

Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS)
Metropolitan Planning Organization

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN



Adopted February 11, 2008



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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN
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In an effort to encourage citizen participation and facilitate public involvement in the transportation planning process, CHATS Policy Committee approved this following Public Involvement Plan on this date.

William E. Crosby
Chair, CHATS Policy Committee

Adopted: February 11, 2008

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Charleston Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (CHATS)

RESOLUTION

Adopting the Public Participation Plan

WHEREAS, a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing transportation planning process is to be carried out in the CHATS Planning Area; and

WHEREAS, the Public Participation Plan describes a public review process of transportation planning activities to be undertaken by local, regional, or state agencies pertinent to CHATS; and

WHEREAS, the various state, local and regional agencies involved with transportation planning activities for CHATS have cooperatively developed a Public Participation Plan to be in compliance with SAFETEA-LU requirements; and

WHEREAS, the CHATS Technical Advisory Committee, at its scheduled meeting recommended the draft Public Participation Plan to the CHATS Policy Committee; and

WHEREAS, it is the function of the CHATS Policy Committee to adopt and approve a Public Participation Plan for the CHATS Metropolitan Planning Organization.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the CHATS Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization does hereby adopt and approve the Public Participation Plan.

William E. Crosby
Chairman, CHATS Policy Committee

February 11, 2008
Date

Introduction

This report documents the actions to be carried out by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) to ensure that opportunities exist for the public to be involved in transportation planning activities, pursuant to Title 23 CFR 450.316 of Statewide Planning; Metropolitan Planning and 40 CFR 51.402(e) Criteria and Procedures for Determining Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects.... and section VI-A 2CCR604-2 Statewide Transportation Planning rules. The Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) promulgates the policy to support and encourage public participation and to adhere to the principles of Environmental Justice in the metropolitan planning process. The CHATS public participation policy is designed to ensure opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the decision-making process.

Background

In 1977, Governor James Edwards appointed the BCD Council of Governments to perform the planning and programming functions of CHATS, in cooperation with the State Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

CHATS currently serves 800 square miles comprised of the tri-county region's most urbanized areas. Generally, the study area contains of all the land expected to be urbanized within the next 20 years. It now consists of portions of all three counties in the BCD Region. CHATS is governed by a 47-member board representing governmental and transportation-related organizations from throughout its coverage area.

Federal and State Mandates

Federal regulations exist that require a public participation component to the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law in 2005. CHATS implements SAFETEA-LU through plans and programs that consider all modes of transportation, and which are “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate” [SEC. 1203(a)(4)]. In addition to the “3C” process listed above, SAFETEA-LU emphasizes the broadening of public participation to include stakeholders who have not traditionally been involved. Transportation planning under SAFETEA-LU must be performed in conjunction with Federal, state, and local officials, transit operators, tribal governments, and the public.

Further, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) are responsible for conducting the locally-developed public participation process as required by the Joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/ Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning Rule (23 CFR part 450, 49 CFR part 613). The legislation requires that the metropolitan planning process must “include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs (Transportation Improvement Programs),” including the Long Range Transportation Plan [23 CFR part 450.316(b)(1)].

SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors

SAFETEA-LU emphasizes eight broad focal points:

1. *Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.* The CHATS MPO will coordinate transportation projects with local governments and agencies to improve the MPO region's global competitiveness. This will be achieved by promoting transportation corridors that improve access to the region, thus enhancing flow of goods and services to the global market. A prime example of this is the cooperation between CHATS MPO, SCDOT, and the South Carolina Ports Authority on the port expansion.

2. *Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.* The CHATS MPO will encourage projects that include enhanced safety features for transportation in the region. The safety measures to be included are pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, and working with the local schools on transportation safety education.

3. *Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.* The transit agency is working on an evacuation plan for the region. The plan will enhance safety to residents and provide options during an emergency. For highway security, ITS systems and signal system upgrades are being planned to aid in transportation security.

4. *Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.* The CHATS MPO will work with all local governments in the region to update the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Travel demand modeling will be used as a tool to analyze the current highway network and projected future network demand. Additionally, mobility of people and freight movement will be addressed.

5. *Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.* In an effort to reduce pollution and protect the environment, the CHATS MPO will monitor the highway network and implement the projects identified in the Congestion Management Plan. The CHATS MPO will work with state and local governments and agencies to coordinate transportation projects in a consistent and environmentally sound manner.

6. *Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes, for people and freight.* The CHATS MPO will coordinate activities examining the integration of transportation systems for the region. To address this issue, the CHATS MPO will be administering the development of a human services transportation coordination plan, service coordination between the urban and rural transit systems, and conducting a phase II of the Rail Corridor Study.

7. *Promote efficient system management and operation.* The CHATS MPO will work with SCDOT on funding system improvements that promote efficient operations.

Intelligent Transportation Systems projects are a focus to accomplish this, as well as project design and selection.

8. *Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.* In all plans and projects the CHATS MPO will examine the existing transportation system before making recommendations for improvements. To facilitate this, the MPO will continue to employ its GIS based information system and travel demand model for the region.

