
Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide

Plan and Strategies for Enhancing
Public Involvement in the
Transportation Planning Process for
the Baltimore Region

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 **Baltimore Regional Transportation Board**

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I. Overview

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) is committed to meaningful public participation in the regional transportation planning process. The BRTB believes that:

- Public participation is a method to ensure high quality transportation planning, not a simple “add on”;
- Effective transportation planning must include the participation of those whose everyday lives are critically affected by how they are able to get to work, home, school, stores, and services;
- It is essential to solicit participation, not just wait for it and it is essential to respect and seriously consider input that is received, not just collect it;
- Public participation must be about meaningful opportunities for input, not just fulfilling regulations;
- Educating the public about the transportation planning process is key to real participation; and
- Additional emphasis should be on including low-income and minority populations in the transportation planning process.

The BRTB believes that transportation planning must be done with the public’s full involvement. While federal laws and regulations set a framework for public involvement in transportation planning, the BRTB seeks to go beyond the letter of these laws to fulfill the true spirit of full public participation.

About the BRTB

The BRTB, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore region, is responsible for providing regional transportation policy and overseeing the federal transportation planning process for the Baltimore region which includes full and fair participation from the public. The BRTB consists of the cities of Annapolis and Baltimore, the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard, and the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Maryland Department of Planning.

The mission of the BRTB is to develop, promote, and ensure implementation of a regional transportation plan that:

- 1) supports the economic vitality of the metropolitan area;
- 2) increases the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- 3) increases the accessibility and mobility options available for people and freight;
- 4) protects the environment, promotes energy conservation, and improves quality of life;
- 5) enhances the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes for people and freight;
- 6) promotes efficient transportation system management and operation;
- 7) emphasizes the preservation of the existing transportation system; and
- 8) promotes an efficient relationship between land-use and transportation that maximizes the use of existing and future public programs and infrastructure.

Activities performed by the BRTB include:

- Overseeing and managing the planning process to comply with current federal requirements.
- Providing policy direction and oversight to meet Federal and State environmental requirements for attaining applicable air and water quality standards.

This Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide assists the BRTB in carrying out its mission in an open process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and support for early and continued involvement.

How This Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide Were Developed

The first step in developing the Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide was to establish a set of goals that meet the spirit and intent of public involvement in the regional transportation planning process. The two goals below were identified through a collaborative process with the public in 2000 and 2001.

Goal 1: Public Outreach and Education

Educate the public about the regional transportation planning process and provide adequate information in a timely manner.

Goal 2: Public Input into the Decision-Making Process

Ensure that the public has been provided with adequate, appropriate, and meaningful opportunities to engage in the decision-making process.

A number of subcommittees also helped establish the framework of ideas and activities that are included in the Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide. These subcommittees included the Certification Subcommittee, Public Involvement Plan Development Subcommittee, Equity Subcommittee, and the Citizens Advisory Committee.

In 2003, a newly-appointed Citizens Advisory Committee, took a fresh look at the Public Involvement Plan and developed and incorporated a number of revisions.

Federal Requirements

The federal laws that cover public participation in transportation planning include the following (Also see Appendix A (Excerpts from the Code of Federal Regulations)):

ISTEA and TEA-21

As mandated in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and other supporting Federal regulations, and continued in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must establish and periodically review and update public involvement processes. These processes should assure early and continued public awareness of and access to the transportation decision-making process.

The planning regulations contain a number of performance standards for public involvement, including:

- Providing reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs);
- Requiring adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points; and
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes.

TITLE VI AND PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER 12898

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act states that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin be excluded from participation

in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” In 1994, Presidential Executive Order 12898 directed every federal agency to make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on “minority populations and low-income populations.” The Executive Order outlined three basic fundamental principles that environmental justice should follow:

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

Title VI and Executive Order 12898 lay the groundwork for the environmental justice work carried out by the BRTB.

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) mandates that public facilities be made accessible to people with disabilities and has been the basis for requiring that transit buses and street curbs be retrofitted or reconstructed with appropriate equipment and design details.

THE CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1990

The Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) set up a timetable and program to improve the nation’s air quality. The 1990 law emphasized mobile sources of emissions, and required the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to invoke penalties if states failed to submit adequate plans to attain standards.

