



PPP



AMARILLO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Public Participation Plan

2023



**A guidebook to actively encourage
stakeholder input into the transportation
planning process for Amarillo.**

This report was prepared by:
Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization

In cooperation with the:

City of Amarillo
 Potter and Randall Counties
 Texas Department of Transportation
 US Department of Transportation
 Federal Highway Administration
 Federal Transit Administration
 Panhandle Regional Organization to Maximize Public Transportation

The original Amarillo MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP) was approved and adopted by the MPO Policy Advisory Committee at a regularly scheduled meeting on _____. This latest version, in which staff updated the document and mailing list of transportation stakeholders, was revised in _____.

A public comment period of 45 days was required before this document could be adopted. The draft PPP public comment period began _____ and ran through _____. At the _____ MPO Policy Committee meeting, staff had received no public comment regarding the updated document and subsequently asked for Committee acceptance of the document. The Policy Committee supported the document updates and voted unanimously to approve the 20XX Public Participation Plan revision.

Disclaimer:

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Introduction

The Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the regional transportation planning agency for the Amarillo and Canyon, Texas urban areas and parts of Potter and Randall Counties. Federal regulations require the designation of an MPO to carry out a coordinated, continuing, and comprehensive transportation planning process.

The Purpose of the Public Participation Plan

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is to include residents, community and neighborhood groups and associations, non-profit groups, business sector groups, transportation providers, federal, state, and local government agencies, and many others to participate in a proactive, predictable planning effort that provides full access to making key transportation decisions early and throughout the process.

This policy is intended to ensure that public participation is an integral and effective part of MPO activities and that decisions are made with the benefit and consideration of important public perspectives. This policy provides a mechanism for bringing a broad range of diverse viewpoints and values into the MPO decision-making process. Early public involvement enables the MPO to make more informed decisions, improve quality through collaborative efforts, build mutual understanding, and trust between the MPO and the public it serves.

The MPO Public Participation Plan has been updated to reflect and incorporate principles from the City of Amarillo's Community Engagement Policy, adopted in 2016, specifically the various outreach tools. MPO-related outreach is considered a "level four" of the Community Engagement Policy, as most transportation measures affect a wide cross-section of the community and outreach should be widespread. The City's Community Engagement Policy is provided as an appendix to this plan.

The PPP outlines various tools and time limits for public involvement in the development various planning documents, such as the:

- **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):** A long-range transportation-planning document, which is updated every five years.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** A short-range transportation-planning document, which is updated every two years.
- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):** An outline of the activities conducted by or overseen by the MPO staff over the course of one year.

Organization of the Amarillo MPO

Representatives from the Texas Department of Transportation, Potter County, Randall County, City of Amarillo, City of Canyon, Amarillo City Transit, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC), and the public are represented on various committees that are a part of the MPO.

Planning for current transportation needs and for needs five, ten and even twenty years from now requires the Amarillo MPO to coordinate and collaborate with many types of public and private groups to provide mobility to housing, schools, jobs, recreation, and freight movement. The public involvement in the planning process helps reduce the time and cost of creating short and long-range plans and projects and provides a forum for public input and collaboration with planning agencies. This process creates the opportunity for the public to voice their ideas, concerns, issues, and opinions and to help guide decision-makers in determining the transportation system of the future.

MPO Staff

The MPO staff is responsible for performing the administrative and technical services necessary to operate the MPO. The MPO Department is fully staffed by the MPO Director, Senior Planner, Planning Technician and Transportation Planner.

Policy Committee (PC)

This is the governing body for the MPO and provides a forum for cooperative decision-making and policy guidance.

