

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

*Pikes Peak
Area
Council of
Governments*

August 2016

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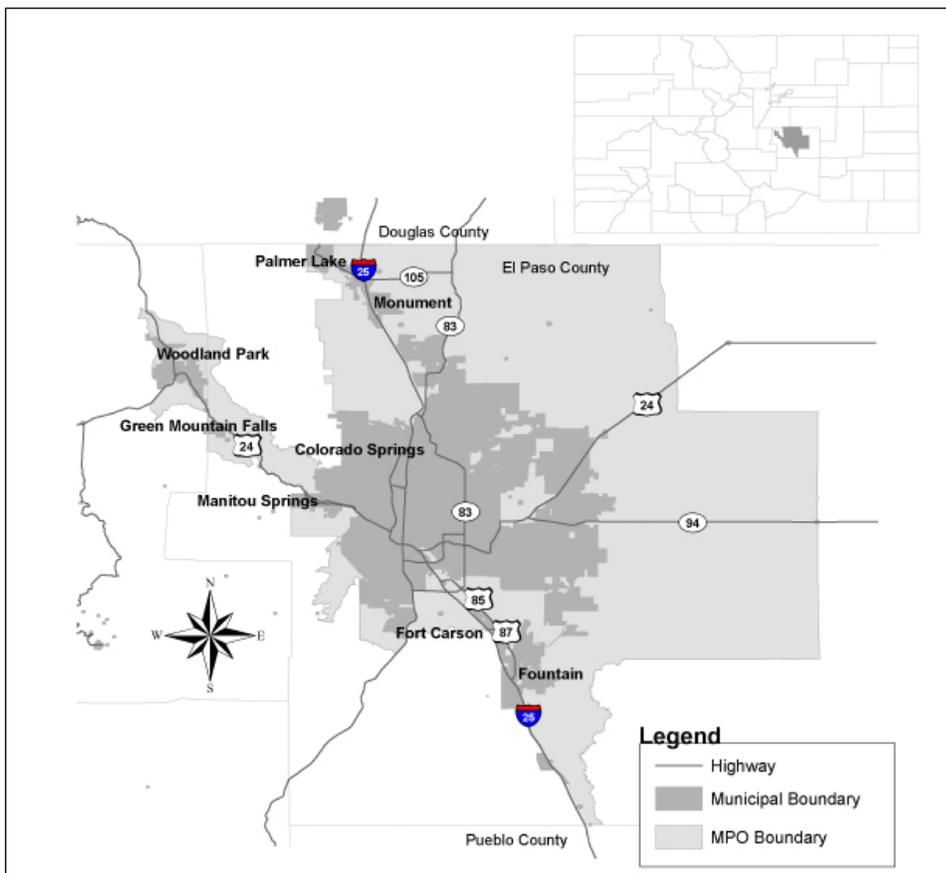
1: Introduction

Transportation planning area

As the Pikes Peak region’s designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and the lead agency for air-quality planning in the Colorado Springs Urbanized Area, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments is responsible for carrying out “a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a metropolitan transportation plan and transportation improvement program.”

The planning area boundary encompasses the Urbanized Area plus the geographic area that is projected to develop to urban densities within 20 years.

Figure 1: Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary



2: Transportation planning overview

PPACG prepares a long-range transportation plan that addresses transportation system needs, goals, and improvements for at least 20 years. This long-range plan is used by regional partners to guide project priorities and funding decisions. PPACG also prepares a transportation improvement program, which addresses transportation system improvements for a four-year time period. These two documents have significant influence on future development and transportation projects in the Pikes Peak Region.

The long-range transportation plan provides a strategic framework for the development, operation, and management of the transportation system to meet economic, social, mobility, and environmental goals. The plan identifies specific projects to achieve regional goals. The PPACG shorter-range (four to six years) Transportation Improvement Program implements the projects identified in the long-range plan.

3: Public participation plan purpose and goals

Importance of public involvement in transportation planning

The needs, goals and projects identified in these documents should reflect the priorities of the community. Conducting a substantive and well-planned community process is essential to determine those priorities. A successful public involvement process increases community support for and ownership of goals and projects, and leads to increased trust in local government. Conversely, poor public outreach efforts can cause stakeholders to view the process as merely “checking the box” after decisions have already been made, leading to limited participation, community adversity to plan goals, distrust of local government, and in extreme cases, legal action.

