



**Permian Basin**  
**MPO** Metropolitan  
Planning  
Organization

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**“Solving Midland and Odessa’s Transportation Challenges”**

**9601 Wright Drive  
Midland, Texas 79706  
[www.permianbasinmpo.com](http://www.permianbasinmpo.com)  
432-617-0129**

**Reviewed and Approved by the Policy Board December 16, 2013.**

## MEMBERSHIP

### Permian Basin MPO Policy Board

| <b>Members</b>      | <b>Title</b>        | <b>Representing</b>   | <b>Elected Official</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| *John B. Love III   | Councilman          | City of Midland       | Yes                     |
| **David Turner      | Mayor               | City of Odessa        | Yes                     |
| Ron Eckert          | County Judge        | Ector County          | Yes                     |
| Robin Donnelly      | County Commissioner | Midland County        | Yes                     |
| Bryan Cox           | County Judge        | Martin County         | Yes                     |
| Mike McAnally, P.E. | District Engineer   | TxDOT Odessa District | No                      |
| Robert Stephens     | General Manager     | MOU/D/EZ-Rider        | No                      |

Total Members: 7

Voting Members: 7

Elected Voting Members: 5

\*Board Chair, \*\* Board Vice-Chair

### Permian Basin MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

| <b>Member</b>         | <b>Title</b>                                  | <b>Representing</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Voting Members</b> |   |                       |
| *Cameron Walker, AICP | Executive Director                            | Permian Basin MPO     |
| **Hal Feldman         | Traffic Engineer                              | City of Odessa        |
| Clayton Black         | Citizen                                       | Martin County         |
| Randy Brinlee         | Planning Director                             | City of Odessa        |
| Matt Carr, P.E.       | City Engineer                                 | City of Midland       |
| Melanie Freeman, P.E. | Engineer                                      | Midland County        |
| Gary Law, P.E.        | Director of Transportation                    | TxDOT Odessa District |
| Charles Harrington    | Director of Development Services              | City of Midland       |
| David Peck            | Project Manager                               | Ector County          |
| Nanette Stephens      | Director of Service Development<br>& Outreach | MOU/D/EZ-Rider        |
| Chad Windham, P.E.    | Director of Operations                        | TxDOT Odessa District |

#### **Non-Voting Members**

|                  |                                   |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Joe Clark        | MPO Coordinator                   | TxDOT                 |
| Kirk Fauver      | Transportation Planner            | FHWA, Texas Division  |
| Alfredo Gonzales | Public Transportation Coordinator | TxDOT Odessa District |
| Gene Powell      | Public Information Officer        | TxDOT Odessa District |

Total Members: 15

Voting Members: 11

Non-Voting Members: 4

\*Chair (votes only in case of a tie or if a meeting quorum is needed)

\*\* Vice-Chair

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## INTRODUCTION

The Permian Basin Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the regional transportation planning organization responsible for working with local, state, and federal governments, as well as the private and public sectors, to coordinate the highway, transit, and land use planning processes in the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB). The MAB includes the Cities of Odessa and Midland and portions of Ector, Martin, and Midland counties. The Permian Basin MPO is the organization that sets the transportation priorities by bringing together government entities within the urban area boundary to make *continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive* transportation decisions. The Public Participation Plan emphasizes the importance of early, on-going public involvement in the transportation planning process. Early public involvement enables the MPO to make more informed decisions, improve quality through collaborative efforts, and build mutual understanding and trust between the MPO and the public. The Public Participation Plan outlines various tools and time limits for public involvement in the development of various planning documents, including, but not limited to the following:

- **Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP):** A long range transportation planning document that includes a 25-year list of desired projects (not funded). The MTP is updated every five (5) years;
- **Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP):** A short ranged transportation planning document that provides a 5-year construction plan (funded). The TIP is updated every four (4) years.

It is the intent of the Permian Basin MPO that the Public Participation Plan provides the greatest possible involvement in the transportation planning process. It is also the intent of the Permian Basin MPO that the public participation plan be implemented in a continuous, proactive manner, and adheres to the principles of Environmental Justice and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The Permian Basin MPO's Environmental Justice (EJ) initiatives will consist of MPO staff activities designed to help partnerships with groups and individuals of "traditionally underserved" communities.

