

**DRAFT PUBLIC
INVOLVEMENT
PROCEDURES (PIP)**

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INTRODUCTION

Federal Statewide Planning and Metropolitan Planning Regulations (23 CFR Part 450 and 771 & 49 CFR Part 613, May 27, 2016) require that state transportation agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) develop public involvement procedures. Pursuant to these regulations, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (Department) has established a proactive, inclusive, public involvement process that is accessible to the public and identifies and addresses transportation-related issues early in the project development process. This process provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing planning documents and transportation improvement programs. This process also minimizes duplication of public involvement efforts and meets the needs of the public and resource and regulatory agencies to provide early and continuing input into the project development process.

The Department's Mission Statement, Vision and Values; Public Involvement Policy and the procedures that the Department follows to carry out this policy are set forth and described in this draft document titled, *The Connecticut Department of Transportation's Public Involvement Procedures*. The federal and state mandates that pertain to public involvement are identified and discussed in Chapter 1, the public involvement procedures that the Department uses when developing plans and undertaking various phases of projects and studies are discussed in the other chapters. the Department's procedures for conducting public meetings and public hearings are explained in Chapter 2, the public involvement procedures that the Department follows when developing plans and conducting studies are discussed in Chapter 3, the public involvement procedures that the Department follows during the environmental phase of projects are discussed in Chapter 4, the procedures to be followed during the survey, design and rights-of-way phases are discussed in Chapter 5, the procedures that are to be followed during the construction, operations and maintenance phases of transportation projects are discussed in Chapter 6, and. The procedures followed for the Bureau of Public Transportation are discussed in Chapter 7.

Connecticut Department of Transportation's Mission Statement, Vision & Values

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Connecticut Department of Transportation is to provide a safe and efficient intermodal transportation network that improves the quality of life and promotes economic vitality for the State and the region.

OUR VISION:

The vision of the Department of Transportation is to lead, inspire and motivate a progressive, responsive team, striving to exceed customer expectations.

OUR VALUES:

Measurable Results: We will endeavor to utilize the latest technology and preserve the integrity of our current assets to provide a safe, efficient, integrated, multimodal, transportation system that offers options for mobility.

Customer Service: We are committed to consulting with our internal and external stakeholders in an open and transparent decision-making process; and to being responsive by providing timely information on services and programs.

Quality of Life: We will strive to maintain and enhance the quality of life in the State and the region by maintaining the character of our communities, supporting responsible growth, and by enhancing and being sensitive to the environment.

Accountability & Integrity: We will prudently manage and invest the human and financial resources entrusted to the Department using sound criteria and efficient, cost-effective methods that put safety and preservation first.

Excellence: We will demand excellence in all we do to fulfill our mission by being solution-oriented and focused on project delivery. We will continuously re-evaluate our mission, values, performance and priorities to ensure that the Department and its employees are innovative and responsive to changing needs.

CHAPTER 1: FEDERAL & STATE MANDATES

Federal and State Laws, Regulations & Executive Orders

State transportation agencies must comply with the public outreach provisions of the following federal regulations and executive orders to use federal money to pay for transportation projects and services or require a federal approval or permit:

- Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning; Metropolitan Transportation Planning; Final Rule 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Parts 450 and 771 and 49 CFR Part 613, May 27, 2016;
- Environmental Impact and Related procedures and Section 4(f). 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Parts 771 and 774; October 16, 2001;
- Protection of Historic Properties. 36 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) part 800.
- Air Quality Conformity. 40 CFR Part 51, November 24, 1993;
- Management and Monitoring Systems. 23 CFR 500, December 1, 1993;
- *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, as amended (42 USC Section 2000d)
- *Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898*; and *FHWA Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule 23 CFR 630 subpart J*.
- Executive Order 13166 – Improving Access for Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency.
- 49 CFR 21, Nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation
- 23 CFR 200, Title VI Program and Related Statutes – Implementation and Review Procedures

These federal regulations require:

- Early and continuing public involvement opportunities during all stages of the planning and programming process,
- States and MPOs provide to additional parties' early and continuous involvement opportunities in the transportation planning process, and that States and MPOs shall allow to comment on the long-range statewide transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation plans.
- A new emphasis on the nonmetropolitan transportation planning process, by
- requiring States to have a higher level of involvement with nonmetropolitan local officials and a structural change to the membership of the larger MPOs,
- Timely information about transportation issues and processes to the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects,
- Reasonable public access to information used in the development of the plans and projects,
- Adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points,

- Meaningful, ongoing and inclusive outreach specifically targeted to low income, minority and Limited English Proficiency individuals.
- A process for demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input,
- A process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, and
- Periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process.

The Statewide Planning and Metropolitan Planning Regulations (23 CFR Part 450 and 771 & 49 CFR Part 613, May 27, 2016) require that the Department and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) develop public involvement procedures. These regulations require that the State carry out a continuing, comprehensive, and intermodal statewide transportation planning process to involve agencies and the public in efforts to define the design concept and scope of major transportation investments.

The regulations pertaining to Air Quality Conformity (40 CFR Part 51, November 24, 1993) and the Management and Monitoring Systems (23 CFR 500, December 1, 1993) mandate that the public involvement process for planning serve as the vehicle for public input to air-quality conformity determinations and the results of the management systems.

The Department's public involvement procedures must also meet the following public involvement requirements: 23 U.S.C. 128, 42 USC 2000d, Executive Orders 12898, 13166, 11988, and 11990, 36 CFR 800, 49 CFR 622, 49 CFR 21, 23 CFR 200, 33 CFR 115.60 and 33 CFR 325 and 327. Section 6001 of P.L. 109 – 59, The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) amended Sections 134 and 135 of Title 23, U.S.C and is continued in the current 2015 FAST-Act. This section includes the requirements concerning the opportunity for comment by the public on both regional and state long-range transportation plans (LRPs) and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU added Section 139 of Title 23, U.S.C., which requires opportunities for public involvement during development of the purpose and need for a project as well as for the Alternatives Analysis during the environmental review process and it is continued in the FAST Act. These procedures are consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR, Parts 1500-1508), the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) internal operating procedure required by NEPA (23 CFR 771, "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures"), and Sec 22a-1b of the Connecticut State Statues which covers the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) process.

Compliance with all of the provisions of FHWA Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule is required as of October 12, 2007. This Rule identifies very specific requirements for public involvement in the planning, design and construction phases of a project, as well as during the subsequent operation of the facility.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 USC 2000d, Limited English Proficiency Executive Order 13166 and the Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 emphasize and require the integration of public involvement in planning and design when minority, low-income, and individuals with Limited English Proficiency, may be affected by a federally funded action. Adequate efforts must be utilized to reach and involve low income, minority, disabled or Limited English Proficient Populations during the planning process. A systematic and consistent approach to engaging those impacted (representing diverse cultural and economic backgrounds) is required by the tenets of environmental justice. Federal requirements for meeting these standards obligate recipients of federal funds to collect data about beneficiaries, to analyze that data, eliminate discrimination when it is found, and to take affirmative measures to ensure nondiscrimination (see 49CFR21.5(b)(7), 21.9(b) and 23CFR200.9(b)(4) and 200.9(b)(14)). Limited English Proficiency (LEP) requirements also mandate that recipients provide meaningful access to the population relative to what is provided to populations that are proficient in English.

Stakeholder Involvement

The Department will seek to involve transportation stakeholders in the development of policies and strategies. Such efforts will focus on specific transportation issues and will strive to include various interested parties; including intermodal transportation representatives, environmental organizations, academic advisors, economic development interests and representatives of other state agencies. The Department may form advisory committees of various sorts, as appropriate, which could include the following stakeholders:

- federal officials,
- other state officials (e.g., Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), or the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO),
- local elected officials,
- town engineers/planners,
- regional officials,
- councils of governments,
- transit districts,
- pre-existing special interest groups or advocacy groups (e.g., Sierra Club, Commuter Rail Council, etc.),
- *ad hoc* groups created for a specific project,
- abutting or nearby property owners,
- Community Leaders
- Community and Faith Based Organizations
- the traveling public, civic associations, business or economic development interests and any other interested parties.

The Department will update the statewide LRP and STIP in consultation with governments of

metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, federally recognized Indian tribal governments and the Secretary of the Interior, transit agencies, local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation, and others who have an impact on the transportation system. When updating the statewide LRP and STIP, the Department will provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, providers of freight transportation services, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed plan.

Tribal governments will be actively solicited to participate in the development of State plans and programs as independent government bodies. To further ensure their participation the Department will provide the following:

- Early involvement
- Timely information exchange
- Adequate notice
- Consideration of input

CHAPTER 2: DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Any activity that involves public participation requires the Department to engage in meaningful and inclusive outreach, particularly to low income, minority and Limited English Proficiency populations. The requirements detailed in this chapter apply to all public engagement activities where the Department seeks to consult, inform and/or solicit comments from the general public; these include all public hearings, information meetings, open houses, workshops and other types of public forums.

The appropriate regional Council of Governments (COG) and local first elected official should be informed and given the opportunity to participate.

Please note, if your program or project has federal or state mandates in regards to comment periods or publishing of notices, the timeline for completing the outlined steps below should be modified to ensure compliance with those requirements.

Public Engagement Requirements

The requirements outlined in this section should be followed when conducting activities that require public engagement. Incorporating these requirements will ensure that outreach activities are compliant with Title VI.

As part of the Department's requirements under Title VI, the Office of Contract Compliance (OCC) is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the Department's outreach efforts, specifically targeted outreach to underrepresented populations. The steps outlined below are also detailed in the Public Engagement Checklist, to be completed for each public engagement activity and submitted to the (OCC). These checklists will assist the OCC in determining the effectiveness of the Department's Title VI program and its outreach efforts.

It is the responsibility of the Bureau Chief to determine the Bureau's process and frequency for submitting the checklist to the OCC.

This chapter provides a chronological framework of the steps required when performing public outreach. There may be steps that are not applicable to the engagement activity you are planning, if you determine that one of the steps does not apply to your activity, you will have an opportunity to note your justification on the public engagement checklist.

TIP: Creating a public outreach plan, outlining detailed outreach milestones, with targeted completion dates, can also be helpful in achieving meaningful and inclusive public participation. An example of a Public Outreach Plan is attached.

