

Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative Public Participation Plan FY 2016/17



DRAFT

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Public participation is an integral part of the transportation process which helps to ensure that decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit public needs and preferences. Early and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process. This process enables agencies to make better informed decisions through collaborative efforts and builds mutual understanding and trust between the agencies and the public they serve. Successful public participation is a continuous process, consisting of a series of activities and actions to both inform the public and stakeholders and to obtain input from them which influence decisions that affect their lives.

The public, in any one area or jurisdiction, may hold a diverse array of views and concerns on issues pertaining to their own specific transportation needs. Conducting meaningful public participation involves seeking public input at specific and key points in the decision-making process issues where such input has a real potential to help shape the final decision or set of actions.

Public participation activities provide more value when they are open, relevant, timely, and appropriate for the intended goal of the public involvement process. Providing a balanced approach with representation of all stakeholders and including measures to seek out and consider the needs of all stakeholders, especially those that are traditionally underserved by past and current transportation programs, facilities, or services.

Specific public involvement requirements detailed in FAST legislation include the following:

- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Employing visualization techniques to describe long range transportation plans and TIPs
- Making public information available in electronically accessible format and means (such as the World Wide Web)
- Requiring a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised
- Providing timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including, but not limited to, central city and other local jurisdiction concerns)
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes, and including written and oral comments received on the draft transportation plan or TIP as a result of the public involvement process, as an appendix of the plan or TIP
- Being consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which ensures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation; and moreover, seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including, but not limited to, low income and minority households
- Identifying actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

To meet these standards, this participation process includes outreach to solicit public opinion and transportation needs, especially of the underserved, through the following means:

- Continually adding new information to the webpage
- Ensuring that there is an opportunity for public comment at committee meetings
- Making information easily available to the public in a variety of ways (online, print, email, etc.)
- Making every attempt to schedule public meetings at convenient times and locations that are along transit routes and accessible to those with disabilities
- Allowing opportunities for public comment on key decisions
- Responding to comments in a timely and forthright manner
- Regularly reviewing the public involvement process itself

The emphasis of this process is on early involvement of the public in all processes in order to obtain input and insight before decisions are made.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Plans and policies need to be revisited and reviewed periodically to determine if the public's needs are being addressed in an effective and efficient manner. In order to ensure the effectiveness of this plan, the public must be kept informed of TTCI activities and must be given a meaningful opportunity to participate in the development and review of public policy through the use of presentations, press releases, mailings, public meetings, and other public outreach activities.

Public Participation Goal: The public involvement process for transportation planning shall provide complete information, timely public notice, and full access to information regarding key decisions; and shall support early and continuing involvement of the public.

Objective 1-Public Access to Information: The public shall be provided timely notice and appropriate access to information about transportation plans, issues, and processes through notices/information posted on networksnorthwest.org, emails to the interested citizen/agency list, press releases, as well as other tools and techniques when determined necessary.

The following policies will be adhered to in order to meet this objective:

- The TIP, the LRTP, the Public Participation Plan, the Unified Planning Work Program, the Title VI Plan, and other important documents shall be made available by TTCI Transportation staff in an electronic format for the public to review on the www.traversetransportation.org. For those without Internet service, libraries may offer free Internet access and should be contacted to determine if this service is available. All plans and documents will also be available at TTCI offices and copies of the Long Range Transportation Plan will be distributed to all public libraries in the MPO area and to all members of the TTCI Transportation Committees. Copies of other plans or projects will be distributed to the TTCI Transportation Committees and notice of release for those plans or projects will appear in area media. Any person or agency may also request a copy of any of TTCI's plans via telephone, fax, mail, or in person at any time. A small copying fee may apply.

- TTCI will employ visualization techniques to describe the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). These may include the following formats: project location maps, photographs, narrative project descriptions, charts, illustrations, graphics, diagrams, and sketches. Staff will continue to monitor and investigate developing technologies to improve the MPO's visualization process.
- Notice and agenda of all TTCI Transportation Committee meetings shall be available to the public seven days before they occur with the exception of emergency meetings when less time is allowed under the State of Michigan Open Meetings Act.
- Information pertaining to the adoption, revision, or amendment of all TTCI Transportation plans shall be available seven days prior to the date of the final action with the exception of emergency meetings when less time is allowed under the State of Michigan Open Meetings Act.
- All meetings and workshops of TTCI Transportation Committees will be open to the public except as allowed by the State of Michigan Open Meetings Act.

Objective 2-Public Access to Meetings and Facilities: Opportunities shall be created for the public to participate in the planning process for important issues, plans and projects under consideration by the TTCI Transportation Division, through public meetings, committee meetings, and other venues. TTCI will target groups who can expect to be directly affected by the outcome or those with special needs that may not be well served by the existing transportation system.

The following policies will be adhered to in order to meet this objective:

- TTCI Transportation Staff shall inform the public about issues and proposals under their consideration through public meetings, presentations, mailings, press releases, or other techniques during the development of each of the transportation plans, programs, or projects for which TTCI is responsible.
- TTCI Transportation Staff will continue to develop and maintain an Interested Citizens/Agencies List for the purpose of disseminating information about transportation plans, policies, and activities. The Interested Citizens/Agencies List, while all inclusive, will be especially geared to reach those low-income and minority populations that have traditionally been underserved in the transportation planning process.
- TTCI Transportation Staff shall review the Public Participation Plan prior to the start of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) development process. The Public Participation Plan will also be reviewed for required updates if needed before the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- TTCI Transportation Staff shall consult with stakeholders through correspondence that utilizes the continuously updated Interested Citizens/Agencies List.

Objective 3-Public Input: The solicitation, compilation, and consideration of public input shall be an integral part of the TTCI Transportation decision making process.

