

# **Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**

## **Public Participation Plan**

**Adopted  
June 5, 2008**



Following MPO's requirement to implement a public involvement process for transportation planning decisions according to SAFETEA-LU: The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users.



## Background

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law (Public Law (P.L.) 109-59) on August 10, 2005. SAFETEA-LU builds on the success of two previous surface transportation authorization laws, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA; P.L. 102-240) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21; P.L. 105-178). Under it, the federal transit program structure remains largely the same, retaining formula programs that target federal investment to systems and communities based on need and capital investment programs that address special needs and projects. SAFETEA-LU provides a record level of federal transit investment, \$52.6 billion over 6 years, an increase of 46 percent over the amount guaranteed in TEA 21. This law retains annual funding guarantees to ensure long-term funding stability; and improves transportation program delivery. The funds from SAFETEA-LU are to improve the efficiency and safety of transportation, increase intermodal connectivity, reduce congestion, and to protect the environment.

## Purpose

The SAFETEA-LU legislation requires that the metropolitan planning procedure must "include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans" [23 CFR part 450.316(b)(1)]. Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) has developed this Participation Plan to involve citizens of the Greater Cumberland Area in the transportation planning process; to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision making. This document describes how CAMPO will solicit and encourage public participation in Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Plans. The specifics of SAFETEA-LU's public participation plan requirements are outlined below.

"(5) Participation by interested parties.--

(A) In general.--Each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, 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 plan.

(B) Contents of participation plan.--A participation plan--

- (i) shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and
- (ii) shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the transportation plan.

(C) Methods.--In carrying out subparagraph (A), the metropolitan planning organization shall, to the maximum extent practicable--

- (i) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- (ii) employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and
- (iii) make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information under subparagraph (A)."

## Participation Plan’s Goal and Objectives

CAMPO’s goal through this plan is to provide the highest quality public participation possible for transportation decision making. This can only be achieved when stakeholders are identified and brought into the planning process. To achieve this goal, major planning and program development objectives include:

- ❖ Identify stakeholders
- ❖ Improve public awareness and outreach communications
- ❖ Provide opportunity for participation
- ❖ Receiving public input
- ❖ Response to public needs

### Identify stakeholders

Identifying the “public” is critical to better understand the transportation needs of the stakeholders in the Greater Cumberland Area and to ensure the participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision making process. The stakeholders includes not only the general public and local units of government, but businesses, industries and transportation service providers as well as organizations that represent people with specific transportation needs. Some potential resource agencies have been identified in Appendix 1. The purpose of identifying stakeholders allows CAMPO to utilize different communication and outreach techniques to reach out to stakeholders with diverse transportation needs.

### Improve public awareness through outreach communications

In order for the public to participate in transportation planning, CAMPO must reach the stakeholders via various media outlets throughout the planning phases. There are many techniques and mechanisms available to ensure that a diverse public is well informed and able to play a role in the transportation planning process. Recognizing that no single media outlet will work in all cases, it is up to CAMPO to consider the special communication needs of the public and use the best approach or approaches to accomplish this objective. The following means of sharing public information materials could be used together or separately to incorporate public involvement in all of the CAMPO transportation planning processes, including the development of the LRTP Plan update and the TIP development:

Brochures	Newsletters
Fliers	Notices
News articles	Press releases
CAMPO webpage	Progress bulletins
Summaries of reports	Slides and overheads

These media outlets are designated to inform the public regarding opportunities to participate, such as promoting meeting schedules and commenting period’s drafts for plans.

## Provide opportunity for participation

Effective participation in the transportation decision-making process requires an understanding of transportation issues and the framework for making transportation investment decisions. CAMPO will provide educational materials that will support and encourage effective participation through the methods listed above. Transportation planning documents will include visualization techniques\* such as diagrams, pictures, maps, three dimensional models and the like, to optimize public understanding of issues and concepts. These transportation planning documents will be available on the CAMPO web site, at Allegany County Public Libraries, and available by request.

The main means of public participation will take place at CAMPO planning meetings. All meetings of the CAMPO are open to the public. An opportunity for public comment is included on the agenda of each meeting. Meetings are publicized through press releases to the local electronic and print media, as well as posting on the CAMPO web site. Meetings are held in government buildings that are accessible to all individuals, including those with mobility impairments. These locations are also accessible by public transit.

## Receiving Public Input

Aside from including an opportunity for public to comment at CAMPO meetings, comments regarding LRTP or TIP will also be accepted via, mail, telephone, fax, email, or through the CAMPO website. The CAMPO website makes it clear that input is always welcome. The LRTP and TIP carry with them specific timelines that govern opportunity for public comment. Public comments on the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and on all other plans and key decisions will be summarized for decision makers and the group receiving the comments will write responses if requested.

## Response to Public Comments

Comments and responses will be kept on file, available for public review and will be made part of the plan, program, or other document as adopted. Responses will be made in a timely manner, so that they can be considered during the next phase of the plan or program development.

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*□ Federal SAFETEA-LU guidance requires the use of visualization techniques "There are many ways to use visualization techniques to better convey plans and programs, ranging from static maps to interactive GIS systems, from artist renderings and physical models to photo manipulation to computer simulation. Visualization can be used to support transportation plans or individual projects."*

These outlines were adapted from Hagerstown Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning organization, as a protocol for CAMPO's LRTP and TIP participation Processes.

