

Public Participation Plan

Policies and Procedures



San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

It is the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments' (SLOCOG) intended purpose to foster greater public involvement in the decision-making process regarding all transportation matters within its discretion. SLOCOG wants the citizens of San Luis Obispo County and its cities to assist in delineating values, goals, and objectives of transportation-related services and planning documents. Further, it is the SLOCOG's wish that those same citizens will participate in the selection of transportation facilities and programs for planning and programming. The citizens are charged with the responsibility of providing feedback regarding plans and programs under SLOCOG's authority. Finally, it is the goal of SLOCOG to adequately provide information to, and solicit input from, the historically underserved community of San Luis Obispo County including the elderly, minority groups, youth, disabled, and lower income residents.

SLOCOG and its member agencies are responsible for determining policy, adopting plans and programs, and awarding funds to implement these plans. In its public participation process, SLOCOG commits to listening to the public. SLOCOG further commits to providing an environment, which is both conducive and receptive to public involvement in the planning process.

The SLOCOG Board has directed its staff to provide professional expertise to both the public officials of the Council of Governments and its member agencies as well as the general public and citizen users of the various transportation systems. The staff has also been directed to provide technical knowledge and employ community sensitivity in dealing with conflict resolution regarding transportation related issues, and the provision of information for controversial projects and programs.

This document is intended to give SLOCOG's elected officials and staff guidance in providing for public participation and interagency consultation in the regional planning and programming process. It contains the policies, guidelines and procedures SLOCOG uses in carrying out the metropolitan planning process. This includes the development and approval of the Regional Transportation Plan, Regional Transportation Improvement Program, other environmental review documentation related to growth, transportation, and air quality and other products prepared by SLOCOG staff that statutorily requires public participation or for which the SLOCOG Board determines it is necessary. These have been broadened to include additional requirements under the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments and the 2005 Safe, Accessible, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

SLOCOG carries out its transportation planning responsibilities in a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive manner in conformance with United States Code Section 134 of Title 23 and California Government Code §§54950-962, the state-mandated Ralph M. Brown Act (The Brown Act). While these directives remains in effect, the federal government has now made it clear that more specific public participation and involvement is a critical element of the funding eligibility criteria.

An effective public information process not only serves SLOCOG by meeting state and federal requirements, but also encourages greater participation in the development of programs or projects that may be controversial.

SECTION 2. BACKGROUND

The federal government mandates that public involvement in the metropolitan planning process meet minimum requirements. How effectively planning agencies have provided opportunities for public input is an important criterion for determining federal fund allocation for local, regional and state projects and programs. While legislation such as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU); the Americans with Disabilities Act; and awareness of environmental justice issues have broadened the scope of public participation in the planning and programming process, prior federal transportation acts (i.e., National Environmental Protection Act) also required public participation.

California's Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) (as amended) has long required actions of California's public agencies to be performed in full view of the public along with opportunities for public input. Environmental documents related to plans and projects include the public comment provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments represents its member jurisdictions as planner, programmer, and broker in developing an efficient and effective inter-modal transportation system that provides for the mobility needs of people, goods, and services while protecting the environment. It has always been the goal of SLOCOG to invite public participation into the decision-making process. The SLOCOG Board and the various advisory committees facilitate the bottom-up planning process and frequent, ongoing public and interagency participation at all stages of the process. Outreach programs are designed in cooperation with policy, citizen and technical advisory committees and other transportation and air quality agencies. These programs complement the decentralized planning process established to increase participation in regional policy development.

SLOCOG's public involvement techniques are tailored to local conditions and encourage creative and fresh ideas as much as possible. This Plan goes beyond the minimum standards set by statute to attract as much public participation as possible. Below is a summary of the minimum standards for public participation as set forth by statute. Additional techniques incorporated into the plan include: workshops and public meetings; extensive use of advisory committees; newsletter distribution, citizen surveys, and community activities; access through the SLOCOG website, open house, charrettes, and focus groups, when appropriate; and Public Access televised SLOCOG Board meetings.

As was stated in the seven planning factors in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) enacted in 1998, the overall goal of transportation planning is to:

- Support economic vitality, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase safety and security of transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life.
- Enhance integration and connectivity of the transportation system across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize preservation of the existing system.

SAFETEA-LU continues these basic principles and looks toward improved consistency, consultation, and coordination between federal, state and local agencies. Statewide planning efforts should coordinate with metropolitan planning; with statewide trade and economic development planning activities and related multi-state planning efforts. Efforts should promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns. Participation processes should be more inclusive of representatives of public transportation employees, users of pedestrian walkways, and users of bicycle facilities and include representatives of the disabled.

States also need to consider economic vitality for rural areas ("non-metropolitan areas") and Metropolitan Planning Organizations, such as SLOCOG, are encouraged to consult with and/or coordinate its planning processes with those responsible for other types of planning activities. Those activities include: state and local planned growth; economic development; environmental protection; airport operations; and freight movements. These discussions are to be developed in consultation with federal, state, and tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies.

This public involvement plan is one tool that will be used in achieving these planning goals. SLOCOG's objective is to follow a 3C's approach: Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive.

In order to achieve this objective and the goals stated above, SLOCOG acknowledges that:

- Comprehensive regional transportation planning and programming should be understood and undertaken from several perspectives, among which are mode, participation and setting.
- Decisions shall be made with the full participation of the community.

Consistent with a collaboratively crafted vision, the region will work together to determine how best to provide a full range of transportation options for system users. Effective public involvement requires that affected individuals and groups be encouraged to participate in the development of local, regional, and state plans. The following policies, guidelines and procedures are designed to encourage participation. Some examples are:

- Regional Transportation Plan
- Regional Transportation Improvement Program
- Federal Transportation Improvement Program
- Environmental Impact Studies and Assessments
- Products prepared by SLOCOG staff that statutorily require public participation or for which the SLOCOG Board determines it is necessary.

Requirements of Senate Bill 375 (Steinberg, 2008)

As part of SB 375 additional requirements were generated to complete a Public participation plan for development of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Alternative Planning Strategy, if any. The statute addresses consultation with local elected officials and requires the metropolitan planning organization conduct at least two informational meetings in each county within the region for members of the board of supervisors and city councils regarding the sustainable communities strategy and alternative planning strategy, if any. The metropolitan planning organization may conduct only one informational meeting if it is attended by representatives of the county board of supervisors and city council members representing a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population in the incorporated areas of that county. Notice of the meeting is to be sent to the clerk of the board

of supervisors and to each city clerk. The purpose of the meeting shall be to present a draft of the sustainable communities' strategy to the members of the board of supervisors and the city council members in that county and to solicit and consider their input and recommendations.

SCS Public Participation Plan and Public Input (Government Code §65080)

Each metropolitan planning organization shall adopt a public participation plan, for development of the sustainable communities strategy and an alternative planning strategy, if any, that includes all of the following:

- (i) Outreach efforts to encourage the active participation of a broad range of stakeholder groups in the planning process, consistent with the agency's adopted Federal Public Participation Plan, including, but not limited to, affordable housing advocates, transportation advocates, neighborhood and community groups, environmental advocates, home builder representatives, broad-based business organizations, landowners, commercial property interests, and homeowner associations.*
- (ii) Consultation with congestion management agencies, transportation agencies, and transportation commissions.*
- (iii) Workshops throughout the region to provide the public with the information and tools necessary to provide a clear understanding of the issues and policy choices. At least one workshop shall be held in each county in the region. For counties with a population greater than 500,000, at least three workshops shall be held. Each workshop, to the extent practicable, shall include urban simulation computer modeling to create visual representations of the sustainable communities strategy and the alternative planning strategy.*
- (iv) Preparation and circulation of a draft sustainable communities strategy and an alternative planning strategy, if one is prepared, not less than 55 days before adoption of a final regional transportation plan.*
- (v) At least three public hearings on the draft sustainable communities strategy in the regional transportation plan and alternative planning strategy, if one is prepared. If the metropolitan transportation organization consists of a single county, at least two public hearings shall be held. To the maximum extent feasible, the hearings shall be in different parts of the region to maximize the opportunity for participation by members of the public throughout the region.*
- (vi) A process for enabling members of the public to provide a single request to receive notices, information, and updates.*

SECTION 3. PARTNERSHIPS

SLOCOG staff maintains contact with a number of other public agencies and non-governmental organizations. The following lists some of our key partners:

Member Agencies:

City of Arroyo Grande, City of Atascadero, City of Grover Beach, City of Morro Bay, City of Paso Robles, City of Pismo Beach, City of San Luis Obispo, and County of San Luis Obispo.

