

2021 TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP)

Public Participation Plan

Prepared For:

**Rapid City Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Rapid Transit System**

INTRODUCTION

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) specific public participation plan was developed using content and organization located in Appendix D of the Rapid City MPO Participation Plan.

The primary goals of the TDP are to develop recommendations for short and longer term periods regarding public transportation service in Rapid City. As the TDP is a plan for transportation service for the public, it should be prepared with and reflective of the needs and preferences of current and potential travelers. To understand the local needs and preferences, opportunities for input and comment at milestones of plan development are critical. The purpose of this document is to document the processes and assumptions for the TDP participation plan.

Development of the TDP will be guided by the Study Advisory Team (SAT), which will provide oversight and input into the development of the Plan. The SRF Team will coordinate with the Rapid City MPO and Rapid Transit to establish a study review committee comprised of agency staff, local stakeholders, and local, state, and federal government partners.

The SRF Team will organize and host SAT meetings throughout the course of the project. These are expected to occur every 1-2 months over the duration of the project, corresponding with major milestones.

The SRF Team will:

- Work in cooperation with the Rapid City MPO/RTS in scheduling the meetings.
- Develop materials necessary to conduct the SAT meetings, which will be distributed to SAT members at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting date.
- Create meeting summaries for distribution and review by the SAT, no later than one (1) week following the meeting.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TDP INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

This TDP will implement an inclusive and robust public engagement effort throughout the study process with the purpose of providing RTS and stakeholders in Rapid City with a comprehensive synopsis of gaps and issues, new opportunities and constraints and service plans that have been vetted and supported by partners and stakeholders. The public has knowledge and insight into local problems that the SRF Team, staff, and decision-makers from RTS need to make informed decisions.

For the TDP, the goals for effective public engagement include:

- Inform a diverse public about the TDP and how they can shape the future of transit in the Rapid City area
- Collect input from a diverse public about the TDP, including transit users and non-users
- Use public input to shape the project and enable informed decision-making

The public and stakeholders will be asked to provide insight and input in the following categories.

Current Use

The SRF Team will ask the public when, where, why, and how they travel and use transit in the region. The SRF Team wants to hear from transit users about their experience, and from non-users about their real or perceived barriers to using transit.

Needs

The SRF Team will ask the public, community leaders, agency representatives and the SAT about unmet transportation needs. As the Rapid City area continues to grow and change – in economic activity, development patterns, and the size and makeup of its population – so do its transportation needs.

Preferences, Tradeoffs and Priorities

Planning for and operating a transit system will always require a series of tradeoffs given fiscal constraints. While engaging the public, the SRF Team hopes to illuminate these tradeoffs in order to better understand preferences and priorities. Asking the public to identify their preferences and rank their priorities will enable more informed decision-making within real resource constraints.

IDENTIFY INTERESTED/NECESSARY PARTICIPANTS

The SRF Team endeavors to reach out to all communities – including racial and ethnic minorities, people with low incomes, newly-arrived immigrants, individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), people with disabilities, and seniors – to understand their transit needs and potential opportunities for improvement. Major employers, educational institutions, medical facilities, affordable housing advocates and other interested parties will be reached out to as well. The following methods will be used to identify potential stakeholders:

- Contacts available through the SAT: The Study Advisory team includes a diverse group of representatives from the school district, the city, the MPO, the SDDOT and the FTA. These representatives have a history of completing outreach efforts in the community and their input will be solicited throughout the plan development to understand missing groups, methods to better reach groups and how successful the program was.
- Outreach to Pennington County Housing and Redevelopment Commission: Understanding there is a shared client/ customer base between the housing commission and transit, SRF will coordinate outreach efforts with Amy Richie from Pennington County.
- Request people to sign-up for follow-on communications: In all of the outreach efforts (including the on-board and community surveys), SRF will ask people if they would like to provide contact information so they can be informed of future milestone information that has been added to the project website or made available in other locations.

TECHNIQUES FOR INTERACTING WITH PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDERS

Outreach to the public and stakeholders will be ongoing throughout the project in partnership between the SRF Team, the SAT and transit agency staff. Generally, activities will be concentrated in three different phases in conjunction with major project milestones. The table below highlights proposed methods of connecting with various stakeholder groups and interested residents/businesses. The techniques outlined represent the initial assumptions and may be periodically updated as the plan is implemented. The table on the next page summarizes techniques proposed to involve/inform the range of constituent groups throughout the plan development.

There will be four public meetings during the project period.

- The first public meeting will be a project kickoff and will be held online. It will introduce the project to the public and gather information pertaining to the needs and desires of the community.

- Two community outreach sessions will be held either online or in person, depending on the federal, state, and local public health guidelines in place at the time.
- The final public meeting will share the plan recommendations and allow opportunities for public input at the draft stage. It will be held either online or in person, depending on the federal, state, and local public health guidelines in place at the time.

