

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

for the

South Coast 101 HOV Project

Project Development Team Working Copy

February 2009



*Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) Phase
and Coastal Development Permitting*



PURPOSE

The purpose of this Stakeholder Involvement Plan is to outline a framework and methodology -- for project team use -- in involving stakeholders in the development of the South Coast 101 HOV Project. This plan covers the Project approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase of the project, which includes environmental clearance and preliminary engineering. This plan also addresses local permitting agency conceptual review and approval, including coastal development permitting.

Beyond meeting California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) legal requirements for public involvement, this plan delineates an approach for early issue identification and sustained awareness of the project among the surrounding community including members of the public, influential community members, policymakers, regulatory agencies, local agencies, and others.

For a project that stretches across multiple communities, each with unique characteristics and local expectations related to this corridor, a tailored engagement approach involving a range of stakeholders is key to ensuring that the diverse voices in the corridor are heard and addressed throughout the project development process. Early and meaningful engagement of stakeholders provides project staff with timely and effective project input.

BACKGROUND

Consideration for widening of Route 101 from the Ventura County line to Goleta has been a topic of discussion for many decades, starting in the early 1960s. By the late 1980s, over \$70 million in STIP funds and \$15 million in Measure D funds had been programmed for widening south of Milpas Street. In March 1993, Caltrans released a draft environmental document to add one lane in each direction between the Santa Barbara/Ventura County line and Milpas Street in the City of Santa Barbara. The plan was met with substantial community opposition that ended further development of the programmed project to widen the highway.

A series of studies sponsored by SBCAG, including the *Highway 101 Alternatives Study* (1995) and *The South Coast Highway 101 Deficiency Plan* (2002), assessed options for relieving congestion in the corridor without the need for freeway widening. *The South Coast Highway 101 Deficiency Plan* identified the problems on the highway and proposed short and long-term strategies aimed at improving transit, managing travel demand, and providing transportation system enhancements.

Consequently, as a result of the 101 Deficiency Plan, in 2002, SBCAG and the local cities adopted 34 short-term projects aimed at correcting operational deficiencies on both the mainline and adjacent roads. The plan further qualified that these improvements did not address long-term freeway congestion and that further action on a community-

wide basis would be required to alleviate the projected increases in traffic volumes and ensuing decrease in Level of Service (LOS) along the corridor. One of the actions required from the *101 Deficiency Plan* was to develop an Implementation Plan for the adopted projects. The 101 Implementation Plan began in 2004 and evolved into what is now called *101 in Motion*.

101 In Motion had the goal of bringing all the communities together to agree on a longer term (20- to 40-year) plan that addressed congestion along the Route 101 corridor. The *101 In Motion* process, which involved staff participation from area cities, SB County and the Metropolitan Transit District, along with local decision makers and members of the public, assessed a wide range of improvement approaches and strategies. Improvement packages were evaluated based on numerous quantitative and qualitative criteria.

The consensus recommendation for implementation arising out of the *101 in Motion* process included a number of strategies, but the primary recommendation was “add a lane and a train” to address commuter and goods movement needs between the Ventura County line and the City of Santa Barbara. Furthermore, the recommendation specifically defined the added lane to be a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane. The *101 In Motion* consensus recommendations were unanimously approved by the SBCAG Board in October 2005.

An opportunity to fund a segment of the “add a lane” portion of the *101 in Motion* recommendation came as a result of Proposition 1B passed by the California voters in 2006. With the successful passage of Proposition 1B, funding for key transportation corridors was approved, and Caltrans Districts 5 and 7, along with SBCAG and VCTC joined efforts to seek funding for an HOV lane addition / facility widening project that extended from Mussel Shoals (Ventura County) to Carpinteria Creek. Proposition 1B also provided a one-time augmentation in state gas tax dollars, from which SBCAG programmed environmental phase funding for the South Coast 101 HOV project.

These two projects, in conjunction with Milpas to Hot Springs Improvement project (05-44780_) and the Linden & Casitas Pass Interchanges project (05-4482U_), will provide a continuous six-lane segment on Route 101 from the City of Ventura through the City of Goleta. This combination of projects will significantly reduce existing and forecasted congestion and delay in the corridor particularly during the peak traffic hours.

Caltrans District 5 completed a Project Study Report in February 2007 for the South Coast 101 HOV project. PA&ED phase work on the project began in July 2007.

