

HAMPTON ROADS TRANSPORTATION PARTICIPATION PLAN




HAMPTON ROADS
PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
JULY 2007

T07-09

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HAMPTON ROADS

TRANSPORTATION PARTICIPATION PLAN

**This item was included in the Unified Planning Work Program
for Fiscal Year 2006-2007, which was approved by the
Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Organization
at their meeting on March 15, 2006.**



JULY 2007

REPORT DOCUMENTATION

TITLE: Hampton Roads Transportation Participation Plan	REPORT DATE July 2007
	GRANT/SPONSORING AGENCY FHWA/VDOT/LOCAL FUNDS
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ABSTRACT

Transportation has a direct and personal impact on the population of a region like Hampton Roads and is of critical importance to the economic vitality and quality of life of the region. As such, it is imperative that the public be provided with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the planning process for the complex system of roads, mass transit, airports, rail, waterways, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and related infrastructure that make up the transportation system. This document describes the Transportation Participation Plan of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan was prepared by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The contents of this plan reflect the views of the Hampton Roads Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the HRPDC. The HRPDC is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the FHWA or VDOT. This plan does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation. FHWA or VDOT acceptance of this plan as evidence of fulfillment of the objectives of this planning study does not constitute endorsement/approval of the need for any recommended improvements nor does it constitute approval of their location and design or a commitment to fund any such improvements. Additional project level environmental impact assessments and/or studies of alternatives may be necessary.

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INTRODUCTION

Transportation has a direct and personal impact on the population of a region and is of critical importance to economic vitality and quality of life. In Hampton Roads, the cost of needed improvements to the transportation system far exceeds the funding available to address those needs and difficult decisions must be made regarding the use of scarce transportation dollars. For each project that is chosen for construction, many others will not be able to be built. The long term effects such decisions can have on so many lives make it imperative that the public be provided with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the planning process for the complex system of roads, mass transit, airports, rail, waterways, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and related infrastructure that make up the transportation system.

The importance of public involvement in the transportation planning process was recognized in federal law in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. Public involvement continues to be an important component of the current federal transportation act - the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU requires that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

TRANSPORTATION PARTICIPATION PLAN (TPP)

This document describes the public participation plan used by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) and the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) to provide citizens, affected public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process. The majority of the information contained in the TPP pertains to metropolitan transportation planning, for which the HRMPO is the designated policy board. However, the TPP also includes information on public participation activities involved with the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan. Rural planning, by definition, does not fall under the purview of the MPO.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are included to clarify the transportation planning process for Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is planning body required by federal law for urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 or greater. The MPO is a policy board designated by the Governor and, together with the State, is responsible for carrying out

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the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive metropolitan transportation planning process.

The Hampton Roads MPO (HRMPO) is one of fourteen MPOs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Voting members of the HRMPO include a representative from each of the cities, counties, and public transit agencies within the metropolitan planning area (MPA), plus the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the HRPDC. Representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are included as non-voting members of the HRMPO. The HRPDC provides staffing for the HRMPO.

Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)

The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) is the geographic area determined by agreement between the MPO for the area and the Governor. The MPA is the area for which the metropolitan transportation planning process is carried out.

The Hampton Roads MPA includes:

Cities	Counties	Public Transit Agencies
Chesapeake	Gloucester*	Hampton Roads Transit (HRT)
Hampton	Isle of Wight	Williamsburg Area Transport (WAT)
Newport News	James City	
Norfolk	York	
Poquoson		
Portsmouth		
Suffolk		
Virginia Beach		
Williamsburg		

* A portion of Gloucester County is included in the MPA

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)

The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) is one of 21 planning district commissions (PDCs) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. PDCs were created in 1969 pursuant to the Virginia Area Development Act and a regionally executed charter agreement. According to Section 15.2-4207 of the Code of Virginia, the purpose of PDCs is ". . . to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing on a regional basis problems of greater than local significance."

Membership on the PDC is based on population, with each jurisdiction having at least two members. The PDC has an Executive Committee that is made up of one member from each jurisdiction. The Executive Committee provides oversight to the HRPDC's activities through monthly meetings held between the quarterly meetings of the full PDC.

