



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

2017 UPDATE



APPROVED BY THE BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

MAY 10, 2017

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The Bryan-College Station MPO thanks the Ozarks Transportation Organization and the River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization for the ideas in their Public Engagement Plans.

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WELCOME

Thank you for taking the time to look at our Public Engagement Plan. The Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) represents a diverse community and welcomes the thoughts and input of community advocates, citizens, businesses, students, etc.



We believe that good decision-making occurs when all factors are fully considered. While much of our information comes from technical analyses, it is clear that the human experience provides important details that help to understand and support the data. This means gathering input from people throughout our communities to ensure we are aware of the needs that exist and effects of projects that might be developed.

We would like you to be aware of the work we are doing and welcome any input that you can provide in whichever way is most comfortable for you - that may be through email, visiting our website, giving us a call or attending one of our meetings.

CONTACT THE Bryan/College Station MPO:
Email: comment@bcsmpto.org
Website: www.bcsmpto.org
Phone: 979-260-5298

POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following statement will constitute the general guide for activities of the MPO Board and staff in implementing a public participation program under federal and state mandates:

It shall be the policy of the Bryan/College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization that all segments of the population of Brazos County population will have reasonable access to the technical and policy processes that support the development of the transportation plans, programs and policies of the MPO. To this end, the MPO will endeavor to educate, inform and directly involve the public in the decision-making activities during all phases of the planning process. Furthermore, the MPO will make a concerted effort to educate, inform and include the traditionally underserved segments of the population.

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (also known as a transportation planning organization) is created in urbanized areas that have a population greater than 50,000. The role of an MPO is to coordinate transportation improvements for the designated Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).

INTRODUCTION

The Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization (BCS MPO) is the federally designated regional transportation planning organization that serves as a forum for cooperative transportation decision-making by state and local governments, and regional transportation and planning agencies. MPOs are charged with maintaining and conducting a “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive” regional transportation planning and project programming process for BCS MPO’s study area. The study area is defined as the area projected to become urbanized within the next 20 years. Please see Exhibit 1 for the study area boundary.

The BCS MPO Policy Committee includes:

- local elected official from Brazos County
- local elected official from City of Bryan
- local elected official from City of College Station
- representative from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Bryan District
- representative from Texas A&M University

The MPO’s Technical Advisory Committee includes technical staffs from:

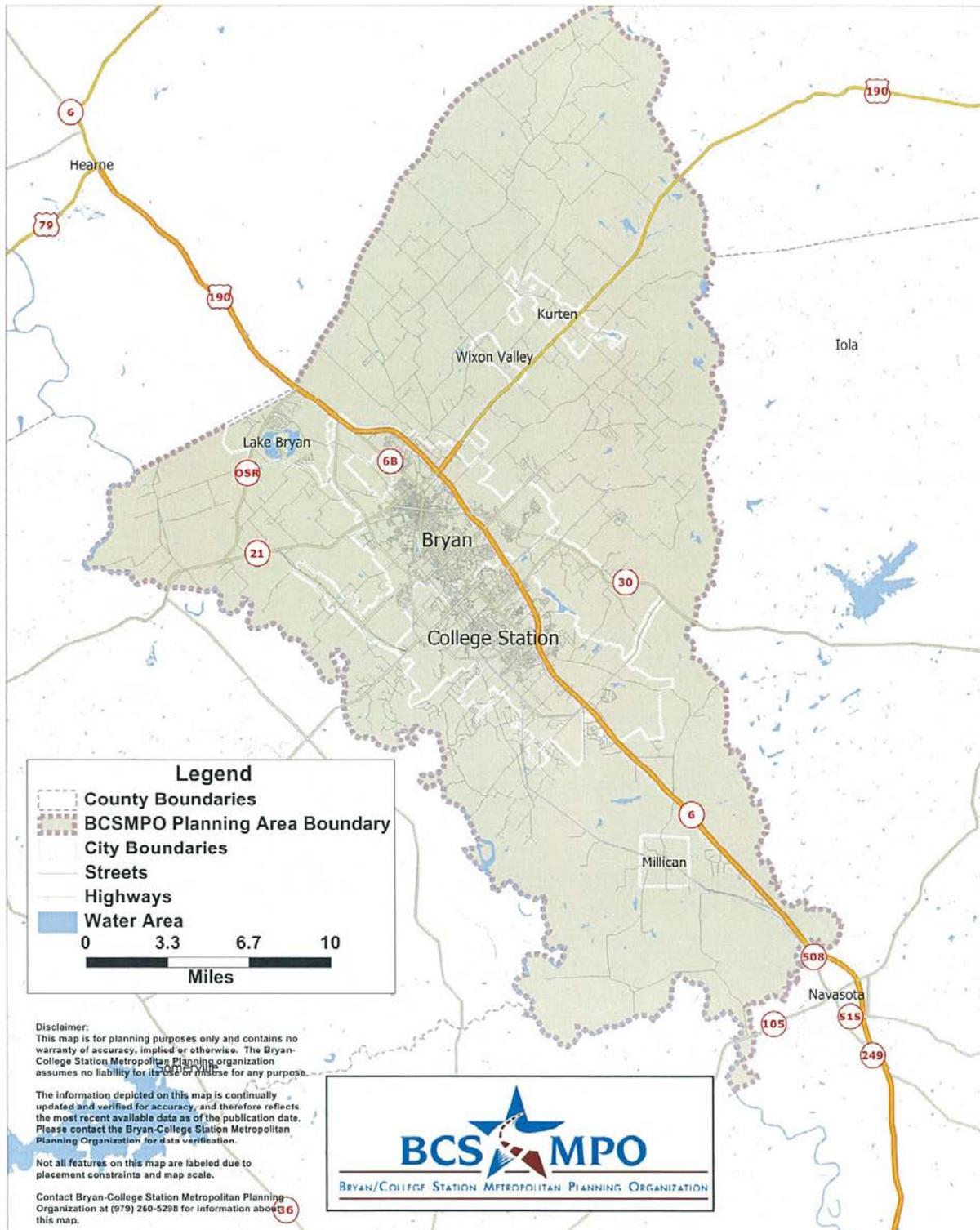
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Bryan District
- City of Bryan
- City of College Station
- Brazos County
- Brazos Transit District
- Texas A&M University

The Active Transportation Advisory Panel (ATAP) includes representatives from:

- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Bryan District
- City of Bryan
- City of College Station
- Brazos County
- Brazos Transit District
- Texas A&M University
- Citizen-based bicycling groups
- Local Human Service agencies

The Policy Committee establishes MPO policy, reviews and approves all planning studies and documents completed under the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and ensures proper completion and maintenance of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The Technical Committee provides technical review, comments, and recommendations on draft MPO plans, programs, studies, and issues for consideration by the Policy Board. The Active Transportation Advisory Panel provides technical review and advice regarding bicycle and pedestrian plans and programs and advocates that bicycle and pedestrian projects conform with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Exhibit 1: BCS MPO Metropolitan Planning Area Boundary



The FAST Act, “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act”, signed into law on December 4, 2015, contains specific language outlining federal requirements regarding public involvement processes and procedures. In general, the FAST Act legislation built upon previous transportation

legislation (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991), Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998), Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005), Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2012), Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (2015)) to provide states and metropolitan planning organizations specific direction in conducting and promoting broad-based public involvement activities. Fast Act Legislation (Public Law 114-94) requires metropolitan planning organizations to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, intercity bus operators, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as a carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, representatives of the tourism industry, representatives responsible for natural disaster risk reduction, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan, transportation improvement program, and other planning documents.

