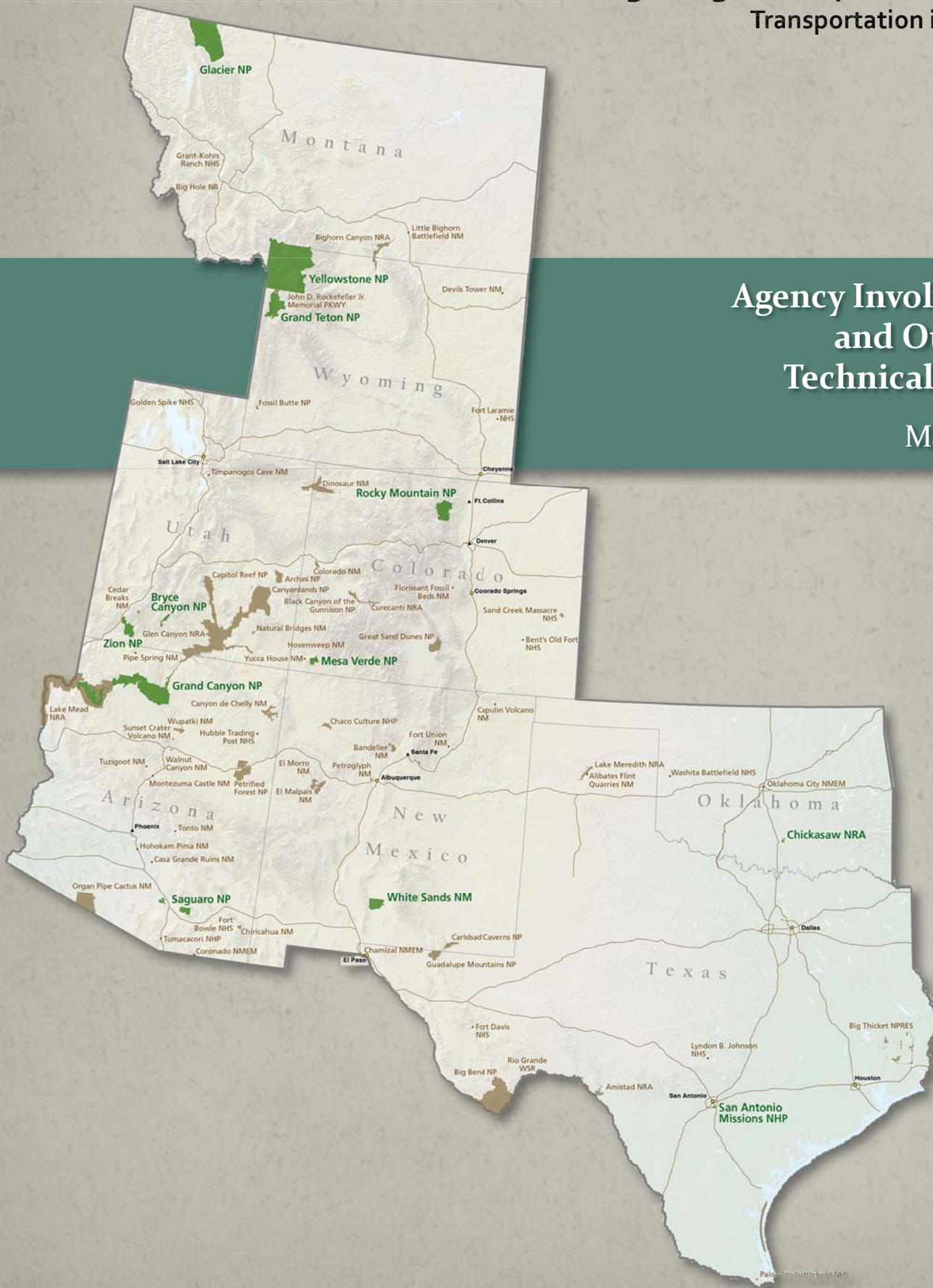




Long Range Transportation Plan Transportation in Context

Agency Involvement and Outreach Technical Report

March 2013



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**IMR Long Range Transportation Plan:
Transportation in Context**

**Agency Involvement and Outreach
Technical Report**

March 2013

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	1
2.0	Agency Involvement and Outreach Plan.....	2
2.1	Pilot Plan.....	2
2.2	First Update	5
3.0	Overview of Input to IMR LRTP	6
4.0	Summary of Internal Outreach Activities	8
4.1	LRTP Foundation Workshop	8
4.2	Focus Park Interviews	9
4.3	Focus Park Surveys.....	11
4.4	Milestone Briefings	12
5.0	Summary of External Outreach Activities	14
5.1	Project Website	14
5.2	Newsletters	15
5.3	State DOT/MPO Outreach Meetings.....	16
5.4	Federal Land Management Agency Workshop.....	18
6.0	Recommendations for First LRTP Update	20
6.1	Internal Project Teams and Scoping	20
6.2	Agency Engagement	21
6.3	Stakeholder Engagement	21
6.4	Public Engagement	21
6.5	Potential Engagement Strategies	22

Appendix

- A. Agency Involvement and Outreach Plan
- B. NPS Milestone Briefings
- C. PEPC Newsletters
- D. NPS Presentations for State DOTs and Other Stakeholders
- E. FLMA Workshop (1/24/13)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Intermountain Region (IMR) began the process of developing a pilot long range transportation plan (LRTP) in September 2010. Completion is scheduled late in 2013. This is the first IMR region-wide transportation planning process. The topic of how to approach public involvement at a region-wide scale has been challenging as the team seeks to engage, at appropriate levels, a large number of parks, agency partners, and stakeholders, as well as the general public.

The IMR implemented mostly traditional outreach approaches for the pilot LRTP, but also sought to identify effective methods and new opportunities to dialogue with partners, stakeholders, and other agencies. This report describes all outreach and involvement efforts conducted with the pilot LRTP, discusses the lessons learned, and outlines a plan for a more expanded effort in future LRTP updates.

The NPS Core Team was formed prior to the initiation of the LRTP to provide oversight, guidance, and review during the planning process. Pertinent information about each outreach element is assessed and accompanied by a series of appendices with presentations, newsletters, and other items that supported the internal and external engagement process.

