

Citizen Information and Participation Plan



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Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization

Address: 101 Jefferson Street Lafayette, LA 70502 Phone: 337-806-9364

Fax: 337-806-9379

Web address: www.planacadiana.org

Table of Contents

1. BACKGROUND
2. INTRODUCTION
3. COMMITTEE PROCESS
 - a. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 - b. TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
 - c. TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE
4. PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS
 - a. UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM
 - b. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
 - i. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENTS
 1. ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION
 2. AMENDMENT
 - c. METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN
 - d. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
5. PUBLIC OUTREACH
 - a. VISION MEETING
 - b. NEWSLETTER
 - c. WEBSITE
 - d. NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT
6. EVALUATION
7. APPENDIX
 - a. FEDERAL LEGISLATION
 - b. TIP ADMINISTRATIVE AMENDMENT GUIDELINES
 - c. ACADIANA MPO AREA MAP

Background

Title 23, CFR 450.316 are the federal regulations detailing the responsibilities of Metropolitan Planning Organization, or MPO, for facilitating and informing the public on transportation planning activities in their metropolitan area. These rules are the guiding force behind the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Participation Plan.

Introduction

The Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization is the designation MPO for the Lafayette Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Metropolitan Study Area is spread over six parishes and 15 municipalities.

POPULATION OF THE LAFAYETTE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

LINE No.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	PARISH	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	2010 POP
1	ACADIA PARISH	ACADIA	POLICE JURY	2,428
2	IBERIA PARISH	IBERIA	HOME RULE	28,864
3	LAFAYETTE PARISH	LAFAYETTE	HOME RULE	67,574
4	ST LANDRY PARISH	ST. LANDRY	HOME RULE	3,362
5	ST MARTIN PARISH	ST. MARTIN	HOME RULE	24,611
6	VERMILION PARISH	VERMILION	POLICE JURY	3,887
7	Subtotal Unincorporated Areas			130,726
8	BREAUX BRIDGE	ST. MARTIN	CITY	8,139
9	BROUSSARD	LAFAYETTE	CITY	8,197
10	CARENCRO	LAFAYETTE	CITY	7,526
11	DUSON	LAFAYETTE	TOWN	1,716
12	GRAND COTEAU	ST. LANDRY	VILLAGE	947
13	HENDERSON	ST. MARTIN	TOWN	1,674
14	LAFAYETTE	LAFAYETTE	CITY	120,623
15	LOREAUVILLE	IBERIA	VILLAGE	887
16	MAURICE	VERMILION	VILLAGE	964
17	NEW IBERIA	IBERIA	CITY	30,617
18	PARKS	IBERIA	VILLAGE	653
19	SCOTT	LAFAYETTE	CITY	8,614
20	ST MARTINVILLE	ST. MARTIN	CITY	6,114
21	SUNSET	ST. LANDRY	TOWN	2,897
22	YOUNGSVILLE	LAFAYETTE	CITY	8,105
23	Subtotal Municipalities			207,673
24	GRAND TOTAL			338,399

As the MPO for the region, the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization is primarily responsible for the annual development of the Unified Planning Work Program, the biannual Transportation

Improvement Program, the decennial Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Public Participation Plan.

Committee Process

The Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization has three main committees, a citizen advisory committee, a technical advisory committee, and a governing policy committee. The committee meetings are advertised the Sunday before the meeting in the local journal of record. The agendas for the meetings are posted 48 hours in advance at the meeting location and on the Acadiana MPO's website.

Ensuring access to the meetings and disseminating information to underserved populations is a major component of the public participation process. The meeting location is accessible to wheelchair users and is directly adjacent to a public transit hub. A written transcript of the meeting is available to the public on request. Reasonable accommodations for individuals with special needs will be provided per request to the Acadiana MPO meeting facilitator via the contact information provided on every meeting agenda. Visualization is an important part of the accessibility component, and every item for public comment and approval will have a visualization attachment. Forms are provided at every meeting to allow public comment for any agenda item. A public sign-in sheet for each meeting is recorded and filed by the MPO. Meetings will be held at noon on a pre-defined day of the month for each committee to ensure regular meeting times. The meeting schedule will be approved by the committees and published on an annual basis.

Citizen Advisory Committee

The Citizen Advisory Committee serves as a permanent constituent review and recommending (sounding board) committee for the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization. The committee meets every other month and provides recommendations on plans, programs, and projects to be considered and acted on by the Transportation Technical Committee and the Policy Committee. The Citizen Advisory Committee is populated with lay persons who are not transportation professionals or elected officials and are representative of MPO Area demographics. The committee members are appointed by the seated individual Transportation Policy Committee members.

