



Technical Memorandum

Consensus Building Strategies - Results



Prepared for:
OHIO DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

Prepared by:

**CDM
Smith**

In cooperation with:

**McCORMICK
TAYLOR**

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1. INTRODUCTION

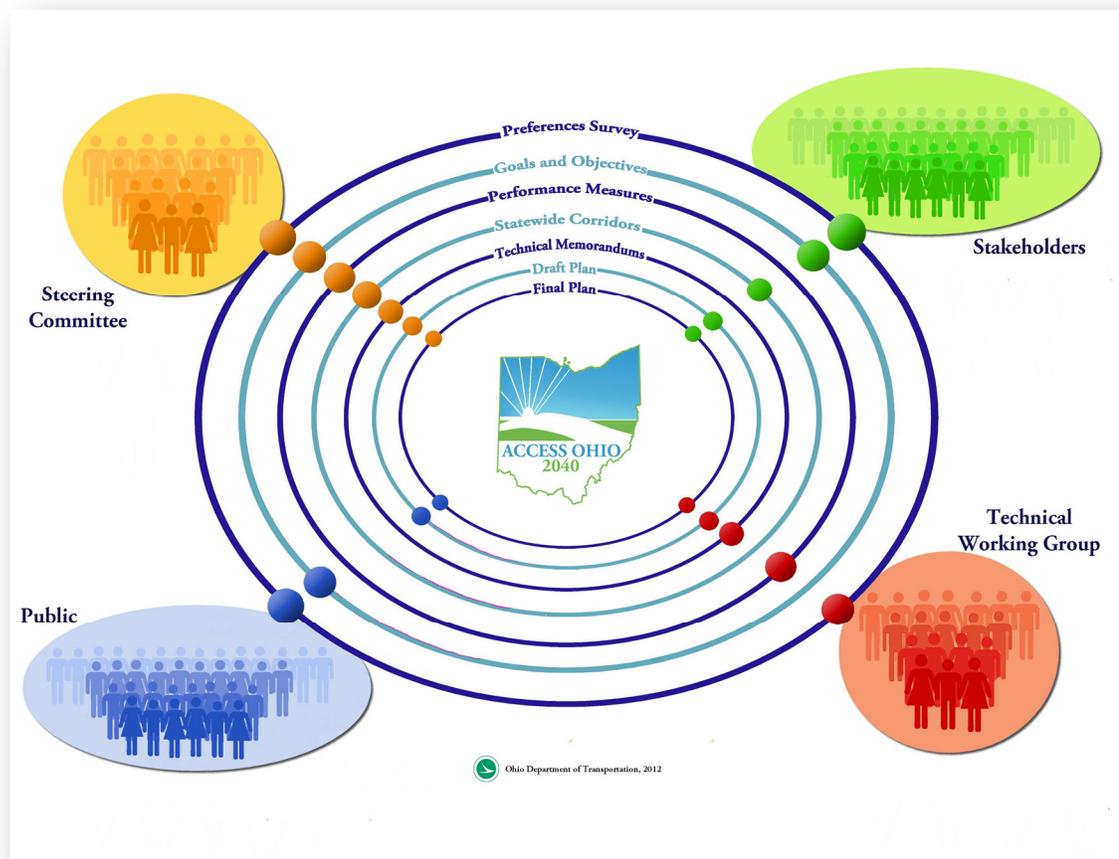
The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) developed its 20-year statewide transportation plan update, Access Ohio 2040 (AO40), with a Consensus Building Plan designed to extend public outreach and participation throughout the state. The plan combined electronic communications technologies with more traditional communication methods. The five primary communication methods were a Customer Preference Survey, Informational Outposts, electronic communication technologies, meetings, and press releases.

Objectives of the Consensus Building Plan were:

- Ensure the AO40 Plan is reflective of Ohioans' expectations for the transportation system, and
- Provide a forum where information on the AO40 Plan is free and easily accessible.

ODOT involved four core groups in its consensus building approach. As depicted in **Figure 1-1** below, the four Consensus Plan Groups included stakeholders, a Steering Committee, the general public and a Working Technical Group.

Figure 1-1: Core Consensus Plan Groups





2. CONSENSUS PLAN GROUPS

The AO40 Consensus Building Plan, as designed, met federal regulations pertaining to public involvement for stakeholders, including Environmental Justice (EJ) populations. Executive Order 12898 (FHWA Orders on Environmental Justice) defines EJ as minority and low income populations.

