

**Stateline Area
Transportation Study**

**PUBLIC
INVOLVEMENT
PLAN**

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Introduction

The Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Beloit Wisconsin/Illinois metropolitan area. It encompasses parts of South-Central Rock County, Wisconsin and North-Central Winnebago County, Illinois. It was established in 1974 in response to the 1973 Federal Highway Act. The 1980 census defined the Beloit metropolitan area as exceeding a population of 50,000. This designation required the creation of an MPO agency according to the Federal law. In 1982 the members of SLATS agreed to meet the federal requirements by creating the MPO under the Intergovernmental Cooperation Acts of Wisconsin and Illinois and through agreement with the Governors of both states.

The SLATS urbanized area is the area determined by the U.S. Census Bureau to be metropolitan in nature and occupied at a required level of population density. SLATS can designate a slightly larger area as an “adjusted urbanized area” which means it will be built up or primarily urban in nature in the next five to ten years. SLATS also designates a much larger area that is called the “metropolitan planning area” that should become mostly urban in nature during the next 20 to 30 years.

The current SLATS urbanized area is a bi-state region comprising parts of two counties and based in the City of Beloit. It encompasses an area of approximately 54.7 square miles in 2000 and 106 square miles in 2010 and has over 114.1 miles of roads. It has a population of 58,274 in 2000 and 69,441 in 2010. These population figures are from the year 2,000 and 2010 censuses.

SLATS policy is determined by a Policy Committee which receives recommendations and advice from a Technical Committee. The Technical Committee is composed mainly of appointed employees of the member units of government such as city, county, and village engineers, planners, and other paid personnel. The Policy Committee is composed mainly of elected representatives such mayors, county board chairmen, and others who are voted into office. The Technical Committee reviews and recommends policies, proposals, and documents to the Policy Committee which has final approval authority.

Membership

The Policy Committee has the following members:

President of the Village of Rockton	Chair of the Rock County Board
Mayor of the City of South Beloit	District 2 Engineer from IDOT
Chair of the Town of Beloit	Chair of Rockton Township
President of the Beloit City Council	South-West Region Engineer/Director
Chair of Winnebago County	from WisDOT

The Technical Committee has the following members:

Public Works Director of the City of Beloit
Engineering Division Director City of Beloit |
Planning Department Director of Winnebago County
Highway Engineer of Winnebago County
Planning Director of Rock County
Public Works Director of Rock County
Engineer of the Town of Beloit
Engineer of the Town of Turtle
Public Works Director of the Village of Rockton
Planning Director of the City of South Beloit
Director of the Beloit Transit System
Planner from the Federal Highway Administration
Systems Planning Chief of South-West Region WisDOT
Systems and Planning Manager of District 2 IDOT
Planning Manager from WisDOT Central Office
Head of the Federal Transit Administration Office in Chicago
Chair Stateline Mass Transit District

Major Work Products

There are certain official documents that SLATS is required to produce by the Federal government to fulfill the 3-C (cooperative, comprehensive, and continuing) transportation planning process. They are:

- 1) A Long-Range Plan (LRP) every five years which is an important planning document outlining all of the major projects that might be undertaken during the next 20 to 30 years. All projects that will use federal funds and all regionally significant, major projects must be included. It also must include various forms of transportation including highway, transit, pedestrian, and integration of freight, rail, and air integration with the ground transportation system. It must state what the sources and the uses of funds will be in a “fiscally constrained” responsible manner based on past experience and reasonable expectations. Generally the projects are not prioritized within the plan.
- 2) A Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) updated in Illinois and Wisconsin every year or two which at a minimum must include all specific projects or phased elements to be started in the planning area that use federal funds. The TIP should also include projects using only local and state funding if they are regionally significant, major proposals. It is a listing of projects at a minimum for the next four years in Illinois and in Wisconsin and, therefore, must prioritize the use of the federal funds in a multi-jurisdictional cooperative manner using the 3-C process. The document must demonstrate what the sources and the uses of the funds will be in a financially constrained manner.
- 3) The Unified Work Program (UWP) is prepared annually and is the foundation of contracts between the MPO and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to use federal funds to carry out the work that SLATS will perform. It outlines the planning work to be done during the coming year. It specifies how the 3-C process is going to be carried out and must include all Federally funded transportation planning activities. The Federal funds are provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) at 80% to be matched by state or local non-federal funds at 20%. WisDOT and IDOT assist SLATS by providing significant state match relieving some of the requirement for local funds for the participating Wisconsin and Illinois communities.

Public Participation as a Policy Issue

While the SLATS Policy and Technical Committees will make the final decisions, these committees actively seek public involvement in the transportation planning process concerning programs, projects, and activities in general. The public is encouraged to be fully integrated into the decision making process, and is given the opportunity for early and continuous participation in the development of the Plan, the TIP, and significant strategies and policies.

This Public Participation Plan (PIP) is established to assure there is a broad range of public information and participation opportunities available. The PIP addresses:

- The dissemination of proposals and alternatives,
- A process for written and oral comments,
- Public meetings after official notice,
- Settings to encourage open discussion,
- Communication programs incorporating education and outreach activities,
- Information services, and
- Consideration of and response to public comments.

The intent of the PIP is to include the citizens of the region, those who live, work, recreate, and worship here, as much as possible in the process of setting goals, establishing policy, planning long and short-range agendas, and evaluating the achievements of SLATS. As people become more involved by offering ideas, sharing in the development of proposals and programs, and assisting in the decision making process, they will be inclined to accept ownership and understanding of these policies, plans, programs, and projects.

The Federal law requires that the public be: 1) offered the opportunity, and 2) encouraged to become involved in the SLATS planning activities and in particular the development of the Long-Range Plan (LRP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Work Program. MPO's are instructed to complete these work items as found in the current legislation (23 United States Code (USC) 134), and in the current rules (23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 250, Section 450, Final planning Rule of 2/14/2007). Public involvement requirements are found in 23 CFR Part 250, Section 450 as well and include:

“In addition the metropolitan 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 continuous involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs and meets the requirements and criteria specified as follows:

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 jurisdictional concerns):

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;

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 non-attainment areas, classified as serious and above, the comment period shall be at least 30 days for the plan, TIP and major amendment(s));

Demonstrate explicit consideration to public input received during the planning and program development process;

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

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 EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP;

If the transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material 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;”

Furthermore, MPOs need to implement Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) that states: “ *No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.*”

Title VI was further amplified by Executive Order 12898 called “Environmental Justice” stating that: “*each Federal Agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low- income populations.*”

Proactive public involvement is critical in addressing all these issues since transportation investment decisions and policies have far-reaching effects. Planning decisions require that SLATS considers a wide variety of factors, many of which reflect community values and are not easily quantifiable. Public input assists the MPO in identifying those community values and addressing them, as well as identifying specific transportation needs and problems. Proactive public involvement includes offering the opportunity for early and continuous engagement of the public, not just seeking comments on draft or final documents.

Public involvement goals and objectives affect the SLATS choice of techniques and the level of public involvement found in this plan. Those choices will, in turn, send a message to the public on how the MPO wants to be seen and viewed as a public body. SLATS develops this plan with carefully consideration of the best methods to accomplish the goals and objectives, including techniques and meeting locations.

The Stateline Area Transportation Study involves the participation of interest groups, organizations, governments, and citizens to build a consensus for addressing area-wide and regional transportation issues. Public involvement in transportation planning and programming gained new emphasis under the 1991 Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), and was further expanded by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and the 1994 Environmental Justice Executive Order No. 12898.

Metropolitan Planning. The new Federal Highway Act “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century” (MAP-21) becomes effective October 1, 2012 and is anticipated to follow previously defined policy concerning public involvement. Organizations are mandated to include public involvement in developing and approving the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), The Unified Work Program, and any other significant plans and related important policies and documents.

