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Mineta Transportation Institute Report: Tribal Corridor Management Planning

Guide shows how to create aesthetic and cultural enrichment for state highways on Native lands.

San Jose, Calif., July 7, 2011 – The [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) has released a report that presents a guide to tribal corridor management planning (TCMP) and a model for the segment of California State Route 96 that lies within the boundaries of the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation in eastern Humboldt County. *Tribal Corridor Management Planning: Model, Case Study, and Guide for Caltrans District 1* was authored by Joy K. Adams, PhD and Mary Scoggin, PhD. The report can provide insight for any efforts to enhance a sense of place within transportation byways, particularly in Native communities. A free download is available at www.transweb.sjsu.edu/project/2604.html

The guide was created because California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 1 personnel and members of the North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission propose to develop interpretive “tribal transportation corridors” along stretches of state highways that cross tribal lands in Northern California.

This study’s authors conclude that whenever Caltrans District 1 staff and tribal governments understand and communicate difficulties and shared common goals for highway operations, progress has been significant despite major geographic and administrative challenges. The report recommends that Caltrans and the tribes seek early and frequent communication and collaboration to overcome these obstacles. Further, the authors identify several examples of non-standard design elements that could be incorporated into highway improvements to enhance local sense of place among residents and travelers.

“It is important to include elements such as tribal symbols, information kiosks, native plantings, bilingual signage, and other features along state highways so travelers can enjoy a greater sense of place when traveling through tribal lands,” Dr. Adams noted. “They also can increase their awareness and appreciation for the history, culture, and vitality of these communities.”

The study’s approach is unique because it emphasizes creative solutions that concurrently address multiple concerns – for example, communication strategies that bring Caltrans and tribal organizations into planning activities, or safety infrastructure designed to enhance interpretative opportunities as well as the beauty of the roadway.

The guide also outlines transportation needs such as traffic calming, safety enhancement measures, aesthetic treatments, and strategies for reducing vandalism and maintenance.

Dr. Scoggin said, “This Hoopa Valley case study was created as a pilot project for future tribal corridor management plans throughout Caltrans District 1. It is one element within a larger goal to create coordinated and holistic corridor management in tribal territories – specifically involving interpretation, design, and context-sensitive solutions.”

The project team included members of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and other local tribes, community residents and stakeholders, MTI research associates, staff from Caltrans District 1, and representatives of other local transportation agencies.

Multidisciplinary methods were employed in this project, including content analysis of existing corridor management plans; literature review to identify best practices; participant observation; interviews with local stakeholders; focus group interviews with Caltrans personnel; and landscape analysis.

The final report is available for free download from the Mineta Transportation Institute at www.transweb.sjsu.edu/project/2604.html

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Joy K. Adams, PhD, is a Senior Researcher at the headquarters of the Association of American Geographers in Washington DC, where she contributes to projects related to professional development and careers for geographers, geographic education, and diversity within the discipline. She was previously Associate Professor of Geography at Humboldt State University, where she taught human geography courses from 2006-2010. Her research and teaching have focused on the social construction of ethnic and racial identities in the US, cultural landscapes of North America, heritage tourism, and qualitative methods. During her time in Humboldt County, she was a member of the North Coast Geotourism Committee. She and her students were involved in developing the recently launched Redwood Coast Geotourism MapGuide.

Mary Scoggin, PhD, is Professor of Anthropology at Humboldt State University, where she has taught anthropology, folklore and Chinese studies since 1998. Her research focuses upon symbolic representation in contemporary Chinese society, including cultural and political identity. She has written articles on Chinese aesthetics, bureaucracy and media, and Chinese American media policies and publications. She has conducted research on local politics and identity in Humboldt County. Related to this work, she served three years on the Humboldt County Association of Governments Citizen Advisory Committee.

ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The institute is funded by Congress through the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other public and private grants and donations, including grants from the US Department of Homeland Security. DOT selected MTI as a National Center of Excellence following competitions in 2002 and 2006. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from the Board's assessment of the transportation industry's unmet needs. That led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. MTI conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer, focusing on multimodal surface transportation policy and management issues. Visit www.transweb.sjsu.edu

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