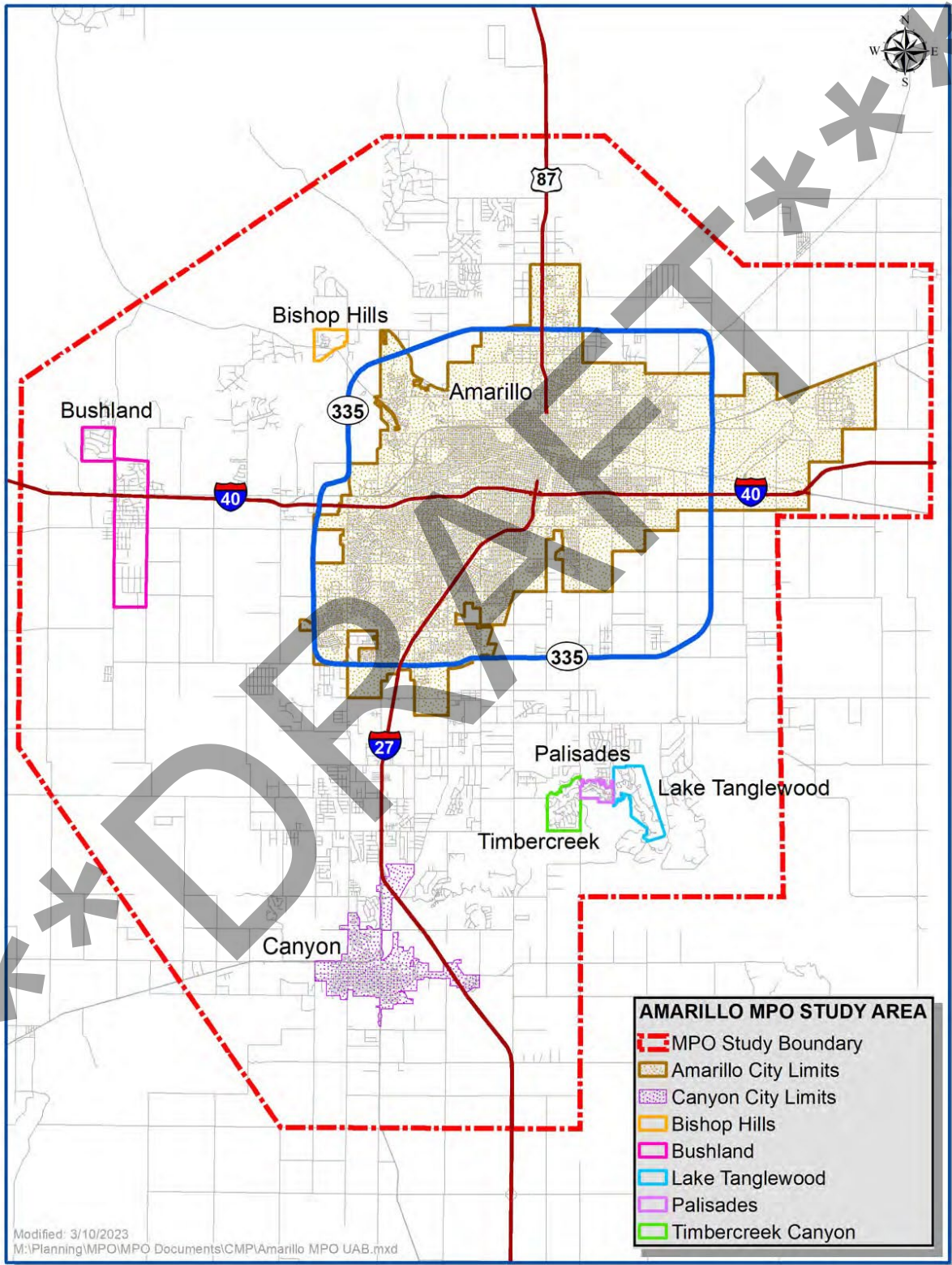
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

This group is composed of technical staff from key transportation planning agencies in the area. Meetings are held to discuss transportation-related issues and to provide technical analysis of planning activities for the Policy Committee.

Citizens Advisory Committee

The MPO staff utilizes the City of Amarillo Traffic Advisory Board as public advisory committee in the development of major issues affecting transportation planning in the urban area.

Amarillo MPO Boundaries



Federal and State Legislative Requirements

The following key pieces of legislation address specific requirements for conducting transportation planning in an open process that supports early and continued involvement, provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to key decisions. See Program Administration Guidelines for more information on the requirements set forth in Title 23, CFR 450.316 (a).

- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST)
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)
- Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act Legacy Users (SAFETEA-LU)
- The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21)
- The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)
- Texas Open Meetings Act
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Environmental Justice (EJ)
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)
- The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

MPO Methods and Strategies

To meet objectives set forth in federal and local mandates, the MPO uses a range of strategies designed to enhance and support public outreach and education in the transportation planning process. Depending on the nature of the project, these may include:

Committee Meetings

The MPO Policy Committee meeting is generally held quarterly on the third Thursday of January, April, July, and October unless otherwise indicated. Agendas are mailed out, approximately one week in advance of the scheduled meeting date, to all individuals that have requested to be on the mailing list. A notice of meetings, which includes the date, time, and subject matter of the meetings, is posted at the Potter and Randall County Courthouses, TxDOT Amarillo District Offices, Amarillo City Hall, Canyon City Hall, and City of Amarillo Public Library Buildings a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours in advance.

Information about the meetings is made available in The Amarillo Globe-News newspaper the Sunday preceding the meeting. The meetings are also posted on the MPO website. Social media outlets are utilized to increase public awareness of MPO initiatives. Persons with disabilities needing auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact the MPO office 48 hours in advance of the meeting to make appropriate arrangements for their attendance of a meeting.

The MPO Technical Advisory Committee meeting is generally held on the first Wednesday of each month unless otherwise indicated. Agendas are emailed to members approximately one week in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Workshops and Forums

The MPO staff and other stakeholders participate in transportation planning workshops and forums to obtain or exchange information. Forums may be held in locations that are dispersed throughout the MPO area and are accessible to the broadest sector of citizens. Notices of such meetings may be distributed through mailings, media, and electronic outlets.

Transportation Focus Groups

Transportation focus groups may be scheduled to discuss special transportation needs of bicycle/pedestrian, neighborhood transportation planning, rural planning organizations, regional public transportation initiatives, and other community issues such as environmental justice, regional mobility authorities, and/or other special projects.

Mailing List

Efforts to expand relationships with non-traditional stakeholders continue, as well as increasing communication with under-served communities such as people with disabilities, low-income, and racial and ethnic minorities. Mailing lists may be sorted via electronic or postal mailing groups.

The mailing list is periodically updated to keep the list current. All organizations and individuals remain in the database until either they request to be removed, or the U.S. Postal Service returns a notification to the MPO office as undeliverable.

