

TEXARKANA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION
PLAN

THE ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MILLER COUNTY, ARKANSAS
BOWIE COUNTY, TEXAS
THE CITY OF TEXARKANA, ARKANSAS
THE CITY OF NASH, TEXAS
THE CITY OF TEXARKANA, TEXAS
THE CITY OF WAKE VILLAGE, TEXAS

IN COOPERATION WITH:
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

APPROVED BY THE POLICY COMMITTEE:

JULY 19, 2006

The preparation and publication of this document was financed in part by funds provided by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration. The provision of Federal financial assistance should not be construed as denoting U.S. Government approval of plans, policies, programs or projects contained herein.

TEXARKANA URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY
RESOLUTION # 14-2006

A RESOLUTION BY THE POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE TEXARKANA URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY ADOPTING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE TEXARKANA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION AND AUTHORIZING ITS SUBMISSION TO THE ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT (AHTD), THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (TXDOT), THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA), AND THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA).

WHEREAS, the Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible for preparing and submitting a Public Participation Plan to AHTD, TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

WHEREAS, the Texarkana MPO staff recommends for adoption and submission of the Public Participation Plan to AHTD, TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

WHEREAS, the Technical Committee recommended for adoption and submission of the Public Participation Plan to AHTD, TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Policy Committee of the Texarkana Urban Transportation Study:

SECTION 1: That the Public Participation Plan for the Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization is hereby adopted.

SECTION 2: That the Study Director of the Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization is hereby authorized to submit the Public Participation Plan to AHTD, TxDOT, FHWA, and FTA.

SECTION 3: That this Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED in Regular Session on the 19th day of July 2006.



Mike Burke, Chairman
Policy Committee
Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Policy Committee of the Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Texarkana Urban Area in regular session on July 19, 2006.



Brad McCaleb, P.E., Study Director
Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (3P)	1
ORGANIZATION OF THE MPO	2
SUPPORTING LEGISLATION	2
OUTREACH TOOLS	3
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	5
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES	6
OPEN MEETINGS & RECORDS PROCEDURES	7
APPENDIX A: 3P PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES	9
APPENDIX B: FEDERAL REGULATIONS	10

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

TEXARKANA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

The Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the regional transportation planning agency for the urbanized areas of Texarkana, Arkansas; Nash, Texarkana, and Wake Village, Texas; Miller County, Arkansas, and Bowie County, Texas. Federal regulations require the designation of an MPO to carry out a coordinated, continuing and comprehensive transportation planning process for areas with an urbanized population of 50,000 or more, as determined by the Census Bureau.

This document was developed with the use of a Value Analysis Study conducted in September 2005 and a review by the Arkansas Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) performed in November 2005 which included participants from the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) and the Hot Springs, Arkansas MPO. Guidance issued on the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was also consulted.

A 45-day comment period was provided prior to the adoption of the Public Participation Plan (3P) by the Texarkana MPO Policy Committee (PC) at its scheduled meeting on July 19, 2006, by Resolution # 14-2006. The comment period was in effect from June 2, 2006 to July 17, 2006. Comments from the public and the MPOs responses are provided in Appendix A.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (3P)

The purpose of the 3P is to ensure that public participation is an integral part of the transportation planning process and that decisions are made with the benefit and consideration of public perspectives. This policy provides a mechanism for bringing diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process. Early and continuous public involvement enables the MPO to make better informed decisions, improves quality through collaborative efforts, and builds mutual understanding and trust between the MPO and the public it serves. The 3P outlines various tools and time limits for public involvement in the development of various planning documents including the:

- ❖ Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): A fiscally constrained 25 year long range transportation planning document, which is updated every five years;
- ❖ Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): A short range 4 year transportation planning document, which is updated every two years;
- ❖ Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP): An outline of the activities that will be conducted by or overseen by the MPO staff over the course of a one to two-year period which is updated every 2 years.

- ❖ Texarkana Regional Mobility Plan (Txk-RMP): A needs based long range transportation planning document which is updated as required.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MPO

Representatives from Texarkana, Arkansas; Nash, Texarkana, and Wake Village, Texas; Miller County, Arkansas; Bowie County, Texas; AHTD; the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT); FHWA; the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG); the Texarkana Urban Transit District (T-Line); the Texarkana Regional Airport, and the Arkansas Red River Commission serve on the following committees that are a part of the MPO:

- ❖ Policy Committee (PC): The governing body for the MPO that provides a forum for cooperative decision making and policy guidance.
- ❖ Technical Committee (TC): A group composed of technical staff of key transportation related planning agencies for the region that meet to discuss transportation-related issues and to provide technical analysis of planning activities for the PC.
- ❖ MPO Staff: The employees of the MPO who are responsible for performing administrative and technical services necessary to operate the MPO on a daily basis.

