

**PUEBLO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN
PACOG MOVES THE REGION 2045**



**Public and Stakeholder
Participation Plan**

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1. Introduction

Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) has created this public and stakeholder participation plan (PSPP) for the 20-year update of the long-range transportation plan, ***PACOG Moves the Region 2045***.

The *PACOG Moves the Region 2045* long-range transportation plan (LRTP) will use the strategies developed in the 2040 LRTP as a starting point and focus on developing a long-term vision and priorities for transportation in the region. Plan development began in April 2020 and includes the development and public review of a draft LRTP. This PSPP ensures that extensive efforts will be made to gather public and stakeholder input, including views on freight, rail, transit, passenger, aviation, bicycle, pedestrian, highway, and other transportation issues important to PACOG's future.

PACOG Moves the Region 2045 is a policy document that will establish a vision and priorities for transportation in the region for 25 years. This PSPP outlines how public engagement will take place. Public participation is critical to assessing individual concerns and gathering a snapshot of community sentiment. Therefore, the greater participation in the process throughout the community; the more accurately future services can reflect the quality of life vision for all the residence and tourists of the MPO.

Highlighting the important role that the public and stakeholders play in the long-range planning process, the PSPP outlines how the public can get involved and offer input on transportation issues. Created through a review of current best practices and recommendations for public and stakeholder outreach, the PSPP also targets outreach to Environmental Justice (EJ) and Title VI groups.

Top features include:

- The use of innovative online tools that allow PACOG to extend outreach to a larger and more diverse group of residents in developing the 2045 LRTP.
- Scenario planning to present transportation situations to the public in a realistic context to help determine a long-term vision for transportation in the region.
- Meaningful and collaborative public engagement, including giving targeted consideration and attention to vulnerable environmental justice populations, marginalized communities, and tribal governments.

PACOG will take comments on the *PACOG Moves the Region 2045* PSPP from May, 2020, through June, 2020. Commenters will be responded to and their input incorporated into the plan as appropriate. All comments are documented in Appendix B. The PSPP was finalized in May 2020, unless significant updates occur, and another comment period is appropriate. Public and stakeholder engagement efforts will continue through the 2045 LRTP's

development in Summer 2020. Overall completion of the PACOG 2045 long-range transportation planning process is anticipated in September 2020.

The public may continue to comment on the PSPP or provide input for the PACOG 2045 plan by visiting the website at: <https://www.pacogmovestheregion-2045.com/>, filling out a comment sheet or map comment from the website, or sending mail to the following address:

John Adams
MPO Director
Pueblo Area Council of Governments
211 East D Street
Pueblo, CO 81003

1.1 PACOG PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The current federal transportation legislation, Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST) requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop and utilize a participation plan that provides reasonable opportunities for interested parties to comment on the metropolitan transportation plan and metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP). Further, this participation plan must be developed “in consultation with all interested parties”, and the public must have input on the participation plan. The participation plan must describe “explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes” for elements of the participation program.

PACOG maintains public involvement procedures that are used to guide public participation in its regional transportation planning and programming processes. The stated goal of the public involvement procedures is to provide an environment encouraging proactive and continuous public involvement while establishing and maintaining trust in the planning process. This goal is to be achieved through disseminating complete and timely information and providing full public access.

PACOG defined the following objectives in order to meet its public involvement goal:

1. Provide timely notice of public involvement opportunities.
2. Obtain active public input early in the process.
3. Ensure that all citizens who wish to have input have that opportunity, and that all ideas are given fair consideration.
4. Obtain widespread community involvement throughout the planning process.
5. Conduct a public involvement program as a two-way learning process.
6. Perform outreach to those particularly affected by specific alternatives and plan recommendations to involve them in the alternatives evaluation process.

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7. Integrate and coordinate public input for regional and local entity planning processes, where possible.
 8. Obtain and maintain the involvement of supporters of plan recommendations, and
 9. Provide feedback to the public to encourage their future involvement.

1.2 ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) states that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity.” Sites for participation activities, as well as the information presented, must be accessible to persons with disabilities. ADA requires specific participation – particularly for developing para-transit plans – such as:

- Outreach by developing contacts, mailing lists, and other means of notification.
- Consultation with disabled individuals.
- The opportunity for public comment.
- Accessible formats.
- Public hearings.
- Summaries of significant issues raised during the public comment period.
- Ongoing efforts to involve persons with disabilities in planning.

1.3 ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, together with related statutes and regulations, provides that “no person shall on the ground of race, color, and national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal funds. The entire institution, whether educational, private or governmental must comply with Title VI and related Federal civil rights laws, not just the program or activity receiving federal funds.”

Executive orders regarding EJ and outreach to persons with limited English proficiency are also regulated under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

2. Visioning & Plan Development

2.1 PRIORITY SETTING

The first phase of public and stakeholder engagement will focus on gathering input to develop a long-range vision and on setting priorities for transportation in the region. This process will begin in May 2020 and will be completed in June 2020.