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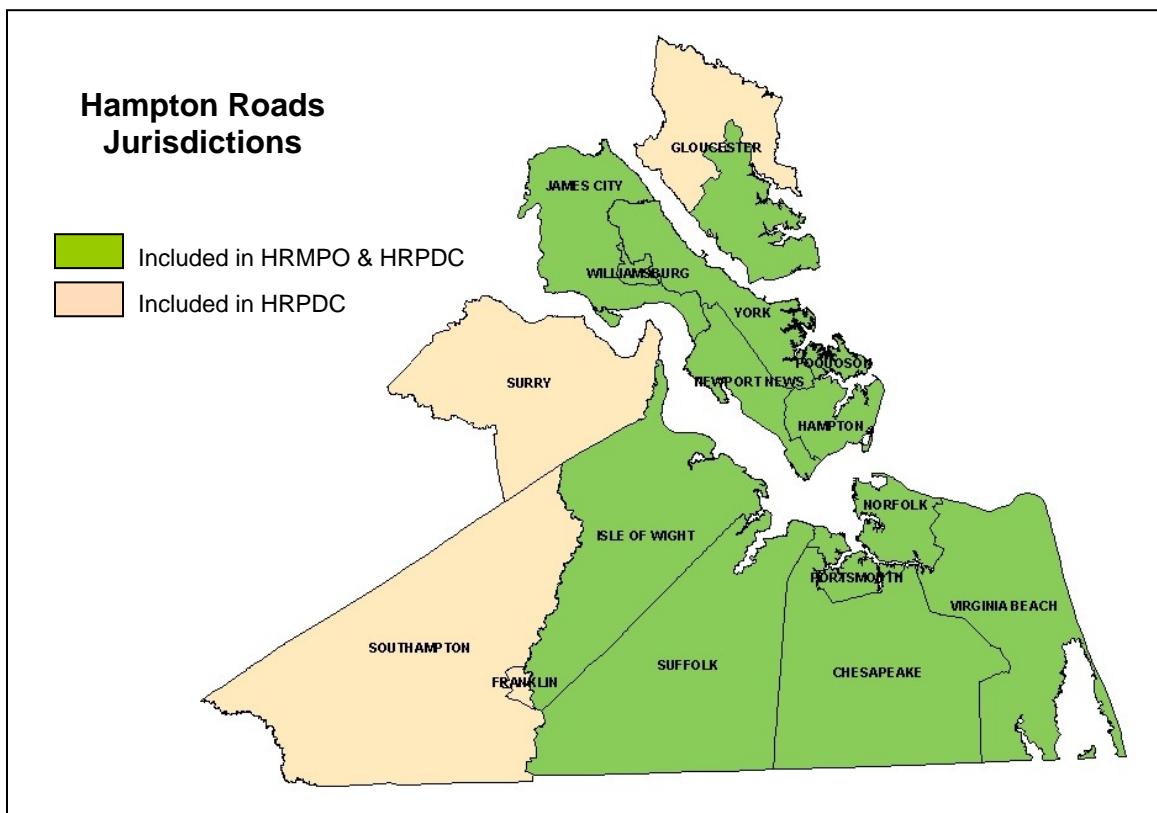
The Hampton Roads Planning District includes the following jurisdictions:

Cities	Counties
Chesapeake	Gloucester*
Franklin	Isle of Wight
Hampton	James City
Newport News	Southampton
Norfolk	Surry**
Poquoson	York
Portsmouth	
Suffolk	
Virginia Beach	
Williamsburg	

* Gloucester County is also included in the Middle Peninsula PDC

** Surry County is also included in the Crater PDC

The Executive Director/Secretary, selected by the HRPDC, manages the daily operations of the HRPDC's professional staff. The HRPDC staff serves as a resource of technical expertise to its member jurisdictions on issues pertaining to economics, physical and environmental planning, and transportation. As stated previously, the HRPDC staff also serves as the support staff for the HRMPO and, as such, carries out the technical aspects of the metropolitan transportation planning process. In addition, the HRPDC staff carries out the rural transportation planning process for Southampton County and the City of Franklin.



Transportation Technical Committee (TTC)

The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) is composed of transportation engineers and planners from each of the local jurisdictions, plus representatives from the transit agencies and VDOT. Each of these entities has up to three voting members on the TTC. The TTC reviews virtually all items that are to come before the MPO and provides recommendations on actions to be considered by the MPO.

In addition to the voting membership discussed above, there are a number of invited participants on the TTC mailing list, including representatives from private bus services, taxi companies, the ports, and freight haulers, as well as organizations that provide services to senior citizens and those with disabilities. Other non-voting members on the TTC include representatives from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, FHWA, FTA, the Navy, and the HRPDC staff.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (LRP)

The metropolitan transportation plan, also called the long-range transportation plan (LRP), is the official multimodal transportation plan addressing a planning horizon of at least 20 years. Any transportation project that is regionally significant and/or utilizes federal funding must be included in the LRP. In addition, the LRP must be financially constrained – meaning it must be shown that there will be sufficient funds to complete the projects included in the plan.

The LRP is developed, adopted, and updated by the MPO through a multi-step process that takes several years to complete. The LRP must be updated at least every four years. The public participation efforts associated with the LRP are detailed in the section entitled **Specific Activities**.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a short-range fiscal programming document that covers a period of no less than four years. The TIP must be updated at least every four years, but is usually updated annually. The cycle for updating the TIP must be compatible with the State TIP (STIP) development and approval process.

Projects that are included in the TIP must be selected from or be consistent with an approved LRP. The public participation efforts associated with the TIP are detailed in the section entitled **Specific Activities**.

Air Quality Conformity Analysis (Conformity)

Conformity is a requirement of the Clean Air Act that ensures that federal funding and approval are given to transportation plans, programs, and projects that are consistent with the air quality goals established by the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Before the LRP and TIP can receive final approval, they must be tested for conformity. With

respect to the SIP, conformity means that transportation activities will not cause new air quality violations or delay timely attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The public participation efforts associated with Conformity are detailed in the section entitled **Specific Activities**.

HISTORY OF THE HRPDC/HRMPO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES

The HRPDC/HRMPO first published a Public Involvement Procedure (PIP) document on September 14, 1994 in response to a requirement of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. A major revision of the PIP was released on September 17, 2003. A report documenting an evaluation of the activities included in the PIP was published on June 16, 2004. This document represents another major revision to update the PIP, now referred to as the Transportation Participation Plan (TPP), to ensure compliance with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized into eight sections:

- Section 1, **Consultation**, describes how the HRPDC/HRMPO consulted with interested parties during the development of the TPP.
- Section 2, **Addressing Communications Barriers**, describes the analysis performed by the HRPDC/HRMPO to determine whether a significant language barrier exists in Hampton Roads. In addition, this section briefly describes how the HRPDC/HRMPO addresses other communications barriers.
- Section 3, **Opportunities for Involvement**, describes the various efforts employed by the HRPDC and HRMPO to provide all interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the transportation planning process.
- Section 4, **Measures of Effectiveness**, describes the parameters by which the effectiveness of various TPP activities is measured.
- Section 5, **Specific Activities**, details opportunities for public involvement associated with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Air Quality Conformity Analysis (Conformity).
- Section 6, **Documentation**, describes the method by which public participation opportunities are documented by the HRPDC/HRMPO.
- Section 7, **SAFETEA-LU Checklist**, describes procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes related to the ten public participation items listed Section

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450.316(a)(1) of the Final Rule published in the Federal Register on February 14, 2007.

- Section 8, **Implementation**, outlines the activities and timelines associated with the adoption of, and any material revisions to, the TPP.

CONSULTATION

SAFETEA-LU requires that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) develop the Participation Plan in consultation with all interested parties. SAFETEA-LU suggests a number of possible interested parties, including:

1. Citizens
2. Affected public agencies
3. Representatives of public transportation employees
4. Freight shippers & providers of freight transportation services
5. Private transportation providers
6. Representatives of users of public transportation
7. Representatives of users of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
8. Representatives of the disabled

According to SAFETEA-LU (Final Rule, published in the Federal Register on February 14, 2007), "*Consultation* means that one or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), considers the views of the other parties and periodically informs them about action(s) taken. This definition does not apply to the 'consultation' performed by the States and the MPOs in comparing the long-range statewide transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation plan, respectively, to State and Tribal conservation plans or maps or inventories of natural or historic resources."

The HRPDC and HRMPO solicit consultation with interested parties via direct email messages to a contact list of known interested parties. As additional individuals or groups express interest in the regional transportation planning process, they will be added to the contact list.

A minimum of fourteen calendar days shall be provided for the consultation period. A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised Participation Plan is adopted by the MPO.

ADDRESSING COMMUNICATIONS BARRIERS

The Transportation Participation Plan cannot be effective if citizens cannot read, hear, or understand the methods of communication used to involve them in the transportation planning process. Therefore, it is important to assess potential communications barriers and find ways to address such barriers.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

Executive Order 13166, published August 11, 2000, is a Presidential directive to federal agencies to ensure that people who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to services. By extension, this executive order applies to any organization that receives federal funds.

An LEP person is someone who has limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. This should not be confused with illiteracy, as an LEP person may converse in multiple languages and have a high IQ. HRPDC staff analyzed data from the 2000 Census to assess whether LEP was a significant problem in Hampton Roads.