### **Limited English Proficiency Plan**

As a federally funded agency, the Permian Basin MPO recognizes the requirements for and benefits of developing and implementing a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan as part of the Public Participation Plan. Doing so will bring the MPO in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its implementing regulations. Title VI states that no person shall be subjected to discrimination due to their race, color, or national origin. Executive Order 13166 entitled "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English" further states that differing treatment based on a person's inability to speak, read or write English is a type of national origin discrimination and directs all federally funded agencies to public guidance to prevent such discrimination. (FTA Circular 4702.1B dated October 1, 2012.)

During 2013, the Permian Basin MPO updated the Public Participation Plan, including developing an LEP Plan. The development process involved identification of population segments for which English is not the primary language. The LEP Plan includes elements such as addressing bi-lingual accommodations for written and verbal communications between the public and the MPO, how the “Four Factor Analysis” will be addressed, dissemination of documents, staff training, and continual monitoring and updating.

These communities include minorities, transit dependent citizens, low income, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Staff activities will include, but not be limited to:

- participation in groups and coalitions serving within these communities;
- targeted communications with local media outlets;
- outreach meetings conducted at times and locations that are accessible to transit dependent or non-driving individuals when possible;
- publication of MPO documents in non-technical, web-based, or other easily accessible formats as necessary and appropriate for purposes of obtaining input and comment into the regional transportation planning processes.

The Permian Basin MPO’s goal will be to ensure that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Representatives from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Ector County, Martin County, Midland County, City of Odessa, City of Midland, Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District (MOUTD), and the public are represented on various committees that are a part of the Permian Basin MPO:

- **Permian Basin MPO Policy Board** – This is the governing body for the MPO and provides a forum for cooperative decision making and policy guidance. The Policy Board sets the priorities for the transportation projects in the Permian Basin MPO MAB. They also provide direction to the Permian Basin MPO Executive Director.
- **Permian Basin MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – This group is composed of technical staff of key transportation agencies in the area. Meetings are held to discuss transportation related issues and to provide technical analysis of planning activities for the Policy Board.

The Permian Basin MPO Policy Board and TAC meet once per month at the Permian Basin MPO offices located at 9601 Wright Drive, Suite 1, Midland, Texas. There is a public comment period offered at each Policy Board Meeting.

- **Permian Basin MPO Staff** – The MPO Staff is responsible for performing the administrative and technical services necessary to effectively and efficiently operate the MPO.

## **MISSION, VISION, GOAL, AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Permian Basin MPO Mission Statement**

*Provide leadership to the region in the planning, funding, and development of a safe, efficient multimodal transportation system.*

### **Permian Basin MPO Vision Statement**

*To develop a sustainable multimodal transportation system that meets the future needs of all users.*

### **Permian Basin MPO Goals and Objectives**

#### ***Livability***

Goal 1: Improve the overall quality of life for the traveling public.

Objective: Work with partner entities and stakeholders to address livability issues and local policies affecting transportation, neighborhoods, and safety.

Goal 2: Incorporate multiple modes of transportation in the planning process.

Objective: Facilitate discussions with the member agencies, the public and transit providers related to transit service.

Objective: Partner with public agencies and private companies to increase bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

Goal 3: Address transportation needs in unincorporated communities.

Objective: Work with community groups in unincorporated areas to improve public transportation accessibility.

#### ***Safety***

Goal 4: Incorporate best practices related to safety during the planning process.

Objective: Reduce crashes resulting in fatalities, injuries, and property damage within the region.

Objective: Promote regional efforts to maintain the existing system to keep it in optimal condition.

Goal 5: Assist with educational efforts to bring awareness to users of the transportation system.

Objective: Provide and promote opportunities to educate the public on transportation safety.

### ***Cohesive/Cooperative***

Goal 6: Increase collaboration with member entities to provide continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning.

Objective: Attend planning meetings, workshops, and public hearings to gather information and provide input on regional transportation projects and issues.

Goal 7: Increase outreach efforts to further educate the general public and Title VI/Environmental Justice communities of how the transportation planning process impacts them.

Objective: Inform the public of the MPO's role regarding current and future transportation decision-making efforts.

Objective: Increase participation from the public throughout the transportation planning process.

