



***Public Participation Plan for the Central
Virginia Metropolitan Planning
Organization***

An Evaluation

April 2010

Introduction

This report provides an evaluation of the Public Participation Plan for the Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization (Plan). This evaluation is accomplished as part of an ongoing effort to continually improve the effectiveness of the Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (CVMPO) public involvement efforts. The evaluation is required every three years.

The Plan is the official policy of the CVMPO regarding public involvement in the transportation planning process. The plan takes into account the process for adoption, noticing, and public comment for all transportation related plans and progress, including the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Federal transportation policy requires an enhanced public involvement process for the planning efforts of all metropolitan planning organizations. The CVMPO—like many MPO’s around the country—continually strive to enhance their public participation efforts through new measures, including technological advances. However, the official policy of the plan remains the same— “[...] 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 (Plan 2007).”

This report is laid out in the following sections. The Review of the Plan examines its use and implementation. The Research section highlights best practices that MPOs are using around the country to enhance their public participation efforts. These findings are distilled into suggestions for the CVMPO’s Plan. The Conclusion and Recommendations sections review the report and make specific recommendations for improving the public participation efforts.

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Review of the Public Participation Plan for the CVMPO

In this section, the Plan is reviewed against current practices and implementation. The purpose and objective statements of the plan were reviewed to determine if the statements were being met (Yes) or not being met (No). These conclusions were drawn from the current processes and activities of the CVMPO. Additionally, an initial indication was provided if opportunities for improvement were apparent.

The content in this section is directly transcribed from the Public Participation Plan for the Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization. Comments are underlined and in italic. The complete Plan is attached as an appendix.

Purpose:

[...] 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.
Yes. MPO plans and programs routinely include a public participation component. Reference is made to the update of the Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan and the Central Virginia MPO Bicycle Plan currently being prepared.
- 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.
Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.
- 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 economies of scope and scale.
Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.
- 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.
Yes. The Plan was last reviewed in 2007.

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.

Yes. Noted below are objectives that exceed state or federal standards.

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”

Yes. This requirement exceeds state and federal requirements.

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.

Yes. This is being accomplished through the Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan update, in particular through the scenario planning approach.

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.

Yes. Routinely, advertisements were placed in the minority owned Piedmont Area Journal until it ceased publishing. This objective’s standards exceed state requirements.

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.

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

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

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

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.

Yes. This objective is being accomplished as part of CVLRTP update. Census block data provides accurate information on income, population, housing, age, and minority status and is being mapped by GIS staff from Region 2000.

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

Yes. This data is maintained as part of project files. All files related to the transportation planning process are available to the public during regular business hours. This is the practice of most MPOs researched in this study.

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.

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

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.

Yes. This objective is accomplished on the project level. Opportunities for improvement exists in the strengthening of the CVMPO's website as well as developing an educational effort to better explain the identity and role of the CVMPO within the region.

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

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

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.

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective. An opportunity exists to better educate the region on the CVMPO's identity and role.

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.

Yes. This objective is accomplished on a project level. An opportunity exists to better educate the region on the CVMPO's identity and role.

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.

Yes. Regular notifications for updates and amendments to the Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan, the Central Virginia Transportation Improvement Program; and various other transportation related plans are provided to local print and broadcast media. An opportunity exists to better educate the press on the CVMPO's identity and role.

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

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

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.

Yes. The Transportation Technical Committee serves as the steering committee in the planning process.

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

Yes. These interest groups are routinely invited to participate in planning efforts.

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

Yes. Summaries of focus groups and community meetings are prepared and brought forward as part of the planning process.

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.

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

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.

Yes. This objective is being met currently but could be improved by providing better online methods for submitting public comments.

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.

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

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.

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

Objective 7.2 Publish notices and advertisements in publications aimed at minorities and low-income individuals.

Yes. This objective is being met whenever possible.

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 concentrations.

Yes. The majority of community meetings and public meetings are held on bus lines and in the central city.

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.

Yes. Members of these populations are invited to participate in focus groups and community meetings.

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.

Yes. Current CVMPO activities and practices mirror this objective.

Research

After examining the CVMPO plan at the objective level, staff researched how other MPO efforts around the country keep their plans up to date. It's important to note public participation practices are evolving nationally as well as in Virginia. This section highlights key findings that are common among the Plans studied.

During the course of the research effort, several resources were consulted including the American Planning Association's Planning Advisory Service (PAS), the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) and numerous MPOs. The following charts identify MPOs researched.

