



PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Pueblo Metropolitan Planning Organization &
Pueblo Transportation Planning Region

August 2004

Prepared By:

PACOG – Pueblo MPO/TPR - City of Pueblo
Urban Transportation Planning Division

In Cooperation With:

City of Pueblo
Pueblo County
Colorado Dept. of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
OVERVIEW	4
A. Purpose	5
B. Planning Programs	5
1. Long-Range Transportation Plan	5
2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	5
3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	6
FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS	6
STATE GUIDELINES	6
PROCESS ELEMENTS	7
A. Public Meetings	7
B. Community Outreach	7
C. Internet	8
D. Publications	8
VALUE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EVALUATION MEASURES	9
LIST OF FIGURES	
Figure 1 Pueblo MPO/TPR Planning Area Boundaries	10
Figure 2 Public Involvement Tools Evaluation	11
PROGRAM CONTACTS	12
PACOG RESOLUTION 2004-018	13

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GLOSSARY

Accountability: To obtain documented input from the public, interest groups, environmental agencies, and citizen groups, elected officials and others who have participated in the transportation planning processes, and a structure for providing responses to issues, concerns, and questions raised by individuals and groups.

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization – an organization required by the United States Department of Transportation in areas over 50,000 population to provide a regional transportation-planning forum.

PACOG: Pueblo Area Council of Governments – the regional policy-making body empowered to decide regional transportation planning/programming issues. The PACOG consists of elected officials from the city and county, representatives from School Districts 60 and 70, and members from the Colorado City Metropolitan District, Pueblo West Metropolitan District, the Pueblo Board of Water Works and the Salt Creek Sanitation District.

Public: Individuals of the general public and groups of organizations, governmental entities and transportation professionals served by the transportation planning process as well as being users of the transportation system.

Stakeholder: Any individual, organization, governmental entity, transportation professional or member of the general public who has an interest in or who will be affected by the results of the transportation planning process.

Underserved: Any individual or group for which it is important to make a special effort to reach out due to particular needs or a lack of previous involvement. For example: people who do not have or cannot operate an automobile; those who are physically challenged; the low-income; and minority community members.

INTRODUCTION

People need to go to work, to school, shopping and medical appointments, and to engage in recreational or leisure type activities. How do people get to their various destinations? A well thought out and implemented transportation system provides people with the mode choices they need to meet their mobility needs.

Transportation and land use decisions are integral and inter-related components of a sustainable living environment. One builds upon the other, i.e., it has been compared to the proverbial “chicken and egg” question. Which comes first? Does the transportation system evolve in response to where new development chooses to locate or is the framework of a system already in place that can support growth? Economic development and public policy decisions are affected by how efficiently the transportation system is perceived to function.

Walking, riding a bicycle, hopping on a bus, driving a car or traveling by plane or rail require conscious choices on the part of the participant/s. How well each component functions or does not function within the entire system is where public input is needed to identify disconnects and plan improvements in an orderly, fiscally constrained manner. Public involvement in the transportation planning process doesn't just occur, it has to be a priority of staff, elected officials and the local citizenry. The purpose of the Public Involvement Program (PIP) is to identify ways in which the public may participate in the planning process.

OVERVIEW

The organization responsible for transportation planning and which involves both urban and rural planning in Pueblo County is the Pueblo Metropolitan Planning Organization/Transportation Planning Region (MPO/TPR). It is a part of the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) and supported by the city and county. Staff persons are housed by the City of Pueblo and planning activities are carried out by the Urban Transportation Planning Division (UTPD) through PACOG approved subcontracts.

A metropolitan planning organization is a regional planning agency established by federal law to engage in a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative (3C) transportation planning and decision-making process for urbanized areas containing a population of 50,000 or more. The transportation-planning region includes the rural areas of Pueblo County including Avondale, Boone, Beulah, Colorado City, Rye and other rural communities. The urban and rural planning boundaries are shown on Figure 1.

