

Baton Rouge Area Capital Region Planning Commission

Public Participation Plan

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Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC)

(Equal Employment Opportunity Employer)



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Executive Summary

This summary of the Capital Region Planning Commission's (CRPC) Public Participation Plan (PPP) is provided as a reference for specific public participation procedures which are further described in the body of the Plan.

Section 1. Introduction

The introduction provides an overview of the CRPC, its major products, and its expectations for public participation in the transportation planning process.

Highlights

CRPC is responsible for three major planning products for the five-parish plus planning area: the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Unified Planning Work Program. In compliance with current federal transportation legislation (SAFETEA-LU), CRPC has developed this Public Participation Plan to provide a framework for the public participation process which will be applied to the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan (Metropolitan Transportation Plan), the Transit Long Range Plan, the Strategic Plan for Transit, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Related Air Quality Plans and Conformity Analysis, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects.

Section 2. Public Participation Techniques

This section provides an overview of various techniques and methods that may be used by CRPC to carry out its public participation process.

Highlights

CRPC will use a variety of techniques including publication of draft plans and processes through print, public meetings, and its website. CRPC will seek public input through its formal Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings and Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) Meetings, other formal local government commission meetings, special public meetings and workshops, and comment cards.

Section 3. Traditionally Underserved Populations

This section presents an overview of how CRPC will ensure that its public participation process is compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Environmental Justice, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Highlights

CRPC is dedicated to identifying traditionally underserved populations (e.g., low-income, minority, non or limited English proficiency, transportation disadvantaged populations, etc.) CRPC will ensure that special populations are well represented in the public participation process and that plans and processes are communicated using audience appropriate methods.

Section 4. Public Outreach Activities

This section presents an overview of how CRPC will consult with key stakeholders in the development and adoption of major MPO products.

Highlights

CRPC will consult with interested parties in the development and adoption of the MTP, TIP, and PPP by requesting that those individuals or agencies indicate their interest in and preference for input and information sharing. Interested parties may include representatives of public transportation employees or customers, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation services, representatives of users of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other organizations or individuals with an interest in the transportation planning process.

CRPC will consult with other federal, state, and local agencies that have an influence on or are affected by local and regional transportation planning decisions. Specifically, CRPC will share draft plans and documents with those groups, and participate in meetings and on committees as appropriate to coordinate regional planning activities.

Section 5. Public Participation Policy

This section provides specific guidelines for how CRPC will comply with the Louisiana Public Records Act (also known as Louisiana Sunshine Law), publish Official Notices, conduct Public Hearings, host special Public Meetings periodically, and make all Plans and Documents available to the public.

Highlights

Louisiana Public Records Act - Any person of the age of majority can examine public records in the state. Penalties were set for government officials who failed to comply with the law.

Official Notices – CRPC will notice all meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods for plans and programs in newspapers around the Baton Rouge region at least seven days in advance of such meeting, hearing, or period.

Public Meetings – The CRPC TAC and TPC committees shall hold public meetings periodically to solicit public comments on all of its plans, programs, and projects to be placed in the Transportation Improvement Program. The date for the meetings shall be published in a meeting schedule adopted by the Committees at its open meetings. The public meetings will be advertised for at least thirty (30) days.

Availability of Plans and Documents – CRPC will make all plans and documents available at its office, on its website (www.crpc-la.org), and in the main public libraries in the five parishes defining the official urbanized area within CRPC's jurisdiction.



Section 6. Plan Specific Guidelines

This section provides specific guidelines for when CRPC will encourage the public and interested parties to participate in the development, adoption, amendment, and review of major MPO plans including the Public Participation Plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, the Title VI Plan, and the Unified Planning Work Program.

Highlights

CRPC staff, under guidance from the Technical Advisory Committee, is responsible for the preparation of each draft document. After the TAC and TPC have endorsed the draft, copies are placed in local libraries and an official notice is made to solicit public review and comment. The TPC will consider each plan for adoption at a public hearing after all comments are received, documented, evaluated, and addressed.

- Public Participation Plan – Forty-five (45) day public review and comment period.
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan – Thirty (30) day public review and comment period.
- Transportation Improvement Plan – Thirty (30) day public review and comment period.
- Unified Planning Work Program – Thirty (30) day public review and comment period.
- TITLE-VI Plan – Thirty (30) day public review and comment period.



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Capital Region Planning Commission

The Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) is a public, nonprofit organization serving municipalities and public service agencies in the following Louisiana parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana (hereafter termed the “Capital Region”). Through its professional staff of planners, cartographers, economic development specialist and others, CRPC offers a range of services in the following areas:

- Transportation and land use planning and programming
- Economic and community development
- Data center
- Mapping and aerial photography

The CRPC strengthens local government by providing a unity in dealing with state and federal agencies and legislative bodies. It has provided technical assistance to local governments on regional concerns such as air, water, transportation priorities and goals. It has, throughout its tenure, produced studies or plans in the areas of transportation, community facilities, and socio-economic trends. In many instances, local membership dues are utilized to match state and federal funds to complete these activities.

Of equal importance, the CRPC has provided a forum for the region’s elected officials to discuss mutual problems face to face. This degree of cooperation and mutual support is unprecedented, and transpires a minimum of four times a year when the commission meets, hosted by its member governments.

The CRPC also maintains a library and information service for any and everyone interested in the Capital Region of Louisiana. As such, we are a regional data center and depository on state of the art planning practices, requisite data, and information. It is our pledge to our local governments to stay on the cutting edge of knowledge and to make that knowledge available to them as an ongoing function.

