

Public Participation Plan



Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Approved: March 15, 2012

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Title VI Note:

The L-DC MPO hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the agency to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the L-DC MPO receives federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with the L-DC MPO. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the L-DC MPO's Title VI Coordinator within one hundred and eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discriminatory Complaint Form, please see our website at <http://www.lawrenceks.org/MPO>.

Introduction

Public participation is an integral part of the overall transportation planning process. The information and perspectives provided through the public participation process assist decision-makers and lead to a more meaningful and comprehensive planning process.

The federal transportation reauthorization legislation, known as the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law in 2005 and requires each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to create and adopt a Public Participation Plan (PPP). This legislation builds on previous efforts designed to encourage participation and provide reasonable opportunities for citizens and other interested groups to be involved with the regional transportation planning process.

This document is intended to fulfill the current federal requirements stated in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Regulations (23 CFR §450.316). Those regulations call for all MPOs to develop a Public Participation Plan in consultation with “interested parties.” MPOs must define a process for providing these interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the regional transportation planning process.

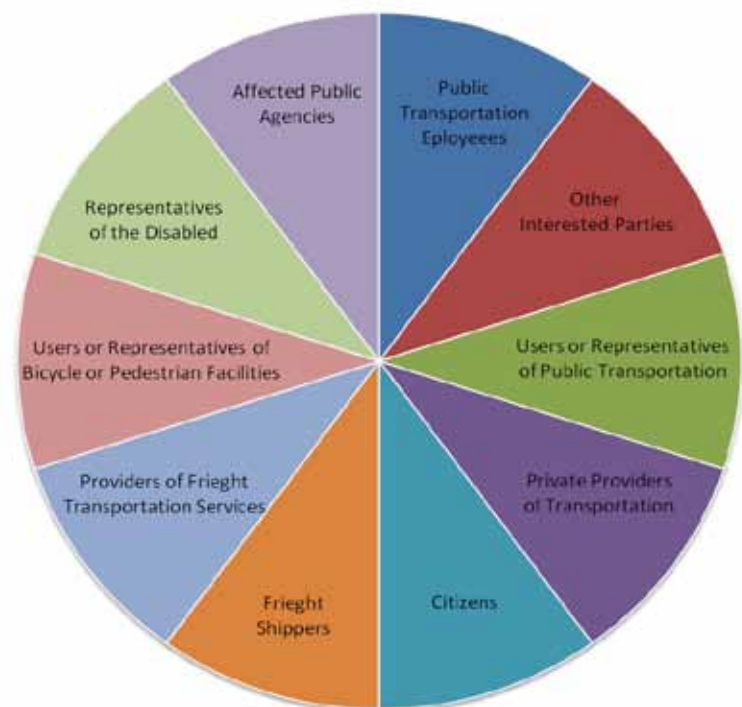
In addition to requiring the creation of a PPP document and broadening the definition of “interested parties”, SAFETEA-LU expanded earlier versions of federal transportation laws to include the following guidelines and requirements related to public participation.

- Hold all public meetings at convenient and accessible times and locations
- Make information available in electronically accessible formats to the maximum extent possible
- Seek out and consider the needs of people who are traditionally underserved
- Employ visualization techniques to illustrate regional transportation plans
- Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies to ensure a full and open participation process

Federal regulations also require this Public Participation Plan (PPP) to be released for a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days before it is adopted by the MPO Policy Board. These guidelines and requirements have all been addressed in this document.

The following pages outline the participation process and recommended methods to engage the public during the regional transportation planning decision making process.

Interested Parties



Importance of Public Participation

Public and stakeholder participation is the corner stone of any regional transportation plan. Good public participation techniques allow planners to identify issues and understand aspects of the transportation system directly from its users. In other words, effective transportation planning must include the participation of those whose everyday lives are affected by how they are able to get to work, home, school, stores, and services.

Public participation affords transportation professionals and decision-makers the opportunity to see sides of an issue that may be missed when considering a project from a purely technical or political point of view. Meaningful dialog among technical professionals, local decision-makers, and general stakeholders is the key to achieving consensus, which is desired before moving a project forward. Other benefits of public participation include the items listed below.

- Fostering a sense of community and ownership
- Identifying issues and concerns that matter most to the community
- Fostering trust in our decision-makers
- Promoting accountability
- Encouraging cooperation and compromise
- Preventing and/or mitigating future conflicts

The Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (L-DC MPO) is primarily responsible for developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Public surveys indicate that Douglas County residents overwhelmingly feel that public participation activities should take place during all stages of development when creating or updating these documents. All comments received by MPO staff on these draft documents will be summarized and distributed to the MPO Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for their consideration prior to approving these documents.

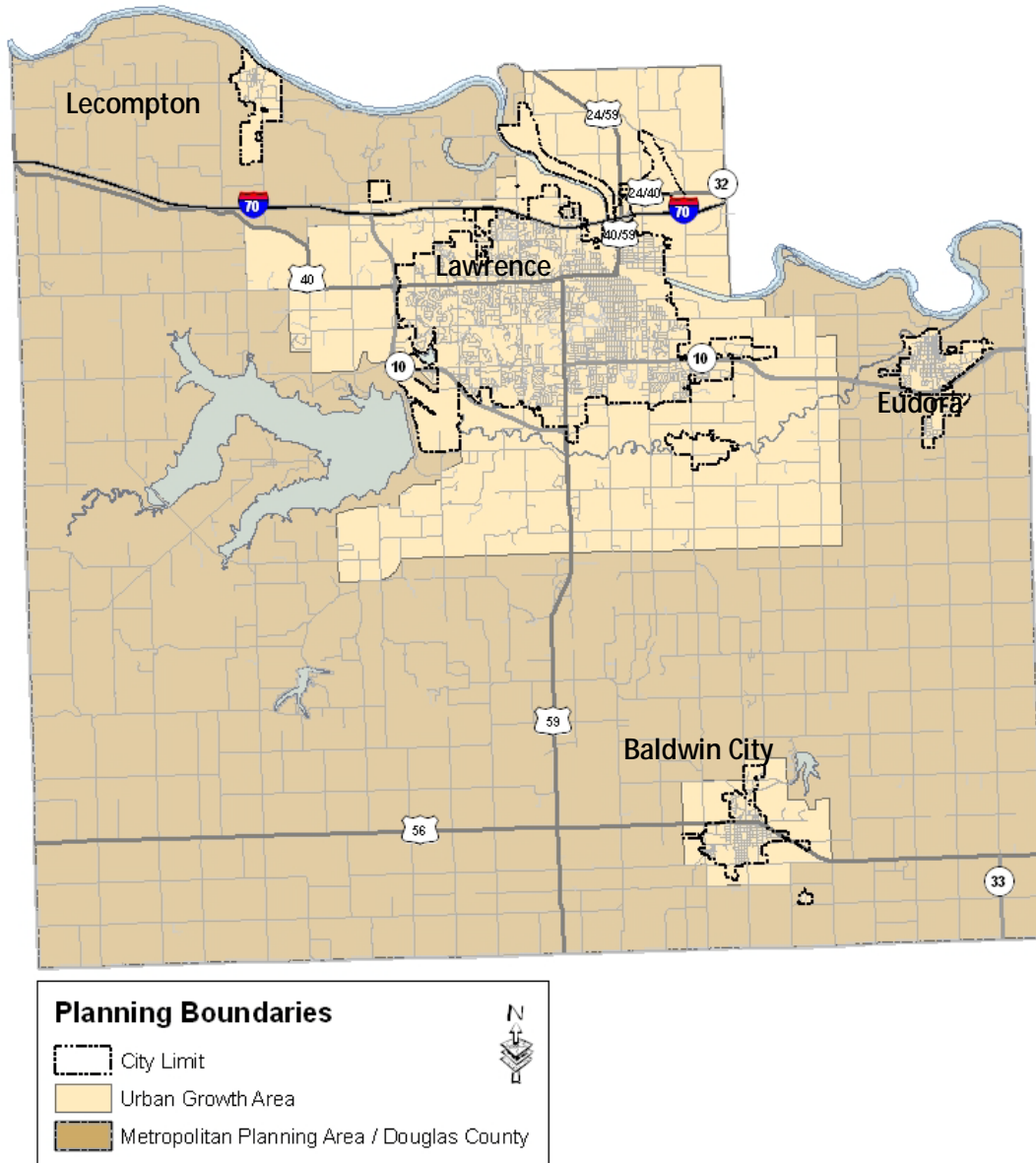
The Role and Structure of the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (L-DC MPO)

To carry out the regional transportation planning process, each urbanized area with a population of 50,000 people or more has a MPO which acts as a liaison between local communities, their citizens, and the state and federal departments of transportation. MPOs are important because they direct how and where available state and federal dollars for transportation improvements will be spent. The primary functions of the MPO are to perform the major tasks listed below.

- Establish the goals, objectives and policies governing transportation planning in the region
- Approve an annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and budget
- Direct the preparation of, and adopt a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) including both long-range and short-range strategies for improving the region's multimodal transportation system
- Recommend projects for implementation through the adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Perform the air quality conformity determination for the TIP and MTP if applicable

The geographic area covered by a MPO is called the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), and the MPA for our region is all of Douglas County including the four cities in the county. This area is shown on the map below.

Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Area



Another role of transportation planning within the MPO area is to create synergy among many different organizations, groups, and committees by involving them in the planning process. Each one of these groups provides another opportunity for the MPO to solicit feedback from area stakeholders.

The L-DC MPO structure is composed of MPO staff, the MPO Policy Board which approves MPO documents including this PPP, a Technical Advisory Committee, a Regional Transit Advisory Committee, and several other advisory groups that may be formed from time to time to help the MPO staff with major projects.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board (MPO)

The MPO Policy Board is charged with maintaining a regional transportation planning process that is continuing, comprehensive and cooperative. The Policy Board is the final decision-maker in the MPO process. It has the authority to approve the regional transportation vision (included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan) and then prioritize and choose projects (included in the Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program) to implement that vision.

In 1982, the Lawrence-Douglas County Planning Commission, which is comprised of appointed officials, was designated as the MPO for the Lawrence Urbanized Area. In 2008 the MPO was re-designated to be primarily composed of elected officials. Today the MPO Policy Board is comprised of seven voting members and serves as an important forum for cooperative decision making on transportation issues affecting the region. The seven voting and five non-voting members of the MPO are listed below.

MPO Policy Board – Voting Members

- 2 Lawrence City Commissioners;
- 1 Douglas County Commissioner ;
- 2 Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Commission members (one that was appointed by the Lawrence City Commission and one that was appointed by the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners);
- 1 elected official of one of the small cities in Douglas County (Baldwin City, Eudora, Lecompton); and
- 1 representative from KDOT.

MPO Policy Board – Non-Voting Members

- 1 representative from the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Kansas Division Office
- 1 representative from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 7 Office
- 1 representative from the University of Kansas
- 1 elected official from the governing body of each of the three small cities in Douglas County not presently represented on the L-DC MPO by a voting member (two members).

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC is the main advisory committee for the L-DC MPO Policy Board and is made up of expert personnel from the Board members' constituent agencies. These committee members advocate for their own community's interests, provide expert advice to board members, oversee studies, and assist MPO staff. The TAC is composed of nine voting members and four non-voting members listed below.