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION

The following key pieces of legislation address specific requirements for conducting transportation planning in an open process that supports early and continued public involvement, provides complete information, timely public notice and full public access to key decisions. See Appendix B for more information on the requirements set forth in Title 23, CFR 450.316 (b) (1).

- ❖ Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)
- ❖ The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21)
- ❖ The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA)
- ❖ Arkansas Open Meetings Act
- ❖ Texas Open Meetings Act
- ❖ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- ❖ Environmental Justice (EJ) in Minority and Low-Income Populations, Executive Order 12898
- ❖ National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)
- ❖ The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

OUTREACH TOOLS

To fulfill the objectives set forth in the federal mandates, the MPO may use a range of strategies to enhance and support public outreach and education in the transportation planning process, including, but not limited to:

❖ Comment Periods

Updates, drafts and revisions of the various planning documents are made available for the public to review and comment on. A copy of the document is made available at the MPO office and on the MPO web page. The amount of time allowed for review and comment varies from document to document. For more detailed information see the “Opportunity for Public Participation” section of this document.

❖ Committee Meetings

The MPO PC and TC meetings are generally held every three months and are open to the public. Agendas are sent out by e-mail, a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours prior to the scheduled meeting, to all individuals that have requested to be on the notification list. A notice of the meeting, which includes the location, date, time and agenda, is posted at nine (9) publicly accessible locations, released for broadcast on public access television and area radio stations and posted on the MPO web page a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting. A legal advertisement is placed in the *Texarkana Gazette* a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting date.

❖ Focus Groups

Focus groups may be formed to address specific concerns related to transportation issues such as conservation, economic development, freight, public transportation providers, etc.

❖ MPO Speakers

The MPO provides speakers to civic organizations, clubs, schools, neighborhood associations, and other organizations who are interested in the transportation planning activities of the MPO. Speakers provide information on the purpose, process, and products of the MPO and seek continued participation and comments from the public.

❖ MPO Web Page (www.texarkanampo.org)

The MPO is committed to providing a web page with current MPO related information including agendas, primary planning documents, traffic count maps and data tables, links to outside agencies and other appropriate transportation-related material.

❖ Notification List

A notification list of organizations, public agencies, elected and appointed officials, transportation providers, radio and television stations, newspapers, special interest or advocacy groups, and individuals interested in transportation related issues has been developed. The MPO staff routinely encourages additional groups or individuals to be added to the notification list.

❖ Press Releases

The MPO will work with the local media as a source of information for the public on significant transportation activities and issues. As warranted, the MPO will write press releases, conduct interviews and submit articles to the news media.

❖ Public Meetings

The MPO staff and other stakeholders participate in transportation planning forums to obtain or exchange information. In particular, forums are held to present updates, revisions and/or drafts of various planning documents to the public for review and comment.

❖ Studies and Reports

The studies and reports published by the MPO provide information on the MPO composition, transportation planning process, major documents and data produced by the MPO. Material is available on the MPO web page for viewing or downloading and hard copies may be made available to the public upon request.

❖ Surveys

The MPO staff will engage the public through the use of survey instruments covering various aspects of the transportation system, its performance, and the public's opinion on policy, projects, and performance.

❖ Traditionally Under-Served Populations

All public meetings are held at ADA accessible locations. Upon request, the MPO will make every effort to provide auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters for the deaf and hearing impaired, to those who qualify as a disabled individual under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Individuals requiring a language translator may also request assistance. The MPO office must receive notification by mail (P.O. Box 1967, Texarkana, Texas 75504), telephone (903-798-3927), or RELAY TEXAS (1-800-735-2989) for such services at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting time so a reasonable attempt can be made to provide appropriate arrangements.

❖ Visualization Tools

Various types of visualization tools will be utilized to depict transportation information, statistics and/or maps.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The MPO is mandated by federal legislation to produce a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and a Public Participation Plan (3P). Additionally, all MPOs in the state of Texas are required to develop a Regional Mobility Plan (RMP). The chart on the following page describes the various minimum required timelines associated with public participation periods for these documents. The days required for a particular activity are consecutive calendar days.

