

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## RURAL EVENT



Figure 15-1  
Rural Event: U.S. Open Championship in Southampton, NY

### PURPOSE

In order to assist the user in planning for a particular planned special event, this chapter describes an advance planning and travel management process and considerations specific to a *rural event*. It summarizes recommended policies, guidelines, procedures, and resource applications that were previously discussed in the first ten chapters of this technical reference. This chapter presents these guidelines and procedures in tables, flowcharts, and checklists that can be followed to help guide the user through all the stages of a planned special event of this category for a particular locale. Although Chapter 3 presents all the steps necessary to

manage travel for a planned special event, this chapter provides a roadmap to help guide the user through all five phases of managing travel for planned special events, identifying issues, analysis, and products applicable to rural events. To further guide readers, this chapter specifies references to best practices relating to this event category.

### INTRODUCTION

In order to guide the user, this chapter addresses four key topics, corresponding to five phases of managing travel for planned special events, including: (1) *event operations planning*, (2) *implementation and day-of-event activities*, (3) *post-event activities*,

and (4) *program planning*. In planning for all planned special events in a region, the final section on program planning highlights issues to consider that evolve from and/or pertain to rural events. By following each one of the steps and procedures, the user will have identified and covered all the significant aspects that are necessary to result in successful management of travel for a planned special event with characteristics specific to a rural event.

A rural event encompasses any discrete/recurring event or continuous event that occurs in a rural area. Table 15-1 indicates different types of planned special events classified as a rural event. Rural events collectively have the event operation characteristics of discrete/recurring events at a permanent venue and continuous events with one notable exception; rural events take place in rural areas. Table 15-2 lists key characteristics of a rural event.

Table 15-1  
Types of Rural Events

EVENT TYPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairs and festivals in rural areas</li> <li>• Events at a rural amphitheater</li> <li>• Events at a rural race track venue</li> <li>• Professional golf tournaments in rural areas</li> </ul>

Table 15-2  
Distinguishing Operating Characteristics of a Rural Event

CHARACTERISTIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural or rural/tourist area</li> <li>• High attendance events attracting event patrons from a regional area</li> <li>• Limited roadway capacity serving an event venue</li> <li>• Area lacking regular transit service</li> <li>• Events having either a time specific duration or continuous duration</li> </ul>

### Special Considerations

In light of the characteristics of a rural event, special considerations when planning such an event include:

- Need for stakeholders to assume new and/or expanded roles.
- Need to work closely with all affected stakeholders in order: (1) to gain their help in identifying concerns and (2) to introduce them to mitigation measures that they may be unfamiliar with due to the rural nature of the area.
- Need to work closely with involved stakeholders so that a trust relationship is established, thus lessening sensitive feelings of an outsider coming in and imposing initiatives that could overlook the significance of local issues.
- Existence of limited road capacity to access the event venue and potentially limited parking capacity at the venue.
- Existence of fewer alternate routes to accommodate event and background traffic.
- Lack of regular transit service and hotels near the venue.
- Existence of limited or no permanent infrastructure for monitoring and managing traffic.
- Generation of trips from a multi-county region.

## EVENT OPERATIONS PLANNING

The scope and infrequent/one-time occurrence of a high-attendance rural event, coupled with the typical limited capacity of transportation systems in rural areas, requires the event planning team to develop: (1) a feasibility study, (2) a traffic management plan, and (3) travel demand management initiatives (as necessary) in the event operations planning phase. The stakeholder composition of an event planning team var-

ies by event, as some rural events represent community or not-for-profit events while others involve commercial dealings. In regard to a community-sponsored special event, transportation and/or law enforcement agencies usually bear the responsibility of developing all of the necessary event planning phase products. Recurring rural events, such as an annual festival or auto race, permit stakeholders to reference a past feasibility study and traffic management plan, coupled with operations successes and lessons learned, when conducting advance planning activities for a future event. However, due to the significant time between recurring rural events, the event planning team must anticipate (1) changes in the operations characteristics of a future event, (2) modifications to the transportation system serving the event, and (3) changes in the community (e.g., land use, socioeconomic, regulations, etc.).

