



Public Involvement Plan

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1. Introduction

The River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization (R2CTPO) is a federally authorized planning agency responsible for planning and programming federal and state transportation funds for the R2CTPO Metropolitan Planning Area. This area includes Volusia County and portions of Flagler County inclusive of Flagler Beach, Beverly Beach, and portions of Palm Coast and Bunnell. For urbanized areas exceeding a population of 50,000, the existence of a Transportation/Metropolitan Planning Organization (TPO/MPO) is necessary to meet federal requirements for obtaining and expending federal transportation funds. Specifically, the federal government requires that each urbanized area, as a condition to the receipt of federal capital or operating assistance, have in place a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation (3-C) planning process. This 3-C process must result in plans and programs consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urbanized area, including preparation and adoption of a long-range transportation plan (LRTP) per requirements of 23 Code of Federal Regulations 450.306, 450.316, 450.322 and Section 339.175(7), Florida Statutes.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines the public involvement approach for *Connect 2045*, hereafter referred to as the 2045 LRTP. The purpose of this approach is to engage the public in a meaningful and measurable way, inform them of transportation issues facing the community and provide reasonable and continuing opportunity for input on planning priorities and solutions being considered. The TPO planning area includes a diverse population of nearly 630,000 residents. By involving the public in ways that are meaningful and measurable, the LRTP will reflect community values and benefits for all socioeconomic segments of the population. This includes making a concerted effort to communicate and address the needs of traditionally underserved segments of the population.

In consideration of social distancing guidance and executive orders issued as a result of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) the potential impacts of COVID – 19 (Coronavirus) to public health and its impact on public involvement activities, revisions have been made to the PIP to identify alternate strategies to the public involvement approach that incorporates virtual/technology-based alternatives to public outreach activities.

This PIP is consistent with the R2CTPO Public Participation Plan adopted by the River to Sea TPO Board on June 26, 2019, and as amended on June 24, 2020 [<https://www.r2ctpo.org/wp-content/uploads/Public-Participation-Plan-adopted-06-26-19.pdf>].

This PIP outlines a process that:

- Requires timely public notice of all public outreach activities via press releases and public service announcements to be provided by the TPO staff;
- Includes multiple events and activities that inform citizens of planning efforts and allows public input and access to key decisions;
- Supports early and continuing involvement of the public in the plan development process;
- Recognizes that the public includes not only citizens, but also business owners, freight operators, environmental groups and others who have an interest in the transportation decisions being made through this plan;

- Includes a variety of activities and strategies to engage members of the community in ways that are innovative and informative including the use of web-based formats; and
- Identifies principles to guide and evaluate the effectiveness of the PIP.

2. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Overview

The LRTP is a federally required plan that addresses future transportation needs for a minimum of twenty years. The LRTP is updated every five years to ensure that it is consistent with current and forecast transportation conditions and needs, and reflective of public input. The 2045 R2CTPO LRTP is financially constrained and includes projects to enhance the performance of the transportation system over the next twenty-five years.

The River to Sea TPO uses the LRTP to 1) identify future needs and improvements for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, highway and freight mobility, 2) guide the expenditure of transportation funds, 3) ensure new transportation improvements meet community values, 4) prioritize transportation projects, and 5) promote safe and efficient transportation services. Local and state planning officials use the LRTP to select projects for inclusion in their work programs.

The LRTP will be the result of a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process that provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors (per the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 450.306(b)):

- (1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- (2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- (4) Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- (5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- (6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- (7) Promote efficient system management and operation;
- (8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- (9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- (10) Enhance travel and tourism.

The success of the LRTP is dependent upon a successful public involvement effort that fosters community interaction. The process is guided by public sentiment about long term transportation investments to achieve the best possible mobility connections. The result is expanded public awareness of and support for the resulting LRTP.

3. Evaluating Public Involvement Activities

It is critical to continuously evaluate public involvement activities to ensure they are meaningful and effective. The following principles will be utilized to guide and evaluate the LRTP public involvement process. These principles advance the TPO’s public participation objectives and are consistent with measurements from the Public Participation Plan:

- Meaningful input will be sought from various groups across the socioeconomic spectrum, and target audiences will be identified including residents, business and property owners and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations including low income and minority households within the study area.
- LRTP public meetings and workshops will be held at locations and times that are convenient to potentially affected citizens and will be geographically dispersed throughout the TPO planning area.
- Up-to-date information about the planning process and clearly identified opportunities for the public to participate will be provided through an LRTP website and social media channels.
- The quality and effectiveness of the LRTP public involvement approach will be continuously evaluated through mechanisms such as participant surveys.
- Input regarding the public involvement process will be sought from non-transportation professionals to help ensure that the information being presented is interpreted as intended.

