



3. Public Involvement Process

A primary component of the the MTP Update revolves around a continuous, comprehensive and cooperative public involvement plan. This plan focuses on involving the public and key stakeholders throughout the process.

SDMPO officials know involving the SDMPO’s stakeholders and residents, business owners, property owners and others with an interest in the area is crucial to the success of the MTP. Feedback about the area’s future transportation needs, and input about prioritizing those needs will help the SDMPO’s Policy Board make decisions likely to have the acceptance or support of the communities served by the SDMPO.

This chapter focuses on identifying the steps to implement the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) including the PIP goals, audiences and activities. This chapter also summarizes the results of the public involvement including the two open houses, online engagement and stakeholder meetings.

The overall public involvement schedule for the MTP update may be found in Figure 3.1.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

This document, hereinafter called the 2040 MTP Public Involvement Plan (PIP), will guide activities to disseminate information and gather public and stakeholder input on the 2040 MTP update. The PIP complies with federal regulations regarding public involvement for MPO long-range planning (23 CFR 450), and conforms to the SDMPO’s agency Public Participation Plan (PPP) adopted in December 2006. The 2040 MTP PIP is a “living” document, and can be adjusted as the need arises.

PIP GOALS

In keeping with the goals of the SDMPO agency PPP, and to comply with 23 CFR 450, the following goals are established for the 2040 MTP update:

- a. Provide early and ongoing opportunities for all local stakeholders and the general public to obtain information, provide feedback or otherwise be involved in the development of the MTP update;
- b. Provide reasonable availability of technical data and other information by employing a variety of methods for disseminating information and gathering public input, including conducting open public meetings that are accessible;
- c. Ensure traditionally underserved populations (i.e., low income, minority, elderly, disabled) have opportunities to participate in the process;
- d. Demonstrate how public input is used in the update process;
- e. Encourage collaborative decision-making; and
- f. Provide open access to the decision-making process prior to closure.

2040 MTP UPDATE AUDIENCES

A variety of audiences should be invited to participate in the SDMPO 2040 MTP Update. These include:

- Elected officials – The mayor and city council members of Denison, Dorchester, Gunter, Howe, Knollwood, Pottsboro, Sherman, Southmayd and Van Alstyne, the county judge and commissioners of Grayson County, and appropriate state and federal legislative and congressional officials should be apprised of the update and offered the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Residents/property owners – The general public and property owners in the SDMPO area should be made aware of the update and of all opportunities to participate. This includes residents and property owners of all races, those with low incomes and disabilities and those who are elderly.
- Businesses/major employers and economic development interests – Transportation needs and proposed transportation improvements to move people to and from jobs and goods to and from markets will be of great interest to the business and economic development



interests in the area. These elements of the study have the potential to impact business growth and economic opportunity, and feedback from the business community is vital to the study.

- Transportation agencies/facilities – Transportation providers and agencies, such as the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Texoma Area Paratransit Services (TAPS) and North Texas Regional Airport (NTRA) have a vested interest in the outcomes of the 2040 MTP update, and should be included in discussions and decisions.
- Schools – The area’s six school districts, Austin College and Grayson County College represent audiences most likely to use alternative modes of transportation such as pedestrian, bicycle and bus. Input from these audiences will be critical for developing a multi-modal strategy for the future.
- Media – Local SDMPO media will be instrumental in helping increase awareness of the development of the 2040 MTP update, and of opportunities for involvement in the process.

ACTIVITIES

Activities for the 2040 MTP update are planned to provide opportunities for the public to receive information and share thoughts and ideas with the project team. The activities will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Activities are targeted to achieve the goals of this PIP and also are in-line with the major components identified as part of the MTP planning process in the SDMPO agency PPP.

