

# BREVARD METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Adopted February 8, 2007

BREVARD METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

Some commonly used transportation terms, acronyms and abbreviations:

**AIS** – Arterial Investment Study

**AMPO** – Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

**BPTAC** - Bicycle Pedestrian & Trails Advisory Committee

**CAC** – Citizens Advisory Committee

**CAP** – Community Awareness Program

**CIA** – Community Impact Assessment

**CMS** – Congestion Management System

**ETDM** – Efficient Transportation Decision Making

**FAC** – Florida Administrative Code

**FDOT** – Florida Department of Transportation

**FHWA** – Federal Highway Administration

**FS** – Florida Statute

**FTA** – Federal Transit Administration

**GIS** – Geographic Information Systems

**GMSC** – Growth Management Subcommittee

**INTERESTED PARTIES** - Groups and individuals who are affected by, or involved with, transportation in Brevard County (or in the region). Examples include: Federal, State and local government representatives, elected officials, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, the disabled, civic and social organizations, special interest groups, and representatives of neighborhood and homeowner associations.

**ISTEA** – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991)

**LRTP** – Long Range Transportation Plan

**MPO** – Metropolitan Planning Organization

**MPOAC** – Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

**PD&E** – Project Development and Environment Study

**PIP** – Public Involvement Plan [may be used interchangeably with  
Public Participation Plan (PPP) ]

**PPP** – Public Participation Plan [may be used interchangeably with  
Public Involvement Plan (PIP) ]

**PSAs** – Public Service Announcements

**SAFETEA-LU** – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation  
Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

**SCAT** – Space Coast Area Transit

**SCGTV** – Space Coast Government Television

**SOS** – State of the System Report

**TAC** – Technical Advisory Committee

**TIP** – Transportation Improvement Program

**UPWP** – Unified Planning Work Program

# **THE BREVARD MPO**

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### ***Authority***

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 mandated that all urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000 establish a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (“3C”) planning process, in order to be eligible to receive U.S. Department of Transportation funding. The 1974 Federal-Aid Highway Act formalized this process further, by mandating the creation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all areas required to have a “3C” planning process.

In December 1991, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was signed into law. ISTEA was landmark legislation that introduced a comprehensive approach to address transportation issues by emphasizing innovation, intermodalism and flexibility. The approach begun under ISTEA was continued in 1998, with the adoption of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). On August 10, 2005 the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted. SAFETEA-LU carries forward a strong federal emphasis on public involvement programs.

### ***History and Composition***

The Brevard MPO was established in order to provide transportation planning services for the Palm Bay – Melbourne – Titusville urbanized area, as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The MPO Board consists of 19 voting members (including all five County Commissioners), 13 municipal representatives and one representative of the Canaveral Port Authority. The MPO Board also includes the Florida Department of Transportation’s (FDOT) District Five MPO Liaison and the MPO Attorney as nonvoting members. Through a staff services agreement, Brevard County provides a full-time support staff for the MPO. Current MPO Board and Committee membership lists can be found on the MPO website and are published each year in the Annual Report.

The Brevard MPO is advised by five committees:

1. **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):** Comprised of representatives from local (county and city) governments, the Brevard County School Board, St. Johns River Water Management District and FDOT (District Five), the TAC reviews transportation plans and programs based on their technical merits and makes recommendations for action to the MPO.
2. **Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC):** Made up of citizens appointed by each MPO Board member, the CAC reviews transportation plans and programs and assists the MPO in understanding community needs as they pertain to transportation issues.
3. **Bicycle, Pedestrian & Trails Advisory Committee (BPTAC):** Citizens and agency staff with an interest in promoting safe, efficient and convenient bicycle and pedestrian facilities and services assist the MPO in the development and promotion of a network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout Brevard County, while encouraging safe bicycle and pedestrian activity as both a healthy recreational activity and as a means of everyday transportation. The BPTAC is responsible for reviewing Transportation Enhancement project applications and making priority recommendations to the MPO Board for funding consideration.
4. **Growth Management Subcommittee (GMSC):** Local government and transportation agency planners and engineers (generally members or alternates of the TAC) meet, as needed, to discuss transportation planning and land use issues. The primary responsibility of the GMSC is to review project funding requests received annually from local governments and transportation agencies and to make project priority recommendations to the TAC, CAC and MPO.
5. **Traffic Operations Committee (TOC):** Local government and FDOT staff responsible for administering the operation of traffic control devices, such as traffic signs and signals meet, as needed, to discuss traffic operations and management issues of interest to the

MPO. The primary responsibility of the TOC is to make priority recommendations for the expenditure of funds set-aside annually by the MPO for operations and maintenance projects.

