



# Public Involvement Policy

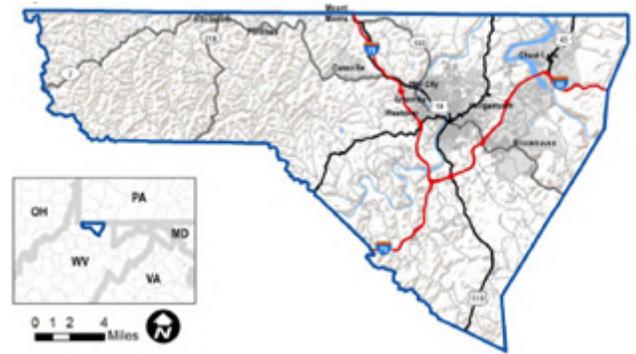
June, 2022

Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization  
243 High Street Room 026, Morgantown, WV 26505  
[www. Plantgether.org](http://www.Plantgether.org)

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Purpose of the PIP</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>History and Function of the MMMPO</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Organizational Structure of the MMMPO</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Partnerships .....	8
<b>Planning Products and Sequence</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).....	9
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) .....	9
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) .....	9
Public Involvement Policy (PIP).....	9
<b>Public Participation Measures</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Federal Requirements.....	10
<b>Development of the Public Involvement Policy</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Outreach Tools</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Public Meetings.....	13
Policy Board Meetings .....	13
Advisory Committee Meetings.....	13
Stakeholder/Steering Committee Meetings .....	14
Stakeholder Interviews .....	14
Focus Group Meetings .....	14
Pop-up Meetings .....	14
Working Group Meetings .....	14
Design Workshop/Charrette .....	15
Open House .....	15
Virtual Public Meetings.....	15

Ongoing Outreach .....	16
Social Media Engagement .....	16
Newsletter .....	17
Transportation Project Information Portal.....	17
Transportation Project Tracking Portal .....	17
Alternative Outreach Methods .....	18
Information Availability .....	19
Public Notification and Participation Standards .....	19
Website & Visualization .....	19
Response to Public Comments.....	20
Outreach Strategies .....	20
Access to Information .....	21
Involvement and Education Strategies.....	23
TTAC and CAC Meetings .....	23
Adoption and Amendment of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) .....	23
Adoption and Amendment of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).....	25
Adoption Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).....	27
General Planning Document.....	27
Evaluation.....	28
<b>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Title VI &amp; Environmental Justice .....</b>	<b>30</b>



## Introduction

The Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMMPO) works with the public in our region to develop transportation plans and programs. Substantial public outreach results in greater community support for plans that help achieve the region's goals for the future. This Public Involvement Policy (PIP) fulfills federal requirements and also serves as a working instrument for MMMPO staff to refer to during the development of a new plan to ensure that adequate public notice is given and the community is engaged throughout the project. In addition, community members may use it to learn about the MMMPO and opportunities for participation. The MMMPO attempts to involve the public whenever possible, although outreach in transportation planning can pose major challenges.

The 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act required the formation of an MPO for all urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000. MPOs were established to ensure that federal funding for transportation projects and programs was based on a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) planning process. The MMMPO was founded in 2003. The MMMPO consists of a Policy Board, made up of local government officials; a Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, comprising local professional staff; Citizens Advisory Committee and three staff members. The Policy Board approves the use of federal transportation funds within the planning area for road, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects as well as other transportation-related studies and projects.

The transportation planning process is multifaceted and uses a lot of jargon to convey information which leads the public to struggle to understand the major planning documents and their relationship to each other. These factors can make it difficult to get meaningful input. The duration of the transportation planning process can also be a barrier to engagement – some transportation projects take 10 or more years to be completed. Another challenge is that the MMMPO is responsible for approving funding, but does not manage transportation projects. Projects are managed by other agencies, such as the West Virginia Department of Transportation Division of Highways, and the local city governments. Ideal methods to reach the public are continually changing – sometimes due to the project and other times as a result of changing technology, preferences, or circumstances. Due to changing times, MMMPO's outreach structure must permit flexibility for staff to experiment with various approaches to increase and improve engagement.

## Purpose of the PIP

The Public Involvement Policy confirms the Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MMMPO) dedication to open communications and an accessible regional transportation planning process. MMMPO recognizes the significance of primary and continued involvement with the local public, adequate communication between applicable public agencies and stakeholders, in addition to appropriate public notices and full public access to key decisions in the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The Public Involvement Policy serves as a guidebook for the public to engage in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

It provides an overall framework for public involvement procedures including the following sections:

- *MMMPO History identifies the mission and role of the organization.*
- *Organization/Structure identifies the decision-making groups that support the MMMPO.*
- *Public Involvement Policy identifies the federal requirements, decision-making board and committees, outreach techniques, and how the MMMPO responds to public comments.*
- *Specific Involvement Techniques provide an overview the MMMPO website, how to submit comments, newspaper and social media announcements, and outreach activities.*
- *Involvement Processes for Major Transportation Planning Documents identifies the public participation plan process for the development of the short and long-range planning documents and the MMMPO's Unified Planning Work Program.*
- *ADA and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) provides procedures to obtain assistance for meetings and materials.*
- *Title VI Policy Statement is the adopted policy of the MMMPO Policy Board.*

