







Okaloosa-Walton
Transportation Planning
Organization
OWTPO

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 19, 2026

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P.O. BOX 11399, PENSACOLA, FL, 32524 | 850-332-7976

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EMERALD COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization OWTPO

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION OW 26-33

A RESOLUTION OF THE OKALOOSA-WALTON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADOPTING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS PLAN

WHEREAS, 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 450, Subpart C, Section 316 (b)(1) states the metropolitan planning process shall, "include a proactive public participation process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing participation of the public in developing plans"; and

WHEREAS, in general, federal legislation built upon previous transportation legislation (ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU) to provide states and metropolitan planning organizations specific direction in conducting and promoting broad-based public participation activities; and

WHEREAS, federal legislation requires metropolitan planning organizations to provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE OKALOOSA - WALTON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION THAT:

1) The TPO has reviewed its public participation procedures, hereafter referred to as Public Participation Plan, to assure that full and open access to the TPO decision-making process is provided for all citizens and finds the document to be in compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR 450.316) and the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Handbook.

2) The TPO adopts the Public Participation Plan.

Passed and duly adopted by the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization on this 19th day of November 2026.

OKALOOSA-WALTON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

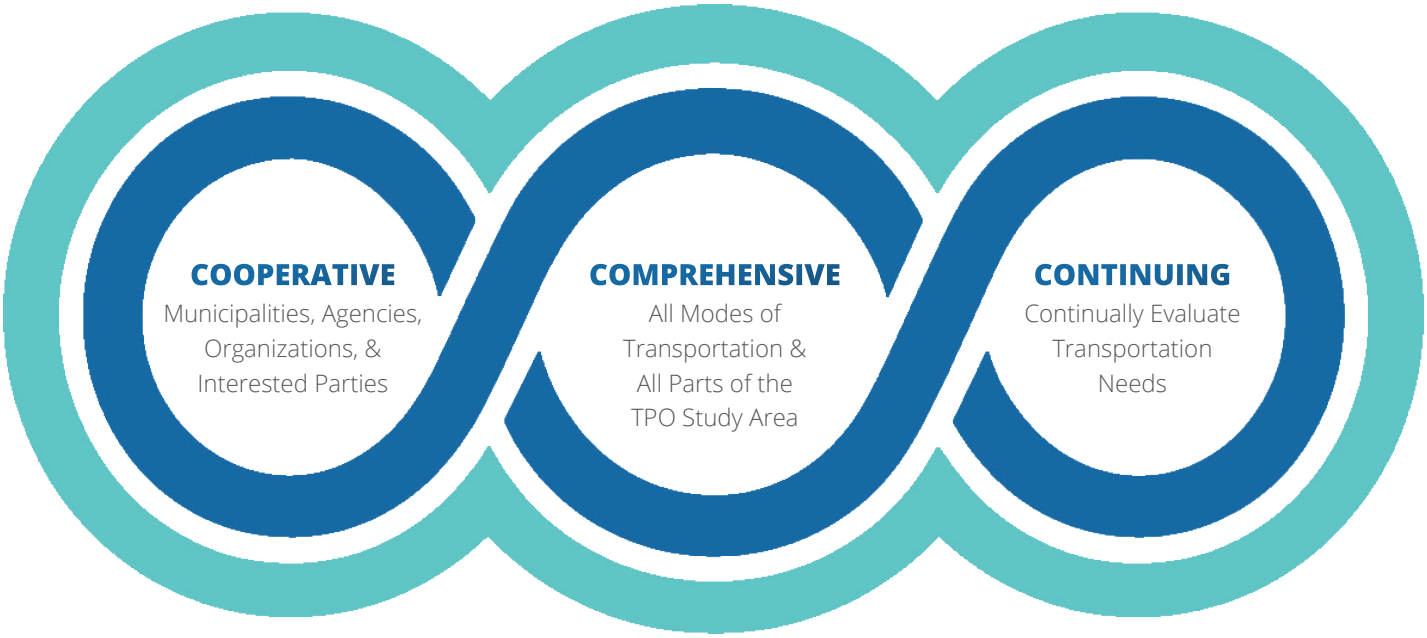
BY: _____
Todd Bierbaum, Chair

ATTEST: _____

SUMMARY

The transportation planning process blends technical analysis and input from public and private transportation partners to identify priorities, choices, and risks to the transportation system within the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) study area. It is also used to distribute resources for future investments. Long-range planning is required to be eligible for federal and state transportation funding assistance, given the vast amount of money invested in the system each year.

A TPO is designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process. This process is accomplished through a forum of **cooperative, comprehensive,** and **continuing** transportation decision making.



WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

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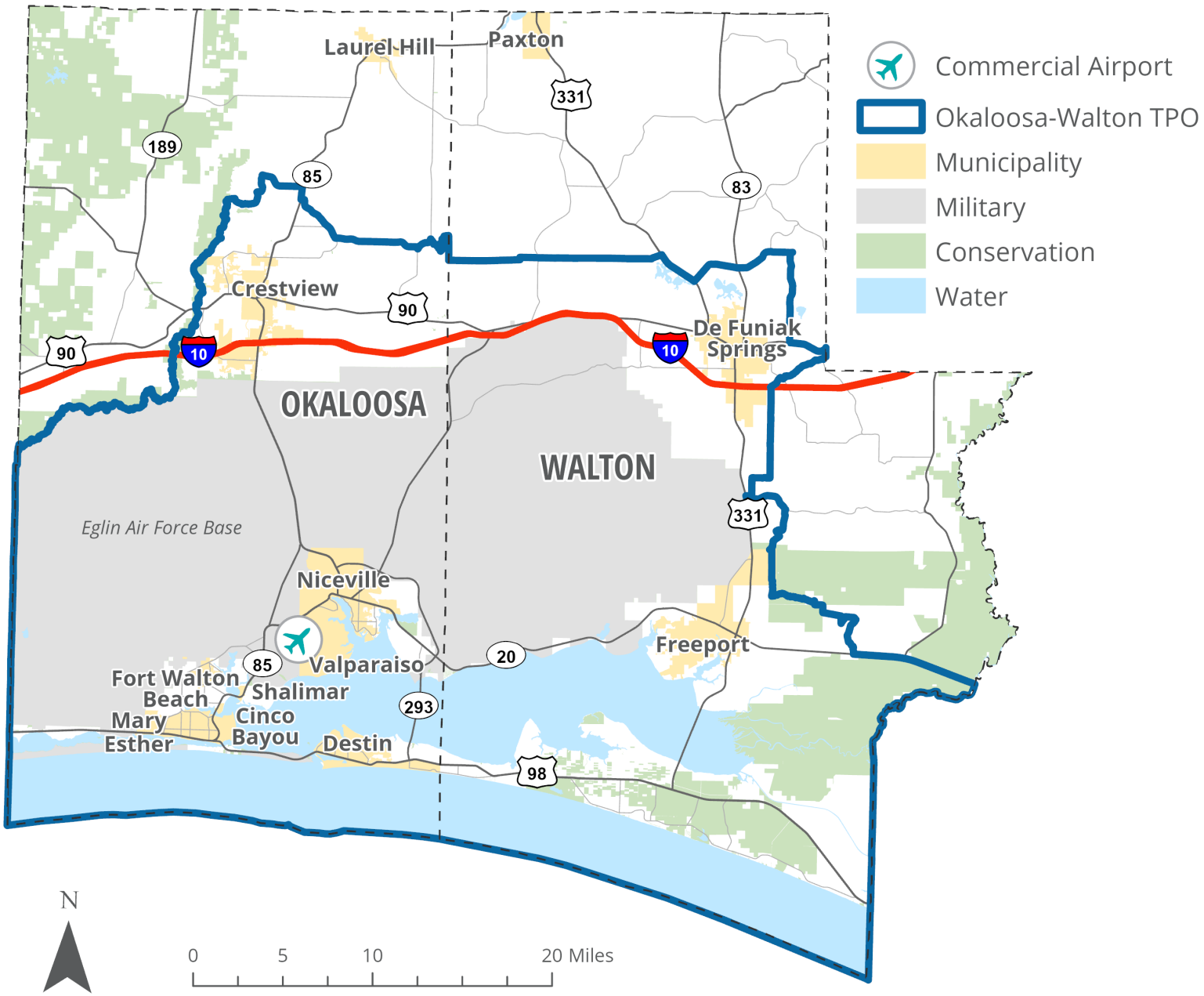
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TPO BOUNDARIES

TPOs are established in a study area with a population of **50,000 or more**, determined by the U.S. Census. The Okaloosa-Walton TPO is the policy board for the urbanized areas within **Okaloosa** and **Walton** counties.



Preparation of this document was supported in part with funds provided by FHWA, FTA, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) through a cooperative agreement with the Okaloosa-Walton TPO. Development of the plan was made possible by leadership from the Okaloosa-Walton TPO; public comments; and input, review, and discussion provided by the Okaloosa-Walton Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Transportation Planning Board

The Okaloosa-Walton TPO is the local, intergovernmental transportation policy board for Okaloosa and Walton counties. The board is comprised of local government officials who make decisions regarding transportation at the regional level. The TPO works to increase transportation safety, security, accessibility, mobility, and connectivity for people and goods.

The current meeting schedule can be found online at **www.ecrc.org/OWTPOMeetings**.
A print copy of the TPO schedule is available upon request.

Membership of the Okaloosa-Walton TPO board is comprised of elected officials from the following municipalities:

- 4 Okaloosa County Commissioners
- 3 Walton County Commissioners
- 3 City of Crestview Councilmembers
- 2 City of Fort Walton Beach Councilmembers
- 2 City of Destin Councilmembers
- 1 City of Valparaiso Councilmember
- 1 City of Mary Esther Councilmember
- 1 City of Niceville Councilmember
- 1 City of Defuniak Springs Councilmember
- 1 City of Freeport Councilmember

Citizen Advisory Committee

The Okaloosa-Walton CAC is comprised of members of the public who express an interest in transportation planning. The CAC provides a mechanism for input to the transportation planning process that reflects the citizens' views and interests. The CAC meets prior to the TPO Board meetings to assist in development of recommendations to the Board. Prospective members complete an application process and must be recommended for approval by the CAC and ultimately approved by the TPO board. Following approval, members serve at the pleasure of the TPO board. A maximum of 30 voting members may serve on the CAC.

