

PREPARED FOR:

THE KINGSPORT URBANIZED AREA  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN  
(PPP)**

Prepared by:

Kingsport Urbanized Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

In Cooperation with:

Tennessee Department of Transportation,  
Virginia Department of Transportation,  
Federal Highway Administration,  
Federal Transit Administration

Adopted

September 25, 2007

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## RESOLUTION

### Resolution Adopting the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization

**WHEREAS**, the Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Board has been designated by the State of Tennessee as the official Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kingsport Urban area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Board is authorized, and reaffirmed with the adoption of the Kingsport MPO Unified Planning Work Program annually, to act on all administrative matters relating to transportation planning projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the development of a Public Participation Plan (PPP) is required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU);

**WHEREAS**, the Public Participation Plan has completed the required 45-day public review and comment period;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE KINGSFORT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION EXECUTIVE BOARD:**

**THAT** the Executive Board hereby adopts the Public Participation Plan for the Transportation Planning Process.

**ADOPTED** by the Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Board on the 25th day of September 2007.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Marsh, Chairman  
MPO Executive Board

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chris Campbell, Chairman  
MPO Executive Staff

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

The Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as the agency responsible for transportation activities, makes public participation and communication a priority to ensure transportation improvements meet the needs of its users and all interested parties. The awareness and involvement of interested persons in governmental processes are critical to successful transportation planning and programming.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is an adopted document of the Kingsport MPO that serves as a guide for public involvement among its stakeholders to ensure the ongoing opportunity for broad-based participation in the development and review of regional transportation plans and programs. The purpose of the plan is to ensure broad public participation during the development, review, and refinement of regional transportation plans and programs. The Kingsport MPO is committed to:

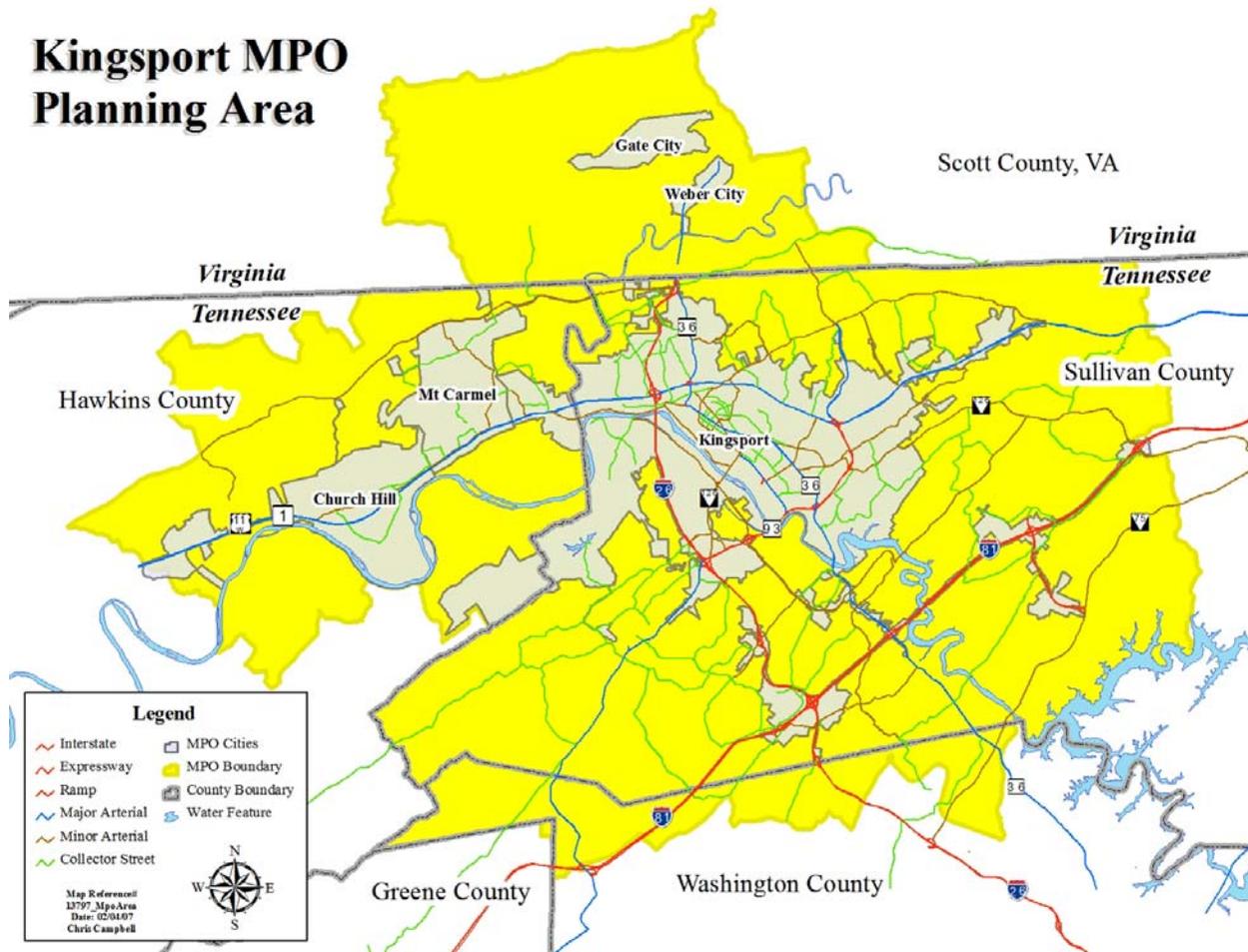
- 1) Informing the community about a range of transportation system and transportation related urban design issues;
- 2) Identifying and addressing community concerns about transportation and transportation related issues;
- 3) Providing opportunities for the community to identify priorities and determine the relative importance of various alternative transportation system improvements and transportation-related land use actions, as well as the relative merits of community travel behavior choices; and
- 4) Meaningfully involving citizens, affected agencies, and other interested parties in planning their regional transportation system.