In addition, the Public Engagement Plan shall:

- be developed in consultation with all interested parties;
- provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plans; and
- ensure that participation by citizens, affected public agencies, community groups, and other interested parties is an important part of a successful public planning program.

Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization actively encourages the participation of all interested parties in its planning efforts.

The targeted audiences for BCS MPO activities should include the following:

- Citizens
 - Area neighborhood organizations
 - Senior centers
 - Disabled groups
 - Limited English Proficiency persons
 - Minorities
- Businesses
- BCS MPO Interested Parties
 - Regional freight firms
 - Human Service agencies
 - Area school districts
 - Transportation providers
- BCS MPO Policy Committee Members

- BCS MPO Technical Planning Committee Members and Alternates
- BCS MPO Active Transportation Advisory Panel and Interested Parties

GENERAL GUIDELINES

This public engagement plan outlines the strategies used by the BCS MPO to ensure that members of the public are able to participate in the decision making process in ways that are both meaningful and inclusive. Outreach efforts are proactive and will utilize strategies that inform and involve residents and travelers in Brazos County. The plan outlines ways for people to provide input and identify how the BCS MPO will promote and encourage engagement. The public engagement process establishes activities that meet or exceed the federal and state requirements. The process informs the public on ways to get involved and provides direction to the MPO staff regarding public engagement activities. The process also provides the guidance necessary for conducting and assessing the public engagement strategies in four main areas:

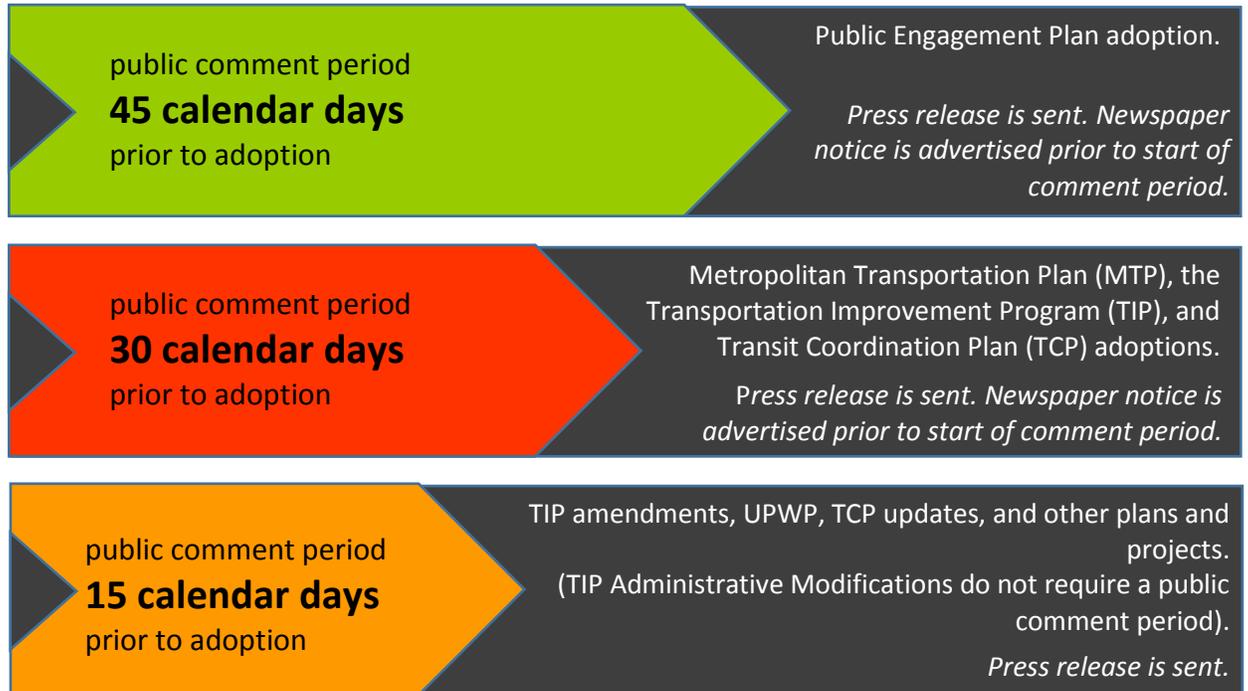
1. Within the formal structure of the MPO Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, subcommittees, and working groups;
2. During the development of major planning documents such as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
3. As a part of special projects, planning activities and studies; and
4. Incorporating public engagement strategies into the ongoing, daily activities of the MPO.

This Engagement Plan is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by the Bryan-College Station MPO and contains the policies, objectives, and techniques used by BCS MPO for public involvement. In its public engagement process, BCS MPO adopts the following guiding principles:

1. Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdiction concerns).
2. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered.
3. Give adequate notice of public engagement activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Regional Thoroughfare Concept, the congestion management process and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, as well as review of environmental

impact. The established Public Comment periods are defined in Exhibit 2. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment by BCS MPO and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan shall be made available.

Exhibit 2: Public Comment Periods



4. Information will also be posted on partner websites such as the cities, the county, TxDOT, Texas A&M, Brazos Transit District as appropriate.
5. Solicit the needs of those under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, limited English proficiency, low-income households and Texas A&M students. BCS MPO shall provide reasonable opportunities for affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, 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 a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation planning.
6. Coordinate the Public Engagement Process with statewide Public Engagement Processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs.
7. BCS MPO 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. BCS MPO shall not exclude any person from participating in the any program receiving federal assistance on

- the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or sex and shall undertake reasonable effort to accommodate citizens with disabilities who wish to attend public meetings.
8. Evaluate and continuously review the public engagement process.
 9. Upon receiving significant public comment, BCS MPO will respond in a timely manner and provide copies of comments to appropriate boards and committees, and related agencies.
 10. All comments will be catalogued in a central location.
 11. An analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan.

