

**Public Participation Plan**  
**OF THE**  
**LINCOLN METROPOLITAN**  
**PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**In Cooperation with the**  
**Federal Transit Administration**  
**and**  
**Federal Highway Administration**

**November 4, 2010**

**draft**

**revised**



**Lincoln**  
**Metropolitan Planning**  
**Organization**

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# **Public Participation Plan**

for the  
**Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization**

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*Prepared by the*  
**Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department**  
for the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization  
555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

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## **Lincoln MPO Members**

- ◆ City of Lincoln
- ◆ Lancaster County
- ◆ State of Nebraska
- ◆ Lincoln Airport Authority
- ◆ RTSD
- ◆ StarTran
- ◆ FTA
- ◆ FHWA

## **Credit / Disclaimer Statement**

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# **Public Participation Plan**

## **for the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization**

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### **Public Participation Plan and its Purpose**

It is the policy of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Lincoln-Lancaster planning area, (the Lincoln MPO) to support and encourage early and continuous public participation and input to the planning process and to adhere to the principles of Environmental Justice and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act as part of the metropolitan “3-C” planning process relating to transportation systems and facilities. The Lincoln MPO’s public participation plan is designed to ensure early and continuous opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the regional planning and transportation “3-C” metropolitan decision making process.

The public includes anyone who resides in, has an interest in, or does business in the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) of Lancaster County and is potentially affected by transportation decisions. For a pro-active participation process and valuable input to occur, educating the public about the transportation planning process is of utmost importance. This document is to ensure that the public is educated and aware of various transportation topics. It is to ensure the public has an opportunity to comment, give feedback and participate in the transportation planning process.

Additional efforts are made to address a Presidential Executive Order that directs every federal agency (ie; MPO) to make Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on "minority populations and low-income populations." The MPO's Environmental Justice initiatives will strive to accomplish this by involving the potentially affected public through a Public Outreach Program. This program consists of MPO staff activities designed to develop partnerships with, and enhance the participation in the transportation planning process, by groups and individuals of “traditionally underserved” communities. Efforts will be made to include the communities who may be considered underserved. These communities include minorities, transit dependent citizens, low income, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

In carrying out the participation plan, the Lincoln MPO shall to the maximum extent practical – 1) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times; 2) employ visualization techniques to describe long-range transportation plans; and 3) make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the MPO website, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunities for consideration of public comment and opinion. The goal of the MPO’s Outreach activities is to ensure that all citizens regardless of race, color, religion, income status, national origin, age, gender, disability, marital status, or political affiliation, have an equal opportunity to participate in the MPO’s decision-making process.

## **Public Participation Plan: Assessment & Adoption**

- ◆ The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is assessed periodically based on changes in local, state, or federal legislation, and in response to periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of public participation techniques that are used by the Lincoln MPO.
- ◆ A critical element for the development, approval and adoption of this plan is that it be based on fully complying with the requirements of Federal Transportation Regulations in 23 CFR Part 450.
- ◆ As the planning process for the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan is initiated, an assessment was made on the types of public participation techniques available at this time, especially new public input techniques in addition to meetings and public hearings. Feedback from this assessment was used to evaluate any changes deemed necessary in the Public Participation Plan.
- ◆ During this assessment period and preparation of the draft plan, the MPO solicits input and comments from interested parties and stakeholders within the planning area. These assessments and consultations with interested parties and stakeholders result in a draft plan which is posted on the MPO website for further public comment.
- ◆ The draft is then open for public review for a minimum of forty-five (45) calendar days. Written and oral comments received are documented, summarized, analyzed and reported in the plan. Subsequent changes as advised by the comments are made to the plan. All relevant state and federal agencies are informed and provided with an opportunity to further comment on any revisions.
- ◆ Following the public review period, the final draft PPP is reviewed and recommended by the MPO Technical Committee which includes a public participation process. The MPO Officials Committee is the guiding policy body for the MPO and acts to formally adopt the PPP making it the Public Participation Plan for MPO planning activities.
- ◆ This Public Participation Plan was developed through the process described above and included consultation with an expanded list of known interested parties through a direct mailing (Appendix 'A' includes a listing of Stakeholders and Interested Parties). The MPO contacted more than 75 organizations, agencies, and representatives and 115 Neighborhood Associations and requested their feedback and engaged them in the planning process. The Appendix provides a copy of the Stakeholder Notice and Public Participation Notice soliciting input in the development of this public participation plan. The draft PPP was also made available on the MPO's website.
- ◆ The final draft is presented to the MPO Technical on November 4, 2010 for final recommendation and the Officials Committee on November 16 for formal adoption.
- ◆ The adopted PPP is presented for State approval.
- ◆ The FHWA and FTA approve the final plan based upon the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning processes being substantially compliant with 23 CFR Part 450

## **Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization**

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a transportation policy-making body made up of representatives from local government and transportation agencies with authority and responsibilities in the Metropolitan Planning Area. The MPO reviews transportation issues and develops transportation plans and programs for the metropolitan area.

In 1973, the Federal Aid Highway Act mandated that all urbanized areas having a population of 50,000 or more designate a single agency to administer federal transportation funds called the MPO. These were created to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects were based on a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) transportation planning process.

The City of Lincoln has been designated as the MPO for the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area by the Governor of the State of Nebraska and is the recipient of federal transportation planning funds. The Lincoln MPO was established on March 22, 1974 and is staffed by the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department and the Lincoln Public Works Department with administrative responsibilities in the Planning Department. Areas with populations greater than 200,000 are designated Transportation Management Areas (TMAs). The 2000 Census identified the Lincoln Urban Area as having a population of 225,581, and accordingly, the Secretary of Transportation designated the Lincoln MPO as a TMA. This classification qualifies the Lincoln MPO for specific shares of federal funds, but along with this, it establishes additional administrative and planning requirements in the transportation planning process. These additional planning activities relate primarily to the development of a congestion management process, project selection, public involvement and the MPO certification process.

The primary role of the Lincoln MPO includes developing a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a shorter range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), a MPO Management Plan and this Public Participation Plan. The LRTP extends out over a minimum 20-year horizon and acts as the official guide for the expenditure of federal and state transportation funds that are expected to be available in the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area.

The MPO generates other planning documents and reports and engages in many other activities such as transportation data collection, safety promotion, and public participation efforts. The primary purpose of many transportation planning activities is to support the monitoring and development of the LRTP and the TIP.

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## **Five Core Functions of an MPO**

- 1 Establish a setting:** Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.
- 2 Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options:** Use data and planning methods to generate and evaluate alternatives. Planning studies and evaluations are included in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- 3 Prepare and maintain a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP):** Develop and update the LRTP for the metropolitan area covering a planning horizon of at least twenty years that fosters (1) mobility and access for people and goods, (2) efficient system performance and preservation, (3) good quality of life and (4) contains a fiscally constrained listing of projects and strategies based upon the MPO project selection process.
- 4 Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** Develop a short-range, four-year, fiscally constrained program of transportation improvements based on the LRTP; the TIP is designed to achieve the area's goals, using regulation, operating, management, and financial tools.
- 5 Involve the public:** Involve the general public and other affected constituencies in the four essential functions listed above.

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### ***Officials Committee***

The Lincoln MPO Officials Committee functions as the policy making arm of the MPO. The Officials Committee membership consists of elected officials representing the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and the State of Nebraska. The Committee is comprised of six voting members and two non-voting members. The voting members review and act upon transportation related programs and studies recommended by the MPO Technical Committee. Reviews and recommendations by the Officials Committee are to be in compliance with the established planning process and the policies of the general purpose governments and agencies which they represent. The non-voting members represent the federal transportation agencies for the region and provide guidance to the Committee.

### ***Technical Committee***

The Lincoln MPO Technical Committee provides detailed analysis of transportation related topics in support of the transportation decision making process. The Technical Committee is made up of representatives of various professional transportation and

related planning disciplines which review the effects of transportation plans and programs on social, economic, and environmental factors in conformance with appropriate federal regulations.

