

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

*Pikes Peak
Area
Council of
Governments*

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1: Introduction

A Metropolitan Planning Organization is a federally mandated and federally funded transportation policy-making organization that is made up of representatives from local government and governmental transportation authorities. MPOs were created to ensure regional cooperation in transportation planning. They are meant to focus on projects and plans that are expected to have a regional impact rather than on small local projects.

MPOs frequently work with numerous regional stakeholders such as federal and state agencies, nonprofits, transit agencies, freight carriers, economic development and public health organizations, and others. They perform “multi-modal” planning, that is, planning which encompasses all modes of transportation, including personal vehicle, public transit, rail, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Transportation Planning Area (see Figure 1)

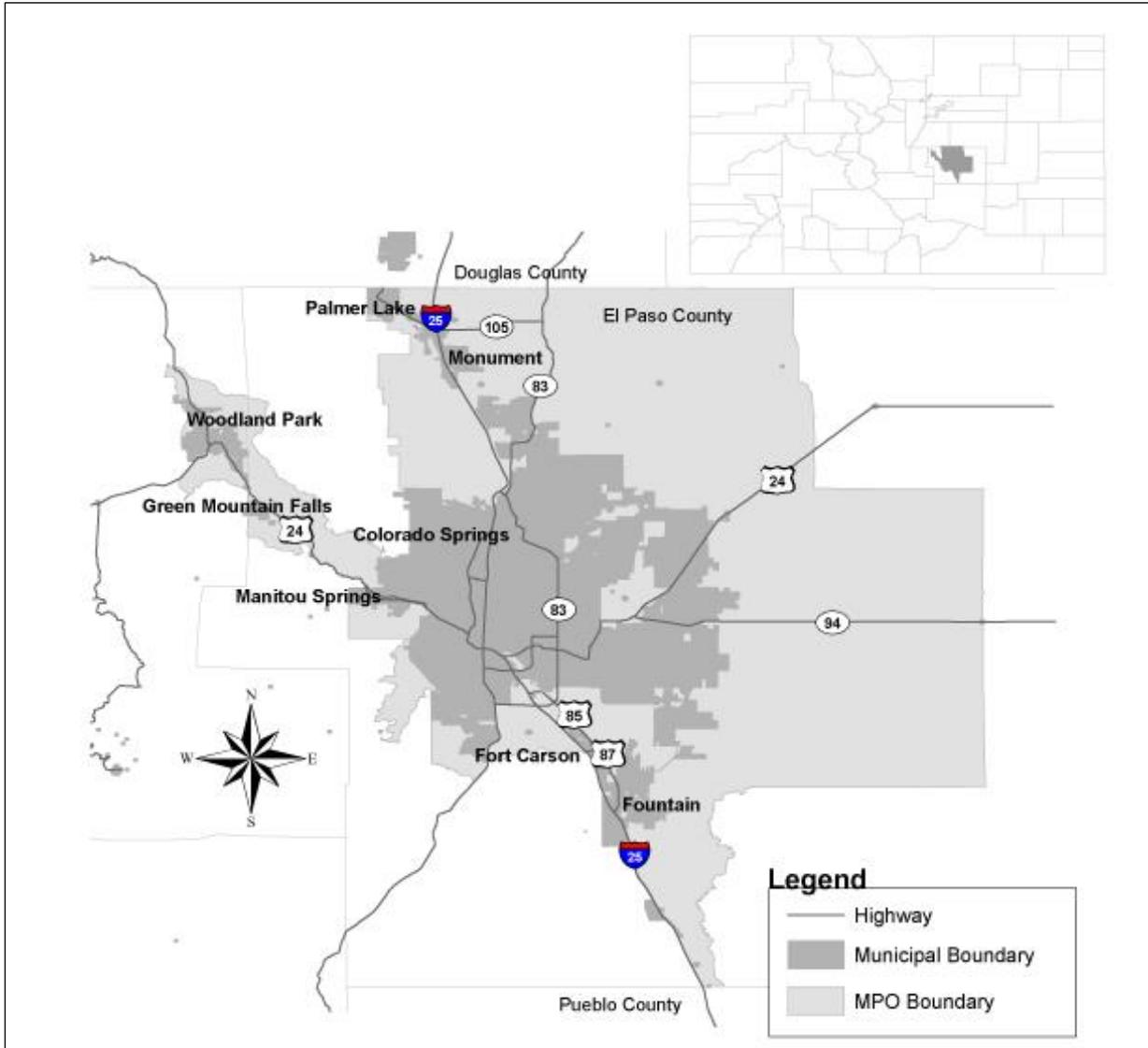
As the Pikes Peak region’s designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and the lead agency for air-quality planning in the Colorado Springs Urbanized Area, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments is responsible for carrying out “a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a metropolitan transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program.”

