

Public Involvement for Transportation Planning



New York State Department of Transportation
Office of Policy, Planning & Performance

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Public Involvement Manual For Transportation Planning

Getting Involved in the Transportation Planning Process

As part of the traveling public, are you concerned about transit needs, road conditions and highways in your area? Do you think about the consequences of urban sprawl and poor air quality? These are all issues the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT or the Department) deals with every day. Your views, ideas and preferences can give us valuable input and influence on how to address these issues. By attending meetings, visiting our Web site, www.nysdot.gov, providing comments and speaking to NYSDOT, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff and local government officials, you can help with the transportation planning process.

In general, public involvement in planning helps identify and achieve early consensus to transportation problems and issues. It helps determine the types of projects in an area and how the public feels we should allocate limited resources.

This manual will provide guidance on how you can become involved in the transportation planning process. For more information on how transportation decisions are made at the local, state and national level, visit the Federal Highway Administration Web site at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/decisionmaking/decisionmaking.pdf>



Workshop for public on Draft NYSDOT Rail Plan

Purpose of Manual

The primary purposes of this document are:

Part 1: To provide general information to the public on how to participate in the transportation planning process.

Part 2: To provide guidance on how NYSDOT will meet the requirements for supporting public involvement as required by the federal surface transportation bill, including the need to update public involvement procedures to reflect new technologies and other enhancements. This report focuses on NYSDOT's updated process.

This guidance does NOT address the public involvement process for specific projects, such as the Tappan Zee Bridge project. NYSDOT's guidance for those project-related processes is discussed in the Public Involvement Manual (appendix 2 of NYSDOT's Project Development Manual, (January 2004). That document is on our Web site located at: <https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/engineering/design/dqab/pdm>.



Tappan Zee Bridge Project – Community Outreach

PART I

A Guide for the Public to the Transportation Planning Process in New York State

The Federally Required Planning Process

Transportation planning and decision-making in New York State are driven by the Federal planning process, the framework mandated for states receiving Federal transportation funds. In New York State, NYSDOT has overall responsibility for the coordinated and balanced statewide transportation planning process. This is carried out in collaboration with the State's 13 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in urban areas with population more than 50,000 and the various local officials with responsibility for transportation in rural or non-urbanized areas with populations less than 50,000.

The foundation document for transportation planning in New York is the State's long-range transportation plan. The current plan, Strategies for a New Age: New York State's Transportation Master Plan for 2030, is available online at:

<https://www.nysdot.gov/main/transportation-plan/transportation-plan>. The Federal planning process requires that our long-range plan be developed in cooperation with the State's MPOs and in consultation with local officials in non-metropolitan areas. Each MPO is also required to develop a metropolitan transportation plan for its area that meets Federal guidelines and is used to guide development of a short-term program of projects, referred to as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). A link to the Web sites of the State's MPOs and their long-range plans is available online at: <http://www.nysmpos.org>.

In the words of the Adirondack Glens Falls Transportation Council MPO, "The TIP projects represent the best solutions to the highest-priority problems within the constraints of money and time."

In general, MPO plans are similar and consistent with the State's long-range transportation plan, but they are much more specific regarding funding needs and resources, programs and projects.

The statewide program of projects, which includes all the projects in metropolitan areas found in the TIPs and a large number of projects in non-metropolitan areas, is called the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In rural and small urban areas, NYSDOT works with elected officials from counties, municipalities, towns, villages and organizations, such as Regional Planning and Development Boards, to share information, to discuss issues of mutual concern and to consider alternate approaches and projects to address varying goals and objectives. These meetings also provide opportunities for public input from community stakeholder groups. The **Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas (2006)** is the State's documented process for involving and consulting with non-metropolitan public officials with responsibility for transportation. This document can be found at: <https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/planning-bureau>.

Elected officials at all levels of government in both rural and urban areas are involved in discussions on transportation issues, as are individuals, interest groups, private and public transit providers, businesses and other parties. As representatives of their communities, they provide valuable input and an important influence on decision-making.



