

3 | Public Participation

3.1 OVERVIEW

The MPO's adopted Public Participation Plan outlines a process to engage the public in the transportation planning process. The Plan also allows for the Farmington MPO to meet the requirements of MAP-21 legislation to provide for cooperative, continuous and comprehensive transportation planning, as well as other requirements and best practices for citizen outreach. Through public involvement, the MPO gained perspective on regional priorities and stakeholders assessment of the transportation system. A good public participation plan allows planners and decision makers to identify and understand aspects of the transportation system directly from the users and the general public. This process was integrated into the overall development of the MTP update. A summary of public comments received during the MTP update process is found on the MPO website under Metropolitan Transportation Plan (www.farmingtonmpo.org).

3.2 PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

In January and February 2014, the MPO began reaching out to local government, stakeholders and the general public through presentations and a stakeholder workshop for this update. In July, the MPO hired a planning consulting firm, Sites Southwest, to facilitate public meetings, conduct stakeholder small group meetings, and to add an online mapping and survey tool. This online tool, "Mapita" from MIG, Inc., was configured to allow respondents to pinpoint the location of an idea or comment on a map. The website also included a more traditional survey. The online survey and mapping was deployed during August and September through emails, links, and other material advertising the MTP



update and meetings. Three hundred and six responses were submitted with the online survey and mapping tool.

The first deployment of the online survey and mapping tool occurred at the San Juan County Fair in early August. The MPO staffed a booth, together with volunteers from the City of Farmington Community Development Department, and informed the public about the MTP update, distributed information about the upcoming meetings, helped citizens take the online survey, and administered a paper version of the survey. There were 55 respondents to the paper survey.

The consultant team then conducted eight stakeholder meetings in smaller groups, and led six evening open house meetings. These meetings were advertised by email, newspaper ads, flyers at meeting locations, and phone calls to stakeholder representatives. The meeting locations were scheduled throughout the MPO area.

During this time, the MPO gathered public input at three additional meetings at the invitation of the Farmington Rotary Club, the Community Health Improvement Council and the Farmington Rotary Club. MPO staff also gave two radio interviews. The online survey tool was available in Spanish, and Spanish-speaking MPO staff was in attendance at each meeting. Assistance in Navajo was available by request. The presentations and other public meetings are listed in Table 3-1.

3.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public meetings were held at various locations at key points in the development of the plan (Table 3-1). The MPO website was updated with links to the surveys and information about meetings, and MPO staff sent e-mails to contacts to advertise the opportunities for input. The Policy and Technical Committees received updates on the status and progress of the plan update throughout the process. Quarterly newsletters also summarized key accomplishments during the development of the update. The 30-day public comment period for the draft MTP ran from August 12 to September 10, 2015.



Sample of postcard handout inviting public participation; reverse side included meeting and web access information

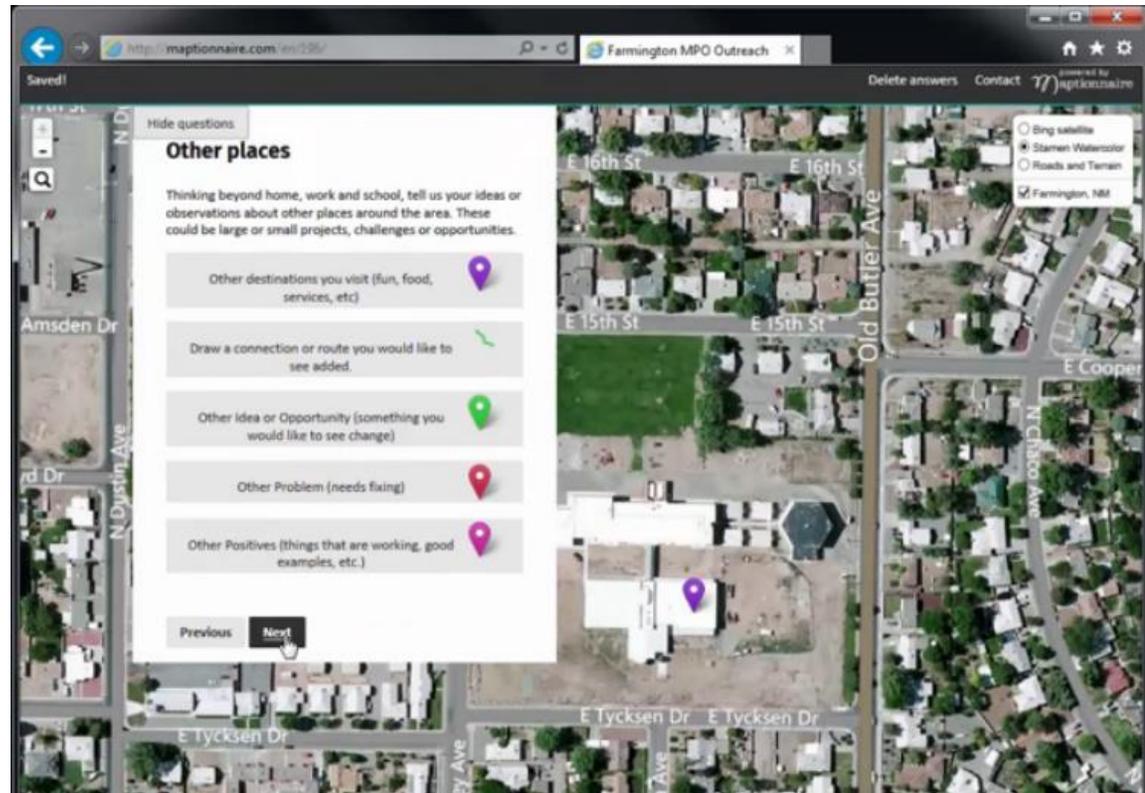
TABLE 3-1 - Public Meetings where the Farmington MPO sought input for the 2040 MTP

