



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

2025 UPDATE





June 18, 2025

The Washington State Department of Transportation is proud to present an updated Community Engagement Plan, consistent with the agency's strategic plan, federal requirements for a public involvement plan, and new state-level requirements under the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) act.

Access and participation of diverse communities in decision making is a high priority for WSDOT. It is our intent to facilitate equitable participation and incorporate meaningful and direct involvement of overburdened communities and vulnerable populations into new and existing activities and programs.

This plan includes how WSDOT will identify and prioritize overburdened communities, best practices, direction on tools to evaluate and understand the nature and needs of potentially affected people, processes supporting equity and inclusion, and methods for engaging those who face barriers to participation.

WSDOT's Community Engagement Plan guides how the agency engages with partners, stakeholders, Tribes and communities for all WSDOT efforts. Strategies in this plan can be implemented immediately to increase community access to decision making, support a resilient transportation system, and improve public access to agency information.

This plan provides a broad policy framework and principles to guide engagement efforts agency-wide. It is not intended to replace other guidance, communications plans, or reference materials. It serves as a WSDOT policy document that guides development and implementation of more specific engagement plans and guidance.

WSDOT takes the development and input into this plan seriously. The engagement process for this plan included soliciting input from community organizations, listening sessions, and a public review and comment period of 45 days. Emphasis was given to collecting input from vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

This plan will be revised and updated as appropriate to meet ongoing needs to strengthen partnerships and develop ongoing relationships. WSDOT is dedicated to reviewing and improving our processes, and this plan will be updated as feedback is received.

ENGLISH

Title VI Notice to Public

It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OECR's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7090.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equity and Civil Rights at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

ESPAÑOL

Notificación de Título VI al Público

La política del Departamento de Transporte del Estado de Washington (Washington State Department of Transportation, WSDOT) es garantizar que ninguna persona, por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional, según lo dispuesto en el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, sea excluida de la participación, se le nieguen los beneficios o se le discrimine de otro modo en cualquiera de sus programas y actividades. Cualquier persona que considere que se ha violado su protección del Título VI puede presentar una queja ante la Oficina de Equidad y Derechos Civiles (Office of Equity and Civil Rights, OECR) del WSDOT. Para obtener más información sobre los procedimientos de queja del Título VI o información sobre nuestras obligaciones contra la discriminación, comuníquese con el coordinador del Título VI de la OECR al (360) 705-7090.

Información de la Ley sobre Estadounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA, por sus siglas en inglés)

Este material puede estar disponible en un formato alternativo al enviar un correo electrónico a la Oficina de Equidad y Derechos Civiles a wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov o llamando a la línea sin cargo 855-362-4ADA(4232). Personas sordas o con discapacidad auditiva pueden solicitar la misma información llamando al Washington State Relay al 711.

한국어 – KOREAN

제6조 관련 공지사항

워싱턴 주 교통부(WSDOT)는 1964년 민권법 타이틀 VI 규정에 따라, 누구도 인종, 피부색 또는 출신 국가를 근거로 본 부서의 모든 프로그램 및 활동에 대한 참여가 배제되거나 혜택이 거부되거나, 또는 달리 차별받지 않도록 하는 것을 정책으로 하고 있습니다. 타이틀 VI에 따른 그/그녀에 대한 보호 조항이 위반되었다고 생각된다면 누구든지 WSDOT의 평등 및 민권 사무국(OECR)에 민원을 제기할 수 있습니다. 타이틀 VI에 따른 민원 처리 절차에 관한 보다 자세한 정보 및/또는 본 부서의 차별금지 의무에 관한 정보를 원하신다면, (360) 705-7090으로 OECR의 타이틀 VI 담당자에게 연락해주시시오.

미국 장애인법(ADA) 정보

본 자료는 또한 평등 및 민권 사무국에 이메일 wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov 을 보내시거나 무료 전화 855-362-4ADA(4232)로 연락하셔서 대체 형식으로 받아보실 수 있습니다. 청각 장애인은 워싱턴주 중계 711로 전화하여 요청하실 수 있습니다.

русский – RUSSIAN

Раздел VI Общественное заявление

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Закон США о защите прав граждан с ограниченными возможностями (ADA)

Эту информацию можно получить в альтернативном формате, отправив электронное письмо в Ведомство по вопросам равенства и гражданских прав по адресу wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov или позвонив по бесплатному телефону 855-362-4ADA(4232). Глухие и слабослышащие лица могут сделать запрос, позвонив в специальную диспетчерскую службу штата Вашингтон по номеру 711.

tiếng Việt – VIETNAMESE

Thông báo Khoản VI dành cho công chúng

Chính sách của Sở Giao Thông Vận Tải Tiểu Bang Washington (WSDOT) là bảo đảm không để cho ai bị loại khỏi sự tham gia, bị từ khước quyền lợi, hoặc bị kỳ thị trong bất cứ chương trình hay hoạt động nào vì lý do chủng tộc, màu da, hoặc nguồn gốc quốc gia, theo như quy định trong Mục VI của Đạo Luật Dân Quyền năm 1964. Bất cứ ai tin rằng quyền bảo vệ trong Mục VI của họ bị vi phạm, đều có thể nộp đơn khiếu nại cho Văn Phòng Bảo Vệ Dân Quyền và Bình Đẳng (OECR) của WSDOT. Muốn biết thêm chi tiết liên quan đến thủ tục khiếu nại Mục VI và/hoặc chi tiết liên quan đến trách nhiệm không kỳ thị của chúng tôi, xin liên lạc với Phối Trí Viên Mục VI của OECR số (360) 705-7090.

Thông tin về Đạo luật Người Mỹ tàn tật (Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA)

Tài liệu này có thể thực hiện bằng một hình thức khác bằng cách email cho Văn Phòng Bảo Vệ Dân Quyền và Bình Đẳng wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov hoặc gọi điện thoại miễn phí số, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Người điếc hoặc khiếm thính có thể yêu cầu bằng cách gọi cho Dịch vụ Tiếp âm Tiểu bang Washington theo số 711.

العربية – ARABIC

العنوان 6 إشعار للجمهور

تتمثل سياسة وزارة النقل في ولاية واشنطن (WSDOT) في ضمان عدم استبعاد أي شخص، على أساس العرق أو اللون أو الأصل القومي من المشاركة في أي من برامجها وأنشطتها أو الحرمان من الفوائد المتاحة بموجبها أو التعرض للتمييز فيها بخلاف ذلك، كما هو منصوص عليه في الباب السادس من قانون الحقوق المدنية لعام 1964. ويمكن لأي شخص يعتقد أنه تم انتهاك حقوقه التي يكفلها الباب السادس تقديم شكوى إلى مكتب المساواة والحقوق المدنية (OECR) التابع لوزارة النقل في ولاية واشنطن. للحصول على معلومات إضافية بشأن إجراءات الشكاوى وأو بشأن التزاماتنا بعدم التمييز بموجب الباب السادس، يرجى الاتصال بمنسق الباب السادس في مكتب المساواة والحقوق المدنية على الرقم (360) 705-7090.

معلومات قانون الأمريكيين ذوي الإعاقة (ADA)

يمكن توفير هذه المواد في تنسيق بديل عن طريق إرسال رسالة بريد إلكتروني إلى مكتب المساواة والحقوق المدنية على wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov أو عن طريق الاتصال بالرقم المجاني: (360) 705-7090. يمكن للأشخاص الصم أو ضعاف السمع تقديم طلب عن طريق الاتصال بخدمة Washington State Relay على الرقم 711.

中文 – CHINESE

《权利法案》Title VI公告

<華盛頓州交通部(WSDOT)政策規定，按照《1964年民權法案》第六篇規定，確保無人因種族、膚色或國籍而被排除在WSDOT任何計畫和活動之外，被剝奪相關權益或以其他方式遭到歧視。如任何人認為其第六篇保護權益遭到侵犯，則可向WSDOT的公平和民權辦公室(OECR)提交投訴。如需關於第六篇投訴程式的更多資訊和/或關於我們非歧視義務的資訊，請聯絡OECR的第六篇協調員，電話(360) 705-7090。

《美国残疾人法案》(ADA)信息

可向公平和民權辦公室發送電子郵件wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov或撥打免費電話 855-362-4ADA(4232)，以其他格式獲取此資料。听力丧失或听觉障碍人士可拨打711联系Washington州转接站。

Af-soomaaliga – SOMALI

Ciwaanka VI Ogeysiiska Dadweynaha

Waa siyaasada Waaxda Gaadiidka Gobolka Washington (WSDOT) in la xaqiijiyo in aan qofna, ayadoo la cuskanaayo sababo la xariira isir, midab, ama wadanku kasoo jeedo, sida ku qoran Title VI (Qodobka VI) ee Sharciga Xaquuqda Madaniga ah ah oo soo baxay 1964, laga saarin ka qaybgalka, loo diidin faa'iidooyinka, ama si kale loogu takoorin barnaamijyadeeda iyo shaqooyinkeeda. Qof kasta oo aaminsan in difaaciisa Title VI la jebiyay, ayaa cabasho u gudbin kara Xafiiska Sinaanta iyo Xaquuqda Madaniga ah (OECR) ee WSDOT. Si aad u hesho xog dheeraad ah oo ku saabsan hanaannada cabashada Title VI iyo/ama xogta la xariirta waajibbaadkeena ka caagan takoorka, fadlan la xariir Iskuduwaha Title VI ee OECR oo aad ka wacayso (360) 705-7090.

Macluumaadka Xeerka Naafada Marykanka (ADA)

Agabkaan ayaad ku heli kartaa qaab kale adoo iimeel u diraa Xafiiska Sinaanta iyo Xaquuqda Madaniga ah oo aad ka helayso wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov ama adoo wacaaya laynka bilaashka ah, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Dadka naafada maqalka ama maqalku ku adag yahay waxay ku codsan karaan wicitaanka Adeega Gudbinta Gobolka Washington 711.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to use this document. 7

Introduction. 8

Community engagement foundation 9

How to use this chapter. 10

Community engagement: It’s the law. 10

Washington State Environmental Justice Council Values & Guidance. 13

WSDOT’s community engagement guiding principles (in no particular order) 15

WSDOT Strategic Plan. 17

WSDOT’s commitment to community engagement: One size does not fit all. 17

Community member guide 21

Purpose of this guide 22

Delivering transportation services: Understanding the process. 22

Transportation system & service delivery business process 23

Engagement procedures for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Process 27

Engagement strategies. 32

Chapter highlights. 33

Strategies for engagement and decision-making with communities. 33

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 38

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) 39

Engaging with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations 39

What is tailored engagement? 41

Community compensation. 44

Childcare 44

Spectrum of Community Engagement. 48

Assessing effective engagement 49

Measuring success 50

Appendices. 52

Interagency work group Tribal Government to Government Engagement Guide 53

Interagency work group Native American Communities Engagement Guide 57

Interagency work group Tribal Definitions 60

Best Practices for Community Engagement 63

<i>WSDOT - Office of Equity and Civil Rights</i>	76
<i>WSDOT Tribal Liaison</i>	76
<i>Communications at WSDOT</i>	76
<i>WSDOT Publications Services Index</i>	76
<i>MPO/RTPO/WSDOT directory</i>	77
<i>NCHRP practical approaches for involving traditionally underserved populations in transportation decision-making</i>	77
<i>WSDOT Visual Engineering Resource Group (VERG) - Visualizations, video, photography & UAV</i>	77
<i>Federal requirements</i>	77

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This guide describes WSDOT engagement practices, including how to engage overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. It describes how to facilitate equitable participation and support meaningful, direct involvement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

This document is intended to provide guidance to WSDOT employees and the general public on WSDOT's community engagement program and process.

The information provided here is not intended to cover all situations and contexts in the community for the service delivery process.

The resources in this guide should be used in coordination with other department guidance such as the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Plan, Title VI Plan, Limited English Proficiency Plan, Design Manual, Communications Manual, and environmental justice guidance.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the legal and policy requirements for community engagement.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provides a community member's guide to engaging in the WSDOT approach to decision-making.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is intended to provide guidance for WSDOT staff including an overview of WSDOT's planning and project development process for community engagement, basic engagement strategies, and resources for community engagement activities. It also provides strategies and recommendations for collecting and using demographic data and details about tailoring engagement activities to traditionally underserved populations.

Chapter 4

The purpose of this chapter is to guide staff in the assessment of engagement effectiveness including strategies to analyze culturally responsive engagement.

Appendices

The appendices include Tribal engagement guidance from the interagency work group established by the HEAL Act, diverse case studies that highlight different successful methods for community engagement, and additional resources.

INTRODUCTION

Washington state has a variety of beautiful landscapes from the Puget Sound to the Columbia River, from the Pacific Ocean to the Idaho border. WSDOT staff, as residents and employees, take pride in living and working in that beautiful environment alongside people of different cultures and life experiences.

The mission of WSDOT is to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation options to improve communities and economic vitality for people and businesses. WSDOT achieves this through operating and maintaining the state portions of the transportation system, identifying performance gaps, and developing strategies to address the performance gaps and aligning effectively with other transportation providers.

Each of these responsibilities require interaction and/or coordination with community and advocacy groups, chambers of commerce, downtown associations, tribes, local, state, and federal government agencies, other stakeholders, and the general public - but in different ways. For example, WSDOT must find a way to build informed consent from these stakeholders during the planning and project development process. Informed consent means agreeing on desired outcomes from a plan, program or project to ensure that the public's best interest is met. WSDOT strives to balance the unique goals of a community, while still adhering to state and federal requirements and best practices. The goal is to focus on finding options together that work to achieve multiple measures of success not just a single transportation measure such as the quality of traffic service (i.e. level of service) or speed.

Community engagement is also required by federal and state law and WSDOT policy. The practices to implement meaningful and equitable community engagement in WSDOT policy, plans, programs and projects is driven by our Community Engagement Guiding Principles. These principles are based on existing WSDOT guidance and federal and state requirements. They help carry out WSDOT's approach to project delivery. When done well, community engagement helps to ensure projects are developed within appropriate contexts, avoids costly delays, provides an opportunity for educating the public on what WSDOT does and why it's done, and builds community support and trust.

This guide identifies and expresses WSDOT's commitment to public participation in decision making in plans, programs and projects that will affect how their communities will benefit. It provides tools and strategies to optimize communications. This update to the plan enhances guidance to staff, provides a community member's guide to engaging, and discusses assessing the effectiveness of engagement efforts.

