

# **Public Participation Plan**

**2006**

PREPARED BY:

Grand Forks/East Grand Forks  
Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Presented for Consideration  
to the  
Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Executive Policy Committee**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (GF/EGF MPO) developed this Public Participation Plan (PPP) to define principles and strategies for public involvement throughout the transportation planning process. Since passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and then the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) in 1998, public participation in transportation planning has had a broader scope. In 2005, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted. This legislation increased the public involvement standards of transportation planning entities. To guide the preparation of this PPP, the GF/EGF MPO adopted this mission statement:

**To make public participation an integral element of all transportation planning activities.**

To ensure compliance with this statement, this Public Participation Plan has the following goals:

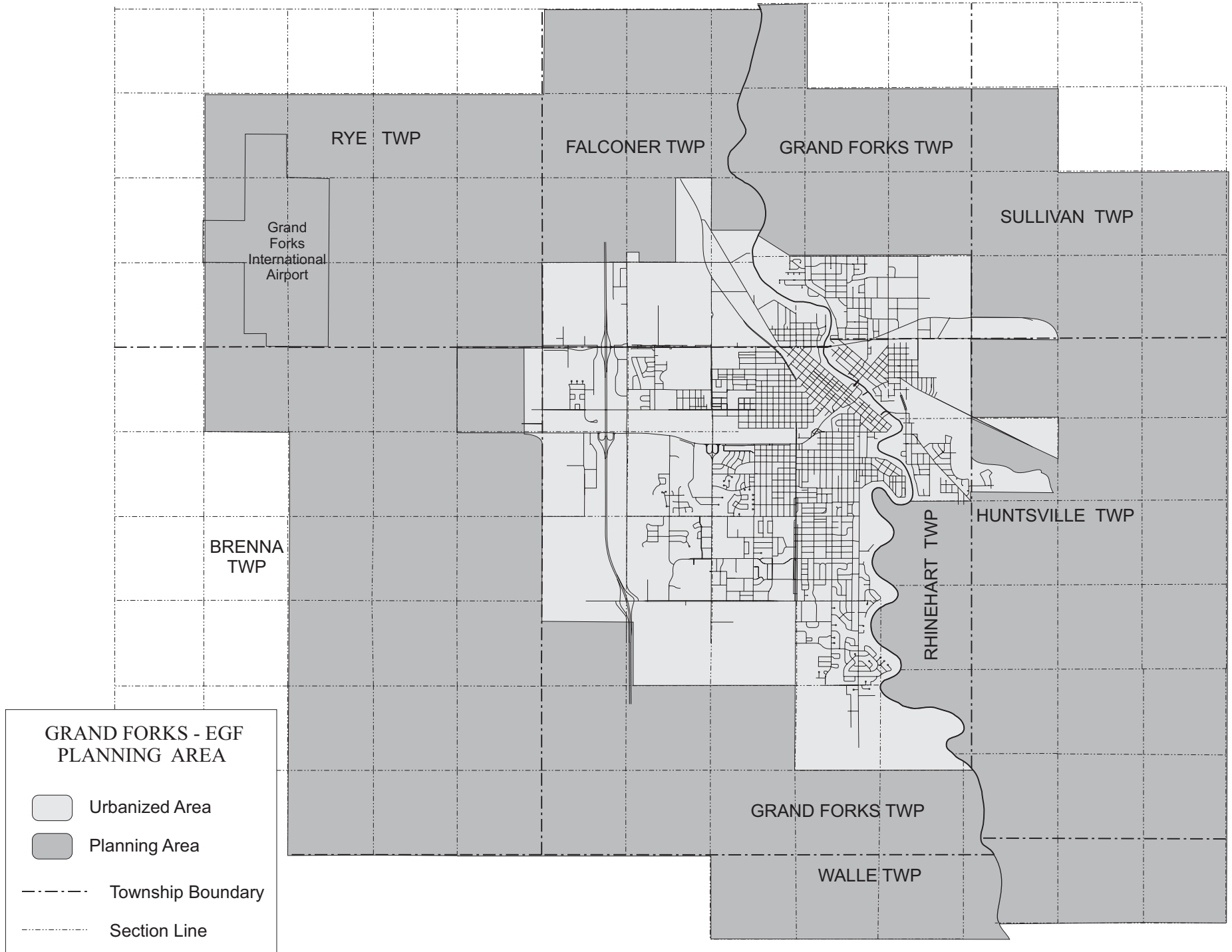
- to provide a proactive public involvement process;
- to provide complete information associated with transportation planning and programming;
- to provide timely public notice; and
- to provide full public access to key decisions.

These goals support early and continuing involvement of citizens, public agencies, transportation agencies, operators of major transportation systems, and other interested parties affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects. The PPP will foster an intermodal approach to transportation planning, in that all modes of transportation are considered.

To assess the progress of attaining these goals, a representative from the Federal Highway Administration – North Dakota Division (FHWA) conducted a desk review of the MPO Public Involvement Process. The review consisted of evaluating plans, supporting materials and a questionnaire completed by the MPO Executive Director. In March 2006, the MPO received their completed FHWA review including recommendations and commendations of all ND MPOs and the state DOT. Each FHWA review is a key basis for updates of the PPP.

## **GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (GF/EGF MPO)**

Established in 1982, the GF/EGF MPO is the federally assisted metropolitan planning organization serving the City of Grand Forks in Grand Forks County, North Dakota; and the City of East Grand Forks in Polk County, Minnesota (Figure 1). The GF/EGF MPO is responsible for fulfilling the federally mandated planning requirements needed in order for the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks area to receive federal funding for federal transportation facility construction projects and transit operation.



The GF/EGF MPO's organizational structure includes an Executive Policy Committee comprised of representatives from:

- the Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Planning Commissions;
- the Grand Forks and East Grand Forks City Councils; and
- Grand Forks County and Polk County (Figure 2).

The Executive Policy Committee appoints the Executive Director, who is the chief administrative officer and technical advisor of the MPO. The director in cooperation with GF/EGF MPO staff creates a Unified Work Program, TIP and Long Range Transportation Plan.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) assists and advises the MPO staff and Executive Policy Board by providing an advisory committee of professional planners and engineers to review Transportation Plans, Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs), and additional plans/updates/studies prior to approval by the MPO (Figure 3).

Federal regulations require MPOs to develop two documents in order if, they are to receive federal transportation funds: a 20-year Transportation Plan, and a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The Transportation Plan consists of both long-range and short-range goals/strategies that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods (Figure 4). Under SAFETEA-LU requirements, the plan must consider eight (8) factors in determining the social, economic, and environmental goals of the region, as well as the impact of transportation on achieving those goals. These factors are enumerated in Appendix A.

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Transportation Plan is currently comprised of three elements: Street and Highway, Transportation Alternative Modes and the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) strategy plan. The alternative modes plan encompasses evaluation and planning of the bikeways, pedestrian pathways and bus systems. The ITS plan encompasses intelligent or smart processes and technologies to improve safety and efficiency of the transportation system and timely information transmittal to travelers. A key objective of all plans includes engaging the public in preparation of the plan through a variety of methods. These elements are part of the Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Comprehensive Plans. The GF/EGF MPO reviews and updates each of these elements at least every five years to confirm their validity and consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions/trends, in addition to extending the forecast period.

The TIP is a short-term transportation programming document that is prepared every year by the GF/EGF MPO and submitted to the North Dakota and Minnesota Departments of Transportation. All transportation projects proposed for federal funding in the next four years must be included in the TIP. At minimum, the TIP must be revised every four years (Figure 5).

MPO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CITY OF GRAND FORKS  
NORTH DAKOTA  
2 REPRESENTATIVES

CITY OF EAST GRAND  
FORKS, MINNESOTA  
2 REPRESENTATIVES

GRAND FORKS COUNTY  
NORTH DAKOTA  
1 REPRESENTATIVE

POLK COUNTY  
MINNESOTA  
1 REPRESENTATIVE

GRAND FORKS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
1 REPRESENTATIVE

EAST GRAND FORKS  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
1 REPRESENTATIVE

GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE

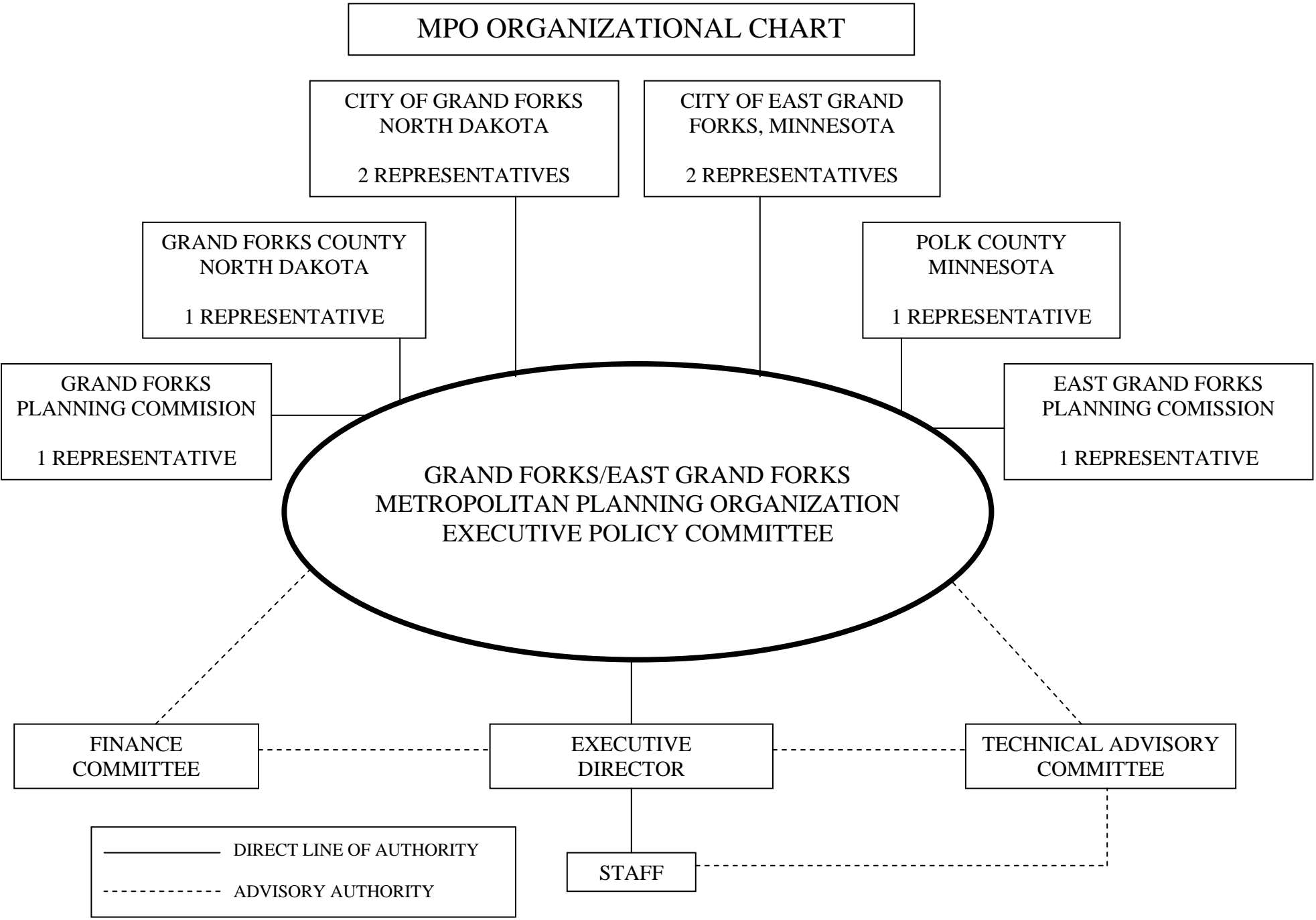
FINANCE  
COMMITTEE

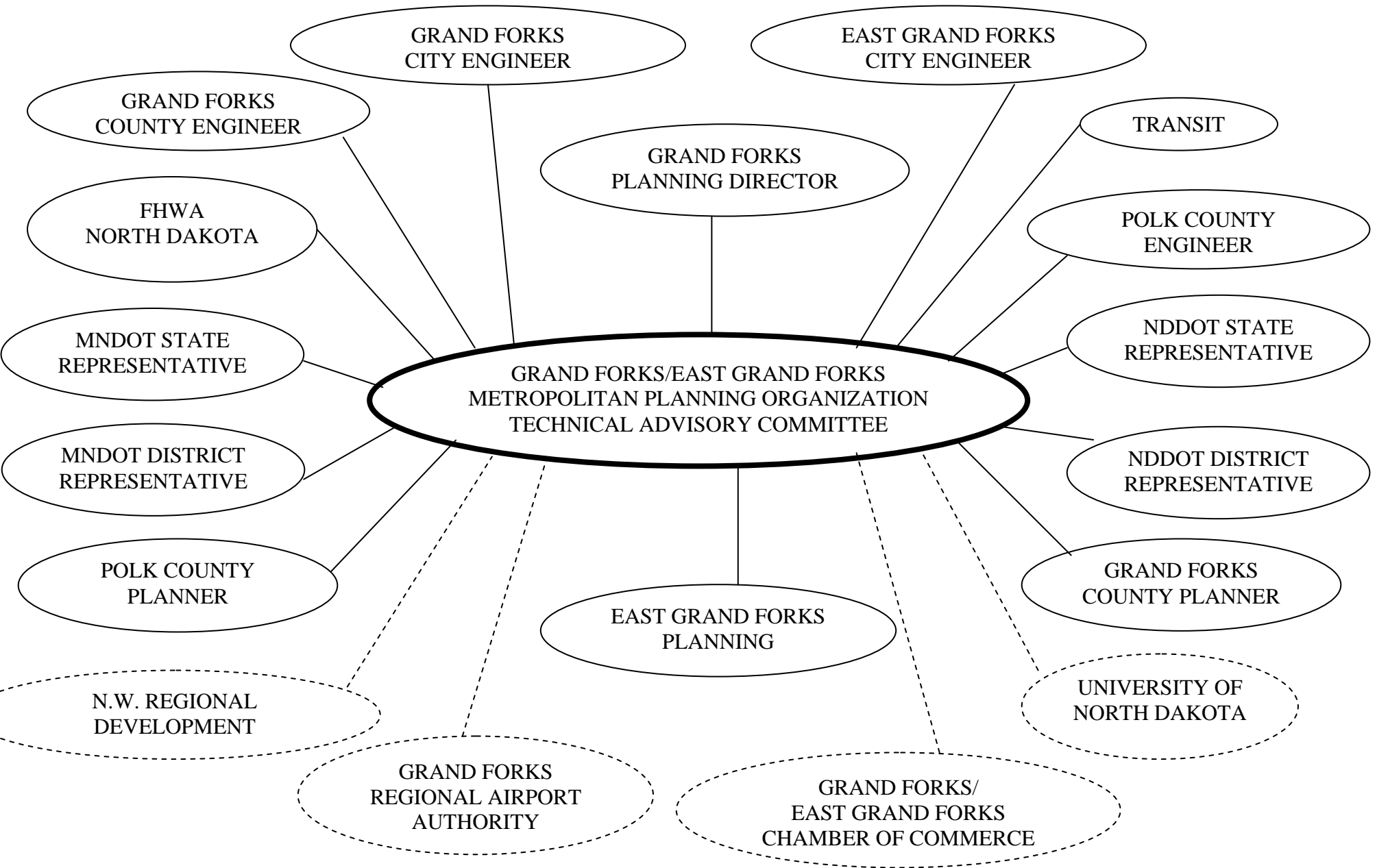
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

TECHNICAL ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE

— DIRECT LINE OF AUTHORITY  
- - - - - ADVISORY AUTHORITY

STAFF





—	STANDING MEMBERS
- - - - -	AD HOC MEMBERS

## **II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **SAFETEA-LU REQUIREMENTS**

The MPO public participation process must be in full compliance with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU Sections 1107 and 6001 beginning July 1, 2007. Federal regulations promulgated by FTA and FHWA from the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and the Transportation Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) are still in effect today. SAFETEA-LU has now replaced these laws, although guidance for public participation by the FTA and FHWA are written from the prior legislation.

ISTEA and TEA-21 called for coordination between the public participation process for statewide planning and the public involvement procedures followed by each MPO. The purpose was to enhance public involvement in the issues, plans, and programs, in addition to reducing redundancies and costs. The intent was not simply to encourage public input, but to foster full public participation in MPO decision-making processes. SAFETEA-LU has now continued with those premises and expanded public participation requirements.

In 1991, ISTEA outlined sixteen (16) social, environmental, and energy factors that must be considered in transportation planning, programming, and project selection. In 1998, TEA-21 streamlined those 16 factors into seven (7) points to be considered. In 2005, SAFETEA-LU slightly modified those seven factors into eight (8). A copy of the SAFETEA-LU factors can be found in Appendix A.

Six useful elements in planning for effective public involvement according to guidance by the FHWA are:

1. Clearly-defined purpose and objectives for initiating a public dialogue on transportation plans, programs, and projects
2. Identification of specifically who the affected public and other stakeholder groups are with respect to the plan(s), program(s), and project(s) under development
3. Identification of techniques for engaging the public in the process
4. Notification procedures which effectively target affected groups
5. Education and assistance techniques which result in an accurate and full public understanding of the transportation problem, potential solutions, and obstacles and opportunities within various solutions to the problem
6. Follow through by public agencies demonstrating that decision makers seriously considered public input.

Metropolitan planning organizations are required to allow at least 45 days for comment before the public involvement process is adopted or revised. Furthermore, public involvement procedures must be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all. See Appendix B for a copy of the federal regulations as they pertain to MPO transportation planning.

In accordance with SAFETEA-LU this Public Participation Plan will be developed in consultation with interested parties and provide reasonable opportunities for all parties to comment. These parties will have an opportunity to comment prior to approval of the Plan

To carry out the participation plan, public meetings are to be conducted at convenient and accessible locations at convenient times; employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and make public information available in an electronically accessible format, such as on the web.

Key modifications SAFETEA-LU calls for beyond ISTEA legislation include encouragement for MPO's to "consult or coordinate" with other types of planning officials affected by transportation. These parties may be involved in planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations or shipping and freight movement. The legislation also requires the MPO to promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and locally planned economic development patterns. Elements of transportation and security of the transportation system are also separate planning factors need to be considered during the MPO planning process.

The entire Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will be developed by consulting with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning development of the Plan. Explicitly added in SAFETEA-LU, the MPO must provide the opportunity for representatives of users of pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities and the disabled to participate in the planning process. The MPO's LRTP will now be required to specifically include a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities with potential sites to carry out the activities to be included. This section of discussion will be developed in consultation with Federal, State and tribal entities concerned with wildlife, land management and environmental regulation. For the financial plan section of the LRTP, the MPO will go beyond consultation and will work in cooperative development with transit operators to determine funding estimates.

## **TITLE VI OF CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

The public participation process must comply with the requirements of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Title VI assurance under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794. The basic requirement of these Titles is to ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal assistance.

The Titles require compliance documentation every year. The documentation must include the following information:

- A list of any active lawsuits or complaints which allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- A description of all pending applications for financial assistance and all financial assistance currently provided by other federal agencies;
- A summary of all civil rights compliance review activities conducted in the last three years; and

- A signed FTA Civil Rights Assurance that all of the records and other information required have been or will be compiled and maintained a signed DOT Title VI Standard Assurance.

An example of the MPO Title VI Assurance Statement can be found in Appendix D.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ)**

In 1991, Presidential Executive Order 12898 went beyond Title VI justice for protected populations to ensure fair treatment of minority or low-income populations. The order states: “Each Federal agency shall make achieving Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” Disproportionately high and adverse effects, not total population segment, are the bases for Environmental Justice.

The Federal Highway Administration has identified three fundamental environmental justice principles:

1. To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
3. To prevent denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.



## **ADA PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

The public participation process must also comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The passage of the ADA marked a turning point in public policy for persons with disabilities. The ADA mandates that all public materials, meetings/hearings, and facilities are made fully accessible to all members of the public on an equal basis.