State Agencies and Organizations:

Caltrans Districts 5 and 6, California Transportation Commission (CTC), California Association of Councils of Government (CALCOG), California Highway Patrol (CHP), Business Transportation and Housing Agency (BT&H), California Department of Finance (DOF), California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), Governors' Office of Planning and Research (OPR), Coastal Conservancy, Cal Poly, Cuesta College, California State Parks.

Regional Agencies and Organizations:

San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (RTA), South County Area Transit (SCAT) Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD), Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC), Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), Regional Transportation Planning Agencies Group (RTPA Group), Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC), Los Angeles-San Diego Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN).

Local Non-Governmental Organizations:

Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, SLO County Bicycle Coalition, San Luis Obispo County Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC), San Luis Obispo Land Conservancy, The Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo (ECOSLO).

SECTION 4. GUIDELINES

SLOCOG is committed to developing and maintaining an effective citizen participation process. In order to accomplish this commitment, the public involvement process should be guided by the following principles:

1. It is the right and responsibility of citizens to be involved in the transportation planning process.
2. Citizens should be educated about the needs and issues and encouraged to participate in finding solutions.
3. Early and timely involvement of citizens is necessary to build community agreement on the needs and solutions before alternatives are proposed.
4. Agreement on the final product is a desirable goal, but agreement does not mean 100 percent unanimity by all parties. Negotiation and compromise are essential ingredients to building agreement.
5. The process by which a decision is reached is just as important as the product.
6. After decisions are made, actions should follow to maintain confidence in the community involvement process.

The process of community involvement is not a one-time step but a continual process. The manner in which the public is involved may change as the process progresses. SLOCOG will define a public participation program for each document it produces. Final documents will reflect the needs and desires of affected communities within the region. This includes establishing procedures and responsibilities for:

1. Informing, involving, and incorporating public opinion into the planning process;
2. Consultative involvement of designated agencies on technical data and modeling used in developing regional plans and determining transportation improvement program and regional transportation improvement program conformity;
3. Clearly designating a lead staff person who is knowledgeable about the entire planning process to be responsible for the public involvement program; and,
4. Providing adequate funds and scheduling expenditures to implement the public participation program.

SECTION 5. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

It is important to have an ongoing program to involve citizens through the use of the advisory committees, public workshops, press releases and other public outreach activities. The effectiveness of any program and policy plan depends upon its success in meeting the expectations of the public. Further, plans and programs need to be reassessed periodically to determine if the public's evolving needs and expectations are adequately provided for through the plan. In order to ensure that this occurs, the public must be kept informed of activities, and must be given a meaningful opportunity to participate in the development and review of public policy.

Public Participation Goal:

The proactive public involvement process for transportation planning and programming shall provide complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to key decisions; and shall support early and continuing involvement of the public and selected agencies in developing plans, studies, programs and agendas.

Objective 1: Public Input.

Consideration of public input shall be an integral part of the SLOCOG decision-making process.

Policy 1.1 SLOCOG shall conduct noticed public hearings prior to the adoption of transportation plans and programming for which it is responsible, including the long-range transportation plan, transportation improvement program and transportation improvement priorities, and on substantive amendments and annual updates thereof. SLOCOG will ensure that the notices of the public hearings are distributed to media outlets serving minority communities.

Policy 1.2 Certain plans and programs require a specific review period ([Section 8](#)). These required review periods allow agencies involved in the consultation process and the public to submit written comments to the draft document and supporting material. SLOCOG will notify the public of the specific review period required by statute.

Policy 1.3 Provide all significant previously-received public comments pertaining to the Transportation Improvement Program and transportation plans, studies, and projects for which SLOCOG is responsible to the Board prior to any action being taken on the planning products that are to be adopted or amended.

Policy 1.4 Provide an opportunity for the public to comment during public meetings of SLOCOG prior to any final action.

Policy 1.5 Demonstrate explicit consideration and responses to public input received during planning and program development processes.

- If significant written and oral comments are received on draft plans and programs as a result of the public involvement process or interagency consultation. A summary analysis and report on the disposition of comments shall be included in the final plans or programs.
- If the final plans or programs differ significantly from the one which was made available for public comment and raises new material and issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public

involvement effort, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plans or programs shall be made available.

Objective 2: Public Access

The public shall be provided timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes.

Policy 2.1 All SLOCOG plans and documents shall be made available for the public to review at the SLOCOG office and internet. Copies of major studies and plans shall be distributed to public libraries in San Luis Obispo County and, to local planning and engineering departments and other participating agencies.

Policy 2.2 Notice and agendas of all SLOCOG Board meetings shall be available to the public 12 calendar days before they occur; addendums may be distributed within 72 hours, except in cases of emergency meetings when 24 hours is allowed under The Brown Act. Agendas will be placed on the SLOCOG website at www.slocog.org.

Policy 2.3 SLOCOG shall provide reasonable access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans, program and studies the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Programs.

Policy 2.4 In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals needing special accommodations to participate in meetings should contact SLOCOG at least three (3) working days prior to the scheduled meeting. Reasonable accommodations should be provided up to the Board meeting.

Policy 2.5 All meetings and workshops of the SLOCOG Board and its advisory committees shall be held in ADA-compliant venues where and when public transportation is available to encourage participation by Title VI communities.

Policy 2.6 All meetings and workshops of the SLOCOG Board and its advisory committees are open to the public, except as allowed by The Brown Act.

Objective 3: Public Outreach

Opportunities shall be created for all segments of the public to learn and become informed about issues and proposals under consideration by SLOCOG, particularly those who can be expected to be directly affected by the outcome or with special needs that may not be well served by the existing transportation system.

Policy 3.1 Information pertaining to the adoption, revision, or amendment of all SLOCOG plans and transportation project priorities shall be available 72 hours prior to the date of the final action, unless in the course of an emergency meeting as allowed under The Brown Act.

Policy 3.2 SLOCOG shall inform the public about issues and proposals under consideration through public workshops, newsletters, maps, electronic simulations, exhibits or other techniques, during the development of each of the transportation plans, program, studies, and projects for which SLOCOG is responsible.

Policy 3.3 SLOCOG shall develop and maintain a list of civic and public service organizations and interested or potentially interested persons for the purpose of disseminating information about its planning and programming activities. Special efforts shall be made to include transportation stakeholders and members of potentially underserved groups.

Policy 3.4 SLOCOG shall periodically review the Public Participation Policy in terms of effectiveness in soliciting broad-based public input and inclusiveness of transportation stakeholders and traditionally underserved groups.

Policy 3.5 SLOCOG will continue to outreach to the minority communities by inclusion on mailing lists, issuing specific invitations to participate.

Policy 3.6 SLOCOG shall continue to outreach to those communities that contains significant Hispanic and Spanish-speaking populations through available media that serves the minority communities.

Policy 3.7 SLOCOG will use visualization techniques, where appropriate, to illustrate major issues and concerns as required by SAFETEA-LU.

