

## Capitol Region Council of Governments

# Public Participation Plan: Executive Summary

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Greater Hartford region. MPOs are designated to conduct regional transportation planning and select projects for federal funding. CRCOG conducts an extensive multi-modal transportation planning program that is guided by federal regulations and its Public Participation Plan. This Plan explains the methods CRCOG uses to provide open and inclusive public participation in its transportation planning process, allowing individuals who are affected by transportation decisions a say in how decisions are made.

This Public Participation Plan describes CRCOG's goals, policies, and procedures to ensure that all members of the public, including underserved populations, have access to information and opportunities to participate in the transportation planning process for the Hartford metropolitan area. CRCOG's intent is to provide reasonable access to information, timely public notice, and support for early and continued involvement of the public in the regional transportation planning process.

The Public Participation Plan serves as a guide for citizens to understand CRCOG's public participation approach and how to get involved in shaping the future of transportation for the 38 communities in the Capitol Region.



*The study team on the Gap Closure Trail Study leads participants in Plainville through a mapping exercise. Participants were asked to connect important locations in their community using thumbtacks and pieces of yarn in a process referred to as a "Star Analysis".*

## Organization of the Public Participation Plan

**Overview of the Public Participation Plan** describes the purpose of the Public Participation Plan and CRCOG's process and procedures for public involvement. CRCOG involves the public in planning studies and in programming activities, such as project selection and project development.

**CRCOG's Role in Transportation Planning** describes CRCOG's mission and its member communities. As the MPO for the region, CRCOG conducts planning studies, sets the region's transportation vision and goals, and allocates federal transportation funds. CRCOG prepares three primary transportation plans including the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). CRCOG also has primary responsibility for selecting projects for funding under the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP). In addition, the public involvement process adopted by CRCOG for its TIP also satisfies the public involvement requirements of the Greater Hartford Transit District as an applicant for regular 5307 FTA Transit Capital Grant funds.

**Strategies for Public Participation** describes CRCOG's intent to ensure that the general public and stakeholders are aware of CRCOG's transportation planning efforts and have opportunities to comment and contribute to transportation decisions in their communities. CRCOG's public participation guidelines include providing adequate and timely notice of key decisions and public meetings, access to information, opportunities for input, and outreach to underserved populations. For each project, CRCOG identifies and engages key stakeholders, including residents, businesses, local municipalities, community groups, transportation providers and users, low-income communities, minority communities, and other interested parties.

CRCOG holds public meetings, workshops, and open houses to provide opportunities for the public to learn about transportation plans, projects, and programs. These events also allow CRCOG to gather input that can help inform transportation decisions. CRCOG encourages the public to comment and provides multiple ways for individuals to give input and share ideas. Oral and written comments may be provided at meetings, and written comments may be submitted by mail, email, fax, or through the website comment form. CRCOG follows specific guidelines to allow reasonable time for the public to comment on plans, projects, and programs. In addition, CRCOG provides a summary of responses to comments submitted by the public.

CRCOG utilizes many communication tools to notify the public of upcoming events and meetings, pending decisions, and opportunities to participate. These tools include stakeholder lists, meeting notices, and the CRCOG website.

CRCOG's website provides a comprehensive source of information on CRCOG and CRCOG's projects, programs, plans, technical information, and a calendar of events. The website features Google Translate to enable viewers to translate website content into multiple languages.

**Outreach to Underserved Populations** describes how, as a recipient of federal funding, CRCOG is required to meet guidelines addressing public outreach and engagement requirements among low-income, minority, limited English proficient (LEP), disability, and Title VI populations. In general these groups are underrepresented in the transportation decision-making process. CRCOG values the diversity within the Region and works to ensure that all individuals have access to information and opportunities to participate in the transportation decision-making process.

Specific outreach methods are selected based on the needs of each individual plan, study, or project and may include partnering with municipalities, neighborhoods, and community organizations, email notifications to stakeholders, participating in community events to distribute project information, and posting information on CRCOG's website.

All CRCOG public meetings are held at ADA accessible facilities. CRCOG offers special assistance, including translation and interpretation services, if requested in advance of a meeting. CRCOG provides public information

in electronically accessible formats on its website to enable non-sighted users to use the website and offers a translation feature on its website.

#### **Reassessment of the Public Participation Program**

describes the annual review that CRCOG conducts to ensure that its public participation process provides full and open access to all and to continue to update its outreach approaches and tools with current best practices. CRCOG employs feedback from staff, public surveys and polls, metrics, and focus group discussions to gather feedback on successes and identify areas for improvement.

**CRCOG's Policy Board, which acts as the MPO, is composed of the First Elected Official from each of the 38 Capitol Region municipalities.**

**CRCOG has established three standing committees and sub-committees that report to the Policy Board:**

- Transportation Committee
- Cost Review and Schedule Sub-Committee
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Sub-Committee

**All Policy Board, Transportation Committee, and sub-committee meetings are open to the public. Meeting details are available on CRCOG's website.**



**CRCOG's Transportation Committee** is composed of representatives from member towns, the Greater Hartford Transit District, the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, and other regional interest groups. The committee meets monthly and advises the Policy Board on transportation issues and funding. All meetings are open to the public.

**Contact CRCOG** | Website: [www.crcog.org](http://www.crcog.org) | Email: [info@crcog.org](mailto:info@crcog.org) | Phone: (860) 522-2217 | Fax: (860) 724-1274