



**Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Public Involvement Policy**

**August 2008**

### **Title VI Compliance**

The Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization (KMPO) assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100.259), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.

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Materials can be provided in alternate formats by contacting the Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization (KMPO) at 1-800-698-1927 or [kmpo@kmpo.net](mailto:kmpo@kmpo.net).

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## I. FOREWORD

Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization (KMPO) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Kootenai County. KMPO provides a coordinated planning effort between the public, cities, small cities and towns, the county, highway districts, the state, transit providers, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, including:

- City of Coeur d'Alene
- City of Post Falls
- City of Hayden
- City of Rathdrum
- Eastside Highway District
- Idaho Transportation Department
- Kootenai County
- Lakes Highway District
- Post Falls Highway District
- Worley Highway District

KMPO maintains the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), a four-year list of state and federally funded transportation projects, as well as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), a 20-year document mapping the future of transportation in Kootenai County.

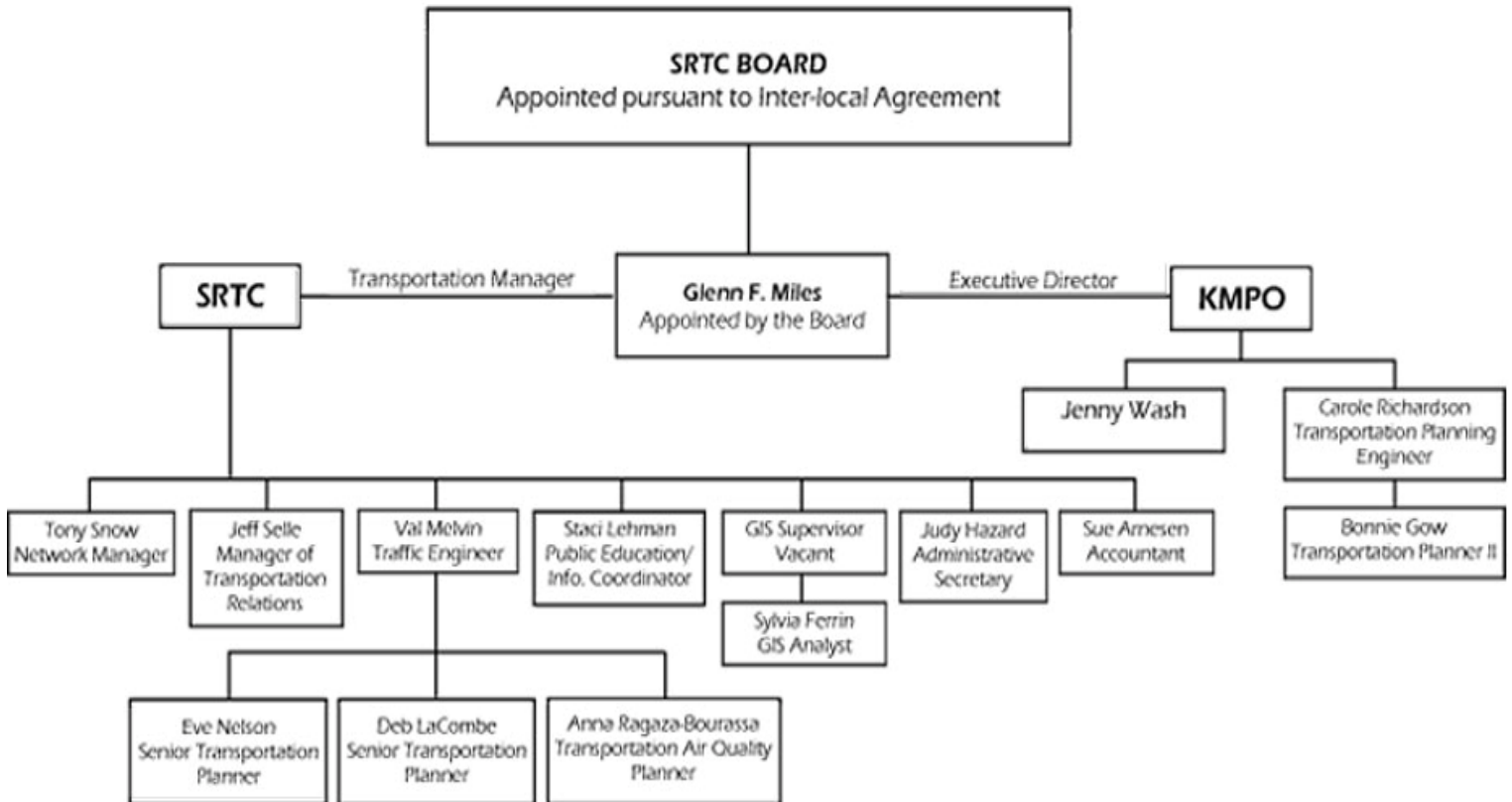
### **Organizational Structure**

KMPO is committed to an active public involvement process that provides comprehensive information, timely public notice, and full public access to key decision makers, KMPO's Board of Directors, staff, and KMPO's technical transportation committee, the Kootenai County Area Transportation Team (KCATT).

The KMPO Board has contracted with Spokane Regional Transportation Council, the MPO for Spokane County, WA, for day-to-day operational and administrative needs. SRTC operates at the pleasure of the KMPO Board.

The organizational chart below shows the structure of KMPO, in relation to SRTC.

# SRTC/KMPO STAFFING



## **Committees**

In addition to a Policy Board, KMPO has two standing committees, the Kootenai County Area Transportation Team (KCATT), and the Public Transportation Roundtable.

KCATT is composed of professionals from various local and state agencies. KCATT assists KMPO staff in the development of an annual work program, reports to KMPO staff on the status of projects approved for funding in the Transportation Improvement Program, and makes recommendations for delays and advances to funding as necessary.

