

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT APPROACH

The Public Involvement Approach provides a concise overview of public involvement objectives and actions for the Transit and Non-Motorized Plan. This brief memorandum presents the plan for soliciting and incorporating the input of the community.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the plan is to guide decisions to improve transportation for people who walk, bike, or take transit in Butte County and to develop a transportation network that will encourage more people to consider alternatives to driving alone. These improvements will be critical to ensure Butte County residents will continue to have good access to jobs, services and other amenities as the county grows.

The first part of the process for developing the plan is a series of general and start-up tasks that include the review of existing services, recent bicycle plans from Butte County jurisdictions, studies of transportation issues, and demographic information. A ridecheck and onboard survey were also conducted on B-Line buses, as well as a community survey at locations in Butte County and online.

The second set of tasks is about identifying service alternatives for Butte County's transit, pedestrian and bicycle network to meet short-term and long-term goals.

The final phase of the process is the recommended plan identifying service priorities, financial requirements, implementation strategies and responsibilities.

Of essential importance to the outcome of the study is involvement by staff from various jurisdictions in Butte County, transit riders, bicyclists, political representatives who may have a role in building community support, and individuals who are familiar with transportation barriers to accessing services.

ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The proposed Public Involvement Approach allows for different formats for input, as well as outreach to residents of Butte County, political leaders, social service organizations, special interest groups and other agencies and organizations. As a result, the plan will reflect the values and interests of Butte County residents.

Objectives

Four primary objectives are presented for community involvement as part of this plan. The objectives are as follows:

1. Integrate a variety of community interests focusing on local residents' priorities, and also including Butte County's various jurisdictions, B-Line, BCAG, and community groups.
 - All key agencies are aware of project and are contacted.

- Participants include representatives from key agencies and organizations in Butte County.
 - Needs and alternatives reflect diverse participation, and thus include issues related to transit, pedestrian and bicycle access, travel needs, public information about transportation and a mix of other transportation concerns.
2. Afford stakeholders and residents the opportunity to share points of view on local and regional growth, transportation programs and policies, and specific transportation problems.
- Stakeholders and residents may provide detailed, candid answers.
 - Stakeholders and residents express interest and participate in follow-up meetings.
 - Stakeholders and residents take ownership of a sustainable approach to growth and planning in Butte County by participating in the process.
3. Prioritize key issues and build consensus.
- List of issues is made manageable so comprehensible alternatives are developed.
 - Stakeholders agree on priorities for recommendations.
 - Participants agree upon primary outcomes of the planning process.
4. Educate stakeholders and residents on the complex decisions required to develop solutions in Butte County.
- The process not only provides information and solicits feedback, but also clarifies the tradeoffs of not working toward sustainable growth in Butte County.
 - Community meetings, kiosks, and surveys are forums for educating residents.
 - Individuals have an opportunity to share experiences and talk about how changes to the transportation network would improve their own travel.

ACTION PLAN FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To address these objectives, the planning process will follow a three-tiered approach to optimize public participation and stakeholder input in the planning process:

- **Listen to the community.** Gather useful information by talking with stakeholders and residents in interviews and at meetings, and through surveys. The goal is to get all of the issues “on the table” early in the study process. This way, we can have an understanding of what types of concerns might arise as we move forward to the next phases of the study.
- **Integrate information.** Share recommendations as the study progresses. Build and maintain consensus throughout the study process.
- **Share information.** Provide informative, comprehensive information to the public. Showcase the public involvement process via the project website, reports, presentations, etc.

Five strategies have been identified to carry forward the public involvement effort. These strategies are as follows:

- **Strategy 1** - Obtain Input/Comments through Stakeholder Interviews
- **Strategy 2** - Identify and Attend Scheduled Meetings and Events for Community, Planning, and Social Service Groups
- **Strategy 3** - Distribute and Collect Survey Forms

- **Strategy 4** - Conduct Public and On-Line Information Kiosks
- **Strategy 5** - Provide Ongoing Public Information

Figure 1. Outreach Objectives and Strategies

	Strategy 1 Stakeholder Interviews	Strategy 2 Scheduled Community Meetings	Strategy 3 Survey Forms	Strategy 4 Public/On-Line Information Kiosks	Strategy 5 Ongoing Public Information
Objective 1. Integrate a variety of community interests focusing on local residents' priorities, and also including Butte County's various jurisdictions, B-Line, BCAG, and community groups.	X	X	X	X	X
Objective 2. Afford stakeholders and residents the opportunity to share points of view on local and regional growth, transportation programs and policies, and specific transportation problems.	X	X	X	X	
Objective 3. Prioritize key issues and build consensus.		X		X	
Objective 4. Educate stakeholders and residents on the complex decisions required to develop solutions in Butte County.	X	X		X	X

Strategy 1. Obtain Input/Comments through Community Representative Interviews

Ultimately, to better inform the public and solicit useful feedback as part of the planning process, it is necessary to obtain input from individuals within the community. To initiate the community outreach process, we will conduct stakeholder interviews with (1) transportation operators at informal sessions and (2) community representatives through formal meetings. Community representatives were identified by BCAG staff.