Preparing for the Public Engagement Activity:

- 1.) Identify the population and composition of the individuals/communities impacted by the CTDOT program, service or activity.
- 2.) Review the CTDOT Title VI maps, to determine if there are low income, minority or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations in the affected area.

The [CTDOT Title VI maps](#) can be accessed from the Department's internet site by clicking on **Maps** under the **Publications** tab. Under the section, **Title VI Demographic Mapping and Information**, you will find statewide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) maps, minority maps and poverty maps.

TIP: To determine if there are additional low income, minority or LEP populations, which are not reflected on the Title VI maps, you can consult with the planning agencies or identified stakeholders in the affected project or service area.

- 3.) Research and identify community based organizations, faith based organizations and community leaders within the project/service area. The Office of Contract Compliance maintains a Community Based Organization Directory that can be accessed online on the Department's website.

TIP: Researching additional organizations and community leaders is strongly encouraged. While the Office of Contact Compliance attempts to keep the directory current, high employee turnover and email address changes within the community based organizations can result in dated contact information.

Scheduling the Public Engagement Activity:

- 4.) Determine the time and location of the public engagement

TIP: Consult with community leaders, community based organizations, and faith-based organization which may be central in providing input on determining the time and location of the public engagement activity.

- 5.) Multiple meetings could be scheduled at various locations and times, if doing so will ensure meaningful access and participation.
- 6.) When possible, select locations near public transportation options.

7.) All public engagement activities should be held at a venue that is ADA accessible.

8.) Once you have determined the date, time, and location of the public meeting or hearing, notify the Office of Communications so the event can be added to the Department's Calendar of Events and posted on the website.

Drafting and Distributing the Public Notice:

9.) All public notices should detail the availability of free language assistance and the availability of reasonable accommodations. The notice should include the contact information and procedures for requesting the services, including the deadline. If possible, the public should be provided at least five calendar days to request language assistance or accessibility accommodations.

The Department has recently contracted with Voiance, to provide over the phone interpretation services. In the event an LEP individual calls to request language accommodations any CTDOT employee with an assigned Voiance PIN can access the system and engage in a three way telephone conversation with a certified translator. To find out who in your office is a Voiance PIN holder, or to request to be assigned a Voiance PIN, please contact your Bureau Chief.

10.) All public notices should provide instruction for those who are hearing impaired to call 711, (Telecommunications Relay Service) to contact the Department to request accommodations. To utilize the system, the hearing impaired individual calls 711, connects to an operator, and the 711 operator calls the Department and interprets the call. The service is free to both the caller and the Department, and can be accessed by the hearing impaired caller via a text phone (TTY). The following is an example of the language that should be included on all public notices.

The meeting facility is ADA accessible. Language assistance may be requested by contacting the Department's Office of Communications at (860) 594-3062 at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Persons having a hearing and/or speech disability may dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). Language assistance is provided at no cost to the public, and efforts will be made to respond to timely requests for assistance.

11.) The public notice should be published with sufficient processing time for free language and accessibility accommodation requests.

12.) If LEP populations have been identified, develop translated version(s) of the public notice, or other related announcements, based on the identified LEP populations. Translation vendors can be found under the DAS state contract. If you determine there is a need for translation, you may contact the Office of Contract Compliance for technical assistance or vendor referrals.

13.) If you have determined that your project/service area includes LEP populations, identify non-English media (print, TV, radio, website, etc.) to publish the notice to the public. The following resources may be utilized to identify sources with a strong presence of individuals who have limited English proficiency, as well as those that target minority and or low income populations.

- CTDOT's Office of Contract Compliance
- Community Leaders
- Community and Faith Based Organizations
- Councils of Governments (COGs)
- Neighborhood Revitalization Zones
- Public Libraries
- Schools/Universities
- Chambers of Commerce

The State's Freedom of Information Act requires that notice of each public meeting shall be posted not less than twenty-four hours before the meeting on the Department's Internet web site. Also, the notice shall be filed with the Secretary of the State not less than twenty four hours prior to the meeting. The notice shall specify the time, place and purpose of the public meeting.

14.) The public notice should be provided to individuals, organizations, and other stakeholders that represent Title VI populations in the affected area. They should be provided with a copy of the public notice, in English and any translated versions, to share with their members and or clients. Options for distribution include email, postal mail, or telephone.

Prior to and During the Public Engagement Activity:

15.) Prior to the public engagement activity, any timely requested language assistance services or accessibility accommodation arrangements should be made. The required accommodations can be identified through the following resources:

- Direct Requests
- Past Experiences
- Community Demographics
- Feedback from Community Leaders and Community and Faith Based Organizations
- The Office of Contract Compliance

16.) The following Title VI considerations should be addressed during set-up and during the public engagement activity:

- Based on requested or identified language needs, has signage in other

languages been posted?

- Is the space reserved for language interpreters clearly visible to the entire audience?
- Are the following Title VI materials available at the welcome desk?
 - [I Speak Cards](#)
 - Translated versions of written materials (i.e. fact sheets, comment cards, etc.)
 - ADA Compliant documents (i.e. braille, large font, etc.)
 - Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries (in English and any identified LEP languages)

17.) The subject matter of transportation-related public engagements can often be based on highly technical studies; care should be taken to communicate complex information in a clear and simple manner to members of the public who have widely varying backgrounds, including varied education levels.

TIP: Here is a [link](#) produced by the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center that provides guidance on writing effective executive summaries of highly technical documents.

TIP: The key points and tips, such as avoiding industry jargon, replacing complex words with simple words, and keeping the use of acronyms to a minimum, apply not only to the development of executive summaries, but also to the development of documents that are generated to convey information to the public.

TIP: Any spoken presentation of complex topics should be as simple as possible to effectively communicate the subject matter across the varying background and education levels of attendees. [This guidance document](#) describes good strategies and tips for presenting technical information to a non-technical audience.

18.) At the official start of a public hearing or informational meeting, if there is a formal presentation, a general statement regarding non-discrimination including the availability of assistance in providing written comments and/or completing forms such as the demographics survey, should be made.

An example of this statement would be as follows:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program, activity or benefit receiving federal financial assistance. Please note that brochures notifying you of your rights under Title VI can be found at the [location, i.e. back of the room, at the entrance, etc.]. They are provided in English [and additional languages if applicable]. We also have a voluntary Title VI demographic survey, it is voluntary but your participation is appreciated and helps us to ensure that all persons are included in our public outreach program.”

19.) If there is a demographic survey available, attendees should be encouraged to complete the voluntary demographics survey. While no member of the public can be required to complete the survey, encouraging completion to determine the effectiveness of our outreach is beneficial to the Department (sample language is included above).

Demographic surveys, in English and Spanish, can be obtained by contacting the Office of Contract Compliance.

20.) For all public engagement activities, all public comments are received and considered.

At a public hearing, the Department shall receive and record verbal comments delivered in front of those in attendance. Although public hearings are generally conducted to receive public comments, the Department may choose to respond to questions received during the hearing. The Department should also be prepared to receive written comments that are hand-delivered at the public hearing, mailed to the Department, or submitted electronically to the Department.

During either a public hearing or other form of public forum where there is a formal question and answer session and the public speaks one at a time, the Department will document the questions and responses. If an immediate answer cannot be provided, the Department may respond to the public separately or as part of a future public forum.

Post Public Engagement Activity:

21.) The Department shall consider all public comments (written and verbal) expressed during a public hearing, informational meeting, or other form of public engagement activity in the decision making process. The Department should review public comments to determine if a response is required.

22.) If there is a state or federal requirement regarding meeting minutes, the meeting minutes shall be available for public inspection and posted on the Department’s Internet website. The Department will make, keep and maintain a record of the proceedings of the meeting.

TIP: If the public engagement activity included a comment period, as the comment period deadline approaches, a follow up email could be sent to identified and contacted community/faith based organizations and community leaders to remind them of the approach of the end of the comment period.

TIP: The community leaders and community/faith based organizations identified and contacted prior to the meeting or hearing, and asked to assist in the Department's targeted outreach efforts, could be acknowledged for their assistance with a call or email.

23.) Submit the Public Outreach Checklists, with attachments, to the Office of Contract Compliance (OCC). The process and frequency for providing the OCC with copies of the checklists and attachments is at the discretion of the Bureau Chiefs.

The Office of Contract Compliance suggests the checklists be submitted to the Division's Title VI liaison, and then submitted to the Office of Contract Compliance on a monthly basis.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

This checklist should be completed and submitted to the Office of Contract Compliance after each public engagement activity including, but not limited to, public meetings, or hearings to ensure meaningful and inclusive public participation

Subject: _____ Date/Time of Activity: _____ Location(s) of Activity: _____

Preparing for the Public Engagement Activity	Yes	No	If No, please explain
● Have you identified the population and composition of the individuals/communities impacted by the CT DOT program, service, or activity?			
● Have you reviewed the CT DOT Title VI Maps (Title VI Maps can be accessed from the CT DOT internet site by clicking Maps under the Publications tab) to determine if there are low income, minority or Limited English Proficiency populations in the affected area?			
● Have you researched and identified community and faith based organizations and community leaders within the affected area?			
Scheduling the Public Engagement Activity			
● Have you scheduled the public engagement activities during times and at locations that are easily accessible to low income and minority communities?			
● Is the venue ADA accessible?			
● Is the venue accessible with public transportation?			
● Have you notified the Office of Communication and the Secretary of State about the public engagement activity?			
Drafting and Distributing the Public Notice			
● Does the public notice detail the availability of language services and reasonable accommodations?			
● Does the public notice include the contact information and a deadline for requesting free language services and accessibility accommodations? Including a reference to 711?			
● If LEP populations were identified, did you translate the public notice and other related announcements based on the identified LEP populations? If yes, please attach copies of the notices/announcements to this checklist			
● If LEP populations were identified, did you identify targeted media that reaches the identified low income, minority and LEP populations?			
● Have you published the public notice with sufficient processing time for free language and accessibility accommodation requests?			
● Have you forwarded the English and translated public notice to all identified Community/Faith Based Organizations and community leaders?			
Prior to and During the Public Engagement Activity			
● Have you made arrangements for any requested language assistance or accommodations?			
● Have you translated meeting materials into identified LEP languages?			
● Did you provide the following Title VI documents at the public engagement activity?			
Speak Cards			
Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries (in English and identified LEP languages)			
Demographics Survey (in English and identified LEP languages)			
After the Public Engagement Activity			
● Have you posted meeting minutes within seven days of the public meeting or hearing on the CT DOT internet site?			
● Have you acknowledged community/faith based organizations and community leaders for their outreach assistance?			
● Have you reminded community/faith based organizations and community leaders of the approach of the end of the comment period?			