## History and Function of the MMMPO

Established in 2003, the MMMPO is the federally-designated transportation planning agency for Morgantown and Monongalia County, serving as a regional partnership with the West Virginia Department of Transportation (DOT), the local transit agency Mountain Line Transit Authority (MLTA), local elected leadership, local government, the business community, and citizens. Currently the MMMPO is housed with the Monongalia County Planning Commission office, and the two groups share resources and data. The urbanized area consists of the City of Morgantown, Star City, Town of Granville, City of Westover, and Blacksville within Monongalia County. The MMMPO has the authority to plan, prioritize, and recommend transportation projects for federal and state funding. It is responsible for ensuring the region is in compliance with federal and state transportation planning requirements.

The MMMPO is committed to providing leadership for regional transportation planning, promoting personal and social economic prosperity while encouraging sustainable growth. The following are the core functions and responsibilities of Metropolitan Planning Organizations:

- 1. Establish a setting: Establish and manage a fair and impartial environment for effective regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.*
- 2. Evaluate alternatives: Evaluate transportation alternatives, scaled to the size and complexity of the region, and the nature of its transportation issues, and to present realistically available options. (These alternatives are included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or MTP for short).*
- 3. Maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): Develop and update a long-range transportation plan 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, and (3) quality of life*
- 4. Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): Develop a program based on the long-range transportation plan and designed to serve the area's goals, using spending, operating, management, and financial tools.*
- 5. Involve the public: Involve the general public and all the significantly affected sub-groups in the four essential functions listed above.*

## Organizational Structure of the MMMPO

The Morgantown Monongalia MPO is comprised of a Policy Board, a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), a Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), a Freight Advisory Committee, a Ped/Bike Data Collection Committee, and Staff. The Policy Board is the decision-making body of the MMMPO. The Board is made up of elected and appointed officials from member local governments and major organizations in the Greater Morgantown region. The Policy Board is responsible for approving the area's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the area's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Citizens Advisory Committee is an advisory group for the Policy Board that provides recommendations on community issues and concerns. The CAC is composed of citizens appointed by the Policy Board to represent the public interest in transportation decision making. The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee is an advisory group for the Policy Board that provides recommendations on technical issues and planning efforts. The TTAC is made up of technical staff from the various agencies and local governments in the MPO area. The Policy Advisory Committee is made up of representatives of the businesses community and the economic development community who provide the Policy Board with their perspective on the impact of the Boards proposed policies and projects. This group is a working group of the Morgantown Area Partnership (MAP).

Given the emphasis on freight in the FAST Act, the purpose of the MMMPO's Freight Advisory Committee is to assure that freight interests are represented in the MMMPO's planning process. The Freight Advisory Committee can consist of representatives of the local trucking/freight industry.

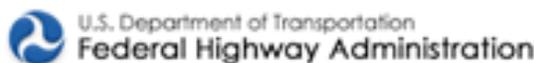
The Pedestrian/Bicycle Data Collection Committee is an ad-hoc technical committee providing input for the development of the pedestrian and bicycle counting program appropriate for the MMMPO. The program will be an annual routine data collection effort included in the MMMPO's Unified Planning Work Program. The committee also provides input for the MMMPO's staff to develop a handbook for collecting pedestrian and bicycle traffic data in the region. The handbook will identify standard practices for collecting pedestrian and bicycle data in the MMMPO area to be used by local municipalities, planning/engineering consultants.

The MMMPO Staff provides professional transportation planning services and

ongoing administration of planning projects. Staff is managed by the Executive Director who reports to the Policy Board, TTAC, CAC, Freight Advisory and the Pedestrian/Bicycle Data Collection Committee.

## Partnerships

The Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization coordinates regional transportation planning with federal, state, and local agencies. Cooperative agencies include: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), Mountain Line Transit Authority (MLTA), Monongalia County Board of Education, West Virginia University (WVU), Morgantown Area Partnership (MAP), Monongalia County, City of Morgantown, City of Westover, Star City, and the Town of Granville. The MMMPO is a member of the West Virginia Association of MPOs and the National Association of MPOs.



## Planning Products and Sequence

### Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP, also called Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), provides a vision of the region’s transportation system needs over a minimum 20-year planning horizon and establishes priorities for transportation investments. The Plan is updated every four to five years. Projects are prioritized using a tier system that correlates with planning horizon time-frames; 8-10 years, 20 years, and 30 years.

### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP identifies all proposed federally-funded transportation improvement projects for various modes and facilities. The TIP is the primary document for identifying the projects to be implemented over the next six (6) years. Funding in the TIP is primarily for the first two years with the remaining years being illustrative. The MMMPO is required to prepare and update the TIP approximately every two to three years.

### Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP defines the planning priorities of the MMMPO, describing all transportation-related planning activities anticipated within a given federal fiscal year.