The PACOG Board, which governs the MPO/TPR, was organized in 1971. It is comprised of elected officials from the City of Pueblo and Pueblo County, representatives from Pueblo School Districts 60 and 70, and members from the Colorado City Metropolitan District, Pueblo West Metropolitan District, the Pueblo

Board of Water Works and the Salt Creek Sanitation District. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) attends all meetings that have agenda items pertaining to transportation issues. CDOT is the agency that has oversight responsibilities for the use of federal and state transportation funds.

A. Purpose

The Public Involvement Program (PIP) outlines a general public involvement process for the Pueblo MPO/TPR. It describes how citizens, local policy makers, and other government agencies can become involved in the transportation planning process. Included are transit users, freight transportation providers, the Pueblo Memorial Airport, the elderly, disabled and anyone else who is interested in becoming a “planning partner”.

The activities described herein are an overview of current efforts and upcoming activities new to the process in 2004. Figure 2 lists the public involvement process tools applicable to the Pueblo transportation planning area.

Each particular planning effort will result in a public involvement process tailored to that program. The PIP provides a general outline of activities that may be included in a specific program’s public involvement plan, as appropriate.

B. Planning Programs

The PIP includes minimum public involvement procedures for the following:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan
2. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Long Range Transportation Plan: A regional transportation improvement strategy for the Pueblo area and adopted by the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG). The plan is updated every three to five years. Corridor improvements listed in the plan are intended to meet travel needs in the planning area for at least the next twenty to twenty-five years. The Plan addresses elements including roadways, air, rail, freight, transit, bicycles and pedestrians.

Transportation Improvement Program: The TIP is a program that identifies federally funded and regionally significant projects by funding year/s. Projects include roadway improvements, new roadways, bridges, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, project feasibility and environmental studies. Projects in the TIP must have an identified, secure source of funding in order to meet the federal requirement for “fiscal constraint”. The purpose of the TIP is to implement the Long Range Transportation Plan. All projects in the TIP must also appear in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Pueblo’s TIP is updated every two years.

Unified Planning Work Program: The UPWP is a guide for all planning related work to be completed or continued each year. Work performed by Pueblo MPO/TPR staff is outlined in each task and progress reported monthly to the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The work program is updated annually.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The transportation planning process carried out by MPOs must encourage and solicit stakeholder input. According to Title 23 CFR 450.316 of the federal regulations, the MPO transportation planning process must be "pro-active and provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans."

In addition, federal action was taken through Executive Order 12898 in February 1994 to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations. This order builds upon Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. All federal agencies must establish internal policies to ensure that there is no discrimination or disproportionate effects of federal programs, policies, or activities on minority or low-income populations.

In April 1995, the USDOT addressed the environmental justice policy objectives by issuing the following regulation: It states that "In determining the site or location of facilities, a recipient or applicant may not make selections with the purpose or effect of excluding persons from, denying them the benefits of, or subjecting them to discrimination under any program to which this regulation applies on the grounds of race, color, or national origin...(49 CFR 21.5 (b)(3)).

Information derived from Census data pertinent to the Pueblo planning region will be used to identify those with affected interests and the underserved including, but not limited to, Hispanic community members, low income community members, physically challenged community members, people without access to an automobile such as the youth or elderly and those community members who do not speak English. Appropriate efforts to encourage participation in the process can be determined based on the demographics of the affected population/s.

STATE GUIDELINES

According to the Colorado Department of Transportation publication "Guidelines for Public Participation in Statewide Transportation Planning & Programming, the Transportation Planning Regions and Metropolitan Planning Organizations are responsible for ensuring that verbal or written responses are produced in a timely manner to issues, comments and questions raised by the public during public participation activities."

CDOT staff actively encourage the TPRs to communicate with the department throughout the process as well as with each TPRs' respective stakeholders. "Direct citizen input and participation should be solicited early and continuously in both the regional and statewide transportation planning and programming processes. Opportunities for involvement such as public meetings, citizen advisory groups, surveys, focus groups, and other mechanisms should be provided."

