

## **2015 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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## **2015 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

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In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion and disability in the execution of this Public Participation Plan.

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## **I. Introduction**

### **Tulare County**

Tulare County, comprised of 4,824 square miles, is located in the southern portion of the San Joaquin Valley. The Valley is between the Coastal Range on the west and the Sierra Nevada Range on the east. The Valley extends from Sacramento on the north, to the Tehachapi Range on the south. The San Joaquin Valley is one of the richest farmlands in the world producing a wide variety of agricultural products. Tulare County has approximately one third of its land area in the Valley. The remaining portion is in the Sierra Nevada Range. This offers an abundance of scenic and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. The land in the Valley produces a wide variety of agricultural products. Tulare County ranks second in the nation in total agricultural income. The population of Tulare County is concentrated in the Valley. There are eight incorporated cities accounting for 67 percent of the county's total approximate population of 435,000.

### **Tulare County Association of Governments**

The Board of Governors directs TCAG. This Board is composed of one representative from each of the eight city councils, the five members of the County Board of Supervisors, and three members-at-large. These sixteen members act as the Council of Governments (COG), the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). These members, plus the District 6 Director of Caltrans, sit as the Policy Advisory Committee. This body offers advice on issues that will be presented to the Board of Governors. The Tulare County Transportation Authority is governed by the elected members of the TCAG Board of Governors. The Authority is designated to act on Measure R (the Tulare County ½ percent sales tax) issues.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) makes recommendations to the Board of Governors. This committee is comprised of representatives from each of the eight cities, the Tulare County Resource Management Agency, Caltrans, the Tule River Tribal Council and TCAG Staff. This committee meets once a month prior to TCAG Board meetings to review upcoming Board agenda items and to discuss outstanding issues of regional significance.

The Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), responsible for the annual review of the Unmet Transit Needs in the County, is another permanent committee of TCAG. This review results in a recommendation of findings to the TCAG Board of Governors, who then considers the recommendation and makes the final Unmet Needs Determination. This council meets 3 to 4 times a year and represents the following agencies and groups of people: disabled transit users, transit users – over 60 years of age, social service providers for Seniors, social service providers for the disabled, social service providers for persons of limited means, consolidated transportation service agency for non-urbanized areas, consolidated transportation service agency for urbanized areas and the Center for Independent Living.

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) meets at least quarterly and is responsible for observing, analyzing, and reporting on new programs such as amendments to the State and

Federal Endangered Species Acts, Sequoia National Forest Service Management Plans, new listing or removing proposals, proposed changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and any federal, state, or local agency proposal that affects environmental issues in Tulare County, including important National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and CEQA documents, and any particular project TCAG may assign to the Committee. The EAC also makes recommendations to the TCAG Board regarding environmental mitigation banking sites. This committee is represented by the following agencies and organizations: Sequoia National Park, Irrigation Districts, TCAG, Tulare County City Managers, Sierra Los Tules Land Trust, Agricultural Commissioner, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, California Dept. of Fish & Game, Tulare County Redevelopment Agency, County of Tulare, County of Tulare Parks Dept., Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District, Bureau of Land Management and Caltrans.

The Rail Advisory Committee meets quarterly or on an as needed basis and provides a forum to identify, discuss and make recommendations regarding commercial rail in Tulare County. This includes rail abandonments, rail goods movement, rail consolidation and other pertinent issues related to commercial rail in the County. The Committee is comprised of members from the cities that are affected by rail, the County and representatives from the rail industry.

The Measure R Citizens Oversight Committee meets at least quarterly and additionally as needed and is responsible for providing input on implementation of the Measure R Expenditure Plan and to advise the TCAG Board if and when the Plan needs to be augmented and to ensure that the funds are being spent in accordance with the Plan. This committee is comprised of non-elected citizens from the following groups: the County of Tulare, the eight incorporated cities, a major private sector employer (nominated by the Tulare County Economic Development Corporation), the building industry (nominated by the Tulare County Building Association), the agriculture industry (nominated by the Tulare County Farm Bureau), the Hispanic community (nominated by the Tulare-Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce), an advocacy group representing bicyclists, pedestrians and/or transit (selected through application), a professional in the field of audit, finance and/or budgeting (selected through application) and an environmental advocacy group (selected through application).

There are also non-Board appointed committees that provide the public and other agencies and organizations the opportunity to participate in planning processes:

The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) meets quarterly or as needed and is responsible for advising the TCAG Board regarding the development and maintenance of bicycle interests within Tulare County. This committee is comprised of members from the following groups: Planning and Public Works Staff from the County and eight incorporated cities, bicycle facility users, school officials, local service clubs, law enforcement officials, local citizens and TCAG staff.

The transit operators in Tulare County are represented on the TCAG Board of Governors and the Technical Advisory Committee by an elected official of the operator's decision-making body and by a technical staff person respectively. In addition, the Transit Forum is composed of representatives from each of the agencies that provide transit operations and TCAG Staff. The Forum meets every two months to exchange information and discuss transit related issues.

## **Purpose of this Document**

This document is a plan for providing guidance for the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) elected officials and staff in public participation and interagency consultation throughout the regional planning process. It contains the policies, guidelines and procedures TCAG uses in developing the Metropolitan planning process. This includes the development and approval of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Regional and Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), Overall Work Program (OWP) and environmental review documentation related to growth, transportation, air quality, and any product prepared by TCAG staff that statutorily requires public participation, or for which the TCAG Board of Directors determines is necessary. TCAG carries out its transportation and air quality planning responsibilities in a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive manner in conformance with federal and state Law that determine how Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) provide for early consultation and public participation. The various laws include but may not be limited to:

### **Federal**

- Transportation and Conformity Regulations of Title 40 CFR Part 93.105
- Title 23 CFR Part 450.316
- Title 23 CFR Part 450.322(g)(1) and (2)
- Title 23 CFR Part 450.216(a)(1)
- Title 23 USC Part 134(g)(4)
- Title 23 USC Section 135(e)
- Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title 49 CFR Part 21.5
- Title 42 USC Chapter 21 Section 2000(d)
- Executive Order 12898 regarding Environmental Justice (1994)
- Executive Order 13166 regarding Improving Access to Services for Persons with limited English Proficiency
- Executive Order 13175 regarding Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes
- US DOT Order 5610.2 (1997)
- US DOT Order 6640.23 (1998)
- 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act
- 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments
- 2005 Safe, Accessible, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)
- Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)

### **State**

- Government Code Section 11135
- Government Code Section 65080
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Title 23 CFR Part 450.316(a) states the following concerning participation and consultation: “The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.”