### Public Involvement Policy (PIP)

The PIP identifies goals and methods for outreach to the public within our region. It is a living document that outlines MMMPO’s strategies for effective public and partnership involvement.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan	Transportation Improvement Program	Unified Planning Work Program	Public Involvement Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long range transportation plan for the region (10-30 year horizon)</li> <li>• Updated every five years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short range plan for projects and programs that have funds programmed for implementation</li> <li>• Updated every four years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines the yearly work activities of the MPO</li> <li>• Updated annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines strategies for effective public and partnership involvement</li> <li>• Updated as needed or every two years</li> </ul>

## Public Participation Measures

### Federal Requirements

Title	Description
<p><b>Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Summary (IIJA)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improves permitting by including enhancements to FAST-41, which has substantially reduced the permitting timeline for larger infrastructure projects</i></li> <li>• <i>Includes rural infrastructure development and dedicated new funds for major projects</i></li> <li>• <i>Long-term spending for capital assets that will improve economic efficiency, productivity, GDP and revenue, and will not increase inflation</i></li> </ul> <p>The guidance currently being developed for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) may change the scope of the Public Involvement Policy</p>
<p><b>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)</b></p>	<p>The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 specifies that programs and activities funded with federal dollars are prohibited from discrimination based on disability. ADA encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation and paratransit plans and services.</p>
<p><b>Title VI</b></p>	<p>Title VI under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that no person in the U.S. shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.</p>
<p><b>Environmental Justice</b></p>	<p>Executive Order #12898 of 1994 directs federal agencies to develop strategies to address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations. 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1) (vii) requires that the needs of those “traditionally underserved” by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and/or minority households, be sought out and considered.</p>

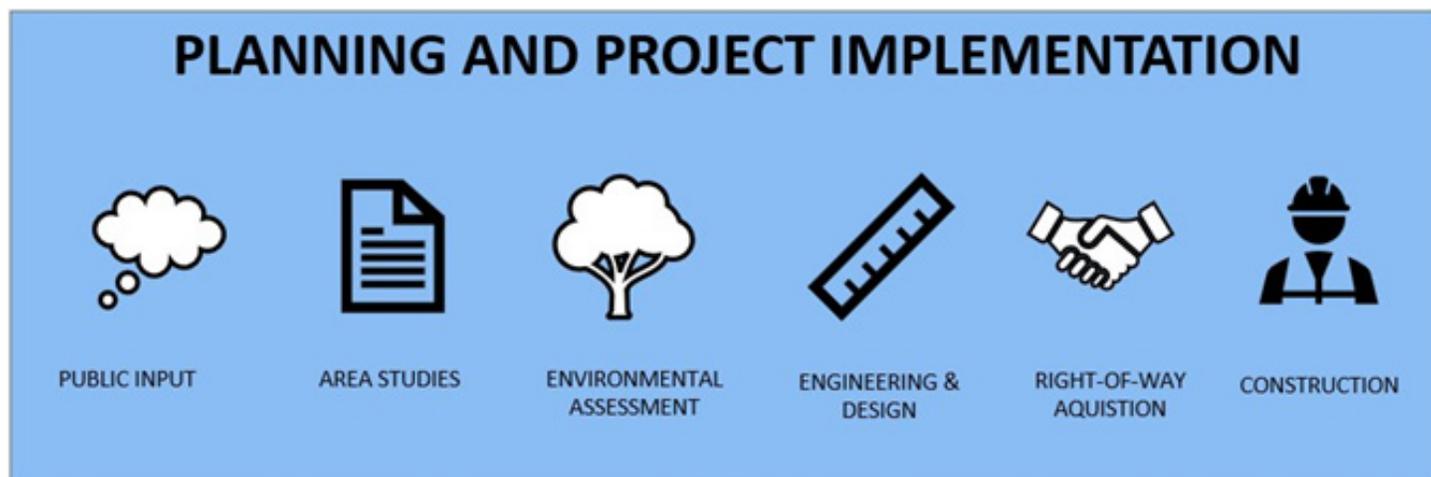
Title	Description
<p><b>Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)</b></p>	<p>The FAST Act of 2015 building on prior Federal transportation authorization bills places strong emphasis on public participation in the metropolitan planning process.</p> <p>Subsequent regulations in 23 CFR 450.316 requires “the metropolitan transportation planning process shall include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPS”. ((b)(1))</p> <p>It also details a number of requirements for MPOs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Development of a public participation plan;</i></li> <li>• <i>adequate public notice for public participation activities;</i></li> <li>• <i>Identification of the types of stakeholders for whom MPOs must provide reasonable opportunities to be engaged;</i></li> <li>• <i>Employment of visualization techniques;</i></li> <li>• <i>Making information available electronically;</i></li> <li>• <i>holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;</i></li> <li>• <i>Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by transportation systems</i></li> <li>• <i>Providing adequate opportunities for public comment.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Clean Air Act of 1970</b></p>	<p>The Clean Air Act (CAA) is the comprehensive federal law that regulates air emissions from stationary and mobile sources. Among other things, this law authorizes EPA to establish National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health and public welfare and to regulate emissions of hazardous air pollutants.</p>
<p><b>Rehabilitation Act of 1973</b></p>	<p>The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by Federal agencies, in programs receiving Federal financial assistance, in Federal employment, and in the employment practices of Federal contractors.</p>
<p><b>Age Discrimination Act of 1975</b></p>	<p>The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits discrimination based on age in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance.</p>
<p><b>Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987</b></p>	<p>The Civil Rights Restoration Act, or Grove City Bill, was a US legislative act that specified that recipients of federal funds must comply with civil rights laws in all areas, not just in the particular program or activity that received federal funding</p>

