

**BROOKE-HANCOCK-JEFFERSON  
TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission is an association of governmental units in Brooke and Hancock counties, West Virginia and Jefferson County, Ohio. The BHJ fosters intergovernmental cooperation by providing a public forum in which local elected officials and interested citizens may coordinate planning and decision making on issues that cross local jurisdictional boundaries. Since 1969, by joint agreement of the governors in Ohio and West Virginia, the BHJ has been the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (BHJMPO) for the Greater Steubenville, OH – Weirton, WV Metropolitan Area.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is also a representative document for public involvement procedures for the metropolitan area's two designated Federal Transit Administration §5307 recipients, the Steel Valley Regional Transit Authority (SVRTA - Ohio recipient) and the City of Weirton (West Virginia recipient) and its contracted sub-recipient the Weirton Transit Corporation (WTC). The MPO's public participation process developed for the TIP will serve as the public participation process for SVRTA's and WTC's program of projects, meeting the requirements of Section 5307 (b) as prescribed in FTA C 9030.1E (DATE 1/16/2014).

Over past years, the BHJMPO has directed past public participation efforts towards the development of the four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the twenty-year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) with varying levels of success. With reauthorize of federal transportation bill SAFETEA-LU, an MPO such as BHJ is encouraged to improve public outreach. The new legislation now includes addition language that directs an MPO to publish its transportation plans and activities in electronic format (e.g., on a website), employ visualization techniques to depict plans and studies, and confirm consultation with land use management, natural resource, historic, and other local and state agencies while developing transportation plans. These additions in the metropolitan planning process reaffirm and strengthen continuing consultation with local, state, and federal partners. Public participation techniques should give stakeholders and interested citizens, adequate opportunity to comment on transportation plan activities.

## **POLICY PROCEDURES**

### *PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN*

The Public Participation Plan outlines strategies and techniques to engage local constituency. The plan not only provides a format to provide information, but also receive comment from the public regarding transportation planning and programming activities.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Technique</u>
Draft or Revised Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available at the BHJ Offices and World Wide Web site at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> </ul>
Comment Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written comments accepted by way of e-mail, fax, or mail; Transportation Study Policy and Technical Advisory Committee meetings</li> </ul>
Public Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held concurrent with Transportation Study Policy meetings</li> </ul>
Public Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a Public Notice in no less than the two (2) local newspapers at least one (1) week before the public comment period is scheduled to begin, and then republished approximately every two (2) weeks thereafter</li> <li>• Post Public Notice at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> <li>• Alert constituency by e-mail announcement</li> <li>• Added techniques may include any of the following: announcement posters/letters, press release, newsletter article/announcement, or public service announcement</li> </ul>
Public Comment Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No less than forty-five (45) days before adoption or revision</li> </ul>
Summary of Comments Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available a summary of written comments prior to adoption by the Transportation Study Policy</li> <li>• Acknowledge receipt of written comments only by no less than five (5) working days</li> <li>• All written comments and responses summarized and incorporated into adopted document</li> </ul>
Final, Adopted Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible in electronic format at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> <li>• Upon completion of final document, available by request at BHJMPO office</li> </ul>
Evaluation Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update e-mail notification list quarterly</li> <li>• Survey number and source of comments received</li> <li>• Review coverage or exposure from various media sources</li> <li>• Establish a committee comprised of various media representatives</li> </ul>

*TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM*

The TIP is a four-year listing of transportation projects (i.e., highway, bridge, pedestrian, and transit projects) scheduled for implementation in a metropolitan area funded by some combination of federal, state, and/or local resources. A fiscally balanced program, the TIP also identifies all funding mechanisms for completing each programmed project and/or strategy. The BHJMPO periodically revises the TIP during the year by adding and/or deleting specific projects from the program or amending a project's specific scope or funding source. Typically, either a state or local transportation stakeholder (ODOT, WVDOT, county or municipal government, or public authority) requests the BHJMPO to consider adopting a TIP amendment by resolution of the Transportation Study Policy Committee. After adoption, the BHJMPO forwards the request to the appropriate state agency (typically ODOT or WVDOT) for inclusion in the State TIP (STIP). The appropriate federal agency (i.e. FHWA, FTA, or FAA) then reviews the amendment for adequacy to public law, and then issues authorization to proceed with constructing or implementing the project.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Technique</u>
Draft Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available at the BHJ Offices and World Wide Web site at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> </ul>

