

**Public Involvement Procedures Manual
of the
Panama City Urbanized Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

A Regional Transportation Planning Partnership



This document replaces the Panama City MPO's Public Involvement Procedures adopted July 25, 2001.

*...planning for the future transportation needs
of Panama City and its surrounding area...*

Visit the MPO's web page at
<http://www.wfrpc.dst.fl.us/pcmpo>

Adopted:
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Executive Summary

Public involvement is the participation by the public in the development of the Panama City Urbanized Area MPO's transportation plans and services. The most effective public involvement is one in which the public has access to information before decisions are finalized, in a variety of ways, and in such a manner as to allow for actual influence over the outcome of decisions, as stated in *The ISTEA Planner's Workbook*.

Public involvement is not new. It has been encouraged and required by federal and state legislation for many years.

The goal of public involvement is to ensure that MPO's plans reflect community values and benefit all communities within the planning area equitably. In order to achieve the goal, the objectives of public involvement are to

- Inform the public of transportation meetings and other events
- Educate the public regarding their role in the transportation planning and decision making process
- Involve the public by providing opportunities early and often
- Reach all communities to inform, educate, and involve
- Improve the public involvement process

MPO staff will develop public involvement strategies for the transportation plans developed by the Panama City Urbanized Area MPO. The format of the strategy can range from a technical memorandum, as in the case of the Long Range Transportation Plan, to an outline which, at a minimum, addresses the objectives of the public involvement strategy, the target communities, and the selection of public involvement techniques: press releases, display ads, fliers, workshops, outreach, etc. The public involvement strategy can be documented as part of the plan or separately as in a scope of services document. However, the plan should state the public involvement activities that were actually held, the response from the public, and the influence of public participation on the adopted plan.

MPO staff will continue to document and report public involvement activities in the Monthly Progress Report, which is sent to FDOT.

MPO staff will hold quarterly meetings to assess the effectiveness of public involvement techniques. Results of the assessments will be used to modify the public involvement processes of the MPO in order for them to achieve the goal of ensuring transportation plans and services reflect community values and benefit all communities in the planning area. Reports of the quarterly assessments will be sent to FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The quarterly assessment reports will also include a list of inquiries received from the public during the period.

I Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Public Involvement Procedures Manual

The purpose of this document is to serve as a guide for planning, encouraging, improving, and reporting public involvement in the development of transportation plans of the Panama City Urbanized Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Primary users of the document are intended to be MPO members, committee members, staff, and citizens of the urbanized area.

The draft of this document was reviewed by the Florida Department of Transportation. The public comment period for the draft Public Involvement Procedures Manual began on February 7, 2003, with advertisements in local newspapers. A Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee member suggested a change to section 2.4.8, which was incorporated. FDOT recommended the manual address public involvement for plan amendments. Section 2.5 was added. No other comments were received. The MPO adopted the manual on March 26, 2003.

1.2 Terminology

A list of terms and acronyms is provided at Appendix A.

1.3 Definition of Public Involvement

In the Spring 1998 issue of FDOT's *Transportation Policy Forum* magazine, the Office of Policy Planning distinguishes between public relations, public awareness, and public involvement. The distinctions are useful in helping to understand public involvement. Public relations professionals try to "put a spin" or a positive image on an experience, person, place or thing. Actually, all government employees engage in public relations to some extent when they interact with the public. Did they leave a positive impression or did they seem indifferent or frustrated? Public awareness is simply getting the information out to the public and can range from press releases to educational campaigns. Both public relations and public awareness are primarily one-way communication. Most government agencies have a public information officer (PIO), and PIO press releases are sometimes confused with public involvement. Public involvement goes farther: it is two-way communication between the MPO and the public. Public involvement is participation by the public in the development of the Panama City Urbanized Area MPO's transportation planning process. **The public must have access to information before decisions are finalized, in a variety of ways, and in such a manner as to allow for actual influence over the outcome of the decisions** as stated in *The ISTEA Planner's Workbook*, which also describes public involvement in the following ways:

- Proactive
- Tailored to local needs and conditions
- Ongoing
- Inclusive
- Frequent
- Encouraged to be innovative and use a combination of techniques

- Educational – both on issues and technical matters
- Most effective when supported by strong leadership and institutional support; and
- Intended to affect the results of the planning process

1.4 Federal Requirements

23 United States Code, Section 134 requires public involvement in development of the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In both cases, it states the following: "Before approving a long range plan [or TIP], each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the long range plan [or TIP], in a manner that the Secretary deems appropriate."

Public involvement gained greater emphasis with passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. It required planners to involve the public to a much greater extent than previous law. It expired and was replaced by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998, which continued emphasis on public involvement.

In October 1993, the FHWA and FTA jointly issued regulations in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 450, guiding the development of statewide and metropolitan plans and programs. Provisions of 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C Section 316 are summarized below:

- 45 day comment period applicable to public involvement procedures
- timely information to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects
- reasonable public access to information and open public meetings
- adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points
- demonstration of explicit consideration and response to public comment
- consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved, including but not limited to low-income and minority
- a summary, analysis and report of the disposition of comments when significant oral or written comments have been made concerning a draft plan or TIP. The report shall be a part of the final plan or TIP.
- additional public involvement activity if the first review period yielded comments that significantly changed the plan or TIP
- periodic review by the MPO of public involvement processes to ensure full and open access to all
- review of public involvement procedures by the FHWA and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as necessary
- coordination of MPO public involvement processes with statewide public involvement processes whenever possible

- consistency with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each state under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794
- identification of actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and U.S. DOT regulations

Federal legislation, regulations, and executive orders relating to discrimination and impacts on the natural environment will be discussed under Chapter IV in the sections dealing with Community Impact Assessment / Sociocultural Effects Evaluation and the Efficient Transportation Decision-Making Process. The Americans with Disabilities Act states that reasonable efforts must be made to accommodate citizens with disabilities who want to attend public meetings. As a result, advertised MPO and advisory committee meetings and workshops include a statement that MPO staff will make reasonable efforts to accommodate persons with disabilities along with the name and phone number of the staff contact.

For further information about federal requirements, see the following website:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/>.

1.5 State Requirements

Chapter 339 Section 175 Florida Statutes (F.S.) echoes the requirements in 23 CFR, Sections 450.322 and 450.324 for public involvement during development of the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Chapter 286 F.S. addresses public access to governmental proceedings at state and local level, commonly known as “The Sunshine Law.” The Sunshine Law requires the following:

- meetings of boards or commissions must be open to the public
- reasonable notice of such meetings must be given
- minutes of the meetings must be taken

The law applies to any gathering of two or more members of the same board to discuss a matter which will foreseeably come before that board for action according to the Florida Attorney General website: <http://legal.firn.edu/sunshine/general.html>. Closed meetings are only allowed for specific purposes such as portions of collective bargaining or to discuss pending litigation with an attorney. Chapter 286 F.S. should be consulted before any decision to hold a closed meeting is made. The law also addresses public access to records and conduct of citizens at public meetings. For instance, citizens may videotape public meetings through the use of non-disruptive video recorders. Also, public agencies are allowed to adopt reasonable rules and regulations to ensure the orderly conduct of a meeting. This includes limiting the amount of time an individual can speak and, if a large number of people are attending, requesting that a representative of each side speak. Also, if an audio tape of a meeting is made, it is also considered public record. For more information about the Sunshine Law, see Appendix B for a list of frequently asked questions or consult Chapter 286 F.S.

The MPO Program Management Handbook, available on the FDOT website under the Office of Policy and Planning, contains guidance for MPOs regarding public involvement.

1.6 Effect on MPOs

With the passage of ISTEA in 1991 and TEA-21 in 1998, the trend in the federal government has been to promote increased public involvement in transportation planning and project development. The trend has been adapted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). In the *Transportation Policy Forum* Magazine cited earlier, the Secretary of FDOT, Tom Barry, was quoted: “We can’t do transportation in a vacuum. Times are changing and we need to do a better job in public involvement. We need to involve the public early and often in the project development process.” One way to involve the public early is through Community Impact Assessment (CIA), which is defined in the FHWA/FTA publication *Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation* as a “process to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life.” The FDOT has shown a continuing interest in CIA and at least one MPO in Florida, Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO, has incorporated CIA into its long range plan. In September 2000, representatives of the FHWA and FTA recommended in their review of the Pensacola Transportation Management Area (TMA) planning processes that the TMA partners (same as MPO partners) include an “assessment of the distribution of benefits and adverse environmental impacts at both the plan and project levels.” As a result, in addition to continuing traditional public involvement activities associated with plan development, all Northwest Florida MPOs are initiating CIA in their planning processes. Recently FDOT has begun to use a new term “Sociocultural Effects Evaluation.” Throughout this manual, the FDOT term Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE) will be used. However, the process developed by MPO staff for the Northwest Florida MPOs serves two purposes: (1) evaluates the sociocultural effects of transportation plans on a community and its quality of life and (2) assesses the distribution of benefits and adverse environmental impacts at the plan level. The latter addresses the equity of transportation benefits or adverse impacts in the community.

