

Public Involvement Plan



Prepared by the
Northwest Louisiana
Council of Governments

ADOPTED

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I. INTRODUCTION

The foundation for public involvement is the belief that people whose lives are affected by transportation planning and decisions have a right to be involved in the decision-making process and influence choices that are made. Engaging the community directly in the process promotes successful problem solving, yields new and diverse ideas and voices, and gives the public a sense of ownership of the developed solutions.

Public participation is a proactive process, both on the part of the governing bodies to find innovative ways to identify and engage the affected public, and on the public to contribute their ideas to influence decisions.

For the transportation community, involving the public in planning and project development poses a challenge. Many people are skeptical about their ability to influence the transportation decision-making process. Others may feel that transportation plans are abstract and far into the future that participating now yields little effect. The challenge also lies in showing the public that their active involvement and participation in the transportation decision-making process provides them an opportunity to have meaningful input into decisions affecting their communities.

Transportation planners must know the community in which they serve. Every decision or action made by a transportation agency affects someone to some degree. Whether it's a long-term plan to build a highway or a short-term maintenance project, people, their neighborhoods and their traffic patterns feel the impacts of the actions taken.

This means knowing what residents in a community want and need by involving the community in the planning process is especially important. Special consideration must be taken to involve groups traditionally underserved including the elderly, low-income, disabled and minority. It is also important that a public participation process be continuously evaluated and improved to ensure that all communities are given a voice.

There is no cookie-cutter approach to informing, educating and involving the public. Every project is different and will require the use of different public involvement strategies. But every project has one thing in common: there will be some level of public involvement, ranging from local government to formal public hearings. The key to developing an efficient transportation system where projects move forward smoothly starts with the identification of all stakeholders and affected citizens in the earliest planning stages and maximizing their participation throughout the life of the project.

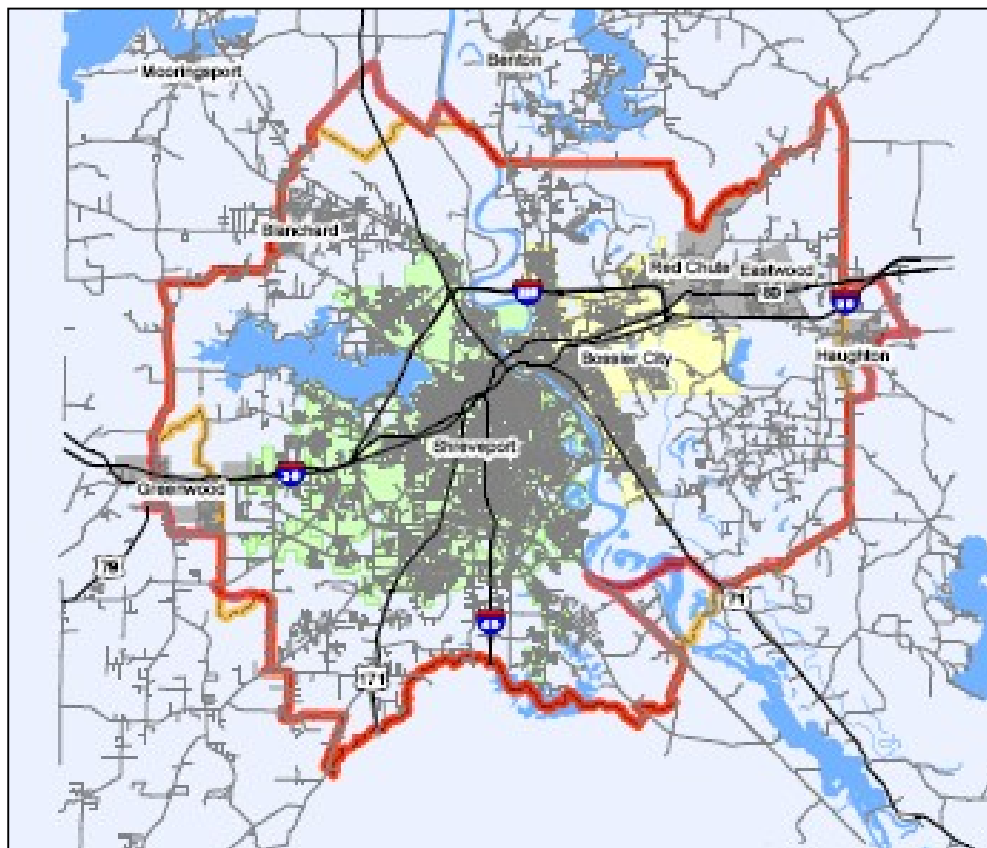
A comprehensive Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is crucial to the success of any public involvement effort. Thorough and well-thought-out plans simplify the public involvement process by providing a systemic approach, maximizing the use of available resources and minimizing delays by ensuring that public involvement activities are coordinated with other project tasks. The goal of the PIP is to allow the public opportunities throughout the process to influence decisions. The PIP will outline ways to:

- **Identify** and contact the community affected by the plan or project;
- **Inform** them of the need for the plan or project; and
- **Involve** them in the decision-making process.

About NLCOG

Under federal law, the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) is recognized as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Bossier and Caddo Parishes in Northwest Louisiana. For any urbanized area (UZA) with a population of more than 50,000, the formation of an MPO is mandated (see Figure 1). An Urbanized Area is a statistical geographic entity designated by the Census Bureau, consisting of a central core and adjacent densely settled territory that together contain at least 50,000 people, generally with an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. Within the transportation planning community, Urbanized Areas are typically referred to as the UZAs.¹

Figure 1 – Urbanized Area Boundary



As the MPO for Northwest Louisiana, it is NLCOG's responsibility to create a forum where transportation planning decisions are made jointly with input from federal, state and local agencies; private organizations; non-profit agencies; and interested citizens – in short, any person, business or agency that is affected by transportation decisions.

¹ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census/faq2cdt.htm#q25>

NLCOG works with federal and local governments, state departments of transportation, transit agencies, area stakeholders, and the public to ensure that the plans and projects developed help the region achieve a rising quality of life for everyone.

Transportation affects everyone every day. Visitors, residents and businesses use various forms of transportation each day to travel to work, school, meetings, events, activities, and to ship or receive goods. Economic and land use trends, as well as population, must be accounted for while recognizing the values and visions of the region's residents. Public involvement is vital to determine the values, visions and needs of such a diverse group.

NLCOG is also recognized as a Regional Planning Council (RPC). As an RPC, NLCOG and its member agencies strive to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments to improve the quality of life for all residents.

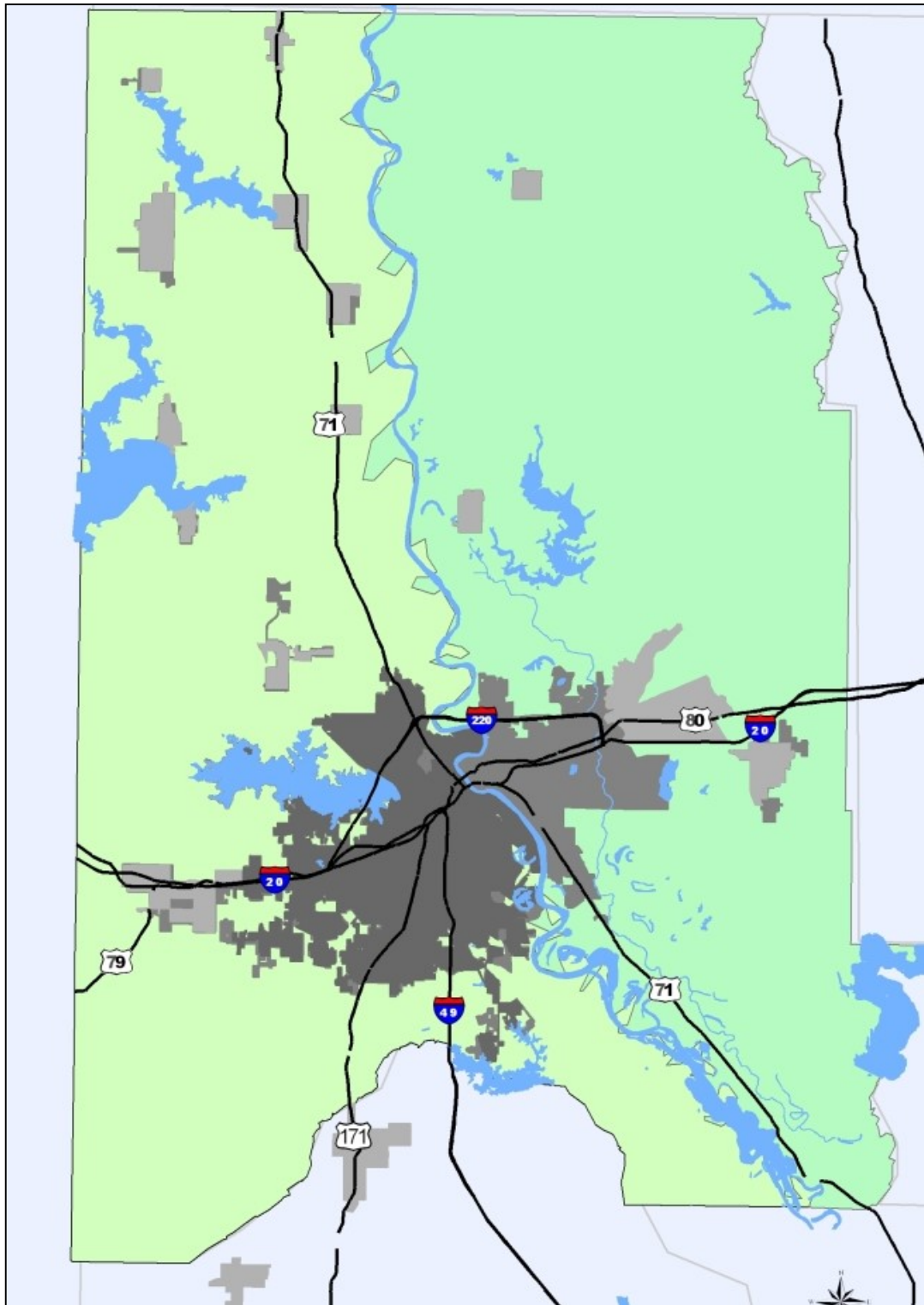
Regions with more than 200,000 people are known as Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). Figure 2 shows the TMA boundary. All TMAs must maintain a Congestion Management Process (CMP) and use it to inform transportation planning and decision-making. A CMP's purpose in the transportation planning process is to help qualify and/or identify potential projects for inclusion into the regional transportation program. Environmental programs that involve air quality and natural hazard mitigation also benefit from the CMP process.

The principal responsibilities of NLCOG include the development of a 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a CMP, a five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and related planning studies and projects deemed necessary to address transportation issues in Northwest Louisiana. NLCOG and its members evaluate local transportation needs annually. Based on this evaluation, project priorities are established and made part of the NLCOG's annual TIP update.

This information is forwarded to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD) for inclusion into its Five-Year Work Program. The LaDOTD then programs these projects, in priority order, considering production schedules and funding constraints. In the event the LaDOTD cannot meet all of NLCOG's priorities, LaDOTD reports to the Board to explain why its priorities cannot be met.

By Federal and State law, all multi-modal transportation improvement projects must be included in and consistent (to the maximum extent feasible) with NLCOG's Transportation Improvement Program to be eligible for federal and state funding. Therefore, NLCOG's Transportation Improvement Program is the primary plan that guides all state and federally funded transportation improvements in Northwest Louisiana.

Figure 2 – Transportation Management Area Boundary



Purpose and Mission of NLCOG

NLCOG is an intergovernmental association established to assist local governments in planning for the common needs, cooperating for the mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NLCOG is composed of state and local decision-makers and elected officials. Please see Figure 3 for the organization chart of NLCOG. The following committees make up NLCOG:

Board of Directors – The standing directors are composed of the following government officials or their designated representatives: mayor of the City of Bossier City, mayor of the City of Shreveport, administrator of the Bossier Parish Police Jury, president of the Caddo Parish Commission. Up to three (3) at-large directors may be selected by the standing directors from local government units in the metropolitan planning area who are not represented. The Caddo Parish Tax Assessor has been added. The members meet monthly, except for July and December, to facilitate the administration of NLCOG, to ensure that policy and planning recommendations are brought before the Board, and confirm that the decisions of NLCOG are implemented. All Board meetings are open to the public.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Policy Committee – This standing committee is established by the Board of Directors and is currently composed of the Bossier Parish Police Jury, Caddo Parish Commission, City of Bossier City, City of Shreveport, Port of Shreveport – Bossier, SporTran, Bossier City / Parish Metropolitan Planning Commission, and Shreveport – Caddo Metropolitan Planning Commission. The LaDOTD, FHWA, and FTA also sit on the committee; however, they are non-voting members. The members meet monthly, except for July and December, to approve and adopt all the transportation planning activities and programs of the MPO. All Transportation Committee meetings are open to the public.

Regional Geographic Information Systems Policy Committee (ReGIS) – composed of the Caddo Parish Communications District #1 (E-911), Caddo Parish Commission, Caddo Parish Tax Assessor, City of Shreveport, Bossier Parish Police Jury, Bossier Parish Tax Assessor, Bossier Parish E-911, City of Bossier City, Caddo Parish Public Schools

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) – The TCC is an advisory committee to the BOD, MPO and ReGIS. This committee serves as the base steering committee for all transportation planning studies. Membership of the TCC is comprised of technical staff from the City of Shreveport, City of Bossier City, Bossier Parish Police Jury, Caddo Parish Commission, SporTran, Port of Shreveport-Bossier, Shreveport-Caddo Metropolitan Planning Commission, Bossier City / Parish Metropolitan Planning Commission, LaDOTD (District 04 and Headquarters), FHWA, FTA, Shreveport Regional Airport, Barksdale Air Force Base, and staff from NLCOG. The members meet as needed to provide planning and engineering guidance to the MPO's Transportation Policy Committee in dealing with issues of the MPO's transportation programs. Inclusion of improvement projects into the MPO program (TIP) and regional, long range planning issues are brought forth during a typical TCC meeting.

Northwest Louisiana Transportation Safety Coalition – This coalition is composed of representatives of the Louisiana State Police, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, local and state law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, cities, parishes, as well as education and advocacy

organizations. The focus of this coalition is to implement the Strategic Highway Safety Plan at the regional level and to promote safety-related activities within Northwest Louisiana.

NLCOG utilizes several project-specific and standing advisory committees. Membership in the sub-committees is generally open to all interested parties. To maintain diverse committees representative of the region, NLCOG asks members and prospective members to complete a “nomination form.” NLCOG accepts all requests for inclusion on a committee, with the understanding that a committee should be composed of a workable number of members. Please see the Nomination Form in Appendix C.

