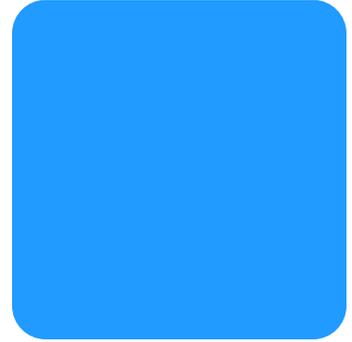


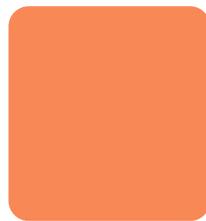
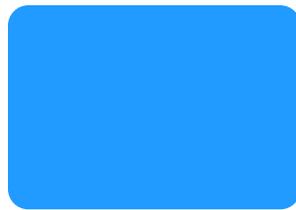
dialogue

engage

inform



Public Participation Plan



Longview
Metropolitan Planning Organization

PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH:

**CITY OF LONGVIEW
CITY OF WHITE OAK
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
GREGG COUNTY
HARRISON COUNTY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**APPROVED BY THE MPO POLICY BOARD
10/03/2012**

INTRODUCTION

The City of Longview, through its Planning Department, serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Longview Metropolitan Area. The metropolitan area includes the Cities of Longview & White Oak, and portions of Gregg and Harrison County. Federal regulations require the designation of an MPO to provide continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning for areas with an urbanized population of 50,000 or more. The public participation plan, along with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), emphasizes the importance of early, on-going public involvement in the transportation planning process.

It is the intent of the Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide every opportunity for the involvement of citizens, as well as staff and elected officials, in the transportation planning process. Recognizing the importance of public involvement, the Longview MPO implements the procedures outlined herein to insure that the public is fully informed about transportation issues and is given reasonable public access to transportation plans and project documents, and that the public has adequate opportunities to express their opinions and concerns about transportation issues in an orderly manner in an appropriate forum.

The public will have an opportunity to participate during all phases of the transportation planning process including development of short and long-term transportation plans, the creation of the public participation plan, the MPO staff work plan and land use plans for the City of Longview. The Public Participation Plan shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties and these parties shall have reasonable opportunities to comment on the participation plan, the short-term transportation plan and the long-term transportation plan. Public participation shall be available through the following formats: public notification, public meetings, public review, public comment, public appearances, project solicitation and the MPO website.

This plan shall be reviewed periodically in terms of its effectiveness of the public's involvement in the transportation planning process. The MPO Policy Board approves revisions to the public participation plan. Currently, federal regulations require a forty-five (45) day public comment and review period prior to revisions to this plan. The Longview MPO adopted its first Public Participation Plan in 1994. The Participation Plan was subsequently updated in 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2012.

MAP-21 REQUIREMENTS

On July 6, 2012, President Barack Obama signed into law the transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion, MAP-21 represents

the largest surface transportation investment in our nation's history. The bill authorizes transportation programs and projects for the two year period of 2012-2014. The three landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century – the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), shaped the highway program to meet the nation's changing transportation needs.

MAP-21 addresses the many challenges facing our transportation system today – challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment – as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. MAP-21 requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to consider planning strategies that will serve to advance eight transportation-planning factors identified under MAP-21 as follows:

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 non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized 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; and
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Originating with SAFETEA-LU and endorsed by MAP-21, the transportation legislation expands the listing of interested parties to be engaged during the development of the Public Participation Plan, the short-term and long-term transportation plans. These interested parties shall have reasonable opportunities to comment on projects of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.

Affected public agencies
Freight shippers
Private providers of transportation
Providers of freight transportation services
Representatives of public transportation employees

Representatives of the disabled
Representatives of users of public transportation
Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
Other interested parties

Various provisions of MAP-21 require expanded consultation and cooperation with Federal, State, Local and Tribal agencies responsible for land use, natural resources and other environmental issues during the adoption of long and short-term plans. The MPO shall consult with agencies responsible for historic preservation, natural resource conservation, environmental protection, and land use management, as appropriate, in the development of the short and long-term transportation plans. The following is a list of federal, state, local and tribal agencies which the Longview MPO or the Texas Department of Transportation may consult with:

Bureau of Land Management
Forest Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
General Land Office
Gregg County
Harrison County
Homeland Security
Local Historical Agencies
Local Land Use Plans (City and County)
Local Parks and Recreation Departments
Longview Economic Development Corporation (LEDCO)
Longview Chamber of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries
Planning & Zoning Commission
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
Texas Historical Commission
Texas Parks and Wildlife
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Border Patrol
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
U.S. Geological Survey
Tribal Agencies

In conjunction with the development of the long-term plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), environmental mitigation shall be discussed. A general discussion of potential environmental impacts, avoidance and mitigation activities shall be developed by the Longview MPO in consultation with federal, state, tribal agencies, environmental and other regulatory agencies. This discussion shall be included in the MTP and shall be directed at the policy or strategy level, not project specific.

