

# **DRAFT**

# **Public Participation Plan**

**For Public Review and Comment  
May 4 to June 21, 2007**



## **Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission**

**Regional Enterprise Tower  
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852  
Voice 412.391.5590  
Fax 412.391.9160**

**[comments@spcregion.org](mailto:comments@spcregion.org)**

**[www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)**



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**Appendix: Document Review Network/Environmental Justice/LEP Resources**

# **Draft Public Participation Plan**

## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the Public Participation Plan**

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the ten-county metropolitan area and is responsible for regional transportation planning activities. SPC communicates with interested parties (see Section 5) to ensure effective and innovative transportation planning that is representative of and responsive to the needs of the entire region. To achieve this goal, SPC provides the public an active role in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects, beginning in the early stages of planning processes.

This Public Participation Plan provides a framework to ensure that SPC's transportation planning processes include a proactive participation process and comply with federal participation plan requirements. This Public Participation Plan identifies strategies and tools to help ensure effective participation in SPC's transportation planning activities. Activities in this Public Participation Plan are also coordinated with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes.

This Public Participation Plan replaces the previous Public Involvement Policy (adopted October 24, 2005).

### **1.2 Background**

The Public Participation Plan ensures that the participation activities of SPC's transportation planning processes comply with the proactive public involvement requirements of Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 450.316, the participation plan requirements of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (Title 23 United States Code, Section 134(i)(5)), and other applicable federal regulations and guidelines on metropolitan transportation planning and programs.

The Public Participation Plan details the strategies and procedures SPC will utilize to achieve its long-standing commitment to participation in regional transportation planning efforts. The Public Participation Plan applies to transportation planning activities for which participation by interested parties is a required component, and outlines SPC's transportation planning activities that comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and other applicable standards for collecting and addressing public comments.

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**1.3 SPC Mission Statement**

*The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission is the cooperative forum for regional collaboration, planning, and public decision-making. The Commission develops plans and programs for public investments; fulfills federal and state requirements for transportation, economic development, and local government assistance programs; and operates with public involvement and trust.*

**1.4 SPC Contact Information**

For more information on this Public Participation Plan or SPC's regional transportation planning activities, please contact the SPC Communications Coordinator:

Communications Coordinator  
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852  
Telephone: (412) 391-5590  
Fax: (412) 391-9160  
Email: [comments@spcregion.org](mailto:comments@spcregion.org)  
Website: [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)

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**Section 2: Public Participation Goals**

SPC's Public Participation Plan goals are to:

- Ensure that interested parties (see Section 5) in Southwestern Pennsylvania have an active and on-going role in the regional transportation planning process
- Increase the level of understanding of the transportation planning process in the region and identify how interested parties can become more involved
- Provide interested parties with opportunities for involvement in the regional transportation planning process
- Identify, seek out and engage minority populations, low-income populations, Limited English Proficient persons, and persons with disabilities
- Serve as a guide to SPC staff for outreach and participation activities and efforts
- Document what we learn from the interested parties in a format for consideration and use by the Commission, SPC staff, and others to improve our outreach and participation efforts

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### **Section 3: Outreach Techniques and Strategies**

#### **3.1 Overview**

SPC utilizes a wide range of communication mechanisms and community engagement techniques to provide for meaningful participation from interested parties, including:

- Public Participation Panels (see Section 4)
- Communication by mail, phone, fax, email, or person-to-person
- SPC's Web Site containing documents, meeting schedules, agendas and minutes/summaries, transportation announcements, and educational tools
- Input at public meetings and workshops that are held at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Partnering with community, civic and business groups to produce forums and input sessions
- Distribution of planning documents, annual reports, brochures, fact sheets, and maps documenting planning efforts
- Distribution of newsletters, public notices, and press releases
- Documentation and availability of public comments and responses in Public Participation Reports (see Section 11)
- Response Sheets: Mail-In forms to gain information on public preferences
- Internet Surveys: Web-based response polls
- Visualization techniques to help members of the general public understand potential outcomes of transportation programs or plans (see Section 3.3)
- Consultation with agencies and officials responsible for planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area that are affected by transportation (see Section 5)

#### **3.2 Contact Lists**

SPC staff continually develops and maintains databases of stakeholders, media and interested organizations and parties; they are updated regularly to reflect current data. Contact lists expand throughout the transportation planning process as people, organizations and agencies become involved and offer their opinions. To establish new contacts, SPC uses a range of strategies, such as:

- Mailing list registration is available at public meetings
- Mailing list registration on its website or via email
- Announcements of public meetings, workshops and other opportunities, which may be hosted online, in newsletters, through news releases, email notifications or announced at meetings
- Working with existing stakeholders to suggest potential participants or encourage participation
- Working with professional, civic and community organizations to provide representatives, suggest participants, and encourage participation

#### **3.3 Visualization Techniques**

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SPC uses a broad variety of accessible information resources to help participants understand different proposals, impacts and possible outcomes related to regional transportation programs and plans. Visualization techniques used to illustrate these concepts may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following materials and practices:

- Maps
- Aerial photographs, alone or with mapping overlays
- Photographs, sketches, artist renderings, images, diagrams, charts and other graphics
- Printed and/or interactive maps that allow comparison of proposals
- Scenario planning exercises
- Online maps and photo galleries
- Web broadcasts
- Interactive kiosks

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## **Section 4: Public Participation Panels**

### **4.1 Overview**

SPC gives the public an active role by bringing planning directly to residents in each county through Public Participation Panels (Panels), which are a key element of SPC's public participation and outreach program. SPC works in partnership with a Panel in each county to provide citizens with direct, ongoing access to the regional planning and decision-making process. The Panels help promote public awareness of the regional transportation planning process and public participation opportunities to communities throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania.

### **4.2 Role and Relationship to the Commission**

The Panels are an established mechanism for citizens to provide input on the regional transportation planning process as well as major decisions of the Commission. The Panels review and evaluate the Public Participation Plan and its strategies and processes for ongoing improvement.

The Panels assist SPC staff and Commission in developing widespread community contacts and partnerships. The Panels serve as a conduit for information, recommending locations and topics for public meetings utilizing their knowledge of local communities.

The Panels serve as outreach forums in each county during formal public review and comment periods on major transportation decisions of SPC. The Panel(s) most affected by the decision(s) may be convened for that purpose. The Panels may convene community meetings for the general public to assist in giving broader public input to major decisions. The Panel Chairs will inform the Commission of the Panel's comments.

Absent an emergency requiring Commission action within a shorter period of time, Panels will have minimum period of 30 days to review documents and/or information concerning major decisions of the Commission and to provide comment to the Commission. SPC will provide a reasonable level of staff to assist the activities of the Panels.

From time to time regional forums may be convened for the Panel Chairs so they may discuss regional issues and convey their perspectives to Panel members and the Commission.

### **4.3 Membership**

County Commissioners in each county (in Allegheny County, the County Executive and the Mayor of Pittsburgh) will be asked to appoint Panel Chairs and Panel members in accordance with the general Guidance for Panel composition stated below.

#### *General Guidance*

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SPC provides County Commissioners (in Allegheny County, the County Executive and the Mayor of Pittsburgh) with the most recent demographic profiles of their county's population. These demographic profiles are available on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org) or by calling (412) 391-5590.

- The membership of the Panels is designed to be representative of the diverse population and interests in each county, and will consider federal guidance on Environmental Justice.
- Fifteen or more members are appointed to each Panel.
- Terms of Panel members last for two years, corresponding to the TIP update cycle.
- Each county may choose to appoint either Co-Chairs or a Chair and Vice-Chair, which are collectively referred to as "Chairs" herein.
- Persons interested in serving on a Panel are encouraged to contact their County Commissioners (in Allegheny County, the County Executive and the Mayor of Pittsburgh). For more information, please call SPC at (412) 391-5590.

#### **4.4 Panel Meeting Accessibility and Notice**

All Panel meetings shall meet the requirements for accessibility and notice detailed in the Public Notices section that appears in Section 10.

Proceedings of Panel meetings will be summarized and distributed to Panel members, posted on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), and kept on file for review at SPC offices. Summaries will not be required for meetings conducted in an open-house or other such format where participants do not convene in a plenary session for presentation and/or discussion. A list of Panel members is available on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), and kept on file at SPC offices.

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## **Section 5: Consultation with Interested Parties**

### **5.1 Overview**

Federal guidance from SAFETEA-LU mandates that:

*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, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process. (§ 450.316(a) Interested parties, participation and consultation)*

### **5.2 Consultation in Developing the Public Participation Plan**

SPC develops all plans and programs in consultation with the interested parties defined above. To develop this Public Participation Plan, SPC first assembled a draft list of participation strategies and ideas based on a review of the existing SPC Public Involvement Policy and new guidance from SAFETEA-LU. SPC staff also participated in *Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making* training sponsored by the National Transit Institute to help prepare for updating the Public Participation Plan. This preliminary discussion draft was developed as a means to begin the dialog and consultation process with interested parties, who were asked to critique the document and suggest improvements.

SPC consulted with interested parties in the development of this Public Participation Plan in the following ways:

- Citizens—Public Participation Panel members (many of whom represent specific interested parties)
- Affected Public Agencies—The Regional Policy Advisory Committee (members include representatives from the private, civic, non-profit and education sectors), the Transit Operators Committee (members include representatives from regional transit agencies and Transportation Management Associations), and Transportation Technical Committee (members include planning department representatives of the ten SPC member counties, the City of Pittsburgh, PennDOT, Pennsylvania DEP, and the Port Authority of Allegheny County)
- Representatives of Public Transportation Employees—The Transit Operators Committee (members include representatives from regional transit operators and Transportation Management Associations)
- Freight Shippers—The Freight Forum (members include representatives from air cargo, railroad, trucking and waterway freight service companies)

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- Providers of Freight Transportation Services—The Freight Forum (members include representatives from air cargo, railroad, trucking and waterway freight service companies)
- Private Providers of Transportation—The Transit Operators Committee The Transit (members include representatives from regional transit agencies and Transportation Management Associations)
- Representatives of Users of Public Transportation—The Transit Operators Committee (members include representatives from regional transit operators and Transportation Management Associations), Public Participation Panel members, the Regional Policy Advisory Committee (members include representatives from the private, civic, non-profit and education sectors)
- Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways and Bicycle Transportation Facilities—The Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (members include representatives from pedestrian and bicycle users)
- Representatives of the Disabled—Public Participation Panel members representing the disabled and regional task forces on the disabled
- Other Interested Parties—The Regional Policy Advisory Committee (members include representatives from the private, civic, non-profit and education sectors), the Transit Operators Committee (members include representatives from regional transit agencies and Transportation Management Associations), and Transportation Technical Committee (members include planning department representatives of the ten SPC member counties, the City of Pittsburgh, PennDOT, Pennsylvania DEP, and the Port Authority of Allegheny County)

This final draft Public Participation Plan incorporated feedback and suggestions from these interested parties before it was presented for formal public review and comment as described in see Section 11.

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## **Section 6: Environmental Justice**

### **6.1 Overview**

SPC's Public Participation Plan contains specific and explicit procedures that SPC will use to identify, seek out and engage Environmental Justice populations, including minority populations and low-income populations. The foundation for these efforts is stated in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal financial assistance.”

*--Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000)*

The President's 1994 Executive Order on Environmental Justice states:

“Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

*--Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994*

### **6.2 Targeted Outreach Areas**

SPC's public outreach process includes Public Participation Panels in each of the region's ten counties. The Panels are designed to reflect the diversity of the region and its population in order to ensure broad participation and input throughout the planning process. SPC's public participation and outreach strategies related to Environmental Justice / Limited English Proficiency are described in the following sections. Additional Environmental Justice / Limited English Proficiency technical analyses and activities are reported in a separate document, the *Report on Environmental Justice*, which is available on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices or by calling (412) 391-5590.

SPC uses its data collection and analysis capabilities to support participation efforts and help ensure meaningful access to its public participation opportunities. SPC carefully analyzes the relationship between the region's populations and its regional investments, plans and programs. Geographic analysis assists SPC to identify environmental justice communities and target outreach to these areas. Specifically, SPC will utilize its geographic analysis of targeted outreach areas to ensure that public meetings are held at accessible locations within these communities, and to identify, where they exist, organizations that target these communities and disseminate information to them to help reach these communities.

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## **Section 7: Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

### **7.1 Overview**

“Limited English Proficient” or “LEP” persons are those individuals who do not speak English as their primary language, and who also have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. The key commonality among LEP persons is their inability to communicate effectively in the English language, regardless of their native tongue. People who are multi-lingual, in that they speak one or more other languages *in addition to being proficient in English*, are not considered to be Limited English Proficient.

### **7.2 LEP Assessment**

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, SPC has an obligation to reduce language barriers that can preclude meaningful access to SPC’s programs, information and services by LEP individuals. An integral part of this effort is the completion of a “Limited English Proficiency Self-Assessment” or LEP Assessment, which is designed to balance four factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or service
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program and/or activities
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided to people’s lives
4. The resources available to the federal financial recipient and costs

Review of Census data and Modern Language Association (MLA) research for the region’s LEP analysis shows that there are now four language groups in the SPC region that meet Department of Justice “safe harbor” thresholds. Spanish estimated by MLA at approximately 4400 LEP persons; Italian at approximately 1900; French at approximately 1200; and German at approximately 1100. More detailed analysis showing LEP populations by County and municipality are available in the region’s Limited English Proficiency Report available on the SPC website [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org) or at the SPC office. Municipal estimates can vary nominally from county totals due to the estimation methodology of the sub-county MLA estimates. However, where there is a difference in the MLA data in the sum of the municipal totals and the county totals, SPC will use the higher total for planning purposes to ensure inclusion of potential LEP persons in its service area.

### **7.3 Meaningful Access for LEP Individuals**

SPC will take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to key transportation planning decisions and have opportunities to become involved in the regional transportation planning processes.

SPC will use one or more of the following tools to reasonably accommodate LEP individuals:

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- Provide upon request translated copies of materials in Spanish, Italian, German and French, the most common languages as identified in SPC's Limited English Proficiency Assessment, as well as other languages if requested. SPC contracts with interpretation and translation providers for these services.
- Provide upon request, with advanced notice, oral interpretation services for public meetings. SPC contracts with interpretation and translation providers for these services.
- In an effort to actively engage LEP persons, meeting announcements, press releases and public notices will be distributed to organizations that target these groups (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)).
- Notices for public meetings and participation opportunities include statements announcing that SPC will provide assistance related to sight, language or hearing with three days advanced notice. (see Section 10)
- SPC provides announcements to local minority media outlets and community service organizations regarding the availability of language translation services (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)).
- SPC's vital documents will include statements, in Spanish, Italian, German and French, the most common languages as identified in SPC's Limited English Proficiency Assessment, that translations are available free upon request. SPC contracts with interpretation and translation providers for these services.

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## **Section 8: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

### **8.1 Overview**

To ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), SPC's Public Meeting Notices and comment opportunities provide multiple input methods (see Section 10 and Section 11). Public meetings are held at ADA-accessible locations.

### **8.2 Meaningful Access for Persons with Disabilities**

SPC may use one or more of the following tools to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities:

- Provide upon request, copies of materials in 14-point or larger type
- Provide upon request, Braille or raised-print notices and materials
- Provide upon request, with advanced notice, sign language interpreters
- Record materials to audio/visual media
- Verbalize information provided through visual presentations or written materials
- Upon request, structure seating to provide visibility for participants who lip-read
- Mount microphones at wheelchair height
- Provide hand-held microphones to participants
- Present meetings through video or teleconferencing, to allow offsite participation

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## **Section 9: Public Participation in Meetings**

### **9.1 Overview**

SPC welcomes comments and ideas related to regional issues from interested parties from the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. There are many opportunities and levels of involvement for citizens related to the regional planning process, and also for those who wish to address the Commission directly. With the exception of those meetings that are appropriate executive sessions, all meetings of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission are open to interested parties and include an opportunity to comment on both agenda and non-agenda items.

### **9.2 Public Comments at Commission Meetings**

Those wishing to comment will be asked to sign in at the meeting location. Speakers will be called upon in the order in which they signed in. Individuals must limit their comments to a maximum of three (3) minutes. Individuals are requested not to duplicate the comments of others preceding them.

Proceedings of meetings of the Commission will be available as meeting minutes or meeting summaries, which will be posted on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), and available for review at SPC offices. Please call SPC at (412) 391-5590 for more information.

### **9.3 SPC Committees**

SPC has several committees that meet routinely, in which citizens, advocates, private sector representatives and others can obtain the same information given to representatives of the professional planning and transportation agencies involved in SPC activities. Committee meetings give interested parties an opportunity to learn the pertinent facts surrounding an issue. All committee meetings are open to the general public.

Information about the different SPC committees is available at SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590.

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## **Section 10: Public Notices**

### **10.1 Overview**

To ensure that the public has ample opportunity to take part in the regional planning process, SPC is committed to providing timely notification, complete information, and full public access to key decisions. This section describes the procedures that SPC will use for all public notices.

### **10.2 Public Notice Requirements**

SPC uses public notices to announce the following types of events and participation opportunities:

- The Commission's annual meeting schedule—advertised annually.
- Special or rescheduled Commission meetings—advertised 24 hours in advance.
- Comment Periods—advertised at least 30 days prior to the date the Commission is scheduled to take formal action on any major decisions (see Section 11)
- Meetings related to Comment Periods—advertised at least 7 days in advance (see Section 11)

Public notices for these events and participation opportunities will be:

- Advertised in the form of paid display advertisements. One paid advertisement will be placed in a newspaper of general circulation in the region and one in a newspaper with circulation targeted to minority communities (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)).
- Public notices will also be distributed to other media outlets or organizations that serve targeted outreach groups identified in SPC's Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency analyses (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)).
- Posted on the agency's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org).

Public notices will provide the following information (where applicable):

- Type or name of meeting/participation event/activity/public comment period
- Subject of meeting of meeting/participation event/activity/public comment period
- The date, time and location of meeting/participation event/activity
- Start and end dates for public comment periods
- Contact information (Address, Telephone Number, E-mail address and/or website)
- Brief summary of the proposed action, plan, program or amendment
- Where to obtain copies of the plan or materials (SPC's Document Review Network, offices and website [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org).)
- How to provide formal public comments
- If formal action on a major decision will be taken by the Commission, the date, time and location of the meeting where that action will be taken
- Offer to provide accommodations for people with Limited English Proficiency

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- Offer to provide accommodations for people with disabilities

## **Section 11: Public Review and Comment Periods at Key Decision Points**

### **11.1 Overview**

SPC values the efforts stakeholders and the public make to participate in the regional planning process. SPC will provide at least 30 days for public review and comment (45 days in the case of the Public Participation Plan) before taking formal action on any major decisions. The Public Participation Plan defines a major decision as the official adoption of:

- regional long range transportation plan (regional plan)
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Air Quality Conformity Determination
- Public Participation Plan
- A Major Amendment to the regional plan or TIP (see Section 15)

### **11.2 Public Comment and Review Period Requirements**

SPC will inform the public and interested parties of Public Comment Periods, using the Public Notice procedures described above, at least 30 days prior to the date scheduled for Commission adoption or major amendment of a regional long range transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Air Quality Conformity Determination, or major amendment.

SPC will inform the public and interested parties of Public Comment Periods, using the Public Notice procedures described above, at least 45 days prior to the date scheduled for Commission adoption of an updated Public Participation Plan.

Documents and information on which public comments are sought will be made available to stakeholders, other interested parties and the general public at locations in the area affected by the proposed action. These locations include those listed in SPC's "Document Review Network," a list of public libraries and other document review sites (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)), as well as SPC's website, [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the Public Notice (see Section 10).

Prior to formal action by the Commission on the adoption of a regional long range transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Air Quality Conformity Determination, Public Participation Plan, or major amendment, at least one public meeting will be held for the purpose of providing information and obtaining comment. This public meeting may be held as part of a regular meeting of the Commission or held as a separate public meeting. Public Notice for this meeting can be combined with the Public Notice issued for the related Public Comment Period described in Section 10.

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### **11.3 Additional Public Review and Comment Periods**

If the draft regional long range transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Air Quality Conformity Determination, or major amendment changes appreciably during the review and comment period, an additional 30-day public review and comment period is provided prior to the Commission taking formal action.

If the draft Public Participation Plan changes appreciably during the review and comment period, an additional 45-day public review and comment period is provided prior to the Commission taking formal action.

Additional Public Review and Comment periods will be conducted in accordance with procedures for regular Public Review and Comment periods listed in Section 11.2.

### **11.4 The Regional Long Range Transportation Plan**

The regional long range transportation plan (regional plan) is a long range (20+ years) strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in multi-modal transportation facilities in the context of the regional vision. The regional plan provides the context from which the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a short-range capital improvement program for implementing transportation projects, is drawn. The regional plan is updated every four years in consultation with interested parties (see Section 5).

SPC's early and ongoing public participation process in developing the regional plan will follow these steps:

- Step 1: Public Participation Panels will be utilized to gather initial input (when update cycles correspond, this can occur in concert with the TIP update--See Section 11.5 for more information).
- Step 2: Initial input will be compiled and used in the design of the next phase of outreach and participation, such as workshops and other public meetings.
- Step 3: Ongoing input will be used to develop draft regional plan materials in consultation with interested parties (see Section 5).
- Step 4: Draft regional plan materials will be presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 30-day public comment period described in Section 11.2. Draft materials will be made available during the 30-day public comment period on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices, member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the Public Notice (see Section 10). Vital draft

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regional plan documents will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 7 and Section 8).

- Step 5: All comments received and the response to comments will be documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the draft regional plan materials.
- Step 6: The Commission takes action on the regional plan.
- Step 7: A Public Participation Report will be developed documenting all comments received and the response to comments, as well as documentation of the public participation and outreach activities.
- Step 8: Regional plan documents and its companion documents (Air Quality Conformity Determination Report and Public Participation Report) will be produced and made available on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices, member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)) or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590. Vital regional plan documents will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 7 and Section 8).

### **11.5 The Transportation Improvement Program**

The regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies the region's highest priority transportation projects, develops a multi-year program of implementation, and identifies available federal and non-federal funding for the identified projects. The TIP covers a four-year period of investment and is updated every two years through a cooperative effort of local, state and federal agencies, including participation by the general public and consultation with interested parties (see Section 5). Transportation projects included on the TIP are to be consistent with the regional plan.

SPC's early and ongoing public participation process in developing the TIP will follow these steps:

- Step 1: Public Participation Panels will be utilized to gather initial input (when update cycles correspond, this can occur in concert with the regional plan update--See Section 11.4 for more information).
- Step 2: Initial input will be used in the design of the next phase of outreach and participation, such as workshops and other public meetings.
- Step 3: Ongoing input will be used to develop draft TIP materials in consultation with interested parties (see Section 5).
- Step 4: Draft TIP materials will be presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 30-day public comment period described in Section 11.2. Draft materials will be made available during

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the 30-day public comment period on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices, member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the Public Notice (see Section 10). Vital draft TIP materials will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 7 and Section 8).

- Step 5: All comments received and the response to comments will be documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the draft TIP materials.
- Step 6: The Commission takes action on the TIP.
- Step 7: A Public Participation Report will be developed documenting all comments received and the response to comments, as well as documentation of the public participation and outreach activities.
- Step 8: TIP documents and its companion documents (Air Quality Conformity Determination Report and Public Participation Report) will be produced and made available on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices, member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)), or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590. Vital TIP documents will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 7 and Section 8).

### **11.6 Major Amendments to the TIP or Regional Plan**

Once a TIP or regional plan has been developed and approved the program is subject to revisions as the budgeted transportation program experiences changes in project scheduling and estimated costs. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will only authorize projects and approve grants for projects where the total cost is programmed in the current approved TIP. SPC must modify the TIP or regional plan to adjust to the changing cost and schedule if a planning partner or the Commonwealth would like to continue to advance the project.

The definition of a major amendment varies by the type of plan or program to be amended. Definitions and procedures for regional plan and TIP major amendments are included in the regional plan and TIP documents, and are available on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org). Please contact SPC at (412) 391-5590 for more information.

If a proposed revision to the TIP or regional plan adds a project, deletes a project, or impacts the schedule or scope of work to an air quality significant project in a nonattainment or maintenance area, SPC will review the proposal and determine if a new air quality conformity determination is required prior to formal approval of the change. If the revision requires that a new conformity

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determination is necessary, an amendment to the regional long range transportation plan shall also be developed. Please see Section 11.7 for more information on the Air Quality Conformity Determination report.

SPC's public participation and public comment for major amendments to the regional plan or TIP will follow these steps:

- Step 1: SPC will inform the public and interested parties of the comment period for the proposed major amendment using the Public Notice procedures described in Section 10, at least 30 days prior to the date scheduled for Commission action on the proposed major amendment.
- Step 2: Proposed major amendment information will be presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 30-day Public Comment Period described in Section 11.2. Proposed major amendment information will be made available during the 30-day public comment period on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices, member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the public notice (see Section 10).
- Step 3: All comments received and the response to comments will be documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the proposed major amendment.
- Step 4: The Commission takes action on the major amendment.
- Step 5: After federal and state approval of the requested changes, SPC will update the appropriate TIP or regional plan documents on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org). Updated documents will also be available at SPC's offices or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590. Notices of the revision will be provided to member government planning offices and public libraries listed in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)).

### **11.7 Air Quality Conformity Determination Report**

The Air Quality Conformity Determination report is a companion document to the regional long range transportation plan and to the Transportation Improvement Program. The Air Quality Conformity Determination report documents the process used by SPC for making the transportation-related conformity determination for the regional long range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for ozone, particulate matter and carbon monoxide. The conformity determination is required by the federal Clean Air Act. SPC's conformity finding is based upon criteria and procedures described in EPA's Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 93) and satisfies all applicable conformity requirements.

The Air Quality Conformity Determination report is developed as part of the regional plan or TIP update, in which case public participation and public comment procedures for the regional

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plan or TIP will be followed as described in Section 11.4 and Section 11.5. The Air Quality Conformity Determination report is also updated as required by certain amendments to the TIP or regional plan, in which case public participation and public comment procedures for major amendments to the regional plan or TIP will be followed as described in Section 11.6.

### **11.8 The Public Participation Plan**

This Public Participation Plan describes the various objectives, strategies and tools to engage the public and encourage participation in the development of transportation plans and programs. SPC will periodically update the Public Participation Plan. This may be due to new official planning regulations and procedures, or after the Public Participation Panels have reviewed and evaluated the Public Participation Plan's effectiveness.

SPC's public participation and public comment process for updating the Public Participation Plan will follow these steps:

- Step 1: Revisions to the Public Participation Plan are developed in consultation with interested parties, including the Public Participation Panels, before the draft documents are submitted for the public review and comment process.
- Step 2: The draft Public Participation Plan will be presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 45-day Public Comment Period described in Section 11.2. The draft Public Participation Plan will be made available during the 45-day public comment period on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices, member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the public notice (see Section 10). The draft Public Participation Plan will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 7 and Section 8).
- Step 3: All comments received and the response to comments will be documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the draft Public Participation Plan.
- Step 4: The Commission takes action on the draft Public Participation Plan.
- Step 5: A Public Participation Report will be developed documenting all comments received and the response to comments, as well as documentation of the public participation and outreach activities.
- Step 6: The Public Participation Plan will be produced and made available on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), at SPC's offices, member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)), or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590. The Public Participation Plan will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for

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accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 7 and Section 8).

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## **Section 12: Access to Information**

### **12.1 Overview**

SPC will provide reasonable access to public information, including technical information and meeting notices:

- In electronically accessible formats on its website ([www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)),
- In its offices at the Regional Enterprise Tower, 425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500, Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852; and

Where indicated in this Public Participation Plan, in member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix and on SPC's website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)).

### **12.2 Response to Special Requests**

In order to facilitate public involvement while also using limited staff resources efficiently, SPC will make information available to interested parties on a regular basis through the various processes and activities outlined in this Public Participation Plan. When SPC receives special requests to perform an analysis that is not considered as part of the planning process, or other special data or information, the agency will determine the reasonableness of the request. Parameters for determining reasonableness (as used in this document) will evolve around the preparation time and costs to respond, as well as the relevancy to the transportation planning process and the agency mission. SPC will determine reasonableness of and respond to all special requests on an individual basis.

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**Section 13: Evaluation of Public Participation Plan, Public Participation Panels and Public Meetings**

- Public Participation Panels: Chairs of the Public Participation Panels will be asked periodically, on a cycle in advance of future regional plan and TIP updates, to participate in a focus group to discuss the effectiveness of the Panels, ways to engage members and encourage participation, and suggestions for improving the Panels.
- Public meetings: Special workshops, hearings and meetings scheduled for the general public and interested parties will include a means of providing feedback on the effectiveness of the process of communication and meeting format.
- The SPC Executive Committee will review and revise the Public Participation Plan and processes based upon input from the public, interested parties, and the Public Participation Panels in terms of their effectiveness in providing full and open access to all.

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**Section 14: Applicability**

This Public Participation Plan and any subsequent amendments shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. This Public Participation Plan replaces the previous Public Involvement Policy (adopted October 24, 2005).

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**Section 15: Definitions**

**A. Air quality conformity determination:** A process in which transportation plans and programs are reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with federal clean air requirements. Changes to the transportation system collectively must not worsen air quality; in areas where air quality does not meet federal standards, transportation plans and programs are expected to improve the air quality.

**B. Interested Parties:** Interested parties as defined in 23 C.F.R. §450.316 include citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties.

**C. Long-range transportation plan:** A transportation plan addressing at least a twenty-year planning horizon, including both long-range and short-range strategies/actions of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods and meets Federal requirements (23CFR Part 450.322).

**D. Major amendment:** Any amendment to a long-range transportation plan or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that does not qualify as a minor amendment, or an amendment that meets the criteria for a minor amendment but is treated as a major amendment because of controversy or high visibility. Procedures for TIP modifications and amendments are provided in the TIP document.

**E. Major decision:** The adoption or major amendment of the long-range transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), air quality conformity determination, or other significant transportation plan or program.

**F. Minor TIP or long-range transportation plan amendment:** Correction of clerical errors; changes that are air quality neutral (projects and project types which are not required to be included in regional air quality conformity assessments for transportation plans and programs as listed in Sections 126 and 127 of EPA's Transportation Conformity Rule, 40CFR Part 93). Procedures for TIP modifications and amendments are provided in the TIP document.

**G. The public:** All individuals or groups in the SPC region. . This includes individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, all public and private providers of transportation, persons with disabilities and Environmental Justice populations, including low income and minority populations.

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**H. Reasonableness:** In order to facilitate public involvement while also using limited staff resources efficiently, SPC will make information available to interested parties on a regular basis through the various processes and activities outlined in this Public Participation Plan. When SPC receives special requests for an analysis that is not considered as part of the planning process, or other special data or information, the agency will determine the reasonableness of the request. Parameters for determining reasonableness (as used in this document) will evolve around the preparation time and costs to respond, as well as the relevancy to the transportation planning process and the agency mission. SPC will determine reasonableness of and respond to all special requests on an individual basis.

**I. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** A staged, multiyear, fiscally constrained, intermodal program of transportation projects which is consistent with the long-range transportation plan. The TIP develops a prioritized program of projects and its financing plan based of estimated funding available. The TIP covers a four-year period and is updated every two years.

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**Section 15: Future Efforts**

- Further identification of and consultation with interested parties.
- Continue to seek out EJ/LEP organizations and resources
- Update Limited English Proficiency Assessment
- Conduct review of ADA accessibility features of website
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan
- Consider methods to further promote the Public Participation Panel appointment opportunities to the general public and interested parties

# **Appendix Included for Reference**

## **Appendix: Document Review Network/Environmental Justice/LEP Resources**

**TO THE**

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#### **Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission**

**Regional Enterprise Tower  
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852  
Voice 412.391.5590  
Fax 412.391.9160**

**[comments@spcregion.org](mailto:comments@spcregion.org)  
[www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)**

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**Document Review Network**

University of Pittsburgh  
1G12 Forbes Quad  
4200 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Harvard University  
Loeb Library  
Cambridge, MA 2138

Northland Public Library  
300 Cumberland Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Penn Hills Library  
240 Aster Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

Avalon Public Library  
Municipal Building  
640 California Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

Baden Memorial Library  
385 State Road  
Baden, PA 15005

Baldwin Borough Library  
Municipal Building  
3344 Churchview Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15227

Baldwin Township Library  
10 Community Park Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Bellvue Public Library  
34 North Balph Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

Bentleyville Public Library  
823 Main Street  
Bentleyville, PA 15314

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Borough Pleasant Hills Library  
302 Old Clairton Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15236

Brentwood Library  
3624 Brownsville Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15227

Bridgeville Public Library  
441 Station Street  
Bridgeville, PA 15017

C.C. Mellon Memorial Library  
One Pennwood Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218-1627

California Public Library  
Wood Water Street  
California, PA 15419

Canonsburg Library  
East Pike Street  
Canonsburg, PA 15317

Carlow College Library  
3333 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Carnegie Free Library  
419 Library Street  
Braddock, PA 15104

Carnegie Free Library  
Carnegie Drive  
Midland, PA 15059

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh  
Library Center  
414 Wood Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh  
Oakmont Branch  
700 Allegheny River Boulevard  
Oakmont, PA 15139

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh  
315 Grandview Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15211

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Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh  
Homestead Branch  
510 Tenth Avenue  
Homestead, PA 15120

Carnegie Mellon University  
4909 Frew Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Clairton Public Library  
616 Miller Avenue  
Clairton, PA 15025

Dormont Public Library  
2950 West Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Ford City Public Library  
1136 Fourth Street  
Ford City, PA 16226