In lieu of face-to-face meetings, certain activities identified in the PIP will be conducted through virtual/technology-based solutions. Virtual meetings and social media can be very effective tools of communication. However, as a standalone approach, technology-based input methods can present major challenges. Specific challenges including the potential impact to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and receiving input from traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations who often do not possess convenient access to the internet and other technology that may be required for virtual public involvement have been identified. The following principles will be used to guide and evaluate the virtual public involvement outreach:

- The TPO will ensure that underserved and underrepresented populations are afforded substantive opportunity to comment on the plan.
- Once social distancing restrictions have been lifted, accommodations will be made to receive in-person public input to ensure public outreach and activities are provided in a manner that engages the public in a meaningful and measurable way.

Evaluation measures will include factors such as public workshop attendance, virtual webinar attendance, website analytics and outreach efforts. See **Table 1** for the complete list of measures with targets to evaluate effectiveness.

Table 1: Public Involvement Targets for Measures of Effectiveness

Activity	Schedule	Target
4.1 - LRTP Website and Social Media	Website will go-live by September 30, 2019 and remain active through September 30, 2020. The website will be updated with current information throughout the course of the project. Analytics collected through September 30, 2020 will be included in the final report documentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 unique visitors to website • 150 likes on LRTP specific Facebook posts • 5,000 Twitter impressions on LRTP specific tweets
4.2 LRTP Survey	Survey will be launched and available on LRTP website no later than October 30, 2019 and will remain open for 60 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 750 survey respondents
4.3 Focus Group Workshops	Six (6) workshops to be held in October-November 2019 in geographically dispersed areas throughout the TPO planning area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 combined attendees across all workshops
4.4 Public Workshops¹	Three (3) Needs Assessment Public Workshops will be held in January 2020 in geographically dispersed locations AND three (3) Cost Feasible Plan Public Workshops will be held in April 2020 in geographically dispersed locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 combined attendees across all Needs Assessment Public Workshops • 100 combined attendees across all Cost Feasible Plan Public Workshops
4.5 Environmental Justice Workshops¹	Two (2) Environmental Justice Workshops will be held no later than February 28, 2020 in appropriate locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input received from at least 25 stakeholders who represent the needs of traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations.
4.6 Environmental Mitigation Consultation	Input will be solicited from the applicable Federal and State land management, wildlife and regulatory agencies no later than February 28, 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and communication with at least the seven (7) applicable Federal and State agencies identified in Section 4.6.
4.7 Freight Coordination	Input will be solicited from the freight and freight related community no later than February 28, 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact and communication with 5 freight related entities
4.8 River to Sea TPO Annual Retreat²	The 2045 LRTP will be the topic of the TPO's Annual Planning Retreat to be held in March of 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 attendees
4.11 Media and Stakeholder Outreach¹	Presentation will be made to various interest groups to promote the LRTP as an ongoing effort throughout the development of the LRTP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 combined attendees across all presentations

¹In lieu of face-to-face meetings, outreach activities will be conducted through virtual/technology-based solutions.

²The River to Sea Annual Retreat, originally scheduled for March 27, 2020 was cancelled.

4. Public Involvement Approach

The LRTP public involvement approach encompasses a range of strategies to involve the public in the development of the 2045 LRTP, including outreach and involvement of traditionally underrepresented populations. In addition, the participation of community stakeholders, agency representatives, planners, engineers, and other knowledgeable public and private sector professionals will provide valuable input so that key issues are identified, and appropriate solutions are generated. The goal is a consensus-based LRTP that accurately reflects the area's needs.

Public outreach efforts include a need to both inform and solicit input from various members of the public. Since these efforts target people with various levels of education, interest, background, goals and desires, socioeconomic status and available time, multiple public involvement tools will make up the approach for the 2045 LRTP. The primary tools proposed are described in the following sections.

The inability to conduct and participate in face-to-face meetings during the COVID-19 declared state of emergency will require virtual/technology-based alternatives to activities identified in the PIP. These activities including, at a minimum, the Cost Feasible Plan Public Workshops, Environmental Justice Workshops, Stakeholder Outreach activities, and the TPO Board and Committee Coordination which would include direct presentations to, and interactions with, the public and many partner organizations. Alternative virtual approaches that are used for public input and outreach activities will be documented accordingly in the plan.