The Technical Committee serves as the administrative and technical staff to implement the plans and policies of the Lincoln MPO and proposes, develops and/or reviews transportation related programs, studies and proposals. The Committee conducts the work necessary to produce and amend the Long Range Transportation Plan. Short-term planning documents developed and reviewed by the Technical Committee include the Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, and the annual Self-Certification report, among other implementation documents. The Technical Committee makes recommendations to the Officials Committee on proposed programs, studies and documents.

### ***Planning Commission***

The Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Commission plays an important role in the MPO transportation planning process. Advertised public hearings before the Planning Commission are part of the formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and LRTP. In addition, the Planning Commission reviews the TIP for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. After public hearings are held, the Planning Commission forwards their recommendations on the MPO documents to the Officials Committee for approval.

Planning Commission members are appointed and include representation from the urban and rural areas of the county. All hearings of the Planning Commission are televised live on the local cable television system, and all meetings are open to the public.

### ***State Coordination***

The Lincoln MPO works closely with the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) to ensure city-county projects are co-ordinated with the State process and State projects. The Lincoln MPO meets regularly with the Department of Roads, involves them in the decision making process at city-county level and works with the state in special circumstances where extra efforts might be needed.

***Technical Committee.*** NDOR has full membership on the Technical Committee with two voting members; District I Engineer and Planning & Project Development Manager.

***Officials Committee.*** The NDOR Director full member of the Officials Committee and has a vote on all key issues.

***Coordination meetings.*** The MPO regularly meets with NDOR to work on planning issues and project development.

***Subcommittees/Task Forces.*** The Lincoln MPO and the NDOR appoints subcommittees and task forces are created when required to undertake special reviews or studies or decisions that regarding transportation issues. Subcommittees and task forces established by the MPO consist of members from participating Lincoln MPO

members, the NDOR and other affected agencies as needed.

The NDOR is involved in the following MPO Subcommittees

- Multi-Modal Committee
- System Management and Operations Committee
- MPO Administration Committee
- Programming and Funding Committee

**L RTP.** The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) also includes state involvement and effected state projects. The State has a vital role in developing Lincoln MPO's vision for future which includes improving regional and state roadways in and through the Metropolitan Area. This participation is critical since the LRTP is a fiscally constrained set of projects and strategies based upon the MPO project selection process.

**TIP/STIP.** Lincoln MPO annually develops a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which includes local and State projects. All projects in the TIP are drawn from, or are consistent with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and project selection process. Program approval is based upon having a documented Metropolitan Planning process that is substantially compliant with 23 CFR Part 450. The Lincoln TIP is referenced in the Statewide TIP (STIP) and adopted after a series of State public involvement activities and approved by FHWA and FTA.

Projects that are funded in the TIP/STIP and constructed, implemented, operated or maintained using federal dollars must conform to any and all federal, state or local regulations/statutes that are applicable based on the type of project, type of funding received, scope of work and/or impact to the natural or human environments. Both the TIP and STIP includes financial summary tables to demonstrate fiscal constraint. The STIP, State Public Involvement Process for the STIP and related documents are located at the NDOR web site, <http://www.roads.nebraska.gov/STIP/index.htm> .

**Traffic Modeling.** Various modeling activities are undertaken by both the Lincoln MPO and State that are closely coordinated.

## **Introduction**

A main responsibility of the MPO is to involve the public in the decision making process. This document is a Public Participation Plan, both a 'Policy Document' and an 'Action Plan' to guide the MPO on effective public participation during its transportation planning activities and processes.

The policy document outlines the procedures, tools, and expectations for outreach and education to the public on transportation issues. It also enlists techniques that will consistently be used to engage members of the public. It is to ensure that the views and opinions of the public and stakeholders are received, recorded and used in the planning process as well as the creation of a Public Participation Plan.

The action plan is a time line, detailed strategies and procedures for various projects under the MPO to ensure proactive participation. The action plan outlines procedures and tools for four different types of activities undertaken by the MPO. The MPO is involved in projects that are reviewed periodically and some that are reviewed less frequently.

The MPO is also involved in some special projects in conjunction with the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County. The MPO engages in outreach and education programs directed toward the public and various stakeholders.

### ***Guiding Principles for this Plan***

The Lincoln MPO Public Participation Process (PPP) is intended to provide direction for public participation activities to be conducted by the Lincoln MPO and contains the vision, goals, objectives, and techniques used by the MPO for public participation. As noted earlier, the Lincoln MPO has been designated by the federal government to serve as the MPO for the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Area which includes all of Lancaster County. Therefore, in its public participation process, Lincoln MPO will strive to:

1. **Provide timely information** about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdictional concerns).
2. **Provide reasonable public access** to technical and policy information used in the development of the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered.

3. **Give adequate public notice** of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to, the approval of the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, there shall be an additional opportunity for public comment.
4. **Respond in writing to all applicable public input.** When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan (including the financial plan) as a result of the public participation process, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan.
5. **Solicit the needs of those traditionally under-served** by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, and low-income households.
6. **Provide a public comment period** of 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the Public Participation Plan and/or any amendments. Notice of the 45-day comment period will be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation, minority community newspapers, and various other publications prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period and on MPO's website. Notice will also be mailed to the entire MPO's mailing list prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period.
7. **Provide a public comment period** of at least 30 calendar days prior to adoption of the LRTP and LRTP amendments, 30 calendar days prior to adoption of the TIP, and 15 calendar days prior to adoption of UPWP and amendments, TIP amendments, and other appropriate transportation plans and programs.
8. **Coordinate the Public Participation Process** with statewide Public Participation Processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs.
9. **Periodically review the Public Participation Process** to ensure it provides full and open access to all. Portions of the process which are found not to meet the needs of the constituency will be revised.
10. **Involving persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** is being actively developed and coordinated within the City of Lincoln and StarTran. The City of Lincoln and StarTran have completed the 4 factor analysis required for the LEP requirements and submitted this with the Title VI program this year to FTA Office of Civil Rights. This is being coordinated with Title VI programs and an Equal Opportunity Program was developed by the Equal Opportunity Officer which was submitted in 2010. Efforts to coordinate the LEP with each department or agency within the city has been initiated. The MPO is taking reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to all programs and activities by LEP persons. During the long range transportation planning process, information is provided in languages other than English when feasible to reach the affected public or interested parties. Translators are also considered and made available at select locations and times.

11. **Accommodations for persons with disabilities** are may so that no person is excluded from participation in the planning process. This is done by facilitating locations for meetings such that persons with disabilities have easy and risk-free access and facilitating outreach, education and information programs in various formats for people with sight, hearing and mobility impairments.

### **Special Accommodations**

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If any person requires special accommodations at public meetings for language interpretation, sign language, or large print, please contact our office at 441-7491, and we will make our best efforts to accommodate you.

## **Procedures**

Information is the key to decision making and the Lincoln MPO understands the importance of information dissemination. The MPO utilizes a variety of printed and electronic tools to inform the public about its mission and programs. Information is available about the various programs, plans, and studies undertaken by the MPO for the public. Availability of information, which is also complete, timely and understandable, is critical in the transportation process.

### ***Information Resources & Visualization Tools***

The Lincoln MPO is responsible for a number of documents pertaining to transportation planning. The key documents are the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, MPO Management Plan and Public Participation Plan. The MPO also undertakes special studies on issues that may have risen during LRTP or Comprehensive Plan Updates.

Information on current or ongoing projects can be found in multiple formats in both electronic and print formats. Information published incorporates images, photos, graphics, and other means of visually describing transportation issues and alternatives as a strategy for promoting public understanding of the material being presented. Reports can be accessed on the Lincoln MPO website and are also available at the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department. These approaches are consistent with the federal requirement to incorporate “visualization” of transportation material into public involvement.

