

# Public Participation Plan

As stated by and in accordance with the US Department of Transportation 23 CFR 450.316, a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required to partake in a transportation planning process that creates opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation throughout the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) is responsible for coordinating this planning process as the designated MPO for the Wasatch Front region, including the Salt Lake-West Valley and Ogden-Layton Urbanized Areas, and will facilitate the following:

- adequate public notice of public participation activities;
- review and comment at specific and key points in the decision-making process; and
- multiple, accessible participation formats, including electronic and in-person.

To that end, WFRC has developed this Public Participation Plan (PPP) to be used in the development and adoption of the RTP, TIP, and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), as well as other plans and programs, and encourages residents of the Wasatch Front region to participate. The PPP will be reviewed and updated as needed every four years and in association with the cycle of the RTP. During this review, the public involvement process will be updated to mitigate barriers in order to successfully engage all populations in regional decision-making and adhere to all requirements as stated in Title VI and Environmental Justice policies. When this PPP is updated, a 45-day (minimum) period will be provided for public comment.



## Transportation Improvement Program

Updated once a year, the TIP provides a carefully reviewed prioritization of and plan for funding regional roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvement projects over the next six years. Prior to the adoption of the TIP and including full amendments that require air quality conformity determination, WFRC will undertake the following steps. Amendments not requiring new air quality conformity determination are described later in this section.

***“Public participation is an integral part of the transportation process which helps to ensure that decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit public needs and preferences. Early and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process. This process enables agencies to make better informed decisions through collaborative efforts and builds mutual understanding and trust between the agencies and the public they serve.”***

*- US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration*

1. The draft TIP and full amendments will be developed through technical advisory committees and based on applications from local government roadway authorities, the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and Utah Transit Authority (UTA).
2. A memorandum describing the draft TIP or full amendment, along with tables describing both highway and transit projects will be distributed to organizations and individuals with known interests in regional transportation projects and programs. These include types of organizations listed in the Community Outreach section of the PPP. Hard copies will also be made available upon request.
3. The TIP will show all projects in an online and/or static regional map(s). Projects will also be individually listed in project tables. A copy of the draft TIP and the analysis showing conformity with the State Air Quality Implementation Plan will be available at WFRC's office and on its website. Arrangements will be made to accommodate persons with special needs.
4. Legal notices will be placed in local newspapers to notify the public that the draft TIP or full amendment is available for review. The legal notices will run for one day, signifying the beginning of a 30-day (minimum) comment period. Additionally, a notice will also be posted on WFRC's website and advertised through social media.
5. An in-person, open house format public meeting will be held during the comment period to obtain input on the draft TIP. The meeting will be advertised via the legal notice, WFRC's website, and social media. An opportunity for the public to ask questions, as well as provide oral or written comments, will be provided at the meeting.
6. Comments may be submitted online or by email, telephone, or mail, as well as in-person at either the Transportation Coordinating Committee (Trans Com) meeting, when the TIP or amendments are recommended for approval, and/or the Council meeting, when the approval action is taken. An electronic and/or hard copy file will be kept of all comments received and made available to interested parties upon request.
7. News releases, including invitations to the public to comment online and via other means regarding the draft TIP, will be issued and media coverage will be encouraged.
8. WFRC has and will continue to coordinate with UTA to assure that the procedures established satisfy the requirement of public participation in the development of the program of projects and grant application requirements of the 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 the FAST Act) are integrated into the PPP.
9. The draft TIP will be provided to the councils of governments or mayors' associations of Salt Lake, Box Elder, Davis, and Weber counties. Local elected officials are invited to review and provide comments during the public comment period. Full amendments will also be provided to the county(ies) in which the project(s) is located.
10. Following the comment period, Trans Com and/or the Council will review all comments received and make a recommendation for any changes to the TIP. If the changes are significant and require a new air quality conformity analysis, an additional 30-day (minimum) comment period will be provided. A new legal notice will be published, notifying the public that changes have been made to the TIP. Only changes requiring a new air quality conformity analysis will be re-advertised.
11. The Council will typically provide final approval of the TIP at the August meeting.
12. After the approval of the TIP, comments may still be provided, but may not be added to the "public comments" file or recorded in the minutes of any WFRC meeting.
13. WFRC will annually prepare a list of projects which have obligated federal funds during the previous federal fiscal year. This list will be presented to Trans Com and/or the Council, placed on WFRC's website, and emailed to interested individuals upon request.
14. During the course of a year, it is often necessary to amend the TIP for project modifications not requiring an air quality conformity analysis. In this case, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), UDOT, UTA, and the Council have agreed that comments will be accepted at the Trans Com or Council meetings prior to the action. Additionally, minor changes not requiring action by Trans Com or the Council may be made at the staff level.