COMPARISON OF PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

While public engagement activities may include open houses, forums, workshops, etc., the following chart outlines the legal requirements for a public hearing and a public information meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING	PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
Is held to obtain public input. It is generally not a question and answer format.	Is held to provide information and obtain public input.
Some are required by regulations; others are granted on a case-by-case basis.	In most cases, will satisfy public involvement requirements.
Is governed by rules concerning who speaks and for how long.	Is more of an exchange of information between interested parties. May be an open discussion during which attendees may ask questions. May be a question and answer format.
Is overseen by a moderator.	Is usually run by the project manager or a designated chairperson of the meeting.
A transcript of the public input is produced and entered into the public record.	Minutes of the meeting are prepared. Public comments are not entered into the public record verbatim.

ADA ACCOMMODATIONS & ACCESSIBLE MEETING LOCATIONS

Guidelines for Meeting Planner’s Responsibilities in reference to Requests for Accommodations:

1. All meetings should be publicized 3 weeks in advance whenever practical, but in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) Chapter 238 Section 13a-58. Public notices should provide instruction for those who are hearing impaired to call 711 (Telecommunications Relay Service) to contact the Department to request accommodations. To utilize the system, the hearing impaired person calls 711, connects to an operator, and the 711 operator calls the Department and interprets the call. The service is free to both the caller and the Department, and can be accessed by the hearing impaired caller via a text phone (TTY). The following is an example of the language that should be included on the public notice:

“The meeting facility is ADA accessible. Language assistance may be requested by contacting the Department’s Office of Communications at (860) 594-3062 at least 5 business days prior to the meeting. Persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities may dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS). Language assistance is provided at no cost to the public and efforts will be made to respond to timely requests for assistance.”

2. Meeting rooms should be ADA accessible with integrated seating available for those who use wheelchairs or power assistive devices where practical. Reserved seating should be made available up front for deaf or hearing impaired so that they may see the interpreter, closed captions, or be able to lip read. Aisles should be at least 3 feet wide and clear of objects/tripping hazards.
3. Individuals requiring materials in alternative formats, translation materials/presentation materials must request them at least one week prior to the event. Large print versions or electronic versions of all printed materials will be made available at all public meetings upon advance request (font size 16 pt. with the highest contrast – Black/White.) These materials should include the same information as the original handouts.
4. Foreign language and audible versions of materials can also be made available when requested at least 1 week prior to the actual meeting date. All reasonable format requests will be honored upon request within 7 calendar days of the requests. If the request is made at the meeting or after the meeting, every attempt shall be made to provide the materials within 7 days of the request. Attendees making the requests will not be charged for any cost affiliated with the creation of alternate formats of meeting materials.
5. When sign language interpreters are present during a meeting, their presence and function should be announced at the opening of the meeting.
6. The location of accessible restrooms and areas of refuge (for safety) should be announced at the opening of the meeting.
7. All videos and DVDs shown should be closed captioned where .
8. Office of Communications should follow-up with attendees who have made requests for accommodations the day before the meeting to ensure them that their requests will be honored to the extent possible.

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DURING A STUDY OR DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Public Involvement Procedures for the Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan

The long-range statewide transportation plan (LRP), which is required by Title 23 USC, Section 135(f) as amended by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21 and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)), is the federally recognized transportation plan for the State of Connecticut. It is a policy document that is intended to present a long-term, intermodal vision of the state's transportation system and serve as a framework for preparing future, more project-specific plans such as the Department's federally mandated statewide transportation improvement program (STIP). The Department updates the State of Connecticut's (LRP) generally every five years, or more frequently based on the vision for the twenty (20) year planning horizon or system needs. The Department undertakes a public engagement effort to solicit public input when updating this plan. The process for soliciting public input consists of the following phases.

Solicitation of Public Input Prior to the Development of a Draft LRP

The Department announces a public comment period and holds listening sessions in various locations throughout the state to solicit public input on transportation issues and concerns in Connecticut. The public comment period is at least 45 days in length and listening sessions are held in the middle of this period. At each listening session, the Department's staff delivers a visual presentation that explains the purpose of the LRP, outlines the process and mandates for developing it, identifies key factors and issues that influence transportation-related decisions and investments in Connecticut, and identifies opportunities for providing public input into the updating of the plan. Following the presentation, the public may provide input and ask questions. Representatives from appropriate Department offices attend the listening sessions to hear the public's comments and questions with respect to modes or components of the transportation system for which their bureau or office is responsible and, if there is sufficient time, respond to people's questions. Copies of the following documents are made available for public perusal at the listening sessions: a copy of the current LRP and other pertinent documents. Copies of various handouts are also provided; such material may include the following: brochures that provide information on the LRP, the process and schedule for updating it and opportunities to provide input; a list of the titles and web site addresses of documents referenced in the visual presentation; a list of major planned and ongoing studies and projects; copies of maps showing the locations of the studies and projects; and forms ("Input, Ideas, and Comments" sheet) that the public can use to submit their written comments at the meeting or to mail in their comments at a later date during the comment period.

Input is sought from the staff of Connecticut's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and the Council of Governments (COGs) when determining the dates, times, and locations of the LRP listening sessions. The facilities at which the listening sessions are held must be handicapped accessible. In areas of the state where public transportation is provided, the listening sessions are held at facilities and at times to enable people to use public transportation to attend the sessions. Up to one week in advance of the date of a listening session, people may request that the Department make special accommodations for them. Assistance for the deaf and hearing impaired is arranged upon request; requests for other special accommodations, including the provision of language assistance for individuals with limited English proficiency, are considered and granted.

The dates, times and locations of the meetings are posted on the Department's web site calendar, which includes an option to request special accommodations at a public meeting. The event posting on the calendar includes a link to the Department's LRP web page, which includes more detailed information on the LRP and the process for updating it. The dates, times and locations of the listening sessions are published at least once, in display ads in newspapers with regional and state coverage, including two with distributions to minority populations in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The display ads also include information on the LRP, the Department's process for updating it, contact information for submitting comments, and a telephone number and e-mail address for requesting special accommodations at a listening session. This information is also included in press releases that are issued by the Department's Office of Communications to newspapers, radio stations and television stations, before, during and just before the end of the public comment period and in brochures that are mailed and/or e-mailed to various interested parties prior to the beginning of the public comment period. LRP staff and other Department staff also notify interested parties by making the LRP brochures available at various meetings and events they attend and making announcements about the LRP listening sessions and public comment period at such events. Councils of Governments and other appropriate organizations in Connecticut are asked to assist in notifying people of the opportunities to provide input into the updating of the LRP by posting information on their web sites and providing links to the Department's LRP web page.

The interested parties to which LRP informational brochures are sent include MPOs, COGs, federal transportation agencies, transit districts, representatives of federally recognized Indian tribes in Connecticut, transit operators, freight shippers, and other groups and individuals that are identified in federal laws, regulations and executive orders pertaining to statewide transportation planning; heads of appropriate State agencies, boards and commissions; first elected officials in all Connecticut municipalities; State legislators, members of Connecticut's Congressional Delegation, public and academic libraries in Connecticut, centers for senior/disabled persons, representatives of bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups, environmental organizations, chairpersons of Neighborhood Revitalization Zones in Connecticut, individuals that have asked to be added to the Department's LRP

mailing list and other appropriate individuals and groups that the LRP staff members become aware of.

Solicitation of Public Input on the Draft LRP

The Draft LRP is posted on the Department's web site and interested parties are notified of the availability of the document and informed of the timeframe and ways in which they can provide input on the document. If possible, a streaming media presentation that provides an overview of the contents of the document and the process used to develop it is created and posted on the Department's web site. Hard copies of the draft document are made available for public review at the Department's headquarters in Newington, Connecticut and at the offices of each of the MPOs and COGs. Comments on the draft document are accepted during a public review and comment period of at least 45 days. During the comment period, at least two public information meetings are held in the middle of the comment period to provide the public with an overview of the contents of and the process used to develop the draft document and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to ask questions and provide input on the document. At the public information meetings a visual presentation is used to provide an overview of the contents of the draft document and the process used to develop it. One meeting is scheduled during the day; another meeting is held in the evening. Representatives of appropriate Department offices attend both meetings and are available to answer questions. An interpreter for the deaf and hearing impaired is provided if such accommodation is requested in advance of the meeting date. Other special accommodations, including language assistance, may be requested, in advance of the meeting via telephone or e-mail or via a "request special accommodations link" that has been built into the public events calendar on the Department's web page; such requests are considered and granted if reasonable and possible. Written comments on the Draft LRP may be submitted at the public information meetings or via e-mail or mail during the public comment period.

Interested parties are contacted and updated on the LRP update process via electronic mail, statements at monthly/quarterly meetings of various organizations, and direct mailings, including an extensive mailing of informational brochures. The brochures provide information on the purpose of the LRP, the process for updating it, opportunities to review the draft document and comment on it, and the anticipated publication dates of the draft and final documents. The brochures are printed in a format suitable for posting on community boards, are posted at selected rail and bus stations, are distributed to municipalities, public and academic libraries, and various regional, State and federal personnel, as well as other interested parties including, but not limited to, transit operators, federally recognized Indian tribes in Connecticut, airport managers, bicycle enthusiasts, and motor transport representatives, and are forwarded to senior/disabled centers throughout the state.

Legal notices announcing the availability of the Draft LRP for public review and comment, opportunities to review and provide input on the draft document, and contact information for submitting comments are published in media publications with regional and state coverage, including two publications with distributions to minority populations in Connecticut and

Massachusetts.

The Department issues press releases to newspaper, television, and radio organizations, including organizations serving minority and low-income populations before, during and just before the end of the public review and comment period on the Draft LRP. The press releases announce the availability of the Draft LRP for public review and comment; provide information on opportunities to learn about, review and comment on the draft document; provide contact information for requesting special accommodations, including language assistance, at public information meetings; promote attendance; and provide reminders of the deadline for submitting comments on the Draft document.

