



M O O R E I A C O F A N O G O L T S M A N , I N C .

Date: December 6, 2007

To: Leslie Snow, Sr. Transportation Planner, Division of Transportation Planning, California Department of Transportation

From: Nancy Kays, Sr. Project Manager

Subject: Report on Stakeholder Interviews

During October and November 2007, MIG undertook a phone survey of forty-one stakeholder organizations from around the State to assist Caltrans with the development of a SAFETEA-LU compliant Public Participation Plan for the California Transportation Plan (CTP) and the Federal State Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP). The interviews, which took about 15-20 minutes each, were intended to find out if these groups have been involved in the process of developing the CTP or FSTIP in the past, if they want to stay or become involved, and if so, what are the most effective methods to use for meaningful input.

A list of the groups that were contacted is found in Attachment A. In most cases, the interviewees were executive directors, or other high-level staff who have a direct interest in transportation. The list is representative, and not exhaustive, but it yielded a good number of valuable suggestions from a broad variety of stakeholders. Although we had great success reaching the stakeholders we had targeted, we had less success with some of the community groups (Lung Association, AARP, YMCA, Latino Issues Forum, NAACP and Urban League to be specific) despite numerous attempts. Given the full agendas of the staff from these groups, it is not too surprising that returning our phone calls was a low priority. What it also suggests is that the Public Participation Plan must include very proactive and tailored approaches to reaching these groups for their input on the CTP and FSTIP.

The following is a high-level summary of the suggestions that were received during the phone interviews. Attachment A is a list of the organizations that were interviewed and Attachment B is a consolidation of the interviews by stakeholder category. Transcriptions of the individual interviews are also available.

PLANNING • DESIGN • COMMUNICATIONS • MANAGEMENT

800 Hearst Avenue • Berkeley, CA 94710 • 510.845.7549 phone • 510.845.8750 fax
Offices in: Davis, CA • Pasadena, CA • Eugene, OR • Portland, OR • Raleigh, NC • Green Bay, WI

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

1. **Many of those interviewed were aware of the CTP or FSTIP, and some of the public agencies have been very involved in the process in the past.** All indicated an interest in being included in future outreach efforts and would need background education on the purpose of the documents and where they fit in the levels of transportation planning and funding in California.
2. **Caltrans needs to communicate the value of the CTP and FSTIP and what these documents signify not only to the stakeholder groups, but to general public.**
 - a. What kind of input does Caltrans seek on the documents?
 - b. What are the most relevant parts to comment upon?
 - c. What is the relevance to our specific interests and to the state as a whole?
 - d. Why is it important for us spend time and energy reviewing these documents?
 - e. Where and how in the process can we affect change in transportation decision making?
3. **There are a large number of hot-button issues for these stakeholder groups; public education and outreach activities should call out these issues and specify how the CTP and FSTIP would address them.** Some potential topics included:: the effects of the transportation system on environmental sustainability and climate change, effects on safety and health, maintenance and rehabilitation of the aging transportation infrastructure, how funding is distributed to rural and urban areas, goods movement, congestion relief, alternatives to driving alone (transit, walking, biking, and rideshare), funding of public transit operations, High Speed Rail, and the accessibility of the transportation system to those with disabilities. Call out the more interesting projects, or controversial projects to stimulate interest (or have other organizations do this).
4. **When developing lists of who to target for comment on the CTP and FSTIP, include all stakeholder groups and normally overlooked or under-represented communities.** Federal agencies noted that the stakeholder groups listed under the SAFETEA-LU regulations is a beginning, and that Caltrans needs to go beyond these regulations to include other groups that are or could be interested in the State's plans and programs. For example, groups that may not have been involved in the past include taxicab and shuttle companies, public health interests, youth and retiree organizations, recent immigrants, and non- or limited-

English speakers. Those from Indian reservations, low-income communities, rural communities, and disabled persons feel excluded from transportation decisions, and a special effort must be made to include them in meaningful ways and address their expressed needs. Although everyone should be invited to comment on the CTP and FSTIP, extra efforts should be made to involve representatives of these groups. It is asking a lot to expect taxi drivers to attend night meetings, for example, but their union representatives would probably be willing to participate.