Public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements.

The public participation process described herein is used to satisfy the public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP) for the following grantees: City of Visalia (Visalia Transit), City of Porterville (Porterville Transit), City of Tulare (Tulare Intermodal Express), City of Dinuba (Dinuba Area Regional Transit), County of Tulare (Tulare County Area Transit), City of Woodlake (Woodlake Dial-a-ride), and City of Exeter (Exeter Dial-a-Ride).

### **Participation Goals, Strategies and Procedures**

A vigorous public information process not only serves TCAG by meeting federal requirements, but also allows for a fruitful exchange of ideas while developing programs or projects that may be controversial. TCAG recognizes that the involvement of the public and agencies, organizations and other groups which represent the public is pivotal in to the success of transportation programs, plans and projects in Tulare County. Listed below are goals, strategies and procedures regarding public participation in TCAG’s planning processes:

Goal: Raise the public’s level of understanding of transportation planning processes in the County.

Strategy: Use a variety of presentation methods and modes of communication to disseminate information to the public.

Procedures:

- Use TCAG’s ‘News in a Minute’ email blasts to highlight important transportation issues and announcements.
- Use TCAG’s Social Media accounts on Facebook and Twitter to highlight important transportation issues and announcements.
- Post news stories and important public documents such as the RTP, FTIP, OWP and Special Planning Studies on the TCAG website (<http://www.tularecog.org/>)
- Work with other agencies and organizations to educate and inform the public regarding transportation processes.
- Respond to the public’s requests or questions in a timely and professional manner.

- Use maps, charts and other visualization techniques to convey transportation related information.
- Use TCAG's public relations consultant to issue news releases regarding important transportation processes and accomplishments.

Goal: Increase opportunities for public involvement in transportation planning processes.

Strategy: Provide varied opportunities for public review and input and be responsive to that input.

Procedures:

- Provide timely public notice of meetings.
- Conduct or attend project/process focused meetings outside the usual monthly TCAG Board meeting to gather public input.
- Work with other public agencies and organizations to gather public input regarding transportation processes and issues.
- Respond to public input in a professional, timely and accurate manner.

Goal: Involve traditionally under-served persons such as low-income and minority households, the elderly, those addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Native American tribal governments and communities in transportation planning processes.

Strategy: Provide forums and seek alternative methods to reach out and address the transportation related needs of traditionally under-served persons.

Procedures:

- Use SSTAC as a forum to address transit needs for traditionally under-served persons.
- Provide non-English language translation at meetings or for written documents when necessary or upon request.
- TCAG meeting locations should be reasonably accessible to those addressed by the ADA.
- Use TAC, through the Tule River Tribe's representative, as a forum to keep the Tribe informed of transportation issues both significant to the Tribe and to the County as a whole.
- Conduct formal consultation with the Tule River Tribe Council at least once a year to determine if Tribal transportation issues are being adequately addressed.
- Work with other public agencies and organizations which represent traditionally under-served persons to maintain a two-way dialogue regarding transportation processes and issues that are important to them.

Goal: Involve other public agencies, organizations and other groups which represent various segments of the public in transportation planning processes.



Strategy: Provide forums and seek alternative methods to seek input and involvement from other public agencies, organizations and groups.

Procedures:

- Provide opportunities for member public agencies to be kept informed and involved in transportation planning processes through TAC and other TCAG committees.
- Provide opportunities for resource agencies to be kept informed and involved in transportation planning process through EAC and other TCAG committees.
- Attend meetings and give presentations to other public agencies, organizations and other groups regarding transportation processes and issues.

## **II. Participation Plan Updates**

The 2015 Public Participation Plan is not intended to be a static document. It will need to be periodically reviewed to evaluate its effectiveness in promoting public participation in TCAG's transportation planning processes. The Plan will be comprehensively reviewed every four years (at a minimum) as part of the adoption of an RTP update. The next currently scheduled RTP update is in 2019. This will ensure that the 2015 Public Participation Plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary preceding the public outreach efforts for the development of each successive RTP update. In addition, the 2015 Public Participation Plan may be subject to additional updates due to changes in state and federal law and to address any needed changes as a result from the input of the public, other public agencies, organizations and other stakeholders which represent various segments of the public in transportation planning processes.

In Attachment A, Public Involvement Chart, TCAG defines 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:

- A. Informing, involving, and incorporating public opinion into the planning process;
- B. 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;
- C. Clearly designating a lead staff person who is knowledgeable about the entire planning process to be responsible for the public involvement program; and
- D. Providing adequate funds and schedule expenditures to implement the public participation program.

