

# Developing a Comprehensive and Effective Public Participation Plan for the California Transportation Plan 2030 (CTP) and the 2008 Federal State Transportation Improvement Plan (FSTIP)

This approach to creating an effective Public Participation Plan was developed in consultation with members of Caltrans Planning and Programming unit staffs, through interviews with a variety of district, agency and community stakeholders and based on the federal rules and regulations for developing a statewide transportation plan and statewide transportation improvement plan.

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## Purpose

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for developing the statewide transportation plan (CTP) and delivering the federal state transportation improvement plan (FSTIP). In carrying out the planning processes for these documents, “the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points (§450.210).”

The purpose of this document is to describe an approach for engaging the public and key stakeholders in developing a Public Participation Plan for the CTP and FSTIP processes. Essentially, the effort to develop a comprehensive, effective Public Participation Plan is intended to answer two main questions for each group:

- Do you wish to be involved in the CTP and FSTIP processes?
- If so, how do you wish to be involved?

In order to be able to answer these questions, stakeholders, agency officials and the general public all need to understand:

- (a) what the statewide transportation plan is;
- (b) how it affects them; and
- (c) how they can affect it.

There also needs to be an understanding about the roles and responsibilities of those involved, the schedule and decision-making processes, and the different perspectives and interests of the various stakeholders.

## Participant Groups and Interested Parties

Transportation planning and decision making in California is complex and requires constant balancing of diverse interests and needs. State transportation plans typically consider a broad range of solutions that may impact many different constituencies.

Caltrans has developed a comprehensive list of potential interested parties for the CTP and FSTIP. This list includes:

- local, regional, state and Federal agencies and organizations;
- local business, pedestrian and bicycle advocacy groups; and
- community and environmental groups.

## **Regulatory and Permitting Agencies**

A variety of federal, state and local agency representatives have compliance, permitting and regulatory responsibilities related to transportation planning and decision making within the State of California.

## **Elected Officials**

Elected officials must be actively engaged and kept informed of transportation planning and programming activities so they can be responsive to constituents who have concerns about or interest in these efforts. Elected officials at all levels of government are an important constituency for this plan since these officials make decisions related to the Plan on issues such as policy, legislation and funding.

## **Stakeholders**

A number of agencies, groups and individuals, comprised of affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties are directly interested in the CTP.

## **General Public**

Input will be solicited from a wide variety of individuals and organizations that have a relationship with the project based on direct impact, interest or geographic

proximity. Members of the general public throughout the State will be invited to share the comments and engage in discussions regarding the Plan. Given the Plan's complexity and long-term planning horizon, many individuals may have a difficult time understanding how their comments could influence or be incorporated into a document of this scale. We anticipate a significant part of this process will be to educate the public.

## Methods

The following outreach methods are intended to reach both targeted groups and broad audiences. The different methods are suggested to address varying levels of project interest and knowledge and are sensitive to preferred communication and participation styles. Along with information about preferred methods, MIG will also be able to gauge the level of public education activities that may need to be conducted concurrently to ensure that outreach activities are successful.

### Interviews

To reach the targeted stakeholder groups identified above, telephone interviews will be conducted with a representative sampling of each type to collect their opinions regarding the key issues of interest and the most effective ways to engage the constituents they represent. Telephone interviews allow for personalized in-depth conversation about preferred methods of participation and understanding and knowledge of the CTP and FSTIP. We anticipate that representatives of organized constituencies will be easiest to reach for the interviews. It is unlikely we will be able to interview representatives of the general public.

MIG will interview approximately 35-45 representatives from affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested

parties (see Appendix A: Potential Stakeholders). We anticipate each interview will be about 15 - 20 minutes. MIG and Caltrans will jointly develop the list of interviewees. Care would be taken to ensure that interviewees include representatives who are executive managers, staff and volunteers from organizations located throughout the state. The interviews will be conducted during the first three weeks of October 2007. Responses will be tabulated, summarized and analyzed to identify correlations between preferred participation methods and geography, issues and other emerging themes.

Interviewees will be asked to share both their personal opinion and to speak on behalf of the constituents they represent. Each interviewee will generally be asked the following questions:

- 1) What is your knowledge of and interest in the CTP and FSTIP?
- 2) Have you participated in any related planning efforts? If yes, what methods did you find to be most satisfying and why.
- 3) How do your constituents get their information and what are their preferred methods?
- 4) Of your constituents, whose participation is critical and why?
- 5) What issues should this process address to help ensure participation by your constituents?

## **Briefings**

Personal briefings are most appropriate when addressing agency and elected officials. Many of these stakeholders will be familiar with the CTP and FSTIP processes. In addition, there are more clear requirements for their involvement than for other types of interested parties. The briefings may include presentations, status reports and other documentation. Briefings will most likely be provided during conferences, events, and other activities that have been organized by constituency groups. We anticipate that representatives of some organizations who are interviewed through this process may request additional information. Caltrans will conduct briefings on an as-requested basis. MIG will prepare briefing materials to

assist with this process. We anticipate there will be requests for 4-6 briefings. The requests for a briefing would most likely surface during the stakeholder interviews.