TAC Voting Members

- Douglas County - Public Works Director or designee
- Lawrence - Public Works Director or designee
- Eudora - City Manager or designee
- Baldwin City – City Manager or designee
- Lecompton – City Clerk or designee
- Lawrence-Douglas County Planning & Development Services Department - Director or designee (not transportation planning/MPO staff)
- Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) - Urban Planning Manager or designee
- Lawrence - Transit System Administrator or designee
- University of Kansas – KU on Wheels Manager or designee

TAC Non-Voting Members

- Lawrence – Public Transit Advisory Committee Chair or designee
- Lawrence-Douglas County – Bicycle Advisory Committee Chair or designee
- Representative from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as designated by the Kansas Division Administrator
- Representative from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as designated by the Region 7 Administrator

Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC)

The RTAC is a new MPO advisory committee formed in 2011 to provide technical support for regional transit planning to the MPO, to assist the MPO with carrying out the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP), to assist the MPO with the transit planning process throughout Douglas County, and to provide a forum for MPO staff and transit operators to discuss transit related issues affecting the Lawrence-Douglas County Region.

Other Advisory Boards & Committees

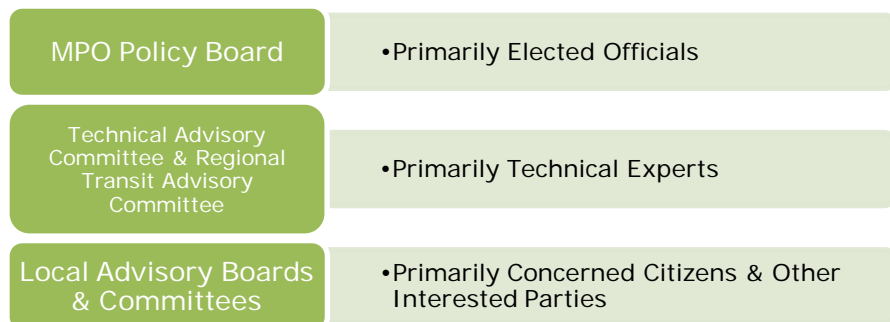
In addition to the MPO Policy Board and advisory committees listed above, there are several other City of Lawrence and Douglas County advisory boards and committees that deal with transportation-related issues and which on occasion are involved in the MPO process. These groups include the Lawrence-Douglas County Bicycle Advisory Committee that represents bicyclists in the region, the Public Transit Advisory Committee which represents transit users in Lawrence, and the Lawrence-Douglas County Air Quality Advisory Committee which represents public health, local planning and business interests in the region. The MPO staff is routinely involved with all three of those groups.

The MPO and MPO staff are also involved with other groups that are formed to address a project under development and are more temporary in nature. At the time this PPP update was approved those groups included the T-2040 Advisory Committee which represents a wide variety of interested parties and was formed to help the MPO staff in drafting the new transportation plan, and the Lawrence Complete Streets Committee which represents advocates that are encouraging local governments in the area to adopt complete street policies.

With these and other local committees acting in an advisory capacity to provide input to the MPO, there is a greater level of assurance that the transportation decisions being made in and for our region are technically viable, in line with public opinion, financially feasible, and consider all modes of transportation.

The number of official MPO advisory committees and their composition is determined by the MPO Policy Board and specified in the MPO Bylaws and/or in the bylaws for each MPO advisory committee. At the time of this PPP approval the L-DC MPO had two official advisory committees (TAC and RTAC). However, these two official advisory committees are not the only two groups that are welcomed to provide comments to the MPO or the only two committees that the MPO staff interacts with regularly. A list of the advisory boards and committees that regularly interacts with MPO staff and participates in the MPO process is included in Appendix A.

L-DC MPO Structure



Goal and Objectives

It is the goal of the MPO to establish a process that is effective and meaningful for citizens and groups to become engaged in the MPO's regional transportation planning activities to the extent that each citizen and group feels comfortable.

Regional transportation planning cannot, and should not, be based simply upon technical analysis. The qualitative information derived from public participation is essential to good decision making. The MPO will ensure that the public has opportunities to be informed and involved early in the development of plans and projects; that their issues and concerns are heard; and that their concerns

are considered prior to any final decision by the MPO Policy Board.

This Public Participation Plan is designed to be a goal-oriented document that provides a philosophy around which to build a regional transportation participation program that will accomplish the following objectives:

- **Educate and effectively disseminate information about transportation planning and how it works to the public**

Given the fact that project-level planning usually occurs at the state and local levels and that often it is that level of planning that energizes citizens to become involved in the transportation planning process, the MPO plans and processes are sometimes not the appropriate or most effective venues for concerned citizens to provide input. Some project planning (e.g., intersection improvements, bridge replacements, etc.) have significant impacts only on landowners near the project site. Some large projects (e.g., construction of a new road or highway) have significant region-wide impacts. Although the MPO staff is often involved in both of these types of planning, the MPO process is more in sync with the latter regionally significant type of transportation system planning. The MPO must work to educate the public about this difference and to direct citizens who are concerned with local project level planning activities to the correct state and local officials so their concerns can be heard by decision-makers early in the process when they can be most effective. At the same time the MPO needs to educate the public about its public participation process and how participation can affect the creation of the regional vision for the future transportation system. The MPO needs to help people who are interested in transportation planning to get plugged into the process where their interests lie and where they can impact the actual decision making process. This MPO Public Participation Plan is designed to direct the MPO staff and committees to go further than it has in the past to build public knowledge about the transportation planning process and to encourage meaningful public participation at various stages of that process.

- **Encourage effective communication among a diverse group of stakeholders**

The MPO recognizes that the continuous update cycle for regional plans can make it difficult for members of the public and other stakeholders to understand when public comment is being solicited and for what purposes. To a large degree, public participation tools and activities must encourage citizen participation on an ongoing basis. At the same time, the L-DC MPO recognizes that strategies and the extent of public participation will vary depending upon the plan or project that is currently in the public view. Decision-makers must be strategic in designing a public participation program that is mindful of the fact that people in the region have varying levels of understanding about, and interest in, regional transportation planning, and consequently have different informational needs. It is widely understood that most people want to have a better transportation system that works for them to get around the region more efficiently. However, depending on the age, income, family status, employment situation, travel mode, and social interests of each person that could mean very different things. The MPO needs to hear from different kinds of transportation users (e.g., people who drive their car, ride the bus, walk, bicycle, carpool, receive truckload deliveries, etc.), and the MPO needs to have those different types of users talk to each other. The MPO cannot plan a transportation system for just one mode of transportation or just one type of transportation user. The MPO needs to hear from everybody and it needs for everybody to understand that their transportation concerns are not the only ones facing the region. The diversity of stakeholders in the transportation planning process is important if that process is to create transportation system plans that work for all stakeholders.

- **Provide ample opportunity and promote continued participation**

The demand for public participation and outreach will always be greater than the MPO's available resources. As the MPO continues to serve the Lawrence-Douglas County Region, standards are set in place so that there is a level of consistency among the different planning efforts. Public review and comment periods for each type of MPO planning activity and draft document (TIP, UPWP, etc.) will remain consistent over time and notifications about major MPO planning projects getting underway (MTP updates, special studies, etc.) will be posted and sent to interested parties regularly so that they can make comments on these MPO projects in a timely manner. Early and continuous public participation will be solicited by MPO staff and viewed as an important factor in the regional transportation planning process.

- **Incorporate public comments and recommendations into the decision making process**

It is essential that public comments, suggestions, and questions be responded to and made available to the appropriate decision-makers. Public comments should help shape policies and guide the MPO's planning activities. Additional public comment opportunities will also be made available if the final plan differs significantly from what was made available to the public initially. It is important that not only do the members of the public view their participation as meaningful, but the MPO needs to show proof that their contribution had an important effect on the overall transportation planning process.

- **Evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation strategies**

A public participation strategy can only be declared effective over time, and an evaluation component within this Public Participation Plan will ensure sustainability among its best practices. Not only do the tools and techniques need to be monitored and continue to evolve, but the entire PPP document and process should be reviewed and updated at least every five years prior to the MTP update to ensure that appropriate changes are being implemented by the MPO. The PPP may also be reviewed and updated if new planning regulations are enacted or if other changes occur that prompt the MPO to direct staff to update the plan.

Participation by Interested Parties and Other Agencies

The MPO staff recognizes that it is important to let the public and organized transportation advisory groups know when key MPO documents are being updated and to solicit their input. Groups such as the Public Transit Advisory Committee composed primarily of transit riders in Lawrence, the Bicycle Advisory Committee composed of cyclists throughout Douglas County, and the Regional Transit Advisory Committee composed of transit operators and social service providers are specifically asked to provide input into updates of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and other important MPO documents. The MPO staff also solicits comments on MPO core documents from environmental groups like the Douglas County Air Quality Committee and from commercial interest groups like the Chamber of Commerce.

The MPO structure includes a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that includes members that have regular interactions with the local neighborhood associations and local land developers. Through that web of professional contacts the MPO and MPO staff keeps informed about the transportation concerns of various local stakeholders. Although the MPO Policy Board is composed primarily of local elected officials it also includes two planning commissioners that help to provide land use planning input into the MPO process. In addition to that, all of the MPO meetings (including advisory committees) are open meetings with agendas posted online and public comment opportunities are provided at those meetings.

The groups that the MPO staff is aware of and has contact information for are contacted early in the process of updating major MPO plans and programs. These groups typically have members on the MPO email/contacts list that is used to send out notices about public comment periods for plan updates and information about special studies being undertaken by the MPO. Likewise, the MPO staff has regular contacts with other government officials at the local, state, and federal levels and those government officials are kept informed about major projects the MPO is working on. All of those officials are asked for comments on draft MPO products. However, even with all of the networking done by the MPO staff and TAC members there are still plenty of private and public sector groups to contact about MPO activities. The MPO staff must make an effort to identify all of those groups and keep the contact information for those groups up to date. This includes resource and special purpose agencies like the Kansas Turnpike Authority, historic preservation groups, water management agencies, land use management agencies, economic development groups, and others. Other agencies and groups that have an interest in transportation planning and/or could be significantly impacted by major transportation projects in Douglas County should be identified by the MPO and put on the contacts list so they can be told when the MPO is updating its documents. The MPO staff needs to contact all of these groups early in the update process of its core documents (MTP, UPWP, TIP, and PPP) and ask all of these groups to sign up to receive MPO agendas. That way these groups can see what issues are before the MPO for discussion and action and they can make comments as they have interest. The MPO does not want groups that could be impacted by MPO policies to remain unaware

that the MPO exists and unknowledgeable about what the MPO does. The list of interested parties shown below should be the starting point for building an effective email list for the MPO to use in its public participation program.

During the development of this 2012 Public Participation Plan several groups were notified of the opportunity to review and comment on the draft. Interested parties and other agencies were involved in developing this PPP to the extent that they chose to participate.