Comment Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written comments are accepted by way of e-mail, fax, or mail; Verbal comments are accepted at the Transportation Study Policy and Technical Advisory Committee meetings</li> </ul>
Public Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public meeting for draft and final document as well as amendments are held concurrent with the Transportation Study Policy meeting at the end of the public comment period</li> <li>• Public meeting for draft document is organized and scheduled with the ODOT District 11 Office during the public comment period</li> <li>• Visualization techniques for public meetings may include maps, aerial photography, pictures, or simplified plans depicting a program of projects or a specific project of regional interest</li> </ul>
Public Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a Public Notice in no less than the two (2) local newspapers at least twice, once at the beginning of the public comment period and then republished approximately one (1) week thereafter</li> <li>• Post Public Notice at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> <li>• Alert constituency by e-mail announcement</li> <li>• Added techniques may include any of the following: announcement posters/letters, press release, newsletter article/announcement, or public service announcement</li> </ul>
Public Comment Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No less than fifteen (15) days before adoption or revision</li> </ul>
Summary of Comments Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available a summary of written comments prior to adoption by the Transportation Study Policy</li> <li>• Acknowledge receipt of written comments only by no less than five (5) working days</li> <li>• All written comments and responses summarized and incorporated into adopted document</li> </ul>
Final, Adopted Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible in electronic format at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> <li>• Upon completion of final document, available by request at BHJMPO office</li> <li>• Reproduced copies of final document are available at a standard fee no greater than the schedule found at <a href="#">CFR 49 CFR 7.43</a></li> </ul>
Document Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a Public Notice in no less than the two (2) local newspapers (if possible with a circulation in the vicinity of the added project) at least twice, once at the beginning of the public comment period and then republished approximately one (1) week thereafter</li> <li>• Added techniques may include any of the following: announcement posters/letters, press release, newsletter article/announcement, or public service announcement</li> <li>• Those requesting amendments are encouraged to apply for requests no less than fifteen (15) days before the public comment period begins</li> <li>• Public comment period begins fifteen days prior to scheduled Transportation Study Policy meetings</li> <li>• Publish a schedule for revision notifications and submissions at the beginning of the calendar year concurrent with organization of the Transportation Study Policy Committee</li> <li>• A special meeting to consider revisions may be considered in emergency circumstances</li> </ul>
Annual Listing of Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with ODOT, WVDOT, and Public Transit Agencies six (6) weeks before end of State Fiscal Year (June 30) and request list of obligated projects (July 1 – June 30) of Sate Fiscal Year</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible in electronic format at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> <li>• Alert constituency by e-mail announcement and publish listing in agency newsletter</li> </ul>
Evaluation Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update e-mail notification list quarterly</li> <li>• Survey number and source of comments received</li> <li>• Review coverage or exposure from various media sources</li> <li>• Establish a committee comprised of various media representatives</li> </ul>

*LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN*

The LRTP is both a long-range (no less than 20 years) and short-range listing of multimodal strategies, actions, and/or projects that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods. The SAFETEA-LU requires an MPO to review and update its LRTP every four (4) years to confirm its validity, consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions and trends, and conform to applicable air quality standards. This includes a financial plan that reasonably demonstrates how each project or program is constructed or implemented over the lifetime of the LRTP. Therefore, the LRTP should not contain any “wish list” projects. The MPO may amend its LRTP as a result updated investment strategies in projected federal, state, and local funding sources; completion of pertinent transportation studies; or changes in relevant federal, state or local laws.

