

Chapter 2

Outreach



INTRODUCTION



Public meeting that focused on the presentation, discussion, and refinement of future transit and TDM recommendations.

MANY VOICES

The vast geography of the Super NoVa region, diverse needs of travelers, and multifaceted agency roles and responsibilities in the region contributed to a broad engagement approach being undertaken during the planning process. Working sessions with stakeholders and the public and communication through traditional and new media helped to reveal regional transit and transportation demand management (TDM) needs. Themes of input included connectivity; travel choice; information; seamless travel; reasonable cost; quality access; coordination; sustainability; service expansion; competitive travel time; respect for communities; economic benefit; and travel related to work, recreation, and other purposes.

A number of stakeholder and public participation meetings were conducted as part of the Super NoVa plan. The target audiences for the outreach included stakeholders (i.e., local jurisdiction staff, regional and state agency staff, transit operators, TDM staff, and other relevant special interest groups), commuters, and the general public. There were four rounds of stakeholder meetings and three rounds of public meetings as well as a number of individual meetings with various groups. In addition to meetings, the study provided a number of different ways for stakeholders and the public to stay informed on the effort.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT



Stakeholder meeting in Arlington County that focused on discussing needs and identifying future opportunities.

EXPANSIVE DIALOGUE

The study process was conducted in an open forum with stakeholders. Stakeholders that participated throughout the study are documented in the Appendix and included:

- Towns
- Cities
- Counties
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)
- Regional Commissions
- Transportation Authorities
- State Agencies
- Federal Agencies
- Transit Agencies/Providers
- Commuter and Passenger Railroads
- Transportation Commissions
- Transportation Management Agencies (TMA)
- TDM Program Administrators
- Military

Widespread support existed in each round of stakeholder meetings. Stakeholders were asked in the first round of meetings in January 2012 to talk with their colleagues and partners about the study, create a link to the project website from their websites, and post the study information on social media sites. Stakeholders also were asked to identify the correct point people to be on the stakeholder list and persons in their organization to contact about outreach.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Four rounds of public meetings were organized to correspond with key milestones in the study. Because of the broad geography of the study area, two opportunities to attend a meeting were offered for each round of meetings. Meetings were organized with presentational and workshop elements. Stakeholder presentations also were made available via an FTP site.

Stakeholder Meeting 1: Vision Plan Introduction/Current Conditions

Fairfax County and Front Royal

The first set of stakeholder meetings were held to introduce the study to the stakeholders, explain the vision plan, review goals and objectives, and facilitate a workshop to gather information and needs.

Stakeholder Meeting 2: Analysis/Concept Alternatives

Culpeper and Arlington County

The second set of stakeholder meetings was held to review preliminary data and analysis; brainstorm ideas related to serving super-regional mobility needs and closing gaps in services, systems, and programs; and facilitate a workshop to gather input to the analysis and guide the development of initial recommendations.

Stakeholder Meeting 3: Initial Recommendations

Winchester and Fairfax County

The third set of stakeholder meetings was intended to workshop through enhanced analysis, discuss draft recommendations, and gather input related to refinement of draft recommendations.

Stakeholder Meeting 4: Final Recommendations

Warrenton and Fairfax County

The fourth set of stakeholder meetings offered the stakeholders the opportunity to review final plan recommendations and provide comments and further insight on the recommendations as well as discuss next steps for achieving the project mission.

STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Stakeholders were offered several ways to submit comments on the study:

- At stakeholder meetings
- Written comments to the project team
- Agency and jurisdictional workshop meetings

A record of stakeholder comments is provided in the **Appendix**. A brief summary of thematic stakeholder comments follows.

Existing Conditions

- Unconstrained demand for park-and-ride lots in many locations
- Primary demand for transit is to traditional inner area destinations
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) have core capacity constraints
- Fare structure can be a disincentive to potential customers
- TDM funding is insufficient
- State's investment in high-occupancy vehicle (HOV)/high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes will benefit bus transit operations

Regional Mobility Needs

- Travelers are not concerned with jurisdictional boundaries, but transit service providers are because there is no incentive or funding for crossjurisdictional boundaries outside the WMATA and VRE compacts
- Additional reverse commute service
- Suburb to suburb
- Support aging in place through human services-oriented transportation
- Services to military institutions, colleges and universities, tourist destinations, and airports
- Transportation options between states

