

Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization

Public Participation Plan

Adopted June 18, 2009

Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization
575 NE 15th Street
Bend, Oregon 97701

Resolution 2009-4

For the purpose of adopting the Public Participation Plan for the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization

Whereas, the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization was formed in 2002 to coordinate transportation planning in the greater Bend urbanized area.

Whereas, the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board is the governing body for the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Whereas, the BMPO Policy Board developed a Public Participation Plan which provides for a proactive public participation process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing participation of the public in developing plans,

Whereas, the BMPO provided a 45-day notice of the adoption of the Public Participation Plan;

Whereas, the Policy Board oversees Transportation Planning Activities for the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization, and

Whereas, the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board did review and comment on the Public Participation Plan

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BEND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD:

That the attached BMPO Public Participation Plan is hereby adopted.

ADOPTED by the Policy Board of the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization on the 18th day of June 2009.

Yes: _____ No: _____

Authenticated by the Chair this 18th day of June, 2009.

Mark Capell, MPO Policy Board Chair

Attest:

Tyler Deke, MPO Manager

Background and Overview

The Bend Metropolitan Planning Organizations (BMPO) is the federally designated regional transportation planning organization for the Bend area. A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an organization of local governments. In this area that includes the city of Bend and parts of Deschutes County. The BMPO serves as a forum for cooperative transportation decision making by state and local governments, and regional transportation and planning agencies. MPOs are charged with maintaining and conducting a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive" regional transportation planning and project programming for the MPO area. This transportation planning process results in transportation projects and programs identified and prioritized consistent with the area's locally adopted comprehensive plans and transportation system plans.

In 2002, the US Bureau of Census declared that the population of the Bend Urbanized Area had exceeded 50,000. In December 2002, the Oregon Governor, in accordance with federal regulations, designated the BMPO as a newly formed MPO in the State of Oregon. The BMPO is governed by a five member Policy Board consisting of representatives of the city of Bend, Deschutes County, and the Oregon Transportation Department (ODOT). The BMPO study area is shown on Figure 1.

Public participation is a key component of the regional transportation decision-making process. It is the goal of the BMPO to provide an open planning process with multiple opportunities for public participation and input.

The last three major federal transportation legislation packages have greatly enhanced the role of public participation in the transportation planning process. Enacted in 2005, the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) legislation requires development of a participation plan in consultation with interested parties that provides reasonable opportunities for all parties to comment. The legislation also requires that public meetings 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 internet.

The State of Oregon also requires public involvement in the planning process. Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 1 is Citizen Involvement. Goal 1 requires regional agencies to use existing local citizen involvement programs established by counties and cities.

The Oregon Public Meetings Law ([Appendix 1](#)) requires that: all meetings of governing bodies covered by the law (which include the Policy Board, Citizen Advisory Committee, and Technical Advisory Committee) are open to the public; that the public be given notice of the time and place of the meetings; that meetings be accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities; and that minutes be made available to the public within a reasonable time that indicate the substance of the deliberations, decisions, and reference any information upon which such decisions are made. Comment: The public

will be provided reasonable time during all public meetings to provide input, feedback and/or recommendations.