## Development of the Public Involvement Policy

The MMMPO's Public Involvement Policy will be reviewed periodically to determine its effectiveness in achieving its goals. As required, MMMPO will hold a forty- five (45) day public review and comment period before the adoption or amendment of the PIP. Copies of the document are available on MMMPO's web-site, [www.plantgether.org](http://www.plantgether.org), via social media, in its office, and by request.

This Policy is subject to the review by the following agencies:

- *Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)*
- *Federal Transit Administration (FTA)*
- *West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT)*
- *Other agencies as may be required by law*
- *Compliance with the State of West Virginia's Freedom of Information Act*



## Outreach Tools

### Public Meetings

#### *Policy Board Meetings*

The policy board meeting occurs on the Thursday of the third week of January, March, May, June, August, October, and November. The board makes decisions on policy, strategy, and operation of the MMMPO.



#### *Advisory Committee Meetings*

The TTAC and CAC advisory committee meetings occur in the week before each Policy Board meeting. The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) meets on Tuesday; the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) on Thursday. The two committees review items for the Policy Board's consideration. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, consideration of these items by these two Committees is considered one of the primary outreach strategies of this Policy. Unless specifically mentioned below, all of the items considered by the Policy Board will be publicly reviewed by these Committees as part of this Public Involvement Process.

### *Stakeholder/Steering Committee Meetings*

Stakeholder/steering committee meetings are held when the MMMPO develops a specific project or study. The meetings serve as a core decision-making body for that project or study. Stakeholder/steering committees are expected to include representatives from all interest groups, including underserved populations.

### *Stakeholder Interviews*

In general, stakeholder interviews are one-on-one conversations with people who have a vested interest in a project or a study. A stakeholder is anyone within an organization or a citizen potentially impacted by a project, who can offer useful advice about the project or study. Stakeholder interviews are held mainly, but are not limited to, for a specific project or study.

### *Focus Group Meetings*

A focus group is a tool that the MMMPO uses to find out the community's perspective on a particular condition and how it can be improved. During a focus group meeting, the participants provide their opinions and ideas in a free-form style. Focus group interviews are held mainly, but are not limited to, for a specific project or study.

### *Pop-up Meetings*

Pop-ups are used as a tool to spread the word and generate interest and visibility for a specific project or study, or for the MMMPO in general. They function as a mobile meeting to draw regional stakeholders who would typically not attend a formal public meeting. Pop-ups take place during established events, such as school events, festivals, or farmers' markets. In some cases, a pop-up may take place with specific community stakeholder groups, such as neighborhood meetings. Pop-up events may contain MPO-related materials and interactive activities such as surveys.

### *Working Group Meetings*

Working groups are established to allow stakeholders and the public to get involved with the MMMPO in specific areas of interest. These Working Groups support the MMMPO's planning efforts by providing guidance in the development of projects, programs, and policies.

## *Design Workshop/Charrette*

A design workshop/charrette is an intensive planning session where citizens, planners, engineers, and others collaborate on a vision for development. It provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. A design workshop/charrette supports the development of a specific project or study.

## *Open House*

An open house or public hearing provides opportunities for the community to understand and comment on the purposes, issues, strategies, design, and implementation of a project. It is the primary form of meetings to engage the community on the project level.

## *Virtual Public Meetings*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the opportunity for the public to participate in the MMMPO's committee meetings was changed to take into consideration the possibility that future meetings will need to be attended remotely via video conferencing. Meeting links will be posted on the MMMPO's website and advertised in print media as needed. There will be three options for public participation in the meetings: video conferencing, phone conferencing or written comment. At the Policy Board meeting Comments will be limited to four minutes and speakers must give their name and address at the beginning of their allotted comment time. Members of the public wishing to make a video comment will need to use Webex on a computer or smart device that has a camera. Members of the public wishing to call in and make a comment over the phone will need to call the Webex number and use the meeting ID posted in the agenda. When participating via video or phone conferencing, you will be placed into a virtual lobby(video) or on hold(phone) until the meeting host permits access to the meeting at which point your microphone will be placed on mute until the public comment portion begins. Once public comment begins, the meeting host will go through each person one at a time and provide them with the opportunity to address the MMMPO meeting. It is recommended that participants fully follow the meeting prior to commenting. The video and phone conference will open at the posted meeting start time.

