

# **Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO)**

## **Public Participation Plan**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) requires that the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) adopt a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information; timely public notice; full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement for the public. This process must address public involvement when developing or modifying the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and when preparing Alternative Access Studies, Location Studies, or Major Investment Studies.

The Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO) has been designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the metropolitan Topeka planning area. As part of the planning process the MTPO periodically undertakes a variety of corridor studies and other specialized planning projects that require public input. It is necessary to solicit public input when making decisions on projects that could have major impacts on persons residing within the MTPO area. By considering both professional criteria (e.g. engineering standards, traffic engineering, right-of-way issues, funding limits, etc) and public comments, the MTPO has the opportunity to address professional criteria within a model planning process that is sensitive to neighborhood needs and uses public involvement effectively. Based on requirements within the planning regulations, this Public Participation Plan was developed for the use of the MTPO. The PPP outlines the process for public involvement in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP) and other major Transportation Studies by the MTPO

This document contains the adopted public involvement policies of the MTPO.

### **Public Participation Goal:**

The goal of the Public Participation Plan is to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation service, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

### **Public Involvement Objectives**

The basic Public Involvement Objectives of the MTPO are as follows:

- Develop simple yet numerous avenues for encouraging participation.

- Improve relationships between private and public sector groups at different levels of government and promote cooperative working groups.
- Utilize visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs.
- Provide timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.
- Provide adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.
- Coordinate with the statewide transportation and local governments planning public involvement and consultation processes.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DEFINITIONS**

### **United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)**

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) is the primary Federal Department responsible for national transportation development and funding. The USDOT includes under its agencies the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as well as other Federal transportation-related agencies. The FHWA and the FTA review the transportation planning and project activities of both metropolitan planning organizations and state transportation departments. These two USDOT agencies provide funding for highway and transit projects as well as for transportation planning activities.

### **Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)**

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) coordinates and develops statewide transportation systems. KDOT also acts as a conduit for Federal funding sent to MPO's and local governments for transportation projects. Virtually all major transportation projects that occur within the Topeka Area are coordinated between the MTPO and KDOT.

### **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

The creation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations was first mandated under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, was again mandated by the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), and is also required under the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). MPO's are mandated for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000 and are intended to make determinations regarding funding of improvements to the region's transportation system outside the local political arena. The MPO sets regional transportation policies and priorities.

### **Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO)**

In the Topeka Area the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO), and the Topeka Planning Department provides staff support to the MTPO.

### **Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority (TMTA)**

The Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority is the transit partner of the MTPO, which provides regional transit planning activities for the MTPO area.

### **Technical Advisory Committee**

The MTPO has one standing technical advisory group called the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC meets regularly and is composed of local government and transportation agency staff. This group is charged with providing the best professional transportation planning recommendations to the policy board for consideration. The TAC along with the MTPO Staff is also charged with implementing the policies set by the MTPO Policy Board. However, the TAC can also be used in the public involvement process and is often the group that arranges and coordinates the various public involvement activities undertaken by the MTPO. The TAC can provide the MTPO Policy Board and staff with recommendations on how to effectively run a public participation program which is in conformance with federal and state regulations.

Specifically, the TAC reviews and makes recommendations regarding draft transportation planning documents, including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). During the course of developing these documents, public involvement activities take place.

### **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan comprises the federally required regional transportation plan for the Topeka Area. This plan sets the vision and policies for the region's multi-modal transportation system. The purpose of the LRTP is to provide an overview of transportation needs in the community, now and in the future, and to provide policy guidance in developing projects and the programming of transportation funding. It provides at least a twenty-year horizon, must be based upon a traffic model that accurately reflects conditions in the planning region, and must be based on reasonable estimates of future funding. The Plan is reviewed annually, and updated at least once every five years.

This plan may also be adopted by local governments and become the Transportation Element of the Topeka Comprehensive Plan and/or the Shawnee County Comprehensive Plan.

