

New Bern Area  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization

# Public Involvement Plan (PIP)



*Adopted: 11/16/2023*

This page left intentionally blank.

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Overview .....	5
<b>2. Purpose.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Goals .....	5
2.2 Objectives .....	6
<b>3. New Bern Area MPO Board Meetings.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) .....	6
3.2 Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC).....	6
3.3 TAC and TCC Meetings .....	6
3.4 Public Comment Period during Meetings .....	7
<b>4. Outreach Efforts .....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Stakeholder Interviews .....	7
4.2 Publicize NBAMPO Activities .....	7
4.3 Maintain a Website.....	8
4.4 Develop and Distribute Brochures and Fact Sheets.....	8
4.5 Conduct Public Informational Workshops, Charrettes and Public Open Houses .....	8
4.6 E-Subscription Lists .....	8
4.7 Conduct Surveys .....	9
4.8 Create Newsletters.....	9
4.9 Social Media .....	9
4.10 Visualization Techniques.....	9
<b>5. Responding to Public Comments .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. Specific Guidelines.....</b>	<b>10</b>
6.1 Public Comment for MTP, UPWP, CTP, and MTIP .....	10
6.2 Public Involvement Plan (PIP).....	10
6.3 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) .....	10
6.4 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) .....	11
6.5 Annual Obligations Listing.....	12
6.6 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) .....	12
6.7 Publication of CARTS Program of Projects (POP) .....	12
6.8 Plan Specific Chart .....	13
<b>7. Modifications to Plan Specific Documents .....</b>	<b>13</b>
7.1 Administrative Modification .....	13
7.2 Formal Amendment.....	13
<b>8. Federal Requirements.....</b>	<b>14</b>
8.1 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) .....	14
8.2 National Environmental Policy Act .....	15
8.3 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.....	15
8.4 Title VI – Environmental Justice .....	15
8.5 FTA Circular 9030.1E Chapter 5, Section 6C.....	18
8.6 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 .....	19
8.7 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency .....	19
8.8 Executive Order 12898, USDOT Order 5610.2(a), and FHWA Order 6640.23A.....	19
8.9 Department of Transportation Update Environmental Justice Order 5610.2(a) .....	20
8.10 Addressing Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations .....	20

This page left intentionally blank.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Public participation in the regional transportation planning process for the New Bern Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (NBAMPO) is guided by this Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The plan outlines recommended methods to engage the public during the transportation planning and decision-making process and informs members of the public how they can be involved.

Public participation is an integral part of the transportation planning process. The information and perspectives provided through public participation assist decision-makers and lead to a more meaningful and comprehensive planning process. Good public participation techniques allow plans to identify issues and understand aspects of the transportation system directly from its users that may be missed when considering a project from a purely technical point of view. Effective transportation planning must include the participation of those whose everyday lives are affected by how they are able to get to work, home, school, stores, and services.

The NBAMPO is responsible for conducting a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process for all members within the NBAMPO area. The NBAMPO must plan for the movement of both people and goods within the NBAMPO boundaries by all modes of travel, including highways, public transportation, bicycles, and pedestrians. It also plans for the connections (such as airports, seaports, buses, and railroads) linking these modes and connecting the greater New Bern area.

# 2. Purpose

The purpose of the NBAMPO Public Involvement Plan is to create an open decision-making process whereby citizens have the opportunity to be involved in all stages of the transportation planning process. This policy is designed to ensure that transportation decisions will reflect public priorities.

## 2.1 Goals

The goals of the NBAMPO's Public Involvement Plan are:

- **Educate** the public regarding the role of transportation planning and the decision making process;
- **Inform** the public of transportation meetings, events, projects and objectives;
- **Involve** the public by providing as many possible involvement opportunities in the transportation planning process and decision making;
- **Reach** out to all communities in the planning area to educate, inform and involve; and
- **Evaluate** and improve the public involvement process by reviewing this policy yearly for potential improvements and compliance with federal law.

## 2.2 Objectives

- Bring a broad cross-section of the public into the public policy and transportation planning decision-making process;
- Maintain public involvement from the early stages of the planning process through detailed project development;
- Use different combinations of public involvement techniques to meet the diverse needs of the general public;
- Determine the public's knowledge of the metropolitan transportation system and the public's values and attitudes concerning transportation;
- Educate citizens and elected officials in order to increase general understanding of transportation issues; and
- Make technical and other information available to the public.

## 3. New Bern Area MPO Board Meetings

### 3.1 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC is the policy and decision-making body for the NBAMPO. The TAC is comprised of elected and appointed officials from the City of New Bern, Town of Trent Woods, Town of River Bend, Town of Bridgeton, Craven County, and the North Carolina Board of Transportation. The TAC is ultimately responsible for providing opportunities for citizen participation in the transportation planning process.

### 3.2 Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

The TCC provides the general review, guidance, and coordination of the transportation planning process for the planning area and has the responsibility for making recommendations to the TAC regarding any actions relating to the continuing transportation planning process.

The TCC is comprised of technical experts from local and state governmental agencies directly related to and concerned with the transportation planning process for the planning area. Membership shall include, but not be limited to, representatives from all of the member agencies.

### 3.3 TAC and TCC Meetings

Meetings of the TAC and TCC are open to the public. The schedule of meetings and past meeting materials are available on MPO's website. If the meeting is virtual, information on how to participate in the meeting will be published on the NBAMPO website which will include a public comment period for both TCC and TAC meetings. Prior to each meeting, a contact list of interested parties receives reminder notices, meeting agendas, and other material. (To join this list, please contact a NBAMPO staff member.) Persons with disabilities needing auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact the MPO office no later than 48 hours in advance of a meeting to make

appropriate arrangements for their attendance.

### 3.4 Public Comment Period during Meetings

Prior to the start of the public comment period, people wishing to address the TCC or TAC Board will sign up before the meeting. The Chairman will collect the sign-up sheet and recognize speakers in the order they are registered. Speakers will address the Board and will be asked to provide their name and address for the record.

Each speaker shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes and each speaker will only be allowed to speak once during this public comment period. A staff member will serve as the timekeeper and will promptly announce when the speaker's time has expired. A speaker's time cannot be yielded or transferred from one speaker to another.

The Board at its discretion may engage in conversation and/or take action such as directing staff to investigate or add the topic to a future agenda.

## 4. Outreach Efforts

The MPO will seek public input through a variety of techniques, including public notices, comment periods, workshops, charrettes, public hearings, newsletters, surveys, media relations, etc. The techniques employed will vary, depending on the specific planning task. Several options are outlined below but are not inclusive.

### 4.1 Stakeholder Interviews

A stakeholder is defined as any person or group that is affected by a transportation plan, program or project, including those who are not aware they will be affected. Individuals will include the general public; environmental, health, neighborhood, citizen and civic organizations; and, traditionally underserved communities such as people with disabilities, and/or low-income, minority, and elderly.

Ongoing meetings with stakeholders will be conducted to share information and for the MPO to receive feedback on transportation issues throughout the community and region.

### 4.2 Publicize NBAMPO Activities

Media coverage will be actively cultivated to ensure that mainstream and ethnic radio, television and newspaper outlets understand the importance of providing information on transportation planning activities. In addition, articles, news releases and/or media releases will be used to disseminate information to announce public review and comment period and public meetings.

### 4.3 Maintain a Website

The NBAMPO's website ([www.nbampo.org](http://www.nbampo.org)) provides information about NBAMPO meetings and activities, including listing all upcoming meetings. This website includes a calendar of meeting dates; agendas and minutes; plans and documents; and updates on current transportation projects. This website should provide the public with an opportunity to provide input and formal comments on an ongoing basis through the email addresses listed.

### 4.4 Develop and Distribute Brochures and Fact Sheets

Brochures and Fact Sheets are a presentation of data in a format emphasizing brevity, key points of interest or concern, a minimalist design aesthetic, and a general desire to convey the most relevant information in the least amount of space. Fact sheets condense information into an easy-to-read, straightforward, portable, and modular form of knowledge. They often contain lists, statistics, and answers to common questions. In some cases they may include a summary or abridgement of a longer document.