The Public Transportation Roundtable promotes continued coordinated planning and development of integrated public transportation services within and through Kootenai County.

All meetings of the KMPO Board, KCATT, and the Public Transportation Roundtable are open to the public, with the exception of Board executive sessions. Board and KCATT member names, as well as agendas and minutes from all KMPO meetings, are posted on the agency website at [www.kmpo.net](http://www.kmpo.net).

All Board meetings include a public comment period.

KMPO also assembles citizen advisory committees and working groups as needed in order to consult on the development of projects, documents, plans, and other materials and activities.

### **Partner Agencies and Neighboring Regions**

On a continuing basis, KMPO actively coordinates its planning efforts and public involvement activities with agencies and officials responsible for planning within the metropolitan area (including state and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movements). Coordination is achieved through a variety of forums including staff involvement in:

- KMPO Board meetings
- KCATT meetings
- Ad hoc plan/study committee meetings
- Chamber of Commerce meetings
- Citylink, KATS, and Committee meetings
- Local government planning forums and workshops, and
- Idaho Transportation Department and other state agency planning forums and workshops

In addition, KMPO involves representatives of the following groups or associations in the development of major MPO studies/activities:

- Citylink
- KATS
- Freight shippers and 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, elderly, low-income, and limited English proficiency, and
- Other interested parties identified by KMPO in its outreach efforts

KMPO and its counterpart agencies in adjacent regions often coordinate with each other to identify transportation programs and projects of mutual interest for key travel corridors traversing both regions.

### **Development of the Public Involvement Policy**

KMPO worked with area agencies, special interest groups, and members of the public to develop this Public Involvement Policy (PIP) over several years. The original document was written after the SAFETEA-LU federal transportation bill of 2005 was passed, requiring each MPO to develop an official Public Participation Plan.

The original Public Involvement Policy was based on extensive demographic research conducted by the Public Education/Information Coordinator using the internet, existing documents, and public meetings to gather information.

Since then, the document has evolved and been refined on an annual basis by incorporating outreach strategies that proved effective in soliciting and accommodating public involvement during specific studies. Some of those strategies have included sending revised drafts of the PIP to email distribution lists for input, asking attendees at public meetings how they hear about MPO activities and how they would prefer to be notified of activities in the future, and setting up meetings with small groups specifically to solicit ideas on how to reach a larger audience of certain populations (the elderly, disabled, people who speak English as a second language, and other traditionally underserved groups).

While there have been no formal public meetings scheduled in *advance* of Public Involvement Policy revisions, there have been public meetings hosted after each draft revision of the PIP is complete, to provide members of the public a chance to voice their opinions on the document.

In August 2008, a draft of the Public Involvement Policy was made available for a 45-day public comment period and was posted to the KMPO website and the KMPO blog. Members of the public were asked for suggestions on improvements that could be made.

In addition, KMPO presented and sent copies of the PIP to stakeholder groups, sent out a news release, ran legal notices, and sent draft plans to area libraries.

All comments received are included as Appendix A of this document.

### **Interagency Review**

Because KMPO is but one of many players involved in area transportation planning, and recognizing that transportation has direct impacts on the environment, it is essential that regional transportation planning and funding decisions are informed by affected governments at all levels.

KMPO engages the following agencies in its planning process, and this PIP was developed in consultation with:

- Public agencies
- Transit agencies
- 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

To facilitate a discussion on how best to engage numerous local, state, and federal agencies in its plans and programs, KMPO alerted local agencies that the Draft Public Involvement Policy was available for review, and asked for comments and feedback. This was done in August of 2008 by emailing draft copies of the PIP to the groups mentioned above and requesting feedback, and posting the draft PIP to the KMPO website and blog.

Responses to the request for review and comment are included as Appendix A of this document.

KMPO also solicits comments from other agencies when seeking input on other transportation documents, studies, and plans. Anytime a plan, policy, study, or document goes out to public review, a variety of agencies, including KMPO partner agencies, transit agencies, freight shippers, private transportation companies, bike and pedestrian groups, and representatives of disabled groups are alerted through email notification and news releases, and asked to submit comments.

Any agencies, jurisdictions, or companies interested in being contacted about KMPO's public outreach or planning process are welcome to email KMPO at [kmpo@kmpo.net](mailto:kmpo@kmpo.net) or call 1-800-698-1927 to request to be included in outreach efforts.

### **Comments on the Draft Public Involvement Policy**

In August 2008, KMPO released for a 45-day public comment period its Draft Public Involvement Policy for the Kootenai County area. All written correspondence received is included in Appendix A of this document.

## II. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

KMPO's public involvement process aims to give the public ample opportunities for early and continuing participation in transportation projects, plans and decisions, and to provide full public access to key decisions. Engaging the public early and often in the decision-making process is critical to the success of any transportation plan or program, and is required by numerous state and federal laws, as well as by KMPO's own internal procedures.

At key decision points, such as approval of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program, pursuant to state and federal laws, KMPO will provide "citizens, 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 reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process." [Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users- CFR Vol. 72, 450.316].

In order to fulfill this requirement, KMPO includes opportunities for interested parties to be involved in the early stages of plan, program, and policy development. These efforts include publications, workshops, open houses, and many of the other public forums or methods to provide for public education and information that are mentioned in section IV of this document, 'Public Participation Techniques.'

In addition, KMPO coordinates closely with Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) in public participation relating to the State's transportation planning and programming activities. Where opportunities arise, public meetings are combined with meetings relating to the State's transportation plans, such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). KMPO also coordinates with non-profits that receive Federal assistance from ITD and local government authorities, Federal land management agencies, clean air management agencies, and freight shippers.