The following policies will be adhered to in order to meet this objective:

- TTCI Transportation Staff shall conduct public participation meetings prior to the adoption of the transportation plan or program for which it is responsible, including the Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, or substantive amendments thereof. Notices of such meetings will be distributed through the Interested Citizens/Agencies List as well as the area media. Meeting notices will also be posted on the www.traversetransportation.org.
- Those plans and programs that require extended review periods will allow for written comments to be submitted, including the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Public Participation Plan, and any other plan with extended review periods. All comments received as well as a response to each comment will appear as an appendix to the applicable plan or program. TTCI Transportation Staff will notify the public of extended review periods that are required by State or Federal guidelines and specifics regarding how to comment on those plans or programs.
- Those members of the public wishing to address comments to any TTCI Transportation Committee will be given the opportunity to comment at the regular public meetings of those committees.

Public Participation Strategies

Participation Plan

The development, adoption, and amendment of TTCI transportation plans and programs shall be subject to the Public Participation Plan. The Public Participation Plan will be monitored and reviewed before the start of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) development process as required by federal guidelines and before the start of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process if needed due to changes in federal law, deficiencies in the tools and techniques used to reach the public, or if it is determined that other changes need to be made to the document. (Please see Appendix A for information on the Public Participation Plan evaluation criteria.) It is hoped that the directives of this plan will result in well-attended public meetings, local news coverage of programs, and more public interest in transportation issues within the region.

Availability of Information

All events/opportunities will appear on TTCI's webpage and are sent to the Interested Citizens/Agencies List that TTCI maintains. Transportation plans and TIPs will also be included on the www.traversetransportation.org for public review and comment.

TTCI staff will make written materials provided to our committees available to the public upon request. Requests can be made by phone, fax, email, through Www.traversetransportation.org, or in person at the Networks Northwest office or at Committee meetings. When appropriate, a charge may be levied for copies of publications. The charge will cover the cost of producing and, if applicable, mailing the materials. All such materials are available for viewing at TTCI offices at no cost.

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

The transportation needs and opinions of those with disabilities will be sought out and the planning process will be made accessible to such persons as per the regulation provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Public meetings will be held in facilities that are on transit routes and that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Meeting Times

Every attempt will be made to host public meetings at convenient hours to maximize attendance.

There is also an opportunity for public comment at TTCI's Technical Committee, Executive Committee, and regular Board meetings. Committee meetings are held throughout varying times of the day, so those with atypical work schedules may find these specific meeting times more convenient. For a list of committee meeting times and locations, please see the *TTCI Meeting Schedule* on page 17.

Writing in Plain Language

Plain language is defined as "communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it."¹ Every effort will be made to use plain language in all MPO public involvement materials, including newspaper ads, flyers, and mailings, in accordance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010. This act requires that Federal agencies use "clear Government communication that the public can understand" and was signed on October 13, 2010. For more information on writing in plain language, please visit www.plainlanguage.gov.

Public Comments

General Comments: Members of the public are welcome to submit comments on specific issues or to contact staff with questions at any time. A staff directory with emails and direct phone numbers is included on www.traversetransportation.org for the public's convenience, or staff can be reached through TTCI's main line at (231) 929- 5000. TTCI's Technical Committee, Executive Committee, and regular Board meetings are also open to the public and include an opportunity for public comment on the agenda. Meeting agendas are posted on the Www.traversetransportation.org seven days before a scheduled meeting.

Ways to Submit Comments: During public comment periods, staff ensures that comment forms are available to the public in a variety of ways. Comments can be submitted by:

- Downloading a comment form from www.traversetransportation.org and sending it to TTCI by mail or email
- Completing an online submittal form on www.traversetransportation.org
- Emailing comments to a TTCI staff member
- Phoning in comments to a TTCI staff member
- Filling out a comment form (available in Appendix B) in person at TTCI or at a public meeting

Note: Comment forms are for the public's convenience only, and comments don't need to be written on an official comment form to be considered.

Response to Comments: TTCI will summarize and respond to public comments on the LRTP, the Public Participation Plan, the TIP, on amendments to the TIP, on proposed major area-wide investment studies, and on key decisions. We will also forward comments about specific projects to the responsible entities. Comments and responses will be kept on file, be available for public review, and will be made part of the plan, program, or other document as adopted. Summaries of comments and responses will also be given to the Technical and Executive Committees as well as the jurisdiction(s) directly responsible for the project for review. Comments will be responded to before decisions are made or plans or programs are adopted. Responses will be made in a timely manner so that they can be considered during the next phase of the plan or program development.

Public Involvement in Planning Projects That Are Not in the TIP

As particular planning or programming projects arise, the performing entity will develop a specific participation process that is appropriate for the project. Examples of such projects are: The Long Range Transportation Plan, substantial amendments to that plan, corridor studies, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and major long range transportation investment studies. The participation process for planning or programming projects will follow the TIP or LRTP amendment procedures outlined in this document and include the following specific measures as well as other actions: (1) a formal public meeting will be held well in advance of the adoption of transportation plans and before the adoption of the TIP, (2) a reasonable period of time will be set aside before the adoption of a plan or the TIP during which the public may comment verbally at the public meeting or in writing to the TTCI offices.

Continual Evaluation of Tools and Techniques

The MPO uses a variety of tools and techniques in order to involve the public in the transportation planning process. TTCI staff believes the tools and techniques reflected in this document allow MPO staff to reach the public most effectively at the present time. However, these tools and techniques will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that they continue to be relevant and effective in reaching the public. (Please see Appendix A for information on the Public Participation Plan evaluation criteria.) If staff determines that a specific tool or technique is no longer effective, staff will discontinue its use and consider replacing it with a different tool or technique. Staff will also continue to monitor technology advancements as well as new and emerging social media outlets that have the potential to be useful in the public involvement process. If a new tool or technique is discovered or becomes available, staff may use it in addition to the tools and techniques listed in this document.

Public Participation Summary Reports

After the completion of all TIPs, LRTPs, and Public Participation Plans, staff will generate a report that summarizes the overall number of public comments received, the estimated number of people reached throughout the public participation process, and the various tools that were utilized. This report will be included as an Appendix of the document.