4.1 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Website and Social Media

A project website, with a unique website domain name, will be established for the LRTP and updated regularly throughout the long-range planning process. The website will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and meet the appropriate Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0 AA). The contents included on the website will generally include the following:

- A welcome message from the Executive Director encouraging people to become involved in shaping the TPO's plan for the future;
- An overview of the long-range transportation planning process;
- Information about the geographical area included in the plan and the cities that lie within its jurisdiction;
- Vision and Goals for the 2045 LRTP
- Links to the River to Sea TPO organizational website, to surveys used to collect public input, to various local government sites within the TPO planning area, and to relevant FDOT sites;
- A project schedule showing key activities, meetings and workshops; and
- Various documents and transportation projects being considered and LRTP Subcommittee meeting agendas and summaries.

The increasing availability of Internet access enables websites to be forums for the dissemination and exchange of information. Social media tools are an important component of this effort. The TPO's Facebook site (www.facebook.com/RivertoSeaTPO) will be utilized, in companion with the LRTP and TPO websites, to maximize the exposure of the LRTP effort and opportunities for public involvement.

The advantages of a project website and social media include the following:

- low-cost to set up and maintain;
- readily able to be edited and updated;
- generally accessible at any time; and
- offers two-way communication (opportunities for site visitors to offer input as well as become informed).

The primary limitations of these tools are that they are only available to those with Internet access. This means that groups with lower utilization rates such as elderly or low-income populations may be less likely to access the planning process using this resource. Environmental Justice Workshops are among the tools that will be used in the development of the LRTP to help address underserved and underrepresented populations that may not have internet access.

4.2 LRTP Survey

The *Tell the TPO* survey is an effort of the TPO to ascertain feedback regarding transportation wants, needs, problems, preferences and suggestions from residents, the business community, elected officials and other stakeholders. Utilizing information and results obtained from the 2018 Tell the TPO Survey, a 2045 LRTP specific baseline survey will be completed early in the LRTP process to gain insight into the public's thoughts on transportation options and desired goals. Survey results will be presented in user friendly format for distribution to the TPO Board, Advisory Committees, LRTP Subcommittee and the public as well as being provided on the LRTP website. The results will be used to inform LRTP development and serve as a baseline to understand the changing needs of the region. The survey results also add to the TPO database of interested residents, businesses, and visitors that can be utilized for public outreach efforts.

Although the exchange of information in a survey is limited, the opportunity to reach a greater number of people is very beneficial. The survey will be available online and supported by a paper version. The electronic format is easy to tabulate, and results can provide direction that assists in decision-making. Drawbacks include the brief nature of surveys which makes this tool less informative for participants and less interactive than other strategies. Ultimately, survey responses augment other outreach efforts, and reasonable conclusions can be drawn where responses are clear.

4.3 Focus Group Workshops

Focus Group Workshops will be utilized as innovative and interactive planning activities to solicit meaningful input from the public. The workshops will engage attendees by seeking their input regarding key questions. This input will be analyzed to identify consistent themes and prevailing issues that will help shape the LRTP. Preliminary categorization of responses during the workshop

will facilitate engaged discussion about priorities and opportunities. Baseline information will be provided at the beginning of the workshops to set the stage for input. Six workshops will be held in geographically dispersed areas throughout the TPO planning area.

Focus Group Workshops offer a balance of advantages and limitations. The public can come with wide-ranging knowledge, education, experience and backgrounds to convey their opinions about transportation options and planning in their community. The small groupings and interactive nature of the workshops encourage and empower participants to express their voice and offer ideas and opinions that would not typically occur in a traditional public forum. The effort also produces information that serves as an influential driver of the plan's direction and project development. Challenges associated with workshops such as these include the required time commitment from participants, staffing resources required and the potential limit of participants that can be accommodated in each event.

4.4 Public Meetings

A series of public meetings will be scheduled throughout the planning area to inform citizens of the plan and to solicit comments on the transportation projects identified for the future. Notification for each of these meetings will include a notice on the LRTP project website as well as the River to Sea TPO website, and an email notice to the River to Sea TPO Board and advisory committee members and interested public.

