

Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot Program

Survey Guide for the

Community Transportation Needs Assessment



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Program Support

For questions about this project design guide and to request individualized technical assistance, please contact:

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Introduction

The Clean Mobility Options Voucher Pilot Program (CMO) requires that Mobility Project Voucher (MPV) applicants and Community Transportation Needs Assessment (CTNA) awardees conduct at least one resident survey as part of the Transportation Access Data Analysis in their Community Transportation Needs Assessment. A resident survey is important for determining resident attitudes about a variety of factors that affect their ability to get around: reliability, affordability, safety, accessibility, and more. Survey results potentially support or challenge data from other sources used in the Transportation Access Data Analysis, and alongside community education and outreach, can help to determine what new or expanded mobility services would be preferred and utilized by the community to meet transportation needs.

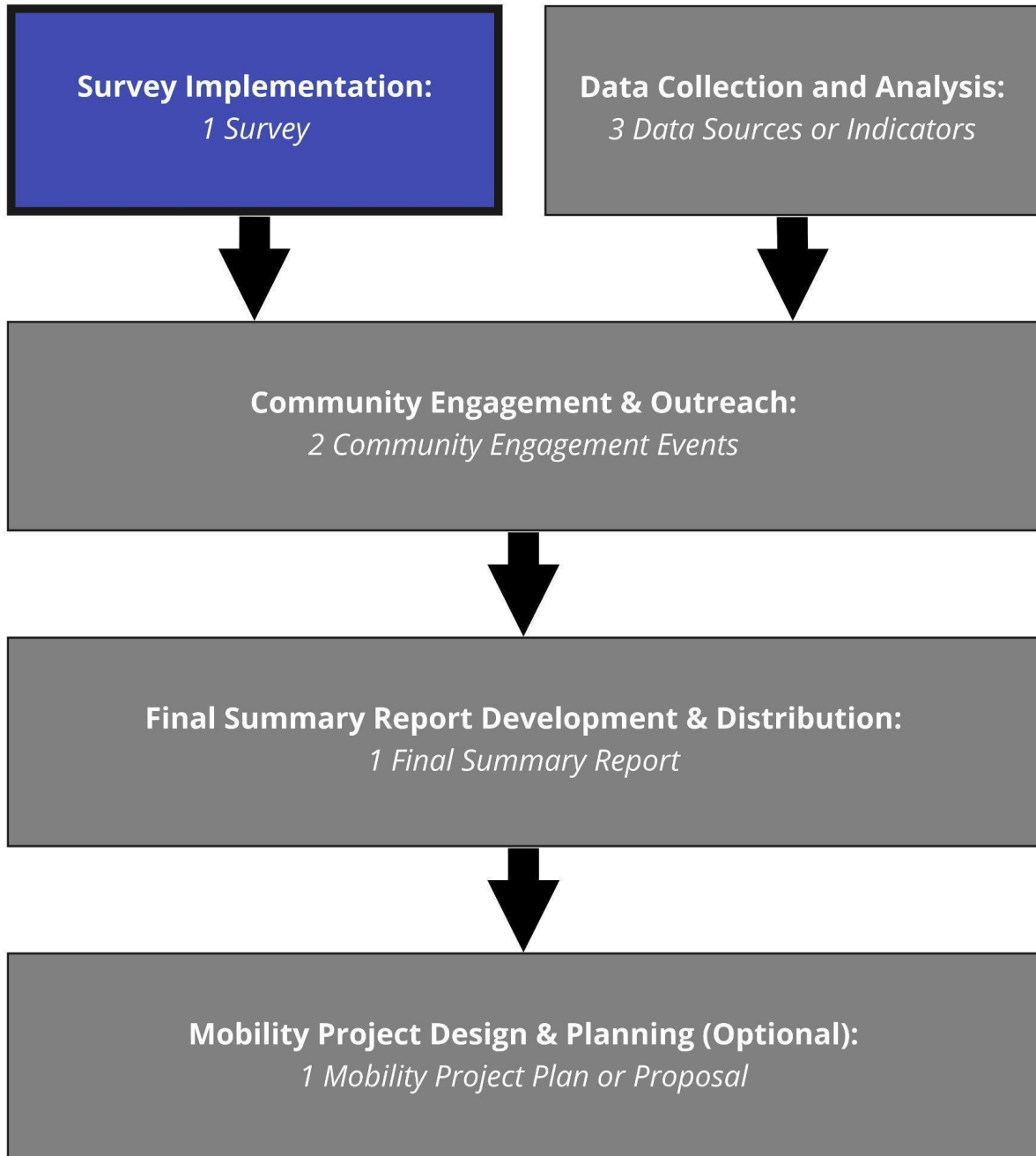
“A well-developed survey makes the whole process much easier, making sure that we take time on...planning the survey...Maybe there's one really good question, instead of asking maybe five or six right? So finding those, going over the survey constantly was something that we really want to do in the future. So that, conducting the survey in these different communities make it so the time is more efficient, and then we get some of the more clear insights as to what we're trying to do in this community.”

