

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 (MTP). Each effort identified in this section was conducted in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Plan and all other applicable governing regulations.

8.1 – identification of issues and concerns

The MPO began development of this MTP with two separate processes with the following goals: 1.) Inform citizens of significant future mobility challenges for the region as identified by MPO staff, 2.) Solicit feedback regarding citizen concerns, and 3.) Solicit ideas on how to address these challenges and concerns. The first process focused on non-motorized transportation and the second process was not mode specific.

8.1.1 – bicycle and pedestrian modes

The Waco MPO Policy Board adopted the Waco Metropolitan Area Active Transportation Plan (ATP) in July 2019. The primary objective of the ATP is to provide better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between neighborhoods and destinations for people of all ages and abilities. The plan envisions a multi-modal transportation network that provides equitable, safe, connected, and convenient transportation alternatives for those who are unable to, or would prefer not to, travel by car.

The ATP is intended to be a resource for the Waco MPO and its member jurisdictions. Specifically, the ATP was used to inform the modal discussion in Sections 4 and 5 of this MTP. Additionally, ATP priority projects were scored using the project evaluation criteria described in Section 7. Many of the ATP recommended projects are included in the MTP's recommendations in Section 7, either as stand-alone projects or as components of larger transportation projects.

Development of the ATP included extensive public outreach, including public informational meetings, presentations to stakeholder groups, stakeholder interviews, an online public

opinion survey, and continuous engagement with the MPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Work Group.

8.1.2 – MTP development kickoff meetings

Once MPO staff completed most of the data analysis and the Technical Committee and Policy Board reviewed it, MPO staff held a series of meetings to present the results and to gather feedback from the public on regional priorities. In addition to receiving feedback electronically, the MPO staff conducted 2 meetings for which persons were able to provide input on which were the most important priorities for the 2045 MTP, as shown in Table 8.1.

table 8.1 – MTP kickoff public meetings

Meeting Date	Location	Attendees
May 1, 2019 1:00 P.M.	South Waco Community Center	12
May 1, 2019 6:30 P.M.	South Waco Community Center	6

MPO staff received a total of 21 comments from this process which were then utilized by staff in identifying project priorities for this plan. Comments received from the MTP kickoff meetings may be found in Appendix C.

8.1.3– MPO stakeholder discussions

MPO staff shared results of the data analysis with representatives of the twenty MPO member governments as well as interested stakeholders during the Spring and Summer of 2019. Feedback regarding mobility trends, concerns, and needs of each community and interest group was solicited and assessed. Stakeholder groups include Rotary Clubs within McLennan County, neighborhood associations within the City of Waco, the Waco Founders Lion Club, the Waco Business League, the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District (Live Well Waco), and the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce which includes representatives from area school districts and institutions of higher learning, and area governments. Many recommendations from these discussions were utilized by staff in evaluating and identifying project priorities for the 2045 MTP.

Recommendations from planning studies conducted since 2016 by private sector consultants working for the MPO were vetted through steering committees composed of knowledgeable and affected stakeholders and through extensive public outreach. Many of the recommended projects from the US Business 77 Corridor Study, the Waco Area Rapid Transit Corridor Feasibility Study, and the McLennan County Transit Need Study are included in the MTP's recommendations.

8.2 – MPO technical committee discussions and recommendations

The Waco MPO technical committee is comprised of key staff members of participating jurisdictions. This committee's primary role is that of professional advisor to policy makers serving on the MPO Policy Board. An important duty of the MPO Technical Committee is to review reports and analysis performed by the MPO staff and/or private sector consultants working for the MPO and then to provide recommendations regarding the priorities of proposed transportation investments to the Board.