More information about ongoing efforts can be obtained by attending MPO Committee meetings. The Officials Committee and the Technical Committee are the two governing bodies in the MPO and meet regularly. The Technical Committee holds regular meetings

on a bi-monthly basis and additional meetings may be scheduled as circumstances warrant. The Officials Committee holds meetings on a quarterly basis and additional meetings may be scheduled as circumstances warrant.

All Committee meetings are governed by the **Open Meetings Act**, are open to the public and will be held at such times and places as generally convenient to the committee membership and the general public. Open Houses and special information meetings are held at various times and locations to meet the needs of the general public. The MPO administrator and staff are responsible for scheduling and coordinating meetings, preparing meeting agendas, recording proceedings of meetings and the dissemination of proceedings.

**What can be accessed at the  
Lincoln MPO Website  
[lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: mpo)**

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- ◆ Notices of upcoming meetings
- ◆ Long Range Transportation Plan
- ◆ Transportation Improvement Program
- ◆ Unified Planning Work Program
- ◆ MPO Management Plan
- ◆ Public Participation Plan
- ◆ Other Planning documents
- ◆ Agenda and minutes of previous meetings of MPO committees
  - Agendas will be posted at least one (1) week in advance of scheduled meetings.
  - Draft minutes will be posted approximately 14 days after meetings.

### ***Public Involvement and Review***

Public comments are an important procedure and a requirement under the federal regulations. The public has the option to record their opinions, whether in support or opposition, in various ways and at various times of the planning process.

The public has the opportunity to record opinions in the following ways and locations:

- Letters
- Feedback form
- Emails
- Comments at public hearings
- Comments at open meetings

### ***Stakeholders and Interested Parties***

This Public Participation Plan was developed through a process that included consultation with an expanded list of Stakeholders and Interested Parties. Contact was made through direct contacts and mailing that requested feedback to engage them in the planning process. This included contacting more than 75 organizations, agencies, and representatives and 115 Neighborhood Associations. The stakeholders identified, but not limited to, are interested citizens, affected public agencies, public transportation, freight shippers, providers of freight services, private providers of transportation, users of public transportation, users of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, the disabled and other interested parties. Appendix 'A' includes a copy of the Stakeholder Notice and the Public Participation Notice soliciting input in the development of this Plan and a listing of Stakeholders and Interested Parties directly contacted.

The assessment period and preparation of the draft plan included solicitation for input and comments from interested parties and stakeholders. These assessments and consultations were brought together for a draft plan which was posted on the MPO website for public comment. The resulting draft plan includes consideration of comments received from interested parties and stakeholders along with staff evaluations. The involvement of stakeholders in the planning process is an effort to assist key agencies and participants in making their participation convenient.

The resulting draft Plan was made available to interested parties and stakeholders for input and all relevant state and federal agencies are informed and provided with an opportunity to further comment on any revisions. The resulting revised draft is presented to the Technical Committee for their review and recommendation to the MPO Officials.

This process allows the MPO to create planning partnerships with a wide range of outreach professionals, the business community, neighborhood groups and other agencies. The MPO actively maintains an up-to-date email and mailing list current and potential stakeholders that are maintained. These contacts are used to publicize a call for projects, transportation plan amendments and other planning activities in an effort to reach a broader audience and/or take leadership role in public participation efforts.

This creates a dialogue on transportation issues and encourages continued interest in the transportation planning process. Information on MPO activities, meetings including agendas and minutes, newsletters and draft documents are regularly posted on the MPO's website which provides the public an opportunity directly access MPO documents. Comments are solicited in an accessible website and email links to MPO staff.

The adopted plan is presented for State approval. The FHWA and FTA approve the final plan based upon the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning processes being substantially compliant with 23 CFR Part 450.

### **How to find out about Lincoln MPO meetings and events**

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Notification of MPO meetings, public hearings, public comment and review periods, and special events are provided in the following ways:

**1 MPO Website.** Notice of upcoming meetings are posted on the MPO website at [lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: mpo).

**2 Email Lists.** To join our electronic mailing list, please complete the online request form at [lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: mpo).

**3 Press Releases.** Press releases are sent to the local newspaper about public hearings, open houses and public meetings.

**4 Public Notice.** Public notices are posted outside the City Clerk's office and at public libraries.

### ***Traditionally Under Served***

The Lincoln MPO will seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally under served by existing transportation systems, such as low income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services by holding public meetings at public places and community centers, at varied times suitable to all, and places that are publicly and handicap accessible. The public meetings would be held in locations convenient to populations identified in the Environmental Justice Strategy.

In an effort to seek out and build relationships with traditionally under served, the MPO will identify and meet with organizations and community leaders who represent non-participating low-income and minority populations. The purpose is to build relationships with these groups and leaders as well as identify strategies to bring traditional non-participants into the planning process. This will involve holding meetings, activities, and other public involvement events at various geographic locations at which the targeted populations congregate as neighborhood or community centers, schools, and other popular destinations. Meetings located on transit lines are most accessible and meeting in public buildings tend to offer convenient and accessible locations.

Outreach and education programs to specific population groups include producing materials as pamphlets, brochures, and workshop outlines that are be used in various presentations and for distribution. Materials can target non-traditional participants and language groups. This will include conducting information workshops and open houses

on specific transportation planning topics or general process. Provide opportunity for involvement through interactive exercises, comment sheets, and/or verbal comments.

In order to provide opportunities for all segments of the community to participate in the planning process, the Lincoln MPO puts into practice proactive outreach techniques such as inviting the clients of retirement homes, Veterans Administration offices, and independent living facilities to a public planning meeting held in the local Senior Center during the day. Obtaining input from people with disabilities will be accomplished by holding a special meeting at a location having good public transit access. Holding planning meetings in buildings accessible to people with disabilities is a routine part of including all citizens.

### ***Indian Tribal Lands***

The Lincoln MPO does not include Indian Tribal lands, but the MPO will involve the Indian Tribal government in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP if such areas are included in the jurisdiction in future. The Indian Community Center is located in Lincoln and is identified as a primary stakeholder and the Center's leadership is involved in MPO planning process.

### ***Federal Lands***

The Lincoln MPO will appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the LRTP and TIP documents.

Land management agencies on the MPO's stakeholder list include Federal entities such as the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI) Bureau of Land Management, the USDI National Park Service, and the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as State and local entities responsible for parks, forests, or other public lands. Since federal land management agencies often delegate decisions to their regional and local divisions, these are primary points of contact. NDOR is involved in the Lincoln MPO's planning process and through this relationship we coordinate other State and local planning agencies.

## ***Consideration of and Response to Public Comments***

- ◆ Time will be reserved for consideration of public comments prior to the close of a meeting, hearing or comment deadline.
- ◆ The MPO Technical and Officials Committees will reconvene a meeting for the purpose of addressing public comments.
- ◆ Once the public and stakeholder comments are considered and found to effect the planning documents under discussion, these ideas will be incorporated into the planning document.
- ◆ The MPO responds in writing to all applicable public input which becomes part of the planning document. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan (including the financial plan) as a result of the

public participation process, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made available to the Committee.

- ◆ Substantive comments pertaining to studies, analyses, or reports, along with appropriate responses, will be included in the published plan document or in an accompanying report.
- ◆ If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, there shall be an additional opportunity for public comment
- ◆ The record (written comments or testimony, tape recordings, or transcripts) of hearings and meetings are compiled by MPO staff and made available to the public, stakeholders and the planning committees.

### **Electronic Mailing List**

#### **Staying up to date**

To receive our electronic newsletter or notification of an upcoming meeting or public hearing, please join our electronic mailing list by completing the online request form at the MPO website.

## ***Public Involvement During Project Engineering, Design And Construction Phase***

Advance notice of project construction will be given to adjacent and abutting property owners. The notice will include approximate construction period, any major changes in roadway design, and dates, time and location of any public meetings to be held.