Needs Assessment Public Workshops will be held to present the needs projects to the public and receive their input. The workshops will provide information that reviews the study process, reviews the needs assessment by mode and area, and solicits comments on identified needs projects as well as unidentified needs. The workshops will be held in three geographically dispersed areas throughout the TPO planning area.

Draft Cost Feasible Plan and Needs List Public Workshops will be held to solicit input from the public on the draft Cost Feasible Plan and Needs List. Participants at the workshops will be given the opportunity to comment on projects in their area before the draft plan is presented to the TPO Board and Advisory Committees. The workshops will be held ~~in three geographically dispersed areas throughout the TPO planning area~~ virtually.

A public comment period will be opened at the June 24, 2020 TPO Board meeting and will remain open until August 24, 2020. The TPO Board will vote on the adoption of the 2045 LRTP at its meeting on September 23, 2020.

4.5 Environmental Justice Workshops

It is critical to understand and address the potential effects of planning and prioritization decisions on minority and low-income populations. Key to this is ensuring that these segments of the population are able to participate and provide meaningful input during the LRTP planning process. Environmental Justice Workshops will be conducted with stakeholders responsible for addressing the needs of traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations. These workshops will provide valuable feedback to ensure that long range planning decisions will not adversely disproportionately impact minority and low-income populations.

4.6 Environmental Mitigation Consultation

The LRTP must include a discussion of the types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including those that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the LRTP [CFR 450.324(g)(10)]. This discussion can focus on policies, programs or strategies, rather than at the project level. The TPO will develop this discussion in consultation with the applicable Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies that include, but are not limited to:

- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (US Department of the Interior)
- National Park Service (US Department of the Interior)
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- St. Johns River Water Management District
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Florida Forest Service (Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services)

The consultation period will take place after the LRTP Needs Assessment is conducted and will consist of direct solicitation of input from the applicable agencies to develop the discussion. The consultation process will be documented in a separate Environmental Mitigation Consultation report.

4.7 Freight Coordination

The River to Sea TPO is focused on providing effective supporting infrastructure for trade and industry. This includes supporting existing activity as well as new freight dependent commercial interests. The TPO will engage the freight community, including the FDOT Freight Coordinator and local organizations such as TEAM Volusia to identify possible needs in the planning area.

4.8 River to Sea TPO Annual Planning Retreat

The River to Sea TPO annually hosts a Planning Retreat which focusses on current issues affecting the TPO. The retreat is attended by TPO Board and Committee members, the public, media, special interest groups, and consultants. The topic of this year's retreat, which is typically held in March, will be of the 2045 LRTP.

4.9 River to Sea TPO Board and Committee Coordination

A significant amount of public notice, representation and review for the development of the 2045 LRTP will also occur as part of the regular meetings of the River to Sea TPO Board, Advisory Committees and the LRTP Subcommittee. These groups include citizen representatives, elected officials, local government staff and special interest advocates representing segments throughout the larger planning area. In addition, public notice will be provided for each of the meetings in accordance with Florida Statutes and the adopted bylaws of the organization.

4.9.1 TPO Board

The River to Sea TPO Board membership consists of elected officials representing local governments in the planning area, including municipal and county entities. The TPO Board is comprised of 19 voting members. In addition, there are six non-voting members that represent the Technical Coordinating Committee, Citizen’s Advisory Committee, Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, FDOT District 5 Office and Volusia and Flagler County School Boards. These members are appointed primarily to provide information and recommendations to the River to Sea TPO Board.

The River to Sea TPO Board typically meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 9:00 a.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. An agenda is developed in advance of the meetings and, in accordance with the adopted Bylaws of the TPO, each meeting agenda includes an opportunity for “citizens to comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the urban transportation planning process.” As appropriate, 2045 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the TPO Board where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.9.2 Technical Coordinating Committee

The Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) membership consists of professional transportation planning and engineering staff as appointed by each of the TPO Board members. The TCC uses their professional education and experience to review transportation related studies and information and provide recommendations to the TPO Board.

The TCC typically meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. As with the TPO Board, an agenda is developed in advance of each meeting and there is an opportunity for citizens to provide comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the business of the organization. As appropriate, 2045 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the TCC where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.9.3 Citizens’ Advisory Committee

The Citizens’ Advisory Committee (CAC) membership consists of representatives from the public as appointed by each of the TPO Board members. The CAC use their knowledge of the local community, special interests and experiences to review transportation related studies and information and provide citizen-based recommendations to the TPO board.