SECTION 6. PROCEDURES

The adopted SLOCOG public involvement techniques go beyond the statutory requirements noted. The procedures listed below are intended to put the Goals, Objectives and Policies listed in Section 5 into practice. Seven major techniques are summarized. Additional techniques beyond statutory minimum include: workshops and public meetings, use of various visualization techniques, extensive use of advisory committees, newsletter distribution, surveys, and public access through open houses, focus groups, and workshop and presentations before Trusted Organizations, sub areas and City Councils and the Council Board of Supervisors.

SLOCOG will notify interested or affected public members who will be impacted by the plans, studies, and programs through customary meeting announcements, newspapers, public service announcements, press releases, special mailers, publications and committee agendas, meetings and other opportunities to participate, as appropriate. Community members or organizations may include but are not limited to:

Elected officials, business and industry, academic and scientific communities, environmental organizations, service organizations, youth services groups, recreation groups, health and handicapped organizations, Native American associations, local public and private transit operators, operators of major modes of transportation, airport authorities, traffic, ridesharing, parking, and enforcement agencies, senior citizen groups, appropriate private transportation providers, minority and ethnic groups, local, State and Federal agencies.

1. SLOCOG encourages public participation and acknowledges the value of this input.
2. SLOCOG will provide complete and easily understood information and summaries and use of various visualization techniques. Planning issues and alternatives will be addressed in a realistic manner.
3. SLOCOG will publish public comments in a newsletter or report. Reports will include specific agency responses, the effect of citizen input on decisions, and when appropriate, updated reports of citizen participation.
4. SLOCOG will conduct a thorough review of the program, including staff and citizen evaluation.

Section 6.1. Three-Level Procedures for Public Outreach.

The SLOCOG Public Participation Plan includes a three-level procedure tier geared towards addressing the need for broader and more in-depth public outreach.

Section 6.1.1. Level I Procedures: Documents and Formal Meetings

This first tier of procedures addresses general protocol for public participation requirements for plans and programs Level I Procedures involve the following:

1. Miscellaneous Studies
2. Transportation and Transit Development Plans
3. Short-Range Transit Plans
4. FTA- and FHWA-adopted Public Involvement Procedures
5. TIP amendments (under certain circumstances)

The following documents also meet the criteria listed in Level I Procedures:

6. Negative Declarations
7. Environmental Impact Reports
8. Regional Transportation Plan
9. State Transportation Improvement Program
10. Regional Transportation Improvement Program
11. Federal Transportation Improvement Program

The following procedures shall be followed after Level I Procedures:

1. No person shall be denied participation.
2. A legal notice will be placed in the legal advertising sections of at least one newspaper of general circulation within the affected community, including a Spanish-language publication, if possible. A chart listing notification requirements is attached in [Section 8](#).
3. Display ads will be placed as deemed necessary and targeted specifically to affected communities to encourage involvement and address key decision-making points.
4. Non-traditional approaches, such as radio advertising and fliers to non-profit organizations, churches and chambers of commerce will be used to encourage involvement of the under-served and transit-dependent in project development and public workshops. Spanish-language fliers and advertising will be included in these non-traditional approaches.
5. Announcements dealing with documents and/or meetings and workshops shall be posted on the SLOCOG website.
6. A mailing list of individuals who have expressed interest shall be maintained.
7. Meeting notices shall be mailed to individuals who have expressed interest.
8. SLOCOG shall provide appropriate assistance, auxiliary aids and/or services when necessary to afford disabled individuals an equal opportunity. Individuals with disabilities will be provided an opportunity to request auxiliary aids.
9. SLOCOG shall provide an interpreter, when requested, at any and all public hearings and workshops, and shall maintain its subscription to a language line service for day-to-day public inquires.
10. SLOCOG's website shall maintain a link to a translation service for information contained on the agency site.
11. Projects must be evaluated for their potential for public interest. Projects likely to have considerable public interest must also include Level III requirements.
12. To strengthen public participation in the planning and project delivery process and specifically to aid the public in understanding proposed plans, SLOCOG will use visualization techniques. Through visual imagery, the complex character of proposed transportation plans, policies and programs can be portrayed at appropriate scales: state, region, local area, project architecture, etc., and from different points of view. The effective presentation of projects' impacts to the public has become an increasingly essential part of the planning and design of transportation systems. Examples of visualization techniques include sketches, drawings, artist renderings, physical models and maps, simulated photos, videos, computer modeled images, interactive GIS systems.

Section 6.1.2. Level II Procedures: Additional Public Involvement Requirements

This second tier of procedures pertains to these plans and studies that have wider and potentially aged effects on jurisdictions, stakeholders or constituents.

1. Public review by various funding agencies submitting projects for the transportation improvement program will be accepted up to the final determination.
2. A copy of draft transportation plans and draft transportation improvement programs, and EIRs will be made available for review at SLOCOG, the main branch of the local library system, college libraries and via internet. Individual copies of all documents will also be distributed to any interested parties for a small fee to offset printing costs.
3. Significant public comments and responses, and the disposition of any comments will be made part of final transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and EIRs.
 - a. Written summary/verbal presentation: Staff will review all comments, synthesize them and prepare a narrative summary highlighting key points.
 - b. Listing all comments: Using a summary chart format, staff will review and summarize all comments, categorizing them by topic and type of comments (e.g. question, fact, desire, and opinion).
 - c. Responding to significant comments: Staff will respond, in writing within 30 days, to significant comments. Those responses will be made part of the final document.
 - d. Providing the full record: The decision-making body will be given copies of the meeting notes, the transcript (for public hearings) or taped transcripts.
4. Transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, EIRs, and major studies will be made available for no less than a 30-day public review period. Programs, projects, or plans routed through the state clearinghouse shall adhere to the public information requirements of the clearinghouse and also be made available no less than 30 days.
5. If regionally significant changes are made to the transportation plan, transportation improvement programs, and EIRs during the review and comment period, the plan(s) will be made available for 30-day public review and comment period prior to final adoption.
6. Regionally-significant changes to the Regional Transportation Plan, transportation improvement programs, and environmental impact reports during the review and comment period shall also be advertised by way of press release to all media outlets, on community fliers and on the SLOCOG website as deemed necessary in the specific project area prior to final adoption.
7. The Executive Director or his designee will coordinate with the state to enhance public consideration for the State Transportation Plan or the State Transportation Improvement Plan.
8. Records relating to the transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and EIRs will be made available for public review upon request.

9. Technical and policy information relating to the transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and EIRs will be made available for public review upon request.
10. SLOCOG staff will biennially hold at least one formal public meeting in each of the subareas of the County on the development of the Regional Transportation Plan. These public meetings/workshops will be announced in a variety of formats, including public notices, display ads, press releases and flier distribution in the affected communities. Information shall be made available in “user friendly” formats that include maps and illustrations of key locations or settings.
11. Amendments deemed significant in scope shall be advertised via public notice and held for a 30-day review period.
12. SLOCOG will use visualization techniques for Level II Procedures as needed. Examples of visualization techniques include sketches, drawings, artist renderings, physical models and maps, simulated photos, videos, computer modeled images, interactive GIS systems.

Section 6.1.3. Level III Procedures: Anticipated High-Profile Projects

1. Staff will work with the Citizens’ Transportation Advisory Committee or other committees formed to address specific projects to identify key issues.
2. SLOCOG will work with affected jurisdictions to develop presentations for public meetings or workshops to address critical concerns with project issues.
3. Identify the appropriate media contact to respond to media inquiries.
4. Develop newsletter articles, visual representations, graphics etc. specific to important plans or projects.
5. Mail the SLOCOG newsletter to the plan/project participants at regular intervals.
6. Coordinate with member jurisdictions regarding any news conference and/or press release highlighting the public participation opportunities. Press releases will be sent to the appropriate radio stations, television channels, and newspapers.

Section 6.2. Process for Receiving Public Comments

The following public involvement techniques may be used to educate the public and/or gather information. Techniques may be selected at the discretion of SLOCOG to best meet the needs of a plan or program being developed.

