2: Public Engagement and Guiding Statements

INTRODUCTION

Public involvement—whether through direct or indirect contact with citizens, stakeholders, elected officials, and other community representatives—is an important part of successful transportation planning. Fully understanding the community's transportation vision and the dynamics involved in achieving it requires a collaborative approach. As a result, local staff and the project team reached out to the community throughout the planning process and in a variety of ways.

Public engagement was a necessary precursor to developing guiding statements and understanding existing conditions. This visioning process was followed by establishing goals an objectives—an important step in long-range planning. The *Horizon 2040* guiding statements reflect the community's vision for the transportation system and help prioritize recommendations. This is important given the shortage of transportation dollars to fund all identified needs.

More information regarding public engagement can be found in Appendix A (http://www.gpats.org/plans/horizon2040).

Public Engagement

As part of *Horizon 2040*, GPATS staff engaged municipal and county staff, elected officials, SCDOT, FHWA, state and federal agencies, public transportation providers and users, freight operators, public service officials, employers, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, community leaders, minority and low income communities, and the public in a variety of ways. To raise awareness, GPATS used television, internet, radio, and print news media outlets as well as multiple social media platforms. Word of mouth was also instrumental in spreading details about meetings and input opportunities.

The first engagement phase involved asking participants what needs should be addressed in the plan. Throughout the process, the public saw how their input informed plan development and the decision-making process. The project team combined initial feedback with technical data to create the draft multimodal recommendations, which were presented to the public. This second engagement phase led to the final recommendations presented in this document.

Engagement for *Horizon 2040* included two regional workshops, 17 sub-regional community meetings, 25 stakeholder and small group interviews, three focus group work sessions, three surveys, and multiple meetings with the GPATS Study Team and Policy Committee. Along the way, several overarching themes emerged:

- **Safety:** Whether walking, biking, or driving an automobile, safety typically was the most frequent comment or request. The public and stakeholders were more likely to identify roadway needs associated with safety and participants often noted the desire to bike, walk, and take transit safely.
- **Mobility:** At its core, transportation seeks to connect people to the places they need or want to access. It's not a surprise that people wanted easy access to daily needs and the opportunity to travel using a variety of modes.
- **Land Development:** An inherent relationship exists between land use and transportation. As development occurs and more vehicles take to the road, roadway improvements are needed to reduce traffic congestion. These roadway improvements often enhance access, raising land values and attracting more development. This relationship was noted by participants throughout the engagement process.
- **Maintenance:** There was general consensus to fix current infrastructure before considering new roadways. Participants noted that maintenance and maximizing existing transportation capacity was a cost-effective solution.

Transportation in the Upstate today...

Our vision for the future...

Activities and Outcomes

Phase 1 Engagement: Visioning

Policy Committee – Kickoff

The first engagement activity for *Horizon 2040* was facilitated with the Policy Committee at their June 2016 meeting. The committee prioritized transportation planning elements, discussed specific issues, and helped develop initial catch phrases to inform the guiding statements. This meeting allowed local elected officials to compare their thoughts about the region's transportation needs to those of their constituents.

Regional Workshop 1 – Visioning

The first public meeting for *Horizon 2040* was held on the evening of September 7, 2016 at the TD Convention Center in Greenville. It was an interactive open house where attendees received a brief overview presentation and participated at interactive stations. These stations focused on vision and needs assessment and included:

- Information Wall
- One Word
- Priority Pyramid
- Thought Wall
- Exit Questionnaire
- More or Less
- Roadways
- Bike and Pedestrian
- Transit

Together with the sub-regional community meetings, more than 200 people attended the in-person workshops and provided more than 600 mapping data points, 1,000 written comments, and 200 priority pyramid game boards.

Sub-Regional Community Meetings – Round 1

GPATS held eight sub-regional community meetings throughout the study area to give the public easy access to at least one meeting. These meetings, listed below, included the same facilitated activities seen at the first Regional Workshop.

- Easley – October 3, 2016
- Williamston – October 10, 2016
- Mauldin – October 11, 2016
- Fountain Inn – October 12, 2016
- Clemson – October 13, 2016
- Greer – October 17, 2016
- Travelers Rest – October 18, 2016
- Greenville – October 20, 2016

Community Surveys

The first engagement phase included two surveys, which were designed to be similar where possible to ensure results could be cross-tabulated. An online survey, created using MetroQuest, launched at the first Regional Workshop and remained active through February 2017. More than 1,400 surveys were received, generating 33,000+ data points, 12,000+ map markers, and 1,800+ written comments.

The second survey was a statistically-valid survey distributed to a random sample of households. The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 400 households; 525 completed the survey. The overall results for the sample have a precision of at least +/- 4.3% with a 95% level of confidence.

Phase 2 Engagement: Recommendations Development and Prioritization

Focus Group Work Sessions

Three meetings, each focusing on a different transportation mode, were held on March 27 and 28, 2017. Technical professionals and advocates for specific modes participated in the work sessions to discuss infrastructure needs in the GPATS region. The meetings helped determine the direction of the LRTP and the best way to present recommendations. The focus groups looked at roadways, bike and pedestrian, and transit infrastructure.

Sub-Regional Community Meetings – Round 2

A second round of sub-regional community meetings was held in May and June 2017 to encourage widespread participation in the review of recommendations and selection of priorities. The meetings gave the public an opportunity to weigh in on draft recommendations for various modes based on input and data gathered in Phase 1. The meetings were held as follows:

- Easley – May 15, 2017
- Greenville – May 16, 2017
- Fountain Inn – May 18, 2017
- Clemson – May 23, 2017
- Williamston – May 30, 2017
- Travelers Rest – June 1, 2017
- Mauldin – June 5, 2017
- Greer – June 6, 2017
- Eastside – June 8, 2017

Regional Workshop 2 – Recommendations

The second regional workshop was held on the evening of August 29, 2017 at the TD Convention Center in Greenville. This open house-style meeting included an overview presentation and several stations where draft recommendations were presented. The stations included infrastructure standards and examples for each improvement method. An exit questionnaire was provided that asked participants to assign $100 to various transportation improvements and to gauge how well the *Horizon 2040* process and outcome addressed the plan's guiding statements.

