

Public Involvement Plan for the Montgomery 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines the overall approach to involve MPO Committees and the general public during the Montgomery 2030 LRTP update. The range of outreach techniques to provide information, solicit input, and develop recommendations is discussed. In addition, the proposed structure and composition of the core groups that will drive the public involvement process and other study elements are identified. The PIP, upon review and approval by Montgomery Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO), will serve as the framework for informing and involving MPO Committees and the general public during the study.

Background

The purpose of the 2030 LRTP update is to identify and document future transportation needs in the Montgomery metropolitan planning area, to validate projects in the existing TIP, and to recommend a phased implementation program that can be realistically implemented with anticipated funds. The LRTP must be developed in accordance with guidelines and objectives outlined in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) as well as local requirements for the LRTP update. The LRTP will be developed in a close working relationship with the MPO technical staff, MMPO Board, Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Other area stakeholders and general public will also be involved at specific points in the LRTP update development process. Specific study objectives include:

- Identifying community goals and objectives and defining the role of transportation in Montgomery area.
- Conducting a comprehensive evaluation of transportation needs.
- Formulating a transportation program with a financially feasible/cost effective mix of services.
- Developing recommendations for transportation services that would best achieve community needs.
- Preparing an action plan to implement the recommendations.

The public involvement activities will be closely coordinated to ensure that the MPO Committees and the public understand the issues and needs of the developed and developing areas within Montgomery metropolitan area.

Approach

Public involvement is a key study element, providing important input to development of community focused transportation recommendations. Public and stakeholder outreach and input are critical to determining the long range transportation needs of the Montgomery metropolitan area. To maximize the benefits of the recommended program of projects, it is crucial that local agencies, organizations, government officials, and the general public have an opportunity to

participate in identifying needs and determining the best future transportation enhancements in the Montgomery area. The public involvement effort for the Montgomery 2030 LRTP will build upon MMPO's existing public involvement process and is consistent with public involvement efforts at the federal and state levels. The LRTP public involvement process recognizes the region's specific characteristics and available resources. The public involvement process will provide early and ongoing opportunities to share information, bring together varied points of view, and obtain input from diverse stakeholders. The overall goal for public involvement is to achieve mutual understanding of the transportation needs of the Montgomery area and build support and consensus for the recommendations of the Montgomery 2030 LRTP.

Critical points in the study have been identified to allow focused public input and gauge support for study recommendations. Special attention will be given to encouraging participation from a wide array of stakeholders, including representation from traditionally underserved, low-income, and minority communities within Montgomery area. These communities will be identified and special attention given to provide ample access to information and public meetings through the early and continuous sharing of study information via local printed and electronic media and participation at public meetings. These communities will be engaged by involving key organizations that provide access to religious/church groups, minority chambers of commerce, and other community agencies and organizations. A list of potential stakeholders is included in Appendix A.

The approach to public involvement for the Montgomery 2030 LRTP will be community-based and focused on building support at two levels throughout the study process: 1) the MPO Committees and 2) the general public. Stakeholder involvement will occur primarily through the MPO Committees. Opportunities for general public input will also be provided to ensure they are informed about the study and to obtain their input prior to key study milestones. The approach to public involvement will also take advantage of local governmental and organizational processes already in place to disseminate information and encourage involvement.

Opportunities for early media coordination and public outreach will be sought, reviewed, and coordinated with MMPO staff to foster community awareness. Special attention will also be given to include local minority media. Initial study activities will focus on developing an understanding of the local community's views of current and future transportation needs and conditions.

Structure for MPO Committee Involvement

An organized structure for the public participation program is important for ensuring that the efforts to provide information on the study and obtain involvement from various stakeholders are cost effective and also reach the broad array of interests that are affected by the study. The structure for stakeholder involvement will be organized around established MPO committees to obtain representation from key stakeholders representing the entire MPO study area. These committees will be actively involved in all phases of the study and will meet with the Consultant Team on a regular basis to review deliverables at key phases. A list of MPO Committees and members is included in Appendix B.

Meetings will include facilitated work sessions to generate discussion, exchange ideas, and work toward the development of recommendations. Several meetings are envisioned at critical points throughout the study as shown on the schedule on page 6.

Public Outreach Techniques

A number of techniques will be utilized to inform key stakeholders and the general public about the study and obtain their input. The techniques are intended to provide information as well as generate discussion and interaction concerning the transportation needs and potential improvement in the Montgomery metropolitan area. The following presents an overview of the public outreach techniques to be used in the study. This overview indicates when each of the techniques will be used in the study and the target audience.

Public Information Meetings

Description	Two sets of public information meetings in each of the three counties (Montgomery, Autauga and Elmore Counties) that comprise the Montgomery urbanized area. The meetings will be held to present critical information on the purpose of the study, Montgomery area's transportation needs, as well as recommended improvements. Fact sheets and comment forms will be distributed. Input will be sought from participants on issues, needs and improvements. A summary will be prepared following each public information meeting. The consultant team will develop responses to comments received from meeting participants. In accordance with the MMPO's adopted Public Involvement Plan, copies of meeting materials and reports will be made available at City Halls and libraries prior to meetings. The MMPO will be responsible for mailing and distributing notices and flyers to publicize meetings.
Schedule	The meetings will be held to support the identification and evaluation of transportation needs. They will have an "open house" format and provide display information that is easily understood.
Target Audience	The public information meetings will serve as an input opportunity for stakeholders and general public. MMPO's mailing list will be used to distribute notices to interested citizens and stakeholders.

Website Development

Description	Working with MMPO staff, the MPO's website will be used to post up-to-date information on the Montgomery 2030 LRTP. The website will provide project information, meeting calendar, presentations, and notes. MMPO staff will be responsible for receiving and responding to inquiries from the website.
Schedule	Updated information will be provided to MMPO throughout the project for placement on their website to reflect the status of the overall study.
Target Audience	The website will provide continuous and ongoing information for stakeholders and the general public.

News Articles

Description	News articles summarizing project status and information at key milestones will be distributed to the media and stakeholder organizations to include in their regular publications. The articles can also be used in the MMPO newsletter and posted on the website.
Schedule	A news article will be developed prior to each series of public information meetings (for a total of two news articles). The articles will share current project information and encourage participation at the meetings and in other public involvement activities.
Target Audience	The intent of the articles is to provide continuous and ongoing study information for MPO Committee members and the general public.

Targeted Media Outreach

Description	A media outreach effort will be implemented to increase both attendance and participant diversity at public information meetings. This effort will be closely coordinated with MMPO staff. The public information meetings will be publicized through newspaper ads and press releases in the <i>Montgomery Independent</i> , <i>Montgomery Advertiser</i> , <i>Montgomery-Tuskegee Times</i> , <i>Prattville Progress</i> , <i>Millbrook Independent</i> , and the <i>Wetumpka Herald</i> . Public service announcements will also be sent to local radio stations. Media outreach will also include minority and low income media outlets where available.
Schedule	Media outreach will begin at least 21 days in advance of each public information meeting. All media information will be provided to MMPO for advance review and approval by the appropriate MMPO staff. The MMPO staff will be responsible for the distribution and placement of media outreach materials (ads, press releases, and articles).
Target Audience	Media outreach will update the general public on the study's progress and encourage attendance at public information meetings.

Targeted Environmental Justice Outreach Activities

Description	Environmental justice (EJ) issues will be an important element of the overall public involvement process. Outreach efforts will be undertaken through personal consultation, phone and written contacts to encourage participation and input. This will include contacting community and neighborhood groups, community service organizations, educational institutions, religious organizations, and churches to request their assistance in publicizing public involvement activities. EJ outreach efforts will be carried out as specified in MMPO's Public Involvement Plan. Potential environmental justice issues will be identified by mapping areas of low income and minority populations in the study area.
Schedule	Environmental justice issues will be considered throughout the study and outreach activities will be initiated in conjunction with the general public involvement activities.
Target Audience	These efforts will be geared towards low income and minority communities impacted by recommended programs and projects.

Evaluation of Public Involvement Efforts

Overall evaluation of public involvement efforts helps answer whether the program is meeting the key public involvement program objectives. The evaluation of the Montgomery 2030 LRTP public involvement program will focus on summarizing activities and reviewing the program's overall success and effectiveness in achieving public participation goals. Strong participation numbers and inclusion of a broad range of interests is of particular concern to ensure the public has been included in the long range transportation planning process.

The effectiveness of outreach to environmental justice communities will be an important element for ongoing monitoring and reporting to ensure accurate documentation of the process and allow for responsive adjustments to the program as required. A summary and evaluation of environmental justice issues and how they were addressed during plan development will be included as part of the overall public involvement program. Table 1 outlines the criteria that have been identified to evaluate the effectiveness of each public involvement technique to be used in the effort.

Table 1 – Evaluation Criteria

PIP Technique	Evaluation Criteria	
	Quantitative	Qualitative
Technical Review	Attendance	Was Input Used in Planning Process?
Committee Meetings	Diversity of Representation Quantity of Feedback Received	Effectiveness of Meeting Format
Media Outreach	Extent and Quantity of Media Coverage Number of Avenues Used to Reach Environmental Justice Audiences	Effectiveness of Notification and Communication Tools How and How Often Contact is Made
News Articles	Number of Additions to a Mailing List Quantity of Articles Distributed	Concise and Clear Information Effectiveness of News articles
Website	Number of visitors Number of comments received Number of comment responses	Comments to MMPO Webmaster on website format/presentation of information
Public Meetings	Number of Events/Opportunities for Public Involvement Number of Comments Received Number of Participants Number of Avenues Used to Reach Environmental Justice Audiences Diversity of Attendees	Effectiveness of Meeting Format Public Understanding of Process Quality of Feedback Obtained Timing of Public Involvement Meeting Convenience: Time, Place, and Accessibility Was Public's Input Used in Developing the Plan?

Anticipated Schedule for Public Outreach Activities

The schedule below provides some detail regarding the number and timing of key public outreach milestone activities for the Montgomery 2030 LRTP. The various meetings and workshops have been structured around the project's technical schedule and deliverables to ensure that input is incorporated at key stages.

Activity Schedule

Month of Study 2004/2005

	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Meetings with MPO Staff		▲		▲	▲			▲	▲
MPO Committee Meetings		▲		▲	▲			▲	▲
Public Meetings						▲		▲	
Newsletter Articles						▲			▲
Media/ EJ Outreach					▲		▲		
Program Evaluation						▲			▲

Potential Activities	▲	Focused Media Outreach	▲	Evaluation of Major Activities	▲
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Attachment A

List of Potential Stakeholders

Attachment B

List of MPO Committees and Members