Public Involvement Goals

The fundamental goal of public involvement is to assure that the decisions regarding a proposed plan or project are made only after the public is aware of and has the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Transportation planning decision-makers must consider concerns of all the publics who may be affected by a proposed project.

Specific goals of the public involvement process are:

Goal 1: Educate and Present Information

BCDCOG is responsible for providing information to the public. BCDCOG staff shall educate and present information about the regional planning process, including the sources of funding and impacts of regional planning decisions. BCDCOG staff shall inform the public about the role of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the committee structure of BCDCOG. Staff shall explain the specific tasks and goals of the BCDCOG, as well as related tasks that are not in the MPO's authority to perform. This information shall be presented in non-technical terms so the public can understand and process this information.

Goal 2: Solicit Public Input

BCDCOG shall gather representative input from the public to identify mobility needs, desires, issues, and concerns. CHATS shall continuously seek public involvement throughout the transportation planning processes, though specifically targeted at the beginning of transportation planning processes, at key decision points and when final product drafts are issued. The elected Board members also have direct contact with the public (as they were selected by the public to represent them) and should reflect their concerns to BCDCOG staff. Staff will also closely monitor public input received through major project development and corridor studies.

Goal 3: Facilitate Information Flow between the Public and Decision-Makers

BCDCOG staff is responsible for compiling public issues, comments, and concerns into complete and concise documents for presentation to the decision-makers. The BCDCOG staff shall also schedule and organize meetings where the public can present concerns to the staff or Board.

Goal 4: Consider Public Concerns in Decision-Making

The Board shall consider the public concerns that are presented to them by the staff as well as those presented to them by individual persons at public meetings. BCDCOG staff shall consider public concerns as it prepares draft planning documents.

Public Notification Procedures

Meetings

All meetings for the CHATS Policy Committee, CHATS Study Team, and all CHATS Standing Advisory Committees are open to the public and shall conform to the following procedures:

- Agenda shall be mailed to all members and to an interested parties list (any citizen, affected public agency, representative of a transportation employer, private provider of transportation, and others shall be included on the interested parties list upon request) seven (7) days prior to a meeting. Electronic mailings (E-mail) shall be used to those individuals who have submitted their e-mail address to BCDCOG staff. Public input meetings will be held at a time that accommodates the population we are seeking input. All efforts shall be made to hold meetings in transit accessible locations.
- Notice of the meeting and the agenda shall be mailed to a regional media list maintained and updated by the BCDCOG.
- All meetings shall conform to the BCDCOG agency policy concerning the American Disabilities Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327, as amended).
- All meetings shall provide an opportunity during the meeting for public comment. The CHATS Policy Committee meetings shall provide for public comment as a part of the discussion of any agenda item requiring action by the body. However, the Policy Committee Chairperson may limit these comments to three (3) minutes per individual. If more than one person is present representing an organization or group, the Policy Committee Chairperson may ask that the group select a spokesperson. In addition, whenever possible, individuals or spokespersons wishing to be recognized should alert the Chairperson or staff prior to the meeting.

Notices shall be advertised in the Charleston Post & Courier Newspaper and documents shall be made available in draft form for public review and comment (in the offices of the BCDCOG, City and County Planning Departments in the region), at least thirty (30) days prior to the Policy Committee Meeting where action is scheduled. Notices will also be sent to media outlets that focus on minority population in the community. These outlets include:

- WAZS 98.9 El Sol
Jabr Communications
5081 Rivers Ave
Charleston, SC 29406
- Charleston Chronicle
1111 King Street
Charleston, SC 29401
- WJEA Channel 12

If the final TIP or Plan is significantly different than the one which was made available for public comment, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised Plan or TIP will be provided. The document will be considered significantly different when changes meet the criteria for an amendment as defined in the glossary of this document.

Citizen input will also be encouraged in the process of updating the Long Range Plan each five years (as required by SAFETEA-LU, as amended) by holding at least five (5) geographically dispersed public forums around the urban area. As needed, charrettes/workshops and/or surveys

will be conducted to supplement the public forums in the effort to involve the public in the Long Range Transportation Planning process for the CHATS MPO.

Any technical and other reports to assure documentation of the development, refinement, and reappraisal of the MPO’s Transportation Plan shall be made available at the BCDCOG offices for review by interested persons upon request.

Plan-Specific Guidelines

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a long range (20+ year) multimodal strategy and capital improvement program developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in transportation facilities. The LRTP is updated every five years and may be amended as a result of changes in projected Federal, State and local funding; major investment studies; congestion management systems plans; and environmental impact studies. The current LRTP is available for viewing on the web at <http://www.bcdco.com/LRP.htm>, as well as in the BCDCOG office.