After the final document is published, it is posted on the Department's web site and hard copies and/or electronic copies are sent to the State Library for distribution to designated depository libraries and to the Department's library. Notification that includes the Department's LRP web page address is issued to inform the general public of the availability of the final LRP. Organizations and individuals that are listed on the Department's LRP Distribution List are notified via e-mail or U.S. mail of the availability of the final document.

Posting of Information on LRP Web Page

Throughout the public outreach process for the LRP, the following items, which are pertinent to the development of the LRP, are posted on the Department's web site: the current LRP, informational brochures, display ads, legal notices, press releases, notifications, material distributed during the listening sessions and public meetings on the Draft LRP, and contact information. The presentations provided at the listening sessions and the public information meetings on the Draft LRP are posted on the Department's web site in several formats, including a version with audio and a version with speaker's notes to accommodate persons with sight or hearing disabilities. Whenever possible, press releases are posted on the State of Connecticut's master web site and on the various individual web sites maintained by the MPOs and COGs in Connecticut. The final LRP is posted on the Department's web site.

Public Involvement Procedures for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which is required by Title 23 USC, Section 135 (g) as amended by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21 and Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)), is a four-year financial document that lists all projects expected to be funded in that four-year period. This document must be updated at least every four years; however, the Department strives to update it every two years. The Department's public outreach process for the STIP is as follows:

A public involvement process is followed to ensure an opportunity for all to participate. The draft STIP is developed in cooperation with MPOs and COGs in the State and made available for public review. The draft STIP is placed on the Department's web page for review. A legal notice is placed in Connecticut's major daily newspapers. This notice states in detail that the

STIP will be available for public review, public informational meetings will be held, and that the Department will receive comments. A press release is also prepared containing detailed information found in the legal notice, background information on the STIP, and examples of projects included in STIP. This press release is issued to Connecticut newspapers, radio stations and television stations. A brochure detailing the availability of the STIP and announcing the Public Informational Meeting is sent to all individuals and businesses that have expressed interest in the transportation planning process. This Interested Parties list may include, but is not limited to, local citizens, affected public agencies, affected federal agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, and federally recognized Indian tribes in Connecticut. These names were compiled to satisfy Title VI, LEP and Environmental Justice requirement.

Each MPO and COG is asked to coordinate a public review of its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with a public review of the Department's STIP. The Department's staff attends all MPO informational meetings on the TIP/STIP and is available to receive comments and answer questions. Two informational meetings on the STIP are held at the Department's headquarters. One meeting is scheduled during the day with the second meeting is scheduled at night to accommodate individuals with different schedules. The Department's headquarters is situated on a bus route and is handicapped-accessible. A visual presentation is given to explain the process for developing the STIP and to highlight major projects in the STIP. Time is allotted for questions and comments.

The draft STIP is made available for public review and comment for a period of at least 30 days. After review and consideration of all public comments, a final version of the STIP is prepared and submitted to the FHWA and the FTA for approval. Explicit consideration and response is given to public input, and all who submit written comments are notified of the availability of the final approved document. The approved STIP is placed on the Department's web page.

Public Involvement Procedures for Air Quality Conformity Analysis

In Connecticut, the Department is responsible for performing an Air Quality Conformity analysis for all areas of the State. The Department will conduct an Air Quality Conformity analysis when new TIPs are developed, when MPOs develop new Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP) and when an amendment to a TIP is needed. Interagency coordination will occur as specified in the Air Quality Conformity analysis procedures document. Once a new analysis is completed, the document and back-up information is sent to each MPO for its review and for the MPO to provide an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the document. Each MPO will follow their public involvement procedures to notify the public that a new Air Quality Conformity analysis has been prepared. This

document will be made available for a 30-day comment period, and a public meeting on this document will be held in conjunction with the public meeting on MPO's TIP and/or MTP. The public may also attend an MPO's monthly meeting to deliver comments before the MPO's Policy Board acts on the Air Quality Conformity determination. All comments received on an Air Quality Conformity document will be incorporated by reference in the MPO's approval submittal to the CTDOT who, in turn will forward to FHWA and FTA.

Public Involvement Procedures of MPOs

The Department recognizes the important role that MPOs play in transportation planning for Connecticut. The Department participates in the cooperative transportation planning process within the MPO's jurisdiction. An effective metropolitan planning process must incorporate input from both local and state jurisdictions as well as the public. Therefore, the Department relies on MPOs to seek public involvement in the development of their comprehensive metropolitan transportation plans (MTP) and TIPs.

Each MPO has developed procedures to provide opportunities for the public to provide input on its regional MTP (which must cover a period of at least 20 years), TIP, and major transportation planning studies that are undertaken. The Department utilizes the MPO public involvement process as an important vehicle for soliciting public comments on Connecticut's STIP. The Department acknowledges the unique nature of each metropolitan area and has determined that the endorsed MPO public participation plans meet the planning public involvement requirements of 23 CRF 450.316 for transportation projects within the MPO area.

The MPO procedures include mechanisms for the public to express their views and to obtain information. The MPO procedures also provide a general approach for involving the public in transportation planning studies.

The MPO procedures detail how the transportation needs of persons and groups who are "traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems" are identified and addressed per Executive Order 12898 (12/11/94) on "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations." For example, some MPOs may institute advisory committees to represent transportation-disadvantaged groups and communities such as transit patrons, the elderly, handicapped, low income and minorities.

When substantial written and verbal comments are received on an MPO's draft MTP or TIP as a result of the public involvement process or the interagency consultation process, or public input is sought on the Air Quality Conformity analysis as required by the conformity regulations, a summary, analysis, and a report on the disposition of the comments shall be made part of the draft MTP and TIP. The Department will assist the MPO in responding to comments and questions.

The Department and the MPOs will coordinate the development of MPOs' plans and the statewide LRP through the cooperative transportation planning process that the Department and the MPOs conduct. The Department's participation in the MPO planning process ensures that statewide issues are considered in the MPOs' planning process. The Department will review and consider the contents of the each MPO's MTP as part of the process of developing the statewide LRP.

Public Involvement Procedures for Amending TIPs and the STIP

Public involvement for amendments to the TIP will be facilitated by the MPO. All amendments to the TIP need to be included on the MPOs agenda for endorsement by the MPO's Policy Board. This agenda is sent to all interested parties and made available to the public. Each MPO and COG board provides an opportunity for the public to deliver comments at its meeting. Department staff attends these meetings and are available for questions and comments. Any comments received on TIP and STIP amendments will be included with CTDOT's transmittal of the amendment to the FHWA and the FTA requesting approval. Once approved by the FHWA and the FTA, the updated STIP is posted on the Department's web page.

Examples of revisions that are not considered significant and, therefore, do not require that the Department provide an additional opportunity for the public to comment, include minor changes in project cost and moving projects among the first four years of the STIP/TIP.

Public Involvement Procedures for Planning Studies

During the scoping of planning studies early coordination is done with the affected COGs and towns to determine the amount of public outreach that will be required for the study. A description of this outreach effort is included in the scope of services for the study to ensure that the public is kept informed and has ample opportunity to relay their concerns and questions on the study. These outreach efforts typically consist of the establishment of an Advisory Committee (AC) or a Stakeholders Group (SG). Public Informational Meetings (PIM), study web sites and distribution of study documents for public review.

ACs are established so that their memberships represent all the stakeholder groups in the study. This representation typically consists of other State and Federal agencies (e.g. OPM, DEEP, DECD, FHWA, FTA, FAA), municipalities, MPOs and public representation, as well as other stakeholders. This membership is not "set in stone" and can change as the study progresses. The AC is a critical piece of the study, as its members are typically charged with the sharing of information with the stakeholder groups they represent and bringing the groups' concerns to the attention of those conducting the study.

Public Informational Meetings (PIM) are held as appropriate throughout the study process to

relay information to the general public and solicit their input to the study. The PIM also offers a forum for the Department to learn and respond to community concerns. These meetings are typically held in an open house format to allow individuals to speak one-on-one with Department personnel regarding their concerns and questions with respect to the study.

Websites are used to disseminate information to the public in an easy and cost effective manner. Depending on the size and scope of the study, a study web site may be created for the sole purpose of providing information to and soliciting comments from all stakeholders. It also offers a way to update interested parties on the status of study activities and notify them of upcoming meetings. Once studies are completed the final reports are posted on the Department's web site for future reference.

Hard copies of study documents, working papers, draft and final documents are made available at town halls, COGs' offices, local public libraries and at the Department's headquarters in Newington, Connecticut. This provides the public with multiple options to access and view the study reports.

CHAPTER 4: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL PHASE OF PROJECTS

Public Outreach under the National Environmental Policy Act and the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act

The transportation planning process is continuous, and public involvement should begin early and continue throughout the duration of the project. Public outreach should be initiated at the onset of the development of any proposed action, prior to conducting detailed analysis. The extent of public outreach for each proposed action depends on the magnitude of the proposed action and the potential effects a proposed action may have upon the environment. The type of environmental documentation required will also dictate the requirements for public outreach in accordance with the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) and the *Connecticut Environmental Policy Act* (CEPA).

During the preliminary stages, each proposed transportation project undergoes an internal environmental review process to determine the type of environmental documentation required for the project. This decision is determined by the funding source and the level of potential impact to the environment as a result of the project. If a project is being funded in whole or in part with federal monies, or if the project requires a federal permit, one of three levels of environmental documentation must be prepared under NEPA. The environmental review process determines if a project shall require a 1) Federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), 2) Categorical Exclusion (CE), or 3) Federal Environmental Assessment (EA). It should be noted that a Federal EA is a decision making tool to determine if a project warrants a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or if an EIS should be prepared. If the project is state-funded only, criteria set forth in the Department's Environmental Classification Document (ECD) will determine whether or not a State Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) shall be prepared under CEPA. For projects that are funded with both federal and state funds, a single environmental document (e.g., EIS/EIE or EA/EIE) is prepared that addresses both NEPA and CEPA requirements.

NEPA Documentation

Each project must incorporate public outreach; the level of outreach required is determined by the significance of the project and the level of documentation required. According to 23 CFR 771.111, public involvement/public hearing procedures must provide for:

- Coordination of public involvement activities and public hearings with the entire NEPA process.

Early and continuing opportunities during project development for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts, as well as impacts associated with relocation of individuals, groups, or institutions.

One or more public hearings or the opportunity for hearing(s) to be held by the Department at a convenient time and place for any Federal-aid project which requires significant amounts of right-of-way, substantially changes the layout or functions of connecting roadways or of the facility being improved, has a substantial adverse impact on abutting property, otherwise has a significant social, economic, environmental or other effect, or for which the FHWA determines that a public hearing is in the public interest.

