



SIERRA VISTA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

DRAFT

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Sierra Vista Metropolitan Planning Region

Regional Transportation Planning

Adopted on _____
Sierra Vista MPO Executive Board

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INTRODUCTION

The Sierra Vista Metropolitan Planning Organization, known as SVMPO, was formed in 2013, after the area reached a Census designated urban population of 50,000. It is the Federal and State designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the southwestern portion of Cochise County, located in southeast Arizona. Its mission is to share information and build consensus among member jurisdictions on regional transportation issues.

A regionally connected transportation infrastructure, as well as a healthy economy and a sustainable environment, is important to all of the area's residents. Inviting the public to be involved in agency-wide planning and program efforts helps to identify shared regional values, builds better relationships between the government and the public, enhances understanding of regional issues and can also help to minimize negative impacts of transportation investments.

Effective public involvement helps to ensure that:

- ❖ Residents are given the opportunity to participate in the transportation planning process.
- ❖ The issues and concerns of residents are given consideration in the selection of transportation investments.
- ❖ Transportation investments provide benefits to all residents.
- ❖ Transportation investments do not disproportionately burden any population group with adverse impacts.

The SVMPO Public Participation Plan, was first adopted on October 22, 2014. This plan emphasizes the importance of, and provides specific strategies for, involving community members, organizations, governments, transportation professionals and others in ongoing and future regional plans, programs and projects. These include agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historical preservation. Involving all potentially affected interests, including the traditionally underserved populations, can increase the public's understanding of the goals and impacts of a specific plan or project.

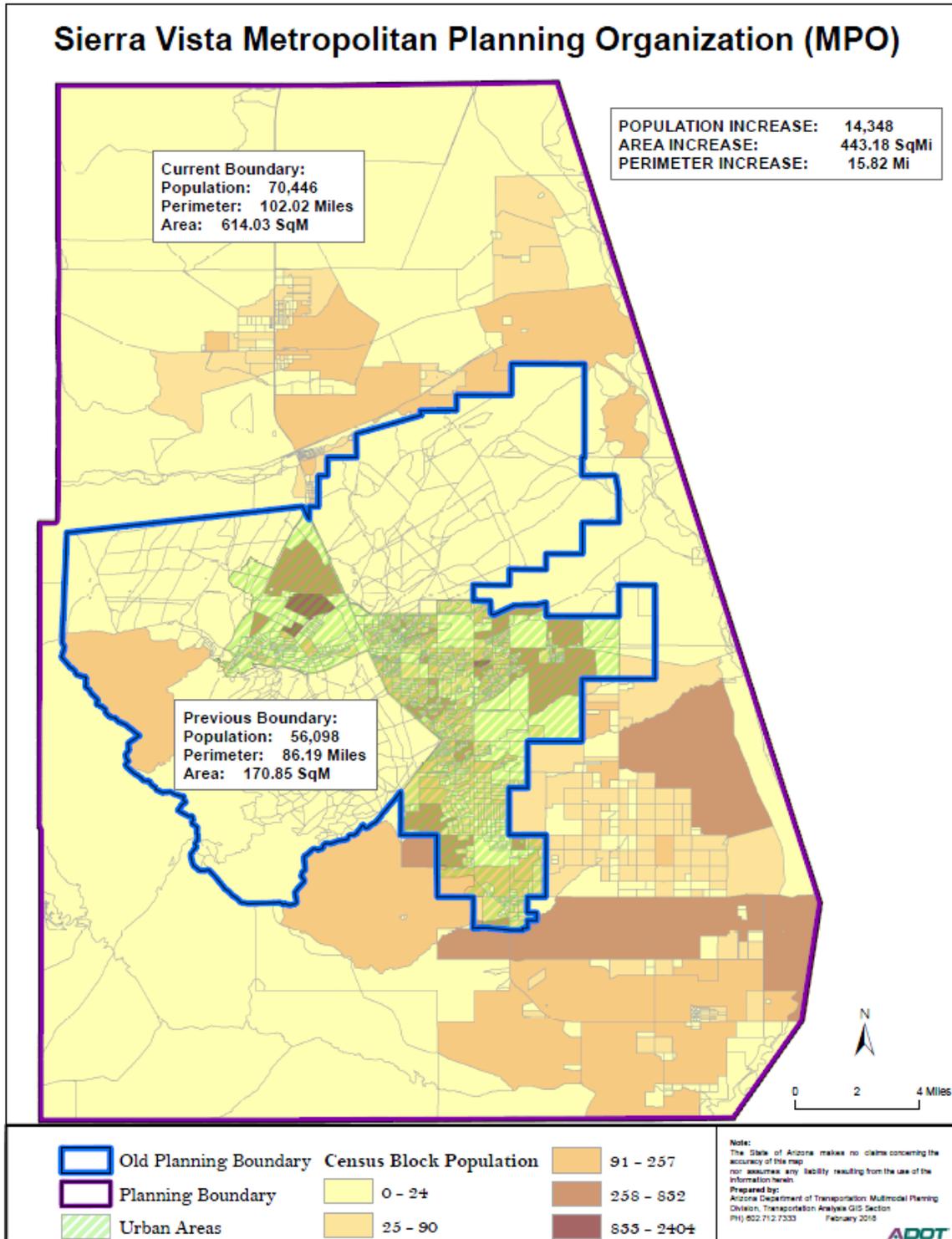
The SVMPO Public Participation Plan supports:

- ❖ Inclusive and meaningful public involvement.
- ❖ Open and honest communications with all individuals and entities.
- ❖ Timely public notification of meetings, and pending studies, plans and projects.
- ❖ Easily accessible information and opportunities to comment on key decisions.
- ❖ Establishing policies and prioritizing needs based on valid data and using objective, fair, and consistent processes.
- ❖ Forming partnerships between member entities, public and private sectors, state and federal agencies to plan and implement transportation programs and projects.
- ❖ Gathering input and providing information so that decision makers are able to make informed decisions.
- ❖ Creating a sense of shared responsibility and ownership for regional transportation/congestion, problems and a shared sense of pride in the development of solutions to those problems.

