



OUTREACH & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

As a part of the update to the SEDA-COG MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the MPO developed and implemented a range of events and opportunities to effectively engage the public and foster an ongoing stakeholder dialogue throughout the draft plan development phase. A variety of activities implemented at key milestones throughout the update process enabled the MPO to solicit and collect public feedback and comment that could be reviewed and assimilated, as appropriate, into the draft plan in a timely manner. These activities also enhanced the MPO's data collection efforts over the course of the LRTP update process. The MPO made a concerted effort to employ a broader range of tools and methods to facilitate both public communications and outreach activities as indicated in its recently updated Public Participation Plan. For example, online surveys were designed and launched to extend the reach and timeframes for public feedback during specific activities such as the Transportation Issues Forums (TIFs) and the Environmental Justice Workshops (EJWs). The MPO website continued to serve as a key repository for meeting announcements, public outreach activities, meeting summaries and other pertinent information regarding the LRTP update process. Additionally, an increased effort was made to make 'real-time' connections with social media audiences by posting photos and information associated with draft LRTP-related events on SEDA-COG's Facebook and Twitter pages while the events were taking place.

The MPO also engaged and maintained an ongoing conversation with its committee members throughout the draft plan development process; namely, the Steering Committee, Advisory Group, and Project Scoring Group. These members were called upon for specific purposes throughout the planning process to provide support and guidance regarding the overall development of the updated plan.

The phases of the LRTP process and related activities are summarized below, including the dates and locations of the stakeholder and public meetings.

A. Primary Activities

1. Data Collection

Four stakeholder-focused special interest group meetings were held during the early and middle timeframes of the draft LRTP plan development process in addition to scheduled MPO presentations that actively engaged the MPO Committee membership in the data collection phase. The special interest group meetings included the following:

a. Transportation Issues Forums (TIFs)

Two TIFs were conducted; one on Tuesday, September 22, 2015 and a second one on Thursday, October 1, 2015. The purpose of the SEDA-COG MPO Transportation Issues Forum was to solicit input from key stakeholders regarding their transportation-related issues, concerns and priorities with the future in mind. The input collected was further reviewed and utilized to reinforce existing project data or generate new project concepts for inclusion in the MPO's updated LRTP. What was unique about these two sessions was the opportunity for attendees to view and identify with the feedback the State Transportation Commission (STC) received in response to their spring 2015 online survey conducted in conjunction with their Twelve Year Program (TYP) update. The STC received over 15,634 transportation issues from more than 5,300 customers statewide. Of those issues, nearly 5% were located within the SEDA-COG MPO region, with biking/walking, road pavement conditions, and safety being the most



commonly identified issues. Other key issues for the MPO region included transit, bridges and freight movement.

The SEDA-COG MPO took several additional steps to refine the STC's regional survey data results before presenting it to the meeting attendees. Two other recent comment sources were evaluated (2015 STC Twelve Year Program, 2014 PennDOT LRTP) and the feedback was categorized and screened geographically. Finally, the field of comments was narrowed through a *cluster analysis*, which resulted in groupings of comments that addressed similar transportation issues and transportation infrastructure elements. More than 50 clusters were identified and each cluster was displayed over aerial mapping for viewing during the Issues Forum. Project concepts were developed based on the comment clusters, and other related planning efforts were identified to demonstrate how the comments may be addressed. Meeting attendees were invited to review the project concepts and provide additional comments. The option to 'like' a project concept was also available to attendees and could be demonstrated by the addition of a 'star' to the project description. Mapping of the projects included on the existing Long-Range Transportation Plan was also available, and meeting attendees were encouraged to draw and add features or corrections to these projects as well. Detailed documentation about the cluster analysis methodology and its use in the LRTP public outreach effort is provided in **Appendix E**.

Another highlight of this event included 'State of the District' presentations by representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PennDOT) Engineering Districts 2 and 3. Karen Michael, the Assistant District Engineer for Design for Engineering District 2, provided an update on the state of the transportation system in the nine-county district at the first Transportation Issues Forum held on September 22, 2015, at the Clinton County Maintenance Building. Jonathan Ranck, Transportation Planning Specialist with District 3, provided a similar presentation at the second forum held on October 1, 2015, at the Union County Government Center. Both presentations focused on the Department's efforts to monitor and maintain its aging bridges and roadways while integrating innovative practices to maximize the investment of transportation dollars through safety enhancements, expedited project delivery, partnering, and generally improving the overall quality of the transportation system.

Nearly 50 stakeholders attended both meetings. All of the feedback gathered at each meeting was analyzed and integrated into the MPO's LRTP update process. The Transportation Issues Forum meeting agenda, handouts, display boards, and PennDOT presentations were also made available for review on the SEDA-COG website following the sessions.

b. Environmental Justice Workshops

Two Environmental Justice Workshops were conducted on Thursday, April 7, 2016 in two different locations within the eight-county MPO region. The meeting agenda, handouts, and county maps for the mapping exercise were the same for both sessions which were attended by a total of 22 stakeholders. An online survey form was also designed and posted on the SEDA-COG MPO website for use by those stakeholders who were invited, but were unable to attend. The survey was made available for use by the meeting invitees and their peers from April 7 to April 21. Paper copies of the survey as well as the link to the online version were given to the meeting attendees so that they could share them with their peers and other stakeholders they felt may have input that would contribute to the discussion.

