

Chapter 2 – Public Participation

The OTO Public Participation Plan recommends that a plan-specific process be developed for the Long Range Transportation Plan. The OTO has employed a variety of methods to reach out to the public. The LRTP public participation process has included a paper and online survey, an all-day public official workshop, public input meetings with comment cards, a plan specific website, public comment meetings, and a presence at community events. In addition to these OTO directed efforts, each of the OTO member jurisdictions continually seek public input. Most recently, the City of Springfield, as part of their strategic planning process, engaged the public with an online survey and numerous listening sessions with anyone who requested one. The public input has served as a guide for goal development in this plan and has contributed to the strategies recommended herein.

OTO Website

A Plan website has been created through the OTO website. The web address is <http://www.ozarkstransportation.org/Journey2035>. Announcements regarding opportunities for public input and the progress of the Springfield Strategic Plan have been placed there. As the draft plan was developed, that information was posted as well.

Public Officials Workshop – April 8, 2010

As a kick-off event for Journey 2035, OTO conducted a brainstorming workshop with local public officials and their staff, as well as other interested parties. The workshop was one whole day which began with presentations by relevant professionals relating to the region’s population and housing trends, transit, air, freight, roadways, bicycles and pedestrians, and future funding. This was followed by several brainstorming sessions in which attendees could contribute to general policies for the area, as well as specific directions OTO should take in relation to the various transportation modes. The Agenda and attendees can be found in Appendix A.

One unique feature of this event was the assignment of attendees to a table. Each breakout table was arranged so attendees were mixed based on their backgrounds and geographic representation. These groups sat together during the first visioning exercise and then were rearranged for the next set of

Figure 2 - Save the Date Card for Workshop



activities. This was done so everyone would have an opportunity to participate and so that everyone would have a chance to hear the varying perspectives of the attendees.

After each topical presentation, a copy of the presentation was hung on the wall. Each group was given a set of sticky notes and throughout the day, attendees were encouraged to use the sticky notes to make comments on the presentation wall. This would allow for comments to be collected throughout the day. A “digital” comment board was kept during the day too. As breakout groups reported the results of their visioning exercises, each comment was captured on the computer and displayed for all to see. This demonstrated that each comment was received and also allowed everyone to see that they were captured correctly.

The first visioning exercise of the day asked one question, “How can the transportation system help create the community you, your children, and your grandchildren want to live in, come 2035?” The following visioning sessions focused on modal changes for the future. The second session asked about the vision for Transit, Rail and Air in 2035. The third session focused on the vision for bicycles and pedestrians, while the fourth examined the vision for streets, highways, and freight.

A variety of answers were received for the questions and the full results can be seen in Appendix A, but the answers could be categorized into several themes:

- Regionalism, Partnerships, and Cooperation
- Multimodality and Interconnectivity
- Higher Density/Smart Growth/Efficient Land Use
- Bus Transit Expansion
- Bicycle/Pedestrian
- Corridor Maintenance and Preservation
- Passenger Rail
- Education
- Benchmark Cities

The results were summarized for the attendees before adjourning the workshop and the results carried forward into the information presented at the public input meetings.

Springfield Strategic Plan Process

The Springfield Strategic Plan update was a regional process, though the end product made recommendations for the City of Springfield. OTO was staff for the Transportation Committee for the Strategic Plan. There were over committee members who represented a variety of interests and covered a geography larger than the City of Springfield. The Transportation Committee met 13 times, not counting additional subcommittee meetings. Over 1200 volunteer hours were put into this effort. The Strategic Plan Committee participated in the initial planning workshop with the public officials. This joint public input provided direction for Journey 2035.

Public Input Meetings

In 2010, OTO held six public input meetings around the region. At each meeting, the public had the opportunity to review current trends, ask questions, complete a survey, and comment on what they would like to see in the future for the region. These meetings were advertised in a variety of ways. The OTO website and calendar listed each public input meeting. A press release was sent out ahead of each meeting. The meetings were also advertised in the Community Free Press and the Springfield News-Leader. The News-Leader package included online advertising as well. OTO also took advantage of the many online community calendars, and posted the meetings on those sites as well.

Figure 3 - Calendar Showing Meeting Dates



June 1, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. – Strafford City Hall

June 4, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. – Springfield's Downtown Farmer's Market

June 8, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. – Ozark Community Center

June 10, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. – Republic High School

June 15, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. – Nixa City Hall

June 17, 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. – Willard Community Center

Almost 60 separate individuals attended the public input meetings. Though the meetings were held in different areas of the region, many comments at each meeting addressed transportation issues for the whole region, in addition to those community-specific concerns. Input addressed every type of transportation issue this region faces. The public requested road improvements, enhancements to the bus service, bicycle improvements, sidewalks and trail connections, and both freight and passenger rail changes. A list of the specific comments can be found in Appendix B.

Public Input Survey

A survey was available for completion by the public at the public meetings as well. The survey was then made available on the web and at community events for further public input.

