

APPENDIX C



Comments to Draft Public Participation Plan and Responses

COMMENTS TO DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND RESPONSES

Note: Comments are unedited.

Question: The PPP provides meaningful public involvement in Caltrans planning and programming processes. (multiple choice response). If you have additional general comments, please write them in provided space.

Comment

In general, I will believe it when I see it. In general, Caltrans staff generally doesn't follow the context sensitive guidelines that are in place at this time. Now there is a whole new program that staff will generally ignore as well. Good luck in implementing.

The group was very interesting and it explained why and how the Departments work and try to coordinate the plans.

Public media is almost totally absent; people in general have no idea of the issues or proposed solutions. There is no organized process for general feedback.

“Bureauspeak” or terms familiar to agency presenters, engineers or those trying to communicate projects is often a roadblock to getting the general public engaged or in support of the project. Understanding the laws, regulations and process used by...

I have not known how to be involved in decisions about my town, Forestville, which is controlled by Caltrans since Highway 116 runs through the center of town.

I have been to many a civic meeting where people's wishes are ignored and eminent domain abuses are being committed. I think it is tragic that people are left with the balance of their mortgages to file bankruptcy and face homelessness.

Spend money on streets, roads, and highways, stop wasting tax money on fancy lighting for the Coronado Bridge. Good highways and lighting for safety, not wasted resources.

The PPP seems to overlook existing mechanisms for public interaction with transportation-based programs. Examples would be DMV office, CHP and DFA Inspection Facilities. Using only new outreach methods limits the exposure of the PPP.

Response

Several written comments expressed frustration with the transportation planning process and what is perceived as a lack of opportunity for public participation. The Public Participation Process (PPP) for the California Transportation Plan (CTP) and the Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP) provides information to educate and guide the public through various key decision points in the CTP and FSTIP process. The PPP encourages individuals to become involved in the transportation planning process at the earliest possible stage, usually the local level. To facilitate this participation, links are provided to Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for all areas of the State. Individuals are also encouraged to contact their local Caltrans office to find out how they can continue to be involved in project implementation opportunities.

The PPP does not contain an exhaustive list of avenues for public interactions. Rather, it does specify various strategies that can be used to facilitate public outreach. Specific outlets such as DMV, CHP, etc. are not excluded and will certainly be considered where appropriate.

The final version of the PPP has been rewritten in a more conversational tone, eliminating much of the “bureauspeak” or technical jargon in an effort to make it more “user friendly.”

Question: The PPP sufficiently addresses the potential outreach methods that may be employed during the CTP and FSTIP public participation process.

Comment

Looks good.

Public hearings are staged in arcane language designed only for local boards who I suspect do not understand the underlying implications of [what] they are making decisions on.

I was not aware of the current public comment opportunity on the CTP and FSTIP until I came to the Caltrans website looking for something else. I've been actively involved in local Caltrans projects and plans, read three local newspapers and listen to local...

The PPP relies on only two, very narrow methods: a webpage and meeting with selected Focus Group members. You should consult District project development staff and HQ Environmental staff about their experience using many other methods.

I hope there will be opportunity for public participation in the decision as to whether to install traffic light or roundabout at #116 and Mirabel. I strongly favor a roundabout!

I have been sent around in circles with vague responses. I find this question insulting to my intelligence. I say fire the PPP and cut out the government fat.

Spend money on streets, roads and highways, stop wasting tax money on fancy lighting for the Coronado Bridge. Good highways and lighting for safety, not wasted resources.

Work for responsible people who are willing to work more if the project calls for it for a mission accomplished and getting the job done.

Please see prior comment. There are also existing stakeholder interactions that are not included, such as regular meetings between BTH Agency departments. ARB, CHP, and DMV hold regular stakeholder meetings with open agendas that can be used for

Response

Based on comments, there appears to be confusion between the methods used to determine how the public wants to be involved, proposed methods for the PPP, and local transportation project concerns.

In order to develop the PPP, Caltrans first had to ask the public how they wanted to be involved in the development of the CTP and FSTIP, and what strategies would be most effective for generating public input. To obtain the initial information, Caltrans worked with a consulting firm Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. and used several methods to interact with the public and solicit input. These included focus groups, web surveys, and interviews with stakeholder groups, etc. This was a separate process from the actual public outreach used to distribute the PPP.

Public outreach for the CTP and FSTIP is designed to educate and inform the general public as well as stakeholders. In order to reach a wide and diverse audience, public outreach for the PPP was conducted using Townsquare™ web technology to create a special Public Participation Process webpage. Invitations were distributed via e-mail blasts and letters to stakeholders and other interested parties soliciting comments on the proposed PPP. Copies of the PPP were also made available upon request.

The PPP emphasizes early involvement in the transportation planning process and provides contact information for the metropolitan planning organizations and regional transportation planning. These agencies often have citizen advisory groups and other avenues for public participation that allow interested parties to become involved in transportation planning much earlier in the process than the FSTIP.

Question: Given these methods, you will have sufficient opportunity for input to influence the final CTP or FSTIP (multiple-choice response). If you have additional general comments, please write them in provided space.

Comment

We probably provide too much opportunity for public input. The public rarely knows or understands what is “best” for them, especially relative to technical issues.

Looks Good!

How will this happen, Caltrans staff are very insulated from the public participation process.

Just happened to stumble on this survey.

Yes, I’m now one of the few who will! Your primary emphasis on the website appears to be an easy option that will be fun for staff, but will miss most of the public.

I hope so!

Nobody has given me the time or place to get up and speak on my constitutional property rights. An “informational meeting” with half truths are a smokescreen to the grand theft the government wants to commit.

Spend money on streets, roads and highways, stop wasting tax money on fancy lighting for the Coronado Bridge. Good highways and lighting for safety, not wasted resources.

True.

The PPP focus seems to put the impetus on the stakeholder to seek out opportunities for commenting and participating in the PPP. The approach should be reversed.

Response

Development of the PPP actively sought participation from stakeholders and the general public using a variety of techniques designed to reach the largest audience. Most participants in the focus groups were not previously aware of opportunities for public participation in the transportation planning process.

The PPP states that in order to achieve a more meaningful public involvement process, Caltrans will emphasize educating the public on how transportation decisions in California are made. Outreach activities may include community and stakeholder presentations, focus groups, and newsletters, all designed to educate the public about the transportation planning process. In addition, similar methods as well as e-mail blasts, website postings, and mailing lists may be employed to reach out to the public and notify interested parties of opportunities to comment on the CTP or FSTIP.

Question: The PPP adequately identifies the features needed for a successful Public Participation Website. If you have additional general comments, please write them in provided space.

Comment

Looks good!

I bet if you ask the general public, they would tell you that the local roads need more help than the state roadways. Unfortunately, there isn't sufficient funding for both and there is no compromising when funding is allocated.

No.

Consider including an "alert" function on the site. People who want to know when something is changed can set their "alert settings" to automatically send them an email outlining where the change was made so they can log on to the site and examine the...

Can't really tell what the website is supposed to do. Perhaps add a "blog" that lets everyone see all the comments would help. Add boxes prepared by SCAG, MTC, etc. to show their events and policies, not just links to their sites.

I don't know where else to communicate with you about this. But this survey is a great start.

The government is a deaf and greedy monster that will steal from the elderly, disabled, and working families with children. They don't care about our "public participation" when they want to steal our home.

Spend money on streets, roads, and highways, stop wasting tax money on fancy lighting for the Coronado Bridge. Good highways and lighting for safety, not wasted resources.

Response

These comments will be considered in developing the PPP website.

Question: PPP adequately address the involvement of groups that are traditionally underrepresented (such as low-income or minority). If you have additional general comments, please write them in provided space.

Comment

Again, probably provides more opportunity than is necessary.

Looks good.

It's hearsay.

Totally not. As we are involved in serving that population, there is no level of discussion of public policy regarding transportation models or priorities.

Tourism groups and organizations are often overlooked. They represent business like Chambers of Commerce do but they also represent the traveling public who may be impacted by projects.

It's only "adequate" if it actually works. No mention of non-English speakers (talk with District 4 and District 7 staff). The PPP effort here is vague, but still focused on the web and email even for this group, so most people will be missed.

Forestville has a significant lower-income population, which is probably one reason we are still unincorporated and controlled by Caltrans and the Sonoma County Supervisors and Planning Dept.

These issues are never considered as there are many who may own property but not have full command of the English language, as my Italian grandparent did not.

Spend money on street, roads and highways, stop wasting tax money on fancy lighting for the Coronado Bridge. Good highways and lighting for safety, not wasted resources.

It will affect the people who have places to be and that is everybody who takes the highway.

The PPP could better identify where these groups already congregate to seek information or interact with government. The PPP might also include groupings by transportation user type, such as commercial vehicle operator, daily commuter, or public transportation...

Response

Caltrans strives to provide opportunities for public comment on the CTP and FSTIP to all interested parties specified in federal regulations. Strategies for the PPP aimed at minority and low-income communities include more than just the PPP website. Examples include advertising in ethnic media, providing outreach materials at transit facilities, communicating through trusted community leaders, and going to their gathering places. Outreach strategies may also include providing language assistance to non-native speakers, providing documents in alternate formats to those with sensory disabilities, and providing disability assistance at workshops.

It should be noted that the draft PPP does not include the various contact lists used for the CTP and FSTIP. These lists do include representatives of the interested parties specified in the federal regulations including private providers of transportation, users of public transportation, and those traditionally underrepresented such as the disabled, minority, and low-income populations.

Questions: The following are general comments that are not associated with the previous open ended questions.

Comment

The site plan for this project does not specifically identify features for the post-construction period that will control stormwater on-site or prevent pollutants from non-point sources from entering and degrading surface or ground waters. The foremost method of reducing impacts to watersheds from urban development is “low Impact Development”(LID), the goals of which are maintaining a landscape functionally equivalent to predevelopment hydrologic conditions and minimal generation of nonpoint source pollutants. LID results in less surface runoff and potentially less impacts to receiving waters...We request you require these principles to be incorporated into the proposed project design. We request natural drainage patterns be maintained to the extent feasible. Future development plans should consider the following items: NPDES General Construction Stormwater Permit and/or a NPDES General Industrial Stormwater Permit. Please consider development features that span the drainage channels or allow for broad crossings. Design features of future development should be incorporated to ensure that runoff is not concentrated by the proposed project, thereby causing downstream erosion. If the proposed project impacts and alters drainages, then we request that the project be designed such that it would maintain existing drainage features and patterns to the extent feasible. Please inform project proponent to consult with Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Fish and Game, and the Water Board prior to issuing a grading permit.

Response

It appears this comment may have been submitted in error as it seems to address a specific project. The PPP does not include specific projects. However, it should be noted that 23 CFR 450.214 (i) states that the long-range statewide transportation plan shall be developed as appropriate in consultation with local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation. It continues by stating the long-range statewide transportation plan shall include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the long-range statewide transportation plan. Caltrans consulted with natural resources and environmental agencies during the development of the California Transportation Plan 2030 Addendum, including consulting and comparing plans, maps, and data. Caltrans will continue to consult with these natural resources and environmental agencies during the development of the next CTP update.

Question: The following comments were received from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Comment

Include consultation for mitigation activities with federal, State, tribal, wildlife, land management and regulatory agencies under Non-metropolitan Local Officials, Tribal Governments and Natural and Environmental Resource Agencies.

Involve resource and regulatory agencies in key decision-making milestones during state transportation plan development.

Involve resource and regulatory agencies in key decision-making milestones during state transportation improvement program (TIP) development/amendments when substantial project modifications or new projects not previously identified in the state transportation plan are expected to result in significant environmental or community impacts.

Provide a forum to update resource and regulatory agencies on how the state transportation plan and programs are affected by changes associated with other significant and related state efforts, such as the Goods Movement Action Plan and AB 32, including related Climate Action Team efforts.

Response

The focus of the next CTP update and follow-on updates will be to develop and support implementation of the consultation process. We also updated the draft PPP to address your concerns, and it now reads:

During the development of the next CTP update, we will continue to consult with federal, State, and tribal governments and wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies to identify environmental mitigation activities and areas with the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by our activities.

Caltrans consulted with key resources and regulatory agencies on the development of the CTP 2030 Addendum for SAFETEA-LU, and will continue to involve resources and regulatory agencies in the next full update of the CTP 2035. An important California Transportation Futures Symposium is scheduled for September 2–3, 2008 at UC Davis as the kickoff meeting for this CTP 2035 update. This symposium follows on the heels of the “Building Conservation into Infrastructure Planning” workshop conducted on June 18, 2008 at UC Davis.

In addition to the environmental process required for the development of all transportation projects, resource and regulatory agencies are provided opportunities to comment on other transportation-related documents such as the metropolitan long-range transportation plans, individual FTIPs, and the FSTIP. The MPOs and RTPAs also have processes related to consultation with resource and regulatory agencies, and coordination with resource agencies during the regional blueprint planning process look very promising.

During the California Transportation Futures Symposium, Caltrans will be taking input from a wide range of participants on how the transportation plan and programs are affected by other significant and related state efforts, such as the Goods Movement Action Plan and AB 32, including related Climate Action Team efforts. There will also be a variety of other opportunities to share ideas, such as websites, workshops, and newsletters.