For many years a wide range of stakeholders with varying interests along this corridor have consistently expressed a strong desire to be involved in the planning, design and decision-making associated with improvements to Route 101. As such, this Stakeholder Involvement Plan provides the project team and key partners with a blueprint and multi-pronged approach to educate and engage a range of stakeholders along the corridor throughout the project development process.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT GOALS

Overall, the goal of stakeholder involvement for the project is to establish a firm foundation of support and sustained community acceptance and understanding. This approach is designed to pave the way for critical steps in the project development process, including environmental clearance and securing applicable permits. To do so, this approach will strive to achieve these goals:

- Engage stakeholders regarding the project history, its context in the larger corridor, its relation to other projects, and the project's guiding principles.
- Identify stakeholders, their level of project knowledge, and priority project related issues.
- Meet CEQA and NEPA requirements for public involvement as part of the environmental clearance process.
- Facilitate hands-on stakeholder involvement opportunities throughout the project development process that support environmental, concept development, local and coastal agency permitting, and design efforts.
- Educate stakeholders about project opportunities and trade-offs with meaningful and illustrative data and imagery whenever possible that build stakeholders' confidence in the project's outcomes.
- Identify areas where stakeholder input can make a difference as well as clarify areas where little flexibility for change exists.
- Build stakeholders' commitment at key project decision points; continue forward momentum and reduce surprises and rework for the project team.
- Retain credibility and trust in the project team and sponsors.
- Lay foundation for cooperative relationships that will continue through project development, including the construction phase.
- Establish and retain a project partnering relationship between the County of Santa Barbara, the City of Carpinteria, the City of Santa Barbara, SBCAG, and the State Department of Transportation.

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

While the public at large is an important stakeholder group, focusing on the public's general information and involvement needs alone would limit the project's ability to provide targeted and meaningful information to the many subgroups of stakeholders along the corridor. Many of these stakeholders are directly impacted by the project, and/or have significant influence in the decision-making steps that will drive the project's timeline and outcomes.

Different stakeholders have specialized issues and information needs, as well as varying preferences for frequency, depth and types of involvement in the project. In the development of this plan, known stakeholders were categorized based on their general representation and constituencies. More in-depth categorization based on issues and informational needs can be conducted throughout the process.

Public Agencies and Commissions

(1)=Project Development Team Member; (2)=Project/Permit Approval Authority

- Air Pollution Control District
- Army Corps of Engineers⁽²⁾
- California Coastal Commission⁽²⁾
- California Department of Fish and Game⁽²⁾
- California Highway Patrol
- California Office of Historic Preservation⁽²⁾
- California Public Utilities Commission
- California Transportation Commission⁽²⁾
- Caltrans District 5⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾
- Caltrans District 7
- City of Carpinteria⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾
- Carpinteria-Summerland Fire District
- City of Santa Barbara⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾
- County of Santa Barbara⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾
- County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾
- Elected officials—Federal
- Elected officials—State
- Federal Emergency Management Agency⁽²⁾
- Federal Highways Administration⁽²⁾
- Metropolitan Transit District
- Montecito Fire Protection District
- Montecito Water District
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Regional Water Quality Control Board⁽²⁾
- Santa Barbara City College
- Santa Barbara County Association of Governments⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾
- Santa Barbara Airport
- United States Fish and Wildlife
- University of California Santa Barbara

Community- and Interest-Based Organizations

- Amtrak
- Allied Neighborhood Association
- American Medical Response
- Alliance for Equitable Regional Transportation (ASERT)
- California Truckers Association
- Carpinteria Chamber of Commerce
- Carpinteria School District
- Carpinteria Valley Association
- Cars Are Basic
- Chumash
- Citizens Planning Association
- Coalition of Labor, Agriculture & Business (COLAB)
- C.O.A.S.T
- Coastal Conservancy
- Coast Village Business Association
- Community Environmental Council
- Crane School
- Environmental Defense Center
- Fix101.org
- Greenhouse Growers
- Goleta Chamber of Commerce
- Laguna Blanca
- League of Women Voters
- Montecito Association
- Montecito County Club
- Montecito School District Heal the Ocean
- Pearl Chase Society
- Pueblo
- Regional Legislative Alliance
- Sandyland Cove Homeowners Association
- Sandyland Protective Association
- Santa Barbara Audubon Society
- Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition
- Santa Barbara Channel Keeper
- Santa Barbara Community Action Network
- Santa Barbara Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Santa Barbara County Board of Realtors
- Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association
- Santa Barbara Industrial Association
- Santa Barbara Land Trust
- Santa Barbara Regional Chamber
- Santa Barbara Safe Streets
- Santa Barbara Zoo
- Sierra Club
- Southern California Automobile Club
- Summerland Homeowners Association
- Surfrider Foundation
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Utilities (phone, water, electricity, etc.)
- Urban Creeks Council
- Westmont College

INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholder involvement and their respective information needs should be carefully considered given their history with the project, concerns, and desired outcomes. The following structure outlines key project related groups and/or activities that can be integrated into the project development process to facilitate quality stakeholder involvement while addressing project stakeholder involvement goals.

Project Development Team (PDT)

Stakeholders: Interdisciplinary team made up of technical and management staff from Caltrans District 5, SBCAG, County of Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara, and City of Carpinteria.

Role: Guide the course of studies required to establish and evaluate a range of alternatives. Guide project delivery and deliver a project that meets customer needs.

Public Involvement Sub-Committee to the PDT

Stakeholders: Technical staff from Caltrans District 5, SBCAG, County of Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara, and City of Carpinteria.

Role: Guide project staff in designing stakeholder and public involvement activities with the group's collective knowledge of the corridor, resources and opportunities for extended outreach. Plan for outreach activities and review and refine outreach materials.

Stakeholder/Group Interviews

Stakeholders: Select policymakers, executive staff, and community leaders with in-depth and unique knowledge of corridor communities and stakeholders.

Role: Learn about the project and provide the project team with new information about the range of stakeholders who should be involved in the process, their key issues related to the project, and recommendations for how to communicate and involve them.

Focus Review Groups

Stakeholders: Informed and influential community and interest-based stakeholders. Members could also include representatives of architectural review and design review boards from local communities. Support by PDT member agency staff.

Role: Provide input and potential solutions on detailed design related issues early in the project development process, providing the project team with

an opportunity to refine the alternatives, enhance their understanding of key stakeholders' values and informational needs, and develop education materials that address these values and needs. Each group would come together for one to three working sessions to provide local input about design challenges identified in the stakeholder group interviews and public scoping meetings. Individual groups would be tasked to address issue specific (e.g. soundwall aesthetics) or sub-area specific (e.g. Montecito area) design challenges. The input and recommendations received are anticipated to lead to design refinements that could be incorporated prior to or following the formal Concept Review meetings.

Corridor Working Group (quarterly, or as needed)

Stakeholders: Identified through key informants, Focus Review Groups, and Scoping Meetings, to include key influencers from local communities throughout the corridor. Representatives may also include representatives from local architectural review boards, historical landmark commissions, and/or planning commissions.

Role: Serve as a “sounding board” to the project team at key milestones during the environmental phase. Review updated project data, conceptual designs, and potential mitigation measures. Contribute to development of context-sensitive designs and form a core group of stakeholders who may serve as ambassadors to their communities and constituents regarding the project's progress, transparency, and efforts to balance all communities' needs.

SBCAG Board and South Coast Sub-Regional Committee (periodically)

Stakeholders: SBCAG Board members, who are policymakers from local jurisdictions represented by the CAG, the project sponsor.

Role: Receive updates on the scope of the alternatives to be considered in the draft environmental document. Approve scope revisions and address resource needs, as well as serve as an important “sounding board”, reviewing aspects of the project from a policymaker's standpoint. Serve as a regular channel of project information to their respective local communities and decision-making bodies.

Executive Staff Consultations (periodically)

Stakeholders: Key executive staff (e.g. City Managers and/or Planning and Public Works Director level staff) from local communities throughout the corridor, SBCAG, and Caltrans.

Role: Advise the project team throughout the process on approaches to addressing their policymakers' and key community members' issues either through project updates provided at quarterly meetings of region's

city managers, or through targeted, as-needed meetings with specific city managers.

Community/Organization Presentations and Briefings (as-needed)

Stakeholders: Community-based or interest-based organizations with direct or indirect interests in the project.

Role: Attendance of project and PDT member staff and/or an outreach specialist at community and/or organizational meetings to provide project updates, project details, and project process information. Provides opportunities for project staff to hear and respond to local questions and concerns about the project.