NLCOG provides a partnership among the local governments for the benefit of the community. Our focus is on developing Northwest Louisiana economically, socially, and environmentally through a variety of projects aimed at improving the quality of life for all residents. Seeking meaningful public involvement is important for sharing the concerns of the community. NLCOG is committed to actively involving the public in identifying and addressing quality of life issues.

NLCOG also helps recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication among the governments, and coordinate joint decisions for the benefit of the community. NLCOG seeks to provide opportunities for interested residents and organizations to participate in the decision-making process, as well as reach out to and involve members of the community who have been traditionally underserved.

Transportation Plans and Programs

NLCOG develops several transportation plans and programs through a public transportation planning process. At key points during the development of the plans and implementation of the programs, the public can review NLCOG’s work and provide feedback to the planning process. Final products / reports are adopted after careful consideration of community comments. Public participation requirements prescribed by the federal government vary with each document. Specific requirements for each plan / program are outlined in the table on page 10.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – As the MPO for Northwest Louisiana, NLCOG updates and adopts a Long-Range Transportation Plan at least every three years. The LRTP is a strategic planning tool providing MPO members, transportation providers, the public and others with a blueprint to blend transportation, economic development and land use strategies over a 25-year horizon. The LRTP provides a common vision for the future supported by goals, objectives and on-going assessment. The LRTP vision also is supported by identification of future transportation needs, clearly-defined fundamental strategies, actions, a budget, and an implementation plan.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – The TIP contains funded transportation projects to meet state, local and parish goals through funded transportation projects. The TIP is a prioritized list of projects including highway, local roads and public transit that the Louisiana Department of Transportation expects to undertake during a three-year period. TIP projects are also identified in the LRTP. Amendments occur as needed; the TIP is updated at least every three years.

Unified Planning Work Program and Budget (UPWP) – The UPWP identified the planning activities that NLCOG intends to accomplish during the fiscal year using federal, state and local resources. It outlines responsibilities and procedures for carrying out the cooperative transportation planning process. The UPWP is the management tool for directing the MPO staff responsibilities annually.

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP) – Encompassing a ten-parish region in Northwest Louisiana, the CHSTP is a plan that seeks to improve transportation coordination in the region, address the transportation needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. It was developed by representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and members of the public. The plan establishes an on-going process for continual coordination and improvement of public transportation services by assessing needs, determining available services, closing gaps and reducing redundancy in services.

Public Involvement Plan (PIP) – The PIP identifies ways that NLCOG will engage and involve all interested parties, including those who have not been traditionally involved, with the transportation planning process. The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework from which to guide the public participation process in future transportation planning projects such as the UPWP, LRTP, CHSTP, TIP, and a range of other programs and special studies. The PIP also specifies NLCOG's underlying goals, as well as strategies and techniques to be considered and employed in achieving the goals of the public participation process. The plan describes the importance of environmental justice and provides a framework for including it as part of the public participation process.

Northwest Louisiana Regional Transportation Safety Plan – The Safety Plan is a data-driven action plan developed by the Northwest Louisiana Transportation Safety Coalition (NWLTS). The plan was developed by representatives from the education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical services, who collaborated to identify effective multimodal transportation safety solutions in the parishes of Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Red River, and Webster. This plan also is supported by FHWA, Louisiana Highway Safety Commission (LHSC), and the jurisdictions in northwest Louisiana.

Other Plans – Periodically, NLCOG undertakes special planning studies that are prepared by staff or consultants. These studies also include opportunities for public participation and involvement in the planning process.

Figure 3 – Public Comment Requirements

| Product | Public Participation Process | Public Comment Period |
|--|--|---|
| Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) | Issue media notices as needed during the development of the plan; distribute draft copies for public input; engage the public in the planning process; receive and respond to public comments; advise MPO council about issues raised in public comments; amend the plan as needed based on public response; prepare a summary of comments received and appropriate responses; prepare and distribute the final document | Not less than 30 calendar days prior to the adoption of the LRTP, any amendments*, or updates; notice will be advertised in two newspapers of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the comment period |
| Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) | Issue media releases to explain the process that creates the TIP; distribute the draft document for public input; receive and respond to public comments; advise MPO council about issues raised in public comments; prepare a summary of comments received and appropriate responses; prepare and distribute the final document | Not less than 30 calendar days prior to the adoption of the TIP, any amendments*, or updates; notice will be advertised in two newspapers of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the comment period |
| Unified Planning Work Program and Budget (UPWP) | Issue media releases announcing availability of and impending adoption of the draft UPWP; distribute the draft UPWP; present public comments to MPO council for consideration; respond to public comments; issue the adopted UPWP | Not less than 30 calendar days prior to the adoption of the UPWP, any amendments*, or updates; notice will be advertised in two newspapers of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the comment period |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP) | Issue media releases to explain the process that creates the CHSTP; distribute the draft document for public input; receive and respond to public comments; advise human services providers about issues raised in comments; prepare a summary of comments received and appropriate responses; prepare and distribute the final document | Not less than 30 calendar days prior to the adoption of the CHSTP, any amendments*, or updates; notice will be advertised in two newspapers of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the comment period |
| Public Involvement Plan (PIP) | Issue media releases to explain the process that creates the PIP; distribute the draft document for public input; receive and respond to public comments; MPO council about issues raised in comments; prepare a summary of comments received and appropriate responses; prepare and distribute the final document | At least 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the PIP and/or any amendments. Notice of the 45-day comment period will be advertised in two newspapers of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period |
| Northwest Louisiana Regional Transportation Safety Plan | None | None |
| Other Plans | Issue media notices as needed during the development of the plan; distribute draft copies for public input; engage the public in the planning process; receive and respond to public comments; advise MPO council about issues raised in public comments; amend the plan as needed based on public response; prepare a summary of comments received and appropriate responses; prepare and distribute the final document | Provide a public comment period of not less than 30 calendar days prior to the adoption of the appropriate transportation plans, projects, any amendments*, or updates; notice will be advertised in two newspapers of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the comment period |

* Administrative amendments excluded

II. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act” (FAST Act), signed into law on December 4, 2015, contains specific language outlining federal requirements regarding public involvement processes and procedures. In general, the FAST Act legislation built upon previous transportation legislation (ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21) to provide states and metropolitan planning organizations specific direction in conducting and promoting broad-based public involvement activities.

The FAST Act (Public Law 114-94) requires metropolitan planning organizations to develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, 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 a reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Resulting plans and processes are developed through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process.

In addition, the Public Involvement Plan shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties and should describe explicit procedures, strategies and desired outcomes for public participation. Beyond the federal requirements, participation by citizens, affected public agencies, community groups, and other interested parties is an important part of a successful public planning program. NLCOG actively encourages the participation of all interested parties in its planning efforts.

Figure 4 – Legal Requirements, Policies and Guidance

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| Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) | Provides for continued and enhanced emphasis on strong planning processes and public involvement: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact |
| Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 | Declares that no person shall be excluded from participating in any program receiving federal assistance on the basis of race, color or national origin: http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevistat.php |
| National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) | Requires consideration of impacts on human environments: http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.asp |
| Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice | Addresses avoidance of actions that can cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ejustice/facts/index.htm |

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|---|---|
| Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency | Improving access to services for people with limited English proficiency: www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/lowlim/index.htm |
| Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) | Encourages the involvement of persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services: www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm |
| Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) | Intended to ensure that integrated transportation and air quality planning occurs in metropolitan areas: www.epa.gov/air/caa/peg/ |

All guidelines are derived from federal regulations [23 CFR 450.316]. The guidelines regarding public participation and involvement are closely aligned with the outlined objectives employed by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development in its Public Participation/Involvement Plan. The PIP, at minimum, describes explicit procedures, strategies and desired outcomes.

Figure 5 – MPO Planning Rule Requirements and Methods of Compliance

| Requirement | Method of Compliance |
|--|--|
| Provide adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points. | Notice of public involvement activities is achieved through notices in local newspapers, including those predominately serving low income and minority groups; web/social media postings; mail outs; and press releases. |
| Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes. | Post information on the www.nlcog.org and www.nlcoglistens.com websites, as well as on social media. The staff of NLCOG is also available to speak at various organizations about regionally significant issues and opportunities for public involvement. |

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| Employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs. | Visualization techniques will be utilized at public meetings to enhance the understanding of topic(s). Visual techniques utilized may include the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), sketches, maps, graphs, charts, photographs, posters, models, audio-visual equipment, overhead projector slides, handouts, film and video footage, videotapes, audio tapes and electronic media. |
| Make public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means. | The NLCOG maintains a website that provides an overview of the agency, a listing of major programs, and background on various projects. The web site provides easy access to transportation related documents, a calendar of events, GIS maps, and a listing of advisory committee members and staff. Meeting agendas and minutes are also posted to the web site and the public can e-mail the MPO staff directly via the web site. The web site is updated on a regular basis. |
| Hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times. | All meetings are open to the public. Every effort will be made to accommodate traditionally under-served audiences including low-income and minority households and persons with disabilities. Efforts will be made to host meetings at public libraries and other highly visible public areas such as schools or community agencies for increased public access. All NLCOG meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities. |
| Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP. | All correspondence is answered in a timely manner; public meeting comments and their responses are summarized and included as an appendix to the respective project, study, or plan. |
| Seek out and consider the needs of the traditionally underserved in the decision-making process. | NLCOG will contact minority, disabled, low-income, and other traditionally underserved communities to exchange information regarding participation in the decision-making process. |

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|---|---|
| Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process. | Improvements to the PIP will be made periodically to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. Evaluations and recommendations will be made from the portfolios for each project and plan, as well as through the staff evaluations. |
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III. INVOLVING THE PUBLIC

The goal of public involvement activities is to collect useful information that will lead to better transportation decisions. The only way to collect this information is through the identification and involvement of representatives from all segments of the affected community. Because public involvement budgets are not unlimited, it is necessary to target public involvement activities towards those citizens who can and will contribute to the decision-making process; however, it is critical to be creative in involving those who have not traditionally participated. People who contribute are:

- Interested in transportation issues;
- Experienced with transportation systems and related issues;
- Knowledgeable about the community;
- Connected to diverse community networks;
- Possess a good mix of interests, backgrounds, and experiences;
- Affected by the plan or project; and/or
- Representative of the full range of segments within the community.

Public involvement is an essential tool in socio-cultural effects evaluation, providing an evaluation of issues and concerns raised in the public forum and the potential effects of transportation actions. An early and on-going public involvement program enhances the transportation decision-making process.

Public Involvement Plan Policy Statement

The purpose of the public involvement plan is to foster two-way communication and trust between NLCOG and the residents. Although a federal requirement, NLCOG feels that local contribution to the decision-making process is vital for the growth of Northwest Louisiana. The residents of this area deserve the advantages of coordinated decision-making that cannot be accomplished without involving the public at an early stage and continually throughout the decision-making process.

The primary emphasis of public involvement is the creation of an open exchange of information and ideas. The goal is to allow the public opportunities throughout the process to influence the transportation decision-making process.

Often on public issues, there is heightened attention from the media and others as a decision point draws near. A lack of understanding by those who recently became aware or interested in the decision and its potential impacts becomes apparent. The NLCOG organizational structure is intended to support timely decision-making and implementation to meet federal mandates. This is another important reason for the public to be involved early, as the NLCOG decision-making process is structured to meet these federal mandates.

One of the major challenges in public involvement is how to motivate the public to be involved during long range transportation planning and to keep them informed about previous decisions that affect current actions.

During the entire planning process, alternatives are considered, choices are made, and plans are readied for final approval. When the planning options are narrowed through technical and public reviews and a timely decision reached, the transportation planning process is considered *efficient*. When the planning process to develop the transportation systems also helps to meet the goals and objectives of the community, then it is also considered *effective*.

The PIP consists of public involvement goals, policies, objectives, and descriptions of various public involvement techniques. This plan is intended to ensure that public participation is an integral and effective part of the activities and decisions that are made with the benefit and consideration of important public perspectives.

Early public involvement enables NLCOG to make more informed recommendations, improve quality through collaborative efforts, and build mutual understanding and trust. NLCOG is committed to a comprehensive and inclusive approach by involving the public in developing plans and programs that fit harmoniously within the community without sacrificing quality of life.

NLCOG's public involvement plan is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by NLCOG and contains the policies, goals, objectives, and techniques used by NLCOG for public involvement. In its public participation process, NLCOG will:

- **Provide timely information** about transportation issues and processes to residents, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdiction concerns).
- **Provide reasonable public access** to technical and policy information used in the development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered.
- **Give adequate notice of public involvement activities** and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any

transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment by NLCOG and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan shall be made available. NLCOG's public involvement plan and public participation process satisfies SporTran's public participation process for the Program of Projects.

- **Respond in writing** to all applicable public input. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan (including the financial plan) a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments will be made part of the final plan.
- **Solicit the needs of those traditionally underserved** by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, and low-income households.
- **Coordinate its Public Involvement Process with statewide Public Involvement Processes** wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs.

Public Involvement Plan Update

As part of the 2017 Public Involvement Plan update, the NLCOG staff reviewed the Public Involvement/Participation Plans of other MPOs from around the country. It was important to get a sense of best practices and peer techniques utilized to engage citizens, further outreach methods and to increase the involvement of under-represented communities. The plans reviewed were of the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Mid-America Regional Council, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study.

NLCOG began the plan update process by encouraging comments and soliciting feedback on the current PIP from the public as well as stakeholders. The staff utilized email lists to provide notice to stakeholders and the public that the update process would be beginning soon and that comments or input regarding improving the current PIP were being solicited. An electronic copy of the current PIP was provided with the email notices. Along with the e-mail notices, notification was also made through social media and on the MPO's website. NLCOG also engaged the community with a brief, eight-question survey through Survey Monkey. The survey was open for a two-week period during the update process.

An updated draft PIP was developed after reviewing comments, effective outreach methods and best practices. The draft was submitted to State and Federal partners for review on September 18, 2017, with a concurrent review by the Transportation Policy Committee members. Comments and concerns from the State, Federal, committee members were addressed by the staff and the revised draft document was released for public review for forty-five (45) calendar days. All comments were used to develop the final version of the updated PIP and are documented in an appendix in the final PIP document. All public comments received during the PIP update process can be found in Appendix G. The final PIP

was anticipated for adoption by the Transportation Policy Committee at the regularly scheduled meeting on January 19, 2018.

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is updated every three years at minimum in response to staff evaluations of the effectiveness of MPO public outreach methods and techniques, or as needed to reflect changes in local, state, or federal legislation. All interested parties are consulted regarding the development of the PIP. The development of this PIP followed the process outlined below.

Figure 6 – Public Involvement Plan Process and Timeline

| | Activity | Date |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | The MPO membership and interested parties receive an email indicating that the plan update process is beginning. A copy of the old plan will be attached, along with a request for comments. | August 28, 2017 |
| 2. | A short survey to solicit feedback will be generated with notice being posted on NLCOG's websites, social media accounts, and via e-mail. | August 28, 2017 |
| 3. | Public comments on the old plan and survey responses will be received for fifteen (15) business days and will be incorporated into the revised document. | Ending September 15, 2017 |
| 4. | The draft public involvement plan will be reviewed by the LaDOTD and Federal agencies review and comment. | Ending October 31, 2017 |
| 5. | After state/federal reviews, the proposed PIP will be made available for public review and comment for sixty (60) calendar days (23 CFR 450.316) before the revised Public Involvement Plan is adopted by the MPO Transportation Policy Committee. The meeting is open to the community. | November 19, 2017 through January 17, 2018 |
| 6. | Outreach activities to promote the public comment period will include notification to all interested parties as well as the entire MPO mailing list. | November 19, 2017 through January 17, 2018 |

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 7. | Public notices will be placed in the local newspapers of greatest circulation and a press release will be issued. | November 19, 2017 through January 17, 2018 |
| 8. | During the public review period, the proposed document will be made available review in public libraries and on www.nlcog.org and www.nlcoglistens.com. Reminders will be sent via e-mail and through social media. | November 20, 2017 December 17, 2017 January 5, 2017 |
| 9. | The revised Public Involvement Plan is reviewed by the MPO Transportation Policy Committee for additional comments and suggestions before the final plan is voted on for adoption by the Committee at their regularly scheduled meeting. | January 2018 through February 2018 |
| 10. | Approved copies of the PIP are provided to the FHWA and the FTA, as well as the LaDOTD. | February 2018 |

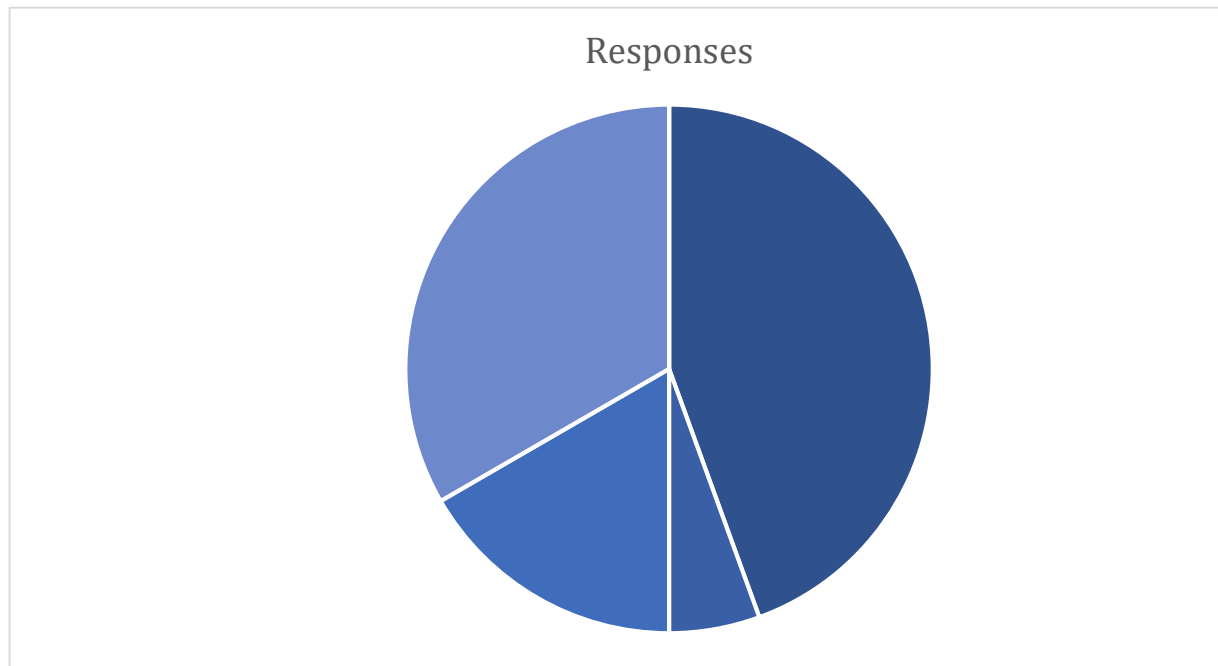
All public comments received during the review process will be incorporated in the decision-making process regarding the final PIP. All comments received will be included in an Appendix of the PIP.

Public Involvement Survey Results

Question 1: How do you hear about upcoming public meetings?

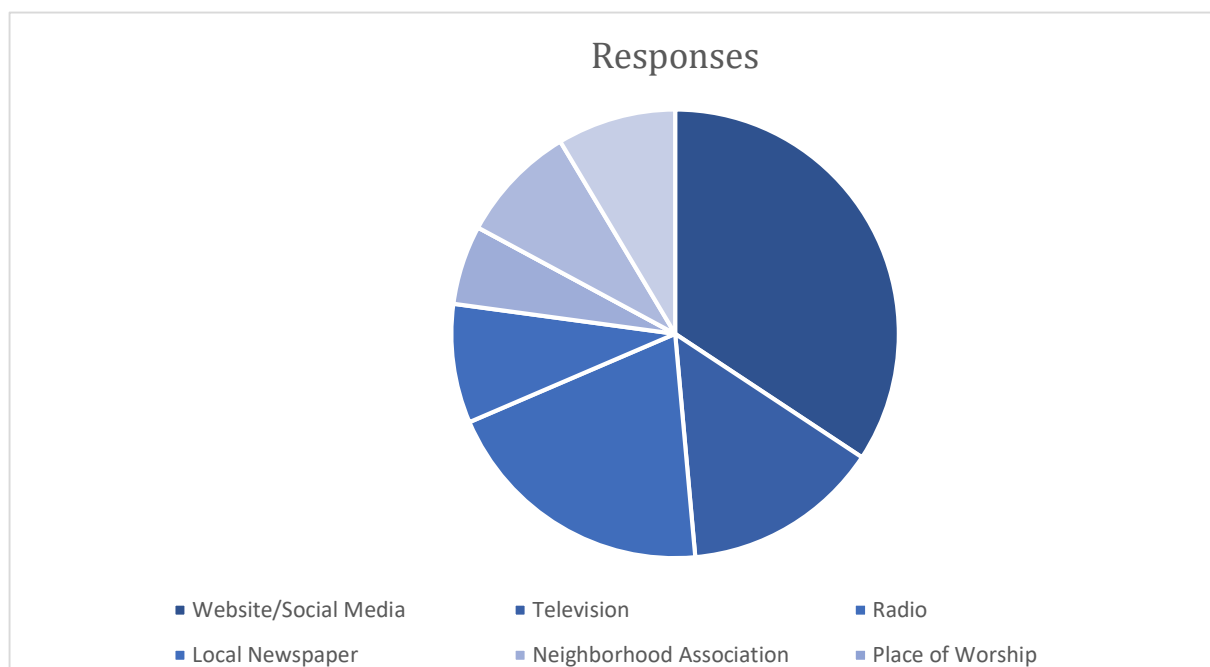
| Answer Choices | Responses | Percent |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| E-mail | 8 | 44.44% |
| TV/News | 1 | 5.56% |
| Word of Mouth | 3 | 16.67% |
| Social Media | 6 | 33.33% |
| NLCOG Website | 0 | 0.00% |

| <i>Answer Choices</i> | <i>Responses</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Newspaper Notice | 0 | 0.00% |



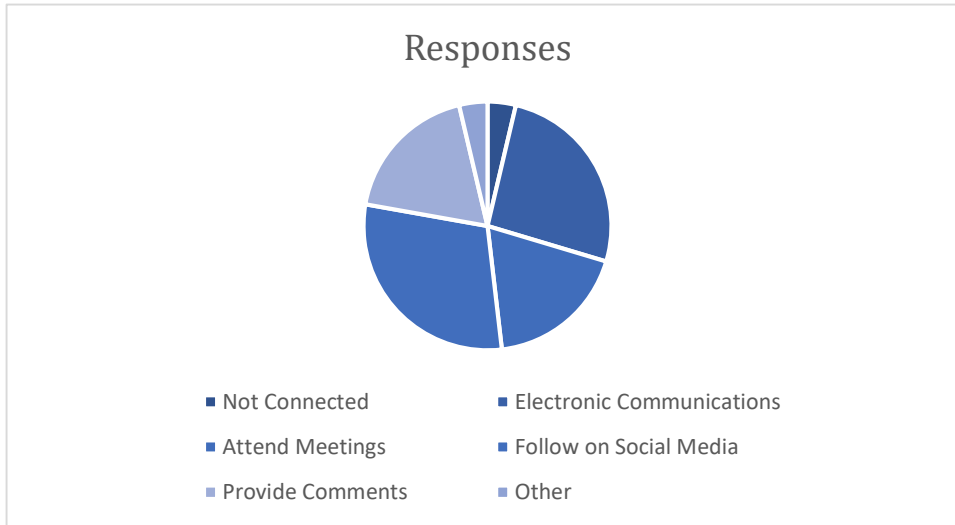
Question 2: In general, how do you tend to hear about news and events in our community? (Please choose up to 2 answers)

| <i>Answer Choices</i> | <i>Responses</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Website/Social Media | 12 | 80.00% |
| Television | 5 | 33.33% |
| Radio | 7 | 46.67% |
| Local Newspaper | 3 | 20.00% |
| Neighborhood Association | 2 | 13.33% |
| Place of Worship | 0 | 0.00% |
| Community Group/Organization | 3 | 20.00% |
| Local Municipality | 3 | 20.00% |



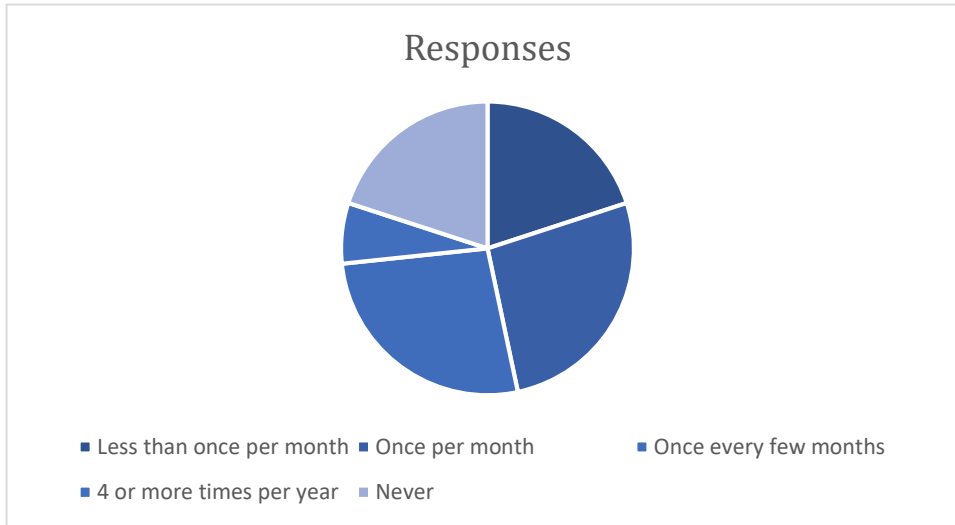
Question 3: How are you currently connected to NLCOG? (Please choose up to 2 answers)

| <i>Answer Choices</i> | <i>Responses</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| I am not connected to NLCOG | 1 | 6.67% |
| Receive e-mail notifications or other electronic communication | 7 | 46.67% |
| Attend NLCOG meetings | 5 | 33.33% |
| Follow NLCOG on social media | 8 | 53.33% |
| Provide public comment or input on plans and studies | 5 | 33.33% |
| Other (none specified) | 1 | 6.67% |



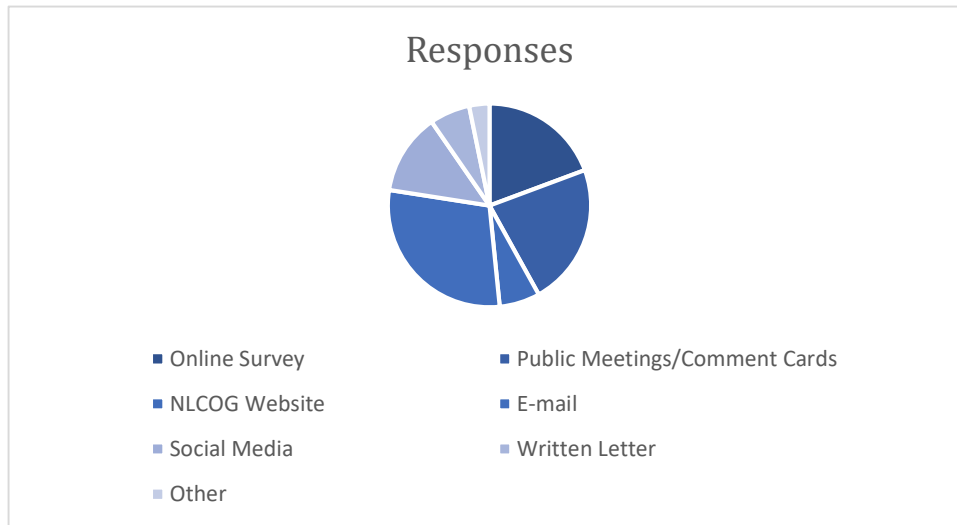
Question 4: How often do you attend NLCOG events? (e.g. Committee/Board meetings, Environmental Studies: I-69/LA3132Ext/I-49ICC)

| <i>Answer Choices</i> | <i>Responses</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than once per month | 3 | 20.00% |
| Once per month | 4 | 26.67% |
| Once every few months | 4 | 26.67% |
| 4 or more times per year | 1 | 6.67% |
| Never | 3 | 20.00% |



Question 5: How would you most likely provide your input to NLCOG? (Please choose up to 2 answers)

| Answer Choices | Responses | Percent |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Online Survey | 6 | 40.00% |
| Public Meetings/Comment Cards | 7 | 46.67% |
| NLCOG Website | 2 | 13.33% |
| E-mail | 9 | 60.00% |
| Social Media | 4 | 26.67% |
| Written Letter | 2 | 13.33% |
| Other (specified as telephone) | 1 | 6.67% |



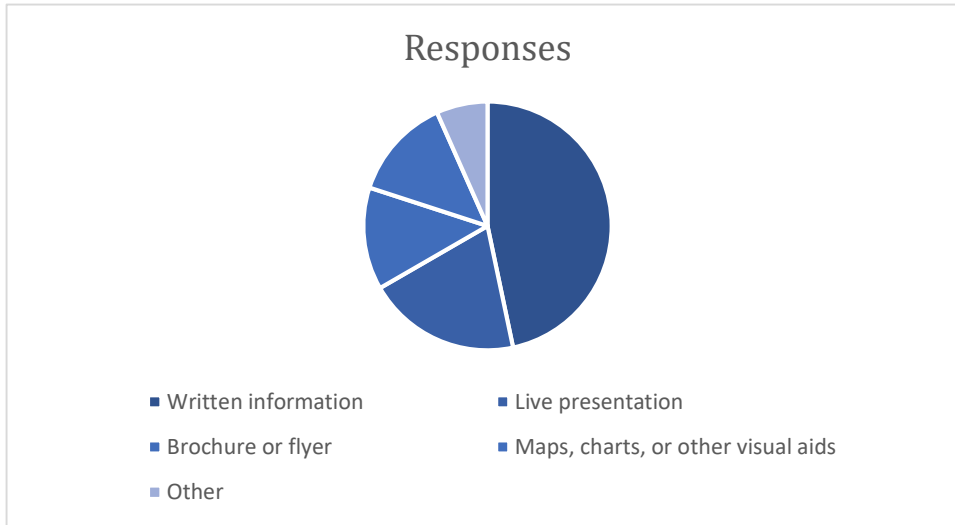
Question 6: What regional transportation issues most interest you? (Please choose up to 2 answers)

| <i>Answer Choices</i> | <i>Responses</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Transit | 4 | 26.67% |
| Bicycle/Pedestrian | 3 | 20.00% |
| Congestion | 2 | 13.33% |
| Safety/Security | 5 | 33.33% |
| Land Use and Transportation | 7 | 46.67% |
| Movement of Goods | 2 | 13.33% |
| Long Range Transportation Improvements | 8 | 53.33% |
| Other (specified as Passenger Rail Service, Satisfactory Completion of LA 3132, and Completion of I-49) | 3 | 20.00% |



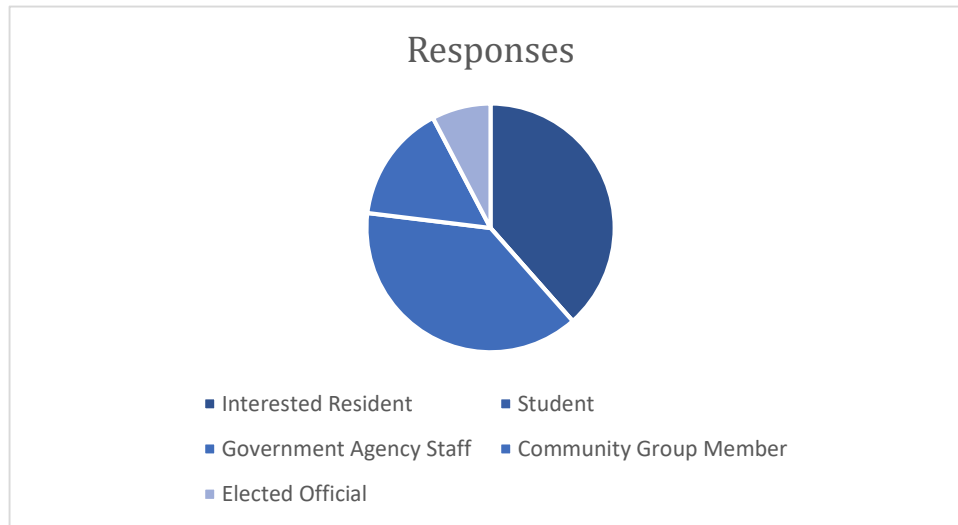
Question 7: How would you prefer to have detailed or complicated information presented to you?

| <i>Answer Choices</i> | <i>Responses</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Written information online for review/ download in advance | 7 | 46.67% |
| Live presentation at meeting or workshop | 3 | 20.00% |
| Brochure or printed flyer | 2 | 13.33% |
| Maps, charts, or other visual aids | 2 | 13.33% |
| Other (specified as All of the Above) | 1 | 6.67% |



Question 8: Which of the following best describes you?

| <i>Answer Choices</i> | <i>Responses</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Interested Resident | 5 | 33.33% |
| Student | 0 | 0.00% |
| Government Agency Staff | 5 | 33.33% |
| Community Group Member | 2 | 13.33% |
| Elected Official | 1 | 6.67% |
| Business Person | 2 | 13.33% |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |



Informing the Public

Public involvement is an ongoing activity of NLCOG, with several techniques continuously occurring. Public involvement is also an integral part of one-time activities such as corridor studies and regularly repeated activities such as the annual Transportation Improvement Program process and Long Range Transportation Plan updates. This section contains descriptions of public involvement tools currently being used by NLCOG. Additionally, tools being developed for possible future use by the NLCOG are included to present a more complete picture of the techniques used.

In keeping with the stated outline of the PIP, all strategies used to engage the public will employ a three-step approach:

- **Identify** the affected public through the creation of an inventory of neighborhood and school organizations, businesses, church groups, ethnic organizations, homeowners' associations, environmental or cultural organizations, and special interest groups.
- **Inform** the affected and public of the plan or project using press releases, display ads, agendas, marketing materials and flyers. Distribution of transportation plans, agendas and brochures will also help familiarize the public with transportation projects. Key staff will participate in radio and/or TV appearances as needed. Staff will publish newsletters for specific transportation projects.
- **Involve** the affected and public through public meetings and hearings, charrettes, and workshops. Staff will participate in established community events and other

opportunities to gauge public sentiment, and create surveys and comment forms to solicit input. As requested, staff will speak at organization meetings to take transportation planning to the public rather than expecting them to attend formal meetings.

Social media and social networking emerged as a viable venue for public engagement. Social media and other internet based communications have had a profound impact on the practice of public involvement in terms of how input is received from the public, how meetings are conducted, and how governments and agencies are communicating with their communities. As social engagement through social media sites is growing in public use they will continue to be used as an engagement tool. NLCOG currently maintains a social media presence on Facebook through the NLCOG page at www.facebook.com/nlcog and the Northwest Louisiana Transportation Safety Coalition Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NWLATransportationSafetyCoalition.

Figure 7 – Northwest Louisiana Transportation Safety Coalition Facebook Page



The development of the www.nlcoglistens.com web portal is the primary means through which NLCOG engages the public online, as well as to gather opinion and attitudinal data concerning specific transportation projects and issues.

By using a number of approaches, such as contacting organizations and individuals, working through media outlets, radio, television, newspapers; posting information to the www.nlcog.org website and flyers to raise awareness of issues; and scheduling meetings and providing opportunities and outlets for public review and comments, NLCOG will provide ample opportunities for the public to participate in the decision-making process. A comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of strategies is provided.

- Publications – NLCOG will provide clear and understandable printed informational materials appropriate to the planning process or event. Where appropriate and feasible, these materials will be made available on the website. NLCOG may charge for maps, major reports and other materials to cover printing or photocopying costs, based on the current NLCOG policy. NLCOG may also charge for shipping and handling costs if the materials are mailed per the citizen's request.
 - Brochures
 - Fact Sheets – NLCOG produces fact sheets on various topics of interest and to update the community on the status of current projects.
 - Information Guides – NLCOG seeks to educate the public on specific aspects of its daily activities. These guides usually accompany a presentation; however, these guides may be used independently. Guides currently used or in development include:
 - Citizen's Guide to the Transportation Planning Process
 - What is GIS? A Citizen's Guide to Geographic Information Systems
 - Overview of Title VI and Environmental Justice
 - Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guide
- News Releases
 - Sent as appropriate regarding NLCOG programs, projects, and other information to news media in the Northwest Louisiana region.
 - Provided to news media in the region regarding major upcoming actions, when and where the action will be taken, and whom to contact for more information.
- Website – NLCOG's websites, www.nlcog.org and www.nlcoglistens.com, seek to provide information to the public on opportunities for participation, maintain up-to-date information about NLCOG programs and activities, as well as upcoming meetings. NLCOG continually seeks to improve the sites to make them increasingly user-friendly, informational, and interactive. Other areas of interest include:

- Regular features such as the calendar of events, committee meeting agendas and contact information.
- Visual information including GIS maps, charts, pictures and slide shows.
- Draft documents open for public comment.
- Other information as appropriate and related to NLCOG programs and activities.
- NLCOG's website will never replace other forms of involvement and notice, to ensure that all non-computer users continue to be fully engaged in the planning process.
- Presentations - NLCOG will use a variety of other means of providing public information and seeking public comment through presentations to area organizations. Examples of presentations currently used or in development:
 - Transportation 101: A Citizen's Guide to the Transportation Planning Process
 - What is GIS? A Citizen's Guide to Geographic Information Systems
 - Overview of Title VI and Environmental Justice
- Public Outreach Events, Presentations and Displays – NLCOG will use a variety of other means to provide the public information and to seek public comment. These events may include:
 - Booths and displays at public events and sites.
 - Participation in broadcast media events.
- Public Service Announcements
- Advertisements of Upcoming Meetings – Placed in the local newspaper, The (Shreveport) Times, as well as posted to the websites www.nlcog.org and www.nlcoglistens.com, and to social media. Agendas are posted to the website and posted on the office door as per Louisiana state law. The MPO Transportation Policy Committee and Board of Directors annual meeting schedule is also published on the www.nlcog.org website, as well as published annually in The Times.

Goals and Objectives of Public Involvement

Public involvement activities seek to “give the public an opportunity to influence decision-making.”² Some of the greatest challenges in public involvement are:

² Public Involvement in the Transportation Decision-making Process, FHWA Pub. No. FHWA-NHI-02-049, March 2002

- Maintaining focus on the issues;
- Educating the public on the importance of early and continued involvement;
- Involving the public early in the process;
- Proactively reaching the public;
- Decreasing public apathy;
- Reaching out to and including all stakeholders;
- Receiving a variety of input from a variety of stakeholders;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement activities; and
- Involving the media in positive and informative ways.

Though there are challenges in public involvement, the benefits of an effective public involvement program outweigh any potential challenge. The benefits include:

- Early identification of potentially significant community issues that should either be satisfactorily addressed to allow the project to move forward, or cause the project to be re-evaluated.
- Building a credible and trusting relationship between the MPO and the community it serves through partnering, outreach, active listening and two-way communication.
- Sustain or improve the quality of life in a community through an open dialogue and understanding of issues related to transportation planning and project development.
- Minimizing conflict through understanding the relationship between transportation decisions and the community.

Active public involvement leads to better decisions and greater acceptance of projects, creates a sense of community, and enhances the relationship between the agency and the public.

As NLCOG's responsibility to the public, our public involvement activities will encompass four basic components:

1. Early notification – NLCOG will inform, engage and involve the public early in the decision-making process.
2. Periodic information sharing – NLCOG will improve the public's knowledge through creative and interactive approaches.
3. Thorough search for stakeholders – NLCOG will undertake an inclusive approach in searching for all stakeholders, soliciting the input of other agencies, neighborhood groups and the public at-large.
4. Clear and open decision-making processes – NLCOG will engage in honest and transparent decision-making processes.

To continue to fulfill its federal mandates, NLCOG has developed several specific and functional goals and objectives for the public involvement plan. The following is a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, list of the goals and objectives of this policy:

Goal 1: *Increase the public's understanding of the transportation planning and decision-making process in Northwest Louisiana.*

- Meeting procedures
 - Provide agendas for all NLCOG Committee meetings
 - Post NLCOG Committee meeting agendas and minutes on the website
 - Notify interested parties, as maintained by an NLCOG database, of upcoming NLCOG Committee meetings
 - Designate time on each NLCOG Committee meeting agenda for comments from interested parties
- Public Informational Materials
 - Maintain the NLCOG website(s)
 - Develop other information materials as needed, i.e., quarterly newsletters, brochures, citizen guides, etc.
 - Develop presentations to increase awareness of public involvement and promote staff availability at local government and community meetings to discuss current issues and initiatives, as well as provide an overview of NLCOG's processes
- Media Relations
 - Identify media outlets, such as print, radio, and television, and maintain contact/ mailing list
 - Notify media of all regularly scheduled NLCOG Committee meetings
 - Work with the media to inform and educate the public about the decision-making process and regional issues

Goal 2: *Ensure the public is aware of involvement opportunities and that they are adequate, appropriate, and meaningful.*

- Public Forum/Public Meetings Procedures
 - Publicize all public meetings, public hearings, and public review periods through media outreach and public notice advertisements
 - Provide draft plans and reports to various local public agencies for public access, as well as via the website and social media
 - Report through NLCOG Committees all significant public comments on draft plans and reports

- Special Publications, Groups, Surveys
 - When warranted, convene task forces, focus groups, and advisory committees, etc. comprised of interested residents, planners, technical experts and others who have expressed an interest in a topic and involve them in the decision-making process
 - Provide fact sheets on specific projects
 - Conduct surveys on significant regional issues, at appropriate times, to produce statistical information to help identify the desires of the region

Goal 3: *Identify and involve traditionally underserved communities in Northwest Louisiana in the decision-making process*

- Outreach efforts
 - Identify groups, using GIS analysis, that represent or assist traditionally underserved communities and maintain contact/mailing list
 - Meet with community leaders to identify ways of reaching and involving them in the NLCOG transportation planning and decision-making processes
 - Identify media serving these communities and maintain contact/mailing list
 - Notify the media of all regularly scheduled NLCOG Committee meetings
 - Work with media to inform and educate the public about regional issues
- Meeting Locations
 - Choose meeting locations and times served by transit whenever possible and include bus route information in meeting announcements
 - Ensure that meetings are held at locations accessible to persons with disabilities
 - Include alternate forms of information (when requested) to assist those residents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), i.e. interpreters, information printed in alternative languages, etc.

Providing Opportunities for Public Involvement

Incorporating innovative approaches to the community in order to foster a two-way, open line of trust and communication, will not only allow NLCOG to gain input from the residents, it will also give knowledge to the residents to become more active in the decision-making process. Below is an inclusive, but not exhaustive, list of activities that NLCOG may implement in the future in order to help increase the level of public involvement in the planning and decision-making process.

- Town Hall Meetings/Dialogue Sessions
- Presentations
- Neighborhood/Community Liaisons
- Surveys
- Community meetings
- Transportation Planning Forums
- Charrettes
- Public Review and Comment Periods
- Email and Feedback forms

Because public involvement is not “one size fits all,” NLCOG will customize each project’s approaches and activities in order to be effective with different publics and different cultures as represented by the project. Most require minimal effort on the part of the community and the majority of the effort is concentrated in either attending a meeting/community forum or completing a survey. NLCOG will make every effort to go to the community in a way that is the least invasive and most convenient.

To solicit meaningful input, the public involvement activities must be tailored to accommodate each different group, especially those traditionally under-represented in the decision-making process. It is important to use creative and innovative methods to reach every spectrum of the community. Because input from every segment of the population is critical to successful transportation decision making, considering new ways to reach out to diverse populations that goes beyond the often-used public meeting is essential. Some alternatives NLCOG may employ to gather input from diverse populations include:

- Seeking permission from the local school principals to involve civics/social studies students in interviewing their parents to record issues and concerns.
- Identifying community focal points such as senior centers, grocery stores, and churches where interviews can be conducted in a non-threatening environment.
- Documenting attendance by asking a volunteer to write the names and addresses of people as they arrive to eliminate barriers to participation for those who are LEP or low-literate.

People want to have a voice in transportation decision-making. Creating a contact network is a proven method to involve a core group of participants known to have a strong interest in transportation projects. A contact network consists of a database composed of key community members and leaders who can provide information about the community.

Targeting participants who represent the different segments of the affected community will enhance public involvement efforts. Figure 10 contains examples of interest groups that may be present within the community, have an interest in the project, and have knowledge about the community. The resources listed below are only a starting point, not all-inclusive.

Figure 8 – Community Resources

| Elected Officials | Appointed Officials |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Police Jury/Parish Commission | Planning Boards |
| State Representatives and Senators | Historic Preservation Boards |
| City Councils | Citizen Advisory Committees |
| Congressional Delegation | Department of Transportation |
| Agency Representatives | Professional Organizations |
| Office of Community Services | Realtors |
| Fish and Wildlife Commission | Planners |
| Department of Health and Hospitals | Developers |
| Department of Children and Family Services | Contractors |
| Department of Environmental Protection | Bankers |
| Federal Agencies | Surveyors |
| Regional Planning Councils | Engineers |
| Water Resource Agencies | Attorneys |
| Housing Authorities | Healthcare Providers |
| Special Interest Groups | Business Community |
| Historic/Cultural Preservation | Chambers of Commerce |
| Public Parking Agencies | Economic Development Councils |
| Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocates | Major Employers |
| Trail Associations | Transportation Professionals |
| Greenway Organizations | Safety Groups |
| Environmental Organizations | Emergency Services |
| Neighborhood Associations | Trucking Associations |
| Retail Associations | Transit/Paratransit |
| Community Development | Community Safety Coalitions |
| Non-Profit Organizations | Tourist Industry |
| Churches | Convention & Tourist Bureaus |
| Colleges & Universities | Festival Organizers |
| Community & Senior Centers | Tourist Attractions |
| AARP/Councils on Aging | Hotel & Restaurant Associations |
| Disability Advocates/ARCs | |
| Homeless Shelters | |

Public meetings afford the community an opportunity to interact with NLCOG staff, members and other members of the public and to provide direct input to the planning process. Public meetings and hearings encompass a large part of NLCOG's information sharing and public input processes. NLCOG seeks to follow these guidelines:

- Types of Public Meetings - Public meetings are defined as including:
 - Public hearings (usually a required hearing, announced via legal notice, with formal rules of participation);
 - Public forums (usually single-topic meetings, with or without speakers, and affording full opportunity for attendee discussion);
 - Public open houses (informational displays, staff available to take written or spoken comments and questions);
 - Modified open house meetings (including an unstructured open house portion plus a traditional meeting portion);
 - Board, committee and task force meetings (primarily for member participation, with public welcome and public comment period provided); or
- Accessibility of Public Meetings
 - All public meetings shall be held in facilities accessible to the disabled and transit-dependent residents.
 - If a series of three or more meetings is held throughout the region to capture public input region-wide:
 - one or more of the meetings will be at a location served by public transportation, and
 - the series will include both daytime (regular business hours) and evening or weekend (non-business hours) meetings.
 - Five-day notice is requested of residents who require special assistance due to a disability to ensure NLCOG can accommodate all requests in a timely manner. If special accommodations are requested, NLCOG will provide such persons an opportunity to participate, either by providing special accommodations at the meeting site, or providing an alternative opportunity to participate.
- Notification of Public Meetings (at minimum)
 - Posting at the NLCOG offices.
 - Additional notice of meetings should be made via:
 - NLCOG website,
 - NLCOG social media,

- Posting to other local electronic events calendars as appropriate, and/or
 - Legal notice to newspapers of record.
- Press releases will be sent to encourage additional media announcements.
- Any person may, upon request and payment of a reasonable fee, obtain advance notification of any specific committee meetings.
- Any person who inquires, in person or by telephone, concerning the date, time and place of such meetings shall be so informed.
- Components of Public Meetings
 - A sign-in sheet to document attendance;
 - Information on the meeting topic that will enable participation, for example, agenda, displays, informational handouts;
 - Clearly explained opportunity for public participation in the meeting; and
 - Documentation of input.

Access to NLCOG Records and Information

Minutes are maintained for all NLCOG Committee meetings. Minutes are available upon request and posted to the NLCOG website. Materials from committee meetings are also available upon request.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program and other special studies are available upon request and posted to the NLCOG website; should the public desire further information or clarification on any of the plans or programs, a member of the staff will be available upon request.

Environmental Justice Considerations

Providing public involvement opportunities develops relationships with community leaders within local health clinics, community centers, churches, advocacy groups and schools to reach people who may not read or speak English, or may not read but can identify community issues.

Environmental Justice refers to federal mandates to ensure that federal funds available for projects and programs are used fairly, so that low-income and minority groups benefit along with the rest of the population. In addition, care must be taken so these groups do not suffer disproportionately from negative impacts of transportation projects.

As recommended by, and in compliance with federal law and rules, NLCOG will:

- Identify and Involve Target Populations

- Identify low-income and minority neighborhoods.
- Identify organizations and neighborhood leaders who can assist with outreach efforts to those communities.
- Seek out and consider 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.
- Adapt Advertising
 - Meeting notices and materials communicate clearly, and acronyms and other jargon will be avoided.
 - NLCOG will seek assistance from neighborhood leaders and organizations to help publicize meetings, distribute questionnaires, etc.
 - Announcements will be sent to ethnic radio stations and newspapers.
 - As needed, notices or surveys may be translated into other languages.
- Choose Appropriate Meeting Times and Locations
 - When appropriate to the particular planning process (examples, regional transportation plan update; transit plan), meetings will be held in target neighborhoods:
 - at familiar locations;
 - near transit routes; and
 - in buildings accessible to those with disabilities.
 - Meetings may be held in conjunction with a regularly-scheduled community meeting.
 - Meetings may be held during daytime to accommodate seniors, second-shift workers, after-dark safety concerns, and transit schedules.
- Structure Meetings to Encourage Participation
 - Refreshments and child care may be provided to encourage attendance.
 - The room set-up and meeting structure will aim to provide an inviting atmosphere.
 - Techniques may include small-group discussions; recording all comments on a tablet easel; use of a familiar neighborhood gathering spot, for example a library or house of worship.
 - NLCOG will strive for diversity in the meeting leadership. Example, neighborhood leaders may be invited to open the meeting.

- Visual images will be used in presentations to make information clear and understandable
- Meetings will be kept reasonably brief.
- Availability of Public Documents
 - Plan or project-related documents will be placed in locations convenient to the low-income and minority target populations (example, public libraries in target population neighborhoods).
 - These locations should be open evenings and weekends.
 - Copies will be free or low cost.

IV. DOCUMENTING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The public's input is what all outreach activities are intended to produce. Public comments are collected for determining the potential effect of a transportation project or plan on a community. The public comments will provide the technical project personnel with the information they need to make transportation decisions that meet community needs. Collecting, analyzing and synthesizing the myriad of comments received into a format that facilitates their inclusion into project level decisions are as important as the activity that produced the comments.

An effective public involvement process requires a procedure for handling public feedback. Careful processing of public comment is critical to maximize responsiveness to the community. By being responsive to the community, trust and credibility are gradually built with each response. All comments received should be analyzed, acknowledged and catalogued.

Additionally, appropriate and complete documentation of public involvement activities creates a history and record of commitments made as a result of the activities. Access to the documentation allows the public to see that their input was heard and considered. Proper documentation includes compiling all materials related to the public involvement activity and summarizing and analyzing the public comments that result.

Portfolio of Public Involvement Activities

A portfolio is an excellent way to document public involvement activities as proposed transportation projects are identified and moved forward to the work program and project development.

The portfolio contains all the project components presented to agencies, elected officials and the public. It should contain the project purpose and need statement, the public involvement plan, contact lists, schedule of activities, materials, maps, invitations, flyers, and photos of any community interaction relating to the proposed project. A project portfolio documents data gathered at public involvement activities and provides a

repository for meaningful information that accurately assesses the issues and concerns of the affected community. The portfolio is prepared by:

- Compiling outreach activity results such as charts, graphs, and summary documents including photographs, newspaper articles, video clips and other materials.
- Summarizing and presenting the findings clearly and in non-technical language.
- Providing the portfolio for public access. The information should be simple and easy to understand.

The components of a project portfolio include:

1. **Project history** – This section should define the affected community. It should include a geographic description of the study area utilizing maps, as well as demographic information.
2. **Public involvement plan** – This section includes the public involvement plan and information to define community attitudes and preferences. It also encompasses the community's level of understanding of the proposed transportation project, feedback from the community on a selected alternative, on-going status of the plan/project decisions as it becomes more defined, and maps, diagrams and typical sectors.
3. **Notification process** – This section should include the master contact list detailing all methods of notification to invite the public to activities. Flyers, posters, letters of invitation, press released and/or legal ads should be included.
4. **Description of all outreach activities** – This section should include the date, time and location of public involvement activities, as well as photographs, sign-in sheets, maps, graphs, boards, surveys, comment forms, comment log and summary, meeting notifications, evaluation forms, requests for presentations, meeting minutes if applicable, etc. Describe the flow of the activity. If workstations were utilized, describe each and what data was gathered. Show exhibits used.
5. **Results** – Document the public involvement activities by using percentages and numbers to reflect the number of people invited to the event and the number of people who attended. Compile the issues or concerns. If the data collected at an activity is different from what was expected, carefully document that information.
6. **Compile and distribute** – Compile all of the information collected for each activity into the project portfolio. This information will be posted on the project website (if applicable) and NLCOG's website.

Whenever a staff/team member makes a presentation or public appearance or attends a community event, a simple, easy-to-complete report will be prepared to document the event. The report should include the number of attendees and handouts distributed and an analysis of public comments received. A sample of the report is shown in Figure 13 as found on page 38.

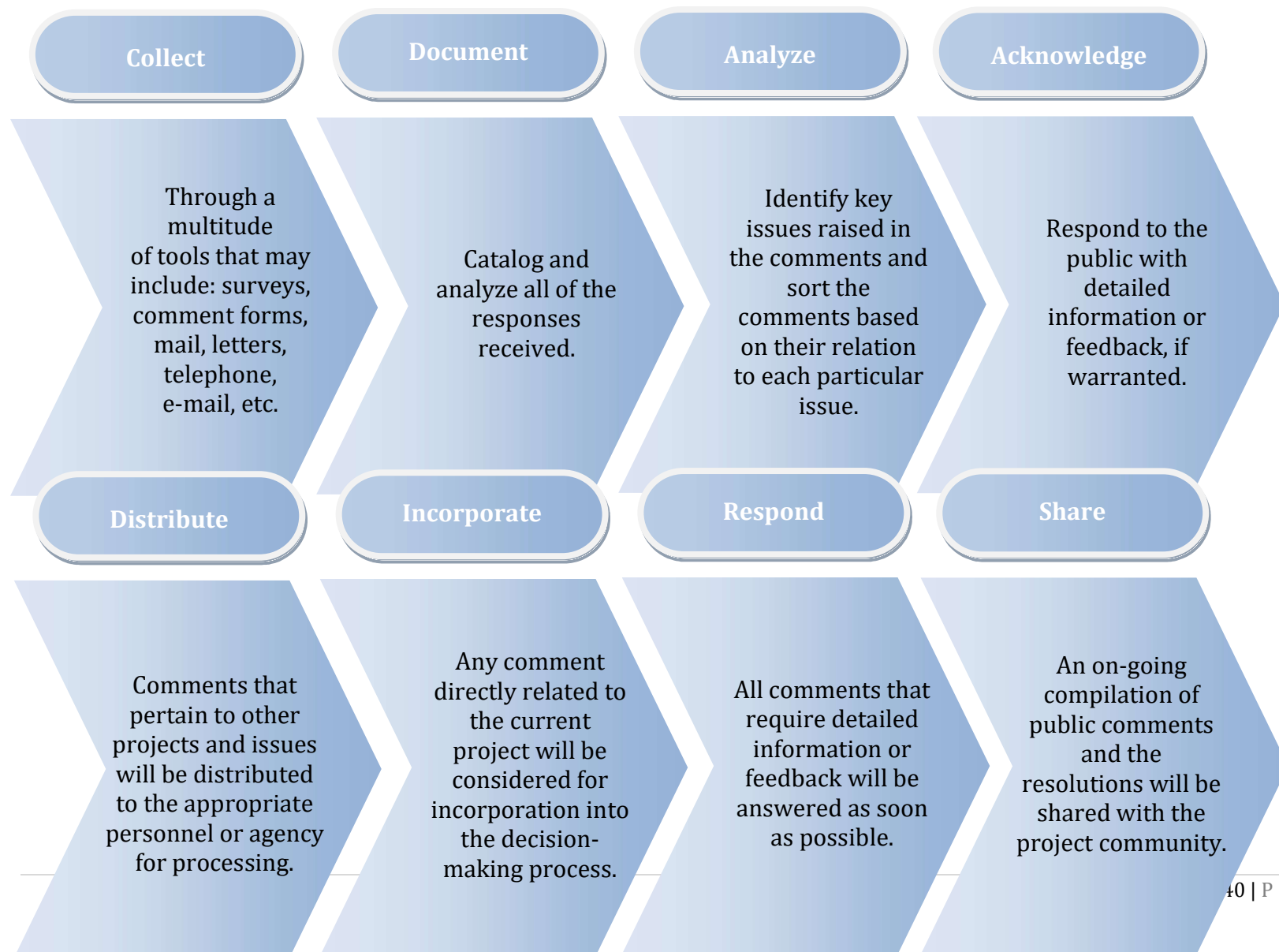
Public Comments

The primary objective of any public involvement activity is to inform the public and solicit their input as it relates to transportation projects and improvements. The most common way for the public in general to relay their ideas and input is through written or verbally submitted comments.

The comments received serve several purposes. Comments help provide documentation for the public involvement activities. The information gleaned from the public comments, if correctly synthesized and catalogued, will serve as an excellent record for future project phases. The amount and types of comments received will help in evaluating the success of the individual public involvement activities as well as the overall public involvement plan. Public comment will help build an understanding of community issues and needs that should be considered in designing transportation solutions that fit community needs.

The public comment process contains eight steps:

Figure 9 – Public Comment Processing



V. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is effective if the purpose of the program or activity is achieved. Proven methods to organize, summarize, and analyze public comments for consideration in transportation decisions are outlined in this section. The steps taken to evaluate public involvement techniques, identify measures to quantify success rates, and outline strategies to improve the public involvement process are as important as the public involvement activities.

In order to develop and implement a successful public involvement program, it is essential to assess and evaluate public outreach efforts not only to meet federal requirements, but also to make sure outreach efforts are successful. Through systemic evaluation efforts, it is possible to discontinue activities that are ineffective and to improve or add new public involvement activities when appropriate.

This section will outline the steps to be taken to evaluate the public involvement techniques identified in the PIP, identify measures to quantify success rates and provide strategies to improve the public involvement process.

Performance Measures and Targets

To determine if public involvement tools were effective, they must be evaluated and compared to established performance measures. Performance measures are:

- **Measurable** – A quantitative translation of the desired objective. Qualitative performance measures may be identified, but should not be the sole indicator for an objective.
- **Verifiable** – Multiple, independent observers should be able to agree upon the results.
- **Cost Effective** – The benefits of using an indicator should exceed the costs associated with tracking it.

To establish a simple but manageable way to evaluate the alternatives, staff defined six performance measures against which to evaluate the PIP objectives. The performance measures were then broken into a more fine-grained set of fifteen considerations including public knowledge of NLCOG and familiarity with its role and publications, as well as effectiveness of methods to get informed and involved.

Figure 10 – Performance Measures and Considerations

| | |
|---|--|
| CONNECT Desired outcome: Continual improvement of connecting with the public. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Public’s awareness of NLCOG (logo, office location, website, social media presence, etc.)2. Public’s familiarity with NLCOG’s role and publications3. Effectiveness of methods to get informed (mail, e-mail, social media, website, etc.)4. Effectiveness of methods to get involved (meetings, charrettes, surveys, website, committees, etc.) |
| ACCESS Desired outcome: Public given adequate review time, opportunity to comment and access to convenient meetings. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide timely information to allow the public to review plans, give comments and attend meetings2. Convenience of meetings at a given time and location (e.g. meetings held at a central location and in neighborhoods where affected people live)3. Ability to access NLCOG’s publications (internet, library, NLCOG’s office, etc.) |
| EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION Desired outcome: Visualizations are used as appropriate and public discussion occurs. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. NLCOG products and presentations use effective visualization techniques to help the public conceptualize the material presented2. Material presented at meetings is relevant3. Quality discussion takes place at meetings |
| INPUT Desired outcome: At least two opportunities are provided for input on each plan or work product. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create a number of opportunities for participants to give their input during comment periods, meetings and other activities2. The public understands why, how and when to participate in the transportation decision-making process |
| IMPACT Desired outcome: All public comments are addressed in a timely manner. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Public concerns are addressed, questions are answered and comments are taken into consideration |

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Desired outcome: Increase the interested party list from diverse populations or under-represented groups.

1. Outreach to diverse populations (citizens, interest groups, agencies, stakeholders from a wide geographical area, demographic diversity, etc.)
 2. Inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups (minorities, the elderly, low-income households, persons with Limited English Proficiency, and persons with disabilities)
-

When asking the public to evaluate the public involvement technique(s) for a project, the survey should take into consideration these performance measures. The survey may consist of short, specific questions regarding the public involvement tools that were used on a specific project.

Staff Evaluations

Staff can provide helpful information on developing new strategies to improve public involvement for a project, and in general. During in-house evaluations, staff can consider the following questions to help evaluate a public involvement activity:

1. Is a significant portion of the entire project community participating in the public involvement activities?
 - Are the timing and/or locations appropriate for the audience?
 - Are the notifications reaching the audience?
2. Is there continuity among participants?
 - Does the public understand the process?
 - Are there alternate ways to educate and inform the public about the process?
3. Are there adequate and appropriate communication techniques being employed?
 - Does the public understand the project information?
 - Does the public believe their comments are important and will be considered?
4. Are the comments received from the community relevant to the project? Are they realistic and appropriate to the project phase?
 - Does the public understand the project scope?
 - Does the public understand what information/input is being sought?
 - Does the public have unrealistic expectations?

- Does the public understand the types of decisions to be made during the current phase of project development?
5. Are there significant unresolved issues on the project?
- Have all relevant issues been identified and resolved to the satisfaction of the community?
 - What kind of continued dialogue or outreach does the public desire?

Review of the Public Involvement Plan and Process

Improvements to the PIP will be made periodically to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. Evaluations and recommendations will be made from the portfolios for each project and plan, as well as through the staff evaluations. Seeking public input is vital to the success of transportation planning. Evaluation of outreach efforts identifies what is being done right and where improvements need to be made.

The PIP will be reviewed every three years at a minimum. Annual improvement recommendations will impact this review and provide insight into which elements of the plan should be modified, with the goal of maintaining core principles and best practices in the context of our region.

Figure 13 shows a sample of the staff evaluation form.

Figure 11 – Sample Staff Evaluation Form



Public Involvement Evaluation and Improvement Form

This form should be completed for each public involvement evaluation.

Date evaluation began: _____
Date evaluation completed: _____
Evaluation completed by: _____

Evaluation of: ☐ Planning study: _____
 ☐ Specific tool(s): _____
 ☐ Other: _____
Date of activity(ies): _____

If this is a study evaluation, is this: ☐ Mid-study ☐ End of study
List the public involvement tools used during the study: _____

Description of study or tool: _____

Audience(s) targeted for public involvement: _____

| | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Type of evaluation(s) to be conducted: | <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis | |
| Survey, indicate type: | <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Written | <input type="checkbox"/> Mail-back |
| Targeted respondents: _____ | | |
| Statistical analysis, description: _____ | | |
| _____ | | |
| _____ | | |
| _____ | | |

| |
|-------------------------------|
| Improvement strategies: _____ |
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|----------------------------------|
| Date(s) of implementation: _____ |
| _____ |
| _____ |
| _____ |
| _____ |
| _____ |

Appendix A

Glossary

Glossary

Access / Accessibility – The opportunity to reach a given end use within a certain period of time, or without being impeded by physical, social or economic barriers. Enhancing mobility is one way of improving access.

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: Federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to persons with disabilities including those with mental disabilities, temporary disabilities, and the conditions related to substance abuse.

Affected community – The community within which the transportation project decisions are to be implemented.

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) – Advisory committee utilized by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for citizen input into the transportation planning process.

CAAA – Clean Air Act Amendments: 1990 amendments to the federal Clean Air Act which classify non-attainment areas and provide for rules dealing with air pollution in such areas; specifically brought transportation decisions into the context of air quality control.

Community – Behavior patterns which individuals or groups of individuals hold in common, usually expressed through daily social interaction, the use of local facilities, participation in local organizations, and involvement in activities that satisfy the population's economic and social needs. May also be defined by geographic boundaries, physical features, and socioeconomic conditions.

CMP – Congestion Management Process: A systematic process required under SAFETEA-LU for all TMAs that addresses congestion management through the metropolitan planning process that provides for effective management and operation, based on a cooperatively developed and implemented metropolitan-wide strategy of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies. The CMP is required under 23 CFR 500.109 and includes methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multi-modal transportation system, identify causes of congestion, identify and evaluate alternative actions, provide information supporting the implementation of actions, and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation actions. The CMP is periodically reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness of the implemented strategies, the results of this evaluation are provided to decision-makers to provide guidance on selection of effective strategies for future implementation purposes.

Contact network – A database of residents and key community leaders who provide feedback to and from broad-based community organizations.

DOT – Department of Transportation: Agency responsible for transportation at the local, state, or federal level. For title 23 U.S.C. federal-aid highway actions, this would mean the Federal Highway Administration and for federal-aid transit actions under title 49 U.S.C, this would mean the Federal Transit Administration.

Environmental Justice – Derived from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it describes the impact of transportation plans or projects, either positive or negative, on a particular community or population. Environmental Justice strives to ensure public involvement of low income and minority groups in decision-making, to prevent disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income and minority groups, and to assure that these groups receive equal benefits from transportation improvements.

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration: Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for administering federal highway transportation programs under title 23 U.S.C.

FTA – Federal Transit Administration: Federal entity responsible for transit planning and programs under title 49 U.S.C.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) – Federal transportation bill signed into law on December 4, 2015. The FAST Act funds surface transportation programs—including, but not limited to, Federal-aid highways—at over \$305 billion for fiscal years 2016 through 2020. It is the first long-term surface transportation authorization enacted in a decade that provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation.

FY – Fiscal Year: A federal fiscal or budget year; runs from October 1 through September 30 for the federal government and July 1 through June 30 for NLCOG.

Geographic Information System (GIS) – A computer system capable of capturing, storing, analyzing, and displaying geographically referenced information; data identified according to location.

ISTEA – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991: Federal law which restructured transportation planning and funding by requiring consideration of multimodal solutions, emphasis on the movement of people and goods as opposed to traditional highway investments, flexibility in the use of transportation funds, a greater role of MPOs, and a greater emphasis on public participation.

Long Range – In transportation planning, refers to a time span of more than five (5) years. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is typically regarded as a short-range program.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – Required 20-year forecast plan of MPOs and state planning agencies resulting from a regional process of collaboration and consensus on a region's transportation system. This document serves as the defining vision for the region or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, the plan indicates all of the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next 20 years.

MAP-21 – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act: A funding and authorization bill to govern federal surface transportation spending. It signed into law on July 6, 2012.

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization: The forum for cooperative transportation decision-making; required for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000. The entity is designated by federal law with lead responsibility for developing transportation plans and programs for the urbanized areas.

MPO Activities – Plans, programs and projects related to the MPO process.

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act: Federal law passed in 1969 that requires an analysis of environmental impacts of federal actions (including the funding of projects).

Officials – Are people who have governmental decision-making, planning or administrative responsibilities that relate to MPO activities.

Outreach – Efforts to offer everyone in a community the opportunity to participate in transportation planning.

Project development – The phase a proposed project undergoes once it has been through the planning process. The project development phase is a more detailed analysis of a proposed project's social, economic, and environmental impacts and various project alternatives. What comes from the project development phase is a decision reached through negotiation among all affected parties, including the public. After a proposal has successfully passed the project development phase, it may move to preliminary engineering, design, and construction.

Public Comment – Once a public involvement program is underway, extensive information begins to accumulate about the views of the public and interest groups in the form of public comment.

Public Participation / Public Involvement – An integral part of a planning or major decision-making process. It provides opportunities for the public to be involved with the MPO in an exchange of data and ideas. Citizen participation offers an open process in which the rights of the community, to be informed to provide comments to the Government and to receive a response from the government, are met through a full opportunity to be involved and to express needs and goals.

Public Service Announcement (PSA) – An announcement (including network) which promotes services, programs, or activities that serve community interests.

SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users - legislation enacted August 10, 2005, as Public Law 109-59. SAFETEA-LU authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009.

Socio-Cultural Effects – The effects a transportation action has on social, economic, aesthetic and livability, relocation and displacement, civil rights, and land use issues.

Stakeholder – Anyone who has an interest in a project: anyone who will be impacted by a project; will be a user of a project; who holds an affected value; and/or those whose participation is necessary for NLCOG to make sound decisions.

TCC – Technical Coordinating Committee: An advisory committee of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO); provides advice on all technical matters under consideration by the staff or as directed by the committees. Also serves as a steering committee for all transportation planning studies.

TPC – Transportation Policy Committee: A standing committee created for the purpose of dealing with transportation issues and is the designated MPO to prioritize and direct federal transportation funds to local projects. The TPC is comprised of elected and non-elected officials from the cities and parishes in the urbanized area. The TPC also has representatives from

LaDOTD, FHWA, FTA and SporTran. The TPC is responsible for creating policies regarding transportation planning issues. The TPC meetings are open to the public and where any member of the public can address the MPO on any transportation issue.

TEA-21 – Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century: Federal Legislation authorizing funds for all modes of transportation and guidelines on the use of those funds. Followed ISTEA, this legislation clarified the role of the MPOs in the local priority setting process. TEA-21 emphasizes increased public involvement, simplicity, flexibility, fairness, and higher transportation funding levels.

The Public – Includes residents, public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, 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, advocacy groups and the private sectors that have an interest in or may be affected by MPO activities.

TIP – Transportation Improvement Program: A priority list of transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization that is to be carried out within the four (4) year period following its adoption; must include documentation of federal and state funding sources for each project and be consistent with adopted MPO Long-Range transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans.

TMA – Transportation Management Area: An area designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation given to all urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 (or other area when requested by the Governor and MPO); these areas must comply with special transportation planning requirements regarding congestion management systems, project selection and certification; requirements identified in 23 CFR - 450.300-33.6.

UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program: Developed by Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs); identifies all transportation and planning activities anticipated within the next one to two years, including a schedule for the completion of the identified tasks and activities.

Appendix B

Toolbox for Public Involvement

A toolbox is important for any line of work. It helps a person or agency complete the required tasks in the most efficient and effective way. As with any toolbox, this toolbox is meant to be the building block for public involvement. Like the entire public involvement plan, this toolbox will be re-evaluated when needed to identify if the tools are working, if they need to be improved upon, or if new tools need to be added.

NLCOG identified several practical techniques of public involvement to use in a variety of situations. While these techniques allow a wide-range of use, NLCOG will tailor each technique to the specific project and needs of the community. These techniques and descriptions are a general guideline of how NLCOG can incorporate a variety of approaches to involve the public to achieve the maximum impact with every opportunity for public involvement from all audiences. The following is a thorough, though not exhaustive, list of public involvement techniques NLCOG will employ. The table illustrates various techniques, criteria for success, performance measures and methods to achieve the public involvement goals.

As needed, NLCOG will reference Public Involvement in the Transportation Decision-making Process (Pub No. FHWA-NHI-02-049) for additional techniques.

Techniques listed in alphabetical order.

| Technique | Use | Participants | Goals | Indicator |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Ads / Press Releases | Block and/or legal ads in the newspaper(s) provide legal notification to affected communities within a plan or project area, as well as the general public within the circulation area. | People living within the affected communities | Provide legal notification to affected communities | Proof of publication affidavit provides confirmation that the ad and/or press release was published |
| Brainstorming | Participants come together in a democratic, freethinking forum to generate ideas and help find common ground for consensus about a solution. Brainstorming can help NLCOG develop projects, policies and programs as we become aware of issues, problems and solutions that might not otherwise come to our attention. | Anyone can participate in a brainstorming session and should bring all ideas to the table. | Brainstorming sessions bring new ideas to difficult problems. Brainstorming gives participants a sense of progress and accomplishment while helping to resolve issues. | Variety and quality of ideas received from interested/involved parties. |
| Charrettes | Participants work together to resolve a problem or issue within a specified time limit. A charrette calls attention to an issue and can generate alternative solutions to the problem through smaller work groups. | Anyone can participate and is assured an opportunity to speak out. | Charrettes produce visible results through open, honest examination of the issues and help participants reach consensus on an appropriate solution. Charrettes encourage public comment by being interactive, responsive, and focusing on the generation of fresh ideas and approaches. | Variety and quality of ideas received from interested/involved parties. |
| Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) | A representative group meets regularly to discuss issues of common concern. It is a forum for hearing ideas and bringing those ideas directly into the process. A CAC creates a working group for sharing ideas in a representative environment of opposing viewpoints. Each participant shares equal status and has an on-going opportunity for input. | Representatives are selected to participate and include a diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds. | A CAC demonstrates commitment to participation in all stages of the process. Participants typically have a broad, long-term view in discussing regional issues, not specific projects. | All segments of the affected community are represented in a project-specific CAC and/or a wide range of demographic communities are represented for a long-term CAC |
| Collaborative Task Force | A task force is assigned the task of resolving a difficult issue within a specified time limit. The participants are directly involved in developing plans and making decisions for official ratification by the Board. A collaborative task force deals with high-profile issues that generate considerable public or media attention and community polarization. | Member groups are selected to represent a broad cross-section of interests. | A task force brings together a wide range of backgrounds and opinions to help in exploring significant issues. NLCOG assumes a non-participatory role, but provides technical assistance as needed. | Variety of members and quality of ideas received from interested/involved parties. |
| Comment Forms | Comment forms are useful to elicit relevant project / plan comments, as well as to share information through answering questions that may be submitted. | Anyone can participate. | Comment forms help gain input about a project or plan from citizens who may not feel comfortable sharing at a public meeting. | ___% of meeting attendees fill out a form ___% of visitors to a website submit a comment ___% of mail recipients return the form |
| Direct Mailings | Direct mailings provide legal notification to affected communities within a plan or project area. | People living within the affected communities | Provide legal notification to affected communities | Mailed piece received by all intended property owners; none returned |

| Technique | Use | Participants | Goals | Indicator |
|----------------------|--|--|---|--|
| E-mail announcements | E-mail announcements, or blasts, help inform the public of upcoming meetings, charrettes, etc. as well as share information regarding the project or process. | Anyone can participate by providing their e-mail address | Inform the public of upcoming opportunities to participate in decision-making | Minimum of __% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated they saw the e-mail announcement |
| Facilitation | Facilitation is the guidance of a group in a democratic, problem-solving process and brings out all points of view represented in the group. Facilitation is a commitment to action and involving residents in the decision-making process. Widespread diversity in viewpoints is expected to exist in the group. | Representatives of citizen groups or stakeholders are invited to participate | Facilitation leads to empowerment and consensus from members of the group. It aids citizen input in a variety of settings and includes consideration of conflicting goals, needs or interests. | Quality and relevance of comments received |
| Fact Sheets | Fact sheets provide information in a clear, concise way through the use of maps and other graphic elements. | Everyone can participate | Distribute information facts to prepare people to assist in decision making and project / plan understanding. | Quality and relevance of comments received |
| Focus Groups | Focus groups gauge public opinion through the identification of concerns, needs and expectations from a particular policy, program or project. Groups can explore attitudes and responses as a basis for broader participatory efforts. A focus group can provide public input from otherwise unrepresented individuals and a place for people to speak out without criticism of their comments or concerns. | Random selection assures representation of all segments of society | Focus groups produce opinions and ideas from participants. This helps NLCOG understand overall public reactions to projects, programs or policies. The goal is to obtain opinions; specific viewpoints are the principal product of the focus group meetings. | Quality and relevance of comments received |
| Media Strategies | Media strategies inform the public about projects and programs and encourage consensus, understanding and response using newspapers, radio, TV, flyers, newsletters, and brochures. The selected medium will provide a wide dissemination of information addressing three questions: “What is the plan or project?” - “Who is the audience?” - “What does the public need to know to participate effectively?” | NLCOG, with assistance from the Board, the CAC and other community representatives | Media strategies seek to enhance public understanding through the dissemination of uniform information, thus alleviating the spread of misinformation that often becomes a barrier to understanding or implementation. | Quality and relevance of comments received, as well as self-identification that awareness or understanding of the plan / project increased Minimum of __% of respondents indicated they saw information about the plan / project via media announcement |
| Posters / Flyers | Posters and flyers inform the community, both affected and general, of public involvement activities or project / plan information | Everyone | Inform the community, both affected and general, of public involvement activities or project / plan information | Minimum of __% of meeting attendees / survey respondents indicated they saw a poster / flyer |

| Technique | Use | Participants | Goals | Indicator |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Project / Plan Logo | Logos help distinguish different projects / plans in the public's eye. Consistency in using the logo on all project materials, including maps, website and presentation, will help develop recognition of the project among the public. | Everyone | Develop a logo for all major projects and use in all materials and on websites. | Recognition of the project |
| Project Open House / Workshop | An open house or workshop is designed to introduce a project, provide project updates, and/or identify project issues through the use of exhibits and one-on-one or small group discussions with the project team. | Anyone can attend and participate at whatever level they choose | Increase understanding; provide avenue to receive comments and answer questions | ___% to ___% of affected population (based on study area) in attendance; relevant comments received |
| Project-Specific Newsletters | Newsletters devoted to specific projects or plans help disseminate information to the public. | Everyone who signs up for the mailing list and/or is in the affected community | Increase understanding and encourage the public to assist in the decision-making process | Minimum of ___% of meeting attendees / respondents indicated they received the newsletter ___% persons in the project area received the newsletter |
| Project-Specific website | Websites devoted to a specific project help inform the public of specific opportunities for input, as well as disseminate information in a timely and easily-digestible format. | Anyone who visits the website | Inform the public of upcoming opportunities to participate in decision-making | Minimum of ___ hits per month Increase of at least ___% over the life of the project / plan Expectations may be higher depending on the size of the study area |
| Public Meetings and Hearings | Public meetings present information to the public and obtain informal (meetings) or formal (hearings) input. They provide for early, timely citizen input through the give-and-take of citizen and agency questions and responses, along with the interaction among the public and staff. | All participants are self-selected based on their interest. | Meetings can be held at specific milestones or phases within a project or program. Public meetings help monitor public reactions to policy, proposals, and progress on specific projects. Public meetings and hearings meet legal requirements and ascertain that the community understands the project / plan. | Evaluation form indicating projects / plan understanding increased and the quality and relevance of comments received |
| Surveys and Questionnaires | Surveys assess widespread public opinion and gather information for use in the planning process. Surveys also show public reactions and portray perceptions and preferences. | Random selection and self-selection | Better information enhances NLCOG's understanding of public concern and helps guide the process of public involvement. Because surveys are one-way communication, results of surveys should guide efforts to meet public concerns and develop effective messages for public information. | ___% of contacted persons participate in the survey ___% of mail recipients return the survey |

| Technique | Use | Participants | Goals | Indicator |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Transportation Fairs | Transportation fairs and events are used to interest the public in transportation projects, policies and programs using visual exhibits. Comments received increase NLCOG's awareness of opinions and views of participants. | Participants are self-selected based on their interest. | Fairs present information to the public and create interest in the project or specific program. Fairs and events seek to keep the public informed, interested and updated about programs and projects. A fair provides opportunity for casual input and seeks to increase community awareness. | Quality and relevance of comments received, as well as self-identification that awareness or understanding of the plan / project increased |
| Visioning | Participants work in a democratic environment that directly involves a cross-section of residents. It is proactive in nature, exploring and advocating strategies for the future. After open consideration of many options, it generates a single, integrated vision for the region based on the diverse viewpoints of those represented. | Typically, representatives are selected to participate through meetings and surveys. | Visioning leads toward a greater degree of public participation in the process while looking for common ground among participants. Visioning uses public participation as a source of ideas in the establishment of long-range policies. Visioning helps NLCOG become aware of issues and problems, and different points of view. | Evaluation form indicating projects / plan understanding increased and the quality and relevance of comments received |
| Visualization Techniques | A visualization technique could be as simple as a dry erase board for a small group discussion focused on a specific issue. Other simple techniques include: PowerPoint, detailed maps with aerial photography, or display boards for scenario development. More detailed approaches include 3-D computer modeling and interactive maps that allow for proposal comparison. Visualization is often used in conjunction with other techniques in the toolbox. | Typically, representatives are present at project-specific meetings, fairs, charrettes, open houses, etc. | Visualization allows the public to better understand how a project might look and/or affect a certain area. In some cases, input can allow adjustments may be made in "real time" for the public to immediately see the results of a decision or suggestion. | Evaluation form indicating projects / plan understanding increased and the quality and relevance of comments received |

Appendix C
Advisory Committee
Nomination Form

Advisory Committee Nomination Form

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Alternate Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

The following questions are *optional and confidential*.

Are you ... ☐ Male ☐ Female

What is your age range?

☐ 18 – 30 years ☐ 31 – 45 years ☐ 46 – 60 years ☐ Over 60 years

Please identify which ethnic group(s) you identify with:

☐ Black/African American ☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Hispanic

☐ Asian American ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native ☐ Other

What is your employment status?

☐ Employed ☐ Unemployed ☐ Student ☐ Retired

What is the highest level of education you completed?

☐ High school/GED ☐ Technical/trade ☐ College ☐ Other

What is your income level?

☐ Under \$25,000 ☐ \$25,000 – \$50,000 ☐ \$50,000 – \$100,000

☐ \$100,000 - \$150,000 ☐ \$150,000 - \$200,000 ☐ Over \$200,000

What form(s) of transportation do you use?

☐ Personal vehicle ☐ Public Transportation ☐ Carpool

☐ Taxi Cab ☐ Bicycle/Walk ☐ Other _____

Please continue on the back.

Are you a member of and/or do you participate in any of the following categories of professional/community organizations?

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | Economic development | | Board of Realtors |
| | Rural development | | Public Health and Safety |
| | Natural Resources/Environmental Protection | | Neighborhood Association/Revitalization |
| | Recreational Opportunities | | Public Services |
| | Cultural Resource Preservation | | Other <i>(please list)</i> |
| | Religious/Faith-based | | |

Describe any community project in which you previously or currently participate:

Briefly, describe your interest in serving on the committee:

What specialized skill(s) or experience(s) will you bring to the committee?

Are you willing and able to make a conscientious effort to give membership on this committee a priority and participate as necessary? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you willing to serve on any of the subcommittees that may require more of your time? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you willing and able to define and evaluate issues without expressing a personal bias? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to abide by future by-laws and procedures adopted by the Citizen's Advisory Committee. It is my intention to familiarize myself to the duties and responsibilities necessary and to fulfill my obligation on this committee to the best of my ability, exercising good judgment, fairness, impartiality, and faithful attendance.

Applicant's Signature

Date

Appendix D

Media and Community Contacts

Media and Community Contacts

In order to maintain adequate flow of information to the community, NLCOG has compiled and periodically updates a database of media and community contacts. The members of this database are from a variety of media outlets, community representatives, and residents.

Media

| Newspaper | Phone Number | Fax Number |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| <u>Caddo Citizen</u> Editor 203 S. Spruce Street Vivian, Louisiana 71082 | (318) 375-3294 | (318) 375-3308 |
| <u>The Times</u> Executive Editor 222 Lake Street Shreveport, Louisiana 71101 | (318) 459-3233 | (318) 459-3462 |
| <u>Shreveport Sun</u> Editor 2224 Jewella Avenue Shreveport, Louisiana 71104 | (318) 631-6222 | (318) 635-3485 |
| <u>Bossier Press-Tribune</u> Editor & Publisher 4250 Viking Drive Bossier City, Louisiana 71111 | (318) 747-7900 | (318) 747-5298 |

| Radio Station | Phone Number | Fax Number |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| KDKS | (318) 320-1021 | (318) 459-1493 |
| KEEL | (318) 320-5336 | (318) 687-8574 |
| KFLO | (318) 222-2744 | (318) 425-7507 |
| KMJJ | (318) 865-5173 | (318) 865-3657 |
| KNCB | (318) 375-3278 | (318) 375-3329 |
| KOKA | (318) 424-7951 | (318) 459-1493 |
| KSCL | (318) 869-5297 | (318) 869-5219 |
| KSYR | (318) 320-9292 | (318) 459-1493 |
| KVKI | (318) 320-9696 | (318) 687-8574 |
| KWKH | (318) 320-1130 | (318) 687-8574 |
| KYLA | (318) 927-3122 | (318) 459-1493 |
| Red River Public Radio | (318) 797-5150 | (318) 797-5153 |

| Television Station | Phone Number | Fax Number |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | |
| KMSS | (318) 631-5677 | (318) 631-4195 |
| KPXJ-PAX | (318) 861-5800 | (318) 219-4634 |
| KSHV | (318) 631-4545 | (318) 631-4195 |
| KSLA | (318) 222-1212 | (318) 677-6703 |
| KTAL | (318) 629-6000 | (318) 425-2488 |
| KTBS | (318) 320-5827 | (318) 219-4680 |

| Community/Neighborhood Agencies |
|---|
| Barksdale Forward, Inc. |
| Biomedical Research Foundation |
| Bossier Chamber of Commerce |
| Bossier Economic Foundation |
| Christian Services |
| Committee of 100 |
| Coordinating and Development Corporation |
| Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce |
| Highland Area Partnership, Inc. |
| North Louisiana Interfaith Association |
| North Shreveport Development |
| Providence House |
| Queensborough Neighborhood Association |
| Shreveport – Bossier African American Chamber of Commerce |
| Shreveport – Bossier Community Renewal |
| Shreveport Green |
| St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church |
| Stoner Neighborhood Action Group |
| The Glen Retirement System |
| United Way of NWLA |
| Volunteers of America/Red River Employment Services |

| City/Parish Agencies |
|---|
| Bossier Council on Aging |
| Bossier Office of Community Services |
| Caddo Council on Aging |
| City of Bossier City Community Development Department |
| City of Bossier City Housing Authority |
| City of Shreveport Community Development Department |
| City of Shreveport Housing Authority |

Appendix E

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – what’s that?

Most governmental units and all federal and state agencies have some kind of planning process, which are required by law. Usually there is a short/mid/long range planning process. For an MPO the long range process is the LRTP. The LRTP is not based on someone’s wish list, but rather it is an analysis of what it will take to efficiently and safely move people and goods around town, 20-30 years from now. It is based on existing conditions of the road network, land use, population, employment centers, community vision, etc. Then a projection is made about what the community needs from its transportation system.

Why do priorities change in the TIP?

Transportation planning documents are meant to be dynamic and are reviewed and reevaluated to ensure that they are responsive to the changing needs of a community. The MPO must reevaluate the LRTP every four years; subsequently, the plans for what a community needs from its transportation system get more scrutiny. Since the TIP is a snapshot of what is planned to occur for the next three years, priorities will change based on the changing community.

How can I get my pet project into the plan?

Become involved early in the project nomination process, which is a primary step in the TIP planning process. Nominate your project emphasizing the appropriate ranking criteria. Get your city council, parish police jury/commission and neighboring councils to support your project. Elected officials’ support is also useful. Check to see if your project is already part of an existing plan.

How come this project isn’t done yet? How come it takes so long to get a project started and completed?

Developing projects with FHWA funding can take a long time. For example, if there was money to start a reconstruction project tomorrow, dirt would not start being moved for five to seven years. Because NLCOG accepts FHWA funds for transportation system development, we are then obligated to proceed with project development under FHWA rules and regulations. These rules and regulations require a rigorous environmental and project design process that takes considerable time, e.g. the five-to-seven-year timeframe.

If a project is accepted into the TIP it does not mean that it is funded immediately. The TIP is financially constrained, so not all needs identified are allotted funding. The process is such that every two years the projects are re-prioritized. A project that in one year is close to the funding line, could get booted lower on the list if a new project scores substantially higher in

terms of need. So it can take awhile to get a project above the funding line. Once above the funding line, the project development process takes over. Since federal dollars are being used in the process, project development must be conducted within the rules set out in the federal process.

Environmental assessments (EA) usually take 24 months and can take longer if there are substantial environmental or social concerns. The initial design process takes 18 to 24 months. The design phase cannot be started until there is an approved and signed EA, and the right-of-way (ROW) process cannot be started until there is sufficient design completed for the project and the utility process cannot begin until there is substantially more design. Until FHWA is satisfied that the previous step in the process has been conducted according to federal rules, it will not authorize funds for the next step.

Appendix F

Public Involvement Performance Measures

Public Involvement Performance Measures

Introduction and Purpose

Public involvement is a fundamental component of effective transportation planning, projects development, and implementation. Interested persons have the opportunity to share their voice in how our transportation system is developed. Early and continuous public involvement allows transportation and resource organizations to be aware of potential issues, problems, and impacts; to discuss them more comprehensively; and to determine how to address such concerns. In its essence, public involvement is a process of two-way communication between citizens and government.

Public involvement occurs at all stages of the transportation life cycle. At the planning stage, public involvement is less about specific project development and more about setting strategic directions and long-range objectives.

Fundamentals of Performance Measurement

The US General Accounting Office (GAO) defined the following key terms used in performance measurement and program evaluation.

- Performance measurement: the on-going monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments, particularly progress toward pre-established goals and objectives
- Performance measures: address the type or level of program activities conducted (process), the direct products and services delivered by a program (outputs), or the results of those products and services (outcomes).
- Program: any activity, project, function, or policy that has an identifiable purpose or set of objectives. Program evaluations: individual systematic studies conducted periodically or on an ad hoc basis to assess how well a program is working. They are often conducted by experts external to the program, inside or outside the agency, as well as by program managers. A program evaluation typically examines achievement of program objectives in the context of other aspects of program performance or in the context in which it occurs.

Performance measurement determines a program's success in meeting established goals and objectives. In evaluating its approach to public involvement, NLCOG will utilize at least one of the following approaches to program evaluation:

1. Evaluate process/implementation: assesses the extent to which a program is operating as it was intended. Typically, assesses program activities' conformance to statutory and regulatory requirements, program design, and professional standards or customer expectations.
2. Outcome Evaluation: assesses the extent to which a program achieves its outcome-oriented objectives. Focuses on outputs and outcomes, including unintended effects, to judge program effectiveness. May also assess program process to understand how outcomes are produced.
3. Impact Evaluation: assesses the net effect of a program by comparing program outcomes with an estimate of what would have happened in the absence of the program. This form of evaluation is employed when external factors are known to influence the program's outcomes, in order to isolate the program's contribution to achievement of its objectives.

Developing Performance Measures

Effective public involvement programs enable transportation professionals to develop systems, services, and solutions that meet the needs of the public, including minority and low-income communities and persons with limited English proficiency. An effective public involvement process also provides for an open exchange of information and ideas between the public and transportation decision-makers.

In developing performance measures, NLCOG identified certain themes or overarching principles for effective public involvement in long range planning, as well as techniques for communication with the public, innovative involvement techniques and technology's role in the process. These principles are:

- Educate the public continuously.
- Involve key stakeholders early and throughout the process.
- Develop partnerships with the media.
- Collaborate to maximize resources for public involvement.
- Personalize public involvement activities.
- Provide incentives to increase participation.
- Provide alternatives to traditional meeting places.

- Use innovative techniques to define communities and traditionally underserved populations.
- Evaluate public involvement activities continuously.

A good indicator of an effective public involvement process is a well-informed public which feels it has opportunities to contribute input into transportation decision-making processes through a broad array of involvement opportunities at all stages of decision-making.

Other equally important outcomes of an effective public involvement process include making public involvement accessible to all segments of the public, involving group representatives from the study area, responsiveness to the input provided, the development of plans and projects that support community values, and building the agency's credibility.

Measures include timing, meeting convenience, documenting the demographics of participants, integration of concerns and support of community interests and affected units of government.

Public Involvement Performance Measures

Evaluate public involvement efforts based on achievement of objectives and feedback from the public. Part of any evaluation effort involves measuring the results of a public involvement process against established measures for success. Including this component is important in order to allow a project manager or transportation planner to make necessary adjustments as the process progresses and to improve future public involvement plans.

The difficulty in establishing measures of success for public involvement revolves around the subjective nature of public involvement itself. Is a public involvement plan successful if there is a large turnout at public meetings, even if the sentiments expressed are uniformly negative? Is it successful if few people participate but the dialogue is fruitful, with new alternatives suggested that become part of the transportation plan/project? Is it successful if a large number of people participate and are satisfied with their opportunity for input, even if they are not representative of the overall affected community?

Using the principles and indicators discussed in the previous section, NLCOG will implement the following measures as the means to evaluate the success of the public involvement process.

| <i>Performance Measure</i> | <i>Outcome</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Connect | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public's awareness of NLCOG 2. Public's familiarity with NLCOG's role 3. Effectiveness of methods to inform 4. Effectiveness of methods to involve |
| 2. Access | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide timely information 2. Provide convenient meetings 3. Ability to access NLCOG's publications |
| 4. Effective Communication | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of visualization techniques 2. Relevant material presented at meetings 3. Quality discussion takes place at meetings |
| 5. Input | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Numerous opportunities for public input 2. Understanding of when and how to participate |
| 6. Impact | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public concerns taken into consideration/addressed |
| 7. Diversity and equity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outreach to diverse populations 2. Inclusion of traditionally under-represented groups |

Appendix G

Title VI Public Involvement Guidelines and Survey

Guidelines for Collecting Demographic Data at Public Meetings

One of the intents of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the National Environmental Policy Act process is to involve the public early and often – from project concept through completion – by holding public meetings. Public meetings are defined as those meetings that the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) hosts to inform and gather input from the public on a project, or list of projects, with potential benefits and/or adverse effects on the community.

This document provides guidance for NLCOG project managers, public involvement officers, planners, and other consultants or team members to capture demographic information as required in 23 CFR 200.9 (b)(4).

Purpose – Non-Discrimination

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that

“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 otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program, service, or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Therefore, Title VI protects all persons. Furthermore, Title VI was augmented by two Executive Orders issued to ensure nondiscrimination; Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice (EJ), and Executive Order 13166, Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The Executive Orders are explained as follows:

- Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice, ensures that low-income populations and minority populations are not unfairly excluded from participation in processes that directly affect their quality of life. Therefore, the intent of Environmental Justice is to:
 - Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations, and
 - Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- Executive Order 13166, Limited English Proficiency seeks to ensure that persons with limited ability to speak, read, or understand English are able to benefit from any program, service, or activity that receives federal financial assistance, having an impact on their quality of life.

NLCOG is required by the Federal Highway Administration to request and collect certain demographic data from public meeting participants on a voluntary basis. This is done to help demonstrate that it has met the intent of Title VI and the Executive Orders, by targeting all persons of communities affected by projects, including the elderly, the disabled, minority populations, persons with limited ability to speak, write, or understand English, and low-income populations.

Sign-In Procedures (Demographic Data Gathering)

1. Welcoming Committee/Registration: Designate a person who will meet and greet participants. Provide the following information to each participant, as follows:
 - Explain the purpose of the meeting
 - Explain the reason for data gathering
 - Display the “Title VI Public Involvement Survey” designed to capture demographic data, i.e., zip code, race, and gender, next to the NLCOG Public Participation Sign-in Sheet which records contact information.
 - Encourage **voluntary** participation to complete the Title VI Public Involvement Survey. Do not guess at gender or ethnicity.
 - Read the printed disclaimer to participants, if necessary.
 - Ensure information printed by participants is legible.
 - Count the total number of public participants and record on the Title VI Public Involvement Survey Results sheet.
2. Purpose of data collection:
 - To ensure that affected communities and interested persons are provided equal access to public involvement, Federal regulation 23 CFR 200.9 (b)(4) requires that all state departments of transportation develop procedures for the collection of statistical data (race, gender, and national origin) of participants in, and beneficiaries of State transportation programs, i.e., relocatees, impacted citizens, and affected communities.
 - At the request of the Federal Highway Administration, NLCOG is using this data collection effort to demonstrate its compliance with the above regulation and, more importantly, to consider the transportation needs of the community by hearing from you. Compliance is **voluntary**. The information will not be used for any other purpose, except to show that those who are affected by a project or have an interest in the project have been given an opportunity to provide input throughout the planning process.

3. Provide Title VI brochure to participants, as appropriate.
4. Emphasize voluntary compliance.
5. Explain that the data will be compiled by the NLCOG Title VI Coordinator for submission to the Federal Highway Administration on an annual basis or as requested.
6. Display “I Speak” cards to promote involvement by community members, especially Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons. “I Speak” cards, the NLCOG Limited English Proficiency plan, including a list of language translators are available on the NLCOG website.
7. Let the participants know that an interpreter may be made available upon request within 5 days of ***future*** public participation meetings.
8. Recording and Reporting Information.
 - Collect the Public Participation Sign-In Sheet and the Title VI Public Involvement Survey sheet(s) containing demographic data, i.e., zip code, race, and gender, at the end of the meeting.
 - Return a copy of the sign-in sheet, survey results and the survey sheet to the NLCOG Public Involvement Coordinator within 10 days after the meeting event.

Lisa M. Frazier
Public Involvement Coordinator
Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments
625 Texas Street, Suite 200
Shreveport, LA 71101
P 318-841-5950
F 318-841-5952
Lisa.frazier@nlcog.org

- Retain the original copy for the project records.
- A copy of all the required forms can be obtained from the office of NLCOG.



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Project Description

Location of Meeting

Date and Time of Meeting

TITLE VI PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

Completing this form is voluntary, but encouraged!

You are not required to provide the information requested to participate in this meeting.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires the Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments (NLCOG) to provide opportunity for everyone to comment on transportation programs and activities that may affect their community. Title VI specifically states,

"No person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be executed from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program, service, or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

NLCOG is required to capture this data to demonstrate its compliance with Federal Regulation 23 CFR 200.9 (b)(4), and more importantly, to consider the transportation needs of the community by hearing from you. *Compliance is voluntary.* However, to demonstrate compliance with federal regulations, the information requested must be documented when provided. It *will not* be used for any other purpose, except to show that those who are affected by the project or have an interest in the project have been given an opportunity to provide input throughout the planning process.

By completing this form, you are helping NLCOG to comply with Title VI and related statutes, which require the collection of statistical data to aid in assessing NLCOG's outreach efforts among those who are affected or interested in this project. The Public Involvement Coordinator for NLCOG and the ADA/Title VI Program Manager for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development will handle all information confidentially. Please contact NLCOG's Public Involvement Coordinator at (318) 841-5950 or lisa.frazier@nlcog.org if you have any questions or concerns regarding this form.



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Project Description

Location of Meeting

Date and Time of Meeting

TITLE VI PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

This form is to be completed by the designated meeting coordinator.

Coordinator Contact Information

| | |
|--------|-------|
| Name | Phone |
| E-mail | |

Meeting Demographics

| | |
|--|---|
| | Total number of public/community participants |
| | Total number of project team participants |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|----|--|----|--|---|--|---|
| Total number of participants by race/gender | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | W | | B | | H | | A | | ME | | NA | | P | | O |
| Female | W | | B | | H | | A | | ME | | NA | | P | | O |

Project Details

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|----|--|----|--|---|--|---|
| Project area ZIP codes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project area demographics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | W | | B | | H | | A | | ME | | NA | | P | | O |
| Female | W | | B | | H | | A | | ME | | NA | | P | | O |



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| |
|---|
| Please provide a synopsis of the efforts made to advertise and inform the public of this meeting. |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

| |
|---|
| List dates of all scheduled public meetings for this project. |
| |

| |
|---|
| List any ADA requests for reasonable accommodation. |
| |

| |
|---|
| List any LEP requests for interpreters or translated materials. |
| |

- Collect the Public Participation Sign-In Sheet and the Title VI Public Involvement Survey sheet(s) containing demographic data, i.e., zip code, race, and gender, at the end of the meeting.
- Return a copy of the sign-in sheet, survey results and the survey sheet to the NLCOG Public Involvement Coordinator within 10 days after the meeting event.

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- Retain the original copy for the project records.

Appendix H

Public Comments

Mr. John Perkins

Verbal comment

MPO Transportation Policy Committee meeting, January 19, 2018

“We downloaded 80 pages from you guys for public comment, public outreach and went through it and found it to be so obtuse and difficult to get through that we are going to rely on our already published comments to the Department of Transportation which basically covers that stuff. But we suggest to you, that in an environment where it seems hard for you to understand why it is important to communicate to people like my friends who speak Spanish, one just moved to Spain, that it’s also important to create documents that people can actually read and understand in less than an hour or two. (inaudible) It’s a herculean task to go through eighty pages and try to get folks that don’t come to these meetings monthly up to speed on what their problems are, but their problems are many. For instance, I hear all the time, that the new bus routes just ain’t cutting it for people. They are actually very disappointed, everybody from every neighborhood. I go up and down Line Avenue, everyone says it’s just not working. So I’m not convinced you guys are hearing what the public are trying to communicate to you and I’m not convinced you really want to hear. So anyway, I’m just filing my complaint. I’m sure you guys are aware that we have more complaints than we have kudos but I do appreciate your patience. I couldn’t give it to you in writing because I went to college and eighty pages is an onerous task to take on in a couple of hours and try to put together something that makes sense. I understand it but trying to explain it to the rest of the folks it really is a herculean task. I think it was a waste of your time and money. I’m going to make a bet that you didn’t get many responses, if any, the public comment (inaudible).”

Thank you for taking the time to review and comment on the draft Public Involvement Plan. The MPO staff reviews all public comments and will make any necessary corrections or changes to the plan. All public comments received from the public during the public comment period will be documented in the Public Involvement Plan itself as an appendix. Thanks.

The Northwest Louisiana Council of Governments is an intergovernmental association of local governments established to assist in planning for common needs, cooperating for the mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NLCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions for the benefit of the entire Northwest Louisiana community. This is achieved by developing and implementing constructive and workable policies and programs for solving area-wide problems. These issues include, but are not limited to, matters affecting transportation, economic, health, safety, welfare, education, and regional development issues.

NLCOG is funded by a variety of funding sources including federal grants from the U. S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, as well as by NLCOG's local member governments.



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