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2012

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Public Participation Plan

Section 1: Introduction

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the ten-county metropolitan area and is responsible for regional transportation planning activities. SPC works with interested parties to ensure effective and innovative transportation planning that is representative of and responsive to the needs of the entire region. To achieve this goal, SPC offers the public an active role in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects, beginning in the early stages of planning processes.

1.1 The Public Participation Plan

This document, the Public Participation Plan, provides a framework for SPC’s transportation planning processes in order to facilitate a proactive public participation process and comply with federal participation plan requirements. This Public Participation Plan identifies strategies and tools to enhance effective public participation in SPC’s transportation planning activities. Activities in this Public Participation Plan are also coordinated with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes associated with statewide transportation planning processes.

This Public Participation Plan supersedes the previous Public Participation Plan (adopted April 2011).

1.2 Background

The purpose of a Public Participation Plan is to ensure that the public participation activities of SPC’s transportation planning processes comply with the proactive public involvement requirements of Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 450.316; the participation plan requirements of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (Title 23 United States Code, Section 134(i)(5)); and other applicable federal regulations and guidelines on metropolitan transportation planning and programs.

The Public Participation Plan details the strategies and procedures SPC will utilize to achieve participation in regional transportation planning efforts. The Public Participation Plan applies to transportation planning activities for which participation by interested parties is a required
component, and outlines SPC’s transportation planning activities that comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and other applicable standards for collecting and addressing public comments.

SPC’s commitment to participation in these activities is reflected in the SPC Mission Statement:

*The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission is the cooperative forum for regional collaboration, planning, and public decision-making. The Commission develops plans and programs for public investments; fulfills federal and state requirements for transportation, economic development, and local government assistance programs; and operates with public involvement and trust.*

1.3 SPC Contact Information

For more information on this Public Participation Plan or SPC’s regional transportation planning activities, please contact the SPC Public Involvement Coordinator:

Public Involvement Coordinator  
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852  
Telephone: (412) 391-5590  
Fax: (412) 391-9160  
Email: comments@spcregion.org  
Website: www.spcregion.org
Section 2: Goals for Public Participation

SPC’s goal is to foster significant and ongoing two-way communication with our region’s citizens. Education and public outreach are essential parts of our responsibility to inform the public about the transportation planning process.

Goal 1: Inform and Educate the Public
SPC works diligently to make information accessible to the public and to provide timely public notice. We will provide information to the public that is accurate, understandable and pertinent to regional transportation planning and engagement activities, and will do so through the use of varied communication tools. In addition to informing the public, SPC will make every effort to educate the public about the planning process and provide supportive policy, program and technical information. Educating the public supports informed public contribution and continued engagement by the public. Education will be enhanced through the use of visualization tools that will help the public understand and relate to SPC’s various planning activities.

Goal 2: Reach Out and Build Connections
SPC continues to develop methods and opportunities for traditionally underserved portions of the population to participate in the transportation planning process, including minority, non-English speaking, and low-income groups. It is a continual priority to increase the diversity and number of participants in previous engagement activities through building new relationships with organizations and communities that serve these populations.

Goal 3: Engage the Public and Encourage Continued Participation
SPC will encourage continued public participation by ensuring an engagement process that is meaningful. This includes providing various ways to engage and communicate with the public, responding to all comments and questions in a timely manner, using our network of partners for help with responses as needed and providing other opportunities for further engagement and education.

The concept of two-way communication between SPC and the public is a key element to developing our planning goals and outcomes. We encourage input, respond in a reasonable and timely manner, and include comments as feedback to decision-makers to shape the
planning process. It is important to note that all regular meetings of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission feature a public comment opportunity.

**Goal 4: Use Public Input to Shape Policies, Plans, and Programs**

SPC will document all input received from the public. This documentation will provide a record of all comments and will assist SPC staff and committees in reviewing public input, which will then be used in the development of transportation plans and programs. The process of incorporating public input into transportation planning documents will be transparent and consistent with the provisions outlined in this Public Participation Plan. SPC will inform the public of the decision-making process for each planning activity in which public comment is solicited. This will be presented to the public at the beginning of each planning activity and throughout the engagement process.

**Goal 5: Evaluate Public Participation Strategies**

In order to sustain best practices in public participation, SPC will continually monitor the public engagement process and develop a framework for evaluating and improving this document and the strategies that guide how SPC engages the public.
Section 3: Public Engagement Techniques

SPC utilizes a wide range of communication mechanisms and community engagement techniques to provide for meaningful participation from interested parties. In order to organize and demonstrate these techniques, SPC has assembled a Public Involvement Resource Program to assist members of the public, stakeholders, and other interested parties to find the necessary information to assist in meaningful participation in the planning process.

3.1 Public Involvement Resource Program

A. Public Involvement Coordinator
In order to better serve the needs of a diverse regional community and its corresponding stakeholders, SPC maintains a staff resource position to coordinate and communicate activities between parties interested in the transportation planning process. This Public Involvement Coordinator provides resources and education to the public in a specific and timely manner. The Public Involvement Coordinator plays a role as a liaison to the public, and responds to comments and inquiries regarding the MPO’s programs and policies. The coordinator represents SPC at transportation-based activities in the community, and looks for specific opportunities to engage a wide variety of citizens, groups, and interested parties, including the disabled, elderly, low-income, minority and Limited English Proficiency populations.

B. Identify and Build Relationships with Interested Parties
In order to create and implement transportation plans with long lasting benefits, appropriate stakeholders must be identified. An interested party or stakeholder is defined as any person or group that is affected by a transportation plan, program, or project. In accordance with SAFETEA-LU, stakeholders will include “citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties.” Citizens include the general public, environmental health, neighborhood, citizen, and civic organizations, and traditionally underserved communities such as people with disabilities, and /or low-income, minority, elderly and Limited English Proficiency.

C. Publicize SPC Activities
Activities of SPC will be advertised by utilizing various media and social outlets. These activities may include distributing press releases to the media, inviting the public to meetings and posting public involvement activities on the SPC website. SPC staff will develop strategies appropriate to the scope and timeframe of the specific project or plan. Specifically, articles, news releases and/or media alerts will be disseminated to announce public review and comment periods for SPC’s Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Public Participation Plans and major amendments.
A current list of information outlets, known as our Document Review Network, will be established and maintained. The current list is available in Appendix A of this document.

D. Coordinate with Partner Agencies and Community Liaisons
In an effort to maximize public involvement, SPC staff will collaborate on outreach activities with those of our partner agencies, as well as civic and community organizations as these professionals have long-standing relationships with the public and are aware of the various concerns expressed by the citizens they represent. Utilizing their resources to help raise awareness of SPC events and programs will promote increased levels of public participation.

Presentations may be made by SPC staff to interested civic organizations on Commission’s activities, the transportation planning process in general, or specific transportation projects.

Public outreach activities will include efforts to involve traditionally underserved groups (e.g., minorities, elderly, low-income, or Limited English Proficient persons) in the transportation planning process. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Identifying areas in the SPC region with concentrations of minority, elderly, and low income populations**

- **Identifying organizations that work directly with traditionally underserved communities**

- **Posting notification of meetings, any public hearings, and open houses in newspapers, at the SPC website, through contact lists and communication network**

- **Publishing notification of meetings, any public hearings, and open houses in LEP Languages (see Section 10.2)**
E. Develop and Implement a Plan to Reach Minority, Low-Income, Limited English Proficiency and Low-Literacy Populations
SPC staff will make concerted efforts to engage communities that have traditionally not been participants in the transportation planning process. Traditional non-participants tend to include persons who are low-income, minority, elderly and disabled, have no vehicles, are low literate or have limited English proficiency. SPC staff will identify opportunities and strategies that will provide these communities greater access to the transportation planning process. These opportunities will allow SPC staff to build relationships with key leaders and organizations within the communities.

F. Develop an Outreach and Education Program
Public involvement is most effective when the general public is informed of the complex issues surrounding a project. When necessary, SPC will develop outreach and educational programs to inform various parties of the public involvement process for a particular project or to provide scope of details regarding a project.

