

Public Participation Plan



PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH:

CITY OF LONGVIEW
CITY OF WHITE OAK
CITY OF GLADEWATER
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
GREGG COUNTY
HARRISON COUNTY
UPSHUR COUNTY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Introduction

The City of Longview, through its Planning Department, serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Longview Metropolitan Area. The Metropolitan Planning Area includes portions of Gregg, Harrison and Upshur counties and the cities from Longview to Gladewater, Union Grove, East Mountain and Lakeport. Federal regulations require the designation of a MPO to provide continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning for areas with an urbanized population of 50,000 or more. The public participation plan, along with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act and Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, emphasizes the importance of early, on-going public involvement in the transportation planning process.

It is the intent of the MPO to provide every opportunity for the involvement of citizens, as well as staff and elected officials, in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Recognizing the importance of public involvement, the Longview MPO implements the procedures outlined herein to insure that the public is fully informed about transportation issues, is given reasonable public access to transportation plans and project documents, and that the public has adequate opportunities to express their opinions and concerns about transportation issues in an orderly manner and in an appropriate forum.

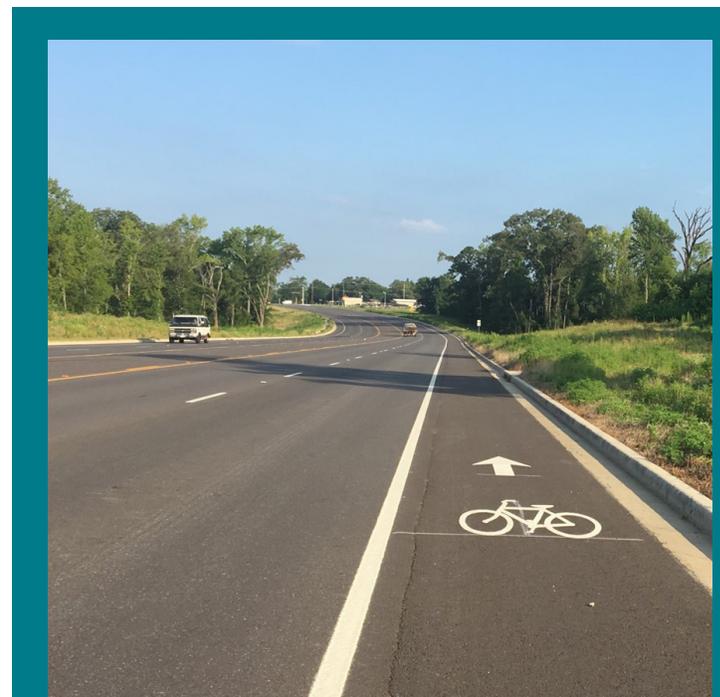
The public will have an opportunity to participate during all phases of the transportation planning process, including development of short- and long-term transportation plans, the creation of the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the MPO staff work plan and land use plans for the City of Longview. The PPP shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties and these parties shall have reasonable opportunities to comment on the participation plan, the short-term transportation plan and the long-term transportation plan. Public participation shall be available through the following formats: public notification, public meetings, public review, public comment, public appearances, project solicitation and the MPO website.