## Ongoing Outreach

### *Social Media Engagement*

The MMMPO is actively working to engage a broader level of the general public through online engagement. MMMPO regularly shares content via our website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Webex video conferencing tool.

The following links are to the MMMPO's social media accounts:

MMMPO's Website:

<https://www.planttogether.org/>

MMMPO's Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Morgantown-Monongalia-Metropolitan-Planning-Organization-195640710451067/>

MMMPO's Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/MonongaliaMpo>

MMMPO's Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/morgantownmonongaliampo/>

MMMPO's LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/42408566>

MMMPO's YouTube:

Morgantown Monongalia MPO

MMMPO's Webex:

<https://meetingsamer16.webex.com/meet/jshuey>



## *Newsletter*

The MMMPO newsletter will be published at a minimum quarterly to update the general public (via mailing list) and our stakeholders on transportation projects in our region. The newsletter will also be posted to our website/social media accounts and shared in local community groups on various platforms. In addition, materials such as flyers, fact sheets, posters, and explainable videos supporting the newsletter will be shared through the MMMPO's website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The Newsletter will be published in full format four times a year, with additional mini-updates as needed.

## *Transportation Project Information Portal*

MMMPO staff is developing an interactive database for project information, tracking, and public comment for both MTP and TIP projects. The Transportation Project Information Portal is a new tool the MPO will be utilizing during the MTP update of 2022. MPO staff will be able to include project specific comments and the public will be able to leave comments on all projects as long as they follow the general comment rules set forth by the staff.

## *Transportation Project Tracking Portal*

The transportation project tracking portal is an online platform providing information for the MMMPO's transportation projects included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The portal has two components:

**Project Table:** Users can sort and filter the project table by project name, federal fiscal year, project phase, funding source, project ID, jurisdiction, obligation date, priority, and funding amount. The project table will also provide additional information associated with individual projects when such information is available. Additional information includes project type, planning level cost estimation, detail of scope of work, target performance measure, target MTP goals, executive director's comments, and external links to relevant documents/studies. The information is displayed in a collapsible information window.

**Project Map:** Users will be able to identify project locations using an online interactive map. Users can click the project location on the map to view a project's basic information. In addition to an individual project map page, the project map is embedded in the collapsible information window of each project.

## Alternative Outreach Methods

### Fact Sheets

Fact sheets present information and data of one or multiple projects, a study, or a transportation issue in a format emphasizing key points on a single printed page. Tables, bullet points, headings, and maps are commonly used to present information on fact sheets. Fact sheets in electronic format are distributed through email, website, and social media outlets.

### Flyers

Flyers serve as an advertisement intended for wide distribution. It is posted or distributed in a public place, grocery stores, or handed out to individuals. Flyers are usually used in public meetings for a project or a study. Flyers in electronic format are distributed through email, website, and social media outlets.

### Posters

Posters promote ideas or events in a public space. They present textual and graphic elements in an eye-catching and informative way. Posters are usually printed out, mounted to hardboards, and displayed on standing easels. A poster often includes large size maps and project illustrations. Posters in electronic format are distributed through email, website, and social media outlets.

### Surveys

A Survey is used to collect both quantitative and qualitative community input on transportation issues. Surveys in electronic format are distributed via email, website, social media outlets, and/or QR codes on printed materials. Paper surveys are distributed and collected in public meetings, as a supplementary method to online surveys.

### QR Code

QR code provides an easy way to access online information through a scannable code on print material. Information that could be linked with a QR code include the MMMPO website, the transportation project tracking portal, surveys, and online posters.

## Information Availability

MMMPO staff provides written minutes and agendas for committee meetings to the public via our website. MMMPO will comply with the West Virginia Freedom of Information Act (“Act”), W.Va. Code §29B-1-1 et seq., that requires public bodies to provide public records in response to requests, unless those records are exempt from disclosure. The website homepage provides pertinent announcements of MPO functions and documents. The WVDOT Podcast (WV on the DOT) and Facebook page are provided on the homepage for the purpose of encouraging community comprehension of the transportation planning process. All current and previous plans and studies are available on the MMMPO website.

## Public Notification and Participation Standards

A variety of public notification and participation measures will be used to encourage the early and continuous involvement of citizens, jurisdictions, communities, and other partners in the planning process and the choices and arrangements of the MMMPO. They will include but not be limited to the following:

- *Public notices will be used to inform the general public and media of upcoming input opportunities.*
- *MMMPO will hold a public comment period prior to the adoption of a new MTP, TIP or UPWP.*
- *The MMMPO web page ([www.planttogether.org](http://www.planttogether.org)), will include information about the MPO’s transportation responsibilities, plans, programs, committees, and meetings.*
- *For transportation studies that diverge from the TIP and MTP, the MMMPO will attempt to include public outreach where suitable, and/or partner with local jurisdictions, conduct surveys, hold public meetings, etc. for public comments.*
- *Meetings will be held in facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities.*

## Website & Visualization

MMMPO will work to advance our planning process to maximize its use of various visualization techniques to help inform the public and relay relevant information regarding transportation plans, projects, and programs. Appropriate methods include, but are not limited to, static maps, interactive GIS demonstrations, model

simulations, photographs, and artist renderings. For each plan, project, or program, MMMPO will strive to employ the best techniques available to inform the public.