NYSDOT Public Meeting

Opportunities for Public Involvement

There are several steps in identifying transportation problems and developing solutions. The process includes problem identification, data collection, public input, analysis of trends and examination of existing conditions. Problem identification is a key early step in the planning and project development process. The major phases from planning to construction are listed below, although this document is focused on the planning phase:

- Transportation planning, early scoping and programming
- Development of reasonable alternatives
- Assessment of potential environmental effects and mitigation
- Assessment of community impacts
- Selection and design of preferred alternative

- Addressing right of way, utility and other related requirements
- Construction and implementation

When members of the public are involved early and effectively in the planning phase, they can identify their desired objectives and what they expect from the transportation system in reaching those objectives. If consensus is not obtained, at least mutual understanding can be reached among the stakeholders. This will have several results:

- Transportation plans will more realistically reflect citizens' goals, needs and interests;
- Projects on the STIP have an increased chance of being progressed through the Scoping, Design, Environmental Analyses and Construction phases; and,
- There will be greater credibility for the planning process.

For those interested in participating in the transportation planning process, you can contact one of the 11 Regional Planning & Program Managers (RPPMs) at the NYSDOT Regional Offices (see map in Appendix), the office of an area's MPO or the NYSDOT main office in Albany, New York. NYSDOT contact information is available at our Web site, www.nysdot.gov; links to the Web sites of New York's MPOs and e-mail and phone contact information can be found at www.nysmpos.org.

What is NYSDOT Trying to Accomplish through Public Participation?

NYSDOT values having an informed public contributing to the transportation planning process. Past experience has shown that early input in the process leads to better decisions and more effective use of limited resources. Also, NYSDOT recognizes that public support is necessary for the effective implementation of plans and programs.

We also recognize that specific groups or individuals may have particular interest in certain topics and/or program areas. For example, agencies with disabled clients want to know about accessibility issues to public transit. Similarly, business organizations and companies, such as shippers of goods, may be concerned about goods movement and the reliability of the highway and rail system. In response, NYSDOT will listen to their concerns and interests and then work with these organizations to form solutions. Our hope is that by voicing ideas during the process (by attending public meetings, by sending comments through e-mails and letters and by other methods), the public can help shape our ability to improve transportation services for all users.

To expand participation, measures to provide language assistance will be included for those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Refer to page 9 for more information on LEP.



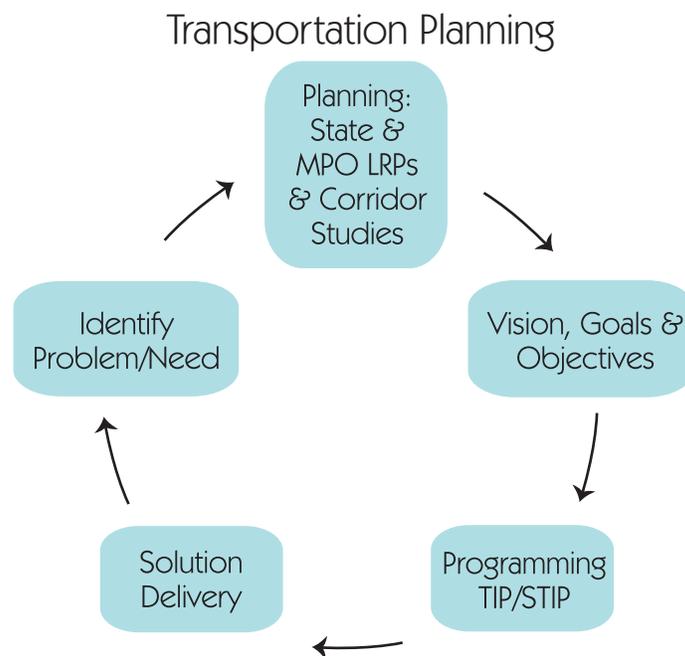
Bicycle Accommodation on CDTA bus

Overview of the Key Planning & Programming Processes

The key transportation plans and programs include:

- (1) The State's Long-Range Transportation Plan (The PLAN).
- (2) Each MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and other State Plans and Studies.
- (3) Each MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- (4) The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (The Program/STIP).

