



Kern COG Electric Vehicle Charging Blueprint Plan Outreach Brief

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Background

Diffusion & Adoption of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

An innovation is defined as an idea practice or object that is perceived as new. While electric vehicles (EVs) are not new technology, national and statewide EV sales numbers suggest that EVs are still widely considered by consumers to be an innovation. In aggregate, the EV market share is being driven by Innovators. Based on 2018 EV vehicle registration data (1,824 EVs) and installed charging stations (98 Level 2 and 18 Fast Chargers), current Kern County EV adoption falls in the Innovators stage. Diffusion of innovations is a theory that endeavors to explain how, why, and at what rate, new ideas and/or technology are adopted by a social system. In 1962, Everett Rogers, a professor of rural sociology, published his seminal work: Diffusion of Innovations, which indicates diffusion occurs through the following five-step decision-making process:

Table 1: Five Stages of the Adoption Process

STAGE	DEFINITION
Awareness/Knowledge	<i>The individual is first exposed to an innovation but lacks information about the innovation. During this stage the individual has not yet been inspired to find out more information about the innovation.</i>
Interest/Persuasion	<i>The individual is interested in the innovation and actively seeks related information/details.</i>
Evaluation/Decision	<i>The individual takes the concept of the change and weighs the advantages/disadvantages of using the innovation and decides whether to adopt or reject the innovation.</i>
Trial/Implementation	<i>The individual employs the innovation to a varying degree depending on the situation. During this stage the individual also determines the usefulness of the innovation and may search for further information.</i>
Adoption/Confirmation	<i>The individual finalizes their decision to continue using the innovation. This stage is both intrapersonal and interpersonal, confirmation the group has made the right decision.</i>

An innovation’s rate of adoption is driven by a social system’s perceptions of five characteristics of the idea/product (its relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (1)). Based on the adopters’ perception of these characteristics, some innovations diffuse relatively slowly, while other innovations diffuse rapidly. The rates of adoption are typically linked to an individual’s adopter category (e.g., innovator, early adopter, early majority, late majority, laggards, as indicated in Figure 1).

In general, participants who first adopt an innovation identify strongly with a characteristic(s) and require a shorter adoption period, as compared to late adopters. Within the adoption curve, at some point the innovation reaches critical mass; the point where the number of adopters ensures the innovation is self-sustaining.

CSE will explore EV/EV Infrastructure (EVI) rate of adoption and recommend activities that will advance the market perception of EVs/EVI in the upcoming Electric Vehicle Charging Blueprint Plan (Plan). Given that most Kern County’s residents are at the early stage of the adoption curve (Innovators), CSE’s outreach plan will target individuals who are most likely to be receptive to EVI messaging – people who are highly motivated and identify with the benefits of EVI. To this end, eight target audiences and outreach strategies for each are proposed herein.

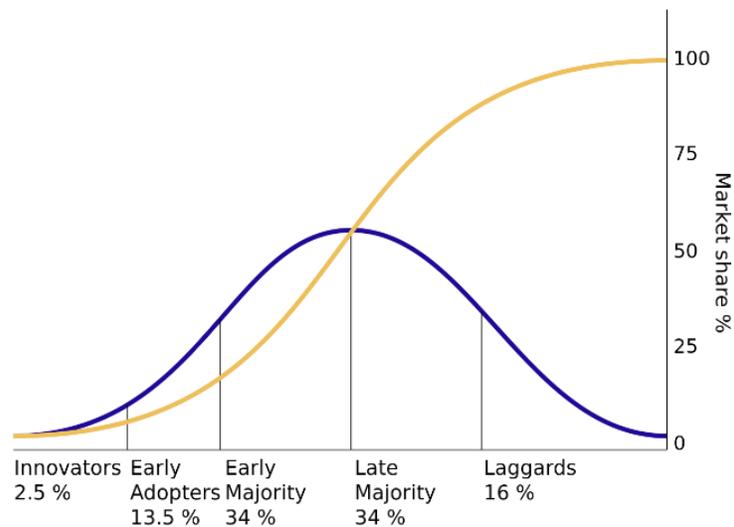


Figure 1: Adoption Curve

Outreach Plan

Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through specific channels, to audiences, over time. This Outreach Brief (Brief) describes the audiences that will be engaged (who), the project phase when they will be engaged (when), and the strategies/tactics employed (how). The Brief takes into consideration the five stages of the adoption process mentioned earlier and provides a plan for developing materials that meet people at their stage and helps move them forward.

Audience Selection (Who)

CSE identified the following target audiences to engage during this project:

1. Working Group
2. Kern COG Internal Stakeholders
3. Public Agencies (e.g., municipalities, school districts, transit planners)
4. Workplaces (e.g., employers, chambers of commerce)
5. Multi-Unit Dwellings (MUDs)
6. Destinations (e.g., areas of interest/Visitor Boards)
7. Fleet (public and/or private fleet managers)
8. Community-Based Organizations (e.g., non-profits, workforce groups, equity organizations)

Reaching people involves understanding and speaking to their specific needs. The primary motivators for each audience identified for this project are presented in Table 2. These primary motivators help inform key messaging that will be used in unique materials developed for each audience.