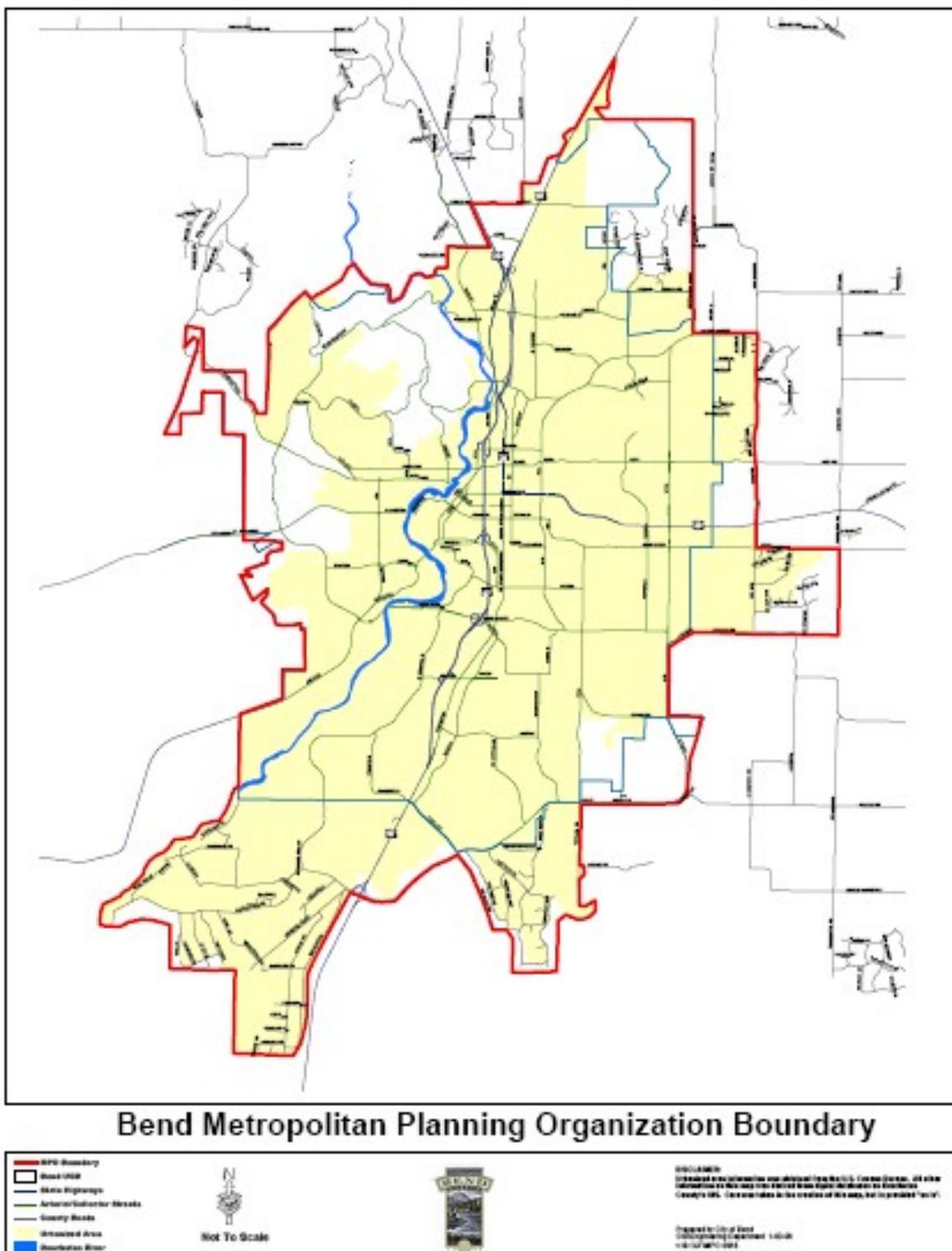
Involving the public is a major challenge, especially in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Metropolitan transportation planning has a long time horizon and is focused on transportation system-level planning rather than actual project design and construction. To help meet these standards, the BMPO developed this public participation plan.

Transportation planning must incorporate regional and community goals and values such as personal mobility, protection of the environment, affect on the regional economy, freight mobility, and maintaining the quality of life that area. **Comment:** The BMPO will perform transportation without regard to race, color, and national origin.

The public participation processes must be proactive and provide complete information, timely public notices, full public access to key decisions, and the opportunity for early and continuing participation.

The MPO is thus required to implement strategies that ensure that there are no barriers to citizen participation and that minority and low-income populations are engaged in transportation decision making.

FIGURE 1 – BMPO Area



Public Participation Plan

Public participation in the transportation planning process allows for the opportunity to voice concerns, offer suggestions and make recommendations regarding transportation-related issues and specific projects. It's designed to inform and educate the public about the technical facets of transportation planning. Public participation affords transportation professionals and decision-makers the opportunity to see other sides of an issue (highway, street or rail crossing projects, for example) that may be missed when considering a project from a technical view point. Meaningful dialogue among technical professionals, local decision-makers, and general stakeholders (e.g. the public) generated through public participation is vital to achieving consensus, which is desired before moving a transportation project or program forward. Additional benefits of public participation include:

- Developing a sense of community and ownership;
- Identifying issues and concerns that matter most to the citizens;
- Fostering trust in the decision making process and with decision-makers;
- Ensuring accountability;
- Encouraging cooperation and compromise; and
- Preventing and/or mitigating future conflict.

