
**COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION AND THE
HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

PURPOSE

This document presents the public participation and involvement process to be used by the Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), designated by the Governor in 1973, and the Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority (PRHTA), for metropolitan and non-metropolitan transportation planning in compliance with the requirements of:

1. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (Pub.L.109-59 August 10,2005), which also incorporates changes initiated in its predecessor legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) Sec.1204 Amending 23 USC Sec.135 (d) (f) and final correction on February 14,2003 in Federal Register (Vol.68:31 pp-7418-7419);
2. Joint regulations of the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, 23 CFR 450 and 49 CFR 613, “Statewide Planning; Metropolitan Planning”;
3. Regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency, 40 CFR 51 and 93, “Air Quality: Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects; Federal or State Implementation Plan Conformity”, 23 CFR 771 and 49 CFR 622 Environmental and Related Procedures and
4. Other applicable laws and regulations.

This document also seeks to provide statewide guidance to planners, project managers, consultants and MPO members on designing and implementing public involvement programs to achieve early and continuing public input and involvement so that the best possible transportation decisions are made which promote safety and enhance the quality of life of our citizens.

CONTACTS

Public Involvement Plan

The PRHTA and the MPO maintain an open door policy and encourages the public to contact its staff regarding state transportation matters. To contact the PRHTA, members of the MPO Policy Committee, or Mayors from non-metropolitan areas, a list of addresses and telephone numbers is provided in **Appendix A and B** of this manual. In addition, a list of acronyms and a glossary are included in **Appendix C** for reference and information.

INTRODUCTION

Four pieces of legislation and one Executive Order have had a major impact on the present requirements for public participation in planning transportation systems. These are:

- 1) *The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (Pub.L.109-59 August 10,2005*
- 2) *The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)*
- 3) *The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) and*
- 4) *The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).*
- 5) *Executive Order 12898 of 1994 (Environmental Justice),*

SAFETEA-LU – In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users was approved. Its goals mirror many of the initiatives included in its predecessor legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), specifically to create employment, reduce congestion and reconstruct the nation's infrastructure. The new Act combines the continuation and improvement of current programs established under TEA-21 with new initiatives to meet the challenges of:

- improving safety, as traffic continues to increase at record levels
- maintaining and operating highways in optimal condition
- protecting and enhancing communities and the natural environment as we provide transportation,
- environmental streamlining, and
- advancing economic growth and competitiveness, domestically and internationally, through efficient and flexible transportation.

SAFETEA-LU, like TEA-21, requires that MPOs develop short and long-term plans, programs and projects to accommodate the actual and future transportation needs identified in the transportation plans. In this context, it allows for Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) funds to be used for either highway or transportation projects.

Another important aspect of this legislation is the continued emphasis on public participation throughout the planning process and in the implementation of plans and projects. It specifically requires a proactive and open approach and consultation process for project selection and implementation and recognizes the importance of cooperation, coordination and joint support of transportation projects.

A new section introduced in the TEA-21 legislation (Section 1204(f)) and retained in SAFETEA-LU, requires that “with respect to each non-metropolitan area in the State, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) shall be developed in consultation with affected local officials with responsibility over transportation.” This requirement promotes an early and effective involvement of transportation officials from rural and non-metropolitan areas in the planning process, which result in revisions to the Statewide Transportation Plan (STP) and the development of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), among other products. *Also SAFETEA-LU, retain Section 450.210 (h), from TEA-21 regarding the State development of a documented process that is separate and discrete from the State’s public involvement process.*

SAFETEA-LU also gave emphasis on developing early public involvement in the planning and programming process to "protect the environment, promote the conservation of energy and improve the quality of life." Public involvement activities related to environmental issues are carried out primarily by PRHTA's Office of Environmental Studies; however, other offices such as the DTPW's Communications Office organize educational activities such as, Transportation Week, Environment Week, Fairs, workshops, and conferences, among others. Involving the public in environmental issues is an ongoing process, from the needs assessment and alternative evaluation phase through the design, acquisition of rights-of-way, and construction phases, continuing on to after construction for example, in cases of environmental mitigation. In environmentally sensitive areas mechanisms have been established to regularly communicate with the public through forums, meetings, and letters to maintain them aware and receive their input.

SAFETEA-LU as TEA-21 also apportioned the highway federal aid program as non-categorical, lump sum, annual allocation for Puerto Rico, which can be utilized according to local needs.