The CAAA air quality rating system categorized the Baltimore region as a “severe nonattainment” area for the 1-hour ozone standard. The Baltimore region has until 2005 to meet air quality standards for this pollutant. In nonattainment areas, the air quality conformity documentation for the TIP and long range plan must be available for public review and comment before any formal action is taken.

General Guidelines

These guidelines provide the overall structure in which public involvement strategies can be implemented:

- **Open Meetings:** All regular and special meetings of the BRTB shall be open to the public, subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Law. The minutes and all materials presented to the BRTB at such meetings shall be public record and shall be available for review at a place determined by the BRTB.
- **Access by Persons with Disabilities:** All meetings of the BRTB shall be held in facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **Subcommittee Meetings:** All BRTB subcommittee meetings shall be open to the public and held at facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities.
- **Adequate Notice:** The BRTB and its subcommittees shall provide adequate notice of meetings subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Law. Public notice shall be given no later than two weeks prior to the meeting date and include the date, time, and location of the meeting.
- **Public Participation Opportunities at BRTB Meetings:** A public participation opportunity shall be provided for the public to address the BRTB on any issues related to the transportation planning process. This public participation opportunity will be conducted at the beginning of each meeting for a 15-minute period unless otherwise extended at the discretion of the Chair.
- **BRTB Agenda Items:** All items on which the BRTB act upon through a resolution (Action Items) shall be placed on the agenda prior to Informational Items. It will be at the discretion of

the Chair to alter the order of agenda items in order to accommodate special circumstances.

- **BRTB Action Items:** Unless there are special, extenuating circumstances, no Action Item shall be added to the agenda once the agenda has been mailed to the general public.
- **Public Participation in Agenda Items:** The public may participate in the discussion of Action and Informational Items at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair shall recognize all interested individuals within reason.
- **CAC Participation in Agenda Items:** The Citizens Advisory Committee Chair may participate in the discussion of all agenda items at the discretion of the Chair.
- **Public Comments:** Public comments may be provided in the following ways: verbally at a public meeting (if applicable), during the public participation opportunity of a regularly scheduled BRTB meeting occurring within the review and comment period, in writing, and via electronic mail.
- **Time Period for Public Comments:** Public comments shall be accepted no later than three working days after the public review and comment period ends.
- **Format of Public Meetings:** Public meetings will provide for free and open discussions between members of the public and BRTB members. All meetings will be on the record. The format of public meetings will generally be as follows:
 1. Presentation by BRTB member(s) and/or BMC staff
 2. Question and answer period and discussion period
 3. Summary and wrap up by BRTB members and/or BMC staff and information about next steps, if applicable

Outline of Document

This document is both a Public Involvement Plan and a Strategy Guide. The *Public Involvement Plan* lays out the specific steps in implementing the public involvement process for five documents:

- 1) The Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan (also known as the **Long Range Plan**);
- 2) Any **amendments** to the Long Range Plan;
- 3) The Transportation Improvement Program (this is the short range program commonly called the **TIP**);
- 4) The Unified Planning Work Program (also known as the UPWP – for the purposes of this document we will refer to it as the **Work Program**); and
- 5) Revisions to the **Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide**

The *Strategy Guide* is an inventory of techniques that can be used to implement the public participation process.

II. The Public Involvement Plan

THE LONG RANGE PLAN

The development of the Long Range Plan takes about a year and a half to complete. A general, estimated, timeline is included in the steps below.

STEP	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY
<p>Step 1: Hold Open House to Kick Off Long Range Plan Development</p> <p>Summer of Year 1 (June)</p>	<p>Attendance at Open House (CAC provides input into format and structure of Open House)</p>
<p>Step 2: Review Principles, Goals, Policies and Strategies</p> <p>Late spring/early summer of Year 1 (May and June)</p>	<p>Review Done By Citizens Advisory Committee (Allow for 3 months if possible, but have a minimum of 2 months)</p>
<p>Step 3: Review Method for Selecting Projects (Prioritization)</p> <p>Late summer and early fall of Year 1 (August and September)</p>	<p>Review Done By Citizens Advisory Committee (Allow for 3 months if possible, but have a minimum of 2 months)</p>
<p>Step 4: CAC Submits Recommendations from Reviews to BRTB</p> <p>Fall of Year 1 (September)</p>	
<p>Step 5: Make Presentations at Community Meetings (on long range transportation planning and the upcoming opportunity to weigh in on the results of prioritization)</p> <p>Fall of Year 1/early spring of Year 2 (October through March)</p>	<p>Public educational opportunities</p>