G. Establish a Speakers Network
The Speakers Network will respond to requests from civic groups, professional organizations, neighborhood associations, and other groups for presentations about the regional transportation planning process and transportation plans. The network will consist of SPC staff, with assistance from staff members of PennDOT, regional transit agencies, member planning agencies, bicycle/pedestrian and freight communities.

H. Maintain a Regional Document Review Network
In order to provide the region’s citizens with local access to our documents and plans, SPC maintains a Regional Document Review Network of libraries located throughout the 10-county SPC region. The libraries provide examination copies of SPC materials for review during our public comment periods. Using resources available through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (www.educationbug.org), SPC maintains an up-to-date listing of recognized libraries in the SPC region.

SPC also makes documents available at county planning and development offices in each county in the 10 county region, as well as the City of Pittsburgh. A list of these locations is available in Appendix A of this document.

SPC also provides documents for public review online (www.spcregion.org)

I. Website (www.spcregion.org)
Transportation plans and activities are accessible through our website in conjunction with additional resource materials. The website is monitored and regularly updated with the latest information regarding the current status of specific plans and projects. Archives may also be accessed through the MPO website.
J. Communications
SPC staff seeks to utilize all available forms of media in an effort to increase public involvement. Citizens and agencies have the opportunity to remain engaged in the public involvement process through updates provided by SPC’s communications department. The following methods are employed in order to provide the best possible information to those looking for information:

- **Create and maintain new forms of technology and media**
  Strategies to encourage public input may include social networks/ mediums such as Facebook. As members of the community have access to these types of social media, such methods may be used to augment current outreach methods to reach a broader audience.

- **Produce and Distribute Brochures**
  Brochures will be created to provide interested parties with information about SPC and the planning process. Copies of the brochure will be made available at public meetings, by written request, and online. Non-English language or special format versions of such materials will be made available upon request.

- **Conduct Surveys**
  Surveys allow SPC staff to directly collect feedback from the general public. SPC staff may also gather small groups of citizens to create focus groups that will provide feedback in regards to a specific topic or transportation plan. Non-English language or special format versions of surveys or other such materials will be made available upon request.

K. Visualization Techniques
The world is an increasingly more visual place, especially in terms of education and information. SPC recognizes this, and has adapted methods to help citizens understand different proposals, impacts and possible outcomes related to regional transportation programs and plans. Visualization techniques used to illustrate these concepts may include:

- Maps
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- Aerial photographs, alone or with mapping overlays
- Photographs, sketches, artist renderings, images, diagrams, charts and other graphics
- Printed and/or interactive maps that allow comparison of proposals
- Scenario planning exercises
- Online maps and photo galleries
- Web broadcasts
- Interactive kiosks

L. Contact Lists
Maintaining up-to-date contact information for individuals, stakeholders, the media, and interested organizations and groups is a priority. As new parties become involved in our planning and outreach efforts, SPC’s contact lists continue to expand and evolve. In order to collect this valuable information, SPC employs the following:

- Mailing list registration is available at public meetings
- Mailing list registration on its website or via email
- Working with existing stakeholders to suggest potential participants or encourage participation
- Working with professional, civic and community organizations to provide representatives, suggest participants, and encourage participation

M. Ensure Public Input Opportunities at SPC meetings
SPC makes a concerted effort to include the public in the planning process. All regular meetings of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission include an opportunity for public comment. A calendar of upcoming public meetings can be found at the SPC website: (http://www.spcregion.org/meet.shtml) or by contacting SPC using the address provided below. All public comments are documented and become a part of the meeting minutes. In the event that the public is unable to make comments during a meeting time, comments may be submitted in written, verbal or electronic form.

3.2 Submission of Public Comments

SPC will accept written comments on transportation plans, programs and actions at any time. Verbal comments are accepted at advertised public meetings, as described in Sections 7 and 8 of this document.
A. Submission of Written Comments
SPC will accept comments submitted via letter, fax or email to the address below:

Comments
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852
Fax: (412) 391-9160
Email: Comments@spcregion.org

Written comments are considered by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission in the same manner as testimony presented orally at scheduled public meetings. Summaries of written testimony are forwarded to the SPC Commissioners for their review.

B. Oral Testimony or Verbal Comments
SPC provides multiple opportunities for the provision of oral testimony or verbal comments, as outlined more fully in Sections 7 and 8 of this document.

- All SPC meetings are open to the public, and members of the public will be provided an opportunity to provide comment during each meeting. A summary of the comments received will be incorporated into the formal meeting minutes.

- Periodically, SPC will also conduct a formal public comment period for the consideration of a specific project, program or plan. As detailed elsewhere in this Public Participation Plan, these public meetings are advertised on the SPC website, and in local or regional news media. Each advertised meeting will provide an opportunity for public testimony.

- When SPC is offering a project- or plan-related public comment period, a link to the current project or program will be made available on the SPC website homepage. That link will direct the interested individuals to relevant project, plan or program materials and information.

- Written comments are also accepted at these events.

All individuals wishing to testify in person about a specific project at an SPC meeting are requested to submit a written abstract at the time of the meeting.

Additional presentation materials can be brought to the SPC meetings. The project abstract and any supplemental presentation material will become part of the public record. Project abstract forms are available from the SPC website at http://www.spcregion.org.
SPC staff will be on-hand at each meeting to assist those wishing to deliver testimony. If you need an accommodation due to a disability or have questions pertaining to these guidelines or format of the public meetings please contact: Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, Public Involvement Coordinator, at (412) 391-5590.
Section 4: Citizens, Partners, Stakeholders and Interested Parties

4.1 Federal Guidance and SAFETEA-LU

Federal guidance from SAFETEA-LU:

The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, 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 disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan planning process. (§ 450.316(a) Interested parties, participation and consultation)

4.2 Consultation in Developing the Public Participation Plan

In 2007, SPC developed a Public Participation Plan in consultation with a wide range of interested parties, as defined above. A preliminary discussion draft was developed as a means to begin the dialog, using guidance from existing SAFETEA-LU legislation, and training sponsored by the National Transit Institute (NTI).

The Public Participation Plan is a dynamic document, and periodic updates are required to ensure that the Plan reflects current conditions and practices.

In 2011 and 2012, SPC consulted interested parties in the development of this updated Public Participation Plan, including:

- Citizens
- Affected Public Agencies
- Representatives of Public Transportation Employees
- Freight Shippers
- Providers of Freight Transportation Services
- Private Providers of Transportation
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- Representatives of Users of Public Transportation
- Representatives of Users of Pedestrian Walkways and Bicycle Transportation Facilities
- Representatives of the Disabled
- Other Interested Parties

The final draft Public Participation Plan used feedback and suggestions from these interested parties before it was presented for formal public review and comment as described in Section 11.
Section 5: Public Participation Panels

SPC provides a unique and active opportunity for participation by bringing planning directly to residents in each county through Public Participation Panels (Panels). Panels are a key element of SPC’s public participation and outreach program. SPC works in partnership with a Panel of residents and business representatives in each county to provide citizens with direct, ongoing access to the regional planning and decision-making process. The Panels help promote public awareness of the regional transportation planning process and public participation opportunities to communities throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania.

5.1 Role and Relationship to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission

Panels are an established forum for citizens to provide input on the regional transportation planning process as well as major decisions of the Commission. The Panels are a key element of SPC’s public participation and outreach program.

Panel members assist SPC staff and the Commission in developing community contacts and partnerships. The Panels serve as a means for two-way information flow, and are a prime source for local perceptions regarding the impacts of transportation issues affecting their communities. In addition, members recommend venues and topics for public meetings using their knowledge of facilities and events where citizens commonly gather to discuss issues.

The Panels play an active role in formal public review and comment periods on major transportation decisions of SPC. The Panel(s) most affected by the decision(s) are convened for that purpose. Panels may convene community meetings for the general public to assist in giving broader public input to major decisions. Individual Panels may elect to convene to consider or discuss issues of local interest.