Each member of the TPO board will nominate a member to the CAC who is representative of his/her respective jurisdiction, representing citizens from their respective districts. The TPO board nominated memberships comprise 19 of the 30 CAC member seats. The nominations are subject to ratification by a majority vote at a regular TPO board meeting, at which a quorum is met. An appointed CAC member's term will mirror the term of their appointing TPO board member. TPO staff will correspond with new elected officials selected to serve on the TPO board regarding the CAC membership recruitment process.

- 4 Okaloosa County Commissioners
- 3 Walton County Commissioners
- 3 City of Crestview Councilmembers
- 2 City of Fort Walton Beach Councilmembers
- 2 City of Destin Councilmembers
- 1 City of Valparaiso Councilmember
- 1 City of Mary Esther Councilmember
- 1 City of Niceville Councilmember
- 1 City of Defuniak Springs Councilmember
- 1 City of Freeport Councilmember

The public is ***welcome to inquire*** with staff for more information about CAC membership

Technical Coordinating Committee

The TCC includes technically qualified persons representing the various local and state governmental entities, including local government representatives, aviation, port, and public transit agency representatives, utility and transportation authority representatives, school board representatives, and other appropriate representatives with some level of expertise in transportation planning. TCC voting memberships are attained through the appointment of members by the local governments represented on the TPO and other agencies to fill TPO approved standing TCC positions.

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is defined as any person or group that is affected by transportation plans or programs, including those who may not be aware they are affected. The following groups and individuals are considered stakeholders in the transportation planning process and the audience for various communication tools and outreach efforts:

- Transportation agencies; freight and passenger railroads; logistics providers
- Media
- Homeowners/neighborhood associations
- Civic and advocacy groups
- Business community
- Interested parties expressing an interest in transportation planning
- Area Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Agencies
- Environmental groups
- Pedestrian and bicycle users
- Special populations and groups
- Large employers
- Boards of Education
- Other stakeholders identified by the TPO

Contact lists will be updated on a continuous basis, containing stakeholder emails and phone numbers. These contact lists will be used to promote participation in the process and facilitate presentations.

INTENT OF THE PPP

The Okaloosa-Walton TPO Public Participation Plan (PPP) provides a framework for methods of engaging the public, one of the key elements of effective planning. Engaging more citizens in the planning process leads to a stronger plan that better addresses the community's needs. Providing opportunities for public participation helps minimize challenges in later phases of the plan by identifying and addressing potential issues during the planning stage.

The test of successful public participation is the level of early awareness and the quantity, quality, and relevance of feedback received. The PPP is designed to identify strategies for gathering public input most effectively to use throughout the planning process and in the development of transportation plans and programs. Techniques for most effectively reaching the public are subject to ever-changing technologies and trends. The appropriate level of public involvement will vary by product.

OW TPO POLICY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Code of Federal Regulations (450.316(b)(1)) and the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Handbook outline public involvement requirements for defining a process for involving the public in the transportation planning process. The Okaloosa-Walton TPO is committed to providing stakeholders with opportunities to provide input for transportation plans and programs. Likewise, the FHWA and FDOT encourage the TPO to solicit public input in all efforts.

- Provide complete and ***easily understood information*** for all segments of the public, particularly those affected by the outcomes and/or special populations
- Support ***early and continuous involvement of the public*** in the development and implementation of transportation plans and programs
- Continually ***identify and implement ways to improve*** the public participation process

TITLE VI & ADA

The OW TPO is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of its programs, activities, or services on the basis of race, color, or national origin. All persons, regardless of their citizenship, are covered under this regulation. In addition, the ECRC prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in its employment and business opportunities.

ECRC will ensure that its programs, policies, and activities comply with both the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and FDOT Title VI Regulations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The OW TPO will not condone retaliation against an individual for his/her involvement in asserting his/her rights pursuant to Title VI or because he/she filed a complaint or participated in an investigation under Title VI, and/or these regulations.

With adequate notice, the OW TPO will accommodate citizens who are hearing and visually impaired, of limited English proficiency, transportation disadvantaged, or have other specific special needs, at all public meetings and workshops.

TRADITIONALLY, UNDER-REPRESENTED AND UNDER-SERVED POPULATIONS

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal funds. In addition to considering minority and low-income persons as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the OW TPO identifies and addresses, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health impacts or economic constraints of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations within the region.

ZIP codes within OW TPO Counties with higher concentrations of minority, transit-dependent, low-income, older adult, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) will be identified as Economically Constrained Communities. If participation from economically constrained communities is disproportionately low, the Project Team will implement targeted measures to improve engagement.

For example:

- If a transit-dependent, economically constrained community shows significantly low participation, smaller community meetings or outreach events may be held within the immediate area to minimize travel barriers.
- The Project Team will collaborate with counties and municipalities to identify accessible meeting locations to enhance participation.

These measures aim to ensure inclusive and equitable participation throughout the planning process.

ADA STATEMENT

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and related federal and state laws and regulations forbid discrimination against those who have disabilities. Furthermore, these laws require federal-aid recipients and other government entities to take affirmative steps to reasonably accommodate those with disabilities and ensure that their needs are equitably represented in transportation programs, services and activities.