The planning area encompasses the Urbanized Area (as defined by the US Census) plus the geographic area that is projected to develop to urban densities within 20 years. That currently includes portions of El Paso and Teller Counties.

Member governments within the planning area include:

- El Paso County
- Teller County
- Colorado Springs
- Fountain
- Green Mountain Falls
- Monument
- Palmer Lake
- Woodland Park
- Manitou Springs

Figure 1: Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary



2: Transportation Planning Overview

PPACG prepares a Long-Range Transportation Plan that addresses transportation system needs, goals, and improvements for at least 20 years. This long-range plan is used by the organization and regional partners to guide project priorities and funding decisions. PPACG also prepares a Transportation Improvement Program, which addresses transportation system improvements for a four-year time period. These two documents have significant influence on future development and transportation projects in the Pikes Peak Region.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan provides a strategic framework for the development, operation, and management of the transportation system to meet economic, social, mobility, and environmental goals. The plan identifies specific projects to achieve regional goals. The PPACG shorter-range (four to six years) Transportation Improvement Program implements the projects identified in the long-range plan.

Other agency products include the Unified Planning Work Program, a document describing the work to be done by the MPO during a given year; the Congestion Management Plan; and the Public Participation Plan.

These plans and programs are federally required and are governed by federal and state regulations. A robust public involvement process is required, and public participation is encouraged. PPACG's plans and programs should reflect the values and priorities of the region.

The PPACG uses a committee structure that provides subject matter knowledge, citizen and stakeholder participation, project guidance, and decision support. Its policies are set by a governing Board composed of elected officials and other representatives from around the region.

The **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** provides technical advice on transportation issues, goals, plans, and programs to the PPACG Board of Directors and staff.

The **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)** is a nontechnical committee made up of volunteers who offer a citizen's perspective on issues such as transportation, the environment, economic development, and military impact planning in the Pikes Peak region.

The **Mobility Coordinating Committee (MCC)** coordinates transit grants and other resources and advises the PPACG board on current emerging issues related to public human service and job-access transit services in the region.

The **Board of Directors (BOD)** sets agency policy and serves as the decision-making body.

3: Public Participation Plan Purpose and Goals

Importance of Public Involvement in Transportation Planning

The needs, goals and projects identified in these documents should reflect the priorities of the community. Conducting a substantive and well-planned community process is essential to determine those priorities. A successful public involvement process increases community support for and ownership of goals and projects and leads to increased trust in local government. Conversely, poor public outreach efforts can cause stakeholders to view the process as merely “checking the box” after decisions have already been made, leading to limited participation, community adversity to plan goals, distrust of local government, and in extreme cases, legal action.

This plan seeks to develop a proactive public participation process for the PPACG region that:

- Provides well-researched, objective information on the state of the transportation system so that stakeholders are empowered to help shape the plan’s content and outcomes, resulting in a plan that reflects community goals and priorities.
- Creates opportunities for substantive two-way dialogue among transportation planners, elected officials, and citizens through widespread community involvement.
- Ensures that all citizens who wish to participate have an opportunity, and that all ideas are given fair consideration.
- Encourages participation by groups traditionally underserved by transportation investments, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Performs outreach to those particularly affected by specific alternatives and plan recommendations in order to involve them in the evaluation process.
- Coordinates public input for state, regional and local entity planning processes, including transit, as appropriate.
- Evaluates the effectiveness of the public involvement program on an ongoing basis.

PPACG also partners with Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) to fulfill the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) requirements for public notification and involvement for FTA-funded programs and projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and long range plan. To ensure the transit products identified above reflect the needs of the community, PPACG will make a particular effort to seek out and consider the needs of these stakeholders. PPACG meeting notifications will include language indicating that the public notice serves to meet FTA public participation requirements for MMT’s FTA-funded projects. PPACG’s public involvement process for the TIP or long range plan will be consistent with federal regulations and will serve to meet FTA public participation requirements for MMT’s program of projects.

Public Involvement Best Practices

PPACG reviewed public participation guidelines and best practices from a number of federal, state, and regional agencies around the country and incorporated many into this plan. Applying the takeaways listed below is key to success, especially for communicating with populations that have been identified as disadvantaged or underserved.

Key takeaways include:

- Outreach efforts should be specifically tailored to the community of interest.
- Traditional public involvement techniques such as open houses and town hall meetings are not always the best forms of public engagement.
- Make use of new technologies and social media.
- Tap into community networks that already exist and go to where people are already meeting.
- Match public engagement techniques with goal and audience.
- Measure and assess the effectiveness of outreach techniques to determine the most efficient ways to allocate resources. What the agency decides to measure will depend heavily on its goals for the engagement process.
- Limit the amount of time required to complete surveys, or to provide feedback, to about five minutes.
- Ensure that public involvement and outreach messaging is relevant to your target audience.
- Phrase questions clearly and simply so that people understand what is being asked.
- Do not assume that the public has prior planning knowledge.

