



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Transit  
Administration**

# **INNOVATIVE USES OF DIGITAL VIDEO**

## **DENVER REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT**



Photo of public meeting room and audience with video camera in foreground and presentation screen in background

**August 27, 2009**

**FINAL REPORT**

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**August 27, 2009**

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**FINAL REPORT**

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The project delivers a national tool and template for public participation in transportation planning using digital video and assesses the effectiveness and limitations of video. The project delivers videos providing a citizens guide to NEPA, a citizen's guide to the regional transportation planning process and a case study of public involvement. Digital video can be an effective media for information transfer between practitioners and the public, can help improve citizen understanding and improve the effectiveness of the citizen's role in public involvement programs. Video should no longer be considered a luxurious extra, but a component of an overall outreach program that can be highly effective if integrated into a program of education, outreach and communication. Digital video has a focused role as one tool among many to address information transfer between practitioners and the public. This report presents supporting research and a technology transfer discussion focusing on video planning and production steps and provides

recommendations for using the project videos, for adapting the project videos for refined purposes and creating new videos on similar and different topics.

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Federal Transit Administration, FTA, Denver, Regional Transportation District, RTD, public participation, public involvement, education, outreach, communication, information transfer, transportation, planning, regional transportation planning, National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, digital, video, citizens guide, case study, research

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# ABSTRACT

The project delivers a national tool and template for public participation in transportation planning using digital video and assesses the effectiveness and limitations of video. The project delivers videos providing a citizens guide to NEPA, a citizen's guide to the regional transportation planning process and a case study of public involvement. Digital video can be an effective media for information transfer between practitioners and the public, can help improve citizen understanding and improve the effectiveness of the citizen's role in public involvement programs. Video should no longer be considered a luxurious extra, but a component of an overall outreach program that can be highly effective if integrated into a program of education, outreach and communication. Digital video has a focused role as one tool among many to address information transfer between practitioners and the public. This report presents supporting research and a technology transfer discussion focusing on video planning and production steps and provides recommendations for using the project videos, for adapting the project videos for refined purposes and creating new videos on similar and different topics.

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**FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PARTICIPATION PILOT**

**INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF DIGITAL VIDEO**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

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### **Federal Transit Administration**

Victor Austin                      David Beckhouse  
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Kristi Estes

### **North Metro Corridor EIS Project Team**

Joe Racosky

### **Project Team:**

Brian Kennedy, AICP, AECOM – Project Manager, Executive Producer, Host and Narrator  
Frank H. Hogan, Let's Be Frank Productions, Inc., Producer, Director and Videographer  
Manolo Gonzalez-Estay, Welchert & Britz, Research Program Task Leader

### **Citizen Participants**

A wide range of citizen participants in the Denver Metropolitan Area contribute in many ways to transportation planning efforts throughout the region. Many citizen participants appear in the videos produced by this program and many more are involved and committed across the region and throughout the State of Colorado and the nation. This project acknowledges their contributions, commends their efforts, and seeks to further empower citizen participation.

For more information about the PTP program and other past and ongoing research efforts funded by this program, go to:

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/programs/planning\\_environment\\_5925.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/programs/planning_environment_5925.html)

For more information about RTD and the FasTracks program, go to: [www.rtd-fastracks.com](http://www.rtd-fastracks.com)  
For more information about innovative applications of digital video and other "21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Involvement Techniques," contact: Brian P. Kennedy, AICP, 303-376-2927,  
[Brian.P.Kennedy@AECOM.com](mailto:Brian.P.Kennedy@AECOM.com)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) selected a grant proposal from the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) as part of the second round of grant approvals for Fiscal Year 2007 (PTP-2) entitled: "Innovative Applications of Digital Video" with the following objectives:

- Deliver a national tool, template, and example for public participation in regional transportation planning processes and programs using innovative applications of digital video, and
- Assess the effectiveness and/or limitations of this media and the proposed design of the digital video tool through scientific research (surveys and focus groups).

The project has created a citizen's guide to effective participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process and a citizen's guide to the [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#) process, and a final program providing a case study of public involvement for a specific project that is part of RTD's FasTracks program. The titles of the three videos are as follows:

*"Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the Regional Transportation Planning"*

*"Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation NEPA Process"*

*"Public Involvement: A Case Study"*

The videos are available on DVD upon request (frankxhogan@comcast.net) and are available online at the following links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lqJJDP1bGE> (Regional Transportation Planning Video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DAWOui0UzU> (NEPA video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmm9jrLxF8M> (Case Study)

This report addresses the following research hypothesis:

*"Digital video can be an effective media for information transfer between practitioners and the public, and the content of the three videos can help improve citizen understanding of the regional transportation planning process, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the citizen's role in public involvement programs."*

Based on the research presented in this report and obvious trends, it appears clear that digital video has a focused role as one tool among many to address information transfer between practitioners and the public and to improve citizen understanding of public involvement in key planning processes. It is also clear that video should no longer be considered a luxurious extra, but a component of an overall outreach program that can be highly effective if integrated into a program of education, outreach and communication.

This report summarize the methods and results of a research study focusing on the use of video as a medium for public communications and the content of three videos produced as part of the project. The technology transfer discussion focuses on video planning and production steps and provides recommendations for using the project videos, for adapting the project videos for refined purposes and creating new videos on similar and different topics.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Grant Program Overview

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sponsors applied research to develop innovative approaches to improving public participation in the planning of public transportation. This research is part of the Public Transportation Participation Pilot Program (PTP Program), created as part of the [Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users \(SAFETEA-LU\)](#). The PTP Program is designed to fund small applied research projects that focus on one or more of the following:

- Improving data collection analysis and transportation access for all users of the public transportation systems
- Supporting public participation through the project development phases
- Using innovative techniques to improve the coordination of transportation alternatives
- Enhancing the coordination of public transportation benefits and services
- Contracting with stakeholders to focus on the delivery of transportation plans and programs
- Measuring and reporting on the annual performance of the transportation systems

Selected proposals work to yield products that can be applied to improve the state of the practice of public participation in transportation planning at the regional or project level.

### 1.2 Project Overview and Background

#### Overview

FTA selected a grant proposal from RTD as part of the second round of grant approvals for Fiscal Year 2007 (PTP-2) entitled: "Innovative Applications of Digital Video" with the following objectives:

- Deliver a national tool, template, and example for public participation in regional transportation planning processes and programs using innovative applications of digital video, and
- Assess the effectiveness and/or limitations of this media and the proposed design of the digital video tool through scientific research (surveys and focus groups).

The project has created a citizen's guide to effective participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process and a citizen's guide to the [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#) process, and a final program providing a case study of public involvement for a specific project that is part of RTD's FasTracks program. The titles of the three videos are as follows:

*"Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the Regional Transportation Planning"*

*"Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation NEPA Process"*

*"Public Involvement: A Case Study"*

A basic outline of each video is presented as follows:

## **NEPA Video Outline**

Welcome  
Program Purpose and Content Summary  
Importance of NEPA and Projects Subject to NEPA  
Importance of Public Involvement in the NEPA Process  
Basic Steps to be More Effective / Where to Learn More about NEPA  
NEPA Overview  
Public Meetings and Other Ways to Participate  
How to Participate Effectively  
How to Comment  
    Project's Purpose and Need  
    Project Alternatives  
    Key Impact Topics  
    NEPA Documents  
Summary and Close

## **RTP Video Outline**

Welcome  
Program Purpose and Content Summary  
Regional Transportation Planning Process Overview  
    Plan Purpose and Contents  
    Regional Planning Organizations  
    Planning Process Steps  
    Outcomes  
    Importance to the Community and What's at Stake  
Importance of Public Involvement in the Planning Process  
The Public's Ability to be Influential / How to be Influential  
    Steps to be an Effective Participant  
    Various Ways to Participate  
    Characteristics of Effective Comments  
Summary and Close

## **Case Study Video Outline**

Introduction to the Case Study Project: FasTracks, North Metro Corridor  
Importance of Public Involvement to the Project Team  
The Project's Public Involvement Commitment  
Variety of Methods for Obtaining Public Input  
Citizen Participation: Values and Influence  
How to be Effective: What is Necessary to Make an Impact  
How the Public Involvement Program was Organized and Customized  
How the Public Involvement Program Worked  
    Overview  
    Station Planning Process  
What it Takes to Make a Difference

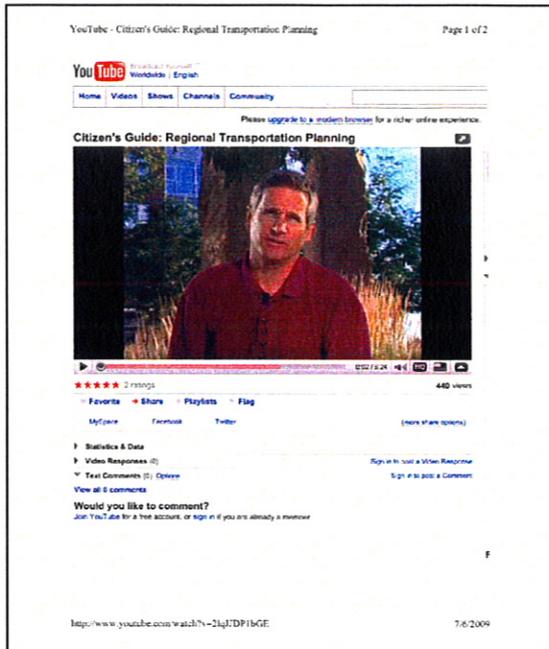
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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DAWQui0UzU> (NEPA video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmm9jrLxF8M> (Case Study)

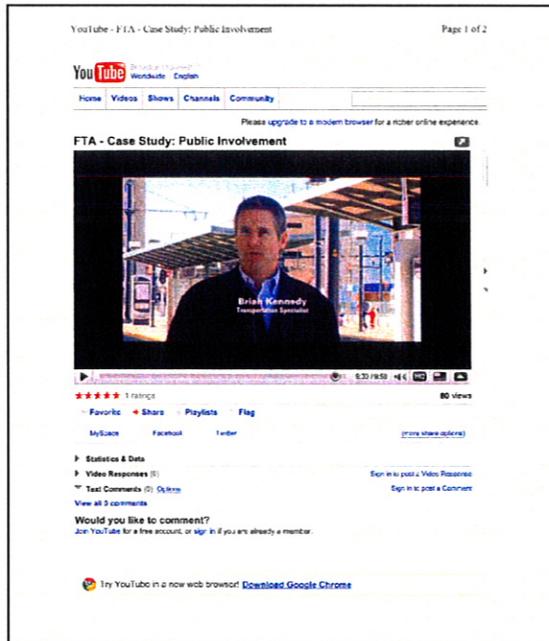
The following page presents screen shots of each video.



Screen shot showing video image of Brian Kennedy as the Regional Transportation Planning video appears on YouTube.



Screen shot showing video image of Brian Kennedy as the NEPA Citizen's Guide video appears on YouTube.



Screen shot showing video image of Brian Kennedy as the FTA-Case Study: Public Involvement video appears on YouTube.

The video program was delivered in two production phases (Phase 1 Citizen Guide videos. Phase 2 Case Study video). The format and content of the programs is geared toward “typical” members of the public interested in, but unfamiliar with, transportation planning, NEPA, and RTD’s FasTracks program process. The intention of the project is to deliver a template and tool for use by practitioners in other regions nationwide.

## **Background**

In 2006, prior to applying for a PTP grant from FTA, RTD was working on the North Metro Corridor (NMC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) involving the RTD PTP Grant Project Team. One component of the NMC EIS was a comprehensive public outreach program managed by Manolo Gonzales-Estay. A subcomponent of that program was an “Educational Video Series” managed by Brian Kennedy with video support from Frank Hogan. The FTA grant for innovative uses of digital video was developed based on the success, lessons learned, limitations and potential of the NMC Educational Video Series. While the EIS process, public outreach effort and video series is ongoing in 2009, a new direction for video was defined and submitted to FTA by RTD and the grant project team.

The NMC educational video series included the development of various innovative and award winning\* video products and ideas. The video effort included creating short meeting invitations, meeting recaps, a corridor tour, and short subject video clips distributed via DVD, e-mail, website video and YouTube. While these videos were effective and well-received by the public, agencies and the project team, an objective means of testing and evaluating the role of video and developing video content for a broad audience was outside the NMC project’s scope of work and budget. These gaps and discussions about other new areas for creativity generated the idea for this grant funded research effort.

RTD is pleased to partner with FTA to explore and evaluate the role of video in public participation and hopes that the research products and results can be transferred to other transportation agencies, and other organizations seeking benefits from participatory decision making, nationwide.