ISTEA, TEA-21, SAFETEA-LU, and MAP-21 have provided more flexibility in selecting and funding transportation investments. Public involvement in the transportation planning process needs to be proactive, early, and continuous. The purpose of the Federal mandates, at a minimum, is to solicit public comments on ideas, issues, scopes, and alternatives allowing the public to have real influence throughout the planning and programming stages and related decision making processes.

Goals and Objectives

The Stateline Area Transportation Study shall implement the 3-C metropolitan planning process with a proactive public involvement process that provides:

Goal 1: Complete information.

Objective 1: Significant documents in their entirety will be made available for review.

Objective 2: Significant document in draft as well as final form will be made available for review.

Goal 2: Timely public notice.

Objective 1: Information will be made available to give sufficient time for the public to respond in a meaningful way to all issues of significance.

Objective 2: There will be reaching out to the public as early in the decision making process as possible so pro-active involvement by the public can be developed.

Goal 3: Reasonable public access to key decisions.

Objective 1: The public will be allowed to participate in a reasonable and meaningful way during the meetings.

Objective 2: Decisions approving or disapproving all significant documents and important decisions and policies will be made in a public forum.

Objective 3: The public will be involved in discussing important decisions through public forums, open house public involvement sessions, or through other methods to be determined and as may fit the circumstances.

Goal 4: Coordinated public involvement activities.

Objective 1: The MPO will seek to coordinate public involvement activities with state and locally sponsored open houses, public hearings, etc.

Objective 2: The MPO will seek to consult and coordinate with other neighboring MPOs regarding programs, plans, and activities.

Goal 5: Early and continuing involvement.

Objective 1: Information will be made available as early as possible for public consideration and review.

Objective 2: Public input can be provided through verbal means, over the internet, in written letter, or by other methods as may fit the particular circumstances.

Objective 3: Opportunity for public input will be provided early and continually throughout the process of decision making on all significant issues.

Objective 4: The MPO will respond in a meaningful way to public questions, comments, and suggestions including through verbal and written form and will attempt to document all public input and MPO responses.

Goal 6: Consideration for the needs of those traditionally underserved in the development of plans, programs, and projects over time.

Objective 1: Identify low income, minority populations and all population groups.

Objective 2: The demographic characteristics and transportation needs of low income, minority populations, and all significant population groups will be up-dated when new information becomes available.

Objective 3: The positive and detrimental effects of transportation plans, proposals, and projects on population groups will be periodically evaluated using maps and analysis.

Goal 7: Evaluation of the Public Involvement Plan.

Objective 1: The effectiveness of this Public Involvement Plan will periodically be reviewed to determine if it reasonably meets its stated goals of providing the public with:

- 1) Complete information,
- 2) Timely notice,
- 3) Reasonable public access to key decisions,
- 4) Coordinated Activities,
- 5) Early and continuing involvement,
- 6) Consideration of the needs of those presumably underserved in the development and implementation of plans, programs, and projects over time.

Procedures for Implementing the Goals and Objectives

SLATS shall implement metropolitan planning requirements that include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, public access to key decisions, coordinates these activities with neighboring MPO's and Human Service Transportation Plan implementers and organizations and federal, state, and local units of government, supports early and continuous involvement of the public, evaluates the process periodically, and meets the public involvement goals and objectives through the following practices:

Public Participation Plan

Consultation with Interested Parties:

The MPO will consult with interested parties in the development of the PIP. At the beginning of the process prior to preparation of the draft PIP, a notice will be sent to the MPO's list of stakeholder groups which is attached as an appendix to the PIP. The notice will ask for their

input and invite them to a meeting to discuss how best to inform them about the MPO's transportation planning and programming activities and include them in the process. A notice about the meeting and the process to update the PIP will also be posted on the MPO website and will be published in the newspaper, and will be mailed to the Town, Township, Village, and City Clerk for each member agency of SLATS with a request to post the notice in their periodic announcements of meetings. Persons and groups will also be invited to meet with staff at the MPO office and/or provide staff with oral or written comments. A summary of the public participation meeting will be prepared, including the attendees and comments or suggestions made. These comments and any other comments will be considered in developing the draft plan.

