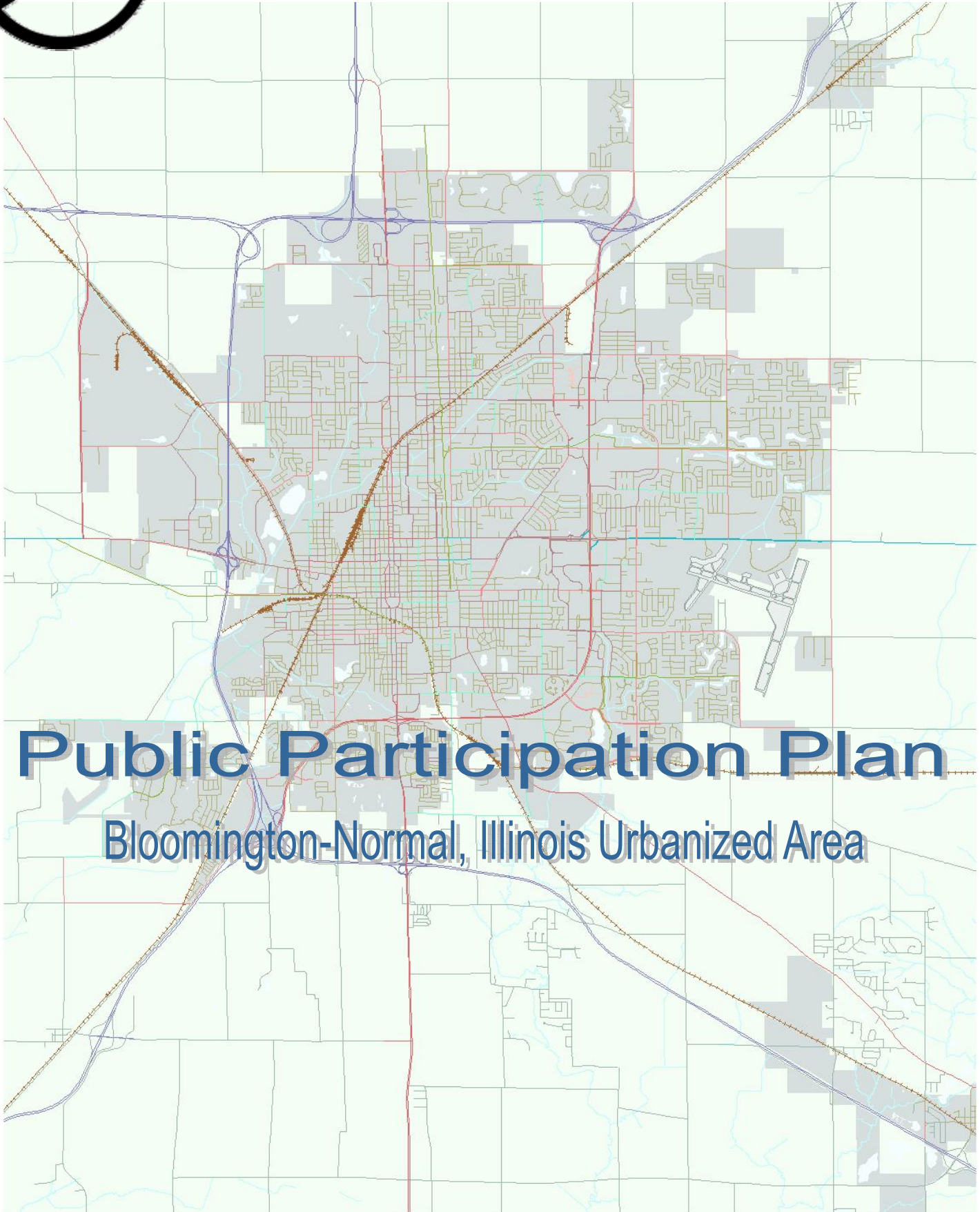


McLean County Transportation Study

Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area  Public Participation Plan



Public Participation Plan

Bloomington-Normal, Illinois Urbanized Area

Public Participation Plan

The McLean County Regional Planning Commission, acting as the metropolitan planning organization [MPO] for the Bloomington-Normal, Illinois urbanized area, and through the Policy Committee of the McLean County Transportation Study, adopts the following Plan to promote public involvement in transportation planning.

The intent of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission Participation Plan is to provide a process for meaningful public input into transportation decision-making. This process includes offering reasonable opportunities for the public to be informed and involved in the development of transportation plans and programs in the metropolitan area. Proactive outreach to educate and inform the public about transportation issues and options, and to elicit input from the public on transportation issues, is integral to the process. Consistent with the principles underlying SAFETEA-LU, outreach is conducted early in the planning process, and is designed to ensure participation by traditionally underserved populations. The metropolitan transportation planning area refers to the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and the adjoining portions of McLean County anticipated to be developed over the next 20-year period, and as defined in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Therefore, the McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall provide a reasonable opportunity to comment on proposed plans for 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 and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of persons with disabilities, and other interested parties.

Components or objectives of the existing public involvement process followed by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission have been revised to incorporate elements required of a Participation Plan process by 23 CFR Part 450.316 pursuant to Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU),(Public Law 109-59, August 10, 2005). Sections A thru C of the Participation Plan address the participation process. Section D addresses the agency consultation process required by SAFETEA-LU of the metropolitan transportation plans and programs.

Section A: Participation Plan Elements

1. Public notification will be provided not fewer than 15 days nor more than 30 days in advance of consideration of action by the Policy Committee of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission on proposed long range [metropolitan] transportation plan updates, transportation improvement programs, and amendments to these planning documents.

- a. To provide time for full public review and comment on the draft participation plan, and pursuant to 23 CFR §450.316(a)(3), public notification will be provided no less than 45 days in advance of consideration of action on this document by the Policy Committee of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission.
 - b. The draft Transportation Improvement Program [TIP] will be reviewed by the members of the Technical Committee and will be made available to the general public, as specified below, for review and comment. Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.316(b)(1)(iv), the public review and comment period will extend a minimum of 30 days. Comments during the thirty-day period should be submitted in writing. One public hearing for the TIP will be held prior to its adoption, during which public comments will also be received. TIP amendments shall be considered and acted upon in the course of public meetings of the Technical and Policy Committees, as required pursuant to 23 CFR 450.104. Events defined as requiring an amendment to the TIP include major changes to a project, including the addition or deletion of a project or a major change in project cost, project/phase initiation dates, or a major change in design concept or design scope.
 - c. The Long Range Transportation Plan will be available to the general public for a 45 day review and comment period. A public hearing on the Long Range Transportation Plan will be held prior to its adoption.
2. A meeting notice will be provided electronically to local news media, including local public television as applicable, one week in advance of each regular Policy Committee and Technical Committee meeting. Reasonable access to available information about MPO sponsored transportation studies in the metropolitan area will also be provided.
 3. Available resources, including web-based mapping, published maps and illustrations and other graphic data will be used by the MPO to visually convey information related to and improving understanding of metropolitan transportation plans and programs.
 4. Public information related to transportation plans and programs and meeting notices of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission will be provided electronically on the World Wide Web, including draft and final versions of the Participation Plan. The website will also provide meeting agendas and minutes, information on the purpose, programs and structure of the Regional Planning Commission, information on MPO planning projects and studies, and contact information for MPO staff.
 5. Public meetings sponsored by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission will be held at convenient locations and times. A citizen information period will be provided during each regular MPO meeting.

6. Public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the transportation improvement program will be given consideration by the MPO. Significant public comments received will be reported by staff to the Policy Committee and the Technical Committee.
7. Outreach efforts seeking input on metropolitan transportation plans and programs from low income and minority households traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems will be continued and documented. All public participation activities of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall be conducted to permit involvement by persons with disabilities, and by persons with limited English proficiency, upon request.
8. Public notices advising citizens in the metropolitan area of the availability of draft transportation plans, transportation improvement programs and conformity reports in local public libraries will be continued. Additional opportunity for public comment will be provided if the final metropolitan transportation plan or transportation improvement program or conformity analysis differs significantly from the version initially made available for public review.
9. The implementation of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission Participation Plan will be coordinated with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes developed, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the metropolitan area that are affected by transportation.
10. The overall effectiveness of procedures and strategies contained in the Participation Plan to ensure a full and open participation process will be reviewed periodically by the McLean County Regional Planning Commission.

Section B: Disposition of Significant Comments

1. When significant comments are received on the draft Long Range Transportation Plan or the Transportation Improvement Program as a result of the Participation Plan, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Section C: Agency Consultation on Other Planning Activities

1. As the transportation plan and the transportation improvement program are developed, the MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities in the metropolitan area affected by transportation in order to coordinate planning functions to the maximum extent practicable. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission, through technical assistance and direct participation, contributes to the planning processes of its constituent governments, agencies and partners. Such contributions involve the formulation of regional and local planning and

development policy, and the implementation of program and project objectives.

2. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission process for public review, participation and comment on the Transportation Improvement Program serves as the public participation process for the Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System Program of Projects.
3. The nature of the consultation shall include comparison of metropolitan plans and transportation improvement programs, as they are developed, with the plans maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies.
4. Interested parties, public and private, responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation in Bloomington-Normal and McLean County shall be included in the planning consultation process, as appropriate. Interested parties whose early and continuous involvement shall be sought include but are not limited to affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation users and employees, freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and citizens. Interested parties shall have access to timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes, and to avenues for direct involvement in the transportation planning process.
5. Metropolitan transportation plans and transportation improvement programs shall be developed with consideration for governmental agencies and non-profit organizations receiving Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation for the design and delivery of non-emergency transportation services.
6. The MPO, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, shall provide to all interested parties access to an annual listing of Federally Obligated Projects.
7. The MPO will consider the future development of an operations plan for consulting with other governmental agencies responsible for the development of plans affected by transportation in the metropolitan area

Section D: Public Participation Plan Evaluation

1. Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), the McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall conduct periodic review of public participation activities and initiatives, and shall revise or amend the Public Participation Plan as needed to enhance public participation in the transportation planning process.
2. Distribution of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission newsletter VISIONS shall be monitored, and changes in the volume distributed assessed. VISIONS is disseminated as a printed document via the U.S. Postal Service, as an electronic document distributed to an email list, and as a downloadable document posted on the Commission website (www.mcplan.org).
3. Postings to the Commission website shall be inventoried and monitored to assess completeness, timeliness and ease of access. Technology to assess frequency of website viewings shall be used to evaluate the impact of the website in providing information and participation opportunities to interested parties and the public.
4. All meeting agendas and minutes of the Transportation Technical and Policy Committees shall be made available on the Commission website. As practicable, supporting documentation cited in agendas and minutes shall also be made available through the website. Website postings relating to the Committees shall be monitored and evaluated pursuant to Section D, paragraph 3, above.
5. The McLean County Regional Planning Commission shall conduct ongoing assessment of the implementation of the Public Participation Plan elements as set forth in Section A, paragraphs 1 – 9, above.
6. In addition to the evaluation described in paragraph 5, above, evaluation criteria shall include the elements presented in Table 1, below, which shall be considered by the Regional Planning Commission and the Technical and Policy Committees in assessing the Public Participation Plan:

Table 1		
Participation Tool	Quantitative	Qualitative
Mailing Lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Additions to Mailing List • Diversity of Representation • Quantity of Educational Materials Distributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concise and Clear Information Portrayed • Effectiveness of Newsletter • Format
Public Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Events/Opportunities for Public Participation • Number of Comments Received • Number of Participants • Number of Methods Used to Reach Disadvantaged/Disabled Citizens • Diversity of Attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of Meeting Format • Public Understanding of Process • Quality of Response Obtained • Timing of Public Participation • Meeting Convenience, i.e. Time, Location and Accessibility • Use of Public Input in Developing Plan
Commission/Committee Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Comments Received • Number of Participants • Number of Methods Used to Reach Aged and/or Disabled Citizens • Diversity of Attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness of Meeting Format • Public Understanding of Process • Quality of Response Obtained • Meeting Convenience, i.e. Time, Location and Accessibility • Use of Public Input in Developing Plan
MCRPC Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of MPO Documents • Number of Site "Hits" per Quarter • Number of Comments and Suggestions Submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of Document Updates • Announcement of Meetings • Accessibility of Information (Site Format) • Quality of Response Obtained

7. The Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed every five years (from date of first adoption) by the staff of the Regional Planning Commission to assess the effectiveness of its procedures.
- a. Staff shall submit recommended revisions or amendments to the Transportation Technical and Policy Committees.
 - b. Pursuant to 23 CFR 450.316(a)(3), action by the Technical and Policy Committees to adopt revisions to or amendment of the Public Participation Plan shall be preceded by a period of public review and comment of not less than 45 days.