The Agency will make every effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to those with disabilities. The Agency will also make every effort to ensure that its advisory committees, public involvement activities and all other programs, services and activities include representation by communities with disabilities and disability service groups. The Agency encourages the public to report any facility, program, service, or activity that appears inaccessible to those who are disabled. Furthermore, the Agency will provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities who wish to participate in public involvement events or who require special assistance to access facilities, programs, services or activities. Because providing reasonable accommodation may require outside assistance, organization or resources, the Agency asks that **requests be made at least 3 calendar days prior to the need for accommodation**.

TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The Agency has established a discrimination complaint procedure and will take prompt and reasonable action to investigate and eliminate discrimination when found. Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or family status in any Agency program, service or activity may file a complaint with the Agency Title VI/ Nondiscrimination Coordinator. If you feel you have been discriminated against or denied access to the Emerald Coast Regional Council's programs, services, or activities in violation of the Florida's Title VI/ Nondiscrimination or ADA policy, **you may file a signed, written complaint form** with the Emerald Coast Regional Council's ADA/Title VI Coordinator **within 30 days of the alleged discrimination**.

If possible, the complaint should be submitted in writing and contain the identity of the complainant; the basis for the allegations (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or family status); and a description of the alleged discrimination with the date of occurrence. If the complaint cannot be submitted in writing, the complainant should contact the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator for assistance.

The Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator will respond to the complaint within thirty (30) calendar days and will take reasonable steps to resolve the matter. Should the Agency be unable to satisfactorily resolve a complaint, the Agency will forward the complaint, along with a record of its disposition to the appropriate FDOT District Office.

The Agency Title VI Coordinator has 'easy access' to the Agency Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and is not required to obtain management or other approval to discuss discrimination issues with the CEO. However, should the complainant be unable or unwilling to complain to the Agency, the written complaint may be submitted directly to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). FDOT serves as a statewide clearinghouse for Title VI purposes and will either assume jurisdiction over the complaint or forward it to the appropriate federal or state authority for continued processing:

Florida Department of Transportation
Equal Opportunity Office
ATTN: Title VI Complaint Processing
605 Suwannee Street MS 65
Tallahassee, FL 32399

REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS OR FILE COMPLAINTS

Name: Tiffany Bates, ADA/Title VI Coordinator
Address: Emerald Coast Regional Council,
PO Box 11399, Pensacola, FL 32524
Email: Tiffany.Bates@ecrc.org
Phone: 850-332-7976 ext 217 (office)
Hearing Impaired: TTY 711

Complaint & Accommodation Request forms are available online at **www.ecrc.org/TitleVIADA** and at the end of this document - **Appendix Figure 2 & 3**







GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The OW TPO incorporates four primary public participation and outreach goals, as outlined in the Public Participation Plan (PPP). To achieve these goals, a range of public involvement and outreach methods will be proposed and utilized during the update of plans and documents.

These goals are as follows:

GOAL 1: INFORM THE PUBLIC

Inform the public, to the maximum extent possible, of opportunities to participate in the transportation decision-making process, using available resources.

- Information Phase – Inform the public and stakeholders about outreach purpose, timeline, major milestones, and how they can stay involved and informed.
- Decision-making Phase – Identify specific opportunities for public and stakeholder input at key decision-making points that affect the development of plans and documents.
- Review Phase – Allow the public to review and provide input on draft versions.

GOAL 2: INVOLVE THE PUBLIC

Ensure citizens and stakeholder agencies have meaningful opportunities to participate in all phases of the public involvement process.

GOAL 3: INCLUDE THE PUBLIC

Reach out to the geographical, organizational, and demographic communities of the TPO study area to increase the public's opportunity to participate in developing transportation plans and services. Special emphasis will be placed on engaging traditionally under-represented or under-served communities.

GOAL 4: IMPROVE THE PROCESS

Continually identify and implement ways to improve the broad spectrum of outreach techniques to engage the diverse populations within the project area.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The following methods have proven effective in previous outreach efforts by the OW TPO Board and will guide future activities:

- Review previous assessments and activities to identify successful and unsuccessful public outreach approaches.
- Analyzing Community Profiles to understand the demographics of the OW TPO Area, including traditionally underserved communities, to guide outreach strategies.
- Develop a list of specific public involvement and outreach tasks to include in future plan scope of services.

STRATEGIES USED BY THE TPO MAY INCLUDE:

- Outreach
- Awareness/Education
- Documentation
- Public Meetings & Workshops



OUTREACH

- Identifying stakeholders, organizations, traditionally underserved communities, tribal organizations, and media outlets.
- Utilizing Virtual Public Involvement (VPI) tools.
- Distribute news releases and conduct radio/TV interviews.
- Posting public notices.
- Creating and distributing surveys with at least a 30-day timeframe for public comment.
- Hosting public open houses, workshops, forums, and focus groups.
- Delivering presentations to civic and community groups.
- Providing comment cards. **Appendix Figure 1**
- Using GIS maps and other technology tools.
- Developing and staffing a steering committee.

AWARENESS/EDUCATION

- Sending email notifications to stakeholders, organizations, underserved communities, tribal organizations, and media outlets.
- Creating social media posts, hosting events, and/or organizing Virtual Open Houses.
- Maintaining a dedicated section on the ECRC website for updates and information.