SVMPO LOCATION

SVMPO is located in the southeast corner of Arizona. There are currently two incorporated areas within the SVMPO; the City of Sierra Vista and the Town of Huachuca City. Portions of southwest unincorporated Cochise County are included within the SVMPO boundaries. Other jurisdictions within Cochise County and key areas outside of Cochise County are frequently included in planning processes in order to help evaluate connectivity and outside impacts.

On January 18, 2018, the SVMPO Executive Board approved an expansion of the MPO planning boundaries. This expansion increased the MPO area to 614.03 square miles, reaching to the international border with Mexico to the south, the Pima County boundary to the west, to the City of Benson jurisdiction boundary to the north and the San Pedro river corridor to the east. The MPO now includes federal and state owned lands, including the Coronado National Forest.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Public participation implies an open process. This means that anyone who is potentially affected, or is just interested in the process, is welcome to participate. Reasons for encouraging public participation include:

- ❖ Project leaders gain new information from a local/regional perspective.
- ❖ Different ideas or solutions may be developed to improve the transportation infrastructure in an area.
- ❖ Project leaders may be alerted to potential problems or issues that may need resolution before moving forward.
- ❖ An interactive forum can be provided to address concerns or resolve conflicts between competing interests.
- ❖ Fully engaged participants may be willing to provide additional resources in the form of assistance, goods, or services or enhance the project with private investment on adjacent parcels.

Effective outreach considers who will be affected and/or who might be interested in the planning issue or policy being developed. Regional plans and projects inherently should take into consideration all people within the planning and/or project boundaries.

Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Federal, State and Local Public Agencies
- ❖ Residents and Area Visitors
- ❖ Disabled and Mobility Challenged People
- ❖ Low-Income Neighborhood Residents
- ❖ Freight Shippers and Freight Service Providers
- ❖ Providers of Public Transportation Services
- ❖ Providers of Private Transportation Options
- ❖ Users of Multi-Modal Transportation Systems
- ❖ Pilots and Drone Operators
- ❖ Transportation/Public Works Employees
- ❖ Permanent and Temporary Duty Military
- ❖ Business Owners and Employers

GENERAL OUTREACH GUIDELINES

Techniques: There are numerous and varied techniques/activities to provide the opportunity for public involvement. Any combination and number of these may be used depending on the scope of the specific plan, program, or project. A number of specific involvement strategies are outlined in Table 1.

Welcoming Attitude: Public participation is welcomed and encouraged by the SVMPO. All questions and statements are valuable and should be treated as such. Participants will be treated with respect. Meetings should be conducted with basic ground rules that enforce civil discussion. With every contact with the public, the intent is to present information that is relevant and accurate. A good-faith effort to present how information might impact individuals in both the near future, as well as long-term, is desired.

Meeting Schedules and Locations: Meetings and hearings, which are open for public participation, should be scheduled to allow the best opportunity for attendance by the general public and other entities whenever possible. The meeting locations should be convenient and ADA accessible. In addition to general meetings, events and activities, reasonable efforts should be made to reach those who are particularly affected, the

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Internal stakeholders include SVMPO member jurisdictions and SVMPO Executive Board members, who ultimately have final decision-making authority over SVMPO's planning and programming efforts.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

External stakeholders include individuals who will be affected by the plan or program under consideration and people with a specific interest in the plan or program.

GENERAL PUBLIC

The general public includes the broad spectrum of population groups, including area residents and property owners, who may or may not be directly impacted or interested in a particular issue.

underserved or others who request that the SVMPO come to them. The policy of the SVMPO is to go where people are whenever reasonably possible. Locations and meeting times for SVMPO activities should be tailored to best accommodate the primary stakeholders.

Notification: Notices will follow the general Open Meeting Laws of the State of Arizona. Information about meetings, events, key decision points and other opportunities for participation should be made in a timely manner. Adequate time may be needed to arrange for accommodations to meet special needs. Notifications should be easy to understand, provide adequate information and explain where information can be obtained.

Presentation of Information: In order to help stakeholders and the general public better understand regional transportation planning, presented information should try to show both the near future as well as long-term effects. Visualization enhancements such as animation, physical props, pictures, 3-D models, etc. should be incorporated, as appropriate, and as resources allow. When the scope of a proposed plan or project has the potential to significantly impact individuals with special needs, every reasonable effort should be made to provide pertinent materials in alternative formats, i.e. large print, Braille, audio/video.

Written and Personal Communications from SVMPO: Technical and policy information from SVMPO should be written so that it is clear and understandable to the public. All relevant information should be open for public consideration. Staff should be available to answer questions and respond to questions in a timely manner.

Ongoing Communications: SVMPO may use mailings, media, and electronic technology such as e-mail and web sites to engage ongoing communication with the public and other entities. Members of the SVMPO staff should also be available via the phone or e-mail for questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Other Agency Partners: The needs and interests of other public and governmental agencies should be solicited, as appropriate. Coordination, cooperation, and teamwork among all the agencies is considered to be vital to the success of any plan, program, or project. Of particular importance in the SVMPO area is providing the opportunity for the Federal and State agencies that have ownership over large portions of the SVMPO region to be engaged in regional transportation planning activities.

Transportation Interests: The SVMPO should solicit input from transportation-related groups such as professional organizations, freight interests, transit operators, and private providers of transportation, bicycle advocates and other organized alternative mode users.

Opportunities for Input: Opportunities for input vary depending on the plan, program or project. For larger projects, such as a regional transportation plan, several rounds of public participation may be appropriate. Opportunity for initial comments on what projects citizens would like their transportation system to include, prior to the start of any work may be desired. A variety of techniques, appropriate to the type of activity being engaged, would be used to involve all the stakeholders throughout multiple stages of any planning or project. Techniques would be determined by the extent and nature of the project, as well as available resources.

