

T R A V I S   C O U N T Y

*Transportation Plan*

*Creating Tomorrow's Choices Today*



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Transportation & Natural Resources  
Public Engagement Plan  
October 2016

## Purpose

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Travis County is developing a long-range transportation plan to identify transportation needs and solutions, incorporate future options and choices, and prioritize improvements. The County adopted a Land, Water & Transportation Plan (LWTP) in 2014 as a set of long term goals and policies which provide a framework for how the County protects land and water resources and builds transportation and park systems. The completion of a local transportation plan is one of the action items in the LWTP. The County wants to gather public input and identify transportation needs and solutions for the unincorporated areas in the county where the county is responsible for building and maintaining infrastructure. The overall intent of the plan is to focus on priorities today and include future options and choices for mobility services.

The Public Engagement Plan (PEP) identifies the goals for this process and outlines the strategies the County will employ to effectively incorporate public input into the development of the local Transportation Plan. The public engagement team, led by the Transportation and Natural Resources Department with support from the public engagement consultant Concept Development & Planning (CD&P), will implement this plan.

## Goals

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Travis County is committed to active communication with residents, individuals, community leaders, and organizations throughout the county to ensure that their preferences and opinions are heard and considered. The County wishes to implement a public engagement process to gather input from the diverse populations in Travis County with an emphasis on those within the unincorporated areas of the county.

The goals of this PEP are:

- Create public awareness about the LWTP and local Transportation Plan and public engagement process through a deliberative outreach effort
- Provide an open and transparent process throughout the entire planning effort
- Provide a variety of accessible opportunities and options for participants to get involved
- Focus on reaching the public where they already gather at organization meetings and events across the county
- Gather input on the community's transportation priorities, options, and preferences
- Obtain input from geographically and demographically diverse set of participants
- Provide engaging interactions that facilitate collecting the most valuable input
- Incorporate public input into the Draft Transportation Plan

## Participants

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To be most successful in developing a Transportation Plan that meets the needs of residents and others traveling within the county, the public engagement effort will reach a wide variety of audiences. Engagement

of residents throughout the county will be encouraged, and additional resources and efforts will be focused on reaching residents in the unincorporated areas of the county. The team will reach out to those who are directly and indirectly affected by the transportation plan and will conduct extensive outreach to identify and encourage participation by all interested participants.

## Public

**General Public** – Residents within the county and those that use the county transportation system.

**Unincorporated Areas** – There will be an emphasis on reaching those in the unincorporated areas where the County provides and maintains transportation options.

**Underrepresented and Underserved Groups** – The team will make additional efforts to reach and solicit participation and input from groups and citizens who traditionally do not participate in civic planning efforts. Outreach techniques will be incorporated to involve participants such as people with disabilities, residents with limited English proficiency, communities of color, the elderly, and low-income residents.

## Governmental Agencies

**Transportation Agencies** – Entities that provide mobility services in and around the county and build the infrastructure to support them.

**Social Service Agencies** – The team will reach out to agencies both internal to the County and external, that provide social services and support to residents of the county, in order to find opportunities for joint efforts to disseminate project information to the community.

**Local Jurisdictions** – There are 22 jurisdictions in part or whole in Travis County and each of them will have useful input related to existing planning efforts, needs, policies, and funding. All of these jurisdictions will be able to provide insight specific to their entity.

## Educational Partners

**Independent School Districts** – There are more than 15 ISDs that provide services within the county. The team will work to reach out to these entities and incorporate their input in the planning process.

**Universities and Community Colleges** – The county also has several different universities and community college campuses, and many commute in and out of the county for education.

## Public Engagement Process & Schedule

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The timeline for development of the transportation plan is:

- Fall 2016 through early 2017 – Gather public input on current and future needs and priorities
- Early to mid 2017 – Draft the Transportation Plan
- Fall 2017 – Share the Draft Plan with the public and gather feedback

- Early 2018 – Complete the Final Transportation Plan

Below is the more detailed scheduled for the initial public engagement timeline.