Glenshaw Public Library  
Old Plank Road  
Glenshaw, PA 15116

Jeanette Public Library  
South Second Street and Clay Avenue  
Jeanette, PA 15644

Leechburg Public Library  
215 First Street  
Leechburg, PA 15656

Ligonier Valley Library  
120 West Main Street  
Ligonier, PA 15658

Mandarnio Library  
250 University Avenue  
California, PA 15419-1394

Marianna Community Library  
P.O. Box 457  
247 Jefferson Avenue, Suite 1  
Marianna, PA 15345

Mellon Institutue  
4400 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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Monroeville Public Library  
2416 Mosside Boulevard  
Monroeville, PA 15146

Mount Pleasant Public Library  
120 S. Church Street  
Mount Pleasant, PA 15666

O'Hara Jr. High School  
115 Cabin Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Penn Area Library  
Box 499  
Harrison City, PA 15636

Public Administration  
211 City Hall  
Cleveland, OH 44114

Richland Public Library  
4011 Dicke Road  
Gibsonia, PA 15044

Rochester Public Library  
252 Adams Street  
Rochester, PA 15074

Rotch Library  
MIT Libraries 7-238  
Cambridge, MA 2139

Saint Vincent College  
300 Fraser Purchase Road  
Latrobe, PA 15650

Sewickley Public Library  
Thorn Broad Street  
Sewickley, PA 15143

Slippery Rock University  
14 Maltby Drive  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057

Springdale Public Library  
331 School Street  
Springdale, PA 15144

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TM Byers Memorial Library  
900 West Main Street  
Monogahela, PA 15063

Vandergrift Public Library  
128 C Washington Avenue  
Vandergrift, PA 15690

Waynesburg College  
51 West College Street  
Waynesburg, PA 15370

Westmoreland Community Library  
Armbrust Road  
Youngwood, PA 15697

Whitehall Public Library  
Borough Park Drive  
Whitehall, PA 15236

Wilkinsburg Library  
605 Ross Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Carnegie Mellon University  
5000 Forbes Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Chatham College  
Woodland Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

Community College of Allegheny County  
808 Ridge Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Community College of Allegheny County  
1750 Clairton Road  
West Mifflin, PA 15122

Dorseville Junior High School  
550 Saxonburg Boulevard  
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Federal Reserve Bank  
PO Box 867  
Pittsburgh, PA 15230

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Geneva College  
3200 College Avenue  
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Stabley Library  
429 South Eleventh Street  
Indiana, PA 15705

Miami University  
Documents Department  
Oxford, OHIO 45056

Penn State University  
3550 Seventh Street Road  
New Kensington, PA 15068

Robert Morris College  
881 Narrows Run Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108

Seton Hill College  
Seton Hill Drive  
Greensburg, PA 15601

Upper Saint Clair Township  
1820 McLaughlin Run Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241

Washington and Jefferson College  
60 South Lincoln Street  
Washington, PA 15301

Lockwood Memorial Library  
State University of New York  
Buffalo, NY 14260

Beaver Area Memorial Library  
100 College Avenue  
Beaver, PA 15009

Washington County Planning Commission  
Washington County Courthouse, Suite 701  
100 West Beau Street  
Washington, PA 15301

Allegheny County Dept of Economic Development  
Regional Enterprise Tower, Suite 800  
425 Sixth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

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Allegheny County Department of Economic Development  
Regional Enterprise Tower Suite 800  
425 Sixth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Department of City Planning  
Fourth Floor  
200 Ross Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Butler County Planning Commission  
Fifth Floor, County Government Center  
124 West Diamond Street  
PO Box 1208  
Butler, PA 16003-1208

Westmoreland County Planning Department  
Westmoreland County Courthouse, Suite 601  
Two North Main Street  
Greensburg, PA 15601

Beaver County Planning Commission  
810 Third Street  
Beaver, PA 15009

Greene County Department of Economic Development  
49 South Washington Street  
Waynesburg, PA 15370

Lawrence County Planning Department  
430 Court Street  
Lawrence County Government Center  
New Castle, PA 16101

Armstrong County Department of Planning and Development  
402 East Market Street  
Kittanning, PA 16201

Indiana County Office of Planning and Development  
801 Water Street  
Indiana, PA 15701-1705

Fayette County Office of Planning and Community  
Development  
61 East Main Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401

Pittsburgh Post Gazette  
34 Boulevard of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1204

New Pittsburgh Courier Publishing Company  
315 East Carson Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1202

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***May 4, 2007 to June 21, 2007***

**Environmental Justice/LEP Resources**

WRCT 88.3 FM  
1 WRCT Plaza  
5000 Forbes Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review  
D.L. Clark Building  
503 Martindale Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

WEDO 810 AM  
1985 Lincoln Way  
White Oak, PA 15131-2415

African-American Chamber of Commerce  
Regional Enterprise Tower Suite 1330  
425 Sixth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1819

The Hispanic/Latino Center  
Suite 216  
800 Allegheny Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area  
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
1536 Beechview Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Orogol Associates, Inc.  
Translators and Interpreters  
654 Braddock Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15112