Transportation Technical Committee

The Transportation Technical Committee serves as the technical advisory committee for the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization. The committee meets every other month and provides technical

comments on the Unified Planning Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program and its amendments, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Public Participation Plan. The committee is populated with technical representatives from the governmental bodies of the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Transportation Policy Committee

The Transportation Policy Committee is the governing board for the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization. The committee holds meetings every other month and votes on the approval of the Unified Planning Work Program, the Transportation Improvement Program and its full amendments, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Public Participation Plan, and the budget for the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization. The committee is populated with elected officials from the governmental bodies of the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Public Comment Process

Federal legislation outlines the requirement for public comment procedures for metropolitan planning organizations' planning documents. A spreadsheet is utilized to track the dates of the public comment periods and adoption of the planning documents by the Policy Committee. The chart below details the new public comment process for the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization:

Planning Document	Federal Regulations	Public Comment Time Period	Development Time Period
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	"Reasonable opportunity"	15 Days	Five Years
Transportation Improvement Program	"Reasonable opportunity"	15 Days	Biannually
Transportation Improvement Program Full Amendments	"Reasonable opportunity"	7 Days	Ongoing
Unified Planning Work Program	"Reasonable opportunity"	15 Days	Annually
Public Participation Plan	45 Days	45 Days	Ten Years or As Needed

Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program is the annual statement of work identifying the planning priorities and activities to be carried out within the Acadiana metropolitan planning area. It includes a description of the planning work and resulting products, the staff who will perform the work, time frame for completing the work, the cost of the work, and the source of funds. The UPWP governs work programs for the expenditure of Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration planning funds. Upon review by the Citizen Advisory Committee and Transportation Technical Committee of the draft Unified Planning Work Program, the public comment process will start by advertising the document in the legal section of the journal of record, posting and providing a form for public comment on the Acadiana MPO website, and distributing a copy of the Unified Planning Work Program and public comment forms at the main library branch in every member parish of the MPO. After the public comment process is closed, the comments will be compiled and provided to the Transportation Policy Committee prior to the Policy Committee meeting where the document will be voted on. If the Policy Committee makes substantial changes to the Unified Planning Work Program, the public comment process will start again.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program is a staged, biannual, intermodal program of transportation projects consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan. It is a regional component of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and contains transportation funding sources. Upon review and consideration of the of the biannual Transportation Improvement Program by the Citizen Advisory Committee and the Transportation Technical Committee, the public comment process will start by advertising the document in the legal section of the journal of record, posting and providing a form for public comment on the Acadiana MPO website, and distributing a copy of the Transportation Improvement Program and public comment forms at the main library branch in every member parish of the MPO. The visualization aspect of this document will be provided on the website and with the library packet in addition to the display at the public meetings. After the public comment process is closed, comments will be compiled and provided to the Transportation Policy Committee prior to the Policy Committee meeting where the document will be voted on. If the Policy Committee makes substantial changes to the Transportation Improvement Program, the public comment process will start again.

Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

As projects go through the development process, plans and funding sources change and new funding sources are periodically provided. The Transportation Improvement Program is developed on a two year cycle, so amendments to the program outside of this time frame must be adopted by the Acadiana MPO. There are two types of amendments: administrative modifications and full amendments. The Federal Highway Administration has provided clear guidance on the difference between the two forms:

Administrative Modification	Amendment
Revision of a project description that does not significantly change the project design concept and/or scope	Major changes to a project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • including the addition or deletion of a project
Minor changes to project /project phase cost applies to R/W, UTIL, ENG, CONST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding changes are limited to \$600,000 for projects for \leq \$3,000,000. • For projects \geq \$3,000,000 an administrative modification is classified as a change of less than 20% in funding 	Major changes in project cost, project/project phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding changes that are greater than \$600,000 for projects \leq \$3 million • Change of 20% or more in funding
Minor changes to funding sources of previously included projects that does not affect fiscal constraint	Major changes to funding sources, such as adding a new federal funding source for a project not previously funding with federal funding.
Minor changes to project/project phase initiation dates as long as the project stays within the approved S/TIP timeframe and does not affect fiscal constraint. 23 CFR 450.330(a)	
A change in the project implementing agency;	
A split or combination of individually listed projects; as long as cost, schedule, and scope	

remain unchanged;	
The addition or deletion of projects from grouped project (line item) listings as long as the total funding amounts stay within the guidelines in number two above.	