Public outreach involves hosting public meetings and open houses where the project scope and the details of the design can be viewed. These are held at times and locations convenient for the public and in locations in or near the project area. Information is usually presented on tables or exhibits within the meeting room. Usually there is not a fixed agenda or formal presentation. This provides an opportunity for involvement through the exhibits and MPO, Public Works or NDOR members are in attendance to listen to and discuss the merits of the project. Comments and concerns can be provided on comment sheets, and/or in verbal comments.

For large projects, a web site is maintained to provide detailed information in new visualization, interactive, and other graphic techniques to enhance understanding of transportation issues and decisions. Interactive web sites and e-mail links provide an opportunity for formal comments. Project newsletters and draft documents under review

also provide an opportunity for the public see a projects progress over time.

Projects involving a major investment of transportation resources may offer additional opportunities for public involvement through such techniques as partnering, value-engineering workshops or mediation. Involvement and level of public participation will be dependent upon the complexity and business or neighborhood sensitivity of particular project.

### **State Agency Coordination**

The Lincoln MPO works closely with the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) to ensure city-county projects are co-ordinated with the State process and State projects. The Lincoln MPO meets regularly with the Department of Roads for their input in the TIP, LRTP and other projects. Major projects that use federal funds must be reviewed and accepted by the NDOR-LPD Project Coordinator. The State is involved in the decision making process at City-County level by including NDOR representatives as voting members on both the MPO Officials Committee and Technical Committee.

The Lincoln MPO annually develops a TIP coordinated with the development of the State TIP. The STIP includes four years of projects, including all federally funded transportation projects and all regionally significant projects regardless of their funding source. The STIP projects are compiled from: the Department's Surface Transportation Program Book, the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), City and County One and Six Year plans, and project lists submitted by Tribal organizations and Federal Lands. All projects in the MPO's TIP are consistent with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and project selection process.

The NDOR "Public Involvement Plan" includes a public participation process that allows the public an opportunity to speak to transportation issues at open meetings held throughout he state. The current Public Involvement Plan is located at the NDOR website: <http://www.roads.nebraska.gov/STIP/docs/STIP-PIP-current.pdf>. The draft STIP is posted on the NDOR website and made available at the eight district offices no later than mid August for a minimum of 15 days. All public comments and responses are documented. At the end of the comment period, approximately September 1st, the STIP is submitted to the FHWA and FTA for approval.

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### **Nebraska Open Meetings Act**

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The Nebraska Open Meetings Act guarantees that every meeting of a public body shall be open to the public in order that citizens may exercise their democratic privilege of attending and speaking at meetings of public bodies.

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## **Plan Strategies and Tools**

This section is a list of strategies adopted by the MPO to ensure effective and continued public participation. These strategies include those that assist in making participation easy and convenient for the public. The ease and convenience of participation will increase the quality and amount of involvement from the public and other stakeholders. Information published or presented by the MPO will incorporate images, photos, graphics, and other means of visually describing transportation issues and alternatives as a strategy for promoting public understanding of the material being presented. These strategies will be reviewed and modified as needed. Strategies that best increase outreach, information, education, and involvement will continue to be used.

### ***Maintain up-to-date mailing list***

Maintain a mailing list to include all current and potential stakeholders. Stakeholders include, among others, the general public, environmental, health, neighborhood, citizen, and civic organizations; traditionally under-served communities; representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation and affected public agencies.

### ***Partner with other entities that influence/conduct outreach***

Create partnerships with a wide range of outreach professionals, community groups, jurisdictions, and agencies. Utilize these resources to publicize activities and events to reach a broader audience and/or take a leadership role in public participation efforts.

### ***Seek out/build relationships with traditionally under served community leaders and nontraditional participants***

Identify and meet with organizations and community leaders who represent non-participating and traditionally under-served populations. The purpose is to build relationships and earn trust with groups and leaders as well as identify strategies to bring traditional nonparticipants into the planning process.

### ***Meet in convenient and accessible locations for optimal attendance***

Hold meetings, activities, and other public involvement events at various accessible public locations where targeted populations congregate including community centers, libraries, churches, and other destinations. Consideration is given to holding meetings at convenient times and in locations that are reasonably served by public transportation.

### ***Develop an outreach and education program***

Produce materials such as pamphlets, brochures, and workshop outlines that can be used in various presentations and for distribution. Some of the materials may target non-traditional participants.

## ***Publicize MPO activities***

Create a media strategy to publicize MPO activities through newsletters, the MPO web site, and other media. Provide members of the media with periodic updates of MPO activities as well as press releases to announce public review and comment periods for major transportation planning products and activities.

## ***MPO Logo***

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.



## ***Maintain a website***

Provide information on MPO activities, meetings (including agendas and minutes), newsletters, and draft documents under review. Provide an opportunity for the public to provide input and formal comments through a feedback form posted on the web site and email links.

## ***Use visualization techniques***

Visualization, interactive, and other graphic techniques are used to enhance understanding of transportation issues and decisions. Availability of various display material including maps and reports at various locations such as libraries, planning offices, City Council Chambers, elected officials' offices, etc. Other popular and modern technology is employed such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to create interactive and visually informative maps and scenarios for data interpretation.

## ***Conduct informational workshops***

Host workshops on general process, specific transportation planning topics or special studies undertaken by the MPO. These could be done in conjunction with public meetings or prior to public meetings.

## ***Hold public meetings***

Disseminate information and provide a setting for formal public comment or discussion at appropriate intervals in the LRTP and TIP development processes. MPO staff members are to be in attendance to listen to and discuss public comments and concerns.

## ***Conduct focus groups***

Conduct small group discussions used to gather perspectives, insights, and opinions on a single or various topics. Small groups may be organized to bring representatives from different fields together or they could be used to target a specific group of stakeholders.

## ***Conduct surveys***

Information on people's perceptions, preferences, and practices sought through surveys which include both mailed survey of stakeholders and random resident telephone surveys. Additional online surveys may also be available to the public during a specific study and process.

## ***Publish a periodic newsletter***

Periodic newsletters will be used to inform the public about important transportation issues. Such newsletters may be integrated with other related planning issues. The newsletter shall include as much information as possible and be used as an education and outreach tool.

## ***Measure effectiveness of public participation tools***

Periodically the effectiveness of the various tools used to engage and inform the public is reassessed. The results of such efforts are used to improve outreach efforts and to identify the most effectively tools. MPO Administration Subcommittee continues to review, evaluate and improve upon public involvement techniques and outreach efforts. The details for these measures are in the following section on "Measuring Effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan"

### **MPO Committee Meetings**

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**Officials Committee** meetings are scheduled as needed, but are to be held at least four times each year to set policy guidelines, review transportation planning activities, and act on MPO transportation planning documents and programs.

Due to the complex nature and magnitude of transportation activity in the Lincoln area, meetings of the **Technical Committee** are scheduled bi-monthly.

Meetings of the Officials Committee and the Technical Committee are subject to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. **Subcommittee meetings** are held on a quarterly basis or additionally as circumstances require.

Regular updates on work efforts and meeting proceedings are provided at Technical Committee meetings.

## **Action Plan**

The second part of this Public Participation Plan is an Action Plan, or more suitably, a time-line guide for various efforts undertaken by the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Action Plan suggests detailed strategies and procedures for four different types of activities undertaken by the MPO.

The four types of activities include: efforts that are reviewed annually; major efforts; efforts that are reviewed when necessary; and special efforts .