### ***Public Involvement Requirements***

The Brevard Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Involvement Plan is periodically reviewed as part of the MPO's ongoing commitment (and adopted public involvement policy) to actively evaluate and improve the public involvement process and assure compliance with State and Federal requirements.

SAFETEA-LU authorizes federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period from 2005 to 2009. SAFETEA-LU requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will advance eight (8) transportation planning factors that:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation; and
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Specific to the public involvement process, one key change from ISTEA/TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU is the expanded definition of "participation by interested parties." Broadly defined, "interested parties" includes groups and individuals

who are affected by, or involved with, transportation in Brevard County (or in the region). Some examples include: representatives of Federal, State and local government agencies; elected officials; representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities; the disabled; civic and social organizations; special interest groups; and, representatives of neighborhood and homeowner associations. The definition may be expanded to include individuals within a designated area affected by a specific program or project, defined using identifiers such as zip codes, census block groups or areas of demographic clusters identified in the MPO's Community Characteristic Inventory (currently under development).

As outlined in SAFETEA-LU, public meetings must, to the extent feasible and reasonable, be held at accessible locations and times convenient to expected participants. All plans must be available on a web site, and documents are to be written in easily understandable language. Further, SAFETEA-LU stresses the use of visual components (i.e. maps, photos) to enhance communications.

The Brevard MPO Public Involvement Plan (PIP) includes a proactive public involvement process that supports and encourages early and continuous opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the regional transportation planning decision making process. As a "living document," this Plan will be continually reviewed for possible revisions.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PIP):**

### ***General Purpose***

Meaningful and effective public participation is essential to the successful implementation of any transportation planning project or program. Active involvement of the citizens and other database contacts (please refer to Policy 1, Objective 1.1 for listing) leads to the incorporation of local and regional concerns, needs, values and ideas into governmental decision making, leading to better decisions that have public support. This PIP is intended to outline the guidelines used by the Brevard MPO during the course of public participation activities. This Plan also contains the goals, policies, objectives and tools used by the MPO for public involvement measures.

## *Overview*

The Brevard MPO actively pursues public involvement in four areas:

1. Regular and special business meetings of the MPO and its advisory committees are conducted in an open public forum with prior notification and provisions for receiving public comment, in accordance with Florida Law.
2. Development of the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) include opportunities for public involvement and comment prior to adoption by the MPO.
3. Individual planning projects, such as corridor studies, have individual public involvement components, including project-specific Public Involvement Plans.
4. Ongoing updates of MPO activities are provided to the public in several ways, including the Internet web site, broadcasting of MPO meetings on Space Coast Government Television (SCGTV), print media coverage, flyers and newsletters.

General guidelines followed by the Brevard MPO to encourage continuing public involvement include:

- Providing timely information about transportation planning projects, issues and processes to interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local and regional concerns). Information may be sent via the Internet, e-mail, direct mail, print advertisements and/or SCGTV.
- Providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the LRTP, the TIP and other transportation plans and projects, by conducting open public meetings, with the agenda allowing time for public comment(s).

- Giving adequate public notice of transportation planning activities and allowing time for public review and comment as pertains to the TIP, the LRTP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment, then an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan will be made available prior to any decision being made by the MPO Board.
- Determining the needs of those who may be underserved by transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, the elderly, youths, persons with disabilities, and individuals living in low-income households.
- Employing visualization techniques (i.e. diagrams, maps, pictures) to supplement and enhance program descriptions in order to optimize public understanding of issues and concepts.

# **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOAL, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES**

## **GOAL: TO PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT TRANSPORTATION PLANNING SERVICES AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IN A CONVENIENT AND TIMELY MANNER.**

Policy 1: The MPO shall actively engage the public in the transportation planning process, according to the goal, policies and objectives contained in this Public Involvement Plan and in State and Federal law(s).