1. MTP Subcommittee – Consists of members appointed by the Policy Board and the membership of the SDMPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The MTP Subcommittee will convene periodically throughout the 2040 MTP update to provide data and knowledge, review reports and documents and serve as conduits of information back to their respective organizations. A list of MTP Subcommittee members may be found in Attachment B. Up to four meetings of the MTP Subcommittee are anticipated.
2. Public Contact Points – Stakeholders and the public will be able to contact the project team through a variety of methods, including email (kwelzenbach@sdmpo.org); telephone (903-771-1451); facsimile (903-870-4087); and postal mail (Sherman - Denison MPO, Suite G-2, 100 W. Houston, Sherman, Texas 75090)

3. Web presence – A web page containing basic 2040 MTP information, with links to report documents, comment forms or other feedback mechanisms and the SDMPO website will be developed.
4. Public Meetings – Two public meetings are planned for the 2040 MTP update. The first meeting is anticipated to occur in May 2014, and will consist of an open house period and table group discussions. Subjects to be covered will include transportation needs and spending priorities. The second public meeting will occur in late summer or early fall 2014. The draft 2040 MTP update will be presented and feedback gathered at this meeting. Methods to notify the public about the meetings will include:
 - Post cards distributed via postal mail;
 - Media releases distributed to local media;
 - Place notices on the public information boards of KXII and KTEN television stations; and
 - Emails to or contact with third parties, such as local Chambers of Commerce, Austin College, major employers, such as Tyson and Texas Instruments, organizations serving low income, minority, elderly and disabled persons, such as Shared Ministry, La Michoacana, social service agencies and senior centers. These third parties will be asked to post notices either physically or on their respective websites and/or Facebook pages, and to distribute notices or surveys, including via email or Twitter to their



members, clients, customers, employees, students, and followers.

5. Surveys – An initial survey in both web-based and printed formats will be developed for a proposed launch in March 2014. The initial survey will seek input on transportation mode choices and future transportation needs. A second survey seeking feedback on the draft 2040 MTP update will be released in late summer, early fall 2014. Notice of the surveys will be disseminated via email and postal mail, through the MTP Subcommittee and SDMPO Policy Board, and the media along with notices of public meetings.
6. Media – Media releases will be distributed to all local media in the Sherman-Denison area, including both print and electronic media. Additionally, on-air interviews will be pursued on local television and radio stations, including KXII’s News 12 Forum, a public affairs program that airs on Sunday mornings, and KSEO talk radio.
7. Small-group/One-on-One Meetings – As appropriate and necessary, briefings will be conducted or presentations made to local governments, business groups, educational institutions, cultural organizations or other interested parties. Presentations to groups serving minority, low income, disabled and elderly populations will include a request for assistance from the groups to help gather input.
8. Database – An initial project database will be developed that includes the names and contact information for elected officials, transportation interests, appropriate property owners (if known), business organizations, educational institutions and others with a known interest in the community, transportation or economic development. This database will be updated continually with the names and contact information for anyone who attends a public meeting or contacts the project team. The database will serve as the project mailing list.

