



Public Involvement Plan

Prepared by



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Sponsored by:



I Plan Purpose

The goal of the public involvement plan for the US 71 – Grandview Corridor Alternatives Analysis is to develop relationships with stakeholders, instilling trust in and support for the decision-making process. We will do so through a program that recognizes the unique circumstances of the project, provides for continuing substantive input by stakeholders, ensures that stakeholder concerns get fair consideration and meets state and federal requirements. The Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) prescriptive New Starts AA process will be followed in order to arrive at a consensus decision on a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The next step would be to receive FTA approval to enter into Preliminary Engineering (PE). This process must result in acceptance by the local community which, in the end, will pay for and use any identified project.

The approach is to bring the right people together, educate them regarding the various options and gather input in a structured, inclusive and transparent process consistent with the goals, strategies and techniques described in Mid-America Regional Council’s (MARC) Transportation Department Public Participation Plan, updated December 21, 2010.

The public involvement plan will employ a variety of methods for communicating with stakeholders and will be coordinated appropriately with ongoing technical activities. The plan will comprise communication strategies, including a stakeholder advisory panel, newsletters, appropriate media strategies, a road show/speakers’ bureau, and public meetings.

This document includes:

- an overview of the project
- the objectives for communication and public involvement
- key messages
- the strategic approach for communication and public involvement
- methods of communications

II Project Overview

The process will result in a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) that satisfies the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements and is acceptable to the community. Some key issues are:

- Addressing rail access to refine the fixed guideway bus and/or rail alternatives, maximizing ridership through travel time savings and convenience while working through operational issues for the freight rail lines;
- Identifying the capital costs associated with improvements, minimizing the up-front capital and on-going operations and maintenance costs through value engineering and innovative design without sacrificing quality, aesthetics or safety;
- Refining a ridership forecasting process with the FTA, taking full advantage and accounting for travel time savings and the capture of new choice transit riders to meet FTA’s criteria for cost-effectiveness; and

- Examining financing strategies to support the FTA New Starts application, ensuring that the LPA does not divert resources from the existing KCATA system.

Public involvement discussions will result in potential transportation system improvement options to a consistent standard that would address:

- General alignment definition (both horizontal and vertical).
- Generalized service plan (frequency of service and stop pattern of new/enhanced service, other associated required transit service changes.)
- Interaction with other existing systems and services.

III Objectives for Communication and Public Involvement

The objectives for communication and public involvement include:

- *Inform* the stakeholders by providing balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities, and solutions.
- *Consult* the stakeholders by obtaining feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions, following the process outlined by the FTA.
- *Involve* the stakeholders by working directly with them throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered, ensuring all stakeholder groups are included and consulted.
- *Develop* an informed group of stakeholders.
- *Enlist* stakeholders in evaluating alternatives.
- *Build* partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders, recognizing the effect this effort has on the region and that it complements other regional public transportation initiatives.

IV Key Messages

A primary component of our approach is to craft consistent messages to educate and inform stakeholders throughout the course of the process. These messages likely will be similar to those developed for the Jackson County Commuter Corridors AA; however, the consultant team will meet with the project partners to develop messages unique to this project.

- This corridor is a significant element of a regional transit system. Improvements to it can provide better access to regional destinations, enhance multimodal connectivity, serve transportation dependent populations, and maximize the use of existing infrastructure in neighborhoods.
- The U.S. 71 Transit Study will provide local decision-makers with detailed information about the options available and which would most likely be eligible for federal funding.
- This effort supports metropolitan Kansas City's vision for expanded and enhanced transit service to enhance economic development and quality of life. Specifically,

improvements would promote transit oriented development; promote redevelopment, encourage density; and provide connectivity among neighborhoods.

- This project does not take away resources from existing projects and routes.
- Area residents have an opportunity to be part of the decision about how best to move people throughout the corridors.
- This study will result in the right choice being selected for the Kansas City region.

V Identity

To maintain continuity and recognition, the project will have a unique identity developed. In addition, previous MARC branding will be used for certain components of the project when applicable.



VI Topics Where Input is Needed

There are many questions to be answered in order to determine LPA. They include:

- What information needs to be gathered to adequately assess the issues?
- What is the purpose and need? (transportation issues, opportunities, goals and objectives)
- What are the possible alternatives to address corridor needs?
- What screening criteria should be used to select the preferred alternative?
- How do the alternatives rate using the screening criteria?
- How should the LPA be funded?
- And, ultimately, what is the LPA?