PROCESS ELEMENTS

The following methods are used to communicate with stakeholders in the Pueblo area: They comprise the "tools" for obtaining public input.

A. PUBLIC MEETINGS -

- PACOG
- TTC/CAC
- Open Houses

All meetings of the PACOG and TTC/CAC are held on a regularly scheduled basis throughout the year. The PACOG meets on the 4th Thursday of each month: TTC/CAC meetings are on the 1st Thursday. Meeting dates and locations are advertised in the Legal Notices section of the local newspaper at least twice prior to the meeting date. These meetings are open to the public and held in accessible locations. The meeting format is formal with a chairperson, printed agenda and recorded minutes. Persons requesting to speak must be acknowledged by the chair before addressing meeting attendees.

Open Houses are scheduled on an "as-needed" basis according to project specific requirements. Staff are available to respond verbally to questions posed by the public in a "one-on-one" format. Comment forms are provided for each individual to complete and either hand in or mail in. There are no formal presentations or agendas. Open Houses are advertised at least twice in the Legal Notices section of the local newspaper and held in locations that are accessible to the general public. Meeting attendees are free to move about the meeting room to view and comment on maps, posters, etc.

B. COMMUNITY OUTREACH -

- Special Events
- Public Fairs
- Neighborhood Meetings

Transportation planning staff attend the county and state fairs held at the State Fairgrounds in Pueblo. Information about current transportation projects and brochures describing the TIP and long-range transportation

planning process are handed out to persons passing by the display. Other special events (home and garden shows, events at the Pueblo Mall or in the Downtown area) are handled in a like manner.

Staff also attends neighborhood meetings when invited by the neighborhood groups to answer questions about topics of interest. Responses may be verbal at the meeting or a follow-up written response may be provided if more information is needed. Staff also use these opportunities for communication with the public to announce upcoming meetings and to distribute handouts about the planning process, as appropriate.

C. INTERNET -

- Notice of public meetings
- Meeting Agendas
- Minutes of public meetings
- Links to CDOT, FHWA, FTA, and other sites

The Pueblo MPO/TPR has a web site on the internet. The address is <http://www.pacog.net>. Interested parties can easily access notices of PACOG and TTC/CAC meetings, agendas, and minutes of prior meetings as well as links to CDOT, FHWA, FTA and other transportation websites. The website is updated at least weekly. Questions or comments can be sent to Don Vest, Webmaster, at <mailto:dvest@pueblo.us>.

D. PUBLICATIONS -

- Brochures
- Newsletter
- Paid advertisements
- Mapping products
- Comment acknowledgement
- Public Opinion Surveys

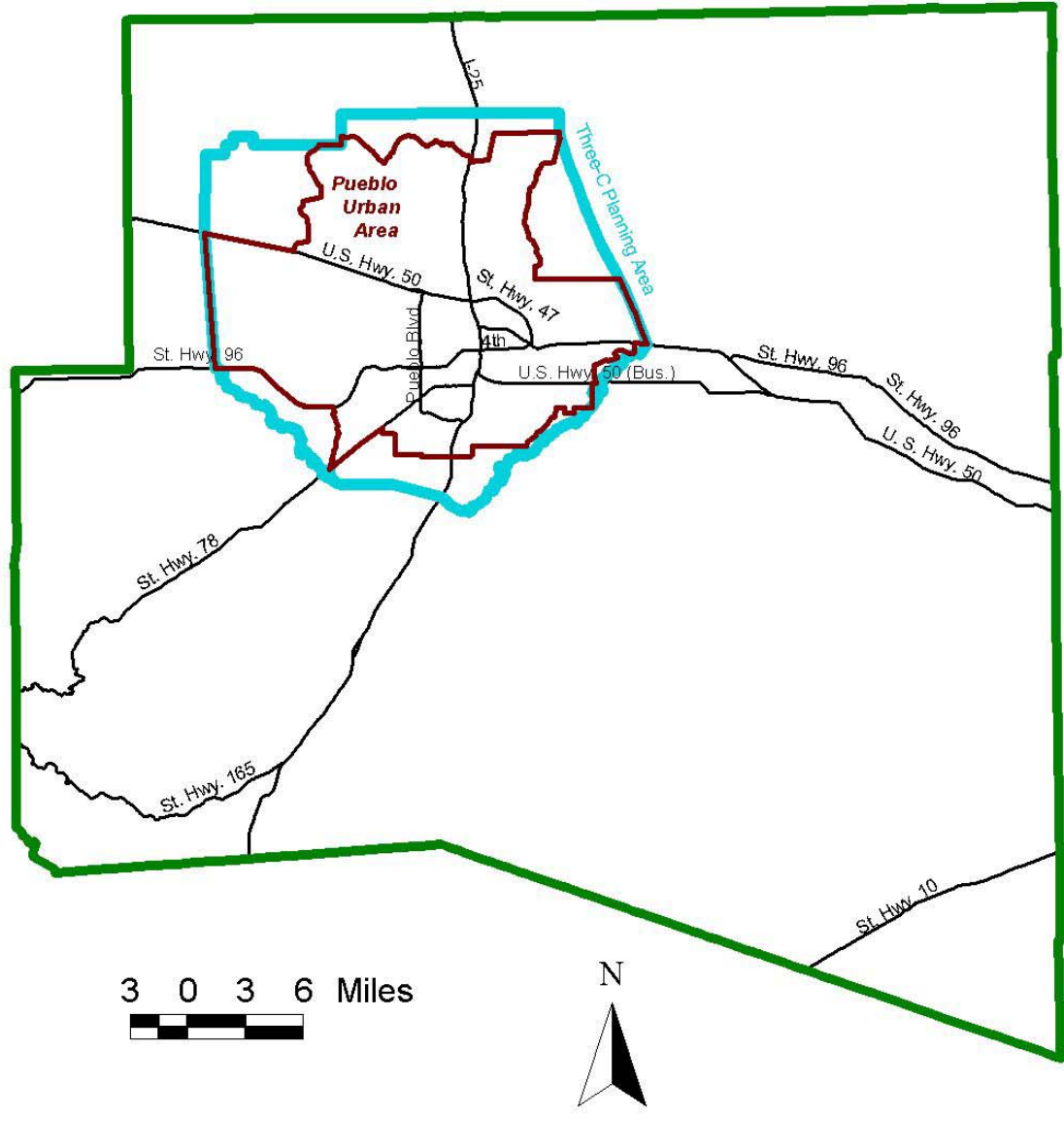
The last category takes the form of written communications. Paid advertisements are currently used to announce formal meetings and informal open houses to the public. A newsletter covering transportation issues will be posted on the PACOG website, and sent electronically and by postal service to interested contacts on a quarterly or semi-annual schedule. Brochures describing the planning process and highlighting project successes will be developed for educational purposes. Public opinion surveys and comment forms will be used to assess how well the transportation planning and implementation processes are working from a public perspective. Maps and other visual displays such as PowerPoint presentations will be used to aid the public in understanding the scope of various projects.

VALUE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & EVALUATION

Involving interested members of the community generally results in better planning overall. Gathering input from the public can help staff develop better technical information that, in turn, can help policymakers make better-informed decisions on behalf of the community or region they represent. It is important that the community understands how the transportation planning process works and how they can contribute to the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program and the Unified Planning Work Program. The public's role is important in providing information that will help to avoid errors in or omissions of important facts.

Whenever interaction or outreach occurs, a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the discussion needs to be provided. Several methods that can be used to obtain feedback from participants include comment forms at meetings, workshops and displays; meeting evaluation forms, citizen letters (and responses), telephone comments, internet email and recorded comments at public meetings. All of this information should be maintained and made readily available to the public for on-going educational purposes and to establish an historical record. Programs and processes must be understood to develop trust between the numerous "planning partners". On-going evaluation of how well public involvement activities are performing shows which measures are ineffective and should be discontinued. More effective types of interaction can be implemented or expanded in scope as the process evolves. The PIP must be a dynamic process that establishes accountability to the public.

FIG. 1: PUEBLO URBAN AREA SKETCH MAP



Prepared by:
PACOG/City of Pueblo
Urban Transportation Planning Division
4/30/03



**2000 URBANIZED AREA AND
PACOG 2030 PLANNING AREA**

FIGURE 2

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLS EVALUATION

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOL	EVALUATION CRITERIA	PERFORMANCE GOAL/S	ACTIONS
Public Involvement Plan	No Measure-PIP is a policy tool	N/A	Update every 3 years
MPO Web Site	Number of hits	Minimum of 60 hits /month	Use other tools to advertise
Legal Advertisements	No Measure-required by CDOT/FHWA/FTA	N/A	N/A
MPO Newsletter	Calls, letters, etc.	N/A	Respond to calls, letters, correct any errors
TTC/CAC	Attendance, calls, letters, etc.	N/A. The committee is comprised of staff & officials	Staff should encourage attendance & participation
MPO Logo	Calls, letters, etc.	Recognition of the logo	The logo should be used on all MPO documents
Public Hearings	Attendance, calls, letters, etc.	30 persons for sub-area plans and 50 persons for regional plans	Schedule hearings at convenient times & locations. Use other tools to increase awareness of hearings
Comment Forms	Number of responses	50% of meeting attendees completed & returned	Encourage responses by explaining importance of feedback
Small Group Meetings	Met the expectations of the group, calls, letters, etc.	N/A. Meetings are held at the request of the affected group	MPO staff available to speak to any group re: transportation issues or activities

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Participation in the transportation planning process is critical to building a desirable community. If you have questions regarding these policies, or if you would like to become involved in the transportation planning process, please contact one of the following persons.

**Urban Transportation Planning Division
PACOG - Pueblo MPO/TPR – City of Pueblo
211 East D Street
Pueblo, CO 81006**

Primary Contacts

Bill Moore, MPO Administrator (E-mail: bmoore@pueblo.us)	719-553-2243
Todd Ahlenius, Senior Transportation Planner (E-mail: tahlenius@pueblo.us)	719-553-2247
Don Vest, Senior Socioeconomic Planner (E-mail: dvest@pueblo.us)	719-553-2248
Rose Marie Ibanez, Part time Senior Clerk (E-mail: ribanez@pueblo.us)	719-553-2253

RESOLUTION NO. 2004-018

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE PUEBLO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION AND PUEBLO TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGION WHICH INCLUDES PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN, TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, AND UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM; AND DIRECTING THE URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DIVISION TO IMPLEMENT THOSE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES.

WHEREAS, the Pueblo Area Council of Governments is responsible for regional transportation planning within the Pueblo urbanized area as well as within Pueblo county boundaries; and

WHEREAS, public input is critical to the transportation planning process including the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Unified Planning Work Program and is required by federal regulations and state guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Public Involvement Program defines PACOG's public involvement policies, tools and evaluation measures for determining the effectiveness of the program; and

WHEREAS, the Public Involvement Program has been reviewed and unanimously recommended for approval by the Transportation Technical Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee (TTC/CAC);

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS that:

SECTION 1.

The Pueblo Area Council of Governments hereby approves and adopts the Public Involvement Program; and

SECTION 2.

The Pueblo Area Council of Governments hereby directs the Urban Transportation Planning Division to implement the Public Involvement Program, as adopted.

INTRODUCED: October 28, 2004

APPROVED: Original signed by: *Debbie Rose*
Chairperson
Pueblo Area Council of Governments

ATTESTED BY: Original signed by: *Louella Salazar*
PACOG Recording Secretary