- LEAP Institute, Pajaro



Image/Source: LEAP Institute

This guide is intended to help MPV applicants (and awarded CTNA voucher recipients) complete the Survey Development and Implementation portion of the needs assessment. See the graphic below which shows the sequence and required components of the needs assessment process:



Survey Development

A good starting point for developing your survey is referencing the CMO [Implementation Manual](#) to understand how the survey fits into the Community Transportation Needs Assessment process. From there, **figure out what you want to learn from your survey** as part of your entire Needs Assessment Strategy. There may be information about residents' perception of safety or reliability of transit options that other data sources are unable to show. What you want to learn can be broad or narrow. For example:

- How do residents get around?
- What transportation barriers do residents currently face?
- Do residents have the technology necessary to pay for a service online?

Alongside information about transportation, you may want to know how different demographic groups struggle or succeed with reliability, affordability, safety, accessibility, and more. For example:

- “Do different gender identities use one mode more than another?”
- “Do Spanish-speaking residents find it more difficult to use transit than English speakers?”

Once you figure out what you want to know, you can identify the questions and answer choices you want to include in the survey. But before choosing questions, a strategy should be developed to make your survey successful.

Developing a Survey Strategy

There are several things to factor into a survey strategy: historical context, the community's trust in the system, and cultural relevance, to name a few. Remember, this survey might be your first time connecting with residents, and you are asking them to share their time with you. Here are some questions to ask to inform your survey strategy:

- What sort of pre-existing relationship, if any, do you have with the community?
- Have residents in your project area ever had the opportunity to answer questions about mobility and transportation experiences before? Similarly, has the community been asked to participate in other surveys recently?
- What are residents struggling with right now (housing, food access) that could affect their interest in taking a survey about transportation needs?

Answers to these will help determine your strategy for [establishing a minimum sample size](#), [your survey length](#), [question and answer choices](#), [incentives](#), [survey translation](#), and [collecting responses](#).

Establish Minimum Sample Size

Although there is no mandatory number of survey responses required as part of the Transportation Access Analysis, there are general rules of thumb to follow to get a good indication of resident needs.

The first is to try and obtain 100 responses at minimum. Second, if dealing with a larger population (>5000) try to sample 5% of the population at minimum. 100 or 5% is not a cut off, as more responses will reduce the margin of error in the results, but, beyond 1,000 the accuracy of the analysis will not improve. **If you are unable to receive the minimum number of responses mentioned above then make sure the responses you gather reflect the diversity of the population you are surveying.** Applying these rules of thumb help to ensure variety in responses and provide results that can be segmented into different demographic groups.

Determine Survey Length

Depending on the number of responses you want to collect, your survey length is important. A long survey can yield a lot of information, but residents may not be comfortable or enthusiastic spending more than a few minutes taking a survey without any familiarity with your project goals, team members, or organization. This could make it difficult to reach your goal for responses. Shorter surveys, paired with incentives, can open the door to further engagement.