VII Targeted Audiences

The following is a listing of the audiences to involve in the alternatives analysis.

Project Partnership Team

The Project Partnership Team will include staff from MARC, FTA, KCATA, Kansas City, Missouri, and Jackson County, Missouri. This technical team, led by MARC and Jackson County, will work with the consultant team on a daily basis and will provide overall coordinating guidance on the AA.

Stakeholder Advisory Panel

A Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) will be formed to help guide the project. It is expected to include appropriate representatives from affected jurisdictions, transit advocacy groups, transit riders, economic development agencies and the general public. It will meet four times over the course of the process.

Regional Transportation Leaders (MARC Technical Committees)

MARC has many transportation policy and technical committees that will need to be included in the process including: Smart Moves Technical Committee, MARC Transit Committee, Special Transportation Advisory Committee Job Access and Reverse Commute (STAC-JARC), Total Transportation Policy Committee, the MARC Board. The Project Partnership Team/Consultant Team will make presentations to these groups at their regular meetings. This feedback will inform the work of the Project Partnership Team. Members of these committees could also be part of the stakeholder interview process and will be invited to all public meetings.

Elected Officials and Local Staff

City and county elected officials will be briefed throughout the process so they can be informed about the project and speak with their constituents about it. Separate briefings will be scheduled with the Jackson County Legislature and KCATA Board of Commissioners in order to give them an opportunity to discuss the study first-hand with project team members. Other elected officials and governing bodies will be briefed as needed. The Project Partnership Team/Consultant Team will make presentations to these groups at their regular meetings. This feedback will inform the work of the Project Partnership Team. Members of these committees could also be part of the stakeholder interview process and will be invited to all public meetings. Additionally, key local staff members from the public works, planning, and economic development departments will be consulted by the Project Partnership Team.

Potential Riders

Public meeting notices will be distributed to the KCATA. The ATA can post them where bus riders can see them.

Major Employers

Major employers might benefit from the development of transit in this corridor. Major employers may be contacted as part of the stakeholder interview process. They will be contacted and asked to distribute information about upcoming public meetings to their employees.

Advocacy Groups

Transit advocacy groups are key stakeholders in the AA process. The Kansas City Regional Transit Alliance and the Transit Action Network will be engaged in this process. Environmental groups will be involved early in the process, not waiting for the formal NEPA process to begin. The Project Partnership Team/Consultant Team will make presentations to these groups at their regular meetings. This feedback will inform the work of the Project Partnership Team. Members of these groups may also be part of the stakeholder interview process and will be invited to all public meetings.

Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Agencies

The Chamber of Commerce and local economic development agencies have a stake in the outcome of this process. All of these agencies have regular e-newsletters and meetings. The Project Partnership Team/Consultant Team will make presentations to these groups at their regular meetings. This feedback will inform the work of the Project Partnership Team. Members of these groups may also be part of the stakeholder interview process and will be invited to all public meetings.

Railroads

The following railroads will be involved: KC Southern, Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and the owners of the Kansas City Terminal Railway. Stakeholder interviews will need to take place to gather information and discuss options.

General Public

Any interested party should have the opportunity to become informed about the AA process and provide input into the decisions. Public notices of meetings will be included in the local newspapers, including the minority newspapers. Website, social media outlets and notices on government access channels will be used to notify the general public about the project and encourage participation. Notices will be distributed to the public libraries along the corridor.

State & Federal Agencies

One of the key stakeholders is the Federal Transit Administration (Region 7 office and national headquarters office). The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) will be a key stakeholder in the process as it will be affected by decisions that could affect its roadway system. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Environmental Protection Agency might have an interest in the project. State agencies that might have an interest are: Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

Economically & Socially Disadvantaged Populations

Special outreach methods will be used to engage those groups typically under represented but impacted by transportation decisions (socially, environmentally, and economically). Public notices will be purchased in minority newspapers. A special effort will be made to work with the minority media to cover this story.

Media

The decisions around a commuter corridor along US 71 is of major interest to the news media. A comprehensive media strategy will be developed and become part of this plan as an Appendix. Stories will be pitched and press releases issued regarding this project. The editorial boards of the major papers will also be briefed early in the process and in conjunction with the announcement of a Locally Preferred Alternative.

