

WORKING DRAFT

*Public Participation Plan*

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# Greater Bozeman Area Transportation Plan (2007 Update)

# Public Participation Plan

*Prepared For:*

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Bozeman Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC)  
Bozeman, Montana

*In Cooperation With:*

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Gallatin County  
City of Bozeman  
Montana Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration



*Prepared By:*

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Helena, Montana

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## Introduction

Gallatin County, the city of Bozeman, and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) have initiated a community transportation planning process to update their existing Transportation Plan. The existing Plan was completed five (5) years ago, is commonly referred to as the "2001 Update" and provides a blueprint for guiding transportation infrastructure and associated decision making principles. Because of steadily increasing growth, and the community's increasing interest in transportation related matters, the governmental entities have decided to update their regional Transportation Plan. To that end, the consulting firm of Robert Peccia & Associates has been retained to assist in developing the *Greater Bozeman Area Transportation Plan (2007 Update)* project.

The development of this project will be overseen by the Bozeman Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC). The TCC has historically acted in the oversight role of previous transportation planning efforts. The TCC is comprised of a multitude of individuals representing various departments of Gallatin County, the city of Bozeman, and the MDT. In addition, there are other citizen members and special interest groups that sit on the TCC.

An initial step in developing such an important planning project is to delineate an appropriate Public Participation Plan that will guide public opportunities and input as the project develops. This Public Participation Plan builds on the developed scope of work for this Transportation Plan Update, and utilizes several traditional and non-traditional public participation strategies. It is the intent of this Public Participation Plan to identify the appropriate strategies to be used, define the sequencing within which the various strategies will be implemented, and chart out a course of action to be followed as the project begins. The entire project is expected to take approximately 18 months to develop and complete. The end result will be a final Transportation Plan Update that the community will use as a blueprint to guide the existing and future transportation system.

## Purpose

The purpose of a Public Participation Plan is to insure a proactive public involvement process that assures the opportunity for the public to be involved in all phases of the planning process. This is accomplished by providing complete information, timely public notice, opportunities for making comments, and full access to key decisions.

## Goals of Public Involvement

The goal of the TCC and the Consultant team is to have significant and ongoing public involvement for this transportation planning process. Education and public outreach are an essential part of fulfilling the local entities responsibility to successfully inform the public about the transportation planning process. All three contracting entities (i.e. Gallatin County, the city of Bozeman and MDT) seek to empower the public to voice their ideas and values regarding transportation issues. The entities strive to ensure early and continuous public involvement in all major actions and decisions.

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## Public Participation

To participate is to express one's self at the proper time and in the proper forum. Public participation means participation in planning by people (public) within the Greater Bozeman Area, its area citizens and entities, by planning and engineering professionals, and by those who are not professional planners or government officials. It is a process of taking part in the transportation planning and decision-making that affects the community.

The TCC and Consultant team's efforts to secure participation will be targeted to stakeholders, who are individuals or entities that could be significantly affected by the Transportation Plan recommendations or could significantly influence implementation. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to: the general public; low income, minority and disabled communities; neighborhood representatives; chambers of commerce; Montana State University; downtown business interests; special transportation interests such as freight shippers, transit users and bicycle organizations; local officials; private developers; and federal and state transportation agencies.

*"The Greater Bozeman Area needs the public involved in transportation planning because the public has the right to have a strong voice in all matters of public policy, including planning."*

The Greater Bozeman Area needs the public involved in transportation planning because the public has the right to have a strong voice in all matters of public policy, including planning. Additionally, only the public can provide the information needed to develop, maintain, and carry out an effective Transportation Plan. Planning staff, consultants and local officials need comments from those who know the community best: the people who live,

work and play there. Public involvement informs and educates the public about transportation planning and creates an informed community, which in turn leads to better planning. Public participation gives the public a sense of ownership of the Plan and fosters cooperation among the public and between them and the TCC.

This Public Participation Plan contains the following elements:

**Involvement Opportunities:** Provides the opportunity for the public to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

**Communication:** Establishes mechanisms for maintaining communications between the public and local officials such as processes like mailings, legal ads, displays and newsletters.

**Information:** Assures that technical information is available and in simplified, understandable form.

**Response to Public Input:** Describes the methods used to respond to comments from the public.

**Advisory Committees to This Transportation Plan Update.** The use of the TCC and the means of providing input from a cross-section of affected citizens through the TCC and various other groups of interest.