Activity	Technique
Draft Document	MPO website and available at BCDCOG office
Comment Opportunities	The public will have many opportunities to have their comments heard. Providing comments at public meetings is but one venue. Among the other are written comments accepted electronically via e-mail, online comment or fax. People can also submit their comments in person or by mail. Comments can also be submitted during Study Team Committee meetings, Policy Committee meetings or public meetings held specifically for LRTP updates. In some cases, mail or web-based questionnaires may be used to gather information about specific projects.
Comment Period	There will be at least a 30-day public comment period prior to adoption for both LRTP updates and amendments. The public comment period begins with public notice.
Public Meeting	Public meeting(s) are to be held during the public comment period. There will be separate meetings for the draft plan and the final LRTP ⁱ . Public Meeting Notices will be sent Two (2) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release, web announcements, announcement posters and/or announcement letters will be sent. Two (2) to three (3) weeks prior to the public meeting, paid media advertisement (newspaper) or a public service announcement (radio) will run, and a public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers.
Amendment Notice	Amendment notices will be sent through web announcements, public notice in regional, local and minority newspapers and regularly scheduled meetings.
Summary of comments received	A public comment summary memo will be made available prior to the Policy Committee meeting for the LRTP update. Written and verbal comments are summarized and incorporated into the final LRTP. ⁱⁱ
Final, adopted document availability	The document will be available on the BCDCOG website and in the office. Upon adoption of final document, all MPO members as well as interested parties will be notified by e-mail and/or hard copy letter that the document is available on the MPO

	website. The document shall be made available in an accessible format as reasonable and appropriate.
Evaluation Technique	The LRTP will be evaluated every five years in consultation with interested parties. All comments and suggestions made by the public will be recorded and taken into consideration when improvement strategies are discussed. The number of participants at meetings, number of electronic comments and responses, number of “hits” on website and the number of non-electronic written and oral comments will be tracked.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a five-year plan that lists all regionally significant and federally funded projects and services in the MPO planning area, such as highway and street projects, public transit projects, major corridor studies, transportation enhancements and bicycle/pedestrian enhancements. Projects that are included in the TIP must be consistent with, or be selected from an approved Long Range Transportation Plan. Additionally, the TIP must be fiscally constrained or have funding mechanisms already in place for all projects and strategies. The TIP can be amended as a result of changes in funding or need. Administrative modifications to the TIP do not require a specific public participation plan, but these modifications are discussed in public meetings where comments are accepted. The current TIP is available for viewing on the web at http://www.bcdco.com/publications/TIP/CHATS_TIP_FY07-12.pdf, as well as in the BCDCOG office.

Activity	Technique
Draft Document	MPO website and available at MPO office.
Comment Opportunities	The public will have many opportunities to have their comments heard. Providing comments at public meetings is but one venue. Among the other are written comments accepted electronically via e-mail, online comment card, or fax. People can also submit their comments in person or by mail. Comments can also be submitted during Study Team Committee meetings, Policy Committee meetings or public meetings held specifically for TIP updates. In some cases, mail or web-based questionnaires may be used to gather information about specific projects.
Comment Period	There will be at least a 14-day public comment period prior to adoption for TIP updates. The public comment period begins with public notice.
Public Meeting	Public meeting(s) are to be held during the public comment period. There will be separate meetings for the draft plan and the final TIP ⁱⁱⁱ .
Public Meeting Notice	Two (2) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release, web announcements, announcement posters and/or announcement letters will be sent. Also, two (2) weeks prior to the public meeting, a public service announcement will be released, and public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers.

Amendment Notice	Amendment notices will be sent through web announcements, public notice in regional, local and minority newspapers and regularly scheduled meetings. Amendments shall be made available in an accessible format as reasonable and appropriate.
Summary of comments received	A public comment summary memo will be made available prior to the Policy Committee meeting for the TIP update. Written and verbal comments are summarized and incorporated into the final TIP. ^{iv}
Final, adopted document availability	The document will be available on the BCDCOG website and in the office. Upon adoption of final document, all MPO members will be notified by e-mail that the document is available on the MPO website.
Evaluation Technique	Will record the number of participants at meetings, number of electronic comments and responses, number of “hits” on website and the number of non-electronic written and oral comments.

Public Participation Plan Update

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) outlines the strategies used to provide and receive information from the public on transportation planning and programming process including funding for projects, studies, plans and committee actions.

Activity	Technique
Draft Document	MPO website and available at MPO office
Comment Opportunities	Written comments accepted via e-mail, online comment card, fax, mail; Public Meeting; Study Team Committee meeting, Policy Committee Meeting.
Comment Period	The public comment period will last 45 days. The public comment period begins with public notice.
Public Meeting	Held during the public comment period.
Public Meeting Notice	Two (2) weeks prior to the public meeting, a press release, public service announcement, web announcements, announcement posters and/or announcement letters will be sent. Also, two (2) weeks prior to the public meeting, a public notice will be published in various regional, local and minority newspapers.
Summary of comments received	A public comment summary memo will be made available prior to the Policy Committee meeting for the PPP update. Written and verbal comments are summarized and incorporated into the final PPP.
Final, adopted document availability	The document will be available on the BCDCOG website and in the office. Upon adoption of final document, all MPO members will be notified by e-mail that the document is available on the MPO website.
Evaluation Technique	The PPP will be evaluated annually by MPO staff and every five years in consultation with interested parties. All comments and suggestions made by the public will be recorded and taken into consideration when improvement strategies are discussed. The number of participants at meetings, number of electronic comments and responses, number of “hits” on website and the number of non-electronic written and oral comments will be tracked.

Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is a one-year plan developed by staff to focus work efforts and planning funds anticipated in the upcoming fiscal year. All federally funded planning activities have to be in the UPWP and have to be developed through required planning factors. The UPWP is reviewed and discussed at the regularly scheduled Study Team Committee and CHATS Policy Committee public meetings along with being made available on the BCDCOG website. Public comment is welcomed and will be recorded. Public comment on the UPWP will be sought in the same process as outlined for the TIP document.

Annual Listing of Obligated Funds

Ninety days after the end of the fiscal year, the Annual Listing of Obligated Funds will be made publicly available through a similar process as the TIP with one exception; a draft of this document will not be distributed. Notice will be given through the regional and local newspapers. The Listing will be distributed and discussed at the regularly scheduled Study Team Committee and CHATS Policy Committee public meetings along with being made available by January 30th each year on the website and at the BCDCOG office. Public comment is welcomed and will be recorded.

Outreach Tools and Techniques

The type of public outreach efforts employed for a particular project will be determined based on the project's overall regional and local impact. Highly localized projects may require more specialized outreach within the project's area of influence, rather than the broad outreach efforts required by others. Extensive outreach efforts throughout all areas of the region are conducted in order to assemble a broad cross-section of input into the decision making process, including traditionally underserved areas. The MPO's outreach efforts in these areas will continue to provide these residents with an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns. The MPO will continue to conduct, sponsor, and participate in special and community events that reinforce the mission and strategic plan of the organization, educate the public, and provide opportunities for public input.

Tools

The MPO's approach in publicizing its public meetings may include the following outreach methods:

Public Notices

Public notices and/or advertisements will be placed in newspapers, in addition to major regional newspapers deemed appropriate for the project. Public service announcements and meeting advertisements will be sent to popular minority and ethnic radio stations. Whenever possible and appropriate, public service announcements and meeting advertisements will be sent to the public access cable television station, in addition to regional network stations. A list of regional newspapers will be maintained by the BCDCOG staff and made available on request.

Paid Advertising

Various projects may require additional paid advertising in the form of newspaper, radio, or television ads. These will be more detailed than a standard Public Notice.

Newsletters

BCDCOG produces and distributes a periodic newsletter that includes articles and other information of interest on MPO plans, programs, and studies.

Flyers/Posters

When appropriate, participation from target populations will be sought by posting flyers/posters and meeting notices in locations such as government centers, neighborhood shops, religious institutions, social service agencies, employment centers, bus stops/transit hubs, senior centers, public health clinics, public libraries, community centers and popular meeting places. Postcards and flyers may also be distributed directly to residents.

Traditional Letters

When appropriate, traditional letters about plans, studies, projects or any other information deemed important for public input will be mailed out to interested parties, public libraries and to members of the advisory committees.

Press Releases

Press releases will be released to ensure interested parties and the press is up-to-date on news and information concerning MPO activities. The MPO's website, (<http://www.bcdcog.com/transportationPlanning.htm>) will be employed as a tool for disseminating information on meetings, project updates and background. The MPO's website is a tool to describe and visually represent MPO plans, programs, meetings, and other appropriate information. A calendar is included on the BCDCOG website displaying scheduled MPO committee meetings. Staff shall post draft documents on the website for public review and comment.

The website shall contain, but not be limited to:

- Brief descriptions of current projects with available maps, photos, renderings
- Work products and publications — TIP, UPWP, LRTP, etc.
- Links to related agencies and planning partners — SCDOT, FHWA, etc.
- Current Operating Procedures — including Public Participation Plan and Prospectus
- A listing of current MPO member jurisdictions
- Meeting calendars with agendas as soon as feasible
- Contact information — mailing address, phone, fax and e-mail
- Profiles of MPO staff with current responsibilities

Mailing databases

The assembly of a database of names and addresses of social and civic groups, neighborhood and community associations and interested individuals will assist in the public outreach for the Public Participation Plan and other plans. The electronic list of names will serve as a mailing list for notification of meetings. Particular efforts will be made to include low-income, minority, disabled and non-English-speaking populations. To supplement the database, members of the public will be asked if they would like to be included on a mailing list as a part of comment forms dispensed and collected at public meetings. Mailing and e-mail addresses will be

requested. E-mail messages and/or post cards will be sent to individuals and groups notifying them of meetings, in addition to the notices that are distributed to the local media.

Visualization

Visualization techniques shall be used to enhance the public's understanding of MPO plans and programs. Such techniques shall be used in an appropriate manner when presenting and describing MPO plans and programs. This includes using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a very effective way to communicate complex technical material and ideas to stakeholders. While a MPO survey revealed web- and e-mail-based communication to be effective and desirable, not everyone in the MPO planning area has access to computers or is computer-literate enough to effectively use them. Plans and documents will be made available through the MPO office and municipal offices. Good customer service can easily make online information accessible, as well. If staff is made aware that a citizen wants to access an online tool or plan, accommodations can be made to print, mail, and discuss the needed document. This is also an opportunity to forge a relationship between the MPO and an affected person.

