

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS & STRATEGIES

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

FAMPO seeks public input through a variety of techniques to ensure we are reaching a broad and diverse public. The public outreach techniques employed by FAMPO will vary depending on the specific planning task.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

- Raise the level of understanding of the transportation planning process among all groups in the FAMPO transportation study area and identify how interested citizens can become involved.
- Provide the public with opportunities for involvement in the transportation planning process, and make access to documents easy.
- Identify and involve traditionally underserved communities (those communities with high concentrations of minority, low-income, or elderly populations) in the transportation planning process.
- Regularly review and enhance the public involvement plan.

WHO IS THE PUBLIC TO BE REACHED?

The public includes anyone who resides, has an interest, or does business in a given area potentially affected by transportation decisions. This includes both individuals and organized groups. Those persons traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income or minority households and the elderly, should be encouraged to participate in the transportation decision making process. Federal, state, and local agencies with an interest in transportation issues also play a particularly important role in the development of transportation projects. Many of those agencies have a statutory responsibility to review environmental documents or issue permits for transportation projects.

TARGET PUBLICS ON FAMPO'S MAILING LIST

- General public
- Directly affected public, such as property owners, including those of abutting properties and those in the vicinity of a proposed project
- Elected officials
- Affected agencies, e.g., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and Public Works Departments
- Freight shippers, providers and users of freight transportation services – via rail, air and highway routes
- Providers and users of private transportation services, e.g., taxis, commuter buses, shuttle buses, limousines, car pools and van pools

- Providers and users of public transportation services, e.g., bus, airlines, and train
- The business community (retail, services, aggregate industry, etc.)
- Advocacy groups – e.g., civic and special interest groups, Chambers of Commerce, homeowner’s associations, public interest groups for bicycle use and pedestrians, civil rights groups, and senior citizen organizations
- Traditionally underserved communities such as people with disabilities, children and youth, elderly, low-income, and racial and ethnic minorities
- Non-English speaking public, as appropriate
- Emergency service providers and users

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

STRATEGY 1

Provide timely and continuous information about transportation issues and processes to stakeholders.

Tactics

- 1.1 **Master Contact Database/Mailing list:** FAMPO’s Public Involvement Department maintains an up-to-date database of contacts to assure that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the transportation planning process and products. The database will include all groups listed previously as target publics.
- 1.2 **Website - www.fampo.gwregion.org:** FAMPO will develop and maintain an internet website that will be compliant with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled users. The website will provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available and use visualization techniques as appropriate. The website will contain the following information:
 - A. Contact information (mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail)
 - B. Current MPO committee membership
 - C. Meeting notices, calendars and agendas
 - D. Transportation planning documents (UPWP, CLRP, TIP, PPP, etc.)
 - E. Public comment/question form and other public involvement opportunities
 - F. Links to related agencies
- 1.3 **Meeting Notices:** Notices for committee meetings, public meetings and public comment periods will be advertised. Locations where they may be advertised include the FAMPO website, local news sections of regional newspapers and on cable television bulletin boards. Local member jurisdictions also may be asked to publicize the public comment period/hearing in their local media (newsletters, websites, etc.). A complete list of committee and public meetings is available on the FAMPO website: www.fampo.gwregion.org

