



**Session 2: Engaging Stakeholders**  
**Panel 1 at 3 p.m. Connecting Communities Through Robust Stakeholder Engagement**

**Presenter: Melissa Figueroa**  
Chief of Strategic Communications  
California High-Speed Rail Authority

**BIO:** As the Chief of Strategic Communications, Melissa oversees the communications branches for media, stakeholder engagement, special projects, and outreach. Melissa was appointed Chief of Strategic Communications in August of 2019.

Melissa previously served as CalSTA's Deputy Secretary of Communications and Strategic Planning; Deputy Secretary of Communications and External Affairs at the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency; and Deputy Secretary of Communications at the State and Consumer Services Agency.

Before beginning work in the state's executive branch, Melissa worked within the Legislature as Press Secretary for California State Senator Joe Simitian.

In her early career, Figueroa worked in news media as the consumer and special projects producer for KCRA-TV and as the newscast producer for KSBY 6.

Figueroa graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo in 2002 with a degree in Journalism. She served as a student representative on the department's advisory board and currently serves on the Cal Poly Journalism Advisory Board.

**Presentation: The Role of Stakeholder Engagement in Delivering California High-Speed Rail**

With 520 miles of electrified high-speed rail, connecting up to 24 station cities, the California High-Speed Rail is building the backbone of a transformative statewide transportation system. The range of vested stakeholders from local communities, elected officials, regional CBOs, local municipalities to statewide environmental, businesses, and labor groups is staggering. Stakeholder engagement on a project of this size and scope must be far-reaching, intentional, and meaningful. We will discuss how to make that happen.