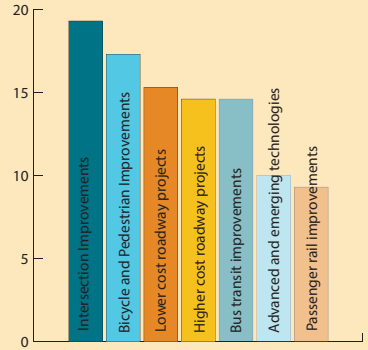
Online Survey

An online survey was distributed to mirror the exit questionnaire collected at the second regional workshop. Combined with responses to the exit questionnaire from the workshop, 125 surveys were received, providing insight on funding priorities and how the plan addressed its guiding statements.

Horizon 2040 Engagement: At a Glance

The two engagement phases were designed to build upon one another and provide data on par with technical information collected throughout the process. Where possible, similar activities were used in various outreach channels so results could be tabulated to show general trends and consensus. In turn, these trends helped GPATS staff better articulate the guiding statements and establish coordinated multimodal recommendations to address those statements.

The second regional workshop and follow up survey asked participants how they would spend $100 on transportation improvements in the region. The results echoed what was heard throughout the process—that the Greenville region needs a more balanced multimodal transportation system that aligns transportation needs with broader initiatives tied to quality of life and economic vibrancy.



GUIDING STATEMENTS

The guiding statements represent six interrelated value statements established in accordance with national, state, and regional long-range planning goals. The guiding statements, which reflect the region's transportation needs and desires, provided direction throughout the planning process and informed the prioritization of recommendations. Each statement consists of a key phrase (i.e., guiding principle) with supporting description. The principles are further clarified by a trio of planning goals.

Culture and Environment

Enhance the region's quality of life by preserving and promoting its valued places and natural assets.

Local, state, and federal planning guidelines have evolved over recent decades to emphasize the role transportation plays in conserving the environment, preserving our neighborhoods, and protecting quality of life. Throughout the Upstate, this process has been aided by land use planning, development controls, environmental planning, and socioeconomic awareness.

- Protect and enhance the natural and social environment by using context sensitive transportation strategies.
- Minimize the transportation system's direct and indirect environmental impacts.
- Promote consistency between transportation improvements, land use decisions, and economic development patterns.

Economic Vitality

Support regional economic vitality by making it easier to move people and freight within and through the region.

Ensuring transportation investments support the region's broader economic vitality goals is critical. Good transportation investments address industry needs, such as shipping goods, encouraging economic growth, and improving access to regional assets. Transportation improvements should position the region and its jurisdictions to be competitive in local, regional, and national markets.

- Highlight transportation recommendations that enable global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight within the region and to other areas.
- Leverage gateways and aesthetics to create an atmosphere that fosters economic investment.

Growth and Development

Make traveling more efficient by coordinating transportation investments with land use decisions.

Over time, the transportation network can influence development patterns, affect property values, and help shape quality of life. In turn, how communities and regions choose to develop impacts the practicality and accessibility of bicycling, walking, and taking public transportation.

- Prepare for continued population growth by coordinating transportation strategies with land use initiatives to foster vibrant and livable communities.
- Connect people to jobs and educational opportunities through coordinated transportation and land use investment decisions.
- Promote mixed-use developments that support bicycle, pedestrian, and transit activity in town centers and along priority corridors.

Mobility and Accessibility

Provide a balanced transportation system that makes it easier to bike, walk, and take transit.

Streets have become increasingly unsafe and inaccessible for non-motorized users during the last several decades as auto-oriented growth influenced street design. Strategic investment in major roadways should be balanced with improvements to the bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and rail networks to keep people and goods moving. Enhanced mobility and accessibility creates transportation options by combining multimodal improvements with most roadway enhancement.

- Provide desirable and user-friendly transportation options for all user groups, regardless of socioeconomic status or physical ability.
- Support a fully integrated multimodal network that advances the concept of complete streets.
- Expand and maintain a network of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure that connects homes, activity centers, and complementary amenities.

Safety and Security

Promote a safe and secure transportation system by reducing crashes, making travel reliable and predictable, and improving emergency response.

Reducing transportation fatalities and serious injuries requires an integrated approach to safety in motorized and non-motorized transportation projects. Additionally, encouraging a connected street network improves emergency response times.

- Improve the safety of the transportation system for all user groups, regardless of socioeconomic status or physical ability.
- Increase the reliability, predictability, and efficiency of the transportation experience through system improvements and enhanced communication.
- Improve safety and security by mitigating potential conflicts and delays at high-crash locations and rail crossing sites.

System Preservation and Efficiency

Extend the life of the transportation system and promote fiscal responsibility by emphasizing maintenance and operational efficiency.

A transportation network with high mobility helps sustain and enhance economic development. Local and regional mobility depends on an approach that maximizes the capacity of the transportation system. This systems management approach includes monitoring and addressing pavement quality and ensuring ancillary infrastructure, such as traffic signals and ITS infrastructure, is properly deployed.

- Increase the lifespan of existing infrastructure and ensure the optimal use of transportation infrastructure.
- Identify and prioritize infrastructure preservation and rehabilitation projects, such as pavement management and signal system upgrades.
- Increase use of innovative transportation technology to enhance the efficiency of the existing transportation system and to better prepare for emerging vehicle technologies.