### **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The MTPO adopts a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) annually. This document outlines work tasks and staffing responsibilities, describes activities to be completed during upcoming year, and lists the status of current and recently completed planning activities. It contains a budget identifying planning priorities for the year.

### **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) provides a multi-year listing of transportation projects that are federally funded, are of regional significance, or both. The TIP document is developed by the MTPO in cooperation with KDOT, TMTA, and City and County governments. The TIP is federally required to be a minimum four- year span listing of projects and be updated at least every four years.

### **Environmental Justice and MTPO Compliance Methods**

The MTPO shall follow a public policy goal of ensuring that adverse human or environmental effects of governmental activities do not fall disproportionately upon minority or low-income populations. Environmental Justice became federal policy in 1994 when President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898, which directed all major federal agencies to ensure that the spirit of the order is reflected in all of their activities.

Environmental Justice (EJ) means that transportation system changes such as roadway improvements shall be studied carefully to determine the nature, extent, and incidence of probable impacts, both positive and negative.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations was issued to ensure that all federally funded transportation-related programs, policies, or activities having the potential to adversely affect human health or the environment involves a process that explicitly considers the impacts on minority and low-income populations. An extensive explanation of Environmental Justice can be found in the current TIP.

In compliance with EJ standards and to assure that the public has access to full information concerning human health and environmental impacts, the MTPO will include representatives of local Neighborhood Improvement Associations (NIA's), the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on its contact list for project proposals and public hearing announcements.

### **Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency**

#### **Section 1. Goals**

The Federal Government provides and funds an array of services that can be made accessible to otherwise eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language. The Federal Government is committed to improving the accessibility of these services to eligible LEP persons, a goal that reinforces its equally important commitment to promoting programs and activities designed to help individuals learn English. To this end, each federal agency shall examine the services it provides and develop and implement a system by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those services consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of the agency, each federal agency shall also work to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance (recipients) provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries. To assist the agencies with this endeavor, the Department of

Justice issued this general guidance document (LEP Guidance), which sets forth the compliance standards that recipients must follow to ensure that the programs and activities they normally provide in English are accessible to LEP persons and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin in violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and its implementing regulations. As described in the LEP Guidance, recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons.

For more information; <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/Pubs/eolep.htm>

The MTPO will evaluate the need for improving access to services for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). LEP Compliance will extend to all MTPO public involvement communication medium. The MTPO will attempt to provide adequate services for LEP populations given 24 hours advanced notice. These services may include, but will not be limited to utilization of an interpreter, or translated documents. In compliance with Title VI equal opportunity provisions, language pertaining to Equal opportunity and access to all, will be printed on all public notices announcing MTPO meetings, events, or solicitations for input.

#### **INTERESTED PARTIES & TARGETED GROUPS INCLUSION IN PLANNING PROCESS**

The MTPO through its public participation process will solicit the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation system, such as elderly, disabled, low income and minority households who may have difficulty accessing or participating in community planning activities. Other specialized groups that may be affected by the transportation plan and representatives of the general public will also be included in the planning process. When appropriate, some or all of the following entities shall be included. The processes used to accomplish these goals will be as follows:

- 1 Periodically solicit and present transportation issues at local Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) and Neighborhood Associations (NA) meetings.
- 2 Periodically solicit and present transportation issues at the Community Advisory Council (CAC).
- 3 Periodically solicit and present transportation issues at the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILREC)
- 4 Periodically solicit and present transportation issues at meetings of the Paratransit Council.
- 5 Periodically solicit and present to representatives of the KAW Valley Bicycle Club.
- 6 Periodically solicit and present transportation issues to local senior citizen organizations.
- 7 Consult local Parks and Recreation Departments for trail planning information.

Including these groups in the public participation process will be accomplished by contacting representatives of the appropriate organizations when issues arise that may be of concern to them. These entities will be included on notification lists for new projects, and amendments to the TIP, and UPWP, as well as new MTP's. The MTPO staff will also make efforts to attend the regularly scheduled meetings of these organizations when deemed necessary.