We developed an Interview Guide, in order to ensure that the time in meetings will be spent most productively. The purpose of the interviews is to understand the stakeholder perceptions of transportation needs, specific transportation concerns, ideas for solutions, their role in the implementation effort, and potential challenges to implementing recommendations. Stakeholders will be asked to identify persons and organizations that should be included in the planning effort to add to our contacts.

Strategy 2. Identify Scheduled Meetings and Events for Key Community, Planning, and Social Service Groups

To solicit participation from community members, we plan to “piggyback” on selected meetings and events held in various locations in Butte County once service alternatives have been developed. Based on input from BCAG staff at the project kick-off, we expect these meetings to take place during and immediately after the service planning process. The consulting team will prepare a calendar of meetings allowing us to schedule presentations with key agencies identified

in the stakeholder interview process and we expect to participate in up to five of these meetings on consecutive days. We anticipate these may include a bicycle advocacy group (e.g., Chico Velo Cycling Club), senior lunches, and/or a school meeting.

Strategy 3. Survey Forms

More than 1,400 surveys were collected from B-Line bus riders via a survey effort conducted in September 2013. In addition, survey forms were developed and distributed to members of the community at key commercial centers and via an on-line portal (buttetransportationsurvey.info), and more than 500 surveys were completed.

All survey forms were available in English and Spanish. The forms provide an opportunity for Butte County residents to submit feedback for consideration in the development of transportation alternatives.

Strategy 4. Public and On-Line Information Kiosks

It is critical to return to the people who will be the users of potential new transportation services. They will want to know what happened to their ideas – how they were evaluated, why some of them may have been ruled out, what the costs are, how they might be involved in making sure that the proposed solutions move forward. In this way, they can move from merely contributors to the process at the outset to participants who understand and help determine the end results.

Based on our discussion at the project kick-off meeting, a series of information kiosks are proposed about the study, to be assembled and carried out once the service alternatives have been developed. The kiosk would include an information table, posters, handouts and feedback forms, and would be staffed by planners. Information presented would detail service alternatives/proposals to solicit feedback from the public.

We propose to staff an information kiosk at (1) the Chico Transit Center, (2) the Oroville Transit Center, and (3) a central location in Paradise (to be determined). The Chico kiosk would be staffed during two two-hour period, and the others would each be staffed for two hours. Informational materials inviting members of the public to drop by and share their opinions will be prepared and can be posted on buses, distributed through stakeholder lists, etc. The same information will also be posted on the website, and the public will be encouraged to provide input on bicycle, pedestrian and transit strategies. Bilingual staff can be available to provide information.

In preparation for the kiosk outreach, the consulting team will summarize key study findings and issues. The information will be prepared in a comprehensive, easy-to-understand format. The informal format of the kiosk will allow individuals to assess their own areas of interest and to speak one-on-one with planners and other community members.

Strategy 7. Ongoing Public Information

In addition to the strategies discussed above, other tasks were identified to inform the community about the study.

Informational Press Releases

The consulting team prepared a press release to announce the survey, and will also prepare press releases to announce public outreach activities. We will work BCAG to share information with local newspapers and other media outlets.

Social Media

At a few key intervals as the project progresses, the consulting team will forward suggested announcements to BCAG staff to post on the B-Line Facebook page. The consultant will also post directly on Craigslist and local Topix message boards.

Project Web Page

The consulting team will continue to provide information to BCAG to maintain the project web page, which will be updated as needed throughout the study process. The web page includes the following:

- Study overview
- Meeting and event dates and locations
- Key study personnel and how to contact them
- Project milestones, findings and outcomes
- Information about how to get involved

CONCLUSION AND OUTREACH TIMEFRAME

This memo summarizes the outreach process recommended to solicit meaningful involvement at many levels from stakeholders and residents. The consulting team will work closely with BCAG staff to modify these approaches as appropriate. The general timeframe for implementation is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Outreach Timeframe