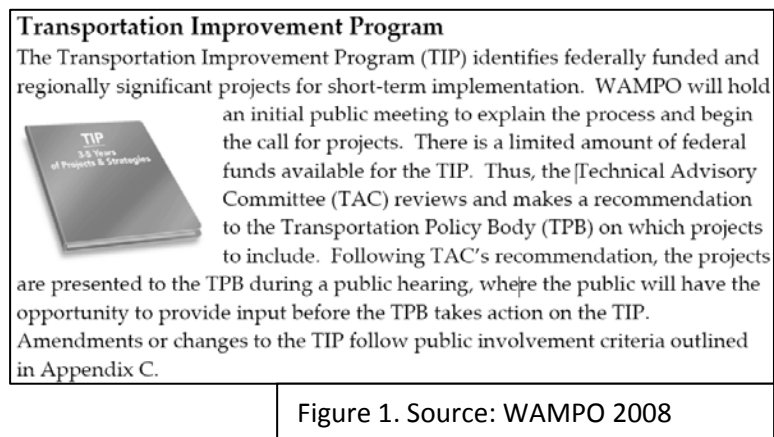
Virginia
Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO (Charlottesville, VA)
Danville MPO (Danville, VA)
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (Chesapeake, VA)
Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (Richmond, VA)
Roanoke Valley Area MPO (Roanoke, VA)

Nationwide	
Atlanta MPO (Atlanta, GA)	Madison MPO (Madison, WI)
Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (Green Bay, WI)	Midland Odessa Transportation Organization (Midland, TX)
Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (Richland, WA)	Nashville MPO (Nashville, TN)
Bloomington/Monroe County MPO (Bloomington, IN)	New York MPO (New York, NY)
Boston MPO (Boston, MA)	North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (Newark, NJ)
Cape Cod MPO (Cape Cod, MA)	Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (Portage, IN)
Chicago MPO (Chicago, IL)	Ozarks Transportation Organization (Springfield, MO)
Corpus Christi MPO (Corpus Christi, TX)	Rapid City MPO (Rapid City, SD)
Green River Area Development District (Owensboro, KY)	Salem-Keizer MPO (Salem, OR)
Greensboro MPO (Greensboro, NC)	South Western Region MPO (Darien, CT)
Huntsville Area MPO (Huntsville, AL)	Spartanburg Area Metropolitan Organization (Spartanburg, SC)
Kansas City MPO (Kansas City, MO/KS)	Texarkana MPO (Texarkana, TX/AR)
Little Rock MPO (Little Rock, AR)	Wichita Area MPO (Wichita, KS)