Ongoing Outreach

Ongoing outreach efforts are made throughout the year to provide the public and interested parties with opportunities to review and provide comment. Ongoing measures to involve the general public and interested parties¹ throughout the planning process include:

- Posting meeting agendas and minutes on the BMPO website: <http://www.bendmpo.org>;
- Posting BMPO documents on the website and making printed copies available to the public;
- Providing an explanation of specific issues on the website;
- Inviting the public to submit electronic, written or verbal comments on transportation plans;
- Employing visualization techniques to describe MPO plans and programs (e.g. maps, graphs, photos, presentations, drawings);
- Allowing for public comment at CAC and Policy Board meetings; and
- Developing outreach to existing advisory groups related to transportation with updates and education regarding BMPO objectives and news.

Environmental Justice Considerations and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) states that "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of

¹ 24 U.S.C. 134 defines interested parties as follows: citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers or transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties.

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." Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (i.e., a neutral policy or practice that has a disparate impact on protected groups).

The federal Executive Orders pertaining to Environmental Justice (EJ) further amplify Title VI by providing that "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."

To insure full compliance with Title VI and the EJ Order, the BMPO will develop a strategy for engaging minority and low-income populations in transportation decision making, including:

- Using data developed by ODOT, identify areas with high concentrations of low-income and minority populations (required) and other populations as directed by the Policy Board;
- Identify specific actions to engage low-income and minority populations in the planning process;
- Consult with and respond to organizations representing low-income and minority populations;
- Comment: Continually evaluate the need for language translated documents based on changing demographics;
- Routinely evaluate the public participation process to evaluate options for better reaching the identified populations; and
- Utilize media (such as print, television, radio, etc.) targeted to low-income or minority populations;
- Comment: Review process to request additional information and process to file complaints regarding discrimination.

The MPO will demonstrate explicit consideration of and response to all public input during the development of the Metropolitan Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan through the publication of written minutes that will document public input, MPO deliberations, and MPO final decisions.

Focused Outreach

In addition to ongoing outreach, focused outreach will be conducted during development of specific transportation planning efforts. Outreach will include public meetings, committee meetings, and public information dissemination. Focused outreach will be conducted at various phases of the plan development process.

Initial Public Outreach

Initial public outreach will include a public meeting and information dissemination to the public. These activities will strive to do the following:

- Explain the roles and responsibilities of BMPO;
- Explain the process, schedule and participation opportunities for the general public and interested parties;
- Present the plan goals and objectives;
- Present the existing conditions assessment;
- Present the results of the future conditions analysis; and
- Obtain public comment.

The input from the public will be compiled for review by the CAC, Technical Advisory Committee, and Policy Board. The input will be used to determine if changes should be made to the draft planning documents.

The initial public outreach may use the following means to involve the public:

- Issuance of press releases to the local media and follow-up to contacts as necessary;
- Purchase of advertisements in local newspaper;
- Request for public service announcements;
- Develop project newsletters;
- Direct mail and e-mail to interested individuals and parties;
- Posting the draft planning documents on the BMPO website;
- Allow public comment via the BMPO website;
- Hold public open house meeting
 - a. Selection of accessible site and convenient time for the holding of the public open house meeting
 - b. The CAC, TAC and Policy Board will be invited to attend the meeting
 - c. Staff will provide a summary explanation of the draft planning documents and key recommendations.
 - d. Visual aids will be utilized to communicate the draft planning documents
 - e. Staff will seek input from the public on the draft planning documents
 - f. Notices of the meeting and the draft planning materials will be made available at least five days prior to the meeting

The schedule for the implementation of this phase will be dictated by the public review process for each plan developed. Input from the general public, however, will be accepted throughout the development process of the plan.

Intermediate and Final Public Outreach

This outreach phase may include public meetings and information dissemination to the public. These activities will strive to do the following:

- Reiterate the roles and responsibilities of BMPO;

- Reiterate the process, schedule and participation opportunities for the general public and interested parties; and
- Seek review and input on the draft planning documents.