Use of Public Comments: A record of public comments should be retained for public review. In specific cases, identified by federal regulations, a summary, analysis and report on comments received and the SVMPO responses, should be made part of the final document. Individual questions should receive a response in a timely manner.

Decision Making: All final decisions (other than those requiring a vote of the people) are made by one or more groups of elected or appointed officials. Prior to each key decision point, ample opportunity should be offered for input and that input shared with the decision-makers. Public meetings allow comments to be collected and may identify a consensus. The final decision, however, will be up to the elected and/or appointed officials on the SVMPO Executive Board, who take into consideration a number of factors, including public input.

LEVELS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The levels of public involvement and methods vary depending on the scope of the particular planning or program efforts. The following table illustrates the increasing levels of public impact during a planning or project activity. Identifying the appropriate level of public engagement and then following through on the promise to the public on how the information gathered is used, and recorded, is a desired goal for every SVMPO document.

INCREASING LEVELS OF PUBLIC IMPACT 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulation solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES	Fact Sheets Websites Open Houses Newsletters Social Media E-Mail Notices News Releases	Public Comment Focus Groups Surveys Public Meetings Public Hearings	Workshops Deliberate Polling Virtual Town Halls	Citizen advisory committees Consensus-building Participatory decision-making Charrettes	Citizen Juries Ballots Delegated Decisions
EXAMPLE LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION	Bicycle Maps Traffic Counts	Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Short-Range Transit Plans	Long-Range Transportation Plan	Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee Citizen Advisory Committees	Voter approved regional Transportation Authority Plans.

Sources: International Association for Public Participation; SVMPO

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH

Welcoming public participation and providing opportunities to comment are key elements of good public outreach. Public engagement is an on-going activity, blending and overlapping different venues and methods, to better understand the needs, concerns and challenges of the traveling public. Strategies that can be used to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower the public regarding regional transportation activities are described in the following Public Participation and Outreach Toolbox table.

Public Participation and Outreach Toolbox

Activity	Description	Comments
Brochures	Written material to distribute that generally contains more information than a flyer. It is often folded to create a small piece for distribution.	Translation into different languages or provided in alternative formats may be desired for targeted outreach to Title VI protected groups.
Charrettes	An intensive brainstorming session using visual methods to define alternatives.	These can last anywhere from a few hours to a few days. The use of visual aids and hands-on activities can cross the language barriers as well as engage inter-generational or cross-cultural groups.
Conference	A meeting with two or more people where the participants confer and discuss. (This can also be a series of meetings and/or events focused on a unifying subject.)	Professional conferences allow opportunities to learn from those with expertise in a specific aspect of transportation and/or planning.
Contact lists	Create contact lists for interested parties.	Difficult to keep these current. Appropriate for project-level outreach.
Displays/Open Houses	Information and materials are displayed in an informal setting where people are free to move about and consider whatever is of interest to them. Informed people are typically available to answer questions and take comments and suggestions.	These are typically held in various public locations, like regional malls and government buildings, but the use of locations or events frequented by specific ethnic groups or targeted groups may increase outreach to protected population groups
E-mails	Using the Internet to contact people that have shared electronic mail addresses.	This is very inexpensive and a quick way to contact people. It is, however, important to find other ways to communicate with people who do not have access to computers. Libraries and Senior Centers are locations in the SVMPO region that provide public access to computers and could be a source providing electronic connections to protected population groups.
Flyers	A written communication piece that provides basic information. Could be mailed, inserted into other communications e.g. utility bills, schools handouts.	Multiple flyers can be produced for one event, plan or project with each flyer designed to communicate with different groups. These can also be produced in various languages or alternative formats.
Focus Groups	A small selected group of individuals meet together, either formally or informally, to give feedback to the organizer on a specific topic.	Because this is a selected group, people who are not selected may be suspicious of the information gathered. Alternative points of view may be left out by those too shy to assert themselves into a selected group or have time constraints.
Forums	A public meeting that is designed to help attendants better understand a subject by hearing different points of view. Usually several people with differing opinions, each make a short presentation and then answer questions. This format is not designed for decision making.	It is often helpful if a disinterested party moderates. It also might be helpful, especially in some communities, if some of the "experts" are local and trusted by the community. If a forum is used, it may need to be in Spanish for Spanish speaking community members (or other language formats depending upon the community group).
Games and Contests	These include a wide variety of activities including such things as board games, role playing, computer simulations, raffles etc.	Use of these is an unusual and creative way to actively involve people; especially younger population groups.

