

2019

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM



**MAG**

Expert Resources. Enriching Lives.

**ADOPTED MAY 2019**

**MOUNTAINLAND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

REGIONAL PLANNING

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Mountainland, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in Utah County provides reliable information for public review and incorporates public input into all planning activities. Mountainland works to inform the public of its programs and encourages public comments at every decision-making opportunity. This includes involvement in the early stages of the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and continuing through final approval process. Without the involvement of local citizens, it is difficult to plan a transportation system that effectively meets the needs of the public.

Mountainland coordinates with local, state, and federal transportation providers to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.

Participation is sought from all interested parties, including but not limited to:

- Special interest groups
- Minority individuals and organizations
- Senior citizens
- Lower income
- Elected officials
- State and local government agencies,
- Resources Agencies
- Businesses
- Utah County residents

When needed, community task forces and public advisory committees are formed to more directly provide feedback and input. These strengthen Mountainland's planning process by providing the public the opportunity to comment on plan objectives and project funding from the start.

Written and verbal comments or questions about transportation plans and programs are recorded and receive a verbal or written acknowledgement from a qualified staff member. All comments along with the contact information of the commenters are included in the final copy of the document and are added to the mailing and email lists for future notices of planning activities.

Meeting agendas are posted, at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, at the Mountainland office and website [www.mountainland.org](http://www.mountainland.org) and the State's Public Meeting Notice website. Legal Notices for public review and comments are posted to the same locations.

Press releases, Mountainland website, MPO cities' websites, social media, flyers, posters, newspaper advertisements, mailings, email, information on buses, and bulletin boards are utilized to inform the public about transportation activities.

---

### ***EXCHANGING IDEAS***

Comments are also taken by telephone, in person at the Mountainland office, or on individual special study websites.

Draft and adopted plans and programs are available on the Mountainland website and the Mountainland office.

### ***TITLE VI***

Staff conscientiously follows Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, amended (42 USC 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21, and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794, which ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation.

Mountainland MPO staff activity seeks out all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, limited English proficiency or physical disability and is committed to assuring all have a chance to participate in the planning process and are not denied the benefits of such participation. MPO staff uses the latest census data to identify residential, employment, and transportation patterns of low-income, elderly, disabled, and minority populations so that their needs can be identified and addressed, and the benefits and burdens of transportation investments can be fairly distributed.

Translation services will be made available upon advance request, as well as

interpretation services for American Sign Language.

Any person who believes that his/her Title VI nondiscrimination rights, ADA, or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) rights have been violated may submit a complaint through the Mountainland website, [www.mountainland.org](http://www.mountainland.org) or by mail.

### ***AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT***

Staff complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) (Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327, as amended) and U.S. DOT regulations "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities" (49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38), to assure that everyone is able to participate in the transportation planning process. In compliance with ADA requirements, all MPO meetings are held in wheelchair-accessible meeting rooms at facilities with accessible parking and can be easily reached on transit routes.

### ***ENVIRONMENT JUSTICE***

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, age or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws. Environmental justice seeks to ensure that minority and low-income communities have access to public information relating to human health and environmental planning regulations and enforcement. It ensures that no population, especially the elderly and children are forced to shoulder a disproportionate burden of the negative human health and environmental impacts of pollution or other environmental hazards. (U.S. EPA Department of Environmental Justice)

---

There are four fundamental environmental justice principles:

1. To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
3. To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.
4. To certify compliance with Title VI and address environmental justice, Mountainland will:
  - a. Enhance their analytical capabilities to ensure that the long-range transportation plan and the transportation improvement program (TIP) comply with Title VI.
  - b. Identify residential, employment, and transportation patterns of low-income and minority populations so that their needs can be identified and addressed, and the benefits and burdens of transportation investments can be fairly distributed.
  - c. Evaluate and - where necessary - improve their public involvement processes to eliminate participation barriers and engage

minority and low-income populations in transportation decision-making.

The MPO staff will analyze the populations of minorities, low-income, disabled and elderly populations, and map locations that specifically cater to these demographics such as churches, community centers, shopping, government offices, and others common travel destinations using GIS and uPlan.

### ***MAILING AND EMAIL LISTS***

Mountainland maintains extensive electronic and hard copy mailing lists of individuals who have expressed an interest or who have participated in the transportation planning processes. This list includes:

- Elected officials
- Environmental groups
- Businesses representatives
- State government officials and staff
- Resource Agencies staff
- Local community staff
- Neighborhood groups
- Minority groups and businesses
- Citizens

Post cards in English and Spanish are mailed and emailed to the mailing lists inviting them to open houses or public meetings.