Following adoption of the Moving Forward 2040 plan update, PPACG also solicited feedback on the public participation process from the Transportation Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee. Their suggestions included:

- Foster a better public understanding of the use and impact of the plan.
- Better integrate and explain technical data.
- Conduct a speakers bureau.
- Simplify the information since too much complexity loses people.
- Post comments in real time online.
- Find better, more effective ways to address concerns raised by citizens.
- Tap into existing networks and engage specific neighborhood groups.

Target Audiences

The audience for long-range, regional planning efforts is by nature broad, diverse, and inclusive: those who impact and are impacted by transportation decisions.

Groups and individuals to involve in the planning process include:

- Citizens in the Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Neighborhood groups and representatives
- Minority groups and representatives (*refer to PPACG's Title VI plan for additional detail*)
- Business groups and representatives
- Transportation planners, engineers, and other technical staff
- Elected officials
- Military officials
- Bicycle and pedestrian groups
- Public transportation users and employees and their representatives
- People with disabilities and their representatives
- Private transportation providers
- Freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services
- First responders

4: Underserved Communities

Title VI

Traditionally underserved communities are defined by [23 US Code § 718] as including low income households and minority households. Non-discrimination statutes also name race, color, national origin, age, sex/gender, handicap/disability, and religion. Subsequent Executive Orders also name low income and minority populations (E.O. 12898) and limited-English-proficient populations (E.O. 13166).

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that

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

As stated in the Title VI & Environmental Justice Plan, to meet the requirements of Title VI, PPACG must:

- Ensure that the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) comply with Title VI;
- Address the needs of minority populations so the benefits and burdens of transportation are fairly distributed; and
- Ensure the public involvement process has no barriers that would prevent successfully engaging minority populations in regional decision-making.

49 CFR 27 requires the designation of an employee responsible for coordinating Title VI efforts.

Questions, concerns, or complaints should be sent to:

John Liosatos
Transportation Director
Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
719-471-7080 x105
jliosatos@ppacg.org

Any person who believes they have been subjected to or denied an opportunity of participation by a discriminatory practice prohibited under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with PPACG or directly with the Federal Transit Administration or US Department of Transportation.

Environmental Justice

Presidential Executive Order 12898 (1994) directs each federal agency to make environmental justice part of its mission. It dictates 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.”

A “minority population” means any readily identifiable group or groups of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed or transient persons such as migrant workers or Native Americans who will be similarly affected by a proposed DOT program, policy or activity.

“Minority” includes persons who are:

- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander

“Low-income” means a person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines. A locally developed threshold is permitted and encouraged, provided that the threshold is at least as inclusive as the HHS poverty guidelines. For more detail, please see the Title VI and Environmental Justice Plan at <http://www.ppacg.org/transportation/>.

The guiding EJ principles followed by DOT are briefly summarized as follows:

- 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 the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Public engagement is necessary to help improve upon traditionally low levels of engagement by minority and low-income populations. Barriers of trust, language, of understanding the agency's purpose and mission, and access must be specifically addressed. Wide distribution of materials and surveys, and traditional meetings that may be or appear inaccessible, are not sufficient to create meaningful access to the planning process for some minority and low-income populations.

In addition to the tactics listed elsewhere in the Public Participation Plan, PPACG will use two main methods to achieve help achieve meaningful access: engaging community representatives and providing accessible materials.

EJ – Community Representatives

PPACG will rely upon community partners in order to gain the fullest reach to underserved communities and to help overcome barriers of communication and trust. Planners and committee and Board members will reach out to organizations such as community centers, minority chambers of commerce, churches, and other support organizations to request help in sharing PPACG's meeting notices and notices of public comment, distributing surveys, directing members and clients to our website, and describing and interpreting our mission and services. Their feedback on our engagement process and materials will also be sought along with advice on how to make improvements for the next planning cycle. Highly accessible and easy-to-use materials will be distributed to community partners in order to help them provide a meaningful point of entry to the planning process for their communities.

Along with enlisting the aid of community partners, planners and committee and Board members will attend community events such as farmer's markets, luncheons, and conferences where they can provide an introduction to the organization and discuss opportunities for engagement. In the past, this approach has been found to be far more effective than traditional public meetings or open houses hosted by PPACG alone.

To help reach out meaningfully to underserved communities and utilize PPACG's existing diversity and community partners, a "public engagement academy" may be offered early during the 2050 plan effort. This will be a short course or training offered to committee members, Board members, and community partners that will teach them how to discuss PPACG's purpose, mission, and core products. They can then become "ambassadors" to underserved communities they represent or are familiar with, which will help to further remove barriers to communication and trust and improve participation rates among underserved populations.

EJ – Accessible Materials

Past feedback on the public engagement process has revealed a need for accessible and easy-to-use materials for members of the public. This goes beyond the need for visual aids and appropriate rendering of complex planning concepts. Members of underserved communities and people with disabilities may require a higher degree of "accessibility" of PPACG's products and materials.