The Census data was divided into five major language groups:

- People that only speak English
- People that speak Spanish
- People that speak other Indo-European languages
- People that speak Asian and Pacific Island languages
- People that speak other foreign languages

Those people that speak foreign languages were classified into four groups based on their ability to speak English, as follows:

- Speak English very well
- Speak English well
- Do not speak English well
- Do not speak English at all

For the purposes of this analysis, HRPDC staff only included the population eighteen years old and older. In addition, staff merged the groups of "do not speak English well" and "do not speak English at all" into one group. This group was compared to the total population for each locality and for the region overall. The findings for the region are summarized in the following table.

Foreign Language Groups	Speaks English “Not Well” or “Not At All”
Spanish	0.35 Percent
Other Indo-European	0.19 Percent
Asian & Pacific Island	0.30 Percent
Other	0.02 Percent

As shown in the table, for the region overall, significantly less than one percent of the Hampton Roads population did not speak English well or at all. As a result of this analysis, it was determined that publishing all public notices and other documents in foreign languages and providing interpreters at public meetings would not noticeably improve public involvement in regional transportation planning in Hampton Roads.

ADDRESSING SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS

For the hearing impaired, the HRPDC/HRMPO makes personal listening devices available at public meetings and utilizes the services of Virginia Relay for telephone communications. For the visually impaired, the HRPDC/HRMPO offers documents in Braille on an as-needed, on-request basis. In addition, although the LEP assessment does not indicate a need for all documents to be provided in foreign languages, the HRPDC/HRMPO will make a good faith effort to provide interpretation of documents on an as-needed, on-request basis.

The response time(s) for a translation or special interpretive service will vary depending upon the request.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

The HRPDC Transportation Participation Plan includes a variety of opportunities for citizens to be involved in the transportation planning process. However, being a regional organization, the HRPDC/HRMPO recognizes that a significant amount of public involvement occurs at the local or state level. Therefore, in addition to HRPDC/HRMPO activities, the transportation-related public involvement efforts of state agencies, local governments, and local transit agencies in Hampton Roads should be taken into account when considering the multitude of opportunities for public involvement throughout the region. Examples of such efforts by other agencies and localities include: state public meetings and hearings; city public meetings, hearings, and council meetings; county board of supervisors meetings; and public meetings and hearings held by the local transit agencies.

HRPDC/HRMPO public involvement opportunities include:

- **Monthly Meetings**
 - HRPDC/HRMPO monthly meetings are open to the public
- **Public Notices**
 - Public Notices are placed in the local newspapers and on the HRPDC website for consultation with the public on revisions to the LRP, TIP, Conformity, and the Participation Plan
- **Public Meetings and Listening Sessions**
 - Held at locations and times that are convenient to the public
 - Meeting sites are accessible by public transportation
 - Meeting sites are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Meeting times allow for people to attend during daylight hours or after regular business hours
 - Officials on-hand generally include federal, state, regional, and local transportation planners and engineers
 - Advertised in local newspapers, on the HRPDC web site, and in the HRPDC newsletter
- **HRPDC Newsletter (Direct Mailing) – *Hampton Roads Review***
 - Published quarterly
 - Contains an insert that describes transportation developments occurring in the region
 - Mailing list currently exceeds 3,000 civic organizations, associations, agencies, and individuals
 - Posted on the HRPDC Website

- **HRPDC Website**
 - Includes all of the latest transportation-related reports published by the HRPDC
 - Provides access to the current Transportation Improvement Program
 - Provides up-to-date information during the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan
 - Provides access to the agendas and minutes of the HRPDC and HRMPO meetings
 - Advertises HRPDC/HRMPO public meetings and special events
 - Includes a general invitation for comments and/or questions via an email link
 - Includes topic-specific surveys or requests for comments, as appropriate
 - Includes links to other sources of transportation information
- **Transportation Kiosks**
 - Self-standing, touch-screen computer systems
 - Surveys the public on transportation issues
 - Placed in various, publicly accessible locations throughout the region
- **Telephone Surveys**
 - Statistically-valid, random sample
 - Can be used to gauge the public's support for particular projects, plans, funding strategies, etc.
- **HRPDC Library**
 - Provides public access to all current HRPDC/HRMPO publications
- **Production Videos**
 - For special activities and when deemed the best means for informing the public on particular transportation issues, the HRPDC produces video presentations for dissemination on television and at meetings
- **HRPDC Staff Speaking Engagements**
 - By request, staff members make presentations to a variety of civic organizations, chambers of commerce, and other groups that express an interest in the transportation in Hampton Roads
 - Staff members are frequently interviewed by local print and electronic media concerning transportation issues
 - Staff members routinely provide transportation information to the local print and electronic media
- **Direct Contact**
 - Direct contact occurs by telephone, email, or regular correspondence
 - HRPDC staff members are available on a full-time basis to respond to comments and inquiries from citizens concerning transportation plans, programs, and the transportation planning process

MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

The goals of the HRPDC/HRMPO Transportation Participation Plan are to provide information to the public to assist them in making decisions about transportation plans and programs and to obtain input from the public regarding their views on those plans and programs. It is important to monitor the effectiveness of the various aspects of the TPP to determine whether those goals are being met.

The HRPDC staff regularly assesses the TPP for apparent effectiveness. In addition, staff monitors applicable activities to determine appropriate measures of effectiveness (MOEs) for each activity. Applicable activities in the current HRPDC/HRMPO list include:

- Public Meetings and Listening Sessions
- Public Notices
- HRPDC Newsletter – *Hampton Roads Review*
- HRPDC Web Site
- Transportation Kiosks

Public Meeting and Listening Sessions

In order for a public meeting to be effective, a significant number of citizens must attend the meeting and provide their comments on transportation issues. Therefore, several things shall be evaluated:

- 1) Was the location of the meeting convenient for the public?
- 2) Was the time of the meeting convenient for the public?
- 3) Was the meeting location accessible by public transportation?
- 4) Was the meeting location ADA-compliant?
- 5) Which advertisement methods were most effective?
- 6) Were the right transportation officials in attendance to respond to citizen concerns?
- 7) Were the right documents and visual aids available for public review?
- 8) How many citizens attended the meeting?

Numbers three and four should be taken into account when the meeting location is selected. Number eight is easily answered since all attendees are asked to sign in. In addition, certain conclusions can be drawn if citizen attendance is very light. The rest of the items are best answered by having the attendees fill out a short survey in addition to providing their comments.

Public Notices

Attention must be given to public notices to determine whether they are effective at reaching and informing targeted populations. Public notice types and formats are assessed for effectiveness in engaging citizens in the planning process.

While it may be possible to draw broad conclusions on the effectiveness of a public notice based on the number of responses received in regard to a particular notice, a more direct measure of effectiveness for public notices used to announce public meetings can be obtained through the use of a survey given to attendees of the public meetings.

HRPDC Newsletter – *Hampton Roads Review*

Although the newsletter covers more than transportation issues, there are a few possible MOEs that may be applied to this activity:

- 1) Related to the previous section – how many citizens attending a particular public meeting credit the newsletter for advising them about the meeting?
- 2) How many people respond to transportation-related surveys or requests for comments included in the newsletter?
- 3) How many low-income and/or minority groups are included on the mailing list and how many people do these groups represent?
- 4) How much correspondence (questions, comments) is received in response to newsletter articles?

HRPDC Website

Like the HRPDC newsletter, the website covers more than transportation issues. Still, there are several possible MOEs that may be applied to the website:

- 1) Related to the section on public meetings – how many citizens attending a particular meeting credit the website for advising them about the meeting?
- 2) How many people respond to transportation-related surveys or requests for comments included on the website?
- 3) How much other correspondence is received in response to items on the website?
- 4) How many requests are received from citizens asking for transportation information to be added to the website?
- 5) How many “hits” does the website receive from the public per day/week/month?

Transportation Kiosks

The transportation kiosks are provide a very convenient way for the public to provide their views on the transportation system and plans. The kiosks are circulated among a wide variety of publicly accessible locations, including local government buildings, public libraries, community centers, and shopping centers. Special efforts are made to ensure that some of the locations are within those communities traditionally deemed to be underserved by the existing transportation system, such as low-income or minority communities.

The kiosks provide the user with information on current transportation plans and ask the user to answer a multiple-choice survey. In addition, users are able to type in comments via the touch screen to accompany the survey.

Possible MOEs for the transportation kiosks include:

- 1) Statistics on the number of responses received from each kiosk location.
- 2) How much correspondence is received from citizens about information they saw on the kiosks?

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

This section details the plan for soliciting the participation of all interested parties with regard to four specific activities – the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Air Quality Conformity Analysis (Conformity), and the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRP).

LRP & TIP

The LRP and TIP are defined in the ***Introduction*** section. In terms of public involvement, the SAFETEA-LU requirements are similar for the LRP and the TIP and include the following:

- During the development of the LRP and TIP, the MPO should consult with agencies responsible for other planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) that are affected by transportation.
- The LRP and TIP shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the MPA.
- Adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment must be provided at key decision points.
- Visualization techniques should be employed as appropriate.
- Public information, including technical information and meeting notices, should be made available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web.
- Public meetings related to the LRP and TIP should be held at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- Consideration and response to public input received during the development of the LRP and TIP should be explicitly demonstrated.
- Additional opportunities for public comment must be provided if the final LRP or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts. This also applies to amendments to the LRP or TIP.
- A summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of significant written and oral comments received on the draft LRP and TIP shall be included as part of the final LRP and TIP.
- If the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the LRP and TIP.
- If the MPA includes federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the federal land management agencies in the development of the LRP and TIP.

