

**Public Engagement Plan  
for the  
Highway 46E Comprehensive Corridor Study**

Prepared for:  
Caltrans

Prepared by:



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# CALTRANS ROUTE 46E CORRIDOR STUDY:

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## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

### I. Purpose

The Caltrans Route 46E Study Team is a multi-agency team responsible for developing an agreed upon long-range improvement strategy for Highway 46 East Corridor from US 101 to Jardine Road. The Study Team is responsible for the completion of a Comprehensive Corridor Study for the five mile stretch of Highway 46E that will be part of a larger Corridor System Management Plan for the entire stretch of 46 East.

The study will need to incorporate public feedback and sentiment into preferred design concepts and MIG, Inc. will work in tandem with the Study Team partners to design and execute a meaningful public engagement process that builds support for the concepts, understanding of the need for corridor improvements and educates the public about Caltrans planning and the Comprehensive Corridor Study process. This document describes project background and goals as well as describing the key elements of the proposed public engagement strategy.

### II. Background

The Highway 46 East Corridor needs to be upgraded to meet current and future travel demands. Route 46 is a major east/west interregional route that runs between State Route 1 along the Central Coast near Cambria in San Luis Obispo County and State Route 99 in the Central Valley near Wasco in Kern County. The segment east of US101 to the San Luis Obispo/ Kern County line is referred to as State Route 46 East. Failure to reach agreement on an improvement strategy between Caltrans, SLOCOG, the City of Paso Robles and the County of San Luis Obispo could jeopardize funding that has been committed and the ability to attract future funds. Absent a strategy to reach agreement on complex issues and complete a required corridor study, negotiations between the four partner agencies have been stalled and the future of the Highway 46 East Corridor remains unclear. The passage of Proposition 1B in November 2006 has created new transportation infrastructure funding opportunities previously unavailable and renewed interest in moving the study forward.

During the spring and summer of 2007, MIG, Inc. facilitated three Study Team meetings to identify goals, issues and priorities related to the corridor and assist the Study Team in moving towards completion of a Corridor Study. With a working Study Team, Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee, the structures to support a challenging multi-stakeholder decision making process are in place.

Public engagement related to potential design concepts is a critical element of the corridor study process and the Study Team is moving towards agreement on key elements of a public engagement plan that will begin in earnest in early 2008.

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### III. Goals and Objectives

A series of goals and objectives have been developed to guide the public engagement and comprehensive corridor study process and are described in the following section.

#### Public Engagement Goals

The following goals are related to the public engagement process:

- i. **High-Quality Input and Participation**  
Public and stakeholder engagement activities will engage participants in a manner that ensures participation adds value to the process.
- ii. **Diversity**  
Efforts will focus on including individuals with varying interests, such as wineries, freight shippers, environmental groups, as well as geographic and socioeconomic interests.
- iii. **Education**  
The public engagement program will assist in educating the community about the complexity and the variety of issues and needs associated with the Comprehensive Corridor Study.
- iv. **Accuracy**  
Information will be factual, accurate, consistent and presented in a timely fashion.
- v. **Reach**  
The public engagement plan describes a range of activities that allow for varying levels of participation, depending on a person's level of interest.
- vi. **Inclusivity**  
Every effort will be made to ensure that anyone who wants to participate can. This can be accomplished by hosting engagement activities where people are already located and by providing alternative ways to participate and stay informed.
- vii. **Impact**  
The Study Team will evaluate and incorporate feedback received through the public engagement process.

#### Public Engagement Objectives

This public engagement plan is designed to engage the public in a meaningful dialogue with Caltrans and Study Team partners about the future of 46E. Ultimately, the public engagement process will give direction to Caltrans and Study Team partners about corridor improvement concepts that will meet the needs of current and future residents. Objectives include:

- ✓ Building public understanding of the need for corridor improvements.
- ✓ Educating the public about Caltrans planning and the Comprehensive Corridor Process.
- ✓ Building support for the 46E improvement concepts.

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- ✓ Engaging local stakeholders and non-traditional participants
- ✓ Engaging interregional stakeholders.

### Corridor Goals

The Study Team has established a set of goals for the future of the Corridor. The Study Team is working to ensure that any designed improvements support these goals.

- ✓ Separating local, regional and interregional traffic
- ✓ Ensuring goods movement
- ✓ Fostering connectivity in all directions
- ✓ Increasing safety and efficiency
- ✓ Providing a decent level of service
- ✓ Promoting multi-modal movement
- ✓ Enhancing community cohesion, character and quality of life.