SAFETEA-LU provides funds for the following types of programs:

HIGHWAY RELATED

- Interstate and National Highway Systems (NHS)
- Bridge Replacement (BR)
- Metropolitan and State Planning (PL)
- Enhancement including pedestrian, bicycle paths and scenic by-ways
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)

TRANSIT RELATED

- Technical Studies Grants (Section 5303)
- Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5307)
- Transportation Services for Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310)
- Non-Urbanized Area Formula Grants (Section 5311)
- Urbanized Area Discretionary Grants (Section 5309)
- Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316)
- New Freedom (Section 5317)

Executive Order 12898 - In accordance with EO 12898 of 1994, (Environmental Justice) the PRHTA has established procedures to avoid having negative impacts of transportation projects affecting poor or minority communities in a disproportionate way. It will assure that the needs of groups traditionally underserved by the existing transportation systems, including all underrepresented groups (e.g. persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and low income families among others) are involved in the planning and programming process. To this end, the PRHTA seeks to identify and contact community organizations, neighborhood groups and interested citizens whom it will invite to meetings, hearings and planning activities.

To assist in early planning, the PRHTA has developed a Preliminary Environmental Evaluation form, which helps analyze and rate the impact of 9 factors which could be adversely affected by transportation actions. These factors consider the presence of bodies of water, wetlands, endangered species, forested areas, areas susceptible to slides, flood-prone areas, schools, parks, and special socio economic conditions. This form is utilized as a general guide at the regional planning level, and at the project planning level by an Interdisciplinary Committee, which is formed after a petition is submitted and prior to inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (for federally funded projects) and the Construction Improvement Program (CIP, for state funded projects).

Staff at the planning phase of a project review existing information on any given area and carry out field visits to the affected area and seek the input and recommendations of the public through personal interviews, meetings, workshops, letters and public hearings among others. The information gathered during these activities is then used to complete the form.

CAAA - Under the *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990*, the quality of the Island's air becomes a much more important issue than in previous legislative efforts. State and local officials have been challenged by the CAAA to find ways to reduce emissions from their vehicle fleet, to develop projects and programs that will alter driving patterns to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles and to make alternatives such as transit and bicycles an increasingly important part of the transportation network. SAFETEA-LU and the CAAA require the DTPW to regularly consult and coordinate with the Environmental Quality Board specifically with respect to any non-attainment area. As part of this consultation process the parties have developed an ongoing process to coordinate plans and programs, which is set out in the State Improvement Plan (SIP) and submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) developed by EPA set allowable concentrations and exposure limits for various pollutants, including ozone, carbon monoxide and small particulate matter. The CAAA and other legislation, including TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU define a non-attainment area as a geographic region that the EPA has designated as not meeting environmental standards. Depending on the severity of the air quality problem, officials in each non-attainment area must take specific actions within a set time frame to reduce emissions and comply with environmental standards. The CAAA and transportation legislation also provide for the following:

- a requirement that transportation plans, programs, and projects conform with the SIP, which contains procedures to monitor, control, maintain, and enforce attainment of environmental standards;
- a requirement for greater integration of transportation and air quality planning procedures in order to address air quality concerns;
- the conditions under which EPA can impose sanctions, including the loss of Federal-aid highway and transit funds.

Conformity is a determination made by MPO's and the U.S. Department of Transportation that transportation plans and programs in non-attainment areas meet the "purpose" of the SIP, which is reducing pollutant emissions to meet the NAAQS.

The TIP must be composed of transportation projects drawn from a conforming Transportation Plan (TP). Specifically, the TP and TIP must contribute to reducing motor vehicle emissions. Conformity determinations are to be made no less than every 3 years or as changes are made to plans, programs, and projects. Transportation plans and TIP's cannot:

- create new NAAQS violations;
- increase the frequency or severity of existing NAAQS violations;
- delay attainment of the NAAQS

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

For transportation planning purposes, Puerto Rico is divided into the following urbanized areas: the San Juan Urbanized Area (SJUA), and Aguadilla Urbanized Area which covers a population of greater than 200,000 inhabitants, San Juan with (38) municipalities and Aguadilla with (11) municipalities; and nine (9) smaller UZAs which cover a population between 50,000 and 200,000 (29 municipalities). See *Appendix A* for a list. The remaining areas are called non-urbanized areas and have populations between 5,000-50,000 inhabitants (6 municipalities). See *Appendix B* for a list of the municipalities comprising these areas.