Section 6.2.1. Formal Public Hearings

Public hearings are held prior to a decision point and are a formal means to gather citizen comments and positions from all interested parties for public record and input into the decision making process. SLOCOG public hearings are necessary for the adoption of major plans (e.g. Regional Transportation Plan), programming of money (e.g. Transportation Improvement Programs), and for the annual Unmet Transit Needs hearing.

SLOCOG shall publish a public hearing notice in a general circulation newspaper citing the time, date, and place of the hearing. SLOCOG will accept prepared comments from the public during the period between the notice and hearing date. These comments will be considered part of the public record. Also during this period, SLOCOG staff will accept questions and provide clarification on issues raised by the public.

The agenda for each SLOCOG meeting shall include an upcoming public hearing notice section, citing the time, date, and description of the public hearing item. SLOCOG policy for posting public hearing notices shall be twelve days in advance of the meeting, with a minimum of seven days unless otherwise required by statute.

For issues of local concern, an option available to the SLOCOG Board is to hold a SLOCOG sponsored meetings at a location in the North County or South County which may provide greater access to the public and meet the needs of people with disabilities.

One or more formal public meetings may be held during a public hearing process. The format for the meeting(s) will be at the discretion of SLOCOG. All SLOCOG meetings and public hearings will be held in buildings accessible to persons with disabilities. The format options include:

1. 'Theater' style with a presentation followed by audience response.
2. 'Open-house' style with individual comments provided directly to appropriate staff or a recorder, typed in by the participant, or via written comment sheets.
3. A mixed format with an 'open house' style meeting followed by a 'theater' style comment period.

Section 6.2.2. Workshops and Public Meetings

The purpose of workshops and public meetings is to present information to the public and obtain informal input from citizens. These meetings are typically held throughout the planning process and can be tailored to specific issues or citizen groups. These meetings can be conducted either formally or informally. They can be scheduled at specific milestones or phases within a participatory process. Public meetings provide interested citizens, organizations and agencies time to speak and bring all opinions and ideas into the planning process. Public meetings and workshops achieve a basic level of citizen input to transportation planning and project development and exchange information with a wide representation of interests.

Properly scheduled public meetings facilitate citizen participation. Pre-meeting materials shall be prepared, including meeting announcements and agendas, displays, and any mailings or publicity that may be necessary. The public shall be informed of the free access to these materials. Some ground rules for workshops and public meetings may be established including: listening carefully and sharing discussion time with others; encouraging everyone to participate; discussing with the intent to identify areas of agreement, clarify differences, search for common understanding; and establishing a speaker's time limit.

Public meetings and workshops may occur during regularly scheduled SLOCOG Board meetings. More informal evening meetings can occur in other locations acceptable to the affected community. It is a SLOCOG goal to post all public notices describing the purpose and citing the time, date, and location of the meeting fifteen days prior to the meeting, with a minimum of seven days unless otherwise required by statute. Every effort shall be made to develop a public notice that is less bureaucratic and more enticing for the public to encourage participation in the meeting/workshop, including but not limited to visually oriented public notices when appropriate.

SLOCOG will provide meeting summaries in the form of written meeting minutes, describing areas of agreement and disagreement. All points shall be clearly and fairly stated.

Translators/interpreters will be provided for non-English speaking and hearing-impaired individuals if requested at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. SLOCOG staff will regularly make available such services when it is reasonable to assume they will be needed (i.e. Unmet Needs Hearing, Call Box Access issues).

Section 6.2.3. Advisory Committees

SLOCOG works cooperatively with four advisory committees: the Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC), the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC), the Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC), and the Executive Committee. It is SLOCOG's policy to distribute all draft SLOCOG agendas and supporting documents to CTAC and TTAC for their review, input, and recommendations prior to the distribution of the regular SLOCOG long agenda. The minutes and recommendations of each committee are included in the SLOCOG long agenda for Board consideration.

All advisory committee meetings are open to the public where the general public has the opportunity to provide input. Interpreters are provided to translate public meetings for bilingual and the hearing impaired if requested ahead of time. SLOCOG will work to facilitate the input of advisory committee members with childcare responsibilities. SLOCOG will work with the eligible children providers to address the needs of advisory committee members as necessary.

The Brown Act requires at least 72 hours public notice citing the time, date, and location before regular meetings. SLOCOG policy for posting public notices for advisory committee meetings shall be seven days in advance of the meeting. SLOCOG shall circulate a short agenda for posting without support documents at the City County Library, South County Library, Atascadero Library, the County Government Center, and members of the public (upon request). Advisory committee agendas shall include a brief narrative describing the purpose and role each committee plays in the decision making process.

Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)

CTAC is a valuable asset. Generally, CTAC provides citizen input and advice regarding regional goals and objectives, problems and needs, and discusses potential options and solutions regarding many SLOCOG activities. CTAC develops and forwards recommendations to the SLOCOG Board on transportation policies and implementation. They review and study existing and proposed transportation-related issues including draft SLOCOG agendas, reports, and programs. The SLOCOG Board receives this citizen input as a part of each agenda.

CTAC members often attend public and neighborhood meetings and may also be asked to assist, provide support and be responsible for the dissemination of information and facts, give testimony to the benefits and importance of the activity to the community, actively seek informed responses from the community regarding transportation problems and priorities and elicit potential solutions.

CTAC members represent various public interests concerned with transportation and are appointed by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors, incorporated cities, and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments in accordance with their bylaws.

Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC)

TTAC serves as the technical engineering and planning review committee of SLOCOG. TTAC assists in the preparation and maintenance of the Regional Transportation Plan, provides advice and recommendations to SLOCOG in its review of state and federally

funded transportation projects; provides assistance and recommendations to SLOCOG in its allocation of funds from the Transportation Development Act; serves as the Surface Transportation Program (STP) committee to recommend projects to be funded with STP funds for SLOCOG approval; and reviews the draft SLOCOG agenda and staff reports.

TTAC membership is represented by the planning and engineering areas of each public agency involved in the transportation planning and programming process as more thoroughly defined in TTAC bylaws.

Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (SSTAC)

SSTAC serves as the Regional Transit Productivity Committee to advise the Board on the efficiency and effectiveness of transit systems and fulfill responsibilities as required by §§99238 and 99244 of the Public Utilities Code. The committees' purpose is to annually participate in the identification of transit unmet needs including unmet transit needs that may exist within the jurisdiction of the council and that may be reasonable to meet by establishing or contracting for new public transportation or specialized transportation services or by expanding existing services and advise SLOCOG on any other major transit issues, including the coordination and consolidation of specialized transportation services. SSTAC is comprised of: one user representative who is over 60 years old; one user representative who is disabled; two representatives of local social service providers for seniors; two representatives of local social service providers for disabled; one representative of a local social service provider for persons of limited means; two representatives from the consolidated transportation services agency; two representatives from local transit operators; one representative from a local social service provider for youth; and, the SLOCOG Board may appoint additional members at its discretion.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee meets on an ad hoc basis to review the draft SLOCOG agenda, identifies items to refer to advisory committees, and provides policy input on agenda items, major sensitive issues, and the agency work program. The committee consists of the SLOCOG President, Vice-President, and immediate Past President.

Other Standing Committees

The other standing committees meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss issues of particular concern to their area of interest or as referred by the full SLOCOG Board. These committees include: an Administrative Committee (consisting of all city managers and the county's administrative officer).

Section 6.2.4. Small Group Sessions

A meeting of representative citizens, businesses, and/or neighborhoods may be invited to participate in small group sessions to discuss options and give opinions on specific transportation topics. Participants may be presented with materials and asked to respond. The following are types of small groups that might be involved in the process:

Plan/Program Advisory Committee (PAC): An advisory committee established for the development of a plan or program may consist of a broadly representative group of citizens who understand other citizen concerns, needs and wants, technical and administrative staff from various organizations and officials from appropriate local and state entities.

