

Corridors of Opportunity Community Engagement Team Purpose, Vision, Values and Work plan Objectives

The Community Engagement and Outreach Project is a fundamental element in the Sustainable Communities Grant. Its purpose is to ensure that underrepresented communities are engaged and that leadership from these communities is developed. It is also to assure that engagement leads to systematic change in the decision making process beyond the three year time period of the grant. The community engagement work is not intended to fund the traditional public sector outreach and engagement responsibilities for transitways and land use. To accomplish this project, the Consortium established a Community Engagement Team to advise the Consortium (Policy Board) on matters of community engagement and on how to use these funds.

The CET's purpose is to develop and support targeted strategies that engage underrepresented communities in planning, decision-making, and implementation processes on and around transit-oriented corridors. The CET will develop strategies that promote social equity, inclusion and access to economic opportunity. Community engagement should focus not only on equitable process but also on equitable outcomes for underrepresented communities.

The CET's approach is to build on existing community assets while supporting innovation and tailored community engagement strategies that secure the inclusion of marginalized communities.

The CET will do this by:

1. Advise the Policy Board on issues of equity and report on the effectiveness of community engagement strategies across the corridors.
2. Develop general guidelines and strategies for outreach and engagement that will guide investments in this area.
3. Develop strategies to engage underrepresented communities in the planning process and ensure their continued participation throughout implementation. Identify core issues and opportunities affecting those communities. Work with participants to develop shared ownership of the process.
4. Reduce potential conflicts and increase trust based relationships.
5. Recommend funding allocations and recipients to the Policy Board.
6. Meet regularly with the corridor project managers and help them develop appropriate community engagement strategies.
7. Facilitate strong alliances across local communities within our region. Partner with public agencies and implementers to ensure a vital community engagement process, bridging gaps between traditionally marginalized communities and the planning processes for public infrastructure investments.

The CET will bring this vision and these values to the work

1. Sustainability means equitable investments in all of our communities and neighborhoods that support residents leading healthy, safe, affordable and productive lives within a clean environment.
2. In our regional planning processes, we will

- a. Ensure that populations traditionally marginalized – low income, new immigrant and communities of color – participate in the long range vision for our region and our regional transitways.
 - b. Engage all stakeholders – underrepresented and traditionally marginalized communities – in meaningful decision making roles
 - c. Ensure greater transparency and accountability to communities in planning, research and data collection, evaluation, implementation, and investments in our region.
3. Reduce social and economic disparities in our region.
 4. Respect, value, and support local communities and neighborhoods.
 5. Build inclusive sustainable communities free from discrimination.
 6. Prevent displacement of communities along transitway corridors and mitigate negative impacts of gentrification.

In our commitment to these vision and values, the Community Engagement Team will be accountable and transparent to our partners – populations traditionally marginalized-low income, new immigrant, and communities of color, local communities and public agencies.

Community Engagement Team Work Plan Objectives:

Objective 1: Advise the Policy Board on issues of equity and community engagement. Ensure the Policy Board is educated, equipped, and continuously supported with local and national best practices, information on equity issues and community feedback on the effectiveness of community engagement strategies along transit corridors. The Policy Board creates a sustainable regional planning framework that includes effective strategies for community engagement for underrepresented communities and equitable development.

Objective 2: Develop a community based working group to advise and support the CE Team. The CET is supported by local communities and regional organizations in the implementation of the work plan to achieve increased community participation in the decision-making and implementation of a long-range vision for the region by populations traditionally marginalized in the public planning process.. This will result in 1) extensive, tailored community engagement strategies existing in communities where transit is being developed; 2) traditionally underrepresented communities who are often marginalized in public planning processes are actively participating to develop corridor visions, goal setting, planning and implementation.; and 3) increase in the number of community leaders in regional transitway planning.

Objective 3: Design and Implementation of the RFP process. Guidelines and strategies for funding outreach and engagement activities along transit corridors exist and engage community based organizations.

Objective 4: Capacity – building with community organizations. Community Based organizations working along transit corridors have the resources they need to effectively engage underrepresented communities in the planning and implementation phases along transit corridors. Informed and engaged communities exist in communities where transit corridors exist.

Objective 5: Support equity in engagement and leadership. Extensive, tailored community engagement strategies exist in communities where transit is being developed. Traditionally underrepresented communities who are often marginalized in public planning processes are actively participating to develop corridor visions, goal setting, planning and development.

Objective 6: Capacity building with government agencies. Corridor Managers are educated and equipped to implement strong community engagement strategies along transit corridors by having access to the information and resources they need. Lessons learned from previous transit way developments (locally and nationally) are scaled up and built upon in the region's other transit corridors. A Community Engagement Toolkit is created as a resource for transit way corridor planners and for non-experts in the engagement field. Effective community engagement leads to viable planning solutions to enhance benefits and mitigate impacts of planned transitways.

Objective 7: On-going and iterative evaluation. Develop quantitative and qualitative measurements to assess the effectiveness of community engagement activities. Evaluate the extent of project's transparency and accountability to underrepresented and marginalized communities. Evaluation reports exist for both the CET engagement processes and funding processes.