- \* American Planning Association (APA), Colorado Chapter, Award for Innovative Use of Technology and National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP), Environmental Excellence Award for Public Involvement

### **1.3 Report Overview**

This report summarize the methods and results of a research study focusing on the use of video as a medium for public communications and the content of three videos produced as part of the project. The technology transfer discussion focuses on video planning and production steps and provides recommendations for using the project videos, for adapting the project videos for refined purposes and creating new videos on similar and different topics.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

### **2.1 Overview**

The project research methods incorporated a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative techniques generated descriptive statistics drawn from participant responses to "yes" or "no" questions or more complex questions. The qualitative methods involved asking open-ended questions requiring the participants (informants or interviewees) to explain in a short phrase or longer statement what they feel, believe, think, assume, gather, or even presume to be true. The use of a questionnaire with both question types enables the researcher to obtain a more accurate set of responses. The quantitative and qualitative input was analyzed, organized, and interpreted by a professional social, cultural anthropologist with over 15 years of related experience. Information was gathered from citizen "focus groups" and a practitioner outreach effort. In both the focus groups and the practitioner outreach a questionnaire was used to collect data. Other information was obtained through a process known as "participant observation." Participant observation provided background and context for the input gathered during the focus group and practitioner outreach effort and was used to develop accurate interpretations of the input.

The identity of all participants is not released in this report and will not be disclosed. Confidentiality was assured and provided so participants could speak freely and openly without concern; especially if their input was negative or sensitive for other reasons. The only identifiers included in this report include basic demographic information.

### **2.2 Citizen Focus Groups**

One key component of the research effort was to ask for citizen input before and after they saw the three videos. The method used for getting this sort of input was Focus Groups. Focus Groups allow for small groups (10 to 15 people) to converse freely about their opinions about a given topic.

The research team sent out an e-mail invitation to generate volunteer participants in the focus groups. The invitation was sent to a large number of e-mail addresses compiled for each of the Denver FasTracks corridor projects with one exception. The invitation was withheld from East Corridor participants because this corridor was holding their Draft EIS hearings. RTD and the project team did not want to confuse residents or ask too much of them during this critical period of the EIS process. Each corridor has accumulated hundreds of e-mail addresses of residents that have attended and signed-up on the Internet for more information. The research team was able to use these email addresses and have RTD send the invitation to all of them. The invitation is presented as Appendix A. The invitation was worded in a manner to make the voluntary participants feel welcome to participate and want to express their opinions. Technical jargon was not used in the e-mail.

A project specific e-mail address was set up to receive people's interest in the form of an RSVP. Approximately 100 people responded with interest in participating in the focus groups. Many were not able to attend on the designated dates. They expressed their interest and wanted to stay informed of the results of the research. Three focus groups were scheduled. A total of about 15 people were confirmed in each group. A total of 24 actually attended. The first night had 13 participants. The second night had 11 participants. Numerous people were unable to attend because of scheduling conflicts. The third focus group had 15 participants scheduled to attend, however it had to be cancelled due to a snow storm. This focus group was unable to be rescheduled in time for delivery of this report. The research team felt that the data collected at the previous focus group sessions were sufficient to make a proper analysis.

The participants ranged in age and gender. Almost all the participants fell within the 18-64 age range, with only a couple participants over 64 years of age. The gender make-up of the participants was balanced with slightly more women than men in each group.

The structure and sequence of the focus group process was as follows:

- The participants were invited to the FasTracks offices on a voluntary basis and were told that their opinions were needed on a new public involvement tool for transportation projects.
- Dinner was provided to participants.
- The focus groups were scheduled for 1.5 hours.
- Participants were asked to fill out a Profile Questionnaire (see Appendix B)
- The facilitator introduced the project and told the participants that their input would be recorded, but would remain anonymous (each questionnaire was given a number for tracking).
- The participants were asked to fill out the Pre-Questionnaire (see Appendix C).
- The participants watched the three project videos (see Appendix D).
- After watching all three videos the participants were asked to fill out the Post-Questionnaire (see Appendix E).
- The facilitator provided 30 minutes for open discussion.
- The focus group sessions were videotaped for research purposes and notes were taken.
- At the end of each session, the participants were all thanked and excused, and then were told that the Final Research Report would be made available to them.

The focus group meeting dates and times were:

Focus Group 1 - March 24, 2009

Focus Group 2 - March 25, 2009

Focus Group 3 - March 26, 2009 Weather Cancellation

### **2.3 Practitioner Outreach**

Another key component of the research effort was to connect with government and industry professionals with known interests and experience with in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), other participatory decision-making processes, and/or public involvement. The compiled distribution lists include over 400 e-mail addresses and covered a wide range of state and federal agency representatives and consultants nationwide. Brenda Kragh from the U.S. Department of Transportation provided the primary list of transportation industry practitioners. Other e-mail addresses covering a wider range of industries were compiled from our team members and their long history of working with NEPA and various federal agencies across the country.

The practitioners were able to watch all three videos on YouTube and then go to an online survey. The survey instruments and questionnaires used in the research efforts are the subject of the following discussion (See Appendix D for the DVD, Appendix F for the practitioner invitations and Appendix G for the online survey.

The practitioner's survey had 28 respondents representing a broad range of professionals from government agencies and consulting firms, and various nationwide locations.

### **2.4 Participant Observation**

The participant observation method provided background and context for the input gathered during the focus group, practitioner outreach and case study efforts and was used to develop accurate interpretations of the input.

Participant observation is widely used in the social sciences. The method of participant observation includes the explicit use of behavioral analysis and recording of information gained from participating and observing.

All humans are participants and observers; however, the difference is that the scientific use of this method requires a particular approach to recording observations (in field notes), in addition to having a

trained eye for certain observations. Therefore, participant observation is the process in which an observer takes part in daily activities, meetings, rituals, interactions, and events of people being studied as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their culture (DeWalt, K.M et al. 1998).

The participant observation employed a case study method used throughout the social sciences. In essence, a community case study: 1) details and allows for the analysis of its social units or components in order to present the most comprehensive description possible and 2) attempts to determine the logical interrelations of its component parts. Rather than a generalized understanding of a community, the purpose of the case study is to offer a comprehensive understanding of a particular case.

In this research effort, the North Metro Corridor EIS and corresponding public involvement program's educational video series was used as the case study. In the best application of this method, the case study approach maximizes the number of variables allowing, the insights gained to have a generalized applicability that goes beyond the specific case itself. With the use of interviews and conversations with project team members and residents who participated in the project, the research/observer was able to gather information on the value of the digital video for North Metro Corridor EIS that was relevant to the research performed involving the three videos, focus groups and practitioner input. Specifically, the researchers conducted elite interviews with the project team managers and videotaped the interviews for the Case Study video.

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following discussion summarizes and sorts the research input from focus group sessions and practitioner outreach. Research conclusions are provided in Chapter 5.

The research findings and conclusions are presented in relation to the project's hypothesis:

*"Digital video can be an effective media for information transfer between practitioners and the public, and the content of the three videos can help improve citizen understanding of the regional transportation planning process, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the citizen's role in public involvement programs."*

Input received during and after the focus group sessions and the input received from the practitioners is presented in this report or in the report Appendix.

#### 3.1 Focus Group Input: Analysis and Findings

##### Participants

As noted above, the participants ranged in age and gender. The team did not attempt to balance the racial mix of participants and did not ask participants any questions about race. Most of the participants were White (Caucasian).

In general, the participants had the following characteristics:

They have lived in the area for over 10 years.  
They have taken public transportation  
They are very familiar with FasTracks  
They have attended more than 10 public meetings in the last 2 years.  
They were educated.  
There are typically informed by mailings and meetings.  
They plan on attending more meetings in the future.

In general, the participants represent people somewhat familiar with transportation, planning and environmental matters. Consequently, their input is helpful and meaningful, but may not represent observations from people who have never participated or people who are otherwise uninvolved or uninformed. While this is a shortfall of the research design, the scope of work for this project did not include "enticements" for participants. Without enticements such as payment for attending, which is usually done for focus group efforts, it was quite difficult to recruit participants who have had no related experiences. Future research should seek input from people who have never participated.

##### Pre-Questionnaire – Previous Understandings

The Pre-Questionnaire revealed a mixture of transportation project knowledge. In particular, the quantitative results revealed the following:

- 52% of the respondents knew that a majority of the FasTracks corridors are the subject of an ongoing NEPA process involving an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- 52% knew what their role, as a citizen, is during an EIS
- 35% knew what was expected of them during an EIS process
- 43% of the respondents said they knew what an effective public comment is and know what it requires.
- 35% of the participants had seen transportation project videos (North Metro Educational Video Series)

- 74% felt that videos would be a helpful method to inform the public on how to participate in a transportation project.

When asked to identify the biggest problems/concerns of participating in a transportation project, four response themes emerged. The themes and subcomponents have been interpreted by the researchers from participant input. The categories are noted here and expanded below.

1. Time
2. Access/Outreach
3. Understanding/Education
4. Predetermined Opinions about the Project

#### 1. Time.

- When the opportunities to participate occur
- Having enough free time to attend
- Travel time to and from meetings
- The amount of time needed to be part of the entire process

#### 2. Access/Outreach

- Convenience: Getting to and from meetings (pedestrian access to transit) and costs
- Notification: Communication, Getting the word out to people who are affected by the project.
- Interest: Getting public to be involved.
- Money: Expense to get people involved and projects moving

#### 3. Understanding/Education

- Clarity of Purpose vs. Confusion
  - What is the purpose and need for the project?
  - Why is public involvement wanted?
  - What agency does what?
  - What are the rules?
  - What is expected?
- Continuity: Participants need to get involved early and stay involved, not just attend one meeting

#### 4. Predetermined Opinions about the Project or Process

- The majority of people who show up at meetings and participate are usually opponents (don't like the project/expenditure and/or they are directly impacted).
- Project supporters (with direct or in direct project benefits or a lack of direct or indirect adverse effects on them) don't think there is a reason to participate, so they don't show up.

When asked about solutions that would facilitate public participation, three themes emerged. Once again the categories are noted and expanded below:

1. Understanding/Education
2. Access/Outreach
3. Funding

#### 1. Understanding/Education

- Improve and focus communications to be relevant to individual communities and audiences
- Have an open citizen's board for each project

- Continue notification of local residents, resident groups, business groups, and others even if they were not interested much initially.
- Use more Internet tools: list – serve e-mail distributions, online newsletters, video, reports, etc.
- Show video at beginning of meeting- better explanation than speaker.
- Set up meetings early and plan them so the meeting purpose and meeting plan do not appear to be afterthoughts.
- Show videos to help people understand the rules.

## 2. Access/Outreach

- Get younger people involved with using light rail. Like the zoo, have one day free and ride on the weekend.
- Get more young people involved with input.
- Increase meeting publicity
- Seek early public involvement.
- Improve communication with citizens.

## 3. Funding

- Limit EIS alternatives (may not be consistent w/ the law) but people get frustrated when inappropriate alternatives are suggested.
- Increase funding for transportation with a priority for transit in highly populated areas
- Pay people to participate.
- Increase understanding and willingness to assist with funding with taxes or fees.

### **Post-Questionnaire: Understandings after Viewing the Videos**

The Post-Questionnaire was administered after the respondents watched the three short project videos. The quantitative results revealed that every participant was informed after seeing the videos. A yes response indicated that the participant was informed.

The participant answered yes at a rate of over 90% to questions 1, 3-8, and 10. Question 2 asked “After watching the digital video, do you know if your transportation corridor is conducting an EIS?” The responses were 67% yes, 25% no and 13% don’t know. The relatively low percent of yes answers to Question 2 may reflect what the participants thought of the words “your corridor” or the fact that the videos didn’t cover all EISs or projects in the region. In addition, some participants may not live or work on an active corridor. The active word in Question 9, where two thirds (66%) answered “yes,” was “required.” Public involvement is never required. The voluntary nature of the public involvement may not have been understood, wasn’t communicated effectively, or may have been interpreted to mean something more like “required if you care about your community and want to make a difference.”

Question 13 was the final qualitative question. Question 13 asked if they thought that the use of video was a “good idea” or a “bad idea” on a 10 point scale. About 88 percent of the respondents thought that video was somewhat of a good idea or a good idea, with 66% indicating that video was a good idea.

The qualitative results provided more detail. Questions 11 and 12 asked the participants about problems and concerns associated with participation in transportation and then related solutions. The problems and concerns were related to three primary themes:

### 1. Understanding/Education

- Public information (awareness)
- Technical understanding
- Getting affected people to respond/comment/attend meetings
- Sufficient review of options
- Keeping the purpose and need in mind as the alternatives are developed and evaluated.