Stakeholder Group: Interview or meet with a broad range of individual persons or groups who have a vested interest in the outcome of the plan or program developed

by SLOCOG. Interviews and meetings would be conducted to identify issues and concerns. Such groups may include business, neighborhood, environmental, and others.

Focus Groups: SLOCOG may use this approach to uncover information that is difficult to access. This includes uncovering attitudes, opinions, and emotions on specific issues or topics from a group of 'screened' participants. This method may also be used to clarify issues and to develop surveys. Care shall be taken to assure fair representation from major interested parties and stakeholders.

SLOCOG along with the affected jurisdiction(s) will specifically consider the need for a PAC or Stakeholder Group with regard to major transportation plans, studies, programs or projects. If the Board elects to form a PAC, the PAC shall be organized with a special effort to appoint persons who are, or will, represent the needs of the persons traditionally underserved such as low income, minorities, elderly and the disabled. The ways and means of determining PAC membership, committee structure, and specific roles and responsibilities for an activity may be presented to CTAC and TTAC for comment and the Board and the affected jurisdiction(s) for approval. Membership will not be permanent, thus PAC members will serve for the length of the development and completion of a plan or program.

PAC and Stakeholder meetings will include the use of various public involvement techniques to keep the group informed, obtain information, identify preferences and resolve conflicts.

Section 6.2.5. Internet

SLOCOG shall provide access to plans and programs through the Internet. An e-mail address will be presented and made available for public access to make and receive comments. SLOCOG maintains a website at www.slocog.org. Using this medium, planning documents (Transit Plans, Regional Transportation Plans and Special Studies) and programming documents (Federal Transportation Plan FTIP, Regional TIP and Transit Capital Improvement Plan CIP) , meeting locations and agendas, contact information and a variety of other information are made available to the general public who have access to the internet.

SLOCOG has expanded the interactive nature and content of the website over time. Draft documents are provided to the public online and the public has an opportunity to comment on projects via e-mail or by other means. Comments will be received, answered by project staff, and they become part of the public record. Final documents are posted on the website providing efficient access.

Section 6.2.6. Fairs and Festivals

SLOCOG may attend community fairs and festivals to present various aspects of transportation planning, programming and projects as set forth in the RTP as well as the FTIP. Participants are encouraged to view exhibits, ask questions, consider the information and give comments. Fairs create interest and dramatize a plan, program or TIP project through visualized graphics and interactive audiovisuals.

Various community activities such as transportation fairs and booths at community festivals help to bring an interest in transportation issues to citizens and in specific projects or programs. These activities keep participants informed, interested, and up-to-date on SLOCOG projects and programs. Non-traditional public involvement methods encourage people to participate and are usually fun for attendees.

With good publicity, community activities become a known opportunity for citizens to participate in transportation planning. SLOCOG shall share information and discuss issues, giving the participants a status report on projects and programs. Participants will be encouraged to view the exhibits, ask questions, consider the information, and give comments.

SLOCOG shall include an article in its newsletter prior to the community activity that describes the purpose of the event, attractions, and other activities associated with the event.

Section 6.2.7. Ad hoc Strategies

When appropriate, SLOCOG shall apply a number of other public involvement strategies as part of the agency's transportation planning and programming process. Among those strategies are citizen surveys, focus groups, charrettes, and project specific open houses.

Citizen Surveys

Surveys report what people know or want to know. Surveys test whether a plan, program or an element of them is acceptable to the public as it is being developed. An appropriately sized random sample will be drawn from the targeted population and surveyed to develop a sense of general public attitudes. Surveys can be formal such as a random statistically valid telephone survey; a direct mailing to citizens, businesses, and community organizations, or informal such as a self-administered questionnaire attached within a draft document.

Citizen surveys assess public opinion and survey results show public reactions to agency issues, proposals or actions and gather information for use in the planning process. They can accurately report on what people know or want to know. Surveys can test the agency perception of what people are thinking and reinforce decisions that have been made through participatory programs. SLOCOG will consider this technique in coordination with the Air Pollution Control District and Regional Rideshare Program in assessing community and citizen's transportation practices, attitudes, and thoughts. SLOCOG is also working with the Transportation Management Association and Ridesharing Program to establish a base line mode split database. This database will be used to monitor performance of the transportation system. This periodic direct public input will be used to set goals and objectives for the planning and programming of projects of each of the different transportation modes. It is SLOCOG's goal to conduct a biennial citizen survey on general transportation issues and mode split. SLOCOG may also conduct periodic special surveys to assess community attitudes on specific countywide issues such as supplemental local option funding sources.

Focus Groups

A focus group is a tool to gauge public opinion. A focus group is a small group discussion with professional leadership. It is a meeting of a selected group of individuals convened to discuss and give opinions on a single topic. A focus group is a place for people to speak out without criticism of their comments. Subcommittees of SLOCOG advisory committees often act as a focus group to solicit specialized information.

SLOCOG will make efforts to provide a family-oriented environment at focus group events that take into account the needs of the children. SLOCOG is committed to providing these services so more families are capable of providing public input. These services will be provided upon request.

Charrettes

A charrette is a meeting with a specified time limit to resolve a problem or issue. The breadth of background of participants assures full discussion of issues, interrelationships, and impacts. Problem solving in nature, Charrettes produce visible results. They are often used early in a planning process to provide useful ideas and perspectives from concerned interest groups.

Open House

An open house provides each potentially affected interest group the opportunity to ask questions, express concerns, react to what is being proposed and even make suggestions to the technical experts who are responsible for developing a plan or program. The open house is an informal setting, which allows for one-to-one exchanges, usually extending over several evenings and part of a weekend, between any concerned and/or interested person and the public officials and professionals. Open houses are typically used for major plan or project input.

SLOCOG will make efforts to provide a family-oriented environment at open house events that take into account the needs of children. SLOCOG is committed to providing these services so more families are capable of providing public input. These services will be provided upon request.

Web-Based Surveys

Web-based surveys are a tool used to gather information on people's perceptions, preferences, and practices. The benefit associated with using the internet as a medium for surveying is the greater likeliness of achieving higher success rates than what would be accomplished if a more traditional medium was used (i.e., mail). This can be attributed to how much less time a web-based survey usually takes to complete and how little effort is required to give the results back to the issuing entity. Results of a web-based survey are instantly compiled, updated, and displayed once a participant completes the survey instrument.

Some people will not have access to the Internet thus they will have limited access to the results of a web-based survey instrument. SLOCOG's uses various media strategies in trying to notify the general public that might not have access to the Internet. The information being sought and the use of that information in the regional transportation planning process will vary.

Section 6.2.8. Phone and In-person Comments

A period of time may be provided to allow citizens to telephone or walk in their comments. SLOCOG's phone number and address will be provided to the media and may be included on documents related to the plan or program. SLOCOG will summarize verbal comments.

SECTION 7. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY EVALUATION

Significant changes to SLOCOG's Public Involvement Procedures shall be advertised and available 45 days for public review and comment before final adoption. The SLOCOG Board will review the public review process biennially.

Section 7.1. Evaluation Methodology

In order to regularly evaluate the Public Involvement Procedures, five performance measures are recommended.

1. The accessibility of the outreach process to serve diverse geographic, language and ability needs;
2. The extent or reach of the process in involving and informing as many members of the public as possible.
3. The diversity of participants in the outreach process and its ability to reflect the broad range of ethnicities, incomes and special needs of residents in the SLOCOG region.
4. The impact of public outreach and involvement on the plan/program and on policy board actions.
5. The satisfaction with the outreach process expressed by participants.

For each of these five performance measures, there is a set of quantifiable indicators. They will be applied as appropriate to each plan/program's level requirements.