The ADA outlines specific participation activities aimed at increasing participation from the disabled, especially with regard to paratransit plans. These include:

- outreach to the disabled through developing contacts, mailing lists, and other means of notification to participate;
- consultation with individuals with disabilities;
- allowing the opportunity for public comments;
- having alternative formats of documents available;
- having accessible public hearings;
- the summarizing of significant issues raised during public comment period; and
- ongoing efforts to involve the disability community in planning.

### **Private Sector Requirements**

In addition to the above requirements, the public participation process must also comply with the private sector requirements as outlined in 49 United States Code 5306(a), which requires that MPO's "shall encourage to the maximum extent feasible the participation of private enterprise."

The GF/EGF MPO has met this requirement by:

- Maintaining a Private Sector Policy related to the involvement of appropriate transportation providers in the transportation planning process (See Appendix D for a complete outline of the GF/EGF MPO's Private Sector Policy);
- Inviting private transportation providers the opportunities to review and comment on metropolitan transportation studies and such plans as the Transit Development Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan and the Public Participation Plan; and
- Including one member from the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Chambers of Commerce ad hoc membership on the Technical Advisory Committee to liaison, coordinate, and direct input on transportation plans to the private sector.

### III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization has long believed in fostering public participation early and often in the planning process. The GF/EGF MPO has actively involved the public through a number of methods. Examples have included public meetings to inform how a particular study was progressing and public hearings to formally obtain public input.

All of these activities were done on a project-by-project basis and without a formal, comprehensive strategy for involving the public in the planning process. No cohesive effort was developed and as such, some MPO planning activities did not involve the public as much as others.

In order to support the GF/EGF MPO's commitment to equally involve the public early and often in the planning and project development process, a cohesive, comprehensive public participation plan was developed. The following mission statement has been adopted by the GF/EGF MPO as an overall guide in the preparation of the goals and strategies that follow.

#### MISSION STATEMENT:

**To make public participation an integral element of all transportation planning activities.**

This statement defines the overall desired result of the GF/EGF MPO's Public Participation Plan. Standing alone, it does not produce any results. Goals were established to identify approaches to achieve the desired results. These goals are the foundation upon which the PPP is built. The goals address specific requirements defined by federal regulations and the desires of the GF/EGF MPO.

To develop a system to measure the progress of these goals, a series of strategies were established for each individual goal. Achieving each strategy will enable the GF/EGF MPO to make public participation a truly integral element of all of its transportation planning activities. Under each strategy is a standard that can be followed to specifically ensure the strategy is effectuated. These standards should be viewed as the minimum acceptable; efforts will be made to exceed them in so far as it is practical.

The adopted goals, strategies, and standards are outlined in detail below.

**GOAL:** Provide a proactive public participation process in all transportation planning activities.

**Strategy:** Follow the Public Participation Plan (PPP)  
**Strategy:** Notify the following parties to provide recommendations for PPP prior to completion of draft:

Environmental Experts	Airport Operators
Private Transit Operators	Affected Public Agencies
Representatives of the Disabled	Bicycle, Pedestrian Representatives
Representatives of Senior Citizens	Historic Preservation Experts
Transit Users	Economic Development Planners
Transit Employees	Shipping & Freight Companies
Public Transit Operators	Transit Safety & Security Professionals

**Strategy:** Allow opportunity to comment on PPP prior to its approval

**Standard:** Publish notice for 45 day citizen public comment period prior to PPP final approval

**Strategy:** Seek out all transportation interests, particularly those traditionally under-served such as low-income and minority interests

**Standard:** Communicate with social service and advocacy agencies to help identify and communicate with underserved transportation interests

**Standard:** Maintain a demographic profile of the entire metropolitan planning area that includes identification of locations of socio-economic groups including low-income and minority populations

**Standard:** Compile a list of interests

**Standard:** Employ creative advertising strategies to try to reach these interests, i.e. posting flyers in buses, grocery stores, churches, or other locations that may reach these interests and other methods

**Strategy:** Develop effective public participation techniques for each specific planning activity

**Standard:** During the development of the Scope of Work for each specific planning activity, evaluate various techniques and select the appropriate techniques according to activity purpose, geographical area, affected interests, etc.

**Standard:** Monitor effectiveness of techniques during planning activity based upon such items as attendance, responses, complaints, inquiries, etc., and adjust accordingly

**Standard:** Have a variety of meeting locations and times to ensure that those with transportation challenges or work commitments have access to all transportation activities

- Strategy:** Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input
- Standard:** Document all responses to public input by development of public input files for each project
- Standard:** Provide verbal or written response to public input, as appropriate, within 10 calendar days of receipt of input or through documentation in the final report
- Standard:** Provide feedback to the public through periodic newsletters, general circulation newspaper inserts, radio programs, telephone hotlines, public access television, or reports or publications describing project or program progression.
- Standard:** Document all MPO appearances in newspapers, television news segments and radio shows with a digital and/or hardcopy file

**GOAL:** Provide complete information of all transportation planning activities as early and as often as necessary

- Strategy:** Maintain an "Open Records" policy, as allowed by law, of all files
- Standard:** Review all laws governing the "openness" of files
- Standard:** Dispose of files as governed by law or acceptable record keeping practices
- Standard:** Provide requested information, as appropriate, within 10 calendar days of receipt of request
- Standard:** Charge reimbursement fee for significant costs of reproducing and retrieving requested records
- Standard:** Provide space in MPO offices for individuals to review documents

- Strategy:** Periodically prepare a publication highlighting MPO transportation planning activities
- Standard:** Periodically publish a newspaper insert, or "Citizens Report" in *Grand Forks Herald* and *East Grand Forks Exponent*
- Standard:** Prepare, as appropriate, newsletters specific to certain planning activities

- Strategy:** Distribute drafts of all documents/material to be discussed at public meetings/hearings to key locations, as appropriate, to be available for public review prior to the meeting/hearing

**Standard:** Distribute to City Halls, libraries, and other appropriate locations

**Standard:** Distribute drafts 10 calendar days in advance (45 days for Public Participation Plan)

**Standard:** Post on official MPO website

**Strategy:** If final documents/materials differ significantly from the one that was made available for public comment or raise new material issues which could not reasonably have been foreseen, additional opportunities for public input shall be made available

**Standard:** During the drafting of the Scope of Work for each specific planning activity, make a determination as to what constitutes a "significant difference which could not reasonably be foreseen"

**Standard:** Monitor progress of each specific planning activity to review adequacy of significant change determination and adjust accordingly

**GOAL:** Provide timely public notice, as appropriate, of all meetings/hearings where transportation planning activities will be discussed

**Strategy:** Publish notice, as appropriate, in local newspapers in advance of meeting/hearing

**Standard:** Publish notice at least 10 calendar days in advance (45 days for Public Participation Plan)

**Standard:** Avoid *legal notice* format by structuring notices in formats applicable to all interested parties

**Strategy:** Distribute press releases, as appropriate, to all local media in advance of meeting/hearing

**Standard:** Distribute at least 10 calendar days in advance (45 days for Public Participation Plan)

**Standard:** Follow up with local media to ensure press releases were utilized by watching for announcements and by documenting reaction to those releases, such as requests for interviews, telephone inquiries, etc.

**Strategy:** Mail or e-mail notices, as appropriate, to transportation interests in advance of meetings/hearings

**Standard:** Mail at least 10 calendar days in advance (45 days for Public Participation Plan)

- Strategy:** Develop and maintain official mailing list of continuous transportation interests, program interests (separate for street and highway, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle), and specific project interests
- Standard:** Add citizens requesting to receive mailings to the official continuous mailing list
- Standard:** Take names and contact information from public hearing/meeting sign-in list to send additional mailings pertinent to specific project approval
- Standard:** Review both planning and project mailing lists after each are respectively approved or discontinued, deleting citizens and interests no longer requesting to receive mailings
- Standard:** Review official mailing list of continuous transportation interests annually by sending notice to all parties to call, mail, or email the MPO to remain on the list
- Standard:** Maintain database of all past list entries to utilize when evaluating effectiveness of public participation

- Strategy:** Consider use of other innovative forms of public notice
- Standard:** Employ use of local cable TV programming, web site presentation, sign displays, etc. if these methods would be the most effective means of communication (refer to Appendix H)
- Standard:** Use visualization techniques at public meetings including maps, PowerPoints, digital movies, and handouts

**GOAL:** Provide full public access to key decision points on all transportation planning activities.

- Strategy:** Establish points of key decisions during the development of the Scope of Work for each planning activity
- Standard:** During drafting of Scope of Work for each specific planning activity, identify the points of key decisions for that activity
- Standard:** Monitor progress of activity to determine adequacy of identification of key decisions and adjust accordingly

**Standard:** Create Citizen User Manual for key decision points and publicize manual when citizen participation is less than desirable

**Strategy:** Employ expertise of environmental professionals and sources during transportation planning process

**Standard:** Develop a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities in Long Range Transportation Plan

**Standard:** Consult with Federal, State, land management, and regulatory agencies when creating discussion section

**Standard:** Consult with Federal, State and local agencies responsible for land use management, water resource management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation during development of LRTP and as needed

**Standard:** Seek out and compare transportation plans with State conservation plans or maps if available

**Standard:** Seek out and compare transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources if available

**Strategy:** Be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794

**Standard:** Ensure no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination

**Standard:** Review MPO policies, practices, and procedures annually to access compliance

**Strategy:** Be consistent with Environmental Justice requirements of Presidential Executive Order 12898

**Standard:** As the GF/EGF MPO Environmental Justice Procedural Manual dictates, planners will assess environmental justice at the start of the planning process. The planners will:

- 1) determine benefits to, and potential negative impacts on minority populations and low-income populations from

proposed investments or actions;

- 2) quantify expected effects (total, positive and negative) and disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority populations and low-income populations; and
- 3) determine the appropriate course of action, whether avoidance, minimization, or mitigation.

