An act to add Section 104.3 to the Streets and Highways Code, relating to streets and highways.
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 104.3 is added to the Streets and Highways Code, to read: 104.3. (a) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

1. “Joint powers authority” means a joint exercise of powers authority established pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code.

2. “Program” means the Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevard Pilot Program established pursuant to subdivision (b).

(b) The Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevard Pilot Program is hereby established, to be administered by the department, with guidance from the Transportation Agency, and in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Strategic Growth Council, and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, to provide funding, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purpose of awarding competitive grants to eligible entities, in partnership with the applicable state transportation district, for planning or implementing the conversion or transformation of underutilized state highways into multimodal corridors that serve residents of underserved communities by developing complete streets, creating open space or parks, supporting affordable housing development, or other community-oriented infrastructure.

(c) The purpose of the program is to achieve the following goals:

1. Advance health and equity outcomes for underserved communities by removing health, safety, and access barriers associated with transportation infrastructure within communities.

2. Improve access to opportunity by improving travel options and reducing combined household transportation and housing costs for underserved communities.

3. Create opportunities for implementation of affordable housing and affirmatively furthering fair housing.

4. Avoid or minimize direct and indirect displacement effects from project implementation.

5. Advance community-based or community-driven transportation planning.

(d) The program shall set aside 25 percent of available funding for planning and 75 percent for implementation.

(e) Eligible applicants under the program shall demonstrate a partnership agreement with the applicable state transportation district, and may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

1. For planning grants, a nonprofit organization, a community-based organization, a faith-based organization, a coalition or association of nonprofit organizations, a local agency, a regional agency, a joint powers authority, a tribal government, or transit agency. In awarding planning grants, the department shall prioritize applications that demonstrate multistakeholder partnerships with local and regional agencies, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

2. For implementation grants, a local, regional, or state transportation agency, a joint powers authority, or a tribal government.

(f) Eligible project types under the program for implementation grants include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
(1) Conversion or capping of an access-controlled state-operated transportation route to increase access for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit.

(2) Conversion of a state highway serving as a main street into a multimodal surface street that allows for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access.

(3) A project that significantly enhances multimodal connectivity along or across a state highway without conversion or capping.

(4) Implementation of early action implementation plans developed under subdivision (g).

(g) Eligible project types under the program for planning grants include, but are not limited to, the following activities leading to any of the eligible implementation project types:

(1) Community engagement, consultation, and leadership activities.

(2) Planning studies, needs assessments, feasibility studies, scenario planning, conceptual designs, and other planning products.

(3) Environmental review, consultation, or other efforts required under any state and federal environmental laws relating to the review or approval of an eligible project.

(4) Early action implementation plans for interim design solutions that demonstrate proof of concept for projects.

(5) Establishment of a community land trust for the development and use of excess or surplus land created by the removal, retrofit, or transformation of an underutilized highway.

(6) Other transportation and community-based transportation planning activities required to advance a project.

(h) (1) Within one year of the effective date of this section, the department shall develop guidelines, including project selection criteria, program evaluation metrics, and targeted technical assistance strategies to implement the program. The guidelines shall be exempt from the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

(2) In developing guidelines pursuant to this section, the department shall solicit input from local communities.

(3) The guidelines shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following:

(A) A requirement that 100 percent of the program funds are awarded to projects that benefit underserved communities. For purposes of the program, the department shall establish a data-driven definition for underserved communities that may include, but need not be limited to, disadvantaged communities, as identified pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code, and low-income communities, as defined in paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of Section 39713 of the Health and Safety Code. A project eligible under the program shall clearly demonstrate a direct and meaningful benefit to an underserved community, and be adjacent to, or directly located in, an underserved community.

(B) Project selection criteria that includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(i) The demonstrated need of the applicant to address the goals of the program as described in subdivision (c).

(ii) The demonstrated leadership and involvement from local community members and organizations in the creation of the project, or the anticipated leadership or
involvement from local community members and organizations in the planning process for which funds are being requested.

(iii) The demonstrated commitment of local, regional, or federal funds as leveraged match to state grants.

(C) Development of performance metrics to measure project outcomes in order to inform future implementation of the program.
Bill No.  
as introduced, ________.
General Subject: The Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards Pilot Program.

Existing law establishes the Department of Transportation and vests the department with full possession and control of all state highways and all property and rights in property acquired for state highway purposes. Existing law authorizes the department to do any act necessary, convenient, or proper for the construction, improvement, maintenance, or use of all highways that are under its jurisdiction, possession, or control.

This bill would establish the Reconnecting Communities: Highways to Boulevards Pilot Program under the administration of the department to provide funding, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the purpose of awarding competitive grants to eligible entities, in partnership with the applicable state transportation district, for planning or implementing the conversion or transformation of underutilized state highways into multimodal corridors that serve residents of underserved communities by developing complete streets, creating open space or parks, supporting affordable housing development, or other community-oriented infrastructure, as provided.