KMPO's public involvement procedures are built on the following guiding principles:

1. Public education through distribution of information strengthens regional transportation policy and regional plans.
2. Inclusion of the traditionally underserved through alternate modes of communication fortifies the whole.
3. Public input is highest when citizens of all ethnicity, gender and backgrounds are well informed; when they have the opportunity to voice their concerns; and when their concerns have been addressed.
4. Public participation is a dynamic activity that requires teamwork and commitment at all levels of the MPO organization.
5. One size does *not* fit all — effective public participation strategies must be tailored to fit the audience and the issue.
6. Citizen advisory committees can be used to hear and learn from many voices in the Spokane area.

7. Engaging interested citizens in 'regional' transportation issues is challenging, but possible.
8. Effective public outreach and involvement requires relationship building.
9. There are many solutions to a problem.

#### **Updating the Public Involvement Policy**

KMPO's Public Involvement Policy is a fluid document. In accordance with 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x) of the Code of Federal Regulations, this Public Involvement Policy will periodically be reviewed for effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in it to ensure a full and open participation process. KMPO's Public Education/Information Coordinator will review the document each May to determine if revisions are needed, then meet with KMPO's Transportation Manager to discuss, refine, and approve the planned revisions.

All major updates to this Public Involvement Policy will include a review by KMPO's advisory committee, the Transportation Technical Committee, and KMPO's Board, plus a 45-day public comment period with wide release and notification of the public about the proposed changes. All other documents, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Plan, and many others require a 30- day public comment period when revisions are made.

All changes to any KMPO policy are available for public review and comment both on the agency website ([www.kmpo.net](http://www.kmpo.net)) and in hard copy form. In addition to public notices being published in local newspapers, as revisions are made to this document notice will be put out to not only the member jurisdictions for comment, but also to email distribution lists such as: affirmative action, study stakeholders, Tribal contacts, neighborhood councils, citizens, public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private transportation providers, public transportation user representatives, representatives of users of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties. This will be done in an effort to fully satisfy the requirement to develop the public participation plan in consultation with all interested parties.

The final draft of the Public Involvement Policy will be posted to the 'Maps/Data/Publications' page of the KMPO website.

#### **Evaluating the Public Involvement Policy**

The most effective way to measure the success of the public outreach process is to ask members of the public for their opinion. Here are some of the ways KMPO will gauge the effectiveness of the Public Involvement Policy:

- KMPO/SRTC's Public Education/Information Coordinator will poll attendees at public meetings on how they became aware of meetings, and how they would prefer to be notified of planning activities in the future. On occasion, a column will be added to public meeting sign-in sheets inquiring how attendees heard about meetings. This information will be compiled and analyzed to see which methods of notification are the most successful in getting members of the public to attend public meetings, workshops, and activities.
- Demographic data is collected at every public meeting then analyzed to determine who is participating. The information gathered on community characteristics will be used for purposes of assuring that public involvement activities include representatives from diverse geographical areas that make up the MPO planning area. Community characteristic information also supports and encourages improvements in the methods used to meet the public need for information and involvement. The use of this information will hopefully increase attendance, participation, collaboration, and diversity at future meetings and events.

Public involvement-related materials will also be evaluated for effectiveness as needed, including public notices, the KMPO newsletter, the KMPO website, and other items such as brochures and flyers. KMPO/SRTC's Public Education/Information Coordinator monitors website and blog performance by tracking the number of people logging onto the site on a monthly basis. The performance of newsletters, public notices, flyers, brochures and other materials can be measured at public meetings by asking attendees how they became aware of the meeting, or by monitoring how many people respond to requests for comments included in printed materials.

The following measures of effectiveness provide a standard framework to measure how well public feedback is being sought.

**Public Participation Evaluation Matrix**

<b>Public Participation Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal</b>	<b>Performance Strategies</b>	<b>Review Period</b>
<b>Regularly Scheduled Meetings</b>	Monitor meeting attendance of members or alternates	Attendance and participation by all appointed committee members	Stress importance of attendance as leverage to obtain funding for projects and report attendance records to the Board	Monthly
	Monitor demographic representation of committee members	Attempt to fill available citizen positions with people representing varied demographic populations	Identify open positions and assist board members in recruiting people to fill them	Monthly
	Monitor meeting attendance of members of the public	Record the attendance and participation of nonmembers	Send news releases to media outlets, send meeting notices to email distribution lists, post notice of meetings on KMPO's website and blog, and include meeting dates in KMPO's newsletter	Monthly
	Document press attendance at regularly scheduled meetings	Procure media coverage or knowledge of MPO studies/activities	Send news releases to media outlets, follow up news release with phone call to remind media members of meetings, post meeting notices on KMPO's website and blog.	Monthly
	Document public comments at regularly scheduled meetings	Ensure opportunity for public comment at all meetings	Emphasize in news releases, meeting notices, website and blog postings, and media interviews that public comment is always encouraged and there are public comment periods available during every meeting.	Monthly
<b>Public Access to Documents, Studies, and Plans</b>	Monitor the public review of plans and reports, such as through website monitoring services and public records requests	Ensure opportunity for public review of all records	Promote/encourage review of all documents through web/blog postings, news releases, news letter articles, and email notification	Monthly
	Provide multiple copies of all documents, studies, and plans to area libraries as approved by the Board	Provide an additional way for members of the public to view MPO materials	Make contacts at local libraries and maintain relationship with that person	Monthly
<b>Public Information Requests</b>	Monitor calls, emails, and other verbal and written inquiries	Respond to all public requests in a timely and satisfactory manner	Document information provided in project/study files	Monthly
	Poll people who submit requests about the service they received and level of satisfaction with the process	To streamline the public information request process and make it as smooth as possible	Maintain database of input on public information request process	Monthly