This plan seeks to develop a proactive public participation process for the PPACG region that:

- Provides well-researched, objective information on the state of the transportation system so that stakeholders are empowered to affect the plan’s content and outcomes, resulting in a plan that reflects community goals and priorities.
- Creates opportunities for substantive two-way dialogue among transportation planners, elected officials, and citizens through widespread community involvement.
- Ensures that all citizens who wish to participate have an opportunity, and that all ideas are given fair consideration.
- Encourages participation by groups traditionally underserved by transportation investments, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Performs outreach to those particularly affected by specific alternatives and plan recommendations to involve them in the evaluation process.
- Coordinates public input for state, regional and local entity planning processes, including transit, as possible.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the public involvement program on an ongoing basis.

PPACG also partners with Mountain Metro Transit to fulfill the Federal Transit Administration's requirements for public notification and involvement for the long range transit plan and FTA-funded programs and projects in the Transportation Improvement Program. To ensure the transit products identified above reflect the needs of the community, PPACG will make a particular effort to seek out and consider the needs of these stakeholders. PPACG meeting notifications will include language indicating that the public notice is consistent with federal regulations (Federal Transit Administration Sections 5307, 5309, 5310, 5312, and 5339.)

The PPACG Community Advisory Committee will oversee this Public Participation Plan to ensure all stakeholders and appropriate outreach strategies for each are identified, including seeking out and considering the needs of the underserved, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services. In order to garner trust among populations that may be disenfranchised, PPACG will identify and collaborate with leaders from these communities regarding the type, time, and location of outreach and communication.

Public involvement best practices

PPACG reviewed public participation guidelines and best practices from a number of federal, state and regional agencies around the country and incorporated many into this plan. Applying the takeaways listed below is key to success, especially for communicating with populations that have been identified as disadvantaged or underserved.

Key takeaways include:

- Outreach efforts should be specifically tailored to the community of interest.
- Traditional public involvement techniques such as open houses and town hall meetings are not always the best forms of public engagement.
- Tap into community networks that already exist, and go to where people are already meeting.
- Match public engagement techniques with goal and audience.
- Measure and assess the effectiveness of outreach techniques to determine the most efficient ways to allocate resources. What the agency decides to measure will depend heavily on its goals for the engagement process.
- Limit the amount of time required to complete surveys, or to provide feedback, to about five minutes.
- Ensure that public involvement and outreach messaging is relevant to your target audience.
- Phrase questions clearly and simply so that people understand what is being asked.
- Do not assume that the public has prior planning knowledge.

Following adoption of the Moving Forward 2040 plan update, PPACG also solicited feedback on the public participation process from the Transportation Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee. Their suggestions included:

- Foster a better public understanding of the use and impact of the plan.
- Better integrate and explain technical data.
- Conduct a speakers bureau.
- Simplify the information since too much complexity loses people.
- Post comments in real time online.
- Find better, more effective ways to address concerns raised by citizens.
- Tap into existing networks and engage specific neighborhood groups.

4: Public participation methods

Target audiences

The audience for long-range, regional planning efforts is by nature broad, diverse, and inclusive: those who impact and are impacted by transportation decisions.

Groups and individuals to involve in the planning process include:

- Citizens in the Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Neighborhood groups and representatives
- Minority groups and representatives (*refer to PPACG's Title VI plan for additional detail*)
- Business groups and representatives
- Transportation planners, engineers, and other technical staff
- Elected officials
- Military officials
- Bicycle and pedestrian groups
- Public transportation users and employees and their representatives
- People with disabilities and their representatives
- Private transportation providers
- Freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services
- Police officers and fire fighters

Strategies

To achieve the goals outlined in section 2, PPACG will:

- Make public involvement opportunities as convenient as possible for those who wish to participate, using a variety of tactics to reach the wide variety of stakeholders in our region, rather than relying solely on public meetings.

- Determine how to best inform stakeholders of input opportunities and subject-matter priorities by conducting a stakeholder survey at the start of the long-range planning process.
- Encourage stakeholders to become engaged at the onset of the planning process so that their ideas and feedback can help guide plan formation.
- Solicit stakeholder input at times in the process when the public can have a meaningful impact, such as during plan visioning, goals, and objectives. Staff is less likely to seek public feedback on technical work products on which public input can have little bearing (e.g. the Small Area Forecast, which is generated by sophisticated forecasting software.)
- Use visualization tools to present complex planning concepts. Committee feedback from previous plans has indicated that information provided to the public has been too complex to be effective. Materials will therefore be high-level and concise, providing an overview of key points and the implications of various plans and policies.
- Partner with other state and local agencies and organizations to increase our reach.
- Provide notification of two weeks to one month for all public input opportunities.

Tactics

Technology has made it easier and more convenient for the public to participate in the planning process. Online resources can be used to inform, educate, and facilitate dialogue about transportation planning at times and locations that are convenient to individuals' schedules. However, PPACG also recognizes that citizens have varying levels of access to, and familiarity with, different types of technology. PPACG will consider the following tactics to reach target audiences as appropriate:

Website – PPACG maintains a website that provides access to the organization's plans, programs, and policies. The website includes a calendar of events, board and committee agendas and minutes, and a library of key planning documents. The website will be updated throughout the planning process with meeting notices, work products, and timelines.

Print and digital publications – Various publications providing an overview of planning processes, plan chapter summaries, public input opportunities, timelines, and other relevant information may be emailed to PPACG'S contact lists, be made available at public meetings, community events, and regularly scheduled board and committee meetings, or distributed at public facilities and through partner agencies. All publications will be available on the PPACG website, and may be converted into alternative formats or languages upon request.

Social media – PPACG maintains a social media presence to help inform residents about programs, projects, policies, and opportunities to provide input throughout the planning process. Staff will continue to use various social media accounts to disseminate information

about ongoing planning efforts, and will monitor and respond to questions and comments as appropriate.

Visualization techniques – Maps, charts, diagrams, photographs, infographics, video, and other illustrations are excellent tools for helping the public better understand and engage in the planning process. These elements may be integrated in presentations, publications, and website content.

Public meetings – PPACG will host public meetings to gather input and build consensus among citizens and transportation stakeholders at key points in the planning process. To facilitate greater participation in public meetings:

- An open, collaborative environment will be cultivated, encouraging attendees to ask questions and submit comments.
- Presentations and supporting documentation will be made available at meetings.
- Meetings will be held in community gathering places at times that will encourage maximum participation.
- Meetings will be held in accessible locations, preferably near transit lines or routes.
- Meetings will be held in buildings that are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and PPACG will accommodate attendees with special needs, with sufficient notice.

Surveys – PPACG will conduct surveys throughout the planning process to garner public input on plan goals, objectives, policies, and other topics as appropriate. Surveys will be provided electronically and in print to ensure widespread participation. Keypad polling may be used at open houses and other large events to gather input on community preferences and priorities.

Direct e-mail – E-mail lists reach a wide variety of stakeholders. PPACG will continue to develop its distribution list for periodic updates, including input opportunities, educational brochures, project updates, and other relevant material. Mailing lists will be continually maintained and expanded based on requests received at meetings and events, and via the PPACG website.

Media relations – PPACG will continue to engage in proactive media outreach efforts, including coordinating with local reporters and news directors and providing timely and accurate information via news releases and interviews.

Advertising – Paid advertising will be used to announce public meetings, relevant community events, and other opportunities for public review and comment during the planning process. Advertising will focus on reaching target audiences through strategically-selected publications and Facebook ads.

Telephone line – PPACG may make available a phone line or extension where citizens can hear updates on the long-range plan or TIP and leave their comments.

Telephone town halls – PPACG may periodically host telephone town halls, in which staff provides information on a topic while participants listen in from either a landline or a mobile phone. Callers have an opportunity to ask questions or make comments, and polling can be integrated in the discussion, as relevant. Audio recordings will be available online.

Stakeholder interviews – PPACG will meet with regional transportation stakeholders, including community and business leaders, nonprofit organization representatives, and other representatives, to gain a better understanding of local communities and how to effectively share relevant information and engage diverse groups in the planning process.

Speakers bureau – Throughout the planning process, PPACG staff will present information and solicit input to various groups and organizations, including neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, businesses and nonprofits, and others.

Standing committees

PPACG’s advisory committees provide an ongoing opportunity for the public to be involved in the regional transportation planning process. Committee meetings are open to the public, and the public is invited to share their views at every meeting.

The PPACG Board of Directors is the decision-making body for transportation and air-quality planning in the metropolitan planning area. The Transportation and Community Advisory committees advise and support the board in its deliberations.

PPACG Board of Directors

Members: member government elected officials,
military leaders, state air and water quality staff
Meets: second Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m.

Transportation Advisory Committee

Members: member government technical staff
Meets: third Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m.

Community Advisory Committee

Members: citizens
Meets: last Wednesday of each month at 3 p.m.

Mobility Coordinating Committee

Members: specialized transportation service providers
Meets: Fourth Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.

For committee rosters, agendas, and meeting locations,
visit <http://www.ppacg.org/committees/>.

5: Plan evaluation

Evaluation helps staff better understand how time and resources devoted to various public involvement tactics and strategies affect public involvement. The evaluation structure for this plan includes both quantitative and qualitative elements to ensure that both the level and quality of engagement are monitored.

PPACG will evaluate the effectiveness of the public involvement tactics and strategies described in the previous section using the metrics summarized below. In addition, PPACG will ask participants to evaluate outreach opportunities for effectiveness. PPACG will also evaluate how audiences identified in section four have been reached. How public involvement influences plans, projects and policies will be communicated throughout the project and documented in final reports, as applicable.

Table 5-1: Evaluation of public process tactics

Tactic	Quantitative and qualitative evaluation	Desired outcomes
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of website visits • Source of web traffic • Time spent on web pages • Navigation on web pages • Search terms used • Geographic location of website users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify trends in web usage throughout planning process • Understand what drives traffic to website • Understand how other outreach strategies influence website traffic • Prioritize and increase accessibility of information and input opportunities most important to the public
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall level and quality of engagement • Number of interactions (likes, comments, etc.) • Audience diversity • Click rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widely distribute information and involvement opportunities via shareable content, interactions, and engagement • Provide increased opportunities for feedback and public input

Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of views • Subscribers to channel (YouTube) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide engaging, visual content to clarify complex transportation issues
Public meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event attendance • Quality and quantity of input received • Accessibility to events (geographic/time/distance and ADA) • How people learned about the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide meaningful opportunities for public to learn about and comment on plans, programs, and policies • Notify the public of events using a variety of strategies
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of publications distributed • Accessibility of information (print and online) • Website analytics for digital publications (number of downloads) • Variety of publication formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information in multiple, accessible formats • Content encourages ongoing, meaningful public involvement in planning process • Publications enhance understanding of plans, programs and policies
Stakeholder interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic representation • Diversity of stakeholders interviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of audiences, region • Deeper understanding of community priorities
Media relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage • Media requests • Media contact list diversity (number of reporters, types of news sources, inclusion of minority news sources) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive media relations and communication of news, policies, programs, and opportunities for public involvement
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rate • Completeness of responses • Geographic representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide simple, accessible opportunities to gather input and feedback • Gather information about public understanding, awareness, priorities, and issues • Results inform future discussion and decisions

Visualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of visualization in presentations and publications and on website • Input/comments received • Demonstrated or stated understanding of ideas, concepts, plans, projects, or programs among intended audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of ideas, concepts, plans, projects, or programs among intended audience • Facilitates informed input
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication reach • Click rates • Diversity of advertising placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional notification of public input opportunities
E-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of contacts • Number of new contacts • Number of unsubscribes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all interested stakeholders receive regular communication from PPACG
Telephone town halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants • Quality and quantity of participation during event • Topics covered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation • Eliminate travel time and vehicle miles traveled required to reach in-person meetings • Provide planned opportunities for the public to interact directly with staff

Appendix A: Federal regulations

The Code of Federal Regulations outlines public involvement requirements for the Metropolitan Planning Agency.

Title 23 CFR Subpart C – Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming

§ 450.316 – Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

- a. The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
 1. The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
 - i. Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - ii. Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
 - iii. Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
 - iv. Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
 - v. Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
 - vi. Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

- vii. Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
 - viii. Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
 - ix. Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
 - x. Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
2. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
 3. A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- b. In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:
1. Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

2. Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
 3. Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.
- c. When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
 - d. When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
 - e. MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under § 450.314.

Appendix B: Public input documentation

PPACG documents and responds to every comment and question received during the public input process using the following table. The input is included in the final plan.

#	Document Reference	Comment	Staff Response

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Pikes Peak Area
Council of Governments
Communities Working Together

**RESOLUTION BY
THE PIKES PEAK AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
APPROVING
THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
FOR THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROGRAM**

December 14, 2016

WHEREAS, as the Pikes Peak region’s designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the lead agency for air-quality planning in the Colorado Springs Urbanized Area, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments is responsible for carrying out “a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a metropolitan transportation plan and transportation improvement program,” and

WHEREAS the Code of Federal Regulations outlines public involvement requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and

WHEREAS Title 23 CFR Subpart C of the Code of Federal Regulations stipulates that MPOs “shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process,” and

WHEREAS, the Public Participation Plan ensures that all citizens who want to have a voice in transportation decision-making have the opportunity,

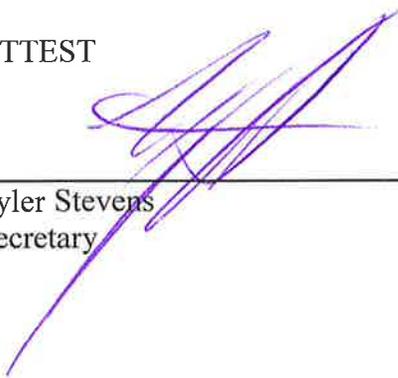
NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments hereby approves and adopts the Public Participation Plan,

RESOLVED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED by the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments this 14th day of December 2016, at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Andy Pico

Andy Pico
Chair

ATTEST


Tyler Stevens
Secretary