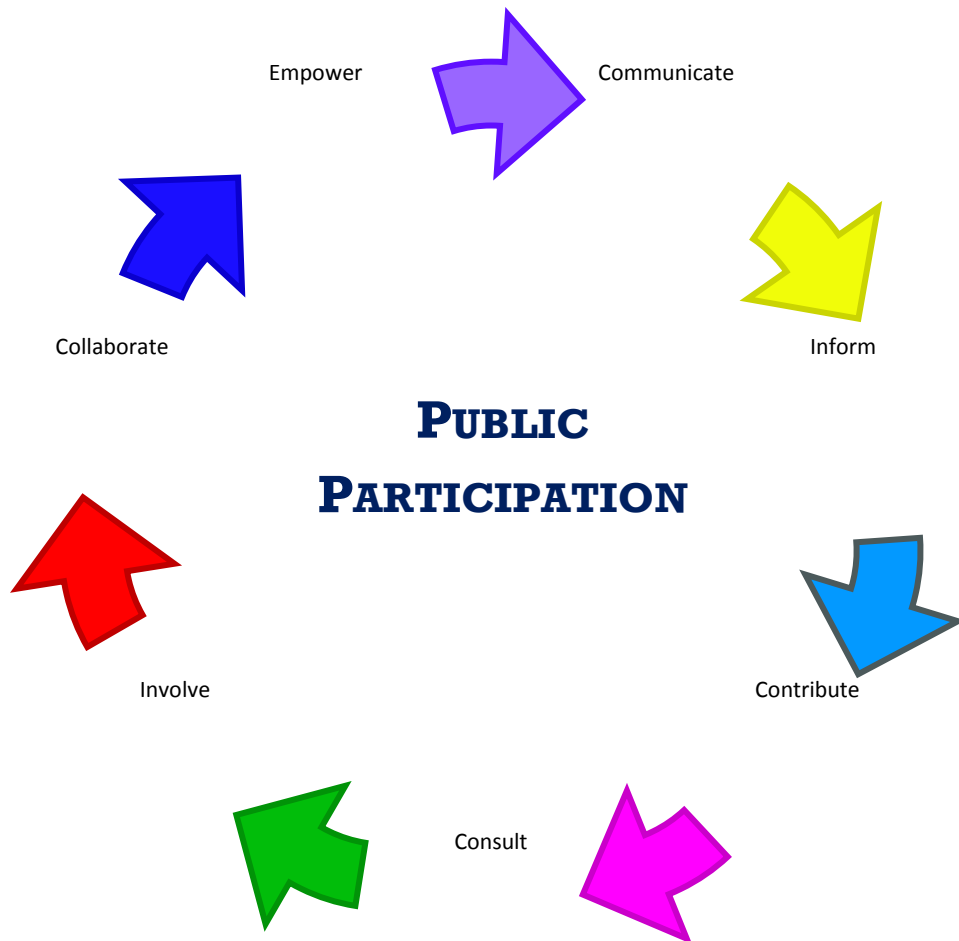


MODOC COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



Public Participation Plan for Regional Transportation Planning

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List of Acronyms in the Plan

