

Durham - Chapel Hill - Carrboro  
Metropolitan Planning Organization  
**Public Involvement Policy (PIP)**

Adopted 2.10.2021



# Executive Summary

Federal regulations, such as the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, require that DCHC MPO involve residents in all stages of the transportation planning process. The Public Involvement Policy guides the MPO’s public involvement efforts by identifying:

- Planning activities that require public involvement
- Guidelines for determining the level of public involvement needed for various planning activities
- Minimum and advanced notification guidelines for various planning activities
- The length of public input periods
- Communication and engagement methods that the MPO can use to solicit feedback during all stages of the plan, program, and project development
- How the MPO will respond to public comments
- Major decision points for plans and studies that require public involvement

This updated policy also identifies strategies that can be used to involve environmental justice communities and contains enhanced guidance on how to review the effectiveness of this policy, including new measures to evaluate the MPO’s equitable engagement efforts.

## Planning Activities, Decision Points, and Minimum Comment Periods

The table below provides a summary of planning activities that require public involvement, major decision points for those planning activities, and the minimum public input period.

Plan/Program	Action	Minimum Period
DCHC MPO’s Public Involvement Policy	Amendments	45 Days
MTP and CTP	Adoption and Major Amendments	42 Days
TIP	Adoption	30 Days
TIP Amendment/Project Priority List/Project Point Assignment	Release and Adoption	21 Days
Air Quality Conformity Determination	Adoption	21 Days
Corridor and Special Studies	Approval	21 Days
County Transit Plans	Adoption and Amendments	21 Days
Fixed Guideway Locally Preferred Alternative	Adoption and Amendments	30 Days
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	Adoption and Major Amendments	21 Days
Policy Board and Technical Committee	Meeting	7 Days
Other Significant Planning and Programing Activities	Approval, Adoption and Amendments	21 Days

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# DCHC MPO

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) is responsible for planning and programming state and federal transportation funding for Durham County, and parts of Orange and Chatham counties. It is important that residents have input into the MPO's decision-making process because of the impact that the MPO has on the roadway, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, transit services, the built environment, and land use that affects residents' lives.

There are three roles in the MPO process:

1. MPO staff carries out the planning processes and develops policies, programs, and plans.
2. The Technical Committee (TC), which is primarily made up of transportation and land use planners from the MPO area, reviews these items and makes recommendations to the MPO Board.
3. The MPO Board, which is mostly made up of elected officials, is responsible for all policy decisions, and approves major plans and programs.

Meaningful public participation is a key component of MPO planning processes and allows us to produce regional plans that reflect regional and local priorities. Federal regulations require the MPO to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process as we develop plans such as the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The MPO, with the support of committed stakeholders, aims to identify, engage, and sustain relationships with residents in communities affected by regional planning processes.

# Introduction

The Public Involvement Policy (PIP) for the DCHC MPO will guide efforts to proactively engage residents and interested parties to plan a multimodal transportation system that meets the region’s transportation, economic, sustainability, and equity goals.

This plan covers the development and approval process for DCHC’s major plans, programs, and studies. It guides how the public will be notified about programs, plans, and studies; opportunities available for the public to provide input into the process; and the length of public input periods.

The PIP is consistent with the requirements of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST ACT) and all subsequent updates.<sup>1</sup> It also contains a review component to assess the MPO’s public input practices on a triennial basis.

## Purpose

The DCHC MPO Public Involvement Policy aims to create an open decision-making process that involves residents in all stages of the transportation planning process. This policy is designed to ensure that regional transportation decisions reflect public priorities.

## Objectives

1. Bring a representative cross-section of the public into all stages of the public policy and transportation planning decision-making process.
2. Add special emphasis on Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Title VI populations, and any community that may be directly affected by plans or projects.<sup>2</sup>
3. Maintain public involvement from the early stages of the planning process throughout project development.
4. Provide complete information to the public and elected officials to increase their understanding of transportation issues.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix A for a description of the legislative framework for this policy.

<sup>2</sup> See the MPO’s Environmental Justice Report, Limited English Proficiency, and Title VI Plans for a detailed description and spatial analyses of these populations. See [www.dchcmmpo.org](http://www.dchcmmpo.org).

5. Determine residents' and elected officials' values and attitudes concerning transportation and establish a process for an effective feedback loop.
6. Use a combination of public involvement techniques to meet the diverse needs of the public including social media, websites, workshops, community events, and mailing lists.
7. Use visualization techniques for transportation plans, studies, and other project planning activities to make them more accessible.
8. Make adopted plans and policies, and technical information easily available to the public using the MPO website and other electronic means.
9. During the planning process, consult with federal and state agencies responsible for:
  - Land management
  - Natural resources
  - Environmental protection and conservation
  - Historic preservation
  - Tourism
  - Natural disaster risk reduction
  - Economic development
10. Evaluate the public involvement process and procedures to assess their success at meeting requirements specified in the FAST ACT (and subsequent updates), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other applicable federal regulations and rules on public participation.

## Technical Committee and MPO Board Meetings

The MPO Board is the decision-making body of the DCHC MPO and is mostly comprised of elected officials from the member jurisdictions. The Technical Committee (TC), which is comprised of representatives of agencies that have transportation interests in the MPO planning area, makes recommendations to the Board.

**Schedule of Meetings:** At the beginning of each calendar year, the schedule of regular Technical Committee and Board meetings will be filed with the City of Durham Clerk's Office.

