

draft Public Participation Plan

For the La Crosse Area Planning Committee

For Approval on:

9/20/2017

La Crosse Area Planning Committee

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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This LAPC Public Participation Plan and other LAPC documents, meeting minutes and agendas, and other information may also be obtained on our website at:

www.lapc.org

To request this document in an alternate format, please contact Jackie Eastwood at 608.785.6141 or at jeastwood@lacrossecounty.org.

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Public Participation Plan

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Why We Need a Public Participation Plan

Federal Requirement

Beginning with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) have been required to “develop and utilize a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing MTPs [metropolitan transportation plans] and TIPs [transportation improvement programs].” The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) of 2012 expanded on the provisions to require extensive stakeholder participation above and beyond public involvement.

The public participation plan provision expressed in the current Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act signed into law in 2015 is codified in Title 23 Part 450 of the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 450) and in 49 CFR 613. Section 450.316, Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation, requires MPOs to develop a participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

- Providing adequate public notice;
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information;
- Employing visualization techniques to describe plans and programs;
- Making public information available in electronically accessible formats;
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems;
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment if the final metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) or transportation improvement program (TIP) differs significantly from the version made available for public comment;
- Coordinating with statewide processes; and,
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the participation plan.

Purpose for Update

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC) Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a policy document outlining the LAPC’s public input opportunities and process. It is updated at least every five years so as to incorporate new federal requirements, if applicable, and to adjust policies as needed based on changes in technologies and internal review of existing policies and their effectiveness.

This PPP updates the 2013 PPP principally to establish policies and procedures that ensure equal access by persons with disabilities to LAPC processes, plans, and programs; to include public input processes and procedures for the *Title VI Non-Discrimination Program and Limited-English Proficiency Plan*; to evaluate our outreach techniques for effectiveness; and to outline a public participation improvement plan.

Interested Parties, Participation and Consultation

The LAPC actively strives for an all-inclusive public process consistent with the provisions of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 450 (23 CFR 450) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 49 CFR 613 as codified in the FAST Act.

Interested Parties

In response to the SAFETEA-LU provision that MPOs develop their public participation plans “in consultation with an expanded list of ‘interested parties’,” the LAPC has identified several stakeholder groups as important participants in the public participation process for LAPC plans and programs.

Minority & Low-Income Populations

Environmental Justice, as defined in *Environmental Justice and Transportation Investment Policy*, is “a public policy goal of assuring that adverse human health or environmental effects of government activities do not fall disproportionately upon minority or low-income populations.” In February of 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) 12898, making Environmental Justice a public policy. The U.S. Department of Transportation developed its own order to address environmental justice in June of 1995 and issued its final order in 1997 (updated in 2012). This order requires all projects subject to federal funding to consider explicitly minority and low-income populations.

A disproportionately high and adverse effect, as defined by the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) EO 5610.2, is an adverse effect that:

- Is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; or
- Will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.

An environmental justice analysis is always conducted and included in the transit development plan (TDP), TIP, and MTP.

Minority Population

Minorities are defined as Hispanic and/or non-white persons within the Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race variable of the American Community Survey (ACS). Block groups whose percentage of minority population is greater than the percentage of the minority population of the planning area will be identified as areas of potential disproportionate impact.

Within the minority community reside those who may have limited-English proficiency.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP)

President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, in August of 2000. This order requires that any agency that receives federal funds to establish a means of including Limited-English Proficiency (LEP) persons in the planning process. The Attorney General for Civil Rights subsequently issued the guidance document, *Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English*

Proficiency [Department of Justice (DOJ) LEP Guidance], to assist agencies in taking “reasonable steps to ensure ‘meaningful’ access to the information and services they provide.”

The process for assessing meaningful access is outlined in the Limited-English Proficiency Plan in the [Title VI document](#) posted on the [LAPC website](#).

Anyone in need of interpretive services may contact the LAPC office at 608.785.6141.