Administrative modifications will be uploaded to the MPO website along with visualization materials. The MPO staff will also update the Policy Committee members of these modifications as an information item at the next regularly scheduled or special Policy Committee meeting, and visualization will accompany these updates.

The full Public Comment Process is only required for amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program. The public comment process will start by advertising the document in the legal section of the journal of record, posting and providing a form for public comment on the Acadiana MPO website, solicitation of public comment via email to the Citizen Advisory and the Transportation Technical Committee members, and distributing a copy of the Transportation Improvement Program amendments and public comment forms at the main library branch in every member parish of the MPO. The visualization aspect of this document will be provided on the website and with the library packet in addition to the display at the Policy Committee meeting. After the public comment process is closed, the comments will be compiled and provided to the Transportation Policy Committee prior to the Policy Committee meeting where the document will be voted on. If the Policy Committee makes substantial changes to the proposed Transportation Improvement Program amendments, the public comment process will start again.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The main task of the Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization is the preparation and update of the transportation plan for the metropolitan area. It is primarily the identification of transportation facilities across all modes, functioning as an integrated metropolitan transportation system and giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions. The horizon for the plan can range from 20 to 30 years. Environmental mitigation, financial planning, and performance measures are also essential aspects of the overall plan. Vision meetings will be held prior to the development of the plan to introduce potential projects and growth scenarios to the public and solicit public comment on the constitution of the plan. Potential projects will be brought to the Citizen

Advisory Committee and the Transportation Technical Committee, who will provide lay and technical feedback and recommend the framework of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The public comment process will start by advertising the document in the legal section of the journal of record, posting and providing a form for public comment on the Acadiana MPO website, and distributing a copy of the proposed Metropolitan Transportation Plan and public comment forms at the main library branch in every member parish of the MPO. The visualization aspect of this plan will be provided on the website and with the library packet in addition to the display at the public meetings. After public comment process is closed, comments will be compiled and provided to the Transportation Policy Committee prior to the Policy Committee meeting where the document will be voted on. If the Policy Committee makes substantial changes to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the public comment process will start again.

Public Participation Plan

Federal legislation has mandated that every MPO develop and publish a public participation plan that outlines and facilitates public comment procedures for every aspect of the planning activities of the MPO. The legislation also provides a specific time frame for public comment on this document, 45 days. Upon review and recommendation of the of the Public Participation Plan by the Citizen Advisory Committee and the Transportation Technical Committee, the public comment process will start by advertising the document in the legal section of the journal of record, posting and providing a form for public comment on the Acadiana MPO website, and distributing a copy of the Public Participation Plan and public comment forms at the main library branch in every member parish of the MPO. Copies of the plan will be distributed to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. After the public comment process is closed, the comments will be compiled and provided to the Transportation Policy Committee prior to the Policy Committee meeting where the document will be voted on. If the Policy Committee makes substantial changes to the Public Participation Plan, the public comment process will start again.

Public Outreach

Federal regulations require metropolitan planning organizations to reach out to the community for input in transportation planning decisions, especially considering the needs of traditionally underserved residents. The Acadiana Metropolitan Planning Organization has developed methods of communication

to target the greater Acadiana community and keep them informed and solicit input on the transportation developments in the area.

Vision Meetings

An essential aspect of the development of the metropolitan transportation plan is the Vision Meeting. The Vision Meeting showcases technical results of the transportation model; the complete streets design for potential projects created from the analysis; and allows for the public to provide a ranking recommendation for project development. The outcome of this meeting will be a 20 – 30 year plan primarily driven from public involvement.

Website

The Acadiana MPO's website is an essential resource for public participation. It hosts a calendar of public meetings, a description of committee structure, planning documents for public comment, a form for making public comment, and contact information for staff.

Newsletter

Newsletters provide an easily accessible visualization and text component to public outreach efforts. A quarterly newsletter will provide information on transportation planning efforts in the Acadiana region, maps depicting potential Transportation Improvement Amendments, meeting schedules, and short MPO committee meeting summaries. The newsletter will be produced and distributed digitally through an email list, the Acadiana MPO website, and a social media account.

Newspaper Advertisement

Traditional print media will be utilized by advertising in the Acadiana MPO's journal of record. The advertisements will contain maps and text of the transportation projects being solicited for public comment.

Evaluations

With new media developing at a rapid pace, old methods of public outreach may be failing to fulfill goals outlined in the federal legislation. To adapt to these new forms of communication, the Acadiana MPO has created a methodology for evaluating the different forms of engagement.

