

Section 8: Public Involvement

This chapter identifies the efforts the Waco MPO undertook to solicit citizen input into the identification of goals, needs and priorities for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

8.1 Land Use – Identification of Preferred Scenarios

The MPO began the development of the MTP through a study to estimate the impacts of future landuse trends on the transportation network and vice-versa. The MPO conducted 3 workshops to solicit input on alternative landuse patterns for the MPO to consider when identifying future priorities. 2 initial workshops were conducted in 2006 to identify possible alternatives. These workshops were conducted on September 25, 2006 and December 6, 2006 at the Waco Transit Administration Building and the Heart of Texas Builders Association Offices respectively. The first meeting focused on participation from community leaders and interested citizens and had 21 participants. The second meeting focused on participation from the business and development interests within McLennan County and had 86 participants.

The MPO conducted 2 workshops on September 6, 2007 to provide the results and consultant recommendations regarding preferred alternatives. The first workshop was conducted at 2:00 PM in the Waco Convention Center and had 13 participants. The second workshop was conducted at 6:00 PM at the Waco Transit Administration Building and had 15 participants. Each of the landuse workshops were advertised and noticed in accordance to procedures identified within the Waco MPO public participation plan.

8.2 Presentations to Boards, Commissions, Civic Interests

Upon receipt of the final landuse study report from Wilbur Smith Associates, the MPO began addressing interested parties on discussions regarding several topics related to the development of a draft MTP. Once a draft MTP was developed and released to the public, the MPO staff conducted additional presentations to interested groups to highlight the recommended priorities and to solicit input. Table 8.1 identifies the presentations made and the topics covered.

Table 8.1 – Presentations

| Group | Date | Topic |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Waco Transit Advisory Board | July 31, 2008 | Passenger Rail, Public Transportation |
| Rotary Club of Waco | August 11, 2008 | Future growth, impacts to future mobility and cost |
| City of Waco Water Dept | September 24, 2008 | Future growth, impacts to future mobility and cost |
| West Kiwanis Club | May 6, 2009 | Future mobility needs, passenger rail |
| Waco Visioning Committee | September 22, 2009 | Future growth, impacts to future mobility and cost |
| Waco Transit Advisory Board | October 1, 2009 | Future Public Transportation Needs and Priorities |
| Heart of Texas Regional Transportation Coordination Council | October 6, 2009 | Future Public Transportation Needs and Priorities |
| HOTCOG Executive Committee | January 26, 2010 | Future growth, MTP project priorities |

In addition to the presentations, the MPO staff also participated in two media events to provide information to the public on several issues related to the development of the MTP and to solicit input on those issues. The first event was an online question and answer session with the Waco Tribune-Herald conducted on March 2, 2009. This event was moderated by Tribune-Herald staff and permitted interested persons to submit questions. The MPO staff would then respond to those questions in real time. In addition to the questions from the public, the staff of the Tribune-Herald also submitted questions. An edited version of the Q&A session was then published in the Tribune-Herald on March 8, 2009.

The second event was an interview with the City of Waco office of Municipal Information conducted on September 23, 2009. The interview primarily covered passenger rail but also covered fiscal issues related to the development of the MTP. The interview was broadcasted on the Clear Channel operated radio stations within Waco on Sunday, September 27, 2009 and the City of Waco cable channel at various times for two weeks after the interview.

8.3 MPO Technical Committee Discussions and Recommendations

The MPO staff presented all analysis used in developing the MTP and identifying project priority recommendations to the MPO Technical Committee for their review and recommendations. The MPO Technical Committee also provided recommendations on

certain policy decisions, as requested by the MPO Policy Board, as well as project priorities. Table 8.2 identifies the MPO Technical Committee meetings where aspects of the development of the MTP were discussed or where recommendations were made. All MPO Technical Committee meetings were advertised and announced in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Plan.