Activity	Description	Comments
Grocery Store	Contacting people at the grocery store, either by printing information on a grocery bag, dropping information into a grocery bag, staffed information tables, or by displaying flyers or posters in the store.	This is a way to reach a larger and possibly diverse group of people, but it will also require availability of the necessary level of resources. Coordination with the local store owners/managers necessary.
Key Person Interview/ Organizational Contact	This question and answer session is with a specifically targeted person who has been identified as someone with whom it would be particularly important or useful to speak with on a given topic.	This may be useful as a first step in involving agencies, state or federal partners or reaching advocacy or special interest groups.
Meetings or Presentations	These are opportunities for larger groups of people to get together for a multitude of purposes. The general intent is to allow people to interact on a person-to-person basis. Meetings can be held for a wide variety of reasons from working on an issue to making a presentation and allows for interactive Questions and Answers.	To be most effective, a meeting should inform the participant prior to coming: what type of meeting it will be, what their role will be, and the expected outcome of the meeting. Weakness in relying entirely on the meeting format is that meetings typically focuses solely on the presenter's point of view.
Modeling	Computer and/or physical modeling can be used to help people better visualize or better understand a particular concept or project.	This can provide useful information but computer generated exhibits often appear "completed" and give the impression to the public that decisions have been already made.
Newspaper Advertisement	Information that a newspaper prints in their paper that is not part of the news. The person/group placing the advertisement has control of the content.	These are generally purchased, and are used to announce meetings, events, or activities. Can be used to solicit feedback via surveys or direct interested people to the website.
Newsletters	A regular communication for a predetermined, or self-selected, group of individuals/groups.	These can be mailed or sent electronically. This is a standard way to keep interested individuals and entities informed on a regular basis. Newsletters are also a source of regular information to those that cannot or do not want to travel to meetings.
On-Line Engagement Tools	Embedded tools and interactive virtual rooms allow for interaction with large numbers of people through the Internet. Simple surveys to virtual town halls can allow people to share ideas, comment on others ideas and reach consensus with others in their community.	Can require technology skilled staff. Also do not assume that everyone is on-line or is on-line savvy.
Postcard Notices/Door Hangers	A postcard mailed to a predetermined mailing list to announce an event or activity or provide other specific information.	
Posters	A large written announcement posted in a public place.	These can be placed at numerous locations and designed to appeal to different groups or underserved populations. Posters must be displayed in conspicuous and accessible locations.
Presentation Meetings	These meetings allow the organizer to provide information and answer questions for a large group at once.	The presenter generally does not present any side of the issue other than their own. (The style of the meeting should be adapted to the audience.)
Press Releases	This official release tells the press there is news they might be interested in reporting. It generally follows a specific format and includes who, what when, where and a contact for more information.	Information that is reported as "news" may get more attention and credibility than paid advertising.

Activity	Description	Comments
Public Hearings	This is a legal meeting that is often required to make sure there is some opportunity for public comment. It is normally conducted with elected officials sitting at the front and allowing community members very specific conditions, and limited timeframes, to speak to the issue at hand.	These are often the last opportunity for getting input as they generally occur late in the process. The primary intent of a public hearing is to provide decision makers with input prior to making their final decision. It can also result in contentious and emotional presentations that have little basis in fact.
Public Notice	These are official notices posted prior to meetings.	These are required for meetings where a quorum of elected officials from the same governing body will be present.
Public Service Announcements	These are short announcements usually on radio or television, for which there is no charge and announce something important for the public to know.	Good for announcing real-time changes in traffic control e.g. detours or road closures.
Radio Talk Show	A longer discussion, on the radio, of a particular subject. It usually involves a talk show host and one or more additional people. Sometimes there is an opportunity for people to call in questions.	This is an opportunity for providing more in-depth information on a certain topic.
School Presentations	In order to reach the youth, presentations can be made at the schools, including presentations to clubs, student council, and specific classes. Also a tool to reach parents through school communication channels.	Suggested classes would be: civics, economics (or other senior level classes), and transportation classes.
Speakers' Bureau	This is an organized effort to provide speakers to various groups and events on one or more specific subjects. Also, can involve developing champions that have expertise in a specific area and are engaging speakers to their interest groups.	This allows more flexibility and a broader outreach to targeted interest groups. The SVMPO Administrator or regional agency partners could provide presentations on general or specific transportation related topics.
Survey – General	This type of survey is open to anyone who wants to participate. (This can be in traditional or electronic formats). Respondents self-select to provide survey feedback from targeted or general survey broadcasts. Effective tool for reaching targeting multi-modal users e.g. on the bus, at bicycle ride events.	While the information is useful and important, it often cannot be stated as representing a larger group. To be representative the survey must be statistically valid and reach to non-English speaking populations.
Survey - Statistically Valid	This is a survey that collects information from specific people who have been chosen on a random basis according to a specific formula. With this type of survey the results can be stated as representing the group from which the random sample was taken.	These are very expensive but can be useful in certain circumstances and typically include non-English speaking populations. Providing Spanish language surveys is often desired.
Town Meeting	This is usually a semi-formal meeting designed to be open to everyone in a community. It often includes both the public and elected officials with an opportunity for comments back and forth.	These are increasingly held in virtual space through interactive on-line programs. These can also be held in a mobile form, such as on a bus, as a mobile presentation to targeted users.
Web-Site	A series of "pages" on the Internet that relate to a specific subject. They can be reached by anyone who has access to the Internet by typing a particular address or by doing a search.	Websites are a common research tool for the public and relatively easy way to post information the public may wish to review. Websites can also provide a way for the public to provide feedback. Be aware of the limitations of technology in rural areas and among some population groups.
Working Meetings/Workshops	Generally these are meetings designed to work through issues when there can be give and take among all the participants. These types of meetings typically inform and solicit input on specific issues, plans, or projects.	Typically, selected persons with expertise in the area are invited and are expected to bring data, information and possible solutions to the meeting. These usually allow a smaller group of people to participate more intensively.

TITLE VI POLICY

This agency has a nondiscrimination policy that addresses Title VI, Environmental Justice and other relevant federal and state statutes. No person, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, income status or limited English proficiency, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any SVMPO sponsored program of activity. Public outreach and data analysis are two tools used to ensure that equal benefits and disproportionate burdens are assessed during project development. The SVMPO Title VI Plan sets out the SVMPO policies and assurances in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1994 Presidential Executive Order 12898.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

The goal of the SVMPO Title VI Plan is to identify and better understand vulnerable population areas within the region so that opportunities can be enhanced to allow these population groups to be engaged in the regional planning process in meaningful ways. All persons within the SVMPO region should receive equal benefits from planning activities without shouldering a disproportionate share of the burdens. This effort is a continual work in progress in order to reflect ever-changing demographics and transportation infrastructure needs of the SVMPO area residents.

The SVMPO Title VI Plan is reviewed annually by ADOT's Civil Rights Division, and submitted to both FHWA and FTA. It is a key tool in determining the appropriate strategy for outreach to vulnerable population groups and identifying if there are any particular Title VI considerations in a plan or project area.

