

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Sherman Denison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)



Sherman Denison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
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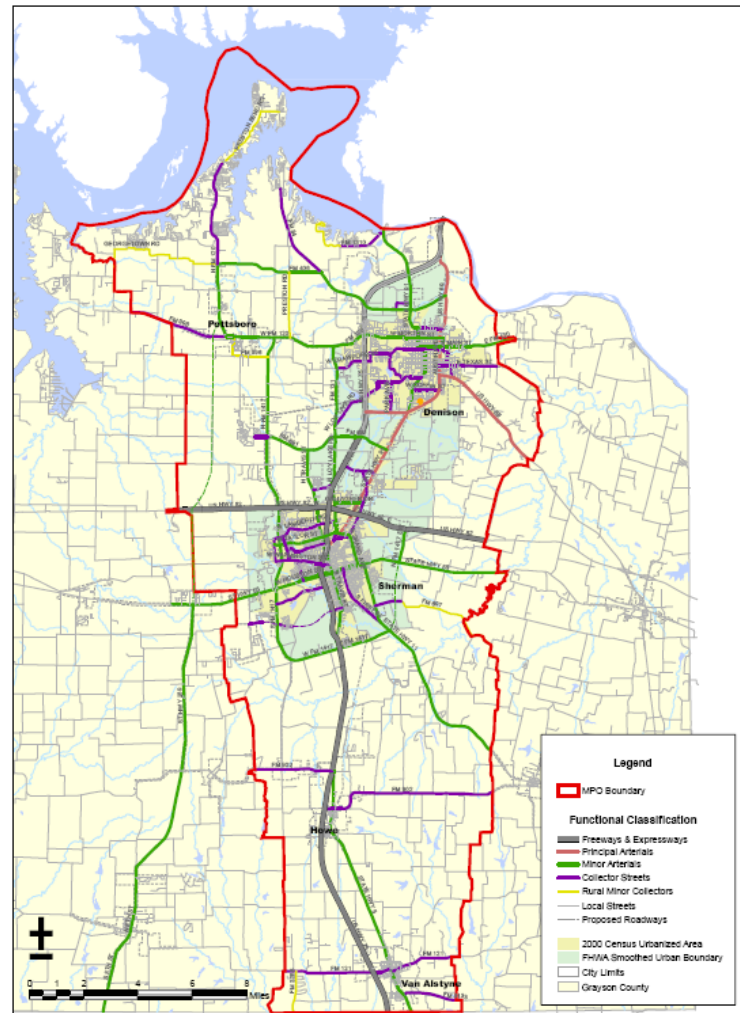
Approved 12-06-06

INTRODUCTION

The Sherman Denison MPO (SDMPO) is committed to involving the public in the transportation planning process for the Sherman-Denison Study Area. To achieve this, the SDMPO has created a Public Participation Plan to ensure that every Sherman-Denison Study Area resident is given the opportunity to participate in the development of transportation policies, programs, and projects being proposed within our study area. This is not to say that the SDMPO has not involved the public in the past, but this is the first time it has been formalized in a plan. By formally documenting our public participation process, we will be able to review what we are currently doing, see what we're missing, and make improvements. This is a dynamic plan that needs to adapt to meet the changing needs of all sectors of the public. Therefore this plan will be updated as needed.

The Public Participation Plan for the SDMPO is built on the following principles established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA):

Sherman-Denison Study Area



- Early and continuous involvement
- reasonable public availability of technical data and other information
- collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria, and mitigation needs
- open public meetings where matters related to transportation policies, programs, and projects are being considered
- open access to the decision making process prior to closure

Regulations and Requirements

A. Federal

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Federal laws and regulations require the formation and designation by the Governor of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 to coordinate a comprehensive and continuing transportation planning process. The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) is the designated MPO for Sherman-Denison Study Area. The MPO operates in accordance with state and federal laws.

Much of the transportation planning work done by the MPO is directed towards implementing and updating the study area's Long-Range Transportation Plan also known as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This work takes the form of studies, data collection and analysis, the use of management systems, forecasts of future travel based on future land use, and prioritization of projects for funding and implementation.