LRP Participation Efforts

LRP participation efforts vary over the four-year plan development period according to the stage of plan development. The public involvement efforts associated with the various stages of development are described below. For more detail on the long-range

planning process, including the environmental mitigation consultation process and how Environmental Justice is addressed, consult the current LRP documents available on the HRPDC website.

Development of the Draft LRP

During the development of the draft LRP, the public is informed about the work being done and encouraged to become involved in the planning process.

- HRPDC staff solicits consultation with all interested parties through the use of a direct email list, public notices, the website, and, in some cases, mailed requests for review and comment. This consultation begins in the early stages of development of the LRP and continues through final approval. The time periods for these various consultations will be specified in the public notices and correspondence, but will be no less than fourteen calendar days.
- Staff typically writes LRP-related articles for each issue of *Hampton Roads Review*.
- LRP presentations and data (e.g. socio-economic forecasts) are posted on the HRPDC website. Staff receives comments from the public via email addresses provided on the HRPDC website.
- Staff typically uses input received from the transportation kiosks (e.g. locations of perceived congestion) in developing the list of projects considered as candidates for the LRP.
- Staff assists newspaper journalists in preparing the articles concerning funding and project inputs to the LRP. These articles usually appear in local papers on a weekly basis.
- Periodically staff implements one-time surveys to gather input from the public. For example, in 2005 staff conducted a general transportation phone survey. The “locations where significant problems are experienced” from this survey were considered in the development of the list of candidate projects for the LRP then under development. In 2006, staff conducted a phone survey of non-drivers. The findings and recommendations emanating from the model developed from the survey data were included in the documentation of the LRP then under development.
- MPO members, most of whom are elected, receive public comments concerning proposed transportation improvements at their weekly council and board meetings and via phone calls, emails, and face-to-face discussions with their constituents.

Review of the Draft LRP

Once a draft LRP has been developed, staff solicits comments from all interested parties by way of the following mechanisms:

- The draft LRP is posted on the HRPDC website for public review via the internet and public comment via staff email addresses listed on the HRPDC website. The comment period will be no less than 30 calendar days.

- HRPDC staff, in conjunction with the staffs of the local governments, transit agencies, and state and federal transportation agencies, holds transportation forums to give all interested parties the opportunity to discuss with transportation professionals the LRP under development and to provide comments on the draft plan. These forums are advertised in local newspapers and on the HRPDC website.
- HRPDC staff reviews and responds to all comments received. Comments are also passed along to the MPO, state transportation departments, and local jurisdictions and transit organizations, as applicable.
- If significant comments are received from the public regarding the draft LRP, those comments are summarized, analyzed, and included as part of the final LRP document adopted by the MPO.
- If significant changes are made to the LRP, additional opportunities must be provided for comment from all interested parties. (See LRP & TIP Revisions below)

TIP Participation Efforts

- The TIP is developed by the MPO in cooperation with the State and affected public transportation operators.
- If the Transportation Management Area (TMA) is a nonattainment area, the MPO shall provide at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process.
- When the proposed TIP is ready, it is placed on the website to allow public access and review. A public notice is published in the local newspapers and on the HRPDC website to solicit comments from all interested parties on the proposed TIP. This public comment period will be no less than 30 calendar days.
- HRPDC staff reviews and responds to all comments received. Comments are also passed along to the MPO, state transportation departments, and local jurisdictions and transit organizations, as applicable.
- If significant comments are received from the public regarding the proposed TIP, those comments are summarized, analyzed, and included as part of the final TIP document adopted by the MPO.
- If significant changes are made to the TIP, additional opportunities must be provided for comment from all interested parties. (See LRP & TIP Revisions below)
- The annual listing of federal obligations on projects from the previous federal fiscal year is posted continuously on the HRPDC website to for allow public review.

LRP & TIP Revisions

SAFETEA-LU defines two types of revisions with regard to the LRP and TIP:

- **Administrative Modification** means a minor revision to the LRP or TIP. This includes minor changes to project or phase costs, minor changes to funding sources of previously-included projects, and minor changes to project or phase initiation dates. An administrative modification does not require public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination.

- **Amendment** means a major revision to the LRP or TIP. This includes the addition or deletion of a project, major changes to project or phase costs, major changes in design concept or scope (e.g. changing project termini or the number of through traffic lanes), and major changes in project or phase initiation dates. An amendment requires public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination.