Reasonable notice to the public of either a public hearing or the opportunity for a public hearing if one is required. Such notice will indicate the availability of explanatory information. The notice shall also provide information required to comply with public involvement requirements of other laws, Executive orders, and regulations.

Explanation at the public hearing of the following information, as appropriate:

- The project's purpose, need, and consistency with the goals and objectives of any local urban planning,
- The project's alternatives and major design features,
- The social, economic, environmental, and other impacts of the project,
- The relocation assistance program and right-of-way acquisition process; and
- The Department's procedures for receiving both verbal and written comments from the public.

Submission to the FHWA of a transcript of each public hearing and a certification that a required hearing or hearing opportunity was offered. The transcript will be accompanied by copies of all written statements from the public, not submitted at the public hearing or during an announced period after the public hearing.

NEPA documentation is required for each transportation project that is funded with federal monies. The three classes of actions which prescribe the level of NEPA documentation and public involvement required for each project are as follows:

- Class I – Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Class II – Categorical Exclusion (CE)
- Class III – Environmental Assessment (EA)

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

An EIS is required for actions that significantly affect the environment. When the decision to prepare an EIS is made, a Notice of Intent (40 CFR 1508.22) is issued for publication in the *Federal Register*, beginning the scoping process. The scoping process is used to identify a range of alternatives, to determine the significant issues to be addressed in the EIS, and to foster public outreach. Early in the process a public scoping meeting shall be held in the project area. The Department shall publish a legal notice in area newspapers two weeks prior to the public scoping meeting to inform the public of the date, time, and location of the meeting. If the project will take place in an area that is home to a population with significant

Limited English Proficiency, the Department will publish the notice in a periodical written in that particular language. Additionally, any language assistance will be provided at the public scoping meeting per request. The public will be allowed to submit comments to the Department for a period of thirty days following the public scoping meeting. A Coordination Plan for coordinating public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for a project or category of projects is required for all projects that require an EIS. For projects requiring an EIS, a joint Federal EIS/ Connecticut Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) can be done to satisfy both NEPA and CEPA, provided the project follows both the public outreach guidelines for NEPA and CEPA.

Draft EIS

Once a draft EIS is prepared and published, the document must be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and made available to the public no later than the date which it is filed with the EPA. At this time, the EPA will publish a notice of availability of the draft document in the *Federal Register* to establish a period of not less than 45 days for public comment on the draft EIS. Similar to the notice of the public scoping meeting, the Department will publish a legal notice that may also be in languages other than English (if it is determined that the project will affect populations with limited English proficiency) in area newspapers to inform the public of the public hearing and where the document is available for inspection. Additionally, the notice will appear in the Environmental Monitor (a web based environmental clearinghouse) in order to comply with CEPA since all EIS documents conducted by the Department will be considered a joint Federal EIS/Connecticut EIE document. At least one public hearing will be held for all transportation projects which involve the development of an EIS. Appropriate level of outreach will occur to group areas that represent populations protected by Environmental Justice. As with the public scoping meeting, language assistance will be available for any member of the public submitting such a request. The draft EIS shall be transmitted to public officials, interested groups, and members of the public known to have an interest in the proposed action or the draft EIS. Additionally, the draft EIS shall be available for public inspection at relevant town clerks' offices, public libraries, and regional planning offices, as well as at the Department, and the lead Federal sponsoring office as well as on the Department's web site for a minimum of thirty days in advance of the public hearing to comply with both NEPA and CEPA public involvement regulations. Therefore, both the notice in the *Federal Register* and in the newspaper(s) shall appear at least thirty days in advance of the hearing; the public will have at least fifteen days to submit comments following the public hearing. Often, this will be extended to 30 days.

Final EIS

After circulation of the draft EIS and consideration of all comments received, a final EIS shall be prepared. The final EIS shall be transmitted to any persons that made substantive comments on the draft EIS or requested a copy, no later than the time that the document is filed with the EPA and the notice of availability is published in the *Federal Register*. Once the

final EIS is filed with the EPA, the Department shall publish a notice of availability of the document in local newspapers and make the final EIS available for public review at relevant town clerks' offices, public libraries, as well as the Department, and on the Department's web site. After the final EIS is filed with the EPA and the notice of availability of the final EIS is published in the *Federal Register*, the lead federal agency will complete and sign a record of decision (ROD) no sooner than thirty days after the publication of the final EIS notice or ninety days after the publication of the notice of the draft EIS, whichever is later. A ROD is a NEPA compliance document that provides the basis for the decision made, describes the environmental factors considered, the preferred plan, and the alternatives considered in the EIS and summarizes any mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the project.

Categorical Exclusion (CE)

A CE is required for actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant affect on the environment. For proposed actions classified as CE's under NEPA and/or requiring no Environmental Impact Evaluation under CEPA, informing the public of the anticipated activity can be accomplished through the municipality and media strategies, such as posting information on the Department's web site, and publishing notices of anticipated activities in local media. The Department may also hold a public information meeting or a public hearing.

Information posted on the Department's web site and in local media shall include a description of the proposed activity, an anticipated schedule for construction, and a Department contact for additional information. A notice may also be published in languages other than English, if it is determined that the project will affect populations with limited English proficiency. Public information meetings and public hearings may be held during the Survey / Design / Rights-Of- Way Phases of projects to advise the public of the associated CE process.

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Under NEPA, an EA is prepared for each action that is not a CE, yet does not clearly require the preparation of an EIS, or where an EA would assist in determining if an EIS is required. An EA will either result in the preparation of an EIS or a FONSI.

The vast majority of projects are funded with both federal and State funds. If a project requires an EA and uses any state funds, the EA may also be published as a joint Federal EA/Connecticut EIE under CEPA. On occasion, however, a project requiring an EA may not require an EIE. These determinations are made on a project-by-project basis and the decision to undertake an EIE takes place using guidance from the Department's Environmental Classification Document. If a joint document is done, the Department takes the responsibility of circulating the joint EA/EIE to satisfy the appropriate public involvement requirements for both an EA under NEPA and an EIE under CEPA. . Although there is no need to circulate an EA for comment under federal regulations, a notice of availability of an

EA/EIE or a stand-alone EA shall be sent by the Department to the affected units of Federal, State, and local government. The document must be made available for public inspection at the appropriate federal regional office, the Department and on the Department's web site. Additionally, a joint EA/EIE will be made available at relevant town clerks' offices, and public libraries. Although public hearings are not required during the NEPA phase for EAs, the Department will determine on a project by project basis whether to hold a public hearing. If a hearing is not held, the public is afforded an opportunity to request a hearing as language regarding this will be included in the notice of availability. For projects requiring a joint EA/EIE, it has been Department practice to hold a public hearing.

FHWA regulation 23 CFR 771.111(h)(2)(iii) requires one or more public hearings or the opportunity for hearing(s) to be held by the Department at a convenient time and place for any Federal-aid project which requires significant amounts of right-of-way, substantially changes the layout or functions of connecting roadways or of the facility being improved, has a substantial adverse impact on abutting property, otherwise has a significant social, economic, environmental or other effect, or for which the lead Federal agency determines that a public hearing is in the public interest.

If a joint EA/EIE is written, the public outreach will follow the same path to satisfy an EIE under CEPA as well as NEPA. If the EA is a stand-alone document it must be made available to the public at the hearing (if one is held) and for a minimum of 15 days in advance of the public hearing (if one is held) at the locations listed above. The notice of the public hearing shall be placed in local newspapers and shall announce the availability of the document and where it may be obtained and reviewed. Comments must be submitted to the Department within 30 days of the availability of the EA.

If no significant impacts are identified, the Department shall recommend a FONSI to the lead Federal agency. Once a FONSI is issued, a notice of availability must be sent to the affected units of Federal, State, and local government and the document shall be made available upon request from the public. If a FONSI is issued for actions listed in 771.115(a), copies of the EA shall be made available for public review for a minimum of 30 days before the final decision to prepare a FONSI can be approved. This public availability shall be announced by a notice in newspapers similar to a public hearing notice. After a FONSI has been issued, by the lead federal agency, copies shall be sent to the affected units of federal, state, and local governments and the document shall be available upon public request.

If it is determined that the level of impacts warrants an EIS, then the procedures previously outlined for the preparation of an EIS shall be followed.

Reevaluations

If the NEPA process is complete and 1) three years have passed since any federal action has taken place; or 2) the project scope has changed, as required by 23 CFR 771.129, the FHWA, in cooperation with the Department, shall reevaluate the project's environmental

documents. This reevaluation will determine whether changes in the project or new information after the NEPA process is complete warrant additional public involvement. If a project is funded by another lead federal agency such as the FAA, coordination shall take place with that agency to determine the reevaluation process. Reevaluations do not have a public involvement requirement. If it is determined that the NEPA process needs to be re-opened, public involvement requirements would apply according to the type of environmental document and would follow the relevant outreach as mentioned above.

CEPA Documentation

The purpose of CEPA is to identify and evaluate the impacts of proposed State actions that could have a potential to significantly impact the environment. Criteria set forth in the Department's Environmental Classification Document (ECD) will determine whether or not a State Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) shall be prepared under CEPA.

Scoping

Before preparing an EIE, the Department shall conduct an early public scoping process to help ensure that relevant environmental concerns are considered in an adequate and timely manner. The Department shall achieve this by publishing a scoping notice in the *Environmental Monitor*, an online publication, to solicit comments from the public and other State agencies regarding the scope of alternatives and environmental impacts that should be considered for further study. The Department must also publish in the *Environmental Monitor* a notice of the opportunity to petition for a public scoping meeting, or the date, time and location of any such meeting already scheduled. Members of the public and any interested State agency representatives may submit comments on the nature and extent of any environmental impacts of the proposed action during the thirty days following the publication of the scoping notice in the *Environmental Monitor*. A public scoping meeting shall be held at the discretion of the Department or if twenty-five persons or an association having not less than twenty-five persons requests such a meeting within ten days of the publication of the notice in the *Environmental Monitor*. If a public scoping meeting is already scheduled, it shall be held at least ten days after the scoping notice appears in the *Environmental Monitor* and shall provide the following:

- a description of the proposed action
- a description of the purpose and need of the proposed action
- a list of the criteria for a site for the proposed action
- a list of potential sites for the proposed action
- the resources of any proposed site for the proposed action
- the environmental limitations of such sites
- potential alternatives to the proposed action; and
- any additional information the Department deems necessary

Any comments or information received during the early scoping process must be addressed

in the EIE, and any substantive issues raised must be evaluated.