Unless there is an emergency requiring Commission action within a shorter period of time, the Panels will have minimum period of 30 days to review documents and/or information concerning major decisions of the Commission and to provide comment to the Commission. During the 30-day timeframe, the affected Panel(s) will hold a public meeting to gather local input. SPC’s staff and planning partners will be available as resources to assist the activities of the Panels.
5.2 Membership

County Commissioners in each county (in Allegheny County, the County Executive and the Mayor of Pittsburgh) appoint Panel members in accordance with the general Guidance for Panel composition stated below.

Panel Chairpersons help to maintain their individual Panel’s organization, sustain orderly procedure, and work to ensure that Panel member issues are addressed. Chairpersons work with SPC staff to organize formal input and inform the Commission of the Panel’s comments. Chairpersons are nominated by recommendation from the appointing bodies based on merit and service to the Panel, and are approved via majority vote by Panel members.

From time to time regional workshops or forums may be convened for the Chairpersons from each Panel so they may discuss issues, educate members, and encourage consistency and continuous improvement.

In general:

- The membership of the Panels is designed to be representative of the diverse population and interests in each county, with consideration given to federal guidance on Environmental Justice.
- Due to the diverse nature of the Panels, each Panel is provided general operational guidance, but may deviate from or reflect other Panels activities as necessary through consultation with SPC staff and the Commission.
- A minimum of fifteen members are appointed to each Panel.
- Terms of Panel members last for two years, corresponding to the TIP update cycle.
- Each county may choose to appoint either Co-Chairpersons or a Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, which are collectively referred to as “Chairpersons”.
- Persons interested in serving on a Panel are encouraged to contact their County Commissioners (in Allegheny County, the County Executive and the Mayor of Pittsburgh). For more information, please call SPC at (412) 391-5590.
- SPC provides County Commissioners (in Allegheny County, the County Executive and the Mayor of Pittsburgh) with the most recent demographic profiles of their county’s population. These demographic profiles are available on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org or by calling (412) 391-5590.
5.3 Panel Meeting Accessibility and Notice

SPC takes great strides to ensure that Panel meetings meet the requirements for accessibility and notice detailed in Section 10, Public Notices.

Proceedings of Panel meetings will be summarized and distributed to Panel members, posted on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org, and kept on file for review at SPC offices. Summaries will not be required for meetings conducted in an open-house or other such format where participants do not convene in a plenary session for presentation and/or discussion. A list of Panel members is available on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org, and kept on file at SPC offices.

5.4 Information Workshops

In addition to public meetings, SPC staff may hold information workshops to provide the Panel(s) with information regarding the transportation planning process, to provide further information about a plan prior to a public meeting, or to discuss the organization and direction of the Panel(s). These forums or workshops are informal and allow the panel members to engage with subject matter in a relaxed format.
Section 6: Ensuring Access for theTraditionally Underserved

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1994 President’s Executive Order on Environmental Justice #12898 state that no person or group shall be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, any program or activity utilizing federal funds. Each federal agency is required to identify any disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects of its programs on minority and low-income populations. In turn, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, such as the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, are charged with evaluating their plans and programs for Environmental Justice sensitivity, including expanding their outreach efforts to low-income, minority and other disadvantaged populations.

6.1 Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice refers to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income by identifying and addressing the effects of transportation projects on the public, especially high or adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations.

SPC’s Public Participation Plan also outlines planning process language that SPC will use to identify, seek out and engage Environmental Justice populations. The foundation for these efforts is stated in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program receiving Federal financial assistance.”

--Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000)

The President’s 1994 Executive Order on Environmental Justice states:

“Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

--Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994
A. Targeted Outreach Areas

SPC’s public outreach process includes Public Participation Panels in each of the region’s ten counties. The Panels are designed to reflect the diversity of the region and its population in order to ensure broad participation and input throughout the planning process. SPC’s public participation and outreach strategies related to Environmental Justice / Limited English Proficiency are described in the following sections. Additional Environmental Justice / Limited English Proficiency technical analyses and activities are reported in a separate document, the Report on Environmental Justice, which is available on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org, at SPC’s offices, or by calling (412) 391-5590.

SPC uses its data collection and analysis capabilities to ensure meaningful access to its public participation opportunities. Our staff carefully analyzes the relationship between the region’s populations and its regional investments, plans and programs. Geographic analysis assists SPC to identify environmental justice communities and target outreach to these areas. For example, SPC will use geographic analysis of targeted outreach areas to make certain that public meetings are held at accessible locations within our communities. Additionally, we will identify, where they exist, organizations that target these communities and distribute information to them to help reach these communities.

6.2 Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

“Limited English Proficient” or “LEP” persons are those individuals who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. The key commonality among LEP persons is their inability to communicate effectively in the English language, regardless of their proficiency in another language. People who are multi-lingual, or those that speak one or more languages in addition to being proficient in English, are not considered to be Limited English Proficient.
A. LEP Assessment

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, SPC has an obligation to reduce language barriers that can prevent meaningful access to SPC’s programs, information and services by LEP individuals. As a part of this effort, is the completion of a “Limited English Proficiency Self-Assessment” or LEP Assessment, which is designed to balance four factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or service
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program and/or activities
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided to people’s lives
4. The resources available to the federal financial recipient and costs

Example: SPC Public Meeting Notice translated into Spanish

Review of Census data and Modern Language Association (MLA) research for the region’s LEP analysis shows that there are now four language groups in the SPC region that meet Department of Justice “safe harbor” thresholds. Spanish, estimated by MLA at approximately 4,400 LEP persons; Italian, approximately 1,900; French, approximately 1,200; and, German, approximately 1,100. More detailed analysis showing LEP populations by County and municipality is available in the region’s Limited English Proficiency Report (available on SPC’s website www.spcregion.org, at SPC offices, or by calling (412) 391-5590). Municipal estimates can vary nominally from county totals due to the estimation methodology of the sub-county MLA estimates. However, where there is a difference in the MLA data between the sum of the municipal totals and the county totals, SPC will use the higher total for planning purposes to ensure inclusion of potential LEP persons in its service area.

B. Meaningful Access for LEP Individuals

SPC takes reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to key transportation planning decisions and have opportunities to become involved in the regional transportation planning processes.
SPC will use one or more of the following tools to reasonably accommodate LEP individuals:

- Provide translated copies of materials in Spanish, Italian, German and French, the most common languages as identified in SPC’s Limited English Proficiency Assessment, as well as other languages if requested. SPC contracts with interpretation and translation providers for these services, and can provide this assistance upon request.
- Oral interpretation services for public meetings. SPC contracts with interpretation and translation providers for these services. A request for such service must be made in advance, preferably with 72 hours notice, as requested by our contracting service. Should a request be made with less than 72 hours notice, we will attempt to resolve the individual’s request with the best available resources and accommodations.
- In an effort to actively engage LEP and non-English persons, meeting announcements, press releases and public notices will be distributed to organizations that target these groups (included for reference in Appendix B and on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org).
- Notices for public meetings and participation opportunities include statements announcing that SPC will provide assistance related to sight, language or hearing with three days advanced notice (see Section 10).
- SPC provides announcements to local minority media outlets and community service organizations regarding the availability of language translation services (included for reference in Appendix B and on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org).
- SPC’s vital documents will include statements that translations are available, in Spanish, Italian, German and French, and are free of charge upon request. SPC contracts with interpretation and translation providers for these services without cost to the requesting individual.
- For translation services requested after a planning activity has been completed, SPC can satisfy most service requests within ten business days.

### 6.3 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

SPC understands that public involvement requires selecting locations and meeting material that do not limit or prohibit individuals from taking part in the process. SPC will take the steps necessary to provide a positive participation experience for all individuals. To ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), SPC’s Public Meeting Notices and comment opportunities provide multiple input methods (see Section 10 and Section 11), and meetings are held at ADA-accessible locations.