### **Level I Procedures**

Level I procedures address routine documents that serve as a subset of or facilitate more significant plans or determinations. These documents are implementing long-range direction provided by plans and documents that went through a more intensive public review procedure (Level II or III). These documents are subject to the minimum levels of public outreach under these policies. These procedures become effective once an initial draft document has been produced.<sup>1</sup>

#### **All Documents and Formal Meetings including:**

- A. Regional Transportation Plan amendments
- B. Federal Transportation Improvement Program amendments (excluding technical or administrative modifications)

- C. State Transportation Improvement Program amendments
- D. Regional Transportation Improvement Program
- E. Air quality conformity determinations
- F. Miscellaneous studies
- G. Transit plans & studies
- H. Environmental Documents, as defined by the California environmental Quality Act and/or the National Environmental Policy Act 1
- I. Congestion Management Program amendments
- J. Active Transportation Plan (ATP)
  - 1. No person shall be denied participation.
  - 2. A legal notice or display ad will be placed in the advertising sections of at least one newspaper of general circulation within the affected community, including a Spanish-language publication, if possible.
  - 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 postal and electronic mailings to non-profit organizations, churches and chambers of commerce will be used to encourage involvement of the underserved and transit dependent in project development and public workshops. Spanish-language advertising will be included in these non-traditional approaches.
  - 5. Public meetings are defined as those regular TCAG meetings normally held monthly.
  - 6. Public workshops are defined as forums established specifically for the public to gain information and provide input on TCAG documents and processes. This definition does not include technical workshops for member agency staff or elected officials even though they are technically open to the public.
  - 7. Announcements dealing with documents and/or meetings and workshops shall be posted on the TCAG web site and social media sites.
  - 8. A mailing list of individuals who have expressed interest shall be maintained.

9. Meeting notices shall be mailed or e-mailed to individuals who have expressed interest.
10. TCAG 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.
11. TCAG shall provide audio/visual presentations along with its maps, charts and graphics whenever practical to help the public better understand the plans, programs, projects or determinations it adopts.
12. TCAG shall provide an interpreter, when requested, at any and all public hearings and workshops, and shall maintain its subscription to a language line for day-to-day public inquires.
13. TCAG's web site shall maintain a link to a translation service for information contained on the agency site.
14. Projects must be evaluated for their potential for public interest. Projects likely to have considerable public interest must also include Level III requirements.
15. A copy of draft transportation plan amendments and draft transportation improvement program amendments, environmental documents, and the Congestion Management Program amendments will be made available for review at Tulare County Association of Governments. Individual copies of all documents will also be distributed to any interested parties for a fee to offset printing charges.

## **Level II Procedures**

### **Additional Public Involvement Requirements**

Level II procedures address core agency plans, programs and declarations. These documents are subject to a higher level of public outreach than Level I documents under these policies. These procedures become effective before an initial draft document has been produced. The following documents must also meet the public involvement requirements listed in Level I:

- A. Congestion Management Program
- B. State Transportation Improvement Program
- C. Federal Transportation Improvement Program
- D. Corridor Studies
- E. Transit Studies

## F. Regional Housing Needs Assessment

## G. Public involvement procedure amendments

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, environmental documents, and the Congestion Management Program will be made available for review at the Tulare County Association of Governments. Individual copies of all documents will also be distributed to any interested parties for a fee to offset printing charges.
3. Public comments and responses, and the disposition of any comments, will be made part of final transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and environmental documents.
  - a. **Prepare written summary/verbal presentation** – Staff will review all comments, synthesize them and prepare a narrative summary highlighting key points.
  - b. **List 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, opinion).
  - c. **Respond to comments** – Staff will respond, in writing within 30 days, to significant comments. Those responses will be made part of the final document.
  - d. **Provide the full record** – The decision-making body will be given copies of the meeting notes, the transcript (for public hearings) or recorded transcripts.
4. Transportation improvement programs and environmental documents will be made available for public review for no less than a 30-day public review period.
5. Programs, projects, or plans routed through the State Clearinghouse shall adhere to the public information requirements of the Clearinghouse and also be made available for no less than 30 days.
6. If regionally significant changes are made to the transportation plan, transportation improvement programs, and environmental documents during the review and comment period, the plan(s) will be made available for 30-day public review and comment prior to final adoption.
7. Minor amendments to the transportation improvement programs will have a 14-day public review period and may be approved by the executive director.

8. Regionally significant changes to the transportation plan, transportation improvement programs, and environmental documents during the review and comment period shall also be advertised via press release to all media outlets, through electronic notice to TCAG's address database and on the TCAG web site as deemed necessary prior to final adoption.
9. The executive director or his/her designee will coordinate with the State to improve public awareness of the State Transportation Plan and/or the State Transportation Improvement Plan.
10. Records relating to the transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and environmental impact reports will be made available for public review upon request.
11. Technical and policy information relating to the transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, and environmental impact reports will be made available for public review upon request.
12. Staff will hold formal public workshops on the Regional Transportation Plan in convenient locations throughout the region. These public meetings/workshops will be announced in a variety of formats, including public notices, display ads, press releases and direct mail and/or electronic mail notices in the affected communities.
13. All project plan amendments not considered administrative in scope shall be advertised via public notice and held for a 30-day review period.
14. Refer to the California Transportation Commission's Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines regarding addendums, supplemental and subsequent environmental documents to the Regional Transportation Plan.

### **Level III Procedures**

#### **Anticipated high-profile projects**

The following must also meet the criteria listed in levels I and II. Level III procedures address plans that provide long-range direction for the organization or that TCAG staff determines to be potentially controversial based on their environmental impacts, project scope or other determining factors. These documents are subject to the highest levels of public outreach under these policies. These procedures become effective before an initial draft document has been produced. TCAG staff will:

- A. Develop a Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
- B. Help form a citizens' advisory committee.

- C. Develop a calendar of public workshops.
- D. Identify the appropriate media contact to respond to media inquiries.
- E. Develop regular email blasts specific to the plan or project and send them at regular intervals.
- G. Coordinate a news conference and/or press release highlighting the plan/program and coordination between TCAG and public participation. Press releases will be sent to the appropriate radio stations, television channels, and newspapers.

Metropolitan transportation planning requires that where a metropolitan planning area includes Federal public lands and/or Indian Tribal lands, the affected Federal agencies and Indian Tribal governments shall be involved appropriately in the development of transportation plans and programs. Discussion on environmental mitigation activities of the long-range transportation plan shall be developed in consultation with tribes.