1.2 MPO Plans

In 2005, the U.S. Congress passed and the President signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU requires CRPC and other MPOs to focus efforts on implementing and updating a regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The work, which is called Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) at CRPC, takes the form of studies, data collection



and analysis, the use of management systems, forecasts of future travel based on future land use, and prioritization of projects for funding and implementation.

SAFETEA-LU also requires CRPC to produce and oversee a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the region's short term transportation investment plan. The TIP prioritizes the region's transportation related projects within the constraints of federal, state and local funding that the region can reasonably expect to receive within the next four years. Projects that are included in the TIP must be selected from or be consistent with an approved MTP. In order to develop plans that are derived from public sentiment, there must be adequate public participation in the development of both the MTP and the TIP.

The following sections present a brief discussion of CRPC's major transportation and planning products for the Capital Region. In addition to the agency's major products discussed below, CRPC also cooperates with consulting companies and the local transit agency to develop the Transit Long Range Plan, the Strategic Plan for Transit, Transportation Related Air Quality Plans and Conformity Analyses, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. All are available to the public and interested parties at CRPC's website (www.crpc-la.org) and at the office located at 333 N. 19th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. An appointment is suggested so that CRPC experts are available to answer questions; CRPC can be reached at (225) 383-3205.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP is a long range (25-year) multimodal strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in transportation facilities. The MTP is updated every four years and may be amended as a result of changes in projected federal, state, and local funding; major investment studies; congestion management system plans; interstate interchange justification studies; and environmental impact studies.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a four-year program that lists all regionally significant and federally funded projects and services in the MPO planning area such as highway and street projects, public transit projects, and bicycle/pedestrian enhancements. Projects that are included in the TIP must be consistent with, or be selected from an approved Long Range Transportation Plan. Additionally, the TIP must be fiscally constrained or have funding mechanisms already in place for all projects and strategies. The TIP can be amended as a result of changes in funding or need. Administrative modifications to the TIP do not require a specific public participation plan, but these modifications are discussed in public meetings where comments are accepted.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is a one-year plan developed by CRPC staff to focus work efforts and planning funds anticipated in the upcoming fiscal year. All federally funded planning activities have to be in the UPWP and have to be developed through required planning factors. The



UPWP is reviewed and discussed at the regularly scheduled Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) meetings.

1.3 Public Participation in the Planning Process

CRPC encourages active participation by the public and other interested parties in the development of all transportation plans and programs, particularly the major products. CRPC believes that the distribution of information regarding regional transportation planning and decision making needs to be inclusive of as many in the public as can reasonably be reached, and that interested parties and other federal, state, and local agencies are given a fair opportunity to participate in the planning process.

It is the policy of CRPC to take all public and stakeholder comments into account in the development and adoption of plans and programs. The processes outlined in this document form the basis for providing the opportunity for the general public and key stakeholders to participate in the transportation planning process. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) has been developed to meet federal requirements outlined by SAFETEA-LU, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Environmental Justice, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Public Participation Planning Goals

The goals of the CRPC Public Participation Plan are as follows:

Education

- To develop informational materials that supports a cooperative planning process and explains CRPC plans and activities in a concise and straightforward manner.
- To explain how transportation plans are affected by federal clean air mandates.

Outreach

- To increase awareness of and interest in transportation plans and the transportation planning process using innovative approaches. Notification in the official journal will occur at least 30 days prior to adoption or amendment actions by the Transportation Policy Committee to allow for public comment. CRPC will give timely public notice; provide complete information, reasonable public access to key decisions, and support early and continuing involvement of the public in the development of plans and TIPs. There will be opportunities for interested parties including citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, users of the systems and the private providers of transportation to be included in the early stages of the plan development/update process. The Capital Region Planning Commission, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baton Rouge urbanized area will include a statement in all public notices for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as follows:



“This public notice of public participation activities and the thirty day time period established for public review and comment on the TIP will satisfy the program-of-projects (POP) requirements of Urbanized Area Formula Program.”

- The announcement will inform the public of the amount of funds available under section 5307 and the capital, operation and planning projects proposed to be undertaken. Further, the public announcement that summarized the POP will indicate where citizens can examine the proposed program and budget in detail and submit comments on the proposed program. In addition, the final program-of-projects will be made available to the public through publication in the official journal and distribution to public libraries and the CRPC office.

Participation

- To provide frequent opportunities for interested parties from the private business community, public officials, neighborhood organizations, the physically challenged and other groups impacted by transportation plans to participate in the development of CRPC transportation plans and to encourage public participation in transportation planning activities at every level.



2.0 Public Participation Techniques

This section provides a description of the various techniques that will be used to carry out CRPC's public participation process. Opportunities for public input are not limited to those contained in this section, and given the significance of the MTP, the TIP, and the UPWP, other public participation techniques may be employed to increase awareness of and to provide ample opportunities for public participation in the development of CRPC products. A set of guidelines for when the public will have an opportunity to review and comment on specific CRPC products is provided in section 6.0.

2.1 Media

Press Releases and Public Service Announcements

In order to broaden the participation in transportation planning decisions, CRPC will use media press releases and public service announcements to announce opportunities for the public to participate in the development of upcoming plans and products.

Registered news media and organizations (such as major neighborhood organizations and minority organizations) on CRPC's email list will receive all press releases. Public Service Announcements will be distributed to the appropriate media.

Newspapers

Notices of all meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods are published in the newspaper *The Advocate* serving the five-parish area. Notices are published a minimum of seven (7) days prior to scheduled meetings.