SPC will make interpretative services available with considerate advanced notice. For sign language interpretation, an advanced notice of three business days is necessary to accommodate requests.
A. Meaningful Access for Persons with Disabilities
SPC may use one or more of the following tools to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities:

- Seek out locations that maximize accessibility to transit and van service
- Seek out locations utilizing the latest in mobility, perception, and access according to ADA standards
- Provide upon request, copies of materials in 14-point or larger type with advanced notice
- Provide upon request, Braille or raised-print notices and materials with advanced notice
- Provide upon request, with advanced notice, sign language interpreters
- Record materials to audio/visual media
- Verbalize information provided through visual presentations or written materials
- Upon request, structure seating to provide visibility for participants who lip-read
- Mount microphones at wheelchair height
- Provide hand-held microphones to participants
- Present meetings through video or teleconferencing, to allow offsite participation

6.4 Tribal Consultation

SPC will consult with tribes who have ancestral homelands within the SPC region regarding decisions that may affect tribal rights and interests in regard to transportation planning. SPC is committed to government-to-government consultation with tribes on actions that affect identified tribal rights and issues.

Consultation means respectful, effective communication in a cooperative process before a decision is made or an action is taken. The goal is to achieve mutually beneficial priorities, programs and interests.

- SPC will inform all Tribal Liaisons regarding transportation plan documents and updates
- SPC will provide documentation, information, maps, and other visual aids to the Tribal Liaisons listed in Appendix B of this document
- SPC will accommodate requests for further detail or information in a reasonable and timely manner
A complete list of Tribal Liaisons with interests in the SPC region can be found in Appendix C to this document.

6.5 Elderly, Non-Car Households, and other Traditionally Underserved

To sustain an effective approach to public involvement policy, SPC continuously develops and pursues methods to attract new audiences to their meetings—especially lower income, non-car, disabled and elderly populations, or what are referred to as “traditionally underserved”. Common barriers to underserved community participation deal mainly with accessibility: under-represented communities cite the lack of notification regarding upcoming meetings, and if they do, often have difficulty attending them, due to time and transportation constraints, as many members of these communities do not have access to a car and the meetings do not take place in areas served by public transportation. In addition, the Southwestern Pennsylvania region is home to one of the largest population concentrations of the elderly in the United States. This makes outreach efforts to the elderly community all the more important to gather the concerns and issues of a significant stakeholder community.

SPC recognizes these challenges and works to involve and inform members of a broad and diverse community with a proactive program of outreach methods. SPC’s Public Involvement Coordinator actively seeks out community groups which organize members of traditionally underserved communities, participates in meetings, and helps to provide information and resources through in-person participation.

Upon request, SPC will provide reasonable accommodation regarding requests for documentation, maps, and resource materials for members of the public.

Also upon request, SPC staff will offer the best available transportation resources to those who are unable to participate in public meetings. Public transit options, including ACCESS, and SPC’s own CommutelInfo program, and carpooling options will be presented to the individual by SPC staff. For further information regarding transportation options for SPC public meetings, please contact SPC.

6.6 Title VI Discrimination Complaints

The SPC Title VI Complaint Procedure is written to specify the process employed by SPC to investigate complaints, while ensuring due process for complainants and respondents. The process does not preclude SPC from attempting to informally resolve complaints.

This procedure applies to all external complaints relating to any program or activity administered by SPC and/or its subrecipients, consultants and contractors, filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (including its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Equal Employment Opportunity components), as well as other related laws that prohibit
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Discrimination on the basis of race, color, disability, sex, age, low income, national origin or Limited English Proficiency. Additional statutes include, but are not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

These procedures are part of an administrative process that does not provide for remedies that include punitive damages or compensatory remuneration for the Complainant. Intimidation or retaliation of any kind is prohibited by law. Please see Appendix D for SPC's Title VI Discrimination Complaint Procedure, including details on how and where to submit a complaint.
Section 7: Active Involvement in Public Meetings

SPC welcomes comments and ideas related to regional issues from interested parties from the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. There are many opportunities and levels of involvement for citizens related to the regional planning process, and also for those who wish to address the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission directly. With the exception of those meetings that are appropriate executive sessions, all regular meetings of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission are open to the public and include an opportunity for public comment.

7.1 Public Comments at Commission Meetings

Individuals or interested parties who wish to speak at an SPC meeting will be asked to sign in at the meeting location. In the event that an individual is unable to make comments during a scheduled meeting time, comments may also be submitted in written, verbal, or electronic form. Any questions regarding directions or special requests should be directed to the appropriate SPC staff member, and will be handled in a reasonable manner.

Speakers will be called upon in the order in which they signed in. Out of respect for everyone’s time, individuals are asked to keep their comments to three (3) minutes, unless otherwise specified. Presenters are encouraged to provide any visual material or handouts for the attendees. Copying or replication of any handout materials for distribution is the responsibility of the individual. It is recommended that individuals not duplicate the prior comments of others preceding them.

Proceedings of meetings of the Commission will be available as meeting minutes or meeting summaries, which will be posted on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org, and available for review at SPC offices. Please call SPC at (412) 391-5590 for more information.

7.2 SPC Committees

SPC has several committees that meet routinely, in which interested parties can attend and receive the same information given to representatives of the professional planning and transportation agencies involved in SPC activities. Committee meetings give interested parties an opportunity to learn the pertinent facts surrounding an issue. All regular committee meetings are open to the public.
Meeting Agendas and minutes for the different SPC committees are available at SPC's website at www.spcregion.org, or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590.
Section 8: Public Review and Comment Periods at Key Decision Points

8.1 Taking an Active Role During Key Decision Points

SPC values the efforts stakeholders and the public make to participate in the regional planning process. Except in those cases where emergency action is required, SPC will provide at least 30 days for public review and comment (45 days in the case of the Public Participation Plan) before taking formal action on major decisions. The Public Participation Plan defines a major decision as the official adoption of:

- Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (regional plan) which includes the Program of Projects for the region’s sponsors of Federal Transit Administration-funded projects.
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Air Quality Conformity Determination
- Public Participation Plan
- A Major Amendment to the regional plan or TIP (see Section 13)

8.2 Public Review and Comment Period Requirements

SPC will inform the public and interested parties of public review and comment periods, using the Public Notice procedures described in Section 10, at least 30 days prior to the date scheduled for Commission adoption or major amendment of a regional long range transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or Air Quality Conformity Determination.

Similarly, we will inform the public and interested parties of public review and comment periods, using the Public Notice procedures described in Section 10, at least 45 days prior to the date scheduled for Commission adoption of an updated Public Participation Plan.

Documents and information on which public comments are sought will be made available to stakeholders, other interested parties and the general public at locations in the area affected by the proposed action. These locations include those listed in SPC’s "Document Review Network," a list of public libraries and other publicly accessible locations (included in Appendix A), as well as SPC’s website, www.spcregion.org. Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the Public Notice (see Section 10).

Prior to formal action by the Commission on the adoption of a regional Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Air Quality Conformity
Determination, Public Participation Plan, or major amendment, at least one public meeting will be held for the purpose of providing information and obtaining comment. This public meeting may be held as part of a regular meeting of the Commission, or as a separate public meeting. Details on the time and location of any and all public meetings held in association with a published Commission action on a Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (or amendment), or a Public Participation Plan will be included in the public notice.

8.3 Additional Public Review and Comment Periods

If the draft regional Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Air Quality Conformity Determination, or major amendment changes appreciably during the initial public review and comment period, an additional 30-day public review and comment period will be provided prior to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission taking formal action.

If the draft Public Participation Plan changes appreciably during the initial public review and comment, an additional 45-day public review and comment period will be provided prior to the Commission taking formal action.

Any additional public review and comment periods will be conducted in accordance with procedures for regular public comment periods listed in Section 11.

8.4 The Regional Long Range Transportation Plan

The regional long range transportation plan (regional plan) is a long range (20+ years) strategy and capital improvement Plan developed to guide the effective investment of public funds in multi-modal transportation facilities in the context of the regional vision. The regional plan provides the context from which the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a short-range capital improvement program for implementing transportation projects, is drawn. The regional plan is updated, at a minimum, every four years in consultation with interested parties (see Section 4).