2.1.1 PACOG Moves the Region 2045 Website

A dedicated website has been created for the PACOG 2045 LRTP separate from, but linked to, the PACOG website. The site is available to the public and stakeholders at <https://www.pacogmovestheregion-2045.com/>. It was launched in late May 2020 to post this PSPP for the required 30-day public comment period. The website will be maintained and advanced with 2045 LRTP updates as they become available. The site will comply with all federal, state and PACOG requirements regarding accessibility.

The website will feature informational pieces about the LRTP such as news releases, fact sheets, infographics, maps and reports. It will also include links to social media pages, a comment form and engagement schedule. The website will also link to an interactive 2045 LRTP MetroQuest survey tool.

2.1.2 MetroQuest Survey

An interactive, online survey tool called MetroQuest will be used to provide general information about the LRTP, to identify the public's transportation priorities, to show the tradeoffs that occur when choosing one priority over another, pinpoint geographic locations through mapping and to gather general public input. (Figure 1 shows sample MetroQuest screens.) The success of using the platform, in terms of engaging as many people as possible, will depend on informing the public and stakeholders about its availability and capabilities. Therefore, a proactive outreach campaign will be conducted to direct people to the MetroQuest page. This effort will include social media ads and posts, prominent positioning on the LRTP website, news releases, mass distribution e-mail "blasts," promotion through presentations, and other communications efforts. The MetroQuest site will be available for one month beginning in May 2020.

Figure 1. Sample MetroQuest Survey Screens

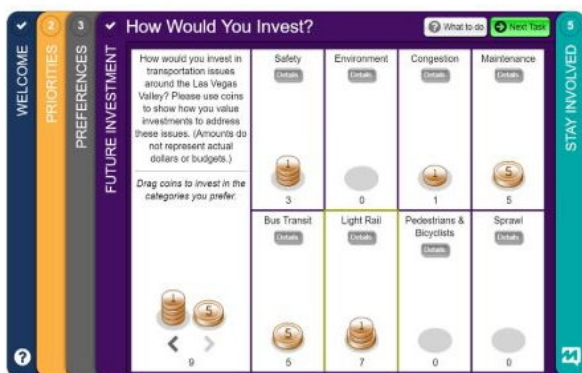
Tradeoffs



Priority Ranking



Budget Allocation



Map Marker



2.1.3 Social Media Advertisements

Social media advertisements, particularly through Facebook, will be used to engage large numbers of PACOG residents. The ads will be used to direct social media users to engagement opportunities such as the MetroQuest survey site and website. They will also be used to inform the public about the LRTP by linking to information like social media posts or other sources.

2.1.4 Newspapers, Radio & Television

Press releases and 2045 LRTP updates will be distributed to regional radio, newspaper and television stations through established PACOG stakeholder lists. Opportunities for public comment, survey, draft and final plan review will be promoted through these channels. Follow up email and/or phone calls may occur as needed to encourage coverage. An effort for 2045 LRTP information to be posted on outlet social media pages will also be made.

2.1.5 Existing PACOG Communications Channels

PACOG has infrastructure in place for communicating with residents. PACOG will strategically use the following capabilities throughout visioning and plan development, as needed, to engage the public and stakeholders in the 2045 LRTP process:

- Existing PACOG website.
- Rawlings Library (website; on-site information pending COVID-19 stay-at-home order).
- County Courthouse (website; on-site information pending COVID-19 stay-at-home order).
- The Justice Center (website; on-site information pending COVID-19 stay-at-home order).
- Regional and local social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn).
- Proactively sending information to the news media.
- Links from partner agency web and social media sites.
- Multiple presentations to Advisory Committees and PACOG Board Members.
- Making staff available for media interviews, online presentations to stakeholder and public groups at existing meetings (due to COVID-19 concerns, all outreach will be done online).

2.1.6 Targeted Stakeholder Outreach

Ensuring that stakeholders with a specific interest in the 2045 LRTP are engaged is of particular importance; in addition, federal regulations list certain groups that should be targeted for participation. The following groups will be contacted directly and more than once:

- **Transportation Agencies** comprised of transportation groups that have established partnerships with PACOG, such as transit agencies, county road commissions, municipalities, airport, etc.
- **Resource Agencies** such as Public Works, Board of Water Works, Metropolitan Districts, Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), Neighbor Works, local agencies responsible for land use management, parks and recreation, economic development, urban renewal and historic preservation.
- **Federal Agencies** comprise the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Maritime Administration, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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- **Local Officials** comprise elected and non-elected officials of local governments in the region.
 - **Youth Groups** targeted outreach to youth who participated in the Community and Youth Spaces report and data gathering to ensure youth transportation issues and topics are addressed.
 - **Other Stakeholder Groups** comprise a diverse collection of groups that have transportation-related interests. Examples include SoCo Runners, Steel City Cycling Club, Vance's Bike World, Southern Colorado Trail Builders, Pillars of Unity, Pueblo Sustainable Solutions, Fit Instincts, Great Divide, chambers of commerce, various businesses and industries, colleges and universities, school districts, community organizations, and many more.