PROGRAM UPDATES	PUBLIC MEETINGS	COMMENT PERIOD*	ADDITIONAL NOTES
MTP: 25-year document, updated every 5 yrs	60 & 30 days prior to adoption	20 days	Project solicitation 90 days prior to adoption, lasting 30 days
TIP: 4-year document, updated every 2 yrs	N/A	10 days	Two separate documents, one for Arkansas and one for Texas
UPWP: 2-year document	N/A	10 days	MPO has the option of developing a 1-year UPWP document
3P: As needed	60 days prior to adoption	45 days	N/A
RMP: As needed	15 days prior to adoption	10 days	N/A
PROGRAM MAJOR REVISIONS	PUBLIC MEETINGS	COMMENT PERIOD	ADDITIONAL NOTES
MTP: As needed or by request	30 & 15 days prior to adoption	10 days	See Program Administration Guidelines section of this document
TIP: Quarterly, if needed	N/A	7 days	
UPWP: As needed	N/A	7 days	
3P: As needed	N/A	45 days	
RMP: As needed	N/A	7 days	
PROGRAM MINOR REVISIONS	PUBLIC MEETINGS	COMMENT PERIOD	ADDITIONAL NOTES
All: As needed or by request	N/A	N/A	See Program Administration Guidelines section of this document
OPEN MEETINGS			
Policy Committee	As scheduled	N/A	See Open Meetings & Records section of this document
Technical Committee	As scheduled	N/A	
OTHER PUBLIC INFORMATION			
Posted Notices	Notices are posted 72 hours prior to public meetings and comment periods		
Legal Notices	Legal notices are run at least 72 hours prior to public meetings and comment periods		
Technical Assistance	Available upon request		
Presentations	Available upon request		
Publications	Available on MPO web page and at MPO office		

* If the MPO Study Director determines that a significant change to the Final Draft of the MTP, TIP, UPWP, 3P or RMP is necessary as a result of comments received from the public, the Final Draft will be made available for one (1) additional seven (7) day public comment period to address the specific significant change(s). However, the MPO Study Director may, at his discretion, request final approval by the TC and PC prior to the additional comment period pending any additional changes to the document.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES

The MTP, TIP, UPWP, 3P and RMP may be modified at any time consistent with the procedures agreed to by the cooperating parties for developing these programs and the federal requirements in 23 CFR Part 450 concerning their development and public involvement requirements. All modifications to the MTP and TIP must maintain the fiscal constraint requirements for these documents. All modifications to the TIP must be consistent with the MTP. Modifications to any of these documents must be consistent with Federal Title 6 requirements and consider the affect on congestion, safety, air quality, quality of life, and opportunities for economic development.

Major Revisions to the MTP, TIP, UPWP, 3P & RMP

Major Revisions require a formal process including approval by some or all of the following entities: TC, PC, AHTD, TxDOT, FHWA and FTA.

The following changes are examples of changes made through a Major MTP Revision:

- ❖ Adding or deleting a project;
- ❖ Changes in an estimated project cost greater than 25%;
- ❖ Changes in the type of work, length, or termini of a project from its original MTP description;
- ❖ Changes from non-federal to federal funds.

The following changes are examples of changes made through a Major TIP Revision:

- ❖ Adding or deleting major regionally significant highway or transit projects;
- ❖ Changes in an estimated federal cost that is greater than 50% and results in a revised total cost exceeding \$1,499,999;
- ❖ Changes in the type of work, length, or termini of a regionally significant highway or transit project from its original TIP description;
- ❖ Changes from non-federal to federal funds involving regionally significant highway or transit projects.

The following changes are examples of changes made through a Major UPWP Revision:

- ❖ Adding or deleting a task;
- ❖ Changes in the amount of funds programmed within a fiscal year;

The following changes are examples of changes made through a Major RMP Revision:

- ❖ Adding or deleting a project;
- ❖ Changes in an estimated project cost greater than 25%;
- ❖ Changes in the type of work, length, or termini of a project from its original description;
- ❖ Changes in funding sources from federal or state funds to local/regional funds.

Any changes other than typographical errors or updating references to regulatory requirements in the 3P are considered to be a Major Revision.

Minor Revisions to the MTP, TIP, UPWP, 3P & RMP

The approval of Minor Revisions has been delegated to the MPO Study Director, the TxDOT District Engineer and/or the AHTD Director of Planning and Research through their written approval upon formal adoption of the 3P.

Minor Revisions to the MTP, TIP, UPWP, 3P and RMP may be made as long as the change does not adversely affect its timely implementation, financial constraint, or the public's opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process. These changes may include:

- ❖ Minor data entry or typographical errors;
- ❖ Changes in Federal, State or Local funding sources or the project sponsor (not including those MTP or TIP actions that involve changes from non-Federal to Federal funds);
- ❖ Moving a project and its funding from one fiscal year to another within the stated period of the program;
- ❖ Any non-regionally significant highway or transit project-related change to projects funded from a "grouped" category.

MTP Revision Request Procedure

Any MPO member agency may request the consideration of a revision to the MTP on its own behalf or on the behalf of a non-member agency or private group, business or individual. Private parties must work through the MPO member agency that represents them to request a revision to the MTP. **ALL** such requests shall be submitted to the MPO Study Director in writing. The MPO Study Director may initiate a revision to the MTP in order ensure that it remains in conformance with all applicable federal, state and regional policy requirements.