### **Participation Process for the Long Range Transportation Plan Development**

Phase I: Outreach activities with stakeholders identified in Appendix 1, with information posted on the CAMPO website and media releases distributed to announce public meetings and the plan development schedule.

Phase II: Receive and respond to public comments.

Phase III: Present the draft plan at advertised open house, and describe the plan approval process and timeline.

### **Participation Process for the Transportation Improvement Program Development**

Phase I: Draft Document Input

- 1A. Notice to involvement, website, and newspapers.
- 2B. Draft project list and other relevant background information made available prior to meeting on website and elsewhere.
- 3C. Comment opportunities available on website and at meeting.
- 4D. Public Comment Opportunity at CAMPO meeting.

Phase II: Final Draft Available for Review/Comment

- 1A. Notice as in Phase I above.
- 2B. Project list being considered is presented.
- 3C. Other relevant information and analysis is presented.
- 4D. Public Comment Opportunity at CAMPO meeting prior to adoption of final draft TIP.

Phase III: TIP Amendment Process

- 1A. Notice As in Phases I & II above.
- 2B. Minimum of 14-day public comment period provided.
- 3C. Projects presented at CAMPO meeting
- 4D. Public comment accepted and closed at CAMPO meeting prior to adoption of the amendments.

Note: Amendments to the adopted TIP that are deemed by the MPO as "Administrative Changes" are not subject to a formal public notification process. Input will be accepted but not solicited. For the purposes of this document, an amendment to the adopted TIP may be considered "administrative" if the following criteria are met:

- a. Change is to correct a non-substantive clerical error;
- b. Changes in funding levels are less than two (2) million dollars;
- c. Changes in funding type, provided funding levels remain constant or do not exceed the requirement under (b) above;
- d. Any other changes deemed by a majority vote of the MPO that meet the criteria of an administrative amendment.

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

In accordance with SAFETEA-LU guidance CAMPO establishes a public comment period of forty-five (45) days before revision or implementation of the public involvement process. Significant revisions to the basic procedures contained herein will require a comment period before such revisions may be utilized. However, activities, which will enhance the opportunity for public comment, as outlined by the basic procedures herein shall not be considered revisions subject to public comment. Draft documents will be made available for public review at the MPO website, all county libraries.

**Closing**

Without the input of its stakeholders, state, and local governments cannot have a true understanding of community values and needs with regard to transportation services. Local businesses, community groups, and residents may know information that is more current or more detailed than what is available to transportation professionals. Effective participation complements the transportation professional’s technical expertise, helps to form a consensus, and lays the foundation for solid decisions.

## Appendix 1

### **Potential Resources Agencies in the CAMPO Area**

#### Maryland

Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
National Park Service - C&O Canal,  
Allegany College of Maryland  
Frostburg State University  
Allegany County Chamber of Commerce  
Cumberland City Council  
Friends Aware  
Archway Station  
Cumberland Housing Association  
City of Frostburg  
Appalachian Regional Commission Habitat for Humanity  
Allegany County Tourism Commission  
Alleghany Highlands Trail  
Allegany County Emergency Services  
Allegany County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association  
Allegany County Home Builders Association  
Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc.  
Allegany County Public Library System  
Allegany Historical Society  
Cumberland Times-News  
Allegany County Transit  
CSX Railroad  
Western Maryland Scenic Rail Road  
Cumberland Senior Center  
Frostburg Senior Center  
Amtrak  
Allegany County League for Crippled Children  
Maryland Department of Planning  
Allegany County Health Department  
Allegany County Department of Social Services  
Goodwill Industries, Inc.  
Blind Industries & Services of Maryland  
United Cerebral Palsy of Central Maryland  
Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc.

#### West Virginia

West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection  
Mineral County Parks and Recreation  
Mineral County Chamber of Commerce  
Potomac Valley Transit Authority  
Eastern Panhandle Home Builders Association

**CAMPO Transportation Planning Participation Plan**

Aging & Family Services  
Town of Ridgeley  
Mineral County Development Authority Economic Development  
Mineral Daily News-Tribune  
Mineral County Emergency Services  
Mineral County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association  
Ridgeley Senior Citizens  
Greater Cumberland Regional Airport  
Mineral County Health Department

**RESOLUTION**

No. 08-13

Resolution adopting the Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Participation Plan, and approving its submission to the Maryland Department of Transportation to forward to the applicable Federal Agencies.

WHEREAS, the Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization was established to manage and provide policy direction to the Unified Planning Program in accordance with Federal requirements, and the Allegany County Commissioners have been designated as the temporary Metropolitan Planning Organization for this area as approved by Maryland Governor Harry Hughes on May 17, 1982; and

WHEREAS, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Equity Act: A Legacy for Users legislation requires all Metropolitan Planning Organizations to have a public participation plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Allegany County Commissioners acting as the temporary Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization adopts the Cumberland Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Participation Plan; approves its submission to the Maryland Department of Transportation to forward to the applicable Federal Agencies.

ADOPTED THIS 5<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2008.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
ALLEGANY COUNTY, MARYLAND

James J. Staben  
James J. Staben, President

Robert M. Hutcheson  
Robert M. Hutcheson, Commissioner

Dale R. Lewis  
Dale R. Lewis, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Carol A. Gaffney  
Carol A. Gaffney, Clerk to the  
Allegany County Commissioners