### **1.2 Background**

Transportation planning is a complex web of project development, research, and decision-making over long timelines. Plans at different geographic scales and areas are developed by different agencies at different times and are routinely integrated to guide system decisions at the regional and state levels. Further, plans and prioritization of projects are updated cyclically. The federal surface transportation acts (the latest being the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users – SAFETEA-LU) require urban areas, through a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), to develop and implement a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process.

As the designated MPO for our community, the Kingsport MPO is responsible for the planning of the transportation systems of regional significance, as well as ensuring that all plans and programs conform to federal and state requirements. The Kingsport MPO is considered to be a bi-state MPO, meaning that its member jurisdictions are located in both the states of Tennessee and Virginia. Its member jurisdictions in Tennessee include the Counties of Sullivan, Hawkins, and Washington and the municipalities of Kingsport, Mount Carmel, and Church Hill. Its member jurisdictions in Virginia include the County of Scott and the municipalities of Weber City and Gate City (figure 1).

# Kingsport MPO Planning Area



**Figure 1 Kingsport MPO Planning Area**

Two major components of the planning process are the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The LRTP provides guidance for the development of transportation programs and establishes strategies and actions necessary to achieve long term transportation goals. It identifies transportation improvements that may be needed to support projected growth, provide improved safety, adequately maintain the existing system and improve mobility while fiscally constrained for a 20-year planning horizon. The TIP, a short-term program, lists all road, bridge, and transit projects scheduled for construction and identifies available funds needed to implement projects over the next four years. All transportation projects using federal or state funding must be listed in the TIP. In order to develop plans that are derived from public sentiment, there must be adequate public participation in the development of both the Long Range Transportation Plan and the TIP. The public participation process within SAFETEA-LU can be found under [Appendix E](#).

Public participation is a key element of the transportation planning process. Public involvement incorporates public concerns, needs, and values into governmental decision making. The MPO has developed this PPP to build agreement among stakeholders, interested parties, agencies that make up the MPO, and the public; to develop a regional transportation plan that has the support of the community; and to ensure the success of the transportation planning effort.

## **2.0 CONSULTATION**

### **2.1 Consultation with Interested Parties**

The MPO actively targets outreach to those most directly affected by transportation planning. Involving and engaging representatives of the general public, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties in the metropolitan transportation planning process is an important function given the significance these entities serve in the understanding of transportation issues and opportunities in the region. The PPP has been developed to provide all interested parties with reasonable opportunities to participate in the transportation planning process and comment on transportation documents developed by the MPO.

The MPO maintains a database of interested parties that serves as a point of reference for public outreach efforts. The database serves as a direct mailing and e-mail list for notification of meetings. Anyone wishing to be added to the database can easily do so by either contacting MPO staff or submitting your information on our website at [www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com). The MPO will provide notice of upcoming public review meetings or review periods being held on the draft and final LRTP and the draft and final TIP. Notification of meetings and documents will be made in a timely manner, to provide adequate notice of public meetings and opportunities to comment on documents. In order to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information, the MPO will hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, employ visualization techniques to describe plans or documents, and make public information available in an electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web.

