



2020 Public Participation Plan

Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS)

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Introduction

Federal legislation requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for interested parties to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) has evolved since it was initially adopted by the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS) MPO in 1994. The July 2012 passage of the federal transportation legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), continued and expanded the requirement for public participation in the transportation planning process for MPOs. MAP-21 required MPOs to develop and utilize a proactive public participation process that was developed “in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes [of the MPO transportation planning process].”

This PPP outlines the process to ensure ongoing public involvement opportunities in the development and review of MPO transportation planning documents, plans, programs, projects, and for the completion, adoption, and implementation of these documents. Federal funding for transportation projects and planning continues under the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act which was signed into law by President Obama on December 4, 2015. The purpose of this PPP is to ensure HOCTS public involvement process is carried out according to all current federal guidelines and to ensure equal opportunity for involvement of all persons within the transportation planning process.

Public Participation Plan Goal and Objectives

The goal of the HOCTS PPP is to involve all appropriate parties of the community in the transportation planning process. Furthermore, ensuring that the public has equal opportunity to provide input and express their opinions on current transportation issues affecting Herkimer and Oneida Counties.

PPP involvement objectives are:

- Provide reasonable opportunities for interested parties, including minorities, elderly, low-income people, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations to obtain knowledge of the HOCTS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), by providing information encouraging their involvement/comment, and increasing their awareness of the transportation program.
- Ensure that all decisions made in the HOCTS transportation planning process and programs are documented clearly and in consultation with all interested parties involved, through the identification of effective methods of obtaining public feedback.
- Ensure a proactive planning process by providing full and open access to the HOCTS transportation program through the utilization of multiple information sharing resources to inform Herkimer and Oneida County residents about the process.
- Make available to all interested parties who participate in the HOCTS planning process, an opportunity to comment on the PPP prior to its approval.

Federal and State Regulations Governing the Public Participation Plan

Transportation planning is a comprehensive and complex process that requires careful planning and decision making, inclusive of all modes of transportation. Therefore, engaging the public early and in all applicable stages of the transportation planning process is critical to the success of any transportation project, plan, or document. This process ensures the public has meaningful opportunities to participate in the decision making on the transportation planning process. Listed below are the current Federal and State regulations and statutes pertaining to the local public involvement processes and procedures.

1. **FAST Act (23 CFR 450.316)**

The current Federal transportation legislation, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, authorizes the Federal transportation programs and governs the statewide and metropolitan transportation planning processes. FHWA and FTA establish the requirements regarding Statewide Transportation Planning and Metropolitan Transportation Planning. In 23 CFR 450.316, FAST Act defines the requirement for public participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process pertaining to interested parties, participation, and consultation; identifies the nature of "interested parties." The legislation requires reasonable and accessible opportunities for all interested parties to comment on all aspects of the MPO transportation planning process, including consultation with individuals with disabilities.

2. **Executive Order 13166 (Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP))**

This 2005 regulation directs each Federal agency to examine the services it provides and develop and implement a system by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those services. They were further instructed to publish guidance to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons.

3. **Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice)**

Enacted in 1994, the executive mandate focuses on environmental and health conditions of the minority and low-income communities. It directs each Federal agency to review its procedures and make Environmental Justice part of its policies and activities by identifying and addressing any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of all programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.

4. **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Section 202-Discrimination)**

This law states that no qualified individual with a disability shall, for the reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by such entity.

5. **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Section 601)**

This provision prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "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" (42 U.S.C. Section 2000d).

6. New York State Open Meetings Law (NYS Public Officers Law, Article 7)

This law outlines mandatory procedures on how public meetings are to be conducted. It states the public business to be performed in an open and public manner and that the citizens of New York State be fully aware of and able to observe the performance of public officials, and attend and listen to the deliberations and decisions that form into the making of public policy.

