

Missouri Department of Transportation Engaging Underserved Populations

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish procedures that allow for, encourage, and monitor participation of all citizens in the planning processes administered by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). This includes, but is not limited to low income and minority individuals, those with limited English proficiency and other underserved populations. While traditional means of soliciting public involvement may not reach such individuals, or might not allow for meaningful avenues of input, the intent of this policy is to highlight the reasonable actions throughout the planning process to provide opportunities for underserved populations to participate.

Goals and Objectives for Engaging Underserved Populations

Goal: The goal of engaging underserved populations is to offer real opportunities for the engagement of Missouri citizens to participate in the development of projects and programs.

Objectives:

- To determine what non-English languages and other cultural barriers exist to public participation within the state.
- To provide a general notification of meetings, particularly forums for public input, in a manner that is understandable to all populations in the area.
- To hold meetings in locations which are accessible and reasonably welcoming to all area residents, including, but not limited to, low-income, minority, limited English speaking members of the public.
- To provide methods for two-way flow of information and input from populations who are not likely to attend meetings.
- To provide a framework of actions appropriate to various types of plans and programs, as well as amendments or alterations to any such plan or program.
- To use various illustrative visualization techniques to convey the information including but not limited to charts, graphs, photos, maps and the internet.

Identification of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who are either directly, or indirectly, affected by projects or programs, or recommendations regarding the projects or programs. Those who may be adversely affected, or who may be denied benefit of a program's recommendation(s), are of particular interest in the identification of specific stakeholders. Stakeholders include several groups: general citizens, minorities, low-income persons, limited English speaking persons, public agencies, private organizations and businesses.

Demographics: There are 5,988,927 residents in the state of Missouri (U.S. Census, 2010). Approximately 83 percent of the population of the state consider themselves to be solely of a white race. Almost 98 percent of the population speaks English at least very well.

Some of the techniques that can be used to engage the general population are public notices of meetings in the local newspaper and open house format public information meetings. While these techniques will continue, staff will continue to make a greater effort to engage the general public with techniques such as, nominal group exercises, surveys, use of local news media, engagement of community groups, social media outlets and the world wide web.

Minorities: Minority populations make up approximately 15 percent of the population in the state (see table below). African Americans make up the largest minority, accounting for 12 percent of the total population. The Asian population makes up approximately two percent, while all other races are at one percent or below one percent of the total population. The other races include; American Indian, Pacific Islander, and others. Persons who consider themselves to be of more than one race account for two percent of the population.

State of Missouri Population (By Race)

Category	Population	Percent of Population	Change from 2000 to 2010
Total	5,988,927	100.00%	↑7.0%
Total One Race	5,863,161	97.90%	↓0.5%
White	4,958,832	82.80%	↑4.4%
African American	694,716	11.60%	↑10.2%
American Indian	29,945	0.50%	↑9.2%
Asian	95,823	1.60%	↑59.2%
Pacific Islander	5,989	0.10%	↑97.0%
Other Race	77,856	1.30%	↑75.6%
Multi-Race	125,767	2.10%	↑51.8%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census Data: <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>

Low-Income: Low-Income households account for 18 percent of the population. Low income populations of the state should be given every reasonable opportunity to provide input on transportation plans and programs, to avoid disproportionate harm, or lack of benefit, of transportation programs and projects.

While low-income individuals may have access to all of the traditional means of public involvement, discussed under "general public", they may be less likely to become involved, or offer input.

Public Agencies: Public agencies can provide valuable input to the planning process, in addition to assisting in gaining participation from traditionally under-represented populations. Pertinent public agencies include those that have clients who fall into under-represented populations, including but not limited to minorities, low-income, and limited English proficiency households. These agencies have great insight into the transportation needs of their clients and are useful partners in overcoming difficult barriers that may not be

understood by professionals dealing more distinctly with the provision of transportation services.

Private Organizations and Businesses: Private organizations and businesses offer a number of perspectives that are valuable to the planning process. Often, transportation for three employees is of critical concern to private sector employers. For that reason, representation of private business interests will be welcomed in the planning process.

Outreach Efforts to Engage Underserved Populations

Engaging minority, low-income and limited English proficiency populations can be challenging. Language and cultural differences may not be compatible with the more traditional means of engaging the public in the planning process.

Some methods of gaining input either directly or indirectly from this portion of the population include focus groups, informal interviews, agency/advocacy group contacts, and meetings held in these groups locations.