Radio, TV, and Other Media Forums

Various TV and radio stations throughout Baton Rouge offer opportunities for organizations to inform their viewers about upcoming meetings and events. Press releases of meetings are sent to all local radio and TV outlets.

2.2 Presentations / Meetings / Workshops

Formal Meetings

Formal meetings, such as the TPC and TAC meetings, will be held in ADA accessible facilities in locations served either by fixed-route transit service, or by a CATS-on-Demand type service. CRPC will select the location, size, and setup of meeting facilities based on the specific characteristics of the audience and the type of information to be presented.

Public meetings and workshops will be held in ADA accessible facilities locations that offer the greatest opportunity for those interested to participate. As much as possible, CRPC will hold meetings and workshops in public places (e.g. public library, hotel conference



center, town center, or shopping mall) that are conducive to attracting the mix of people and businesses most representative of the community. For all public meetings, CRPC will seek to increase participation by creating a welcoming and inviting environment. All meeting agendas contain the following statement:

ADA Notice: For special accommodations for this meeting, contact Title VI/ ADA Coordinator via phone (225) 383-5203 at least one week in advance.

Tag-on Meetings

At various times, the CRPC staff may request to appear on the agendas of local planning commission, town/city alderman, parish commission, or other public meetings to communicate the purpose and need for CRPC and its planning process. This method can be an effective way to encourage discussion about the affects that local land use zoning and sub-division decisions can have on region-wide planning efforts. School Board meetings would also be an appropriate place for general messages about the functions and products of CRPC.

In addition, special presentations may be made to inform the public about specific times and locations where input can be given on the MTP, the TIP and the annual UPWP.

2.3 Other Tools

CRPC Website

Many people use the internet as their main source of data and information. The physically disabled are especially able to use this source to both receive input and to provide feedback, while not being required to physically attend meetings.

The CRPC website (www.crpc-la.org) provides a comprehensive resource to people wanting information about MPO products or activities. Public notices of all meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program are posted there. The site also contains electronic versions of MPO products, a public comment form, and links to MPO member jurisdictions.

Comment Cards

Comment cards will be available at every public meeting.

Additionally, comment cards will be attached to the copies of the draft MPO products that are furnished to public libraries in the region. Comment cards will also be made available at all public meetings, including project-specific open houses/town meetings, to assess priorities and goals.



Mailing Lists

CRPC has a comprehensive e-mail list of citizens, businesses, agencies, and other groups and individuals with an interest in the transportation planning process. That list will continue to grow with each outreach effort. CRPC will make a specific effort to add the email addresses of various community groups (e.g., Spanish-speaking groups, ADA organizations, Elderly associations, Alzheimers associations, etc.) to the email list.

During each update to the PPP, CRPC will ask each contact (via email) to specify their preferred methods of information sharing. Each also will be given the opportunity to subscribe to one or more product-specific mailing lists (e.g., Executive Board / TAC meeting notices, MTP update, TIP adoption, etc.).

Public Libraries

Each of the main libraries in each of the five parishes within the urbanized region will receive copies of the draft MPO products for public review and comment. A list of the five main libraries within the five-parish area is located in Appendix B.



3.0 Traditionally Underserved Populations

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects persons from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. President Clinton's Executive Order 12898 provides further guidance to federal assistance programs to ensure that low-income and minority populations are not discriminated against by Federal, state or local agencies receiving Federal monies. Specifically, the Federal Executive Order directive requires federal programs:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations,
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process, and
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and/ or low-income populations.

Because of the extreme importance of an all inclusive outreach program that ensures compliance with Title VI and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, CRPC will place emphasis on efforts to reach out to traditionally underserved or underrepresented segments of the region's population including:

- Low Income,
- Minorities, including majority minorities,
- Homeless or institutionally housed,
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP),
- Limited Literacy,
- Transit Dependent,
- Transportation Disadvantaged,
- Single-parent Families,
- The Elderly, and
- School-Aged Children.

Identifying Special Populations

Prior to the implementation of special outreach efforts, CRPC staff will use several methods to identify where special populations are likely to live and work. The most recent US Census will provide a region-wide vehicle for analyzing racial and socio-economic characteristics of communities within the CRPC planning area. The Census will also be



used as a tool for identifying low-literacy and limited English proficiency communities. CRPC has already identified many of these communities and areas within the five-parish region for use in development of future plans. These “layers” of SF3 data from the US Census have been added to CRPC GIS database for quick access by CRPC planning staff in the future.

Note: The CRPC Title VI plan contains six maps of the five-parish urbanized region. Each map depicts an analysis of the urbanized area using different data from the most recent US Census. Maps illustrating minority areas, Hispanic areas, elderly areas, disabled residents, residents with linguistic challenges, and other issues are all included.

Enhanced Outreach Methods

When appropriate for project-specific meetings, CRPC will use enhanced public outreach and communications methods for hard-to-reach or traditionally underserved populations. When reaching out to those communities, CRPC will use simple, straight forward language, incorporating visual cues such as photos, renderings, aerials, and color charts to help communicate complex concepts and plans. Meetings and workshops will be held at locations that are ADA accessible, convenient, and most effective in encouraging turnout and input. In general, facilities will be located close to participants’ home, work or other places they frequent. Potential meeting sites include community churches, local ministries to the poor and/or homeless, public schools, libraries, transit facilities, universities, and shopping facilities.