Public Participation Procedures for Major Documents

TTCI produces three major documents that require public involvement. These documents include the Public Participation Plan (PPP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Public involvement for the Public Participation Plan, TIP, and LRTP document will be continual throughout the plan development processes. Updates will be posted on www.traversetransportation.org before Committee meetings, public meetings, and before public comment periods begin, and will be given verbally during regular Board meetings periodically as well. However, there are several milestone points for each document when it will engage the public through additional means in order to inform them of opportunities to become involved in the development process, which may include invitations to public meetings, requests for public comment, or other information. These milestones are outlined in the tables on the following pages, along with the procedures for amending the TIP and LRTP. *Please note: In years when the TIP and LRTP are developed simultaneously, public participation activities for both documents may be combined at staff's discretion in order to maximize efficiency and resources and reduce confusion. Please also note: TTCI staff may choose to add additional tools and techniques not specified at their discretion at any point during the TIP development process to enhance public outreach.*

Public Participation Plan

The Public Participation Plan describes the ways in which TTCI will engage the public in the transportation planning process. The table below describes the public participation procedure for developing the PPP.

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment
1. Draft Public Participation Plan developed and presented to the Technical and Policy Committees	After the draft Public Participation Plan has been developed and presented to the Board, TTCI will bring it to the public for comment. TTCI staff will notify the public of this opportunity by the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notice on webpage• Email sent to interested citizen/agency list• Advertisement in the Record Eagle	At least 1 day before the public comment period begins	45 days; the public comment period will begin after the draft document is presented to the Board and will end at least one week before the final document is approved by the Board (approximately two months after the comment period begins)
2. Public Participation Plan approval	After all comments have been considered and the 45-day public comment period has concluded, the document will be brought to the Board for approval. The public will have an additional opportunity to comment on the document at the Board meeting, and will be notified of this meeting by the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notice on webpage	7 days prior to the first TIP programming meeting	N/A; notification only

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the list of road, transit and non-motorized projects that communities and agencies plan to implement over a four-year period within TTCI's MPO area. (Please see Appendix C for a map of TTCI's MPO area.) The table below describes the public participation procedure for the development of the TIP document, and the following table describes the public participation procedures for amendments and modifications to the document once it's developed.

Milestone	Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment
1. Kickoff to TIP Development	Before the TIP development process begins, TTCI staff will notify the public in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on webpage • Email sent to Interested Citizen/Agency List • Advertisement in Record Eagle 	7 days prior to the first TIP programming meeting	N/A; notification only
2. Draft project lists, environmental justice, and air quality results (if applicable) completed and available for public comment	<i>Once draft project lists have been developed, environmental justice has been completed, and an air quality analysis has been performed, TTCI staff will bring these items to the public for comment. A public meeting will also be held. The public will be notified of the meeting and the comment period in the following ways:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on webpage • Email sent to Interested Citizen/Agency List and to environmental justice mailing list • Advertisement in Record Eagle 	7 days prior to the public meeting and before the 1st day of the public comment period	14 days
3. Adoption of draft document	<i>Once the draft TIP document is complete, Staff will bring it to the Technical and Policy Committees and TTCI board for approval. Public comment opportunities will be available at all three committee meetings. The public will be notified of this public comment opportunity in the following ways:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on webpage • Everyone who submitted a comment will be contacted individually 	6 days prior to Technical Committee meeting	A minimum of 14 days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Board meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the meetings.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments

It is frequently necessary to amend the TIP because of changes to projects within the document. Outlined below is the public involvement procedure for TIP amendments. For additional information about the process that is followed for TIP amendments and administrative modifications, please see the matrices in Appendix D.

Description of TIP Amendment	Public Participation Procedure
1. Add new project (including Safety, Transportation Enhancement, TAP, and CMAQ projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web posting • Committee meeting
2. Delete project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web posting • Committee meeting
3. Federal aid cost increase over 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meeting
4. Major* scope / design change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meeting
5. Move illustrative list project into the TIP (new project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meeting
6. Change non-Federal aid funded project to Federally funded project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee meeting
7. New discretionary projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web posting

Please see the Public Participation Timeline Summary on page 18 for information on the length of the public comment period and prior public notice for TIP amendments.

Public involvement is not necessary for TIP administrative modifications, which include the following:

- Additional lanes or non-motorized, up to one mile
- Increase in Federal aid cost more than 10% and less than or equal to 20%
- Increase in Federal aid cost up to 10% (per Local Agency Programs (LAP) Policy)
- Decrease in Federal aid project cost
- Change in non-Federal aid project cost
- Change in Federal funding category (applies to MDOT only)
- Change in non-Federal funding category
- Change in Federal aid funding level not affecting other projects (i.e., MDOT, ITP, TE,)
- Bridge, Safety, HPP (earmarks), or other discretionary sources)
- Adding or changing job numbers within approved funding and scope limits
- Changing an advance construction project to Federal aid
- Changing a Federal aid project to advance construction
- Change of project year within the 4-year TIP
- Listing error corrections
- Minor** scope changes (not regionally significant as defined)

Notes:

- *Major* = 1) change in lane configuration, 2) change affecting road capacity, 3) change affecting air quality (regionally significant)*
- *Minor** = May include at staff's discretion: 1) lane extensions up to ¼ mile, 2) sidewalks & NM up to ¼ mile, 3) ADA enhancements, 4) signalization and/or signs, 5) utility issues, 6) pavement type, 7) phase changes, 8) additional spaces in parkand-ride lots, 9) other*

Long Range Transportation Plan

The purpose of the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is to ensure that transportation investments in TTCI's MPO area enhance the movement of people and freight efficiently, effectively, and safely. (Please see Appendix C for a map of TTCI's MPO area.) The LRTP has a 20-year horizon. Outlined below is the public participation procedure for LRTP development, and following is a table that addresses the public participation procedure for LRTP amendments.