If, after a scoping notice has been posted and comments from the public and regulatory agencies have been received, the Department determines that the action will not require an EIE; then the Department will post a post scoping notice including memorandum of findings. This will include all comments received and responses, as well as any environmental analyses performed. The memorandum of findings will then indicate that an EIE is not warranted and that the post scoping notice will conclude the CEPA process for that project.

Environmental Impact Evaluation

If an EIE is prepared, the document is circulated to other State agencies, and is made available for public review at the office of the local town clerk as well as the local and state library, and the Department. The Department must publish a notice of the availability of the EIE in a general circulation newspaper in the affected town at least once a week for three consecutive weeks, as well as in the *Environmental Monitor*. If it is determined that the project may affect a population with significant Limited English Proficiency, notices will be posted in periodicals written in that particular language if such periodicals exist. The mandatory 45-day public review and comment period begins on the day that the notice is published in the *Environmental Monitor*. These notices can also announce a public hearing if the Department has scheduled one; however, a public hearing is required if twenty-five persons or an association having not less than twenty-five persons requests a public hearing within ten days of the publication of the EIE availability notice in the *Environmental Monitor*. It is Department policy, however, to hold a public hearing for all EIE documents. As previously mentioned, if Federal funds are present, the Department will publish a joint NEPA/CEPA document in most cases. A summary of public comments and the public hearing record is included in the Record of Decision (ROD).

Public Involvement specific to Cultural Resource Impacts

Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* was enacted in an effort to maintain a balance between preservation concerns and federal undertakings. Section 106 requires federal agencies to consider the impacts their projects will have on historic properties and cultural resources. The law generally requires that consultation take place between the federal agency, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) (or a Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) if the project occurs upon Tribal lands), representatives of any federally-recognized Native American Tribal nations with a historical connection to the relevant area, stake holding parties with a vested interest in resources affected, and the general public at large, for any undertaking that has the potential to affect historic properties. Section 106 also allows the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on such projects.

The Section 106 Process

In order to initiate the Section 106 process, the federal agency supporting an action must

determine whether the proposed project is an undertaking that could potentially affect historic properties. If the undertaking has no potential to cause effects, there are no further obligations under Section 106. If it is determined, however, that the undertaking has the potential to affect historic properties, further investigation is needed. A reasonable and good faith effort to carry out appropriate identification efforts, which may include background research, consultation, and site visits, must be made in order to determine whether any resources listed upon or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places exist within the area of potential effect of the undertaking. In some cases it will be necessary to carry out a formal Phase I cultural resource field survey. The Office of Environmental Planning (OEP) can make arrangements for a consultant to carry out this work upon request. The Department's cultural resources expert may need to contact SHPO, relevant Tribes, and/or other stake-holding parties for consultation in order to make or recommend a determination of effect.

The federal agency will ultimately reach one of three possible findings regarding the entire project's impact on archaeological and historical resources:

- No Historic Properties Affected,
- No Adverse Effect, or
- Adverse Effect

Section 106 Public Participation Requirements

The general public is specifically named as a participant in the Section 106 process under the implementing regulations (*see 36 CFR 800.2 –Participants in the Section 106 Process*). The federal agency official is responsible for providing information to the public and interested parties on the federal action and shall seek and consider the views of the public and other interested parties on the federal action in a manner that reflects the complexity of the undertaking and its effects on historic properties. In the case of FHWA projects, this responsibility is usually delegated to the Department (CTDOT). The agency may use procedures for public involvement carried out under the National Environmental Policy Act, or other State-level legislation, to satisfy public involvement requirements under Section 106, so long as such procedures provide adequate opportunity for public participation consistent with principles mandated under *36 CFR 800*, outlined below.

Public participation under Section 106 should be afforded according to the level of anticipated impact to historic properties. The general principles are outlined in the Section 106 implementing regulations as follows:

- **No Historic Properties Affected**
 - Documentation supporting the Section 106 determination of no historic properties affected shall be made available for public inspection prior to approving the undertaking (*36 CFR 800.4(d)(1)*).

- **No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties**
 - Documentation supporting the Section 106 determination of effect shall be made available to the public *upon request* (emphasis added), subject to confidentiality provisions (36 CFR 800.5(d)(1)).

- **Adverse Effect to Historic Properties**
 - Documentation supporting the Section 106 determination of effect shall be made available to the public. Opportunity for members of the public to express their views on resolving the adverse effects of the undertaking shall be provided. There shall be appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure that the public's views are considered in planning to resolve the adverse effects (36 CFR 800.6(a)(4)).

Section 106 public outreach requirements can almost always be satisfied through coordination of the historic properties analysis and determination process with otherwise scheduled project-related public outreach by the engineering/design team. Public informational meetings on the project should specifically explain the proposed action's effect on historic properties and cultural resources to the extent they are known at the time of the meeting. The public and interested parties should be given time to address concerns at the meeting and afterward by written comment to the federal or state agency (see 36 CFR 800.2(d) – *The Public*). In the case that only one public information meeting will be held for a project, OEP recommends delaying such until at least a preliminary determination of effect has been made so as to present it at said meeting. In cases where there is no public information meeting planned for an undertaking and the finding is one of no historic properties affected or no adverse effect, simple mention in a local newspaper of the Section 106 determination should be adequate.

Public Coordination under Section 4(f) of the DOT Act

The FHWA, the FTA and all other U.S. DOT agencies cannot approve the use of land in a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site unless the following conditions apply:

1. There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land.
2. The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from use; or
3. The use, including any measures to minimize harm will have a *de minimis* impact on the property.

It is the responsibility of the Office of Environmental Planning in the Bureau of Policy and Planning, in cooperation with the lead federal agency, to determine whether a Section 4(f)

resource will be affected by a federally funded transportation project.

Section 4(f) is concerned with the use of significant public lands or historic properties. “Use” of a Section 4(f) property occurs when land is either permanently incorporated into a transportation facility, when there is a temporary occupancy of land that is adverse, or when there is no incorporation of the resource, but the project’s proximity impacts are so severe that they are substantially impaired (constructive use).

There are three types of Section 4(f) Evaluations that are used, depending on the impact of the respective project. They are as follows:

1. Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation. When it is determined that the impact to the Section 4(f) resource will be significant, an Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation must be reviewed by the Department of Interior and approved by the lead Federal agency’s legal counsel. The impacts must be made know to the public during any public outreach that is held during the NEPA process. This is often done through public information meetings in coordination with the design/engineering team within the Department.
2. Programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluation. This may only be used if project circumstances satisfy all of the conditions for the applicable Nationwide Programmatic 4(f) Evaluation, and when it is determined that the impact will be less significant than that of an individual Section 4(f) Evaluation. These programmatic Section 4(f) Evaluations are prepared in coordination with the FHWA and need only be approved by the FHWA Division office. No other Federal Agency has a Programmatic Section 4(f) process. Public awareness of the impacts is made known during any public outreach held during the NEPA process. This is often done through public information meetings in coordination with the design/engineering team within the Department.
3. Section 4(f) De Minimis Impacts In August 2005, Section 4(f) legislation was amended to simplify the process and approval of projects that have only de minimis impacts on Section 4(f) resources. Once it is determined that a Section 4(f) resource qualifies as a de minimis impact, analysis of avoidance alternatives are not mandatory and the Section 4(f) evaluation process is finalized. If the impacts are to a public park, recreation area, or refuge, the public must be made aware of the impacts and given time to comment. This can be accomplished through public information meetings, public notice, or advertisements in a local newspaper. After the public comment period expires, a letter must be obtained by the Officials with Jurisdiction over the resource concurring that the impacts are in fact minor and will not adversely affect the resource in any way. The Section 106 public involvement process is followed for the use of historic resources.

CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DURING THE SURVEY/DESIGN/RIGHTS-OF-WAY PHASES OF PROJECTS

The Department is responsible for public involvement during the development and implementation phases of projects. Specific procedures for public involvement will vary with the scope and location of the project, as well as with other factors including whether or not it is a municipally administered design and/or construction contract. Such procedures will be governed by the Department's current *Public Involvement Guidance Manual* and the Department's Work Zone Safety and Mobility Policy and Implementation Plan, which are incorporated by reference. Project managers will be aware of the various mandates at various stages of the survey, design and rights of way phased of a project and will fully comply with them.

Once a project has been identified and initiated for design, notification should be made by the lead agency/office to the general public, of the intent to initiate the action. This notification should include a description of the proposed activity, schedule and a Department/Municipal contact for additional information.

The public involvement processes shall be proactive and provide timely public notice, full public access to agency/municipal personnel during the decision-making process, opportunities for early and continuing involvement, and detailed information, so the public can evaluate the project's importance, anticipated costs, impacts and benefits. The public involvement process will assure the public has the opportunity to help shape the substance of the project. Activities will be consistent with 23 CFR 771.

The design of a transportation facility is typically undertaken in stages of completion (i.e. Preliminary Engineering studies, Preliminary Design, Semi-Final Design, and Final Design). The Department/Municipality may conduct public meetings or other public outreach methods prior to and at any time during the development of the project, depending on the public involvement strategies deemed appropriate for the project. At a minimum, there will be at least one opportunity for a public hearing to be held for any federal-aid project which requires significant amounts of right-of-way, substantially changes the layout or functions of connecting roadways or of the facility being improved, has a substantial adverse impact on abutting property, otherwise has a significant social, economic, environmental or other effect, or for which the Department determines that a public hearing is in the public interest.

The Department will discuss the need for a public meeting and type (public information meeting or public hearing) required with the local elected official or his /her representative. Coordination with public officials should take place prior to public meetings, with the goal of addressing any concerns. The opportunity for public comment and participation can be made at this time for the action's sponsors to identify any additional specific issues and concerns

that need to be addressed. This can be accomplished through a variety of strategies. Locations for holding the meeting and posting the legal notice will be coordinated, in addition to any special local cultural considerations such as the need for interpretation for communities / property owners not proficient with the English language. If the Department and the local elected official believe a public meeting is not warranted, the Department will document the determination and concurrence by the local elected official in the project files.

