

JACKSONVILLE URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Jacksonville Urban Area MPO (JUMPO) strives to ensure an open transportation planning process where the free exchange of ideas and information and the opportunity for input from interested parties at all stages of the transportation planning process can take place in an effective manner. The purpose of this plan is to outline JUMPO work products and the public involvement process required for the successful completion, adoption and implementation of each.

The Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed annually by MPO staff, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to assure that a full and open process that is inclusive of all interested parties and that conforms to federal transportation regulations is being followed. There will be a 45-day minimum public review period for the Public Involvement Plan if changes have been made since the last opportunity for public review or if the Public Participation Plan has not be reviewed in the past three (3) years. The following outreach methods will be utilized to notify the public of the comment period:

- i) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section of at least one (1) newspaper with regional coverage prior to initiation of the public comment period(s);
- ii) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section, or if no legal advertisement section available a display advertisement shall be placed in at least one (1) newspaper with circulations targeted at minority and/or low-income populations;
- iii) A Summary of changes will be sent with a media notification to the two newspapers above AND the City of Jacksonville media contact list (approximately 8 news agencies covering printed media, television, and radio as well as 12 other media related contacts);
- iv) Additional regional newspapers and non-government organizations representing other interested parties will be notified as deemed appropriate.

There are several laws and regulations that have been established by the Federal government to ensure the transportation planning process remains open and in the public interest. The following is a listing of federal legislation and regulations that guide the public participation process:

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for users (SAFETEA-LU) (Pub. L. 109-59 August 10, 2005) 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 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.

National Environmental Policy Act: 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 period 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 Disabilities Act of 1990: The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 encourages the participation of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services. Also in accordance with ADA guidelines, all meetings conducted by the MPO will take place at locations which are accessible facilities so as to accommodate persons with mobility limitations.

Clean Air Act: The Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 requires the transportation community to improve air quality while, at the same time, sustain adequate mobility for transportation users.

CAAA and the transportation planning provisions of SAFETEA-LU (Section 6011 – Transportation Conformity) are intended to ensure that integrated transportation and air quality planning occurs in the areas designated by the U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) as nonattainment or maintenance areas.

Title VI – Environmental Justice: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1974 sets standards which authoritatively outlawed discrimination in the conduct of all Federal activities. The term Environmental Justice (EJ) was created by people concerned that everyone within the United States deserves equal protection under the country’s laws. A 1994 Presidential Executive Order directed every Federal agency to make Environmental Justice (EJ) part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on “minority populations and low-income population.” The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) issued its DOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Population and Low-income Population in 1997. The DOT Order accomplishes this goal by involving the potentially affected public in developing transportation projects that fit harmoniously within their communities without sacrificing safety and mobility.

The Jacksonville Urban Area MPO has developed several policies, procedures, and techniques that will be used to solicit information from interested parties and ensure participation of the public. Several types of projects or plans require specific actions while other activities may require a more versatile set of outreach options. JUMPO will strive to incorporate the policies and techniques listed below as well as other procedures as appropriate:

1. **JUMPO Meetings**

Meetings of the TAC and TCC are open to the public, and meeting minutes are available to the public. Past minutes and the schedule of meetings are available at the MPO's Web site. Prior to each meeting, a contact list of interested parties receives reminder notices, meeting agendas, and other material. To join this list, please contact a JUMPO staff member. JUMPO also publishes periodic newsletters to provide quick updates on projects and plans. Persons with disabilities needing auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact the MPO office 48 hours in advance of a meeting to make appropriate arrangements for their attendance of a meeting.

2. **Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).**

The development of the MTIP and all amendments shall meet all current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) requirements for public notification and participation. The following opportunities for public participation will be initiated:

- a) A 30-day minimum public review and comment period will be established for the Draft MTIP. The following outreach methods will be utilized to notify the public of the review and comment period:
 - i) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section of at least one (1) newspaper with regional coverage prior to initiation of the public comment period(s);
 - ii) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section, or if no legal advertisement section available a display advertisement shall be placed in at least one (1) newspaper with circulations targeted at minority and/or low-income populations;
 - iii) A Summary of MTIP changes will be posted on the Jacksonville Area MPO website (<http://www.jumpo-nc.org>);
 - iv) A Summary of MTIP changes will be sent in a media notification to the two newspapers above AND the City of Jacksonville media contact list (approximately 8 news agencies covering printed media, television, and radio as well as 12 additional media related contacts);
 - v) Additional regional newspapers and non-government organizations representing interested parties will be notified as deemed appropriate; and
- b) A timely opportunity for public comment on the Draft MTIP will be made available during at least one TCC and one TAC meeting, the latter serving as a public hearing;
- c) Member jurisdictions involved shall also notify citizens of the public comment period during regularly scheduled board and council meetings as well as through distributing notification to community contacts via email;

In addition:

- a) There will be a formal public comment period of no less than 30 days after development of the draft project priority list and the mechanism for evaluating projects has been released. This comment period will be an opportunity for interested parties to comment on the project priorities and the method(s) used to derive them;
 - i) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section of at least one (1) newspaper with regional coverage prior to initiation of the public comment period(s);
 - ii) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section, or if no legal advertisement section available a display advertisement shall be placed in at least one (1) newspaper with circulations targeted at minority and/or low-income populations;
 - iii) A Summary of MTIP changes will be posted on the Jacksonville Area MPO website (<http://www.jumpo-nc.org>);
 - iv) A Summary of MTIP changes will be sent in a media notification to the two newspapers above AND the City of Jacksonville media contact list (approximately 8 news agencies covering printed media, television, and radio as well as 12 additional media related contacts);
 - v) Additional regional newspapers and non-government organizations representing interested parties will be notified as deemed appropriate; and
- b) When significant formal comments are received, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final MTIP.

