

Draft Participation Plan

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

I. BACKGROUND

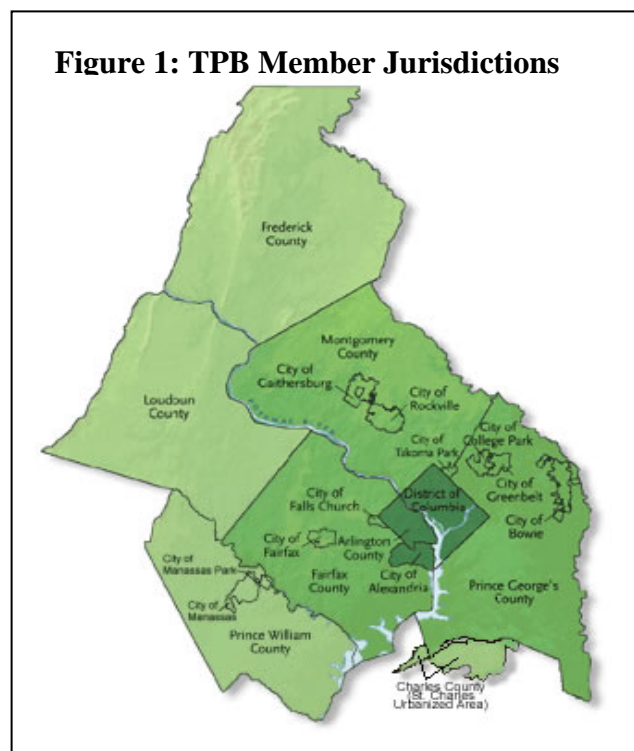
The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is designated under federal law as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington region. As an MPO, the TPB brings together key decision-makers to coordinate planning and funding for the region's transportation system. The TPB relies on advisory committees and participation from interested parties in order to make informed decisions.

This Participation Plan is required by the 2005 federal transportation reauthorization legislation, known as the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU). The plan builds on previous efforts designed to encourage participation in the TPB process and provide reasonable opportunities to be involved with the metropolitan transportation planning process.

As required by federal regulation, the plan has been developed in consultation with affected parties. In addition, federal regulations require the plan to be released for a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days before it is adopted by the TPB, which is scheduled for the fall of 2007.

Transportation Planning Board

The TPB was created in 1965 by the region's local and state governments to respond to federal highway legislation in 1962 that required the establishment of a "continuing, comprehensive and coordinated" transportation planning process in every urbanized area in the United States. The TPB's membership is comprised of the key transportation decision-makers in the metropolitan Washington region. The board includes local officials— mayors, city council members, county board members and others-- as well as representatives from the state



transportation agencies, the transit authorities and the state legislatures. The TPB also includes non-voting representatives from key federal agencies, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and the TPB's Private Providers Task Force.

The TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) in 1966. COG was established in 1957 by local cities and counties to deal with regional concerns including growth, housing, environment, public health and safety—as well as transportation. Although the TPB is an independent body, its staff is provided by COG's Department of Transportation Planning.

The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region. In particular, federal law and regulations relating to the work of MPOs, require the TPB to adopt a long-range transportation plan, which is known as the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) in the Washington region, and a six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TPB must also ensure compliance with other federal laws and requirements, including federal air quality conformity requirements and planning factors specified in SAFETEA-LU.

In addition to ensuring compliance with federal laws and requirements, the TPB performs many other functions, including providing a regional forum for coordination policy-making, and providing technical resources for transportation decision-making.

The TPB receives input and guidance from advisory committees comprised of members of the public, special interest groups, and jurisdictional staff. A list of these committees is provided in Appendix A and they will be discussed in greater detail in the Participation Strategy.

Previous Public Involvement Process Documents

The TPB first adopted a Public Involvement Process in 1994 to fulfill the requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. The TPB amended this document in 1998 in response to the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The 1998 Public Involvement Process includes a policy statement and general requirements for public involvement in the TPB process. It also contains a list of 14 specific activities designed to solicit participation and provide support for the policy statement and general requirements and criteria. The requirements of the 2005 federal transportation act, SAFETEA-LU, necessitated the development of a Participation Plan, which will replace the previous Public Involvement Process.

Federal Requirements

This Participation Plan is intended to fulfill the current federal requirements for a Participation Plan outlined in the federal transportation reauthorization legislation of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU). For the first time, SAFETEA-LU calls for metropolitan planning organizations, including the

TPB, to develop a Participation Plan. The new law stipulates that this plan will be developed in consultation with “interested parties.”

In addition to requiring a Participation Plan, SAFETEA-LU has expanded earlier versions of federal transportation law to include the following guidelines and requirements:

- The definition of “interested parties” to be engaged in metropolitan transportation planning has been expanded.
- Publish or make available for public view transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible times and locations.
- Make information available in electronically accessible formats to the maximum extent possible.
- Employ visualization techniques to depict metropolitan transportation plans.¹

2007 Evaluation of Public Involvement Activities

To provide strategic input for this Participation Plan, the TPB in 2006 procured the services of the firm Circle Point to conduct a review of public involvement activities and offer recommendations for updating the TPB’s official public participation policies to meet the new federal guidelines under SAFETEA-LU. This was the second time the TPB has contracted with a consultant to evaluate its public involvement activities; an independent review in 1998 informed the amendments to the Public Involvement Process in 1999.

The Circle Point report, “Evaluation of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board Public Involvement Activities,” contains an overview of best practices in participation from Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) across the country, synthesizes TPB stakeholder interviews on public involvement activities, and provides recommendations for improving many of the current TPB outreach activities and refining TPB materials in order to inspire participation from stakeholders.

