



Northern Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NORTPO)

of the
Northern Oklahoma Development Authority

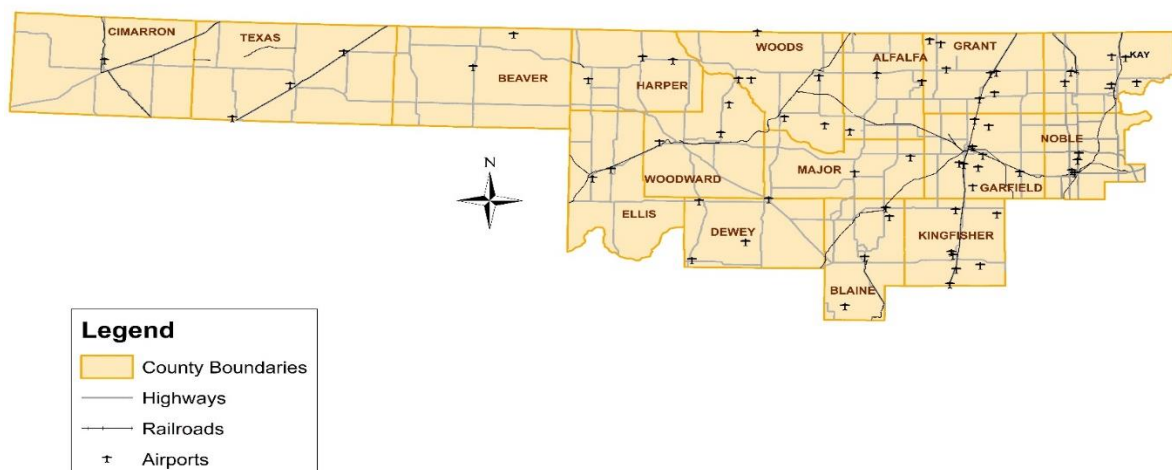
Public Participation Plan



Northern Oklahoma Development Authority
2901 N. Van Buren St.
Enid, OK 73703

Adopted: January 24th, 2019, Amended: July 25th, 2025

NORTPO Region



NORTPO Public Participation Plan

Introduction

The Northern Oklahoma Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NORTPO) Public Participation Plan has been developed to assure that the transportation planning process conducted by NORTPO complies with Federal requirements for public involvement and participation. This document presents the goals of the NORTPO for public participation and involvement, as well as the public involvement procedures designed for various NORTPO activities. These procedures will provide opportunities for citizens to contribute ideas and opinions early and at every stage of the planning process. Efforts will be made to assure participation in the transportation planning and programming process by traditionally underserved individuals including elderly, low income, minority, persons with disabilities, and persons with limited English proficiency.

The NORTPO will, to the extent reasonable and practical, ensure that the NORTPO Public Participation Plan will address the requirements for NORTPO public involvement as identified in 23 CFR 450.210 Statewide Transportation Planning and Programming. Copies of these requirements are found in Appendix A of this document.

Purpose of Plan

To outline methods and approximate time frames for encouraging citizens, affected organizations and other interested parties to be involved in and comment on development of the long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and the ongoing transportation planning process.

Methods for encouraging involvement include providing access to plans, programs and their supporting materials, and opportunities to comment as the plan or program develops. Implementation of scheduled activities is designed to meet or exceed requirements of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) formerly the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

The Public Participation Plan is periodically evaluated and revised, as needed, to ensure its continued effectiveness. A 45-day public review and comment period was provided with each proposed revision to the PPP. NORTPO's Policy Board adopted the PPP on Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019.

Federal Planning Requirements for an RTPO

Federal law and regulations require each RTPO to conduct a planning process that must consider projects, planning strategies, and implementation methods that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight;

- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Freedom of Information Act

In order to ensure public notice and provision of timely information all meetings of the NORTPO Board and all subcommittee and focus groups are subject to the provisions of the Oklahoma Annotated Statutes 25-301-314.

Public Notification and Participation

Official notification of public meetings, public hearings, and public review and comment periods will be posted on the NORTPO website (www.nortpo.org) and will be provided for posting at the following locations and other locations identified by NORTPO staff in order to encourage minority and other underserved populations to participate in the process:

- The administrative offices of local member jurisdictions
- Public libraries
- Newspapers
- NORTPO/NODA office
- OEDA office
- County and NORTPO websites

All NORTPO Board meetings are open to the public and will be conducted in a location that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A reasonable period of time (15-20 minutes) for comments from members of the public will be provided prior to the adjournment of said meetings.

Reasonable Public Access to Technical and Policy Information

The NORTPO staff is available during normal business hours to discuss technical and policy information with citizens and other interested parties. The NORTPO/NODA office is located at 2901 N. Van Buren Street in Enid, Oklahoma. NORTPO staff is also available to meet with outside groups after normal business hours. Arrangements for staff to attend meetings after normal business hours must be made at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting. Copies of all available documents and other materials are available for the cost of postage.

Environmental Justice

Pursuant to Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations, dated Feb. 11, 1994, and the subsequent U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5680.3, issued April 15, 1997, the NORTPO promotes Environmental Justice in all aspects of the NORTPO transportation planning process. These procedures augment and reaffirm the NORTPO policy to adhere

to and advance the principles of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA) as amended, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) as amended, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and other statutes, regulations and guidance that address or affect infrastructure planning and decision making; social, economic, or environmental matters; public health; and public involvement. To these ends, notices of meetings and public hearings will be specifically provided in minority and ethnic gathering places to promote participation in the transportation planning process. Minority and ethnic communities will be monitored through census data to guarantee their inclusion in the process as populations fluctuate over time. Special accommodations (e.g. interpreter, sign language interpreter, large print copy, etc.) may be requested of the NODA staff during normal business hours at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. NODA staff will attempt to accommodate all such requests.

NORTPO Civil Rights Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Northern Oklahoma Development Authority (NODA) and Northern Oklahoma Rural Transportation Planning Organization (NORTPO), under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Section 324 of the Federal-aid Highway Act of 1973; Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987; and other related authorities and regulations, that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap/disability, religion, or familial status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation under any federally or non-federally funded program or activity administered by NODA or its sub-recipients.

RTPO Work Products

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) & Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Major updates to the Regional Transportation Plan will be conducted every five (5) years. The NORTPO will host three (3) public meetings and/or provide notice of availability for public outreach to involve interested parties in the early stages of the plan development. Notices of public hearings and notice of availability for public outreach for the RTP will be published and posted as stated in the Public Notification and Participation section above. After the draft RTP is developed, the NORTPO will host three (3) additional public meetings and/or notice of availability for public outreach to solicit comments on the draft plan. A final plan RTP will be presented to any appropriate focus group for review and comment prior to recommendation to the NORTPO Board for adoption. All public comments received will be made a part of the final adopted document.

Public Participation Plan Amendment Procedures

Review of the Public Participation Plan will be conducted annually and updates will be adopted as necessary. The public comment period will be 45 calendar days. Notices of

public review and comment period for the Public Participation Plan will be published and posted as stated in the Public Notification and Participation section above. The public participation Plan will be presented to the NORTPO Technical Committee for review and NORTPO Policy Board for adoption.

Planning Work Program (PWP)

The Planning Work Program (PWP) is a description of the proposed transportation planning activities of the Northern Oklahoma Regional Transportation Program during the coming federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). The program is prepared annually and serves as a basis for requesting Federal planning funds. It also serves as a management tool for scheduling, budgeting, and monitoring the planning activities of the participating agencies. The public comment period for the PWP will be 10 calendar days.

Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

The RTIP is a prioritized list of transportation projects proposed for implementation during the next four years. Projects included in the RTIP must be consistent with the LRTP. The RTIP is required to be financially constrained in each year of the program. This means that the funding identified for transportation projects in a given year must be equal to the amount reasonably expected to be available under existing federal, state and local programs. Prior to adoption of the RTIP (or amendment) the NORTPO provides an opportunity for public review and comment and holds a public hearing. A project utilizing federal transportation funds may not proceed unless it is included in the RTIP. Amendments and revisions of the RTIP may occur at any time during the FY. The TIP is also responsible for implementing and monitoring Performance-Based Planning and Programming initiatives. A new RTIP is adopted once every two years and NORTPO will continue to provide opportunities for public participation by interested parties in the development of the program. The proposed RTIP will be published and be made readily available for public review and comment. A notice of public hearing will be published at least 21 days prior to the date of the TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD at which a new RTIP will be considered for adoption. Notice of public hearing for a RTIP amendment will be published at least 10 days prior to the TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD action. Proposed amendments to the RTIP will be presented to the TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE for its review and recommendation to the TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD.

Mobility Studies and Corridor Plans

Notices will be distributed to the citizens who live in the specific study areas in order to obtain the input of persons and/or groups who would most likely be affected by any proposed improvements. After at least one public meeting at a location convenient to the affected citizens, regional studies and corridor plans will be presented to the NORTPO Board for adoption.

Amendments to Adopted Documents

Whenever proposed amendments to adopt non-administrative documents such as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are

necessary, the NORTPO will notify members of the Technical Committee by mail, fax or email to initiate the amendment process, and post notification that the amendment is available for public review. This notification will serve as the 10-day public notice of the upcoming meeting. Notices of public review and comment period for proposed amendments will be published and posted as stated in the Public Notification and Participation section above. The proposed amendment will be stated on the posted notice. Mail-out, email or faxed ballots may be used for amending the Regional Transportation Planning Work Program (PWP), Public Participation Plan (PPP), and other time sensitive NORTPO business matters on a case-by-case basis. Copies of the ballots will become part of the record of NORTPO activities and a summary of the vote will be included as an addendum to minutes of the previous meeting.

The public comment period for document amendments outside of the PPP will be ten (10) working days. Proposed documents, amendments, and public comments to the NORTPO Board for review and adoption. The following amendments to adopted documents are entirely exempt from the public involvement process:

Minor technical, editorial, or otherwise non-substantive revisions including the following:

- Minor cost changes
- Changes in cost shares
- Splitting or phasing of projects
- Other administrative changes such as in the lead agency or funding source

Activities to Enhance Public Participation and Involvement

The following activities and initiatives will be incorporated into the NORTPO public involvement and outreach programs as well as into the overall planning process and RTP development.

1. Surveys

NORTPO will distribute surveys among the local population of each jurisdiction. Survey forms will be distributed to the appropriate affected populations within the NORTPO region; be available on the NORTPO website, at county offices, at public meetings and distributed by community groups. These forms will be collected and tabulated; the results will become a part of the LRTP and/or RTP.

2. Visualization Techniques

In addition to the online surveys and the web-based GIS program the NORTPO will incorporate visualization techniques into the planning process and public involvement activities which may include:

- A coordinated and comprehensive campaign to elevate the regional awareness of the NORTPO planning activities and functions of the NORTPO through the development of a NORTPO banner, project fact sheets, speaker bureaus, transportation fairs, NORTPO logo utilization in NORTPO sponsored events, and articles of interest prepared by the NODA staff for local newspapers and regional magazines.

- Increased circulation of NORTPO products and proposed documents through the use of local chambers of commerce, business clubs, ministerial alliances and tribal clubs and organizations.
- The expanded use of digital photography and photographs in NORTPO public meetings, advertisements and publications.
- An upgrade of the NORTPO website to create a more user-friendly and interactive experience for the visitor as well as to provide the NORTPO an improved platform for animations, digital presentations, and timely information regarding the performance of the region's transportation network and proposed improvements to the region's transportation network.

3. **Public Meetings**

The NORTPO Policy Board and Technical Committee meeting notices will be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. A notice of public hearing will be published at least ten business days prior to the meeting date. A copy of any paid newspaper publications shall be retained in the NORTPO files for a period of three (3) years after the end of the Fiscal Year.

NORTPO meetings are open to the public and will be conducted in a location that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A reasonable period of time (15 – 20 minutes) for comments from members of the public will be provided prior to the adjournment of said meetings.

4. **Public Engagement**

NORTPO seeks to continually grow public participation in its transportation planning process by setting meaningful measurement goals for engagement. Because the public participation plan is to be regularly updated, these goals will provide milestones for progress towards a more inclusive, proactive and ongoing public participation effort on the part of NORTPO.

Surveys

The RTPO will use surveys as appropriate to gather public input, distributed through online channels such as the NORTPO website, blog, social media and transportation newsletter. Surveys will be available in multiple languages where appropriate. Hard copies will be distributed to all NORTPO area public libraries and available on request. Recipients of the survey will include media outlets, advocacy groups, public and private transportation interests, individual citizens, affected public agencies and more. Surveys will be utilized as an opportunity for public participation in the development of the LRTP.

Public Meetings

The RTPO will conduct public meetings as necessary during the development of the LRTP to encourage questions and comments about existing transportation conditions and future needs. Public meetings will include visualization methods

such as maps and hand-outs and can include special presentations such as PowerPoints and speakers. Public meetings will emphasize interaction between technical experts, staff, stakeholders and the public. Public meetings will be scheduled at times and locations to encourage attendance and accessibility. The RTPO shall provide timely information about public meetings utilizing the above tools and tactics.

Public Engagement

RTPO staff will be available to speak at organization meetings and events regarding the transportation planning process so as to bring the opportunity for face-to-face engagement to organizations, groups and committees around the region.

Press Outreach

The RTPO will work to foster and expand relationships with media outlets, including outlets geared toward minority, low-income, disabled, transit-dependent and other underrepresented populations throughout the region. Awarded projects, grant opportunities, calls for public comment, regional events and accomplishments are all broad subjects the RTPO will prepare for press outreach. Where appropriate, materials will be translated into other languages.

Websites

NORTPO will regularly maintain its websites to provide up-to-date information in a timely and concise fashion. Content to be added to the respective websites will include committee meeting dates, times and agendas, presentations, reports and studies, PPP, transportation planning documents (PWP, LRTP), amendments to the transportation improvement program, information on federally-funded projects, data visualizations and graphics, grant and funding notifications, air quality information, the LRTP draft plan summary, the adopted the LRTP plan brochure and report and other resources. The NORTPO website will serve as a resource for information about the development of the LRTP and to solicit public input.

Plans and Reports

These various engagement mediums will be used to invite public review of the draft LRTP before formal adoption.

Translation

The LRTP materials and transportation planning documents will be translated into languages other than English as necessary in accordance with the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan. These translations will take place in a variety of mediums such as website and print as necessary.