



Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Participation Plan (PPP)

City of Harrisonburg | Rockingham County | Town of Bridgewater | Town of Dayton | Town of Mt. Crawford

DRAFT DOCUMENT



Harrisonburg Rockingham
Metropolitan Planning Organization
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hrvampo.org

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO)

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Plan Documentation and Contact

Title and Date

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Participation Plan, 2026

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Contact Information

The public, stakeholders, and interested parties can contact the HRMPO regarding the Public Participation Plan, the Title VI Plan, HRMPO documents, and other public records. Submit written comments to the following address:

- HRMPO
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)
112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, Virginia, 24401

Written comments can also be made online, email, or fax:

- Online hrvampo.org inquiry form: hrvampo.org/contact-us/
- Email: cspdc@cspdc.org
- Fax: (540) 885-2687

Oral comments can be submitted by calling the CSPDC office and requesting HRMPO staff at 540-885-5174. Comments may also be made in person at regularly scheduled HRMPO Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee meetings held at the Rockingham County Administration Building.

Title VI Manager and Additional Assistance

Submit any Title VI inquiries or comments to the HRMPO Title VI Manager at the above CSPDC contact information. Hearing and voice assistance are available from: Virginia Relay for Hearing and Voice Impaired: 7-1-1

Disclaimer

The HRMPO ensures non-discrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you have questions or concerns about your civil rights regarding this document, or if you need special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited

English proficiency, please contact the HRMPO. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, view the [HRMPO PPP and Title VI Plans](#), or call the CSPDC office at 540-885-5174.

Document Overview

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO) Public Participation Plan (PPP) establishes the policies, procedures, and strategies for engaging residents, stakeholders, and partner agencies in regional transportation planning. The PPP ensures compliance with federal regulations requiring that MPOs provide meaningful opportunities for public input on transportation plans and programs.

This document describes the public engagement procedures for developing, adopting, and amending the HRMPO's major planning documents. The PPP aligns with the HRMPO Title VI Plan to ensure that historically underserved and disadvantaged populations have equal access to the planning process. The PPP establishes four primary goals: transparency and regulatory compliance, comprehensive and accessible public engagement, responsiveness to public input, and continuous improvement. The HRMPO reviews the PPP as needed to ensure the document remains effective and responsive to community needs.

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) administers and staffs the HRMPO. HRMPO staff prepared the PPP in coordination with the City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, towns of Bridgewater, Dayton, and Mount Crawford, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The FHWA, FTA, VDOT, DRPT, and MPO localities provide financial support for HRMPO planning activities and the development of the PPP.

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Contents

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Section 1: Introduction and Purpose

Overview

The Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (HRMPO), which includes the City of Harrisonburg, the towns of Bridgewater, Dayton, and Mount Crawford, and the urbanized portion of Rockingham County, was established on May 1, 2002, as a result of the U.S. Census designation of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Urbanized Area (UZA). Federal legislation requires that any urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000 have an MPO comprised of representatives of the local jurisdictions and state and federal transportation officials.

The HRMPO, comprised of a Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), has the responsibility for transportation policy-making in the metropolitan planning area. The Policy Board is the decision-making body of the HRMPO, and voting membership is comprised of elected representatives from each of the five HRMPO localities and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The TAC reviews and makes recommendations for Policy Board consideration, and voting membership is comprised of staff from each locality and representatives from VDOT and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT).

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC) administers and staffs the HRMPO. Staff, in coordination with the HRMPO localities and agencies, collect, analyze, and evaluate transportation data to inform Policy Board decision-making. Staff prepare materials and develop planning documents for the Policy Board and TAC meetings and administers the public involvement and Title VI processes. Staff review and consider revisions to the PPP as needed to ensure the MPO's planning processes meet current state and federal requirements.

Purpose

The purpose of the HRMPO PPP is to document the MPO's responsibilities, goals, and strategies for engaging the public in metropolitan transportation planning activities. Federal Regulation Code 450.316 mandates that the HRMPO document public engagement processes in a PPP. The PPP identifies how the HRMPO works to ensure federal code requirements are met and that all members of the public are notified of MPO activities specifically related to meetings and updates to major MPO governing documents such as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Title VI Plan, and other documents and processes.