In 1973 the Governor designated the DTPW as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for

all of Puerto Rico’s urbanized areas. At that time, only San Juan, Ponce and Mayagüez had been determined to be urbanized areas according to the Census. Over the years other urbanized areas (UZAs) were certified by the Census Bureau and therefore added to the MPO. Among them are Aguadilla, Arecibo, Caguas, Cayey, Humacao and Vega Baja-Manatí. *According with the 2000 Census, others urbanized areas were certified; Fajardo, Florida-Barceloneta-Bajadero, Guayama, Juana Díaz, San Germán-Cabo Rojo-Sabana Grande and Yauco.*

To assure a forum for cooperative decision-making in the planning process, the MPO has structured several committees (Policy, Technical and Citizen Participation) to ensure that transportation planning is conducted in a coordinated, comprehensive, continuous and cooperative manner. The DTPW, as the MPO, carries out its regional transportation planning responsibilities through three Policy Committees: one for the San Juan Urbanized Area (SJUA) another for the Aguadilla Urbanized Area (AUA) and one for Urbanized Areas Under 200,000 Population (UZA). The MPO Policy Committees operate by consensus with each member having one vote. Members are involved in the planning process from its inception to the final approval of the planning documents: specifically the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Plans (TP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The members of the MPO include representatives from state and municipal governments involved in transportation issues as well as operators of mass transportation systems and state-level planning agencies. The general public participates through the Public Participation Committees and Groups of the MPO and the public involvement processes described in this document. The members of the Policy Committees are detailed below:

VOTING MEMBERS MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

1. Secretary, Department of Transportation and Public Works (President)
2. Executive Director, Highway and Transportation Authority
3. Executive Director, Ports Authority
4. President, Planning Board
5. President, Metropolitan Bus Authority*
6. President, Public Service Commission
7. President, Environmental Quality Board
8. Administrator, Regulations and Permits Administration
9. Executive Director, Maritime Transportation Authority (MTA)
10. Mayors from Municipalities included in *Appendix A*

SJUA 38 representatives
AUA 11 representatives
UZA 29 representatives

7 8

* Member of the San Juan Urbanized Area Committee only

NON-VOTING MEMBERS MPO POLICY COMMITTEE

-
11. Administrator, Puerto Rico Division, Federal Highway Administration
 12. Regional Administrator, Region IV, Federal Transit Administration

In addition to the Policy Committees, there are several other groups and committees, which assist the Secretary, carry out its MPO and non-MPO functions, including:

Technical Committee (TC) - The TC is comprised of technical representatives of MPO agencies and municipalities including public and private transportation providers. Its members are professionals in the area of transportation, transit, land use and public works.

Technical Group (TG) – This is an ad hoc subcommittee of the MPO’s Technical Committee comprised of DTPW, PRHTA, municipal and other agency liaison representatives, private entities and consultants. Their primary purpose is to establish a participatory forum during development or revision of regional transportation studies and plans.

Public Participation Committee (PPC) – This is an ad hoc committee of the MPO comprising representatives from state and federal agencies, local civic, professional and community groups and the general public. They are organized by the PRHTA at the regional and municipal levels to provide an early forum to the community about studies and Metropolitan and Statewide Transportation Plans under consideration or development and to receive their comments and input in the process. This is a critical mechanism for effective participation in the transportation planning process.

Public Involvement Committee (PIC) - This is a PRHTA committee organized to promote and facilitate the participation of representatives of private agencies, community organizations and the general public. It also assures that the interests and social, economic and environmental concerns of the community are being considered in the planning process. Committee members consist of representatives from the DTPW’S Office of Communications, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning Federal Coordination Offices and the Strategic Planning Area who coordinate public participation activities and assure that they are being carried out effectively according to the Public Involvement (PI) Plan.

Central Planning and Coordination Work Group (CPCWG) - The MPO relies on the expertise of the Central Planning and Coordination Work Group comprised of technical staff from the DTPW's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning (including the Federal Coordination Offices and Strategic Planning Office); and the PRHTA's Planning Area (including the Environmental Studies Office). Its purpose is to provide technical support to the MPO’s committees and subcommittees and to prepare the planning products, including the TIP, STIP, UPWP and TPs according to directives established by the MPO. It is also one of the mechanisms used by the DTPW to carry out outreach efforts to the community.

Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) - This board comprises transportation related government officials including representatives from the Police Department and private citizens named by the Governor to advise the DTPW Secretary on matters regarding public policy for transportation issues.

