

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCEDURES

August 2020



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Free language assistance for the Limited English Proficient individuals is available upon request.

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INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT or 'Department') has developed the following public involvement methods and processes to ensure opportunities for public review of transportation planning programs administered by the Department as required by federal regulation 23 CFR 450.210. These methods and processes are reviewed periodically to ensure their effectiveness for full and open access to all interested parties and are revised as needed.

ARDOT will use the following process to consult, notify, solicit input, receive comments, and give notice of availability to interested parties for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Statewide Long-Range Intermodal Transportation Plan (LRITP). The Department will:

- Provide early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes.
- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the STIP and LRITP.
- Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed STIP and LRITP.
- To the maximum extent practicable, ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times.
- To the maximum extent practicable, use visualization techniques for presenting information.
- To the maximum extent practicable, make public information available in various online formats (e.g. Department website, social media, email, etc.).
- Consider and respond to public input during the development of the STIP and LRITP.
- Engage and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including, but not limited to, hearing impaired individuals, sight impaired individuals, persons with limited English proficiency, and other minority groups.

The STIP is a document that contains federally funded and regionally significant state funded highway and transit projects to be undertaken by the Department and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) over a period of no less than four federal fiscal years. The STIP describes specific projects, their funding source, route, job limits, and anticipated years for construction and is updated at a minimum of every four years.

The LRITP contains goals and objectives to guide transportation planning for a minimum of 20 years into the future. The LRITP takes an intermodal approach, considering highways, rail, air, waterways, transit, and non-motorized transportation. Unlike the STIP, the LRITP does not contain specific transportation projects; it may, however, identify corridors for transportation improvements and other long-range goals. The LRITP is updated as needed.

PROCESS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OF INTERESTED PARTIES ON THE STIP

Early Involvement

The Arkansas Highway Commission (Commission) serves as an advocate for transportation as well as being a voice for transportation needs throughout the State. As such, Commission members communicate with local elected officials, community leaders, and business leaders to understand the local and regional transportation strengths and needs.

Commission members and Department personnel routinely attend local civic meetings throughout the State to gather information regarding transportation in Arkansas. Meetings are held with local elected officials and other transportation stakeholders on a continual basis. These meetings are vitally important in the development of the STIP, the LRITP, and planning studies. They provide an on-going dialog to discuss the benefits, conditions, and needs of the Arkansas transportation network.

In addition, regional meetings may be offered by the Department to discuss statewide, regional, and local needs and opportunities. Corridor needs and specific projects may be identified through these meetings for possible inclusion into the STIP. Likewise, as transportation needs are studied throughout the state, various opportunities exist for information exchange between Department staff, local elected officials, and the public. The public is also afforded the opportunity to request information and provide input via the Department's Public Information Office, various District Offices, and the Department's website at www.ardot.gov.

Periodically, formal public meetings are conducted during the planning and early environmental review process. These meeting organizers will reach out to traditionally underserved people such as minorities and low-income populations. Comments from the public, local officials, and transportation stakeholders, including affected public agencies, public transportation providers, ports, freight shippers and providers, bicycle advocacy groups, and other interested parties, are received and appropriately incorporated into project planning and design phases.

MPOs perform their own public involvement efforts during development of their Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP). The MPOs then use the MTP and knowledge of their areas to engage the public during the public comment period as they develop their regional Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP). Prior to adoption of their TIP, MPOs typically pass resolutions to show support for projects that they send the Department for consideration of the next STIP.

Finally, local officials, public transit operators, human service providers, and transit-dependent persons are afforded an opportunity to comment on roadway and transit projects at an early stage. Agencies applying for transit funding assistance through the Department must publish an opportunity for public comment about their project as part of the application process.

These activities constitute the initiation of the STIP development. In addition, local officials and members of the public routinely recommend improvement projects for inclusion in the STIP. As projects and improvements are brought forward to the Commission and Department's attention, they

are noted for possible future program development. They are then reviewed and evaluated for inclusion in the STIP as it is being developed.

Interested individuals may sign up for the Department's voluntary email distribution list by emailing their contact information to STIP@ardot.gov. The voluntary email list members may receive periodic emails and communication from the Department regarding the STIP.

Development of the STIP

Early and continuous involvement occurs as described previously providing input into the preparation of a Draft STIP.