Following are additional methods CRPC may use to reach out to special populations:

- CRPC will use visualization methods (maps, displays, charts, and other static and interactive engagements) to make the topic relevant to the target audience. The extensive use of maps, aerial photographs and simple charts allow for greater participation and understanding by those that may be more visually oriented and will allow for greater interaction by participants.
- If meetings are to be held in areas where there is a predominance of non-English speaking populations, CRPC will have people available to help translate questions and inputs.
- When appropriate, CRPC will use community-based TV and radio stations and websites to target messages and solicit input from specific population segments.



4.0 Public Outreach Activities

CRPC will utilize a variety of mechanisms which will be selected as appropriate for the scope, needs and allocated resources of the various plans to be created. Examples of the primary public participation efforts include:

Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is comprised of about 20 representatives from various segments of the community and acts in an advisory capacity to the five-parish Baton Rouge Area Transportation Policy Committee. Responsibilities include providing input and recommendations to the main products of CRPC. The CAC meets regularly and all meetings are open to the public.

Public Outreach Activities

This part of the public participation plan has been prepared to introduce the staff and community to some of the specific processes to be undertaken as part of the Transportation Public Participation Plan.

To address the needs of the plan, a “community-base” strategic-comprehensive planning approach is recommended. For our needs, community planning is defined as “a cooperative planning process in which the CRPC, elected officials and citizens who live in the community work in true partnership to create a vision for our community’s future, build consensus in the community for the future, and develop specific plans and projects to make that future happen.” The strategic-comprehensive approach is a process that is intended to facilitate the identification of broad-based issues and the quickly focuses on those issues with implementation potential.

The CRPC is using an approach which includes the following steps: establishing a conceptual framework, identifying issues, developing a community vision, refining/prioritizing the issues, developing strategies which address the highest priorities, examining the strategies to determine their implementation potential, and allowing appropriate time for adoption, implementation and feedback. To complete these steps, the CRPC is using several community based planning techniques via the use of the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and the public meetings that will be discussed later in this document.

The basic foundation of the plan is the transportation technical and citizen advisory committees. The TAC is a representative group of stakeholders that meets regularly to discuss issues of common concern. The TAC provides a forum whereby the CRPC and its associated members can present goals and propose programs. It also provides a continuing forum for bringing citizens ideas directly into the process and a known opportunity for citizens to participate. The TAC is democratic and representative of



opposing views, with equal status for each participant in presenting and deliberating views and in being heard. The TAC is a place where citizens can become educated on technical issues.

The TAC meetings provide ongoing opportunities for citizen input. As an established institution within the CRPC framework, the TAC expands federal transportation legislation basic concepts by giving citizens periodic opportunities to comment on a process of transportation planning and programming. By providing multiple opportunities to be heard, the TAC requires consideration of conflicting stances – in a democratic process of give-and-take.

As intended, the TAC is made up of technical representatives from local governments and from the stakeholder groups identified through the process below, and the general citizenry. Members of the TAC are grouped into task teams, according to their interest, on an as-needed basis. These groups focus on specific aspects of transportation planning and assist the CRPC in the development of specific and measurable goals, objectives, and strategies to address major transportation issues within their respective function are related to:

1. Bicycle
2. Pedestrian
3. Infrastructure
4. Mobility
5. Public Transit
6. Intermodalism
7. Environmental

Mission Statements for Transportation Advisory Subcommittees

Committee 1: Bicycle

Mission: To assist the CRPC in the identification and examination of major issues associated with bicycle travel within the metropolitan area. Assigned activities may include: review of existing and potential future bicycle plans and documents, review of existing and potential future bicycle routes, paths and lanes, current and projected levels of demand, consideration of LADOTD and AASHTO construction standards, financial opportunities for facility development and operation, linking land use/site design and bicycle facilities, safety issues, educational issues, enforcement issues, transportation enhancement projects, promotion of bicycling as a legitimate mode of transportation. This committee meets monthly at CRPC after normal work hours.



Committee 2: Pedestrian

Mission: To assist the CRPC in the identification and examination of major issues associated with pedestrian travel within the context of the metropolitan area. Assigned activities may include: review of existing pedestrian plans and documents, review of existing pedestrian network, current and projected levels of demand, network development needs and strategies, transportation enhancement projects, consideration of construction standards and maintenance issues, financial opportunities for facility development and operation, linking land use/site design and pedestrian facilities, safety issues, accessibility issues, educational issues, and promotion of walking as a legitimate mode of transportation. This committee meets monthly at CRPC after normal work hours.

Committee 3: Infrastructure

Mission: To assist the CRPC in the identification and examination of major issues associated with the development and operation of the road and highway systems within the context of the metropolitan area. Assigned activities may include: pavement and bridge management and maintenance, financial needs and opportunities, corridor preservation, new facility needs, land use/site design linkages, design standards, safety issues, and enforcement issues. This function is currently handled by the East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Commission at district planning meetings.

Committee 4: Mobility

Mission: To assist the CRPC in the identification and examination of major issues associated with the efficient utilization of the transportation system within the context of the metropolitan area. Assigned activities may include: examination of the local areas of congestion, demand forecasting, congestion mitigation, construction mitigation, travel demand management issues (e.g. telecommuting, ridesharing, job-sharing, alternative work hours, parking management), transportation system management issues (e.g. inappropriate capacity, signal improvements, channelization), alternative transportation modes, high occupancy vehicles (HOV) facilities, trip reduction ordinances, incident management strategies, and demographic trends. This function is currently handled through a CRPC incident management committee.

Committee 5: Public Transportation

Mission: To assist the CRPC in the identification and examination of major issues associated with the use of public transportation within the context of the metropolitan area. Assigned activities may include: review of existing services including capital needs, service coordination and expansion issues, financial opportunities for system development and operation, linking land use/site design and transit use, safety issues, educational issues, promotion issues, fixed guide-way opportunities, demand response and service innovations, maintenance and replacement issues, public sector participation, energy conservation/alternative energy sources, congestion mitigation, special events and construction mitigation, and technology innovations. This function is currently handled through the CATS Operational and ADA Planning Committee, the CATS Management



Operations Committee and the East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Commission at district planning meetings.

Committee 6: Inter-Modal Transportation

Mission: To assist the CRPC and CATS staff in the identification and examination of major issues associated with the inter-modal use of the transportation system within the context of the metropolitan area. Assigned activities may include: freight and goods movements (e.g. trucking, rail, air, water, pipelines), facility demand (e.g. highways, canals, pipelines, railroads truck terminals, marine terminals, inter-city/intra-city bus and airline terminals), coordination issues, technical innovation, truck and hazardous material routing, public and private investment opportunities, economic development implications, and .construction mitigation and phasing. This function is currently handled through a CRPC incident management committee.

Committee 7: Environmental

Mission: To assist CRPC in the identification and examination of major environmental issues associated with the development and use of the transportation system within the context of the metropolitan area. Assigned activities may include: energy use and alternative fuel opportunities, air quality impacts and legislation, preservation of sensitive areas (e.g. wetlands, archeological sites, endangered species aquifer recharge areas, cemeteries and historic preservation), “transportation enhancement” projects, and corridor preservation. This function is currently carried out by CRPC staff only.



5.0 Public Participation Policy

5.1 Open Public Meeting Act

- Every meeting of any public body shall be open to the public unless closed pursuant to R.S. 42:6, R.S. 42:6.1, or R.S. 42:6.2. - §5. A., Louisiana Open Meetings Law.
- After notifying the general public, including traditionally underserved populations, the public shall be afforded the opportunity to comment on current agenda items at the end of every meeting of the CRPC commission members. The chair of CRPC commission shall determine the time to be allotted to each speaker. For those who choose not to speak or are limited by disability, language or other barrier to speaking, or for those who are not able to attend an open meeting, comments may be submitted to CRPC staff for consideration during the meeting. These comments may be translated into English if necessary by the translation services contract held by the Government of East Baton Rouge Parish. Comments received outside of the regular meeting should be submitted by letter, email, fax, website or other written format to be provided to CRPC commission.

5.2 Responsibilities

It is the intent of the CRPC Transportation Policy Committee to pursue the active involvement of key individuals and groups with an interest in transportation planning projects in the review, design and the development of its plans and to develop transportation plans that reflect the needs of the region while meeting federal air quality standards. Groups that will be targeted for participation in particular include private alternative transportation providers, transportation enforcement agencies, local port authorities, local toll authorities, community and neighborhood organizations, local elected officials, transportation and environmental interest groups and groups representing the elderly and the disabled. To these ends, the CRPC will undertake the following responsibilities:

- To conduct public meetings for the development and the review of the Transportation Improvement Program, the Long-Range Plan, Unified Planning Work Program and any other significant transportation plans developed through CRPC and CATS.
- To provide a forum for the review and discussion of significant amendments to adopted plans and actively solicit input from the public in the design and the development of its plans.
- To provide adequate notice and publicity regarding public meetings to develop and amend its transportation and related air quality plans.



- To involve key individuals and groups with an interest in transportation and related air quality issues in the development and review of its plans.
- To solicit the participation of and establish a dialogue with groups which have traditionally had limited involvement such as civic and neighborhood organizations.
- To increase availability of and access to planning documents and CRPC informational materials.
- To periodically evaluate the transportation needs of the community through meetings or surveys.
- To continue to develop educational materials for the general public regarding transportation planning and related air quality issues.



6.0 Plan Specific Guidelines

6.1 Public Participation Plan

- A. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) shall be assessed periodically based on changes in local, state, or federal legislation, in response to periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of public participation techniques (*Section 2.0*) that are used by CRPC.
- B. Following the adoption of an update to the MTP, an assessment shall be made of the types of public participation techniques that were used, especially public input meetings and public hearings.
- C. PPP shall be assessed and updated regularly, following the schedule of the MTP update. The evaluation tools will come from the matrix shown in Appendix A. CRPC will use survey techniques and statistical analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of the tools used during the latest MTP update. Additionally, if substantial changes occur to local, state, or federal legislation, the PPP shall be evaluated for compliance with the new legislation.
- D. When an update to the PPP is made, the public participation process shall follow that of the TIP (*section 6.3*) with the exception that the public review period shall be forty-five (45) days and relevant state and federal agencies shall be informed and provided with an opportunity to comment.
- E. CRPC will consult with interested parties in the development of the PPP. Interested parties include those individuals, associations, organizations, agencies, and/or businesses that are included in CRPC contact list or that have been identified as representing some interest in the transportation system or transportation disadvantaged populations (*sections 3.0 and 4.0*). CRPC will send a letter to those parties informing them of the purpose for, and process to update the PPP. Interested parties will be asked to identify their preferred methods of participation and information sharing with the MPO. MPO contacts also will be given an opportunity to indicate their interest in receiving periodic updates about particular MPO products, or elements of CRPC planning process. All parties will be given the CRPC contact to receive the instruction on how to access and comment on the draft PPP.

