

Michiana Area Council of Governments Public Participation and Involvement Process



Effective Date:
March 23, 2007

Michiana Area Council of Governments



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This document is published by the Michiana Area Council of Governments and is prepared in cooperation with financial assistance from all or several of the following public entities: the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and local governments in the MACOG region. This financial assistance notwithstanding, the contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the funding agencies.

The Public Involvement Plan has been developed through comment and consultation with interested parties and the public and identifies procedures for complying with the SAFETEA-LU requirements:

- Requires adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, comment on proposed of plans and TIPS which means MACOG will provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes the comment period shall be at least 30 days for the Plan, TIP and major amendments(s).
 - MACOG will employ visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPS
 - MACOG will hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
 - MACOG will make public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
 - As MACOG develops its TP and TIPS, we will consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation including to the maximum extent practical comparison to the plans, maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies.
 - Consultation efforts will as appropriate, include contacts with State, local, Indian Tribal, private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation.
 - In addition, transportation plans and TIPS will be developed with consideration of other related planning activities in the metropolitan area, and other requirements listed in SAFETEA-LU.
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes .
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including, but not limited to, low-income and minority households.
- 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 TIP.

- If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available;
- Public involvement processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open participation process to all.
- These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews for TMAs, and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to MPO decision making processes.
- Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with statewide public involvement processes to the maximum extent practical to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.

The Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) enacted in 2005 additionally requires that:

“Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the long-range transportation plan [for the TIP].”
[SAFETEA-LU Title VI, 6001 (a).134(i)(5), (A)]

Public Involvement Policy

It is the policy of the MACOG Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide access to the planning process so as to allow the public opportunity to comment on transportation planning activities. By doing so, the MACOG Policy Board will have available to them public ideas, concerns, and suggestions on transportation planning issues.

MACOG Public Involvement Process

The following actions are based on experience and federal requirements. These means of access will be provided by MACOG in order for the public to be aware of and comment on transportation planning and programming for the region. The following actions will be taken during update of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the long-range Transportation Plan. Major Transportation Plan (TP) and TIP amendments are also included. The following processes will be followed for new non-exempt TIP or TP amendments requiring air quality conformity determinations and for exempt projects:

FOR EXEMPT PROJECTS:

All exempt TIP or TP amendments may be handled through the current MACOG Policy Board and TTAC public meetings. Emergency exempt TIP or TP amendments may be faxed to the MACOG Policy Board officers for approval and documentation and the Executive Director shall have the authority to make administrative amendments.

FOR MAJOR AMENDMENTS FOR NON-EXEMPT PROJECTS:

- ◆ Notice will be sent to the MACOGazette and/or list of citizens, affected state and local public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit those responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation and historic preservation and other interested parties, which includes neighborhood centers and areas with potentially under served populations in the MACOG region. The notice will provide information about the document and public review opportunities. The MACOGazette list will be developed from the existing mail list, information provided by member agencies, membership lists, and other sources.
- ◆ In advance of the public review period, a legal notice will be placed in the area's newspaper of largest circulation. The legal notice will provide basic information on the document, public review period, the means of submitting comments, and the open house or other public involvement opportunity. This information will be posted on the MACOG web site and in the MACOGazette when feasible.

Presentation

- ◆ A MACOG Open House from 10am – 7pm at the MACOG Office will be held within the 21-day public review period, prior to MACOG Policy Board action on the document.

- ◆ In advance of the public review period, the document will be sent to the public libraries of the metropolitan planning study area for public review.
- ◆ Portions and projects listing from the MACOG Internet web page for public review and comment. Web Site: www.macog.com .

All MACOG Committee meetings are open to the public. A notice of MACOG Committee meetings is mailed monthly to local jurisdictions and the media in the region. In addition, other activities may also be applied as deemed appropriate, by the MACOG, such as a survey, focus group or transportation forum or other public meeting. Any of the listed opportunities may be provided for other products of the planning process as deemed appropriate. The Public Involvement Process is designed to allow the general public an opportunity to participate in plans, which may impact their daily lives.

Guidelines for Public Events

The following guidelines will be followed in planning public events:

Notification

- ◆ Public review period will begin no later than twenty one days (21 days) prior to action by the MACOG Policy Board.
- ◆ Notification by a legal ad placed in the area newspapers of largest circulation, at least two weeks prior to the public event, which will list the topic of the items available for public comment.
- ◆ Notice will be sent to the MACOG Gazette list of citizens, affected state and local public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, those responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation and other interested parties, which includes neighborhood cities and organizations with traditionally underserved persons.
- ◆ All forms of notice and advertising of the public event will note that auxiliary aids will be made available at the public event if requested two weeks in advance.
- ◆ The means of contacting MACOG will be listed in notification materials.

Presentation

- ◆ The document title page will include a statement that alternate formats will be made available when requested two weeks in advance.
- ◆ Portions of the document may be made available on the MACOG Internet web page for the public review period.

Accommodations

- ◆ The public event will be scheduled at a location accessible by users of wheelchairs.
- ◆ Interpreters or other auxiliary aids will be arranged for the public event if requested two weeks in advance.
- ◆ Comments collected will be provided to the MACOG Policy Board and other appropriate agencies.

Review and Evaluation

This public involvement process will be reviewed and evaluated annually based on experience, changes in technology, and changes in federal guidance. MACOG adoption of this plan will remain in effect until Policy Board approval of amendment.