Image/Source: BikeVentura



“So we wanted to recognize folks’ priorities during Covid, and also take into account...it had been a long time since really meaningful outreach had been done in these communities. And we knew we needed to ask questions that were relative to folks’ experience rather than just give them a big survey that required a lot of context and explanation. So, we felt that we needed an incremental approach to establish a presence in the community. So, we started from the very basic level and a very short survey.”

- BikeVentura, Oxnard

Review Sample Surveys

Awardees can access the sample surveys listed below to get started. Each survey includes similar questions but differs in length, strategy, and overall approach. Remember that some questions or answer choices in each survey may not be the right question for your project area – consider adapting the question, dropping the question, or adding a new question altogether.

[Introductory Survey - Sample](#) - This survey is designed to make a brief, initial introduction of the project to residents, and gauge interest in taking a more robust survey or participating in deeper conversations/community engagement events.

Reliability Survey - Sample This survey is designed to collect responses about current transportation behavior and needs, specifically related to the reliability of existing transportation services, and gauge interest in specific, new mobility options. This survey incorporates demographic questions to establish barriers and preferences between different segments of the community.

Comprehensive Survey - Sample This survey is designed to capture data about current travel behavior, barriers, accessibility, and gauge interest in any new mobility options, as well as collect more specific demographic data to challenge or support data from other sources (e.g., Census, CalEnviroScreen).

Developing Additional Questions

You don't necessarily need to write new questions; however, if you can't find a survey question that will tell you what you want and need to know, consider developing additional questions. Some questions are good for assessing current conditions, others are good for assessing potential solutions, and some can be useful for both.

Step 1: Identify what you want to know: *I want to know about bike ridership in my community*

Step 2: Identify why you want to know this: *because, given observed geographic and demographic conditions, I think bikeshare could be an option for this community*

Step 3: Develop 1-2 questions that ask what you want to know in clear, straightforward, unbiased language

Step 4: Develop common answer choices that make sense for your community

Example:

1. Do you have access to a working bicycle?

Yes No

2. If you don't use a bicycle, please indicate why (check all that apply):

It seems unsafe It's uncomfortable I can't afford to buy one

I don't know how to ride It's not working

Other _____

Responses from this question could indicate current travel behavior, and potential barriers to shared mobility solutions. For example, if many residents do not know how to ride a bicycle, that could have consequences for implementing a bike-share program.

Some tips for writing new survey questions:

- Use clear, straightforward language to develop concise, short statement questions
- Phrase behavioral questions using "you" to personalize the question.

- Ask Questions that elicit specific answers
- Avoid using examples when writing questions, as they can lead respondents to a specific answer.
- When asking a respondent to recall travel behavior, ask for a specific time frame and action first, then ask for a general estimate for all other activities
- Do not place positive or negative determinations in the questions. Instead leave it up to the respondent to decide how they feel about a topic.
- Phrase questions to present options, rather than ones that normalize behavior.

Developing Answer Choices

While much of the focus is on developing or choosing questions, the answer choices are equally important. Survey answers should be clear and easy for survey-takers to understand. Survey respondents should feel like their response is captured fully in their answers, for this reason offering an open-ended “other” answer can be helpful and insightful.

Mainly, there are three types of answers to survey questions.

- **Open-ended** text or numerical response, to collect qualitative feedback.
 - “Tell us about your experience riding a bike in Barstow”
- **Closed-ended** multiple choice or radio style questions. When a single answer is wanted, use **radio style buttons**, or make it clear the respondent should only check one answer. When asking for multiple answers from a list, use **checkboxes** and let the respondent know then should check all answers that apply.
 - **Radio Style:** Which of these did you most use to get to work in the last month? (pick one)
 - Bicycle □ Drive Alone □ Carpool □ Walk □ Bus □ Other _____
 - **Checkbox Style:** Which of these have you used to get to work in the last month? (check all that apply)
 - Bicycle □ Drive Alone □ Carpool □ Walk □ Bus □ Other _____
- **Scaled** responses measure attitude directly. These can be dichotomous questions with Yes/No; True/False; Fair/Unfair; Agree/Disagree, or Likert Scale with three, five, or seven point scales: yes/maybe/no, never/sometimes/always
 - **Dichotomous:** Would you use free bike parking at the transit center?
 - Yes □ No
 - **Likert:** What do you feel is the quality of bike parking at the transit center currently?
 - Very Poor □ Poor □ Fair □ Good □ Excellent