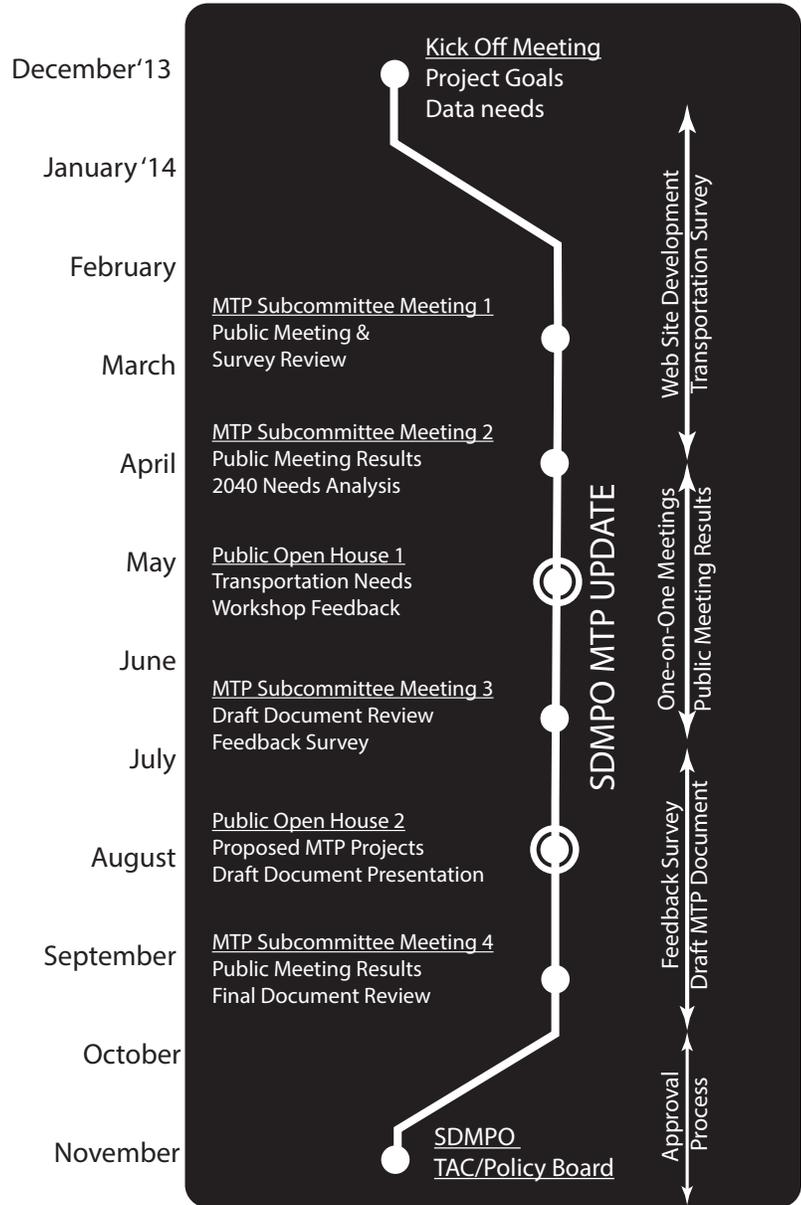


Figure 3.1 - Public Involvement Schedule

9. Reports/Summaries – Periodic reports about public input will be prepared, including compilations of surveys and comment forms and summaries of public forums.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

