



JOIN TOGETHER

On an issue as fundamental as infrastructure, rest assured that there are a lot of organizations, business groups and non-profits who are all trying to make things better. But should you join forces with a more established group and take advantage of their resources and connections, or do you have an issue that is not really being addressed by other groups? Usually, the more local an issue, the fewer the groups there are working to correct the situation. The bigger, more widespread the issue, the greater the odds that there are others who share your passion for change.

So, cracks in a sidewalk – it might be all you or a small group of neighbors. Cracks in a bridge – you're probably going to find lots of like-minded people seeking improvements.

Joining an Organization.

To find the right organization, you need to be clear what it is you're hoping to achieve. For instance, in South Pasadena, California, there is an ongoing dispute on whether or not to extend a portion of I-710, and the method in which to do it. (highway, tunnel, etc.). There are several organizations – for and against – that community members can join. For example, "No710" is against the extension; "710 Coalition" is for it. "Responsible Alhambrans Against the 710" don't want a freeway, but are open to alternatives. They're all solid organizations, but with different goals and methods. It's up to the individual to choose where to lend his or her support.

One way to find out about advocacy groups is to go to your local city council's website and search for the topic you're interested in. See if it's being discussed and who's talking about it. Also, a search of a local newspaper's website will let you know if your topic is in the news and if there are other gatherings you should attend.

Starting Your Own Group or Going Solo.

If your concern is connected to a certain location such as a school or neighborhood, you can reach out to other people there to find out if they're interested in joining forces. Chat with people after a parent-teacher night or soccer match. [Start a Facebook group.](#) [Start a petition.](#) The first step is usually the hardest, but once you begin connecting with people you'll be surprised at how quickly the word spreads.

Of course, there's nothing stopping you from speaking your piece any government meeting. Download our **Speak to Power** pdf for some tips on how to do that. Or download our **Send a Message** guidelines for help with online and "snail mail" communication with representatives.

Participate! And let us know if you have had experience with this and have suggestions for others.

Drop us a line at info@bepreparedtostop.org and we'll share any additional tips and tools with everyone.