Further Public Consultation and Approval by the Technical and Policy Committees:

The PIP shall be prepared and presented to the Technical Committee for review and referral to the Policy Committee which upon acceptance (not approval) of the PIP will open a 45 day public review process as required by Federal law. During this process a public notice will be posted on the SLATS website and a public notice will be printed in the local newspaper, and will be mailed to the Town, Township, Village, and City Clerk for each member agency of SLATS with a request to post the notice in their periodic announcement of meetings. The public notice will state where the document can be reviewed, staff contact information, and information so that any member of the public can find out where and when they can present questions, comments, and opinions concerning programs, projects, and activities in general. The public will also be informed where they can be in attendance to observe, participate in the discussion, ask questions, or add information during the decision making process at the Technical and Policy Committees, when there shall also be a formal public participation comment period. It should be noted that during the Technical and Policy Committee meetings the public will be allowed to participate in the discussion process on this and any other item brought before the meeting for information, discussion, or action. The PIP will be available at: 1) the City of Beloit MPO Office in the Engineering Department in Beloit City Hall, 2) the Beloit, South Beloit, Roscoe, and Rockton Public Libraries. Contact information for the MPO staff shall include address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Comments received in whatever form during the public participation process, and the MPO staff's response as well as the response from the Technical and Policy Committees, shall be in writing and available during the review process. It is the intent of SLATS for the MPO staff to respond in writing to individual comments from the public, and when public comments can be grouped together about a common concern the MPO staff may respond with a single response to such a group concern or comment.

Amendments to the PIP shall follow the same procedure as those followed in reviewing the full PIP as stated above.

The PIP will also be used to fulfill the necessary public participation procedures required by the Federal Transit Administration for review and approval of the Program of Projects, the Transit Program, for the transit system.

Long-Range Plan

All actual road projects proposed for construction in the TIP must also be in the area's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRP). Projects "flow" from the relatively long 20-30 year list found in the LRP into the short 3-6 year list found in the TIP. They "flow" from the Long-Range Plan to the Short-Range Transportation Improvement Program as the most highly prioritized projects are advanced from the LRP and proposed for construction in the next few years.

The LRP addresses all modes of surface transportation and includes improvements that are considered necessary to accommodate the communities' transportation needs for the next 20-30 years. Copies of the LRP are available in the SLATS office in the Engineering Department in the City of Beloit in city hall and at the libraries referenced in this document. People interested in obtaining a copy may contact the MPO Manager at 608-364-6702. The MPO reserves the right to request reimbursement for the cost of copying the document. The LRP is re-evaluated regularly and is formally and comprehensively updated at least every five years.

The Draft LRP shall be prepared in sections and presented to the Technical Committee for review, and in individual sections or groups of sections, referred and recommended by the Technical Committee to the Policy Committee for further review and acceptance. During the preparation and review phases of the sections of the LRP, various public interest groups and individual interested citizens will be contacted and offered the opportunity to become involved in these activities.

