PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

March 18, 2015



STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN





Importance of Public Involvement

CDOT implemented a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuous transportation planning process to engage the traveling public and other interested parties in the development of the 2040 Statewide Transportation Plan: Transportation Matters (SWP) and the 10 rural Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs). Beginning in the summer of 2012, CDOT provided numerous opportunities for citizens, elected officials, stakeholder groups, representatives of underserved populations, environmental agencies/organizations and others to contribute to development of the transportation plans. Public involvement actively engaged the public in the following:

- Allowed the public to provide valuable information to CDOT to help guide planning and decision-making
- Built an ongoing relationship between CDOT and the public based on mutual trust
- Increased community knowledge by providing citizens with new information
- Encouraged stakeholders to become actively involved in plan or program development
- Provided feedback that helped CDOT understand where additional information was required or where misunderstandings existed
- Identified potential problems or plans that required an extra level of sensitivity and public education
- Provided comments to better inform others who were not participating

The comprehensive public involvement process ensured that the Colorado Transportation Commission had all the relevant information and heard clearly from citizens and stakeholders, ensuring that the SWP and the RTPs correctly reflect the vision for transportation in Colorado.

What Is A Web-Based Plan

CDOT developed the SWP and RTPs using an innovative technical - a web-based plan. A web-based plan employs a variety of public involvement technologies that increase reliance on web-based methods. The SWP website, therefore, served as the central hub of all transportation plan education, communication, and interaction. Colorado's web-based SWP was developed, coordinated and finalized using the interactive and mobile-compatible SWP website, <u>www.coloradotransportionmatters</u>. This web-based approach is a first for CDOT and perhaps a first among all State Departments of Transportation. A screenshot of the SWP website can be seen in Attachment A.

Statewide Transportation Plan Website -coloradotransportationmatters.com

The purpose of the SWP website was to make it easy for people to share their thoughts and opinions so that CDOT can develop a transportation plan that reflects the priorities and needs of all Coloradans.



Launched on October 22, 2013, the website served as a central point of contact for CDOT, its planning partners, and the public at large throughout the planning process. The SWP website included the following features:

- Picture sharing Users could submit photos of problem locations in their area.
- The site was designed using <u>Wordpress</u> and <u>MySQL</u> database These made for very easy updating and adding of new content, pages, and additional features.
- The site was designed in HTML5 This made it reasonably mobile-compatible with responsive web layout. A responsive layout is a website that changes size and layout based on the user's device.
- The site translated into the top 10 languages spoken in Colorado: These languages included Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Vietnamese.
- Interactive mapping to help the public identify their Transportation Planning Region: Viewers could click on their county to find what Transportation Planning Region they live in.
- A comment-capturing feature: Comments made about SWP Executive Summary and the 10 rural RTPs were directed to the appropriate CDOT personnel for storage and response.
- Central hub: The site served as the central hub for the SWP, the RTPs, the Statewide Transit Plan and other CDOT modal and system plans.

Regional Surveys

CDOT developed electronic dual-purpose surveys that both informed the public and gathered thoughts on statewide transportation issues and TPR-specific information. The surveys were posted on the website and significant promotion by means of statewide press releases and social media were used to encourage the public to take the surveys.

English and Spanish versions of the surveys were distributed to the public through the SWP website. More than 2,500 Coloradans weighed in on the future of transportation in our state during November and December 2013. While the survey CDOT conducted was not statistically significant, it provided valuable insights from every county in the state. Survey results helped CDOT better understand how different regions view transportation differently. A sample survey can be found in Attachment B.

Telephone Town Halls

In early April 2014, the Colorado Department of Transportation began hosting interactive telephone town halls (TTH) around the state. The purpose of these electronic meetings was to hear from the public about transportation needs and priorities and answer any questions they might have.



