

Destination 2055 Development: Metropolitan Transportation Plan Public Engagement Plan

Capital Area MPO
Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPO

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Introduction

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is the long-range regional transportation plan for the greater Research Triangle region. The Capital Area and the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro MPOs coordinate to develop the MTP for the region. The 2055 MTP will provide a framework for the investment of anticipated federal, state, and local funds over a 30-year period. It will include transportation projects, programs, services, and policies across all modes, including roadway, transit, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian.

Public engagement is a significant component of the MTP development process. Investment decisions cannot be based solely on performance numbers and the efforts of the MPO staff and policy Boards. Public engagement elicits the input of a variety of stakeholders and residents to help create a broader based plan, and the engagement process provides an opportunity to build credibility for the adopted MTP.

The purpose of the following Public Engagement Plan (PE Plan) is to outline the goals and methods to be deployed to promote meaningful participation and ensure that the public is not only informed, but also involved in the creation of ideas, identification of problems and issues, and the development of solutions. The overarching goal is to focus on inclusive and authentic public outreach tools and tactics that will reach the region's numerous and diverse stakeholders and residents early and consistently.

In addition to this PE Plan, which is customized for the public engagement related to the 2055 MTP, both MPOs have an agency-level Public Participation Plan available on their respective websites (www.campo-nc.us or www.dchcmpto.org). Those plans outline the commitment of each MPO to deliver meaningful public engagement in the development, decision-making, and delivery of programs and projects. They also detail the requirements for public comment periods, public hearings, and other elements related to MPO Policy Board actions.

Note that as each of the various 2055 MTP development key decision points approaches, the MPO staff will create and publish a detailed schedule of the upcoming public engagement activities for that key decision point based on this PE Plan.

2055 MTP Development Key Decision Points

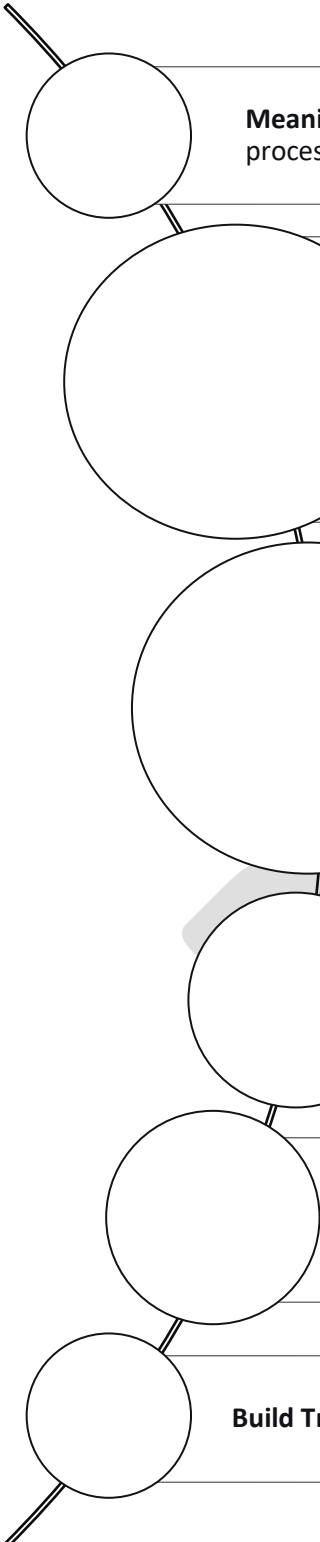
There are four key decision points in the development of the 2055 MTP that will involve public engagement:

- I. Vision – Goals & Objectives
- II. Alternatives Selection and Analysis
- III. Preferred Option Review
- IV. 2055 MTP Adoption, including
 - a. Air Quality Conformity Determination
 - b. Travel Model and SE Data*
 - i. Socio-Economic Data (SE Data) for 2055 MTP and other plans and studies
 - ii. Triangle Regional Model (TRM) for 2055 MTP and other plans and studies

*This element will no longer require an independent engagement effort as it has in previous years. This decision was made due to the technical nature of the item being difficult to digest and problematic for providing feedback. It will be included as part of the larger effort to adopt the plan and will include scenarios with which to facilitate action.

Public Engagement Goals

The strategies and methods outlined in this PE Plan reflect one or more of the following goals:



Meaningful: Multiple engagement efforts will take place during the 2055 MTP development process (24+ months). They will be customized to each development key decision point.

Ensure Diversity: “Go to them where they are approach.” Deploy a range of methods to reach all populations, including targeted efforts toward traditionally underengaged populations

- Involve minority, low-income, limited English proficiency, and disabled populations in transportation decision-making.
- Utilize community ambassadors and traditionally underengaged population representatives to gain input from targeted communities of concern

Ensure Access: Use methods and approaches that are understood and attractive to the participants

Increase access to participation by utilizing both in-person and online methods.

- Craft materials in a manner that is easily understood by the general population and ensure that the participation is both welcomed and encouraged.
- Coordinate with the outreach efforts of MPO partners (i.e., local municipalities and NCDOT) for opportunities to engage a broader public and avoid "engagement fatigue."

Increase Participation: Leverage recent engagement efforts by MPOs as well as municipal partners for outreach mechanisms (eg. contacts lists) to broaden reach to both general public and targeted groups

Documentation: Target and measure engagement gaps and successes. Document public engagement activities and inputs for review by the public, administrators, and decision makers.

Build Trust: Close the loop; ensure all participants receive follow-up information about outcomes.

Public Engagement Activities

The following table depicts the intended public engagement activities for the development of the 2055 MTP. These activities are described in more detail below. Staff may develop other tools and materials if circumstances suggest they will enhance effectiveness.

Activity	2055 MTP Development Key Decision Points			
	I. Goals & Objectives	II. Alternatives	III. Preferred Option	VI. Adopt Plan
Written Materials				
Reports	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maps (Online and interactive)	--	✓	✓	✓
In-Person Engagement				
Public events	✓*	✓*	✓*	--
Public hearing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Presentations	✓*	✓	✓	✓*
Virtual Engagement				
Website	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social media	✓	✓	✓	✓
Videos	✓	✓	✓	--
Surveys	✓	✓	--	--
Mailing list	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newsletters/Brochures	✓	✓	✓	✓
Virtual Meetings	✓	✓	✓	--
Media and Ads				
Press releases	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ads	✓	✓	✓	--
Diverse Engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓
Respond to Comments	✓	✓	✓	--

*In-person engagement is likely to vary between efforts based on need. For example, pop-up events may be better suited for goals and objectives, whereas scheduled in-person meetings may be more beneficial for visual-centric items (i.e. alternatives mapping).

Activity Descriptions

1. Written Materials

Reports – The MPOs will produce easy-to-read plan reports that make extensive use of visuals such as charts, tables, and graphs to present the materials. Long reports will have a summary. Materials will be translated as necessary per MPO guidelines and procedures.

Maps – The MPOs will produce easy-to-read printed and electronic maps (e.g., PDFs), and interactive, online maps that allow the user to zoom-in and zoom-out.

Mailing List – The MPOs will create an electronic and postal mailing list of people and agencies and send engagement opportunity notices to that list.

2. In-Person Engagement

In-person engagement will be held at various locations throughout the region to ensure the MPOs receive feedback from a variety of locales and socio-economic groups. To the extent possible, the MPOs will coordinate with the public engagement activities of other planning efforts in the area. The MPOs' activities will be held at locations that are accessible to persons with disabilities and which are located on a transit route, to the extent feasible (some parts of the planning areas do not have fixed-route transit service). If given advance notice prior to an event, special provisions will be made, e.g., sign language, translator, etc.

In-person events – These events can have a variety of formats, including, but not limited to:

- Open houses in which community members are able to talk one-on-one with staff;
- Focus groups in which a facilitator helps to produce feedback;
- Charrettes or workshops that allow citizens to make hands-on contributions to design elements or other MTP development elements; and,
- Pop-up events conducted at popular locations for targeted groups.

Public hearings – People can directly address the MPO Board.

Presentations – As appropriate, the MPOs will make presentations and solicit feedback from the elected officials and advisory commissions and committees of partner agencies and municipalities, community organizations, and those identified among the target groups.

3. Virtual Engagement

Website – The MPOs will develop a single website that provides the following: easy ways to provide feedback; background on the MTP federal requirements; MPO public engagement plan and schedule; public opportunities to participate and sign-up for notices; all MTP documents, maps, presentations and surveys; and staff contact information. The Public will primarily be oriented to this central website hosted by Central Pines. Both MPOs will also house more technical information specific to their regions on their individual organization websites.

Social Media – The MPOs will publish public engagement opportunities through social media such as Twitter/X and Facebook, and through the public affairs offices of local jurisdictions and counties. The MPOs may also purchase engagement advertising to target audiences on social media.

Videos & Audio Files – The MPOs will develop and publish explanatory videos to present products, e.g., plan alternatives, during the development of the 2055 MTP. The MPOs will also explore the utility of presentations with audio for distribution.

Online Survey and Maps – As appropriate, the MPO will administer written and online surveys, and crowdsource maps.

Mailing List – The MPOs will build an email list of interested citizens based on the planning processes of local jurisdictions, counties, Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) and other related agencies (e.g., NCDOT, Central Pines Regional Council) for inclusion of these public engagement activities.

E-Newsletters and Brochures – The MPO will publish newsletters or brochures for major key decision points.

Call in meetings and/or Virtual Town Halls – The MPOs will host virtual meetings and endeavor to replicate in-person activities online for key decision points, as appropriate. Such meetings would be interactive to engage participants via meeting polling, and similar tactics. Online meetings (at a minimum the staff presentations) will be recorded and posted on the website.

4. Media and Ads

Press Releases – The MPOs will provide press releases to the public affairs offices of local governments for release to the public and media.

Ads – The MPOs will publish a notice in major newspapers, and other local, minority, or alternative language newspapers, as appropriate, to notify the public of engagement opportunities. If deemed effective, outdoor advertising can be used.

5. Diverse Engagement

The MPOs will endeavor to engage people from all member jurisdictions, multi-modal transportation groups, neighborhood and community groups, and local and state agencies responsible for environmental protection, conservation, land use management, natural resources and historic preservation. The MPOs will realize more equitable engagement by making special, targeted efforts to include people from the environmental justice communities including minority, low-income, limited English proficient, and elderly persons.

6. Respond to Comments

The MPOs will document both oral and written public comments received during the course of public engagement and make those comments available to the MPO Executive Board and the public. As needed, staff will summarize comments, and in some cases directly respond to significant or popular comments.