As part of the outreach effort for the 2045 LRTP, a very brief “primer” will be developed that will offer a simple and easy-to-understand point of entry into PPACG’s planning process and give detailed information about upcoming public involvement opportunities.

Since this plan emphasizes the importance of electronic or web-based communication, it will therefore be important to provide a highly accessible web platform. To help evaluate the current website, PPACG conducted an assessment per the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), an international standard that is backed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

The assessment asks a series of questions about the website’s design and capabilities, such as whether text alternatives are provided for non-text items, which makes it possible to change them into braille; or whether captions are provided for video recordings. The resulting “A” rating means that PPACG’s website currently includes basic web accessibility features but does not achieve broad accessibility for a variety of situations. Through future updates and the introduction of new capabilities, PPACG hopes to achieve the “AA” rating, which “deals with the biggest and most common barriers for disabled users”.

For more detailed information about Title VI and Environmental Justice, please see the 2019 Title VI & Environmental Justice Plan available of PPACG’s website.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency", requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. This is an extension of the prohibition against national origin discrimination in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

LEP – Translation Services

For those with Limited English proficiency (LEP), inclusion means providing both spoken and written translations of program materials and presentations. Translation will be provided for workshops, open-houses, and public meetings when requested, with 7 days’ notice.

Korean translation may be provided if practical; Korean is the third most common language in Colorado Springs, and Asian and Pacific Islanders reported the highest rates of speaking English “less than very well” in the 2016 American Community Survey.

For communications concerning plans which will substantially impact areas where there is an identified LEP population, translated materials and/or translation services may be offered even if not requested. In this situation, planning staff will proactively attempt to engage support organizations and to discover advertising channels likely to reach persons in the area who speak limited English.

The procedure for requesting Spanish translation services for PPACG’s regularly occurring committee and Board meetings will appear (in Spanish) on all meeting agendas as of the adoption of this plan.

LEP – Accessible Documents and Website

The “primer” mentioned above will be available in English and Spanish, and a special effort will be made during Long Range Plan updates to distribute the primer to Spanish-speaking community leaders and support organizations.

Due to limited budget and resources, PPACG is unable to translate all documents. It may translate core documents, or portions thereof, as suggested by four-factor analysis. Spanish translations of documents such as the “Title VI Complaint Form” and the “Notice to Beneficiaries of Protection Under Title VI” will be provided in English and Spanish. Executive summaries for the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program will also be provided in Spanish and English. Other plans and program documents may be translated if they are likely to have disproportionate impacts on an identified LEP population.

PPACG’s website will feature an easy-to-use translate button made available by Google, which can instantly translate the site into numerous languages. This add-on program also offers the benefit of tracking the number and language of translation requests: this data can then be used to help determine the demand for translations of PPACG’s documents and other website content.

LEP – Community Outreach

As stated in the Title VI & Environmental Justice Plan, PPACG will rely upon community partners in order to gain the fullest reach to underserved communities and to help overcome barriers of communication and trust. This includes the Spanish-speaking community (others where appropriate). Their feedback on our engagement process and materials will also be sought along with advice on how to make improvements for the next planning cycle.

Along with enlisting the aid of community partners, planners and committee and Board members will attend events of the Spanish-speaking community and others as appropriate.

As with Environmental Justice, PPACG’s committees and Board can draw on their own experiences and language issues in their communities to provide needed perspectives on the LEP process. Traditionally, these groups have been underused. It will be a goal moving forward to involve the committees and the Board more meaningfully and *earlier* in the LEP process, and to seek and provide feedback as each plan or TIP is wrapping up in order to achieve ongoing improvement.

To further improve diversity for the purpose of achieving a better understanding of language considerations, PPACG will explore expanding the Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) to

include representatives of the Spanish-speaking community. The CAC is the body most involved in the development and improvement of PPACG's overall public involvement processes.

The "public engagement academy" described in the Title VI and Environmental Justice Plan would also be applicable to the Spanish-speaking and other language communities.

There will be a sustained effort to increase PPACG's list of LEP contacts and community leaders, and to grow our LEP email/contact list and grow the number of appropriate advertising channels with each planning cycle. With each planning cycle, PPACG will review why this did or did not happen successfully.

For more detailed information about Limited English Proficiency, please see the Limited English Proficiency Plan available on PPACG's website.

Other Traditionally Under-Represented Populations

Older and younger people are also sometimes underrepresented in public process for transportation planning. Participation in interactive workshops and community events may be difficult for older people. Younger people may experience a relative lack of access due to generational barriers, school and work schedules, and a historical lack of involvement. PPACG will work with its own Area Agency on Aging (AAA) as well as schools and colleges to promote increasing rates of participation by older and younger people in the region.