5. **Most stakeholder groups have an organized network of information dissemination that can be leveraged by Caltrans.** By identifying the key umbrella organizations or coalitions, or the key people within organizations (“connectors”), Caltrans can send out information and invitations to comment on the CTP and FSTIP and the word will be spread very effectively. These connectors can also be used to collect comments to be given back to Caltrans. When asked about critical participants, the interviewees listed their members or staff, their Boards, their key committees, their partners, legislators, funders and many others, including the general public for some. The point is that by using connectors within stakeholder groups to disseminate information, Caltrans can reach critical participants.
6. **E-mail is the most common form of communication for stakeholder organizations, both internally and externally.** Nearly every interviewee said that e-mail, e-newsletters, and listservs have replaced or minimized paper-based communications. E-mail can be used to alert a large number of people very quickly about an issue, or to direct them to a website where there is further information. A danger mentioned by some of the interviewees is that e-mail can be over-used and ignored. However many said that if an issue is of interest, an e-mail can be easily forwarded by a person to others who are interested, especially if they are asked to spread the word.
7. **CTP and FSTIP information needs to be presented in user-friendly and accessible formats.** Many people noted that being presented with a large, dense document and asked to comment on it was daunting and should be avoided. It is important to consider that the time of stakeholders and the public is valuable, and they will need to have important information from the documents called out in some type of summary format. One suggestion was that the website version of the FSTIP, for example, include a searchable GIS database of projects, so that people can easily see the descriptions, costs, and timelines for their local projects. Accessible formats would include using HTML format that can be read by software for the sight-impaired, meetings that offer

translation services for non-English speakers, sign-language interpretation services for the hearing-impaired, and meeting locations that are accessible to wheelchairs and are near public transit. Meetings should also be held in public locations that are open and well-known, such as community centers and library rooms.

8. **Caltrans needs to take the chance of letting people engage in a meaningful way with the CTP and FSTIP.** A number of interviewees commented that it would go a long way with many people if Caltrans would accept changes to these documents that are the result of public comment, or at least acknowledge that the comments are heard and there is a commitment to address them.
9. **There was some difference of opinion on when to obtain input from stakeholders and the public.** Some think that it is important to get input early in the process when a plan or program can be shaped, and other think that there needs to be a plan or program first so that it can be commented upon, but not so late that there is no chance to make changes.
10. **The Public Participation Plan should include a toolbox of methods that is tailored for different groups.** The methods used for different groups should depend on their needs and wants, as well as on how they typically receive information and engage in public discussions. For example, e-mail doesn't work for groups without computers or where they don't use a lot of written materials. Radio and personal contacts may work better for these groups. A number of people said that the more outreach the better. More information on what methods work best with which groups can be found in Attachment B.
11. **Caltrans should avoid passive outreach methods** such as traditional public hearings (especially if it's only one covering the entire state, or if the hearing goes too long), announcements that appear only on the website, paid newspaper ads, flyers that sit on tables, and information-only workshops. Some interviewees also mentioned that mailed newsletters aren't cost-effective.
12. **People mentioned surveys as powerful tools, but that they need to be well-designed and used sparingly.** Some people said they don't really like surveys -- "get too many of them"-- or find them frustrating because of the limited choices they present. A number of people said that surveys (either phone or e-mail) can be very helpful in finding out about specific issues, though.