### ***Connectivity/System Continuity***

Goal 8: Connect infrastructure and services by reducing gaps and conflicts in the multimodal transportation system.

Objective: Utilize Planning and Environmental Linkage studies and other tools for developing new infrastructure prior to considering significant investment.

Goal 9: Ensure that freight is moved safely, efficiently, and seamlessly throughout the region.

Objective: Coordinate efforts with partner entities and stakeholders to improve the movement of freight.

### ***Congestion/Mobility***

Goal 10: Reduce congestion and decrease time delays on the transportation system.

Objective: Implement and maintain the Congestion Management Process as a tool to analyze and identify congestion problems and needs.

Objective: Encourage ride sharing and alternative working hours to alleviate congestion.

Goal 11: Promote awareness of alternative transportation modes.

Objective: Encourage increased participation in transit, cycling, and walking for purposes beyond recreation.

***Efficient Use of Funding***

Goal 12: Identify critical system issues and areas as identified through the Congestion Management Process.

Objective: Employ tools such as Intelligent Transportation Systems and enhanced technology to maximize system efficiency.

Goal 13: Identify non-traditional funding sources or apply for resources beyond what is allocated.

Objective: Increase available funding sources to complete more projects on the transportation system.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

### **General Guidelines**

The Public Participation Plan is intended to provide direction for public involvement activities to be conducted by the Permian Basin MPO and contains the policies, goals, objectives, and techniques used by the MPO for public involvement. In its public participation process, the Permian Basin MPO will:

1. Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including, but not limited to local jurisdiction concerns).
2. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered.
3. Give adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of the MTP, the TIP, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly from the one available for public comment by the Permian Basin MPO and raises new material issues, which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised be made available.
4. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan (including the financial plan for the MTP and TIP) as a result of the public participation process or the interagency consultation process required under MAP-21, report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan.
5. Solicit the needs of those under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to the transportation disadvantaged, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, and low-income households. MAP-21 requires that the MPO shall provide reasonable opportunities for affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation planning process.
6. Provide a public comment period of 45 calendar days prior to the adoption of the Public Participation Plan and/or any amendments. Notice of the comment period will be

advertised in the Midland Reporter Telegram and the Odessa American prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period.

7. Provide a public comment period of not less than 30 calendar days prior to adoption of the MTP and the TIP, and a public comment period of not less than 10 calendar days prior to the adoption of any formal amendments or updates.
8. Coordinate the Public Participation Process with statewide Participation Processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs.

### **Environmental Justice**

Title VI of the 1962 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S. C. 200d-1) states, “No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to the discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” The Executive Order issued on Environmental Justice in 1999 further amplified Title VI by providing that, “each federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” The Executive Order requires all federal agencies to establish internal policies to meet these requirements.

During the adoption of transportation plans, policies, and programs, it is Permian Basin MPO’s policy to ensure fair and full participation in the transportation planning process by all citizens who may be potentially affected. Public outreach to low-income and minority populations will be made by maintaining a distribution mailing list of community organizations and leaders to invite them to participate in the transportation planning process.

Prior to the adoption of any update to the MTP, the MPO will identify low-income and minority populations by traffic analysis zones (TAZs) or by census tracts, so the effects or burdens of transportation programs on these groups can be reviewed and addressed to ensure transportation programs are distributed through the planning area in a fair and equitable manner.

## **PROCEDURAL NOTICES AND PROCESSES**

### **Public Participation Plan**

A minimum public comment period of 45 days will be established prior to the Public Participation Plan adoption or revision. Public participation processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all.

Copies of the draft Public Participation Plan will be placed at the Ector and Midland County Libraries, the City Secretaries’ Offices of the Cities of Odessa and Midland, Martin County Courthouse, TxDOT Odessa District office, and on the Permian Basin MPO website

([www.permianbasinmpo.com](http://www.permianbasinmpo.com)) during the 45-day public review period. The draft Public Participation Plan will also be made available during regular business hours at the Permian Basin MPO Office located at 9601 Wright Drive, Midland, Texas 79706. The adopted Public Participation Plan will remain on the website for ongoing reference by the public.