6.2 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

- A. At the periodic public meetings the Transportation Policy Committee shall review the planning assumptions and development process for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and obtain comments from the public on the validity of the MTP. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment, and who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, can contact CRPC at least seven days in advance, at the number listed on the published notice, to make special



accommodations. Comments may also be provided to CRPC staff prior to the public meeting. These comments may be in the form of a letter, email, fax or comment submitted on the CRPC website.

- B. Public review and comment opportunities shall be provided when the plan is originally adopted or amended. CRPC will determine the appropriate mix of public participation techniques (identified in *section 2.0*) as part of the early development of the MTP. Public outreach and involvement efforts will be clearly communicated to the public and interested parties using, at a minimum, the guidelines for official notices provided in *section 5.2* of this plan.
- C. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall guide the preparation of the MTP for the MPO. CRPC will search for appropriate consultation from State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the MTP. The consultation shall involve, as appropriate (1) comparison of MTPs with State conservation plans or maps, if available, or (2) comparison of MTPs with inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.
- D. The TAC shall review and endorse the draft MTP for consideration by the TPC. The TPC shall then review, amend if necessary, and concur with the draft MTP for public review and comment.
- E. After concurrence by TPC, the CRPC Executive Director shall publish the draft MTP and place copies in selected public libraries in the region (Appendix B). These copies will be distributed to the libraries a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to final consideration by TPC. Additionally, an electronic version of the draft will be placed on the CRPC website.
- F. An official notice stating that the TPC has endorsed a draft MTP for public review and comment shall be placed in the newspaper (*The Advocate*) at least 30 days prior to consideration by the TPC. The notice shall invite the public to review and comment on the draft MTP. The notice shall specify the date, time, and location of the public hearings. Press releases announcing the meetings will be furnished to all news organizations registered with CRPC and on their email lists.
- G. CRPC shall hold two public hearings during the public review period. The first hearing should be held by the TAC during the review process. Comments received at the first public hearing shall be provided to TPC prior to the second public hearing. The second and final public hearing should occur at the end of the 30-day review period. At the TPC meeting, CRPC's Executive Director shall report all comments received from all sources prior to the TPC meeting.
- I. The public shall be given the opportunity to provide comment at the public hearings. The TPC may establish reasonable time limits for each presentation, considering the time constraints of the meeting and complexity of the issue. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment and who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, may contact CRPC at least seven days beforehand at the



number listed on the published notice to work with CRPC to make special accommodations.

- J. In the event the TPC determines there are significant unresolved comments on the MTP it may defer the adoption of the plan until a subsequent meeting. MPO staff will then produce a written summary and an analysis of comments which may lead to amendments to the draft plan. Should those amendments be significant, or if the final plan differs significantly from the draft presented to the public, an additional 30-day review period shall be allowed. A summary and analysis of the disposition of public comments will be incorporated into the final.
- K. The TPC must close the final public hearing prior to a Committee vote on the MTP.
- L. Amendments to the MTP must follow the same process and procedure. CRPC has adopted MTP Adjustment Procedures which allows for very specific changes to the MTP. Appendix C provides the process and procedures for such adjustments.
- M. Opportunities for general public input are not limited to those contained in this section. Given the significance of the MTP, other public participation techniques may be employed to increase awareness and to provide ample opportunities for public participation (section 2.0).

6.3 Transportation Improvement Program

- A. Public review and comment opportunities shall be provided when the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is being adopted or amended. CRPC will determine the appropriate mix of public participation techniques (identified in *section 2.0*) as part of the early development of the TIP. Public outreach and involvement efforts will be clearly communicated to the public and interested parties using, at a minimum, the guidelines for official notices provided in *section 5.2* of this plan.
- B. CRPC's TPC will allow the public to suggest eligible transportation projects for inclusion in the TIP.
- C. CRPC Director and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall review the input from the CRPC Executive Board public meeting, input from the state, and input from the local MPO member jurisdictions in the creation of the TIP and the accompanying Air Quality Conformity Determination.
- D. The TAC shall review and endorse the draft TIP for consideration by the TPC. The TPC shall then review, amend if necessary and concur with the draft TIP for public review and comment.
- E. After concurrence by the TPC of the draft TIP, the CRPC Executive Director shall publish the program and place copies in selected public libraries in the urbanized region (Appendix B). These copies must be distributed to the libraries a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to final consideration and adoption by the TPC Meeting. Additionally, an electronic version of the draft will be placed on the CRPC website.



F. A notice stating that the TPC has endorsed a draft TIP for public review and comment shall be placed in the notice newspaper *The Advocate*. The notice shall specify the dates, times and location of forthcoming public hearings. Similar press releases shall be furnished to all news organizations registered with the CRPC Executive Director.

This notice and press release shall be published/mailed a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the TIP will be considered by the TPC.

G. A public hearing shall be held by the TAC following the TPC's endorsement of the draft TIP. Comments received at this public hearing shall be provided to the TPC prior to the final public hearing.

H. A final public hearing shall be held by the TPC prior to voting on the Transportation Improvement Program.

I. At the public meetings, the CRPC Executive Director shall report to the Committee all comments received in writing prior to the meetings. These comments may be in the form of a letter, email, fax or comment submitted on CRPC website.

J. The public shall be afforded the opportunity for comment at the public meetings. The TPC may establish reasonable time limits for each presentation, considering the time constraints of the meeting and complexity of the issue. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, can contact CRPC at least seven days beforehand at the number listed on the published notice to make special accommodations.