Objective 1.1: The MPO shall maintain an up-to-date database of contacts, including (at a minimum) the following representatives:

- a. Elected Officials;
- b. Local Government Staff;
- c. Transportation Agencies (seaport, airports, transit, etc.);
- d. Local Media;
- e. Homeowner Associations;
- f. Civic and Advocacy Groups;
- g. Special Interest Groups;
- h. Brevard County Libraries (for public display);
- i. Individuals expressing an interest in transportation planning activities;
- j. Representatives of users of Pedestrian Walkways;
- k. Representatives of users of Bicycle Transportation Facilities;
- l. Representatives of traditionally underserved individuals and/or community(ies). This may include: low-income, elderly, racial and ethnic minorities; and,
- m. Representatives of emergency service providers and users.

Objective 1.2: The MPO shall, when feasible, mail and/or e-mail meeting announcements/invitations to the MPO contact list and/or to targeted groups for upcoming transportation activities.

Policy 2: The MPO shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis.

Objective 2.1: The MPO shall make all publications and work products readily available to the public via the Internet and at the MPO staff office.

Objective 2.2: 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 groups such as homeowner associations, with reasonable notice.

Objective 2.3: The MPO shall produce a newsletter for distribution to the MPO contact list. The newsletter will include, at a minimum:

- Updates on current or recently completed projects
- Announcements of upcoming meetings
- Significant program information
- Safety education information
- Contact information

Objective 2.4: The MPO shall maintain an Internet web site, that will:

- Be continuously updated and maintained in order to provide the most current available information.
- Contain, at a minimum, the following information:
  - a. Contact information (mailing address, e-mail, phone and fax numbers);
  - b. Current MPO and advisory committee(s) membership;
  - c. Brief descriptions of current projects;

- d. Work products and publications (TIP, LRTP, UPWP, etc.);
- e. Comment/Question form(s); and,
- f. Links to transportation related organizations/agencies (i.e. FHWA, FDOT, etc.).

Policy 3: The MPO shall encourage the involvement of *all* Brevard residents in the transportation planning process.

Objective 3.1: Target audiences shall be identified for each planning study conducted by the MPO, including residents, business and property owners and traditionally underserved and under-represented populations, including but not limited to, non-English speaking individuals, low income households, and minority households within the study area.

Objective 3.2: The MPO shall, whenever feasible, hold public meetings at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens.

Policy 4: The MPO shall strive to continuously improve public involvement.

Objective 4.1: The MPO shall continuously evaluate public involvement techniques, according to the procedures contained in the Brevard MPO Public Involvement Evaluation Handbook.

Objective 4.2: This Public Involvement Plan and the Evaluation Handbook shall be reviewed and adopted, with revisions if necessary, at least every three (3) years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement.

Policy 5: The MPO shall be involved in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction.

Objective 5.1: The MPO shall actively assist the Florida Department of Transportation, local governments and transportation agencies in the

development and implementation of public involvement techniques for planning and other studies, including Major Corridor/Feasibility Studies, Project Development and Environmental Studies (PD&E), Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) evaluations, and other transportation planning activities.

Objective 5.2: The MPO shall cooperate with the Florida Department of Transportation to implement their Community Awareness Program (CAP) and other public outreach efforts that the Department undertakes for specific projects.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES**

The MPO relies on the distribution of printed materials, electronic communications and staff presentations to keep the public informed about its activities and programs. Public involvement is an on-going activity of the MPO, with several techniques used on a continuous basis. Public involvement is also an integral part of one-time activities such as corridor studies, and regularly repeated activities including the annual Transportation Improvement Program process and Long Range Transportation Plan updates.

This section contains descriptions of public involvement tools currently used by the MPO. Included with the description is a list of activities that each tool may be used for. In order to present a more comprehensive picture of available techniques, additional tools used by other agencies are also described.

### **MPO WEB SITE**

*Description:* The Brevard MPO launched its web site ([www.brevardmpo.com](http://www.brevardmpo.com)) in 1998, and it has proved to be an invaluable tool in the MPO's overall PIP. The site includes basic information about the MPO process, members, calendar of meetings/events and contact information. Over the years, the site has been expanded to include information about specific projects undertaken by the MPO. Work

products, such as the UPWP, TIP and LRTP are available for downloading from the site, as well as Traffic Counts and several maps and brochures. This site also provides links to local and national transportation related sites. Additionally, individuals are able to submit comments.

*Activities:* The site is used as an informational/educational tool, as well as to advertise opportunities for public involvement.

