2023 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

JUNE 2022
Robust stakeholder engagement has been a hallmark value of the Active Transportation Program (ATP) since program inception in 2014. The California Transportation Commission (Commission) has prioritized public engagement in the development of program materials for every cycle. Each cycle, Commission staff conducts a series of workshops, site visits, and other outreach activities to gather and incorporate stakeholder feedback, facilitate policy discussions on challenging subjects, and provide technical assistance to applicants. The result, outreach improves scores - 82% of counties which participated in the 2021 workshops or site visits saw an increase in their average scores compared to prior program cycles. 32% of those counties increased their average scores by over ten points compared to past cycles. Engagement activities have traditionally taken place in person. However, when the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic hit in early March 2020 and extended into the outreach period for the 2023 program, the Commission reimagined its approach to stakeholder engagement. Commission staff shifted to an all-virtual setting for the 2023 Active Transportation Program for each of the three main engagement activities – Central Workshops, Branch Workshops, and Project Site Visits. The virtual approach significantly extended the geographic reach of our engagement activities. Approximately 200 stakeholders attended each of the nine Central Workshops, where policy decisions are discussed and moved forward. That’s approximately 220% more than in past cycles. The Branch workshops, regionally-focused meetings to help participants understand program basics also saw more counties participate than last cycle.

The most dramatic engagement increase - 96 virtual site visits were conducted, covering 33 counties, and 129 projects this cycle. By switching to virtual project site visits, Commission staff increased the number of project site visits by over 100 percent. Site visit participants overwhelmingly appreciated the direct support.

“[Commission] Active Transportation Program staff are the best public agency program staff that I’ve ever seen or had the privilege to work with! As a stakeholder in Cycle 6, their stakeholder engagement and responsiveness to questions and/or issues that arise is unmatched by any other agency or department in my experience. The resources and support made available for participants make them easily one of the most transparent and best examples of government in action.”

- Michael C. Williams
  Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

Virtual project site visits not only give many more agencies the opportunity to get expert feedback on their projects and application narratives, but also allow Commission staff to gain valuable knowledge on the active transportation issues and project trends from agencies all around the state.

This report outlines the 2023 Active Transportation Program engagement and highlights the major outcomes from this unique cycle.
CYCLE 6 ENGAGEMENT

WORKSHOPS

15
TOTAL WORKSHOPS

9
CENTRAL WORKSHOPS

6
BRANCH WORKSHOPS

BRANCH WORKSHOP COUNTY PARTICIPATION

CYCLE 5
12 Counties

CYCLE 6
16 Counties

4 ADDITIONAL COUNTIES ATTENDED BRANCH WORKSHOPS IN CYCLE 6

CENTRAL WORKSHOPS focus on recommendations and revisions to the ATP guidelines, applications and scoring rubrics.

BRANCH WORKSHOPS are region-specific workshops that provide program education, technical assistance and analyses of each county’s performance in prior cycles.
I just wanted to thank you [Commission staff] for your time last week to do a virtual site visit with us ... The feedback was super helpful for us and we really appreciate your time. As I said in the meeting, I don’t know many agencies that provide that kind of one-on-one feedback and I can’t say enough how cool that is.

- Adam Fukushima
City of San Luis Obispo
VIRTUAL SITE VISIT LESSONS LEARNED

ELEVATED THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF ATP ENGAGEMENT

- Boosted staff knowledge of statewide trends and challenges
- Allowed for efficient use of staff resources and time
- Created a surge in site visit request through word-of-mouth referrals
- Enhanced geographic equity and accessibility of engagement
- Allowed for intensive, direct technical assistance
- Provided applicants with one-on-one access to Commission staff
- Encouraged agencies to create well-thought-out visuals and presentations
- Provided an opportunity for innovative project video tours
- Enhanced applicants’ ability to communicate project and community context
- Allowed staff to easily identify big picture project issues for feedback
- Created a productive environment for discussion
- Allowed for more project tours than ever before

ATP stakeholders are eager to participate in engagement and learning opportunities when given flexible and accessible options. The pandemic forced staff to move away from traditional practices and ultimately led to an engagement process with a broad geographic reach and high-quality assistance for applicants. Moving forward, staff hopes to blend these new, creative methods of engagement with pre-pandemic best practices.

Takeaways

2023 Active Transportation Program Engagement Summary 04