A TTH is like a radio talk show that is focused on transportation. CDOT utilized this new technique so that citizens who normally do not have the time or inclination to attend a public meeting regarding the SWP or RTPs could do so from the comfort of home. The TTH automatically called a sizeable number of people in this transportation planning region. If called, citizens and stakeholders participated in the TTH meeting by staying on the line after answering their phones and were connected to the meeting automatically. Citizens who did not have landline phones could participate by using a toll-free number.

Telephone Town Hall Results

- 17,481 attendees for 10 rural TPRs
- 40,353 attendees for the five Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- 9 to 15 minutes average listening time for the TPRs
- 8 minutes average listening time for the MPOs
- 1,450 average peak attendees for the MPO areas
- 108 questions asked for all five MPO TTHs

Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) Coordination and Updates

Consistent with Colorado State Statute, both SWP and RTPs are developed with the full and active participant of the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC). Created by CRS 43-1-1104, the purpose of the STAC is to provide advice to CDOT on the needs of the transportation system and to comment on regional plans. The STAC is comprised of one representative from each transportation planning region and serves as the primary mechanism of communication between CDOT and the TPRs. From early 2012, staff has provided approximately 18 SWP and RTP updates to the STAC on plan development helping to direct and contribute toward every aspect of the process.

Plan Notification Public for Comment

The SWP is divided into four connected but distinct modules, plus an executive summary. Unlike previous plans, these different modules were released and made available to the public as they were completed. These modules are comprised of web-based videos, Prezi presentations, and written sections. CDOT faced challenges in distributing these different types of media to the public in order to obtain substantive comments.

Staff employed four primary methods for plan module notification:

- E-mail blast distribution
- Postcard distribution with links to the various modules located on the SWP website and staff contact information
- Mailing of key documents and videos to local libraries and State Depository Libraries
- Press releases and social media



Statewide Plan Module Notification

Because of their different formats, the various elements of the SWP modules needed to be distributed to the public in a variety of methods. Staff employed the following methods to notify the public the modules were ready for public review and comment:

- Postcards Staff distributed the notification postcards to the approximate 3,500 to 4,000 addresses in the Statewide Plan mailing database. The database includes cities, towns, counties, housing authorities, chambers of commerce, libraries, transit providers, outdoor organizations, bike/pedestrian interests, unions, resource/regulatory agencies, environmental interests, federal agencies, agencies that serve the elderly and disabled, public housing authority representatives, education representatives, colleges/university's, airports, veterans services offices and citizens. A copy of the postcard can be found in Attachment C.
- 2. E-mail blasts were used to distribute electronic links to all five modules and links to download the short documents. The e-mail distribution list contains approximately 1,000-1,200 e-mail addresses of Colorado transportation stakeholders.
- 3. **Mailing** of materials to depository and neighborhood libraries that are located in lowincome and minority communities and to those who requested a hard copy document. These depository and neighborhood libraries also received directions to make sure these documents are made available so the public can easily access them.
- 4. Select radio ads notified the public of the release of the SWP. This approach was also used to help reach Colorado's Spanish-speaking community through Spanish radio stations along the Front Range and the Western Slope. A sample version of the radio ad can be viewed in Attachment D.
- **5. Public Access TV** stations aired a customized version of the Colorado Transportation Story video throughout the state.
- 6. **Press releases and social media** were distributed to various media outlets and to those who follow CDOT on various social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

Outreach to Low-Income and Minority Communities

Elderly and Disabled Survey - Division of Transit and Rail - The CDOT Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) developed its first comprehensive s mobility needs of Colorado's elderly and disabled transportation users. A total of 3,113 respondents completed the survey between October 2013 and December 2013. Of the 3,113 respondents, 1,190 completed the mailing list survey, 998 completed the agency-distributed hard copy survey, and 925 completed the agency-distributed web survey. The overall survey response rate was 30%.

Spanish Language Website - The SWP website translates the following top 10 languages spoken in Colorado: Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Vietnamese.