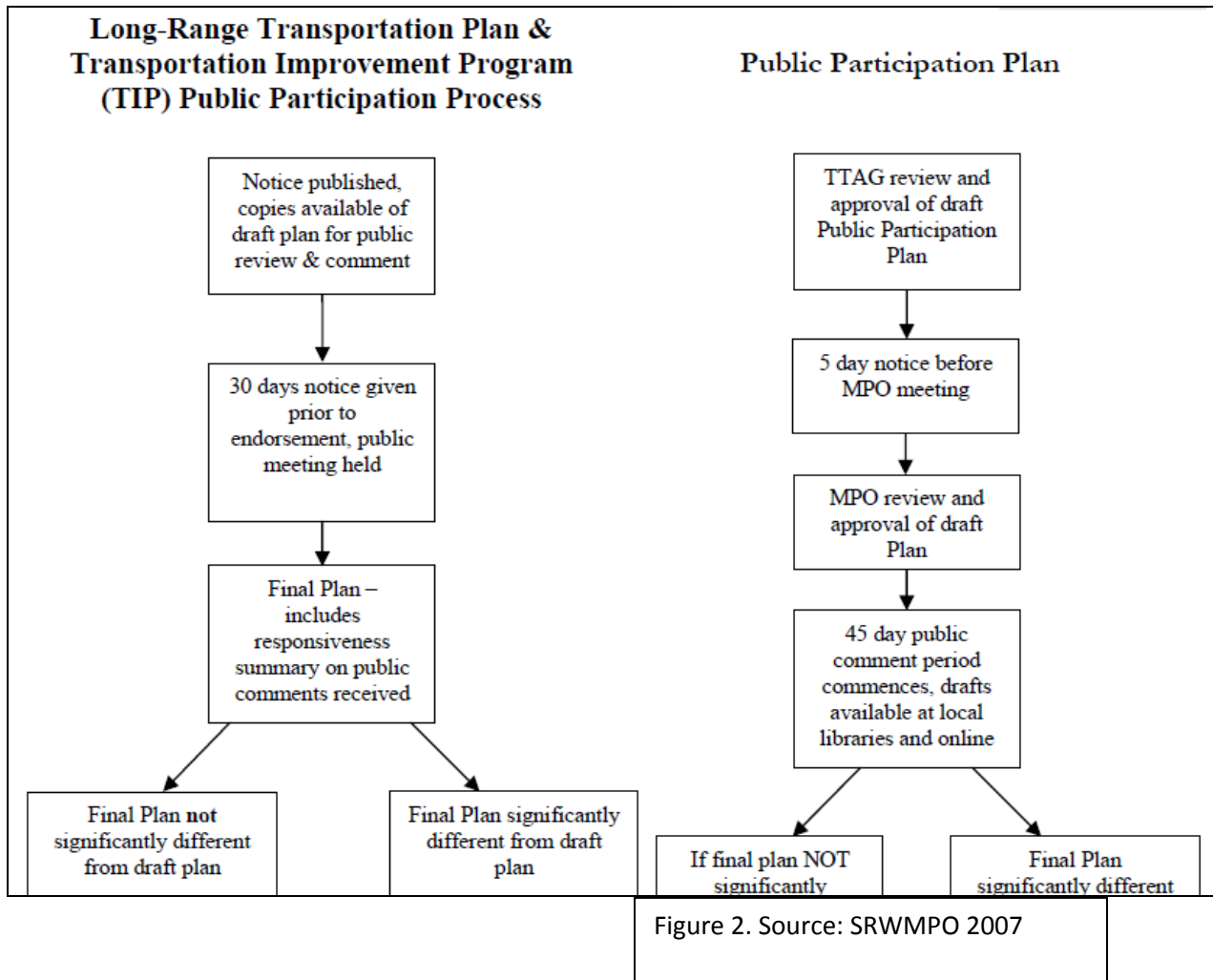
Findings

1. **MPO Guide—Provide a general guide on the operation and capacity of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Developing and distributing materials explaining the identity and role of MPOs can assist in raising the profile of this planning function.**
 - a. Midland/Odessa MPO (MOTOR) provide materials that define the overall responsibilities and actions of an MPO on their website.
 - b. A “Public Participation Guide” that provides a list of ways for the public to get involved is suggested by the Southwest Regional MPO.

2. **Glossary/List of acronyms—Define commonly used transportation terms and acronyms so that the general public can more easily understand the transportation planning and programming environment.**
 - a. Midland/Odessa MPO (MOTOR) has a glossary of transportation terms and acronyms listed in the appendix of their public participation plan (PPP). Interestingly, words such as ‘public participation’, ‘consideration’, ‘consultation’, ‘cooperation’, ‘coordination’, etc. are also defined in their transportation planning context.
 - b. The Huntsville Area MPO has a glossary of abbreviations listed at the beginning of their PPP.
 - c. The Wichita Area MPO (WAMPO) includes a glossary of terms that are often used in the transportation planning context. Example:



- d. The Southwest Regional MPO best practices report encourages the use of visuals to define transportation planning documents. This is common among many MPOs and could be improved upon by the CVMPO. Figure 2 shows a flow chart outlining the public participation process for the LRTP.



- e. The Nashville (TN) MPO's Plan includes a glossary of technical terms pertaining to transportation planning that could be beneficial to readers without transportation planning background. The CVMPO plan uses some acronyms which could be described more fully in a glossary section. Other questions answered in the glossary/introduction section are 'What is an MPO?', 'What are its chief responsibilities?', 'What is a LRTP and a TIP?'

3. **Provide more online resources—Post important information on the activities of the MPO and the accompanying resources online. Figure 3 shows what the CVMPO is currently offering online. An opportunity exists to improve the visibility, layout, and content of the CVMPO website to strengthen its usefulness for the general public.**

Central Virginia MPO

The Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization (CVMPO) is the federally designated transportation planning agency for the Lynchburg urbanized area. The primary activities of the CVMPO are developing and updating the Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan, developing and updating the Central Virginia Transportation Improvement Program, and developing and executing the annual Central Virginia Unified Planning Work Program UPWP.

- **Membership**
- **Agendas and Minutes**
- **Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan Year 2030**
- **Constrained portion of the Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan Year 2030 (29 KB)**
- **Central Virginia Transportation Improvement Program FY 2009-2012 (5.78 MB)**
- **Unified Planning Work Program**
- **Public Participation Plan for CVMPO**
- **Federally Obligated Funds**

For Central Virginia Long Range Transportation Plan Updates please click [here](#).