### **MPO MASTER DATABASE**

*Description:* MPO staff maintains a master database of all contacts representing business, civic, Federal, State and local agencies and interested public. The database includes committee membership, mailing information, phone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses and web sites. The database is used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest/advocacy groups and homeowner association contacts, and is the foundation of the newsletter and special event mailing list. The database is also used to establish and maintain a list of e-mail contacts for electronic meeting notifications and announcements.

*Activities:* The database is used to enhance public involvement activities.

### **LEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS**

*Description:* Florida Administrative Code (FAC) requires advertisement of any public meeting where a decision could be made or that may be attended by more than one elected official. The MPO regularly advertises the MPO, the TAC/CAC, and other meetings, as required. Meeting notices are regularly published in *Florida Today* (the local newspaper with the largest circulation), Spanish language and minority based publications.

*Activities:* Regular and other meetings seeking public input are posted.

### **MPO NEWSLETTER**

*Description:* MPO staff produces a newsletter, generally on a quarterly schedule, that is distributed to interested citizens as well as representatives of advocacy groups, elected officials, municipalities, the media, private entities and other

agencies. Citizens are added to the distribution list, by their own request. Opportunities to request being added to the distribution list occur during public meetings hosted by the MPO, on the MPO web site, and when citizens contact the MPO staff. Each issue of the newsletter includes staff contact information, upcoming meeting schedules, the MPO web site address, project highlights, and current planning project status reports. Each year, inserts are included to highlight major MPO projects or activities, such as the adoption of project priorities and the MPO Annual Report. When appropriate, information regarding significant transportation issues, MPO awards, and other one-time activities are included. An important goal of the newsletter is to inform the public of upcoming decisions to be made by the MPO or other agencies, so that they have time to prepare meaningful comments prior to the decision being finalized.

*Activities:* The newsletter is used to inform and educate the public, as well as to promote regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications and work products.

### **DISPLAY ADS**

*Description:* Eye-catching ads are used to promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor study workshops. These ads are published in the local section of the newspaper with the intent of reaching a larger audience than those that typically read legal ads. The MPO actively seeks out minority publications for placement of display ads in English and Spanish to increase public participation from Brevard County's various minority groups.

*Activities:* Project specific meetings, workshops, open houses or hearings.

### **PROJECT SPECIFIC NEWSLETTERS**

*Description:* For individual projects (i.e. corridor studies) that are typically performed using consulting services, newsletters are often used to address specific project issues. These newsletters are mailed to targeted residents, businesses and property owners in the area that are expected to be impacted by a particular project or program. Information regarding upcoming project meetings, alternatives being proposed in the area, and other related project news is reported in these newsletters.

*Activities:* Corridor studies, small area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

### **OTHER NEWSLETTERS**

*Description:* When project specific newsletters are not used, articles may be prepared for publication in other newsletters produced by municipalities, homeowner associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the projects. These articles are subject to the publication dates and space restrictions of the individual publishers.

*Activities:* Corridor studies, small area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

### **DIRECT MAILINGS**

*Description:* Used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area or group of people. Direct mailings include post cards, letters or flyers. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of a potential impact(s) from a project. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example avid cyclists may be targeted for bicycle and pedestrian trail projects.

*Activities:* Project specific meetings, workshops, open houses, corridor studies, small area studies, other planning studies or major activities.

### **PRESS RELEASES**

*Description:* Formal press releases are sent to local media (newspaper, television and radio) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the MPO or their committees.

*Activities:* Corridor or other planning studies, workshops, open houses, public hearings and other MPO (and related) activities.

### **SPACE COAST GOVERNMENT TELEVISION (SCGTV)**

*Description:* Brevard County maintains a cable television network that is available to all cable television subscribers within the County. All MPO meetings are televised live on SCGTV, and rebroadcast throughout the month. SCGTV also broadcasts select meetings, both live and pre-recorded, and short informative programs about departmental activities or projects of interest to the entire population.

*Activities:* MPO monthly meetings, regular and special MPO activities.

### **TV MESSAGE BOARD SCRIPTS**

*Description:* Information about regular MPO and TAC/CAC meetings and other public meetings is provided to Space Coast Government Television (SCGTV) to be included in scrolling announcements.

*Activities:* Regular meetings, project-specific meetings, workshops, open houses, public hearings and other MPO events, activities or program related messages.

### **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)**

*Description:* Space Coast Government Television (SCGTV), as well as other local television and radio stations, provide airtime for PSAs used to promote MPO related programs such as bicycle and pedestrian safety.