5: Access for People with Disabilities

The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments is committed to accommodating the needs of persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal opportunities for participation in all transportation plans and programs.

PPACG's metropolitan planning process will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which states "that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." This includes having an equal opportunity of participation in public involvement activities that are part of the metropolitan planning process.

PPACG will comply with 49 CFR 27.11, which outlines remedial action, voluntary action, and compliance planning for the provision of meaningful involvement opportunities for persons with disabilities. To date, PPACG has not been found to violate this rule. Current policies call for holding public meetings at locations accessible to persons with disabilities. Beyond meeting location, PPACG uses the services of the Independence Center (<https://www.theindependencecenter.org/>) to provide a range of accommodations for people with different disabilities.

During the latest planning cycle, this accommodation has proved adequate for needs that have arisen, but review of the appropriateness and effectiveness of accommodation for persons with disabilities will be performed at the start of each Long Range Transportation Plan. Data on the participation rate of persons with disabilities will be collected, along with information about whether accommodation was adequate.

In general, to better engage traditionally underserved communities, PPACG will employ some or all of the following outreach methods:

- A. Hold public meetings or events at locations that are accessible to persons with disabilities and near transit routes;
- B. Hold public meetings at times when the working and non-working public can attend;
- C. Provide ample advanced notice of public meetings and events;
- D. Perform targeted outreach to community associations, churches and/or faith-based organizations, and other organizations that provide support for traditionally underserved communities;
- E. Provide translated documents for limited English speakers and in-person language and deaf translators as needed or requested, with adequate notice;
- F. Provide any other assistance that is requested, within reason and with adequate notice of the need for assistance.

As mentioned above, PPACG conducted a voluntary assessment of its website per the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), an international standard that is backed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI). The assessment asks a series of questions about the website's design and capabilities, such as whether text alternatives are provided for non-text items, which makes it possible to change them into braille; or whether captions are provided for video recordings. The resulting "A" rating means that PPACG's website currently includes basic web accessibility features but does not achieve broad accessibility for a variety of situations. Through future updates and the introduction of new capabilities, PPACG hopes to achieve the "AA" rating, which "deals with the biggest and most common barriers for disabled users".

6: Strategies

To achieve the goals outlined in section 2, PPACG should:

- Make public involvement opportunities as convenient as possible for those who wish to participate, using a variety of tactics to reach the wide variety of stakeholders in our region, rather than relying solely on public meetings.
- Determine how to best inform stakeholders of input opportunities and subject-matter priorities by conducting a stakeholder survey at the start of the long-range planning process.
- Encourage stakeholders to become engaged at the onset of the planning process so that their ideas and feedback can help guide plan formation.

- Solicit stakeholder input at times in the process when the public can have a meaningful impact, such as during plan visioning, goals, and objectives. Staff is less likely to seek public feedback on technical work products on which public input can have little bearing (e.g. the Small Area Forecast, which is generated by sophisticated forecasting software.)
- Use visualization tools to present complex planning concepts. Committee feedback from previous plans has indicated that information provided to the public has been too complex to be effective. Materials will therefore be high-level and concise, providing an overview of key points and the implications of various plans and policies.
- Partner with other state and local agencies and organizations to increase our reach.
- Provide ample advance notice all public input opportunities.

Tactics

Technology has made it easier and more convenient for the public to participate in the planning process. Online resources can be used to inform, educate, and facilitate dialogue about transportation planning at times and locations that are convenient to individuals' schedules. However, PPACG also recognizes that citizens have varying levels of access to, and familiarity with, different types of technology. PPACG will consider the following tactics to reach target audiences as appropriate:

Website – PPACG maintains a website that provides access to the organization's plans, programs, and policies. The website includes a calendar of events, board and committee agendas and minutes, and a library of key planning documents. The website will be updated throughout the planning process with meeting notices, work products, and timelines.

Print and digital publications – Various publications providing an overview of planning processes, plan chapter summaries, public input opportunities, timelines, and other relevant information may be emailed to PPACG'S contact lists, be made available at public meetings, community events, and regularly scheduled board and committee meetings, or distributed at public facilities and through partner agencies. All publications will be available on the PPACG website and may be converted into alternative formats or languages upon request.

Social media – PPACG maintains a social media presence to help inform residents about programs, projects, policies, and opportunities to provide input throughout the planning process. Staff will continue to use various social media accounts to disseminate information about ongoing planning efforts and will monitor and respond to questions and comments as appropriate.

Visualization techniques – Maps, charts, diagrams, photographs, infographics, video, and other illustrations are excellent tools for helping the public better understand and engage in the

planning process. These elements may be integrated in presentations, publications, and website content.