### **Policy Board**

All meetings of the Permian Basin MPO Policy Board and all public meetings shall be held in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act as amended. Minutes of public meetings shall be retained by the MPO for a period of three (3) years. Current minutes of the public meetings will be maintained on the website ([www.permianbasinmpo.com](http://www.permianbasinmpo.com)). The public will be given an opportunity to comment during every Policy Board and public meeting. All persons attending the Policy Board meeting or other public meetings will be asked to sign a roster that will be retained by the MPO.

Notification of all Policy Board meetings and public comment periods shall be placed at least 72 hours in advance in the Midland Reporter-Telegram and the Odessa American newspapers and on the MPO website

### **Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a long-range planning document which identifies transportation projects and programs for the next 25 years. The MTP addresses various aspects of transportation, such as major streets and highways, traffic operations, maintenance, public transportation, freight, pedestrian and bicycle transportation. The MTP is updated every 5 years.

One or more public meetings shall be held to present a new or amended MTP prior to its adoption. At least one of these meetings shall be held a minimum of 30 days prior to adoption of a new or amended MTP and will provide for a 30-day public comment period for a new MTP and a 10-day comment period for amendments to the MTP.

Copies of the draft MTP will be placed at the Ector and Midland County Libraries, the City Secretaries' Offices of the Cities of Odessa and Midland, Martin County Courthouse, TxDOT Odessa District office, and on the Permian Basin MPO website ([www.permianbasinmpo.com](http://www.permianbasinmpo.com)) during the 30-day public review period (10 days for amendments to the MTP). The draft MTP will also be made available during regular business hours at the Permian Basin MPO Office located at 9601 Wright Drive, Midland, Texas 79706 throughout the 30-day public review period for a new MTP and 10-day public review period for amendments to the MTP. The adopted MTP will remain on the website for ongoing reference by the public.

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies and schedules transportation projects to be implemented in the Permian Basin MPO MAB. The TIP is updated every 4 years; the next update will occur in 2015-2018.

One public meeting shall be held to present the TIP or amendments to the TIP prior to adoption. The meeting shall be held a minimum of 30 days prior to the adoption or amendment

of the program and will provide for a 30-day comment period for a new TIP and a 10-day comment period for amendments to the TIP. All public notifications regarding a public TIP review and comment period will contain the following language: *“This public notice will satisfy the Program of Projects public participation requirement as part of the FTA’s Section 5307 funding grant”*

Copies of the draft TIP will be placed at the Ector and Midland County Libraries, the City Secretaries’ Offices of the Cities of Odessa and Midland, Martin County Courthouse, TxDOT Odessa District office, and on the Permian Basin MPO website ([www.permianbasinmpo.com](http://www.permianbasinmpo.com)) during the 30-day public review period (10 days for amendments to the TIP). The draft TIP will also be made available during regular business hours at the Permian Basin MPO Office located at 9601 Wright Drive, Midland, Texas 79706 throughout the 30-day public review period for a new TIP and a 10 day public comment period for amendments to the TIP. The adopted TIP will remain on the website for ongoing reference by the public.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)**

On July 6, 2012, President Barack Obama signed into law the transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion, MAP-21 represents the largest surface transportation investment in our nation’s history. The bill authorizes transportation programs and projects for the two-year period of 2012-2014. The three landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century – the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), shaped the highway program to meet the nation’s changing transportation needs.

MAP-21 addresses the many challenges facing our transportation system today – challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment – as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. MAP-21 requires the MPO to consider planning strategies that will serve to advance eight transportation planning factors identified under MAP-21 as follows:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;

6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system management and operation; and
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

Goal 1: To provide the public with thorough information on transportation planning services and project development in a convenient and timely manner.

Objective 1: Educate the public regarding the planning of transportation system improvements

The Permian Basin MPO shall maintain an up-to-date database of contacts including at a minimum the following persons to provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to be educated and to comment on the transportation planning process and products:

- Elected Officials of member entities
- Staffs of member entities
- Transportation Agencies (Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District)
- Local Media (Television, Radio, Newspapers)
  - including minority news (El Matador/print materials/ethnic radio/television)
- Homeowners Associations
- Civic Groups and Fraternal Organizations
- Special Interest Groups (Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission and MOTRAN)
- Consultation with Federal, State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation.
- Consultation with parties that would have an interest in the planning and development of the transportation network including affected public agencies in the MAB.
- Private Freight Shippers
- Representatives of Public Transportation Entities
- Private providers of Transportation
- Representatives of Users of Public Transportation
- Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways
- Representatives of Users of Bicycle Transportation Facilities
- Representatives of the Disabled

The Permian Basin MPO Staff shall, when feasible, electronically mail meeting announcements to the MPO Contact list or to targeted groups for upcoming activities.