Public Meeting Principles

Public meetings are held for a variety of reasons, and different levels of public input are expected. The purpose of these meetings is threefold:

1. To confirm the purpose and intent of the plan or project;
2. To present the trends and forecasts for the region; and
3. To gather public input.

These meetings may be specially scheduled, project- or plan-specific. Public meetings may also be regularly scheduled meetings of the Technical Committee and Policy Committee. Actions of meetings may result in the adoption or approval/disapproval of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Annual Listing of Obligated Projects and/or LRTP. Other actions include adoption of resolutions for amendments, adjustments, endorsements, special plans and reports.

Early Involvement

Early involvement with local community leaders will help to determine suitable meeting forums and information formats to foster valuable input, especially when soliciting input from target populations.

Understandable and Interesting Language/No Jargon

Meeting notices and materials will use appropriate, understandable language — acronyms and other technical jargon will be avoided to the extent that is possible to the subject matter (For a helpful Transportation Planning Glossary, see Appendix C). Efforts will be made to tailor advertising, project campaigns and slogans to generate the most interest possible. The MPO will make reasonable efforts to address identified language barriers in order to provide meaningful access to information on its plans and programs.

Accessible

MPO meetings and public review meetings shall be held at a location and time that is convenient and accessible. When there are a series of public meetings being held throughout the region on a

certain plan or program, at least one-quarter of these meetings shall be held at a time and location that is accessible by public transportation.

Information Gathering Techniques

Many of the Outreach Tools described above serve to initiate a two-way dialogue and therefore also act as Information Gathering Tools. Some other Information Gathering Tools are below:

Internet	As internet usage and availability continues to increase so will the MPO’s utilization of this technology to gather input. Online surveys are obvious tools to gather public sentiment along with website “hit” counts to analyze which plans or projects are garnering interest.
Surveys	Common input gathering tools include statistically valid telephone surveys, user surveys, traditional postage-paid comment cards, and online surveys.
Comment Card	Comment cards will be available at every public meeting. At specially held public meetings, all participants will be encouraged to fill out a comment card. In addition to gaining feedback, the MPO can also bolster its interested party’s database if the participant wishes.
Advisory Committees	The MPO maintains the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), a citizen’s advisory group, to address bicycle issues and concerns in order to create a coordinated intermodal transportation system. The Title VI Working Group advises staff and reviews plans in regards to Environmental Justice.
Door-to-Door Campaigns	When warranted, highly localized projects may benefit from door-to-door (business and/or residential) campaigns to distribute information, project updates, and gather input and comments.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As designated CHATS staff, BCDCOG will monitor the amount of public participation resulting from each public outreach activity. This will be done through various means, including:

- Taking attendance at public outreach meetings using a sign-in sheet;
- Keeping a log of contacts with the public, via phone, mail, email, fax, in-person meetings, or other means, which resulted from a public outreach activity;
- Keeping a record of attendance and involvement at events which are attended by BCDCOG staff and include a public outreach component for CHATS;
- Tracking the number of completed surveys or comment cards received from a public outreach event;
- Monitoring daily and weekly traffic to the BCDCOG website and number of page views;
- Tracking distribution of public information materials, including brochures, newsletters, and other publications;
- Tracking number of addresses on mailing lists; and
- Other means appropriate for the type of public outreach used.

This monitoring will identify any special circumstances which may have contributed to an unusually high or low attendance. It will also identify the nature of the notification process for the public outreach activity, including press releases, paid advertising, mailed notices, emails, phone calls, and other means.

On at least an annual basis, the information collected through monitoring public outreach will be compiled and evaluated to assess the effectiveness of each type of outreach activity. This will include both a quantitative assessment of the number of participants, as well as a qualitative assessment of the level of interaction and information exchanged.

The assessment will note the public involvement techniques used, the public's response, the public involvement objectives that were met by the meeting, and any change to how the activity should be conducted in the future.

This monitoring and evaluation process will be used to determine the effectiveness of existing public involvement techniques. The evaluation will include recommendations for improvements, which will be implemented over the course of the following year. Records of the monitoring and evaluation process will be kept on file at BCDCOG offices.

Title VI and Environmental Justice

Title VI of the Civil rights Act of 1964 protects persons from discrimination based on their race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. CHATS is funded at the federal level, so all of our transportation planning processes must comply with this law. Environmental Justice stems from Title VI, focusing on including low-income and minority populations in federally funded programs. Environmental justice has three general principles:

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

By providing the opportunity for everyone to participate in the transportation planning process, we are ensuring that the needs of all people can be met and that their desires for how the whole community should function and develop will be considered. To accomplish this, CHATS staff will use Census data to determine where concentrations of the underserved or underrepresented reside. Using this data, staff will:

1. Hold public meetings that are convenient to these geographic concentrations in terms of walk-ability and available transit options, which tend to be used more by low-income individuals than other forms of transportation;
2. Make all draft documents available for public review via the techniques described above

3. Residents or organizations that express an interest by attending public meetings or notifying us by other means will be included in the direct mailing list to receive information about future events and plan development;
4. Continue to research creative methods of reaching these populations with information, documents, and invitations other than the techniques listed within this document;
5. Seek out community leaders or representatives of these groups to participate in our planning processes as appropriate; and
6. Meet and make presentations to organizations that represent these segments of the population as requested.