The brochure and/or fact sheet should be available online and made available to identified stakeholders, libraries, government buildings, MPO offices, and other locations. If requested, this brochure will be provided in large print format and translated to another language.

### 4.5 Conduct Public Informational Workshops, Charrettes and Public Open Houses

Public Informational Workshops, Charrettes and Public Open Houses may be conducted on topics associated with the transportation planning process. Such workshops, charrettes and/or open houses will be designed based on the intent of the meeting. These can be used to educate the participants on specific topics, e.g. transportation projects, the transportation model, planning efforts, etc. Public Informational Workshops, Charrettes and Public Open Houses provide a means for allowing the public to express their ideas and concerns in an informal setting. The workshops, charrettes and open houses may be conducted on an as-needed basis.

### 4.6 E-Subscription Lists

The MPO staff maintains lists of TAC and TCC committee members including any temporary MPO groups set up for particular projects. MPO staff encourages people to use the New Bern Area MPO email lists and sunshine list to sign up to receive notice of about MPO meetings and events. These lists allow any individual, organization, or other interested party to use their email address and request that it be added to the MPO's email list. Anyone interested can subscribe by contacting the MPO in the following ways:



- Mail – New Bern Area MPO, 303 First Street, New Bern, NC 28560
- Phone – 252.639.7593
- Email – [mcreef@newbernc.gov](mailto:mcreef@newbernc.gov)
- Online – [www.nbampo.org](http://www.nbampo.org)

#### 4.7 Conduct Surveys

Surveys may be used to gather information from peoples' perception, preferences, and practices. In areas where low literacy exists, surveys should be conducted in person. In limited English proficient communities, these surveys should be published in Spanish. In areas where the public is literate, surveys may be mailed, e-mailed, or posted on the MPO's website.

#### 4.8 Create Newsletters

The MPO will produce a newsletter at least quarterly, but will strive for monthly, dedicated to transportation planning activities in the New Bern planning area. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide a brief overview of ongoing or new transportation projects to help share information as well as periodic updates on NBAMPO activities.

#### 4.9 Social Media

Social media is an advantageous way to reach people who may not read press releases or other "traditional" forms of communication. The NBAMPO creates social media posts to be posted on New Bern Area MPO social media accounts and requests that member agencies cross share the posts to their social media accounts. Social media posts are written to encourage education and participation in surveys and open houses.

#### 4.10 Visualization Techniques

Visualization techniques will be used in all core transportation plans, programs, and projects to the extent they are feasible. Visualization techniques promote improved understanding of existing and proposed transportation activities to those who do not have a background in transportation planning. Effective visualization techniques help build consensus and clarify ideas between the public and decision-makers. Tailoring visualization techniques for a specific document or population will help interested people better understand regional transportation planning goals and activities. These techniques will include the use of colors, diagrams, tables, maps and photos that better illustrate the ideas and concepts represented in transportation plans, projects and programs.

## **5. Responding to Public Comments**

The MPO will document both oral and written public comments received during the public input process. Documentation might include a written compilation, meeting minutes, a transcript of oral comments, a memorandum that summarizes the comments. The MPO will also provide a publicly available summary of responses to comments through the MPO website. MPO staff will provide electronic copies of comments to the TAC and/or TCC. The comments and responses may be produced as a separate report or appendix of a final document or plan.

## **6. Specific Guidelines**

### **6.1 Public Comment for MTP, UPWP, CTP, and MTIP**

The NBAMPO will provide an opportunity for meaningful public involvement in the development and update of the MTP; final draft of the MTIP; and in the development of the UPWP. The public comment period will be a minimum of fourteen (14) day period, effective from the date of the public notice publication on the NBAMPO's website. Written comments will be received during the comment period. The contact person, phone number and email address will be included in the public notice. Comments received will be presented to the TAC and/or TCC as a summary or verbatim, whichever is most appropriate.