Structure

Under federal legislation, the MPOs are responsible for the planning and programming of federal transportation funds within the designated MPO planning area. The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) is comprised of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, therefore, as the MPO for Herkimer and Oneida Counties, the Governmental Policy and Liaison Committee (GP&L) directs the regional transportation planning process as it relates to the use of federal transportation funds. The transportation planning process is carried out by the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Transportation Study (HOCTS) staff and in consultation with the Transportation Planning Committee (TPC), an advisory committee of the GP&L. Recognizing that the public has a substantial interest in the planning of regional transportation policies and programs, the GP&L, TPC, and HOCTS have, and will continue to strongly encourage public participation in the planning process.

Governmental Policy and Liaison Committee (GP&L)

The GP&L was created in 1963. This committee is responsible for setting transportation policy for the two-county region and programming many categories of federal funding within the urbanized area. The GP&L is the designated MPO for Herkimer and Oneida Counties and directs the regional transportation planning process as it relates to the use of federal transportation funds. The GP&L has final approval and authority on all major transportation decisions, policies, and programs developed through the HOCTS planning process. HOCTS serves as staff to the GP&L to carry out the transportation planning process and works cooperatively with local, state, and federal agencies to conduct transportation planning activities in Herkimer and Oneida Counties. The GP&L is composed primarily of locally elected and appointed officials that represent the interests of the citizens of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, officials from the State of New York, transit providers, social services agencies, and other stakeholders. All scheduled committee meetings are open to the public. Public attendance and involvement are encouraged.

Transportation Planning Committee (TPC)

The TPC is a subcommittee of the GP&L committee, tasked with reviewing work program tasks, addressing developing transportation issues, and providing technical recommendations to the GP&L. The TPC membership represents the cities of Utica and Rome, counties, and transportation agencies within the MPA.

Meetings of the GP&L, TPC, and Sub-Committees

The GP&L, TPC, and various sub-committees are required to meet on a regular and as needed basis to carry out the business of the MPO. As such, meetings of MPO committees must include an opportunity for public involvement and comment for transportation projects and programs. The general procedures for public participation opportunities at meetings are noted below. Additional procedures may be required as they specifically relate to planning documents, transportation programs, policy, or transportation projects.

- General announcement for public involvement, public-involvement participants, and the media will be sent a notice at least ten (10) days in advance of all meetings.
- Meetings will be held in facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities, and at locations accessible by public transportation.
- The public will be provided an opportunity to comment on issues relevant to the meeting agenda.

- TPC meetings will be scheduled at a minimum of one (1) week, and not more than three (3) weeks before GP&L meetings.
- Meeting notices, materials, and minutes will be available at www.hocts.org.
- These guidelines shall apply to any subcommittee or working group of either the TPC or the GP&L.

Electronic Meetings

The HOCTS Director, in consultation with the Chair of the relevant committee, shall have the discretion to either postpone an in-person meeting or if not practical, shall call for the meeting to be held electronically/virtually. The GP&L, TPC, and various sub-committees will hold electronic/virtual meetings in lieu of in-person meetings only for extraordinary reasons of:

- Public health and safety-related to an infectious disease outbreak; or
- Civil unrest or armed conflict; or
- A natural disaster or an extreme weather event; or
- Other emergency events as declared by a government issued Executive Order.

These meetings will be held via an electronic medium deemed appropriate by the HOCTS Director. Electronic/virtual meetings shall follow the same public notification and comment process as regular in-person meetings. The electronic/virtual meetings shall utilize the same procedure as regular in-person meetings with regards to the agenda, the recording of minutes, public comment, and parliamentary procedure in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order §9 – Types of Meetings.

HOCTS will continue to provide opportunities for public involvement during an electronic/virtual meeting. Advance notice of such a meeting will be made available per the same procedures as outlined in *Meetings of the GP&L, TPC, and Sub-Committees* section of the PPP.

Required Transportation Planning Documents

The MPO transportation planning process is guided by three required documents: the 20-year Long-Range Transportation Plan (updated every 5 years), the 5-year Transportation Improvement Program, and the annual Unified Planning Work Program. Public participation is an inherent function in the development of these documents, which are federally required to complete the transportation planning process. A detailed description of the public comment opportunity, as it relates to the above mentioned documents is further outlined, by a specific document.