### **2.2 Consultation with Local, State, and Federal Agencies**

The Kingsport MPO will seek to actively consult, as appropriate, with federal, state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of a the LRTP and TIP. This consultation shall include, as appropriate, contacts with regional, local, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation and historic preservation. An increased emphasis is placed on consultation with resource agencies responsible for natural resource management and historic preservation.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) took the lead in establishing consultation procedures, and the MPO will contact federal and state agencies using the agreed upon process. On March 1, 2007, TDOT provided a letter to all state and federal agencies responsible for land management, natural and historic resources, and other functions which relate to planning and/or transportation planning. For bi-state MPOs, TDOT also contacted the appropriate state departments outside Tennessee. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) provided an Environmental Consultation Information Sheet document with a list of environmental agencies to contact for environmental mitigation consultation. Virginia's State Environmental Review Process

directs interagency review, study, and identification of environmental concerns. The contacted state and federal agencies included:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. EPA
- USDA Forest Service
- U.S. Coast Guard Tennessee Valley Authority
- National Park Service
- TN Department of Environment & Conservation
- TN State Historic Preservation Office
- TN Wildlife Resources Agency
- VA Department of Environmental Quality
- VA Department of Conservation & Recreation
- VA Marine Resources Commission
- VA Department of Game & Inland
- VA Department of Forestry

Formal coordination with these agencies will help to identify effective mitigation strategies for potential impacts of projects included in the MPO's LRTP and TIP. These agencies, listed above, were asked to supply TDOT and the MPO with all available conservation plans, maps, and inventories of natural and historic resources, as well as a list of potential areas in which to carry out environmental mitigation activities, if available and appropriate, and any updates or additions to those materials. Appropriate mitigation strategies for these areas were also requested. The MPO will compare proposed transportation improvements in their area to the agencies' plans, maps, inventories, etc. to assess potential environmental impacts.

The MPO will also contact the following regional and local agencies for coordination and input on the development of the LRTP and TIP:

#### **Regional Agencies**

First Tennessee Development District  
Kingsport Regional Planning Commission (Land-use, Zoning, Historic, etc.)  
LENOWISCO Planning District Commission  
NETWORKS – Joint Economic Development Partnership  
Sullivan County Regional Planning Commission (Land-use, Zoning, Historic, etc.)  
Tri-Cities Regional Airport

#### **Local Agencies**

City of Kingsport (Planning, Public Works, Engineering, Parks & Rec., etc.)  
City of Church Hill  
City of Mount Carmel  
Gate City, VA  
Weber City, VA  
Sullivan County Highway Department  
Hawkins County Highway Department  
Scott County, VA Highway Department  
Kingsport Area Transit Service (KATS)

Interagency agreements should be maintained between the MPO and other local and regional agencies such as the Bristol MPO, Johnson City MPO, and First Tennessee Rural Planning Organization (RPO). The agreements should describe the MPO's role and responsibility in relation to the other agencies' work.

### **3.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARLY INVOLVEMENT AND INPUT**

Transportation planning activities continually take place at the local, regional, state, and federal levels. Numerous venues for identifying and reporting transportation needs exist. Also, opportunities are available to participate in formulating projects to address those needs. This chapter describes the core public involvement opportunities for the key MPO work products: the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Each MPO agency is a public contact point for influencing investment priorities and identifying transportation needs. The public's connection to transportation decision-making begins by finding out what specific participation opportunities are available in the local community. Often times the most direct way for the public to express an interest or concern about the transportation planning process is by contacting the MPO.

#### **3.1 Public Notification Policy**

It is the policy of the Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization to advertise any public meeting of the Kingsport MPO seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting. However, notice will be no less than 3 days prior to the meeting. In order to gain attendance of a representative group of citizens and interested parties of the Kingsport MPO and its urbanized areas, the MPO will publish a legal notice in the Kingsport Times News. In addition, the MPO may advertise notice in other publications and send news releases and media alerts as needed.

#### **3.2 Public Input**

A public hearing will be conducted by the MPO Executive Board at each scheduled MPO meeting for the purpose of soliciting citizen input concerning program activities. In order to gain attendance of a representative group of citizens and interested parties of the Kingsport MPO and its urbanized areas, the MPO will publish a legal notice as stated in the Public Notification Policy section.

#### **3.3 Public Meetings**

All meetings of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Board will be public and open to citizens and all interested parties of the MPO. In order to gain attendance of a representative group of citizens and interested parties of the Kingsport MPO and its urbanized areas, the MPO will publish a legal notice as stated in the Public Notification Policy section. Citizens and interested parties will be encouraged to ask questions and make comments about MPO programs and projects. Opportunities for public comments and/or questions from those that are traditionally underserved and/or lacking opportunity for transportation service will be provided at MPO Executive Board meetings. Times and location of these public hearings will be established to accommodate those most affected.

SAFETEA-LU requires that, in carrying out the Public Participation Plan, the MPO shall, to the maximum extent practicable, hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, employ visualization techniques to describe plans, and make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate, to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information. In order to gain attendance of a representative group of citizens and

interested parties of the Kingsport MPO and its urbanized areas, the MPO will publish a legal notice, as stated in the Public Notification Policy section of all MPO related public meetings.