American with Disabilities Act

Title II of the ADA requires State and local governments to make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities. This requirement extends not only to physical access at government facilities, programs, and events -- but also to policy changes that governmental entities must make to ensure that all people with disabilities can take part in, and benefit from, the programs and services of State and local governments. In addition, governmental entities must ensure effective communication -- including the provision of necessary auxiliary aids and services -- so that individuals with disabilities can participate in civic life.

Consultation with Interested Parties

CHATS will provide notice of upcoming public review meetings or review periods being held on the draft and final documents of the UPWP, the LRTP, and the TIP. Notice will be provided to known interested parties:

- Public transportation providers
- Freight shippers
- Providers of freight transportation services
- Private providers of transportation
- Users of public transportation
- Users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities
- Disabled
- Elderly
- Low-income
- Limited English-speaking populations
- Land management agencies
- Military installations
- Tribal governments
- Providers of non-emergency transportation services receiving financial assistance from a source other than title 49, U.S.C., Chapter 53.

Consultation with Federal, State, and Local Agencies

In developing the LRTP and TIP, the CHATS staff shall consult, as appropriate, with local and regional agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the CHATS study area. This consultation shall include, as appropriate, contacts with regional, local, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation. An increased emphasis is placed on consultation with resource

agencies responsible for natural resource management and historic preservation. CHATS will contact federal and state agencies using a direct mailing process and host meetings as appropriate. Formal coordination with these agencies will help to identify effective mitigation strategies for potential impacts of projects included in the CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

CHATS will compare proposed transportation improvements in their area to the agencies' plans, maps, inventories, etc. to assess potential environmental impacts. The assessments will be included in the draft Long Range Plan document, to be circulated to the public and to the environmental agencies for at least 30 days prior to adoption.

The UPWP, LRTP, and TIP shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the CHATS study area, including the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:

- Recipients of assistance under title 49, U.S.C., Chapter 53;
- Governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation service; and
- Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.

Interagency agreements will be maintained between CHATS and other local and regional agencies such as CARTA, Tri-County Link, and BCD Rural Planning Organization (RPO). The agreements will describe CHATS' role and responsibility in relation to the other agencies' work.

This Public Participation Plan was first developed by CHATS staff and the governing agencies of CHATS. It was then sent to the various agencies (Appendix B), via mail and/or email to review and make any suggestions, or comments. The various agencies have two weeks to send in any comments or suggestions for the PPP. The comments shall be taken into consideration to be included in the PPP. Once this process was done, and CHATS staff had responded back to the agencies comments and/or suggestions, then the PPP will have a 45-day public review period before it is actually adopted by the CHATS Policy Committee.

Appendix A — Consultation Process and Contacts

The following state and federal environmental agencies were sent letters seeking their consultation on the MPO planning documents. The letter directed the recipient to our website where the documents are posted and offered our contact information for additional information or clarifications.

National Park Service
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
US Department of Navy
US Air Force
South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
South Carolina Department of Commerce
South Carolina Department of Social Services
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
South Carolina Trucking Association
South Carolina State Ports Authority
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
South Carolina Forestry Commission
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
South Carolina Emergency Management Division
South Carolina Department of Public Safety
CARTA
BCD Rural Transportation Management Association (Tri-County Link)
Charleston County Human Service Commission
Charleston County Aviation Authority
Private Railroad Operators
Berkeley County School District
Charleston County School District
Dorchester County School District
Berkeley County Economic Development
Charleston Economic Development Alliance
Dorchester County Department of Economic Development
Historic Preservation Society of Charleston
Trident Area Council on Aging
United States Forest Service

Appendix B — Transportation Glossary

Access/Accessibility — The opportunity to reach a given end use within a certain time frame, or without being impeded by physical, social or economic barriers.

Alternative Modes of Transportation — Forms of transportation that provide transportation alternatives to the use of single-occupant automobiles. Examples include: rail, transit, carpools, bicycles and walking.

Amendment - A major change in the approved TIP or Plan that requires public review and comment, redemonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination (for ‘non-exempt’ projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas)

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) — A nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) — Federal civil rights legislation for persons with disabilities, signed into law in 1990, that prohibits discrimination specifically in the areas of employment, public accommodation, public services, telecommunications and transportation. Transportation requirements include the provision of “comparable paratransit service” that is equivalent to general public fixed-route service for persons who are unable to use regular bus service due to a disability.

Arterial Street — A class of street serving major traffic movements (high-speed, high volume) for travel between major points.