Low-Income Populations

The LAPC has taken the recommendation from FTA C 4702.1B to adopt its own threshold for “low-income” and defines a low-income person as “an individual whose family income is at or below 150 percent of the poverty line.” This definition comes from 49 U.S.C. 5302 as amended by MAP-21.

Block groups where the percentage of low-income persons is greater than the percentage of low-income persons in the planning area will be identified as areas of potential disproportionate impact.

Organizations representing these populations are included in LAPC contact lists, with many represented on LAPC committees.

Elderly and Disabled Populations

For planning purposes, the LAPC defines “elderly” as persons 60 years of age and older (persons eligible for La Crosse County elderly transportation services). The “disabled” population includes persons defined by the U.S. Census as having sensory, physical, mental, self-care, and employment disabilities.

Block groups where the percentage of elderly and tracts where the percentage of disabled persons have been determined to be greater than the percentages for the planning area will be identified as areas of potential disproportionate impact.

Elderly and disabled populations are mapped thematically by area and by location of elderly and disabled facilities (i.e. assisted-living facilities, senior centers). As with minority and low-income populations, mapping locations helps identify areas of need and illustrates the relationship between proposed transportation improvements and elderly and disabled populations.

Organizations representing these populations are included in LAPC contact lists, with many represented on LAPC committees.

Transportation Interests

These stakeholders include public and private agencies representing transit, passenger, and freight interests. Organizations representing these interests are included in LAPC contact lists, with many represented on LAPC committees. The Committee on Transit and Active Transportation (CTAT), for example, has members who represent transit agencies while the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has members who represent freight interests. (The CTAT is also represented on the TAC.)

A rather extensive contact list of transit and freight interests is maintained by LAPC staff for public notice and public involvement purposes.

Government Agencies

In order to comply with Federal and State regulations and to be consistent with the planning processes of State and local entities, LAPC staff regularly consult with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation (WisDOT and MnDOT) and State offices of the FHWA through mid-year reviews and committee meetings, and by e-mail and phone as work products are drafted and reviewed. The FTA and FHWA are represented on the TAC.

Other agencies (i.e. La Crosse County Emergency Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ho Chunk Nation, state historical societies, Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources) are consulted during the update of the MTP to provide input on the potential impact of our plans and projects on natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources.

Local municipalities are represented on the LAPC Policy Board and on LAPC subcommittees.

Special Interests

Special-interest groups invited into the process include, but are not limited to:

- Neighborhood associations
- Environmental groups
- Business and economic development organizations
- Institutions of learning
- Bicycle, pedestrian, and transit advocates

These groups offer differing opinions on the need for and scope of transportation services and facilities in the region.

Other Interested Public

Contact lists of “interested-public” are maintained for all LAPC committees. Anyone interested in being added to a mailing list may do so by contacting the LAPC staff office at 608.785.6141.

Opportunities for Participation and Consultation

LAPC Committee Structure

The public is invited to attend any of the three committees that make up the LAPC: The Policy Board, the TAC, and the CTAT. The TAC and CTAT review, prioritize, and recommend policies, projects, plans, and programs to the LAPC Policy Board, which is made up of the highest elected officials from member communities. As the highest authority, the Policy Board makes the final approvals.

The two-person staff work under the direction of the Policy Board and with the guidance of the state DOTs and the state offices of the FHWA.

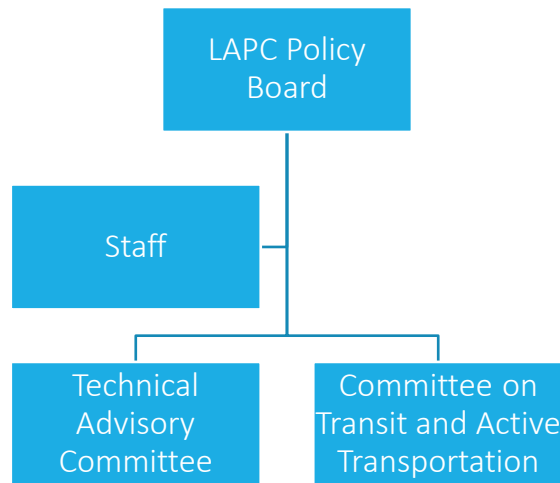


FIGURE 1: LAPC COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Policy Board