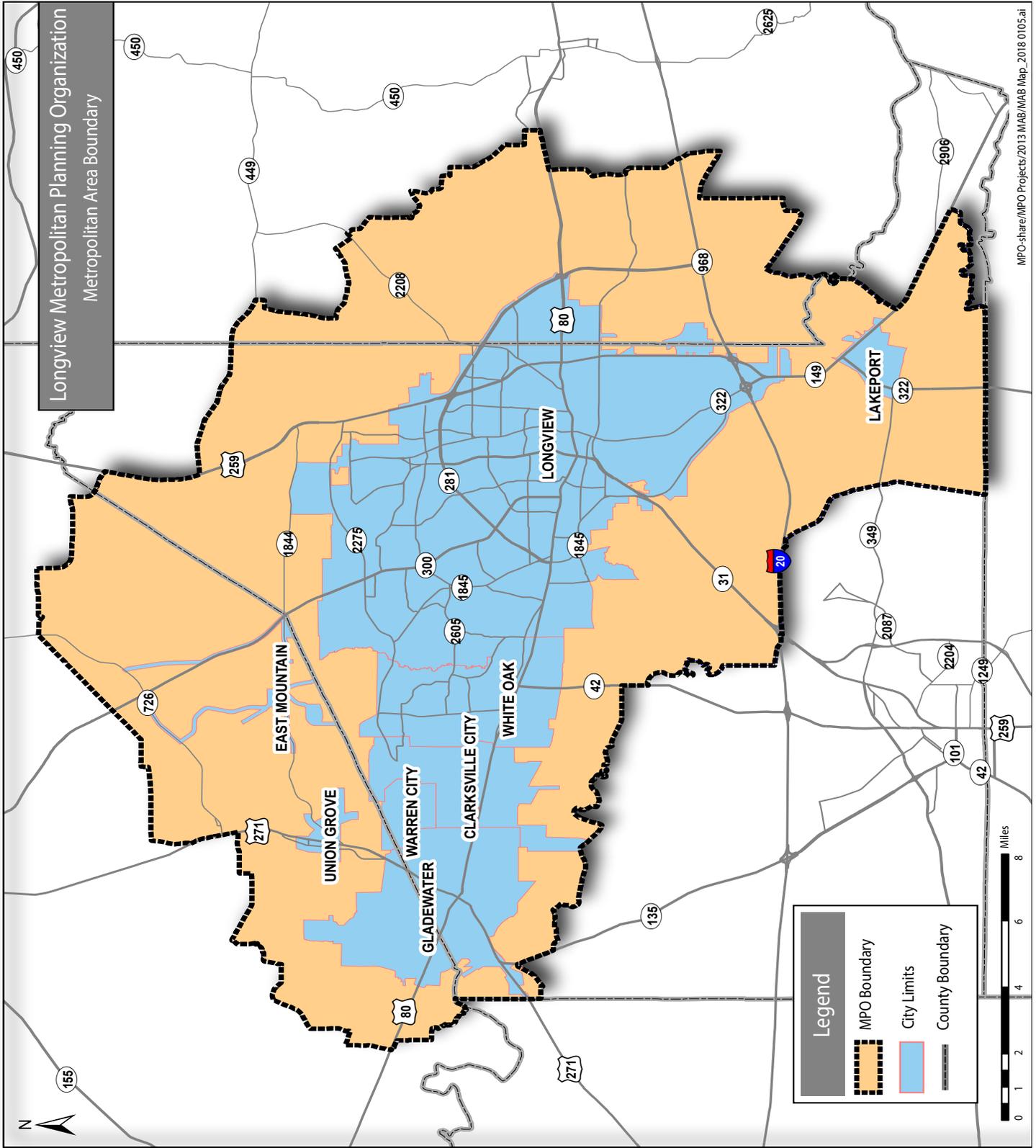
This plan shall be reviewed periodically in terms of its effectiveness of the public's involvement in the

transportation planning process. The MPO Policy Board approves revisions to the public participation plan. Currently, federal regulations require a forty-five (45) day public comment and review period prior to revisions to this plan. The Longview MPO adopted its first Public Participation Plan in 1994. The plan was subsequently updated in 2001, 2004, 2007, 2012 and 2018.

About the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Federally mandated, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for the administration of the area's surface transportation planning activities. The MPO is governed by a Policy Board composed of elected officials and senior staff members from Longview, White Oak, Gladewater, Gregg, Harrison and Upshur counties and the Texas Department of Transportation. Representatives of the Federal Highway Administration and the local Texas State Representatives serve as non-voting members of the transportation board. The MPO Technical Committee, constituted of staff members from participating public entities and agencies, provides technical analysis, develops policies, plans, and projects for recommendation to the Policy Board.