The MPO staff presented several areas of analysis and public feedback to the MPO Technical Committee for their review and advice prior to the development of the draft plan. This input was generally forwarded to the MPO Policy Board for their consideration prior to inclusion into the draft MTP. The Technical Committee provided direction to the MPO staff and recommendations to the Policy Board regarding the US Business 77 Corridor Study, the Waco Area Rapid Transit Corridor Feasibility Study, and the McLennan County Transit Need Study which are included in the MTP's recommendations. Additionally, the committee provided technical insight into performance measurement and target setting. Table 8.2 identifies the discussions conducted with the Technical Committee in the development of this plan. Appendix A provides a listing of Technical Committee members serving at the time of MTP adoption.

table 8.2 – technical committee discussions

Meeting Date	Topic
August 10, 2017	Safety Performance
October 19, 2017	Safety Performance, Pavement & Bridge Performance Transit Service Recommendations Air Quality
November 16, 2017	Pavement & Bridge Performance
January 18, 2018	2015 Socio-Economic Data, New MTP Planning Requirements, Transit Asset Management Bridge Performance
April 5, 2018	New MTP Planning Requirements, 2030 & 2045 Population & Employment Projections, Locally Preferred Rapid Transit Corridor Alternative, Transit Need Study Feedback & Recommendations
May 3, 2018	2030 & 2045 Household Income Projections, Travel Time Performance
June 8, 2019	New MTP Planning Requirements, Travel Time Performance
July 11, 2019	Active Transportation Project Identification
September 6, 2018	Pavement & Bridge Performance
October 4, 2018	Pavement & Bridge Performance
January 3, 2019	Significant Regional Trends & Issues, Safety Performance Transit Asset Management
March 7, 2019	MTP Guiding Principles
April 4, 2019	MTP Candidate Project Identification
May 2, 2019	MTP Candidate Project Identification, Public Feedback from Kickoff Meetings
August 1, 2019	Project Evaluation Criteria
September 5, 2019	Project Evaluation Criteria
October 3, 2019	Financial Forecast, MTP Candidate Project Scores
November 21, 2019	Financial Forecast, MTP Candidate Project Scores, Passenger Rail

8.3 – MPO policy board discussions

Once reviewed by the MPO Technical Committee, the MPO staff then presented several areas of analysis and public feedback to the MPO Policy Board for their consideration prior to the development of the draft plan. Table 8.3 identifies the discussions conducted with the Policy Board in the development of this plan. Appendix A provides a listing of Policy Board members serving at the time of MTP adoption.

8.3.1– connected and automated vehicles MPO policy board subcommittee

Due to the potential of wide ranging impacts theorized from the deployment of connected and automated vehicles (CAV), the MPO Policy Board convened a subcommittee in May, 2018 to provide recommendations regarding future development of MPO plans and programs. The primary purpose of the CAV subcommittee was to review the current state of CAV deployment, the latest guidance regarding infrastructure and policy needs and provide a set of recommendations to the Board for their consideration prior to the development of the draft MTP. The subcommittee was composed of three Policy Board members and regional transportation stakeholders including transit and the private sector. Table 8.4 identifies the discussions conducted with the CAV Subcommittee in the development of this plan. For more information on CAV, see Section 5.6 of this MTP.

table 8.3 – MPO policy board discussions

Meeting Date	Topic
August 17, 2017	Overview of FAST Act Performance Monitoring Requirements
October 26, 2017	Safety Performance
February 15, 2018	Safety Performance, Transit Asset Management
April 19, 2018	New MTP Planning Requirements, Locally Preferred Rapid Transit Corridor Alternative, Transit Need Study Feedback & Recommendations, Travel Time Performance
May 17, 2018	New MTP Planning Requirements, Travel Time Performance
June 21, 2018	New MTP Planning Requirements, Travel Time Performance, Transit Need Recommendations
September 20, 2018	New MTP Planning Requirements, Pavement & Bridge Performance
October 18, 2018	Pavement & Bridge Performance
December 20, 2018	Safety Performance, Transit Asset Management
February 21, 2019	Safety Performance, Transit Asset Management
April 18, 2019	MTP Guiding Principles
May 16, 2019	MTP Candidate Project Identification, Public Feedback from MTP Kickoff Meetings
July 18, 2019	Active Transportation Project Identification, Connected & Automated Vehicles
August 15, 2019	Project Evaluation Criteria, Passenger Rail
November 21, 2019	Financial Forecast, MTP Candidate Project Scores, Passenger Rail

table 8.4 – CAV subcommittee discussions

Meeting Date	Topic
July 19, 2018	Purpose and Goals, Future Impacts on Travel, Key Variables in Planning Process
September 20, 2018	Possible Evaluation Criterion
April 3, 2019	CAV & Performance Targets, Recommendations for 2045 MTP

