

7. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A. LRP Public Involvement

The public involvement process for this Long Range Plan process addressed the public outreach-related concerns of the Cache MPO and provided opportunities for meaningful input for both the general public and specific audiences. This approach to public input involved an open and continuous process that sought to involve all citizens. There were two primary venues for public involvement during the Long Range Plan update process. The first was workshops designed for target audiences which focused on specific aspects of the plan and offered opportunities to take part in specific activities. The details of the two workshops are described in Appendix C. The second focus of the public involvement process was open houses intended to both offer information and gain input and for general public participation. More information regarding the open houses is given in Appendix D.

B. Ongoing Public Involvement

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, known as TEA-21, places great importance on public involvement for Metropolitan Planning Organizations, not only in the development of their Long Range Plans, but more generally in their capacity as public, decision-making bodies. More specifically, 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 450.212 identifies specific regulations related to public involvement that have been issued jointly by the FHWA and the FTA. Those regulations include:

- Early and continuing public involvement opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process;
- Timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private sector transportation entities and other interested parties, including segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects;
- Reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the plan and the STIP;
- Adequate public notice of the public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to action on the plan and the STIP;
- A process for demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input during the planning and program development process;
- A process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households which may face challenges accessing employment and other amenities; and
- Periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.

With these elements at its forefront, public involvement is a fundamentally important component of MPO activities and planning processes. Described later in this chapter are Cache MPO strategies for annual, non-specific transportation open house or “fairs,” and more project-specific public involvement events.

Another aspect of public involvement is the on-going coordination of MPO officials with other agencies and organizations, such as environmental groups, trail user groups, or bicycle advocacy groups. The Cache Technical Advisory Committee should regularly invite these

groups to participate in discussions, both general and project specific. In addition, meetings of the CTAC need to be held regularly, not more than once per month and possibly less, and agendas and meeting minutes need to be made available. The CTAC should develop annually a calendar of topics that will be addressed throughout the year.

i. Annual Open House

The Cache MPO will implement an annual Transportation Open House which will include all Cache County cities as well as county-related transportation plans. The value of regularly scheduled public venues such as an open house is creating the expectation of the event each year and the building of a base group of attendees that will likely increase every year. In addition the event offers city, county, and MPO staff the opportunity to get a detailed understanding, which might not otherwise occur, of planning projects that are currently underway in other cities. While other formats exist for providing public input opportunities, an open house format offers a more “user friendly” and casual atmosphere where participants can ask questions that reflect their specific interests and concerns. In addition, an open house such as this that includes information related to many different transportation projects and processes offers the participant a more comprehensive view of the transportation planning process and the inter-related aspects of projects.

Generating interest in transportation planning public events is often described as a losing proposition, that people will attend events when personal property is threatened but that 30 year planning horizons offer nothing of immediate concern to draw attendees. However, organizations that have effectively overcome this perception point to key elements that are common to successful public events.

a. Advertising

Advertising the event in public locations and areas where transportation user-groups are likely to be is important in reaching target audiences. An eye-catching poster produced in various sizes (to comply with size limits of various facilities) should be posted in places such as city halls, libraries, schools and universities, grocery stores, and post offices. Posters should also be hung on every LTD and CVTD bus, as transit users are an especially important group to reach. Ideally posters should be displayed approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the event. Newspapers of general circulation as well as city-provided newsletters are also important places to advertise the event to reach a large segment of the population. Another good source for broad distribution is utility bills that are sent out by cities. With sufficient notice, cities will generally print notices of such events on the bill. For a cost, a separate flyer can also often be included in utility mailings.

b. Invitations

Besides existing MPO mailing lists or databases, specific invites should be sent to all mayors, planning commissioners, and city council members; and any Cache MPO technical advisory committee members who can also post and distribute invitations and/or posters in their offices. In addition, any community councils or neighborhood groups should be invited and can also serve as a good resource for distribution of invitations and information. Schools and schoolchildren can be a good way to distribute open house information as well. The UDOT public involvement person in Region 1 should be used as a resource for contacts. Finally, in order to connect with the traditionally underserved populations, an important part of the TEA-21 regulations, area aging and adult service agencies usually maintain mailing lists which might be available, as well as minority organizations.

c. Location

The event should be held in a facility large enough to easily accommodate planned displays and visitors. There is advantage in consistency of location, holding the event in the same place every

year. Locations such as senior citizen centers, community centers, city halls, libraries or other public spaces are good options and often provide a built-in attendance base of individuals visiting the building for other reasons.

d. Exhibitors

Involving MPO local governments in the open house is an effective way to provide them the opportunity to showcase city transportation projects. The idea of the open house is to present all kinds of transportation projects, whether they are short or long term projects, whether they are in the planning or design stage. Cities should be strongly encouraged to actively participate in the open house, and in fact can use the event to cover public meeting requirements for specific projects. The MPO can provide information related to Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program update processes as well as any special studies being sponsored by the agency. The emphasis in exhibits should be on graphics, maps, and even video presentation rather than written documents.

e. Time

Other MPOs that have held successful transportation “fairs” suggest that early evening is the optimal time to hold a public event. From 4:30pm to 7:00pm allows people to attend the event on their way home from work. Anecdotal evidence suggests that when people get home in the evening, they are less likely to leave to attend events such as these.

ii. Project-Specific Events

In addition to an annual transportation fair, many specific projects will still require public events to fulfill public involvement requirements. Depending on the timing of those projects, those requirements might be fulfilled by the annual transportation fair. If not, however, a public open house should be provided. Advertising can be limited to newspapers of general circulation, newsletters of cities affected by the project, and fliers posted in city halls. Invitations should be sent to the MPO mailing list and any other affected individuals, property owners, or organizations.

C. Agency and Organization Contacts

i. Federal

FHWA	801-963-0182	www.fhwa.dot.gov
FTA-Region 8	720-963-3300	www.fta.dot.gov
EPA-Region 8	800-227-8917	www.epa.gov

ii. State

Utah Department of Transportation		
Region 1	801-620-1600	www.dot.state.ut.us
Planning & Program Dev.	801-965-4000	www.dot.state.ut.us
Utah Division of Air Quality	801-536-4000	www.airquality.utah.gov

iii. Cache MPO Region

Cache MPO	435-716-7154	www.cmpo.info
Cache County	435-716-7154	www.cachecounty.org
Cache Valley Transit District	435-752-2877	www.loganutah.org/transit
Logan Transit District	435-752-2877	www.loganutah.org/transit

iv. Other Region

Wasatch Front Regional Council	801-363-4250	www.wfrc.org
Mountainland Assoc. of Governments	801-229-3800	www.mountainland.org
Dixie MPO	435-673-3548	www.fcaog.state.ut.us

v. Cities	Hyde Park	435-563-6507	utahreach.usu.edu/cache/hydepark
	Hyrum	435-245-6033	www.hyrumcity.com
	Logan	435-716-9000	www.loganutah.org
	Millville	435-750-0924	
	Nibley	435-752-0431	
	North Logan	435-752-1310	www.ci.north-logan.ut.us
	Providence	435-752-9441	www.providence-city.com
	River Heights	435-752-2646	www.ulct.org/riverheights/
	Smithfield	435-563-6226	
	Wellsville	435-245-3686	

vi. Other	Bridgerland Audubon Society		www.bridgerlandaudubon.org
	Cache Chamber of Commerce	435-752-2161	www.cachechamber.com
	Cache Trails Coalition		www.cachetrails.org
	Cache Valley Tourism	435-742-2161	www.tourcachevalley.com
	Cache Valley Veloists	435-713-0212	www.cvveloists.org
	Logan Canyon Coalition	435-753-5031	www.logancanyon.org
	Utah State University	435-797-1000	www.usu.edu