Public Outreach Method	Evaluation Criteria
MPO Web Site	Number of hits
Legal Advertisements	Circulation numbers
MPO Newsletter	Circulation numbers
Press Releases	Number of press releases submitted per year
Public Hearings	Attendance
Committee Meeting	General public attendance
Comment Forms	Number of responses
Media Reports	Number of media reports referencing the MPO

Using this methodology, the MPO will be able to measure the effectiveness of the public outreach efforts and make changes if they are needed.

Appendix

Federal Legislation

CFR Sec. 450.316

(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, 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 Transportation Improvement Program;

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

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs;

(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 Transportation Improvement Program;

(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;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or Transportation Improvement Program differs significantly from the version that was made

available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(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 Transportation Improvement Program (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA 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 and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.

(1) Include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and Transportation Improvement Programs and meets the requirements and criteria specified as follows:

(i) Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised;

(ii) Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to central city and other local jurisdiction concerns);

(iii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and Transportation Improvement Programs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered;

- (iv) Require adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs (in nonattainment areas, classified as serious and above, the comment period shall be at least 30 days for the plan, Transportation Improvement Programs, and major amendment(s));
- (v) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;
- (vi) Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households;
- (vii) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan or TIP (including the financial plan) as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and Transportation Improvement Program;
- (viii) If the final transportation plan or Transportation Improvement Program differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or Transportation Improvement Program shall be made available;
- (ix) Public involvement processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all;
- (x) These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews for Transportation Management Area, and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to MPO decision making processes;
- (xi) Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs;

CFR Sec. 450.322

- (c) There must be adequate opportunity for public official (including elected officials) and citizen involvement in the development of the transportation plan before it is approved by the MPO, in

accordance with the requirements of Sec. 450.316(b)(1). Such procedures shall include opportunities for interested parties (including citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, and private providers of transportation) to be involved in the early stages of the plan development/update process. The procedures shall include publication of the proposed plan or other methods to make it readily available for public review and comment and, in nonattainment Transportation Management Areas, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting annually to review planning assumptions and the plan development process with interested parties and the general public. The procedures also shall include publication of the approved plan or other methods to make it readily available for information purposes.

CFR Sec. 450.324

- (a) The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include development of a Transportation Improvement Program for the metropolitan planning area by the MPO in cooperation with the State and public transit operators.
- (b) The Transportation Improvement Program must be updated at least every two years and approved by the MPO and the Governor. The frequency and cycle for updating the Transportation Improvement Program must be compatible with the State Transportation Improvement Program development and approval process. Since the Transportation Improvement Program becomes part of the State Transportation Improvement Program, the Transportation Improvement Program lapses when the FHWA and FTA approval for the State Transportation Improvement Program lapses. In the case of extenuating circumstances, FHWA and FTA will consider and take appropriate action on requests to extend the State Transportation Improvement Program approval period for all or part of the State Transportation Improvement Program in accordance with Sec. 450.220(d). Although metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs, unlike statewide Transportation Improvement Programs, do not need to be approved by the FHWA or the FTA, copies of any new or amended Transportation Improvement Programs must be provided to each agency. Additionally, in nonattainment and maintenance areas for transportation related pollutants, the FHWA and the FTA, as well as the MPO, must make a conformity determination on any new or amended Transportation Improvement Programs (unless the amendment consists entirely of exempt

projects) in accordance with the Clean Air Act requirements and the EPA conformity regulations (40 CFR Part 51).

(c) There must be reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with the requirements of Sec. 450.316(b)(1) and, in nonattainment Transportation Management Areas, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process. This public meeting may be combined with the public meeting required under Sec. 450.322(c). The proposed Transportation Improvement Program shall be published or otherwise made readily available for review and comment. Similarly, the approved Transportation Improvement Program shall be published or otherwise made readily available for information purposes.

CFR Sec. 450.326

The Transportation Improvement Program may be modified at any time consistent with the procedures established in this part for its development and approval. In nonattainment or maintenance areas for transportation related pollutants if the Transportation Improvement Program is amended by adding or deleting projects which contribute to and/or reduce transportation related emissions or replaced with a new Transportation Improvement Program, new conformity determinations by the MPO and the FHWA and the FTA will be necessary. Public involvement procedures consistent with Sec. 450.316(b)(1) shall be utilized in amending the Transportation Improvement Program, except that these procedures are not required for TIP amendments that only involve projects of the type covered in Sec. 450.324(i).

[(i) Projects proposed for FHWA and/or FTA funding that are not considered by the State and MPO to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, geographic area, and work type using applicable classifications under 23 CFR 771.117 (c) and (d). In nonattainment and maintenance areas, classifications must be consistent with the exempt project classifications contained in the U.S. EPA conformity requirements (40 CFR Part 51).]