### **3.4 Executive Board and Technical Coordinating Committee Meetings**

The Kingsport MPO Executive Board is the formal decision-making body for matters relating to regional transportation planning. The Executive Board has the authority to adopt regional transportation plans and programs. The Executive Board normally meets once every quarter and also has the ability to hold specially called meetings.

The MPO has established a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) to ensure coordination of the regional transportation planning process. The TCC will make recommendations to the MPO Executive Board at key points during the planning process. Members of the TCC include technical specialists from the Kingsport MPO member jurisdictions and transportation agencies. The TCC normally meets once every quarter and also has the ability to hold specially called meetings.

### **3.5 Key MPO Work Products**

#### **Long-Range Transportation Plan**

The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon as of the effective date. The LRTP shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

The MPO shall review and update the LRTP at least every five years to confirm the transportation plan's validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends and to extend the forecast period to at least a 20-year planning horizon. In addition, the MPO may revise the transportation plan at any time using the procedures in this section without a requirement to extend the horizon year.

The MPO shall consult, as noted in the Consultation chapter of this document, with both interested parties and local, state, and federal agencies regarding the development of the LRTP.

For both LRTP updates and amendments there will be at least a 30-day public comment period prior to adoption. The public comment period starts on the date of public notice. Before the MPO Executive Board meets to adopt LRTP updates or amendments a public notice, as well as press releases, will be published in accordance with the Public Notification Policy section. All public comments either oral or written will be given to the MPO Executive Board for review.

In the event the MPO Executive Board determines there are significant unresolved comments on the LRTP, it may defer the adoption of the plan until a subsequent meeting. The MPO staff will then prepare a written response to the comments to be incorporated into the document, or suggest amendments to the draft document as a means of summarizing, analyzing, and reporting on the disposition of the comments. Should these amendments be significant, an additional 15-day review period shall be allotted to the public.

The LRTP should be made publicly available and accessible, as noted in the Public Display of Documents section of this document. Every effort will be made to incorporate the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, listed in the Public Meetings section.

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the region's short-term transportation investment plan. The TIP prioritizes the region's transportation-related projects within the constraints of federal, state, and local funding that the region can reasonably expect to receive within the next four years. Projects that are included in the TIP must be selected from or be consistent with an approved LRTP. The MPO shall consult, as noted in the Consultation chapter of this document, with both interested parties and local, state, and federal agencies regarding the development of the TIP.

The Transportation Improvement Program as well as any amendments to the TIP will be presented to the Executive Board for approval. The Kingsport MPO will publish a legal notice, as stated in the Public Notification Policy. The notice will explain the item(s) to be amended or approved and state where copies of the TIP will be available for the public to view.

For both TIP adoption and amendments there will be at least a seven (7) day public comment period prior to adoption. All public comments, either oral or written, will be given to the MPO Executive Board for review.

In the event the MPO Executive Board determines there are significant unresolved comments on the TIP it may defer the program until a subsequent meeting. The MPO staff will then prepare a written response to the comments to be incorporated into the document, or suggest amendments to the draft document as a means of summarizing, analyzing, and reporting on the disposition of the comments. Should these amendments be significant, another seven (7) day review period shall be allotted to the public.

The TIP should be made publicly available and accessible, as noted in the Public Display of Documents section of this document. Every effort will be made to incorporate the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, listed in the Public Meetings section.

### **Unified Planning Work Program**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a one-year plan developed by staff to focus work efforts and planning funds anticipated in the upcoming fiscal year. All federally funded planning activities have to be in the UPWP and have to be developed through required planning factors. The UPWP is reviewed and discussed at the regularly scheduled Technical Coordinating Committee and Executive Board public meetings along with being made available on the website. Public comment is welcomed and will be recorded.

### **Annual Listing of Obligated Projects**

On an annual basis, no later than 90 calendar days following the end of the program year, the Kingsport MPO will cooperatively develop a listing of projects (including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) for which funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 were obligated in the preceding program year. The listing shall be prepared in accordance with §450.314(a) and shall include all federally funded projects authorized or revised to

increase obligations in the preceding program year, and shall at a minimum include the TIP information under §450.324(e)(1) and (4) and identify, for each project, the amount of Federal funds requested in the TIP, the Federal funding that was obligated during the preceding year, and the Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years. The listing will be distributed and discussed at the regularly scheduled Technical Coordinating Committee and Executive Board public meetings. The list should be made publicly available and accessible in the same manner as the TIP. Public comment is welcomed and will be recorded.

### **3.6 Public Workshops/Open Houses**

These are public meetings that are generally open and informal, with information displays, handouts, and project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. These meetings are usually set up on a drop-in basis, but may include short presentations. The purpose of the workshop is to provide information to the public and to solicit public comment. An attendance record is kept and attendees are given the opportunity to sign-up for the mailing list.

