



**Meaningfully involve the community to address relevant needs and understand barriers.**

Community Engagement aims to foster collaboration and build relationships between community members, partners, and project planners. By engaging community members as well as interdisciplinary partners in the planning and implementation processes, these initiatives ensure that the needs, preferences, and insights of the community are reflected in the projects. This inclusive approach not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of transportation solutions but also empowers communities, promotes equity, and garners broader public support. Ultimately, it leads to the creation of safer, more accessible, and sustainable transportation options that better serve everyone.

**Types of active transportation engagement activities include:**

- Conducting safety education and encouragement activities: walking school buses, bike skills training, helmet distributions for youth, and open streets events.
- Conducting community-led walking and bicycling assessments, including data gathering through methods like [Street Story](#).
- Implementing messaging campaigns to raise public awareness.
- Educating local communities on how to advocate for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements such as high visibility crosswalks.
- Communicating regularly with local officials and agency staff about efforts to make communities safer and more pleasant for walking and bicycling.
- Forming Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committees to provide feedback to decision makers about issues important to the community.

It is important that the initiative is well-publicized to ensure the participation of everyone in the community. The data and input of citizens directly impacts proposed interventions. Be prepared to adapt and revise initial proposals.

**Other considerations:** (Also see [Equity Fact Sheet](#))

- Communicate openly, be transparent, and accountable throughout the process.
- Use fun, creative and varied engagement methods, such as including artists where possible. (See ATRC [webinar](#) on this topic)
- Consider community needs, such as food access, transportation, language barriers, etc. and arrange for assistance as needed. Use simple, easy-to-understand language and avoid the use of jargon.
- Cultivate diverse community participation in a safe and comfortable environment to facilitate open and honest discussion.
- Offer a variety of meeting settings, such as local community centers, religious centers, coffee shops, schools, virtually, etc., in addition to government offices.
- ‘Piggyback’ and leverage on existing or ongoing local events. Identify events where the community is already congregating and partner with that organizer to attend or add-on an engagement activity. Seek permission well in advance of events.
- Carefully evaluate the use of technology in community engagement and consider a range of approaches to meaningfully engage the full spectrum of community partners.
- Host events at schools when parents can attend after picking up their children.
- Provide childcare at meetings or make events family- friendly.
- Give surveys in multiple languages. Anticipate diverse reading levels. Accessibility assistance should always be provided if requested.
- Host pop-ups that include demonstration projects for more interactive engagement. (See ATRC [webinar](#) on this topic)



## Levels of Engagement

Based on the need one may choose a different level of engagement. Each of these processes evolves based on impact, influence and involvement. (Reference: [California Transportation Plan and MIG, Inc.](#))

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EN TRUST
<b>ENGAGEMENT GOALS</b>	Provide objective and balanced information	Gather input; obtain relevant feedback	Engage participants in the process; ensure concerns and ideas are understood and considered	Share leadership responsibilities in planning and implementation	Foster open participation and equity through community-driven decision making
<b>ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Signs or message boards</li> <li>• Videos</li> <li>• Social media posts</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Informational presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Small groups</li> <li>• Town hall meeting / open houses</li> <li>• Polling</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Presentations with discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community organizing &amp; advocacy</li> <li>• Interactive workshops</li> <li>• Community forums</li> <li>• Open planning forums with polling</li> <li>• Interactive website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOUs with community-based organizations</li> <li>• Stakeholder advisory committees</li> <li>• Collaborative data analysis</li> <li>• Co-design and co-implementation of solutions</li> <li>• Collaborative decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory action research</li> <li>• Community-driven planning</li> <li>• Consensus building</li> <li>• Participatory budgeting</li> <li>• Scoping and cost sharing</li> </ul>
<b>CONSIDER THIS OPTION WHEN ...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine or fairly routine matter</li> <li>• Time and/or budgets constraints</li> <li>• Clear legal process</li> <li>• No or low level of controversy</li> <li>• Fairly simple set of interests</li> <li>• Most issues have been heard, address through earlier processes</li> <li>• Parties have tried but are unable to come to resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time and/or budget constraints</li> <li>• Medium or high levels of interest</li> <li>• Manageable or average level of controversy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active and mobilized groups with competing views</li> <li>• Strong need for dialogue (not just input)</li> <li>• Need for multiple types of input designed for different groups</li> <li>• Fair amount of controversy</li> <li>• Complex issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense controversy, mobilized groups with competing views</li> <li>• Need for education and buy-in by key partners</li> <li>• Long-term, far-reaching effects</li> <li>• Multiple jurisdictions</li> <li>• Parties willing to meet, discuss (vs. referendum, court, etc.)</li> <li>• Recommendation likely to be followed by key decision makers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active and mobilized groups</li> <li>• No time constraints</li> <li>• The decision will heavily impact the community</li> <li>• Grant funding is available</li> </ul>
<b>MAY NOT BE BEST OPTION WHEN ...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear or competing jurisdictions</li> <li>• Policy matters with unclear effects</li> <li>• Strong controversy or polarized parties</li> <li>• Need for two-way dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public input will have no effect</li> <li>• Policy matters with unclear effects</li> <li>• Strong controversy or polarized parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public input will have no effect</li> <li>• Intensive input will not satisfy need of public to influence the decision</li> <li>• Time and/or budget constraints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost prohibitive for amount of controversy</li> <li>• No negotiating room</li> <li>• Other groups or individuals may intercede to invalidate any forthcoming proposals</li> <li>• Key parties unwilling to meet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is inequitable representation of the community (vocal minority)</li> <li>• Legislative requirements need to be met</li> </ul>

These definitions are provided as resource for planning or implementing a Non-Infrastructure (NI) project. For questions, please contact us at [ATRC@dot.ca.gov](mailto:ATRC@dot.ca.gov).