### Regional Transportation Plan

Developed every four years to reflect the dynamic and ever-changing needs of the region, the RTP identifies transportation projects needed over the next 20 or

more years. Public input and comment will be solicited throughout the four-year development process of the RTP. However, specific efforts will be made at the beginning of the process to identify issues of importance to the public, and at the end of the process to obtain comments on the recommended RTP. WFRC will make the following public involvement efforts.

1. Correspondence will be distributed to various stakeholder groups notifying them that the RTP is to be updated and asking for their input regarding transportation issues to be considered and needs to be addressed. These include types of organizations listed in the Community Outreach section of the PPP.
2. As the RTP reaches the scenarios phase, legal notices will be placed in local newspapers to notify the public that the draft scenarios are available for review. The legal notices will run for one day, signifying the beginning of a 30-day (minimum) comment period. Additionally, a notice will also be posted on WFRC's website and advertised through social media.
3. WFRC will hold one or more open houses during the comment period to obtain input on the draft scenarios. The open houses will be advertised via the legal notice, WFRC's website, and social media. An opportunity for the public to ask questions, as well as provide oral or written comments, will be provided at the open houses. Additional information regarding the community organization workshops may be found in the Community Outreach section of the PPP.
4. Comments may be submitted online or by email, telephone, or mail, as well as in-person at the Regional Growth Committee (RGC) meeting. An electronic and/or hard copy file will be kept of all comments received and made available to interested parties upon request.
5. When a recommendation to update the RTP has been drafted, a process similar to what was described in the previous steps will be followed to obtain additional input and comments. A 30-day (minimum) period will be provided for public comment. Additionally, public meetings will be held in appropriate geographies across the MPO region to explain the recommendations and obtain comments.
6. Visual representations of scenarios, as well as the draft and adopted updates to the RTP will be available at WFRC's office and on its website. Arrangements will be made to accommodate persons with special needs.
7. News releases, including invitations to the public to comment online and via other means regarding the elements of the RTP, will be issued and media coverage will be encouraged.
8. Following the comment period, the RGC and/or the Council will review a summary of the comments before they approve the updated RTP.
9. During the course of the four-year update cycle, it is occasionally necessary to amend the RTP. If the amendment does not require a new air quality conformity analysis, then there will be no official public comment period. Nevertheless, WFRC always welcomes comments at the RGC and Council meetings. If a comment period is necessary, a comment period of 30-days (minimum) will be utilized and legal notices will be placed in local newspapers to notify the public that the RTP amendment is available for review. The legal notices will run for one day, signifying the beginning of a 30-day (minimum) comment period. Additionally, a notice will also be posted on WFRC's website and advertised through social media.
10. Following the comment period, the RGC and/or the Council will have the opportunity to review a summary of the comments prior to their consideration of the RTP amendment.
11. As part of the outreach program, elected officials and staff, agency partners, regional planning organizations, related industry and interest groups, and the public will be solicited for input regarding the scenarios and draft portions of the development of the RTP.