2.0 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH PLAN

An Agency Involvement and Outreach Plan was created to outline the agency coordination and external involvement envisioned for the current pilot LRTP (2035 Plan). It also outlined preliminary plans for the public involvement to implement during the first LRTP update (2040 Plan). The outreach process for the pilot was designed to begin the process and explore meaningful methods of communication. Additional activities, based on this experience, will be implemented during the first update. The Agency Involvement and Outreach Plan is provided in *Appendix A*.

2.1 Pilot Plan

The pilot LRTP includes specific steps for agency involvement, internal NPS management, and external outreach.

2.1.1 Agency Involvement

The plan identified transportation and land management agencies expected to engage in the LRTP process, most in either a networking and coordination role or an information sharing role.

Agency		Nature of Involvement
State and Local Transportation Agencies	DOTs	In person visits to all eight states; discussions and networking regarding transportation concerns/issues of mutual interest
	MPOs	In person meeting with representative from San Antonio-Bexar County MPO (only focus park wholly within MPO)
Federal Transportation Agencies	FHWA	In person, direct involvement, member of core team
Federal Land Management Agencies	USFS USFWS BLM USGS	Less direct involvement; outreach workshop to discuss LRTP processes, outcomes, and opportunities; information sharing

2.1.2 NPS Management

2.1.2.1 Core Team

The IMR LRTP Core Team met regularly during the project to review and discuss work progress and to offer guidance to the consultant and project manager. At major milestones, the project manager briefed the IMR Regional Director and WASO leadership about the progress of the plan.

NPS Core Team
Bryce Lloyd, WASO LRTP Program Manager
Cam Hugie, NPS Denver Service Center
Elijah Henley, FHWA Central Federal Lands
Jayne Schaeffer, NPS IMR Transportation Program Manager
Kevin Percival, Chief, WASO Facility Planning Branch
Linda MacIntyre, NPS Project Manager
Roxanne Bash, FHWA Western Federal Lands

2.1.2.2 Advisory Committee

Initially, an advisory committee consisting of non-transportation IMR park and regional staff was engaged in the project, and their insights on LRTPs were valuable during the development of vision, goals and objectives. However, agency travel budget cuts meant that engaging this committee grew more challenging during the planning process. Feedback from the committee indicated that conference calls were not an effective communication tool since they were only involved periodically in the planning process.

2.1.2.3 NPS State Representatives

The NPS state representative from each of the eight IMR states was notified of the planning process and invited to the outreach meetings with the respective state DOT. Representation at the meetings was lacking, as only the Colorado/Wyoming representative (based in Cheyenne) attended a meeting with the Wyoming Department of Transportation.

2.1.2.4 Focus Parks

The Core Team selected twelve focus parks to represent the range of issues throughout the IMR and to better understand transportation conditions and challenges from the park perspective. The focus parks represent a broad spectrum of different park typologies, sizes, and locations as well as physical configurations, transportation needs, and visitation levels. Each focus park was contacted during the data collection phase. Representatives completed interviews and surveys, as described in later sections of this report, to provide critical information about transportation issues and conditions in each park.

IMR Focus Parks	
Bryce Canyon National Park	Rocky Mountain National Park
Chickasaw NRA	Saguaro National Park
Glacier National Park	San Antonio Missions National Historic Park
Grand Canyon National Park	White Sands National Monument
Grand Teton National Park	Yellowstone National Park
Mesa Verde National Park	Zion National Park

2.1.3 Pilot Outreach and Involvement Activities

The outreach components described in the Agency Involvement and Outreach Plan and carried out for the pilot study included activities designed for both internal and external involvement. The activities are described in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report, along with a series of lessons learned. The Lessons Learned sections will assist in scoping public involvement for the first update.

Outreach and Involvement Activities	Purpose
Internal	
L RTP Foundation Workshop	Develop the LRTP purpose, vision, goals, and objectives
Focus Park Interviews	Gather information from park representatives
Focus Park Survey	Gather information from park representatives
Milestone Briefings to IMR and WASO leadership	Update management
External	
Newsletters	Inform the public
Project Website (PEPC)	Inform the public
State DOT/MPO Outreach Meetings	Gather information Identify common issues
Federal Land Management Agency Workshop	Promote interagency information exchange

2.1.4 Successes

- ★ The pilot plan made important progress toward expanding understanding of the IMR transportation program beyond project level funding and decision-making to include focus park representatives, federal partners, federal land management agencies, and state departments of transportation.
- ★ Valuable contacts and relationships were strengthened, or in some cases established for the first time.
- ★ Input from the Advisory Team provided a broad base of issues to address in the plan, from a range of disciplines and base of experience.
- ★ The focus park representatives brought much needed perspectives of individual parks, successfully identifying “real life” descriptions of the park experience. This knowledge gives life to often dry data analyses.

2.1.5 Lessons Learned

- ⇒ IMR learned that the difficulties inherent to this first LRTP created an arena that was not conducive to meaningful public involvement in the traditional sense of direct interaction with the end user – park visitors.
 - The lengthy planning process needed for this pilot study did not lend itself to active traditional public involvement.
 - The general public is typically most interested in project-level planning that directly affects their experience. The pilot LRTP is primarily designed to identify issues and plans at the regional level.

- ⇒ The core team needs to be prepared for frequent and active involvement in the planning process at every phase. Frequent delays were encountered in review and comment processes that ultimately delayed the overall project schedule.
- ⇒ Review and involvement of other NPS staff likewise must be scaled to an appropriate role. Organizational decision-making authority and policies should be worked out in advance to avoid delays and changes in direction once the project begins.
- ⇒ It was important to work through the plan and involvement processes at the agency level so as to build a framework for future expansion.

2.2 First Update

The pilot LRTP is intentionally focused on compiling better information about existing conditions, projecting trends, and identifying future needs and funding issues. Subsequent LRTP updates are intended to have a greater level of public involvement and outreach, as described in Section 6 of this report, and will be guided by the experience of this pilot plan.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF INPUT TO IMR LRTP

The following table synthesizes input to the IMR LRTP from all activities described in this report. This section identifies broad themes that were brought forward from multiple sources, whether internal to the NPS (Core Team, Advisory Committee, Focus Parks) or external (federal agencies, states, and MPOs). The right hand column indicates which outreach activities provided the source of the input. For more information on specific input received, please see sections 4.0 and 5.0, as well as the referenced appendices.

