



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN 2013



OZARKS TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION
A METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

REVISION A
APPROVED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS APRIL 16, 2015

This report was prepared in cooperation with the USDOT, including FHWA and FTA, as well as the Missouri Department of Transportation.

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INTRODUCTION

The Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) MPO is the federally designated regional transportation planning organization that serves as a forum for cooperative transportation decision-making by state and local governments, and regional transportation and planning agencies. MPOs are charged with maintaining and conducting a “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive” regional transportation planning and project programming process for OTO’s study area. The study area is defined as the area projected to become urbanized within the next 20 years. Please see **Figure 1** on page 5 for the study area boundary.

The OTO Board of Directors includes local elected and appointed officials from Christian and Greene Counties, and the cities of Battlefield, Nixa, Ozark, Republic, Springfield, Strafford and Willard. It also includes technical staffs from the Missouri Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Staff members from local governments and area transportation agencies serve on the MPO’s Technical Planning Committee, which provides technical review, comments, and recommendations on draft MPO plans, programs, studies, and issues.

The “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act” (MAP-21), signed into law on July 6, 2012, and effective on October 1, 2012, contains specific language outlining federal requirements regarding public involvement processes and procedures. In general, the MAP-21 legislation built upon previous transportation legislation (ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU) to provide states and metropolitan planning organizations specific direction in conducting and promoting broad-based public involvement activities. MAP-21 Legislation (Public Law 112-141) requires metropolitan planning organizations to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, 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 a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.

In addition, the Public Participation Plan

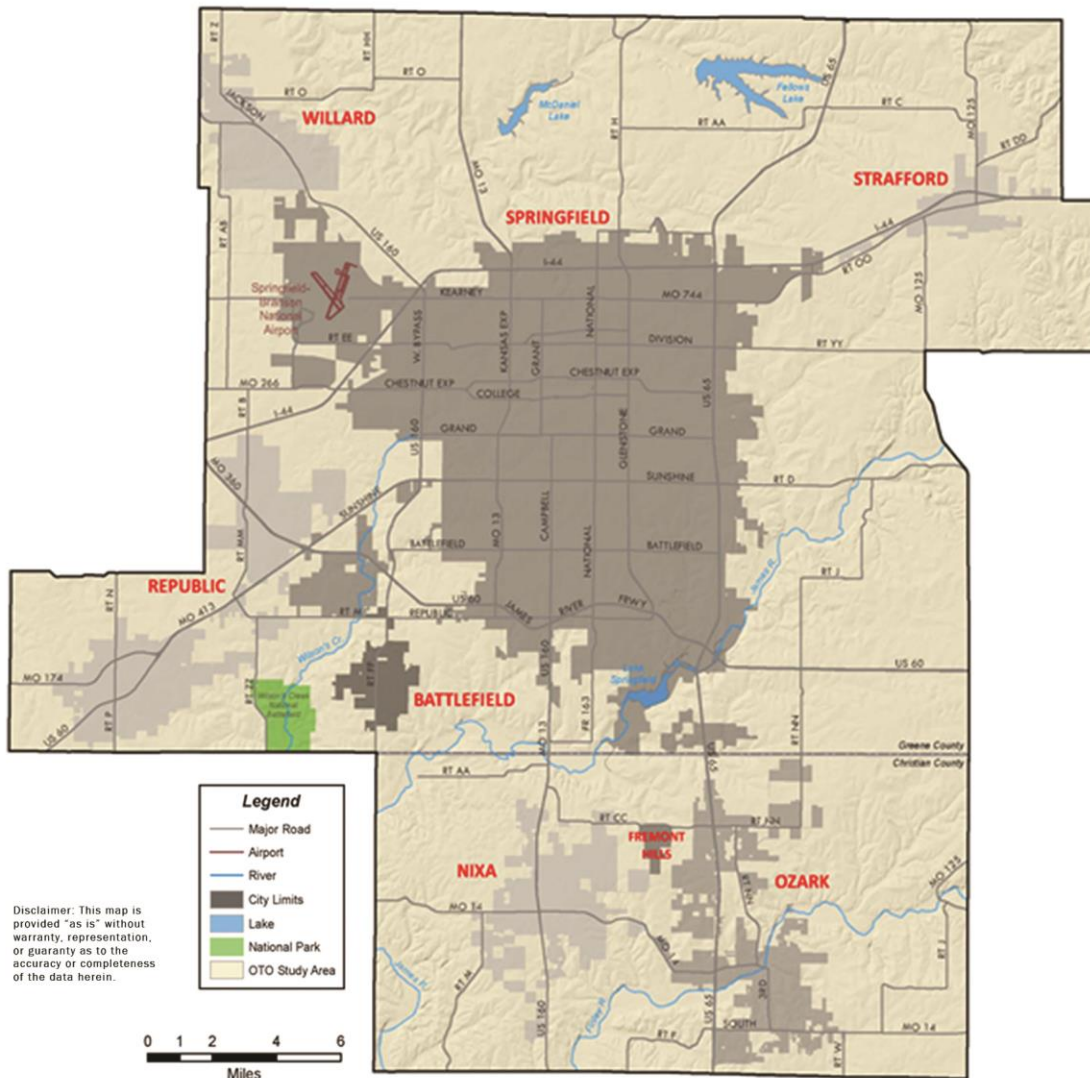
- shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and
- shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan. Beyond the federal requirements, participation by citizens, affected public agencies, community groups, and other interested parties is an important part of a successful public planning program.