Non-Metropolitan Area Representation – Participation in the planning process is provided to representatives from non-metropolitan areas through outreach efforts and coordination activities with affected local officials with responsibility over transportation and the general public. PRHTA staff annually carries out a series of regional orientation meetings to explain the planning and project programming process, provide information about the availability of funds and the petition preparation and evaluation processes. This forum is also utilized to receive input from the community on transportation-related problems and concerns.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

Puerto Rico's transportation will continue to change in the next several decades in order to address the changing needs of those who live, work, and visit here. Puerto Rico is currently moving towards multi- and intermodal networks which will meet transportation demands while at the same time be sensitive to environmental and land use concerns. This will be carried out within the context of sustained development policies and goals adopted by the government. The development of creative solutions is essential towards meeting the DTPW's commitment to excellence and providing a system of transportation that meets future needs and growth. Successful transportation project implementation depends on effective interaction with diverse agencies, individuals, companies, and institutions. These parties must work together as partners in a cooperative manner. In order to promote consensus building regarding transportation issues in Puerto Rico, the DTPW has established a system for public participation in the planning, development and programming of transportation projects, including those that utilize federal funds. In this context the participants in the planning process comprise local officials, private operators, agencies and institutions involved in providing public transportation, and the general public.

The process of soliciting, listening, and responding to what citizens have to say about plans and projects can often be a complicated and challenging process for all those involved. However, if carried out well it can also be a rewarding and meaningful experience that leads to better decisions on public policy. The MPO/DTPW's public involvement process attempts to provide a “voice” to the public as well as address each of the key points presented in the SAFETEA-LU

1. Early and continued public participation throughout the process of transportation planning and project programming;
2. Timely information about transportation planning 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;

-
3. Reasonable public access to technical information and public policy used in the development of the STIP and, in urbanized or metropolitan areas, the local TIP;
 4. To the maximum extent practicable;
 - a. ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and time,
 - b. use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and supporting studies,
 - c. make public information available in electronically accessible format and means.
 5. Adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to, action on the TPs and STIP;
 6. Process for demonstrating explicitly consideration and response to public input during the planning and program development process;
 7. Process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems;
 8. Periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all and revision of the process as necessary.

Public involvement is not limited to special events or high profile projects or just to those projects utilizing Federal funds. It is also an essential part of the planning process used by the PRHTA in the development of its highway program. There are numerous techniques used to disseminate information about projects, identify issues and concerns and involve the public at an early stage. These techniques are geared to the scope of work being undertaken. Typically, depending on the magnitude and type of project, public input is accomplished through some or all of the following activities:

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Educational Activities

- Annual orientation meetings with elected officials and the public to participate in the planning process and the role of the public in its development
- Use of innovative tools and media including utilizing the DTPW's web page, local newspapers and radio shows to inform the public of upcoming planning activities
- Plan and carry out activities geared towards educating the public about transportation-related issues including highway safety; such as Transportation Fairs and school visits
- Conduct workshops to assist municipal officials and community entities prepare STIP project proposals.

-
- Each TIP petition that does not meet the criteria for inclusion is critiqued by the CPWGP staff and returned to the submitting jurisdiction for possible future actions.

Early and continued public participation

- Hearings and regional meetings between DTPW officials, municipal technical staff and elected officials during development of the CIP, STIP, TIP as well as Metropolitan and Statewide Transportation Plans
- Meetings with elected and appointed officials and the general public to review environmental and design studies
- Formal public hearings concerning proposed major investment studies
- Early coordination meetings with representatives of federal and government agencies
- Availability of environmental documents, notices and hearings relating to the environment to the public including those with limited English speaking ability for review and comment and an opportunity to request a public hearing or meeting
- Publication of periodic public notices which provide the opportunity to comment on draft and final planning products
- Consideration of written opinions or recommendations submitted to the DTPW and/or MPO related to planning documents
- Requirement that any consultants contracted to carry out transportation plans must submit and have approved a PI Plan for involving the public
- Meetings held with PPG and PPC to obtain input and comments at critical decision making points
- Formal meetings of the Transportation Advisory Board

Outreach

- Establishment of citizen's advisory groups or steering committees for more complex projects. Complex projects could also involve public information activities to assure that the public is informed as to the progress of major impact projects and afforded the opportunity to comment at critical stages
- Individual meetings with non-urbanized area officials to provide technical assistance in planning and developing mass transportation projects.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Metropolitan transportation plans must be prepared for a 20-year planning horizon, be multimodal in nature and be financially constrained according to reasonable expectations on resource availability for each one of the Urbanized Areas. Within the CPCWG, the PRHTA's Strategic Planning Office is responsible for the preparation of the Metropolitan Transportation Plans. The MPO plays a vital and continuous role in identifying the relationship between land use and transportation with the metropolitan areas and with projects that can improve the coordination of land use and transportation decisions. Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) included in the TIP are consistent with the region's

transportation plan. The MPO adopts the urbanized area's long-range transportation plans and determines the highest priority transportation projects in the plans which are contained in the TIP (Federal funds) and CIP (Federal, state and local funds).