SDMPO PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #1

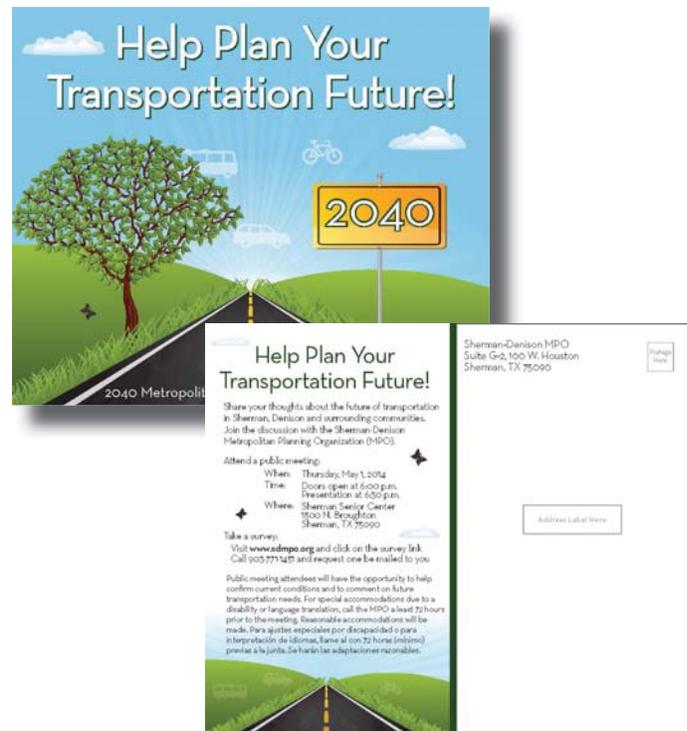
May 1st, 2014

On Thursday, May 1st, 2014 at 6pm the SDMPO held its first public meeting at the Sherman Senior Citizen Center. The meeting was attended by over 20 people: a mix of city and regional government workers and the general public. It began with people visiting four MTP Update stations, of which the topics included Roadway, Transit, Bike/Pedestrian, and Policy. At each station attendees were able to view maps and toolboxes that corresponded to the topics and give their input regarding transportation improvements and issues in the region. This input expressed people's wants and needs as well as issues and concerns related to these transportation topics. After an hour of allowing the public to peruse the displays, ask questions and make comments, the project team including the SDMPO staff gave a brief presentation on the purpose of the MTP Update. During the presentation, a few more concerns, mostly over safety, were raised by a couple attendees and then addressed by the MPO staff. After the presentation, people returned to the different stations to continue giving input and learning about the possibilities for transportation in the region.

All four MTP Update stations received various input. The Transit station input largely discussed TAPS, the primary transit provider for the area. In general, people expressed a desire for increased connectivity (of routes and with DART), frequency (of stops and connections), and reliability. For the Roadway station, most concerns were geared towards different aspects of FM 1417, such as safety and future conditions related to traffic and roadway extensions. The input from the Bike/

Pedestrian station reflected desires for increased quality and quantity of sidewalks as well as for more bike amenities like bike lanes and even projects for implementing rails to trails. The Policy station generated input to promote safety for multiple transportation modes, as well as strategies for higher density, mixing land uses, and utilizing space more efficiently.

There were 205 respondents to the MTP Update Initial Survey between April 1, 2014 and June 1, 2014. Survey forms were completed at the May 1st public meeting, or were submitted via email, fax, or postal mail. A summary of the results of the survey can be found in Appendix A.



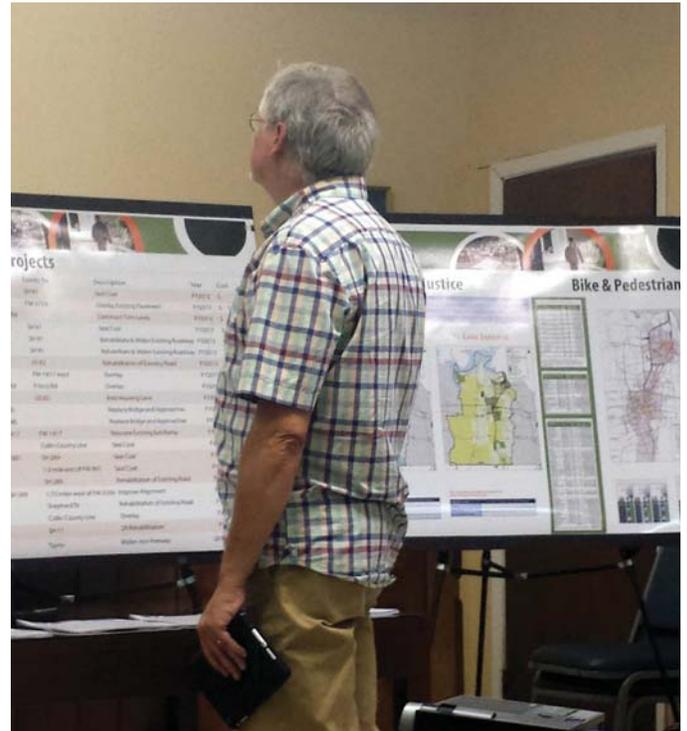


SDMPO PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #2

September 9th, 2014

On Tuesday, September 9th, 2014 at 6pm the SDMPO held its second public meeting at Pottsboro City Hall in Pottsboro, TX. The meeting was attended by 12 people: a mix of city and regional government workers and the general public. It began with people visiting three MTP Update stations which displayed highlights of MTP Update chapters. After an open-house period, MPO staff gave a presentation regarding the findings of the MTP study and the recommended projects.

The presentation gave an explanation of the purpose of this project and the intended outcomes. A summary of the work to date, public involvement, and concepts developed followed. The MTP Update team then explained the stations and provided insight on the purpose and importance of each station, while offering further one-on-one explanation after the presentation. The presentation concluded with a call for comments, questions and concerns while attendees participated in the open house. Following the presentation, a question-and-answer session was facilitated with the participants.