*Activities:* Transportation safety educational messages.

### **THE FLORIDA CHANNEL**

*Description:* The Florida Channel is a statewide public affairs broadcasting network that regularly airs Florida Legislative Branch activities, and other governmental programming of statewide interest. SCGTV works with the Florida Channel to provide taped coverage of the Brevard MPO monthly meetings for broadcast statewide on a rotating schedule and at the discretion of the Florida Channel.

*Activities:* Monthly MPO meetings and other MPO activities taped by SCGTV.

## **PUBLIC EVENT MESSAGES**

*Description:* Written scripts are provided to facility managers (i.e. sports stadium) for announcements before and after sporting events. Typically the announcements offer transportation safety tips and reminders (i.e. Don't Drive Drunk, Buckle Up). The intent is to increase safety awareness among the general public and encourage interest in transportation issues.

*Activities:* Transportation safety messages.

## **PROJECT SPECIFIC WEB SITES**

*Description:* For individual projects (i.e. corridor studies) that are typically performed using consulting services, project specific web sites are often used. These sites are used when project information is too extensive to be included on the MPO web site. Project web sites can contain study area maps, meeting announcements, descriptions of potential alternatives, comment forms, user surveys and project team contact information. Links to project web sites are provided on the MPO web site.

*Activities:* Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies.

## **PROJECT WORKSHOPS/OPEN HOUSES**

*Description:* These are public meetings that are generally open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis, and/or through an open microphone. Short presentations may be given at these meetings. Project specific meetings provide information to the public and are used to solicit public comment(s).

*Activities:* Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, annual TIP and Project Priority process, certification review, Long Range Transportation Plan updates and other major MPO activities.

## **SMALL GROUP MEETINGS**

*Description:* During projects such as planning studies, targeted meetings are held with specific small groups that have an interest in the project. Meetings could be with homeowner or neighborhood associations, civic groups, special interest groups,

municipal and county planners and engineers, or other groups of affected or interested parties.

*Activities:* Early plan development, corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies and other MPO activities.

### **SPEAKERS BUREAU**

*Description:* The face-to-face communications available through public speaking assures the greatest opportunity to inform the public and encourage their involvement in the transportation planning process. MPO staff schedule speaking engagements before civic, community and business groups interested in transportation issues and related topics in Brevard County. This provides a forum for groups to learn about transportation planning issues, including long and short term projects. Additionally, educational talks are offered which can address various safety topics, most specifically in the areas of bicycle and pedestrian safety (including bicycle helmet use and fitting).

*Activities:* Planning studies, project priority process, bicycle and pedestrian safety and other major MPO activities.

### **E-MAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS/INTERNET MESSAGE BOARD**

*Description:* Meeting announcements and MPO information is e-mailed to interested individuals and groups who have submitted their e-mail address to MPO staff. Interactive message boards are used to facilitate discussion and gather public comments regarding specific MPO projects or related transportation planning issues.

*Activities:* Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, regular meetings, public hearings, workshops, open houses, and other major MPO activities.

### **FACT SHEETS**

*Description:* Used to provide summary information regarding MPO policy, programs and projects. Fact sheets can be distributed at public meetings, on the MPO web site, and in public places such as libraries and community centers. Individuals and special interest groups may request fact sheets directly from the

MPO staff office. Informational items may provide background information on an upcoming planning project or activity, or be used as general educational material. *Activities:* Corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, annual TIP and Project Priority process, Long Range Transportation Plan updates, bicycle and pedestrian safety information and other MPO activities.

### **POSTERS AND FLYERS**

*Description:* Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed for display in public places such as municipal buildings (i.e. City Halls), libraries and community centers. Special interest groups, homeowner associations and individuals may request posters and flyers for distribution and display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of the meeting, the time(s) and location(s), contact information and website address where additional information can be obtained. Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailings, newsletters, e-mails, etc.

*Activities:* Corridor studies, small area studies, other planning studies, regular and special MPO activities.

### **MPO LOGO**

*Description:* A logo representing the MPO is used to identify products and publications of the MPO. A logo helps the public become familiar with the different activities of the MPO by providing a means of recognizing MPO products.

*Activities:* MPO publications including those developed by consultants working on MPO sponsored projects.

### **COMMENT FORMS**

*Description:* Comment forms are often used to solicit public comment on specific issues presented at a workshop, open house or other public meeting. Comment forms may be very general in nature, or may ask for very specific feedback. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific alignment alternatives considered during a corridor study, or may ask for a person's general feelings about

any aspect of transportation. Comment forms may also be included in publications and on web sites to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication or web site.

