

Headquarters—Public Participation Internet Webpage: Contents Review and Improvement Implementation

Project Summary

Caltrans' Office of Community Planning requested MIG to review the content and presentation of the Department's Public Participation and Engagement webpage and make specific recommendations and improvements to create an easy-to-use, visually appealing webpage, which provides improved information to encourage the use of best practices in public participation related to transportation decisions and assisted in meeting SAFETEA-LU documentation requirements. The webpage provides a showcase for specific public involvement projects, as well as examples of tools and best practices to help Caltrans project managers enhance their public outreach efforts.



Outreach Methods

Caltrans promoted the website internally to Districts interested in receiving funding support from the Public Participation and Engagement Contract (PPEC). This task was designed to improve the site so that it was more likely to engage District staff in using proven public participation techniques and illustrate the types of projects that could utilize these funds.



Public Involvement Tools

Project Webpage

The webpage, at www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/pp.html, includes a number of features designed to facilitate Department use of best practices in public participation, including:

Featured Presentations

The Featured Presentations element of the webpage includes links to MIG's two Planning Horizons presentations: both a video and a pdf of the PowerPoint presentation by MIG's founding principal, Daniel Iacofano, "Getting the Most Out of Public Involvement;" and a pdf of the PowerPoint for the Planning Horizons presentation by MIG's Carolyn Verheyen and Lou Hexter, on Public Engagement Best Practices.

Featured Project and Project Archives

The Project Archives provide a listing of all projects that utilized the Public Participation and Engagement process, with links to a printable project plate giving detailed information on each project. In order to assist Caltrans staff in quickly identifying appropriate project examples, the projects are sorted into the following categories:

- Corridor Planning
- Bicycle-Pedestrian Planning
- Meeting Facilitation
- Complete Streets
- Rural Planning
- Soundwall Health Safety Issues
- Information Portals
- California International Blueprint and California Transportation Plan
- Meeting Facilitation
- Community Visioning

Best Practices

The Caltrans "Best Practices in Public Participation" overview identifies success factors for achieving positive outcomes in public participation processes, and presents a series of case studies of PPEC projects that exemplify best practices for Caltrans' public participation and engagement. The Best Practices document incorporated innovative public participation techniques and included updated legislative requirements as directed by SAFETEA-LU and CFR 450.210.



Deliverables

Final Webpage Design Pages updated with new project examples on a regular basis throughout the term of the contract.

continued next page

Headquarters—Public Participation Internet Webpage: Contents Review and Improvement Implementation

continued from previous page

Information for Caltrans Staff and the General Public

The webpage provides a method of sharing project information, as well as a quick link for guidelines on meeting FHWA, FTA and Caltrans reporting requirements. The site also provides contact information for the PPEC project manager for those seeking PPEC resources on Caltrans outreach projects.

Environmental Justice Community Involvement

The purpose of the PPEC webpage is to share best practices that encourage and build capacity for Caltrans to engage the Environmental Justice community. The webpage provides links to other internal Caltrans webpages with valuable public information regarding Title VI, Environmental Justice and Context-Sensitive Solutions (CSS), making it easy to incorporate these elements in PPEC project proposals.



Lessons Learned

There is a real desire for Caltrans staff to see positive examples of public engagement. Public engagement is often perceived as difficult and sometimes negative. MIG's process is to emphasize the preparation and collaboration that needs to be done before Caltrans engages with the public to ensure that the first interaction is positive.

The PPEC projects are well documented and these examples can provide a strong foundation for District and Headquarters staff when considering the development of future public participation projects.



Results

The webpage continues to assist Caltrans staff in making the utmost use of Public Participation and Engagement practices and available funding in order to increase and improve the use of effective public participation in local, regional, and statewide transportation decisions. The webpage continues to function as an excellent method of sharing project results statewide.

This project also assisted Caltrans in meeting new SAFETEA-LU public engagement documentation requirements, as outlined in Section 450.210 (23 CFR 450.210).