### **3.7 Public Display of Documents**

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and Annual Listing of Obligated Projects shall be made available to the public in the office of the City Manager, the office of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization Coordinator, the Kingsport Public Library, and via the MPO's website at [www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com).

## 4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

The Kingsport MPO constantly seeks public participation on many of the services that the agency performs. There are many different techniques that the MPO uses in order to reach the vast range of stakeholders in the planning area. The type of public outreach efforts employed for a particular project will be determined based on the project's overall regional and local impact. Highly localized projects may require more specialized outreach within the project's area of influence, rather than the broad outreach efforts required by others.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects persons from discrimination based on their race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. The Kingsport MPO receives federal funding, so all transportation planning processes of the MPO must comply with this law. Environmental Justice stems from Title VI, focusing on including low-income and minority populations in federally funded programs. Environmental Justice has three general principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

By providing the opportunity for everyone to participate in the transportation planning process, the MPO is ensuring that the needs of all people can be met and that their desires for how the whole community should function and develop will be considered. To accomplish this, the MPO Staff will use Census data to determine where concentrations of the underserved or underrepresented reside. Using this data, the MPO will:

- Hold public meetings that are convenient to these geographic concentrations in terms of walkability and available transit options, which tend to be used more by low-income individuals than other forms of transportation;
- Make all draft documents available for public review at the Kingsport Public Library;
- Residents or organizations that express an interest by attending public meetings or notifying us by other means will be included in the direct mailing list to receive information about future events and plan development;
- Continue to research creative methods of reaching these populations with information, documents, and invitations;
- Seek out community leaders or representatives of these groups to participate in our planning processes, as appropriate; and
- Meet and make presentations to organizations that represent these segments of the population, as requested.

The following discussion explains how each technique used by the MPO is helpful in attracting and incorporating public involvement.

#### **4.1 Public Meetings**

In order to gain attendance of a representative group of citizens and interested parties of the Kingsport MPO and its urbanized areas, the MPO will publish a legal notice, as stated in the Public Notification Policy section regarding public meetings. At each scheduled public meeting, time for members of the public to discuss agenda items or specific concerns will be provided. Citizens and interested parties will be encouraged to ask questions and make comments about MPO programs and projects. If a person is not able to attend a specific meeting they may request copies of their input be distributed to those at the meeting. Times and location of these public hearings will be established to accommodate those most affected.

#### **4.2 Meeting Accessibility**

Kingsport MPO shall, to the maximum extent practical, hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times. The MPO will make reasonable efforts to schedule meetings at locations that are transit accessible. All MPO meeting locations shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

#### **4.3 Website**

The Kingsport MPO's website ([www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com)) will be employed as a tool for disseminating information on meetings, project updates, and background information. The MPO's website is a tool used to describe and visually represent MPO plans, programs, meetings, and other appropriate information. The MPO website is continually updated to keep the public informed of the agency's activities, meetings, and key work products. All MPO planning documents that seek public participation can be found by stakeholders on the website, as well as in the MPO office library. All Kingsport MPO meetings that are open to the public are listed on the website. Surveys and comment forms regarding particular activities may be submitted online. The Kingsport MPO website provides an opportunity for the public to submit questions, comments, or obtain information from the agency.

#### **4.4 Paid Advertising**

Various projects may require paid advertising in the form of newspaper, radio, or television ads. These will be more detailed than a standard Public Notice.

#### **4.5 Flyers/Posters**

When appropriate, participation from target populations will be sought by posting flyers/posters and meeting notices in locations such as government centers, neighborhood shops, religious institutions, social service agencies, employment centers, bus stops/transit hubs, senior centers, public health clinics, public libraries, community centers and popular meeting places. Postcards and flyers may also be distributed directly to residents.

#### **4.6 Traditional Letters**

When appropriate, traditional letters about plans, studies, projects or any other information deemed important for public input will be mailed out to interested parties, public libraries and to members of the advisory committees.

#### **4.7 Press Releases**

Press releases can be utilized to ensure interested parties and the press is up-to-date on news and information concerning MPO activities.

#### **4.8 Mailing Databases**

The assembly of a database of names and addresses of social and civic groups, neighborhood and community associations, and interested individuals will assist in the public outreach for the Public Participation Plan and other plans. To supplement the database, members of the public will be asked if they would like to be included on a mailing list as a part of comment forms dispensed and collected at public meetings. Mailing and e-mail addresses will be requested. If requested by the individual, e-mail messages and/or post cards will be sent to individuals and groups notifying them of meetings, in addition to the notices that are distributed to the local media.

#### **4.9 One-on-One Meetings**

The Kingsport MPO staff is readily available and willing to discuss transportation related projects and documents. To schedule a meeting please contact our office either by phone at (423) 224-2670 or e-mail at [campbell@ci.kingsport.tn.us](mailto:campbell@ci.kingsport.tn.us).