[See Appendix B for list of stakeholders]

Educational Materials

The pamphlets and brochures published by the MPO provide information on the MPO composition, transportation planning process, and major documents and data produced by the MPO. On request the material is mailed, emailed or distributed during the MPO meetings, workshops, and forums.

MPO Website

The MPO commits to providing a dynamic web site with current, related MPO information, including agendas, primary planning documents, links to outside agencies, and other appropriate transportation-related information. Use of a webpage aids the MPO in attracting citizens and transportation stakeholders to the transportation planning process by making information readily available. The visual, electronic display of program documents and maps permits a greater civic understanding of transportation planning projects.

In addition, MPO contact information and transportation planning links available on the website allow citizens to find all information on transportation related subject matter. The website gives citizens a greater opportunity to comment on projects, ask questions, and receive a fast response from the MPO. Visit us at www.amarillompo.org or find us on social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

MPO Speakers

The MPO provides speakers to civic organizations, clubs, schools, neighborhood associations, and other organizations who like to know the transportation planning activities of the MPO. The speakers provide information on the purpose, process, and products of the MPO and seek continued participation and comments from the public.

Static Display

Static displays, used at meetings, are updated periodically for special purposes, to depict transportation information, statistics, and/or maps. This, and other visualization tools, are used to convey information to the public.

Targeting Activities for Traditionally Under-Served Populations

Contacts with traditionally under-served communities are very important. The MPO contacts minorities, disabled, and other traditionally under-served communities to exchange information regarding transportation planning. All public hearings and open houses are held at accessible locations. Upon request, the MPO makes every effort to provide auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the deaf and hearing impaired. The MPO office must receive notification by mail or telephone of such services at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. You may make a request for assistance by calling the MPO office in Amarillo, Texas at (806) 378-4219 or by calling the City of Amarillo TTD number at (806) 378-4229. Additionally, translators may be requested for meetings, with prior notification of 48 hours.

Advisory Groups

The MPO stays involved and participates in other groups involved with transportation-related issues, both in the community, as well as at the state and national levels.

Press Releases

The MPO works closely with the local media as a tool to inform the public of significant transportation activities and issues. As warranted, the MPO writes press releases, conducts interviews, and submits articles to the news media.

Response to Interested Parties

If an interested party requests additional information or voices concerns about a project, then further coordination with that party continues either through written correspondence, telephone conversations, and/or informal or formal meetings.

Outreach Tools

The community engagement process must fulfill the expectations of citizens, transportation stakeholders, and participating agencies. Most transportation projects affect a wide cross-section of the community; consequently, public outreach should be widespread. To better achieve high-impact, wide-reaching solutions for community engagement, the MPO incorporates the following methods as necessary:

- Social networking
- Banner on web
- Email list
- Display Notice on website
- Intensive, multi-disciplinary workshops
- Briefing/issue memos
- Online forums
- Focus groups
- Media Releases
- Public meeting sign
- Advisory committees
- Meetings with stakeholders
- Expert commentaries
- Public exhibitions with opportunities for written feedback
- Water bills inserts
- Newsletters
- Publications
- Dialogues
- RSS feed
- Billboard
- Radio
- TV
- Letters
- Blog posts
- Surveys
- Suggestion boxes
- Site tour
- Online polls
- Meetings

Opportunities for Public Participation

Recognizing that public awareness and involvement in the transportation planning process best assures that citizens are satisfied with the regional transportation system, the MPO is committed to bringing projects into the public forum. The MPO employs measures such as those shown below, but not limited to, to enhance its efforts for presentation of information to citizens and the transportation stakeholders:

- public meetings scheduled at varying times
- public meetings scheduled in varying locations throughout the study area
- public meetings will not conflict with other known meeting times or dates
- use of electronic media or video to aid comprehension of plans and projects
- update the MPO website for project information and MPO contacts
- utilize maps to show the relation of projects to various population segments

The MPO is mandated by federal legislation to produce a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and a Public Participation Plan (PPP). Table 1 describes the various minimum required timelines associated with public participation periods for these documents. The days required for a particular activity are consecutive calendar.

Program Administration Guidelines

The MTP, TIP, UPWP, and PPP may be modified at any time consistent with the procedures agreed to by the cooperating parties for developing these programs and the federal requirements in 23 CFR Part 450 concerning their development and public involvement requirements. All modifications to the MTP and TIP must maintain the fiscal constraint requirements for these documents. All modifications to the TIP must be consistent with the MTP. Modifications to any of these documents must be consistent with Federal Title VI requirements and consider the effect on congestion, safety, air quality, quality of life, and opportunities for economic development.

Major Revisions to the MTP, TIP, UPWP, & PPP

Major Revisions require a formal process including approval by some or all the following entities: PC, TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

The following changes are examples of changes made through a Major MTP Revision:

- Adding or deleting a project.
- Changes in an estimated federal cost that is greater than 50% and results in a revised total cost exceeding \$1,499,999.
- Changes in the type of work, length, or termini of a project from its original MTP description.
- Changes from non-federal to federal funds.

The following changes are examples of changes made through a Major TIP Revision:

- Adding or deleting a project.
- Changes in an estimated federal cost that is greater than 50% and results in a revised total cost exceeding \$1,499,999.
- Changes in the type of work, length, or termini of a project from its original TIP description.
- Changes from non-federal to federal funds.