Spanish Language Surveys - CDOT developed both English and Spanish versions of the regional surveys. RPC members were instrumental in the distribution of both surveys that were critical in confirming regional corridor priorities.

Statewide Transportation Plan - Executive Summary - The Executive Summary was available to the public in both English and Spanish during the 30-day official public comment period. Additionally, the final version of the Executive Summary is also available in both languages.

Statewide database - Staff has attempted to ensure the Statewide Planning Mailing Database is inclusive of the following types of organizations:

- Colorado Housing Authorities
- Low Income Advocacy Organizations
- Minority Advocacy Organizations
- Minority Business Organizations
- Minority Media Outlets
- Influential Community Leaders

Statewide Plan video - Spanish language subtitles Spanish subtitles were included on Transportation Story video and Commissioner Peterson website introduction video

Telephone Town Hall Notification- Telephone town hall notification ads ran in Spanish newspapers. Sample telephone town hall ads can be found in Attachment E.

RTP and SWP Notification - Spanish radio ads were aired by radio stations reaching areas of the state with especially high numbers of limited English proficiency populations.

Coordination with Tribal Governments- Staff continued the collaborative relationship with Colorado's Tribal Governments throughout the planning process. That work included involvement with the STAC, participation in the Southwest RTP development process, development of specific language for The Rules, and project selection within tribal lands. For more information, see the Tribal Coordination Technical Memorandum.

Environmental Consultation Outreach

CDOT provided an online webinar that focused on recent CDOT greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction approaches, CDOT sustainability program, Energy Literacy Report, and changes in funding priorities.

The purpose of the Environmental Interest Group Outreach was to communicate with environmental special interest groups that are very interested in the transportation planning process and have traditionally provided comments during previous statewide transportation planning efforts. The invited participants included the following:



- Sierra Club Rocky Mountain Chapter
- Southeast Energy Efficiency Project
- Colorado Public Interest Research Group
- Special Districts Association of Colorado
- Conservation Colorado
- The Environmental Coalition
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- Colorado Open Lands
- Community for Environmental Solutions
- Western Resource Advocates
- Colorado Environmental Health Association
- Trout Unlimited

Additionally, CDOT hosted an Environmental Consultation Webinar for state and federal environmental agencies on October 2, 2014. The participants included:

- US Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)
- San Luis Valley TPR
- South Central TPR
- Southwest TPR
- North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO)
- Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG)

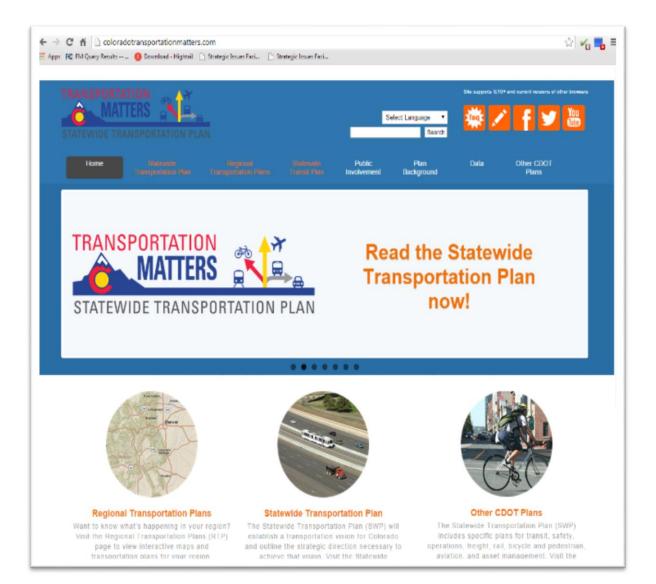


Summary of Public Outreach

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUE	TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
THE COLORADO TRANSPORTATION MATTERS WEBSITE	October 2013 - January 2015	Total Pageviews: 41,669
REGIONAL SURVEYS	November 2013 - December 2013	2,500 surveys submitted statewide
TELEPHONE TOWN HALLS	April 2014 - June 2014	58,000 attendees for TPRs and MPOs
STAC MEETING	January 2013 - January 2015	Average attendance - 55
E-MAIL BLASTS	October 2013 - January 2015	1,000-1,200 e-mail addresses of Colorado transportation stakeholders
RADIO ADS	November 2014	Numerous ads on over 20 Radio Station
PUBLIC ACCESS TV STATIONS	November 2014	10 Public Access Stations Statewide

