

# Framework for Public Engagement

*Prepared by Georgetown Climate Center, Revised November 2021*

## Introduction

In the “[Update on Public Engagement Planning](#),” published on March 1, 2021, Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) jurisdictions outlined the next steps to ensure meaningful, equitable and inclusive participation of community stakeholders when jurisdictions implement the TCI Program (TCI-P).

This document, which reflects input received through the TCI-P public input portal, includes principles to guide jurisdictions when conducting outreach and public engagement to the general public and all interested stakeholders, with a focus on ensuring just and equitable outcomes, including targeted emissions reductions and access to low-carbon transportation for communities that are overburdened by pollution and underserved by the transportation system.

## Guiding Principles

### **1) Work with stakeholders to create, or adapt existing, public engagement plans that include the following elements:**

- Plans for meaningful and effective public engagement, particularly for environmental, climate, and transportation justice communities; Tribal communities; people with disabilities or mobility challenges; people without access to public transportation; impacted workers and union representatives within the transportation sector; and other equity stakeholders;
- Articulation of clear goals, expectations, and scope of engagement;
- Clearly outlined timelines for each stage of the TCI-P Implementation Plan;
- Engagement plans that will be updated and revised over time as milestones are reached and related policies are adopted or advanced;
- Description of how equity and justice considerations will be centered and how input from overburdened communities will be incorporated into decision-making processes; and
- Inventory of existing communication and engagement channels to identify gaps, including where translation is needed.

## **2) Build trust through honest and open exchanges of information.**

- Maintain respect, honesty, and integrity in the process.
- Use an open, two-way exchange of information to increase understanding among all stakeholders and encourage active listening. Establish or maintain open communication channels that are consistently monitored and responded to.
- Engage community leaders to build understanding among stakeholders and cultivate trusted channels to promote TCI-P engagement.
- Maintain a regularly updated public funding dashboard/report detailing where program proceeds are being invested and where additional funds are being leveraged.

## **3) Encourage active community participation.**

- Actively work to increase the number of community members who recognize themselves as stakeholders in the low-carbon transportation policy conversation.
- Where possible, partner with other types of community centers, such as employment centers and rural health offices, to help expand the transportation dialogue.

## **4) Recognize community knowledge and expertise.**

- Document input received from community members, respond to it, and be transparent regarding how their input is reflected in decision making. Make efforts to reconnect with the groups that originally provided the input to demonstrate that the input has been effectively integrated into the program.
- Use input received through community engagement to inform TCI-P decisions and activities in the wider context of overburdened and underserved communities' issues and concerns.
- Invite environmental justice and community-based organizations to co-convene public workshops on TCI-P and other related topics.

## **5) Make public engagement accessible for everyone (e.g., language and disability access).**

- Methods, processes, and information should be targeted and applicable to the specific community's needs.
- Host meetings at varied times, in venues and in formats that maximize community engagement, including through accommodations for language, disability and other needs. Meeting structures should vary (e.g., including presentations, breakout rooms, and facilitated discussion) to provide different ways for people and organizations to participate and provide input.

- Reduce barriers to engagement and enable interested community members to meaningfully participate. This may include scheduling meetings at times outside of regular work hours and hosting viewing parties for online meetings in areas where internet access is limited.
- Provide plain language resources, technical assistance, and materials that make TCI-P more understandable and accessible to a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Best practices include frequently asked questions, a glossary defining common terms, and contact information for agency officials able to provide assistance. Create anonymous options for submitting questions about program content or requests for simplifying definitions and educational materials.
- Provide translation and interpretation services for materials and meetings and follow culturally relevant communication practices. If possible, identify commonly spoken languages in different regions across the jurisdiction and translate accordingly for those communities.

**6) Build capacity for sustained, long-term community engagement that can exist beyond the TCI-P implementation process.**

- Build capacity within communities and community organizations to ensure that underserved and overburdened communities can build the technical and policy knowledge to effectively influence low-carbon transportation policy outcomes.
- Invest in community-based air quality monitoring and other tools so data collected in communities is accessible to the public and used in decision-making by TCI-P jurisdictions to further reduce carbon emissions. Establish and/or maintain a regularly updated public dashboard/report to share data.
- Build capacity within government agencies to institutionalize public participation.
- Ensure that data and information collected by TCI-P jurisdictions can measure the outcomes of transportation policies in ways that are disaggregated by race, income, and other equity-related metrics.
- Leverage federal resources (e.g., U.S. EPA and U.S. DOT grants) and work with federal agencies, as appropriate, to further enable capacity building within communities and TCI-P government agencies.