As depicted in the diagram below, the planning and programming processes are continuous as they feed into one another from one cycle to the next.



The following are descriptions of some of the major planning products for which comments, involvement and input can be provided:

(1) The State's Long-Range Transportation Plan (the PLAN)

The State's Long-Range Transportation Plan is a key policy and strategic planning document that presents an overview of NYSDOT's planning processes, a projection into the future and NYSDOT's ideas for meeting the challenges of providing efficient transportation for all the people and businesses that utilize the transportation system. Federal regulations require the development of this plan to insure that transportation funds are well spent. The current plan, "*Strategies for a New Age: New York State's Transportation Master Plan for 2030*," is available at www.nysdot.gov. It contains the goals, strategies, objectives and trends that will help shape future transportation decisions. Essentially, the PLAN is the long-range planning document that guides the development of the short-range STIP.



Bridge Project at Riparius, New York

Public involvement elements of the PLAN include:

- **Consultation:** NYSDOT develops the PLAN in cooperation and consultation with the MPOs, Tribal Nations, agencies concerned with land use and the environment and other interested groups. Also, NYSDOT develops the PLAN in consultation with affected non-metropolitan officials in accordance with its **Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas (Revised 2006)**.
- **Outreach:** At the beginning of the PLAN update, New York State will announce the ongoing development of a new draft plan with press releases, a series of public meetings for getting input and disseminating information, outreach to individual municipal officials, and announcements on NYSDOT's Web site and the Web sites of all of the State's MPOs. With input from public meetings, letters and other mechanisms, a draft plan will be developed and made available for public comment.
- **Review:** NYSDOT's Main Office will make known that the draft PLAN is available for public review and comment for at least a 30-day period and will identify the beginning date and end date of the review and comment period. The draft PLAN will be available for review and comment at each NYSDOT Regional Office and each Metropolitan Planning Organization office in the state and on the Department's Web site, www.nysdot.gov.

Public Meetings: NYSDOT provides citizens an opportunity to comment during each update of the Statewide Transportation Plan (The PLAN). NYSDOT provides 14-30 days prior notice to public meetings on the draft PLAN and will make known the time, location and purpose of the public meeting(s). NYSDOT Main Office will distribute agenda and summary information on any public meeting on the draft PLAN to numerous organizations, elected officials and members of the public.

- **Final Plan:** At the end of the process, NYSDOT Main Office will formally transmit the final PLAN to the Governor and the Legislature as well as government officials, business groups, advocacy groups and members of the public. NYSDOT Main Office will retain notices, comments and responses for documentation.

Measures to provide language assistance are included in this public involvement process for those with disabilities and/or Limited English Proficiency.

(2) Other State and MPO Plans and Studies

Corridor and other planning studies in metropolitan areas, including the development of the MPOs' long-range plans, will generally be announced by the MPOs. Information on how to participate in these studies and information about public involvement events will usually be posted on an MPO Web site, sent out in newsletters or press releases or made available in other ways. In rural areas, studies may be initiated by NYSDOT, the counties, Regional Planning & Development Boards or other entities. Transportation solutions identified as a result of these studies would then be considered for funding and, if programmed, would proceed on to detailed design. NYSDOT distributes information on these studies to the local media and other stakeholders and provides contact information to help those who want to participate.



Interactive Public meeting

(3) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Projects are proposed in metropolitan areas in accordance with the MPO process. The product of this process is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a listing of 3-5 years of capital and non-capital transportation projects for the metropolitan area developed in accordance with an MPO's public involvement process and featuring projects generally sponsored by the municipality(s) in the area, NYSDOT, the member counties, the transit operators and sometimes other state and local agencies and organizations. The public has opportunities to suggest projects, comment on projects and be kept informed about progress on TIP development. The MPOs generally have large mailing lists that they utilize to keep citizens informed. Furthermore, MPOs are required to provide a reasonable opportunity for public comments on their draft TIPs.

Major amendments to the TIP must also go through a public review process. Each MPO is responsible for coordinating this effort.