TIP Revision Request Procedure

To request a TIP revision, the project sponsor must submit the proposal to the MPO Study Director for review. MPO staff will review the submitted request for compliance with Federal regulations, state and regional policy, including funding completeness, impacts to air quality, congestion mitigation, safety, quality of life, and opportunities for economic development, financial constraint and for compliance with other Federal, state and regional requirements before approving the submitted request. If the proposal is found not to conform to the MPO adopted guidelines as shown herein or is inconsistent with the financial constraint of the TIP the proposal may not be approved. Proposed revisions to projects contained in the TIP must also conform to the revision rules of the funding program involved. The MPO Study Director may initiate a revision to the TIP in order ensure that it remains in conformance with all applicable Federal, state and regional policy requirements.

OPEN MEETINGS & RECORDS PROCEDURES

The Texarkana MPO will abide by Texas open meetings requirements:

- ❖ The MPO adheres to the requirements for open meetings and notices of meetings. All meetings where public business is conducted, which have a quorum, are open to the public. Notice of meeting is given at least 72 hours (3 days) beforehand through posting the agenda at Miller County, AR Courthouse; Bowie County, TX Tax Collectors Office; Texarkana, AR City Hall; Nash, Texarkana, and Wake Village, TX City Halls; Southwest Community Center; Texarkana Library; Collins Memorial Center; Sandflat-Glendale Neighborhood Center, and the MPO web page (www.texarkanampo.org).
- ❖ All open meetings will be sound recorded, and the soundtrack maintained for a minimum of two (2) years. A summary of proceedings (minutes), including a roster of those who attended, will be made available at the MPO office, usually within 30 days of the meeting. Minutes are maintained for a minimum of four (4) years and will be made available to the public upon request in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- ❖ Meetings may go into executive session following the rules of the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- ❖ All MPO meetings are held in ADA accessible facilities. Reasonable attempts will be made to accommodate those with special needs if request is given at least 48 hours (2 days) in advance of the meeting.
- ❖ The MPO adheres to the requirements of the Texas Open Records Act. Records, as defined by the law, are made accessible to the public. Upon receiving a written request for a record, the MPO responds to the request in the most appropriate manner. Standard paper copies will be provided for \$0.10 per page fee (each side with recorded information is considered a page). Additional fees may apply depending on the materials onto which the information is copied, labor charges for locating, compiling and reproducing the requested information and postal or shipping charges in accordance with Texas Administrative Code §§ 111.63-.66. Access to records may be denied in those rare instances permitted by law, such as confidential personnel matters or negotiations.

APPENDIX A

3P PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

A 45-day public review and comment period was provided for this document beginning on June 2, 2006 and ending on July 17, 2006. No comments were received from the public.

APPENDIX B

Federal Regulations

Specifically, 23, CFR § 450.316(b), of the Metropolitan Planning Process, requires eleven elements be addressed. Each requirement and the method in which it is met, is listed below.

1. **Development of a public participation plan.**
One public meeting and a period of at least 45 days, from date of posted notice, for public comments will be provided prior to its adoption. Comments may be made in writing, in person, by phone, fax or email. All comments are addressed and provided to the TC for review prior to final approval by the PC.
2. **Provide timely information on transportation issues.**
Information is disseminated through a variety of measures, including a web page, email, press releases, public meetings, focus groups, presentations and visualization tools.
3. **Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans.**
The MPO provides this access through public meetings, open and accessible committee meetings and public comment periods.
4. **Facilitate public involvement in developing the TIP and MTP.**
The various outreach tools will be employed in encouraging input into the development of these planning documents.
5. **Public comments to be considered as an integral part of the planning process.**
The public has an opportunity to comment on all plans released by the MPO. Comments may be made in writing, in person, by phone, fax or email. All the comments are reviewed and documents are amended, if necessary.
6. **Seek out and consider needs of historically under-served.**
A comprehensive public notification list is maintained and includes groups that provide outreach to these under-served populations. Spanish translators are made available, if requested. Additionally, special arrangements can be requested for the physically disabled and hearing or visually impaired.
7. **For areas of non-attainment, significant public comments will be part of the final TIP and MTP.**
The Texarkana MPO Study Area is in attainment. However, public comments on the TIP and MTP are addressed and included in the documentation.
8. **Revisions to the TIP and MTP based on public comments will be made available to the public.**
These types of revisions will be subject to the same, open meeting requirements.
9. **Periodic Reviews of the 3P.**
The MPO staff and TC will review the 3P as needed.
10. **FHWA and FTA review of the 3P.**
The 3P will be forwarded to FHWA and FTA in accordance with these federal mandates.
11. **Coordination with statewide public involvement processes.**
The MPO coordinates its activities with AHTD and TxDOT.