1. A Draft STIP is developed by the Department and approved by the Director relying on information provided by the public and local officials throughout the years, including the metropolitan long-range transportation plans from the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). This draft is also made available on the Department's website at www.ardot.gov.
2. The Commission approves the Draft STIP release for public comments.
3. A display ad is published in the statewide newspaper, and also in publications that typically serve minority populations, informing the public and local officials that the Draft STIP is available for comment.
4. A press release is posted on the Department's website and postings are made on the Department's social media accounts notifying interested parties of the public comment period for the Draft STIP.
5. Letters or notices stating the availability of and soliciting oral and written comments on the Draft STIP are sent to elected officials, community leaders (including those that assist traditionally underserved populations), industry and interest groups, and State and Federal agencies including the State Clearinghouse, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
6. The Draft STIP is made available in various formats: by download from the Department's website; by mailing copies upon request; and by placement in the following locations: ARDOT District Headquarters, MPO offices, Planning and Development Districts or Economic Development Districts (PDD/EDDs) offices, and the State Clearinghouse.
7. A 30-day comment period is provided.
8. Comments received by the Department are considered and responses are made to the originator of the comment when appropriate.
9. The Draft STIP goes through a final internal review process, including the review of all comments received.
10. The Draft STIP (with any revisions) is then submitted to the Commission.
11. The Commission approves the STIP by Minute Order.
12. The STIP is sent to FHWA and FTA for final approval. This approval includes confirmation that the STIP is financially constrained over the four-year period with relation to anticipated revenue and that it matches the TIPs for each of the state's MPO areas.
13. Notification of the availability of the final document is published in a statewide newspaper, including those publications that typically serve minority populations, as well as various other means as appropriate.
14. The Department's website is updated with the approved STIP.

Amendments and Administrative Modifications

There are two types of changes that apply to the STIP, Amendments and Administrative Modifications. A STIP Amendment is required when there are any significant changes to a project. This includes addition to or removal from the STIP, a major change in estimated project cost or project initiation dates, major changes in funding sources, or a major scope change. This type of change requires public review, re-demonstration of financial constraint and FHWA and FTA approval.

A STIP Administrative Modification is required when minor changes are made to a project, such as minor change to scope, cost, funding, or schedule. This type of change does not require public review, re-demonstration of fiscal constraint, or FHWA and FTA approval.

STIP Amendments and STIP Administrative Modifications are processed throughout the year on an as needed basis. The Department consults with the FHWA, FTA, and MPOs as needed to reconcile the STIP, and verifies that fiscal constraint has been maintained. A quarterly Demonstration of Financial Constraint report is provided to FHWA and the MPOs.

STIP Amendment Process

1. The Department develops a STIP Amendment document that lists the significant changes to the STIP.
2. A display ad is published in the statewide newspaper, and also in publications that typically serve minority populations, informing the public and local officials that a STIP Amendment is available for comment.
3. A press release notifying interested parties of the public comment period for the STIP Amendment is posted on the Department's website.
4. Letters or notices stating the availability of and soliciting oral and written comments on the STIP Amendment are sent to the PDD/EDDs, State Clearinghouse, FHWA, and FTA.
5. The STIP Amendment is made available in various formats: by download from the Department's website and by mailing copies upon request.
6. A 15-day comment period is provided.
7. Comments received by the Department are considered and responses are made to the originator of the comment when appropriate.
8. The STIP Amendment goes through a final internal review process, including the review of all comments received.
9. The Department approves the STIP Amendment.
10. The STIP Amendment is sent to FHWA and FTA for final approval. This approval includes confirmation that the STIP remains financially constrained.
11. Notification of the availability of the final document is published on the Department's website at www.ardot.gov.

STIP Administrative Modification Process

1. The Department develops a STIP Administrative Modification document that lists the minor changes to a project.
2. The STIP Administrative Modification goes through internal reviews.
3. The Department approves the STIP Administrative Modification.
4. Notification of the availability of the final document is published on the Department's website at www.ardot.gov.

PROCESS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OF INTERESTED PARTIES ON THE STATEWIDE LONG-RANGE PLAN

Early Involvement

As the advocate for transportation in the State, Commission members routinely communicate with local elected officials, community leaders, and business leaders to understand the local and regional transportation strengths and needs.

Commission members and Department personnel routinely attend local civic meetings throughout the State to gather information regarding transportation in Arkansas. Meetings are held with local elected officials and other transportation stakeholders on a continual basis. These meetings are vitally important in the development of the STIP, the LRITP, and planning studies. They provide an on-going dialog to discuss the benefits, conditions, and needs of the Arkansas transportation network.

