

5 Public Participation

5.1 ARTS Public Participation Plan

The necessity of public participation in the transportation planning process as mandated by federal legislation has guided the ARTS as the regional MPO in the development of the ARTS PPP. The goal of the ARTS PPP is timely and meaningful input into the transportation planning process. This purpose is achieved through five (5) key components of ARTS PPP, namely: 1) consultation; 2) public access; 3) public outreach and education; 4) public input; and 5) evaluation. Each of these components and a selection of public involvement strategies used during the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update are described below.

Consultation: To ensure that major regional transportation documents, including the PPP, are developed in consultation with the general public, and other interested parties. This also involves efforts to identify and include stakeholders in the transportation planning process (See [Appendix C](#)).

Strategies used to achieve this objective were:

- Apply GIS data spatial analysis to identify underserved population groups;
- Develop and maintain a stakeholder directory;
- Consult with stakeholder groups to determine the preferred communication methods to maximize ARTS reach;
 - ✓ Transit Citizens Advisory Committee
 - ✓ Neighborhood Associations
 - ✓ Lower Savannah Council of Governments (LSCOG)
 - ✓ Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission (CSRA RC)
 - ✓ Aiken County
 - ✓ Columbia County
 - ✓ ARTS MPO Committees
 - Technical Coordinating Committee
 - Citizen Advisory Committee
 - South Carolina Policy Subcommittee
 - Policy Committee
- Consult with stakeholder groups to determine other groups that may be invited to participate in the public participation process and/or identify hot topics that may be raised during this process.

Public Access: To ensure that the general public and other interested parties have timely and convenient access to agendas, meetings, documents and other information related to the regional transportation planning process.

Strategies used to achieve this objective were:

- Community meetings held at community centers, churches and venues centrally located in a public place with diverse population;
- Community meeting public notice materials made available in English and Spanish;
- Community meeting venues ADA accessible;
- Community meetings held on Saturdays;
- All community meeting documents and presentations are available via regular mail or email; and
- Assistance at 48-hour notice provided to persons requiring special assistance to attend meetings.

Public Notice: To publish formal notices of public meetings through local newspapers, flyers, posters, and signs, so the public is encouraged to participate in the regional transportation planning process.

Strategies used to achieve this objective were:

- Updating of ARTS official webpage, making it easier to remember and record;
- Linking ARTS social media webpages to ARTS official webpage;
- Ensure that adequate transportation options are available to and from venue locations to constituents who would like to attend a meeting; and
- Links to Metropolitan Planning Organization partners – Columbia County, Aiken County, LSCOG, and CSRA RC.

Public Outreach and Education: To use effective tools and techniques to provide information about regional transportation plans and issues to the general public and other stakeholders.

Strategies used to achieve this objective were:

- Utilize two color or full color public announcements. Color captures the reader's attention and has the potential of increasing the readership of the advert or announcement.
- Actively pursue speaking engagements at various venues and meetings (e.g., Speakers Bureaus).

- Develop active partnerships with ARTS planning area leaders including ARTS Policy Committee members, South Carolina Policy Subcommittee members, and City of Augusta Commissioners.
- Hosting meetings at smaller, more localized venues, e.g., churches, neighborhood association meetings, etc.
- Television and Radio engagements. It is proposed that local television and radio engagements will be pursued significantly increasing public awareness about ARTS purpose and initiatives.
- Hosting standalone social media (distinct from the City of Augusta) webpages, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Public Input: To obtain meaningful and diverse input from the general public and other interested parties on regional transportation needs, plans, programs, services, and activities.

Strategies used to achieve this objective were:

- Identify stakeholders. Stakeholders will be sought from: Neighborhood & Homeowners Associations; Civic Associations; Special interest groups,
- Recommend new members to ad hoc or advisory committees. The identification of stakeholders may create a pool of individuals who may be recommended by ARTS or volunteer to participate on advisory committees.

Evaluation: To continually evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies, tools and techniques used as part of the Participation Plan.

Strategies used to achieve this objective were:

- Meeting evaluation forms. Evaluation forms are given to all persons who attend meetings hosted by ARTS.
- Online Surveys will be used to evaluate ARTS constituents' views and perspectives on regional transportation issues. Online surveys have the potential to reach a significantly wider audience in the ARTS planning area that would not physically attend meetings.
- Wireless polling. Wireless polling at community meetings offers the ability to conduct on-the-spot surveys and the ability for an audience to immediately view the results of their participation.

Fostering and sustaining two-way communication in the transportation planning process was significantly enhanced in February 2015 by the use of social media and updating the ARTS

webpage address. Before this time, ARTS online presence was nested deep within the City of Augusta's web portal that limited effective online communication. Extraneous factors overwhelmed the message that ARTS sought to communicate online and frustrated the submission of input from the public.

In an era of mobile communications, social media and instant messaging, ARTS has a greater potential of meeting its public involvement goals by accommodating these accepted methods of communication and information sharing specifically reaching people where they are. Best practice necessitated that ARTS strengthen timely communication, citizen engagement, customer service and public information and outreach; all of which are possible through an enhanced website or social media platform.

5.2 Public Outreach Best Practices

Best practices in public outreach seek to apply those methods that are accepted as being the most effective in generating and sustaining public input throughout the transportation planning process. However, the application of established best practices during the Transportation Vision 2040 public outreach process was flexible, leaving room for adjustment that would provide the greatest benefit to the community served. Recent developments in public outreach have seen extensive use of technology and social media. Webpages, Facebook and Twitter have become the de facto standard of any public outreach campaign. Public outreach applications and Best Practices as utilized in the Transportation Vision 2040 public outreach process are presented in Table 31.

The application of technology and visual aids (widely accepted Best Practices in public outreach) has great potential to increase the level of public involvement during a community meeting. In January 2015, ARTS invested in an Audience Response System or wireless polling devices. This system allows voting using a wireless hand held device (or smart phone) the results of which are immediately displayed on a monitor or screen. The instant presentation of results and the ability to vote anonymously versus indicating by the raising of a hand; has the potential to increase public participation on all planning issues including sensitive ones. The public will appreciate and immediately see evidence of their unique and valued input into the transportation planning process. Wireless polling is a tool that will achieve this in ways that paper surveys cannot. It gives the public real time results of their input.

5.3 Development of Stakeholder List

Through its many interactions with federal, state and local agencies, ARTS developed an extensive stakeholder list. Members of ARTS committees in their interactions with their own constituents have also augmented the list of ARTS stakeholders. Attendees at Speakers Bureaus, breakfast meetings and community meetings held during February through May 2015, and online visitors to the ARTS Facebook and Twitter websites took the opportunity to join the stakeholder list.

ARTS communicate with its stakeholders primarily via email. However, those stakeholders who do not have internet access receive information by mail or over the phone. ARTS currently communicate via email to more than 700 institutional or individual recipients. Some of these recipients, such as chambers of commerce or local government partners, forward ARTS communication to their contacts or post online. This additional push significantly expands the reach of ARTS information to several thousand recipients in the ARTS planning area.

Table 31: Public Outreach Best Practices

Method	Best Practice	Applied
Identify Demographics	Decennial Census	Yes
	American Community Survey	Yes
	Environmental Justice Populations	Yes
	GIS Techniques	Yes
Media	Press Kits/Press Releases	Yes
	Print Media (full color notices)	Yes
	Radio & TV	Yes
	Social Media, e.g., Facebook, Twitter	Yes
	Standalone Website	No
	Speakers Bureau	Yes
	Spanish Availability of Notices	Yes
	Email circulation lists	Yes
	Partner with local government agencies	Yes
Public Meetings	Workshop/Community Forums	Yes
	Focus Groups	No
	Small Group Meetings	Yes
	Varied Start Times	Yes
	Neighborhood Locations	Yes
	Transit Accessible Locations	Yes
	Weekend Meetings	Yes
	Venues ADA Accessible	Yes
	Printed Materials & Maps Available	Yes
	Diversified audience by age, race, socio economic status	Yes
Innovative Meeting Format	Open House format	Yes
	Ample time for questions & answers	Yes
	Surveys & Questionnaires	Yes
	Wireless Polling	Yes
	Printed Materials & Maps	Yes
	Technology	Yes
	Visualization	Yes
Sign in sheets and comment cards	Yes	
Evaluation	Surveys & Questionnaires	Yes
	Online Surveys & Questionnaires	Yes

Source: ARTS

5.4 Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice (EJ) is by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Environmental Justice “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” EJ is ensured through public outreach. All citizens are aware of, have access to, and are encouraged to participate in the transportation planning process.

In order to ensure all residents (e.g., minority, low income, etc.,) in the ARTS planning area had equal opportunity to hear, attend and participate in the Transportation Vision 2040 community meetings, the needs of EJ populations were considered in the locating of the venues.

Another consideration for venue location was the proximity to a public transit bus stop. More than 50% of the Transportation Vision 2040 community meeting venues were located within quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) mile of a transit bus stop. However, bus scheduling had an impact as to how many persons relying on public transit were able to attend the meetings.

The Oak Pointe Community Center located in a residential neighborhood of the Augusta Housing Authority is an example of a community meeting venues located in close proximity to a transit stop (Augusta Public Transit bus route #3). The Oak Pointe Community Center is situated in a census tract that meets or exceeds multiple EJ thresholds, e.g., minority (95%), low-income households (56%), and no vehicle households (24%). This location directly targeted the underserved and hard-to-reach population.

This was also the case at the Smith Hazel Recreation Center in Aiken SC: minority (82%), elderly (19%), low-income (50%), and no vehicle households (22%). All community meeting venues selected were based on locations that met at least one EJ demographics. [Table 32](#) illustrates the EJ demographics of the Transportation Vision 2040 community meetings.

Table 32: Transportation Vision 2040 Community Meeting Venues and Environmental Justice

#	Venue	Census Tract #	% Minority	% Elderly	% Low Income HH	% Zero Car HH	LEP	Transit within 0.25 mile
1	Hephzibah City Hall	109.03	33	11	28	3	2	No
2	Liberty Community Center	305.06	39	7	25	2	6	No
3	Sand Hills Community Center	1	38	24	37	17	0	Yes
4	Carrie J. Mays Family Life Center	104	85	15	67	24	0	Yes
5	First Baptist Church of Evans	302.01	22	20	13	9	0	No
6	North Augusta Community Center	208.02	28	15	18	3	2	Yes
7	Warren Road Community Center	101.05	25	19	16	1	0	No
8	Odell Weeks Activity Center	215	26	17	28	11	0	Yes
9	Smith Hazel Recreation Center	214	82	19	50	22	1	Yes
10	Diamond Lakes Community Center	107.12	91	6	9%	1	0	No
11	Oak Pointe Community Center	106	95	16	56	24	0	Yes

Source: ARTS

Environmental Justice Thresholds: Minority 42% (i.e., 42% of ARTS population are minority); Elderly 12%; Low Income HH 27% (i.e., 150% HHS Poverty Guidelines); Zero Car HH 7% and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) 1.25%. Source: Decennial Census 2010 & American Community Survey 2008-2012.

5.4.1 Identification and Involvement of Underserved Groups

Through the ARTS public involvement methods, Speakers Bureaus and community meetings; many civic and neighborhood associations became aware of the transportation planning process. Identifying locations for community meetings and other ARTS outreach initiatives incorporated Environmental Justice (EJ) considerations, such as minority population groups, proportion of households with no vehicle, etc., in the venue selection process. ARTS enabled additional involvement of underserved population groups in the transportation planning process through advertising in media serving these groups, such as the Metro Courier.

5.5 Public Engagement and Media Outreach Tools

Informing the public to gather their input into the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update was pivotal to the success of the scheduled community meetings. Public and media outreach tools are presented in this section.

5.5.1 Traditional and Non-Traditional Public and Media Outreach Tools

Media outreach during the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update engaged traditional and non-traditional methods to increase public awareness. The launch of the public awareness campaign began with the publication of a press release in February and July 2015, distributed to the major media houses in the ARTS planning area. The press release marked the official launch of the Transportation Vision 2040 community outreach campaign.

All media outlets in the ARTS planning area were contacted and informed of the Community Meetings. [Table 33](#) lists all the media outlets that received the press release.

Table 33: Media Outlets Receiving Press Release

Radio	Television	Newspaper
Clear Channel	NBC (Local)	Aiken Standard
Radio-One	ABC (Local)	Augusta Chronicle
WFAM	CBS (Local)	Fort Gordon Signal
WAFJ	Comcast	Metro Courier
WGAC	WFXG	Metro Spirit
WIIZ		North Augusta Star

Source: ARTS

Formal “Community Meeting Notices” (in English, Spanish, Korean and Chinese) were issued to local newspapers. [Table 34](#) lists the local newspapers that advertised the Community Meeting notices.

Table 34: Local Newspapers Advertising Community Meeting Notices

News Paper	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Aiken Standard	Thurs. 2/26/15	Sun. 3/8/15	Sun. 3/15/15	Sun. 3/22/15		Thurs. 7/16/15	Sun. 7/19/15, Wed. 7/22/15, Thurs. 7/23/15	Mon. 7/27/2015, Tues. 7/28/15, Thurs. 7/30/15
Augusta Chronicle	Fri. 2/27/17	Sun. 3/8/15	Sun., 3/15/15	Sun. 3/22/15		Fri. 7/17/2015	Sun. 7/19/2015 Wed. 7/22/2015	Mon. 7/27/2015
Fort Gordon Signal		Thurs. 3/5/15	Thurs. 3/12/15	Thurs.3/19/15		Thurs. 7/16/15	Thurs. 7/23/2015	Thurs. 7/30/15
Metro Courier		Wed. 3/4/15	Wed. 3/11/15	Wed., 3/18/15	Wed. 3/25/15	Wed. 7/15/15	Wed. 7/22/15	Wed. 7/29/15
Metro Spirit	Thurs. 2/26/15	Thurs 3/5/15	Thurs. 3/12/15	Wed. 3/18/15	Thurs. 3/26/15			Mon. 7/27/2015
North Augusta Star		Wed. 3/4/15	Wed. 3/11/15	Wed. 3/18/15	Wed. 3/25/15		Wed. 7/22/15, Fri. 7/24/15	Wed. 7/29/15

Source: ARTS

Subsequent to the press release, a partnership was formed between APDD and Augusta Fire Department’s Public Information Officer, Dee Griffin. Dee Griffin’s experience as a news reporter in Memphis TN, provided valuable input into the success of the public awareness campaign that secured a locally televised interview on Local News Channel 6 on Sunday March 1, 2015 at 7.35 A.M. [Figure 44](#) is a screen capture of the interview. During the interview, ARTS staff was able to introduce ARTS and explicate what it does, as well as share the main objectives of the upcoming community meetings.

A local news reporter (TV 12 WRDW) attended the first community meeting in Hephzibah City Hall and broadcasted the event on the evening news. At one community meeting, an ARTS Staff person was interviewed by Fox 54 as part of their One Hour Earlier news broadcast ([Figure 45](#)). Members of the audience were also interviewed for a very brief informational message to the public about the Community Meetings ([Figure 46](#)). The public was encouraged to attend these meetings and provide their input on how they viewed the transportation system in the region, and not just in their immediate neighborhoods. News articles and interviews with the public were conducted throughout the ARTS area in March 2015. The Augusta Chronicle posted articles of

the Community Meetings that occurred in Aiken, Columbia, and Richmond Counties. In these articles, members of the public expressed their concerns about the regional transportation network and were happy to provide feedback on the LRTP.

Figure 44: ARTS Staff Person in Interview at a Local News Station



1 On 1: Community Meetings on Traffic and Growth

Posted: Mar 01, 2015 10:20 AM EST
Updated: Apr 12, 2015 10:20 AM EDT

By Deon Guillory, WJBF GMA Weekend Anchor/Reporter CONNECT



01:33/02:35

Augusta, GA - The Augusta Planning and Development Department is holding a series of community meetings in March.

The meetings are designed for neighbors and business owners to voice concerns about traffic, growth, public transit, bike and walking paths.



Figure 45: ARTS Staff Person Interviewed on Local News Station Fox54

Community voices concerns at regional transportation meeting



Figure 46: Member of Public Interviewed by Local New Reporter at a Community Meeting

Aiken County

Transportation visions for the CSRA

Posted: Mar 23, 2015 10:08 PM EDT
Updated: Apr 06, 2015 10:09 PM EDT
Written by Alexa Laz, Reporter [CONNECT](#)

AIKEN, S.C. - Georgia and South Carolina are looking ahead to 2040...and asking for the public's input on ways to improve transportation in the CSRA.

The Augusta Regional Transportation Study invited residents to give their concerns on traffic, public transportation and walking and bike paths during the month of March. Residents came out in small numbers at Monday night's meeting in Aiken, but shared big ideas with what needs to be changed.

"Transportation Vision 2040" is the theme of the March meeting series to get residents to learn about plans for our area, and voice their concerns.

Aiken resident, Lisa Holloway, says there are many improvements she could think of that would benefit all CSRA residents.

COMMUNITY MEETING
TRANSPORTATION VISION 2040

Other outreach initiatives in the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update included the use of flyers in English and Spanish, enhanced the ARTS website, and the use of social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) to encourage people to attend the community meetings and keep them informed in real time. Yard signs and bill drops were also used.

The bill drop (in English, Spanish, Korean and Chinese) shown in *Figure 47* was attached to the water utility bill issued by Richmond County. Bill drops were dispatched over 8 cycles during the March and July 2015 reaching a potential 91,000 customers.

Yard signs (*Figures 48*) were designed for each community meeting and placed at strategic locations in and around community meeting venues informing local residents of the upcoming meetings.

Figure 47: Community Meeting Bill Drop

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Voice Your Concerns on Traffic, Growth, Public Transit, Bike & Walking Paths.

TRANSPORTATION VISION 2040



GEORGIA

March 5, 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Hephzibah City Hall
2530 Highway 88
Hephzibah, GA 30815

March 9, 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Liberty Community Center
1040 Newmantown Road
Grovetown, GA 30813

March 10, 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Sand Hills Community Center
2540 Wheeler Road
Augusta, GA 30904

March 12, 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Carrie J. Mays Family Life Center
1014 Eleventh Avenue
Augusta, GA 30901

March 16, 2015: 5:00 - 7:00 PM
First Baptist Church of Evans
515 N. Belair Road
Evans, GA 30809

March 21, 2015: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Warren Road Community Center
300 Warren Road
Augusta, GA 30907

March 28, 2015: 9:30 - 11:30 AM
Oak Point Community Center
730 East Boundary
Augusta, GA 30901

SOUTH CAROLINA

March 19, 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
North Augusta Community Center
495 Brookside Avenue
North Augusta, SC 29841

March 23, 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Odell Weeks Activity Center
1700 Whiskey Road
Aiken, SC 29803

March 24, 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Smith Hazel Recreation Center
400 Kershaw Street NE
Aiken, SC 29801

Please contact the Augusta Planning & Development Department at (706) 821-1796 for more information about the meetings. Persons with special needs related to disability or foreign language may contact the Planning office for assistance or visit our webpage at www.augustaga.gov/arts

Reuniones Comunitarias

Expresé Sus Preocupaciones Sobre Tráfico, Crecimiento, Transporte Público, Senderos Para Caminar

Visión de Transporte 2040



GEORGIA

5 de marzo de 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Hephzibah City Hall
2530 Highway 88
Hephzibah, GA 30815

9 de marzo de 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Liberty Community Center
1040 Newmantown Road
Grovetown, GA 30813

10 de marzo de 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Sand Hills Community Center
2540 Wheeler Road
Augusta, GA 30904

12 de marzo de 2015: 5:00 - 7:00 PM
Carrie J. Mays Family Life Center
1014 Eleventh Avenue
Augusta, GA 30901

16 de marzo de 2015: 5:00 - 7:00 PM
First Baptist Church of Evans
515 N. Belair Road
Evans, GA 30809

21 de marzo de 2015: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Warren Road Community Center
300 Warren Road
Augusta, GA 30907

28 de marzo de 2015: 9:30 - 11:30 AM
Oak Point Community Center
730 East Boundary
Augusta, GA 30901

SOUTH CAROLINA

19 de marzo de 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
North Augusta Community Center
495 Brookside Avenue
North Augusta, SC 29841

23 de marzo de 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Odell Weeks Activity Center
1700 Whiskey Road
Aiken, SC 29803

24 de marzo de 2015: 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Smith Hazel Recreation Center
400 Kershaw Street NE
Aiken, SC 29801

Favor contactar al Departamento de Planificación y Desarrollo de la ciudad de Augusta, llamando al (706) 821-1796, para más información sobre las reuniones. Personas con discapacidades o problemas de idioma pueden contactar a la oficina de Planificación para recibir asistencia o visitar nuestra página de internet, www.augustaga.gov/arts

Figure 48: Detailed View of Yard Sign



*Location: Carrie J. Mayes Family Life Center
Contributed by: ARTS Staff*

Reporters from local news agencies such as Fox 54, WJBF, WRDW, WAGT, and Augusta Chronicle attended various community meetings, interviewed ARTS staff, and presented these interviews on the nightly news.

The internet and social media played an important role in the Transportation Vision 2040 public outreach campaign, starting with notices of the community meetings appearing on the City of Augusta homepage. The City of Augusta homepage keeps the public informed of government activities, events, and programs providing them with readily available information. Facebook and Twitter were also used as means to get the word out and keep the public informed. This was in addition to posting community meeting notices, on online calendars and the websites of partner agencies including the Augusta-Richmond County and Columbia County Governments. A listing is provided below:

The Community Meetings were also posted online through Local Event Calendars and the Wheel Movement.

- Online Event Calendars:
- Events Calendar of the Augusta Chronicle <http://events.augusta.com/>
- Events Calendar WRDW <http://www.wrdw.com/>

- Wheel Movement Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WheelMovement>

ARTS Partner Agencies:

- Augusta-Richmond County Government <http://www.augustaga.gov/>
- Columbia County Government <http://www.columbiacountyga.gov/>
- North Augusta <http://www.northaugusta.net/home>
- Aiken County <http://www.aikencountysc.gov/>
- ARTS <http://www.augustaga.gov/arts>

Several other internet or social media highlights include:

- Simplifying the ARTS website address (written in documents, flyers, etc.,) from www.augustaga.gov/680/Transportation-Planning-ARTS to <http://www.augustaga.gov/arts>
- Launching an ARTS Facebook site www.facebook.com/planningaugusta
- Launching an ARTS Twitter site www.twitter.com/planningaugusta
- Establishing an online Community Travel Behavior Survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TransportationVision2040>

During each community meeting, Facebook posts were posted or messages tweeted. Examples of such Facebook posts or Twitter tweets can be seen in the individual community meeting summaries. Facebook posts along with an image taken at the community meeting illustrated an occurrence at the meeting in real time and encouraged online viewers or mobile device users to attend the current meeting taking place or plan to attend an upcoming meeting near their home or work place. Tweets gave succinct messages of real time occurrences at a meeting. Information about the ARTS Facebook page or Twitter account was distributed at all community meetings allowing all meeting participants to like ARTS on Facebook or follow ARTS on Twitter.

5.6 Speakers Bureau

In an effort to spread the news of the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update, and get people involved in the transportation planning process, Speakers Bureau sessions were promoted throughout the ARTS planning area. Methodology and outcomes of the Speakers Bureau sessions are presented in this section.

5.6.1 Speakers Bureau Process

Speakers Bureau presentations were promoted to any community, business, faith based, or social service organization within the ARTS planning area. These sessions allowed ARTS staff to speak to public or private organizations about the LRTP update or transportation planning process. Each speaking session, at the host's chosen venue, allowed ARTS staff to explain the purpose and function of ARTS, and identify how the public and organizations can become involved in the transportation planning process. After speaking, ARTS staff would listen to concerns and answer questions from the audience. One advantage of using the Speakers Bureau method of public outreach is engaging an audience which might otherwise not attend the public meetings due to lack of awareness of the MPO or the need for public input into regional transportation planning. During the months of January through August 2015 ARTS staff addressed twelve (12) Speakers Bureau meetings. Details of the Speakers Bureau meetings held are presented in [Table 35](#).

Figure 49: *Jamestown Community Center*



*Location: Jamestown Community Center
Contributed by: ARTS Staff*

The Speakers Bureau meetings were hosted by a diverse group of organizations and took place at venues throughout the ARTS planning area. An estimated 344 people attended the 12 Speakers Bureau sessions. Each Speakers Bureau session consisted of a short presentation (up to 15 minutes) given by an ARTS staff person. Each presentation was followed by a brief question and answer session. At the end of each session, the public was motivated to spread the information gained and encourage others to participate by attending the public meetings scheduled to take place in March 2015 or complete the online community transportation survey. *Figures 50 to 51* depict Speakers Bureau meetings.

Table 35: Transportation Vision 2040 Speakers Bureau Meetings January - May 2015

1st Round March				
Organization	Date	Location	Presenter	#
Walton Way Signal Improvement Public Meeting	Thursday, Jan 22, 2015, 5:30 - 7:30 pm	Trinity on the Hill Methodist Church, Augusta GA	Paul Decamp and Carletta Singleton	2
Columbia County Exchange Club	Thursday, Jan 29, 2015, 8:00 am	Snelling Center, Augusta GA	Carletta Singleton	8
Augusta Exchange Club	Thursday, Feb 5, 2015, 12:00 pm	First Baptist Church - Walton Way Ext, Augusta GA	Paul Decamp	100
Augusta Canal Authority	Thursday, Feb 12, 2015, 5:00 pm	Enterprise Mill, Augusta GA	Paul Decamp	12
Commissioner Sammy Sias – District Breakfast Meeting	Saturday, Feb 14, 2015, 9:00 - 11:00 am	Jamestown Community Center, Augusta GA	Melanie Wilson and Carletta Singleton	73
Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce	Thursday, Feb 19, 2015, 7:30 am	Aiken Chambers, Aiken SC	Paul Decamp	25
Augusta Richmond County Neighborhood Alliance	Saturday, Mar 7, 2015, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Ryan's Restaurant, Augusta GA	Melanie Wilson and Carletta Singleton	45
Augusta Chamber of Commerce	Friday, March 13, 2015, 7:30 am	Augusta Chamber, Augusta GA	Paul Decamp	12
Sierra Club	Tuesday, March 17, 2015, 7:30 pm	Unitarian Universalist Church, Augusta, GA	Carletta Singleton	38
Friends of Our Greenway	Wednesday, May 6, 2015, 6:00 – 7:00 pm	North Augusta Activity Center	Paul Decamp and Carletta Singleton	12
Wheel Movement	Monday, May 11, 2015, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Augusta Canal Authority	Paul Decamp	10
2nd Round July - August 2015				
Organization	Date	Location	Presenter	#
Augusta Bus Rider Association	Tuesday, August 11, 2015, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Augusta-Richmond County Library	Carletta Singleton	7
			Total	344

Source: ARTS

Figure 50: *Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce*



*Location: Aiken County Chamber of Commerce
Contributed by: ARTS Staff*

Figure 51: *Augusta Exchange Club*



*Location: First Baptist Church, Augusta, GA.
Contributed by: ARTS Staff*

5.7 Community Meeting

ARTS actively conducted a series of 17 community meetings concerning the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update from March through August 2015. The planning staff of the APDD, who also serves as the technical staff to ARTS, conducted each community meeting. The community meetings were held at 17 strategically selected locations. The sites were selected because of their proximity and accessibility to all communities that may be affected in the public participation

process, including those that are traditionally hard to reach or underserved, e.g., EJ populations. The objectives of the community meetings were:

- Introduce ARTS, its role and functions to the local community
- Present the status of the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP.
- Hear what the public identify as transportation issues and needs in their communities.
- Solicit public input on regional transportation needs, projects and strategies in order to help define and evaluate year 2040 LRTP projects.

5.7.1 Community Meeting Notification Methods

Public notification methods for increasing public awareness of the community meetings consisted of the following: Newspaper display ads; announcements at ARTS committee meetings; postings on the ARTS website; email notification delivery methods; social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter; local media outlets; press release; flyers; and bill drops were included in 91,000 household water bills. In addition, individuals and organizations who had expressed interest about the LRTP update were notified of the community meetings via email marketing.

5.7.2 Community Meeting Venues, Schedule and Number of Attendees

Meetings were open to all interested residents of the local community. Through media announcements, email marketing and word of mouth over one hundred 86 persons attended the series of community meetings as presented in Table 36 as follows:

Table 36: Community Meeting Schedule and Number of Attendees

1st Round		
Date	Venue	Attendees
Thursday, 3/5/15	Hephzibah City Hall	7
Monday, 3/9/15	Liberty Community Center	6
Tuesday, 3/10/15	Sand Hills Community Center	26
Thursday, 3/12/15	Carrie J. Mays Family Life Center	7
Monday, 3/16/15	First Baptist Church Evans	7
Thursday, 3/19/15	North Augusta Community Center	6
Saturday, 3/21/15	Warren Road Community Center	7
Monday, 3/23/15	Odell Weeks Activity Center	13
Tuesday, 3/24/15	Smith Hazel Recreation Center	7
Thursday, 3/26/15	Diamond Lakes Community Center	8
Saturday, 3/28/15	Oak Pointe Community Center	8
2nd Round		
Date	Venue	Attendees
Thursday, 7/23/15	Odell Weeks Activity Center	10
Monday, 7/27/15	Gracewood Community Center	5
Tuesday, 7/28/15	Sand Hills Community Center	17
Thursday, 7/30/15	Evans Government Complex	30
Saturday, 8/1/15	Augusta-Richmond County Municipal Building	12
Monday, 8/3/15	Riverview Park Activity Center	10
	Total	186

Source: ARTS

The majority of the community meetings were held on weekdays, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday meetings were from approximately 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A registration desk was located at the entrance of each meeting room where attendees were invited to sign-in (*Figure 52*). Each attendee received a meeting agenda, ARTS fact-sheet, surveys, and question card to record their thoughts or questions regarding the LRTP.

Figure 52: Sign In Desk



*Location: Sand Hills Community Center
Contributed by: ARTS Staff*

The two-hour meeting was designed in an open house format with poster-board maps of the existing transportation conditions placed around the meeting room. Meeting attendees were given an opportunity to view the various exhibits that were on display. Exhibits included maps of existing transportation conditions and predicted conditions. Additionally, ARTS staff persons were available to provide information and answer questions (*Figure 53*).

Figure 53: ARTS Staff with Audience



*Location: Sand Hills Community Center
Contributed by: ARTS Staff*

Lastly, meeting attendees participated in a live polling/survey to identify transportation issues and needs for vision and goal settings (*Figure 54*) and followed by questions/answer discussion. Each meeting started with a brief introduction of ARTS staff, followed by a presentation covering the following topics:

- Metropolitan Transportation Planning (Planning and Schedule)
- Where Are We Now? Existing Conditions
- Where Are We Going? Highlights from Regional Travel Model 2040/2035 LRTP
- Where Do We Want to Be in 2040? Vision and Goal Setting
- How Do We Get There?
- Next Steps in the Transportation Planning Process

Figure 54: *Goal Setting*

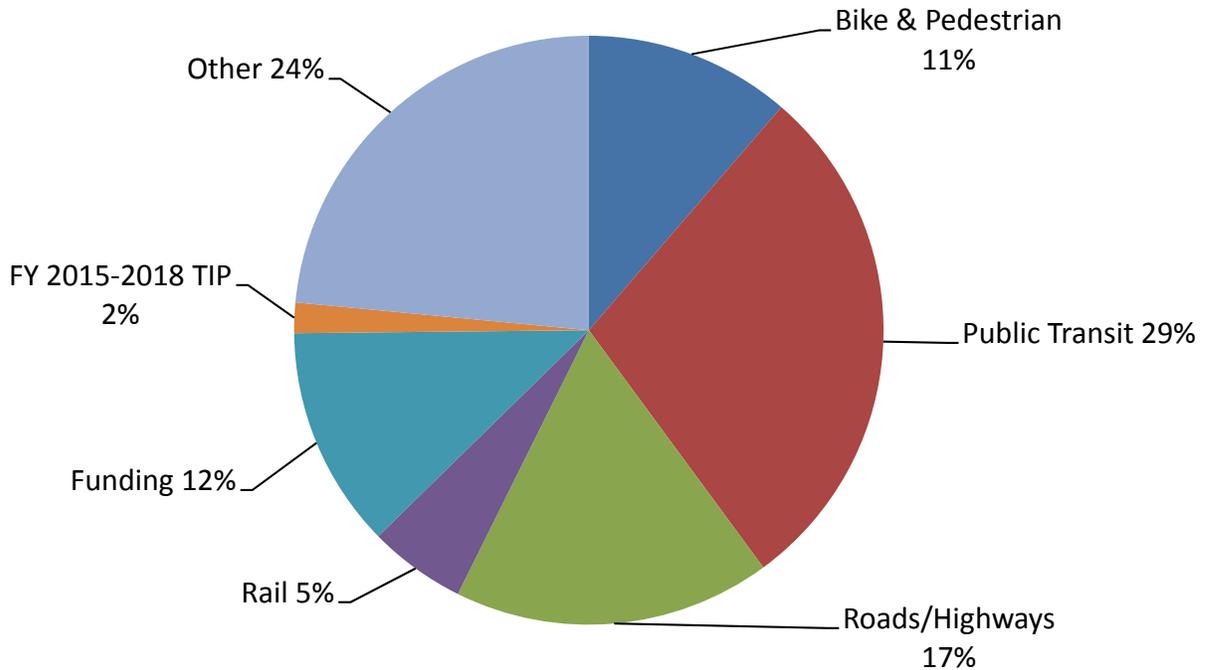


*Location: Odell Weeks Community Center
Contributed by: ARTS Staff*

5.7.3 Common Discussion Themes

At each of the community meetings and Speakers Bureaus many opportunities and time was provided for question and answer sessions. Attendees were encouraged to write questions or comments on comment cards that were answered at a specified time during each meeting. However, attendees were free to ask ARTS staff any questions before, during or after each meeting. A few inquiries were also submitted electronically, e.g., email or telephone. For all of the attendees, the community meetings or Speakers Bureaus created unique opportunities to ask questions, share concerns, or simply comment on an issue relating to transportation or their local community. Close to 100 questions and inquiries were discussed during the 17 community meetings. Subject themes of these questions are presented in [Figure 55](#).

Figure 55: Questions/Inquiries Received During Community Meetings



Source: ARTS

The top three (3) key themes arising at the community meeting were as follows: 1) Funding transportation; 2) Roads/Highways; and, 3) public transit. Funding of transportation as an indirect theme dominated many community-meeting discussions. Attendees at community meetings who put forward questions or comments relating to increasing transportation and mobility choices, e.g., transit, bike and pedestrian facilities; became aware that the availability of local funds and willingness of the public to provide local funds, ultimately determines the choice of transportation modes in communities.

Funding as a theme permeates many decisions relating to transportation systems or community transportation options. However, the bottom placement of the original ARTS Goal #2 (i.e., Develop a transportation system that is financially and politically feasible and has broad support) in the Goal Setting and Evaluation. It is apparent that respondents do not accept that 'funding' is an obstacle, limiting the reality of the transportation environment that they desire.

5.8 Goal Setting and Evaluation

The first step in developing a transportation system that meets the needs of the communities it serve is to develop goals, objectives and evaluation measures (i.e., activities) that will demonstrate progress towards the anticipated state. The goal setting and goal validation process that was followed during the Transportation Vision 2040 public outreach process is presented in this section.

5.8.1 Defining Goals

Defining goals in the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update process guidance was taken from a variety of resources, e.g., MAP-21, ARTS 2035 LRTP update, Georgia’s 2013 Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan, and South Carolina’s 2040 Multimodal Transportation Plan, etc. These resources created a framework in which the goals developed would be attainable, measurable, enable prioritization and relate to state DOT and National goals for transportation. A summary of the resources used is presented below.

5.8.2 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century

MAP-21, which was signed into law in 2012, developed a new performance-based paradigm in funding for surface transportation, transportation infrastructure and transit investments. Guiding future investments in transportation, seven (7) national performance goals (governing transportation investments of the Federal Highways Administration FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA)) were developed.

- **Safety:** To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- **Infrastructure Condition:** To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
- **Congestion Reduction:** To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
- **System Reliability:** To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
- **Freight Movement and Economic Vitality:** To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

- **Reduced Project Delivery Delays:** To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

5.8.3 ARTS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Published in 2010, the ARTS 2035 LRTP update developed seven (7) goals that provided focus during the transportation planning process. Adopting these seven (7) goals enabled proposed transportation and transit projects to fit within a framework. This would ultimately result in a transportation system that met the needs of the ARTS community. The seven (7) goal statements (taken from the 2035 LRTP update) were as follows: 1) Develop a Transportation System Integrated with Planned Land Use; 2) Develop a Transportation System that is Financially and Politically Feasible and has Broad Support; 3) Develop a Transportation System that will allow Effective Mobility Throughout the Region and Provide Efficient Movement of Persons and Goods; 4) Develop a Transportation System that will Enhance the Economic, Social, and Environmental Fabric of the Area, Using Resources Wisely While Minimizing Adverse Impacts; 5) Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs; 6) Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users; and, 7) Continue to develop a multimodal transportation network that utilizes strategies for addressing congestion management and air quality issues in the ARTS planning area.

5.8.4 Goal Setting Process

During each of the first series of community meetings and Speakers Bureau session, attendees were asked to show their preference to seven (7) transportation goals as defined in the 2035 LRTP through an interactive goal setting exercise. These seven (7) transportation goals were used as a benchmark from which an expanded or shortened list may result from the goal setting process. Public input was necessary to reaffirm these seven (7) transportation goals and incorporate them into the LRTP Update. Out of the one hundred eighty-five (185) persons who participated in the community meetings and Speakers Bureau sessions, where a goal setting exercise was offered, approximately ninety-seven (97) persons took part in the goal setting exercise (a response rate of 52%). The objectives of each goal setting exercise were as follows:

- Present transportation planning goals for general discussion.
- Gauge the level of agreement of meeting participants with each goal statement.
- Prioritize the seven (7) goal statements in order of preference.
- Gauge the level of alignment of prioritized goals with MAP-21, and 2035 LRTP update.

An Audience Response System was the primary method used to conduct the goal setting survey. This is a system where meeting participants can vote wirelessly and anonymously using a hand held wireless-keypad ([Figure 56](#)). Each of the seven goal statements were presented on the screen and briefly explained to the attendees at the meeting. Attendees were handed a wireless hand-held device to select one of five (5) options to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the goal statement. The five choices were: 1) Strongly Agree; 2) Agree, 3) Disagree; 4) Strongly Disagree; and 5) No Preference. By pressing one of these five choices, votes were recorded. Results were shown immediately following each selection made. [Figures 57 and 58](#) illustrate a goal-setting question and the results.

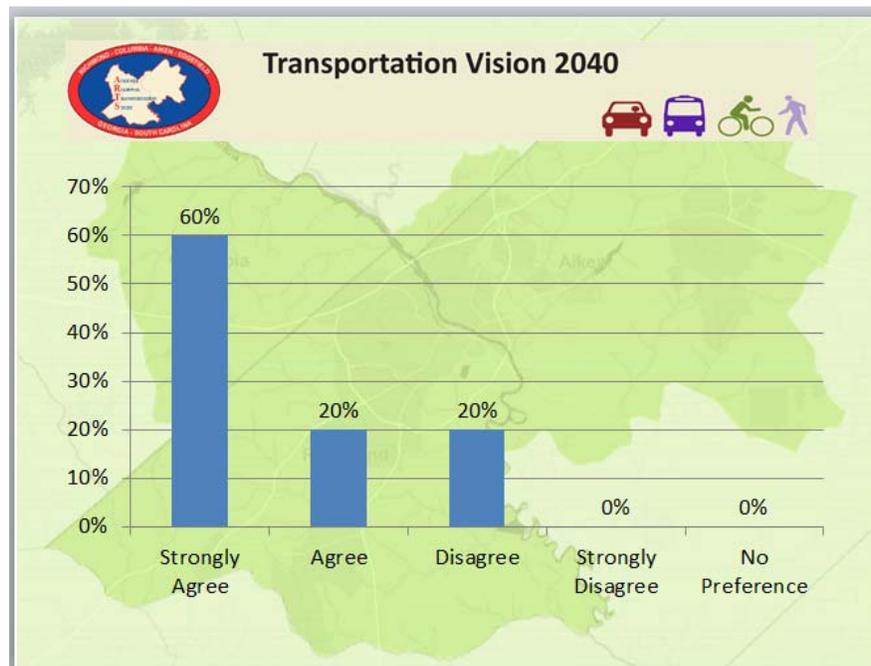
Figure 56: *Voting with a Wireless Hand-Held Device*



Figure 57: Example Question Slides from the Goal Setting Exercise



Figure 58: Example Results Slide from Goal Setting Exercise

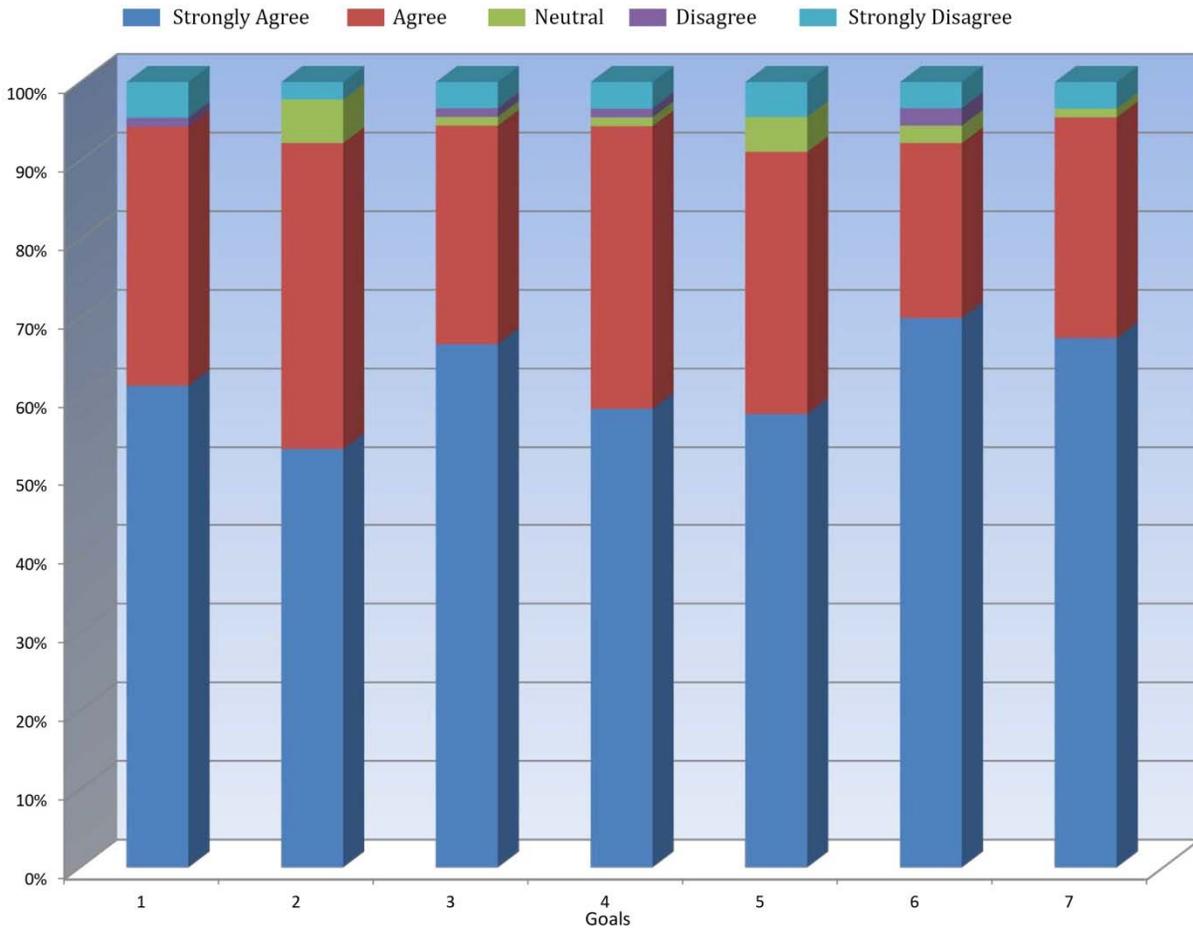


The seven (7) goal statements presented at the eleven (11) community meetings and two (2) speakers bureau sessions (taken from the 2035 LRTP update) were:

- Goal 1 – Develop a transportation system integrated with planned land use.
- Goal 2 – Develop a transportation System that is financially and politically feasible and has broad support.
- Goal 3 – Develop a transportation system that will allow effective mobility throughout the region and provide efficient movement of persons and goods.
- Goal 4 – Develop a transportation system that will enhance the economic, social, and environmental fabric of the area, using resources wisely while minimizing adverse impacts.
- Goal 5 – Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs
- Goal 6 – Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Goal 7 – Continue to develop a multimodal transportation network that utilizes strategies for addressing congestion management and air quality issues in the ARTS planning area.

