practically on their front porch, which is something I've done. There was a really tragic collision that happened about this time last year and the community group said we've been screaming at you about this issue. Just come here and look at it, and so they invited me over on a Friday night and we sat on their porch and we just watched cars race by. We don't need to have a public meeting about that. We can see it right there. Sorry I don't mean to be yelling you guys. I'm just saying these doubling down at our strongest point really. These conversations are happening in places that planners are not comfortable going to and we should make ourselves uncomfortable. We should go there. We should meet people at where they are, where they feel safe. And that's a really good point. So we have about 5 minutes left, so we're going to couple rapid rapid fire questions here. Something that really stuck out to me. I think Doctor Thomas said on our planning call was that public space and how it's used has changed. You know, sometimes for some people it's a safe place to be. For others, it's a place where they store their private assets. For others, it's a place where they can demonstrate
injustices,

and so it's changed something that brings it a little bit back to the city scale an the right now scale.

Someone has asked I'd be interested to hear the panelist perspective on the impact of location on the ability of restaurants and other businesses to make use of sidewalk or roadway space. Is there an equity inherent in this process? It may be unavoidable, but I'm curious if there have been alternative arrangements made.

And I'll let that be open to anybody.

I can do a lightning round,

which is that our Flex treats program original like we rewrote the programme about twice.

So the first program was brick and mortar stores.

You can use the space directly out front of your business an immediately our team was like hey there are not businesses like that in East Oakland.

What should they do? So then we wrote the program and said if you are a non profit,

if your if you have a business yourself but don't have a brick and mortar you can still apply for public space and better yet we made all of the permits free and you can now.

Our priority neighbourhoods, which is the opposite of communities of concern 'cause we don't like that term,

can now apply for free use of public land and will provide you you the resources to do closest read to put up the park.

Let yourself like we're going in buying those resources for them instead of making them bear the cost of that.

So we are directly trying to address that problem.

Yeah, I would add onto that what I'm seeing a lot and specifically in Miami as an example.

They had this program. They started in June.

Nobody availed themselves of it until August and the communities that are most using the sidewalk dining ordinance are those that have a band or some other municipal entity to help actually usher it along in those communities that are arguably the most in need.
Don't have anybody helping them or actually doing the work that you just described, or in that. That's like, which is also why we are. We after this call I have a meeting to hire A contractor to provide Technical Support and we have a standing rule in our executive order that staff time and this is the other part that Doctor Thomas is talking about. It's not just the money we spend on capital improvements, it's the time we spent right. We have a standing order that staff time cannot go towards providing technical assistance to businesses in bids because if we're going to provide engineering support to anybody, it's going to go to businesses that don't have those types of resources. Great. And I don't want to miss the you use the term equity. So I want to raise some of the equity concerns that come up for me with these programs and that those are when we talk about neighborhoods that historically impressive presently don't have this sort of official recognition of being a business with this within the city boundaries, we see an increase in vigilanteism amongst residents, especially Gentrifier's who are policing their neighbors. And their businesses because they don't have the official markings of a business. We're also seeing the infrastructure itself is becoming increasingly more hostile to people with disabilities to people with physical disabilities as well as mental disabilities. That in and of itself is also creating a more opportunities for criminalization of people. Just trying to access this space. While these businesses are also trying to access that space. And Lastly, I will say that. We cannot forget that everything we're talking about is the
literal stage and backdrop for civil unrest.

An racial protests that have been happening for years, but definitely during the COVID-19 epidemic or pandemic as so.

How do we? How do we address that?

An act like that's not happening right next to the tables were eating at, you know, in the alfresco dining.

Thank you so in our very last minute Super rapid fire.

What is the one lesson from right now and today that will help us use this opportunity and this door opening to make the future that we want a reality.

Trust God no, no you start. You start very short and I mentioned this in my presentation.

It's actually possible if we want it to be.

And you can define it for whatever you want it to be.

Yeah, I would just say that the resources are there. We have, you know, brilliant. People working in this field.

It's just a matter of, you know. Breaking up the system that we have right now 'cause it's not working, consulting or. Or you know municipal stuff.

Yeah, and I would just reiterate my belief that I think urbanism has a lot to learn from the public health field, and so being harm reductive in our approach, moving away from comfort, convenience, and thinking more about who needs intervention, who needed intervention before this crisis, and how we can support them with our creativity and genius.

Well, thank you all 216 not not bad.

I wanted to thank all of our panelists for participating today.

I think that was an awesome and lively discussion.

I want to thank all of the participants who took the time to learn about what some cities are doing and how we can make this process better and how
we can take today's lesson and make the future that we want a reality.

And with that again, the slides will be shared.

There will be follow-up information for registrants and available through you lie.

So thank you everybody and I hope you have a great weekend.