Federal transportation law (such as ISTEA, TEA-21, and the current legislation SAFETEA-LU) required the SDMPO to produce and oversee a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the study area's short range transportation investment strategy. The TIP prioritizes the study area's transportation related projects within the constraints of federal, state, and local funding that Texas can reasonably expect to receive within the next four years. Projects that are included in the TIP must come from an approved MTP. There must be adequate public participation in the development of both the MTP and the TIP.

Transportation Policy Board Responsibilities

The Transportation Policy Board has five voting members representing the following organizations.

Grayson County, County Commissioner
 City of Sherman, City Manager
 City of Denison, Community Development Director
 Small Cities representative (rotating)
 Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), District Engineer

Members of the MPO are appointed by the entities they represent. The Federal Highway Administration, Texas Department of Transportation and the Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS) each have one non-voting member.

For more information about how to get involved, contact the Sherman Denison MPO at 903-813-3531.

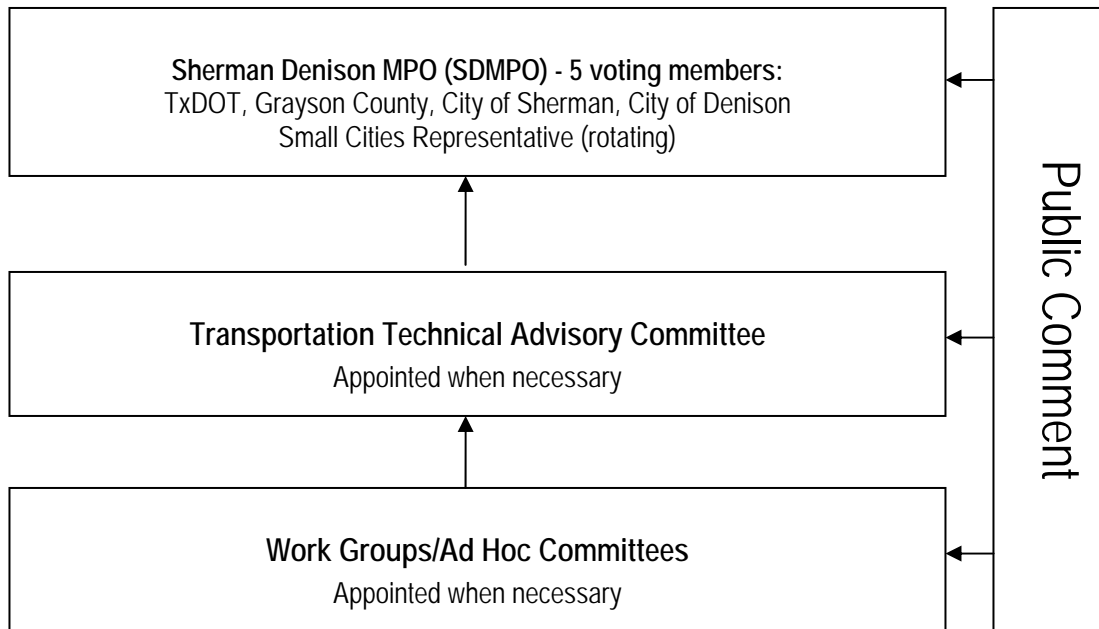
From time to time, the MPO will appoint a task force or steering committee to carry out a specific planning assignment such as updating the MTP or overseeing the conduct of a study.

SDMPO as the MPO has the lead responsibility to ensure that the transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with federal and state regulations. Several other agencies, however, also play key roles in the transportation planning process.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) works cooperatively with the SDMPO in carrying out all of its transportation planning activities. TXDOT representatives serve on all transportation related committees. TXDOT is responsible for a number of activities that affect the metropolitan transportation planning process. It is charged with the development of a statewide long-range plan, which will include the Metropolitan Transportation Plan developed by SDMPO. TXDOT also develops a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which must include the TIP developed by SDMPO. Accordingly, TXDOT participates actively in the process by which projects are prioritized and included in the SDMPO's TIP. TXDOT also serves as the primary intermediary between SDMPO and federal transportation agencies: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS) provides public transit service in the study area. This agency is responsible for both the capital and service needs in its service area. It is the principal source for identifying transit projects for inclusion in the transit portion of SDMPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. It also carries out many of the public transit planning activities, both funded through SDMPO's regional planning program and through other sources.

