

**WINSTON-SALEM URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

**FOR ALL TRANSPORTATION PLANS
AND THE AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS REPORT**

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

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I. INTRODUCTION – GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has a commitment to public participation for all transportation plans and air quality conformity analysis reports. The Metropolitan Planning Organization will adhere to the regulations set forth by the Safe, Accountable, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which, even more than the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA) before it, requires all MPOs to demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes. The public participation process will provide early and continuing involvement; full public access to citizens, public agencies, providers of private transportation, and segments of the community affected by transportation plans; and clear, accurate, and timely information.

The goals and objectives of this policy are:

1. Bring a broad cross-section of the public into the public policy and transportation planning decision-making process.
2. Make special efforts to increase the opportunities for involvement by groups of citizens who do not generally participate in community affairs, particularly low-income and minority populations.
3. Provide citizens with opportunities to participate in developing plans and programs for their communities.
4. Make information on government activities widely available to the public.

5. Maximize the use of communications technology to facilitate the exchange of information between public officials and citizens, including use of the MPO web site and other electronically accessible formats (CDs, e-mail, etc.).
6. Ensure that technical information is available in understandable form and that all segments of citizens are afforded access to this information.

The previous Public Participation Policy was approved as a part of the Long Range Transportation Plan in 2005. The current plan is based upon the previous plan, but expands upon it in a number of ways. Among these are a structured approach consisting of three levels of public involvement, depending on the nature and scope of each project or plan. This plan also takes into account new methods, and in fact new technologies, which give the public greater access to the transportation planning process.

The MPO will actively seek public input through a variety of techniques, which include media relations (newspapers, television, radio, etc.), public notices, appropriate comment periods, newsletters, surveys, workshops & charrettes, public hearings, and input from local member governments and their appointed committees and similar entities.

The specific techniques used will depend on the requirements of each specific planning task. The MPO will hold a public hearing every three years to seek input and feedback on the MPO's public involvement efforts.

II. DEFINITIONS

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act;

Federal legislation passed in 1990 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. In addition to other public and private facilities, the act requires all transportation facilities and services must be accessible to individuals with physical handicaps.

CAAA – Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990;

The original Clean Air Act was passed in 1963, but our national air pollution control program is actually based on the 1970 version of the law. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments are the most far-reaching revisions of the 1970 law. In this summary, we refer to the 1990 amendments as the 1990 Clean Air Act.

Charrette – a meeting to resolve a problem or issue. Within a specified time limit, participants work together intensely to reach a resolution.

ISTEA – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991;

Legislative initiative by the U.S. Congress that restructured funding for transportation programs. ISTEA authorized increased levels of highway and transportation funding from FY92-97 and increased the role of regional planning commissions/MPOs in funding decisions. The Act also required comprehensive regional and Statewide long-term transportation plans and places an increased emphasis on public participation and transportation alternatives.

L RTP – Long Range Transportation Plan;

This is a long-range plan that identifies facilities that should function as an integrated transportation system, and developed pursuant to Title 23, U.S.C. (United States Code) and the Federal Transit Act. It gives emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions, and includes a financial plan that demonstrates how the long-range plan can be implemented.

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization;

A federally required planning body responsible for transportation planning and project selection in its region; the governor designates an MPO in every urbanized area with a population of over 50,000 people.

MTIP – Metropolitan Transportation

Improvement Program; Also known as a transportation program, an MTIP is a program of transportation projects drawn from, or consistent with, the long-range transportation plan and developed pursuant to Title 23, U.S.C. (United States Code) and the Federal Transit Act. This document is prepared by metropolitan planning organizations listing projects to be funded with FHWA/FTA funds for the next one- to three-year period.

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act of 1969;

An Act to establish a national policy for the environment, to provide for the establishment of a Council on Environmental Quality, and to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man.

Nonattainment Area – An urbanized area which does not meet federal air quality standards defined in the Clean Air Act.

Public participation – The active and meaningful involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs.

SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act:

A Legacy for Users; Enacted August 10, 2005 as Public Law 109-59. SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

Stakeholder – An individual or organization involved in or affected by the transportation planning processes.

TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee;

The TAC serves as a forum for cooperative transportation planning and decision-making for the MPO. The TAC has the responsibility for keeping the governing boards informed of the status and requirements of the transportation planning process; assisting in the dissemination and clarification of decisions, inclinations and policies of the governing boards; and ensuring meaningful citizen participation in the transportation planning process.

TAZ – Traffic Analysis Zone; The unit of geographic area, generally of small size (several blocks in dense urban areas to a few square miles in semi-rural areas) and of similar development characteristics, used in travel demand modeling.

TCC – Technical Coordinating Committee;

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) is composed of key staff representatives from all local and State governmental agencies which are directly related to and concerned with the transportation planning process for the MPO. The TCC conducts research, reviews plans and programs, and makes

recommendations to the TAC based upon technical expertise.

TEA-21 – Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century; Enacted June 9, 1998 as Public Law 105-178. TEA-21

authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 6-year period 1998-2003.

Urbanized Area – An Urbanized Area is a statistical geographic entity designated by the Census Bureau, consisting of a central core and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people, generally with an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile.

Visualization – The formation of mental visual images, or the act or process of interpreting in visual terms or of putting into visible form. Examples of visualization techniques include sketches, drawings, artist renderings, physical models and maps, simulated photos, videos, computer modeled images, interactive GIS systems, GIS based scenario planning tools, photo manipulation and computer simulation.

Sources: Atlanta Regional Commission, *Citizen's Guide to Regional Land Use & Transportation Planning*, 2005

Federal Highway Administration, *Transportation Conformity Reference Guide*, 2006

Federal Highway Administration, *Visualization in Planning*, 2006

United States Code, 42 § 4321.

III. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The MPO's Public Participation Policy is designed to be consistent with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

A. SAFETEA-LU Requirements

On August 10, 2005, the President of the United States signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SAFETEA-LU requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to consider planning strategies that will serve to advance eight transportation-planning factors identified under SAFETEA-LU as follows:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; and

- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

SAFETEA-LU also expands the listing of interested parties to be engaged during the development of the Public Participation Policy, the short-term and long-term transportation plans. These interested parties shall have reasonable opportunities to comment on projects of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.

- Affected public agencies
- Private providers of transportation
- Providers of freight transportation services
- Representatives of the disabled
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- Other interested parties
- Various provisions of SAFETEA-LU require expanded consultation and cooperation with Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies responsible for land use, natural resources and other environmental issues during the adoption of long and short-term plans.

The MPO shall consult with agencies responsible for historic preservation, natural resource conservation, environmental protection, and land use management, as appropriate, in the development of the short and long-term transportation plans.

In conjunction with the development of the long-term plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), environmental mitigation shall be discussed. A general discussion of potential environmental impacts, avoidance and mitigation activities shall be developed by the Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO in consultation with federal, state, tribal agencies, environmental and

other regulatory agencies. This discussion shall be included in the MTP and shall be directed at the policy or strategy level, not project specific.

Another element of SAFETEA-LU emphasizes consultation with other planning agencies that have a direct or indirect tie to transportation planning. The MPO will expand, as appropriate, the methods to improve coordination with land use and economic development planning. As part of the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program update, the planning process will promote consistency of the transportation plans with state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

In order to better communicate transportation plans with the general public, SAFETEA-LU also emphasizes the use of visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques may include charts and graphs, tables, Geographic Information System maps overlaid with data, computer simulation, photo manipulation and static maps. The intent for this technique is to better depict the programs and their impact on the public. The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO will utilize visualization techniques during the development of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.

Other requirements which pertain to SAFETEA-LU are found in regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended), the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990. CAAA and the transportation planning provisions of SAFETEA-LU, ISTEA, and TEA-21 are intended to ensure that integrated transportation and air quality planning occurs in the areas designated by the U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) as non-attainment or maintenance areas.