Interested Parties needing reasonable opportunities to become involved in the MPO transportation planning process

- Citizens
- Affected Public Agencies
- Representatives of Public Transportation Employees
- Freight Shippers
- Providers of Freight Transportation Services
- Private Providers of Transportation
- Representatives of Users of Public Transportation
- Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways and Bicycle Transportation Facilities
- Representatives of the Disabled

The MPO staff now routinely interacts with several groups and advisory committees that include persons representing some of these interested parties. Those groups are listed in Appendix A. During the course of creating this Public Participation Plan in 2012 the MPO staff encouraged those groups to participate in the MPO planning program. The MPO staff also contacted several leaders in the community in early 2012 in an effort to obtain contact information for these groups and build an extensive mailing list for interested parties. That list will be used in the future to send specific invitations to these interested parties to ask them to review and comment on the development of required MPO documents (MTP, TIP, UPWP, and PPP) and special studies.

The MPO staff will ask local leaders to help build and update the interested party contacts list as part of each review of the Public Participation Plan (PPP) and each update of Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The MPO staff plans on reviewing and updating the PPP before the public participation activities for the MTP update begins. Currently the MPO is on a five-year schedule for MTP updates so both of these documents should be thoroughly reviewed and updated at least once every five years. However, the MPO will not wait that long to update the contact information if new data is available. The contacts list will be periodically reviewed whenever the MPO staff or TAC members obtain new information. Having this list will allow the MPO staff to send email notices to many groups soliciting their input as MPO projects begin, and this will allow the MPO to encourage more groups to become involved in the MPO process.

Another part of the federal public participation regulations states that the plan needs to include specific strategies for seeking input from traditionally underserved groups such as low-income and minority populations. In order to address that issue the MPO staff will include neighborhood groups from areas identified as Environmental Justice (EJ) Zones on the interested parties list. This will ensure that low-income and minority areas are sent notices about the MPO process and projects and that their input is sought early in the process of updating major documents like the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The definition of EJ zones used by the MPO and a map showing their locations are found in the Transportation Improvement Program.

In addition to the interested parties listed above, the MPO also needs to consult with the following groups when developing a TIP or MTP.

- State and Local Agencies dealing with planning functions for Economic Development, Planned Growth, Environmental Protection, Airport Operations, Freight Movements and Other Planning Activities Affected by Transportation
- Indian Tribal Governments if tribal lands exist in the area
- Federal Land Management Agencies if federal lands exist in the area

The MPO staff will work with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members when updating the TIP

or MTP to identify any of these groups in Douglas County and contact them to ask if they want to meet with MPO staff and discuss their transportation planning concerns. These groups will also be added to the interested parties list used to solicit comments on MPO projects.

This Public Participation Plan will serve as a basic general guide to public participation efforts undertaken by the MPO committees and MPO staff as part of the regional transportation planning process. However, this plan may not represent all of the public input efforts included in the development of certain major MPO products. Some MPO items, especially the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program, may include their own public participation chapters describing in more detail the specific public participation efforts used to create those documents. Likewise, corridor plans and special studies that the MPO and other agencies participate in and fund may have their own particular public input strategies. Albeit, all of the planning projects that the MPO is involved in should contain an active public participation element and strive to get public comments early in the process of creating the plan or study.

Coordination of the MPO Public Participation Plan and Process with Statewide and Transit Agency Public Participation Efforts

This Public Participation Plan is designed for use by the MPO in its efforts to carry out a regional transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area consisting of all of Douglas County. During the development of this 2012 Public Participation Plan the MPO staff consulted with and took comments from both the Lawrence Transit and KDOT staffs. Through those staff level contacts the needed coordination between the MPO public participation process and the KDOT and Lawrence Transit public input programs was obtained. Further coordination between KDOT, Lawrence Transit, and the MPO is evidenced in the adoption and amendments of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is used to meet the transit requirement for a Program of Projects (POP), and the public involvement activities conducted for TIP approval are also used by Lawrence Transit to approve their POP. Similarly, the TIP approval/amendment process provides the necessary public participation for certain Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) changes initiated by KDOT. Through active participation by KDOT, transit and MPO staffs at TAC meetings and discussions the coordination of MPO, transit and KDOT public participation efforts is maintained. Typically, if the KDOT or transit staffs need the MPO staff to change something in their public participation process to accommodate them then the MPO staff can do that within a few weeks. In the event that intensive public participation discussions and process changes are needed, then the MPO staff and committees can respond to that too.

In addition to TAC discussions about public participation coordination, the topic of public involvement routinely comes up during both triennial reviews of the MPO program and Title VI reviews of the MPO operations.

MPO Work Products

According to survey data, citizens believe their participation is valuable at all stages during the regional transportation planning process. The MPO also recognizes that any documents where regional goals and objectives are identified are more valuable with the community direction and support. The MPO's core documents are the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Public Participation Plan (PPP). Each document is described below with each public participation process identified. All core documents are available on the MPO web page (<http://www.lawrenceks.org/mpo>) and available in hard copy at the MPO offices at Lawrence City Hall 6 East 6th Street, Lawrence, KS 66044.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

- **Updated:**

Every 5 Years (4 years if Douglas County is designated non-attainment for air pollution)

- **Amended:**

As Needed

- **Public Comment Period:**

Minimum 30 Days required for complete updates and amendments

- **Minimum Required Strategies & Techniques:**

Complete Updates

- Development of a participation plan for the MTP update, review by the TAC and approval by the MPO. This plan will indicate how the public information activities listed below are meant to work together and be coordinated.
- Discussions with and draft reviews by the TAC and the MPO.
- TAC recommendation and MPO approval to release the draft MTP for the public comment period.
- Newspaper and MPO web site advertisements announcing the public comment period.
- Email notice of public comment period will be sent to all people who sign up for MPO information and are on the MPO's Email/Contacts List.
- Press Release informing all media representatives of the MTP update and encouraging coverage of this MTP update in electronic media outlets.
- Draft made available at Lawrence City Hall, Lecompton City Hall, Baldwin City Public Library, Eudora Public Library, Lawrence Public Library, and the L-DC MPO website.
- Neighborhood Meetings in affected areas if needed to inform area residents about major projects deemed to have a significant local/neighborhood impact.
- Open House or Public Meeting Required.
- Compilation of all public comments received and a summary of how those comments were addressed in the final MTP draft sent to the MPO for approval.

Amendments

- Discussions with TAC and the MPO prior to placing it on agendas for approval.
- TAC approval of the release of the draft amendment for public comment.
- Newspaper and MPO web site advertisements announcing the public comment period.
- Email notice of public comment period will be sent to all people who sign up for MPO information and are on the MPO's Email/Contacts List.
- Draft made available at Lawrence City Hall, Lecompton City Hall, Baldwin City Public Library, Eudora Public Library, Lawrence Public Library, and the L-DC MPO website.
- Public meetings are not required for MTP amendments, but may be used at the discretion of the MPO staff or by the direction of the MPO Policy Board.

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) represents the best attempts by citizens, governing bodies, planners and transportation experts to develop a vision for a healthy, safe, and efficient transportation system which will adequately serve the Lawrence-Douglas County Area for the next 20 years and beyond. This plan identifies future transportation needs, investments, and recommendations for all modes of surface transportation (automobile, truck, public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian). Portions of the plan are reviewed annually. At least once every five years a critical analysis and update of the entire plan document and its supporting data and assumptions are made. Amendments to the MTP can and should be made, as needed, to reflect significant changes to regional transportation policies and/or funding conditions.

The MTP shall be developed through an open and deliberative planning process. Development of the plan typically involves a series of public involvement meetings, extensive involvement by the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), informational briefings and public comment at MPO meetings, public hearings at city commission and county commission meetings, and website notices and updates. During this process the public and interested parties are invited to send comments about the MTP to the MPO staff. Those comments are compiled and an explanation of how they were addressed in the final MTP draft is included in the MTP appendices. The approval process for the MTP includes a final round of TAC, MPO, KDOT and FHWA/FTA reviews prior to MTP adoption. The TAC first approves the draft MTP, and their approval is a recommendation to the MPO Policy Board that they approve it. Only after the TAC approves it does the MPO consider the draft MTP for approval. Once the MPO approves the new MTP document it replaces the former MTP in its entirety. The new MTP is then posted online to replace the draft that was posted earlier for comments. The approved MTP is also sent to KDOT, FHWA and FTA for information purposes.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- **Updated:**
Every 4 Years
- **Amended:**
Scheduled Quarterly, but may be amended at other times to handle special time-sensitive projects
- **Administratively Revised**
As needed
- **Public Comment:**
Minimum 30 Days (Complete Update)
Minimum 15 Days (Amendments)
None (administrative revisions)
- **Minimum Required Strategies & Techniques:**

Complete Update

- Discussions with TAC and MPO Policy Board prior to placing the new TIP on the agendas for approval.
- Newspaper and MPO Website Notices announcing the public comment period.
- Email notice of public comment period will be sent to all people who sign up for MPO information and are on the MPO's Email/Contacts List.
- Draft made available at Lawrence City Hall, Lecompton City Hall, Baldwin City Public Library, Eudora Public Library, Lawrence Public Library and the L-DC MPO website.
- Compilation of all public comments received and a summary of how those comments were addressed in the final TIP draft sent to the MPO for approval.

Amendments

- Discussions with TAC and MPO Policy Board.
- Newspaper and MPO Website Notices announcing the public comment period.
- Email notice of public comment period will be sent to all people who sign up for MPO information and are on the MPO's Email/Contacts List.
- Posted on the MPO website and printed copy made available at the MPO Office-Lawrence City Hall for public review and comments.

The TIP is a multi-year listing of projects or improvements to the region's transportation system that are anticipated to receive federal funds, as well as all other regionally significant transportation projects, whether or not those projects receive federal funding. The TIP is developed in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), and affected transit operators. The TIP also serves as the Program-of-Projects (POP) for the Lawrence Transit System (The T) and the TIP approval process is used to satisfy the public hearing requirements of 49 U.S.C. 5307 (the FTA Urbanized Area Formula Program).

The TIP must be reviewed and updated at least every four years. However, the MPO will typically update this document every two years with quarterly amendments as needed between those updates. All projects to which federal funding is programmed in the TIP must be consistent with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The TIP is one of the major implementation tools for the MTP so projects listed for funding in the TIP should be specifically mentioned in the MTP and/or clearly addresses some transportation issues discussed in the MTP.

Projects included in the TIP are typically drawn from local city and/or county Capital Improvement Programs (CIP), from KDOT funding programs, and from projects listed as recommended system improvements in the MTP.

The local CIP processes have their own public involvement procedures involving publication of public notices initiating the process, public hearings by the Planning Commission, City Commission, and/or County Commission, as appropriate. The MPO staff typically waits until those local CIP processes are completed before beginning work on the next TIP update. MPO staff monitors the status of the local CIP budgets through conversations with TAC members and typically in the spring each year the MPO staff asks the TAC members to submit new project information and updates on existing TIP projects. Depending on the magnitude of project changes and additions along with any other

needed TIP changes the MPO staff and TAC decide whether a full update or an amendment is warranted. If an update is in order then the draft TIP is made available for public review and comment for 30 days before final approval is made by the MPO Policy Board.

