

TPB PARTICIPATION PLAN

2020 Update

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Technical Committee
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Participation Plan Purpose

The TPB's Participation Plan guides TPB staff interactions with the public so that they can:

- 1) Reach as many people as inclusively as possible, and
- 2) Collect meaningful input and build support to inform TPB plans, programs, and aid in decision making.

NOTE: This presentation includes draft language for the 2020 Participation Plan update. Language may change based on input from the Technical Committee, AFA, CAC, and other groups.



Presentation focus

This presentation focuses on the Participation Policy, the Staff Participation Guide, and the Public Participation Guide from the 2020 update to the Participation Plan.

Seeking Technical Committee input on three questions:

1. Does the Participation Policy serve as a solid foundation for making sure that TPB interactions with the public are equitable?
2. How do you determine whether and how much public input is appropriate in your work at the local level? Any suggestions for the Staff Participation Guide?
3. Is there anything missing from the Public Participation Guide? How should the plan direct the public to get involved locally?



Main elements of 2020 Update

Staff Guide

**Public
Guide**

**Federal
Guide**

Participation Policy



Policy Statement

It is the TPB's policy to provide public access and involvement under a collaborative planning process in which the interests of all TPB constituencies are reflected and considered. It is the TPB's intent to make both its policy and technical processes inclusive of and accessible to all constituencies.

The TPB believes that public input into its process is valuable and makes its products better. Regional transportation planning cannot, and should not, be based simply upon technical analysis. The qualitative information derived from public involvement is essential to good decision-making.



Policy Principles

The Policy Principles declare TPB values around informing and engaging the public. These principles guide engagement and point towards the goals without specifying the goals or the means to achieve them. These principles recognize that most people who are impacted by transportation decisions are not technical experts and that being inclusive means meeting people where they are.

Equity Perspective – Staff strive to incorporate an equity perspective into their work activities so that work acknowledges and seeks to accommodate different contexts, experiences, and abilities. This equity perspective is informed by COG’s Title VI Plan and Program and the TPB Equity Statement. It acknowledges past inequities and seeks to be more just.

Plain Language – Staff strive to use plain language and prepare their materials in a variety of mediums. This will make TPB work accessible and understandable to as many people as possible and serve as a foundation for meaningful participation.



Policy Principles, continued

Early and Continuing Participation - Staff strive to involve the public early in planning processes to maximize the impact of public input. Staff also strive to involve the public throughout processes to create repeat interactions with the public. This will help foster transparency, keep the public updated, and aware of future opportunities to learn more and participate.

Timely Response – Staff strive to acknowledge receipt of public input in a timely manner and provide information about how public input will be used. This will build trust by demonstrating the value and purpose of input.

Clarity of Purpose – Staff strive for clarity of purpose when planning public facing work. This will help staff determine if the work is meant to inform, consult, or engage the public. This will also help the public understand their role in the TPB plan or activity and how their input will be used.



Policy Goals

The Policy Goals describe what the TPB is trying to achieve through its participation activities. These goals are in line with the Policy Statement and informed by the Policy Principles. When planning public facing work, staff should use these goals to set desirable outcomes, and then refer to the goals when evaluating their work.

Communicate effectively with appropriate audiences. The TPB will disseminate information about programs and projects through a variety of conduits. Information will be presented in manner that is clear and tailored to each of the TPB's constituencies.

Provide clear and open access to information and participation opportunities. The TPB will work to improve access to technical and planning documents and, where appropriate, tailor these documents to be accessible to more constituencies. Opportunities for participation in TPB meetings and in committee meetings will be clearly defined and provided for at each meeting.



Policy Goals, continued

Gather input from diverse perspectives. The TPB will continue to encourage participation from diverse constituencies and to provide for discussion about transportation issues that are responsive to the interests of different constituencies. In addition to perspectives coming from people with different racial, ethnic, and language backgrounds, diverse perspectives include those representing all transportation modes and all areas of the region.

Respond meaningfully to public comment and feedback. The TPB will provide information on how comments will be considered in the planning process, including the development of Visualize 2045 and TIP, and acknowledge the comments that were received and considered.

Promote a regional perspective. The TPB will communicate how regional transportation planning plays a vital role in coordinating planning activities on many levels. The TPB will also work to connect the public to where their input can have the biggest impact, which is often on the local level.



Policy Constituents

Every person who lives in the Washington region is impacted by transportation. The TPB acknowledges that not every person is aware of the TPB or has an understanding for how decisions are made at the regional, state, and local levels.

To make sure that TPB participation efforts are most effective, it is important to tailor the communications and outreach to different constituencies. These three constituencies are grouped according to varying levels of engagement in regional transportation planning process and awareness of regional transportation issues.



Policy Constituents, continued

The active public is both knowledgeable about transportation policy issues in general, as well as the TPB's role in the regional transportation planning process. These individuals and organizations already actively participate in the TPB process and have an extensive understanding of regional transportation issues and policy. Among others, this category includes the TPB's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee.

Community leaders have some knowledge of transportation policy issues but are not familiar with the TPB's role in the regional transportation planning process. They also may not be fully aware of the regional context underlying the transportation challenges experiences throughout the region. This middle tier often includes community and opinion leaders who work at the local level.

The general public has an inherent interest in transportation challenges but possess little direct knowledge of transportation policy issues. This group, which is the largest of the three, includes community leaders or even elected officials who have limited exposure to transportation planning at any level.



Staff Participation Guide

The Staff Participation Guide is designed to assist TPB staff as they start work on a new activity. The guide walks them through a process to help them determine if their work has a public facing component and if it is covered by any federal requirements. The workflow also helps staff plan for public participation that is in accordance with the Participation Policy.

Not all the work lead by TPB staff requires direct input from the public. That said, there is value in being clear about how technical work can inform the public, and how that technical work, in addition to input from an informed public, can support decision-making, will strengthen the process we oversee at the TPB.



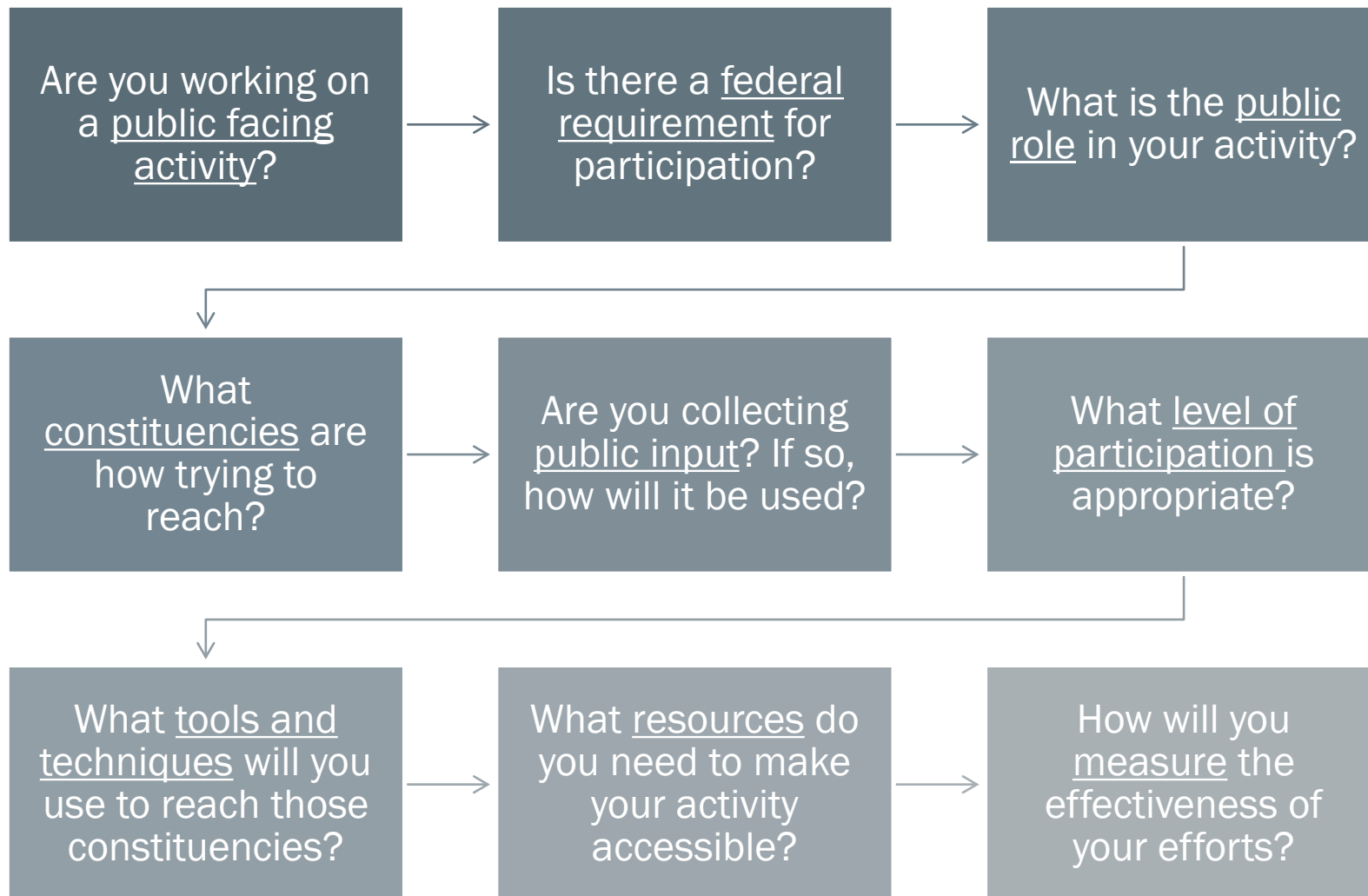
Participation Workflow

The workflow consists of a series of questions for staff to ask themselves as they start a new activity. Each of these questions is accompanied by a description and considerations to inform and provide context. In effect, the answers to these questions will serve as the participation approach for their activity.

By completing this workflow and accompanying worksheet at the beginning of an activity, staff can determine whether there is a role for the public in their activity, what constituencies will be engaged, and how best to engage them. The workflow also asks staff to define success at the beginning of a project so the effectiveness of the public activity can be evaluated at the end.



Participation Workflow



Public Participation Guide

The public guide chapter in the Participation Plan describes ways that the public can get informed about the TPB and get involved at the TPB.

- **Monthly TPB meeting** – Attend in-person or online (www.mwcog.org/tpbmtg) and comment (TPBcomment@mwcog.org)
- **Join an advisory committee** – Citizens Advisory Committee (mwcog.org/tpbcac) and AFA (mwcog.org/tpbafa/)
- **TPB News** – Subscribe to TPB News to learn about all the great things going on at the TPB (mwcog.org/tpbnews)
- **Visualize 2045** – We are planning our next long-range plan update (visualize2045.org)
- **Other subscriptions** (mwcog.org/subscribe/)
- **Comment** – Comment on a specific plan or on anything transportation related (mwcog.org/tpbcomment/)



Next Steps

1. Meet with Tech – July 10
2. Discussions with team leaders and staff – July
3. Public comment (45 days) – Late summer 2020
4. Brief TPB – September
5. Board approval – October



Seek committee input

1. Does the Participation Policy serve as a solid foundation for making sure that TPB interactions with the public are equitable?
2. How do you determine whether and how much public input is appropriate in your work at the local level? Any suggestions for the Staff Participation Guide?
3. Is there anything missing from the Public Participation Guide? How should the plan direct the public to get involved locally?



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