For more information on WSDOT's public involvement program, please contact the Multimodal Planning & Data Division:

Washington State Department of Transportation
310 Maple Park Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98504
360-705-7000

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/send-us-your-feedback>

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning>

Community Engagement Plan

Chapter

1

Community Engagement Foundation

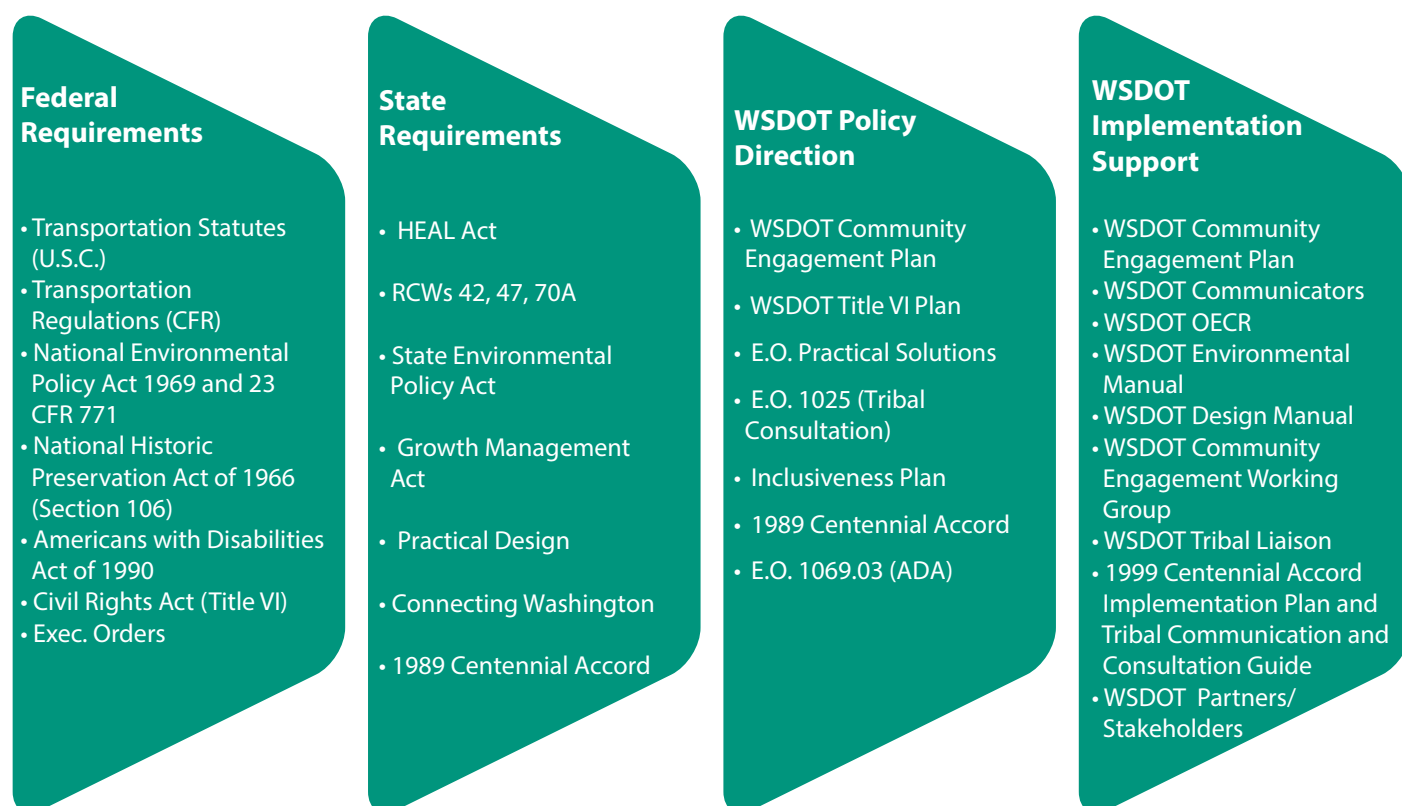
HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background and context for all WSDOT staff on community engagement. It includes the following:

- Introduction to federal and state requirements for community engagement.
- Community engagement values and guidance from the Washington State Environmental Justice Council.
- WSDOT's Community Engagement Guiding Principles.
- An overview of the WSDOT strategic plan.
- Introduction to WSDOT's Community Engagement Policy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: IT'S THE LAW

State and federal law are where the majority of the requirements for involving the community in transportation decision making can be found. However, public involvement is more than just following requirements and regulations. Engaging the public and communities at specific and key points in the transportation decision making process can result in better projects and more timely project delivery. WSDOT has also developed policies around equity and project delivery that set a high bar for community engagement. The figure below represents the elements of the starting point for development of a community engagement program. The level of effort, resources required and strategies used will vary from project to project and from plan to plan.



Federal requirements

Federal requirements for community engagement illustrate the important role it plays in understanding, assessing and addressing effects of transportation decisions on individuals and communities.

United States Code (U.S.C.) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) call for public involvement (synonymous with community engagement) in numerous locations including 23 U.S.C. 135, 49 U.S.C., 23 CFR 450.210 and 40 CFR. Additional requirements for involving the public are found in the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act, and executive orders on Tribal Consultation. Specific details on federal requirements can be found in the legislation which is available online at www.gpo.gov. Links are provided in Appendix E.

The objectives identified in federal requirements as applied to this community engagement plan can be summarized as:

- Nondiscriminatory processes/activities.
- Early and continuous public involvement.
- Inclusionary practices in activities and notifications.
- Consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved.
- Collaboration with other agencies, tribal and local governments, private sector representatives, and other officials.
- Convenient and accessible meeting times and locations.
- Reasonable access to information.
- Timely notice of engagement activities, including review periods.
- Acknowledgment and consideration of public comments.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

In November 2021, President Biden signed into law the current federal transportation authorization act which governs federal surface transportation. The IIJA extended enacted funding levels through federal fiscal year 2022 and reauthorized surface transportation programs for fiscal years 2023 - 2026. The IIJA builds upon the previous surface transportation act, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, which was enacted in 2015. Under the IIJA, public involvement remains a key factor in the planning process. Accordingly, WSDOT strives to enhance its efforts to:

- Provide explicit consideration and response to public comment.
- Provide timely information about public meetings.
- Provide convenient and accessible public meeting locations.
- Engage a variety of stakeholders in transportation decision making including; but not limited to; residents, public agencies, public and private transportation providers, persons with disabilities, and bicycle and pedestrian facility users.

Washington state requirements

In 2021, The Washington State Legislature passed Substitute Bill 5141, more commonly known as the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act implementing recommendations from the statewide Environmental Justice Task Force. The HEAL Act is codified as Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 70A, which states, “The purpose of this chapter is to reduce environmental and health disparities in Washington state and improve the health of all Washington state residents.”

RCW 70A.02.050, Equitable community engagement and public participation, states that, “By July 1, 2022 each covered agency must create and adopt a community engagement plan that describes how it will engage with overburdened communities.”

Washington’s requirements for community engagement emphasize the commitment to the public made by the legislature, governor, and agencies in Washington. Additional state requirements can be found in:

- Revised Code of Washington (RCW).
- Washington’s Growth Management Act (GMA).
- Washington Administrative Code (WAC).
- The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), including the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Environmental Assessment (EA) Processes.
- Secretary’s Executive Orders.
- WSDOT Centennial Accord Plan.

WSDOT Mission	WSDOT Vision	WSDOT Values
We provide safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation options to improve communities and economic vitality for people and businesses.	Washington travelers have a safe, sustainable and integrated multimodal transportation system.	Safety Engagement Innovation Integrity Leadership Sustainability

WASHINGTON STATE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VALUES AND GUIDANCE

The Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act creates a coordinated approach to reducing environmental health disparities across Washington State. The HEAL Act established the Environmental Justice Council to provide guidance to state agencies on how to integrate environmental justice into different facets of their work. The Community Engagement Committee was created by the Council to lead the discussion on community engagement with the agencies. The committee and the Council believe that authentic community engagement is the heart of environmental justice. Community engagement is a two-way communication process between government and the public.ⁱ As such the following values are foundational to community engagement, and the guidance are reflective of these values. While the guidance is designed for state agencies, they can be useful for communities as they review and evaluate how agencies are engaging with communities. (Appendices are being prepared to accompany and support the values and guidance. These will be presented to the Council at a later date.)

- 1. Community-centered:** With a focus on those closest to the pain: Power, dialog, and knowledge production must be done with community as equal partners. The use of lived experience, story, participatory, qualitative, and arts-based methods that accurately convey community concerns must be prioritized as at least equal to western and quantitative methods for transformational change.
- 2. Equity-centered:** We work to make meaningful change with communities that have been historically oppressed, denied resources, and extracted from for the benefit of others. The goal is to eliminate racial hierarchies and advance collective liberation, where Black, Indigenous and People of Color, in particular, have the dignity, resources, power, and self-determination to fully thrive.
- 3. Accessible:** Work should be done in locations where community is in partnership with community-based organizations and community leaders, in ways that utilize multiple ways of knowing, in ways that share power, and with results that are usable by community. Translation services and disability inclusion through accommodations should be provided.
- 4. Authentic:** Community is the expert of their lived reality. Engagement with community should be authentic, ongoing and non-extractive, and value community knowledge through reciprocity.
- 5. Accountable (Reciprocal Trust):** Government must acknowledge their past and current missteps and take action to create a better relationship currently and in the future through Truth and Reconciliationⁱⁱ. At the same time, government often distrusts community knowledge and work if it is not based on quantitative data (even if the numbers are not accurate or real). Authentic partnership with community can lead to data that is a more accurate representation of their truth.
- 6. Intersectional:** We coalition build by doing intersectional work to make a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable movement that explores the nuance of how identities such as gender, race, disability, sexuality, religion, citizenship, age, and more have led to disproportionate burdens from environmental inequities.
- 7. Interconnectedness:** We are interwoven with all people of the world, the environment, and the living and non-living world. Only through working together and seeing the humanity of us all can we replace individualism that leads to extractive relationships with people and the environment towards reciprocal relationships to address inequities and climate change.

Therefore, the Environmental Justice Council guidance is that outreach and community engagement shall:

1. Demonstrate respect and value for community cultural practices and expressions, ways of knowing, forms and sources of community leadership, and specific, local expertise. (Reflective of Values #1: Community Centered and #4: Authentic)
2. Center, acknowledge, trust, and amplify voices of marginalized, vulnerable communities experiencing unaddressed environmental health disparities. Remember that community is the pre-eminent expert in their reality. (Reflective of Values #4: Authentic and #7: Interconnectedness)
3. In planning and conducting community engagement, incorporate an understanding of the impacts of historical, contemporary and structural forms of racial and other oppressions. Incorporate this understanding into analytical methodologies agencies use when determining community impacts, mitigations, reparative benefits and the implementation of community engagement. The community engaged should be the primary beneficiary. (Reflective of Values #3: Accessible, #4: Authentic, and #5: Accountable [Reciprocal Trust])
4. When planning and conducting community engagement, utilize multiple forms of culturally responsive research including quantitative, qualitative, and community driven methodologies and approaches to collaborative, and applied research that center community cultural values, voice, and agency. Ask the right questions, do the research in a non-extractive and anti-racist way to avoid disengagement, analyze the data in a non-deficit way, and the data/end product should be usable by community. (Reflective of Values #1: Community Centered, #5: Accountable [Reciprocal Trust], #6: Intersectional, and #7: Interconnectedness)
5. Prioritize transparency in data collection by preserving raw data and creating opportunities for communities to re-analyze it. Recognize that publicly available data sometimes minimizes community-based data. Utilize community-based research methods including multiple qualitative and quantitative data sources to identify marginalized, vulnerable sub-populations within communities that might require unique approaches for engagement. (Reflective of Values #1: Community Centered, #3: Accessible, and #6: Intersectional)
6. In collaboration with communities, identify and use culturally and linguistically responsive and effective outreach and community engagement methods and materials. (Reflective of Values #1: Community Centered, #3: Accessible, and #4: Authentic)
7. Fully and concurrently utilize a wide variety of methods to conduct and engage communities in the ways and venues preferred by communities themselves. Make sure materials are accessible to community members without technology, prefer not to use technology, or have low literacy. (Reflective of Values #1: Community-Centered, #2: Equity-Centered, #3: Accessible, and #4: Authentic)
8. Ensure that community meetings take place during times and locations when community members are available. (Reflective of Value #3: Accessible)
9. Consider the impacts of community engagement on communities. Provide needed social supports such as funding for community-based resources that communities identify to help mitigate and process the trauma experienced from the engagement itself. (Reflective of Values #1: Community-Centered, #2: Equity-Centered, and #3: Accessible)

10. Treat the valuable engagement with reciprocity in the form of gifts, food, and compensation which is a baseline of exchange for knowledge and experience communities are sharing with the state that they would otherwise not have access to. (Reflective of Values #2: Equity-Centered and #3: Accessible)

11. Coordinate and collaborate among state agencies when engaging with communities. (Reflective of value #1: Community Centered)

12. Provide a report on how the above guidance is integrated in community engagement, and lessons learned. (Reflective of Value #5: Accountable [Reciprocal Trust])

i From Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Community Engagement Guide, <https://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MAPC-Community-Engagement-Guide-2016.pdf>. ii

Truth and Reconciliation: "Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior" (Canada's TRC Report 2008). https://web.archive.org/web/20200430162813/http://www.trc.ca/assets/pdf/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

WSDOT has developed Guiding Principles for Community Engagement to help staff when planning and preparing for community engagement.

WSDOT'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES (IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER)

Identify and prioritize overburdened communities

Understand the community and the history of a place before engaging. Use both quantitative and qualitative data in your discovery. Use quantitative screening tools that integrate environmental, demographic and health disparities data and work to evaluate and understand the nature and needs of the people impacted by significant actions. Facilitate equitable participation and support meaningful and direct involvement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

Connect and engage

Become active members of communities and go to the places they gather. Take advantage of opportunities to work with community members, volunteers and leaders and find out their priorities and perspectives. Reach out to interested parties that cannot attend meetings and receive their feedback. Seek out voices not traditionally heard, including people who are traditionally unable to participate due to age, disability, income or national origin.

Listen and act

Focus on listening to what people are sharing before responding. Confirm that the intended message is understood. Receive and act on feedback.

Facilitate communications

Help groups listen to each other and explore new ideas. Solicit input by encouraging everyone to speak up. Check in with the group as a whole, as well as with individual participants, to gauge their comfort levels.

Help each other succeed

Share resources and information with the various WSDOT regions, divisions, and offices to achieve success. Be aware that success is defined in different terms and outcomes. Be creative in defining work teams and understand how team members define success.

Maximize creativity and innovation

Seek out and use successful community engagement tools and techniques when conducting engagement. Prevent requirements from being the only focus of engagement.

Blend diverse inputs

Be sensitive to other perspectives when receiving input. Understand that how WSDOT evaluates and responds to comments from governments, stakeholders and the public is critical, especially if there are opposing viewpoints. Remember that all comments are considered, even if they are not directly incorporated.

Provide access to the process and foster inclusiveness

Rely on effective one-way and two-way communication throughout the process. Strive for transparent conversations that include diverse people, opinions, ideas, and information. Remember that what works for one process or group may not be as effective for others.

Be a wise steward of the public's money

Be mindful of the use of everyone's time and money while ensuring adequate time and funding for community involvement in planning and project development. Achieve effective two-way engagement without exceeding limited budgets.

Consider the needs of the multimodal system

There are a variety of ways to move people and goods on Washington's transportation system. Consider all modes and offer choices and opportunities. Do not focus on just the goals of individual modes.

Be clear and open about the process

Inform and involve users of the transportation system in planning, construction, maintenance and stewardship of the transportation system. Encourage input at decision points, and involve interested parties throughout the process. Continue to exhibit a high level of integrity.

Involve communities

Engage governments, stakeholders, and the public early and continuously in our decision making process to lay the groundwork for success. Discuss what success means to WSDOT and then jointly define what success means to the community.

WSDOT STRATEGIC PLAN

The WSDOT Strategic Plan provides the vision, mission and values that guide the work of the agency. The important work of the agency is focused in three key areas: Diversity-Equity-Inclusion, Resilience and Workforce Development.

Our Vision is that Washington travelers have a safe, sustainable and integrated multimodal transportation system.

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation options to improve communities and economic vitality for people and businesses.

Our values are safety, engagement, innovation, integrity, leadership and sustainability.

You can read more about our strategic plan at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/secretary-transportation/strategic-plan>.

WSDOT'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Engagement strategies that are culturally responsive and tailored to the affected community can help achieve full and fair participation. Not all communities have the same level of understanding regarding public processes or community consultation processes. If we understand the barriers to participation in each community we can work to remove them.

Public involvement efforts should be flexible. Community engagement with one group or community may not be effective for other groups and communities. For example, some individuals do not have access to the internet or subscribe to newspapers. In these situations, engagement may need to be through different means such as working with community based organizations, posting notices at community gathering places, and so on. Tailoring engagement efforts to the affected community provides the opportunity for meaningful participation.

The engagement process should be tailored to match the specific context and complexity of the project and the community's information needs.

In developing a community engagement approach, it is important to recognize that various groups and communities may have existing social networks or non-traditional methods of communicating. The traditional methods of community engagement, including public hearings, is an uncomfortable concept for some. Their lack of participation does not necessarily represent a lack of interest or concern but rather a discomfort with the form of the meeting notice, setting, or method of engagement.

To genuinely and effectively engage local communities, the engagement approach may be non-traditional in the sense that it requires staff or consultants to explore and utilize a variety of sources

and means of communicating. In many communities there are existing social networks that can assist in identifying the most effective means of engaging these communities.