In addition, regional meetings may be offered by the Department to discuss statewide, regional, and local needs and opportunities. Corridor needs and specific projects may be identified through these meetings for possible inclusion into the STIP and the LRITP. Likewise, as transportation needs are studied throughout the state, various opportunities exist for information exchange between Department staff, local elected officials, and the public. The public is also afforded the opportunity to request information and provide input via the Department's Public Information Office, various District Offices, and the Department's website at www.ardot.gov.

Periodically, formal public meetings are conducted during the planning and early environmental review process. Comments from the public, local officials, and transportation stakeholders including affected public agencies, public transportation providers, ports, freight shippers and providers, and other interested parties, are received and appropriately incorporated into project planning and design phases.

Finally, local officials, public transit operators, human service providers and transit-dependent persons are afforded an opportunity to comment on roadway and transit projects at an early stage. Agencies applying for transit funding assistance through the Department must publish an opportunity for public comment about their project as part of the application process.

These activities constitute the initiation of the LRITP development. As needs are brought forward to the Commission and Department's attention, they are noted for evaluation and consideration.

Development of the LRITP

Advisory Group

An advisory group may be established to enhance stakeholder engagement by creating a forum for partners to provide input, oversight, and direction during the development of the LRITP. During the development of the LRITP, they may meet as often as the group desires with a minimum of three in-person meetings: once at the beginning of the plan update process, once to review goals and objectives and

discuss desired performance, and a final meeting to review the recommendations. The advisory group may be comprised of representatives from health, human services, energy, economic development, agriculture, parks and tourism, freight industry, transit, safety advocates, cities, counties, regional planning agencies, MPOs, resource agencies, and Federal and State agencies.

Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the stakeholder involvement process, interviews are conducted with transportation stakeholders across the state representing a variety of interests, including transportation planning, economic development, freight related industries, transit providers and users, cities, and counties. Questions posed are related to the State's transportation system including goals and objectives, desired performance, challenges, needs, and priorities.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are held using an open house format at the beginning of the LRITP update process to give stakeholders and the public background information on the process and offer the opportunity to share comments and ask questions. Notice of the meeting is provided through informational flyers, letters, radio public service announcements, newspaper advertisements, news releases, and postings on the LRITP and the Department websites. Regional public meetings are scheduled to attain meaningful public involvement without an undue travel burden for the public.

Leveraging technology to improve the effectiveness of the public involvement process will be considered on an on-going basis.

Online Engagement

To reach a broad and diverse group of stakeholders and the public, a LRITP website and/or an online engagement tool may be used to gather input and share information. Access to the tool may be distributed via various communication channels including the Department and LRITP websites, stakeholder meetings, news releases, social media, and direct emails to stakeholders and Department staff.

Interested individuals may sign up for the Department's voluntary email distribution list by emailing their contact information to AR_LRITP@ardot.gov. The voluntary email list members may receive periodic emails and communication from the Department regarding the LRITP.

Public Review and Comment Period

An array of tools may be used to provide effective and pertinent information to the public and stakeholders as well as to solicit the most comprehensive and meaningful public input. Throughout the previous steps of public involvement, all attendees were requested to provide contact information (mail, email, and/or phone number). A 30-day comment period is also advertised via paid advertising, email blasts, and stakeholder connections.

Upon completion of the final public review of the LRITP and adoption by the Commission, the final LRITP is posted to both the Department's website and the LRITP website. The document will be distributed upon request.

Process for Consultation

1. The Draft LRITP is developed by the Department and approved by the Director.
2. A display ad is published in a statewide newspaper, including those publications that

- typically serve minority populations, informing the public and local officials that the Draft LRITP is available for comment.
3. A press release is given to the statewide media informing them of the availability of the Draft LRITP for comment.
 4. Specific effort is made to identify and solicit involvement from minority, low-income, and traditionally underserved populations through use of demographic data and consultation with local officials.
 5. Letters or notices stating the availability of and soliciting oral and written comments on the Draft LRITP are sent to elected officials, community leaders, industry and interest groups, and State and Federal agencies including the State Clearinghouse, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
 6. The Draft LRITP is made available in various formats: by download from the Department and LRITP websites, by mailing copies upon request, and by placing them in the District Headquarters, the PDD/EDD offices, and the State Clearinghouse.
 7. After a minimum comment period of 30 days, comments received by the Department are considered and responses are made to the originator, as appropriate.
 8. The Draft LRITP goes through a final internal review process, including the review of all comments received on the plan.
 9. The Final LRITP (with any revisions) is then submitted to the Commission.
 10. The Commission approves the LRITP by Minute Order.
 11. Notification of the availability of the final document is given to various interested parties through in person meetings, email distribution, and various other means as appropriate.
 12. The approved LRITP is transmitted to FHWA and FTA.
 13. The Department website is updated with the approved LRITP.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN REVISION PROCESS

