

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

## DISTRICT 1 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

October 2020



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## Introduction

This document outlines the District 1 Active Transportation Plan's public engagement goals, target groups, methods, and performance measures. The Statewide Active Transportation Plans use a data-driven framework supported by research and best practices to identify location-based needs to increase the safety and number of people walking and bicycling. Public input is needed to ensure these outputs reflect the lived experiences of District 1 communities and ultimately result in projects that achieve statewide safety and mode shift goals. Social equity is an important goal of the plan—along with safety, mobility, and preservation; it is critical that the experiences of disadvantaged and underrepresented communities inform plan outputs. It is also essential that the District 1 Active Transportation Plan links to regional and local bicycle and pedestrian networks and planning efforts.

## Public Engagement Goals

The public engagement goals are consistent with those developed for the statewide plan, "Toward an Active California" and have been modified so they are relevant to District 1:

1. Provide information to the public and stakeholders regarding the Active Transportation Plan
  - a. Purpose, background, role in the district's bicycle and pedestrian policy framework, and current status.
  - b. How and when they can provide input, how their input will be or was used, and what input others have provided.
2. Seek participation from people who reflect the diversity of communities throughout District 1 with a focus on disadvantaged communities and those who have not previously engaged in a Caltrans planning process.
3. Collect public and stakeholder location-based input regarding the location and type of bicycle and pedestrian improvements that will make people feel more comfortable walking and bicycling.
4. Understand factors—such as traffic stress, distance, and non-traffic-related concerns—that influence District 1 residents' willingness to walk or bicycle in their communities.
5. Develop a more complete understanding of walking and bicycling safety-related concerns on the State Highway System in District 1.
6. Solicit stakeholder input on how the District 1 Active Transportation Plan can support regional and local bicycle and pedestrian planning and implementation efforts. Combine outreach efforts with local and regional partners where synergistic outcomes are possible.

## Target Audiences

The target audiences described in this section reflect internal and external partners, organizations, and individuals that will be engaged in the Active Transportation Plan development.

## Caltrans District 1

The District 1 Active Transportation Plan requires significant cross-disciplinary coordination. Tier 1 coordination involves the core planning team—three Planning staff members and one Public Information Officer—and representation from multiple functional units. This team communicates across the District so that other staff members and managers are informed of the planning process and can provide input as needed. Some staff will have a direct role, while others may be involved intermittently to provide support on technical issues.

## Technical Advisory Group

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is split into four groups—one for each county.<sup>1</sup> It comprises representatives from the four Regional Transportation Agencies in District 1, interested local public agency partners including public works and public health departments, Tribes, and community-based organizations or individuals with demonstrated interest in active transportation. Many participants have been active in ongoing or completed planning processes throughout the district, and they can help Caltrans build on related efforts. They are also experienced in public engagement and can help Caltrans identify proven outreach strategies.

The purpose of the TAG is to guide the context-sensitive development of the Active Transportation Plan. Members will be responsible for “ground truthing” draft documents, providing input on linkages to local planning efforts, advising on outreach to disadvantaged communities, and promoting public participation.

## Disadvantaged Communities, Vulnerable Users & Community-Based Organizations

*“Equity is addressed in this Plan consistent with the California Transportation Plan 2040 and the Smart Mobility Framework, with a focus on providing mobility for people who are economically, socially, or physically disadvantaged in order to support their full participation in society. Social Equity strategies seek to support disadvantaged communities—including low income communities and communities of color—who rely on walking, bicycling, and transit by designing and managing an active transportation system that equitably distributes its benefits and burdens.”*

*-Toward an Active California*

*Pedestrians and bicyclists are often referred to as vulnerable users of roads because they do not have the protection provided by an automobile, though this can be improved by off-street trails or on-street separated bikeways. This is especially true for children, seniors, and*

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<sup>1</sup> In Humboldt County, the TAG representation and involvement occurs with the Humboldt County Association of Governments' Complete Streets Ad Hoc Committee.

*those with disabilities, who may require additional time or unique information to use and cross roads safely. -Toward an Active California*

Disadvantaged community members' and vulnerable users' participation in development of the Active Transportation Plan is critical to the plan's success. Community-based organizations have established relationships with these communities; they can provide feedback on the material and methods of engagement, and help District 1 staff reach their constituents. District 1 hopes to use the Active Transportation Plan process to build and strengthen relationships with community-based organizations to ensure this planning effort reflects the needs and desires of these communities. District 1 will continue to engage these communities in future planning and project input opportunities. Reaching community-based organizations whose work addresses issues of access, mobility, or social justice will be emphasized.