8.4 – MTP adoption process

The process to adopt Connections 2045: The Waco Metropolitan Transportation Plan, began in November, 2019 and concluded with adoption by the MPO Policy Board on January 17, 2020. Efforts to solicit citizen input on plan recommendations were conducted in accordance with the MPO Public Participation Plan and detailed in the following sections.



Public Informational Meeting held on January 6, 2020 to review a draft of Connections 2045: The Waco Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

8.4.1 – project priority survey

The MPO staff began the process of soliciting public feedback on the draft plan through the implementation of an online public survey published on the Waco MPO website in November, 2019 and available through January 7, 2020. Attendees at public informational meetings identified in Table 8.4 were invited to participate in the same survey in person during those meetings. A total of 41 persons participated in the survey, 9 of which participated through the online forum, 1 by phone, and 32 in person when attending one of the public information meetings. The survey presented detailed information on recommended projects included in the draft MTP along with project evaluation scores and project maps showing the location and extent of each project. Participants were asked to select up to 4 projects of importance from the draft MTP project recommendation list and rank those by personal priority. The survey permitted MPO staff to analyze the results to determine those project recommendations with the greatest or least support and those plan strategies with the greatest or least support. A copy of the survey may be found in Appendix D and a summation of the responses received may be found in Chart 8.1 and in Chart 8.2.

chart 8.1 – survey results: votes by strategy

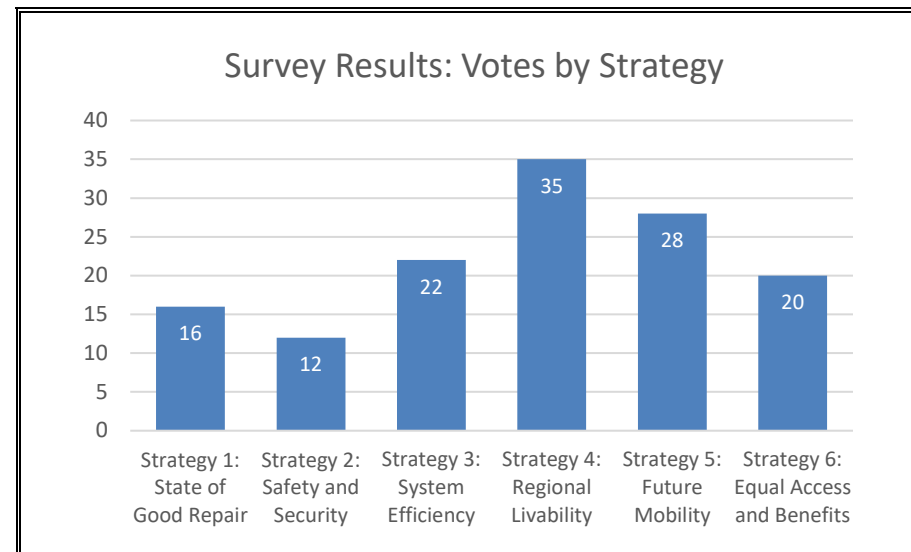
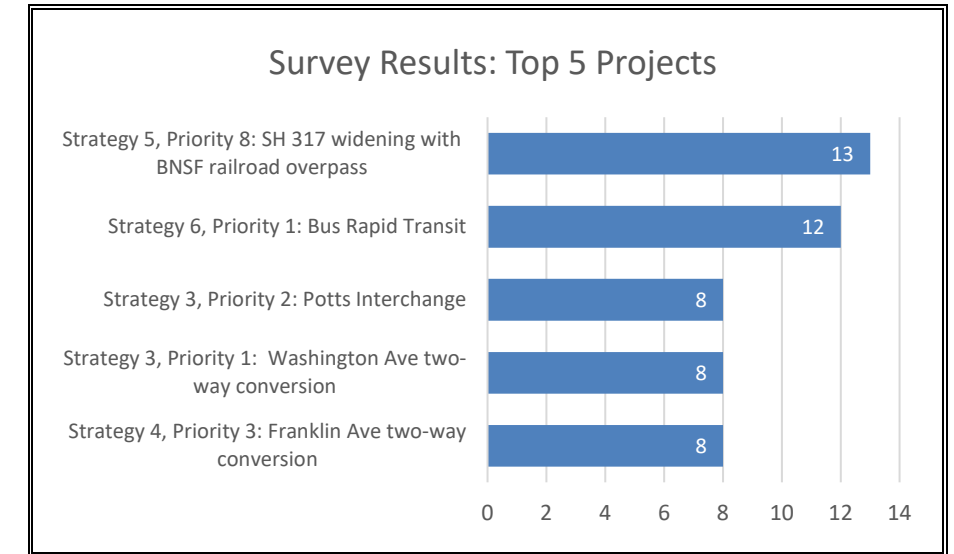