Senate Bill 375 increased the minimum level of public participation required in the regional transportation planning process, including collaboration between partners in the region during the development of a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and/or an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS). Public participation pursuant to SB 375 shall include the following:

1. Outreach efforts encouraging the active participation of a broad range of stakeholders in the planning process, consistent with the agency's adopted Federal Public Participation Plan. This includes, but is 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, healthy and active lifestyle advocates and homeowner associations.
2. Consultation with other regional congestion management agencies, transportation agencies, and transportation commissions.
3. Regional public workshops will be held with information and tools providing a clear understanding of policy choices and issues. To the extent practicable, each workshop shall include urban simulation computer modeling to create visual representations of the SCS and APS.
4. Preparation and circulation of a draft SCS (and APS, if one is required) not less than 55 days before adoption of a final RTP.
5. A process enabling the public to provide a single request to receive notices, information and updates.
6. During the development of the SCS (and APS, if applicable), at least two informational meetings will be held for members of the Board of Supervisors and City Councils. Only one informational meeting is needed if it is attended by representatives of the Tulare

County Board of Supervisors and City Councils that represent a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population in the incorporated areas of the county.

- a. The purpose of the meeting (or meetings) will be to discuss the SCS (and APS, if applicable), including key land use and planning assumptions, with the members of the Board of Supervisors and City Councils and to solicit and consider their input and recommendations.
  - b. Notices of these meetings are to be sent to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and City Clerks.
7. In preparing an SCS, TCAG will consider spheres of influence that have been adopted by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). TCAG will also consult with LAFCO regarding special districts within the region that provide property-related services such as water or wastewater services, and will consult with these regional special districts, as appropriate, during development of a SCS (and APS if applicable).



### **III. Process for Receiving Public Comments**

The following public involvement techniques may be used to inform and educate the public and/or gather information.

#### **A. Formal Public Meetings/Workshops**

Formal public meetings and/or workshops may be held during the process. The format for the workshops will be at the discretion of TCAG. All TCAG meetings and public workshops will be held in buildings accessible to persons with disabilities. The format options include:

- 'Theater' style with a presentation followed by audience response.
- 'Open-house' style with individual comments provided directly to a recorder, typed in by the participant, or via written comment sheets; or
- A mixed format with an 'open house' style meeting followed by a 'theater' style comment period.
- Combining the workshop with a regular or special meeting put on by a local agency, such as a City Council or Planning Commission regular meeting, or other similar group meetings.

In each case, TCAG shall provide audio/visual presentations along with maps, charts and graphics, whenever practical, to help the public better understand the plans, programs, or projects it adopts.

#### **B. Small Group Sessions**

A meeting of selected citizens, businesses, advocates (which could include healthy and active lifestyle advocates) and/or neighborhood residents may be invited to participate in small group sessions to discuss options and give opinions on specific transportation topics. Sessions could be held in local community facilities including schools, rural clinics or civic facilities. 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 citizens' concerns, needs and wants, technical and administrative staff from various organizations, and officials from appropriate local and state entities.

A PAC with citizen participation can be a valuable asset. Generally, PACs provide and consider citizen input and advice regarding regional goals and objectives, problems and needs, and to discuss potential options and solutions regarding the activity and to be responsive to the citizen input.

PAC members may be expected to attend several public and neighborhood meetings. They may also be asked to assist, provide support and be responsible for the dissemination of information, and 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.

TCAG will specifically consider the need for a PAC with regard to major transportation plans, studies, programs and 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 disabled. The ways and means of determining PAC membership, committee structure, and specific roles and responsibilities for an activity shall be presented to the TTAC and Board for their approval. Membership will not be permanent, thus PAC members will serve for the length of the development and completion of a plan or program.

Stakeholders - Interview or meet with individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the outcome of a TCAG-developed plan or program. Interviews and meetings would be conducted to identify issues and concerns. Such groups may include business, neighborhood, environmental, and others.

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

Focus Groups - TCAG 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 so as to develop surveys.

### **C. Internet**

Whenever possible, TCAG will provide access to plans and programs through Internet access. When applicable, an e-mail address will be presented and made available for public access to make and receive comments.

### **D. Fairs and Festivals**

TCAG will 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, audiovisuals, and interaction with TCAG staff.

### **E. Public Opinion 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 direct mailing to citizens, businesses, and community organizations or informal such as a self-administered questionnaire attached within a draft document.

#### **F. Phone/In-person Comments**

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

#### **IV. Public Involvement Policy Evaluation**

- A. Significant changes to TCAG's Public Involvement Procedures shall be published and available for a 45-day public review and comment period before final adoption.
- B. TCAG staff and the public will review the public review process every four years.

#### **Evaluation Methodology**

In order to regularly evaluate the Public Involvement Procedures, five performance measures are proscribed:

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 Tulare 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, a set of quantifiable indicators has been established. They will be applied as appropriate to each plan/program's level requirements.

##### **A. Accessibility Indicators:**

- ☐ Meetings are held throughout the county.
- ☐ 100 percent of meetings are reasonably accessible by transit.
- ☐ All meetings are 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 available professional translation services.*)

##### **B. Reach indicators**

- ☐ Number of comments logged into comment tracking and response system.
- ☐ Number of individuals actively participating in outreach program.
- ☐ Number of visits to the specific section of the TCAG website.
- ☐ Number of newspaper articles mentioning the plan/program.
- ☐ Number of radio/television interviews or mentions on the plan/program.

##### **C. Diversity indicators**

- ☐ Demographic of targeted workshop/charette/meeting roughly mirror the demographics of the Tulare region.
- ☐ Percentage of targeted organizations and groups participating in at least one workshop/charette/meeting.
- ☐ Participants represent a cross-section of people of various interests, places of residence and primary modes of travel.