The detailed definitions of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) updates, amendments and administrative revisions are found in the latest TIP document approved by the MPO. Updates are major upgrades to the TIP and often involve several project changes, responses to regulation revisions, project additions, and text and/or map changes. An update is usually not done every year

and only has to be done once every four years. Amendments are typically done to update project information and may contain several changes to several different projects. Amendments are typically done every year and are scheduled to be done quarterly. Administrative Revisions are simple fixes to correct typos, document formatting problems, obvious clerical mistakes, to clarify project descriptions, and to make minor adjustments to project budgets.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

- **New UPWP:**
Created Annually
- **Amended or Revised UPWP**
As Needed
- **Public Comment:**
 - 30-day comment period prior to MPO approval of a new UPWP for the upcoming year
 - 15-day comment period prior to approval for an amendment of the current year UPWP.
 - No public comment period required for administrative revisions.

Minimum Required

Strategies & Techniques:

- Discussions with TAC and MPO Policy Board before approval of a new or amended UPWP.
- Public Notice announcing the Public Comment Period for a New Draft UPWP for the coming year will be made available for public review at the following locations: MPO Office-Lawrence City Hall, Lecompton City Hall, Baldwin City Public Library, Eudora Public Library, Lawrence Public Library and on the L-DC MPO website.
- Public Notice for draft UPWP Amendments will be made available for public review online at the MPO website and at the MPO Office-Lawrence City Hall.
- Email notice of public comment period for both new UPWP approval and amendments will be sent to all people who sign up for MPO information and are on the MPO's Email/Contacts List.

The UPWP is developed by the MPO staff with input from local governments, area transit providers, and KDOT. The UPWP outlines the status of MPO planning activities, gives details about MPO work done in the previous year, and describes the MPO work that is scheduled for the upcoming year. This annual work program document is drafted by the MPO staff in consultation with KDOT and area transit provider staffs.

Public comments on the draft UPWP for the upcoming year are solicited each fall during the public review period. Notice of this public review period is posted on the L-DC MPO web site and through a public notice in the local newspaper. All public comments received about the UPWP are reviewed by the TAC and MPO staff before the final draft UPWP is prepared and presented to the MPO for review and approval. An effective means of incorporating public input into the annual UPWP is to review the public comments received about the MPO work program during the previous year and see if those comments still apply to similar planning work scheduled for the upcoming year. When developing the work program during the late summer and fall each year, the MPO staff should take all of this public comment (last year comments and new ones) into consideration and discuss it with the TAC and MPO Policy Board before the new UPWP is approved.

Development of a New UPWP takes place annually. The MPO staff in consultation with KDOT and local transit staffs draft a new UPWP for the coming year and have it ready for initial committee reviews in September. The draft is released for public review and comment for a minimum of 30 days prior to MPO approval. The draft UPWP is approved by the TAC and then sent to the MPO Policy Board for approval during the 4th Quarter of each calendar year. Typically, the UPWP for the

next year is approved at the October or November MPO meeting. The UPWP also requires KDOT and FHWA/FTA approval.

Amendments are made throughout the year as needed and are released for public comment for a minimum of 15 days prior to TAC and MPO Policy Board approval. Amendments are used when projects/work tasks are either added or deleted, or when significant changes are made to the UPWP document. Amendments require TAC and then MPO approval. UPWP amendments also require KDOT and FHWA/FTA approval

Administrative Revisions can be made to the UPWP by the TAC and then sent to the MPO for concurrence at their next meeting. Revisions will be used for routine technical changes and updates to

the UPWP text, graphics, and minor budget changes of 10% or less (e.g., corrections of spelling or grammar errors, updates of hourly rates for MPO staff to reflect salary increases, etc.). No public comment period is needed for UPWP revisions.

Strategies and Techniques

Transportation planners are responsible for developing a unique public engagement strategy for each project that uses the appropriate techniques for the job. The strategy should include a timeline showing engagement techniques and other relevant activities, and should outline target audiences and expected outcomes. The following techniques and strategies will serve as a guide for expectations of the decision-makers to consider when developing the public participation component of each project. Area surveys indicated that a large percentage of the community only becomes involved in the transportation planning process when the projects or issues are of personal interest to them. The community also indicated that they do not have enough free time to participate in planning activities. Overcoming these issues will require finding a balance of various techniques and strategies that will result in a tailored mix of approaches that ensure early, continuous, and accessible public participation.

Serving the Needs of the Traditionally Underserved Population

As a matter of long-standing MPO policy and a requirement of federal law, the regional transportation planning process must make special efforts to consider the concerns of traditionally underserved populations, including low income and minority communities and people with disabilities. Public meetings should be held in locations accessible by transit and in buildings compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Furthermore, technical jargon should be avoided in presentations and information should be displayed using visualization techniques. Staff should be available to answer questions and work to verify that the messages presented are being understood by the audience. Likewise, the staff should actively listen to participants at meetings and make sure that the staff understands the comments made by the public.

A more recent issue that came to light in the last two years is that the MPO needed to create a plan to address its requirement to engage the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population in Douglas County. The creation of a LEP Plan had been a federal requirement for several years, but the MPO had not created one. This issue was an outgrowth of discussions the MPO and KDOT staffs had as part of a November 2010 Title VI Review of the MPO operations. The development of a LEP Plan was the major action requested by KDOT staff from that review. Following that review, the MPO and KDOT staffs worked jointly to create the LEP Plan for the Lawrence-Douglas County MPO. In June 2011 the MPO approved its first LEP Plan. That plan describes what the MPO needs to do and will strive to do to engage those people that need translation services. Although the percentage of population in Douglas County that does not understand English is small and the MPO is not required to provide written translations of MPO materials, the MPO is still required to make reasonable attempts to provide translations if requested. The MPO staff will make reasonable efforts to provide information to all Douglas County residents regardless of what language they speak and understand. Another change prompted by that Title VI Review in late 2010 was the development of

Specific Techniques to help encourage participation among the traditionally underserved population

- Conduct interviews orally so that low literacy will not be a barrier.
- Divide larger groups into smaller, more comfortable sizes.
- Utilize local residents to help interview people in their own community.
- Provide a comfortable meeting space with light refreshments (cookies and punch), chairs, and tables.
- Involve local officials and community insiders.
- Hold meetings in "neutral" locations, like schools or community centers that are accessible by transit.
- Work with existing organizations
- Attend scheduled and special events.
- Use interpreters and translated materials where appropriate and feasible.

a Title VI note that is now put on all MPO agendas and MPO approved documents.

In 2009 the MPO approved a Title VI Program Manual. That document discusses how the MPO will comply with civil rights laws and ensure that no person will — on the grounds of race, religion, age, gender, disability, national origin, or economic status — be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any MPO program or activity. The MPO also promotes the full and fair participation of all affected populations in the transportation decision making process. Any MPO information, educational materials, and transportation planning participation opportunities will be equally accessible to all people covered by Title VI. The Title VI Program Manual also includes a complaint form and process for use by anyone who believes they have been discriminated against in the MPO operations. Any and all Title VI complaints will be reviewed by the MPO Policy Board and used by MPO staff to improve the region's transportation planning process.

With the update of this Public Participation Plan in early 2012, the approval of a LEP Plan in 2011, and the approval of the Title VI Program Manual in 2009, the Lawrence-Douglas County MPO now has a complete set of public involvement documents to guide their efforts to engage the region's citizens in planning for a better regional transportation system. Future editions of these documents may be combined into one report, but for now they are separate but coordinated policy guides.

Visualization

Visualization techniques will be used in all core transportation plans, programs and projects to the maximum extent feasible. Visualization techniques promote improved understanding of existing and proposed transportation activities to those who do not have a background in transportation planning. Effective visualization techniques help build consensus and clarify ideas between the public and decision-makers. Tailoring visualization techniques for a specific document or population will help interested people better understand regional transportation planning goals and activities. These techniques will include the use of colors, diagrams, tables, maps and photos that better illustrate the ideas and concepts represented in transportation plans, projects and programs.

E-Mail / Contact Lists

The Contacts List is maintained by MPO staff and any individual, organization, agency or other interested party can request to be added to this list by contacting the MPO staff or joining via the MPO's web site. Information regarding plan updates, transportation planning activities, and meeting notices will be sent to all interested parties wishing to be included in the E-Mail Database. E-Mail messages and alerts were recognized in the 2009 survey as the most preferred method to send out information regarding transportation planning issues. Anyone interested can subscribe to the meeting agenda announcements and/or updates by writing to the MPO at:

Lawrence Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization
6 E 6th Street, Lawrence, KS 66044
or by visiting: <http://www.lawrenceks.org/subscriptions>

Brochures and Fact Sheets

Brochures and Fact Sheets are a presentation of data in a format emphasizing brevity, key points of interest or concern, a fairly minimalist design aesthetic, and a general desire to convey the most relevant information in the least amount of space. Fact sheets condense information into an easy-to-read, straightforward, portable, and modular form of knowledge. They often contain lists, statistics, and answers to common questions. In some cases they may include a summary or abridgement of a longer document. The MPO should utilize this tool when disseminating information about major plans and studies.

Mailings

Mailings are a staple of most public involvement programs. Agencies use mailing lists throughout the planning and project development processes to “keep a thumb on the pulse” of the community at-large and for key stakeholders. Using mailing lists, a transportation agency reaches an audience with announcements of upcoming events, meeting invitations, newsletters, summary reports, and other information about its activities and/or about particular projects that a segment of the community is likely to be keenly interested in. These mailings may go to some of the same people or groups that have signed up to get MPO information via the Email/Contact List, but these mailings are often used for target area or target interest audiences (e.g., all landowners within a half-mile radius of a new

interchange, or all persons who have bought a bus pass in the last year). When asked which method the L-DC MPO should use when providing information to the public, the community in 2009 ranked mailings as the third most effective tool or strategy.

Neighborhood Meetings and Newsletters

Neighborhood meetings will be held in areas where significant transportation-planning recommendations are being made to upgrade or change existing public infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, bridges, bikeways, railroad crossings, etc.). At least two weeks in advance of the scheduled public hearing date notices for neighborhood meetings will be posted on the MPO's web site and through appropriate neighborhood association newsletters if available.

Newsletters will also be utilized to keep the community informed about transportation planning activities. Neighborhood newsletters can be targeted and tailored to specific areas, therefore increasing the effectiveness of the newsletter outreach efforts. The Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods and similar organizations that exist in other parts of Douglas County are resources that the MPO staff should use when soliciting public participation.

Information Kiosks / Booths at Local Events

People like special events. These unique occasions are light-hearted and intended to be fun for participants. They have a holiday-like feeling clearly different from day-to-day meetings and hearings. They give people opportunities to meet others in a friendly, non-threatening setting and share their ideas. People like the freedom and openness of pleasurable events. This is a great strategy to inform, educate and solicit comments from a diverse and large group of people who are traditionally not involved in the transportation planning process. The MPO should use these events to gain public input on transportation issues as staff time and schedules allow. MPO staff should use events sponsored by other larger agencies (e.g., bike fair hosted by the University of Kansas, Earth Day event hosted at South Park in Lawrence, Douglas County Fair, Maple Festival in Baldwin City, etc.) to provide opportunities for the public to voice their comments about the region's transportation system and participate in the MPO planning process.