The purpose of the LRTP is to guide regional long-range transportation goals and objectives for orderly social and economic growth, and identify adequate resources to accomplish the needs. In the past, the LRTP metropolitan planning process required a public involvement period for consultation and cooperation with not only local planners, engineers, and public officials, but also interested citizens and civic organizations. The public involvement period should allow opportunity for all citizens and groups to provide input and subsequent comments into the development of the LRTP. The SAFETEA-LU legislation expanded the consultation and cooperation requirement to include non-metropolitan local officials and Tribal governments, as well as other local and state land-use management, natural resource, and historic planning agencies. In this way, all affected agencies including the MPO can compare the LRTP with available conservation plans and maps including available inventories of historic and natural resources.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Technique</u>
Draft Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available at the BHJ Offices and World Wide Web site at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> </ul>
Comment Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written comments are accepted by way of e-mail, fax, or mail; Verbal comments are accepted at the Transportation Study Policy and Technical Advisory Committee meetings</li> </ul>
Public Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public meeting for draft and final document as well as amendments are held concurrent with the Transportation Study Policy meeting at the end of the public comment period</li> <li>• Visualization techniques for public meetings may include maps, aerial photography, pictures, or simplified plans depicting a program of projects or a specific project of regional interest</li> </ul>
Public Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a Public Notice in no less than the two (2) local newspapers at least twice, once at the beginning of the public comment period and then republished approximately one (1) week thereafter</li> <li>• Post Public Notice at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> <li>• Alert constituency by e-mail announcement</li> <li>• Consult with local and state land-use management, natural resource, and historic planning agencies by direct mailing of draft and final documents or by e-mail notification of documents available in electronic format for download or e-mail attachment</li> <li>• Added techniques may include any of the following: announcement posters/letters, press release, newsletter article/announcement, or public service announcement</li> </ul>
Public Comment Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No less than fifteen (15) days before adoption or revision</li> </ul>
Summary of Comments Received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available a summary of written comments prior to adoption by the Transportation Study Policy</li> <li>• Acknowledge receipt of written comments only by no less than five (5) working days</li> <li>• All written comments and responses summarized and incorporated into adopted document</li> </ul>
Final, Adopted Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible in electronic format at <a href="http://www.bhjmpc.org">www.bhjmpc.org</a></li> <li>• Upon completion of final document, available upon request at BHJMPO office</li> <li>• Reproduced copies of final document are available at a standard fee no greater than the schedule found at <a href="#">CFR 49 CFR 7.43</a></li> </ul>
Document Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those requesting amendments are encouraged to submit amendments fifteen (15) days before the public comment period begins</li> <li>• Public comment period begins fifteen days prior to scheduled Transportation Study Policy meetings</li> <li>• Publish a schedule for revision notifications and submissions at the beginning of the calendar year concurrent with organization of the Transportation Study Policy Committee</li> <li>• A special meeting to consider revisions may be considered in emergency circumstances</li> </ul>
Evaluation Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update e-mail notification and planning agency consultation lists quarterly</li> <li>• Survey number and source of comments received</li> <li>• Review media coverage or exposure from various media sources</li> <li>• Establish a committee comprised of various media representatives</li> </ul>



*OTHER TRANSPORTATION ACTIVITIES, PUBLIC SERVICE, MEETINGS, NEWSLETTER*

In addition to the development and preparation of the annual TIP and periodic update of the LRTP, BHJ may be involved in various activities and programs for which public involvement efforts may be appropriate. Such activities may include studies such as, safety reports and project recommendations, major corridor studies and their alternatives, public transportation development plans, annual public transit program of projects, and other non-specific transportation projects (as determined on a case-by-case basis). As deemed whichever is appropriate, BHJ will use the general public involvement process described for the preparation of the TIP or LRTP. However, in lieu of public notices, BHJ may substitute announcement posters/letters, press release, newsletter article/announcement, or public service announcement if the approach appears to be the most effective public notification approach.

BHJ will continue its transportation related public service activities that generally respond to requests for information and data. Historically, such requests have been associated with traffic count data, miscellaneous social and economic demographics (typically available from the US Census Bureau), mapping and aerial photography generated by the Geographic Information System (GIS), and project status information. The BHJ will strive to fulfill all reasonable requests for service or information in a timely manner, and include this provision of such service in the annual work program. In addition, the BHJ will evaluate its fee schedule for generating information and data product requests on a case-by-case basis. A fee schedule for producing maps and aerial photography is available for public inspection. Typically, BHJ does not charge Participating member governments (whose paid dues are up to date) a fee for minimal requests.

Transportation related meetings are open to the public and held at accessible locations. BHJ will provide meeting notices and agenda packages to local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. In addition, when warranted, BHJ may send public notices and service announcements to social service and community-oriented organizations (i.e. Jefferson County Department of Job and Family Services, Community Action Agencies serving Jefferson, Brooke and Hancock counties, senior citizen group homes and local colleges and universities).

As noted on the first page of this document, BHJ periodically reviews its public involvement procedures. Revising basic procedures contained herein requires a public comment period before the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Transportation Study Policy Committee adopts such revisions. Examples include, but are not limited to, the conduct of any meeting, formal or informal, which enhances the opportunity for public comment, and the creation of any transportation related ad-hoc committees that may provide input for planning and programming activities. On the other hand, adding and deleting individuals and organizations from the contact list or e-mail notification list does not trigger a public comment period nor require Policy Committee adoption.