Attainment Area — An area considered to have air quality that meets or exceeds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) health standards used in the Clean Air Act. Non-attainment areas are areas considered not to have met these standards for designated pollutants. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a non-attainment area for others.

Capacity — A transportation facility's ability to accommodate a moving stream of people or vehicles in a given time period. The maximum rate of flow at which persons or vehicles can be reasonably expected to traverse a point or uniform segment of a lane or roadway during a specified time period under prevailing roadway, traffic and control conditions; usually expressed as vehicles per hour or persons per hour.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) — A plan for future capital infrastructure and program expenditures which identifies each capital project, its anticipated start and completion and allocates existing funds and known revenue sources for a given period of time. Most local governments have a CIP.

Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)- The public transit provider in the Charleston-North Charleston Urban Area.

Clean Air Act (CAA) — Federal statutes established by the United States Congress which set the nation’s air quality goals and the process for achieving those goals. The original Clean Air Act was passed in 1963, but the national air pollution control program is actually based on the 1970 version of the law. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments are the most far-reaching revisions of the 1970 law.

Congestion — A condition under which the number of vehicles using a facility is great enough to cause reduced speeds and increased travel times.

Congestion Management Process (CMP) — Systematic process for managing congestion. Provides information on transportation system performance and finds alternative ways to alleviate congestion and enhance the mobility of people and goods, to levels that meet state and local needs.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) — A categorical Federal-aid funding program created with the ISTEA. Directs funding to projects that contribute to meeting National air quality standards. CMAQ funds generally may not be used for projects that result in the construction of new capacity available to SOVs (single occupant vehicles).

Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) — A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. CSS is an approach that considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist.

Design Standards — Standards that are met when a new road is constructed, or when a deficient section is improved. These standards pertain to all relevant geometric and structural features required to provide a desired level of service over the life of the project. The life of the project is generally 20 years beyond its implementation.

Environmental Assessments (EA) — Prepared for federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) where it is not clearly known how significant the environmental impact might be. If, after preparing an environmental assessment, it is determined that the project impact is significant, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is then prepared. If not, a “finding of no significant impact” (FONSI) is documented.

Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) — Prepared for federal actions that have a significant effect on the human and natural environment. These are disclosure documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that provide a full description of the proposed project, the existing environment and analysis of the anticipated beneficial and adverse environmental effects of all reasonable alternatives. There are various stages — Draft EIS and Final EIS.

Environmental Justice (EJ) — Environmental justice assures that services and benefits allow for meaningful participation and are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) — The federal regulatory agency responsible for administering and enforcing federal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and others. EPA is the source agency of air quality control regulations affecting transportation.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) — A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the federal-aid Highway Program, providing financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads and bridges. The FHWA also administers the Federal Lands Highway Program, including survey, design and construction of forest highway system roads, parkways and park roads, Indian reservation roads, defense access roads and other Federal lands roads.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) — A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that is the principal source of federal financial assistance to America's communities for planning, development and improvement of public or mass transportation systems. FTA provides leadership, technical assistance and financial resources for safe, technologically advanced public transportation to enhance mobility and accessibility, to improve the nation's communities and natural environment and to strengthen the national economy.

Financial Planning — The process of defining and evaluating funding sources, sharing the information and deciding how to allocate the funds.

Financial Programming — A short-term commitment of funds to specific projects identified in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (see TIP).

Fiscal or Financial Constraint — Making sure that a given program or project can reasonably expect to receive funding within the time allotted for its implementation.

Geographic Information System (GIS) — Computerized data management system designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze and display geographically referenced information.

High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) — Vehicles carrying two or more people. The number that constitutes an HOV for the purposes of HOV highway lanes may be designated differently by different transportation agencies.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) — the application of advanced technologies to improve the efficiency and safety of transportation systems.

Intermodal — The ability to connect and the connections between modes of transportation.

Level of Service (LOS) — a qualitative rating of how well a unit of transportation supply (e.g. street, intersection, bikeway, etc) serves its current or projected demand. LOS A = free-flow condition (32 percent of capacity); B = reasonably free-flow conditions (51 percent); C = operation stable but becoming more critical (75 percent); D = lower speed range of stable flow (92 percent); E = unstable flow (100 percent); F = forced flow; >100 percent of capacity, stop-and-go operation.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) — A document resulting from regional or statewide collaboration and consensus on a region or state's transportation system and serving as the defining vision for the region's or state's transportation systems and services. In metropolitan areas, the plan indicates all of the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over a minimum of the next 20 years.

Maintenance Area — Maintenance area is any geographic region of the United States previously designated non-attainment pursuant to the CAA Amendments of 1990 and subsequently re-designated to attainment subject to the requirement to develop a maintenance plan under section 175A of the CAA, as amended.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) — An MPO is a planning agency established by federal law to assure a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process takes place that results in the development of plans, programs and projects that consider all transportation modes and supports the goals of the community. Any urbanized area or contiguous urbanized areas, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, containing a population of greater than 50,000 are required to have an MPO.