The input from the public will be compiled for review by the CAC, Technical Advisory Committee, and Policy Board. The input will be used to determine if changes should be made to the draft final plan.

This outreach phase may use the following means to involve the public:

- Issuance of press releases to the local media and follow-up contacts as necessary;
- Purchase of advertisements in local newspaper;
- Request for public service announcements;
- Direct mail e-mail to interested individuals and parties;
- Develop project newsletters;
- Posting the draft planning documents on the BMPO website;
- Allow public comment via the BMPO website;
- Hold public open house meetings
 - a. Selection of accessible sites and convenient times for the holding of the public open house meetings
 - b. The draft planning documents will be made available to the general public on the BMPO website
 - c. The CAC, TAC and Policy Board will be invited to attend the meeting
 - d. Staff will provide a summary explanation of the draft planning documents and its key recommendations
 - e. Visual aids will be utilized to communicate the draft planning documents
 - f. Notices of the meetings and the draft planning materials will be made available at least five days prior to the meeting

- **Use required language in public notice documents**

Copies are free of charge and, upon request, will be made available in CD, print, and accessible formats. Upon request, in advance of the meeting, through any of the means listed above, every effort will be made to prepare materials in other formats and in languages other than English, and to provide interpreters in American Sign Language and other languages. Assistive listening devices and large-print materials will be available at the meeting upon request.

The Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), which is the FTA Section 5307(c) applicant, has consulted with the MPO and concurs that the public involvement process adopted by the MPO for the development of the TIP satisfies the public hearing requirements that pertain to the development of the Program of Projects for regular Section 5307, Urbanized Area Formula Program, grant applications, including the provision for public notice and the time established for public review and comment.

f.a.

In the event the final metropolitan transportation plan or the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan (MTIP) is significantly different from the version that was made

available for public comment and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the initial public involvement efforts, additional opportunity for public comment will be provided.

The schedule for the implementation of this phase will be dictated by the public review process for each plan developed. Input from the general public, however, will be accepted throughout the development process of the plan.

APPENDIX A: Public Involvement Tools – Potential Evaluation Measures

Successful evaluation of the effectiveness of the public participation plan requires tracking outreach activities and establishing initial baseline measurements. Reasonable effort will be made to regularly evaluate the public participation.

Public Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	Required by law; TAC, CAC, and Policy Board discussion	NA	Update at least every 3 years to incorporate the improvement strategies resulting from public involvement evaluations and insight from TAC, CAC, and Policy Board review
E-Mail Announcements, Master Contact Database/E-mail List	Number of contacts; Number of returned messages	Increase the number of contacts. Decrease the number of returned e-mail messages. Increase the number of meeting attendees indicating that they saw the announcement.	Make immediate corrections when e-mails are returned. Increase e-mail list by advertising the availability of e-mail announcements using other public involvement tools. (Sign up for email via the BMPO Website)
Website	Number of hits	Increase number of web hits over the course of each year.	Include website address on all organization products. Link website to partner organizations.
Comment: Public Service Announcements (PSA)	Number of PSAs ran	Provide information on meetings and/or pending transportation policy decisions.	Request PSAs be run by local radio, TV, print and other media outlets communicating with the public.
Newspaper Advertisements and Legal Advertisements	Number of contacts	Increase the number of activity attendees indicating that they saw the ad	Place publication in prominent location of paper if possible. Increase size or change layout to make ads more visible.
Press Releases	# of media reached, calls, letters, e-mails.	No standard. Format may be modified based on specific comments received.	Encourage publication of press releases by keeping the media informed and through follow up. Send a release for each significant BMPO activity (public meeting, public hearing,

			comment period, etc.) Maintain a current media contact list.
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Public Involvement Tool	Evaluation Criteria	Performance Goal(s)	Methods to Meet Goal(s)
Direct Mailings	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Increase the number of meeting attendees indicating that they received the mailing.	Increase/Decrease mailing list to more accurately target affected areas. Use the most up-to-date information to maintain the mailing list.
Flyers/Posters	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of persons reached	Increase the number of meeting attendees indicating that they saw a flyer or poster.	Increase distribution to common areas where posters will be more visible to the general public.
Speakers Bureau/Small Group meetings	Number of persons reached based on sign up sheet and number of groups reached.	Not applicable. These events are held at the request of affected groups.	Advertise opportunities to make presentations. MPO staff and any consulting staff will be available in a timely manner to hold meetings regarding MPO activities. The meeting should provide the specific information requested by the group.
Planning Document Distribution	Number of distribution sites	100% distribution on vital documentation	Build distribution list. Include county and city government buildings, libraries and provide links to Websites.
Comment Forms	Calls, letters, etc.; Number of responses	Increase the number of meeting attendees that filled out a form -OR- return the form by mail - OR – submit a form as a visitor to a web site	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving comments.