Accessibility Indicators

Meetings are held at easily accessible locations within the county. All meetings are to be accessible under Americans with Disability Act requirements. Meetings are linguistically accessible to 100 percent of participants with three working days' advance request for translation. Meeting announcements will offer translation services with advance notice to participants speaking any language with reasonably available professional translation services.

Reach Indicators

The following indicators may be tracked to understand the effectiveness of public outreach efforts: number of comments logged into comment-tracking and response system; number of individuals actively participating in outreach programs; number of visits to the specific section of the SLOCOG website; number of newspaper articles mentioning the plan/program; and number of radio or television interviews or mentions about the plan or program.

Diversity Indicators

Demographics of targeted workshop/charrette/meeting roughly mirrors the demographics of the SLOCOG region. Percentage of targeted organizations and groups participating in at least one workshop/charrette/meeting. Participants representing a cross-section of people of various interests, places of residence and primary modes of travel.

Impact Indicators

Written comments received are logged into the comment tracking system, analyzed, summarized and communicated in time for consideration by staff and the policy board. Significant written comments are acknowledged so that the person making them knows whether their comment is reflected in the outcome of a policy board action, or, conversely, what the policy board acted differently.

Participant Satisfaction

This information would be obtained via an online and written survey available on the SLOCOG website, and at each workshop/charrette/public meeting involving the plan or program in question.

Other factors to be considered in the evaluation of the Public Involvement Procedures are as follows:

- Accessibility to meeting locations,
- Materials presented in appropriate languages for targeted audiences,
- Adequate notice provided for meetings,
- Sufficient opportunity to comment,
- Educational value of presentations and materials,
- Understanding of other perspectives and priorities,
- Clear information at an appropriate level of detail,
- Clear understanding of items that are established policy versus those that are open to public influence,
- Quality of the discussion, and
- Responsiveness to comments received.

SECTION 8. LEGAL AND DISPLAY AD MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The Brown Act requires the SLOCOG Board to conduct its business in meetings open to the public. The Brown Act also requires every agenda for regular SLOCOG meetings to provide an opportunity for the public to address the SLOCOG Board on any item of interest to the public within SLOCOG's jurisdiction. The law also allows boards to meet in private to discuss such issues as personnel, litigation, and labor negotiations. The Brown Act also applies to any committee or subsidiary body of a local agency, whether permanent or temporary, decision-making or advisory, which is created by the governing board. Public notices in various formats are used to inform the general public and media of meetings, workshops, and public hearings.

Section 8.1. Brown Act Procedures

The Brown Act (Government Code §§54950-963) requires public notices be posted at least 72 hours before regular meetings or 24 hours before special meetings sets minimum standards for open meetings relative to public access, reasonable regulations ensuring the public's right to address the agency, including regulations to limit the amount of time allocated for public testimony. SLOCOG policy for posting public notices shall be fifteen days in advance of the event, with a minimum of seven days unless posting is required to be longer by statute (e.g. Unmet Transit Needs requires 30 days). SLOCOG shall circulate a long agenda with supporting "draft" staff reports to all advisory committee members. Short agendas without supporting reports shall be sent to newspapers, broadcasting media, libraries, and members of the public, upon request. Agendas will also be available through the SLOCOG website.

The Brown Act also requires all written materials provided to the SLOCOG Board be made available to the public upon request. SLOCOG shall also circulate long agenda packets to three San Luis Obispo County libraries: the City County Library, South County Library, and Atascadero Library. It is a SLOCOG goal to distribute all SLOCOG long agendas to SLOCOG delegates and their administrative staff twelve calendar days prior to the next regular meeting. Short agendas for advisory committee meetings will be made available to libraries and electronic bulletin board services. The short agendas will include a brief narrative describing the purpose and role each advisory committee plays in the decision making process.

The following table summarizes the legal and display ad minimum requirements for various legal notifications. The table also summarizes the times required for various meetings and/or procedures. Public notices describing the purpose and citing the time, date, and location will be posted as noted in the following table.

Table 1: Public Notice and Comment Period for Public Meetings, Planning Documents and Programming

Program Adoption	Public Hearing	Public Notice or Comment Period	Remarks
RTP	Yes	30 days (45 days if EIR required)	A summary of oral or written comments will be provided to the Board and available to the public on request
FTIP	Yes	30 day review period; 15 day for FTIP formal amendment	
RTIP	Yes	30 days prior to Board action	
OWP	N/A	10 days starting the day after Board action	
Transit Programming	Yes	30 day public notice	
Public Participation Plan	Yes	45 days after public notice	Outreach activities will be expanded as opportunities permit
Disabled Business Enterprise Plan	Yes	30 days prior to Board notice	45-day comment period
Unmet Transportation Needs	Yes	30 days prior to Board action	Comments are taken throughout the year
Program Amendments			
RTP Amendments	Yes	30 days	N/A
Major TIP Amendments	Yes	15 days, starting day after the public hearing	N/A
OWP Amendments	N/A	N/A	N/A
PPP Amendments	N/A	45 days	N/A
Other regional plans	Yes	15 days	
Open Meetings			
SLOCOG Board	1st Wednesday of the month 8:30 AM	15 days public notice	N/A
Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee	3rd Wednesday of the month 6 PM	N/A	N/A
Technical Transportation Advisory Committee	3rd Wednesday of the month 2 PM	N/A	N/A
Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee	3rd Wednesday of the month 11 AM	N/A	N/A
Environmental Review			
Negative Declaration	Yes	20 days	
Negative Declaration submitted to State Clearinghouse for review	Yes	30 days	CEQA Guidelines Section 15072
Draft Environmental Impact Report	Yes	30 days	CEQA Guidelines Section 15087
Final Environmental Impact Report	Yes	30 days	CEQA Guidelines Section 15089
Notice of Determination	Yes	30 days	CEQA Guidelines Section 15094
Additional Public Information			
Federal Transit Administration: Grant Notice	Yes	15 days	
Technical Assistance	provide daily	Responding to comments and requests is an ongoing process	
Staff Presentations	as needed	Available to address groups or individual needs	
Publications	N/A	Newsletter, FTIP, TIP, OWP, Annual Report, Regional Profile, other brochures and studies	
Website	N/A	Electronic accessibility for schedule documents and other information	

Basic Legal Notice:

1. Date, time, and place of public hearing or meeting;
2. Identity of the hearing body or officer;
3. General explanation of the matter to be considered;
4. General description, in text or by diagram, of the location of the real property, if any, that is the subject of the hearing or meeting;
5. The following statement when appropriate: "Individuals with disabilities may call SLOCOG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public meeting/hearing."

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
1114 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Contact name
Telephone number: (805) 781-4219
Website: www.slocog.org
E-mail: slocog@slocog.org

Notice of Intent to Adopt:

1. Period during which comments will be received;
2. Date, time, and place of any public meetings or hearings on the proposed project;
3. Brief description of the proposed project and its location;
4. Address where copies of the proposed negative declaration are available for review;
5. The following statement when appropriate: "Individuals with disabilities may call SLOCOG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public meeting/hearing."

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
1114 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Contact name
Telephone number: (805) 781-4219
Website: www.slocog.org
E-mail: slocog@slocog.org

Notice of Determination (Filed ONLY with County Clerk's Office):

1. Information identifying the project, including common name and location, and brief description of the project;
2. Date on which SLOCOG determines the project will not cause any significant adverse environmental effects;
3. Address where copy of the negative declaration may be examined;
4. The following statement: "SLOCOG has complied with the California Environmental Quality Act in the preparation of this negative declaration;"
5. The following statement when appropriate: "Individuals with disabilities may call SLOCOG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public review process."

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
1114 Marsh Street

San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Contact name
Telephone number: (805) 781-4219
Website: www.slocog.org
E-mail: slocog@slocog.org

Notice of Preparation:

1. Description of project;
2. Project location on a map;
3. Statement of probable environmental effects of project;
4. The following statement when appropriate: "Individuals with disabilities may call SLOCOG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public review process."