Public meetings – PPACG will host public meetings to gather input and build consensus among citizens and transportation stakeholders at key points in the planning process. To facilitate greater participation in public meetings:

- An open, collaborative environment will be cultivated, encouraging attendees to ask questions and submit comments.
- Presentations and supporting documentation will be made available at meetings.
- Meetings will be held in community gathering places at times that will encourage maximum participation.
- Meetings will be held in accessible locations, preferably near transit lines or routes.
- Meetings will be held in buildings that are in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and PPACG will accommodate attendees with special needs, with sufficient notice.

In addition to traditional public meetings, PPACG will attend public events sponsored by other agencies and organizations. In the past, this has been more successful than public events hosted by PPACG alone in terms of attendance rates and overall participation. This approach may also be more successful among members of underserved populations who may be more likely to participate in a familiar, trusted environment. This might include open houses, luncheons, fairs, church events, or events organized by community or neighborhood organizations.

Surveys – PPACG will conduct surveys throughout the planning process to garner public input on plan goals, objectives, policies, and other topics as appropriate. Surveys will be provided electronically and in print to ensure widespread participation. Keypad polling may be used at open houses and other large events to gather input on community preferences and priorities.

Surveys may include questions about the public engagement process itself, such as which other types of public engagement opportunities the respondent would be interested/comfortable participating in.

Direct e-mail – E-mail lists reach a wide variety of stakeholders. PPACG will continue to develop its distribution list for periodic updates, including input opportunities, educational brochures, project updates, and other relevant material. Mailing lists will be continually maintained and expanded based on requests received at meetings and events, and via the PPACG website.

Media relations – PPACG will continue to engage in proactive media outreach efforts, including coordinating with local reporters and news directors and providing timely and accurate information via news releases and interviews.

Advertising – Paid advertising will be used to announce public meetings, relevant community events, and other opportunities for public review and comment during the planning process. Advertising will focus on reaching target audiences through strategically-selected publications and Facebook ads.

Stakeholder interviews – PPACG will meet with regional transportation stakeholders, including community and business leaders, nonprofit organization representatives, and other representatives, to gain a better understanding of local communities and how to effectively share relevant information and engage diverse groups in the planning process.

Speakers bureau – Throughout the planning process, PPACG staff will present information and solicit input to various groups and organizations, including neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, businesses and nonprofits, and others.

Standing committees

PPACG’s advisory committees provide an ongoing opportunity for the public to be involved in the regional transportation planning process. Committee meetings are open to the public, and the public is invited to share their views at every meeting.

The PPACG Board of Directors is the decision-making body for transportation and air-quality planning in the metropolitan planning area. The Transportation and Community Advisory committees advise and support the board in its deliberations.

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is the main internal group charged with reviewing PPACG’s public process. Going forward, the CAC will be consulted early and regularly regarding any public process, such as for the Transportation Improvement Program or the Long Range Plan. It is expected that the CAC will have a significant role in helping to both design and review public processes in accordance with this plan. It may also review and provide responses to public comments.

An expansion of the CAC to include members of underserved communities will be considered early in the 2050 Long Range Plan process.

PPACG also hosts the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), which routinely deals with persons with disabilities as well as older individuals with specialized transportation needs. The AAA will be relied upon to contribute to the design and review of the public input process regarding those populations.

Community Partners

As mentioned in the Title VI and LEP plans, community partners are often trusted members of their respective communities and can be of invaluable assistance in overcoming barriers of trust, understanding, language, and availability for public involvement, especially for traditionally underserved populations. Representatives of member jurisdictions, faith-based organizations, human services and non-profit organizations, and other community partners can assist with distributing surveys and materials, forwarding announcements, hosting events, and acting as ambassadors for PPACG's transportation programs. PPACG will make use of its existing community partners and continually reach out to new ones.

PPACG Board of Directors

Members: member government elected officials,
military leaders, state air and water quality staff
Meets: second Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m.

Transportation Advisory Committee

Members: member government technical staff
Meets: third Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m.

Community Advisory Committee

Members: citizens
Meets: last Wednesday of each month at 3 p.m.

Mobility Coordinating Committee

Members: specialized transportation service providers
Meets: Fourth Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.

For committee rosters, agendas, and meeting locations, visit <http://www.ppacg.org/committees/>.

7: Core Planning Products

Along with various other plans and studies, PPACG produces several core planning products that form the backbone of all its activities: the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Public Participation Plan (PPP – this document), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). What follows is a brief description of each along with how and when public input opportunities will be available.

The Long Range Transportation Plan represents the long-term vision for the region’s transportation system and includes information about current conditions and future projections, the natural environment and environmental standards and regulations, reasonably expected revenues and their sources, public input, transportation projects eligible for funding, and more. The plan looks ahead twenty-five years and is updated every 4-5 years. Most other plans and programs derive from or are directed by the LRTP. The 2045 LRTP will be in progress from **November 2016 to November 2019** and public input opportunities will occur during **August-September 2019**.

The LRTP is the most far-reaching and extensive plan produced by PPACG and as such entails a variety of public involvement opportunities. Members of the public can expect public meetings or events either hosted or attended by PPACG, surveys, online and social media engagement, and notices through multiple advertising channels. The public will be invited to comment on the overarching vision and goals for the future, on environmental and equity concerns, and on the projects and initiatives they feel would best address the transportation needs of the region over the next twenty-five years.

The Transportation Improvement Program is the short-term implementation program for the LRTP. The TIP is a program of projects consistent with the LRTP which are scheduled for funding by funding program type and year. PPACG’s TIP looks ahead four years and is updated every 1-2 years, although smaller updates called “amendments” occur more frequently than that as practical construction and funding schedules require adjustment. The TIP is also guided by a public process. The FFY 2021-2024 TIP will be in progress from **August 2019 to May 2020**, and public input opportunities will occur **December 2019**.

As the key program directing short-term funding, the TIP also entails a substantial public input process. Members of the public are encouraged to comment on the short-term needs of the region and how best to implement the LRTP over the next few years through prioritizing different transportation projects. Typical public engagement opportunities include public meetings, hosting and attending special events, and social media engagement.

The Unified Planning Work Program lists all of the major activities that will be undertaken by the transportation organization for a given year by funding program, giving a comprehensive look at the work of the agency. It covers one year and is updated annually. The 2020 UPWP will be in progress from **April 2019 to July 2019**, and public input opportunities will occur in **June 2019**. Members of the public can give provide their comments on the UPWP at regularly scheduled public meetings, via our website, and on social media.

Table 7, below, describes the minimum required public involvement activities by type and the minimum public comment duration for each of these planning products. Please see Table 8 for a condensed look at when opportunities for public involvement are expected.

Please check PPACG's website at <http://www.ppacg.org/transportation/> for updates and additional opportunities to get involved. Plans, programs, and documents open for public review will be posted along with public notices and schedules of public involvement opportunities.

Table 7: Minimum Public Involvement Procedures for Plans and Programs

Plan or Program	Minimum Comment Period Duration for Completed Draft	Timeline & Reporting	Minimum Notifications and Public Process Activities
Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	30 days	Summary, report, or analysis of public process results* up to that point will be <u>presented</u> to the Board & relevant committees 30 days before approval or recommendation of the project list is sought; subsequent results will be made available prior to seeking final approval of the Plan	-Web page updates -Press release -Print media advertisements -Social media updates -Regular public meeting(s)** -Special public meeting(s) and/or events** -Distribution list communication -Request partners forward or post notices
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	30 days	Same as LRTP	-Web page updates -Print media advertisements -Social media updates -Regular public meeting(s)** -Distribution list communication -Request partners forward or post notices
Public Participation Plan	45 days	Results must be made available to the Board & relevant committees before approval or recommendation is sought	-Web page updates -Social media updates -Regular public meeting(s)**
Unified Planning Work Program	30 days		
LRTP or UPWP Amendment requiring Board action	30 days		
TIP <u>Amendment</u> requiring Board action	14 days (before adoption only)		

*The full listing of comments received will be included in an appendix to the LRTP and TIP.

**Appropriate public notice will be given at least 7 days prior to any public meeting that will serve to meet these requirements.

Table 8: Upcoming Opportunities to Participate

Plan or Program	Public Comment Period	Expected Approval Date
2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan list of projects	January-February 2019	April 2019
2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan final document	August-September 2019	November 2019
2021-24 Transportation Improvement Program	January 2020	April 2020
Public Participation Plan	October 2018	November 2018
2020-22 Work Program	June 2019	July 2019

*Please see PPACG’s website at <http://www.ppacg.org/transportation/> for fully updated and detailed information about opportunities to give us your input.

8: Plan Evaluation

Evaluation helps staff better understand how time and resources devoted to various public involvement tactics and strategies affect public involvement. The evaluation structure for this plan includes both quantitative and qualitative elements to ensure that both the level and quality of engagement are monitored.

PPACG will evaluate the effectiveness of the public involvement tactics and strategies described in the previous section using the metrics summarized below. In addition, PPACG will ask participants to evaluate outreach opportunities for effectiveness. PPACG will also evaluate how audiences identified in section four have been reached. How public involvement influences plans, projects and policies will be communicated throughout the project and documented in final reports, as applicable.

Evaluation and examination of the public process is critical to gaining meaningful dialogue with the public. The change of a single advertising channel or reaching out to a single community organization can sometimes increase participation by orders of magnitude. It is therefore essential to see public involvement as a continual feedback process that involves risk taking (new approaches may fail, but it is important to try them), experimentation, new ideas, and to a lesser extent tracking certain key metrics.

In the past, there has not been sufficient collection of data or continuity of process in evaluating public outreach methods. One goal moving forward is to establish a permanent feedback process which uses both public comments and data about the public process to continually improve rates of participation and the meaningfulness of public involvement.

