

Focus Group – Facilitator’s Guide

Welcome! (5 min)

My name is _____ and I will be leading a discussion with you about transportation. I will be assisted by _____ who will be taking detailed notes on our conversation. Caltrans has hired us to collect your opinions today. Thanks for coming!

Purpose

Our purpose is to get your feedback on current and future transportation activities in the Sacramento region. We are most interested in hearing what you think. We don’t have to come to agreement or choose the best answer. All of your opinions are important and there are no wrong answers to the questions. We’ll be preparing a summary of the results, but we will never quote you by name. We hope you will be honest and tell us what you really think!

We will be talking with you to learn how you get around in the area and your ideas for the best ways to improve the transportation system between now and the next five years.

I need you all to participate and may call on you to make sure you are getting a chance to speak. If you have a lot of ideas, I may need to skip your turn so that others get a chance to speak. My job is to make sure everyone gets a chance to participate and that we finish within the time we have.

a. Introductions : (15 min)

1. Let me your first name, what community you live in and one thing you like about living in the Sacramento area.

*2. Now- tell me how do you mostly get to where you are going - walk, drive, bus, carpool, etc.?

(Facilitator prompts below – use as needed- ask for a show of hands):

How many drive every day or nearly every day?

How many walk or ride a bike for transportation (not just recreation)?

How many use the bus (or light rail in Sacramento)?

How many get rides from family or friends?

How many do something else to get places? Tell us how you get there

b. Comparison on daily travel: (10 min)

Think about 5 years ago- how many of you lived in this same area. If you lived here then, how does your daily travel compare to your travel in the past (e.g., a year ago, 5 years ago). What's different, and why? (Prompts: Do you drive, bike or walk more? Do you spend more time in traffic?)

c. Comparison on transportation system: (10 min)

What works well in the transportation system here? By transportation system I'm asking about roads, public transit, bike lanes.

What doesn't work well? What changes have you seen over the last few years, either for the better or worse?

d. Factors for driving/other mode use: (15 min)

What encourages you to do use transit, walk, bike or share rides? If you drive, what would help you (and/or other members of your household) drive less?

Prompts: Who rides transit? What encourages you to take the bus or light rail?

For those who walk or bike – what encourages you to do this?

(Prompts: ask about weather, seasons- getting dark early).

e. Preferences/Barriers: (15 min)

- - Are there specific places you'd like to be able to go by public transit, biking or walking if you could? What are those places? What keeps you from being able to get there now?

MAPPING EXERCISE (10 min) – Collect the maps from participants at the end

f. Mapping destinations:

- We have a map here of where people who are most likely to need transit service tend to live, and the public transit routes that are currently available. We've also included on the map what might be considered "essential" or "lifeline" destinations: places a lot of people need to go to meet health care and other essential needs. (People who drive use a red ink pen; people who don't drive use a blue ink pen).

Let's take a few minutes to mark the map. (red pen for drivers, blue pen for people who don't drive)

- Mark where you live with a large X.
- **If places** that are essential for you or your family to get to are already shown on the map, circle them in pen
- Write in any other places that don't show on the map but you consider essential to reach.

Examples of potential essential destinations:

Health clinics
County programs
Grocery stores or food banks
Nonprofit service agencies
Education and training
Community Centers
Public Libraries

g. Supplemental Services: (15 min)

What ideas, if any, do you have for helping you get to these areas- if you can get there by car, transit, walking or bikes? How else might we fill gaps in transportation service for people to reach essential "lifeline" locations?

Are there trips that you or others you know use taxi service for?

Do you or others you know ever rent a car because of lack of access to a car or public transportation? Do you know of problems with renting a car for those who don't own a car?

g. part 2* Car-Sharing.** Some cities have a car-sharing system A car-sharing group owns a number of cars and pays for the insurance. People can join the group at a monthly fee, and then can rent a car in their neighborhood for a few hours to do errands and things, rather than owning a car themselves. **What do you think would work for people to share cars? Do you think it would work to:**

- Charge people a monthly fee to be part of a car-sharing group?
- Charge people a per-hour fee to rent a car-sharing vehicle for short periods?
- Require people to make an advance reservation for a car-sharing vehicle?
- Locate car-sharing vehicles in neighborhoods, with people walking to pick up a vehicle?
- Have a limit on the amount of time someone could use the car-sharing vehicle?
- Have people loan their vehicle sometimes to a car-sharing pool, if there was separate insurance for other drivers while they were using the car?

Prompts for other ideas: e.g., volunteer driver programs, way to set up shared rides in a neighborhood, specific shuttle to/from a location

FLIP CHART EXERCISE (15 min)

h. Funding Priorities:

Given all you have said and heard, we're now going to ask you tell us how you would want to see transportation funds spent to improve the transportation options in our area (now and in the future)? Each of you will have 5 dots to show what you most want to see transportation funding spent on. (People who drive use RED dots, and people who don't drive use GREEN dots) You can put all your dots on one thing if that's the most important to you, spread your dots among everything, or put more than one dot on each item that's important to you.

Flip chart paper with dots:

:

- Improve public transit services:
 - Bus service
 - Light rail (in Sacramento)
 - Commuter bus (or rail?)
 - Neighborhood shuttles
- Projects to provide bicycle lanes, sidewalks and safer neighborhood streets
- Fix major streets and local roads
- Expand local streets and roads
- Maintain major freeways and highways
- Expand freeways and highways
- Support for car-sharing or other alternatives to reach "lifeline" destinations
- Other: write in space_____

i. Future: (15 min)

- Think about how old you will be in 20 years. What about the ages of your kids, if you have any, or your parents if they live in the region?
- Thinking about your (and their) lives 20 years from now, where will you be and do you think your neighborhood would meet your or your travel needs and those of any family members?
- If not, how would you change things?
- Or where would you move within the region to be able to get where you need to go?

That's our last question! Thank you. Before you leave, please turn in the map you completed and sign in to receive your check. We appreciate your help!