K. In the event the TPC determines there are significant unresolved comments on the TIP, it may defer the program until a subsequent meeting. MPO staff will then produce a written summary and an analysis of comments which may lead to amendments to the draft program. Should those amendments be significant, or if the final TIP differs significantly from the draft presented to the public, an additional 30-day review period shall be allowed. A summary and analysis of the disposition of public comments will be incorporated into the final TIP.

L. The TPC must close the final public hearing prior to a Committee vote on the TIP.

M. Major amendments to the TIP (those that involve the addition or deletion of projects) must follow the same process and procedure as provided in *Paragraphs C to I* above. Minor amendments, those that involve a change in funding source, amount or timing, do not require a public input process and shall be administered through the approved TIP Adjustment Process and Procedures (Appendix D).

6.4 Air Quality Conformity Determination

A. If conformity determination is concurrent with the development of the MTP, the public participation process shall follow that of the MTP (*Section 6.3*).



- B. If conformity determination is warranted at any other time, the public participation process shall follow that of the TIP (*section 6.3*) with the exception that the public review period shall be thirty (30) days.

6.5 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- A. Public review and comment opportunities shall be provided when the Unified Planning Work Program is adopted, or amended. CRPC will determine the appropriate mix of public participation techniques (identified in *Section 2.0*) as part of the early development of the UPWP. Public review and comment periods will be clearly communicated to the public and interested parties using, at a minimum, the guidelines for official notices provided in *section 5.2* of this plan.
- B. Staff shall prepare and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) shall recommend the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for public review and comment. A notice to that effect shall be placed in the notice newspapers listed in *Section 2, subsections A & B*.
- C. The notice shall state that copies of the draft UPWP, as endorsed by the TAC, are available in selected public libraries throughout the urbanized region for public review and comment. The notice shall specify the dates, times, and location of forthcoming public hearings. Press releases shall also be furnished to all other news organizations registered with CRPC.
- D. The notice and press release shall be published/mailed a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the next scheduled TAC meeting at which time a public hearing shall be held. Comments received at this public hearing shall be provided to the TPC prior to the second public hearing. Copies of the draft shall also be distributed to selected area libraries a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to this meeting.
- E. A second public hearing shall be held by the TPC prior to voting on the UPWP.
- F. At each public hearing, the CRPC Executive Director shall report to the Board all comments received in writing prior to the meetings. These comments may be in the form of a letter, email, fax or comment submitted on CRPC website.
- G. The public shall be given the opportunity for comment at each public hearing. The TPC may establish reasonable time limits for each presentation, considering the time constraints of the meeting and complexity of the issue. Any person desiring to attend the meeting and make a comment and who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, can contact CRPC at least seven days beforehand at the number listed on the published notice to request special accommodations.
- H. In the event the Transportation Policy Committee determines there are significant unresolved comments on the UPWP, it may defer the program until a subsequent meeting. MPO staff will then produce a written summary and an analysis of comments which may lead to amendments to the draft program. Should those amendments be significant, or if the final UPWP differs significantly from the draft presented to the



public, an additional 30-day review period shall be allowed. A summary and analysis of the disposition of public comments will be incorporated into the final UPWP.

- I. The TPC must close the final public hearing prior to a vote on the UPWP.
- J. Amendments to the UPWP (those that involve the addition or deletion of funds alter the scope of work tasks or add/delete a work task) must follow the same process and procedure outlined above with the exception that only one (1) public hearing shall be conducted. The public hearing shall be held by the TPC prior to voting on the UPWP. Adjustments, changes that do not involve a change in scope and/or adjustment funding amounts by no more than 15%, do not require a public input process.
- K. All tasks and studies in the work program shall be designed to allow the public reasonable opportunity for input as the study progresses. The project's scope of work shall outline the public input process used for the task. For planning efforts such as sub-area or corridor studies, bikeway and pedestrian plans, and corridor studies, a minimum of two (2) public meetings shall be held, one by the TAC and one by the TPC.



Appendices

Appendix A - Public participation Tool Evaluation Matrix

Appendix B - Public Library List

Appendix C - Metropolitan Transportation Plan Adjustment Process

Appendix D - Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Adjustment Process

Appendix E - Summary of Comments on CRPC Products



Appendix A

Public Participation Tool Evaluation Matrix

Public Participation Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Public Participation Plan	No Formal Criteria. Should be updated to reflect regional goals	N/A	Update at request after the MTP is adopted. Evaluate successes and needed improvement
MPO Website	Number of hits	100 hits per quarter. 50 hits during adoption of TIP and 50 during MTP update	Use other techniques to increase awareness of the Website
MPO Master Database	Number of returned items. Updated to include all attendees at public meetings and committee meetings	Maximum of 2% returned. Database updated within 30 days of last meeting	Correct immediately. No second mailings/email to any returned item.
Legal Advertisements	N/A	N/A	N/A
Display Ads	Calls, letters, other correspondence. Attendance at meeting.	Minimum of 10% of attendees at meeting indicate they saw ad	Evaluate Ad and/or Ad placement
Project Specific Newsletter or Pamphlets	Calls, letters, other correspondence. Attendance at meeting.	Minimum of 10% of attendees at meeting indicate they read newsletter or pamphlet	Increase/Decrease distribution to reflect effectiveness of latest round
Press Releases	Calls, letters, other correspondence. Attendance at meeting.	No standard evaluation measure.	Review the times the items have been mentioned. Request information from media as to how to improve.
Project Specific Website(s)	Calls, letters, other correspondence. Attendance at meeting. Number of hits.	Minimum of 25 hits per month with increases of 10% after each round of public meetings round	Use other techniques to increase awareness of the Website(s).
Public Hearings	Number of Attendees	Range of attendees geography and impact.	Schedule at more convenient times and/or places
Comment Forms	Responses from attendees	10% of attendees fill out.	Ask attendees who are leaving why they did not fill out. Use answers to better design future comment forms.
Media Outlets (TV, Radio, Press)	Number of Attendees at meeting who learned from this tool	10% of attendees answer positively	Provide information to media in time for next meeting