In accordance with CFR 450.210, project participants included:

- Citizens;
- Affected public agencies;
- Representatives of public transportation employees;
- Freight shippers;
- Private transportation providers;
- Representatives of users of public transportation;
- Safety and security providers;
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities;
- Representatives of the disabled;
- Providers of freight transportation services; and
- Other interested parties.

ODOT classified Ohioans into four groups for coordination throughout AO40 plan development to comply with the federal requirements and ensuring inclusion of identified populations. These groups are described in the following sections.

2.1 STAKEHOLDERS

ODOT's stakeholders group was comprised of 622 representatives of the various strategic partnering agencies throughout Ohio. These partners include, but are not limited to, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs), economic development organizations, the County Engineers Association of Ohio (CEAO), airports, transit agencies, private transportation providers, and local governments. Communication with stakeholders consisted primarily of email blasts to announce the availability of updated plan materials for review and comment on ODOT's website, MindMixer web page, and other electronic media.

The stakeholders group's role was to provide comments on draft documentation and plan direction. All draft Technical Memos and the draft plan were posted to ODOT's public website (www.access.ohio.gov) for review and comments. ODOT also relied on the stakeholders group for written feedback regarding the general direction of the plan and the identification of important issues for inclusion in the plan.

2.2 STEERING COMMITTEE

The forty-two member AO40 Steering Committee was comprised of representatives from various stakeholder segments across Ohio representing:

- Public agencies;
- Freight transportation services;
- Economic development groups;
- Public transportation;
- Non-motorized transportation;
- Local and regional planning officials;
- ODOT representatives; and
- Groups serving EJ populations, including minorities and low-income.

A full list of the Steering Committee members is included in **Appendix A**.

Figure 2-1: Steering Committee Meeting



The Steering Committee interacted directly with the study team to review information and provide feedback throughout study development. The Steering Committee's role included:

- Advise ODOT on the conduct and content of AO40;
- Review and comment on the AO40 Technical Memos and Products; and
- Function as AO40 ambassadors by sharing study information with other stakeholders and gathering ideas to share with the study team.

Steering Committee meetings were conducted centrally in Columbus, Ohio and regionally across the state. (A detailed description of all Steering Committee meetings is presented in **Section 3.4 Meetings**.)

2.3 PUBLIC

The general public was the largest group of stakeholders to whom ODOT reached out during the plan update process. The intent of the public portion of the plan was to involve those citizens who were not engaged through the other consensus building groups identified for the study effort. In order to reach the most people in the most efficient way, the communication tools utilized were focused primarily on electronic media supplemented by other more traditional communications tools. The following lists the public mediums used throughout the study:

- Project Website,
- MindMixer Website,
- Informational Outposts,
- Social Media Sites (Facebook and Twitter),

- Project Email Account, and
- Press Releases.

Due to the emphasis on electronic outreach, special consideration was given to Environmental Justice communities to ensure their ability to access project information. See **Section 3.2 Outposts** for details.

A further description of the public outreach tools listed above can be found in Section 3.0.

2.4 WORKING TECHNICAL GROUP

The Working Technical Group (WTG) was comprised of administrators and staff from ODOT's Central Office, representing a diverse range of interests. Their unique perspectives shaped technical analyses and vision of the plan. The group met in person to discuss the development of goals and objectives, critical success factors (performance measures), final plan development, and implementation strategies. WTG members are the people who use the document and implement its recommendations.

Representation on the WTG included:

- Planning Systems and Program Management Administrator
- Finance Administrator
- Ohio Rail Development Commission Director
- Structures Administrator
- Traffic Administrator
- Pavement Administrator
- Environmental Administrator
- Maintenance Administrator
- Transit Administrator
- Freight and Maritime Coordinator
- FHWA Planning & Environmental Team Leader
- FHWA Senior Planning Specialist

(A detailed description of WTG meetings is located in **Section 3.4 Meetings**.)



3. CONSENSUS PLAN COMMUNICATION METHODS

3.1 PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

In the spring of 2012, ODOT conducted a comprehensive statewide Customer Preference Survey to identify Ohioans' expectations and desires for the transportation system. The survey served as the first public involvement activity of AO40.