Among the many comments a found in the Circle Point report, TPB staff has identified several key recommendations, which have been addressed in the new Participation Plan:

- **Strategically plan outreach activities.** The TPB should be more deliberate about goals and about the choices it makes in the public participation activities it pursues and the tools it uses. Specific and measurable goals that are tailored to each constituency are important for an effective participation program.
- **Improve integration of public involvement activities.** The TPB has made a number of recent enhancements in public participation, but it needs to comprehensively examine how various public involvement activities fit together and to identify where gaps remain.

¹ The complete language of the federal regulations may be found in Appendix B.

- **Move beyond a “one size fits all” approach.** Different types of audiences and constituencies need different types of participation tools. Each TPB constituency has different information needs and opportunities for involvement.
- **Work toward developing a “regional story” that is clear and compelling.** The evaluation noted that most current TPB publications and the website are geared toward individuals who are already knowledgeable about the TPB process.
- **Evaluation of involvement efforts and strategies should occur more frequently.** This could include self-appraisal by TPB staff and as-needed evaluation of program effectiveness by third parties.

Addressing Continuing Challenges

In addition to responding to the recommendations noted above, this Participation Plan acknowledges and addresses a number of continuing challenges that reflect the transportation planning context in the Washington region.

Unrealistic expectations of the TPB process. Given the fact that project-level planning usually occurs at the state and local levels, the TPB’s plans and processes are often not the appropriate or most effective venues for public involvement. The TPB must work to align expectations for public involvement with the actual decision-making process. Through publications such as the Citizen’s Guide and outreach events such as the Community Leadership Institute, the TPB in recent years has improved the information provided to the public and other constituencies about where and how transportation decisions are made. This Participation Plan is designed to tailor the ways in which staff can go further in building public knowledge about the transportation planning process to encourage meaningful public involvement at various stages of that process.

The annual nature of the TPB planning cycle. Although federal law requires only every four years, in practice the TPB’s primary documents, the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), are updated every year to incorporate project submissions from the state departments of transportation and local jurisdictions. The practice by the TPB and the region’s implementing agencies of treating the CLRP and TIP as “living documents” has implications for public involvement strategies. The TPB and TPB staff recognize that this continuous update cycle for regional plans can make it difficult for members of the public and other constituencies to understand when public comment is being solicited and for what purposes. To a large degree, public participation tools and activities must encourage citizen involvement on an ongoing basis.

Limited resources. The demand for public involvement and outreach will always be greater than the TPB’s available resources. This Participation Plan recognizes that the TPB must be strategic in designing a public participation program that is cognizant of the fact that all of the people in the region have varying levels of understanding about regional transportation planning and different informational needs.

Special needs of traditionally underserved communities. As a matter of long-standing TPB policy and a requirement of federal law, the regional transportation planning process must take special efforts to consider the concerns of traditionally underserved communities, including low-income and minority communities and people with disabilities. To ensure these concerns are heard, the TPB founded the Access for All Advisory Committee in 2001. This Participation Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the TPB's outreach to these communities.

II. POLICY, GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

This Participation Policy articulates the TPB's commitment to a transparent interface with the public to support the regional transportation planning process, including the development of the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the TPB to provide public access and involvement under a true collaborative planning process to develop the CLRP and TIP in which the interests of all of the stakeholders - public and private - are reflected and considered. Accordingly, it is the TPB's intent to make both its policy and technical process inclusive of and accessible to all of these stakeholders. The TPB notes in structuring this public involvement process that many additional opportunities for access and involvement exist at the state and local jurisdictional levels through local, subregional, and state sponsored activities associated with transportation planning in the Washington region.

Policy Goals

Participation in the TPB process is designed to be goal-oriented. The policy statement provides a philosophy around which to build a regional transportation participation program that will accomplish the following:

- *Effective communication and messaging of information leading to knowledgeable, informed constituencies.* The TPB will disseminate information about programs and projects through a variety of conduits. Information will be presented in a manner that is clear and tailored to each of the TPB's constituencies.
- *Involvement from diverse participants and opportunities for constituency building.* The TPB will continue to encourage participation from diverse constituencies and to provide forums for discussion about transportation issues that are unique to different constituencies.
- *Open access to information and participation.* The TPB will work to improve access to technical and planning documents and where appropriate, tailor these documents to be accessible to more constituencies. Participation in TPB meetings and in Committee meetings will be clearly defined and provided for at each meeting.
- *Reception of public comment and provision of meaningful feedback to constituencies.* The TPB will provide information on how comments will be considered in the planning process, including the development of the CLRP and TIP, and acknowledge that comments were received and considered.

Participation Activities

NOTE: FOR THE PURPOSES OF REVIEWING THIS DRAFT, THIS SECTION INCLUDES STRIKEOUTS AND UNDERLINED TEXT (indicating new text) TO INDICATE HOW THE NEW LIST OF ACTIVITIES HAS CHANGED FROM THE 1998 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS.

The TPB will carry out the following specific activities in support of the above policy statement and policy goals:

- Ensure the TPB follows federal requirements for public involvement, including a public comment period of at least 30 days prior to the approval of the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and other major documents, and the development and consideration of written responses to comments received.

NEW

- Dedicate a period of time (~~approximately twenty minutes~~) during at the beginning of each TPB meeting for public comment by interested citizens and groups on transportation issues under consideration by the TPB, and provide follow-up acknowledgment and response as appropriate.
- Maintain and expand the COG/TPB website to provide comprehensive information on TPB activities and offer online opportunities for public comment.