SHERMAN - DENISON

2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

SHERMAN-DENISON MPO
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
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WEBSITE

At the onset of the project, a website was created in order to concisely and consistently provide the general public with the most up-to-date information of the development of the 2040 MTP. The website address was provided on the mail-outs for the first public meeting, as well as at both public houses. The website was <http://www.shermandenisonmtp.com>. A link to this website was also provided on the main page of the SDMPO.org website.

Information on the webpage included information about the MPO, how to get involved, the MTP chapters (posted as they were being developed), contact information, links to other pertinent documents, and announcements for public meetings.



MAIL OUTS

As part of the outreach (coupled with the website) mail-outs were sent before the first public open house to notify residents of the work being done. These postcards contained information on what the purpose of the plan was, date and time of the public meeting, the website, and a telephone number for persons wanting a hard-copy of the survey. Information was provided in Spanish so as to allow for a translator at a public meeting if necessary.

Emails were also sent out to the MPO email list to inform them of each of the public meetings that occurred during the MTP Update process

POLICY BOARD/TAC AND MTP SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Throughout the MTP Update process a number of continuous stakeholder involvement meetings occurred to gather feedback and to give status updates on the plan development. The MPO Policy Board, the MPO Technical Advisory Committee and the MTP Sub Committee were the specific groups that received regular status updates. The meeting topics and outcomes are summarized below:

December 4, 2013 - Joint Policy Board/TAC Meeting

- The project team facilitated a discussion with the Policy Board and TAC Committee members to gather feedback on the transportation goals in the region. Each of the proposed goals were ranked by each member of the committee.

January 15, 2014 - TAC Meeting

- This meeting reviewed the goals and objectives of the MPO along with the public participation goals and activities. Focus in this meeting was placed on relating and discussing information regarding transportation funding methods.

February 5, 2014 - Policy Board Meeting

- An update was provided to the Policy Board to explain the details in Public Involvement Plan. The update also included status information on existing conditions and other ongoing tasks.

March 19, 2014 - Joint TAC/MTP Sub-Committee Meeting

- Discussion of the MTP at this meeting was followed by a review of the public involvement status. The Goals and Objections Draft section of the report was also reviewed. The meeting continued with a status update on bicycle and pedestrian planning tasks.

April 2, 2014 - Policy Board Meeting

- Information on the upcoming Public Open house and public involvement was provided to the policy board. A update on the status of the Bike and Pedestrian plan update was also given.

April 16, 2014 - MTP Sub-Committee Meeting

- This MTP Sub-Committee meeting reviewed and discussed the potential project selection criteria for the MTP Update. A status update on MTP activities was also provided to the committee.



May 21, 2014 - MTP Sub-Committee Meeting

- This MTP Sub-Committee meeting refined the potential project selection criteria for the MTP Update. A status update on MTP activities was also provided to the committee.

May 30, 2014 - Joint TAC/MTP Sub-Committee Meeting

- This joint TAC/MTP Sub-Committee meeting approved the project selection criteria for the MTP Update. A status update on MTP activities was also provided to the committee.

July 16, 2014 - Joint TAC/MTP Sub-Committee Meeting

- An update on Modeling Efforts was provided at the start of this meeting. Discussion of the MTP tasks, and an update on the status of the financial plan, environmental justice data and bike and pedestrian plan were also provided.

August 5, 2014 - Policy Board Meeting

- This meeting discussed the financial plan, the environmental justice for the area, an update on the bike and pedestrian plan. MPO staff also presented to the Policy Board on the 2040 Cost Feasible list of projects.

September 24, 2014 - Joint TAC/MTP Sub-Committee Meeting

- The purpose of this meeting was to present the draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update to the TAC for approval.

October 15, 2014 - Policy Board Meeting

- The purpose of this meeting was to present the draft Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update to the Policy Board for approval.