#### **Unified Planning Work Program**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is developed each year and describes all activities devoted to planning an effective regional transportation system within the Salt Lake-West Valley and Ogden-Layton urbanized areas. The UPWP includes all transportation planning activities in the metropolitan area scheduled for completion by WFRC, UDOT, and UTA during the current fiscal year. Prior to the adoption of the UPWP, WFRC will undertake the following steps.

1. A notice will be posted on WFRC's website and advertised via social media and/or newsletter to notify the public that the draft UPWP is available for review during a comment period.
2. WFRC will notify relevant area stakeholders and government organizations of the availability of the draft UPWP and solicit comments.
3. Comments may be submitted by email, telephone, or mail, as well as in-person. An electronic and/or hard copy file will be kept of all comments received and made available to interested parties upon request.
4. Following the comment period, comments received will be forwarded to the members of the Council for their review, prior to its adoption of the UPWP.

## Legal Notices

In an effort to promote transparency and in addition to the aforementioned TIP, RTP, and UPWP, legal notices for other plans or programs may be placed in local newspapers to notify the public that a draft is available for review. The legal notices will run for one day, signifying a public meeting and/or the beginning of a comment period. Notice will also be posted on WFRC's website.

## Public Meetings

To ensure the opportunity for public participation, WFRC will hold public meetings in transit-friendly and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible locations. As previously mentioned, these open house format meetings will be held in order to receive input. An opportunity for the public to ask questions, as well as provide oral or written comments, will be provided at the meeting.



## Website Policy

To provide technical, subject-matter expertise to local governments and other stakeholders, WFRC manages content for and regular updates to its responsive and accessible website. Utilizing a plugin, real-time translation into Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese (Simplified), Serbian, Croatian, Korean, Filipino, and Russian languages is available.

Historical, general, policy, committee, vision, plan, program, public involvement, and contact information, as well as maps, data, and studies will be available on the website. Specific meeting information, including agendas, informational packets, recordings, minutes, and presentations will be available for each committee meeting during the current and previous three years.

Additionally, visualization tools, including ArcGIS Story Maps (in English and Spanish formats when applicable/possible), interactive maps, static maps, charts, graphics, etc. will be available on the website in an effort to graphically represent the TIP and RTP, as well as other plans and programs.

All updates to the WFRC website will be managed by its website administrator and/or communications consultant.

In an effort to monitor website performance, WFRC will track and report website traffic. Custom reports based on behavior and/or acquisition may be available upon request.

## Social Media Policy

In an effort to communicate the needs and benefits of investing in Utah's multi-modal transportation system and to continue to build relationships with local governments, transportation partners, community-based organizations, and the private sector, WFRC manages content for and regularly shares pertinent information via its social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. WFRC will continue to review new outreach methods and opportunities and take advantage of them as they become practicable.

All posts to WFRC's social media platforms will be managed by its social media administrator and/or communications consultant. In an effort to monitor social media performance, WFRC will track its social media traffic by number of tweets, impressions, and followers (Twitter) and number of posts, reach, and engagements (Facebook). Reports may be available upon request.

WFRC welcomes and encourages comments to its social media posts. However, to maintain a professional space where constructive communication can take place, WFRC enforces the following guidelines.

- Bullying or discriminating (especially on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age, or other protected class) will be deleted at the administrator's discretion.
- Foul language, threats, obscene, or other unacceptable comments, content, and posts will be deleted at the administrator's discretion.
- Spam, off-topic, or other similar comments, content, and posts will be deleted at the administrator's discretion.
- WFRC requests that official comments regarding a vision, plan, or program during a public comment period are submitted online (i.e. - interactive map) or by email, telephone, mail, or in-person, rather than via social media comments, content, or posts.
- WFRC requests that comments, content, or posts are supported with research, findings, or the original source.

## Email Public Outreach Policy

Information regarding the needs and benefits of investing in Utah's multi-modal transportation system, as well as WFRC's vision, plans, programs, activities, and events, will be disseminated via email newsletters, approximately monthly.