~~Post on an Internet Web site the TPB guide to public involvement, an annual calendar of regularly scheduled TPB meetings, TPB News, and to the extent feasible and appropriate, the same materials as are mailed to the TPB and TPB Technical Committee and its subcommittees, as well as other relevant TPB materials.~~

- Prepare and update as necessary reports, guidebooks, brochures and other publications to explain the regional transportation planning process and key issues facing the TPB.

~~Prepare and update as necessary a guide to TPB goals and expectations for public involvement in transportation planning in the Washington region, including information about the regional transportation planning process, the relationship between the TPB and other state, regional, and local agencies, and how transportation projects are developed and funded.~~

- Publish and distribute the monthly TPB newsletter to inform as broad a regional audience as possible of the activities of the TPB.

~~Expand the distribution of the monthly newsletter, TPB News (first issued in December 1992), to inform as broad a regional audience as possible of the activities of the TPB and CAC. The newsletter will be distributed to any person or group requesting it. The newsletter will include a summary of the previous monthly TPB meeting, key agenda items for the next monthly TPB meeting, a calendar of all TPB Committee/Subcommittee meetings over the coming two months, a brief summary of the previous CAC meeting, an announcement of the time and place for the next CAC meeting, and other relevant news items.~~

- ~~Establish and Maintain the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in accordance with section VII.c of the TPB Bylaws, with the participation of individual citizens and representatives of environmental, business, and civic interests concerned with regional transportation matters as well as representatives of minority, low-income, and disabled groups. The missions and operating procedures for the CAC are provided in Appendix C and D of this Participation Plan.~~

THE CAC MISSION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN MOVED TO APPENDICES C AND D. THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF THE CAC BULLET REMAINS THE SAME AS IN 1998 WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE CHANGES NOTED ABOVE.

- Maintain the Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA), which advises the TPB on transportation issues, programs, policies and services that are important to low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities.

NEW

- Conduct and develop training workshops, such as the TPB's Community Leadership Institute, to engage members of the informed and interested public who have not been typically involved in the regional transportation planning process.

NEW

- Conduct and participate in public forums and workshops across the region to provide information to citizens and obtain comment on key regional transportation issues. When appropriate, TPB staff will incorporate interactive techniques into public forums to more fully engage participants.

~~Hold special public forums and workshops at convenient locations and times to inform and obtain comment from interested citizens and groups on key actions to be taken by the TPB, including the development and review of the six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), and the analysis of the TIP and CLRP conformity to State(s) or Federal Implementation Plans for attaining and maintaining federal air quality standards. Identify opportunities to provide information to the public on regional transportation plans, programs, and issues, including placing staffed, temporary information booths at convenient locations.~~

- Publicize special TPB meetings, forums, and workshops prominently in ~~local~~ appropriate newspapers and on radio and TV, ~~including cable TV bulletin boards.~~
- Seek media coverage through radio and TV programs and newspaper ~~op-ed pieces~~ of issues before the TPB.
- Seek participation by TPB members and staff in meetings of citizen, business, environmental, and other organizations interested in regional transportation matters.

NO CHANGE FROM 1998 PROCESS

- Use representative polling techniques, well-designed focus groups, and the Internet to obtain the views of the public on key regional transportation issues.

NO CHANGE FROM 1998 PROCESS

- Maintain active communication and consultation with the Board of Directors and other interested committees at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

NO CHANGE FROM 1998 PROCESS

- Provide access to the ~~specialized~~ technical and policy activities of the TPB through open attendance at meetings of the TPB Technical Committee and its Subcommittees. The chairs of TPB committees and subcommittees will recognize members of the public who wish to ask questions or make comments at these meetings, to the maximum extent possible under the time constraints imposed by the agendas.

NO CHANGE FROM 1998 PROCESS (except one word deletion)

THE FOLLOWING BULLET AND SUB-BULLETS HAVE BEEN REORDERED AND MODIFIED AS INDICATED:

- Ensure further that reasonable public access is provided to technical and policy information used in the TPB process through the following activities:
 - Invite members of the public to ~~request copies of~~ review reports and other technical information (other than proprietary software or legally confidential data). ~~These requests will be handled as follows~~ The TPB will encourage dissemination of information through the following means:
 - [THIS POINT HAS BEEN REWRITTEN AND MOVED TO THE TOP OF THE LIST] Post all publicly available TPB documents on the TPB website, and otherwise seek opportunities to make suitable reports and technical information available through the TPB website.

~~OLD LANGUAGE: TPB staff will seek opportunities to make suitable reports and technical information available through electronic bulletin board services.~~

- Relevant reports and technical information will be distributed free of charge at meetings of the TPB and its committees and subcommittees. ~~To the extent practical within budget limitations, relevant reports and technical information will also be made available free of charge for other meetings and outreach activities related to TPB activities.~~
- ~~In circumstances other than (a)~~ At times other than the meetings of the TPB and its committees and subcommittees, requests for reports and technical information will be fulfilled on an "at cost" basis, including duplication costs

and staff time associated with responding to the requests. For state and local agencies, WMATA, and consultants under contract to these agencies, miscellaneous services budgets specified in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) can be used to cover these costs, once written approval has been obtained from the appropriate state agency or WMATA. For other organizations, a direct charge will be made to the requesting organization.

- Provide comprehensive descriptions of the technical and policy procedures used in the TPB process in terms understandable to the public. These descriptions will be updated as new procedures are developed and adopted.
- Invite members of the public to participate in the review of technical work programs and analysis results through attendance at the appropriate technical committee and subcommittee meetings, and the TPB meetings. In addition to participation in these meetings, concerns and issues on such technical work can be raised formally with the TPB either through the CAC or by raising the concern during the public comment period provided at each TPB meeting.
- Provide at least one formal public meeting during the development process for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

NEW

- Consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the metropolitan planning area that are affected by transportation (including state and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate the planning process for developing the TIP and CLRP (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities.