**Public Comment at Meetings:** The meeting agenda of every Technical Committee and Board meeting will include an opportunity for public comment. Anyone can request to address the TC or Board during the meeting's public comment period. Residents can also be added to a mailing list to be informed about upcoming meetings and public input opportunities.

**Virtual Meetings:** Although the regular practice of the MPO is to conduct in-person meetings, it might occasionally be necessary to conduct virtual or online meetings for reasons of public safety. For virtual meetings, the MPO will continue to observe the notification and access standards of this Public Involvement Policy. The MPO will ensure that the public has been notified about the online meeting through the MPO website, mailing list, and social media accounts seven days in advance of the meeting. Notification will include an electronic link to view and/or access the meeting and instructions on how the public can address the TC or Board during the online meeting.

If requested at least 48 hours before the online meeting, the MPO will provide a way to participate in the meeting that does not require access to a personal computer or the internet. Alternatives may include a call-in number or computer terminal at a public place where residents can view the meeting and address the TC or Board.

# Public Involvement Framework

## Activities that Require Public Involvement

The DCHC MPO will conduct early and continuing public involvement activities for the following plans and programs:

1. Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)
2. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
3. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
4. Air Quality Conformity Determination Analysis for the MTP and TIP
5. Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) project submission, points assignment, policy changes, or any important activity related to project prioritization and selection
6. County Transit Plans, including amendments and the annual program of projects
7. Congestion Management Process (CMP)
8. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
9. Corridor studies and other small area transportation studies
10. Regional plans (e.g., intelligent transportation systems, toll studies, freight plans, incident management, and commuter rail transit)
11. Other substantive plans and programs such as transit/rail Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), New Starts/Small Smarts program, and bicycle and pedestrian plans and programs

## Determining the Level of Public Engagement

The scale of public involvement will depend on the significance and impact of a planning activity. The MPO will use guidance from the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation<sup>3</sup> to:

1. Determine the public's role in a planning activity
2. Define the level of public participation needed for a planning activity
3. Determine the activities that are suited to achieving that level of participation

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<sup>3</sup> International Association for Public Participation, "Core Values, Ethics, Spectrum – The 3 Pillars of Public Participation." <https://www.iap2.org/page/pillars#:~:text=IAP2%20Spectrum%20of%20Public%20Participation.in%20many%20public%20participation%20plans.>



## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Public Participation Goal</b>	To provide the public with balanced information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
<b>Promise to the Public</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
<b>Examples</b>	The MPO's website, open houses, fact sheets	Public comment periods, focus groups, and surveys	Workshops, the Engagement Ambassador Program	Resident advisory committees	Citizen juries, ballots, the City of Durham's Participatory Budgeting Initiative

## Public and Stakeholders

<b>General Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and elected officials of member municipalities and counties</li> <li>• Affected public agencies</li> <li>• Transportation related committees of local jurisdictions</li> <li>• Representatives of neighborhood and community groups</li> <li>• Private intercity bus operations</li> <li>• Employer based commuting programs</li> <li>• Vanpool programs</li> <li>• Transit benefit programs</li> <li>• Parking cash-out programs</li> <li>• Shuttle or telework programs</li> </ul>
<b>Specific Parties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property owners affected by a plan or study</li> <li>• Neighborhood or community associations</li> <li>• Environmental and natural resource groups</li> <li>• Federal, state, and local agencies responsible for land use, environmental, and economic oversight</li> <li>• Businesses within the study area</li> </ul>
<b>Special Groups<sup>4</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino populations, and people of color</li> <li>• Low-income populations</li> <li>• Elderly population</li> <li>• Zero-car households</li> <li>• Individuals with limited English proficiency</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Groups<sup>5</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified businesses owned by women and/or minorities</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> The MPO will use advisory boards and community groups whose members are from the special groups, targeted media outlets, mailing lists, targeted social media advertising, and workshops and other targeted outreach to reach these groups.

<sup>5</sup> As a recipient of federal funds, the MPO is required to meet DBE participation goals. The MPO will circulate all planning activities that require consulting services to DBE lists maintained by the state, municipalities, and transit agencies.

## Adequate Time for Public Comment

The MPO Board will identify a reasonable timeframe for public review and comment. The minimum public comment period for common MPO activities are listed below. Specific public involvement details, such as the definition of a major amendment, are available for each plan/program at a later section in this document.

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## Notifying the Public

The methods used to notify the public will depend on the importance and characteristics of the plan or program. Notification methods will also be used to familiarize the public with the plan, program, or project under development.

### People with Disabilities and Speakers of Other Languages

Meeting and event notices will include a statement that people with disabilities or those who speak a language other than English will be accommodated. The MPO will make special provisions if notified at least 48 hours in advance. Provisions include having large print documents, audio material, sign language interpreters, interpreters for languages other than English, and other provisions as requested.

The notice below will be added to all DCHC MPO's event notices:

DCHC MPO Non-Discrimination Policy Notice

It is the policy of the DCHC MPO that no person shall be subjected to discrimination in any form based on race, color, sex, age, income status, national origin, or disability. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination, please contact the DCHC MPO Title VI Coordinator at 919-450-4366.

For details on the MPO's Title VI non-discrimination plan, which ensures that no person shall be excluded from participation in any MPO activity on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, national origin, language proficiency, or disability, please see: <http://www.dchcmpo.org/involvement/discrimination.asp>.