	Public Engagement Launch	Public Engagement	Comment Review, Analysis, and Recommendations	Report on Public Input and Recommendations, and LWTP Adoption
	SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER	OCTOBER - DECEMBER	DECEMBER - JANUARY	JANUARY
Community Meetings	●	●		
Public Meetings		●		
Jurisdictional Outreach	●	●		
Media Release	●	●	●	●
Advertisements		●		
Social Media		●	●	●
Email Updates	●	●	●	●
Webpage Updates	●	●	●	●
Surveys	●	●		
Focus Groups		●		
Public Comments	●	●	●	●

## Participation Opportunities & Outreach Tools

Various tools will be employed to educate and engage the public. These tools are all effective methods to disseminate project information and provide a convenient and easy way for Travis County residents and others to provide feedback and input. The timelines illustrate the areas the team will be focusing on throughout the engagement process.

### Community Meetings and Events

#### October – December

The team will reach out to groups that have regularly scheduled meetings to distribute project information. Community meetings will serve as a forum to create awareness of the Transportation Plan, the ways to get involved and provide feedback, and information about the upcoming public meetings. Presentations at these meetings will be coordinated with the host organization.

The team will also identify local events such as festivals and fairs, as well as public locations such as grocery stores, and libraries to set up information tables or exhibits to share information about the Transportation Plan and how to participate. Efforts will be made to identify places where underserved residents of Travis County can have access to information on the Transportation Plan. Certain events and locations may be manned by team members, while others may simply provide information about the Transportation Plan and opportunities to participate in the public engagement effort.

## Public Meetings

### November

Public meetings will be held to share information about the Transportation Plan and facilitate the process of gathering public feedback. Two meetings will be held in locations on the eastern and western side of the county. The same information will be shared at both meetings.

The meetings will be conducted in a hybrid format, consisting of an open house session, followed by a presentation and discussion session, followed by an additional open house period. The open house format allows attendees to come and go as they are available, and facilitates one-on-one dialog, while the presentation format allows a greater level of detail to be shared and an opportunity for a question and answer discussion. Meeting materials and activities will be designed to gather input from participants and include tools such as instant audience feedback polls, questionnaires, and collection of general comments. A Spanish translator will be present at all public meetings, and every effort will be made to select locations which are ADA compliant. The project team will attempt to accommodate other special needs with advance notice.

Meetings will be promoted using email updates, flyers, media releases and advertisements, social media, public notices and phone outreach.

## Jurisdictional Outreach

### October – November

The Public Engagement Team will work to involve local municipal jurisdictions and other mobility service agencies within Travis County. These entities have unique input to share on behalf of their residents, such as city developed transportation plans, land use plans, and resource management plans, and how those plans interrelate to the Travis County Transportation Plan. The team may engage in outreach by phone or via in-person meetings to gain insight into the valuable input these jurisdictions can contribute.

## Media Tools

### September – December

**Media Releases** – The team will develop a media list for Travis County and create media releases to share project information and promote awareness and participation in the Transportation Plan development process. Media releases will be distributed to announce the launch of the project, meeting dates, and final results.

**Advertisements** – The team will identify media outlets in which to place advertisements promoting the engagement process, meeting times and locations, questionnaires, and other opportunities to participate.

**Social Media** – Social media will be used to educate the public on the process, announce public meetings and other public engagement opportunities, distribute project materials, and generally get people involved in the process. A media campaign with emphasis on the residents of the unincorporated areas of the county will be utilized to inform them of the project and illicit their input. The existing Travis County social media networks including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube will be used to share this information.

**Videos** – The team will coordinate the production of 45 – 60 second promotional videos to promote the project and use in the social media campaign. The first video will be done in both English and Spanish to

introduce the project to the community and promote the survey. As needed, a second round of videos can be produced in English and Spanish to promote additional public engagement opportunities.

### Project Materials

The project team will design and develop project materials in an effort to share background information and considerations. These materials may include a fact sheet or brochure, flyers, meeting handouts, exhibits, informational graphics, and maps. These collateral materials and maps are essential in providing information to the public and will be developed in an easy to understand format. Materials will be translated into Spanish as needed.

### Email Updates

#### September – December

Periodic emails will be distributed to provide project highlights and updates and detailed information on opportunities for public feedback. Emails may be forwarded to interested participant groups to be sent out to their contact list or can be used to update their own newsletters, blogs, and other materials. The project team will collect email addresses from all public and community meetings and events and they will be added to the distribution list.