Meanwhile, FDOT’s Environmental Streamlining Working Group, which is comprised of representatives of federal, state, and local environmental and transportation agencies, has been working on a new process to include environmental permitting agencies early in transportation planning: Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM). The ETDM website includes screens to evaluate sociocultural effects. The target date for ETDM implementation in Florida is January 2004. Both ETDM and SCE will be explored more fully in Chapter IV Methodologies.

II Goal, Objectives, Policies, and Actions of the Panama City MPO

2.1 Goal and Objectives of Public Involvement

The ultimate goal of public involvement is to ensure that transportation plans reflect community values and benefit all segments of the community equitably. What is the definition of a community? What are community values?

Dr. Lisa Beever, in the Charlotte County – Punta Gorda Community Impact Assessment and Environmental Analysis: Long Range Transportation Plan 2020, defines three types of communities: geographic, organizational, and demographic. The same can be applied to the Panama City MPO planning area. Geographic communities can be defined on a map. They are normally associated with places such as Parker, Tyndall Air Force Base, or Back Beach Road. Organizational communities are made up of individuals who share a common interest or belief: developers, environmentalists, or religious groups. Demographic communities are made up of individuals who share a common heritage, culture, or characteristic: the African-American, Asian, or Hispanic communities, the elderly, or the physically challenged. Often, communities overlap. In fact, we should be careful in categorizing communities because communities can be very complex.

What are community values? Think of what is important to you – that’s what you value. The same applies to communities. Some communities value protecting the natural environment. Others value economic development. Some value individual property rights. Others value what is best for the community as a whole. Again, as with the above definition of communities, values are often a mix. If a community, for instance, values sustainable development, it values a mix of economic development and environmental protection.

So, if the ultimate goal of public involvement is to ensure transportation plans and services reflect community values and benefit all segments of the community equally, what objectives can help reach the goal? The following public involvement objectives help achieve the goal:

- **Inform** the public of transportation meetings and other events
- **Educate** the public regarding their role in the transportation planning and decision making process
- **Involve** the public by providing opportunities early and often in the transportation planning and decision making process
- **Reach** all communities in the planning area to inform, educate, and involve
- **Improve** the public involvement process

The authors of the Panama City Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PCUATS) 2020 Plan Update, published December 2000, provided early and continuing opportunities for meaningful public input. Planners intended that the approach would help the communities reach a consensus regarding the needed transportation projects in the study area. This approach could be applied to all planning efforts. As a result, the likelihood is increased that citizens will “understand, support, and take ownership” of the plans produced by the MPO. Numerous techniques can be employed to involve the public in the planning process. These techniques are

described in Chapter IV. The extensive public involvement activities organized to accomplish the 2020 Plan Update are described in Section 2.4.5.

2.2 MPO Policies and Actions

In order to implement the objectives cited in Section 2.1, the following policies and actions have been adopted by the MPO.

2.2.1 Objective 1: Informing the Public

Policy: It is the policy of the MPO to inform the public, to the maximum extent possible with available resources, of opportunities to participate in the transportation decision-making process.

Actions:

- A. Provide meeting agendas to MPO members, committee members, and interested parties. Mail/e-mail at least one week in advance.
- B. Maintain a current mailing list of local governments and send agenda at least a week in advance. Request posting of the agenda for viewing by the public.
- C. Send display ads announcing MPO meetings to the following local media: *The Panama City News Herald* and *The County Press*.
- D. Maintain a media mailing list for press releases and send notifications of MPO meetings.
- E. Create and distribute flyers for special events such as workshops.
- F. Write newsletter articles about upcoming public involvement events.
- G. Post MPO agendas on the Panama City MPO web page.
- H. Include the web page address on all MPO documents, including brochures and flyers, so that the public can easily access meeting information.
- I. Hold meetings in accessible locations.
- J. Comply with provisions of the Florida State Sunshine Law.
- K. Write meeting announcements that are easily understood.
- L. Include provisions in meeting announcements for citizens to respond in writing, by phone, or by e-mail.
- M. Establish a relationship with local news media for coverage of public involvement events.

2.2.2 Objective 2: Educating the public

Policy: It is the policy of the MPO to educate stakeholders/citizens regarding their role in the transportation planning process.

Actions:

- A. Maintain an updated MPO brochure. Distribute the brochure throughout the planning area.
- B. Maintain an updated MPO Orientation presentation that can be given not only to the MPO but also to local organizations and citizen groups. The current orientation presentation was updated in January 2001 and subsequently minor updates have been made.
- C. Set up displays at public events. A new mobile display was created in October 2000 and has been taken meetings and public events, including those in traditionally underserved communities.
- D. Hold transportation fairs.
- E. MPO members/staff speak at local civic group meetings, schools, and leadership courses about transportation planning.
- F. MPO members/staff give interviews on local tv/radio news programs and talk shows to educate the public regarding transportation planning issues and the role of citizens.
- G. Publish a report as a newspaper insert to inform the public of the MPO's accomplishments and to request public participation. Post the MPO report online.
- H. Arrange tours of transportation facilities
- I. Make transportation planning documents available through local libraries.

2.2.3 Objective: Involving the Public

Policy: It is the policy of the MPO to involve the public early and often in the transportation planning process.

Action:

- A. Maintain a standing Citizens' Advisory Committee so that citizens have an opportunity to participate in the continuous planning process.

- B. Maintain a standing Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee so that citizens have an opportunity to participate in the continuous planning process to improve bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel in the planning area.
- C. On the MPO's web page, include a feature allowing the public to e-mail staff with questions or comments.
- D. Create surveys in different media. Surveys can be taken at MPO meetings, public hearings, workshops, events, etc. Surveys have been included in newspaper ads. See the Pinellas MPO web site for an example of an online survey:
<http://www.co.pinellas.fl.us/mpo/survey.htm>.
- E. Include comment forms in MPO products.
- F. Encourage public involvement by greeting citizens who attend MPO meetings and providing them a copy of the agenda.
- G. Include a variety of public involvement techniques in the development of plans or services: for example, workshops, visioning, and/or charrettes in addition to public hearings.
- H. Be responsive. Respond to all inquiries. Interim responses, while a question is being researched, are encouraged.
- I. Thank members of the public who devote their time and talents to transportation planning. Everyone's time is valuable.
- J. MPO staff will inform MPO members of recommendations from the Citizens' and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committees and inform MPO members of trends indicated from other contacts with the public.

2.2.4. Objective: Reaching Out to Communities

Policy: The Urbanized Area of the Panama City MPO has been blessed with a rich heritage of diverse demographic communities. It is the policy of the MPO to identify and reach out to the geographical, organizational, and demographic communities that make up the MPO planning area so that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the development of transportation plans and services.

Actions:

- A. Schedule community outreach events, with a goal of several per year, while expanding the focus to include traditionally underserved communities.
- B. Create a mobile display that can be taken to community gatherings.

- C. Take every opportunity to learn about the communities that make up the Panama City Urbanized Area by attending festivals, special events, lectures, etc. that highlight the diversity of the area.
- D. As part of Community Impact Assessment/Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE), identify the various communities and establish a database of points of contact. Coordinate with local government redevelopment agencies, non-profit agencies, and others who have already developed community contacts. The goal is to display neighborhood associations and other community groups spatially in a geographic information system (GIS) with associated tables that show point of contact information for each association/group.
- E. Ensure planners have access to the database and GIS displays so that as projects are planned, impacted communities can be identified and notified.
- F. Develop a community profile, a description of all the communities. The profile will be available to planners who are responsible for development of the long range transportation plan, bicycle/pedestrian plans, the transportation improvement program, the congestion management plan, and public transportation plans.
- G. Advertise MPO and advisory committee meetings in a newspaper such as the New American Press oriented toward African American readership.

2.2.5 Objective: Improving Public Involvement

Policy: It is the policy of the MPO to continually identify and implement ways to improve its public involvement processes.

Actions:

- A. Look for other opportunities to add media that will reach greater numbers and more diverse populations.
- B. Try to create specialized mailing lists for specific events. For example, for a corridor study, try to develop a mailing list of homeowners' associations and businesses along the corridor.
- C. Establish a Speakers' Bureau.
- D. Work with the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to determine the most effective ways to involve them in the transportation decision-making process.
- E. Review composition of CAC and ask MPO members to appoint additional representatives, if needed to balance the distribution of representation.
- F. Conduct quarterly assessments of the effectiveness of public involvement techniques.

- G. Conduct CIA/SCE initially as part of the development of the long range transportation plan and then extend to other plans as time allows: bicycle/pedestrian plans, the transportation improvement program, and the congestion management system plans. Determine applicability of CIA/SCE to the transit development plan and the transportation disadvantaged service plans
- H. Look for ways to improve community outreach activities.
- I. Look for ways to improve staff speaking, writing, and leadership skills.
- J. Take advantage of training opportunities and learn from the experiences of other MPOs.

2.3 Benefits of Public Involvement

Citizen support is essential for plans to become projects. If citizen understanding, support, or ownership of a plan falter, it is likely that the plan or service will never come to fruition. During a public involvement training session for MPO staff in Pensacola, Louise Fragala, of Powell, Fragala, and Associates stated that 80 percent of all public projects are stalled, shelved or interrupted because people don't understand the need for the project. On the other hand, maybe planners did not understand community values and more time could have spent early in the process to come to a consensus. Again, in the Panama City 2020 Plan Update, authors pointed out that the goal of public involvement was to achieve a consensus regarding the needed transportation projects in the study area. Plans represent an investment of time and money for both the MPO and the public. Effective public involvement helps ensure the most cost effective utilization of tax dollars and time.