Structure of the MPO



SAFETEA-LU

Public participation in the transportation planning and programming process is a priority for federal, state, and local officials. The current federal transportation legislation called the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) continues this. SAFETEA-LU authorizes funding for Federal highway, highway safety, transit and other surface transportation programs and requires that Metropolitan Planning Organizations establish, periodically review, and update public participation processes to assure early and continued public awareness of, and access to, the transportation decision-making process.

SAFETEA-LU mandates that the metropolitan transportation planning process contain the following public participation elements:

- 1 Include a proactive public participation process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing participation of the public in developing plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and meets the requirements and criteria specified as follows:

φ Require a minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public participation process is initially adopted or revised

- ϕ Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to central city and other local jurisdiction concerns)
- ϕ Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered
- ϕ Require adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs
- ϕ Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes
- ϕ Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to low-income and minority households
- ϕ When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan or TIP (including the financial plan) as a result of the public participation process or the interagency consultation process required under the US EPA's conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan and TIP
- ϕ If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public participation efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available
- ϕ Public participation processes shall be periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to all
- ϕ These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews to assure that full and open access is provided to MPO decision-making processes

ϕ Metropolitan public participation processes shall be coordinated with statewide public participation processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs

- 2 Be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794, which ensure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation.
- 3 Comply with Presidential Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. Environmental Justice directed federal agencies to develop environmental justice strategies to help federal agencies address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs on minority and low-income populations. The order is also intended to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs that affect human health and the environment. It aims to provide minority and low-income communities access to public information and public participation in matters relating to human health and the environment.

The Environmental Protection Agency defines Environmental Justice as the "fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, programs and policies." Fair treatment means that no racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from the operation of industrial, municipal, and commercial enterprises and from the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.

The Federal Highway Administration identifies three fundamental environmental justice principles:

ϕ 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.

ϕ To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.

ϕ To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

- 4 Comply with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990 and US DOT regulations "Transportation for Individuals With Disabilities." Meetings and hearings must be held in ADA-compliant buildings and special accommodations must be made for those with disabilities to participate in meetings, planning, and programming activities.
- 5 Consult with entities responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movement, bicycles, pedestrians, the disabled community, land use management, natural resources, and historic preservation
- 6 Provide for the involvement of traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies; commuter rail operators; airport and port authorities; toll authorities; appropriate private transportation providers, and where appropriate city officials.

B. State

The state of Texas has Open Government Laws. These include the Open Meetings Act and the Public Information Act codified in chapters 551 and 552 of the Government Code. The two laws that have jurisdiction over a public participation plan. These two laws are intended to provide residents of Texas with firsthand knowledge of the activities that public agencies have taken at meetings and access to contents of public records.

2. Public Participation Principles

- Early and continuous involvement
- reasonable public availability of technical data and other information
- collaborative input on alternatives, evaluation criteria, and mitigation needs
- open public meetings where matter related to transportation policies, programs, and projects are being considered
- open access to the decision making process prior to closure

3. Routine SDMPO Activities

All meetings are open to the public and a public comment period is available at all meetings.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD (TPB) MEETINGS – held the 1st Wednesday every of even numbered months at 11:00 am and/or scheduled when necessary. Meetings currently are held at the Grayson County Courthouse Commissioners' Courtroom. Meeting location is subject to change. Attendees should call the Sherman Denison MPO to verify meeting location.

TPB meetings are held in conformance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The meeting agenda is prepared and posted a minimum of 72 hours at the Grayson County Courthouse Bulletin Board. Meeting agendas will be forwarded in advance to the Cities of Sherman, Denison, Howe, Van Alstyne, and Pottsboro. A press release is issued to the local television stations, radio stations, and newspapers. This list is available from the SDMPO office and is updated periodically. Documentation to support the posting and press release will be retained in the SDMPO study office for a minimum of five (5) years.

Citizens, elected officials, transit providers, and staff have opportunity to speak on transportation issues at every meeting under the item "Public Comment Opportunity".

All meetings of the Transportation Policy Board are recorded and minutes are drafted. These are available for public review upon request and available on the SDMPO's website www.sdmpo.org.

Transportation Policy Board –(TPB) Technical Meetings – scheduled as needed.