Therefore, if an amendment to the MPO-adopted LRP or TIP is proposed, the public will be provided with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed change(s) prior to MPO action. The comment period for LRP and TIP amendments will be no less than fourteen calendar days.

Air Quality Conformity Analysis (Conformity)

As stated in the **Introduction** section, before the LRP and TIP can receive final approval, they must be tested for conformity. In addition, if amendments to the LRP or TIP are not considered “air quality neutral”, the revised LRP and/or TIP must be retested for conformity. Details on the conformity analysis procedures, including the required interagency consultation, can be found in the document entitled “Consultation Procedures for the Hampton Roads Ozone Nonattainment Area In Support of the Transportation Conformity Regulations, Revised July 18, 2005.” The document can be found on the HRPDC website.

Conformity Participation Efforts

- Before the conformity analysis is begun, the lists of applicable projects from the LRP and TIP are posted on the website to allow for public access and review. A public notice is published in the local newspapers and on the HRPDC website to solicit comments from all interested parties on the project lists to be used in the conformity analysis. The comment period will be no less than fourteen calendar days.
- Once the preliminary conformity analysis has been completed, the results are posted on the website to allow public access and review. A public notice is published in the local newspapers and on the HRPDC website to solicit comments from all interested parties. The comment period will be no less than fourteen calendar days.
- If significant comments are received from the public regarding the preliminary conformity analysis, those comments will be addressed and incorporated into the final report.

RLRP

The Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRP) is a new initiative to create a rural long-range transportation plan in Hampton Roads that would complement the planning efforts in the MPA. The RLRP covers Southampton County and the City of Franklin and is used to evaluate the transportation system with respect to existing and projected

population and employment in those jurisdictions and to recommend a range of transportation improvements that could best satisfy existing and future transportation needs. The RLRP has a planning horizon of at least 20 years and must be updated every 5 years.

RLRP Participation Efforts

- A mailing list of interested parties is maintained.
- The *Hampton Roads Review* is utilized to keep its readers up-to-date on the status of plan development.
- During the development of the RLRP, a public meeting/workshop is scheduled and advertised in the local newspapers and on the HRPDC web site.
- During the development of Southampton County's Secondary Six-Year Plan, public hearings are generally conducted by VDOT between the months of October and December to solicit citizens' comments on secondary system road needs. A public notice regarding these hearings is published in the local newspapers to advise citizens of the times and locations of each public hearing.
- The transportation kiosks may be utilized to survey the public on transportation issues.
- HRPDC staff reviews comments received from the public. The comments are summarized and provided to the Rural Transportation Technical Committee (RTTC).

DOCUMENTATION

In the fall of 2002, HRPDC staff developed a new system for collecting and archiving information related to public involvement. Staff contacts were set up with each jurisdiction and transit agency in Hampton Roads and with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). These contacts forward basic information and materials associated with their public involvement efforts, such as public notices and special informational brochures, to HRPDC staff. In addition, HRPDC staff reviews each of the local newspapers daily and clips public notices, articles, and editorials related to regional transportation planning. HRPDC staff may gather information from other sources such as websites and newsletters.

All of the information collected is organized in loose-leaf binders to document, on a continuous basis, the public involvement opportunities in the Hampton Roads MPA. This set of binders is called the Documentation Compendium. The types of information contained in the Documentation Compendium include the following:

- 1) Information on HRPDC/HRMPO public meetings and listening sessions
- 2) Information on public meetings and hearings held by Hampton Roads localities or transit agencies, VDOT, or federal agencies where transportation in Hampton Roads is the topic for discussion
- 3) Information on HRPDC staff appearances before local government bodies and citizen groups where transportation is a topic of discussion
- 4) Information on HRPDC staff appearances before special-needs groups, such as elderly and handicapped groups
- 5) Information on HRPDC staff appearances on radio and television programs to discuss transportation in the region
- 6) Transportation-related correspondence (letters, email) between the public and HRPDC staff
- 7) Transportation kiosk survey results
- 8) Transportation-related information and resources available on the HRPDC website
- 9) Transportation-related articles and editorials clipped from local newspapers and other printed media
- 10) Videotapes containing transportation-related programs, such as the Regional Priority Setting series or the program on the Transportation Referendum for Hampton Roads

The Documentation Compendium is continually maintained and available for public review.

SAFETEA-LU CHECKLIST

SAFETEA-LU requires that the “participation plan” describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for ten specific items. Many of those items are addressed in previous sections of this document. The purpose of this section is to ensure that all ten items have been addressed.

- 1) Provide 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 LRP and TIP.

The procedures and strategies for this item, as related to the LRP, TIP, and Conformity, are detailed in the previous section entitled **Specific Activities**. In addition, the section entitled **Opportunities for Involvement** relates other options employed by the HRPDC/HRMPO for providing public notice of opportunities to be involved in the regional transportation planning process.

The desired outcome is to provide multiple opportunities for all interested parties to review and comment on the LRP, TIP, and/or Conformity, under development or any other activity that requires public review. By using the website as a one-stop location for reviewing the associated materials and emailing comments, the HRPDC/HRMPO endeavors to make public participation convenient to the population of Hampton Roads. Interested parties can review materials and send comments when it is convenient for them, rather than having to attend meetings set on particular dates and times. As an alternative to commenting via the website, interested parties are invited to comment via telephone, mail, or in person. All comments are acknowledged and forwarded to those responsible for making decisions regarding the material discussed in the comment.

- 2) Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.

The procedures, strategies, and desired outcome for this item are the same as in Item 1.

- 3) Employ visualization techniques to describe the LRP and TIP.

Visualization techniques, primarily in the form of static maps, have been an integral part of the LRP for many years. Much thought and effort go into making the maps easy to read and understand. Other visualization techniques may be employed as technology evolves, if there is a clear advantage over static maps in relating information to the public. The desired outcome of using visualization techniques is to make it easy for interested parties to identify the various projects included in the LRP.

The Hampton Roads TIP has not traditionally utilized visualization techniques due to the nature and size of the document. However, interested parties can view maps of the road projects included in the TIP via the Dashboard or SYIP accessible on the VDOT website.

- 4) Make public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web.

The HRPDC website is an important part of the TPP. As discussed in previous sections, the HRPDC/HRMPO makes extensive use of its website to provide convenient access to technical information and reports, meeting notices, and other public notices. In addition, the website provides convenient access to HRPDC staff that can be used by interested parties to communicate their thoughts on proposed plans and programs.

The desired outcome is to provide convenient and continuous access to public information and multiple opportunities for all interested parties to review and comment on the LRP, TIP, Conformity, or other activities.

- 5) Hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times.

HRPDC public meetings are described in the section entitled ***Opportunities for Involvement***. The desired outcome is for the meetings to be convenient and accessible for all interested parties.

- 6) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the LRP and TIP.

The procedures and strategies for this item are detailed in the previous section entitled ***Specific Activities***. The desired outcome is for interested parties to know that their comments are important and will be considered during the development process.

- 7) Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by the existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.

HRPDC staff has done specific research and analysis on such underserved populations as part of the LRP development process. The consultation procedures used during the development of the LRP (as outlined in the section entitled ***Specific Activities***) and this document also help to address these groups. Finally, the Transportation Kiosks have been, and will continue to be, positioned in certain locations with the specific goal of obtaining input from these traditionally underserved individuals and groups. The desired outcome is to ensure that the needs of these people are not overlooked.

8) Provide an additional opportunity for public comment if the final LRP or TIP 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.

The procedures and strategies for this item are detailed in the previous section entitled **Specific Activities**. The desired outcome is to ensure that all interested parties have had reasonable opportunities to review and comment on the LRP or TIP any time significant changes are made to either.

9) Coordinate with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes.

The HRPDC/HRMPO and VDOT coordinate on applicable public involvement efforts, specifically on meetings and public notices associated with the SYIP, LRP, TIP, and Conformity. In addition, multiple state agencies are involved in the consultation processes for the LRP and the TPP. State officials are involved in HRPDC/HRMPO public meetings and HRPDC/HRMPO officials are involved in specific state transportation meetings. The desired outcome is to ensure that state and regional public involvement opportunities are used to the greatest benefit in terms of resources and convenience to the public.

10) Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

The procedures and strategies for this item are detailed in the previous section entitled **Measures of Effectiveness**. HRPDC staff monitors the effectiveness of the various procedures and strategies included in the TPP and makes adjustments, as necessary, in an attempt to improve upon effectiveness. In addition, HRPDC staff seeks out new procedures and strategies that might further improve the public participation process.

IMPLEMENTATION

This section describes the steps required prior to final approval and implementation of the Hampton Roads Transportation Participation Plan.

- The TPP is developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties. The consultation process is described in the previous section entitled **Consultation**. The consultation period is generally fourteen calendar days.
- A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised TPP is adopted by the MPO. The document will be posted on the website to allow for public access and review. A public notice will be published in the local newspapers and on the HRPDC website to solicit comments from all interested parties.
- Following the public review period, significant comments will be addressed in the final TPP document prior to adoption by the MPO.
- Any time the TPP is materially revised, it shall undergo the public review and MPO adoption as described in the steps above.