

Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Planning Grants

Lincoln Oval Traffic Study & Needs Assessment

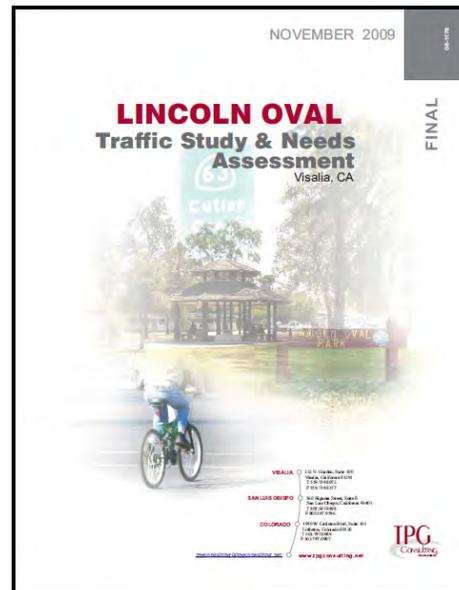
- **Grant Amount:** \$135,000
- **Grant Recipient:** City of Visalia
- **County:** Tulare County

Project Area – The project area is a ‘diamond’ shaped area bounded by Pearl Street to the northwest, NW 1st Avenue to the southwest, NE 1st Ave to the southeast, and Granite Street to the northeast.

Project Focus – The City of Visalia is a community of approximately 120,000 people located in the Central San Joaquin Valley, between Fresno and Bakersfield, along the east-west SR 198 off the north-south SR 99. The study area consists of an eight block area several blocks north from the traditional downtown area of Visalia. The study outcome will lead to the development of a Concept Plan and a proposed Action Plan with estimated cost and potential funding sources that will promote a strong and healthy community that incorporates transportation projects that will improve mobility, access, and safety for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians, and contribute to the economic vitality of the area.

Project Goals – Caltrans, the City of Visalia and the Community Stakeholders developed a series of goals for the project. The City, Caltrans and the Community Stakeholders had very similar goals; to plan for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian mobility, access and safety improvements. With stakeholder engagement promote family-friendly uses and improve community safety. The engaged stakeholders had additional goals such as improving the stock of safe and affordable housing, reduce illegal activity and improve the community’s reputation.

Community Outreach – A Community Outreach Plan was prepared with the partnership of various consultants and community experts. Some of the actions taken, were the development of a an Asset Map of the study area, three community meetings, a joint Parks and Recreation Commission and the North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting, along with focused group meetings with Property Owners and Business operators in the area. Surveys were distributed to receive feedback from the groups involved.



Project Outcome – A Needs and Traffic Study was created for the immediate surrounding Lincoln Oval Park in downtown Visalia, CA. The study considers alternatives for improvements for vehicles, bicycle and pedestrian traffic as well as revitalizing the park area. Alternatives were presented to the City Council for approval and the City of Visalia will continue the effort to improve traffic flow with little or no impact on the local businesses.

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Challenges

- The survey responses indicated that local stakeholders are concerned about the illegal activities in Lincoln Park and the surrounding community.
- Incorporation of all stakeholder interests and community feedback into a realistic alternative.

Successes

- The City of Visalia had sponsored community meetings in Park prior to the beginning of the study. These meetings were a way to introduce city department head and staff. In addition, there was a growing community involvement with concerts at the park, new development and housing plans.
- Once the plan is adopted, there will be no additional right-of-way requirements for plan improvements.