Appendix B Public Library List

MAIN LIBRARY - 7711 Goodwood Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806

BLUEBONNET REGIONAL BRANCH LIBRARY - 9200 Bluebonnet Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70810

ASCENSION PARISH LIBRARY - 708 S. Irma Blvd., Gonzales, LA 70737

LIVINGSTON PARISH LIBRARY - 13986 Florida Blvd., Livingston, LA 70754

WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH LIBRARY – 830 North Alexander Avenue, Port Allen, LA 70767

IBERVILLE PARISH LIBRARY - 24605 J. Gerald Berret Blvd., Plaquemine, LA 70764



Appendix C

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Adjustment Process

Metropolitan Transportation Plan Adjustment Process

The CRPC's TPC approved the following Metropolitan Transportation Plan Adjustment Process & Procedures in fiscal year 2007.

Adjustments to the MTP may be needed for many factors such as:

- A. Correcting the status of a project from a MTP Fiscal Year project (either a Place Holder or not) to an E+C project or;
- B. Indicating a Place Holder project has completed an approved Tier II Analysis and has developed the same solution as envisioned by the Place Holder or;
- C. Indicating a Place Holder project meets the Tier II exemption of criteria outlined in the amended CMP plan,
- D. Other clerical or technical errors that do not affect the fiscal constraint or Air Quality Conformity determination.

Each of the above or other cases will have to follow an approved process and procedure, with appropriate documentation for the adjustment, as demonstrated below.

Process, Procedure and Documentation

- A. *Correcting the status of a project from an MTP project (either a Place Holder or not) to an E+C project*

Existing plus Committed projects are defined as projects that have been in an adopted TIP, in which the Construction Phase was funded. E+C projects are tested separately from Fiscal Year projects although for air quality conformity determination they are counted in the base case. Projects that have incorrectly been included as a Fiscal Year project and are then removed and placed in the E+C category may change the conformity status of the LRTP if their removal would change travel paths and add or remove VMT.

In order for an adjustment (rather than an AMENDMENT) in this classification the project would need to have the following documentation:

1. Page showing the previously adopted TIP, with the Construction phase indicated.



2. Page showing the project in the new TIP.
3. Documentation of agreement by the Inter Agency Coordination group that the project is NOT likely to have any impact on the Conformity Determination of the MTP.

CRPC Staff will inform the TAC and TPC of any adjustment made under this classification. No public participation will be necessary in these cases.

B. Indicating a Place Holder has gone through an approved Tier II Analysis and has developed the same solution as envisioned by the Place Holder.

Having a 'Place Holder' project in the MTP is a method of including potential solutions that have not gone through the full Tier I and Tier II Analysis procedure of the Congestion Management Process Plan. After an approved Tier I and II Analysis Report has been completed with the Tier II recommended project being the same as that listed as a Place Holder in the MTP, it will be an administrative adjustment to remove the Tier II needed designation (sometimes referred to as the X in the box). This will allow the project to be moved into a TIP, when funding is available. Projects that are recommended from the Tier II Analysis that differed from the 'Place Holder' in the MTP will require a full amendment to be included in the MTP.

Staff will provide the TAC and TPC with the Summary and Recommendation from the Tier II Analysis Report for those projects that will only need an adjustment. A letter signed by the Chair of the Executive Board indicating the change in status for the project will be provided to the project sponsor to be included when requesting federal or state funding.

C. Indicating a Place Holder project meets the Tier II exemption of criteria outlined in the amended CMP plan.

During the period between adoption of the MTP and the adoption of a new MTP, amendments to the CMP Plan and MTP may be necessary. Where those amendments would change the status of a project in the adopted MTP, the projects so affected would take the status assigned by the amended document as soon as the amended documents are approved by the TPC. Notification of any changes in status of projects will be provided to LADOTD and FHWA/FTA expeditiously.

This Adjustment Process may be amended, as needed, by the TPC upon recommendation from the Technical Advisory Committee at any regularly scheduled meeting.



Appendix D

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Adjustment Process

Administrative adjustments can be used to document minor changes to the TIP but must be consistent with the requirements in 23 CFR 450 regarding fiscal constraint and, where applicable, air quality conformity. The following are examples of changes that can be accomplished through the administrative adjustment process:

- Adding a prior phase to a programmed project.
- Moving programmed funds between programmed projects.
- Moving a project from year to year within a TIP period provided that, in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, the move does not cross an Air Quality Horizon year.
- Changing a project description/scope if:
 - a) the change does not necessitate revising the NEPA documentation or will not alter the NEPA determination or,
 - b) in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas, the change does not require a new Air Quality conformity finding.



Appendix E

Summary of Comments on CRPC Products

CRPC received no comments from the committee or public in the last twelve (12) months on the MTP, TIP or UPWP.

CRPC runs 6 TAC meetings, 6 TPC meetings and 4 Commission meetings annually; these meetings are always open to the public and announced as required. The products are updated online regularly and comments can be received via email, fax, phone and at the meetings.