**Public Participation Evaluation Matrix (Cont.)**

<b>Public Participation Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal</b>	<b>Performance Strategies</b>	<b>Review Period</b>
<b>Email Distribution Lists and Contact Lists</b>	Number of recipients on lists	Maintain a contact list for every current project/study/etc.	Identify interested citizens or groups through public meetings or activities, website/blog postings, and meeting/event notices	Monthly
<b>Public Meetings, Workshops, and Hearings</b>	Attendance	Set varying attendance goals for each event	Send news releases to media, meeting notices to distribution groups, post notice on website and blog, and place legal notices in local newspapers	As needed
	Public comment and participation	Encourage attendees to provide comment on meeting topic	Provide comment sheets, take verbal comments and record them, use interactive exercises, send contact information home with participants so they can submit comments at their leisure and provide to friends/neighbors to do so as well	As needed
	Media coverage	Amount and tone of media coverage	Send news releases to media and follow up with reminder calls about the meeting or event, greet the media as they come in and provide them with meeting materials, make staff member available to answer media questions	As needed
<b>News Releases and Media Contacts</b>	Number of news articles and level of press coverage	Strive for increased amount of media coverage of local transportation activities	Send news releases and follow up with personal phone calls, develop and maintain positive relationship with media members	Weekly
<b>Printed and Marketing Materials</b>	Amount distributed, monitor how many people respond to requests for comment included in printed materials.	Increase distribution annually	Identify interested recipients during public activities and target civic group meetings to attend and distribute materials	Yearly
	Amount developed	Increase amount of materials available to the public.	Make sure all significant projects/activities have materials available	Monthly
<b>Internet and Direct Mail Polls and/or Surveys</b>	Number of public responses to polls/surveys	Have enough people take polls/surveys to be able to infer public opinion regarding specific topics	News releases to media, notice of polls/surveys sent through email distribution lists or direct mail, post poll/survey on website and blog site.	As needed
<b>Web Site and Blog</b>	Number of site visitors who post comments	Maintain user-friendly, informative, and interesting website and blog site	Emphasize in news releases, legal notices, newsletter articles, and on websites that comments are encouraged and appreciated	Weekly

<b>Public Participation Evaluation Matrix (Cont.)</b>				
<b>Public Participation Tool</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Performance Goal</b>	<b>Performance Strategies</b>	<b>Review Period</b>
<b>Web Site and Blog (Cont.)</b>	Number of site visitors	Maintain user-friendly and interesting website and blog site	Issue press releases, increase links from other sites, include web addresses in legal notices, meeting notices, and newsletter articles	Monthly
<b>Public Inquiry, Special Events, and Outreach Activities</b>	Number of special events/outreach activities involving SRTC staff members	Attend community events as requested by the general public and groups/organizations and seek opportunities to attend events	Monitor community/agency calendars for public events, develop relationship with local event planners, and participate in public events to discuss MPO activities	As needed

**Public Involvement Procedure**

KMPO will target the following agencies for public participation:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Citylink
- KATS
- County Commissioners
- City of Post Falls staff and Council Members
- City of Coeur d'Alene staff and Council Members
- Idaho Transportation Department
- Freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services
- Private providers of transportation, and
- Small cities and towns within the County

KMPO will adhere to the following public involvement procedures:

1. Prior to review and action by the KMPO Board, all regional plans, TIPs, and major amendments will be subject to review and comment by KMPO's Kootenai County Area Transportation Team (KCATT).
2. KMPO may create, when necessary, new citizen committees. Conversely, KMPO may disband citizen committees that are no longer deemed productive.
3. All committee meetings will be open to the public.
4. The scheduled meeting dates of the KMPO Board will be published on the agency website and in newspapers of general circulation. Various ethnic community groups as well as organizations that assist individuals with disabilities will be informed of these dates in order to access all facets of the population. Notice of additional meetings will be sent to newspapers of general circulation a minimum of 10 days prior to the meeting. All possible efforts will be made to place notice of urgent or emergency-scheduled meetings in newspapers ten days prior to the meeting. In the case that is not possible, additional steps to publicize the meeting will be taken, such as posting flyers, sending notice to email

distribution lists, posting meeting information on KMPO's website and blog, and asking other agencies to do the same.

Regularly scheduled meeting dates of all board-created committees will be issued to the general public on a regular basis through such avenues as the news media and general mailings.

5. Public comment will be solicited on all regional plans, TIPs or amendments (including a TIP amendment which adds or deletes a project which contributes to and /or reduces transportation-related emissions). At least 30 days prior to the KMPO Board adopting a regional plan, TIP, or amendment, a legal notice summarizing the document or amendments indicating where copies for review can be obtained and where to send comments will be placed in newspapers of general circulation.

6. KMPO staff will consider all public comments. A summary, analysis and report on the disposition of all comments will be made part of the final document for all plans, studies, policies, and other documents.

7. If the final document differs substantially from the one that was made available for public comment or raises new issues, an additional opportunity for public comment will be made available.

8. The KMPO public process will be coordinated with ongoing local, regional and statewide public involvement processes wherever possible in order to enhance public involvement.

### **Public Meetings**

Public meetings are held as needed. Meetings are located and scheduled to maximize public participation. Locations are chosen based on proximity to the project/study area, ease of accessibility to minority, low-income, and traditionally underserved populations, and based on how accessible the location is to people with disabilities and people who rely on public transit.

If multiple meetings are required on a single topic, the meetings will be held at separate locations in order to cover as much geographic area as possible to provide accessibility to a maximum amount of people.

Meeting times vary, depending on the meeting topic and the target audience. Most meetings are held in the evening as that is when the majority of members of the public are available to attend. In the case of multiple meetings on the same topic, meetings will occasionally be held within traditional daytime working hours.

### **Access to All**

Consistent with Federal requirements associated with the transportation planning process, KMPO is committed to nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities. KMPO strives to ensure fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all Kootenai County residents, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability and income. An effort will be made to seek out and consider the needs and interests of traditionally underserved populations.