- Who is in charge, Federal, state, local agency?
- Better up front if not all answers will be addressed at each meeting.
- Because it's the future, extensive research data and background reports need to be public.
- Getting meaningful information out and comments
- Not enough input by "all" citizens and then the people who don't give their input are the people who complain.
- Help people have a better understanding by having actual facts available and be consistent.

#### Access/Outreach

- Bus interconnections to light rail
- Creating an effective voice
- Getting people to participate
- Comfort with public forum
- Contacting Homeowners Association

#### Time

- Time commitments to attend
- Person commitments.
- The extra long time to do EIS studies (process duration)

The solutions were related to the same themes:

#### Understanding/Education

- Schedule of meetings
- Construction updates/updated mapping
- Easy questions and answers
- Maintain consistency throughout the explanations of the projects and their components and reasons changes may be necessary
- Cost/benefit analysis – given current economic conditions and changing ridership numbers
- More detailed responses (not "we looked at that")
- Provide lots of information early in the process so local citizens can get involved

#### Access/Outreach

- Grass roots effort, relying on electronic media may miss prime targets
- Have more input from people who are disabled, like myself
- Engagement beyond just meetings
- Contacting Homeowners Associations
- Hold /sponsor more community organization meetings – community councils
- Have more places where information about what's going on is available

#### Time

- EIS studies/process should take 50% less time.
- Have the video on the project website so people could see the past meetings
- Narrow the scope of public meetings to save time

#### **Focus Group Discussion Results:**

The open discussion at the end of the focus groups revealed a mixture of results and details that didn't get addressed directly or indirectly by the questionnaires. In summary, both groups had some critiques of video in general and the project videos and suggestions and recommendations to make them better, but overall both groups felt that the use of digital video as an additional public involvement tool was effective.

### Positive Comments about the Use of Video

- DVD is a good idea.
- Videos are good tools to educate. You have to educate people before they can get involved.
- People can use videos to go back and catch up if they just moved to the area or haven't gone to earlier meetings.
- Digital video could go on a website so I could watch a meeting I missed.
- The advantage of video is its flexibility. You could have several levels of detail. You could have some that are short and generic and have menus. (For more info, go to Chapter 2, for example.) Other chapters could drill down to a greater level of detail.
- Videos can make as much information available as stakeholders need.
- Videos should be an addition to current methods. I like the video as a supplement.
- On videos, the information is seen as being true. If a consultant is talking at a meeting, I see it as them "trying to sell me something."
- Digital video is good for the younger audience.
- Video should be shown at the beginning of a meeting.
- With video, you can specifically target segments and edit to an audience. You can add history of comments and it could be really powerful.
- DVDs are helpful because some presenters at meetings are not as good as others.
- A video should include station planning process and how it interfaces with a city's processes. The station planning process is very confusing. You could have a video just on station area planning.
- Give away as many videos as possible so stakeholders can give to their sphere of influence.
- You should put the videos on the Web. Maybe people will see them and decide to go to a meeting. You should suggest people watch it before the meeting so they could speak in an educated manner.
- On flyers, you could add "Is this your first meeting? If so, go to this link to watch video or call this number to receive one."

### Positive Comments about the Content of the Project Videos

- The information in the videos is good.
- Good consistency of information. People will get their information in different ways.
- First video did good job of explaining Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- As a general citizen, I learned a lot. I thought it was very engaging and not too long.
- The NEPA video could be useful to teach new attendees about NEPA.
- The videos could be useful in encouraging people to get involved.
- The information is useful for people who are already involved.
- I liked the third video. The case study video gives citizens a comfort zone.
- I like how the videos are broken out. The first video shows what RTD expects from citizens. The second video shows procedure. The third video shows the city's needs.
- Good to use citizens in videos because people like to see someone who represents themselves.

### Negative Comments about the Use of Video, Recommendations, and Suggestions

- Videos are a good idea if there is a representative available.
- You shouldn't show these videos to a general audience at a large public meeting. If you use these videos at public meetings, play them on a laptop at a station.
- Segment information so you don't lose people
- Use of technology is based on age spectrum.
- Ambiance and warmth is important in getting people involved. That is only achieved by the people on the project. Video could not take the place of people.
- Videos are very good idea if you're in the digital world. People at public meetings may not be computer savvy.

- Videos do not replace the people on the project.
- Videos are good as an enhancement, but not a replacement to any tool.
- This video could be one tool. It should not replace other tools.
- I'm not sure how I would use videos. I like to take newsletters with me so I can look at them as I go. I think a newsletter is better than a video.
- Don't make videos too professional – use real people.
- Video needs to be interactive and engaging. Otherwise, you might lose people.

#### Negative Comments about the Content of the Project Videos

- The videos don't answer enough questions to stand alone.
- I was confused about the audience in the first two videos.
- I like the videos, but did not necessarily follow. It was a little overwhelming. People could get confused. The videos did not have the ability to reach out and draw people in.
- Videos should be shorter.
- NEPA takes longer than any other part of the project and people get bored with it. Need to explain how important it is to stay involved through all the meetings because different information is presented at different times.
- The length should be short or people will get bored. The 10-minute video gave more information, but my attention span is 6 to 8 minutes.
- The videos have too much repetition if they are put together. You need more of a mix of pictures.
- I did not like the background movement during the text in the video.
- The text is white and sometimes was not visible. The background should be darker.
- Videos were too generalized.
  - I wanted to know who the players were.
  - It started to sound like opinion.
  - Was it RTD or the government selling me something?
  - Videos de-emphasized the power of the MPO
  - Videos did not show that NEPA is federal law
- Meetings go very well. Videos were too vague.
- First video included too much information.
- I found the videos frustrating.
- You should add a glossary of acronyms.
- There is a part in the video where Brian says "It doesn't matter what you comment on." I think that should come out. It is too broad of an invitation.
- The videos should make reference to how much time projects have taken so people know how long their commitment will be.
- The video talked about people asking good questions, but gave no examples. Show examples of good questions. Show comments that don't belong versus ones that do.
- Graphic of timeline would help on the video.

#### Comments on Related Topics and Processes (Other Thoughts, Recommendations and Suggestions)

- You have to understand your audience. I-225 is a different audience than North Metro.
- Is it possible to sell the DVD? People might want to take it home. People should be able to take DVD home. How do you get it in the hands of people who are not interested?
- How do you get people to attend these meetings? I've been to meetings, and they have had low participation. Attendees are already pretty well-informed.
- Corridor meetings should surround each station area.

- Part of PI is educating the public on how to get involved. Suggest small sessions at churches, community organizations, etc. The whole purpose would be to show how to get involved.
- I get invitations to corridor meetings and have no idea what FasTracks is or why I should go to the meeting. You need to communicate about how it affects me.
- Can you put videos in the public school system so kids can get their parents involved?
- Too many consultants talk in NEPA-ese and it goes over people's heads.
- Populations roll 100% every 5 years so population may not know what's going on.
- Young people don't feel like they can get involved in projects. They should be. Seventy-five percent ride light rail. You should post information on school Web sites.
- On packaging, you could add local contact information.
- Use a web format for young people.
- On web video, add link to snippets.

### 3.2 Practitioner Survey Results

The Practitioner online survey conducted through [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) had 28 responses. The participants included consultants and agency representatives working directly and indirectly on transportation projects.

A total of 62% of the participants have more than 10 years experience. Half of the participants had seen the use of video used as a public outreach tool. A total of 93% felt that the use of video as an outreach tool was effective and 85% would recommend the use of video in a project. Given this information and input, the potential for a pro-video bias exists with this set of practitioners. It is possible that recipients of the invitation message who do not support video may have decided not to participate. This potential for bias is noted and addressed in the research conclusions.

The narrative input provided by the practitioners as part of Questions 4/5, 7, 8, 10 - 13, was especially valuable and insightful (See Appendix H). Spelling errors and certain punctuation errors were corrected to improve clarity.

In summary, like the focus group participants, the results were generally positive, but mixed. The practitioners seemed to be more positive about video and the three project videos than the focus group participants. This may have occurred as a result of many factors such as:

- Practitioners who don't support video didn't participate.
- Practitioners welcome new tools
- Practitioners are less likely to be confused by the video than the focus group participants

This situation raises the long standing question about who should be the judge of public involvement effectiveness and what is the appropriate set of effectiveness or performance criteria. These topics and others are discussed in Chapter 4 Conclusions.

The following summary presents some of the key input from practitioners in the same categories as the summarized input from the focus group participants.

#### Positive Comments about the Use of Video

- This is a valuable tool for wider distribution of project information to the public
- It's accessible, free to view, cheap to distribute on YouTube
- Video can really show the public the environmental and community resources that may be impacted by a proposed project. It's much more representative of key resources than anything described in a DEIS.
- Visual & sound.... sure beats reading

### Positive Comments about the Content of the Project Videos

- I thought they were very good. I liked how they were efficient, they got right down to business and stuck to main points, and did not try to cover too much detail.
- I liked the Regional Transportation Planning video, it gave a nice overview and I plan on using some of the same themes in my own
- I thought the NEPA one is exactly what we are looking for.
- It is a good idea because it explains the basic function of the MPO as a planning organization.

### Negative Comments about the Use of Video, Recommendations, and Suggestions

- It took a long time (I would guess 5 minutes or more) to download the video and I have an "average" computer. Some of the public will give up before viewing them via YouTube.
- A certain level of literacy and internet access was assumed

### Negative Comments about the Content of the Project Videos

- Overly general... The videos were very basic and may frustrate individuals because of the simplicity, especially after they get involved.
- Minorities and the disabled were conspicuously absent in both videos. Video should include content to indicate how citizens with disabilities can be involved in the process (e.g., requesting sign-language interpreters, copies of documents in Braille other accessible formatting via screen readers).
- Tone down the working on getting informed aspects. We want the aggressively ignorant to show up, because they usually can learn and may turn in to project proponents or at least understand and step back.
- In the MPO video, there should be more description about how decisions are made in an MPO, who are the "deciders," and about the importance of public participation from citizens from many of the jurisdictions that are represented by the MPO.
- On the Citizens' Guide: Regional Transportation Planning, the focus seemed to be on providing input to MPO plans. Perhaps a sentence or two stating that plans for areas outside urbanized can be commented upon by following guidance given on the various state Department of Transportation websites would be helpful. On the NEPA Citizens' Guide, include how to access or obtain the document referred to by Mullins.
- In the NEPA video: 1. Replace [ceq.hhs.doe.gov](http://ceq.hhs.doe.gov) with [www.nepa.gov](http://www.nepa.gov) 2. Replace "and/or" with or 3. Replace "of other alternatives in addition" with "of alternatives that would avoid or reduce adverse consequences" 4. Replace "least environmental effects" with "least adverse environmental consequences" 5. Replace "comment on draft and final" with "comment on draft" 6. To the video examples of adverse consequences, add a historic house being demolished, with appropriate commentary -- this will cover both displacements and 106 historic preservation.

### Comments on Related Topics and Processes (Other Thoughts, Recommendations and Suggestions)

- Have you gotten feedback from the environmental groups and/or local activists on the videos? They could provide a valuable perspective as well.
- Great idea, hard goal to accomplish...

#### **4. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER: TIPS FOR USING VIDEO AND ADAPTING THE VIDEOS FROM THIS PROJECT**

The following discussion provides tips for adapting this program in four primary areas:

1. Using the project's videos for ongoing and future efforts
2. Creating similar and customized videos
3. Addressing "equitable access" issues
4. Applying evolving video technologies

##### **4.1 Using the Existing Videos for Ongoing and Future Efforts**

All three videos were designed to be of value to viewers nationwide. The format and content of the programs is geared toward "typical" members of the public interested in, but unfamiliar with, transportation planning, NEPA, and specific planning programs such as RTD's FasTracks program. However, with the proper introduction, all three videos can be shown to the public anywhere in the United States without editing. Appendix I provides a "Leader's Guide" and a "Viewer's Guide" for the videos to assist industry practitioners with using these videos. The following discussion provides specific suggestions for each video.

The "*Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the Regional Transportation Planning*" video tackles a complex topic with a mandated need for more public involvement and especially low levels of public input in many cases. The project team was told at the kickoff workshop that considerable variation across the nation, within a particular state, and even within a specific region exists making an endeavor to guide the public difficult at best. Clearly, regional transportation planning processes vary with respect to agencies and typically change and evolve over time. However, there are some commonalities. Consequently, the use of this program in an unedited format, necessitates the use of the guides presented in Appendix I and some local/regional communications that set the stage for the audience.