Public Meetings

Public meetings present information to the public and obtain input from community residents. Held throughout the planning process, they are tailored to specific issues or community groups and are either informal or formal. Public meetings have been used for many years to disseminate information, provide a setting for public discussion, and get feedback from the community. Public meetings are effective at both gathering questions and comments from stakeholders, but they are also useful in providing information to all participants. Public meetings should be held at a variety of locations within Douglas County and held at convenient, accessible locations and times. All of the MPO transportation committee and board meetings are open to the public. This provides a great opportunity for the public to stay informed and participate in the MPO planning process.

Web Sites

On-line services provide communication 24 hours a day. The MPO web site provides comprehensive information on MPO activities and regional transportation planning issues. Also housed on the MPO web site are necessary reports, core documents, agendas and meeting minutes for all MPO committees and advisory boards. Douglas County residents indicated via an online survey that although the web site is not the most preferred method of retrieving information, it is effective at gathering the questions and comments of the public. The web site is located at <http://www.lawrenceks.org/mpo>.

Local Newspaper Articles, Advertisements, and Public Notices

Every effort to involve the local media should be used when providing information to the public or encouraging participation. Press releases will be sent out whenever notable transportation planning activities are taking place. MPO staff will be available to answer media questions and for interviews. The *Lawrence Journal-World* is an effective source to disseminate information to the public. Advertisements may also be taken out in the *Lawrence Journal-World* officially notifying the public of comment periods related to updates of selected major MPO documents including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Other selected MPO document updates and amendments will be described in shorter public notices printed in the newspaper.

Public Interaction

There is no replacement for direct human interaction. An effective way to educate people about transportation planning activities and create opportunities for the public to get involved is to meet with them face to face. The MPO must take the attitude of “meeting the public where they are” if the MPO is to get the most effective results. Surveys indicated that speaking directly to MPO staff was an effective method when gathering the community’s comments and questions.

Electronic Surveys

Public opinion surveys assess widespread public opinion. An agency administers an electronic survey to a sample group of people via the internet. The limited sample of people is considered representative of a larger group. This is a popular method when gathering feedback on transportation related issues. A web survey was used in 2009 to help gather public opinion related to participation when developing this Public Participation Plan.

Document Availability

When selected major MPO documents, maps or programs are proposed to be changed, copies of the existing documents and the proposed changes will be made available during the public comment period at the following locations:

- Baldwin City Public Library, 800 7th Street;
 - Lawrence City Hall, 6 E. Sixth St., 1st Floor, Planning & Development Services;
 - Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont Street;
 - Eudora Public Library, 14 E. 9th Street; and
 - Lecompton City Hall, 333 Elmore, City Clerk.
- Documents are also published online for public review and comment at the MPO website at <http://www.lawrenceks.org/mpo>.

Evaluation of the Public Participation Strategies

The MPO will evaluate the effectiveness of its public participation activities. By evaluating the tools and techniques presented in this plan, the MPO will ensure that only the most effective strategies are continued and improved upon, while ineffective strategies are discontinued or replaced.

An effective evaluation component will outline the steps to be taken to evaluate those tools and techniques, and identify measures to quantify success rates and outline strategies to improve the MPO’s public participation process. It is recommended that the tools and techniques be reviewed annually while the entire Public Participation Plan be reviewed and updated at least once every five years (prior to the start of public participation activities for the MTP update) to ensure that appropriate changes are being implemented by the MPO. The following table outlines the performance measures that can be used to evaluate each public participation tool or technique and the methods for improving each.

Performance Measures

Tool	Performance Measure	Methods for Improvement
E-Mail / Contact Lists	Number of persons included in the database / Number of persons contacted	Increase e-mail list by advertising the availability of e-mail announcements using other public involvement tools.
Brochures / Fact Sheets	Number of persons reached	Increase distribution by making brochures and fact sheets available at more locations
Mailings	Number of letters / Persons contacted	Increase/Decrease mailing list to more accurately target affected areas. Use the most up-to-date information to maintain the mailing list.
Neighborhood Newsletters	Number of persons reached / Number of neighborhood newsletters participating	Increase or decrease distribution to more accurately target an area that may be affected
Neighborhood Meetings	Number of participants / Attendance	Schedule at convenient times and locations. Hold multiple workshops. Use other tools to increase awareness.
Information Kiosks / Booths at Local Events	Number of persons reached / Attendance	Schedule at convenient times and locations. Attend events that are not normally targeted. Hold multiple workshops. Use other tools to increase awareness.
Public Meetings	Number of participants / Attendance	Schedule hearings at convenient and accessible times and locations. Hold multiple meetings. Use other public involvement tools to increase awareness of meetings.
Web Sites	Number of hits / Viewers	Use other public involvement tools to increase advertisement of the Web site.
Local Newspaper Advertisements	No measure / Typically required by regulations	No measure / Typically required by regulations
Electronic Surveys	Number of persons contacted / Number of participants	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving feedback. Offer Incentives.

Appendices

Appendix A: Advisory Boards and Committees

Aviation Advisory Board (AAB)

A five-to-seven member board appointed by the Mayor of the City of Lawrence with the consent of the City Commission, the AAB exists to promote general and commercial aviation activities and interests. The AAB also aids the users of aviation facilities in obtaining and improving services, and receives and evaluates reports of poor or improper service by the contractual base operator, and unsafe or dangerous conditions. TAC members including the Lawrence Public Works Director have routine contact with this advisory group.

Lawrence-Douglas County Air Quality Advisory Committee

This is an advisory committee composed of local government, state government, local industry, and representatives from other groups that have an interest in air quality issues. This committee created by the Douglas County Commission monitors the status of air quality data and air quality regulations that will affect Douglas County. The MPO staff has been involved in this committee and participates regularly in its meetings.

Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)

A nine-member advisory committee appointed by the Mayors of the four cities in Douglas County (Lawrence, Eudora, Baldwin City, Leocompton) and the Chair of the Douglas County Commission, the BAC works to improve bicycle safety and awareness, education of motorists and non-motorists, and update the region's bikeway system maps. BAC members also develop the Bicycle Plan and seek information on current trends, programs, and facilities outside the local area. The BAC makes recommendations to the area's local governments concerning issues related to bicycle usage and facilities. The BAC meetings are staffed by the MPO Transportation Planner.

Coordinated Transit District #1 (CTD #1)

CTD #1 consists of transit service providers representing Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Douglas, and Johnson Counties as well as other groups interested in paratransit issues. The purpose of this group is to enhance coordination and management of state and federal programs for public and private not-for-profit transit providers. Lawrence's Public Transit Administrator and the MPO Senior Transportation Planner are both CTD #1 members and participate regularly in these meetings.

Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)

A nine-member body appointed by the Mayor of the City of Lawrence with the consent of the City Commission, the PTAC considers matters relating to policies regarding the provision of public transit services within Lawrence. The PTAC may conduct public hearings on issues pertaining to fare increases, route modifications and service reductions as defined by city policy. The PTAC is composed of transit riders and staffed by the Lawrence Public Transit Administrator. The MPO Senior Transportation Planner regularly attends PTAC meetings.

Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC)

The RTAC is a nine-member body representing transit and human service transportation providers who operate in Douglas County. The RTAC is an advisory committee of the MPO Policy Board. The RTAC oversees the development of the Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) for Douglas County. RTAC meetings are staffed by the MPO Transportation Planner.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC is a nine-member board that is composed of local and state transportation officials and non-voting members including federal transportation officials. This is the primary MPO advisory committee. The TAC reviews several MPO documents including the UPWP, TIP and MTP. When drafted to TAC satisfaction, this group approves and recommends approval of those documents to the MPO Policy Board. TAC meetings are staffed by the MPO Senior Transportation Planner.

Traffic Safety Commission (TSC)

The TSC is a nine-member body appointed by the Mayor of Lawrence with the consent of the City Commission for staggered three year terms. The Traffic Safety Commission considers matters relating to the safe and expeditious flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the City of Lawrence. Typically, the TSC reviews and acts on traffic signalization, parking, and pedestrian control requests within the city. The Lawrence's Traffic Engineer staffs this advisory board. MPO staff attends these meetings as needed.

University of Kansas (KU on Wheels)

The University of Kansas Parking & Transit Office operates the *KU on Wheels* fixed-route bus service that functions as public transit with its primary destination as the KU campus. The system is funded through student fees and parking permit fees, with transit operations contracted to a private transit operator. The KU Transit Commission makes recommendations to the Provost for policy changes, makes decisions on operational matters, and conducts hearings and makes changes to routes. The KU On Wheels Manager is a voting member on the TAC.

Appendix B: Outreach and Development Efforts

To ensure that the Public Participation Plan (PPP) was developed in consultation with the public, the MPO staff developed a survey intended to give regional transportation planners an understanding of the best ways to inform and engage the citizens of Douglas County in the transportation planning process.

The transportation planning community engagement survey identified the following items:

- obstacles that prevented citizens from participating in the regional transportation planning process
- better ways to keep citizens informed about regional transportation planning issues
- how concerns expressed by the public should be addressed and responded to by the MPO and MPO staff, and
- how to better incorporate the public comments received into the MPO's regional transportation planning activities.

The survey was available online and paper copies were accessible at the following locations:

- Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont Street
- Baldwin City Public Library, 800 Seventh Street
- Eudora Public Library, 14 East Ninth Street
- Lawrence Community Building, 115 W. 11th Street
- East Lawrence Recreation Center, 1245 E. 15th Street
- Lawrence Jewish Community Center, 917 Highland Drive
- Lecompton City Hall, 327 Elmore Street, and
- Lawrence City Hall, 6 E Sixth Street.

All surveys were accessible between November 18, 2008 and December 19, 2008.

To ensure that the public was made aware of the survey and to encourage participation the MPO drafted a press release that resulted in an article written for *The Lawrence Journal-World* online edition announcing the Public Participation Plan update and survey. The MPO staff was also interviewed by KLWN – 1320 AM news talk radio station during the KLWN Morning News Watch informing the public about the survey.

To gather the input from all interested parties identified in SAFETEA-LU and related planning regulations, MPO staff emailed individual invitations to complete the survey to all known stakeholders. That list included the groups listed below.

- Lawrence Transit System (The T)
- Public Transit Advisory Committee
- KU on Wheels
- Ground Transportation Inc.
- Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center
- Cottonwood, Inc.
- Douglas County Senior Services, Inc.
- Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging
- Independence, Inc.
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
- Kansas Motor Carriers Association
- Lawrence Paper Company
- Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
- Kansas Department of Transportation
- Lawrence Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Eco² Commission
- Lawrence Municipal Airport
- Lawrence Aviation Advisory Board
- FBO Hetrick Air Services, Inc.
- University of Kansas
- Haskell University
- Baker University
- Lawrence School District (USD 497)
- Eudora School District (USD 491)
- Baldwin City School District (USD 348)
- Perry-Lecompton School District (USD 343)
- Lawrence Historic Resource Commission
- Lecompton Historical Society
- Kansas Turnpike Authority
- Lawrence Bicycle Club
- Lawrence Mountain Bike Club
- Lawrence Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Lawrence Traffic Safety Commission
- Passenger Rail Kansas
- Centro Hispano
- Haskell Wetlands Preservation Organization
- Jayhawk Audubon Society
- Wakarusa Group of the Kansas Sierra Club
- Lawrence Preservation Alliance

- Kaw Valley Heritage Alliance
- Downtown Inc.
- League of Women Voters
- Small World
- City of Lawrence
- City of Eudora
- City of Baldwin City
- City of Lecompton
- Douglas County
- Federal Transit Administration
- Federal Highway Administration

Invitations were also sent out to twenty five neighborhood associations, including the Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods. Two-hundred eighty-six (286) surveys were completed and the results are summarized in Appendix C.