In a pandemic-free environment, our preference is to make participation easier on these groups by attending in-person meetings and events in which disadvantaged community members and vulnerable users are already participating rather than expecting them to come to events hosted by Caltrans. As groups transition to more online collaboration, they are restructuring events and using different tools. The project team will reach out to community-based organizations and stakeholders to have conversations on how to effectively engage these communities and what resources are needed to do so successfully.

### Other Stakeholders

Stakeholders not discussed above include other groups with interests adjacent to the State Highway System and groups with a focus on walking and bicycling.

### Other Public Agencies

Caltrans often coordinates with other public agencies where they interface with the State Highway System:

- Twenty-eight Native American Tribes have trust lands in in District 1. Tribes may have information on location-based needs and context-sensitive improvements.
- Transit providers may have location-based needs specific to transit riders accessing bus stops on the State Highway System.
- Law enforcement organizations may have insight on location-based needs, particularly for high traffic enforcement areas and near-miss locations. They may also be consulted for collision reporting information.
- Local public agencies may request information and provide location-based needs input beyond what is provided through TAGs. These other requests may come from boards, councils, transportation commissions, or municipal advisory committees.
- The California Coastal Commission and the Coastal Conservancy may have interest in public access to the coast and the potential impacts of improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

- California State Parks, the National Park Service, and others manage lands that people around the world visit to recreate by walking and biking, including long-distance touring cyclists, many of whom rely on hike and bike campsites. These agencies may have location-based needs where park roads connect to the State Highway System or where access improvements are needed.

### Other Organizations

- Local bicycle shops are central to bicycling communities. Bicycle shops may provide opportunities to engage people already cycling who are likely to have knowledge of location-based needs and strong interest in the Active Transportation Plan.
- Recreational walking and bicycling groups may be using the State Highway System as part of or to access recreational routes, and may have information on location-based needs to improve access and mobility. They may also have perspective on what physical or social factors encourage people to walk and bicycle.
- Civic groups may have interest in placemaking aspects of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

### General Public

The general public includes people who live, work, and travel in District 1. This is a broad group with varying levels of interest and ability to be engaged in the planning process. For the Active Transportation Plan, Caltrans is seeking location-based input from the public on issues related to walking and bicycling on the state routes.

### Participation Methods

Best practices recommend a combination of online and in-person outreach to deliver interactive and meaningful engagement opportunities. Social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic affect the ability to provide in-person engagement opportunities. Efforts will be made to ensure virtual engagement can occur via phone and internet, and that promotion reaches the diverse District 1 populations.

Engagement demographics and geographies will be evaluated midway through the engagement period to determine if some groups are not being reached. Caltrans will consider use of print materials and mailings to reach these community members.

County	Households without Internet
Del Norte	27.8%
Humboldt	18.5%
Lake	26.8%
Mendocino	21.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S2801

## Map-Based Surveys

The primary outcome of the Active Transportation Plan is location-based needs that will increase the safety and number of people walking and bicycling along and across the State Highway System. Thus, the primary public input sought is location-based needs, which will be acquired through a map-based survey. The map-based survey allows users to identify deficiencies by placing pins on a map. When a pin is placed, the user can select their concern from a list and add more detail about that concern. Users can place an unlimited number of pins. The survey interface developed for Caltrans is ADA-compliant and available in Spanish.

Community-based organizations and other stakeholder organizations will be encouraged to share the map survey with their community members. If digital access is a limiting factor, Caltrans is available to receive the information over the phone or by mail.

The map-based survey will also be used by TAG members to input location-based needs for which GIS data was not previously available. These needs will be those which have been expressed by the public to the TAG members or their organizations, or which TAG members have professional knowledge.

Street Story is another map-based survey application and has received extensive input in Humboldt County due to its promotion by the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (a member of the TAG) prior to the Active Transportation Plan process. Use of Street Story will continue to be promoted in Humboldt County, and comments on Street Story will be included in the Active Transportation Plan analysis. Street Story may be promoted in other counties to be determined through discussion with the TAGs.

## Technical Advisory Group Meetings

TAG groups will meet online approximately once every two months. Materials will be distributed via email.