The MPO Staff will also conduct meetings, when feasible, with the above-referenced groups.

The Permian Basin MPO shall employ visualization techniques 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.

The Permian Basin MPO will conduct workshops when practical and feasible in order to educate/update the public and various stakeholders on transportation planning issues within the Permian Basin MPO MAB.

Objective 2: Provide citizens, public agencies, private transportation and shipping providers, users of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with opportunities to participate in the transportation planning process.

Target audiences shall be identified to encourage the involvement of all area citizens in the transportation planning process. This will include residents, business and property underserved and under-represented populations, including, but not limited to low income and minority households. Outreach opportunities will include the leadership/membership of non-government organizations including, but not limited to:

- MOTRAN
- Midland Industrial Development Corporation
- Odessa Industrial Development Corporation
- Midland Chamber of Commerce
- Odessa Chamber of Commerce
- Service Organizations (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Leadership Midland, Leadership Odessa)
- Housing Authorities/Home Owners' Associations
- School/PTA Organizations

The Permian Basin MPO will, whenever feasible, hold public meetings at a site convenient to potentially affected citizens.

Objective 3: Solicit public feedback early in the transportation planning process so that the final design incorporates solutions which include consideration of public concerns.

The Permian Basin MPO will provide adequate public notice for all Permian Basin MPO regular Policy Board Meetings. A public comment period is offered at each Policy Board Meeting. Public Notice for all Policy Board Meetings will be given ten (10) days prior to the meeting. (See Table No. 1).

All Permian Basin MPO meeting agendas, documents, maps, plans and programs will be made available in electronic format on the Permian Basin MPO website. There is a comment section on the Permian Basin MPO website for the public to ask questions or to make any comments/recommendations which is monitored by MPO Staff. The MTP and TIP documents will be placed at the Ector County and Midland County Libraries for public review and comment prior to final approval of these documents.

The MPO website will be updated and maintained to provide the most current and accurate transportation planning information available. The website ([www.permianbasinmpo.com](http://www.permianbasinmpo.com)) shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- Contact information (mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail)
- Current MPO Membership
- Meeting calendars and agendas
- Work products and publications (MTP, TIP, UPWP Annual Project Listing and Annual Performance Expenditure Report)
- Comment/Questions Form
- Links to transportation related agencies/entities
- Current By-Laws, including the Public Participation Plan and updates.

The Permian Basin MPO Staff will be available to provide general transportation information at their business offices located at the Wright Office Complex, Suite 1, 9601 Wright Drive, Midland, Texas 79706, phone number 432-617-0129, fax number 432-617-0165

The Permian Basin MPO Staff will produce a periodic newsletter for distribution to the MPO contact list that will include updates on current or recently completed projects, design projects, announcements of upcoming meetings, and contact information.

Objective 4: Increase involvement of traditionally underserved communities, such as low-income and minority households, and foster ownership of transportation decision-making by considering the needs of those communities.

Informational outreach will include the leadership/membership of community groups including:

- African-American Chambers of Commerce in the Cities of Midland and Odessa
- Hispanic Chambers of Commerce in the Cities of Midland and Odessa
- Minority community/youth center leaders in Midland and Odessa
- Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District (MOUSD)

The Permian Basin MPO will make every effort, when it is deemed necessary and feasible, to provide an interpreter for meetings.

Objective 5: The Permian Basin MPO will strive to continuously improve public participation.

5.1: The Permian Basin MPO will continuously evaluate public involvement techniques.

5.2: The Public Participation Plan will be reviewed at least every four (4) years in order to improve the effectiveness of public involvement.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

Public participation is a mandated activity of the Permian Basin MPO. Public participation is also an ongoing and integral part of corridor studies, regularly repeated activities such as the MTP and TIP, and scenario planning.