B. Environmental Justice

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) states, “No person in the United States

shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to the discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. President Bill Clinton’s Executive Order issued on Environmental Justice in 1999 further amplifies Title VI by providing that “each federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” The Executive Order requires all federal agencies to establish internal policies to meet the requirements of Environmental Justice.

During the adoption of transportation plans, policies and programs, it is the MPO’s policy to ensure fair and full participation in the transportation planning process by all citizens who may be potentially affected. Public outreach to low-income and minority populations will be made by maintaining a distribution mailing list of community organizations and leaders, inviting them to public meetings or workshops and speaking at community meetings. Public notices for adoption of new or major updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or a new Transportation Improvement Program will be placed in free community newspapers, whenever possible, to reach the maximum extent of the low-income, minority and citizens in the area. Block ads informing the Hispanic community of the long-term plan adoption and where public surveys are available will be placed in a community Spanish newspaper.

Prior to the adoption of new or major updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MPO will identify low-income and minority populations by traffic analysis zones or by census tracts, so the effects or burdens of transportation programs and on these groups can be reviewed and addressed to ensure transportation programs are distributed throughout the planning area fairly.

IV. POLICY FRAMEWORK

It is the policy of the Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to have a proactive public participation process that provides complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to MPO activities at all key stages in the decision making process. It is also MPO policy to involve the public early in the planning process, and to actively seek out the involvement of communities most affected by particular plans or projects. Furthermore, it is a goal of the PPP that the MPO's MTIP, LRTP, and other transportation plans and programs, be developed in a manner that assures that the public, and affected communities in particular, are afforded ample opportunity to participate in the development of such plans.

A. Identification of Public and Stakeholders

General Program: As part of its general planning and programming process, the MPO will try to involve the following: residents, member municipalities, affected public agencies, representatives of neighborhood groups, planning steering committees, public and private providers of transportation, and other parties who express an interest in the process.

Who's the Public?

For our purposes, the public includes residents; public agencies; anyone involved with public transportation, freight, non-motorized transportation, the disabled, safety, and security; and any other parties interested in transportation planning.

The MPO shall make an effort to inform and engage both the general public and stakeholders as appropriate.

Special Studies: For special studies that the MPO conducts, it shall make an effort to identify and involve persons and groups that might be affected by potential changes to the particular transportation service or facility under review. Examples include the following; abutting property owners, neighborhood associations, environmental groups, appropriate federal, State and local agencies responsible for land-use,

environmental and economic development, and businesses within the study area.

Outreach to Special Groups: The MPO shall also make a special effort to seek out and consider the needs of groups or communities traditionally not well-served by existing transportation systems. These include, but are not limited to low-income households and minority households. To assure adequate participation of these groups, the MPO shall use tools such as advisory boards (whose members shall be either low-income or minority individuals, or represent low-income or minority groups), target mailing list, workshops, and public notices in minority or low-income targeted media outlets.

Targeted Strategies

Where a participation strategy is intended to help reach minority or low-income communities, it is marked with an asterisk ().*

The MPO's efforts in this regard shall be consistent with the Environmental Justice Executive Order (EO 12898) dated February 11, 1994, and other related guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The MPO shall also make a special effort to seek out and consider the needs of individuals or communities with Limited English Proficiency. The MPO efforts in this regard shall be consistent with the signed Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," dated August 11, 2000, and other related guidance from the FHWA and FTA.

Federal regulations define Persons with Limited English Proficiency as individuals with a primary or home language other than English who must, due to limited fluency in English, communicate in that primary or home language if the individuals are to have an equal opportunity to participate effectively in or

benefit from any aid, service or benefit in federally-funded programs and activities.

B. Activities Subject to Public Participation

The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO shall provide early and continuing public participation opportunities throughout the transportation planning and programming process.

Planning Activities: Special emphasis shall be given to engage the public in planning studies that form the basis for later programming decisions. Planning activities include corridor studies and special regional studies, environmental assessment studies, development of the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The MPO shall make every effort to involve the affected community through methods such as local direct mailing, transportation related committees of local jurisdictions, public information meetings, and newsletters.

Programming Activities: Opportunities for the public to participate shall also be provided through the project selection, programming, NEPA Process and project development phases. These activities include the development of the Regional Priority List and the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), and the adoption or amendment of the Regional Priority List and MTIP.

C. Method of Notifying the Public

Some minor items are performed administratively with limited public involvement; these do not require a formal public involvement process outside the regular meeting structure of the MPO. Members of the TAC will represent residents in making decisions, and materials will be distributed to inform stakeholders and implementing agencies of changes. Residents may also attend and speak at each TAC meeting upon recognition by the TAC Chair, who may impose a reasonable time limit for speakers.

Items in this category would include the following:

- Administrative modifications to the MTIP or LRTP,

- Small projects with few impacts, and
- Technical/preliminary/exploratory studies.

Amendment or Administrative Modification?

Amendment – a revision to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that is significant enough to require public review and comment, demonstration of fiscal constraint, and/or an air quality conformity determination. Examples include the addition or deletion of a regionally significant project or a substantial change in the cost, design concept, or design scope of a project included in the plan or program.

Administrative modification – a revision to the LRTP or TIP that is not significant enough to be classified as an amendment (see above). Examples include minor changes in the cost or initiation date of included projects.

For all other plans and projects, additional public involvement tools should be used. In general, the following are the minimum requirements:

1. A public notice inviting comments at the beginning of the public review period. It will contain the following information:
 - Locations where the document can be reviewed;
 - Instructions for submitting comments;
 - Contact information for questions or additional information, noting that comments on the public participation process are also welcome;
 - The due date for comments;

- Information about any public meetings that have been scheduled (date, time, and location); and
- A note regarding where to find any additional information on the Internet.

Staff will make efforts to include maps, photos, or renderings on public notices to attract interest, but textual descriptions may be more appropriate uses of space in some cases.

2. The public notice (ad or poster) will be submitted to the following outlets, which will also be advised of any significant developments during the public review period:

- At least one major newspaper, with one display ad per major newspaper, to include publications serving minority communities. MPO staff will maintain the list of newspapers.*
- Local access cable television station.
- Lead planning agency Web site.
- Press release to media outlets. MPO staff will maintain the list of media contacts.*
- (as appropriate) Local newspapers and representatives of the City of King, the Towns of Bermuda Run, Bethania, Kernersville, Lewisville, Rural Hall, Walkertown, and Wallburg, and the Villages of Clemmons and Tobaccoville, based on the project's geographic reach.
- TCC and TAC members, as well as representatives of stakeholder agencies.

3. Documents shall be available for public review for 30 calendar days at the following locations.

- City of Winston-Salem Clerk's Office,
- Forsyth County Commissioners Office,
- WSDOT Office,
- NCDOT Division 9 Office, and
- Forsyth County Central Library.

Documents should contain maps, photos, renderings, or other visualization tools to aid in understanding and shall be as jargon-free and succinct as possible.* At a minimum, visualizations should include the corridor or location of the plan or project. As appropriate based on geographic impacts, officials of the City of King, the Towns of Bermuda Run, Bethania, Kernersville, Lewisville, Rural Hall, Walkertown, and Wallburg, and the Villages of Clemmons and Tobaccoville may receive the document. Because of limited operating hours in some of these towns' government buildings, each town's public review display location shall be at their discretion. The document shall also be available on the Web site of the lead planning agency for the duration of the public review period. The Web site is visually accessible and is designed to be compatible with assistive technology tools.*

4. During the public review period, comments shall be allowed to be submitted:

- in writing,
- via e-mail, and
- through Internet forms if available.

5. Public comments received will be

- Acknowledged with a written or e-mailed receipt message for comments submitted in writing, via e-mail, or through Internet forms;
- Responded to as appropriate, which could include a direct communication to the commenter or a response in the revised document;
- Documented and presented to the MPO's Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and TAC, in summary form or verbatim, before a vote is taken to adopt the plan or document in question; and
- Included in summary form or verbatim with final documents, if sufficiently significant.

Other documents are more significant, such as adoption of the MTIP (and major MTIP amendments), full updates to the LRTP, or other major projects, studies, plans, or amendments, especially those impacting much of the urban area or affecting minority or low-income populations substantially or in unusually high proportions. The following methods are not required, but are highly recommended in addition to those listed above to increase public participation:

1. The MPO should use its most broad and inclusive contact list to ensure that as many people as possible receive information. Items that should be sent to this list include:
 - Progress/update newsletters to provide timely notice at project kick-off, at the beginning of public comment periods, and otherwise as appropriate;
 - Postal mailings to generate interest and announce public meetings or workshops; and surveys to elicit comments that

might not otherwise be volunteered.

2. For a newspaper selected that serves minority communities, the public notice display ad should be run at least twice and in different weeks.* Two or more different notices may be used in place of a single repeated notice if the substantive information is the same.
3. Public notices (announcements, ads or posters) should be placed in the following additional locations.
 - PART administrative offices, transit hub, and onboard buses, where possible;
 - WSTA administrative offices and onboard buses;*
 - Bulletin boards in City-operated parking decks;*
 - All City-operated recreation centers, especially those in minority or low-income communities impacted by the item in question;* and
 - Place of worship in affected areas.*
4. Municipalities in the Piedmont Triad region but outside the MPO should also receive notices for informational purposes, which they may post at their discretion. These municipalities may also be provided with materials for public review on request.
5. Documents should be available for public review at additional locations: Wake Forest University Library, WSSU Library, and all Forsyth County Public Library branches, especially those serving minority and low-income areas. Visualizations in documents should include photos, graphics, or renderings to enhance understanding.*
6. An electronic notice should be sent to a list of interested parties, including representatives of neighborhood and

community organizations, especially in minority and low-income communities, to provide timely information about public comment periods and meetings. A project blog would also meet this requirement. Postal mailing will be used upon request.*

7. TCC meetings should include additional agency invitees as appropriate in order to involve the proper officials and ensure adequate consultation with interested parties.
8. Multiple public meetings should be held. At least one should be in a transit-accessible location.* These may be before the document is released, to discuss the project and receive input, or it may be during a document review period, to present the document and solicit comments.
9. The MPO should make efforts to ensure that scheduling and location are accessible to the public (this includes a location near public transit, a time when transit is operating, as well as an accessible building and room for individuals with disabilities).*
10. Special services should be available upon five business days advance notice, when practical, and subject to availability of services and resources. These special services include translation for non-English speakers, materials for the visually impaired, and services for the deaf and hard of hearing, in accordance with City policies. The availability of these services should be mentioned in public notices.*
11. Targeted mailings should be sent to the transit operator's community organizations mailing list.*

D. Visualization Techniques

The Winston-Salem Urban Area MPO shall employ visualization techniques in disseminating information relating to MPO long range transportation plans, MTIPs and other planning programs. The goal of the MPO visualization policy is to help the public and decision makers

visualize and interact with transportation plans and projects, alternatives, large data sets and land-use information more effectively. Visualization techniques will vary, and could range from Geographic Information Systems (GIS) displays, mappings and land-use/transportation scenario planning tools to information technology, such as three-dimensional digital models, web-based information systems, transportation and urban simulation, and Internet communications.

E. Adequate Time for Public Comment

The MPO shall allow reasonable time for public review and comment at key decision points. These include, but are not limited to, action on the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Minimum notification periods shall be as follows:

- Amendments to MPO's Public Participation Policy – 30 days
- Adoption of the MTIP & major MTIP amendments – 30 days
- Adoption of the TIP Regional Priority List & major amendments – 30 days
- Adoption of the LRTP/CTP & major amendments – 30 days
- Adoption of the Air Quality Conformity Determination – 30 days
- Policy Board (TAC) & Technical Committee (TCC) meetings – 7 days

F. Documentation of Public Comment & Response

The MPO shall document public comments received during the course of public input process. The MPO shall also document how it responded to public comments.

Comments Received: Documentation of comments may be accomplished in a manner appropriate to the project and the nature of the comments. Documentation may consist of meeting minutes, a file of letters, or a special memo that summarizes the comments. A written

summary of comments and responses shall be prepared to provide the feedback to the public.

Response to Comments: the MPO shall provide a descriptive summary of how it responded to significant public comments during the development of a plan or document such as the LRTP/CTP, air quality conformity, Regional Priority List and MTIP. The summary may be produced as a separate report or included as a short section in the final plan or document.

G. Additional Procedures

Certain projects may merit additional public participation efforts. Other possible strategies not required in any tier are listed below; the MPO should also consider other procedures not listed here.

- Create citizen committees as an opportunity to increase public participation in and ownership of the transportation planning process. These committees could include an advisory committee which would meet regularly to discuss transportation issues, as well as issue- or project-specific committees which would meet only when needed.
- Post public notices in smaller newspapers, community centers, YMCA locations, YWCA, major retail centers, public schools, churches, and agencies that work with the non-English-speaking population, based on a project's location and impacts.* Major retail centers and public schools may also be good locations for document review and public meetings.
- Make project or plan documents available to individuals on CD-ROM upon request for a nominal fee.
- Consider using an online project journal (blog) and podcasts for projects where progress updates will be frequent and important in sustaining momentum.
- Accept comments over the phone or in person, allowing those with limited writing skills to comment.*
- Hold workshops or design charrettes instead of standard public meetings or drop-in sessions.
- Use online webcasts, wikis, and community forums to augment face-to-face meetings.
- Hold multiple public meetings at various locations throughout the planning area (at least one location must be accessible). At least one should be in the evening or on a weekend to allow those with traditional work schedules to attend, and at least one should be during the traditional work day to allow those who work in the evenings or on weekends to attend. A single drop-in session running from afternoon through evening satisfies this time-of-day goal but not the Level Three multiple meeting requirement. As appropriate, hold meetings in minority communities.*
- Post "PUBLIC REVIEW ITEMS" placards or posters near documents at public review locations.
- Reverse the traditional flow of information: interested parties or groups could be invited to make presentations to the TAC, TCC, or other policy boards.
- Provide a longer public review period.
- Create podcasts of MPO minutes or highlights of meetings.
- Use special strategies in special situations for engaging low-income, low-literacy, or limited-English-proficiency populations:*

 - Fund neighborhood block parties
 - Engage faith-based groups
 - Offer food and child care or children's activities at meetings

- Go door-to-door in communities
- Make translation services available for meetings without requiring a request, and advertise them

Additional Methods: The MPO shall give consideration to alternative methods of involving the public that are appropriate to the project. Such methods may include, but are not limited to newsletters, transportation related committees of MPO member jurisdictions, advertising in minority and alternative language newspapers, distributing information through public libraries and community groups (especially those serving minority, low-income, and limited English

proficiency communities, the elderly and persons with disabilities), using local government cable access stations, using open house format meetings, involving focus groups for specially selected topics, preparing press releases, and holding events at special locations.

H. Access to MPO Documents and Technical Information

The MPO shall provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), and related studies, plans, and programs.

V. COMMENTS ON THIS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY?

Following the public review period from August 2 to September 17, 2007, comments were compiled and revisions to the draft policy have been made. Approval and adoption of the Public Participation Policy was done by the Winston-Salem Urban Area Transportation Advisory Committee on September 20, 2007.

For more information, please contact Kevin Edwards at the City of Winston-Salem Department of Transportation:

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VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

This section provides the text of the comments received in preparing the draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) and during its public review period (August 2, 2007 through September 17, 2007). This type of document is fairly difficult to get residents excited about, because it does not directly affect their property, neighborhoods or daily commutes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY

Only two comments were received, via e-mail, in response to the Draft Public Participation Policy. Both were largely negative, and displayed distrust of the Winston-Salem DOT and criticism of a perceived lack of action on issues important to the commenters. Thus, while underscoring the need of a comprehensive public process, the comments do not relate directly to the contents of the policy itself.

Comment: *City does not address transportation needs or listen to the public; general negative comments.*

COMMENTS

As a 40-year resident of Winston-Salem it has been my experience, in observing the City Department of Transportation, that the DOT could care less what the “citizens” think about transportation issues. It appears to me as if the solicitation of public opinion by the DOT is merely part of some kind of routine checklist, or process, that the city must be required to do by an agency of the state or federal government, as one wonders why the DOT bothers to request public “participation” when it appears as if the DOT is going to do what it wants to do irrespective of what the citizens want.

NOTE

(1) The city has procrastinated for years in doing something to correct the mess at the intersection of Stratford Road and Knollwood Street. Originally, the City's excuse for inaction was that it had no money to make improvements. (I've heard the DOT excuse “we do not have the money” to do what the public wants on many occasions.) Then, the public approved the issuance of bonds to reconstruct this intersection in, as I recollect, 2000 or 2002. Have the improvements been made? No, of course they haven't been made.

(2) The traffic problems on London Lane, and at the intersection of Silas Creek Parkway and Ebert Street, were called to the attention of the DOT in the 1990's. It appears as if, in the second half of 2007, the DOT is making an effort to solve those problems.

(3) “Public participation” has, for many years, asked for a resolution to the traffic problems on South Stratford Road. Has a resolution been forthcoming from DOT? No, of course not.

(4) One wonders whether DOT “planning” is worth the money the taxpayers pay for it. Sometimes it appears as if the DOT is unaware of existing, or future, traffic problems until the public calls the problem(s) to the attention of DOT. Then, DOT reacts to the problem(s) maybe.

(4a) It appears as if sections of Silas Creek Parkway are close to their traffic-volume capacity, at least at certain hours of the day. It's no longer practical for a driver to make an effort to get into, or out of, Kirklees Road at peak hours.

(4b) The intersection of Country Club Road and Peacehaven Road is now a mess, even though the Asst. City Manager publicly assured the mayor and city council that the construction of a shopping center at that location would not create any additional traffic volume at that location.

(4c) The bridge on Peacehaven Road over Highway 421 appears to be unable to handle traffic volume at peak hours.

(4d) The intersection of Peacehaven Road and Robinhood Road will soon be as big a mess as the intersection of Peacehaven Road and Country Club Road.

Is DOT “planning” properly addressing these issues, most of which are in the West Ward?

Thank you.

S.P. Blankenship, Jr.

Comment: *King residents have very little means of participation in activities of the MPO, the RPO, or of Stokes County.*

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Winston Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Draft Public Participation Policy.

As residents of Stokes County, we find that there is little meaningful opportunity for public participation in MPO planning. We regularly participate in review and comment periods for proposed plans that are made available to the public and find staff very helpful at these drop ins.

However, for the King component of the MPO, we would like to have opportunity to actually participate in the planning process for the King community and specifically planning that is done in regard to the MPO as it affects King. We would encourage MPO staff to hold planning meetings in King that actually involve citizens in the creative planning process.

In addition, consideration of King in the W S Urban Area MPO effectively removes it from the Stokes County planning process. King is not included in the transportation planning process for Stokes RPO, and this negatively effects the planning process, transportation and otherwise. King is the largest population center in Stokes County, and without King in the RPO, there is incomplete consideration and understanding of Stokes Count dynamics. This is especially detrimental for any transportation planning process.

We appreciate your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,

Martha B. Hartley and Michael O. Hartley