Ozarks Transportation Organization actively encourages the participation of all interested parties in its planning efforts.

The targeted OTO stakeholders should include the following:

- OTO Board of Directors Members
- OTO Board of Directors Alternates
- OTO Interested Parties
 - Area neighborhood organizations
 - Regional freight firms
 - Human Service agencies
 - Area school districts
 - Senior centers
 - Disabled groups
 - Limited English Proficiency persons
 - Minorities
 - Transportation providers
- OTO Technical Planning Committee Members
- OTO Technical Planning Committee Alternates
- OTO Local Coordinating Board for Transit Members
- OTO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- OTO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee Interested Parties

FIGURE 1: OTO METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY



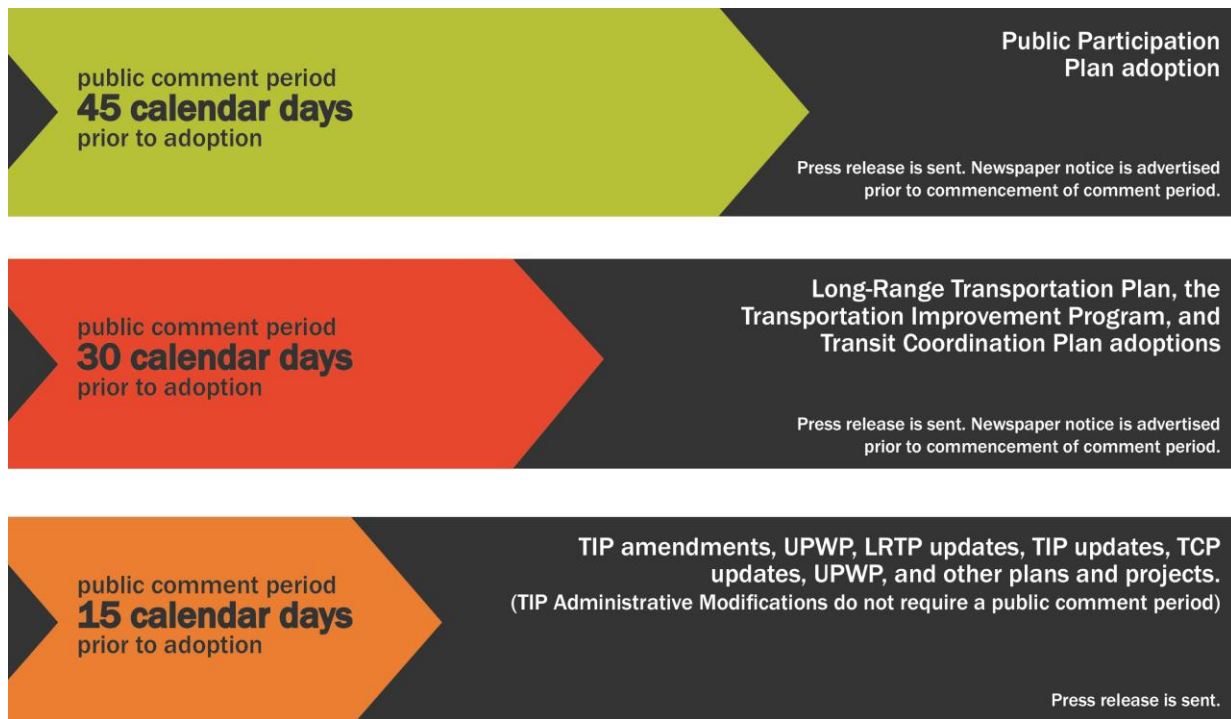
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GENERAL GUIDELINES

This Participation Plan is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by OTO and contains the policies, objectives, and techniques used by OTO for public involvement. In its public participation process, OTO will:

1. Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdiction concerns).
2. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered.
3. Give adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, as well as review of environmental impact. The established Public Comment periods are defined in **Figure 2** on page 7. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment by OTO and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan shall be made available.
4. Solicit the needs of those under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and low-income households. OTO shall provide reasonable opportunities for affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, 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 a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation planning.

FIGURE 2: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIODS



5. Coordinate the Public Participation Process with statewide Public Participation Processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduces redundancies and costs.
6. OTO will ensure that the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are met and that appropriate actions are taken during all phases of public involvement to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. OTO shall not exclude any person from participating in the any program receiving federal assistance on the basis of race, color, or national origin and shall undertake reasonable effort to accommodate citizens with disabilities who wish to attend public meetings.
7. Evaluate and continuously review the public participation process using the performance measures outlined in Appendix A that relate to Reach, Access, Effective Communication, Input, Impact, and Diversity and Equity.
8. Upon receiving public comment, OTO will respond in a timely manner and provide copies of comments to appropriate boards and committees, and related agencies.
9. All comment will be catalogued in a central location to measure effectiveness of outreach activities, per the annual evaluation report.
10. A summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Goal: To provide the public with thorough information on transportation planning services and project development in a convenient and timely manner.

STRATEGY 1.

OTO shall actively engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies contained in this Participation Plan and state and federal law.

Policy 1.1: OTO shall maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including at a minimum the following persons to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products.

- A. Elected officials
- B. Local government staff
- C. Transportation agencies (airports, transit, etc.)
- D. Local media (TV, radio, print, etc.)
- E. Civic groups
- F. Special interest groups (other interested parties)
- G. Libraries (for public display)
- H. Federal, state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation, and other environmental issues.
- I. Parties that would have an interest in the planning and development of the transportation network including affected public agencies in the metropolitan planning area
- J. Private freight shippers
- K. Representatives of public transportation employees
- L. Providers of freight transportation services
- M. Private providers of transportation
- N. Representatives of users of public transportation
- O. Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways
- P. Representatives of users of bicycle transportation facilities
- Q. Representatives of the disabled
- R. Minority groups
- S. Limited English Proficiency groups
- T. Area school districts

A form will also be made available on the website to enable additional interested persons to request information.

Policy 1.2: OTO shall, when feasible, electronically mail meeting announcements to the MPO contact list or to targeted groups for upcoming activities. Pertinent information will be contained in the subject line to ensure maximum exposure of the information.

Policy 1.3: OTO shall employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include: charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS systems, artist renderings, physical models, and/or computer simulation.

STRATEGY 2.

OTO shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis.

Policy 2.1: OTO shall make all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the OTO website and at the OTO offices and employ visualization techniques to describe transportation actions as part of the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Policy 2.2: OTO staff shall be available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice.

Policy 2.3: OTO shall maintain an internet website.

Policy 2.3.1: The website shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available.

Policy 2.3.2: The website shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- A. Contact information (mailing address, phone, fax, and email)
- B. Current OTO committee membership
- C. Meeting calendars and agendas
- D. Work products and publications (Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, etc.)
- E. Comment/question Form
- F. Links to related agencies
- G. Current by-laws and operating procedures (including the Public Participation Plan and updates)
- H. Guidance on public participation

STRATEGY 3.

OTO shall encourage the involvement of all area citizens in the transportation planning process.

Policy 3.1: Target audiences shall be identified for each planning study conducted by OTO, including residents, business and property owners and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including but not limited to, low income, limited English proficiency, and minority households, within the study area. This can be accomplished by working with community organizations and popular community websites to help distribute the information.

Policy 3.2: OTO shall, whenever feasible, hold public meetings or forums at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens.

Policy 3.3: OTO will provide comment cards at meetings and general/plan-related comment forms on the website, minimizing any concerns someone may have when making a public comment.

OBJECTIVE 4.

OTO shall follow a public policy goal of ensuring that adverse human or environmental effects of governmental activities do not fall disproportionately upon minority or low-income populations.

These effects include, but are not limited to:

- A. Bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death;
- B. Air, noise, water pollution, and soil contamination;
- C. Destruction or disruption of manmade or natural resources;
- D. Destruction or diminution of aesthetic values;
- E. Destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality;
- F. Destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services;
- G. Vibration;
- H. Adverse employment effects;
- I. Displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations;
- J. Increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion, or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community; and,
- K. Denial of, reductions in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits of U.S. DOT programs, policies, or activities.

Policy 4.1: OTO shall not carry out any activity using federal funds that is shown to cause a disproportionately adverse impact on these populations unless:

- Alternative approaches or further mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the disproportionate effect are not practicable; and,
- A substantial need exists for the program, policy, or activity, based on the overall public interest and alternative approaches that would have less adverse effects on protected populations either would:

1. Have other adverse social, economic, environmental, or human health impacts that would be more severe, or
2. Involve increased costs of extraordinary magnitude.

Policy 4.2: In order to assure compliance with the environmental justice standards and to assure that the public has access to full information concerning human health and environmental impacts, OTO and its member agencies shall conduct the following four actions early in the project development process:

1. Identify and evaluate environmental, public health, and interrelated social and economic effects;
2. Propose measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse environmental and public health effects and interrelated social and economic effects, offsetting benefits on opportunities should be provided to enhance communities, neighborhoods, and individuals whenever permitted by federal law and policy;
3. Consider alternatives when they would enable disproportionately high and adverse impacts to be avoided and/or minimized; and,
4. Provide sufficient public involvement opportunities, including soliciting input from affected minority, limited English proficiency, and low-income populations, in considering alternatives.

STRATEGY 5.

OTO shall strive to continuously improve public participation.

Policy 5.1: OTO shall create and distribute a brochure or other format, describing OTO, MPOs, and OTO's work products.

Policy 5.2: OTO, when appropriate, will send out press releases informing the region of OTO project or plan activities of interest.

Policy 5.3: OTO shall continuously evaluate public involvement techniques. This process is outlined in Appendix A.

Policy 5.4: This Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed and adopted, with revisions if necessary, at least every three (3) years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement.

PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

Public participation is an ongoing activity of OTO. It is also an integral part of one-time activities such as corridor studies and regularly repeated activities such as the annual Transportation Improvement Program process and Long Range Transportation Plan updates. This section contains descriptions of public participation tools currently being used by OTO.

OTO WEBSITE

The site was established to provide basic information about the MPO process, members, meeting times, and contact information. A Public Comment page has been added, along with the email address comment@ozarkstransportation.org, set up specifically for comments that are received and monitored by OTO's Public Relations, and posted to the website's Public Comment page with OTO responses. The site also includes information about specific projects undertaken by OTO. Work products, such as the Public Participation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, and Long Range Transportation Plan are available from the site. The site provides many links to other transportation related sites at the local and national level. The website address is ozarkstransportation.org. The site is maintained and updated regularly.

OTO MASTER DATABASE

OTO staff maintains a master database of business, federal, state and local agencies and interested public. The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses and websites. The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists and special interest groups, including minority and low-income groups. The database will be used to establish and maintain a list of email contacts for electronic meeting notification and announcements.

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Missouri Sunshine Law requires posting a notice of any public meeting where a decision could be made by the OTO Board of Directors or when a quorum of the OTO Board of Directors may be in attendance at another function or meeting. OTO regularly posts notice of OTO meetings.

PRESS RELEASES

Formal press releases are sent to local media (newspaper, TV and radio) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by OTO or OTO's committees.

PROJECT WORKSHOPS/OPEN-HOUSES

These are targeted public meetings that are generally open and informal, with project team

members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. Short presentations may be given at these meetings. The purpose of project-specific meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment and a sense of public priorities.

EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting announcements and OTO information are emailed to interested persons that have submitted their email addresses to OTO staff.

OTO LOGO

A logo representing OTO is used to identify products and publications of OTO. A logo helps the public become familiar with the different activities of OTO by providing a means of recognizing OTO products.

COMMENT FORMS

Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meeting. Comment forms can be very general in nature, or can ask for very specific feedback. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific alignment alternatives being considered during a corridor study, or may ask for a person's general feelings about any aspect of transportation. Comment forms can also be included in publications and on websites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or website.

SURVEYS

Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to ask very specific questions such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns.

POSTERS AND FLYERS

Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed to public places such as City Halls, libraries, community centers, City buses and City bus transfer stations for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of a meeting, the time(s) and location(s), and contact information. Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using other notification methods.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, are used to announce meeting and events, and include links to pertinent information and survey sites. Social media also invite public comments and participation on the sites themselves.

SPECIFIC PLAN PROCEDURES

The following plans are identified as OTO’s core plans with each public participation process identified. All of OTO’s plans are available on the OTO website and are also available in hard copy at the OTO offices.

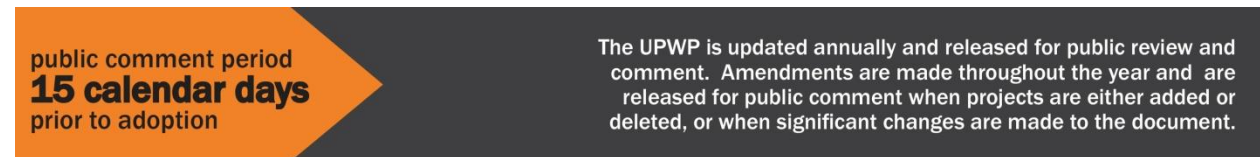
UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a description of the proposed activities of the Ozarks Transportation Organization. The program is prepared annually and serves as a basis for requesting federal planning funds from the U. S. Department of Transportation.

It also serves as a management tool for scheduling, budgeting, and monitoring the planning activities of the participating agencies. This document is prepared by staff from OTO with assistance from various agencies, including the Missouri Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, City Utilities Transit Department, Missouri State University Transportation Department, and members of the MPO Technical Planning Committee consisting of representatives from each of the nine MPO jurisdictions.

The UPWP is developed by OTO with input from local governments, area transit providers, and the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). When comments are being solicited during the public review period, notice will be posted on the OTO Website. All public comments received pertaining to the UPWP will be reviewed and considered. An effective means of incorporating public input into the UPWP is to review comments received the previous year that relate to similar new projects. When developing the work program, the UPWP project manager should take this public comment into consideration.

FIGURE 3: UPWP PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD



The UPWP is updated annually, and released for public review and comment for 15 days, seen in **Figure 3**, above. Amendments are made throughout the year and are released for public comment when projects are either added or deleted, or when significant changes are made to the document.

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is essential in the development of a sound transportation network. The OTO has developed a Long Range Transportation Plan in order to provide guidance for future transportation decisions. Although long-range in scope, the plan provides direction and sets policies for day-to-day decision making. The LRTP builds on past transportation planning conducted by the Ozarks Transportation Organization. All transportation modes relating to passenger travel and freight are discussed in the document. The plan addresses transportation policies and strategies and assists in prioritizing transportation improvements over the next 25 to 30 years.

The transportation system is generally the community's single largest infrastructure investment. Transportation decisions can have a tremendous effect on the community and its neighborhoods, which explains why transportation projects often spark much community discussion and debate. It is not uncommon to have many stakeholders with legitimate and often conflicting values involved with a transportation project. As a result, it is critical to balance the concerns and values of stakeholders with the values and priorities of the community in making transportation decisions.

The LRTP is developed through an extensive public process that spans several months and involves thousands of individuals across the region. A series of public meetings will be held throughout the region for each complete update. Events will be publicized using display advertisements in the Springfield News-Leader and other community newspapers. Opportunities for public involvement do not stop with the adoption of the Long-Range Transportation Plan; it will continue to evolve as additional needs are identified. The LRTP must be completely updated at least every five years while in air quality attainment (four years when in non-attainment), but may be revised more frequently if necessary.

When a new update is being developed, it is suggested that a specific public participation plan be written to outline the public participation process. OTO should post drafts of chapters online throughout development, in addition to when it is officially released for public comment as a single document.

FIGURE 4: LRTP PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD



Once ready, the draft plan will be publicized on the OTO Website and local newspapers. The public review and comment period will last at least 30 days, as seen above in **Figure 4**, as

federally required. Amendments are periodically made, between major updates, to the LRTP as new projects, funding, or programs arise. The approval and public comment process for LRTP amendments is the same as the process for full updates, except the public comment period will be at least 15 days. However, only chapters containing the proposed amendments are presented for public comment and Board of Directors approval.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the short-range capital improvement program for various transportation systems located in OTO's study area. The TIP is a financially constrained four-year program outlining the most immediate implementation priorities for transportation projects and is updated on a yearly basis. It serves to allocate limited financial resources among the various transportation needs of the community. The TIP serves to program the expenditure of federal, state, and local transportation funds. In order to receive federal highway or transit funds, a project must be included in the TIP.

The TIP is intended to serve as a project implementation guide for those agencies participating in the OTO. The projects outlined in the TIP are a reflection of the policies and plans adopted by the Ozarks Transportation Organization. The TIP, as approved by the Board of Directors and the Missouri Department of Transportation, constitutes the selection document for project implementation. The first year of projects in the TIP represent the agreed list of projects eligible for implementation.

OTO shall consult with (1) agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA, (2) recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, (3) government 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 (4) recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204, and this process shall be documented in the intra-agency memorandum of understanding.

AGENCY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The projects submitted by the various agencies for inclusion in the TIP have been subjected to citizen input through each individual agency's public involvement process. The projects submitted by the various cities are all part of their respective Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) where required. Depending on their area of concern, the following City boards hold public hearings on the proposed projects - Airport Board, Park Board, and Planning and Zoning Commission/Board. After receiving a recommendation on the CIP from the Planning and Zoning Commission/Board, the City Council/Board of Aldermen of the respective city, hold another public hearing at which additional comments are received.

City Utilities of Springfield

The OTO's adopted public participation plan and process satisfies CU's public participation plan and process for the Program of Projects. OTO conducts an extensive public involvement process for the Transportation Improvement Program and publication of the Program of Projects which is outlined on pages 18-21.

In addition, City Utilities holds an annual public hearing on the Utilities' budget and projects for the coming year. The City Utilities' Board of Public Utilities also must approve the Utilities' budget and projects with the Springfield City Council making the final approval.

OTO advertises City Utilities' program of projects each year in the Springfield News-Leader.

A public hearing is required prior to implementing either an increase in Transit fares or a significant reduction in service. A significant reduction in service is defined by the following criteria:

1. A decrease of 25 percent or more in the revenue miles of route, either at one time or cumulative during any twelve month period; or
2. An increase in headway's for a route of more than 15 minutes; or
3. A rerouting that will last more than 180 days and decrease the revenue miles of a route by 25 percent or more.

OTO Member Jurisdictions

The cities and counties hold public hearings and meetings on projects that are listed within the time frame for the TIP.

Missouri State University

Missouri State University (MSU) utilizes the Transit Shuttle Advisory Committee for public involvement in the selection of projects to be included in the TIP. This committee includes representatives of the student body, faculty, Administration, and transit operations.

OATS, Inc.

OATS, Inc. uses public involvement procedures to select projects for inclusion in the TIP. The three methods used to solicit and gain public input includes:

- A public notice
- Input from an advisory group, and
- Southwest Missouri Office on Aging

Missouri Department of Transportation

Local input is important in statewide transportation planning. The Missouri

Department of Transportation (MoDOT), the regional planning commissions (RPCs), OTO, city officials, and county officials form partnerships to gather and evaluate local input on transportation needs. These are regional partnerships. This allows the group members with common interests and goals to tailor their level of participation as they desire. Their roles can then evolve as participants gain more experience in transportation planning.

Although members' roles and specific processes may differ from group to group, some common themes exist among them. Public comments concerning transportation needs are gathered from many sources including county-wide public meetings, calls to MoDOT's customer service center, public surveys, and comments received by local officials from their constituents. The local officials, generally in conjunction with the RPC and MPO, use these comments in their process for identifying and prioritizing transportation needs in this region. Each RPC and MPO develop a prioritized list of needs for MoDOT's consideration in programming.

In addition to public input, MoDOT continuously evaluates the condition of Missouri's roads and bridges. State bridge inspectors evaluate the structural integrity of each bridge component. Interstate and primary system roads are evaluated every year, along with approximately one-third of the secondary system roads. During the pavement evaluation, physical factors such as rut depth, roughness, cracking, and joint integrity are reviewed. The road and bridge inspection data for the entire system is analyzed to provide indices for pavement and bridges. All of this data is used in programming.

MoDOT uses a combination of factors to determine what would be the best expenditure of funds in a particular year. These factors may include public comment and priority time necessary to produce plans, and estimated cost, as well as safety factors, traffic information, condition ratings, construction scheduling and sequencing, duration of the construction, coordination with other construction projects (both MoDOT's and others), economic development, and the availability of outside funding sources. The combination of these factors, and more, are used to develop project priorities for programming.

OTO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In addition to the public involvement processes of the individual agencies, OTO conducts its own public involvement process. This includes the notification of transportation agencies and other interested groups concerning the TIP process and how to participate. OTO also publishes written notices and press releases to alert the public to those meetings at which the proposed TIP would be discussed. Public comment is solicited

and copies of the draft are been made available for public examination at the public library and in the OTO offices.

OTO will provide annual notice by April 1st of the calendar year to the agencies and groups considered interested parties and to agencies that have previously submitted projects to the MPO. The notice shall include information concerning the transportation issues and processes used in developing a TIP submittal. This notice will provide the information required to propose projects for inclusion in the TIP and the timetable to be followed. OTO staff will be available to give these agencies and groups any assistance they might require in developing projects for submittal for the TIP.

Agencies submitting projects for inclusion in the TIP will include written documentation of the public involvement procedures used by that agency in selecting projects to include in the TIP and/or for federal funding, e.g., projects for which FTA Section 5307 funding is sought. If written or oral comments that question the need, scope or scheduling of TIP projects or that propose alternative projects are received during the TIP preparation process, the submitting agency will submit a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of the comments which will be made a part of the approved TIP.

Public comment is taken prior to approval of the Transportation Improvement Program. The draft TIP is to be made available for comment for 30 days. A notice will be in the Springfield News-Leader or other community paper. The draft TIP will be available on the OTO website, at the OTO offices, and at the Springfield-Greene County Library. Any public comment received during this review period will be taken into account by OTO staff and will be presented to the Technical Planning Committee and Board of Directors as part of the approval process.

The approved TIP will be available for review by the public at the OTO offices, City Utilities Transit office, and the Missouri Department of Transportation Southwest District office.

CHANGES TO THE TIP

Project sponsors may find it necessary to request revisions to the adopted TIP.

Pursuant to 23 CFR § 450.104, TIP amendments and administrative modifications are defined into two categories:

1. **TIP Amendments.** TIP Amendments are major revisions which require official approval by the OTO Board of Directors. This is followed by submission to the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) for approval by the Governor of Missouri and subsequent approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). TIP Amendments will require a public comment period of 15 days prior to consideration by the OTO Board of Directors. Notice will be given by press release and on the OTO website.

2. **TIP Administrative Modifications.** TIP Administrative Modifications are minor revisions which can simply be made by OTO staff after verification that the change(s) falls into this category. Notification of administrative modifications will be provided to the Technical Committee, Board of Directors, MoDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). TIP Administrative Modifications will require no public comment period.

Revisions Requiring TIP Amendments:

1. Addition or deletion of any project (except as noted in the Administrative Modifications section below);
2. Substantial changes to the scope of a project (e.g. changing the number of through traffic lanes, changing the type of project such as from rehabilitation to system expansion);
3. Changes in the availability (adding or deleting funds by Congressional action) of earmarked (special appropriation) funds;
4. Moving a project into or out of the first four Federal Fiscal Years of a TIP;
5. Changes in a project's total programmed amount greater than 15% (or any amount greater than \$2,000,000);
6. Changes in a project's fund source(s) from non-Federal to Federal; and.
7. Changes in the termini of a capacity project of any length OR any project in which the total length changes more than 1/4 mile.

Revisions Allowed As Administrative Modifications:

1. Changes in a project's programmed amount less than 15% (up to \$2,000,000);
2. Minor changes to the scope of a project;
3. Minor changes to the termini of a non-capacity project (one that increases or decreases the total length of the project by no more than 1/4 mile);
4. Adding or deleting a project development phase of a project (Env. Doc, PE, Design, ROW, Constr. or Other) without major changes to the scope to the project;
5. Moving a project's funds to another Fiscal Year provided they are not being moved into or out of the first four FYs of a TIP;
6. Minor changes to funding sources between federal funding categories or between state and local sources,
7. Changes in a project's fund source(s) from Federal to non-Federal with no changes to the project's scope (however, the disposition of the "freed-up" Federal funds remain under the authority of the OTO and are subject to TIP Revisions as appropriate); and
8. Changing a project's lead agency when agreed upon by the two agencies affected.

9. Changes made to an existing project's amount of local or state non-matching funds provided no other funding, scoping or termini changes are being made to the project;
10. Changes made to an existing project's programmed federal funds, in order to reflect the actual amount awarded by the federal agency and the corresponding required amount of matching funds;
11. Adding a project to the TIP which is split from a "parent project" provided the cumulative, total amount of Federal funding in each funding category in the parent and split projects remains intact and the overall scope of work intended to be accomplished does not change; and
12. Combining two or more projects already in the TIP provided the cumulative, total amount of Federal funding in each funding category of the combined projects remains intact and the overall scope of work intended to be accomplished does not change.
13. Moving a project from a prior adopted TIP to the current TIP.