Core MPO Documents

To conduct transportation planning in the Longview Metropolitan Area, the Longview MPO has created several documents aimed at both long- and short-term planning. Core documents include the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Annual Project Listing (APL), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Additional documentation produced by the Longview MPO includes the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the Annual Performance and Expenditure Report (APER), and the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan. The PPP is continuously evaluated to determine if revisions are needed to improve public participation outreach efforts. All other documents are produced on an as needed basis, as determined by federal regulations, to administer the area's surface transportation planning activities.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP is the Longview Area's long-term strategy to respond to the transportation needs of the community for the next twenty-five years. It includes plans for meeting existing and projected transportation needs identified through the continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative planning efforts of the Longview MPO.

Updated every 5 years

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is the Longview Area's short-term plan that identifies and schedules surface transportation projects to be implemented in the Longview Metropolitan Area for four fiscal years. The transportation project categories are major streets and highways, bridges, public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

Updated at least every 2 years

Annual Project Listing (APL)

The Longview MPO is required to publish an APL for which federal funds have been obligated during the previous fiscal year. This report provides an overview of the transportation planning and programming process and the resulting federal funding obligation of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Updated every year

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP describes and schedules work to be undertaken by Longview MPO staff in pursuit of the Longview Urban Transportation Study transportation planning process for two years.

Updated every 2 years

Guiding Regulations

MAP-21

On July 6, 2012, President Barack Obama signed into law the transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act. With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion, MAP-21 represented the largest surface transportation investment in our nation's history. The bill authorized transportation programs and projects for the two year period of 2012-2014. Prior to MAP-21, the three landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century – the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) shaped the highway program to meet the nation's changing transportation needs.

MAP-21 addressed the many challenges facing our transportation system today – challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment – as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges.

FAST Act

On December 4th, 2015, President Barack Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) Act into law. The FAST Act provides long-term funding certainty for surface transportation investment as it authorizes \$305 billion for fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to consider planning strategies that will serve to advance ten (10) transportation-planning factors identified under the FAST Act:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life;
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation;
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
9. Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation and reduce or mitigate storm water impacts of surface transportation; and
10. Enhance travel and tourism

MAP-21 and SAFETEA-LU Public Participation Plan regulations are maintained under the FAST Act, however, public ports and private providers of transportation, including intercity bus operators and employer-based commuting programs, are explicitly added to the list of interested parties that an MPO must provide with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. In addition, the FAST Act adds officials responsible for tourism and natural disaster risk reduction to the list of agencies and officials that a MPO should consult with in developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs. The Public Participation Plan is developed in compliance with MAP-21 and FAST Act regulations.

Environmental Justice

Title VI of the 1962 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) states, “No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to the discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” President Bill Clinton’s Executive Order issued on Environmental Justice in 1999 further amplifies Title VI by providing that “each federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” The Executive Order requires all federal agencies to establish internal policies to meet the requirements of Environmental Justice.

During the adoption of transportation plans, policies and programs, it is the Longview MPO’s policy to ensure fair and full participation in the transportation planning process by all citizens who may be potentially affected. Public outreach to low-income and minority populations will be made by placing public notices for adoption of new or major updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) or a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in free community newspapers, whenever possible, to reach the maximum extent of the low-income, minority and citizens in the area. Block ads informing the Hispanic community of the long-term plan adoption and where public surveys are available will be placed in the free community Spanish newspaper, La Opinion. Additionally, the Longview MPO will maintain a distribution mailing list of community organizations and leaders, invite them to public meetings or workshops and speak at community meetings.

Prior to the adoption of new or major updates to the MTP or a new TIP, the MPO will identify low-income and minority populations by traffic analysis zones or by census tracts, so the effects or burdens of transportation programs on these groups can be reviewed and addressed to ensure transportation programs are distributed fairly throughout the planning area.

The Limited English Proficiency Plan has been prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin. On August 11, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency”, which further clarifies Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. As defined in the executive order, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. The executive order requires federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services, so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. It is expected that agency plans will provide for such meaningful access consistent with, and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of the agency. The executive order states that individuals with a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.





The Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) has been prepared to address the Longview MPO's responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency language skills. The purpose of the LEP is to ensure accessibility to programs and services to persons who are not proficient in the English language.