13. **Make websites user-friendly.** Make sure the information on the CTP and FSTIP is easy to find, and not buried on the website. Internet users don't usually have a lot of patience in navigating a website to look for something specific, and will easily give up if faced with barriers. When sending an e-mail that tells of a website link, a PDF of the document can also be attached if that is more convenient for people to access.
14. **Use public meetings or workshops,** as long as they include enough background information, invite attendees to participate, and aren't used only to disseminate information. Many people said that the most valuable form of public engagement is to discuss issues with others in some type of public meeting, where there is the opportunity to listen to others, express one's own opinion, and see where the consensus lies. These kinds of meetings build community as well as provide feedback to the sponsors. One person said that it is important not to over-structure a meeting at the beginning, and allow people to more easily express themselves. Also, information given in workshops needs to be relevant to the local area.
15. **Make presentations to local or statewide stakeholder groups.** Having a captive audience guarantees feedback.
16. **Develop a relationship with the press.** Use press releases and work with knowledgeable reporters who can provide good information to the public through interesting stories. Meet with editorial boards of major newspapers.
17. **Provide feedback and follow-up to all who participated,** letting them know the results of their comments and the next steps in the process.
18. **Consider using new high-tech methods, such as webinars and webcasts** instead of meetings. These can incorporate e-mailed or phoned-in comments and questions.
19. **Model the Public Participation Plan after MTC's or SCAG's.** These plans have been adopted and found to comply with SAFETEA-LU.
20. **A successful outreach process can be measured by the process and the product,** including
 - a. whether or not all members of the public and stakeholder groups had an opportunity to participate in some way,
 - b. that everyone involved was respected and feels they had a voice,
 - c. by the level of understanding of the issues,
 - d. by Caltrans having responded to all comments, and
 - e. by satisfaction with the final product.

Interviewees generally thought that the number of attendees at meetings and the number of comments made, while interesting, weren't particularly informative measures.

ATTACHMENT A
LIST OF INTERVIEWED STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS

Local, Regional, State and Federal Agencies and Organizations

Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration
State Department of Water Resources
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
State Historic Preservation (SHIPO)
Regional Council of Rural Counties
Amador County Transportation Commission
Regional Transportation Planning Agency Group
Caltrans District 12
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
California League of Cities
City of San Jose Public Works
Shasta County Public Works

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

California Chamber of Commerce
California Walks
WalkSacramento
California Bicycle Coalition
San Diego Bike Coalition

Community and Environmental Groups

Sierra Club – San Diego
Sierra Club – Bay Region
Planning and Conservation League
Housing California
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Caltrans Native American Advisory Committee

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

Port of Los Angeles
California Highway Patrol
Safety Center – Sacramento
California Transit Association
California Association for Coordinated Transportation (CalACT)
The California Automobile Association

Representatives of Public Transportation Employees

Amalgamated Transit Union
United Taxicab Workers, San Francisco

Freight Shippers

Network Public Affairs (maritime shipping consultants)
California Trucking Association
California Aviation Alliance

Private Providers of Transportation

Super Shuttle
MV Transportation, SF Bay Area

Representatives of Users of Public Transportation

The Transit Coalition (Los Angeles)
San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee

Representatives of the Disabled

Californians for Disability Rights
Protection and Advocacy, Inc.

**ATTACHMENT B
CONSOLIDATED ANSWERS TO
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. *What is your knowledge of the CTP and FSTIP? Have you participated in before in these planning processes? Do you wish to provide input on this plan and program? How much education would be needed about them?*

Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies and Organizations

Knowledge of the CTP and FSTIP and the processes used to develop them varied a lot with this group. Some have participated in the past, and some have never participated. All are interested in either staying or becoming involved, but they need education. Some of the agencies have recently started formally coordinating with Caltrans because they feel it is in their best interest. Some would like to be notified, even if they don't get actively involved. A regional agency representative commented that the general public definitely needs education because people perceive that the state will take care of all transportation needs without local financial contributions.

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

These groups have some familiarity, but would need education about the CTP and FSTIP. They want to be involved, but one of the pedestrian group executive directors questioned the effectiveness of the CTP.