- ✚ Meeting announcement is done via newspaper, press release to all media and direct mail to stakeholder/interested parties list
- ✚ Meeting dates listed on SDMPO website
- ✚ Agendas listed on SDMPO website
- ✚ Meeting minutes listed on SDMPO website
- ✚ Meeting packet with agenda, minutes, background information, and contact person information mailed and/or emailed at least one week prior to meeting
- ✚ Meeting location is handicap accessible
- ✚ Meeting cancellations announced via newspaper, press release to all media and direct mail to stakeholder/interested parties list

4. Major SDMPO Activities and Public Participation Technique

A. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP is updated and adopted at least every five (5) years. It contains goals and objectives for Sherman-Denison Study Area's transportation system and identifies the improvements, studies, and strategies that must be implemented to reach those goals and objectives. It includes a list all of the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next 20 years.

Updates and Adoption	
Activity	Technique
Input Prior to Development or Updating (Draft Document)	Input from citizens affected, public agencies, member governments, public transportation providers, users of public transit, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, the Grayson County Airport, Local and State Emergency Response agencies and TxDOT will be requested at two (2) public meetings held by the SDMPO. Citizens will also have an opportunity to provide written comments prior to and for ten (10) calendar days after all public meetings. Document available via: SDMPO website: www.sdmpo.org , SDMPO office and TxDOT area office
Notice to Agencies	At least thirty (30) days prior to adoption or amendment of a <u>Metropolitan Transportation Plan</u> , the SDMPO shall post a public notice at the Grayson County Courthouse Bulletin Board and alert agencies including, but not limited to: the Cities of Sherman, Denison, Howe, Van Alstyne, Pottsboro, Chambers of Commerce, news media, including radio, television, newspapers, and public libraries as to when and where the Metropolitan Transportation Plan will be available for review, offering to make a copy available upon request and asking for comments. This list is available from the SDMPO Office and will be updated periodically. Documentation to support the posting and press release will be retained in the SDMPO study office for a minimum of five (5) years.
Public Meeting	Two (2) public meetings held. One meeting will be required during the initial stages of plan development. The second meeting will be held to obtain input on the "Draft" plan as long as it is advertised and follows the Texas Open Meetings Act. At a minimum, the meetings will be recorded and a roster of those in attendance will be kept on file in the SDMPO office.
Comment Opportunities	Public Meeting; Written comments (from citizens affected, public agencies, member governments, public transportation providers, users of public transit, freight shippers, providers of freight trans-

	<p>portation services, the Grayson County Airport, Local and State Emergency Response agencies) accepted via email, fax, mail, TPB meeting.</p> <p>Included in the notice of public meeting shall be a call for public comment which shall include when and where a copy of the proposed Metropolitan Transportation Plan can be reviewed and a deadline to receive public comment. Written comments will be accepted up to ten (10) days after conducting the public meeting. Significant written and oral comments will be summarized and incorporated as part of the final document.</p>
Affected Agencies and Stakeholders	The SDMPO shall maintain a current list of affected agencies and stakeholders.
Final, adopted document	SDMPO website: www.sdmpo.org , SDMPO office and TxDOT area office
Updates and Amendments	As necessary
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

B. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Four year program that lists all regionally significant and federally funded projects and services in the study area, such as highway projects, bridge replacements, major corridor studies, transportation enhancements. Projects that are included in the TIP must be consistent with and come from an approved Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Updates and Adoption	
Activity	Technique
<p>Input Prior to Development or Updating (Draft Document)</p>	<p>A minimum of one (1) public meeting will be held to solicit public input on the <u>quadrennial</u> Transportation Improvement Program. The meeting will be recorded and a roster of those in attendance will be available and kept on file in the SDMPO office. Citizens will also have the opportunity to provide written comments prior to, and for, ten (10) calendar days after the public meetings. A notice of the public meeting will be prepared and posted at the Grayson County Courthouse Bulletin Board a minimum of 72 hours in advance Notice of the meeting will be forwarded to the Cities of Sherman, Denison, Howe, Van Alstyne, Pottsboro. The meetings will be publicized in local newspapers and a press release publicizing the meetings issued to the local television stations and radio stations. This list is available from the SDMPO Office and will be updated periodically. Documentation to support the posting and press release will be retained in the SDMPO study office for a minimum of five (5) years.</p> <p>All documentation concerning the Transportation Improvement</p>

	<p>Program will be kept on file and be available to the public upon request.</p> <p>Document available via: SDMPO website: www.sdmppo.org, SDMPO office and TxDOT area office</p>
Notice to Agencies	<p>Approximately fourteen (14) days prior to adoption or amendment of a TIP, the SDMPO shall alert affected agencies including, but not limited to: the Cities of Sherman, Denison, Howe, Van Alstyne, Pottsboro, and the Grayson County Courthouse, Chambers of Commerce, news media, including radio, television, newspapers, and public libraries as to when and where the TIP will be available for review, offering to make a copy available upon request and asking for comments.</p>
Public Meeting	<p>Prior to adoption or amendment of a TIP, a public meeting shall be conducted to gather input from the public and affected agencies. Notice of the meeting shall be posted at the Grayson County Courthouse Bulletin Board. Public Notice will be forwarded to the Cities of Sherman, Denison, Howe, Van Alstyne, Pottsboro, Chambers of Commerce, news media, including radio, television, newspapers, and public libraries as to when and where the TIP will be available for review, offering to make a copy available upon request and asking for comments.</p>
Comment Opportunities	<p>Public Meeting; Written comments (from citizens affected, public agencies, member governments, public transportation providers, users of public transit, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, the Grayson County Airport, Local and State Emergency Response agencies) accepted via email, fax, mail, TPB meeting.</p> <p>Included in the notice of public meeting shall be a call for public comment which shall include when and where a copy of the proposed Metropolitan Transportation Plan can be reviewed and a deadline to receive public comment. Written comments will be accepted up to ten (10) days after conducting the public meeting. Significant written and oral comments will be summarized and incorporated as part of the final document.</p>
Affected Agencies and Stakeholders	<p>The SDMPO shall maintain a current list of affected agencies and stakeholders.</p>
Final, adopted document	<p>SDMPO website: www.sdmppo.org, SDMPO office and TxDOT area office</p>
Updates and Adoption	<p>A Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) shall be updated and adopted at least every <u>four (4)</u> years.</p>
Evaluation Technique	<p>Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received</p>

C. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Describes all transportation and transportation related planning activities within the study area for a two year period. The UPWP includes a budget that shows the federal, state, and local funds that are committed to the completion of the planning activities.

Activity	Technique
Draft Document	SDMPO website: www.sdmpo.org , SDMPO office and TxDOT area office
Comment Opportunities on draft document	Public Meeting; Written comments accepted via email, fax, mail, TPB meeting
Public Meeting	Held during a scheduled TPB meeting
Public Meeting Notice	SDMPO website, SDMPO office, 1 week prior to TPB meeting
Final, adopted document	SDMPO website: www.sdmpo.org , SDMPO office and TxDOT area office
Amendment Notice	TPB agendas on SDMPO website
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

D. Public Participation Plan

Outlines the strategies utilized 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	SDMPO website: www.sdmpo.org , SDMPO office and TxDOT area office
Comment Opportunities	45 day comment period; Public Meeting; Written comments accepted via email, fax, mail; TPB meeting
Public Meeting	Held during the public comment period, held during a TPB
Public Meeting and Comment Period Notice	Five (5) business days prior to the start of the Public Comment period, published in local media (see above)
Final, adopted document	SDMPO website: www.sdmpo.org , SDMPO office and TxDOT area office
Evaluation Technique	Number of participants at meetings, number of comments received

E. Special projects, projects of regional significance

For topic or geographically specific projects, meetings should be held at locations convenient to the group targeted for participation. These types of projects may be required to make a presentation to TPB and the SDMPO listed in the MTP and TIP

5. Outreach Techniques

SDMPO, utilizing staff, will utilize many other techniques to involve and educate the public including:

Direct Outreach – SDMPO planning staff provide direct outreach to minority and/or low income groups through contact with local community groups and their leaders

SDMPO website – an online resource about the plans and programs of the Transportation Policy Board, including the SDMPO activities
www.sdmpo.org

Special studies/plans – SDMPO planning staff produce special studies and plans as issues and needs arise. This will continue to be a part of the transportation planning program.

Surveys and Questionnaires – When circumstances warrant, SDMPO staff will conduct surveys and develop questionnaires suitable for distribution in specific project areas or at public meetings, training sessions, etc., in order to elicit increased public input into the decision-making process.