The public participation program is reviewed periodically by the Mountainland staff for its effectiveness in assuring that the public is provided full and open access to all transportation planning documents.

Mountainland staff looks for new ways to inform the public and solicit their comments.

**ADOPTION OR AMENDMENT PROCESS**

Adoption and/or any amendments of the Public Participation Program require a 45-day public comment period prior to adoption

by the Mountainland Regional Planning Committee.

**COMMITTEES**

Long range planning issues, transportation projects, and matters related to federal transportation funds are presented and discussed in the monthly Regional Planning Committee and Technical Advisory Committee meetings. The public is always welcome at any of the following Mountainland MPO sponsored committee meetings.

- *Regional Planning Committee (RPC):* Includes the mayors in Utah County, Utah County Commissioners, a Utah Department of Transportation Commissioner, a Utah Transit Authority Board Member, a Utah Air Quality Board Member, and representatives from various state and federal agencies. This committee is the executive board or Policy Committee for the Mountainland MPO and approves/adopts all plans and programs.
- *Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):* Includes technical and planning staff of all the participating jurisdictions and agencies in the metropolitan planning area. They meet once a month and advise the RPC Policy Committee.
- *MPO Finance Committee:* A sub-committee to Regional Planning Committee, includes

mayors, commissioners, UDOT, and UTA representatives to discuss various transportation funding strategies and advise the RPC Policy Committee

- *Joint Policy Advisory Committee (JPAC):* Representatives from the Metropolitan Planning organization's UDOT, and UTA have joined together to improve communication and coordination on transportation issues. JPAC functions as an advisory body to its member agencies.
- *Public and Other Advisory Committees:* May be established for special studies and for the development of transportation related plans. The committees may consist of city/county staff, resource agency representatives, and interested people who volunteer or are appointed by local elected officials.

Mountainland MPO staff are involved in various community-based committees where transportation issues are discussed.

Mountainland outreach events are kept up to date on the Mountainland website, [www.mountainland.org](http://www.mountainland.org).

---

## UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

The Unified Planning Work Program (Work Program) describes the annual transportation planning work that is undertaken by the Mountainland Metropolitan Planning Organization, Utah Department of Transportation and the Utah Transit Authority in Utah County. It illustrates to our members, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the general public where our planning resources are allocated. This program gives an overview of the planned work, budget and sources of funding.

### **ADOPTION PROCESS**

A new Work Program is adopted every year in May by the Regional Planning Committee prior its inclusion into the Mountainland Association of Governments' (MAG) annual Budget.

There is a required ten-day public comment period for the Mountainland AOG Budget. A Public Hearing is held during MAG's

Executive Council May meeting where the MAG Budget is adopted.

### **AMENDMENT/MODIFICATION PROCESS**

On occasion the Work Program needs to be amended or modified to allow for new staff funding, a new study, or to modify an existing study/contract.

*Staff Modification:* Does not require Regional Planning Committee approval.

- Up to a 20% funding change to an existing study/contract

*Board Amendment:* Public comment is held during a Regional Planning Committee meeting.

- Adding new staff member
- Over a 20% funding change to an existing study/contract
- A major scope change to a study/contract
- A new Item placed in the Work Program

---

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) lists the proposed transportation projects to be constructed in the next 20 to 30 years. The RTP must conform to the federal Air Quality Conformity standards via the State's Implementation Plan for Air Quality prior to adoption. The RTP is updated every four years using the latest development patterns and growth projections. Any draft and final adopted RTP's are available at the Mountainland office and [www.mountainland.org](http://www.mountainland.org).

### **APPROVAL/ADOPTION PROCESS**

The Regional Planning Committee approves the draft RTP for an official 30-day public comment period. A public meeting is held during the public comment period.

Comments are received throughout the planning process.

After the official public comment period is completed and all comments and any changes are incorporated into the RTP the

---

Regional Planning Committee adopts the Plan.

### **AMENDMENT PROCESS**

Amendments requiring an air quality conformity analysis have a 30-day public comment period. An amendment includes:

- ♦ A new Phase 1 project not in the current plan
- ♦ A significant scope change to an already existing project in Phase 1 of

the plan (over 1/2 mile increase in project length, adding additional lanes, changing a bus route to a BRT or light rail line, etc.)

- ♦ A funded regionally significant project moving from a later phase of the plan to Phase 1

The TAC and RPC adopt amendments to the Regional Transportation Plan.