## Website

<https://www.catplan.org/district-1>

The website will be used to provide information to the public and stakeholders regarding the Active Transportation Plan purpose, background, and role in the District's bicycle and pedestrian policy framework. It will also be updated with notices regarding current status of the planning process and how and when input can be provided.

The website will have three sections—news, partners, and documents. The news section will be updated at least monthly with a report on recent planning activities and status updates. The partners section will list TAG members. The documents section will host frequently asked questions, fact sheets, presentations, and reports.

## Social Media

The Caltrans District 1 Facebook account will be used to inform the public of opportunities to participate in English and Spanish. Comments provided on social media platforms will be monitored. People will be encouraged to use the location-based survey, but comments with location-based needs will be noted and included in the needs analysis. Caltrans staff will attempt to answer questions left as comments or

direct messages. Frequently-asked questions will be added to the website FAQ. TAG members, community-based organizations, and stakeholders will be encouraged to share District 1 posts or create their own promoting participation.

## Interviews

The District 1 project team will reach out to community-based organizations to interview them about barriers disadvantaged community members and vulnerable users face while walking and biking on the State Highway System, and to collaborate with them on how best to seek input from their constituents. The District 1 project team recognizes the privileges we as individuals have and the power dynamic present when Caltrans as a State department enter spaces organized by and intended for disadvantaged communities. We desire to listen to concerns and learn from the experiences of disadvantaged community members and vulnerable users. The purpose of interviews is to ensure proposed infrastructure improvements support disadvantaged communities' and vulnerable users' abilities to walk and bike for transportation and do not exacerbate their concerns.

These conversations will be exploratory, so it is difficult to express at the time of this writing how input will influence plan outputs. However, the project team commits to documenting conversations in to-be-agreed upon ways, sharing notes with the community-based organizations for consensus prior to including notes or summaries in public documents, and following up with further detail on how conversations ultimately influenced the District 1 Active Transportation Plan outputs and the active transportation policy framework.

Immediate safety or maintenance issues identified in these interviews will be shared with appropriate Caltrans staff.

## Partnering with Local and Regional Partners on Other Planning Outreach

Regional Transportation Planning Agencies and local governments may be updating existing plans or conducting new planning activities that overlap with the scope of the D1 Active Transportation Plan. Caltrans will collaborate with our partners to align outreach timing, methods, and content to be mutually useful to the extent possible.

## Recognizing Input Provided on Past Planning Efforts

Many active transportation planning efforts on the State Highway System have been completed in the past ten years by Caltrans and our partners, generating hundreds of comments expressing concerns and desired improvements. We want to recognize the time and effort of community members participating in past efforts. Comments from these past efforts will be reviewed to situate the District 1 Active Transportation Plan in the context of ongoing planning efforts and to inform the location-based needs analysis.

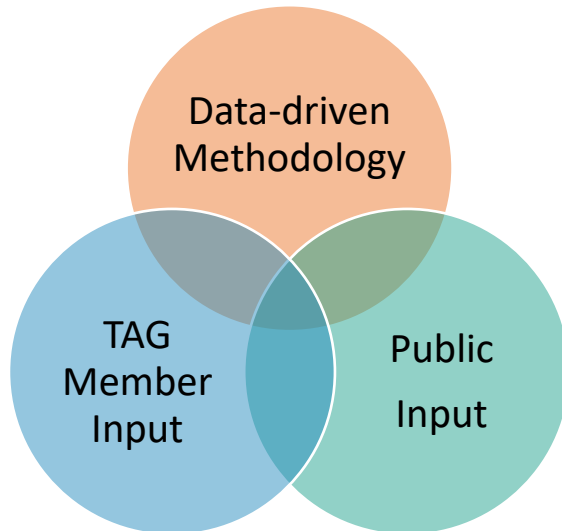
## How Public Input Will Be Used

### Location-Based Needs

Location-based needs will be identified using three methods during the Active Transportation Plan process:



- A data-driven approach based on level of traffic stress methodologies and place type context,
- Needs identified by TAG members through previous planning efforts and engagements with the public, and
- Public input collected through the map-based survey and Street Story.



