



**COLORADO**  
Department of Transportation  
Division of Transportation Development  
Multimodal Planning Branch  
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**TO:** State Transportation Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Michelle Scheuerman, Statewide Planning Manager  
Jeff Sudmeier, Regional and MPO Planning Manager

**DATE:** June 13, 2014

**RE:** Results of Rural Transportation Planning Region (TPR) Telephone Town Halls

***Purpose***

This memorandum serves to provide results for the rural TPR telephone town halls that occurred in April and May. The Metropolitan Planning area telephone town halls have initiated and will finish in late June 2014. See **Attachment A** for a schedule of the telephone town halls.

Telephone town halls were used as an organizational partnering effort, and as outreach to the public to gain input that will inform development of the Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWP).

***Focus Areas***

Telephone town halls focused on three major elements: CDOT key messaging (education), polling participants, and fielding live questions from callers. Specific transportation topics included: a transportation vision discussion, limited transportation funding, transportation priorities, and transportation and the local economy. Three polling questions, built off of earlier online TPR survey questions (on the Statewide Transportation Plan website), were asked during these calls (with input via the telephone key pad). Results of the polling were shared with the participants during the call. Recordings of the town halls are posted or will be posted on the Statewide Transportation Plan website shortly after the calls occur.

***Participation***

The participation rates at telephone town halls greatly exceeded those at the public open houses used during the development of the 2035 Statewide Transportation Plan. A high level of attendance at traditional open house meetings ranged from 30 to 40 people, not including CDOT or consultant staff. Participation on the call at these telephone town halls ranged from 567 to 3,251 people, with peak attendance rates for those on the call at one point in time ranging from 92 to 933 attendees. Overall, it is estimated that over 17,000 people participated on these calls. The national average of minutes for those on a telephone town hall is 10 minutes. The CDOT calls resulted in averages from nine to 15 minutes. It was noted that participation dropped off as the telephone town calls continued. It is recommended to cover important topics early on during the call. Calls were made to randomly generated land line numbers in the call area to reach potential participants. Paid advertising was also used including a toll free call-in number, but was considered unsuccessful as it resulted in negligible participation.

Live questions answered by the panel during the calls totaled between 10 and 21, and related to a variety of topics including: local traffic operation, safety, pavement condition, extreme weather conditions, multimodal concerns, and funding. These questions were addressed during the calls by the panel members



that generally included a local elected official, the CDOT Regional Transportation Director (RTD), and a Transportation Commissioner. CDOT staff was present to help screen calls and to provide information to the panel members.

### ***Cost Comparison***

Analysis of outreach efforts conducted for the current SWP compared to the 2035 Statewide Transportation Plan identified substantial cost savings. During the 2035 Statewide Transportation Plan development, a total of 22 public meetings occurred counting regional forums and joint public outreach meetings, compared to only 16 telephone town halls occurring for the current SWP. In addition, a traditional open house with consultant assistance costs approximately \$9,000, while an average telephone town call costs only \$4,500, an estimated savings of roughly 50 percent.

### ***Key Benefits***

The following list describes the key benefits of telephone town halls:

- Reach a substantially broader audience
- More use of in-house staff vs. consultants
- Forum for informal discussion with key decision makers
- Opportunity to deliver CDOT's key messages
- Other parts of the Department will have access to this valuable information, (i.e., Division of Transit and Rail, the Office of Policy and Government Relations, and the Communications Office, to name a few)
- Cost effectiveness
- Events may be revisited (calls are recorded)

### ***Next Steps***

- Transportation Commissioners, CDOT staff and the telephone town hall vendor will conduct, record, and document results of the remaining Metropolitan Planning Organization telephone town halls.
- A mini-poll (one or two questions) to find out more about the telephone town hall participant experience and to get information on suggestions for improvements will be uploaded to the SWP website soon.
- The results of the calls taken from questions raised and the polling will be used to inform the identification of priorities in the Rural RTPs and the SWP.



# Attachment A

## Rural TPR Telephone Town Hall Schedule:

- **April 2, 2014**, Gunnison Valley TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Doug Aden /Co-Host – Vince Rogalski (STAC Chair)
- **April 8, 2014**, San Luis Valley TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Sidny Zink/Co-Host – George Wilkinson (TPR Chair)
- **April 10, 2014**, Eastern TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Steven Hofmeister /Co-Host, Trent Bushner (TPR Chair)
- **April 22, 2014**, Southwest TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Sidny Zink/Co-Host – Robert “Bobby” Lieb Jr. (TPR Chair)
- **April 24, 2014**, Southeast TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Bill Thiebaut /Co-Host – Dan Tate (TPR Chair)
- **May 1, 2014**, Intermountain TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Doug Aden /Co-Host – Thad Noll (TPR Chair)
- **May 6, 2014**, South Central TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Bill Thiebaut / Co-Host – County Commissioner, Mack Louden
- **May 8, 2014**, Central Front Range TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Les Gruen/Co-Host – County Commissioner, Mark Dowaliby
- **May 13, 2014**, Northwest TPR, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Kathy Connell /Co-Host – County Commissioner, Steve Ivancie
- **May 21, 2014**, Upper Front Range, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Kathy Gilliland/Co-Host – County Commissioner, Tom Donnelly

All telephone town halls were hosted within the TPR at CDOT region offices, residencies or local municipal buildings, and the start time for all Telephone Town Hall meetings was 7:00 p.m. The calls lasted one hour.

## MPO Telephone Town Hall Schedule:

- **May 15, 2014**, Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) , Host – Transportation Commissioner, Ed Peterson /Co-Host – County Commissioner, Jack Hilbert
- **May 20, 2014**, DRCOG , Host – Transportation Commissioner Gary Rieff /Co-Host – County Commissioner, Jack Hilbert
- **May 22, 2014**, North Front Range MPO, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Kathy Gilliland/Co-Host – County Commissioner, Sean Conway
- **May 27, 2014**, Pueblo MPO, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Bill Thiebaut/Co-Host – County Commissioner, Buffie McFadyen
- **June 24, 2014**, Pikes Peak MPO, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Les Gruen/Co-Host – County Commissioner, Dennis Hisey
- **June 26, 2014**, Grand Valley MPO, Host – Transportation Commissioner, Doug Aden/Co-Host – County Commissioner, Steve Acquafresca