2. **Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).**

The development of the LRTP and all amendments shall meet all current Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) requirements for public involvement. The following opportunities for public involvement will be implemented:

The LRTP shall be open to public review and comment for a minimum of 45 days prior to JUMPO approval. Development of the LRTP shall consider, at a minimum, the following:

- a) Establishment of stakeholder listings, including citizen advisory committees, community leaders, chambers of commerce, public and quasi-public organizations, housing authorities, faith-based organizations, and state, federal, and local government agencies;
- b) Special outreach to low-income and minority populations within JUMPO that will include a list of business, and community leaders in areas with incomes below the JUMPO average and minority populations above the JUMPO average;
- c) Dissemination of newsletters and summaries to stakeholder groups;
- d) Contact information that includes telephone, facsimile, and email listings;
- e) Development of public information on the Internet;
- f) At least three (3) open public meetings to receive public comment, either in conjunction with regularly-scheduled meetings of the Transportation Advisory Committee or at dedicated sessions;

- g) Member jurisdictions involved shall also notify citizens of the public meetings and the opportunity for public comment during regularly scheduled board and council meetings as well as through distributing notification to community contacts via email;
- h) Dissemination of media notifications to public news agencies in the JUMPO area with:
 - i) daily publications such as *The Jacksonville Daily News*,
 - ii) weekly publications such as *The Liberty News*, and
 - iii) minority publications including but not limited to *Mundo Latino* and *The Greater Diversity News*;
- i) The draft LRTP shall be open to public review and comment for no less than 45 days prior to approval by the Transportation Advisory Committee. The draft plan shall be advertised using the following:
 - i) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section of at least one (1) newspaper with regional coverage prior to initiation of the public comment period(s);
 - ii) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section, or if no legal advertisement section available a display advertisement shall be placed in at least one (1) newspaper with circulations targeted at minority and/or low-income populations;
 - iii) The LRTP will be posted on the Jacksonville Area MPO website (<http://www.jumpo-nc.org>);
 - iv) Notice of the LRTP will be sent with in a media notification to the two newspapers above AND the City of Jacksonville media contact list (approximately 8 news agencies covering printed media, television, and radio as well as 12 additional media related contacts);
 - v) Additional regional newspapers and non-government organizations representing interested parties will be notified as deemed appropriate; and
 - i) When significant formal comments are received, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final Long-Range Transportation Plan.

3. **General.**

As the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) for the Jacksonville Area MPO, the City of Jacksonville will maintain copies of any plans, programs or amendments on file in the Development Services Department of the City of Jacksonville. Copies of the proposed plans, programs or amendments shall be distributed to all Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) members. This same information shall be made available to any interested party upon request. Each JUMPO member jurisdiction shall also have a copy available for public review during the official comment period.

- a) A legal notice published in the legal advertisement section (published in at least one local newspaper with regional circulation) shall be advertised indicating that plans, programs or amendments have been prepared and are available for public review and comment at all MPO member jurisdictions. The public review period shall be no less than 30 days. An MPO staff contact person, paper and email address, and telephone number shall be included in the public notice;
- b) Both the TCC and TAC shall have an open formal public comment period at the beginning of each regularly scheduled board meeting. The allowable duration of each speaker's time shall be determined by the chair of the board, recommended not to exceed three (3) minutes per speaker;

- c) Innovative methods shall be utilized to inform, involve and allow the public in the transportation planning process. Such methods may include, but will not be limited to, digital and paper maps, the use of collages and photomontages at public gathering places such as malls or libraries, television and radio public service announcements, open house forums & public workshops, project specific web pages, the use of PowerPoint presentations, and other visualization techniques where possible; and
- d) Member jurisdictions involved in the development or amendment of any plan or program shall also notify citizens of the opportunity for public comment during regularly scheduled board and council meetings as well as through distributing notification to citizens contacts via email; and
- e) These general guidelines shall apply to the development or amendment of any plan or program administered by the Jacksonville Area MPO with the exception of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program as described above in this document. This Public Participation Plan shall be available for public information upon request and will remain viewable by the public on the Internet and in the offices of the Jacksonville Area MPO.

4. **Common Transportation Terms and Acronyms.**

Modern transportation planning is a comprehensive process that is filled with an ever increasing array of policies, boards, and agencies that all work to meet the transportation needs of the public. A list of common transportation planning related terms and acronyms has been included as Appendix B. to assist interested parties in the transportation planning process.