## Response to Public Comments

MMMPO will recognize when public comments are received for the MTP, TIP, UPWP and any other special study, and provide meaningful responses. The responses will be concise with any related key decision. Responses to comments will be made in a timely manner before decisions are made or plans and programs are adopted by the Policy Board. Final comments and responses will remain on file, available for public review and documented as part of the plan, program, or other special study as adopted.

## Outreach Strategies

The MMMPO intends to maximize the public's comment and input in the metropolitan transportation planning process. It is important to have participation from a wide array of participants. Therefore, MMMPO will work to ensure that all interested and affected parties have an opportunity to participate in the planning process. Every reasonable attempt to reach all those interested or affected by the plans and programs of the MPO.

The actions described in this section can be used collectively or separately to integrate public involvement into all of the MMMPO's transportation planning processes, including the development of the MTP, TIP and UPWP. These endeavors are intended to inform the public regarding opportunities to provide input, and expand the public's observation of transportation needs or deficiencies.

This Public Involvement Policy embodies an enhanced effort of public inclusion, outreach and engagement that is consistent with the expectations of public involvement and participation per federal guidelines.

The main categories of public involvement activities are:

- *Access to Information*
- *Involvement and Education Strategies*

These categories and their distinct components are discussed below:

## Access to Information

Transportation planning documents can be very multifaceted and technical, and at times difficult to fully understand. The MMMPO recognizes that participation tactics should be suitable for gathering public input and opinions of people with varying amount of available time and interest. To streamline access of various transportation-related documents, MMMPO utilizes our website, local newspaper (Dominion Post), radio stations, and social media as involvement strategies to keep the public informed and engaged.

## MMMPO Website

MMMPO's website ([www.plantogether.org](http://www.plantogether.org)) is the principal source for comprehensive information on current activities and regional transportation planning issues. The homepage provides the latest news and articles of transportation related newsfeeds and a list of upcoming public meetings.

A substantial opportunity for the public to share their opinions and ideas is during the public review and comment periods for the MTP, TIP, and the UPWP. Federal regulations require a minimum of at least 30 days before key decisions are made and documents are adopted. MMMPO allows a 45-day comment period for major planning deliverables. The current plans for each of these are located under the "Documents" tab within the "Plans & Studies" link on the MMMPO website.

The screenshot shows the MMMPO website homepage. At the top, there are utility links: "Log In Contact Us", "Get Email Updates", "Text Size", and "Translate Page". Below this is a navigation bar with icons for various transportation modes: truck, car, wheelchair, pedestrian, bicycle, stroller, motorcycle, bus, and train. The main title is "Morgantown Monongalia METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION". A "Quick Links" section lists: "Policy Board", "Projects", "Agenda Tools", "Annual Traffic Count", "Environmental Justice", and "Links". A main navigation menu includes: "HOME", "TRAVEL", "DOCUMENTS", "PARTICIPATE", "ONGOING PROJECTS", "ABOUT US", and "More". The "ANNOUNCEMENTS" section lists:
 

- **OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: MTP Draft Plan** (Supporting documents and tables can be found using the documents tab under Plans & Studies)
- **March 2022 TIP Amendment Dominion Post Ad**
- **Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) Greenbag Road Improvement Project**
- **Adopted 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

 A map of Morgantown is visible on the left side of the page.

Information needed for the public to understand and comment on each document will be released for review. Examples may include executive summaries, flyers, surveys, full draft report or links to project or sponsor websites.

## Media Coverage

MMMPO will, to the extent possible, work to develop and maintain a strong relationship with the print and broadcast media. MMMPO identifies the media as a pertinent link to promote and motivate public involvement in the transportation planning process.

MMMPO will provide meeting information to local newspapers as well as radio/television providers. This activity is intended to spur a certain amount of visibility and coverage regarding MMMPO operations. The primary newspaper for media announcements is The Dominion Post.

<https://www.dominionpost.com/>

As opportunities and topics arise, MMMPO will pursue to bolster public awareness by working with the local television and radio stations to obtain appropriate coverage of activities. Examples may include interviews with WBOY (www.wboy.com), news articles, radio interviews, letters to the editor, and other sources as necessary. The local radio station WJAR features stories regarding transportation improvement topics, and in some cases requests that the Executive Director join for interviews to clarify specific project details.