Overview of Key Input Themes to IMR LRTP by Goal Area		
<i>Goal Area</i>	<i>Key Input Theme</i>	<i>Sources</i>
Asset Management	Tight budgets leave many desired investments on long waiting lists. While the NPS is moving toward more of an asset management or maintenance paradigm, many parks see an unfortunate decline in facility condition and the quality of services to visitors.	Advisory Committee Focus park interviews/surveys
	While road pavement conditions have generally improved with targeted projects in recent years, parking lots are often crowded and poorly maintained.	Core Team Focus park interviews/surveys
	State and local agencies, also under tight budgets, are attempting to build a culture of maintaining the existing system, a departure from a history of building to meet demand.	DOT/MPO
	While the decommissioning of underutilized or under-maintained transportation assets is under discussion, many parks consider most existing assets as essential to operation. Consensus has not been found on how to resolve this perplexing issue.	Focus park interviews/surveys
Mobility, Access, & Connectivity	Most congestion is seasonal or related to well-defined periods of peak visitation. Designing management techniques, facilities, and services to meet peak demand without over-investing is a much sought goal.	Focus park interviews/surveys
	Some focus parks are well connected to gateway and regional communities, while others would like to find common ground to enhance seamless and well-maintained connections.	Focus park interviews/surveys
	Transit systems often have unintended effects. While shuttle or bus transit may help reduce the number of vehicles on the roads, pulsing effects at transit stops often leads to crowding.	Core Team Advisory Committee
	Non-motorized modes are very popular among visitors, but examples of well-designed and complete systems are few. Pedestrians and bicycle users are often at risk on narrow roads.	Core Team Focus park interviews/surveys

Visitor Experience	The quality of visitor experience often suffers from congestion at the most used spots like entrance stations, visitor centers, overlooks, trailheads, and parking areas.	Focus park interviews/surveys
	Some parks are beginning to explore the concept of matching visitation, especially in private vehicles, to the capacity of transportation systems, resources, and visitor experience to absorb the demand for access.	Advisory Committee Focus park interviews/surveys
	Conflicts between the desired visitor experience within parks is often at odds with the needs of non-recreational visitors traveling or commuting on through routes. This issue remains unresolved, but is an important part of the conversation.	Core Team Advisory Committee Focus park interviews/surveys
	Safety is an overriding concern for parks and external agencies. While traffic volumes and speeds are typically lower than in congested urban areas, the level of crashes in parks is higher than what is viewed as acceptable. Helping to ensure a safe experience for all visitors is a key goal.	Advisory Committee Focus park interviews/surveys DOT/MPO
Resource Protection	Every focus park – and the region – is extremely concerned about the negative impacts of transportation on natural and cultural resources. The noted effects on wildlife, habitat, soils, vegetation, air-water-sound quality, and scenic views are many.	Advisory Committee Focus park interviews/surveys
	Historic transportation resources comprise a significant portion of the asset portfolio. Their management is a growing, sometimes unrecognized, and expensive proposition.	Core Team
	State and local agencies are also attempting to address many similar aspects of resource protection. Coordination with other agencies is crucial to creating more comprehensive responses at more than just the individual project level.	Advisory Committee DOT/MPO
Sustainable Operations	Many, but not all, focus parks are engaged in sustainability planning through the Climate Change Action Plan process. While environmental resources protection is a universally high priority, other aspects of sustainability planning, such as planning to operate in a fiscally constrained environment, is weaker.	Focus park interviews/surveys
	The NPS, and numerous parks in the IMR, are valuable contributors to the discussion about climate change and adaptive or mitigating actions. Parks are becoming significant educational platforms in communities, by example.	Core Team Focus park interviews/surveys
	Alternative transportation modes are attractive to park visitors when properly implemented. However, the NPS and other agencies all have difficulty funding them, especially operational costs over the long term.	Core Team Focus park interviews/surveys DOT/MPO
	All agencies are struggling to more effectively engage partners in the social and financial arenas. There is a growing realization that transportation networks are inextricably tied to the regional community and that finding better ways to support initiatives of mutual benefit will open doors to the future.	Core Team DOT/MPO Federal Lands Management Agencies

4.0 SUMMARY OF INTERNAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

4.1 LRTP Foundation Workshop

The Core Team, Advisory Team, and other NPS staff attended the LRTP Foundation Workshop on February 9-10, 2011. The consultant-facilitated workshop set the stage for the LRTP planning process, including three presentations: an overview of the planning process, known conditions that will affect the outcome of the plan, and next steps. The *LRTP Foundation Technical Report* is published separately and includes appendixes with complete notes, input, and presentations.

LRTP Foundation Workshop Presentations

- Introduction to Long Range Transportation Planning
- IMR System Conditions
- Performance Measurement

The facilitator led the attendees through a set of exercises and discussions designed to help all participants understand issues facing the individual parks, the IMR, and the National Park Service. Topics included:

- Issues and Options
- Understanding the Consequences of Decision-making
- Long Range Plan Visioning
- Statement of Purpose and Intent
- Identification of Key Goal Areas and Objectives
- The Relationship of Goals and Performance Measurement
- Roadblocks to Success
- Thinking Outside the Box

4.1.1 Successes

- ★ The LRTP Foundation Workshop provided a good forum for the project participants to discuss and prioritize key issues. The group successfully sifted through literally hundreds of ideas, concepts, facts, and preferences and emerged with draft goals and objectives that were to guide the rest of the plan.
- ★ The workshop also provided an opportunity for participants to express their chief concerns about the future of transportation in the IMR and their ideas to improve the future. The consultant was able to use this input to inform many aspects of the plan.
 - The participants discussed “sustainability” at length. All agreed that the issue is critical to NPS success; however, the definition of the concept turned out to have many aspects – environmental, social, and financial. The group determined that the NPS should seek to become even more sustainable in all of its day-to-day activities and discussed whether this concept should be an integral part of each goal or should be a stand-alone goal. Recognizing the inherent overlap of sustainability with all goals, the group decided to make it a stand-alone goal so as to give it maximum emphasis.
 - Participants discussed various ways to construct a framework for ensuing plan phases and determined that it made good sense to frame the plan around the five selected

goal areas. This allowed the plan to define “needs” as a deficiency in achieving goals, a key aspect of the LRTP.