VIII Methods

The following methods will be used to meet the study goals:

- Build basic information about the Alternatives Analysis in a number of formats using a consistent identity and key messages.
- Tailor the messages and methods for each audience.
- Distribute materials and make contacts in a targeted way.
- Provide participants with the information that they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Respect diversity among participants.
- Let stakeholders know how their input influenced decisions.
- Demonstrate and celebrate successes and progress.

Methods of Communication

A variety of methods will be used to communicate our messages to the targeted audiences. Two-way communication methods will allow for stakeholders to provide input. With one-way communication methods, information will be provided with the purpose of informing. The communications methods will include:

- **One-Way Communication**
 - E-newsletters and list-serve
 - Fact sheets
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - Media relations (press releases)
 - Website
- **Two-Way Communication**
 - Open house/public meetings
 - Media relations (media briefings & meetings with the editorial boards)
 - Speakers bureau input sessions (government officials & key stakeholder groups)
 - Online questionnaires
 - Stakeholder interviews
 - Social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)

Shockey Consulting Services will coordinate these efforts. However, implementation is a mutual effort of the entire PB and Project Partnership teams, with specific responsibilities outlined in individual scopes. **Table 1** outlines a timeline, recommended tools, techniques and stakeholder groups to involve.

Table 1. Process Steps, Tools, Techniques and Stakeholders

Timeline	Process Step	Stakeholders & Level of Involvement	Tools & Techniques
May – July 2012	Review the Corridor and Identify Transportation Issues and Opportunities	<i>Consult</i> with the interested stakeholders to identify transportation issues and opportunities and to develop project goals, objectives, purpose and need.	One-way communication tools to inform: distribute fact sheet, frequently asked questions/fact sheet No. 1, launch website, publicize public meeting, issue press release No. 1.
	Develop Project Goals, Objectives, Purpose and Need	<i>Collaborate</i> with the Project Partnership Team to finalize the goals, objectives, purpose and need. <i>Inform</i> the general public about the project goals, objectives, purpose and need.	Two-way communication tools to gather input: reach out to stakeholders at regularly scheduled meetings to brief them and gather input (speaker’s bureau); conduct stakeholder interviews, launch social media; facilitate SAP meeting No. 1 regarding purpose and need and preliminary alternatives. Public Meeting #1 Gather input into the project goals, objectives, purpose & need & alternatives screening criteria. Project Partnership Team Work Sessions: Conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team to identify issues and opportunities, project goals, objectives, purpose and need.
June – August 2012	Identify Alternatives to Address Corridor Transportation Needs	<i>Consult</i> with the interested stakeholders about potential alternatives to address corridor transportation needs and local screening criteria. <i>Collaborate</i> with the Project Partnership Team to finalize the list of alternatives to screen. <i>Inform</i> the general public about alternatives.	One-way communication tools to inform: frequently asked questions/ fact sheet No. 2, update website, publicize public meeting, issue press release No. 2. Two-way communication tools to gather input: meet with editorial boards, use social media, reach out to stakeholders at existing meetings to brief them and

			gather input (speaker's bureau); conduct stakeholder interviews. Stakeholder Advisory Panel Meeting No. 2.
			Project Partnership Team Work Sessions: Conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team to identify alternatives.
August – Sept. 2012	Screening of Project Alternatives	Collaborate with the Project Partnership Team to screen the project alternatives.	One-way communication tools to inform: update website. update website
		Gather <i>input</i> on screening from other interested stakeholders.	Project Partnership Team Work Sessions: Conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team to screen alternatives.
		Inform the interested stakeholders regarding the screening results.	Public Meeting #2 Present alternatives and gather feedback.
Sept – Oct. 2012	Detailed Alternative Assessment	Inform the interested stakeholders regarding the screening results.	One-way communication tools to inform: update website, fact sheet, frequently asked questions No. 3; issue press release No. 3, seek publicity for public meeting.
			Two-way communication tools to gather input: reach out to stakeholders at regularly scheduled meetings to brief them and gather input.
			Project Partnership Team Work Sessions: conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team to conduct detailed alternative assessment.
May – Dec. 2013	Ridership Forecast	Gather input on study methods, assumptions and data.	One-way communication tools to inform: update website.
			Project Partnership Team Work Sessions: conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team to develop the ridership
August – December	Technical Methods		