### Corridor Study Goals

The Study Team has established the following goals for the Corridor Study Process and Product.

- ✓ Ensuring coordination with existing planning processes and current projects
- ✓ Providing guidance for near-term decisions
- ✓ Developing sustainable agreements over time
- ✓ Ensuring flexibility
- ✓ Creating fundable, feasible and phaseable concepts for the short, medium and long term
- ✓ Ensuring environmental enhancement, preservation and stewardship
- ✓ Gaining stakeholder acceptance
- ✓ Developing a well-designed solution.

## IV. Participant Groups and Interested Parties

In consultation with the Study Team, MIG has identified the following participant groups and interested parties and organizations that will be integrated into the public engagement process. A comprehensive list is provided in appendix A.

### Stakeholders

Agencies, groups and individuals directly impacted by Corridor Improvements including non-traditional participants such as low-income, senior and Spanish speaking populations. Explicit efforts will be made to engage non-traditional participants through translation of outreach materials and coordination with Community Based Organizations to conduct targeted involvement activities. The participation and inclusion of interregional stakeholders such as tourism and trucking associations will be sought as well.

### Elected Officials

Elected officials must be actively engaged and kept informed of public engagement activities so they can be responsive to constituents who have concerns about or interest in the corridor.

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### General Public

Input will be solicited from a wide variety of individuals that have a relationship with the corridor based on direct interest or geographic proximity. Explicit efforts will be made to engage non-traditional participants through translation of outreach materials and coordination with Community Based Organizations to conduct targeted involvement activities.

### V. Key Messages and Questions

Public engagement activities will be designed to emphasize the following key messages defined by the Study Team:

- i. Highway 46E corridor improvements will result in long-term:
  - ✓ Long-term safety
  - ✓ Increased traffic capacity
  - ✓ Stronger local economy
  - ✓ Improved local, regional and interregional circulation
  - ✓ Increased mobility and quality of life
  - ✓ Improved North/ South connectivity across 46E.
- ii. Corridor improvements are needed and developing them now will reduce traffic delay and minimize safety issues.
- iii. The consequences of inaction are significant.
- iv. Land use and transportation decisions can support quality of community and cohesiveness while reducing sprawl.

Public engagement activities will be designed to answer the following key questions identified by the Study Team:

- i. Which of the technically feasible solutions are most acceptable or desirable?
- ii. What are the Pros/Cons and tradeoffs of the different concepts (including no change)?
- iii. How can corridor improvements enhance the community's quality of life?
- iv. What is the value to you of well-functioning infrastructure?

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## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

### VI. Public Engagement Phases and Activities

#### Phase One: *Public Assessment*

**Phase Goal:** Identify audiences, assess key issues and design process.

**Specific**

**Deliverables:** Study Team Meetings  
Branding

**Activity**

**Description:** MIG staff will continue to meet with the Study Team, and develop a Highway 46E Comprehensive Corridor Study “Look and Feel” that can be used in all related materials including website, newsletter and media outreach.

**Phase**

**Timeline:** October - December 2007

#### Phase Two: *Education and Information*

**Phase Goal:** Inform the public about corridor needs, goals and principles through workshop, web and print outreach.

**Specific**

**Deliverables:** Stakeholder Interviews  
Newsletter # 1: Need, Goals and Principles  
Community Workshop # 1 (March 5): Need, Goals and Principles  
Study Team Meeting  
Website  
Speakers Kit  
Media Outreach  
Outreach through Community Leaders and CBOs

**Phase**

**Timeline:** January 2008 - March 2008

**Activity**

**Description:** During phase two, MIG will conduct stakeholder interviews with an agreed upon list of stakeholders to test and refine the proposed public engagement process. In advance of the March 5th workshop, a project website will be launched and a project newsletter and save-the-date postcard will be mailed to property owners in the study area. Outreach efforts will be complemented by outreach through Community Leaders and Community Based Organizations. Efforts will be made to ensure multi-lingual participation and representation from non-traditional groups. The educational community workshop will be designed to inform attendees about the corridor Need, Goals and Principles. MIG will coordinate and facilitate one Study Team meeting during Phase Two and provide materials to assist Study

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Team members with briefings to Elected Officials. Input generated during this phase will allow decision makers and agency staff to determine public interest and support for improvement concepts in the area.