To assist in encouraging the participation of minority and low-income populations in the planning process, the DTPW will work closely with municipal officials and MPO members in the study area. Municipal governments, as part of their Territorial Plans, generally have identified low income and disadvantaged areas and their input into the planning process will be key to assuring not only in identifying but in seeking the active participation of these groups. The DTPW will also utilize socio-economic data produced by the 2000 Census.

During the early stages of developing or revising each of the transportation plans, a Public Participation Group (PPG) is organized to discuss issues and future directions, transportation problems and needs, system plans and options and program emphases. The group meets regularly during the course of the plan development and periodically once the plan is complete. It is comprised of representatives from interest and environmental groups, businesses, civil organizations and the general public.

In addition, the MPO's Technical Committee representatives meet to discuss the technical aspects related to the development of the transportation plans including the preparation of a work plan by the Office of Strategic Planning covering the following phases:

1. data gathering;
2. data analysis;
3. data processing and projections;
4. preparation and evaluation of alternative plans;
5. selection of the preferred plan; and
6. preparation of a report which includes conclusions and recommendations regarding the long and short range programs and financial aspects

Close coordination and communication with municipal officials is critical to the successful planning and implementation of these plans and projects. The MPO informs Mayors (usually through letters, fax and phone calls) and their liaison officials of the dates of any meetings to be held so that the Mayor's can use their own means to communicate with the public. Many municipalities have or are in the process of developing local Land Use Plans together with the Planning Board and their input is valuable and essential. The Mayors' office is often the first stop for citizens to voice their opinions and raise concerns about transportation issues in the town and surrounding areas. The Mayors are an ever-present link with the community and, as MPO members, ensure two-way access and communication to the public.

Transportation, land use and environment-related agencies, municipalities and the public in general are involved in the planning and development of the region's transportation plans through their early participation in meetings and orientations, as well as through the opportunity to comment on draft

and final copies of the plan. At least three (3) meetings (adequate advanced notice is provided) for each metropolitan area plan will be conducted as follows:

1. to discuss the planning development process, present and/or revise planning assumptions, goals and objectives, and provide general orientation to interested parties and the public;
2. to present study findings and alternatives being considered and obtain public input;
3. to present and discuss the draft plan which has incorporated comments and recommendations from the general public, municipalities agencies, etc;

Public notices will be published advising the dates of the respective planning meetings as well as the availability of the draft plan for review. A 45-day comment period will be provided. A record of public comments received and the MPO's response to those comments will be kept on file and will remain available to the public. Likewise, when the plan is in final form, a notice will be published advising the public that it is available for public information and reference.

The Environmental Studies Office of the PRHTA Planning Area reviews the draft Metropolitan Transportation Plans as well as any revisions to assure that they comply with the requirements of the Clean Air Act. They will review the impact that any recommendations in the Plan will have on environmentally sensitive areas to help ensure consistency with environmental policies and energy conservation goals and objectives.

Once the Metropolitan Transportation Plan has been approved by the MPO, it will be forwarded to FHWA and FTA officials for their information. Simultaneously, it will be submitted to the Planning Board (PB) to be used as input in the development of their Regional Plans.

In 1991 the Legislature approved Law #81, entitled "Municipal Autonomy Law" which gives participating municipalities, among other things, regulatory and permits authority within their jurisdiction. However, each municipality must first have their Plan approved by the Planning Board. The PB assures that there is consonance between the municipal and regional plans.

Revision Process: Each Metropolitan Plan will be updated periodically, which generally comprises the following principal elements:

Surveillance - This is a continuous monitoring of all pertinent land use data, the re-evaluation of changing travel characteristics and community values, new economic changes, and a review of transportation improvements and planning implementation schedules. Generally, the public is not involved; however, this surveillance could result in an identified need for substantial revisions to the Plan in which case the above procedures would be implemented.

Reappraisal - This consists of an annual review of existing plans and a major review at a maximum three (3) year interval for the SJMR and five-(5) year intervals for all other Metropolitan Transportation Plans. The PRHTA will follow the same public

involvement process discussed above to assure that the public and relevant transportation related agencies and entities are involved in any revisions to the document.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a 4-year investment program that includes all proposed capital (highway, transportation and enhancement projects), operational subsidies and transit vehicle acquisition projects (for general transit or special services) requesting Federal funds in urbanized areas developed from a metropolitan transportation plan. One of the MPO's primary responsibilities is to endorse the TIP as well as the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The TIPs approved by the MPO are included in the STIP without any modification.