### **6.2 Public Involvement Plan (PIP)**

The PIP shall be reviewed periodically by MPO staff, TAC, and TCC to ensure a full and open process that is inclusive of all interested parties and conforms to federal transportation regulations is being followed. There will be a 45-day calendar minimum public review period for PIP changes that have been made since the last opportunity for public review or if the PIP has not been reviewed in the past three (3) years.

### **6.3 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

The MTP is developed for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) and covers at least a 20-year planning horizon and is updated every five years to reflect the changing public interest and contains financially constrained transportation projects for all modes in the MPA, including highways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian, freight and rail, ferry, and aviation.

NBAMPO uses the MTP to:

1. Estimate future needs and services for the highway network;
2. Guide the expenditure of transportation funds;
3. Ensure new transportation improvements meet community values; and
4. Promote safe and efficient transportation services.

Local and state planning officials use the MTP to select projects for inclusion in their work programs. Developers and planning firms use it to help develop land use proposals.

The draft MTP should be presented to the public for review and comment for a minimum 14 days. The public comment period can be open while the draft MTP is presented to the TCC. However, the public comment period must end before the TAC considers action to allow any public comment to be presented.

For MTP Amendments, refer to [Section 7. Modifications to Plan Specific Documents](#).

#### 6.4 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)

The federally required Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program, or MTIP, is a fiscally constrained short range multi-year listing of projects or improvements listing all the NBAMPO's multimodal transportation projects that are anticipated to receive federal funds, as well as all other regionally significant transportation projects, whether or not those projects receive federal funding. The TIP is developed in cooperation with the FHWA, FTA, the NCDOT, the area's public transit operators, and the area's local governments.

The MTIP and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) must match exactly in projects, schedule, and scope, for projects to move forward with federal funding. It is therefore critical that close coordination be held with the State to assure that both parties agree with program and thus allow projects and programs (including transit elements) to move forward.

The TAC adopts the MTIP and STIP every two years. By law, the MTIP and STIP must cover at least a three-year period and contain a priority list of projects grouped by year. Further, the MTIP and STIP must be financially constrained by year (meaning that the amount of dollars programmed must not exceed the amount of dollars estimated to be available). Federal regulations also require an opportunity for public comment prior to MTIP approval.

The draft MTIP should be presented to the public for review and comment a minimum 14 days. The public comment period can be open while the draft MTIP is presented to the TCC. However, the public comment should remain open until it is closed during the public hearing when the TAC considers action to allow any public comment to be presented.

For MTIP Amendments, refer to [Section 7. Modifications to Plan Specific Documents](#).

## 6.5 Annual Obligations Listing

The NBAMPO's Annual Obligation Listing identifies the projects that were authorized and committed using federal funds in the previous year. This list is prepared by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for the NBAMPO and includes project names, locations, type of work to be performed, and funding levels. The annual listing will be published on the MPO's website ([www.nbampo.org](http://www.nbampo.org)) within ninety (90) days following the end of the federal program year.

## 6.6 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Federal law requires each MPO, as a condition of the receipt of federal highway and transit capital or operating assistance, to conduct a documented comprehensive transportation planning process. A Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which includes planning and project development activities that address transportation issues in the area, is required by this process. Annual certification that the planning process is being carried on in conformance with state requirements is necessary for the receipt of funding for surface transportation programs, air quality, national highway system, interstate maintenance, state bridge replacement, and transit capital and operating funds.

The purpose of the UPWP is to administer the MPO planning process and carry out the planning activities necessary to implement the MTP. It describes the planning activities to be undertaken by the MPO during the upcoming fiscal year and is updated yearly. It also serves to document the proposed expenditures of federal, state, and local transportation planning funds, and provides a management tool for the MPO and the funding agencies in scheduling major transportation planning activities and projects.

The MPO staff in consultation with NCDOT and local transit staff draft a new UPWP for the coming year and have it ready for initial TCC and TAC review in January at which time it will be available for public review for at least 14 calendar days prior to its consideration for adoption by the TAC. Typically, the UPWP for the next year is approved at the March TAC meeting. The UPWP also requires NCDOT, FHWA and FTA approval.