### ***Efforts that are reviewed annually***

- ◆ Transportation Improvement Program
- ◆ Unified Planning Work Program
- ◆ MPO Management Plan
- ◆ Annual Listing of Obligated Projects
- ◆ Self-Certification of the MPO Process
- ◆ Annual Review of LRTP and Comprehensive Plan

### ***Major Efforts***

- ◆ Comprehensive Plan Update
- ◆ LRTP Update
- ◆ FHWA/FTA TMA Certifications every four years

### ***Efforts that are reviewed when necessary***

- ◆ Public Participation Plan
- ◆ Congestion Management Process
- ◆ Coordinated Transportation Human Services Transportation Plan

### ***Special Efforts***

- ◆ College View Neighborhood Mobility Audit
- ◆ Downtown Master Plan
- ◆ Transit Development Plan Study
- ◆ Airport West Subarea Plan
- ◆ Multi-Modal Transportation Study

## ***Efforts that are Reviewed Annually***

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

The TIP is an intermediate range planning document developed annually that reflects local and State transportation expenditures programmed over the next four years. The TIP draws on priorities identified in the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan to select projects to receive state and federal funding. All projects in the TIP are consistent with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and project selection process. Project information is provided in the TIP such as the general project description and cost, the funding source and funding year. Program approval is based upon having a documented

Metropolitan Planning process that is substantially compliant with 23 CFR Part 450 and approved by FHWA and FTA. The TIP is used to maintain a schedule of improvements and ensure coordination with the capital improvement programs of the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and the State (STIP).

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

On an annual basis the Lincoln MPO prepares a UPWP, in cooperation with other transportation agencies, to describe all metropolitan transportation planning activities anticipated within the area during the upcoming fiscal year. The UPWP is a short term planning tool that is used to define specific annual goals and work efforts to be performed or managed by the MPO staff. In addition, the UPWP outlines the annual budget for the planning activities of the MPO.

### ***MPO Management Plan***

This document presents an outline of the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), its organizational structure and related responsibilities, as well as the procedures used to carry out the federally-mandated transportation planning process in the Lincoln region. This MPO Management Plan document also provides an overview of how other agencies are involved in the regional planning process and a brief description of the federal transportation planning requirements and guidelines.

### ***Annual Listing of Obligated Projects***

On an annual basis, the State of Nebraska StarTran, and the MPO must cooperatively develop a listing of projects (including investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) for which federal funds were obligated in the preceding program year. The listing shall include all federally funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year, and shall at a minimum include the TIP information and identify, for each project, the amount of Federal funds requested in the TIP, the Federal funding that was obligated during the preceding year, and the Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years. The listing shall be published or otherwise made available in accordance with the MPO's public participation criteria for the TIP.

### ***Self-Certification of the MPO Process***

A self-review and evaluation of the transportation planning process for the Lincoln MPO is conducted each year assessing its compliance with applicable federal metropolitan planning laws and regulations. A report is prepared, reviewed and acted upon by the MPO's Technical and Officials Committees regarding this compliance evaluation on the transportation planning process.

### ***Annual Review of LRTP and Comprehensive Plan***

The LRTP and Comprehensive Plan, along with a Community Indicators Report are reviewed annually for updates. According to the Comprehensive Plan, "Such report may include new and pertinent information about the community; changes in the Plan's

underlying assumptions or any other factors affecting the health or welfare of the community. Such report may include specific proposals to amend the Plan.”

## ***Major Efforts***

### ***Comprehensive Plan Update***

The core promise embedded in the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and enhance the health, safety and welfare of our community during times of change, and to promote our ideals and values as changes occur. The Comprehensive Plan is specific to Lincoln and Lancaster County and it recognizes the factors that make us unique. The Plan therefore is a combination of practicality and vision, and provides guidelines for sustaining the rich mosaic that now characterizes our growing community. The plan prepares for the future of the community based on our present scenario and emerging trends. The plan is updated to keep abreast of trends and recognize issues that emerge between major updates.

### ***Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update***

The LRTP is a part and parcel of the Comprehensive Plan since transportation is an integral part of community development. The LRTP has two sections: future conditions as desired and appropriate for community development and an existing conditions report. The LRTP recognizes the transportation related issues in particular. The annual CIP, UPWP and List of Obligated Projects are based on the LRTP. Some of the Special studies have also been conducted after they were identified as important aspects of transportation that needed more focus.

### ***TMA Federal Quadrennial Certification Review***

The FHWA and FTA jointly conduct a detailed Certification Review of metropolitan transportation planning in Transportation Management Areas (TMA) every four years. This is to evaluate the effectiveness of the MPO's transportation planning process and verifies the MPO is complying with federal regulations. In general, the review consists of three primary activities: a site visit, a review of planning products, and preparation of a report that summarizes the review and presents findings and Federal actions.

## ***Efforts that are reviewed when necessary***

### ***Public Participation Plan***

The Public Participation Plan of Lincoln and Lancaster County is a proactive process which seeks to provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions and the early and continuous involvement of the public in the development of transportation plans and programs. This document will be updated as necessary.

### ***Congestion Management Process***

The most recent federal transportation legislation, SAFETEA-LU, which was passed by

Congress in 2005, requires there be a process that provides for effective management and operation of the transportation system to address travel needs within a metropolitan planning area serving a Transportation Management Area (TMA).

The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is to serve as a practical tool for the transportation planning staff and decision-makers to identify and implement strategies that enhance the mobility of people and goods. This is to be a systematic process that provides information on transportation system performance and alternative strategies to provide for effective management and operation of the transportation system. An annual CMP report is reviewed by the Technical and Officials Committee with ongoing efforts and reviews.

### ***Coordinated Transportation Human Services Transportation Plan***

The preparation of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan is a Federal requirement. Projects selected for funding under this program are to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. The plan is developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public. The plan is meant to establish goals, criteria and strategies for delivering efficient, coordinated services to elderly, underemployed or otherwise financially disadvantaged persons and persons with disabilities.

### ***Special Efforts***

The Lincoln MPO undertakes special studies and projects that facilitate a better understanding of transportation issues and therefore better planning. Listed below are a few examples of some recent studies that the Lincoln MPO did in association with other agencies such as the City of Lincoln, StarTran, Lancaster County, an independent coalition of agencies, citizen committees or task forces, neighborhood groups, citizen-business-officials action teams, advisory committees and private consultants.

#### ***College View Neighborhood Mobility Audit***

From April to November 2007, City of Lincoln staff teamed-up with people in the College View neighborhood to improve the transportation options for pedestrians, bicyclists, people who ride the bus, and drivers by making College View more walker-biker- rider-river friendly. The goal of this study was to develop a "multi-modal" strategic plan for the College View neighborhood that effectively integrates vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit systems and identifies achievable project initiatives and improvements for the neighborhood.

#### ***Downtown Master Plan***

The Downtown Master Plan identifies major land use and development policies for Downtown Lincoln, including delineating a number of land use activity zones and identifying the relationships between each zone. The policies derived from this study support the role of the downtown as set forth in the adopted City-County Comprehensive Plan. The Master Plan brings certainty to investors, developers, architects, business

people and residents by providing a clear vision of the community's goals and a basis for the review and approval process.

### ***Transit Development Plan Study***

The Transit Development Plan for the City of Lincoln is an analysis of existing service demand and an assessment of service utilization for StarTran services leading to recommendations for potential modifications or restructuring. The Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department, in conjunction with StarTran, retained a team led by Urbitran Associates for this effort. The study was comprised of a review of transit service characteristics and demographic features, and a presentation and analysis of the StarTran route network. These elements, combined with observations collected through consultant fieldwork and discussions with StarTran and City/County planning staff, as well as local stakeholders and the public, allowed the consultant team to develop a preliminary list of service issues and proposed service charges.

### ***Airport West Subarea Plan***

The Airport West Subarea Plan is important to the future development of northwest Lincoln and to the community as a whole. This Subarea Plan identifies a number of transportation, infrastructure and land use changes as well as identifying potential partnerships for public service agencies. The approval of this Subarea Plan is critical in providing guidance for a number of private and public entities involved in future developments, infrastructure, and facilities in the subarea. The community has an opportunity to provide a distinct impression of its desired future for this subarea.