**Standard:** The fulfillment of the above analytical process will be documented in all MPO planning documents.

**Strategy:** Comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and with U.S. DOT regulations "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities"

**Standard:** Identify both communities ADA Coordinators as the GF/EGF MPO's ADA Coordinators

**Standard:** Include in all notices, press releases, and other appropriate materials a statement informing individuals with special accommodation needs or auxiliary aid to contact the ADA Coordinator

**Standard:** Hold all meetings/hearings in fully accessible buildings/meeting rooms

**Strategy:** Periodically review Public Participation Plan to ensure continued full and open access to all

**Standard:** Annually assess PPP for consistency with federal, state and local requirements

**Standard:** Include this annual review as a regular work element in the GF/EGF MPO Annual Unified Work Program

## **IV. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **ACTIVITIES COVERED**

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization undertakes many different planning activities. Although the federal regulations specifically identify the transportation plan and the transportation improvement program for inclusion in the PPP, the GF/EGF MPO's Public Participation Plan will cover the other planning activities as well. Examples of those activities include:

- corridor studies;
- development of the Annual Unified Work Program; and
- the Monitoring and Surveillance Report.

An important distinction needs to be made between planning activities done by the MPO and project design activities undertaken by either the City, the County or the state DOTs. This PPP covers only the former and not the latter.

Because the PPP as adopted by the GF/EGF MPO covers both administrative issues as well as specific planning activities, the implementation will be broken down into four types:

1. General activities;
2. Transportation Plan;
3. Transportation Improvement Program; and
4. Other planning activities.

The implementation for each type is detailed below.

### **GENERAL ACTIVITIES**

These activities are those that are more administrative in nature. Many have already been implemented by the GF/EGF MPO.

#### List of Interests

The GF/EGF MPO has developed lists of groups, agencies, and transportation operators for public input prior to the preparation of transportation plans and program documents (Appendix E). These groups, agencies, and transportation operators, along with the media, will be informed of public meetings to ensure that the public is aware of the GF/EGF MPO's activities and have the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process. Participants included on the list will need to verify each year their desire to remain on the list, by calling in, e-mailing a notice, or sending a letter to the GF/EGF MPO. It is possible that the GF/EGF MPO may request these entities to nominate persons to form special advisory committees to provide expertise in the development of transportation plans.

With the inclusion of certain groups and organizations on mailing lists for public input, the GF/EGF MPO attempts to "seek out and consider" the needs of those traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system. These individuals include, but are not limited to low-income, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and minority populations. In addition, explicit consideration, recognition, and feedback to any public input received during the planning and program development processes must be demonstrated, especially in regards to the underserved.

### Open Records

The GF/EGF MPO periodically reviews the laws governing the accessibility of its files. After consultation with legal counsel, the MPO will formalize a policy on its files.

In North Dakota, the MPO, as a public entity is subject to the Open Record and Open Meeting laws. To deny access to records, the MPO must explain, within a reasonable time, the legal authority or statute for denying the request. Certain MPO employee personal information may be exempt or confidential. Citizens have a right to open records regardless of the reason.

A request for public records can be made in any manner. The MPO must respond to the request within a reasonable time, either by providing the requested record or by explaining the legal authority for denying all or part of the request. Depending on the amount of records requested, a "reasonable" time could be a couple of hours or a few days, but not several days or weeks. If the MPO is unable to fulfill the request immediately, it should give the requester an estimate of when the record will be available.

A public entity can only deny access to information for which there is a specific statute closing that information.

### Public Notice

A standard public notice has been developed for use by the GF/EGF MPO. A sample notice is included in Appendix F. The notice must be published 10 calendar days prior to the event, or 45 days in advance of a Public Participation Plan. The notice should not be used merely as a "cookie cutter." Some consideration must be given to the specific needs of the planning activity the notice will be addressing. The example provided offers the basic elements of a notice and can be tailored to address the unique circumstances of each specific planning activity.

Due care shall be taken to ensure that each notice prepared by the GF/EGF MPO include the statement informing all individuals with special accommodation needs or auxiliary aids need to contact the ADA Coordinator.

## Press Release

Guidelines for drafting a press release are included in Appendix G. An example of a recent press release is also included in that appendix. The press release must be released 10 calendar days in advance of the event.

## Website

The official website of the MPO will be located at “theforksmpo.org”. This site contains information on the historical background of the MPO and the entity’s primary responsibilities. Contact information for all board members and staff are available, along with upcoming meeting agendas and past meeting minutes. Links are provided for political partners of the MPO, including Federal, State, County and City. Furthermore, each planning document is available for quick and accessible download. Key planning documents highlighted on the site include the Unified Work Program, TIP, LRTP and List of Annual Projects.

The MPO will establish a separate page on the site for each new project. The page will include everything from the beginning Scope of Work to the final plan and recommendations. Press releases, upcoming public hearings, meeting agendas, and any proposed changes will be posted on the project page in a timely manner as available.

As the MPO recognizes the need to serve the underrepresented of the population, links to the MPO website, and plans concerning public transit will be made available on the website of the metropolitan area’s public transit operator, Cities Area Transit.

## Consistent with State Public Participation Plans

In following state public participation plans, the MPO will submit a long range transportation plan and a unified work program by set deadlines. The MPO will also ensure an early and continuing consultative process with the public in developing these programs. Specifically, the public will have an opportunity to participate in all stages of the planning process, and the MPO will involve representatives of all modes of transportation.

## Consistent with Title VI

Annually, the GF/ EGF MPO self-certifies that it is consistent with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794. This self-certification is done during the adoption of the GF/EGF MPO Transportation Improvement Program. It is during that time that the MPO reviews its policies, practices and procedures to assess compliance. In addition to checking compliance with the law, the MPO will evaluate its activities and public involvement processes to ensure it is providing full and open access.

## Consistent with Environmental Justice (EJ)

In 2003, the MPO approved an Environmental Justice Procedural Manual. The recommendations of the manual apply to all MPO planning and programming reports including the LRTP, transportation corridor plans and the TIP. Public involvement is addressed throughout the manual not as a separate stage. Guidance is taken from the federal, Minnesota and North Dakota DOTs. At the preliminary stages of a project, the questions of whether the proposal has a high and adverse or disproportionate impact on minority or low income populations must be answered by judgments based on both quantitative and qualitative measures. The MPO currently uses area maps to depict the location and extent of low-income and minority in the communities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks.

The guidelines of the manual are assessed in all MPO planning documents with a section specifically addressing EJ. These documents include plans, corridor studies, special projects and annually in TIP. The MPO EJ process also aids assurance of the Title VI discrimination protections.

## ADA Compliance

The GF/EGF MPO has designated the ADA Coordinator for each City shall also be identified as the Coordinator for the GF/ EGF MP. The GF/EGF MPO shall direct all inquiries and requests to the appropriate Coordinator for their action. Because the GF/EGF MPO rents office space, as well as conducts the majority of its meetings, from both Cities, a letter from each shall be requested. The letter asks for certification that the buildings in which the GF/ EGF MPO offices are located are in full compliance with ADA. If not in compliance, the GF/EGF MPO will ask for a copy of the Transition Plan in order to determine whether full compliance will be obtained.

Whenever a meeting/hearing conducted by the GF/EGF MPO takes place outside of its regular buildings, the GF/EGF MPO shall request a letter from the property owner certifying that the property is in compliance with ADA. This letter must be received well in advance in order for the proper notices, press releases, and other information to be prepared and distributed.

## **MPO TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The federal regulations specifically cite a long-range transportation plan and the public participation requirements for MPO's. Those specific requirements can be found in Appendix B. However, the reader shall note that this PPP demands far more public involvement than required.

The GF/EGF MPO's transportation plan is actually comprised of three elements: street and highway, alternative modes and intelligent transportation system. Each of these covers a different "long range" and they are updated at a minimum of every five years. Figure four illustrates the process that the Transportation Plan goes through during its update.

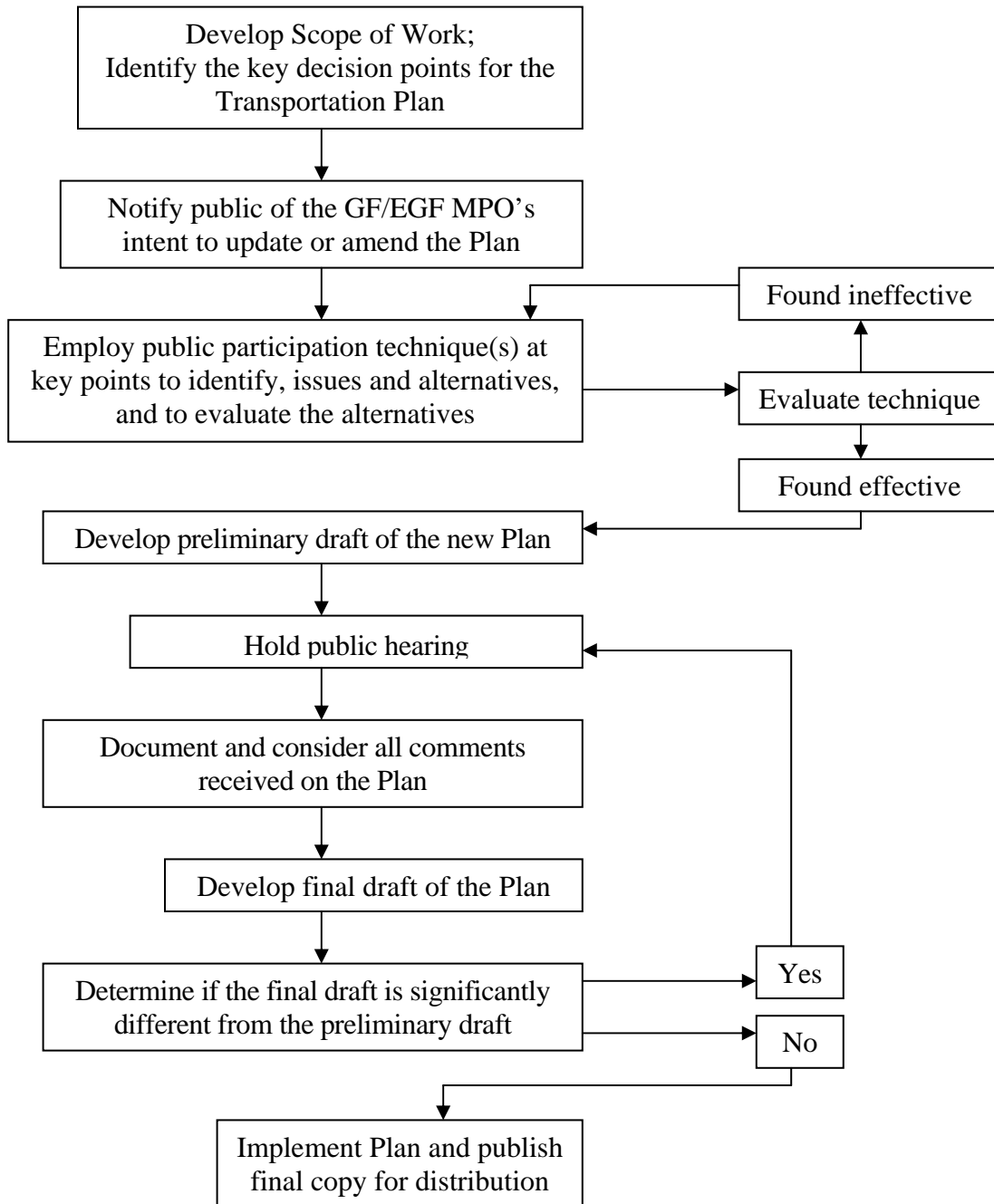
The common key decision points in each of the transportation plan elements include:

- developing a Scope of Work;
- identifying the issues;
- identifying alternatives;
- evaluating alternatives; and
- approving the preliminary and final drafts.