Federal code also requires that MPOs conduct transportation planning through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) process. The 3-C process means planning is ongoing rather than irregular, involves coordination among multiple agencies and stakeholders, and considers all transportation modes and factors that affect the regional transportation system. The HRMPO ensures that transportation planning is based on the 3-C process and involves coordination among localities, agencies, stakeholders, and the public while considering all transportation modes affecting all people in the region.

The HRMPO also emphasizes the value of public participation in informing transportation planning, programming, and decision-making. HRMPO staff adhere to the American Planning Association (APA) American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct related to public

engagement. The Code notes providing timely, adequate, clear, and accurate information on planning issues to all affected persons and decision makers. Staff strive to ensure that the public has an opportunity to provide meaningful input on HRMPO planning while providing special attention to how decisions affect disadvantaged communities.

How the PPP Informs Other Documents

The HRMPO maintains five key documents (see **Figure 1**). Three documents guide MPO transportation planning in the short and long-term: The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The remaining two documents, the PPP and the Title VI Plan, inform the HRMPO's public engagement.

LRTP, TIP, and UPWP

The LRTP is a 25-year vision for the region's transportation system that identifies regional transportation needs, goals, and prioritized projects. The LRTP addresses all modes of transportation and must be fiscally constrained to reasonably expected revenues.

The TIP documents transportation projects that will receive federal funding over four-year period. The TIP includes project descriptions, costs, funding sources, and schedules, must be consistent with the LRTP, and is updated as needed when the status of projects or funding changes.

The UPWP is the HRMPO's annual budget and work plan that describes all transportation planning activities the HRMPO will complete during the fiscal year. The UPWP identifies tasks, schedules, funding sources, and responsible agencies for each planning activity.

Title VI and PPP

The Title VI Plan and PPP are complementary documents that ensure comprehensive public engagement. The PPP describes how the HRMPO conducts public participation and the Title VI Plan ensures that the MPO is meeting federal Title VI requirements and that historically underserved and disadvantaged populations have equal access to the planning process. Federal regulations require that the PPP align with the Title VI Plan, which ensures compliance with Title VI and related non-discrimination regulations.

Figure 1: Relationship of Foundational and Supplemental Documents in Relation to HRMPO Planning



Goals, Desired Outcomes, and Performance Measures

The HRMPO PPP establishes goals for engaging the public in transportation planning, describes the desired outcomes of engagement efforts, and identifies the performance measures used to evaluate the PPP's effectiveness. The public participation goals reflect federal requirements and the HRMPO's commitment to transparent planning. The desired outcomes describe what successful engagement is in practice. The performance measures provide criteria for assessing effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. Combined, these elements create a public engagement framework for accountability and continuous improvement.

Goals

The HRMPO PPP goals for engaging the public are:

Table 1: HRMPO PPP Goals

Goal	Description
Goal 1: Transparency and Regulatory Compliance	Provide complete and accessible information on HRMPO activities and maintain full compliance with Title VI and all applicable state and federal requirements.
Goal 2: Comprehensive and Accessible Public Engagement	Connect with all members of the public through multiple notification methods and accessible meeting formats. Provide adequate public notice for review and input on the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, Title VI Plan, PPP amendments, and other planning activities. Conduct meetings at convenient times and accessible locations, with particular attention to populations traditionally underserved by transportation systems. Use visualizations and clear communication to make planning initiatives easier to understand.
Goal 3: Responsiveness to Public Input	Demonstrate thoughtful and timely consideration of public input received during development of the LRTP and all other planning activities.
Goal 4: Continuous Improvement	Regularly review the effectiveness of the PPP to ensure a full and open participation process and update as needed.

Desired Outcomes

The HRMPO PPP desired outcomes of successful public engagement are:

Table 2: HRMPO PPP Desired Outcomes

Outcome	Description
Outcome 1: Meaningful Public Participation	An engaged and informed public that actively participates in and provides meaningful input on the metropolitan planning process.
Outcome 2: Effective Partnerships	Strong working relationships between the public, stakeholders, the HRMPO Policy Board, TAC, and partner agencies that support collaborative decision-making.
Outcome 3: Community-Responsive Plans	Transportation plans and programs that reflect and address community needs and priorities and reflect industry best practices

Performance Measures

The HRMPO performance measures for assessing how well the MPO is meeting PPP goals and desired outcomes are:

Table 3: HRMPO PPP Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Description
Measure 1: Public Responsiveness	Respond promptly and within a reasonable time period to requests for information about plans under public comment and all HRMPO activities. Comply with all Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements and provide timely responses.
Measure 2: Participation Effectiveness	Track public participation for plans under comment, including number of comments received through meetings, surveys, and written submissions. Identify and implement strategies to increase engagement if necessary.
Measure 3: Staff Capacity and Training	Staff complete annual Title VI training and attend other federal compliance training related to MPO operations as needed.
Measure 4: Regulatory Compliance	Address any federal PPP compliance findings promptly and maintain 100% full compliance with Title VI and other applicable regulations. All major HRMPO transportation plans (LRTP, TIP, UPWP, PPP, and Title VI Plan) receive appropriate state and federal approvals.

Section 2: Public Meeting Notice and Accessibility

This section establishes the procedures for public meeting notification, providing advance notice of meetings and planning activities, and ensuring that all meetings are accessible to the public. Section 3 provides an overview of public communication, education, and outreach methods.

Public Meeting Locations and Guidelines

Location of Regular HRMPO Policy Board and TAC Meetings and Public Information Meetings

All regular Policy Board and TAC meetings and public information meetings will be held at locations within the region to inform residents and solicit feedback. Meeting locations and times will be publicly accessible and accommodate individuals with disabilities and served by public transportation.

Public Comment Opportunity

All HRMPO Policy Board, TAC, and committee meetings will include a public comment period after the meeting is called to order and prior meeting minutes are approved. When major plans are on the agenda, an additional public comment period will be provided before action is taken. The public may also submit comments before meetings via email or mail. Staff will acknowledge the comments during the public comment period at Policy Board and TAC meetings.

Accessibility and Interpreter Availability

All meetings are held in ADA-accessible facilities with public transit access. HRMPO provides accommodations for individuals with disabilities upon request. Written materials will be available in accessible formats for the visually impaired, including large print, Braille, and audio. Sign language interpreters and language interpreters are available upon request. Accommodation requests should be submitted at least three business days before a meeting to HRMPO staff (see **Table 4**).

Table 4: Summary of Accessibility and Language Services

Accessibility and Language Services		
Service Type	Advance Notice Required	Response Commitment
Sign Language Interpreters	3 business days minimum	Provided if requested
Non-English Interpreters		
Large Print Materials		
Braille Documents		
Audio Recordings		

Public Notice of Meetings and Plans

HRMPO provides public notice for all public MPO meetings and major plans. Meeting notices include all Policy Board and TAC meetings, including regular, special, rescheduled meetings, and meeting venue changes from in-person to all-virtual; citizen advisory committee meetings or other committee meetings involving the public; and any meetings intended to gather public information or input. All notices include the meeting date, time, location, and meeting and document materials and are posted on hrvampo.org and also posted in newspapers or other outlets if necessary.

HRMPO major plans such as the LRTP, TIP, UPWP, Title VI Plan, and PPP are approved or amended. An approval creates or replaces a complete document, while an amendment modifies an existing document. Approvals are comprehensive planning documents and typically require longer public comment periods than amendments, while amendments are specific modifications to an already-approved document that typically require shorter public comment periods.

For the HRMPO, the LRTP is approved every five years and amended as needed when project priorities change. The TIP is approved every four years and amended when projects are added, removed, or significantly changed. The UPWP is approved annually, with amendments made when work tasks change. The Title VI Plan is approved every three years and amended as needed based on federal requirements and guidance. The PPP is approved when major revisions occur, with amendments made for procedural updates between major revisions.

Table 5 provides a comprehensive summary of the HRMPO public notice requirements for meetings and documents.

Table 5: HRMPO PPP Public Notice Requirements

Public Notice Requirements		
Activity Type	Advance Notice Period	Publication Requirements
Regular Meetings		
Policy Board and TAC Regular Meetings Calendar	Published prior to January 1 of the next calendar year	Once in local newspapers and HRMPO website
Policy Board and TAC Regular Meetings	Published one week prior to the scheduled meeting	HRMPO website
Special/Rescheduled Meetings		
Policy Board and TAC Special Meetings	7 calendar days minimum	Once in local newspapers and HRMPO website
Policy Board and TAC Rescheduled Meetings	7 calendar days minimum	Once in local newspapers and HRMPO website
Policy Board and TAC All-Virtual Meetings	7 calendar days minimum	Once in local newspapers and SAWMPO website
Special Community Meetings	14 calendar days minimum	Once in local newspapers and HRMPO website
Major Plan Approvals		
LRTP Approval (approved every five years)	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
TIP Approval (approved every four years)	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
UPWP Approval (approved annually)	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
Title VI Plan Approval (approved every three years)	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
PPP Approval (approved as necessary)	45 calendar days minimum	Once in local newspapers and HRMPO website
Other Major Plans Approval	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
Plan Amendments		
LRTP Amendments	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
TIP Amendments	7 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
UPWP Amendments	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
Title VI Plan Amendments	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website
PPP Amendments	45 calendar days minimum	Once in local newspapers and HRMPO website
Other Major Plan Amendments	14 calendar days minimum	HRMPO website

Section 3: Public Communication, Education, and Outreach

The HRMPO provides public access to records, plans, meetings, and activities, and educates the public about metropolitan transportation planning. Staff scale public outreach to match project scope and significance. Localized projects receive targeted outreach within the project area, while regional projects require broader engagement throughout the entire HRMPO region, with particular attention to traditionally underserved areas.

Access to Information

The HRMPO will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to technical and policy information related to the data or content used in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects. Documents are available for public review at the CSPDC office from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and also locality offices in Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Bridgewater, Dayton, and Mount Crawford upon request. Major planning documents are available on hrvampo.org.

Response to Public Input

HRMPO staff responses to questions and comments from the public concerning the public participation process, draft transportation plans, programs, or public agency consultation process will be made directly to the individual by email, letter, phone, or other appropriate means.

When significant written and oral comments are received on the LRTP, TIP, UPWP or other planning documents, HRMPO staff will develop a summary and analysis of the comments and a report as part of the final document.

Public Outreach and Education Methods

The HRMPO uses a variety of communication and outreach methods to inform the public about transportation planning activities and encourage participation in the planning process. These methods are selected and tailored based on the type of activity, the audience, and the level of engagement needed. **Table 6** summarizes the primary communication and outreach tools used by HRMPO staff, HRMPO members, and partner stakeholders to inform the public and other stakeholders.

The HRMPO will engage underserved populations through organizations and media outlets that serve these communities. Using GIS, the HRMPO has identified the locations of these communities, as documented in the Title VI Plan.

Table 6: Public Outreach and Education Methods

Communication Method	Description	Frequency/Usage
HRMPO Website	Staff perform routine maintenance, updating, and posting of materials including public notices for procurement, public comment, and meetings; policy documents; meeting schedules; events calendar; major transportation plans; and agendas and minutes for Policy Board and TAC meetings.	Ongoing
Presentations	HRMPO staff, HRMPO members, and partner stakeholders make presentations to citizen groups, public agencies, and local governmental bodies.	As requested
Public Meetings and Events	HRMPO staff, HRMPO members, and partner stakeholders attend public meetings and events to inform the public.	As necessary and appropriate
Public Service Announcements	HRMPO staff, HRMPO members, and partner stakeholders provide public service announcements and interviews on radio and local television channels to explain subject matter and promote public participation.	As appropriate
News Articles and Press Releases	Articles and press releases provided to local media.	As needed
Open Houses, Roundtables, and Community Forums	HRMPO staff, HRMPO members, and partner stakeholders provide information presentations at regional sites, open houses, roundtables, and other community forums.	As requested and appropriate
Email	Email provided to select individuals, groups, or organizations that have expressed interest or made comments at meetings.	When appropriate
Flyers	Informational flyers distributed in public locations.	When necessary and appropriate

Section 4: Transit and Public Participation

The Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT) operates the City's public transit program. HDPT chooses to integrate coordination with the HRMPO and gives formal public notice in this PPP that the HRMPO's TIP development process is being used to satisfy HDPT's public participation and public hearing requirements of Section 5307(c). All public transportation providers in the region may utilize the HRMPO as an entity to augment their public participation process.

To that end, the HRMPO will comply with transit planning requirements. Each public notice will state that "public notice of public involvement activities and time established for the public review and comments on the TIP will satisfy the Program of Projects requirements," as presented in joint Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration environmental regulations "Environmental Impact and

Related Procedures" 23 C.F.R. Part 771. A project that requires an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement will involve additional public involvement.

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