Representatives of Public Transportation Employees

The groups don't have any knowledge of the CTP or the FSTIP, but they've been actively involved at either the county or regional level in transportation planning. They'd like to be involved at the statewide level.

Representatives of Private Transportation Providers

These groups haven't had any involvement in the CTP and FSTIP in the past, but they are interested and would like education. They believe they bring a good perspective from working with many different clients.

Users of Public Transit

Haven't been involved, would like to be and would need education.

Representatives of the Disabled

Have heard of it through the CalACT organization, want to be involved. One organization would have its issue team look at the documents first. It is important that involvement be possible in accessible formats, locations and with conferencing available. Caltrans should also contact consumer groups such as the People First groups. The education should state why it is important for someone with disabilities to review the plan.

Freight Shippers

Have some knowledge and have commented in the past, and are very interested in commenting in the future. Are interested in the larger view in relation to their interests. It would be particularly interesting for their

constituents to know the relationship between levels of plans, who's approving the funding, and what the consensus is.

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This varied between the agencies. The Port has been very involved, but the others have had limited knowledge and involvement. They would like to participate and would need education.

Community and Environmental Groups

Some of these groups have been involved in the past, but all are interested in commenting and would need education.

2. *What are the hot-button issues for your constituency? What are the topics that really engage people?*

Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies and Organizations

For the federal and state agencies, the list includes major climate change, environmental, water, growth, land use and transportation as well as the linkages between many of these issues that need to be addressed in planning for the future. The other set of issues were about the aging infrastructure and how to pay for maintenance, rehabilitation, and new facilities. Another is whether rural and urban areas receive a fair share of funding and attention from Caltrans.

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

For the California Chamber of Commerce, the biggest issue is goods movement and the adequacy of the infrastructure, funding and how it's raised. They would like to see removal of barriers, such as litigation. The walking organizations are interested in promoting that mode, development of complete streets, safety, speed management, design and enforcement, and funding. The biking organizations are concerned primarily with safety and making sure that biking is viable and not degraded by other projects that favor vehicular traffic. Bicycle planning doesn't tend to energize local biking groups.

Representatives of Public Transportation Employees

Funding of public transit, operations and expansion, improvements to transit, especially in suburban areas. Taxis are public transit, but are not usually seen that way. They should have some of the privileges of transit, such as use of HOV lanes. Road maintenance is also an issue.

Representatives of Private Transportation Providers

Traffic congestion (particularly San Francisco and Los Angeles), use of HOV lanes when vehicles are empty, road quality. Generally, private providers feel that they offer a public transit service, but are treated as private vehicles on HOV lanes and at airports.

Representatives of Users of Public Transit

For the groups interviewed, the issue is rail, at different levels. They want better performance out of existing systems, and additions of service throughout the state.

Representatives of the Disabled

The accessibility of the transportation system to people with physical, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities. Availability of paratransit, and its rules. More public transit for everyone.

Freight Shippers

Goods movement capacity (bridges, rail, freeway, truck lanes, terminal access routes, truck parking and rest areas), regulation (e.g. CARB, CEQA), and tolls. For aviation, it's development of inappropriate land uses around airports.

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

Air quality, funding, safety, ADA enforcement and interpretation, congestion relief, automated enforcement, keeping the road system running smoothly, offering alternative modes to driving.

Community and Environmental Groups

Each group has interests related to its purpose, such as environmental sustainability, fighting sprawl and pollution, social equity, promoting alternatives to driving, health related to transportation, housing for low-income and homeless persons, safety.

