



Draft Community Engagement Guidance for Plan and Projects: A Statewide Playbook

Executive Summary

Overview

The "Draft Community Engagement Guidance for Plans and Projects: A Statewide Playbook" (known as the Statewide Playbook) is a comprehensive guide in development by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to support meaningful and equitable community engagement throughout the planning and project delivery processes. The Statewide Playbook is designed to guide staff on how, and when appropriate, to provide communities meaningful opportunities to shape transportation projects, ensure that their opinions are actively sought and respected, and that their feedback is incorporated into decision-making.

Purpose and Goals

The primary goal of the Statewide Playbook is to guide Caltrans staff on ways to better engage the diverse communities Caltrans serves. It emphasizes the importance of engaging with California Native American Tribes; local, regional, and state government entities; community groups; and the public. The Statewide Playbook supports a more equitable transportation system by promoting processes and best practices for direct and meaningful engagement and increased transparency.

Key Principles and Strategies

The Statewide Playbook emphasizes several key principles and strategies for effective community engagement:

- **Early and Continuous Engagement:** Engaging other government entities, California Native American Tribes, and the public early in the planning process and maintaining communication throughout the project lifecycle is crucial for building trust and delivering projects that serve communities as well as regional and state needs.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Attention is given to engaging underserved and marginalized communities, ensuring their voices are heard, and their needs are addressed.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Being transparent about project decisions and processes, and to reporting back to communities on how their input was used.



- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Working closely with local, regional, and state governments entities; tribes; and community organizations is essential for successful engagement. The Statewide Playbook encourages leveraging relationships and resources to enhance engagement efforts.

Structure and Content

The Statewide Playbook includes the following chapters, each addressing different aspects of community engagement:

Chapter 1. Why We Do Engagement. This chapter outlines the importance of community engagement in transportation planning and project delivery. It highlights Caltrans' commitment to equity and the guiding principles that drive our engagement efforts.

Chapter 2. What Is Engagement? This chapter defines community engagement as an inclusive and equitable process that informs transportation decisions. It introduces the Spectrum of Engagement—Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Entrust—to guide how Caltrans involves other government entities, tribes, and communities based on the project and context.

Chapter 3. How We Do Engagement. This chapter details the specific processes and strategies for conducting engagement at various stages of project development, from planning through construction.

Chapter 4. How We Work Together. This chapter focuses on building working relationships with different external entities, including local, regional, and state government entities; tribes; the media; elected officials; community-based organizations (CBOs); and more. It provides guidance and best practices for engagement and highlights the importance of internal collaboration within Caltrans.

Chapter 5. The Tools We Use. This chapter introduces various tools and resources available to Caltrans staff for conducting engagement. It includes detailed information on the Public Engagement Plan (PEP), the Caltrans Engagement Portal, and visualization techniques.

Chapter 6. How Engagement Relates to Each Function. This chapter explains how engagement is integrated into different functions within Caltrans, such as planning, environmental analysis, construction, and right of way. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of various staff members in the engagement process.

Chapter 7. District Community Engagement Playbook. This chapter provides guidance for districts to create their own customized District Community Engagement Playbooks, tailored to their unique communities, geographies, and demands.

Chapter 8. Resources. The final chapter lists various laws, regulations, directives, and additional resources that support community engagement efforts.



Conclusion

The "Draft Community Engagement Guidance for Plans and Projects: A Statewide Playbook" is a new resource in development for Caltrans staff, providing comprehensive guidance on how to conduct effective and equitable community engagement. By following the principles and strategies outlined in the Statewide Playbook, Caltrans aims to build stronger relationships with the communities it serves, leading to better transportation outcomes for all.