## Involvement and Education Strategies

MMMPO is mindful that there is a need to increase public awareness of both the role of MMMPO and the metropolitan transportation planning process. The community involvement and education workings are designed to achieve a wide acknowledgement of MMMPO's mission in the community, and to improve the community cognizance that transparency exists in the process. MMMPO engages with local neighborhood groups via social media to bolster staff knowledge upon the transportation issues in each area. The organization can reach the largest number of community members via established groups on Facebook, many of which have membership in the thousands. The MMMPO will work with the *City of Morgantown Neighborhood Associations* to strengthen neighborhood outreach. When appropriate, staff will engage and educate the public at local events such as farmers markets or community organized events. To achieve the core goals of community involvement, MMMPO continuously works in partnership with community organizations and performs public outreach to increase awareness and pursue valuable input on MMMPO activities.

### *TTAC and CAC Meetings*

The TTAC and CAC meetings include, at minimum, the following public involvement activities:

- *Advertisement Period: At least three (3) days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting*
- *Advertisement Channel: Website, General Public Email List, Media/Stakeholder Email List, Facebook, Twitter, an other social media platforms as applicable*
- *Virtual Public Involvement: Video conferencing*

### *Adoption and Amendment of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)*

Adoption of an updated Metropolitan Transportation Plan requires:

- *The public should be notified of the intent to update/develop the MTP. This process may occur as part of the public involvement for the development and consideration of the Unified Planning Work Program as part of the*

*MMMPO's Committee review process identified above.*

- *Establishment of a Steering Committee including Policy Board Members, members of the MMMPO's Committee's, and representatives of the general public.*

The development of the MTP includes:

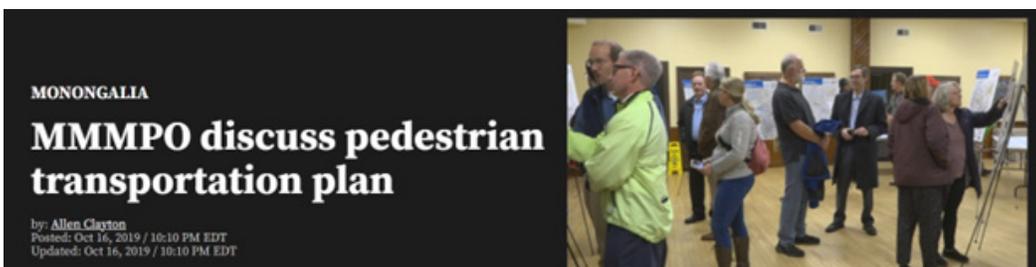
- *At a minimum two (2) walk through public forums/public open house.*
- *The first public forum will present an examination of the existing conditions in the area, and the public will be encouraged to express their concerns with transportation in the area. The second public forum will be to review the recommendations for the MTP.*
- *All public comments received during the comment period will be summarized and presented to the MMMPO's Committee's and the Policy Board for consideration prior to adoption of the Plan. The summarized comments will be included in an appendix to the Plan.*
- *At least two (2) Steering Committee meetings where public comments may be received. The Steering Committee meetings will be to review the results of the public forums and to receive public comment.*

Advertisement Period:

- *A minimum of one (1) week in advance of required meetings.*
- *It is anticipated that unless the draft Plan is found to need major revisions, the Steering Committee will release the draft MTP for a forty five (45) day final comment period before consideration by the MMMPO Policy Board for adoption.*

Advertisement Channels:

- *Website: MMMPO website, dedicated MTP webpage*
- *Email: General Public Email List, Media/Stakeholder Email List,*



- *Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube (explanatory videos), and*
- *LinkedIn*

#### Supplementary Tools:

- *Online survey, online project evaluation/prioritization tool.*
- *Working Group Meeting, Focus Group, Stakeholder Interview.*
- *Pop-up meetings*

Amendment of a new non-Tier One project to Tier One of an adopted MTP is considered as a major amendment to the TIP. Major amendment requires:

- *The public must be allowed a minimum 45 day comment period and a minimum of two public meetings on the proposed new project and the project(s) proposed to be impacted by the proposed change to the Tier One List. The MMMPO Policy Board meeting may be one of the two required public meetings.*
- *At least a thirty (30) day public notification for any potential significant change to the MTP*
- *A proposal to modify the MTP fiscally constrained Tier One Project List must include recommendations for projects to be removed or adjusted to meet the fiscal constraint requirements of the Tier One List. Minor amendments to an adopted MTP require the same notification as a TIP Amendment. Minor amendments are those that do not substantially impact the purpose and/or need of a project.*

## *Adoption and Amendment of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*

Adoption of an updated Transportation Improvement Plan requires:

#### Advertisement Period:

- *Thirty (30) days prior to the preparation of the TIP update, informing the public that the TIP will be developed and soliciting input into projects that should be recommended for inclusion in the TIP.*

#### Advertisement Channels:

- *Website: MMMPO website, dedicated MTP webpage*
- *Email: General Public Email List, Media/Stakeholder Email List,*
- *Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Youtube (explanatory videos/do-ityourself video), and LinkedIn*
- *Local newspaper*

All comments received will be documented and provided to the MMMPO's committees for consideration of inclusion in the draft TIP. Upon completion of the notification period the draft TIP will be included in the MMMPO committee process as part of the regular agenda for review by the MMMPO Policy Board.