Consider culturally responsive engagement

Washington state is a diverse place full of communities with a rich fabric of cultural diversity. WSDOT considers culturally responsive engagement out of respect for that diversity and to help ensure we acknowledge and consider viewpoints that may not be initially apparent.

It is important to develop culturally responsive methods of communication depending on an individual community's cultural norms. These methods can help address culturally sensitive issues, reduce costly project delays and assure legal compliance.

Environmental justice

WSDOT strives to include all voices in transportation decisions and is committed to inclusive community engagement. WSDOT believes strongly in environmental justice.

State environmental justice principles

The Washington State Legislature created a statewide Environmental Justice Task Force in 2020, tasked with issuing a report by October of 2020. In 2021, the Legislature passed the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act, which is codified in RCW 70A.

Chapter 70A.02.005 states, "The purpose of this chapter is to reduce environmental and health disparities in Washington state and improve the health of all Washington state residents. This chapter implements the recommendations of the environmental justice task force established in section 221(48), chapter 415, Laws of 2019 entitled "Report to the Washington state governor and legislature, Environmental Justice Task Force: Recommendations for Prioritizing EJ in Washington State Government (October 2020)."

The EJ Task Force's Environmental Justice Principles are:

Achieve the highest attainable environmental quality and health outcomes for all people.

- Prioritize health of the land, humans, animals, air, water, and marine ecosystems.
- Create sustainable systems for production, consumption, processing, and distribution.
- Recognize the ecological unity and the interdependence of all species.
- Ensure the ethical, balanced, and responsible uses of land and resources in the interest of a sustainable Washington.
- Commit to actions that ensure all children have opportunities to reach their full health and life potential.

Adopt a racial justice lens.

- Commit to identifying and disrupting racism embedded in your organization, policies, protocols, practices, and decision-making.

- Dismantle all forms of racism, including environmental racism, by meaningfully partnering with communities to eliminate environmental and health disparities for Black people, Native and Indigenous people, and people of color.
- Develop public policy based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- Recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.

Engage community meaningfully.

- Prioritize continuous engagement with communities who face environmental injustices and continue to be underinvested and underserved.
- Recognize that people and communities hold intersecting identities that have been subject to systemic oppression including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, and disability status.
- Focus engagement on building long-term, trust-based relationships with cultural humility.
- Adequately fund opportunities for meaningful community engagement by supporting and providing opportunities for civic voice and community capacity building that builds on existing community priorities, research, and expertise. Value different “ways of knowing”¹ and share power between governments, Tribal nations, and Indigenous communities in decision-making, needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation to find community-driven solutions that are sustainable and amplify community assets.

Be transparent.

- Ensure participation and decision-making processes are equitable and accessible.
- Make information easily accessible and relevant to the public and ensure communications are culturally and linguistically grounded.
- Engage community in processes early and often (e.g. planning, funding, policy, evaluation).
- Provide clarity on how the community engagement process informs government processes.

Be accountable

- Embed equity and the elimination of environmental and health disparities into mission, planning, goals, and measures of progress.¹
- Center the community in identifying the problems, solutions, and successes.
- “Close the loop” with communities by sharing how their involvement shaped and informed decisions, and by gathering feedback on how the government can continue to improve service delivery and engagement.

¹ Refer to the EJTF’s recommendations for creating measurable goals and embedding EJ into strategic plans for guidance.

WSDOT incorporates state environmental justice principles into its programs, policies, and activities. This involves working with all communities in the planning, developing and operations of transportation projects. Additional information about WSDOT's approach to environmental justice can be found in the agency's Environmental Manual.

RCW 70A.02.010 Environmental Justice Definition

“Environmental justice” means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.”

Community Engagement Plan

Chapter

2

Community member guide

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide provides an overview of the state's transportation activities and describes how WSDOT conducts its work. It is tailored to the user's perspective to help Washingtonians understand how to navigate the process and what they can expect from WSDOT:

- What happens at each stage of the transportation decision making process?
- How are decisions made and how can I get involved to influence those decisions?
- What are the opportunities for engagement at each stage? What types of feedback are sought?

It's important to keep in mind that one size does not fit all. While this section describes in general terms the type of work WSDOT does in the various stages of delivering transportation services, WSDOT teams tailor their approaches for different kinds of activities based on the type of work, the complexity, and the communities affected.

Demographic analysis gives us an idea of how to tailor activities to meet the needs of communities, but that's only part of the story. Communities need to tell WSDOT what is needed. For example, if written materials are needed in an alternative format or language, or if specific equipment is needed to accommodate people with disabilities at a public meeting.

DELIVERING TRANSPORTATION SERVICES: UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

The Washington State Department of Transportation delivers transportation plans, projects and services consistent with laws, regulations, rules and expectations set by the federal and state government. Transportation policies are set in long range plans developed by the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) and by WSDOT.

We manage our system by operating, maintaining, and preserving existing transportation systems. We also work to identify needs, assess strategies, refine solutions and assign resources. This approach focuses on addressing performance objectives, ensures compliance with federal and state requirements, and ensures we are good stewards of public investment.

Each stage in this process has varying opportunities for the public to engage. More detail about each step is provided in the following pages, including:

- What actions occur and what decisions are made at this stage in the process?
- What tools/activities are typically used?
- What is my role at this stage?

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM & SERVICE DELIVERY BUSINESS PROCESS

Establishing the policy framework

Policy direction includes legislation, direction from the governor, federal rules and laws, and long-range plans developed by the state. The public can be involved in legislation through legislative members, the governor through the governor’s office, and federal laws and rules through Congressional representatives. Transportation plans that direct transportation policy in Washington include the Washington Transportation Plan and the Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan: Target Zero.

What actions occur and what decisions are made at this stage in the process?

Statewide plans establish a transportation vision and goals for the state, identify the future needs for the transportation system, and outline the strategic direction necessary to achieve these goals.

What tools/activities are typically used?

- Public in-person and virtual meetings.
- Web pages.
- Online open houses.
- Folios.
- Emails.
- Press releases.
- Newsletters.
- Regional and metropolitan planning organization (RTPO/MPO) meetings.
- Workshops.
- Advisory group.
- Social media.
- Tribal consultation.

What is my role at this stage?

Community input at this stage is important to help shape the vision, set the goals and outline a strategic direction. Roles for engagement include taking part in surveys, attending public meetings, participating in advisory groups or steering committees, or providing comments on or about draft documents.

A few examples of statewide transportation plans produced in Washington state:

Washington Transportation Plan	https://wstc.wa.gov/wtp/washington-transportation-plan/ https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/statewide-plans/washington-transportation-plan
Washington Aviation System Plan	https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/aviation/aviation-plans-studies/aviation-planning/washington-aviation-system-plan-wasp
Washington State Ferries Long Range Plan	https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/washington-state-ferries/about-us/washington-state-ferries-planning/washington-state-ferries-long-range-plan
Highway System Plan	https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/statewide-plans/highway-system-plan

Strategic Highway Safety Plan: Target Zero	https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/statewide-plans/strategic-highway-safety-plan-target-zero
Washington State Public Transportation Plan	https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/statewide-plans/public-transportation-plans
Washington State Freight System Plan	https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/statewide-plans/freight-rail-plans/freight-system-plan
Freight Mobility Plan	https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/statewide-plans/freight-plans

Managing system assets

Managing assets refers primarily to the operations, maintenance, and preservation of transportation systems and facilities including roadways, bridges, ferries, and other facilities.

What actions occur and what decisions are made at this stage in the process?

Engagement at this stage is designed differently because at this point the transportation asset already exists and we know we need to maintain, preserve and operate it. WSDOT strives to provide information, receive feedback, and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the community it serves.

What tools/activities are typically used?

- Governmental or quasi-governmental meetings.
- Folios/ Literature/ Newsletters.
- Television/ Radio.
- Responses to emails and phone calls.
- Press releases.
- Mailings.
- Travel displays.
- Open houses (online or in person).
- Community meetings (identified by community leaders).
- Regional and/or Metropolitan Planning Organization (RTPO/MPO) meetings.
- Informal (acquaintance, friend, family, etc.).
- One-on-one conversations/ Door knocking.
- Web pages & social media.
- Rest area billboards.
- Face-to-face on-site meetings.
- Portable changeable message signs.
- Providing information to and through schools.
- Service schedule changes.
- Vehicle reservations system.
- Tribal consultation.

EXAMPLES

- For conditions related to managing assets, you can use the WSDOT mobile app, look at cameras online, view travel time signs, or follow us on social media. Links to our social media are available at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/mobile-app-and-social-media>.
- The Maintenance Accountability Process (MAP) is a tool which measures and communicates the outcomes of the maintenance activities. It provides the tools to link strategic planning, the budget and maintenance service delivery. Once a year, field inspections are made of randomly selected sections of highway. The results of WSDOT's work are measured, recorded and compared to the MAP criteria to determine the level of service (LOS) delivered. You can access the tool on our website at the following address: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/accountability/maintenance-accountability-process>.
- Discover more about our agency performance and progress as well as how we measure it on the WSDOT Accountability site: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/accountability>.
- Report a highway maintenance issue.
- WSDOT Highway Maintenance oversees the day-to-day needs of maintaining our state's highway system. Our job is to maintain the highway infrastructure in good working order, keep people safe, and goods moving 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year.
- Online feedback form: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/send-us-your-feedback>.

What is my role at this stage?

As noted above, activities at this stage are primarily related to the operations, maintenance and preservation of the transportation system. Engagement at this stage often consists of keeping people informed and providing input into impacts of expected activities.

Identify needs and assess alternative strategies

At these stages, WSDOT works with local partners, stakeholders, and communities to evaluate performance of the transportation system, identify additional needs, and prioritize needs. Then strategies for addressing identified needs are examined.

What actions occur and what decisions are made at these stages in the process?

As WSDOT identifies the needs of the transportation network and assesses strategies to address the needs, opportunities for engagement exist both with the state and local governments. WSDOT region planning offices are a good place to get started, or you can attend local meetings such as those held by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs), tribal planning organizations, and local governments. WSDOT reaches out to other interested groups where appropriate or if requested. Examples of groups WSDOT may reach out to include community groups, home owner's associations, transit providers, senior groups, bicycle and pedestrian groups, environmental groups, business organizations, chambers of commerce, school districts, neighborhood organizations and others. Contact information for MPOs, RTPOs and WSDOT regions can be found at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/planning-guidance/tribal-regional-planning>.

What tools/activities are typically used?

- Stakeholder and executive committees.
- In-person, online or hybrid open houses.
- Presentations to local groups (audiences identified by community leaders).
- Surveys with social media (Facebook, X [formerly Twitter], SurveyMonkey).
- Public meetings with break-out sessions.
- Web pages.
- Folios.
- Emails.
- Press releases.
- Newsletters.
- RTPOs/MPOs.
- Workshops.
- Tribal consultation.

What is my role at this stage?

At these stages, engagement opportunities are to provide input on transportation system needs and related goals, offer suggestions, voice concerns, stay informed, and provide input into conceptual strategies.

Refine solutions and assign resources

What actions occur and what decisions are made at this stage in the process?

As WSDOT works to refine solutions and assign resources, it's important to understand the previous steps that have taken place. At these stages, the need for a plan, project or service has already been established and alternative strategies to meet the need have been examined. Engagement may focus on design elements of the solution and getting the most “bang for the buck” from available resources.

What tools/activities are typically used?

- Focus groups.
- Web pages.
- Social media.
- Open houses (online, in person or hybrid).
- Stakeholder group meetings.
- Presentations to local groups (audiences identified by community leaders).
- Surveys.
- Folios.
- Email.
- Press releases/newspapers.
- Mailings.
- Newsletters.
- Displays/kiosks/fairs.
- Existing community meetings.
- Tribal consultation.

Example; Community engagement & tribal consultation procedures for the statewide transportation improvement program

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program is a group of priority, multimodal transportation projects that will take place over four years, with a limited budget. The STIP is required and approved federally.

The projects were prioritized using Tribal, local, regional, and state planning and programming processes, and represent ways to preserve and improve the state's transportation network.

Only approved projects listed in the STIP can be authorized by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration to use federal funds.

Local agencies are required to develop and adopt six-year transportation programs, with at least one public hearing during their development. Local agencies work through their metropolitan planning or regional transportation planning organizations and lead county agency, as appropriate, to include projects in both the local and state transportation improvement programs. If an agency is submitting projects to the TIPs for selection, it must conduct public involvement. (NOTE: the Governor's Office and the state legislature seek public involvement during all phases of the biennial budget development and approval process).

Tribal nations are required by federal law to develop long-range transportation plans. They must also develop Tribal transportation improvement programs that include all Tribal transportation program funded projects set for construction in the next 3 to 5 years. The TTIPs can also include other federal, state, county and municipal transportation projects.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, FHWA, or the Tribal nation must involve the public when developing the long-range plan. The Tribal nation is required to conduct public involvement for the TTIP by publishing a notice in local or tribal newspapers when the draft TTIP is complete. In the absence of local public newspapers, the BIA or the Tribal nation may post notices under locally acceptable practices.

After approval by the Tribal government, TTIPs are forwarded to BIA or FHWA. A copy of the FHWA-approved TTIP is returned to the Tribal nation and BIA (The FHWA compiles the approved TTIPs into one document annually). Tribal projects are posted on the STIP webpage: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/support-local-programs/delivering-your-project/statewide-transportation-improvement-program-stip>.

In metropolitan areas, metropolitan planning organizations develop federally required metropolitan transportation plans (MTP) and metropolitan transportation improvement programs (MTIP). The MTP is a 20-year transportation plan for state highways, county roads, city streets and tribal roads within the MPO planning area boundary.

The MTPs are required to be updated at least every four years in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years for the other areas. Community engagement is required as per the MPO's public participation process. MTPs are approved by the MPO and then submitted to WSDOT, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, for informational purposes.

The MTIP is a four-year prioritized list of transportation projects that are consistent with the MTP. Before a project is included in the MTIP, the community is given an opportunity to review and

comment on it, as outlined in the metropolitan planning organization's public participation process. The MTIP includes all federally funded and regionally significant projects submitted by Tribes, cities, counties, the state and transit providers. The project list in the MTIPs are approved by the MPO and the WSDOT Secretary of Transportation. (NOTE: MPOs may, but are not required to, submit monthly updates to their MTIP for inclusion in the STIP. These are known as TIP amendments.)

A regional transportation planning organization is a state funded, voluntary association of local governments within a county or contiguous counties with members from cities, counties, WSDOT, Tribes, ports, transportation service providers, private employers and others within its organizational boundary. RTPOs were authorized by Washington state's 1990 Growth Management Act to ensure local and regional coordination of transportation planning and to develop applicable regional transportation plans and six-year regional transportation improvement programs. RTPOs can cover both urban and rural areas.

Based upon agreed procedures, lead county agencies, rural cities, Tribes, transit providers and the state can submit federally funded and regionally significant projects directly to WSDOT for inclusion in the STIP or to the RTPOs. Before a project is included in the RTIP list, the community is given an opportunity to review and comment on the project list, as per the RTPO's public participation process.

WSDOT ensures the RTP and the RTIP are consistent with state law, and if they are, WSDOT includes the first four years of the RTIP in the STIP without change. (NOTE: RTPOs may, but are not required to, submit monthly updates to their RTIP projects for inclusion in the STIP.)

Community engagement is encouraged by WSDOT throughout the STIP process: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/support-local-programs/delivering-your-project/statewide-transportation-improvement-program-stip>.

What is my role at this stage?

Engagement includes:

- Providing information to support technical review.
- Providing input to draft plans.
- Staying informed.

Opportunities can include:

- Participation in local groups.
- Participation in stakeholder or community meetings.
- Attending open houses.

Visit the WSDOT website or social media platforms to stay informed and to provide feedback. WSDOT headquarters or regional offices can help you get involved. Contact information is available at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/offices-regions>.

Develop funded solutions

What actions occur and what decisions are made at this stage in the process?

At this point in the service delivery process, a need has already been established, alternative strategies have been considered, a solution has been identified, and resources have been assigned. Engagement at this point often includes learning about what to expect when a project goes to construction or influencing decisions about design elements of the solution.

What tools/activities are typically used?

