

Public Participation Plan

2014

This plan is a guide for promoting public participation in Mountain Metropolitan Transit planning processes and activities.

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Public Participation Plan

Introduction & Purpose

The City of Colorado Springs Transit Services Division (MMTransit) operates the local public fixed-route bus service, ADA paratransit demand-response service, and vanpool programs (collectively branded as **Mountain Metropolitan Transit**), and provides more than 10,000 trips per day in a service area that includes more than 400,000 people.

The *Mountain Metro* fixed-route bus service offers 24 bus routes with weekday service and limited Saturday and Sunday service. The routes extend north to Research Parkway, west into Manitou Springs, east to Peterson Air Force Base and south into Widefield. *Mountain Metro Mobility* is the system's complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service, and *Mountain Metro Rides* is Transit's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant-funded alternative transportation program, designed to reduce congestion and pollution and encourages more people to use carpools, vanpools, bicycling and other means of commuting.

Public involvement is fundamental to achieving equitable programs, services, and activities. Public participation provides opportunity for public involvement of all persons, including minorities and low-income persons, affected public agencies, employees, the general public, transportation service providers, public transit users, and others affected by transit and plans, programs, and projects.

MMTransit considers the viewpoints of Title VI, LEP, and Environmental Justice populations in the course of conducting project and service planning activities. MMTransit's public participation strategy offers early and continuous opportunities for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transit and transportation decisions.

Planning Activities

MMTransit engages in a variety of long and short-range planning activities, such as the preparation of the Long-range Transit Plan. They also engage in specific activities to encourage participation from low-income, minority, and disabled populations as described here.

MMTransit planning activities take place at multiple levels, with the level determining whether the public participation process is engaged. MMTransit planning activities include:

- Service planning activities
- Short and long-range planning projects
- Facilities planning projects

MMTransit conducts two service changes annually, one in the Spring and one in the Fall. The MMTransit semi-annual route change planning process is relatively standard and produces recommendations that are aimed at maintaining fluid operations while responding to changing demographics and conditions. Recommendations resulting from the corresponding route

evaluations, when deemed to be *Major* or *Moderate* will include MMTransit's public involvement process. Occasionally, minor changes and adjustments occur outside the cycle based on a number of variables that can affect service levels and routing, including recommendations from planning studies, changes in funding, construction, etc.

The short and long-range planning projects may result in recommendations for service changes that then go through the service change process. The public involvement carried out in the planning projects provides for early involvement for the public as MMTransit considers transit service options.

MMTransit undertakes transit facilities construction projects as the need and opportunity arises. Facilities projects may include operations and maintenance facilities, transfer centers, multi modal centers, bus shelters/benches and street amenities.

Service Changes and Public Process

Service changes can occur for many reasons and be of large or small scale. They can affect a single route or several routes in the network. MMTransit classifies service changes as Major, Moderate, and Minor and defines them as affecting a single route or the system (more than one route). Facilities projects are classified similarly, with impact on the public determining the level of public involvement activities.

The magnitude of service changes indicate what types of public process should be used. There are three basic levels of public involvement.

- Rider Notifications – includes on-board, printed rider alerts; may include on-board audio alerts
- Public Notifications – Includes the Rider Notifications above, and may include:
 - Social media postings
 - Press release
 - Web site posting
- Full Public Process – Includes the above Rider and Public notifications, and:
 - Proposed service change pamphlet that summarizes proposed changes and list upcoming public meetings
 - Press releases
 - Public Meetings
 - Public Comments Review
 - Outcome Documentation
 - Final service change pamphlet that summarize the final approved service changes; usually posted 30 days prior to final service change implementation

Assessing the Magnitude of Changes

MMTransit views potential changes to the system based on the magnitude of the change. Table 1 identifies the process for assessing service changes.

Table 1 – Impact Guidelines

Magnitude of Service Changes	Criteria Based on Most Applicable Measure	Response
Major	Modifying, adding, or eliminating 25% or more of service hours, miles, or bus stops on a route or the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Public Process • Public Notifications • Rider Notifications
Moderate	Modifying, adding, or eliminating 10% - 24% of service hours, miles, or bus stops on a route or the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Notifications • Rider Notifications
Minor	Modifying, adding, or eliminating < 10% of service hours, miles, or bus stops on a route or the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rider Notifications

Operational Changes: Temporary and extremely minor service changes may be announced with rider notifications, depending on the significance of the adjustment. (Detours, construction, background operations, etc).

Facilities Changes: Modification, construction, or changes to transit facilities that impact riders or the public in general will be similarly announced based on the magnitude of impact.

Public Involvement Process

Meaningful public involvement, particularly from Title VI, LEP, and Environmental Justice populations is critical to MMTransit’s efforts to maintain services that are well received and relevant. MMTransit has considered public involvement at all levels of planning activities and engages itself in the public involvement process when established criteria are met or special circumstances warrant it.

MMTransit’s public participation strategy offers early and continuous opportunities for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transit and transportation decisions.

Service Change and Project Implementation Activities

Once a service change or project has received staff approval, MMTransit engages the appropriate public process and the decision-making authorities responsible for final approval of the changes.

Service Change Implementation Activities

Category	Activity	<i>Days Until Implementation</i>
Full Process, Internal	Proposed Changes Approved (Division Manager)	
Public Notification	Post Proposed Changes to Website & Social Media	75
Rider Notification	Distribute Proposed Changes Rider Alerts	75
Public Notification	Distribute Proposed Changes Pamphlet	75
Rider Notification	Audio On-Board Announcements	75
Full Process	Present to TPAC for input	75
Public Notification	Publish Proposed Changes Press Release	63
Full Process	Mass Email	63
Full Process	Public Meetings (2 - one scheduled for AM, one PM)	60
Full Process	Public Meeting #3	59
Full Process, Internal	Consideration of Public Meeting Results	55
Full Process	Presentation to CTAB, Including Public Input	45
Full Process	Presentation to PPRTA Board, Including Public Input	45
Full Process	Presentation to Council, Including Public Input	45
Full Process, Internal	Changes Approved (Budget, Mayor)	
Public Notification	Post Service Changes to Website and Social Media	30
Public Notification	Distribute Service Change Pamphlets	30
Rider Notification	Distribute Service Change Rider Alerts	30
Public Notification	Post New Schedules & Maps to Website	7
Rider Notification	Audio On-Board Announcements	7
Public Notification	Publish Press Release	3
Public Notification	Distribute Schedules	0
Public Notification	Replace System Maps	0