## **Focus Groups**

Focus groups will be held to get feedback from the general public on their level of interest and preferred methods for providing input on the CTP and FSTIP. By recruiting paid participants, Caltrans can ensure that they are truly reaching unaffiliated members of the general public, especially since it is difficult to predict their participation in any public involvement process. The use of a web-based recruitment approach with careful screening questions will help ensure that participants are both ethnically and economically diverse. The stipend offered to all participants provides an economic incentive, and will help to attract low-income participants. Approximately four (4) focus groups will be held in four different locations throughout the state. The recommended locations include: Oakland, Sacramento, Long Beach and Fresno. These locations were suggested because the four population centers will provide a pool of participants who are ethnically and economically diverse. As transportation hubs, a broad range of transportation issues such as good movement, HOV lanes, congestion management, etc. are likely to be discussed.

We anticipate each focus group will be 2 hours long, have 12 – 15 participants and be conducted on weekday evenings during late October and early November. Recruitment will begin the second week of October. Participants will receive a stipend of \$60 for their participation and be provided light refreshments. Participants will be asked about their general knowledge of and interest in the CTP and FSTIP and preferred methods of participation and communication. Should participants indicate they have little knowledge of or interests in these planning processes, participants would be asked questions to identify their preferred methods for receiving information about these processes. We would also ask questions to help identify whose opinions they trust and who they might consider appropriate to represent their interests in this process.

While this method does not solicit a high volume of data, we believe the depth and quality of the information received from the estimated 60 participants can help

determine the most effective ways to engage an unaffiliated member of the general public in this process.

### **E-mail/Web Survey**

This format allows for distribution to, and input from, a broad set of stakeholders. Additionally, it can provide a standard set of information upon which questions – both closed- and open-ended – may be based and results can be tabulated quickly. Using various e-mails lists provided by willing stakeholder groups and organizations, Caltrans will send out an e-mail notification referring participants to a web survey that will be valid for a specific two week period. Participants will be asked 4-6 questions total regarding their level of interest and preferred methods of engagement. Most questions will be multiple choice with one open-ended question provided to accept general comments. MIG will develop the web survey by mid-November. MIG and Caltrans will work with partner agencies and organizations to publicize the availability of the web survey using e-mail contact lists.. The survey will be conducted between November 5 and November 16. MIG will compile and analyze the results of the survey, summarize comments received through the open-ended question and analyze the results to determine the preferred methods and outreach tools.

## Documentation

MIG will document the results of the methods used in this approach to be used in developing recommendations for the Public Participation Plan. Along with a report on the key findings and results, MIG will also, when possible, track the number of participants, agency affiliation, and general demographic information to help characterize and describe the participants who provided input on the development of this plan. Some methods, such as the web survey, allow for very limited collection of data from the respondents, however, MIG will report on the number and source of the participants. Other methods, like the interviews and focus groups provide opportunities to report more specific information about the participants.

## Conclusion

Preliminary information shows that most stakeholders, organized groups and elected officials have a vested interest in the CTP and FSTIP and they are likely to participate in most methods provided to them. Members of the general public, however, may be less likely to understand why the process is important and participate in any involvement activities. Given the scale and scope of transportation planning in the state, we may learn through focus groups, interviews and the web survey that participants feel their voice is best heard during the regional priority-setting processes or by commenting on specific projects. Members of the general public may defer to stakeholders, organized groups and elected officials in their area to represent them and their community's best interests. If that is the case, this effort will help to identify which representatives are considered to be most effective, and future involvement activities will target the participation and preferred methods of these trusted representatives.

## APPENDIX A: POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

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### A. Affected Public Agencies

- City of Lodi Public Works Department
- Sacramento County Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration

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### B. Representatives of Public Transportation Employees

- Amalgamated Transit Union (various)
- United Transportation Union (Los Angeles)
- Service Employees International Union (various)

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### C. Freight Shippers

- California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains
- California Trucking Association
- BNSF Railway
- Union Pacific
- FedEx
- UPS

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### D. Private Transportation Providers

- SuperShuttle (various)
- MV Transportation (Bay Area)

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### E. Public Transportation Users

- Southern California Transit Advocates (Southern California)
- The Transit Coalition (Los Angeles)

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### F. Users of Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

- Bay Area Bicycle Coalition (San Francisco Bay Area)
- California Walks (statewide)
- Surface Transportation Policy Project (statewide)
- South Valley Bicycle Coalition (Bakersfield/Kern County)
- San Diego County Bicycle Coalition

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**G. Representatives of the Disabled Community**

- Disability Rights Advocates (Berkeley/statewide)

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**H. Other Interested Parties**

- Tribal Council of California
- Tourism Industry
- California Chamber of Commerce

**APPENDIX B: OUTREACH STRATEGIES**

<b>Method</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>Interviews</b>	35-45 phone interviews with representatives of specific stakeholder groups, especially those identified in the SAFETEA-LU requirements	October 1	October 31
<b>Briefings</b>	Likely to be stakeholder members. Will be conducted on an as-requested basis; estimated 4-6 briefings	October 31	January 15
<b>Focus Groups</b>	Unaffiliated members of the general public. Recruitment will emphasize economic and ethnic diversity of the participants. Focus groups will be held in Oakland, Sacramento, Fresno and Long Beach.	October 15 begin recruitment; conduct focus groups starting October 29	November 22
<b>E-mail/web survey</b>	All potential stakeholders and members of the general public. Participants will answer a 4-6 question survey that is distributed electronically	Begin survey development October 15. Conduct survey November 5 - 16	November 16

**APPENDIX C: PROJECT TIMELINE**

	2007			2008					
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Conduct Public Outreach									
Report on Public Involvement									
Draft Public Participation Plan									
45-day PPP public comment period									
Revise PPP based on public comment									
Mgmt review/approval of final document									
Final Public Participation Plan									