Public Scoping Meetings (1-4)

Stakeholders: A wide range of stakeholders throughout the corridor, open to interested groups and members of the general public.

Role: Learn about and comment on the project and the scope of the environmental review process in one of the public meetings located in the corridor (each with the same agenda and materials) designed to meet CEQA/NEPA public involvement requirements for environmental scoping.

Concept Reviews (up to 4)

Stakeholders: Local agency decision-making bodies with coastal development and other project permitting authority.

Role: Advise the project team on how the project's initial design concepts relate to local policies, identifying potential conflicts and means for resolution.

PROJECT PHASES AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

This section outlines the stakeholder involvement activities associated with each environmental clearance sub-phase (a graphic representation is attached at the end of this document). As explained in the Stakeholder Involvement Goals section, the approach strives to educate and involve key stakeholders through a variety of involvement activities, meet and exceed CEQA/NEPA requirements, and coordinate involvement and technical tasks.

This plan identifies an anticipated framework for stakeholder involvement activities to support the stated involvement goals. This plan should be seen as a flexible framework that can be modified as needed to respond to project team and stakeholder needs. When changes occur, or when significant changes are anticipated, the Stakeholder Involvement Plan should be updated with input from the PDT Public Involvement Subcommittee.

Phase I: Pre-Scoping (Fall 2008 – Spring 2009)

Phase Goals:

- Engage stakeholders regarding the project guiding principles and history
- Explain the project's context in the larger corridor and relation to other projects
- Introduce the integrated technical and stakeholder involvement approach
- Conduct an initial issues scan among key stakeholders to support a more efficient and streamlined environmental scoping process
- Identify stakeholders not yet aware of or involved in the project

Activities: The **PDT and PDT Public Involvement Sub-Committee** will review and advise on confirming the PDT Charter and Stakeholder Involvement Plan.

Stakeholder or group interviews with key agency partners involved in project review processes (e.g., Coastal Commission, local agencies) will provide partners with a high-level project update, focusing on the guiding principles and plan for stakeholder involvement. Importantly, the sessions will emphasize asking questions of stakeholders to collect data about issues, opportunities and other key persons and influencers who may not yet be identified as having a vested interest in the project.

The **South Coast Sub-Regional Committee and/or SBCAG Board** will hear a project update focusing on the project purpose and need, guiding principles, project approach, and project development timeline, as requested. Action will be requested to designate the South Coast Sub-Regional Committee as the lead, representing the project sponsor, for considering future project scope revisions that may be warranted as determined through early results from the environmental scoping process. These revisions could include recommendations for refining the project technical and public involvement approaches.

One or more **executive staff consultations** with executive management of PDT partner agencies via briefings at the managers' quarterly meetings or a similar forum to provide project status information and allow managers to communicate their policymakers' and community members questions and concerns about the project.

To support these initial involvement activities and subsequent efforts, the project team will produce **updated educational materials** and launch the **project website**, which will provide information about project history, context related to other projects in the corridor, and answer frequently asked questions.

Deliverables:

- Stakeholder Involvement Plan
- PDT Charter
- Initial project website
- Educational materials: project history, frequently asked questions, initial hand sketches
- Key findings from stakeholder interviews, SBCAG Board and Sub-Committee updates, and executive staff consultations
- Updated stakeholder database

Phase II: Environmental Scoping (Spring 2009 – Fall 2010)

Phase Goals:

- Meet CEQA/NEPA environmental scoping requirements for public involvement
- Receive local design input from Focus Review Groups
- Present project information at concept review meetings for each of the local permitting agencies
- Refine and/or confirm project scope for technical and involvement activities
- Assess visual and aesthetic impacts and identify visual mitigation strategies

Activities: Up to two **scoping meetings** designed to meet CEQA and NEPA environmental scoping requirements will be conducted.

Two to four **Focus Review Groups** will be convened following the public scoping meetings. These groups, made up of influential community stakeholders would come together for one to three working sessions to provide local input about design challenges identified in the stakeholder group interviews and public scoping meetings. Members of local architectural review boards, historical landmark commissions, and /or planning commissions may also participate. The individual groups would be tasked to address issue specific (e.g. soundwall aesthetics) or sub-area specific (e.g. Montecito area) design challenges. The input and recommendations received are anticipated to lead to design refinements

that could be incorporated prior to or following the formal Concept Review meetings.