2.4 Work Products of the MPO and Corresponding Public Involvement Techniques

Among its major work products, the MPO produces the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Transit Development Plan (TDP), the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP), the Urban Area Transportation Study (UATS), the Congestion Management System (CMS) Plan and Corridor Studies. In the development of each of these mandated work products, the public is provided many opportunities to make comments and recommendations.

2.4.1 The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)- In accordance with Chapter 339.175, Florida Statutes, the UPWP defines the work tasks and anticipated funding requirements of the Panama City Urbanized Area MPO. This document serves to inform public officials and agencies who contribute manpower and allocate funds to the transportation planning process of the proposed work program. In addition, the UPWP provides the basis for federal, state, and local funding of transportation planning activities identified in the document.

The UPWP is distributed to local governments for review as a draft document by March each year. Prior to its distribution as a draft, the TCC and the CAC review the UPWP and provide comment on its content and structure. The final document is adopted by May 15.

2.4.2 The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)- The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a planning document developed and adopted by the MPO in response to the transportation needs in an urbanized area. The TIP updates and advances a five-year implementation program for all modes of transportation. This document is important because it not only addresses long-range transportation needs (constructing a new bridge or road), but it also contains short-term transportation improvements (intersection improvements, etc.). In fact, the TIP includes all types of projects: roadway, public transportation, aviation, bicycle paths, and sidewalk improvements.

The TIP is updated annually, and the process of revising the document consists of a number of stages. The MPO adopts a revised list of project priorities in September of each year. Based on the new list of project priorities, the Florida Department of Transportation develops the Tentative Five-Year Work Program in October or November. The MPO reviews the Tentative Five-Year Work Program for consistency with MPO Priorities, and the document then goes to the State Legislature for approval by February 1st. The MPO adopts the final TIP by July 15.

The public exercises a considerable amount of influence over the development of the TIP. As previously mentioned, the CAC reviews the Project Priority lists in August of each year to determine which projects they think should go into the TIP. In addition, however, the CAC is also given an opportunity to review the entire document before it is approved at the local level by the MPO. After reviewing the TIP and making suggestions concerning its contents, the CAC passes along a recommendation to the MPO pertaining to the document.

In addition to the CAC's review of the TIP, a public hearing is held prior to adoption of the TIP by the MPO for the purpose of receiving comments from the general public concerning the document. This public hearing is advertised in the paper along with the MPO agenda.

2.4.3 The Transit Development Plan (TDP)- The TDP, developed by the MPO, determines projected transit needs over a five-year period, develops recommendations specific to those needs, and promotes consistency between transit plans and other local transportation plans. Public opinion is perceived as an accurate barometer by which to measure projected changes in transit demand. Subsequently, the public's views on the transit system are received through interviews, surveys, and community group meetings. In addition to this, the TDP is reviewed by the CAC and the TCC before it is adopted by the MPO. Prior to adoption of the TDP by the MPO every third year, a public hearing is held to receive public comment. The public is instrumental in developing the TDP. A major TDP update is required every third year by the Florida Department of Transportation from all counties receiving State Transit Block Grant funds, and an evaluation of the current TDP is required annually.

2.4.4 The Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP)- As with the TDP, public input is essential in the development of the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP). The TDSP is produced each year with a major update every three years in accordance with Chapter 427, Florida Statutes. This document analyzes the current status of each county with regards to the needs of the Transportation Disadvantaged in that area. The TDSP is designed as a guide for future development of Transportation Disadvantaged services in an urbanized area. The document highlights both current and projected demand for services, as well as methods by

which more efficient services can be procured. The TDSP is produced in cooperation with the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB) and the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). Consequently, it is influenced by the diversity of citizens that make up the TDCB. Furthermore, in formulating this document the TDCB conducts an annual survey of agencies and riders involved in Transportation Disadvantaged services. Prior to adoption of the TDSP by the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board, a public hearing is held to receive public opinion.

2.4.5 The Panama City Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PCUATS)- The PCUATS, also known as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), is a twenty-year plan for transportation improvements in an urbanized area. Public involvement activities of the last update are documented in the Panama City Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PCUATS) 2020 Plan Update. Public involvement activities, extending between October 1999 and September 2000, included development of the goals and objectives by the MPO's Citizens' Advisory Committee, two transportation summits, six community workshops, two public workshops, three focus group meetings, one civic presentation, one open house, and one public hearing. In addition, a Mobility 2000 Newsletter was distributed to anyone who had attended a public involvement event as well as to all MPO, TCC, and CAC members. The MPO website advertised meetings, made copies of the newsletter available, and displayed documents, which could be downloaded. For the 2030 Update, a joint committee of the CAC, TCC, and BPAC will be established to initially develop the goals and objectives, which will then be taken to public workshops and subsequently reviewed by the CAC, TCC, and BPAC before they are presented to the MPO for adoption. The goals and objectives exert a considerable, direct influence on future transportation improvements in an urbanized area. Another technique to encourage citizen involvement early in the planning process is the Visual Choice Assessment Survey (VCAS), also planned for the 2030 Update. Surveys will be conducted at two public workshops and will also be available on the MPO's webpage. Staff will be available to conduct the survey at community meetings. The draft scope of services also calls for the implementation of Community Impact Assessment (CIA) during the plan to identify community needs and analyze impacts of the proposed projects. Public involvement for the 2030 update altogether will include a total of 14 public workshops, five newsletters, information on the MPO website, and establishment of a focus group in addition to periodic presentations to the MPO and its advisory committees, all open to the public and advertised in local media. Staff presentations at additional community group meetings will most likely be held to conduct VCAS and CIA.

2.4.6 Congestion Management System (CMS) Plan – This plan is updated each year. It rates the performance of transportation facilities and suggests low-cost, short-term strategies to alleviate congestion. A study team meets periodically to develop the strategies. Public participation is through man-on-the-street interviews conducted by MPO staff throughout the study segments. Newspaper ads containing survey questions have also been effective in the past. The MPO's CAC and TCC are presented draft copies of the Congestion Management System Plan the month before it is scheduled for adoption by the MPO.

2.4.7 Corridor Studies – Corridor studies develop management plans to improve specific road segments. During 2002, a corridor management plan was completed and adopted by the MPO for Panama City Beach Parkway (Back Beach Road) from Thomas Drive to the Walton County Line. A community involvement committee, consisting of local citizens, was initially formed

and remained active throughout the study. Their involvement certainly contributed to the plan's acceptance by local governments and the MPO's advisory committees as well as adoption by the MPO itself.

2.4.8. Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP). Annually, the MPO solicits projects from local governments to be submitted to FDOT for funding under the TEP, which is a federal program to set aside a percentage of the surface transportation funds for projects in specific categories such as bicycle/pedestrian, historical preservation, landscaping, or drainage. The MPO receives the projects and ranks them for submission to FDOT. Because of the popularity of the program and the limited funds, projects may be on the list for years before they migrate high enough on the priority list to be funded. During the time they are on the list, the support from the local government or public may diminish. To ensure continuing support from the local governments and public for TEP projects, the following procedure has been adopted by the MPO:

Application and Implementation Process

Require that the following documentation be submitted to the MPO when an application is originally made:

- (a) documentation that the public, potential users of the project, and potentially impacted property owners have been notified
- (b) adoption of a resolution of project support and maintenance by the local government

Re-submittal Process

When a re-submittal application is made:

- (a) a resolution of project support from sponsoring agency will be required
- (b) additional documentation of project support may be submitted for ranking points

In addition, in the ranking criteria, the MPO increased the number of points allocated to local government and public support from 8 to 16 out of a total of 99 points.

2.5 Plan Amendments

When the Long Range Transportation Plan is amended, public involvement shall be in accordance with Section 4.10 of the MPO Program Management Handbook issued by the FDOT Office of Policy and Planning.

When the Transportation Improvement Program is amended, public involvement shall be in accordance with 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C Section 326.