A more specific identification of other key points will be made during the development of the Scope of Work. The Scope of Work is prepared before any work is done on the element so that the public will be informed at the earliest possible time. After completion of the Scope of Work, the GF/EGF MPO will provide a public notice of its intent to update or amend the Transportation plan. This notice will be published in the *Grand Forks Herald* and *The Exponent*, or the papers of general circulation in the area, posted in local government buildings, and also sent to those interested groups, agencies and individuals included on the “List of Interest”.

In regards to those on the list, they will be asked to respond positively if they wish to be included in the future activities associated with the update or amendments to the Transportation Plan. Only those who indicate an interest will be directly contacted for involvement activities. The GF/EGF MPO may also employ more innovative methods of notice, such as e-mail, public access TV, etc. if it is seen as a more effective means of notification. This notice shall be given 10 calendar days before any public involvement event.

Figure 5.



The GF/EGF MPO will solicit public input at these key decision points during the transportation plan development/update process. The list of transportation interests will be utilized in order to ensure access is available to all. The public input will be solicited through a series of public participation techniques (Appendix H). Public participation techniques should be selected because they are expected to yield the most effective results, while meeting a particular need in the development of transportation plan element. The federal requirements for public involvement allow flexibility in techniques. The MPO can tailor the technique to the specific demographic, social, and political aspects of a metropolitan area.

A technique may be selected because it:

- meets a particular need and objective of a planning phase;
- is appropriate for the scale of the area or project;
- can reach target publics;
- can be implemented within budgetary and time constraints; or
- is compatible with the community's operations, structure, politics, and style.

The determination of which techniques will be used will be made during the development of the Scope of Work. In addition, the techniques will be monitored throughout the activity to evaluate their effectiveness. This evaluation can occur using any one of several techniques, which include, but are not limited to:

- comment cards at meetings or workshops;
- evaluation forms;
- surveys;
- telephone comments;
- citizen letters;
- e-mail follow-ups;
- questionnaires;
- recorded comments made during meetings, workshops, focus groups, etc.

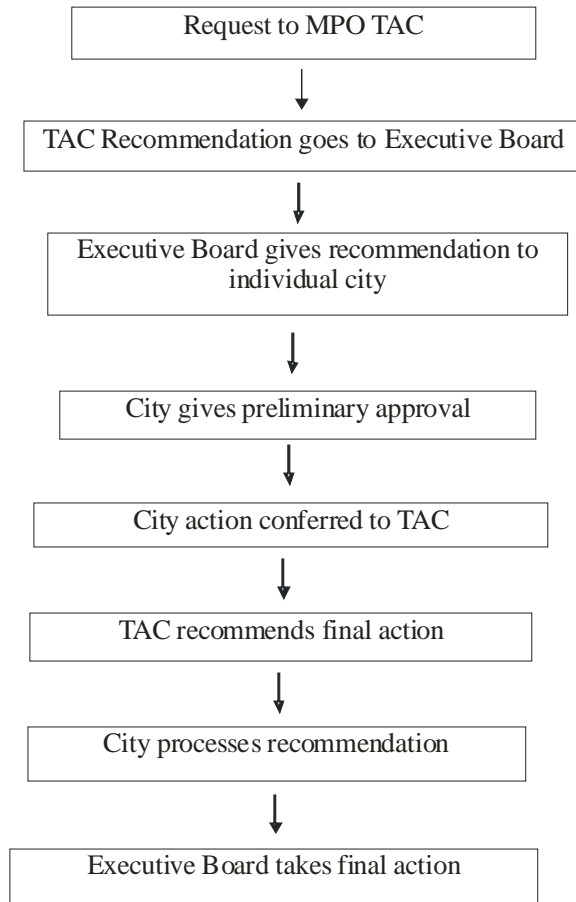
If the evaluations indicate ineffectiveness, the techniques can be adjusted accordingly.

A series of public hearings will be scheduled during the preliminary and final draft approval process of the transportation plan elements. The public hearings will be held concurrent with meetings of the Planning and Zoning Commissions of both Cities. A component of the transportation plan approval process includes the formal adoption of the Plan with an amendment to the Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Comprehensive Plans. When adopting amendments to their Comprehensive Plans, both communities are required by state statute to hold public hearings.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT), the mayors of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, and the MPO in August 1997. The purpose of the memorandum is for the member parties to cooperatively undertake a continuing and comprehensive transportation planning and programming process for the metropolitan planning area in order to

achieve a common goal. The MPO plan and program leads to the development and operation of an integrated intermodal transportation system which supports the organized metropolitan community development and social goals.

Should a difference occur between the local comprehensive plans and the long-range transportation plan of the GF/EGF MPO, efforts shall be made to resolve the difference. In the circumstance that the City of Grand Forks approves a plan different than the MPO plan the MPO decision governs.



The terms of the MOU will be carried out through implementation of this Public Participation Plan. Special attention will be served to the review and comment of plans, input into long range plans and assistance of public meetings pertaining to transportation.

The public participation procedures will include publication of the proposed transportation plan element to make it readily available for public review and comment. The approved transportation plan element will be published or otherwise made readily available for information purposes. In addition, an Executive Summary of the Street and Highway element is available for distribution to the public and available for viewing on the MPO website.

The GF/EGF MPO will document the public participation process utilized in the transportation plan development process, including the comments received from the public and responses thereof.

A preliminary determination of what "significant difference" will be for each of the elements will be made during the drafting of the Scope of Work. An obvious "significant difference" which would require additional public input would be the addition of a project. However, a difference of rewriting a section because of grammatical errors would not be a "significant difference."

During the planning activity, the determination will be monitored to ensure that it remains valid. If doubts occur as to whether a change constitutes a significant difference, the GF/EGF MPO normally will require additional input before formal adoption of that change.

## **TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)**

The federal regulations specifically cite the MPO transportation improvement program (TIP) and the public participation requirements that must be met. Those specific requirements can be found in Appendix B. However, the reader shall note that this PPP demands far more public involvement than required.

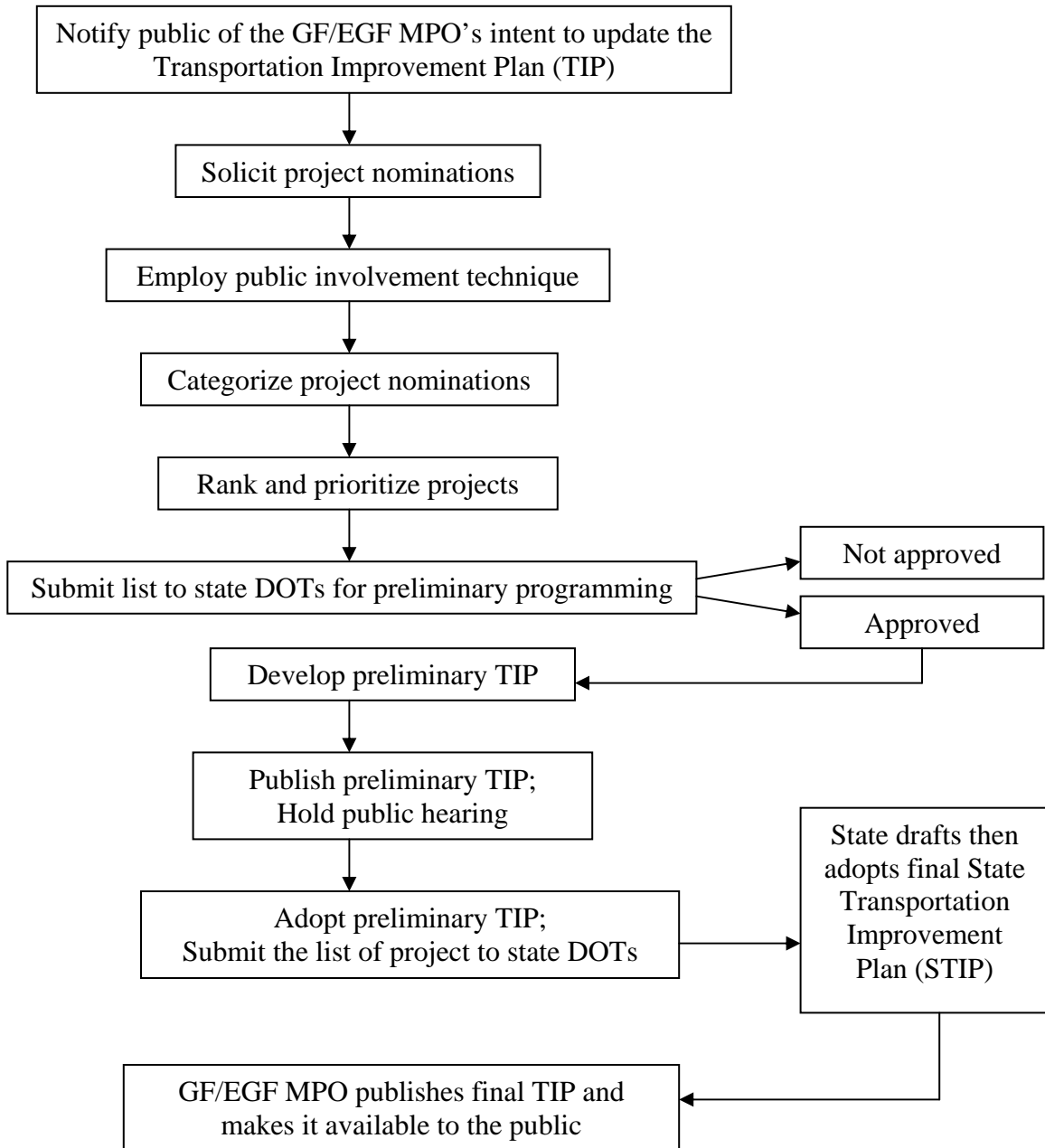
Annually, the GF/EGF MPO will prepare a TIP for the next four years. A TIP lists all transportation projects that will be undertaken within the metropolitan area during the years covered by that particular TIP. The first year projects are considered committed projects, which mean they can be expected to be constructed. Second year projects have a significant likelihood of being constructed, but may be moved back due to changes in federal funding levels, prior year cost overruns, subsequent project priority changes, or increases in project costs. Third and fourth year projects are tentative due to variability of second year factors. The TIP covers all street and highway, transit, bikeway, pedestrian, and other significant transportation projects. A diagram illustrating the TIP approval process is shown in Figure six.

The points of key decisions in the TIP development process include:

- soliciting projects;
- categorizing submitted projects;

- ranking and prioritizing projects; and
- approving the preliminary and final drafts.

Figure 6.



The GF/EGF MPO solicits public input in the TIP process through a request for project nominations. A cover letter and project information form will be mailed to the list of transportation interests for their nomination of projects for possible inclusion in the TIP. In addition, public notices will be published in the *Grand Forks Herald* and *The Exponent*, or the papers of general circulation in the area, requesting project nominations. A public notice is to inform the public of the TIP adoption process and their opportunity to participate in the project nomination process. This notice shall be given at least 10 calendar days prior to any public involvement event.

The GF/EGF MPO, after soliciting public involvement, will categorize the nominated projects. This categorization is necessary in order to maximize a particular projects potential to receive federal funding. After the categorization, the GF/EGF MPO will again solicit public input and will rank and prioritize all the federally funded transportation improvements on the basis of their consistency with approved plans, evaluation criteria, and projects already programmed. This preliminary list of projects is submitted to the state DOTs concurring with their programming schedules.

Once the list of projects for the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks metropolitan area is given preliminary approval by the state DOTs, public meetings will be held for further public input in the TIP development process. Once a preliminary TIP has received public comment and has been adopted by the GF/EGF MPO, the list of projects is submitted to the respective state DOTs. Once each state has adopted their STIPS, the GF/EGF MPO can then prepare publication of its final TIP.

The public participation procedures will include publication of the proposed preliminary and final TIPs to make it readily available for public review and comment prior to the meeting/hearing in which they will be discussed. The final approved TIP will be published and made readily available based upon the requirements of this PPP.

The GF/EGF MPO will document the public participation process utilized in the TIP development process, including the comments received from the public and responses thereof.

Each year the TIP process is unique. However, there are some common "significant differences" during the development of each TIP. An addition of a project or the expansion of its scope which was not on the advance review material would constitute a difference that would require additional public input before final adoption. The deletion of a project or combining projects would not require additional input because each project proponent should have reasonably foreseen this possibility given the limited amount of funds available. If a project's local share is increased by over 25% than the amount identified in advance, this difference would require additional public input. A decrease, on the other hand, would not. Changing the source of state or federal funds would constitute a significant difference.

Because of the uniqueness of each TIP development, the GF/EGF MPO will monitor each and make determinations as to what other differences will require additional public input.

## **OTHER PLANNING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE GF/EGF MPO**

Each year, the GF/EGF MPO conducts various plans/updates/studies. Examples of these would include corridor studies, the ADA Paratransit Plan Update, Annual Unified Work Program, and Monitoring and Surveillance Report. Upon drafting the Scope of Work for each, the specific public participation plan for the each project will be identified. These specific public participation plans will follow the overall requirements of this PPP.

The points of key decisions will be determined during the specific planning activity's drafting of its scope of work. Each activity will be unique so no common points can be identified in this PPP. However, each specific determination of key decisions will be monitored to evaluate whether additional points are identified and whether additional public input is necessary at those points.

The specific public participation plan will, during the drafting of the scope of work for that specific planning activity, determine the appropriate techniques that will be utilized (Appendix H). A technique may be selected because it:

- meets a particular need and objective of a planning phase;
- is appropriate for the scale of the area or project;
- can reach target publics;
- can be implemented within budgetary and time constraints;
- is compatible with the community's operations, structure, politics, and style.

Also during the drafting of the specific planning activity's scope of work, a determination as to what may constitute a "significant difference" will be made. During the planning activity, the determination will be monitored to ensure that it remains valid. If doubts occur as to whether a change constitutes a significant difference, the GF/EGF MPO normally will require additional input before formal adoption of that change.

The final report for these types of activities will include the public participation process used, the comments received, and the response to the comments.

## V. CONCLUSION

The MPO makes key decisions with the requirement of citizen involvement. ISTEA, TEA-21 and now SAFETEA-LU mandate a higher level of public involvement and provide the opportunity to promote greater awareness and more active involvement in the decision-making process. SAFETEA-LU encourages informed public comment by requiring that the agencies provide the public with relevant information regarding plans, programs, and studies well in advance of any public hearings.

In response to the MPO's commitment to organizing its public involvement processes, this Public Participation Plan was adopted. It is the desire of the GF/EGF MPO to make public participation an integral element of all of the transportation planning activities it undertakes. By following this Plan, the GF/EGF MPO hopes to create community ownership in the products produced. This community ownership should lead to confidence and trust in the efforts of the GF/EGF MPO.

Reports, analyses, and data relative to transportation plans, TIPs, and specific projects should be accessible and understandable. "Accessible" also means available in enough time to be thoroughly reviewed, and modified by public comment as necessary.

Public participation techniques that offer a variety of opportunities for input would appear to best meet the spirit of public involvement. The GF/EGF MPO attempts to see that these public participation techniques are consistent with this Plan. The results/benefits of different techniques should be documented for evaluation purposes.

This Plan is dynamic. As changes occur, the public involvement processes utilized by the GF/EGF MPO are to be periodically reviewed in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all.

The MPO will be effective with its public participation when a well informed public feels it has opportunities to contribute input into transportation decision making processes at all stages. Instead of relying on one or two public meetings, the MPO will hold several well attended meetings. In addition, indicators to show the plan's effectiveness include frequent news coverage on transportation issues, public forums where a broad representation of diverse interests are in attendance and plans, TIPs, and project designs are reflective of the understood and considered public input. Two-way continuing and consistent communication between the MPO and the public is imperative.

**APPENDIX A.**  
**SAFETEA-LU Factors**

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), has outlined eight factors to be considered when developing transportation plans and programs.

SAFETEA-LU sec. 6001 (h) (1) (A-H)—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The metropolitan transportation planning process for a metropolitan area under this section shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will—

“(A) support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;

“(B) increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;

“(C) increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;

“(D) increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight;

“(E) 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;

“(F) enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across the between modes, for people and freight;

“(G) promote efficient system management and operation; and

“(H) emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

**APPENDIX B.**

**Federal Transportation Plan Requirements  
For  
Public Participation**

**FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
(23 CFR PART 450)**

Section 450.104 Definitions

*Consultation* means that one party confers with another identified party and, prior to taking action(s), considers that party's views.

*Cooperation* means that the parties involved in carrying out the planning, programming and management systems processes work together to achieve a common goal or objective.

*Coordination* means the comparison of the transportation plans, programs, and schedules of one agency with related plans, programs and schedules of other agencies or entities with legal standing, and adjustment of plans, programs and schedules to achieve general consistency.

Section 450.316(b) (1-5): Overall Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process

The Metropolitan transportation planning process shall:

1. Include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs. To meet the requirements the process shall:
  - (i) Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised;
  - (ii) Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to central city and other local jurisdiction concerns);
  - (iii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered;
  - (iv) Require adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs;
  - (v) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;

- (vi) Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally under served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households;
  - (vii) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan or TIP (including the financial plan) as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP;
  - (viii) If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available;
  - (ix) Public involvement 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;
  - (x) These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews for TMAs, and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to MPO decision-making processes.
  - (xi) Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.
2. Be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794, which ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation.
  3. Identify actions necessary to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-36, 104 Stat. 327, as amended) and U.S. DOT regulations "Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities" (49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38);
  4. Provide for the involvement of traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies; commuter rail operators; airport and port authorities; toll authorities; appropriate private transportation providers, and where appropriate city officials; and
  5. Provide for the involvement of local, State, and Federal environmental, resource and permit agencies as appropriate.

#### Section 450.322(c): Transportation Plan

There must be adequate opportunity for public official (including elected officials) and citizen involvement in the development of the transportation plan before it is approved by the MPO, in accordance with the requirements for the transportation planning process above (S 450.316(b)(1)). Such procedures shall include opportunities for interested parties (including citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, and private providers of transportation) to be involved in the early stages of the plan development/update process. The procedures shall include publication of the proposed plan or other methods to make it readily available for public review and comment. The procedure also shall include publication of the approved plan or other methods to make it readily available for information purposes.

#### Section 450.324(c): Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

There must be reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with the requirements of the transportation planning process above (450.316(b) (1)). The proposed TIP shall be published or otherwise made readily available for review and comment. Similarly, the approved TIP shall be published or otherwise made readily available for information purposes.

#### Section 450.212(b): Statewide Public Involvement Process

Public Involvement activities carried out in a Metropolitan area in response to metropolitan planning requirements in Section 450.322(c) or Section 450.324(c) may by agreement of the State and the MPO satisfy the requirements of this section (Section 450.212).