NEW

- Establish a mechanism for continuing evaluation of the TPB public involvement activities.

NEW

~~COMPLETELY DELETED: Provide fact sheets about TPB outreach activities to interested groups to insert into their regular mailings.~~

Accommodations Policy

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the Transportation Planning Board are committed to the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is COG/TPB policy to provide equal access for individuals with disabilities to programs, meetings,

publications, and activities including employment. Special accommodations will be provided by the Council of Governments upon request. Reasonable accommodations may include modifications or adjustments to a program, publication, activity, or the way things usually are done to enable an individual with a disability to participate. Examples include:

- Providing sign language interpreters;
- Providing materials in alternative formats (large print or electronic copies);
- Providing tables that are “higher” than normal meeting room tables for people using electric wheelchairs;
- Alerting security staff that persons with disabilities will need assistance to the meeting room;
- Alerting COG garage attendants that a person with a disability will be needing disabled parking spaces;
- Offering individuals to participate in meetings through conference calls and other accommodations as necessary.

Meetings and Events

Translation services in sign language and Spanish are available upon request for meetings that are open to the public. Other accommodations, such as special seating requirements, can also be arranged. Please allow up to seven business days to process your request.

Publications

Most publications are available on the website. For information on locating reports, meeting agendas, presentations and other documents, go to:

www.mwcog.org/accommodations/#publications.

Alternative formats of publications are also available upon request. Please allow up to seven business days to process your request.

Advance Notice Requested for Interpreting or CART Services

An individual needing a sign language interpreter or Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) service to participate in a meeting or event should request the interpreter service within seven days in advance of the event. If the event is more than 12 interpreting hours, such as a two day conference, COG asks that the request be made 14 days in advance. Late requests will be handled based upon the availability of service(s).

To make a request:

Phone: 202-962-3300

TDD: 202-962-3213

Email: Office of Public Affairs

III. PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

The strategic key to the implementation of this Participation Plan is the identification of different types of constituencies who possess varying levels of knowledge about transportation and the TPB process. The Participation Strategy tailors public involvement activities to serve the diverse needs of these constituencies.

Constituencies

This Participation Plan identifies three broad types of constituencies:

- ***The Involved Public*** is both knowledgeable about transportation policy issues in general, as well as the TPB's role in the regional transportation planning process and the regional challenges raised by the TPB. These individuals and organizations already participate in the regional transportation planning dialogue.
- ***The Informed Public*** has some knowledge of transportation policy issues, but is not familiar with the TPB's role in the regional transportation planning process and the regional challenges raised by the TPB.
- ***The Interested Public*** has an inherent interest in transportation challenges, but possesses little direct knowledge of transportation policy issues.

Each of these different types of constituencies includes a wide spectrum of members, including individuals, interest groups, community leaders, and elected officials.

Serving Different Constituencies

1. The Involved Public

Who they are:

This category of the public includes interest groups and citizens who already actively participate in the TPB process and have a thorough understanding of regional transportation issues and policy. Among others, this category includes the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee and the Access for All Advisory Committee.

Goals for serving this constituency:

The TPB will seek to:

- Recognize and support the vital contributions of citizens who are already active in the TPB process.

- Utilize the expertise and commitment of involved individuals and groups to inform the TPB's decision-making.
- Support these individuals and groups in their efforts to disseminate information about regional transportation planning to their communities.

Tools for serving the “involved public”:

The TPB will continue to provide the following existing tools, and some cases enhance these mechanisms and activities, in order to serve members of the public who are already involved in the TPB process. For more information on tools, see Appendix D.

- *Access to Information*
 - Provide pertinent documents in a clear location on the website.
 - Ensure documents are available with enough time for review.
- *Public comment process*
 - Provide information on how comments will be considered in the planning process.
 - Acknowledge that comments have been received.
- *Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)*
 - Facilitate the CAC in its continuing efforts to provide clear, region-oriented advice to the TPB.
 - Encourage a broad membership on the CAC so that a variety of interests are represented.
- *Access for All Advisory Committee (AFA)*
 - Facilitate the AFA in its continuing efforts to advise the TPB on the transportation concerns of low-income and minority communities and people with disabilities.
- *Publications and Website*
 - Provide information that is pertinent to the involved public.
 - Regularly assess whether the information needs of involved citizens are being met through the TPB's publications.
- *Public Meetings*
 - Encourage already involved citizens to attend public meetings and share their knowledge with their peers.

2. The Informed Public

Who they are:

For the purposes of this Participation Plan, the term “informed public” represents individuals and groups who are not currently involved in the regional transportation planning process although they are knowledgeable about transportation policy issues. In many cases, they may be active as community leaders at the local or state level.

Goals for serving this constituency:

The TPB will seek to:

- Provide information and knowledge about regional transportation issues that will empower community leaders and other members of the informed public to positively affect transportation decision-making at the local and state levels.
- Utilize the informed public and community leaders as conduits to disseminate information about regional transportation issues at the grassroots.
- Encourage the informed public to get involved in the regional transportation planning process at the TPB.

Tools for serving the “informed public”:

The TPB will use the following tools so that informed citizens can more effectively influence decision making in their communities and so that these citizens are encouraged to get involved in the TPB process. For more information on tools, see Appendix D.