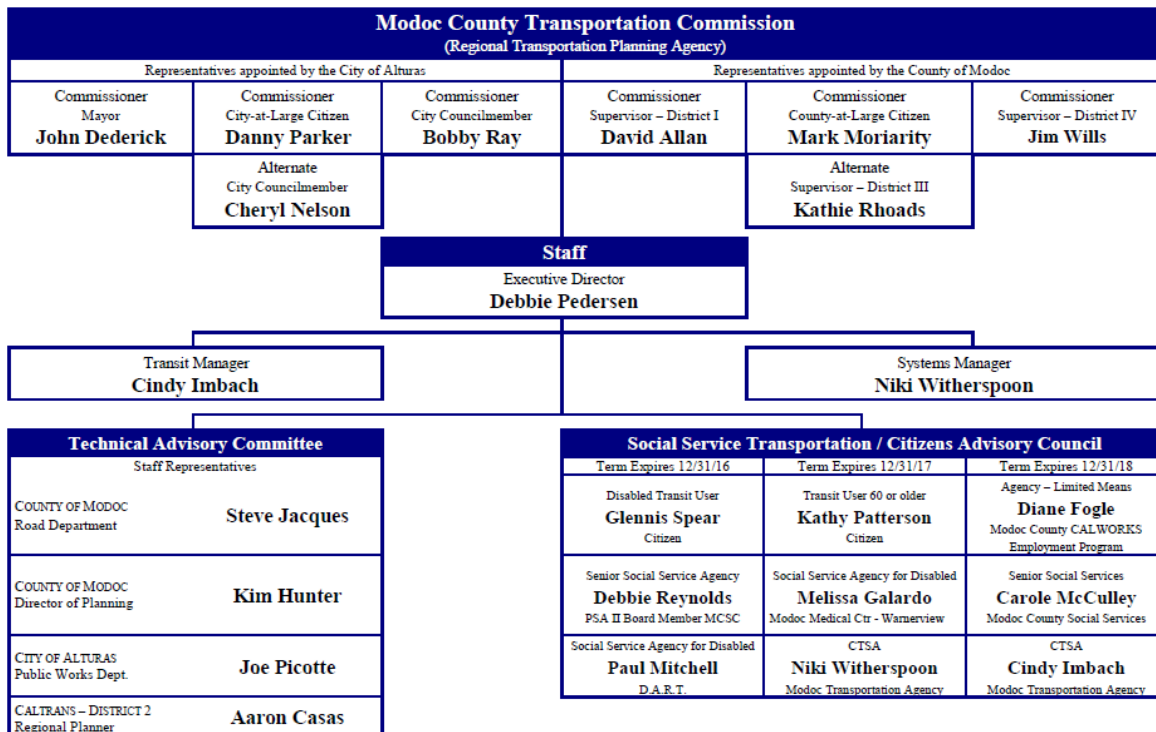
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ARB	Air Resources Board
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CTC	California Transportation Commission
CTSA	Consolidated Transportation Services Agency
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FTIP	Federal Transportation Improvement Program
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21 st Century
MCBOS	Modoc County Board of Supervisors
MCTC	Modoc County Transportation Commission
MTA	Modoc Transportation Agency
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
OWP	Overall Work Program
PPP	Public Participation Plan
RTIP	Regional Transportation Improvement Program
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SB	Senate Bill
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SSTAC	Social Services Transportation Advisory Council
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TDA	Transportation Development Act
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program (Federal, State, local)
USC	United States Code

Preface

Modoc County Transportation Commission (MCTC) Overview

The MCTC was created by the Modoc County Board of Supervisors (MCBOS) in 1972 by Resolution 72-08, in accordance with Government Code, Title 3, Division 3, Chapter 2, Article 11, Sections 29532 and 29535. The MCBOS created MCTC as a “public transportation entity” and local transportation commission pursuant to statute (Gov. Code §§ 29532, 29535) in order to establish a local transportation fund and receive a portion of the tax from the State Board of Equalization (Gov. Code § 29530). The MCTC adopted Bylaws in 1982 and adopted an update in April 2016.

The MCBOS appoints three members and one alternate member to the MCTC, and the City of Alturas appoints three members and one alternate member to the MCTC as required by statute (Gov. Code § 29535). MCTC operates as a fully independent government agency with three full time employees.



02/02/2016

Under the direction of MCTC, staff evaluates regional transportation needs and obtains and manages many grants to fund projects and prepare plans. Staff also recommends to MCTC what improvements will be made. Each year, MCTC administers over \$4 million in state and federal funds to support regional planning and program highway, street and road projects.

These actions support the State and local agencies efforts to construct, operate and maintain transportation projects in the Modoc region.