*Activities:* Comment forms are typically used at public workshops, open houses, hearings and other MPO events.

## **SURVEYS**

*Description:* Surveys are used when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment cards to ask very specific questions, such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys are also used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies. For example, participants may be asked about their daily travel patterns. Another use of surveys can be gathering information to develop community characteristic inventories which will assist the MPO in making transportation decisions that compliment the values and desires of the citizens of Brevard County.

*Activities:* Community characteristic inventory development, corridor studies, small area studies and other planning studies.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTIC INVENTORY**

*The development of a Community Characteristic Inventory (may also be referred to as Community Characteristics) is anticipated to be finalized by Summer 2007. The Community Characteristics will be used for planning and public outreach purposes.*

*Description:* Community Characteristics are used to identify the existing transportation network, socio-economic variables and environmental factors needed for use in both short term and long range transportation planning and management systems. A GIS program is used to identify areas demographically in order to provide the MPO with the capability of assessing impact distribution by area and target public involvement activities. Community Characteristics are used to assure that public involvement activities include representatives from diverse geographical, demographic and organizational areas that compose the MPO planning area. Community Characteristics also serve to support and encourage continuous

improvement in the methods used to meet the public need for information and involvement. Ultimately, the use of Community Characteristics will increase attendance, participation, collaboration and diversity at meetings and events.

*Activities:* Corridor studies, small area studies, other planning studies, annual TIP and Project Priority process, Long Range Transportation Plan updates, regular and special MPO activities.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EVALUATION**

The Federal Highway Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation require the MPO to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities. By continuously evaluating public involvement activities, it is possible to discontinue activities that are ineffective and to improve or add new public involvement activities to the MPO transportation decision-making process. Guidelines for the evaluation of public involvement techniques are contained in the *Brevard MPO Public Involvement Evaluation Handbook*.

The evaluation handbook describes public involvement techniques, outlines the steps to be taken to evaluate those techniques, identifies measures to quantify success rates and outlines strategies to improve the MPO's public involvement process. The appendices of the evaluation handbook contain samples of public involvement tools, general and project-specific evaluations and general and project-specific improvement strategies. The evaluation handbook text and sample evaluation and improvement strategy forms are contained in Appendix A of this PIP. The full Brevard MPO Public Involvement Evaluation Handbook is available from the MPO staff office, upon request, or on the MPO website.

## **Revisions and Amendments**

This Public Involvement Plan reflects the current policies of the Brevard MPO. As evaluation of public involvement occurs, it may be necessary to revise those policies. Revisions and amendments to the PIP will be documented in this section.

### Adoption of the Public Involvement Plan

MPO Public Involvement Plan, Adopted November 9, 2000

### Revisions and Amendments

MPO Public Involvement Plan (Revision), Adopted February 12, 2004

MPO Public Involvement Plan (Revision), Adopted February 8, 2007

**APPENDIX A**

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN  
EVALUATION HANDBOOK**

Text and Samples

## **Introduction**

The Federal Highway Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation require the MPO to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of public participation activities for the transportation planning process. By continuously evaluating public participation activities, it is possible to discontinue activities that are ineffective and to improve or add new public participation activities to the MPO program. The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidelines for the evaluation of public participation techniques.

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) includes descriptions of the various public involvement techniques that can be employed by the MPO. The PIP also includes the public involvement goal, policies and objectives of the MPO.

The following excerpts from the Evaluation Handbook provide a basic overview of the public involvement evaluation process. It outlines the steps to be taken to evaluate the public participation techniques identified in the PIP, identifies measures to quantify success rates and outlines strategies to improve the MPO's public participation process.

The Evaluation Handbook is intended to be a "living" document, with additions and changes based on each evaluation that is performed. The Handbook should be reviewed at least every three years, in conjunction with the PIP, to ensure that appropriate changes are being implemented by the MPO.

## **Evaluation Methods and Performance Goals**

In order to determine the effectiveness of public participation tools, they must be evaluated and compared to established performance measures and goals. The typical methods for evaluating the effectiveness of public participation tools are surveys and quantitative statistical analysis. This section briefly describes evaluation methods used by the MPO. For each public involvement tool, performance goals and methods for meeting those goals are identified in Table 1.

