



# Public Participation Plan for the Sioux Falls MPO

**In Cooperation with:**

South Dakota Department of  
Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Federal Transit Administration

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# Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Participation Program

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## Executive Summary of Public Participation Program

Before the Urbanized Development Commission's (UDC) approval of any Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) plan or product, the policies of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) shall be followed. The PPP will help ensure that the public and interested parties have an opportunity to voice their concerns and to influence the outcome of decisions. Through a seven-step strategic methodology, the PPP carefully organizes the various ways in which to contact people, give them the information they need, hear their concerns, respond to their concerns, and incorporate their concerns into the final product. Public participation should not merely be conducting public meetings to meet federal regulations, but rather public participation should be considered as:

. . . access to information before decisions are finalized, in a variety of ways, in such a manner as to allow for actual influence over the outcome of those decisions (Younger, page 1).

Prior to development of any transportation product requiring approval, the MPO should consider the following seven-step process and design a specific public participation plan:

**STEP 1—Goals:** Determine the specific goals and objectives that public participation is to accomplish.

**STEP 2—Stakeholders:** Identify the public that either might be interested in participating or whose participation is necessary in order to achieve the objectives.

**STEP 3—Methods:** Select a technique(s) for interacting with the public that will achieve the objectives.

**STEP 4—Notification:** Select suitable notification techniques for reaching the desired public with the necessary information.

**STEP 5—Implementation:** Implement and conduct the appropriate participation technique(s).

**STEP 6—Evaluation:** Determine how the techniques are to be evaluated.

**STEP 7—Incorporation:** Incorporate the results of the participation into the plan or product.

**Outcome or Decision:** Who recommends and approves the plan or product? What is the significance of the approval of the plan or product? (Refer back to goal.)

*(See Appendix A for specific project plan worksheet.)*



## Introduction to the Public Participation

In order to achieve a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing process in all of the planning activities undertaken by the MPO, input should be solicited from all stakeholders. The MPO understands that the area’s transportation system cannot solely be dictated by the major governing bodies that make up the MPO; rather, there needs to be significant input from the citizens who live, work, and visit the area as well.

The Sioux Falls MPO has accepted the following transportation planning public participation mission statement:

**The Metropolitan Planning Organization’s public participation process will focus the type of participation on the decisions to be made and ensure the public has the opportunity to be included in the decision-making process.**

As the MPO strives to accomplish this mission and the public becomes more involved in the transportation planning process, the system and the users of the system will surely benefit. More ideas are considered. Decision makers have a better understanding of the process. There is more support on current and future projects; and there are more positive—and less negative—impacts on the users of the system.

The decision-making process begins with identifying the interests of the stakeholders. This eliminates planners making assumptions about what stakeholders want and allowing stakeholders to truly address their needs. It is then up to the decision makers to evaluate the information and adopt the policies that best serve the community. It is not an easy process, but it can be made easier by having everyone involved in agreement that the decision-making process was open and fair.

*Tell me...I will forget.  
Show me...I might remember.  
Involve me...I will understand.*  
Motto of the Manhin Township, PA Planning Process

The benefits of such a public participation process are far-reaching. When well planned transportation decisions are made with public participation, it generally reduces the likelihood that individual transportation plans and projects will falter. The process reduces time and expenses. The decision makers and the public build trust and better working relationships, and, in the end, there is broad-based ongoing support for the local transportation planning process.

While the federal government has the power to regulate the public participation process, it only regulates minimum requirements. Former Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena set the tone in the early 1990s when he directed the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to, “Put people first.” Acting on this principle, local governments initiated proactive public participation at all stages of local transportation planning process.



*Federal DOT policy and FHWA and FTA regulations build on these principles by requiring MPOs to establish their own continuing public involvement processes which actively seeks involvement throughout transportation decision making, from the earliest planning stages, including the identification of the purpose and need, through the development of the range of potential solutions, up to and including the decision to implement specific solutions (FHWA/FTA Questions and Answers on Public Participation in Transportation Decision Making, #1).*

## **Methodology**

In considering the seven-step process, the MPO should, when appropriate, consider any and all opportunities to coordinate local public participation efforts with those of the SDDOT's public participation plans. Coordinated efforts such as these conserve resources and allow for broader public participation.

In the following sections, each one of the steps listed above will be discussed in greater detail. At the same time, each section will remain within the overall vision that all products are different and need to be considered with their own unique set of goals and objectives.



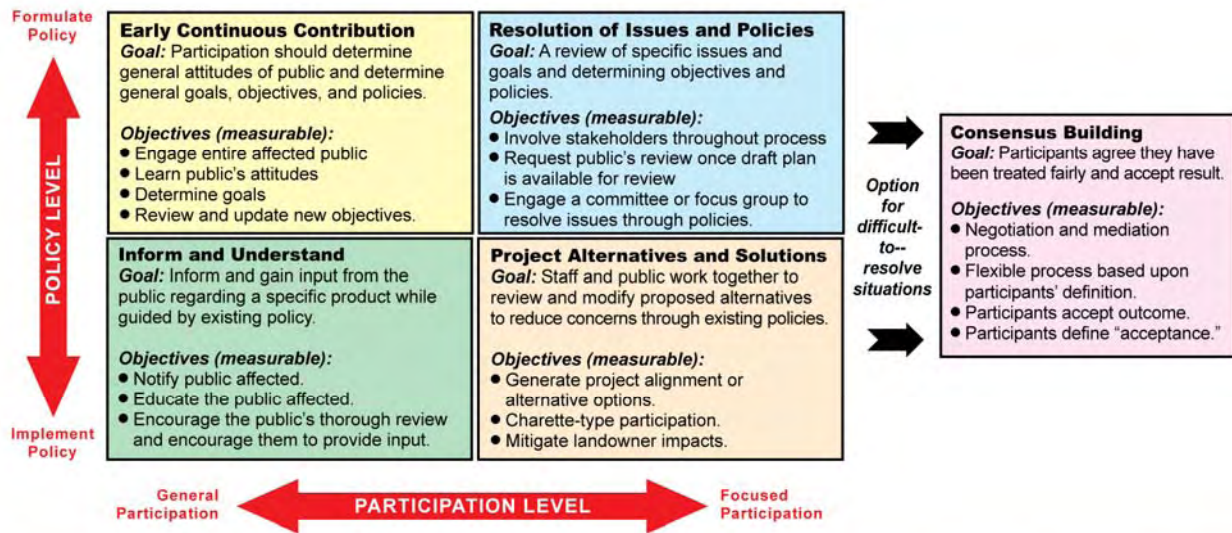
## STEP 1—Determine Participation Goals and Objectives

The first question that should be asked when designing a public participation plan is, “How do we ensure that the plan is truly open, responsive, and in the best interest of the public?”

Each plan or product will have different goals of public participation. Therefore, the MPO should be consistent in determining participation goals and objections by following the guidelines of the participation goals and objectives stated below. In some cases, more than one participation goal may apply to a product.

### Step 1—Participation Goals and Objectives Matrix

The goals and objectives should be determined by policy and participation levels. (See arrows on the side and bottom of matrix.)



**What is a "goal"?**  
An end that someone or an organization strives to attain.

**What is an "objective"?**  
A statement of what is to be done, and should be stated in terms of results (specific, measurable, attainable, result-oriented, time-limited).

**What is "policy"?**  
Policies are typically promulgated through official written plans and adopted through a legal process by a governing body.

The term "public policy" always refers to the actions of government and the intentions that determine those actions. A policy is also a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcome(s).

**How do we implement policy?**  
The execution of policies through ordinances, budgets, or administrative rules/standards.



### **Goal: Early and Continuous Contribution**

Early participation from the public in transportation planning products allows the public to help shape goals, objectives, and policies for a product. This type of plan or product will allow the public the greatest flexibility to comment and help define general guidance to the MPO. Information needs to be shared by both the MPO and the public throughout the process. Such information sharing may take the form of formal or informal surveys or other comments that are recorded throughout the process.

Example:

- Long-Range Transportation Plan (Public hearings are required.)

### **Goal: Inform and Understand**

To implement a policy, the public should be informed and educated to understand how a transportation product may be implemented. This will allow the public an opportunity to review and determine if they agree how the MPO is implementing policies.

Implementation of a policy can be completed in many ways. It can be achieved through a budget, ordinance, or resolution. However, implementation can also be achieved through studies that provide vital statistics and work procedures that help the public better understand issues facing the MPO.

Examples:

- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) \*
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) \*
- MPO Operations Plan
- Transportation System Management Efficiency Report
- Traffic Volume Counts
- Land Use Report

*\* Public Hearings are required.*

### **Goal: Resolution of Issues and Policies**

When goals have been established, but policies remain to be determined, the MPO may move to problem-solving techniques with the identified stakeholders. The stakeholders should have a basic understanding of the issues, and the MPO should attempt to deliberately identify the issues.

Examples:

- Pedestrian Plan
- Bicycle Plan
- Transit Development Program
- Public Participation Plan



### **Goal: Project Alternatives and Solutions**

Project alternatives and solutions are offered by the MPO and by consultants through proposing various study alternatives and solutions. By working together to review the various concepts, issues and new ideas may surface and modify proposed alternatives, since the public may offer other feasible alternatives or solutions that have not yet been considered.