### Phase Three: *Concept Review*

**Phase Goal:** Provide opportunities for area residents and stakeholders to provide meaningful input to the Study Team about proposed corridor improvement concepts. Input generated will allow the Study Team to move closer towards selection of a preferred improvement concept using community input. Phase Three activities will generate information and specific community feedback that Caltrans staff can incorporate into the Comprehensive Corridor Study.

#### Specific

**Deliverables:** Community Workshop # 2: 46E Improvement Concepts  
Newsletter # 2: 46E Improvement Concepts  
2 Study Team Meetings  
Speakers Kit  
Media Outreach  
Outreach through Community Leaders and CBOs  
2 Website Updates  
4 Stakeholder Group Interviews

#### Phase

**Timeline:** April -July 2008

#### Activity

**Description:** Phase three will continue with activities similar to those from phase two including website and newsletter updates. The community workshop will feature a virtual-community tour and visual aids such as maps, models and simulations illustrating the alternative improvement concepts. In advance of the community workshop, MIG will coordinate and facilitate 4 stakeholder group interviews to preview alternative improvement concepts. Identified stakeholder groups include residential, business and institutional property owners. Spanish speakers are also identified as a stakeholder group. The stakeholder group interviews will be held in advance of the community workshop to provide input to MIG and Caltrans to design an effective public meeting. An improvement concept survey will also be made available on the project website following the public meeting. MIG will coordinate and facilitate two Study Team meetings during phase three and provide speakers kit materials to assist Study Team members with Elected Official briefings. The completion of Phase Three will coincide with the completion of the draft Comprehensive Corridor Study.

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### Phase Four: *Reflection and Completion*

**Phase Goal:** Incorporate public comment generated during Phase Four into final CCS. Outreach efforts are designed to reflect the public impact on the planning process and completion of CCS.

#### Specific

**Deliverables:** Community Workshop #3: Open House  
Study Team Meeting  
Newsletter: Draft CCS Plan  
Media Outreach  
Speakers Kit  
Website Update  
Public Engagement Evaluation

#### Phase

**Timeline:** August – September 2008

#### Activity

**Description:** Phase Four will emphasize the planning and educational accomplishments of the public engagement process. The community workshop will be designed in an open house style that will feature informational booths/ displays and allow residents to visit at their own pace to learn about particular topics. Newsletter, Media Outreach, Speakers Kit and website materials generated during this phase will describe the work completed to date and offer ideas for how residents and interested parties can stay engaged in local transportation planning projects. A public engagement evaluation survey will be made available on the project website during this project phase. MIG will coordinate and facilitate one Study Team meeting during Phase Four and provide materials to assist Study Team members with Elected Official briefings.

#### **Study Team, Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee meetings**

MIG will facilitate four Study Team meetings throughout the Public Engagement Process. The four Study Team meetings will ensure continued coordination between the public engagement process as planned and current developments in the area.

This draft Public Engagement plan calls for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to meet five times and for the Steering Committee (SC) to meet three times during the Public Engagement process, providing providing opportunities for plan refinement and addressing technical issues as needed. MIG will attend and facilitate the Steering Committee (SC) meetings.

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### Appendix A: Participant Groups and Interested Parties

#### Stakeholders

Cuesta College  
School Districts  
Major developers  
AAA  
Winery organizations such as San Luis Obispo Vintners and Growers Association  
Community Based Organizations, contact information to be provided by Caltrans PIO.  
Local trucking association chapter  
County Farm Bureau  
Migrant workers  
Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce  
Local/ Regional tourism groups  
Mid-State Fair/ Event Center  
Advocacy groups such as Fix 46  
Emergency response personnel from CDF and the City of Paso Robles  
San Luis Obispo County Visitors and Conference Bureau  
Advisory groups in San Miguel and Shandon  
Airport Advisory Board  
Home builders association  
Homeowners association  
Development Community (BIA)  
Public Transit/ Bike and Pedestrian Groups  
CA Main Street Program  
Senior Citizen Advisory/ Youth Commission  
Low-income  
North County Watch  
California Youth Authority  
SLO County Bicycle Coalition  
SLO County Manufacturers Association

#### Study Team and Partner Agencies

Caltrans  
SLOCOG  
SLO County Public Works  
City of Paso Robles  
County Planning Dept: Jay Johnston  
City/County Planning Commissions

#### Elected Officials

Paso Robles City Council  
SLOCOG Board  
SLO County Board of Supervisors

#### General Public

Other residents, property owners and businesses