This section contains descriptions of public participation tools that will be used by the Permian Basin MPO:

**Website** – This website ([www.permianbasinmpo.com](http://www.permianbasinmpo.com)) was established to provide basic information about the MPO process, members, meeting times and contact information. The site is currently under construction and has recently been expanded to include information about specific projects undertaken by the MPO. Work products such as the TIP and MTP are available on the site. Also, citizens are able to submit comments. The site provides links to other transportation related sites at the local, state and national level. This site will be used to list current and topical information on both regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, related public events and work products.

**Database** - The Permian Basin MPO Staff will maintain a master database of business, federal, state and local agencies and interested public. The database will include committee membership, mailing information, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses and web sites. The database will be used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest groups and homeowner association contacts, and will be the foundation of the newsletter mailing list. The database will be used to establish and maintain a list of e-mail contacts for electronic meeting notification and announcements. The database will be used to enhance public involvement activities.

**Legal Advertisements** - Texas Government Code, Chapter 551 requires posting a notice of any public meeting where a decision could be made or that may be attended by more than one elected official. The MPO regularly posts notice of the Permian Basin MPO Policy Board Meetings. These notices are posted in the Odessa American and Midland Reporter Telegram newspapers, and Agendas of the Meetings are posted at the Permian Basin MPO Offices. Plans are to begin posting Agendas of Policy Board Meetings at the City Halls of Midland and Odessa. Notices are also posted for all public meetings.

**Press Releases** - Formal press releases will be sent to local media (newspaper, television and radio, and City websites) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the Permian Basin MPO or their board/committees.

**Newsletter** - The Permian Basin MPO Staff will produce a periodic newsletter titled, “Permian Basin MPO MOBILITY FOCUS” – Midland-Odessa Working Together for Better Transportation Solutions”. The “Permian Basin MPO MOBILITY FOCUS” newsletter will be used to promote

regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, work products and board and committee member interviews.

**Permian Basin MPO Logo** - A logo representing the MPO will be used to identify products and publications of the MPO. A logo will help the public become familiar with the different activities of the MPO by providing a means of recognizing MPO products. The following tag line will also be utilized to create a community awareness of the MPO deliverables: “Solving Midland and Odessa’s Transportation Challenges.”



**Public Meetings** - Public Meetings will be conducted to solicit public comment on a project or work products being considered for adoption by the MPO Policy Board. The Public Meetings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to the MPO prior to the final adoption of work products. Notices of the public meetings will be published in the Midland Reporter Telegram and Odessa American newspapers.

The Permian Basin MPO may utilize the following techniques to further expand the public involvement process:

**Display Ads** - The Permian Basin MPO will use publication of larger ads to promote public meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as those conducted for the TIP and MTP. They will be published in the Midland Reporter Telegram and the Odessa American newspapers in order to reach a larger audience than those that typically read legal notices. These ads will provide public awareness of project specific meetings, workshops, or open houses.

**Other Media** - Opportunities will be sought for articles in other newsletters produced by municipalities, homeowners’ associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the MPO transportation issues. Opportunities will also be sought to present to civic and social agencies, participate on radio talk shows, and provide television news highlights and to utilize public service notices to create community awareness of transportation planning activities.

**Direct Mailings** - Direct Mailings will be used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area or group of people. Direct mailings may be post cards, letters or flyers. Activities for which direct mailing may be utilized may include project-specific meetings, scenario planning workshops, open houses, corridor studies, small-area studies, and other planning studies or major activities. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example avid cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects.

**Project Workshops/Open Houses** - Targeted public meetings will be conducted that will generally be open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. Short presentations may be given by the MPO Staff at these meetings. The purpose of project-specific meetings will be to provide information to the public and to solicit public comment and obtain a sense of public priorities.

**E-Mail Announcements** - Meeting announcements and MPO information will be e-mailed to interested persons.

**Kiosks** - The Permian Basin MPO Staff is currently evaluating the costs to add MPO meeting announcements and other information to kiosks that are currently in place in community colleges and at various TxDOT area locations. Eventually, consideration may be given to the purchase of kiosks by the MPO to place at strategic locations that will not only provide information exclusive to the MPO transportation issues, but will allow interactive input capabilities.

**Comment Forms** - Comment forms will be used to solicit public comment on specific issues being presented at public meetings or workshops. Comment forms can be very general in nature, or can ask for very specific feedback.