Outreach will be sent through e-mail and, in some cases, U.S. mail in June 2020 to all known stakeholder groups to ensure they are aware of the LRTP process, including the ways that they can engage in it. Follow-up e-mails will be sent as reminders to stakeholders and to inform them of open public comment periods as another way to make sure they are kept informed and engaged.

In an effort to reach the public, stakeholder groups will be asked to help expand PACOG's reach. Organizations such as these typically maintain various channels for communication with their members and constituencies. PACOG will ask that information about the 2045 LRTP be shared through stakeholder e-mail lists, social media sites, websites, phone trees, newsletters, and other outreach tools. PACOG will provide stakeholder organizations with information to distribute.

Information will be provided to stakeholders who are willing to share information about the 2045 LRTP. Informational materials, a presentation and link to MetroQuest survey will be compiled in a virtual "packet" then provided to the facilitator of the meeting.

As feasible, efforts will be made to go to public libraries, universities and colleges, transit facilities and other places where people gather to provide information about the 2045 LRTP.

Limited English Proficiency

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, 2000, requires that recipients of federal financial aid must ensure that the programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to persons with limited English proficiency.

The racial and ethnic composition of Pueblo's population has undergone significant changes in the past three decades. This is particularly the case with the City of Pueblo, which has experienced a substantial growth in its Hispanic population. PACOG will provide Spanish translation for 2045 LRTP website information and the MetroQuest survey.

Engaging All Stakeholders

It is particularly important to ensure that minority, low-income, and disabled populations are engaged in the public and stakeholder engagement process. Members of these populations may not always be aware of the development of the new LRTP or its importance to them, and they may have difficulty participating through traditional engagement methods.

Direct, proactive outreach will be made to organizations that represent and/or primarily include minority, low-income, and disabled residents of the region. PACOG will proactively reach out to these organizations included in their stakeholder's database. Resources for identifying additional stakeholders will include the following:

- PACOG staff and liaisons who work frequently with these groups
- Cities and counties
- Regional organizations representing minority, low-income, or disabled residents
- Civic organizations

Once identified, an e-mail will be sent to these groups. Follow-up e-mails and phone calls, as appropriate, will be employed as well. Offers to attend existing meetings (online) to make a presentation or simply have a discussion will be extended.

Opportunities to go to where people are already gathering, such as community events or meetings, will be limited due to COVID-19 health concerns and stay-at-home orders. Hosting an extensively publicized online MetroQuest survey will be a key strategy in gathering and streamlining 2045 LRTP input.

2.1.7 Internal PACOG Communications

Ensuring that PACOG employees are engaged is another key part of the 2045 LRTP process. PACOG staff will ultimately implement the vision presented in the plan, so providing them with opportunities to give input and learn about how the plan affects them in the short and long terms is important. This engagement could help promote buy-in to the plan. PACOG employees are also located throughout the region, are involved in their communities, and are ambassadors for PACOG.

Existing internal channels will be used to inform PACOG employees about the 2045 LRTP. An e-mail message will also be sent at key milestones. Informational materials and a PowerPoint presentation will be developed to be shared at standing employee and management meetings in addition to Technical Advisory Committees and Board meetings.

3. 2045 Plan Review

3.1 LRTP DRAFT REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The second round of public and stakeholder engagement will obtain public and stakeholder input on the draft 2045 LRTP. Many of the methods used during visioning will be carried over to plan development. The 2045 LRTP draft plan will be posted for public and stakeholder comment for 30 days. Comments received will be addressed, as appropriate and included in the final 2045 plan appendix. The 2045 Final LRTP is expected in September 2020.

3.1.1 Website, E-mail, Press and Social Media Outreach

The 2045 LRTP website will continue to be active through plan development. In addition to information and resources included on the site during visioning, the site will house the report documenting the results of the first round of public and stakeholder engagement. It will also house the draft 2045 LRTP document and will provide mechanisms to comment on the draft, such as a comment form and e-mail address.

Letters will be sent through e-mail to all stakeholder groups and individuals who indicated interest in the Visioning phase of the 2045 LRTP as well as press release to radio, newspaper and television stations. The first e-mail will be sent to announce the release of the draft LRTP. A link to the draft plan and ways that stakeholders can comment on it will be included. A second e-mail will be sent upon approval and release of the final 2045 LRTP.

Stakeholder group communications channels, social media and online presentations will also be leveraged to inform people about the draft 2045 LRTP and provide opportunities for input.

