

District 3–I-80 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane Feasibility Study Outreach

Project Summary

District 3, in partnership with Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) and Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), engaged stakeholders in examining the feasibility of establishing High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on a stretch of I-80, from I-5 to State Route 65, in Sacramento and Placer Counties. Since this would be the first HOT lane project in the Sacramento region, it was important to both educate stakeholders about how HOT lanes operate, as well as record their questions and concerns, as part of an overall assessment of HOT lane feasibility.



Outreach Methods

- Stakeholder interviews
- Public telephone survey
- Policy Advisory Committee meetings
- E-mails and phone calls
- Meeting agendas
- Client agency websites
- Informational webpage (www.corridormobility.org)



Public Involvement Tools

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted by MIG and technical consultants with 15 individuals and groups. Comments were graphic recorded on flipcharts. The interviews were conducted early in the study to determine if there were any “red flags” or specific questions that needed to be considered about the concept of HOT lanes. Individual interviews were also conducted with the six members of the Policy Advisory Committee.

Public Telephone Survey

MIG and an opinion research sub-consultant developed the research survey. Four hundred (400) residents in the general area of the proposed HOT lanes were surveyed by telephone. The survey included questions about knowledge and attitudes regarding High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, HOT lanes, and tolling.

Technical Advisory Committee Meetings

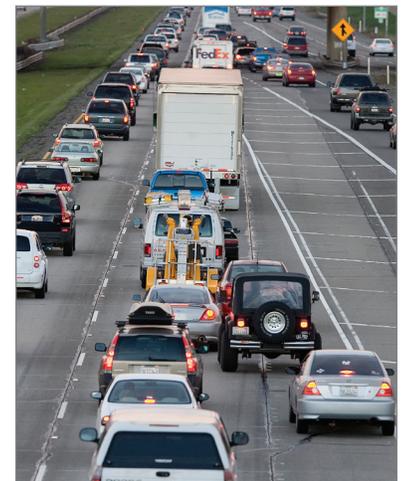
MIG created agendas, facilitated meetings, and provided meeting summaries for four Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings. The TAC was composed of staff from agencies potentially affected by HOT lanes in this corridor, including regional transportation agencies, two counties, three cities, Caltrans, and the Federal Highway Administration.

Policy Advisory Committee Meetings

MIG created agendas, facilitated meetings, and provided meeting summaries for two Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings. The PAC was composed of six officials from the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Boards of Directors in whose jurisdictions the corridor lies.

Graphic Recording

At the PAC meetings, MIG used the technique of wallgraphic recording so that the elected officials who participated could see that their comments were heard and recorded. Graphic recording is a hallmark of MIG meeting facilitation in which workshop comments are recorded with colored markers on a large sheet of paper. This method allows participants to see that their comments have been noted, it serves as a useful tool to guide the conversation, and it provides a formal record of the meeting. The wallgraphics were photo-reduced and included in the meeting summaries.



Deliverables

Stakeholder Interview Questions and Summary Report
 Public Telephone Survey Questions and Summary Report (Godbe Research)
 Fact Sheet
 Agenda Packets and Meeting Summaries
 Public Involvement Report

continued next page

District 3–I-80 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane Feasibility Study Outreach

continued from previous page

Project Fact Sheet

MIG wrote and designed a one-page fact sheet that summarized the concept of HOT lanes, explained the variations that were possible for tolling, vehicle occupancy requirements, possible uses for excess revenue, and provided examples of where HOT lanes have already been implemented.

Project Website

Project information is available on the corridor-specific pages of the statewide CSMP website at www.corridormobility.org. This helped fulfill the SAFETEA-LU requirements regarding community involvement and use of visualizations, as specified under Section 450.210.

Environmental Justice Community Involvement

Several of the stakeholder interviews specifically targeted representatives of groups that are normally underrepresented in transportation planning efforts, such as low-income and transit-dependent individuals. The public telephone survey included a representative sample of residents of all income levels and cultural/racial groups in the zip codes surrounding the proposed facility.



Lessons Learned

Caltrans benefited from conducting the public involvement activities to gain an advance understanding of public attitudes regarding HOT lanes in the project area. The findings helped Caltrans determine a lack of readiness for this approach. Should Caltrans have proceeded with the HOT lanes proposal without the outreach process, the project would have encountered significant opposition and would probably not have achieved a positive outcome. The relationships that Caltrans has developed over time with stakeholders and members of the public in the project area could also have been negatively impacted.



Results

The very robust and detailed outreach process helped Caltrans to reach the conclusion that the public in District 3 is not yet ready for HOT lanes, and that current congestion does not warrant an immediate focus on implementing HOT lanes. The process also aided Caltrans in identifying issues that will need to be examined if further consideration is to be given to HOT lanes in the I 80 corridor and elsewhere.