

ISSUE

VOTE: Public Participation Plan Amendment

BACKGROUND

The *Public Participation Plan (PPP)* describes strategies and policies to engage the public in activities that MARC and other agencies undertake for the metropolitan transportation planning process, including development and maintenance of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program and Unified Planning Work Program. The current PPP was approved on October 20, 2007 and last updated on December 21, 2010. The current PPP is available online at: <http://www.marc.org/transportation/participation.htm>.

MARC seeks to amend Section A-D of the PPP to allow:

1. TIP revisions related to declared emergencies to be processed through an expedited public participation process, and
2. Flexibility in the use of local newspapers for the advertising of public review and comment periods.

Details of this proposed PPP amendment are on the attached sheet.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Amendments to the *Public Participation Plan* require a 45 day public comment period per section D of the PPP.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

None.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Both the Missouri and Kansas STP/Bridge Priorities Committees have reviewed this proposed amendment as part of a larger discussion about TIP modification procedures at their meetings on November 8 & 10, 2011, respectively.

RECOMMENDATION

Release the proposed Public Participation Plan Amendment for public review and comment.

STAFF CONTACT

Ron Achelpohl

A. UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

Comment period: 14 days

Web page: www.marc.org/transportation/upwp.htm

E-mail: transportation@marc.org

Update schedule: every year in August/September

The *Unified Planning Work Program* (UPWP) is a document that describes the transportation planning activities MARC and other agencies propose to undertake during the next fiscal year. Each major activity is described in enough detail to indicate who will perform the work, the schedule for completing it and what will result from the activity. The UPWP also contains information on the proposed budget for each activity. The UPWP is posted on the MARC website at www.marc.org/transportation/upwp.

The UPWP is developed by MARC with input from local governments, area transit providers, the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Missouri Department of Transportation. When comments are solicited during the public review period, notice will be posted on the MARC website, [and printed in area newspapers \(including Spanish-language newspapers\)](#), other MARC publications, and communicated to stakeholders on transportation-related mailing lists, [and/or printed in area newspapers \(including Spanish-language newspapers\)](#). All public comments received pertaining to the UPWP will be reviewed and considered. An effective means of incorporating public input into the UPWP is to review comments received the previous year that relate to similar new projects. When developing the work program, the UPWP project manager should take this public comment into consideration.

The UPWP is updated annually in August/September, and released for public review and comment for a minimum of two weeks. Final approval is made in October/November. Amendments are made throughout the year and are released for public comment when projects are either added or deleted, or when significant changes are made to the document.

B. LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Comment period: 30 days

Web page: www.marc.org/transportation/lrtp.htm

E-mail: lrtp@marc.org

Update schedule: at least every five years

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), called *Transportation Outlook 2040*, is the centerpiece of the metropolitan transportation planning process and serves as a blueprint for the management of the region's transportation system. It identifies transportation improvements for a 25- to 30-year horizon. It articulates region-wide transportation goals, policies and strategies ranging from road and transit improvements to projects that enhance bike, pedestrian and freight movement.

The LRTP is developed through an extensive public process that spans many months and involves thousands of individuals across the region. A series of public meetings will be held throughout the region for each complete update. Events and information will be publicized widely, such as in community newspapers (including Spanish-language newspapers), on the project website, and through radio ads, flier distribution, social media outlets, newsletters and stakeholder mailing lists. Opportunities for public involvement do not stop with the adoption of the long-range transportation plan; it will continue to evolve as additional needs are identified. The LRTP must be completely updated at least every five years while in air quality attainment (four years when in non-attainment), but may be revised more frequently if necessary.

When a new update is being developed, it is suggested that a specific public participation plan be written to outline the public participation process. MARC should post drafts of chapters online throughout development, in addition to when it is officially released for public comment as a single document. In the past, presenting one or more chapters of the plan each month, allowed the Total Transportation Policy Committee (TTPC) and the public more opportunities to comment on the plan update as it was developed prior to its official release for public comment. The LRTP website will include a link to submit comments.