MoDOT staff uses the following techniques, as deemed appropriate, during its planning studies and project selection phases:

- Presentations to professional, citizen, and student organizations.
- Articles in community newsletters.
- Press releases and meetings with local media representatives.
- Bilingual advertisements as necessary.
- Informal conversations with individuals and small groups.
- Interviews with people who are or could be affected by study recommendations.
- Presentations by experts on various transit-related subjects.
- User and non-user surveys.
- Use various illustrative visualization techniques to convey the information including but not limited to charts, graphs, photos, maps and the internet.
- Meetings held at religious venues as a way to involve various groups of traditionally under-served populations.
- Printing of information in various languages to engage certain populations, as well as responding to any comments in various languages, if necessary, through bilingual communications.
- Presentations to various Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) committees to ensure the participants on urban committees are given the opportunity to discuss.
- Presentations to various Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) committees to ensure the participants on rural committees are given the opportunity to discuss.

Other techniques are examined to determine the best methods of involving all segments of the service area population in the planning process.

Public Outreach in the Long-Range Transportation Plan

MoDOT, MPOs, RPCs, public officials, special interest groups and citizens set and refine Missouri's transportation vision in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The vision is Missouri's ideal transportation system; however, Missouri cannot afford all the components of this ideal system. The LRTP also includes policies and goals and a fiscally constrained strategy for achieving the highest-priority components of the transportation vision with an agreed upon timeframe. This requires working with multiple groups to determine where Missouri's transportation dollars should be spent.

MPO LRTPs include policy development, fiscally constrained needs identification, public involvement and conformity with air quality regulations. The content of these MPO plans is similar to the statewide long-range transportation plan. MPO plans include public outreach and require approval of the MPO board of directors, which is comprised of the region's local officials. In general, items in MPO and state LRTPs are consistent. Resources will be allocated only to the needs and projects agreed upon by both the MPO and MoDOT.

LRTP public involvement concentrates on developing Missouri's shared transportation vision. It captures and uses public opinion on transportation issues and needs. The plan targets all levels of public involvement including MPOs, RPCs, local officials, legislators, interest groups, traditionally underserved populations and the public. MoDOT gauges Missourians' expectations of the transportation system and the relative priority of each expectation.

The following are various outreach efforts conducted during the formation of the most recent LRTP:

Stakeholder interviews:

Long-range transportation planning offers MoDOT an ideal opportunity to identify and respond to the concerns of customers and constituents. Issues and interests that are very difficult to address within the context of short term or project-specific discussions can be explored, deliberated and, to a great extent, resolved through the long-range planning process. In order to serve this critical, consensus-building role, issues and interests must be known and invited into the long-range planning process. For this reason, stakeholder interviews were the first activities scheduled as part of the MAP initiative.

MoDOT took the following approach with stakeholder interviews. The interviews were conducted from April through August 2005. Approximately 120 interviews were conducted across the state, drawing on a range of perspectives, experiences and interests. While traditional and invested stakeholders, such as planning partners and advocates were interviewed, particular emphasis was placed on interviewing individuals who have not previously participated in similar activities. In order to cast a wider net, approximately 75 stakeholders were identified and scheduled for interviews initially. During the interviews,

stakeholders were asked to suggest additional interview subjects. These suggestions were then used to identify new participants in the process.

In order to encourage candid feedback, interviews were conducted independently and confidentially by consultants. Participants were told that their interviews were not for attribution. Interviews were dynamic and responded to the issues and interests of the participant. However, consultants did use an interview guide to assist in gathering consistent information. In addition to the interview guide, these themes were explored further through a second survey that was, in most cases, left with the stakeholder to be completed and mailed separately.

While the 120 stakeholders represent a diverse audience, they are not representative of the population in general. Their perceptions and opinions merit serious consideration, but they may or may not represent the opinions of the general population.

Regional Working Groups:

Regional working groups were used as another means of outreach. These groups were comprised of various individuals from all walks of life brought together several times over the course of approximately one year.

Selection of Regional Working Group members:

Regional Working Group member selection involved a two step process. The first step included a meeting with staff members of: MoDOT's districts, MoDOT's central office, MPOs and RPCs. MoDOT conducted a work meeting where the types of citizen planners MoDOT was seeking were outlined and MoDOT asked planning partners to help identify candidates. MoDOT sought out citizens traditionally not involved in transportation. Some of the people included: minority representatives, locally elected officials, religious leaders, over-the-road truck drivers, small business owners, bankers, insurance executives, contractors, hearing-impaired individuals, bicycle advocates, pedestrian advocates, low-income persons, city and county staff members, transit interest groups, urban and rural transit providers, farmers, chamber of commerce representatives, car salesman, airport representatives, news reporters, higher-education officials, lawyers and general citizens.