## Involvement Opportunities

The TCC and the Consultant team will take a proactive approach to provide an opportunity for the public to be involved early and with a continuing involvement in all phases of the planning process. For this project, a number of public involvement strategies are proposed to work together to reach the most people possible and elicit meaningful participation. The consultant's project manager will be responsible for implementing this Plan. The Consultant team will have the primary responsibility for disseminating accurate information and responding to questions. They will have primary responsibility for running the various meetings, setting up the meeting venues, advertising the meetings in the local newspaper, and maintaining an accurate database of interested citizens and officials, and facilitating larger meetings.

The Consultant team understands that the interest of the public in transportation issues has increased with the community's rate of growth, and that updating the Plan will provide public outreach opportunities that will:

- Educate the public on the critical elements of planning and engineering the community's transportation system;

- Respond to the increasing interest of the general public to participate in planning of the community; and
- Increase the public's investment in our Transportation Plan.

The following public outreach activities will be utilized as part of the public involvement program:

**General Meetings**

RPA will attend monthly TCC meetings (the fourth Wednesday of each month) to discuss the progress of the study, make presentations, and obtain guidance as appropriate. RPA will also hold one full day workshop session with the TCC to discuss the preliminary recommendations and priorities. RPA will also attend and present at the following venues (agendas and minutes will be prepared by RPA):

City Commission	Two (2) Project Status Presentations One (1) Public Hearing
County Commission	Two (2) Project Status Presentations One (1) Public Hearing
1st Public Meeting Series	One charrette (visioning & issues)
2nd Public Meeting Series	One open house with formal presentation
3rd Public Meeting Series	One charrette (preliminary recommendations / findings)
Other Meetings	Up to Twenty (20) Total <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Pedestrian/Traffic Safety Committee</li><li>□ Bicycle Advisory Board</li><li>□ Safe Trails</li><li>□ Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce (Eggs &amp; Issues Program)</li><li>□ Montana State University</li><li>□ Inter-neighborhood Council</li><li>□ Neighborhood Groups</li><li>□ (Others as Requested)</li></ul>

**Easy Access**

RPA will make its lead project staff available to all interested parties for the purposes of receiving comments and answering questions. This will be accomplished by several methods, including:

- Telephone Number to RPA - published in all materials;
- Internet e-mail access to our lead engineers - published in all materials;
- Internet Web Page dedicated to the Greater Bozeman Area Transportation Plan Update;
- Project information linked to the City's Listserv;
- Direct mailing of project materials (as defined) to neighborhood group lists;

- Regular attendance at all TCC meetings during the project (18 total plus one workshop);
- Attendance at City Commission and County Commission meetings as noted above and by special request; and
- Attend other local group meetings as requested to include meetings with City of Bozeman Neighborhood Groups (i.e. Inter-Neighborhood Council and up to three Neighborhood Organization meetings) and Gallatin County neighborhood groups.

### **Personal Contacts**

RPA will make its project manager and lead planners available for personal contacts or meetings with smaller groups such as the emergency services personnel and school district officials, for one-on-one communications about the project. These interactions will be developed and conducted on a case-by-case basis. Routine contacts for information will not need to be recorded, however any items of importance will be recorded and passed on to the TCC and the City, County and MDT as appropriate.

RPA will interview at least 40 local officials and business representatives to discuss and verify general growth and land-use trends. A brief summary of the interviews will be recorded and submitted to the City, County and MDT.

### **Published Information**

RPA will produce a regular newsletter (every three months) that describes work in progress, results achieved, preliminary recommendations, and other related topics. These newsletters will be user-friendly, with little or no engineering jargon. They will be expected to closely mimic technical memorandums, at a lower level of technical content. Each newsletter will be published on the project web site. Each newsletter will include an invitation to the public to submit their comments and ideas to the team using any of the easy access methods listed above. RPA will make the newsletters available in an electronic format only.

### **Transportation Plan Listserv**

The City of Bozeman is able to set up a listserv which would allow residents to subscribe to the "Transportation Plan" in the same way they now subscribe to the City Commission agendas. Any meeting announcements, newsletters, reports, memos, minutes relevant to the update will be posted to the listserv and received automatically by all subscribers. The TCC Subcommittee will need to identify the materials they want posted by RPA. Note that the set-up and passwords will be provided by the City's IT Department.