### Webpage

#### September – January

A Transportation Plan webpage will be created on the Travis County website to share project information and materials. The project team will work closely with the Travis County Information Technology Services (ITS) staff to continuously update the webpage with materials as they become available. Community and public meeting notices, as well as links to social media outlets, the project survey, and comment submission instructions will be included on the Transportation webpage. An identical webpage in Spanish will also be created on the Travis County website to share information and materials.

### Participant Database

#### September – January

An essential component of the public engagement process will be the development of a comprehensive participant database of city, county, and other jurisdiction contacts, neighborhood associations/contacts, planning groups, businesses, economic development groups, environmental and social advocacy groups, transit services, hospitals, schools, residents, community and civic organizations, special interest groups, media, and other interested parties. Email addresses and cell phone numbers will be collected at all public engagement activities and added to the database. The database will be used to distribute information about the project, such as meeting notifications and will be updated throughout the project as new participants are identified. Those opting in to receive text messages may be alerted to new information on the website in that manner, instead of by email.

## Collecting Public Input

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The team will offer many different formats for those interested in the Transportation Plan to share their ideas, comments, and concerns. Some may be interested in sharing longer written comments while others may only want to take a brief survey. Similarly, some may want to participate in all aspects of the Transportation Plan process while others just want to share comments on a single aspect. The tools outlined below will facilitate many opportunities for sharing feedback on the Transportation Plan. All data collected will be categorized, analyzed, and included in the final report.

Travis County will accept comments on the Transportation Plan and this process at any time. To be included as official comments for the record, they must be submitted in writing, via email, by phone, or as responses to a survey or poll. All official comments must be received by the comment period close date. Discussions that occur during the public engagement process, such as social media, one-on-one conversations with staff, and question and answer sessions will be beneficial for the process; however, they will not be documented as official comments.

**Surveys** – A survey will be developed to collect input on priorities and preferences of the public. The survey will be available online and in paper format. All paper responses will be entered in the online tool so that reports of data collected can be run easily. The team will work to identify organizations, other community events, and activities where the questionnaire can be distributed.

**General Comments** – Many participants will want to share general comments on the Transportation Plan and process. These comments will be collected via paper comment cards, email, and mail. The project team will review all comments and summarize priorities and preferences identified to facilitate use in the development of the Transportation Plan. All comments will be included in the final report. Questions and comments that do not pertain to the Transportation Plan (such as questions on other projects or county services) will be forwarded to the appropriate contact but not included in the public comment record.

**Focus Groups** – Focus groups will be utilized to review concepts and to collect more in depth input on the Transportation Plan and process. The groups may include seniors, people of color, businesses/major employers, disabled/para transit users, the technology sector and youth groups. It is anticipated that approximately 15 people will attend each focus group.

## Evaluation

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To ensure that a high degree of public involvement is achieved in the most effective and efficient manner possible throughout this process, public outreach tools will be monitored on a regular basis, and adjustments will be made as needed to enhance levels of engagement. As input is collected, the team will encourage participants to provide feedback on the quality of public involvement activities and the community outreach strategies employed. The evaluation methods listed below are both quantitative and qualitative to help team members gauge the effectiveness of the public engagement process. Evaluations of the methods below will be measured on a monthly basis.

The evaluation methods are:

- Create public awareness of the Transportation Plan and public engagement process
  - Evaluated by: type and number of media coverage; social media engagement; number of participants, surveys, and comments collected
- Provide an open and transparent process throughout the planning effort
  - Evaluated by: availability of materials online and around the County
- Provide a variety of accessible opportunities and options for participants to get involved
  - Evaluated by: number of participants by opportunity
- Focus on reaching the public where they already gathered
  - Evaluated by: number and geographic locations of community meetings/events Project Team visits
- Gather input on transportation priorities, options, and preferences
  - Evaluated by: analysis of input given
- Obtain input from geographically and demographically diverse t of participants
  - Evaluated by: demographic survey questions, zip codes
- Provide engaging interactions that facilitate collecting the most valuable input
  - Evaluated by: analysis of input given, number of participants

## Final Report

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All comments will be categorized and summarized in an official public record report. This report will be presented to the County and used to develop the Travis County Transportation Plan. Further, it will include a detailed summary of the public engagement outcomes and the outreach activities conducted during this process, a summary of input received along with backup documentation, and key findings of the outreach effort. Results reflect those that participated in the process and are not a statistical representation of Travis County residents.