Community partners will also play a role in helping to shape the public engagement process by advising PPACG as to which public engagement methods are likely to be the most successful in their respective communities. Their input will be encouraged before, during, and after the public engagement processes for PPACG’s core plans and programs.

The two main goals of evaluation will be to 1. Discover which existing methods are increasing or declining in usefulness, and 2. Try new methods and maintain good information about the success or failure of those methods. Without proper and ongoing evaluation, the public involvement process will either stagnate or evolve randomly with irregular and unexplainable results.

Table 5: Evaluation of Public Process Tactics

Tactic	Quantitative and qualitative evaluation	Desired outcomes
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of website visits • Source of web traffic • Time spent on web pages • Navigation on web pages • Search terms used • Geographic location of website users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify trends in web usage throughout planning process • Understand what drives traffic to website and grow traffic by 3% per year • Understand how other outreach strategies influence website traffic • Prioritize and increase accessibility of information and input opportunities most important to the public
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall level and quality of engagement • Number of interactions (likes, comments, etc.) • Audience diversity • Click rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widely distribute information & involvement opportunities via shareable content, interactions & engagement • Provide increased opportunities for feedback and public input • Grow engagement by 3% per year

Tactic	Quantitative and qualitative evaluation	Desired outcomes
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of views • YouTube Subscribers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide engaging, visual content to clarify complex transportation issues
Public meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event attendance • Relevance of input received (shows understanding of materials) • Accessibility to events (geographic/time/distance and ADA) • How people learned about the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide meaningful opportunities for public to learn about and comment on plans, programs, and policies • Notify the public of events using a variety of strategies
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of publications distributed • Accessibility of information (print and online) • Website analytics for digital publications (number of downloads) • Variety of publication formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information in multiple, accessible formats • Content encourages ongoing, meaningful public involvement in planning process • Publications enhance understanding of plans, programs and policies
Stakeholder interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic representation • Diversity of stakeholders interviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of audiences, region • Deeper understanding of community priorities
Media relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage • Media requests • Media contact list diversity (number of reporters, types of news sources, inclusion of minority news sources) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive media relations and communication of news, policies, programs, and opportunities for public involvement
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rate • Completeness of responses • Geographic representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide simple, accessible opportunities to gather input and feedback • Gather information about public understanding,

		awareness, priorities, and issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results inform future discussion and decisions • Increase survey completions by 3% for each successive plan or program
Tactic	Quantitative and qualitative evaluation	Desired outcomes
Visualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of visualization in presentations and publications and on website • Input/comments received • Demonstrated or stated understanding of ideas, concepts, plans, projects, or programs among intended audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of ideas, concepts, plans, projects, or programs among intended audience • Facilitates informed input
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication reach • Click rates • Diversity of advertising placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional notification of public input opportunities
E-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of contacts • Number of new contacts • Number of unsubscribes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all interested stakeholders receive regular communication from PPACG • Grow the contact list by 3% per year

The agency will continue to take advantage of evolving technologies to make its outreach efforts as successful and cost-effective as possible. However, differing levels of access to technology for different populations will be considered in designing outreach strategies. For example, older adults may feel less comfortable engaging with online methods; low-income households may have reduced access to computers. For these reasons, certain traditional outreach methods, while generating a lower rate of return, may not be entirely phased out for some time.

As stated earlier, PPACG solicited feedback on the public participation process from the Transportation Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee following adoption of the Moving Forward 2040 plan update. Their suggestions included the following:

- Foster a better public understanding of the use and impact of the plan.
- Better integrate and explain technical data.
- Conduct a speakers bureau.
- Simplify the information since too much complexity loses people.
- Post comments in real time online.
- Find better, more effective ways to address concerns raised by citizens.
- Tap into existing networks and engage specific neighborhood groups.

Since that time, several of these points have been integrated into PPACG's Strategic Plan and are now a matter of agency policy, including a speakers bureau. Continual improvements will be made to the presentation of data and complex information, and responses to public comments may be included online for viewing by the general public. Existing networks will be extensively utilized, especially as part of the Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency processes in order to deliver information from trusted sources and solicit responses.

Appendix A: Federal Regulations

The Code of Federal Regulations outlines public involvement requirements for the Metropolitan Planning Agency.

Title 23 CFR Subpart C – Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming

§ 450.316 – Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

- a. The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
 1. The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
 - i. Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - ii. Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
 - iii. Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
 - iv. Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
 - v. Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
 - vi. Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

- vii. Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
 - viii. Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
 - ix. Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
 - x. Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
2. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
 3. A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- b. In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:
1. Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;

2. Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
 3. Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.
- c. When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
 - d. When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
 - e. MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under § 450.314.

Appendix B: Public Input Documentation

PPACG documents and responds to every comment and question received during the public input process using the following table. The input is included in the final plan.

#	Document Reference	Comment	Staff Response