(4) The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (the STIP or the Program)

The STIP is the statewide, multimodal program for state and federal transportation funding. The list of proposed projects included in the STIP comes from two main sources:

- The MPO TIPs, which must be included in their entirety into the STIP without change, directly or indirectly by reference.
- The NYSDOT rural program of projects, developed in cooperation with local governments that arise from the Department's highway, bridge and multimodal capital program. The NYSDOT report, **Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas (Revised 2006)**, describes how the different Regions will obtain input for STIP projects.

Opportunities for public participation in the STIP are listed below:

- **Comments:** Opportunities for comment during development will include a variety of public involvement activities that are most appropriate for a given region. NYSDOT Regional Offices will distribute announcements and summary information on the draft STIP to the public. NYSDOT Regional Offices will make staff available to reply to comments about the region's component in the draft STIP. It will also be available on the NYSDOT Web site.
- **Time Frames:** The Program will undergo a 30-day comment period, during which copies of the draft STIP will be available for public review on NYSDOT's Web site, at the State's 11 Regional Offices and at the offices of the State's 13 MPOs. Regional Offices will provide citizens 14-30 days prior notice to any public meeting on the draft STIP and make known the time, location and purpose of the public meeting.

- **Indian Nations:** For each area of New York State under the jurisdiction of a Tribal Government, the State will develop the STIP in consultation with the Tribal Government and the Secretary of the Interior.
- **Synopsis:** NYSDOT Main Office will develop a synopsis of major comments and responses on the draft Program prior to completing the final STIP and will incorporate changes as appropriate. The Main Office will include a narrative in the final STIP on how the Public Participation Process was conducted for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to consider during FHWA/FTA approval process.

Other Special Considerations

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation plans and paratransit plans and improvement services. In accordance with ADA guidelines, all meetings conducted by NYSDOT and MPOs must be in locations that are accessible to persons with mobility limitations. Other accommodations may be necessary, such as telecommunication devices for hearing-impaired persons and publishing information on Web sites in an accessible electronic format.



Handicapped-accessible bus

NYSDOT's ADA compliance effort is described in a draft Management Plan that summarizes current ADA compliance and outlines the approach and efforts under way to prepare a required Transition Plan. An outreach component of the Management Plan charges NYSDOT with expanding outreach and ADA assurance efforts with the many and various entities that plan and develop federally funded transportation services and facilities, including NYS MPOs. Information on NYSDOT's overall ADA compliance effort can be found at: <https://www.nysdot.gov/programs/adamanagement>.

NYSDOT is also participating in the development of the State's Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC) Transportation Plan. The Council's mission is to promote and advocate for the accessibility, reliability and affordability of transportation alternatives to improve mobility alternatives for individuals with disabilities.

Title VI/Environmental Justice:

The 1994 Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 supplements the existing requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Title VI states that each Federal agency is required to ensure that no person on grounds of race, color or national origin is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of or in any way subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance. The Environmental Justice (EJ) provision goes further to ensure that any adverse human health or environmental effects of any governmental activities do not disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.

With regard to public involvement, a core principle of EJ is the full and fair participation by all affected communities in the transportation decision-making process. For example, a Regional Office may hold a public meeting to discuss the progress of an ongoing corridor study; part of that outreach would involve identifying affected EJ populations and informing them of a meeting. Nontraditional media may be utilized when promoting a study or plan, including community papers that are distributed for free as well as newsletters within community groups.

Many of the MPOs have developed Environmental Justice Analysis Reports that include identification of geographic areas of EJ concern (low-income, minority) and comparison of TIP projects to location of EJ population.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

U.S. Presidential Executive Order 13166 of 2000 requires the recipients of Federal funding (such as the State and MPOs) to examine the services they provide, to identify any need for services to LEP individuals and to develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access.

NYSDOT is committed to providing language assistance services to ensure accessibility to our programs and services as well as opportunities for public involvement for those with limited English proficiency. NYSDOT has developed a tool kit on LEP that provides guidance on LEP requirements and strategies to address the requirements. The LEP tool kit can be accessed through the Office of Civil Rights, NYSDOT.