ROLE OF THE MEMBER JURISDICTIONS

The SVMPO is a member organization with three jurisdictions: Cochise County, City of Sierra Vista and the Town of Huachuca City, in partnership with ADOT. Each of the member jurisdictions have their own obligations and responsibilities to include specific stakeholders and the general public in the development of plans, programs and projects. SVMPO activities may be targeted within the boundaries of one jurisdiction, such a spot safety improvement, or it may be broad and far-reaching, such as long-range transportation planning effort. Public information officers of each jurisdiction play an important role in leveraging outreach efforts to their residents.

Jurisdiction newsletters, e-news release, social media outlets (including Facebook, Twitter) and broadcasts to their employees via e-mail are all additional support member jurisdictions are willing to add to the SVMPO outreach efforts. All member jurisdictions have also offered support in scheduling meeting space in locations familiar and accessible to their residents. The SVMPO should coordinate early in a plan, program or project process with the jurisdiction's public information officers to effectively include the additional communication channels to the region's stakeholders.

ROLE OF THE PUBLIC

Providing opportunities for the public to participate in many different ways is one method for encouraging input and involvement from potentially affected people, business and organizations. A few ways in which the public can be involved in regional transportation planning include:

- ❖ Share thoughts and ideas during posted public comment periods or hearings.

- ❖ Seek membership on SVMPO advisory committees and working groups.
- ❖ Be involved in advocacy groups with a focus on aspects of transportation that interest you.
- ❖ Attend public meetings to present or submit your questions, concerns and comments.
- ❖ Attend open houses to learn and understand more about regional planning activities and share your questions, concerns, ideas and solutions.
- ❖ Ask to be on SVMPO e-mail list for newsletters or notices.
- ❖ Participate in surveys about transportation or regional planning.
- ❖ Visit the SVMPO website at www.svmppo.org to learn more about SVMPO's planning activities and regional programs, and to view its calendar of meetings and events.

COMMENTS IN WRITING MAY BE SUBMITTED BY:

MAIL: Sierra Vista MPO, 401 Giulio Cesare Ave., Sierra Vista, AZ 85635-2411

E-MAIL: SVMPO@SierraVistaAz.gov

WEBSITE: Comments may be submitted through on-line comment forms at www.svmppo.org

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

This Public Participation Plan has gone through several stages during its development:

- ❖ Preparation of a Preliminary Draft Plan.
- ❖ Evaluation of this Plan to ensure compliance with all federal regulations.
- ❖ Circulation of the Draft Plan for at least 45 calendar days. This includes notice to member jurisdictions that this final Draft Plan is available for review, including placement on the SVMPO's website.
- ❖ Review of the plan by stakeholders including the general public, governmental entities, and transportation professionals/businesses.
- ❖ Review and evaluation of any recommended revisions.
- ❖ Preparation of a Final Draft Plan
- ❖ Adoption/Acceptance of the 2019 Public Participation Plan by the SVMPO Executive Board.
- ❖ Ongoing implementation of the Plan by SVMPO.

This Public Participation Plan should be updated at least every 5 years. Other periodic revisions may occur, as new and better approaches are determined or in advance of a larger-scaled outreach effort, such as the Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan. Each time any significant content revisions are made (other than technical, grammatical or formatting revisions) the public will be given a 45-calendar day review and comment period prior to implementing the changes.

SVMPO DOCUMENT REVIEW COMMENT PERIODS

Few of the SVMPO documents have mandated public review timeframes. This document, the Public Participation Plan, requires a minimum 45 day comment period, prior to adoption. All other documents, including the SVMPO Work Program and the Long-Range Transportation plan, are required to provide a "reasonable opportunity" to review and comment on those plans. From time to time, federal regulations require specific comment periods for MPO documents. The practice of the SVMPO is to bring forward, through the TAC and Executive Board, preliminary draft documents, to post those preliminary plans for public review and to finalize those Plans approximately two months later. Most SVMPO draft documents are available for the public to review and comment at least 30 days in advance of the adoption.

For each of the SVMPO documents, early in the process a determination should be made as to the level of public involvement, not just required, but desired. Consideration of the scale of potential impact, available resources (both time and funds), and the most effective strategies to reach the primary stakeholders should influence decisions on what level of outreach will be conducted and the timeframe allowed for review comments. The public should also be informed as to what will be done with their comments and a commitment to provide those comments to the decision makers before they vote on any document before them.

During the development of the short and long range regional transportation plans, consultation with agencies, groups and stakeholders that are directly impacted by the transportation system should occur. These would include airport operators, the military base, emergency response personnel, freight haulers, land and economic planners as well as providers and users of public and private transportation systems. Land managers, working for agencies such as the Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Arizona State Lands are key stakeholders in any regional planning effort. To the extent practicable, stakeholders would be proactively engaged and encouraged to participate at whatever level they deemed appropriate for the scale in which their interest coincides with the regional transportation activity proposed.

If there are substantive changes that are recommended as a result of public or committee comment, it is appropriate to postpone adoption of those documents until the changes have been made, and a revised version posted for an additional review and comment period. Mandated timeframes may require an adoption of a given SVMPO Plan, pending revisions responsive to public input provided near or on the posted action item date. In these cases, an amendment to the adopted plan, can be drafted and then posted for review and comments and brought forward at the next reasonable opportunity for consideration by the SVMPO Board.

EVALUATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Evaluation and enhancement of the public participation process is intended to improve the outcome of each new SVMPO plan, program or project. Evaluating public participation can include:

- ❖ A quantitative aspect which uses measurements such as the number of activities held, the number of notices sent, and/or the number of people who participated.
- ❖ The qualitative aspects relating to perceptions, attitudes, and effectiveness. Did the people who participated feel they were heard? Were all the potentially affected interests (including the underserved) actually represented? Were the materials provided easy to understand? Were announcements received in a timely manner?
- ❖ How the public input was used. This information should be recorded and made available to both the decision makers and the public. It also needs to be considered in the decision-making process.
- ❖ Evaluate the reasons why there was good (or poor) participation to better inform future outreach activities.

