

PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH	PROCEDURE	
	Document Number:	EA-MR-PR-1010
	Version Number:	01

1.0 Purpose:

Communities, businesses and individuals often have many diverse interests and concerns about the activities and disruptions associated with the delivery of capital projects. The public must be kept informed about projects and associated activities on an ongoing basis. Established procedures that demonstrate sensitivity to community concerns and provide timely, pertinent information contribute to the successful development and completion of capital projects. In addition, providing a forum for the resolution of project-generated issues helps minimize costly delays, allowing contractors to focus on the timely achievement of project milestones.

The Project Communications and Outreach Procedure (PCO Procedure) ensures adequate, appropriate and consistent communications and outreach during the planning, engineering and construction of capital projects.

2.0 Scope:

The Project Communications and Outreach Procedure (PCO Procedure) applies to VTA capital project personnel representing Communications and Outreach, the BART Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Program, Engineering & Construction and Congestion Management. The PCO Procedure identifies practices that will ensure VTA prepares for, addresses, and communicates all levels of anticipated effects on identified project stakeholders including communities, neighborhoods, businesses, residences, commuters and individuals. Implementation and adherence to the procedure, combined with thoughtful design, use of advanced construction techniques, best management practices, and strategic scheduling will result in the least disruption possible to the status quo. Potential project effects may include introducing new facilities to a community, temporary construction traffic detours, modifying access and parking, construction dust and noise, or other activities that have the potential to affect residences, businesses, schools, emergency services, and community events.

Each project will require its own Project Communications and Outreach Plan (PCO Plan), driven by the following procedures and tailored to the project's schedule, scope, location and planned activities.

3.0 Responsibilities:

The PCO Procedure was developed through a cooperative process involving External Affairs, Engineering & Construction, and BART Silicon Valley staff. It is the responsibility of Communications and Outreach assigned staff, in coordination with Engineering & Construction and Congestion Management Agency project staff to implement and adhere to this procedure.

4.0 Procedure:

4.1 Goal and Objectives:

The goal of the PCO Procedure is to deliver a community-based, long-term beneficial

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transportation project while minimizing disruption to the status quo during all phases of the project.

The objectives of the PCO Procedure are to:

1. Provide established guidelines for communications and outreach activities during project development, through design and all phases of construction on a project.
2. Establish consistent communication practices locally and regionally.
3. Disseminate communications that are timed, crafted and distributed for maximum effectiveness.
4. Educate stakeholders about the project, design phases, and construction processes and practices while fostering on-going relationships.
5. Adhere to identified practices that consider interests of all project stakeholders while enabling project progress.
6. Establish guidelines for communications and outreach incorporated into all project contracts.
7. Identify specific measures implemented by VTA to properly address issues.

4.2 **Procedure Components:**

The four basic components of the PCO Procedure include: 1) identifying stakeholder groups based on levels of project involvement, 2) specifying communication methods, tools and timing for project information dissemination, 3) attributing the appropriate communication methods to be used for identified stakeholder groups, and 4) implementation and adherence to the resulting plan.

4.2.1 **Stakeholder Group Identification**

Stakeholder groups are identified based on three levels of project involvement:

- 1) The Significant Project Involvement group is defined as stakeholders who are directly affected by changes to the status quo. Examples include: City Councils, relevant Policy Advisory Boards, VTA Board of Directors, Commuters, Concerned Citizens, Developers, Funding and Partnering Agencies, Individuals/Business Employees/Customers and Media. A complete list of stakeholder groups can be found in Exhibit A – EA-MR-PR-1010A: Project Stakeholders List.
- 2) The Moderate Project Involvement group is identified as stakeholder groups who experience the future benefits of the project and are not directly affected by project activities. Examples include: Businesses/Residents/Commuters, Current Transit Users, Transit Advocates and Transit Related Organizations.
- 3) The Minimal or No Project Involvement group includes the public in general. This could be any stakeholder in Santa Clara County or in the nine Bay Area and neighboring counties.

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4.2.2 Method Identification

Distributing pertinent information to the public regarding the nature and course of a construction project is necessary. Timely, accurate and consistent communications provide impacted stakeholders the opportunity to provide input and potentially influence the approach being taken by a project, and to prepare for activities in advance, alerting them to potential disruption of daily routines. Forty-two tools and/or methods have been identified and defined for the PCO Procedure (Exhibit B: EA-MR-PR-1010B).

Communication methods include: advertisements, briefings, celebratory/recognition events, dedicated field hours, emails, flyers, newsletters, phone calls, public meetings and presentations, signage, social networking sites, tours, and website updates. A complete list of stakeholder groups can be found in Exhibit B - EA-MR-PR-1010B: Communication Methods Chart.

Each of the communication methods has a Trigger. A Trigger is defined as the activity or project milestone that essentially activates the need for communication with the impacted or associated stakeholder. In addition, the Timing and Frequency for each of the communication methods are identified.

4.2.3 Attributing Methods To Stakeholder Groups

Exhibit C – EA-MR-PR-1010C: Stakeholder and Communication Methods Matrix shows all appropriate communication tools associated with stakeholder groups to inform, educate, and foster relationships.

4.2.4 Developing and Implementing Project Communication and Outreach Plans

Completion of components 1, 2 and 3 above provides the basis for development of comprehensive and project-specific Project Communications and Outreach Plans (PCO Plans). Assigned Communications and Outreach staff shall monitor implementation, adherence and progress of PCO Plans on a recurring basis with input from designated project staff.

4.3 Additional Activities

There are additional associated activities referenced below that complement and/or affect project communications and outreach.

4.3.1 Public and Media Relations

Public and media relations play an important role in communicating project benefits. Strategic efforts help the community balance short term impacts with long-term benefits. If there is any project activity or actions that have not been adequately communicated to the public, then Community Outreach staff shall be alerted to implement corrective action, which may include a variety of communication methods, and, if warranted, postponement of activities until properly resolved.

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VTA has designated staff roles specific to media relations and inquiries. The VTA Media Spokesperson's sole responsibility is to manage media inquiries and coordinate appropriate responses on behalf of VTA. The VTA Media Spokesperson has been trained to work with the media, project staff, and designated communications and/or media relations specialists (if necessary), to provide consistent messaging and accurate information to a very large audience.

AVTA Media Spokesperson is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and can be reached via cell phone at (408) 464-7810. Calls to the dedicated cell phone number result in immediate contact or response within 15 minutes.

4.3.2 Crisis Communications

If a crisis occurs on a construction project, the designated VTA Media Spokesperson, Chief of External Affairs, and, if it involves BART Silicon Valley, the BART Silicon Valley Communications Director shall be contacted immediately and the designated project Crisis Communications Plan implemented. VTA's designated spokesperson shall be engaged immediately because media outlets also receive emergency responder information. In some cases of crisis (e.g. fire, strike, construction failure, employee injury, gas leak, water main break, etc.), the media can arrive rapidly on scene and may want to conduct interviews.

5.0 Definitions:

N/A.

6.0 Records:

N/A.

7.0 Appendices:

Exhibit A – EA-MR-PR-1010A: Project Stakeholders List.

Exhibit B – EA-MR-PR-1010B: Communication Methods Chart.

Exhibit C – EA-MR-PR-1010C: Stakeholder and Communication Methods Matrix.

8.0 Training Requirements:




N/A.

9.0 Summary of Changes:

Initial release of this procedure.

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10.0 Approval Information:

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