More than 2,800 surveys were completed online, over the phone, or on paper. A valid statewide sample of those completed, representing all ODOT districts, was utilized to glean the results. The following is a general sampling of those results:

- Ohioans prioritized maintaining the existing system above any modal improvements, with 96% of them identifying maintenance of the existing system as important.
- Safety and congestion relief were identified as high priorities ODOT should be addressing in the future.
- Medium priorities consisted of having a good freight transportation system to support Ohio's economy and providing public transportation.
- Participants identified the highway network and public transit as the two most important modes. Sixty-two percent of participants think ODOT funding should be increased over the next five years, with 20% indicating funding should remain the same.

A complete listing of the survey questions and results are included in **Appendix B**.

3.2 OUTPOSTS

In order to provide access to AO40 Plan materials to the general public, permanent and temporary Informational Outposts were established. The intent of the outposts was to extend the reach of the study to Ohioans through hard-copy materials or through access by computer kiosks at locations throughout the state. The outpost concept allowed ODOT to share information with those who do not have computer or internet access from home.

3.2.1 Permanent Informational Outposts

3.2.1.1 Purpose/Function

The Informational Outposts were intended to provide the opportunity for members of the public to view printed information, including the draft AO40 Plan document or to view the study website using a computer kiosk, or both in some locations. To keep the outpost materials up to date throughout the Plan's development, ODOT mailed study updates to an identified liaison at each outpost. The liaison then added the new materials to the binder of AO40 information. Materials provided at the outposts include the following:

- Key Study Handouts** – The intended purpose of the handouts was to have documents in the lobby of the identified outpost locations where people could view and take home information that pertained to AO40. Some of the materials included a project overview, a chapter outline for the AO40 Plan, newsletters, comment forms, and paper copies of the Customer Preference Survey.

Figure 3-1: Outpost Information



- Study Binder** – The purpose of the binder was to have a comprehensive set of documents that explain most of the products and processes that were underway with AO40. Binder materials included the Customer Preference Survey Report, Statewide Freight Study, and executive summaries of the Technical Memos and chapters developed as part of AO40.
- Computer Kiosk** – Some outpost locations included a computer kiosk available for the public to view the AO40 study website and MindMixer site, sign-up for the contact list, or provide comments on the study development.
- Visitor Sign-in** – Visitors were encouraged, but not required, to sign-in at the outpost locations. Those who did sign-in were added to the study contact list.

Figure 3-2: Outpost Locations



3.2.1.2 Outpost Locations

Permanent Informational Outposts were established in 40 locations throughout the state and in two cities in West Virginia with Metropolitan Planning Organizations that serve parts of Ohio. The outpost locations are shown in **Figure 3-1**, listed in **Appendix C**, and include the following:

- 16 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) offices,

- 14 ODOT offices,
- 3 Regional Planning Organization (RPO) offices,
- 5 county offices, and
- 2 transit agencies.

3.2.1.3 Outpost Advertising

To make the public aware of the outpost locations and their purpose, the following outreach tools were utilized:

- Over 90 newspaper advertisements were placed in local newspapers circulating in all areas of the state, including those serving EJ populations (a complete list of newspapers is included in **Appendix D**). Classified newspaper ads were utilized in 86 newspapers and the following seven newspapers contained a display advertisement (see **Appendix E** for a sample display ad):
 - Cleveland Plain Dealer,
 - Columbus Dispatch,
 - Cincinnati Enquirer,
 - Akron Beacon Journal,
 - Toledo Blade,
 - Dayton Newspapers Inc., and
 - Vindicator Printing Co.
- Email notifications were sent to the Steering Committee and contact list; and
- Information was placed in the “Get Involved” section of three different issues of the Plan’s newsletter to encourage use of the outposts.

Because visitors at the Informational Outposts were not required to sign-in, it is difficult to quantify how many people may have reviewed the information and/or taken the handouts provided. However, completed sign-in sheets as of September 2013 were collected are included in **Appendix F**.

3.2.2 Temporary Informational Outposts

In addition to the 38 permanent Informational Outposts, a Temporary Informational Outpost was provided at the 2012 Ohio State Fair. Materials provided were consistent with the Permanent Informational Outposts including the study handouts and binder.

Because visitors at the Ohio State Fair were not required to sign-in, it is difficult to quantify how many people may have reviewed the information and/or taken the handouts provided. The fair’s average attendance in 2012 was over 800,000 people.

3.3 ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

3.3.1 Website

3.3.1.1 Description / Purpose

At the start of the project, the Ohio Department of Transportation dedicated a plan website to be the primary source for all up-to-date information regarding the AO40 Plan, www.access.ohio.gov. The website was developed and updated by ODOT as the Plan progressed.

3.3.1.2 Site Content

The site included the following four main sections and information:

- **Home** – This page provided an overview of the project and included links to the online Customer Preference Survey and to the MindMixer website.
- **Multimedia** – This section of the site provided demographic maps, passenger maps, and corridor maps. The demographic maps provided information regarding population, age, vehicle and population change information. Passenger maps displayed GoBus routes, intercity bus locations, transit agencies, Ohio airports, passenger rail, and roads by functional class. Under corridor maps, users could find information on the Strategic Transportation System, aviation corridors, bicycle corridors, highway corridors, marine corridors, transit corridors, and rail corridors.
- **Documents** – The Documents section provided the majority of the plan information, including presentations, newsletters, Steering Committee information and meeting summaries, handouts, the Customer Preference Survey Final Report, the Statewide Freight Study, and the different Technical Memos developed during the study.
- **Contact Us** – This afforded visitors the opportunity to contact members of the project team, sign up for email updates, participate in the survey, and fill out a comment form. It also provided links to the Facebook and Twitter pages and whom to contact at the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Figure 3-3: Website Home Page



3.3.1.3 Participant Notifications

To inform the public about the website's availability, the address was included on many Plan handouts/documents made available to stakeholders. In addition, the following other techniques were employed:

- Link was placed on the AO40 MindMixer Site and ODOT's website (www.dot.state.oh.us), and
- Reminders in the Plan Newsletter's Get Involved section - See **Section 3.3.4 Newsletters** for details.

3.3.1.4 Results / Participants

Utilizing Google Analytics, ODOT was able to document that more than 5,000 unique visitors from all over Ohio were users of the Plan website.

3.3.2 MindMixer

3.3.2.1 Description / Purpose

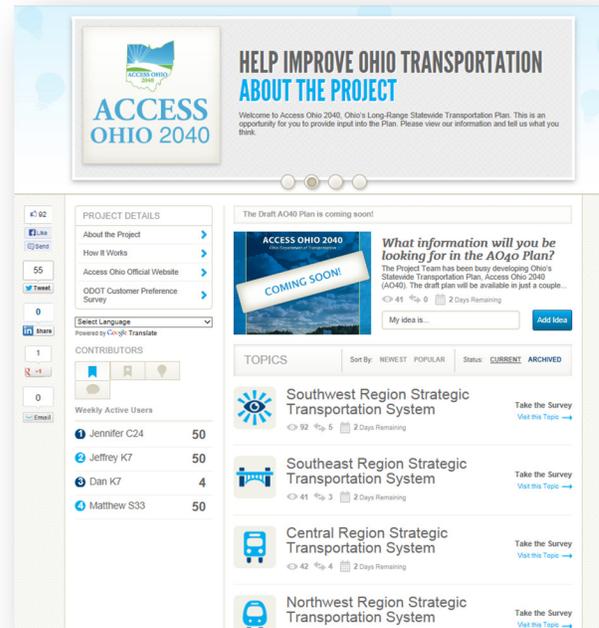
As a supplement to the ODOT website, the innovative online community engagement tool, MindMixer was used. The AO40 MindMixer site was established in October 2012 and could be accessed at <http://www.accessohio2040.com>. The AO40 MindMixer site afforded visitors the opportunity to review project information at their convenience, add their ideas related to plan topics, contribute to or support others' ideas, and share the information via social media outlets.

3.3.2.2 Site Content

Over 50 topics related to key components of the Plan's development were posted for comment on the site. The following is a sampling of the topics included in the questions, polls and/or surveys posted to the site:

- Connectivity and Accessibility,
- Available Transportation Modes,
- Economic Development,
- Mobility and Efficiency,
- Issues and Trends,
- Financial Priorities,
- Regional Profiles, and
- The Draft Plan Document.

Figure 3-4: MindMixer Site



The topics were provided on the site using a variety of different question formats offering both open-ended responses and closed-ended responses. The following is a description of the formats utilized on the AO40 MindMixer site:

- **Ideas Submissions:** Participants were able to provide unlimited input on posted questions and submit ideas of their own. More than thirty (30) idea submissions were utilized throughout plan development.
- **Instant Polls:** Instant polls were utilized to focus the topic feedback to specific ideas/responses, similar to a multiple choice question. Throughout the Plan update process, more than 15 instant polls were posted to the site.
- **Surveys:** Surveys provided the opportunity to group several questions under one topic heading with the option to include both Idea Submissions and Instant Poll type questions. Five surveys were included on the AO40 MindMixer site.

3.3.2.3 Content Updates

Throughout the year, the AO40 MindMixer site was updated with new content on six occasions. **Table 3.1** provides the general focus of the series of topics posted for each update and the duration of time the topics were available online. For a complete listing of topics refer to **Section 3.3.2.5 Results / Participants**.

3.3.2.4 Participant Notifications

To encourage participation on the AO40 MindMixer site, the following outreach techniques were utilized:

- Business cards developed by MindMixer were printed and provided to Steering Committee members for their distribution and attendees at the 2012 Ohio Transportation Engineering Conference (OTEC). See **Appendix G** for the business cards used.
- Posters were printed and provided to Steering Committee members for their distribution and were displayed at the Information Outposts. See **Appendix H** for the posters utilized.
- E-mail blasts to current users of the site, planning partners and the general contact list of stakeholders were sent on the following dates:
 - February 25, 2013

Table 3-1: Content Updates

Topic	Duration Posted
Multimodal Transportation System Assessment	October 2012 – January 2013
Funding Priorities	February 2013 – March 2013
Roadway, Transit and Bike Routes	March 2013 – May 2013
Big Ideas for ODOT	May 2013 – June 2013
Greatest Transportation Need in Your Region	June 2013 – October 2013
Review the Regional Profiles	October 2013 – November 2013
Draft AO40 Plan	November 2013 – December 2013

- April 2, 2013 (2)
- May 14, 2013
- June 26, 2013

See **Appendix I** for the e-mail blasts utilized by date.

- Plan logo with a quick link was sent to Planning partners to encourage them to share it on their organization's website.
- Feature articles and/or reminders in the Get Involved section were included in three issues of the plan's newsletter. See **Section 3.3.4 Newsletters** for details.

3.3.2.5 Results / Participants

Several MindMixer results-oriented reports were monitored regularly to access user analytics, and track public interactions on the site including:

- **Traffic Report** – Showed how many people visited the site per day, week, or month. Increases in site visits were apparent every time email reminders were sent to users.
- **Participant Overview** – Displayed the average age and gender of those using the site. In this panel, one could also see what zip codes had utilized the page and the age range.
- **Participant Report** – This report tallied the total number of participants throughout the project, provided their name, and whether they were an active or inactive participant.
- **Idea Overview** – Allowed the Project Team to see how many ideas and comments had been added for all open topics. It also displayed the number of days and active participants. The Idea Overview also allowed the viewing of archived topic results and poll and survey topics.
- **Idea Report** – Provided an overview of all ideas submitted throughout the project. The user interface allowed management to see the detailed ideas and whether anyone else had seconded, or supported, the idea. This report also displayed whether anyone else had commented on the idea. The Idea Report could also be sorted by archived topics, poll and survey, and open topics.

Below is a summary of key information noted in the above reports.

- 190 total participants on the site – participants account for those who created user IDs and made contributions to the site.
- Nearly 2,000 unique visitors to the site – unique visitors are those that may or may not have created a user ID, but have visited the site.
- More than 14,500 page views occurred.
- Approximately 80 ideas and 50 comments were provided by participants.
- Average participant was 41 years old and male.
- Twenty-four participants shared site information on their Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn pages.

The complete Traffic Report, Participant Report Overview, Participant Report, Idea Overview and Idea Report are included in **Appendix J**.

3.3.3 Social Media

3.3.3.1 Description / Purpose

ODOT utilized their existing statewide Twitter and Facebook accounts to share information about the Plan at key milestones during the Plan update. Posts to Twitter and Facebook allowed ODOT to communicate with a large, diverse group of people and organizations. Many of ODOT's partnering agencies have similar social media accounts and follow and/or are friends with ODOT online. This allowed the opportunity to further expand communication across the state, when the information was shared by partners. Partners were willing to share information based on the results listed below in **Section 3.3.3.3 Results**.

3.3.3.2 Content

Posts focused on opportunities to participate in the online Customer Preference Survey, announcing updates to the AO40 MindMixer site, and the release of draft documents. **Table 3-2** includes the listing of the posts ODOT made on Facebook and Twitter.