The "*Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation NEPA Process*" video also takes on a complex topic that could fill a full length documentary. However, the emphasis of this program is not technical details about NEPA, related environmental regulations, or the nuances of the associated processes, but rather is focused on what all public participants have a need to know and rarely, if ever, hear or read about. The focus of this program is "how to be an effective participant and have a meaningful influence on the NEPA process." The generic nature of the program is intended to apply broadly across the country. Future programming that would be beneficial, but was not expected to be provided in this program, could involve the technical aspects of NEPA and other regulatory compliance. These technical topics can be addressed with existing written materials or future video programs broken down into a menu of possible choices for the viewer. Again, use of this program in an unedited format simply necessitates the use of the guides presented in Appendix I, and some local/regional communications that set the stage for the audience.

The "*Public Involvement: A Case Study*" video is focused on one project, in one place, and on one type of transportation facility (a large, new, subcomponent of a complex regional rail transit system improvement - as opposed to small, upgrade to a simple and stand alone transit facility or a road project). While this fact creates some limitations, the underlying message from the video is broad and encompassing for viewers and allows them to transfer the messages into other projects, other locations and other facility types. The key messages include: project proponents are required to provide for public involvement, public involvement is sought by project proponents to create a better project and better project decisions, there are many ways to participate, there are often very important project implications that citizen's should care about, and public input is considered and can be influential. These messages are understood and timeless in terms of practitioner awareness (or should be), but they are not generally how the public sees industry processes. Use of this program in an unedited format is relatively simple and viewer benefits can be enhanced through the use of the guides presented in Appendix I.

## 4.2 Creating Similar and Customized Videos

### 4.2.1 Define Your Message

The need to modify and/or customize the citizen guides to address the particular nuances or different kinds of topics is expected and inevitable. Some key ideas to keep in mind if you elect to prepare your own videos include:

1. Define your audience, stay with that definition and meet their needs.
2. Test your script, storyboard and draft video on real people. The use of a social scientist and/or a public involvement specialist familiar with public communications is highly recommended.
3. There will be audience “outliers” (and reviewers) who require something different than you produce. This is understandable and may be helpful. It may also show you that more and less detail will be better than what you have produced. This may mean your content is close to perfect.
4. Keep the program brief. Think out complete sets of short video topics created with a clear purpose. Given short attention spans, viewer differences, and an increasing lack of time and patience among potential viewers, a set of short programs are far better than one longer program. One to three minute programs are ideal. Longer videos should be in the 5 to fewer than 10 minute range.
5. Always allow the viewer to make choices about where to watch, when to watch, what to watch and how to comment.
6. You can save time and money with narration rather than using an on-camera host
7. An on-camera host is effective when a series of videos is anticipated and there is a benefit in the continuity that is created with the host
8. Know the rules about using music and other intellectual property.
9. Obtain general and/or specific permissions to use the video of individual people you take at meetings and elsewhere.
10. Know the rules if you are using federal money. There are costly requirements to meet that involve subtitles and other program features before the products can be released on DVD or for online viewing.
11. Prepare a Leaders’ Guide and Viewer’s guide so that the videos can be distributed and commented upon without your involvement. This will save a considerable amount of time and money.
12. Use free online video streaming opportunities like YouTube and others if possible. New sources and services are becoming available at a rapid pace. No commentary on what is possible in this area will remain up to date.

### 4.2.2 Process Management: Leadership – Hosting and Directing

The process of directing and producing a video program is similar to the process of leading another type of project or, more specifically, leading an effort to write a report or prepare a project newsletter. A well organized set of ideas and corresponding presentation sequence is vital. If you approach video production in this manner and with this mindset, you will find that your existing skills will serve you well. However, a skilled person or professional may be needed to help you take advantage of important differences between written products and video products. Seek assistance or get some training to understand how long a scene should last and what works and what doesn’t work in a video program.

Some programs need a host and/or narrator. Other programs don’t necessitate either. The use of a host can add a lot to the quality of a program, but it can also add costs. The process of being the host or narrator of a video is similar to planning and making a live presentation. The best reasons to be the host and/or narrator yourself are as follows:

- You know what you want (and don’t want) to say or convey better than anyone
- Retakes, if needed, are easier, less expensive and less time consuming.

- If you are the host, less “ego management” is needed
- If you are the leader, you should be seen as the leader

If you choose to be the host or narrator, keep the following considerations in mind:

- Be yourself (being authentic is important, being inauthentic is obvious)
- Speak with a firm, properly paced, and confident voice (diction is very important for clarity)
- Work with someone who can tell if your inflection and tone of voice are appropriate (subtle difference can make a big difference in meaning and viewer interpretation, and can make video editing and production much easier or much harder)
- Learn the script or read the script if necessary to get it right (avoid the appearance of reading by using a relatively small font held near the camera lens)
- Try speaking naturally and comfortably about key ideas over a period of time and use the best portions of what was said in the program
- Have someone interview you with self-selected questions in a logical sequence

If you pick someone else to be the host, provide clear and specific guidance, let them be themselves, and establish a solid working relationship that allows you to be assertive.

A calm confident director enhances the opportunity for interview subjects to provide relaxed, clear, and articulate information. It is important to create a stress-free atmosphere before the filming begins. All attention during pre-interview setup should be toward creating a congenial atmosphere. Clipping on a microphone and staring into a camera lens can be stressful. It is the director’s job to communicate that multiple “takes” are normal, and that no one always gets it right the first time. The director should be intuitive in meeting subjects’ needs, and calmly reassure them that the nature of video allows for multiple “takes” and editing out mistakes or clips that don’t come out right. The timeframe set aside for filming should provide enough time to make sure the person or persons filmed and the director are satisfied with the outcome.

#### **4.2.3 Content Development: Storyboarding and Script Development**

Storyboarding is the process of linking a script to the video sequence so someone can see what you have in mind in a linear format over time. To start, think of a spreadsheet with time on the horizontal (X) axis and various “tracks” along the vertical (Y) axis. The tracks may include field video or other B-roll\* images, hosted video, special effects, text insertions, camera audio and/or wireless microphone audio. You may find that switching the axis references allows you to create an easier to use long file, rather than a hard to use wide file. However, most software has time running along from left to right, rather than from top to bottom.

Script development is relatively easy and familiar because it relates directly to writing tasks and setting up a presentation. However, expect your initial product to change when it is delivered and expect to find that some of it doesn’t actually make it into the final production. In other words, develop what you think makes sense, but be flexible. Inflexibility on some aspects of your script may be wise, but overzealous adherence to your initial ideas may not really work in the finished video.

The writer and/or producer should act as interpreter asking the questions:

- What needs to be communicated?
- In what order should the information be presented so as to create a compelling story?
- What graphics, music, maps and/or special effects can be utilized to help the audience understand key points?

As mentioned previously, the writer and/or producer should also be flexible in script development because video production requires collaboration and revisions. There is often a difference between what works on paper and what works during the editing process. The editor and producer should keep the big picture in mind, focusing on what needs to be communicated to the target audience. This will help with selecting and cutting specific video clips. The process of telling a compelling story can be labor intensive. A successful, effective presentation requires precise links between sound and image, which often results in long hours and the need for video production expertise. Frequently, there is no fast route to telling a crisp, compelling video story.

- \* The term B-roll refers to important video that used to provide “relief” from long video sequences of the same basic images such as the on camera host video. In other words, B-roll breaks up video clips that are too long by adding specific images to enhance the host’s or narrator’s message.

### **4.3 Addressing Equitable Access Considerations**

Without any doubt, the most common negative comment on the innovative use of video involves equitable access to online video and DVDs. In fact, some government agencies and companies limit access to online (streaming) video. However, the key equity concerns typically involve one or some combination of the following assertions:

1. Low income persons do not have access to the Internet
2. Elderly people have less experience with the Internet and new technology
3. People with no or low English proficiency levels won’t understand the program

There is some truth to these assertions, but the project’s research and practitioner experience indicate that digital divide issues are limited and shrinking over time, can be readily addressed, and that the same assertions and others apply to all other public involvement techniques in similar and/or different forms. For example:

1. Video is available to low income person if they have access to a library or a DVD player and a television. A DVD player can be purchased for \$30. A DVD player including a TV screen can be purchased for less than \$150. If a person doesn’t have a TV and a DVD player because of their income, they will be difficult to reach with any public outreach tool other than direct contact.
2. Feedback from the elderly includes the comment that the fine print in a project newsletter is often far too small for them to read easily. Video allows people to watch the program more than once, pause the program, and increase the volume, as necessary.
3. Language translation via DVD is easy and inexpensive. With proper planning, an alternate language can be made available via DVD with the push of a button.

Every public involvement tool has certain advantages and disadvantages. Every effective outreach program uses a variety of tools and techniques to reach a variety of audiences. Video can be one tool among many to create meaningful and influential public participation.

The positive social equity attributes of digital video include:

- The ability of digital video to transfer information with pictures, maps and graphics in a manner that has the potential to improve understanding among people with no or limited English proficiency.
- The ability of digital video to reach people at home, at work or in the neighborhood who are traditionally underrepresented at public meetings (low income persons, minorities, individuals with limited English proficiency, youth (10 to 17 years old), young adults (18 to 35 years old) and seniors (65 years and older).

## **4.4 Applying Evolving Video Technologies and Possibilities**

### **4.4.1 Quality and Skill Development: Understanding What is Possible and Necessary**

Anyone can take digital photographs, print them, and distribute them, but a professional photographer can do far more. The same situation is true for video. There is an art to high quality video production.

A full range of skill levels can be successfully applied to making a video. The span ranges from simple (making a PowerPoint file into a video file and creating animation to the more complex (filming a presentation to George Lucas doing a full length Hollywood feature film).

The simple PowerPoint file with a music track called "Did You Know, Shift Happens" has had 4.5 million viewers on YouTube. "Did You Know" and the "The Last Lecture" (almost 9.5 million hits) illustrate that interesting content, not necessarily the quality of video production is the key to the number of viewers (or eyeballs) your work may generate. The emergence of YouTube clearly illustrates that virtually anyone can produce and distribute video.

Go to the following link to see the "Did You Know" video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljbl-363A2Q&feature=PlayList&p=298EF3495A87A17D&playnext=1&index=4>

Go to the following link to watch "The Last Lecture."

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5\\_MqicxSo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji5_MqicxSo)

The Disney website for kids called Kerpoof allows children to easily create animated movies. The "Make a Movie" activity has been supported in part by the National Science Foundation grant, the BizWorld Foundation and the National Center for Women and Information Technology. The existence of Kerpoof implies that a new generation of skilled people and impressive tools are headed into the marketplace.

Go to the following link to see Kerpoof:

[www.kerpoof.com](http://www.kerpoof.com).

However, what all of this doesn't make clear is that these situations are rare and YOU will need a compelling message and some basic skills to produce something of value and something watchable. You need to tell a story in a compelling manner. Clearly, your objectives, anticipated audience, budget and access to skills should guide your video planning and production decisions.

What is possible today was not possible just a year ago and may be nothing in comparison to what may be available a year from now. This unsettled situation is expected to exist for quite some time, so investments in particular products or strategies that lock you into particular tools, processes or agreements should be thought out carefully. Outsourcing on a project by project basis can be an effective means to balance your investments of time for skill development and a means to obtain access to the right tools and techniques as they evolve. There are expensive sources for these services and there are inexpensive sources and everything in between. You may or may not get what you pay for, so if you are the buyer, then beware...

The following discussions provide important technology and process tips ranging from covering tools and equipment to video production planning and distribution of finished products.

### **4.4.2 Tools: Video Cameras, Lighting and Audio Equipment**

Basic digital video cameras are relatively inexpensive and the quality of the images that can be produced is rapidly improving along with the quality you can get for the price of a camera. Basic equipment and development of the necessary skills to take and produce reasonably good video are easily attainable. Many cameras include training in some format and many stores have classes for reasonable prices.

In general, professional video production people and companies have very nice cameras and important lighting and audio equipment that can make a big difference in final product quality. Sometimes this is not important. In some instances, the use of the right equipment is very important and can make the difference between a program that works and one that doesn't.

Special lighting equipment is especially helpful when doing indoor interviews. If you don't have access to lighting equipment, it can be beneficial to obtain some test film to make sure your wonderful interview will also look wonderful.

Wireless microphones can make an important difference when doing field video or trying to capture dialogue at a public meeting. Wireless microphones create a second audio track. This allows a producer to increase volume on the track featuring a host in the field or a conversation at a public meeting while turning down the volume of background noise captured by the camera's microphone (traffic noise or multiple meeting conversations). The audio track from the camera only may not be useable if background noise is relatively high. Again, some testing prior to formal filming can be used to make sure you will have an effective audio track.

As mentioned previously, technology is changing rapidly so presenting recommendations on specific cameras, equipment and software has a very limited shelf life. Today's video cameras provide remarkable pictures for relatively low cost. However, the key to effective video presentations require stable images. It is important to use a tripod for all interviews and "you are there" footage. A wireless microphone for interviews is especially helpful to avoid "muddy" sound. The use of a teleprompter or cue cards is also recommended, especially when the dialogue required approval and/or the person to be interviewed is unfamiliar with speaking in front of a video camera.