The following changes are examples of changes made through a Major UPWP Revision:

- Adding or deleting a task.
- Changes in the amount of funds programmed within a fiscal year.

Any changes, other than typographical errors or updating references, to regulatory requirements in the Public Participation Plan are a Major Revision.

Minor Revisions to the MTP, TIP, UPWP, & PPP

The approval of Minor Revisions has been delegated to the MPO Study Director, the TxDOT District Engineer and/or the TxDOT Director of Planning and Development through their written approval upon formal adoption of the Public Participation Plan.

Minor Revisions to the MTP, TIP, UPWP, and PPP may be made if the change does not adversely affect its timely implementation, financial constraint, or the public's opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process. These changes may include:

- Minor data entry or typographical errors.
- Changes in Federal, State, or Local funding sources or the project sponsor (not including those MTP or TIP actions that involve changes from non-Federal to Federal funds).
- Moving a project and its funding from one fiscal year to another within the stated period of the program.
- Any non-regionally significant highway or transit project-related change to projects funded from a "grouped" category.

MTP Revision Request Procedure

Any MPO member agency may request the consideration of a revision to the MTP on its own behalf or on the behalf of a non-member agency or private group, business, or individual. Private parties must work through the MPO member agency that represents them to request a revision to the MTP. ALL such requests shall be submitted to the MPO Study Director in writing. The MPO Study Director may initiate a revision to the MTP in order ensure that it remains in conformance with all applicable federal, state, and regional policy requirements.

TIP Revision Request Procedure

To request a TIP revision, the project sponsor must submit the proposal to the MPO Study Director for review. MPO staff reviews the submitted request for compliance with Federal regulations, statute, and regional policy, including funding completeness, impacts to air quality, congestion mitigation, safety, quality of life, and opportunities for economic development, financial constraint, and for compliance with other Federal, state, and regional requirements before approving the submitted request.

If the proposal is found not to conform to the MPO adopted guidelines as shown herein or is inconsistent with the financial constraint of the TIP, the proposal may not be approved. Proposed revisions to projects contained in the TIP must also conform to the revision rules of the funding program involved. The MPO Study Director may initiate a revision to the TIP in order ensure that it remains in conformance with all applicable Federal, state and regional policy requirements.

Review Of Draft Materials

Copies of the draft Plan Updates for the MTP and TIP documents may be accessed at the MPO offices, social media, and MPO website. The public is given ample time from when the notice is posted to review documents and call, mail, fax, or e-mail their comments. After the public comment period ends the draft documents along with the summary of comments are presented to the Policy Committee for the final adoption process.

- The MPO is mandated by federal legislation to produce various primary-planning documents, such as the long-range plan, short-range plan, staff work plan, and public participation plan. Table 1 describes the various timelines associated with public comment periods for all the planning documents of the MPO.

Table 1. Public Participation Plan Minimum

PROGRAM UPDATES		PUBLIC MEETINGS	COMMENT PERIOD *	ADDITIONAL NOTES
MTP:	25-year document, updated every 5 years	2 meetings	30 days	A summary of all comments will be provided to the Policy Committee and made available for public review.
TIP:	4-year document, updated every 2 years	2 meetings	30 days	
UPWP:	1-year document	1 meeting	30 days	
PPP:	As needed	1 meeting	45 days **	
PROGRAM MAJOR REVISIONS		PUBLIC MEETINGS	COMMENT PERIOD	ADDITIONAL NOTES
MTP:	As needed or by request	1 optional meeting	10 days	See Program Administration Guidelines section of this document
TIP:	Quarterly, if needed	1 optional meeting	10 days	
UPWP:	As needed	1 optional meeting	10 days	
PPP:	As needed	1 meeting	45 days **	
PROGRAM MINOR REVISIONS		PUBLIC MEETINGS	COMMENT PERIOD	ADDITIONAL NOTES
All:	As needed or by request	See Program Administration Guidelines section of this document		
OPEN MEETINGS				
Policy Committee		As scheduled	At each meeting	See Open Meetings & Records section of this document
OTHER PUBLIC INFORMATION		ADDITIONAL NOTES		
Posted Notices ***		Notices are posted 72 hours prior to public meetings and comment periods		
Legal Notices		Legal notices are run at least 72 hours prior to public meetings for MTP, TIP, UPWP, and PPP updates.		
Technical Assistance		Available upon request		
Presentations		Available upon request		
Publications		Available on MPO web page and at MPO office		

*If the MPO Study Director determines that a significant change to the Final Draft of the MTP, TIP, UPWP, or PPP is necessary because of comments received from the public, the Final Draft will be made available for one (1) additional seven (7) day public comment period to address the specific significant change(s). However, the MPO Study Director may, at his discretion, request final approval by the Policy Committee prior to the additional comment period pending any additional changes to the document.