Examples:

- Corridor Studies
- Street Construction Design Projects
- Transit Route Analysis

### **Goal: Building Consensus**

Building consensus is a process through which participants accept a product. The process of building consensus achieves an outcome of varying degrees, from participants who can “live with it” to participants who are “willing to support it.” In the consensus-building process, the MPO or an outside facilitator works with participants to define consensus and spend time clarifying what consensus looks like in terms of participant behavior. Those involved must also have an understanding of negotiation and mediation.

Examples of projects that have gone through this process in the past:

- East Corridor Process Team
- West Corridor Process Team
- Accessible Transportation for All Study Group

### **Combinations of Goals**

There may be several combinations of goals implemented for each public participation plan. If the MPO and the public consider what they hope to accomplish within the Participation Plan, the overall process should be improved.



## STEP 2—Identify the Public to be Involved

**Step 2**  
**Identify the Public to Be Involved**

Identify stakeholders based upon Step 1  
     Is the goal broad or focused participation?  
     Who would reasonably be expected to be affected?

Identify government to be involved  
     Just the MPO?  
     MPO and local units of government?  
     MPO and state and federal government?  
     MPO and environmental agencies?  
     (See Appendix B for consultation process)

Interested Parties  
     List of agencies maintained by MPO  
     Environmental agencies  
     Media

Within each product there are generally numerous stakeholders. A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest in or is impacted by the outcome of the project. The public to be involved will vary depending on the type of participation goal or combination of goals in Step 1.

It is the MPO's responsibility to empower stakeholders. Empowerment is accomplished through early, often, and thorough communication. The MPO needs to define the planning process and roles that the stakeholders, MPO, and decision makers will play in the outcome.

The stakeholder, units of government, and agencies within the local metropolitan transportation planning process include Southeast Council of Governments, the City of Sioux Falls, Minnehaha County, Lincoln County, the South Dakota Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and various environmental agencies. These units of government and agencies each play a vital role in the transportation planning process.

There are three different measures to identify the public to be involved:

- **Self identification**—Anyone who has exhibited previous interest through public meeting attendance, written comments, or with the MPO contact.
- **MPO identification**—Agencies, organizations, and the general public identified from the current interested parties lists (see Appendix C) other mailing lists, Yellow Pages, and public records such as GIS parcel data.
- **Third-party identification**—General public and interest groups as identified through known stakeholders such as the media and interested parties.



By identifying local media outlets as stakeholders, the MPO initiates an open discussion of the product that is in progress. Communicating notification information (see Step 4) to the media prior to the public participation event serves both to disseminate facts and to advertise the actual event to the public.

Each stakeholder group has different needs and desires. The general public prefers information that is understandable and received in a timely fashion. Directly affected stakeholders prefer direct participation in articulating what alternatives should be analyzed; they should be afforded opportunities for continuous participation through such means as steering committees, task forces, or visioning workshops.

### **Interested Parties**

An important element to the update of the PPP is to identify all interested parties. In July 2007, the MPO distributed over 200 questionnaires to agencies and groups that may be interested in being an advocate for transportation planning and/or disseminating information about transportation issues to its members. From that list, 26 agencies or other organizations indicated that they would like to be listed as an MPO interested party. The list of interested parties, including contact information, is included in Appendix C.

Two interested party meetings were held on July 24, 2007. During the meetings, the MPO gained valuable information in regard to ways to better gain participation from the public. The following comments were made during the two meetings:

- Talk to leadership of organizations to educate and involve.
- Don't forget about organizations outside the city of Sioux Falls.
- Include on the website: "What's new in transportation."
- Include web links in press releases so it can be posted on other websites.
- Get "buy in" from stakeholders to get them to disseminate info.
- ID stakeholders—Don't underestimate what you can do for them.
- Marketing reword information sent out to say how you can help them.
- Face-to-face meetings with organizations.
- Good organizations to contact include the Multi-Cultural Center, MS Society, and Disabled American Veterans.
- Educate organizations about the MPO. Organizations can disseminate information to their constituents.
- Brochures, websites, and word-of-mouth are all useful resources for organizations to spread information.
- Get information to the organizations so they may disseminate it.
- Get documents out to the public to familiarize them with the MPO.
- Include information in City sewer/water bills.
- Create perception of involving everyone and create opportunities for involvement.
- How can you involve the public? How much can you involve the public?
- Specifically state in emails and letters that the information can be forwarded to others.



- What can you do if you or members of the public have no access to computers, newspapers, TV, or the news media (which may only be interested in “hot” issues)?
- How do people know to go to the website or to call for information (511)?
- Create awareness of open meetings by saying that information can be forwarded to others.
- Work with PTAB (and other boards) and bring relative items to PTAB meetings as “other business.”
- Organizations spread information by reporting it at their monthly meetings and/or by including it in their newsletters (emailed, mailed, or posted on the web).
- Getting input directly from people using system is helpful.
- Public needs are dynamic/seasonal.
- More education on the MPO process made available on the website. Allow for email sign-up for more information.
- Cable channel CityLink 16 TV segments.
- Have agency contacts designate two to three contacts/key clients/consumers for focus groups.
- Hold one focus group session to build support.

### **Underrepresented Populations**

As an emphasis of the efforts to gain participation from interested parties, the MPO shall consider techniques to obtain input from portions of the local population that have historically not participated in the local transportation planning process, but are stakeholders nonetheless. The underrepresented population may include:

. . . those with special cultural, racial, or ethnic characteristics. Cultural differences sometimes hinder full participation in transportation planning and project development. People with disabilities find access to transportation more difficult and their ability to participate in public participation efforts more constrained. People with low incomes often lack both access and time to participate. Poorly educated people may not be fully aware either of what transportation services are available or of opportunities to help improve them (Public Participation Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making, p. 17).

In order for the MPO to identify the needs and concerns of the underrepresented populations, relationships need to be developed between the MPO and affected community agencies. Additionally, Map 26 (Environmental Justice) within the Long-Range Transportation Plan illustrates areas of minority and low income to help demonstrate that the overall MPO area does not disproportionately affect those underrepresented populations.



Underrepresented populations must overcome various barriers in order to participate more fully in the local process. The MPO should identify and reduce barriers that impede underrepresented populations' access to the process. These barriers are as varied as the populations themselves.

The MPO should consider that:

- Certain populations have a greater difficulty getting to shopping, work, school, and recreation than the population at large.
- Underrepresented populations may be less aware of the impacts of transportation decisions.
- There is a cost to participate, such as lost time, travel expenses, and child care needs.
- Citizens to whom English is a second language may need translation or interpretation assistance.
- Citizens who need American Sign Language interpreters.
- Agency representatives may think they do not have access to the decision-making process.

In an attempt to overcome these barriers, the MPO should consider these possible solutions:

- Communicate information through the agencies that serve underrepresented populations.
- Ensure the appropriate agency representative receives the information.
- Ensure the information is distributed to the underrepresented population.

Input from underrepresented populations is not separate from other input and should not be given greater or lesser weight. It needs to be integrated and balanced with the needs and concerns of all interests.

Involving all of the various stakeholders, both traditional and nontraditional, in the local transportation planning process ensures that the full ranges of the community's needs are considered. Involving the stakeholders provides the opportunity to create more responsive and innovative options and ensures the equitable distribution of transportation services.



## STEP 3—Select the Appropriate Participation Methods

Step 3— Select the Appropriate Participation Methods	
<b>Broad Participation</b> Website Cable Access TV Access Channel News Release Formal Survey Informal Survey Open House with Media Story Public Meeting*	<b>Focused Participation</b> Open House Charrette Focus Groups Newsletters Email Special Study Committees Public Meeting*
<i>* If required by the MPO's public participation procedures (see Table 1 on page 37)</i>	

The appropriate public participation technique(s) will be determined based upon the type of participation, either broad or focused. This step is not meant to direct the MPO toward a specific technique. It is intended to direct the MPO to consider as many techniques as may be necessary to achieve the goals and objectives.

The specific techniques to be considered must address the following questions:

- What techniques have been used in the past for similar projects?
- What techniques does the public respond to?
- What techniques seem reasonable to accomplish the goals and objectives?

When trying to accomplish the Public Participation Plan’s goals and objectives, it is necessary to review these general goals:

- Provide the public with an understanding of the key facts.
- Ensure that diverse interest groups see each others’ viewpoints.
- Ensure that all local governments and agencies see how their decisions affect one another.
- Establish constructive interactions among all stakeholders.

Within each technique, the MPO must speak honestly and directly and listen to the stakeholders. If these principles are adhered to, the public should feel that the process was fair.

## Methods

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has developed a manual entitled; “Public Participation Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making” which describes in detail all standard and innovative participation techniques.

It is highly recommended that the MPO does review and study the various techniques within the manual prior to selecting the techniques that will be employed to achieve the goals and objectives of the specific product.