**Surveys** - Surveys may be utilized when very specific input from the public is desired such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study.

**Posters and Flyers** - Posters and flyers may be used to announce meetings and events and may be distributed to public places such as City Halls, libraries, and community centers for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of a meeting, the time(s), location(s) and contact information. Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot always be reached using direct mailings and/or newsletters.

The Permian Basin MPO Staff will continually monitor the public participation outreach efforts to identify those methods that are the most efficient and effective.



## COMMONLY USED TRANSPORTATION TERMS AND ACRONYMS

**Public Participation:** Is an integral part of a planning or major decision making process. It provides opportunities for the public to be involved with the MPO in an exchange of data and ideas. Citizen participation offers an open process in which the rights of the community to be informed, to provide comments to the Government, and to receive a response from the Government, are met through a full opportunity to be involved and to express needs and goals.

**ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:** Federal law that requires public facilities (including transportation services) to be accessible to persons with disabilities including those with mental disabilities, and temporary disabilities

*The revised Federal Regulations governing the development of metropolitan transportation plans and programs provides specific definitions for “Consultation”, “Coordination”, “Consideration”, and “Cooperation”. The new definitions are provided below:*

**CONSIDERATION:** Means that one or more parties take into account the opinions, action, and relevant information from other parties in making a decision or determining a course of action;

**CONSULTATION:** Means that one or more parties confer with other identified parties in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action(s), considers the view of the other parties and periodically informs them about action(s) taken. This definition does not apply to the “consultation” performed by the States and the MPOs in comparing the long-range statewide transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation plan, respectively, to State and Tribal conservation plans or maps or inventories of natural and historic resources.

**CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS:** The purpose of the CMP is to improve the transportation system performance and reliability by reducing adverse impacts of congestion on the movement of people and goods. The resulting CMP network will reflect corridors currently experiencing congestion. The CMP is a tool that may be used in the MTP project selection process. A draft CMP will be shared with the staff members of Permian Basin MPO member agencies prior to adoption.

**COOPERATION:** Means that the parties involved in carrying out the transportation planning and programming processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective.

**COORDINATION:** Means the cooperative development of plans, programs, and schedules among agencies and entities with legal standing and adjustment of such plans, programs, and schedules to achieve general consistency, as appropriate.

**EJ - ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:** Describes the impact of transportation plans or projects, either positive or negative, on a particular community or population (derived from Title VI of the Civil Right Act of 1964). Environmental Justice strives to ensure public involvement of low income and minority groups in decision making, to prevent disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low income and minority groups, and to assure that these groups receive equal benefits from transportation improvements.

**FHWA – Federal Highway Administration:** Division of the U.S. Department of Transportation responsible for administering federal highway transportation programs under Title 23 U.S.C.

**ISTEA – Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991:** Federal law which restructured transportation planning and funding by requiring consideration of multimodal solutions, emphasis on the movement of people and goods as opposed to traditional highway investments, flexibility in the use of transportation funds, a greater role of MPO’s and a greater emphasis on public participation.

**MOTOR:** Midland Odessa Transportation Organization.

**MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization:** The forum for cooperative transportation decision making; required for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000.

**MTP – Metropolitan Transportation Plan:** A 25-year forecast plan required of state planning agencies and MPOs; which must consider a wide range of social, environmental, energy, and economic factors in determining overall regional goals and consider how transportation can best meet these goals.

**REVISIONS –** The Final Rule defines as a change to a long-range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP or STIP that occurs between scheduled periodic updates. A major revision is an *“amendment”* while a minor revision is an *“administrative modification”*. Amendments require public review and comment, and a demonstration of fiscal constraint. Administrative modifications allow minor changes without such actions.

**MAP-21 – The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act:** Legislation enacted July 6, 2012. Map-21 is a funding and authorization bill to govern United States federal surface transportation spending thru FY 2014. MAP-21 continues the successful Highway Safety Improvement Program, doubling funding for infrastructure safety, strengthening the linkage among modal safety programs, and creating a positive agenda to make significant progress in reducing highway fatalities. It also continues to build on other aggressive safety efforts, including the Department’s fight against distracted driving and its push to improve transit and motor carrier safety.