Milestone	Public Participation Procedure	Public Notification Date	Length of Public Comment Period
1. Kickoff to LRTP Development	<p><i>Once the LRTP development process begins, TTCI staff will engage the public in the following ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice and detailed LRTP information added to webpage • Email sent to interested citizen/agency list • Advertisement in Record Eagle • Transportation issues survey developed and circulated • Press release submitted to TTCI's media contact list and posted online 	N / A	N/A; Public involvement will be continuous throughout the LRTP development process. Updates will be posted regularly on www.traversetransportation.org and given at committee meetings.
2. Pre-Programming Collaboration	<p><i>TTCI staff will invite the public to review and comment on identified modal needs. The public will be notified of this opportunity in the following ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on webpage • Email sent to interested citizen/agency list • Press release 	Up to 7 days prior to the start of the public comment period	14 days
3. Draft LRTP, Environmental justice, and air quality results (if applicable) Completed and available for public comment	<p><i>Once the draft LRTP document, environmental justice, and corresponding air quality analysis are complete, TTCI staff will bring the document to the public for comment. A public meeting will also be held to discuss these items. The public will be notified of the meeting and the comment period in the following ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on webpage • Email sent to interested citizen/agency list • Advertisement in Record Eagle that notifies the public of the public comment period and the public meeting • Copies of the draft LRTP distributed to all jurisdictions within the MPO area. <p><i>At this point, staff will also contact state regulatory agencies (i.e., MDNR and MDEQ) to consult with them on the draft project list and potential impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.</i></p>	Up to 7 days prior to the start of the public comment period	14 days

4. Adoption of draft document	<p><i>Once the draft LRTP document is complete, Staff will bring it to the Technical Committee and TTCI board for approval. Public comment opportunities will be available at all three committee meetings. The public will be notified of this public comment opportunity in the following ways:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice on webpage • Everyone who submitted a comment will be contacted individually 	6 days prior to the scheduled Tech meeting	A minimum of 14 days, beginning on the date of the Technical Committee meeting and ending at the Board meeting. The comment period length will vary depending on the amount of time between the meetings.
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Long Range Transportation Plan Amendments

It is occasionally necessary to amend the LRTP because of changes to projects listed within the document. Outlined below is the public involvement procedure for LRTP revisions. For additional information about the process that is followed for LRTP amendments and administrative modifications, please see the matrix in Appendix E.

Description of LRTP Amendment	Public Participation Procedure
1. Add/delete regionally significant* project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech Committee & Board meeting • Web posting
2. Major ** scope/design change for regionally significant project(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech Committee & Board meeting • Web posting
3. Move regionally significant illustrative list project into the LRTP (new project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech Committee & Board meeting • Web posting
4. Change in air quality conformity model year grouping for regionally significant project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech Committee & Board meeting • Web posting

Public involvement is not necessary for LRTP administrative modifications, which include the following:

- Additional lanes or non-motorized facilities, up to one mile
- Increase in Federal aid cost up to 20%
- Decrease in Federal aid project cost
- Change in non-Federal aid project cost
- Change in Federal or non-Federal funding category
- Listing error corrections or other non-regionally significant project changes
- Minor** scope changes (not regionally significant as defined)
- Update to the first four years of the LRTP to correspond to the most current TIP

Notes:

- **Regionally Significant = Adding or reducing through capacity over 1 mile; adding new federal-aid road, transit, non-motorized, or rail infrastructure.*
- *Major** = 1) change in lane configuration, 2) change affecting road capacity, 3) change affecting air quality (regionally significant).*
- *Minor*** = May include at staff's discretion: 1) lane extensions up to 1/4 mile, 2) sidewalks & NM up to 1/4 mile, 3) ADA enhancements, 4) signalization and/or signs, 5) utility issues, 6) pavement type, 7) phase changes, 8) additional spaces in parkand-ride lots, 9) other.*

Public Participation Timeline Summary

Draft Document/Plan Review	Prior Notice to Public (minimum)	Length of Public Comment Period (minimum)
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	At least 1 day before the public comment period begins	14 days
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)		
Public Participation Plan		45 days

Plan (Amendments)	Prior Notice to Public (minimum)	Length of Public Comment Period (minimum)
Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	6 days	
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)		

Other	Prior Notice to Public (minimum)	Length of Public Comment Period (minimum)
Major Corridor Studies	6 days	
Major Transportation Investment Studies	6 days	
Non-Motorized Plan	The non-motorized plan goes through public involvement when the LRTP is developed; a separate public involvement process is not necessary.	
Public Meetings	7 days	
Unified Planning Work Program	6 days	

Public Participation Tools and Techniques

The MPO strives to create a Public Participation Process that encourages early and continuous involvement of citizens, jurisdictions, communities and others interested in the planning process and the decisions and actions of the TTCI Transportation Committees. TTCI will use a variety of tools and techniques to encourage communication with the public in order to achieve this goal. These tools and techniques are described below, along with their primary objectives.

Comment Forms

During every public comment period, staff ensures that comment forms are available to the public in a variety of ways. These comment forms include a large area for writing comments on a specific project as well as the name and contact information from the respondent. If the respondent chooses, they can also sign up to be added to TTCI's Interested Citizen/Agency Mailing List by checking a box on the form. (See "Public Comments" section on pg. 9 for more information on submitting comments.)

Primary Objectives—Recording the views and opinions of the public during the TIP and LRTP development process and signing up for the Interested Citizen/Agency List.

Committee Meetings

The MPO has two standing Committees: the Technical Committee and TTCI Board. The agendas for both meetings are posted online at least five days before the scheduled meeting. Either meeting include an opportunity for the public to comment on the items listed on the agenda. Since issues frequently pass from the Technical Committee to the Board, there will often be two opportunities to comment on issues. The TTCI Board meeting agendas also always include an opportunity for public comment, and this meeting is recorded and archived with Networks Northwest staff.

The Technical Committee, Executive Committee, and TTCI Board meeting schedule is as follows:

- Technical Committee—3rd Thursday every other month at 1:30 pm, Garfield Township Hall (3848 Veterans Dr.)
- Executive Committee—1st Wednesday every other month at 3:00 pm at the Networks Northwest offices (600 E. Front St.)
- TTCI Board—3rd Tuesday every other month at 10:00 am, NW Michigan Works! (1209 S. Garfield)

A complete schedule of MPO meetings is posted on TTCI's webpage. Meeting times and locations occasionally change, so it is important to call or view the meeting agendas from the webpage before attending.

Primary Objectives – Allowing an in-person opportunity for the public to comment on TIP or LRTP amendments, the documents themselves, or anything else on the meeting agenda.

Databases

TTCI staff maintains a master database for the organization as a whole, which includes committee membership lists, local government contacts, elected officials, as well as the Interested Citizen/Agency List, a composite of citizens or businesses that have a working relationship with TTCI or are interested in the transportation planning process.

Primary Objectives – Keeping the organization's contacts organized and up-to-date and maintaining accurate records of committee membership.

Direct Mailings

The MPO may decide to use a direct mailing to reach a targeted group of individuals to inform them about an upcoming meeting, a public involvement opportunity, a construction project in their area, or another issue of interest to them. Mailings will generally be postcards, but may also be letters or flyers.

Primary Objectives—Reaching the public as part of the environmental justice (EJ) process, sending information to the Interested Citizen/Agency List, and whenever else a targeted group of individuals needs to be reached.

Document Copies

Hard copies of all of TTCI's work products, including the LRTP, the TIP, the UPWP, and the Non-Motorized Plan, will be available at Networks Northwest office. Draft copies of the LRTP will also be distributed to all jurisdictions/members within the MPO area before the document is approved.

Primary Objectives—Providing those who don't have access to a computer or who lack the technical skills to find the information online the opportunity to view important MPO work products.

Flyers

Flyers are developed in order to advertise public meetings, public comment opportunities, or other important events. They may include information such as the time, date, and location of a public meeting; contact information; instructions on commenting on draft documents or project lists; and deadlines for commenting. To view the list of locations that may post flyers, please see the "List of Libraries and Jurisdictions in the MPO Area" listed in Appendix D.

Primary Objectives—Advertising public meetings, public comment opportunities, and other important events.

Interested Citizen/Agency List

This list is a composite of private citizens who have asked to receive transportation-related information, as well as a variety of agencies (including businesses and governmental entities) that have expressed an interest in or are impacted by transportation issues, such as the following:

- Members of the Technical Committee and TTCI Board
- Traffic agencies
- Private providers of transportation services
- Ridesharing agencies
- Parking agencies
- Transportation safety agencies
- Traffic enforcement agencies
- Airport and port authorities
- Freight companies
- Railroad companies
- TART

- Environmental organizations
- Neighborhood associations
- Interested citizens
- Organizations representing the interests of:
 - The elderly
 - Minorities
 - Transportation agency employees
 - Users of various modes of transportation
 - People with disabilities
 - Economically disadvantaged
 - Native American tribes
 - Others underserved by the transportation system

Individuals and agencies can sign up to be included on this list by visiting the Www.traversetransportation.org or by phone, email, fax, or mail, and asking to be included on the list.

Primary Objectives—Providing this group information about upcoming public meetings, public comment periods, and other public involvement opportunities through direct mailings.

Newspaper Ads

The MPO uses newspaper ads on a case-by-case basis to alert the public to upcoming public involvement opportunities. These ads may appear in the Traverse City Record Eagle

Primary Objectives – Notifying the public about upcoming public meetings or other opportunities for public involvement.

Organizational Logos

The MPO has two logos—one for TTCI and one for Networks Northwest. The MPO logo appears on all official correspondence, including direct mailings, and on all published advertisements, including newspaper ads and flyers.

Primary Objectives – Maintaining uniformity of the MPO’s publications, making its products and correspondence official, and helping the public to identify plans, promotional items, and advertisements of the MPO.

Press Releases

Press releases are generally used on a case-by-case basis and sent to TTCI’s media list, which includes TV, news, press, and radio representatives, and are used to alert the media of noteworthy news items from the MPO and its committees.

Primary Objectives—Informing the public about major initiatives, program changes, or other important news; or alerting the media about the LRTP kickoff and pre-programming collaboration.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are generally informal gatherings that give the public a chance to interact with staff and discuss questions or concerns about projects, plans, etc. that are of interest or importance to them. These meetings may include a short staff presentation as well as a variety of visuals, such as maps, brochures, or other important materials, for the public’s convenience. The public is also encouraged to fill out a comment form at the meeting.

Records of public meeting attendance and Title VI information are kept on file and included in the appendices of the TIP and LRTP.

Primary Objectives – Encouraging public participation during the development of the TIP and LRTP and allowing the public an opportunity to meet with staff.

Surveys

Surveys may be conducted on an as-needed basis during the development of the LRTP to gain insight into important issues within the area. Individuals can contact staff by mail, email, fax, phone, through Completing an online submittal form on www.traversetransportation.org, or stop by TTCI's office in person to receive a copy of the survey.

Primary Objectives— Gauging the public's interest in investment priorities.

Visual Aids

As part of policy 1.2, attempts will be made to use visualization techniques to describe long range transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). These may include maps, photographs, charts, illustrations, graphics, diagrams, and sketches. Staff continues to monitor and investigate developing technologies to improve the MPO's visualization process.

Primary Objectives – Engaging the public during public meetings and helping to increase their understanding of projects, project locations, etc.

Webpage

[TTCI's webpage](#) is an inclusive resource for transportation planning information. The webpage includes basic information such as meeting schedules, committee membership, and contact information, as well as work products, such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Long Range Transportation Program (LRTP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Information about additional transportation programs and activities is also available. During public comment periods, an electronic comment form is added to the site that allows the public to submit comments online, and a copy of the form is also made available for downloading. The site is maintained by a webmaster, consistently reviewed for accuracy, and new information is added to it continuously.

Primary Objectives – Alerting the public to the latest developments in the TIP or LRTP development process, as well as TIP or LRTP amendments and public comment opportunities, facilitating the submission of public comments during public comment periods, or providing updates about other plans, programs, opportunities, or transportation developments.

Optional Public Participation Tools and Techniques

The MPO primarily relies on the tools and techniques above for reaching the public, but occasionally, the MPO may decide to employ additional tools and techniques to augment its public involvement process in order to increase the public's participation in transportation planning. This may occur because a primary tool or technique is determined to no longer be effective during the PPP review process, because the primary tools and techniques need to be enhanced with additional activities in order to better engage the public, because an optional public participation tool or technique becomes more popular with the public, or because staff determines it is necessary to use an optional tool or technique for another reason altogether. Examples of optional tools and techniques are outlined on the following pages.

Appendix A: Guide to Evaluating the TTCI Public Participation Plan

Introduction

TTCI continually strives to improve its public involvement and participation process. To this end, TTCI staff has developed the Public Participation Plan (PPP), which is a guideline for public participation activities conducted by Networks Northwest. The PPP contains the goals, objectives, and policies of the MPO for actively engaging the public. The Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Michigan Department of Transportation require the MPO to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities. Therefore, Networks Northwest staff reviews and updates the PPP prior to the start of the Long Range Transportation Plan development process and before the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) if needed. By monitoring public participation practices, it is possible to assure that public participation tools and techniques remain effective. If certain tools or techniques are determined to be ineffective during the review process, it is possible to improve them, discontinue their use, or replace them with new activities. This guide outlines the steps to be taken to evaluate the public involvement tools and techniques described in the PPP, identifies performance measures to quantify success rates, suggests strategies to improve the MPO's public participation process, and provides an avenue through which TTCI can evaluate its public involvement goals and objectives. This guide, along with the PPP itself, is a "living document" that will be consistently reviewed to ensure that appropriate changes are being implemented by the MPO.

Evaluation Methods and Performance Goals

In order to determine the effectiveness of public involvement tools and techniques, they must be evaluated and compared to established performance goals. The two typical methods for evaluating the effectiveness of public involvement tools are surveys and quantitative statistical analysis. Surveys typically consist of short, specific questions regarding public involvement tools. They may be conducted in person, by phone, mail, email, or on the internet. Surveys conducted in person are considered highly effective and generally have the best response rates. Mail, email, or online surveys are useful for providing a written record of respondents' answers. Each surveying method has strengths and weakness, and the survey format affects the type of results and types of people responding. In addition to these surveys, we also encourage you to submit comments at any time about the public participation processes listed in this document. Comments can be submitted to TTCI Staff by mail, email, fax, or phone.

Statistics can be a great indicator of whether or not tools used for public involvement are reaching their intended audience and which tools have the strongest response rate. For example, the number of people attending a meeting can be compared to the number of people notified of the meeting. This type of evaluation can indicate the effectiveness of any particular involvement strategy.

The following table briefly describes the evaluation methods that TTCI may use to evaluate each of the public participation tools that TTCI currently uses during the PPP review, which will occur after the LRTP and TIP development processes have concluded. For each public participation tool, performance goals and methods for meeting those goals are suggested. Below the tools and techniques that are currently employed is a list of public participation tools that TTCI may use occasionally or may substitute as necessary to replace or augment a currently used tool or technique.

Public Participation Tool Evaluation Table

Public Participation Tools	Evaluation Criteria	Suggested Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Comment Forms:	Calls, emails, etc; Number of responses	20% of meeting attendees filled out a form -OR- 1% of the annual webpage visitors emailed a comment	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving comments
Direct Mailings (environmental justice)	Calls, emails, etc; number of persons reached	Minimum of 15% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they received the mailing	Use the most up-to-date geographic address data available to direct EJ mailings to property owners/renters adjacent to proposed project locations
Document copies	Number of signatures on the document sign-out sheet	A minimum of one signature per sign-out sheet at every location where a document copy is left for review.	Work with TTCI members and jurisdictions within the MPO area to inform them about the document and to advertise that it's available for review.
Interested Citizens/Agencies mailing list	Number of returned mailing items	Maximum of 2% return rate per mailing	Make immediate corrections when items are returned
Newspaper Advertisements	Calls, emails, etc; number of persons the publication reached	Minimum of 10% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw the ad; ad formats may be modified based on feedback received	Improve the size, layout, or placement of the ad to increase visibility
Organizational Logo	Calls, emails, etc	Recognition of the logo	The TTCI logo should be used on all MPO products and publications and on materials for all MPO sponsored activities
Press releases	Calls, emails, etc	No standard; format may be modified based on feedback received	Encourage publication of press releases by keeping the media informed
Public meetings	Calls, emails, etc; attendance	Level of attendance	Schedule meetings at convenient times and locations; use other public participation tools to increase awareness of hearings
Surveys	Calls, emails, etc; Number of responses	25% of contact persons participated in the survey – OR- 20% of mail recipients returned the survey	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving feedback; offer incentives for returning surveys
Networks Northwest webpage	Number of hits	Minimum of 50 hits/month, 5% increase in hits/year	Provide all plans and documents on the webpage for public review; use other public participation tools to advertise the webpage

Optional Public Participation Tools	Evaluation Criteria	Suggested Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Social Media	Calls, emails, etc; Number of "friends" Or "followers"	N/A; participants select TTCI themselves	Provide information, announcements, access to surveys, and meeting information; maintain and monitor account weekly
MPO Newsletter/Email Newsletter	Calls, emails, etc; Number of returns	N/A; return rate is addressed under interested Citizens/Agencies List	Continue items that receive favorable comments and correct or improve items that receive negative comments
Other Newsletters	Calls, emails, etc; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/survey respondents were reached	Provide information to publishers of these newsletters in a timely fashion; investigate all possible newsletters that may reach an affected area
Small Group Meetings	Calls, emails, etc; Met the expectations of the group	N/A; these meetings are held at the request of the affected groups or interested parties	MPO staff should be available in a timely manner to hold small group meetings regarding any MPO activity or issue; the meeting should be formatted to provide specific information requested by the group and should highlight issues that are of interest to the group
Subject/Project Specific Workshops	Calls, emails, etc; attendance	Minimum attendance as it relates to workshop cost achieved	Schedule at convenient times and locations; hold multiple workshops when possible; use other participation tools to advertise increase awareness
Email Announcements	Calls, emails, etc; Number of persons reached	Minimum of 5% of meeting attendees/survey respondents indicated that they saw the email announcement	Increase email list by advertising the availability of email announcements using other public participation tools

Improvement Strategies

TTCI continues to strive for improved public participation in the transportation planning process. With review and evaluation, TTCI hopes to refine public participation strategy improvements to increase public awareness and to improve the quality and quantity of information provided to the public. Contributions and input from the citizens of Grand Traverse County and Southeastern Leelanau County are crucial for responsible planning decisions, and therefore it is critical for TTCI to seek the most effective public input methodologies.

Appendix B: Public Comment Form



Project: _____

Comments: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

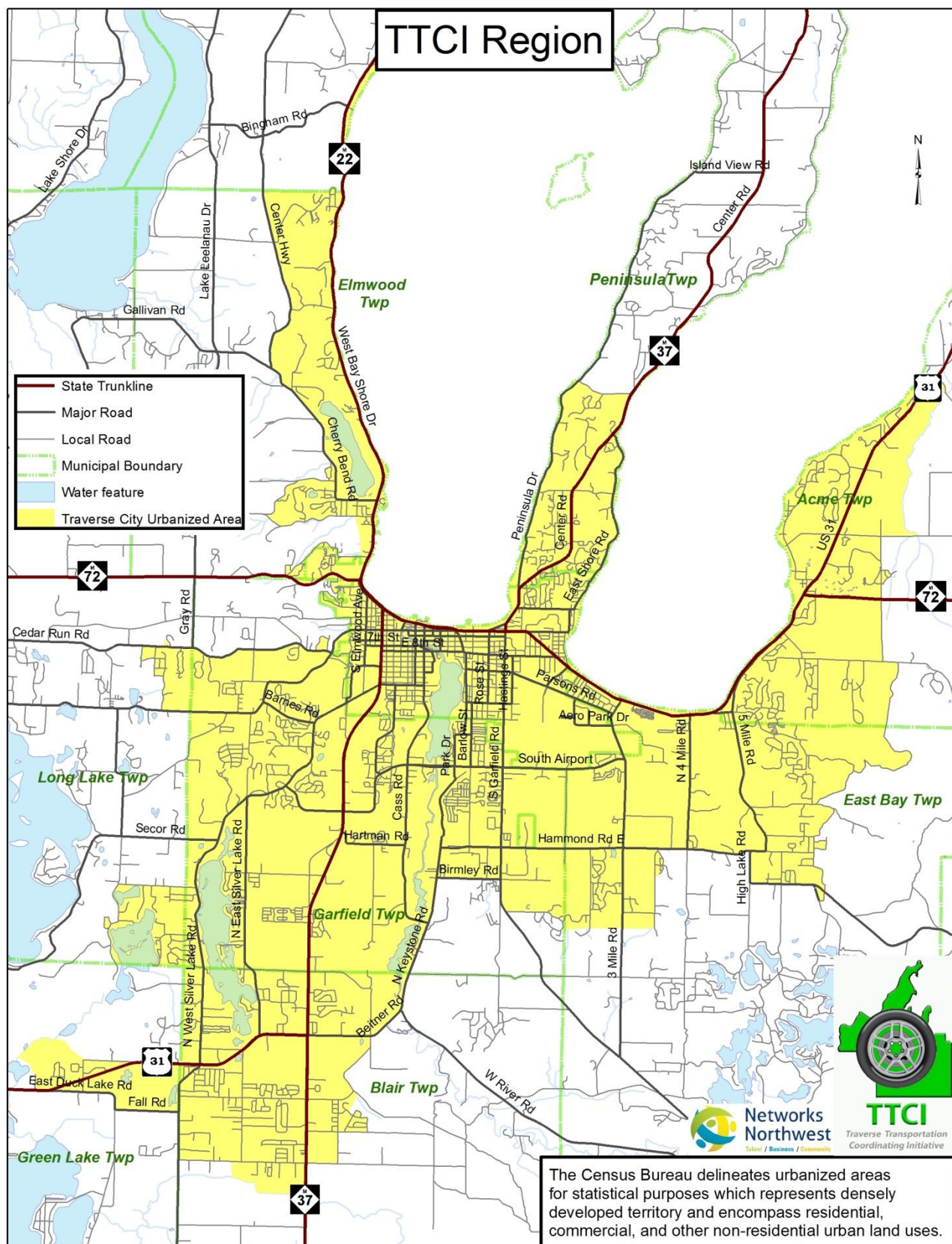
Email _____

Would you like to be added to our mailing list?

Yes/No (circle one)

TTCI is a program of Networks Northwest
600 E Front Street, Suite 104, PO Box 506
Traverse City MI 49685-0506
(231) 929-5000 FAX (231) 929-5012

Appendix C: Map of TTCI MPO area



Appendix D: Revisions Matrix

TIP Revisions		Staff Recommendation	Committee Chair Approval	Technical Committee Review & Recommendation	Policy Committee Approval	MDOT/FHWA/FTA Approval	Public Participation Procedure
TIP Amendment	Add New Project (including Safety, Transportation Enhancement, TAP, and CMAQ projects)	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Delete Project	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Federal-aid cost increase over 20%	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Major* scope/design change	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Move Illustrative List Project into the TIP (new project)***	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Change non-federal aid funded project to federally funded project	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	New Discretionary Projects	x	x (option)			x	Web posting
TIP Administrative Modification	Additional lanes or non-motorized facilities, up to one mile	x	x (option)	x	x		Not required
Financial constraint must be maintained at all times	Increase in Federal aid cost more than 10% and less than or equal to 20%	x	x (option)	x	x		Not required
	Increase in Federal aid cost up to 10% (per LAP Policy)	x					Not required
Changes to existing projects	Decrease in Federal aid project cost	x					Not required
Changes will be reflected in the next e-STIP filing	Change in Non-Federal aid project cost	x					Not required
	Change in Federal funding category (applies to MDOT only)	x					Not required
	Change in Non-Federal funding category	x					Not required
	Change in Federal-aid funding level not affecting other projects (ex. MDOT, ITP, TE, Bridge, Safety, HPP (earmarks), or other discretionary sources)	x					Not required
	Adding or changing job numbers within approved funding and scope limits	x					Not required
	Changing an advance construction project to Federal-aid	x	x (option)	x	x		Not required
	Changing a Federal-aid project to advance construction	x	x (option)	x	x		Not required
	Change of project year within the 4-year TIP	x	x (option)	x	x		Not required
	Listing error corrections	x					Not required
	Minor** scope changes (not regionally significant as defined)	x					Not required
Financial constraint must be maintained at all times.							
Any new project or major scope change shall be consistent with the MTP.							
Regionally significant for air quality = Adding or reducing through capacity over 1 mile; adding new Federal aid road, transit, non-motorized, or rail infrastructure.							
Major* = 1) change in lane configuration, 2) change affecting road capacity, 3) change affecting air quality (regionally significant)							
Minor** = May include at staff's discretion: 1) lane extensions up to 1/4 mile, 2) sidewalks & NM up to 1/4 mile, 3) ADA enhancements, 4) Signalization and/or signs, 5) Utility issues, 6) pavement type, 7) Phase changes, 8) additional spaces in park-and-ride lots, 9)Other							
*** Any project from the TIP Illustrative Project list, which has previously been processed for public involvement with the TIP, is not required to have additional public involvement (Consultation, EJ and EA) prior to completing the TIP amendment process.							

MTP Revisions		Staff Recommendation	Committee Chair Approval	Technical Committee Review & Recommendation	Policy Committee Approval	MDOT/FHWA/FTA Approval	Public Participation Procedure
MTP Amendment	Add/Delete Regionally Significant Project	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Major* scope/design change for regionally significant project(s)	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Move Regionally Significant Illustrative List Project into the MTP (new project)	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
	Change in air quality conformity model year grouping for regionally significant project	x	x (option)	x	x	x	Committee meeting, Web posting
MTP Administrative Modification	Additional lanes or non-motorized facilities, up to one mile	x	x (option)	x	x		Not required
Financial constraint must be maintained at all times	Increase in Federal aid cost up to 20%	x	x (option)	x	x		Not required
	Decrease in Federal aid project cost	x					Not required
Changes to existing projects	Change in Non-Federal aid project cost	x					Not required
MTP modifications will be made during the next MTP amendment or plan update	Change in Federal or Non-Federal funding category	x					Not required
	Listing error corrections or other non-regionally significant project changes	x					Not required
	Minor** scope changes (not regionally significant as defined)	x					Not required
	Update to the first four-years of the MTP to correspond to the most current TIP	x					Not required
Financial constraint must be maintained at all times.							
Any new project or major scope change shall be consistent with the MTP.							
Regionally Significant = Adding or reducing through capacity over 1 mile, Adding new federal-aid road, transit, non-motorized, or rail infrastructure.							
Major* = 1) change in lane configuration, 2) change affecting road capacity, 3) change affecting air quality (regionally significant)							
Minor** = May include at staff's discretion: 1) lane extensions up to 1/4 mile, 2) sidewalks & NM up to 1/4 mile, 3) ADA enhancements, 4) Signalization and/or signs, 5) Utility issues, 6) pavement type, 7) Phase changes, 8) additional spaces in park-and-ride lots, 9)Other							

Appendix E: Public Participation Summary Report

Public Outreach Strategy and Tools Used

The public comment period for the Public Participation Plan ran from Sunday, March 27, 2016, through Tuesday, May 10, 2016, for a total of 45 days. Before the comment period began, staff placed a notice on traversetransportation.org notifying the public that Networks Northwest is requesting comment/input for a Public Participation Plan (PPP) and that the draft document was available for public comment through Tuesday, May 10. Staff explained that the document details the specific times and ways that Networks Northwest engages the public during the transportation planning process. A link to the document was also included on the notice, as well as instructions for submitting comments, which were to be directed to Michael Woods and sent by email, phone, fax, or mail. Interested parties could also fill out an online comment form.

Advertisements with similar information were placed in the Record Eagle on Saturday, March 26, 2016. Physical copies of the Draft PPP were distributed to the township offices of Elmwood, Garfield, East Bay and Acme; the City of Traverse City and Grand Traverse County offices; Grand Traverse and Leelanau County Road Commission offices; and the Traverse Area District Library in Traverse City. After the 45-day public comment period concluded, the public was given a final opportunity to comment on the document at the Policy Committee meeting on Tuesday, May 17, at 10:00 am at the Networks Northwest offices. The public was notified of this opportunity through a notice on traversetransportation.org

Estimated Number of People Reached

The ad in the Record Eagle reached an estimated 30,000. An email sent to all public officials in municipalities within the urbanized area reached approximately 1,000 people.

Comments Received

Staff did not receive any comments during the 45-day public comment period and no additional comments were received at the Policy Committee meeting on Tuesday, May 17.