Figure 15-2 presents 31 steps in the event operations planning process for all planned special events. The flowchart covers development and integration of the phase's aforementioned three products. Table 15-3 complements the flowchart by providing step-by-step guidance on issues and recommended analyses for a rural event. The table also presents reference information contained in this handbook that is specific to rural events. While all of the major handbook topics under event operations planning apply to a rural event, Table 15-3 indicates agency example applications (e.g., via narratives or photos) within the context of this event category. In turn, practitioners can use example applications presented for a rural event to manage travel for other categories of planned special events.

The flowchart in Figure 15-2 represents a suggested order of event operations planning activities. However, as noted below, the

event planning team can modify activities to create a dynamic and more effective planning process tailored to the scope of a specific planned special event:

- A jurisdiction planned special event permit process and requirements will scope, schedule, and direct event operations planning activities for rural events, particularly continuous events occurring in rural areas.
- Based on lessons learned from past special events at a particular permanent venue, stakeholders may program new infrastructure or adopt new policies (e.g., parking restrictions) early in the event operations planning process.
- Links between process steps are two-way as stakeholders evaluate alternative strategies and/or integrate traffic management plan components.
- The event planning team can develop different traffic management plan components concurrently.

The event operations planning process references information and concepts contained in the advance planning section of this handbook, and it directs the user to recommended guidelines, procedures, strategies, and resource applications for managing travel for a specific planned special event. When following the process, practitioners should review:

- Advance planning and travel management process and considerations provided in Chapters 11 and 12 depending on the type of rural event.
- Important advance planning considerations and external factors, summarized in Chapter 5, that influence planning activities. For instance, effective and rapid stakeholder review of event operations planning products requires: (1) an

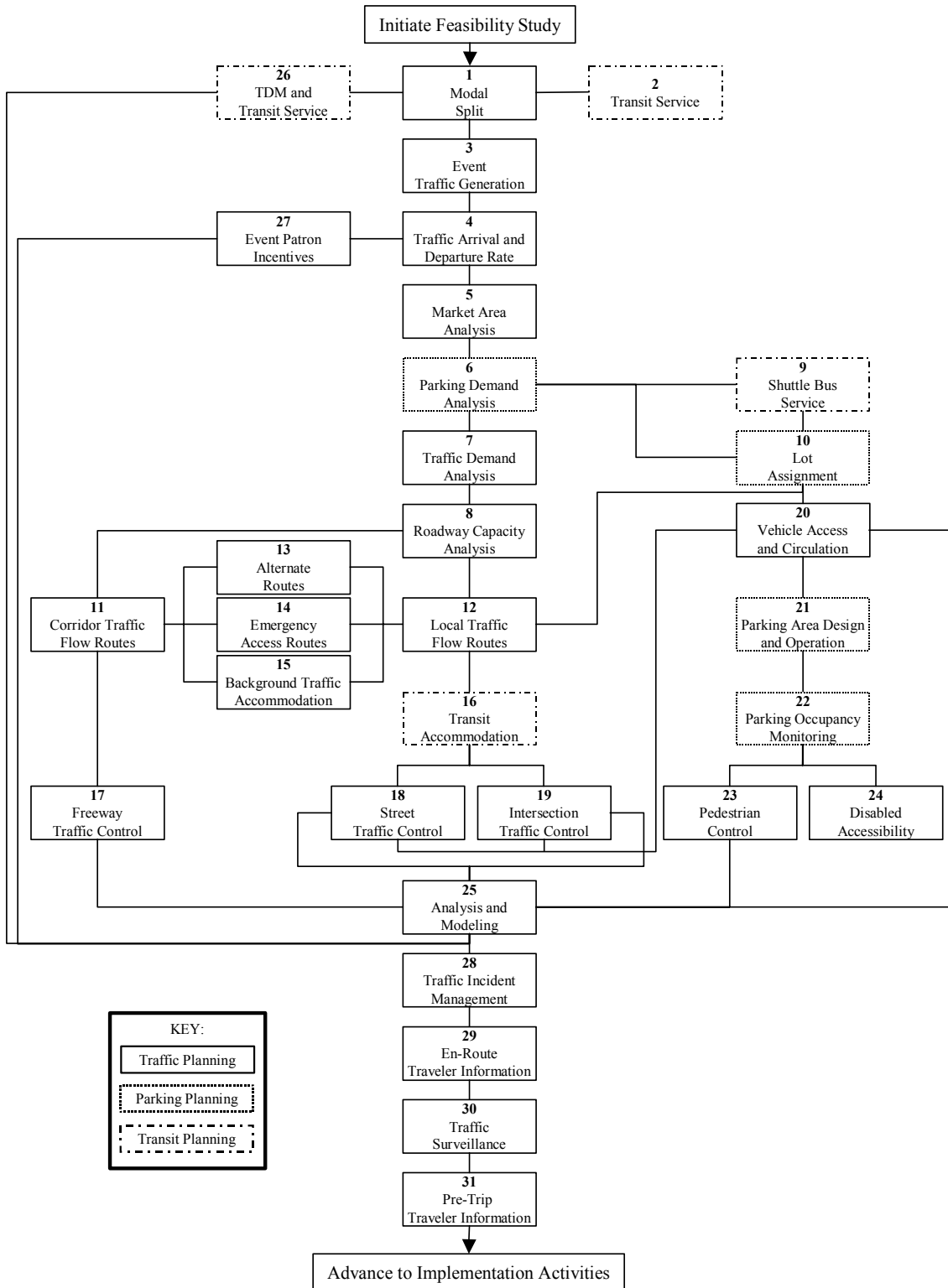


Figure 15-2  
Event Operations Planning Process Flowchart

Table 15-3  
Event Operations Planning Steps  
Rural Event

STEP		EVENT-SPECIFIC ISSUES	EVENT-SPECIFIC REFERENCE INFORMATION	
NO.	PAGE		TOPIC	PAGE
1	5-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of 100% automobile trips.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Commuter rail service as alternative mode of travel; Figure 5-6.</li> </ul>	5-20
2	7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public transit not existing or serving area surrounding the venue location.</li> </ul>		
3	5-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence of seasonal population on attendance.</li> </ul>		
4	5-22			
5	5-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Larger market area for high attendance events.</li> <li>Origins of area visitors attending the event.</li> </ul>		
6	5-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of off-site parking areas.</li> <li>Likely use of unpaved parking areas.</li> </ul>		
7	5-29			
8	5-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed analysis of roadways providing access to event venue and parking areas.</li> </ul>		
9	6-32			
10	6-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low capacity local traffic flow routes serving multiple parking areas.</li> </ul>		
11	6-38			
12	6-38			
13	6-40			
14	6-41			
15	6-43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact of high attendance events on background traffic flow.</li> </ul>		
16	6-45		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Exclusive bus route; Figure 6-36.</li> </ul>	6-46
17	6-49		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Special consideration:</i> Alternative lane operations for freeways.</li> </ul>	6-54
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Portable changeable message sign; Figure 6-38.</li> </ul>	6-50
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Appendix K – Equipment location plan.</li> </ul>	6-59
18	6-51		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Temporary reversible lane operation; Figure 6-1.</li> </ul>	6-1
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Route marker signs; Figures 6-46 and 6-47.</li> </ul>	6-55 and 6-56
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Appendix K – Equipment location plan.</li> </ul>	6-59
19	6-57		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Positive traffic control; Figure 6-54.</li> </ul>	6-58
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Appendix K – Equipment location plan.</li> </ul>	6-59
20	6-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of few roadways providing access to venues and adjacent parking areas.</li> <li>Consideration of strategies to increase the capacity of site access roads and parking area access points.</li> <li>Potential for event patrons to park illegally on site access road shoulders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Roadway shoulder utilization; Figure 6-9.</li> </ul>	6-18
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Strategy for effecting parking area egress.</li> </ul>	6-20
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Striping additional exit lanes on parking area access roads for egress; Figure 6-11.</li> </ul>	6-20
21	6-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely use of unpaved parking areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Minimizing pedestrian/vehicular conflicts in parking areas; Figure 6-14.</li> </ul>	6-23
22	6-23			
23	6-28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely lack of sufficient existing pedestrian facilities within area surrounding the event site.</li> <li>Emphasis on pedestrian safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Temporary pedestrian bridge; Figure 6-23.</li> </ul>	6-31
24	6-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong consideration for temporary venues.</li> </ul>		
25	6-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of detailed analysis (e.g., tabletop exercises) and modeling for high attendance events.</li> </ul>		

STEP		EVENT-SPECIFIC ISSUES	EVENT-SPECIFIC REFERENCE INFORMATION	
NO.	PAGE		TOPIC	PAGE
26	7-2 to 7-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High applicability of high occupancy vehicle incentives, local travel demand management, and charter bus service to this event category.</li> </ul>		
27	7-6			
28	6-72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roadway network serving the event likely not lighted.</li> <li>Consideration of quick clearance initiatives to avoid breakdown of critical traffic flow routes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Portable lighting; Figure 6-58.</li> </ul>	6-73
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Example:</i> Congestion warning sign; Figure 6-59.</li> </ul>	6-73
29	6-61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on portable roadside traveler information devices.</li> </ul>		
30	6-70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasis on portable closed-circuit television, field observation, and/or aerial observation.</li> </ul>		
31	7-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication to a regional audience.</li> <li>Event patrons likely unfamiliar with roadways and the transportation system serving the event.</li> </ul>		

annotated planning timeline, (2) a review process, and (3) performance standards. Under risk assessment, scenarios relating to excessive overcrowding may warrant consideration if planning for a sporting or concert event.

- Traffic management plan components in Chapter 6 that provide an overview of various principles driving plan development in addition to a contingency plan checklist.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND DAY-OF-EVENT ACTIVITIES



Implementation activities represent an essential phase in advance planning for rural events. The traffic management team may involve new interagency relationships, and it requires an event-specific implementation plan to communicate specifics of the new traffic management plan prepared by the event planning team. Stakeholder development of implementation plan details for an event at a permanent venue focuses on transportation operation successes and lessons learned for previous, similar events at the subject venue.

Because particular rural event types occur infrequently, stakeholder simulation exercises prove valuable in assisting traffic management team personnel understand the roles and responsibilities of participating stakeholders in addition to the actions taken on the day-of-event. Exercises must involve field staff, some of whom represent personnel obtained temporarily from other regions for the purpose of increasing local stakeholder (e.g., state police, etc.) staff for an event. Temporary staff, although possibly experienced in traffic control, usually do not have familiarity with the local transportation system or roadways in the vicinity of the venue site. Equipment testing marks another key consideration as day-of-event operations at and in the vicinity of the event site usually depend on portable equipment for traffic control, surveillance, and dissemination of en-route traveler information. These intensive stakeholder activities reflect the typical unfamiliarity with managing travel for a rural event coupled with the fact that transportation management activities, on the order required for a planned special event, may not regularly take place in the vicinity of the event site.

Table 15-4 presents a checklist of implementation and day-of-event activities for

Table 15-4  
Checklist of Implementation and Day-of-Event Activities for Rural Events

HANDBOOK PAGE	ACTION	APPLIES
8-2	• Develop an implementation plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8-6	• Conduct a stakeholder simulation exercise(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>
8-8	• Test equipment resources slated for use on the day-of-event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8-9	• Recruit and train volunteers to fulfill personnel resource needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-2	• Implement a traffic management team management process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-4	• Designate a multi-agency command post.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-6	• Conduct a traffic management plan evaluation(s) during the day-of-event.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-6	• Establish protocol for traffic management team officials to consider and implement changes to the traffic management plan to accommodate real-time traffic conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-8	• Establish interagency communication protocol.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-9	• Review communication equipment compatibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-10	• Use the media to communicate with event patrons and other transportation users.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-12	• Perform traffic monitoring on the day-of-event.	<input type="checkbox"/>

stakeholders to consider regarding any rural event. As indicated in the table, the event planning team must determine, based on various event operations characteristics (e.g., event type, event location, event time of occurrence, attendance, market area, etc.) and other external factors, what unique set of activities apply in handling a specific special event. In addition, stakeholders should review the special considerations and recommended activities presented in Chapters 11 and 12 for discrete/recurring events at a permanent venue and continuous events, respectively, as appropriate based on the type of rural event. The table facilitates fast access to handbook sections providing detailed guidance, including recommended strategies, protocol, and resource applications, required by users to plan and execute these activities.

Some distinguishing considerations of this event category during the day-of-event activities phase include:

- The scope of high-attendance rural events demand personnel resources that may exceed the level of available staff from local event stakeholders. Supplementing traffic management team personnel with temporary staff and volunteers may represent a necessary action to meet staffing requirements for rural special events. Many volunteers have no past experience in tasks associated with traffic and pedestrian control and parking operations. As a result, volunteer training becomes paramount to the success of day-of-event operations. Chapter 8 contains checklists and relevant considerations for assessing personnel resource needs and using volunteers on the day-of-event. The chapter also specifies volunteer training activities and summarizes basic functions required of all volunteers.
- The traffic management team likely includes stakeholder representatives involved in managing travel for a particular rural event type for the first time. To

ensure successful traffic management plan deployment, the traffic management team must adopt a formal management process and establish an interagency communication structure and protocol to support day-of-event operations.

- Other essential team management considerations involve (1) the designation of an Incident Commander for the planned special event and (2) the set up of a temporary, multi-agency command post at or near the event venue.
- Traffic management team officials should anticipate enacting modifications to the traffic management plan during the rural event.
- Surveillance information and performance evaluation data define transportation operation conditions and, thus, influence decision-making at a day-of-event briefing. Given the typical lack of transportation management centers in rural areas, transportation system operators usually monitor system operations from the event command post using portable equipment (e.g., laptop computers, devices using radio/cellular/spread spectrum radio communication, etc.).
- The collection and evaluation of transportation system performance data proves valuable in guiding decision-making not only on the day-of-event but also for recurring rural events. Stake-

holders can archive raw data for use in future feasibility studies, and various evaluation measures can identify specific areas that require improvement for future, similar events.

- The traffic management team must exercise great care in collecting performance evaluation data in order to ensure data quality and consistency.

## POST-EVENT ACTIVITIES



All of the primary products of this phase (e.g., participant evaluation, post-event debriefing, and post-event report) have a high level of applicability to rural events. Given the infrequent occurrence of rural events coupled with the scarcity of travel forecast data, post-event activity results represent a key resource in planning for future rural events in a region.

Table 15-5 presents a checklist of post-event activities for rural events. The post-event activities section of this handbook provides detailed information on common techniques, special considerations, and recommended protocol that facilitate the activities listed in the table.

Table 15-5  
Checklist of Post-Event Activities for Rural Events

HANDBOOK PAGE	ACTION	APPLIES
10-2	• Review measures of effectiveness identified in event operations planning phase.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10-3	• Compile agency measures of effectiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9-14	• Compile performance evaluation data.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-5	• Conduct stakeholder participant debriefing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-6	• Conduct event patron survey.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-7	• Conduct public survey.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-7	• Conduct a post-event debriefing meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-10	• Prepare a post-event report.	<input type="checkbox"/>



Some distinguishing considerations of this event category during the post-event activities phase include:

- Practitioners should reference the post-event activities guidelines and considerations contained in Chapters 11 and 12, as appropriate, based on the type of rural event.
- In regard to participant evaluation, rural event patron travel surveys yield important information and statistics that can assist practitioners in (1) improving the accuracy of future rural event travel forecasts and (2) developing travel demand management incentives (e.g., express/charter bus services, event patron incentives) for the market area served by rural events.
- Periodic public surveys warrant consideration for special events under this category as event performance evaluation data fails to assess all community impacts. Survey results alert special event stakeholders of impacts to affected residents and businesses, in addition to non-attendee transportation system users, that may continue to occur with each successive special event at a particular venue location. As a result, stakeholders can develop and implement appropriate strategies (e.g., enforcement, etc.) and regulations to mitigate the identified impact(s) for future planned special events.
- Post-event debriefings represent a common and recommended stakeholder activity for all rural events.
  - Written comments should be obtained from temporary, borrowed staff used on the day-of-event if staff can not participate in a debriefing meeting.
  - A key aspect of a post-event debriefing for rural events involves

preparing detailed meeting minutes that include the identification of key successes and lessons learned.