DOCUMENTATION

- Compiling survey results and comments.
- Mapping outreach locations using GIS tools.
- Documenting outreach events with photos.
- Tracking email open and click rates.
- Measuring social media engagement.
- Posting oral and written comments alongside draft documents on the TPO website.
- Public Meetings & Workshop Summaries
- Create demographic profiles for each region in the OW TPO study area consisting of:
    - ◊ Population
    - ◊ Housing
    - ◊ Business Profile
    - ◊ Education
    - ◊ Employment



PUBLIC MEETINGS & WORKSHOPS

The OW TPO follows these procedures for public meetings:

1. Creating a social media event or post.
2. Issuing a news release or a reminder release.
3. Listing the event on the website calendar.
4. Send email notifications to TPO members, interested parties, and city and county partners.
5. Include Title VI/ADA Statement in meeting notifications:

   In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reasonable accommodations to access information, meetings, and services for individuals with Limited English Proficiency are available upon request. Individuals requiring special accommodations under the ADA or translation services should contact us toll-free at 1-800-226-8914, ext. 203, or use TTY-Florida at 1-800-995-8771 at least 48 hours in advance.

   Participation is encouraged without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Individuals who believe they have experienced discrimination based on any of these conditions may file a complaint with Leandra Meredith, Title VI Coordinator, at leandra.meredith@ecrc.org or call 850-332-7976, ext. 203.

   Se solicita la participación del público sin importar la raza, el color, la nacionalidad, la edad, el género, la religión, la discapacidad o la situación familiar. Las personas que requieran acomodaciones especiales conforme a la Ley de Americanos con Discapacidades o las personas que requieran servicios de traducción deben comunicarse con Ada Clark al 850-332-7976, ext. 278 o ada.clark@ecrc.org al menos 48 horas de anticipación. Las personas con deficiencias auditivas deben llamar al 1-800-955-8771 (TTY).

Public Workshops

Public workshops follow the same procedures as public meetings and may also include:

1. Emailing flyers to committees, interested parties, public transit providers, and community facilities.
2. Posting event details on community event calendars, such as those for libraries and community centers.
3. Developing tailored presentations and activities as needed.

Emergency & Special Meetings

The TPO or advisory committee chairman may call for an emergency meeting of their respective board or committee when, in their opinion, an emergency exists which requires immediate action. A special meeting may be called by the TPO or advisory committee chairman or a majority of the voting members at a regular meeting.

- Emergency & Special meetings should be scheduled to allow a seven-day public notice, whenever possible, and will be noticed as described above.
- In the event a seven-days public notice is not possible, at least a 24-hour advance public notice of the emergency meeting shall be given to local media services before the time the meeting is held.

Council Continuity of Operations

It is critical that staff remain knowledgeable of proper actions to take when situations occur. The TPO and advisory committees are staffed by the Emerald Coast Regional Council and will follow the agency's Council Continuity of Operations Plan (with Emergency Preparedness Plan), adopted on April 23, 2020. This plan can be located on the ECRC website. The TPO will also implement guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and other state MPOs/Partners.

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

The OW TPO continuously develops and updates several plans and programs. In exercising its authority to guide the expenditure of federal and state transportation funds, it is critical for the PPP to provide complete information and timely public notice, and to support continuing involvement of the public in the development of plans and programs. The TPO operates on an annual cycle with a fiscal year of July 1 through June 30 and follows Code of Federal Regulation (CFR 450.316) and the MPO Handbook. **(Appendix PG 28)**

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a federally required plan, updated every five years, that addresses future transportation needs for a minimum of twenty years. The LRTP, a major product of the TPO, details a variety of tasks to be accomplished during the 21-month update process, including the tasks outlined below:

SCOPE OF SERVICES

An agreement between FDOT, the TPO, and consultants outlining the scope of the LRTP process, tasks to be completed through the process, and a general timeline of the process.

NEEDS PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The development of the Needs Plan as well as Purpose and Needs Statements for each project in the Needs Plan, considering how the existing and proposed transportation facilities will function as an integrated, multimodal system.

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The Congestion Management Process is a state and federally mandated document designed to support the transportation planning process formulating safety recommendations through the collection of annual data.

DOCUMENTATION

Elements of this task provide for the development of the Cost Feasible Plan. Cost and Year of Expenditure will be developed.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals, objectives, and policies adopted at the out-set of the LRTP update will guide the study and will play a critical role in project ranking and systems evaluation. Performance measures and targets will be used in accordance with the required performance management approach.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

This task will produce information regarding existing and projected funding sources to be used in developing the Cost Feasible Plan.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