**APPENDIX C.**

**Title VI Assurance Statement**

## LOCAL CIVIL RIGHTS ASSURANCE

### (Title VI)

The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) HEREBY CERTIFIES THAT, as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance under the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1965, as amended, it will ensure that:

1. No person, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, will be subjected to discrimination in the level and quality of transportation services and transit related benefits.
2. The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization will compile and submit, in a timely manner, Title VI information required by FTA Circular 1160.1a, and in compliance with the Department of Transportation's Title VI Regulation, 49 CFR Part 21.9.
3. The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization will make it known to the public that any person or persons alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as it relates to the provision of transportation services and transit related benefits, may file a complaint with the Federal Transit Administration and/or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The person or persons whose signature(s) appear below are authorized to sign this assurance on behalf of the grant application or recipient.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doug Christensen, MPO Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Earl T. Haugen, Ex Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX D.**

### **Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Private Sector Procedure**

It shall be the procedure of the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization, together with the Cities of Grand Forks, North Dakota, and East Grand Forks, Minnesota, to involve the private sector in the planning and provision of transit/paratransit service in the Metropolitan Area. 49 U.S.C. 5306(a) requires that plans and programs required for Federal transit assistance must encourage the participation of private enterprise to the maximum extent feasible. The MPO's Public Participation Plan provides the full extent of the procedure.

- I. The early, and often involvement of private operators in local planning process, which must comply with rigorous planning and private enterprise requirements and the joint FHWA/FTA planning regulations (FTA C 9030.1C)
  - A. Early notification to private transportation providers and potential providers of proposed services and opportunities,
  - B. Early consultation opportunities for participating in the development of transit/paratransit plans,
  - C. Reasonable opportunity for private operators to offer their own service proposals for consideration.
  
- II. The early, and often involvement of private operators in the development of each City's Program of Projects (POP), which are integrated with the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (49 U.S.C. 5307 (c) (1-7) (49 U.S.C. 5304) 23 C.F.R. 450.316(b)).
  - A. Make available to the private operator's information concerning the amount of funds available that will be programmed and the purposes the funds will be programmed for.
  - B. Develop a proposed TIP for activities to be financed, in consultation with private operators.
  - C. Publish the proposed TIP in sufficient detail and in such a manner as to afford private operators an opportunity to examine the proposed TIP and to submit comments on it and on the performance of the service.
  - D. Consider comments and views received from the private operators and if deemed appropriate modify the proposed TIP.
  - E. Make available the final TIP to the private operators.

**APPENDIX E.**

**List of Groups, Agencies, and  
Transportation Operators for Project  
Solicitation**

**GROUPS, AGENCIES, AND TRANSPORTATION OPERATORS PROPOSED FOR INCLUSION ON THE PROJECT SOLICITATION LIST ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
Altru  
Amtrak  
Arc Upper Valley  
Britton Transportation  
Building Inspections –GF City Hall  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Burlington-Northern Santa Fe  
Centers for Disease Control  
Chamber of Commerce  
Cities Area Transit  
City of Grand Forks - Urban Development  
Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities  
Corps of Engineers  
Council On Environmental Quality  
Department of Agriculture (MDA)  
Dept of HUD, Regional Office  
Dept. of Interior, Nat'l Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region  
Development Homes  
Dietrich Bus Service  
Downtown Leadership Group  
EGF Public Schools  
Environmental Health Section, ND State Dept. of Health & Consolidated Laboratories  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Evangelical Pastors Fellowship  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Federal Railroad Administration  
Foster Grandparent  
Garrison Conservancy District  
GF/EGF Chamber of Commerce  
Good Samaritan Village  
Grand Forks Air Force Base  
Grand Forks County Commission  
Grand Forks County Social Services  
Grand Forks County Social Services  
Grand Forks County Soil Conservation Service  
Grand Forks County Water Resources District  
Grand Forks Historical Preservation Commission  
Grand Forks International Airport  
Grand Forks Mission  
Grand Forks Public Schools  
Grand Forks Region EDC

Grand Forks Senior Citizens  
Grand Forks Taxi  
Greater Grand Forks Ministerial Group  
Indian Affairs Commission  
Job Service  
Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation  
Midcontinent Cable Co.  
Minnesota Department of Health  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board  
Minnesota Historical Society  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)  
Minnesota State Highway Patrol  
Minnesota Workforce Development  
National Park Service  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Nodak Electric Cooperative  
Nodak Radio Cab  
North Dakota Aeronautics Commission  
North Dakota Association for Disabled  
North Dakota Association of Counties  
North Dakota Eye Clinic  
North Dakota Forest Service  
North Dakota Geological Survey  
North Dakota Parks & Recreation Dept.  
North Dakota Ready Mix & Conc. Prod. Assn  
North Dakota School for the Blind  
North Dakota State Game and Fish Dept  
North Dakota State Highway Patrol  
North Dakota State Historical Society  
North Dakota State Tourism Department.  
North Dakota State Water Commission  
North Dakota Wildlife Federation  
Northeast Human Services  
NW Private Industry Council  
NW Reg. Dev. Comm.  
OPTIONS  
Polk County Commission  
Polk County DAC  
Red River Regional Planning Council  
Red River Valley Community Action  
Regional Environmental Officer  
Sierra Club  
Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate  
Soil Conservation Committee  
Spirit Lake Nation  
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe  
Triangle Transportation  
Tri-Valley Heartland Express  
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

U.S. Coast Guard, Ninth Coast Guard District  
U.S. Dept of Agriculture  
U.S. Dept of Commerce, Economic Development Administration  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Forest Service  
U.S. Geological Survey  
United Way  
University of North Dakota - Institute of Ecological Studies  
University of North Dakota - Plant Services  
University of North Dakota - Police Chief  
University of North Dakota - Transportation/Transit  
Valley Memorial Homes  
Water Mgmt/Wetlands, US EPA  
Western Area Power Administration  
Xcel Energy

Additions or deletions may be made to this list as needed. Any group, agency, or transportation operator with special interest or expertise in the transportation field which have not been included on the above list and wish to be considered for inclusion may contact the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization by calling (701) 746-2660, e-mail Peggy McNelis at [pmcnelis@grandforksgov.com](mailto:pmcnelis@grandforksgov.com) or by writing to the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization, 255 4th Street North, P.O. Box 5200, Grand Forks, North Dakota 58206.

**APPENDIX F.**  
**Citizen User Manual**



## **APPENDIX G.**

### **Press Releases Guidelines and Examples of Public Notices, Etc.**

## **PRESS RELEASE GUIDELINES**

### When to accompany a paid notice with a press release

When the contents of a paid public notice is of greater than usual public interest, then the MPO should accompany, with the paid notice, a press release on the subject. Whether or not the newspaper uses the press release is strictly an editorial decision and the MPO cannot depend on a newspaper to print it.

### The fundamentals

Make it as easy as possible for the newspaper to publish the press release by following these guidelines:

- Make it short and to the point - no more than two pages, typed and double-spaced.
- Include your organization's name, contact person and telephone number on top of page one.
- The first sentence - or lead - should contain the most important information. Assume the media will only pay attention to the first three paragraphs, so try to get the vital information up there:
  - Who, What, When, Where, and Why?
  - What format will the hearing follow?
- After covering the above information, if you have room, supplementary material can be developed, such as:
  - A quote from an official about the importance of public involvement in this important planning effort.
  - TEA-21 planning requirements
  - What will happen to comments received at the meeting
  - Some interesting fact for them to receive more information about at the meeting
  - Something that will arouse their interest/curiosity
- Include a copy of the public notice.
- A press release should take the format of an inverted pyramid with the most important information at top and subsequent information following by level of importance.

Sample Press Release.

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT: Earl Haugen 746-2660

### Solicitation of Projects

GRAND FORKS, ND - The Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization is pleased to announce that it is accepting nominations for projects to be considered for General Transportation Funds. Annually, the MPO solicits projects for consideration of being funded with General Transportation Funds. Projects awarded federal funds are documented in a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP covers a three year period and is updated annually; the projects currently being solicited are for the 2003-2005 TIP, which will be finalized by the MPO in June of 2002. Any projects nominated will be reviewed for consistency with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and will be prioritized.

The specific projects the MPO is currently soliciting are for projects to be funded from the North Dakota Allocation of Transportation Enhancement Funds; a total of \$900,000 is available. These funds are for projects to be completed in 2003. Traditionally, these funds have been used to construct bike trails within Grand Forks.

Specific projects are also sought utilizing the Minnesota Sub-target of Interregional Funds. These funds are for projects to be completed in 2005; a total of \$6.7 Million is available. Traditionally, these funds have been used to reconstruct major highways in Northwestern Minnesota.

Projects are also requested for nomination for the Minnesota Sub-target of Hazard Elimination Safety (HES) Funds. These are for projects to be completed in 2005; a total of \$300,000 is available. Traditionally, these funds have been used to make improvements at highway/railroad crossings.

Because each of these funding sources has different criteria, any one interested in nominating a project should contact the MPO as early as possible. The contact person is Mr. Earl Haugen, Executive Director; his phone number is 701/746/2660.

Further, these projects must be submitted officially to the MPO by a city government, county government or state agency; therefore, any one interested in nominating a project must work through the local agency's approval process.

###

Sample Public Notice.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization will hold a public hearing to receive comments on projects proposed to being amended in the FY 2002 Program of the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program 2002-2004. The hearing will be held in Grand Forks on Wednesday, February 13 at 1:30 p.m. in conjunction with a meeting of the MPO Technical Advisory Committee in the Planning Conference Room located in Grand Forks City Hall, 255 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Str.

The purpose of the hearing is to explain what projects are being proposed for amendment, how the projects may be amended and to receive comments from the public regarding the proposed amendments. The public will also have an opportunity to ask questions regarding any projects they are considering nominating for these funds. A copy of the proposed amendments can be reviewed at the MPO Offices located at 255 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Grand Forks or 600 DeMers Avenue, East Grand Forks.

Any individual requiring a special accommodation to allow access or participation at this meeting is asked to notify the ADA Coordinator (701/746/2665) of their needs prior to the meeting. Any one not able to attend can forward their comments to the GF/EGF MPO at 701/746/2660 or write to GF/EGF MPO, PO BOX 5200, Grand Forks ND 58206-5200.