Graphics/Visualization	Comment form noted that graphics were “useful”	Increase the number of comment form and web users that find the graphics and visualization techniques “useful”	Include graphics and visualization techniques online and during public meetings and hearings.
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APPENDIX A: List of Organizations for Outreach (Not inclusive)

According to federal law, interested parties include:

- Citizens
 - Neighborhood Associations – City of Bend
 - General public
- Affected public agencies
 - City of Bend
 - Deschutes County
 - Bureau of Land Management – Prineville Office
 - Deschutes National Forest
 - Bend-LaPine School District
 - Bend Metro Parks and Recreation District
 - ODOT
 - Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)
 - Department of State Lands (DSL) (Section 11 property is adjacent to BMPO area)
 - Irrigation Districts/Bureau of Reclamation
 - Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) (fish/wildlife issues in/around MPO)
 - National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) (fish issues on Deschutes or Tumalo Creek)
 - State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) (historical/archeological sites)
 - Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) (floodplain issues)
 - Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) (if climate change issues begin to impact MPO planning)
 - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) (soils issues)
 - Tribes (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Klamath Tribe, Burns Paiute Tribe)
 - Others
- Representatives of public transportation employees
 - Bend Area Transit Drivers Union
- Freight shippers
 - Transtech Carriers
 - Cascade Transport
 - Fedex Freight West
 - United Parcel Service
 - City of Bend/BMPO Freight Advisory Committee
 - Others
- Providers of freight transportation services
 - Freight Lanes International
 - Harbor Freight Tools
 - Trans Valley Transport
 - Others
- Private providers of transportation
 - Owl Taxi
 - Bend Cab Company
 - City Cab
 - Cascade Shuttle Inc.
 - Central Oregon Breeze
 - Green Energy Transportation
 - TAC Transportation Inc.
 - Mid Columbia Bus Company

- Greyhound Bus Lines – Bend Office
 - Others
- Representatives of users of public transportation and users of pedestrian walkways/bicycle transportation facilities
 - Commute Options (Advisory Committee and Board)
 - BAT riders
 - Deschutes County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
 - Bend Committee on Accessible Transportation
 - School kids (walking/biking to school)
- Representatives of the disabled
 - Full Access Brokerage
 - Central Oregon Resources for Independent Living
 - Opportunity Foundation
 - Senior and Disabled Services (not a city service)
 - Oregon Dept of Human Services (Bend Office)
 - Central Oregon Council on Aging
 - Bend Committee on Accessible Transportation
 - Coalition for Access
- Other interested parties (including “traditionally underserved” populations such as minorities, seniors and low income workers, and consideration of environmental concerns, historical landmarks, etc.)
 - Latino Community Association
 - NeighborImpact
 - Central Oregon Council on Aging
 - United Way
 - HousingWorks
 - Goodwill Industries
 - St. Vincent De Paul
 - Bend Chamber Nonprofit Council
 - Central Oregon Environmental Center
 - Deschutes County Historical Society

APPENDIX B: Improvement Strategies

The Bend MPO will continually strive for improved public involvement. Improvements should be made to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. The decisions made by the MPO affect the entire population, both residents and visitors, of Bend. Therefore, seeking public input on those decisions is vital to the success of the MPO as the agency responsible for transportation planning in Bend.

Within two months after the completion of an activity or at milestones during an activity, evaluation of public involvement will occur. For on-going activities, evaluation will occur at least twice each year.

Each time a public involvement evaluation is performed, a list of improvement strategies will be identified for implementation. If improvement is needed for an on-going public involvement task, such as the MPO web site, a reasonable completion date will be established. If improvement is needed for one-time activities, such as corridor studies, the improvement will be implemented where appropriate on future activities.