

Legacies of the Street: Seeking Transportation Justice

This three-part series of community conversations will address the racialized histories of transportation in two major metropolitan areas of California--the San Francisco Bay area and Los Angeles County--and in the corridor of the Central Valley. The history of transportation is as much a story of exclusion, isolation, and destruction as it is one of connection and growth. Communities of color suffered disproportionately from the creation of California's transportation infrastructure as highways ripped communities in half in order to benefit commuters moving between the white suburbs and employment hubs. These legacies are still alive today, as the voices and priorities of communities of color continue to be sidelined in mainstream active transportation conversations.

We will host three events: one in San Francisco, one in Fresno, and one in Los Angeles. At each event, a humanities scholar expert in the region's transportation history will speak alongside local leaders of color in mobility advocacy. These events will invoke what Eric Avila calls the "Folklore of the Freeway" in order to understand how communities of color have created community through movement and engaged in alternative ways of moving about the city and country space. While advocates will participate in this conversation, the goal will not be to advance a specific policy agenda, but to understand how history, culture, and race influence conversations about mobility. This dialogue will set the stage for a facilitated discussion focused on what it means to reclaim the streets for people. Via this backwards-forwards dialogue, these events will create a platform from which to understand the racialized past and presents of the roads we travel daily.

These events will build on momentum created at [The Untokening](#), a gathering of marginalized voices within active transportation. Held immediately following the [Facing Race conference](#), the Untokening will center intersectionality and, through collaboration that embraces our expertise and the expertise of our communities, create a series of equity statements on critical issues, like gentrification and community engagement. This event will take place in Atlanta in November 2016, which allows few Californians to participate. This grant will allow those from California who do participate to expand the conversation back home, and discuss how to create more a just transportation future for all Californians.

Each event will result in a collection of artifacts that will travel from north to south, creating cross-talk across geographic locations. These artifacts will include the digital (a twitter feed), the written (a narrative summary of the event) and the visual (a collection of photographs taken at the event). At the conclusion of the project, artifacts from all three events will be included in a web archive, which will be shared through social media channels. We also plan to publish a publicly-accessible article on the process. Other outcomes of this project will be a greater awareness of the historical roots of current transportation systems, amplification of the voice of communities of color within transportation planning, and dissemination of results from The Untokening conference. We expect that all of these will provide advocates and marginalized

communities with new tools and strategies to further their own unique agendas. We also expect to identify resonances and differences across the distinct regions of California.

The audience for the project will be local residents with interest in transportation & environmental justice, mobility, community development, and street safety. We will work with local organizations at each site to plan and advertise the event. We strive for the demographics of participants to fully represent marginalized communities in each locale, and will work with local leaders to achieve this goal.

We will assess the success of the events via a combination of written and oral feedback. Participants will be asked to fill out an evaluation form that asks how informative and empowering the event was, as well as what future actions they plan to take (if any). We will also debrief with local community leaders after the event to assess how the conversation might have contributed to their ongoing community-building efforts.

Project Director Adonia Lugo and Humanities Advisor Sarah McCullough have successfully organized community events that connect scholarly conversations with community activists. They co-organized the Bicicultures Roadshow, which hosted a community storytelling event in Los Angeles that resulted in the [LA Bike Movement History website](#). The roadshow continued in Davis, where they hosted a symposium on bicycling cultures well-attended by advocates, scholars, and planners ([see results here](#)). They have continued to enact and promote community-engaged scholarship and scholarly-engaged community action through the [Bicicultures project](#). Adonia Lugo worked as the Equity Manager for the League of American Bicyclists, and now is an independent scholar and consultant in Los Angeles, Sarah McCullough was the Associate Director at the Center for the Humanities at UC San Diego for two years before returning to UC Davis to take the same role at the Feminist Research Institute. The Feminist Research Institute seeks to integrate feminist principles of justice into research and support community-university dialogues. Partner organization San Francisco Rising unites the voices of low-income and working class communities of color to share their vision for the future of the city. Community Alliance for Agroecology is a group of six environmental justice organizations that are working to link the need for political systems shift in the San Joaquin Valley to the way we govern natural resources in California. Multicultural Communities for Mobility exists to improve the quality of life for underserved low-income communities of color by empowering and engaging community leaders at the local level to advocate & educate for safer bikeways, walkable communities and access to mass transit for all.

San Francisco Bay Area event in May 2017:

Host organization: San Francisco Rising

Community advocate speaker: Chema Hernández Gil, Political Coordinator at SF Rising

Humanities scholar speaker: John Stehlin, PhD in Geography from UC Berkeley

Fresno event in June 2017:

Host organization: Community Alliance for Agroecology (CAFA)

Community advocate speaker: Janaki Jagannath, Coordinator, CAFA

Humanities scholar speaker: Sarah McCullough, Associate Director of Feminist Research Institute

Los Angeles event in July 2017:

Host organization: Multicultural Communities for Mobility

Community advocate speaker: Sahra Sulaiman, Writer for Streetsblog LA

Humanities scholar speaker: Adonia Lugo, PhD in Anthropology from UC Irvine