#### D. Impact Indicators

- ☐ 100 percent of written comments received are logged into a comment tracking system, analyzed, summarized and communicated in time for consideration by staff and the policy board.
- ☐ 100 percent of significant written comments are acknowledged so that the person making them knows whether his or her comment is reflected in the outcome of a policy board action, or, conversely, why the policy board acted differently.

#### E. Participant Satisfaction *(This information would be obtained via an online and written survey available on the TCAG web site, and at each workshop/charette/public meeting involving the plan or program in question.)*

- ☐ Accessibility to meeting locations.
- ☐ Materials presented in appropriate languages for targeted audiences.
- ☐ Adequate notice of the meetings provided.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Responsiveness to comments received.

## **V. Legal and Display Ad Minimum Requirements**

### **Legal Notice:**

- Date, time, and place of public hearing or meeting;
- Identity of the hearing body or officer;
- General explanation of the matter to be considered;
- 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;
- The following statement when appropriate – “Individuals with disabilities may call to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public meeting/hearing.”

Tulare County Association of Governments  
Attention: Benjamin A. Kimball – Deputy Executive Director  
210 North Church Street, Suite B  
Visalia, CA 93291  
(559) 623-0450  
Web site: [www.tularecog.org](http://www.tularecog.org)  
E-mail: [bkimball@tularecog.org](mailto:bkimball@tularecog.org)

### **Notice of Intent to Adopt:**

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

Tulare County Association of Governments  
Attention: Benjamin A. Kimball – Deputy Executive Director  
210 North Church Street, Suite B  
Visalia, CA 93291  
(559) 623-0450  
Web site: [www.tularecog.org](http://www.tularecog.org)  
E-mail: [bkimball@tularecog.org](mailto:bkimball@tularecog.org)

### **Notice of Determination: – Filed ONLY with Tulare County Clerk's Office**

- Information identifying the project, including common name and location;
- Brief description of the project;
- Date on which TCAG determines the project will not cause any significant adverse environmental effects;
- Address where copy of the negative declaration may be examined;

- The following statement – "TCAG has complied with the California Environmental Quality Act in the preparation of this negative declaration;"
- The following statement when appropriate – "Individuals with disabilities may call TCAG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public review process."

Tulare County Association of Governments  
 Attention: Benjamin A. Kimball – Deputy Executive Director  
 210 North Church Street, Suite B  
 Visalia, CA 93291  
 (559) 623-0450  
 Web site: [www.tularecog.org](http://www.tularecog.org)  
 E-mail: [bkimball@tularecog.org](mailto:bkimball@tularecog.org)

**Notice of Preparation:**

- Description of project;
- Project location on a map;
- Discussion of probable environmental effects of project;
- The following statement when appropriate - "Individuals with disabilities may call TCAG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public review process."

Tulare County Association of Governments  
 Attention: Benjamin A. Kimball – Deputy Executive Director  
 210 North Church Street, Suite B  
 Visalia, CA 93291  
 (559) 623-0450  
 Web site: [www.tularecog.org](http://www.tularecog.org)  
 E-mail: [bkimball@tularecog.org](mailto:bkimball@tularecog.org)

**Notice of Completion:**

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

Tulare County Association of Governments  
 Attention: Benjamin A. Kimball – Deputy Executive Director  
 210 North Church Street, Suite B  
 Visalia, CA 93291  
 (559) 623-0450  
 Web site: [www.tularecog.org](http://www.tularecog.org)  
 E-mail: [bkimball@tularecog.org](mailto:bkimball@tularecog.org)

## **Sample Notice**

Notice of Public Hearing

Date

Before the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) in the matter of STATE  
PURPOSE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

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

B. WHEREAS, NAME DOCUMENT AND PURPOSE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT:

- A. A PUBLIC HEARING will be held in the STATE LOCATION, STATE ADDRESS at STATE TIME, on STATE DATE, for the purpose of receiving public comments and testimony regarding INSERT PLAN, PROJECT, OR PROGRAM. This hearing will be a part of a regularly scheduled meeting of the Tulare County Association of Governments.
- B. The INSERT PLAN, PROJECT, OR PROGRAM will be considered for INSERT ACTION by the Tulare County Association of Governments following the public hearing.
- C. Any person wishing to present testimony related to INSERT PLAN, PROJECT, OR PROGRAM may be heard, or may submit written comments to TCAG for inclusion in the official record of the hearing. Individuals with disabilities may call TCAG to request auxiliary aids necessary to participate in the public review process.

Tulare County Association of Governments  
Attention: Benjamin A. Kimball – Deputy Executive Director  
210 North Church Street, Suite B  
Visalia, CA 93291  
(559) 623-0450  
Web site: [www.tularecog.org](http://www.tularecog.org)  
E-mail: [bkimball@tularecog.org](mailto:bkimball@tularecog.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. They will announce either 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 by which to draw the eye. This should include, but not necessarily be limited to the TCAG logo. The number of different fonts used should be limited to two.

### **Sign In Sheets**

Have a sign-in sheet available. This will become part of TCAGs 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 TCAG materials available**

Several items will help the public to understand the purpose of the agency, the project and TCAGs role. Many questions as can be answered prior to the meeting, which will save time during the meeting.

- Comment Sheets
- Project Information Guide
- TCAG Information Guide
- Presentation-specific support materials

### **Visual Aids**

- PowerPoint presentation
- Slides
- Enlarged diagrams and graphs
- Enlarged maps
- Videos
- Handouts

### **Anticipate Questions**

Anticipated questions should be developed and answered when the Project Information Guide is created. However, 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 staff responds to questions or statements of desire will make a difference with their opinion of Tulare COGs efforts to involve the public. TCAG staff should create ways of telling the audience the planning process instead of telling the audience “No, we can’t.” Are there creative ways to help the audience understand that transportation planning is a dynamic give-and-take process?