Table 3-2: Twitter and Facebook

Post	Format	Date
How important is our transportation system to you? Share your opinion here: http://www.accessohio2040.com/ #ODOT	Twitter	February 20, 2013
Come join the conversation and share ideas on how ODOT can make the transportation system work better for you! http://www.accessohio2040.com/ #AO40	Twitter	October 12, 2012
Come join the conversation and share your ideas on how ODOT can make the transportation system work better for you. http://www.accessohio2040.com is your chance to let us know about your transportation needs, visit the site today and let us know what's important to YOU.	Facebook	October 12, 2012
What do you think Ohio's long-term transportation priorities should be? Take the survey at #AccessOhio http://tinyurl.com/cskrozx	Twitter	July 25, 2012

3.3.3.3 Results

As a result of posting updates on Twitter, Facebook, and the MindMixer page, information was shared by some ODOT partners and other interested parties. Overall, the MindMixer website at <http://www.accessohio2040.com> was shared 13 times on Facebook, had 10 re-tweets on Twitter and one share on LinkedIn.

In addition, several entities shared ODOT's posts from Twitter. Some of those groups included:

- ODOT Cleveland
- ODOT Toledo
- ODOT Northwest Ohio
- ODOT North central Ohio
- ODOT East central Ohio
- ODOT South Ohio
- ODOT Southeast Ohio
- ODOT Columbus
- ODOT Akron
- ODOT Cincinnati
- ODOT Dayton
- MindMixer
- Westtown CDC
- Paving The Way
- Realtor
- Ohioterpgirl

When the post was made on MindMixer to Facebook on October 12, 2012 inviting ODOT's Facebook followers to participate in the conversation the information was shared five times by partners. Some of those partners included:

- Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District
- Portage Area RTA
- Building Cincinnati
- Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments

Social media sharing proved to be beneficial for ODOT as it broadened the base of those that were asked to participate. Through partners, ODOT was able to reach some residents that may not have otherwise heard about Access Ohio 2040.

3.3.4 Newsletters

3.3.4.1 Description / Purpose

A quarterly newsletter, called *The Connection*, was developed for electronic distribution. The newsletter provided an opportunity for stakeholders to stay up to date with the latest progress related to the Plan update.

3.3.4.2 Content

An example of *The Connection* newsletter is shown in **Figure 3-5**. The newsletter format included the following general sections, but was tailored to present the most current project information:

- AO40 Plan Progress Schedule,
- Updates on draft study documents,
- Description of recent Steering Committee activities,
- Opportunities for input to the study; and
- Contact Information and Social Media Links.

3.3.4.3 Results

Four newsletters were issued prior to the Draft Plan's availability. Each issue corresponded with the activity phase noted in the milestone schedule that was included in each newsletter – Visualize, Analyze, Document and Adopt. Below is a listing of each newsletter and its distribution date.

- Issue I - June 2012
- Issue II – September 2012
- Issue III - February 2013
- Issue IV – July 2013

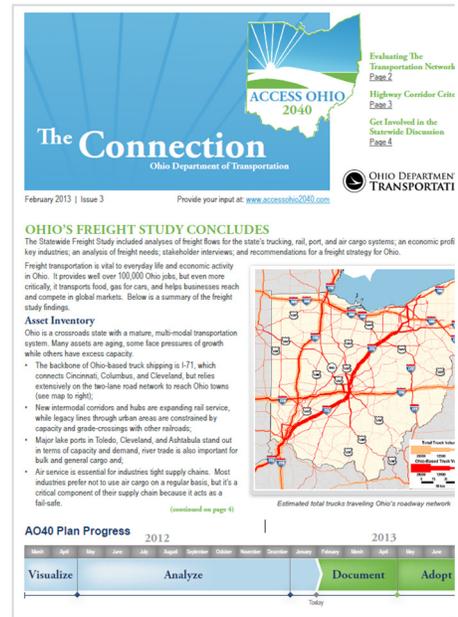
Each of the above newsletters is available in **Appendix K**.

3.3.5 E-mail

Throughout the Plan's development, ODOT used e-mail to effectively reach hundreds of planning partners and stakeholders. E-mails were used to kick-off the online Customer Preference Survey, provide update's on the Plan's progress, notify stakeholders of new information on the project website (including Technical Memos and mapping), and share project newsletters. Below is a listing of the e-mails sent to stakeholders:

- ODOT Customer Preferences Survey – May 22, 2012
- Access Ohio Newsletter Issue I – July 2, 2012

Figure 3-5: Newsletters



- Access Ohio 2040 Update – Regional Steering Committee Meetings Held – August 31, 2012
- Share Ideas with ODOT on Improving Transportation – October 2012
- New Technical Memos and Maps – March 30, 2013
- Access Ohio Update – New Technical Memos & Reports – June 26, 2013

The e-mails noted are available in **Appendix L**.