Direct notification should also be made to property owners of the start of land survey activities, and subsurface investigations including environmental testing (when entry onto private property is required). This notification is the responsibility of the office overseeing or performing the activity on private property and would advise the property owner of the Department's "right of entry" policy and provide an outline of the procedure. The notification must also request an authorizing signature on a form provided by the sponsoring agency acknowledging the property owner's understanding of the information provided.

Project Managers will document issues and commitments made during the survey/design/right of way processes and make those responsible for completing the project aware of the issues and commitments.

For actions that require the acquisition of additional rights-of-way, owners of affected properties shall be contacted individually to review those effects with a representative from the DOT Office of Rights-of-Way. This will also be stated during the public engagement activity and noted that ROW acquisitions must follow the Uniform Relocation Act.

For projects determined to be "significant" under the Department's Work Zone Safety and Mobility Policy and Implementation Plan, a Transportation Management Plan (TMP), including an appropriate Public Outreach/Public Involvement (PO/PI) program will be developed.

CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DURING THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE PHASES OF PROJECTS

Public Involvement during the Construction Phase

Once the construction phase of a project is initiated, the responsibility for continued project involvement and commitment to implementing context-sensitive solutions is transferred to the Department's Office of Construction. It is important to accomplish the final posting of documented public involvement information to ProjectWise by the Project Design Unit to the Office of Construction as soon as the plans, specifications and estimate for the contract are approved for a project letting. Informal and early coordination between the design and construction phases of projects is also encouraged and necessary, especially for significant and/or controversial projects. It is important to maintain some level of public outreach and involvement during the project construction phase. In addition to the public involvement that was established during the project planning and design phase, it now becomes important to also reach out to the traveling public that will be affected during project construction. Two critical stakeholders during the construction phase include:

1. **The Community** – The continuation of outreach should involve those persons, groups, officials, agencies, etc. that were involved in the planning and design phases of the project. They have an extended interest in the project through the construction period, and after, to ensure that commitments are maintained. It is important to continue to keep the community informed using appropriate outreach tools.
2. **The Traveling Public** – This group consists of those persons, groups, etc. that were not necessarily involved with the project in the planning, design and/or environmental phases of the project. However, the construction of the project will now affect them through direct and/or indirect disruption to the transportation network. The affected public is inclusive of the general traveling public as well as emergency services personnel, trucking companies, transit operators, etc. It is very important to keep this group informed and seek their input to promote positive public relations for the Department, help achieve desired traffic flow and re-routing, maintain work zone safety, and generally reduce the impacts of the construction.

The October 2007 FHWA Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule identifies very specific requirements for public involvement in the planning, design and construction phases of a project, as well as during the subsequent operation of the facility. The Work Zone Safety and Mobility Rule, as codified in 23CFR630, Subpart J, requires the sponsor agency (the Connecticut Department of Transportation) to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for "significant" projects. An important key element of the TMP is development and

implementation of an effective public information and outreach campaign to mitigate negative construction zone impacts related to congestion and safety for workers and the traveling public. A significant project is defined as a project that, alone or in combination with other concurrent projects nearby, is anticipated to cause sustained work zone impacts (i.e., mobility or congestion and worker/traveling public safety) that are greater than what is considered tolerable in engineering judgment. For those significant projects there must be a Transportation Management Plan and corresponding public involvement element. The public involvement component must include communication strategies that inform affected road users, the general public, area residents and businesses and public entities about the proposed and ongoing project, anticipated work zone impacts and changing project and travel conditions. During the construction phase of a project, it is important to keep the Department of Transportation's Office of Communications and Operations Centers advised regularly on project conditions that will affect the traveling public. The information provided will be used for updating the Travel Information Gateway section of the Department's web site, issuing press releases, and keeping the media and public informed about on-going construction projects, as well as real time advisories via the Department's permanent variable message board system.

To assist in facilitating the dissemination of public information during project development and implementation, as well as during subsequent maintenance activities, the FHWA has developed the "Work Zone Public Information and Outreach Strategies Guide". The informative guide is aimed at assisting transportation agencies in the planning and implementation of effective public involvement and outreach plans for all projects. The comprehensive Guide covers all aspects of public outreach from determining the scope of the plan through evaluating the effectiveness. Effective methods and strategies on how to communicate with the targeted audience during construction are identified and explained in the Guide. These strategies include:

- Branding – Establishing a trademark for the project work zone campaign
- Media Outreach – Radio, TV and newspapers reports for all major operational work and special events,
 - Consider providing announcements in majority language of Limited English Proficiency(LEP) areas, where applicable, in specific locations
- Websites –
 - Project information site – (can be continued from Design/NEPA phase)
 - Department website regularly reports work zone areas that affect traffic patterns
- E-mail Alert – Direct contact with subscribers and the Department is developing the 511 service which provides current information about travel conditions, allowing travelers to make better choices
- Social Media including Facebook and Twitter.
 - Inform the public of Mobile Phone Apps for live traffic updates and transit schedules that are affected by work zone areas Printed Materials – Project brochures for distribution

- Project Information Phone Line/Highway Advisory Radio – Free calls to get updates
- Site Specific signage including but not limited to, Changeable Message Signs- On-site resources for drivers
- Public Meetings, Workshops, Community Events – Opportunities for project and work zone information for the public, including Listening Workshops
 - Hold meetings at convenient locations and times for all affected individuals, ensuring meeting locations are easily accessible by transit.
 - Consider having a translator present for LEP communities
- Project Information Center – On- or near-site accessible locations, possibly the project field office
- Videos – Readily available for widespread use
- Highway Operations Center, which services the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

The importance of good public involvement and outreach in the construction of a project cannot be over-emphasized. Not only does it ensure regulatory compliance, but it will provide for a safer and, potentially less congested, work zone. It will also promote goodwill for the Department by keeping the public informed and involved during the critical, highly-visible construction phase of a project.

Public Involvement during the Highway Operations and Operations Support Phases

The operation support for Connecticut's transportation system is a critical link between the Department and the public. These functions are evident on a daily basis with a direct link that benefits the public, local officials, community groups, highway users, law enforcement personnel, and others. After the construction phase of a project is completed, the operation and operation support phase begins. For nearly completed projects, there should be assurance that all environmental commitments and mitigation measures are in place. Information on those measures should be transferred from the Office of Construction's District Office to the Department's Highway Operations District Maintenance staff. No legal public involvement requirements are applicable during the operation and operational support phases, but methods for ongoing communication with the public and procedures for Department project follow-up should be established between District's Construction and Maintenance Staff. Most of the public involvement in these phases will most likely be in the form of written questions and/or complaints from the public. The best way to respond to these issues is to ensure that the public is adequately and proactively informed about a specific project or projects and that all communications are responded to promptly and effectively. All of these questions can be answered by having access to the project documents and having discussions with the previously involved Project Design and District Construction Staff. Having accurate and thorough project information and continued sensitivity to public

concerns throughout the operations and operational support phase will enable the Department's District Maintenance staff to respond to public inquiries in a timely and efficient manner. By following these guidelines, the Department can minimize miscommunication with or the confusion of individuals who may be impacted by a transportation project. In order to ensure effective use of public involvement techniques and input, it is important to document all activity, participants, agreements and discussion points and make this information available to the public. The documentation must be complete and take place at the time of the public involvement activity (i.e., public hearing, transcript and sign-in) or shortly thereafter in an official file document. **It is critical to indicate that the letter, intent and spirit of the referenced regulations are being followed.** The Department's responses to comments, as well as other information received through the public involvement process, should also be maintained in this record file by uploading to ProjectWise. The public should be informed as to where to access documentation on a project-by-project basis.

Public Involvement during the Maintenance Phases

The Department's Office of Maintenance conducts on a daily basis throughout the state numerous activities that can affect travelers, residences and businesses. These activities can range from pothole repair to roadway resurfacing. Public outreach for maintenance activities that will result in a long-term (one day or more) disturbance of traffic movement can be conducted using media strategies. For roadway resurfacing projects, a specific public outreach procedure has been established. The components of this procedure are as follows:

- A letter is sent to Town Officials from the Department's District Maintenance Director advising them of the termini and incidentals that will be completed as part of the resurfacing project.
- Town Officials are contacted by the Department's District representatives to confirm that they received the letter and to discuss any concerns or answer any questions they may have.
- The Council of Governments (COGs) are notified of the details of resurfacing projects by staff in the Department's Bureau of Policy and Planning.

A copy of the resurfacing list is also sent to:

- The Bituminous Producers Association and The Connecticut Construction Industries Association,
- Utility Companies
- The Department's Office of Communications is also provided with a copy of the list, and a press release is published prior to the start of work.

CHAPTER 7: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FOR THE BUREAU OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Bureau of Public Transportation has a wide ranging mandate which includes day-to-day operations of rail and bus transit services, capital project planning and implementation, conduct of planning studies, and management and oversight of other federally funded programs.

Public Transit Service Provision

The Bureau of Public Transportation maintains ongoing communication with customers using traditional as well as more modern methods of communication. Customer interaction can take place through our telephone information centers, or by writing letters in hardcopy or contacting us via email, where we have distinct email mailboxes for service complaints and comments.

Consumer input can also be solicited or is provided at certain other community outreach events that take place. Corporate outreach is led by our CTrides program. Other meetings and opportunities for input are provided at advisory councils in other transit and paratransit service areas around the state, including ADA Advisory Councils in areas where ADA paratransit is provided by the state contractors. Rail feedback is also solicited through the Connecticut Commuter Rail Council which holds monthly public meetings in the rail service areas.

Fare and Service Changes

The department has very specific processes whenever fare changes or significant service changes are proposed. When proposed changes reach the specified thresholds, a Service and Fare Equity analysis (SAFE) must be conducted and presented to the public at public meetings in the service area. The details of the mandated outreach effort are outlined below.

Title VI Future Fare and Service Equity Analyses

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) will conduct equity analyses whenever fare changes and/or major service changes, defined by the SAFE Policy, are planned. Equity analyses will be conducted prior to notifying the public of the proposed change regardless of whether the changes will cause positive or negative impacts to riders.