- Focus groups.
- Web pages.
- Social media.
- Online, in-person or hybrid open house.
- City council meetings.
- Stakeholder group meeting.
- Presentations to local communities (audiences identified by community leaders).
- Folio.
- Email.
- Press release.
- Newsletter.
- Mailing.
- Travel display.
- Charrettes and workshop.
- Tribal consultation.

What is my role at this stage?

In this phase, WSDOT engages with partners and community members to provide information about what to expect when a project goes to construction and to get input on proposed design. A key to success at this stage is clarity about what phase of the process we are in. At this point, we have already looked at the alternatives, refined a solution, and assigned resources.

Engagement at this stage is often conducted through WSDOT Regions (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/offices-regions>). You can also contact WSDOT's Development Services (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/highway-access-requests-training/development-services>).

Implement solutions

What actions occur and what decisions are made at this stage in the process?

When a solution is at this phase, engagement should have occurred that shaped transportation policy, identified needs, assessed alternative strategies, refined the solution, assigned resources, and developed a funded solution. Engagement at prior stages should have set this stage up for success.

As the solution has already been through all of the development steps, this stage is primarily about implementation of the strategy that emerged from the prior process and engagement. Most engagement at this stage consists of sharing information about impacts from implementing the solution.

What tools/activities are typically used?

- Print, radio and television stories.
- Web pages.
- Social media.
- Mailings.
- Flyers.
- Door-to-door interactions/one-on-one conversations.
- Folios.
- Newspaper inserts.
- Kiosks.
- Fairs.
- Online, in-person or hybrid open houses.
- Local and community meetings (audiences identified by community leaders).
- RTPO/MPO meetings.
- Workshops.
- Tribal consultation.

What is my role at this stage?

Ideally, engagement at this stage consists of receiving information in advance of and as work progresses. To achieve a successful construction outcome, interaction is expected and necessary. On complex and multi-season projects, consulting and collaborating are necessary to satisfy or mitigate unanticipated community needs and demands.

Project specific information can be found on the WSDOT website.

- Projects by county: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects>.

- Project search: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects>.
- Study search: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-studies>.
- Local projects: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/support-local-programs/find-local-project>.
- Door-to-door interactions/one-on-one conversations.
- Folios.
- Newspaper inserts.
- Kiosks.
- Fairs.
- Online, in-person or hybrid open houses.
- Local and community meetings (audiences identified by community leaders).
- RTPO/MPO meetings.
- Workshops.
- Tribal consultation.

Community Engagement Plan

Chapter

3

Engagement strategies

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Strategies for community engagement including strategies for engaging with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations while evaluating new and existing activities and programs.
- A description of how to facilitate equitable participation and support meaningful and direct involvement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
- Strategies to identify and prioritize overburdened communities.
- Best practices to overcome barriers to engagement with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.
- Instruction on use of special screening tools that integrate environmental, demographic, and health disparities data to evaluate and understand the nature and needs of people impacted by significant agency actions and processes to overcome barriers to participation.
- Suggested processes that facilitate and support the inclusion of members of communities affected by agency decision making including child care and reimbursement for travel and other expenses.
- Methods for engaging and communicating with those who face barriers to participation.
- Information about Tribal relations and expectations.
- Multiple reference resources.
- Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership

This chapter is not intended to:

- Include every strategy for every situation.
- Require that all strategies included be used for every engagement effort.
- Limit engagement to only the methods provided in the guide.

STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Specific strategies for engaging communities in a meaningful way are identified early in the process. This engagement:

- Facilitates information sharing between partners, agencies and stakeholders.
- Assures that WSDOT information is relevant, timely and credible.
- Builds trust.

Transportation efforts can vary greatly in the length of time required for planning, design and construction and in the level of consultation appropriate.

WSDOT takes steps to assure that no person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination under any program or activity on the grounds of race, color, national origin, income, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

In general, WSDOT strategies for meaningful engagement include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying and prioritizing overburdened communities.
- Providing opportunities for communities, partners, and external stakeholders to help shape the future of the state's transportation vision, strategy, and infrastructure by involving them early, consistently, and continuously.
- Developing ongoing partnerships with stakeholders, local agencies, communities, organizations, tribes, and businesses to provide an integrated, comprehensive, multimodal approach to transportation decision-making.
- Providing timely information, at appropriate decision points, that is easy to understand and accessible by affected communities.
- Integrating community needs, values, and input into the decision-making process.
- Engaging with the vulnerable, overburdened and traditionally underserved while evaluating new and existing activities and programs.
- Consistently working to build trust with external stakeholders.
- Facilitating equitable participation and supporting meaningful and direct involvement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.
- Providing for periodic review of engagement strategies and ensuring full and open access to revisions of the community engagement process.
- Explaining actions in plain talk that can be understood by the widest possible audience.
- Developing engagement plans for major projects and plans that describe engagement and consultation opportunities relative to project milestones.
- Identifying existing community groups and sharing information at pre-existing meetings.
- Ensuring that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Using visualization techniques.

Basic community engagement strategies

The following are examples of typical methods WSDOT uses. This list should not be construed as the approved list of communication methodologies. Each community is unique and not all of these strategies will work in every community.

Public meetings/workshops

WSDOT requests that discussions are included on meeting agendas of community-based organizations, agencies and stakeholder groups such as the Washington State Transportation

Commission, MPOs, RTPOs, community cultural events, business associations, and other agencies and organizations with an interest in transportation issues.

Whenever possible, arrangements should be made to overcome barriers to participation. This includes providing child care, refreshments and reimbursement for travel and other expenses whenever possible.

Additional meetings will be established as needed to discuss specific efforts such as the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan or the STIP. These meetings are held at low-or-no cost, accessible facilities and scheduled at reasonable times to facilitate public participation.

Visualization techniques

To the extent practicable, WSDOT employs visualization techniques, which may include:

- Maps.
- Charts.
- Graphs.
- Web content.
- Slide shows.
- Artist's renderings.
- Animation.
- Videos.

WSDOT's Visual Resource Group (VERG) are available to provide help with visualizations, video, photography, and UAV (drone) footage. More information about VERG and the services they offer is available at <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/business/visualcommunications/>.

Online, virtual and hybrid engagement

WSDOT uses online, virtual and hybrid options to ensure the maximum amount of opportunities to engage. We have developed a system for online open houses at <http://engage.wsdot.wa.gov/>. We have a variety of platforms for conducting virtual and hybrid public meetings including Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, and GoTo meeting/webinar. When conducting online, virtual and hybrid engagement, consideration should always be given to accessibility including:

- Those with vision or hearing limitation.
- Those with limited English proficiency.
- Those with limited internet connectivity or available technology.

WSDOT uses social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Blogger and others. We also engage through use of the WSDOT app.

Email the web team at webhelp@wsdot.wa.gov as soon as you identify an online engagement need. The web team can help make sure development starts with our agency standards in mind, ensuring every online presence meets our accessibility, language access and usability requirements.

Polls/surveys

When appropriate, polls including telephone polls, electronic surveys through the internet or email, or hard-copy printed surveys distributed at meetings or by mail are used for engagement activities. Web based surveys may be employed, including those through the Washington Transportation Commission's "Voice of Washington State" survey and those created using the SurveyMonkey tool. These surveys allow community members to provide input at a time and location of their choosing. Surveys may be sent to established email lists such as those for local agencies, RTPOs, MPOs, tribes, engineers or project managers, and state agencies.

In addition to using these existing lists, there is a Statewide Planning Email/Text update list on WSDOT's homepage at: www.wsdot.wa.gov. Those who do not have internet access can call or write WSDOT at P.O. Box 47370, Olympia, WA 98504.

Public involvement materials

To minimize expense, WSDOT will limit the use of printed materials. Where necessary, printed materials should be presented in reader-friendly format and should use visualization techniques as much as possible. WSDOT tries to provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes simply, efficiently, concisely and correctly. Examples of materials used for public involvement include:

- Fliers.
- Brochures.
- Visualizations.
- Maps.
- Drawings.
- Photographs.
- Presentations.
- Fact sheets.
- Charts and graphs.
- Newsletters.
- Websites.

Publications

Documents are published on the WSDOT website and emails are sent to distribution lists when materials are published. Hard copies are made available upon request for those lacking internet access. Official documents are provided to and available at the WSDOT and State Libraries. You can contact the WSDOT library at library@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-7750 or the State Library at research@sos.wa.gov or 509-586-1492.

WSDOT takes steps to ensure that all voices are heard, including those traditionally underserved by the transportation decision-making process. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) report 710, Practical Approaches for Involving Traditionally Underserved Populations in Transportation Decisionmaking serves as a guide. The report is available online at: <https://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/166872.aspx>.

Targeted mailings, fliers, and email

Letters and/or postcards announcing engagement opportunities may be sent to targeted audiences encouraging them to participate. Fliers may be developed and delivered to community organizations announcing updates. Translation services should be provided consistent with WSDOT guidelines available at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/WSDOT-Internal-Procedures-Translation-Services.pdf>.

Working with local media

During the community engagement process, meetings may be held at various locations throughout the state. Local media will be notified when locations have been chosen. Local non-English speaking media will be notified if available. Some ways that WSDOT may notify local media:

- News release.
- Purchased advertising.
- Written commentary pieces.
- Display advertising.
- Public service announcements.
- Agency spokesperson on public access or cable television programming.
- Neighborhood or regional publications/newsletters.
- Non-English publications in areas with Limited English Proficiency populations.

Electronic access to information

To the extent practicable, WSDOT provides materials electronically to the widest possible audience. To achieve this, materials are typically posted on the WSDOT website and sent out by email. Materials may also be sent or posted to social media sites. WSDOT has an FTP site that can be used to transfer large files.

Public notifications

Public notification may be through:

- Notices on the web.
- Email.
- Newsletters.
- Announcements at public meetings.
- Advertisements.
- Local media.
- Libraries.
- Local groups.
- Services for underserved populations.
- Fliers.
- Exhibits.
- X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, the WSDOT Blog or other social media platforms.

How will WSDOT consider and respond to public comment?

Public comment is an integral part of WSDOT's decision-making process. WSDOT reviews, documents and considers comments. Each comment received should be acknowledged. This encourages continued involvement and confirms that each comment has been considered. Acknowledgement helps facilitate future communication and builds trust and credibility within the community. Detailed engagement plans for individual efforts should include a description of how comments are considered and what the process for responding will be.

Collecting and using demographic data

Identifying the size and location of vulnerable, overburdened, low-income and minority population groups is an important first step toward assessing whether or not transportation system investments disproportionately burden or fail to meet the needs of any segment of the population.

When developing an engagement plan, a demographic analysis should be conducted paying special attention to overburdened, vulnerable, or traditionally underserved populations including minority, low-income, and non-English speaking. Once determined, demographic information should be used to shape WSDOT's engagement strategy including how the agency will engage with vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. The results of this demographic analysis should be preserved and shared upon community request.

WSDOT uses tools such as the the U.S. Census (<https://www.census.gov/data.html>), the Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool (<https://edgi-govdata-archiving.github.io/j40-cejst-2/en/>), and data from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website to determine community demographics. OSPI information is available at the following URL: <https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.

It is recommended to use the Washington State Environmental Health Disparities map to understand the nature and needs of people impacted by significant agency actions. Guidance for using the Environmental Health Disparities map can be found here: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/environmental-guidance/social-community> or here: <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/washington-environmental-health-disparities-map>. Direct access to the map is here: <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtnibl/WTNIBL/>.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

WSDOT's Title VI Program's primary goal is to ensure all management, staff, contractors, local agencies, and service beneficiaries are aware of the provisions of Title VI and the responsibilities associated with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. WSDOT's Title VI policy and plan can be found on the Office of Equity and Civil Rights's website at: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/title-vi-limited-english-proficiency>.

Document language

Proper Title VI Language for Publications, Communications, and Public Involvement can be found in our language guide: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/OEO-WSDOT-LEP-Access-Plan2.pdf>.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

WSDOT provides language assistance to people with limited English proficiency consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and RCW 70A.02.

Who is an LEP individual?

A limited English proficient individual is someone who does not speak English as their primary language and has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

What is WSDOT's process for engaging LEP individuals?

It is WSDOT's policy to ensure that programs, activities, and services normally provided in English are accessible to LEP individuals and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin. These processes include, but are not limited to, providing resources such as bilingual staff, interpreters, and translated materials to ensure that information and services are made available in languages readily understood by WSDOT customers and those affected by its activities and services. For specific guidance on WSDOT LEP policy check WSDOT's LEP accessibility plan at: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/OEO-WSDOT-LEP-Access-Plan2.pdf>.

Translation services

If the demographic data indicates that five percent of the population or more than 1,000 persons within a half mile of a project "speak English less than well," equal access to project information in their language must be provided. This may be accomplished by posting a notice on the web in the appropriate language(s) and printing and distributing translated project brochures, meeting invitations, and newsletters in the appropriate languages(s). Not all documents need to be translated if there is a way for people to request that information.

Resources

- WSDOT LEP web page: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/title-vi-limited-english-proficiency>
- WSDOT LEP Plan: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/OEO-WSDOT-LEP-Access-Plan2.pdf>
- Determination of translation need and languages: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/WSDOT-Internal-Procedures-Translation-Services.pdf>.
- Request for translation services: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Title-VI-Translation%20Services3.pdf>.

ENGAGING WITH OVERBURDENED COMMUNITIES AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

As WSDOT evaluates new and existing activities and programs, the agency facilitates equitable participation and supports meaningful and direct involvement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. Community engagement needs to be proactive and appropriate to the communities we interact with. Engagement is done in a way that is responsive to the needs of the people or group. Examples of appropriate engagement include:

- Meeting times, places, or formats chosen by the community.
- Materials in formats preferred by the community (web, print, braille, different language, etc.).
- Produce materials at an 8th grade reading level.
- Community members time and efforts are respected and appreciated; reimbursement offered to those with low income or who have lived experience to support equity (subject to available funding).
- Child care provided or expenses reimbursed when possible (subject to available funding).

Proactive and appropriate community engagement conveys a respect for the community that will be affected by agency activities and programs. Early consultation, and integrity with local issues and concerns, indicate that the community's voice and participation is valued and an important part of the overall project process. Essentially, it comes down to building respect and trust.

Extra effort may be needed to elicit involvement from people unaccustomed to participating in the public involvement process. They often have different needs and perspectives than those who traditionally participate in transportation decision-making, and they may have important, unspoken issues that should be heard. They not only may have greater difficulty getting to jobs, schools, recreation, and shopping than the population at large, but also they may be unaware of transportation proposals that could dramatically change their lives.

How do I tailor community engagement to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations?

Many people have traditionally been overburdened and underserved by conventional engagement methods due to race, color, national origin or income. People that an agency wishes to reach may not read notices in an English language newspaper, or may have low-literacy. People may not feel safe or welcome at a meeting held in government offices. People may be unable to attend public events if they do not own a car, if they cannot afford childcare, or if they work late shifts or more than one job.

What is low literacy? What is limited English proficiency? A 2019 report by the National Center for Education Statistics determined that 21 percent of American adults have "low level English literacy," including 4.1 percent classified as "functionally illiterate."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 20 percent of Americans speak a language other than English at home. Limited English proficiency individuals have low English literacy and may or may not be literate in their primary language. In many cases, there is a direct correlation between low literacy, limited English proficiency, low educational attainment, and low income.

Failing to account for variety in cultural expectations, language, literacy, or income and affordability can create barriers to full participation. In order to have participation that can ultimately inform decisionmaking, agencies must identify the area demographic(s) and develop an effective approach for outreach and communication.

What guidelines apply to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations?

Transportation plans should avoid a disproportionately high and adverse impact of transportation policies or investments on traditionally underserved communities. The USDOT's Statewide and

Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning; Final Rule, effective May 27, 2016, requires “a process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.”

Presidential Executive Orders direct federal agencies to conduct their programs, policies, and activities in a way that ensure serving every person with equal dignity and respect. Since WSDOT receives federal money, it is also subject to these executive orders.

What is tailored engagement?