- *Access to Information*
 - Ensure that information on the web and provided in public documents is clearly labeled and is not hidden.
- *Public Comment*
 - Encourage informed citizens who are not typically heard at the TPB to participate in public comment processes, especially the public comment period preceding every TPB meeting.
- *Citizens Advisory Committee*
 - Ensure that the CAC reflects new and fresh perspectives by recruiting informed citizens to become committee members.
 - Provide individualized support to new CAC members who may be overwhelmed by the complexity of the TPB process.
- *Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee*
 - Continue to recruit informed community leaders to serve on the Access for All Committee.
 - Provide individualized support to new AFA members who may be overwhelmed by the complexity of the TPB process.
- *Publications and Website*
 - Develop simple and compelling documents and web material that help informed citizens better understand the connections between regional challenges and the local issues they are already involved in.
 - Consider developing abridged versions of the TPB Citizens Guide and other materials.
- *Public Meetings*
 - Hold more forums, which are designed to both educate the informed public and solicit input from them.
 - Use community leaders and other “informed citizens” to help organize forums.
 - Document the feedback received at public meetings so that it is meaningful and useful for decision makers at the TPB and in other decision-making bodies.
- *Training workshops*
 - Conduct sessions of the Community Leadership Institute more frequently.

- Follow-up with graduates of the Institute to encourage them to become involved in the TPB process and regional decision making.

3. The Interested Public

Who they are:

For the purposes of the document, the “interested public” includes people with very limited knowledge about specific transportation planning issues, especially the details of projects and plans. They are, however, familiar with the growing problems of getting around in the region, and they are interested in learning about possible solutions. This group includes the “general public,” but it may also include community leaders or even elected officials who have limited exposure to transportation planning at any level.

Goals for serving this constituency:

The TPB will seek to:

- Make available basic information on regional transportation and land use challenges to create a more informed voting public.
- Increase the capacity of interested citizens to understand transportation and land use issues so that some of them might become “informed” and even “involved.”
- Understand that most members of the general public may not become more engaged in transportation planning activities and therefore, it is most important that outreach activities for interested citizens should focus on basic issues, not planning processes or institutions.

Tools for serving the “interested public”:

The TPB will use the following tools to provide basic information and outreach opportunities to the interested public. For more information on tools, see Appendix D.

- *Access to Information*
 - Ensure that interested citizens can quickly find information on the Web.
 - Ensure that staff quickly responds to requests for information and documents.
- *Public Comment*
 - Solicit input from the general public through opinion surveys or focus groups.
- *Publications and Web materials*
 - Develop brochures on regional transportation and land use challenges with limited text and extensive graphic imagery.
- *Public Meetings*
 - Seek to be sensitive to the presence of interested citizens who have limited knowledge and engage them as effectively as possible.
 - Provide written and other visual information at each meeting describing key issues and explaining acronyms.
 - Seek to engage citizens and organizations on their “own turf.”

	<u>Involvement Public</u>	<u>Informed Public</u>	<u>Interested Public</u>
Committees	TPB Technical Committee and Subcommittees		
	Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)		
	Access for All Committee (AFA)		
Documents and Publications	Forecasting, Modeling, and Scenario Planning Reports		
	Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)		
	Visualization Techniques		
	TPB Newsletter		
	<i>The Region Magazine</i>		
	A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Decision-Making		
Outreach and Education	Collaboration with States and Jurisdictions		
	MWCOG / TPB Website		
		CLRP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Public Hearings	
		Media and Messaging	
		Leadership Training and Development	
	Scenario Planning Presentations and Related Outreach Materials		

IV. Implementation

Implementation of the Participation Plan will occur through an annual Participation Program that will be consistent with the Public Participation element in the TPB's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Participation Program will synthesize elements from the Policy, Goals, Activities and Strategy to guide the public involvement efforts of TPB staff on a yearly basis.

The annual Participation Program will include outreach and education efforts to increase participation in the TPB process from interested and informed constituencies, as well as efforts to sustain participation from involved constituencies. Not only will this assist staff in scheduling for the year, but it will allow interested parties to understand the involvement and outreach efforts that are programmed.

The Participation Program will be developed annually in two parts:

- a. In the period from January to March, TPB staff will develop a budget and broad goals for public participation activities for inclusion in the UPWP, which the TPB typically approves in March for the fiscal year beginning on July 1.
- b. In the period from April to June, consistent with the parameters established in the UPWP, TPB staff will develop a more detailed Participation Program for the fiscal year. This program will establish an anticipated schedule of activities and products for the year. The process for developing the program will include a staff evaluation of recent public involvement activities, and discussions with TPB committees and stakeholders regarding public involvement needs and opportunities in the coming year.

Following the approval of this Participation Plan in the fall of 2007, TPB staff will develop a Participation Program for the remainder of FY2008. This program will be consistent with the Public Participation elements in the FY2008 UPWP, which the TPB approved in March 2007. Changes to the FY2008 UPWP could be made if warranted.

Appendices

Appendix A: Participation Plan Development outreach efforts

The TPB receives input and guidance from advisory committees comprised of members of the public, special interest groups, and jurisdictional staff. The Access for All Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee were discussed in detail in the Plan, due to the public nature of their composition and their ability to relate to the differing constituency groups.

- Access for All Committee
- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Human Service Transportation Coordination Task Force
- Private Providers Task Force
- Steering Committee
- Task Force on Value Pricing for Transportation
- Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems Policy & Technical Task Forces advise the TPB on matters of transportation operations and management, and receive input from the following subcommittees:
 - Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program Steering Committee
 - Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture Working Group
 - Traffic Signals Working Group
 - Traveler Information Working Group
- TPB Technical Committee is comprised of transportation planners from the jurisdictions, as well as the transit agencies and departments of transportation. The Technical Committee reviews transportation projects and programs and makes recommendations to the TPB on action items. The Technical Committee receives input from several subcommittees:
 - Aviation Technical Subcommittee
 - Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee
 - Regional Bus Subcommittee
 - Travel Forecasting Subcommittee
 - Transportation Scenarios Subcommittee
 - Travel Management Subcommittee

The following discuss the outreach to various TPB committees during the development of the Participation Plan.

