



CALTRANS / COASTAL COMMISSION

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

May 2022

Caltrans and the Coastal Commission Partnership Agreement

Background & Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Coastal Commission (Commission) have engaged in several Interagency Agreements since the early 2000s to support a broad range of activities aimed at facilitating effective collaboration that mutually supports the public missions of both agencies. A key aspect of these agreements has been to enhance both Commission and Caltrans staffs' understanding of their partner agency's statutes and regulations. A second key element is to promote early and ongoing communication, in collaboration with our local and state partners, to ensure that transportation planning and project delivery are consistent with the requirements of the California Coastal Act and the federal Coastal Zone Management Act. Achieving consistency with these legal mandates facilitates smoother and more efficient coastal development permit (CDP) and federal consistency processes between the Commission and Caltrans, in addition to fulfilling obligations identified in complimentary statutes and executive orders designed to protect coastal resources in our state for current and future generations.

To promote such results, Caltrans' Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA) established the Coastal Program in 2012 to assist Caltrans' District staff in understanding the requirements and complexities of Coastal Act policies and permitting processes. The DEA Coastal Program is the focal point of collaborations with the Commission and trains, educates, and coordinates with Caltrans staff working on plans and projects in the coastal zone. It also fosters coordination across other Caltrans' Divisions, and through District Offices, in relation to a variety of functions, including Project Delivery, Transportation Planning, Asset Management, Design, Sustainability, and Maintenance.

Furthering these efforts, an Integrated Planning Team (IPT) was jointly established in 2015 with staff from both Caltrans and the Commission which collaborated together through a series of working sessions to develop the [Plan for Improved Agency Partnering](#) (*Plan*). That *Plan* contains a series of recommendations for earlier coordination during both Caltrans' and the Commission's planning processes, as well as greater collaboration through early Caltrans' project development processes. The *Plan* also identified the need for enhanced coordination addressing sea level rise (SLR) and public access issues—along with programmatic improvements—that could alleviate common problems experienced in regulatory reviews. In 2017, the leadership of both agencies signed a Partnership Agreement committing their support for implementation of the integrated planning framework within the *Plan* for improved collaboration and outcomes.

That same year, AB 1282 was passed, creating a Transportation Permitting Taskforce, including several state agencies such as Caltrans and the Commission. The law called for detailed analyses of existing transportation project development and permitting processes/challenges and asked the Taskforce to prepare a report to the legislature on recommendations for developing structured early transportation project coordination efforts and to address identified challenge areas. Caltrans and the Commission worked extensively with their partner agencies to prepare a report to the Legislature in 2020, which includes many recommendations that mirror and complement Caltrans and the Commission's [Plan for Improved Agency Partnering](#). Work continues today on advancing the AB 1282 recommendations through what is now known as the State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency (STEPPE).

Now, five years after signing Caltrans and the Commission's original Partnership Agreement, leadership from both agencies desires to update the 2017 Partnership Agreement to sustain and build upon the successes of our long-term interagency work together.

Caltrans and the Coastal Commissions Directors' Partnership Agreement

May 2022
Partnership Agreement 2.0
Between
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
And
CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

Preamble

We, the undersigned, renew our support for the ongoing Partnership between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Coastal Commission (Commission), hereinafter "Agency Partners," with the overall goal of ensuring that transportation projects in the California coastal zone are planned, designed, and implemented to be consistent with California Coastal Act policies, thereby ensuring positive outcomes for both transportation and the environment in the coastal zone in a manner that promotes more efficient permitting processes and successful results for the people of California. We also commit to furthering the 2017 Integrated Planning Framework, implemented in part by the services and funding provided via Caltrans and the Commission's Interagency Agreements, as well as through broader interagency collaboration work being coordinated through the State Transportation and Environmental Partnership for Permitting Efficiency (STEPPE).

Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement (Agreement) is to express leadership support for concerted, cooperative, effective, and collaborative work between the Agency Partners as they carry out their respective missions to meet the needs of the citizens of this great state. Recognizing the correlation between healthy, accessible coastal resources/ecosystems and enhancing California's economy and livability, the Agency Partners commit to planning and investment for long-term sustainability, including transportation system resiliency in the face of climate change impacts along California's coast.

Key objectives of this Agreement include achieving a greater understanding of each agency's statutory mandates and processes for a better alignment of Agency Partners' planning activities and decision-making. This Agreement is intended to produce more effective approaches to satisfying Coastal Act requirements in the development of a safe, integrated, and efficient multimodal transportation system throughout the coastal zone. This Agreement also supports implementation of each agency's strategic plan and the broader commitments of the State to address and adapt to climate change.