In an ideal situation, every possible strategy could be engaged to bring a community together, at the neighborhood scale to the regional scale, providing a strong weave of information, ideas and solutions for transportation needs and concerns. However, there are limitations, both in time and in funds, to the resources that can be applied to this aspect of the SVMPO activities.

Although responsible for all the federally mandated MPO plans and programs, the SVMPO is staffed by one full-time employee, supported by interns or temporary staff assigned to specific projects. Approximately 1,800 to 2,800 hours a year are available for all the SVMPO activities, with an annual planning budget under \$270,000. As such, what may be reasonable for one MPO may not be reasonable for this MPO, or even possible to accomplish. Cost effective strategies, overlapping with concurrent jurisdiction activities, leveraging regional

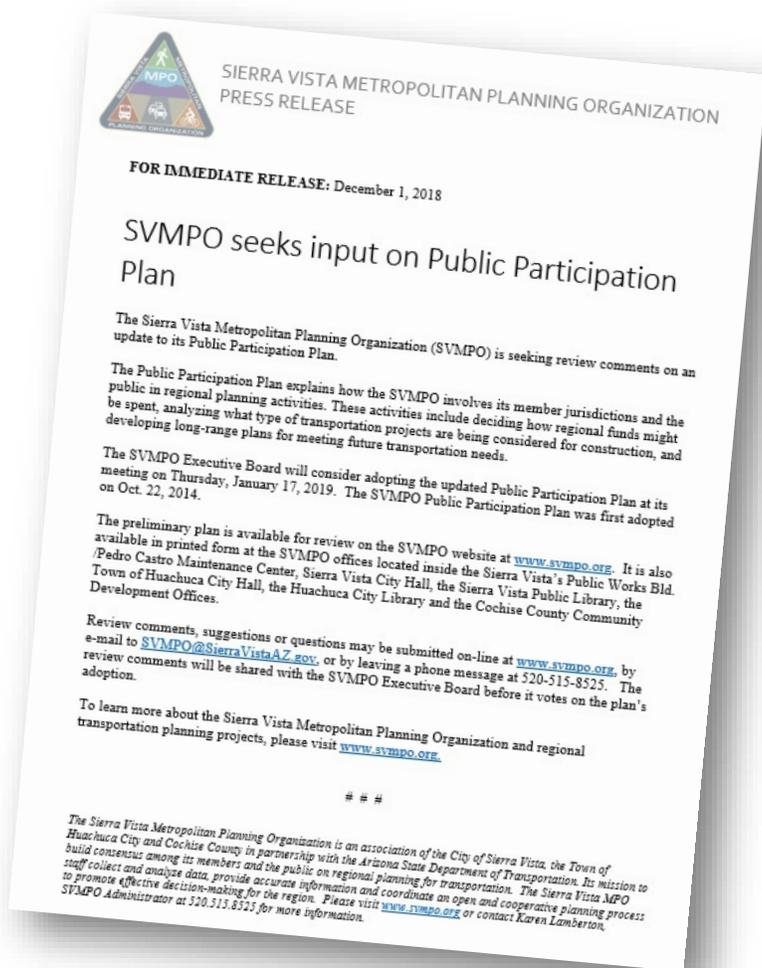
activities rather than developing stand-alone events are some of the methods that the SVMPO can use to provide the interested members of the public an opportunity to engage with their regional government.

Complaints or concerns about the adequacy of any public involvement efforts may be submitted to the SVMPO via e-mail at SVMPO@SierraVistaAZ.gov or by calling 520-515-8525. SVMPO staff will work to resolve the issue or concern, and unresolved issues will be forwarded to the SVMPO Executive Board and/or SVMPO Legal Counsel.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE 2019 UPDATE

The Public Participation Plan update provided an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the drafted Plan for a minimum 45-day period, beginning on December 3, 2018 through January 17, 2019, as required under Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration regulations (23 CFR 450.316(c)).

This updated Public Participation Plan becomes effective upon adoption by the SVMPO Executive Board on *January 17, 2019*. Once approved, the 2019 Public Participation Plan will be forwarded to both FHWA and FTA for their information and records.



SIERRA VISTA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 1, 2018

SVMPO seeks input on Public Participation Plan

The Sierra Vista Metropolitan Planning Organization (SVMPO) is seeking review comments on an update to its Public Participation Plan.

The Public Participation Plan explains how the SVMPO involves its member jurisdictions and the public in regional planning activities. These activities include deciding how regional funds might be spent, analyzing what type of transportation projects are being considered for construction, and developing long-range plans for meeting future transportation needs.

The SVMPO Executive Board will consider adopting the updated Public Participation Plan at its meeting on Thursday, January 17, 2019. The SVMPO Public Participation Plan was first adopted on Oct. 22, 2014.

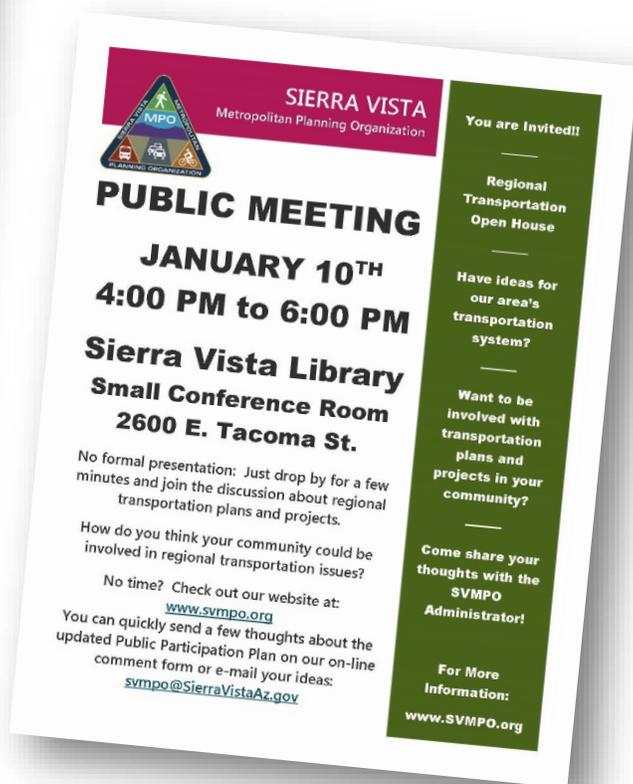
The preliminary plan is available for review on the SVMPO website at www.svmppo.org. It is also available in printed form at the SVMPO offices located inside the Sierra Vista's Public Works Bld./Pedro Castro Maintenance Center, Sierra Vista City Hall, the Sierra Vista Public Library, the Town of Huachuca City Hall, the Huachuca City Library and the Cochise County Community Development Offices.

