# Resiliency Guidebook
Community Engagement Best Practices

February 13, 2017

Executive Order B-30-15 directed State agencies to integrate climate change into all planning and investment, including accounting for current and future climate conditions in infrastructure investment. OPR was directed to convene a Technical Advisory Group to develop guidance to support implementation of the Executive Order.

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) included members from nearly every State agency, local and regional governments, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and the private sector. The TAG produced a guidance document called "Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies." This document provides high-level guidance on what future conditions to plan for and how State agencies should approach planning differently in light of a changing climate. The Executive Order also mandated that because "climate change will disproportionately affect the state's most vulnerable people", all "State agencies' planning and investments shall...protect the state's most vulnerable populations". This was the first mandate in the United States requiring all state agencies to plan for climate change and to protect vulnerable people while doing so.

Robust, genuine community engagement in significant decisions is core to protecting people facing climate vulnerability.
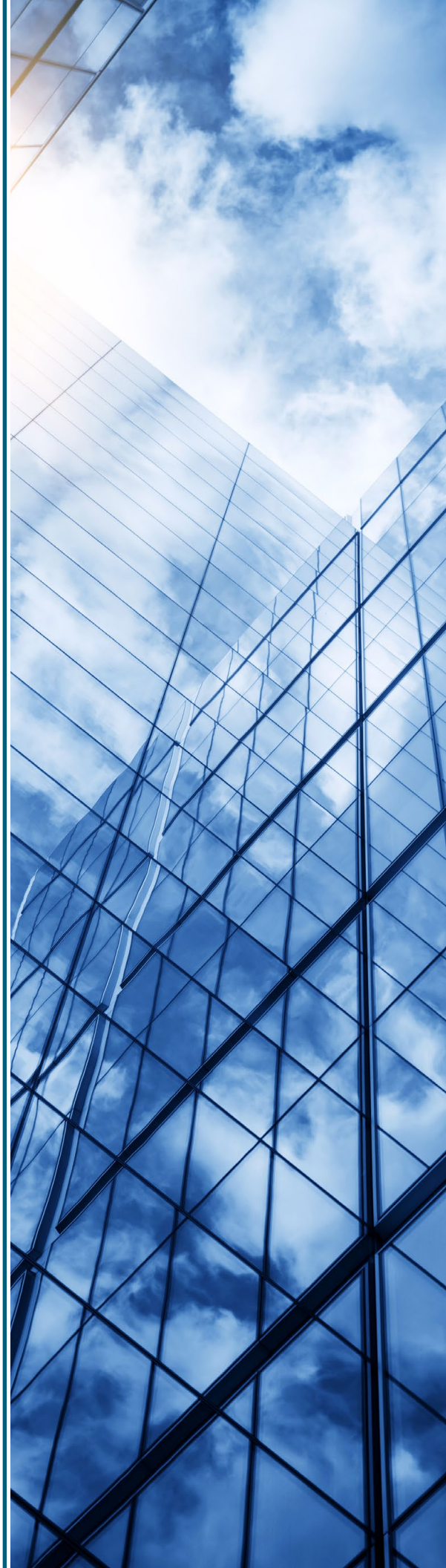
The following best practices were created by the Equity and Vulnerable Communities subcommittee of the Technical Advisory Group, facilitated by the Climate Change and Health Equity Program of the California Department of Public Health.[1]

Best practices for community engagement involves actively soliciting collaboration from diverse populations, and making opportunities for input accessible in different formats (online, in public meetings, one on one, by mail, etc.), venues (at school and community events, festivals, community centers, libraries, transit hubs, etc.), hours (evening or weekend), and language (accessible to lay people and translated into the principle languages of the relevant communities, including accessible media such as caption videos). Often it is more effective to "go where the people are" rather than expecting them to deviate from their routine to attend a special state-sponsored meeting. Communities deserve to know who is making the decision, by what criteria, for what purpose, and with what resources.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) developed a Spectrum of Public Participation to help agencies define how much power they are offering communities over decisions. Options range from informing the public, which involves providing objective information about problems, alternatives and potential solutions, to consulting with the public, involving the public, collaborating with the public, and finally empowering the public, which involves placing final decision-making power in their hands. Agencies should be transparent about what degree of decision-making power community members have, and should strive towards collaboration and empowerment, to share decision-making power as much as is feasible.

When agency projects or processes can involve the community on a long-term basis, a best practice is to develop a written collaboration agreement or memorandum of understanding that defines respective roles, expectations, desired outcomes, and agreements for how to work together. The US EPA Region 9 and the West Oakland Toxics Reduction

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Collaborative successfully pioneered the use of such agreements to reduce diesel emissions, asthma, conflict, and lawsuits, and US EPA has replicated this approach nationwide.

Other best practices for community engagement include establishing an advisory group of representatives of vulnerable communities, such as the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) that advises the California Air Resources Board, and co-hosting public participation events in collaboration with community-based organizations that have deep relationships in local communities. Whenever possible, community members should be paid for their participation out of respect for their time and wisdom, and food, travel assistance or transit reimbursement and childcare should be provided. Strive to spend a significant portion of every project budget on community engagement. Collaborate creatively with other agencies to avoid overtaxing community members' time and capacity. Consider inviting community leaders onto the committee to design the public engagement process. Provide community members with worthwhile roles in the process such as designing engagement techniques, conducting outreach, collecting data, analyzing results, translating and communicating results to stakeholders, so that community capacity is built during the collaboration process.

Developing trust with community members is hard work and time-consuming, but ultimately worth it, part of an agency's job, and the right thing to do. Be patient and persistent, and don't take conflict personally.