**MOUSD: Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District**

**TEA-21- Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:** Federal legislation which authorizes funds for transportation and guidelines for the use of those funds. Successor to ISTEA, TEA-21 is the landmark legislation that clarified the role of the MPOs in the local priority setting process. TEA-21 emphasizes increased public involvement, simplicity, flexibility, fairness, and higher funding levels for transportation.

**TIP –Transportation Improvement Program:** A priority list of transportation projects developed by a metropolitan planning organization that is to be carried out within the four (4) year period following its adoption; must include documentation of federal and state funding

sources for each project and be consistent with adopted MPO long range transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans.

**TUMP – Texas Urban Mobility Plan:** The Texas Legislature initiative that requires smaller metropolitan areas to develop comprehensive regional mobility plans to quantify long-range needs within their areas.

**UPDATE** – The Final Rule defines as “making current a long-range statewide transportation plan, metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP through a comprehensive review.” Updates are significant events and require public review and comment, re-establishment of a 20-year horizon year for metropolitan transportation plans and long-range statewide transportation plans, a re-established four-year program period for TIP’s and STIP’s, and demonstration of fiscal constraint.

**UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program:** Developed by Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs); identifies all transportation and planning activities anticipated within the next two years, including a schedule for the completion of the identified tasks and activities.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN EVALUATION**

### **Introduction**

The Federal Highway Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation require that the Midland Odessa Metropolitan Planning Organization (Permian Basin MPO) continue to evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement activities. By continually evaluating public involvement activities, it is possible to improve or add new public involvement activities to the MPO program and to discontinue activities that are ineffective.

The purpose of this section of the Public Participation Plan is to provide guidelines for the evaluation of public involvement techniques. The Permian Basin MPO public involvement activities outlined in this Participation Plan include descriptions of various public involvement techniques that could be used by the MPO. This plan should be reviewed at least every four (4) years to ensure that appropriate changes are being implemented by the MPO. Any significant changes to the Permian Basin MPO’s Public Participation Plan will be advertised and made available for 45 days for public review and comment before final adoption. Administrative or minor adjustments, i.e. terminology, can be approved by the Policy Board without public review.

### **Improvement Strategy**

The Permian Basin MPO continues to strive for improved public involvement. Improvements should be made to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. The decisions made by the MPO affect the entire population, both residents and visitors of the Cities of Midland and Odessa and surrounding areas. Therefore, seeking public input on these decisions is vital to the success of the MPO as the agency responsible for transportation planning. Each time a public involvement evaluation

is performed, a list of improvement strategies need to be identified for implementation. If improvement is needed for an ongoing public involvement task, such as the Permian Basin MPO website, a reasonable completion date should be established.

### **Evaluation Methodology**

To evaluate the Public Participation Plan, five performance measures are recommended:

1. The accessibility of the outreach process to serve diverse geographic, language and ability needs;
2. The extent or reach of the process in involving and informing as many members of the public as possible.
3. The diversity of participants in the outreach process and its ability to reflect the broad Range of ethnicities, incomes and special needs of residents in the Permian Basin MPO region.
4. The impact of public outreach and involvement on the plan and on Policy Board actions.
5. The satisfaction with the outreach process expressed by participants.

Below are five (5) quantifiable performance measures to be applied, as appropriate:

**Accessibility Indicators:** Ensure meetings are held at easily accessible locations within the Cities and Counties. All meetings are to be accessible under Americans with Disability Act requirements. Determine if meetings are linguistically accessible to 100 percent of the participants with three (3) working days' advance request for translation.

**Reach Indicators:** Analyze the number of comments received and kept on file; the number of individuals actively participating in outreach programs; the number of newspaper articles mentioning transportation plans and programs; and the number of radio/television interviews or mentions on the plans and programs.

**Diversity Indicators:** Determine if demographics of targeted workshop/meetings mirror the demographics of the Permian Basin MPO region; the percentage of targeted organizations and groups participating in a least one workshop/meeting; and the participants representing a cross-section of people of various interests, places of residence and primary modes of travel.

**Impact Indicators:** Written comments received are recorded, analyzed, summarized and communicated in time for consideration by staff and the Policy Board. Significant written comments are acknowledged so that the person making them knows whether their comment was considered in the Policy Board action.

**Participation Satisfaction:** This information would be obtained at each workshop/public meeting involving the plan or work program in question.