3.4 MEETINGS

3.4.1 Working Technical Group

ODOT's Working Technical Group (WTG) was convened three times during the course of study development.

- **Meeting #1: June 4, 2012**

The WTG reviewed existing goals and objectives and identified national standards and best practices for incorporation into the AO40 Plan Development Process. Feedback gathered from the May 30, 2012 initial meeting of the AO40 Steering Committee was also considered. The WTG discussed the future of transportation in Ohio in identifying the following goal areas (shown in alphabetical order) for the AO40 Plan update:

- Accessibility and Connectivity
- Economic Development
- Mobility and Efficiency
- Safety
- Stewardship
- System Preservation

Goal areas were used to discuss the development of related objectives.

- **Meeting #2: June 28, 2012**

Input from ODOT Executive Management regarding plan development was discussed and the WTG finalized goals and objectives for each of the Goal Areas. The group also identified "Critical Success Factors" that served as performance measures to guide plan development and identified plan effectiveness and success.

- **Meeting #3: July 13, 2013**

The final meeting of the WTG included a status update of AO40 Plan development. An executive summary of the State of the System Report was reviewed. Ohio's new Strategic Transportation System (STS) was also introduced and Strategic Investment Priorities (SIPs) were discussed. The term Strategic Investment Priorities was later changed to Regional Transportation Needs (RTNs) as recommended by the AO40 Steering Committee at its October 8, 2013 meeting.

3.4.2 Steering Committee

The statewide AO40 Steering Committee was convened centrally in Columbus for three meetings to consult and advise ODOT regarding study development. Regional meetings were also held in which ODOT conducted meetings with stakeholders in five regions throughout Ohio to extend outreach and involvement to a broader range of stakeholders. The statewide and regional Steering Committee meetings are enumerated below. (Details of these meetings can be found in the Meeting Summaries section in **Appendix M** of this technical memo.)

3.4.2.1 Statewide Meetings

Three centralized statewide meetings of the Steering Committee were conducted in Columbus throughout plan development. The meeting dates and purpose of each are identified below.

- **May 30, 2012: Orientation and Start-up Meeting**

The Steering Committee was briefed regarding its review and advisory role in AO40 study development. The Plan outline was reviewed, including a discussion of intended chapters or the final study report and the study schedule. Brainstorming and breakout group discussions were focused on the development of goals and objectives.

- **October 23, 2012: Modal Analysis Approach**

The Steering Committee discussed ODOT's modal analysis approach in AO40 development. A corridor approach would be utilized for highways, bike, maritime, rail and intercity transit modes with stratification by national, statewide and regional significance. Aviation and transit would be analyzed by service area. The Steering Committee also reviewed the Objectives and Critical Success Factors (performance measures) for Goal Areas that were identified with feedback obtained in the first Steering Committee meeting. The Goal Areas included: Preservation; Safety; Mobility and Efficiency; Accessibility and Connectivity; Stewardship; and Economic Development.

- **October 8, 2013: Presentation of Draft AO40 Plan**

ODOT presented the Draft Access Ohio 2040 Plan to the Steering Committee, reviewed Plan Recommendations and solicited feedback regarding the readability, understandability and organization of the Plan document. The Plan consists of 14 Technical Memos including: Guiding Principles; Setting the Stage; Finance; Passenger; Safety; Freight; State of the System Report; Security; Corridors; Congestion; Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO); Environmental; Environmental Justice; and Consensus Building. Access Ohio 2040 also contains recommendations focused on 11 areas: Performance Management; Leveraging Resources; Future Funding; Asset Management; Freight Network; Transit Needs; Climate Variability; Bicycle Network; Planning Partnerships; Strategic Transportation System; and Regional Transportation Needs.