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
1114 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Contact name
Telephone number: (805) 781-4219
Website: www.slocog.org
E-mail: slocog@slocog.org

Notice of Completion:

1. Description of project;
2. Project location;
3. Date, time, and place of any public meetings or hearings on the proposed project;
4. Address where copies of the Draft EIR are available for review;
5. Period during which comments will be received;
6. The following statement when appropriate: "Individuals with disabilities may call SLOCOG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public review process."

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
1114 Marsh Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Contact name
Telephone number: (805) 781-4219
Website: www.slocog.org
E-mail: slocog@slocog.org

Sample notice

Notice of Public Hearing

Date

Before the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) in the matter of STATE

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

WHEREAS, SLOCOG, in its capacity as the INSERT DESIGNATION will hold a public hearing to receive public comments regarding the INSERT PLAN, PROJECT, PROGRAM; and

WHEREAS, NAME DOCUMENT AND PURPOSE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT:

A PUBLIC HEARING will be held in the LOCATION at TIME, on, STATE DATE, for the purpose of receiving public comments and testimony regarding INSERT PLAN, PROJECT, OR PROGRAM NAME or TITLE. This hearing will be a part of a regularly scheduled meeting of the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments.

The INSERT PLAN, PROJECT, OR PROGRAM will be considered for INSERT ACTION by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments following the public hearing.

Any person wishing to present testimony related to INSERT PLAN, PROJECT, OR PROGRAM may be heard, or may submit written comments to SLOCOG, 1114 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401, for inclusion in the official record of the hearing. Individuals with disabilities may call SLOCOG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public review process.

Ronald L. De Carli, Executive Director
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments
(805) 781-4219 Fax: (805) 781-5703
Website: www.slocog.org
slocog@slocog.org
DATE OF PUBLICATION

Display ads

Newspaper display ads, which may be inserted anywhere in the paper and are not confined to the classified section, will be used for the following documents: Regional Transportation Plan; Regional Transportation Improvement Program; Federal Transportation Improvement Program; all corridor studies; transit studies, including the unmet transit needs process; and all special studies.

These advertisements should run at the beginning, middle, and toward the end of the document development process. The notice shall announce a public input period, draft review availability or a final review period.

Display ads should be no smaller than 2 columns in width by no less than 4 inches deep. If financial constraints allow, display ads should run 2 columns wide by 7 inches deep or larger.

Given the larger canvas with which to work, display ads should contain at least one art element to draw the eye in. This should include, but not necessarily be limited to the SLOCOG logo.

SLOCOG will prepare notices and conduct outreach in Spanish for certain activities that merit such outreach. The notices for the Unmet Transit Needs hearing will be prepared in Spanish and translators will be available at the public hearing.

Sign-In Sheets

Have a sign-in sheet available. This will become part of the official record. Make sure people write legibly, this information will become a part of the mailing list. At a minimum, include: name, address (street city, zip), daytime contact telephone number and e-mail address. The information needed from the sign-in sheet may vary from meeting to meeting. If quite a bit of information is needed, consider developing an information card that attendees can complete at their seat.

Have SLOCOG materials available. There are several items that will help the public to understand the purpose of the agency, the project and SLOCOG's role. As many questions as can be answered prior to the meeting, saves everyone time during the meeting.

1. Comment Sheets
2. Project Information Guide
3. SLOCOG Information Guide
4. Presentation-specific support materials

Visual Aids

Visual aids are important in helping to communicate plan concepts effectively. For meetings, discussions and the preparation of major documents such as the RTP shall use visual aids to assist in communicating key concepts and basic information. Sample mediums for creating effective visual aids include:

1. PowerPoint presentations
2. Slides
3. Enlarged diagrams and graphs
4. Maps
5. Videos
6. Handouts

Attachment A: SLOCOG Board of Directors

AGENCY	DELEGATE	ALTERNATE
SLO County District 1	Frank Mecham, Supervisor	
SLO County District 2	Bruce Gibson, Supervisor	
SLO County District 3	Adam Hill, Supervisor	
SLO County District 4	Katcho Achadjian, Supervisor	
SLO County District 5	James Patterson, Supervisor	
City of Arroyo Grande	Tony M. Ferrara, Mayor	Joe Costello, Council Member
City of Atascadero	Tom O'Malley, Mayor	Roberta Fonzi, Council Member
City of Grover Beach	John P. Shoals, Mayor	William Nicolls, Council Member
City of Morro Bay	Janice Peters, Mayor	Betty Winholtz, Council Member
City of Paso Robles	Fred Strong, Council Member	Nick Gilman, Council Member
City of Pismo Beach	Mary Ann Reiss, Mayor	Kris Vardas, Council Member
City of San Luis Obispo	Jan Howell Marx, Council Member	Dave Romero, Mayor
Caltrans (ex-officio member)	Richard Krumholz, District 5 Director	

Attachment B: General Description, Roles and Responsibilities



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

- I. PURPOSE/AUTHORITY (per Adopted Joint Powers Agreement)
 - A. Address issues of mutual concern & satisfy fed & state planning/programming mandates
 - B. Forum for planning/discussion of area wide issues, preparing regional plans and programs, serving as regional agency for federal and state programs, and addressing other area-wide issues as mutually desired
 - C. Develop an efficient and effective multi-modal transportation system for mobility
 - D. Maximize state and federal funding
- II. BOARD REPRESENTATION
 - A. Appointed representative from the governing body of each city, and
 - B. All five members of the County Board of Supervisors
- III. MAJOR STATE AND FEDERAL DESIGNATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
 - A. Council of Governments (COG, forum for area-wide planning/housing allocations)
 - B. Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA, for state planning & transit fund allocations)
 - C. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO, for federal planning/programming of transportation funds)
 - D. Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE)
 - E. Regional Census Data Affiliate
- IV. MAJOR FUNCTIONS
 - A. Transportation Development Act (TDA) Administration
 - 1. Local Transportation Fund Allocation/Administration (\$10 million per year)
 - 2. State Transit Assistance fund Allocation/Administration (\$450,000 per year)
 - 3. Annual unmet transit needs hearings (regional authority to mandate transit)
 - 4. Fiscal and performance audits (all fund recipients)
 - B. Transportation Planning
 - 1. Required Plans:
 - a. Regional Transportation Plan: This state mandated plan includes policy, action and financial elements.
Purpose:
 - Foundation for transportation decisions
 - Identify and document regional mobility needs/issues
 - Resolve transportation issues and provide policy direction
 - Document region's transportation goals, policies and objectives
 - Action plan to address needs

- Identify transportation improvements for programming
 - Provide a Financial Element documenting resources and needs
 - Overall goal is to develop an integrated multi-modal transportation system.
 - b. Short Range Transit Plans: Federal requirement for federal transit funds
 - c. Social Services Transportation Coordination: State requirement.
 - d. Special Studies:
 - Transit (Long-range Transit Study; North County Transit Study; Maintenance Facility Assessment)
 - Transit Marketing and Management Information Systems
 - Rail Improvement Studies
 - Transportation Improvement Studies (interchanges, operational improvements, capacity increasing)
 - Highway Corridor Studies (US 101, SR46, SR166, and SR227 improvements)
 - Project Study Reports (state mandated scoping studies for major transportation improvement projects)
 - Other technical support studies
 - e. Major Investment Studies (alternative assessments on high-cost projects, US 101 improvements)
 - 2. Grant Assistance: state and federal transportation grants.
- C. Transportation Programming. SLOCOG is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region and is responsible for programming most Federal and State Transportation funds.
 1. Major Transportation Funds Programmed by SLOCOG:
 - a. State Transportation Development Act (approximately \$10 million per year for local transit, streets and roads).
 - b. State Transportation Bond Funds
 - c. Regional Transportation Improvement Program (biennial program; major transportation improvements; \$0 to \$15 million per year)
 - d. Federal Transit formula and competitive grants (studies, operating and capital projects).
 - b. Federal Surface Transportation Program (approximately \$2 million per year, regional and local allocations).
 - c. Federal Transportation Enhancement Grants (approximately \$75,000 per year).
 2. Capital Improvement Programs (CIP). SLOCOG must biennially adopt two CIPs to program projects using any State and Federal transportation funds.
 - a. Federal Transportation Improvement Plan (FTIP) for Federal funds.
 - b. Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP) for State and Federal funds.
- D. Intergovernmental Planning and Coordination.
 1. Census Data Center – (Census reports, Regional Profile, Jobs-Housing studies)
 2. Housing allocations (mandated by California Housing and Community Development Department for local Housing Elements every 5 years).
 3. Legislative Program (review proposed legislation focused on transportation, housing, and growth management).
 4. Other area-wide issues as mutually agreed.

Attachment C: Advisory Committees

Executive Committee

- Provide policy direction to staff regarding agendas, meetings, work program, budget.
- Representation: Immediate-Past President, current President and current Vice-President.

Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)

- Provide citizen review and recommendations to staff and COG board.
- Representation:
 - Four (4) area at-large Council of Governments appointees
 - One (1) appointee from each city (7 total)
 - One (1) appointee from each supervisorial district (5 total)

Technical Transportation Advisory Committee (TTAC)

- Provide technical advice/recommendations to staff and COG board.
- Representation:
 - One (1) planner and one (1) engineer from each member agency
 - Caltrans District 5
 - San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District

Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC)

- Representation:
 - Each transit operator
 - User representatives for each type of transit service
 - Social Services Organization representatives

Other Committees provided in JPA (meet on an as-needed basis)

- Planning Directors Committee: Member jurisdiction Planning Directors
- Administrators Committee: Member jurisdiction Managers and Administrators
- Legal Committee: Member jurisdiction Legal Counsel
- Public Works Committee: Member jurisdiction Public Works Directors

Attachment D: Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee Membership

AGENCY
SLO County District 1
SLO County District 2
SLO County District 3
SLO County District 4
SLO County District 5
City of Arroyo Grande
City of Atascadero
City of Grover Beach
City of Morro Bay
City of Paso Robles
City of Pismo Beach
City of San Luis Obispo
SLOCOG (At-Large)
SLOCOG (At-Large)
SLOCOG (At-Large)
SLOCOG (At-Large)
Caltrans District 5

Attachment E: Technical Transportation Advisory Committee Membership

AGENCY
City of Arroyo Grande Community Development Department Public Works Department
City of Atascadero Community Development Department Engineering / Public Works Department
City of Grover Beach Community Development Department
City of Morro Bay Public Services / Capital
City of Paso Robles Community Development Department Public Works / Capital Projects / Administrative Services / Transit
City of Pismo Beach Public Works / City Engineering Department Community Development Department
City of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department Planning Department San Luis Obispo Transit
County of San Luis Obispo Planning and Building Department Engineering Department
Caltrans District 5 - Planning and Local Programs Planning Division
San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District Air Quality Planning
San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA) Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Transit System

Voting Members:

*TTAC Non-Voting Members:
AGENCY
San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport
Paso Robles Airport
Port San Luis Harbor District
California Highway Patrol
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

* Vote only on non-financial issues.

Attachment F: Understanding Media Formats

Effective media strategies help to generate interest in a project or program. SLOCOG media strategies shall inform the public about projects and programs through newspapers, radio, TV, the internet, press releases, mass mailing of brochures or newsletters, and the distribution of flyers if necessary. Working with the media, SLOCOG takes an active role in disseminating information to the public. SLOCOG hopes to proactively frame public messages rather than allowing the media to do it themselves. Effective use of media helps to deliver a uniform message and alleviates the spread of misinformation that often becomes a barrier to understanding or implementation. More people participate in the planning process when they have access to substantial and accurate information.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments uses a variety of media sources to generate public involvement into the planning process.

Press Releases

SLOCOG shall prepare press releases to newspapers and broadcasting media of news worthy events that affect the region, including major actions, notification of workshops, completion of major projects, and actions taken by state agency decision making bodies.

Newspapers, Radio and TV

When possible, the briefing of reporters and editorial boards of both newspaper and broadcasting media with in-depth background on a project or program shall occur to help prepare them to analyze SLOCOG's approach and report on aspects of an issue in an objective manner. Media outlets have different strengths and weaknesses.

- Newspaper: This media format allows more time for concept development; typically, this is the most-educated audience profile.
More time for concept development.
- Television: This media format tends to be delivered in quick, 10-second sound bites; attire and delivery are 90 percent of the message.
- Radio: This media format can only be delivered by way of sound bites; typically, this is the least-educated audience profile.

Newsletters or Brochures

SLOCOG shall prepare a newsletter each quarter. The newsletter shall include recent actions taken by the SLOCOG Board, articles on upcoming events, plans or programs where early public input is necessary, and other related issues. The newsletter will be available to the public approximately forty to fifty days prior to the next regularly scheduled SLOCOG meeting. The newsletter will be widely distributed to all local government elected officials, planning commissioners, applicable member agency staff, media contacts, chambers of commerce, and interested organizations.

Flyers and Posters

Flyers and posters shall be used to focus attention to a specific public group. For example, flyers may be posted on buses or at transit centers and stops to inform transit users of public meetings or hearings that may have a direct affect on them.

Preparing for Media Interviews

Interacting with the media to accurately and effectively communicate regarding complex projects and community issues that may be controversial requires a careful approach to avoid misunderstandings and communicate effectively. The following details a number of items that will offer guidance in a variety of situations to assist in providing public information.

1. Know your audience
2. Formulate a concise, positive message
3. Interview the reporter to better understand his or her goal
4. Ask that the interview be conducted at SLOCOG
5. How long will the interview take?
6. Who will the questioners be?
7. What is the nature of the questions that will be asked?
8. How will the interview be used?
9. Offer a positive point before the interview begins
10. Remember, your interviewer knows very little about your subject

Anticipate Questions

Several of your anticipated questions will be developed and answered when the Project Information Guide is created. Despite this, it is likely the audience will have many more. The process of transportation planning is not an easy one to grasp. Many members of the audience will have wishes and desires that simply cannot be fulfilled. How you respond to their questions or statements of desire will make a difference with their opinion of efforts to get them involved. Use creative ways that put the audience in your shoes and help them to understand that transportation planning is a dynamic give-and-take process.

Interview “Do’s”

1. Be direct and concise. Use prepared responses as often as possible.
2. Use plain language. You will lose the audience if jargon is used.
3. Be personal and relax. Especially in television interviews, your appearance and how the audience responds to you is one of the most important parts of your message.
4. Speak in terms of public interest. Regardless of the medium, the listeners/readers want to know how this project will affect them.
5. Know your goal for the interview and make sure you achieve it. This is your time to help the public understand what is important.
6. Maintain control of your message in the interview.
7. In controversial matters, record the interview.
8. Correct mistakes on the spot.

Interview “Don'ts”

1. Don't go “off the record.” There is no such place.
2. Never set policy. Staff's role is merely to state the position of the agency and the Board. If any of your sentences begin with “I think” or “It's my opinion,” don't say them.
3. Don't speculate. Unless you know the answer, don't guess.
4. Avoid absolutes. The “Never” and “Always” statements you make today can change.
5. Don't exaggerate.
6. Don't lose your cool. Aggravation can be used as a technique to get detailed information.
7. Never say “No comment.” There are thousands of ways to say no comment without actually saying it. For example: “It is under review”, “Our board is determining its position on that matter” or, “We will make a decision based on the outcome.” These are just a few ways to say “No comment.”
8. Don't be afraid to say, “I don't know.” Find out the right answer and get back to the questioner immediately.
9. Never lie.
10. Don't fill dead air. Respond to questions briefly and concisely, and then stop speaking.