### ***Multi-Modal Transportation Study***

The Multi-Modal Transportation Plan is one step in meeting the mobility goals contained in the Comprehensive Plan and the Long Range Transportation Plan. The primary focus of the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan is to identify realistic means for expanding travel, mobility, and accessibility opportunities within the city and county by supporting and promoting alternative modes of transportation. The goal of the study is to define means for furthering the usage of a wider range of travel modes to meet the Comprehensive Plan's and Long Range Transportation Plan's vision for enhancing multi-modal opportunities.

### MPO Planning and Program Documents

MPO Planning and Program Documents	Reviewing Body Public Meeting *	Meeting Notices: Public Notice, Email Postings, & Advertisements	Comment Period**	Availability of Reports/Minutes and Agenda ***
Long-Range Transportation Plan Update (LRTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MPO Technical Committee,</li> <li>▶ LCLC Planning Commission,</li> <li>▶ City Council and County Board</li> <li>▶ Officials Committee</li> </ul>	Posted during the public review period and prior to public meetings	At least 30 Days prior to approval by MPO Officials Committee	Agenda available at least 7 days prior to meetings
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MPO Technical Committee,</li> <li>▶ LCLC Planning Commission,</li> <li>▶ MPO Officials Committee</li> </ul>	Posted during the public review period and prior to public meetings	At least 30 Days prior to approval by MPO Officials Committee	Agenda available at least 7 days prior to meetings
TIP Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MPO Technical Committee,</li> <li>▶ MPO Officials Committee</li> </ul>	Posted 7 days prior to MPO Technical Committee meetings	At least 15 Days prior to approval by MPO Officials Committee	Agenda available at least 7 days prior to meetings
Unified Planning Work Program and Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MPO Technical Committee,</li> <li>▶ MPO Officials Committee</li> </ul>	Available during the public review period and prior to public meetings	At least 15 Days prior to approval by MPO Officials Committee	Agenda available at least 7 days prior to meetings
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MPO Technical Committee,</li> <li>▶ MPO Officials Committee</li> </ul>	Available during the public review period and prior to public meetings	At least 45 Days prior to adoption by MPO Officials Committee	Agenda available at least 7 days prior to meetings
Annual Review of Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MPO Technical Committee,</li> <li>▶ LCLC Planning Commission,</li> <li>▶ City Council and County Board</li> <li>▶ MPO Officials Committee</li> </ul>	Available during the public review period and prior to public meetings	At least 30 Days prior to approval by MPO Officials Committee	Agenda available at least 7 days prior to meetings
Other Reports and Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MPO Technical Committee,</li> <li>▶ MPO Officials Committee</li> </ul>	Available during the public review period and prior to public meetings	At least 15 Days prior to approval by MPO Officials Committee	Agenda available at least 7 days prior to meetings

\* All committee meetings are governed by the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

\*\* The comment period begins upon the posting of reports under consideration, least 7 days prior to MPO Technical Committee review and continues through the MPO Officials Committee review and adoption.

\*\*\* Draft documents are available at least 7 days prior to Technical Committee meetings and continue through Officials Committee reviews & adoption, approximately 10-14 days after Technical Committee review.

## ***Measuring Effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan***

The Lincoln MPO seeks to improve its public participation processes by identifying strengths and weaknesses in its methods, gauging the level of participation of stakeholders and interested parties, and modifying its methods accordingly. The Federal Highway Administration also requires that Lincoln MPO periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation plan and process.

Continuous evaluation allows the MPO to revisit its strategies, highlight improvements needed in the Public Participation Plan, identifies additional outreach activities; allows ineffective tools to be discontinued; and the evaluation of specific plans and projects keeps public involvement dynamic.

This section of the plan provides various activities or methods that have been used in the past and some that will be incorporated in the future for evaluating the performance of a public involvement technique (“Plan Strategies” on page 14). One or more of these methods will be used by the MPO to measure effectiveness of its public process.

In order to determine the effectiveness of the public involvement tools, evaluation and comparison to established performance goals is important. This section briefly describes evaluation methods used by the MPO. The table on Page 24 identifies performance goals and methods for meeting those goals for each public involvement tool.

- ◆ Tabulation of media coverage – keep a written and visual record of all advertisements, legal notices, newspaper notices, press conferences, press releases, website publications for any Lincoln MPO project.
- ◆ Surveys - Surveys will be conducted either in person, by phone, mail or e-mail.
- ◆ Comment/feedback cards – Public meetings will have feedback cards available for all. The feedback cards will also act as a survey to ascertain how the respondents learned about the meeting.
- ◆ Website polling – The Lincoln MPO website has a feedback form for all visitors. The public is encouraged to fill the feedback form to let us know how we can improve any of our public participation strategies. The form also gives the option to join the stakeholder mailing list.
- ◆ Periodic review and updating of outreach mailing lists

### **Contact Information**

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## Public Involvement Tools Evaluation Table

Public Involvement Tools	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goals	Improvement Opportunities
MPO Web Site – Message Boards	Number of Hits	Min. of 90 hits per month, 5 % increase in hits per quarter	
MPO Master Database of Contacts	Number of returned items	Maximum of 2% return rate per mailing	Make immediate corrections when items are returned or staff is notified of changes
E-mail Announcements and Direct Mailings	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons contacted	Minimum of 5% 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 better target affected areas. Use the most up-to-date information
Legal Advertisements	Required by Law	none	none
Press Releases	Calls, letters, etc.	none	Encourage publication of press releases by keeping the media informed.
Periodic Newsletter	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of returns	none	Continue items that receive favorable comments and correct or improve mistakes or items that receive negative comments
Poster and Flyers	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Min. of 10% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw a poster.	Increase distribution to common areas visible to the general public.
Other Media (Facebook, Twitter etc)	Calls, Letters, Messages, Number of 'Fans' and 'Followers.'	Minimum of reference in project area community newsletters, presence on electronic news shows quarterly and public service announcements for public meetings associated with long-range planning process	

Small Group Meetings	Calls, letters, etc.; Met the expectations of the group	N/A. These meetings are held at the request of affected groups.	The meeting should be formatted to provide specific information requested by the group and should highlight issues that are of interest to the group.
Study Sessions	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	NA	Encourage members to attend the sessions
Open Houses	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	3%-5% of affected population (based on study area) should attend.	Schedule at convenient times and locations. Hold multiple workshops. Use other tools to increase awareness.
Citizens Advisory Committees	Calls, letters, etc.; Attendance	NA	Encourage members to attend the sessions
MPO Logo	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons contacted	Recognition of the Logo	The MPO logo should be used on all MPO products and publications, and on materials for all MPO sponsored activities
Public Hearings	Calls, letters, etc.	3%-5% of affected population (based on study area) in attendance.	
Comment Forms	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons contacted	60% of meeting attendees filled out 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 in order to improve the planning process
Surveys	Calls, letters, 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 comments in order to improve the planning process
Reports – Online and Paper Copies	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons contacted	Positive Comments	Make it available at more public locations
Meeting Agenda and Minutes	Calls, letters, etc.	Positive Comments	Ensure timely availability of agenda and minutes

Project Specific Web Sites	Number of Hits	Min. of 90 hits per month, 5 % increase in hits per quarter	
Project Specific Open Houses / Workshops	Calls, letters, etc.;	Attendance 3%-5% of affected population (based on study area) in attendance.	Schedule at convenient times and locations. Hold multiple workshops. Use other tools to increase awareness.
Project Specific Newsletters	Calls, letters, etc.;; Number of persons contacted	Min. of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they received a newsletter. –OR Reaches a min. of 85% of persons that are affected by a project.	Increase or decrease distribution to more accurately target an area that may be affected

*Public Participation Plan*

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# Appendices



# Appendix A

## **Comments from Stakeholders during Preparation of the Plan**

### **Comment 1**

**Date:** October 30, 2009

**Name:** Denise Mainquist

**Comments:** The plan looked more like a slick sheet than an operational plan. Lots of good ideas, but not many specifics. I realize you need to have some flexibility, but there didn't appear to be any accountability to actually execute the strategy.