#### **4.4.3 Editing and Producing Video: Software and Artistic Considerations**

Video editing and production is an art with specific academy awards for each role. Good video production requires skills and abilities that are learned over time. The quality of your video will benefit from an experienced director, editor and producer, involvement of people with these skills from the project's inception, and from an "appropriate" amount of time spent on these tasks. Video production can be shortchanged and it can be overdone. The production planning process should include a discussion of these topics and related goals.

Some important artistic considerations include:

- Shot Framing and Composition (a blend of consistency and variation is important)
- Scene Timing/Duration (2 to 4 second minimums, to 6 to 10 second maximums)
- Scene Transitions (a multitude of possibilities here, but a few basic transitions with some consistency is key)
- Thematic Graphics and Special Effects (quality productions use a predetermined basic format with a variety of special effects that work well together)
- Audio Track (two or more tracks are recommended, volume adjustments are needed to balance sound quality)
- Music Type, Length and Legal Use Agreements (music can attract or distract viewers, experience is key here, don't use music without proper approvals)
- Overall Production Length and Viewer Attention Spans (unless you are doing a documentary for a documentary watching audience, do not exceed 10 minutes and shoot for two to seven minutes. If more time is needed, split the program into parts as part of a menu of viewer choices)

The same principles required of good writing are expected in video storytelling. While the software may be easy to use, and the camera equipment may provide vivid images for relatively-low cost, the ability to

package the words, images, music and graphics into an effective presentation still requires creative techniques merged with clearly presented information.

#### **4.4.4 Distribution: Digital Video Disks, Municipal Television and Online Possibilities**

If a tree falls in forest and no one hears it, does it make any noise? If you write a report or produce a newsletter and no one reads it, does it have any value? If you hold a public meeting and virtually no one shows up, have you achieved anything? If you produce a video and no one watches it, does it make any difference? Effective distribution of your video is key, but how many viewer or “eyeballs” you get is the true test.

There are a variety of distribution methods for your video. Each has advantages and disadvantages, and these conditions are changing all the time.

- Meetings: Great if the target audiences choose to attend. Unfortunately, this happens infrequently and the attendees represent a limited set of your target audience.
- Digital Video Disks (DVD): Great if you have distribution mechanisms like mailing lists and funding for copying and shipping, and have places where people can pick up the DVDs like libraries, other public buildings, busy places such as businesses near a project site. DVDs may someday be outdated by online sources, but still serve people without easy access to municipal television or the Internet.
- Network Television: Great if you can get news clips made from your programming, but can be difficult to accomplish even with especially short public service announcement length clips.
- Cable and Municipal Television: Great to obtain prime time and repeated showings, but there is limited access to these stations in many communities and their typical “public” content is unedited or live footage that frequently doesn’t generate high viewer numbers or a large following of customers
- Online Opportunities: Great, free, easy, highly accessible for large numbers of people, linked to supporting information, tools and gadgets, but in some cases access is limited

Each method for distribution is important and can be made part of a video program distribution effort and a full range of other techniques making up a well rounded public outreach and involvement effort.

The most opportunity and fastest evolving of these distribution techniques involves online possibilities. The following discussion provides some current examples of sources and begins to demonstrate what is possible now and is likely to happen in the future.

YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) was sold to Google for over \$4 billion for a reason. The eyes of the world are watching videos uploaded free by virtually anyone around the world for free. This free Internet utility allows someone with a short video (less than 10 minutes) to upload the program, obtain viewer ratings, count the number of people who have watched the program, monitor online dialogue and even create a “channel” where sets of videos all covering the same general topic can be presented like a website. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has a YouTube channel at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/aashtovideo>

Another YouTube channel can be found at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/letsbe7>

This site presents some of the videos from the award winning “Educational Video Series” produced by the RTD FasTracks North Metro Corridor Environmental Impact Statement. The Awards included:

- 2007 American Planning Association (APA), Colorado Chapter Award, “Innovative Use of Technology”
- 2008 National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP), National Environmental Excellence Award for Public Involvement/Partnership.

One disadvantage of YouTube is that some public and private computer networks prevent access to YouTube and other online video streaming sites. While these limits exist, a high percentage of systems do not block these sites and/or allow access as necessary. This limit is an important consideration at this time, but is expected to lessen as online video becomes more and more prevalent. Two other disadvantages include a limit on video duration (less than 10 minutes) and video screen size and resolution limits. A final disadvantage is the nature of video programming that can appear near your video. In summary, it may be inappropriate or not even closely related to your topic. This issue can only be resolved by creating a YouTube Channel.

There are other similar sources for uploading video. Each has distinct advantages and disadvantages. One example is Vimeo (<http://www.vimeo.com/>). This site and others have content and other limits.

Another option is making a project website suitable for video streaming. This is possible, but requires technical work to allow the video to be available and show without delays and interruptions. One primary advantage of this approach is content control. One primary disadvantage is that this is not free. An example of a project site featuring video content is found at this link: [http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main\\_123](http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main_123). This is the RTD FasTracks Program website where corridor tours are provided for each line in the system.

**4.4.6 Costs: Basics and Estimating**

One of the first questions and/or hesitations that will come up when people consider preparing a video for a project involves costs. While there are other questions and hesitations, many people see the potential costs of adding video to a public outreach program as a substantial obstacle. This makes sense because the costs can vary considerably from next to nothing (PowerPoint file conversion) to multimillion dollar films. The situation is also complicated by initial upfront costs if a do-it-yourself method is proposed and the unknowns of using specialty consultants.

**Basic Cost Considerations**

The following discussion presents some basic considerations surrounding costs.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purchase Price</u>
<b>Equipment</b>	
Video Camera (low end)	\$ 500
Video Camera (moderate)	\$ 800
Video Camera (high end)	\$ 1,500
Video Camera (professional)	\$15,000
Audio Equipment (low end)	\$ 200
Audio Equipment (high end)	\$ 2,000 and up
Lighting (low end)	\$ 300
Lighting (high end)	\$ 2,000 and up

**Editing and Production Software (Examples not Endorsements)**

iMovie with Mac (low end)	\$ 200
Final Cut Pro (high end)	\$ 1,500

**Professional Services** (hourly rates)

Director, Editor, Producer	\$50 to \$150+
On Camera Talent	\$100 to \$500+
Videographer	\$50 to \$100 (plus camera package)
Editing and Production	\$50 to \$150+
Specialty Graphics	\$100 to \$300+

Simple Cost Estimating Method

Based on experience with a professional videographer, director, editor, special effects specialists and producer, RTD in Denver has prepared the following videos as part of the award winning education video series for costs ranging from \$1,000 per minute to \$2,000 per finished/delivered minute.\*

Meeting Invitation Video	1.5 minutes	\$ 2,500
Meeting Recap Video**	5.0 minutes	\$ 7,500 to \$10,000
Corridor Tour Video	6.0 minutes	\$ 6,000
Quick Tour	0.5 minutes	\$ 400

\* A "price per minute" is a video industry metric. Actual costs for a specific production may vary considerably depending on the nature and circumstances of the production and personnel involved. Delivery included YouTube screening of draft products, DVD production (Master) and online files for website upload.

\*\* Six plus hours of public scoping meetings filmed and then summarized in 5 minutes.

Costs for the RTD FasTracks corridor tour videos found at the following link are not available: [http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main\\_123](http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main_123). These videos were produced under a long-term specialty services contract.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

Based on the research presented in this report and obvious trends, it appears clear that digital video has a focused role as one tool among many to address information transfer between practitioners and the public and to improve citizen understanding of public involvement in key planning processes. It is also clear that video should no longer be considered a luxurious extra, but a component of an overall outreach program that can be highly effective if integrated into a program of education, outreach and communication.

The research revealed a mixture of results about the use of digital video in general and the content of the project videos. The following comments that capture many of the key ideas and demonstrate important differences of opinion:

#### Positive Comments about the Use of Video

- It's accessible, free to view, cheap to distribute on YouTube
- Video can really show the public the environmental and community resources that may be impacted by a proposed project. It's much more representative of key resources than anything described in a DEIS.
- The advantage of video is its flexibility. You could have several levels of detail. You could have some that are short and generic and have menus. (For more info, go to Chapter 2, for example.) Other chapters could drill down to a greater level of detail.
- Videos should be an addition to current methods. I like the video as a supplement.
- With video, you can specifically target segments and edit to an audience. You can add history of comments and it could be really powerful.
- You should put the videos on the Web. Maybe people will see them and decide to go to a meeting. You should suggest people watch it before the meeting so they could speak in an educated manner.

#### Negative Comments about the Use of Video

- Ambiance and warmth is important in getting people involved. That is only achieved by the people on the project. Video could not take the place of people.
- Videos are very good idea if you're in the digital world. People at public meetings may not be computer savvy.
- Videos do not replace the people on the project.
- Videos are good as an enhancement, but not a replacement to any tool.

#### Negative Comments about the Content of the Project Videos

- Overly general... The videos were very basic and may frustrate individuals because of the simplicity, especially after they get involved.
- In the MPO video, there should be more description about how decisions are made in an MPO, who are the "deciders," and about the importance of public participation from citizens from many of the jurisdictions that are represented by the MPO.
- The videos don't answer enough questions to stand alone.
- I like the videos, but did not necessarily follow. It was a little overwhelming. People could get confused. The videos did not have the ability to reach out and draw people in.
- Videos should be shorter.
- The videos have too much repetition if they are put together. You need more of a mix of pictures.
- First video included too much information.

## Positive Comments about the Content of the Project Videos

- I thought they were very good. I liked how they were efficient, they got right down to business and stuck to main points, and did not try to cover too much detail.
- I liked the Regional Transportation Planning video, it gave a nice overview and I plan on using some of the same themes in my own
- I thought the NEPA one is exactly what we are looking for.
- First video did good job of explaining Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- As a general citizen, I learned a lot. I thought it was very engaging and not too long.
- The NEPA video could be useful to teach new attendees about NEPA.
- The videos could be useful in encouraging people to get involved.
- I like how the videos are broken out. The first video shows what RTD expects from citizens. The second video shows procedure. The third video shows the city's needs.

Overall, the research indicates that video can be one tool among many tools needed to reach the public and each public involvement effort should be customized to match the particular outreach goals of the project. In addition, the videos created for this project are suitable for nationwide distribution in their current form, but tailoring them or providing a local introduction would be advantageous.

## 5.2 Perspectives

### Rapid Evolution of Technology

The original ideas that formed the basis for this research effort were generated in 2006. In 2009, as this project and research effort was completed, new perspectives about video and new video capabilities make those original ideas and the proposed research design seem outdated to some extent or at least subject to new scrutiny. More precisely, this project has taken place in an era of substantial technological evolution and innovation. The ability to create and distribute video has changed dramatically, along with the number of videos available on the Internet and the proliferation of transportation videos making their debut. YouTube and social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter are changing Internet activity, community dialogue possibilities, and public involvement technology across the country.

### Creating Perfect Videos

It was not a goal of this project to produce a perfect set of videos. That goal would be elusive at best. The goal was to produce valuable videos addressing some key topics and assess whether video as a new media could be effective and begin to establish a dialogue about what could make this technology work. As one practitioner put it, "*great idea, hard goal to accomplish...*" As the team welcomed a broad range of input, with often conflicting recommendations (too detailed, too complex, too long vs. too general, too simple, too short) and substantially different audiences (general public vs. practitioners), it remained clear that a "one size fits all" approach to creating the perfect videos would be impossible and impractical. There are, however, many uses for the existing videos and a variety of improvement that could be made to them and some clear and specific directions for making those changes. Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on your perspective, the project doesn't include answering to an undefined set of interested participants or making the corresponding revisions. However, this situation does raise two interesting questions applicable to video and any other existing or new communication tool:

1. Who should be the judge of the adequacy of the content of public involvement communications?
2. What is the appropriate set of public participation effectiveness criteria?

The answers to these questions are complicated and are best addressed locally and within the context of a specific project or endeavor. In addition, they require continuous scrutiny and assessment as public involvement efforts evolve over time.

## The Most Common Criticism: Equity and the Digital Divide

Digital divide issues exist, but are limited and shrinking over time. These issues typically involve access to video (online or otherwise) by lower income persons and households and perceptions about age and language differences and how these factors relate to access to video. Digital divide issues can be easily addressed with video and/or a broad spectrum of tools used in an overall public involvement program. Some of the often overlooked positive social equity attributes of digital video include:

- The ability of digital video to transfer information with pictures, maps and graphics in a manner that has the potential to improve understanding among people with no or limited English proficiency. In addition, language translation is easy and inexpensive.
- The ability of digital video to reach people at home, at work or in the neighborhood who are traditionally underrepresented at public meetings (low income persons, minorities, individuals with limited English proficiency, youth (10 to 17 years old), young adults (18 to 35 years old) and seniors (65 years and older).