Mode, Intermodal, Multimodal — Form of transportation, such as automobile, transit, bicycle and walking. Intermodal refers to the connections between modes and multimodal refers to the availability of transportation options within a system or corridor.

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) — An established national environmental policy requiring that any project using federal funding or requiring federal approval, including transportation projects, examine the effects of proposed and alternative choices on the environment before a federal decision is made.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) — Law requiring federal agencies to consider the potential effect of a project on a property that is registered on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If effects are identified, federal and state agencies and the public must identify means to mitigate the harm.

Non-attainment — Any geographic area that has not met the requirements for clean air as set out in the Clean Air Act of 1990. An area can at the same time be classified as in attainment for one or more air pollutants and as a non-attainment area for another air pollutant.

Paratransit — Alternative known as "special or specialized" transportation, which often includes flexibly scheduled and routed transportation services. These services use low capacity vehicles such as vans to operate within normal urban transit corridors or rural areas. Services usually cater to the needs of persons whom standard mass transit services would serve with difficulty, or not at all. Common patrons are the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Planning Funds (PL) — Primary source of funding for metropolitan planning designated by the FHWA.

Revision - A change to a long range statewide or metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, or STIP that occurs between scheduled periodic updates. A major revision is an “amendment,” while a minor revision is an “administrative modification

Right-of-Way (ROW) — Public space legally established for the use of pedestrians, vehicles, or utilities. Right-of-way typically includes the street, sidewalk and buffer strip areas.

Rural Planning Organization (RPO) — An organization similar to an MPO, composed of representatives of rural local governments and appointed representatives from the geographic area covered by the organization with the purpose of involving local officials in multi-modal transportation planning through a structured process.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) – Authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the five-year period 2005-2009.

Stakeholders — Individuals and organizations involved in or affected by the transportation planning process. Include federal/state/local officials, MPOs, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, and the general public.

Surface Transportation Program (STP) — Federal-aid highway funding program that funds a broad range of surface transportation capital needs, including many roads, transit, sea and airport access, vanpool, bike and pedestrian facilities.

South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) — The State agency that manages the highway system within South Carolina. SCDOT’s mission is to plan, implement, maintain and manage an integrated transportation system for the movement of people and products, with emphasis on quality, safety, efficiency and the environment for citizens. SCDOT is the administrative agency that responds to policy set by the South Carolina Legislation.

Title VI — Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The legislation prohibits discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance.

Transportation Conformity — Process to assess the compliance of any transportation plan, program, or project with air quality implementation plans. The conformity process is defined by the Clean Air Act.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) — “Demand-based” techniques that are designed to change travel behavior in order to improve the performance of transportation facilities and to reduce the need for additional road capacity. Methods include the use of alternative modes, ride-sharing and vanpool programs and trip-reduction programs and/or ordinances.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) — A staged, multiyear (typically three to five years) listing of surface transportation projects proposed for federal, state and local funding within a metropolitan area. MPOs are required to prepare a TIP as a short-range programming document

to complement its long-range transportation plan. The TIP contains projects with committed funds over a multiyear period (five years).

Transportation Management Area (TMA) — All urbanized areas over 200,000 in population and any other area that requests such designation. The MPO is responsible for transportation planning with a TMA.

Transportation Planning — A collaborative process of examining demographic characteristics and travel patterns for a given area. This process shows how these characteristics will change over a given period of time and evaluates alternatives for the transportation system of the area and the most expeditious use of local, state and federal transportation funding. Long-range planning is typically done over a period of 25 years; short-range programming of specific projects usually covers a period of 3 to 5 years.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) — The management plan for the (metropolitan) planning program. Its purpose is to coordinate the planning activities of all participants in the planning process.

Update - Making current a long range transportation plan or TIP, through a comprehensive review. Updates require public review and comment, a 20-year horizon year for metropolitan transportation plans, a four-year program period for TIPs, demonstration of fiscal constraint (except for long-range statewide transportation plans), and a conformity determination (for metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs in nonattainment and air quality maintenance areas)

Urbanized Area — Area that contains a city of 50,000 or more population plus incorporated surrounding areas meeting size or density criteria as defined by the U.S. Census.

Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) — The sum of distances traveled by all motor vehicles in a specified region.

ⁱ If there are significant changes to the final draft LRTP or TIP from the one made available for public comment, an additional opportunity will be provided for public comment on the revised changes. The BCDCOG Executive Director shall determine when changes are significant and warrant additional opportunity for public comments.

ⁱⁱ When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft LRTP or draft TIP as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process required under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final LRTP/TIP.

ⁱⁱⁱ If there are significant changes to the final draft LRTP or TIP from the one made available for public comment, an additional opportunity will be provided for public comment on the revised changes. The BCDCOG director shall determine when changes are significant and warrant additional opportunity for public comments.

^{iv} If there are significant changes to the final draft LRTP or TIP from the one made available for public comment, an additional opportunity will be provided for public comment on the revised changes. The BCDCOG director shall determine when changes are significant and warrant additional opportunity for public comments.