**Response:** The purpose of the MPO Public Participation Plan is to define a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, providers of transportation services, and other interested parties with an opportunity to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have oversight responsibilities on the MPO's planning process and determines whether this process is following applicable federal laws and regulations for which the transportation planning process is to comply (23 CFR Parts 450). The Lincoln MPO planning process is reviewed annually by the MPO Technical and Officials Committees and goes through a comprehensive Certification Review every 4 years by the FHWA and FTA. (Excerpts from these Federal Regulations are located in Appendix B)

### **Comment 2**

**Date:** November 03, 2009

**Name:** Mike Carlin

**Comments:** Posting Agendas on Website. It should be stated in the PPP that agendas for the Officials Committee and Tech Committee Meetings will be posted to the website "x" number of days before the scheduled meeting. When posted, the agendas should have a "posted on" date rather than just the date of the meeting. By spelling this out in the PPP it will provide staff with a firm target completion date and let the public know when they can expect to see the agendas posted. Having a firm target completion date will also provide staff with the "leverage" they may sometimes need in obtaining agenda inputs from stakeholders.

Posting Minutes on Website. It should be stated in the PPP that minutes for the Officials Committee and Tech Committee Meetings will be posted to the website "x" number of days after the scheduled meeting. When posted, the minutes should have a "posted on" date rather than just the date of the meeting. By spelling this out in the PPP it will provide staff with a target completion date and let the public know when they can expect to see the minutes posted.

NOTE: Having the minutes posted in a timely manner has been a problem for years. This has been brought to the MPO Administrator's attention in the past but the problem persists. For example, as of 11/2/09, the minutes from 9/24/09 & 10/30/09 Officials Committee meetings and the 6/4/09 & 9/10/09 & 10/30/09 Tech Committee meetings were not yet posted.

Overall meeting schedule awareness. The "Adopted Meeting Schedule" link on the Planning Department website does not

acknowledge that the MPO even exists. You have to know what you are looking for to find it. Similarly, there is nothing on the Public Works website that even hints to the existence of the MPO. This is confusing since that is where we use to go to find information on the MPO. It would be nice to think that it would not be necessary to codify in the PPP the requirement to maintain a meeting calendar on the website but if that what it takes then so be it.

**Response:** The meeting agendas for both the Technical and Officials Committee meetings are posted “at least seven (7) days in advance of meeting day” as required by the committee bylaws published in the MPO Management Plan. The required one week meeting notice is stated in the draft Public Participation Plan on page 20 and, in response, the minimum 7-day notice will be added and highlighted in the Public Participation Plan section on how to find out about meetings.

Meeting minutes from the Technical and Officials Committee Meetings are currently posted on the MPO web page along with the agendas. In response, we intend to make every effort to post draft minutes within 14 days after each meeting and will note this in the Public Participation Plan. Draft minutes will continue to include the note “that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Committee.” Revisions will be made to draft minutes, as necessary, upon committee adoption.

MPO meeting schedules and agenda information are currently posted under “Public Notices” on the MPO web page. Meeting dates are posted at the time scheduled and the agendas are posted seven days in advance of the meeting. In response, changes are being made to the Planning and MPO web pages for easier navigation, and they will include more prominence for the MPO, including bullets to the different types of MPO-related

information. The MPO is currently working on an MPO logo to use in reports, correspondence, etc. to strengthen the “identity” of the MPO.

Administration of the MPO is the responsibility of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department under the direction of the Planning Director. Planning is responsible for MPO transportation planning activities and program administration and coordination. The Mayor of the City of Lincoln along with the MPO Officials Committee provide oversight and policy direction.

## ***Stakeholders List***

### ***Government Agencies***

City of Lincoln  
Lincoln Aging Partners & Senior Ctrs  
Public Works & Utilities Department  
Planning Department  
Urban Development Department  
Federal Highway Administration  
Federal Transit Administration  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Lancaster County Engineer  
Lincoln Airport Authority  
Lincoln Electric System  
Lincoln Housing Authority  
Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Dept.  
Lower Platte South Natural Resource Dist  
Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission  
Nebraska Department of Roads  
Nebraska Games & Parks Commission  
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
Towns & Villages in Lancaster County

### ***Alternative Transport/Transit Agencies***

Alliance for Sustainable Transportation/  
Citizens for Transportation  
Great Plains Trails Network  
Human Service Transportation  
Organizations  
Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Comm.  
StarTran

***Freight Services & Shippers***

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad  
Nebraska Trucking Association

***Environmental Organizations***

Community Forestry Advisory Board  
Friends of Wilderness Park  
Lancaster County Ecological Advisory  
Committee  
Nebraska Association of Resource  
Districts

***Neighborhood Groups***

Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable  
Neighborhood Associations (115)  
NeighborWorks of Lincoln

***Community Centers***

Asian Community Center  
Hispanic Community Center  
Indian Center  
Malone Center

***NonProfit Agencies/ Organizations***

Catholic Social Services  
Center for People in Need  
Commission for the Blind and Visually  
Impaired  
League of Human Dignity  
League of Women Voters  
Lincoln Commission on Human Rights  
Lincoln Interfaith Council Church  
Lincoln Partnership for Economic  
Development  
Lincoln Seniors Foundation  
Lincoln/Lancaster County Human  
Services Federation

Lincoln/Lancaster County Women's  
Commission  
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital  
Mosaic  
Region V Systems  
Tabitha Home

***Developers/ Business Groups***

Downtown Lincoln Association  
Haymarket Historic District  
Homebuilders Association of Lincoln  
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce  
Lincoln Independent Business Assoc.  
Neighborhood Business Associations  
Realtors Association of Lincoln

***Academic Institutions***

Lincoln Public Schools  
Nebraska Wesleyan University  
Public School Districts  
Southeast Community College  
Union College  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

***Citizen Organizations & Advocacy  
Groups***

Citizens Transportation Coalition  
Islamic Foundation of Lincoln  
Lancaster County Medical Society  
Lincoln Action Program  
Lincoln Literacy Council  
Mayor's Environmental Advisory Comm.  
Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee  
Nebraska Appleseed  
Urban Design Committee  
YMCA  
YWCA

## Notice of Stakeholder Input Request



### Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization

Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department  
555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street - Suite 213  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508  
(402) 441-7491

### The Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization Requests Stakeholder Input for a New Public Participation Plan

October 12, 2009

The **Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization** (MPO) is a policy making body comprised of representatives from local government and transportation authorities that review transportation issues and develop transportation plans and programs for the metropolitan area. To assist the MPO in the decision-making process, members rely upon other Government Agencies and Organizations as well as active participation from committees, concerned community groups, interested citizens and other voices in the community. The MPO **Public Participation Plan** is intended to be a point of information, provide the specifics for public outreach efforts and help direct organization coordination that will provide opportunities for the review and input on transportation planning activities and programs.

As a recognized **Stakeholder** in the Lincoln MPO planning area, you are being asked to provide your valued input for the development of this new **Public Participation Plan**. Stakeholders are an integral part of the planning process for the Lincoln MPO and your organization's involvement significantly increases the chances of success in all phases of MPO planning activities. You are the people from whom planning standards are drawn and the people who will influence and ultimately reap the benefits of transportation planning activities. It is also extremely important that, as stakeholders, this **Public Participation Plan** is coordinated with your organization's public participation process and planning activities.

The *draft* **Public Participation Plan** is available for review and comment. It is located at the MPO website: <http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo/index.htm> or [www.lincoln.ne.gov](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov) (keyword: mpo) or you can request a copy sent to you by contacting the Lincoln/ Lancaster County Planning Department. Please provide your comments in a timely manner, by November 4, 2009. Comments may be submitted either by mail, email, in person or through the MPO website.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the MPO Administrator, Mike Brienzo at [mbrienzo@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:mbrienzo@lincoln.ne.gov) or call at 441-7491.