#### **4.10 Visualization**

Visualization techniques shall be used to enhance the public's understanding of the Kingsport MPO plans and programs. Such techniques shall be used in an appropriate manner when presenting and describing MPO plans and programs. The MPO currently uses graphs, charts, and maps to display information whenever possible. The MPO will also work to incorporate a broad variety of visualization techniques in public meetings and documents. This will aid people that comprehend visual images more fully than written documentation. While GIS maps provide a good base for visualization, visual preference surveys and artist renderings will be used if possible.

#### **4.11 MPO Library**

There is a small library in the Kingsport MPO office which has a variety of transportation related information such as past and current plans, studies, maps, and proposed design drawings. When the MPO obtains brochures and other educational documents from TDOT, VDOT, FHWA, and FTA the articles will be available for public viewing.

## **5.0 PPP DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Development**

This Public Participation Plan was developed through consultation with an expanded list of known interested parties by utilizing direct mailings (See [Appendix D](#) for examples) and creating a participation survey ([Appendix B](#)) that was distributed and placed in public buildings and on the MPO's website. The MPO contacted more than 200 individuals in our contact database, directed them to the draft Public Participation Plan and survey, and requested their feedback in order to collect their preferences and gain a better understanding of how the general public and our interested parties prefer to be contacted and involved in the transportation planning process.

A rapidly changing world and new technology offer new opportunities for quick and cost-effective ways to get information out to the public. Busy schedules mean that citizens appreciate convenient, comfortable, and quick ways to stay informed about government services and issues. A recent study by the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington found that the most effective community involvement programs utilize the following: convenient and comfortable meeting formats, visual presentations to groups, and reaching citizens through such technologies as cable TV, e-mail notification, and websites.

The results of the Kingsport MPO's PPP survey found similar results from our interested parties. The majority of respondents prefer to receive notification of upcoming meetings via e-mail. Utilizing the local newspaper and TV was also found to be an effective means for public notification purposes. Direct mailings for both meeting notices and as a means of receiving hardcopy documents was considered to be very ineffective. An overwhelming majority of respondents preferred to receive documents in a digital format, either by e-mail or downloading from a website. Respondents to the survey also noted that one-on-one interviews are considered to be very effective.

The MPO will use the results of the PPP survey to enhance and expand the use of technology and digital formats for outreach purposes. The MPO will work to maximize the use of its website, e-mail contact database, and openly encourage our interested parties to meet one-on-one in order to better engage them in the transportation planning process. A discussion of one-on-one meetings was added to the Public Involvement Techniques section as a result of the participation survey.

This Public Participation Plan has been developed in consultation with interested parties as required by federal rules and regulations. Before it was adopted, this PPP was available for public review and comment from August 10, 2007 to September 23, 2007 (required 45 days). The resulting public input has been addressed and incorporated as appropriate into this plan. These procedures for public participation have been formally enacted, reviewed, and certified as being in compliance with all applicable federal rules and regulations.

### **5.2 Evaluation**

The Kingsport MPO seeks to continually work to improve its public participation processes by identifying strengths and weaknesses in its methods, gauging the level of participation of stakeholders and interested parties, and modifying its methods accordingly. The MPO invites the public to evaluate the agency's effectiveness of conducting public

participation meetings and allow the public to comment on how it could improve the public participation process.

The Kingsport MPO staff will review the Public Participation Plan annually, and every four years the plan will be evaluated through consultation with interested parties. The latter evaluation will be more extensive and involve surveys and other evaluation techniques. The public involvement segment of other plans and programs will be monitored by the MPO staff after plan adoption or program completion. Evaluation covers a broad range of purposes. It highlights improvements needed in the Public Participation Plan, identifies additional outreach activities, allows ineffective tools to be discontinued, and the evaluation of specific plans and projects keeps public involvement dynamic. In order to determine the effectiveness of public involvement tools, they must be documented, evaluated, and compared to established performance goals.

### **5.3 Measures of Effectiveness**

The strategies contained in the Public Participation Plan will be reviewed, as needed, to determine if modification of any particularly strategy is necessary or if additional strategies need to be incorporated into the plan. Evaluation tools to measure the effectiveness in terms of reaching desired demographic groups or attaining stated goals will also be employed. Evaluation strategies could include, but not be limited to:

- Tabulation of media coverage
- Surveys;
- Comment/feedback cards;
- Website polling;
- Periodic review and updating of outreach mailing lists

### **5.4 Public Participation Plan Revision**

The Kingsport MPO extends its appreciation to all those who reviewed and commented on the draft of this plan. SAFETEA-LU procedures pertaining to public participation require a 45-day comment period before major revisions to this plan are adopted.

