

Title: Comparison of Methods for Community Engagement : The Ohlone Greenway

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Abstract Text:

Objectives:

The Ohlone Greenway is a pedestrian bike off-trail that begins at the intersection of Hearst Ave and Martin Luther King way in the City of Berkeley and extends NW through three different cities. It intersects various transit stops, three BART stations, parks, commercial districts and other amenities. Within the City of Berkeley, there is interest in improving the Ohlone Greenway through two goals: to improve pedestrian/bike safety along crosswalks and widen the path where needed.

In order to achieve these goals, a community engagement strategy will be employed to gain a better understanding of identifying solutions to key issues along the trail. Community members are important players in the development of any city's bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure. Strong community/advocacy groups in favor of pedestrian/bicycle planning are seen as a key factor in creating more bikeable cities in the U.S.¹ Furthermore, investing in more bicycle infrastructure will also increase more bicycle-based trips².

This paper will address the following objectives:

1. Can a more visual-based intercept survey yield different results from a more traditional one?
2. If so, will it change the content of design proposals for improving the Ohlone Greenway?

In achieving objectives, this paper will identify potential solutions in increasing bicycle rates within the City of Berkeley from community feedback. However, this paper underscores the importance of community engagement strategies in improving the Ohlone Greenway, and that different methods can yield different futures of how the public realm can be shaped.

Topical Track:

Best Practices in Bicycle Facility Design and Implementation

Methodology:

This study will be conducted in two parts. The first part will address the information gap of the existing dimensions of the Ohlone Greenway. Field work will be done to: take measurements of the path; take note of uses surrounding the area; map and classify signage along the path; and identify any crosswalks the trail follows while noting any no-parking

¹ Handy

² Pucher

zones surrounding each one. The results of this work will identify two key opportunity sites to use as a pilot project for the next step.

The second part of the study will include two intercept surveys that will solicit feedback on key capital improvements participants would like to see at these two pilot sites. One will be word-based, and the other will contain visual aids. Both surveys will ask the same questions and ask participants how they rate the effectiveness of each survey.

Hypothesis:

The hypothesis for this project is that utilizing a more visual-based community engagement tool will yield different results from a word-based survey, and that survey participants will prefer the visual method.

Contributions to knowledge/practice:

The information gathered for this study will be used by the Berkeley Transportation Division in its own efforts to improve the Ohlone Greenway. For example, the field-work on the Ohlone Greenway will be used to identify any "low-hanging fruit," such as sign replacements, and/or visual graphics for grant applications.

Two or Three Keywords:

- Community based-design
- Community engagement
- Regional pedestrian/bicycle trails

Sources:

Handy, Susan, and Barbara McCann. "The regional response to federal funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 77, no. 1 (2010): 23-38.

Pucher, John, Buehler, Ralph., & Seinen, M.. "Bicycling renaissance in North America? An update and re-appraisal of cycling trends and policies." *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 45 no. 6, (2011): 451-475.