Upon satisfactory review by the MMMPO Policy Board, the Board will release the draft TIP for public comment and consideration by the Policy Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The TIP may be amended at the request of the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT), the MMMPO, Mountain Line Transit, West Virginia University and the MMMPO's member jurisdictions. An amendment to an adopted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) requires:

- *At least be advertised fifteen (15) working days in advance of consideration by the MMMPO Policy Board.*
- *Proposed Amendments of the TIP will be subject to the MMMPO's established Committee process unless it is an emergency.*
- *Administrative Adjustments to the TIP will be in accord with the MMMPO's Administrative Adjustment Policy adopted in 2014 (see Appendix).*

The Mountain Line Transit Authority depends on the MMMPO's Public Participation Process to satisfy their public participation requirements for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and these notifications serve as invitation for public involvement, review and comments for the TIP relative to the Mountain Line Transit Authority's participation in this process.

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

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is the annual funding document for the MMMPO's Planning Activities. In addition to review by the MMMPO's standing committees, the development of the UPWP requires the following activities:

- *Notification at the November MMMPO Committee meetings and Policy Board meeting soliciting input for the development of the UPWP.*
- *Notification requesting input from the public, the MMMPO's member jurisdictions and agencies will be sought through information released to the MMMPO Media/Stakeholder List.*
- *The Executive Director will prepare a draft UPWP with the aid of the MMMPO Policy Board and standing committees. The draft will be presented for consideration at the regularly scheduled January Policy Board meeting. Upon review the Board may recommend changes to the UPWP and recommend its release for public review for adoption at the Policy Board's regularly scheduled March meeting.*
- *All public comments received will be summarized and presented to the MMMPO's committees and the MMMPO Policy Board as part of the committee process at the March meeting.*

## *General Planning Document*

The MMMPO prepares various planning studies to further develop or modify the recommendations of the MTP. Those studies have a proactive public involvement process, including the following elements:

- *Develop a specific public involvement plan through the following steps:*
  1. *Clearly define the project in terms of its scope and impact.*
  2. *Identify project stakeholders, including underserved population.*
  3. *Determine public involvement tools, and how it will be applied.*
- *Establish an ad hoc steering committee made up of stakeholders.*
- *Hold a minimum of two (2) public meetings to gather public input and to seek comments on the proposed plan.*
- *Integrate the study in the MMMPO's regular committee review process.*

## *Evaluation*

Evaluations of public involvement help to define, measure, and improve public involvement effectiveness by identifying successes and areas for improvement.

### **Annual Public Outreach Report**

MMMPO staff will prepare an annual report of public involvement evaluation and submit the report to the MMMPO's committees and policy board for review in November. The report will contain, at minimum, the following elements:

- *Outcomes (quantitative and qualitative outcomes)*
- *Lessons Learned (Successes and areas of concern)*
- *Prospective (actions to improve public involvement performance)*

### **Evaluation Metrics**

Outcomes are assessed through both quantitative and qualitative metrics. Quantitative metrics include:

- *Number of website visits*
- *Video viewings*
- *Number of event attendees*
- *Social media subscribers*
- *Mailing list size*

Qualitative metrics include answers to the following questions:

- *Have public comments been received early enough in the planning process to have an impact?*
- *What impact have the public comments had on plan/project development or outcomes?*
- *What are the public's expressed opinions on the MMMPO's public involvement process?*
- *How is the public reaction to the MMMPO's public involvement process?*

Federal guidelines of the metropolitan planning process involves outreach with local planning partners to provide better insight to the needs and objectives of the region. MMMPO recognizes the importance and benefits of reaching out to resource agencies in the community. The subsequent list identifies the possible agencies/ organizations that have an interest or have participated in the MPO's

metropolitan transportation planning process. The list will be updated often as MMMPO's outreach efforts identify additional resource agencies.

- *Mon River Trails Conservancy*
- *Morgantown Traffic Commission*
- *Visit Mountaineer Country*
- *West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection*



## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is federal legislation defining the responsibilities of and requirements for transportation providers to make transportation accessible to individuals with disabilities. Limited English proficiency (LEP) is a term used in the United States that refers to a person who is not fluent in the English language, often because it is not their native language. To have an opportunity to participate effectively in or benefit from any aid, service or benefit, people with LEP must communicate in their primary language.

Meetings and hearings, which are open for public participation, will be scheduled to allow the best opportunity for attendance by the general public and other entities whenever possible. The meeting locations will be convenient and ADA accessible. In addition to general meetings, events and activities, reasonable efforts will be made to reach those who are particularly affected. ADA and LEP assistance or alternative formats of this publication are available upon request. Please allow at least seven working days for preparation of the material.

## **Title VI & Environmental Justice**

MMMPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations prohibiting discrimination in all programs and activities. MMMPO assures that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259) be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. MMMPO further assures every effort will be made to ensure non-discrimination in all of its programs and activities, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. The MMMPO works to analyze the impacts of proposed projects in accordance with Executive Order 12898 to determine that low income and minority communities are not disproportionately impacted by any proposed action of the MPO.