- 1.4 **Press Releases/Media Relations:** News releases are developed and distributed to local and regional television, radio and print media. Topics for releases will include meeting notices and transportation planning news and general FAMPO news. As part of media relations, Corridor Tours (familiarization tours) may be conducted to introduce the media the affected area(s).
- 1.5 **Email:** Meeting announcements, project and other FAMPO updates are sent electronically to the master contact database or to targeted groups for upcoming activities.
- 1.6 **Postcards/Direct Mail:** Meeting notices in the form of a postcard mailer may be utilized prior to key public forums, meetings and hearings. Mailers will be sent to those on the master contact mailing list and also may be sent to households and businesses in affected areas through the purchase of a targeted mailing list to supplement the master contact mailing list.
- 1.7 **GWRC Newsletter:** GWRC will begin production of a regional quarterly newsletter for distribution to the master contact mailing list and for circulation to area libraries. The newsletter also will be available for review and download from the GWRC and FAMPO websites. The newsletter will include a section on FAMPO activities. The newsletter could include updates on current or recently completed projects, design projects, announcements of upcoming meetings, and contact information.
- 1.8 **Flyers/Informational Inserts:** Flyers may be developed to provide information about FAMPO activities to interested groups to insert into their regular mailings, e.g., Homeowner's Association Newsletters.
- 1.9 **Signage:** Directional signs may be considered for posting outside meeting locations to announce public workshops at least two days prior to the meeting date, e.g., sandwich boards, marquees, electronic signage (VDOT).
- 1.10 **Informational Brochures:** Over the next three years, FAMPO will assess current informational brochures and consider updates and the need for new informational guides to help the public learn more about FAMPO and the transportation planning process and how the public can become involved.
- 1.11 **Speakers Bureau:** FAMPO staff members are available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours and after hours at the request of community interest groups with reasonable notice. TAG members also may assist in performing public outreach to community and advocacy groups.
- 1.12 **Public Meetings:** Workshops, seminars, and exhibits can provide vital information directly to the public to help inform and educate. A complete schedule of public meetings is found on the FAMPO website:
www.fampo.gwregion.org.

STRATEGY 2

Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and projects.

Tactics

- 2.1 **FAMPO Library:** The MPO will make all publications and work products available at the FAMPO office and electronically via the FAMPO website.
- 2.2 **Community Buildings:** Place printed materials in public areas that are easily accessible.
 - A. Local/Regional Government Offices
 - B. Libraries (In the Reference area; not available for checkout)
- 2.3 **Committee & Public Meetings:** Use public meetings and hearings as a conduit to release information used in the development of studies, plans and amendments as appropriate. Public meetings will be held at various locations throughout the region. Whenever feasible, hold public meetings at a site(s) and time(s) convenient to potentially affected citizens. FAMPO will conduct public workshops and a public hearing during CLRP and TIP updates. A complete schedule of committee and public meetings is found on the FAMPO website: www.fampo.gwregion.org.
- 2.4 **Copies of Reports:** Invite members of the public to request copies of reports and other technical information (other than proprietary software or legally confidential data). These requests will be handled as follows:
 - A. Relevant reports and technical information will be distributed free of charge at committee meetings. To the extent practicable within budget limitations, relevant reports and technical information will also be made available free of charge for other meetings and outreach activities related to FAMPO activities.
 - B. In circumstances other than (a), requests for reports and technical information will be fulfilled on an "at cost" basis, including duplication costs and staff time associated with responding to the requests.
 - C. Reports and technical information will be made available through the FAMPO Website.
- 2.5 **Committee Meeting Access:** Provide access to all committee meetings by welcoming the public to attend. The chairs of various committees and subcommittees will recognize members of the public who wish to ask questions or make comments at these meetings, to the maximum extent possible under the time constraints imposed by the agendas. Comments will be recorded,

reviewed and considered and appropriate feedback will be given to the individual/group.

- 2.6 **Internet:** Place easy to upload materials on the FAMPO website: www.fampo.gwregion.org for 24-hour public access. For those who do not have the ability to go online at home, local libraries are available to access online information.
- 2.7 **Graphics:** FAMPO will use visualization techniques on its website, in printed materials and during meetings as practicable to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include: charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS systems, artist renderings, physical models, and/or computer simulation.
- 2.8 **Public Access – Underserved and Disabled Americans:** Recognizing that certain members of the public who may be interested in transportation may have difficulty in attending FAMPO's public meetings, public hearings, and the open meetings of the FAMPO Policy Board to specifically address planning activities regarding transportation, the following arrangements shall be observed:
 - A. Advertisements also will include information for those who may need special assistance (sign language interpreter, etc.) to attend.
 - B. Meetings will be held at ADA accessible locations.
 - C. Meetings will be held on or near transit routes whenever possible.

STRATEGY 3

Provide a reasonable time to comment prior to adoption of any plan or amendment. Notice of the comment period should be advertised.