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP is a twenty (20) year comprehensive framework for transportation planning in Herkimer and Oneida Counties, based on the anticipated transportation needs and recommendations to address current issues and future demand. The federal metropolitan planning rule (23 CFR Part 450.324) specifies twelve planning requirements to be included in the metropolitan transportation plan. It is also federally required to be updated at least every five years. The goal of HOCTS is to solicit early and continuous involvement from all interested parties of the community, including minorities, the elderly, and low-income people to ensure that the public has equal opportunity to provide input on transportation issues. The specific process for public participation is outlined below:

- The LRTP planning process is carried out simultaneously in the virtual and paper-based/in-person environment through the utilization of the website (www.hocts.org), flyers, mailings, media/ press announcements, and emerging communications technologies.
- LRTP development starts internally with the establishment of an internal timeline, tasks, and milestones to be accomplished. The document update process is publicly announced in conjunction with the release of a survey to the residents of the two counties. This survey remains publicly available for the first three (3) months of the project at a minimum and should be available through the conclusion of the public outreach meetings.
- Stakeholder meetings are held to allow for coordination and cooperation across agencies involved in the transportation network.
- Public input meetings are to be held prior to draft plan development to share the project with and develop comments from the public. At a minimum, there will be two meetings in each county, at times logical to encourage public input.
- Additional public input opportunities may be utilized through joining other events or, use of alternative communication and media methods, and coordination with civic, youth, educational institutions, or other groups within the community.
- Within ninety (90) days of the conclusion of the public input meetings, the LRTP draft will be released. This document is subject to public review and comment period of at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the adoption of the plan.
- The public review period will be formally published in the form of a legal notice; stakeholders and interested parties will receive written notification, media notification will be provided, and the LRTP draft will be available, in hard copy, at two public locations in each county, at the HOCTS office, and will be mailed to anyone requesting a copy via phone or email. The draft LRTP can be obtained electronically online at www.hocts.org.
- Within the thirty (30) day review period, at least one public hearing will be held at a public location. The date, time, and location of the public hearing will be published

within the content of the legal notice. Public comments will be accepted through the end of the thirty (30) day review period.

- All public comments received throughout the process are recorded within the appendix of the LRTP. These comments are provided, in summary, to the TPC and GP&L to develop the final LRTP.
- If there are substantial changes from the draft LRTP, a new public review period will be initiated, revised, and will utilize the same public process outlined above.
- The final LRTP is presented to the GP&L for approval. The final LRTP is concurrently submitted to State and Federal partner agencies for review. After which, it is transmitted to the appropriate state and federal agencies for acceptance.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a staged program of prioritized federally funded transportation improvement projects to be implemented within the two-county planning area. The TIP is the capital program that is developed from and consistent with the priorities of the LRTP. It is a four-year program, which is required to be updated every two years and can be amended in the interim by GP&L committee resolution. The TIP follows two separate processes for public participation opportunities, dependent on if the action is the creation of a new TIP or amendment to the existing TIP. General requirements are outlined herein; specific requirements are within the TIP document.

- The TIP planning process is carried out simultaneously in the virtual and paper-based/in-person environment through the utilization of the website (www.hocts.org), flyers, mailings, media/ press announcements, and emerging communications technologies.
- Public-involvement participants are notified at a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the TPC meeting for their input on the TIP.
- With appropriate prior notification, the TPC meets to identify projects for possible inclusion in the TIP.
- After the project identification meeting, a draft TIP is prepared. The public and media are notified of the review period. The draft TIP will be available, in hard copy, at the HOCTS office and will be mailed to anyone requesting a copy via phone or email. The draft TIP can be obtained electronically online at www.hocts.org.
- Comments received on the draft TIP are addressed by the TPC. If there are substantial changes to the draft TIP, a new review period is initiated.
- The TIP is approved by the TPC and submitted to the GP&L for final action.
- When amendments to the TIP are required, the public is notified via a legal notice, and relevant documents are made available. There is a two week review period preceding formal action by the GP&L for TIP Amendments.
- All public comments received throughout the review process are recorded within the appendix of the TIP. These comments are provided, in summary, to the TPC and GP&L to develop the final TIP.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is the outline of the budget and activities of the HOCTS, serves as a guide for staff activities over the procurement year. Public participation opportunities are incorporated into the development of the UPWP as outlined below:

- The UPWP planning process is carried out simultaneously in the virtual and paper-based/in-person environment through the utilization of the website (www.hocts.org), flyers, mailings, media/ press announcements, and emerging communications technologies.