## **TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

---

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a list of the funded transportation projects that start or are constructed over the current four-year period. The TIP must conform to the federal Air Quality Conformity standards via the State's Implementation Plan for Air Quality. The TIP is updated annually. The TIP can be modified or updated by an amendment process, whereas projects can be added in, taken out, or corrected throughout the four-year life of the TIP.

### **ADOPTION/APPROVAL PROCESS**

The draft and final TIP and all amendments are brought before the TAC for their review and recommendations to the Regional Planning Committee.

The Regional Planning Committee will review the draft TIP during the 30-day public comment period. A public meeting is held during the public comment period. The MPO Regional Planning Committee adopts the final TIP after the public comment period is finished.

The Utah Transit Authority has coordinated with the Mountainland Association of Governments to assure that the procedures established in this public involvement policy, including public notice and time established for public review and comment on the transportation improvement program (TIP), satisfy the requirement of public participation in the development of the program of projects and grant application requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Urbanized Area Formula Program, Section 5307; and other FTA formula funds. The public participation requirements of 49 U.S.C. Section 5307 (b) (1) through (b) (7) (as amended by Map-21) are hereby integrated into this MPO adopted "Public Involvement Policy."

### **AMENDMENT PROCESS**

There are three different ways to amend the TIP.

*Staff Modification:* A staff modification does not require public comment or Regional Planning Committee approval. A staff modification is based on the following:

- Change in project funding source
- Additional funds - 25% of project value up to \$500k
- A project moved within the 4-year TIP
- Minor project scope changes
- New or changed non-regionally significant project
- Additional funds over 25% of project value or over \$500k

*Board Modification:*

Public comment will be conducted during the regularly scheduled Regional Planning Committee meeting. If no comments or changes are required, Regional Planning Committee will approve the modifications at the meeting. Board modification is based on the following:

- A new or changed Regionally Significant Project from Phase 1 of the Regional Transportation Plan

*Full Amendment:*

A 30-day public comment period is required prior to Regional Planning Committee approval. A full amendment is needed for the following:

- New Regionally Significant Project not from Phase 1 of the Regional Transportation Plan will cause:
- New regional emission analysis
  - ◆ A Regional Transportation Plan amendment

## TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Depending on the type of study, a policy, technical, and/or public advisory committees may be established. A kick-off brainstorming session or focus group may involve community leaders, technical and resource agency staff, minority representatives and the public.

A Request for Qualifications/Proposal (RFQ/RFP) for a study is issued by legal notice, the State's Legal Notice website, mail, and on [www.mountainland.org](http://www.mountainland.org). Transportation Studies are procured in a manner consistent with the MAG purchasing Policy.

A thorough public participation process may be incorporated into the study's work scope to include but not limited to the following.

- *Public Meetings:* open houses, focus groups or workshops
- *Study Website:* created so the public can follow the progress of study and to make comments
- User friendly brochure or executive summary
- Public Meeting may be held during the comment period

TAC and RPC receives the results of each Transportation Study.



## PRESENTATIONS

---

Staff members make presentations to city and county planning commissions, local elected officials, local business groups, area schools, and university classes on Mountainland's planning activities.

Presentations are also given to local Chambers of Commerce, legislators, and legislative committees. Staff documents the presentation dates on the MAG website

## OPEN HOUSES

---

Mountainland sponsors Transportation and Community Planning Open House each year. Transportation and community planning representatives from Mountainland, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah Transit Authority, Utah Division of Air Quality, Utah County, and the various communities in the MPO display current and future transportation and community development plans.

Mountainland staff, city/county staff, UDOT, and UTA representatives are available to explain documents and answer questions. This public involvement process includes written comments, one-on-one exchanges, and group discussions.

These public comments are incorporate as appropriate into plans and programs.

## CONCLUSION

---

Participation by the public provide a comprehensive decision making process. Effective public involvement requires reaching out to the public and stakeholders to identify their transportation needs.

Transportation projects are more likely to be accepted and supported by the community if community members are given the opportunity to have an active role in shaping the decisions. Informed citizens can better assist elected officials in reaching sound decisions supported by the community.

The Public and Stakeholders use the transportation network daily, they can

supply the transportation planning agencies information about congested areas, road connectivity, visions of future roads, transit routes, traffic signal timing, etc. Therefore, public participation is not only a requirement but a vital tool utilized by the Mountainland, UDOT and UTA planners, engineers, and elected officials.

Public knowledge, participation, and input are key elements in the Mountainland transportation planning effort. Having meaningful and extensive public involvement from start to finish in the planning process enhances all plans and programs.

---