Program of Projects (POP)

Projects selected for inclusion in an FTA grant application must form part of a metropolitan area's TIP, which has been endorsed by the MPO and included in an approved STIP. The Program of Projects (POP) is a list of projects in the first-year program of the approved TIP which will utilize the Urbanized Area Formula Program for federal funding.

The DTPW and MPO will integrate to the extent feasible the public involvement requirements of Section 5307(c) with those of Subpart B, "Statewide Transportation Planning" (23 CFR Part 450) and Subpart C, "Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming" (49 CFR Part 613). The DTPW/MPO will annually publish the POP for the San Juan Urbanized Area, Aguadilla Urbanized Area and the Urbanized Areas Under 200,000 in Population. A project that requires an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement will involve additional public involvement, as presented in joint FHWA/FTA environmental regulations, "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures," 23 CFR Part 771 and 49 CFR Part 622.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - presents all the planning activities to be developed using FTA funds (Sections 5303, 5307, and 5304), FHWA (State Planning Research (SPR).

Major Investment Studies (MIS)

SAFETEA-LU also requires the DTPW and the MPO to undertake MIS where the need for major transportation investments has been identified and there is the potential for using federal funds as part of the investment. Generally, the studies are needed in corridors or areas where highway or public transportation improvements will be of substantial cost and will have significant effects on travel.

A reasonable opportunity shall be provided for citizens and interested parties including affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, and private providers of transportation to participate in this process. If the MIS incorporates development of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document, the public involvement strategy will also comply with the public involvement provisions of 23 CFR Part 771 or 40 CFR Part 622.

Statewide Transportation Plan (STP)

The DTPW/PRHTA prepares a Statewide Transportation Plan (STP) with a 20-year horizon according to the requirements of SAFETEA-LU. The plan contains short and long-range elements and provides for an integrated and intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods for the entire Island. Included in the plan are capital improvement projects; important changes needed to existing transportation facilities; and an action plan for establishing long-range policies on transportation issues. The plan integrates the results of input and recommendations from non-metropolitan areas obtained through the planning process with metropolitan area plans to assure connectivity of the transportation system throughout the Island. The recommendations, which are presented in the STP, form the foundation for the development of the STIP, a 4-year programming document for project implementation.

Public involvement efforts related to this planning process include:

1. Outreach efforts to transportation system users and providers in urbanized and non-metropolitan areas, and the general public to identify groups and individuals who are then invited to participate in and comment on the development of the Statewide Plan. These efforts also help determine how, when and where participation/comments from the key groups and individuals should be obtained; and
2. Meetings held by the Transportation Advisory Board which include representatives from transportation related government agencies and private citizens who represent the interests of both urbanized and non-metropolitan areas.

At least three (3) public participation meetings (adequate advanced notice will be provided) in each of the PRHTA's 6 regions will be conducted:

1. to discuss the planning development process, present and/or revise planning assumptions, provide general orientation to interested parties and the public and obtain input regarding existing deficiencies;
2. to present and discuss the preliminary draft plan;
3. to present and discuss the draft plan which has incorporated comments and recommendations;

-
4. (optional) additional meetings to discuss the plan and to present the final plan will be arranged according to the needs of the community and any particular circumstances of the plan.

A public notice will be published advising the availability of the draft plan for review and a 45 day comment period will be provided. Notices will also advise the dates of the respective planning meetings. Likewise, when the plan is in final form, a notice will be published advising the public that it is available for review. Comments will be considered in the development of the final plan. A record of public comments received and the DTPW/PRHTA's response to those comments will be kept on file at the DTPW/PRHTA and will be available for public review.

The final Statewide Transportation Plan is approved by the Secretary. This Plan is used as a guide to evaluate Municipal Land Use/Transportation Plans which are submitted to the Planning Board and Governor for approval. The Statewide Plan is forwarded to FHWA and FTA officials for their information.

The Plan is updated periodically and follows the same public involvement process discussed above to assure that the public from urbanized and non-metropolitan areas and relevant transportation-related agencies and entities are involved in any revisions to the document. This updating process comprises the following principal elements:

Surveillance - This is a continuous monitoring of all pertinent land use data, the re-evaluation of changing travel characteristics and community values, new economic changes, and a review of transportation improvements and planning implementation schedules. Generally, the public is not involved; however, this surveillance could result in an identified need for substantial revisions to the Plan in which case the above procedures would be implemented.

Reappraisal - A major review or update of the STP is made at a maximum five-(5) year interval. The PRHTA will follow the same public involvement process discussed above to assure that the public and relevant transportation related agencies and entities are involved in any revisions to the document.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The STIP is a four-year project-scheduling tool, which provides a list of transportation *and highway* improvement projects. The STIP includes projects for urbanized, metropolitan and non-urbanized areas. The STIP is prepared by the PRHTA in consultation with officials from the affected areas and the public.

TIP/STIP PROCEDURES

Initial Outreach Efforts

1. Around October/December of each year, (depending on the release of the Federal appropriations notice) notices are published in newspapers of general circulation to:
 - a. inform the general public about the availability of federal funds to develop transportation and highway related projects for urbanized as well as small urban and rural areas;
 - b. provide information on the date and location of the regional technical assistance and planning meetings to be held with urbanized and non-metropolitan area officials and the public; and
 - c. notify entities of the deadline to submit their petitions for projects utilizing federal funds including Section 5303, 5307, 5310, 5311, 531 and 5317 of FTA and FHWA. The deadline for submitting petitions is on or about January 31 of each year. Petition forms can be requested from the Federal Coordination Offices in PRHTA Central Offices.

Technical Orientation and Proposal Application

1. Regional meetings directed to urbanized, small urban and rural areas request input from the public on transportation issues as well as provide orientation on:
 - a. the transportation planning process
 - b. the TIP and STIP programming process
 - c. the petition process to request funds from the various programs of FTA and highway-related projects funded from FHWA.
2. Communication with the public in non-metropolitan areas is maintained throughout the planning process through phone calls and individual meetings held with officials and the public to clarify doubts answer questions, etc.
3. Training seminars are carried out to non-urbanized areas to assist in mass transportation planning so that they may be able to better compete for federal funds.

Technical Orientation and Petition Request

-
1. At least two additional (2) meetings will be held for urbanized areas through the MPO Technical Committee members to discuss:
 - a. the submitted petitions for projects with committee members and any questions they may have for the Central Planning and Coordination Work Group (CPCWP). As part of the technical review process, on-site visits are carried out by the CPCWP in affected areas to obtain specific information on the submitted petitions and which would help determine possible environmental or other effects.
 - b. after a technical review by the CPCWP the proposed transportation projects to be recommended in the TIP are presented and discussed among the MPO's Technical Committee members. The projects are then prioritized and incorporated into a draft programming document.
 2. Comments and petitions submitted by municipal governments, public agencies, and transportation providers in urbanized and non-urbanized areas will be reviewed and discussed by DTPW planning officials.
 3. Individual technical assistance is provided to urbanized officials in developing plans for projects financed by FTA.

Evaluation and Selection of TIP/STIP Projects

1. Once a draft list of projects has been selected for recommendation, the Assistant Secretary for Planning presents a Recommendation Report to the Secretary of DTPW.

Draft Documents

1. The preliminary drafts of the TIP and UPWP are prepared and discussed by the CPCWG in consultation with the Technical Committee members at their 3rd meeting.
2. Once a TIP is prepared in draft form, the Environmental Studies Office of the PRHTA Planning Area conducts an air quality evaluation to determine if the TIP is consistent with the TP which was previously found to conform to air quality standards established in the CAAA. If studies indicate that the TIP complies with the CAAA, a conformity determination is prepared.
3. A notice is published in major local newspapers informing the public of the opportunity to review and comment on the draft UPWP and TIP. A 15-day response period is provided. The notice states that copies of said documents are available for review at the various municipalities, at the PRHTA Central Office. The notice also states the date and location of the MPO Policy Committee meeting.

-
4. A letter is sent to all MPO members advising them of the date of the MPO meeting, which includes copies of draft TIP and UPWP documents for their review and comments at the meeting.
 5. At the annual meeting of the MPO Policy Committees, the draft UPWP and TIP together with a conformity determination are discussed, evaluated and endorsed by the members. Committee members clarify doubts or questions and propose any revisions they consider necessary. In addition, the urban planning process is certified.
 6. After the conformity determination is adopted by the MPO, it is sent to FHWA and FTA for their review and approval. Once this has been approved, it is sent to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Environmental Quality Board for their endorsement.
 7. The CPCWG prepares the final draft of the documents incorporating suggestions and revisions discussed at the MPO meeting and prepare a final TIP and UPWP, as approved by the MPO.
 8. After the consultation process with affected local officials including those in non-metropolitan areas, the draft STIP is prepared incorporating the MPO-approved TIP.

Final Document Preparation and Approval

1. A notice is published in major local newspapers informing the public of the availability of the final UPWP and TIP documents as well as the draft STIP for review and comments. The notice provides for a 15-day comment period and informs the public that copies of said documents are available for review at the various municipalities and at the PRHTA.
2. Based on the comments received, the DTPW determines if there is a need for a public hearing. If so, adequate prior notice will be provided to the public.
3. The final version of the STIP is prepared taking into consideration comments received from the public as well as public policy established by the DTPW and programs being implemented. Any comments received are available for review by the public, upon request.
4. A notice is published in major local newspapers informing the public of the availability of the final version of the STIP.
5. The final TIP is sent to FHWA and FTA for their information. The UPWP and the final STIP are sent to them for their approval.
6. The STIP and UPWP documents are distributed as follows:

- Urbanized Areas: MPO Members will receive a copy of the final TIP, STIP and UPWP documents
- Non-Metropolitan Areas: Each affected Mayor will receive a copy of the STIP.
- The STIP and UPWP will remain available to the general public for review at the PRHTA's Central offices throughout the year.

TIP Amendments

Public involvement procedures consistent with Section 450.316(b)(1) will be utilized in amending the TIP. The TIP will be amended by adding or deleting projects which contribute to or reduce transportation related emissions or replacements of a new project.

TIP/STIP PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

MONTH	TIP/UPWP PROCESS	STIP PROCESS
NOVEMBER	Public notice published in the newspaper announcing the annual funding cycle for highway and transportation related projects and invitations to elected officials, transportation providers and the public to participate in regional technical orientation meetings in urbanized, small urban and rural areas to discuss the planning process.	
	Invitations to MPO Technical Orientation meetings (one to SJUA, AUA and another to UZA) to participate in orientation/planning meetings.	Invitations to Rural and Small Urban Mayors to participate in orientation meetings.
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER	Regional technical orientation meetings will be carried out for municipalities in urbanized and non-urbanized areas, entities and the general public to discuss the planning and programming of the TIP/STIP, availability of funds and the preparation of applications to request funds from FTA/FHWA.	
JANUARY 31	Deadline for submission of all petitions for Federal funds.	
FEBRUARY	Individual technical assistance is provided by the CPCWG to funding proponents, as requested. Evaluation of petitions for highway and transportation projects.	
	Invitations to MPO Technical Committee members to participate in the 2 nd planning meeting to discuss submitted petitions.	
MARCH	2 nd MPO Technical Committee meeting is held to discuss the submitted petitions, answer questions and clarify any doubts.	Individual technical assistance provided to non-urbanized areas and entities related to preparing proposals for FTA funds, as requested.

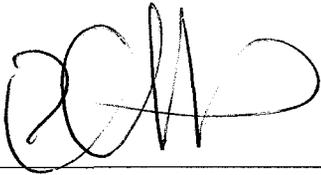
MONTH	TIP/UPWP PROCESS	STIP PROCESS
	Preparation of Recommendation Report for the Secretary by the Assistant Secretary for Planning	
APRIL	3 rd Meeting with Technical Committee to discuss transportation and highway petitions received which will be recommended for inclusion in the TIP. Also there is a discussion of those petitions not recommended for inclusion.	Preparation of the Recommendation Report by the Assistant Secretary for Planning to revise projects under Section 5311 as well as Enhancement.
MAY	Public notice announcing availability of draft TIP/UPWPs for review and 15-day comment period. Invitations are sent for the MPO meeting.	
JUNE	The MPO Public Policy Committee meeting is held to discuss and approve the TIP/UPWP documents	
JULY/AUGUST	Final TIP is sent to FTA and FHWA for information; final UPWP for approval.	Assistant Secretary for Planning prepares 1 st draft of STIP incorporating MPO-approved TIP document into it
	Public notice published stating availability of draft STIP and Final TIP and UPWP for review; 15-day comment period provided	
AUGUST	Final TIP/UPWP is sent to MPO members	Final STIP prepared; public notice published announcing availability of document for review. If necessary, public hearing is conducted.
	STIP sent to FHWA/FTA for approval and is available to the public.	

EVALUATION

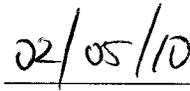
The PRHTA will periodically evaluate the public involvement efforts presented in this document to determine its effectiveness in reaching the public and assure full and open access to MPO decision-making processes. As part of these efforts, an evaluation form will be distributed to each participant at MPO sponsored public involvement activities to receive comments about the activity and request

PROCEDURE ADOPTION

The PI Plan was adopted by the 1st of February, 2010 by the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Highway and Transportation Authority after a 45-day public comment period for revision and comments. The Plan has been presented and approved by each of the MPO Policy Committee at December 2009. This document will be review by the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration as part of its Planning Certification Process to assure that there is public involvement in the MPO's Planning Process.



Rubfu A. Hernandez, MEM, PE
President, Metropolitan Planning Organization



Date