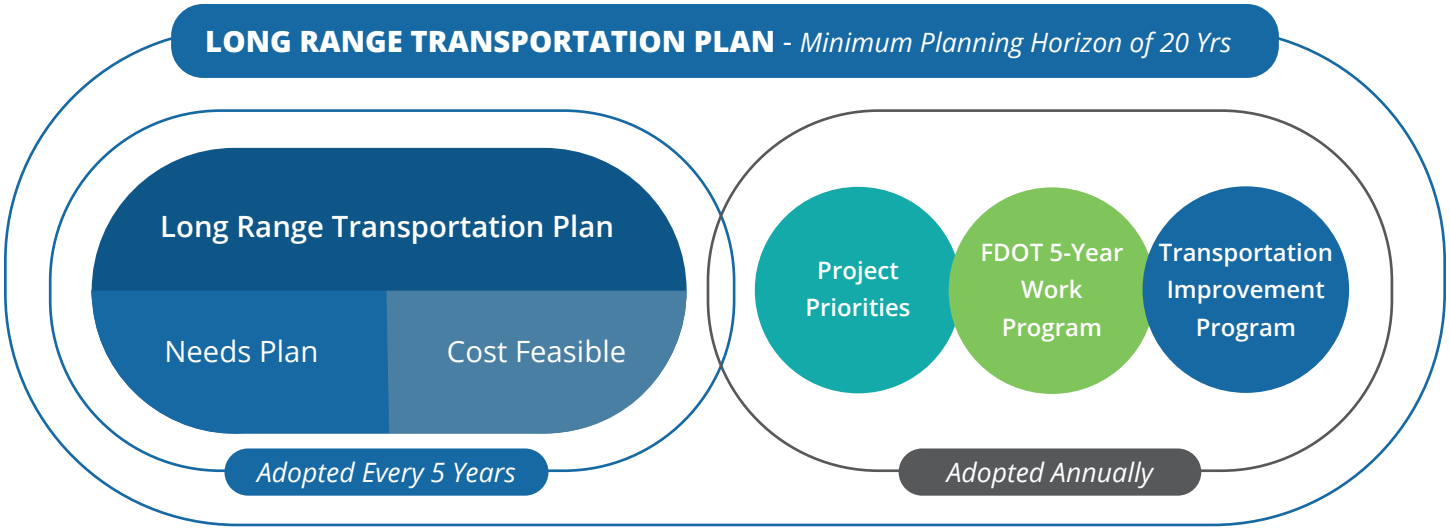
To ensure that the projects in the Needs Plan are evaluated with a common set of criteria, a series of evaluation criteria will be developed that reflect the Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Performance Measures.

COST FEASIBLE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Elements of this task provide for the development of the Cost Feasible Plan. Cost and Year of Expenditure will be developed.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & PROJECT PRIORITIES

The Project Priorities result from the LRTP's Cost Feasible Plan and are reviewed with the public and the TPO board and advisory committees annually. Once adopted by the TPO board, the Project Priorities are given to FDOT to develop the Five-Year Work Program. From the Five-Year Work Program, the TPO develops the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which contains all transportation programs and projects scheduled during the next five-year cycle. The TIP is revised annually.



UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is the document that details the tasks assigned to the TPO staff and the projected funding to cover those tasks within the fiscal year. The plan covers a two-year period but is revised annually to refine task descriptions and reflect changes necessary within the forecasted financial management schedule.

ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS

Administrative modifications to the PPP, LRTP, TIP, or UPWP are minor revisions and do not require public review but must be included in the public notice for the TPO board meeting when the modification is presented for review and adoption.

AMENDMENTS

Amendments are revisions that may involve the addition or deletion of a major project, a major change in project cost, or a major change in design concept or design scope. Amendments require a formal public review and comment period.

A 30-day formal comment period will be implemented for major LRTP amendments and the public participation procedures may vary based on the nature of the amendment. TPO board staff, with TPO board consultation, will make this determination based on the project, the nature of the change, the number of counties affected, and the impact on the planning process. Because of the wide variability in what an amendment can include, the TPO reserves the right to determine what participation techniques are appropriate, recognizing that outreach measures should fit the amendment content. At all times, the public, interested parties, policy makers, and partners are able to obtain the full extent of information about each project change. Review and adoption of amendments to core documents, by the TPO board, will be noticed in the Florida Administrative Register.

ADDITIONAL PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

Public involvement strategies and techniques vary widely depending on the depth and detail of a project or plan. Examples include the Congestion Management Process, Pedestrian-Bicycle Plan, Regional Freight Plan, and Corridor Management Plans. Project specific public participation elements will be included early in the planning process.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION & OUTREACH TIMELINES

	UPWP	LRTP	TIP	CMP	PPP	Project Priorities
Program Update Schedule	*Every 2 Years*	*Every 5 Years*	*Every Year*	*Minor- Annually Major - Every 5 Years*	*Every Year*	*Every Year*
Adoption Public Comment Period	*30 Days Prior to TPO Adoption*		*14 Days Prior to TPO Adoption*	*30 Days Prior to TPO Adoption*	*45 Days Prior to TPO Adoption*	*30 Days Prior to TPO Adoption*
Adoption Public Notice Period	*7 Days Prior to Meeting or Workshop*					
Amendments Schedule	*As Needed*			*N/A*	*Annual*	*N/A*
Amendment Public Comment Period	*7 Days Prior to TPO Adoption*			*N/A*	*45 Days Prior to TPO Adoption*	*N/A*
Public Access to Documents	*www.ecrc.org/OWTPO*					

EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Creating meaningful public participation means providing multiple ways for residents to engage. The Okaloosa-Walton TPO combines traditional and digital communication methods to help remove barriers to participation.

Whether attending a workshop, completing a printed survey, visiting the Virtual Open House, or submitting comments online, residents can participate in the way that works best for them.



WORKSHOPS

Face-to-face conversations give residents a welcoming place to ask questions, learn about projects, and share local knowledge



PRINTED SURVEYS

Paper surveys ensure participation isn't limited by internet access or technology preferences.



PARTNERSHIPS

Working with community organizations helps connect with more people through trusted local networks.



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Virtual tools make it easy for residents to participate whenever and wherever it works best for them.