WHEN	WHERE	WHAT
January 13, 2014	MPO Office	Presentation to Farmington Chamber of Commerce
January 21, 2014	MPO Office	Presentation to Farmington Young Professionals
January 27, 2014	Aztec Commission Chambers	Presentation to Aztec City Commission
January 27, 2014	Bloomfield City Council Chambers	Presentation to Bloomfield City Council
February 4, 2014	San Juan County Commission Chambers	Presentation to San Juan County Commission
February 5, 2014	MPO Office	Stakeholder outreach meeting
February 10, 2014	San Juan College	Presentation to San Juan College Student Senate
March 18, 2014	Farmington City Hall	Presentation to Farmington City Council in public meeting
August 11-16, 2014	San Juan County Fairgrounds	County Fair booth for public outreach and surveys
August 19, 2014	San Juan College	Public open house
August 20, 2014	MPO Office	Stakeholder input meeting
August 20, 2014	Aztec Commission Chambers	Stakeholder input meeting
August 20, 2014	San Juan College East	Public open house
August 21, 2014	MPO Office	Stakeholder input meeting
August 21, 2014	MPO Office	Stakeholder input meeting
August 21, 2014	San Juan Rehabilitation Hospital	Stakeholder input meeting with Community Health Improvement Council
August 21, 2014	Sycamore Park Community Center	Public open house
August 26, 2014	San Juan County Fairgrounds – McGee Park	Public open house
August 27, 2014	Four Corners Economic Development	Stakeholder input meeting
August 27, 2014	Bloomfield Cultural Center	Stakeholder input meeting
August 27, 2014	Bloomfield Cultural Center	Public open house
August 28, 2014	Farmington Civic Center	Stakeholder input meeting
August 28, 2014	MPO Office	Stakeholder input meeting
August 28, 2014	San Juan Country Club	Stakeholder input meeting with Farmington Rotary Club
August 28, 2014	Kirtland Youth Association	Public open house
September 4, 2014	MPO Office	Stakeholder input meeting with Place Matters
April 2, 2015	MPO Office	Stakeholder input meeting with San Juan Trail Riders
August 25, 2015	Kirtland Youth Association	Public open house for Plan Draft
August 25, 2015	MPO Office	Public open house for Plan Draft
August 26, 2015	Aztec Commission Chambers	Public open house for Plan Draft
August 26, 2015	Bloomfield Seniors Center	Public open house for Plan Draft
August 27, 2015	Farmington Civic Center	Public open house for Plan Draft

3.4 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

During the public outreach efforts, staff met with representatives from many stakeholders to seek input and provide information on the development of the plan. The stakeholder groups represented in meetings included:

- Bonnie Dallas Senior Center
- Bloomfield Senior Center
- Central Consolidated School District
- City of Aztec
- City of Bloomfield
- City of Farmington
- Farmington Chamber of Commerce
- Farmington Rio del Sol Kiwanis
- Farmington Rotary Club
- Farmington Municipal School District
- Four Corners Economic Development
- Navajo Ministries
- Northwest Regional Planning Organization (NWRPO)
- Red Apple Transit
- River Reach Foundation
- San Juan Center for Independence (SJCI)
- San Juan College Enterprise Center
- San Juan County
- San Juan County Office of Emergency Management
- San Juan Place Matters
- San Juan Regional Medical Center
- Transit Services for Disabled Veterans



Screen-shot from the online comment mapping tool and survey

3.5 A GROWING REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DISCUSSION

Through this and previous public outreach efforts, the MPO is building a network of participants in the regional transportation planning process. The result is a growing list of stakeholders from an ever-broader scope within the community. The MPO found success in engaging stakeholder representatives through direct invitations to its public open houses and stakeholder meetings, as opposed to general invitations to these events. In order to engage the general public, the MPO will continue to use advertisements in newspapers and community bulletins, as well as e-mail deployment of notices and online surveys. The MPO does not maintain its own social media accounts, but will cooperate with local government and community partners to leverage their efforts for further community outreach. Also, a presence at events such as the San Juan County Fair engaged members from a broad geographic area.

Going forward, the public engagement of the MPO will be two-fold. The MPO will continue engaging stakeholders and the general public in transportation planning decisions. The MPO will also reciprocate as a representative of transportation needs and planning principles in support of the other stakeholder groups in the region.