- The UPWP is developed through ongoing involvement with the general public, and the joint efforts of the committees and staff.
- Development of the UPWP begins by soliciting project ideas from the members of the TPC and the GP&L at a minimum of forty-five (45) days prior to the draft UPWP being released.
- These ideas are combined with the continuing activities from the previous UPWP and with consult from the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). In addition, elements from the State's call letter, FTA, and FHWA emphasis areas are incorporated.
- The TPC is provided a two (2) week period to review the draft report. Upon review and recommendation, the UPWP is submitted to the GP&L for final action. It is also provided to NYSDOT, FTA, FHWA, and related agency staff for review at this time.
- A two (2) week review period, which is initiated with a legal notice prior. The public and media are notified of the review period. The draft UPWP will be available, in hard copy, at the HOCTS office and will be mailed to anyone requesting a copy via phone or email. The draft UPWP can be obtained electronically online at www.hocts.org.
- The final draft UPWP is reviewed, discussed, and adopted by the GP&L. After approval the report is sent to NYSDOT for processing and submission to the FHWA and the FTA.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The following requirements and procedures for public participation will apply to the development and all updates to the HOCTS PPP.

- The PPP planning process is carried out simultaneously in the virtual and paper-based/in-person environment through the utilization of the website (www.hocts.org), flyers, mailings, media/ press announcements, and emerging communications technologies.
- The public will be notified throughout the media of the development and update of the PPP.
- According to federal regulations, MPOs are required to have a minimum public comment period of forty-five (45) days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised. This public comment period will be commenced by the publishing of a legal notice in the official newspaper of each Oneida and Herkimer County and publishing the same notice on www.hocts.org.
- Partners and interested agencies will be notified a minimum of 45 days prior to GP&L action, to solicit comments on the draft PPP. The public and media are notified of the review period. The draft PPP will be available, in hard copy, at the HOCTS office and will be mailed to anyone requesting a copy via phone or email. The draft PPP can be obtained electronically online at www.hocts.org.
- Any comments received during the public review will be reviewed and included in the draft PPP, as appropriate.
- The draft PPP and any subsequent revisions to the PPP must be approved by the GP&L Committee.
- The approved PPP will be forwarded to the FHWA and the FTA, as required by law (23 CFR 450.316) FAST Act.

Involving the Public

It is HOCTS' goal to ensure that the transportation planning process is open, transparent, and accessible to the community, and attentive to the community's needs and concerns. HOCTS strives for broad public input, yet it is recognized that the majority of public comments and input come at the project and program level. It is an ongoing, interactive, and evolving process to include the public in transportation planning.

As required in FAST Act (23 CFR 450.316), public involvement processes shall be proactive and provide complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement. HOCTS complies with the FAST Act requirement of a PPP that is developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and "defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process."

Throughout the MPO process, there are numerous opportunities for public involvement, which include:

- Development of the Long Range Transportation Plan
- Development of the Unified Planning Work Program
- Identifications, prioritizations, and selections of projects
- Development of the Transportation Improvement Program
- Project design and construction

This is in addition to the other opportunities the public has for involvement in the transportation planning process at the local, state, and federal levels of government. Furthermore, the public transportation operators within Herkimer and Oneida Counties also provide for public involvement. Public requests and inquiries are consistently treated as a high priority.

Contacting HOCTS

The HOCTS office is located in downtown Utica. The facility is ADA accessible. Staff members are available in person, via phone, email, or through virtual meetings to discuss issues and concerns with members of the public.

Office location:
Boehlert Center at Union Station
321 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Utica, NY 13501

Phone: 315.798.5710
Email: transplan@ocgov.net
Website: www.hocts.org

Common Methods of Providing Public Information

HOCTS uses a variety of public involvement techniques to provide opportunities for public participation in the transportation process and specific projects. The methods of contact are listed below.

▫ **Contact List**

HOCTS maintains a central contact list of public involvement participants, elected officials, interested agencies, and advisory groups. The list is used to provide information and opportunities for public input on activities related to the transportation planning process and projects. HOCTS will revise the contact list, on an as-needed basis, to maintain compliance with the FAST Act.

▫ **Internet/Online/Website Publication**

HOCTS will continue to regularly update its website (www.hocts.org) to provide the public with timely information on the status of ongoing projects, completed projects, upcoming projects, and pertinent meeting information, including meeting minutes. The website information includes general MPO background and contact information; transportation planning process documents (such as the TIP, UPWP, and LRTP), current transportation studies, ongoing project information, and other public-facing documents as it relates to MPO activities. The website will be updated no less than once per calendar month. Meeting materials will be uploaded to www.hocts.org in advance of any meetings hosted by HOCTS.

▫ **Public Meetings and Public Workshops**

HOCTS ensures all meetings are open to the public, held at convenient times and locations, and accessible to elderly, low-income, and minority individuals. As needed, HOCTS conducts Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) meetings, Governmental Policy and Liaison (GP&L) meetings, and advisory committee meetings. Other public meetings, public hearings, and public workshops are project driven and are held, as necessary, to facilitate public involvement and participation in the transportation planning process. HOCTS, when planning for public meetings, will consider all appropriate groups of interested parties as defined by the FAST Act. All notices of public meetings and workshops will be available at www.hocts.org.

▫ **Legal Notice of Meetings**

In certain cases, a legal notice is required for a HOCTS sponsored meeting, dependent on the Federal program and fund source. For such meetings that require a legal notice prior to action being taken on a particular item, a legal notice shall be placed in the official newspaper of Oneida County and Herkimer County for ten (10) days prior to the meeting. The legal notice shall contain information regarding the action to be taken, the opportunity for public comment, location of additional information, and details regarding the meeting. All Legal Notices of public meetings and workshops will be simultaneously published at www.hocts.org.

▫ **Media Notification**

HOCTS will maintain a news media list to be contacted via Press Releases to announce, promote, and publicize all meetings, as appropriate. Media notification for public involvement is at a minimum of ten (10) days prior to a scheduled public involvement activity and includes meeting information including, date, time, location, and description of the activity.

- **Annual Report**

Major transportation planning activities carried out by HOCTS are described in an Annual Report produced by the Oneida County Department of Planning and circulated to municipalities, elected officials, interested agencies, and made available to the general public on www.hocts.org.

- **Visualization Techniques**

Visualization can provide the public and decision makers a clearer idea of the proposed policies, plans, and Transportation Improvement Programs and the impacts on the human and natural environment. The new technology has made it possible to communicate what proposals may look like when implemented and helps to make the complex technical information more clearly understood. Examples of visualization techniques include sketches, drawings, artist renderings, physical models and maps, simulated photos, videos, computer-modeled images, interactive GIS systems, GIS-based scenario planning tools, photo manipulation, and computer simulation. HOCTS will continue to use visualization techniques, as appropriate, in the transportation planning process to convey information to the public.

Recommendations to Increase Public Participation

Public participation is an ongoing and evolving process that is federally required for the transportation planning process. HOCTS will continue to look for additional opportunities to reach diverse populations and to investigate innovative communication tools to maximize participation.

- **Expanded Outreach Efforts**

To ensure that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on transportation planning activities, HOCTS shall attempt to contact additional community and human services agencies such as The Center and the Resource Center for Independent Living for expanded outreach activities to include involving underrepresented groups in the HOCTS public participation process. Some efforts have included having Google Translate available on www.hoctslrtp.org for the Long-Range Transportation Plan and working with community groups that are ethnically organized or serve the specific ethnic population, to ensure inclusion and diversity in the transportation planning process.

- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Services**

According to the Civil Rights Office at the U.S. Department of Transportation, individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be part of the LEP population. These individuals may be entitled to language assistance concerning a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

Executive Order 13166 ensures accessibility to all federally conducted programs and activities to individuals whom English is not their primary language and who might have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. It applies to all federal agencies and all programs and all operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government, including state agencies, local agencies, and governments including the MPO, private and non-profit entities, and sub-recipients.

HOCTS shall attempt to provide adequate translator services for LEP individuals when 24-hours advance notice is given. Every effort will be made to provide

translator services at all public transportation planning meetings; this will include attempts to translate significant documents or project components to a language other than English. Translator services include foreign language and hearing impaired services and pertain to written and oral information available from the MPO.

HOCTS actively engages with the region's LEP population. The five languages spoken most frequently in LEP households include Arabic, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. According to the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates provided by the Census Bureau, 12.1% of the population (5 years and over) in Oneida County and 5.5% of the population (5 years and over) in Herkimer County, speaks a language other than English at home.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism

If HOCTS receives a complaint, conflict, or dispute regarding any policy document, planning document, procedural policy, or environmental justice element, at any stage of the transportation planning process, the following guidelines and/or process shall be adhered to.

- Informal Dispute Resolution Guidelines:
 1. All issues raised are to be seriously considered.
 2. Prioritize issues raised, noting frames of references and a clear understanding of content.
 3. Document discussions and clarify positions.
 4. Set and adhere to timeframes and/or deadlines, and escalate as necessary.
- Formal Dispute Resolution Process:
 1. All disputes should be heard and documented at the staff level. Any supporting documentation should be included: minutes, letters, dates of event occurrences, inquiries, and any other related material.
 2. Disputes should be resolved within a short amount of time, usually a two-week timeframe.

If no resolution is found by the allotted time, the process shall continue to escalate to the next appropriate level until the dispute is resolved. At each escalation level, the appropriate executives from each associated agency shall convene to discuss and resolve the issues. This may include staff from HOCTS, Oneida County Department of Planning, NYSDOT Region 2, NYSDOT Main Office, FTA, FHWA, EPA, DEC, and/or other project-related agencies. Escalation should be raised until a resolution is found. Escalation shall be determined by the agreement of the HOCTS Director and the Region 2 Regional Planning and Program Manager. Notification of any action which requires utilization of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism shall be made in writing via mail, e-mail by the HOCTS Director, to the Chairman of both the Governmental Policy and Liaison Committee and Transportation Planning Committee and be accessible at www.hocts.org.

Emergency Provisions for Public Involvement

Due to the unknown and unexpected nature of an emergency event, HOCTS will rely heavily on local, state, and Federal guidelines to ensure the safety of all staff while providing the continuation of a transparent and open planning process to the maximum extent possible.

During an emergency event, HOCTS will be flexible in meeting public participation plan requirements. The Director of HOCTS or designee will determine what constitutes an “adequate public notice” under the circumstances should a regularly-scheduled meeting need to be held in an alternative manner or location or an emergency meeting need to be scheduled. If access to the normal notification procedures through regional newspapers is not possible, HOCTS staff will use other notification sources such as television, radio, social media, and posting notices at public locations.

HOCTS will continue to provide opportunities for public involvement in planning activities. Depending on the availability of resources, the procedures identified in the PPP may be delayed or replaced with other inclusive public engagement activities. HOCTS will document any outreach activities identified in the PPP to provide strategies, if needed, to ensure sufficient and appropriate outreach is maintained.

Review and Self-Evaluation

The PPP shall be reviewed, as part of the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process, to determine its effectiveness in meeting the stated goals and objectives. The PPP shall be coordinated with the ongoing statewide public involvement process as appropriate. The PPP shall be, at minimum, reviewed every three (3) years and/or whenever new transportation legislation is enacted. This effort will ensure that HOCTS maintains compliance with public participation requirements for all Federal transportation planning legislation.