Preliminary Ideas

- Make use of technology
- Consider telework and reverse commutes as a way to use available transportation capacity
- Transportation hubs in established activity centers with information, TDM services, and timed transfers
- New Potomac River crossings for transit
- Increased Transportation Management Plan (TMP) requirements
- Public-private partnerships transit/TDM funding
- Open-source transit and TDM data
- Centralized location for customers to access transit and TDM information
- Additional commuter parking
- Additional VRE service (i.e. extensions, midday service, reverse operation, and potential run through service between Maryland and Virginia)
- Core capacity improvements for Metro such as additional eight-car trains
- Regional midday bus storage
- Sustainable and transit-oriented land use patterns

- Additional HOV facilities
- “Last mile” improvements such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Destination-specific shuttles
- Specific corridor rapid transit services
- I-495 or other circumferential transit services

Draft Recommendations

- Follow Tyson’s Corner example for TDM outreach
- Encourage “car-light” and “car-free” lifestyles
- Address core capacity issues and potential improvements
- Promote benefits of smart land use planning
- Regionally-coordinated transit and TDM planning
- Plan for paratransit and other programs and services for disabled populations
- Improve walking and bicycling infrastructure
- Consider parking guidelines that are supportive of transit and TDM
- Develop regional transit technology systems or guidelines
- Continue regional planning dialogue
- Communicate using and educate people on transit mode definitions
- Specific comments related to corridor transit recommendations (described further in Chapter 5)
- Additional locations for hubs
- Connect fixed guideway transit corridors
- Discuss coordination with local and regional plans

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



Public meeting that focused on the presentation, discussion, and refinement of future transit and TDM recommendations.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The complex physical, human, political, and policy landscape of the Super NoVa region requires a focused effort on stakeholder and public coordination. Outreach with stakeholders and the general public was designed to be relevant, timely, and meaningful.

The program described in the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed with an understanding of federal, state, regional, and local requirements and needs. The outreach program sought to accomplish the following:

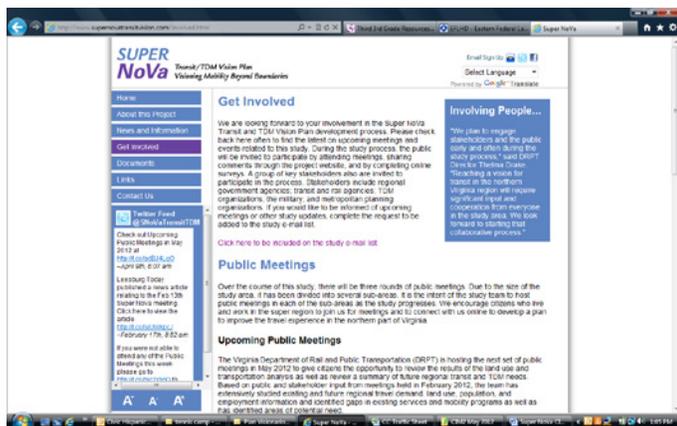
- Create awareness and understanding of the study and the benefits that would result from implementing a strategic vision to enhance mobility for the Super NoVa region.
- Inform and educate community groups, businesses, and the general public, including Title VI audiences, about the study, its objectives, and outcomes.
- Encourage coordination, communication, and collaboration among key stakeholders and regional agencies to broaden the reach of the information and dialogue beyond the vision planning effort.
- Gather input from stakeholders, state leaders, and policymakers regarding issues and opportunities.

The outreach effort was organized to coincide with key study milestones. These milestones corresponded to the following meeting topics:

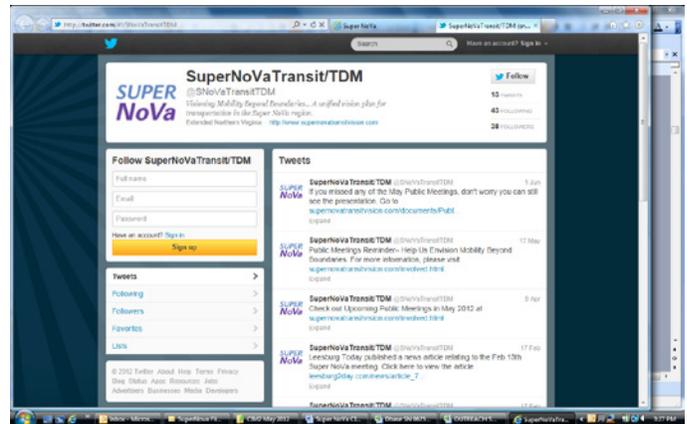
- Vision plan introduction and current conditions
- Analysis and conceptual alternatives
- Final recommendations

To increase the reach of the study's outreach effort, a study website, Twitter page, Facebook page, and survey questionnaires were used. The following summarizes each of the additional tools used in the outreach effort:

- **Study Brand** — A study logo and Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) logo were incorporated into all notification, educational and display materials for easy study identification and consistency.
- **Website – www.SuperNoVaTransitVisionPlan.com** — A study website was developed to inform the public about this important study. Information was presented describing the project, how to get involved, upcoming public meetings, and links to project-related documents. The website also provided links to Facebook and Twitter pages for the project in which viewers could also gather information.



- **Twitter** — A Twitter website page was created to provide a live feed of project activity. This form of media outreach was implemented because of its ability to update the public as the project progressed, without lag time. Information was posted concerning upcoming events (such as public meetings) and related news articles. A Twitter Feed, or a miniature display of our Twitter page, was placed on the project website so website viewers could see the most up-to-date information.



- **Facebook** — Facebook was used to highlight current/timely information about the study and provide important electronic links to the study website and comment forms. The primary purpose of the Facebook page was to post project announcements and substantive achievements. The Facebook page routinely referred people to the project website.



- **Project Business Card Handouts** — Project business cards were developed to promote the study. The business card included the vision plan logo; a brief statement or summary to describe the project; the website, Facebook, and Twitter URLs; and other contact information.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Three rounds of public meetings (in addition to the stakeholder meetings) were organized to correspond with key milestones in the study. Because of the broad geography of the study area, several opportunities to attend a meeting were offered for each round of meetings. Meetings were organized at locations with convenient transit access and all meetings were in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible locations. Meeting notifications were distributed throughout the region with the intent to reach as broad an audience as possible.

Meetings were organized in an open-house format and had both a presentational element and an opportunity for discussion. Each meeting offered two formal presentations to better allow people to drop-in and arrive and depart on a more flexible schedule. The DRPT facilitated all public meetings, with project staff there to assist as necessary, in answering questions and presenting material. The project team members and DRPT staff were available throughout the open-houses to assist the public with understanding the Vision Plan and to answer any questions the public may have.

Study fact sheets, demographic surveys, and printed questionnaires were provided to all meeting attendees and an interactive questionnaire also was available on the study website until the close of the formal comment period. A separate comment summary on page 26 will detail the comments and responses. The three rounds of public meetings were organized as follows:

Public Meeting 1: Vision Plan Introduction/Current Conditions

Leesburg, Crystal City, Warrenton, and Fredericksburg

The first set of public meetings were held to introduce the study to the public, explain the vision plan, and introduce the possible alternatives to be studied. This was the stage of the study effort where information was gathered, common knowledge was shared, goals and objectives were reviewed, and an overview of the study was presented.

Public Meeting 2: Analysis/Concept Alternatives

Triangle, Front Royal, and Arlington

The second set of public meetings was held to gather input on the first set of mobility options prepared by the study team. At this meeting, a summary of the first round of public

meetings was available for review along with concepts and ideas for enhancing mobility within the Super NoVa study area.

Public Meeting 3: Final Recommendations

Alexandria, Manassas, and Herndon

The third set of public meetings offered the public the opportunity to review final plan recommendations and provide comments and further insight on the recommendations.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND NOTIFICATIONS

The following is a summary of methods used to educate, inform, and engage the public about each set of public meetings and to distribute study related materials and presentations posted online.

- **Study-Specific Contact List** — A contact list was created and maintained to distribute email notifications and flyers. The list included a diverse group of affected citizens, stakeholders, community leaders, ethnic groups, social service groups, and study participants.
- **Study Website – www.SuperNoVaTransitVisionPlan.com** — The study website was updated to include information specific to the meetings. Meeting details and comment information was posted as well as meeting materials. The web pages provided a link to the interactive survey form, to the meeting presentation and display boards, and to social networking tools.
- **Social Media** — Facebook and Twitter pages were used by the study team to provide information about the meetings, reminders to comment, and news articles about the study.
- **Newspaper Ad Notifications** — Newspaper ads were placed in local and regional newspapers beginning up to three weeks in advance of each set of public meetings. Newspapers included mainstream newspapers and those specially targeting Hispanic and African American populations.
- **Email Notifications** — A series of three email notifications were sent to stakeholder and interested citizens on the study mailing list in advance of public meetings and comment period deadlines.

- **Press Releases/Media Advisories** — News releases were sent to regional print and broadcast media and to DRPT’s email database 30 days and again 1 week in advance of each set of public meetings. Releases were distributed to 49 ethnic/special media and 117 general media. For Spanish publications, a translated version was created and used. As a result of the news releases, news outlets, web blogs, and other outlets reported on and/or posted information about the workshop.
- **Flyers** — Informational flyers were prepared prior to each set of public meetings and distributed to key locations in the study area through outreach with public affairs and stakeholder partners among others. Flyers were distributed through transit ticket sales outlets, libraries, and community centers.
- **Coordination with Regional Public Affairs Managers** — The study team connected with public affairs officers, public information officers, and other communication managers in the region to broaden the reach of the vision study message. Contacts assisted by posting information to their social media sites and to their websites; to forward our email blasts to their groups; to run slides on city/county cable, and to include information in their newsletters.

OUTREACH TO LOW-INCOME, MINORITY, AND LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) POPULATIONS

A critical element of the public outreach plan is ensuring the involvement of residents who are low-income, minority, seniors, and persons with disabilities. By including these Title VI and LEP populations in our outreach, we were able to reach those traditionally underserved groups and meet Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requirements. These groups provided a rich source of ideas and helped to improve transportation not only for themselves, but also for the entire community.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Through partnerships, outreach was made to low income, minority, elderly, disabled, low literacy, LEP and non-English speaking individuals, human service transportation providers, and the organizations that advocate and/or provide services. Key communications materials were translated into Spanish, during the study and distributed through local media outlets.

The following Title VI-related paragraphs were included on the appropriate materials:

- The DRPT will strive to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require special assistance to participate in this public involvement opportunity. Contact the Title VI Compliance Officer at (804) 786-4440 or TDD 711 for more information.
- The DRPT is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For additional information on DRPT’s nondiscrimination policies and procedures or to file a complaint, please visit the website at www.drpt.virginia.gov or contact the Title VI Compliance Officer, Linda Maiden, 600 E. Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219.

Actions taken to involve diverse audiences included:

- Including identification of advocacy groups social services, Hispanic business and civic organizations, minority business and civic groups, etc. in communication database.
- Partnering and consulting with stakeholder organizations and agencies and officials responsible for planning activities within the region that are affected by transportation to promote the study via their communication channels and customers.
- Partnering with other studies and lead agencies such as Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Mega Projects, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), and more to assist with disseminating press release and newsletter insert information.
- Partnering with senior, disability, social service, human service advocate leaders, and Hispanic Liaison Offices of the cities and counties in the study area to provide information to their contacts regarding the study.
- Coordinating with Public Involvement Officers/ Communication Managers from various stakeholder organizations such as local governments, transit agencies/operators, TMAs, regional commissions, and MPOs to leverage greater dissemination of information.

- Increasing awareness of the study through the Internet and use of social media (Facebook and Twitter).
- Engaging the audience through greater use of visuals, larger font and simpler language in flyers, display boards, and presentations.
- Providing informational materials and meeting notifications that are easy to read and understand and include information for those who may need special assistance (sign language interpreter, translation, etc.) to participate in the study.
- Encouraging input at public meetings that are held at convenient, transit- and ADA-accessible locations.
- Offering translation services for meetings and with participation in general (offer made in Spanish and English on all materials).
- Establishing Spanish email address (espanol@kimley-horn.com) and promoting it on all materials for those who required translation services—and translators reserved for each meeting.
- Translating email notices into Spanish to be sent to Hispanic business and social groups for further distribution.
- Sending email notices to Asian- and African American-related business and social groups for further distribution.
- Making translation tools, text font tools, meeting materials, meeting schedules, comment methods, and educational tools available on the study website.
- Using Facebook and Twitter to reach people with Internet access.
- Hand delivering and mailing flyers, fact sheets, and maps documenting planning efforts.
- Placing newspaper advertisements in ethnic newspapers (i.e., Metro Herald, Nuevas Raíces and El Tiempo) and translating ads in Spanish for El Tiempo, in addition to ads placed in mainstream and other specialty newspapers.
- Distributing press releases to 49 contacts at ethnic/specialty news media to include African American, Hispanic, Asian, and senior interest and produced in English and Spanish.
- Surveying via the Internet and printed surveys.
- Including DRPT’s Title VI statement plus a statement in Spanish on all notices and materials:
 - The DRPT will strive to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require special assistance to participate in this public involvement opportunity. Contact the Title VI Compliance Officer at (804) 786-4440 or TDD 711 for more information.
 - *Si usted necesita servicios de traducción a participar, por favor manda un email: espanol@kimley-horn.com.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Citizens were offered several ways to submit comments on the study. Printed survey questionnaires were available during the meetings, and online as a printable PDF. In addition, an interactive electronic survey questionnaire was developed and linked to the study website and citizens were offered to send comments by mail to the team. An example of the survey questionnaire is shown below. Demographic information was requested during meetings and via the electronic survey form. A record of public involvement is provided in the **Appendix**. A brief summary of thematic public comments follows:

Existing Conditions

- Many areas unserved or underserved by transit
- In some locations where transit options are available, the options are not always convenient
- HOV hours are insufficient
- Not enough transit information available
- Special events frequently negatively impact transit operations and transit customers

Regional Mobility Needs

- Improved access for disabled persons and elderly persons

- More direct services and decrease transfers
- Additional education on transit options
- “Last mile” improvements
- Transit services outside normal commuting times
- Consider Base Realignment and Closure
- Amenities such as outlets and wireless internet access on board vehicles as well as real-time travel information to attract customers

Draft Recommendations

- Use technology/telework to decrease commuting
- Need additional services crossing the Potomac River
- Provide seamless fare structure and payment system
- Hubs can help people get to the next place on transit, but also should have standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to serve nearby destinations
- Include Capital Bikeshare in recommendations
- Look into diverting freight rail to increase passenger rail capacity
- Additional emphasis on ridesharing
- Additional parking at transit stations

SUPER NOVA TRANSIT/TDM VISION PLAN

We Need Your Input
 The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is leading the development of a Transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Vision Plan for the Super NoVa area. We want to hear from you about your commute and your ideas and suggestions for improving it. All comments received will be reviewed and considered in the development of the final plan. This is the first of several survey opportunities during the plan development process.

About You
 First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Organization/Affiliation: _____
 Address: _____
 City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Email Address: _____

What is your HOME zip code? _____
 What is your WORK zip code? _____

Do you want to be included in the study mailing list to receive periodic updates?
 Yes No

Transit services you are using

1. What transit services work well for the trips you make on a daily basis?
 Commuter Bus/Express Bus (FRTC, LCT, Martz, Quicks, or similar)
 Local Bus (Metrobus, Fairfax Connector, ART, DASH, VRT, Cue, FRED, or similar)
 Virginia Railway Express Metrorail
 None Other (please specify) _____

2. What types of trips do you make using these services?
 Work School Healthcare
 Shopping Recreational None
 Other (please specify) _____

3. What are the **three most important** things that could be done to improve a service you are currently using?
 Increase frequency Reduce travel time (more direct service)
 Improve schedule adherence Reduce fare
 Improve amenities (stops/station/shelters) Increase hours of service

Survey Questionnaire – Page 2 of 2

Improve sidewalks/bikeways Increase number of parking spaces at transit facilities
 Nothing Other (please specify) _____

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Programs you are Using

4. Do you currently take advantage of a program, service, or targeted information that encourages you to reduce single-occupant vehicle travel?
 Yes No

5. If so, what type of program do you currently use?
 Ridematching Guaranteed Ride Home
 Retail/Mobile Store Call Center/Help Line
 Website/Social Media Radio/TV/Paper
 Financial Incentives Vanpool Subsidy
 Telework Other (please specify) _____

6. If not, what could be done to encourage you to do so?

Future Considerations

7. What are your top 3 priorities for transit service and facility and/or TDM program improvements in the region in the future?
 a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____

8. What are the **three most important** things that are needed to encourage more people to take transit in the future?
 Increase service coverage Increase frequency
 Reduce travel time (more direct service) Improve schedule adherence
 Reduce fare Improve amenities (stops/station/shelters)
 Increase hours of service Improve sidewalks/bikeways
 Less free parking/charge more for parking More tolling
 Increase number of parking spaces at transit facilities
 Other (please specify) _____

Additional Comments?
 Is there any other information you think is important for the study team to have as they develop the Super NoVa Transit/TDM Vision Plan?