PROGRAM OF PROJECTS

For all federal transportation funding OTO will conduct the project selection process and subsequently select projects for publication in the TIP. This process and publication will serve to satisfy the public requirements for the Program of Projects.

The TIP and all amendments will serve as the final Program of Projects.

Public transportation providers and human services agencies will rely on the public participation process conducted for the TIP by OTO to satisfy the public involvement requirements for all FTA programs.

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

EVALUATION HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration, under Federal Law 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), requires that OTO continuously evaluates the effectiveness of public involvement activities, with the purpose of establishing guidelines to evaluate the effectiveness of current public involvement strategies and increase OTOs accountability for its stakeholders. By continuously evaluating public involvement activities, it is possible to improve or add new public involvement activities to the OTO program and to discontinue activities that are ineffective. The purpose of this Appendix is to provide guidelines for the evaluation of public involvement techniques. OTO's public involvement activities are contained in the Public Participation Plan.

This document will guide OTO's public participation evaluation efforts during the upcoming years. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of OTO's public outreach methods along with the public's perception of accessibility, current levels of participation, and quality of public comments. In addition, it will attempt to uncover obstacles that may be limiting the public's ability to participate, while identifying strategies for further public involvement. Over the long-run, OTO expects to use this tool to phase out ineffective methods and to help tailor outreach efforts.

In creating this handbook, OTO staff conducted in-depth literature reviews of other MPOs' Public Participation Plans and evaluation programs to be included as part of a comprehensive evaluation. OTO plans to create an in-house report of the evaluation annually.

This handbook will include recommendations for future evaluation strategies. This Evaluation Handbook is not set in stone as it is meant to be a living document; changes will be made as new evaluation and outreach strategies are assessed and adopted.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To establish a simple but manageable way to evaluate the alternatives, staff worked to define six performance measures against which to evaluate the PPP objectives: Reach, Access, Effective Communication, Input, Impact, and Diversity & Equity. The performance measures were broken into a more fine-grained set of fifteen considerations including: public knowledge of OTO and familiarity with its role and publications, as well as effectiveness of methods to get informed and involved. The survey for public involvement should take into consideration these performance measures. The symbols under the performance measures will be used on the “Key Findings, Recommendations and Next Steps” section to indicate which performance measures the survey questions addressed. In addition, the focus group was asked to evaluate OTO’s strengths and weaknesses, and suggest modifications/opportunities according to the following performance measures and considerations:

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Reach



CONSIDERATIONS

1. Public’s awareness of OTO (logo, office location, media, radio, etc.)
2. The public’s familiarity with OTO’s role and publications
3. Effectiveness of methods to get informed (mail, email, website, etc.)
4. Effectiveness of methods to get involved (meetings, focus groups, surveys, website, boards, commissions, etc.)

Desired Outcome: Continual improvement of reach.

Access



5. Provide timely information to allow the public to review plans, give comments and attend meetings
6. Convenience of meetings at a given time and location (e.g. meetings held at a central location and in neighborhoods where affected people live)
7. Ability to access OTO’s publications (internet, library, OTO’s office, etc.)

Desired Outcome: Public given adequate review time, opportunity to comment, and access to convenient meetings.

Effective Communication



8. OTO products and presentations use effective visualization techniques to help the public conceptualize the material presented

9. Material presented at meetings is relevant

10. A quality discussion takes place at meetings

Desired Outcome: Visualizations are used as appropriate and public discussion occurs

Input



11. Create a number of opportunities for participants to give their input during comment periods, meetings and other activities (public speaking, surveys, comments cards, etc.)

12. The public understands why, how and when to participate

Desired Outcome: At least two opportunities are provided for input on each plan or work product

Impact



13. Public concerns are addressed, questions are answered and comments are taken into consideration

Desired Outcome: All public comments are addressed in a timely manner

Diversity and Equity



14. Outreach to diverse populations (citizens, interest groups, governmental organizations/stakeholders from a wide geographical area/demographic diversity by age, race, income and gender)

15. Inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups (racial/ethnic minorities, the elderly, low-income households, persons with Limited English Proficiency, and persons with disabilities)

Desired Outcome: Increase the interested party list from diverse populations or under-represented groups

CONCLUSION

Annually, OTO will evaluate its public participation process based upon the performance measures as outlined. An evaluation report will be published which documents how well OTO is doing.

The **Evaluation Framework**, below, provides a suggested listing of how to improve upon the current practices.