## Standard Methods and Techniques

Typically, within the local transportation planning process, the following techniques have been employed to cultivate public participation:

- **Cable TV Access Channel**—Provides information about an event, plan, or project.
- **Email**—Information can be quickly distributed through email. Email chains provide an option for one email to be forwarded to a larger email list for greater distribution.
- **Focus Groups**—To adequately study a plan, it is sometime broken into two or more issues. Focus groups are meetings where citizens are selected to focus on one of those issues within a larger plan or project.
- **Formal Survey**—This type of survey is scientific in its approach and is reliable and accurate in its reflection of the overall composition and attitudes of the community.
- **Informal Survey**—Either a mailed or web-based survey can be used to ask people their opinion on the issues. This can be effective in more focused plans or projects.
- **Informal Comments**—Comment forms are developed for meetings and people are asked to comment based upon their opinion of the project or plan. This can be effective to give the MPO a sense of the general attitude of a project or plan.
- **News Story**—A well-timed news story can be a great way to spread the word about a project or plan. The media involved can vary greatly.
- **Open Houses**—An informal presentation of information to help educate the public and the MPO. This allows the public to spend as much or as little time as needed in order to receive the information required to voice opinions.
- **Press Release**—Many news stories are generated by a simple press release. A press release may also provide an opportunity to inform citizens of a meeting, project, or plan.
- **Public Hearings**—The public’s opportunity to be heard, to present one’s side of a case, or to be generally known or appreciated. This includes formal proceedings with formal presentations and structured public speaking time frames.
- **Public Meetings**—General term for coming together at a particular time or place and holding formal and/or informal discussions.

Informal settings such as public meetings or one-on-one meetings with agency staff have been found to make it much easier for the public to assimilate information on the project, resolve issues, and contribute data. The formal public meeting is a technique best suited to the statement of fixed positions for or against the project. In general, interaction is most effective when it is informal and allows for give-and-take between both sides such as in



one-on-one meetings. The lack of an audience makes it easier for both public and agency staff to focus on communicating with one another and altering positions as new information is received (Public Participation, p. 3-5).

- **Special Study Committees**—A plan or project may require a group of people who are chosen or who volunteer to study an issue in greater detail. They provide recommendations and find ways to most effectively communicate with the citizens.
- **Visualization Techniques**—Methods will be used in the development of transportation plans and programs with the public, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders in a clear and easily accessible format such as maps, pictures, and/or displays, to promote improved understanding of existing or proposed transportation plans and programs.
- **World Wide Web**—A website is a good venue with which to direct people for information. A central website for all public participation information in the MPO area is recommended. Documents, project information, meeting information, and other transportation information will be posted on the World Wide Web for public access.

### **Innovative Methods**

When the standard methods and techniques do not achieve meaningful public participation, the MPO should consider selecting more innovative techniques that may create more interest and increase public participation. Some techniques to consider are:

- Visual demonstration (slides, videos, visual preference surveys, and kiosks)
- Transportation fairs
- Telephone hotlines
- Speaker bureaus
- Brainstorming
- Charrettes
- Visioning
- Role playing
- Site visit

Techniques within each public participation plan should allow for flexibility to adjust the process, depending upon prevailing conditions and circumstances. Proper planning will help the MPO respond to unexpected circumstances in an appropriate manner.



## STEP 4—Employ Appropriate Public Notification Techniques

### Step 4— Employ Appropriate Public Notification Techniques

#### Formulate Policy, Goals, Objectives

- Press Release (includes TV news, radio, newspaper)
- Cable Access Channel
- Website
- Public Notice of Public Meeting\*

#### Implement Policy, Goal, Objectives

- Website
- Letters or Newsletters
- Word of Mouth
- Brochures
- Public Notice of Public Meeting\*
- Press Release (for meeting only)

\* If required by the MPO's public participation procedures (see Table 1, page 37)

The public needs to be notified once the objectives have been set, the stakeholders identified, and the public participation techniques have been selected. The MPO strives to provide adequate notice of public participation opportunities and time for public review and comment within the decision-making process.

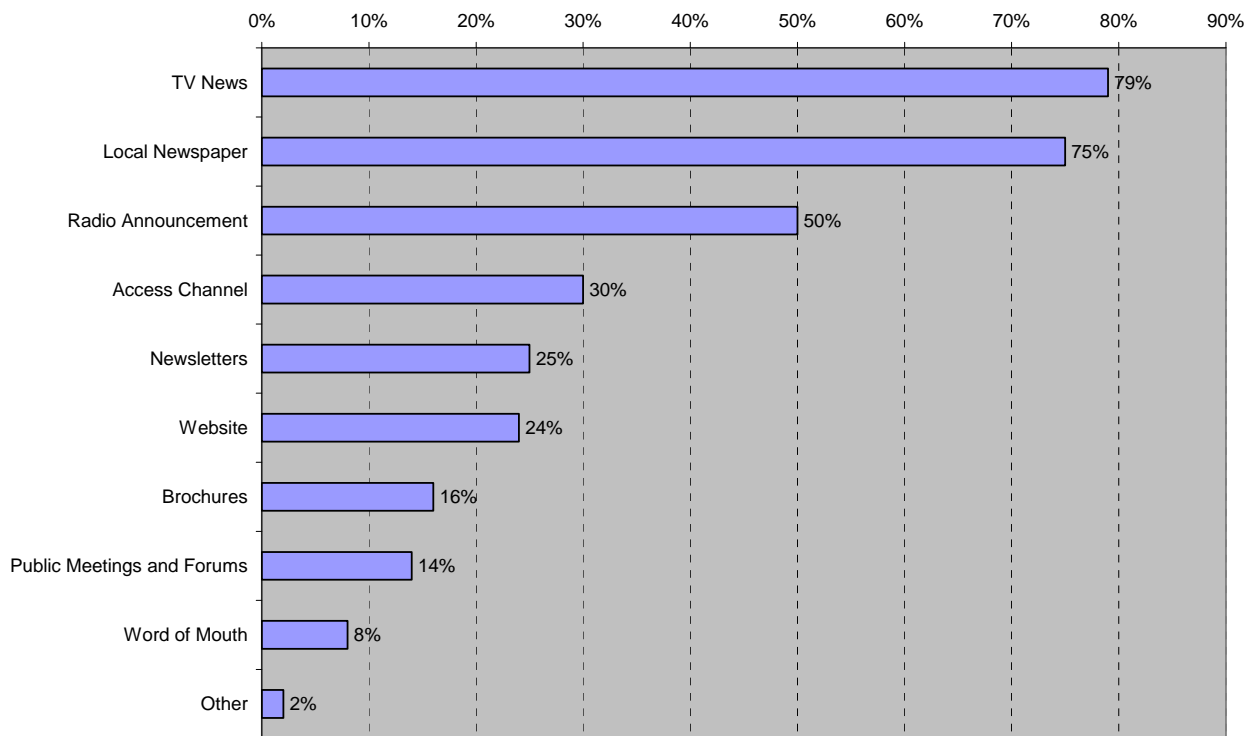
Participation is the key to a planning process that creates consensus by the essential stakeholders. The public who have a stake in a particular participation plan are not one group, but rather, separate groups who are impacted in different ways. Since groups are impacted differently, each may require different information in order to participate in the process. Each may also need to receive their notification from different sources.

In 2005, three separate local surveys were conducted in which the public was asked how they wished to receive their information. The MPO shall reference these survey results when determining how best to distribute information to the public. The results of one question from the local survey are shown in the following table:



### Best Ways to Keep Residents Informed

by percentage of residential respondents (exceeds 100% because some respondents chose more than one)



Regardless of the notification technique chosen, the most effective notification time frame is seven to ten days prior to the event, with reminders provided up to the actual event. Issues large in scope or controversial may require a double notice system with an initial 30-day notice and a second notice five to seven days in advance of the event.

The information included within the notification should have enough information for the public to make a decision about becoming involved. The basic information included should identify the date, time, place, and scope of the event. The notification should also include an address and deadline for comments to be submitted. Depending on the participation technique selected, the notification may also include:

- A map
- A summary of major issues
- A summary of the agenda
- A description of the role of the event in the planning process
- A staff name and telephone number to contact for more information



## STEP 5—Implement the Appropriate Participation Method(s)

### Step 5—Implement the Appropriate Participation Method(s)

#### Event Planning (i.e. meeting or open house)

- When and what time of day?
- Where to hold the event?
- What resources are needed?
- How to gain feedback?

#### Information Distribution Planning (i.e. website, press release)

- What information should be included?
- Who is the contact person?
- How to gain feedback?

Once the methods have been selected and the public has been notified of the event, it is imperative that the event be properly planned and conducted. Different techniques may require different participation from the public. The MPO should explain these differences at the beginning of the event.

Public participation requires the commitment of many resources. The MPO should consider allocating funds for public participation plans. The MPO should prepare appropriate materials and be aware of funds that will be needed so that resources can be used efficiently and effectively. Budgets need to address salary and overhead costs of time spent preparing for and conducting the public participation process. Production and postage budgets for newsletters, summary reports, special graphics, and other materials may also be needed. Funds should be available for the rental of meeting locations and the purchase of any necessary equipment (such as computers, video equipment, or projectors). If transcripts of certain meetings are desirable, funds should be allocated for dictation services. Funds and time to prepare materials such as videos, slides, displays, questionnaires, and special booklets should also be budgeted.