## 6.7 Publication of CARTS Program of Projects (POP)

On an annual basis, the MPO, on behalf of the Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS), shall publish a Program of Projects (POP) to ensure that the public is aware of any federal expenditures (with associated public transportation activities planned for each fiscal year). The POP will be published on the MPO website and available in print at the City of New Bern's Development Services Building, located at 303 First Street. The MPO shall advertise the proposed POP in a local newspaper at least 10 days prior to consideration for adoption by the Craven County Commissioners to allow for public review and comment.

During fiscal years when the MPO amends an existing or adopts a new MTIP, publication of a separate POP is not required. It is intended that the process utilized to adopt and/or modify the MTIP also satisfies the annual POP publication requirements.

As of the 2020 Census, New Bern lost its urbanized status and as such a POP is no longer needed to be published. When the New Bern area becomes urbanized again and Section 5307 funding becomes available, a POP will be required to be in place.

## 6.8 Plan Specific Chart

	<b>Public Comment Period</b>	<b>Public Hearing</b>
<b>MTP</b>	14 calendar days	Not Required
<b>MTIP</b>	14 calendar days	Yes, prior to the MTIP adoption every 2 years
<b>UPWP</b>	14 calendar days	Not Required
<b>CTP</b>	14 calendar days	Not Required
<b>PIP</b>	45 calendar days	Not Required

## 7. Modifications to Plan Specific Documents

Occasionally, the need may arise which requires modifications to the MTIP, MTP, UPWP, PIP, CTP or other planning documents. Changes can be categorized in two ways: Administrative Modification or Formal Amendment.

### 7.1 Administrative Modification

Administrative modification shall be for the purpose of correcting an administrative error or informational change; minor modification to project descriptions, project cost, and/or funding source; adjustment of a project start and completion date.

- Does NOT require a formal public involvement process
- Changes can be approved by MPO staff
- Changes are reported to the TCC and TAC boards at their next meeting

### 7.2 Formal Amendment

Formal Amendment is defined as a significant change such that it would require public review and comment. Examples include the addition or deletion of a regionally significant project or substantial change in the design concept or design scope of a project included in a plan.

Formal Amendments to the MTIP are defined as projects identified within the first four years of the document result in:

- 1) Addition of a project
- 2) Deletion of a project
- 3) Changes in project cost beyond a predetermined amount
  - a. \$2 million AND 25% of original cost for highway projects
  - b. \$1 million OR 25% of original cost for transit projects
- 4) Major changes in design concept or scope

Formal Amendments will follow the Public Involvement Plan by allowing a minimum 14 days for public comment regarding the modification. MTIP modifications are mostly required because of changes to the STIP to which the NCDOT has already acted. If time permits, the proposed MTIP Formal Amendment should be presented to the TCC. The MTIP Formal Amendment and other Formal Amendments should also allow for public comment at the meeting ahead of action by the TAC.

When Formal Amendments to MPO documents, maps or programs are proposed to be changed, copies of the existing documents and the proposed changes will be made available during the public comment period at the following locations:

- MPO offices; 303 First Street, New Bern, NC
- Documents are also published online at [www.nbampo.org](http://www.nbampo.org)

## **8. Federal Requirements**

There are several laws and regulations that have been established by the Federal government to ensure the transportation planning process remains open and in the public interest. The following is a listing of federal legislation and regulations that guide the public participation process:

### **8.1 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)**

- A. In General: IIJA emphasizes participation by interested parties in the transportation plan. Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, affordable housing organizations, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.

- B. Contents of Participation Plan shall:
  - 1) be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and
  - 2) provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents on the transportation plan.
  
- C. Methods: In carrying out subparagraph A, the metropolitan planning organization shall, to the maximum extent practicable:
  - 1) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
  - 2) employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and
  - 3) make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information under subparagraph A.
  
- D. Use of Technology: A metropolitan planning organization may use social media and other web-based tools:
  - 1) to further encourage public participation; and
  - 2) to solicit public feedback during the transportation planning process

## 8.2 National Environmental Policy Act

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended) outline requirements to go through an environmental review process for implementing projects from a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). NEPA has its own set of public participation requirements for review period and notification of interested parties on a project basis. These requirements are not a substitute for earlier participation at the planning and programming stages.

## 8.3 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 encourages the participation of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services. Also, in accordance with ADA guidelines, all meetings conducted by the MPO will take place at locations which are accessible facilities so as to accommodate persons with mobility limitations.

## 8.4 Title VI – Environmental Justice

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 sets standards which authoritatively outlawed discrimination in the conduct of all Federal activities. The term Environmental Justice (EJ) was created by people concerned that everyone within the United States deserves equal protection under the country's laws. A 1994 Presidential Executive Order directed every Federal agency to make Environmental Justice (EJ) part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on

“minority populations and low-income population.” The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued its DOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Population and Low-income Population in 1997. The DOT Order accomplishes this goal by involving the potentially affected public in developing transportation projects that fit harmoniously within their communities without sacrificing safety and mobility.

Effective public involvement is a key element in addressing Title VI in decision-making. This Public Involvement Plan describes how New Bern Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (NBAMPO) will disseminate vital agency information and engage the public. We will seek out and consider the input and needs of interested parties and groups traditionally underserved by transportation systems who may face challenges accessing our services, such as minority and limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Underlying these efforts is our commitment to determining the most effective outreach methods for a given project or population.

General public involvement practices will include:

- Expanding traditional outreach methods. Think outside the box: Go to hair salons, barbershops, street fairs, etc.
- Providing for early, frequent and continuous engagement by the public.
- Use of social media and other resources as a way to gain public involvement.
- Coordinating with community- and faith-based organizations such as the Hispanic Liaison, educational institutions, and other entities to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities.
- Providing opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews or use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments.
- Considering radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations. Outreach to LEP persons could also include audio programming available on podcasts.

### Public Notification

We will inform people of their rights under Title VI and related authorities with regard to our program. The primary means of achieving this will be posting and disseminating the policy statement and notice. Additional measures may include verbally announcing our obligations and the public’s rights at meetings, placing flyers at places frequented by targeted populations, and an equal opportunity tag-on at the end of radio announcements. The method of notification will be determined through an initial screening of the area.

### Dissemination of Information

Information on Title VI and other programs will be crafted and disseminated to employees, contractors and subrecipients, stakeholders, and the general public. Public dissemination efforts may vary depending on factors present, but will generally include:



posting public statements setting forth our nondiscrimination policy in eye-catching designs and locations; placing brochures in public places, such as government offices, transit facilities, and libraries; having nondiscrimination language within contracts; including nondiscrimination notices in meeting announcements and handouts; and displaying our Notice of Nondiscrimination at all our public meetings.

At a minimum, nondiscrimination information will be disseminated on our website and on posters in conspicuous areas at our office(s). Project-related information and our most current Title VI-related information will be maintained online.

### Meetings and Outreach

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to public involvement. A variety of comprehensive and targeted public participation methods will be used to facilitate meaningful public involvement. Methods for engaging stakeholders and target audiences, including traditionally underserved and excluded populations (i.e., minorities, youth, low-income, the disabled, etc.) will include the following:

### Public Relations and Outreach

Public relations and outreach (PRO) strategies aim to conduct well-planned, inclusive and meaningful public participation events that foster good relations and mutual trust through shared decision-making with the communities we serve.

- We will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.
- Public events will aim to be collaborative, fun, and educational for all, rather than confrontational and prescriptive.
- Media plans will typically involve multiple channels of communication like mailings, radio, TV, and newspaper ads.
- Abstract objectives will be avoided in meeting announcements. Specific “attention-grabbing” reasons to attend will be used, such as “Help us figure out how to relieve congestion on [corridor name]” or “How much should it cost to ride the bus? Let us know on [date].”
- Efforts will be made to show how the input of participants can, or did, influence final decisions.
- We will do our best to form decision-making committees that look like and relate to the populations we serve.
- We will seek out and identify community contacts and partner with local community- and faith-based organizations that can represent, and help us disseminate information to, target constituencies.
- Demographic data will be requested during public meetings, surveys, and from community contacts and committee members.

## Public Meetings

“Public meeting” refers to any meeting open to the public, such as hearings, charrettes, open house and board meetings.

- Public meetings will be conducted at times, locations, and facilities that are convenient and accessible.
- Meeting materials will be available in a variety of predetermined formats to serve diverse audiences.
- An assortment of advertising means may be employed to inform the community of public meetings.
- Assistance to persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency will be provided, as required.

## Small Group Meetings

A small group meeting is a targeted measure where a meeting is held with a specific group, usually at their request or consent. These are often closed meetings, as they will typically occur on private property at the owner’s request.

- If it is determined that a targeted group has not been afforded adequate opportunities to participate, the group will be contacted to inquire about possible participation methods, including a group meeting with them individually.
- Unless unusual circumstances or safety concerns exist, hold the meeting at a location of the target group’s choosing.
- Share facilitation duties or relinquish them to members of the target group.
- Small group discussion formats may be integrated into larger group public meetings and workshops. When this occurs, the smaller groups will be as diverse as the participants in the room.

## Community Surveying

- Opinion surveys will occasionally be used to obtain input from targeted groups or the general public on their transportation needs, the quality or costs of our services, and feedback on our public outreach efforts.
- Surveys may be conducted via telephone, door-to-door canvassing, at community fairs, by placing drop boxes in ideal locations, or with assistance from other local agencies like social services.
- Surveys will be translated into languages other than English, when appropriate.

## 8.5 FTA Circular 9030.1E Chapter 5, Section 6C

Federal transit law and joint FHWA/FTA planning regulations governing the metropolitan planning process require a locality to include the public and solicit comment when the locality develops its metropolitan long-range (twenty-year) transportation plan and its (four-year) metropolitan TIP. Accordingly, FTA has

determined that when a recipient follows the procedures of the public involvement process outlined in the FHWA/FTA planning regulations, the recipient satisfies the public participation requirements associated with development of the Program of Projects (POP) that recipients of Section 5307 funds must meet.

To comply with the last statement:

- MPO must have an adopted public involvement plan.
- The TIP document (public involvement plan, notice, or TIP) must have an explicit statement that public notice of public participation activities and time established for public review of and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements

#### 8.6 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Section 508)

The *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* mandates that public facilities be made accessible to people with disabilities and has been the basis for requiring that transit buses and street curbs be retrofitted or reconstructed with appropriate equipment and design details.

*The Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504) states that “no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under” any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.

*The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998* (Section 508) states that federal agencies must ensure that electronic and information technology is accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities to the extent it does not pose an “undue burden.”

#### 8.7 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (Executive Order 13166, 2000)

The basis of *Executive Order 13166* lies in *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. It requires that federal agencies work to ensure that recipients of federal financial assistance provide “meaningful access” to their limited English proficiency applicants and beneficiaries.

#### 8.8 Executive Order 12898, USDOT Order 5610.2(a), and FHWA Order 6640.23A.

The basis of Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (1994) lies in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Executive Order directs that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income

populations.”

## 8.9 Department of Transportation Update Environmental Justice Order 5610.2(a)

The USDOT Order 5610.2(a) sets forth the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) policy to consider environmental justice principles in all USDOT programs, policies, and activities. The three fundamental environmental justice principles include:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations;
- To ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in transportation decision-making; and
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

## 8.10 Addressing Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations (FHWA 6640.23A)

The Federal Highway Administration Order (FHWA) Order 6640.23A is the directive that establishes policies and procedures for the FHWA to use in complying with Executive Order 12898. In addition, it defines the following terms:

- Low-Income – A person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.
- Low-Income Population – Any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy, or activity.
- Minority – A person who is:
  - Black: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;
  - Hispanic or Latino: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;
  - Asian American: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent;
  - American Indian and Alaskan Native: a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America (including Central America), and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition; or
  - Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.
- Minority Population – Any readily identifiable groups of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy, or activity.