4.1.2 Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Professional facilitation was especially successful. The broad range of topics under discussion meant that careful attention to tracking and organizing input was critical to success. All participants were encouraged to fully participate, all ideas were given equal consideration, and a method was devised to narrow the focus of discussion on the final day toward meaningful conclusions.

4.2 Focus Park Interviews

As part of the LRTP outreach program, the consultant contacted the 12 focus parks to convey the pilot LRTP process, obtain information about conditions and transportation needs in each park, explore park initiatives to manage transportation, and discuss other areas of interest or uniqueness to that particular park. Two methods were used to collect information:

- Telephone interview of a park representative (often the Superintendent) in July-August 2011
- Follow-up questionnaire distributed by email to the same person

The interviews were intended to be informal, allowing opportunity for the park representative to discuss transportation-related issues. A “conversation guide” was sent in advance; however, these lightly structured interviews each had their own flavor, reflecting the thoughts of the interviewee. The conversation guide is included below as a reference for the topics discussed during the interviews.

Telephone Interview Conversation Guide	
1.	How does the transportation system (roads, parking, trails, transit, etc.) affect Visitor Experience and Park Resources?
2.	What are the basic elements of the transportation system (roads, parking, trails, transit, etc.) to, through, and within your park?
3.	What is working well? (enough parking, congestion management, positive visitor experience, limited effects on the resources...).
4.	What needs improvement? What are your most pressing transportation problems?
5.	Is there congestion in the gateway community?
6.	Describe your relationships with the park’s gateway communities, public groups (bicycle, environmental, etc.), government agencies (MPO (explain), County, State). Who are your contacts at these places?
7.	Are there partnering opportunities with any of these groups?
8.	What are your most pressing transportation problems?
9.	What are the stumbling blocks that keep you from achieving your transportation goals? (money, policies, competing priorities, cultural issues, etc.)
10.	Has this park participated in any transportation studies recently?
11.	How can the LRTP process help you best?

4.2.1 Successes

- ★ The focus park interviews enabled the project team to develop an understanding of each of the 12 parks' unique characteristics, as perceived by local staff. The conversations identified major issues and topics of discussion to be further explored. The interviews helped the project team to gather details about the parks and to gain a better on-the-ground understanding of the circumstances underlying the statistical findings.
- ★ The interview results also helped to inform the content and questions of the follow-up survey questionnaire.

4.2.2 Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Park staff is very busy, especially during peak visitation periods. While the final result was extremely helpful, scheduling the interviews was difficult. Similar future efforts must be sensitive to the seasonal demands, busy schedules, and primary duties of the individuals.
- ⇒ Scheduling the interviews later in the LRTP process might have allowed for the park representative to better understand the LRTP process and its potential effects on the park.
- ⇒ A two-step interview could be considered: one to uncover and document unresolved key issues, and a second conversation after the park representatives have had the opportunity to review early documents to help determine if the “park voice” is being adequately represented.

Detailed summaries of the focus park interviews are included in the *Baseline Conditions Technical Report, Appendix A: Summary of Interviews and Surveys*.

4.3 Focus Park Surveys

Following the focus park interviews, a survey was distributed to the same focus park representative in order to fill in information about transportation in the park that is less well documented in data bases or other uniformly published information. The survey focused on gaining information about the LRTP goal areas that would otherwise be difficult to obtain: Visitor Experience, Resource Protection, and Sustainable Operations.

Detailed interview responses are included in the *Baseline Conditions Technical Report, Appendix A: Summary of Interviews and Surveys*. The following table shows the survey questions.

LRTP Goal Areas	LRTP Objectives	Questions
Support the visitor experience with safe, sustainable transportation and information options that strengthen stewardship and diversity.		
Visitor Experience	Reduce congestion where it interferes with the visitor experience or resources.	Is congestion (parking, entrance station, etc.) negatively impacting the VE?
		What are the top 3 impacts from transportation-related activities or infrastructure.
		Please describe bicycling or pedestrian facilities specifically designed to enhance the visitor experience. This plan addresses only transportation related non-motorized facilities and does not include recreation oriented activities or facilities.
		If you have a Visitor Transportation system, is it bicycle accessible?
	Integrate state-of-the-art visitor information systems into transportation programs.	Is visitor orientation to and inside the park adequate for visitor needs?
		What innovative or advanced information systems are in use?
	Address impacts of non-recreational traffic on visitor experience.	Is non-recreational traffic negatively affecting visitor experience, resources or park management? To what extent?
	Design systems/infrastructure to enhance visitor experience and showcase resources.	What types of pre-trip visitor orientation is available (park website, social media, apps, HAV, etc.) and how often does the park update this info?
		Does the park or the gateway community employ Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) measures to provide real time information to visitors or park managers about traffic, parking, weather, or transit system conditions? How successful has it been? Examples include variable message signs, electronic payment systems, electronic monitoring of congested areas, incident management, animal/vehicle detection, etc.
		If transit is provided, is it at 75% or greater capacity during peak periods?
		What transportation investments have been most helpful in improving the visitor experience (parking, trails, road improvements, etc.)?
Incorporate the ideal of leaving park resources unimpaired into all aspects of transportation including planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation.		
Resource Protection	Manage visitation and the park transportation system to minimize resource impacts and achieve the desired conditions of park resources.	Does the park experience concentrated areas of resource impacts resulting from or connected to transportation?
		Does the park host large-scale special events? When?
		Do you experience a large number of wildlife/vehicle conflicts for threatened or endangered species or other wildlife? Are any mitigation programs in place to address the problem?
	Consider removing unnecessary, redundant, or underutilized infrastructure.	Please describe any transportation infrastructure that could be considered unnecessary, redundant, or underutilized.
	Use emerging technologies in construction, maintenance, and operations to reduce impacts to park resources.	Do you use, or have you considered using, strategies to limit or otherwise control visitation at peak times?
Consider relocating infrastructure in sensitive environmental areas to restore resources.	Does existing transportation infrastructure impose unnecessary impacts on natural, cultural, or historic resources? Please consider habitat, wetlands, noise impacts, air quality, loss of vegetation, etc.	
	What categories of resources are present in the park, e.g., cultural, landscapes, historic, and natural? Please provide a few examples of key resources that help define this park and especially that might be at risk from transportation activities.	
Advance IMR transportation programs to promote wise investments and adapt to emerging issues.		
Sustainable Operations	Utilize the planning process to strengthen effective regional and community relationships.	Please describe existing partnerships with gateway communities, local or regional planning organizations. How would you rate the effectiveness of these relationships?
	Identify and incorporate climate change mitigation strategies into all planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operations.	What risks does the park have in preserving resources in a changing climate? Please describe any transportation-related programs or strategies that have been implemented to address these challenges.
		Does the park utilize any leveraged funding opportunities with other agencies or groups? Please describe.
Other	What other unique aspects would you like to tell us about the interrelationship of transportation with Visitor Experience, Resource Protection, or Sustainable Operations?	

4.3.1 Successes

- ★ The focus park surveys, completed shortly after the interviews, allowed the project team to follow up on themes and issues that emerged in the interview discussions. The surveys provided a second means of collecting park input, this time in written form, following the earlier conversations.
- ★ The survey questions were more specific than the interviews and were designed to collect input in a uniform manner that would be conducive to issue tracking.
- ★ The combination of interviews and surveys was an effective method to expand the project team's understanding of the individual parks and to ensure that the flavor of the park was well represented in the LRTP. While somewhat repetitive, the two methods provided slightly different opportunities; some respondents were more inclined to provide helpful information through one or the other format.

4.3.2 Lessons Learned:

- ⇒ The survey provided very useful and valuable information for the LRTP and should be considered for future updates.
- ⇒ Similar to the interviews, the effort must be sensitive to schedules and priorities of the participant. Since the format allowed the interviewee to fill in information on their own schedule, this was not as problematic as scheduling telephone interviews at a mutually agreeable time.
- ⇒ To increase the park representatives' understanding of the LRTP process and the role of that focus park, a detailed introduction letter with a request for assistance by senior NPS management would be helpful and likely improve results.
- ⇒ The two methods, interviews and surveys, might be even more successful by reversing their order. The survey could be completed first, with a follow-up interview to more thoroughly explore items of key interest and to clarify or deepen the level of understanding.

4.4 Milestone Briefings

The NPS project manager briefed IMR and WASO management throughout the process at major milestones. The purpose of the briefings is to keep senior management informed of the progress of the plan, to seek synchronous results with other national and regional plans, and to obtain guidance on the direction of the LRTP.

Milestone Briefings	
Vision, Goals, and Objectives	June 27, 2011
Existing Conditions/Projected Trends	November 17, 2011
Public Involvement & Revisions to Baseline Conditions	February 20, 2013
Needs and Financial Analysis	Spring 2013
Preferred Scenario	Late Spring 2013
LRTP Results	Fall 2013

The milestone briefing presentations are included in *Appendix B*.

4.4.1 **Successes**

- ★ The briefings served the intended purpose to provide a forum within the NPS for discussion about the progress and direction of the IMR LRTP. Valuable input and support was provided to help keep the project on track.
- ★ The briefings also provide an opportunity to discuss emerging national and regional LRTPs in progress within the NPS. The structure of similar goals and objectives emerged as an important way to organize the plans in a consistent fashion.

Emerging LRTP Goal Areas			
IMR Goal Areas	National Goal Areas	NER Goal Areas	Alaska Goal Areas
Asset Management	Asset Management	Manage Assets Wisely	System Management
Mobility, Access, & Connectivity		Ensure Access, Safety, & Mobility	Mobility
Visitor Experience	Visitor Experience	Enhance Visitor Experience	User Experience
Resource Protection	Natural Resources	Protect Resources	Resource Protection
Sustainable Operations	Climate Change - Mitigation	Ensure Sustainable Operations	Climate Change
	Cultural Resources		

4.4.2 **Lessons Learned**

- ⇒ Management understanding of the LRTP purpose and progress is indispensable in obtaining consensus on the results and the participation of all staff that may provide useful information.
- ⇒ More frequent and regular briefings might foster closer coordination and information sharing both up and down the chain. Participation and assurance that needs are being met for all parties helps build support and buy-in for final products.
- ⇒ The National and other regional LRTPs are in process on similar timelines. Since the intent is to create a series of complementary plans that support national policy goals, future efforts should ensure that clear direction is obtained during development of the scope of work. Time and effort could be saved if the expectations of IMR and WASO are understood in advance.
- ⇒ Development of a standard briefing template that addresses the needs of the NPS at the national and regional levels would provide the assurance that communications are complete, effective, and lead to a sound course.

5.0 SUMMARY OF EXTERNAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

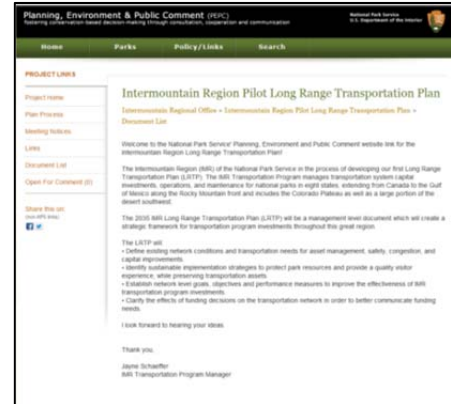
5.1 Project Website

The NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website,

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=39734>, was developed to display IMR LRTP project information.

The IMR LRTP website includes a project home page that summarizes the planning process, meeting notices, links to other webpages of interest, and a list of documents available for viewing.

The site was intended to provide information to the general public and partner agencies.



5.1.1 Successes

- ★ Because the NPS PEPC website was already operational, the project benefitted from having the website to provide a point of entry for interested parties. Relevant information was displayed in a readily accessible format.
- ★ The NPS PEPC website design already has the capacity to accept public comments and to allow viewers to share the webpage information via Facebook or Twitter, both with a simple click.

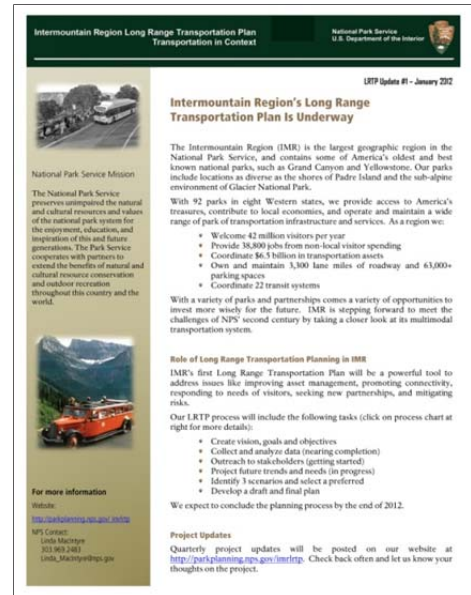
5.1.2 Lessons Learned

- ⇒ The level of public interaction with the project website is unknown. While, the website has the capability to capture public comments on a wide variety of subjects and projects, this feature was not employed.
- ⇒ The website should be further developed and more complete during future updates. LRTP websites often include links to interim plan products as they become available. Mechanisms for input could be included, such as a questionnaire, the ability to include general thoughts and comments, and the ability to request addition to a stakeholder distribution list. While there are significant labor costs involved with regular updates and monitoring/documenting comments, this is a relatively cost effective method to solicit useful input.
- ⇒ The LRTP project page on the PEPC website was not well advertised. The site has existing capacities that, if used, could enhance the public involvement effort without having to design a website from "scratch." A wider notification of availability would be desirable, including links from other electronically distributed materials.

5.2 Newsletters

A series of quarterly newsletters was produced to document milestones in the LRTP and placed on the public website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=39734>. The newsletters provided the opportunity for anyone to monitor the plan and its results. An example thumbnail is shown here for reference. The publication date and main topic is shown in the following table. The newsletters are provided in Appendix C.

Newsletters	
Overview of LRTP Process and Snapshot of Transportation Assets	January 2012
Summary of Outreach to State DOTs and MPOs	May 2012
Macro Trends in Transportation	October 2012
Baseline System Conditions	January 2013
Needs, Funding, and Planning Scenarios	TBD
LRTP Results	TBD



5.2.1 Successes

- ★ The newsletters provided a succinct summary of milestones as they occurred. A longer format with more summary information might be more interesting to the reader and stimulate further interaction, through reading exploring the website or reviewing interim documents.

5.2.2 Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Again, the level of public interaction with the project website including the newsletters is unknown. However, the project team should continue to post the one-page fact sheets during future updates because they provide a quick, concise update to the reader.
- ⇒ Scoping for the next LRTP update should consider whether mailing a physical newsletter to key stakeholders is appropriate. Key stakeholders might include: state DOTs, federal land management agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, friends of the park groups, etc.
- ⇒ Publicity about the plan, the website, and the newsletters was not well distributed. Future updates will involve an expanded public involvement process and should consider emailing the newsletters directly to a defined list of stakeholders. There are increased labor costs involved in creating and maintaining email distribution lists and sending documents. The IMR could consider accumulating lists of stakeholders from parks, other planning projects, or partners as a starting point.

5.3 State DOT/MPO Outreach Meetings

The project team conducted a series of outreach meetings with departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations in each of the eight states in the IMR. The purpose of the DOT/MPO outreach meetings was to initiate discussions surrounding areas of mutual interest. While issues and coordination activities are unique to each state, many items of common interest emerged in the outreach meetings and the sessions set the stage for on-going management of transportation programs that promise mutual benefits. The DOT/MPO outreach meetings took place between January and September 2012, as shown in the following table.

Areas of Mutual Interest

- transportation to, through, and within national park units
- deferred maintenance
- limited current and future budgets
- recreational travel planning
- changes in recreational communication, such as ITS
- LRTPs and other plans, projects, and actions that could impact access to the parks or provide mutual opportunities such as grants
- on-going avenues for dialogue outside the LRTP process, including projects and strategic planning initiatives

DOT/MPO Outreach Meetings	
Colorado DOT	January 9, 2012
Wyoming DOT	March 6, 2012
New Mexico DOT	March 13, 2012
Utah DOT	March 27, 2012
Oklahoma DOT	April 9, 2012
San Antonio-Bexar County MPO	April 11, 2012
Texas DOT	April 12, 2012
Arizona DOT	May 29, 2012
Montana DOT	September 5, 2012

In general, the presentations at the outreach meetings followed a standard outline:

- IMR statistics and overview
- Map of NPS facilities and federal lands within focus state
- State-specific NPS transportation facts
- NPS Mission
- IMR LRTP Vision
- Five Goal Areas
- LRTP process/timeline
- Macro trends summary
- General issues summary
- State-specific key NPS issues (by focus park)

After the presentation, the meeting participants worked through a series of discussion topics and questions, as detailed in the following table. Notes and presentations from the state DOT/MPO outreach meetings are provided in *Appendix D*.

Discussion Topics
<i>Framework for cooperation and coordination</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify appropriate contacts• Establish regular timeline for coordination
<i>Identify potential efficiencies at project or program level</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State-specific example(s)• Relationship between STIP/TIP/LRTP for federal lands projects
<i>Transportation issues of mutual concern</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System preservation needs exceed available resources• Leveraged funding• Congestion and congestion management at key locations/times• Environment – air quality – wildlife
<i>Discussion questions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do your LRTP traffic projections include recreational destinations?• Do you reach out to NPS or other Federal Lands for planning purposes? If so, how and when?• Are you working to manage recreational congestion in communities near NPS units? Which ones?• Does your STIP contain any Federal land projects and if so, who are your main NPS contacts?• Does your agency have any on-going coordination with Federal lands on non-project specific issues (like wildlife migration corridors, environmental issues, etc.)

5.3.1 Successes

- ★ The State DOT/MPO outreach meetings helped the NPS project team to develop contacts with state and local agencies with respect to their LRTP processes.
- ★ The discussions centered on common issues faced by both NPS and state/local officials and also, at times, considered specific project-related issues at or near the national park units. Ultimately, the meetings helped to solidify a network of transportation planners and participants came away from the sessions knowing whom to contact for various coordination and data-sharing opportunities.
- ★ Common issues discovered during the meetings include:
 - All contacted agencies are dealing with reduced transportation budgets.
 - Extensive maintenance backlogs.
 - Transition from building capacity to new paradigm of maintaining existing system.
 - Environmental impacts, especially air quality, wetlands, and vehicle animal crashes.
 - Most agencies are on the search for innovative financing methods such as bonding and special districts, other cost sharing opportunities, and ways to reduce costs without reducing services.

5.3.2 Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Scheduling difficulties emerged with this process. Finding a mutually acceptable time for the agencies, NPS staff, and the consultant was time-consuming and several delays were experienced.
- ⇒ Travel costs were also an issue and future in-person meetings are unlikely due to travel budget cuts. However, the effort was deemed quite successful, precisely for the reason that face-to-face meetings provide a much better opportunity for discussion and networking than would a phone call or webcast. The IMR should continue to pursue opportunities to engage these stakeholders.
- ⇒ The biggest value beyond widening professional networks was the emerging understanding that, while different agencies have somewhat different missions, the central problems of delivering transportation in a fiscally constrained environment are mutual. The process should be expanded in future updates.
- ⇒ Opportunities to visit in-person with DOTs while on other types of travel (conferences, park projects, etc.) should be explored and pursued whenever possible.
- ⇒ A follow-up conversation with each DOT will be scheduled in the near future so as to build on the relationships and to continue to explore opportunities for coordination.

5.4 Federal Land Management Agency Workshop

The IMR hosted an outreach meeting to sister federal land management agencies on January 24, 2013, in Lakewood, CO. The purpose of the workshop was to build a communication network to promote on-going information exchange between the participating agencies. Sessions for the one-day, facilitated workshop, included presentations on each participating agency's background, the US DOT initiative Transportation Resource Opportunity Spectrum (TROS), common program needs, and setting an agenda to continue the discussion.

Most participants attended in person; additionally, several participated during the morning sessions via speaker phone. The lively dialogue included universal interest in continuing to network; sharing information about projects, programs, and opportunities; and learning to avoid potentially confusing and overlapping dialogue with agencies such as DOTs.

See *Appendix E* for the agenda and detailed contact list.

FLMA Workshop Participants			
Casey Matthews	BLM	Erica Cole	NPS/IMR
Geoff McManus	BLM	Jayne Schaeffer	NPS/IMR
Scott DeBock	BLM	Liza Ermeling	NPS/IMR - Facilitator
Elijah Henley	FHWA	Bryce Lloyd	NPS/WASO
Roxanne Bash	FHWA	Ed Hocker	URS
Jenny Staroska	NPS/DSC	Ann Marie Verde	USFS
Linda MacIntyre	NPS/DSC	Marjorie Apodaca	USFS
Cam Hugie	NPS/IMR	James Graves	USFWS

5.4.1 Successes

- ★ The workshop successfully explored the various planning initiatives underway within each agency.
- ★ The workshop established a network for future contact and coordination.
- ★ Many similarities in the types of transportation problems were highlighted, such as the rising costs of transportation improvements and maintenance paired with too little funding.
- ★ The agencies described the differences in their missions when it comes to how they serve the public. The issue of resource management was of particular interest, with core missions for each agency designed to protect resources, facilitate their use, or some balance in between.

5.4.2 Lessons Learned

- ⇒ Each agency must, under MAP-21, continue to expand its planning activities. Each agency will be required to coordinate with the others. This group will form the foundation for that coordination and outreach effort, without duplicate effort.
- ⇒ The new Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) in MAP-21 is of great interest to the agencies. The program is seen as a potentially effective tool to help solve certain access problems such as roads that cross multiple jurisdictions.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRST LRTP UPDATE

The pilot plan included only a modest outreach program and limited opportunities for general public involvement. Future updates may include a more robust outreach element, depending on requirements and needs at the time of the update. While future requirements for public involvement are unknown at this time, LRTP updates will comply with Director's Orders.

The next steps for agency outreach and public involvement in the LRTP planning process for the update may feature expanded outreach and opportunities for engagement with partners and the general public. The extent of the expanded effort should be assessed during the project scoping phase, with specific scope items identified to address IMR needs at that time.

Once the planning framework is established during the scoping phase, based partly on the lessons learned described in this and other pilot plan technical reports, the project team will develop appropriate strategies (who to engage, when, and how often) needed to achieve those requirements and the vision and goals of the plan.

The following broad areas should be given consideration when designing the process:

6.1 Internal Project Teams and Scoping

The number and composition of teams assembled to support the first LRTP update will depend on the project approach and requirements developed during the scoping phase.

6.1.1 Core Team

The concept of the Core Team working closely with the NPS project manager is integral to project oversight and should be continued during future updates. The Core Team should be selected from NPS staff with specific long range planning experience. The team should be focused on IMR needs, with appropriate representation from WASO to help ensure consistency with national initiatives. The Core Team should provide overall direction for the project and review and comment on preliminary deliverables. Interim deliverable dates, with review schedules, should be included in the scope of work, with commitment from all concerned to meet deadlines.

Potential disciplines to consider for the Core Team include:

- Program management.
- Asset and facilities management.
- Data collection and analysis.
- Environmental and cultural resources.
- Financial analysis.
- Strategic planning.

6.1.2 Advisory Team

The role and composition of the advisory team should be reconsidered during the scoping phase. Questions for the next scoping phase include:

- Should the Advisory Team be based on technical support across a variety of disciplines, or
- Should the advisory team function as a “voice” for the parks?

- Is more – or less – input valuable?
- Given the time commitments required for the duration of the project, can selected member allocate sufficient attention to the LRTP?
- Team meetings by phone/webinar are difficult to manage, given the amount of time and detail required for meetings. Will team members be available to travel?
- What is the appropriate interval for Advisory Team meetings? Scoping phase, quarterly, at key milestones, draft document reviews, other?