Tailored engagement simply means selecting and adjusting community engagement techniques in order to effectively connect with the people affected by a project, whoever and wherever they are. Tailored engagement recognizes that “traditional” techniques are not always the most effective. Creating effective engagement requires knowing the constituency and taking steps to ensure that the public involvement process is accessible to everyone in the community. WSDOT must also be sensitive to the limitations experienced by some individuals due to any number of reasons.

WSDOT needs input from overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to assure equity in the agency’s decision making process. Typical meeting announcements in newspapers and on the radio, for example, may not reach underserved populations. Agencies need to understand how these populations get information. This could be via bulletins from religious centers, on grocery store or laundromat bulletin boards, or at community meeting places.

Tailored engagement has several objectives in addition to the basic goals of public involvement:

- Convey issues in ways that are meaningful to all constituents.
- Bridge cultural and economic differences that affect participation.
- Use communication techniques that enable a wide variety of people to interact.
- Develop partnerships on a one-to-one or small group basis to assure representation of all demographics.
- Increase participation by overburdened communities and vulnerable populations so they have an impact on decisions.

When is tailored outreach used most effectively?

Outreach should always be tailored to ensure a connection with potentially affected interests. A key activity for WSDOT staff is to learn about the potentially affected interest(s) and identify the most effective means of outreach and communication in the earliest possible stages.

Tailoring outreach efforts to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations starts early and extends throughout the process, including fine-tuning other public involvement efforts to most effectively reach potentially affected interests, and can also be integrated with other public involvement efforts. Informing communities of events and providing status reports helps to establish a good working relationship. This approach is also very effective in diffusing potentially controversial issues by addressing concerns early.

The advantages of tailoring outreach early in both project development and long-range planning include:

- Allowing more people to understand a process, plan, or project.
- Broadening the range of approaches and project alternatives.
- Enhancing opportunities for creative solutions for transportation needs.
- Reducing the potential need to re-do an environmental analysis.
- Establishing good relationships with traditionally underserved groups.
- Getting people to help in the planning process.
- Breaking down historical barriers.
- Improving opportunities for obtaining consensus.

Why is it important to tailor outreach to overburdened and vulnerable groups?

Outreach to overburdened communities and vulnerable populations helps assure that all constituents have opportunities to affect the decision-making process. It sets the tone for subsequent project activities, promoting a spirit of inclusion. Tailored outreach efforts are particularly useful because they:

- Provide fresh perspectives.
- Give first-hand information about community specific issues and concerns of which WSDOT may not have been aware.
- Flag potential controversies.
- Provide feedback on how to get these communities involved.
- Provide solutions that best meet the communities' needs.

Understanding the full range of a community's needs enables WSDOT to be more responsive and incorporate community feedback into decisions. The perspective of overburdened and vulnerable people can inform the goals and outcomes of planning and project development. Such individuals can suggest fresh approaches to transportation issues that otherwise would not be raised.

Considerations when tailoring outreach to overburdened and vulnerable populations

Traditional public involvement techniques, such as formal meetings, may not be effective in engaging overburdened and vulnerable populations. A variety of public involvement techniques may be needed. In order to have active participation, it is useful to hold meetings and conduct outreach in the community itself. Practitioners can identify activity centers as meeting locations and venues for informal outreach. When disseminating information to the public, agencies must recognize the need to communicate with those who have limited English proficiency by instead communicating in their native language. Announcements in minority or ethnic news media can also heighten interest in a process.

Effective outreach approaches should be identified to overcome potential barriers. Outreach efforts should not rely exclusively on traditional communication such as written media (newspapers, email, and websites).

Presentations may need to rely on verbal communication and visual explanations and avoid the need for participants to read or write. One starting point in effective interaction is asking people how they want to be referred to (e.g., Hispanic or Latino; American Indian or Native American).

Effective outreach approaches must be matched to the characteristics of the community being contacted. WSDOT staff must initially determine the most effective communication techniques for reaching the community affected by the project. A variety of techniques may need to be employed to reach more than one overburdened or vulnerable group.

WSDOT staff may first need to learn about the constituency, both in general and, more specifically, the individuals in the local community (e.g., how many are recent immigrants). In addition, agencies should discover whether the group is literate in its own language or in English or neither. Agencies should also talk with community leaders to find out the best techniques for working with a particular group: which approaches to use, where to hold events, how to recruit people, what to avoid doing. Once contacted, the community can suggest alternative times, places, and methods.

Identify which underserved groups require special attention for a transportation plan or project because of its impact on them.

Strategies for tailoring outreach to overburdened and vulnerable populations

Understand the community

Carefully research the communities potentially affected by a plan or project to identify a diverse group of community leaders. This can be done by contacting local governments to determine the leaders in the community, through word of mouth, conducting interviews, and by being alert to advertisements/fliers for community activities. It is also important to maintain up-to-date contact lists for community-based organizations and key individuals in the community who can be tapped for discussions. Human service coalitions, such as the United Way, colleges and universities, and national organizations, often maintain similar contact lists.

Access information from community members

- Community organizations and their leaders are invaluable in building communication between agencies and overburdened or vulnerable groups. Canvassing key community leaders individually may help determine the best ways to conduct outreach within their communities. These community leaders play an important role; they often represent their communities in the process, especially when those working long hours cannot attend grass root events.
- Community groups provide access to individuals and can serve as forums for participation. Agencies sometimes focus initial attention on active community groups to prepare for later approaches to the general public. Community groups, like Civic Advisory Committees, can provide overburdened and vulnerable communities with meaningful ways to participate, as well as a sense of empowerment.
- Religious organizations are often an effective way to reach a particular local community. Most religious organizations have civic as well as religious activities and interests along with a strong geographic base. Religious organizations have broad constituencies and often have

a strong ethnic or cultural focus. They are particularly good avenues for reaching people who are not active in the community in other ways.

Concept mapping

Concept mapping is a technique that involves mapping the ideas of residents and using those results in strategic plans. It includes a brainstorming activity and is very inclusive in the sense that no idea or input is excluded or “edited” in the final result. Overburdened or vulnerable people can be invited to participate in civic advisory committees, task forces, and other policy bodies. Such inclusion empowers these communities and provides access to the whole participatory effort.

Community compensation

Community Compensation is a tool that shall be incorporated into all WSDOT actions, when community engagement practitioners believe that engaging the community would improve outcomes. The budget will be drafted to fulfill community compensation needs.

An action can be defined but not limited to planning, program or project-based efforts that would require engaging with the community, as part of the decision-making process.

Community Compensation will require dedicated budget and should be incorporated into budget planning documents at the earliest point possible.

WSDOT's Guidance for Community Compensation document is available to staff on the Community Compensation SharePoint. Our guidance is based on the guidance from the Washington State Office of Equity that is available online at <https://equity.wa.gov/resources/community-compensation-guidelines>.

Child care

Providing child care at public meetings facilitates and supports the inclusion of affected community members. If resources are available, it is a good idea to provide child care, reimbursement for child care, or child-friendly activities.

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

One of the best ways to engage with EJ and limited-English proficient populations is to establish a CAC composed of local residents. If possible, it is a good idea to recruit individuals who are trusted and well-known in the community and who represent a wide range of stakeholder viewpoints that may be affected by a project. CAC members can serve as a good liaison between the project team and the community. They can also advise the project team on messaging and outreach approach. While they can be effective, advisory groups require a substantial amount of initial planning to determine the role of the CAC and the frequency and content of meetings. Serving on a CAC also involves a substantial commitment for stakeholders.

Partnering with community-based and social service agencies.

Some groups and communities may have existing social networks or non-traditional methods of effectively communicating within their groups. The traditional methods of community outreach, including public meeting notices and public hearings, can be an unfamiliar concept and seem unnatural for some groups. In many communities there are existing social networks that can assist in identifying the most effective means of engaging their communities. Consult with key community leaders in the

project area who can assist in identifying existing community social networks such as churches, social groups, tribal representatives, homeowners associations, or school principals, to name a few. Be sure to ask key community leaders for appropriate places to convene public meetings. Community-based and social service agencies may be willing to support the public involvement process if they feel that it will help their constituents or clients. They may offer meeting space and staff, or they may have other effective ways of conveying information. If the project team enlists their help, it is important to remember that these organizations are typically overextended and rarely have the capacity and resources to take on new responsibilities. The project manager or communications lead may, for example, need to consider dropping by during lunch time at a local senior center or other gathering place on a more regular basis, to become a familiar face within a community before conducting outreach specific to a project.

Sensitively-designed workshops and meetings

Some residents may be uncomfortable participating in large public meetings or speaking up in group settings. Therefore, it is important to design meetings and workshops that are sensitive to those differences and offer a variety of methods of interaction. If possible, providing food may be a good idea, especially when the food comes from a local business or restaurant. To reach out to families, setting up a table with coloring or other child-friendly activities is an effective way to draw more people to a meeting. If the target audience is likely to have irregular work schedules or other scheduling challenges, it helps to hold multiple meetings at various times or host an all-day open house. That way, people who work night shifts can attend during the day. Always select meeting venues that are served by transit and are ADA accessible. Consider language interpretation needs when designing a workshop. When working in a community where multiple languages are spoken, it may be more manageable and comfortable for participants and staff alike if sessions are specific to one language, rather than conducting simultaneous interpretation as part of a large meeting where multiple languages are spoken. It is also necessary to provide reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities, including visual, hearing, or mobility impairments.

Identify popular communication methods

Various language groups may have a variety of preferred methods of communications. For example, Vietnamese speakers may prefer Vietnamese-language newspapers, whereas Spanish-speakers may get most of their information from Spanish-language radio and television. Target audiences should be evaluated to determine which communications methods are most favored and appropriate. Community organizations and churches can be a good source of information to aid in understanding the preferred methods of communication in the project area.

Community assessment

Conventional planning processes might not always capture detailed information about specific community challenges or priorities. A community assessment can empower residents to fill those gaps. In a community assessment, community members gather, analyze, and report information to produce a more complete picture of current conditions, needs, and available resources. An assessment typically focuses on a priority issue in a specific area, such as housing or transportation options in a neighborhood. Examples include walkability audits, which evaluate the safety and convenience of the walking environment, and community food assessments, which analyze the availability of healthy food

options. Community assessments provide credible data that community organizations and government staff can use to document needs, secure grants, and inform future neighborhood investments. They can also lead to helpful new relationships among residents, organizations and government partners.

Hold community planning and visioning workshops.

Defining a shared vision and goals for a site, neighborhood, city, town, or region is the first step in the planning process and the foundation for subsequent land use policy and regulatory changes and investments in the community. Community planning and visioning workshops can be sponsored by public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private developers. These workshops are usually managed by facilitators who lead participants through structured discussions and design exercises, and they often produce visual representations of the community's desired future, such as maps and drawings. After the workshop, the results, along with recommendations on how to achieve the vision, are shared with the broader public and decision-makers and integrated into planning processes. Workshops can be completed in one day or include multiple meetings scheduled over several months. Multi-day collaborative planning events where stakeholders create a plan and implementation strategy are known as charrettes. The costs of a workshop or charrette vary depending on their complexity, technical needs and duration.

Community meeting times

WSDOT needs to consider the times at which members of a community are available to participate in the transportation decision-making process. Agencies should discover whether work schedules interfere with evening and weekday meeting times. Many low-income people do not have private transportation and are limited to times and locations accessible by public transit. In addition, issues of child and elder care can impact an individual's schedule. In winter months, many elderly people can be reluctant to drive when it is dark outside. It is important, therefore, to consider expanding hours of operation for public meetings and other functions that might be typically held in the evening. For some informational meetings, expanding hours of operation might consist simply of staffing a desk with informational materials, perhaps even showing a short informational video or slide presentation on the project. In addition, individuals can be offered an opportunity to put their names on a mailing list for additional information or to be included in the formal review process for a particular project. A more formal public meeting can be held in addition to these open hours; however, it should be emphasized that all input taken during the open hours will be considered.

Traditional methods for communication

WSDOT also needs to recognize communication and decision-making expectations of whatever community they are communicating with. WSDOT staff members can learn about traditions and behavioral patterns by careful observation or by tactfully and privately asking group members what is going on. In some cultures, for example, it is considered improper to disagree with authority. In other cultures, discussion with the entire community precedes decisions by its leaders, and elders may have a particular role in decision-making. In some groups, speaking up is interpreted as "making trouble." Group members familiar with mainstream culture are particularly good sources of such information. WSDOT needs to make special efforts to communicate with people who use languages other than English. Translation of material and bilingual speakers are often necessary to reach the non-English speaking population.

Who leads tailored outreach efforts?

Existing staff may lead outreach activities, provided they have the appropriate skills or training. To be successful, staff needs to have an open-mind, process skills, and sensitivity to cultural differences. They also must be committed to encouraging diverse group participation, not only because it takes persistence and creative thinking to foster inclusion of people who have historically been excluded, but also because lack of such commitment is easily perceived and undermines trust and credibility. To enhance the effectiveness of interaction, staff should come from a variety of backgrounds.

Special outreach coordinators such as WSDOT communicators or staff from our Office of Equity and Civil Rights can provide particularly strong leadership and demonstrate the agency's sincere commitment to responding to concerns of traditionally underserved communities. A number of agencies hire staff specifically charged with outreach to overburdened and vulnerable populations. By communicating with an intermediary, WSDOT staff better understand the community's culture, dress code, language, and beliefs, as well as their specific transportation needs and concerns.

Consultants with special expertise or skills can also enhance the process.

What are the challenges of tailoring outreach to the constituency?

Staff time and resources may be significant. Administering an outreach program involves monitoring inquiries and responses as well as documenting and answering numerous requests for meetings or briefings. In addition, tailored outreach to specific groups may require substantial staff time and energy. For example, some people lack a tradition of participation in government and require extra staff effort to encourage their participation.

It takes time, effort, and sensitivity to develop relationships. Agencies should be aware that communities are usually complex entities; every individual in a community has their own way of viewing and responding to an issue. There may be a history of changing influence of one or more subgroups within a community. For example, a community leader identified by WSDOT may not actually represent the full range of views held by the constituency.

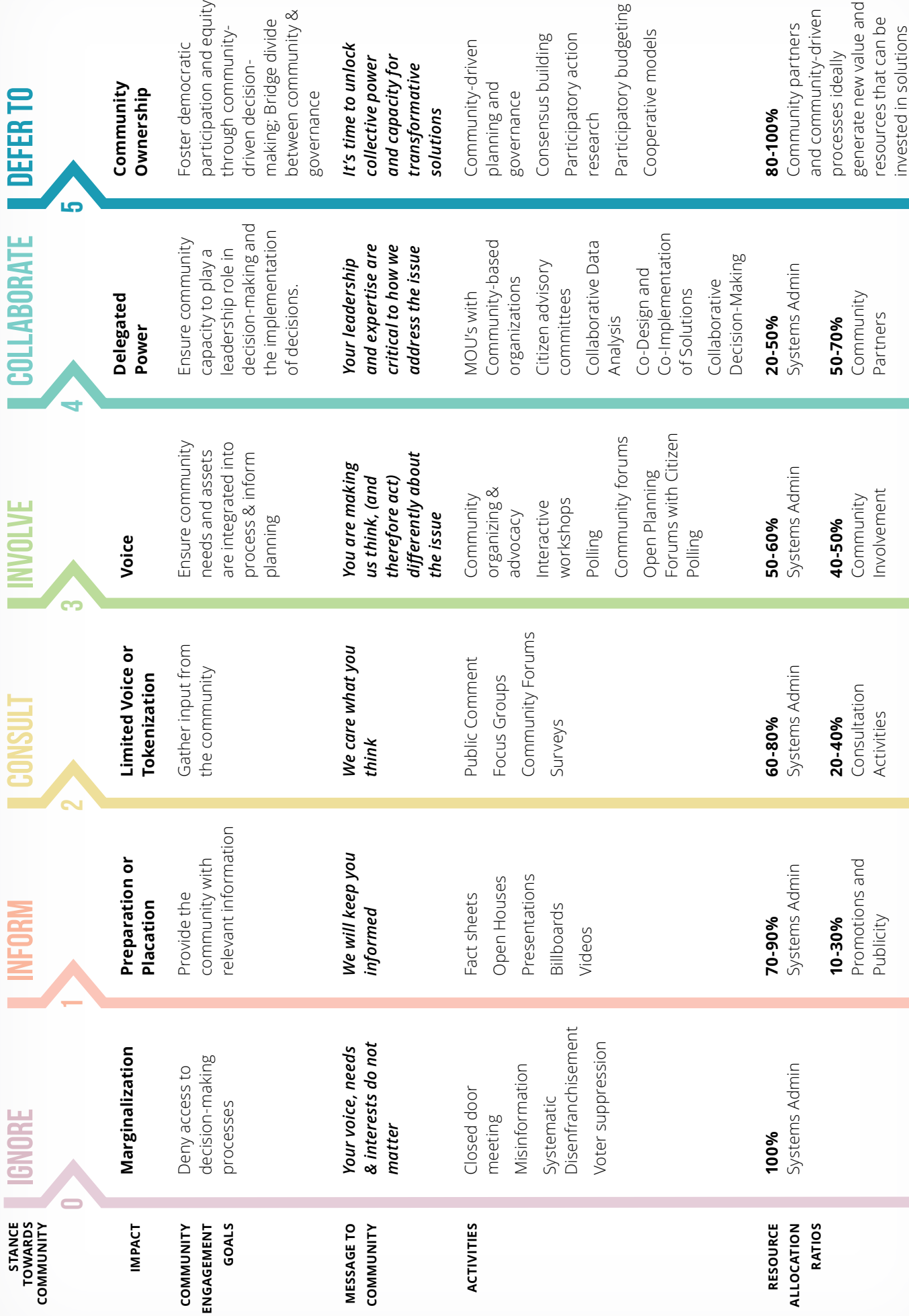
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

The following figure represents the different levels of engagement. Not every effort will include all levels. We work with all levels of the spectrum where possible.

THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP



► ► ► ► ► INCREASED EFFICIENCY IN DECISION-MAKING AND SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTATION ► ► ► ► ► EQUITY



Community Engagement Plan

Chapter

4

*Assessing effective
engagement*

MEASURING SUCCESS

Measuring the effectiveness of community outreach is a vital step in the engagement process. A key element is to think about engagement at the beginning of the plan, project or program. Have an outreach plan, carry out the plan, and then measure the success of engagement on a case-by-case basis. It can often be helpful to obtain feedback in order to differentiate between how staff think the engagement went and how communities think it went. Asking for basic contact information and permission to follow up will allow creation of a contacts list for individuals and groups to contact for feedback.

Sample ways to obtain feedback:

- Interviews at events.
- Form distributed at public meeting.
- Follow-up phone calls with participants after an event.
- A survey sent out via email.

Some sample performance measures:

- Number of engagement events held, meetings attended, or persons interacted with.
- Number of participants at transportation related meetings.
- Number/percent of customers satisfied with feedback received after offering comments.
- Percent of overall customer satisfaction.
- Percent of customers that felt their concerns were addressed.
- Percent of customers (public and partners) who feel that they are included in the decision making process.
- Percent of positive versus negative comments received.
- Number of positive news stories.
- Percent of customers who feel completed projects, plans, or programs are (or present) the right solution.

A less effective but still useful way to measure the success of engagement may be to have an “after action” session to document where the engagement was successful and where it could have been better. Some sample questions to ask include:

- Did we provide enough opportunities for engagement?
- Did we inform people about the opportunities to engage?
- How did we help people understand the issues?
- What convenient opportunities for meaningful engagement did we provide?
- How was the outcome of the project, plan or program affected by the participation?
- How were our relationships with residents, local officials, businesses and others affected?

- What surprises did we encounter?
- What could we do better next time?

Measuring success of culturally responsive outreach

Measuring the success of culturally responsive outreach doesn't have to be difficult, expensive, or overly time-consuming. Evaluation can be based on qualitative or quantitative measures or both. Ideally, use a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate outreach. Determining quantitative information about race, income, or LEP status may be challenging, but try to capture whatever quantitative data possible. This may include:

- Number of self-identified minority and/or low-income people interacted with.
- Number of meetings held in minority and/or low-income neighborhoods.
- Number of translated documents requested, provided, distributed or responded to.
- Number of community groups contacted that specialize in services for minorities, low-income persons, or the disabled.
- Number of efforts to reach out to media targeting minority, low-income, and disabled persons.
- Number of responses to a survey.

It can be helpful to set up objectives for culturally responsive outreach ahead of time. Some sample objectives could be:

- Increase the number of phone calls, emails, and website visits related to your project.
- Publish five stories in media targeting protected populations.
- Translate materials into languages appropriate for your targeted populations.
- Make sure that minorities, low-income persons, and the disabled are aware about meetings and that they know accommodations will be available.

Collecting qualitative data isn't always as clear-cut as quantitative, but here are some suggested steps.

- Contact community organizations directly and ask them if they felt included in the process.
- Do a survey to see if people felt their voices were heard.
- Increased support for your plan, project, or process.
- Reduced number of complaints or inquiries.
- Avoiding an expected legal challenge or Title VI complaint.
- Receiving a favorable review or avoiding an expected negative review.
- The tone of media coverage may change.

The bottom line for measuring success is that by evaluating engagement and documenting the results, we can continue to get better at it. See what works and what doesn't. This also sets us up for positive reviews and continued acceptance and trust in communities.

Community Engagement Plan

Appendices

APPENDIX A: INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP TRIBAL GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

This document serves as a guide to ensuring that the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act's intention for government-to-government engagement is done effectively and appropriately. For engagement with Native American communities, see the next appendix on NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE ON THE HEAL ACT.

HEAL ACT BACKGROUND

The HEAL Act was signed into law to reduce environmental and health disparities throughout Washington state and improve the health of all Washington state residents. The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5141, HEAL Act, to be effective on July 25, 2021.

The HEAL Act defines Environmental Justice (EJ) as "...the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental Justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm."

Key priorities of the HEAL Act include reducing exposure to environmental hazards within Tribal lands, ensuring Tribal sovereignty and rights in EJ, and eliminating environmental and health disparities in disadvantaged, vulnerable, and low-income populations.

PRINCIPLES OF TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

In addition to principles identified by the HEAL Act Environmental Justice Council, engagement with Tribal governments should be guided by the following principles:

- WSDOT recognizes Tribal nations as unique, distinct sovereign peoples with inherent rights and connections to Washington state territories. The agency acknowledges its government-to-government duties and will prioritize consultation with federally recognized Tribes.
- WSDOT works to understand definitions of human health and the environment from the perspective of federally recognized Tribes.
- WSDOT uses legal authorities, as appropriate, to advance environmental justice goals in its work throughout the state, including in Indian Country.
- WSDOT strives to understand cultural and communication differences of federally recognized Tribes and to establish common understandings of, and opportunities to address environmental justice issues.
- WSDOT encourages, as appropriate and to the extent practicable and permitted by law, any voluntarily shared knowledge and history by Tribal governments or peoples, in addition to the agency's environmental science, policy, and decision-making processes, to understand and address environmental justice concerns and facilitate program implementation.

- WSDOT considers confidentiality concerns regarding information on sacred sites, cultural resources, and other traditional knowledge and history, as permitted by law.
- WSDOT acknowledges that unique significant relationships may exist regarding sacred sites and cultural resources information for federally recognized Tribes.
- Tribes have reserved rights protected by federal, treaty, statute, or executive order on lands and resources that exist far outside of their reservation boundaries. Tribes attach religious, spiritual, and cultural significance to sites that are associated with their ancestral lands, territories, and history well outside of reservation lands.
- WSDOT recognizes the right of the Tribal governments to self-determination and acknowledges the federal government's trust responsibility to federally recognized Tribes, based on the U. S. Constitution, treaties, statutes, executive orders, and court decisions.
- WSDOT seeks to maintain relationships with Tribal governments based mutual understanding and respect.
- WSDOT strives for open communication and meaningful involvement with Tribal governments and encourages an appropriate level of involvement by other state, federal and nonfederal government agencies in matters in which the agency is involved.
- WSDOT strives to identify key points of contact in Tribal governments to facilitate meaningful involvement and fair treatment on environmental justice issues, and to better understand the unique aspects and nature of the Tribes' communities.
- WSDOT recognizes and supports the use of federal and Tribal conflict management and dispute resolution processes, including traditional consensus building and decision-making practices, as appropriate, to address disputes and potential conflicts.
- WSDOT encourages and seeks to facilitate discussions among and between government entities with an interest in environmental justice issues affecting federally recognized Tribes.
- WSDOT collaborates and cooperates with other state and federal agencies to leverage resources to better communicate, share information, and address the environmental justice concerns of federally recognized Tribes.

CONSULTATION WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Federally recognized Tribes are individually and culturally unique from each other. Their inherent rights originate back to the beginning of their creation and are rooted in their ancestral cultures. Washington State recognizes Tribes' inherent rights to exercise their language, cultural beliefs, protection of Tribal resources, sense of place and territory through their existence and inhabitation of Washington territory since time immemorial. Inherent rights means the birth-right of a people instilled in them since the time of creation. These rights are embedded in their right to their language, teachings, culture, territories of land and water, history of stewardship and service, and fiduciary obligation to preserve those rights for future generations

Federally recognized Tribes retain their inherent rights and are, as such, sovereign and operate their own Tribal governments to govern their Tribal citizenship and reservation populations through self-

governance and self-determination. Federally recognized Tribes have a unique trust relationship with the United States federal government based on the U. S. Constitution, treaties, statutes, executive orders, and court decisions. Their status as sovereign nations entitles them to a direct government-to-government relationship with the federal government, independent of the states or local jurisdictions where these Tribes may reside.

Agencies in Washington State are also guided by laws, policies and agreements related to Tribal consultation. Engagement on environmental justice issues should also be consistent with the 1989 Centennial Accord, 1999 Millennium Agreement and Chapter 43.376.

WSDOT is committed to consulting with Tribal governments on issues that affect their rights and interests. Government-to-government consultation occurs preemptively, independently, and parallel to any public involvement process.

Washington State maintains a government-to-government relationship with all 29 federally recognized Tribes located within Washington and other federally recognized Tribes outside of the state, but which have interests, traditional territory, or rights within the state.

WSDOT engages with Tribes consistent with our agency's Centennial Accord Plan and our Tribal consultation policies and protocols. These policies and protocols guide employees on how and when to consult with Tribes. All WSDOT policies are available online at:

- WSDOT Tribal planning partnerships, including the Centennial Accord:
<https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/planning-guidance/tribal-regional-planning>
- WSDOT Tribal Contacts: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/tribal-contacts>
- WSDOT Model Comprehensive Tribal Consultation Process for NEPA:
<https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/all-manuals-and-standards/manuals/wsdot-model-comprehensive-tribal-consultation-process-national-environmental-policy-act>

WSDOT staff should identify Tribes' cultural concerns, community needs and related plans, projects, and outreach early in the engagement process through communication, collaboration, and meaningful consultation.

Consultation with Tribal governments should be initiated at the beginning of a project, plan or service development and continue throughout project development and delivery.

Guidance from the agency's Tribal Liaison should be sought in developing relationships with Tribes' leaders.

METHODS FOR TRIBAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

- Seek to understand what a Tribe considers meaningful consultation (e.g. holding consultations on Tribal land).
- Distribute project documents for Tribal review and comments.
- Engage in frequent technical and policy level discussions on project elements and report findings.
- Individual meetings between the agency leaders and Tribal chairs and councils.

- Coordinate with Tribal representatives to provide community engagement and outreach opportunities.
- Participate in intertribal meetings with Tribal leadership and technical staff.
- Invite Tribal representatives to serve on committees convened to advise an agency on the development or administration of plan, program, project (executive and technical), or to make funding decisions (grant selection committee).

WORKING WITH CITIZENS OF CONSULTING TRIBES

Tribal citizens engagement should always be coordinated through the Tribal government.

If your plan, project, or service is located on or near Tribal lands, it may be appropriate to conduct direct outreach to a Tribe's citizens. Tribal citizens engagement can help raise awareness of projects / programs, identify needs and concerns, and help ensure the best outcomes for the Tribal citizens from their perspective.

METHODS FOR TRIBAL CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Work with the Tribal government infrastructure to identify how to appropriately distribute documents for community review and comments. Some ideas for engagement strategies are:

- Host community open house at a Tribal location, such as a community center.
- Distribute information via Tribal newsletters, newspapers, or social media sites.
- Sponsor a table / booth at a Tribal event, such as a powwow, sports tournament, and/or canoe journey etc.

APPENDIX B: INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

This document serves as a guide to ensuring that the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act's intention for engaging with Native American communities, separate from government-to-government engagement, is done effectively and appropriately. For information on engaging with Tribal governments, see the guide on TRIBAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT ON THE HEAL ACT.

HEAL ACT BACKGROUND

The HEAL Act was signed into law to reduce environmental and health disparities throughout Washington state and improve the health of all Washington state residents. The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5141, HEAL Act, to be effective on July 25, 2021.

The HEAL Act defines Environmental Justice (EJ) as “...the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental Justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.”

Key priorities of the HEAL Act include reducing exposure to environmental hazards within Tribal lands, ensuring Tribal sovereignty and rights in EJ, and eliminating environmental and health disparities in disadvantaged, vulnerable, and low-income populations.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

In addition to principles identified by the HEAL Act Environmental Justice Council, engagement with Native American communities should be guided by the following principles:

- WSDOT recognizes the unique and distinct Native American communities throughout Washington State.
- WSDOT works to understand definitions of human health and the environment from the perspective of Native American community members.
- WSDOT uses legal authorities, as appropriate, to advance environmental justice goals in its work throughout the state.
- WSDOT strives to understand cultural and communication differences of Native American communities to establish common understandings and opportunities to address environmental justice issues.
- WSDOT encourages, as appropriate and to the extent practicable and permitted by law, any voluntarily shared knowledge and history by Native American communities, in addition to the agency's environmental science, policy, and decision-making processes, to understand and address environmental justice concerns and facilitate program implementation.

- WSDOT considers confidentiality concerns regarding information on sacred sites, cultural resources, and other traditional knowledge and history, as permitted by law.
- WSDOT acknowledges that unique significant relationships may exist regarding sacred sites and cultural resources information for Native American community members.
- WSDOT acknowledges that many Native American people were displaced and removed from their original homelands. Therefore, they may attach religious, spiritual, and cultural significance to sites that are associated with their ancestral lands, territories, and history well outside of any current reservation boundaries.
- WSDOT seeks to maintain relationships with Native American communities based mutual understanding and respect.
- WSDOT strives for open communication and meaningful involvement with Native American communities and encourages an appropriate level of involvement by other state, federal and nonfederal government agencies in matters in which the agency is involved.
- WSDOT strives to identify key points of contact in Native American communities to facilitate meaningful involvement and fair treatment on environmental justice issues, and to better understand the unique aspects and nature of the communities.
- WSDOT recognizes and supports the use of Indigenous conflict management and dispute resolution processes, including traditional consensus building and decision-making practices, as appropriate, to address disputes and potential conflicts.
- WSDOT encourages and seeks to facilitate discussions among and between Native American community members with an interest in environmental justice issues affecting them.
- WSDOT collaborates and cooperates with other state and federal agencies to leverage resources to better communicate, share information, and address the environmental justice concerns of Native American communities.

ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Many Native American people were forcibly displaced or encouraged to relocate to urban areas through various federal policies that sought to assimilate native people. As a result, cities like Seattle, Tacoma, Aberdeen, and Spokane (among others), have high populations of Indigenous people who are not represented by Tribes that consult with the state of Washington. Many of these people, however, have formed communities and are considered vulnerable populations and overburdened communities under the HEAL Act.

One way to engage these communities is to work with and through Tribal organizations created to serve them. Engaging with these organizations is distinct from consultation with Tribal governments. It can be done on a timeline consistent with that of public engagement.

A short list of examples of organizations connected to Native American communities in Washington includes:

- Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center
- The Native Project
- Chief Seattle Club
- Native non-profit organizations

METHODS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Work with organizations to learn how to engage with Native American communities. Some engagement strategies are:

- Host community open house at a local location, such as a community or service center.
- Distribute information via Tribal newsletters, newspapers, or social media sites.
- Sponsor a table / booth at a Tribal event, such as a powwow, sports tournament, or health fair.