2012	Operational Plans		<i>forecast, operational plan & technical methods. This group might be expanded for this portion to include the systems analysis committee at MARC.</i>
August – Nov. 2012	NEPA Compliance and Environmental Analysis	NEPA requirements will be followed but we will work to involve agencies and advocacy groups early on as this supports making infrastructure more sensitive to wildlife and ecosystems.	Two-way communication tools to gather input: meet with various environmental groups and agencies to discuss potential barriers and opportunities (stakeholder interviews & speaker's bureau).
Oct. – December 2012	Financial Assessment	The result of this work is very important to partner participation. Therefore, partner agencies will need to <i>collaborate</i> to determine the sources of funding and assess financial feasibility.	Two-way communication tools to gather input: meet with various elected officials and local government staff to discuss potential funding sources (stakeholder interviews & speaker's bureau). Project Partnership Team Work Sessions: conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team re: financial assessment.
Oct. – December 2012	Identification and Refinement of Preferred Alternatives	<i>Collaborate</i> with the Project Partnership Team to identify and refine preferred alternatives. <i>Inform</i> the interested stakeholders regarding the results & solicit <i>input</i> .	One-way communication tools to inform: FAQ/fact sheet No. 4; Issue press release No. 4, update website, Two-way communication tools to gather input: meet with editorial boards, meet with various elected officials and local government to discuss the preferred alternatives; facilitate SAP meeting No. 3 to discuss the LPA. Project Partnership Team Work Sessions: conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team to identify and refine preferred alternatives.

Public Meeting #3

Conduct public meeting to inform the public about the Locally Preferred Alternative and how their input was used to select it.

**December
2012**

FTA
Documentation

Working with project sponsors to get the project documentation completed. It will need to be endorsed by stakeholder agencies.

**Project Partnership Team
Work Sessions**

Conduct work sessions with the Project Partnership Team to get final endorsement of documentation.

IX Public Involvement Detailed Schedule

Successful stakeholder engagement requires active and regular communication with stakeholders using multiple methods and providing multiple opportunities for participation. Messages must be crafted to educate and inform the stakeholders. The messages must also be delivered in a targeted way that will most effectively reach the targeted audiences and the process should include multiple opportunities to provide input. The following schedule details the months each type of method is scheduled to support technical decision-making.

US 71- Grandview Corridor Alternatives Analysis Public Involvement Schedule	May - 12	June - 12	July - 12	Aug - 12	Sept. -12	Oct. - 12	Nov. - 12	Dec. - 12
Prepare Public Involvement Plan								
Meet with client to develop plan								
Develop a detailed planning document								
Prepare Printed Pieces for Targeted and General Distribution								
Develop logo								
Prepare templates using logo and branding								
Prepare FAQ/fact sheet								
Update FAQ/fact sheet								
Use Websites								
Develop basic website content								
Update website								
Develop & Implement Comprehensive Media Strategy								
Draft press releases								
Meet with media and brief on project								
Seek placement of public notice in newspapers (Jackson County)								

MARC Commuter Corridors Alternatives Analysis Public Involvement Schedule	May - 12	June - 12	July - 12	Aug - 12	Sept. - 12	Oct. - 12	Nov. - 12	Dec. - 12
Facilitate SAP								
Identify and recruit SAP members								
Conduct Meeting No. 1 regarding Purpose and Need and preliminary alternatives								
Conduct Meeting No. 2 regarding screening of alternatives								
Conduct Meeting No. 3 regarding LPA								
Hold Public Meetings								
Meeting #1: Opportunities, Purpose & Need, Alternatives Under Consideration, Local Evaluation Criteria								
Meeting #2: Gather input about alternatives								
Meeting #3: Gather input about Locally Preferred Alternative, Funding Source and Next Steps								
Prepare and distribute meeting input summaries								
Employ Regularly scheduled Social Media of Project Partners (through MARC staff)								

MARC Commuter Corridors Alternatives Analysis Public Involvement Schedule	May - 12	June - 12	July - 12	Aug - 12	Sept. -12	Oct. - 12	Nov. - 12	Dec. - 12
Facilitate Project Partnership Meetings								
Kickoff Meeting		■						
Gap Analysis Workshop		■						
Initial Corridor & Alternative Identification		■						
Level I Screening Presentation			■					
Detailed Alternatives Workshop				■				
Level II Screening Presentation					■			
LPA & Next Steps Discussion							■	
Conduct Stakeholder Interviews								
Identify stakeholders to interview		■						
Develop interview tool		■						
Schedule interviews		■						
Conduct interviews		■	■					
Summarize Interviews				■				
Conduct Speakers Bureau & Input Sessions (PPT members)								
Identify groups to present road show & schedule for presentations		■						
Develop presentation materials			■					