Another element of MAP-21 emphasizes consultation with other planning agencies that have a direct or indirect tie to transportation planning. The MPO will expand, as appropriate, the methods to improve coordination with land use and economic development planning. As part of the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, the planning process will promote consistency of the transportation plans with state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

In order to better communicate transportation plans with the general public, MAP-21 also emphasizes the use of visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques may include charts and graphs, tables, Geographic Information System maps overlaid with data, computer simulation, photo manipulation and static maps. The intent for this technique is to better depict the programs and their impact on the public. The Longview MPO will utilize visualization techniques during the development of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Title VI of the 1962 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) states, "No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to the discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. President Bill Clinton's Executive Order issued on Environmental Justice in 1999 further amplifies Title VI by providing that "each federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." The Executive Order requires all federal agencies to establish internal policies to meet the requirements of Environmental Justice.

During the adoption of transportation plans, policies and programs, it is the Longview MPO's policy to ensure fair and full participation in the transportation planning process by all citizens who may be potentially affected. Public outreach to low-income and minority populations will be made by maintaining a distribution mailing list of community organizations and leaders, inviting them to public meetings or workshops and speaking at community meetings. Public notices for adoption of new or major updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or a new Transportation Improvement Program will be placed in free community newspapers, whenever possible, to reach the maximum extent of the low-income, minority and citizens in the area. Block ads informing the Hispanic community of the long-term plan adoption and where public surveys are available will be placed in the free community Spanish newspaper, La Opinion.

Prior to the adoption of new or major updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) or a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MPO will identify low-income and minority populations by traffic analysis zones or by census tracts, so the effects or burdens of transportation programs and on these groups can be reviewed and addressed to ensure transportation programs are distributed throughout the planning area fairly.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Longview Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a long-range planning document, which identifies transportation projects and programs for the next twenty-five years. The Plan addresses various aspects of transportation, such as: major streets and highways, traffic operations, maintenance, public transportation, freight, pedestrian and bicycle transportation. The long-term plan is updated every five years. Should the area be designated non-attainment for air quality standards, then the plan is updated every four years.

Two or more public meetings shall be held to present new or major updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) prior to its adoption. To the maximum extent practical, the public meetings will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. At least one of these meetings shall be held a minimum of thirty days prior to adoption of the plan. If possible, one of the meetings shall be videotaped and rebroadcast daily on Channel 5, to allow maximum publicity and exposure to the public. During the process of major updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a public notice shall be placed in a free community newspaper.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies and schedules transportation projects and programs to be constructed or implemented in the Longview Metropolitan Area for four years. The TIP is updated every two years.

A public meeting shall be held to present the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at least 10 days prior to its adoption. If possible, the meeting shall be videotaped and rebroadcast daily on Channel 5, to allow maximum publicity and exposure to the public. To the maximum extent practical, the public meeting will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. During the process of adopting a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a public notice shall be placed in a free community newspaper.

As a Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 recipient, Longview Transit projects are programmed into the Longview Transportation

Improvement Program (TIP). Both the planning regulations and Section 5307 require public participation. The planning regulations require that the metropolitan transportation planning process include a proactive participation plan that provides complete information, timely public notice, and reasonable public access to key decisions and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) allows a grantee, Longview Transit, to rely on locally adopted public participation requirements for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in lieu of the process required in the development of the Program of Projects (POP) if the grantee has coordinated with the MPO and ensured that the public is aware that the TIP development process is being used to satisfy the POP public participation requirements. To comply with this requirement, the Longview MPO's public participation process satisfies the grantee's public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP). When the Longview MPO publishes public notices of the TIP, the notice will have an explicit statement that public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review of and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements as follows: "This public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP development process will satisfy the FTA's Program of Projects requirements."

ANNUAL PROJECT LISTING

The Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization is required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (MAP-21) to publish or otherwise make available by the cooperative effort of the State, transit operator, and metropolitan planning organization for public review, an Annual Listing of Projects, including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. The listing shall be consistent with the funding categories identified in each metropolitan transportation improvement program (TIP). Although an entire project may be on a TIP, the obligation for a particular year may be for only a portion of that project (e.g., acquisition of right of way, or construction of only a portion of the project). In these cases, only the amount of the obligation for that particular year should appear on the Annual Listing. To aid public understanding, the Annual Listing for multi-year projects should also include the full project amount requested and the amount of funds remaining for use in subsequent years. This provision is intended to increase the transparency of government spending on transportation projects and strategies in metropolitan areas to State and local officials, and to the public at large.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Notification of all public meetings, public comment periods, and public review periods shall be placed at least 72 hours in advance in:

Longview News-Journal, and on the official bulletin boards of the Gregg County Courthouse, the Harrison County Courthouse, Longview City Hall and White Oak City Hall.