ENGAGEMENT POLICIES

Goal: To provide the public with thorough information on transportation planning services and project development in a convenient and timely manner.

STRATEGY 1.

BCS MPO shall actively engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies contained in this Engagement Plan and state and federal law.

Policy 1.1: BCS MPO shall maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including at a minimum the following persons to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products.

- A. Elected officials
- B. Local government staff
- C. Transportation agencies (airports, transit, etc.)
- D. Local media (TV, radio, print, websites, etc.)
- E. Civic groups
- F. Special interest groups (other interested parties)
- G. Libraries (for public display)
- H. Federal, state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation, natural disaster risk reduction and other environmental issues.
- I. Parties that are interested in transportation network planning and development (includes affected public agencies in the metropolitan planning area)
- J. Private freight shippers
- K. Providers of freight transportation services
- L. Private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as a carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program)
- M. Representatives of users of public transportation
- N. Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways

- O. Representatives of users of bicycle transportation facilities
- P. Representatives of the disabled
- Q. Minority groups
- R. Limited English Proficiency groups
- S. Area school districts
- T. Representatives of the tourism industry

Forms will also be available on the BCS MPO website to enable additional interested persons to request information.

Policy 1.2: BCS MPO shall, when feasible, electronically mail meeting announcements to the MPO contact list or to targeted groups for upcoming activities. Pertinent information will be contained in the subject line to ensure maximum exposure of the information.

Policy 1.3: BCS MPO shall employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include: charts, graphs, maps, use of GIS systems, artist renderings, physical models, and/or computer simulation.

STRATEGY 2.

BCS MPO shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis.

Policy 2.1: BCS MPO shall make all publications and work products available electronically to the public via the BCS MPO website and at the BCS MPO offices and employ visualization techniques to describe transportation actions as part of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Policy 2.2: BCS MPO staff shall be available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice.

Policy 2.3: BCS MPO shall maintain an internet website.

Policy 2.3.1: The website shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available.

Policy 2.3.2: The website shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- A. Contact information (mailing address, phone, fax, and email)
- B. Current BCS MPO committee membership
- C. Meeting calendars and agendas
- D. Work products and publications (Transportation Improvement Program, Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, etc.)
- E. Comment/Question/Suggestion Form
- F. Links to related agencies
- G. Current by-laws and operating procedures (including the Public Engagement Plan)
- H. Guidance on public engagement

STRATEGY 3.

BCS MPO shall encourage the involvement of all area citizens in the transportation planning process.

Policy 3.1: Target audiences shall be identified for each planning study conducted by BCS MPO, including residents, business and property owners and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including but not limited to, low income, limited English proficiency, and minority households, within the study area. This can be accomplished by working with community organizations and popular community websites to help distribute the information.

Policy 3.2: BCS MPO shall, whenever feasible, hold multiple public meetings or forums at sites and times convenient to potentially affected citizens.

Policy 3.3: BCS MPO will provide comment cards at meetings and general/plan-related comment forms on the website, minimizing any concerns someone may have when making a public comment.

STRATEGY 4

BCS MPO shall follow a public policy goal of conforming with federal Environmental Justice requirements by ensuring that adverse human or environmental effects of governmental activities do not fall disproportionately upon minority or low-income populations.

These effects include, but are not limited to:

- A. Bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death;
- B. Air, noise, water pollution, and soil contamination;
- C. Destruction or disruption of manmade or natural resources;
- D. Destruction or diminution of aesthetic values;
- E. Destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality;
- F. Destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services;
- G. Vibration;
- H. Adverse employment effects;
- I. Displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations;
- J. Increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion, or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community; and,
- K. Denial of, reductions in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits of U.S. DOT programs, policies, or activities.

Policy 4.1: BCS MPO shall not carry out any activity using federal funds that is shown to cause a disproportionately adverse impact on these populations unless:

- Alternative approaches or further mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce the disproportionate effect are not practicable; and,

- A substantial need exists for the program, policy, or activity, based on the overall public interest and alternative approaches that would have less adverse effects on protected populations either would:
 1. Have other adverse social, economic, environmental, or human health impacts that would be more severe, or
 2. Involve increased costs of extraordinary magnitude.

Policy 4.2: In order to assure compliance with the environmental justice standards and to assure that the public has access to full information concerning human health and environmental impacts, BCS MPO and its member agencies shall conduct the following four actions early in the project development process:

1. Identify and evaluate environmental, public health, and interrelated social and economic effects;
2. Propose measures to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse environmental and public health effects and interrelated social and economic effects, offsetting benefits on opportunities should be provided to enhance communities, neighborhoods, and individuals whenever permitted by federal law and policy;
3. Consider alternatives when they would enable disproportionately high and adverse impacts to be avoided and/or minimized; and,
4. Provide sufficient public involvement opportunities, including soliciting input from affected minority, limited English proficiency, and low-income populations, in considering alternatives.

STRATEGY 5.

BCS MPO shall strive to continuously improve public engagement.

Policy 5.1: The BCS MPO shall update and maintain a revised website describing the BCS MPO and BCS MPO's work products.

Policy 5.2: The BCS MPO, when appropriate, will send out press releases informing the region of BCS MPO project or plan activities of interest.

Policy 5.3: The BCS MPO shall continuously evaluate public engagement techniques. This process is outlined later in this Plan.

Policy 5.4: This Public Engagement Plan shall be reviewed and adopted, with revisions if necessary, at least every five years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement.

ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Public engagement is an ongoing activity of BCS MPO. It is also an integral part of one-time activities such as corridor studies and regularly repeated activities such as the annual Transportation Improvement Program process and Metropolitan Transportation Plan updates. This section contains descriptions of public participation tools being used by BCS MPO.

BCS MPO WEBSITE

The site (bcsmmpo.org) was established to provide information about the MPO process, members, meeting times, and contact information. A Public Comment page has been added, along with the email address comment@bcsmmpo.org set up specifically for comments that are received and monitored by BCS MPO's staff, and posted to the website's Public Comment page with BCS MPO responses. The site also includes information about specific projects undertaken by the BCS MPO. Work products, such as the Public Engagement Plan, Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, and Metropolitan Transportation Plan are available from the site. The site provides many links to other local planning and transportation projects and programs and transportation related sites at the local and national level. The site is maintained and updated regularly.

PROJECT WORKSHOPS/OPEN HOUSES

These are targeted public meetings that are generally open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public individually. Short presentations may be given at these meetings. The purpose of project-specific meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment and a sense of public priorities.