(Please publish as an advertisement)

(Please publish as soon as possible)

(Please bill the GF/ EGF MPO 746-2660)

(Please submit an affidavit of publication to GF/EGF MPO)

**APPENDIX H.**

**Public Participation Techniques  
For  
Transportation Planning**

## TECHNIQUES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**Brainstorming** brings participants together in a freethinking forum to generate ideas.

Advantages:

- Promotes creative solutions to a problem.
- Often can generate variety of ideas.

Limitations:

- Difficult to involve more than a small number of people.
- Generates many solutions to a problem that may be difficult to evaluate.

A **charrette** is a meeting to resolve a problem or issue, within a specified time limit.

Advantages:

- Effective in achieving consensus among conflicting interests. Participants gain understanding of both sides of an issue.

Limitations:

- Crisis issue prerequisite to motivating participants.

A **Citizens' Advisory Committee** is a representative group of stakeholders that meets regularly to discuss issues of common concern.

Advantages:

- Provides a continuing forum for bringing citizens' ideas directly into the transportation planning and development process.

Limitations:

- May not be representative. Sometimes perceived as biased and elitist.

**Citizen surveys** are used to determine public perceptions and preferences. A survey is administered to a sample group of citizens via a written questionnaire or through interviews in persons, by phone, or by electronic media.

Advantages:

- Representative.
- Can identify values and attitudes.

Limitations:

- Surveys are not interactive
- Costly.
- Design and sampling techniques are critical to level of confidence.
- Difficult to collect.

A **collaborative task force** is assigned a specific task with a time limit to come to a conclusion and resolve a difficult issue, subject to ratification by official decision-making.

Advantages:

- Helps resolve impasses through a participatory process.
- Represents a broad cross-section of interests.

Limitations:

- Process is long and expensive.
- Participants must make an extensive commitment to the process.

**Facilitation** is guidance of a group in a problem-solving process. A facilitator works with the group as a whole and provides procedural help in moving toward a conclusion.

Advantages:

- Brings out all points of view represented in the group.

Limitations:

- A group may feel manipulated by an agency unless the facilitator is perceived to be impartial.
- There is a limit on the number of interest that can be facilitated in a meeting.
- Opponents may refuse to consider each other's ideas.

**Focus groups** should be convened when specific problems come up or a particular project or approach needs detailed involvement.

Advantages:

- Provides fast general public reaction to proposal or project.
- Comparatively inexpensive.

Limitations:

- Provides solely qualitative responses. Not statistically representative of society at large.
- Brings no public consensus.

**Media strategies** inform customers about projects and programs through newspapers, radio, TV and videos, billboards, poster and variable message signs, mass mailings of brochures or newsletters, and distribution of flyers.

Advantages:

- Delivers a uniform message to alleviate the spread of misinformation that often becomes a barrier to understanding or implementation.

Limitations:

- Media strategies take a high level of commitment over time to be successful.

**Public meetings/hearings** are forums for receiving citizen comments. Both are widely used to achieve a basic level of citizen input to transportation planning and project development and to exchange information with a wide representation of citizens.

Advantages:

- Public meetings provide exposure of information to large numbers of people.
- Provides visibility to the political process.
- Public hearings are low cost.
- Meets legal requirements.

Limitations:

- Public meetings allow only a small percent the opportunity to speak.
- May be manipulation of the meeting by interest groups.
  - Tends to increase polarization of positions

- Public hearings are at the low end of public participation effectiveness.
- Reactive public instead of proactive involvement.
- Often very low attendance.

**Telephone techniques** offer a unique, two-way medium for public involvement. It can be used to obtain information and to give opinions.

Advantages:

- Basically interactive.
- Reaches out to a broad variety of people who might not otherwise participate, including people with disabilities.

Limitations:

- Does not allow people to hear other opinions.

A **transportation fair** is typically a one-day event used to interest citizens in transportation and in specific projects or programs. A fair focuses on visual exhibits, such as exhibits, videos, and maps or models of projects.

Advantages:

- Creates interest and dramatizes a project or program.
- Keeps participants informed, interested, and up-to-date.

Limitations:

- Does not bring public consensus.
- Representative comments cannot be expected because a fair is not likely to include all potential participants.

**Video techniques** use recorded visual and oral messages to present information to the public, primarily via videotapes.

Advantages:

- A video may be worth a thousand words.
- Documents a planning process.
- Illustrates different planning scenarios.

Limitations:

- Videotapes are not two-way.

**Visioning** leads to a goals statement. Typically it consists of a series of meetings focused on long-range issues.

Advantages:

- Offers the widest possible participation for developing a long-range plan.
- Visioning is an integrated approach to policy-making.

Limitations:

- Time and staff requirements are significant to maintain contact with the numerous citizen participants and carry the program forward.

The following three tables are guides to choosing techniques appropriate for the type of project, point in the process, and with the resources available. Tables were taken from *Hear Every Voice*, MN DOT.

KEY							
Always Appropriate	Sometimes Appropriate	Not Very Appropriate	<b>Project Development</b>				
Tool/Technique	Planning	Scoping	Pre-Design & Env. Study	Detail Design & R/W Acq.	Construction & Operation	Requires Facility	Requires Ext. Expert
Civic Advisory Committee (Advise)			■	●		■	
Citizens on Decision & Policy Bodies (Recommend)			■			■	
Collaborative Task Force (Problem Solve)			■			■	
Mailing Lists	●	●	■		●		
Public Information Materials		●	●	●	●		■
Key Person Interviews		●					
Briefings			●	●	●		
Video Techniques		●	■				■
Telephone Techniques			◇			■	
Media Strategies	●	●	●	●	●		
Speakers Bureau & P.I. Volunteers	●	●	■				
Public Meetings/Hearings		●	■				
Open/Forum Hearings /Open Houses		●	●			●	
Conferences, Workshops & Retreats	●		■			●	
Brainstorming	●	●					
Charettes			■	●			
Visioning	●		■				
Small Group Techniques			■				
On-Line Services			■			■	
Drop-in Centers			■			■	
Focus Groups	●		◇			■	■
Public Opinion Surveys	●		■				
Facilitation	●	●	■				
Negotiation & Meditation			■	●			●
Transportation Fairs	●		■			●	
Games & Contests	●	●				■	
Role Playing			■				
Site Visits	●	●	■	●			
Interactive Television			■			●	■
Interactive Video Displays & Kiosks			■			●	■
Computer Presentations & Simulations	●	●	■	●			■
Teleconferencing	●	●	●	■		●	

KEY			Plan Process		
Always Appropriate	Sometimes Appropriate	Not Very Appropriate			
Tool/Technique	Total Planning	Developing Values,	Choosing Alternatives	Plan Implementatio	Feedback-Modification
Civic Advisory Committee (Advise)		●	●	◇	◇
Citizens on Decision & Policy Bodies (Recommend)		◇	◇	●	◇
Collaborative Task Force (Problem	●	●	●	●	●
Mailing Lists	●	●	●	●	●
Public Information Materials	●	●	●	●	●
Key Person Interviews	●	●	●	●	●
Briefings	●	●	●	●	●
Video Techniques		■	●	■	◇
Telephone Techniques		■		■	■
Media Strategies	●	●	●	●	●
Speakers Bureau & P.I. Volunteers		●		■	◇
Public Meetings/Hearings		◇	●	◇	◇
Open Forum/Open Houses		■	●	◇	■
Conferences, Workshops & Retreats	●	●	●	●	●
Brainstorming		●		◇	◇
Charrettes	●	●	●	●	●
Visioning		●	●	◇	◇
Small Group Techniques	●	●	●	●	●
On-Line Services		●		■	■
Hotlines		■	●	■	●
Drop-in Centers		■	●	◇	◇
Focus Groups	●	●	●	●	●
Public Opinion Surveys		●	●	◇	●
Facilitation		◇	●	◇	◇
Negotiation & Meditation		◇		●	◇
Transportation Fairs		■	●	◇	◇
Games & Contests		◇	●	◇	◇
Improving Meeting Attendance	●	●	●	●	●
Role Playing		◇		◇	◇
Site Visits		■	●	●	◇
Non-Traditional Meeting Places & Events	●	●	●	●	●
Interactive Television		■	●	◇	◇
Interactive Video Displays & Kiosks		■	●	◇	■
Computer Presentations & Simulations		■	●	●	◇
Teleconferencing		◇	■	◇	■

KEY			Resources Required		
Very Intensive	Moderately Intensive	Less Intensive			
Tool/Technique	Use of Time Resources	Use of Money Resources	Use of Staff Resources		
Civic Advisory Committee (Advise)	◇	●	●		
Citizens on Decision & Policy Bodies (Recommend)	■	◇	■		
Collaborative Task Force (Problem Solve)	■		■		
Mailing Lists	◇	■	■		
Public Information Materials	◇	◇	◇		
Key Person Interviews	◇		●		
Briefings	◇		●		
Video Techniques	■	●			
Telephone Techniques	◇		●		
Media Strategies	■		■		
Speakers Bureau & P.I. Volunteers	■		■		
Public Meetings/Hearings	◇	◇	◇		
Open Forum/Open Houses	◇	◇	■		
Conferences, Workshops & Retreats	◇	◇	■		
Brainstorming	◇	■	■		
Charrettes	◇	■	■		
Visioning	◇	■	■		
Small Group Techniques			■		
On-Line Services	◇	◇	■		
Hotlines	◇	◇	■		
Drop-in Centers	◇	■	■		
Focus Groups	■	■	■		
Public Opinion Surveys	■	■	●		
Facilitation	■	◇	■		
Negotiation & Meditation	●	●	■		
Transportation Fairs	■	■	■		
Games & Contests	◇	■	◇		
Improving Meeting Attendance	◇	◇	◇		
Role Playing	◇	◇	◇		
Site Visits	◇	◇	◇		
Non-Traditional Meeting Places & Events	◇	◇	◇		
Interactive Television	◇	●	■		
Interactive Video Displays & Kiosks	■	●	■		
Computer Presentations & Simulations	■	●	■		
Teleconferencing	◇	◇	■		

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