EVERY VOICE DESERVES AN
OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD

ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES

The Okaloosa-Walton TPO is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of its public participation strategies to ensure that time and resources are used efficiently and that public participation activities achieve their intended goals. As a standard practice, the TPO evaluates public outreach activities regularly for all projects and initiatives.

If an assessment indicates that the public participation goals are not being met, strategies may be modified or replaced to improve effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the TPO's public participation activities is measured using the following metrics:

- Number and quality of outreach opportunities
- Number and reach of social media posts
- Number of eblasts sent & interaction with links
- Number of news release subscribers (media, groups, and organizations) and news releases distributed
- Number of attendees at public workshops and the number of comments received
- Number of completed surveys

Regular assessments help the TPO identify areas for improvement and ensure meaningful public engagement in the planning process.

APPENDIX

FIGURE 1
Public Comment Form **21**

FIGURE 2
Accommodation Request Form **22**

FIGURE 3
Complaint of Discrimination Form (English). **23**

FIGURE 4
Complaint of Discrimination Form (Spanish). **25**

FIGURE 5
List of Title VI Investigations **27**

FIGURE 6
Code of Federal Regulation (CFR 450.316) and the MPO Handbook. **28**

Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization
OWTPO

COMMENT CARD

Public input is crucial to the transportation planning process. Please write your comments below as legibly as possible. Your name and contact information are optional. **Thank you!**

Name: **Email:**

Zip Code:

Comments:

EMERALD COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

FIGURE 1 PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM

The Emerald Coast Regional Council does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, or operation of its programs, services, activities or facilities. This form may be used by individuals with disabilities and/or their companions seeking access to a facility, program, service or activity.

ACCOMMODATION REQUEST INFORMATION

Name:_____ Telephone (or TTY):_____

Address:_____Date:_____

The program or facility to which I am requesting access is located at:

_____

I am requesting the following accommodation(s):

- ☐ Wheelchair Access
- ☐ Language translation services
- ☐ Sign Language Interpretation
- ☐ Written Material in Alternate Format (Large Print, Computer Disc)
- ☐ Written Material in Braille
- ☐ Reader
- ☐ Modification of Policy Procedures
- ☐ Other

Please provide any other details or information necessary to process this request.

_____

_____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO

Name: Leandra Meredith, Title VI Coordinator
Address: Emerald Coast Regional Council, P.O. Box 11399, Pensacola, FL, 32524
Email: Leandra.Meredith@ecrc.org
Phone: (850) 332-7976 ext 203
Hearing Impaired: TTY 711

Complaint of Discrimination

The Emerald Coast Regional Council abides by both the Federal Transit Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation's Title VI/Nondiscrimination Programs. As a result, it is the policy of this agency, under ***Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Section 324 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973; Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987***; ***the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992,*** and related statutes and regulations, that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability/handicap, or income status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation under any federally or non-federally funded program or activity administered by this agency or its sub-recipients.

Section I:

Complainant(s) Name:		
Complainant(s) Address:		
Telephone (Home):	Telephone (Work):	Email Address:
Accessible Format Requirements:	Large Print ☐ TDD ☐	Audio Tape ☐ Other ☐

Section II:

Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf? ***If you answered "yes", go to Section III.**	Yes* ☐	No ☐
If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are submitting the complaint:	Name:	Relationship:
Please explain why you are filing for a third party:		
Please confirm that you have obtained permission from the aggrieved party if you are filing on behalf of a third party:	Yes ☐	No ☐

Section III:

I believe the discrimination I experienced was based on (check all that apply):			Date of Alleged Discrimination:
☐ Race	☐ Color	☐ National Origin	
☐ Sex	☐ Age	☐ Handicap/Disability	
☐ Income Status	☐ Retaliation	☐ Other	

Explain as clearly as possible what happened and why you believe you were discriminated against. Describe all persons who were involved. Include the name and contact information of the person(s) who discriminated against you (if known) as well as names and contact information of any witness. If more space is needed, please use the back of this form.

Section IV

Have you previously filed a Title VI complaint with this agency?	Yes ☐	No ☐

FIGURE 3 COMPLAINT OF DISCRIMINATION FORM (ENGLISH)

Section V		
Have you filed this complaint with any other Federal, State, or local agency, or with any Federal or State Court?	Yes ☐	No ☐
If yes, check all that apply and list name of agency/court if known:		
☐ Federal Agency: _____	☐ Federal Court: _____	
☐ State Agency: _____	☐ State Court: _____	
☐ Local Agency: _____		

Section VI	
Please provide information about a contact person at the agency/court where the complaint was filed.	
Name:	Title:
Agency:	Telephone:
Address:	
You may attach any written materials or other information that you think is relevant to your complaint.	
Complainant(s) or Complainant(s) Representatives Signature:	Date of Signature:

Please mail this form to:

Emerald Coast Regional Council
Leandra Meredith, Title VI Coordinator,
418 E Gregory Street, STE 100, Pensacola, FL 32502
Office: (850) 332-7976 Mobile: (270) 206-5519
Hearing Impaired: TTY 711 Fax: (850) 637-1923
Email: Leandra.Meredith@ecrc.org

Internal Use Only		
Date Complaint Was Received:	Date Investigation Was Completed:	Investigator Assigned:

Complaint of Discrimination

El Emerald Coast Regional Council cumple con los programas del Título VI y de no discriminación de la Administración Federal de Tránsito y del Departamento de Transporte de Florida. En consecuencia, es política de esta agencia, de conformidad con el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, la Sección 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, la Ley de Discriminación por Edad de 1975, la Sección 324 de la Ley de Carreteras con Ayuda Federal de 1973, la Ley de Restauración de los Derechos Civiles de 1987, la Ley de Derechos Civiles de Florida de 1992 y demás leyes y reglamentos aplicables, que ninguna persona en los Estados Unidos sea excluida de participar, se le nieguen los beneficios o sea objeto de discriminación o represalias por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, discapacidad o nivel de ingresos en cualquier programa o actividad, independientemente de que reciba o no fondos federales, administrado por esta agencia o por sus subreceptores.

Sección I:

Nombre Del Demandante:

Dirección Del Demandante:

Teléfono (Casa):	Teléfono (Trabajo):	Dirección De Correo Electrónico:

Requisitos formato accessible: Letra Grande ☐ TDD ☐ Audio Tape ☐ Otro ☐

Sección II:

¿Está presentando esta queja en su propio nombre?
***Si usted contestó "sí" a esta pregunta, vaya a la Sección III.**

Sí* ☐ No ☐

Si no es así, por favor provea el nombre y la relación de la persona a la que usted se está quejando por:	Nombre:	Relación:

Por favor, explique por qué usted ha presentado por una tercera persona:

Por favor, confirma que ha obtenido el permiso de la parte perjudicada, si usted está presentando en nombre de un tercero: Si ☐ No ☐

Sección III:

Creo que la discriminación que experimenté fue basado en (marque todo lo que corresponda):

☐ Raza ☐ Color ☐ Origen Nacional
☐ Sexo ☐ Edad ☐ Handicap/Discapacidad
☐ Estado de Ingresos ☐ Represalias ☐ Otro

Fecha de la Discriminación Presunta:

Explique lo más claramente posible lo que pasó y por qué cree que fue discriminado. Describa todas las personas que estuvieron involucradas. Incluya el nombre y la información de contacto de la persona (s) que lo discriminó (si se conoce), así como los nombres y la información de los testigos en contacto. Si se necesita más espacio, por favor use el reverso de este formulario.

Sección IV

FIGURE 4 COMPLAINT OF DISCRIMINATION FORM (SPANISH)

¿Ha presentado previamente una queja del Título VI con esta agencia?	Si ☐	No ☐

Sección V

¿Ha presentado esta queja ante cualquier otro, estatal o agencia local Federal, o ante cualquier tribunal federal o estatal?	Si ☐	No ☐

En caso afirmativo, marque todo lo que corresponda:

☐ Agencia federal _____ ☐ Tribunal Federal: _____

☐ Agencia Estatal: _____ ☐ Tribunal Estatal: _____

☐ Agencia Local: _____

Sección VI

Por favor provea información sobre una persona de contacto en la agencia/tribunal donde se presentó la denuncia.

Nombre:	Título:
Agencia:	Teléfono:
Dirección:	

Puede adjuntar cualquier material escrito o cualquier otra información que usted piensa que es relevante para su queja.

Demandante (s) o recurrente (s) Representantes Firma Del:	Fecha de la firma:

Por favor envíe este formulario a:

Emerald Coast Regional Council
Leandra Meredith, Coordinador del Título VI
418 E Gregory Street, STE 100, Pensacola, FL 32502
Office: (850) 332-7976 Mobile: (270) 206-5519
Hearing Impaired: TTY 711 Fax: (850) 637-1923
Email: Leandra.Meredith@ecrc.org

Sólo para uso interno:		
Fecha De Recibimiento por:	Fecha De La Investigación Completada:	Investigador Asignado:

Title VI Investigations, Complaints & Lawsuits

There have been no Title VI complaints, investigations, or lawsuits, filed with the Emerald Coast Regional Council in the past 3 years as of the date of this document.

Type of Process	*Date**	*Summary***	*Status*	*Action(s) Taken*
Investigations				
1.				
Lawsuits				
1.				
Complaints				
1.				

*Month, Day, and Year

**Including basis of complaint: race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap/disability, income status, retaliation, or other)

FIGURE 5 LIST OF TITLE VI INVESTIGATIONS

FIGURE 6 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATION (CFR 450.316) AND THE MPO HANDBOOK

- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and documents online at www.ecrc.org/OWTPO and at the TPO office at Emerald Coast Regional Council
- Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment on key decisions, such as but not limited to the approval of the core documents
- Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during plan development process
- Employ visualization techniques to describe planning processes
- Make documents and any associated information available on the TPO website
- Hold public meetings at convenient times and ADA accessible locations
- Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including but not limited to, low-income and minority households
- Coordinate with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under 23 C.F.R. Subpart B
- Periodically review the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan
- Utilize ArcGIS mapping to assess areas in need of outreach and environmental justice impacts of the plan and projects
- When significant written and oral comments are received on a draft core document as a result of public involvement, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final document
- If the final document differs significantly from the one made available for public comment or raises new material issues, an additional opportunity for public comment must be made available
- When the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) includes Indian Tribal Lands, the TPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal Government(s)
- When the MPA includes federal public lands, the TPO shall appropriately involve the federal government