For details on the MPO's ADA Transition Plan, which aims to ensure nondiscrimination and access for individuals with disabilities in state and local government services, please see: <http://www.dchcmpo.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=30100>.

## **Minimum Notification Requirements**

**DCHC MPO Website:** The MPO will maintain a calendar of meetings and activities on its website and prominently post all public involvement opportunities. In addition, the MPO website will provide electronic copies of plans, programs, maps, technical and visualization documents, and other information related to MPO planning activities.

**Social Media:** The MPO will maintain accounts on popular social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, and promote meeting and public involvement opportunities on these sites.

## Advanced Notification Requirements

Many MPO adoptions and amendments will require advanced notification methods because of the greater impact of these actions. Minor actions, such as administrative amendments to the TIP, MTP and UPWP, do not require advanced notifications.

**Notices in Newspapers:** The MPO will post an advertisement in the area's major daily newspaper and other local, minority, or alternative language newspapers, as appropriate, to notify the public of a formal public comment period.

**Mailing Lists:** The MPO will maintain a master electronic and postal mailing list and use that list to notify the public about public involvement opportunities and meetings. The MPO may send notices to the entire mailing list or just to a targeted subset, such as a particular neighborhood, modal interest group, or EJ group, depending on the impact of a particular activity.

The mailing list will include a broad representation of interested parties such as: member jurisdictions; multimodal transportation groups; environmental justice communities; neighborhood and community groups; and, local and state agencies responsible for environmental protection, conservation, land use management, natural resources and historic preservation, etc. The MPO will also include residents that are representative of the EJ, Title VI and LEP communities, and will encourage residents to add their contact information to the mailing list, and will add the name of any resident that wishes to be on the list.

**Press Releases:** The MPO will work with the public relations offices of the various jurisdictions and counties within the MPO area to develop press releases that will notify the public about public involvement opportunities.

**Additional Methods:** The DCHC MPO occasionally uses additional methods of involving the public that are appropriate to the project. Such methods may include newsletters, presentations to transportation-related committees of MPO member jurisdictions, distributing information through public libraries and community groups (especially those serving EJ and LEP communities, the elderly, and people with disabilities), local government cable access stations, open house format meetings, focus groups, and holding events at special locations.

## Communication and Engagement Methods

The MPO will use appropriate methods to communicate with and engage the public and receive their feedback during all stages of plan, program, and project development. The scale of these methods will vary depending on the significance of the plan, program or project, and the importance of a particular action.

**Public Meetings:** The MPO will conduct public meetings to share information with members of the public on proposed plans and programs and to receive their feedback. The meetings may have a variety of formats. Potential formats include:

- Workshops in which residents can speak one-on-one with staff
- Focus groups where a facilitator helps solicit feedback
- Charrettes that allow residents to make hands-on contributions to design elements
- Pop-up events conducted at popular locations for targeted groups

Public meetings will be held at various locations within the planning area to ensure the MPO receives feedback from a representative group of residents. Also, public meetings will be held at locations that are accessible to people with disabilities and located on a transit route.

**Public Hearings:** The MPO Board will conduct public hearings to adopt, amend, or make other decisions on major plans and programs such as the MTP, TIP, and fixed-guideway locally preferred alternatives. Residents can speak directly to Board members during hearings. Notification of the hearing will be made through some or all notification methods outlined above.

**Virtual Meetings and Engagement:** Although the regular practice of the DCHC MPO is to conduct in-person meetings, it might be necessary from time-to-time to conduct virtual, online meetings for reasons of public safety. In a virtual meeting, the MPO will continue to observe the notification and access standards of this Public Involvement Policy. The MPO will ensure that the public has been notified about the online meeting format through the MPO website and mailing list and include an electronic link and a call-in number to access the meeting.

The MPO understands that not all residents will be able to access virtual meetings and will make every effort to supplement virtual meetings and engagement activities with in-person activities as soon as it is feasible along with more targeted efforts to reach EJ, Title VI, and LEP communities.

**Boards and Commissions:** MPO staff will make presentations and request feedback from the elected officials and advisory boards, commissions, and committees within the MPO area. These commissions and committees often have oversight of programs and policy related to land use, transportation, bicycle and pedestrian travel, the environment, and parks and trails.

**Visualization Techniques:** DCHC MPO will use visualization techniques to help the public and decision makers better understand plan and program information such as project alternatives, environmental and social impacts, large data sets, and land-use information. Examples of visualization techniques include:

- Printed maps and interactive online maps
- Tables and charts
- Videos, photos, illustrations, and concept drawings
- Flyovers
- Three-dimensional models
- Traffic and other simulation tools

**Available Documents:** The MPO will ensure that copies of plans, programs, maps, technical and visualization documents, and any other important information are available to the public primarily through the MPO website. The MPO will also provide printed and electronic copies to the public upon request.

## **Responding to Public Comments**

The DCHC MPO will document both oral and written public comments received during the public input process. Documentation might include a written compilation, meeting minutes, a transcript of oral comments, a memorandum that summarizes the comments, and/or an online collection and display application such as a crowdsourcing map.

The MPO will also provide a publicly available summary of responses to comments through the MPO website. MPO staff will provide electronic copies of comments to the Technical Committee and MPO Board. The comments and responses may be produced as a separate report or appendix of a final document or plan.