COMMENT FORMS

Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meeting. Comment forms can be very general in nature, or can ask for very specific feedback. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific alignment alternatives being considered during a corridor study, or may ask for a person's general feelings about any aspect of transportation. Comment forms can also be included in publications and on websites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or website.

SURVEYS

Surveys are used when specific public input on a plan, proposal or program is desired. The BCS MPO will use surveys instead of comment cards to ask very specific questions such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys will also be used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns.

EVENTS

In addition to formal committee meetings and public meetings, the Bryan-College Station MPO will participate in community gatherings, workshops or meetings throughout the planning area to help inform the public about significant activities. Comment forms, organizational literature and other information can be provided so that participants can provide information and input during the event or as a follow-up.



MPO staff member participation in community events introduces citizens to the MPO and helps build strong community relationships. By supporting pedestrian safety events, bicycle education programs and many other activities, the MPO furthers its public engagement efforts by forging new relationships and making itself more visible in the community.

PRESS RELEASES

Many types of message channels help the MPO publicize its plans, programs, and studies. The Bryan-College Station MPO encourages and will support articles, TV and radio segments, interviews, stories and web postings that help to inform and engage the public. The MPO will prepare press releases to local media (newspaper, television, radio and websites) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and provide information on specific issues being considered by the BCS MPO and its committees. The MPO staff will respond to news media inquiries on projects and programs directly under their management. All other inquiries should be referred to the Executive Director.

BCS MPO LOGO BRANDING

The BCS MPO logo identifies the programs, meetings and products of the BCS MPO. The logo brands the BCS MPO activities and improves public awareness.

POSTERS AND FLYERS

Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed to public places such as City Halls, libraries, community centers, Brazos Transit District and Texas A&M buses and transfer stations for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of a meeting, the time(s) and location(s), and contact information. Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using other notification methods.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media, such as Facebook, are used to announce meeting and events, and include links to pertinent information and survey sites. Social media also invite public comments and participation on the sites themselves.

BCS MPO CONTACT DATABASE

BCS MPO staff maintains a master database of business, federal, state and local agencies and interested public. The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone numbers, email addresses and websites. The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists and special interest groups, including minority and low-income groups. The database will be used to establish and maintain a list of email contacts for electronic meeting notification and announcements, press releases, website postings and plans or project-related announcements.

EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting announcements and BCS MPO information are emailed to interested persons that have submitted their email addresses to BCS MPO staff or through the website. Event information is posted on the MPO's website and Facebook page. Workshops and presentations occur in various geographic locations depending on the activity, target group, project or invitation.

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Texas Law requires posting a notice of any public meeting where a decision could be made by the BCS MPO Policy Committee or when a quorum of the BCS MPO Policy Committee may be in attendance at another function or meeting. The BCS MPO regularly posts notice of BCS MPO meetings.

SPECIFIC PLAN PROCEDURES

The following plans are identified as the BCS MPO's core plans with each public engagement process identified. All of the BCS MPO's plans are available on the BCS MPO website and are also available in paper copy at the BCS MPO offices.

UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a description of the proposed activities of the Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization. The program is prepared semi-annually and serves as a basis for requesting federal planning funds from the U. S. Department of Transportation.

It also serves as a management tool for scheduling, budgeting, and monitoring the planning activities of the participating agencies. This document is prepared by staff from the BCS MPO with assistance from various agencies, including the Texas Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, Brazos Transit District, Texas A&M University Transportation Services, and members of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee and Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

The UPWP is developed by the BCS MPO with input from local governments, Brazos Transit District, Texas A&M University and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). When

comments are being solicited during the public review period, notice will be posted on the BCS MPO Website. All public comments received pertaining to the UPWP will be reviewed and considered.

The UPWP is updated semi-annually, and released for public review and comment for 15 days (Exhibit 3). Amendments are made throughout the year and are released for public comment when projects are either added or deleted, or when significant changes are made to the document.

Exhibit 3: UPWP Public Comment Period

public comment period
15 calendar days
prior to adoption

The UPWP is updated semi-annually and released for public review and comment. Amendments are made throughout the year and are released for public comment when projects are either added or deleted, or when significant changes are made to the document.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is essential in the development of a sound transportation network. The BCS MPO has developed a Metropolitan Transportation Plan in order to provide guidance for future transportation decisions. Although long-range in scope, the plan provides direction and sets policies for day-today decision making. The MTP builds on past transportation planning conducted by the Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization. All transportation modes relating to passenger travel and freight are discussed in the document. The plan addresses transportation policies and strategies and assists in prioritizing transportation improvements over the next 25 to 30 years.

The transportation system is generally the community's single largest infrastructure investment. Transportation decisions can have a tremendous effect on the community and its neighborhoods, which explains why transportation projects often spark much community discussion and debate. It is not uncommon to have many stakeholders with legitimate and often conflicting values involved with a transportation project. As a result, it is critical to balance the concerns and values of stakeholders with the values and priorities of the community in making transportation decisions.

The MTP is developed through an extensive public process that spans several months and involves thousands of individuals across the region. A series of public meetings will be held throughout the region for each complete update. Events will be publicized using display advertisements in The Eagle and other community newspapers. Opportunities for public involvement do not stop with the adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan; it will continue to evolve as additional needs are identified. The MTP must be completely updated at least every five years but may be revised more frequently if necessary.

Once ready, the draft plan will be publicized on the BCS MPO Website, The Eagle and press releases sent to local radio, TV and other media outlets. The public review and comment period will last at least 30 days (Exhibit 4) as federally required. Amendments are periodically made to

the MTP as new projects, funding, or programs arise. The approval and public comment process for MTP amendments is the same as the process for full updates. However, only chapters containing the proposed amendments are presented for public comment and Policy Committee approval.

Exhibit 4: Metropolitan Transportation Plan Public Comment Period

public comment period
30 calendar days
prior to adoption

Metropolitan Transportation Plan:
Amendments are periodically made, between major updates, to the MTP as new projects, funding or programs arise.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the short-range capital improvement program for various transportation systems located in BCS MPO’s study area. The TIP is a financially constrained four-year program outlining the most immediate implementation priorities for transportation projects and is updated on a yearly basis. It serves to allocate limited financial resources among the various transportation needs of the community. The TIP serves to program the expenditure of federal, state, and local transportation funds. In order to receive federal highway or transit funds, a project must be included in the TIP.

The TIP is intended to serve as a project implementation guide for those agencies participating in the BCS MPO. The projects outlined in the TIP are a reflection of the policies and plans adopted by the Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization. The TIP, as approved by the Policy Committee and the Texas Department of Transportation, constitutes the selection document for project implementation. The first year of projects in the TIP represent the agreed list of projects eligible for implementation.