- Considering the potential significant time between rural events, stakeholders must chronicle participant survey results and debriefing meetings so that those stakeholders charged with managing travel for future rural events can tap the wisdom of past participants.
- The occurrence of a major, recurring rural event warrants development of a post-event report. In turn, the report can serve as a working document to assist in advance planning for the next (year's) event.
- A post-event report for a recurring rural event should include an operational cost analysis to assist stakeholders in identifying potential cost-saving resource deployment strategies for the next event occurrence.

## PROGRAM PLANNING



Program planning activities involve the development of policies, programs, and initiatives that facilitate improved planning and management of travel for future planned special events.

Program planning for rural events include activities, as summarized in Table 15-6, on both a regional and local level. Practitioners should reference program planning activities contained in Chapters 11 and 12, as appropriate, depending on the type of rural event.

Some distinguishing considerations of this event category during the program planning phase include:

Table 15-6  
Program Planning Activities for Rural Events

PRODUCT	TOPIC	PAGE NO.
Institutional frameworks	• Development of a formal planned special event permit program.	4-10
	• Creation of a transportation operations task force for a recurring rural event or specific permanent venue.	5-3
	• Development of a joint operations policy.	5-15
	• Development of a mutual-aid agreement to facilitate resource sharing.	5-15
Policies and regulations	• Traffic and parking restrictions.	5-10
	• Public-private towing agreements.	5-16
	• Public information safety campaign.	6-73
	• High occupancy vehicle incentives.	7-3
Infrastructure deployment	• Planned alternate route for diverting background traffic around a venue.	6-40
	• Portable traffic management system.	6-56
	• Express, charter, or shuttle bus service.	6-32
		7-11
		7-12
• Telephone information systems.	7-17	

- The fixed location of planned special event venues (e.g., fairgrounds, amphitheaters, golf courses, and race tracks) in rural areas allow for the easy identification of stakeholder representatives involved in planning and day-of-event travel management for high-attendance special events at these venues. These representatives may collaborate year-round as an inter-jurisdictional, multi-discipline task force, working to: (1) strengthen interagency coordination for future special events, (2) identify needs relative to minimizing community impacts and improving transportation system operations during venue events. The latter involves proposing new policies, regulations, and infrastructure deployments to support future event-specific traffic management plans and travel demand management initiatives.
- A planned special event permit program proves particularly effective for rural events that, because of such characteristics as event attendance and event location, may (1) conflict with municipal or state guidelines and regulations and (2) impact transportation operations and the community. The program specifies a permit process, coupled with supporting restrictions and requirements, that allow stakeholders to plan and assess all types of rural events within a common framework. A section on program planning for local planned special events in Chapter 4 provides complete and in-depth coverage on developing a permit program applicable to rural events.
  - Two or more stakeholders, representing multiple jurisdictions and/or disciplines, may establish a joint operations policy for managing travel for all planned special events in a region.
  - Stakeholders may develop a mutual-aid agreement to facilitate resource sharing (e.g., personnel or equipment) and/or reimbursement for services in order to handle future planned special events.
  - Because rural events usually occur infrequently and occasionally at temporary venues, an infrastructure needs assessment on the program planning level

should focus on equipment and technology applications transferable to managing all planned special events in a region and/or day-to-day transportation system operations.

- Funding represents a key public agency consideration for rural events in the program planning phase.
  - Commercial events may involve event organizers and participants from outside the community hosting the event.
  - Prior to initiating event operations planning activities for a specific rural event, stakeholders should establish a funding mechanism for recovering costs incurred in providing services during the event operations planning phase and resources on the day-of-event.
  - Funding often represents a requirement of a comprehensive planned special event permit program.

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