Content for and distribution of WFRC's email public outreach will be managed by its email public outreach

administrator and/or communications consultant. In an effort to monitor performance of its email campaigns, WFRC will track and compare its average open rate to the industry average open rate. Reports may be available upon request.

### **Outreach Materials**

WFRC will produce outreach materials, including but not limited to brochures, reports, and studies, detailing the structure of its visions, plans, and programs, as well as its activities and accomplishments and planning processes. Outreach materials may be distributed electronically or in hard copy format.



### **Community Outreach**

To provide a balanced approach with representation from all stakeholders, especially those who are traditionally underserved by past and current transportation programs, facilities, or services, WFRC will make concerted effort to search for and consider the needs of all stakeholders.

WFRC's community outreach coordinator, as well as its staff, will actively seek opportunities to engage with local, state, and federal officials; Environmental Justice populations, including but not limited to low-income, minority, persons with disabilities, and senior citizen groups; organizations, including environmental and historic preservation; community councils; chambers of commerce; transit unions and users groups; service clubs; news media representatives; and members of the public.

More specifically, during the four-year RTP process, WFRC will facilitate targeted outreach to organizations that represent the aforementioned Environmental Justice groups, such as hosting community organization workshops. These workshops will allow representatives from diverse organizations and communities to share existing transportation challenges and ideas to improve access to employment, services, and educational opportunities, as well as to review and provide input on projects and strategies within the RTP. WFRC will use these workshops as a means to garner information regarding existing barriers to access to opportunities, and the ways in which transportation and land use strategies

can address the needs of the communities these groups represent. The outreach process will also help to identify any potential disparate impacts that projects within the RTP may impose on vulnerable communities throughout the region. Vulnerable communities are areas with above average concentrations of minority, low-income, and/or zero-car households. Vulnerable communities are identified as census tracts that are outside one standard deviation for one of following measures: low-income populations (> 25%), minority population (>40%), and/or zero-car households (>10%).

In addition to hands-on workshops, WFRC strives to make all short- and long-range plans accessible to the Wasatch Front community at critical steps in the planning process through the administration of online interactive maps. These maps allow community members to access, view, and provide project-specific and general input within the web application. Maps are provided in English and Spanish formats when applicable/possible, and advertised via WFRC's website, social media platforms, email distribution list, and legal notices.

After the completion of the four-year RTP process, WFRC will distribute a survey to or meet with key stakeholders and community organizations to assess the effectiveness of its public participation process. WFRC will then use the feedback received to improve its public involvement, if applicable. Additionally, WFRC will maintain and continue to expand the list of individuals and organizations who are interested in transportation issues.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

All of WFRC's committee meetings are open to the public and are held at locations that are ADA accessible. The times, dates, and locations of WFRC's committee meetings will be displayed on WFRC's website. The agendas for the Council, RGC, and Trans Com meetings will include an item for public comment regarding matters related to WFRC.

### **Title VI**

WFRC is committed to full compliance with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that "no person in the United States, shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." WFRC has developed and adopted a comprehensive Title VI Plan, which is available on WFRC's website.

### **Environmental Justice**

Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," mandates that agencies that receive federal funds include environmental justice as part of

their mission. During the public participation process, minority populations, including but not limited to low-income, minority, persons with disabilities, and senior citizen groups, that have been traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, shall be sought out in order to obtain their input relative to transportation needs. WFRC seeks to identify and address the transportation needs of these populations so that the benefits and burdens of transportation can be fairly distributed. A full description of WFRC's policy regarding Environmental Justice is included in the Title VI Plan, which is available on WFRC's website.

**Limited English Proficiency Plan**

Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," requires agencies that receive substantial federal funding to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP) and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. To that end, WFRC has developed and adopted a LEP Plan, which is available on its website.

Any questions or comments regarding this plan should be directed to:

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