1. The Department will evaluate and revise its Public Involvement Plan as needed.
2. Representatives of the interest groups, including traditionally underserved groups, and individuals expressing an interest in the Public Involvement Process will be asked to review and comment on existing procedures.
3. If changes are developed, a draft is prepared for Department review.
4. The Draft Public Involvement Plan is approved by the Director.
5. A display ad is published in a statewide newspaper informing the public and local Officials that the Draft Public Involvement Plan is available for comment.
6. A press release is given to the statewide media informing them of the availability of the Draft Public Involvement Plan for comment.
7. A 45-day comment period is provided.
8. The Department prepares a final Plan.
9. The Department's website is updated with the Final Public Involvement Plan.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT METHODS AND PROCESSES FOR CONSULTING WITH NON-METROPOLITAN OFFICIALS

The Arkansas Department of Transportation has developed the following cooperative public involvement process to ensure consultation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas for transportation planning programs administered by the Department as required by federal regulation 23 CFR 450.210. This discrete process is separate from transportation policy and project development in metropolitan areas with a population greater than 50,000.

The Department will use the following process to consult, notify, solicit input, receive comments and give notice of availability to the officials in non-metropolitan areas for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the Long-Range Intermodal Transportation Plan (LRITP). Additionally, the Department will continue to partner with other state and regional agencies to encourage and solicit input from minority, low-income, and other traditionally underserved populations. Exact methods will depend on the situation and, when appropriate, will embrace a combination of the methods described below.

For more detailed involvement and participation in the process, interested individuals may sign up for the Department's voluntary email distribution list by emailing their contact information to (MPP-MPO@ardot.gov). The voluntary email list members may receive periodic emails and communication from the Department regarding the STIP, LRITP, and other statewide planning efforts.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The following methods and processes will apply to the STIP. The STIP is a document that contains federally funded projects to be undertaken by the Department and the MPOs in the next four fiscal years. The STIP describes specific projects, their funding source, route, job limits, and anticipated construction letting dates.

Process for Consultation

1. The Draft STIP is developed by the Department and approved by the Director.
2. The Commission approves the Draft STIP release for public comments.
3. A display ad is published in the statewide newspaper, and also in publications that typically serve minority populations, informing the public and local officials that the Draft STIP is available for comment.
4. A press release is posted on the Department's website and postings are made on the Department's social media accounts notifying interested parties of the public comment period for the Draft STIP.
5. Specific efforts will be made to identify and solicit involvement from minority, low-income, and traditionally underserved populations through use of demographic data and consultation with local officials.

6. Letters or notices stating the availability of and soliciting oral and written comments on the Draft STIP are sent to elected officials, community leaders, industry and interest groups, and State and Federal agencies including the State Clearinghouse, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
7. Email notification of Draft STIP is sent out to non-metropolitan officials who sign up for voluntary distribution list.
8. The Draft STIP is made available in various formats: by download from the Department website, by mailing copies upon request, and by placing them in the District Headquarters, the PDD/EDD offices, and the State Clearinghouse.
9. Comments received by the Department are considered and responses are made to the originator of the comment as appropriate.
10. The Draft STIP goes through a final internal review process, including the review of all comments received.
11. The Draft STIP (with any revisions) is then submitted to the Commission.
12. The Commission approves the STIP by Minute Order.
13. The STIP is sent to FHWA and FTA for approval. This approval includes confirmation that the STIP is financially constrained over the four-year period with relation to anticipated revenue.
14. Notification of the availability of the final document is published in a statewide newspaper, including those publications that typically serve minority populations, as well as various other means as appropriate.
15. The Department website is updated with the approved STIP.

Long-Range Intermodal Transportation Plan

The following methods and processes will apply to the Long-Range Intermodal Transportation Plan (LRITP). The LRITP contains Goals and Objectives to guide transportation planning for a minimum of 20 years into the future. The LRITP takes an intermodal approach, that is, it makes consideration for highways, rail, air, waterways, rural transit, and pedestrian/bicycle forms of transportation. Unlike the STIP, the LRITP does not contain specific transportation projects; it may, however, identify corridors for transportation improvements and other long-range goals. The LRITP is updated as appropriate.