3. *How do people get their information? What methods have they come to rely upon? Could Caltrans use your newsletter or website for outreach to your constituents? Would you be willing to sue your e-mail list to send out information about the CTP and FTSIP comment periods?*

Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies and Organizations

The larger state and federal agencies disseminate information internally mainly through e-mail. There is usually a transportation coordinator at the highest level who acts as a clearinghouse for information and comments that go in and out of the agency, communicating with field offices or branches. Websites are also used for posting information and documents. Associations such as CSAC or League of Cities with many members often use extensive e-mail lists of contacts for spreading the word, either through e-mail alerts or regular e-newsletters or listservs. Sometimes the e-mail lists are organized into sub-lists depending on the topic area. Some organizations also use phone trees. The regional and local agencies use the Internet extensively, but because they often communicate with the public about specific projects, they also hold public meetings, send out flyers and newsletters, and attend the meetings of civic groups to provide information on transportation projects or local plans. For big projects, the media is often a good way to educate the public and generate interest. Everyone interviewed for this project indicated a willingness to allow Caltrans to use their e-newsletters, print materials, and other means, to publicize the CTP and FSTIP and announce comment periods.

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

Word of mouth, checking websites, print and e-newsletters, e-mail lists, letters, notices, big postcards about events, media stories (for general public). All groups are willing to use their lists to send out information. If Bike Club leaders hear about something, they will spread the word.

Representatives of Public Transportation Employees

E-mail, newsletter, website.

Representatives of Private Transportation Providers

E-mail and e-newsletters. Airports have names and addresses of providers (or the PUC does). For specialized transportation providers, CalACT would be a good avenue.

Users of Public Transit

Electronic newsletters, websites, working with partner organizations.

Representatives of the Disabled

Newspapers, word-of-mouth networking, e-mail, phone, meetings, listservs.

Freight Shippers

Freight industry associations – meetings, e-mails, websites, magazines. Use leadership to get the word out.

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

Agencies tend to have e-mail distribution lists in a very structured way, as well as e-newsletters. People at the Port get their information through the MPO and RTPAs. CHP and the Safety Center primarily uses paper communications. The associations use a lot of e-mail blasts and newsletters. AAA communicates through magazines, letters, website, some surveys on policies, and e-mails. All of these groups are happy to work with Caltrans to spread the word.

Community and Environmental Groups

Public meetings, e-mail alerts and listservs, websites, newsletters, committee announcements, conferences, regional workshops

4. *Whose participation is critical? How do you recommend we get them involved?*

Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies and Organizations

The federal transportation agencies want to see Caltrans meet the SAFETEA-LU regulations about groups to include but also go beyond the regulations by including other groups that are or could be interested. FTA staff talked about involving the general public in a meaningful way, with presentation of the plans and programs in user-friendly formats such as a website that allows people to search their own local area for future planned or programmed projects. They suggested using non-traditional media such as cable TV and Internet to solicit interest, with a message of “this is why you should care.” For U.S. Fish & Wildlife, the critical parties are simply field office transportation coordinators. Some agencies listed critical stakeholder groups and elected officials. Organizations that have a

membership, such as League of Cities, have boards and committees that are critical stakeholders. Local agencies consider the general public, neighborhood groups and key stakeholder categories such as business and environmental groups to be critical. The comment was made that the way to get all of these groups involved is to craft key messages that convince people that they need to be involved, and then list the specific reasons.

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

The Boards and membership of their organizations and partner organizations. Usually there is a hard core group of interested persons in each group.

Sierra Club

The participation of the general public at all levels is critical, particularly those who are most impacted or who have been underrepresented in the past.

Representatives of Public Transportation Employees

For the California Amalgamated Transit Union, the 30-40 statewide leaders are the critical ones.

Representatives of Private Transportation Providers

MV Transportation – Operational VPs in the regions.

Users of Public Transit

Depending on the issue – politicians, communities, business, the general public.

Representatives of the Disabled

People with disabilities and the general public, transit providers, legislators, funders, legal rights agencies, other like organizations

Freight Shippers

Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, Waterfront Coalition, railroads. Trucking Association – their membership (geographic areas, policy committees, Board). Aviation Alliance – carriers at commercial airports, local city and county lawmakers, CSAC.