### **Surveys**

*Description:* Surveys typically consist of short, specific questions regarding public involvement tools that are on-going or that were used on a specific project. Surveys can be conducted in person, by phone, mail or e-mail. Face-to-face and telephone surveys provide quick responses and can be used when a respondent's answer may lead to a follow-up question. For example, respondents may be asked if advertisements are an effective notification tool. If the response is no, the surveyor can ask the respondent why

advertisements are not effective and also what other tools they would prefer. In person and telephone surveys can target specific areas or groups or can be random samplings. Mail surveys may be used to provide a written record of the answers received from those responding. Mail-back surveys can be distributed at meetings, inside other publications, or by mailing directly to potential respondents. Respondents can be a targeted group, such as members of special interest groups or residents of specific areas, or they can be randomly chosen. Return postage for mail surveys is typically pre-paid by the MPO, or can be the responsibility of the respondent. Past experience indicates that a higher rate of return occurs when postage is pre-paid. e-mail surveys, like mail surveys, provide a written record of responses. Unlike mail-back surveys, there is little to no reproduction or distribution cost to the MPO to send out the surveys, and little to no cost to respondents to participate. To use e-mail surveys, it is necessary to have e-mail addresses for the targeted respondents, and random distribution is generally not an option.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Statistics can be used to determine the "return on the investment" of producing public involvement tools. For example, the number of persons attending an activity can be compared to the number of persons that were notified of the activity. This type of evaluation can be an indicator of whether or not the tools used for public involvement are actually reaching the intended audience, or which tools had a greater response rate. Statistical analysis is used to evaluate survey responses and the results of the analysis are compared to the evaluation measures to determine the rate of success of public involvement tools.

### Public Involvement Tools Evaluation

<b>Public Involvement Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal(s)</b>	<b>Methods to Meet Goal(s)</b>
Public Involvement Plan	No measure - PIP should reflect the policies and practices of the MPO.	N/A.	Update at least every 3 years to incorporate the improvement strategies resulting from public involvement evaluations.
MPO Web Site	Number of hits.	Minimum of 90 hits/month, 5% increase in hits/quarter.	Use other public involvement tools to increase advertisement of the web site.
MPO Master Database	Number of returned items.	Maximum of 2% return rate per mailing.	Make immediate corrections when items are returned.
Legal Advertisements	No measure – required by Florida Statutes.	N/A	N/A
MPO Newsletter	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of returns.	N/A. Return rate is addressed under MPO Master Database.	Continue items that receive favorable comments and correct or improve mistakes or items that receive negative comments.
Display Ads	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw the ad. Ad formats may be modified based on specific comments received.	Pursue publication in a prominent location in the paper(s). Increase the size or modify the layout to make ads more visible and easily understood.

Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Project Specific Newsletters	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they received a newsletter. -OR- Reaches a minimum of 85% of persons that are affected by a project.	Increase or decrease distribution to more accurately target an area that may be affected.
If no project specific newsletter: Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached. - OR- Reaches a minimum of 80% of persons that are affected by a project. If in addition to project specific newsletter: Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/ survey respondents were reached - OR- When combined with a project newsletter reaches a minimum of 95% of persons that are affected by a project.	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.		Provide information to the publishers of these newsletters in a timely fashion. Investigate all possible newsletters that may reach an affected area.

<b>Public Involvement Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal(s)</b>	<b>Methods to Meet Goal(s)</b>
Direct Mailings	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they received the mailing -OR- Reaches a minimum of 85% of persons that are affected by a project.	Increase/Decrease mailing list to more accurately target affected areas. Use the most up-to-date information from the Brevard County Property Appraiser and/or the MPO Community Profile to maintain the mailing list.
Press Releases	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.	No standard. Format may be modified based on specific comments received.	Encourage publication of press releases by keeping the media informed.
Space Coast Government Television (SCGTV)	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw or heard the meeting notice on SCGTV.	Provide information to SCGTV as soon as it is available to increase the air time. Encourage SCGTV to make the announcements prominent.
TV Message Board Scripts	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw the meeting notice.	Provide information to SCGTV as soon as it is available to increase the air time. Encourage SCGTV to make the announcements prominent.
Public Service Announcements (PSAs)	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.	No standard. Format may be modified based on specific comments received.	Encourage airing of public service announcements by keeping SCGTV and the media informed.