A morning session was held at the Durrwachter Alumni Conference Center of the Lock Haven University Campus in Lock Haven, Clinton County, followed by an afternoon session at the Union County Government Center in Lewisburg, PA.

The general purpose of the workshop was to solicit input from a range of key stakeholders who by the nature of their organization or the services offered could provide insight on the potential motorized or non-motorized transportation needs and/or concerns of the traditionally underserved populations within the MPO region. The feedback from the meeting was reviewed and considered, as appropriate, during the development of the draft LRTP.

The following organizations were represented at the Environmental Justice Workshops:

- Clinton County Planning Commission
- Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc.
- Greater Susquehanna Valley United Way
- Union-Snyder Agency on Aging
- Service Coordination Resources
- PA Career Link (Clinton/Northumberland/Snyder/Union)
- Snyder County Planning Commission
- Transitions of PA
- Mifflin-Juniata County Department of Human Resources
- Grey Medical Advocate, LLC
- Call A Ride Service, Inc.
- Montour County Planning Commission
- Mifflin-Juniata Regional Services Corp.
- Berwick Area United Way
- Lewisburg Neighborhoods Corp.
- Evangelical Community Hospital
- Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corp.
- Union County Planning Commission

Several primary themes surfaced over the course of the meetings, particularly following the mapping exercise; namely: healthcare-related transportation needs, employment-related transportation needs, and increased non-motorized transportation alternatives - sidewalks and bike paths. The healthcare and employment-related discussions included, but were not limited to improving/expanding fixed transit routes, and better alternatives to volunteer transportation services.

As a part of this meeting the MPO also solicited input and recommendations regarding the most effective methods of communications with the traditionally underserved populations in conjunction with the public engagement activities associated with the draft LRTP and TIP updates. As a result, two additional free print publications were added to the MPO's general media contact list. The new publications, the Bargain Sheet and the Webb Weekly, have broad distribution throughout the majority of the counties included in the MPO region, and both publications are delivered to residential mailboxes and are also available online.

2. Steering Activities

The Steering Committee assisted with the identification of a unified plan vision and its framework, project scoring and ranking criteria, and the evaluation of fiscal scenarios and project costs. The meeting



agenda and meeting summaries for each of these sessions are posted on the SEDA-COG MPO website. The dates of the meetings were as follows:

- June 12, 2015
- August 7, 2015
- October 2, 2015
- November 20, 2015
- January 22, 2016
- March 11, 2016
- April 29, 2016

In addition to the meetings with the MPO Steering Committee, two PennDOT District “Strategy Days” were also conducted during this period. The half-day strategy session for PennDOT District 3 was held on October 22, 2015; and the session with PennDOT District 2 was held on January 29, 2016.

3. Draft Plan

The draft plan phase consisted of presentations to the MPO Steering Committee, Agency Coordination Meeting (ACM), and a public meeting held during the required Public Review and Comment Period. These activities were conducted on the following dates:

- **Agency Coordination Meeting**
 - April 27, 2016
- **Public Review and Comment Period**
 - May 11, 2016 to June 10, 2016
- **Public Meeting**
 - May 25, 2016

4. Final Plan

All comments received during the Public Review and Comment Period, at the ACM meeting, and at the public meeting were compiled, reviewed, and as appropriate integrated into the final version of the draft LRTP. The final plan phase consisted of a presentation to the SEDA-COG MPO and official adoption of the final version of the updated Long Range Transportation Plan. The SEDA-COG MPO adopted the 2016 LRTP at a public meeting held on Friday, July 15, 2016, at SEDA-COG’s office in Lewisburg, PA.

B. Comment Tracking & Response

Public comments received during the public comment period, along with comments received from the LRTP Steering Committee and MPO staff, were collected and tracked in a tabular format. A copy of this “Record of Comments and Resolution” is provided in **Appendix J**. The following information is tracked for each written comment received:

- Date of Comment
- Name of Commenter
- Source/Location of Comment (referenced to the page and topic of the comment)



- Text of Comment
- Status of Comment Follow-Up (Unassigned, Assigned to [person], In Progress, Complete)
- Comment Resolution (how the comment was addressed)
- Date of Most Recent Status Update
- Editor (person implementing the comment resolution)
- Back-Check Editor (person checking the comment resolution)

C. Public Participation Activity Portfolio

In compliance with the Public Participation Plan, the Activity Portfolio containing record of the public involvement process for the LRTP will be assembled and provided to the SEDA-COG MPO as a separate submission. The Activity Portfolio for the LRTP will include the following:

- Public notices and announcements of comment periods and involvement activities
- Summaries of the proceedings of the public outreach activities
- Listings of participants
- Record of materials displayed, distributed, and/or made available
- Compilations and analysis of surveys conducted and comments received
- Interested Parties distribution lists and correspondence sent/received
- Record of media coverage of the event