** Federal regulations call for a minimum 45-day public review period for a PPP update.

*** Posted Notice is defined as from the date the notice is posted at the Potter and Randall County Courthouses and the City Hall of Amarillo

Texas Open Meetings & Records Procedures

- The MPO adheres to the requirements for open meetings and notices of meetings.
- All meetings where public business is conducted, which have a quorum, are open to the public. Notice of meeting is given no less than 72 hours beforehand through posting the agenda at county courthouses, TxDOT district office, city hall, and library branches.
- All open meetings are sound recorded. A summary of proceedings (Minutes), including a roster of those who attended, can be accessed at the MPO office usually within 90 days of the meeting. Minutes are made available to the public upon request in accordance with the Texas Public Information Law. The summaries of proceedings and recordings are maintained for a minimum of three (3) years.
- Meetings may go into executive session following the rules of the Texas Open Meetings Law.
- All MPO meetings are held in barrier-free sites. Accommodation will be made for those with special needs if requested at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.
- The MPO adheres to the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act. Records, as defined by the law, are made accessible to the public.

Appendix A: Federal Regulations

Specifically, Title 23, CFR 450.316 (a) of the Metropolitan Planning Process, requires eleven elements be addressed. Each requirement and the method in which it is met, is listed below.

1. Development of a public involvement process.
A period of at least 45 days, from the date of posted notice, for public comments is provided prior to its adoption. Comments may be made in writing, in person, by phone, fax, or email. All comments are addressed and taken back through the Technical Committee for oversight, then put before the Policy Committee to request final approval.
2. Provide timely information on transportation issues.
Information is disseminated through a variety of measures, including a newsletter, information bulletins, email, press releases, forums, website, public meetings, mailings, and a static board.
3. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information in the development of plans.
The MPO provides this access through public, open, and accessible committee meetings and public review periods.
4. Facilitate public involvement in developing TIP and MTP.
The various outreach tools are employed in encouraging input into the development of these planning documents.
5. Public comments to be considered as an integral part of the planning process.
The public has an opportunity to comment on all plans released by the MPO. Comments may be made in writing, in person, by phone, fax, or email. All the comments are reviewed, and documents are amended, if necessary.
6. Seek out and consider the needs of historically under-served.
A comprehensive public notification list is maintained and includes groups that outreach to these under-served populations. Spanish translators are made available, if requested. Additionally, special arrangements can be requested for the physically disabled, hearing or visually impaired.
7. For areas of non-attainment, significant public comments are part of the final TIP & MTP.
Even though the MPO is attainment, public comments received on the TIP and MTP are addressed and included in the documentation.
8. Revisions to the TIP and MTP based on public comments are made available to the public.
These types of revisions are subject to the same open meeting requirements.
9. Periodic Reviews of the PPP.
The Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee review the PPP as needed.
10. FHWA & FTA review of the PPP.
The PPP will be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, in accordance with these federal mandates.
11. Coordination with statewide public involvement processes.
The MPO coordinates its activities with the Texas Department of Transportation.

Appendix B: Mailing List

The MPO staff maintains and regularly updates the mailing list used for meeting notifications, newsletters, and various other mailings. This list includes a wide variety of stakeholders, such as the following:

MPO Policy Committee	Legislators
MPO Technical Advisory Committee	Freight Transporters
Potter County	Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
Randall County	Area Newspapers & Publications
City of Amarillo	Radio Stations
Amarillo City Transit	Television Stations
Panhandle Transit	Amarillo ISD
Panhandle Community Services	River Road ISD
Public Libraries	Canyon ISD
Citizens	Bushland ISD
Chamber of Commerce	Highland Park ISD
Center City of Amarillo	Neighborhood Interest Groups
Indian Tribal Groups	Historical Preservation Groups
Social Service Organizations	Business & Civic Groups
Consultants	Bicycle Interest Groups
Other MPOs	Other Agencies

Contact update forms are distributed once a year for organizations to update contact names, addresses, emails addresses and text numbers if needed, but interested parties may contact Amarillo MPO at (806) 378-6293 or amarillompo@amarillo.gov at any time to receive meeting information.

Appendix C: Amarillo Community Engagement Process

Approved: December 16, 2015

Introduction

The City of Amarillo recognizes the importance of a responsive community engagement program. The City Council is committed to ensuring that stakeholders have opportunities to communicate their thoughts and ideas on decisions that affect their lives. Through the development of a Community Engagement Process the City of Amarillo seeks to take account of the views, needs, issues, and aspirations expressed by the community, and to balance these with other influences, such as budgetary constraints, to make informed decisions.

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is a connection between the local government and the citizens, enabling them to effectively come together, deliberate and act. Local governments across the country have moved beyond “public comment” hearings to find ways to involve the stakeholders in the community. Research has shown that effective citizen engagement can foster a sense of community, engender trust, enhance creative problem solving, and even increase the likelihood that citizens support financial investments in community projects.

Involving citizens in their local government can lead to significant improvements in policy and program designs and outcomes. Community engagement is an excellent way for City leaders to increase their awareness of the needs, priorities, and diversity within the local community. In turn, the City Council is better equipped to ensure that their actions are aligned appropriately. There is also potential for time, resources, and cost savings through shared skills and ideas.

Community engagement can be described as a spectrum and hierarchy of processes. As the level of engagement increases, so does the public’s influence. Each level along the spectrum builds from the previous. For example, if you want to consult you must first inform. Citizen participation approaches range along the continuum from one-way communication on one end, to dialogue shared and processed among multiple participants at the other. ¹

This is illustrated in the following table.