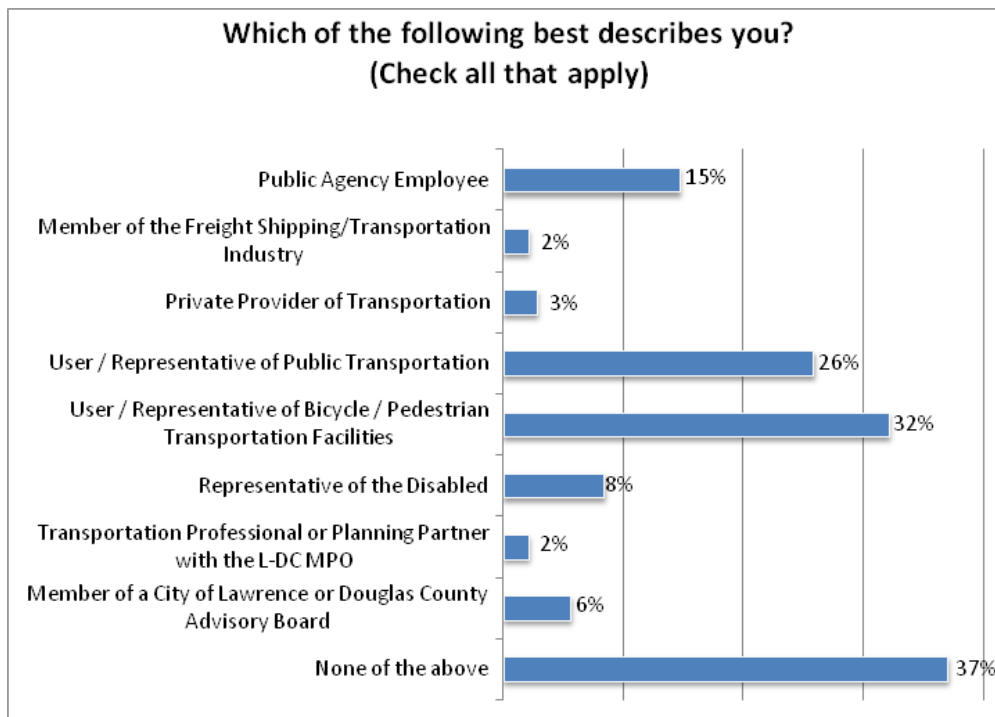
The MPO staff interpreted the survey results and used them to compare with the information included in the Public Involvement Plan approved in 2004. A SAFETEA-LU compliance analysis was completed that identified areas in the 2004 plan that needed to be updated, added, or improved to comply with the federal regulations for MPO public participation. MPO planners then worked with other MPOs and the FHWA Resource Center to research and incorporate best practices that would address the issues and concerns identified in the survey. A draft Public Participation Plan was presented to the TAC for review and comment. After TAC approval, the plan was released for public review and comment for 45 days. Everyone who asked to be notified when future public transportation activities were available in the survey was notified of the review and comment period. The initial list of stakeholders and neighborhood associations was also identified and a press release was posted. All public comments received are located in Appendix D. The Public Participation Plan was approved by the TAC on April 7, 2009 and the MPO Policy Board approved and adopted the plan on April 16, 2009.

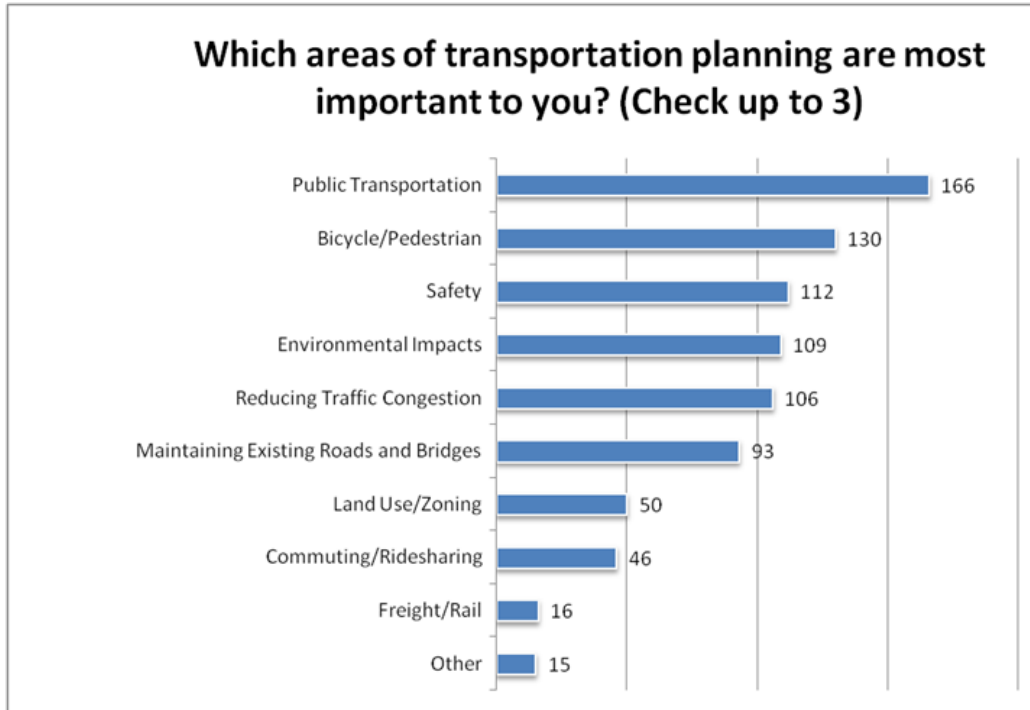
For the 2012 changes to the PPP the MPO staff and TAC agreed that a new survey was not needed now but that a new survey and greater analysis of the public participation process would be undertaken after a new federal surface transportation act to replace SAFETEA-LU is passed and subsequent regulations are approved. At the time that this 2012 PPP change was being drafted (late 2011 and early 2012) the MPO staff and TAC members thought that a new transportation act would be passed in early 2013, if not sooner, and that new transportation planning regulations could be developed by early 2014. That would allow the MPO to adopt a major PPP update in 2014 that conformed to new MPO planning regulations and keep the major upgrade and approval of a new PPP on a five-year cycle (2009 to 2014).

Appendix C: Survey Results

Although this survey was used in the development of the 2009 Public Participation Plan, it is in no way intended to be a statistical representation of the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Area. Survey results were used only to help the MPO garnish a better understanding of some methods that could be used to better inform and engage the citizens of Douglas County in the regional transportation planning process.

The MPO received 286 survey responses from a diverse group of stakeholders. All constituencies identified in SAFETEA-LU as interested parties participated in the survey. Other than "None of the above" most respondents identified themselves as users/representatives of bicycle/pedestrian facilities or public transportation services which correlated with the main interests among respondents. It is also worth noting that although aviation was left off the list of transportation interests because the aviation sector has its own planning process and airport improvement funds are not programmed by the MPO, it still received many write-in votes. All comments received are presented as written by the respondent and have not been edited.

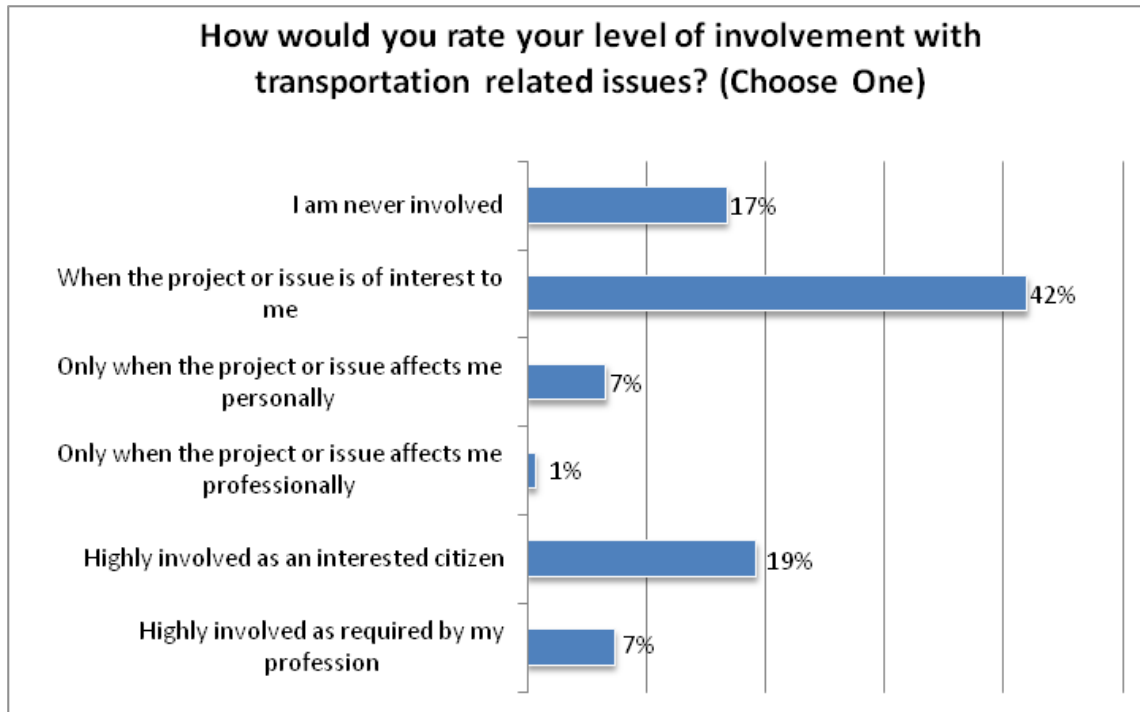




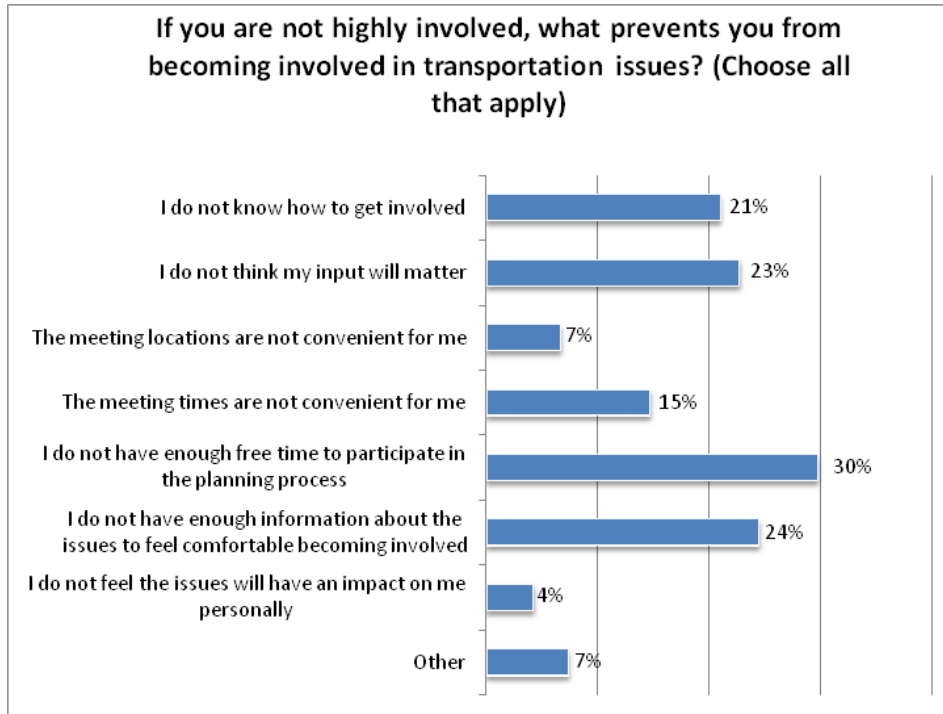
Other:

- airports and aviation
- Aviation
- We are an air-medical provider from the airport
- Airport
- all of the above and intertwined and it is hard to choose just one as most important
- Assuring that Buses have designated Bus bays or Bus turn outs especially for 6th and 23rd street, in order to provide an inset place for buses to "hover" while letting riders on and off. This will avoid blocking traffic.
- motorcycle safety
- Moving large trucking traffic off of 23rd/Iowa Street
- comprehensive land use transportation plan
- Efficient spending
- efficient infrastructure for public use: airports, roads, highways, etc.
- Transportation must be accessible to those with disabilities
- more sidewalks for pedestrians and bicycle paths (paved)/bike lanes on busy streets (e.g., 6th street, Iowa, etc.).
- Sidewalks
- Use bus when can't use car for some reason--repair, icy road, medical. Not Often. Too infrequent, half mile to bus stop, does not run for night events.
- limiting # private vehicles, and developing regional-local transportation system, using renewable energy sources
- Installing speed cushions at dangerous cross streets such as Chalk Hill Ct & 9th St.
- Sidewalks
- school age transportation

Most respondents (66%) said that they are either never involved in the transportation planning process or only involved when a project or issues is of interest to them or affects them personally. This is representative of the amount of work that needs to be done by the MPO to ensure that people who are traditionally not involved in the planning process are afforded the opportunity and encouraged to participate. Only 26% of the respondents indicated that they are highly involved. The MPO will need to make every effort possible to increase the level of participation.



The MPO recognizes that free time among the residents of Douglas County is sometimes rare and difficult to devote to regional transportation planning activities. However, there are some tools and strategies that can be used to help with other issues that prevent participation. Forty-five percent (45%) of the respondents indicated that they either don't know how or feel they don't have enough information to participate in the planning process. The MPO should concentrate efforts to educate and provide proficient messaging of information to the public to help reduce this potential obstacle. The community also needs to know and feel that their input and suggestions help shape the regional plans and policies that the MPO seeks participation on. Making these comments available to decision-makers and the public will help increase transparency and hold the MPO accountable during its public outreach efforts.



Other:

- I live in Eudora and my input does not seem to be as valid as someone who lives in town and it effects personally.
- That danged trafficway in South Lawrence has been on the planning boards for years, we've planned and lawyered and fought, and the danged thing is STILL not built. What's the excuse this time?
- I don't feel the public opinions are actually listened to. I feel the decisions are made in the corner office and we are asked out of mandates not actual interest in what we want or need.
- I am a Baldwin City resident, and rightly or wrongly, I perceive that most of the "action" regarding transportation involves Lawrence.
- My biggest hot button is aviation. As "merely" a former member of the Lawrence Aviation Advisory Board, it has been a challenge to remain actively involved. City employees no longer working for the city had a bad habit of deleting my name from information distribution lists. However, I salute Chairman Rick "Bear" Bryant, and quickly concede that the current board has done an absolutely outstanding job advising the city. We are tremendously privileged to have his expert and seemingly tireless leadership. Thus, they have done such a good job that it seems they really don't need me at all. Now, on the other hand, the traffic safety board needs me, because they seem to operate under a misguided notion that safety, obstruction of orderly traffic flow, and revenue enhancement all mean exactly the same thing.
- No one with any common sense ever seems to be allowed to express themselves. Loony leftist types will shout you down or do something to you like graffiti your property.
- I am not aware of meetings and the process here in Douglas County.
- I do not drive and have limited transportation to businesses in Lawrence. At present, the bus routes are too far away from the entrances to the south Lawrence stores. As I cannot walk that well, I don't feel comfortable in using the bus to get to them. Also, the downtown transfer areas are too far apart.
- Why can't you collect input via online forms like this one for any issues that come up? Meetings are never convenient--I work in Overland Park (live in Lawrence) and simply don't want to use my non-work time to attend meetings like this. Also, clearly there's a disconnect in providing information--I did not know that a Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Office exists. I know that the city employs planners, but I've never

heard of this group.

- I am unaware of how else I can participate other than: 1) Voting, and 2) Participating in these surveys.
- I don't ever know when the meetings are or have enough information. Plus, whenever I have gone to public meetings in Lawrence, I'm always disappointed because there's usually not a way for me to have a say or make a difference. I always feel like the public participation is window dressing and my opinions never really make a difference. It gets hard being a citizen trying to work for change in Lawrence when it feels like the Chamber of Commerce and developers have the inside track. Whether the perception is correct or not - this is the perception - particularly when there are special meetings just for the Chamber and developers and not the same for neighborhood groups or citizens.
- The people in power (ones with the money and land) never really care about the majority vote. Look at the T. Almost everyone knows it is needed,,, BUT so inefficient and poorly managed that the cost per passenger is probably more than private taxi's would cost.
- Seems the City Planners are only interested in what is "cool" now and not concerned about cost (brick streets in Old West Lawrence and traffic circles or roundabouts). Also those who scream the most will get their way (i.e. Southwest Trafficway).
- Established interest groups seem to be the only ones expressing organized opinions, dominated by the environmentalists/native American coalition opposed to completing K-10, and bus system advocates. I have not recognized the opportunity to participate in the process.
- Because operating cost considerations are never considered when providing services to the citizens of Lawrence. Just which neighborhood organization or other special interest group makes the most noise or trouble.
- I live in another town.
- Was disappointed in the either/or type of choice. I am somewhat involved because a friend asked for my help.
- Sometimes the current transportation resources are unreliable or do not run at the time of the meetings. Also, there is not a consistent way to inform the public regarding transportation planning meetings.
- There is no alternative route to transportation than what is offered for KU, and older people that is convenient to them, and not school age children.
- Dislike the Lawrence Process of Challenging every issue and thus holding up the process

The three most effective methods for providing the public with information were identified as e-mail messages (88%), brochures/fact sheets (70%), and mailings (53%). Neighborhood newsletters, public meetings, and information kiosks/booths at local events were also noted as effective. The MPO should incorporate those tools when conducting public outreach activities.

The least effective methods were identified as the City's Cable Channel 25 (85%), local newspaper classifieds (80%), and radio advertisements (58%).

How effective are each of the following methods of providing information to you?			
	Effective	Not Effective	Unsure
Email Messages	88%	6%	6%
Neighborhood Newsletters	45%	35%	21%
City of Lawrence's Web Site	27%	51%	22%
Project Specific Web Sites	33%	36%	31%
Mailings	53%	33%	14%
Local Newspaper Advertisements	37%	47%	16%
Local Newspaper Classifieds	8%	80%	12%
Television Advertisements	30%	53%	17%
Radio Advertisements	28%	58%	14%
City's Cable Channel 25	5%	85%	10%
Neighborhood Meetings	32%	44%	24%
Public Meetings	39%	34%	27%
Internet Forums/Blogs	30%	48%	22%
Brochures/Fact Sheets	70%	13%	17%
Information Kiosks/Booths at Local Events	42%	34%	24%

Most Effective	Percentage
Email Messages	88%
Brochures/Fact Sheets	70%
Mailings	53%
Least Effective	Percentage
City's Cable Channel 25	85%
Local Newspaper Classifieds	80%
Radio Advertisements	58%

Other Methods and Comments:

- Effective Meetings of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. I see the agendas and sometimes I attend the meetings.
- Effective Very dependent on the issue. Media to use needs to take into account the target audience. Each situation is different.
- Effective Information reported in local media. Also, word of mouth from friends, etc.
- Effective Online newspaper articles are effective, as opposed to advertisements in print or online. I do check the city website occasionally, watch television sometimes, but email or newspaper articles are how I learn about transportation issues.
- Effective The individuals that personally hand out info at the farmers market.
- Effective I get phone calls from the planning office on occasion.
- Unsure Again, many elderly and disabled citizens are unable to physically attend

meetings but they are still interested in bus transportation issues.

- Comment I want to note that you needed 'somewhat effective' v. effective or not effective. The City website can be effective if I know to go there regarding some project and if it's easily linked to from either the home page or someplace intuitive in the website. In general I know there's a lot of info there but when I've searched for things in the past I've either not found them or found them in an area that makes sense to City employees but not to community members who don't know the jargon, departments, etc.
- Unsure I think items such as advertisements, television, radio and brochures are not good use of scarce funds.
- Effective Email combined with the city website or project specific website is the most effective for myself, and I think it is a growing trend for most people that have reliable access to the internet. A friend forwarded me info about the survey; otherwise I wouldn't have known to check the city website. I would recommend working on expanding a city wide email list serve of interested Lawrence citizens (ideally several thousand strong) that you can stay in contact with and solicit participation and feedback from. Participatory democracy! That's what it's all about.
- Unsure I do not trust the facts and figures that come from the administrators of public programs. The numbers are tweaked to show positive results. Example. I have ridden the T. Most times it is almost empty and the big buses waste fuel and just wear out the equipment and roads. Smaller buses with more direct routes to various locations should be possible with onboard computers to measure daily use to determine capacity needed and the time needed.
- Comment I have trouble getting to any meeting place at any time. I have a disabled relative at home.
- Unsure I live in the west side of Lawrence where we don't have an organized neighborhood organization. I don't participate in any of the local blogs because the opinions offered are so irrational and people quickly resort to name calling and abusive behavior.
- Effective List-serves. Door-to-door information gathering/speaking.
- Unsure Some of these communication means are in flux--for the present, as a member of the city's traffic safety advisory committee, I'm attending the monthly public meetings of that group, but because of my work schedule, I'm often unable to attend other public hearings. Websites, if they're linked to the city's main site are good if I have specific topics of concern. In the past, I've had little to do with blogs or forums, but that may change.
- Unsure All of these areas have varying degrees of effectiveness -might be better to ask which are the top three effective methods.
- Effective News stories in Lawrence Journal World
- Effective E-newsletters
- Unsure E-mails are good, and maybe a mailing with more in-depth details. But, e-mails are a good way to connect.
- Effective Work with the school district in more convenient transportation schedules they cannot currently offer due to public school cut backs in the transportation area.
- Unsure My examples of City web info is that the one site I want is not up to date: Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission. Also we need more recycling info about the various deposit sites.
- Effective L J World Website Ads

When asked to identify the most effective methods to gather the public comments and questions, 69% of the respondents stated that electronic surveys were effective. Web sites (64%), telephone conversations (40%), public hearings (40%), and neighborhood meetings (39%) were also considered effective. Every effort should be made to utilize these methods during the public participation process.