Table 8.2 – Technical Committee Meetings & Discussions

| Date | Topic |
|-------------------|---|
| February 16, 2007 | Revisions to Highway Project Evaluation Criteria |
| October 24, 2007 | Socio-Economic Forecasts |
| June 10, 2008 | Bicycle Suitability Index |
| July 8, 2008 | Public Transportation Needs |
| September 9, 2008 | Review of Crash Patterns |
| January 13, 2009 | Highway & Public Transportation Project Proposals |
| February 10, 2009 | Highway project evaluation |
| March 10, 2009 | Highway project evaluation |
| June 9, 2009 | Financial Forecasts |
| September 1, 2009 | Highway project evaluation |
| October 1, 2009 | Public Transportation project evaluation |
| December 8, 2009 | Financial Forecasts and Fiscal Constraint Determination |
| December 17, 2009 | Technical Committee Project Priority Recommendations |

8.4 MPO Policy Board Discussions

The MPO Policy Board makes all decisions regarding transportation policies and adopts all plans and programs developed by the MPO. During the development of the MTP, several policy decisions were required. Table 8.3 identifies the decisions and discussions performed by the MPO Policy Board during the development of the MTP. All MPO Policy Board meetings were advertised and announced in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Plan.

Table 8.3 – Policy Board Meetings & Discussions

| Date | Topic |
|--------------------|--|
| September 30, 2008 | Selection of MTP Guiding Principles |
| October 27, 2008 | Bicycle Suitability Index |
| September 22, 2009 | Review of Draft Highway Projects for Consideration |
| October 19, 2009 | Review of Draft Public Transportation Projects for Consideration |
| January 6, 2009 | Review of Project Priority Recommendations |
| January 15, 2009 | Review of Project Priority Recommendations |

8.5 MTP Adoption Process

The process of formally adopting the MTP began with the completion of the draft MTP in December, 2009. The MPO made the draft of the MTP publicly available via the MPO website and 6 locations where paper copies were available. Table 8.4 identifies these locations. A formal public comment period commenced on December 18, 2009 and was advertised and announced in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Plan. The comment period ended at 5:00 PM on February 1, 2010. The MPO staff received 6 formal comments regarding project recommendations which were forwarded to the MPO Policy Board prior to adoption of the MTP. Appendix H contains copies of the comments received.

Table 8.4 – Locations for Paper Copies of Draft MTP

| Location | Physical Address | City |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| MPO Offices | 401 Franklin Ave | Waco |
| TxDOT – Waco District | 100 South Loop Dr | Waco / Bellmead |
| Waco Transit | 301 South 8 th St | Waco |
| Hewitt City Hall | 105 Tampico | Hewitt |
| Robinson City Hall | 111 West Lyndale St | Robinson |
| West City Hall | 110 North Reagan St | West |

The MPO conducted 5 public information meetings to give interested persons an opportunity to review the draft MTP, ask questions of staff and to submit comments or concerns regarding project recommendations. All meetings were advertised and announced in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Plan. Table 8.5 identifies the time and locations of these meetings.

Table 8.5 – Public Information Meeting Locations

| Date | Time | Location | City | Attendance |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| January 19, 2010 | 6:30 PM | Waco Transit Administration Building | Waco | 12 |
| January 21, 2010 | 6:30 PM | Lacy-Lakeview Community Center | Lacy-Lakeview | 4 |
| January 25, 2010 | 6:30 PM | Hewitt Community Center | Hewitt | 7 |
| January 26, 2010 | 12:00 PM | City of Waco Multi-Purpose Center | Waco | 6 |
| January 28, 2010 | 6:30 PM | West Community Center | West | 6 |

A formal public hearing was conducted at the February 3, 2010 meeting of the Waco MPO Policy Board to receive comments regarding the draft MTP and project recommendations. The public hearing was advertised and announced in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Plan. A total of 8 persons addressed the Policy Board during the public hearing. Appendix H contains a transcript of the comments received during the public hearing.