Who is a LEP person? A person who does not speak English as primary language and has a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

PART II

Meeting the SAFETEA-LU Public Involvement Requirements

SAFETEA-LU, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005) emphasizes public participation in the transportation planning and programming process. To implement portions of this act, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly issued regulations (23 CFR Parts 450 and 500 and 49 CFR Part 613 in the Federal Register in a document titled **Statewide Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning; Final Rule**. Go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/safetealu.htm> for the document.

One regulation in the Final Rule noted above, §450.210 (a), states in part, “In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the long-range statewide transportation plan (PLAN) and the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points.” Part II of this document presents the required public involvement process and how NYSDOT will respond to the requirements of SAFETEA-LU Regulations, including our goals for the process.

Our goals for public participation during key planning activities include:

- Identifying and documenting public and community support or concerns with planned transportation improvements and issues.
- Educating the public about important transportation issues, including the consequences of Federal, State and local legislation.
- Obtaining input from a wide variety of sources.
- Providing opportunities for interested parties to have input into decisions early, before final decisions are made.
- Providing access and reasonable accommodation for all population groups, including persons with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency, minorities, low-income individuals and other interested groups.

The requirements of §450.210(a) are indicated below, as well as the methodology used by the Department in responding to these requirements:

1. **Early & Continuing Public Involvement** - The Department will provide early and continuing public involvement opportunities throughout the transportation planning process, including providing information on its Web site, making public announcements and providing numerous opportunities for input. Each NYSDOT Regional Office has Regional Public Involvement Coordinators (RPICs) whose responsibility is to coordinate

and assist the various program areas with public involvement activities. For a listing of the RPICs and other related public involvement best practices, contact the Office of Design through the NYSDOT Web site, www.nysdot.gov.

2. **Timely Information** - The Department will provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, freight shippers, private providers of transportation and others affected by transportation plans, programs and projects. Examples include:
 - NYSDOT may use mailing lists, press releases, public notices, e-mails, Web postings and/or other ways to keep citizens current on The PLAN and other issues, such as corridor plans, air quality and energy-related analysis.
 - In rural areas, NYSDOT actions will be consistent with the recently updated **Procedures for Consultation with Public Officials in Rural Areas** (revised 2006). Go to the NYSDOT link:
<https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/policy-and-strategy/planning-bureau>.
 - NYSDOT may use mailing lists, press releases, public notices, Web postings and other means to keep the public current on the State Transportation Improvement Program. Meetings on major planning studies and other important events will be posted on the NYSDOT Web site: <https://www.nysdot.gov/news-events>
 - NYSDOT Main Office will develop generic statewide information (brochures, newsletters) with regional input for easy distribution. NYSDOT Regional Offices may distribute generic statewide information and supplement it with their own regionally specific information. NYSDOT Main Office and Regional Offices, as appropriate, will retain notices, comments and responses for documentation.
3. **Reasonable Public Access** - The Department will provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the PLAN and STIP.
 - NYSDOT will make technical and policy information on the PLAN (drafts, issue papers, and other documentation) and the STIP (bridge and roadway condition inventories infrastructure goals, available funds and eligible users, etc.) readily available to the public at the NYSDOT Main Office and NYSDOT Regional Offices, and take advantage of other opportunities for dissemination, including extensive use of the web site (www.nysdot.gov).
 - Efforts will be made at public meetings to use many different visualization tools, such as charts, photographs, simulation, video and other means to provide information in a clear and understandable format.
 - NYSDOT Main Office will retain notices, comments and responses pertaining to the PLAN for documentation. NYSDOT Main Office and NYSDOT Regional Offices will retain notices, comments and responses for documentation pertaining to their specific involvement in the Program.
4. **Adequate Public Notice** - The Department will provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and adequate time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, action on the PLAN and STIP.

- In each rural county, NYSDOT Regional Offices will provide citizens at least 14-30 days prior notice of their public involvement activity and make known the time, location and purpose, including issues or list of projects to be discussed, by submitting press releases to the media, by publishing public notices, or by other means, including e-mails and letters when appropriate, the NYSDOT Web site and other tools.