Review comments, suggestions or questions may be submitted on-line at www.svmppo.org, by e-mail to SVMPO@SierraVistaAZ.gov, or by leaving a phone message at 520-515-8525. The review comments will be shared with the SVMPO Executive Board before it votes on the plan's adoption.

To learn more about the Sierra Vista Metropolitan Planning Organization and regional transportation planning projects, please visit www.svmppo.org.

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The Sierra Vista Metropolitan Planning Organization is an association of the City of Sierra Vista, the Town of Huachuca City and Cochise County in partnership with the Arizona State Department of Transportation. Its mission is to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation. The Sierra Vista MPO staff collect and analyze data, provide accurate information and coordinate an open and cooperative planning process to promote effective decision-making for the region. Please visit www.svmppo.org or contact Karen Lambertson, SVMPO Administrator at 520.515.8525 for more information.



SIERRA VISTA
Metropolitan Planning Organization

You are Invited!!

Regional Transportation Open House

Have ideas for our area's transportation system?

Want to be involved with transportation plans and projects in your community?

Come share your thoughts with the SVMPO Administrator!

For More Information:
www.SVMPO.org

PUBLIC MEETING

JANUARY 10TH

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Sierra Vista Library

Small Conference Room

2600 E. Tacoma St.

No formal presentation: Just drop by for a few minutes and join the discussion about regional transportation plans and projects.

How do you think your community could be involved in regional transportation issues?

No time? Check out our website at: www.svmppo.org

You can quickly send a few thoughts about the updated Public Participation Plan on our on-line comment form or e-mail your ideas: svmppo@SierraVistaAz.gov

APPENDIX A: COMPLIANCE INFORMATION

This Public Participation Plan addresses a variety of federal requirements relating to public involvement on transportation projects. These requirements include:

- 1) The requirements found in the Code of Federal Regulations on Highways (23 CFR) section 450.316 titled: Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process. This section outlines requirements that have been incorporated into the specifics of this plan.
- 2) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements to provide equal access to people with disabilities.
- 3) Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- 4) Fixing American's Surface Transportation Act (FAST ACT) S1201; 23 U.S.C. 134 requiring Metropolitan Planning Organizations to consult, "to the extent practicable" with interested parties and provide "reasonable opportunity" for review and comments when preparing metropolitan transportation plans and the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program.
- 5) Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994 which requires each federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission.
- 6) National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) which focuses on providing for "all Americans' safe, healthful, productive and esthetically pleasing surroundings," and developing a "systematic, interdisciplinary approach" in community environmental decision making.
- 7) U.S. DOT Order 5610.2: Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, April 1997 which summarizes and elaborates on the Executive Order 12898.
- 8) Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – DOT Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Persons (December 14, 2005). Title VI and its implementing regulations require that FTA recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their program and activities for individuals who are Limited English Proficient.

INTERESTED PARTIES DEFINITION PER 23 CFR §450.316 (A)

"...Individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved..."

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

The 2019 update to the Public Participation Plan was first posted for internal, agency and public review in late October 2018 as part of the November 1st TAC meeting and the November 15th Executive Board meeting agenda packets. The SVMPO 2019 Public Participation Plan was then formally made available for public comment from December 3, 2018 through January 17, 2019. The preliminary draft was posted on the front page of the SVMPO website, with an on-line interactive comment form, on November 29, 2018. Hard copies, with hard copy review/comment forms, were made available at the following locations:

- ❖ SVMPO Office: 401 Giulio Cesare Ave, Sierra Vista, AZ
- ❖ Cochise County Planning Dept: 1415 Melody Lane, Bisbee, AZ
- ❖ Cochise County Commercial Permits/Foothills Complex: 4001 Foothills Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ
- ❖ City of Sierra Vista City Hall: 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ
- ❖ City of Sierra Vista Library: 2600 E. Tacoma St. Sierra Vista, AZ
- ❖ Town of Huachuca City Town Hall: 506 N. Gonzales Blvd., Huachuca City, AZ
- ❖ Town of Huachuca City Library: 506 N. Gonzales Blvd., Huachuca City, AZ

A press release was issued on December 1, 2018 announcing the availability of the preliminary plan and was published in the Sierra Vista Herald on several different days during the first week of December, 2018. The SVMPO Winter newsletter was transmitted in early January with the lead article linking readers to the on-line preliminary draft plan and comment form. Jurisdiction Public Information Officers (PIO's) included information about this update in e-newsletters, utility inserts (Town of Huachuca City) and also posted information about an SVMPO Open House, held on January 10, 2018, at the City of Sierra Vista's Library, small conference room, allowing an opportunity for people to stop in and discuss their thoughts directly with the SVMPO Administrator.

Comment	Response	Source/Jurisdiction
"This is only for Sierra Vista, right?"	No, this includes the entire SVMPO area as shown on Map on page 3.	Verbally: Whetstone area resident/Town of Huachuca City Library
"Some of the words seem pretty complicated." Suggests an abstract version that is simpler to read.	Good idea. The audience for the document is FHWA/ADOT and jurisdiction staff but a handout designed to explain outreach strategies would be a good thing to develop for the SVMPO.	Verbally: Whetstone area resident/Town of Huachuca City Library
"Looks pretty good to me."	Thanks.	E-Mail: Cochise County Planning Dept.
Need to include specific transit related section to comply with FTA requirements for Vista Transit grant awards and FTA funding.	Will add a section specific to Vista Transit. Requested specific strategies from Vista Transit to ensure compliance with FTA requirements.	Verbally: Vista Transit Administrator
Include bicyclists and walkers/runners in the stakeholder list.	Good idea. Will include multi-modal transportation users as a stakeholder group.	Verbally: Bicycle/ Pedestrian Advisory Committee
"This Plan seems very through to us." Willing to help with sharing items through our social media. Assistance in preparing Press Releases and support offered.	Thanks.	Meeting: Sierra Vista PIO Dept.
"It is a very comprehensive plan...". County is willing to promote participation through social media, the e-newsletter and County website.	Thanks.	E-Mail: Cochise County PIO

Comment	Response	Source/Jurisdiction
Needs to be a method to specifically reach residents of affected areas; likes idea of contacting people at groceries stores and using postcard mailings; feels that public participation for the MPO has been weak or non-existent.	This review comment heightens the awareness that using only social media for outreach may not be entirely effective in all areas of the MPO.	E-mail: south-west Sierra Vista area resident
Suggest libraries for meeting locations, offers the Town's library space for meetings, and likes outreach activities that includes youth. Willing to support sharing information through Town social media, e-mails and website.	Agree that reaching out to the youth can be a powerful, and fun, outreach activity, for appropriate regional or safety messages.	Meeting: Town of Huachuca City PIO's
"What is the MPO?"	Metropolitan Planning Organization. We are a regional agency working in partnership with three jurisdictions (Cochise County, City of Sierra Vista, Town of Huachuca City) and ADOT.	Open House: drop-in attendee from the City Council reception next door.
"Do the people in the MPO, know that they are in the MPO?"	Likely they do not. Regional governments' liaison between federal and state agencies with the local jurisdictions and most people don't know this form of organization exists.	Open House: question from drop-in attendees discussing the MPO among themselves with the Administrator.
<p>Comments that a majority of the public is not aware the MPO exists. Concern was expressed both the adequacy of Agenda items and subsequent minutes "which have been very minimal in the past". Posting meeting notices at the County and City websites and posting meeting recordings is recommended.</p> <p>Concern is expressed about the adequacy and scale of outreach for the pending West End project. Suggests interaction with the livery/taxi companies serving the area. Proactively reaching civic groups, "always seeking speakers", and church, political, special interest groups also suggested. Town festivals, events with informational booths. Postcards/Mailings recommended.</p> <p>States that implementation has been weak/inadequate of the previous Plan. Suggests an organizational chart to illustrate/visualize the SVMPO role within the various agencies it engages and interacts with.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that developing a Public Participation Plan is one thing: implementing it fully and adequately is another. The SVMPO will try to do better.</p> <p>Good ideas to include the private transportation services, like taxi services. Civic groups, like the Rotary Club, are key stakeholders that the SVMPO ought to engage.</p> <p>Determining what threshold, and what scale of impact, early in a proposed plan or project is important. Full MPO scaled mailings, for an estimated 27,800 households is possible, for a cost of just under \$10,000. SVMPO should look into options for mass mailings to make this strategy more cost effective.</p> <p>Yes, agree, that an organizational chart is very much needed – will work on that for the pending WebSite rebuilding effort underway.</p>	Website on-Line Comment Form: eastern urban edge of MPO boundary resident

The SVMPO used this information to add additional stakeholder and modified/added outreach strategies in the 2019 Public Participation Plan and also took note of those activities identified by these respondents as most valuable to them. The SVMPO agrees that a simple, easy to access, reference guide for this Plan would be useful and will plan to develop such a Handout. SVMPO also agrees that a clear organizational chart illustrating the role of the MPO would be useful and will also plan to develop such a Chart.

SVMPO also notes the number of comments received about the SVMPO boundary expansion, in particular, the general lack of knowledge of those boundaries. This may be an important scoping element when the Long-Range Transportation Planning effort is undertaken, planned to begin in late summer 2019.

APPENDIX C: VISTA TRANSIT PUBLIC OUTREACH STRATEGIES

A key stakeholder in the SVMPO activities are the providers and users of public transportation systems. The City of Sierra Vista operates Vista Transit, a small, rural transit system with 13 buses providing approximately 141,000 rides annually. Vista Transit, as a direct recipient of FTA funds, is responsible for providing the general public and public transit riders a reasonable opportunity to comment on transit plans and projects.

Vista Transit uses strategies described in this SVMPO Public Participation Plan to solicit public input prior to, or during the development of, proposals for service changes, major service reductions and/or fare increases. Vista Transit's policy is that for any major change in service or fare increases, defined as over 25% of existing conditions, a public hearing would also be held before implementation of the proposed action would take place. Such a public hearing would be scheduled at least 30 days in advance and posted at the Sierra Vista City Hall, transit center, in all buses and other outlets, as appropriate.

Vista Transit welcomes an ongoing dialogue with their bus riders and provides an on-line Website link for public comment, questions or suggestions. Full ridership surveys are undertaken from time to time and notifications are provided to riders of opportunities to comment on both transit and other transportation plans. During the development of short or longer range transit plans or program of projects, opportunities for the general public and for transit rider stakeholders to participate in the process, have opportunities to review and comment and be informed of relevant public hearings related to key decision points in these processes are provided, consistent with the policies and strategies of this SVMPO Participation Plan.

For additional information see Vista Transit's ***Public Involvement Policy for Major Service Reductions, Service Changes and Fare Increases.***