Conducting a public participation method requires proper planning and administration, as well as an understanding of the goals and objectives of the methods used. The method itself may have instructions and tips for conducting the event. The MPO should answer the following questions in preparing to conduct each event:

- What type of event is most appropriate? (e.g., open house, public meeting, public hearing, etc.)
- What time of day will the event need to be held?
- Where is the best location to hold the event?
- How many staff is needed for the event, and who is needed?
- What visuals and equipment are needed for the event?
- How should the event be set up? (e.g., stations for open house, chairs in theater style, etc.)
- How will the MPO get feedback? (e.g., comment forms, email, discussion at meeting, etc.)
- Should the event have a formal presentation, informal discussion, or both?

The MPO should consider the following questions in preparing to conduct information distribution techniques to inform and educate the public about a plan or project:

- What technique will help get the information out about the plan or project?
- Is a news release needed to distribute this information effectively?
- How long should a document be available for public review?
- What information should be available for the most effective review?

The following section has been reprinted with the permission of the Federal Highway Administration and should be used as a guide when implementing participation methods.

### **Informal, Personal Contact**

One basic form of interaction between planners and community members is the informal, personal contact which occurs in their day-to-day relationships. This is established by getting to know community leaders, representatives of groups, and other participants in individual conversations as well as group meetings. Planners should develop these informal contacts and allow ample time for them to occur, since they form a basis for good working relationships with participants.

### **Meetings, Briefings, and Workshops**

In addition to informal contact, it is essential to have more structured means by which planners and participants can interact. The most common of these are community meetings—usually large, public meetings, in which staff members present plans, discuss them with the audience, exchange information and views, give feedback and response to citizens, and answer questions. While such meetings are a necessary part of community participation plans, planners should hold other kinds too. Typically, these are briefings and workshops—smaller, more informal meetings, often oriented around specific topics or groups of participants.

Briefings provide opportunities for planners to get together with groups and individuals to discuss plans in small sessions or in greater detail than can be done in large, informational meetings. Briefings can be held to discuss certain aspects of plans with special interest groups and respond to their particular concerns, as in a briefing on economic impacts for area business people.

They can also be used to bring people up-to-date on the status of work if they are new participants or if they have not been able to attend other meetings. For example, it is worthwhile to brief public officials periodically, particularly if they cannot attend many other meetings or if a major public meeting or hearing is to be held shortly.

Workshops allow planners to go beyond presentation and discussion of plans and hold intensive working sessions with participants. Workshops can deal with a variety of different subjects, though they usually are quite specific in their focus in order to allow for the intended intense consideration of certain topics. Workshops might



address the relationship of plans to a specific area, such as a neighborhood, or certain elements or impacts of plans, like construction staging or relocation impacts. They could be used to address the several most important concerns of a particular group of participants, such as environmentalists. Workshops can also serve as a forum for generating ideas and alternative proposals or for focusing on the collective analysis of some aspect of a plan.

Usually the planning staff will arrange and sponsor most meetings, briefings, and workshops. However, it is worthwhile to let groups know that the staff would also like to attend their regular or special meetings in order to present and discuss plans. The staff might do this with city councils, clubs, civic associations, special interest groups, and other organizations. Many will find this more convenient and comfortable for their members, and it saves some staff time and effort in making meeting arrangements.

Since meetings of all sorts are such frequent and important activities in community participation plans, planners should devote special attention to preparing for and conducting meetings.

#### **Meeting Suggestions:**

- In preparing for a meeting, first determine its purpose and desired outcome. Then use these as a guide in determining topics, speakers, presentations, materials, participants, location, time, and format.
- Choose a time and place convenient to participants. Often, evening meetings in the community are best. Meeting places should be accessible, comfortable, and of a size and layout appropriate to the type of meeting.
- Check the meeting place in advance to see that it is appropriate for the meeting and to determine if projection screens, microphones, easels, or other materials must be brought by the staff.
- Give ample notice time. Let participants know in advance what the purpose, topics, and intended outcomes of the meeting are. In addition to written notices, it is often helpful to telephone key participants and groups to give special invitations or reminders of a meeting.
- If materials to be given to participants require more than a few minutes to be read and understood, they should be distributed prior to the meeting so that participants can review them in advance and be better prepared. If materials are to be distributed at the meeting, be sure there are enough copies and place them in an obvious spot or give them out individually.
- Arrive early to check the meeting place, set up equipment, greet people, and talk informally with participants prior to the start of the meeting.



- ☑ Start on time and, unless everyone wants to stay late, finish on time. Usually two or three hours are the maximum workable time for the typical meeting. Overly long meetings tire participants and staff and make them lose both interest and patience. Poorly prepared staff or presentations waste valuable time that could be spent on discussion with participants.
- ☑ It is usually preferable to have one person moderate the meeting. While the moderator is frequently a staff member, it is often desirable to have a participant do this. The moderator could be the chairperson of a study committee; if meetings are sponsored by a municipality or group, then its representative could moderate.
- ☑ The moderator should state the purpose, topics, procedures, and desired outcomes of the meeting at its start. Also, a summary statement of how the meeting fits into the overall planning effort can help orient newcomers and refresh memories of previous participants. With the agreement of the group, decide whether questions should be asked during or after any presentations when discussion will occur.
- ☑ Introduce staff members and describe their roles and areas of specialty. Appropriate staff members should be present to answer questions and make presentations.
- ☑ Do not deal with too many topics in one meeting. It is better to have a modest agenda and hold a shorter meeting than to rush through many agenda items, not discuss advertised topics, or limit discussion time. Keep presentations short enough to maintain interest and attention and to allow ample time for discussion. Keep the use of technical terms and jargon to a minimum and explain those that are used. (Some ways to avoid jargon are to review presentations specifically for it, or ask staff or others whose background is more like the public to help staff identify confusing jargon. Such persons include staff not specialized in a given area, secretaries, or family members.)
- ☑ Use of graphics can greatly enhance the clarity of meetings and written or oral presentations. Maps and displays should be large, legible, and put in convenient, well lit places. A staff member should be nearby to answer any questions. When maps, charts, aerial photographs, or other materials are used in presentations, tell the audience what they show, what they mean, their scale, and symbols. Point out landmarks on maps and photographs to orient people. Tell them whether plans are in preliminary, draft, or final form. For all materials, summarize what they are in a sentence or two before getting into detailed presentations.
- ☑ Allow fair allocation of time to all people who want to speak. If many people want to make statements, it may be necessary to establish time allocations or allow everyone to speak once before anyone speaks twice. In most meetings, it is helpful to have everyone who speaks give their name and any affiliation, though this can vary depending on whether people know one another and how formal the meeting is. If



participants ask questions which cannot be answered immediately, tell them why and when answers will be available. Remember to follow through with answers or materials that have been promised.

- ☑ At the end of a meeting, it is helpful to summarize major points made, any decisions, and what next steps are to be taken. It is also helpful to ask for any recommendations about future meetings and topics.
- ☑ Stay for a short while after the meeting to answer any questions, talk with people, and discuss subjects in more detail than could be done in the meeting.
- ☑ Various records can be kept of meetings. Attendance lists placed at entrances or circulated during a meeting will provide a record of those who came to the meeting, their affiliations, and where they can be contacted. In addition to verbal summaries at the end of a meeting, notes, minutes, tape recordings, or transcripts can be taken, depending on how exact a record is wanted. Meeting records can be kept on file and made available on request, distributed, or summarized in a newsletter.

### **Public Hearings**

These are the most formal means for community participation and are the official events marking the culmination of this process. If other elements of community participation plans have worked well, hearings should produce no surprises or new data. They should be the summation of what has occurred throughout planning, reflecting the balance and range of considerations and points of view which have emerged earlier.

Since hearings are such important events, it is worth special effort to see that they work well. In addition to fulfilling legal requirements for the notice, conduct, and recording of hearings, planners can use several techniques to make hearings an effective means for community participation and interaction.

### **Public Hearing Suggestions:**

- ☑ In addition to legal advertisements, use other notices and newsletters to inform people of hearings. Include appropriate graphics in notices to clarify the subjects of hearings.
- ☑ Make hearing documents readily available to the public well in advance of the hearing. Put copies in city halls, libraries, field offices, and other places in the planning area. Inform the public of these materials and where they are located.
- ☑ In scheduling hearings, choose places and times convenient to participants. It is helpful to hold hearings in the affected community, and, if it is a large area, to hold separate sessions at different locations.



- ☑ If large numbers of people are expected to attend, the staff might establish a system of scheduling speakers, either before or at the hearing, so that people will know approximately when they can speak and how long they will have to wait. In some cases, it may be necessary to establish time limits for initial statements and have everyone speak once before some continue their statements or make additional comments. This will allow everyone a fair chance to speak without having a long wait while some people make lengthy statements. The hearing should remain in session or be continued until everyone has had reasonable opportunity to speak.
- ☑ Have materials available for people to use in making written statements if they do not want to speak or want to make both written and oral comments. It is helpful to develop questionnaires as an additional means for citizens to express their views.
- ☑ Make summary reports of hearing documents available to participants both prior to and at the hearing so they can review these in preparing their statements. Pertinent graphics, reports, and materials should be brought to the hearing for citizens to examine.
- ☑ In addition to making formal presentations at hearings, staff members should be available informally to talk with participants, explain graphics, answer questions, and discuss study materials. This will assist participants in preparing statements and will avoid some questions of fact or clarification coming up on the hearing floor.
- ☑ Inform hearing participants and the general public where and when the hearing transcript and written statements will be made available for public review. Let them know how a response will be made to their comments, how the hearing relates to decision making, and when a decision will be made. Following the decision, give feedback to the public on what it means, what was taken into account in making it, how the decision responds to community input, and what next steps will be taken. This feedback can be given through newsletters, press releases, meetings, letters to participants, and other public information and interaction methods.