Example: *“I want to know about bike ridership, because bikeshare could be an option for this community”*

1. *Do you have access to a working bicycle* is a close ended, radio button style, dichotomous question as there is only one answer appropriate in response to the question.
 - Yes No

2. *If you don't use a bicycle, please indicate why (check all that apply)* works best as a checkbox style question, as respondents can select multiple options from a series of choices, and can include an open ended short answer in the "other" line.
 - It seems unsafe It's uncomfortable I can't afford to buy one
 - I don't know how to ride It's not working
 - Other _____

When identifying common answer choices for selection be sure to ask others to review the answer choices to see if you've missed a response that makes sense for your community. For example, in the above Question 2, maybe roads and bike lanes are in bad condition and this is a known complaint among the community. Think about providing an answer choice that reflects this issue.

Picking the Right Questions (and Answers) Sensitive to Community Context and Culture

Project Teams know their communities best, and what types of questions and answers are sensitive to residents' experiences, attitudes, community context, and cultures. Sensitive questions might not yield useful data due to chronic question skipping, answer selections respondents think are the "right" answer instead of those that honestly reflect their situation, or can upset the respondent enough so they drop out of the survey altogether.

"We also...had long conversations and removed the, "do you have a driver's license?" [question] from our survey because some of our community leaders gave the feedback that a lot of people actually have to drive, even when they don't have a driver's license and that includes undocumented members of the community. And by asking that question that would immediately ...turn them off of the survey or might not make them feel safe to answer it honestly."

- YOOTs, Richmond

How many unique surveys do you need to conduct?

A unique survey is required as part of the Transportation Data Access Analysis; however, additional surveys can be conducted and qualify as one of the three required community engagement activities. Additional surveys could include more open-ended questions, questions that propose potential solutions to the community and ask for input or feedback, or questions that help clarify conflicting data from the transportation access survey or other data sources.

Survey Deployment

Translating and Interpreting Surveys

If the survey needs to be administered in another language, it's always best to write the questions in the desired language first, rather than translate the questions. You should also test your survey in each language with community members to see if anything needs to be clarified or some of the words can be refined to best match regional dialects. For example, "scooter" in English could translate to "patinete" in Spanish in some areas, but they may be more commonly known as "diablos" or "patin de diablo" depending on where you are.


If you are hiring translators or interpreters to administer surveys, allocate time to review the survey together. Ensure you review the goals of your Transportation Needs Assessment to acquaint them with some of the terms and concepts of your survey, so that they can respond to potential questions from residents. Documenting these questions from residents as they come up could be informative to the Needs Assessment and be built into the strategy for continued community engagement.

Testing your Survey - Online and In-Person

When developing the first draft of your survey, consider testing it with a few residents first, and/or vetting it with community partners. Testing the survey could reveal questions or answers that will require context or confuse respondents. You may also get insights into how long it takes for someone to fill out the survey or can set realistic expectations for survey collection at events or door-to-door. Remember to practice and include this part when testing your survey for in-person data collection.

Survey Incentives




Incentives can boost the quantity and quality of participation, and show you appropriately and explicitly value residents' time and input. Incentives communicate that a successful project is truly dependent on their input! Some examples of things you can provide in return for taking a survey are: gift cards, transit passes, or raffle tickets for prizes. Directly providing food as an incentive is not reimbursable through the CTNA voucher, however gift cards for groceries or a local eatery are reimbursable. Providing incentives also shows that you value residents' time and feedback for your project. This is important to build trust in the community and foster continued participation throughout the process. Remember to track the names of survey respondents, as well as the date the incentive was distributed. Tracking this information is important for project reporting in our Gift Incentive Log.