To ensure KMPO's programs and activities are inclusive, a community profile utilizing population and demographic characteristics has been developed. This information will assist KMPO in: (1) developing strategies for public outreach activities; (2) project planning and development; (3) evaluating the effects of its transportation planning activities/decisions on the communities it serves; and (4) ensuring that planning decisions/investments are equitable and not disproportionate to traditionally underserved populations.

KMPO utilizes various mechanisms for engaging all segments of the population. For example, KMPO provides auxiliary aids or interpreters to persons with disabilities; translation of materials/meetings for persons with Limited English Proficiency; and visualization techniques for all participants.

### **Tribal Government Consultation**

There are five federally recognized Native American tribal governments in the Kootenai County area/region:

- Spokane Tribe
- Kalispell Tribe
- Coeur d'Alene Tribe
- Salish/Kootenai Tribe
- Colville Tribe

As part of the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), KMPO asked these five tribes to review the documents and respond with suggestions to increase opportunities for ongoing consultation on regional transportation and land use matters.

KMPO also consults with area tribes on other transportation plans, studies, and activities. KMPO's working relationship with area tribes stretches back many years. Originally, tribes were only consulted when projects specifically impacted them or tribal members expressed an interest in being involved in transportation studies or activities. Since then, KMPO has developed a consultation process to involve area tribes in all aspects of the planning process.

KMPO's Executive Director and Transportation Planning Engineer are the two direct point of contacts between SRTC and area tribes. In the past, the Executive Director would meet with tribal members as needed or requested by either party. In recent years though, tribes have been added to email distribution lists for project notices, newsletter mailing lists, and contacted whenever drafts are developed of documents such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or the Transportation Improvement Plan.

KMPO maintains an email distribution list of Tribal contacts. Whenever a plan, policy, study, or document goes out to public review, or notification is sent out on any subject, it goes to the Tribal contacts distribution list in addition to a variety of other distribution lists.

A workshop for planners, designers, and consultants to meet with Tribal representatives to present and explain the transportation planning process has been discussed but to date no formal steps have been taken to arrange such a meeting.

### III. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION METHODS

KMPO uses a variety of ways to notify the public of transportation studies, projects, and activities:

#### **Email Distribution Lists and Databases**

KMPO maintains email distribution lists and databases of interested members of the public, public agency staff members, committee members, and stakeholders. The distribution lists and databases include mailing information, e-mail addresses, and other contact information, and are organized around transportation studies, issues, or events. This allows KMPO to send targeted mailings to keep the public updated on specific activities they are interested in.

#### **Public Meetings, Workshops and Forums**

Public meetings on specific issues are held as needed. If statutorily required, formal public hearings are conducted, and notice is placed in the legal section of numerous newspapers in the KMPO region at least ten days prior to the meeting. Documents containing the proposals to be considered at KMPO public hearings are delivered to libraries throughout the region prior to public hearings, and are made available to interested citizens upon request.

KMPO also conducts workshops, community forums, conferences and other events to keep the public informed and involved in various transportation projects and plans, and to elicit feedback from the public and KMPO's partner agencies. Meetings are located and scheduled to maximize public participation (including evening meetings). Some types/techniques used for KMPO Public Meetings/Workshops are:

- Open Houses
- Facilitated discussions
- Question-and-Answer sessions with planners and policy board members
- Break-out sessions for smaller group discussions on multiple topics
- Interactive exercises
- Customized presentations

For major initiatives and events, KMPO typically provides notice by posting information on the agency website, and through e-mail notices, flyers, and news releases. If appropriate, bulk mailings are used to distribute flyers, surveys, or postcards about upcoming meetings and events.

All meeting notices include language indicating that KMPO is capable of, and willing to, arrange for an interpreter or have meeting materials translated. Equipment is also available to assist people with hearing impairments. Requests for interpreters, translated materials or special equipment must be received by KMPO at least 48 hours prior to the date the item is needed.

The public will be offered the opportunity to comment at all public meetings. A time limit may be set for each speaker in consideration of time constraints. Any person wishing to attend the meeting and comment and who needs special consideration such as a sign-language interpreter, can contact KMPO 48 hours prior to the meeting.

#### **Emergency/Urgent meetings**

KMPO makes every effort to schedule all meetings with at least ten days before the meeting in which to place legal notices in local publications. Occasionally however, an issue will arise that requires an emergency or urgent meeting be scheduled with less than ten days advance notice. In these cases, every effort will be made to place ads ten days prior to the meeting, but if not possible, other, additional efforts will be made to publicize the meeting, such as:

- Posting flyers
- Sending notice to email distribution lists
- Posting meeting information on KMPO's website
- Posting meeting information on KMPO's blog
- Asking other agencies to post meeting information on their websites, and
- Sending news release to local media and making personal calls to ask media contacts to publicize the meeting

### **Web Site**

KMPO's Web site, [www.kmpo.net](http://www.kmpo.net), is targeted at transportation professionals, elected officials, members of the public, and news media seeking information on particular programs, projects and public meetings.

KMPO's website is a primary location for current information on all KMPO activities, and for posting documents, reports, and studies. Its function is to make information available quickly and conveniently. The KMPO website averages approximately 100 page views per day. That average has been increasing steadily over the past few years.

Updated on a regular basis, the site provides information about KMPO's projects and programs, the agency's structure and governing body and upcoming public meetings and workshops. It contains the names and contact information for staff and Board and Committee members, as well as all KMPO current planning documents and other publications.

### **Media Outlets**

KMPO regularly issues news releases about studies, projects, events, and actions of interest to the media. These include announcements of public meetings, workshops, and hearings. News releases are sent to regional, state and national media — including minority print and broadcast outlets.