**Assistance to the Community**

Planners can provide Explanatory Assistance, Organizational and Educational Assistance, and Special Technical Assistance in order to help citizens be more knowledgeable and effective participants.

**Explanatory Assistance**

This is the most common form of assistance which planners provide to participants. Much of it occurs in other elements of community participation plans, such as in the informal contact between staff and citizens, and in meetings where technical matters are explained and discussed. In most instances, however, there are participants who need additional explanatory assistance in order to properly understand the nature and implications of plans. This assistance can be provided through special materials, such

as primers, modified technical memoranda, or special graphics that are developed by the staff for participants. It can also be given in working sessions devoted to detailed explanation, discussion, and analysis of particular topics.

### **Organizational and Educational Assistance**

This responds to special needs which participants have beyond the level of explanation, but not of a degree that requires additional technical study. Such assistance often takes the form of planners working with community and organization leaders to help them relate more knowledgeably and systematically to constituents and issues. Planners can help leaders identify critical, shared concerns of constituents and suggest ways they can interpret and review options with constituents. Planners can provide organizational training by sharing ideas on techniques they use to communicate information, prepare written materials and graphics, and organize people into effective working groups.

Similarly, educational assistance can be given through training sessions and materials on procedural and technical aspects of transportation planning so that citizens are better equipped to understand and participate in transportation studies. In addition to providing information and materials, planners can also advise participants of issues they should consider or information they might gather on their own in order to contribute ideas and express positions more effectively. Planners can also provide organizational and educational assistance by working with a number of individuals and groups to help them understand others' views and to assist them in relating better to one another as they consider their shared interests and their differences. Providing these kinds of assistance is of help to planners as well as citizens, because citizens who are better organized and educated about transportation planning can more clearly and adequately express community concerns to planners.

### **Special Technical Assistance**

The need sometimes arises for additional technical studies—supplementary to other work—in order to provide information which is essential to the informed participation of certain groups. If a study does incorporate all of the important matters to be considered, then the need for such special technical assistance should be infrequent. If a matter is so pertinent to the study that more than a select group requires technical assistance, then the scope of the study probably needs to be modified. While special technical assistance studies are useful to the study as a whole and to the staff, their primary purpose should be to assist participant groups, and, therefore, they should be geared to their needs.

Special technical assistance might include breaking down existing traffic data into a finer level of detail and performing additional analyses to enable a community to understand what prevailing traffic conditions are in their area. It could be conducting a study of a neighborhood's special mobility problems to provide citizens and community leaders with information essential for them to accurately represent their



area's needs and interests, contribute their ideas for improvements, and evaluate and respond to alternative proposals.

### **Suggestions on Avoiding Problems:**

- ☑ Let participants know what standards, requirements, and constraints planners and plans must meet in legal, technical, and procedural matters. In this way, their expectations can be within the framework of what can be done properly and legally. Prevent misleading confusion between requirements, preferences, and options so that participants can see the full range of realistic choices available. Avoid confusion over the process of community participation by letting participants know what this process is and what opportunities are available for their participation. Be particularly clear about the relationship of participation to decision making. Identify those determinations to be made by the staff or decision makers which are not made in a participatory manner. For such decisions, also let citizens know who will make them, when, by what process, upon what criteria, and with what advice and input from others.
- ☑ Expose a broad range of views with balance and fairness, including minority viewpoints and ones different from those of the staff. Be prepared to act as a mediator between different views and interests. Seek the common ground of agreement from which people can work together to consider issues over which there is disagreement.
- ☑ Work toward the positive. Help participants translate their criticisms of plans into positive suggestions. Identify the best points of all views, find the points of agreement among these, and build on them.
- ☑ Separate planners' appropriate professional judgment from inappropriate opinions. Omit those personal opinions which do not have bearing on the plan and which serve to bias planners and participants. In matters which are pertinent to the plan, distinguish fact from opinion, the quantitative from the qualitative, the science from the intuition, and technical criteria from value considerations. While all of these are a legitimate part of a creative participatory planning process, they should be distinguished from one another. Likewise, acknowledge certainties, uncertainties, and unknowns so there is no confusion over these.
- ☑ Be willing to help participants learn and involve themselves actively and constructively in transportation planning. At the same time, do not underestimate their capabilities in understanding the issues, in being able to handle technical information, and in judging what is best for them.
- ☑ Be prepared to deal constructively with change and controversy. While these often make transportation planning more difficult, they are basic aspects of the participatory process. They help to keep planning in touch with community needs and desires and to foster debate of important questions in order to arrive at the best possible plans and decisions for the community.



☑ Finally, keep the planning process open. It is from an open process that transportation planners and community members develop the mutual confidence and trust that are essential for them to work together easily and productively.

Community participation is neither separate from, nor more or less important than other aspects of transportation planning, but an integral element of this process. Community participation does not solve all of the issues that arise and the problems planners face. All controversies cannot be settled, nor can consensus always be reached. Planners can never ensure that all people who should participate do so or that the participatory process represents all pertinent interests exactly and completely. Nevertheless, the community participation process does offer the means by which all interested citizens can have opportunities to participate, where a balance of interests can be sought, and where important issues can be addressed.

Creating an effective community participation process is clearly a difficult and important job for transportation planners. However, this job is easier if approached with an understanding of community participation, with skills in working with participants, and with confidence that the effort is worthwhile.

Then community participation will be positive, useful, and advancing for both the community and transportation planners [*An Introduction to Community Participation in the Transportation Planning Process* (USDOT, FHWA. March 1976)].

### **Open Houses**

With an informal technique such as open houses, staff should conduct them as follows:

- ☑ Multiple staff persons, who are specialists, are able to present information to a wide range of public inquiry.
- ☑ Staff must understand what their areas are representing, what information needs to be presented, and what other areas are available to the public. Supplying staff with notes and outlines prior to the presentation is helpful.
- ☑ The use of physical displays, maps, charts, and handouts must be carefully selected to present enough visual information that those citizens desiring limited information can receive it and at the same time generate detailed questions and comments from other participants. Participants are then able to listen in on informal discussions without being obligated to a time frame.
- ☑ The use of physical displays such as posters, aerial photographs, maps, handouts, audiovisuals, etc., require proper planning and organization. Staff needs to work together to produce them and determine their clarity to the public.



- All materials should be completed far enough in advance to allow ample internal review of all materials for accuracy, make needed revisions, and conduct a dress rehearsal of the meeting.
- All materials should be designed to be as self-explanatory as possible with necessary keys, texts, references, etc., supplied. This reduces the demand on available staff, allowing them to focus on listening to the public's concerns and answering more detailed questions.

Federal laws require that when conducting participation technique(s), the public must have reasonable access to documents and plans. This may include:

- Mailing to a full list of known interested parties of the availability of the document and process/deadline for public comment
- Press releases or public service announcements in the major media to the general public of the availability of the document
- The deadline being far enough in the future (30- to 60-day minimum) to allow for enough time for thorough review
- Placement of the document in public libraries in the affected geographic area at the beginning of the review period
- Designation of a public information officer (PIO) to answer basic inquiries
- Availability of a summary document in accessible formats (free of charge) to anyone who requests it
- Provision of the full document (printing and/or postage charges may apply) to anyone who requests it (Younger, p. 7).

Within the participation technique, the public should receive a comment sheet that allows them to give written comments to staff that can then become a part of the final report of the public participation plan. The comment sheet should follow a general format that the public will find easy to use. Staff may want to ask one or two questions on the comment sheet that they specifically want answered by the public.

When conducting public participation techniques, staff needs to consider the needs of the public. This consideration of their needs allows for a trusting relationship between the public and staff and creates a responsive public participation process that is in the best interest of the public.

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## STEP 6—Evaluate Effectiveness of the Participation Technique(s)

### Step 6— Evaluate Effectiveness of the Participation Techniques

*Do the citizens believe that their voice was heard and mattered?*

**The MPO shall include public involvement into consideration for approval.**

**Generally, the UDC shall evaluate public participation based upon:**

- Is there documentation in the plan or product showing that Steps 1–5 have been completed?
- Did the participation completed fulfill the identified Participation Goals and Objectives?

Throughout each step of the public participation methodology, the MPO should evaluate each step's effectiveness in accomplishing step objectives, as well as the overall goals of the public participation plan.

The MPO should consider the following questions in the evaluation of each step:

- Are the originally defined objectives still viable and reasonable?
- Were all of the affected stakeholders identified?
- Do the techniques selected seem reasonable?
- Did the public receive timely and effective notification?
- Were the techniques that were employed successful so that citizens believe that their voice was heard and mattered?

After the public participation techniques have been completed and evaluated, the MPO, as a part of its consideration for approval, will determine whether the plan has achieved the overall participation objectives and provided adequate public participation to be incorporated into the product. A major tool in evaluating the effectiveness of public participation is documenting the level of effort expended to stimulate public participation, in the plan documents or in the project documents. The following questions can be addressed in documenting the effort to ensure public participation:

- How many press releases were distributed?
- How many emails were distributed?
- How many news stories were generated by the media?
- How many direct mail letters were sent?
- How many days did the website have information on the project?
- To how many groups was the information presented?
- How many meetings were held on the plan or project?



- How many comments were received about the plan or project?
- How many participants were at the meetings?

The overall evaluation process should afford the public an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness and fairness of the public participation plan. A section of the comment sheet distributed during the participation technique step should contain questions regarding the portion of the process in which the public has participated. The MPO will accept comments regarding the public participation process at any time. The project's participation plan should include the body that will recommend changes and the body that will approve the plan or project. This will then help set the stage for a section in each plan or project documenting the level of effort in public participation. The approving body will then be able to consider public participation input in the decision to approve, defer, or disapprove the plan or project.

#### **Federal Objective**

Public meetings that are well attended, frequent news coverage on transportation issues, public forums where a broad representation of diverse interests is in attendance, and plans, TIPS, and project designs which reflect an understanding and consideration of public input are all indicators that the public participation process is effective (FHWA/FTA, #3).

**1** GOALS**2** STAKEHOLDERS**3** METHODS**4** NOTIFICATION**5** IMPLEMENTATION**6** EVALUATION**7** INCORPORATION

## STEP 7—Incorporate the Results of the Participation

### Step 7—Incorporate the Results of the Participation

#### Who should incorporate the results?

The MPO with recommendations of CAC and TAC and approval by UDC.

#### How should results be incorporated?

The MPO should state how the documented participation has changed the plan or product. The CAC, TAC, and committee/stakeholder, if applicable, may also change the product based upon the documented participation.

### How do the citizens know if public participation has made a difference?

The final step within the public participation plan is to incorporate (when appropriate) the results of the public's participation into the product. Sectors of the public tend to be skeptical about whether public participation does influence decisions within the transportation planning process. Others feel that the transportation planning process is too long-term or speculative to justify their participation. By designing a democratic process where people have the opportunities to debate issues, frame alternative solutions, and effect final decisions, public skepticism should dissipate.

The MPO should identify how the results of the public participation techniques are to be specifically reviewed and analyzed for incorporation into the product. As a part of the project's participation plan, a section in each participation plan should document how public input has created changes, if any, to the plan or project. The approving body will then be able to take the documented changes or additions into consideration for their decision to approve, defer, or disapprove the plan or project.

This following information should be discussed with the stakeholders.

State DOTs and MPOs should incorporate input from the public into decision making, when warranted, with the understanding that not all parties will get exactly what they want. However, the public must receive assurance that its input is valued and considered in decision making so that it feels that the time and energy expended in getting involved is meaningful and worthwhile. To do this, State DOTs and MPOs should both maintain records of public involvement activities, input, comments, and concerns, as well as document requests for information and responses to input received during the public involvement process. Agencies can keep records and provide feedback in a variety of ways. Techniques for providing feedback include: regularly published newsletters, special inserts into general circulation newspapers, radio programs, telephone hotlines with project updates public access television programs, and reports or publications describing how projects or programs are progressing. (FHWA/FTA, #13)



Stakeholders shall be informed how public participation input and/or comments will be analyzed, considered, addressed, and incorporated into the plan and/or product. Addressing comments and questions in thank-you postcards or follow-up phone calls may instill a feeling of fairness in the process.

## Outcome—“The Decision”

The process of public participation will ensure the public has the opportunity to be included in the decision-making process. The decision is the outcome. Each outcome will vary. The goal for each outcome is consensus, where everyone agrees to the decision. However, it is understood that consensus will not be possible in every situation. Ensuring the process is fair and allowing everyone an opportunity to be included will result in better decisions.

With each project specific public participation plan (see Appendix A), the advisory bodies that make recommendations for the plan or project should be identified (e.g., CAC, TAC, the Planning Commission, the Parks Board, PTAB, or other advisory bodies). In addition, approval should be defined to help determine how the plan or project should be used by the MPO in the future. To do that, the MPO should ask the following questions:

- Is the MPO formulating new or changed policies with this plan?  
*If so, the action of the UDC is to have all MPO entities follow the plan policies.*
- Is the approval of a plan, product or budget to help implement policies for a specific project?  
*If so, the action of the UDC is to have all MPO entities follow the implementation of the product, budget, or plan as adopted.*
- Is the approval a step toward final approval from other government bodies (federal, state, or local)?  
*For example the recommended highway alignment should advance to Phase II (Environmental Assessment approved by FHWA) as the Preferred Build Alternative.*

Therefore, each project-specific plan should define and determine the significance of an approved plan or product. To do this, each decision should be linked back to the goals and objectives in Step 1.

## **Public Participation Procedures within the Committee Process**

Public participation opportunities within the local transportation planning committee process are numerous. These opportunities are designed to promote early and ongoing public participation that is incorporated into the committee decision-making process. The following section outlines the various specific procedural requirements for public participation activities within the local transportation planning committee process. The MPO and the general public may use this section of the Public Participation Plan as a guide to the various procedural requirements as well as to the opportunities available for public participation in the local process.

### **Transportation Planning Committees**

The local transportation planning process operates through a hierarchical committee structure, consisting of a policy board and two advisory committees that review, discuss, and approve all local transportation products. Federal, state, and local governmental staff collect and process transportation-related data, complete reports, and conduct various studies that are used as the basis for decision making within the local transportation planning committee process. The public is relied upon to provide input at every stage in the process.

#### **Citizens Advisory Committee**

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was organized in 1977 to provide a process for receiving citizen input into the overall transportation planning process. The CAC's membership is drawn from a broad range of various community groups, as well as concerned citizens, and its meetings are generally held bimonthly beginning in January of each calendar year. The CAC's meetings are open to the public and the media.

While the CAC does not have approval authority, its role in reviewing transportation products and making recommendations from the citizens' viewpoint is considered crucial to a balanced process.

#### **Technical Advisory Committee**

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed in 1976 as a means of providing technical review and analysis of transportation products. The membership of the TAC is composed of federal, state, and local technical staff, as well as local representatives of the various major modes of transportation. The TAC's meetings are held bimonthly and are open to the public and the media.

One of the most important roles fulfilled by the TAC is that its meetings serve as the forum for conducting official public meetings on all of the federally required products of the local transportation planning process. It is during these public meetings that the public is afforded the opportunity to have technical questions concerning particular projects or plans answered, in addition to having their comments and concerns entered into the record of the proceedings.

In addition to public input, the TAC also considers the input of the CAC.



## Urbanized Development Commission

The Urbanized Development Commission (UDC) is the local policy board for all transportation planning decisions in the Sioux Falls metropolitan area. The requirement for the UDC's existence is found in federal legislation, and its local authority for acting in this capacity is found in the Memorandum of Understanding that has been entered into by the state and the local units of government involved in the process.

The UDC's voting membership is composed primarily of local elected officials from each of the units of government involved in the local process. The UDC also meets bimonthly, and its meetings are open to the public and media.

The UDC's main responsibility as the policy board of the local process is to review and approve all Sioux Falls-area transportation plans and products. While the UDC considers the recommendations from the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) when making its decisions, the UDC is not bound to follow the recommendations.

## Meeting Notification

The advanced meeting notification methods, requirements, and target audience varies slightly among the different committees of the process because of either state legal requirements or the type of event occurring during a meeting. The following explains how meeting notification is conducted for each of the three committees.

### CAC Meetings

*CAC members are notified of meetings by a mailed agenda packet at least seven days in advance of all regular meetings and at least 24 hours in advance of all special meetings.*

### TAC Meetings

TAC members are notified of meetings by a mailed agenda packet at least seven days in advance of all regular meetings and at least 24 hours in advance of all special meetings. When public meetings on major process documents are to be held during a TAC meeting, public notice of the meeting is published no later than seven days prior to the meeting in all metropolitan planning study area legal newspapers.

### UDC Meetings

UDC members are notified of meetings by a mailed agenda packet at least seven days in advance of all regular meetings and at least 24 hours in advance of all special meetings. The following requirements also apply to UDC meetings:

- **Required Notice Under South Dakota Open Meeting Laws**—The Sioux Falls City Council, Lincoln County Commission, and Minnehaha County Commission each have an official quorum of their respective bodies serving as members of the UDC. Therefore, the local process must adhere to the following state statute:



*All public bodies shall provide public notice, with proposed agenda, at least 24 hours prior to any meeting, by posting a copy of the notice, visible to the public, at the principal office of the public body holding the meeting, and for special or rescheduled meetings, delivering, in person, by mail or by telephone, the information in the notice to members of the local news media who have requested notice. For special or rescheduled meetings, all public bodies shall also comply with the public notice provisions of this section for regular meetings to the extent that circumstances permit. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor (SDCL § 1-25-1.1).*

In order to comply with this state statute, the following actions will be conducted:

1. SECOG (Southeastern Council of Governments) staff will provide the Sioux Falls City Clerk’s Office, the Lincoln County Auditor’s Office, and the Minnehaha County Commission Office with a copy of the upcoming UDC agenda at least seven days prior to all regular meetings and at least 24 hours prior to special meetings for posting in a prominent location in each body’s principal office. In the event that an emergency meeting of the UDC is called, notice of the meeting will be posted as circumstances permit.
  2. SECOG staff shall notify all metropolitan planning study area local broadcast and print media of all regular or special UDC meetings via facsimile or direct mail at least 48 hours in advance of such meetings.
- **UDC Meetings Conducted by Teleconference**—Should circumstances warrant that the UDC conduct a regular or special meeting by teleconference, the following actions will be conducted. (Note that the statutory definition of “teleconference” is “any information exchanged by audio or video medium.”)
    1. SECOG staff will provide the same public notice of any teleconference meetings as is required under SDCL § 1-25-1.1 (see above).
    2. SECOG staff will provide a place for the public to participate in the meeting by speakerphone.
    3. SECOG staff will ensure that all votes taken during a teleconference meeting of the UDC are roll call votes.

