



TRANSIT PLAN



Appendix A

Community Engagement Plan

November 2020

1. Introduction

Community engagement is an essential component of any planning initiative. This document contains the Community Engagement Strategy for the City of Jackson's Transportation Plan Study (TPS)¹. In addition to the engagement goals and objectives and a brief strategic outline, this document contains a proposed timeline and methods for the public to be a part of the planning process.

This Community Engagement Strategy will ensure Jackson residents – and in particular, those who use Jackson's public transit system – have opportunities to provide input that will help officials plan for an efficient public transit system to meet current and future needs. The Community Engagement Strategy is divided into four phases that are scheduled to begin in the Fall/Winter of 2020 and continue until completion of the project in the Fall of 2021. Members of the CTG Team will work closely with the City of Jackson's Planning, Transportation and Communications departments as well as any other identified personnel to ensure compatibility is achieved and a comprehensive approach is accomplished.

The TPS consultant team will also work closely with the appropriate employees and associated personnel who are in the process of updating the City of Jackson's Comprehensive Plan (branded ConnectJXN). The TPS team's collaborative efforts will ensure agreement of ongoing efforts, capitalize on pre-existing momentum, and confirm that an inclusive approach is achieved.

Due to current health concerns related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Community Engagement Strategy presented in this document is considered a work in progress. As such, it will remain a flexible, living document that may be amended to meet the changing conditions ahead.

2. Community Engagement Goals & Objectives

As defined in the TPS Project Management Plan, the study is divided into four phases delineated by milestones at critical junctures of the project where input from the project management team, Technical Advisory Group (TAG), City Council, stakeholders, and the public will be needed to keep the project moving forward. The four phases are defined as follows:

- **Phase I:** Service Inventory and Analysis (data collection and assessment of existing conditions)
- **Phase II:** New System Visioning (development of alternatives)
- **Phase III:** New System Design (refinement of preferred alternative)
- **Phase IV:** Draft and Final Transit Plan (development final project documentation)

Specific community engagement goals and objectives for each phase of the study are defined in Table 1, on the following page.

¹ The Transportation Plan Study was subsequently rebranded as the ConnectJXN: Transit Plan.

Table 1: Community Engagement Goals and Objectives

PHASE	GOALS	ANTICIPATED TIMEFRAME
I	<p>Inform and educate citizens about the Jackson Transportation Plan Study; Create communication opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Objective – Provide opportunities for people to understand the purpose and intent of the project b. Objective – Foster an environment of transparency, trust, and inclusion c. Objective – Provide opportunities for public input (opinions, needs, ideas) 	<p>Nov 2020 – Jan 2021</p> <p><i>(Revised to Dec 2020 – Mar 2021)</i></p>
II	<p>Help citizens envision what can be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Objective – Craft preliminary vision of a new system based on opinions, needs, and ideas b. Objective – Understand tradeoffs associated with project alternatives and educate the public regarding new mobility technologies c. Objective – Work collaboratively to ensure the feasibility of the primary vision 	<p>March – April 2021</p> <p><i>(Revised to May 2021 – Aug 2021)</i></p>
III	<p>Keep citizens engaged as draft plans are developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Objective – Keep momentum and interest in the project alive b. Objective – Engage key stakeholders to receive any feedback that could have a bearing on the draft plans or the viability of project implementation 	<p>May – June 2021</p> <p><i>(Revised to Sep 2021 – Oct 2021)</i></p>
IV	<p>Provide opportunities for draft plan review and comment and final plan review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Objective – Provide opportunities for citizens to review and make comments on the draft plans b. Objective – Provide opportunities for citizens to see the final plans 	<p>July 2021</p> <p><i>(Revised to Nov 2021 – Dec 2021)</i></p>

3. Community Engagement Strategies & Methodologies

The consultant team will utilize a range of strategies to accomplish the study engagement goals and objectives identified in the previous section. The recommended strategies to be utilized throughout the TPS include the following:

- A. Develop study branding
- B. Develop and maintain a project database
- C. Conduct digital and media outreach
- D. Conduct Technical Advisory Group meetings
- E. Conduct stakeholder outreach
- F. Conduct grassroots public engagement
- G. Conduct surveys
- H. Conduct outreach to internal stakeholders
- I. Conduct public open house meetings

The strategies identified above are described in detail in the sections that follow. For each strategy, a general description is provided, along with the intended audience, timing, product or deliverable, and team members responsible for implementation. Team members responsible for implementation of the community engagement program include:

- Connetics Transportation Group (CTG)
- Par Excelon Marketing and Advertising Group (PEMAG)
- Beyond Communication, LLC (BC)
- Neel-Schaffer, Inc. (NSI)

A: Develop Study Branding and Website

The consultant team will develop project branding to identify the Transportation Plan Study and distinguish it from other existing City of Jackson projects and activities. The branding will key into existing colors, fonts, and formats associated with the ConnectJXN Comprehensive Plan to capitalize on existing momentum while characterizing the Study as a separate activity. Once the City has approved the proposed branding elements, the consultant team will develop document templates and project-specific branding standards for use throughout the project. Finally, the consultant team will develop and maintain a project-specific website that will link to the City of Jackson and the ConnectJXN websites to promote the project, inform the public regarding upcoming events and surveys, and display/store project documents.

Audience	JTRAN users, stakeholders, media, public
Timing	All phases of the Study
Product	Project branding elements; website

B: Develop and Maintain a Project Contact Database

The consultant team will develop a database consisting of JTRAN riders, business owners, employers, community leaders, transit officials, or other interested citizens. The consultant team members will compile and maintain the database for the purpose of disseminating project information or meeting notices at the following milestones: project kickoff, launch of project surveys, public meetings, release of draft and final plans.

Audience	Project stakeholders
Timing	All phases of the Study
Product	Project database; notification provided during key intervals of the Study

Conduct Digital and Media Outreach

Digital (website / social media) and traditional media (print/radio/TV) outreach will occur throughout the course of the project. As the study advances, the TPS team will prepare a monthly schedule of digital and/or traditional media outreach activities to correspond with key project milestones. This effort will involve the creation of marketing content and press releases for dissemination to all partners for use on websites and social media accounts or as news items by local media outlets.

Information about the study, including educational materials about tradeoffs and new technologies, will be made available on the study website. Vetted project information will be presented in easy to understand language and supported with appropriate graphics so the public will clearly understand the project's objectives and opportunities for involvement. Members of the public who wish to ask questions or make comments will find information there explaining how they may do so.

The TPS team will develop social media postings for distribution through project-specific accounts and/or sharing on the City of Jackson's platforms. The TPS team will coordinate with the City of Jackson's communications department to facilitate this effort.

Media initiatives will include development of digital news releases to announce key activities such as the availability of surveys and public meetings.

Audience	Stakeholders, media, public
Timing	All phases of the Study
Product	Development of digital content; development of messaging including information for news releases

D: Establish a Technical Advisory Group

The CTG Team will identify and recruit transportation and planning specialists to serve as volunteers on a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The CTG Team will facilitate four meetings of the TAG. The first meeting, scheduled for Phase I, will be an introductory meeting to identify the study objectives and discuss initial findings of the existing conditions assessment. The second and third meetings will take place in Phase II when TAG members will be invited to take part in Network Design Workshops. The CTG Team will hold the fourth meeting during Phase III to review and discuss final recommendations.

Audience	Transportation/planning specialists (see Attachment 1 for initial list of potential organizations)
Timing	Phase I / Phase II / Phase III
Product	Draft invitation letters; preparation and facilitation of TAG meetings; compilation of workshop results and TAG insights

E: Conduct Stakeholder Focus Groups

Focus groups will be utilized to collect insight and feedback from relevant stakeholder groups throughout the Jackson community. The ConnectJXN comprehensive plan study, which is running in parallel to the TPS, intends to conduct a series of focus groups to with representatives affiliated with housing, the business community, young people, and neighborhood associations. TPS team members will work collaboratively with the ConnectJXN team to provide transit-related questions to be included in these focus group sessions.

The TPS team will seek to establish focus groups for any stakeholder groups that are not engaged through the ConnectJXN study. These groups would likely consist of public transit system stakeholders who would help inform the planning process. The TPS team expects contact with focus groups to occur

during the first phase of the study. Follow up meetings with key stakeholders may occur in later phases of the study to address questions and concerns and to ultimately help ensure buy-in of the plan.

Audience	Stakeholders focus group members (see Attachment 2 for initial list of potential organizations)
Timing	Phase I, Phase III, Phase IV
Product	Real-time understanding of needs, ideas, and concerns

Conduct Grassroots Public Engagement

The TPS team will engage JTRAN users and the general public through on-the-ground, grassroots engagement activities. The goal of the grassroots activities will be to engage with the public in an informal setting to communicate information about the study and collect feedback regarding needs, opportunities, and preferences. Opportunities for grassroots engagement activities will be identified in part based upon ridership assessments to identify high-traffic areas where the team can maximize interactions. The team will also investigate opportunities for collaboration with social services organizations or planned events throughout the community. Collaboration would include partnerships with entities such as the following:

- Non-profits to piggy-back on community outreach efforts and existing events (e.g., Stewpot Community Services)
- Merchants who experience high traffic volumes (e.g., Dollar General and Family Dollar) as identified by ridership assessments
- Medical community (local hospitals and the Jackson Medical Mall)
- Religious community (local churches with large congregations)
- ConnectJXN events

Audience	Jackson public transportation users and community members
Timing	Phase I / Phase II
Product	Informational materials; surveys; review of draft plan opportunities

G: Conduct Surveys

The CTG Team will develop two surveys targeting JTRAN riders. The first survey, offered during Phase I, will focus on transit needs and opportunities. The second survey, scheduled for Phase II, will focus on transit alternatives. Both surveys will be conducted online and in intercept, face-to-face encounters. The intercept surveys will be conducted at the downtown Union Station Transit Center. The electronic surveys will be distributed via the project contact database. Additionally, social media posts, along with news releases, will point people to the Study website where the surveys will be available.

Audience	JTRAN users, stakeholders, and the public
Timing	Phase I / Phase II
Product	Two surveys; compilation of results

H: Conduct Outreach to Internal Stakeholders

The CTG Team will engage internal stakeholders through interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Internal stakeholders are individuals such as bus and paratransit operators, supervisors, and the JTRAN Management Team. Internal stakeholders will gain a clear understanding of the Study and will be made aware of involvement opportunities. In return, internal stakeholders will provide first-hand insight into operational issues and opportunities that will inform planning processes.

Audience	Internal stakeholders (bus/paratransit operators and supervisors, JTRAN management)
Timing	Phase I
Product	Compilation and application of knowledge gained for guiding planning initiatives

I: Conduct Public Open-House Meetings

The CTG Team will hold two open-house public meetings either virtually or in-person. The first, to be held during Phase II, will offer the public the opportunity to learn about the findings of the existing conditions assessment the various network design and service delivery alternatives, and tradeoffs between different approaches. The public will provide input that will be used to help inform the refinement of the study alternatives and ultimately help select a preferred network vision.

The second open-house public meeting will be held during Phase IV and will provide the public the opportunity to review and make official comments about the draft plan.

Audience	JTRAN users, stakeholders, media, public
Timing	Phase II / Phase IV
Product	Facilitate either virtual or in-person public meetings; informational materials including the draft plan; collection and review of comments

4. Community Engagement Schedule

The strategies outlined in the previous section will be implemented over the course of the project. **Table 2** identifies strategy implementation by phase. As the study advances, a more detailed schedule with specific outreach activities will be developed.

Table 2: Community Engagement Strategies by Study Phase

Strategy	Description
Phase I	Inform and educate citizens about the Jackson Transportation Plan Study; Create communication opportunities
A	Develop study branding (name, tagline, logo) and website.
B	Develop and maintain a project contact database.
C	Conduct digital (website/social media) and media outreach.
D	Establish a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and facilitate introductory meeting.
E	Conduct stakeholder outreach (focus groups)
F	Conduct grassroots public engagement.
G	Conduct online and intercept survey (Focus: Transit Needs and Opportunities).
H	Conduct outreach to internal stakeholders.
Phase II	Help citizens envision what can be; Explain tradeoffs and technologies associated with the project; Work collaboratively to ensure the feasibility of primary visions
C	Conduct digital (website/social media) and media outreach.
D	Conduct two TAG meetings and facilitate Network Design Workshops.
F	Conduct grassroots public engagement.
G	Conduct online and intercept survey (Focus: Transit Alternatives).
I	Conduct public open house (virtual or in-person, depending on circumstances).
Phase III	Keep citizens engaged as draft plans are developed
C	Conduct digital (website/social media) and media outreach.
D	Conduct TAG meeting to review final recommendations.
E	Conduct stakeholder outreach (ad hoc coordination meetings).
Phase IV	Provide opportunities for draft plan review and comment and final plan review
C	Conduct digital (website/social media) and media outreach.
E	Conduct stakeholder outreach (ad hoc coordination meetings).
H	Conduct Public Open House (virtual or in-person, depending on circumstances).