Table 1 - MCTC Staff Contact Information

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1. Introduction

A. Public Participation Plan Goals

MCTC’s role in transportation planning and decision making is a balancing act between diverse community needs, values, and priorities. We rely on the public and integrate public input into policies, plans, and products to provide balance between community-based and technical solutions. Community members have an integral knowledge of their surroundings because they work and live here.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) sets forth the process that MCTC follows to enable and establish working relationships with community and public agency members. This process is open and continuous to enable early, ongoing, and continuous public involvement.

B. How to use the PPP

The PPP is a reference document for community members and MCTC. It serves as an informal two-way agreement between MCTC and community members and sets forth clear processes, and desired outcomes. Community members can be defined as general public, community stakeholders, community decision makers, tribal government officials, local partners and agencies, multimodal groups, neighboring inter county agencies, special interest groups, and state and federal partners and agencies. The PPP

can be used by all interested individuals and entities to interact and follow MCTC's activities and assist MCTC in consistent outreach efforts.

The PPP is presented in sections to present the information in an organized manner.

Section 1 - *Introduction*. Information is provided for the use the PPP, and challenges that MCTC experiences with different aspects of public outreach strategies and techniques.

Section 2 – *Purpose of the Plan*. This section provides information on why MCTC prepares a PPP, and provides relative information on laws and regulations. MCTC desires to build accountability and consistency with processes to foster and encourage public participation.

Section 3 – *Tools and Techniques* – A summary of tools and techniques is provided that MCTC utilizes to engage and encourage public participation.

Section 4 – *Activities Involving Public Participation* – MCTC is required to provide opportunities for public comment during development of plans and programs. This section provides a summary of plans and programs that are routinely updated and amended and the desired level of public participation.

Section 5 – *Partner Consultations* – A framework for interacting with tribal government officials, state government agencies, and local government agencies to gain technical participation in the development of plans and programs is provided.

Section 6 – *Measuring Participation* – Public participation is challenging to measure for MCTC. MCTC employs 3-4 full time employees to work for two agencies. This section provides general information to measure public participation.

C. Challenges

The table below lists some of the challenges and examples of strategies and techniques MCTC employs to address the challenges. Planning projects in a county with a large area and varying demographics presents its challenges.

Table 2 – Challenges and Sample Strategies and Techniques

Challenge	Potential Strategy/Technique to Address Challenge
MCTC is legally and ethically bound to represent a diverse population with varying needs, priorities, and ability to access and influence the planning process.	Partner with social service agencies in order to target traditionally under represented segments of the population, including low-income households, elderly, and non English speaking citizens.
Limited advertising options and MCTC resources make it difficult to compete for public attention	Use grass roots communication versus expensive media buys. Establish good rapport with the local newspaper. Utilize opportunities to advertise on bus service, public agency bulletin boards, etc.
The planning process is complicated and can be intimidating to community members that would like to participate and provide input.	Avoid the use of planning and legal jargon. Use visualization techniques to describe complex concepts. Request to attend community or neighborhood meetings. Do not wait for public to engage MCTC.
MCTC projects are normally long-term and regional.	Employ continuous communication to engage community members, place posters in local businesses, and distribute updates via email to interested parties. Develop email lists from attendees or community members expressing interest in a project or plan.
It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of public outreach efforts.	MCTC utilizes a range of measures based on Access (points of dissemination of information); Awareness (community members ability to understand issues and alternatives); and Action (community members actively participate in the planning process and or provides meaningful feedback)

D. Levels of Participation

MCTC recognizes that not all decisions, plans, programs, or projects require the same outreach. MCTC selects the type and method of noticing based on the level of public input needed. This approach helps ensure limited resources are applied most effectively and does not saturate the public and cause a negative outcome (i.e., having public toss or discard notices due to oversaturation).

Inform – This level of public participation provides the public with the information they need to understand the decision-making process and where public input would not likely change the outcome of the decision.

Consult – This level of participation is the basic minimum opportunity for public input to a decision. This approach seeks the public’s opinion and decision makers consider input, however the input typically has little to no impact on the decision. For example, input is generally asked for at transportation project milestones.

Collaborate – the public is directly engaged in decision-making. Actions and or solutions are typically generated by the public and consensus is normally reached through this process. Conducting a collaborative program is time-consuming and resource intensive.

Outreach is conducted through a multi-faceted effort; these levels are not rigidly applied. Flexibility and adaptability are essential to a successful outreach effort.

2. Purpose of the PPP

A. Satisfying Legal Requirements

The PPP has been developed and is updated in accordance with guidelines established by federal, state, or local regulations including the following:

1. Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375)

This act prompts regional planning to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from cars and light trucks through coordinated transportation and regional land use planning in order to meet regional per capita vehicular greenhouse gas emissions targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

2. The Ralph M. Brown Act (California Government Code §§ 54950-963)

The Ralph M. Brown Act (Act) is commonly referred to as the Brown Act, Open Meeting Law, or the Sunshine Law. It governs the meetings and actions of governing board members of local public agencies and their created bodies. The Act ensures that local government bodies are open to the public. It also extends to any committee or other subsidiary body of a local agency, whether permanent or temporary, decision-making or advisory, which is created by such a governing board. The Act sets minimum standards for open meetings relative to access to public, location of meetings, notice posting, agenda distribution, and public input.

The public agency may adopt reasonable regulations ensuring the public's right to address the agency, and may also to limit the total amount of time allocated for public testimony. MCTC and its committees adhere to these requirements involving proper noticing, access, and ability to address the board of directors and committees.

Due to time constraints at board of directors meetings, unscheduled comments by the public may be limited to five minutes in length. The MCTC encourages interested citizens to provide written copies of presentations to the board of directors/committees, particularly if the statement is too long to be presented in its entirety. Citizens unable to attend the meeting may submit their concerns and ideas in writing to staff, who will then present the comments to the respective board of directors/ committee in either a written or oral format.

3. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as Amended (42 U.S.C., Section 2000d)

Title VI states that "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." MCTC adheres to Title VI and environmental justice principles. Elderly, disabled, and persons with limited means, located within 10 miles of a MCTC meeting, may call 48 hours prior to a meeting for a free ride to and from that meeting. To arrange a Spanish translator, contact the office at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

4. Consultation and Coordination with Tribal Governments (U.S. DOT Order 5301.1)

U.S. Department of Transportation ensures that program, policies, and procedures administered by the U.S. DOT are responsive to the needs and concerns of Native American Tribal Governments. The MCTC Executive Director maintains ongoing communication with tribal councils regarding transportation planning projects. MCTC has a policy for Consultation with Native American Tribal Governments that details how the agency consults with local Tribal Governments regarding transportation plans and programs.

B. Accountability

MCTC conducts business during regular meetings, open to public attendance and public comment. To encourage participation and inform the community, a variety of media formats is used to provide notice for meetings, workshops and public hearings. Some of these methods of notification are to comply with laws. MCTC often exceeds the required minimum notification standard to provide opportunities for community input, provide information, foster partnerships, and involve the public. Positive experiences between MCTC and the public lead to continued participation with future projects. These interactions also build trust and foster partnerships.

C. Consistency

The PPP sets reasonable expectations for those wishing to participate in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects. The PPP is intended to provide information on how people can get involved in the MCTC processes for fair and equitable access. Public participation is not a “one size fits all” approach. Each public opportunity should be tailored by MCTC to elicit and facilitate open and informal settings to encourage public participation.

3. Tools and Techniques for Effective Public Outreach.

A. Summary of Tools

Most MCTC plans, grants, and programs have minimum requirements that MCTC needs to meet for public comment opportunities. Each requires an assessment or specific set of outreach strategies and or tools. Public outreach tools are ever-evolving. Table 3 represents an assessment of the most common tools MCTC utilizes.

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Table 3- Outreach Tools

Tool/Strategy	Pros	Cons
Formal Public Hearings – Legal Notices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct public input/feedback • Typically used to satisfy program and grant legal notice requirements • Provides basic broad access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured - impedes free flow of information • Intimidates some • Occurs later in the process with little or no impact on final outcome.
Public Meetings or Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct public input/feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes considerable effort and expense to attract attendees for each event. • Difficult for some to attend
Town or Community Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct community based comments, input, and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can take considerable staff time • Attendance is unpredictable
Fairs, special events, group/organization meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct community based comments, public input/feedback. • Can provide a good cross section of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can take considerable staff time, depending on the event. • Not all community members involved
Technical Advisory Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert review, feedback and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input typically focused on a technical or narrow perspective.
Steering Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation from disparate groups to collaborate, discuss options, and recommend options to decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all community members involved; input via representation. • Potential to miss segments of population when establishing groups
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely and convenient public access to planning, programming, grants, and project documents, meeting locations, agendas, etc. • Low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all segments of the population have internet access and/or computer experience. • Requires staff time to keep information fresh and relative.
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct input/feedback from public • Low cost • Interested people can follow progress with instant/relative updates • Becoming increasingly popular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comments can be difficult to validate or easily misunderstood. • Anonymity can foster inappropriate comments that quickly digress. • Management of this media group can be labor intensive.
Surveys (mail, newspaper, telephone, internet, spot locations – neighborhood canvassing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct input/specific questions • Aids in the collection and analysis of data • Web-based surveys compile instantly and are updated and displayed as data is submitted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low response rate for direct mail and newspaper circulation. • Can be costly • Need to consider type of questions so that data is easier to tabulate • Qualitative difficult to tabulate
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive/team building. • Conducive to building trust, consensus, and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Works well for small groups 8-10 participants
Open House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal setting • Provides opportunity for personal exchanges • Can be conveniently located for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple locations may be needed to get a good cross section of input • Public attendance is unpredictable

4. Activities Involving Public Participation

A. Recurring Plans

There are several key plans and programs that are required by state and federal legislation. Federal law prescribes early and continuing opportunities for public participation in developing the Regional Transportation Plan and State law mimics this standard.

1. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The RTP is a long range planning and policy document – state law requires the plan be updated each five years in rural areas like Modoc County. The RTP establishes priorities for all modes of transportation in the county over the 20 year planning horizon. Regional stakeholders (the city, county and state) provide information on their systems (roads, streets, highways, airports, bridges, transit, and other modes). Many federal and state funded transportation programs require projects to be listed in a RTP to be eligible for funding. The RTP also addresses transportation related issues such as air quality, safety, land use, and environmental impacts. The RTP undergoes an initial environmental study to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and typically a Negative Declaration is approved and filed. Each transportation project undergoes federal and state environmental reviews and special studies are often needed to complete the environmental process for a transportation project. Below are the typical steps used to update or amend the RTP:

RTP Update

- a. Develop a comprehensive project scope and timeline by utilizing stakeholder and advisory committee feedback. The project scope includes early, continuing opportunities to comment.
- b. Stakeholder and advisory committee meetings, targeted public workshops, letters soliciting input and participation.
- c. Opportunities to participate via the website; draft documents available online for public review and comment. News release to solicit public input.
- d. Intergovernmental consultation with affected agencies and tribal governments.
- e. Draft plan released for 30 day public review. Conduct a workshop and circulate the document to stakeholders, the library, and other public locations. Additional or expanded public review if issues arise that need addressed.
- f. Final RTP adopted by the MCTC following a public hearing. Minimum of one public hearing conducted at the MCTC meeting.

RTP Amendment

- a. Public Notice – amendment reviewed by the technical advisory committee. Notices posted in the MCTC office and county and city bulletin boards and on the MCTC website.
- b. Legal notice published regarding the MCTC proposed action to amend the RTP.
- c. RTP amendment approved during a regular or special MCTC public meeting.

2. Transportation Improvement Programs (local, State, and Federal)

Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

MCTC is required by state law to develop and adopt a 5-year program outlining regional transportation projects. This five year program is known as the Regional Transportation Improvement Program and is due each odd numbered year by the 15th of December. It is a list of recommended capital projects for transportation improvements including rehabilitation of streets, roads, and highways, new construction and operational improvements. Each planning entity in the State adopts a RTIP for their jurisdiction.

State Transportation Improvement Program

The STIP is a multi-year capital improvement program of the transportation projects on and off the state highway system, funded with revenues from various transportation funding sources. All of the RTIPs statewide, the State's portion of the program (the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program) and other state programs are included in the STIP. STIP programming is adopted by the California Transportation Commission every two years.

Federal Transportation Improvement Program

Caltrans prepares the FTIP for all rural agencies each four years. The FTIP typically includes all (STIP) projects that are funded with federal funds. Federally funded projects require state and federal approvals for environmental, permits, and the plans, specifications and estimates and construction. These projects often require a higher effort of work, more time and more funding to construct the project than a state only funded project. The FTIP represents projects that utilize federal aid for transportation, transit, and capital projects. The FTIP is adopted every four years. Below are the typical steps used to update or amend the TIP.

TIP Update

- a. TIP reviewed by the technical advisory committee. Public notices posted in the MCTC office and county and city bulletin boards and on the MCTC website.
- b. Intergovernmental consultation with affected agencies and tribal governments (if applicable).
- c. Draft TIP released for 30 day public review. Conduct a workshop and circulate draft to stakeholders and other public entities. Additional or expanded public to address public concerns (as needed).
- d. Legal notice published regarding the public hearing for the TIP adoption.

- e. TIP approved during a regular or special MCTC public meeting, following a public hearing.

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TIP Amendment

- a. Public Notice – amendment reviewed by the technical advisory committee. Notices posted in the MCTC office and county and city bulletin boards and on the MCTC website.
- b. Legal notice published regarding the MCTC proposed action to amend the TIP.
- c. TIP amendment can be approved administratively (by MCTC Executive Director) or during a regular or special MCTC public meeting.
- d. Note: TIP technical corrections are occasionally necessary – there are no approvals or public reviews required. A technical correction does not affect an overall project.

B. Supporting Documents

Overall Work Program (OWP)

The Overall Work Program is adopted annually by MCTC during a regular public meeting. The OWP outlines transportation planning goals, objectives, actions and funding to support work in the OWP. The OWP is a contract between the state and MCTC to undertake mandated and desired regional planning functions for Modoc like the RTP, the RTIP, plans for other modes, consultation, public outreach, etc.

Unmet Needs

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding is generated from fuel taxes (State Transit Assistance) and a portion of the sales tax generated in Modoc (Local Transportation Fund). TDA provides funding for local program activities including administration costs, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, community transit services, public transportation, bus and rail projects, and local streets and roads (construction and maintenance). Annually MCTC conducts the Unmet Needs process and assesses public transportation needs. Public transportation needs that are “reasonable to meet” (MCTC has the ability financially support) are addressed before funding can be used for other non public transit uses. The STA can only be used for public transit uses, administrative and planning costs for contracted public transportation and capital acquisition and maintenance (typically intermodal facilities and bus acquisition). The MCTC TDA Handbook and the TDA Guidebook published by Caltrans Division of Mass Transportation provide more information regarding the Unmet Needs and TDA.

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

MCTC prepares and develops the Coordinated Human Services Transportation (CHST) Plan. This plan is required to obtain some federal funds for transit operation and capital improvements. The CHST identifies social service agencies and opportunities to coordinate transportation services. It also focuses on meeting basic transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people

with low income and limited means. Caltrans Division of Mass Transportation assisted 13 rural agencies (including Modoc) in updating their CHST plan in 2013.

Short Range Transit Study

MCTC prepared the Short Range Transit Study (SRTS) in 2013. This study focuses on a five year period (through 2018) and outlines transit service expansions, transit bus replacement schedule (capital improvement program), assesses current transit operations and recommends fare structure options, provides marketing and recommended schedule improvements, etc. The study was funded through a federal planning grant awarded to MCTC. Typically, it takes more than five years to implement improvements included in a SRTS and some of the program expansions are implemented and others (pilot) services are not maintained because ridership does not support the service. MCTC typically operates agency funded pilot transit services six to twelve months, giving an opportunity for riders to use new services. A new start that has grant funds may operate longer than a year.

Public Participation Plan

The PPP provides guidance for MCTC Board, committees and staff, local agencies and officials, and public members. It provides general information on the types of public participation and interagency consultation for the regional transportation planning process.

C. Special Projects

Special projects are often grant-funded projects and come with specific requirements for public outreach. In addition, area or specific plans may generate the need for new public outreach strategies. As these grants are developed, budgets may include expanded outreach efforts such as telemarketing, community surveys, radio advertising, attendance and presentation at local governing agency boards, tribal governments and committees, community workshops, etc.

5. Transportation Planning Partnerships

Transportation planning is most effective when open, continuous, and collaborative process are utilized. MCTC maintains contact with public agencies, tribal governments, and non-governmental groups and organizations to foster and develop these partnerships. Some of these partners are included below.

A. Governmental Partners

Tribal Government Partners – Alturas Indian Rancheria, Cedarville Rancheria, Ft. Bidwell Reservation, Pit River XL Reservation, Pit River Tribe Lookout and Pit River Tribe Likely.

Local and Regional Government Partners – City of Alturas – Public Works, Police and Planning Department, Modoc County – Road, Health and Planning Departments, Sheriff's Office, CalWORKS, and Air Pollution Control District, Local Agency Formation

Commission, adjoining Counties, Modoc Transportation Agency, North State Super Region, California Rural Counties Task Force.

State Government Partners – Caltrans District 2, California Transportation Commission (CTC), California Highway Patrol (CHP), Business Transportation and Housing Agency (BT&H), Governors’ Office of Planning and Research (OPR), State Parks, Cal Fire, Department of Fish and Game

Federal Government Partners – Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration, US Department of Transportation, US Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service.

B. Private Non Governmental Partners

This is not an all inclusive list – many entities play beneficial and important roles in the transportation planning process.

Local service clubs (Rotary, Lions and Elks), area Chamber of Commerce, Builders Exchanges, California Trucking Association, Far Northern Regional Council, Modoc Work Activity Center, Modoc Senior Citizens Center, Surprise and Big Valley 50 Clubs, Surprise Valley Saturday Market, Alliance for Workforce Development, and Modoc Medical Center (Warnerview SNF, Last Frontier Health District).

6. Measuring Success

MCTC staff will utilize the effectiveness of public outreach efforts by using the data collected at public venues and by the following criteria:

Access – does the public have equitable access to information on all MCTC plans, programs, and decision making processes?

Awareness – is adequate information available to the public in an understandable format (explains actions, plans, needs, etc., and avoids acronyms as practical) – does the public receive the information and is the information presented in an understandable form?

Action – Did the MCTC/staff receive public input or did the public contribute to the planning process? (Was the public able to act or comment?)

MCTC has sign in sheets available for each public forum (MCTC meetings, workshops, committee meetings, community meetings etc.). It is not mandatory for attendees to sign in, it is mainly used to see what public members attended, and add them to mailing lists for future meetings.

MCTC Resolution 16-05

Insert Resolution after adoption

2016 Public Participation Plan

Adopted May 7, 2002

Revised ***, 2016