Process for Consultation

1. The Draft LRITP is developed by the Department and approved by the Director.
2. A display ad is published in a statewide newspaper, including those publications that typically serve minority, low-income, and traditionally underserved populations, informing the public and local officials that the Draft LRITP is available for comment.
3. A press release is given to the statewide media informing them of the availability of the Draft LRITP for comment.
4. Specific efforts will be made to identify and solicit involvement from minority, low-income, and traditionally underserved populations through use of demographic data and consultation with local officials.
5. Letters or notices stating the availability of, and soliciting oral or written comments on the Draft LRITP are sent to elected officials, community leaders, industry and interest groups, and State and Federal agencies including the State Clearinghouse, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
6. Email notification of the Draft LRITP will be sent to others who signed up for voluntary distribution list.

7. The Draft LRITP is made available in various formats: by download from the Department website, by mailing copies upon request, and by placing them in the ARDOT District Headquarters, the PDD/EDD offices, and the State Clearinghouse.
8. After a minimum comment period of 30 days, comments received by the Department are considered and responses are made to the originator, as appropriate.
9. The Draft LRITP goes through a final internal review process, including the review of all comments received on the plan.
10. The Final LRITP (with any revisions) is then submitted to the Commission.
11. The Commission approves the LRITP by Minute Order.
12. Notification of the availability of the final document is given to various interested parties through in person meetings, email distribution, and other means as appropriate.
13. The Department website is updated with the approved LRITP.

Projects of Regional Significance

The Department will use the following process for projects of regional significance:

1. The Department will consult with local affected non-metropolitan officials to determine if a proposed project is regionally significant.
2. The Department will coordinate with local officials to engage them and other decision makers in the planning process.
3. Scoping meetings, public involvement meetings, or listening sessions may be scheduled to determine project needs and impacts.
4. Specific efforts will be made to identify and solicit involvement from minority, low-income, and traditionally underserved populations through use of demographic data and consultation with local officials.
5. The Department will keep stakeholders updated throughout the process and conduct follow up meetings, as appropriate.

REVISION PROCESS (NON-METRO)

1. At least once every five years, the Department will review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan officials and other interested parties for a period of no less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the cooperative process and any proposed changes.
2. The Department will direct a specific request for comments (through survey or other means) to the State association of counties, municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to non-metropolitan local officials.
3. Comments and any applicable survey data will be used to update the Non-Metropolitan Public Involvement Plan by the Department's Transportation Planning and Policy Division.
4. The Department, at its discretion, is responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes. Department administration will review and approve the updated plan.
5. If a proposed change is not incorporated, the Department will make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, included notification to non-metropolitan local officials or their associations.
6. Copies of the updated plan will be forwarded to FHWA and FTA for their records.

APPENDIX A

23 CFR 450.210 Citation

Citation	ARDOT Actions
<p>450.210 Interested parties, public involvement, and consultation.</p> <p>(a) In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP, the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points.</p> <p>(1) The State’s public involvement process at a minimum shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decision making processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties; (ii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP; (iii) Provide adequate public notice of public involvement 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 long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP; (iv) To the maximum extent practicable, ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times; (v) To the maximum extent practicable, use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and supporting studies; (vi) To the maximum extent practicable, 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; (vii) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP; (viii) Include a process for seeking out and considering 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; and (ix) <i>Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate.</i> <p>(2) <i>The State shall provide for public comment on existing and proposed processes for public involvement in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. At a minimum, the State shall allow 45 calendar days for public review and written comment before the procedures and any major revisions to existing procedures are adopted. The State shall provide copies of the</i></p>	<p><u>To address 450.210 (a)(1)(ix):</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Department will rely primarily on participants’ comments at civic and public meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Involvement Plan. 2. During civic and public meetings, the Department may collect information from written surveys, general discussions from participants, and/or demographic profiles of participants. 3. Specifically, for public meetings, the Department may measure effectiveness by comparing such data as the number actually attending the meetings, the number invited to attend, the number of comments received, etc. 4. Periodically, the Department may develop a survey tool or other means of feedback and solicit comments from the public, planning partners, and elected officials regarding the efficacy of the Public Involvement Process. <p><u>To address 450.210 (a)(2):</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Department will evaluate and revise its Public Involvement Plan as needed. 2. Representatives of the interest groups, including traditionally underserved groups, and individuals expressing an interest in the Public Involvement Process will be asked to review and comment on existing procedures. 3. If changes are developed, a draft is prepared for Department review. 4. The Draft Public Involvement Plan is approved by the Director. 5. A legal notice is published in a statewide newspaper informing the public and local Officials

