

# Public Involvement Plan



Prepared by the  
Northwest Louisiana  
Council of Governments

**ADOPTED**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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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.

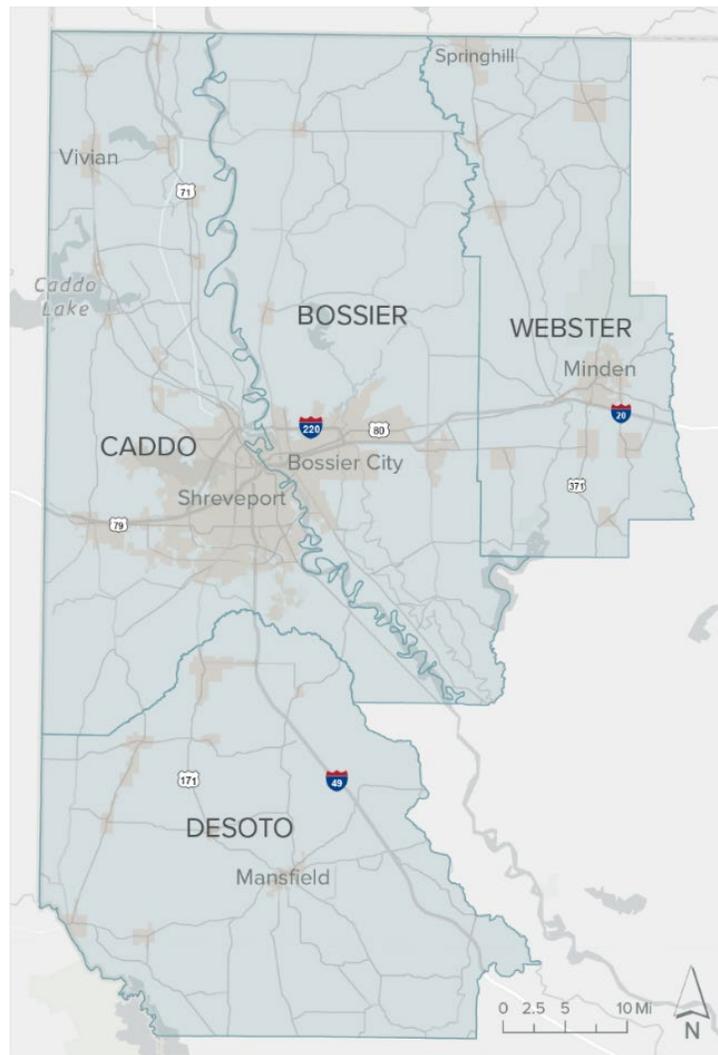
A comprehensive Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is crucial to the success of any public involvement effort. Thorough and well-thought-out plans simplify the public involvement process by providing a systemic approach, maximizing the use of available resources and minimizing delays by ensuring that public 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, Caddo, DeSoto, and Webster 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.<sup>1</sup>

*Figure 1 – MPO Planning Area (MPA)*



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

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.

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 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), 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 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.

## 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, administrator of the DeSoto Parish Police Jury, and administrator of the Webster Parish Police Jury. 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 minimum of once quarterly 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, the DeSoto Parish Police Jury, the Webster Parish Police Jury, City of Bossier City, City of Shreveport, Port of Caddo – Bossier, SporTran, Bossier City / Parish Metropolitan Planning Commission, Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Commission, and the LaDOTD District 4. The FHWA and FTA also sit on the committee; however, they are non-voting members. The members meet every six weeks to approve and adopt all the transportation planning activities and programs of the MPO. All Transportation Committee meetings are open to the public.

**Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)** – The TCC is an advisory committee to the BOD, and the MPO. 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, DeSoto Parish Police Jury, Webster Parish Police Jury, 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.

**Coordinated Human Services Transportation Coalition** – Coordinated Human Services Transportation Planning Coalition (CHSTP) members include specialized and public transportation operators in Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, and Webster Parishes; and representatives of human service agencies specializing in employment, healthcare, and homeless advocacy.

**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 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 B.

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 8.

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)** – As the MPO for Northwest Louisiana, NLCOG updates and adopts a Metropolitan Transportation Plan at least every five years. The MTP 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 MTP provides a common vision for the future supported by goals, objectives, and on-going assessment. The MTP 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 four-year period.

TIP projects are also identified in the MTP. Amendments occur as needed; the TIP is updated at least every four (4) 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** – 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.

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Infrastructure Investment and Job Act (IIJA) or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) the federal surface transportation funding and authorization bill, was signed in 2022, and continues to support previous federal public participation guidelines. MPOs are required to develop a public participation plan identifying reasonable opportunities for the public and all interested stakeholders to be involved in and comment on the contents of the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. In addition to the MTP and TIP, this Public Involvement Plan outlines public participation requirements and outreach methods for the NLCOG’s core planning processes.

The IIJA/BIL 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 2 – Legal Requirements, Policies, and Guidance*

<b>Infrastructure Investment and Job Act (IIJA) (Public Law 117-58)</b>	Provides for continued and enhanced emphasis on strong planning processes and public involvement: <a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/</a>
<b>Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964</b>	Declares that no person shall be excluded from participating in any program receiving federal assistance because of race, color or national origin: <a href="http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevistat.php">http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/coord/titlevistat.php</a>
<b>National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)</b>	Requires consideration of impacts on human environments: <a href="http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.asp">http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.asp</a>
<b>Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice</b>	Addresses avoidance of actions that can cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations: <a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ejustice/facts/index.htm">www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ejustice/facts/index.htm</a>

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

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 3 – MPO Planning Rule Requirements and Methods of Compliance*

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Method of Compliance</b>
1. 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 e-mails to our Community Contacts distribution list; local newspapers, including those predominately serving low income and minority groups; web/social media postings; mail outs; and press releases. The website and social media channel(s) are the primary outlets used to post public notices. Interested parties will be added to our Community Contacts list upon request.
2. Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.	Post information on the <a href="http://www.nlcog.org">www.nlcog.org</a> and websites, as well as on social media. Documents on which NLCOG seeks public input will also be available at local government offices and public libraries. The staff of NLCOG is also available to speak at various organizations about regionally significant issues and opportunities for public involvement.

<p>3. Employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPS.</p>	<p>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, illustrations, maps, graphs, charts, photographs, posters, models, audio-visual equipment, overhead projector slides, handouts, film and video footage, videotapes, audio tapes and electronic media. Visualization techniques are also used in planning documents such as the MTP and TIP.</p>
<p>4. Make public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>5. Hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.</p>	<p>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 highly visible public areas such as schools, libraries, or community agencies for increased public access. All NLCOG meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities.</p>
<p>6. Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>7. Seek out and consider the needs of the traditionally underserved in the decision-making process.</p>	<p>NLCOG will contact minority, disabled, low-income, and other traditionally underserved communities to exchange information regarding participation in the decision-making process.</p>

<p>8. Provide additional opportunity for public comment, if the final MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version made available to the public and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts.</p>	<p>If any of the final plans or programs differ significantly from the draft that was made available for public comment and raises new material issues, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made available. At the minimum, the format of the additional comment opportunity will be the same as the initial opportunity and have a minimum 14-day comment period. At a minimum, one public meeting will be held. Minor changes or changes that could have reasonably been foreseen can be made without further opportunities for public involvement.</p>
<p>9. Coordinate with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes, including state and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport and freight operations and movement; develop metropolitan plans and TIPs with consideration of other related planning activities within the region; and provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the region.</p>	<p>Review of the LaDOTD Public Involvement Plan occurs once it is provided to NLCOG. Statewide transportation officials, local public and rural transportation providers, non-profit agencies, economic development entities, natural disaster coalitions, law enforcement and emergency operations, etc. all sit on various committees within the overall NLCOG framework. NLCOG seeks agency input on the plans and programs it administers and develops.</p>
<p>10. Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.</p>	<p>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.</p>

NLCOG public meetings shall comply with the State of Louisiana Open Meetings Law, R.S. 42:11 through 28. La. R.S. 42:12 It is essential to the maintenance of a democratic society that public business be performed in an open and public manner and that the citizens be advised of and aware of the performance of public officials and the deliberations and decisions that go into the making of public policy.

La. R.S. 42:14 A Every meeting of any public body shall be open to the public unless closed pursuant to R.S. 42:16, R.S. 42:17, or R.S. 42:18. A., Louisiana Open Meetings Law. The public will have an opportunity to comment on current agenda items at each of the NLCOG meetings. The executive director of the MPO shall determine the length of time to be

allotted to each speaker. For those who are unable to attend the open meeting, comments may be mailed to NLCOG staff:

NLCOG  
Attn: Public Comment  
625 Texas Street, Suite 200  
Shreveport, LA 71101

or emailed at [public\\_comments@nlcog.org](mailto:public_comments@nlcog.org). If translation services are needed, please contact Lisa Frazier at 318-841-5950 or [lisa.frazier@nlcog.org](mailto:lisa.frazier@nlcog.org).

## **Public Comment Periods for Required Transportation Plans and Programs**

Based on the legal requirements, policies, and documents as described on pages 7-8 of this document, and the comment periods NLCOG obtained from partner MPOs within Louisiana, the table on page 12 summarizes the public review and comment periods NLCOG will utilize for all plans and programs.

Except for the Public Involvement Plan, NLCOG will provide 14 days for public comment on plans and programs. The MPO may extend a public comment period an additional 10 days if a proposed plan, program, or amendment is significantly altered during the initial public comment period or if the number of comments received is too great to properly address. If a significant alteration occurs after the close of the initial public comment period, the MPO may schedule an additional comment of 14 days for TIP, UPWP, or MTP amendments.

## **Emergency or Special Meeting Provisions**

With increased focus on expediting project implementation and funding allocation, there may be rare occasions in which issues arise that require urgent modification of the MTP, TIP, UPWP, CMP, and PIP due to funding requirements or timeliness. In these cases, exceptions to the comment periods as outlined below may be required to avoid not being able to secure funding.

In these cases, there will be adequate public notice and clear communication of the abbreviated comment period. An abbreviated comment period will be at least seven days. Longer comment periods are preferred and will be offered whenever possible. These actions will be emphasized on the appropriate meeting agenda which is posted at least 24 hours prior to the posted meeting.

Figure 3 – MPO Public Comment Periods for Required Planning Documents

MPO	PIP	Public Hearing / Meeting	Amendments	Public Hearing / Meeting
CRPC	45 days	None	45 days	None
NORPC	45 days	None	45 days	None
HTMPO	45 days	None	45 days	None
RAPC	45 days	1	45 days	1
OCOG	45 days	None	45 days	None
IMCAL	45 days	1	45 days	1
AMPO	45 days	None	45 days	None
NLCOG	45 days	1	45 days	1

MPO	MTP	Public Hearing / Meeting	Amendments	Public Hearing / Meeting
CRPC	30 (+7 if needed)	2	14	2
NORPC	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
HTMPO	30 (+30 if needed)	2	30 (+30 if needed)	2
RAPC	14 (+10 if needed)	1	14 (+10 if needed)	Not specified
OCOG	14 (+10 if needed)	Not specified	14 (+10 if needed)	Not specified
IMCAL	14 (+ if needed)	1	14 (+ if needed)	1
AMPO	15	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
NLCOG	14 (+10 if needed)	1	14 (+10 if needed)	1

MPO	TIP	Public Hearing / Meeting	Amendments	Public Hearing / Meeting
CRPC	30 (+7 if needed)	2	14	2
NORPC	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
HTMPO	30 (+30 if needed)	2	30 (+30 if needed)	2
RAPC	14 (+10 if needed)	1	14 (+10 if needed)	Not specified
OCOG	14 (+10 if needed)	1	14 (+10 if needed)	1
IMCAL	14 (+ if needed)	1	14 (+ if needed)	1
AMPO	15	Not specified	7	Not specified
NLCOG	14 (+10 if needed)	1	14 (+10 if needed)	1

MPO	UPWP	Public Hearing / Meeting	Amendments	Public Hearing / Meeting
CRPC	14 (+7 if needed)	2	14 (+7 if needed)	1
NORPC	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
HTMPO	30 (+30 if needed)	2	30 (+30 if needed)	1
RAPC	14 (+10 if needed)	1	14 (+10 if needed)	Not specified
OCOG	58 days (FY2019)	1	Not specified	Not specified
IMCAL	14 (+ if needed)	1	14 (+ if needed)	1
AMPO	15	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
NLCOG	14 (+10 if needed)	1	14 (+10 if needed)	1

\* Administrative modifications excluded

### III. INVOLVING THE PUBLIC

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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

An updated draft PIP was developed after reviewing effective virtual public outreach methods and best practices. The draft was submitted to State and Federal partners for review on March 30, 2021. Comments and concerns 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 Board of Directors at the regularly scheduled meeting on November 18, 2022.

## Informing the Public

Community members are not all the same when it comes to their options and choices for how to express their opinions and preferences on new housing development, transit-line expansions, or road diet designs. Some engage through contentious late-night public meetings. Others are more comfortable writing letters to the editor or expressing themselves anonymously through surveys and online feedback websites. Still others opt for small focus groups or advocacy groups that represent their views.

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 Metropolitan Transportation Plan updates. 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 engagement through social media sites grows 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](http://www.facebook.com/nlcog) and the Northwest Louisiana Transportation Safety Coalition Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/NWLATransportationSafetyCoalition](http://www.facebook.com/NWLATransportationSafetyCoalition).

As opportunities arise to connect with people with limited mobility, internet access, familiarity with computers and the internet, and time, it is important to remember online engagement is not a simple solution. As with any community engagement, to be useful, it is vital that the:

- scope of the engagement is clear,
- questions asked of participants are carefully thought through,
- diversity of participation is achieved by ensuring it is not only the hyper-engaged, or organized stakeholder organizations who participate,
- there is commitment to seriously consider all input and to communicate how this is accomplished,
- information available is sufficient to help people to participate in an informed way,
- process itself strengthens community and builds trust.

Using a combination of online platforms can also support dynamic and robust community engagement providing information and answering questions through a webinar, followed by a discussion about the issues, and reaching consensus via polls and surveys. Virtual engagement can reach some citizens who don't typically engage in more traditional community engagement platforms. Engaging the community meaningfully is the end-goal. The development of the [www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org) website, as well as project-specific pages within the [www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org) website, are 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. Digital tools for community engagement may include:

- webinar and meeting software to help build and maintain connections,
- crowdsourcing to encourage the development and presentation of ideas for projects,
- ecosystem mapping to help understand the social connections within a community,
- creating videos in-house to share information and opportunities for involvement,
- online brainstorming tools to help smaller advisory groups to work simultaneously in one document, and
- survey platforms to gather information about community members and their needs.

Virtual meetings may be broadcast online and/or hosted via an online meeting application or other technology. The ability for the public to submit comments during virtual meetings will be provided. Virtual committee meetings will meet the requirements of Louisiana Open Public Meetings Law.

It is also important to recognize that online engagement doesn't work for everyone, but there are ways of helping people to participate online with a bit of thought and planning. Groups who are often excluded from digital forms of engagement include the elderly, citizens reentering public life after incarceration, immigrants, the homeless, people with physical and mental disabilities, people with low incomes, people working several jobs or non-traditional hours, food- and housing-insecure families, and people with limited English proficiency. These groups should not be left out of engagement efforts, so it is critical to consider the new circumstances the community finds themselves in and to meet people where they are given the circumstances.

Nondigital tools for engagement may include:

- mailing information,
- posting flyers at community centers and gathering places,
- data walks to enable community members to share information and offer feedback,
- using community networks and connections, and
- utilizing gatherings that are happening within the community.

There are limitations to virtual engagement. A shortage of technical resources—computers and broadband access—persists for some Americans and a digital divide in skills is evident in some areas. A careful and deliberate combination of strategies will help ensure some community members aren't left behind.

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](http://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.

## Goals and Objectives of Public Involvement

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

- 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,

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

- 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.
- Improve the quality of life through 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
2. Periodic information sharing
3. Thorough search for stakeholders
4. Clear and open 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 Committees' meetings.
  - Post NLCOG Committees' meeting locations, dates and times, agendas, and minutes on the website.
  - Notify interested parties, as maintained by an NLCOG database, of upcoming NLCOG Committee meetings at least three business days in advance.
  - Designate time on each NLCOG Committees' 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.
  - Documents presented for public comment will be made available on the [www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org) website and at public locations such as public libraries and/or local government offices.
- Media Relations
    - Identify media outlets and maintain contact/ mailing list.
    - Notify media of all scheduled NLCOG Committees' 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
  - Convene task forces, focus groups, and advisory committees, etc. comprised of interested residents, planners, technical experts, and others who have expressed an interest and involve them in the decision-making process.
  - Provide interested persons fact sheets on specific projects, as well as the MEGA Project report that is updated on a quarterly basis, which are posted to [www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org).
  - 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.
  - During and after public comment periods, programs and plans are made available at all public libraries within the four-parish planning area, as well as posted to the [www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org) website in mobile-friendly formats.
  - 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
    - Ensure that meetings are held at accessible locations.
    - Utilize community centers and neighborhood meeting spaces, including churches and places of worship.
    - 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 to help increase the level of public involvement in the planning and decision-making process.

- Town hall meetings/dialogue sessions (in-person and/or virtual)
- Neighborhood/community liaisons
- Surveys (paper and/or online)
- Community meetings (in-person and/or virtual)
- Transportation planning forums
- Charrettes
- Online interactive maps
- Public review and comment periods
- Email and feedback forms
- Mobile applications
- Publications (paper and online)
- News releases
- Websites ([www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org))
- Public outreach events, presentations, and displays
- Public service announcements and videos
- Crowdsourcing
- Advertisements of upcoming meetings (paper and online media)

Because public involvement is not “one size fits all,” NLCOG will customize each project’s approaches and activities 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 much 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 have LEP.

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 5 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 5 – Community Resources

<b>Elected Officials</b>	<b>Appointed Officials</b>
Police Jury/Parish Commission	Planning Boards
State Representatives and Senators	Historic Preservation Boards
City Councils	Citizen Advisory Committees
Congressional Delegation	Department of Transportation
<b>Agency Representatives</b>	<b>Professional Organizations</b>
Office of Community Services	Realtors
Fish and Wildlife Commission	Planners
Department of Health and Hospitals	Developers
Dept. 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
<b>Special Interest Groups</b>	<b>Business Community</b>
Historic/Cultural Preservation	Chambers of Commerce
Public Parking Agencies	Economic Development Councils
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advocates	Major Employers
Trail Associations	<b>Transportation Professionals</b>
Greenway Organizations	Safety Groups
Environmental Organizations	Emergency Services
Neighborhood Associations	Trucking Associations
Retail Associations	Transit/Paratransit
Community Development	Community Safety Coalitions
<b>Non-Profit Organizations</b>	<b>Tourist Industry</b>
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. 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)

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.

At minimum, notification of public meetings will include:

- Posting at the NLCOG offices.
- Additional notice of meetings via:
  - NLCOG website,
  - NLCOG social media,
  - Posting to other local electronic events calendars as appropriate, and
  - Notice to newspaper(s).
- Media will be notified to encourage additional media announcements.
- Any person may, upon request and payment of a reasonable fee, obtain advance notification of any specific committee meetings. NLCOG will provide initial notice of upcoming meetings 5 business days in advance for regularly scheduled meetings. For non-regular meetings or specially called meetings, NLCOG will provide 24 hours' notice in accordance with the state open meetings laws.
- Any person who inquires, in person, by e-mail, or by telephone, concerning the date, time and place of such meetings shall be so informed.

## 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 Metropolitan 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, Locations, and Formats
  - When appropriate to the planning process, meetings will be held in target neighborhoods:
    - at familiar locations,
    - near transit routes, and
    - in accessible buildings.
  - Meetings may be held in conjunction with a regularly scheduled community meeting.

- Meetings may be broadcasted online or through an online meeting platform such as Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, WebEx or GoToMeeting, as well as offering a way for interested parties to submit feedback and comments online.
- 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 childcare 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) and posted to the [www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org) website.
  - 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 of 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 because 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 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.

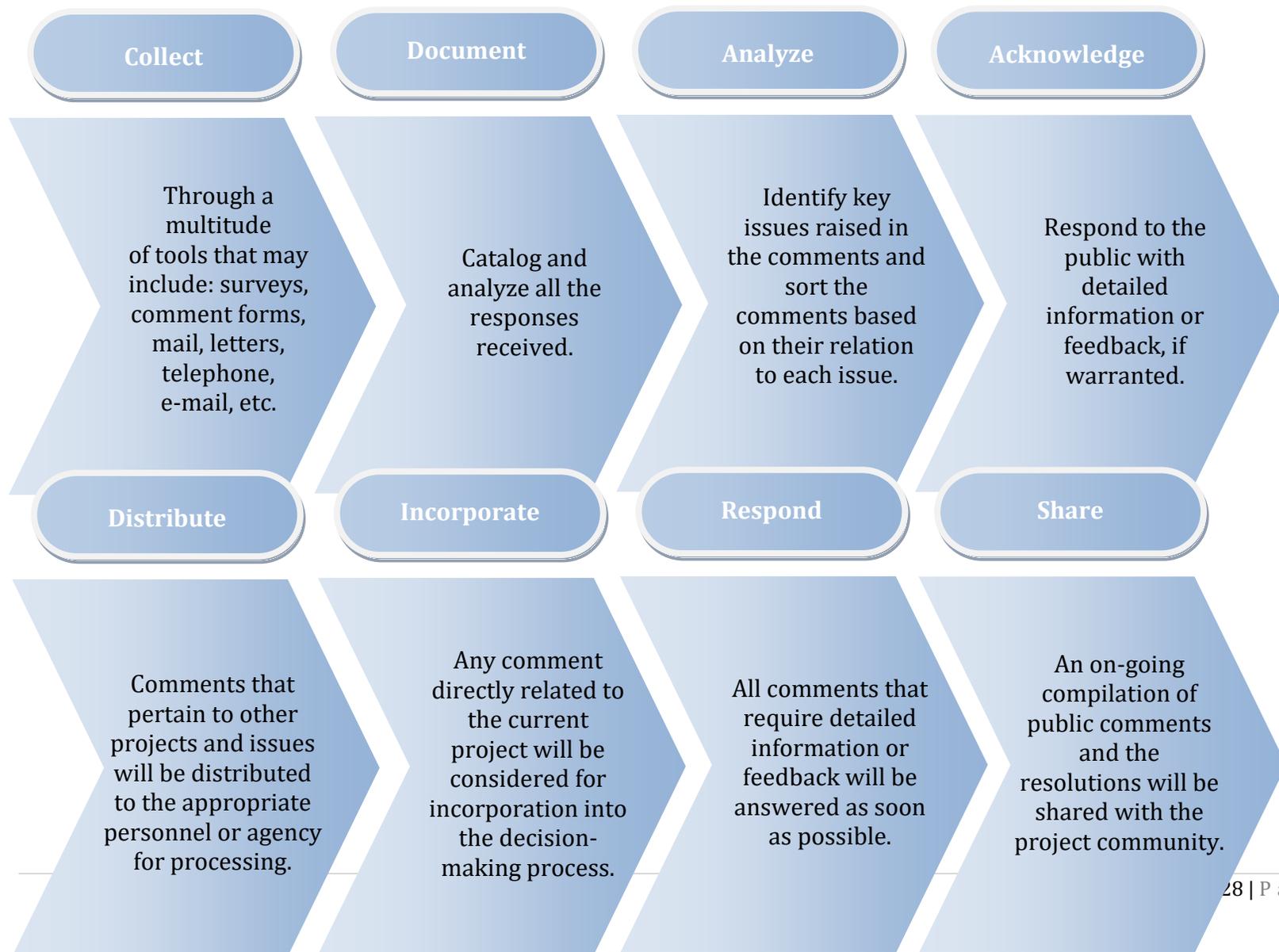
## **Public Comments**

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 6 – 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.