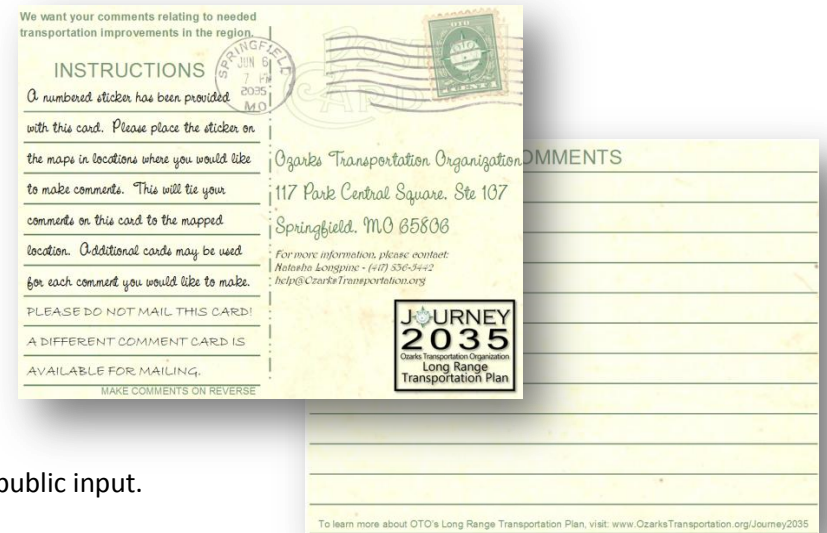
Results show that respondents believe traffic congestion is currently a problem in the community and that will continue for the next 10 and 20 years. The majority think that the existing transportation system does not meet the needs of all citizens. This is for a variety of reasons, including the aging population, the need for mass transit, more public transportation for those who can't drive, the need for a user friendly transportation system, traffic congestion, the region is growing faster than road improvements can be made, problematic railroad crossing, and other similar comments.

The public listed the top five measures for improving mobility as Widening Existing Roads first, Building New Roads, Increasing Bus Service, Adding Pedestrian Facilities, and Adding Bicycle Facilities fifth. This was out of a list of 10 options. The original survey and results can be seen in Appendix C. The public thought government officials should consider Congestion, the Efficiency of the System, and Safety over all else when making transportation decisions. Three changes the public would make regarding transportation in the region include Improving Roadway Design, Adding/Improving the Sidewalk Network, and Adding/Improving Bike Paths.

Long Range Transportation Plan Subcommittee Meetings

The Long Range Transportation Plan Subcommittee is comprised of OTO Technical Planning Committee members. The Subcommittee started meeting in September of 2010 and has been responsible for establishing the Plan Goals and Objectives, the Prioritization Criteria, and project submissions. Each of these items will be addressed in their respective Chapters.

Figure 4 - Comment Cards at Meetings



Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The bicycle and pedestrian recommendations of the plan have been developed through the OTO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The Committee has set additional bike/ped goals for Journey 2035, developed a process for tracking and prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian projects, and redesigned the bike/ped plan map.

Major Thoroughfare Plan Subcommittee Meetings

The Major Thoroughfare Subcommittee met and took public comment two times to specifically discuss the extension of East Republic Road. This then became part of a larger discussion on all necessary changes to the Major Thoroughfare Plan which was further discussed at another two meetings. The recommended changes will be discussed in the Streets and Highways Chapter. Public comment for changes to the Major Thoroughfare Plan was accepted at the Multicultural Festival on January 17, 2011, where OTO had a booth. Further comment was taken at the Public Hearings for the entirety of Journey 2035.

The Subcommittee meetings were well attended by the public, though spoken comment was given only regarding the extension of East Republic Road. No comments regarding the Major Thoroughfare Plan were received at the Multicultural Festival, although general public input was received regarding the transportation system. This information will be covered under the public comments and public input survey.

City Utilities Transit Fixed Route Advisory Committee

OTO staff met with the Fixed Route Advisory Committee at City Utilities Transit to further develop input on the transit system in its current form, as well as to gain insight for the future of transit in the region. Details from this meeting will be discussed in the Transit Chapter.

Public Hearings for Comment on the Plan

Public Hearings were scheduled in September and October of 2011 to gather comments on the final plan document. A public hearing was included as part of the regular OTO Board of Directors meeting on October 20, 2011. The meetings were advertised

Figure 5 - Advertisement for Public Hearings



Public Comment Meetings
See and comment on the recommendations in the
OTO Long Range Transportation Plan
Read the Plan!
www.OzarksTransportation.org

Sept. 22, 5pm to 7pm	Ozark Community Center 1530 W. Jackson
Sept 26, 5pm to 7pm	Springfield Library Station 2535 N. Kansas Expressway
Sept. 27, 5pm to 7pm	Strafford City Hall 126 S. Washington
Sept. 29, 5pm to 7pm	Republic Fire Station #1 701 US Hwy 60 East
Oct. 1, 10am to 12pm	Springfield Library Center 4653 S. Campbell Ave.
Oct. 3, 5pm to 7pm	Battlefield Community Room 5434 S. Tower Drive
Oct. 4, 5pm to 7pm	Willard Community Center 220 W. Jackson
Oct. 6, 5pm to 7pm	Nixa City Hall 715 W. Mount Vernon

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through several area newspapers, including the Christian County Headliner, Community Free Press, Marshfield Mailer, Nixa Xpress, Republic Monitor, and the Springfield News-Leader.

During the meetings, OTO staff provided comment cards, as well as kept track of verbal comments expressed by attendees. Each meeting consisted of a projected presentation and display boards highlighting the Plan and its recommendations. The meetings were held in an open house format that allowed the public time to visit on their own schedules and ask questions of staff as they had them. The specific comments received are listed in Appendix D.

Comments that were received during the public meetings have been shared with the Technical Planning Committee and the Board of Directors, as well as agencies that might also be impacted by the comments. Several comments are already addressed by the Plan or other OTO activities. Those comments pertaining to specific projects will be reviewed again as those projects move forward.

Figure 6 - At the Public Hearing in Ozark