APPENDIX C: INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP TRIBAL DEFINITIONS

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN): Persons belonging to the tribal nations of the Continental United States (American Indians) and the tribal nations and villages of Alaska (Alaska Natives).

Consultation: A process of meaningful communication and coordination between WSDOT and a tribal government leadership prior to considering a WSDOT policy, agreement or program implementation that may affect Tribes. Consultation includes seeking, discussing, and considering the views of federally recognized tribal governments regarding a State action or decision. Consultation consists of respectful, meaningful, and effective two-way communication, to achieve mutual understanding between WSDOT and a Tribe of their respective interests and perspectives before WSDOT makes its decision or moves forward with its action. As a process, consultation includes several methods of interaction that may occur at different levels. The appropriate level of interaction is determined by past and current practices, adjustments made through this Policy, the continuing dialogue between WSDOT and tribal governments, and program and regional procedures and plans.

Coordination: A process of working with tribes at a technical, program, project, and/or staff-to-staff level. Coordination is not a substitution for consultation when required under this policy.

Employee: Permanent, temporary, or volunteer worker.

Federally Recognized Tribes: Those Indian Tribes included on the list of Indian tribes eligible for special programs and services provided to Indians by the United States, which list is published annually by the Bureau of Indian Affairs pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 479a-1. Federally recognized Tribes located in, or with rights in, Washington are listed on the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs website.

Government-to-Government Meeting: A planned and structured meeting, typically between the WSDOT Executive Director's office and one or more leaders of a Tribe.

Indian Country: The term Indian country is defined in 18 U.S.C. § 1151 and 40 CFR § 171.3 as:

- (a) All land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and, including rights-of-way running through the reservation;
- (b) All dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of a state; and
- (c) All Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.

Consistent with the statutory definition of Indian country, as well as federal case law interpreting this statutory language, lands held by the federal government in trust for Indian tribes that exist outside of formal reservations are informal reservations and, thus, are Indian country.

Leadership Meeting: A meeting of leaders of multiple tribal governments. Generally, WSDOT participation in a leadership meeting is not a substitute for offering government-to-government consultation with individual Tribes.

Native American: All Native people of the United States and its trust territories (i.e., American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Chamorros, and American Samoans), as well as persons from Canadian First Nations and Indigenous communities in Mexico and Central and South America who are U.S. residents.

Project Lead: The person within WSDOT designated or otherwise responsible for serving as the lead employee on a particular policy, agreement, or program proposal.

Significant Agency Action: The following actions as identified at the beginning of a covered agency's consideration of the significant agency action or at the time when an environmental justice assessment would normally be initiated in conjunction with an agency action:

- (a) The development and adoption of significant legislative rules as defined in RCW 34.05.328;
- (b) The development and adoption of any new grant or loan program that a covered agency is explicitly authorized or required by statute to carry out;
- (c) A capital project, grant, or loan award by a covered agency of at least \$12,000,000 or a transportation project, grant, or loan by a covered agency of at least \$15,000,000;
- (d) The submission of agency request legislation to the office of the governor or the office of financial management for approval; and
- (e) Any other agency actions deemed significant by a covered agency consistent with RCW 70A.02.060.

By July 1, 2023, and periodically thereafter, the agency must publish on its website the types of agency actions that the agency has determined are significant agency actions and provide notification of the determination of the types of significant agency actions in the Washington State Register, consistent with RCW 70A.02.060.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK): TEK is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, practices, and beliefs that promote environmental sustainability and the responsible stewardship of natural resources through relationships between humans and environmental systems. It is applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and spiritual systems. TEK has evolved over millennia, continues to evolve, and includes insights based on evidence acquired through direct contact with the environment and long-term experiences, as well as extensive observations, lessons, and skills passed from generation to generation. TEK is owned by Indigenous people—including, but not limited to, Tribal Nations, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. Other terms maybe used in similar context: Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge, traditional knowledge, local knowledge, Indigenous knowledge or science, native science, multiple ways of knowing, folk knowledge, farmers' knowledge, fishers' knowledge and tacit knowledge.

Tribal Citizen: Any enrolled person as a member of a federally recognized tribe.

Tribal Liaison: The person designated by WSDOT pursuant to RCW 43.376.030 to be responsible for serving as a contact person with tribal governments and maintaining communications between

WSDOT and affected tribal governments.

Tribal Sovereignty: The right of tribes, as “domestic dependent nations,” to exercise self-determination and the right to self-government, unless these powers have been modified by treaty or by an act of Congress. Sovereignty ensures control over the future of the tribes and encourages preservation of tribal culture, religions, and traditional practices.

Trust Responsibility: A legally enforceable obligation of the United States to protect tribal self-determination, tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, as well as carry out the directions of federal statutes and court cases.

Usual and Accustomed Territories: 1) The lands formally ceded by the tribes to the United States as those lands are described in the Treaties; and 2) other areas where it can be shown that those areas were used for hunting and occupied [by the tribe] over an extended period of time.

APPENDIX D: BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Getting back to our roots - community engagement in the North Central Region

In 2024, North Central Region is getting back to its roots regarding community engagement.

The strategy of concurrently using public open houses and online tools continue to be the primary community engagement strategy for North Central Region.

Upcoming Complete Streets work is associated with segments of highway in pavement-preservation projects.

- North Central Region used pop-up events in all three maintenance regions and staffed with maintenance, planning and engineering team members to meet with people at community events they are already attending. This means less requirements for individuals who are interested in discussing WSDOT work to make plans, find childcare or otherwise take time out of their schedules to attend a project-specific meeting. It also provides access for individuals who might not have otherwise been looped into WSDOT information and events. Staff used games to engage youths and provided project specific hand-outs, as well as region/agency-wide information.
- NCR communicators do still use websites, online open houses, in person open houses and social media to provide online access and broader reach for project engagement, but have found positive results with the pop-ups at fairs and community events. People can ask their questions, don't need to look around online and can have a conversation with the team that is working on the project in their area.
- The community events are always staffed by English-Spanish bilingual communications consultant, Sebastian Moraga, who has also worked at the Wenatchee Valley Hispanic business chamber and with local media prior to WSDOT. Sebastian brings a lot of local knowledge and connections to Spanish-language media, so he's not only a great resource for Spanish language accessibility, he has awareness about the community and what matters to it, outside of WSDOT issues.

IBR Program Engagement Overview

The IBR program will replace the aging I-5 bridge across the Columbia River with a modern, seismically resilient, multimodal structure.

The Oregon Department of Transportation and Washington State Department of Transportation are jointly leading these efforts in coordination with eight other bi-state partner agencies. Current work builds upon previous planning efforts to replace the I-5 bridge and addresses physical, regulatory, and contextual changes that have occurred in the program area since those previous efforts ended in 2013.



The bi-state multimodal nature of IBR program work requires the engagement and alignment of two states, two state legislatures, two transportation commissions, two cities, transit organizations, metropolitan planning organizations, and ports. Oversight comes from two sets of state regulatory agencies, elected officials and other interested parties. The program includes four agencies (the DOTs and transit agencies) that will be owner-operators of program assets. The program also has two federal lead agencies because it will deliver operational highway improvements as well as fully operational transit improvements through a light rail extension and expanded bi-state transit service, and requires coordination with numerous local, state and federal permitting agencies.

IBR engagement overview

Ongoing public dialogue is critical to developing a multimodal solution that best serves the needs of communities in Washington and Oregon. Community engagement efforts seek to provide opportunities for meaningful two-way communication with community members that prioritize equity, diversity, accessibility, transparency, and inclusion. Direct outreach to equity priority communities and minimizing barriers to engagement are key components of the public involvement strategy. This includes intentional outreach to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), persons with lower income, and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations within the program area. The program also includes people with disabilities, houseless individuals and families, immigrants and refugees, young people (25 and under) and older adults (65 and older) in its definition of equity priority communities.

Equity-centered community engagement tools

The program offers a number of ways to engage with the program, meeting people where they are, and taking intentional measures to improve accessibility and reduce barriers to participation. Examples of outreach efforts and tools the program has utilized to reach equity priority communities and improve accessibility and inclusion include:

- ADA remediation of documents and graphics to ensure compatibility with screen reader software.
- American Sign Language interpreters and closed captioning in English and Spanish at public meetings.
- Website translation tool allowing information to be readily available in multiple languages based on corridor demographics.
- Multiple advisory groups providing ongoing community feedback to inform program work (Executive Steering Group, Community Advisory Group, Equity Advisory Group, Community Benefits Advisory Group).

- Partnerships and mini-grant opportunities with community-based organizations who work directly with equity priority communities to extend the program's reach to those who may not otherwise engage in public infrastructure projects.
- Coordination with multilingual community engagement liaisons for direct in-language outreach.
- Incentives for participation in engagement activities provided to equity priority participants.
- In-person and online events including office hours, affinity listening sessions, open houses, equity roundtables, neighborhood forums and events for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and Small Business Enterprises.
- Tabling at community events and presentations to organizations and neighborhood associations.

Accountability

The IBR program's [Accountability Dashboard](#) is a voluntary transparency tool designed to share key community engagement metrics and hold the IBR program accountable to the public. This is also a space where the public can learn about what the program has heard from the community and how the program is responding. The Accountability Dashboard is available on the program website and is updated quarterly with community engagement metrics. Biannual updates related to financial and contracting metrics are also reported.

EXAMPLE SNAPSHOT – ENGAGEMENT TO SUPPORT THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program held a 60-day public comment period to seek feedback on its draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) from Sept. 20-Nov. 18, 2024. All comments received will be recorded and responded to when the program prepares its final SEIS in 2025. A comprehensive communications effort to get the word out included a range of tools including email notifications, press releases, advertisements (print and digital media, radio, billboard, and transit advertising) including some in-language outlets, social media, and several direct mail pieces including translated content.

The draft SEIS document was made available on a dedicated page on the program's website. The document adhered to ADA standards, included a search function to allow readers to quickly find specific information, and included translation of the executive summary into multiple languages. Hard copies were also made available for review at the IBR office and several other locations. The public was able to provide comment in one of several ways, including using an online form, sending an email, writing a letter, leaving a voicemail on the program's toll-free hotline or attending an in-person or virtual public comment event. Comments did not need to be provided in English.

The IBR program also hosted a variety of opportunities for the public to learn more about the draft SEIS and provide comments. This included two virtual briefings leading up to the publication of the draft SEIS, a media briefing, two virtual public briefings highlighting the findings of the draft SEIS, two in-person open house and public hearing events (one in Vancouver and one in Portland), two virtual public hearing opportunities, and multiple opportunities to sign up for office hours to ask questions of program staff.

Outreach objectives for the draft SEIS public comment period

Promote program understanding and awareness

- Broadly share the IBR purpose, benefits, impacts, and ways to participate in the Draft SEIS public comment period with corridor users to promote understanding and awareness.
- Notify interested parties and the public where and how to access and comment on the Draft SEIS using multiple inclusive tactics.
- Information on how to provide a meaningful comment for the formal program record and provide opportunities for comments in multiple accessible formats and languages, including expectations on comment response.
- Create opportunities to collaborate with regional agency partners during the release of the Draft SEIS to incorporate community values and concerns.
- Meet with local organizations and elected officials pre-Draft SEIS release to provide an overview of the program milestones and engagement opportunities.

Garner meaningful engagement

- Meaningfully engage with corridor users during the Draft SEIS public comment period so they may provide well-informed comments.
- Use equity-centered engagement tactics to influence and inform our community engagement.
- Comply with NEPA requirements to create adequate opportunity for the public to provide formal comments on the Draft SEIS.
- Deliver an open and transparent process whereby accurate, accessible information is presented to provide for well-informed public comments.
- Provide opportunities for interested parties to learn about the benefits and impacts of the program.
- Meaningfully engage equity priority communities.

Measurable objectives:

- Provide opportunities for interested parties to learn about the benefits and impacts of the program 15% increase in social media engagement over baseline.
- 20% increase in website unique views.
- 25% of survey respondents note that they were informed on how and when to provide public comment on the Draft SEIS.

Overview of engagement activities completed during the public comment period

In addition to the formal Draft SEIS activities held during the public comment period, the program provided more than 50 briefings to community groups and neighborhood associations, held eight advisory group meetings, and participated in four tabling opportunities at community events.

To better reach traditionally underserved communities during the comment period, IBR partnered with community engagement liaisons to provide multi-lingual outreach to the program's equity priority communities. Community engagement liaisons recruited members from their communities to attend our open houses and participate in the comment period. Liaisons hosted small information sessions in person and virtually. These information sessions ranged from two-seven people each and were provided in-language through November 18. Their outreach included the following languages and communities:

- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Russian
- Ukrainian
- Chinese
- Tagalog
- Somali
- Chuukese
- Black
- Native American
- BIPOC
- Disability community
- Youth/Seniors
- Arabic
- Korean

Eastern Region Best Practice: Incorporating after event evaluations

Eastern Region Planning Office has introduced a new and impactful best practice: incorporating after event evaluation surveys. The surveys are completed by both staff and community members, providing real-time feedback on how well the event met its goals and identifying areas for improvement. Attendees are given either a paper or online version of the survey, with time at the end of the meeting dedicated to completing it. Standard questions are used to ensure consistency and comparison across events. We are looking at customizing the tool as needed for different types of engagements.

Why Post-Event Evaluations Matter

Post-event evaluations are a critical tool in ensuring that our engagement efforts reflect WSDOT's commitment to transparency, equity, and responsiveness. They allow us to collect meaningful, qualitative data from the community, helping us assess whether we are meeting our goals of genuine, inclusive, meaningful engagement. By incorporating community voices into the feedback process, the evaluations ensure that future adaptations are community-driven, helping us build trust and establish more positive, long-term relationships and better serve historically underrepresented communities.

Post-event evaluations are meaningful because they provide an opportunity for the team to reflect on their performance, understand the community's perspective, and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement. By gathering feedback directly from community members, the team ensures that the evolving needs of the community remain at the forefront of their engagement strategy.

Staff also participate by completing surveys to reflect on their roles and key takeaways, creating a holistic view of the event's effectiveness. This dual feedback system allows the team to evaluate not only external perceptions but also internal efficiency and collaboration.

Ensuring Inclusivity and Accessibility

Recognizing that our communities are diverse, we have designed these surveys to be inclusive and accessible to all attendees. By offering multiple formats (both paper and digital) and ensuring that translations are available, if needed, we make it easy for all community members to share their feedback, regardless of technological access or language barriers. This commitment to inclusivity reflects our broader goal of engaging with traditionally underserved or overburdened populations in a meaningful and respectful way.

Data-Driven Insights and Continuous Learning

The data collected from these evaluations isn't just anecdotal—it's used to generate actionable insights. The qualitative data is analyzed to identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement. These insights are used to track key performance metrics, such as community satisfaction, the inclusivity of engagement efforts, and the effectiveness of communication strategies. This enables us to make measurable improvements in how we conduct future events and helps align our engagement practices with the specific needs of the communities we serve.

Embracing Feedback, Even When It's Tough

Receiving constructive or difficult feedback can be challenging, but the team has embraced this as an opportunity for growth. While hard feedback can be tough to hear, it often points to the most critical areas for improvement. By leaning into this process, we've created a supportive culture that encourages creative problem-solving and collaborative thinking, allowing us to turn difficult feedback into meaningful changes. For instance, staff debrief sessions after events allow us to process feedback together, develop solutions, and approach future engagements with renewed focus.

As Shauna Harshman, Principal Community Transportation Planner at Eastern Region Planning, reflects: "Our team members are excited to know how we did and how we can improve. This kind of qualitative data collection allows us to know if we are meeting our goal of meaningful engagement."

Building a Standardized Evaluation Framework

The post-event survey tool is part of a standardized framework that ensures consistency across different projects, from planning to construction. This framework can be easily tailored to fit specific event types or community needs, ensuring that feedback is both relevant and actionable. Consistency in questions allows us to track improvements over time, while customization ensures that we can address the unique concerns of each engagement.