CTDOT will utilize a four step process as detailed below:

- 1) CTDOT will develop the narrative of fare and/or service changes. These narratives are prepared as part of the normal service review process and analysis of proposed changes, or as part of the financial analysis package for a fare increase that is done as part of the budgeting process.
- 2) CTDOT will analyze the proposed major service and/or fare changes and to determine if the change falls under CTDOT's adverse effects definition provided in the SAFE Policies. If it is determined a disparate impact or disproportionate burden exists, based on the established thresholds of the SAFE Policies, we will examine whether alternatives exist to maintain the effect of the service and/or fare change, while taking steps to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts where practicable. Should an alternative not be present that avoids, minimizes, or mitigates the disparate impact or disproportionate burden to the minority/low-income populations an explanation and justification of the proposed changes will be prepared to present at the public hearings.
- 3) CTDOT will conduct a comprehensive community outreach process, to afford the public with opportunities to provide input, alternatives, or request clarification prior to the adoption of major service changes that may result in a disparate impact or disproportionate burden, and, in accordance with long-standing practice, any fare level or structure change regardless of if there is a determination of disparate impact or disproportionate burden.

A Connecticut Department of Transportation news release announcing the public hearings with the dates and locations of each hearing will be posted to the CTDOT website at least two weeks prior to the public hearings. In addition, legal notices will be published in newspapers. Interior notices regarding the public hearings and the opportunity for public comment will be placed on board buses and at New Haven Line rail stations and the Shore Line East rail stations as appropriate for the changes proposed.

To ensure sufficient public participation from minority and low-income communities the Department will conduct outreach to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs). This will involve emailing all CBOs and FBOs within the affected service areas (for statewide service changes and fare changes, all CBOs and FBOs in the Department's database will be contacted) with the public hearing information and a copy of the news release. The email announcement will include details on how their members can request language assistance at the hearings and the date by which it should be requested to allow CTDOT sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements for the hearings. The Department will also refer to the LEP and Safe Harbor maps and include information, in the safe harbor languages identified in the targeted service area(s), on how to request interpretation and translation services of documents describing the proposed changes and the SAFE analysis conducted for the proposed changes.

In addition to contacting the CBOs and FBOs the Department will provide this information to all Council of Governments (COG). During the two weeks leading up to the public hearings, the Department will periodically send reminders and any updates to all CBOs, FBOs and COGs.

These notices are considered to be vital documents and CTDOT will adhere to its Language Assistance Plan to ensure that Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations within the affected service area(s) are informed of the proposed service or fare changes and can participate in community discussions. CTDOT will refer to the LEP and Safe Harbor maps to determine what languages should be considered when written materials are produced. Documents detailing the proposed changes will be translated into identified LEP languages including Safe Harbor languages that are requested in response to the notices announcing the hearings.

During the hearing the Department will explain the purpose of the hearing and the proposed changes. CTDOT will discuss strategies used to minimize and mitigate any disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens found during the analyses (should any exist). The moderator will open the hearings to provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. All questions and comments pertaining to the proposed changes will be documented and addressed as appropriate for the final hearing record.

After all scheduled public hearings have been held, a final email will be sent to CBOs, FBOs, COGs, and individuals who provided an email on the public hearing sign in sheet, thanking those who attended and providing details on how to submit comments during the comment period for those who were unable to attend or unable to provide comments during the hearings.

4) CTDOT will review all comments and feedback received during the public hearings and makes any necessary revisions to the proposed changes. If the major service changes and/or fare changes must be implemented, despite disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens, the Department will demonstrate that it has a substantial legitimate justification and has analyzed the alternatives to determine that the proposed service and/or fare changes have had their impacts minimized to the extent possible.

Capital Projects Implementation

When an environmental review is required for any capital project, such activities are delegated to the environmental planning office. All public involvement activities in the environmental phase of projects are then conducted in accordance with Chapter 4 of this report. As with any other projects, a stakeholders group is carefully selected, but with public

transportation projects, care is taken to ensure that the stakeholders groups included transit advocacy and interest groups and the public who use public transportation.

As projects progress into the design and construction phases, there is additional public participation recommended or required. For all projects, the public involvement process that is followed mirrors the processes spelled out earlier in this report, or it is conducted directly by departmental staff or their consultants and will comply with the public involvement process laid out in chapter 5 for design of project.

During construction, which is typically managed by Bureau of Construction staff or consultants, the same public processes are followed as for any departmental project as described in chapter 6.

Planning Studies

Planning studies managed by Bureau staff follow the same public outreach and involvement steps described in Chapter 3 though the composition of the advisory groups of stakeholders may vary somewhat from the groups given as examples in Chapter 3 due to the different nature of certain transit planning studies.

State-Managed Programs

The federal authorization includes several programs that are mandated to be managed or overseen by the state departments of transportation. These programs are funded under the Section 5310 Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program and Section 5311 Non-Urbanized Areas programs. While 5310 funding is allotted to the large urbanized areas and local recipients could manage those programs, in Connecticut the management has always been deferred to the state and completely managed by the state for both large and small urbanized and the non-urbanized areas.

Section 5310 - Federal Transit Administration Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities

Public participation is carried out for the Federal Transit Administration Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310), in coordination with metropolitan planning organization and grantees. Projects that are awarded funding must be derived from the locally coordinated public transit – human services transportation plan.

Outreach - CTDOT created a one page application notice to briefly explain the program and how to apply. When distributing the application notice, the Office of Transit and Ridesharing requests updated contact lists for Community and Faith-based organizations from the Office of Contract Compliance. The application notice is distributed via e-mail to prior recipients,

interested parties that have asked to be included in the distribution, community and faith-based organizations, transportation providers, and council of governments. The application is also posted to Biznet, which is a state administered portal for information on state contracts, solicitations, and vendor information.

During TIP/STIP approval, a list of approved projects is provided for review and comment.

The CTDOT website has a page on the Section 5310 program to provide application information and explain reporting requirements. CTDOT staff is available for technical assistance on completing the application or reporting via phone or email.

Monitoring - Applicants must explain how they will inform people with limited English proficiency, seniors, and people with disabilities about the availability of the services they will provide. They also must provide data on the race of the population they will serve. To verify compliance, during site visits staff reviews how the grantee provides information about the services they provide, how they inform people of their rights under Title VI, and how they put into practice their public participation plan and language assistance plan.

Section 5311 – Federal Transit Administration Formula Grants for Non-Urbanized Areas

Every four years CTDOT solicits Section 5311 Grant Applications from current Section 5311 Subrecipients as well as private bus companies operating intercity service in non-urbanized areas. The grant application is posted on the CTDOT website for public view. Any entity which currently is not a subrecipient is welcome to submit their proposal and complete application. In their Section 5311 Four Year Grant Application, subrecipients must provide data on what percentages of the population they serve are minorities, low income, and LEP populations.

CTDOT staff is available for technical assistance on completing the application via phone or email or a visit at the subrecipient/applicant office.

Outreach – CTDOT invites and encourages rural transit operators to participate in Quarterly Transit Meetings, facilitated by CTDOT staff and attended by rural and urban transit districts, private bus operators, and other interested parties. Information is disseminated to participants on a broad range of transportation issues such as, budgets, insurance, bus operations, capital equipment, service enhancements, and federal/state program regulations. They also serve as an opportunity for transit operators to bring forth and discuss any issues affecting their agency or bus services being provided to the general public.

Through the Section 5311 Four Year Grant Application process, CTDOT requests its subrecipients to describe their public involvement efforts and community outreach.

Monitoring - Each Section 5311 subrecipient is required to have a Public Participation Plan in place which is reviewed and approved by CTDOT. Section 5311 Subrecipients' Public Participation Plans contain at the minimum information about:

- a) Scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for minority and LEP communities,
- b) Employing different meeting sizes and formats,
- c) Coordinating with community- and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities,
- d) Considering radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations. Outreach to LEP populations could also include audio programming available on podcasts.
- e) Providing opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews or use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments.

CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND REVIEW

The public involvement process will be completed to ensure an opportunity for all to participate in our process:

The Public Involvement Procedures document will be available for the public to review.

A Legal Notice will be placed in the Connecticut newspaper such as but not limited to the following list

The Connecticut Post	The New Haven Register
The New London Day	The Torrington Register Citizen
The Danbury News Times	The Northeast News Today
The Hartford Courant	The Waterbury Republican-American
	The Norwalk Hour
The Manchester Journal	The Stamford Advocate and Greenwich Times
The Middletown Press	The Willimantic Chronicle

The Legal Notice will inform the public of the availability of the PIP for their review and comment. It will state in detail the PIP's comment period, the starting and ending date. A copy of this notice will be included in Appendix B.

A Brochure detailing the availability of the PIP for review and comment will be sent to a little over 1100 individuals (using our Title VI, EJ and LEP contact database) and businesses who have expressed interest in the past in the Transportation planning process. A copy of this brochure will be included in Appendix B.

Comments and concerns will be received, addressed and incorporated in the final document. The department encourages the MPOs to have the PIP available in their office for public review and comment. This extends the PIP public involvement process to most parts of the state.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF ACRONYMS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

A-B

AC	Advisory Committee
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADA	<i>Americans with Disabilities Act</i>

C

CBO	Community based organizations
CE	Categorical Exclusion
CEPA	<i>Connecticut Environmental Policy Act</i>
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	<i>Code of Federal Regulation</i>
COG	Council of Governments
CT	Connecticut
CTDOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation

D

DECD	Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
DEEP	Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
DOT	Department of Transportation

E

EA	Environmental Assessment
ECD	Environmental Classification Document
e.g.	exempli gratia (for example)
EIE	Environmental Impact Evaluation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency

F

FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAST Act	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FBO	Faith based organizations
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FTA	Federal Transit Administration

G-K

Gov	Government
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L

LEP Limited English Proficiency
LRP Long-Range Transportation Plan

M

MAP21 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MPO Metropolitan Planning Organizations
MTP Metropolitan Transportation Plan

N

NEPA *National Environmental Policy Act*

O

OEP Office of Environmental Planning
OCC Office of Contract Compliance
OPM Office of Policy and Management

P

PIM Public Information Meetings
P.L. Public Law
PO/PI Public Outreach/Public Involvement

Q-R

ROD Record of Decision

S

SAFE Service and Fare Equity Analysis
SAFETEA-LU *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users*
SG Stakeholders Group
SHPO State Historic Preservation Office
STIP Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

T

THPO Tribal Historic Preservation Office
TIPs Transportation Improvement Programs
TMP Transportation Management Plan
TRS Telecommunications Relay Service
TTY Text phone

U-Z

- U.S. or US United States
- U.S.C. United States Code