# **Title VI and Public Participation**

Effective public involvement is a key element in addressing Title VI in decision-making. We will seek out and consider the input and needs of interested parties and groups traditionally underserved by transportation systems who may face challenges accessing our services, such as minority communities and people with limited English proficiency (LEP). Underlying these efforts is our commitment to determining the most effective outreach methods for a given project or population.

Other than some of the engagement activities listed above, the MPO will use additional public involvement practices to reach Title VI communities including:

- Expanding beyond traditional outreach methods by reaching people at locations frequented in their daily lives, such as public events and business frequented by Title VI communities
- Providing for early, frequent, and continuous engagement by the public.
- Coordinating with community- and faith- based organizations, educational institutions, and other entities to implement public engagement strategies that reach members of affected minority and/or LEP communities.
- 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.
- Considering radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations. Outreach to LEP persons may also include audio programming available on podcasts.

## **Public Notification**

We will inform people of their rights under Title VI and related legislation. The primary means of achieving this will be posting and disseminating the DCHC MPO Non-Discrimination Policy Notice. Additional measures may include verbally announcing our obligations and the public's rights at meetings, placing flyers at places frequented by targeted populations, and an equal opportunity tag-on at the end of radio announcements.



## **Dissemination of Information**

Information on Title VI and other programs will be compiled and disseminated to employees, contractors and subrecipients, stakeholders, and the public. Public dissemination efforts may vary depending on factors present, but will generally include: posting public statements; setting forth our nondiscrimination policy in eye-catching designs and locations; placing brochures in public places, such as government offices, transit facilities, and libraries; having nondiscrimination language within contracts; including nondiscrimination notices in meeting announcements and handouts; and displaying our Notice of Nondiscrimination at all our public meetings.

At a minimum, nondiscrimination information will be disseminated on our website and on posters in conspicuous areas at our office(s). Project-related information and our most current Title VI-related information will be maintained online.

## **Meetings and Outreach**

A variety of comprehensive and targeted public participation methods will be used to facilitate meaningful public involvement. Methods for engaging stakeholders and target audiences, including traditionally underserved and excluded populations (e.g. minorities, youth, low-income, the disabled, etc.) will include the following:

### Public Relations and Outreach

Public relations and outreach (PRO) strategies aim to conduct well-planned, inclusive, and meaningful public participation events that foster good relations and mutual trust through shared decision-making with the communities we serve.

- We will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.
- Public events will aim to be collaborative and educational for all, rather than confrontational and prescriptive.
- Media plans will typically involve multiple channels of communication like post mail, electronic mail, social media marketing, radio, TV, and newspaper ads.
- Abstract objectives will be avoided in meeting announcements. Specific attention-grabbing reasons to attend will be used, such as “Help us figure out how to relieve congestion on [corridor name]” or “How much should it cost to ride the bus? Let us know on [date].”
- Efforts will be made to show how the input of participants can, or did, influence final decisions.
- We will do our best to form decision-making committees that look like and

relate to the populations we serve.

- We will seek out and identify community contacts and partner with local community- and faith- based organizations that can represent, and help us disseminate information to, target constituencies.
- Demographic data will be requested during public meetings, surveys, and from community contacts and committee members.

### Public Meetings

Public meetings are open to the public, including hearings, charrettes, open houses, and board meetings.

- Public meetings will be conducted at times, locations, and facilities that are convenient and accessible.
- Meeting materials will be available in a variety of predetermined formats to serve diverse audiences.
- An assortment of advertising means may be employed to inform the community of public meetings.
- Assistance to persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency will be provided, as requested.

### Small Group Meetings

- A small group meeting is a targeted measure where a meeting is held with a specific group, usually at their request or consent. These are often closed meetings, as they will typically occur on private property at the owner's request.
- If it is determined that a targeted group has not been afforded adequate opportunities to participate, members of the group will be contacted to inquire about possible participation methods, including an additional meeting for that group.
- Unless unusual circumstances or safety concerns exist, hold the meeting at a location of the target group's choosing.
- Share facilitation duties with members of the target group.
- Small group discussion formats may be integrated into larger group public meetings and workshops.

### Community Surveying

- Opinion surveys will occasionally be used to obtain input from targeted groups or the public on their transportation needs, the quality or costs of our services, and feedback on our public outreach efforts.
- Surveys may be conducted via online, telephone, door-to-door canvassing, at community fairs, by placing drop boxes in ideal locations, or with assistance from other local agencies like social services.
- Surveys will be translated into Spanish in accordance with the MPO's Limited English Proficiency plan.

# Quadrennial Review of Public Involvement Policy

The DCHC MPO will review and evaluate this Public Involvement Policy on a quadrennial basis to ensure that the objectives of the plan are being met and that the process provides full and open access to all. The MPO will request input on the effectiveness and implementation of the Public Involvement Policy during a minimum forty-five (45) day public comment period and conduct a public meeting to receive input. The MPO will create a report that summarizes the input and responds to comments received. This report will be added as an appendix in the updated Public Involvement Policy.

The MPO will also solicit comments on the Public Involvement Policy through outreach programs to those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including environmental justice, Title VI, and LEP households.

## Measuring Equitable Engagement

The MPO will also begin to gather information about the effectiveness of each of our outreach activities and planning processes.

We will collect data including:

- Number of meetings and workshops held
- Number of residents who participate in an outreach activity
- Number of press releases
  - Number of media stories that result from press releases
- Number of website visitors
- Number of social media followers on each platform
  - Appropriate measures for each platform (likes, retweets, reach, engagements, URL clicks, etc.) for tweets related to planning activities
- Number of residents on our listservs
- Number of emails sent and opened per campaign

Where possible, we will collect demographic data for our engagement activities. We will collect data on the following demographic factors:

- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Income
- Disability status

- Zero car households
- Limited English Proficiency households

This information will be compared to regional thresholds for EJ population groups as cited in the 2020 Environmental Justice Report for DCHC MPO so staff can measure whether our engagement strategies are reaching Title VI, LEP, and EJ communities.

## **Transportation Plans**

The remainder of this report provides public input guidance for the MPO's major planning activities. With this guidance in mind, some plans will have their own detailed Public Engagement Plan that provides, to the extent possible, details on:

- Strategies that the planning team will use to reach Title VI, LEP, and EJ communities
- Detailed engagement timelines
- Measures that will be used to determine whether engagement for the plan was successful

### **The Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

The federally required Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and state required Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) identify transportation infrastructure and services required to meet future transportation demand. The public involvement plan developed for each of these initiatives strives to engage interested parties at the early stages of the process, and to provide a gradual progression from the general information of the goals and objectives early in the process to the projects in the final plan.

The MPO will implement the complete public input process for a transportation plan update, which commonly involves an evaluation of transportation goals, demographic data, financial forecasts, and project alternatives, and therefore requires multiple years to complete.

The MPO will implement some of these public involvement elements for major and minor amendments, which commonly involve only a few projects and therefore require a much shorter, less complex process.

A major amendment is a substantial change to a project that is deemed regionally significant by federal definitions or a fixed-guideway transit project. Minor

amendments are changes to projects that are not deemed regionally significant or not related to a fixed-guideway transit project.

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

The minimum public comment period will be 42 days for the transportation plan adoption, all key decision points, and major and minor amendments.

### **Notifying the Public**

The Minimum Notification Requirements and Advanced Notification Requirements sections above provide the notification details. There are a few requirements that need further emphasis given some of the unique characteristics of these transportation plans.

Newspapers and Press Releases: Transportation plans affect the entire MPO planning area. The MPO will involve the public relations offices of the various jurisdictions and counties to notify the public about public involvement opportunities, and notices will be published in major daily newspapers that reach residents throughout the MPO planning area.

Mailing Lists: The MPO will gather email and other contact information from all participants (including online surveys) in the public involvement process of each decision point. These contacts will be used to notify participants of subsequent decision points and public participant opportunities throughout the transportation plan process.

Given the impact of the transportation plans, the mailing list will include a broad representation of stakeholders that will include member jurisdictions; multi-modal transportation groups; environmental justice communities; neighborhood and community groups; and local and state agencies responsible for environmental protection, conservation, land management, natural resources, and historic preservation.

## **Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

### **Description**

The MTP identifies future transportation projects for the Triangle Region that will serve the demand created by expected land use

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

42 Days

### **Key Decision Points**

- Work program, schedule, and public involvement plan
- Goals, objectives, and performance measures
- Land use scenarios
- Socioeconomic and demographic forecasts
- Travel demand modeling assumptions
- Transportation alternatives
- Preferred option
- Transportation plan adoption

Special Populations: Transportation services and projects start with long-range plans. Therefore, it is important to involve Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Title VI populations, the elderly, and people with disabilities when projects are being developed in these plans. If feasible, the MPO will advertise in newspapers that serve people of color and those who do not speak English. The planning team will also involve community groups that are related to these populations.

### **Communicating and Engaging with the Public**

The MPO will use the following methods to communicate with the public.

DCHC MPO Website: The MPO website will make notices, plans, maps, analysis and reports available to the public.

Public Meetings: The MPO will conduct public meetings to educate the public and receive feedback on major decision points during the transportation planning process. Meetings can have a variety of formats, such as workshops in which residents are able to talk one-on-one with staff; focus groups where a facilitator helps to solicit the feedback; and, pop-up events conducted at popular locations for targeted groups.

Public meetings will be held in locations around the planning area to ensure the MPO receives geographically and demographically representative feedback. Public meetings will also be held at venues that are accessible to people with disabilities and on transit routes.

Public Hearings: The MPO Board will conduct public hearings for all the major decision points in the planning process.

Boards and Commissions: Given the geographical and multimodal extent of a transportation plan, the MPO will make presentations and solicit feedback from elected officials and advisory commissions and committees of the jurisdictions and counties in the MPO.

Visualization Techniques: The MPO will use visualization techniques to help the public and decision-makers understand information such as project alternatives, environmental and social impacts, large data sets, and land-use information. Examples of visualization techniques include printed maps, interactive online maps, thematic maps, and tables and charts.

Newsletters: In some cases, an online or printed newsletter will be useful to present the large amount of complex data used in the transportation plan process.

Online Surveys and Maps: Online surveys can be a convenient, effective way to collect the public's transportation vision, community values, and specific recommendations. Online maps, such as crowd sourced maps, can also be used to collect transportation improvements from the public.

## **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) designates the funding and scheduling of transportation improvement projects (highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit capital and operating assistance) using state and federal funds. The TIP implements the projects and objectives of transportation plans like the MTP.

It is developed based on the revenue estimates provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the results of the NCDOT and MPO project prioritization processes. The NCDOT and MPO prioritization processes determine which projects are selected for TIP funding, and therefore are completely integrated into the TIP public involvement process. The NCDOT prioritization process is often called SPOT, which refers to the NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Office.