Concept Reviews with local agencies with permit authority will occur after the Scoping Meetings to review early design concepts and hear feedback on coastal plan and general plan conformity.

The **Corridor Working Group** consisting of key community and stakeholders from throughout the corridor will convene quarterly to review and advise on ongoing project outcomes from a corridor-wide perspective.

The **South Coast Sub-Regional Committee** and/or **SBCAG Board** will receive project updates at two key junctures: (1) prior to the Scoping Meetings to discuss the environmental scoping process and to understand the scope of the alternatives under consideration; and (2) after the scoping meetings, initial meetings of the Corridor Working Group, and the concept review meetings have been conducted to review and approve possible project scope revisions.

Community and organization briefings on project status will be conducted by project staff, an outreach specialist, and/or other key project stakeholders as-needed or requested.

Executive staff consultations with upper management of PDT partner agencies will occur in the form of briefings at the managers' quarterly meetings or a similar venue.

The **PDT Communications Sub-Committee** will convene quarterly or as needed to review stakeholder and public involvement efforts and advise on updates to the Stakeholder Involvement Plan.

Deliverables:

- Notice of Preparation
- Scoping Meeting materials
- Key findings from Focus Review Groups
- Key findings from Corridor Working Group (quarterly)
- Refined and finalized project scope
- Visual simulations
- Preliminary identification of visual effects and associated mitigation recommendations
- Traffic data and simulations
- Initial and refined design concepts
- Visual Impact Assessment Report
- Community/organization briefing materials
- Updated Stakeholder Involvement Plan (periodically)
- Updated project website (periodically)
- Updated stakeholder database (periodically)

Phase III: Draft Environmental Document Review and Final EIR (Spring 2011 – Winter 2012)

Phase Goal:

- Meet CEQA and NEPA legal requirements for draft environmental document review and public involvement
- Refine project alternatives
- Select preferred alternative
- Transition from hands-on concept development and advisory efforts with key stakeholders to a formal design review framework

Activities: One to three **Public Hearing(s)** will be noticed and conducted for review and comment on the draft environmental document for the project.

The **South Coast Sub-Regional Committee** will be provided with an overview of the draft environmental document.

The **Corridor Working Group** will continue to meet quarterly, or as needed, providing input on design related issues, options for implementing mitigation measures, and other project related input as needed.

Community and organization briefings on project status will be conducted by project and PDT member staff, an outreach specialist, and/or other key project stakeholders as-needed or requested.

Executive staff consultations with executive managers of PDT member agencies will occur in the form of briefings at the managers' quarterly meetings or a similar venue.

The **PDT Public Involvement Sub-Committee** will convene quarterly to review stakeholder and public involvement efforts for the Draft EIR and advise on updating the Stakeholder Involvement Plan, as needed.

Deliverables:

- Draft environmental document
- Public Hearing materials
- Key findings from Corridor Working Group
- Community/organization briefing materials
- Updated Stakeholder Involvement Plan (periodically)
- Updated project website (periodically)
- Updated stakeholder database (periodically)

Phase IV: Permitting and Design (Spring 2012 – Spring 2013)

Phase Goal:

- Engage Coastal Development Permitting (CDP) agencies in CDP application process
- Attend public hearings and present project information as needed
- Secure coastal development and other local permits

Activities: Project staff will coordinate with local agency staff having **Coastal Development Permit** approval authority and California Coastal Commission staff to submit applications. Project and partner agency staff will prepare and present project information at CDP hearings. The **South Coast Sub-Regional Committee** will be briefed on the approval process at key junctures.

Community and organization briefings and executive staff consultations will occur as needed or requested.

One or more **public hearings** with each agency having CDP approval authority.

Deliverables:

- Final EIR
- Community/organization briefing materials
- Updated Stakeholder Involvement Plan (periodically)
- Updated stakeholder database (periodically)
- Coastal development permit applications
- Approved coastal development permits
- Other local permits as needed

APPENDIX

The following page displays the “process graphic,” which visually depicts the flow of the project’s technical phases integrated with stakeholder involvement activities.

As previously noted, the Stakeholder Involvement Plan identifies a framework for stakeholder involvement that may be modified to meet project team and/or stakeholder needs. When changes occur, or when significant changes are anticipated, the Stakeholder Involvement Plan and related process graphic should be updated with input from the PDT Public Involvement Subcommittee.



South Coast 101 HOV Stakeholder & Public Involvement Process