Tactics

- 3.1 **Set reasonable comment periods for each plan/report.**
 - A. Unified Work Program– 30 days
 - B. Constrained Long Range Plan– 30 days
 - C. Transportation Improvement Program– 30 days
 - D. CLRP & TIP Amendments – 14 – 30 days
 - E. Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan – 30 days
 - E. Regional Transit Plan – 30 days
 - F. Public Participation Plan & Amendments - 45 days

3.2 Give notice of the comment period & public meetings at the start of the comment period.

- A. Display Ad (at the start of the comment period weeks prior and then again 1 to 2 weeks prior to end of comment period or before a public meeting/hearing.)
- B. GWRC Newsletter (one quarter prior, if dates are known)
- C. Website (at the start of the comment period)
- D. Press Release (at the start of the comment period and again after the comment period as a follow up)

3.3 Provide various methods for providing public input during comment periods.

- A. Public Meetings/Hearings
- B. Policy Committee, Technical Committee, Transportation Advisory Group meetings and hearings
- C. Comment Forms at meetings and on the website. Comment forms also may be included in GRWC newsletter, as appropriate.
- D. Comment forms may be postage paid to encourage their return
- E. Email
- F. Fax
- G. 711 Virginia Relay Service
- H. Briefings/Stakeholder Interviews/Speakers Bureau
- I. Include comment forms at libraries and with reports and publications

3.4 Respond in writing, when applicable, to public input. When significant comments are received on the draft FAMPO CLRP as a result of public participation, a report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final FAMPO CLRP.

3.5 Additional Opportunities for Comment: If there are significant changes to the final draft transportation plan or program from the one made available for public comment, an additional opportunity will be provided for public comment on the revised changes. FAMPO shall determine when changes to the transportation plan or program are significant and warrant additional opportunity for public comments.

STRATEGY 4

Encourage and solicit the involvement of all area citizens including those under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, Non-English speaking, elderly, persons with disabilities, and low-income households.

Tactics

- 4.1 **Use socioeconomic map information to identify target audiences for each planning study.** These include: those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including but not limited to, low income and minority households, within the study area.
- 4.2 **When feasible, hold public meetings at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens.** Public meetings will be held in locations accessible to persons with disabilities and will be located near or on a transit route.
- 4.3 **Community Information/Events:** FAMPO staff may bring informational materials, presentation boards, and visualization tools to regional festivals, grocery stores, major retail organizations, and others as appropriate.
- 4.4 **Partnering Activities:** Consider partnering with the TAG and advocate organizations to educate and broaden outreach and involve underserved audiences.
- 4.5 **Accessible Formats:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, all planning documents will be made available in larger print during the review period. These will be available upon request.

STRATEGY 5

Coordinate the PPP with local, regional and statewide Public Participation Processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancy and cost.

Tactics

- 5.1 **Partnering:** FAMPO will work with public involvement representatives from VDOT and the local jurisdictions to share information, coordinate public meeting schedules and ensure that the public does not experience “meeting overload” and/or confusion of study purposes, processes or sponsors. FAMPO will identify agency contacts and establish a regular meeting schedule and/or mechanism for regular information sharing.
- 5.2 **Assistance:** Whenever feasible, FAMPO will assist VDOT, local governments and transportation agencies in the development and implementation of public involvement techniques for planning and other studies, including Major Corridor/Feasibility Studies, Project Development and Environmental Studies or other documents to support planning.

STRATEGY 6

Evaluate and improve public participation and maintain and make readily available documentation of its public participation activities and procedures.

Tactics

- 6.1 **Continuous Monitoring:** FAMPO staff will evaluate public involvement techniques after every public meeting and hearing. Citizen surveys during meetings and via the Internet will solicit opinions to improve public participation techniques.
- 6.2 **Annual Review:** The PPP will be reviewed each year by FAMPO staff and TAG as part of the self-certification process and appropriate modifications will be recommended to the Policy Committee.
- 6.3 **Full Review:** Every three years, the FAMPO staff will conduct a thorough review of the PPP with the TAG. Any changes to the PPP shall include at a minimum a forty-five day public comment period which has been advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in the region.