Citizens Advisory Committee

May 10, 2007

TPB staff provided background information on the TPB Public Involvement Process and the Evaluation of TPB public involvement activities. Staff then conducted an exercise designed to give the CAC a better understanding of the constituencies. To guide discussion, a challenge facing the participation in the TPB process was posed: “TPB publications and the website are too technical.” Responses included:

- Public involvement activities need to respond to local issues because citizens find it difficult to relate to a regional framework.
- Reaching out and communicating effectively is a serious professional undertaking and the TPB should work with professionals to perform this work correctly.
- It is not the TPB's job to communicate directly with the public. The TPB should work more extensively with the media to do this.
- The documents that are available are fine for many of the people that participate in the TPB process.

June 14, 2007

Access for All Committee

April 26, 2007

TPB staff presented information about the Evaluation, the purpose of the Participation Plan, and the timeline for the completion of the Plan. Staff answered questions about the Evaluation and the Participation Plan, and discussed initiatives staff is taking to include populations represented by the AFA both in the development of the Plan and TPB outreach efforts in general. This included presenting information about the Community Leadership Institute. Several comments regarding the Participation Plan from AFA members included:

- Conduct outreach to faith-based leaders during the development of the Participation Plan, as well as to gain input on TPB activities. AFA members said that Faith-based Organizations are a vital tool in reaching out to the region's under-served populations.
- Include outreach to Parent-Teacher Associations from around the region in the Participation Plan, potentially using the RMAS Study as a way to reach out to these organizations.
- Host outreach meetings in the surrounding jurisdictions, as many people who may be interested in transportation cannot make the trip to the COG offices.

June 21, 2007

TPB Technical Committee

May 4, 2007

TPB staff provided background information on the TPB Public Involvement Process and the Evaluation of TPB public involvement activities. In addition, staff discussed efforts surrounding the update of the Process through the development of the SAFETEA-LU compliant Participation Plan, including discussion of the outline of the Plan and the timeline for completion.

Comments from the Technical Committee included:

- Concern about the inclusion of Limited-English Proficient (LEP) communities in both the development and content of the Participation Plan.
- The comparison of TPB's Participation Plan with the jurisdictions' participation plans, as well as the DOT plans.
- Concerns about avenues for outer-jurisdictional residents to participate without having to make the long trip to COG offices.

- Using the Participation Plan to incentivize participation by telling potential participants why they should be involved.

July 6, 2007

Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee

May 15, 2007

Staff provided the subcommittee with a draft outline of the Participation Plan and offered to answer any questions they had. Members of the subcommittee were encouraged to provide comments to the outline. They were told that staff would return in July to discuss the draft Participation Plan.

July X, 2007

Ad-Hoc Freight Committee

The TPB engaged the services of a consultant in the Spring of 2007 to determine the ability to incorporate freight planning and input in the TPB process. Preliminary recommendations from the draft final report, “Enhancing Consideration of Freight in Regional Transportation Planning,” include:

- Create a Freight Subcommittee: this committee will be one of the primary catalysts for outreach to both private and public sector stakeholders. Members of the Freight Subcommittee represent a link to both private sector industries and to public sector representatives and should serve as a conduit of information in both directions.
- Create and maintain contact lists: the TPB should involve a wider group of goods movement constituents in ad hoc outreach activities. The first step in this process is the development of a contact list of stakeholders. A special note should be made of individuals who indicate an interest in becoming active in freight issues.

Appendix B: Federal Regulations

The TPB will fulfill all of the requirements and criteria provided for public involvement under 23 CFR §450.316 and §450.324 of Subpart C-Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming of 23 CFR Part 450 (Federal Highway Administration) published in the Federal Register on Wednesday, February 14, 2007, as follows:

§ 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, 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 reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all

- interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
- (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
 - (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
 - (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
 - (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
 - (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
 - (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
 - (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
 - (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
- (2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
 - (3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- (b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

- (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
 - (2) Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
 - (3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.
- (c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under § 450.314.

§ 450.324 Development and content of the transportation improvement program (TIP).

...

(b) The MPO shall provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP as required by §450.316(a). In addition, in nonattainment area TMAs, the MPO shall provide at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process, which should be addressed through the participation plan described in §450.316(a). In addition, the TIP shall be published or otherwise made readily available by the MPO for public review, including (to the maximum extent practicable) in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web, as described in §450.316(a).

Appendix C: Mission Statements for TPB Advisory Committees

TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

The mission of the CAC is:

- to promote public involvement in transportation planning for the National Capital Region; and
- to provide independent, region-oriented citizen advice to the TPB on transportation plans, programs, and issues in the Region, including responding to requests from the TPB for comment on specific issues or subject matter.

TPB Access for All Advisory Committee

The Access for All Advisory Committee advises the TPB on transportation issues, programs, policies, and services that are important to low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities. The mission of this committee is to identify concerns of low-income and minority populations and persons with disabilities, and to determine whether and how these issues might be addressed within the TPB process.

Appendix D: Operating Procedures for the TPB Citizens Advisory Committee

NOTE: FOR REVIEW PURPOSES, THIS SECTION INCLUDES STRIKEOUTS AND UNDERLINES TO INDICATE CHANGES FROM THE 1998 PROCESS.

- The CAC shall have 15 members approved by the TPB. Membership appointments shall be recommended to the TPB as follows:
 - A term of membership in the CAC will begin in February and end in January of the following calendar year.
 - By the end of ~~November~~ December of each calendar year, the then current CAC shall designate six individuals to serve on the CAC for the next calendar year. These six individuals, two from each of the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia, should represent the environmental, business, and civic interests in transportation, including appropriate representation from low-income, minority, and disabled groups and from the geographical area covered by the TPB.
 - Following receipt of the six designees from the CAC, the TPB officers shall nominate an additional nine members, three from each of the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. These nine members should represent the environmental, business and civic interests in transportation, including appropriate representation from low-income, minority and disabled groups and from the geographical area served by the TPB.
 - The Chair of the CAC for each calendar year shall be appointed from the 15 members by the Chair of the TPB for that calendar year. The CAC shall elect two Vice Chairs such that the Chair and Vice Chairs are from the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia.
 - The appointments to the CAC for each calendar year shall be approved by the TPB no later than the ~~January~~ February meeting of the TPB.
- The CAC shall meet at least two days prior to the day of each TPB meeting. Mailout materials for the TPB meeting shall be available for the CAC meeting. ~~At least six of the CAC meetings each calendar year shall be held outside of the COG offices, with two meetings in each of the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. The meeting locations shall be rotated over time so that each of the TPB member jurisdictions has an opportunity to host a CAC meeting.~~ The schedule of meeting times and locations for the calendar year shall be developed by the CAC at its first meeting of the calendar year, and notice of the schedule shall be provided to the general public.
- The CAC chair shall encourage members of the general public to participate in the discussions at the CAC meetings to the maximum extent possible under the time constraints imposed by the agendas.

- The CAC Chair shall prepare a report on the CAC meeting which shall be made available to the TPB members at least one day prior to the day of the TPB meeting. Time (up to ten minutes maximum) shall be reserved on each TPB meeting agenda for the CAC Chair to report to the Board on CAC activities.
- TPB staff shall be available at the CAC meetings to brief the CAC on TPB procedures and activities as requested, and to answer questions. TPB staff shall assist the CAC Chair in preparing meeting agendas, assembling and mailing meeting materials to CAC members, and preparing the CAC Chair's Report to the TPB.
- An evaluation of the activities of the CAC shall be provided to the TPB by the Chair of the CAC ~~by the end of November each January. for the first three years, and thereafter every three years to correspond to the triennial federal certification process.~~

Appendix E: Overview of Participation Activities and Products

The TPB has numerous products and activities through which it provides information and solicits input on transportation planning projects and programs.

As the TPB moves to implement this Participation Plan, gaps in participation may be identified through review of the various committees, products, tools and activities that TPB staff rely upon to increase engagement in the regional transportation dialogue. TPB staff will analyze participation activities with a focus on how the TPB can use staff resources more effectively to ensure broad participation from all constituencies.

The following descriptions include current public involvement activities, and well as potential future efforts.

Committees

Most of the committees² affiliated with the TPB are comprised of transportation and planning staff from the representative jurisdictions. Their level of knowledge about the TPB process and transportation planning in particular is quite extensive. These committees provide much of the local expertise behind many of the forecasting, modeling, and scenario planning conducted by TPB staff. The primary technical advisory committees are the TPB Technical Committee and the Management, Operations and Intelligent Transportation Systems Policy & Technical Task Forces. The myriad subcommittees under each committee provide input on specific topics. The Human Services Transportation Coordination Task Force, the Private Providers Task Force, and the Task Force on Value Pricing for Transportation were created to guide programmatic development. Other committees have membership from agencies having particular interest in the transportation issue discussed by the committee. These include the Bicycle and Pedestrian

² A list of all the TPB committees may be found in Appendix A.

Subcommittee, the Private Provider’s Task Force, the Human Services Transportation Plan Task Force, and the Ad Hoc Freight Committee.

Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Access for All Committee (AFA) represent both general public interest and community organizations and agencies serving traditionally underserved populations. The two committees are described below, focusing specifically on the transportation needs and opinions of the general public.

- Citizens Advisory Committee³
The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the TPB is a group of 15 people from throughout the Washington metropolitan region who represent diverse viewpoints on long-term transportation policy. The mission of the CAC is 1) to promote public involvement in transportation planning for the region and 2) to provide independent, region-oriented citizen advice to the TPB on transportation plans and issues. Nine members of the CAC are appointed annually by the TPB. The other six members are elected by the previous year’s CAC. The membership is evenly divided between the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. Meetings are held on Thursdays preceding the regular meetings of the TPB.
- Access for All Committee
The Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee advises the TPB on transportation issues, programs, policies, and services that are important to low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities. The committee membership is composed of community leaders from around the region. The committee also includes ex-officio representation from five key transportation agencies that are active in the TPB process—the District Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration .

Documents and Publications

Documents and publications provide information about the TPB process, projects, and programs. Documents are often developed to convey results from a study or provide relevant information over a number of years, while publications are updated or produced on a continual basis. Many of these documents are appropriate for the TPB Technical Committees and persons with a high level of knowledge about the TPB process. In order to meet the informational needs of the different constituencies, several of the publications described below could be abridged to convey more basic details about the transportation planning process.

- Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP)



³ The CAC mission and operating procedures may be found in Appendix C and D.

The CLRP contains transportation projects and a system-wide collection of strategies that the TPB realistically anticipates can be implemented over the next 25 to 30 years. The CLRP is updated annually and is fully documented on the TPB website. A brochure on the CLRP is printed and distributed on an annual basis.

- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
The TIP, which is essentially a more detailed, six-year subset of the CLRP, is mainly of interest to a relatively small number of citizens and stakeholders who are already involved in the TPB process. The TIP is produced in limited printed editions, and is also available on the TPB website.
- Technical Reports
The TPB researches and drafts a host of technical reports that are produced on a regular basis, including the Unified Planning Work Program, the Air Quality Conformity Assessment, reports on travel monitoring, evaluations of the Commuter Connections programs, documentation related to the TPB travel forecasting model, among many others. These documents are appropriate for decision-making and technical advisory committees. They are available for review for persons interested in these topics.
- Special Reports and Studies
On a frequent basis, the TPB produces special reports, including publications on the regional transportation funding shortfall, a recent brochure on the TPB's scenario study, and reports from the Access for All Advisory Committee. Staff has made efforts in recent years, to make these reports more visually engaging and user-friendly. All such reports are made available on the TPB website.
- TPB Newsletter and *The Region* Magazine
The TPB Newsletter is a monthly publication about current TPB issues. It is designed to provide subscribers with brief updates on items discussed at the most recent TPB meeting, as well as a preview of the upcoming TPB meeting. *The Region* is an annual periodical that summarizes TPB events and items from the previous year. The TPB and TPB staff may consider developing versions of these periodical documents that are simplified and accessible to interested citizens who have limited exposure to the regional planning process.
- A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Decision-Making
The Citizen's Guide was designed to provide the residents of region with an all-encompassing overview of the TPB's role in regional transportation planning. This tool has been instrumental in providing new committee members, informed constituencies, and even TPB members a thorough overview of the TPB process. To more effectively reach the interested citizens, the TPB and TPB staff may consider developing abridged versions of these documents.

Outreach and Education Efforts

Actively engaging the general public, the media, and local planning partners is part of the TPB's goal to gain broader participation in the program, leading to a more informed constituency base and better plans and products. Therefore, the TPB will continue to build on recent education and outreach efforts in the future, but also develop new strategically focused efforts.



- Collaboration with States and Jurisdictions

The TPB itself is comprised of elected officials and high-ranking staff from the jurisdictions and departments of transportation (DOTs). However, TPB staff works closely with staff from the jurisdictions and DOTs on projects and programs. To meet the federal requirements for the development of this Plan, the TPB must review the participation plans from its member jurisdictions. The TPB Technical Committee has recommended that the TPB not only review these plans, but also work with the jurisdictions to coordinate public outreach for transportation projects and programs of regional significance. This coordination would assist in broader distribution of project information, leading to a more informed discussion in communities and at the TPB.

- MWCOG / TPB Website

The MWCOG and TPB websites provide current information about projects and programs, as well as an archive of publications and documents. The website was initially designed to provide information for individuals and groups that already participate in the TPB process. In recent years, the site has been updated to provide more information in a more citizen-friendly presentation. TPB staff intends to continue these enhancements.

- CLRP and TIP Public Hearings

Under SAFETEA-LU, the TPB is required to hold a formal public meeting during the development of the TIP. The TPB will provide this annual forum and will provide informational items on the TPB process and educational materials on the CLRP and TIP at this meeting.

- Media and Messaging

The region's media frequently features stories on the TPB and regional transportation challenges. The TPB will make additional effort to engage the media in the dissemination of information of regional transportation decision-making. Media coverage is often extensive during discussion about high-profile projects, however, it is important to also seek media coverage of TPB programs that may not naturally solicit this kind of attention.

- Leadership Training and Development

Since 2006, the TPB has conducted the Community Leadership Institute, which is a two-day training program designed to provide participants with detailed information about the

TPB process and regional transportation planning so that they may both actively participate in TPB activities as well as inform their communities about transportation initiatives and programs. The participants at the Institute represented organizations that have been recognized as forces for change in their communities, including civic groups, homeowners associations, business organizations and local citizen advisory boards. They specifically do not include individuals who are already involved with the TPB. The sessions are

In the future, the TPB and TPB staff will consider ways to follow up with Institute participants to effectively encourage future participation. In addition, these graduates should be considered partners in reaching deeper into interested communities that might benefit from applying the regional transportation context to local decision making.

- Outreach Forums

Since 2004, TPB staff has been making presentations around the region based on the Regional Mobility and Accessibility Scenario Study. Since 2006, these forums have included an interactive exercise in which participants, working in small groups, are asked to construct their own scenarios to address regional land use and transportation challenges. These outreach forums have proven successful in soliciting feedback on TPB programs and projects, as well as providing a small subset of the regional population with information about regional transportation planning.

In setting up these public forums, TPB staff has increasingly targeted organizations and groups that have regularly scheduled meetings and do not typically include citizens who are already involved in the TPB process. Staff intends to continue to use this approach for organizing forums.

- Visualization Techniques

The TPB has developed a variety of visualization techniques to strengthen participation in the planning process and aid the TPB's various constituencies in understanding proposed plans. An example of visualization includes an interactive mapping feature that shows projects programmed in the CLRP while displaying project information and facts. The TPB also uses maps, photographs, charts, and other visuals to demonstrate planning concepts and networks and regional linkages. These tools enhance the understanding of all constituencies when discussing the TPB projects and programs. Further development of these visualization techniques will enhance the ease of participation for the interested and informed citizens who may not be familiar with the regional transportation challenges.

In addition, the TPB and staff will consider the utilization of technology to further its outreach goals. These efforts might include the development of "stand alone" presentations that can be posted on the website, allowing a person of any level of knowledge to understand the concepts, challenges and opportunities of regional transportation decision making.