<p>Step 6: Review Information on Funds Available over period of Long Range Plan</p> <p>Winter of Year 2 (January)</p>	<p>Review done by Citizens Advisory Committee</p>
<p>Step 7: Public Review of Results of Prioritization (the list that shows the scores for each of the submitted projects). Present results of prioritization at same organizations participating in Step 5 and via mail, e-mail and website. Collect input.</p> <p>Spring of Year 2 (April and May)</p>	<p>Various</p>
<p>Step 8: Public Review of Preferred Alternative -- This is the list of projects selected by the BRTB after they consider the impact of funding different combinations of projects. One combination of projects is selected and is known as the <i>Preferred Alternative</i>. The Preferred Alternative is reviewed for a number of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to see how it meets the goals of the Long Range Plan • to see what impact the projects will have on low income and minority populations • to make sure they do not interfere with air quality goals (the conformity process) <p>Hold another series of public meetings.</p> <p>Summer of Year 2 (June)</p>	<p>Public Meetings (sponsored by BRTB members)</p>
<p>Step 9: Public Review of Final Draft of Selected Projects After all factors are considered the final draft of the list of selected projects is made available for public review before a public meeting takes place. The review will be a 30 day comment period.</p> <p>Fall of Year 2 (September)</p>	<p>Public Comment Period</p> <p>Public Meeting</p>

Guidelines for Long Range Plan Presentations for Step 5 and Step 7 follow. Public meetings held by BRTB members for Step 8 are not covered by these guidelines.

1. Instead of being held at separate meetings, presentations will be incorporated into part of regularly scheduled meetings of other organizations.
2. These organizations will include a presentation on the Long Range Plan as an item on their agenda.
3. There will be at least one presentation per jurisdiction except for Baltimore City and Baltimore County where at least two presentations will be offered because these two jurisdictions have the biggest populations. It is likely that there will be presentations on the Long Range Plan and regional transportation planning at many more meetings than just one.
4. The organizations who host the meetings will be responsible for providing a space large enough to accommodate the expected audience and will be responsible for doing publicity in conjunction with the CAC and the BMC Public Involvement Coordinator.
5. Snacks will be provided at the meetings by the sponsoring organizations.
6. All oral and visual presentations on the Long Range Plan at these meetings will be done in clear, simple language with as few acronyms as possible. Presenters will provide basic introductory information on the topics being presented.

Disseminating Information on the Long Range Plan

Clear and easy-to-read information will be created throughout the process and will be distributed in the following ways:

- Through the presentations described earlier
- Information to be inserted in the newsletters of other organizations
- A section on the BMC website for information and citizen input
- A dedicated section on the Plan in the newsletter, *BRTB Notes*

AMENDMENTS TO THE LONG RANGE PLAN

Opportunities to comment on proposed amendments to the Long Range Plan will be publicized through the following steps:

1. Notice of the proposed amendments will be sent out to the public. At the same time a 30 day comment period will be announced.

2. On the last day of the comment period a public meeting will be held.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Opportunities to comment on the proposed TIP document and amendments to the TIP will be publicized through the following steps:

1. Notice will be given that the project descriptions from the first draft TIP will be available online for review for a 30 day period prior to the release of the entire draft document. Comments can be submitted during this time period by e-mail or regular mail.

2. A public meeting on the first draft TIP will take place at the end of this comment period.

3. Notice will be given that the final draft TIP will be available in hard copy at various libraries, local government planning offices, the BMC offices and online for a 30 day period. Comments can be submitted during this time period by e-mail or regular mail.

4. A public meeting on the TIP will take place at the end of this comment period.

5. A major amendment to the TIP consisting of a 20% or more change in funding, or a new capacity project or a new fixed guideway project will trigger

a 30 day review and comment period.