<b>Public Involvement Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal(s)</b>	<b>Methods to Meet Goal(s)</b>
The Florida Channel	Calls, letters, e-mails etc.; Number of persons reached.	No standard.	Work with SCGTV to assure taped coverage of MPO meetings, etc. are made available for re-broadcast.
Public Event Messages	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	No standard. Format may be modified based on specific comments received.	Encourage facility managers (i.e. sports stadium) to include transportation safety messages in public announcements.
Project Specific Web Sites	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of hits.	Minimum of 30 hits per month. Increase of at least 10% over the life of the project. Expectations may be higher depending on the size of the study area.	Use other public involvement tools to increase advertisement of the web site.
Project Workshops/Open Houses	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Attendance.	3% - 5% of affected population (based on study area) in attendance.	Schedule at convenient times and accessible locations. Hold multiple workshops. Use other tools to increase awareness.

<b>Public Involvement Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal(s)</b>	<b>Methods to Meet Goal(s)</b>
Small Group Meetings	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Met expectations of the group.	N/A. These meetings are held at the request of affected groups.	MPO staff and any consulting staff should be available in a timely manner to attend small group meetings regarding any MPO activity or issue. Meeting should provide information requested.
Speakers Bureau	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Met expectations of the group.	N/A. These events are held at the request of affected groups.	MPO staff should be available in a timely manner to give presentations regarding any MPO activity or issue. The presentation should provide specific information requested.
E-Mail Announcements & Internet Message Board	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw the announcement.	Increase e-mail list by advertising the availability of e-mail announcements using other public involvement tools.
Fact Sheets	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Positive comments. Circulation throughout the MPO planning area, or project/study area.	Modify format and content based on comments received. Increase distribution by partnering with community stakeholders. Encourage reproduction & distribution.

<b>Public Involvement Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal(s)</b>	<b>Methods to Meet Goal(s)</b>
Posters and Flyers	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of persons reached.	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw a poster or read a flyer.	Increase distribution to common areas where posters will be more visible to the general public and by partnering with community members & stakeholders.
MPO Logo	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.	Recognition of the logo.	The MPO logo should be used on all MPO products and publications, and on materials for all MPO sponsored activities.
Comment Forms	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of responses.	60% of meeting attendees filled out a form – OR- 2% of visitors to a web site submitted a form –OR- 20% of mail recipients return the form.	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving comments. Offer incentives for providing comments.
Surveys	Calls, letters, e-mails, etc.; Number of responses.	60% of contacted persons participate in the survey –OR- 20% of mail recipients return the survey.	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving feedback. Offer incentives for returning surveys.
Community Profile	N/A. Tool required by FHWA/FTA.	Use of contact information to reach a minimum of 85% of persons that are affected by a project.	Increase or decrease distribution to more accurately target an area that may be affected. Adjust the profile on a regular basis to reflect changes in community characteristics.

## **Improvement Strategies**

The Brevard MPO should continually strive for improved public involvement. Improvements should be made to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. The decisions made by the MPO affect the entire population, both residents and visitors, of Brevard. Therefore, seeking public input on those decisions is vital to the success of the MPO as the agency responsible for transportation planning in Brevard.

Within one month after the completion of an activity or at milestones during an activity, evaluation of public involvement should occur. For on-going activities, evaluation should occur at least quarterly.

Each time a public involvement evaluation is performed, a list of improvement strategies should be identified for implementation. If improvement is needed for an on-going public involvement task, such as the MPO web site, a reasonable completion date should be established. If improvement is needed for one-time activities, such as corridor studies, the improvement should be implemented where appropriate on future activities.

### Public Involvement Evaluation Form

*This form should be completed for each public involvement evaluation.*

Evaluation of:	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning Study – please specify _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Specific Tool(s) – please specify _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify _____
If this is a study evaluation, is this: <input type="checkbox"/> mid-study <input type="checkbox"/> end of study	
List the public involvement tools used during the study:	
Description of Study or Tool:	
Audience(s) Targeted for Public Involvement:	
Type of Evaluation(s) to be conducted: <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative <input type="checkbox"/> Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical Analysis	
Survey, indicate type: <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Written <input type="checkbox"/> Mail-back	
Targeted Respondents:	
Statistical Analysis, description:	
Date Evaluation Began: _____	Date Completed: _____
Completed By:	

## Improvement Strategies Form

Study or tool:

Date Evaluation Completed:

Improvement Strategies:

Date(s) of Implementation: