

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN
PAYSON PARA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP DIVISION
ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEBRUARY 2009
Contract No. TO649F0018
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Communications and Community Partnerships (CCP) has requested that URS develop a public involvement strategy for the Town of Payson Transportation Study (Planning for Rural Areas [PARA] Study). The principal focus of the study is to update the December 1999 Small Area Transportation Study. Significant growth and economic development have occurred in the Payson area in the past several years requiring a new comprehensive transportation planning effort to address growing demands placed the Payson's roads and streets. In addition to traditional transportation approaches, it is important to examine transit needs and opportunities. The Town of Payson is also interested in investigating the potential benefits of an alternate route for travelers who wish to drive through or around Payson without traffic interruption.

2.0 PURPOSE

This public involvement plan is designed to support and contribute to sustainable long-range planning by ADOT for improvements to the transportation situation in the Town of Payson. This public involvement plan contains elements that would be useful during the study phase of the project, expected to require about 18 months starting in January 2009.

Both the public and decision makers need to fully understand the problems, opportunities, and available options to finding acceptable solutions.. Effective public participation facilitates understanding and improves decisions by bringing all issues and perspectives to the table. Sustainable decisions are those that are technically feasible, economically viable, environmentally compatible, and publicly acceptable.

The purpose of this public involvement plan is to:

- Clarify specific public involvement objectives for the project.
- Develop a preliminary schedule for the process concurrent with the planning process.
- Establish a process for communicating with and obtaining input from the stakeholders who will be or may be impacted by this transportation project.
- Ensure a clear understanding of the level of public influence and public involvement goals and tools.

- Identify the appropriate communication tools and techniques that will be used in the process.

Throughout the project, techniques and the implementation of the plan will be evaluated and changes may be made to adapt to stakeholder needs, new and changing issues, and/or changes in the project process and schedule.

3.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A main goal of the Payson Transportation Study public involvement process will be to seek general public, stakeholder, and agency suggestions and agreement for long-range improvement concepts for the Town of Payson. Therefore, the objectives of the program are to:

- Assist ADOT and the consulting team in developing a well planned and researched, legally defensible, and publicly acceptable public outreach program.
- Provide on-going information and obtain input from the primary stakeholders and the broader public about the project.
- Identify key issues and concerns of the public and work to ensure they are addressed during the studies.
- Develop and implement a process that maintains open and continuing two-way communication between the public and the project team.

4.0 APPROACH

The public participation approach is based on discussions and input from ADOT; ADOT CCP; the engineering consultant, Jacobs; and other members of the technical advisory committee (TAC). Our intent is to provide information about the project to elected officials, key stakeholders and the local community and to gather input from them about issues, problems and opportunities.

Through the life of the project, the team would like to take advantage of scheduled public events in the study area to communicate with, educate, and receive information from citizens. The extent of such opportunistic outreach would depend on available budget and scheduling requirements.

The approach presented in this plan through the following series of tasks is adapted to reach various groups of stakeholders:

- Key local opinion leaders and elected officials
- Local residents and businesses
- Regional travelers/highway users
- Agency staff, including representatives from the Town of Payson, Gila County, and others

Each of these groups has distinct issues, priorities, concerns and needs. Our intent is to ensure that the needs of each of these groups are addressed.

5.0 TASKS

To accomplish ADOT's goals for this study, the URS Consortium suggests several tools to provide information to the stakeholders and public, as well as techniques to obtain input from them.

Task 1 – Public Involvement Plan, Kickoff Meeting, and Project Management

CCP team members assigned to this project will meet with Dianne Kresich, ADOT project manager; LaRon Garrett, Payson Public Works Director; Richard Powers, Jacobs; and members of the TAC at the project kickoff meeting to discuss and agree on a scope of work and approach to public involvement as well as a project schedule.

In addition to the kickoff meeting, up to five additional TAC meeting will be held during the project's 18-month duration. These meetings will be held to share project information, public concerns, develop or modify public outreach strategies, and review progress. This task also includes ongoing contact with the ADOT CCP project manager, contract and budget management, and coordination assignments as needed.

Task 2 – Identify Stakeholders and Communicate with the Public

The URS Consortium will work together with CCP to assist the team in identifying "stakeholders," whom we define as concerned people and organizations that represent the general public in some way. They may include elected officials, tribal agency staff, community leaders, business leaders, and special-interest group representatives. We assume that ADOT has already assembled some stakeholder contacts from previous and other ongoing studies in the study area, including the Statewide Transportation Framework Study, and we will use these as a starting point. Others may be identified by the project team as the study progresses.

Community outreach and information efforts will be conducted in a variety of ways, including press releases, radio slots on local radio stations, updates on the City of Payson website, information posted on the ADOT website, and other methods as needed. The URS Consortium will arrange for the technical team to meet with and provide presentations to local groups, including the Chamber of Commerce; the Rotary Club; the Kiwanis Club; the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department; the Payson Regional Economic Development Corporation; and other citizens groups as identified. The URS Consortium will also invite representatives of these special community interest groups to the public meetings to ensure that their input is solicited and evaluated.

Task 3 – Public Meetings

Two public meetings are anticipated over the duration of this project. The first meeting, scheduled for July or August 2009, will be held in conjunction with the completion of Working Paper #3, Forecast of Future Conditions and Identification of Deficiencies. A second meeting will be held in February or March 2010 after the completion of Working Paper #4, Evaluation Criteria and Plan for Improvements.

The URS Consortium will arrange logistics (facilities and arrangements) and advertising (newspaper display advertisements, posters, fliers as needed) for the public meetings and will provide meeting materials to include agendas, sign-in sheets, comment forms, nametags, and informational handouts as needed. Electronic notification (email) to persons on the comprehensive mailing list may be used to announce meetings and events as deemed appropriate. It is anticipated that the public meetings will consist of a public discussion period featuring the technical team providing one-on-one conversation, a brief presentation, and a question/answer period for the public to provide comments and ask additional questions. A pre-meeting may be held on an as-needed basis to assist the technical team with the meeting approach.

The URS Consortium will be responsible for taking minutes at the public meetings, and will prepare and distribute a meeting summary to the project team. Once the summary has been approved by ADOT in final approved format, the URS Consortium will provide it to the City of Payson and ADOT for posting to their respective websites.

We assume that the technical team will provide the graphics for informational display boards and the URS Consortium will be responsible for printing and mounting. Meeting presentations will be prepared by the planning consultant in coordination with ADOT.

Any media releases, features, and interview requests will be coordinated through and by the direction of ADOT CCP.

Task 4 – Public Meeting Comment Collection and Public Involvement Reporting

The URS Consortium will be responsible for collection and documentation of comments received at all public meetings and via U.S. mail, email, fax, telephone, or other means of communication. Comments will be directed to the planning team and ADOT for review and input and the public involvement team will be responsible for composing and transmitting the appropriate response letters to the respective agency representatives and members of the public.

A Public Meeting Summary Report will be completed and distributed to the project team electronically within ten days of the conclusion of each of the public meetings. A final report outlining the public involvement activities associated with the project will be prepared and will include copies of all press releases, contacts made, stakeholder interview notes (conducted and provided by the technical team), public meeting advertisements and flyers. This report will be provided electronically to the ADOT project manager and Jacobs for inclusion in the final report.