It is anticipated that each meeting will include a presentation followed by open discussion or questions and answers. Comment forms will be offered at each meeting. The forms will be based on the example included in Appendix E of the Rapid City MPO Participation Plan. Meetings will be advertised consistent with MPO Participation Plan requirements.

Group	Technique									
	Website Posts	Social Media	Printed Newsletters	Online Surveys/Maps	Printed Surveys	One-on-one/Small Groups	Informational Kiosk	Public Meetings	Community Events	Meeting Packet Material
General Public (Includes Non-users)	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	
Transit Riders – Rapid Ride	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	
Transit Riders – Paratransit	•	•	•				•	•	•	
MPO Committees	•	•								•
City Council	•	•	•						•	•
Businesses	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	

Assessment of Needs

The focus of outreach efforts in this stage will include:

- Understanding rider use of Rapid Ride service, rider perceptions of the positives and negatives of the service and characteristics of riders.
- Gathering input from the community regarding perceptions of fixed route and paratransit services.
- Gathering input from RTS staff regarding service provision, what is working and not working from their inside perspective, what they hear from riders and non-riders and what improvements/changes staff would like to see be implemented.
- Understanding where future development of a density that could support transit is anticipated.

Draft Service Recommendations

Service concepts or scenarios, including extending fixed route service or introducing new transit products, will first be developed working closely with RTS and MPO staff. Preliminary ideas/scenarios will be reviewed with stakeholders through:

- Online surveys/map reviews
- Kiosks with information regarding service options and forms for receiving comments placed at locations in the community where people are already traveling.
- Small groups or one-on-ones with city leaders.
- Committee and council packets for discussion at meetings.
- Public meetings (we anticipate these to be in-person).

Draft TDP

The draft document will be available in electronic format through the study website and in a hard copy at the transit center.

NOTIFICATION TECHNIQUES

The following methods will be used by the SRF Team to share project information and promote opportunities for submitting input.

Study Website

The SRF team will develop a project website for the Rapid City TDP. All public-facing project materials will be hosted on the project website, along with project information and opportunities to provide input. Following completion/adoption of the plan, the website will remain active for six months.

Social Media

The SRF Team will leverage Rapid City MPO and RTS existing social media channels to for disseminating and collecting feedback regarding the TDP update steps. Facebook and Twitter (through the City's handle - @rcgov) will be the primary social media platforms used as part of the TDP project. The primary focus of social media posts will be short information posts, with the primary purpose being directing people to the study website for information about the TDP and engagement opportunities. When a specific event is approaching, social media posts will focus on promoting the event, whether it is online or in-person.

The SRF Team will work with the SAT to determine whether there are opportunities for targeted advertisements via existing social media accounts. Doing so would be a cost-effective means of extend the reach of project messaging, including to members of the public who do not currently ride transit.

When appropriate, the SRF team will also collaborate with stakeholder and partner organizations to share these posts through these organizations' social media accounts to broaden their reach. Any social media content developed by the SRF Team will be reviewed by SAT (or a subset as directed by the SAT) before being shared through partner social media channels.

Email Updates

Email updates will be distributed by the SRF Team. Email updates will announce opportunities to get involved and share links to surveys and recent engagement summaries around project milestones. Content for email updates will be coordinated and developed by the SRF Team then reviewed by SAT.

Those interested in receiving TDP project emails can sign up through the project website and other engagement events and opportunities.

The SRF Team will retain and update a contact list from interested individuals who participate in engagement activities. Additionally, the SRF Team will seek opportunities to use the existing mailing lists of stakeholders – elected officials, community organizations, higher education institutions, business associations – to broaden our reach.

Traditional Media

Traditional media outlets – including television, radio, and print media – may serve as supplemental avenues to promote the TDP update. The SRF Team will work with the SAT to identify free media opportunities with local television, radio, and print outlets. The SRF Team proposes the distribution of press releases to local news media in the initial and last few months of the project. Paid advertisements may be placed in print outlets for public notices.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUE EVALUATION

The SRF Team will share summaries of engagement efforts and input received with the SAT and RTS staff to help make key project decisions. Summaries of engagement efforts and input received will be posted on the project website at project milestones and leading up to project decisions.

Input received throughout the project will be documented and summarized in a final TDP document. The following materials will be produced by the SRF Team and provided to the SAT:

- Presentation Materials
- Meeting Handouts and Display Boards
- Draft/Final Survey Instruments
- Social Media Content
- Meeting/Event Summaries (may be incorporated into deliverables as appendices)
- Study Review Committee agendas, slides, and summaries

Project: _____ Date: _____ Staff: _____

Revision Number: _____ Revision Date: _____