Free Bike Lights!

- Take a 10-minute survey
- All personal information is confidential
- Improve your mobility options!

Scan this QR code or visit bikeventura.org/OxnardCMO
Get information on how to receive your free lights at the end of the survey.



Bike Ventura is a part of California's Climate Investments (CCI), a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health in the environment—particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Source: Bike Ventura

Collecting Responses

Surveys can be collected online, or on paper or in-person interviews. Remember that options must be provided to residents that do not have a computer or access to the internet. This does not necessarily mean providing a printed, offline survey is necessary, as awardees could find ways to make the online survey accessible to these residents by providing computers, tablets, or temporary wifi access.

Collecting Consent from Residents

When administering a survey either in person, online or through in-person interviews the respondent should be informed either in written form or verbally of the following items:

- The purpose of the survey
- Who is conducting it (the organization's name/specific department or office)
- The estimated length of time it will take to complete
- How responses will be used
- The handling of any personal information (personally identifiable information or PII should only be collected and used for contacting/following up)
- A contact person or general contact how they can contact in the event they have any questions or concerns before, during or after completing the survey

A sample consent statement can be found in each of the sample surveys.

Collecting Surveys Online

Posting a survey online makes it accessible to residents who, for a variety of reasons, may not be able to attend an event where survey collection is taking place. When there is a link to the survey online, that can be shared through various channels, for example:

- Project website
- Email Newsletters/Blasts
- Social Media
- QR Codes on Flyers
- Partner Organization's Social Media
- Transit Provider's Website
- Print or Radio News outlets
- Transit Provider's Website
- Event Flyers

Collecting Responses In-Person

When collecting surveys in-person, prioritize the safety of your team and community members. Please adhere to all relevant local and State safety guidelines about public gatherings.

Some of the ways to collect surveys in-person:

- Door-to-door canvassing

JOIN US FOR

Transportation & Tacos

August 17th 5PM - 7PM
Biola Chamber of Commerce
12535 G Street

Food and Beverages will be served

Tell us about your transportation needs for a taco and a chance to win a gift card!

TAKE THE SURVEY
[HTTPS://SURVEY.ALICHEMER.COM/53/6075034/BIOLA-ENG](https://survey.alchemer.com/53/6075034/biola-eng)

English Survey Spanish Survey Hmong Survey

FCRTA Fresno County Rural Transit Agency
Clean Mobility Options
California State Office of Transportation Planning

Source: FCRTA

- Tabling at community events, farmers markets, etc.
- Tabling at Partner Organizations Events
- Walking the Neighborhood
- Engaging residents waiting for transit

Adjusting strategies for unexpected situations

Situations could arise that necessitate modifying or even canceling original plans for survey collection. Some options for changing plans:

- Move events originally planned from indoors to outdoors
- Create a way to distribute and collect surveys without person-to-person contact, such as a drop box at a library or other community space
- Collect surveys door-to-door instead of having events
- Provide a how-to guide, simple instructions, or short video that helps people navigate taking an online survey

Image/Source: Social Good Fund



“We had initially planned on hosting in person events to reach the community and gather survey responses. But because of Watsonville restriction on in person events we shifted that strategy to door-to-door outreach and that ended up being really successful for us. We had good success, reaching the community and folks were motivated by the gift cards that we were providing and were willing to take the time to talk to us and answer our survey questions. Before we had our team going door-to-door we sent out a mailer to all the residents within our project area. And we also dropped off leave behind flyers, letting folks know that day and time when people would be coming to their doorstep. And both of those measures were meant to build awareness of the project and build trust with residents and let them know that there was a legitimate reason for people to be knocking on their doors.”

- Social Good Fund, Watsonville