From Reflection to Action: Shaping Future Engagements

At the end of each event, the team now shares a transparent feedback loop with the community, explaining what they heard in prior events and how it shaped the current meeting or materials. This transparency strengthens trust between WSDOT and the community.

These evaluations are not just a retrospective tool—they're forward-looking. The feedback we gather helps us refine future community engagement efforts, ensuring that we remain adaptive to the evolving needs of the communities we serve. The insights gained have already led to tangible improvements, such as the redesign of meeting materials to be more accessible, which resulted in higher community satisfaction at subsequent events.

Supporting Continuous Learning and Growth

Our evaluation process is a key part of our commitment to continuous learning. Each event offers new lessons, which in turn inform our approach to the next engagement. This cyclical process ensures that we are always improving and evolving our community engagement strategies to better meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Implementing post-event evaluations is not only a best practice for immediate reflection, but also an essential tool for long-term improvement.

Recommendation: We recommend incorporating an evaluation instrument at every level of work, from Planning to Design to Construction. Valuable feedback can be gathered at any stage where community engagement occurs. The Eastern Region Community Engagement Program has developed a survey tool that can be seamlessly integrated into your daily practices, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with community needs.

CASE STUDY: INTEGRATING EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION) PLANNING – SR 167 MASTER PLAN PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL STUDY

Background

The SR 167 Master Plan PEL (Planning and Environmental Linkages) Study represents a equity centered effort in transportation planning at WSDOT, integrating a comprehensive approach to align future transportation projects with regional development patterns and community needs. This study focused on enhancing mobility and connectivity in the within the Puget Sound area.

Engagement Strategy

The project's community engagement plan prioritized feedback from vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. The goal was not only to hear their voices but to center the infrastructure improvements on those who needed them the most. This proactive approach in engaging these groups ensured that the resulting transportation strategies directly addressed their unique challenges.

Central to this approach was the establishment of an Equity Advisory Committee (EAC) alongside a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). These committees collaborated closely throughout the planning process, from setting the vision and goals to developing scenario-based planning and crafting the final recommendations. The EAC, which included representatives from a variety of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), advocated for vulnerable populations and supported environmental justice and transportation equity. The EAC played a crucial role, ensuring that equity considerations were woven into the project from inception.

Equity Advisory Committee

- African Community Housing & Development
- Asian Counseling and Referral
- Atlantic Street Center
- Center for Independence
- Congolese Integration Network, Inc.
- Forever Green Trails
- Future Wise
- IDIC Filipino Senior and Family Services
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Orion Industries
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Renton Inclusion Task Force
- Somali Community Services of Seattle

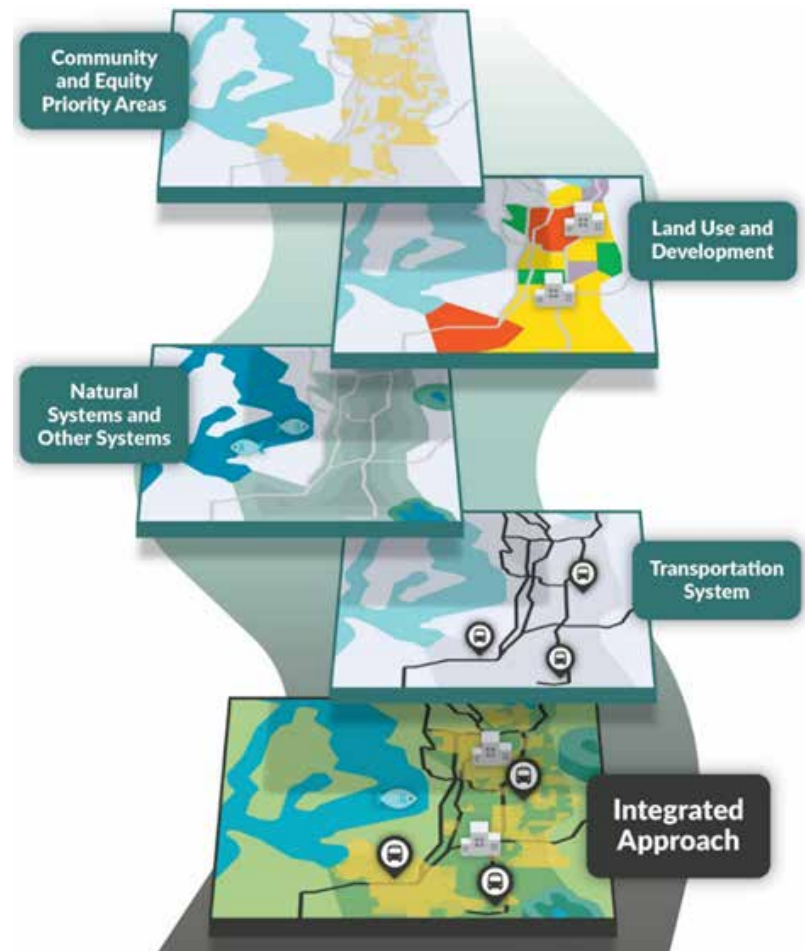
Methods of Engagement

One-on-one listening sessions, held between October 2021 and January 2022, were used to both gather critical feedback from equity communities and gauge interest and capacity to participate in the EAC. Based on interest from CBOs in participating, an EAC was formed. There were seven EAC meetings from February 2022 to May 2023. These meetings were instrumental in understanding the specific needs and concerns of equity communities, especially those historically underrepresented in planning processes. EAC members were compensated for their time participating in meeting as well as for supporting community engagement efforts.

Impact of EAC Feedback

The EAC's feedback was critical in shaping the final recommendations of the SR 167 Master Plan. Key themes from the feedback included:

- **Transit:** The need for more reliable and accessible east-west transit routes, along with expanded on-demand transit services.
- **Sidewalks/Trails:** Addressing gaps in sidewalks and trails to improve accessibility.
- **Sense of Security:** Enhancing lighting, visibility, and design to increase security.
- **Congestion:** Reducing congestion through the addition of managed lanes and interchange improvements.
- **Tolling:** Implementing a statewide low-income tolling program to mitigate economic barriers.



Outcomes

The final study recommendation incorporated these feedback areas, proposing specific projects like creating new transit routes, adding new lighting on regional trails, and recommending policies like low-income toll programs. These measures aimed not just to enhance transportation but to ensure equitable access for all community members, particularly those impacted by economic and social barriers.

Conclusion

The SR 167 Master Plan PEL Study used a multi-step approach to incorporate equity communities and feedback in the planning process. The study sets the goal of elevating the voices and needs of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. The process and recommendations are the result of integrating community input and focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable to achieve not only functional but also equitable outcomes.

Next Steps

The I-405/SR 167 Corridor Program has met with the EAC twice since the completion of the SR 167 Master Plan PEL Study. The Program is committed to continued engagement to collaborate on advancing the recommendations in the SR 167 Master Plan PEL Study.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES AND BANDS OF THE YAKAMA NATION

Working together to discuss U.S. 97 roundabouts

Yakima county experiences the highest overrepresentation of Native American and Alaska Native traffic fatalities of any county in Washington. A large part of the problem is U.S. 97, which is the only north-to-south highway in the Yakama Nation Reservation. WSDOT recommended installing roundabouts at eight key intersections, where the sideroads meet the highway, to reduce crash severity, fatalities and serious injuries that plagued the area.

The Tribal Council rejected WSDOT's recommendation, in part because the existing relationship was strained, and the Tribe needed more information about the effectiveness of roundabouts.

Then in 2017, with communication and education over time, a relationship began to build. WSDOT acknowledged past missteps and recognized that trust is earned first between individuals and then organizations.

The communications professional worked with the subject matter expert to create a roundabout-education campaign that included a tabletop roundabout display, an interactive walkabout roundabout demonstration and the use of a neighboring state's coloring book. This child-focused education campaign was brought to dozens of community events, often engaging parents.

State and Tribal engineers talked together about roundabouts as a solution. The Tribal Council was open to the state building a couple roundabouts and determining if they did work to make the highway safer. For the two that have been completed, the results are 19 million successful trips through the roundabouts, with a handful of crashes, mostly non injury and no fatalities. To date, Tribal Council has approved the construction of seven roundabouts.

It took time, but the Tribe learned in 2017 that WSDOT was willing to learn from mistakes, wanted to earn back trust and wanted to collaborate on traffic safety. The Tribal Council and WSDOT had common goals and built a relationship and trust, which resulted in a productive working relationship.

As of 2023, the Yakama Nation Tribal Council has issued resolutions supporting the construction of roundabouts on reservation land and encouraging WSDOT to continue conducting public outreach regarding roundabouts' benefits.

Lessons learned:

- Mending relationships and building trust takes time.
- Build the relationship in advance of "the big ask." Listen more than telling.
- Consistency is critical – before, during and after the project. It is important to continue to work with the Yakama Nation beyond the construction of the roundabouts.
- Be respectful. Use proper protocols and etiquette (make sure you know how the community defines respect and etiquette).
- Assign to the project key staff who won't be rotated out. It is important to have a consistent point-of-contact who won't just vanish.

A NEW APPROACH TO INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT VIA THE HIGHWAY SYSTEM PLAN (HSP) 2024 UPDATE

Background

It became clear early on during the process of updating the HSP that the project was lacking engagement from overburdened and historically disadvantaged communities, who play a key role in ensuring the success of the plan as well as the agency's commitment to DEI and the HEAL Act. The initial engagement strategy that was led by a WSDOT consultant proved unsuccessful due to various factors including not meeting folks where they are at and not conveying the true value of their input. Instead of operating in the way that had always been the standard, the team decided it was time to try something different.

Engagement Strategies and Outcomes

A more robust tactic for connecting with historically under-represented communities was necessary to ensure an accurate depiction of Washington residents' highway investment priorities. Therefore, the project team designed a statewide engagement effort that took place in locations the communities already frequent in their day-to-day including food banks, places of worship, and public parks. While at these community hubs, the project team used in-person intercept interviews and focus groups to reach people of color, people living on low income, and people who primarily speak languages other than English. A key contributor to the success of this outreach was ensuring that there were bilingual team members at the sites of engagement so that not only was the team physically meeting them where they are at but also meeting them at their level of English proficiency. This helped to expand the geographic diversity of the project as well as the quantity and quality of participation.

In addition to meeting the communities where they are at, the HSP team also came up with a new strategy for conveying the true value of community feedback to the participants. This new community engagement tool allowed for qualifying participants to be compensated with a \$25 cash card for participating in an interview, or a \$100 cash card for participating in an hour-long focus group. This incentive was distributed in-person to the community members at the time of participation which benefitted the communities and the agency while forming trust and connection. To be successful in this effort, the team brought their initiative, diligence, and follow through when it came to completing successful reporting. These strengths were harnessed to overcome the barrier of getting funding reimbursed so that the engagement strategy can be used again by the agency in the future.

Conclusion

These combined methods for engagement opened the door for not only deeper connection with community but also rich information and knowledge gleaned from authentic storytelling based on lived experiences. The in-person interview style in combination with the project team showing up in the spaces the community members already exist, as well as offering financial compensation, were all innovative techniques that achieved great results. The success of the HSP team's engagement strategies were evaluated based on the quality and quantity of engagement. The geographic and demographic reach that was achieved through their innovative efforts was an improvement compared to previous attempts at connecting with overburdened communities for planning projects.

WSDOT'S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DIVISION IS RE-THINKING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY CO-DEVELOPING A PLAN

Background

PTD came to realize that their community engagement plan was not meeting expectations. Results from previous attempts at community engagement made by the Public Transportation Division at WSDOT proved insufficient for the needs of planning projects and unsatisfactory in the eyes of community members. The division had made very little progress in creating community partnerships and was not able to get the quality of feedback that would be conducive to successful planning projects. Something had to change for engagement efforts to have the intended impact and to minimize any waste of community member and agency time.

The Pre-Engagement Engagement Approach

Since the original community engagement plan for PTD was not meeting the needs of neither the agency nor the community, the PTD team had to come up with a way to realign their attempts at eliciting public participation. The team decided that the best way to figure out how to effectively engage and get results from the public was to ask the communities themselves:

1. How they would like the agency to engage with them and
2. How they would like to participate in PTD projects.

The intent of this re-strategizing was to formulate the most productive engagement strategies moving forward based on the input from the people that PTD would actually be engaging with and seeking the feedback from, as well as from those the update of the CE plan would impact. This effort was an attempt at co-creating the update to the division's community engagement plan with the communities it is intended to serve.

Engagement Strategies and Outcomes

In order to co-create the update to the PTD CE plan, the team decided that they themselves would build the relationships with the participating communities themselves as opposed to having the usual consultant conduct the interviews and briefings. This connected the planning team directly to the communities and created an opportunity to grow and maintain reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships with groups that have been historically under-represented.

Another new technique was related to the issue of further overburdening community members by asking them the same base-line questions that are asked in all WSDOT projects. Instead of asking the general and repetitive "how do you use transportation" questions, the project team compiled and reviewed previously collected responses to those questions and drafted a summary of their findings. They then presented this "vision statement" back to the community to see if their perspectives and experiences were accurately portrayed and offered them the space to make any corrections or additions. This showed the community that the agency was listening to their feedback and allowed the process to move more efficiently.

Conclusion

This pre-engagement engagement allowed PTD to learn from communities across the state about how to best partner together to develop a plan that addresses needs and offers strategies that truly improve mobility and access for all. The project team noted that the quality of the engagement and of the information collected improved greatly due to the strategies that they employed, compared to past engagement trends. The effort in turn made the PTD CE plan update more accurate and representative, resulting in the community being better served. In the end, the communities were able to feel heard and that the agency was able to build and maintain relationships themselves instead of through a third party, all of which helped classify this community engagement approach as a success.

APPENDIX E: RESOURCES

WSDOT - OFFICE OF EQUITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Equal opportunity in contracting: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/equal-opportunity-contracting>

Title VI/Limited English Proficiency (LEP): <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/title-vi-limited-english-proficiency>

WSDOT LEP Plan: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/WSDOT-Limited-English-Proficiency-LEP-Accessibility-Plan-2024.pdf>

WSDOT Title VI Plan: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/OECR-Title-VI-Implementation-Plan.pdf>

Determination of translation need and languages: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/WSDOT-Internal-Procedures-Translation-Services.pdf>

Environmental Justice & Title VI: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/environmental-justice>; <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/title-vi-limited-english-proficiency>

WSDOT TRIBAL LIAISON

Tribal Contacts: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/tribal-contacts>

Tribal & regional planning: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/planning-guidance/tribal-regional-planning>

Centennial Accord Plan: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/WSDOTCentennialAccordPlan5mb.pdf>

Model Tribal Consultation Process: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/TribalManual.pdf>

Tribal Consultation Best Practices: https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/Tribal_Consultation_Best_Practices_Guide_for_MPOsR.pdf

COMMUNICATIONS AT WSDOT

WSDOT Style Guide and Communications Manual: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/current-employees/wsdot-style-guide-and-communications-manual>

Communications contacts: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/contacts/media-contacts>

WSDOT PUBLICATIONS SERVICES INDEX

Guidance for Community Engagement is included in many manuals for design, development services, environmental and local agency guidelines.

www.wsdot.wa.gov/Publications/Manuals/index.htm

MPO/RTPO/WSDOT DIRECTORY

<https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-08/Directory-MPO-RTPO-WSDOT.pdf>

NCHRP PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR INVOLVING TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS IN TRANSPORTATION DECISIONMAKING

onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_710.pdf

WSDOT VISUAL ENGINEERING RESOURCE GROUP (VERG) - VISUALIZATIONS, VIDEO, PHOTOGRAPHY & UAV

www.wsdot.wa.gov/business/visualcommunications/default.htm

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: https://www.ada.gov/ada_intro.htm

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: <https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI-Overview>

U.S.C. Title 23, Highways: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2015-title23/pdf/USCODE-2015-title23.pdf>

23 CFR, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):

- 23 CFR 450: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2016-title23-vol1/pdf/CFR-2016-title23-vol1-part450.pdf>
- 23 CFR 771: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2016-title23-vol1/pdf/CFR-2016-title23-vol1-part771.pdf>
- 40 CFR 1500-1508: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): <https://www.epa.gov/nepa>