6. Evaluation Procedures for Public Participation

It is important that the SDMPO continuously evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation techniques in the planning process for each plan or project. SDMPO should consider the following when evaluating the effectiveness of the public participation plan:

(a) Are there many people participating in the techniques with good ideas and suggestions?

(b) Are targeted stakeholders participating in the application of the techniques? Consider asking participants, "Who else should be in attendance?"

- (c) Is the general public getting enough information and in a timely manner?
- (d) Rather than assume non-participants are "not interested", consider contacting participants missing from the process to determine the reasons for their lack of interest or inability to participate in the planning process.
- (e) Should an evaluation form be given to participants to see if they feel the technique is effective and useful?
- (f) Are the results and input from the public able to be incorporated in the decision-making process? If not, what changes need to be made?

7.Policies and Procedures

Before adoption of any new or revised policy or procedure of the PPP, the SDMPO shall request public comment by publicizing the meeting in local newspapers and a press release publicizing the public comment period issued to the local television stations and radio stations. This list is available from the SDMPO Office and will be updated periodically. Public comment will be received for at least 45 days from the time of the first publication. The SDMPO shall maintain a log of all comments received. The SDMPO Transportation Policy Board shall review all public comments and staff responses before the adoption of the new or revised policy or procedure of the PPP.

Citizen requests to present or discuss information related to the SDMPO, transportation plans, and/or policies that affect those citizens will be responded to by the SDMPO staff, as well as officers, as time permits.

How to Get Involved

Sherman Denison Metropolitan Planning Organization
1117 Gallagher Dr.
Suite 300
Sherman, Texas 75090
903.813.3531
903.813.3539 fax
www.sdmpo.org

Look under Transportation Planning

Office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
Offices are handicapped accessible.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENTS

23 CFR 450.316 (b) (1)

REQUIREMENT	SDMPO PRACTICE
• Development of Public Participation (PPP)	TPB open meeting is held September 2006 with a 45-day written comment period.
• Provide timely information on transportation issues	Information is disseminated through SDMPO website, reports, public and open meetings.
• Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information	TPB hold public and open meetings; other technical assistance is provided as necessary.
• Facilitate public involvement in developing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	Public meetings are held during development of TIP and MTP as well as upon proposal of any major amendments to these documents.
• Public comments to be considered as an integral part of planning process	All public comments are reviewed and considered by TPB
• Seek out and consider needs of historically under-served	A comprehensive public notification list will be developed and maintained. Inclusion on mailing list will be by written request.
• Public comments will be part of final TIP and MTP	Public comments received on TIP and MTP are included in documentation of the TIP and MTP.
• Revisions to the TIP and MTP based on public comments will be made available to public	If the TIP or MTP require revisions, an additional public meeting will be scheduled.
• Review of the PPP	SDMPO reviews the PPP annually in conjunction with MTP and TIP meetings. If modified to be more restrictive to the public, a 45-day comment period will be held following meeting.
• Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration review of PPP	SDMPO PPP will be sent to FHWA and FTA and published as part of MTP and the TIP. Minutes, comments, and responses of all public meetings will be sent to appropriate FHWA/FTA officials.
• Coordination of statewide PPP	When possible, public meetings will be coordinated with TxDOT's Urban Transportation Plan process

Appendix : Public Comments, Advertising and Publicity

Summary of Comments Received

(To be added after comment period)

HERALD DEMOCRAT
September 7, 2006

0010 Legal Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION PLAN
REVIEW

Sherman, TX - The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) for the Sherman - Denison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approved a draft Public Participation Plan (PPP) at its last meeting. The draft document is available for review and public comment prior to its adoption.

Information concerning the SDMPO PPP is on file and available for inspection at the TCOG offices located at 1117 Gallagher Dr. Suite 300, Sherman, Texas during normal business hours and/or available on our web site www.sdmpo.org.

Verbal and written comments will be accepted from the public regarding the Public Participation Plan. Comments may be presented within 45 calendar days of this notice. Written statements or exhibits may be submitted to Sherman - Denison MPO, 1117 Gallagher Dr. Suite 300, Sherman, TX 75090, Attn: Robert Wood, Transportation Director, AND MUST ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 45 CALENDAR DAYS AFTER THIS NOTICE.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS