

## **Appendix H: Public Participation Policies**



**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN  
FOR THE  
GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN METROPOLITAN  
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**Approved**

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# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE GASTON-CLEVELAND-LINCOLN MPO AREA**

## **Study Area Profile and the Planning Process**

Gaston, Cleveland, and Lincoln counties are within the Piedmont region of North Carolina and are part of the Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area. The region is a mix of rural, suburban, and urban development and character with a sprawling urban core that includes over one-third of the persons living in the three counties. One of the unique features of this urban area is the number of incorporated municipalities. Including Gastonia, which is the largest city, there are 18 municipalities participating in the governance of the GCLMPO.

The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, 23 CFR Section 450.316 guides the development of public participation plans for transportation planning process. The United States Department of Transportation, through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) require:

"...each urbanized area, as a condition to the receipt of Federal capital or operating assistance, have a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process that results in plans and programs consistent with the comprehensive planned development of the urbanized area"

These federal regulations require a single agency be responsible for the implementation of the urban transportation planning process in each urbanized area. This agency is designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the study area. In the Gastonia Urbanized Area, this function is fulfilled by the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization Board and is advised by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) states voting members are elected officials appointed by their respective board or council to serve as each jurisdiction's representative. The TCC are members of the individual member governments and NCDOT staff that review the technical aspects of all transportation planning including roads, greenways, transit and bicycle and pedestrian planning.

The Board ensures that a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3C) planning process exists in the study area. The Federal Register states that: "The urban transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan consisting of a transportation systems element for each mode out to twenty (20) years. The transportation plan shall be reviewed every four (4) years or earlier if needed to confirm its validity and its consistency with current transportation and land use conditions."

For the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO area, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has led the development of Thoroughfare Plans, now known as Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTPs). However, MPO staff leads the development of Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTPs), project prioritizations for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development, and a range of smaller transportation plans and programs. This work frequently involves travel demand model development, which can take months to calibrate. These models are used to evaluate the various alternatives proposed during the planning process. The local planners and MPO staff provide demographic information and alternatives needed for the modeling. Much of this work is performed in coordination with the City of Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT), who

has been responsible for managing the Metrolina Regional Travel Demand Model (MRM) since its inception. The decision to have one (1) agency, CDOT, perform this work is to better provide the uniform and consistent data collection and output necessary for regional compliance for plan development and conformity determination reports for demonstrating progress in addressing Ozone non-attainment as established by US Environmental Protection Agency.

### **GCLMPO Contact List**

The MPO will maintain a distribution list of all Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Board members, their alternates and non-voting members stipulated in the MPO's MOU and bylaws, who shall be apprised of all upcoming meetings and opportunities for comment on MPO plans and related documents. These TCC and Board rosters will include representatives of local governments as well as the NCDOT, FHWA, FTA and other local transportation agencies, such as transit, airports and non-motorized modes.

The MPO will maintain an e-mail and mailing list of any interested person or organization who wishes to be made aware of all upcoming meetings, projects and opportunities for comment. The MPO will make specific attempts to include representatives of the following groups:

- Freight and Economic Development: Freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, and economic development professionals;
- Environmental: Federal, state, and local environmental protection organizations and advocates;
- Land use: Land use planners;
- Aviation: Area airport representatives;
- Non-automotive Transportation: Bicycle and pedestrian advocates, planners, and users;
- Public Transportation: Public transportation, representatives of disabled persons, representatives of users of public transportation, governmental and non-profit providers of non-emergency medical transportation;
- Elderly, disabled, minority, limited English proficiency (LEP) populations; advocacy groups, etc.

### **Public Notice and Comment Periods**

The MPO will provide adequate notice of upcoming meetings, as well as duration to public input and comment periods, in order to allow affected parties to review materials and submit comments. The public and interested parties will be notified by means listed under "Strategies to Solicit Public Input."

The MPO will provide a minimum of seven (7) days' notice for all upcoming public meetings, and all public comment periods will be 30 days, unless otherwise noted in this Public Participation Plan. Public comments will be accepted via in-person meetings, USPS mail, and/or by virtual means (email, Online GIS platforms, etc.).

All public comment provided to the MPO will be reviewed by the MPO staff and conveyed to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and MPO Board for consideration.

A written response to public comments, if warranted, will be made within 30 days after the TCC and MPO Board have reviewed the comments.

## **MPO Public Input and Comment Activities**

All TCC and Board meetings are open to the public and include a public comment period. Public input or other participation is encouraged and welcomed at both the TCC and MPO Board meetings and will be allowed up to three (3) minutes per person or five (5) minutes per group. The following processes include, but are not limited to projects, project lists, programs, plans and policy updates or development necessitating public comment or input:

### **1. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The MPO will solicit public input at the beginning of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development cycle to update the MPO's candidate project list as well as the project ranking process for submittal to the NCDOT for consideration in developing the Statewide TIP (STIP). In addition, the MPO will solicit public input during the local input point assignment process for Regional Impact and Division Needs projects. The public comment periods for both Regional Impact and Division Needs Tiers will total no less than thirty (30) days. More information can be found in the GCLMPO's Local Input Point Methodology, located on the MPO's website.

### **2. Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)**

The MPO will solicit public input when adopting modifications to the local Metropolitan TIP (MTIP) periodically *when a formal amendment is required*. Public input will not be solicited for administrative modifications to the MTIP.

**Formal/Major Amendments** require documentation of a 30-day public review and public comment opportunity at the TCC and MPO Board meetings. Also, the amendment may require re-demonstration of fiscal constraint and local transportation conformity determination. Fiscal constraint may be shown by either the project cost impact being less than 5% of the expected annual budget or by showing other project cost reductions and/or revenue increases within the affected fiscal year(s).

#### **Examples of Formal Amendments:**

- Change in a unique project phase cost beyond a predetermined threshold; increases in highway projects that exceed both \$2 million and 25% of the original cost and may affect fiscal constraint and changes (increases or decreases) in transit projects that exceed either \$1 million or 25% of the original project cost;
- Any addition or deletion of a federally funded project to the first four (4) years of the Program;
- Addition or deletion of any regionally significant project into the first four (4) years of the Program;
- Change in project design or scope that significantly changes the termini or project type, purpose, or number of through lanes on a non-exempt (for transportation purposes) project;
- Any addition, deletion or significant modification of non-traditional funding source to a project (traditional sources of revenue include federal, state, or local government tax revenues. Non-traditional sources include state bonding and/or private participation);
- Project schedule shifts that move ROW, major capital acquisitions, or construction authorization dates either into or out of the four (4) year STIP time window;

- Project schedule shifts in years one (1) through four (4) that move project completion dates across Horizon Years as determined by the local Metropolitan Transportation plan;

**Administrative Modifications** do not require documentation of public review or comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a transportation conformity determination.

**Examples of Administrative Modifications:**

- Any change to projects in years five (5) or later of the STIP;
- Minor change to project descriptions, scopes, sponsor funding;
- Minor cost increases in highway projects that do not exceed both \$2 million and 25% of the original project cost;
- Minor cost change (increase or decrease) in transit projects that do not exceed either \$1 million or 25% of the original project cost;
- Addition or deletion of a state funded project that is determined to not be regionally significant;
- An existing project or project segment (project break) is sub-divided into two (2) or more sub-segments without changing the overall project scope or description and both pieces remain in the first four (4) year period of an approved STIP;
- Schedule changes that move project authorization dates within the first four (4) year STIP time window and do not affect local air quality conformity findings;
- Funding source changes between traditional funding sources (i.e. substituting available Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for FTA Section 5307 formula transit funds);
- Projects approved for Emergency Relief funds do not generally have to be included in the STIP, so any changes made for emergency projects may be considered minor modifications.

**State funded projects** are amended when the fiscal year changes or when there is a significant change in the project description. Unless the project is determined to be regionally significant for transportation conformity purposes these amendments are approved solely by the State Board of Transportation. Local approval of these changes is desired but not legally required. The GCLMPO may treat these as Administrative Modifications if the Board so chooses. If there is a change to a state funded project that is regionally significant this requires a new transportation conformity determination and this determination must be made before the amendment can be processed. The state public notification process will be the same for state funded projects as it is for federal-aid projects.

3. **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Development:** The MPO will solicit input on the draft UPWP outlining the work tasks for the upcoming fiscal year following the posting of the TCC agenda, seven (7) days prior to the meeting, allowing a minimum of fourteen (14) days for public comment prior to the adoption by the Board. The same will apply for amendments to the UPWP.
4. **Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Development:** The MPO may choose to identify a steering committee comprised of members of the public as well as the TCC and MPO Board to oversee a significant update of a CTP. This update may involve periodic public input meetings to help guide the committee's work. For amendments to the CTP, please reference the CTP Amendment Policy. Two types of amendments may be requested: Administrative and

Procedural. Administrative Amendments do not require public involvement. Procedural Amendments require a full public engagement process, including a thirty (30) day public comment period, and one (1) public meeting. The MPO will also accept public comments at the MPO TCC and Board meetings for Procedural Amendments.

5. **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):** MPO staff will release a draft MTP and supporting conformity documents for 30-day public comment periods. The two (2) documents will be presented to the public at a series of public meetings with one (1) meeting each in Gaston, Cleveland and Lincoln counties. Verbal, written and email comments will be received and presented to the TCC and MPO Board for consideration. The TCC and MPO Board will recommend and approve the MTP and corresponding conformity report at their first meeting following a 30-day comment period. Major amendments to the MTP, including conformity (if needed), will also be released for public comment for thirty (30) days and a public comment opportunity given at the TCC and MPO Board meetings.
6. **Public Participation Plan (PPP):** Formal amendments to the PPP require documentation of a 45-day public review, public comment opportunity and a public meeting. (23 CFR 450.316 (3))
7. **Performance Measures:** The MPO will seek public input via a 30-day public comment period when initially adopting performance measures. Subsequent amendments will be announced via the TCC and Board agenda packets seven (7) days prior to a meeting.

### **Title VI Policy Statement**

It is the policy of GCLMPO, as a federal-aid recipient, to ensure that no person shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, Limited English Proficiency, sex, age, or disability, (and low-income, where applicable), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of our programs and activities, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Orders 12898 and 13166, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and other pertinent nondiscrimination authorities.

If you feel you have been subjected to discrimination, you may file a complaint. Allegations of discrimination should be promptly reported to our Title VI Coordinator.

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The GCLMPO Title VI Program Plan can be accessed at [www.gclmpo.org/TitleVI](http://www.gclmpo.org/TitleVI). To respond to the ever-changing demographics of our population we must use a range of methods to reach all populations. The end goal is to involve minority, low-income and limited English proficiency populations in the transportation decision-making process. To accomplish this, we must solicit adequate, effective, and meaningful participation by understanding unique needs, cultural perspectives and financial limitations of different socioeconomic groups.

The MPO attempts to increase participation of these groups by translating public input documents into Spanish and by holding multiple meetings.



## **Public Participation Processes and Strategies**

The GCLMPO commits to the following strategies, as appropriate, for effective public participation in transportation planning in its study area.

- **Newspapers:** The GCLMPO will send news releases to major newspapers of record in each of the three counties. These news releases will be sent at least seven (7) days in advance of any public meeting pertaining to revised or new planning documents as required.
- **Legal Advertisements/Notice of Public Meetings:** Once per year the GCLMPO will advertise, in the major newspaper of record in each of the three (3) counties, all MPO Board and TCC meeting dates (for the calendar year) including the website address and physical location where the agendas will be available for review. If a meeting date changes, a new legal advertisement will be released.
- **Posting of Public Meetings for major planning documents:** The GCLMPO will distribute news releases, post on the GCLMPO website and email via the GCLMPO Contact List. In addition, the GCLMPO will post to traditional outlets such as municipal offices with populations greater than 3,000 persons as of the 2010 Census.
- **Social Media:** The GCLMPO will maintain a presence on various social media websites including Facebook and Twitter where upcoming meetings as well as news and updates will be posted regularly.
- **Internet:** The GCLMPO will maintain a Section 508/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant website. All programs and projects developed by the MPO will be posted to the website ([www.gclmpo.org](http://www.gclmpo.org)). Hyperlinks to the NCDOT, local governments and other relevant transportation related programs or projects will be included on the website. The website will include announcements of upcoming meetings and opportunities for public input. This Public Participation Plan will be included on the website.
- **Public Participation Email List:** The MPO will maintain an e-mail list of any interested person or organization who wishes to be made aware of all upcoming meetings, projects and opportunities for public comment. You can sign up for this list on the MPO's website.
- **Meeting Locations:**
  - a. The GCLMPO will attempt to hold public comment and input meetings and utilize bulletin boards in public and/or government buildings (City Halls, Public Libraries, etc.) and other media forms for information dissemination and will attempt to notify Title VI population groups of meetings. In some instances, it may be necessary to hold public meetings virtually due to extenuating circumstances such as a Governor-declared state of emergency, local emergencies or severe inclement weather.
  - b. The GCLMPO will update its website and social media regarding meeting locations, method of meeting and possible meeting location changes when possible as soon as changes are determined by the Chairman.
  - c. MPO meetings: At the Gastonia Police Department; 200 Long Avenue; Gastonia, NC unless otherwise advertised. In some instances, it may be necessary to hold meetings virtually due to extenuating circumstances such as a Governor-declared state of emergency, local emergencies or severe inclement weather. If changes need to be made to the location or method of meeting the public will be notified at least seven (7) days in advance.
  - d. TCC meetings: Gaston County Administration Building; Room 3A; 128 West Main Avenue, Gastonia, NC unless otherwise advertised. In some instances, it may be

necessary to hold meetings virtually, due to extenuating circumstances such as a Governor-declared state of emergency, local emergencies or severe inclement weather. If changes need to be made to the location or method of meeting the public will be notified at least seven (7) days in advance.

- **Program and Sub-Committee meetings:** To the extent possible, GCLMPO meetings will be held in ADA-accessible locations along scheduled public transportation routes.
- **Meeting Format:** the MPO will employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans, TIPS, and other related documents. This will typically mean displaying information as maps, graphs, tables and charts in addition to written documents. MPO staff will present information verbally as well as through printed materials.
- **Meeting Times for TCC and MPO Board Meetings:** Regular meetings for both GCLMPO boards will be held bi-monthly beginning in January and in each odd-numbered month of the year, unless otherwise determined by the Board. The MPO Board will typically meet at 6:30 pm on the fourth Thursday of the month, unless otherwise advertised. The TCC will meet regularly at 10:00 am on the second Wednesday of the odd-numbered months of the year, unless otherwise advertised.
- **Board Meeting Agenda Packets -** The agenda will be electronically transmitted and posted on the MPO webpage at least seven (7) days in advance of any Board meetings. If any person or organization wishes to receive a hard copy they can request this by contacting GCLMPO staff in advance of the meeting.
- **Meeting Times for Public Participation Meetings:** MPO staff will work to schedule meetings at times convenient to the general public, with both day and evening meetings scheduled when possible.
- **Coordination with the NCDOT and Other Agencies:** The GCLMPO will coordinate with the NCDOT and other related agencies whenever possible in order to maximize the effectiveness of concurrent public outreach and public comment events and processes.
- **Translation:** The GCLMPO will provide translation of any requested documents into another language within a reasonable period of time.
- **Environmental Justice (EJ):** The MPO will distribute announcements of upcoming meetings and opportunities for public input to persons or organizations identified in the Title VI Program Plan.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Updates**

GCLMPO staff will evaluate the effectiveness of this Public Participation Plan (PPP) a minimum of every two (2) years, or if modifications are necessary. The results of this evaluation will be presented to the TCC and Board for their feedback, recommendation and adoption of a modified PPP if necessary.

While this PPP does not list specific performance criteria we will track the number of attendees at public comment meetings, tracking the frequency of and geographic location of public meetings, tracking visitor trends on the MPO website, the number of comments received from the public, or the public comment period and any personal information provided.

Any recommended updates to this plan shall be available to the public for forty-five (45) calendar days before the revised document is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the updated public participation plan shall be distributed based on this policy and a copy provided to the NCDOT, FHWA and FTA for their records as well as posted on the MPO's website.

# Social Media External Use Policy

## **Comments and Interactions**

The GCLMPO reserves the right to repost, share, like, or retweet content from another social media account. A like, share, or retweet of content does not imply an endorsement of that account. Likewise, comments expressed on any MPO social media page do not necessarily reflect the opinions and position of the GCLMPO, its individual members, administrators or employees. In addition to information provided by the GCLMPO, the social media sites may contain comments and opinions from unrelated third parties which are being provided as a convenience to the public and for informational purposes only. These comments or opinions do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the GCLMPO of any of the views or comments posted on the GCLMPO's social media pages. Furthermore, the GCLMPO bears no responsibility for the accuracy or legality of these materials. When in doubt, the GCLMPO will take a very conservative approach to what appears through social media.

Third party comments will be rejected or removed (if possible) when the content:

- Is off-subject or out of context;
- Contains obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest;
- Contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information;
- Contains offensive terms that target protected classes;
- Is threatening, harassing, defamatory or discriminatory;
- Contains any copyrighted material owned by a third party;
- Circumvents Public Records and Open Meetings Laws;
- Incites or promotes violence or illegal activities;
- Contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety;
- Advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual.

## **Moderation of Third Party Content**

The MPO's social media sites serve as a limited public forum and all content published is subject to monitoring. In the same manner as a public forum, user-generated posts should be suitable in terms of time, manner and place. The GCLMPO reserves the right to publish any posting, or to later remove it based on the aforementioned guidelines.

While endorsing the proper use of the limited public forum on the MPO's social media platforms the GCLMPO cannot guarantee that violations will not take place. If a comment violates these guidelines, the GCLMPO reserves the right to remove or hide a comment without prior notification.



# Public Involvement Plan



**Adopted by: Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization**

*November 15, 2017*

*November 17, 2021 Amendment Adopted*

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## List of Acronyms

- **23 CFR 450.316** – Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23 – Highways, Part 450 – Planning Assistance and Standards
- **ADA** – Americans with Disabilities Act
- **CRTPO** – Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization
- **CTP** – Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- **EJ** – Environmental Justice
- **FAST Act** – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act
- **HOA** – Homeowner’s Association
- **LEP** – Limited English Proficiency
- **MPO** – Metropolitan Planning Organization
- **MTP** – Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- **NAAQS** – National Ambient Air Quality Standard
- **NCDOT** – North Carolina Department of Transportation
- **NEPA** – National Environmental Policy Act
- **PIP** – Public Involvement Plan
- **RPO** – Rural Planning Organization
- **TCC** - Technical Coordinating Committee
- **TIP** – Transportation Improvement Program
- **TTY** – Teletypewriter
- **UPWP** – Unified Planning Work Program

The Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) adopted its initial Public Involvement Plan (PIP) in 2005. Since the last update in 2012, new federal regulations have been passed, the CRTPO's planning area boundary has expanded, and there have been advancements in public engagement techniques within the transportation planning field. In 2017, an analysis of the PIP evaluated the effectiveness of the CRTPO's public involvement program by surveying its current practices, assessing state and federal requirements, and developing recommendations based upon best practices.

This document incorporates revisions to strengthen the CRTPO's ability to solicit input, communicate, and engage with the public. A Steering Committee was organized to guide the evaluation process of the PIP. The evaluation process included peer Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) reviews and surveys of the CRTPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), the MPO Board, and the public. This PIP was adopted on Month, XX, 2017 following a 45-day public comment period (August 17, 2017 – October 1, 2017).

## I. Overview

The CRTPO is the MPO for the Charlotte Urbanized Area which includes Iredell, Mecklenburg, and the western portion of Union County. Federal legislation requires Urbanized Areas with populations larger than 50,000 to have an MPO, whose primary function is to carry out the transportation planning process by actively participating in the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) process upon which MPO activities were originally based. Given the Charlotte region's growth throughout the past several decades, and the recognition at the federal, state and local levels of the importance of an efficient transportation system to support continued economic vitality, transportation infrastructure improvements have taken on an exceedingly important and prominent role. As such, the CRTPO views public participation as essential in building public trust and ensuring that transportation planning efforts meet the needs and requests of the residents throughout the three county planning area.

The CRTPO defines its role in public participation as not only providing quality information about transportation planning to the public, but also ensuring that its awareness and education initiatives are all-inclusive to the diverse populations within its boundary. To accomplish successful public involvement, the CRTPO is dedicated to the following goals:

1. Education of residents to allow for meaningful input
2. Informing residents about the location to assist in making an informed decision
3. Providing opportunities to actively soliciting meaningful participation
4. Evaluating public input received



5. Communicating the method in which public input is incorporated into plan and process recommendations.

6. Improving the public involvement process to enhance participation opportunities and incorporate new methods and technologies as they are available

This PIP provides guidelines and techniques that CRTPO may incorporate as appropriate to fulfill its mission in a transparent, collaborative process. The strategies detailed in this document will enable CRTPO to conduct public involvement throughout the planning process.

## A. CRTPO

The CRTPO is governed by a policy board that consists of elected officials representing the following jurisdictions:



- **Iredell County:** Iredell County, Mooresville, Statesville, and Troutman;
- **Mecklenburg County:** Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mecklenburg County, Mint Hill, and Pineville; and,
- **Union County:** Fairview, Indian Trail, Marshville, Marvin, Mineral Springs, Monroe, Stallings, Union County, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wesley Chapel and Wingate.

The North Carolina Board of Transportation has two voting members on CRTPO board from representing NCDOT-Divisions 10 and 12. The Metropolitan Transit Commission also has a voting member on the policy board. Non-voting members of the CRTPO board include a member representing the Iredell, Mecklenburg, and Union County

Planning Commissions, North Carolina Turnpike Authority, and the Federal Highway Administration. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department is the MPO's lead planning agency, and additional staff support is received from the Charlotte Department of Transportation.

## B. Federal Requirements

The Federal laws and processes covering public participation in transportation planning include:

- 23 CFR 450.316 (Updated Annually);
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) (2015);
- Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (2000);
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Section 508);
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (1994);

- The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990;
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (1969); and,
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### 1. **23 CFR 450.316 (Updated Annually)**

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is updated annually and produced by the Federal Register through the federal government's departments and agencies. It is divided into 50 Titles representing topics subject to federal regulation. Title 23 of the CFR pertains to Highways. Part 450 (Planning Assistance and Standards) is broken into sections with Subpart C pertaining to Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming. [Section 316](#) details public participation requirements including:

- Development and use of a documented participation plan providing for reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process;
- Adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points;
- Timely public notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
- Visualization techniques to describe Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- Public information and meeting available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as World Wide Web;
- Public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Explicit consideration and response to public input received;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of people traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems;
- Providing additional opportunities for public comment if the final MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment;
- Coordination with Statewide public involvement and consultation processes;
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process;
- Provide a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of significant written and oral comments received;
- A minimum public comment period of 45 days before adoption or revision of the public involvement process; and,
- Consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation or coordinate the planning process with such planning activities.

### 2. **FAST Act (2015)**

The FAST Act was signed into law on December 4, 2015. The FAST Act expands upon the requirements of previous transportation legislation (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century

(TEA-21), Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, (MAP-21); thus public involvement remains a feature of the planning process. The following were added as part of the FAST Act:

- The criteria required a representative from the transit provider to be part of the MPO process. *The FAST Act* states transit provider may “also serve as the representative of a local municipality;”
- It continues to encourage MPOs to consult with officials responsible for other types of planning activities. It adds tourism and the reduction of risk of natural disasters to the list of such activities; and,
- The *FAST Act* explicitly adds public ports and certain private providers of transportation, including intercity bus operators and employer-based commuting programs, to the list of interested parties that a MPO must provide with reasonable opportunity to comment on a transportation plan.

### **3. Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (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.

### **4. The 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.”

### **5. Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (1994)**

The basis of *Executive Order 12898* lies in *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. It 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.” *Executive Order 12898* defines minority populations as belonging to any of the following groups:

- Black – a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;
- Hispanic – 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, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands; and,
- American Indian and Alaskan Native – a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

It defines low-income populations as those whose household incomes (or in the case of a community or group, whose median household income) is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. 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 the transportation decision-making process; and,
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

## **6. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990**

*The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990* require CRTPO to perform transportation conformity prior to adopting a MTP or TIP. A public review and comment period is required for transportation conformity in non-attainment (meaning an area that has work air quality than the National Ambient Air Quality Standard defined in the Clean Air Act) areas. This requirement is important in protecting air quality for both the public and the environment. Federal funding and approvals are given to projects that are consistent with the federal air quality goals.

## **7. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* states that “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 discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY & TECHNIQUES



# Public Involvement Toolkit

## Informational Techniques

- > Infographics/graphics
- > Brochures/Fact Sheets
- > Electronic Newsletters
- > Website/Digital Materials
- > Social Media
- > Multi-language Hotline
- > Radio Interviews
- > Informational Videos
- > TCC Ambassadors

## Outreach Tools

- > Media Notices
- > E-blasts
- > Direct Mail
- > Social Media Advertisements
- > Bus Notices
- > Utility Bill Notices
- > Online Targeted Newspaper Ads

## Engagement Methods

- > Informational Workshops/Open Houses
- > Public Meetings
- > Pop-up Events
- > Small Group Meetings
- > Participant Surveys
- > Interactive Mapping
- > Webinars
- > Web-based Engagement Platforms
- > Task Force Group
- > Social Media

## II. Public Involvement Strategy & Techniques

This section contains a comprehensive list of public engagement tools and practices that CRTPO may implement. The CRTPO covers a large planning area, with diverse communities that have varied needs. This section allows for flexibility to engage with a variety of communities effectively. The project scope, size, and range of affected stakeholders will determine which strategies and techniques are most appropriate. A chart describing appropriate implementation is provided in Section G at the end of this chapter.

The PIP is an evolving document; as innovative technologies and tools become available, new techniques may be incorporated.

### A. Maintain a Stakeholder Database

The CRTPO maintains a stakeholder database that is compiled of identified stakeholders, organizations, and groups that may have an interest or may be impacted by transportation plans throughout the region

#### Recommendations:

- The stakeholder database to disseminate e-blasts about CRTPO activities, news, and upcoming public participation opportunities.
- Assistance can be pursued from stakeholders in distributing CRTPO communications within the stakeholders' organization.
- The stakeholder list should be updated on a periodic basis to include newly identified stakeholders.

## B. Partner with Stakeholders

The CRTPO may partner with stakeholders with an interest in transportation. Coordinating outreach efforts with identified stakeholder agencies may help expand the CRTPO's reach and provide additional public outreach resources.



## C. Outreach to Underserved Populations

The CRTPO must provide equal opportunity to all populations regardless of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency (LEP), income status, sex, age, and disability, in CRTPO programs and activities per federal requirements.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) correlates to Environmental Justice (EJ) guidance as both prohibit discrimination, and ensure fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all populations respectively. Requirements and guidelines in regards to Title VI, LEP, and EJ populations are previously stated in *Chapter I, Section B: Federal Requirements, Number 3: Executive Order 13166, Number 4: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Section 508), Number 5: Executive Order 12898, and Number 8: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*

> **Title VI** prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin in programs or activities which receive federal funding.

> **Environmental Justice** ensures fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income.

The CRTPO's public involvement efforts include strategies to specifically engage residents who have not traditionally participated in the transportation planning process. The following groups have traditionally demonstrated lower than average participation rates in CRTPO's public involvement processes:

- Disabled residents
- Economically disadvantaged residents
- Elderly residents
- Illiterate residents, or residents with limited literacy comprehension
- LEP
- Minority groups

**Recommendations:** CRTPO should establish relationships with organizations that represent underserved populations to build relationships with these groups and leaders as well as identify strategies to engage traditional non-participants in the transportation planning process.

Additional strategies to engage with these groups may incorporate the following:

- Holding meetings in transit accessible locations or in the targeted community neighborhood for those who do not have personal transportation;
- Holding meetings at various times throughout the day to allow for participation from all members of the community;
- Hosting meetings on days of the week or weekend when it is convenient for the public to attend;
- Participating in existing events to reach additional residents;
- Conducting meetings and providing materials in a language that can be understood by the community;
- Reaching out to churches in a specific neighborhood;
- Hosting pop-up events in areas where people congregate such as malls or transit stops; and,
- Producing materials for public consumption in English, Spanish, and other languages as necessary.

### 1. Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plan

The CRTPO has developed and implemented a plan to reach minority and low-income populations, who usually do not participate in the transportation planning process. This plan is referred to as the [Title VI Plan](#). The CRTPO Title VI plan addresses Title VI and EJ populations. CRTPO has a separate plan entitled, [Limited English Proficiency Plan](#), to describe methods to engage populations with the limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English.

## D. Informational Techniques

### 1. Develop and Implement Methods to Explain Complex Concepts

The CRTPO should attempt to simplify and explain complex concepts by using the following methods:

- **Clearly state the intent of public involvement:** Prepared materials should explain **how** the resident will be affected and **why** residents should participate;
- **Understand the needs of the audience:** Materials created for public distribution should incorporate graphics, and limit the amount of text if possible. Limit the use of industry vocabulary and acronyms whenever possible;
- **Use Graphics instead of text:** Infographics, visualizations, and/or renderings should be used to illustrate information when applicable; and,

### 2. Develop and Distribute Informational Handouts

Brochures, fact sheets, and other informational handouts can be used to inform residents of relevant initiatives and current planning efforts.



#### Recommendations:

- Consideration should be given to the preparation of these materials in other relevant languages as well as in large-print.
- Periodic reviews of materials should be conducted to ensure that relevant material is displayed.
- Graphics can be used to explain complex concepts. Informational materials should be available online and distributed at public events attended by the CRTPO.

### **3. Newsletters**

The CRTPO has distributed quarterly newsletters to provide subscribers with periodic updates of relevant activities and public involvement opportunities since 2009. The newsletter is available online and distributed to over 750 stakeholders. Residents may elect to receive the newsletter through the [newsletter link](#) on the website. The CRTPO has distributed special edition newsletters on an as-needed basis to provide information on specific topics outside of the regular newsletter distribution cycle. The following recommendations have been developed to guide the development and readability of the CRTPO's newsletter.

#### Recommendations:

- Graphics should be incorporated as appropriate to illustrate and describe content.
- Newsletter content should be concise, easy to understand, and use graphics whenever applicable.
- Newsletters should be prepared in other relevant languages and at the request of a subscriber be available in a large-print format.
- Resident and stakeholder email addresses collected during public events can be added to the newsletter database.
- The newsletter should contain approximately five articles per edition to ensure readability and reader comprehension. If there is a consistent need to include more than five articles per edition, then staff may consider implementing a new schedule to include six newsletters a year (every other month).

### **4. Website**

The CRTPO's website provides information about CRTPO and its activities, as well as the transportation planning activities of its member jurisdictions. Given the reach of the internet, the CRTPO website has become the central repository for meeting agendas and minutes, plan information, project information, mapping and other resources. The website provides the public access to documents such as, but not limited to:

- MTP: Current document and previous archived versions, as well as documentation of the MTP development process;
- CTP mapping and background information;
- TIP: Current document and previous archived versions, as well as documentation of the TIP development process (NCDOT Prioritization);

- PIP;
- UPWP;
- TCC and MPO meeting agendas and minutes;
- Frequently Asked Questions;
- Glossary of important terms; and,
- Documents and links to provide background information regarding the MPOs federal and state requirements.

Visit [www.crtpo.org](http://www.crtpo.org) to review materials and information, contact us, or connect with us.

The following recommendations have been compiled to ensure that CRTPO’s website continues to be a valuable resource for residents of the planning area.

Recommendations:

- Website content should be concise, easy to understand, and use graphics whenever applicable.
- Staff should review the CRTPO website content on a regular basis to determine if content needs to be added or updated.
- The website will be maintained in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998.

**5. Social Media**

The CRTPO has utilized social media to enhance its public involvement program and provide real-time information to planning area residents since 2016. It is anticipated that mediums such as social media will continue to become an ideal method to reach residents and conduct public involvement, with reduced reliance on holding large public meetings. The following recommendations are intended to ensure that the CRTPO’s social media accounts are being used effectively.

Recommendations:

- Staff should use a content calendar will help to ensure that regular posts are being made on CRTPO’s social media accounts. Determining a routine schedule for posting information will help CRTPO’s social media accounts maintain their relevancy without overwhelming its followers.
- The subject and type of CRTPO’s social media postings should be varied. Examples of relevant social media posts include: videos, questions designed to engage followers, and informational postings regarding CRTPOs core processes.
- The CRTPO may “share” posts from other organizations (such as NCDOT) or municipalities that pertain to the CRTPO.
- Images and videos should be incorporated frequently within social media posts
- Consider implementing a community-based social networking website (such as NextDoor) in a future plan development process. Community-based social media websites are organized by HOAs allowing organizations to target communications to

specific audiences. This technology allows local governments to distribute information about plans and processes to a broad audience in lieu of residents' attendance at a public meeting.

## 6. Multi-language Hotline

A toll-free telephone line provides instructions in multiple languages to offer non-English speaking residents with a method to provide feedback. The toll-free hotline allows a caller to leave a message detailing their feedback. CRTPO may implement the multi-language hotline for its plans and programs as needed. A multi-language hotline was available to residents during the development of the 2040 and 2045 MTPs.

## 7. Radio Interviews

The CRTPO pursues radio interviews regarding as a method to reach additional residents during the development of plans and programs. Radio interviews provide another source for the public and stakeholders to receive information. Radio interviews should be publicized through social media whenever possible.



## 8. Informational Videos

The CRTPO periodically develops short informational videos to present complex information in a simplified and concise manner. The CRTPO has developed brief videos to clearly convey the CTP public involvement process, and MTP and TIP development processes to residents. The following recommendations are intended to ensure that informational videos are a valuable resource for residents:



### Recommendations:

- Videos should be limited to approximately than three minutes in length to maintain the viewer's attention.
- Graphics may also be incorporated into informational videos to clarify a concept.

- Informational videos should be posted on the website, social media, and distributed as needed including to the news media.

### 9. Public Input at CRTPO Board Meetings

The CRTPO Board bylaws state that residents are provided with an opportunity to address the CRTPO on any issue related to the transportation planning process. Residents should sign up at the beginning of the meeting to speak or contact the CRTPO's secretary prior to the meeting.

Meeting agendas and minutes from MPO and TCC Meetings can be viewed on the website by clicking [here](#).

### 10. Public Attendance at Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Meetings

The TCC is the staff arm to the MPO. It is composed of representatives of various departments and communities involved in the transportation planning process. The TCC's primary responsibility is to carry out the various planning tasks described in the UPWP. These include updates to the MTP, analysis of operational issues in the thoroughfare system, recommendations for various transportation investment programs and the public involvement process for the MPO. Virtually all technical recommendations to the MPO originate at the TCC level.

TCC meetings are generally scheduled on the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center. The TCC Bylaws are available on the [website](#). Residents may attend TCC meetings to gain insight on transportation planning efforts; however, public questions or comments should be addressed during the CRTPO Board meeting.

### 11. Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Member Outreach Assistance

TCC members may be asked to assist in public outreach coordination between the CRTPO and their respective jurisdiction. Staff may request TCC member assistance with the following tasks for public engagement within their respective jurisdictions.

- Promote the CRTPO's public meetings and opportunities for input to the TCC member's municipality;
- Facilitate coordination between the CRTPO and the municipality to disseminate information through local channels to the public; and,
- Present information at local events and meetings using the CRTPO's presentation materials.

### 1. Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

### 2. CRTPO Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board

meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month.

Meetings are located at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center (600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, NC 28202) Room 267.



## E. Outreach Tools

### 1. Media Releases

The CRTPO issues media releases to announce upcoming activities in radio, television and newspaper outlets in Iredell, Mecklenburg and Union Counties. Media releases should focus on upcoming public participation opportunities, and public comment periods for the CRTPO's plans and programs. This medium can also be used to announce milestones in the transportation planning process such as the approval of project funding or the adoption of a significant plan. Media outlets within the planning area that target non-English speakers should be included. A list of media outlets has been established and will be updated as necessary. A media list will be available on the updated public involvement page of the CRTPO website.

### 2. E-blasts

E-blasts are informational e-mails sent to numerous recipients simultaneously. E-blasts should be sent using a web-based communications service to the CRTPO distribution lists. The analytics feature tracks "open" and "click" rates and preferences of recipients. Residents may subscribe for e-blasts by sending a message to CRTPO staff through the "Contact Us" page on the website.

### 3. Direct Mail

Distribution of a direct mailing to a targeted area may be necessary when local area impacts are possible because of a proposed plan or project. Direct mailings should provide information about project scope, potential impacts, and methods to obtain further information.

### 4. Social Media Advertisements

Social media advertisements utilize social networking sites as a marketing tool. The advertisements are a cost-effective method that may be incorporated during the outreach phase to promote public participation opportunities and reach specific audiences. Social media sites allow the advertiser to set a daily limit on cost. Target audiences can be selected by demographic, location, and profile information. The target audience does not have to be a current CRTPO subscriber to receive the advertisement. The advertisement appears in the target audience's newsfeed or side bar of the screen. The CRTPO may choose to implement social media advertisements to publicize comment periods, project-related meetings, and events where staff will be present to provide information on a planning process.

### 5. Bus Flyer

The CRTPO may choose coordinate with transit providers within the planning area to distribute bus flyers to reach residents utilizing transit. Bus flyers may also be utilized when an amendment or proposed decision may affect transit operations. A Quick Response (QR) code should be incorporated on the bus flyer to direct residents to additional information regarding the particular issue.

## 6. Utility Bill Notices

The CRTPO may coordinate with utility companies to include public event notices in mailings throughout the three counties. Notices should include information regarding public participation opportunities.

## 7. Online Targeted Newspaper Ads

The CRTPO may publicize public participation notifications in online news media. Following the advertisement's run period, CRTPO should use advertisement "views" and click rates provided by the newspaper to determine the cost benefit of running newspaper advertisements. This method may be incorporated solely to reach targeted communities.

# F. Engagement Methods

## 1. Conduct Public Engagement Events

The CRTPO seeks to involve the public and throughout the transportation planning process through a variety of engagement methods including; in-person outreach efforts to reach diverse audiences. These public engagement events are conducted to educate and solicit public input regarding the region's transportation plans and programs.

Open houses, public meetings and public workshops are the traditional methods that the CRTPO has used to conduct public involvement in the past. While the CRTPO has shifted its focus to using interactive and internet-based methods for reaching residents, public meetings may need to be conducted periodically to ensure that residents have an opportunity to provide input. The following section summarizes the types of public meetings and strategies to receive effective input.

- **Open Houses** - An informal, drop-in session that provides an opportunity for residents to review draft plans or obtain information regarding ongoing projects. Residents may attend at any time during the stated open house hours. Open houses do not include a set agenda or presentation. Staff should



consider the most appropriate materials to display for the most effective resident participation.

- **Public Workshops** - These meetings have a set agenda and include one or more of the following elements:
  - Presentation can be used to convey plan recommendations. Presentations should be brief and avoid industry jargon and technical information.
  - Break-out sessions/group activities are appropriate for the beginning of the planning process, and developing goals and objectives. Break-out sessions may also be used collect public input on alternatives to evaluate and consider during the decision-making process.
- **Public meetings** - A formal event that educates residents on recommendations from a plan, project, or program. Public meetings can include a presentation, facilitated discussion, and information about next steps. Interactive activities may be incorporated during the public meeting to actively solicit public input. Written comments can be solicited during the public meeting. Comment forms may include a survey to measure meeting efforts.
- **Outreach at Events** - Hosting an information table at a scheduled event (e.g. the Latin American Festival) reaches residents who may not typically attend a public meeting. Informational materials will be displayed, and staff will be available to educate attendees one-on-one and receive public input. Outreach at specific events may be implemented if CRTPO is targeting a particular community or population in which an event is taking place.
- **Pop-up Events** - A staffed information table at locations in a community where residents typically gather, such as a transit station, farmer's market, or festival. The purpose of the pop-up event is to answer questions, inform residents of ongoing plans and distribute fliers and other plan information. Pop-up events may be hosted in specific communities or locations to reach targeted populations.
- **Small Group Meetings** - The purpose of this meeting format is to solicit input from participants in an informal setting. Typically, staff will contact the chairman or group organizer to request a short presentation or discussion on the agenda. This meeting format is effective because group members do not need to dedicate additional time to attend a public meeting on the subject. Small group meetings are effective in reaching residents within targeted communities that may not regularly participate in the public involvement process.

The following recommendations are intended to guide CRTPO to hold successful public engagement events:

Recommendations:

- Determine the type of input is being sought from residents and the ability that comments would have the ability to change the recommendations within a plan or project.
- Offer a variety of timeframes throughout the day if several open houses have been scheduled to provide residents convenient options for their schedules.
- Consider an offering at least one interactive component during a public engagement event to make the topic relevant and easy for residents to understand. The CRTPO has used interactive mapping and videos during previous open houses.
- Investigate the feasibility of holding public meetings in locations other than government buildings. Churches, community centers, and other neighborhood facilities may be appropriate venues.
- Coordinate with the respective TCC members and community leaders within the general area where the public meetings will be held to assist in promoting the event.
  - Ensure that the particular communities in which the meetings will be held have promoted the public engagement events on their websites and social media accounts.
- Staff should track the results of each public engagement events to record the number of residents that attended and the major themes that were identified within the resident comments. This data will be helpful in determining the type of outreach that is pursued in the future and will inform staff of the specific issues that will need to be documented.

## 2. Surveys

Public surveys should be implemented during public engagement efforts to garner input on plans or projects. Survey results enable staff to analyze the responses from a series of meetings and geographically reference the results to identify trends. The CRTPO has successfully implemented public surveys in planning efforts associated with the CTP, MTP, and update of the PIP. The following recommendations will ensure that the surveys are designed to seek the most effective public input:

Recommendations:

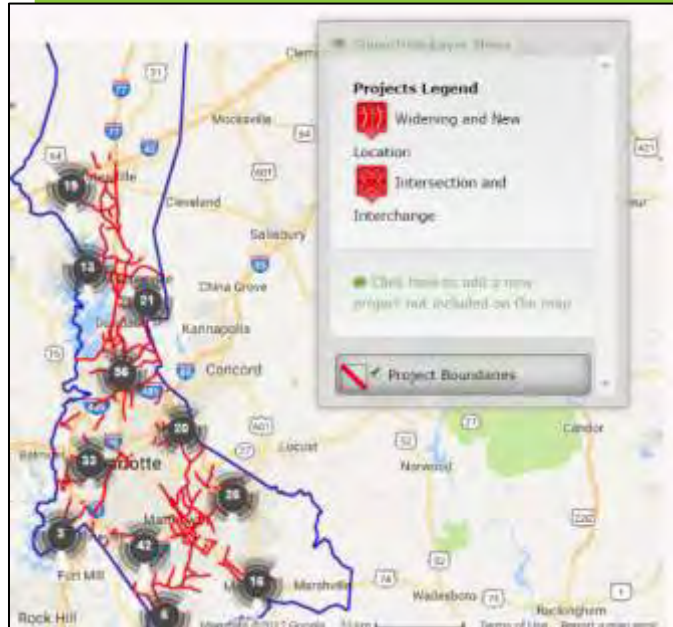
- Real-time surveys can be implemented during public meetings as an effective interactive engagement measure. Polling software can be downloaded to participant's phones, which also allows for the results to be displayed on a large screen on a real-time basis.
- Online surveys should be promoted through e-blasts, social media, and the website.
- Surveys should be translated into any necessary languages to provide all populations with the opportunity to provide input.
- Surveys may also be incorporated to obtain participant feedback regarding the facilitation and logistics of a meeting or event conducted by the CRTPO. Surveys may



include questions to gain insight on public preferences for future public engagement efforts. Collected data will help evaluate CRTPO's public participation efforts and may be included as a performance measure.

### 3. Online Interactive Mapping

The CRTPO has used website-based mapping to provide residents an interactive opportunity to review and comment on projects during the CTP and MTP public engagement processes. Residents may click on a project to view a description and add a comment. The interactive mapping tool may also be utilized at public meetings, open houses, and other public events as a method to increase participation. The CRTPO may choose to implement a blank map (without any projects listed) that will allow



residents to comment anywhere on the map. This would allow the CRTPO to collect data on community concerns, vision, or areas where the community believes improvements are warranted. The CRTPO will solicit input from the public on the interactive maps through website announcements, social media, e-blasts, press releases, and other methods of outreach as appropriate.

### 4. Webinars

The CRTPO has incorporated webinars within its public engagement processes as a convenient method for residents to participate without having to attend a public meeting. Webinars are recorded presentations that are available online and may be viewed live or at a later time. Webinars will be promoted through notifications to media, e-blasts, and social media.

### 5. Web-based Public Engagement Platforms & Applications

CRTPO may implement a web-based public engagement application to increase outreach and provide residents with an alternative and convenient method to participate in the transportation planning process. Interactive public engagement applications have the ability to guide residents through a sequence of webpages to educate and seek input through a series of multiple choice or open-ended questions. Residents may view how other participants have responded to the questions, which provides a transparent process. Web-based public engagement applications can be utilized at a resident's convenience

as well as at in-person events. This tool may be implemented during the development or update of a plan or program.

## **6. Stakeholder Task Force**

The CRTPO may consider forming a stakeholder task forces to receive input from residents from throughout the planning area. The goal of the task force would be to solicit feedback from members regarding a particular element of a plan or process. The task force would dissolve once its work has been completed within the specific plan or process. A task force could be comprised of residents, developers, members of an organization within the transportation industry, and other relevant participants at the discretion of staff. The following recommendations are intended to guide the formation of a stakeholder task force:

### Recommendations:

- Identify a diverse group of residents from the three counties within CRTPO to receive balanced feedback;
- Include representatives of economically disadvantaged and/or minority populations on the task force;
- Target non-elected officials as members;
- Establish a meeting schedule, frequency and termination date so that the requested stakeholders are aware of the commitment.
- Staff should evaluate the effectiveness of input received from the task force at the conclusion to determine the benefits and lessons learned.

**Table I: Implementation Guidelines**

PLAN or PROGRAM	INFORMATIONAL TECHNIQUES								OUTREACH TOOLS							ENGAGEMENT METHODS												
	Handouts	Articles in Regular Electronic Newsletter	Website	Social Media	Multi-language Hotline	Radio Interviews	Informational Videos	TCC Member Outreach Assistance	Media Release	E-blasts	Direct Mail	Social Media Advertisements	Bus Flyer	Utility Bill Notices	Online Targeted Newspaper Ads	Open Houses	Public Workshops	Public Meetings	Outreach at Events (Information Tables)	Pop-up Events	Small Group Meetings	Surveys	Online Interactive Mapping	Webinars	Web-based Public Engagement Platforms & Applications	Stakeholder Task Force	Social Media	
CTP Development	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
MTP Project Submission	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
MTP Fiscally Constrained Project List	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+	
TIP Project Submittal Phase	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
TIP – Local Input Point Assignment Phase		+	+	+				+	+	+				+				+			+	+		+		+	+	
CTP Map Amendments, MTP Amendments: Tier 1			+	+					+	+	+			+							+						+	
CTP Map Amendments, MTP Amendments: Tier 2			+	+					+	+	+	+		+					+		+	+					+	
CTP Map Amendments, MTP Amendments: Tier 3			+	+					+	+	+	+	+	+					+		+	+		+			+	
TIP Amendments (depends upon level of change)			+	+					+	+	+	+	+	+					+		+	+		+			+	
Transportation Conformity Determination		+	+	+						+				+				+	+	+				+			+	
Unified Planning Work Program		+	+	+						+				+										+			+	

+ = Highly Recommended  
 + = CRTPO May Consider Implementing Depending on Need

# GENERAL GUIDELINES & POLICIES





### III. General Guidelines and Policies

The following sections provide guidelines for the CRTPO's public engagement efforts.

#### A. Open Meetings

Official CRTPO meetings (TCC and MPO Board) are open to the public and subject to the *North Carolina Open Meetings Law*. This law states that official meetings include a majority of members gathering “for purposes of conducting hearings, participating in deliberations, or voting upon or otherwise transacting the public business.” The minutes and all materials presented at these meetings will be public record and will be available for review. The availability of these records will be posted on CRTPO's website and can be distributed on request.

#### B. Public Events

Public events will follow the guidelines outlined in *Chapter II, Section F: Engagement Methods*. All events should post clear directional signage to guide event participants from outside the facility to the designated meeting space. A sign-in sheet should be utilized at all CRTPO public events to collect names and contact information of attendees. Staff should be in attendance to provide information, answer questions, and solicit input as appropriate. The following guidelines provide details regarding implementation of CRTPO public events.

##### 1. Adequate Notice

The CRTPO should provide adequate notice of all events where public participation is being requested. Adequate notice should be provided in advance of any public engagement events, public comment periods, and other opportunities where the resident

may participate and provide input. The list below provides guidelines regarding adequate public notice:

- Event notices should be posted on CRTPO's website and social media at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- Notice will be provided to mainstream and minority media at least one week prior to the event. If requested, a reading service for the blind will be enlisted to broadcast this information.
- If a mailing is required, they should be distributed at least two weeks prior to the public event.

## 2. Public Input

The CRTPO will solicit public input through a variety of methods for plans, projects and programs. Comment periods should occur for a minimum of 14 days and up to a maximum of 45 days in length, with a preference of a length of 30 days whenever possible.

The CRTPO will issue a media release, and post information on the website and on its social media accounts to inform residents of the topic in which public comment is being sought and the dates within the period. The results of the public comment period should be posted on the website and presented to the TCC and MPO. Public comments will be accepted up to close of business of the final day of the public comment period, unless otherwise specified. Public comments may be provided in the following methods:

- During the public comment portion of a regularly scheduled CRTPO meeting;
- In writing, including through e-mail and social media;
- With TTY (teletypewriter) and/or TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf); and,
- By voicemail/translator on the multi-language hotline.

## 3. Access by Persons with Disabilities

The *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* prohibits discrimination of persons with disabilities and affords persons with disabilities equal opportunities as persons without disabilities; including the ability to participate in State and local government services and programs. The following recommendations are designed to ensure that the CRTPO's public input meetings are ADA compliant.

### Recommendations:

- All CRTPO events should be facilitated in venues that are ADA compliant;
- Meeting venues should provide free parking and access to transit, when applicable;
- All public documents may be provided in alternative formats, as necessary;
- Auxiliary aids and services to those participants in need will be provided. Public meeting announcements will include content with details regarding accommodations for persons with disabilities. Persons requiring special assistance should contact staff prior to the event to request services.
- The website will be updated and maintained according to the guidelines in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Section 508).

In following the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements CRTPO includes the following text on public event notices:

**“In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), accommodations will be provided for persons who require assistance in order to participate in Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization meetings. If assistance is needed or to request this document in an alternative format, please contact CRTPO at (704) 336-2205 or (704) 336-5123 (fax) or [info@crtpo.org](mailto:info@crtpo.org).”**

## C. Social Media Policy

The CRTPO utilizes social media as a method to communicate information to stakeholders and residents. The web links to social media are available on the CRTPO’s website. In accordance with the City of Charlotte’s social media guidelines, the following outlines the CRTPO’s social media policy:

Comments posted on the CRTPO social media sites by the public are opinions expressed by the particular resident, not CRTPO. The comments will be seen by other members of the public. CRTPO reserves the right to remove comments/postings from their social media sites that contain the following:

- Vulgar, abusive or threatening language, defamatory statements or nudity in profile pictures or attachments;
- Personal attacks, hate speech or offensive terminology targeting individuals or groups of individuals;
- Suggestions or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Unsolicited business proposals or endorsements/promotion of commercial services, products or entities;
- Infringements of copyrights, trademarks or other intellectual property;
- Endorsements of political parties, candidates or groups; and,
- Off-topic comments/posts, spam or links to unrelated sites.

# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES





## IV. Implementation Guidelines for Plans and Programs

This section provides public involvement guidelines for the CRTPO's programs and transportation plans. Recommended performance measures are listed for each plan to ensure targets are being met. The public involvement guidelines outlined in this section as well as the performance measures should be reviewed on an annual basis.

### A. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is CRTPO's annual budget that identifies the major transportation planning activities to be undertaken the coming year. Estimated costs, funding sources, and a timeline of the associated activities are also provided within the UPWP. This document is developed and approved annually by the MPO Board. Residents will be given the opportunity to review and comment on the UPWP prior to adoption by the MPO Board. The UPWP will be available on CRTPO's website.

### B. The Transportation Planning Process

The CRTPO is responsible for conducts its transportation process by developing and updating the following plans and programs:



Transportation projects are initially identified in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). Based on data-driven prioritization process, a subset of these projects are scored and programmed into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan's (MTP) fiscally constrained project list and are ultimately submitted to NCDOT for consideration in an upcoming Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for design and construction. The four modes of transportation included in these plans are; highway and roadways, pedestrian, bicycle, and rail and transit.



Each plan requires public involvement as the purpose of these plans is to develop projects to improve connectivity and mobility for the regions residents. Amendments to these plans may require public involvement depending upon the level of change and impact to the residents. The plans and the recommended public involvement levels are further described below.

## 1. Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) represents CRTPO's long-term vision for the evolution of the transportation network to serve residents and employers in the CRTPO planning area. It evaluates the condition of the entire surface transportation network through a needs-based assessment conveyed in four modal maps: highway, bicycle, pedestrian and public transit and rail. The four modal maps are mutually adopted by the CRTPO and North Carolina Board of Transportation. The CTP does not include specific projects or improvement schedules but instead represents the status of the network that will be required to support anticipated growth. Many jurisdictions reference the CTP in their development regulations to reserve rights-of-way for future transportation improvements.

[North Carolina General Statute 136-66.2](#) requires each MPO to coordinate with NCDOT to develop a CTP that will serve present and anticipated travel demand in and around the organization's planning area. The plan shall be based upon population growth, economic conditions and prospects, and patterns of land development throughout the planning area and shall provide for the safe and effective use of the transportation system.

### CTP Amendment Guidelines

The CTP Amendment Guidelines table, found in Appendix A, identifies the mode and facility type, as well as the examples of amendment types. This table is not meant to be all-inclusive but serves as a guide for the most common scenarios resulting in a CTP amendment. CRTPO staff makes the final recommendation regarding the classification of a change as an administrative modification or procedural amendment.

### CTP Map Amendment Classification

The CTP workgroup identified the following two types of CTP map amendments: administrative modification and procedural amendment.

**Administrative Modifications** are determined to have no to very minor impact to the overall transportation network and adjoining residents and property owners. Administrative modifications are intended to correct minor cartographic errors or revisions and do not alter the intent of the existing CTP alignment. Public involvement is not required if the proposed amendment is determined to be an administrative modification. Notice of administrative modifications will be provided to the CRTPO Board at least once a year.

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**Note: The TCC Bylaws address map amendments:** Article V, Section 6 of the [TCC bylaws](#), contains specified circumstances that authorize the TCC to approve map amendments. In other instances, procedural amendments require public involvement and CRTPO Board approval.

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**Procedural Amendments** have a greater impact on residents and/or property owners. These amendments may alter the intent of the future CTP component. Procedural amendments could enhance the scope, remove an alignment or portion of, change the facility type or change the impact to adjacent property(ies). Procedural amendments may vary due to the characteristics of each transportation mode represented within the four CTP maps. For example, an amendment to a bicycle facility will most likely not have the same impact to affected properties as an amendment to the highway map. The member jurisdiction is responsible for leading public engagement process.

The administrative modification and procedural amendments processes can be found in the Appendix C.

### **Public Involvement Process**

The workgroup developed guidelines addressing the level of public involvement recommended based on the type of amendment. The guidelines are intended to provide a framework of potential public involvement methods that may be implemented based on a CTP amendment's magnitude of impact to stakeholders and the public.

Administrative modifications will not require public involvement and will be brought to the CRTPO Board as an information item at least once a year.

Procedural amendments require public involvement, including a public comment period open for 30 days in length if meeting schedules permit, with a minimum 14 days. Residents will have the opportunity to provide input during a public comment period, during a CRTPO Board meeting, by email, regular mail or facsimile.

Proposed changes will be reviewed to ensure that low-income and/or minority populations will not experience disproportionate impacts, as noted in Executive Order 12898 (see Chapter I, Section B). The CRTPO website will be updated with revised CTP maps once the CRTPO Board has approved the change.

Suggested tools and techniques that can be utilized by the member jurisdiction(s) or CRTPO staff to reach and engage residents can be found in Appendix D.

**Waiver of Public Involvement Activities** - Public involvement efforts for procedural amendments may be waived only if the agency proposing the amendment has conducted public involvement efforts sufficient to meet the guidelines in the CRTPO's PIP. The public involvement efforts must have been completed within twelve (12) months of the time the CRTPO receives the amendment request.

## 2. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP is the official intermodal transportation plan that is developed and adopted for the Charlotte region's metropolitan planning area that describes the programs and projects to be implemented within a 20-year horizon. FHWA requires MPO's that are classified as TMAs to update their MTP every four years based upon a re-evaluation of various components of the transportation planning process, socio-economic and financial assumptions, and transportation-related environmental and health issues. Since the MTP becomes the CRTPO's primary policy document upon adoption, plan-specific branding and a dedicated project website have been promoted through the most recent update.

There are two significant opportunities for public involvement during the development of the MTP. Residents are provided with an opportunity to provide input on the roadway projects that are submitted by the CRTPO jurisdictions for evaluation in the roadway ranking process. The second opportunity for public involvement exists during the public review of the draft fiscally constrained project list, which is the outcome of the roadway ranking process.

**Roadway Project Submission Public Notification** - Public notices should be concise and **specify that CRTPO is seeking input regarding the projects to be evaluated in the 2045 MTP** and why it is important for the public to participate. The following techniques may be utilized to inform residents and stakeholders about opportunities to participate in the prioritization process.

- E-blasts;
- Social Media;
- Bus Flyer;
- Utility Bill Notices;
- TCC Member Outreach; and,
- Online Targeted Newspaper Advertisements.

**Roadway Project Submission Public Involvement Opportunities** - The CRTPO should conduct public involvement activities to seek input regarding the proposed roadway projects to evaluate during the development of the MTP. Public engagement during the development may utilize the following:

- Online interactive mapping where residents can express support for project submissions;
- Open houses or public workshops;

- Informational presentation to an elected board or civic group; and,
- Staffed table (pop-up) at a regularly scheduled event

**Fiscally Constrained Project List Public Notification** - Public notices should be concise and **specify that CRTPO is seeking input on its draft fiscally constrained project list within the MTP** and why it is important for the public to participate. CRTPO Currently maintains a project website for the development of its MTP. This should be the central location for all online materials for this process. The following techniques may be utilized as appropriate to inform stakeholders and the public about participation opportunities.

- E-blasts;
- Social Media;
- Bus Flyer;
- Utility Bill Notices;
- TCC Member Outreach; and,
- Online Targeted Newspaper Advertisements

**Fiscally Constrained Project List Involvement Opportunities** – The CRTPO should conduct public involvement activities to seek input regarding the proposed roadway projects to evaluate during the development of the MTP. The following guidelines should be considered in planning for a public comment period for the fiscally constrained project list:

- The fiscally constrained project list should be made available for at least a 14-day public comment period. A 30-day public comment period is preferable if meeting schedules permit.
- The fiscally constrained project list should be made available on CRTPO’s website along with instructions for residents to provide comments on the project list.
- A summary of public comments should be presented to the TCC and MPO in consideration with the adoption of the project list.

Public engagement during the fiscally constrained project list may include the following techniques:

- Online interactive mapping where residents can express support for the fiscally constrained projects;
- Open houses or public workshops;
- Informational presentation to an elected board or civic group;
- Staffed table (pop-up) at a regularly scheduled event; and,
- Recorded webinar that summarizes the process to develop the fiscally constrained project list.

**Amendments to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan** - MTP amendments are required when a project scope is modified, or when the project is included within the TIP. Residents will have the opportunity to review and provide input on the amendment. The following recommendations are intended to provide guidelines in accounting for public input in the MTP amendment process:

Recommendations:

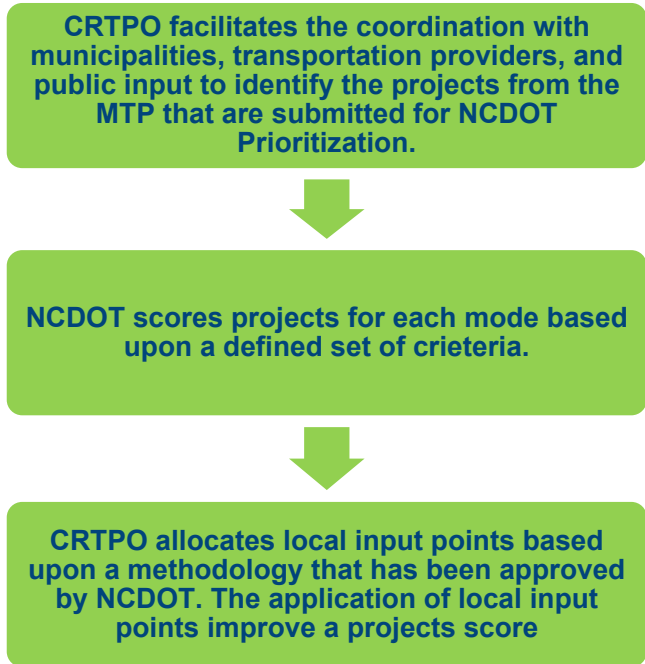
- MTP amendments should follow the three-tiered impact system in determining the appropriate level of public involvement activities as described previously for the CTP amendments (Chapter IV: Section B.1).
- Amendments to the MTP will follow the same procedures for notification and public input solicitation as the CTP. A 30-day comment period will be enacted. CRTPO should coordinate with the affected municipality to determine if a public meeting is warranted during the 30-day period. The municipality of the proposed amendment should post information regarding the amendment on its website, social media, and other appropriate techniques.

### **3. Transportation Improvement Program**

The TIP is a staged, prioritized, ten-year intermodal program of transportation projects, prepared in each metropolitan area, which is consistent with that area's metropolitan transportation plan. Each metropolitan TIP is incorporated in its entirety into the STIP. In North Carolina, the TIP is separated into a five-year Transportation Improvement Program and a five-year Development Program and is updated every two years. The TIP is developed through NCDOT's decision-making tool referred to as the Prioritization process, which is the mechanism for allocating funding from the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) legislation (HB 817, 2013).

**TIP Development Process** - [NCDOT's Prioritization Process](#) is a two-step, data-driven process to develop the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) every two years. The first step is the submission of projects to NCDOT for scoring and the second phase is the local input points assignment process that each MPO, Rural Planning Organization (RPO), and NCDOT Division participate to indicate their local priorities.

### TIP Development Process



The CRTPO uses the MTP and other plans as a basis for submitting projects to NCDOT for the TIP Development process. Due to the technical nature of the TIP Development process following the passage of STI, the CRTPO should ensure that all materials prepared through this effort are easy to understand for all residents within the planning area.

#### Project Submittal Phase:

It is important that residents provide input in during the project submittal phase within the TIP development process because the STI legislation limits project submission to MPOs, RPOs, or NCDOT Divisions. This requires residents, local governments, and other public interest groups to actively participate in the CRTPO's public involvement period of its project submission phase to ensure that their priorities are being considered within this process.

The CRTPO collaborates with its member jurisdictions and other surface transportation providers within the planning area to develop project submittal lists to submit to NCDOT for scoring in the TIP development process. The CRTPO receives a set amount of submittal slots from NCDOT, and has the opportunity to submit aviation, bicycle/pedestrian, roadway, rail, and transit projects to NCDOT for scoring.

It should be noted that both NCDOT Division offices (10 & 12) within CRTPO also receive a smaller number of project submittal slots during each round of NCDOT Prioritization. Staff should coordinate the project submittal process to the extent possible with the NCDOT Division offices to ensure that residents are aware of the projects that are being submitted by each organization.

### Public Involvement Process:

The CRTPO should consider the following process recommendations to provide an opportunity for adequate public involvement in the project submittal phase of the TIP development process.

- A minimum 14-day public comment and review period should be held for the proposed list of projects to submit to NCDOT for the TIP Development process. A 30-day comment period is desirable if CRTPO meeting schedules, and NCDOT milestones allow for this timeframe within this phase.
- Draft lists and maps of projects proposed for project submittal should be easily found on CRTPO's webpage. Context should be provided in regards CRTPO's process to give priority to the submission of roadway projects from the current MTP.
- The public comment period should be announced by using media releases, newsletter articles, social media posts and CRTPO's website.
- Residents may attend the MPO Board meeting to provide comments on the TIP Development project submittal lists.
- Staff should summarize the public comments received on the project submittal lists and post a summary on the NCDOT Prioritization webpage.
- A summary of public comments received should be presented to the TCC and MPO during the endorsement presentations.
- The MPO board can divert from the recommended project submittal list proposed by the TCC based upon public comment received.

### Public Involvement Techniques:

Public engagement during the project submittal process list may include the following techniques:

- The CRTPO's NCDOT Prioritization webpage should be used as the central location for information regarding this process. Links to the recommended project submittal lists and PDF (static) maps should be easily viewed on the webpage.
- Consider implementing online interactive mapping within the webpage where residents can express support for submission of projects;
- Open houses or public workshops can be held as deemed necessary;
- Informational presentation to an elected board or civic group;
- Staffed table (pop-up) at a regularly scheduled event; and,
- Recorded webinar that summarizes CRTPO's role in the NCDOT Prioritization process.

### **Local Input Point Assignment Phase:**

This is the second step of CRTPO's TIP Development process, and it usually begins four to six months following the submission of projects for scoring. Based upon the STI legislation, local input points define up to 30% of Regional Impact and 50% of Division Needs tier project scores in the TIP Development process. Statewide Mobility projects are scored by NCDOT based upon 100% criteria scoring, and generally are not eligible for



local input points unless they are unfunded in the Statewide Tier. In most cases, a Regional Impact or Division Needs project must receive allocations of local input points from both CRTPO and an NCDOT Division in order to be funded within the TIP, making this a critical step in the TIP Development process.

The STI legislation requires each MPO, RPO and NCDOT Division to adopt a local input points assignment methodology with at least one quantitative and one qualitative criteria. The [CRTPO's local input points methodology](#) uses the scores and horizon years from its most current fiscally constrained MTP project list as its primary prioritization criteria for assigning local input points. Roadway projects that are not included within the fiscally constrained project list and non-highway projects are prioritized for local input points based upon the NCDOT quantitative score. Given data-driven requirements required as part of the CRTPO's methodology, the draft assignment of local input points to projects is developed by members of the TCC and presented to the MPO board as an information report as a request to open a public comment period.

Coordination with both NCDOT Division offices (10 & 12) on the mutual assignment of local input points to priority projects is integral to funding projects in the forthcoming TIP. Staff should coordinate with the NCDOT Division offices to ensure that residents are aware projects will most likely require mutual local input point assignments from both the CRTPO and the respective division to receive funding in the draft TIP.

#### Public Involvement Process:

The CRTPO should consider the following process recommendations to provide an opportunity for adequate public involvement in the local input points assignment phase of the TIP development process.

- A minimum 14-day public comment and review period should be held for the proposed list of projects to submit to NCDOT for the TIP Development process. A 30-day comment period is desirable if CRTPO meeting schedules, and NCDOT milestones allow for this timeframe within this phase.
- Draft lists and maps of projects proposed for local input points assignment should be easily found on CRTPO's webpage. The assignment of the NCDOT Division's allocation of local input points to these projects should also be shown if the data is available.
- Context should be provided in regards to the STI legislations requirements for adherence to CRTPO's adopted local input points methodology.
- The public comment period should be announced by using media releases, newsletter articles, social media posts and CRTPO's website.
- Residents may attend the MPO Board meeting to provide comments on the draft list of projects proposed for local input point assignment.

- Staff should summarize the public comments received on the draft list of projects proposed for local input points assignment and post a summary on the NCDOT Prioritization webpage.
- A summary of public comments received should be presented to the TCC and MPO during the endorsement presentations.
- The MPO board can divert from the recommended list of projects proposed for local input point assignment by the TCC based upon public comment received. If a diversion from the recommended local input points assignment occurs, it should be clearly documented on the final project list that is posted to the CRTPO website.

#### Public Involvement Techniques:

Public engagement during the local input point assignment process list may include the following techniques:

- The CRTPO's NCDOT Prioritization webpage should be used as the central location for information regarding this process. Links to the recommended local input point assignment lists and PDF (static) maps should be easily viewed on the webpage.
- Consider implementing online interactive mapping within the webpage where residents can express support for local input point assignment for specific projects;
- Open houses or public workshops can be held as deemed necessary;
- Informational presentation to an elected board or civic group;
- Staffed table (pop-up) at a regularly scheduled event; and,
- Recorded webinar that summarizes CRTPO's role in the NCDOT Prioritization process.

**Public Involvement Opportunities Following Release of DRAFT TIP-** Once the NCDOT Prioritization process is complete; CRTPO should begin the process of informing the public regarding the contents of the draft TIP. The release of a draft TIP will usually require project amendments to the current MTP, and an air quality conformity determination. MTP amendments and air quality conformity determination are incorporated into the TIP adoption process.

The following recommendations are intended to ensure that residents are adequately notified of the release of the draft TIP:

- The CRTPO currently maintains a webpage on its website with content on the current TIP and TIP archives. During the TIP adoption process, the following materials should be included on the webpage:
  - TIP adoption schedule;
  - Information regarding the public comment period;
  - Links to PDF (Static) maps that clearly label the projects identified through the TIP Development process. Given the CRTPO's unique geography, it may be helpful to divide the maps by County;
  - Link to the TIP Financial Plan;
  - Link to Air Quality Conformity Determination document; and,

- Link to lists and maps of MTP amendments that have been identified by the release of the draft TIP.
- The draft TIP will be available for residents to review the document and other related materials on its website.
- Emphasis should be placed on CRTPO's involvement in the project submittal and local input points processes within the most current round of NCDOT Prioritization led to the projects that are identified in the draft TIP.
- A minimum 14-day public comment and review period should be held for the draft TIP. A 30-day comment period is desirable if CRTPO meeting schedules, and FHWA milestones allow for this timeframe within the TIP adoption process.
- The public comment period should be announced by using media releases, newsletter articles, social media posts and CRTPO's website.
- Residents may attend the MPO Board meeting to provide comments on the draft TIP.

### **Amendments and Modifications to the Transportation Improvement Program**

– An amendment or modification to the TIP is necessary when projects are added or removed, funding levels have changed, or a project schedule has shifted. Both TIP amendments and administrative modifications will require a recommendation from the TCC and adoption by the MPO.

- Administrative modifications may occur if a change will not alter the intent of a project and has minor impact. Public outreach is not necessary with an administrative modification.
- TIP Amendments are proposed when changes occur in funding sources, schedule, and project scope.
  - Staff should determine the level of public involvement that is appropriate for TIP amendments since their impacts may vary.
  - TIP amendments that also require an amendment to the MTP and/or a new conformity determination will be required to have a public involvement component.
  - Public involvement is recommended if the TIP amendment is recommended to cancel a regionally significant project.

## **C. Transportation Conformity Determinations**

The CRTPO is required to demonstrate that projects included in the MTP and TIP follow the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). This requirement is important in protecting air quality for both residents and the environment. Conformity determinations are necessary during the TIP and MTP adoption process, and during certain TIP and MTP amendments.

A public comment period is required when a conformity determination is conducted. Staff will determine if a public meeting is warranted based upon the impact of the conformity determinations. Public involvement activities may be coordinated with MTP and TIP outreach efforts because the conformity determination is typically related to the requested action for the TIP and/or MTP.

## **D. Public Involvement Plan**

A 45-day public comment period is required when an MPO updates its PIP. The recommended document should be available on the CRTPO's website. The public comment period should be announced by using media releases, newsletter articles, social media posts and the CRTPO's website.

Residents may attend the MPO board meeting to provide comments on the draft PIP. Public comments will be evaluated and appropriately considered prior to the adoption of the PIP by the CRTPO. The final PIP will be available on the CRTPO website. Hard copies may be available upon request.

## **E. Public Involvement Performance Measures and Periodic Reporting**

The CRTPO should consider producing periodic reports that summarize the public involvement activities and associated performance measures as staff time allows. The report should include an assessment of each activity and any resulting recommended changes to future public involvement efforts. The MPO board members and the TCC will be notified that this report is available on CRTPO's website. The chart on the next page describes a summary of potential performance measures for the CRTPO's public involvement activities.

## CRTPO Public Involvement Performance Measures and Targets

Tool/Effort	Measurements	Method to Reach Goals
<b>Public Involvement Efforts</b>		
<b>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility</b>	Number of meetings that are ADA compliant and near transit (when applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Host meetings in locations with ADA accessibility; and,</li> <li>- Utilize facilities that are accessible to transit when available.</li> </ul>
<b>Participant Satisfaction</b>	Performance based on level of participant satisfaction with the public involvement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct participant satisfaction surveys following CRTPO facilitated public meetings and workshops;</li> <li>- Ask leading questions to receive constructive feedback in regards improvements that can be made to the public involvement process; and,</li> <li>- Staff to evaluate responses and make the appropriate adjustments to its public involvement activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Website</b>	Number of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Track unique website visitors and repeat visitors; and,</li> <li>- Eliminate City staff IP addresses from the website visitor counts.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Media</b>	Number of new followers on social media accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use advertisements to target populations that are not currently following CRTPO;</li> <li>- Post interesting and informative information regularly to retain followers' interest; and,</li> <li>- Follow stakeholder organizations and comment on their pages as appropriate</li> </ul>
	Number of "likes"/"re-tweets"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Track the number of positive affirmations that particular posts receive on the CRTPO's Social Media accounts;</li> <li>- Evaluate posts that receive the greatest number of positive affirmations, and design future postings with similar information.</li> </ul>
<b>Newsletter</b>	Percentage of opens compared to the total number sent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Track the number of "opened newsletters" for each edition; and,</li> <li>- Identify the topics that have the greatest amount of "opens" to help shape future newsletter content</li> </ul>
<b>Plan Specific</b>		
<b>Share of Municipality Visits / Coordination</b>	Number of visits and/or communications a municipality issues on behalf of CRTPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Track the municipalities visited and/or coordinated with during a plan or program. The purpose is to make sure all impacted areas receive opportunities to be educated and participate in the process.</li> </ul>
<b>Comments Received Per Meeting</b>	Percent of attendees who submit a comment form during a public meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that all attendees are verbally notified about the opportunity to comment and are physically handed a comment form.</li> <li>- If a low percentage is received, reformat comment form for future meetings to make it more user friendly.</li> </ul>
<b>Total Plan Comments</b>	Total number of comments received on a plan or program during the comment period and all outreach events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine what method (meeting, mail, online, phone, etc.) was most popular for obtaining comments. Review outreach strategies for areas that are low.</li> </ul>

# CONCLUSION



## V. Conclusion

The public engagement strategies outlined in this document serve as the CRTPO's PIP with the goal of increasing and encouraging public participation in the transportation planning process. The strategies have been developed through practice and are supported by the results from research efforts. A comprehensive update to the PIP was necessary for the following reasons:

- An increase in population, membership and area of the MPO due to the expansion of the Charlotte Urbanized Area, as a result of the 2010 Census;
- A new name for the MPO, the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization, triggered by the expansion of the MPO's planning area boundary;
- New Federal transportation legislation enacted in 2015, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST); and
- New State transportation legislation enacted in 2013, Strategic Transportation Investments (STI), which materially changed the manner in which public involvement can be conducted as part of the TIP development process.
- Advancements made within the social media field as an effective method for government agencies to reach its residents more efficiently.
- Decrease the reliance on holding public meetings, and move towards having a "pop-up" presence at existing events.

The CRTPO recognizes the importance of conducting effective public engagement as a critical component of the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) process upon which MPO activities were originally based. This comprehensive PIP should be reviewed and updated regularly to include new and innovative public engagement techniques to increase the CRTPO's ability to effectively engage audiences and successfully acquire input.



# VI. Appendices

## Appendix A

### CTP Amendment Guidelines



## Table II: CTP Amendment Guidelines

Mode	Facility Type	Administrative Modifications (Notification Only to TCC & MPO)	Procedural Amendments (MPO Adoption Required & Public Engagement)
Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoroughfares (Minor, Major, Boulevard, Freeway, Expressway)</li> </ul>	Status change from recommended to existing Status change from needs improvement to existing Minor change to alignment **	Add or remove facility Status change to recommended/needs improvement Major change to alignment ** <i>Classification change **</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade Separations, Interchanges</li> <li>• Managed Lanes Interchange (Direct Access)</li> </ul>	Status change from recommended to existing Status change from needs improvement to existing	Add or remove facility Status change to recommended/needs improvement Change to location <i>Classification change **</i>
Bicycle and Pedestrian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-Road Facility</li> <li>• Multi-Use Path</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> </ul>	Status change from recommended to existing Status change from needs improvement to existing Realignment necessitated by roadway realignment Minor change to alignment ** Classification change **	Add or remove facility Status change to recommended/needs improvement Major change to alignment **
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenways</li> <li>• Grade Separations</li> </ul>	Status change from recommended to existing Status change from needs improvement to existing Minor change to alignment **	Add or remove facility Status change to recommended/needs improvement Major change to alignment **
Transit and Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed Guideway **</li> <li>• Commuter Rail **</li> <li>• Active Rail **</li> <li>• High Speed Rail Corridor</li> </ul>	Status change from recommended to existing Status change from needs improvement to existing Minor change to alignment **	Add or remove facility Status change to recommended/needs improvement Major change to alignment ** <i>Classification change **</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational Strategies **</li> </ul>	Status change from recommended to existing Realignment necessitated by roadway realignment	Add recommended/existing strategy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rail Stops, Bus Park &amp; Rides</li> <li>• Intermodal Connectors</li> <li>• Rail-Rail</li> <li>• Rail-Highway Grade Separations</li> </ul>	Status change from recommended to existing Status change from needs improvement to existing	Add or remove facility Status change to recommended/needs improvement Change to location

\*\* See Appendix B for definition

*Classification change - CRTPO staff can determine if public engagement is needed or not.*

## Appendix B

### Definitions

- **Minor Change to alignment:**
  - If the recommended alignment stays on the same parcel(s) as the adopted alignment and does not move closer than 400 feet to an adjacent parcel unless the adjacent parcel(s) owner(s) provide agreement to the recommended alignment in written form; OR
  - If the recommended alignment is being proposed as part of a development proposal, has been approved by the jurisdiction and will be constructed as part of that development. If there are parcels affected by the recommended alignment that are outside the development proposal, those parcel owners must be notified and provide written concurrence to the recommended alignment; OR
  - If the recommended alignment is being proposed as part of a development proposal and public outreach related to the development proposal has included references to the CTP amendment and all parcel owners affected by the recommended alignment that are outside the development proposal must be notified and provide written concurrence to the recommended alignment.
  
- **Major Change to alignment:** Any other amendment that is not defined as a minor change.
  
- **Classification Change:** Refers to changes related to the type of facility. For example, a change for a highway facility may update a road from Freeway to Expressway or Boulevard to a Major Thoroughfare. The overall impact is significantly different depending on the transportation mode. CRTPO staff will determine the appropriate level of public engagement when the classification changes.
  
- **Operational Strategies:** Operational strategies are classified within the CTP as managed lanes on expressways, express bus or bus rapid transit modes.
  
- **Transit and Rail:**

The following describes the eligible transit technology within the CTP:

  - Fixed guideway is a facility that generally operates in a dedicated guideway separated from general vehicular travel for the exclusive use of public transit, high occupancy vehicles and light rail.
  - Commuter rail is a form of regional passenger rail service within a metropolitan area that provides travel between principal cities and adjacent suburban areas.
  - Active rail is defined as railways that carry primarily either freight or cargo in the railcars to and from its destination by private freight rail companies such as Norfolk-Southern, CSX, etc.

## Appendix C

### Administrative Modifications and Procedural Amendments Process

This appendix provides an overview of the Administrative Modifications and Procedural Amendments to the CTP.

#### Administrative Modifications Process:

1. Staff from the CRTPO member jurisdiction initiates the process by coordinating with CRTPO staff to verify and confirm the request is an administrative modification.
2. The proposed modification will be presented by the member jurisdiction at a Transportation Staff Meeting (TSM) for information.
3. Pending any comments from TSM, the modification is conducted internally without action from the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and CRTPO Board.
4. CRTPO staff will present a comprehensive list of modifications to the TCC and CRTPO Board meetings once a year.
5. NCDOT staff brings a list of all amendments once a year to the NC Board of Transportation Meeting for inclusion within the statewide CTP.

#### Procedural Amendments Process:

1. Staff from the CRTPO member jurisdiction initiates the process by providing a map of the proposed amendment and coordinating with CRTPO staff to verify and confirm the request is a procedural amendment.
2. If confirmed, the member jurisdiction staff will conduct a presentation during a TSM for information and/or discussion as needed.
3. Provided no significant issues are identified during the presentation at TSM, the request will move to an upcoming TCC Meeting for information to recommend that the Board open a public comment period on the proposed amendment. Board approval of the request is required to start the public engagement period. The member jurisdiction must lead the public engagement process. The public engagement period is preferred to be 30 days in length if meeting schedules permit, with a minimum 14 days.
4. Following the close of the public comment period, member jurisdiction staff conducts a second presentation at TSM to summarize the comments received.
5. Member jurisdiction staff provides all agenda text, attachments and presentations to be included within an upcoming TCC and CRTBO Board agenda to present a summary of the comments received.
6. NCDOT staff brings a list of all amendments at least once a year to a NC Board of Transportation meeting for inclusion in the State CTP plan.

Public Comment Waiver for Procedural Amendments: The requirement for public comment can be waived if the member jurisdiction can demonstrate that an adequate

level of public engagement has been conducted within the last year as part of a local land development proposal or plan adoption the amendment has conducted public involvement efforts sufficient to meet the guidelines in the CRTPO's PIP (Section 4.3, Waiver of Public Involvement Activities).

## **Appendix D**

### **Public Engagement Requirements and Techniques for CTP Amendments**

This appendix summarizes the public involvement requirements and suggested techniques for member jurisdictions conducting engagement on CRTPO CTP amendments:

- The public engagement period for review and comment should be held for 30 days in length if meeting schedules permit, with a minimum 14 days.
- Media releases must specify the current alignment or project that will be amended within the CRTPO's CTP.
- Residents will have the opportunity to provide input during a public comment period during a CRTPO Board meeting, by email, regular mail or facsimile.
- The appropriate project, plan or study information, maps, or similar should be made available on CRTPO and/or jurisdiction's website along with instructions for residents to provide comments.
- Member jurisdiction staff should summarize the public comments received on the project submittal lists. Summaries will be posted on the member jurisdiction and CRTPO webpage.
- Member jurisdiction staff should present a summary of public comments received to the TCC and CRTPO Board.

Member jurisdiction and CRTPO may implement the following techniques to inform residents of an open public comment period on a CTP procedural amendment proposed by a member jurisdiction:

- Public comment period may be announced by distributing media releases, e-blasts and inclusion in newsletter articles.
- Post an announcement on the member jurisdiction and CRTPO website regarding the proposed amendment, with instructions on how residents can provide input.
- Social media advertisements may be used to promote the details of the CRTPO Board meetings scheduled to review and/or action on the amendment.
- Notices may be distributed as bus flyers or within utility bill mailings to affected communities.

Public engagement may include the following techniques:

- On-line interactive mapping where residents can express support for project submissions;
- Surveys (on-line or in-person);

- Open houses or public workshops;
- Informational presentation to an elected board, civic group or neighborhood association;
- Staffed table (pop-up) at a regularly scheduled event; and
- Virtual meetings or recorded webinars.

#### **Additional Guidance for Member Jurisdictions:**

The member jurisdiction or designee will distribute information to notify the residents within a reasonable vicinity of the proposed amendment. Notifications will include information summarizing the proposed CTP map modification, instructions for residents to obtain additional information regarding the proposal, a schedule of presentations to the TCC and CRTPO Board and ways the public can provide comments. Information can be distributed using one or more of the following methods:

- The distribution should be targeted to the affected property owners and adjacent parcels that may experience a secondary impact. The distribution area should be determined by CRTPO staff and the member jurisdiction's judgment.
- Media release to the appropriate markets.
- The jurisdiction of the proposed amendment should post information regarding the amendment on its website, social media and other appropriate channels.
- For transit and rail amendments, the local transit agency that has initiated the CTP map amendment will lead the public involvement activities in accordance with its local outreach policy.
- For State rail or freight amendments, amendments will follow the public notification methods described under Section I. Highway, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Mode Amendments. Proposed changes will be reviewed to ensure that low-income and/or minority populations will not experience disproportionate impacts, as noted in Executive Order 12898 (see Chapter I, Section B). The CRTPO website will be updated with revised CTP maps once the CRTPO Board has approved the change.

# Cabarrus Rowan MPO Public Participation Policy

*Cabarrus Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization*

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# Cabarrus Rowan MPO Public Participation Policy

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*Cabarrus Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization*

## **Summary of Changes**

The current Public Involvement Policy document was adopted in 2017. This Public Participation Policy document makes the following updates and revisions:

- Out of an abundance of caution, MPO staff are recommending adding language to the PPP that specifically mentions the permissibility of electronic meetings. Currently, the North Carolina Open Meetings Law, which the MPO abides by as stated in the approved PPP, includes language enabling electronic meetings and voting. The current proposed update lists the reasonable steps the MPO should take to ensure meetings held solely electronically are as publicly accessible as feasible. It addresses requirements for notification as well as providing the public with the means to both view or listen to the meeting in real-time.

When Feasible:

- Meetings will be streamed live on an online platform that allows visual and audio capabilities to the general public.
- Meeting agendas and materials will be posted online in advance of the meeting.
- If public comments cannot be made in person, a means to provide comments by phone call, email, letter, or video will be provided. It is requested that public comments be received 48 hours prior to the meeting.

The full Public Participation Policy document can be found at:

<http://www.crmppo.org>

## Cabarrus Rowan MPO

The Cabarrus Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (CR MPO) is the officially designated body responsible for administering the transportation planning process. The MPO plans for regional transportation needs including highway, transit, air, bicycle and pedestrian facilities within both Cabarrus and Rowan counties as well as connections to the greater Metrolina Area. The priority goals of the MPO planning process include:

- Promote the safe and efficient management, operation and development of the transportation system;
- Serve the mobility needs of people and freight;
- Public participation and partnership;
- Foster economic growth and development; and,
- Minimize the negative effects of transportation including air quality.

The MPO is responsible for developing and directing a continuous, comprehensive transportation planning process carried out cooperatively by the local, State and Federal governments in conformance with Federal laws and guidelines. Broad responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To advise the policy boards within the MPO planning area on the status and needs identified through the transportation planning process.
- To assist the general public in understanding decisions and policies related to the transportation planning and decision-making process.
- Identifying existing and future transportation needs by analyzing existing conditions, data, and trends and making projections of future changes.
- Increase safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increasing the accessibility and mobility options available for people and freight.
- Protecting and enhancing the environment and the improving quality of life.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes.
- Support and improve transit services.



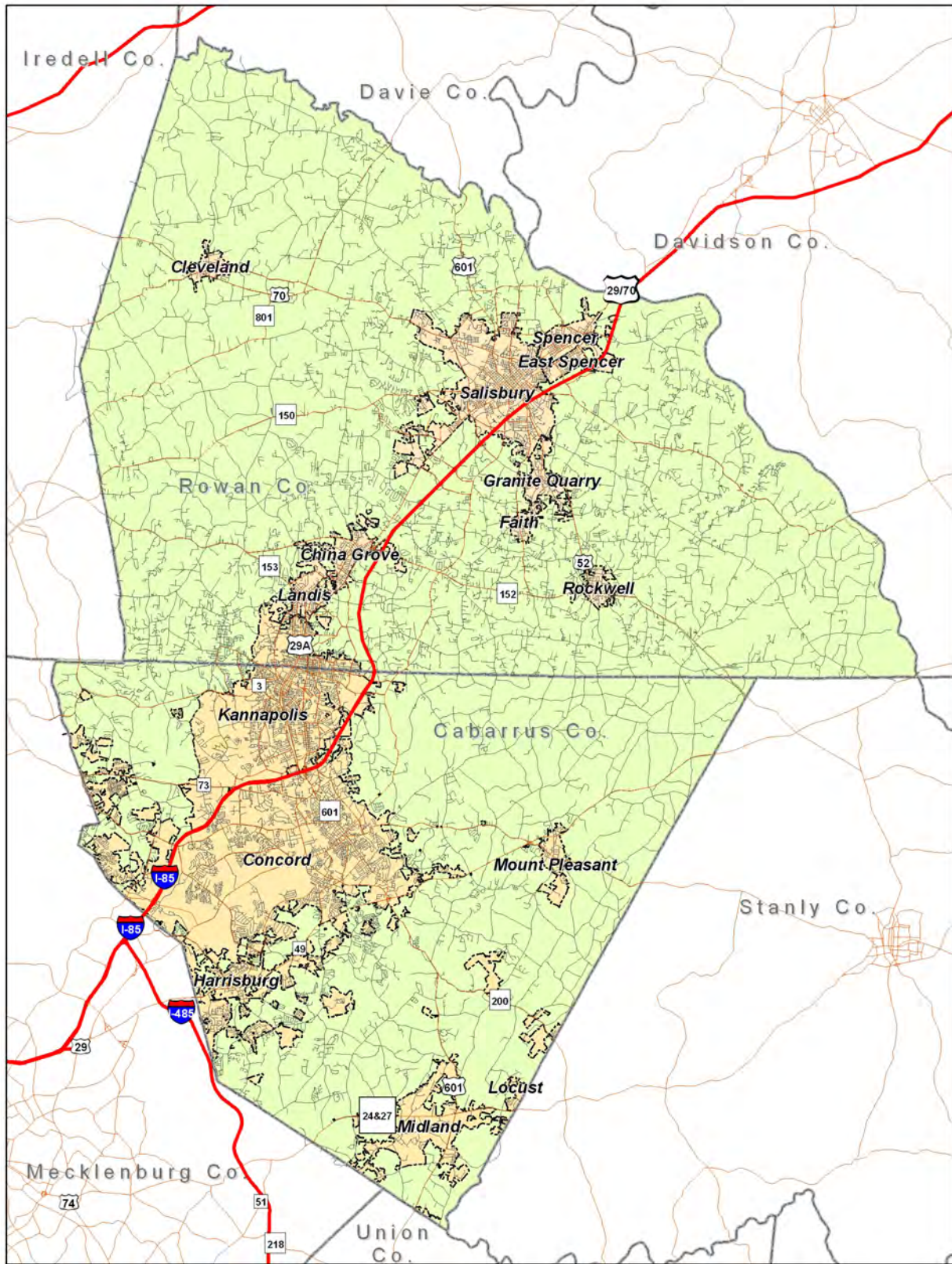


Figure 1 - Cabarrus Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization

Participation in the Cabarrus Rowan MPO by member units of government is handled through two different groups: the **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** and the **Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)**.

The Transportation Advisory Committee is the policy and decision-making body for the Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TAC is comprised of elected and appointed officials from the City of Concord, the City of Kannapolis, City of Salisbury, the Town of Landis, the Town of China Grove, the Town of Harrisburg, the Town of Spencer, the Town of Granite Quarry, the Town of Rockwell, the Town of Mount Pleasant, the Town of Cleveland, Cabarrus County, Rowan County, Town of Midland, Town of Faith, Town of East Spencer, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The TAC is responsible for approving the transportation planning documents and reports prepared by the MPO staff, developing policies on various transportation conditions and issues, and providing opportunities for citizen participation in the transportation planning process.

The Technical Coordinating Committee is the technical advisory body for the Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TCC is comprised of professional planning and engineering staff from the City of Concord, the City of Kannapolis, City of Salisbury, the Town of Landis, the Town of China Grove, the Town of Harrisburg, the Town of Spencer, the Town of Granite Quarry, the Town of Rockwell, the Town of Mount Pleasant, the Town of Cleveland, Cabarrus County, Rowan County, Town of Midland, Town of Faith, Town of East Spencer, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The TCC makes recommendations to the TAC and is also responsible for providing opportunities for citizen participation in the transportation planning process.

## **MPO Plans and Programs**

The Cabarrus Rowan MPO is responsible for creating and maintaining documents essential to the on-going transportation planning effort and guiding the prioritization and implementation of transportation projects.

## **Federally Required Documents**

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

The MTP is a multimodal plan with a minimum 20-year planning horizon that is fiscally constrained. The MTP must currently undergo an air quality conformity analysis determination. The MTP must be updated at least every four (4) years. The current MTP is the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update approved March 2014 and amended August 2015.

### **Air Quality Conformity Determination (AQCD) (Clean Air Act (CAA) Amendments of 1990)**

Transportation conformity is required for MPOs that are non-conforming or in maintenance for the State Implementation Plan (SIP) air quality standards regulated by the CAA. The MPO must meet conformity requirements or risk a conformity lapse where the use of Federal transportation funds is restricted to projects that do not increase roadway capacity.

### **Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) and Rider Transit System Program of Projects (POP)**

The MTIP is a ten-year (10) program that schedules State and Federal funding for roadway, bridge, safety, public transportation, passenger rail, bicycle, and pedestrian projects transportation projects in the MPO. The MTIP is a subset of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and must meet AQCD. The City of Concord Rider Transit System's Program of Projects (POP) is included in MTIP document.

### **Major Investment Study**

A major investment study (MIS) is a planning tool to support decisions on significant federally funded transportation investments along a corridor or sub area level within the MPO. It is a detailed analysis designed to provide local decision-makers with more comprehensive corridor level technical analysis early in the transportation planning process.

### **Congestion Management Processes (CMP)**

As a TMA, the Cabarrus Rowan MPO produces a CMP as an integral part of the MTP. The purposes of the CMP are to identify and address most of the major existing traffic congestion problems and conditions in the urban area and to identify a variety of tools and techniques that can be used to mitigate the identified problems.

### **Environmental Justice (EJ) Plan (Executive Order (EO) 12898, 1994)**

The EJ Plan outlines specific goals and procedures the MPO will follow to involve minority and low-income populations in transportation planning processes and avoid disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.

### **Public Participation Policy**

The Public Participation Policy details the MPO's commitment to public participation for all transportation plans and air quality conformity determination reports with clear, timely information; early and continuous involvement; and increased access for citizens, public agencies, providers of public transportation, and low income and limited English segments of the community. The Public Participation Policy outlines techniques to engage the public and provide outreach through traditional and new social media outlets. The Public Participation Policy includes performance measures that will provide information on the effectiveness of public involvement strategies. The Public Participation Plan will be implemented as a part of the MTP processes and outreach.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

The MPO prepares an annual work program known as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP must identify the MPO planning tasks to be undertaken with the use of federal transportation funds, including highway and transit.

### **Annual List of Federal Project Authorizations**

Each year the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) provides the CR MPO with an annual list of project that receive Federal Authorizations.

## **State Required Documents**

### **Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)**

The MPO, with the cooperation of North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), develops a CTP based on population growth, economic conditions, and land use patterns. The CTP includes highway, transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian elements in five maps to guide the development of the transportation system and document all expected projects at build-out with no regard to funding and/or timing constraints.

### **Strategic Prioritization Process**

The NCDOT Strategic Planning Office of Transportation (SPOT) manages the STIP Project Prioritization process through a transparent, data-driven decision-making process for transportation projects along with local MPO input. The SPOT process develops an initial ranking and Statewide projects are prioritized with available funding. Remaining Statewide projects and Regional and Division level projects receive local

ranking and points through the MPO and NCDOT Division. Final STIP funding decisions are made using project scores and points along with the application of financial and scheduling constraints.

## **Other MPO Plans**

### **Livable Communities Blueprint**

The Livable Community Blueprint is a guide to assist Cabarrus County and the municipalities to identify bicycle and pedestrian routes on which they may focus over the next decade. The plan is located at <https://www.cabarruscounty.us/government/departments/active-living-parks/Pages/Livable-Community-Blueprint.aspx>

### **Carolina Thread Trail Masterplan for Cabarrus County**

The Cabarrus County vision for greenway and trail development to connect the county, cities, towns and region within the Cabarrus Rowan MPO. The plan is located at [https://www.cabarruscounty.us/government/departments/active-living-parks/Documents/parks\\_carolina\\_thread\\_trail\\_master\\_plan.pdf](https://www.cabarruscounty.us/government/departments/active-living-parks/Documents/parks_carolina_thread_trail_master_plan.pdf)

## **Public Participation Policy**

The Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CR MPO's) Public Participation Policy is an umbrella policy, encompassing the plans and programs of the Urban Area's transportation planning process. Public involvement is an integral part of the CR MPO's planning efforts and is intended to offer opportunities for the general public and particularly, historically disadvantaged populations to provide meaningful input into the transportation planning and decision-making process. The Public Participation Policy is comprised of the public involvement programs for all the major planning activities, including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), Major Investment Studies (MIS), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The CR MPO will seek public input through a menu of techniques, including but not limited to, public notices, comment periods, workshops, charrettes, public hearings, newsletters, surveys, social media outreach, website and traditional media relations. The techniques employed will vary, depending on the specific planning task. The MPO will hold a forty-five (45) day public comment period for amendments to the Public Participation Policy. The CR MPO's Public Participation Policy will be consistent with the requirements of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the FTA/FHWA Guidance on Public Participation.

## **Federal Requirements**

The MPO's Public Participation Policy is designed to be consistent with the requirements of the following Federal laws and processes detailed in **Appendix A – Acronyms, Glossary of Terms and Federal Requirements:**

- FAST Act – Fixing America's Surface Transportation
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Executive Order 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (1994)
- Executive Order 13166 – Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (2000)
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

- Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Section 508
- National Environmental Policy Act
- Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the CR MPO Public Participation Policy is 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. This Policy is designed to ensure that the involvement of communities most affected by particular plans or projects are afforded ample opportunity to participate in the development of these plans and that transportation decisions will reflect public priorities.

## **Objectives**

1. Bring a broad cross-section of the public into the public policy and transportation planning decision-making process.
2. Maintain public involvement from the early stages of the planning process through detailed project development.
3. Use different combinations of public involvement techniques to meet the diverse needs of the general public.
4. Make special efforts to increase the involvement by groups of people who do not generally participate, particularly low-income and minority populations.
5. Determine the public's knowledge of the metropolitan transportation system and the public's values and attitudes concerning transportation.
6. Ensure that technical information is available to the public in an understandable form and that all segments of the population are afforded access to this information.
7. Maximize the use of communications technology to facilitate the exchange of information, including use of the MPO web site and other electronically accessible formats (dropbox, e-mail, etc.).
8. Establish a channel for an effective feedback process.
9. Evaluate the public involvement process and procedures to assess their success at meeting requirements specified in the FAST Act, NEPA and the FTA/FHWA Guidance on Public Participation.

The Public Participation Policy consists of levels of public involvement depending on the nature and scope of each project or plan. Special emphasis will 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 MTP and CTP. The MPO shall make every effort to involve the affected community through methods such as local direct mailing, transportation committees of local jurisdictions, public information meetings, and newsletters.

## **Public Involvement Opportunities**

### **Open Meetings**

The TCC holds regular monthly meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month and the TAC holds regular monthly meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month except the months of December and July. All of

these meetings are open to members of the public and media and subject to the North Carolina Open Meetings Law. At the beginning of each regular meeting, the TCC and TAC provide time to receive public comments. All materials presented during MPO committee meetings will be public record and made available for review at the CR MPO office. Copies of archived records are available upon request.

### **Electronic Meetings**

The CR MPO may choose to hold electronic meetings solely online or electronically. For CR MPO boards, the decision to hold an electronic meeting will be made by the Chair and Vice-Chair of each respective board in consultation with the MPO Director. In these cases, a telephone number will also be published for individuals without internet access.

When Feasible:

- Meetings will be streamed live on an online platform that allows visual and audio capabilities to the general public.
- Meeting agendas and materials will be posted online in advance of the meeting.
- If public comments cannot be made in person, a means to provide comments by phone call, email, letter, or video will be provided. It is requested that public comments be received 48 hours prior to the meeting.

### **Adequate Notice**

The local news media will receive notification of all TCC and TAC meetings. The CR MPO will provide at least a week notice to citizens and media outlets of meetings in accordance with North Carolina Open Meetings Law. Meeting notices and the meeting schedule for the year is posted on the CR MPO website and publicized.

### **Access by Persons with Disabilities**

All TAC, TCC and other MPO meetings will be held in facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities. All notices for planning activities of the Cabarrus Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization will include an announcement that states that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be made if notified 48 hours in advance (i.e. having available large print documents, audio material, someone proficient in sign language, a translator or other provisions requested). The MPO will use the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services database of sign language interpreters in our region to secure a sign language interpreter for a scheduled meeting upon request. Currently the database is available at [HTTP://WWW.NCDHHS.GOV/DSDHH/DIRECTORIES.HTM](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/directories.htm).

**Public Outreach for General Programs and Plans:** The MPO will involve residents, member municipalities, affected public agencies, representatives of neighborhood groups, planning committees, public and private providers of transportation, freight handlers, non-motorized transportation users, the disabled, economic development and business groups and associations, and other parties who express an interest in the process.

**Public Outreach for Special Studies:** For special studies, the MPO will identify and involve persons and groups that might be affected by potential changes to transportation services or facilities under review. Examples include: 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.

**Transportation Equity**

During the adoption of transportation plans, policies and programs, the MPO will ensure fair and full participation in the transportation planning process by all citizens who may be potentially affected and be consistent with the Environmental Justice Executive Order guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). 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. Public outreach to low-income and minority populations will be made by maintaining a distribution email or mailing list of community organizations and leaders, inviting them to public meetings/workshops and speaking at community meetings. Public notices for adoption of new or major updates to the MTP or MTIP will be placed in newspapers and other available media outlets to reach low-income, minority and Spanish speaking communities.

**Format of Public Meetings**

Public meetings allow the MPO staff an opportunity to interact with citizens that may be directly affected by specific transportation plans. The general format of public meetings may include: a presentation by MPO staff; a question and answer period, and a summary of materials covered. Meetings may also incorporate using maps to identify where citizens are located, and an interactive activity. The CR MPO will hold multiple public meetings at various locations throughout the planning area. At least one will be in the evening or on a weekend to allow those with traditional work schedules to attend, and at least one will be during the traditional work day to allow those who work in the evenings or on weekends to attend. As appropriate, meetings will be held in minority communities.

**Visualization Techniques**

The Cabarrus Rowan MPO will use visualization techniques to clearly present information relating to MPO transportation plans, MTIPs and other planning projects. 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. See the definition of visualization in the glossary (Appendix A) for examples of visualization techniques.

**Time Period for Public Comments**

The MPO shall allow reasonable time for public review and comment at key decision points. Minimum public review and notification periods shall be as follows:

- Amendments to the MPO’s Public Participation Policy – 45 days
- Adoption of the MTIP & major MTIP amendments, Air Quality Conformity Determination, MTP/CTP & major amendments – 30 days
- TAC & TCC Meetings – 7 days

**Public Outreach Timelines and Actions Table**

Planning Document	Update	Amendment	Administrative Modification
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	At least one public meeting during the 30 days public review period prior to approval	Public Review and Comment period to last 30 days prior to approval	No public participation required for correcting small, non-substantial items

<b>Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)</b> <b>Air Quality Conformity Determinations (AQCD)</b>	Public Review and Comment Period to last 30 days prior to approval	Public comment period on the MTP during the TAC Meeting prior to final approval	
	Public comment period during the TAC Meeting prior to final approval		
<b>Prioritization List</b>	Public Review and Comment Period to last 28 days after initial TAC list approval	NA	No public participation required
<b>Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)</b>	Public Review and Comment Period to last 30 days prior to approval	Public Review and Comment period to last 30 days prior to approval	No public participation required for correcting small, non-substantial items
<b>Public Participation Policy</b>	Public Review and Comment Period to last 45 days prior to approval	Public Review and Comment Period to last 45 days prior to approval	No public participation required for correcting small, non-substantial items
	Public comment period during the TAC Meeting prior to final approval		
<b>Major Investment Study (MIS)</b>	Public comment on a case by case basis to meet goals of MIS.	Public comment on a case by case basis to meet goals of MIS.	No public participation required
<b>Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)</b>	Public comment period during the TAC Meeting prior to draft approval	Public comment period during the TAC Meeting prior to draft approval	No public participation required
<b>Annual List of Federal Project Authorizations</b>	Annual Authorizations made available for review and comment at MPO and on the website.	Annual Authorizations made available for review and comment at MPO and on the website.	No public participation required

## General Guidelines

The following are general minimum requirements for all plans and projects requiring public involvement:

1. A public notice inviting comments at the beginning of the review period containing the following:
  - a. Locations where the document can be reviewed;
  - b. Instructions for submitting comments;
  - c. Contact information for questions or additional information, noting that comments on the public participation process are also welcome;
  - d. The due date for comments;
  - e. Date, time, location and special accommodations for any scheduled public meetings;
  - f. A link for additional information on the Internet.
2. MPO will include maps, photos, or renderings on public notices to attract interest, when possible.
3. The public notice (ad, poster or website notification) may be submitted to the following outlets, which will also be advised of any significant developments during the public review period:
  - a. For major updates of the MTP, CTP, MTIP or AQCD only, at least one major newspaper and publications serving minority communities. MPO will maintain the list of newspapers;
  - b. MPO Web site;
  - c. Press release to media outlets. MPO will maintain the list of media contacts;
  - d. Local newspapers and representatives of the MPO municipalities based on the project;
  - e. TCC and TAC members, as well as representatives of stakeholder agencies.
4. Documents may be available for public review for at least 28 calendar days at the following locations:



- a. Municipal and county government offices;
  - b. The MPO and NCDOT Division 9 and 10 offices;
  - c. Libraries in Rowan and Cabarrus Counties.
5. Documents should contain maps, photos, renderings, or other visualization tools to aid in understanding and shall be as jargon-free and succinct as possible.
  6. The document shall also be available on the MPO website for the duration of the public review period. The website should be accessible and compatible with assistive technology tools.
  7. During the public review period, comments should be submitted:
    - a. in writing;
    - b. via standard mail, e-mail and fax or Internet forms, if available.
  8. Public comments received will be:
    - a. Acknowledged with a written or e-mailed receipt message;
    - b. Responded to as appropriate, which could include a direct communication to the commenter or a response in the revised document;
    - c. Documented and presented to the MPO's TCC and TAC, in summary form or verbatim, before a vote is taken to adopt the plan or document in question; and
    - d. Included in summary form or verbatim with final documents, if sufficiently significant.

## Implementation Guidelines

Minor items are performed administratively with limited public involvement outside the regular meeting structure of the MPO. Members of the TAC will represent citizens in making decisions, and materials will be distributed to inform stakeholders and implementing agencies of changes. Residents may also attend and speak at the beginning of each TAC meeting upon recognition by the TAC Chair, who may impose a reasonable time limit for speakers. Items in this category would include:

- Administrative modifications to the MTIP, MTP or CTP;
- Small projects with few impacts; and
- Technical/preliminary/exploratory studies.

Full updates of the MTP, CTP, MTIP and major MTIP amendments with Air Quality Conformity Determinations, or other major projects, studies, plans, or amendments, especially those impacting much of the urban area or substantially affecting minority or low-income populations, will have additional involvement to increase public participation:

1. The MPO will ensure that as many people as possible receive information including:
  - a. Progress/update newsletters to provide timely notice at project kick-off, at the beginning of public comment periods, and otherwise as appropriate;
  - b. Targeted postal mailings to generate interest and announce public meetings or workshops where possible; and survey material to elicit comments that might not otherwise be volunteered.
2. Public notices (announcements, ads or posters) may be placed in the following additional locations:
  - a. Transit hubs and onboard buses, where possible;
  - b. Bulletin boards in recreation centers, especially those in minority or low-income communities impacted by the item in question or places of worship in affected areas.

2. An electronic notice will 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.
3. Multiple public meetings will be held in transit-accessible locations during regular service hours.
4. Special services will be provided upon seven business days advance notice, when practical and subject to availability, of services and resources including translation for non-English speakers, materials for the visually impaired, and services for the deaf and hard of hearing, in accordance with MPO policies. The availability of these services should be mentioned in public notices.

## **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Air Quality Conformity Determinations (AQCD)**

The multi-modal Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) public review and participation process is designed to provide early and adequate opportunities for citizens, public and elected officials to be involved in the Cabarrus-Rowan (CR) MTP development. This public participation program is designed to involve all parties in the early stages of plan development and the subsequent update process. It is also designed to provide gradual progression from the general information (vision setting and formulation of goals, objectives and policies) pertaining to the plan to very specific information regarding alternatives and plan selection.

1. The Cabarrus-Rowan (CR) Metropolitan Planning Organization will provide opportunity for early and meaningful public involvement in the development and update of the MTP.
2. Proactive participation techniques will be employed to involve citizens and provide full access to information and technical data. The technique will generally include, but not be limited to: public meetings/hearings, surveys, charrettes, mass media, etc. Visualization techniques shall be utilized to enhance the public's understanding of MPO plans and programs. The techniques will be utilized in an appropriate manner when presenting and describing MPO plans and programs.
3. Information dissemination, notification of meeting, publication of proposed plans will be integral elements of the public involvement process.
4. The MPO will initiate the MTP update process as required by the FAST Act, the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) and subsequent federal regulations. Elements of the Transportation Plan, and/or amendments will meet all current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) requirements.
5. The public comment period for all elements of the MTP will be for a minimum 30 day public comment period, effective from the date of the public notice publication. Written comments will be received during the comment period and will be directed to the MPO. The contact person, phone number and e-mail address will be included in the public notice.
6. Public meeting(s) will be held to: formulate a vision for the MTP development; provide the public background information on the metropolitan transportation system and other issues as well as the proposed framework of the Transportation Plan update process; and to receive citizen input.
7. All public meetings (forums) designed to solicit public comment will be held at various locations and times of day around the metropolitan area to encourage the greatest public participation. Public meetings will be held at a location which is accessible to persons with disabilities. Outreach activities will be conducted to inform minority and low-income groups and limited English-speaking

groups of the opportunity for public comment. At least one-quarter of these meeting shall be held in minority and/or low income areas and within ¼ mile walk of a transit route in an easily accessible area.

8. The Cabarrus-Rowan MPO will maintain a website which shall include information on the MTP, meetings, other programs and appropriate information. The MPO staff shall post on the CR MPO website draft documents that are subject to the MPO's public review process for review and comment. Staff will also use the website to distribute information to the MPO membership.
9. The MPO shall assess the distribution of impacts on low-income and minority groups for investments identified in the MTP and publicize these findings on the MPO website.
10. The TCC will assemble all comments and forward comments to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC may choose to hold a public hearing before adopting the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
11. Any significant revision and amendment to the MTP will be subject to the public review process as outlined above.
12. The public participation component of the MTP will generally follow the same citizen input and review as outlined in this policy. Public input will be solicited to review and comment on any major MTP amendment proposal as well as analyses conducted as part of the amendment request. Adequate opportunity will be provided for public involvement in the amendment of the MTP, and any significant revisions to the MTP will also be subject to public comment period as described in # 5 of this policy.
13. The CR MPO will endeavor to involve the public at key decision points of the MTP development. Decision points are those stages where the TAC will be required to endorse or take action on particular work elements. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Formulation of vision, goals and objectives
  - Policy development
  - Review and approval of socio-economic and demographic projections
  - Review of land use information and scenarios
  - Review and determination of transportation deficiencies
  - Identification of transportation (facility) needs
  - Evaluation of alternatives and selection of preferred option
  - Development of the Financial Plan
  - Plan recommendation and adoption

## **Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) and Public Transit Systems Program of Projects (POP)**

The Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) is the document that describes the funding and scheduling of transportation improvement projects (highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit capital and operating assistance) using Federal, State, local and public-private funds. The MTIP serves as the project selection document for transportation projects and, therefore, is the implementation mechanism by which the objectives of the Transportation Plan are reached. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) mandates an opportunity for public review of the MTIP. The City of Concord, City of Salisbury, Rowan County and Cabarrus County rely on this public involvement policy by the MPO to satisfy their public participation requirements for their respective Transit System's Program of Projects (POP). The CR MPO will prepare an MTIP based on 1) revenue estimates provided by the North Carolina Department of

Transportation (NCDOT) and 2) the CR MPO Regional Priority List. The public input element of the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program is presented as follows:

1. The Cabarrus Rowan Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) will develop a draft Regional Multi-Modal Priority List from the Local Project Priorities of the MPO jurisdictions.
2. The Regional Priority List will be published for a minimum four week (28-day) public comment period and the notice will be published by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in:  
*Independent Tribune*  
*Salisbury Post*  
The notices for the public comment period will include an announcement that states that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. The Regional Priority List will be on file in the Cabarrus-Rowan MPO office, Cabarrus County Planning Department, Rowan County Planning Department, CR MPO website, and any participating municipal and county websites.
3. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will solicit public comment from interested parties on the draft Regional Priority List. The TAC will approve a final Regional Priority List after considering the public comments received.
4. The CR MPO Technical Coordinating Committee will develop a draft MTIP from the approved Regional Priority List and from revenue estimates provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The TCC will forward the draft MTIP to the Transportation Advisory Committee. The Transportation Advisory Committee will publish the draft MTIP for public review and comment.
5. Copies of a draft MTIP will be distributed to TAC members and via the CR MPO website. Each jurisdiction will also have copies, available for public review. The draft MTIP will follow the same notification procedures as outlined above for the Regional Priority List. The TAC will solicit public comment from interested parties on the draft MTIP. Public comments will be addressed and considered in the adoption of the MTIP.
6. The public comments will be assembled and presented to the Cabarrus-Rowan TAC.
7. Amendments to MTIP will be available for public review and comment, if they make a major or substantial change to the MTIP. The NCDOT has identified a delineation between STIP Amendments and Modifications and issued guidelines to address each category . The Cabarrus-Rowan MPO wishes to incorporate the language from these guidelines into their own MTIP amendment procedures. A major change in the MTIP is considered the addition or deletion of a project that is regionally significant and in the first 4 years of the TIP or can affect fiscal constraint in the STIP or LRTP. Additional public comment on project additions or deletions that do not meet any of these 3 criteria may be sought at the discretion of the TAC by majority vote. Administrative modification is a streamlining process recommended in a recent FHWA/FTA/NCDOT Joint STIP Review and do not require documentation of public review or comment, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a transportation conformity determination.
8. Written public comments and their responses will be published as an appendix to the final MTIP.

**MTIP Amendments:**

- Change in project cost beyond a predetermined threshold; increases in highway projects that exceed both \$2 million and 20% of the original cost and may affect fiscal constraint

- Change in federally-funded or state-funded regionally significant transit, bicycle or pedestrian project that exceeds either \$1 million or 20% of the project cost
- Any addition or deletion of a federally funded or state funded regionally significant project or project schedule shifts that move ROW, major capital acquisitions, or construction authorization dates either in or out of to the first 4 years of the TIP
- Project schedule shifts in years 1 through 4 that move project completion dates across Horizon Years as determined by the Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Project schedule shifts to incorporate the project from an out-year into the current (four-year) TIP
- Change in the project design or scope that significantly changes the termini or project type, purpose, or number of through lanes on a non-exempt (for transportation conformity purposes) project
- Any addition, deletion or significant modification of non-traditional funding sources to a project (Nontraditional sources include state bonding and/or private participation)
- Public comment on project additions or deletions of less than \$1 million may be sought at the discretion of the TAC by majority vote.

### **MTIP Modifications**

When a MTIP change is not substantial enough to trigger a MTIP amendment, a MTIP administrative modification takes place. A public hearing and 30-day public notice is not required for a MTIP administrative modification; however there will be a public comment opportunity provided at the TAC meeting where the MTIP modifications are being adopted. A MTIP administrative modification takes place under one of the following criteria:

- Any change to projects in years 5 or later
- Minor change to project descriptions, scopes, sponsor funding
- Minor cost increases in highway projects that do not exceed both \$2 million and 20% of the original project cost
- Addition or changes to locally-funded bicycle or pedestrian projects in the MTIP
- Schedule changes that move project authorization dates within the first 4 year MTIP time window and do not affect local air quality conformity findings
- Funding source changes between traditional funding sources (i.e. substituting available Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for FTA section 5307 formula transit funds)
- Projects approved for Emergency Relief funds do not generally have to be included in the MTIP, so any changes made for emergency projects may be considered minor modifications.

### **Prioritization List**

The TCC will develop a draft prioritization list from the local project priorities of the MPO jurisdictions using the approved local ranking criteria and point assignments process. Public participation for the prioritization list will include:

- Public input will be sought in the development of the prioritization criteria and local point assignments for regional and division level projects through the Strategic Transportation Initiative (STI)

- The draft prioritized list will be available for public comment for 28 days prior a final prioritization list approval by the TAC. The prioritization list will be submitted to the NCDOT for fiscal constraint prior to the release of the draft STIP.

## **Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)**

Additional public involvement at key decision points may include:

- Formulation of vision, goals and objectives
- Coordination of socio-economic and demographic projections with land use planning agencies

## **Public Participation Policy Updates**

An important step in public involvement is evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and outreach activities in order to ensure a full and open involvement process. The CR MPO shall periodically review the overall effectiveness of the public involvement process in order to ensure that the process is providing meaningful citizen input. The public involvement policy is a work in progress and strives to improve CR MPO's efforts toward increasing public awareness and involvement in transportation planning. The CR MPO initially used a Public Involvement Survey, which was distributed in the fall of 2007, to gauge the public's satisfaction with the public involvement process. (The Public Involvement Survey is included as **Appendix C.**) Surveys will be developed to determine the success of public outreach methods and to judge how responsive they are in providing public input in the transportation decision-making process will be ongoing. Strategies and measures to evaluate public involvement effectiveness will rely on information gathered through surveys and data readily available to MPO staff. The CR MPO public involvement policy will be evaluated on a short and long-term basis.

### **Short Term**

At every public involvement event, participants will be asked to evaluate the activity or opportunity. MPO staff will ask how the public found out about this opportunity and solicit feedback on the effectiveness of it or any suggestions for improvement. The MPO will develop public involvement objectives or strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of the public participation policy and track changes in public input and outreach or identify areas for improvement.

### **Long Term**

The Public Involvement Policy must be reviewed at least every 4 years and updated in coordination with the development of the MTP.

## **Measures of Effectiveness and Biennial Evaluation Survey**

Evaluation is a key component of any successful plan. Both short and long term evaluations ensure that the appropriate revisions to the public involvement approach are being recognized and addressed by the CR MPO. The objectives, strategies and measures below will be tracked by the MPO. The sources of data for these measures are meeting and attendance logs, surveys distributed at public meetings and events, records of public comments, and data on the total and unique number of hits on the MPO's website. Following these evaluations, it is possible that some public involvement activities will be refined, revisited, or discontinued. It is the philosophy of the CR MPO to strengthen the relationship with the public through these periodic evaluations and to report on the measures of effectiveness on a biennial basis.

**Objective – Hold Regularly Scheduled and Advertised Meetings Open and Accessible to the General Public**

**Strategy****Measures**

All MPO Meetings, times, agendas, and locations will be publicly noted in newspapers and online	Overall increase in meeting attendance Increase in number of attendees who are first time
MPO meetings will be held in ADA compliant locations accessible to transit or near traditionally underserved communities	% of meetings that are handicapped accessible % of meetings that are within ¼ mile of transit Overall increase in participation from transit riders, physically challenged or underserved communities
Incorporate specialized surveys and questionnaires in meetings and events where appropriate	% increase in recipients who responded to the survey or questionnaire

**Objective – Seek Out Traditionally Underserved Communities****Strategy****Measures**

Staff will provide presentations to community groups and provide one-on-one small group dialogue throughout the MPO to discuss process and projects	% increase in minority community and underserved participants in MPO outreach efforts. Geographic distribution of meeting attendees and comments
Identify communities with higher concentrations of under-served populations, develop relationships with community and religious leaders and hold workshops and meetings in these communities	Overall increase in participation by minority and underserved communities.

**Objective – Engagement through a Variety of Outreach Activities to Maximize Public and Agency Input****Strategy****Measures**

Provide opportunities through the website for people to access plans and have input into transportation plan or project decision-making	Overall increase in on-line comments
Schedule at least two community presentations or meetings per year in the evening and at locations out in the community.	Overall increase in telephone, email, and public inquiries about MPO programs and plans Increase in small municipalities and rural attendee participation.
Explore new tools and techniques through social media engagement and visualization	Overall increase in comments and survey responses
Partner with agencies to broaden MPO awareness and maintain information to ensure planning continuity	Overall increase in meetings with other agencies on MPO related topics % Increase in public inquiries about MTP and other plans

**Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP)**

The CR MPO LEP plan provides public outreach to comply with Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (2000) and is included in this plan by this reference. In addition, the Cabarrus Rowan MPO will use special strategies in special situations for engaging low-income, low-literacy, or limited-English-proficiency populations, including but not limited to the following:

- **Identifying LEP populations**

Areas within the CR MPO with high LEP populations will be identified and provided with specialized staff and materials for planning sessions or events.

- **Translation Services**

Interpretation assistance should be made available where possible and be as seamless as possible.

Create a list of staff translators serving CR MPO on an ad hoc basis.

Provide written materials translated into appropriate languages with general information and directions until an interpreter can be located.

Prepare documents, flyers, notifications, agendas, etc. in the language known by the LEP population.  
Phone notices for public input should be provided in the language of the known LEP population

- **Evaluation of LEP services**

Distribute translated evaluation cards for feedback from LEP persons at meetings and CR MPO offices.



## Appendices

### Appendix A – Glossary, Federal Requirements and Key Acronyms

**ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act;** Federal legislation passed in 1990 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. The act requires all transportation facilities and services must be accessible to individuals with physical handicaps.

- **Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504** - 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.
- **Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Section 508** - 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.”

**CAAA – Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990;** The original Clean Air Act from 1963 was revised in 1970, instituting the national air pollution control program. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments are the most far-reaching revisions of the 1970 law and include transportation conformity.

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

#### **Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA Section 5310)**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 grant program, formerly called New Freedom, supports additional transportation service options to Americans with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment and seeks to expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities beyond the requirements of ADA.

#### **FAST Act – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation**

The FAST Act continues the public involvement requirements of MAP-21 and emphasizes the public involvement with Planning and Environmental Linkages and incorporates new stakeholders including Intercity Bus and Public Ports as public entities. The Act reinforces the emphasis on performance based approach to planning and programming and includes two new planning factors dealing with resiliency and creative stormwater mitigation strategies

#### **JARC – Job Access Reverse Commute (FTA Section 5307)**

The JARC program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment.

**LEP – Limited English Proficiency** - 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 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.

#### **MAP-21 – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

MAP-21 regulations require that an opportunity for public involvement be provided throughout the planning process. Metropolitan area plans include a public participation plan, with a minimum public comment period of 45 days required when a public participation plan is updated. Specific provisions should give affected parties a reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans. These parties include, but are not limited to, those identified as stakeholders.

**NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act of 1969;** An Act to establish a national environmental policy to provide for the establishment of a Council on Environmental Quality, and to promote efforts to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare.

**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 - The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users** Enacted August 10, 2005, SAFETEA-LU expanded the list of interested parties to be engaged during public participation (see “stakeholders” below). Provisions of SAFETEA-LU expanded consultation and cooperation with Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies responsible for land use, natural resources and other environmental issues and promoted consistency of transportation plans with state and local planned growth and economic development patterns during the adoption of long and short-term plans. Additional requirements included methods to better communicate transportation plans with the general public by the use of visualization techniques and the integration of transportation and air quality planning in the areas designated by the U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) as non-attainment or maintenance areas.

### **Stakeholders**

An individual or organization involved in or affected by the transportation planning process. In order to create and implement transportation plans with long-lasting benefits, appropriate stakeholders must be identified. In accordance with MAP-21, stakeholders will include “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”. Citizens 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.

**TAZ – Traffic Analysis Zone;** The unit of geographic area, generally small and with similar development characteristics, used in travel demand modeling.

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1)** - Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act 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. The 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.

- **Executive Order 12898** requires federal agencies and their sub recipients achieve environmental justice as part of its mission. MPOs must identify and address as appropriate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations in the United States.
- **Executive Order 13166** requires public outreach to include people of limited English proficiency. Combined with nondiscrimination statutes, meaningful access would extend to people who cannot

read and understand what is read: thus the need to include outreach to low-literate populations is needed as well. MPOs must work to provide “meaningful access” to their limited English proficiency applicants and beneficiaries.

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

**Visualization** – The formation of visual images to describe information. Examples of visualization techniques include sketches, drawings, artist renderings, physical models and maps, simulated photos, videos, computer modeled images, interactive mapping, 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

• **Key Acronyms and Technical Terms Defined**

Acronym or Term	Description
Conformity Analysis	Demonstration that when the projects planned in the MTIP and MTP are implemented the area will not exceed allowable motor vehicle emissions budgets.
Conformity Finding	Statement that the projects contained in the MTIP are essentially consistent with those listed in the MTP and that no new Conformity Analysis is needed to account for noted differences.
CMS	Congestion Management System. A program of strategies for monitoring, evaluating, and addressing traffic congestion. Required for Transportation Management Areas.
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. A federal highway fund category for projects intended to improve air quality.
CTP	Comprehensive Transportation Plan. A multimodal plan of maps of the MPO area that is not financially constrained and developed in consultation with NCDOT.
DENR	North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
Emissions Budget	See Conformity Analysis.
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement. Technical review of impacts caused by a project on the environment. Required by NEPA.
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency.
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration (US Department of Transportation).
FTA	Federal Transit Administration (US Department of Transportation).
HTF	North Carolina State Highway Trust Fund.
MAB	Metropolitan Area Boundary. The boundary of the area within the transportation planning jurisdiction of an MPO.
MTIP	Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program. Current MTIP covers FY 16-25, took effect October 1, 2015.
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Long Range Plan for all modes of transportation and federal requirement. Last MTP was locally adopted on April 23, 2014.

Acronym or Term	Description
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act. Federal law that requires consideration of environmental impacts for all major expenditures of federal funds.
RABA	Revenue Aligned Budget Authority. A budget-balancing provision of the FAST Act.
Section 104(f) PL	Funds distributed through the Federal Highway Administration for transportation planning tasks.
Section 5307	Funds distributed through the Federal Transit Administration for public transportation capital assistance, operating assistance, and planning needs.
SIP	State Implementation Plan. The modeling analyses and the state and federal regulations demonstrating that the air in an area will meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program—FY 16-25. STIP was adopted in June 2015.
STP-DA Funds	Statewide Transportation Planning funds that are Directly Apportioned to a TMA.
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century. Current federal highway funding legislation.
TMA	Transportation Management Area: an urbanized area over 200,000 in population. The Cabarrus-Rowan MPO has been classified as a TMA beginning with the 2000 Census.
TPB	The NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch, formerly Statewide Planning Branch.
UA or UZA	Urbanized Area. The census-defined boundary that is the basis for establishing an MPO.
UPWP	Accounting document for use of planning grant funds; lists approved activities that these funds may reimburse. The UPWP guides transportation planning activities for the year.

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## **Appendix B – Public Outreach Toolkits**

The following tools are listed to provide a range of methods to more effectively engage the public in the transportation planning process. Not all of these tools are required, but should be considered as part of the public participation efforts of the Cabarrus Rowan MPO (CR MPO).

### **Non-Participating Minority and Low-Income Populations**

Public Outreach activities will include efforts to involve traditionally underserved groups (i.e., minorities, elderly, low-income persons) in the transportation planning process. These efforts may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Identifying areas in the CR MPO region with concentrations of minority, elderly, and low income populations;
- Including organizations that deal directly with minority groups on the Stakeholder List;
- Posting notification and/or holding meetings and open houses in county health departments, senior centers, major retail centers and public schools;
- Publishing notification of meetings, public hearings, and open houses in Spanish.

### **Outreach and Education Program**

Public involvement is at its best when the general public is thoroughly informed of the issues surrounding a project. Outreach also includes informing the public and other agencies about the roles and responsibilities of the MPO. When necessary, the MPO will develop outreach and educational programs to inform various parties of the public involvement process for a particular project or to provide technical framework. English and Spanish materials will be a part of this program.

### **Outreach Professionals**

To promote increased levels of public participation, the MPO will collaborate with outreach professionals with long-standing relationships with target communities that are aware of the various concerns expressed by the citizens they represent.

### **Reverse Flow**

In order to reverse the traditional flow of information, interested parties or groups could be invited to make presentations to the TAC, TCC, or other policy boards.

### **Newsletters**

The MPO will provide information to be included as part of a newsletter to keep the general public and agencies informed of MPO activities and public involvement opportunities. The newsletter is distributed through e-mail on an “as needed” basis.

### **Data Storage Devices**

It is the policy of the CR MPO to make project or plan documents available to individuals on CD, DVD, portable USB drive, or other media formats upon request.

### **Advertisements, Press Releases and Media Outlets**

The CR MPO will post advertisements and press releases in newspapers, on radio and television stations including municipal government channel, at community centers, YMCA and YWCA locations, major retail centers, public schools, churches, and agencies that work with the non-English-speaking population, based on a project’s location and impacts.

### **Briefings and Presentations**

Briefings and presentations will be used as a method of delivering information to the public, key individuals, civic groups, professional organizations, neighborhood associations, and other groups about

the regional transportation planning process and transportation plans. Elected officials, business leaders, the media, regional groups, or special interest groups can participate. Briefings usually involve issue-focused communication and are held at critical times in plan development or project schedule.

### **Workshops**

Informational workshops designed to educate participants on specific topics, such as air quality, associated with the transportation planning process provide a means for allowing participants to express their ideas and concerns in an informal setting. Information workshops will be conducted on an as needed basis.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups allow the MPO to directly collect feedback from the general public. The MPO may also gather small groups of citizens or residents of affected project area neighborhoods to create focus groups that will provide feedback regarding a specific topic or transportation plan.

### **Surveys and Response Sheets**

Surveys allow the MPO to directly collect feedback from the general public. Strategies for disseminating surveys will consider differences in language and technology access among affected citizens. Some methods may include inserting surveys in social media announcements, providing links to surveys on government websites, and having available comment sheets at public events and hearings.

### **Site Visits/Tours**

It is recommended that the MPO utilize site visits when possible. Site visits are trips taken by community residents, officials, agencies, and consultants to proposed or actual project areas, corridors, impacted areas, or affected properties. Site visits show the physical environment of a proposal, give participants a common frame of reference, and help people understand each other's point-of-view. Site visits also improve media coverage and accuracy of reporting, and can help gain credibility for the agency by going into the community.

### **Open Houses**

Open houses provide an informal setting for the public to access general information on the transportation planning process. Open houses have no fixed agendas and no formal presentations. The MPO technical staff would be on hand to answer questions and provide details on a one-on-one basis. Open houses may precede public meetings.

### **Neighborhood Meetings**

The MPO may consider the use of neighborhood meetings, usually in conjunction with neighborhood association planned events. While not applicable for all types of plans or projects, a neighborhood meeting can be very effective at maximizing two-way communication in a relaxed setting.

### **Web-Based Meetings**

The CR MPO may use online webcasts, wikis, and community forums to augment face-to-face meetings. The MPO may also explore the use of podcasts of MPO minutes or highlights of meetings.

### **Charrettes**

A charrette, a meeting to resolve a specific problem or issue, may also be a useful public participation technique. Within a specified time limit, participants work together intensely to reach a resolution. The sponsoring agency usually sets the goals and time limit and announces them ahead of time. A leader's responsibility is to bring out all points of view from concerned local residents as well as agency representatives and experts. The usual components of a charrette include issue definition and analysis; data collection; small group development of alternatives; and presentation and consensus on final solution.

**Advisory Committees**

The MPO may use advisory committees to increase public participation in and ownership of the transportation planning process. These committees could include citizens or interest groups that would meet to discuss transportation issues or project-specific topics when needed.

**Interagency Consultations**

The MPO consults with officials and agencies that are affected by transportation decisions to gather input and coordinate between the MPO and planning underway by others. The MPO consultations include air quality conformity processes, notification of the development of certification documents, as well as requests for reviews and comparisons of information during the development of the MTP such as state and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, historic resources, airport and rail operations, freight movements, and federal land management.

**Website**

The CR MPO website is a tool that provides timely information to the public. Interested parties have the ability to review all MPO documents, technical information, access updates on the status of specific plans and projects, as well as make public comments. An online calendar provides dates of upcoming meetings and public involvement opportunities. Anyone can access the DOT website at [WWW.CRMPO.ORG](http://WWW.CRMPO.ORG).

**Social Media**

The MPO seeks to use all available forms of media in an effort to increase public involvement. Strategies to encourage public input may include social marketing mediums such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs and efforts to include them will be made when deemed appropriate. The MPO will consider using an online project journal (blog) and podcasts for projects where progress updates will be frequent and important in sustaining momentum.

**TAC and TCC Meetings**

Formal MPO business is conducted during TAC and TCC meetings. MPO TAC and TCC meetings allot time for public comment at the beginning of the meeting. These public comments are documented and become a part of the meeting minutes. In the event that an individual seeks to address a specific agenda item, they may contact the MPO prior to the meeting to comment on that specific agenda item. The chair has the discretion to address anyone wishing to speak on a particular agenda item whose name is not on the list previously mentioned. In the event that the public is unable to make comments during a meeting time, comments may be submitted in written or electronic form.

**Related Outreach Conducted by Individual MPO Members**

The MPO agencies and municipalities conduct public participation activities related to MPO activities and their particular agency and program needs. Agencies are encouraged to coordinate their outreach plans, when possible, with MPO events to consolidate public involvement activities.

## Appendix C – Public Involvement Survey

### **Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization**

May 2017: Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (CR MPO) is seeking input on Public Involvement from Cabarrus and Rowan County citizens. The survey will be used to determine the best methods for CR MPO to effectively share information and consult with the public. The information from this survey will be used in modifying the comprehensive Public Involvement Policy for citizens throughout the Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Area.

#### **Public Involvement Survey**

1. What portions of transportation planning interest you?  
Check as many as apply.
  - Roads and Highways
  - Traffic Congestion
  - Public Transportation or Transit
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - Trucking and Freight
  - Railroad
  - Environmental Concerns
  - Aviation
2. Have you participated in transportation planning public meetings in the past?
  - Yes
  - No
3. When do you tend to become involved in transportation-related issues?
  - I am never involved
  - When the project interests me
  - When the project affects me
  - I am highly involved
4. Which of the following affects your level of participation?
  - I regularly participate
  - I do not receive enough information to participate
  - The events are not accessible
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - The times are inconvenient
  - I do not think participation is useful
5. How do you find out about public meetings and workshops?  
Check as many as apply.
  - Newspaper
  - Direct mailing
  - Poster or Flyer
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - Internet
  - E-mail
  - Telephone
6. How much time is necessary for public review and comment for updates and major amendments to all primary transportation plans/programs for which the MPO is responsible?
  - 7 days
  - 15 days
  - 30 days
  - 45 days
  - 60 days
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please select your preferred method of communicating with CR MPO.
  - Phone a CR MPO employee
  - Meet with a CR MPO employee
  - E-mail CR MPO
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - Mail a letter to CR MPO
  - Comment at public hearing or meeting



# **Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization**

## **Public Involvement Survey (Continued)**

8. Are you satisfied with CRMPO's efforts to solicit public participation?
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Unsatisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied      | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfied    |   |
9. Should public comments be included in the final plan document?
- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> As written with the name of submitter | <input type="checkbox"/> Both    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summarized with no names included     | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither |
10. How should the Cabarrus-Rowan MPO release public comments (Mark all that apply)?
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In public comment section of Final Plans/programs/projects                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Available on the MPO web site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Available at MPO meetings   | <input type="checkbox"/> Available at public meetings  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documented and available for review as requested, but not included in final plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                   |

**Contact Information:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the name and contact information of any group, committee, or individual you feel would be interested in completing this survey.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. If you have any comments or questions, please contact the CR MPO.

**Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Attn: Phil Conrad**                      **704-795-7528**  
**164 Edgewater Drive**                **pconrad@mblsolution.com**  
**Concord, NC 28027**                    **www.crmppo.org**

## Appendix D – Media Contacts

### NEWSPAPERS

**Salisbury Post**  
(704) 797-4286

**Independent Tribune**  
(704) 789-9105

### TELEVISION STATIONS

**WBTV**  
(704) 374-3500

**WCNC**  
(704) 329-3636

**WSOC**  
(704) 338-9999

**WUNG**  
(919) 549-7000

**WJZY**  
(704) 398-0046

**WAXN**  
(704) 338-9999

### RADIO STATIONS

**WFDD**  
(336) 758-8850

**WFAE**  
(704) 549-9323

**WEND**  
(704) 714-9444

**WTIX**  
(704) 633-0621

**WSAT**  
(704) 633-0621

**WRNA**  
(704) 857-1101

**WMFR/WSJS**  
(336) 777-3900

### LIBRARIES

South Rowan Regional Library  
China Grove, NC  
(704) 216-7727

Rowan Public Library - East Branch  
Rockwell, NC  
(704) 216-7838

Rowan Public Library: Headquarters  
Salisbury, NC  
(704) 216-8228

Spencer Public Library  
Spencer, NC  
(704) 636-9072

Cabarrus County Public Library  
Concord, NC  
(704) 920-2050

Kannapolis Branch Library  
Kannapolis, NC  
(704) 920-1180

Harrisburg Branch Library  
Harrisburg, NC  
(704) 920-2080

Mt Pleasant Branch Library  
Mt Pleasant, NC  
(704) 436-2202