

West Piedmont Planning District Public Involvement/Participation Plan

The intent of the West Piedmont Planning District Public Involvement/Participation Plan is to offer reasonable opportunities for the public to be informed and involved in the development of transportation plans and programs in the planning district's non-urban or rural area. The public and interested parties, including affected agencies and certain expressly identified population groups, are encouraged to help identify highway, transit, pedestrian, bikeway and other transportation needs and comment on proposed improvements in the planning area. The identified groups will need to be added to mailing distribution lists for PDC announcements, relevant meetings, newsletters, etc. In the West Piedmont Planning District, the regional rural planning area refers to the City of Martinsville, and the Counties of Franklin, Henry, Patrick and the non-urban portion of Pittsylvania anticipated to be developed over the next twenty (20) year period.

Components or objectives of the existing public involvement process followed by the West Piedmont Planning District have been developed to incorporate elements required of a Participation Plan process by CFR 23, Part 450.316 pursuant to Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), (Public Law 109-59, August 10, 2005). Sections A thru B of the Participation Plan address the participation process. Section C addresses the agency consultation process required by SAFETEA-LU.

Section A: Participation Plan Elements

1. In order to allow for adequate time for public review and comment of the draft participation plan, public notification will be provided forty-five (45) days in advance of consideration of action on this document by the Board of Commissioners of WPPDC. Public notification will be provided thirty (30) days in advance of consideration of action by the Board of Commissioners on proposed regional rural long-range transportation plan and its update documents.
2. A meeting notice will be provided in printed form and electronically, where practicable, to local news media, one week in advance of each regular Commission and Technical Committee meeting. Reasonable access to available information about WPPDC-sponsored transportation studies in the planning area will also be provided.
3. Available resources will be used by the WPPDC to visually convey information related to transportation plans and programs.

4. Public information related to transportation plans and programs and meeting notices of the West Piedmont PDC will be provided electronically on World Wide Web as website notices, including draft amendments and final versions of the Participation Plan.
5. Public meetings sponsored by the WPPDC will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. A citizen information period will be provided during each regular WPPDC technical meeting.
6. Public input received during the development of the regional rural long-range transportation plan will be given consideration by the WPPDC. Significant public comments received will be reported by staff to the Board of Commissioners and the Technical Committee.
7. Outreach efforts seeking input on regional rural long-range transportation plans and programs from low income and minority households traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems will be developed, continued and documented.
8. Public notices advising citizens in the planning district area of the availability of draft transportation plans in local public libraries will be continued in addition to website availability. Additional opportunity for public comment will be provided if the final regional rural long-range transportation plan differs significantly from the version initially made available for public review.
9. The implementation of the WPPDC Public Involvement Participation Plan will be coordinated with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes developed, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the planning district area that is affected by transportation.
10. The overall effectiveness of procedures and strategies contained in the Public Involvement Participation Plan to ensure a full and open participation process will be reviewed periodically by the WPPDC staff and Board of Commissioners.

Section B: Disposition of Significant Comments

When significant comments are received on the draft regional rural long-range transportation plan as a result of the Participation Plan, a report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final regional rural long-range transportation plan.

Section C: Agency Consultation on Other Planning Activities

1. As the transportation plan is developed, the WPPDC shall consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities in the planning area affected by transportation in order to coordinate planning functions to the maximum extent practicable.
2. The nature of the consultation shall include comparison of this planning area's regional rural long-range transportation plan, when it is developed, with the plans maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies including the Danville MPO.
3. Public and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation should be included in the agency consultation process, as appropriate.
4. Transportation plans shall be developed with consideration for governmental agencies and non-profit organizations receiving Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation for the design and delivery of non-emergency transportation services.

Public Input Elements: Means of Receiving Input

The WPPDC will utilize, as is practical and appropriate, the following means of providing for input on projects and planning efforts whereon public involvement, public participation is required.

Input Elements:

Offer a Comments Period Indicate means of comment submission	Public Display of Commission Plans/Studies for Review	Advertisements in Newspapers
Website made available	Newsletters available	Open Meetings & Public meetings declared
Have press releases	Have direct mailings	Visual Communications such as maps, Internet visuals, videos if practical
Library available for document review, storage	Workshops, meetings, listening sessions offered for Plans, Studies	Staff Public Appearances
Direct Staff Contact	Address Title VI	Provide kiosks as appropriate
Have measures of effectiveness	Address language barrier issues	Surveys carried out on plans, studies
<i>Address Elderly and Handicapped, Disabled</i>	Have measures of effectiveness	Advocate for bicycle and pedestrian
<i>Address hearing or visually impaired</i>		

The importance of websites and their contents is far reaching in the communications efforts of public and private sector entities today. The following lists the desired contents of the website the West Piedmont PDC should have in the future. It should be noted that WPPDC serves both as a rural transportation planning agency and, as staff to the Danville Metropolitan (Transportation) Planning Organization, as a urban transportation planning agency which adds substantially to the website content level.

Website Contents Required:

Study Area Map & the Long Range Transportation Plan Document	PDC meeting agendas	PDC meeting minutes
Method of providing public comments	Staff contact person	Technical Committee membership
Address Long Range Plan Availability, Status	Dates/times of meetings	Citizens Committee membership
PDC Board membership	Visual techniques utilized	Rural Planning Work Program
Freight Committee membership	List of other committees and memberships	Listing of Projects
Six Year Improvement Plan for Primary, Interstates, other	Six-Year Improvement Plan for Secondary System	
Public Participation Plan (manual)	PDC Bylaws, Charter	

Meeting Schedules

The Rural Transportation Technical Committee will have a central role, along with the WPPDC staff, in that it will be responsible for receiving plan drafts and supportive information and giving the staff input and guidance on plan development. It will also be asked to consider making approvals and recommendations on the work as it proceeds in this initial development of the rural transportation plan and then future updates. It also is charged with being the general transportation planning advisory body for the Commission. The Rural Transportation Technical Committee will be meeting frequently over the course of the phased development of the Regional Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan. Customarily it meets the Friday prior to the Board of Commissioners meetings, which are held on the fourth Thursday of the month excepting the November-December meeting. The staff intends to place announcements of the Committee’s meetings on the website and as press releases/agendas in addition to sending agendas out to a direct mailing/emailing list.

Public Outreach Meetings

The staff intends to provide the general public, agencies and groups, community based organizations, and others the opportunity to hear first hand about work the

PDC is doing on transportation planning and its development of the regional transportation plan and then provide commentary input on the plan's formation and the plan's conclusions and recommendations once those phases are reached. The public information, input, and commentary desired will be able to come via typical electronic means such as via websites and emailing, but the PDC wants to offer direct contact opportunities by means of public outreach meetings at critical points in the plan development process. These meetings will be held during the various phases of plan development. At this time, it is anticipated that the plan will be developed over the course of four phases, and it can be anticipated that at least that many public outreach sessions will be utilized. For example, one public outreach session was held in the early part of Phase I; a second outreach session may be held at the end of Phase I or beginning of Phase II in order to report findings and data collected at the end of Phase I and to gather input and comments desired for Phase II. It is also anticipated that in Phase III and Phase IV we will be having public outreach sessions preparatory to reporting out the recommendations and taking comments on the final draft plan. It should be noted that the staff anticipates that, for each public outreach session step, it will most likely have a session in each of the four counties in the Planning District.

Public Outreach Sessions Guidance:

The following gives a basic outline of guidance on items we need to consider as outreach sessions are planned in the future:

Determine Groupings of Localities: By county along with city, towns, inside boundary. Typically, the PDC will hold four meetings for the following groupings of localities: Franklin County, Rocky Mount, Boones Mill; Henry County, Martinsville, Ridgeway; Patrick County, Stuart; Pittsylvania County, Chatham, Gretna, Hurt. [Danville is an urban, MPO locality.]

Estimate of Number of Meetings: 6-8 for Long Range Plan Development, assuming four (4) phases.

Potential Locations:

- Board of Supervisors meeting room
- Council meeting room
- Other public agency locations with ADA compliant access

Attendees:

- Local planners
- Chambers of commerce
- VDOT Resident Engineer
- Agencies providing client transportation
- School transportation personnel
- Realtors, developers

- Airport operators, managers
- Elected officials
- Planning commissioners
- Others

Introduction:

Presented by Local Planning Director or Local Government Administrator

Note that:

- VDOT desires Plan
- PDCs are lead agency in partnership to develop plan over next four years
- Planning District Executive Director is present to review project, take input
- Open session available for public input, questions

Review Background on Regional Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan

Development:

- General Planning Objectives for the effort
- Planning Timeline, Phases of Work
- Phase I, First-Year Activities (review other phases as appropriate)

Solicit Information on Concerns with the Transportation System:

Review Area Map

(Items below are examples from Phase I, other Phase's items will vary.)

- Input on Transportation Safety issues, location of problems
- Input on System Capacity and Congestion issues, location of problems
- Major Problem areas for transportation; locations
- Input on High Growth areas of the jurisdiction.

Summarize the Meeting; Discuss Next Steps, and Phase of Work Effort

Adjournment

Contents of Website:

- Study Area Map
- Public Participation Plan (manual)
- Address Long-Range Plan Availability, Status
- Six-Year Improvement Plan for Primary, Interstates, other
- Six-Year Improvement Plan for Secondary System
- Rural Planning Work Program
- Listing of Projects
- PDC Meeting Agendas
- PDC Meeting Minutes
- PDC Bylaws, Charter
- PDC Board Membership
- Technical Committee Membership
- Citizens Committee Membership

- Freight Committee Membership
- List of Other Committees and Memberships
- Dates/Times of Meetings
- Visual Techniques Utilized
- Method of Providing Public Comments
- Staff Contact Person

Items to be addressed in setting up Public Participation effort for a Plan Development:

- Public Display of Commission Plans/Studies for Review
- Offer Comment Period
- Indicate Means of Comment Submission
- Open Meetings & Public Meetings Declared
- Website Available
- Newsletters Available
- Visual Communications such as Maps, Internet Visuals, Videos (if practical)
- Library Available
- Workshops, Meetings, Listening Sessions Offered for Plans, Studies
- *Surveys Carried Out on Plans, Studies*
- Staff Public Appearances
- *Provide Kiosks*
- Direct Staff Contact
- *Address Language Barrier Issues*
- *Address Hearing or Visually Impaired*
- *Address Elderly and Handicapped, Disabled*
- Advocate for Bicycle and Pedestrian
- Address Title VI
- Measures of Effectiveness
- Press Releases
- Direct Mailings

January 11, 2007