The second step entailed MoDOT conducting analysis to help ensure an adequate citizen cross section was obtained. When deficiencies were found, MoDOT staff took steps to attempt to include new candidates. MoDOT paid particular attention to ensure the members were representative of the geography for socio-economic characteristics, as well as interests and perspectives on transportation.

Activities of Regional Working Group members:

Regional Working Group members had six meetings, taking the citizen planners through a series of discussions to maximize their input. The meetings included providing an overview of the state transportation system, its key strengths and weaknesses, and relevant trends. Additionally, MoDOT functions and responsibilities were explained, and an overview of system deficiencies was provided. Once this work was done, members decided on topics for further discussion. MoDOT facilitated informative work sessions to delve into these

issues further. Finally, electronic voting was used by members to select the most important issues they wanted MoDOT to address.

MoDOT's use of citizen input in LRTP development:

The use of citizen input was the cornerstone of the long-range plan. Key issues selected by members were used in the plan to create the new transportation vision. These key issues became the three over-arching plan recommendations. This inclusive involvement of citizens led to a plan centered on their input and direction.

Statewide Survey:

The Statewide Survey conducted for the LRTP initiative (also conducted annually) explores the opinions of adult residents of the state of Missouri toward MoDOT, the state of transportation in Missouri, and the preference for change in transportation policy. This method was one of several measures intended to provide the public voice to MoDOT's LRTP initiative.

Professional interviewers, working from a central, monitored location to interview a random sample of 3,100 Missouri adult residents. Potential respondents were contacted through random digit dialing (RDD). Attempts were made each night to reach people who were not at home the previous night, before moving on to new telephone numbers. This emphasis on callback improves accuracy by including hard-to-reach respondents. The participation rate (completed interviews over the total number of completed, refused, and terminated interviews) was 53%.

To allow for assessment of variations in regional attitudes, the state was divided into eight regions based on Regional Planning Commission boundaries. All regions had between 250 and 400 randomly drawn interviews, and all MPOs had between 200 and 400 randomly drawn interviews. Data was then weighted proportionally based on the size of the adult population determined in the 2000 census and estimated growth from the 2004 census estimates. Quotas were also set for gender to match the known proportion of men and women in the adult population within each region. After the data was collected, it was also weighted by age to match the known proportion in the adult population within each region.

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is about +1.8% for a sample of 3,100. However, due to the geographic oversampling, a true margin of random error for the entire sample is more like +2.9%. The margin of error is larger for subgroups, depending on subgroup size.

Profile of the Sample for the Survey

The profile of the sample presented a demographic profile of Missouri adults across the state and in eight regions. Understanding the demographic characteristics of Missourians helped MoDOT to understand better how regions differ in attitudes toward transportation in Missouri. Throughout the report, it was shown how Missourians differed on key questions regionally, if there were regional differences important enough to show.

Personal Demographics for the Survey

The Missourians surveyed were split by gender, with 52% women and 48% men. Twenty-two percent (22%) are 18 to 29 years of age, and 18% are over 65 years of age.

One-half (51%) of Missourians had only a high school education or less, and 27% had a college education. Only 4% had a post-graduate degree.

Forty-three percent (43%) of the sample had household incomes under \$40,000, and 13% had household incomes over \$70,000.

Forty-three percent (43%) of Missourians said they live in a large or small city; 19% said they live in a suburb, and 37% described where they lived as small town or rural. Sixty-two percent (62%) of Missourians lived within one of the states seven MPOs. Ten percent (10%) of the residents lived in counties where there had been next to no growth between 1990 and 2004, while 52% lived in counties that had grown by more than 10%, and 22% lived in counties that had grown by more than 25% during that time period.

LRTP Funding Allocation Challenge:

Another outreach effort for the LRTP was the Funding Allocation Challenge located on the LRTP website. The website allowed Missourians to choose how they would spend the state's transportation dollars if the choice was theirs. In the exercise, they were given a representative \$100 to allocate across the following priorities:

- Aviation
- Freight Movement
- Taking Care of Current Highways and Bridges
- Building New Highways and Bridges or Expanding the Ones We Have
- Enhancing Safety Features on Existing Highways and Bridges
- Public Transportation in Rural Areas
- Public Transportation in Urban Areas
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
- Ports
- Passenger Rail and Bus Services
- Technology