### **Targeted Groups Definitions**

#### **Neighborhood Improvement Associations (NIA's) and Neighborhood Associations (NA's)**

Topeka's target redevelopment area is divided into 17 territories called Neighborhood Improvement Associations (NIA's). Each NIA has elected officers and holds monthly meetings. These meetings provide a forum for communicating local needs and concerns as well as advising city government officials about plans and policies the neighborhood is considering. Recommendations from the NIA's are considered in setting priorities for the provision of city services such as street paving, zoning changes, drainage issues, and traffic controls. Neighborhood Improvement Associations have initiated and supported the development of community centers, senior citizen centers and housing units, parks, and special neighborhood incentive programs. These groups have also been very active in neighborhood planning efforts undertaken in the last several years. Traffic and circulation issues have been discussed during those planning projects.

Neighborhood Improvement Associations also provide a forum to reach out to low-income parts of the community and inform residents in those parts of Topeka about MTPO activities taking place that may impact their lives. In the past, the Topeka MPO has made special efforts to inform the NIA's through the CAC about major MPO projects. Using the NIA's as a tool to reach low-income residents with information about the regional transportation planning process will continue in the future.

Similarly, Neighborhood Associations (NA's) provide representation for residents in areas of the community that do not meet the low/mod. Income guidelines for NIA's, but serve many of the same functions. There are 18 Neighborhood Associations in Topeka. These groups represent distinct neighborhoods that are often facing transportation related issues. These groups are a tool for outreach to other neighborhoods in Topeka that are not low-income areas but have concerns about mobility.

Between the 17 NIA's and the 18 NA's the most heavily urbanized part of the metropolitan Topeka planning area is covered by organized groups that can provide public input into the regional transportation planning process.

#### **Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILREC)**

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILREC) is an organization which assists Topekans with disabilities. The MTPO will work with this organization to solicit information of the needs of the local ADA populations with regards to mobility within the Topeka area. Members of this group currently participate on MTPO advisory boards.

**Paratransit Council Inc.**

A committee of Coordinated Transit District #2 addresses transportation needs of riders with special needs. Paratransit services are coordinated through the Topeka Metropolitan transit Authority (TMTA). Members of this group currently participate on MTPO advisory boards.

**Kaw Valley Bicycle Club**

The Kaw Valley Bicycle Club is a bicycle touring organization of the Topeka Kansas area. They sponsor annual tours and weekly bike rides. Membership is open to the public through their website. Members of this group currently participate on MTPO advisory boards.

**Senior Citizen Centers**

Topeka has various senior centers throughout the city. They include The East Topeka Senior Center, The Topeka LULAC Multipurpose Senior Center Inc., Papans Landing Senior Center, and many others. Efforts will be made to reach out to representatives of these organizations. Members of this group currently participate on MTPO advisory boards.

**Topeka Branch NAACP**

The Topeka Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is an organization made up of primarily minority individuals and has over 300 members in the Topeka area. The NAACP is on the MTPO email list and receives all information with regards to Transportation issues within the MTPO Area. The MTPO staff also give period presentations to the NAACP group at their monthly meetings. Members of this group currently participate on MTPO advisory boards.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY – STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR MTPO REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

There are various public involvement methods discussed in this document which can be used to gain public input on draft MPO documents. Each method should be evaluated and adapted to best fit the needs of the communities from which input is being solicited. However, it is unlikely that all of the methods described herein will be used for every required MTPO document. The following sections outline the public participation procedures that will be utilized to provide a “good faith” effort to allow public input before vital MTPO documents are approved. These public involvement procedures and opportunities will be conducted, as warranted, before a required MTPO document is approved and set as regional transportation planning policy. All meeting facilities used for public hearing as well as all other meetings will be ADA accessible and specialized assistance or document formatting can be provided with 24-hours prior notice. Meeting times will also be at locations and times that are convenient for the public, in order to allow for maximum public participation. These times will usually be in the early evenings or during regular meeting times of the affected groups (e.g. NIA, NA, paratransit council meetings). Meetings will be held at central locations throughout the city.