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.

### **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 identify traditionally underserved communities.
- Evaluate public involvement activities continuously.

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

## Performance Measures and Targets

To determine if public involvement tools were effective, they must be evaluated and compared to established performance measures. Performance measurement determines a program's success in meeting established goals and objectives. 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 considerations including public knowledge of NLCOG and familiarity with its role and publications, as well as effectiveness of methods to get informed and involved.

Public involvement is a fundamental component of effective transportation planning, projects development, and implementation. Interested persons can 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.

Part of any evaluation effort involves measuring the results of a public involvement process against established measures for success. Including this component is important 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 many 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.

Figure 7 – Performance Measures and Considerations

<p><b>CONNECT</b></p> <p><b>Desired outcome:</b> Continual improvement of connecting with the public.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness of NLCOG (logo, office location, website, social media presence, etc.)</li> <li>2. Familiarity with NLCOG’s role and publications</li> <li>3. Effectiveness of methods to get informed (mail, e-mail, social media, website, etc.)</li> <li>4. Effectiveness of methods to get involved (meetings, charrettes, surveys, website, committees, etc.)</li> </ol>
<p><b>ACCESS</b></p> <p><b>Desired outcome:</b> Public given adequate review time, opportunity to comment and access to convenient meetings.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide timely information to allow the public to review plans, give comments and attend meetings</li> <li>2. Convenience of meetings at a given time and location (e.g. meetings held at a central location and in neighborhoods where affected people live)</li> <li>3. Ability to access NLCOG’s publications (internet, library, NLCOG’s office, etc.)</li> </ol>
<p><b>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION</b></p> <p><b>Desired outcome:</b> Visualizations are used as appropriate and public discussion occurs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NLCOG products and presentations use effective visualization techniques to help the public conceptualize the material presented</li> <li>2. Material presented at meetings is relevant</li> <li>3. Quality discussion takes place at meetings</li> </ol>
<p><b>INPUT</b></p> <p><b>Desired outcome:</b> Opportunities are provided for input on each plan or work product.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create opportunities for participants during comment periods, meetings, and other activities</li> <li>2. The public understands why, how, and when to participate in the decision-making process</li> </ol>
<p><b>IMPACT</b></p> <p><b>Desired outcome:</b> All public comments are addressed in a timely manner.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public concerns are addressed, questions are answered, and comments are taken into consideration</li> </ol>
<p><b>DIVERSITY AND EQUITY</b></p> <p><b>Desired outcome:</b> Increase the interested party list from diverse populations or under-represented groups.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outreach to diverse populations (citizens, interest groups, agencies, stakeholders from a wide geographical area, demographic diversity, etc.)</li> <li>2. Inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups (minorities, the elderly, low-income households, persons with Limited English Proficiency, and persons with disabilities)</li> </ol>

## **Review of the Public Involvement Plan, Process, and Performance Measures**

Improvements to the PIP will be made periodically to increase public awareness and to improve the quality of information provided to the public. Evaluations and recommendations will be made from the portfolios for each project and plan. 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 with the goal of maintaining core principles and best practices in the context of our region.

# **Appendix A**

## Glossary

# Glossary

**Access / Accessibility** – The opportunity to reach a given end use within a certain period, 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 by 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.

**MAP-21** – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 areas with populations over 50,000. It is designated by federal law with lead responsibility for developing transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas.

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

**Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)** – 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 the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next 20 years.

**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.

**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.

**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**  
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:**

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**Briefly, describe your interest in serving on the committee:**

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

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**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.

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Applicant’s Signature

---

Date

**Appendix C**  
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](mailto: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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318.841.5950 | F 318.841.5952 | [www.nlcog.org](http://www.nlcog.org)

## 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](mailto:lisa.frazier@nlcog.org) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this form.



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 318.841.5950 | F 318.841.5952 | www.nlcog.org

**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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Public Involvement Coordinator  
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[Lisa.frazier@nlcog.org](mailto:Lisa.frazier@nlcog.org)

- Retain the original copy for the project records.

# **Appendix D**

## Public Comments

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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