The CAC typically meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 1:15 p.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. As with the TPO Board, an agenda is developed in advance of each meeting and there is an opportunity for other citizens to provide comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the business of the organization. As appropriate, 2045 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the CAC where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.9.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) membership consists of representatives from the public who serve as advocates for walking, cycling and other non-motorized activities.

Members of the BPAC are appointed by each of the TPO Board members and use their knowledge of the local community, special interests and experiences to review transportation related studies and information and provide recommendations to the TPO board.

The BPAC typically meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 2:00 p.m., and meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. As with the TPO Board, an agenda is developed in advance of each meeting and there is an opportunity for other citizens to provide comment or be heard on any matter pertinent to the business of the organization. As appropriate, 2045 LRTP activities will be placed on the agenda and considered during regularly scheduled meetings of the BPAC where the public will be provided an opportunity for comment.

4.9.5 Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) is comprised of various agency and non-agency members as outlined in Chapter 427, Florida Statutes and Rule 41-2.012, Florida Administrative Code to represent persons who are transportation disadvantaged. Committee representatives are recommended from specific agencies or volunteers (for non-agency positions) and are approved by the TPO Board. The purpose of the coordinating board is to assist the TPO in identifying local service needs and to provide information, advice, and direction to the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) regarding the coordination of services to be provided to the transportation disadvantaged. As such, the TDLCB provides a forum for the needs of the transportation disadvantaged to be heard. The TDLCB is recognized as an advisory body to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged in its service area.

The TDLCB typically meets on the second Wednesday of every other month at 11:00 a.m. in the Volusia County Mobility Management Center at Votran and forwards comments and recommendations to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantage. Beginning January 2020, the TDLCB will meet on a quarterly basis. TDLCB meetings are properly noticed and open to the public. In addition, each meeting agenda includes an opportunity for press and citizen comments. This provides time for citizens to address the TDLCB regarding an unlimited range of transportation disadvantaged related topics.

4.9.6 LRTP Subcommittee

In addition to the above-referenced committees, a 2045 LRTP Subcommittee has been formed to guide the process of developing the plan. The Subcommittee will review the plan schedule, goals and objectives, technical documents and data, and activities throughout the plan's development. It includes members from the TCC, CAC, and BPAC plus one member from the TDLCB. Diverse representation helps to ensure that each aspect of the plan is developed with consideration for a broad cross-section of the community. Membership is included in **Table 2**.

The TPO Project Manager will schedule Subcommittee meetings to be held at the River to Sea TPO offices, unless circumstances require an alternate location. The Subcommittee will typically meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 11:30 a.m. Meetings will be properly noticed and open to the public. As with other TPO committees, an agenda will be developed in advance of each meeting with an opportunity for citizens to provide comment.

Table 2: Membership of LRTP Subcommittee

Member	Committee	Representing
Gayle Belin	BPAC	Ormond Beach
Chris Daun	BPAC	Volusia County – District 2
Bob Storke	BPAC	Orange City
Nic Mostert	BPAC	New Smyrna Beach
Marcia Stevens-Foltz	CAC	Flagler County
Bobby Ball	CAC	Port Orange
Dave Castagnacci	CAC	Volusia County – Chair
Jose Papa	TCC	Palm Coast
Andrew Holmes	TCC	Daytona Beach
Becky Mendez	TCC	Orange City
Amye King	TCC	New Smyrna Beach
Jon Cheney/Melissa Winsett (alt)	TCC	Volusia County
Judy Craig	TDLCB	Disabled Citizens

4.10 Print Brochure

A brochure will be developed to notify the public that the River to Sea TPO is engaged in a public outreach effort to seek input in developing the 2045 LRTP. The brochure will include information about the TPO, long range planning, transportation and land-use, the public meetings, survey and website.

A brochure offers the advantage of literature that can be printed and distributed, providing a greater opportunity to reach a broad audience. Brochures can also be tailored for certain audiences (i.e. Spanish language) and are low cost. Literature is a form of one-way communication that does not yield any direct input but encourages additional activity.

4.11 Media and Stakeholder Outreach

In addition to the efforts above, there will be outreach to news media at key points for coverage to promote the long-range planning efforts of the River to Sea TPO and encourage public participation. Targeted presentations and work sessions will also be conducted with stakeholder groups, as warranted, such as chambers of commerce, business associations, transportation providers, freight interests, education and health organizations, professional associations, and state, regional, and local government agencies.