III Roles and Relationships

3.1 Role of the Public Involvement Coordinator

The primary role of the public involvement coordinator is to coordinate the flow of information between the MPO and the public. The information flows from many different sources and in many directions. To carry out his/her role, the public involvement coordinator must accomplish the following:

- Develop the overall Public Involvement Procedures for the MPO. This is different from developing a public involvement strategy for a specific planning effort. The Public Involvement Procedures can be used as a resource by all planners in developing specific public involvement strategies for, as example, the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Congestion Management Plan, or Community Transportation Services
- Establish and maintain a process to document and report the public involvement activities of the Transportation Division to FDOT.
- Hold meetings to assess the effectiveness of public involvement techniques. Help increase Citizens' Advisory Committee membership and diversity in representation.
- Educate MPO members, committee members, and the public regarding their roles in the transportation planning process through orientation workshops, presentations, brochures, and displays at public events.
- Reach out to the traditionally underserved communities of the Panama City Urbanized Area by reducing barriers to communication and opening up lines of communication.
- Create a community profile consisting of descriptions of the various communities, a database, and GIS maps (related to the database) that can serve as a resource for the development of specific public involvement plans.
- Educate planners about Community Impact Assessment/Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (CIA/SCE) and how it can be accomplished for specific plans.
- Develop a working relationship with television, radio, and print media journalists in order to successfully submit articles or set up interviews about transportation planning issues.
- Look for opportunities to participate in local events and coordinate displays with MPO planners.
- Look for opportunities to submit articles to local government newsletters and coordinate submissions with MPO planners.
- Look for opportunities to use the Internet as a means of communication.
- Advise planners as they develop public involvement strategies or marketing strategies for their products or services.
- Provide examples for planners of press releases, display ads, meeting notifications, fliers, etc.
- Keep abreast of advances in technology as they apply to public involvement techniques.
- Report accomplishments of the MPO through a report to be published as an insert in the newspaper, distributed to local government offices, and available on the Internet.

3.2 Role of Transportation Planners

Transportation planners play a key role in encouraging public involvement. They develop a public involvement strategy for their specific transportation plan or service, with assistance from the public involvement coordinator, if required. If a consultant is hired to develop a plan, the scope of services may also include that the consultant develop the public involvement strategy and carry it out. In this case, the planner overseeing the consultant is still obligated to selectively monitor public involvement activities. The public involvement role of the planner includes the following:

- Develop a public involvement strategy for every plan or service. The strategy consists, for example, of a plan for fliers, display ads, workshops, public hearings, focus groups, and outreach events. In some cases, documentation of the strategy is formalized. For instance, for the long range transportation plan, the public involvement strategy is sometimes in the form of a technical memorandum that also documents the public involvement activities.
- Conduct a CIA/SCE as part of the planning process. Consult with the public involvement coordinator regarding the applicability of CIA/ SCE and the information available. The CIA/ SCE database is intended as a resource to provide names of neighborhood points of contact and other demographics. It is also a process that helps identify negative and positive impacts on a community. See Chapter IV Methodologies for more information about CIA/ SCE.
- Advise MPO members of the results of public involvement activities.
- Report public involvement activities to the public involvement coordinator. This allows the public involvement coordinator to make a consolidated report to FDOT. The reporting format will be discussed in Chapter V Documentation and Reporting of public involvement activities.

3.3 Role of MPO Members

As local elected officials, MPO members represent the public. However, they also serve the public and are obligated to listen to their constituents. In this regard, the role of MPO members is as follows.

- Advocate public involvement in the transportation planning process through representing public interests. MPO members bring with them a variety of experiences and expertise that add diversity to analyzing alternatives and making decisions. This diversity reflects citizen involvement via the ballot box. Another means available to MPO members to represent public interests is by appointing citizens to the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is most effective when its membership reflects the demographic composition of the community.

- Support public involvement in the transportation planning process through listening to the public. Citizens have become disillusioned with government in past instances. During a public hearing on the subject of off-shore drilling in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, a front page story in the Pensacola News Journal quoted a citizen as saying, “The trouble with public hearings is no one hears the public.”
- Adopt procedures in compliance with federal and state requirements for public involvement.

3.4 Role of MPO Committees

The MPO has several advisory committees that play a significant role in public involvement. The committees in which the public has the greatest continuing influence are the CAC, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), and the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TD Board). Their role is listed below:

- Make recommendations regarding transportation plans and services to the MPO from the citizens’ perspective.
- Work with the public involvement coordinator to develop the community profile as part of the CIA/SCE of transportation plans and services.

3.5 Relationship with Florida Department of Transportation

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is decentralized into districts within the State of Florida. The Panama City MPO is in District 3, with its headquarters in Chipley. Additionally, FDOT has an Urban Planning Office located at FDOT’s Milton Operations Center.

FDOT conducts public involvement activities concerning its Five-Year Work Program and the projects in the work program. For instance, FDOT will hold public workshops for road widenings, resurfacing projects, and bridge replacements. FDOT has modified construction projects as a result of public involvement and comments received from citizens and agencies.

Resources developed to support public involvement activities could be shared between the MPO and FDOT. For instance, the database of community organizations developed during the CIA/SCE of the MPO’s plans could be shared with FDOT. This database would help FDOT contact the same stakeholders involved in earlier public involvement activities for a specific project once it progresses to the program development phase.

Meanwhile, FDOT representatives from the Urban Planning Office or Chipley are available to advise the MPO regarding statewide public involvement policy and district policy relating to public involvement. Usually, at least one FDOT member attends all MPO meetings and serves as a liaison between FDOT and the MPO.

3.6 Relationship with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation. They administer funds that provide for transportation planning, project development, and services throughout the United States. The FTA has a regional office in Atlanta, and FHWA has a state office in Tallahassee.

Both the FHWA and FTA promote proactive and continuing public involvement by the state departments of transportation and the MPOs as a condition of receiving federal funding. The FHWA and FTA conduct certification reviews of MPOs to ensure they are implementing federal requirements. An MPO can lose its certification, and therefore federal funding, if it does not comply with federal requirements.

Well before the situation proceeds to the point of decertification, the FHWA and FTA are available as a resource to help with questions regarding public involvement, Community Impact Assessment, or Environmental Justice. Helpful websites are as follows:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenters/southern/index.htm>

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/genlenv.htm>

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/fldiv/planning.htm>

IV Methodologies

4.1 Public Involvement Techniques

Public involvement techniques are the means by which information is exchanged. A public involvement strategy consists of a collection of techniques, tailored to the specific situation. Public involvement techniques can be divided groups: informing, educating, and involving the public.

4.1.1 Informing the public

- Memos to local governments (posted for public viewing) – Memos announcing MPO meetings and other public involvement events.
- Press releases – Notices of MPO meetings and other public involvement events distributed to local news media.
- Display ads – Ads purchased by the MPO in 2 local newspapers announcing MPO meetings and other public involvement events.
- Distribution of agendas – Agendas are distributed to MPO members, committees, and interested parties the week before MPO meetings. Additionally copies of the agenda are available during meetings for those that did not receive copies by mail or on the Internet. Agendas are posted on the Internet the week before meetings are held.
- Distribution of marketing materials – This includes items such as billboard notices, postcards, and refrigerator magnets publicizing the Commuter Assistance Program.
- Fliers – Created for special events such as workshops, charrettes, etc.
- E-mail distribution list – To notify the public of meetings and web postings.

4.1.2 Educating the public

- Distribution of plans or summaries – Plans and summaries, distributed to MPO members and committees, are available for purchase by the public at printing cost.
- Distribution of agendas and enclosures – Enclosures are written by staff to provide background and recommendations to the MPO regarding agenda items.
- Brochures – Brochures are written to acquaint the public with the MPO. The current brochure is “Traffic Woes – Tell It to the MPO!”
- TV or radio appearances – Arranged to educate the public regarding transportation issues.
- Videos, CDs, audio tapes – More frequently, plans are available on CD.
- Newspaper articles – Submission of articles publicizing transportation planning activities and issues.
- Newsletter articles – Submitted to the West Florida Regional Planning Council or for publication in local government newsletters.

- Annual reports – Reports of MPO accomplishments usually published as an insert in the newspaper.
- Tours of transportation facilities – Arranged by MPO staff.
- MPO presentations to civic groups, educational institutions, etc. – Presentations can be in conjunction with a plan update or for general information.
- Availability on the MPO’s webpage of plans and other related information
- Availability of MPO plans in public libraries

4.1.3 Involving the public

- MPO meetings – Every meeting includes a public forum.
- Committee meetings – The public has an opportunity to address the committees.
- Responding to inquiries from the public in person, by phone, e-mail, or in writing – Part of the staff’s responsibilities.
- Web page with e-mail to staff capability – Currently in place.
- TV and/or radio appearances with call-in questions from viewers and listeners – Provides more of an opportunity to receive feedback than shows without the call-in capability.
- Public hearings and forums – Announced by display ad and press release. An opportunity for an individual or group to express opinions on specific topics.
- Workshops – A gathering of people to analyze transportation issues and participate in developing solutions. Community workshops to gather comments regarding the 2020 Plan Update were held in Panama City Beach, Panama City, Callaway, Lynn Haven/Southport, Youngstown, and Mexico Beach.
- Participation in community events already scheduled such as festivals
- Transportation fairs or displays at the mall
- Surveys or public response to comment forms – An opportunity for feedback. One of the most successful recently was a display ad, “Got a Gripe About Traffic?” which was a survey for development of the Congestion Management System Plan.
- Focus group – A dedicated group of individuals interested in improving transportation in their area. A focus group was established for the 2020 Plan Update.
- Transportation summit – A meeting with business and political leaders to solicit their comments. Transportation summits were held during the 2020 Plan Update.
- Community outreach – Taking transportation planning to the people, rather than expecting them to attend formal meetings.
- Charrette – An intensive, interactive problem solving process with meetings convened around the development of specific plans.
- Visioning – A group of individuals working together to answer the questions: “Where are we now? Where do we want to be? and How do we get there?”