3.1.2 Environmental Justice

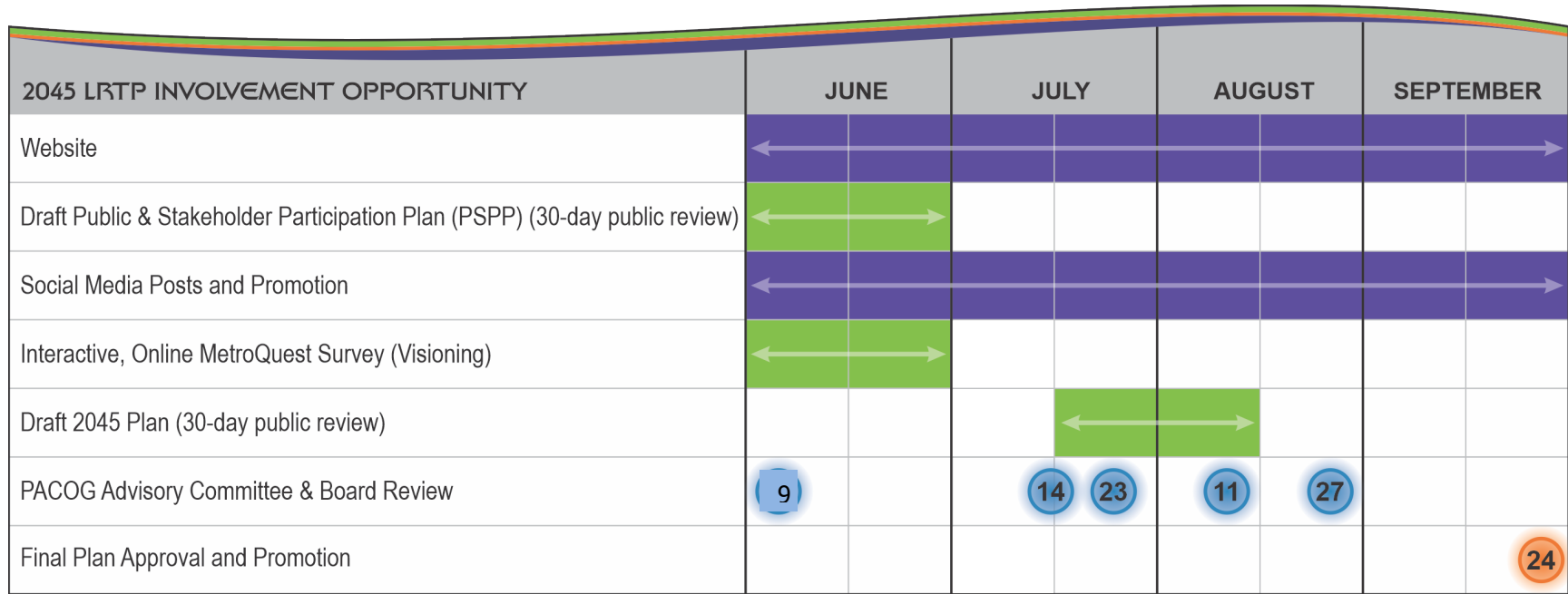
PACOG will follow up with all stakeholder groups contacted during visioning to engage them in developing and reviewing the draft 2045 LRTP. Stakeholders categorized as part of PACOG environmental justice outreach will receive e-mailed letters that include the draft plan and ways that they can comment on it. Follow-up e-mails will be used to remind groups about the draft plan and to again offer to meet with them and make presentations.

3.1.3 Release of the Final 2045 LRTP

The ultimate objective is the development and release of the 2045 LRTP. Following extensive public and stakeholder engagement and approval by PACOG Policy Board and Advisory Committees, these methods will be used to release the plan to the public:

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- Letter e-mailed to stakeholders
 - Regional mass distribution e-mail “blast”
 - News release
 - Posting on the PACOG and PACOG Moves the Region 2045 websites
 - Posting on Facebook, Twitter and other existing social media pages

4. Timeline



5. Performance Measures

5.1 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION EFFECTIVENESS

PACOG will trace a variety of measures to determine the effectiveness of public and stakeholder participation efforts on the LRTP 2045 visioning and plan development processes. Analyzing the results of outreach and engagement activities will allow us to determine if additional efforts are needed with specific stakeholders.

Measures that PACOG will track include:

- Total number of people engaged through website and MetroQuest survey.
- Geographic locations of people engaged (captured by MetroQuest survey).
- Numbers of people engaged who are determined to be low-income, minority and/or disabled (captured by MetroQuest survey).
- Number of different organizations engaged, including those representing all modes of transportation along with low-income, minority and/or disabled individuals.
- Number of efforts made to engage the public and stakeholders.
- Number of comments received through all engagement mechanisms.
- Number of people reached through Facebook and/or other social media advertisements.