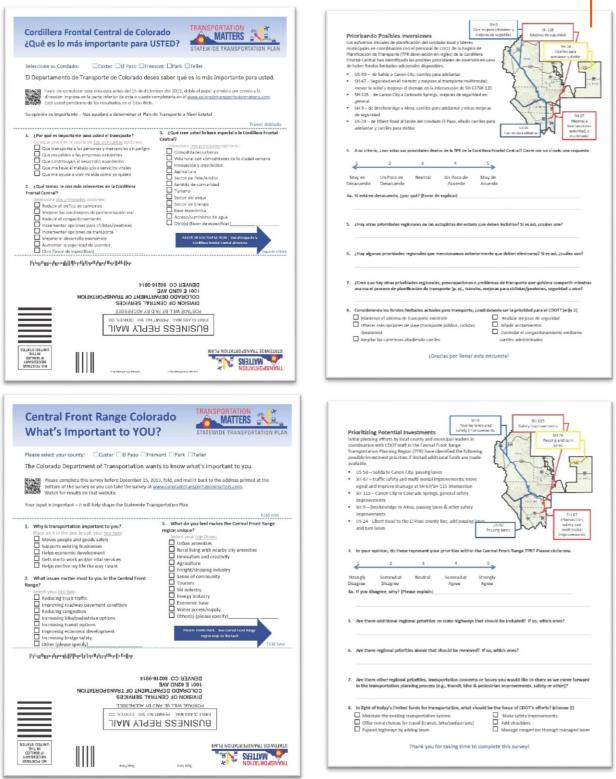
ATTACHMENT A

ColoradoTransportationMatters.com Screen Shot



ATTACHMENT B

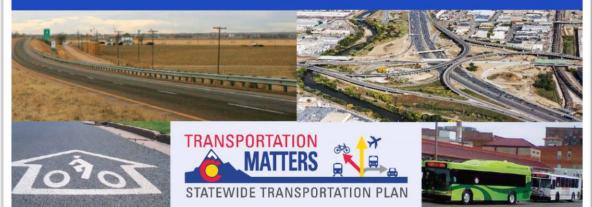
ColoradoTransportationMatters.com Screen Shot



ATTACHMENT C

Statewide Transportation Plan Postcard





As of December 5, 2014 the web-based multimodal Statewide Transportation Plan and the Statewide Transit Plan are available for public review and comment at *coloradotransportationmatters.com* At CDOT, we strive to provide our state with a safe, efficient multimodal

transportation system - it's what Coloradans expect and deserve.

The Statewide Transportation Plan and the Statewide Transit Plan will be available for public review and comment from December 5, 2014 through January 5, 2015.

Let us know if we are on the right track

ATTACHMENT D

Sample Radio ad text for the RTPs

Draft Gunnison Valley TPR

Regional Transportation Plan Release

Radio Copy

Draft #2 - October 9, 2014 - 30 second version

Traveling is more challenging today - with increasing traffic, bad weather and wildlife related accidents.

The Colorado Department of Transportation is working to get you where you need to go - safely and in a timely manner. Working together with your local representatives, a plan has been developed to find solutions for the transportation problems and priorities in your area.

The Gunnison Valley Regional Transportation Plan is where you'll find that information. And we need to hear from you to know we're are on the right track. Please visit coloradotransportationmatters - dot - com and make sure we got it right.

ATTACHMENT E

Sample Newspaper Ads for the telephone town halls – (English and Spanish)