<p><i>approved public involvement process document(s) to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>The State shall provide for nonmetropolitan local official participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. The State shall have a documented process(es) for consulting with non-metropolitan local officials representing units of general purpose local government and/or local officials with responsibility for transportation that is separate and discrete from the public involvement process and provides an opportunity for their participation in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. Although the FHWA and the FTA shall not review or approve this consultation process(es), copies of the process document(s) shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes.</i></p> <p><i>(1) At least once every five years (as of February 24, 2006), the State shall review and solicit comments from nonmetropolitan local officials and other interested parties for a period of not less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the consultation process and any proposed changes. A specific request for comments shall be directed to the State association of counties, State municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to non-metropolitan local officials.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The State, at its discretion, shall be responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes. If a proposed change is not adopted, the State shall make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, including notification to nonmetropolitan local officials or their associations.</i></p> <p>(c) For each area of the State under the jurisdiction of an Indian Tribal government, the State shall develop the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP in consultation with the Tribal government and the Secretary of Interior. States shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with Indian Tribal governments and Federal land management agencies in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP.</p> <p>(d) To carry out the transportation planning process required by this section, a Governor may establish and designate RTPOs to enhance the planning, coordination, and implementation of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of nonmetropolitan areas of the State. In order to be treated as an RTPO for purposes of this Part, any existing regional planning organization must be established and designated as an RTPO under this section.</p> <p>(1) Where established, an RTPO shall be a multijurisdictional organization of nonmetropolitan local officials or their designees who volunteer for such organization and representatives of local transportation systems who volunteer for such organization.</p> <p>(2) An RTPO shall establish, at a minimum:</p> <p>(i) A policy committee, the majority of which shall consist of nonmetropolitan local officials, or their designees, and, as appropriate, additional representatives from the State, private business, transportation service providers, economic development practitioners, and the public in the region; and</p> <p>(ii) A fiscal and administrative agent, such as an existing regional planning and development organization, to provide professional planning, management, and administrative support.</p> <p>(3) The duties of an RTPO shall include:</p> <p>(i) Developing and maintaining, in cooperation with the State, regional long-range multimodal transportation plans;</p> <p>(ii) Developing a regional TIP for consideration by the State;</p>	<p>that the Draft Public Involvement Plan is available for comment.</p> <p>6. A press release is given to the statewide media informing them of the availability of the Draft Public Involvement Plan for comment.</p> <p>7. A 45-day comment period is provided.</p> <p>8. The Department prepares a final Plan.</p> <p>9. The Department's website is updated with the Final Public Involvement Plan.</p> <p><u>To address 450.210 (b):</u></p> <p>1. At least once every five years, the Department will review and solicit comments from non-metropolitan officials and other interested parties for a period of no less than 60 calendar days regarding the effectiveness of the cooperative process and any proposed changes.</p> <p>2. The Department will direct a specific request for comments (through survey or other means) to the State association of counties, municipal league, regional planning agencies, or directly to non-metropolitan local officials.</p> <p>3. Comments and any applicable survey data will be used to update the Non-Metropolitan Public Involvement Plan by the Department's Transportation Planning and Policy Division. The Department, at its discretion, is responsible for determining whether to adopt any proposed changes.</p> <p>4. Department administration will review and approve the updated plan.</p> <p>5. If a proposed change is not incorporated, the Department will make publicly available its reasons for not accepting the proposed change, included notification to non-metropolitan local officials or their associations.</p> <p>6. Copies of the updated plan will be forwarded to FHWA and FTA for their records.</p>
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<p>(iii) Fostering the coordination of local planning, land use, and economic development plans with State, regional, and local transportation plans and programs;</p> <p>(iv) Providing technical assistance to local officials;</p> <p>(v) Participating in national, multistate, and State policy and planning development processes to ensure the regional and local input of nonmetropolitan areas;</p> <p>(vi) Providing a forum for public participation in the statewide and regional transportation planning processes;</p> <p>(vii) Considering and sharing plans and programs with neighboring RTPOs, MPOs, and, where appropriate, Indian Tribal Governments; and</p> <p>(viii) Conducting other duties, as necessary, to support and enhance the statewide planning process under § 450.206.</p> <p>(4) If a State chooses not to establish or designate an RTPO, the State shall consult with affected nonmetropolitan local officials to determine projects that may be of regional significance.</p>	
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