## Appendix A – Outreach Chart

TCAG Public Outreach Chart 2015										
	OWP (Budget)	RTP/SCS	RTP/SCS Amend.	RTP/SCS EIR	RTIP	FTIP	TIP Amend.	Special Studies	RHNA	AQ Conform.
Document and Process Inception										
Display Ads		★				★		★	★	
Direct Mail		★				★		★		
E-Mail		★						★	★	
Press Release		★						★		
Public Meeting	★									
Public Workshops		★				★		★		
Draft Document Process										
Display Ads		★						★	★	
Direct Mail		★						★		
E-Mail		★				★		★	★	
Press Release		★			★	★		★	★	
Public Meeting	★	★			★			★		★
Public Workshops		★			★	★		★		
Final Document Process										
Display Ads		★						★	★	★
Direct Mail	★	★						★		★
E-Mail		★			★	★		★	★	★
Press Release		★			★	★		★		★
Public Meeting	★	★			★	★		★		★
14 - Day Review Period			★				★			
30 - Day Review Period	★	★	★		★	★	★	★	★	★
45 - Day Review Period				★						
55 - Day Review Period		★								
Legal Notice		★	★	★		★	★			★
Public Hearing		★	★	★		★	★			★

## **Appendix B – Federal Transportation Improvement Program - Development and Circulation**

### Expedited Project Selection Procedures (EPSP):

EPSP allows eligible projects to be moved between FTIP fiscal years within the four year FTIP as long as the project cost and scope do not change. TCAG staff is federally authorized to utilize EPSP without additional State or federal approval action.

### Amendment Type 1 – Administrative Modification:

Administrative modifications are defined in the current agreement between Caltrans and FHWA/FTA (original agreement November 17, 2008) on Administrative Modifications, and include such changes as minor changes in project cost, scope, schedule or funding sources. They require action and approval by TCAG (delegated to the Executive Director or TCAG Chair). As delegated by Caltrans, TCAG has agreed to the following procedures:

- I. Prior to the MPO (TCAG) approval of FTIP/FSTIP administrative modifications, TCAG may consult with Caltrans on proposed changes.
- II. Caltrans may provide cursory review of the administrative modification prior to the MPO's approval.
- III. TCAG shall send copies of the approved administrative modifications to Caltrans, FHWA, FTA, and other stakeholders. Caltrans will post the approved administrative modification on the Division Transportation Programming Website.
- IV. Caltrans will regularly review the MPO's (TCAG's) approved administrative modifications and will reject changes that do not comply with the attached procedures. In such cases the MPO (TCAG) must correct all noncompliance.
- V. Caltrans will withdraw its delegation from the MPO (TCAG) if it is found to be consistently noncompliant with the modification

Federal agencies are notified but do not take approval action. Public notification of the administrative modification is posted on TCAG's website (<http://www.tularecog.org/>) at the time of the action and subsequently posted on the Caltrans website ([www.dot.ca.gov/hq/transprog](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/transprog)) after TCAG approval.

### Amendment Type 2 – Amendment (Funding Changes):

Type 2 amendments include project cost changes that are greater than what is allowed in an Administrative Modification. Public notice of the amendment is posted at least 14 days prior to action (delegated to the Executive Director or TCAG Chair) on the TCAG website. The amendment is distributed to local agencies through the TAC and reaffirmed by the Board at the next available meeting following approval by the Executive Director or TCAG Chair (any amendments to the Measure R Expenditure Plan are still subject to direct action by the Tulare County Transportation Authority). TCAG Board approval is required for amendments over \$25 million. The TCAG Chair may approve an amendment over \$25 million if loss of funding may occur. These amendments require

approval by TCAG, Caltrans and FHWA. The approved TCAG amendment is forwarded to Caltrans and FHWA for approval both in hard copy and electronic format.

Amendment Type 3 – Amendment (Exempt Projects):

Type 3 amendments included adding or deleting projects that are exempt from regional air quality emissions analysis such as transit buses, etc. These amendments typically include transit or safety projects. Public notice of the amendment is posted at least 14 days prior to action (delegated to the Executive Director or TCAG Chair) on the TCAG website. The amendment is distributed to local agencies through the TAC and reaffirmed by the Board at the next available meeting following approval by the Executive Director or TCAG Chair (any amendments to the Measure R Expenditure Plan are still subject to direct action by the Tulare County Transportation Authority). These amendments require approval by TCAG, Caltrans and FHWA. The approving TCAG resolution and amendment is forwarded to Caltrans and FHWA for approval both in hard copy and electronic format.

Amendment Type 4 – Amendment (Conformity Determination that Relies on a Previous Regional Emissions Analysis):

Type 4 amendments include adding or deleting projects that have already been appropriately modeled for air quality purposes as part of the RTP. Federal approving agencies can use a previous analysis of the project's impact on air quality for approval purposes. These amendments may be accompanied by an RTP amendment to maintain consistency. The legally noticed public comment period is 30 days. The legal notice of the public hearing is posted in the Visalia Times-Delta (VTD) and posted on the TCAG website. These notices may be combined as long as they are compliant with state and federal noticing provisions. The amendment is distributed to local agencies through the TAC. These amendments require approval by TCAG, Caltrans and FHWA. The approving TCAG resolution and amendment is forwarded to Caltrans and FHWA for approval both in hard copy and electronic format.

Amendment Type 5 – Amendment (Conformity Determination and New Regional Emissions Analysis):

Type 5 amendments are the highest level amendment and involve adding or deleting new projects that result in new modeling for air quality impacts or significantly changing the design concept, scope or schedule of an existing project. These are accompanied by a new Air Quality Conformity document that demonstrates conformity with applicable air quality requirements. If applicable, these amendments may be accompanied by an RTP amendment to maintain consistency. The legally noticed public comment period is 30 days. The legal notice of the public hearing is posted in the Visalia Times-Delta (VTD) and posted on the TCAG website. These notices may be combined as long as they are compliant with state and federal noticing provisions. The amendment is distributed to local agencies through the TAC. These amendments require approval by TCAG, Caltrans and FHWA and are distributed to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. The approving TCAG resolution and amendment is forwarded to Caltrans and FHWA for approval both in hard copy and electronic format.

