

KMPO Public Involvement Policy June 2007

Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization (KMPO) encourages a proactive and meaningful public involvement process to the citizens of Kootenai County and its partner agencies. KMPO will provide timely public notice and disclosure of information and public access unbiased by race, ethnicity, gender, economic level or any other population boundary. Early and continuing public involvement in transportation planning (i.e. regional plans, major investment studies, the Transportation Improvement Plan, etc.) is the goal and main objective of the public involvement portion of KMPO. This includes identification of transportation issues of citizen concern through a well-considered public participation process.

KMPO's Public Involvement Policy is a fluid document. Revisions will be considered annually and all changes in any KMPO policy are available for public review and comment.

KMPO public involvement policy is based on the following principles:

- A. Public education through distribution of information strengthens regional transportation policy and regional plans.
- B. Inclusion of the traditionally underserved through alternate modes of communication fortifies the whole.
- C. 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.
- D. There are many solutions to a problem.

Public Involvement Procedure

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 (www.kmpo.net) 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. 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, general mailings, and so on.
5. Public comment will be solicited on all regional plans, TIP or major 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. When significant comments are received on the regional plan or TIP, a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of all comments will be made part of the final document.

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.

Publications

Copies of all reports, Major Investment Studies, bylaws, policies, etc., will be published on the KMPO web site.

A semi-annual KMPO newsletter will be published and distributed to partner agencies, libraries, community centers and neighborhood councils. This will also be published on the web site.

Public Meetings

Meetings for public comment will be held prior to the adoption of any major plan or TIP. A record of comments received and responses will be archived and included with the final document.

1. Public meetings will be held prior to the adoption of the regional plan or TIP. Notice of such meetings will be published in newspapers of general circulation at least ten days prior to such meetings.

2. Annually KMPO will hold a public meeting to review planning assumptions and the plan-development process with interested parties and the general public.

3. KMPO will actively seek feedback and encourage participation from all public sectors.

4. All public meetings will be accessible to the disabled.

Public Outreach Strategies

Public participation activities will require a wide variety of tools to reach various audiences. The following lists those audiences, strategies, techniques 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
 - Traditionally underserved populations such as ethnic citizens or citizens with Limited English Proficiency

Strategies for Outreach to Minority/Low Income Populations:

KMPO seeks to increase opportunities for public comment on its activities, including its policies, programs, and transportation studies. KMPO is particularly interested in providing opportunities for underserved populations to provide input into planning activities.

KMPO will implement the following strategies in an attempt to reach minority/low income and traditionally underserved populations:

- advertisements for public meetings will be published in area general-circulation newspapers and publications.
- Minority/ethnic organizations will be notified of public meetings/hearings/projects/activities by e-mail, with the goal of engaging traditionally underserved populations in a culturally appropriate manner.
- 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'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.
- A quarterly newsletter of KMPO activities will be emailed to local jurisdictions, interested citizens, 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 the public should be aware of.
- KMPO's Public Education/Information Coordinator will make arrangements to speak at the meetings of neighborhood groups that are affected by projects/activities organized by or involving SRTC.

Strategies for Outreach to Limited English Proficiency Populations:

Results from the 2000 U.S. Census show that there is not a great need for translation services in the Kootenai County area. The statistics show that only 3.7% of Kootenai County residents speak a language other than English at home.

Even so, KMPO has established the following policies for providing information to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

- KMPO has created a list of all 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.
- Flyers and other informational material, written in the identified populations' language, will be posted/distributed in locations frequented by Title VI-identified populations.
- Research will be conducted into locating any possible Spokane-area publications that target minority populations in order to replace La Prensa Bilingue as a source for disseminating information to minority and LEP populations. La Prensa Bilingue is no longer in operation.

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, maps, line drawings, renderings, presentations, fact sheets and web sites.