BCS MPO shall consult with:

- (1) agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA)
- (2) recipients of assistance under Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 (Public Transit Providers)
- (3) government agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services
- (4) recipients of assistance under Title 23 U.S.C. 204, (public lands highways, park roads and parkways, refuge roads, and Indian reservation roads and bridges) and this process shall be documented in the intra-agency memorandum of understanding.

The BCS MPO will provide annual notice by April 1st of the calendar year to the agencies and groups considered interested parties and to agencies that have previously submitted projects to the MPO. The notice shall include information concerning the transportation issues and processes used in developing a TIP submittal. This notice will provide the information required to propose projects for inclusion in the TIP and the timetable to be followed. BCS MPO staff will be

available to give these agencies and groups any assistance they might require in developing projects for submittal for the TIP.

Agencies submitting projects for inclusion in the TIP will include written documentation of the public involvement procedures used by that agency in selecting projects to include in the TIP and/or for federal funding, e.g., projects for which FTA Section 5307 funding is sought. If written or oral comments that question the need, scope or scheduling of TIP projects or that propose alternative projects are received during the TIP preparation process, the submitting agency will submit a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of the comments which will be made a part of the approved TIP.

Public comment is taken prior to approval of the Transportation Improvement Program. The draft TIP is to be made available for comment for 30 days (Exhibit 5). A notice will be in The Eagle and other community papers. The draft TIP will be available on the BCS MPO website, at the BCS MPO offices, and at the Bryan-College Station Libraries. Any public comment received during this review period will be taken into account by BCS MPO staff and will be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee as part of the approval process.

The approved TIP will be available for review by the public at the BCS MPO offices, and the Texas Department of Transportation Bryan District office.

Exhibit 5: Transportation Improvement Program Public Comment Period



public comment period
30 calendar days
prior to adoption

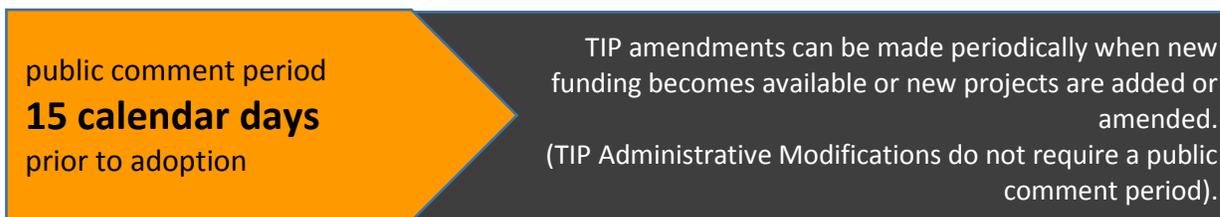
Transportation Improvement Program:
Amendments are periodically made, between
annual updates, to the TIP as new projects,
funding or programs arise.

CHANGES TO THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Project sponsors may find it necessary to request revisions to the adopted TIP. Following the federal regulations (23 CFR § 450.104), TIP amendments and administrative modifications are defined into two categories:

1. **TIP Amendments.** TIP Amendments are major revisions which require official approval by the BCS MPO Policy Committee. This is followed by submission to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for approval and subsequent approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). TIP Amendments will require a public comment period of 15 days prior to consideration by the BCS MPO Policy Committee (Exhibit 6). Notice will be given by press release and on the BCS MPO website.
2. **TIP Administrative Modifications.** TIP Administrative Modifications are minor revisions which can simply be made by BCS MPO staff after verification that the change(s) falls into this category.

Exhibit 6: TIP Amendment Public Comment Period



public comment period
15 calendar days
prior to adoption

TIP amendments can be made periodically when new funding becomes available or new projects are added or amended.
(TIP Administrative Modifications do not require a public comment period).

Notification of administrative modifications will be provided to the Technical Advisory Committee, Policy Committee, TxDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA). TIP Administrative Modifications will not require a public comment period.

Revisions Requiring TIP Amendments:

1. Addition or deletion of any project (except as noted in the Administrative Modifications section below);
2. Substantial changes to the scope of a project (e.g. changing the number of through traffic lanes, changing the type of project such as from rehabilitation to system expansion);
3. Changes in the availability (adding or deleting funds by Congressional action) of earmarked (special appropriation) funds;
4. Moving a project into or out of the first four Federal Fiscal Years of a TIP;
5. Changes in a project's total programmed amount greater than 15% (or any amount greater than \$2,000,000);
6. Changes in a project's fund source(s) from non-Federal to Federal; and.
7. Changes in the termini of a capacity project of any length OR any project in which the total length changes more than 1/4 mile.

Revisions Allowed As Administrative Modifications:

1. Changes in a project's programmed amount less than 15% (up to \$2,000,000);
2. Minor changes to the scope of a project;
3. Minor changes to the termini of a non-capacity project (one that increases or decreases the total length of the project by no more than 1/4 mile);
4. Adding or deleting a project development phase of a project (environmental documentation, preliminary engineering, design, right-of-way acquisition, construction or other) without major changes to the scope to the project;
5. Moving a project's funds to another Fiscal Year provided they are not being moved into or out of the first four fiscal years of a TIP;
6. Minor changes to funding sources between federal funding categories or between state and local sources,
7. Changes in a project's fund source(s) from Federal to non-Federal with no changes to the project's scope (however, the disposition of the "freed-up" Federal funds remain

- under the authority of the BCS MPO and are subject to TIP Revisions as appropriate); and
8. Changing a project's lead agency when agreed upon by the two agencies affected.
 9. Changes made to an existing project's amount of local or state non-matching funds provided no other funding, scoping or termini changes are being made to the project;
 10. Changes made to an existing project's programmed federal funds, in order to reflect the actual amount awarded by the federal agency and the corresponding required amount of matching funds;
 11. Adding a project to the TIP which is split from a "parent project" provided the cumulative, total amount of Federal funding in each funding category in the parent and split projects remains intact and the overall scope of work intended to be accomplished does not change; and
 12. Combining two or more projects already in the TIP provided the cumulative, total amount of Federal funding in each funding category of the combined projects remains intact and the overall scope of work intended to be accomplished does not change.
 13. Moving a project from a prior adopted TIP to the current TIP.

AGENCY PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The projects submitted by the various agencies for inclusion in the TIP have been subjected to citizen input through each individual agency's public involvement process. The projects submitted by the various cities are all part of their respective Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) where required. Depending on their area of concern, the following City boards may hold public hearings on the proposed projects - Airport Board, Park Board, and Planning and Zoning Commission. After receiving a recommendation on the CIP from the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council of the respective city, hold another public hearing at which additional comments are received.

BCS MPO Member Jurisdictions

Each transportation agency or group engages the public according to their process. A summary of each is included below.

City of Bryan

The City of Bryan utilizes a 5 year Capital Improvements Program in which most large transportation projects are funded primarily from bond funds or Transportation User Fees. Citizens are encouraged to suggest projects by filing out suggested projects on our webpage and those are entered into the CIP program ranking system and contained in a database so projects are not forgotten. Additionally outreach is done through meetings with neighborhood associations or other civic groups as requested. Also on the webpage we have links to items such as our bicycle masterplans and thoroughfare masterplans for folks to provide us comments.

As consultants are selected for the design of these transportation projects, public participation is solicited through a public meeting early on in the design process to hear concerns and then a final public meeting is held toward the end of the design process to relay the final design scheme to the public.

City of College Station

The City of College Station generally uses a 5-year Capital Improvements Program to implement significant projects, including transportation projects. Potential capital projects are identified through adopted City plans, most of which include public engagement efforts, operational needs, and input of a citizen advisory committee appointed by City Council. City staff prioritizes potential projects utilizing a standard formula and seeks recommendation from a citizen advisory committee to forward to City Council for consideration. Capital projects are included as part of each annual City budget that is adopted by City Council after public hearing with the general public. Projects are typically funded through bond funds approved by the citizens of College Station and other funding mechanisms including appropriating funds through the annual General Fund.

When initiating a capital project, City staff seeks direction from City Council regarding the scope and direction of a particular project. Public engagement efforts typically occur with affected stakeholders early in the design process and at intervals during the design as needed based on the complexity and impact of the project.

Brazos County

Texas Department of Transportation

TxDOT seeks public review for most all our projects and plans. Some public participation is required by legislation and some is an effort to be open and transparent.

For the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP), Unified Transportation Plan (UTP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), these are made available for review by the public both online and at our offices statewide. Notice of the opportunity to review is made through multiple media outlets, including online, radio, television and print media. These review periods are required to meet legal statutes. Typical review periods are 30 days.

For our specific projects, environmental legislation requires public hearings be held for added-capacity, or regionally significant projects. Notice is given similar to above. However, we hold public meetings, rather than formal public hearings, continuously throughout project development, as necessary. These meetings are not legally mandated. But, they are our best opportunity to make local communities aware of our work and give them the chance to weigh in on decisions early and throughout the process. Meeting notices can be less formal and tailored to meet the stakeholders' needs.

Recently, we've attempted to hold some "virtual" public meetings in some offices within TxDOT to gain input without restricting attendees to a single time/date/location. This effort is still being worked out and is evolving.

Texas A&M Transportation Services

Texas A&M University's Transportation Services Department is responsible for a number of forums and groups that promote public engagement. One of the department's key resources is

the Transportation Services Advisory Committee (TSAC), which is comprised of representatives from a wide range of constituencies including faculty, staff, student leadership groups and various departments representing the university. These constituents make use of services provided by Transportation Services. Organizations represented in TSAC include Faculty Senate, Student Government Association, Graduate and Professional Student Council, Staff Council, Council of Principal Investigators, Council of Deans, Committee of Senior Business Administrators, Distinguished Professors, Athletics, Texas A&M Professional Support Staff and Facilities Services. Members of TSAC are asked to weigh in on and obtain feedback from their respective constituent groups regarding significant policy changes and enhancements or revisions made to aspects of Transportation Services' operations.

Transportation Services administrative staff serve on numerous committees across campus and throughout the community. These representatives participate in a wide range of meetings to gather information about service areas and overlapping projects impacting the community. Information garnered from this outreach is used to engage and to solicit feedback about departmental activities from the campus community. In addition, Transportation Services representatives regularly engage the Student Government Association, Student Senate, Graduate and Professional Student Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Council and other groups that represent the student body, faculty, staff, and administration. The goal of this engagement is to keep constituents apprised of changes occurring with Transportation Services' business models and to request critical input and feedback. As needed, Transportation Services will present to the Student Services Fee Committee as rate proposals are set for review.

Transportation Services public engagement includes open forums and surveys, such as customer satisfaction and mode split utilization surveys that are distributed annually. Transportation Services utilizes a robust social media and multimedia platform to regularly promote their public engagement. The department manages three Twitter accounts, Facebook, RSS feeds, and a custom mobile App. Additional resources include website feedback forms, online chat, email distribution, phone and face-to-face customer service.

When large construction projects are planned, Transportation Services conducts user focus groups to gather input about project designs, customer needs and to review potential concerns. This information is used to create draft designs, produce plans, estimate costs, schedule construction and develop priorities for programming. Transportation Services continuously evaluates the condition of parking facilities, roadways and signs. Structural engineers evaluate the integrity and compliance of the parking facilities. During the facility evaluation, physical factors such as cracking, potholes, joints, slope and ramp compliance are reviewed. The inspection data is analyzed and programming for preventative maintenance is scheduled.

Brazos Transit District

The Brazos Transit District (BTD) publishes its own Program of Projects (POP) in addition to the MPO's public participation process. The POP offers the opportunity for comment as well a public hearing, upon request. The POP is published in the local area in which the project is to be executed and opportunity is made available for a public hearing. If such is requested the hearing is

scheduled as recommended by the Federal Transit Administration's Best Practices and conducted as a posted public hearing as per the Texas Open Meetings Act. Documentation of the advertising, the posting and minutes of the hearing (if any) are maintained by the Grants & Reporting Coordinator in the project file.

Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee

Members of the Policy and Technical Committee regularly attend the Chamber Transportation Committee and provide information on significant projects and programs, and encourage involvement from the business community in MPO plans and public meeting opportunities.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN EVALUATION

The Federal Highway Administration, under Federal Law 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), requires that the BCS MPO continuously evaluates the effectiveness of public involvement activities, with the purpose of establishing guidelines to evaluate the effectiveness of current public involvement strategies and increase BCS MPOs accountability for its stakeholders. By continuously evaluating public involvement activities, it is possible to improve or add new public involvement activities to the BCS MPO program and to discontinue activities that are ineffective. The purpose of this section is to provide guidelines for the evaluation of public involvement techniques.

This document will guide BCS MPO's public engagement evaluation efforts during the upcoming years. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of BCS MPO's public outreach methods along with the public's perception of accessibility, current levels of participation, and quality of public comments. In addition, it will attempt to uncover obstacles that may be limiting the public's ability to participate, while identifying strategies for further public involvement. Over the long-run, BCS MPO expects to use this tool to phase out ineffective methods and to help tailor outreach efforts.