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

Port engineering staff, SCAG, MTA, CHP Headquarters with help from regional offices, larger companies that are members of Safety Center, possibly Board of Directors. CTA says management and appropriate staff at their member agencies, CalACT says key players such as active Board members from larger transit agencies, ADA Coordinators, transit managers. AAA says businesses, motoring public, Board of Directors for the region, transportation committee, Public Affairs Dept. staff.

Community and Environmental Groups

Usually these groups have a policy committee or a group that can speak for the membership as a whole. Some involve only those who would be interested, or senior staff, or regional agency liaisons.

5. Based on past experience, what public involvement methods work well, and what methods did not deliver as expected? How do people provide input or engage in the process?

Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies and Organizations

Avoid passive methods such as:

- Traditional public hearings announced in the newspaper. These are a waste of time because they attract few people, and they are usually the same people.
- Burying information on a website. Don't send people to a website and expect them to find something. Provide a PDF version of the document so it is easily accessible.

Good methods are proactive ones, including:

- Developing extensive e-mail lists (or using the lists of others) to send out messages to those likely to be interested. E-mail should be used judiciously, but if messages are well-written, relevant, and provoke interest, people will forward them to others.
- Presentations to scheduled meetings of local civic groups or statewide organizations.
- User-friendly websites. Websites are somewhat problematical because even though they can be very well-designed and informative, they are still a passive form of delivering information and may be underutilized unless people know about them and are motivated to seek them out. However, one agency had a good experience with a web survey that was announced on a listserv.
- Local meetings or workshops where people are given very specific information about their area and asked to provide their input, both verbally and in comment forms.
- Press releases, and better yet, develop a good relationship with a reporter who is knowledgeable and can help get the word out.
- Make it real – explain to people what this document is for, what happens to it when it's completed, what's at stake, and why they should care about it. How is their local area going to benefit? How much funding are they going to get?
- Use a variety of communication methods – flyers, postcards, ads, workshops, presentations, website, listservs, e-mails, newsletters, radio, TV, newspapers.
- Be sure to go to those areas that are traditionally not visited by Caltrans – such as rural areas, inner city, or ethnic communities.

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

Avoid:

- Just "fulfilling requirements."
- Typical hearing notices.
- Paid advertising.

- A generic plan for public participation – it won't work for everyone and will not amount to true public participation

Good methods:

- The more opportunities the better
- Involvement that actually seeks public input as opposed to an audience. Take the chance of actually letting people engage in the process and impact the result.
- Public workshops with dialog and feedback (held at convenient times, such as during the day and early evening, in multiple locations, with plenty of advance notice). Let people see where the consensus is possible and then reflect it in the documents. These help build community as well as get involvement.
- On-line surveys and focus groups may work
- Newspaper ads/stories
- Verbal announcements at MPO/RTPA meetings
- Use key contacts in organizations to spread the word to others who are interested
- Hire/contract with individuals to spread the word to their constituencies
- Develop a strong Internet presence, especially good for engaging young people
- Provide feedback and follow-up

Representatives of Public Transportation Employees

Avoid:

- Surveys – people get too many of them

Good Methods:

- Public meetings where you interact with others, with adequate notice to interested parties
- Presentations to their statewide group

Representatives of Private Transportation Providers

Avoid:

- Sending someone to a large website and expect them to navigate

Good Methods:

- Send out collateral material on the plans, saying why it is important for them to comment
- Hold workshops

Users of Public Transit

Avoid:

- Don't just put out a flyer and expect it to be read.
- Very long public meetings where people get tired and go home before testifying

Good Methods:

- Tabling, to meet people, distribute newsletters.
- Public meetings
- Meetings with editorial boards of media

- Continue to do what is being done

Representatives of the Disabled

Avoid:

- In meetings, giving people too few options to choose from (don't overplan at the beginning)
- Presentations without the ability to provide feedback
- Surveys with limited choices sometimes frustrate people