**Notification of Others**

Interested parties (see Appendix C) who have requested to be notified of meetings are notified by a mailed agenda and copy of the preceding meeting’s minutes at least seven days in advance of all regular meetings and at least 24 hours in advance of all special meetings.



Agendas and previous meeting minutes are available on the SECOG Internet home page at [www.secog.org](http://www.secog.org) or through a link from the City of Sioux Falls Internet home page at [www.siouxfalls.org](http://www.siouxfalls.org).

Any special events being conducted are either publicly advertised or the stakeholders are notified through a direct mailing detailing the event.

### **Public Comment Procedures**

Public comments on all transportation-related issues are welcome during meetings of the CAC, TAC, and UDC. Public comments shall be accepted in the following manner:

- **Public Input Agenda Item**—Each of the transportation planning committees shall include on its agenda an item entitled “Public Input.” During this agenda item, any member of the public that is present wishing to address the committee on any matter not on the published agenda may do so. An individual’s comment period shall be limited to three minutes. The appropriate staff will provide that member of the public with a response to their concern either during the meeting or in a reasonable amount of time following the meeting.
- **Specific Agenda Item Comments**—After an agenda item is presented to a committee, the Chair or Vice-Chair shall afford any member of the public the opportunity to speak to the item, pro or con. An individual’s comment period shall be limited to three minutes. Following the public comment period of the agenda item, the committee shall begin its discussion or action on the agenda item.
- **Formal TAC Public Meetings**—Following the presentation of a particular agenda item, the TAC chair or vice chair shall open the public meeting and afford any member of the public who is present with the opportunity to speak to the item. An individual’s comment period shall be limited to five minutes. Following all public comments, the TAC chair or vice chair shall close the public meeting and the TAC shall begin its discussion or action on the agenda item.
- **Written Comments**—Members of the public who are unable to attend an official public meeting are able to submit their written comments (see Table 1, page 37) for a specified period of time following the public meeting.
- **Significant Comments**—The MPO must include a summary, analysis, and report regarding how significant comments were responded to as part of the final Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvements Program.
- **Elected/Constituent Relationship**—Comments into the local process may also be received through the elected official/constituent relationship that exists between most of the UDC members and their constituents.



## Local Transportation Planning Products

The MPO may develop a multitude of products during any given year. Many are federally required to be produced or conducted by the local process, while others are voluntarily produced by the process to be used as tools to manage transportation-related data and support better transportation planning decision making. Some products are reviewed and approved by the committees on an annual basis, while others are reviewed and approved less frequently.

The products produced by the MPO are available to be reviewed by the public at principal office locations of the local governmental entities, public libraries, and online.

The following table identifies the various products that are produced, updated, or undertaken by the local transportation planning process. The table also identifies the frequency of the update, the committee action required, and the public participation requirements of each product.



**Table 1**  
**Sioux Falls MPO**  
**Metropolitan Transportation Planning Products**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Participation Goal (See Step 1)</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Public Hearing(s) Required?</b>
Long-Range Transportation Plan	Every 5 years	Early and Continuous Contribution	Approval Required	Yes* 2 public hearings 14-day comment period
Transportation Improvements Program & Air Quality Certification	Annually	Inform and Understand	Approval Required	Yes* 2 public hearings 14-day comment period
Public Participation Plan Update	As Needed	Resolution of Issues and Policies	Approval Required	Yes* 2 public hearings 45-day comment period
Long-Range Transportation Plan Minor Update	As Needed	Inform and Understand	Approval Required	Yes* 1 public hearing
Unified Planning Work Program	Annually	Inform and Understand	Approval Required	Yes* 1 public hearing
Metropolitan Planning Organization Operations Plan Update	As Needed	Inform and Understand	Approval Required	No
Transportation Improvements Program Amendments	As Needed	Inform and Understand	Approval Required	No
Unified Planning Work Program Amendments	As Needed	Inform and Understand	Approval Required	No
Transit Development Program	As Needed	Resolution of Issues and Policies	Approval Required	No
Bicycle Plan	Every 5 years	Resolution of Issues and Policies	Approval Required	No
Pedestrian Plan	Every 5 years	Resolution of Issues and Policies	Approval Required	No
Special Studies	As Needed	Varies by Type of Study	Approval Required	No
Transportation System Management Efficiency Report	Annually	Inform and Understand	Informational	No
Safety Management System Report	Annually	Inform and Understand	Informational	No
Traffic Volume Counts Report	Annually	Inform and Understand	Informational	No
Land Use Report	Annually	Inform and Understand	Informational	No
Coordinated Public Transit—Human Services Transportation Plan	As Needed	Inform and Understand	Informational	No
Transportation Enhancement Grant Applications	As Needed	Inform and Understand	Informational	No

*Note: All MPO transportation products requiring approval shall first include the approval of a project specific Public Participation Plan (see Appendix A) prior to public participation activities.*

*\*See additional public hearing requirements on the next page.*



**Committee Approval of Transportation Planning Products**—Committee review and approval of metropolitan transportation planning products follow specific procedures that include review by each of the three transportation planning committees, with final approval by the Urbanized Development Commission (UDC).

**Approval Procedure for Products**—The approval process for any products begins with review by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC discusses the product and provides its comments.

Next, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviews the product. The TAC discusses the product and provides any comments. Following its review, the CAC and TAC make a recommendation to the UDC.

Finally, the Urbanized Development Commission (UDC) reviews the product. The UDC is informed of any comments from the other committees as well as their recommendations. Following its review, the UDC then votes to either approve, modify, or reject the product. A vote by the UDC approving the product finishes the process. However, a vote to modify or reject the product would require modifications to the product and additional committee review prior to final approval.

**Public Hearing Requirements for Federally-Required Products**—In addition to the above approval procedure, federally required products include a requirement that public notices are published, formal public meetings are conducted, and in some cases, public comment periods are held in conjunction with the committee review process.

**Public Notices:** This document requires the publication of either one or two public notices in all MPO planning study area legal newspapers. Each public notice will be published at least seven days prior to the TAC's public hearing.

**Public Hearings:** This document requires either one or two public hearings during review by the TAC and that the public hearings are held at accessible locations and times. When two public hearings are required, a 14-day (45 days are required for a Public Participation Plan) comment period begins after the first public meeting conducted by the TAC.

The products subject to this approval procedure include:

### **Two Public Hearings and Public Notices**

- Long-Range Transportation Plan (with 14-day comment period)
- Transportation Improvements Program and Air Quality Certification (with 14-day comment period)
- Public Participation Plan (with 45-day comment period)



## One Public Hearing and Public Notice

- Long-Range Transportation Plan Minor Updates (e.g., addition of projects consistent with policies)
- Unified Planning Work Program

**Approval Procedure for MPO Planning Products**—Several other process products require final approval action by the Urbanized Development Commission (UDC). The approval process for these do not require that public notices, formal public hearings, or comment periods be conducted.

- Transportation Improvements Program Amendments
- Unified Planning Work Program Amendments
- MPO Operations Plan
- Bicycle Plan
- Pedestrian Plan
- Transit Development Program
- Special Study Reports

**Informational Products**—Several additional products, which are used by the local transportation planning process and committees in decision making, are produced throughout the year by the MPO. The following products are presented to the committees as informational items and do not require approval:

- Transportation System Management Efficiency Report
- Safety Management System Report
- Traffic Volume Counts Report
- Land Use Report
- Transportation Enhancement Grant Applications



## Federal Public Participation Regulations

This section highlights the federal regulations that direct the public involvement process in local transportation planning. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the source document where such regulations are found. The CFR can be found online at [www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html). Listed below are the current regulations pertaining to public participation in local transportation planning.

### Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation, 23CFR450.316

- (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
  - (1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
    - (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
    - (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
    - (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
    - (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
    - (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
    - (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
    - (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;



- (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public participation efforts;
  - (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public participation and consultation processes under Subpart B of this part; and
  - (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
- (2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
- (3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- (b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:
- (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
  - (2) Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide nonemergency transportation services; and
  - (3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.
- (c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.



- (d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.