In creating this section, BCS MPO staff conducted in-depth literature reviews of other MPOs' Public Engagement Plans and evaluation programs to be included as part of a comprehensive evaluation. This section will include recommendations for future evaluation strategies. This section is meant to be a living document; changes will be made as new evaluation and outreach strategies are assessed and adopted.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

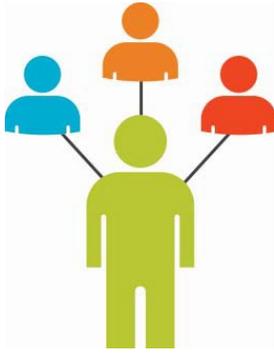
Establishing progress on the Public Engagement Plan objectives requires a set of a performance measures. The following six areas were defined with a few important evaluation measures for each area.

- Reach
- Access
- Effective Communication
- Input
- Impact
- Diversity & Equity

The detailed performance measures described below will be used to evaluate public engagement by the BCS MPO.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES CONSIDERATIONS

Reach



1. Public's awareness of BCS MPO (logo, office location, media, radio, etc.)
2. The public's familiarity with BCS MPO's role and publications
3. Effectiveness of methods to get informed (mail, email, website, etc.)
4. Effectiveness of methods to get involved (meetings, focus groups, surveys, website, boards, commissions, etc.)

Desired Outcome: Continual improvement of reach.

Access



5. Provide timely information to allow the public to review plans, give comments and attend meetings
6. Convenience of meetings at a given time and location (e.g. meetings held at a central location and in neighborhoods where affected people live)
7. Ability to access BCS MPO's publications (internet, library, BCS MPO's office, etc.)

Desired Outcome: Public given adequate review time, opportunity to comment, and access to convenient meetings.

Effective Communication



8. BCS MPO products and presentations use effective visualization techniques to help the public conceptualize the material presented
9. Material presented at meetings is relevant
10. A quality discussion takes place at meetings

Desired Outcome: Visualizations are used as appropriate and public discussion occurs

Input



11. Create a number of opportunities for participants to give their input during comment periods, meetings and other activities (public speaking, surveys, comments cards, etc.)

12. The public understands why, how and when to participate

Desired Outcome: At least two opportunities (for example, website, open house meeting, public hearing, forum) are provided for input on each plan or work product

Impact



13. Public concerns are addressed, questions are answered and comments are taken into consideration

Desired Outcome: Substantive public comments are addressed in a timely manner

Diversity and Equity



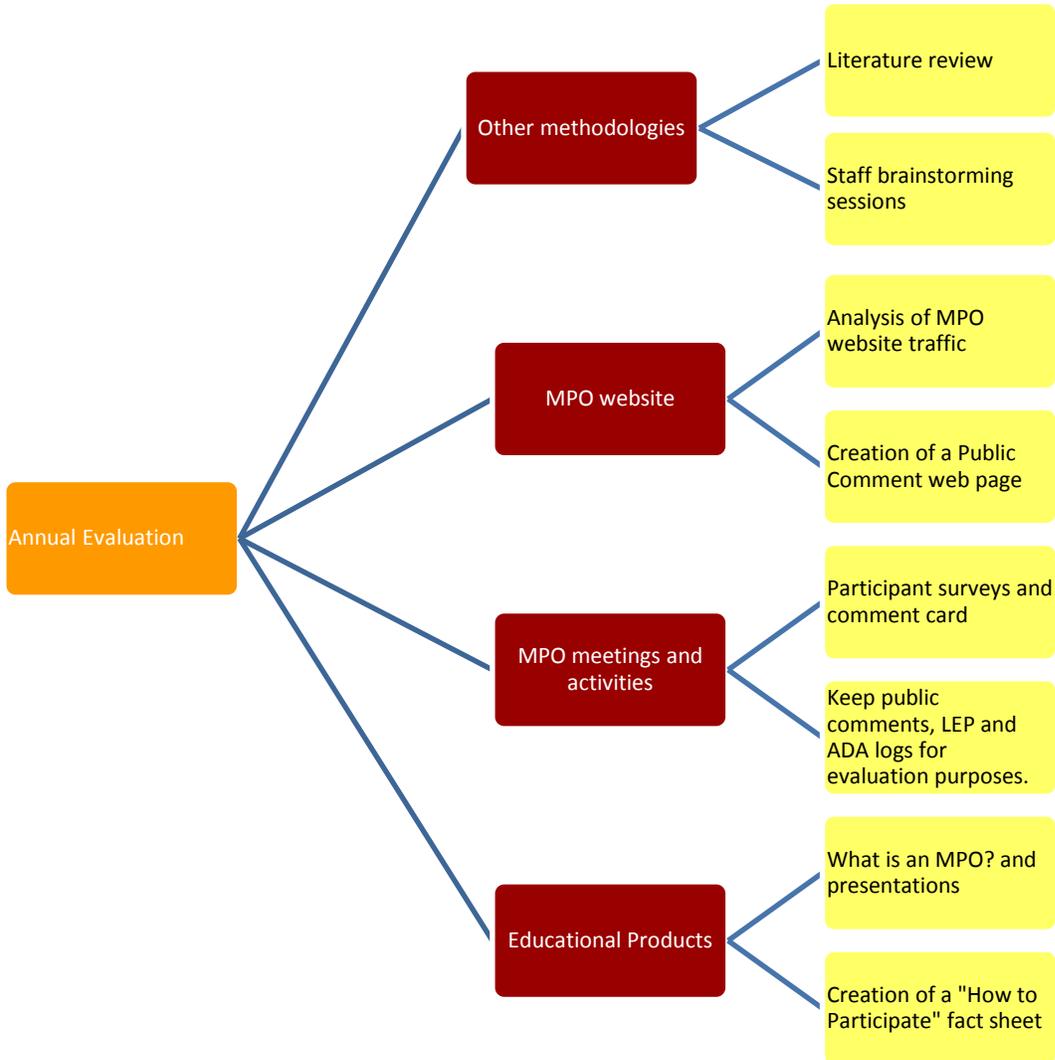
14. Outreach to diverse populations (citizens, interest groups, governmental organizations/stakeholders from a wide geographical area/demographic diversity by age, race, income and gender)

15. Inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups (racial/ethnic minorities, the elderly, low-income households, persons with Limited English Proficiency, and persons with disabilities)

Desired Outcome: Update the interested party list from diverse populations or under-represented group

CONCLUSION

Annually, BCS MPO will evaluate its public engagement process based upon the performance measures as outlined. The Evaluation Framework, below, provides a suggested listing of how to improve upon the current practices.



APPENDIX A. LEARN MORE - HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Here at the BCS MPO we want to hear from citizens regarding transportation items. Listed below are some of the ways that you can get involved with the Bryan-College Station MPO.