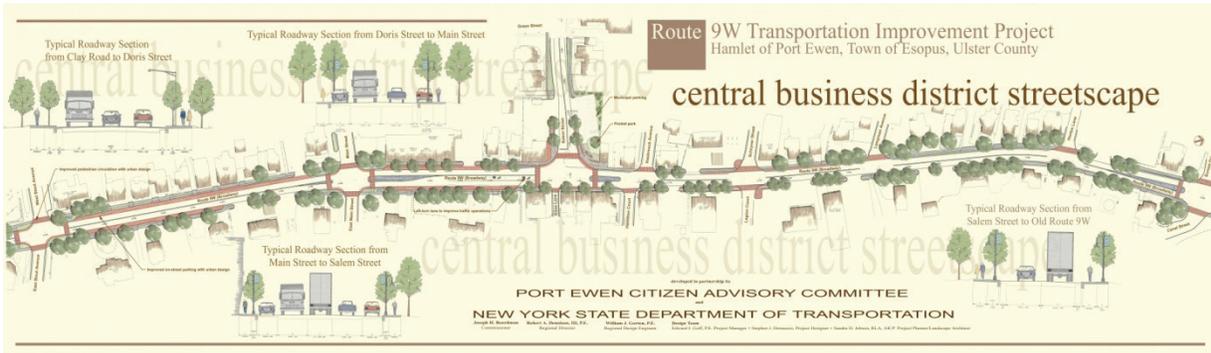


Rural road in New York State

- In urbanized areas, each Metropolitan Planning Organization will adopt and update its own Public Involvement Procedures. NYSDOT will have an oversight function and, as a voting member in each Metropolitan Planning Organization, will actively promote involving citizens in the Metropolitan Planning Organization's planning process.
 - NYSDOT Regional Offices will provide at least 14 days (at least 30 for the PLAN and STIP) after the public involvement activity for citizens to review and submit comments on the items presented at the public involvement activity. NYSDOT Regional Staff will retain notices, comments and responses for documentation.
- 5. Location** - The Department will ensure that public meetings are held at accessible and reasonably convenient locations and times to the maximum extent possible.
- When appropriate, efforts will be made to utilize the same locations and times for meetings and make this information more available to citizens.
 - The Department will strive to utilize accessible buildings with access to transit when available.
 - The Department will make presentations at public meetings held by Regional Planning and Development Boards, community planning groups and other groups to allow for information to flow in both directions between NYSDOT and the public.
- 6. Visualization** - The Department will use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan (PLAN) and supporting studies.
- NYSDOT will strive to identify new techniques, including animation and simulation.
 - New tools will be frequently examined, tested and implemented when appropriate.

The goal of using all tools is to help the public develop a better understanding of the process, information and issues.

- Drawings, photos, pictures, charts, maps, tables, PowerPoint presentations and similar tools will be utilized when feasible in NYSDOT publications and meetings. These can include before and after photos of proposed projects, models and other tools.
- Videos and similar tools will be captioned when appropriate.



NYSDOT artistic rendering of Route 9W Project

- 7. Internet** - The Department will make public information available in electronically accessible format to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information.
 - The Department’s Web site, www.nysdot.gov, will be updated at frequent intervals with appropriate information, including a section on Frequently Asked Questions.
 - There will be a link on the Web site to send comments or questions to the Department.
 - When there are specific comments requested on a publication, such as the Draft PLAN or STIP, the publication and how to comment will be highlighted.
- 8. Keeping Track of Comments** - The Department will demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the development of the PLAN and STIP.
 - As part of updating The Plan and the STIP, NYSDOT Main Office will develop a synopsis of verbal and written comments received during the review and comment period and how these comments were addressed.
 - The synopsis will be available at Department offices and on the Web site.
- 9. Underserved Populations** - The Department will include a process for identifying and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income, people with disabilities and minority households, who may face particular challenges accessing employment and other services.
 - NYSDOT will help support the underserved, using the Title VI, Environmental Justice, Limited English Proficiency, Nondiscrimination Implementation Plan that

outlines the minimum requirements and obligations to implement and conduct civil rights, environmental justice, anti-discrimination and related activities and statutes of all programs administered by the department and its subrecipients.