3.4.2.2 Regional Meetings

Regional meetings were conducted to provide an open forum and facilitate a deeper discussion of transportation issues that are important to particular regions of the state. The following is a description of the regional groups:

- **Northwest Region:** Included cities of Findlay, Lima and Toledo, and the counties of Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Lucas, Mercer, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot.
- **Northeast Region:** Included cities of Akron, Alliance, Canton, Cleveland, Mansfield, Medina, Youngstown, and the counties of Ashland, Ashtabula, Erie, Geauga, Huron, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Richland, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, and Wayne.
- **Central Region:** Included cities of Columbus and Newark-Heath and the counties of Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Pickaway, and Union.
- **Southwest Region:** Included cities of Cincinnati, Dayton, Middletown and Springfield in addition to the counties of Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Darke, Fayette, Greene, Hamilton, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby, and Warren.
- **Southeast Region:** Included cities of Cambridge, Steubenville and Weirton, and the counties of Adams, Athens, Belmont, Carroll, Coshocton, Jefferson, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington.

3.4.2.2.1 Meetings

Two rounds of regional meetings were conducted during study development in the following locations:

- Northwest Region: Findlay (second meeting held in Toledo)
- Northeast Region: Akron
- Central Region: Columbus
- Southwest Region: Dayton
- Southeast Region: Cambridge

The first round of Regional Meetings occurred August 13-17, 2012 to identify and discuss regional transportation concerns, including economic growth and development, the identification of regionally-significant transportation corridors, and available transportation funding and investments. Input received was instrumental in the development of Regional Profiles and the identification of Regional Transportation Needs (RTNs) that were previously called Strategic Investment Priorities (SIPs).

The second round of Regional Meetings was conducted July 22-31, 2013 and included small group meetings for statewide passenger and statewide rail discussions in addition to the five Regional Meetings. The purpose of the second round of meetings included the review of Draft Regional Profiles and the identification of transportation needs by region.

3.5 PRESS RELEASES

The Division of Communications in ODOT's Central Office issued an initial press release to announce the start of the Access Ohio 2040 Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan update. The press release entitled, "ODOT Seeks Public Comment on Long-Range Transportation Plan" (dateline: Columbus, Monday, August 13, 2012) was distributed to statewide media outlets and identified 38 public locations across the state where Informational Outposts were located to provide access to current AO40 Plan update information near Environmental Justice (EJ) communities where electronic access may otherwise not be available. Informational Outposts contained printed and/or electronic informational materials and were located in all ODOT District Offices and ODOT Central Office, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) offices, and in the offices of other planning partners. The release also identified ODOT's Access Ohio website www.access.ohio.gov where documents associated with AO40 were available for public review and comment. (See **Appendix N** for the press releases mentioned above.)



4. DRAFT AO40 PLAN OUTREACH AND COMMENTS

4.1 AO40 PLAN AVAILABILITY

The draft Plan was available to the public for review and comment for a 60 day period beginning November 15, 2013. For public convenience, the document was made available using physical locations with hard copies and the project website and MindMixer sites for online viewing and/or printing.

The physical locations included all of the ODOT District offices (Districts 1 – 12), ODOT’s central office, all Ohio Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and several other community organizations. In addition to hosting the draft Plan, the MindMixer site asked reviewers of the plan to answer a series of survey questions about each of the recommendations and/or provide comments. (For a complete listing of Plan locations, see **Appendix O** of this technical memo.)

4.2 AO40 PLAN NOTIFICATIONS

ODOT issued a statewide press release and sent an e-mail blast to existing MindMixer users, Steering Committee members and other planning partners to announce the availability of the draft Plan document. (The press release is available in **Appendix P**) A second email blast was sent to extend the comment period from 30 days to 60 days. (Both email blasts are available in **Appendix Q** of this technical memo.)

4.3 PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

Comments on the draft Plan were provided by email at access.ohio.2040@dot.state.oh.us, or by regular mail to the Division of Planning, ODOT central office. Written comments were accepted until the close of business on January 15, 2014.

Nearly, 200 written comments were received during the comment period by email or letter. Comments on the Plan were related to the following topics or categories:

- I-77
- US30
- Other corridors
- Shale/Oil & gas
- Connections
- Map designations
- Needed projects
- Freight intermodal
- Maritime
- Transit
- Aviation
- Bike and pedestrian access
- Planning partnerships
- Funding
- Overall plan document

(A table of the comments provided is available in **Appendix R** of this technical memo for more detail.)

Additionally, over 100 comments and/or interactions were noted on the AO4O MindMixer site where topics related to the overall plan content and each of the 11 plan recommendations were included on the site. The MindMixer topics were available for users to provide comments online until January 15, 2014. (A table of the comments provided on the MindMixer site is available in **Appendix S** of this technical memo for more detail.)