### **Public Notices of MTPO Meetings**

All announcements of MTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and MTPO Policy Board (MTPO) meetings shall be released to the public through one or more of the City of Topeka's regular outlets: weekly calendar, on the City of Topeka/MTPO website, and via Channel 4. Public meeting notices shall be posted at least one week prior to the meeting. In addition, the agendas and minutes for TAC and MTPO meetings will be posted on the MTPO website and be available for public inspection at the MTPO office soon after they are approved.

Announcements for public involvement meetings for proposed updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Public Participation Plan (PPP) and any other required MTPO document shall be posted on the MTPO website at least one week before the meeting and also included on the weekly meeting calendar published by the City of Topeka. Other methods of announcing these meetings may also be used. The public will be apprised of this posting through our contacts mailing lists.

### **Public Participation "Toolbox"**

The following is a list of techniques for public participation that may be utilized during the public participation process. These techniques are intended to enhance the public participation process however, not all techniques will necessarily be used for every situation.

1. **Visualization techniques** When appropriate the MTPO will utilize GIS maps, charts, graphs, Power Point presentations, or pictures to illustrate plans or ideas used in plans or drafts. These tools may be used on the City of Topeka website, as well as hard copy presentation available for viewing at public meetings.
2. **Web Page** The city of Topeka maintains a web site that hosts the MTPO. Using this internet tool, the MTPO's planning documents, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, contact information, and a variety of other information is made available to the public. The website will also contain MTPO Policy Board members, Technical Advisory Committee members and other information for public review. Plans are also being considered to expand the interactive nature of the City of Topeka/MTPO website to include an interactive public mapping interface to view the locations of projects both on-going and those projected to be undertaken in the near future. The public is able to submit comments on these plans via email correspondence. The public can also request to be added to the Interested Parties Contact list as well.
3. **Planning Workshops** The purpose of the Planning Workshop is to have subject experts present information about the topic and to gain public reaction to it. The focus of the workshops is to educate the public and public leaders. Planning workshops should have a certain topic, but staff should be prepared to field other questions related to mobility in the region.



4. **Public Access Television** The City of Topeka broadcasts regularly on its government access cable channel, Channel 4. The availability of a variety of City services and meeting announcements are broadcast on this channel. This television channel is available to all Topeka Area residents who subscribe to Cox communications. The MTPO uses the Topeka Planning Department to staff its operations, and the MTPO staff can post information on Topeka Channel 4.
5. **News Media Contacts and Press Releases** The MTPO staff will work with the City of Topeka and local media outlets as needed to inform the new media of upcoming MTPO public involvement events. Press releases announcing the approval of major MTPO documents (MTP, TIP, etc.) and notices announcing public information meetings for draft MTPO products will be released through these public involvement methods.
6. **Surveys** Between November 2000 and April 2001 the Metropolitan Planning Department conducted a series of Visual Preference Surveys in conjunction with A. Nelessen Associates of Princeton, New Jersey. The results of that survey have provided a great deal of primary information about the type of community the region's residents want to see. The MTPO may similarly use survey instruments in conjunction with public involvement activities. Various types of survey instruments and distribution techniques will be considered in designing MTPO surveys.
7. **Pamphlets** The MTPO will consider preparing and distributing pamphlets that provide a general overview of the MTPO, and the processes for developing and modifying transportation plans, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the rationale for preparing studies for a specific project (with assumed financial assistance from project sponsors for project related information). The pamphlets, and future editions, will be distributed, at a minimum, to the organizations and groups identified. In addition, pamphlets shall be available to the public at City and County offices, the Public Library, the internet, and other locations as deemed necessary and accessible.

The MTPO staff will be available to make presentations on the information contained in the pamphlets to the organizations and identified or any other group that requests a presentation.

#### **Basic Process for Public Input, Review and MTPO Approval of Required MTPO Documents**

The Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO) at a minimum shall be subject to the following public involvement process for the review and approval of all federally required MTPO documents:

1. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall be given an opportunity to review and comment on the draft and recommend its release for public comment.

2. The draft document shall be made available for public review through the placement of paper copies at the MTPO staff office (Topeka Planning Department Office) and the placement of an electronic copy on the City of Topeka/MTPO website. MTPO staff contact information will also be included with the draft document in case there are any further questions. Notice of document availability is provided through announcements posted on the website, and sent to public agencies, neighborhood groups, or other organizations that have expressed interest in the document.
3. After public information meetings and other public involvement activities are completed, the MTPO Staff will prepare a hearing draft of the document, addressing any public comments that were received, if any, and present this draft document back to the TAC for their consideration.
4. After the TAC considers and approves the post- public comments hearing draft of the document it will then be sent on to the MTPO Policy Board for their review, possible revision, and approval.
5. When final MTPO Policy board action is taken on a required document the MTPO Staff shall send a letter requesting approval of the Board's action (i.e. approval of amendments, new TIPs and UPWPs) to the Kansas Department of Transportation. The MTPO Staff shall send those agencies copies of the MTPO approved document. In the case of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, (MTP) once adopted by the MTPO the document becomes the official Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the metropolitan Topeka planning area, and requires no approval from any other agencies. This same document will also be forwarded to the City of Topeka, Shawnee County, KDOT, FHWA and FTA for informational purposes. The MTP may then be adopted by the City of Topeka and Shawnee County as the Transportation Elements of the comprehensive Plans for those jurisdictions.
6. The approved document will then be posted on the City of Topeka/MTPO website for public viewing.

### **Additional Public Participation Standards and Procedures**

In addition to the Standards discussed above, the MTPO will also provide other participation opportunities to the public. Many of these efforts are mandated by SAFETEA-LU. The following is a list of communication methods that the MTPO will use when deemed necessary or appropriate.

The MTPO will maintain an up-to-date database of interested parties (as previously defined) so that they may be notified when plans and studies are being carried out, so that they may have reasonable opportunities to comment on these transportation plans and products and participate in planning activities, subcommittees, panels, and focus groups.

## **Public Comment Period**

- Any significant modification or amendment to the Public Participation Plan requires a forty-five (45) day public comment period.
- Adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) will require a thirty (30) day public comment period.
- A change or addition to a major Federal Transit Administration funded project, a major Federal Highway Administration funded project, or the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) requires a fourteen (14) day public comment period.
- Transportation Improvement Program adoption will require a thirty (30) day public comment period. A fourteen (14) day public comment period will be required for TIP amendments.
- Adoption of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) will require a minimum of (20) days for public comment. UPWP amendments will require a fourteen (14) day public comment period.
- Other federally required documents needing approval by the MTPO, will have a minimum length fourteen (14) day public comment period.

## **Additional Public Comment Periods**

If responses to public comments results in the MTPs, TIPs, UPWPs and other plan/program documents or amendments being significantly different from the draft document which was sent out for public review, an additional public comment period may be held. Determination of the need for an additional comment period will be made by the MTPO

The public comment periods for the MTPO required documents will begin on the day that a public notice soliciting comments on the draft document is posted on the MTPO website and in paper form at the MTPO office. Public comment period notices may also be posted at other locations, run on Channel 4, printed in local newspapers, or announced at various meetings attended by MTPO staff.

### **Any press release/advertisement will contain:**

1. A general description of the proposed policy, amendment or official action;
2. Where information on the policy, amendment or official action can be reviewed or obtained;
3. When the public comment period begins and ends;
4. Where comments on the policy, amendment or official action can be submitted;
5. When and where the discussion and/or public hearing on a proposed action is scheduled;
6. The specific dates and location for the review and recommendation by the MTPO Technical Committee; and,
7. The name, title, and telephone number of a specific contact person.

## **Documented public comments and recommendations**

An appendix containing significant oral and written comments and responses will be made part of the final document. Written response letters will be sent to citizens who have submitted comments, notifying them that their comments have been received and considered in the preparation of the subject document or amendment.

### **Administrative Revisions**

Non-amendment changes to Planning Documents requiring Public Input can be done using a simplified procedure. Such changes only require that notice of the change be included in the published agenda of the MTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the MTPO Policy Board meetings where the change will be considered.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FOR OTHER MAJOR STUDIES**

The Public Involvement Plan for preparing a major study is intended to provide a proactive, early, and continuous process that is tailored for each study and includes the public in the analysis of alternatives and selection of the best alternative.

A study may be required for major metropolitan transportation investments. A major metropolitan transportation investment means a high-type highway or transit improvement of substantial cost that is expected to have a significant effect on capacity, traffic flow, level of service, or mode share at the transportation corridor or sub area scale. Consultation among the MTPO, Kansas Department of Transportation, TMTA, FHWA, FTA, and any other reviewing agencies may lead to the designation of other proposed improvements as major investments beyond the examples listed below. Examples of such investments could generally include but are not limited to; Major Corridor Studies, Major Transit Studies, or Major Bike/Pedestrian Studies.

When any implementing agency or the MTPO intends to prepare a major study, the public involvement process described below will be followed at a minimum. The sponsor agency shall meet with MTPO staff prior to formulation of the PPP for consultation and coordination to include:

The staffs of the implementing agency and MTPO will use a proactive approach for contacting local groups and citizens, neighborhood organizations and other local news agencies.

The notice of intent will contain a general description of the Study and announce the time and location of a meeting to determine the extent of the analysis and public roles in the cooperative process.

Public involvement procedures described herein will also apply to these major studies.

## **COORDINATION**

The MTPO, KDOT, TMTA and County departments will coordinate through regular consultation their metropolitan public involvement processes to enhance public consideration of issues, plans and programs and to reduce redundancies and costs.

- KDOT offers the 'Sharing the Future Plan' on its website, a public information guide.
- **Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority (TMTA) public participation techniques**

Below is a listing of additional public involvement techniques currently used by the TMTA:

### **Major Service Changes**

Examples: fare increase, fixed route changes, service cuts

Public notice detailing information (the proposal, ways to comment) and public meeting schedule (place, timeline) distributed 7-14 days in advance of 1<sup>st</sup> meeting at Quincy Street Station, TMTA website, on fixed route buses, and other locations specifically affected by the proposed change.

TMTA hosts at different locations (Quincy Street Station, community building, public library) two to three public meetings including a public hearing at the TMTA monthly Board Meeting. Meetings are scheduled to take place once a week beginning about one month prior to the scheduled monthly Board meeting.

Public comment is open from the time public notices are distributed through the close of the public hearing at the scheduled Board Meeting. Public comments are recorded and summarized to the Board before action is taken on the service change.

Press releases detailing the proposals/recommendations and all information pertaining to the service change are also distributed to local media outlets including television, radio, and newspaper.

Following action by the Board, TMTA distributes public notices at the above mentioned locations to announce the Board's decision, and any time schedule for implementing the Board's action.

### **Minor Service Changes**

Examples: detours, run cuts or expansion

These changes are continuous and do not require a public meeting or hearing. TMTA posts notices ASAP on the TMTA website and at Quincy Street Station stating the minor change.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS ACT AND AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The MTPO will ensure that the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, are met and that appropriate actions are taken during all phases of public involvement to comply with the Americans with disabilities Act. In addition, an attempt will be made to seek out representation for both the MTPO and the Citizens review Committee from segments of the population who are traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including, but not limited to, low-income and minority households.

## **REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The MTPO will establish a review committee to periodically (or at least every three years) evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation program. The Review Committee will make recommendations concerning the development of and modification to transportation plans, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the preparation of Studies on specific projects (when project sponsors provide the appropriate information for review and recommendation), and various MPO policy and procedural changes. The role of the review committee will be to provide public involvement in addition to the processes outlined in the Public Notification procedures outlined herein.

The review committee shall be comprised of members of the policy board, elected officials and representatives of the traditionally underserved populations of which the MTPO represents.