An administrative modification is a TIP action that changes a project budget by less than \$1 million, does not move into or out of the first four fiscal years of the TIP, and is consistent with the MTP. The MPO will not conduct a public input process for administrative modifications but will post modifications on the MPO website as part of the Technical Committee and MPO Board approval process.

An amendment to the TIP is any change that does not fit the definition of an administrative modification. Public involvement for amendments will follow the procedures described below.

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

The minimum public comment period will be 30 days for TIP adoption, and 21 days for all other key decision points.

### **Notifying the Public**

The Minimum Notification Requirements and Advanced Notification Requirements sections above provide the notification details. There are a few requirements described below that need further emphasis.

Newspapers and Press Releases: The TIP and prioritization effort affect the entire MPO planning area. The MPO will involve the public relations offices of the various jurisdictions and counties to notify the public about public involvement opportunities related to the TIP adoption, amendments, project priority list, and project point assignment. Notices will be published in major daily newspapers that reach residents throughout the MPO planning area.

Special Populations: The TIP designates funding to implement transportation projects. Therefore, it is especially important to involve Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Title VI populations in discussions, the elderly, and people with disabilities when the projects are being conceived in these plans. If feasible, the MPO will advertise in newspapers that serve people of color and those who do not speak English. The planning team will involve community groups that are related to these populations.

### **Communicating with the Public**

The MPO will use the following methods to communicate with the public.

DCHC MPO website: The TIP and prioritization processes analyzes and presents large amounts of data and includes maps and reports. The MPO website will make all analysis and reports available to the public through our website.

Public Hearings: The TIP and prioritization processes do not include public meetings and workshops. Therefore, the MPO Board will conduct public hearings for all major decision points.

Boards and Commissions: The TIP and prioritization processes affect the entire MPO planning area and all transportation modes. Therefore, the MPO will encourage and support staff from the various jurisdictions and counties in the MPO to solicit feedback from the elected officials and advisory commissions and

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

### **Description**

The TIP designates the funding and scheduling of transportation improvement projects (highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit capital and operating assistance) using state and federal funds.

### **Public Comment Period**

30 Days for adoption  
21 Days for all other decision points

### **Key Decision Points**

- Release MPO project priority list
- Release MPO point assignment for regional tier projects
- Release MPO point assignment for division tier projects
- Release draft TIP
- TIP adoption
- TIP project amendment



committees in their area and forward that feedback to the MPO.

Visualization Techniques: The MPO will use visualization techniques to help the public and decision makers better understand information such as project costs and schedules, points and ratings, location, prioritization strategies, environmental and social impacts, and data summarized by county, mode and prioritization tier. Examples of visualization techniques include project tables, printed maps, interactive online maps, and summary graphics.

## **Air Quality Conformity Determination Report**

The AQ-CDR demonstrates that emissions from the future transportation network will be below a threshold set by the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The Clean Air Act (CAA) section 176(c) (42 U.S.C. 7506(c)) requires the MPO to complete an Air Quality Conformity Determination Report (AQ-CDR) on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and possibly on MTP amendments that impact a project that is designated as regionally significant. The DCHC TIP is a subset of the MTP and therefore a separate AQ-CDR is not conducted for TIP or TIP Amendments.

The Triangle interagency consultation partners, which are composed of state and federal transportation and environmental agencies, determine whether an amended MTP or TIP will require an AQ-CDR.

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

The minimum public comment period is 30 days for AQ-CDR adoption.

### **Notifying the Public**

The Minimum Notification Requirements and Advanced Notification Requirements above provide the notification details. There are a few requirements described below that need further emphasis.

Newspapers and Press Releases: Interest in the AQ-CDR might come from anywhere in the MPO planning area. The MPO will involve the public relations offices of the various jurisdictions and counties to notify the public about public involvement opportunities, and the MPO will publish notices in major daily newspapers that reach residents throughout the MPO planning area.

Special Populations: The MPO will try to notify Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Title VI populations, the elderly, and people with disabilities. If feasible, the MPO will advertise in newspapers that serve people of

color and those who do not speak English. The planning team will involve community groups that are related to these populations.

### **Communicating with the Public**

The Communicating with the Public section in this document provides details for public input activities. There are a few activities that need further emphasis.

DCHC MPO Website: The MPO website will post the AQ-CDR, report attachments, and any related information.

Public Hearings: The AQ-CDR commonly does not include public meetings and workshops. Therefore, the MPO Board will conduct a public hearing for the adoption of the AQ-CDR.

Visualization Techniques: The MPO will use visualization techniques such as tables, charts or graphics to depict the emissions data and thresholds.

## **Air Quality Conformity Determination Report (AQ-CDR)**

### **Description**

The AQ-CDR demonstrates that certain pollutant emissions from the future transportation sector will not exceed the threshold in the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

30 Days

### **Key Decision Points**

- Release AQ-CDR
- Adopt AQ-CDR

## **Corridor and Special Studies**

The MPO conducts studies that support decisions on significant transportation investments in specific areas of the MPO. These comprehensive studies consider the land use, travel demand, and community goals to develop recommended transportation investments that are subsequently adopted in the MPO's long-range transportation plans.

The MPO often hires consultants to carry out these studies which are commonly called corridor studies, small area studies, major investment studies, and regional plans related to multimodal transportation improvements, intelligent transportation systems, tolling, freight, incident management, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, and passenger rail service.