The local print and broadcast media agencies will receive notification of all public meetings and public comment periods at least 72 hours in advance. Notification of all public meetings, public comment periods, and public review periods shall be placed on the City of Longview's website. Certification of posting on official bulletin boards and a copy of the newspaper publication shall be obtained and retained in the MPO files for a period of three years.

MAILING LIST

The MPO shall maintain a distribution list of interested groups and individuals, including state, county, and local government officials, Chambers of Commerce, community groups, special interest groups, transportation providers, freight companies, etc. These individual stakeholders and groups shall also receive notices or flyers via regular mail or email notification at least 72 hours prior to any public meeting, public review period, or public comment period.

- Elected officials & legislators
- Transportation agencies (transit, rail, airport)
- Local governments (cities, counties, council of governments)
- Longview Economic Development Corporation
- Longview Partnership
- Major employers
- Local media (print, television and radio)
- Private freight shippers
- Provider of private freight transportation
- Private transportation providers (taxi)
- Bicycle interest groups
- Pedestrian interest groups
- Transit interest groups
- Disabled persons interest group
- Historical preservation groups
- Public library (for posting notices)
- Users of public transportation
- Local school districts
- Local colleges & universities
- Business and civic groups
- Social service organizations

- Native American Tribal Councils
- Special interest groups
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Other interested citizens

PUBLIC MEETINGS

All meetings of the MPO Policy Board and other public meetings shall be held in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The public shall be given an opportunity to participate at every public meeting. Public meetings shall be recorded on audio and/or videotape. Tape(s) shall be retained by the MPO for a period of three years. Public meetings held for the purpose of presentation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) shall be televised on local public access cable television, if possible. Those attending public meetings will be asked to sign a roster. The roster shall be retained by the MPO for a period of three years. The MPO shall prepare a summary of the meeting, documenting comments, speakers, and other information, and shall submit the information to TXDOT after the completion of a public comment period.

PUBLIC REVIEW

In order to allow the public an opportunity to review major plans in detail, a public review period shall be announced lasting a minimum of ten days before the adoption of Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and/or the Public Participation Plan (PPP). During the public review period, the MPO shall make available at the Longview Public Library and the MPO office a copy of the document(s) proposed for adoption. The public may review the documents at the library or MPO office during working hours. If possible, staff will be available to discuss the document or answer questions. The public review period may run concurrently with the public comment period.

PUBLIC COMMENT

To solicit public opinion, a public comment period shall be held for the period required by federal and state regulations or the number of days listed below, whichever is greater, prior to the adoption of the following documents:

- Transportation Improvement Program (10 days)
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (30 days)
- Revisions to the Public Participation Plan (45 days)

Notice of the comment period will be advertised in the Longview newspaper and various other area newspapers. The public notice will also be mailed to the MPO's mailing list of interested parties. Any significant oral or written comments received during the public comment period shall be summarized along with a report on the disposition of comments in the final Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A copy of the summary and disposition report shall be sent to the TXDOT, Tyler office. The summary and disposition report shall be retained in the MPO files for a three-year period.

PROJECT SOLICITATION

At least six months prior to the adoption of a major update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the MPO shall solicit from the public ideas for improvements to the transportation system to be considered as part of the updated Transportation Plan. Solicitation may be in the form of a published questionnaire, survey, a public meeting, or other means. These ideas shall be reviewed by the MPO staff and MPO Technical Committee and will be considered for incorporation into the Plan.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Requests for public records or information will be handled in accordance with the Open Records Act of Texas, as well as, the City of Longview Procedure of Requests for Records.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

The MPO shall make every effort to comply with requests from civic or professional groups, organizations, or committees to present or discuss information related to the work of the MPO, Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The organization should contact the MPO and allow ample time for the MPO to make arrangements to attend.

INTERNET

It is the goal of the Metropolitan Planning Organization to make public information available in electronically accessible format to afford reasonable opportunities for consideration of public comment and opinion. The official website of the Longview MPO shall be utilized to post public notices for public

meetings and to post various planning documents. The MPO's website will have these MPO documents available for public access: the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Annual Project Listing and the Unified Planning Work Program. The MPO will provide a user-friendly website containing other pertinent transportation information such as newsletters, agendas, meeting minutes, and links to outside agencies. The website will provide an opportunity for citizen feedback.

For additional information, please contact:

**Karen Owen
Longview MPO Director
Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization
(903) 237-1062 office
(903) 291-5328 fax**

Mailing address:

**Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization
P.O. Box 1952
Longview, TX 75606**

Office address:

**410 S. High Street
Longview, TX 75601**

Email:

mpo@LongviewTexas.gov

Website:

www.LongviewTexas.gov