‘Local agencies’ include the Cities of Dinuba, Exeter, Farmersville, Lindsay, Porterville, Tulare, Visalia and Woodlake, Tulare County and the Tule River Indian Tribe. FTIP updates follow the same process as Type 5 amendments. Copies of all amendments and updates are posted on the TCAG website (<http://www.tularecog.org/>) and hardcopies are provided to other agencies, organizations or individuals upon request.

## **Appendix C – Development and Update of the Public Participation Plan**

Pursuant to Map-21, an MPO's Public Participation Plan must be developed in consultation with 'all interested parties'. Listed below is the step by step process to be used to update the Plan:

- On May 1 2015, notice of the 45-day public review period and the public hearing was posted in the Visalia Times-Delta. The Draft 2015 Public Participation Plan was mailed and/or e-mailed to all identified Resource Agencies, the Tule River Tribe and other interested agencies, organizations or individuals. In addition, a letter was sent to all remaining agencies, organizations and individuals on TCAG mailing lists notifying them that the Draft Plan was available for review and is posted on the TCAG website (<http://www.tularecog.org/>).
- May 18, 2015, Public Hearing held at the Lindsay Wellness Center, 860 N. Sequoia Ave, Lindsay, CA 93247. All comments are addressed with the comments and responses included in Appendix B of the final 2015 Public Participation Plan, and anticipated adoption of the updated plan.

## **Appendix D – Responses to Comments**

### **City of Visalia Comment**

Comment 1. The City of Visalia has requested the following be added to the plan:  
*“Public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP will satisfy the POP requirements.”*

*“The public participation process described herein is used to satisfy the public participation process for the Program of Projects (POP) for the following grantees: City of Visalia (Visalia Transit), City of Porterville (Porterville Transit), City of Tulare (Tulare Intermodal Express), City of Dinuba (Dinuba Area Regional Transit), County of Tulare (Tulare County Area Transit), City of Woodlake (Woodlake Dial-a-ride), and City of Exeter (Exeter Dial-a-Ride).”*

Response: This sentence was added to the document on page 4 (Purpose of the Document Section). No further action is necessary.

### **Caltrans Comments**

Comment 2. TCAG's PPP purpose is to ensure its residents have a structure for public participation involvement and opportunity to provide comments in all transportation planning decisions. This plan involves its citizens more directly in the policy process and promotes encouragement to all its citizens by reaching diverse communities to attend meetings and provide comments on transportation planning projects.

Response: TCAG Agrees with this comment.

Comment 3. TCAG's Introduction, Tulare County Association of Governments, Third Paragraph-Page 1: TCAG should consider adding Environmental Justice and Title VI communities to the listing of groups of people as they are federally protected under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898.

TCAG Agrees with this comment. Tulare County does have a number of unincorporated communities that qualify as Environmental Justice and Title VI communities. They are governed by Tulare County and represented on TAC through the Tulare County Resource Management Agency, which works directly with Town Councils, Legal Representatives and non-profit organizations (such as Self Help and CSET) and brings their issues and needs to TAC meetings and discussions. This has proven to be a very successful way to insure that these groups are represented on official boards as evidenced by the significant amount of planning and federal and state funding going into these communities at this present time.

Comment 4: 11-Participation Plan Updates, First Paragraph-Page 7: Caltrans recommends providing the date of TCAG's most recent Public Participation Plan.

Response: Suggested language added to the text on Page 7 as requested.

Comment 5: 11-Participation Plan Updates, Second Paragraph-Page 7: Caltrans recommends designating an Environmental Justice Coordinator and a Tribal Liaison to the list of establishing procedures and responsibilities.

Response: It is unclear what exactly is being requested here as the list mentioned is a list of tasks for conducting public outreach on a given project and not a list of individuals involved in the process. However, adequate representation of Environmental Justice Groups and Tribes are important to TCAG. The Tulare County Resource Management Agency represents its disadvantaged communities. There is a current position on the Technical Advisory Committee for a Tribal Liaison that would be involved in all Planning Projects and important TCAG business matters. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) Roundtable that advised TCAG in the preparation of the RTP and SCS included a member of the Environmental Justice Community and Tribal Governments to represent those interests in the planning process.

Comment 6: Level II Procedure, Additional Involvement Requirements-Page 9: Caltrans recommends TCAG add the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) to the list of documents needing public involvement requirements listed in Level I. Caltrans also made a similar recommendation in TCAG's OWP Draft comment letter dated April 10, 2015 in *Work Element 602.01 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, Page 31 to add A TP to their list of tasks.

Response: Added as Item J on Page 8, as requested.

Comment 7: Level III Procedures, Anticipated high-profile projects-Page 11: Kern COG created a Social Equity Roundtable and Fresno COG has an Environmental Justice Task Force for the work to develop their Regional Transportation Plans/Sustainable Communities Strategies. The Fresno COG Environmental Justice Task Force meets quarterly and addresses transportation planning issues. TCAG should consider creating a roundtable or task force for the purpose of addressing Environmental Justice community concerns within the transportation planning processes, programs and activities. Previous comments were provided on the Caltrans letter Draft OWP dated on April 10, 2015 in *Work Element 650.01 Public Information and Participation, Page 64*: Caltrans recommended TCAG consider creating an Environmental Justice Task Force and include under Level III Procedure.

Response: TCAG recognizes that the Fresno COG task force and Kern COG Roundtable were created to meet a certain need in their regions. In Tulare County, we have been able to meet these needs using a different structure and outreach strategy. Using the same type of task force would be duplicative to work already being done in an existing, highly successful TCAG structure. In essence, the formation of an Environmental Justice Task Force would be a solution in search of a problem in our County.