- This Implementation Plan functions as a management tool to help NYSDOT staffs plan their civil rights activities, serves as a resource document for the general public and helps the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in its oversight of NYSDOT's external civil rights enforcement. The plan includes goals and objectives for conducting research, education, technical assistance and staff training; initiating compliance reviews; and for complaint investigations.
- Activities to better serve the underserved will include providing interpreters at appropriate meetings. Also, NYSDOT Regional Title VI Coordinators will assist other program areas in reaching out to EJ, LEP and other population groups for public meetings, mailings and other outreach efforts.
- NYSDOT Main Office and NYSDOT Regional Offices will use mailing lists developed to solicit and consider input from the traditionally underserved in their planning and programming activities. Also, nontraditional media should be utilized, including community papers that are distributed for free as well as existing communication methods (newsletters, etc.) within community groups.

For additional information and policy guidance on Title VI, Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency, please visit this Web site:

www.nysdot.gov/main/business-center/civil-rights

10. Public Involvement Process - The Department will periodically review the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and to revise the process, as appropriate.

- NYSDOT will provide an opportunity for public comment on existing and proposed public involvement procedures.
- NYSDOT Main Office will make the Draft Public Involvement Procedures available for public review and comment for a 45-day period and will identify a date by which comments must be submitted before the procedures are adopted by NYSDOT. Any major revisions will be subject to a similar public review process. An example of a major revision is the addition or deletion of a procedure in this manual that the public has not had the opportunity to provide comment.
- The State will provide copies of the process and revisions to the process to FHWA and FTA for informational purposes.

November 2009

APPENDIX

LEGAL/ REGULATORY BACKGROUND

Public involvement in transportation planning and programming is the process to inform and involve the public in the development of a proposed action, plan or program. Several Federal laws and regulations have requirements pertaining to public outreach on transportation decision-making. SAFETEA-LU, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005) emphasizes public participation in the transportation planning and programming process. To implement portions of this act, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly issued regulations (23 CFR Parts 450 and 500 and 49 CFR Part 613 in the Federal Register of Feb. 14, 2007, in a document titled Statewide Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning; Final Rule at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/safetealu.htm>.

One regulation in this document, §450.210 (a), states, in part, “In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP, the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points.” This document presents the required public involvement process.

NYSDOT previously issued an earlier document, “Adopted NYSDOT Public Involvement Procedures for Transportation Planning and Programming (1994)” after extensive public review and comment. This document presents the first significant revision and reflects changing technology, including the World Wide Web, new Federal requirements and our experience in public involvement activities. The public was given an opportunity to review and to comment on this report during an extensive 45-day comment period. Copies will be available at the Department’s Web site, www.nysdot.gov, the 11 Regional Offices of the New York State Department of Transportation and the offices of the 13 Metropolitan Planning Organizations of New York State.

GLOSSARY

MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization. By Federal law, a metropolitan planning organization is designated by the Governor for every urban area with at least 50,000 residents. The MPO devises solutions to regional transportation problems; this involves addressing other related important issues, such as land use, air quality, energy, economic development and safety. To do this, the MPO develops a long-range regional transportation plan that outlines a strategy to address these issues. The MPO also maintains a short-range program of projects (the Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP) to fund with federal transportation money. For each of these planning products, the MPO's duty is to engage many stakeholders, including the general public, in the planning and the decision-making process.

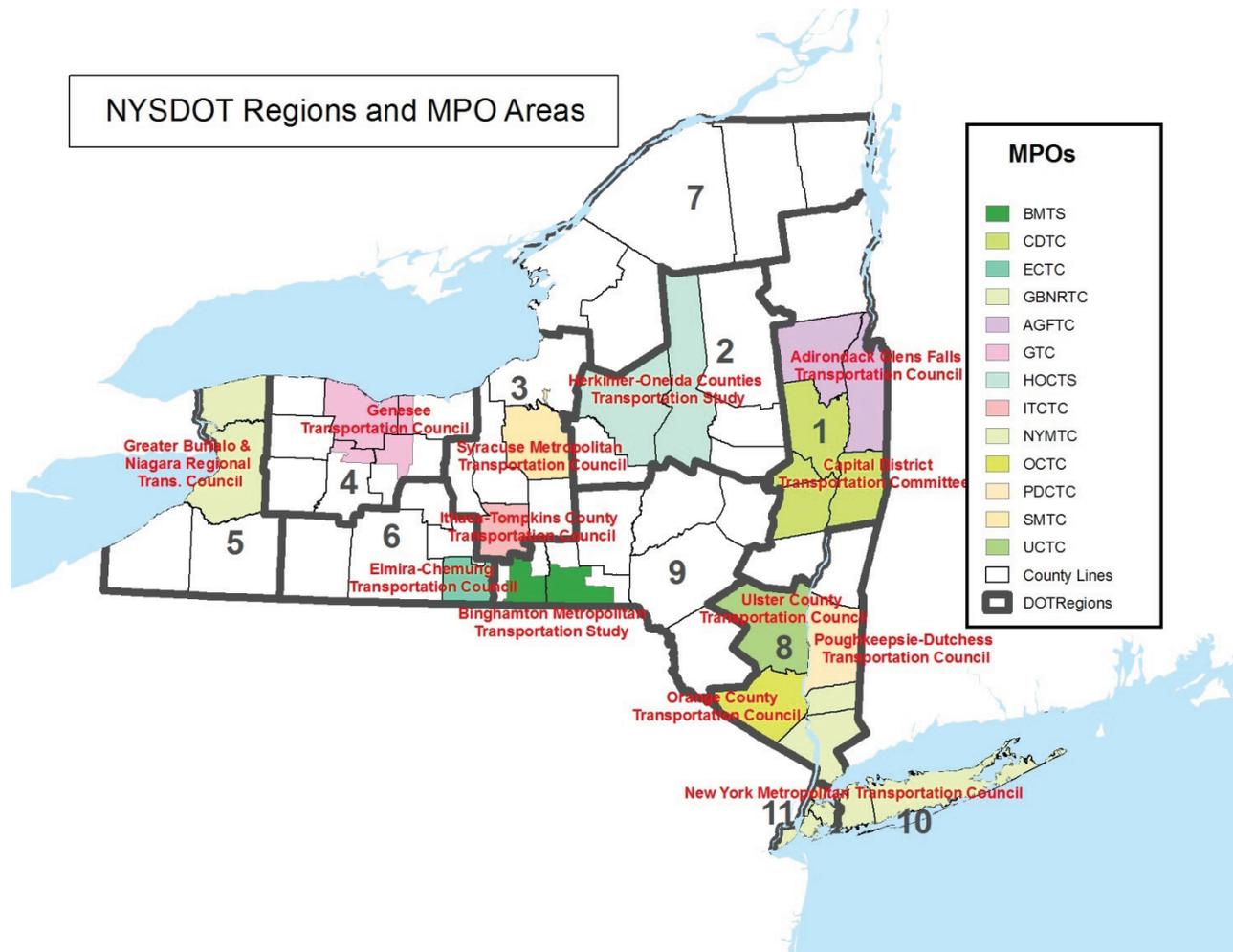
New York State has 13 MPOs. They range in population from the largest, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) that covers New York City, Long Island and Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties, to the smallest, the Ithaca Tompkins County Transportation Council, (ITCTC). Links to all the State's MPOs and other information are at www.nysmpos.org.

CITIZENS: This is a blanket term to refer to a variety of stakeholders. The term citizens includes the general public, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers and providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the traditionally underserved (including persons with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency, minority, low-income populations), Indian Tribal Governments and other interested parties.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING: Transportation planning is fundamental to the establishment of state, regional or community vision for the future. It includes a comprehensive consideration of possible strategies; an evaluation process that encompasses diverse viewpoints; the collaborative participation of relevant transportation agencies and organizations; and open, timely and meaningful public involvement. (U. S. Department of Transportation)

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMMING: Transportation Programming involves prioritizing and scheduling proposed projects and matching those projects with available funds to accomplish agreed-upon stated needs.

Map of Regions and MPOS





New York State
Department of Transportation