Individual results of the goal setting exercise from each of the first round of community meetings are presented in the meeting summaries contained in the *Public Participation & Community Meeting Report*. Nevertheless, overall results are presented in [Figure 59](#). It is evident that participants in the goal setting exercise strongly agreed with all seven (7) goal statements.

Figure 59: Overall Goal Setting Results



Goal description listed on page 162

Goal #1 - Develop a transportation system integrated with planned land use.

Goal #2 - Develop a transportation system that is financially and politically feasible and has broad support.

Goal #3 - Develop a transportation system that will allow effective mobility throughout the region and provide efficient movement of persons and goods.

Goal #4 - Develop a transportation system that will enhance the economic, social, and environmental fabric of the area, using resources wisely while minimizing adverse impacts

Goal #5 - Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs.

Goal #6 - Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

Goal #7 -Continue to develop a multimodal transportation network that utilizes strategies for addressing congestion management and air quality issues in the ARTS planning area.

However, to prioritize the goal statements, numeric value may be attached to each of the levels of agreement, e.g., strongly agree = 5 points, Agree = 4 points, No Preference = 3 points, Disagree = 2 points and Strongly Disagree = 1 point. Multiplying these values by the number of meeting attendees who selected a particular level of agreement gives an overall rating as depicted in Tables 37 and 38.

Table 37: Goal Setting Overall Results

Response	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Preference	Total Votes
Develop a Transportation System Integrated with Planned Land Use	54	29	0	1	4	88
Develop a Transportation System that is Financially and Politically Feasible and has Broad Support	48	35	5	0	2	90
Develop a Transportation System that will allow Effective Mobility Throughout the Region and Provide Efficient Movement of Persons and Goods	60	25	1	1	3	90
Develop a Transportation System that will Enhance the Economic, Social, and Environmental Fabric of the Area, Using Resources Wisely While Minimizing Adverse Impacts	52	32	1	1	3	89
Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs	52	30	4	0	4	90
Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users	63	20	2	2	3	90
Continue to develop a multimodal transportation network that utilizes strategies for addressing congestion management and air quality issues in the ARTS region	60	25	1	0	3	89

Source: ARTS

Table 38: Goal Setting Rating of Responses

Rating	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Preference	Total Score	Rating
Continue to develop a multimodal transportation network that utilizes strategies for addressing congestion management and air quality issues in the ARTS region	300	100	2	0	9	411	4.62
Develop a Transportation System that will allow Effective Mobility Throughout the Region and Provide Efficient Movement of Persons and Goods	300	100	2	1	9	412	4.58
Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users	315	80	4	2	9	410	4.56
Develop a Transportation System Integrated with Planned Land Use	270	116	0	1	12	399	4.53
Enhance the Economic, Social, and Environmental Fabric of the Area, Using Resources Wisely While Minimizing Adverse Impacts	260	128	2	1	9	400	4.49
Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs	260	120	8	0	12	400	4.44
Develop a Transportation System that is Financially and Politically Feasible and has Broad Support	240	140	10	0	6	396	4.4

Source: ARTS

Applying the average rating to the seven (7) goal statements, the following prioritization (i.e., highest to lowest average rating) order is identified by respondents who voted, see [Table 40](#).

5.9 Goal Prioritization

Of the seven (7) goals presented, the prioritized order based of the average rating is as follows:

- Goal #1 - Continue to develop a multimodal transportation network that utilizes strategies for addressing congestion management and traffic safety in the ARTS planning area (formerly Goal #7).
- Goal #2 - Develop a transportation system that will allow effective mobility throughout the region and provide efficient movement of persons and goods (formerly Goal #3).
- Goal #3 - Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users (formerly Goal #6);
- Goal #4 - Develop a transportation system integrated with planned land use (formerly Goal #1).
- Goal #5 - Develop a transportation system that will enhance the economic, social, and environmental fabric of the area, using resources wisely while minimizing adverse Impacts (formerly Goal #4).
- Goal #6 - Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs (formerly Goal #5).
- Goal #7 - Develop a transportation system that is financially and politically feasible and has broad support (formerly Goal #2).

Correlating the prioritized goals with MAP-21 and the results of the Goal Prioritization, the following conclusions can be made:

- Goal #1 emphasizing the continued development of multimodal transportation options emphasizes more transportation choices and MAP-21 goal #3 congestion reduction.
- Goal #1 impacting congestion management in a positive way will have parallel impacts on safety. (Safety is the MAP-21 #1 goal).
- Goal #2 emphasizing mobility options will have positive impacts on equitable, affordable housing; supporting and adding value to existing communities.
- Goal #3 - recognizes the equality of motorized and non-motorized users in terms of safety while using the transportation system. Safer transportation systems will strengthen safer, economically vibrant and sustainable communities; positively enhancing economic competitiveness and MAP-21 goal #5, freight movement and economic vitality.

5.9.1 Summary

Through an extensive public outreach campaign during February thru August 2015, more than 1,100 persons contributed to the Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP update. The use of traditional and non-traditional outreach tools contributed to this success. Key issues arising from the input received were:

- **Funding:** The issue of funding generated the most inquiries during the public outreach campaign.
- **Road and Highways:** A highway system that is safe, efficient and in a good state of repair, benefits everybody in meeting their transportation needs.
- **Preferred Transportation Mode:** The majority of residents and visitors in the ARTS planning area own a private motor vehicle, i.e., car/truck/van.
- **Desired transportation improvements:** Physical condition of highways and streets; traffic flow during peak periods; and road safety were seen as the most needed transportation improvements.
- **Public Transit and Non-motorized Transportation Modes:** More public transit and alternative transportation facilities, such as bike lanes, multi-use paths, and sidewalks are needed in the ARTS planning area.
- **Functionality of the Regional Transportation System:** Local traffic congestion, traffic safety, public transit and facilities for alternative transportation modes were all seen as critical transportation issues improving transportation system functionality.

Transportation Vision 2040 Goals: Transportation Vision 2040 LRTP supported a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.