Tulare County already has a representative from the Environmental Justice Community, Affordable Housing Community, Agricultural Community, Environmental Advocacy



Community, Health Community, Disable Access/ADA Community and Tribal Governments Community, among others on its RTP/SCS Roundtable. These representatives work collaboratively on planning issues that affect their constituencies and provide significant input on the preparation of the RTP/SCS. In addition to this the County Resource Management Agency conducts significant outreach and collaboration with the Environmental Justice Community's Town Councils, Legal Representatives and other non-profit groups. CSET and Self Help are among those groups who regularly collaborate on planning issues and provide assistance, especially in the areas of public outreach.

This has proven to be a highly successful and efficient way to interact with the Environmental Justice Communities in getting their voices heard. In addition to transportation funded projects, the County Resource Management Agency has updated one third of all of the Environmental Justice Community's Community Plans last year, with another third set to adopt this year, and the remaining plans next year or shortly thereafter. Outreach in these communities has been so extensive that many of the residents have grown tired of being contacted about public input, workshops, and outreach and have begged County Resource Management Agency staff to stop contacting them. We are the only county that we know of that the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) organization claims is doing an outstanding job in reaching residents of disadvantaged communities. CRLA has been involved in our Roundtable meetings and has made significant contributions to the planning process here. Replacing Tulare County's highly successful structure and system with what Fresno and Kern County have done, may not be the best approach for meeting the outreach needs of Environmental Justice Communities in Tulare County.

Comment 8: Level III Procedures, Anticipated high-profile projects-Second Paragraph-Number 1, Page 12: Healthy and active lifestyle advocates could be added to the list of stakeholders as they are involved in promoting transportation facilities that encourage walking and bicycling.

Response: TCAG agrees with this comment. Text added as requested.

Comment 9: III. Process for Receiving Public Comments-Small Group Sessions, Page 14: Rural clinics could also be included to hold small group sessions as well as healthy and active lifestyle advocates could be added to the list of stakeholders as they are involved in promoting transportation facilities that encourage walking and bicycling.

Response: TCAG agrees with this comment. Text added as requested.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**DISTRICT 6**  
1352 WEST OLIVE AVENUE  
P.O. BOX 12616  
FRESNO, CA 93778-2616  
PHONE (559) 445-5421  
FAX (559) 488-4088  
TTY 711  
www.dot.ca.gov

**TCAG/LAFCO**  
210 N. Church Street, Ste. B  
Visalia, CA 93291

**JUN 12 2015**



*Serious drought.  
Help save water!*

**MAIL RECEIVED**

June 10, 2015

Mr. Benjamin A. Kimball  
Deputy Executive Director  
Tulare County Association of Governments  
210 N. Church St. Ste. B  
Visalia, CA 93291

Dear Mr. Kimball:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) Draft 2015 Public Participation Plan (PPP). Caltrans District 6 offers the following comments:

TCAG's PPP purpose is to ensure its residents have a structure for public participation involvement and opportunity to provide comments in all transportation planning decisions. This plan involves its citizens more directly in the policy process and promotes encouragement to all its citizens by reaching diverse communities to attend meetings and provide comments on transportation planning projects.

**TCAG's Introduction, Tulare County Association of Governments, Third Paragraph-Page 1:** TCAG should consider adding Environmental Justice and Title VI communities to the listing of groups of people as they are federally protected under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898.

**II-Participation Plan Updates, First Paragraph-Page 7:** Caltrans recommends providing the date of TCAG's most recent Public Participation Plan.

**II-Participation Plan Updates, Second Paragraph-Page 7:** Caltrans recommends designating an Environmental Justice Coordinator and a Tribal Liaison to the list of establishing procedures and responsibilities.

**Level II Procedure, Additional Involvement Requirements-Page 9:** Caltrans recommends TCAG add the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) to the list of documents needing public involvement requirements listed in Level I. Caltrans also made a similar recommendation in TCAG's OWP Draft comment letter dated April 10, 2015 in *Work Element 602.01 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, Page 31 to add ATP to their list of tasks.

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system  
to enhance California's economy and livability"*

Mr. Benjamin Kimball  
June 10, 2015  
Page 2

**Level III Procedures, Anticipated high-profile projects-Page 11:** Kern COG created a Social Equity Roundtable and Fresno COG has an Environmental Justice Task Force for the work to develop their Regional Transportation Plans/Sustainable Communities Strategies. The Fresno COG Environmental Justice Task Force meets quarterly and addresses transportation planning issues. TCAG should consider creating a roundtable or task force for the purpose of addressing Environmental Justice community concerns within the transportation planning processes, programs and activities. Previous comments were provided on the Caltrans letter Draft OWP dated on April 10, 2015 in *Work Element 650.01 Public Information and Participation, Page 64*: Caltrans recommended TCAG consider creating an Environmental Justice Task Force and include under Level III Procedure.

**Level III Procedures, Anticipated high-profile projects-Second Paragraph-Number 1, Page 12:** Healthy and active lifestyle advocates could be added to the list of stakeholders as they are involved in promoting transportation facilities that encourage walking and bicycling.

**III. Process for Receiving Public Comments-Small Group Sessions, Page 14:** Rural clinics could also be included to hold small group sessions as well as healthy and active lifestyle advocates could be added to the list of stakeholders as they are involved in promoting transportation facilities that encourage walking and bicycling.

TCAG is commended for their development of procedures to address public involvement and public participation in the areas of transportation planning. TCAG's PPP continues to allow its citizens to help create better decisions and provides steps to reach its minority and other underrepresented communities. This is essential in providing an equal and effective plan for all of the County of Tulare. If you have any questions, please contact me at (559) 445-5421.

Sincerely,



LORENA MENDIBLES  
North Planning Branch

*"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system  
to enhance California's economy and livability"*