Commitments

In the spirit of cooperation, and with the mutual understanding that this is a flexible working Agreement between our respective agencies, we hereby renew our commitment to continued implementation of our interagency agreements aimed at promoting integrated transportation and coastal environmental planning efforts and project delivery. As initiated by our [Plan for Improved Agency Partnering](#), we will continue to direct early and ongoing coordination between our staffs, including proactively analyzing and implementing sea level rise adaptation, and multimodal public access and transportation improvements. Going forward, this Agreement identifies five key focus areas for interagency coordination:

- 1. Early Plan and Project Coordination:** Continue interagency coordination focused on the development, environmental review, and advancement of transportation plans and projects, with an emphasis on harmonizing with Coastal Act and Local Coastal Program Plan policies. Ensure that early staff coordination occurs on these efforts and that plan and project information is shared to inform designs

and allow for timely identification and resolution of potential coastal resource issues, leading ultimately to better coordinated transportation and land use plans, informationally complete permit applications, and smoother permit processes. Continue to develop tools and procedures to support these activities through accurate and up-to-date data entry, strong communication channels, and efforts such as semi-annual District-to-District coordination meetings.

2. **Programmatic Approaches:** Advance effective programmatic approaches to reoccurring planning, project, and permitting challenges; including improving the understanding of each agency's policies and processes, and incorporating best practices. Continue interagency collaborations on project-specific and advanced mitigation efforts, including Caltrans' Advance Mitigation Program.
3. **Sea Level Rise and Climate Change:** Further ongoing efforts between Partnering Agencies focused on addressing, and resiliently adapting to, sea level rise and other climate change impacts. Build upon existing statewide efforts alongside the Partnering Agencies' guidance documents, vulnerability assessments, adaptation plans, corridor management plans, and related efforts to ensure climate change considerations are appropriately incorporated into transportation plans and projects.
4. **California Coastal Trail and Multi-modal Transportation:** Promote multi-modal transportation to serve the coastal zone, advance active transportation opportunities, and complete the California Coastal Trail (CCT). Enhance efforts to work with state, regional and local partners, including effective guidance for regional transportation and local coastal plans and exploring a variety of options for closing gaps in the CCT. Ensure that coastal public access concerns and features are appropriately factored into Caltrans plans and projects in ways that meet Coastal Act policies and advance Caltrans active transportation goals.
5. **STEPPE:** Participate in, and help advance, STEPPE (AB 1282) recommendations and workgroup efforts in concert with companion IPT Partnership Agreement focus areas.

To accomplish these shared goals and as the Directors of the Partnering Agencies, we commit, within available time and funding resources, to the following endeavors by our staff:

1. **Meetings and Status Reports:** Ensuring that annual status reports are prepared, providing a review of progress under this Partnership Agreement and offering suggestions and subsequent workplan proposals for further collaboration on issues and opportunities that are of mutual concern. On at least a biennial basis, and as the Directors of the Partnering Agencies, we will jointly confer to determine if it is advisable to call a full executive management meeting virtually or in person to review and discuss the status and future needs of the collaborative efforts.
2. **Integrated Implementation Team Steering Committee:** Establishing an Integrated Implementation Team (IIT) Steering Committee with balanced agency representation. At a minimum, this Committee will include Caltrans' Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA) Assistant Division Chief, GNEIS Office Chief, and Coastal Program Manager and the Commission's Statewide Transportation Program Manager, NorCal Transportation Coastal Program Manager, and SoCal Transportation Coastal Program Manager. The IIT Steering Committee will set up workgroups to advance and develop jointly agreed upon workplans and/or collaboration strategies for the first four of the five focus areas listed above. These proposed workplans/strategies will be submitted to Caltrans' and the Commissions' Executive Management, as appropriate, for their concurrence and support. Subsequent proposed workplans/strategies will be prepared or updated annually, as appropriate for each of the four focus areas and the status of their progress will be conveyed in the annual status reports. Workplans for the STEPPE efforts are, and will be, developed through that complementary effort and included within the annual status report, as appropriate.
3. **Cross-functional Staff Engagement:** Informing and involving all functional unit staff as appropriate within each of the Partnering Agencies to ensure that they may provide technical advice and other input on the development and implementation of workplans, products and procedures and, as applicable, will incorporate those results into their functional unit processes.

4. **Training / Outreach:** Coordinating and collaborating on internal and external training and outreach between the Partnering Agencies as well as with their respective local partners and other stakeholders to support the purpose and objective of this partnership.
5. **Communication Strategies: Conflict Prevention & Resolution** Supporting collaborative work efforts to promote professional communication and resolve potential conflicts, consistent with State laws, as early as possible through conflict prevention principles, strategies, and resolution process steps as previously adopted in the [Plan for Improved Agency Partnering](#). Of benefit to both agencies, these communication strategies minimize unproductive time, costs, and project delays associated with unresolved conflict.
6. **Partnership Leads:** Reaffirming the Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA) GNEIS Office Chief and the Commission’s Statewide Transportation Program Manager as the point people within each agency for shepherding the overall implementation of this Partnership Agreement under our general direction.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Partnership Agreement as of [DATE]



John “Jack” Ainsworth, Executive Director, California Coastal Commission

06/06/2022

Date



Steven Keck, Acting Director, California Department of Transportation

6/2/2022

Date