

# 2021 Public Participation Plan Update

Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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# Introduction

- This document provides an outline of the tools and techniques we use to inform and engage the public throughout our transportation planning and programming processes.
- This guidance helps to ensure that our Public Participation Plan provides opportunities and access for all individuals to provide input on key transportation planning, policy and investment decisions.
- The document can be referenced at any time by the public and other planning agencies to learn how to participate, see our methods for sharing information, and identify opportunities to provide input.



## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

DRAFT - 2021



**Goal 1: Inform and Educate  
the Public**



**Goal 2: Reach Out and  
Build Connections**



**Goal 3: Engage the Public and  
Encourage Continued Participation**



**Goal 4: Use Public Input to Shape  
Policies, Plans, and Programs**



**Goal 5: Evaluate Public  
Participation Strategies**

# Federal Guidance & Consultation

- Our Public Participation Plan must comply with federal guidance associated with transportation planning and programming. We also consult with interested parties to gather feedback before the plan is adopted.
- The requirement for MPOs to establish a Public Participation Plan was identified in 2005 with the passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Below is an excerpt from SAFETEA-LU:

*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)*

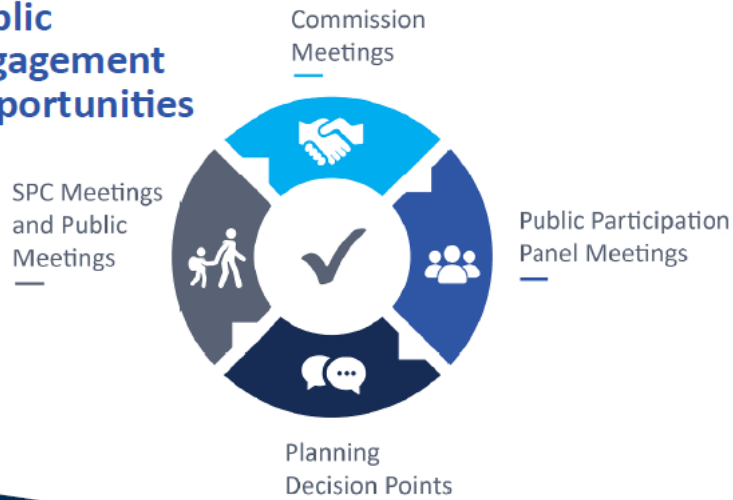
# Access and Information for All

- We seek to increase the number of participants and meaningful input throughout the planning process. This includes traditionally underserved populations.
- Our priority is to build new relationships with community organizations to increase the diversity and number of participants who engage in activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE .....  
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY .....  
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)/  
SECTION 504/508 COMPLIANCE .....  
TRIBAL CONSULTATION .....  
ELDERLY, NON-CAR HOUSEHOLDS,  
AND OTHER TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED  
TITLE VI DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS .....

# How to Participate

## Public Engagement Opportunities



### Public Participation Panel Meetings

Each county in our region has a Public Participation Panel with a minimum of 15 members appointed by County Commissioners. Panel meetings are held for them to provide input on transportation planning processes and major decisions.

### Planning Decision Points

Before acting on major transportation planning decisions, SPC provides at least 30 days for public review and comment. Information on how to access documents is provided on our website and via our Document Review Network.

### SPC Meetings and Public Meetings

Our regular SPC meetings and Public Meetings always include opportunities for public comment. You can find an online calendar of upcoming public meetings on our website: [spcregion.org/events/](http://spcregion.org/events/).

### Commission Meetings

We hold Commission Meetings quarterly that are open to the public for comment. If a person is unable to comment during a scheduled meeting time, they can submit their comments in written, verbal, or electronic form.

- We use a wide range of communication tools and engagement techniques to obtain meaningful participation. Our Public Participation Plan outlines these tools and techniques and assists members of the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties to find the necessary information to participate in the planning process.
- This guidance helps to ensure that our Public Participation Plan provides opportunities and access for all individuals to provide input on key transportation planning, policy and investment decisions.

## SECTION 5: EVALUATING OUR STRATEGIES



**We continually monitor the public engagement process to sustain best practices in public participation. Our evaluation process includes the following:**

- An outline for evaluating and improving this document and the strategies that guide how we engage the public.
- Public Participation Panels: We periodically ask the chairpersons to participate in focus groups. During focus groups they discuss the effectiveness of the Panels, ways to engage members and encourage participation, and suggestions for improving the Panels. We collect input from the Panels related to other plans, projects or studies through meetings, workshops or surveys as needed.
- Public meetings: The public can provide feedback on the effectiveness of our communication and meeting format during special workshops and meetings.
- The Commission reviews comments after a 45-day public comment period for the update of the Public Participation Plan. Then they recommend changes to the Public Participation Plan and our public engagement processes.



**In addition to the above evaluation, we implement the following actions to improve our public engagement processes:**

- Identify and consult with interested parties
- Seek out EJ/LEP organizations and resources
- Update our Limited English Proficiency Assessment
- Review ADA accessibility features of websites/meeting locations
- Develop various forms of education media for all interested audiences
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan
- Promote Public Participation Panel appointment opportunities to the general public and interested parties
- Seek new ways to engage the Public Participation Panels and general public, including social media, virtual meetings and other online tools

# 2021 Public Participation Plan Update

Public Comment Period Ends: April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 4pm

Draft documents are available for public review on the internet at  
[www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)

Written comments may be submitted to [comments@spcregion.org](mailto:comments@spcregion.org),  
by mail to SPC Comments at Two Chatham Center, Suite 500, 112  
Washington Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15219 or by fax to (412) 391-9160.