Inclusive public participation is a priority for the Longview MPO as it develops transportation plans, program and studies. The impact of transportation improvements resulting from these planning activities has an impact on all residents. Understanding and continued involvement are encouraged throughout the process. The MPO is concerned with input from all stakeholders and every effort is taken to make the planning process as inclusive as possible.

The Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has developed this Limited English Proficiency Plan to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) to ensure access to the planning process and information published by the Longview MPO. Although there is a very low percentage of LEP individuals, in the Longview MPO, that is, persons who speak English "not well" or "not at all", it will strive to offer the following measures:

- The Longview MPO staff will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to LEP clients who have difficulty communicating English.
- Volunteer interpreters for the Spanish language are available and will be provided within a reasonable time period.
- Language interpretation will be accessed for all other languages through a telephone interpretation service.
- Public notification for major revisions to the Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan will be published in the East Texas Review, a free community newspaper and in Spanish in the free newspaper, LaOpinion, as well as the Longview News Journal.

Other Related Regulations

- Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sections 134 and 135
- Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 450
- Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 613
- The American with Disabilities Act of 1990, updated in 2010
- Executive Order #13166 of August 11, 2000, requires accessibility to persons with Limited English Proficiency

Outreach Policies

Public Notification

Notification of all public meetings, public comment periods, and public review periods shall be placed at least 72 hours in advance in the Longview News-Journal, and on the official bulletin boards of the Gregg, Harrison and Upshur County Courthouses, Longview, White Oak and Gladewater City Halls.

The local print and broadcast media agencies will receive notification of all public meetings and public comment periods at least 72 hours in advance. Notification of all public meetings, public comment periods, and public review periods shall be placed on the City of Longview’s website. Certification of posting on official bulletin boards and newspaper publication copy shall be filed and retained in the MPO files for a period of three years.

Stakeholder Involvement

The MPO shall maintain a distribution list of interested groups and individuals, including state, county, and local government officials, Chambers of Commerce, community groups, special interest groups, transportation providers, freight companies, etc. These individual stakeholders and groups shall also receive notices or flyers via regular mail or email notification at least 72 hours prior to any public meeting, public review period, or public comment period. The federal transportation legislation expands the listing of interested parties to be engaged during the development of the Public Participation Plan, the short-term and long-term transportation plans. These interested parties shall have reasonable opportunities to comment on projects of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.

- Affected public agencies
- Freight shippers
- Providers of freight transportation services
- Private providers of transportation (intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool or vanpool program, transit benefits program, parking cash-out program, shuttle or telework program)
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
- Representatives of the disabled
- Other interested parties



Federal regulations require expanded consultation and cooperation with agencies and officials responsible for other planning related activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area. The MPO shall consult with agencies and officials that are affected by transportation in the development of the short- and long-term transportation plans. The following is a list of those agencies and officials which the Longview MPO may consult with:

- Bicycle interest groups
- Bureau of Land Management
- Business and civic groups
- Disabled persons interest groups
- Elected officials & legislators
- Forest Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
- General Land Office
- Gregg County Emergency Operations Center
- Gregg, Harrison and Upshur Counties
- Homeland Security
- Local colleges & universities
- Local governments (cities, counties, council of governments)
- Local historic preservation agencies
- Local land use plans (City and County)
- Local media (print, television and radio)
- Local Parks and Recreation Departments
- Local school districts
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Local Convention & Visitors Bureaus
- Local Economic Development Corporations
- Major employers
- National Marine Fisheries
- Native American Tribal Councils
- Other interested citizens
- Pedestrian interest groups
- Planning & Zoning Commission
- Private freight shippers
- Private transportation providers (taxi)
- Providers of private freight transportation
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Representatives of users of public transportation
- Social service organizations
- Special interest groups
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Division of Emergency Management
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Transit interest groups
- Transportation agencies (Longview Transit, GoBus, rail, airport)
- Tribal Agencies
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
- U.S. Geological Survey



Public Meetings

All meetings of the MPO Policy Board and other public meetings will be held in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The public will be given an opportunity to participate at every public meeting. Policy Board meetings will be live streamed, recorded, rebroadcast on the City of Longview’s website, CityView Municipal TV and Longview Cable TV public access Channel 5. Meeting recordings will be retained by the MPO for a period of three years. Those attending public meetings will be asked to sign a roster. The roster will be retained by the MPO for a period of three years. The MPO shall prepare a summary of the meeting, documenting comments, speakers and other information after the completion of a public comment and review period.