### **Planning Assistance and Standards TITLE 49 PART 613**

#### **Subpart A—Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming**

613.100 Metropolitan transportation planning and programming.

The regulations in 23 CFR 450, Subpart C, shall be followed in complying with the requirements of this subpart. The definitions in 23 CFR 450, Subpart A, shall apply. [72 FR 7285, Feb. 14, 2007]

#### **Subpart B—Statewide Transportation Planning and Programming**

613.200 Statewide transportation planning and programming.

The regulations in 23 CFR 450, Subpart B, shall be followed in complying with the requirements of this subpart. The definitions in 23 CFR 450, Subpart A, shall apply. [72 FR 7285, Feb. 14, 2007]

#### **Subpart C—Coordination of Federal and Federally Assisted Programs and Projects**

613.300 Coordination of Federal and federally assisted programs and projects.

The coordination of Federal and federally assisted programs and projects implementing OMB revised Circular No. A-95, which are set forth in 23 CFR Part 420, Subpart C, are incorporated into this subpart. [41 FR 33443, Aug. 9, 1976]

### **Statewide Transportation Planning 23 USC 135**

#### **(a) General Requirements.**

(4) Process of development. The process for developing the plans and programs shall provide for consideration of all modes of transportation and shall be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate, based on the complexity of the transportation problems to be addressed.



(e) Long-Range Transportation Plan.

(3) Participation by interested parties. In developing the long-range transportation plan, the State shall.

(A) provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed plan; and

(f) State Transportation Improvement Program.

(1) Development.

(C) Participation by interested parties. In developing the program, the Governor shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, providers of freight transportation services, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed program.

**Prohibition Against Exclusion from Participation In, Denial of Benefits of, and Discrimination Under Federally Assisted Programs on Ground of Race, Color, or National Origin 42 USC 2000d**

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**23 USC 134 Metropolitan Planning**

(g) Development of Long-Range Transportation Plan.

(4) Participation by interested parties. Before approving a long-range transportation plan, each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the long-range transportation plan, in a manner that the secretary deems appropriate

(h) Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.—

(1) Development.—

(B) Opportunity for comment. In developing the program, the metropolitan planning organization, in cooperation with the State and any affected public transit operator, shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency



employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed program.

(4) Notice and comment. Before approving a transportation improvement program, a metropolitan planning organization shall, in cooperation with the State and any affected public transit operator, provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with reasonable notice of and an opportunity to comment on the proposed program.



## Bibliography

“An Introduction to Community Participation in the Transportation Planning Process.” United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. March 1976.

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“FHWA/FTA Questions and Answers on Public Participation in Transportation Decisionmaking.” United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. April 1995.

“Public Participation.” NEPA and the Transportation Decision Making Process. United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. February 1999.

“Public Participation Techniques for Transportation Decisionmaking.” United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. September 1996.

Younger, Kristina. “Public Participation: The ISTEA Planner’s Workbook.” The Surface Transportation Policy Project. October 1994.



## Appendices

- A. Project Specific Public Participation Plan—The Sioux Falls MPO Seven-Step Process
- B. Consultation Process with Government and Environmental Agencies
- C. Sioux Falls MPO Interested Parties



## Appendix A

Project: \_\_\_\_\_ UDC Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Project Specific Public Participation Plan The Sioux Falls MPO Seven-Step Process

Public involvement should not merely be conducting public meetings to meet federal regulations, but rather, public involvement should consist of providing access to information and addressing stakeholder’s concerns. Doing so may have an effect on the outcome of the decisions. Therefore, prior to the development of any transportation product, staff should implement the following seven-step process, review each step’s corresponding section in the PPP, and design a public participation plan specific to the product.

**Step 1 Goals:** What is the public participation goal?

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**Step 2 Stakeholders:** Who are the stakeholders?

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**Step 3 Methods:** What public participation methods for interacting with the public will be utilized?

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**Step 4 Notification:** What notification techniques will be used to inform the public?

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**Step 5 Implementation:** Where, when, and how will the public participation techniques be implemented?

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**Step 6 Evaluation:** What documentation will the plan or product include to fulfill the identified participation goals and objectives?

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**Step 7 Incorporate:** How will the participation documentation be reviewed, and how will any necessary changes to the plan or product be made?

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**Outcome or Decision:** Who recommends and approves the plan or product? What is the significance of the approval of the plan or product? (Refer to Step 1.)

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## Appendix B

### Consultation Process with Government and Environmental Agencies

As stated in Title 23 Part 450.315 (e) “MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under §450.314.”

The Sioux Falls MPO will consult and coordinate with agencies and officials when completing transportation planning activities as appropriate to the transportation planning activity. As defined in steps one through seven of the Public Participation Plan, the type of planning activity will determine the agencies and officials who should be involved and the appropriate methods of consulting and coordinating with those resource agencies and officials. Stakeholders involved in the process will include a list of interested parties as included in Appendix C. If environmental information is needed in a special study or other transportation, the public involvement plan will include environmental agencies and local land use agencies as a stakeholder.

### Long-Range Transportation Plan Consultation

Consultation with environmental resource agencies should be a goal of the Long-Range Transportation Plan to link NEPA and Planning. This goal includes early agency environmental coordination that will allow public involvement, alternative consideration, and environmental information to help determine how a project may have to be altered or changed to help create a more streamlined environmental review process once it does reach the formal consultation stage. The new policy above also has been interpreted to also require that Long-Range Transportation Plans shall include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities at the policy level. In addition, the consultation of the environment should also take into consideration the opportunities to enhance and to improve the quality of life. This may include recommendations for new open space that should be preserved based upon opportunities for purchase, dedication, easements, and zoning restrictions for environmental sensitive lands.

The environmental consultation with resource agencies shall include the following general format:

1. Letters shall be sent to resource agencies and local land-use agencies asking for information in regard to overall environmental inventories or other environmental issues.
2. Organize and hold a sit-down meeting to discuss potential long-range transportation projects, future growth areas, potential open space opportunities, and proposed goals and policies.
3. Send a draft Long-Range Transportation Plan to all applicable resource agencies and land use agencies requesting comments allowing adequate time for comments.
4. All comments from resource agencies and local land use agencies shall be documented within the public involvement plan section of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

## Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Consultation

Because the Transportation Improvement Plan is implementing the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the environmental resource agencies and local land use agencies in South Dakota have requested that only a copy of the approved TIP be mailed after it is approved. This should keep all resource agencies and land use agencies up-to-date on the status of upcoming transportation projects. All resource agencies and land use agencies will be notified with the TIP submittal to provide comments of any concerns that they might have with any of the programmed projects.

### *Title 23 Part 450.315 (b)*

*In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:*

- (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;*
- (2) Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide nonemergency transportation services; and*
- (3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.*

## Tribal Indian Lands Consultation

Sioux Falls' MPA does not contain Indian Tribal lands. Therefore, the Sioux Falls MPO will not be consulting with Indian Tribal governments on a regular basis. If a transportation planning activity occurs where there is overlap into Indian Tribal lands, the MPO will consult with Indian Tribal governments as appropriate.

### *Title 23 Part 450.315 (c)*

*When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.*

## Federal Public Lands Consultation

Sioux Falls' MPA does not contain federal public lands. Therefore, the Sioux Falls MPO will not be consulting with federal land management agencies on a regular basis. If a transportation planning activity occurs where there is overlap into federal public lands, the MPO will consult with federal land management agencies as appropriate.

### *Title 23 Part 450.315 (d)*

*When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.*



## Appendix C

### Sioux Falls MPO Interested Parties

**Group/Organization**

**Preferred Method of Contact**

1	Multi-Cultural Center	mccsf@msn.com, 367-7400
2	North Central Chapter PVA	ryang@ncpva.org, 336-0494
3	Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce	sweber@siouxfalls.com
4	United Daycare	judyjacobs7@yahoo.com
5	Cathedral Historic Society	632 W 9th St, SFSD 57104-3606
6	Sioux Falls School District	bill.smith@k12.sd.us
7	City of Sioux Falls Planning Department	dgaikowski@siouxfalls.org
8	South Dakota Achieve	jeff.nichols@achievesd.org
9	Home Builders Association of the Sioux Empire	todd@hbsiouxempire.com
10	Realtor Association of the Sioux Empire	barton@rase-inc.org, 334-4752
11	Harrisburg School	jim.holbeck@k12.sd.us
12	South Dakota Voices for Children	srandall@sdvoicesforchildren.org, 367-9667
13	Lincoln & Minnehaha Co. Econ. Dev. Assoc.	jeffe@siouxfalls.com
14	Sioux Falls Vet Center	brian.wellin@va.gov 601 S Cliff Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57104
15	The Center for Active Generations	pnikolas@cfag.org
16	Falls Area Bicycle Club	mytzpyk@yahoo.com
17	Senior Companion Program of South Dakota	jholiway@good-sam.com sdscp@good-sam.com
18	Siouxland Heritage Museum	367-4210, 200 W 6th St, Sioux Falls, SD 57104
19	United Way	lori@seuw.org
20	Project Car	327 S Dakota Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57104
21	Center for Active Generations	klueth@cfag.org & pnikolas@cfag.org,
22	Center for Disabilities	judy.struck@usd.edu & rose.moehring@usd.edu
23	National MS Society	patty.brooks@nmss.org, 336-6326,
24	Literacy Council	1000 N. West Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104
25	Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities	Julie.Johnson@state.sd.us, 367-5250
26	Minnehaha Republican Party	minnofc.gop@midconetwork.com