SPC's early and ongoing public participation process in developing the regional plan typically follow these steps:

- Step 1: Public Participation Panels utilized to gather initial input (when update cycles correspond, this can occur in concert with the TIP update--See Section 5 for more information).
- Step 2: Initial input compiled and used in the design of the next phase of outreach and participation, such as workshops and other public meetings.
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- Step 3: Ongoing input used to develop draft regional plan materials in consultation with interested parties (see Section 4.2).
- Step 4: Draft regional plan materials will be presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 30-day public review and comment period described in Section 8.2. Draft materials will be made available during the 30-day public comment period on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org, and at SPC’s offices. Notices detailing how to access draft documents will be provided to member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix A and on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the Public Notice (see Section 10). Vital draft regional plan documents will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 6).
- Step 5: All comments received and the response to comments will be documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the draft regional plan materials.
- Step 6: Draft documents may be revised to reflect comments received from the public.
- Step 7: The Commission takes action on the regional plan.
- Step 8: A Public Participation Report will be developed documenting all comments received and the response to comments, as well as documentation of the public participation and outreach activities.
- Step 9: Regional planning documents will be produced and made available on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org, at SPC’s offices, or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590. Vital regional plan documents will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 6).

8.5 The Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program is Stage I of the regional Long Range Transportation Plan, and as such identifies the region’s highest priority transportation projects; develops a
multi-year program of implementation; and identifies available federal and non-federal funding for the identified projects. The TIP covers a four-year period of investment and is updated every two years through a cooperative effort of local, state and federal agencies, including participation by the general public and consultation with interested parties (see Section 5). Transportation projects included on the TIP are to be consistent with the regional plan.

SPC’s early and ongoing public participation process in developing the TIP typically follows these steps:

- **Step 1:** Public Participation Panels utilized to gather initial input (when update cycles correspond, this can occur in concert with the regional plan update--See Section 11 for more information).
- **Step 2:** Initial input used in the design of the next phase of outreach and participation, such as workshops and other public meetings.
- **Step 3:** Ongoing input used to develop draft TIP materials in consultation with interested parties (see Section 4).
- **Step 4:** Draft TIP materials presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 30-day public review and comment period described in Section 8.2. Draft materials will be made available during the 30-day public comment period on the SPC website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org), and at SPC’s offices. Notices detailing how to access draft documents will be provided to member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix A and on SPC’s website at [www.spcregion.org](http://www.spcregion.org)). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the Public Notice (see Section 10). Vital draft TIP materials will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 6).
- **Step 5:** Draft TIP materials will include project listings for the draft Program of Projects for the region’s sponsors of Federal Transit Administration-funded projects. Information on where and how to access these public comment documents will be included in the Public Notice along with a statement that the public process for the Transportation...
Improvement Program satisfies the Program of Projects requirements of the Federal Transit Administration (see Section 10).

- Step 6: All comments received and the response to comments documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the draft TIP materials.
- Step 7: Draft documents may be revised to reflect comments received from the public.
- Step 8: The Commission takes action on the TIP.
- Step 9: A Public Participation Report developed documenting all comments received and the response to comments, as well as documentation of the public participation and outreach activities.
- Step 10: TIP documents and its companion documents (Air Quality Conformity Determination Report and Public Participation Report) produced and made available on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org, at SPC’s offices, or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590. Vital TIP documents will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 6).

8.6 Major Amendments to the TIP or Regional Plan

Both the Transportation Improvement Program and the regional Long Range Transportation Plan are dynamic documents subject to change in funding, projects and priorities. Once a TIP or regional plan has been developed and approved, the program is subject to revisions as the budgeted transportation program experiences changes in project scheduling and estimated costs. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will only authorize projects and approve grants for projects where the total cost is programmed in the current approved TIP. SPC must modify the TIP or regional plan to adjust to the changing cost and schedule necessary to advance projects.

The definition of a major amendment varies by the type of plan or program to be amended. Definitions and procedures for regional plan and TIP major amendments are included in the regional plan and TIP documents, and are available on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org. Please contact SPC at (412) 391-5590 for more information.

If a proposed revision to the TIP or regional plan adds a project, deletes a project, or impacts the schedule or scope of work to an air quality significant project in a nonattainment or maintenance area, SPC will review the proposal and determine if a new air quality conformity determination is required prior to formal approval of the change. If the revision requires that a new conformity determination is necessary, an amendment to the regional Long Range Transportation Plan shall also be developed. Please see Section 8.7 for more information on the Air Quality Conformity Determination report.
SPC’s public participation and public comment process for major amendments to the regional plan or TIP typically follows these steps:

- **Step 1:** SPC informs the public and interested parties of the public review and comment period for the proposed major amendment using the Public Notice procedures described in Section 10, at least 30 days prior to the date scheduled for Commission action on the proposed major amendment.

- **Step 2:** Proposed major amendment information presented for review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 30-day Public Comment Period described in Section 8.2. Proposed major amendment information made available during the 30-day public comment period on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org, and at SPC’s offices. Notices detailing how to access draft documents provided to member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix A and on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org). Information on where and how to access public comment documents included in the public notice (see Section 10).

- **Step 3:** All comments received and the response to comments documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the proposed major amendment.

- **Step 4:** Draft documents may be revised to reflect comments received from the public.

- **Step 5:** The Commission takes action on the major amendment.

- **Step 6:** After federal and state approval of the requested changes, SPC will update the appropriate TIP or regional plan documents on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org. Updated documents will also be available at SPC’s offices or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590.

### 8.7 Air Quality Conformity Determination Report

The Air Quality Conformity Determination report is a companion document to the regional Long Range Transportation Plan and to the Transportation Improvement Program. The Air Quality Conformity Determination report documents the process used by SPC for making the transportation-related conformity determination for the regional long range transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for ozone, particulate matter and carbon monoxide. The conformity determination is required by the federal Clean Air Act. SPC’s conformity finding is based upon criteria and procedures described in EPA’s [image of I-376, Inbound toward the City of Pittsburgh]
Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 93) and satisfies all applicable conformity requirements.

The Air Quality Conformity Determination report is developed as part of the regional plan or TIP update, in which case public participation and public comment procedures for the regional plan or TIP will be followed as described in Section 8.4 and Section 8.5. The Air Quality Conformity Determination report is also updated as required by certain amendments to the TIP or regional plan, in which case public participation and public comment procedures for major amendments to the regional plan or TIP will be followed as described in Section 8.6.

8.8 The Public Participation Plan

This Public Participation Plan describes the various objectives, strategies and tools to engage the public and encourage participation in the development of transportation plans and programs. SPC will periodically update the Public Participation Plan. This may be due to new official planning regulations and procedures, or after review and evaluation of the Public Participation Plan’s effectiveness.

SPC’s public participation and public comment process for updating the Public Participation Plan follows these general steps:

- Step 1: Revisions to the Public Participation Plan are developed in consultation with interested parties, including the Public Participation Panels, before the draft documents are submitted for the public review and comment process.
- Step 2: The draft Public Participation Plan is presented for public review and comment by the public and interested parties using the Public Review and Comment procedures for a 45-day Public Comment Period described in Section 8.2. The draft Public Participation Plan will be made available during the 45-day public comment period on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org and at SPC’s offices. Notices detailing how to access draft documents will be provided to member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix A and on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org). Information on where and how to access public comment documents will be included in the public notice (see Section 10). The draft Public Participation Plan will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 6.2).
- Step 3: All comments received and the response to comments will be documented and provided to the Commission prior to taking action on the draft Public Participation Plan.
- Step 4: Draft documents may be revised to reflect comments received from the public.
- Step 5: The Commission takes action on the draft Public Participation Plan.
• Step 6: A Public Participation Report will be developed documenting all comments received and the response to comments, as well as documentation of the public participation and outreach activities.

• Step 7: The Public Participation Plan will be produced and made available on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org, at SPC’s offices, or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590. The Public Participation Plan will be made available in languages other than English and alternative formats upon request in accordance with the procedures for accommodating Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities contained in this Public Participation Plan (see Section 6.2).
Section 9: Access to Information

SPC will provide reasonable access to public information, including technical information and meeting notices:

- In electronically accessible formats on its website (www.spcregion.org)
- In its offices at the Regional Enterprise Tower, 425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500, Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852

Where indicated in this Public Participation Plan, information detailing how to access information regarding draft documents available for public review and comment (see Section 8) will be provided to member government planning offices and public libraries in the Document Review Network (included for reference in Appendix A and on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org).

9.1 Actions, Tools, and Methods

SPC realizes that the public is the key to an effective planning process. SPC utilizes a wide range of actions, tools, and methods to provide and effective means of open dialogue and education regarding the transportation planning process. Examples include:

- The Public Resource Program (see Section 3)
- Public Participation Panels (see Section 5)
- SPC employs a full-time staff person to plan, develop and maintain our community and partner relationships
- Communication by mail, phone, fax, email, or person-to-person
- SPC’s website containing documents, meeting schedules, agendas and minutes/summaries, transportation announcements, and educational tools
- SPC accepts input at public meetings and workshops that are held at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Partnering with community, civic and business groups to produce forums and input sessions
- Distribution of planning documents, annual reports, brochures, fact sheets, and maps documenting planning efforts
- Distribution of newsletters, public notices, and press releases
- Documentation and availability of public comments and responses in Public Participation Reports (see Section 9.1)
- Response Sheets: Mail-In forms to gain information on public preferences
- Internet Surveys: Web-based response polls
- Visualization techniques to help members of the general public understand potential outcomes of transportation programs or plans (see Section 3.2)
- Consultation with agencies and officials responsible for planning activities within the Metropolitan Planning Area that are affected by transportation (see Section 4.2)
9.2 Response to Special Requests

Effective public involvement requires two-way communication between the public and SPC staff. In the effort to use limited staff resources efficiently, SPC will make information available to interested parties on a regular basis through the various processes and activities outlined in this Public Participation Plan. When SPC receives special requests to perform an analysis that is not considered as part of the planning process, or other special data or information, the agency will determine the reasonableness of the request. Criteria for determining reasonableness (as used in this document) will evolve around the preparation time and costs to respond, as well as the relevancy to the transportation planning process and the agency mission. SPC will determine reasonableness of and respond to all special requests on an individual basis.

9.3 Right to Know Law Requests

The Pennsylvania Right to Know Law, 65 P.S. §67.101 et seq. (RTKL) establishes the standards for the provision of access to public information held by Commonwealth, Local, Legislative, and Judicial agencies in Pennsylvania. SPC’s Right to Know Law Policy sets forth the guidelines, process and procedures with respect to requests made for access to SPC’s records. SPC’s Right to Know Law Policy is available on the SPC website at www.spcregion.org, at SPC’s offices, or by calling SPC at (412) 391-5590.
Section 10: Public Notices

Reaching out to 2.6 million citizens in 10 counties, in the most direct, yet cost-effective manner requires a multi-faceted approach. To ensure that the public has ample opportunity to take part in the regional planning process, SPC is committed to providing timely notification, complete information, and full public access to key decisions. Our efforts to ensure the most effective level of communication for all public notices are detailed in this section.

10.1 Public Notice Policies

SPC publishes formal public notices to announce the following types of events and participation opportunities:

- The Commission’s annual meeting schedule—advertised annually
- Special or rescheduled Commission meetings—advertised 24 hours in advance
- Comment Periods—advertised in a newspaper of general circulation, and the SPC website, at least 30 days prior to the date the Commission is scheduled to take formal action on any major decisions (see Section 8)
- Meetings related to Comment Periods—advertised at least 7 days in advance (see Section 8 and Section 10)

Public notices for these events and participation opportunities are:

- Advertised in the form of paid display advertisements. One paid advertisement will be placed in a newspaper of general circulation in the region and one in a newspaper with circulation targeted to minority communities (included for reference in Appendix B and on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org)
- Public notices are also distributed to other media outlets or organizations that serve targeted outreach groups identified in SPC’s Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency analyses (included for reference in Appendix B and on SPC’s website)
- Posted on the agency’s website at www.spcregion.org
- Posted prominently at SPC’s offices

Public notices provide the following information (where applicable):

- Type or name of meeting/participation event/activity/public comment period
- Subject of meeting of meeting/participation event/activity/public comment period
- The date, time and location of meeting/participation event/activity
- Start and end dates for public comment periods
- Contact information (Address, Telephone Number, E-mail address and/or website)
- Brief summary of the proposed action, plan, program or amendment
- Where to obtain copies of the plan or materials (Document Review Network, offices and website.)
- Instructions on how to provide formal public comments
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- If formal action on a major decision will be taken by the Commission, the date, time and location of the meeting where that action will be taken
- Offer to provide accommodations for people with Limited English Proficiency
- Offer to provide accommodations for people with disabilities
- Offer to provide accommodations related to sight, language or hearing
Section 11: Evaluation of Public Participation Plan, Public Participation Panels and Public Meetings

- Public Participation Panels: Chairs of the Public Participation Panels will be asked periodically, on a cycle in advance of future regional plan and TIP updates, to participate in focus groups to discuss the effectiveness of the Panels, ways to engage members and encourage participation, and suggestions for improving the Panels.

- Public meetings: Special workshops and meetings scheduled for the general public and interested parties will include a means of providing feedback on the effectiveness of the process of communication and meeting format.

- After a 45 day public comment period, the SPC Executive Committee will review and recommend changes to the Public Participation Plan and SPC public engagement processes based upon input from the public, interested parties, and the Public Participation Panels.
Section 12: Applicability

This Public Participation Plan and any subsequent amendments shall be effective immediately upon adoption by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. This Public Participation Plan supersedes the previous Public Participation Plan (adopted April 2011).
Section 13: Definitions

A. Air quality conformity determination: A process in which transportation plans and programs are reviewed to ensure that they comply with federal clean air requirements. Changes to the transportation system collectively must not worsen air quality; in areas where air quality does not meet federal standards, transportation plans and programs are expected to improve the air quality.

B. Interested Parties: Interested parties as defined in 23 C.F.R. §450.316 include citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, 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 disabled, and other interested parties.

C. Long-range transportation plan: A transportation plan addressing at least a twenty-year planning horizon, including both long-range and short-range strategies/actions of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods and meets Federal requirements (23CFR Part 450.322).

D. Major amendment: Any amendment to a long-range transportation plan or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that does not qualify as a minor amendment, or an amendment that meets the criteria for a minor amendment but is treated as a major amendment because of controversy or high visibility. Procedures for TIP modifications and amendments are provided in the TIP document.

E. Major decision: The adoption or major amendment of the long-range transportation plan, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), air quality conformity determination, or other significant transportation plan or program.

F. Minor TIP or long-range transportation plan amendment: Correction of clerical errors; changes that are air quality neutral (projects and project types which are not required to be included in regional air quality conformity assessments for transportation plans and programs as listed in Sections 126 and 127 of EPA’s Transportation Conformity Rule, 40CFR Part 93). Procedures for TIP modifications and amendments are provided in the TIP document.

G. The public: All individuals or groups in the SPC region. This includes individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, public and private providers of transportation, persons with disabilities and Environmental Justice populations, including low income and minority populations.
H. **Reasonableness:** In order to assist public involvement while also using limited staff resources efficiently, SPC will make information available to interested parties on a regular basis through the various processes and activities outlined in this Public Participation Plan. When SPC receives special requests for an analysis that is not considered as part of the planning process, or other special data or information, the agency will determine the reasonableness of the request. Parameters for determining reasonableness (as used in this document) will evolve around the preparation time and costs to respond, as well as the relevancy to the transportation planning process and the agency mission. SPC will determine reasonableness of and respond to all special requests on an individual basis.

I. **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** A staged, multiyear, fiscally-constrained, intermodal program of transportation projects which is consistent with the long-range transportation plan. The TIP develops a prioritized program of projects and its financing plan based of estimated funding available. The TIP covers a four-year period and is updated every two years. The TIP is the first stage of the regional Long Range Transportation Plan.
Section 14: Continuing Efforts

- Further identification of and consultation with interested parties
- Continue to seek out EJ/LEP organizations and resources
- Update Limited English Proficiency Assessment
- Conduct review of ADA accessibility features of websites/meeting locations
- Continue to develop various forms of education media for all interested audiences
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan
- Consider methods to further promote the Public Participation Panel appointment opportunities to the general public and interested parties
- Advance methods of continuous engagement for Public Participation Panel and the general public
Section 15: Frequently Asked Questions

15.1 What is a Public Participation Plan?

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission’s (SPC) Public Participation Plan identifies strategies and tools used to gather the public’s input into SPC’s transportation planning activities. The plan outlines SPC’s adoption and amendment process for transportation plans, projects, and tasks; public comment periods; opportunities for public participation; public notice practices; and strategies for public participation.

This Public Participation Plan supersedes the previous Plan adopted in April 2011.

15.2 Why Update the Plan?

SPC routinely reviews and evaluates its public participation and outreach activities as the transportation planning landscape changes. Infrastructure improvement is more of a priority than ever, and even more challenging in the midst of challenging economic conditions. SPC’s ability to adapt to these changes, educate our communities, and create opportunities for two-way dialogue amongst its partners and citizens, requires a comprehensive and cohesive approach.

15.3 Why is SPC responsible for the Public Participation Plan?

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for our ten county region, and is responsible for regional transportation planning activities. SPC communicates with interested parties to ensure that transportation planning is representative of and responsive to the needs of the entire region. SPC makes a concerted effort to provide the public an active role in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects, beginning in the early stages of planning processes.

The Public Participation Plan ensures that the participation activities of SPC’s transportation planning processes comply with the proactive public involvement requirements of Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 450.316, the participation plan requirements of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (Title 23 United States Code, Section 134(i)(5)), and other applicable federal regulations and guidelines on metropolitan transportation planning and programs.

15.4 What are the Objectives of Public Participation?

- Educate and inform the public about transportation planning, projects, and issues within their communities and the region
Public Participation Plan
DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT, Spring 2012

- Involve the public in the transportation process
- Ensure that information is easily accessible to all interested parties in the community
- Identify, seek out and engage minority populations, low-income, populations, Limited English Proficient persons, and persons with disabilities
- Enhance the decision-making process to include the interest/needs of stakeholders through informed consent
- Continue to evaluate, evolve, and improve the public participation process

15.5 How Do I Contact SPC?

For more information on this Public Participation Plan or SPC's regional transportation planning activities, please contact:

Public Involvement Coordinator
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-1852
Telephone: (412) 391-5590
Fax: (412) 391-9160
Email: comments@spcregion.org
Website: www.spcregion.org

If you have a Title VI Discrimination complaint, please see Appendix D for more information.
APPENDIX A

DOCUMENT REVIEW NETWORK
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<tr>
<th>Document Review Network</th>
<th>Armstrong County Department of Planning and Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Planning Offices</td>
<td>402 Market Street</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kittanning, PA 16701</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allegheny County Department of Economic Development</td>
<td>Butler County Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800</td>
<td>P. O. Box 1208</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA 15219</td>
<td>Butler, PA 16003-1208</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beaver County Planning Commission</td>
<td>Greene County Department of Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>810 Third Street</td>
<td>49 South Washington Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beaver, PA 15009</td>
<td>Waynesburg, PA 15370</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fayette County Office of Planning and Zoning</td>
<td>Lawrence County Planning Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 East Main Street, 3rd Floor</td>
<td>430 Court Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniontown, PA 15401</td>
<td>Lawrence County Government Center</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Castle, PA 16101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana County Department of Economic Development and Planning</td>
<td>Washington County Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>801 Water Street</td>
<td>Washington County Courthouse, Suite 701</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana, PA 15701-1705</td>
<td>100 West Beau Street</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Washington, PA 15301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh Department of City Planning</td>
<td>Westmoreland County Planning Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Floor</td>
<td>Fifth Floor, Suites 510 and 520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Ross Street</td>
<td>40 North Pennsylvania Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA 15219</td>
<td>Greensburg, PA 15601</td>
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Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
www.spcregion.org
Document Review Network
Public Libraries

Mount Lebanon Public Library
16 Castle Shannon Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Eva K. Bowlby Memorial Library
311 North West Street
Waynesburg, PA 15370

Ellwood City Public Library
510 Crescent Avenue
Ellwood, PA 16117

Laughlin Memorial Free Library
Eleventh Avenue and Maplewood Avenue
Ambridge, PA 15003

New Castle Public Library
207 E. North Street
New Castle, PA 16101

Peoples Library
880 North Barnes Street
New Kensington, PA 15068

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
419 Dinwiddie Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Lawrenceville Branch
279 Fisk Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
7101 Hamilton Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Five Allegheny Square
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Brownsville Free Library
100 Seneca Street
Brownsville, PA 15417

Shaler North Hills Library
1822 Mount Royal Boulevard
Glenshaw, PA 15116

B. F. Jones Memorial Library
663 Franklin Avenue
Aliquippa, PA 15001

Greater Canonsburg Public Library
68 East Pike Street
Canonsburg, PA 15317

Monroeville Public Library
4000 Gateway Campus Blvd.
Monroeville, PA 15146

Cranberry Public Library
2525 Rochester Road, Suite 300
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

Belle Vernon Public Library
505 Speer Street
Belle Vernon, PA 15012

Carnegie Free Library
1301 Seventh Avenue
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Stapleton Library
431 South Eleventh Street
Indiana, PA 15705

Scottdale Public Library
231 Pittsburgh Street
Scottdale, PA 15683

Apollo Memorial Library
219 North Pennsylvania Avenue
Apollo, PA 15613

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Foundation Center
4400 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
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<td>Northland Public Library</td>
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<td>Flenniken Memorial Library</td>
<td>102 East George Street</td>
<td>Carmichaels, PA 15320</td>
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<td>Zelienople Public Library</td>
<td>227 South High Street</td>
<td>Zelienople, PA 16063</td>
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<td>Peters Township Library</td>
<td>616 East McMurray Road</td>
<td>McMurray, PA 15317-3420</td>
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<td>New Library</td>
<td>207 East North Street</td>
<td>New Castle, PA 16101</td>
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<td>Jefferson Library</td>
<td>925 Old Clairton Road</td>
<td>Jefferson Hills, PA 15025-3158</td>
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<td>Carnegie Library of Homestead</td>
<td>510 E. 10th Avenue</td>
<td>Munhall, PA 15120-1910</td>
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<td>Mars Area Public Library</td>
<td>107 Grand Avenue</td>
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<td>Mars, PA 16046</td>
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<td>Andrew Carnegie Free Library</td>
<td>300 Beechwood Avenue</td>
<td>Carnegie, PA 15106</td>
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<td>Chartiers Houston Community Library</td>
<td>730 West Grant</td>
<td>Houston, PA 15342</td>
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<td>Bethel Park Public Library</td>
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Blairsville Free Library
113 North Walnut Street
Blairsville, PA 15717

Norwin Public Library
100 Caruthers Lane
Irwin, PA 15642-4008

Indiana Free Library
845 Philadelphia Street
Indiana, PA 15701

Saltsburg Free Public Library
307 Point Street
Saltsburg, PA 15681

Monessen Public Library
326 Donner Avenue
Monessen, PA 15062

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Hazelwood Branch
4901 Second Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15207

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
East Liberty Branch
5920 Ralph Munn Mall
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Knoxville Branch
400 Brownsville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15210

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Mount Washington Branch
315 Grandview Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15211

Kittanning Free Library
280 North Jefferson Street
Kittanning, PA 16201

Moon Township Public Library
1700 Beaver Grade Road
Moon Township, PA 15108

Western Allegheny Community Library
8042 Steubenville Pike
Oakdale, PA 15071
Monongehela Area Library
813 West Main Street
Monongahela, PA 15063

Wagner Memorial Library
609 Pennsylvania Avenue
Monaca, PA 15061-1805

Citizens Library
55 South College Street
Washington, PA 15301

Murphysville Community Library
4130 Sardis Road
Murphysville, PA 15668

Uniontown Public Library
24 Jefferson Street
Uniontown, PA 15401

Adams Memorial Library
1112 Ligonier Street
Latrobe, PA 15650

Community Valley
1522 Bordview Boulevard
Natrona Heights, PA 15065

Butler Area Public Library
218 North McKean Street
Butler, PA 16001

Burgettstown Community Library
Two Kerr Street
Burgettstown, PA 15021

Rostraver Public Library
700 Plaza Drive
Belle Vernon, PA 15012
APPENDIX B

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY RESOURCES
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Resources

WRCT 88.3 FM
1 WRCT Plaza
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

The Hispanic Center
800 Allegheny Ave.
Suite 127 & 118 A
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

WEDO 810 AM
1985 Lincoln Way
White Oak, PA 15131-2415

Language Line Services
Over-The-Phone Language Interpretation
1 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Bldg. 2
Monterey, CA 93940

Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
1536 Beechview Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Latin American Cultural Union
P.O. Box 19403
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Orogol Associates, Inc.
Translators and Interpreters
654 Braddock Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15112

La Jornada Latina
6 Loop Street, Suite 4
Pittsburgh, PA 15215
APPENDIX C

TRIBAL LIAISONS
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TRIBAL LIAISONS

Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Govt-Govt (cc. for Section 106 and projects):
George Blanchard, Governor
2025 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801

Section 106/environment/NEPA:
Henryetta Ellis
Same address

Cc: Governor

Cayuga Nation
Govt-Govt, Section 106 and projects:
Chief William Jacobs
P.O. Box 803
Seneca Falls, NY 13148

Environment/NEPA:
Timothy Two Guns
Same address

Delaware Tribe
Govt-Govt:
Paula Pechonick, Chief
170 N Barbara Ave
Bartlesville, OK 74003

Section 106 and projects:
Dr. Brice Obermeyer
1420 C of E Drive
Emporia, KS 66801

Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Govt-Govt:
Glenna Wallace, Chief
P. O. Box 350
Seneca, MO 64865

Section 106 and projects:
Robin Dushane, Cultural Preservation Officer
Same address

Environment/NEPA:
Roxane Weldon, EPA Director
Same address

Delaware Nation
Govt-Govt:
Kerry Holton, Tribal President
P. O. Box 825
Anadarko, OK 73005

Section 106 and projects:
Tamara Francis, THPO
31064 State Highway 281
Anadarko, OK 73005

Environment/NEPA:
Darrin Ahshapane, EPA Director
Same address

Oneida Indian Nation
Govt-Govt:
Raymond Halbritter, Nation Representative
5218 Patrick Road
Verona, NY 13478

Section 106 and projects:
Jesse Bergevin, Historian
1256 Union Street
PO Box 662
Oneida, NY 13421-0662
Onida Indian Nation (continued)
cc: Laura Misita, Land Administrator
5218 Patrick Road
Verona, NY 13478

Environment/NEPA and legal issues:
Stephen J. Selden, Esq.
General Council
5218 Patrick Road
Verona, NY 13478

Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Govt to Govt:
Rick Hill, Chairman
P. O. Box 365
Oneida, WI 54155-0365

Section 106 and projects:
Environment/NEPA:
Corina Burke, THPO
Same address

Onondaga Nation
Govt-Govt, Section 106 and projects,
Environment/NEPA:
Tony Gonyea, Faithkeeper
Hemlock Rd 11a Box 319-B
via Nedrow, NY 13120

Seneca Nation of Indians
Govt to Govt:
Robert Porter, President
P.O. Box 231
Salamanca, NY 14779

Section 106 and projects,
Environment/NEPA:
Lana Watt, THPO
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
90 O:hi’yoh Way
Salamanca, NY 14779

Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma
Govt-Govt, and cc. on Section 106 and projects:
LeRoy Howard, Chief
P.O. Box 1283
Miami, OK 74355

Section 106 and projects:
Paul Barton, Historic Preservation Officer
23701 S. 655 Road
Grove, OK 74344

Environment/NEPA:
Paul Barton, Environmental Director
Same address

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
Govt-Govt:
Chief Randy Hart
412 State Route 37
Hogansburg, NY 13655

Section 106 and projects:
Arrold Printup, Historic Preservation Officer
Same address

Environment/NEPA:
Ken Jocks, Director
Environmental Division
RR #1, Box 8a
Hogansburg, NY 13655

Shawnee Tribe
Govt-Govt (cc. for Section 106 and projects):
Ron Sparkman, Chairman
29 South 69a Highway
Miami OK 74354
Shawnee Tribe (continued)
Section 106 and projects,
Environment/NEPA:
Kim Jumper, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Same address
cc. Tribal Chairman

Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation of Wisconsin
Govt-Govt:
Kimberly Vele, Tribal President
Route 1
P.O. Box 70
Bowler, WI 54416

Section 106 and projects:
Sherry White, THPOR
W13447 Camp 14 Road
Bowler, WI 54416

Environment/NEPA:
Greg Bunker
Same address

Tonawanda Seneca Nation
Govt-Govt, Section 106, and
Environmental:
Chief Darwin Hill
7027 Meadville Road
Basom, NY 14013

Tuscarora Nation
Govt-Govt, Section 106, and projects:*
Leo Henry, Chief
2006 Mt. Hope Road
Via Lewiston, NY 14092
Phone: (716) 297-1148
Fax: (716) 297-7355

cc. Section 106 and projects:*
Stuart Patterson, Chief
1983 Upper Mountain Road
Tuscarora Nation
Sanborn, NY 14132
Phone: (716) 298-5114

*As requested by Chief Henry, please address any correspondence to an individual to the:

Tuscarora Nation
Chiefs Council

Environment/NEPA:
Tuscarora Environmental Program
Neil Patterson, Jr., Director
2045 Upper Mountain Road
Tuscarora Nation
Sanborn, NY 14132

*This Tribal Liaisons listing is effective, December 2011.

Check www.penndotcrm.org for most up-to-date tribal contact list)
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APPENDIX D

TITLE VI DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURES
SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION (SPC)
TITLE VI DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The SPC Title VI Complaint Procedure is written to specify the process employed by SPC to investigate complaints, while ensuring due process for Complainants and respondents. The process does not preclude SPC from attempting to informally resolve complaints.

This procedure applies to all external complaints relating to any program or activity administered by SPC and/or its subrecipients, consultants and contractors, filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (including its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Equal Employment Opportunity components), as well as other related laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, disability, sex, age, low income, national origin or Limited English Proficiency. Additional statutes include, but are not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

These procedures are part of an administrative process that does not provide for remedies that include punitive damages or compensatory remuneration for the Complainant. Intimidation or retaliation of any kind is prohibited by law.

SPC Complaint Procedure Process

An individual, or his or her representative, who believes that he or she has been subject to discrimination or retaliation prohibited by Title VI and other nondiscrimination provisions, has a right to file a complaint. Complaints need to be filed within 180 calendar days of the alleged occurrence, when the alleged discrimination became known to the Complainant, or when there has been a continuing course of conduct, the date on which the conduct was discontinued or the latest instance of the conduct.

Complaints may be sent to:

Title VI Compliance Officer
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 2500
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Title VI Coordinator
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
PO Box 3251
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-3251

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
www.spcregion.org
Equal Opportunity Specialist
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
228 Walnut Street; Room 508
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101-1720

Civil Rights Officer
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration
Region III
1760 Market Street, Suite 500
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Title VI Coordinator
Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Mail Stop 0800
Washington, DC 20520

Title VI Coordinator
Office of Civil Rights
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Title VI Coordinator
Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code 1201A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

If necessary, an authorized person will assist the Complainant in writing the complaint. The written complaint must include the following information:

- Name, address and telephone number of the Complainant.
- Basis of the complaint, (e.g. Race, Color, National Origin, Sex, Age, Disability, Retaliation).
Public Participation Plan
DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT, Spring 2012

- A detailed description of the circumstances of the incident that led the Complainant to believe discrimination occurred.

- Name(s), title, and address of the person who discriminated against the Complainant.

- Name(s), address and phone numbers of people who may have knowledge of the alleged incident or are perceived as parties in the complained-of incident.

- Date or dates on which the alleged discrimination occurred.

- Other agencies where the complaint was filed.

As an investigation moves forward, additional information may be required.

If SPC receives a complaint, the Commission will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by notifying the Complainant and immediately transmitting the complaint to the proper state and federal agency (e.g., Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, PennDOT) for investigation and disposition pursuant to that agency’s Title VI complaint procedures.

The SPC Title VI Compliance Officer will maintain a log of all complaints received by the Commission. The SPC Title VI Discrimination Complaint Procedure is available on SPC’s website at www.spcregion.org.
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