### **5.5 Kingsport MPO Contact Information**

The Kingsport MPO welcomes additional comments about public participation and/or this plan. The MPO will keep your comments on file and use them to evaluate and revise the public participation procedures in the future.

Please submit comments to:

Mail: Chris Campbell  
Kingsport MPO  
201 West Market Street  
Kingsport, TN 37660

Phone: 423-224-2670  
Fax: 423-224-2756  
E-mail: [campbell@ci.kingsport.tn.us](mailto:campbell@ci.kingsport.tn.us)  
Online: [www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com)

## 6.0 CONSISTENCY WITH APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Along with the desire to include a diversified public in its planning processes, the Kingsport MPO relies on various federal and state statutes to help guide its participation activities. Under Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation regulations, the public must be involved in transportation planning and decision-making at both the state and regional levels. The MPO is responsible for ensuring that the public is involved in regional planning programs and projects. The MPO's PPP is consistent with all applicable federal and state regulations.

**Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for users (SAFETEA-LU)**, emphasizes Participation by Interested Parties:

A. In General: Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan.

B. Contents of Participation Plan: A participation plan:

- i. shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and
- ii. shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents on the transportation plan.

C. Method: In carrying out subparagraph A, the metropolitan planning organization shall, to the maximum extent practicable:

- i. hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- ii. employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and
- iii. make public information available in an electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate, to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information under subparagraph A.

**NEPA**, The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (as amended) outline requirements to go through an environmental review process for implementing projects from a TIP. NEPA has its own set of public participation requirements for review periods and notification of interested parties on a project basis. These requirements are not a substitute for earlier participation at the planning and programming stages.

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** states that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity.” Sites for participation activities, as well as the information presented, must be accessible to persons with disabilities.

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, together with related statutes and regulations, provide that “no person shall on the ground of race, color, and national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal funds. The entire institution, whether educational, private or governmental must comply with Title VI and related Federal civil rights laws, not just the program or activity receiving federal funds.”

**Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994**, states that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” Traditionally underserved groups such as low-income and minority populations must be identified and given increased opportunity for involvement in order to ensure effective participation.

**Tennessee Code Annotated 8-44-101, The Sunshine Law** declares it to be the policy of Tennessee that the formation of public policy and decisions is public business and shall not be conducted in secret. This part shall not be construed to limit any of the rights and privileges contained in Article I Section 19, of the constitution of the State of Tennessee. All meetings of any governing body should be open to the public at all times, except as provided by the Tennessee Constitution.

# APPENDIX A — PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENT SHEET

## Utopiaville (*Example*) Transportation Plan

Your suggestions and comments are important to the *Utopiaville Transportation Study* planning process. Please feel free to provide any comments you wish to make regarding the *map or written documents*. Some of the issues under review are *the proposed land uses, road network, and bike path locations*. Please send written comments by mail, e-mail, fax or phone until *September 31st, 2007*, and address your comments to:

Chris Campbell  
Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization  
201 West Market Street  
Kingsport, TN 37660  
Phone: (423) 224-2670  
Fax: (423) 224-2756  
E-mail: [campbell@ci.kingsport.tn.us](mailto:campbell@ci.kingsport.tn.us)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Optional)  
Participant Information:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX B — SAMPLE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SURVEY

## Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 AGENCY/ ORG: \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Which of the following categories best describes your organization?**

- Public Transportation / Transit Service Provider
- Private Transportation / Transit Service Provider
- Freight Shipper
- Freight Transport Service Provider
- Senior Citizen Care / Advocacy
- Disabled Citizen Care / Advocacy
- Bicycle / Pedestrian Advocacy
- Environmental Advocacy
- Socio-Cultural Advocacy
- Local Government Agency
- County Government Agency
- State Government Agency
- Federal Government Agency
- Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Please indicate how effective you believe each of the following public involvement methods is. Use the "OTHER" fields to share your ideas.**

METHOD FOR:	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Not at all effective	Not Sure
<b>Providing Information about Transportation Plans / Planning Process</b>					
Direct Mailings					
Email					
Yard Signs					
Flyers					
Websites/ Internet					
Radio					
Television					
Newsletters					

METHOD FOR:	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Not at all Effective	Not Sure
<b>Providing Information about Transportation Plans / Planning Process</b>					
Newspaper Advertisements					
Newspaper Articles					
Information Kiosks/ Booths					
Brochures					
Fact Sheets					
Speaker Presentations					
OTHER _____					
OTHER _____					
<b>Gathering Public Input / Sharing Information</b>					
Comment Cards					
Websites / Internet					
Workshops					
Open House					
Public Q&A					
Citizen Advisory Committees					
Telephone Surveys					
One-on-One Interviews					
OTHER _____					
OTHER _____					

