

Public Participation

Introduction

Along with accurate data and technical analysis, public input serves as an important foundation guiding the long-range transportation planning process. Public participation is a particularly important part of the planning process because the plan considers transportation-land use scenarios for how the region may grow over the 25 year planning horizon. The public participation process ensured that the plan was representative of the desires and sensitive to the concerns of the diversity of communities in the Spartanburg region. It was the mission of the public participation process to gain insights about transportation needs and associated growth patterns from the different perspectives for a truly community-based plan.

A concerted effort was made to include all aspects of the regional community, not just those traditionally part of the planning process. The public involvement process revealed a collection of diverse opinions as to the preferred transportation future of the region; however, a number of clear goals emerged that helped to guide the LRTP. Through the process of establishing a regional transportation vision and continued dialogue with the community, the public participation process aided in the creation and prioritization of the region's transportation improvement projects program for the next 25 years.



SPATS Public Participation Plan

The SPATS PPP was approved by the SPATS Policy Committee in November 2007. The SPATS Public Participation Plan is intended to provide direction for public participation activities to be conducted by the SPATS MPO and contains the vision, goals, objectives, and techniques used by SPATS for public participation. As noted earlier, SPATS has been designated by the federal government to serve as the regional MPO for the SPATS Transportation Program. Therefore, in its public participation process, SPATS will strive to:

1. Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdiction concerns).



2. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered. Such access would also include, if necessary, the conversion of the key planning documents into Spanish (or any other language).
3. Give adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to, the approval of the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment by SPATS and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan shall be made available.
4. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan (including the financial plan) as a result of the public participation process, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan.
5. Solicit the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, and low-income households.
6. Provide a public comment period of 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the SPATS Public Participation Plan and/or any amendments for the groups listed in Item 1 above. Notice of the 45-day comment period will be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period and on the Spartanburg County and SPATS's websites. Notice will also be mailed to the entire SPATS mailing list prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period.
7. Provide a public comment period of not less than 30 calendar days prior to adoption of the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, Transit Development Plans, any amendments or updates, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects.
8. Coordinate its Public Participation Process with statewide Public Participation Processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and to reduce redundancies and costs.
9. Periodically review the Public Participation Process to ensure it provides full and open access to all. Portions of the process, that are found not to meet the needs of the constituency, will be revised.



SPATS Public Participation Vision and Goals

The vision for the public participation plan is that the public will be provided thorough information on transportation planning services and project development in a convenient and timely manner. To this end, the following goals and policies have been established.

Goal 1: To actively engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies contained in Federal and State law as well as in this Public Participation Plan.

Goal 2: SPATS shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis.

Goal 3: SPATS shall encourage the participation of all citizens in the transportation planning process.

Goal 4: SPATS shall strive to continuously improve public participation.

Goal 5: SPATS shall participate in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction.



LRTP Goals

The following provides the overall multi-modal goals and objectives for the SPATS area. These goals, along with the data and public input, provided a framework for the identification and prioritization of the transportation improvements in the plan.

Mission Statement

To facilitate efficiency, promote safety, and maintain and enhance the transportation system for the movement of people and goods in a manner which supports the economic vitality and the quality of life in the region.

Goal: Promote efficiency of operation and emphasize preservation of existing transportation system.

Objectives:

- Improve traffic flow by considering operational improvements such as intersection improvements, signal coordination and timing, and the utilization of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).



- Consider corridor-specific improvements including intersections, right turn lanes, and center median storage lanes.
- Measure system's performance based on Level of Service (LOS) criteria and strive to maintain an acceptable LOS.
- Promote transit and facilitate a planned fleet replacement schedule.
- Preserve and enhance transit facilities and non-motorized facilities such as multi-use trails.

Goal: Increase Safety

Objectives:

- Obtain and analyze accident data.
- Participate in the identification of high hazard locations.
- Facilitate the development of projects that enhance the safety of people and the movement of goods.
- Encourage improvements that mitigate safety hazards.

Goal: Increase Accessibility and Mobility Options

Objectives:

- Promote the improvement of the mobility of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems.
- Encourage the maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of transit service.
- Facilitate and promote coordination among public transit providers.
- Study accessibility of freight terminals and major generators in the area.
- Review the functional class system.
- Maintain, enhance and expand existing multi-use trails and bicycle facilities, with emphasis on developing an interconnected network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Coordinate enhancement grant funding to facilitate connected, non-vehicular transportation facilities.

Goal: Enhance Intermodal Connectivity and Integration

Objectives:

- Ensure the viability and maintenance of existing intermodal facilities.
- Improve intermodal transfers where needed.
- Facilitate the development of an integrated multi-modal transportation system.

Goal: Support Economic Vitality by Enabling Competitiveness, Productivity and Efficiency

Objectives:

- Identify the existing and future development areas and address transportation needs.
- Develop transportation projects that enhance existing developments and promote future growth.



- Optimize the use of existing networks to accommodate both existing and new developments.
- Concentrate on intersection improvements along selected corridors as a cost-effective strategy to reduce congestion and improve efficiency.
- Identify projects that facilitate efficient freight movement to, from and through the area.

Goal: Protect and Enhance the Environment

Objectives:

- Identify ways to improve air quality.
- Develop strategies to reduce emissions.
- Ensure equity in the benefits of transportation system.
- Protect recreational and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Promote consistency of transportation improvements with state and local plans.

L RTP Public Participation

The SPATS staff developed an informational flyer that was used to advertise the times, dates and locations of the various public input opportunities for the long-range plan. The flyer included information relating to corridor improvements, the bicycle and pedestrian master plan, transportation enhancements and mass transit.

Public information meetings were held at five separate locations throughout the Spartanburg MPO area. The following schedule of meetings were staffed by SPATS staff members, Partners for Active Living staff members and URS personnel:

- Monday October 13th, The Westside Club 4pm – 6pm
- Wednesday October 15th, VSP Club of Senior Centers (Chesnee) 11am – 12 noon and 1pm – 2pm
- Monday October 20th, Spartanburg County Public Library Headquarters, 5pm – 6:30pm
- Monday October 27th, Middle Tyger Recreation Center, 4pm to 6pm
- Wednesday October 29th, Boiling Springs Family Resource Center 4pm – 6pm



The format for each of the meetings was informal and mostly involved one-on-one conversations. Additional information, including maps and a video on the Highway 9 plan, was available for the public at each of the meetings. Comment forms also were available at the meetings. Public comments were received at the meetings, via email and via postal mail. The comments mostly involved recommendations for additional bus



service and sidewalks. The comments also included several positive responses to the Highway 9 plans. A detailed list of the comments received can be seen in **Appendix A** of this report.