Chart 8.2 – survey results: top 5 projects



Prior to release of the draft MTP, the MPO staff reviewed draft project priorities with the MPO Technical Committee on October 3, 2019. The recommendations of the Technical Committee were then forwarded to the MPO Policy Board for their consideration on November 21, 2019. At that time the Policy Board authorized release of the draft MTP for public review.

8.4.2 – formal comment period

In addition to the survey, the MPO staff also conducted a more traditional process with a formal comment period and 5 public informational meetings which were advertised in accordance with the MPO public participation plan. The official public comment period was administered from November 22, 2019 through January 7, 2020. Table 8.5 identifies the dates and locations for each of the public informational meetings conducted as part of the MTP adoption process. In addition to these meetings, MPO staff also recorded a voice-over powerpoint presentation with identical information presented during the meetings and posted it on the MPO website for those who could not attend one of the meetings.

MPO staff received 10 formal comments the during the official public comment period. Comments received from the survey, the MTP adoption public meetings, and during the official comment period may be found in Appendix C. Also during the formal comment period, input was received from the Waco City Council expressing concerns regarding proposed IH-35 projects and requesting the

Policy Board consider changing the priority and timing of these projects. In response, MPO staff developed Alternative A that removed two proposed short-term priority mobility projects (Strategy 5) from consideration.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan by unanimous vote immediately after closing the public hearing.

table 8.5 – MTP adoption public informational meetings

Meeting Date	Location	Attendees
December 9, 2019 5:30 PM	Waco Multipurpose Center	9
December 10, 2019, 11:30 AM	Waco Transit System, Inc.	5
January 6, 2020 11:30 AM	Waco Transit System, Inc.	12
January 6, 2020 5:30 PM	Waco Transit System, Inc.	4
January 7, 2020 5:30 PM	Waco Transit System, Inc.	2

MPO staff presented the draft MTP along with feedback received from the survey, formal comments received as part of the public process and Alternative A, requested by the Waco City Council, to the MPO Technical Committee on January 9, 2020. At this meeting the Technical Committee recommended adoption of the draft MTP to the MPO Policy Board as originally proposed and did not recommend adoption of Alternative A.

The MPO staff presented the Technical Committee recommendation along with feedback received from the survey, formal comments received as part of the public process and Alternative A, requested by the Waco City Council, to the MPO Policy Board on January 17, 2020. After deliberation, the Policy Board chose to accept the recommendation of the MPO Technical Committee with the exception of a reordered list of short term priority recommendations in Section 7, Strategy 5. Project Priority 2 was shifted to Priority 7, project Priority 3 was shifted to Priority 8, and priority projects 4 through 8 were shifted to priority 2 through 6 accordingly (Section 7: Recommendations, Strategy 5: Demand for Future Mobility).

A formal public hearing was conducted immediately prior to action by the Board. No persons addressed the Board at the public hearing. The Board formally adopted Connections 2040: The Waco