The scope of these studies varies greatly. As a result, the number and intensity of the public involvement activities will be determined on a project-by-project basis to appropriately match the project scope. The study area is often a subset of the MPO planning area, such as along a particular roadway or within a specific community. In some cases, not all of the jurisdictions and counties will have an interest in the study.

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

The minimum public comment period to approve the final study plan will be 21 days.

### **Notifying the Public**

The Minimum Notification Requirements and Advanced Notification Requirements sections above provide notification details. There are a few requirements described below that need further emphasis.

Press Releases: The MPO will involve the public relations offices of the affected jurisdictions and counties to notify the public about public involvement opportunities.

Social Media: The MPO will maintain a presence on popular social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, and post meeting and public involvement opportunities these sites.

### **Communicating with the Public**

The MPO will communicate with the public using the following methods.

Stakeholder Groups: If deemed appropriate, the MPO will form a stakeholder

group to provide advice on each development step of the study. The diverse group will be comprised of individuals, elected officials, and leaders from the jurisdictions, neighborhoods and organizations that have an interest in the study.

DCHC MPO Website: Studies such as these often have their own website, which will post the maps, documents and other materials related to the development of the study, the final plan, and opportunities for public involvement. In some cases, a consultant will maintain and direct the public to the project web site. Should a study not have its own website, the MPO website will provide all the information listed above.

Workshops and Outreach: The MPO will conduct public workshops for the different steps in the project development in which the public can review the information and speak one-on-one with staff. The MPO will consider other outreach efforts that appear to be effective for corridors studies such as pop-up informational events at locations in the study area, and online crowdsourcing maps to collect problem information and suggestions for improvement.

Public Hearings: The MPO will conduct a public hearing for the final plan.

## **Corridor and Special Studies**

### **Description**

The MPO conducts studies that support decisions on significant transportation investments along a corridor, subarea of the metropolitan area, or mode throughout the area.

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

21 Days

### **Key Decision Points**

- Release development documents, e.g., visioning and goals, contextual data, current and future data, conceptual plans, and alternatives
- Release of final study

# Unified Planning Work Program

Federal transportation legislation requires each MPO to prepare an annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP identifies the tasks to be completed with federal transportation funds.

Local jurisdictions, counties, and transit systems in the MPO have an interest in this process because the UPWP identifies subrecipient funding that goes to those entities and a local share that they must provide to match the federal funding. The distribution of some UPWP funding, such as FTA Section 5307 and FHWA Section 104(f), are based on formulas that the MPO Board approves through a separate process.

## Minimum Public Comment Period

The minimum public comment period to adopt the UPWP will be 21 days.

## Notifying the Public

The Minimum Notification Requirements and Advanced Notification Requirements sections above provide the notification details. There are a few requirements described below that need further emphasis.

Notices in Newspapers: The MPO will post an ad in the area's major daily newspaper and other local newspapers that serve people of color and those who do not speak English, as appropriate, to notify the public of a formal public comment period.

Press Releases: The MPO will involve the public relations offices of jurisdictions and counties in the MPO to notify the public about public involvement opportunities.

Social Media: The MPO will maintain a presence on popular social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, and post meeting and public involvement

## Unified Planning Work Program

### Description

Federal transportation legislation requires each MPO to prepare an annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP identifies the tasks to be completed with the use of federal transportation funds

### Minimum Public Comment Period

21 Days

### Key Decision Points

- Release draft UPWP
- Adopt UPWP

opportunities on these sites.

### **Communicating with the Public**

The Communicating with the Public section in this document provides details for public input activities. There are a few activities that need further emphasis.

DCHC MPO Website: The MPO website will post the draft and final UPWP to the website, and opportunities for public involvement.

Local government and agencies: The MPO will ensure that the jurisdictions and counties in the MPO, and any interested State and Federal agencies receive a draft and final copy of the UPWP and are aware of public input opportunities.

Public Hearings: The MPO will conduct a public hearing before adopting the final UPWP.

### **County Transit Plans**

This Durham and Orange County Transit Plans contain a program of transit services and projects to be funded by the dedicated local revenues for transit.

Transit Plans are to be reviewed and updated periodically according to an Interlocal Implementation Agreement executed by GoTriangle, DCHC MPO, and Durham or Orange County, respectively.

The agreement established a staff working group (SWG) for each county that is charged with reviewing and recommending updates and the overall public involvement process. Staff for the SWG is responsible for developing and conducting these activities and plans, including amending them from time to time.

The MPO is only responsible for conducting the public involvement process for the MPO Board adoption, and not that of the other three signatories.

Each of the signatories to the agreement must adopt the proposed update for the update to be valid. The agreement does not set a minimum timeframe in which the plan must be periodically updated.

### **Minimum Public Comment Period**

The minimum public comment period to adopt a county transit plan will be 21 days.

## Notifying the Public

The Minimum Notification Requirements and Advanced Notification Requirements sections above provide the notification details. There are a few requirements described below that need further emphasis.

Press Releases: The MPO will involve the public relations offices of the affected jurisdictions and counties in the MPO to notify the public about the plan availability and public involvement opportunities.

Social Media: The MPO will maintain a presence on popular social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, and post workshop and public involvement opportunities on these sites.

## Communicating with the Public

The Communicating with the Public section in this document provides details for public input activities. There are a few activities that need further emphasis.

DCHC MPO Website: The MPO website will post the updated plan to the website, and opportunities for public involvement.