**3. Which of the following mailing lists are you interested in joining?**

- MPO Executive Board Meeting Notices / Agenda
- MPO Technical Coordination Committee Meeting Notices / Agenda
- Long Range Transportation Plan Updates
- Transportation Improvement Program Updates
- Unified Planning Work Program Updates
- Corridor Plans / Studies
- Freight Plans / Studies
- Bicycle / Pedestrian Plans / Studies
- Public Transportation (Transit) Plans / Studies
- Air Quality Plans / Studies
- Environmental Justice (Title VI) Plans / Studies
- Safety Plans / Studies
- Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your input. Please return the survey either by mail or fax. If you wish you can also submit the survey online at [www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com)

Kingsport MPO  
201 West Market Street  
Kingsport, TN 37660

Phone: (423) 224-2670  
Fax: (423) 224-2756  
Website: [kingsportmpo.com](http://kingsportmpo.com)

# APPENDIX C — SAMPLE PARTICIPATION EVALUATION SURVEY

## Sample Participation Evaluation Survey

### Participation Evaluation

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Your responses are confidential and will help us improve the quality of future meetings.

### Instructions

Please rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree" by placing a check mark in the appropriate box. If the statement does not apply to you, please check the column marked NA.

Statement	Rating					
	5	4	3	2	1	NA
I was comfortable in the meeting room.						
I could see the speaker and hear him/her clearly.						
The meeting was held at a convenient time.						
The meeting location was easy for me to get to.						
The displays were useful and helped me to understand transportation issues.						
The questions I asked were answered completely.						
The information presented was easy to understand.						
I learned how to become involved in the transportation planning process.						
I know who to call to offer suggestions or comments.						
I know how my comments and/or questions will be handled.						
I know where to get information about transportation planning.						
I understand that my comments, suggestions, and concerns are an important part of the process.						
I will attend future participation meetings.						
I will suggest to other (friends, relatives, associates) that they attend future meetings.						
This meeting was a good use of my time.						
The facility was accessible and barrier free.						
All printed materials were made available to everyone in the audience.						

<b>How did you learn about today's meeting?</b>			
Mailed Notice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio Ad	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	Newspaper Article	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Website Announcement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone told me	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Who do YOU represent?</b>			
General Public	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Official	<input type="checkbox"/>
Citizen Advisory Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Group	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Business or Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Comments about today's meeting:			

## **APPENDIX D — SAMPLE CONSULTATION COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Postcard text:**

Your input is needed as we update our Public Participation Plan. As a stakeholder in regional transportation planning issues, your input is vital. We're seeking new and creative ways to shape the process in which the Kingsport MPO engages all interested parties. Your input will be incorporated in transportation planning activities and the Long Range Transportation plan for the greater Kingsport MPO planning region.

Please answer a few questions on our quick and easy survey at [www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com) by June 15, 2007. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please contact Chris Campbell at (423) 224-2670. Thank you in advance for your input.

### **Letter:**

We need your opinions.

The Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is updating its Public Participation Plan. It is very important to our organization and to our resulting transportation plans that we seek out input and ideas from those that are interested and affected by transportation planning in the region.

The Public Participation Plan will guide how all new transportation plans and improvement programs are brought to the public for review and comment. Please use this opportunity to share with us what methods are working now, what might work better, what doesn't work at all and any other new ideas you think can increase the public's opportunities to be conveniently and actively involved in developing plans. How can the MPO share information and consult with the public most effectively?

Please let the MPO know your thoughts by phone or email.

Please visit the MPO's website at [www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com) for more information.

### **Legal Notice:**

The Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is updating its Public Participation Plan (PPP). It is very important to our organization and to our resulting transportation plans that we seek out input and ideas from our interested parties affected by transportation planning in the region. The PPP will guide how all new transportation plans and improvement programs are brought to the public for review and comment. Please use this opportunity to share with us what you think can increase the public's opportunities to be conveniently and actively involved in developing plans. Please visit the MPO's website at [www.kingsportmpo.com](http://www.kingsportmpo.com) to view a draft copy of the PPP and to fill out the public participation survey. If you have any questions, comments, or would like more information please call Chris Campbell at (423) 224-2670.

## **APPENDIX E — SAFETEA-LU PARTICIPATION PLAN REGULATIONS**

23 CFR Part 450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.

(a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, agencies or entities responsible for safety/security operations, providers of non-emergency transportation services receiving financial assistance from a source other than title 49, U.S.C, Chapter 53, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

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(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was initially made available for public comment;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

(2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.

(3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved

participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) and the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation. To coordinate the planning functions to the maximum extent practicable, such consultation shall compare metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, as they are developed, with the plans, maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies. This consultation shall include, as appropriate, contacts with State, local, Indian Tribal, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation. In addition, transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

(1) Recipients of assistance under title 49, U.S.C., Chapter 53;

(2) Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

11 12

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) The MPOs are encouraged to develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under § 450.314.