Needs identified by all three input methods can be considered with little discussion. Needs identified by one or two input methods may need further examination and discussion with the TAG:

- Needs not identified by the data-driven methodology: Does the level of traffic stress methodology need to be augmented for the communities this area serves? Is this area of special interest to particular communities?
- Needs not identified by current public input: Did engagement methods reach users of this area? What is the level of interest in this area?
- Needs not identified by TAG members: Was this area not included in previous planning efforts? Did current public engagement efforts reach different populations than previous efforts?

### Disadvantaged Communities and Vulnerable User Input

Information regarding the needs and concerns of disadvantaged communities and vulnerable users that are not specifically location-based will inform the toolkit of possible treatments to address identified needs, which will be considered during project initiation. For example,

- If a bikeway is an identified need (location-based input), and
- if the location is near a K-12 school (context), and
- if separation from traffic is key to children's utility of a bikeway (vulnerable user input), then
- the recommended facility type may be a separated bikeway.

## Prioritization

All identified needs within a project area will be reviewed and considered when a project is being initiated. The amount of public input received in an area is not considered in the prioritization of the need. In other words, pins on the map do not equate to “votes.”

District 1 staff and the TAG will be evaluating and selecting metrics in the plan goal areas of safety, mobility, preservation, and equity for use in prioritizing investment areas. The public will be polled on the relative importance of each goal area for weighting purposes.

## Schedule

The current schedule for the development of the Active Transportation Plan and public engagement opportunities will be available online at <https://www.catplan.org/events/upcoming/now/15>.

## Performance Metrics and Results Documentation

Performance metrics will help District 1 confirm who has been reached and engaged in the development of the Active Transportation Plan. The District 1 project team's goal is to have participation from disadvantaged communities and the most vulnerable road users at a minimum that is proportional to their presence in each county.

		County			
		Del Norte	Humboldt	Lake	Mendocino
Race & Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino	19%	11%	20%	25%
	Black or African American	3%	1%	2%	1%
	American Indian or Alaska Native	7%	5%	4%	4%
	Asian	4%	3%	1%	2%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Some other race	3%	4%	13%	5%
	Two or more races	6%	6%	3%	5%
Age	Under 18	22%	19%	21%	24%
	65 and Older	17%	17%	22%	20%
Income	Households with Income <\$50,000	52%	54%	56%	51%
Disability	Hearing	6%	5%	7%	6%
	Vision	3%	3%	3%	2%
	Cognitive	10%	7%	8%	6%
	Ambulatory	11%	8%	12%	8%
	Self Care	4%	3%	6%	3%
	Independent Living	10%	6%	9%	6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Tables B03002, B01001, B19001, and S1810

To the extent possible, demographic data will be collected to confirm feedback is being received from disadvantaged community members and vulnerable users.

Methods for collecting demographic data include

- Map-based survey: Upon completion the public and partner map-based survey, participants are asked to report zip code, age, income, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Street Story: Upon completion of input, users are asked to answer questions on gender, race/ethnicity, age, and disability.
- YouTube and Facebook videos: Videos may include polls asking for zip code, age, income, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Online meetings with target groups: The number of participants will be noted, and links to online polls will be distributed to participants.
- Catplan.org, Facebook, and YouTube: Analytics will be collected for the number of visits/engagements/views and available demographic or geographic information.

The District 1 project team aims to collect enough demographic information to gauge the level of participation from disadvantaged communities and vulnerable users. We anticipate the following potential barriers to collecting demographic data:

- Privacy concerns: Participants will be informed as to why demographic data is being collected and how it will be used.
- Respondent fatigue: The project team will keep survey, video, and factsheet tools short and easy to read.
- Limitations built into third-party applications: The project team will use the best available data.

A summary of public participation demographics and reach will be included with the final report. This summary will include

- The number of map-based surveys taken, and the distribution of zip code, age, income, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- The number of street story inputs, and the distribution of gender, race/ethnicity, age, and disability.
- Summaries of zip code, age, income, race/ethnicity, and gender from social media polling.
- Summaries of analytics available through the project website and social media.
- Total number of interviews conducted, reported by type of disadvantaged community or vulnerable users with whom the interviewees work.

## Modifications to the PEP

This PEP is a living document and guide. The process may be adjusted if objectives are not being reached. For example, methods may be changed if the project team is not reaching as many members of a specific group as desired. Having flexibility allows District 1 to respond to opportunities as they become available, such as invitations to

participate in community events. Modifications to the PEP will be shared with the Technical Advisory Group for feedback and consensus.