Map of CVMPO Planning Area


[View the Central Virginia Transportation Plan 2030 Map \(4.5 MB\)](#)

Figure 3. Source Region 2000

- a. Owensboro-Davies MPO requires that “Committee material for each TPC, PAC, and CAC meeting be made available for public review on the MPO website. This could be addressed in the CVMPO’s website.
- b. Midland/Odesa MPO (MOTOR)—among other MPOs researched—requires the minimum content for their website: contact information, current MPO membership, meeting calendars and agendas, work products and publications, comment/questions form, links to transportation related agencies/entities, and current by-laws to various plans and updates.
- c. Figure 4 shows the Huntsville Area MPO’s website. Their webpage is representative of many other MPOs researched.

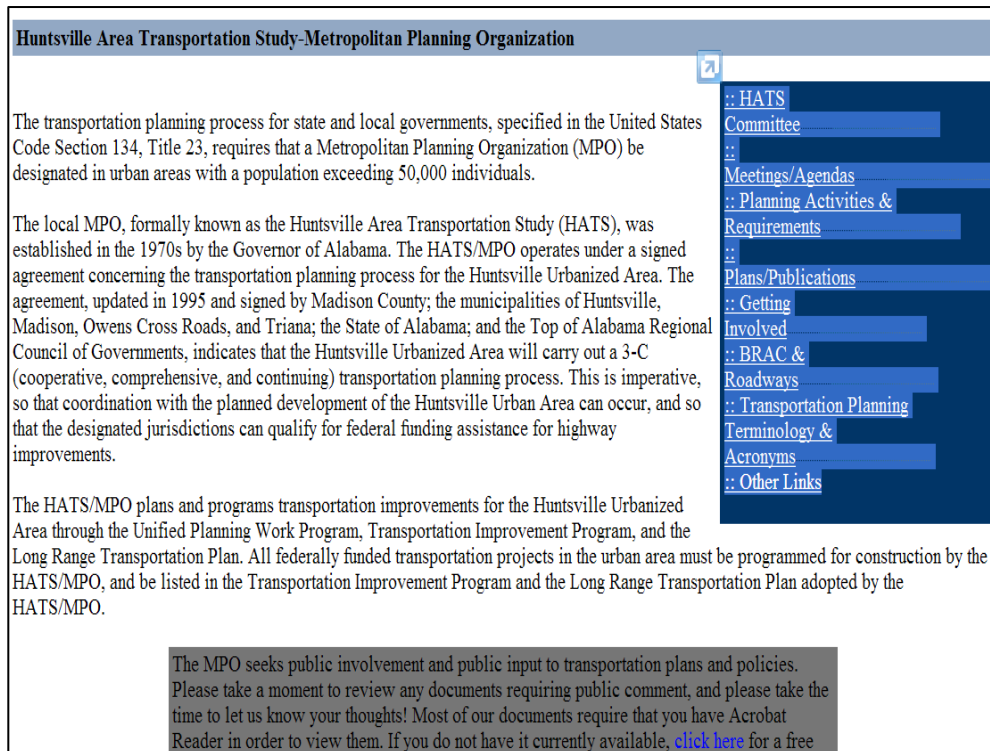


Figure 4. Huntsville MPO

4. Readability—Public participation plans should be written for easy comprehension

- a. The South West Regional MPO stresses the fact that PPPs should not contain a lot of legalistic language.
- b. The CVMPO’s plan is concise and straight forward. It does not contain any legalistic language so that it is readable to any citizen regardless of their background in transportation knowledge background.

5. Establish measures of effectiveness—Measures of effectiveness can help track the success of a public participation plan, and potentially lead to ongoing improvements to participation efforts.

- a. Examples of measures of effectiveness for MPOs are difficult to come by—especially for smaller MPOs.
- b. In general, the performance measurements that MPOs employ via their PPPs are soft measurements. For example, measuring the “[...] satisfaction with the outreach process expressed by participants” (MOTOR 2007) or “The impact of public outreach and involvement on the plan and on policy board actions” are difficult because they are so wide open for interpretation.
- c. The US DOT compiled a report on public participation plans and presents the following chart on effectiveness of notification methods. Figure 5 shows that less emphasis should be placed on postings and press releases and more time be placed on more personable methods of contact such as phone calls or letters.

Table 8 Three most effective means of communication		
Means of Communication	No. of MPOs which rate "High"	% of MPOs which rate "High"
Phone calls or meetings with community leaders and organizations	15	46.9%
Personalized letters or email to community leaders, organizations, and selected individuals	15	46.9%
Phone calls or meetings with selected individuals	13	40.6%

Table 9 Three least effective means of communication		
Means of Communication	No. of MPOs which rate "Low"	% of MPOs which rate "Low"
Posting of public notices	18	56.3%
Paid print advertising (newspaper or magazine)	16	50%
Press releases	11	34.4%

Figure 5. Source: USDOT

- d. Hard measurements such as relating specifically invited persons against the Plan’s targeted groups and relating actual meeting attendees against the Plan’s targeted groups potentially could help determine the effectiveness of outreach efforts and give insight on how to improve participation efforts over time. Geo-coding invitees and attendees can be a part of this effort.