Table 2: Audience Profile

AUDIENCE	WHAT DO THEY DO?	PROJECT BENEFITS
Working Group	Work in transportation, work in Kern County	EV infrastructure for their residents
Kern COG Internal Stakeholders (e.g., TTAC, RPAC, and Kern COG Board)	Advise, review, and direct Kern COG’s work	EV infrastructure for Kern County
Public Agencies (e.g., Cities, School Districts)	Work in regional planning agencies or government	EV infrastructure for employees and the public
Workplace (e.g., employers, Chambers of Commerce)	Employ Kern County residents	Boost employer attractiveness and serve their employees
Multi-Unit Dwellings (e.g., owners & operators)	Provide housing options for Kern County residents	Advisory for adding EV charging amenities for residents
Destinations (e.g., Visitor Centers, short/long dwell)	Facilitate recreation activities in Kern County	EV information for people traveling to destinations
Fleet (e.g., Public & Private Fleet Managers)	Work in transportation managing fleets	EV infrastructure to maintain compliance and optimize fleet
Community-Based Organizations (e.g., workforce, social equity, DACs)	Promote social justice, equity, and fairness	EV infrastructure & associated impacts benefit the community

Working Group

As part of the project scope, CSE and Kern COG convened a Working Group with members which represent a diverse cross-section Kern County. Working Group members fall across the spectrum of the adoption process with some in the early awareness phase, some already evaluating EVI decisions, and select members having direct experience completing EVI installations. The Working Group members include representatives from the following organizations:

Table 3: Working Group Members

PROJECT LEADS	COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS
Kern Council of Governments	Leadership Council for Accountability
Center for Sustainable Energy	Sierra Club
PUBLIC AGENCIES	Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment
City of Arvin	TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS
City of Ridgecrest	ChargePoint
City of Tehachapi	Envoy
Eastern Kern APCD	PowerFlex Systems
San Joaquin Valley APCD	WORKPLACE, COMMUNITY, & MUD
PG&E	EV Enthusiasts
SCE	A-C Electric
Kern Community College District	Bolthouse Properties
CSU, Bakersfield	

Kern COG Internal Stakeholders

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee [TTAC], Regional Planning Advisory Committee [RPAC], and Kern COG Board of Directors (Board) review Kern COG’s work and provide key advisory. The TTAC, RPAC, and Board will be engaged through making remote and in-person presentations on the Plan and Toolkits during their scheduled meetings.

Public Agencies

Kern COG member agencies include the County of Kern and its 11 incorporated cities. Relevant government agencies and departments will be engaged.

Workplace

The following table lists Kern County’s largest employers that may be engaged during this project; CSE will attempt to engage any employer who has interest in EVI solutions.

Table 4 Kern County Largest Employers

3-Way Chevrolet	Kern Medical Center
Adventist Health	Kern Regional Center
AT&T	Kern Ridge Growers, LLC
Account Control Technology, Inc.	MTC-TCI
Aera Energy	Managed Care Systems, LLC
Bakersfield Association for Retarded Citizens, Inc.	Motor City Sales & Service

Bakersfield City School District	Nestle Dreyers Ice Cream
Bakersfield College	Pacific Gas & Electric Company
Bakersfield Family Medical Center	Parsons
Bakersfield Heart Hospital	Physician's Automated Laboratory, Inc.
Bakersfield Memorial Hospital	Rain For Rent
Bill Wright Toyota	State Farm Insurance
Bolthouse Farms	Sun Pacific
California State University, Bakersfield	The Wonderful Company
Caterpillar, Inc.	Wasco State Prison
Chevron USA Inc.	Halliburton
City of Bakersfield	IKEA
Comprehensive Blood & Cancer Center	Jim Burke Ford
County Administrative Office	Kern Community College District
Delano District Skilled Nursing Facility	Kern County
Dignity Health	Kern County Department of Human Services
FedEx	Kern County Development Svcs Agency
Golden Empire Transit	Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
Golden West Casino	Kern Health Systems
Grimmway Enterprises, Inc	Kern High School District
Hall Ambulance Service, Inc.	

Multi-Unit Dwellings

Owners and operators of MUDs that contain more than 100 units will be targeted for engagement. MUDs with at least 100 units are well positioned, based on spaces and power requirements, for near-term EVI investment.

Destinations

Kern County's Office of Countywide Communications, and short-term/long-term dwell destinations will be engaged during this project to distribute toolkits to tourists visiting the region.

Fleet

Fleet managers are stakeholders within the public and workplace audiences. CSE will work with Kern COG and the Working Group to develop a list of fleet managers as well as target fleet managers (by job title) during community outreach.

Community-Based Organizations

Three Community-Based Organization (CBOs), the Leadership Council for Accountability, Sierra Club, and Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment are members of the Working Group and provide input accordingly. CSE will work with Kern COG and the Working Group to develop a list of other CBOs to engage during Plan deployment.

