Public Participation Plans

IPTA MID-YEAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2017
Why develop a public participation plan (PPP)?

- Provides a central point to document the processes your agency will use to notify and interact with the public and seek their input
  - Public participation helps create buy-in for projects and services, and the public can bring new and different ideas and perspectives to the table
  - Meaningful public engagement means offering opportunities for early and continuous involvement in transportation decision-making, and explicitly considering public comments prior to making decisions

- Recipients of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding are required to document various public participation procedures

- This presentation provides background on federal regulations, example content that can be included in a PPP, and links to existing PPPs and other resources
Iowa MPOs, RPAs, and public transit systems
Requirements for MPO/RPA PPPs

- Specific requirements are outlined in metropolitan transportation planning regulations under 23 CFR §450.316, Interested parties, participation, and consultation

- Requires a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process
- Specific requirements include:
  - Providing adequate public notice and time for review and comment at key decision points
  - Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes
  - Using visualization techniques
  - Making public information available online
  - Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
  - Considering and responding to public input received during the development of the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and transportation improvement program (TIP), and providing an additional opportunity for public comment if the final LRTP or TIP differs significantly from the version the public was able to comment on
  - Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by the transportation system, such as low-income and minority households

- MPOs are federally required to meet these requirements; Iowa DOT requires RPAs to follow the requirements and develop a public participation plan as well

MPOs: Metropolitan Planning Organizations
RPAs: Regional Planning Affiliations
Requirements for public transit agencies

-This presentation will discuss requirements for documented public participation processes related to:
  ◦ Title VI
  ◦ Environmental Justice
  ◦ Urbanized area formula grants

-Additional federal and state regulations that should be considered in public participation activities include, but are not limited to:
  ◦ Americans with Disabilities Act
    ◦ Resource: FTA Circular 4710.1  Americans with Disabilities Act Guidance
  ◦ Iowa Code, Chapter 21 (open meetings) and Chapter 22 (public records)
    ◦ Resource: Iowa Public Information Board
  ◦ Regulations incorporated into the joint participation agreement for State Transit Assistance (STA)
    ◦ Resource: Appendices of FTA program circulars, state, and federal regulations incorporated into the agreement by reference
  ◦ A list of federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders to consider in transportation planning is provided in the appendix of the FHWA Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decisionmaking report
Requirements for public transit agencies

FTA Circular 4702.1B
Title VI requirements and guidelines for Federal Transit Administration recipients

- Requirements for Title VI Program include the following
  ◦ A public participation plan that includes an outreach plan to engage minority and limited English proficient (LEP) populations, as well as a summary of outreach efforts made since the last Title VI Program submission. A recipient’s targeted public participation plan for minority populations may be part of efforts that extend more broadly to include other constituencies that are traditionally underserved, such as people with disabilities, low-income populations, and others.
  ◦ A copy of the recipient’s plan for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency, based on the DOT LEP Guidance.
Requirements for public transit agencies

FTA Circular 4702.1B
*Title VI requirements and guidelines for Federal Transit Administration recipients*

-Promoting inclusive public participation

- The content and considerations of Title VI, the Executive Order on LEP, and the DOT LEP Guidance shall be integrated into each recipient’s established public participation plan or process (i.e., the document that explicitly describes the proactive strategies, procedures, and desired outcomes that underpin the recipient’s public participation activities).