Public Review

In order to allow the public an opportunity to review major plans in detail, a public comment and review period shall be announced before the adoption of Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and/or the Public Participation Plan (PPP). During the public review period, the MPO shall make available the document(s) proposed for adoption online on the MPO’s webpage, at the Longview Public Library and in the MPO office. The public may review the documents at the library or MPO office during working hours. If possible, staff will be available to discuss the document or answer questions. The public review period may run concurrently with the public comment period.

Public Comment

To solicit public opinion, a public comment and review period shall be held for the period required by federal and state regulations or the number of days listed below, whichever is greater, prior to the adoption of the following documents:

Transportation Improvement Program	10 days
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	30 days
Public Participation Plan	45 days

Notice of the comment period will be advertised in the Longview newspaper and various other area newspapers. The public notice will also be mailed to the MPO’s mailing list of interested parties. Any significant oral and all written comments received during the public comment period shall be summarized along with a report on the disposition of comments in the final Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The summary and disposition report shall be retained in the MPO files for a three-year period.

Project Solicitation

At least six months prior to the adoption of a major update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the MPO shall solicit from the public ideas for improvements to the transportation system to be considered as part of the updated Transportation Plan. Solicitation may be in the form of a published questionnaire, survey, a public meeting, or other means. These ideas shall be reviewed by the MPO staff and MPO Technical Committee and will be considered for incorporation into the Plan.

Request for Information

Requests for public records or information will be handled in accordance with the Open Records Act of Texas, as well as, the City of Longview Procedure of Requests for Records.

Public Appearances

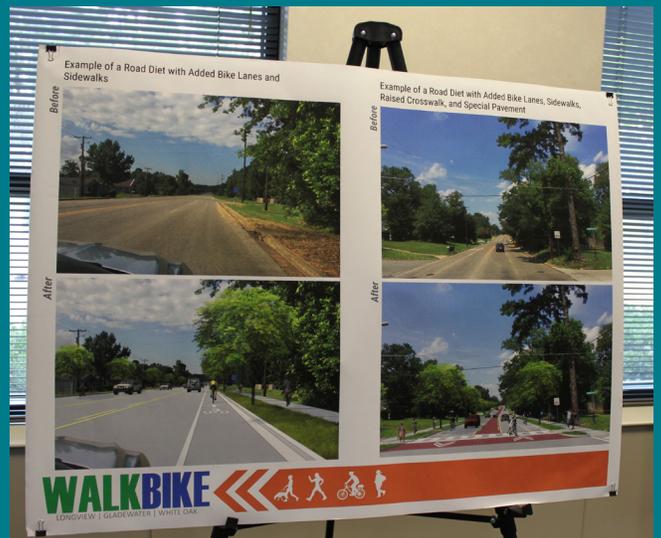
The MPO shall make every effort to comply with requests from civic or professional groups, organizations, or committees to present or discuss information related to the work of the MPO, Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The organization should allow ample time for the MPO to make arrangements for a public appearance.

Internet

It is the goal of the MPO to make public information available in electronically accessible format to afford reasonable opportunities for consideration of public comment and opinion. The official website of the Longview MPO shall be utilized to post public notices for public meetings and to post various planning documents. The MPO's website will have these MPO documents available for public access: the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Annual Project Listing (APL) and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The MPO will provide a user-friendly website containing other pertinent transportation information such as latest news, agendas, meeting minutes, and links to outside agencies. The website will provide an opportunity for citizen feedback. MPO public meetings will be live streamed, recorded, and rebroadcast on the City of Longview's website, CityView Municipal TV, and Longview Cable TV public access Channel 5.