4.2 Public Involvement Resources

Public involvement resources are the tools that enable implementation of the techniques. Public involvement resources available at the West Florida Regional Planning Council are listed below along with the point of contact for each.

- Address book databases in Microsoft Access centrally maintained for the entire West Florida Regional Planning Council. The address book is the source of addresses, phone numbers, FAX numbers, duty titles, and e-mail addresses for anyone associated with transportation planning: MPO members, committee members, alternates, FDOT/FHWA/FTA staff, interested parties.
- MPO member and committees mailing lists maintained by the MPO Secretary.
- E-mail distribution list maintained by the Network Administrator to distribute information on transportation-related topics.
- Transportation Disadvantaged mailing lists maintained by the Public Transportation Secretary.
- Commuter Assistance Program data in RidePro, maintained by Commuter Assistance Planners.
- CAD drawings (AutoCad and Microstation) and GIS shape files (ArcView and ArcInfo), maintained by the GIS Manager.
- CIA database tables associated with GIS shape files, maintained by the Public Involvement Coordinator.
- Census information, maintained by the Census Data Analyst.
- Property appraiser data, maintained by the Census Data Analyst, whose duties include analyzing and managing other data besides census information.
- Paper maps and aerial photos produced by other agencies, maintained by the Mapping Research Assistant.
- Sign-in sheets that can be used as mini-surveys (see Appendix C).

4.3 Community Impact Assessment/Sociocultural Effects Evaluation

4.3.1 Definition

The Federal Highway Administration defines Community Impact Assessment (CIA) as a process to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its quality of life (FHWA, Sept 96). It consists of five steps:

- Define the study area and project alternatives.
- Develop a community profile, a description of the communities that make up the MPO study area. The community profile description should include a narrative, maps, and tables of neighborhoods, organizations, and demographic

groups. The tables should be in a relational database that can be displayed spatially using a geographic information system (GIS).

- Analyze the impacts. The proposed projects in a draft MPO plan could be superimposed over the neighborhoods to determine the impacted communities and show the persons to contact. Other spatially displayed information that might be considered could include schools, retirement homes, or health care facilities, shopping centers, etc.
- Identify solutions that might minimize the impact, mitigate the impact, enhance the community or avoid the community altogether.
- Document the findings to present to decision makers and disseminate to interested parties.

During a certification review of the Pensacola MPO in September 2000, FHWA and FTA representatives recommended the MPO establish a means to assess the benefits and adverse environmental impacts of transportation plans on the community. As a result, the Northwest Florida MPOs have implemented CIA. See Appendix D for a copy of the Fort Panama City MPO letter implementing CIA. FDOT periodically holds training sessions for district and MPO staff on CIA, more recently known as Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE) in Florida.

To implement CIA/SCE, the public involvement coordinator is creating a community profile. The first full implementation of CIA/SCE will be with development of the Panama City Urbanized Area Transportation 2025 Update. The Scope of Services includes CIA/SCE.

4.3.2 Benefits

CIA/SCE alerts communities of transportation plans long before the bull dozers appear in their neighborhoods. Impacts can be revealed far enough ahead so that collaborative solutions can be achieved. CIA/SCE can also reveal impacts no one could have predicted. In many cases, impacts are unknown until CIA/SCE is conducted. CIA/SCE helps reduce the probability that a project will be interrupted or shelved after MPO and FDOT time and money have been committed to its planning and program development.

4.3.3 Relationship to Environmental Justice

If CIA/SCE is effective, then the principles of Environmental Justice will be well served. The principles are derived from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and Presidential Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994.

The three principles of Environmental Justice are as follows:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority or low-income populations.

Executive Order 12898 addresses the following groups:

- African-American
- Hispanic
- Asian American
- Native American and Alaskan Native
- Low-Income

However, other groups need not be excluded. The FHWA Fact Sheet on Environmental Justice at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ejustice/facts/index.htm> says others such as the elderly, children, and persons with disabilities could also experience adverse impacts. CIA/SCE databases will include communities addressed by Environmental Justice, extending to the other groups noted in the FHWA Fact Sheet as much as possible.

To facilitate outreach to communities, a mobile display has been created that can be taken to community meetings.

4.4 Efficient Transportation Decision Making Process

In response to the requirement for “streamlining” in TEA-21, the Florida Department of Transportation’s Environmental Streamlining Working Group has initiated the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Process. The process will consist of a screening (review and comment) of transportation major capacity projects in the Long Range Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program by a team of environmental agency representatives. Currently, the environmental agencies are asked to comment on projects during the Program Development and Environmental phase. By then, the project has been planned for many years, and significant time and money have already been committed to it. A determination of adverse impacts by the environmental agencies could result in the costly delay or cancellation of a project. The advantage of the ETDM is that the environmental agencies are brought into the process much earlier. But EDTM is not limited to the natural environment. The screening will also include social and cultural impacts. Indeed, the screening for social and cultural impacts appears very similar to CIA/SCE. ETDM and CIA/SCE both try to determine social and cultural impacts at the planning level. The connection to public involvement is that both require public involvement early in the development of transportation plans.

ETDM is is being implemented through a memorandum of agreement signed by the numerous federal and state agencies, which have review and regulatory authority over development projects (includes transportation projects). The procedures will be incorporated into the MPO Procedures Manual. To carry out ETDM, a GIS system is being used to spatially display the planning area, natural resources, the built environment, and planned projects as well as serve as a repository for comments on the planned projects.

4.5 Development of Specific Public Involvement Strategies

4.5.1 Ideal Public Involvement

Ideal public involvement occurs when the public is involved in the development of solutions versus merely voting on solutions developed by planners, at the other extreme. When ideal public involvement occurs, transportation plans better reflect community values. Ideal public involvement would take place in the following scenario in which planners

- identify deficiencies in transportation facilities with the help of models, MPO committee members, and the public
- identify communities impacted by the deficiencies with the help of committee members, CIA/SCE information in GIS, and the public
- determine most effective mix of public involvement techniques (workshops, focus groups, etc.) to encourage public participation with advice from the Public Involvement Coordinator
- determine goals and objectives with MPO committees and public
- discuss alternative solutions with the public and MPO committees
- ask for recommendations from the public and MPO committees and
- present recommendations from the public and MPO committees to the MPO members. At this point, if alternatives were developed that did not have public support, the alternatives should be presented to the MPO members as well.

4.5.2 Development of Public Involvement Strategies

A public involvement strategy should be developed for each transportation plan produced by the Transportation Division. The format of the public involvement strategy can range anywhere from an outline of the selected techniques to a full documentation of the techniques and results written in a technical memorandum, as in the case of the Long Range Transportation Plan. If an outline is used, it should as a minimum address the public involvement strategy's objectives, target communities, and the selection of public involvement techniques.

It is the responsibility of the individual planner to develop the public involvement strategy, but the public involvement coordinator is available to provide advice. Additionally, the public involvement coordinator is responsible for maintaining the CIA/SCE databases and making them available to planners. For instance, the CIA/SCE

GIS maps can be used to identify the communities that will be impacted by a project and the community leaders who can serve as points of contact to disseminate information. The planner can then ensure that the community leaders receive information about planned projects. CIA/SCE will be conducted initially on the long range transportation plan cost feasible projects and SCE on the transportation improvement program. As time allows, CIA/SCE will be extended to the bicycle/pedestrian plan and the congestion management system plan. Staff will determine the applicability to the transit development plan and the transportation disadvantaged service plans. The ETDM process will apply to major capacity projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Keys in developing a public involvement strategy for a specific transportation plan are as follows:

- Develop the public involvement strategy early in the planning process
- Select a mix of public involvement techniques that help overcome barriers to communication*
- Give the public full access to information
- Make sure public involvement is planned at key decision points
- The best approach for public involvement is early and often

* An example of a barrier to communication can be the timing and location of public meetings. For instance, not everyone can come to City Hall at 1:00 pm in the afternoon and sit for two hours waiting to speak during the public forum at the end of the meeting. The time and location of the meeting doesn't necessarily have to change. However, MPO staff can make more of an effort to get out to the various communities and reach them through making presentations at their events. Members of the public might also feel more willing to participate in their own surroundings. Community outreach is a public involvement technique that helps overcome this barrier to communication.

V Documentation and Reporting of Public Involvement Activities

5.1 Past Documentation

We all know the job is not done until it's documented. Currently, MPO staff documents public involvement activities in the monthly progress report (also known as the PL report), which is submitted to FDOT and also reviewed by FHWA and FTA. However, the PL report may not fully capture all public involvement activities. For instance, no requirement has existed to document or report telephone conversations, visits to the office, e-mail responses, and responses by mail.

5.2 Documentation of Major Public Involvement Activities

Current documentation of public involvement activities by planners in the PL report will continue. These activities include writing public involvement plans, holding MPO Citizens' Advisory Committee meetings, organizing workshops, creating fliers and brochures, marketing services, setting up displays, etc. The Public Involvement Coordinator will organize the summaries of public involvement activities in the PL report.

5.3 Documentation of Contacts by Phone Calls, Office Visits, Mail and E-Mail

In order to document contacts with the public by phone or through office visits, the following new procedures will apply with adoption of this document:

- Planners will keep a telephone/office visit log. A log on a clipboard will be provided by the public involvement coordinator to each planner (see Appendix E). A separate telephone log is not necessary for commuter assistance planners who document calls and visits using the RidePro software. At the end of each month, the sheet for the month will be collected by the public involvement coordinator. Commuter assistance planners will provide a copy of the RidePro report at the end of each month to the public involvement coordinator.
- To document contacts with the public through e-mail and U.S. mail, throughout the month, planners will provide either an electronic or hard copy to the public involvement coordinator. The public involvement coordinator will consolidate the information for input to the PL report. If this information is provided in the RidePro report, commuter assistance planners need not provide individual copies to the public involvement coordinator.
- The public involvement coordinator will report information from the logs as part of part of the quarterly assessment of the effectiveness of public involvement techniques.

5.4 Reason for Documentation

Why all the documentation? Documentation allows the MPO to determine where it is expending its efforts in public involvement, how effective the efforts have been, and where the MPO might improve. In fact, documentation makes it possible to assess the effectiveness of public involvement techniques, the subject of the next chapter.

VI Assessment of the Effectiveness of Public Involvement Techniques

6.1 Why Assessment is Needed

The MPO has limited resources to accomplish its objectives. It must ensure that funds are spent in ways that will achieve the desired results. The MPO must periodically assess the effectiveness of its public involvement techniques to ensure the funds and time invested in public involvement activities are achieving the public involvement objectives of

- **Informing** the public of transportation planning meetings and other events
- **Educating** the public regarding their role in the transportation planning and decision making process
- **Involving** the public by providing opportunities early and often in the transportation planning and decision making process
- **Reaching** all segments of the community to inform, educate, and involve
- **Improving** the public involvement process

6.2 Data Collection for the Assessment

To aid in the assessment on a continuing basis, information will be collected from sign-in sheets that serve as mini-surveys. A sample is at Appendix C. It asks attendees at meetings to indicate how they heard about the meeting: through U.S. mail, website, newspaper ad, etc. The sign-in sheet format will be used for all public events including workshops, displays, outreach activities, etc.

6.3 Evaluation Criteria (or Indicators), Performance Objectives, and Strategies

If the assessment reveals that the public involvement objectives are not being achieved, then the techniques should be modified or changed. In order to assess effectiveness, for each public involvement technique, the following should be established: evaluation criteria or indicators, a performance objective, and strategies to achieve the performance objective. The assessments are related to achieving the following objectives of public involvement: informing, educating, involving, and reaching out to the public. Please refer to the tables at Appendix F.

6.4 Continuing Assessment

The public involvement coordinator will hold quarterly meetings to assess the effectiveness of public involvement techniques. During the meeting, strategies can be discussed for improving progress toward public involvement goals. The public involvement coordinator will record and implement changes requested by the staff.

VII Improving the Public Involvement Process

Regular assessment of the effectiveness of public involvement (PI) techniques has resulted in improvements in the MPO's Public Involvement processes. The assessment is a dynamic process, encouraging the development of innovative techniques to achieve the MPO's goals of informing, educating, and involving the public and reaching out to all communities in the planning area. Status of quarterly assessments will be reported in the monthly PL report.

In addition to accomplishing the assessment, other means are available to the MPO to improve its public involvement processes. Below are a few which have been already implemented or are underway and should continue.

- Exchange of public involvement best practices among MPOs
- Attendance of courses, not only about public involvement, but also to improve communication skills
- Taking every opportunity to learn about the communities that make up our planning area
- Documenting and reporting public involvement activities on a regular basis
- Joining groups such as the Toastmasters to improve speaking skills

These efforts to improve public involvement in the transportation planning and decision making process, in addition to regular assessments, should put the MPO on the road to better public involvement. As a result, transportation plans and services will better reflect community values and benefit all segments of the community equally – the goal of public involvement.

But, as General Eisenhower said when he was planning the Allied Invasion of Europe, "Plans are nothing. Planning is everything." This is a dynamic process. If you have ideas to improve the public involvement planning process, the MPO wants to hear from you. Let us know your thoughts by completing the comment form at Appendix G or contacting the Public Involvement Coordinator, Nancy Model, at 1-800-226-8914 ext 213, e-mail modeln@wfrpc.dst.fl.us. The MPO's Public Involvement Procedures Manual is available at www.wfrpc.dst.fl.us/pcmpo click on "documents." Thank you.

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Appendix A

Terminology and Acronyms

BPAC: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Council

CAC: Citizens' Advisory Committee

CFR: Code of Federal Regulations

CMS Plan: Congestion Management System Plan. A plan to help decision makers in selecting cost effective, short-term alternative strategies to enhance the mobility of people and goods.

Community Impact Assessment (CIA): A process to evaluate the effects of a transportation action on a community and its way of life. Recently, the Florida Department of Transportation has begun to use the term "Sociocultural Effects Evaluation."

Demographic community: A group of individuals who share a common heritage, culture, or characteristic.

Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process: The screening and review of major capacity projects in the Long Range Plan by environmental agencies. Screening for social and cultural impacts will also be accomplished.

Environmental Justice (EJ): Three fundamental principles derived from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Executive Order 12898, the Transportation Equity Act of 1998, and other U.S. Department of Transportation statutes and regulations. The principles are as follows: (1) To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations; (2) To ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and (3) To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

F.A.C.: Florida Administrative Code

FDOT: Florida Department of Transportation

FHWA: Federal Highway Administration

Focus group: A core group that can focus on a specific issue. For instance, a focus group was formed of major employers in the Panama City Area. The group met on a regular basis during development of the 2020 Plan Update.

F.S.: Florida Statutes

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

Geographic community: A group of individuals living within a geographic area.

ISTEA: Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

LRTP: Long Range Transportation Plan (also referred to as long range plan)

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization

Northwest Florida MPOs: Pensacola, Okaloosa-Walton, and Panama City MPOs

Organizational community: A group of individuals sharing a common interest or belief.

Panama City Urbanized Area: The southern portion of Bay County which meets the federal definition of a metropolitan planning organization area (greater than 50,000 population at a density of 1000 persons per square mile). The following municipalities are included in the urbanized area: Panama City, Panama City Beach, Callaway, Lynn Haven, Parker, Springfield, and Cedar Grove.

PCUATS: Panama City Urbanized Area Transportation Study. A twenty-year plan of transportation improvements.

Public Involvement: Public participation in the development of transportation plans for the Panama City Urbanized Area in such a manner that the outcome can be influenced.

Public Involvement Activities: Actual public involvement events planned or conducted by the MPO. Public involvement activities are reported monthly in the Progress Report (also known as the PL Report) to FDOT.

Public Involvement Procedures: The manual that serves as a guide for planning, encouraging, improving and reporting public involvement in the development transportation plans and services for the Panama City Urbanized Area.

Public Involvement Strategy: The collection of public involvement techniques selected by each planner for his/her specific plan update or development of a service such as commuter assistance. The strategy consists, for example, of a plan for fliers, display ads, public hearing, focus groups, and outreach events. The format of the strategy can range from an outline to a technical memorandum, depending upon the requirements of the specific plan. As a minimum, the public involvement strategy should address the objectives of public involvement, the target communities, and the selection of public involvement techniques.

Public Involvement Techniques: Ways of communicating with the public. Examples include press releases, committee meetings, workshops, website, displays, and focus groups.

Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE): The name chosen by the Florida Department of Transportation to replace “Community Impact Assessment.” Sociocultural effects screens will also be part of the Efficient Transportation Decision Making process.

TCC: Technical Coordinating Committee

TDLCB: Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

TDP: Transit Development Plan

TDSP: Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan

TEA-21: The Transportation Equity Act of 1998

TIP: Transportation Improvement Program

TMA: Transportation Management Area

Traditionally Underserved Communities: Communities which have been less active or not involved in the processes and decisions that shape their future. The MPO is striving to remove barriers to communication so that every community has an opportunity to participate in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

Transportation Summit: A meeting in which business and community leaders share their perspective on transportation plans and priorities.

Appendix B

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON FLORIDA'S OPEN GOVERNMENT LAWS

From the Florida Attorney General website: <http://legal.firn.edu/sunshine/faq/html>

The following questions and answers are intended to be used as a reference only - interested parties should refer to the Florida Statutes and applicable case law before drawing legal conclusions.

Q. What is the Sunshine Law?

A. Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine law provides a right of access to governmental proceedings at both the state and local levels. It applies to elected and appointed boards and applies to any gathering of two or more members of the same board to discuss some matter which will foreseeable come before that board for action. There is also a constitutionally guaranteed right of access.

Q. What are the requirements of the Sunshine Law?

A. The Sunshine law requires that 1) meetings of boards or commissions must be open to the public; 2) reasonable notice of such meetings must be given, and 3) minutes of the meeting must be taken.

Q. What agencies are covered under the Sunshine Law?

A. The Government-in-the-Sunshine Law applies to "any board or commission of any state agency or authority or of any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation or political subdivision. " Thus, it applies to public collegial bodies within the state at both the local as well as state level. It applies equally to elected or appointed boards or commissions.

Q. Are federal agencies covered by the Sunshine Law?

A. Federal agencies operating in the state do not come under Florida's Sunshine law.

Q. Does the Sunshine Law apply to the Legislature?

A. Florida's Constitution provides that meetings of the Legislature be open and noticed except those specifically exempted by the Legislature or specifically closed by the Constitution. Each house is responsible through its rules of procedures for interpreting, implementing and enforcing these provisions. Information on the rules governing openness in the Legislature can be obtained from the respective houses.

Q. Does the Sunshine Law apply to members-elect?

A. Members-elect of public boards or commissions are covered by the Sunshine law immediately upon their election to public office.

Q. What qualifies as a meeting?

A. The Sunshine law applies to all discussions or deliberations as well as the formal action taken by a board or commission. The law, in essence, is applicable to any gathering, whether formal or casual, of two or more members of the same board or commission to discuss some matter on which foreseeable action will be taken by the

public board or commission. There is no requirement that a quorum be present for a meeting to be covered under the law.

Q. Can a public agency hold closed meetings?

A. There are a limited number of exemptions which would allow a public agency to close a meeting. These include, but are not limited to, certain discussions with the board's attorney over pending litigation and portions of collective bargaining sessions. In addition, specific portions of meetings of some agencies (usually state agencies) may be closed when those agencies are making probable cause determinations or considering confidential records.

Q. Does the law require that a public meeting be audio taped?

A. There is no requirement under the Sunshine law that tape recordings be made by a public board or commission, but if they are made, they become public records.

Q. Can a city restrict a citizen's right to speak at a meeting?

A. Public agencies are allowed to adopt reasonable rules and regulations which ensure the orderly conduct of a public meeting and which require orderly behavior on the part of the public attending. This includes limiting the amount of time an individual can speak and, when a large number of people attend and wish to speak, requesting that a representative of each side of the issue speak rather than every one present.

Q. As a private citizen, can I videotape a public meeting?

A. A public board may not prohibit a citizen from videotaping a public meeting through the use of nondisruptive video recording devices.

Q. Can a board vote by secret ballot?

A. The Sunshine law requires that meetings of public boards or commissions be "open to the public at all times." Thus, use of preassigned numbers, codes or secret ballots would violate the law.

Q. Can two members of a public board attend social functions together?

A. Members of a public board are not prohibited under the Sunshine law from meeting together socially, provided that matters which may come before the board are not discussed at such gatherings.

Q. What is a public record?

A. The Florida Supreme Court has determined that public records are all materials made or received by an agency in connection with official business which are used to perpetuate, communicate or formalize knowledge. They are not limited to traditional written documents. Tapes, photographs, films and sound recordings are also considered public records subject to inspection unless a statutory exemption exists.

Q. Can I request public documents over the telephone and do I have to tell why I want them?

A. Nothing in the public records law requires that a request for public records be in writing or in person, although individuals may wish to make their request in writing to ensure they have an accurate record of what they requested. Unless otherwise exempted,

a custodian of public records must honor a request for records, whether it is made in person, over the telephone, or in writing, provided the required fees are paid. In addition, nothing in the law requires the requestor to disclose the reason for the request.

Q. How much can an agency charge for public documents?

A. The law provides that the custodian shall furnish a copy of public records upon payment of the fee prescribed by law. If no fee is prescribed, an agency is normally allowed to charge up to 15 cents per one-sided copy for copies that are 14" x 8 1/2" or less. A charge of up to \$1 per copy may be assessed for a certified copy of a public record. If the nature and volume of the records to be copied requires extensive use of information technology resources or extensive clerical or supervisory assistance, or both, the agency may charge a reasonable service charge based on the actual cost incurred.

Q. Does an agency have to explain why it denies access to public records?

A. A custodian of a public record who contends that the record or part of a record is exempt from inspection must state the basis for that exemption, including the statutory citation. Additionally, when asked, the custodian must state in writing the reasons for concluding the record is exempt.

Q. When does a document sent to a public agency become a public document?

A. As soon as a document is received by a public agency, it becomes a public record, unless there is a legislatively created exemption which makes it confidential and not subject to disclosure.

Q. Are public employee personnel records considered public records?

A. The rule on personnel records is the same as for other public documents ...unless the Legislature has specifically exempted an agency's personnel records or authorized the agency to adopt rules limiting public access to the records, personnel records are open to public inspection. There are, however, numerous statutory exemptions that apply to personnel records.

Q. Can an agency refuse to allow public records to be inspected or copied if requested to do so by the maker or sender of the documents?

A. No. To allow the maker or sender of documents to dictate the circumstances under which documents are deemed confidential would pennit private parties instead of the Legislature to determine which public records are public and which are not.

Q. Are arrest records public documents?

A. Arrest reports prepared by a law enforcement agency after the arrest of a subject are generally considered to be open for public inspection. At the same time, however, certain information such as the identity of a sexual battery victim is exempt.

Q. Is an agency required to give out information from public records or produce public records in a particular form as requested by an individual?

A. The Sunshine Law provides for a right of access to inspect and copy existing public

records. It does not mandate that the custodian give out information from the records nor does it mandate that an agency create new records to accommodate a request for information.

Q. What agency can prosecute violators?

A. The local state attorney has the statutory authority to prosecute alleged criminal violations of the open meetings and public records law. Certain civil remedies are also available.

Q. What is the difference between the Sunshine Amendment and the Sunshine Law?

A. The Sunshine Amendment was added to Florida's Constitution in 1976 and provides for full and public disclosure of the financial interests of all public officers, candidates and employees. The Sunshine law provides for open meetings and open records for all government agencies.

Q. How can I find out more about the open meetings and public records law?

A. Probably the most comprehensive guide to understanding the requirements and exemptions to Florida's open government laws is the Government-in-the-Sunshine manual compiled by the Attorney General's Office. The manual is updated each year and is available for purchase through the First Amendment Foundation in Tallahassee. For information on obtaining a copy, contact the First Amendment Foundation at (850) 222-3518.

<http://legal.firn.edu/sunshine/faq.html>

Appendix C

Sample Sign-In Sheet

Meeting Name _____

Date, Time & Location _____

Name	U.S. Mail address and e-mail address (if not provided before or if changed)	Phone and FAX numbers (if not provided before or if changed)	How did you hear about this meeting?						
			Agenda in mail	Newspaper ad	TV	Radio	Newsletter	Website	Other

Appendix D

PANAMA CITY URBANIZED AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

P. O. Box 486 (3435 North 12th Avenue)
Pensacola, Florida 32593-0486
Web Site: www.wfrpc.dst.fl.us/pcmpo

(850) 595-8910 O S/C 695-8910
1-800-226-8914
FAX (850) 595-8967

Hildrie Peel
Chairman

Cornel Brock
Vice Chairman

Staff to the MPO:
West Florida Regional Planning Council

February 28, 2001

TO: Local Government Planning Staffs and Agencies (distribution list attached)

Community Impact Assessment (CIA) in transportation planning is very important. It can help identify issues in communities potentially impacted by transportation plans long before the plans become projects. A comprehensive CIA effort early in the planning process results in a more effective use of tax dollars and better plans to meet the mobility needs of all citizens. CIA can also help the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) determine if transportation plans are equitably serving all segments of the population. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12898, and the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century, the MPO strives to ensure the following principles are integrated into transportation planning: (1) disproportionately high adverse impacts on minority and low income populations are avoided, mitigated or minimized; (2) all potentially affected communities fully and fairly participate in the transportation decision making process; and (3) benefits to minority and low-income populations are not denied or delayed. These are the three (3) guiding principles of Environmental Justice, which is the subject of Executive Order 12898 and which was discussed at length during a recent federal certification review of MPO transportation planning processes. If the CIA is effective, the above principles will be well served.

In this regard, MPO Staff is taking two actions: (1) encourage increased public involvement in transportation planning among minority and low-income populations and (2) build a database that can be used in CIA of transportation plans. The database will be used to develop a community profile, one of the five steps in the CIA process. The complete steps are as follows: (1) define the study area, (2) develop a community profile, (3) analyze the impacts of transportation plans, (4) identify solutions, and (5) document findings. These steps cannot be accomplished in isolation and would greatly benefit from the cooperation of your organization.

MPO Staff will contact you regarding public involvement events and building the database. Thank you for your consideration. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please contact Ms. Nancy Model at 1-800-226-8914, 850-595-8910 or send e-mail to modeln@wfrpc.dst.fl.us.

Sincerely,

Original signed

Chairman

Attachment: Distribution List

xc: Jim DeVries, FDOT Urban Planning Office

Distribution List

Bay County Planning Division
Bay County Traffic Engineering Division
City of Callaway City Attorney
Town of Cedar Grove Town Clerk
City of Lynn Haven Planning Coordinator
City of Lynn Haven Director of Development and Planning
City of Panama City Land Use and Code Enforcement
City of Panama City Community Development Program
City of Panama City Beach City Manager
City of Parker City Clerk
City of Springfield City Clerk

"...planning for the future transportation needs of the Panama City Urbanized Area and its municipalities..."

Appendix F

Assessment of Effectiveness of PI Techniques to Achieve Objective of Informing the Public

PI Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
1. Memo to local governments (posted for public viewing)	Percentage of people who have seen it based on results from sign-in survey	Increase/maintain number of people who have attended a meeting as the result of seeing the memo	Determine recipient. Discuss posting location and visibility to public. Consider redesign of the memo. Determine if memo is posted in a timely manner.
2. Press releases	Percentage of people who have seen or heard them based on results from sign-in survey	Increase/maintain number of people who have attended a meeting or event as the result of hearing or seeing a press release	Contact local news media. Discuss changes to get more air time/news space.
3. Display ads	Percentage of people who have seen them based on results from sign-in survey	Increase/maintain number of people who have attended an events or meeting as the result of seeing the display ads	Consider redesign of ad. Look at location of ad in the newspaper. Discuss with newspaper advertising staff.
4. Distribution of agendas	Percentage of people who indicate they came to a meeting because they received an agenda	Increase/maintain number of people who have attended a meeting as the result of receiving agendas (with or without enclosures)	Offer to add interested persons to the list of interested parties who receive agendas.
5. Marketing materials	Number of people who call in response to seeing a billboard, receiving a marketing package, etc.	Increase/maintain the number of people who call	Has target market been defined? Is the marketing means chosen most likely to get results? Consider changing media (from billboard to radio ads, for instance)
6. Fliers	Number of people who indicate they came to an event because they saw the flier	Increase/maintain the number of people who have attended a meeting or event because they saw the flier advertising an event	Consider redesign of the flier. Determine if flier was posted in a timely manner. Determine if distribution of the flier was adequate.
7. Announcements on internet	Number of hits on the website and	Increase/maintain the number of hits	Let the network administrator know

	webpages	on the website and webpages	when an advertisement, flier, etc. is available to post on the web page. Look for community calendar of events on other websites to post meeting/event announcements.
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Assessment of Effectiveness of PI Techniques to Achieve the Objective of Educating the Public

PI Technique	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
1. Agenda packages	Feedback comments regarding agenda packages	No negative comments	Once each year, survey MPO members and committee members regarding agenda packages. As a result of comments, take action as needed.
2. MPO Orientation Workshops	Feedback comments regarding orientation	No negative comments	After each orientation, survey attendees. Revise orientation accordingly.
3. Distribution of plans and summaries	Feedback comments regarding the plans or summaries	No negative comments	Try to get “early and often” public review of draft plans and provide a comment form for responses. When final plans or summaries are distributed, include a comment form. Consider comments for development of future plans and summaries.
4. Brochures	Brochures are picked up by people	Increase in number of brochures removed from display holders	Keep brochures current. Distribute brochures in places where the public can have access to them. Periodically, check on the status of the displays and replenish the supply of brochures as necessary. If brochures are not being picked up, then consider changing design of the brochure and locations of the displays. Encourage planners to take copies of the brochure when doing presentations.
5. Web page	Number of hits	Increase the number of hits	Keep information on web page current. If hits are decreasing, consider redesign of web page.

PI Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
6. Videos, CDs, audio tapes about transportation planning or services	Distribution or showing of video tape, CDs or audio tape material in presentations or events	Increase the distribution or showing of a video tape, CD or audio tape	Order video tapes, CDs or audio tapes and review for applicability to educational efforts of the MPO. If suitable, make video tapes, CDs, or audio tapes available for public viewing.
7. Newspaper articles or quotes	Appearance of newspaper articles or quotes by MPO members, committees or staff	Increase the number of newspaper articles or quotes by MPO members, committees, or staff	Contact news media about policies regarding submission of viewpoint articles. Maintain working relationship with news media so that they know the role of the MPO in transportation planning and who to contact.
8. Newsletter articles	Number of articles appearing in newsletters	Increase the number of articles appearing in newsletters	Look for opportunities to submit articles to local government, regional planning council, and government agency newsletters. Consider development of an MPO newsletter.
9. Annual report	Publication of an annual report	Publication of one annual report each year.	PI coordinator explores publication opportunities. PI coordinator drafts format for review and approval by the transportation director. Planners assist by providing information from their respective areas.
10. TV or radio appearances	MPO members, committee members, or staff appear on tv or radio	Increase in tv or radio appearances by MPO members, committee members, or staff	PI coordinator establishes contacts with local media representatives. Staff keeps abreast of newsworthy issues relating to transportation planning and decision making.
11. Responding to office visits, phone calls, e-mail and U.S. mail	Number of inquiries received through visits, phone, e-mail and U.S. mail	Increase inquiries from citizens remain at a reasonable number consistent with topical nature of	MPO staff document number of inquiries and topic.

		transportation issues	
12. Community events	Number of people who are contacted through the displays at community events	Increase in the number of people who signed in at displays during community events	PI coordinator keeps informed about local community events. PI coordinator organizes participation by MPO A sing-in sheet is part of the display
13. Transportation fairs	Number of people who are contacted through displays at transportation fairs	An increase in the number of people who signed in at the display during the transportation fair	PI coordinator organizes the fair with inputs from staff A sign-in sheet is part of the fair displays
14. Tour of transportation facilities	Number of people on the tour	An increase in the number of people on tours	Staff and PI coordinator look for educational tour opportunities with a theme related to current issues A sign-in sheet is part of the tour

Assessment of the Effectiveness of PI Techniques to Achieve the Objective of Involving the Public

PI Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
1. MPO Meetings	Public attendance at MPO meetings	Increase/maintain public attendance at MPO meetings	Look at the time and location. Look at accessibility of meeting room. Review meeting announcements for timeliness, clarity, and distribution. Consider redesign of meeting announcements.
2. Committee meetings	Public attendance at MPO committee meetings	Increase/maintain public attendance at MPO committee meetings	Canvass community groups for representatives. Ask MPO members to appoint additional CAC members.
3. Public hearings/forums	Public attendance at MPO public hearings/forums	Increase/maintain in public attendance at public hearing /forums	Look at time and location. Look at accessibility of meeting room Review meeting announcements for timeliness, clarity, and distribution. Consider redesign of announcements.
4. Workshops	Public attendance at workshops	Increase/maintain in public attendance at workshops.	Look at the time and location. Look at accessibility of meeting room. Review meeting announcements for timeliness, clarity, and distribution. Consider redesign of meeting announcements.
5. Surveys or comments forms	Number of comments	Increase in the number of comments	Make sure a survey or comment form is available at every event. Keep survey forms simple and quick to complete. Make sure they stand out.
6. Focus groups	Number of people involved in focus groups.	Increase the number of people involved in focus groups.	Solicit focus group members from community organizations.

			<p>Ask focus group members for recommendations for additional members.</p> <p>Advertise the focus group and show the relationship between the goals of the focus group and the community.</p> <p>Show the focus group members the outcome of their involvement.</p>
7. Outreach events	Number of people attending outreach events.	Increase in the number of people attending outreach events.	<p>PI coordinator develop a network of contacts for outreach events.</p> <p>PI coordinator schedule and organize outreach events in neighborhoods.</p> <p>Keep a sign-in sheet of attendees.</p>
8. Charrettes	Public attendance at charrettes	Increase in public attendance at charrettes	<p>Review announcements.</p> <p>Look at meeting time and location.</p> <p>Look at accessibility.</p> <p>Redesign announcements if necessary.</p> <p>Keep a sign-in sheet at charrette.</p>
9. Visioning	Public attendance at visioning	Increase in public attendance at visioning	<p>Review announcements.</p> <p>Look at meeting time and location.</p> <p>Look at accessibility.</p> <p>Redesign visioning announcements if necessary.</p> <p>Keep a sign-in sheet at visioning meetings.</p>

Assessment of PI Techniques to Achieve the Objective of Reaching Out to the Public

PI Techniques	Indicator	Performance Objective	Strategies to Achieve Performance Objective
1. Media advertisements with distribution in specific community groups	Public attendees who indicate they saw or heard the ads in community-oriented media	Increase in number of attendees representing the diversity of the MPO planning area.	PI coordinator ensure ads are placed in publications oriented toward specific community groups PI coordinator devise a survey to help assess how attendees knew of the event
2. Newsletter articles	Calls from the public in response to newsletter articles placed within community newsletters	Increase in calls in response to articles placed in community newsletters	PI coordinator develop list of newsletters and organize submission of articles with planners
3. Involvement from diverse community groups	Attendees to MPO meetings or events who were invited from community groups	Increase in representation from diverse community groups to reflect composition of the planning area	Attend meetings of community groups and solicit involvement in the transportation planning process. Build a network of contacts in different communities.
4. Creation of innovative ways to achieve PI	New methodologies are devised to which people of all ages and groups can relate	Increase in attendance at PI events such as outreach, displays, etc.	PI coordinator try some of the new methods such as game playing during Transportation Fairs and outreach events
5. Community Outreach	Outreach events include groups that have been traditionally underserved	Increase in outreach events in community civic groups, schools, etc.	PI coordinator review PI plans to ensure outreach is included. PI coordinator ensure MPO educational efforts extend to all community groups.
5. Means to assess disproportionate adverse impacts	Impacts are revealed	Increase in community feedback/comments concerning impact of transportation plans	MPO implement Community Impact Assessment.

Fold along lines and tape shut

Postage

Panama City MPO
Public Involvement Coordinator
P. O. Box 486
Pensacola, Florida 32595-0486