Local government: The MPO will ensure that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) of the relevant county, or counties, receives a copy of the draft updated plan.

Workshops and presentations: Staff from the appropriate agency commonly conduct public workshops at convenient locations in the relevant county and make presentations to the relevant BOCC, DCHC MPO Board, and GoTriangle Board of Trustees. The MPO will ensure that the MPO Board receives a copy of public, agency and elected official comments before MPO adoption.

Public Hearings: The MPO will conduct a public hearing before adopting an update.

## County Transit Plans

### Description

This Durham and Orange County Transit Plans contain a program of transit services and projects to be funded by the dedicated local revenues for transit.

### Minimum Public Comment Period

21 Days

### Key Decision Points

- Goals and objectives
- Scenario development
- Release draft county transit plan
- Adopt county transit plan

# Appendix A

## Legislative Framework for Public Participation Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act

The FAST Act requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to consider planning strategies that will:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
7. Promote efficient system management and operation
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
10. Enhance travel and tourism

Section 134 of title 23, of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, includes provisions for public participation as the MPO carries out its planning activities. The FAST Act requires participation by interested parties, specifically:

### Consultation

- (A) In each metropolitan area, the metropolitan planning organization shall consult, as appropriate, with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of a long-range transportation plan.
- (B) Issues: The consultation shall involve, as appropriate-
  - (i) comparison of transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps, if available; or



- (ii) comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

### **Participation by Interested Parties**

- (A) In general, each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, 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 a 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 a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.
- (B) Contents of participation plan - A participation plan:
  - (i) shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and
  - (ii) shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan.
- (C) Methods-In carrying out subparagraph (A), the metropolitan planning organization shall, to the maximum extent practicable:
  - (i) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
  - (ii) employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and
  - (iii) make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information under subparagraph (A).

### **Publication**

A transportation plan involving Federal participation shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the metropolitan planning organization for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web, approved by the metropolitan planning organization and submitted for information purposes to the Governor at such times and in such manner as the Secretary shall establish.

## **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century**

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) public participation regulations are maintained under the FAST Act. However, public ports and private providers of transportation, including intercity bus operators and employer-based commuting programs, were explicitly added to the list of interested parties that an MPO must provide with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. In addition, the FAST Act adds officials responsible for tourism and natural disaster risk reduction to the list of agencies and officials that an MPO should consult with in developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs.

## **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Beyond: Nondiscrimination in Federally Funded Programs**

Two key federal actions provide the basis for the civil protections addressed in this plan:

1. The 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title VI of the Act (nondiscrimination)
2. Executive Order No. 12898 signed by President Clinton in 1994 (Environmental Justice)

The Civil Rights Act, and specifically Title VI of the Act, establishes the prohibition of discrimination “on the basis of race, color or national origin” in any “program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Subsequent legislation has extended the protection to include gender, disability, age, and income, and has broadened the application of the protection to all activities of federal aid recipients, sub-recipients, and contractors regardless of whether a particular activity is receiving federal funding.

The three fundamental principles of environmental justice set forth by Title VI and Executive Order 12898 are:

1. To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations;
2. To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and
3. To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay of these protections for minority and low-income populations.

Environmental justice must be considered in all phases of planning. Areas of focus and particular concern are public participation – to ensure that protected populations have real and equitable opportunity to influence decisions – and analysis – to assess the distribution of benefits and impacts on protected populations.

The following notations expand on the authority, requirements, and standards of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act:

<b>Prohibition of Discrimination Based on Gender</b>	The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 USC 324) established the prohibition of discrimination based on gender.
<b>Expanding Title VI to Sub-recipients and Contractors</b>	The Civil Rights Act of 1987 broadened the scope of Title VI coverage by expanding the definitions of “programs or activities” to include all programs or activities of Federal Aid recipients, sub-recipients and contractors, regardless of whether the programs and activities are federally assisted (Public Law 100259 {S. 557}, March 22, 1988).
<b>Protections for Americans with Disabilities</b>	The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq. and 49 CFR Parts 27, 37 and 38) and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, (29 USC 794) extended the protections under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination of persons with disabilities.
<b>Prohibition of Age Discrimination</b>	The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits discrimination based on age (42 USC 6101). Executive Order 12250 (28 CFR Part 41) requires consistent and effective implementation of various laws prohibiting discriminatory practices in programs receiving federal funding assistance, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

<p><b>Enhanced Public Participation for Low Income and Minority Populations</b></p>	<p>Executive Order 12898 (28 CFR 50) from 1994 directs federal agencies to evaluate impacts on low- income and minority populations and ensure that there are not disproportionate adverse environmental, social, and economic impacts on communities, specifically low income and minority populations. This order also directs federal agencies to provide enhanced public participation where programs may affect such populations.</p>
<p><b>Protection for those with Limited English Proficiency</b></p>	<p>Executive Order 13166 intends to improve access to federally conducted and assisted programs and activities for those who because of national origin have limited English language proficiency (LEP).  The Order requires federal agencies to review services, identify any needed services and develop and implement a program so that LEP populations have meaningful access. LEP guidance from the US Department of Justice sets compliance standards that federal fund recipients must follow to ensure that programs and services provided in English are accessible to LEP individuals, and thereby do not discriminate on the basis of national origin (protection afforded under the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VI). US Department of Transportation Policy Guidance: Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 239, pages 74087-74100, Dec. 14, 2005.</p>