



Baltimore Regional Transportation Board

2022 Public Participation Plan

Recommendations to improve the PPP

December 6, 2022



What is the Public Participation Plan?



PURPOSE of the Public Participation Plan

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) seeks to provide an open process that offers reasonable access to information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions and support for early and continued involvement of stakeholders in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

There are two intended audiences for the Public Participation Plan.

First, the Public Participation Plan serves as a guidebook for the public as to how and when they can engage in the regional transportation planning and decision-making process.

Second, the Public Participation Plan clearly outlines the policies and procedures for those responsible for engaging the public in the regional planning process. That is, BRTB members, subcommittee members and planning staff.

The Public Participation Plan is organized into several sections:

Public Involvement Policies

This section outlines the process and procedures the BRTB will follow when conducting public involvement. It includes such topics as how members of the public can submit comments, what the BRTB will do with the comments it receives, when public meetings or comment periods will be held, and how members of the public can find out how to get involved.

Strategies for Outreach, Education & Engagement

The tools and techniques used to educate and engage the public in the regional transportation planning process.

Evaluation

The tools used to measure both the quantity and quality of interactions with the public.

Additional Resources

Information and links to more information on the transportation planning process and related federal regulations.



- **Guide for residents in the Baltimore region to navigate the regional transportation planning process.**
- **Policies and procedures that the BRTB and staff follow while informing and engaging the public.**
- **Toolkit of public engagement practices**
- **Evaluation process**

2022 PPP Highlights



- The draft 2022 Public Participation Plan (PPP) updates the existing PPP, adopted in 2018.
- The proposed updates were made after a review of:
 - Other PPPs
 - Prior consultant recommendations
 - Results of a recent public participation survey
 - Tech Committee suggestions
 - Staff debriefs

What's New in the 2022 PPP

- Added a graphic showing the organization and committee structure for BMC and BRTB



- Added virtual or hybrid meeting options for BRTB committee meetings and public meetings or events

What's New in the 2022 PPP

- Updated accessibility policy to use plain and inclusive language (p 16)
- Added information about (Presidential) Executive Order 13985 – Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (p 25)
- Reorganized several sections to streamline information and make it easier to understand policies

The Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) operates its programs and services without regard to race, color, or national origin in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable laws.

BMC offers interpretation services, including language translation services and signage for the hearing impaired, at public meetings upon request with seven days advance notice. BMC will not exclude persons based on age, religion, or disability. For assistance, contact the Public Involvement Coordinator, comments@baltometro.org, or call 410-732-0500.

Dial 7-1-1 or 800-735-2258 to initiate a TTY call through Maryland Relay. Usuarios de Relay MD marquen 7-1-1

Si se necesita información de Título VI en español, llame al 410-732-0500.

What's New in the 2022 PPP

- Added new ways to comment, such as voicemail and text through our PublicInput engagement hub (p 12)



- Clarified how to submit comments via social media (p 13)

Public Comment Period on Draft PPP

- August 22 through October 7
- 995 visitors to the project page
- 65 participants
- 90 survey responses
- 29 comments



Recommendations on Updates to PPP

1. Add civil rights organizations to the list of Interested Parties

- Page 9 updated to add civil rights organizations to the list of Interested Parties.

From the feedback:

Outreach should explicitly include civil rights organizations and fair housing organizations among the list of groups/organizations that are consulted for all planning processes.

Maryland and the Baltimore region have an array of non-profit legal organizations that work very closely with the low income, disabled, racial/ethnic minority and other marginalized populations that you are trying to reach. They also have accumulated expertise in the subject areas (transportation, housing) relevant to the BRTB planning process. You should include these organizations in your public outreach and consultation. - Barbara S.

Recommendations on Updates to PPP

2. Add language regarding the comment review timeframe

- Page 10 adds the following statement: If additional time is needed, the BRTB will consider modifying the voting schedule to allow further time to review and incorporate comments.

Where the document states "To allow sufficient time for the BRTB to review and respond to comments, efforts will be made to close comment periods at least 14 days (but not less than 7 days) before a BRTB vote on these items." First of all, do you actually mean "at most 14 days" (not "least")? The intent communicated here is confusing. Regardless, 14 days seems like a too-short time span to allow for sincere consideration of input and modification of the document in question. 7-14 days equates to, at most, 5-10 business days. Assume that reading through, discussing, and drafting responses to comments takes several days. The remaining amount of time (6-7 days?) only allows for very minor modifications. Is that assessment accurate?

If the BRTB has a sincere intent to allow public comments to feed back into their documents, it needs to either close the comment period earlier or allow for the due date for document finalization and subsequent vote to be pushed. The currently-followed (compressed) timeline serves as an additional factor causing commenters to feel that their comments don't result in any changes.

Recommendations on Updates to PPP

3. Make video recordings of meetings available online

- Page 14 - adds language to add recordings of committee meetings
- Staff will explore necessary procedures and logistics

From the feedback:

The proposed updates to the Public Participation Plan are welcome, especially the commitment that "there will always be a virtual option for the public to join the BRTB or any of its subcommittee meetings". With that being a go-forward option, I'd like to see the plan reach further and also call for publishing video recordings of the meetings, so members of the public are able to view the proceedings after the fact. - Michael S.

Does BRTB live-stream public meetings through its Facebook page, and do you archive videos of past meetings? I would recommend adding archiving videos as part of the PPP. - Jim K.

Recommendations on Updates to PPP

4. Update evaluation section to incorporate TRB research and guidance from USDOT on evaluating meaningful public engagement

- Page 22-23 updated to add language from USDOT and TRB

There seems to be a general consensus among public commenters (particularly on TIPs and LRTPs) that their comments don't result in any changes to the commented-on documents. Have public comments received on past TIPs or LRTPs have resulted in changes to those documents? If so, greater transparency would be appreciated that allows a commenter to see exactly how their comment is reflected in a corresponding document.

While it's great that the BRTB does "seriously consider input", it should establish a practice of recording and communicating actual changes resulting from input received. With that being said, the tone of most responses to individual public comments, while uniformly respectful and polite, tends to be rather defensive in nature. And the substance of those responses does not indicate much willingness to make changes. - Michael S.

Recommendations on Updates to PPP

5. Update Title VI plan

- The BRTB is scheduled to refresh its Title VI plan, policies and practices in 2023.
- This review will be done with the benefit of an equity scan the BRTB has funded in its FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program.

From the feedback:

1. Public participation and outreach techniques should extend to Title VI planning and evaluation process. 2. Relatedly, Title VI and Title VIII impact evaluation should be integral part of all BRTB plans and processes. - Barbara S.



Questions?

For More Information

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