After TTPC officially releases the document, the draft plan will be publicized on the MARC website, in the monthly *Transportation Matters* newsletter, ReMARC, and/or local newspapers. The public review and comment period will last at least 30 days, as federally required.

Amendments are periodically made, between major updates, to the LRTP as new projects, funding, or programs arise. The approval and public comment process for LRTP amendments is the same as the process for full updates. However, only chapters containing the proposed amendments are presented for public comment and approval.

C. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Comment period: 14 days ([7 days for Declared Emergencies](#))

Web page: www.marc.org/transportation/tip.htm

E-mail: tip@marc.org

Update schedule: every two years

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) documents how Greater Kansas City will prioritize limited transportation resources to meet the needs of the region. The TIP contains major surface transportation projects planned to receive federal, state and local funding within the metro area that will be carried out in a five-year period. Project examples include new roadways, additional through lanes to existing streets, interchange construction or modification, improvements to intersections, transit amenities and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. MARC updates the TIP every two years and processes amendments on a quarterly cycle throughout the year. [Special amendments may also be processed at other times throughout the year. In the event of declared state and/or federal emergencies, or at the discretion of MARC's Executive Director, MARC may elect to process any emergency related TIP](#)

~~revisions through an expedited public participation process. The TIP update process, taking place in odd-numbered years, begins in early January and is completed by September 30.~~

~~Public outreach for the creation of the new TIP takes place in October. Quarterly amendments take place every three months and are announced at TTPC meetings and posted online on MARC's website. The notice soliciting public comments will be published in local newspapers.~~

It is recommended that efforts to involve the public be made during the early stages of the TIP process. Early and continuous public involvement could be done for the TIP in the following stages:

(1) Previous public comment from other projects as well as a regular transportation survey should be taken into account and provided to serve as a tool throughout the entire TIP process. (2) When MARC solicits projects for the TIP, an opportunity for public input and comment should be made. The website, newsletters, surveys and other means of communication should be used to do this. (3) An opportunity should be made available for public comment on possible projects. Additionally, when the projects recommended for funding are proposed, staff should present the full list of projects that were considered, as well as public comments to provide a more informed basis to analyze projects.

The TIP is available on the MARC website, and public notification of availability and opportunity for public comment is made on the MARC public input page and/or through local media ~~and on the MARC public input page~~. It is challenging to involve the public in the TIP development process, because the project listing can appear to be complex. TIP development is also highly dependent on prior planning and programming work of state and local governments. Extra efforts must be made to clearly inform the public about when their comments would be most useful. Visualization techniques should be incorporated into the TIP document and Web site to better educate the public about the TIP process and enhance overall usability.

D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Comment period: 45 days

Web page: www.marc.org/transportation/ppp.htm

E-mail: ppp@marc.org

Update schedule: every three years

The Public Participation Plan provides a framework to guide the public participation process in transportation-planning projects at MARC, such as the UPWP, LRTP, TIP, and a range of programs and special studies, including major investment studies. This plan specifies MARC's underlying goals, strategies and techniques to be considered and employed in achieving the goals of the public participation process.

The development of a new Public Participation Plan will itself involve an inclusive public participation process. The process shall meet the goals of the currently adopted Public Participation Plan and strive to employ new and/or underused methods for engaging the public, particularly to evaluate and validate the effectiveness of strategies outlined in the current plan.

Once a final draft of a new Public Participation Plan is complete, MARC staff will present it to the TTPC for their consideration and approval to release to the public for a 45-day comment and review period. The notice of the public comment and review period will, at a minimum, be posted [on MARC's website](#); and, in community newspapers [as appropriate](#). ~~and on MARC's website.~~ All comments received by MARC will be considered in the final review by the Total Transportation Policy Committee, prior to its adoption.

Based on yearly evaluations of the public participation processes MARC may undertake, MARC staff will decide at the time of the plan's full review (every three years) whether an update or a full redevelopment of the plan is necessary. If only minor updating is necessary, MARC staff may choose to use TTPC and the final public comment and review period as the means for involving the public in the adoption of the updated plan.

The adopted plan will be posted on the MARC website and be available in both an English and Spanish version.