The least effective methods were identified as internet forums/blogs (48%), standard mail surveys (40%), and comment cards at public meetings (38%).

How effective are each of the following methods at gathering your comments and questions?			
	Effective	Not Effective	Unsure
Phone (Speak directly to L-DC MPO Staff)	40%	36%	25%
Internet Forums/Blogs	32%	48%	20%
Web Sites (comments submitted by e-mail)	64%	16%	20%
Electronic Surveys	69%	13%	18%
Standard Mail Surveys	39%	40%	20%
Public Hearings	40%	34%	25%
Neighborhood Meetings	39%	37%	25%
Workshops or Open Houses	32%	31%	37%
Comment Cards at Public Meetings	30%	38%	32%

Most Effective	Percentage
Electronic Surveys	69%
Web Sites (comments submitted by e-mail)	64%
Public Hearings	40%

Least Effective	Percentage
Internet Forums/Blogs	48%
Standard Mail Surveys	40%
Comment Cards at Public Meetings	38%

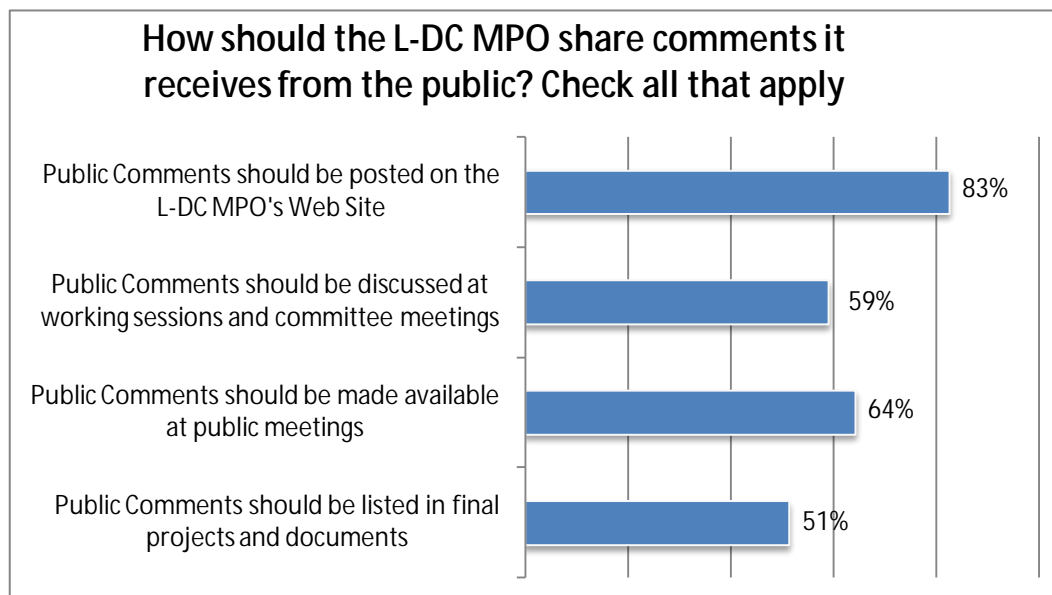
Other Methods and Comments:

- Effective I sometimes submit letters to the MPO on behalf of the League of Women Voters.
- Effective Planning Commission or City Commission meetings
- Effective Meetings tend to be very attendee biased, and these can unduly bias the results for both good or bad depending on your viewpoint
- Effective I hosted planning and traffic officials at my house to look at street development. I invited neighbors and we were able to ask questions and make comments. It was great.
- Not Effective I couldn't find anywhere else to make any further comments. We live in the county and I feel that the information that is garnered by the survey (which if I am not at work, don't have access to email) should be distributed to the public by a newsletter or some similar mailing so that we have the ability to review (?) the submitted info. I am unsure that I would make it to any hearings, committees or other gathering and thus would miss out on the gathered comments from others.
- Unsure As I am not able to attend transportation meetings, some way should be found for citizens to easily communicate--like an address posted in the newspaper to which I could mail my thoughts on the issue.

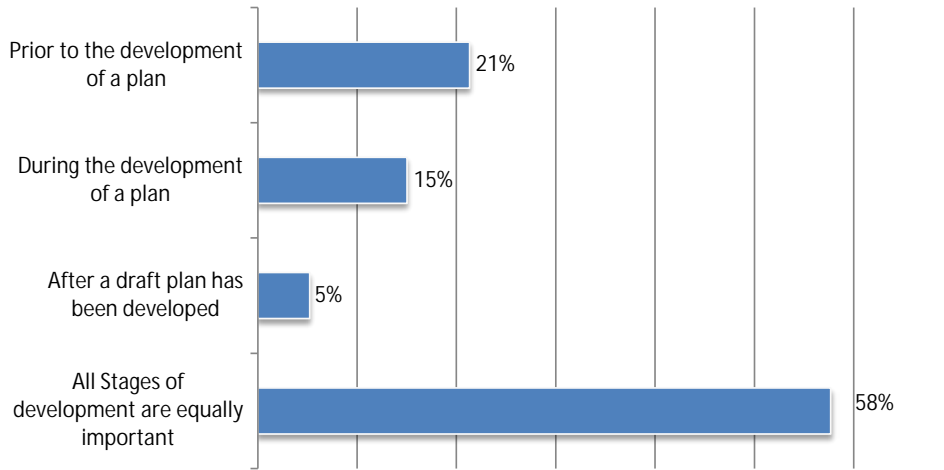
- Unsure Just to reiterate that any blogs or forums or websites set up to capture feedback must supply actual information from informed sources about the project. I will not read a list of rants or opinions from other locals.
- Unsure Most times only a few people come to meetings. Those that do are usually on the extreme ends of the issue and the majority feels that the issue has been already decided by some politically motivated or self interest need. Example, the few people that voted on the recent school tax issue, a very small percent of the voters participated.
- Unsure on-line works for me
- Unsure I'm using "unsure" to indicate "sometimes" or "possibly" or "it depends".
- Unsure See above comments re: effectiveness levels.
- Not Effective I sometimes get the impression that the decision-makers minds are already made up prior to public comment. It is very frustrating and almost leads me to not get involved. I hope I'm wrong.
- Effective email is best
- Unsure I refrain from committing bcs of other community projects in which I have a leadership responsibility.

Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents indicated that public comments should be posted and be made available for review on the MPO web site. Other methods listed below also received strong support as ways in which the MPO can share the public comments it receives with others. The MPO should use this information to make sure that public comments are included in documents posted online and printed. The MPO should also have previous public comments on hand at public meetings and be prepared to discuss those comments and similar ones. It seems clear from these responses that people want to see what others are saying about the proposed projects or plans.

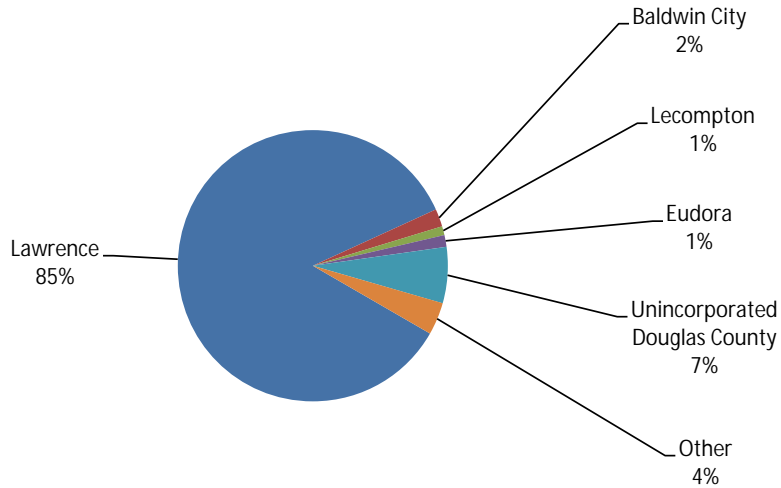
An overwhelming 58% of the survey respondents indicated that all stages of development were equally important with regard for the need of public participation. The MPO is committed to provide ample opportunity and promote continued participation during the regional transportation planning process. Early and continuous participation should be sought during the creation of the MPO's core documents, including this Public Participation Plan, and other MPO planning activities.



When do you feel public participation is most important during the transportation planning process? (Choose One)



Please indicate your place of residence



As a direct outcome of the survey, 172 people will be added to our engaged citizen e-mail database. These individuals will be notified of all engagement opportunities and will be asked to participate in the MPO planning process. Only 26% of the respondents indicated that they were highly involved in the transportation planning process at the beginning of the survey, but 60% indicated that they would like to become more involved and notified when outreach activities take place. The MPO should not lose this momentum and continue to grow its database to ensure that all citizens within the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Area have an opportunity to participate in MPO activities and are informed throughout the MPO process.

Would you like to be notified when future public transportation activities are available?		
Yes	172	60%
No	114	40%
Total Surveys	286	100%

Appendix D: Public Comments Received by MPO Staff in 2009 and 2012

The 2009 Public Participation Plan (PPP) was available for public review and comment beginning February 10, 2009 and ending March 27, 2009. The draft plan was made available online at <http://www.lawrenceks.org/pds/PPP> and at the following locations in print.

- Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont Street
- Baldwin City Public Library, 800 Seventh Street
- Eudora Public Library, 14 East Ninth Street
- Lecompton City Hall, 327 Elmore Street
- Lawrence City Hall, 6 E Sixth Street

The MPO staff received two comments during this 2009 public review period.

Received: Tuesday, February 10, 2009 8:06 PM

Re: Draft Public Participation Plan is now available for public review and comment!

Mr. Rudolph,

I greatly applaud the incorporation of the cycling community into the PPP. Especially in light of Deputy Dillon's tragic loss I think it is more important than ever to raise awareness of the presence and rights of cyclists on our roadways - as well as incorporating them into planning measures.

Best regards,

-Dan Buonadonna

Received: Friday, February 13, 2009 7:51 PM

Re: Draft Public Participation Plan is now available for public review and comment!

Hi Bart,

Thanks for the draft preview. I noticed a couple of headline typos in the survey chart section you need to fix asap.

Also, I was greatly amused on Page 29 in the 'Other' comment section when I read the entry regarding my role on the Aviation Advisory Board. Don't know who the former board member is, but I have a couple of hunches. Regardless, it was a nice pat on the back - I think.

Nice plan, and interesting results.

Best,

Rick

Rick Bryant, chair

Aviation Advisory Board

Lawrence Municipal Airport

The 2012 Public Participation Plan (PPP) was available for public review and comment beginning on January 27, 2012 and ending on March 12, 2012. The draft plan was made available online at <http://www.lawrenceks.org/pds/PPP> and at the following locations in print.

- Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont Street
- Baldwin City Public Library, 800 Seventh Street
- Eudora Public Library, 14 East Ninth Street
- Lecompton City Hall, 327 Elmore Street
- Lawrence City Hall, 6 E Sixth Street

The MPO staff received comments from the KDOT and FHWA staffs during the required 45-day public review period and incorporated those comments into this PPP document and MPO public participation process as appropriate. No other comments were received during the public comment period.