- Recipients have wide latitude to determine how, when, and how often specific public participation activities should take place, and which specific measures are most appropriate. Recipients should make these determinations based on a demographic analysis of the population(s) affected, the type of plan, program, and/or service under consideration, and the resources available.
Requirements for public transit agencies

FTA Circular 4703.1
*Environmental justice policy guidance for Federal Transit Administration recipients*

- Provides guidance for complying with [Executive Order 12898](#) and [DOT Order 5610.2(a)](#) and meet guiding environmental justice principles:
  - 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
Requirements for public transit agencies

- Effective strategies for engaging minority and low-income populations (FTA Circular 4702.1B)
  - Scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for minority and LEP communities.
  - Employing different meeting sizes and formats.
  - Coordinating with community- and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities.
  - Considering radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations. Outreach to LEP populations could also include audio programming available on podcasts.
  - Providing opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews or use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments.
Requirements for public transit agencies

49 USC § 5307 Urbanized area formula grants

- Requirements for program of projects (5307 (b))
  - Make available to the public information on amounts available to the recipient under this section
  - Develop, in consultation with interested parties, including private transportation providers, a proposed program of projects for activities to be financed
  - Publish a proposed program of projects in a way that affected individuals, private transportation providers, and local elected officials have the opportunity to examine the proposed program and submit comments on the proposed program and the performance of the recipient
  - Provide an opportunity for a public hearing in which to obtain the views of individuals on the proposed program of projects
  - Ensure that the proposed program of projects provides for the coordination of public transportation services assisted under section 5336 of this title with transportation services assisted from other United States Government sources;
  - Consider comments and views received, especially those of private transportation providers, in preparing the final program of projects
  - Make the final program of projects available to the public

- Grant recipient requirement (5307 (c)(1)(I))
  - Have a locally developed process to solicit and consider public comment before raising a fare or carrying out a major reduction of transportation
Can planning and public transit agencies have a joint plan?

- Yes – Agencies housing an MPO/RPA and public transit can have one PPP, provided it meets all applicable regulations
- Agencies using this approach should be very clear regarding which procedures apply to which entity/entities
- Example joint plans include:
  - Siouxland Regional Transportation Planning Association (SRTPA; RPA 4) and Siouxland Regional Transit System (SRTS)
    (Note: plan is being updated to also include the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO MPO))
  - Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (INRTA; RPA 7) and Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission (INRTC)
Example public participation plan content

- The following slides provide example plan content to consider including in a PPP, examples from existing PPPs, and public participation resources.

- Example content is divided into the following broad categories:
  - Purpose of the PPP
  - Agency overview
  - Regulations
  - Routine activities and procedures

- Note: Experience from metropolitan and regional transportation planning and PPPs helped guide this example content, and it should not be considered a list of requirements. Agencies should consult with Iowa DOT Office of Public Transit and/or the regional Federal Transit Administration office to ensure they are complying with applicable requirements.
Purpose of the PPP

- Discuss the importance of public participation and how the agency will utilize it
- Explain what the PPP is
- Discuss how the PPP was developed and any feedback that was received during development
Agency overview

- Area context
  - Map, demographic information, or other overview of the geographic area
  - Stakeholders

- Provide a description of the agency’s services
  - Map of routes or service area
  - Basic information, such as type of service, hours of service, website

- Structure of the agency
  - Staff or organization chart
  - Umbrella organization if part of a COG, city, etc.
  - Governance structure (board members)

- Related agencies and committees and an explanation of relationships between agencies
  - MPO/RPA
  - Transportation Advisory Group

- Contact information and ways people can engage with the agency
  - Address and phone number, office hours
  - Website
  - Social media
Regulations

-Discuss federal and state regulations that the PPP is helping address. Regulations to consider including as applicable:
  ◦ FTA regulations, such as 5307
  ◦ Iowa DOT requirements, such as those for the consolidated funding application
  ◦ Regulations incorporated into the joint participation agreement for State Transit Assistance (STA)
  ◦ Title VI
  ◦ Environmental Justice
  ◦ ADA
  ◦ Iowa Open Meetings
  ◦ Iowa Public Records

-To streamline the document, regulations could be summarized/referenced early on and detailed in appendix
Routine activities and procedures

- Describe regular activities and public engagement methods utilized by the agency, including specific procedures for EJ and Title VI populations, such as any applicable items from the following:
  - Board meetings
  - Other advisory or stakeholder groups
  - Public comment periods, public hearings
  - Rider, stakeholder, or community surveys
  - Community outreach, such as attending community events or service group meetings
  - Travel trainer or mobility manager outreach
  - Press releases, newsletters, email lists, social media, website
  - Printed materials such as riders guide, brochures, comment cards
  - ADA, language, and other assistance methods
  - Analysis efforts, such as mapping service in relation to minority, LEP, and low-income populations, mapping walk distances from transit stops, or calculating employees within a certain distance from transit stops
Routine activities and procedures

- For those activities that occur regularly, such as board meetings or an annual public hearing on projects, discuss specific processes that are in place:

  ◦ When and how is the public notified that a meeting is occurring?
    ◦ Example: state where agendas will be published/posted and how far in advance of the meeting.
  ◦ Note how persons with special needs are able to participate in meetings.
    ◦ Example: provide standard accommodation language on all agendas and note this in the PPP.
  ◦ Will the meeting be accessible?
    ◦ Example: note typical meeting times; note that meetings will be held in ADA-accessible facilities; discuss whether transit access will be available for public meetings; discuss whether translation services will be available.
Routine activities and procedures

- In particular, for public comment periods and hearings:
  ◦ Discuss any established comment period lengths for draft documents.
    ◦ Example: 45-day comment period for draft PPP.
  ◦ Discuss how action will be taken.
    ◦ Example: Action taken during public hearing at regularly scheduled board meeting, with notice of the publish hearing published [when and how].
Routine activities and procedures

-MPOs and RPAs are asked to outline the following information for their routine planning documents. The same information may apply to items such as a transit agency’s PPP; the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP); fare or service change decisions; and the annual consolidated funding application and program of projects.

- Description
- Update frequency or cycle
- How draft is developed, including how public input is sought
- Public comment period on draft and how public input is reviewed and incorporated
- How adoption occurs
- Availability of final products
Examples
Purpose of the PPP

MAPA’s outreach philosophy and part of a table highlighting comments received during PPP development and how MAPA responded or will take action.

Table 1.2: Resource Agency/Interested Parties Comments and MAPA’s Action/Response (Continued) - 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Agency/Interested Parties Comment</th>
<th>MAPA Action/Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research the possibility of coordinating MAPA meetings with other meetings occurring in the region such as senior groups and other interested parties.</td>
<td>MAPA has continued to look into this possibility. With the development of the 2040 LRTP and then the 2050 LRTP shortly thereafter, MAPA will be looking to capitalize on this opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve the public as early in the planning process as possible using focus groups, surveys and other forms of communication.</td>
<td>MAPA has devised a specific public participation plan for the 2050 LRTP, which includes a focus on involving the public early in the planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post the meeting agenda for more than the 5 days prior to the meeting.</td>
<td>MAPA has continued to achieve this comment, in most cases posting the agenda 7 days prior to the meeting. This will be emphasized in the 2050 LRTP. The PPP states in “Open Meetings at Accessible Locations” agendas must be posted 7 days prior to the meeting (page 14). MAPA is developing this now. The availability of MAPA to speak at meetings as a part of a speaker’s bureau will be highlighted when MAPA’s website is updated. Attention will be called to this availability. This is mentioned in “Philosophy 3: Conduct Outreach to all within the MPO Boundary” on page 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a canned presentation about MAPA. Advertise the availability of MAPA staff to speak at meetings as a part of a speaker’s bureau. This presentation will set the stage for specific planning activities later, as people understand how they can be involved and what the benefit of participation will be for them and their community.</td>
<td>MAPA has used this comment in the planning activities completed since February 2014. The flyers and meeting invites were written in clear language to let participants know what is expected from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be very clear when asking representatives of agencies to participate in the planning process. Is there a decision to be made? Or should the representatives only pass information on to their constituents? Let the participants know how their input will fit into the bigger picture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The best way to receive information, especially from the business community, is in a short electronic medium; a webinar, a short survey, or a virtual public meeting.</td>
<td>MAPA has kept this in mind in the planning processes of the last year and will implement this throughout the 2040 and 2050 LRTP development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add people continually to the mailing list and use emails blasts to inform contacts of participation opportunities.</td>
<td>MAPA will be adding people continually to the mailing list and will especially use it in the 2040 and 2050 LRTP development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The time of the meeting should depend on the target audience and can change depending on the scope of the meeting and project. However, daytime is best for seniors and the visually impaired. A brown-bag lunch meeting might be successful.</td>
<td>MAPA considers the target audience for all functions appropriately and conducts the planning processes according to the target planning market. This is mentioned in “Targeted Format and Frequency” on page 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length of a meeting is also important, 60-90 minutes is best. 2 hours is too long.</td>
<td>MAPA will implement this recommendation throughout the 2050 LRTP development. This is mentioned in “Targeted Format and Frequency” on page 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize community centers and schools for meeting locations.</td>
<td>MAPA will consider this recommendation throughout the 2050 LRTP development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples
ADA and accommodations

Right: Part of MAPA’s ADA compliance facility checklist.

Below: Example accommodation notice MAPA includes on agendas.

"Meetings of the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency are conducted in compliance with the Nebraska Statutes of the Open Meetings Act. Auxiliary aids, language assistance, and services are available when requested at least three (3) working days prior to the meeting so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Si necesita ayuda con traducción, por favor llame la oficina. (402-444-6866)"
Examples
Contact and comments

Right: A way to summarize contact information (ECIA (RPA 8))

Far right: How public comments are considered (MAPA)

Examples

Routine activities

Example summaries of timelines for various planning documents

Right: MAPA

Far right: SEIRPC

Examples

EJ and Title VI

Example ways to incorporate EJ and/or Title VI considerations

Below: DART
Right: ECIA (RPA 8)

E. Survey Outcomes Regarding Public Participation

DART conducted a survey of riders in March 2013. The survey asked questions aimed at learning the preferences of riders in the following areas:

- How to receive information about opportunities to participate in DART decisions.
- The best times of days for public meetings
- The best locations for public meetings.

In addition, the survey asked respondents a series of questions about their backgrounds in order to determine whether they were Low Income, Minority or Limited English Proficiency populations:

- **Low Income** – Respondents were considered Low Income if they identified themselves as coming from a household with an annual income of less than $35,000.
- **Minority** – Respondents were considered Minority if they identified themselves as any ethnicity other than “White / Caucasian.”
- **Limited English Proficiency** – Respondents were considered to be LEP if they indicated they spoke English anything less than “Very Well,” including those who answered “Well,” “Not Well,” and “Not at All.”

... The results of the survey were then compiled by staff and analyzed. Specifically, staff examined the preferences of those identified as Low Income, Minority or Limited English Proficiency.
Examples
Public participation procedures

- Examples from MAPA’s PPP of language identification cards, website translation, and targeting outreach through organizations serving low-income and minority populations.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**
The Title VI Plan includes an LEP plan as a component. The LEP Plan discusses the Four Factor Analysis MAPA conducts to determine the level and extent of language assistance measures MAPA undertakes within the MPO area. The language assistance can come in the form of translators and/or distribution of public materials in their native language. MAPA has taken steps to prepare for plans, documents, agendas and other public information to be translated upon request from the public.

"I Speak" language identification cards are available at the MAPA front desk to assist in identifying the language needs of any member of the public who requests translation services. An example of a card is shown in Figure 2.1.

MAPA also utilizes Google Translate on its website to allow members of the public to translate the MAPA website into their native language. Figure 2.2 displays the Google Translate function on the MAPA website.

- MAPA targets these populations with specific outreach in community centers, schools, faith-based institutions and businesses that are located in census tracts that have a high concentration of minority and/or low-income populations.
  - A map of the Low-Income and Minority outreach locations and targeted census tracts is shown in Figure 3.3.
  - Appendix C contains a list of specific organizations located in Low-Income and Minority locations. Outreach is conducted to these specific organizations, which in turn use their network of resources to distribute the information and solicit input.

Examples Stakeholders

Example method for developing stakeholder or interested parties list from SRTPA (RPA 4) and SRTS PPP.

INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The following are non-exhaustive lists of individuals and organizations within the Regional Planning Area and SRTS service area that are to be contacted about the Public Participation Plan Process and the implementation in the Regional Planning Area and SRTS service area. In addition, this contact list will also be used in the development of the SRTPA and SRTS planning documents. The list was initially developed under the FY 2008 SRTPA PPP during the 2013/2014 full update of the plan. At the time, the list was re-evaluated and updated with current information. All organizations, businesses, interested parties, etc. were invited to respond to a survey that was sent out to the non-exhaustive lists. Interested parties that responded during the 2008 surveys that they did “not want to be notified of future transportation issues/projects in the Regional Planning Area” were given the opportunity to update that information or continue to not receive information regarding transportation planning documents. The 2013 survey was sent out in July and due back in August. The interested parties were asked to choose from the following options on being contacted:

- Please contact me by email when documents are available on the SIMPCO website www.simpco.org
- Please contact me by letter when documents are available on the SIMPCO website www.simpco.org
- I do not want to be notified of future transportation issues/projects in the planning area

The following is a master list of organizations to be contacted regarding transportation planning document updates including those interested parties that responded in favor of receiving transportation plan updates.

Resources – public participation

  ◦ Good overview of engagement methods and various ways to run a meeting or conduct public input activities. Appendix has a good list of federal regulations that should be considered.

  ◦ Developed for CA DOT, includes an overview of a variety of public participation tools and techniques and best practices.

FHWA Public Involvement: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/)
  ◦ FHWA planning homepage for public participation, includes links to various publications.

Transportation Planning Capacity Building public engagement resources: [https://planning.dot.gov/focus_publicEngage.asp](https://planning.dot.gov/focus_publicEngage.asp)
  ◦ Provides links to several publications on public participation, as well as related websites and organizations.

  ◦ FTA public involvement homepage, includes links to various publications.
Resources – EJ and Title VI


- FHWA Environmental Justice: [https://www fhwa dot gov/environment/environmental_justice/](https://www fhwa dot gov/environment/environmental_justice/)

- FHWA Title VI: [https://www fhwa dot gov/civilrights/programs/tvi.cfm](https://www fhwa dot gov/civilrights/programs/tvi.cfm)

Resources – EJ and Title VI

- NHI Fundamentals of Environmental Justice online course (free): [https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/course-search?tab=0&key=142074&sf=0&course_no=142074](https://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/course-search?tab=0&key=142074&sf=0&course_no=142074)

- EPA EJSCREEN: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool: [https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen](https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen)

- Interactive tools, including Housing + Transportation Affordability Index and Location Affordability Index: [http://www.cnt.org/tools](http://www.cnt.org/tools)

- American Factfinder – use to obtain American Community Survey estimates for populations such as low-income (DP03), race (DP05), limited English households (B16002), and households with limited vehicle access (S0801 or B08141).
  - Guided search: [https://factfinder.census.gov.faces/nav/jsf/pages/guided_search.xhtml](https://factfinder.census.gov.faces/nav/jsf/pages/guided_search.xhtml)
Example PPPs

Transit agencies


Pierce Transit (WA) 2015 PPP: https://www.piercetransit.org/documents/
Example PPPs

MPO and RPA plans


Combined MPO/RPA and transit agency plans

Siouxland Regional Transportation Planning Association (SRTPA; RPA 4) and Siouxland Regional Transit System (SRTS): [https://simpco.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Nov-2016PPP-SRTPA_SRTS.pdf](https://simpco.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Nov-2016PPP-SRTPA_SRTS.pdf) (Note: plan is being updated to also include the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO MPO))