

# Public Participation Plan



METROPLAN

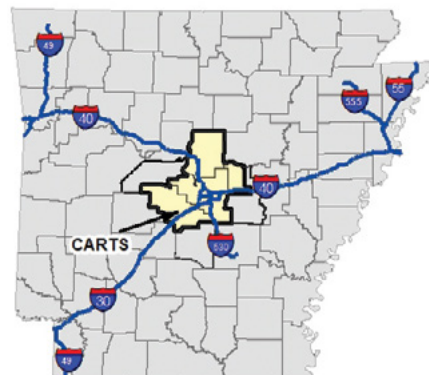
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## About CARTS

The Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study, or CARTS, is the cooperative effort by the participating communities, transportation providers, and many other interested parties to develop a long-range transportation plan for the metropolitan area.

Notice of Nondiscrimination: <https://tinyurl.com/yrp24d8a>



## Introduction

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a critical component of the metropolitan transportation planning process, ensuring that the voices of the community are heard and considered in the development of transportation policies, programs, and projects. This plan is developed in accordance with federal regulations, specifically 23 CFR 450.316, which mandates that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) provide opportunities for public involvement, participation, and consultation throughout the planning process.

The Public Participation Plan will serve as the benchmark for outreach and how Metroplan intends to engage with the public in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), among other planning products. This includes providing adequate public notice of participation activities, offering multiple and accessible formats for participation, and ensuring that public comments are considered at key decision points.

By fostering an inclusive and transparent planning process, the PPP aims to build trust and collaboration between the MPO, the public, and other stakeholders. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality of transportation planning but also ensures that the resulting plans and projects reflect the needs and priorities of the community.

All plans, projects and programs managed by Metroplan will adhere to the Public Participation Plan, as well as other public engagement requirements as stated in each agreement.

## Make-Up of Metroplan

Metroplan is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Central Arkansas. Metroplan conducts long-range transportation planning for the Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study (CARTS), which covers Faulkner, Pulaski, and Saline counties, and northwest Lonoke County.

Metroplan supports regional growth and development through providing technical assistance, long-range planning, short-range planning, transportation improvement projects, and sustainability programs to our board members. Metroplan is responsible for a variety of committees including our Board of Directors, Technical Coordinating Committee, and Small Cities Council.

### **Metroplan Board of Directors**

Metroplan's Board of Directors voting members include four counties and 29 cities. Non-voting members include the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), Rock Region METRO, Little Rock Port Authority, and Clinton National Airport.

### **Advisory Subcommittees**

#### **Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)**

The purpose of the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) is to provide oversight of transportation project development and implementation, including oversight and review of long-range plans, technical studies, analyses, and iterative drafts.

Voting membership on the TCC is composed of technical and professional staff of the Metroplan member jurisdictions.

#### **Small Cities Council**

The Small Cities Council was created as a standing Board Committee for the purpose of focusing on the needs of the smaller cities in the Central Arkansas metropolitan area. Any city or community under 10,000 population, including second-class cities and incorporated towns, within the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is eligible to participate in the Small Cities Council. The Small Cities Council may make recommendations to the full Metroplan Board.

## Additional Committees/Councils

All other public committees and advisory councils will be formed as ad hoc, as determined by projects and Metroplan staff.

## Objectives and Policies

Metroplan's Public Participation Plan includes the following objectives:

- (1) Ensure that groups with interest in transportation planning to have a reasonable opportunity have their interests represented through engaging various forms of information dissemination including, but not limited to; social media, newspaper, website posts, community meetings, and in-person/virtual meetings and webinars.
- (2) Inform residents of the Central Arkansas MSA of planning efforts, projects, and others in a timely and readily understood manner.

The following outlines the approach, strategies, and policies Metroplan will use to engage the public in transportation planning and decision-making processes:



### 1 Regional Participation

- **Regional Representation:** Ensure that public participation activities reflect the demographics of the CARTS service area and other communities identified by Metroplan.
- **Non-Discrimination Compliance:** Adhere to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and other applicable non-discrimination laws to prevent exclusion.
- **Education and Capacity Building:** Provide educational resources to aid the public's understanding of Metroplan's role and encourage meaningful participation. Educational materials will include, but are not limited to, biannual Metrotrends publications, Best Practices newsletters, annual reports, and long-range metropolitan transportation plans.



### 2 Transparency and Accountability

- **Open Access to Information:** Provide the public with access to planning documents, data, and project information to encourage informed participation. Comply with current adopted Freedom of Information Act policies and procedures. For more information, please view [Appendix](#).
- **Clear Documentation of Input:** Keep a record of all public comments, meeting summaries, and responses to show how public input is considered in decision-making.



### 3 Accessibility and Accommodation

- **ADA Compliance:** Ensure all public meetings, documents, and online content comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **Language Accessibility:** Translate key documents and provide interpretation services as required by Limited English Proficiency (LEP) guidelines.
- **Multiple Access Points:** Offer various ways for the public to engage, including, but not limited to virtual meetings, online public comment, in-person meetings, and assistance as requested.



## 4 Timeliness of Engagement

- **Early and Ongoing Engagement:** Engage the public early in the planning process and continue to provide opportunities for input throughout key project stages.
- **Advance Notification:** Provide sufficient notice before meetings, workshops, and comment periods so the public has time to prepare and participate. Comment and notice periods are subject to change per the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Please view [Appendix](#) for more information.
- **Feedback on Outcomes:** Keep the public informed on how their feedback influenced decisions, engaging with the public through every step of the planning process.



## 5 Collaboration with Local Stakeholders

- **Partnerships with Community Organizations:** Partner with Central Arkansas community organizations, advocacy groups, and local governments to expand outreach efforts and enhance public engagement.
- **Interagency Coordination:** Coordinate with ARDOT, Federal Regional, Rock Region METRO, and local agencies to align public engagement efforts. For all other projects, Metroplan will coordinate with associated Federal, regional, and local agencies.



## 6 Use of Multiple Outreach Methods

- **Variety of Engagement Channels:** Use diverse outreach methods—such as social media, public meetings, surveys, and focus groups—to reach a broad audience.
- **Innovative Engagement Techniques:** Incorporate online tools (e.g., virtual meetings, interactive maps, social media) to make participation more convenient and accessible to all audiences.
- **Tailored Outreach Approaches:** Customize outreach strategies to suit the needs and preferences of different community groups, considering factors such as cultural relevance and accessibility.



## 7 Continuous Improvement

- **Regularly Update the PPP:** Metroplan will periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan, as determined by the Metroplan Board of Directors and Staff, to ensure a full and open participation process. The Metroplan Public Participation Plan will be updated and adopted prior to the adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

## Policies

### Social Media

Metroplan uses the following social media channels to present news and information relating to the community and economic development of Central Arkansas and its partner jurisdictions:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube



Metroplan is also the parent to the following Facebook sub accounts:

- Arkansas River Trail
- Ozone Action Days/Ditch The Keys
- Southwest Trail
- Regional Greenways

You are welcome to submit your questions, comments, and concerns. **However, please note this is a moderated page and not a public forum.**

Comments will not be removed, deleted or hidden because of the speaker's point of view or opinion. However, once posted Metroplan reserves the right to delete comments containing the following: vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, links or content of a sexual nature, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial or religious group. Further, Metroplan also reserves the right to delete the following comments:

- Spam, advertising or comments that include links to other sites;
- Clearly off topic and/or disruptive;
- Advocate illegal activity;
- Promote particular services, products or political organizations;
- Infringe on copyrights or trademarks;
- Comments that contain or link to malware; and
- Repetitive comments from the same individual.

## Performance Measures

### Public Engagement Metrics

#### Overall Goal:

Provide and participate in diverse community participation in the transportation planning process.

- Number of public meetings, workshops, or outreach events held.
- Attendance rates at meetings and online engagement levels (e.g., webinar participation, social media interactions).
- Diversity of participants (demographics, geographic distribution) to ensure inclusivity.

### Stakeholder Feedback and Satisfaction

#### Overall Goal:

Foster a transparent and inclusive process where stakeholders feel heard and valued.

- Percentage of participants expressing satisfaction with the participation process (via surveys or feedback forms).
- Number of comments received and responses provided.
- Level of public understanding and awareness of MPO planning efforts.

## Impact on Decision-Making

### Overall Goal:

Foster a transparent and inclusive process where stakeholders feel heard and valued.

- Number of public comments incorporated into final plans or policy changes.
- Documentation of how public input influenced transportation projects or funding decisions.
- Transparency in reporting back to the public on how their input was used.

## Methods

Metroplan will determine the appropriate method of dissemination at the time of engagement. Methods will include, but are not limited to the following:

### Traditional In-Person Methods

1. **Public Meetings**—Interactive forums where attendees can ask questions and provide feedback.
2. **Workshops & Focus Groups**—Small, structured discussions for in-depth community input.
3. **Technical Coordinating Committee**— Provides oversight of transportation project development and implementation.
4. **Community Events & Pop-Up Engagement**—Participation at farmers' markets, festivals, and public spaces to gather input.
5. **Neighborhood & Civic Group Meetings**—MPO representatives attend local meetings to engage directly with residents.

### Digital & Online Methods

- **Interactive Websites & Online Portals**—Websites with surveys, interactive maps, and project updates.
- **Social Media Engagement**—Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube for updates, live discussions, and polls.
- **Virtual Public Meetings & Webinars**—Online meetings via Zoom, Teams, or YouTube with live Q&A sessions.
- **Online Surveys & Polls**—Digital questionnaires for broad public input.
- **Crowdsourcing & Interactive Mapping Tools**—Platforms where residents can pinpoint concerns on a digital map.
- **Email Newsletters & E-Blasts**—Regular updates with opportunities for input.

### Printed & Non-Digital Methods

- **Newspaper Ads & Press Releases**—Announcements in local media to reach a wider audience.
- **Radio & TV Broadcasts**—Public service announcements and interviews to inform residents.

### Targeted & Inclusive Engagement Methods

- **Bilingual & Multilingual Outreach**—Translation services and key materials translated to ARDot LEP adopted language to reach non-English speakers.
- **ADA-Accessible Meetings & Materials**—Ensuring people with disabilities can participate fully.
- **Engagement with Underrepresented Communities**—Tailored outreach efforts for low-income and rural communities (LIRC).

## Comment Periods and Requirements

All forums valid for public comment will be determined at the time of the period, and will adhere to policies listed below.

Public Participation Plan	A minimum of <b>30 calendar days</b> shall be provided before the initial transportation plan is adopted by the MPO. A minimum of 14 calendar days shall be provided before the revised/amended transportation plan is adopted by the MPO.
Metropolitan Transportation Plan	A minimum of <b>30 calendar days</b> shall be provided before the initial transportation plan is adopted by the MPO. A minimum of 14 calendar days shall be provided before the revised/amended transportation plan is adopted by the MPO.
Unified Planning Work Program	A minimum of <b>30 calendar days</b> shall be provided before the initial transportation plan is adopted by the MPO. A minimum of 14 calendar days shall be provided before the revised/amended transportation plan is adopted by the MPO.
Transportation Improvement Program	A minimum of <b>30 calendar days</b> shall be provided before the initial transportation plan is adopted by the MPO. A minimum of 14 calendar days shall be provided before the revised/amended transportation plan is adopted by the MPO.
Title VI Program	A minimum of <b>30 calendar days</b> shall be provided before the initial transportation plan is adopted by the MPO. A minimum of 14 calendar days shall be provided before the revised/amended transportation plan is adopted by the MPO.

## Additional Documents

### Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) & Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment Procedures

The purpose of these Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Revision Procedures is to establish consistent standards for revising the Arkansas Department of Transportation's (ARDOT) STIP and the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) developed by the State's eight Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). These Revision Procedures were prepared by ARDOT in coordination with the MPOs and with the support and assistance of the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

For more information, you can request the full document by contacting our office at 501.372.3300

#### Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

<https://arkansasag.gov/divisions/opinions-foia/arkansas-freedom-of-information-act/>

#### Federal Requirements

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-23/chapter-I/subchapter-E/part-450/subpart-C/section-450.316>

## Appendix

- [Metropolitan Transportation Plan](#)
- [Unified Planning Work Program](#)
- [STIP/TIP](#)
- [Title VI](#)
- [Annual List of Obligated Projects \(ALOP\)](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Complaint Procedure \(English\)](#)
- [Complaint Procedure \(Spanish\)](#)





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