### **Other Meetings**

The Scope of Services for this project includes "up to 20 other meetings". These meetings will be conducted when RPA is in the community on other project related business. Included in those groups previously identified are the following entities:

Inter-Neighborhood Council: The INC is comprised of representatives from a variety of organized neighborhoods across Bozeman. They serve as an important link between residents and the local government and manage communication that would be useful in keeping residents informed about the Transportation Plan as it moves through the process. RPA will meet with this group **two months prior** to the first formal public opportunity (i.e. charrette) in order to provide sufficient time for them to notify their neighbors of upcoming opportunities.

Citizen Advisory Boards: The City has 25+ Citizen Advisory Boards focused on a variety of community values. The Advisory Boards will be contacted using the City Clerk's Office. All the boards will be provided with a copy of the public outreach schedule and RPA will request a representative from each board to attend the first formal public outreach activity. Specific invitation to the Advisory Boards will precede the first formal public outreach activity (i.e. charrette) by **at least one month** to provide boards time to meet in advance.

Neighborhood Organizations: The City of Bozeman currently has seven (7) neighborhood organizations which are formally recognized by the City. These organizations maintain a communication plan for the residents within their boundaries. RPA will execute up to three (3) specific meetings to address the large scale projects which are known to be of interest to a variety of these neighborhood organizations (e.g. Highland / Kagy / Main; Oak Street Connector).

### **Monthly TCC Meetings**

The project manager, and any necessary support staff, will attend meetings with the TCC, as scheduled, to make regular presentations covering the current work effort. This element is considered the most important aspect of the exchange of information and ideas during the development of the Plan. During these meetings the issues, problems, and possible solutions will be identified and discussed. These meetings will provide the RPA team with essential feedback during the development of the Plan. These meetings will also provide the TCC with numerous opportunities to guide the consultant through the process. City and/or County staff will prepare agenda and minutes for TCC meetings.

### **TCC Workshop**

RPA will conduct one TCC workshop to do a detailed review at the appropriate project milestone. This will be in addition to the regular monthly TCC meetings. The workshop will focus on preliminary recommendations, including both major and minor actions. This will occur when we first develop solid recommendations, before they are incorporated into model runs. We will hope to reach tentative consensus on the importance of each of these improvements and make sure that none are missing. RPA will prepare agendas and minutes for the workshop.

### **Meetings with the City Commission and County Commission**

RPA will attend two project status meetings each with the City Commission, and County Commissioners as necessary to ensure that the goals, objectives, and decisions are acceptable with the elected officials. The presentations for these venues will be provided in a PDF format such that they can be posted to the Transportation Plan website.

### **Public Meetings**

We propose to hold three formal public opportunities for this project. Two of these opportunities will be in the form of a highly participatory set of community planning workshops known as a charrette. The charrette is an intensive, broad-based, community driven process that has a record of success by crafting meaningful community engagement and acceptance.

The first charrette (i.e. *public meeting number 1*) will be used to discuss and identify the issues and visioning that will help define community perceptions and goals, as well as identifying issues that should be addressed as part of the planning effort. This initial effort would consist of a 3- or 4-hour workshop that would be very interactive. The purpose would be for RPA to define the transportation planning process, and then engage the community through the execution of the charrette workshop.

The *second public meeting* will occur after we have completed our initial field studies and have defined the transportation-related problems. The purpose of this gathering will be to review the identified problems with the public to assure that all of the major transportation problems have been included in our analysis. This meeting will be more of a typical public meeting, whereby an informal open house would be held where attendees could visit with project personnel at several displays, followed by a formal presentation by the Consultant team and questions and answers.

The *third public meeting* will be in the form of a charrette as well. A formal presentation will be made regarding the preliminary recommendations and findings, individual work stations will be set up for participants to move about to their areas of interest to review and comment on the preliminary findings. It is hoped that participants can become fully engaged through this mechanism and alleviate many of the "confrontational" situations that can occur in large, traditional



public forums. The purpose of this venue will be to present the types of recommended improvements and receive initial feedback from the community.

RPA will facilitate these public opportunities and will have the project manager present, as well as another staff member to record the comments and concerns of the public. This will allow the project manager to focus on the discussion while the staff member records the comments.

RPA will be responsible for arranging the locations of the various public meetings and advertising them in the local newspaper.

### **Public Hearings**

RPA will plan to hold two public hearings on the project after the draft Transportation Plan has been published. These public hearings will be held separately with the City Commission and the County Commission and will be facilitated by the RPA team. These hearings will be designed to obtain official comments from the public prior to final approval of the document and production of the final report. RPA will be responsible for arranging the location and advertising of the public hearings.

### **Management Techniques**

All of the public participation components described will be conducted using sign-up lists, to make sure that we stay in touch with everyone interested in the project. Our staff will also collect public comments either by requesting written comments, or writing notes as verbal comments are offered. All such records will be accumulated and addressed during the planning process.

## Communication

The *Greater Bozeman Area Transportation Plan (2007 Update) Public Participation Plan* establishes guidelines and procedures for encouraging public participation. The following communication strategies and techniques may be used in their entirety (or partially) to distribute the information to the community at large and seek a higher level of engagement. The TCC and the Consultant team will utilize as many of these techniques that best suit the Transportation Plan project development.

- Robert Peccia & Associates (RPA) will create and maintain a project website. In addition, the City of Bozeman, Gallatin County and the Montana Department of Transportation will all have appropriate links to the project website from their respective web pages.
- The City of Bozeman intends to utilize their "Listserv" for project updates. RPA will provide appropriate materials to a "yet-to-be-identified" contact with the City as information is generated and conditions warrant.

- ❑ Public service announcements and interviews on radio and television will be conducted to explain the subject matter and promote participation.
- ❑ Articles and press releases for the newspaper or other widely circulated publications will be developed.
- ❑ Mass mailings through utility bills or other documents periodically issued to the community at large (note that City of Bozeman staff will be responsible for this element).
- ❑ Informal presentations will be made at regional sites, open houses, round tables, or other community forums to receive input from the affected community.
- ❑ Formal presentations will be made to various service clubs, civic and professional groups.
- ❑ Mailings will be made to select individuals, groups or interests that have expressed interest or made comments at meetings.
- ❑ Technical memorandums (working drafts) will be provided on the project website and distributed to the TCC to provide a better understanding of proposed transportation issues and recommendations and, in return, to provide the three (3) project entities with feedback and an opportunity for continual comment.
- ❑ Special presentations will be made upon request of community groups and organizations.
- ❑ Neighborhood organization outreach to those groups formally recognized by the City. These organizations maintain a communication plan for the residents within their boundaries. RPA will execute up to three (3) specific meetings to address the large scale projects which are known to be of interest to a variety of these neighborhood organizations.
- ❑ The Inter-Neighborhood Council (INC) is comprised of representatives from a variety of organized neighborhoods across Bozeman. They serve as an important link between residents and the local government and manage communication that would be useful in keeping residents informed about the Transportation Plan as it moves through the process. RPA will meet with this group **two months prior** to the first formal public opportunity (i.e. charrette) in order to provide sufficient time for them to notify their neighbors of upcoming opportunities.

- The City has 25+ Citizen Advisory Boards focused on a variety of community values. The Advisory Boards will be contacted using the City Clerk's Office. All the boards will be provided with a copy of the public outreach schedule and RPA will request a representative from each board to attend the various public meetings. Specific invitation to the Advisory Boards will precede the first formal public outreach activity (i.e. charrette) by **at least one month** to provide boards time to meet in advance.
- Fact sheets may to be used to explain transportation related issues.
- Special issues "technical memorandums" will be announced or reported at meetings and/or via email on relevant transportation issues.

### **Public Involvement Key Concepts**

#### **Know the Strategy**

The RPA project manager will ensure that there is a clear strategy for involving the public during the planning process, and will follow through on that process!

#### **Utilize New Approaches and Techniques**

New strategies and techniques must be used to improve the Plans public involvement results.

#### **Be Realistic with Participants**

In public meetings, the Consultant team and staff will emphasize the long-range nature of the transportation planning process, helping people understand that results may not be seen quickly.

### **Information**

The TCC and the Consultant team will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to technical and planning level information related to the data or content used in the development of this Transportation Plan Update. Working draft technical memorandums, meeting announcements, draft project graphics, and other miscellaneous materials will be available on the project website. In addition, links to the project website will be provided via Gallatin County, the city of Bozeman, and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) website.

## Response to Public Input

Responses to questions and comments from the public concerning the public participation process, working draft technical memorandums, the draft and public draft Transportation Plan Update document and other work products will be made via written response in an Appendix to the actual Transportation Plan. In some circumstances, the TCC and/or Consultant team will respond directly to an individual or group by letter or telephone call, or by way of a periodic newsletter.

## Advisory Committees to This Transportation Plan Update

There are several advisory groups and/or committees that oversee transportation related matters in the community. These are listed below, and all will have some level of involvement as this project develops.

**Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC)** – The TCC is a permanent committee that is composed of technical, planning and/or managerial staff representatives from the three funding agency's (Gallatin County, city of Bozeman, and the MDT). There are also citizen and business interests represented, at-large members of the community, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It is expected that regular, monthly TCC meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, from 10:00 am to noon, for the 18 month duration of the project. All meetings will be held at 411 East Main Street.

1. All meetings are open to the public.
2. All committee members, and interested member of the public, and the news media will receive agendas and associated documentation by regular mail or email at least seven (7) days prior to all TCC meetings. The agendas and associated materials will be distributed by the City of Bozeman's assigned project manager for the Transportation Plan Update.
3. Committee members may propose topics for future meetings.
4. The TCC is to help guide the project development, review interim deliverables, be fully engaged in the project's development, and participate in a concerted effort with the public and the Consultant team.

**Bozeman Area Bicycle Advisory Board (BABAB)** - is responsible for organizing events such as National Bike to Work and School Week and bike rodeos and safety fairs. They also produce an area bicycle map, which includes tips on safe riding, low traffic routes through the city, and Montana state laws pertaining to bicycles. They are working with the Bozeman Police Department to reduce traffic infractions from motorists and bicyclists. The BABAB is collaborating with the school system to try and add a bicycle education segment to the Health Enhancement curriculum. The BABAB works closely with community planners and engineers to plan and redesign streets for bicycles and pedestrians. The BABAB will be an integral participant to the Transportation Plan Update.

**Safe Trails Coalition** – is a community-led group formed to help, initiate, and expedite the creation of trails, easements, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities within Gallatin County.

**Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLТ)** - The "Mainstreet to the Mountains" trail system is rapidly growing in the community and is expected to reach the milestone of 50 miles of trails and shared use paths during the year 2007. The Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLТ) has been an important advocate for the development of this system through their Community Trails Program.

**Inter-Neighborhood Council** - The INC is comprised of representatives from a variety of organized neighborhoods across Bozeman. They serve as an important link between residents and the local government and manage communication that will be useful in keeping residents informed about the Transportation Plan as it moves through the process. RPA will meet with this group **two months prior** to the first formal public opportunity (i.e. charrette) in order to provide sufficient time for them to notify their neighbors of upcoming opportunities.

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**Neighborhood Organizations** - The City of Bozeman currently has seven (7) neighborhood organizations which are formally recognized by the City. These organizations maintain a communication plan for the residents within their boundaries.

**Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce** – Attend and present at the Chamber's "Eggs & Issues Programs".

## Consideration for Traditionally Underserved Populations

The TCC and the Consultant team recognizes that additional efforts must be made to involve traditionally underserved segments of the population in the transportation planning process, including the disabled, racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income residents. This will lead to planning that reflects the needs of everyone. The following steps will help with these efforts:

### **Plan Meeting Locations Carefully**

Public meetings will be held in locations that are accessible and compliant with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. If a targeted population is located in a certain geographic part of the City of County, then the meeting location should be in that area for convenience.

### **Seek Help from Community Leaders and Organizations**

To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, community leaders and organizations that represent these groups will be consulted about how to most effectively reach their members.

### **Be Sensitive to Diverse Audiences**

At public meetings, staff and Consultants will attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Technical jargon will be avoided and appropriate dress and conduct will be adhered to.

## Public Participation – Project Schedule

Strict adherence to the project schedule is important to stay on track and keep all interested parties engaged. The project schedule for this Transportation Plan Update is attached. In addition to providing the overall schedule for project development, **Task 18** depicts the overall public involvement program schedule. It is RPA's intent to strictly adhere to this schedule.

*The MDT, City of Bozeman, & Gallatin County attempt to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program or activity associated with this project. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406) 447-5000 or TTY (800) 335-7592, or by calling Montana Relay at 711.*