



CHAPTER II

Public Participation Program

This chapter provides a brief discussion of the public participation process as it relates to the siting of both an administration center and a transfer facility. Each of these types of facilities requires a much different level of public participation. An administration center, as stated, does not have the level of impact that a transfer facility may have on passengers. Generally, throughout the planning process an administrative center should be presented to the public once the number of sites has been limited to no more than three and a preferred site has been recommended. Public participation becomes more intense if siting the facility may involve property acquisition from private parties through eminent domain which may result in litigation and hearings. However, typical administrative centers do not pose a direct harm or nuisance to a local community and are sited in such a way as not to directly affect local residents.

However, the siting of a transfer facility may unduly affect current passengers, and therefore must be publicized and information made more readily available to the public. The location of such as transfer facility may impact everything from bus timing, routes, schedules, and other operational characteristics which may affect passengers. Therefore, an integrated public participation program was established which meets the project's goals.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Program Elements

Several elements constitute an effective public participation process. The Plan includes the following elements:

- Project Team comprised of representatives of the community
- Stakeholders Group
- Public open houses
- Local governing body hearings (City Council/County Commissioners)
- Information available to public
- Departmental/governing body retreat

Public Participation Program

The program sought input from the Project Team through various project meetings. LSC acted as the facilitator to foster discussion between members of the team. The first of such meetings was held in Grand Junction on November 9, 2005. The Team met to discuss project goals, priorities, and deadlines. This Team worked with LSC throughout the siting of both the administration center and the transfer center. The Team also had valuable input on selection criteria as presented in Chapter IV.

The second meeting was held on March 1, 2006 to review the site selection criteria and preliminary site analysis. The RTPO held additional meetings with the local stakeholders to review and discuss the sites.

Public open houses were scheduled throughout the planning process. Members of GVT and the RTPO, as well as LSC, hosted two open format public meeting to present the progress of the study to community residents. At key points during the process, these open houses were held to solicit community input regarding the siting of the facilities.

The first such forum for participation was in the form of a Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee retreat scheduled on January 12, 2006. Key components of the process and initially-screened sites were presented for both the administration center and the transfer center. Input regarding these sites was sought from key individuals and departments. Initial site criteria were presented for review to determine if additional criteria are needed for evaluation of sites.

During the open houses, held in the County Administration Building, only a few community representatives provided comments. Most comments were general in nature and spurred some discussion on the sites. These open houses were held March 1, 2006 and June 26, 2006.

Project reports and notices were provided through local newspapers and the Internet. All information was readily available via LSC's website with links on the City/County websites.