## Conclusion

With a compelling message and some basic video skills, practitioners can produce a valuable communication tool with a reasonable budget and the ability to reach a large number of viewers. Some important artistic considerations include:

- Shot Framing and Composition (a blend of consistency and variation is important)
- Scene Timing/Duration (2 to 4 second minimums, to 6 to 10 second maximums)
- Scene Transitions (a multitude of possibilities here, but a few basic transitions with some consistency is key)
- Thematic Graphics and Special Effects (quality productions use a predetermined basic format with a variety of special effects that work well together)
- Audio Track (two or more tracks are recommended, volume adjustments are needed to balance sound quality)
- Music Type, Length and Legal Use Agreements (music can attract or distract viewers, experience is key here, don't use music without proper approvals)
- Overall Production Length and Viewer Attention Spans (unless you are doing a documentary for a documentary watching audience, do not exceed 10 minutes and shoot for two to seven minutes. If more time is needed, split the program into parts as part of a menu of viewer choices)

The same principles required of good writing are expected in video storytelling. While the software may be easy to use, and the camera equipment may provide vivid images for relatively-low cost, the ability to package the words, images, music and graphics into an effective presentation still requires creative techniques merged with clearly presented information. There are a variety of distribution methods for your video. Each has advantages and disadvantages, and these conditions are changing all the time.

### 5.3 Next Steps

The following research is recommended as a follow-up to this work:

The two citizens guide videos should be refined. One approach would be to address the input obtained during the research effort creating revised versions of each video and then make the revised versions available nationwide. A supplement to this approach would be to 1) refine them with support from two distinct expert panels composed of federal, state and regional practitioners from across the country and then 2) test them with an expanded focus group process emphasizing a broad range of citizen participants and special interest groups. The citizen groups should include inexperienced and

experienced citizens as a method of finding an appropriate level of technical content for a nationwide audience.

The case study video should be made available via Internet sites and should become the initial subject of an ongoing dialogue involving practitioners and the public, such that a growing record of issues and perspectives becomes available over time. This Internet resource could then be made available to practitioners and the public across the county as a means of guiding and educating both types of participants. The Internet site design and ongoing management requirements would need to be addressed along with federal requirements for Internet Video.\*

\* Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Section 508 addresses online video requirements. The existing videos are 508 compliant for digital video disk (DVD) format.

An effort to develop of a complete set of educational videos focused on NEPA and transportation industry topics of nationwide value should be initiated. The effort should result in an online source for national exposure and use.

As social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter emerge, new research exploring new possibilities should be performed to keep practitioners ahead of the public. Clearly, the transformation of public involvement practice is at hand and if practitioners don't lead they will end up following.

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## **7. APPENDIXES**

Appendix A – Focus Group Invitation

Appendix B – Profile Questionnaire

Appendix C – Pre-Questionnaire

Appendix D – DVD: Project Videos

Appendix E – Post-Questionnaire

Appendix F – Practitioner Invitations

Appendix G – Results of Online Practitioner Survey

Appendix H – Practitioner Narrative Input

Appendix I – Leader's Guide and User's Guide for the Project Videos

**Appendix A – Focus Group Invitation**

March 3, 2009

Subject: **Invitation to Participate:** Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Public Transportation Participation (PTP) Pilot Program, Innovative Uses of Digital Video.

Dear FasTracks Participant,

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) are conducting a research project to test new communication tools and methods to address growing interest in public involvement and the need to improve outreach techniques. You are invited to participate in this research effort and offer your opinions in a "focus group" format.

The purpose of the focus group effort is to generate public comments about the new tools and methods created as part of this research program. Your opinions and input from a nationwide network of public participation specialists will be included in a research report designed to improve public participation nationwide.

The proposed dates for the focus groups are as follows:

March 24 (5:30pm-7:00pm)

March 25 (5:30pm-7:00pm)

March 26 (5:30pm-7:00pm)

The focus groups will be held at the FasTracks offices located in downtown Denver. The address is 1560 Broadway, Ste. 700. In Regional Conference Room

Your involvement will be complete with attendance at one 90 minute session.

If you would like to participate or have any questions, please call Manolo at (303) 615-9725 or send an e-mail to [FTAresearch@gmail.com](mailto:FTAresearch@gmail.com) by March 4, 2009. Space is limited. RSVP is required.

Thank you,

Manolo Gonzalez Estay  
Research Task Leader, FTA PTP Grant  
Welchert & Britz Inc.  
(303) 615-9725  
[FTAresearch@gmail.com](mailto:FTAresearch@gmail.com)

cc: Brian Kennedy, AICP, Project Manager, FTA PTP Grant, [FTAresearch@gmail.com](mailto:FTAresearch@gmail.com)

**Appendix B – Profile Questionnaire**

**PROFILE SURVEY**

**FTA-RTD Digital Video Research Project**

**(Denver Metro Area, CO.)**

**Interviewee Profile (Denver, CO.)**  
 (Remind interviewee that this is anonymous)

**Sponsored by:**  
 FTA (Federal Transit Administration)

**Research Conducted by:**  
 Manolo González-Estay  
 Welchert & Britz Inc

**Survey Designed by:**  
 Manolo González-Estay  
 Ph.D. Candidate (ABD)  
 Social/Cultural Anthropology  
 E-mail: manolo@welchertandbritz.com  
 (720) 936-4287 cell

**1. Age** a. Youth (<18) \_\_\_\_\_ b. Adult (18 to 64) \_\_\_\_\_ c. Senior (>64) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Gender:** a. MALE \_\_\_\_\_ b. FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How long have you lived in the Denver metro area?**  
 a. 0-1 YEARS \_\_\_\_\_ b. 2-4 YEARS \_\_\_\_\_ c. 5-9 YEARS \_\_\_\_\_ d. 10+ YEARS \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Have you ever taken public transportation?**  
 a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Are you familiar with FasTracks?**  
 a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

**6. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being “not at all familiar” and 10 being “completely familiar”, where do you measure your familiarity to FasTracks currently?**

<b>Not at all familiar</b>				<b>Less familiar</b>	<b>More familiar</b>				<b>Completely familiar</b>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. What FasTracks corridor is closest to you?**  
 a. North Metro Corridor \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. West Corridor \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. East Corridor \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Gold Line Corridor \_\_\_\_\_

- e. Central Corridor \_\_\_\_\_
- f. I-225 Corridor \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Northwest Rail Corridor \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Southeast Corridor \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Southwest Corridor \_\_\_\_\_
- j. US 36 BRT Corridor \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

**8. How many FasTracks meetings for any corridor have you attended in the past 2 years?**

- a. 0-1 \_\_\_\_\_
- b. 2-4 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. 5-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- d. 10+ \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Don't remember \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Have you attended more than one corridor's meetings? If yes, which ones?**

- a. YES \_\_\_\_\_
- b. NO \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Which corridors \_\_\_\_\_

**10. How did you become familiar with the FasTracks program?**

- a. meetings \_\_\_\_\_
- b. mailings \_\_\_\_\_
- c. newspaper \_\_\_\_\_
- d. TV news \_\_\_\_\_
- e. internet \_\_\_\_\_
- f. newsletter \_\_\_\_\_
- g. elected officials \_\_\_\_\_
- h. other \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Do you plan on attending new FasTracks corridor meetings in the future? If yes, why? If no, why?**

- a. YES \_\_\_\_\_
- b. NO \_\_\_\_\_
- c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C – Pre-Questionnaire**

1. Do you know what an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
2. In your corridor, is there currently an EIS on transportation being conducted?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you know what is expected of you in an EIS project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you know what your role, as a citizen is, in an Environmental Impact Statement project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you know what the corridor project team members want or expect from you?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you know in what way you can participate in a transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you know what various ways you can participate in a transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you know what an effective public comment is or what it requires?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are you required to attend meetings in your corridor?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you know how to become more informed (learn more) about your transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
11. In order of importance, please list the two (2) biggest problems/concerns of participating in a transportation project?  
1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
12. In order of importance, please list the two (2) solutions you would like to see in future transportation projects that would facilitate public participation?  
1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
13. Have you seen digital videos used on you transportation project to inform or encourage the public to participate?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you think that video is a helpful method to inform the public on how to participate in a transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
15. Is there anything else you would like to add or mention? Please elaborate here...  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D – DVD: Project Videos**

See Enclosed DVD

**Appendix E – Post-Questionnaire**

\* These questions should be answered after you have viewed the digital video (s).

1. After watching the digital video, do you know what an EIS is?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
2. After watching the digital video, do you know if your transportation corridor is conducting an EIS?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
3. After watching the digital video, do you know what is expected of you in an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
4. After watching the digital video, do you know what your role, as a citizen is, in an Environmental Impact Statement project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
5. After watching the digital video, do you know what the corridor project team members want or expect from you?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
6. After watching the digital video, do you know in what way you can participate in a transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
7. After watching the digital video, do you know what various ways you can participate in a transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
8. After watching the digital video, do you know what an effective public comment is, or what it requires?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
9. After watching the digital video, do you know if you are required to attend meetings in your corridor?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_
10. After watching the digital video, do you know how to become more informed (learn more) about your transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

11. After watching the digital video, in order of importance, please list the two (2) biggest problems/concerns of participating in a transportation project?  
1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

12. After watching the digital video, in order of importance, please list the two (2) solutions you would like to see in future transportation projects that would facilitate public participation?  
1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

13. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being a "good idea" and 10 being a "bad idea"; do you think that the use of digital videos in transportation project to inform or encourage the public to participate is a good idea or a bad idea?

Good Idea				Somewhat of a good idea	Somewhat of a bad idea				Bad idea
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>									

14. Do you think that video is a helpful method to inform the public on how to participate in a transportation project?  
a. YES \_\_\_\_\_ b. NO \_\_\_\_\_ c. DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

15. Is there anything else you would like to add or mention about this project? Please elaborate here...

## Appendix F – Practitioner Invitations

Transportation Planning Practitioners:

You are invited to view and comment on two short videos produced under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Public Transportation Participation (PTP) Pilot Program:

1. "Citizen's Guide for Effective Participation in the Regional Transportation Planning Process"
2. "Citizen's Guide for Effective Participation in the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA Process"

The videos are available on YouTube. Please click the links below to watch them:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lqJJDP1bGE> (Regional Transportation Planning Video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DAWQui0UzU> (National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA video)

FTA is seeking your input as a practitioner. However, please keep in mind that the intended audience is the general public.

**To participate, please click on the link below to view and complete the brief on-line survey (5 mins).**

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=C0GLIJUwSgkKMYalSgVW2A\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=C0GLIJUwSgkKMYalSgVW2A_3d_3d)

If you are unable to watch the videos on YouTube, please request a DVD by replying to this e-mail. A DVD featuring these programs will be shipped to you at no cost.

These videos were produced by FTA PTP grant funding and were inspired by similar work funded by the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) FasTracks North Metro Corridor EIS Educational Video Series. The video content is focused on generating effective participation. These videos should be viewed with the understanding that other videos could be made available that would elaborate on process steps, technical details and project specific information. The next phase of this grant project involves a case study video featuring the public involvement program for the RTD FasTracks North Metro Corridor EIS project.

Videos of this nature are being produced for costs ranging from \$5,000 to 10,000 depending on their duration and complexity. These budget figures include all services from concept development and pre-production approval to final production and distribution - uploading for online viewing (project website and YouTube) and DVD reproduction (250 copies). Language translation has not been provided, but could be relatively easily.

Compliance with federal requirements for video products (508 rules) will be met following completion of the research effort.

If you have questions, please reply to this message.

Thank you,

Manolo Gonzalez Estay  
Research Task Leader, FTA PTP Grant  
Welchert & Britz  
(303) 615-9725  
FTAresearch@gmail.com

Brian Kennedy, AICP  
Project Manager, FTA PTP Grant  
FTAresearch@gmail.com

**Appendix G – Results of Online Practitioner Survey**

<b>How many years of experience do you have with projects involving public participation?</b>	
a. 0-1 YEAR	6.9%
b. 2-4 YEARS	10.3%
c. 5-9 YEARS	20.7%
d. 10+ YEARS	62.1%

<b>Have you ever seen a video used as a public participation/outreach tool on a project?</b>	
a. YES	48.3%
b. NO	48.3%
c. DON'T KNOW	3.4%

<b>Do you think that video as an outreach tool is useful with the public?</b>	
a. YES	93.1%
b. NO	0.0%
c. DON'T KNOW	6.9%

<b>Would you use or recommend the use of either video on a project or planning effort?</b>	
a. YES	85.2%
b. NO	11.1%
c. DON'T KNOW	3.7%

## Appendix H: Practitioner Narrative Input

4. Have you ever seen a video used as a public participation/outreach tool on a project?

5. If yes to the previous question, where and when?

### Comment Text

Campaigns (political/social) , community organizing activities, environmental campaigns, visioning processes

North Metro Corridor, RTD Denver

State agency web sites

Colorado, Washington, DC, Oregon, California

Brian Kennedy showed me his draft idea a couple of years ago.

Various ones for the FAA, one for collision avoidance devices programs. Saw a video on the High Capacity Corridor Transit Project (Rail) for Honolulu while at DTS.

First used video as a continuous loop VCR tape playing as a station at an open house format public meeting in early 90s

Numerous projects over the last three years

I have seen several, but recently one with Brian Kennedy

At the FHWA Transportation Planning Conference a couple years ago. Brian Kennedy did a demo.

I believe it was a CUTR video several years ago at a conference in Orlando.

I used to teach a course that used a PI video.

Not to reach the public on how to participate, but we use video at our meetings successfully to describe the project - Not sure what you're asking for.

several Nevada DOT public participation meetings set in the "open house" format, used a loop video to explain either the process or the project.

### 7. Why or why not is the use of video a good idea with the public?

My answer is yes and no (but your survey doesn't allow that). You are going to reach a certain audience with video, but not everyone. If not done properly, videos can be ineffective.

This is a valuable tool for wider distribution of project information to the public

Most folks don't have a clue how the NEPA process works. This is a pretty basic, but not boring video that tells them.

Yes--If specific and provides good information.

The video provides visual and audio stimulus, which can intrigue the participants. A video is easy accessible in today's computer age. Viewing it on YouTube allows me to control playback.

Visual & sound... sure beats reading

Assuming users have high-speed Internet connections, they are very accessible; can view at anytime of day. Typically, they are short and to the point.

It captures the basic information needed to participate meaningfully in the NEPA process, moves fast, and is visually stimulating. A video allows people to absorb information and interact in their own time-frame.

If the videos are on-line in a place easy to find, the public is more apt to watch a short video than read a long document.

The younger generation communicates a great deal on the internet and logs onto YouTube.

It can get ideas across to the public more intensely than slide shows or handouts.

It helps provide a learning tool that can reach out to many people.

It helps the public know where to go for information. It is a basic introduction.

Reach a broader audience with less expense while maintaining a consistent message.

It is a good idea because it explains the basic function of the MPO as a planning organization.

If used it should be appropriate to the target population

Good use as a PSA if kept under a minute. Or can be used on Public Channels

The public has numerous ways to pick up on information and events. Video on websites, on Local access channels, and general TV allow the public to connect to ideas, projects, and events on their time.

It's accessible, free to view, cheap to distribute on YouTube, and it can really show the public the environmental and community resources that may be impacted by a proposed project. It's much more representative of key resources than anything described in a DEIS.

popular format; more and more people accessing social networking channels for information

It stresses that comments should be to the point and topical.

People take in information differently so it's another tool. It needs to be done correctly and the set up is important.

Video (or TV) is the most common form of communication to today's listener. I recommend an intro video for an overview of the process and/or project for all public meetings. I also support the "open house" form of meeting versus the presentation, followed by Q/A form of meeting. Citizens get more information and are more communicative in a 1 to 1 discussion, rather than a "stand up at the microphone and ask your question" arrangement.

These are brief and will interest people who want to be involved.

Because you can't reach everybody individually and a video is a good way to be certain the same information is presented to everybody.

#### **8. What did you like or dislike about each video as a public outreach tool?**

Each video? Which video? The ones I have seen before, or the ones you produced? Poorly worded question. Questions 6 and 7 are generic and 8 is undirected.

Both were easy to understand and to follow the logic of the discussion

Only looked at the NEPA video

They are brief and provide a good overview of the process and terminology for those unfamiliar. This would be helpful before someone attends a meeting. Once they arrive at the meeting, I generally educate them on the concepts introduced in the video, so encouraging someone who has already attended a meeting to view one of these would be redundant.

The videos were informative in an informal way. The actors didn't appear to be corporate employees, but they were regular people. The language was basic is easy to understand.

what to ask

With posting on YouTube, can easily become distracted and view other non-related videos. Also, no context for video.

See above - I thought they were both very dynamic and informative.

Because of the format, the content may be too simplified.

Liked the planning process video for ease of host in communication and the director's use of close up shots. Distracting to have two narrators in the second (NEPA) video. Didn't learn much new by watching the second video.

I thought they were very good. I liked how they were efficient, they got right down to business and stuck to main points, and did not try to cover too much detail. Dislike: it took a long time (I would guess 5

minutes or more) to download the video and I have an "average" computer. Some of the public will give up before viewing them via YouTube.

I liked that it was brief and pointed.

As far as transportation the videos were very basic and may frustrate individuals because of the simplicity. Especially after they get involved.

Videos can be view at the viewers convenience and it tan be viewed multiple times. Video does not allow for question and answer interaction.

The presentation was fine. The NEPA presentation is deficient for not mentioning Climate Change as an important environmental issue--like water quality and loss of habitat--on which it is appropriate to comment.

Minorities and the disabled were conspicuously absent in both videos Certain level of literacy and internet access was assumed Overly general

Good information, may be a little long

Most videos on public outreach are boring. Those that keep a person's interest are better and will be remembered longer. Preaching is not the way. The videos need to be a little entertaining in nature with out preaching.

I thought they were both very good as a basic introduction to NEPA and how the various ways the public can participate in transportation planning.

see 7 above

No opinion. It works for some projects/settings and doesn't on others.

What I liked about the RTP video: -well presented overall. -well organized, distinct sections, well defined - good summary What I would recommend to be changed about the RTP video: -at the beginning, tell the listener, "thank you for taking the time to watch this 6 minute introduction to the Regional Transportation Planning Process", so the listener has an idea of the length of the video. -When you talk about --...in larger regions the MPO is most often the COG, I would add: "however, with smaller regions the Regional Transportation agency is the MPO." -When talking about the citizen participation level is unfortunately low... you can participate..., I would add something about: Especially if you support the plan or the project being presented. Right now most citizens show up to oppose the plan or project and therefore, the public input is always disproportionately slanted toward the opposition point of view. - For both videos, I find it boring when the presenter reads the slide word for word. I suggest you put bullets on the slide and read the full dialogue when explaining the bullets.

Liked the clarity and directness. There were a couple of points at which I wondered if we were trying to model the "perfect citizen" and if that wouldn't be something of a turn off, but, in general, the tone is very good.

They were quality efforts - really excellent information conveyed in a compact format. I learned new information and would love to be able to download these for use in a greeting station at a public meeting

**10. Please explain why you would or would not use or recommend the use of either video on a project or planning effort?**

I liked the Regional Transportation Planning video, it gave a nice overview and I plan on using some of the same themes in my own outreach. Our involvement in public participation for NEPA is minimal, so I doubt we would use that one.

Good explanation of the general necessity and guidelines for public input and the context of the RTP and its process

I'd put in on the project website....then folks who want to check it out, can.

Probably not, for reason explained in question 8. This might be helpful to have on the website of the MPO or COG so that people understand what to expect before the process begins. By the time I talk to them, it's too late.

I would b/c the internet allows for video to be easily accessible.

gets more attention than Public Notices

Yes, but would continue to do other types of outreach since the video posted on the Internet wouldn't be available to those without high-speed Internet access.

See previous responses.

For the reason stated above.

The NEPA video was too reliant on text. How does one relay the information more visually and generate interest? The "planning" video held my attention more simply because of the photography, host, and backdrops.

I think video is a very effective medium and these videos achieved their purpose of informing the audience about their respective subjects.

It reaches a large audience. It provides a brief lesson on the issue. It may get more people involved.

The videos will always help to encourage involvement.

See answer to question 7.

For a general audience, these are fine intros in how a citizen can get involved in an important planning process, and at what stage. I think that the comment in the NEPA video about the importance of voicing opinions EARLY is very good; in fact, the importance of early participation may even be understated.

See previous answer #8

They would be useful to educate smaller committees at the being of a project or at an open house style meeting on a continuous loop at a station

I would use the videos at the start of the project or planning and have it as an introduction to them on how the public can and should be involved. Have on websites for the project, for the City the project is in, and other electronic site for information.

The videos could be referenced in scoping notices as a public resource. They could educate the public, resulting in more effective comments and, ultimately, better planning and project implementation.

see above; easy of use

too general -- they are good only as background info for the general public

I like the simple explanation of how people can get involved and what that involvement means.

I thought the NEPA one is exactly what we are looking for. Only had one clarifying point but it is minor.

see prior input.

People may appreciate the information and may find it empowering.

#### **11. What changes, if any, would you recommend?**

I think the NEPA video would be a bit more valuable if you did an example of a project and followed it through the video with examples of how to get involved and the actual process. I think it might be a bit hard to follow for a lay person.

The music used was a little funky and the notice taped to the pillar in the background of the RTDP video was a little distracting.

None

I would tone down the music in the NEPA video. I noticed that I focused on the music more that the message in some cases.

The videos should have written text of narrators for those with hearing impairment

Subtitles in Spanish, etc.

On the Citizens' Guide: Regional Transportation Planning, the focus seemed to be on providing input to

MPO plans. Perhaps a sentence or two stating that plans for areas outside urbanized can be commented upon by following guidance given on the various state Department of Transportation websites would be helpful. On the NEPA Citizens' Guide, include how to access or obtain the document referred to by Mullins.

Have one video for public participation that is applicable for both planning and NEPA that allows a little more time to be in depth. Perhaps use a case history.

Maybe include more concrete examples of citizen involvement in actual projects.

It's very good.

The basic video should have a few more links for detailed information.

I would end the videos with a Citizens Statement of Rights: what does a citizen have a right to expect as responses to specific concerns. You do mention that a person doesn't get to vote on issues; but it is important to state that a citizen has the right to receive a response to specific comments or concerns in the NEPA process.

Different images and different speakers

I would put more examples of people asking good questions and the response to those questions. This way people get a clear understanding of the give and take of the Q & A sessions.

I saw a typo in the NEPA presentation (project was spelled project). The videos could provide a few real-life examples of how public comments resulted in a significant change to a project.

on the NEPA film and the "project alternatives slide," the word "project" is misspelled

In the NEPA video: 1. Replace ceq.hhs.doe.gov with www.nepa.gov 2. Replace "and/or" with or 3. Replace "of other alternatives in addition" with "of alternatives that would avoid or reduce adverse consequences" 4. Replace "least environmental effects" with "least adverse environmental consequences" 5. Replace "comment on draft and final" with "comment on draft" 6. To the video examples of adverse consequences, add a historic house being demolished, with appropriate commentary -- this will cover both displacements and 106 historic preservation.

Show some buses or bus rapid transit instead of just fixed rail.

A slide that stated comments on draft and final documents (focus is on EIS) and tech reports... Simplify it to comments on environmental documents and tech reports as there is no Draft EA.

See prior input about what you liked and disliked.

Tone down the working on getting informed aspects. We want the aggressively ignorant to show up, because they usually can learn and may turn in to project proponents or at least understand and step back.

**12. In order of importance, please list the two (2) biggest problems/concerns you see in using these videos and/or other videos in a public participation program for a transportation project?**

1. Dissemination of video
2. It is not specific to our MPO, so if our process is a little different, the public might be confused.
1. getting the people to actually view the video - need to give them a compelling reason to watch
2. still will be some people who don't understand the message, may be too complex still with some of the public.

Just where to put them. The folks who are already participating probably know the score...but, you could put CDs of the videos on information tables for anyone to pick up. Also - as I said, I'd place the video on the project website.

It's too late once they are already participating

- 1) Can't access it anytime like you would a written message b/c you would always have the have a DVD player or the internet
- 2) None

1. User access to high speed Internet.
2. Not accessible to those with hearing impairment.

Equipment availability Limited to English only audiences

1. Knowledge about the existence of the videos may not be widespread, so it may not get the circulation you desire.
2. The videos probably are too simplified.

Keeping the public interest. Giving enough information without becoming technical.

1. Anytime you generalize, there is the risk of not being specific enough to be useful. But the inclusion of sources of information (websites, etc.) was a good antidote to that here.
2. Getting the videos to the public easier, faster download times on YouTube, etc.

Cost of producing the video. Interaction between the public and the team.

Again, they were just basic information and should be followed-up by more detailed videos or websites.

Will there be enough interest in the videos by the general public so that there are sufficient viewings to justify the effort to create the videos.

In the MPO video, there should be more description about how decisions are made in an MPO, who are the "deciders," and about the importance of public participation from citizens from many of the jurisdictions that are represented by the MPO.

Not diverse in people participating Not environmentally diverse

They may be a little long, can be expensive to produce

As stated in Question 11, I think that more examples of citizens asking their questions (that are to the point that is needed and the response) and the response to the questions would give a better understanding of how the process works. Some times the governmental agency or consultant has the answer to the question and at time they may not. The video should show both and when they do not have the answer show that the response is that we do not have that answer at this time and we will get your name and phone number and call you back. That is very important. People either need the response at the meeting or they need to know that it will be available at a future meeting, or that they will get it by phone, e-mail messages, or it will be addressed in a news letter so that every body can know what the response to the question was.

No concerns.

like anything, people have to know it exists before they can access it; not everyone uses internet

The sign off was a little too personal if other agencies were to use this video.

Nothing stands out.

1) the use of videos can tend to give the impression that the agency and staff has distanced themselves from the public. This can be mitigated by not making the video the first thing they see walking in the door. Greet them first using staff, give them an overview of what is in the room (if it's an open house) or what to expect (if it's a presentation), then make the video available for them to view.

Getting them to the eyes of potential public participants. Convincing potential public participants that we really do want their involvement.

Setting up equipment Language and signing

### **13. Is there anything else you would like to add or mention? Elaborate here...**

Video should include content to indicate how citizens with disabilities can be involved in the process (e.g., requesting sign-language interpreters, copies of documents in Braille other accessible formatting via screen readers).

Great idea, hard goal to accomplish. Perhaps spell out what the purpose and need of the video is. . . . Increase public participation? Reach a portion of the public that has not been involved before?

Need more images of people being involved.

Have you gotten feedback from the environmental groups and/or local activists on the videos? They could provide a valuable perspective as well.

loved that the Denver metro region was featured in the background and DRCOG's web site was used to illustrate how to get more info

No... Thanks for putting the work and resources into this project.

thanks for the chance to offer input.

## APPENDIX I. LEADER'S GUIDE AND USER'S GUIDES FOR THE PROJECT VIDEOS

### LEADER'S GUIDE

#### Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide someone who is unfamiliar with the program that created the three videos and the associated content with enough information to use one or more of them in a public meeting setting without adaptation.

#### Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sponsors applied research to develop innovative approaches to improving public participation in the planning of public transportation. This research is part of the Public Transportation Participation Pilot Program (PTP Program), created as part of the [\*Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users \(SAFETEA-LU\)\*](#).

FTA selected a grant proposal from the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) as part of the second round of grant approvals for Fiscal Year 2007 (PTP-2) entitled: "Innovative Applications of Digital Video"

The project has created a citizen's guide to effective participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process and a citizen's guide to the [\*National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)\*](#) process, and a final program providing a case study of public involvement for a specific project that is part of RTD's FasTracks program. The intention of the project is to deliver a template and tool for use by practitioners in other regions nationwide.

#### Narrative Introduction for Each Video

##### *Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the Regional Transportation Planning Process*

This short video addresses the nationwide need, and mandate, to involve citizens in the process of selecting, prioritizing and funding of a wide range of transportation improvements with the potential to impact people, the environment, and communities positively and negatively.

Many citizen's are unfamiliar with regional planning, the issues associated with creating an interconnected transportation system, or the processes for making related public policy decisions.

In addition, they often don't really know how to participate in a meaningful or influential manner. This video provides some background about this process and tips to be an effective citizen participant.

##### *Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the NEPA Process*

This short video addresses the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA, which is the law that requires the evaluation of environmental effects when the Federal government makes decisions and/or implements various kinds of projects.

Many citizens are unfamiliar with NEPA, the environmental impact analysis process for a project, or the key steps along the way where citizen input is required and valued.

Citizen's often don't really know how to participate in a meaningful or influential manner. This video provides some background about this process and tips to be an effective citizen participant.

##### *The North Metro Corridor Environmental Impact Statement: A Case Study in Public Involvement*

This video presents a case study to illustrate that public involvement is not only required, but highly valued by project proponents, project opponents, government agencies and citizens. This video clarifies the intentions of project team leaders and provides a variety of suggestions to help citizen participants realize that their involvement is important and influential.

### **Key Discussion Questions for Viewers for Each Video**

The following questions are designed to engage viewers of each video in an open discussion about some of the key ideas that are presented. Additional questions should be added by the leader and by the viewers.

#### *Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the Regional Transportation Planning Process*

1. How can regional transportation planning decisions impact you, your neighborhood, or your community?
2. What is at stake if regional transportation planning decisions are made without citizen involvement?
3. How can you find out when key processes and decisions in your region are going to be made?
4. When is the best time to get involved and why?
5. What are three regional transportation planning issues in your region that concern you?
6. What are you willing to do to be an effective participant in your region's transportation planning process?

#### *Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the NEPA Process*

1. If you hear about a project in your area where a NEPA process will occur and NEPA documents will be prepared, do you believe your input will be heard and/or valued? If yes, explain why? If not, explain why not?
2. Is the project team required to demonstrate that public input was compiled and considered?
3. What are some of the key points in the process where citizen input can be influential?
4. What makes a public comment valuable and influential?
5. What parts of an overall project are harder to influence than others?
6. What parts of a project are most influenced by citizen input?
7. Do you believe you could be an influential participant in the NEPA process?

#### *The North Metro Corridor Environmental Impact Statement: A Case Study in Public Involvement*

1. Do you believe that project planners and designers really use public input?
2. Do you believe that active citizen participants are satisfied with the influence they create?
3. Can you imagine getting involved in a project in your community?
4. What would motivate you to participate in a project in your community?
5. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for project teams that would encourage your involvement?

## VIEWER'S GUIDE

### Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of the Viewer's Guide is to provide someone who is unfamiliar with Regional Transportation Planning, the National Environmental Policy Act and/or public involvement programs in general with information to maximize the benefits they get from viewing the three programs.

### Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sponsors applied research to develop innovative approaches to improving public participation in the planning of public transportation. This research is part of the Public Transportation Participation Pilot Program (PTP Program), created as part of the [Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users \(SAFETEA-LU\)](#).

FTA selected a grant proposal from the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) as part of the second round of grant approvals for Fiscal Year 2007 (PTP-2) entitled: "Innovative Applications of Digital Video"

The project has created a citizen's guide to effective participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process and a citizen's guide to the [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#) process, and a final program providing a case study of public involvement for a specific project that is part of RTD's FasTracks program. The intention of the project is to deliver a template and tool for use by practitioners in other regions nationwide.

### Questions to Answer or Consider Before Viewing Any of the Videos

1. What role should citizen's play in public decision making?
2. How much should citizens rely on their representatives and industry professionals when it comes to public projects and policy decisions with potential social, environmental and economic impacts?
3. Are you involved in your community? If yes, how and why? If no, why not?
4. What do you value in your community?
5. Are any of these community resources at risk? Could what you value be upgraded or degraded by public decisions or public actions?
6. What would it take for you to become involved in your community?

### Questions to Answer or Consider After Viewing the Videos

#### *Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the Regional Transportation Planning Process*

1. How can regional transportation planning decisions impact you, your neighborhood, or your community?
2. What is at stake if regional transportation planning decisions are made without citizen involvement?
3. How can you find out when key processes and decisions in your region are going to be made?
4. When is the best time to get involved and why?
5. What are three regional transportation planning issues in your region that concern you?
6. What are you willing to do to be an effective participant in your region's transportation planning process?

### *Citizen's Guide to Effective Participation in the NEPA Process*

1. If you hear about a project in your area where a NEPA process will occur and NEPA documents will be prepared, do you believe your input will be heard and/or valued? If yes, explain why? If not, explain why not?
2. Is the project team required to demonstrate that public input was compiled and considered?
3. What are some of the key points in the process where citizen input can be influential?
4. What makes a public comment valuable and influential?
5. What parts of an overall project are harder to influence than others?
6. What parts of a project are most influenced by citizen input?
7. Do you believe you could be an influential participant in the NEPA process?

### *The North Metro Corridor Environmental Impact Statement: A Case Study in Public Involvement*

1. Do you believe that project planners and designers really use public input?
2. Do you believe that active citizen participants are satisfied with the influence they create?
3. Can you imagine getting involved in a project in your community?
4. What would motivate you to participate in a project in your community?
5. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for project teams that would encourage your involvement?

### **Technical Resources for Further Understanding**

The following Internet sites provide technical information that might be of value to you if you are unfamiliar with various aspects of transportation planning, NEPA and citizen involvement.

#### Transportation Planning

<http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/BriefingBook/BBook.htm>

“Public involvement is integral to good transportation planning. Without meaningful public participation, there is a risk of making poor decisions, or decisions that have unintended negative consequences. With it, it is possible to make a lasting contribution to an area's quality of life. Public involvement is more than an agency requirement and more than a means of fulfilling a statutory obligation. Meaningful public participation is central to good decision making.”

“The fundamental objective of public involvement programs is to ensure that the concerns and issues of everyone with a stake in transportation decisions are identified and addressed in the development of the policies, programs, and projects being proposed in their communities.”

“A well-informed public can contribute meaningful input to transportation decisions through a broad array of involvement opportunities at all stages of decision making. Useful elements in planning for effective public involvement are:

- Clearly defined purpose and objectives for initiating a public dialogue on transportation issues;
- Specific identification of the affected public and other stakeholder groups with respect to the plans and programs under development;
- Identification of techniques for engaging the public in the process;
- Notification procedures that effectively target affected groups;
- Methods and measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the public involvement program;
- Education and assistance techniques, which result in an accurate and full public understanding of transportation issues;
- Follow-through by the MPO demonstrating that decision makers seriously considered public input; and

- Solicitation of feedback from the public and stakeholders on the effectiveness of the public involvement process.”

## NEPA

<http://www.epa.gov/Compliance/nepa/>

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions.

<http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/Nepa/regs/nepa/nepaegia.htm>

“The purposes of this Act are: To declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality.”

<http://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.asp>

“NEPA requires, to the fullest extent possible, that the policies, regulations, and laws of the Federal Government be interpreted and administered in accordance with its environmental protection goals. NEPA also requires Federal agencies to use an interdisciplinary approach in planning and decision making for any action that adversely impacts the environment.”

“NEPA requires and FHWA is committed to the examination and avoidance of potential impacts to the social and natural environment when considering approval of proposed transportation projects. In addition to evaluating the potential environmental effects, we must also take into account the transportation needs of the public in reaching a decision that is in the best overall public interest. The FHWA NEPA project development process is an approach to balanced transportation decision making that takes into account the potential impacts on the human and natural environment and the public’s need for safe and efficient transportation.”

“It is FHWA’s policy that (23 CFR § 771.105):

- To the fullest extent possible, all environmental investigations, reviews, and consultations be coordinated as a single process, and compliance with all applicable environmental requirements be reflected in the environmental document required by this regulation.
- Alternative courses of action be evaluated and decisions be made in the best overall public interest based upon a balanced consideration of the need for safe and efficient transportation; of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed transportation improvement; and of national, state, and local environmental protection goals.
- Public involvement and a systematic interdisciplinary approach be essential parts of the development process for proposed actions.
- Measures necessary to mitigate adverse impacts be incorporated into the action.”

<http://nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNepa/ReNepa.nsf/home>

“This site supports and encourages the open exchange of knowledge, information, experience, and ideas about the National Environmental Policy Act, related environmental issues, and transportation decision making. The goal of *Re:NEPA* is to provide additional opportunities to explore the transportation decision making process through discussion, research, assistance, and education that is directed toward a better,

streamlined and solution oriented process for balancing transportation need and the social, economic, cultural and natural environment.”

#### Citizen Involvement

The FHWA explores many transportation issues of great concern to the public, and provides more information to MPOs seeking guidance on involving the public. See [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pubinv2.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/pubinv2.htm).

*Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-making*, FHWA and FTA, 1996, Publication No. FHWA-PD-96-031.

The FTA funds innovative demonstration projects through its Public Transportation Participation Pilot (PTP) Program. See [http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/programs/planning\\_environment\\_5925.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/planning/programs/planning_environment_5925.html)

For the Transportation Research Board's Public Involvement Committee website, see [www.trbpi.com](http://www.trbpi.com)

For more TPCB Technical Public Involvement Resources, see [www.planning.dot.gov/technical.asp#pub](http://www.planning.dot.gov/technical.asp#pub)

For TPCB Peer program reports on current practices and issues in public involvement, see [www.planning.dot.gov/peer.asp#pi](http://www.planning.dot.gov/peer.asp#pi)