Upon completion of the Draft LRP, a public notice will be posted on the SLATS website, a public notice will be printed in the local newspaper, and will be mailed to the Town, Township, Village, and City Clerk for each member agency of SLATS with a request to post the notice in their periodic announcement of meetings. The public notice will state where the document can be reviewed, staff contact information, and information so that any member of the public can find out where and when they can present verbal comments. The public will also be informed where they can otherwise be in attendance: 1) to observe, engage in discussion, ask questions, or add information during the decision making process as outlined in the PIP, and 2) at the Technical and Policy Committees during which there shall be a formal public hearing providing a public participation comment period. It should be noted that during the Technical and Policy Committee meetings the public will be allowed to participate in the discussion on this and any other item brought before the meeting for information, discussion, or action. The Draft and Final LRP will be available at: 1) the City of Beloit MPO Office in the Engineering Department in Beloit City Hall, 2) the Beloit, South Beloit, Roscoe, and Rockton Public Libraries, and 3) the MPO website. . It should be noted that at the time of the preparation of this PIP, a website is not available to SLATS through its parent organization, the City of Beloit. SLATS is committed to making its documents, meeting notices, and other SLATS public information available through the SLATS location in the Engineering Department in the City of Beloit web site, as appropriate.

Contact information for the MPO staff shall include address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Comments received in whatever form during the public participation process, the MPO staff's response, and the response from the Technical and Policy Committees shall be in writing and available during the review process and will be integrated into official documents as required by law.

The Final LRP will require formal approval by the Policy Committee. Notification to the public by SLATS will provide a 30 day public comment period.

The LRP will also be used to fulfill the necessary public participation procedures required by the Federal Transit Administration for review and approval of the Program of Projects for the transit system. WisDOT relies on the public participation process conducted by the MPO in the development of the LRP to satisfy the FTA planning and programming requirements, as established for Section 5307 and 5309 programs.

It is a goal of SLATS to involve the public early and often in the decision making process. The SLATS policy encourages citizens to become involved in decision making as soon in the planning and programming activities as possible. The LRP development schedule is deliberately extended to provide ample opportunities for public involvement.

Long-Range Plan Amendments

When changes are proposed after the LRP is adopted, an additional public review period will be provided. These amendments may include: 1) additions of regionally significant projects, 2) major scope changes to regionally significant projects, 3) capacity-increasing projects, and 4) projects impacting air quality or environmental justice areas that significantly affect concentrated populations of low income people and minority people.

Amendments to the LRP will require formal approval by the Policy Committee. Notification of the public by the SLATS meeting notice and agenda mail outs, which include a public notice on the SLATS website which include publication of a notice in the print media, and will be mailed to the Town, Township, Village, and City Clerk for each member agency of SLATS with a request to post the notice in their periodic announcement of meetings shall provide a 30 day public comment period prior to amendment adoption. The amended LRP must remain fiscally constrained within revenues that can reasonably be expected to be available.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Draft TIP shall be prepared and presented to the Technical Committee for review and referral to the Policy Committee. Upon completion of the Draft TIP, a public notice will be posted on the SLATS website, a public notice will be printed in the local newspaper, and will be mailed to the Town, Township, Village, and City Clerk for each member agency of SLATS with a request to post the notice in their periodic announcement of meetings providing for a 30 day public review period. The public notice will state: 1) where the document can be reviewed, 2) staff contact information, and 3) information so that any member of the public can find out where and when they can present verbal comments. The public will also be informed where they can otherwise be in attendance to observe or add information during the decision making process at the Technical and Policy Committees when there shall also be a formal public participation comment period. It should be noted that during the Technical and Policy Committee meetings the public will be allowed to participate in the discussion process on this and any other item

brought before the meeting for information, discussion, or action. The TIP will be available at: 1) the City of Beloit MPO Office in the Engineering Department in Beloit City Hall, 2) the Beloit, Roscoe, and Rockton Public Libraries, and 3) the MPO website, if feasible. Contact information for the MPO staff shall include address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Comments received in whatever form during the public participation process, and the MPO staff's response as well as the response from the Technical and Policy Committees, shall be in writing and available during the review process and will be integrated into official documents as required by law.

Annual Listing and Status of Obligated Projects:

SLATS will also make available to the public a listing and the status of federally funded projects for which funding was obligated in the previous year. If the listing and status is available from FHWA and FTA, or from local sources in time to include it in the TIP, it will accordingly be included. Also, a table identifying the status of major projects programmed the previous year for construction or implementation the previous year will be added as an appendix and posted on the MPO website and be available in the MPO office within **90** days after the new TIP becomes effective. The annual listing of projects may also be addressed by discussion of the status of the projects in the public Technical and Policy Committee meetings and through discussion of the updated status as reflected in the minutes. The status will be done within 90 days of the beginning of the new calendar year or else when the new TIP is activated.

The TIP will also be used to fulfill the necessary public participation procedures required by the Federal Transit Administration for review and approval of the Program of Projects for the transit system. WisDOT relies on the public participation process conducted by the MPO in the development of the LRP to satisfy the FTA planning and programming requirements, as established for Section 5307 and 5309 programs.

It is a goal of SLATS to involve the public early in the decision making process. SLATS encourages citizens to become involved in decision making as soon in the planning and programming activities as possible. The TIP development schedule is deliberately extended to provide ample opportunities for public involvement.

It should also be noted that citizens can influence project selection and priority setting in at least two ways.

First, the public can scrutinize the both the first four years of projects in Illinois and Wisconsin as well as the next two years of projects in Wisconsin called the "out years projects", the public can determine if the projects they believe to be important are included. Although, by federal law, a project cannot be included in the first four years of the TIP unless funding is likely to be available, citizens can question why some projects are included and others not.

Second, citizens can influence the priority setting, which advances projects into the implementation year. Sometimes a project cannot be hastened because engineering, right-of-way acquisition, funding, and /or various other components of project planning and engineering have not been accomplished. But many times, these steps moving toward project construction can be streamlined and sometimes overlapped, and the time for implementation can be lessened.

Transportation Improvement Program Amendments

When significant changes are proposed after the TIP is adopted, an additional public review period will be provided. Significant amendments include:

- Regionally significant changes,
- Major scope changes,
- Projects with a significant goal of capacity improvement,
- Projects negatively and significantly affecting air quality, or
- Projects significantly affecting in a negative way concentrated populations of low-income people and minority people.

TIP amendments of an administrative nature will be presented to the Technical Committee and Policy Committee for approval as necessary.

Significant amendments to the TIP will require a formal approval by the Policy Committee. Notification of the public by the SLATS meeting notice and agenda mail outs, which includes a public notice posted on the SLATS website publication of notice in the print media, and will be mailed to the Town, Township, Village, and City Clerk for each member agency of SLATS with a request to post the notice in their periodic announcement of meetings shall provide a 30 day public comment period prior to amendment adoption. The amended TIP must remain fiscally constrained, meaning within revenues that can reasonably be expected to be available.

No amendment is required to change the:

- Implementation schedule within the four years of the TIP,
- Character of work or project limits, while remaining reasonably consistent within the approved project scope,
- Funding source meaning federal, state, and local, or
- The amount of funding for the project without violating SLATS policy.

Amendments will be defined as “Minor Amendments” provided the changes (amendments) do not trigger the need to re-demonstrate fiscal constraint. Minor amendment changes must also be approved by a majority of the Policy Committee to change the:

- Schedule by adding a preservation project to the first four years of the TIP,
- Movement of an exempt/preservation project out of the first four years of the TIP.

“Minor amendments must be approved by the SLATS Policy Committee and the Governor (Illinois or Wisconsin) and submitted to the State DOTs and FHWA/FTA. Appropriate public involvement for minor amendments is required and may be handled within the context of a SLATS Policy Committee meeting by providing adequate advance notice of the amendment actions and public comment opportunity in the published meeting agenda prior to the scheduled action on the amendment by the Policy Committee.”

Major Amendment revisions to the TIP will be considered significant and will require the implementation of the entire public involvement process as outlined in this section for changes to the:

- Schedule, adding a system expansion project to the first four years of the TIP, including advancing an expansion project for implementation from an illustrative list, or from the out-years of the TIP,
- Scope, significantly changing it in character (character of work or project limits) of an expansion project within the first four years of the TIP such that the current description is no longer reasonably accurate, or
- Project cost that exceeds either 50% of the annual program cost or \$1,000,000 which ever is less.

It should be noted that a major amendment requires formal public notice and appropriate comment opportunity as provided in the MPO public participation plan. Following appropriate consideration of public comments, a major amendment requires approval by the MPO Policy Committee and the Governor. Approved amendments must be submitted to WisDOT and FHWA/FTA.

Planning Studies

Public involvement is periodically required for special transportation studies that involve SLATS. These include highway, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other special studies which are managed by or funded through SLATS. In the highway area these studies would include corridor studies, feasibility studies, and other related planning studies.

Notice of the studies will be made through press releases to various radio, television, and newspaper media as well as direct mail to interested groups and individuals, with special emphasis on the affected area. The public notice will inform the parties of how to contact SLATS, or the lead agency for the study, to make comments or seek additional information.

The site for the meetings of the committee steering the study will be adequate in size for the prospective audience, accessible to people with disabilities, located on or convenient to a transit route, and provide adequate parking. Any applicable handouts will be available to the public attending the meeting. It should be noted that during the meetings the public will be allowed to participate in the discussion process as this is outlined in the PIP. A copy of the study, or sections of the study, in draft and final form, will be available to the public for review at the City of Beloit MPO Office in the Engineering Department in Beloit City Hall, or in the office of the lead agency.

Contact information for the MPO staff or the lead agency shall include address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Comments in whatever form received from the public and the

response from the appropriate source will be recorded and made public. Comments from the public and the response will be incorporated into the final document as required by law.

Transit Agency's Title VI Reports

SLATS will prepare a Title VI Report at least once every three years in conjunction with the FTA triennial review process following the recommended procedures outlined in the FTA rules and regulations which includes solicitation of comments by representatives of public transportation.

Interested Parties and Outreach Techniques

Potentially Interested Parties:

Potentially interested parties include those who are presumed to either be directly or indirectly affected by a plan, project, policy, or study as referenced in the PIP. Of particular interest are those who may be part of transportation disadvantaged groups in their access to or use of transportation services. In the case of the TIP, or other grouping of projects, the totality of the adverse and positive affects must be considered for all the projects over the total time horizon. Because of the geographically broad area, and substantial length of time, involved in many of the plans, and even individual projects, interested parties could include everyone who makes, funds, or provides trips in the area by various modes. In some instances it also could include various parties who purchase goods, participate in entertainment, or live in the SLATS area. The PIP seeks to reach out through different techniques to:

- Citizens-in-general through broad based media,
- Low-income and minority groups through targeted geographic areas,
- Multi-lingual people when specific projects are done affecting local neighborhoods,
- Public transit users through working closely with the transit agencies providing planning assistance to maximize service benefits,
- Private providers of transportation such as taxi companies by keeping them informed of SLATS activities,
- Freight providers by reaching out to them periodically seeking input and offering assistance,
- Organizations and businesses in general by participating through groups such as the chamber of commerce and assisting businesses to create jobs through improvements to the transportation system including inter-modal and transit improvements,
- People with limited English proficiency who want to become involved in the transportation planning process who are encouraged to contact the MPO Coordinator so SLATS can seek to provide translation services.

Information Visualization Techniques:

All Plans and Studies will be made available and presented to the public in methods that are reasonably appropriate for the nature and importance of the information being presented. The methods will also take into account the technical capabilities and resources available to SLATS

and or the contractor undertaking the Plan or Study. For example, when SLATS is doing an early-on demonstration of the impact of projects on individual populations, groups of people, or environmental areas; mapping may be used that shows the project as it over lays these populations, groups, or environmental areas. Likewise, when a major consulting firm is engineering a significant system expansion project, advanced visualization techniques may be used and strongly encouraged by SLATS, such as a visualization movie demonstrating driving through the project as it would be constructed. So visualization techniques may be used as warranted that include methods such as verbal descriptions, maps and map overlays, or advanced computer based simulation technology.

Information Distribution Methods:

To maximize the dissemination and availability of all phases of project planning, SLATS will make documents, plans, and studies available through libraries, as mentioned elsewhere in the PIP, and through the SLATS website as available within the City of Beloit website, and as it is easily available through world-wide search engines.

Limited English Proficiency:

To enable people with limited English proficiency to become involved in the transportation planning process, SLATS will publish a statement to that effect in Spanish in each of the SLATS public notices. The statement will provide a name and phone number of a contact person with whom Spanish speaking people can communicate to find out more information and become further involved. The only limited English proficiency group with significant representation in the population of the SLATS area is Spanish speaking.

An example of the announcement is as follows:

Para mas informacion, a esta interesado en participar en el planeamiento del proceso de transporte en su comunidad y necesita asistencia con idioma, por favor comuniquese Contact Person's Name, al Contact Person's Phone Number.

Title VI and Environmental Justice Outreach

SLATS recognizes the special effort that should be made to reach out to low-income and minority groups as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and further amplified under environmental justice through Executive Order 12898. FHWA and FTA identify three fundamental environmental justice principles that are addressed throughout the PIP:

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

SLATS will comply with the following strategies required by the Title VI law and the Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898:

- Identifying minority and low-income groups in the SLATS area including them in mailings announcing public meetings and planning activities,
- Identifying concentrations of low-income and minority populations through mapping demographic data,
- Identifying current transportation systems including highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit serving minority and low-income populations,
- Preparing maps to assess the impact of transportation programs established over time, and
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the PIP.

Evaluation Criteria and Process

As stated in the goals and objectives, the effectiveness of this Public Involvement Plan will periodically be reviewed to determine if it reasonably meets its stated goals of providing the public with:

- 1) Complete information,
- 2) Timely notice,
- 3) Reasonable public access to key decisions,
- 4) Coordinated Activities,
- 5) Early and continuing involvement,
- 6) Consideration of the needs of those presumably underserved in the development of plans, programs, and projects over time.

The MPO will evaluate the PIP regularly and at a minimum once every five years in anticipation of preparing an updated LRP, with such evaluation to begin at least two years prior to the next LRP due date. This evaluation will be in the form of requesting suggestion or input on at least the following elements:

- Number of public notices in news media and on web page,
- List of where public notices are posted,
- Number of opportunities for public involvement,
- Number of days from public announcement to planning activity such as meeting, open house, etc,
- Number of days for public review and comment,
- Number of television and radio appearances and stories,
- Number of public comments, questions, suggestions, etc,
- Number of citizens at public meetings,
- Number of citizens and organizations on mailing list,
- Number of locations where documents and announcements are placed for public review and a list of when they are available, and
- Quality and number of comments received.

Based on the information the MPO will evaluate whether the procedures for public involvement are adequate or need to be revised. Adequacy is determined by how many citizens take the opportunity to make comments, ask questions, or attend public meetings.

Who to Contact

Any questions, comments, opinions, concerns, or complaints about the Public Involvement Plan, TIP, LRP, or special studies should be sent or otherwise conveyed to the MPO Coordinator. An addendum to this document is available in the SLATS office documenting how it was developed, processed, and publicly reviewed. All communications will be reviewed by the MPO Coordinator and the MPO Planning Director. If the MPO Coordinator and Planning Director are unable to resolve a complaint, the complaint will be referred to the Technical and Policy Committees for final action.

Please submit any comments, opinions, concerns, or complaints to:

MPO Coordinator
Stateline Area Transportation Study
City of Beloit Engineering Department
100 State Street
City of Beloit, Wisconsin, 53511

Call: 608-364-6702

Fax: 608-364-6609

E-mail current contact is: soltaub@ci.beloit.wi.us

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