Area and regional media outlets include:

- Spokesman-Review newspaper
- Coeur d'Alene Press newspaper
- The Pacific Northwest Inlander weekly newspaper
- The Bonner County Bee newspaper
- KHQ Channel 6 television news
- KXLY Channel 4 television news
- KREM Channel 2 television news
- FOX 28 television news
- KSBN radio
- Building Magazine
- Cheney Free Press
- Deer Park Tribune
- Clear Channel Radio
- Journal of Business
- City Cable 5
- CDA TV Channel 19
- KPBX Radio
- Out There Monthly magazine
- Kootenay News newspaper
- La Prensa Bilingue newspaper

- Northwest Cable News
- Rathdrum Star newspaper
- Valley News Herald
- Comunidades Latinas del NW website
- Los Carminos de la Vida radio program
- Russian Spokane website
- Thin Air Radio

***Staff Dedication to Assistance and Outreach***

In addition to the components of KMPO's public outreach program detailed above, KMPO's commitment to public participation includes staff dedicated to involving the public in our work. KMPO/SRTC's Public Education/Information Coordinator provides the following materials and services:

- Any item on the KMPO Web site (including meeting notices, agendas, and materials that accompany agenda items) if a person does not have Internet access,
- Works with interested organizations to arrange for KMPO staff and Board members to make presentations to community groups, and
- Will respond by telephone (1-800-698-1927), U.S. mail (221 W. First Ave., Suite 310, Spokane, WA 99201-3613) or e-mail ([kmpo@kmpo.net](mailto:kmpo@kmpo.net)) to inquiries from the public and the media about KMPO.

## **IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES**

KMPO selects from an array of options to develop and execute specific public participation programs to inform of its major decisions, such as for corridor studies, new funding policies or updates to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Public participation activities require a wide variety of tools to reach various audiences. The following lists the audiences, strategies, and materials that may increase public involvement:

### **Key Audiences**

- Public voters
- Media
- Legislators/elected officials
- Special interest groups/involved members of the public
  - a. environmental groups
  - b. social groups
  - c. civic groups
  - d. business groups
- Neighborhoods/neighborhood councils
- Traditionally underserved populations such as ethnic citizens or citizens with Limited English Proficiency, and
- Transportation users

### **Public Meetings/Workshops**

- Get on meeting agendas of existing agencies, and
- Co-host workshops with community groups, business associations, etc., especially in low-income and minority communities for targeted outreach

### **Visualization Techniques**

- Maps
- Charts, illustrations, photographs
- Web content
- PowerPoint slide shows

### **Polls/Surveys**

- Telephone polls
- Electronic surveys via internet
- Printed surveys distributed at meetings or through the U.S. Mail

### **Focus Groups**

- Participants recruited randomly from telephone polls

### **Printed Materials**

- Reader-friendly documents
- Maps, charts, photographs, and other visual means of displaying information

### **Targeted Mailings/Flyers**

- Deliver flyers to businesses/services within interest area
- Mail to targeted database lists
- Distribute stacks of flyers to key community organizations for distribution

### **Utilize local media**

- News Releases
- Opinion pieces/commentaries
- Purchase display ads
- Place speakers on Radio/TV talk shows
- Public Service Announcements on radio and TV
- Develop content for public access/cable television programming
- Free or weekly or monthly neighborhood or regional newspapers and newsletters

### **Electronic Access to Information**

- Web site with updated content
- Opportunity on website to comment on materials/content
- Electronic duplication of open house/workshop materials
- Blog sites, including opportunity to comment
- Access to maps, charts
- Provide information in advance of public meeting

### **Notify Public via:**

- Emails, both to individuals and distribution lists
- Notice widely disseminated through partnerships with community-based and interest organizations
- Newsletters
- Printed materials
- Electronic access to information
- Local Media
- Flyers distributed throughout community
- Exhibits at events such as information fairs, community festivals, etc.

### **Techniques for Involving Low Income Communities and Communities of Color**

Prior to the implementation of special outreach efforts, KMPO used several methods to identify where low income communities, communities of color, and Limited-English Proficient Populations are likely to live and work. This was done through analysis of US Census information. Following are other methods KMPO may use to identify special populations:

- The American Literacy Council maintains information on those who have both low literacy and low English proficiency.
- Consultation with the Idaho Housing and Finance Commission can provide supplemental information both on the location and the best method of interaction with lower-income populations.
- Transportation disadvantaged individuals can sometimes be located through the cooperation of transit agencies and specific disabilities agencies such as the American Council of the Blind, Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, etc. All facilities that will be considered for use as meeting sites will be investigated to assure that they are ADA compliant.

Throughout the year, in an effort to determine and consider the needs of area underserved minority, low-income, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations, KMPO will conduct an ongoing dialogue with groups representing their interests and those of potentially under-served populations, such as the elderly, youth, and non-native-English speakers.

To consider and articulate the needs of these groups and populations, KMPO uses methods that include gathering information on their transportation needs, as well as identifying, sharing, and connecting new contacts and sources of information for the planning process, recruiting new people interested in participating in the planning process, and serving as a conduit for ideas on improving transportation that can be relayed to other agencies.

Following are some of the ways KMPO involves low income communities and communities of color in the planning and decision-making process:

- Place flyers in low income neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color.
- Translate materials and have translators available at meetings as requested.
- Include information in meeting notices on how to request translation assistance.
- Use large amount of “visualization” techniques, including maps and graphics to illustrate trends, choices being debated, etc.
- Use community and minority media outlets to announce participation opportunities.
- Notify minority/ethnic organizations of public meetings/hearings/projects/activities by e-mail, with the goal of engaging traditionally underserved populations in a culturally appropriate manner. This includes the Native American community. KMPO maintains an email distribution list titled ‘Tribal contacts.’ This list has been used to engage/consult with Tribal Governments in development of the MTP, TIP, and several other documents.
- When multiple meetings will be held for a single project, efforts will be made to ensure a diversity of meeting locations are utilized, in an effort to reach all segments of the affected population.
- KMPO/SRTC’s Public Education/Information Coordinator will seek opportunities to speak at meetings of groups involving minority/low income and traditionally underserved citizens.
- Notice of all public meetings/hearings will be posted on the front page of the KMPO website at [www.kmpo.net](http://www.kmpo.net).
- A quarterly newsletter of KMPO activities will be emailed to local jurisdictions, interested transportation users, citizen groups and any other person/group that expresses an interest in receiving it. The newsletter will also be posted to the front page of the KMPO website.
- Press releases will be distributed to local media outlets in order to inform citizens of any meetings/hearings or other KMPO activities or issues that transportation users should be aware of.
- All KMPO news releases and meeting notices will include wording to the effect that KMPO assures nondiscrimination in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, etc. and that special accommodations can be arranged by calling in advance.
- KMPO/SRTC’s Public Education/Information Coordinator will make arrangements to speak at the meetings of neighborhood councils that are affected by projects/activities organized by or involving SRTC.

#### **Techniques for Involving Limited-English Proficient Populations**

Census data shows there is not a great need for translation services in the Kootenai County area. Statistics show the greatest potential benefits would be for people who speak Spanish or Russian at home. Accordingly, KMPO will concentrate any necessary Limited English Proficiency (LEP) efforts primarily on these populations. Efforts such as:

- On-call translators for meetings.
- Include information on meeting notices on how to request translation assistance.
- Use large amount of “visualization” techniques, including maps and graphics to illustrate trends, choices being debated, etc.
- KMPO has created a list of all KMPO and SRTC staff members who speak a second language semi-fluently. One staff member speaks semi-fluent Spanish, one speaks semi-fluent French and one speaks semi-fluent Japanese. These staff members have agreed to be initial points of contact for citizens who speak the language each staff member is “semi-

fluent” in. Staff members will assist callers by arranging interpretation or translation services as necessary.

- The City of Spokane maintains, and makes available for KMPO utilization, a ‘Language Bank’ for circumstances when there is not enough time in advance to schedule a certified translator. Employees who speak second languages volunteer to help translate if called upon. This resource is helpful for times when persons with LEP show up at an agency to ask a question or deal with an issue without scheduling an appointment in advance.
- Flyers and other informational material, written in the identified populations’ language, will be posted/distributed in locations frequented by Title VI-identified populations.
- The publication ‘La Prensa Bilingue’ will be used as a source for disseminating information to Spanish-speaking populations.
- The website ‘Comunidades Latinas del NW’ will be used as a source for disseminating information to Spanish-speaking populations.
- The local radio program ‘Los Carminos de la Vida’ will be used as a source for disseminating information to Spanish-speaking populations.
- The website ‘Russian Spokane’ will be used as a source for disseminating information to Russian-speaking populations.
- A local Russian radio show that airs every Saturday on ‘Thin Air’ will be used as a source for disseminating information to Russian-speaking populations.
- Every meeting notice and news release will include wording on how to request translation services.
- Regional plans such as the TIP and MTP will include visualizations of projects of regional significance. These visualizations will be digitally-altered pictures, sketches, and drawings. They will be used in general to convey to the public what a project will look like after construction is complete, but will also be effective in demonstrating to persons of Limited English Proficiency who may not be able to understand a written project description, what a project is meant to accomplish.

#### **Techniques for Reporting on Impact of Public Comments**

- Summarize key themes of public comments in reports.
- Email participants from meetings, surveys, etc. to report final outcomes.
- Newsletter articles.
- Maintain updated and interactive internet content.

## V. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MATERIALS

KMPO public information materials communicate simply, efficiently, and concisely to the public concerning transportation projects. Examples of materials include but are not limited to:

- Brochures
- Visualizations
- Maps
- Line drawings
- Renderings
- Photographs
- PowerPoint and other types of presentations
- Fact sheets
- Charts
- Graphs
- Newsletters
- Web sites

Regional plans such as the TIP and MTP will include visualizations of projects of regional significance. Through visual imagery, the complex character of proposed transportation plans, policies and programs can be portrayed at appropriate scales and from different points of view, providing the public and decision makers with a clear idea of the proposals and likely impacts to the human and natural environment.

### **Publications**

Copies of all reports, Major Investment Studies, bylaws, policies, etc., will be published on the KMPO web site on either the home page, the 'Documents, Studies and Plans' page, or the 'Maps/Data/Publications' page, and on the KMPO blog page. For those who do not have internet access, hard copies can be requested of all materials posted to the websites.

A quarterly KMPO newsletter is published and distributed to partner agencies, libraries, community centers, neighborhood councils, and concerned transportation users and groups. The newsletter is also published on the agency web site and linked to the KMPO blog.

## **VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES FOR THE MTP, TIP, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

SAFETEA-LU requires KMPO and other MPOs to focus efforts on implementing and updating a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), as well as several other documents.

The MTP and TIP are specially called out in federal law as needing early and continuing opportunities for public participation.

### **Metropolitan Transportation Plan**

The long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) guides all area transportation development over 20 years. The MTP is the comprehensive blueprint for transportation investment (transit, highway, local roads, bicycle, and pedestrian projects), and establishes the financial foundation for how the region invests in its surface transportation system by identifying how much money is available to address critical transportation needs and setting the policy on how projected revenues are to be spent. The MTP is updated annually to reflect reaffirmed or new planning priorities and changing projections of growth and travel demand based on a reasonable forecast of future revenues available to the region.

MTP updates include extensive public consultation and participation involving area residents, public agency officials, and stakeholder groups over many months. As appropriate, KMPO requests that local agencies involve the public in their process for nominating projects for inclusion in the MTP, and show how public comments helped inform their recommendation.

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) implements the policy and investment priorities expressed by the public and adopted by KMPO in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The TIP covers a four-year timeframe, and all projects included in the TIP must be consistent with the MTP. The TIP is a comprehensive listing of area surface transportation projects — including transit, highway, local roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian investments — that:

- receive federal funds, or are
- subject to a federally required action, or are
- regionally significant, for federal air quality conformity purposes.

The TIP includes a financial plan that demonstrates there are sufficient revenues to ensure that the funds committed (or “programmed”) to the projects are available to implement the projects or project phases. Adoption of the TIP also requires a finding of conformity with federal transportation-air quality conformity mandates.

The following Document Review and Advertising Schedule gives an idea of what kind of documents KMPO develops and the process for reviewing, adopting, and updating them.

<b>KMPO Document Review and Advertising Schedule</b>	
<b>Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed and updated on annual basis</li> <li>• Review through Kootenai County Area Transportation Team (KCATT)</li> <li>• Reviewed through KMPO Board (first touch in two-touch system)</li> <li>• Minimum 30-day comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Legal advertisement published in the Spokesman-Review and Coeur d'Alene Press; ad includes notice of public meeting to be held during 30-day comment period</li> <li>• Notice of public comment period sent to extensive email distribution list</li> <li>• Public meeting hosted during 30-day comment period to solicit input</li> <li>• Draft document posted for review and comment on KMPO website and blog site</li> <li>• Provide draft to Federal and State agencies for official review and comments, and partner agencies (list of partner agencies is included as section I of this document) Provide draft to area libraries for public review and comment</li> <li>• Document is approved by KMPO Board</li> <li>• Distribute final adopted copies to partner, Federal, and State agencies, and area libraries.</li> <li>• Post adopted document on the KMPO website and blog site.</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed and updated on annual basis</li> <li>• Reviewed through KCATT</li> <li>• Reviewed through KMPO Board (first touch in two-touch system)</li> <li>• Minimum 30-day comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Legal advertisement published in the Spokesman-Review and Coeur d'Alene Press; ad includes notice of public meeting to be held during 30-day comment period</li> <li>• Notice of public comment period sent to extensive email distribution list</li> <li>• Public meeting hosted during 30-day comment period to solicit input</li> <li>• Draft document posted for review and comment on KMPO website and blog site</li> <li>• Provide draft to Federal and State agencies for official review and comments, and partner agencies (list of partner agencies is included as section I of this document) Provide draft to area libraries for public review and comment</li> <li>• Document is approved by KMPO Board</li> <li>• Distribute final adopted copies to partner, Federal, and State agencies, and area libraries.</li> <li>• Post adopted document on the KMPO website and blog site.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Involvement Policy (PIP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and assess every two (2) years</li> <li>• Minimum 45-day public comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Review through Transportation Technical Committee</li> <li>• Reviewed through SRTC Board (first touch in two-touch system)</li> <li>• Minimum 30-day comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Legal advertisement published in the Spokesman-Review; ad includes notice of public meeting to be held during 45-day comment period</li> <li>• Notice of public comment period sent to extensive email distribution list</li> <li>• Draft document posted for review and comment on SRTC website and blog site</li> <li>• Provide draft to Federal and State agencies for official review and comments, and partner agencies (list of partner agencies is included as section I of this document)</li> <li>• Board adopts final document</li> <li>• Distribute final adopted copies to partner, Federal, and State agencies, and area libraries.</li> <li>• Post adopted document on the SRTC website and blog site.</li> </ul>

**SRTC Document Review and Advertising Schedule (Cont.)**

<p><b>Title VI Annual Questionnaire</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed and assessed annually</li> <li>• Minimum 30-day public comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Review through KCATT</li> <li>• Review through KMPO Board (first touch in two-touch system)</li> <li>• Minimum 30-day comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Legal advertisement published in the Spokesman-Review and Coeur d'Alene Press; ad includes notice of public meeting to be held during 30-day comment period</li> <li>• Notice of public comment period sent to extensive email distribution list</li> <li>• Draft document posted for review and comment on SRTC website and blog site</li> <li>• Provide draft to Federal and State agencies for official review and comments, and partner agencies (list of partner agencies is included as section I of this document)</li> <li>• Board adopts final document</li> <li>• Distribute final adopted copies to partner, Federal, and State agencies, and area libraries.</li> <li>• Post adopted document on the KMPO website and blog site.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kootenai County Coordinated Public-Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed and adopted periodically</li> <li>• Minimum 30-day public comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Review through KCATT</li> <li>• Review through KMPO Board (first touch in two-touch system)</li> <li>• Minimum 30-day comment period prior to adoption and/or revision</li> <li>• Legal advertisement published in the Spokesman-Review and Coeur d'Alene Press; ad includes notice of public meeting to be held during 30-day comment period</li> <li>• Notice of public comment period sent to extensive email distribution list</li> <li>• Draft document posted for review and comment on KMPO website and blog site</li> <li>• Provide draft to partner agencies (list of partner agencies is included as section I of this document)</li> <li>• Board adopts final document</li> <li>• Distribute final adopted copies to partner, Federal, and State agencies, and area libraries.</li> <li>• Post adopted document on the KMPO website and blog site.</li> </ul>

## **VII. SUMMARY**

Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization recognizes the importance of the public participation process as a means to inform, educate, and involve citizens in the transportation decisions that shape our community. By involving the public in our planning process, it helps to ensure that plans and programs include elements important to our community members and that all segments of the population benefited equally.

The KMPO Public Involvement Policy has been developed to assist staff in administering an effective public outreach program. Future updates to this document will include new and innovative strategies as they evolve.

# **Appendix A**

## **Public Comment**

**No comments were received regarding the Public  
Involvement Policy**