Good Methods:

- Internet is #1, but must be accessible to the sight-impaired (all documents in PDF and HTML).
- Having documents available immediately in accessible formats would go a long way.
- Signing at meetings needs to be available to people who are hearing impaired.
- Focus groups seem to work best
- Surveys and web surveys good if well-designed
- Make special efforts to go to group facilities
- When meetings are held, make sure that the disability community is HEARD.
- Face-to-face meetings best when there is feedback and back-and-forth (or conference call)
- Go to where people are, make special efforts to go to group facilities

Freight Shippers

Avoid:

- Mailed newsletters aren't cost-effective
- Single meetings (need to be held in multiple locations around the state)

Good Methods:

- Websites
- Get on agendas of established stakeholder groups
- Workshops are good if noticed effectively, transit accessible
- Meetings need to be well-designed, can attract people who just want to shout
- Any method works with enough time and resources
- Some promising new web-based methods, such as web-casting with e-mailed questions, webinars with PowerPoints
- Promote participation
- E-mail
- Relationships with agencies

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

Avoid:

- Mailings, they are too expensive
- Public hearings have very little participation (except at regional level, the regions are experts on this)

Good Methods:

- Meetings need to be in the evening to attract the public
- Have something for people to react to for better input
- Focus groups good for specific issues
- Online surveys could work
- Telephone surveys are good for information, they are more structured
- One-on-one meetings, group meetings are good
- Paid focus groups. Gift cards in addition to food.

Community and Environmental Groups

Avoid:

- E-mail doesn't work for groups without computers or where reading is not done. Radio and personal contacts should be used.
- "Fulfilling a requirement" doesn't work well
- Need to take the chance of actually letting people engage in the process and impact the result.
- Inadequate to have the public participation after the decisions have been made, projects selected, money allocated and a nearly final draft produced.
- Not enough to mail or e-mail people. Explain why it is important for them to get involved, link issues to people.
- General, non-personalized campaigns (although e-mail works)

Good Methods:

- Provide information pertinent to daily issues to get the highest involvement (e.g. congestion, pollution)
- Use a combination of methods for the greatest effect.
- Newspaper stories
- Verbal announcements at MPO/RTPA meetings
- ID people with key contacts in key groups, develop individual plans, and then pay them to implement (or non-profits could implement). A generic plan won't work for everyone.
- Announcements on public transit
- Forums in multiple locations at convenient times, with multiple language options and with good advance notice
- Pay people to attend forums (or offset their costs)
- Include every type of stakeholder (has extensive list)
- Surveys OK if statistically valid and culturally/economically appropriate.
- On-line polls OK if widely advertised/promoted
- Interactive involvement is necessary
- Can have different levels of involvement – at goal setting, programmatic choices, and different levels of time requirements
- If Caltrans wants genuine involvement, need to highlight the differences in the plan or program and make it compelling to stimulate interest and involvement. Use teaser questions. Non-profits can fill that function (government can't do it).

- Direct communication by phone is more effective.
- Anything personalized has a higher response rate; one-on-one with peers
- Getting people together to discuss; it coalesces the energy.
- With Native American community, agencies are looked on with suspicion and meetings are usually not well-attended (past experiences have taught that situations are studied but then nothing comes of it). Best approach – talk with Caltrans Native American Advisory Committee and give them structured questions to discuss.

6. *What are your measures of success for public participation?*

Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies and Organizations

Agencies said that a successful public participation process could be measured by:

- Giving all identified parties the chance to weigh in on the FTP or FSTIP.
- Actively involving all stakeholders, or at least the major ones or those who represent many others
- The number of people who participate, or the number of comments, website hits
- The diversity of people who participate
- The types of comments – are they constructive, valuable? Were the comments addressed?
- Conducting a follow-up satisfaction survey to measure whether people understood the documents and if they had a chance to comment.
- An increase in the level of understanding of electeds, stakeholders, and the public
- That the differences between areas are acknowledged (for example, rural areas)

Success for public participation can also be measured by the plan or program itself:

- How much opposition there is to the document in its final form?
- Whether or not the plan/program is approved.
- Tracking implementation progress.

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

- The ability to engage in multiple ways, particularly those that involve sharing, conversation, and feedback
- Whether the public has actually participated and had a voice that was reflected in the plan
- If a meaningful plan results
- If people have heard of the CTP
- If there is active participation
- If there's a broad representation of interests that can leaven the conversation.

- If I know that something came of my participation – does the plan reflect my concerns?

Users of Public Transit

- Participation
- When people don't whine and complain
- What's said on websites

Representatives of the Disabled

- Coming from a meeting feeling you were heard
- Hearing statements of respect
- Making progress on needs
- If you really got public input from people with disabilities

Freight Shippers

- Count number of participants, articles in newspaper, public comments
- Projects that can be supported by our association
- That people understand the issues

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

- That we've already thought of all of the major issues
- Level of participation is superficial and not particularly valuable
- A good response rate
- That all association members are knowledgeable and engaged on the issues
- When partnerships are formed to get things done

Community and Environmental Groups

- Involvement that actually seeks public input, gives people the opportunity to work with problems and puts forward solutions/and measures the effectiveness of those solutions
- Whether the public has actually participated and had a voice in the planning and programming of funding
- Number of responses, number of people who turn out for events.
- If changes can be made in the drafts that have been put forward. Participation is more valuable after there's a plan to react to.
- If a plan lays out what is allowed, what is not allowed, and uses assurances.
- If people other than professionals come to meetings
- If enough information is provided to the public for them to really understand and become engaged.
- Native American – if they really have a voice
- Meaningful involvement

7. Do you have anything else to add that will help Caltrans develop its public participation plan?

Federal, State, Regional, and Local Agencies and Organizations

- Caltrans needs to be clear and specific about what kind of input is desired.

- People's time is valuable, they need to be shown the relevant information.
- How will the Public Participation Plan be used, beyond the CTP or FSTIP? How will amendments be handled?
- Use MTC's or SCAG's Public Participation Plans as models, they are adopted and have been approved by the federal agencies as SAFETEA-LU compliant.
- Don't expect agencies to attend a lot of planning meetings. They don't have enough staff time. Instead, give them some options to comment on.
- Hiring a neutral facilitation consulting firm really helped develop our plan – it takes away the charge of bias.

Local Business, Pedestrian and Bicycle Advocacy and User Groups

- Caltrans needs to be clear on what it wants
- Caltrans should learn in advance what the hot issues are so it can focus the conversation and not have to spend time in the meeting identifying issues that everyone knows about

Users of Public Transit

- Caltrans documents are boring, the content must be interesting and relevant. Rail gets people excited.

Representatives of the Disabled

- Make sure topics are at right level for the public, not at a "policy wonk" level.
- Make information relevant.
- Ratchet down the level of information so it is relevant to pocketbook, future of children.

Freight Shippers

- Biggest challenge for Caltrans is "what are you taking comments on?" It's very confusing to the public and there is "stakeholder fatigue," especially at the state level.
- Need to know what is the relevance of these documents – need to structure them, distinguish them from other plans and programs. What level of input is there at the state level?
- Do a multi-lingual brochure – here's why you should care. Show how the priorities are changing at the state level.

Affected Public Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

- Caltrans needs more quality assurance with RTPAs and MPOs entering of project data (from the Port of LA)
- Be sure to get major stakeholder involvement, e.g. AAA
- Look to the regions and make the plans locally relevant.

Community and Environmental Groups

- Environmental justice and transportation equity is an area overlooked.
- It's good if Caltrans current leadership is really trying to get public engagement
- Caltrans should call out the relevant information, target its outreach, synthesize plans and programs