Visualization Techniques

In order to better communicate transportation plans with the general public, federal regulations also emphasize the use of visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques may include charts and graphs, tables, Geographic Information System (GIS) maps overlaid with data, interactive GIS maps, GIS-based scenario planning tools, photo renditions, artist renderings, and static maps. The intent for this technique is to better depict the programs and their impact on the public. The Longview MPO will utilize visualization techniques during the development of the short-term and long-term transportation plans.



Plan Specific Outreach

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Longview Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a long-range planning document, which identifies transportation projects and programs for the next twenty-five years. The Plan addresses various aspects of transportation, such as: major streets and highways, traffic operations, maintenance, public transportation, freight, pedestrian and bicycle transportation. The long-term plan is updated every five years. Should the area be designated non-attainment for air quality standards, then the plan is updated every four years.

Two or more public meetings shall be held to present new or major updates to the MTP prior to its adoption. To the maximum extent practical, the public meetings will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times to maximize public attendance and participation. At least one of these meetings shall be held a minimum of thirty days prior to adoption of the MTP. If possible, one of the meetings shall be live streamed, recorded and rebroadcast on the City of Longview's website, CityView Municipal TV, and Longview Cable TV public access Channel 5, to allow maximum publicity and exposure to the public. During the process of major updates to the MTP, a public notice shall be placed in a free community newspaper.

In conjunction with the development of the long-term plan, the MTP, environmental mitigation shall be discussed. A general discussion of potential environmental impacts, avoidance and mitigation activities shall be developed by the Longview MPO in consultation with federal, state, tribal agencies, environmental and other regulatory agencies. This discussion shall be included in the MTP and shall be directed at the policy or strategy level, not project specific.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies and schedules transportation projects and programs to be constructed or implemented in the Longview Metropolitan Area for four years. The TIP is updated every two years.

A public meeting shall be held to present the TIP at least 10 days prior to its adoption. The meeting shall be live streamed, recorded and rebroadcast daily on the City of Longview's website, CityView Municipal TV, and Longview Cable TV public access Channel 5, to allow maximum publicity and exposure to the public. To the maximum extent practical, the public meeting will be held at convenient and accessible locations and times. During the process of adopting a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a public notice shall be placed in a free community newspaper.

As a Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 recipient, Longview Transit projects are programmed into the Longview Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Both the planning regulations and Section 5307 require public participation. The planning regulations require that the metropolitan transportation planning process include a proactive participation plan that provides complete information, timely public notice, and reasonable public access to key decisions and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) allows a grantee, Longview Transit, to rely on locally adopted public participation requirements for the TIP in lieu of the process required in the development of the Program of Projects (POP) if the grantee has coordinated with the MPO and ensured that the public is aware that the TIP development process is being used to satisfy the POP public participation requirements. To comply with this requirement, the Longview MPO's public participation process satisfies the grantee's public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP). When the Longview MPO publishes public notices of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the notice will have an explicit statement that public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review of and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements as follows: "This public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP development process will satisfy the FTA's Program of Projects requirements."

Annual Project Listing

The Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization is required by federal regulations to publish or otherwise make available a list of projects, by the cooperative effort of the state, transit operator, and metropolitan planning organization for public review. The Annual Project Listing (APL) includes highways, bridge, pavement and investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, for which federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. The listing shall be consistent with the funding categories identified in each metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Although an entire project may be on a TIP, the obligation for a particular year may be for only a portion of that project (e.g., acquisition of right of way, or construction of only a portion of the project). In these cases, only the amount of the obligation for that particular year should appear on the APL. To aid the public's understanding, the annual listing for multi-year projects should also include the full project amount requested and the amount of funds remaining for use in subsequent years. This provision is intended to increase the transparency of government spending on transportation projects and strategies in metropolitan areas to State and local officials, and to the public at large.

Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describes and schedules work to be undertaken in pursuit of the Longview Urban Transportation Study transportation planning process for two years. All elements of this work program are described in subtasks that will facilitate federal transportation planning goals, including a performance-based approach in the transportation planning and programming process. The UPWP serves as a management tool for planning activities of MPO staff and participating agencies.

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