



Principles of Community Engagement

Purpose and Application:

- The Colorado Electric Transmission Authority (CETA) is a state entity created by the Colorado General Assembly in 2021;
- CETA's mission is to plan and develop electric transmission in the state to increase grid reliability, help Colorado meet its clean energy goals, promote powerline trails, and aid in economic development;
- In furtherance of this mission, CETA developed these Principles of Community Engagement (Principles) to enable efficient, productive, and beneficial transmission development that reflects the objectives of CETA;
- In adopting and applying these Principles, CETA will continue to place high priority on the urgency to meet state clean energy goals, the need to expedite transmission development and improve efficiencies to support these goals, and the desire for improved outcomes for both transmission developers and host communities.
- As such, these Principles apply to CETA's activities related to major new transmission development only;
- CETA intends to incorporate these Principles into its partnership agreements with specific requirements negotiated between CETA and its project partner;
- CETA's partnership agreements will be legally enforceable, and CETA will oversee the proper implementation of these Principles through partnership agreement terms;
- Effective implementation of these Principles by CETA's partners will ensure a productive relationship with CETA;
- CETA acknowledges that these Principles may be amended in the future based on experience gained, changed circumstances, or other factors;

The Colorado Electric Transmission Authority (CETA) is committed to fostering transparent, credible, and open public engagement processes; meaningfully involving local communities, Tribes, and other governmental entities; advocating for resources and tangible benefits for local communities; and ensuring long-term commitments from project developers to host communities. CETA will achieve these goals in the following ways:

INFORMATION SHARING

Principle 1: Require a transparent, credible, and open process. To build a credible stakeholder and community engagement process, while still recognizing the time critical nature of project completion, CETA will require its partners¹ to engage in open communication about projects and their impacts, provide access to fact-based educational materials and other resources, and provide an open and transparent exchange of information. CETA's minimum requirements include:

- **Process Documentation:** Maintain thorough documentation of all steps leading to project decisions, including meeting notices, agendas, summaries, public input opportunities, and supporting technical information, subject to reasonable confidentiality considerations.
- **Public Information Repository:** Create and maintain a publicly accessible repository of project information, including a project timeline with highlighted public engagement opportunities, subject to reasonable confidentiality considerations.
- **Timely Updates:** Provide regular and timely updates on project status to local communities and affected stakeholders.
- **Project Points of Contact:** Clearly identify project points of contact for community questions and stakeholder feedback. Points of contact should respond to project inquiries within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Transparency about Other Infrastructure Projects:** Inform the public about other facilities project sponsors build, own, or operate.

COMMUNICATION

Principle 2: Require meaningful engagement with local communities, including local governments, community stakeholders, Tribal members, and local labor groups. To ensure that local input is integrated into the decision-making process, CETA will require its partners to conduct early, responsive, and inclusive communication with local communities. CETA's minimum requirements include:

- **Comprehensive Engagement Plans:** Develop and implement community engagement plans consistent with these Principles detailing public outreach goals, budgets, staffing requirements, pre-application community engagement schedules, and strategies to reach diverse community interest groups.²

¹ A public or private transmission developer as defined in CETA's Partnership Policy.

² Resources that can be used to inform these plans include: DOE's [About Community Benefits Plans](#), DOE's [energy communities review tool](#), and the [Climate and Economic Justice screening tool](#), among others.

- **Pre-Application Information Sessions:** Hold information sessions in local communities before filing applications with permitting authorities, scheduling these sessions at times and places convenient for the community with virtual and in-person options.
- **Private Tribal Meetings:** Conduct private meetings with Tribal governments to share and discuss sensitive information.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** Ensure that engagement efforts identify all affected interests and actively seek out marginalized or underrepresented groups within the community to provide a truly inclusive process.
- **Adaptable and Responsive:** Design engagement methods that are tailored to address regional and local issues, cultures, and relationships. Continuously monitor the effectiveness of these methods, actively seek feedback from stakeholders and the public, and modify engagement processes as necessary to ensure they remain relevant and effective.
- **Flexibility in Project Design:** Be open to adapt project design and location based on community feedback prior to construction.
- **Land Agent Code of Conduct:** Instruct project sponsors' land agents to be respectful, forthright, and truthful, clearly identifying themselves as project representatives.
- **Language Services:** Provide language translation services when significant non-English-speaking populations are present, including key documents contained in the public information repository.
- **Documentation of Public Input:** Record local community input and the project sponsor's responses, especially regarding siting considerations.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Principle 3: Advocate for public resources and both financial and non-financial benefits that support local communities. CETA recognizes that local communities should benefit from hosting transmission projects in their community and may need additional resources to effectively evaluate proposed transmission projects and influence project design and siting decisions. CETA will advocate for its project partners to provide:

- **Fair Landowner Compensation:** Establish a consistent methodology for determining landowner compensation to ensure that landowners receive fair and equitable compensation, regardless of when they sign an easement agreement. While this consistent methodology should be applied as uniformly as possible for a project, there should also be limited flexibility for unique circumstances.
- **Tangible Community Benefits:** Ensure transmission projects contribute to local community improvements, such as better roads, enhanced local workforce, improved emergency services, or upgraded public spaces.
- **Self-Determination of Benefits:** Provide mechanisms for local communities to determine the allocation of community benefits.
- **Third-Party Advisory Resources:** Offer resources for local communities to hire third-party consultants to advise on the proposed project and the permitting process.
- **Mediation Services:** Offer mediation services to help facilitate discussions and promptly resolve issues between the community and project developers.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Principle 4: Require long-term commitments to host communities.³ Transmission infrastructure is used for decades; a similar commitment should be afforded to local communities hosting that infrastructure. CETA's minimum requirements include:

- **Construction Stage Engagement:** During the construction stage, designate a point of contact or community liaison to hear concerns, take action to address them, ensure safety, and minimize adverse unintended consequences.
- **Restoration Commitments:** At a minimum, ensure roads and public facilities are returned to their pre-construction status.
- **Clear Monitoring Metrics:** Establish clear metrics to monitor and enforce project commitments to local communities.
- **Dispute Resolution Processes:** Establish and implement processes to promptly resolve disputes regarding project commitments.
- **Operation Stage Engagement:** During the project's operation stage, foster long-term engagement with communities through locally based efforts and activities. These can include site visits, monitoring, research and educational programs, and regular information updates on the project's effects on the community.

Approved by the CETA Board of Directors: October 10, 2024

³ Should there be a change in project ownership, all long-term commitments to host communities should pass to the subsequent owner/operator.