# Appendix B

## **Comments from the Public during Preparation of the Plan**

### **Comment 1**

Date: November 16, 2009

Name: Peter W. Katt

**Comment:** 35 pages to describe the public participation process? Information overload. More is less. Describe it in a post card or at most one page. If you need more to satisfy the Feds, tell people were to go or who to talk to get more information. Do you seriously think anyone in the public will read 35 pages? Follow the KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) methodology if you want participation and input from the public. Information overload (garbage in) will get you garbage out from the public.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments on the Lincoln MPO public participation process. It is the intent of the Lincoln MPO and Planning Department to provide those who may not be as informed as you, with complete information on the Lincoln MPO public participation process.

### **Comment 2**

Date: November 16, 2009

Name: Marc Rosso

**Comment:** Hi Mike, looks like a good plan. That took a lot of work!

**Response:** Thank you, we appreciate it.

### **Comment 3**

Date: November 17, 2009

Name: Public Library Staff

**Comment:** The purpose of the PPP for Transportation Planning needs to be clearly noted in the intro of the PPP.  
**Response:** Thank you for your interest in the MPO's Public Participation Plan. The "Introduction" to this Plan has been revised to reflect your input and clearly state the purpose of the plan

### **Comment 4**

Date: December 12, 2009

Name: Jason Shield

**Comment:** I think in the regards to StarTran that they should run the buses longer hours. For those of us that work late hours.  
**Response:** This is a major recommendation of the Transit Development Program (TDP) and is consistent with the current transit planning document. StarTran has received this comment and will take it into consideration when additional operating funds are secured.

## Notice of Public Input Request



### Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization

Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department  
555 South 10th Street - Suite 213  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508  
(402) 441-7491

### NOTICE OF RELEASE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

November 10, 2009

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### Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization

A federally recognized organization that sets the region's transportation priorities, voted at their Technical Advisory Committee Meeting conducted on November 10, 2009, to release its proposed **Public Participation Plan** for public review and comment. The Public Participation Plan provides detail of the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization's public outreach efforts relating to their work on regional transportation planning and programming of regionally significant transportation projects.

The Public Participation Plan will be available for public review at the following locations:

- The Lincoln MPO website at [www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo).
- Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department
- Lincoln Public Works & Utilities Department
- Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department
- Lancaster County Engineer
- *Lincoln City Libraries*

The Public Participation Plan will also be available for public review on the Lincoln MPO website at [www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo](http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mpo). All persons are invited to review the Public Participation Plan. Comments on the Public Participation Plan will be received by the Lincoln MPO until December 31, 2009. Comments from the public may be submitted either in person, by email or by mail at:

Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department  
555 South 10th Street – Suite 213  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

# Appendix C

## Excerpts from Federal Regulations

Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
23 CFR Parts 450 and 500

Federal Transit Administration  
49 CFR Part 613

### Statewide Transportation Planning / Metropolitan Transportation Planning

#### Subpart C Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming

**450.316 Interested parties, participation, and consultation.**

- transportation plan and the TIP;
- (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, agencies or entities responsible for safety/security operations, providers of nonemergency transportation services receiving financial assistance from a source other than title 49, U.S.C, Chapter 53, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.
    - (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
    - (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
    - (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
    - (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
    - (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
  - (1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
    - (vii) 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;
  - (l) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan
    - (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was initially made available for public

- comment;
- (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
  - (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
- (2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
- (3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- (b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation. To coordinate the planning functions to the maximum extent practicable, such consultation shall compare metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, as they are developed, with the plans, maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies. This consultation shall include, as appropriate, contacts with State, local, Indian Tribal, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation. In addition, transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:
- (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49, U.S.C., Chapter 53;
  - (2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and
  - (3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.
- c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.
- (e) The MPOs are encouraged to develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in agreement(s) developed under Sec 450.314.

# Appendix D

## **Nebraska Open Meetings Act**

### **Basic Provision**

The basic statement of our state policy on public meetings is found at Neb. Rev. Stat. ' 84- 1408. That statute provides, "[i]t is hereby declared to be the policy of this state that the formation of public policy is public business and may not be conducted in secret. Every meeting of a public body shall be open to the public in order that citizens may exercise their democratic privilege of attending and speaking at meetings of public bodies, except as otherwise provided by the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, federal statutes, and the Open Meetings Act."

History: Section 84-1408 was passed as a part of LB 325 in 1975. That bill repealed previously existing public meetings provisions and substituted new provisions which were intended to preserve the features of the previous law and strengthen and expand their authority. Government Committee Statement on LB 325, 84th Nebraska Legislature, First Session (1975). LB 325 was passed to ensure that all meetings of public bodies would be open to the public, except when protection of the public interest clearly called for a closed session concerning specific matters. Id. 2004 Neb. Laws LB 821, '34 formally established the name of " 84-1407 through 84-1414 as the "Open Meetings Act."

Purpose: The Nebraska open meetings laws are a statutory commitment to openness in government. *Wasikowski v. The Nebraska Quality Jobs Board*, 264 Neb. 403, 648 N.W.2d 756 (2002); *Steenblock v. Elkhorn Township Board*, 245 Neb. 722, 515 N.W.2d 128 (1994); *Grein v. Board of Education of the School District of Fremont*, 216 Neb. 158, 343

N.W.2d 718 (1984). Their purpose is to ensure that public policy is formulated at open meetings of the bodies to which the law is applicable. *Dossett v. First State Bank, Loomis, NE*, 261 Neb. 959, 627 N.W.2d 131 (2001); *Marks v. Judicial Nominating Commission for Judge of the County Court of the 20th Judicial District*, 236 Neb. 429, 461 N.W.2d 551 (1990); *Pokorny v. City of Schuyler*, 202 Neb. 334, 275 N.W.2d 281 (1979). In Nebraska, the formation of public policy is public business, which may not be conducted in secret. *Johnson v. Nebraska Environmental Control Council*, 2 Neb. App. 263, 509 N.W.2d 21 (Neb. Ct. App. 1993).

Construction: The open meetings laws should be broadly interpreted and liberally construed to obtain their objective of openness in favor of the public. *State ex rel. Upper Republican Natural Resources District v. District Judges of the District Court for Chase County*, 273 Neb. 148, 728 N.W.2d 275 (2007); *State ex rel. Newman v. Columbus Township Board*, 15 Neb. App. 656, \_\_\_ N.W.2d \_\_\_ (Neb. Ct. App. 2007); *Alderman v. County of Antelope*, 11 Neb. App. 412, 653 N.W.2d 1 (Neb. Ct. App. 2002); *Rauert v. School District I-R of Hall County*, 251 Neb. 135, 555 N.W.2d 763 (1996); *Grein, supra*. The beneficiaries of the openness sought by the Open Meetings Act include citizens, members of the general public, and reporters or other representatives of the news media. *State ex rel. Newman v. Columbus Township Board*, 15 Neb. App. 656, \_\_\_ N.W.2d \_\_\_ (Neb. Ct. App. 2007).

Exceptions: Section 84-1408 requires open meetings except "as otherwise provided by the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, federal statutes, and the Open Meetings Act.@ The Attorney General has concluded that the Nebraska Legislature is

not covered under the open meetings statutes because the Nebraska Constitution separately provides for public access to that body. Op. Att'y Gen. No. 120 (July 25, 1985).

Subsequent legislative limitations: The Legislature holds the power to decide the scope of citizen access to governmental meetings. As a result, the Legislature has the right to limit access to public meetings and the effect of the Open Meetings Act through later statutory provisions which provide that certain information in the possession of government should remain confidential without exception or limitation. *Wasikowski v. The Nebraska Quality Jobs Board*, 264 Neb. 403, 648 N.W.2d 756 (2002).