CALL US

(979) 260-5298 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday



WRITE TO US

Bryan-College Station MPO Planning Organization (BCS MPO)
3833 South Texas Avenue, Suite 290, Bryan TX 77802



EMAIL US

General Inquiries: comment@bcsmppo.org

Public Involvement/Media, Title IV/Limited English Proficiency, Website:
drudge@bcsmppo.org



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.bcsmppo.org



VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

www.Facebook.com/ to be created



COME TO AN EVENT

The BCS MPO participates in special events throughout the region and hosts workshops for citizens to learn about projects where they work and live. Find our calendar of events at www.bcsmppo.org



PARTICIPATE IN PERSON

Make a public comment at a Bryan/Collee Station MPO Board or committee meeting. Visit our website www.bcsmppo.org or call (979) 260-5298 to learn more.



VOLUNTEER

Contact Dan Rudge at drudge@bcsmppo.org or call (979) 260-5298 for more information.

APPENDIX B. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
3-C process	Continuing, Cooperative, Comprehensive – Generally used to defining qualities of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) planning process.

A

AA	Alternative Analysis – A process for evaluating alternative methods to address transportation needs in a region.
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ADA	American with Disabilities Act
AMPO	Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
APA	American Planning Association – National organization of professional planners; focus includes planning policy, lobbying and public information.
ATAP	Active Transportation (Bicycle/Pedestrian) Advisory Panel

C

CAC	Citizens' Advisory Committee – Advisory committee utilized by some metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) for citizen input into the transportation planning process.
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations – Compilation of the rules of the executive department and agencies of the federal government.
CIP	Corridor Improvement Program
CMS	Congestion Management Process – A systematic program providing information on transportation system performance and alternative strategies to alleviate congestion and enhance the mobility of persons and goods. A CMS includes methods to monitor and evaluate performance, identify alternative actions, access and implement cost-effective actions, and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented actions.
COG	Council of Governments - A multipurpose organization composed of representatives of local governments and appointed representatives from the geographic area covered by the council, and designated as the primary organization to address problems and plan solutions that are of greater than local concern or scope.
CST	Construction Project Phase
CTCs	Community Transportation Coordinators – People contracted by the Transportation Disadvantaged Commission to provide complete, cost-effective and efficient transportation services to transportation disadvantaged (TD) persons.
CTST	Community Safety Traffic Teams
CY	Calendar Year

D

DBE	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
DMV	Department of Motor Vehicles
DOT	United States Department of Transportation – Agency responsible for federal transportation programs and projects.

E

EPA	Environmental Protection Agency – A federal agency charged with protecting the natural resources in the nation.
ETDM	Efficient Transportation Decision Making

F

FAST Act	Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act – current federal five-year transportation act; in effect from 2015 to 2021.
DPS	Department of Public Safety
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration – The FTA operates under the authority of the Federal Transit Act. The FTA was established as a component of the US Department of Transportation.
FY	Fiscal Year

G

GIS	Geographic Information System
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I

ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 - Federal Transportation Law in effect from 1991 to 1997?
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems – program that endeavors to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities

J

JPA	Joint Participation Agreement – Legal instrument describing intergovernmental tasks to be accomplished and/or funds to be paid between government agencies. (Contract).
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L

LAP	Local Agency Program
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LOS	Level of Service – A qualitative assessment of a road's operating condition; generally described using a scale of A (little congestion) to E or F (severe congestion).

M

MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century – Federal Transportation Law from 2012 to 2015
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Metropolitan Planning Area – The geographic area within which the metropolitan transportation planning process is carried out.
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization - An association of local agencies established for mutual benefit to help coordinate planning and development activities within a metropolitan region. Establishment of the MPO is required by law in urban areas with populations over 50,000 if federal funds are to be used. The MPO is not a level of government; however, the MPO has “effective control” over transportation improvements within the area since a project must be a part of the MPO's adopted plan in order to receive federal funding.
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan – A 20-year forecast plan required of state planning agencies and MPOs; must consider a wide range of social, environmental, energy, and economic factors in determining overall regional goals and consider how transportation can best meet these goals.

N

NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act – One of the first environmental laws; establishes the broad national framework for environmental protection. The NEPA assures that all government branches give appropriate consideration to the environment before taking any major action that significantly affects the environment.
NHS	National Highway System – The NHS is one of the three major components of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. A major new Federal-Aid system was established in the NHS. It includes the Interstate System, other routes identified as having strategic defense characteristics, routes providing access to major ports, airports, public transportation and intermodal transportation facilities, and many principal urban and rural arterials which provide regional service.
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

P

PD&E	Preliminary Design and Environment Study
PIP/PPP	Public Involvement/Participation Plan – other names for public engagement plans
PL	Federal planning funds category name
PSA	Public Service Announcement

R

RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
ROW	Right of Way - The land (usually a strip) acquired for or devoted to transportation purposes.

S

SAFETEA- LU	The “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” – Federal Transportation Bill that was adopted in August 2005; Replaced in July 2012 by MAP-21
SCE	Socio-cultural Effects
SIS	Strategic Intermodal System
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program The official statewide, intermodal transportation plan that is developed through the statewide planning process.
STP	Surface Transportation Program - A new block grant type program established as one of the three major components of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act to supplement the National Highway System (NHS). The STP may be used by states and localities for any roads (including NHS) that are not functionally classified as local or rural minor collectors. These roads are now collectively referred to as Federal-aid roads.

T

TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TAP	Transportation Alternative Plan
TD	Transportation Disadvantaged - People who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation due to disability, income status or age.
TDLCB	Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board
TDP	Transit Development Program - A short term (5 year) plan that identifies the intended development of transit. including equipment purchase. system management and operation.
TEMPO	Texas Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations – An advisory council (consisting of one member from each MPO) that serves as the principal forum for collective policy discussion in urban areas; created by law to assist the MPOs in carrying out the urbanized area transportation planning process.
TTF	Transportation Trust Fund
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century – Federal Transportation Law from 1997 to 2005
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program - The TIP is a staged, three-to-five-year prioritized program of transportation projects covering a metropolitan planning area which is consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan.

TMA	Transportation Management Area - An urbanized area with a population over 200,000 (as determined by the latest decennial census) or other area when TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and officially designated by the metropolitan planning area served by an MPO within which the TMA is located.
TOD	Transit-Oriented Development - A mixed use community or neighborhood designed to encourage transit use and pedestrian activity.
TPP	Division of Transportation Planning and Programming – TxDOT office responsible for state-level transportation planning and project development
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation – Agency responsible for state transportation programs and projects.

U

U.S. DOT	United States Department of Transportation
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program – Official two-year plan of significant work items and budget of an MPO.