

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN for the

CENTRAL VIRGINIA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CVMPO)

Adopted: April 19, 2007

Amended: July 15, 2010

Amended: April 18, 2013

Amended: September 17, 2015

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the CVMPO to facilitate public information; access and involvement under a collaborative planning process in which the interest of all interested parties, including affected agencies and certain identified population groups, are duly considered. To the extent permissible by law, the policy and technical processes will be made inclusive of and accessible to the aforementioned stakeholders. The CVMPO also recognizes that there is additional opportunity for public involvement at the local and state levels and will seek to cooperate with and assist these efforts whenever possible.

Purpose:

The Public Participation Policy Plan identifies a proactive public involvement process for the transportation planning efforts and products of the CVMPO in compliance with CFR 23, Part 450.316 pursuant to SAFETEA-LU and its amendments. This process includes but is not limited to: adherence to state and federal regulations regarding public notices and public hearings; complete access to information barring legal or fiduciary restraints; input to key decisions; development of a demographic profile of the MPO study area; and the development and deployment of innovative public involvement strategies.

This plan also specifies standard procedures for the development, adoption, and amendment of the Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Additionally this manual specifies the following:

I. MPO plans and programs will include a public participation component.

II. A public comment period of 45 calendar days will be provided prior to the adoption of this public involvement process and/or any amendments to the process.

III. The CVMPO will endeavor to coordinate this process with local, state and federal public involvement processes and initiatives wherever possible to enhance public involvement, promote the democratic process and reduce redundancies and costs through economics of scope and scale.

IV. The public participation policy shall be reviewed by the CVMPO for effectiveness and/or updated at least once every three years. The policy will be reviewed by the CVMPO staff, the Transportation Technical Committee and the CVMPO as part of this review.

Goals and Objectives:

Goals are used to describe the ultimate vision for the progress and accomplishments of the public involvement program. Objectives are the measurable short-term and interim steps used to provide feedback on the progress towards reaching the goal.

Goal 1: Endeavor to exceed applicable federal and state statutes regarding the LRTP, TIP and projects of regional significance –the major products of the MPO planning process.

Objective 1.1 All rules pertaining to advertising and holding a public hearing as described in 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia will be met or exceeded.

Objective 1.2 For major revisions and the addition of projects to the LRTP or TIP a minimum thirty (30) days public comment period will be observed before the “Official Public Hearing”.

Objective 1.3 A formal public meeting will be held to discuss “Long-Range” planning assumptions, at least once every long range plan cycle. Discussion of planning assumptions will be a major topic throughout the LRTP update process, integrated into the public participation process for the LRTP development, including its formal adoption by the CVMPO.

Objective 1.4 At a minimum, notice of intent to hold a public hearing shall be published in local newspapers, including minority-owned publications, and publications targeted toward specific groups, at least fourteen (14) days and no more than twenty-one (21) days in advance of the proposed meeting date. A second notice shall be published seven (7) days prior to the proposed meeting date. The Notice will also be posted on the Virginia’s Region 2000 Local Government Council’s website and posted at the Council’s offices.

Objective 1.5 The current LRTP and TIP along with any proposed amendments will be accessible on the Virginia’s Region 2000 Local Government Council’s website. Additionally these documents will be available at the Local Government Council’s offices.

Objective 1.6 The CVMPO will undertake, as part of the LRTP update and as described in the LRTP, an environmental mitigation discussion.

Goal 2: Develop a demographic profile of the CVMPO area as a tool to assess, discuss and benchmark public participation, and the harms and benefits of projects with respect to neighborhoods, communities, minorities and concentrations of poverty.

Objective 2.1 Develop Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data layers pertaining to income, population, housing, age, minority status for the CVMPO.

Objective 2.2 Develop a plan for the management, cataloging and incorporation of useful public involvement related data.

Objective 2.3 Incorporate the demographic profile into the LRTP, as a framework with which to display and evaluate the various proposed projects and improvements.

Goal 3: Inform the public about how transportation improvements are made and describe the role the MPO plays in the process.

Objective 3.1 Provide regular public opportunities to explain and discuss plans and outline the transportation planning process for the general public.

Objective 3.2 Continued the use of focus groups and steering committees in the planning process to keep stakeholders informed about the transportation projects in their area.

Objective 3.3 Public information initiatives can include but are not limited to the following: information kiosks, mailing lists, public events, focus groups, Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership website, project websites, Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership newsletter, newspaper articles and visual displays of information.

Goal 4: Raise the visibility of the CVMPO within the Central Virginia Region as the urbanized area transportation planning body.

Objective 4.1 Utilize a variety of means and visualization techniques to inform the public about the CVMPO including those listed in Objective 3.3.

Objective 4.2 Seek to cultivate a positive relationship with local print and broadcast media in order to establish an environment of goodwill and to seek positive publicity whenever feasible.

Objective 4.3 Maintain relationships with member government staffs in order to enhance collaboration and leverage the benefits from member government planning and public participation initiatives.

Goal 5: Involve the public in planning, prioritization, and identification of transportation needs.

Objective 5.1 Establish the role of focus groups and steering committees in the planning process as serving as a communication mechanism between citizen representatives, CVMPO, and CVMPO staff by:

- Ensuring focus groups and steering committees have up-to-date information about CVMPO plans to pass on to organizations and individuals within the areas they represent.
- When appropriate encourage focus groups and steering committee members to consult and collaborate with neighborhood, organizational and local government leaders.

Objective 5.2 Ensure the mobility concerns of the elderly and disabled, bicyclists and pedestrians are represented in focus groups and steering committees.

Objective 5.3 Comments will be provided to and discussed by the CVMPO as part of its consideration of any update to the LRTP.

Goal 6: Obtain and incorporate public comments, reactions and perceptions into plans and solutions where appropriate, and share such comments with local, state and federal officials where appropriate.

Objective 6.1 Provide opportunities for the public to comment in writing or in person on any action being processed by the CVMPO.

Objective 6.2 Provide multiple means of response that may include but is not limited to: mail in postcards, email, tape recordings, handwritten comments and or voice-mail messages when feasible and/or appropriate.

Objective 6.3 Comments will be provided to the CVMPO as part of its consideration of any amendments or updates to the LRTP or TIP, as appropriate.

Goal 7: Make it easier for low income, minority, and all citizens to get involved in the transportation planning process.

Objective 7.1 When possible scheduling public hearings and workshops in the late afternoon and early evening so those citizens that work can attend.

Objective 7.2 Publish notices and advertisements in publications aimed at minority and low-income populations.

Objective 7.3 Use the demographic profile described in Goal 2 to ensure that initiatives and outreach efforts are adequately targeted to low-income and minority populations.

Objective 7.4 Take advantage of opportunities to coordinate with agencies serving low income and minority populations in their public involvement and public information efforts.

Goal 8: Comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990

Objective 8.1 All public hearings will be held in facilities fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. All written material will be available in accessible formats for the visually impaired (i.e. large print, Braille, and/or audio tapes) upon request, or personnel will be available for readings. An interpreter for the hearing impaired will be available upon request for all meetings. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate individuals with disabilities who wish to participate in the public process.

Goal 9: Comply with Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency.

Objective 9.1 Maps provided by DRPT for the CVMPO Title VI plan show high areas with LEP populations that exceed 5% of the entire area population. This percentage is based on a federal standard. The CVMPO will use these maps to ensure that initiatives and outreach efforts are adequately targeted to these areas.

Measures of Effectiveness:

The following measurements are identified to assist the Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization in evaluating its effectiveness over time.

1. Region 2000 Staff will update the CVMPO's website, as discussed in the Public Participation Plan, An Evaluation, April 2010. The Staff will monitor its usage against the previous sites use. The result of this analysis will be used to inform future plan evaluations accomplished to strengthen its intent.
2. Region 2000 Staff will maintain a contact database as discussed in the Public Participation Plan, An Evaluation, April 2010. The contact database will be reviewed against the plan's identified interested parties. Additionally, actual attendance at public involvement efforts for the Long Range Transportation Plan update will be reviewed against the plan's identified interested parties.

The results of these reviews will assist in determining the effectiveness of outreach efforts an informing future plan evaluations.