6.2 Agency Engagement

Agency engagement should include Federal Land Management Agencies, the Federal Highway Administration, state departments of transportation, and metropolitan planning organizations, at a minimum. Other agencies for consideration might include state economic development divisions or environmental agencies.

The pilot LRTP featured extensive support from FHWA, which is crucial to project success. The FLMA Workshop was also successful and the relationships and mutual interests established there should be continued in future efforts.

The state DOT outreach was reasonably successful and did establish relationships and identify items of mutual interest. The IMR may wish to consider continuing this outreach and also consider working to establish NPS representation on existing forums, conferences, etc., all of which help raise awareness of the planning process.

The MPO portion of the outreach was less successful, with limited participation. Given the closer relationship individual parks have with the local MPO, if there is one, the park unit may be the better liaison to develop the link to the region. The current pilot only attempted contact with MPOs proximate to focus parks. This could be expanded to all MPOs proximate to any park unit.

6.3 Stakeholder Engagement

The planning process may involve expanded coordination with local and regional partners. The coordination should target specific partners with a high level of interest and ability to provide input relative to long range regional planning. The scoping process should consider including groups such as gateway communities, friends of the park groups, transportation providers, concessionaires, and regional planning partnerships, all of which have a vested interest in long term coordination.

Well-developed presentations and interactive workshop opportunities to share ideas will help foster long term partnering relationships. In general, the consultant's experience has been that general public meetings without carefully targeting attendees are high cost, low return events.

6.4 Public Engagement

It should be recognized that intensive traditional public involvement activities such as open forums, workshops, or meetings have limited application for long range planning. The general public will continue to be involved in these activities at the park level when conducting transportation plans, general management plans, or contemplating project development. One of the most successful ways to share long range regional planning processes is by seeking existing already scheduled local

opportunities, forums, etc., and gaining a slot on the agenda to present information and gather feedback.

Public involvement initiatives should inform stakeholders and the public of all aspects of the planning process. A variety of methods may be used to transmit information, including websites, newsletters, and representation at other meetings.

All interim deliverables should be made available for public review, with mechanisms for comment. Issues and comments gathered by these methods will be incorporated into discussions with the Core and Advisory Teams, as appropriate, and will be part of the final Public Involvement Technical Report. Issues and comments need not be individually addressed, but should be summarized by theme and documented in the Technical Report.

6.5 Potential Engagement Strategies

The first IMR LRTP may test new strategies for public engagement (including social media) in order to reach out to the public-at-large. Other successful methods include targeting specific user groups such as the aging, ethnically diverse, and transit and non-motorized advocacy groups. Telephone surveys, mail/email surveys, online surveys, in-person meetings, workshops, webinars, social media, or focus groups can successfully gather information at a reasonable cost.

6.5.1 Newsletters/E-News Updates

Newsletters will be published on PEPC website, emailed, and possibly mailed to key groups and individuals, such as representatives of advocacy groups, elected officials, municipalities, MPOs, state DOTs, other agencies, private entities, and the media. Interested citizens will be able to subscribe to a distribution list. The newsletters will provide project updates following key milestones in the process, such as major decisions and actions, and should include notifications of upcoming opportunities for engagement.

6.5.2 PEPC Website

The IMR will expand and maintain use of the NPS Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC) website as a major conduit for communicating with the public. The website enables the NPS to distribute information and receive input related to the development of the LRTP update. The site will provide materials to the public to explain the LRTP process, mission, vision, goals, etc. The website will include graphics, maps, and other materials for clarity and reference. An up-to-date schedule of LRTP meetings, associated agendas, and copies of presentations will be maintained on the website. The website should include final interim documents for review.

6.5.3 Contacts Database

The NPS will maintain a master contact database that includes park staff; businesses; civic and advocacy groups; Federal, State, and local agencies;

Example PEPC Website Comment Page

Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC)
Receiving information-based decision-making through consultation, observation and communication

Home Parks Policy/Links Search

PROJECT LINKS

- Project Home
- Plan Process
- Meeting Notices
- Links
- Document List
- Open For Comment (1)
- Post Form

Share this on:
Facebook Twitter

Submit Comments

Proposed Road Status Change in Montezuma Park

We welcome your comments on this project.
The comment period closes on 04/30/2012 at 11:59 PM Mountain Time.

Before including your address, telephone number, electronic mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment (including your personal identifying information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold your personally identifiable information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comment Form bold* indicates required fields

Country:

City: *

State/Territory: *

Postal Code: *

First Name:

Last Name:

Organization:

☐ Member ☐ Official Representative

Address 1:

Address 2:

E-mail:

Please submit your comments in the box provided. You can enter up to 35,000 characters in the comment field (approximately equivalent to a 10 page letter). If you wish to send us more detailed comments, you may submit them in hardcopy by clicking on Post Form in the left navigation.

Comments:

How did you hear about the document?

How would you like to hear about NPS documents in the future?

☐ Newsletter ☐ Newspaper ☐ Radio ☐ Blog ☐ Email - NPS ☐ Email - Other ☐ Standard Mail

☐ Public Meeting ☐ Park Website ☐ Other Website ☐ Twitter ☐ Facebook

☐ Other Social Media (e.g., YouTube) ☐ Other

and interested members of the general public. The database will track each contact's physical and electronic contact information as well as their specific project interests – such as a particular focus park, mode of transportation (bicycle, transit, etc.), and/or particular theme (sustainability, visitor experience, etc.). The database should be coordinated with an issue tracking module that links specific comments to individuals. The database will be used to generate mail and email distribution lists as needed.

6.5.4 Issue Tracking

A database tool will be developed to work alongside the contacts database to track issues developed at all points of the outreach process and ensure that they do not get lost as the project develops. Issues will be referred to the project management team as well as the applicable focus parks. These comments and, when appropriate, general responses by issue or theme will be included in the Public Involvement Technical Report that will accompany the completed LRTP update.

6.5.5 Review of the 2040 Plan

Stakeholders and the public will be invited to review the draft LRTP for a defined period with a provision for comments to be received. Six weeks is a reasonable period of public review for non-NEPA documents. Comments on the draft plan should be evaluated at a general level and considered prior to the development of the final document.