The Work Program

The proposed Work Program and an opportunity to comment will be made available to the public through the following steps:

1. Notice will be given that the draft Work Program will be made available online and by hard copy at various libraries, local government planning offices, and the BMC offices for a 30 day period.

2. Comments can be submitted during this time period by e-mail or regular mail.

Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide

Proposed updates to the Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide and an opportunity to comment will be made available to the public through the following steps:

1. The Citizens Advisory Committee will take responsibility for reviewing and drafting proposed changes. All proposed changes will be reviewed by all members of the CAC prior to making it available to other members of the public.

2. A public review and comment period will take place for 45 days. During that time, the draft Public Involvement Plan and Strategy Guide will be available online and by hard copy at various libraries, local government planning offices, and the BMC offices.

Annual Performance and Evaluation Report on Public Involvement

A report describing and evaluating public involvement efforts and strategies will be developed by Public Involvement staff and the CAC by October 1 each year (three months after the end of the fiscal year).

1. The Annual Performance and Evaluation Report will be reviewed by the Citizens Advisory Committee. The CAC will develop and submit comments to the BRTB on this report.
2. The Report will be provided to BRTB and all committee members, made available on BMC's website and publicized in *BRTB Notes*.

III. The Strategy Guide

Inventory of Public Involvement Strategies

The following is a list of strategies that can be used to enhance and support public outreach and education in the regional transportation planning and decision-making process. Not all strategies are necessarily used every year.

1. Identify and Build Relationships with Stakeholders

A stakeholder is defined as any person or group that is affected by a transportation plan, program, or project, including those who may not be aware they are affected. Stakeholders include the general public; environmental, health, neighborhood, citizen, and civic organizations; traditionally underserved communities such as people with disabilities, low-income, and racial and ethnic minorities; and affected public agencies. Representatives of all identified stakeholders shall be included in the mailing list. Also, the existing mailing list will be evaluated on at least a yearly basis to ensure that as many individuals and groups as possible who are potential stakeholders are included in the list. Updates will occur on a continual basis. Ongoing meetings with stakeholders will be conducted to share information on a one-to-one basis on BRTB's public involvement process. These meetings will also give stakeholders an opportunity to provide individualized feedback to BRTB public involvement staff.

2. Develop and Implement a Plan to Reach Non-participating Low- Income and Minority Populations

Particular emphasis will be put on reaching people who have traditionally not been participants in the transportation planning process. Traditional non-participants include persons who are low-income, belong to a minority population, are disabled individuals or

are immigrants – particularly those who are non-English speaking. Public involvement staff will identify and meet with organizations and community leaders who represent these populations. The purpose of these meetings will be to build relationships with the groups and leaders as well as identify strategies for bringing traditional non-participants into the transportation planning process. The identified strategies will be implemented in cooperation with the organizations and community leaders. A detailed plan for identifying and meeting with groups and leaders and implementing strategies will be developed.

3. Develop an Outreach and Education Program

The outreach and education program shall be designed to educate the public about the regional transportation planning process and its relevance to all stakeholders. Materials produced as part of this program shall include such tools as pamphlets, brochures, and workshop outlines which can be used in various presentations and for distribution. It shall be necessary to periodically review and update the program and accompanying materials such as a citizen's guide.

Special considerations and arrangements shall be made to design a program that is tailored for non-traditional participants such as low-income, minority and disabled communities. These considerations shall include developing materials specifically targeted to those communities.

4. Publicize BRTB Activities

Key media shall be provided with periodic updates of the activities of the BRTB. Media coverage will be actively cultivated to ensure that radio, TV and newspaper outlets understand the importance of providing information on transportation planning activities. In addition, news releases and/or media alerts shall be disseminated to announce public review and comment periods for the Baltimore

Regional Transportation Plan (BRTP), BRTP amendments, Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWPs), Public Involvement Plans and other major activities. In order to do so, a current list of media outlets such as television and radio stations, and newspapers, including small-community based publications, shall be established and maintained.

5. Partner with Outreach Professionals

Establishing partnerships with member jurisdiction and agency outreach professionals will help to reach a greater number of affected communities. Such professionals are often aware of local issues and have a good understanding of the various communities and community networks within their jurisdictions. In addition, utilizing their resources to publicize activities and events will help the BRTB to reach a broader audience. Finally, such partnerships will help to promote best practices.

6. Establish a Speakers' Bureau

The Speakers' Bureau shall consist of BRTB members, staff, and other volunteers who can speak to civic groups, professional organizations, neighborhood associations, and other groups about the regional transportation planning process. Members of the speaker's bureau shall present information (preferably that which has been developed for outreach and education) in order to educate them about the MPO process. In addition, opportunities shall be provided to listen to the concerns of the group, answer questions, and seek continued participation and input. The availability of speakers shall be marketed to interested groups, as well as advertised in *BRTB Notes* and other outreach publications. Organizations involved in the transportation planning process will be asked to identify speaker topics that would be useful to them.

7. Maintain a Website

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council website provides information about the BRTB and its activities. Included on this website is a listing of all upcoming meetings. Agendas and minutes will be added, if available. In addition, information on documents, draft documents, or portions of draft documents under review by the public are made available when feasible. The website also provides an opportunity for the public to provide input and formal comments on an ongoing basis through e-mail links.

8. Produce and Distribute Newsletters

BRTB Notes, a newsletter dedicated to the regional transportation planning process is published bi-monthly. The newsletter includes information about technical issues written in layman's terms for the general public. In addition, the newsletter provides the public with periodic updates of the activities of the BRTB and its subcommittees. There will be a regular column providing information on public participation activities and efforts. The newsletter is distributed to all identified stakeholders. Additionally, specialized newsletters are produced to provide timely information on targeted topics. These are placed on the website and made available to anyone who is interested.

9. Conduct Information Workshops

Information workshops are held on topics associated with the regional transportation planning process. Such workshops are designed to educate participants on specific topics such as modeling, intelligent transportation systems, elderly travel and air quality. In addition, information workshops provide a means for allowing participants to express their ideas and concerns in an informal setting. Information workshops shall be conducted on an as needed basis. Organizations involved in the transportation

planning process will be asked to identify workshop topics that would be useful to them.

10. Hold Open Houses

Open houses provide an informal setting for the public to access information on the BRTP, BRTP Amendments, and other activities. Information is presented buffet-style at tables and exhibits around the room. Open houses have no fixed agendas and no formal presentations. Technical staff and MPO members are on hand to answer questions and provide details on a one-on-one basis. Finally, open houses may precede public meetings.

11. Provide Outreach Services

In order to manage and carry out the activities identified in this Plan, a range of staff resources will be needed. Public Involvement staff will have the responsibility of carrying out all of the tasks needed to establish and maintain a meaningful public involvement process. Those tasks will include carrying out any of the strategies listed in this section that are selected to be implemented.

12. Maintain a Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is a subcommittee of the BRTB established to provide broad regional community input throughout the long-range transportation planning process. The CAC is comprised of individuals representing the region's populations including environmental, business, and civic organizations, as well as low-income, minority, and disabled populations. The CAC members represent as much as possible a balanced cross-section of interests.

13. Provide for Public Input at BRTB Meetings

The BRTB holds regular meetings in which all formal business is conducted. At each meeting, the public is provided with an

opportunity to address the BRTB on any issue related to the transportation planning process. Anyone wishing to speak can sign up at the beginning of the meeting or contact the BRTB Secretary prior to the meeting. Speakers are encouraged to review a copy of the Guide on “Making Public Comments at BRTB Meetings” (see Appendix C). The public may engage in the discussion of Action and Information Items on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.

14. Provide for Public Input at BRTB Committee Meetings

Under the auspices of the BRTB, a network of committees and subcommittees exists to focus on specific technical and policy areas of the regional transportation planning process. The public can attend the committee and subcommittee meetings and at the discretion of the chairs contribute to the discussion. Those interested in attending and participating on an ongoing basis may request to be placed on the mailing list of any and all committee and subcommittee meetings.

15. Hold Public Meetings

Public meetings are used to disseminate information and provide a setting for informal public comment and discussion at appropriate intervals in the BRTP and TIP development processes. Such meetings provide an opportunity for early and continued public involvement. BRTB members are in attendance to listen to and discuss public comments and concerns. Comments received during public meetings are considered part of the formal public record. See the suggested format of public meetings on page 9.

All public meetings will be advertised by the following steps:

- ❖ Information will be e-mailed to all CAC members with a request for them to distribute the information to their colleagues and members. The information will be provided at least one month before the date of the meeting.

- ❖ Information will be e-mailed to all members of the Transportation Equity Task Force (TETF) with a request for them to distribute the information to their colleagues and members. The information will be provided at least one month before the date of the meeting.
- ❖ Information will be e-mailed to any other individuals or organizations not on the CAC or TETF who are known to be interested in the regional transportation planning process.
- ❖ Information about the meeting will be posted on-line on BMC's website.
- ❖ If possible (given timing), information about the meeting will be included in an issue of *BRTB Notes*.

16. Conduct Surveys

Surveys are a tool to gather information on people's perceptions, preferences, and practices. Surveys can range from being informal and inexpensive to scientific and costly. The information being sought and the use of that information in the regional transportation planning process will vary, as well.

17. Conduct Focus Groups

Focus groups are small group discussions used to gather perspectives, insights, and opinions on a single topic. Focus groups allow for more in-depth discussion to occur. Such groups usually consist of no more than 12 randomly or non-randomly selected participants. Agendas are carefully crafted with a handful of questions. Minimal presentation of materials is provided to establish the subject and context.

Special Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is landmark civil rights legislation ensuring equal opportunity for people with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications. The BRTB and its Subcommittees are fully committed to the spirit and intent of the ADA legislation. In order to facilitate participation by people with disabilities, the following guidelines and activities shall apply:

- All public meetings and formal events of the BRTB shall be held in facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- All public notices of BRTB events shall state that accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. One-week notice is required for provisions of appropriate auxiliary aids and services.
- All documents available to the public shall be provided in alternative formats for qualified individuals with disabilities, upon request.
- The website shall be accessible to and usable by individuals with vision impairments.
- The telephone number of the Maryland Relay Service shall be included on all publications of the BRTB.
- A list of resources for auxiliary aids and services shall be developed and maintained.

Appendix A

Excerpts from the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Regarding Public Participation in Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming

23 CFR §450.316

(b) In addition, the metropolitan transportation planning process shall:

(1) Include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs and meets the requirements and criteria specified as follows:

(i) Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised;

(ii) Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to central city and other local jurisdiction concerns);

(iii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered;

(iv) Require adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs (in nonattainment areas, classified as serious and above, the comment period shall be at least 30 days for the plan, TIP and major amendment(s));

(v) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;

(vi) Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households;

(vii) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan or TIP (including the financial plan) as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. EPA's conformity analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP;

(viii) If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available;

(ix) Public involvement process shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all;

(x) These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews for TMAs, and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to MPO decision-making processes;

(xi) Metropolitan public involvement processes shall be coordinated with statewide public involvement processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs;

(2) Be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S. C. 794, which ensure that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving

Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation;

(3) Identify actions necessary to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327, as amended) and U.S. DOT regulations “Transportation for Individuals With Disabilities” (49 CFR parts 27, 37, and 38);

(4) Provide for involvement of traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies; commuter rail operators; airport and port authorities; appropriate private transportation providers, and where appropriate city officials; and

(5) Provide for the involvement of local, State, and Federal environment resources and permit agencies as appropriate.

23 CFR §450.322

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

23 CFR §450.324

(c) There must be reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with the requirements of §450.316 (b)(1) and, in nonattainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process. This public

meeting may be combined with the public meeting required under §450.322 (c). The proposed TIP shall be published or otherwise made readily available for information purposes.

Appendix B

Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
BMC	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
BRTB	Baltimore Regional Transportation Board
BRTTP	Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan
CAAA	Clean Air Act Amendments (of 1990 and other years)
CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act
MDE	Maryland Department of the Environment
MDOT	Maryland Department of Transportation
MDP	Maryland Department of Planning
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTA	Maryland Transit Administration
SHA	State Highway Administration
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
US DOT	United States Department of Transportation
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency



MAKING PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BRTB MEETINGS: A BRIEF *HOW TO* GUIDE

At the beginning of each meeting of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) members of the public have an opportunity to make comments. This is a very important, regular, on the record opportunity to be heard by BRTB members. This *How To Guide* gives you a series of questions that will help you determine if making comments at BRTB meetings is your most effective strategy for getting your message heard, and will give you hints about how to make the most impact.

