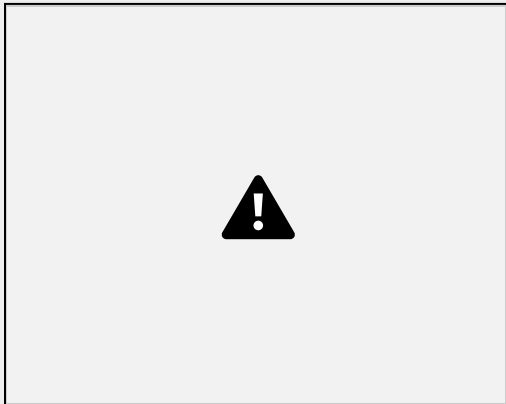


Cultural Diversity Through Student Engagement

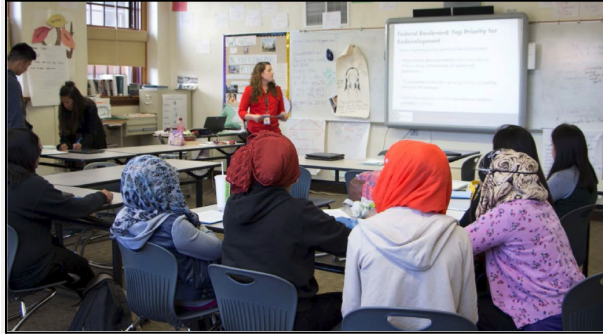


By: Karen Good, AICP; Jason Longsdorf, AICP and Kate Angell

Federal Boulevard is known as a corridor of opportunity in Denver given its potential for development. It is home to commercial businesses, schools, churches, and some of the most diverse neighborhoods in Denver. The City and County of Denver (CCD) developed the Federal Boulevard Corridor Wide Study to discover and prioritize opportunities to make Federal a better place to walk, drive, bike, use public transit, shop, work, live, and recreate. The project is located in historically underrepresented communities that often have difficulty engaging in traditional public outreach efforts due to non-English speaking and minority populations. These groups can be structurally left

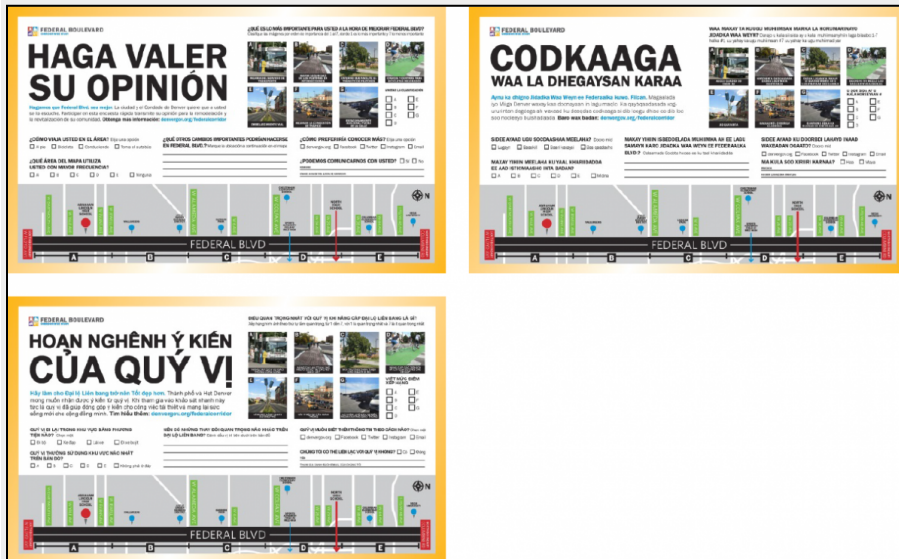
out of the conversation in many ways, but CCD wanted to change that. The project team knew the plan would be much more successful if the community took ownership of the study process and recommendations.

Knowing that it would be a challenge to attract the bilingual and minority populations to traditional public meetings, CCD in coordination with its community outreach consultant, HDR Inc., sought new strategies to gather meaningful input from local stakeholders in their homes and community gathering places.



Through the Federal Boulevard Student Ambassadors Program (FBSAP), the team reached into nearby high schools to inform and train bilingual students to gather feedback from the underrepresented neighborhoods including the Spanish, Somali, and Vietnamese-speaking communities along the corridor. The program introduced students to the planning process, and helped to engage this next generation in planning and community development, while garnering valuable feedback for the study. For their efforts the team provided them letters of recommendation for future opportunities.

The FBSAP gathered more than 160 completed surveys in three languages from the most prominent minority populations in the project area. These surveys provided information on how residents travel in the area, what priorities they value for making improvements to the corridor, and what issues were most concerning to them. The feedback informed the development of the plan to better reflect the preferences of a broader population. The project's unique public outreach provided effective, transferable, and quality community feedback and demonstrated to minority and underrepresented groups that their voices do matter in the community planning process.



The City and HDR are honored that Colorado APA has selected this innovative outreach program for the 2017 Community Engagement Award.