¹ Lukensmeyer and Torres 2006; International Association of Public Participation [IAP2]2006

Public Involvement Spectrum in Local Governance*

	Exchanges with Citizens		Citizen Engagement		
	Inform	Consult	Include/Incorporate	Collaborate	Empower
Interaction in policy making Goal: Decision-Making and Problem-Solving	Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.	Receive and respond to resident comments, requests, and complaints. Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	Work directly with citizens throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered by staff.	Partner with citizens in each aspect of the decision, including the identification of issues, development of alternatives, choice of the preferred solution, and implementation.	Place final decision-making authority or problem-solving responsibility in the hands of citizens.
Interaction in service delivery Goal: Service Delivery and Addressing Community Needs	Provide/Enforce Provide services and enforcement laws and regulations with courtesy, attentiveness, helpfulness, and responsiveness to citizens.	Consult Receive and respond to citizen requests and complaints. Obtain public feedback on quality of or satisfaction with services.	Include/Co-produce Involve citizens in deciding which services to evaluate and in assessment of results. Involve citizens as volunteers and in production of services.	Collaborate Partner with citizens in determining service priorities and taking actions to achieve objectives, e.g., crime watch. Partner in services with non-governmental organizations.	Empower Place final responsibility for meeting a community need in the hands of citizens or facilitate and accept citizen initiatives.

* Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006, 7) make the distinction between information exchange models and information processing models of citizen engagement. We use that distinction to categorize the activities in the spectrum of public involvement developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and used in adapted form by Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006, 7, Table 1). Neither Lukensmeyer and Torres nor IAP2 include a separate spectrum for service delivery and addressing community needs.

**The left side of the table focuses on “exchanges” with citizens that focuses on information and may be a one-way interaction with information flowing from the MPO to the citizens, or from the citizens to the government officials. However, these exchanges do not allow for the opportunity for information exchange and may not yield new information or allow for stakeholders to discuss ideas. The exchange of information is a vital part of community engagement, but as a primary technique of communication often fails to meet the public’s expectations of involvement. The right side of table illustrates community “engagement.” Community engagement creates opportunities for “extensive exchange of information.” The governing body should work to gain shared understanding and consensus with the stakeholders.

Determining the level of engagement depends largely on the impact of the decision to be made. Stakeholders may be incorporated in the decision-making process, or they may ultimately be empowered to make the final decision on a project.

Background

Information has been gathered by the MPO staff on the current state of Amarillo's community engagement efforts. Comprehensively, the City of Amarillo shares a webpage with the MPO and has a Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter account. City Council meetings are available to view live, accessed from the City's webpage, or watched on YouTube. The Office of Engagement & Innovation (OE&I) is responsible for producing press-releases, distributing public information, and posting information on the various city websites. These methods of communication allow citizens to be informed and engaged.

Additionally, some departments within the City of Amarillo organization have advisory boards and public meetings to assist in their decision-making processes. The most active departments, in terms of community engagement, are Parks & Recreation, Planning & Zoning, and the library. The MPO staff is aggressively seeking to work with these departments to include transportation in their projects and public engagement. The Planning department has agreed to partner with MPO when starting the Comprehensive City Plan process.

Community Engagement Principles

The community engagement process must begin with expectations that both citizens and government engage each other with mutual respect, honesty, and fairness. When both sides agree to listen and attempt to understand, the best solutions for the community can be found. While participating in the community engagement, the MPO staff adheres to these principles:

Inclusive:	The City of Amarillo staff strives to reach all individuals who wish to be involved. Everyone, regardless of beliefs or philosophies can contribute their ideas to the community.
Partnership:	The City of Amarillo maintains a fair and open environment for community engagement in exchange for respectful and safe public participation and input. The MPO works with citizens, government and community institutions, and others to advance the common good.
Accessible:	The City of Amarillo clearly defines the opportunities for citizen engagement and provides resources that enable all citizens to participate, regardless of ability.
Transparent & Trust:	The City of Amarillo is clear and open about the process and provide public records of the outcomes including the range of views and ideas expressed.
Diversity:	The City of Amarillo provides a variety of ways for citizens to participate. Engagement opportunities are appropriate for the needs of the citizens that are participating.
Stewardship:	The City of Amarillo is committed to delivering quality services to the citizens of Amarillo. Therefore, the time and energy the citizens put forth to provide ideas and feedback through community engagement efforts are taken seriously. The city ensures each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference and that citizens are aware of that potential.

City of Amarillo Community Engagement Process

The community engagement process is relevant to all staff. This process aims to guide staff in their interactions with the community and ensure the appropriate level of participation for a range of projects, services, and activities. The community engagement process should be considered at the commencement of all projects and as a part of daily operations. The process is not meant to prescribe exactly how the community should be consulted for each project, issue, or service. Instead, it helps to identify different levels of impact that require certain types of engagement. Outlines below are the steps to the community engagement process.

Step 1-Purpose and Objectives

Clearly define the project or initiative and include what has happened to date. Define the expected outcomes of the community engagement process. Set goals for the engagement process and decide the final decision-maker.

Step 2-Stakeholders

Create an initial list of stakeholders. Consider who is affected by the project or decision. Consider asking committees, community groups, businesses, non-profit groups, and other departments for input. To understand the full impact of a project, an inclusive group must be identified.

Step 3-Level of Impact & Methods of Engagement

Before deciding how best to engage the community, it must first be determined what level of impact the issue has on the stakeholders. Issues having minimal impact on the community are not likely to garner much response to engagement efforts. Likewise, topics with many differing opinions and high impact bring more public interest.

To determine the level of impact a project or issue has, the chart below helps to categorize issues based on several factors. Each issue falls into one of four levels.

Table 1. Levels of Community Impact

Community Impact	Criteria	Examples
Level One: <i>Modest impact on select area and/or community group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest impact on a limited group in the community • Small changes to facilities or services • Modest risk of controversy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street cleaning or repair • Upgrading dilapidated sidewalks • Changes to P&R Program, such as time or venue
Level Two: <i>Modest impact on whole community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modest impact across the community • Sufficient degree of interest • Moderate possibility of conflicting opinions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to city-wide services such as solid waste collection • Community-wide events
Level Three: <i>High impact on select area and/or community group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High impact on a specific group of neighborhood or specific service program • Strong possibility of conflicting perspectives, or the need for compromise among particular groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in permitting requirements • Change in bus routes • Removal of parking lot
Level Four: <i>High impact on whole community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High impact across community including significant changes for all residents • High degree of interest throughout the community • Strong possibility of conflicting perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council's strategic plan • Elimination of a City Service • Major rezoning change

Once the appropriate level of impact has been determined, the next step is to decide the most suitable forms of community engagement. Below is a table representing appropriate methods of community engagement for each level of community impact. These are specific methods that would be appropriate for each situation.

Table 2. Community Engagement Methods

Community Engagement Methods	Level of Impact			
	Level 1 Modest Impact, Focused Reach	Level 2 Modest Impact, Wide Reach	Level 3 High Impact, Focused Reach	Level 4 High Impact, Wide Reach
Social Networking	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended
Banner on web, email list, display	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Optional	Essential
Notice on website	Optional	Essential	Essential	Essential
Workshop	Optional	Strongly Recommended	Essential	Essential
Briefing/issue memo	Optional	Strongly Recommended	Essential	Essential
Online forum, focus group	Optional	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended
Media Release, notification sign	Optional	Optional	Essential	Essential
Public Meeting	Optional	Optional	Essential	Essential
Advisory committee, meeting with stakeholders	Optional	Optional	Strongly Recommended	Essential
Expert commentary	Optional	Optional	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended
Public exhibition with invitation for written feedback	Optional	Optional	Strongly Recommended	Strongly Recommended
Water bill insert, newsletter, publication	Optional	Optional	Optional	Strongly Recommended
Dialogue, charrette	Optional	Optional	Optional	Strongly Recommended
RSS Feed	Optional	Optional	Optional	Strongly Recommended
Billboard/Radio/TV, letter, blog post, survey, suggestion box, site tour, online poll	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional

Step 4-Develop a Community Engagement Plan

At this step it is appropriate to determine which of the community engagement methods from Table 2. will be used in the community engagement process. There are several key considerations in creating a community engagement plan.

The first consideration is to create clear and concise information for the public. They must have sufficient information in order to participate and make informed decisions. Equally important is the act of promoting how the public can be involved. Always explain expectations and give constraints to avoid unrealistic expectations.

The second consideration is to recognize the knowledge and expertise that the citizens will provide throughout the process. Appropriate community engagement should provide opportunities for citizens to share ideas, thoughts, opinions and visions. Participants should be

reflective of the community, or the group that is specifically affected by a policy or project. Evaluate the participation throughout the process to ensure that the efforts are reaching the affected population groups.

The third consideration is to determine the timeline and allocate resources required to execute the community engagement plan. Typically, projects with higher levels of impact require more community engagement activities. More time and resources will need to be allotted to meet the needs of those types of projects. Also consider what skills and staffing is required, and if they are readily available.

Step 5-Execute the Engagement Plan

Announce the issue or project to the public with all the information available. The citizens should be informed of all upcoming meetings, workshops, or project milestones. The stakeholders should be aware of all opportunities to participate, and they should have a clear understanding of how to be involved at each step. Communicate throughout the process what you are learning from the citizens and share the results.

Step 6-Evaluate the Findings

It is essential to provide the community with feedback and reports on community engagement activities based on their participation. Take the information gathered throughout the process and prepare a report summarizing the findings. Consider the project in light of the community's response.

Step 7-Make a Decision

A decision is made after considering the outcome of the community engagement process.

Step 8-Evaluate the Process

Evaluation is an important part of continuing to improve and develop the community engagement process. Feedback should be encouraged throughout the community engagement process. An evaluation summary should be completed on all high impact projects summarizing the project, process, and outcome. This should be made available to the public.

Community Engagement Comprehensive Efforts

In addition to engagement on specific initiatives or projects, the City of Amarillo should define and implement a general and comprehensive engagement program as a matter of routine.

Currently, the City of Amarillo uses several general community engagement methods to inform the citizens of Amarillo. As part of the City of Amarillo's Community Engagement Process, several tools will be used as comprehensive methods to communicate for the entire organization. These methods are meant to educate, inform, and engage on an ongoing basis. They will complement and assist any additional community engagement efforts that are made due to the submission of a specific issue, project, or proposal. A decision is made after considering the outcome of the community engagement process.

The City of Amarillo will implement at a minimum, the following community engagement efforts:

- Amarillo 101: Citizen’s academy aimed at educating the community and gaining involvement.
- Online City Council Meetings: City Council meeting can be viewed live online.
- Website: City of Amarillo website including information and notices.
- Blog: Frequently updated commentary on relevant City topics and information.
- Email distribution list: Email distribution lists based on citizen interests.
- Community Calendar: Calendar for City of Amarillo events.
- Online Surveys or Opinion Polls: Public opinion and feedback opportunities online.
- YouTube: Videos available online.

Staff should continue to seek opportunities to expand and improve these and other comprehensive tools.

Proposed Community Engagement Committee

To be successful and remain relevant, the community engagement process should regularly be reviewed and updated. To aid in the effort, it is recommended a community engagement committee be formed. At a minimum, representatives from the following departments will staff the committee.

- Community Relations Office
- Information Technology
- City Manager’s Office
- *Other department representatives as assigned*

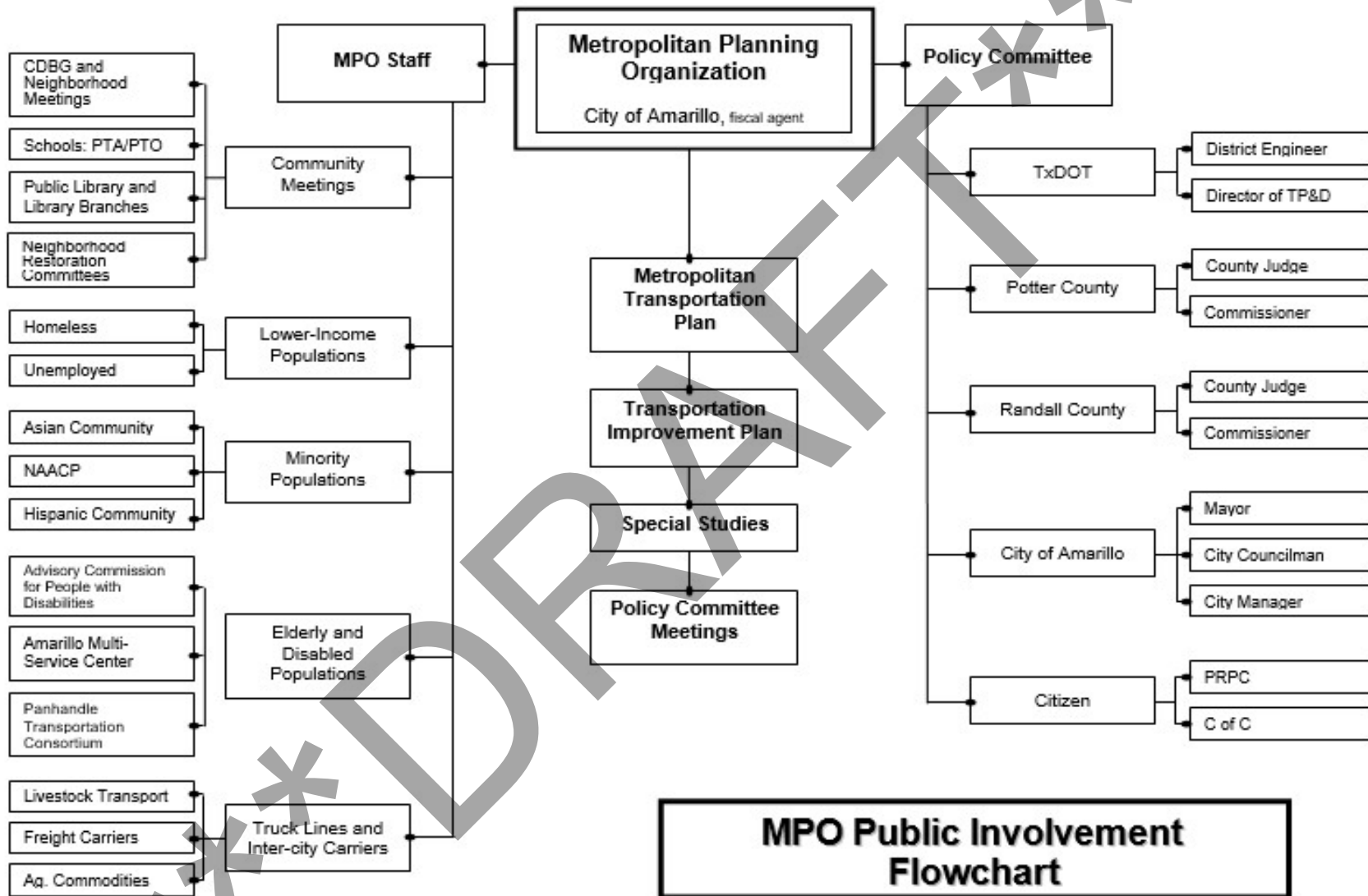
Worksheet 1: Pre-planning questions for community engagement

Key Questions	Responses
Step 1. Why is this process needed? Goals? Who will be the final decision-maker?	
Step 2. Who are the stakeholders?	
Step 3. What is the level of impact? What are the appropriate methods of community engagement?	

Worksheet 2: Implementation framework

Step 4. Develop a community engagement plan				
What engagement activities need to happen?	Who is responsible for this activity?	What resources are needed?	When does this need to be done?	What are the success measures? How will we know if we have been successful?

Appendix D: MPO Public Involvement Flowchart



MPO Public Involvement Flowchart