For more information, contact Susan Aceti, Public Involvement Coordinator, at 410-732-0500, x1047 or saceti@baltometro.org.

You can think through these questions yourself, discuss with other interested individuals or groups, or contact Susan Aceti to discuss them.

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH BY MAKING COMMENTS AT A BRTB MEETING?

Possible Responses

- ❖ **I want to share information with the BRTB.** Before doing this, you should figure out if the Board members are already aware of your information. If so, do they need to hear it again? There may be value in repeating information to emphasize a position or opinion, but it also may come across as repetitive and unnecessary.
- ❖ **There's an action I want the BRTB to take.** This is likely to be the most effective use of this technique. For example, you want the BRTB to include or take out a particular project from a Plan or Program, or you want them to hear a new idea or concept (e.g. the recent list of transportation control measures that the Baltimore Regional Partnership asked the BRTB to consider).
- ❖ **I want to discuss an issue with the BRTB.** The opportunity for public comment at a BRTB meeting is much more of a formal hearing structure than an informal dialogue format. The BRTB members will hear your comments but, with a full agenda to follow, they are not likely to engage in much discussion.

2. ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE TALKING TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE? DOES THE BRTB HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO DO WHAT YOU'RE ASKING THEM TO DO?

Possible Responses

- ❖ **Yes.** You want the BRTB to consider your comments on a Long Range Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or some aspect of either of those documents.
- ❖ **No.** If you are concerned about a change in bus service or perhaps the site of a future service, you should be aware of two facts: first, the BRTB is not responsible for operating different services. If bus service, for example, is the issue, the MTA is responsible and you should contact them. Second, the BRTB is not responsible for project planning. Once a project has been approved to take place (the BRTB's role), the how and where become the responsibility of the local jurisdictions or the state.

3. ARE THERE OTHER STRATEGIES YOU MIGHT USE TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR PURPOSE?

Possible Responses

- ❖ **Yes, I can talk with BRTB members on a one-to-one informal basis.** Taking advantage of informal opportunities for discussing issues can be very effective. In fact, discussing issues on an informal basis with BRTB members should lay the groundwork for any formal testimony that you give.
- ❖ **Yes, I can participate at committee and subcommittee meetings.** A great deal of work that supports the BRTB's decisions goes on at various committee and subcommittee meetings. Observing these meetings, asking questions and making comments can be a good way to get your ideas across.
- ❖ **Yes, I can submit written comments.** Written comments work for some participants but not all. If you can submit written comments, you'll be on the record, and you'll receive a written response too. Again, though, don't overuse this opportunity or it will lose its effectiveness.
- ❖ **No, this is the best strategy to accomplish my purpose.** If the public participation opportunity at the BRTB meetings is truly the best strategy for you, make sure you consider these guidelines:
 1. **Figure out what you want the BRTB to do.** Have something specific in mind. If you don't, your comments will have much less impact.
 2. **Use the public participation opportunity wisely.** In other words, make sure you are making comments at times when they will make the most impact. If you overuse this opportunity, your comments will be much less effective.
 3. **Do your own evaluation.** If you have presented comments a number of times, look back over those times and try to determine if you've made an impact. If it's

difficult to figure out, ask one or more BRTB members to talk to you about when your comments had the biggest impact on them.

4. **Be creative.** Reading from a sheet of paper is a standard way of presenting comments. Work on grabbing the members' attention by showing maps, passing around a report that supports your position, passing around pictures of a problem area or service, or bringing others in to testify with you. Make sure you are prepared to pass around copies of handouts. Twenty-five copies is a good number to bring.
5. **Understand the power of numbers.** An individual testifying on behalf of an organization will almost always have more impact than a single individual. If you don't belong to an organization, bring in others who support your position to testify too.
6. **Check in with Public Involvement staff.** If you're unsure what you want the BRTB to do, or how best to present your information, check in with the Public Involvement Coordinator who can give you some tips.