Engagement Phase (When)

Because CSE and Kern COG successfully engaged a dynamic and representative Working Group, we are relying on them and Kern COG Internal Stakeholders to provide wholistic and critical input on the format of the Plan and the methodology for generating a master list of potential EVI sites. CSE will engage the broad Kern County community, in addition to the Working Group and Kern COG Internal Stakeholders, to prioritize EVI sites and generating a list of shovel-ready projects. We will also engage all audiences during Plan Deployment to increase disperse project recommendations and encourage EVI adoption. The following table details which audiences will be engaged during each project phase.

Table 5: Outreach Schedule

PROJECT PHASE	GOAL	AUDIENCE ENGAGED	RATIONALE
Plan Development	Develop a Kern County Charging Station Blueprint Plan for Kern County communities to achieve its 2018 Regional Transportation Plan & Sustainable Communities Strategy through establishing 4,000 EV charging spaces by 2025	Working Group & Kern COG Internal Stakeholders	Stakeholders are identified in CSE’s contract with Kern COG.
Site Selection	Develop a master list of projects to reach the 4,000 EV charging spaces by 2025 AND Position at least 12 sites for future California Energy Commission (CEC) funding under Phase II of the EV Ready Communities Challenge program.	ALL	Input from all audiences will help prioritize sites for public/private investment leading to more rapid adoption
Plan Deployment	Deploy the Plan and provide toolkits to all audiences. Share project findings, make the blueprint visible, increase the rate of EV/EVI adoption, and generate momentum for Kern County to continue reaching the 4,000 EV spaces goal beyond the term of this project.	ALL	Widespread dispersion of the Plan and toolkits is best reached through engaging all audiences.

Audience Engagement Strategy and Tactics (How)

The following table provides a high-level overview of the channels that will be used to reach each target audience. Tactics are outlined further below, broken out into paid, earned, shared and owned platforms under each target audience.

Table 6: Engagement Channels

CHANNEL	WORKING GROUP	INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	PUBLIC AGENCIES	WORKPLACES	MUDS	DESTINATIONS	FLEET	CBOS
Meetings								
Landing Page								
Webinars								
Email								
Talking Points								
Toolkits								

Working Group

Integral to the development and successful implementation of the Plan is a high level of collaboration and engagement with the working group. A high-level strategy for this audience includes:

- formalizing a predictable structure for meetings and other communications ensuring the working group has a clear understanding of goals and milestones that need to be collaboratively developed, as well as anticipated outputs;
- regular meetings, transparency regarding process and progress and meaningful collaboration to facilitate consistent engagement;
- providing key talking points and toolkits so enable working group members to help distribute EVI information; and
- summarizing the project findings in a final report that can be shared with and referenced by other communities.

Tactics - Paid

- Since this audience can be reached efficiently through direct contact by leveraging our established connections, no paid tactics are proposed for this audience.

Tactics - Earned

- If facilitated by Kern COG, CSE will provide sample pitches that can be distributed to local media on key working group members and their contributions to EV infrastructure planning.

Tactics - Shared

- Provide a social media kit with prepared posts and images for working group members to share.

Tactics - Owned

- Schedule, organize and facilitate regular in-person meetings;
- Develop and distribute regular email communications with progress reports and upcoming milestones;
- Develop and distribute an online survey, analyze and share results;
- Develop and distribute talking points;
- Develop and distribute project tool-kits; and
- Develop and distribute a final project report.

Internal Stakeholders

The RPAC, TTAC, and Kern COG Board will be engaged through making remote and in-person presentations on the Plan and Toolkits during their scheduled meetings.

Workplaces, MUDs, Destinations, CBO's, Fleet, and Public Agencies

The high-level strategy for these audiences involves:

- Leveraging business advocacy groups by encouraging them to share EVI information and call-for survey participants through their established communications channels;
- Attracting motivated key decision-makers at regional employers, MUDs, tourist destinations, fleet, and public agencies to learn more about installing EVI at their location(s);
- Providing audience-specific EV infrastructure toolkits to promote the benefits of installing EV charging and a process for implementing an EVI project; and
- Working directly with organizations with shovel-ready projects to help them realize their projects.

Tactics - Paid

- CSE will validate with the Working Group whether this audience can be reached efficiently through direct contact and leveraging established connections. If that assumption is valid, no paid tactics will be assigned.
- If direct contact tactics do not sufficiently reach the identified audience, targeted social media campaigns may be deployed to driving traffic to a lead-capture landing page, pending Kern COG approval.

Tactics - Earned

- If facilitated by Kern COG, pitch local media on how EV infrastructure can be a value add to their organization.

Tactics - Shared

- Provide content for targeted associations/networks to share on their blogs and/or newsletters with their members with a call-to-action to learn more on the project landing page.

Tactics - Owned

- Develop and maintain a landing page outlining project goals, with email sign-up for more information and links to webinar and toolkits;
- Develop site-specific toolkits for EV infrastructure implementation;
- Develop and deliver a webinar for shovel-ready project owners and others during plan/toolkit deployment; and
- Develop and distribute email communication for lead-generation follow-up, as well as for distributing toolkits and other resources.



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