Additionally, research shows that the more resources an MPO has, the more effective they can be in the public participation realm. The CVMPO’s public participation efforts are in alignment with similar sized MPOs.

Conclusion

The current activities and processes of the CVMPO adhere to the Public Participation Plan. The plan is clear and concise and does not contain much legal terminology. The plan and practice emphasizes the incorporation of all interested parties in the transportation planning process. The CVMPO employs techniques that are useful in gathering citizen input beyond traditional public meetings. The CVMPO's public participation plan is in line with similar sized MPOs in Virginia.

The three areas where the Plan and its efforts can improve the most are its web presence; its efforts in educating the public on MPO activities, and identifying measurements of effectiveness. Expanding web resources to include more readily available material to the public is an important item that many MPOs are doing. Finding new and innovative ways to educate the public on the responsibilities and activities of an MPO is an area where the CVMPO might improve. Finally, addressing a measurement or technique to evaluate effectiveness of the Plan can also be useful in providing a means to consider improvements to the plan over time.

Recommendations

The staff recommends the CVMPO receive the report and direct the staff to accomplish the following:

1. Consider and develop means to improve the CVMPO's website, including material, readability, and accessibility.
 - a. Create domain name for website that will allow for easier navigation- "less clicks".
 - b. Improve the appearance of the website by implementing a new template.
 - c. Measure the success of making a new website by tracking web site hits from the old website to the new one.

2. Consider and develop materials and outlets to raise the profile and understanding of the CVMPO and its role in transportation planning and programming.
 - a. Create an informational brochure including:
 - i. Define the area of the Central Virginia MPO
 - ii. Present the responsibilities of the Central Virginia MPO
 - iii. List current projects that the Central Virginia MPO is involved in
 - iv. Glossary of transportation planning terms
 - b. Improve the distribution of material to include areas of high public travel.
 - i. Libraries
 - ii. Government offices
 - iii. News outlets

3. Consider and develop measures of effectiveness aligned with the concepts identified in this report.
 - a. Continue to work with localities in building database of contacts to match theirs.
 - b. Measure the contact database against what is listed in the plan.
 - c. Measure meeting attendees to what is listed in the plan.
 - d. Evaluate the website by measuring the number of hits from the old website to the new one.

Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization

During the April 28, 2010 meeting, the Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization received and accepted this report as the evaluation of the Public Participation Plan. Region 2000 Staff will carry out the following recommendations in accordance with the plan's approval:

1. As stated in the report, the CVMPO's web presence could be improved in order to make it more accessible to the public and to make the site more navigable. Region 2000 Staff will compile information that will be pertinent to fulfilling this recommendation and assist in the creation of an improved website. The website will be descriptive on the topics of jurisdictional boundary of the CVMPO, the responsibilities of the CVMPO, as well as current projects—mainly the Long Range Transportation Plan—that the CVMPO is involved in. The informational brochure described in recommendation #2 will also be available through the website, as well as a short media clip describing the content of the brochure.
2. To increase awareness and educate the public on the CVMPO, an informational brochure describing the CVMPO's involvement in various projects including the Long Range Transportation Plan will be developed and made available to the public via media outlets, public spaces, libraries, public meetings, the CVMPO's website and government buildings. The informational packet will educate the public on the responsibilities, tasks, and jurisdictional area of the CVMPO. Additionally, the brochure will include a glossary of transportation planning terms and acronyms pertinent to CVMPO projects.
3. Region 2000 Staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the CVMPO's outreach efforts by employing the following measurements. A contact database that is refreshed with each update to the Long Range Transportation Plan will be measured against the recommended contacts that the Public Participation Plan calls for. This measurement will guarantee that all interested parties are receiving meeting invitations from the CVMPO. Secondly, a database of the public meeting attendees will be stored and reviewed against the plan's recommended participants. Thirdly, the staff at Region 2000 will gauge outreach effectiveness by monitoring the number of website hits from the old website to the new website. These measures will help determine the effectiveness of outreach efforts and informing future plan evaluations.

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Appendix

The Metropolitan Planning Organization

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN for the

CENTRAL VIRGINIA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CVMPO)

Adopted: April 19, 2007

Revised: July 15, 2010 (Pending approval)

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 provided 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.

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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.

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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 minorities and low-income individuals.

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 concentrations.

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.

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.