WORK ELEMENTS

The LAPC is the MPO and policy-making body for the La Crosse, Wisconsin-La Crescent, Minnesota metropolitan planning area (MPA). The LAPC and its two-person staff are responsible for the development, amendment (if needed), and update of a:

- Long-range (20-yr) MTP updated every five years;
- Short-range (4-yr) TIP updated annually;
- Short-range (2-yr) planning work program (PWP) for LAPC staff updated annually;
- Public participation plan (PPP); and,
- Title VI Program and Limited-English Proficiency Plan.

MEMBERSHIP

The cities of La Crosse and Onalaska in Wisconsin and La Crescent in Minnesota; the villages of Holmen and West Salem in Wisconsin; the towns of Barre, Campbell, Greenfield, Hamilton, Holland, Medary, Onalaska, Shelby and a small portion of Bergen in Wisconsin, and La Crescent and Dresbach in Minnesota

are in the MPA. Not all of these communities, however, belong to the LAPC. (See Figure 2 for a map of the planning area and its constituent communities.)

The LAPC Policy Board is currently comprised of one member from each of 10 governmental entities: the mayors from La Crosse, Onalaska, and La Crescent; the presidents from Holmen and West Salem; the chairpersons from Onalaska, Campbell, Medary, and Shelby; and the board chair for the County of La Crosse.

MEETINGS

The LAPC Policy Board generally conducts business on the third Wednesday of every other month (January, March, May, July, September, November), but may meet more frequently as business dictates. Meetings are held at 4:30 pm in room 1107 of the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 212 6th St N, La Crosse, unless otherwise noted on agendas. Meetings are held at a location and time accessible to persons with disabilities and to persons dependent on public transit, and are open to the public.

All meetings are noticed at least one week in advance, with minutes and agendas distributed via mail and e-mail to the Policy Board, a Policy Board Public distribution list that includes the members of all subcommittees and other interested parties, and the media (agenda only). Meeting materials are also posted to the LAPC website (www.lapc.org) prior to mail and e-mail notice of the meeting.

Technical Advisory Committee

WORK ELEMENTS

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is one of two subcommittees of the LAPC. TAC responsibilities are to:

- Review the PWP, TIP, MTP, and PPP.
- Determine and evaluate transportation and land use alternatives during update of MTP.
- Review, evaluate and recommend adoption of LAPC policies and plans that are not under the purview of the CTAT.
- Solicit, evaluate, and prioritize Surface Transportation Program (STP)-Urban and local studies projects.
- Serve as technical experts.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership includes technical staff from each member municipality, the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation, federal agencies, and business and transportation interests in the region. All approved members have one vote.

MEETINGS

TAC meetings generally take place on the third Wednesday of every other month beginning at 2:30 pm in room 1107 of the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 212 6th St N, La Crosse. During significant planning activities, the TAC may meet monthly. Meetings are held at a location and time accessible to persons with disabilities and to persons dependent on public transit, and are open to the public.

All meetings are noticed at least one week in advance, with minutes and agendas distributed via e-mail to TAC members, TAC-interested parties, and the media (agenda only). Meeting materials are also posted to

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the LAPC website (www.lapc.org) prior to e-mail notice of the meeting. Any change in the meeting date, time, or place is reflected in the agenda.

Committee on Transit and Active Transportation (CTAT)

WORK ELEMENTS

Like the TAC, the CTAT is a subcommittee of the LAPC. CTAT responsibilities are to:

- Review, evaluate and recommend adoption of LAPC policies and plans that are not under the purview of the TAC.
- Solicit, evaluate, and prioritize Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) applications.
- Develop plans and programs that promote transit and active transportation.
- Review the TIP to ensure consideration of transit and active transportation in roadway projects.
- Recommend and review transit and active transportation program elements in the annual LAPC PWP.

MEMBERSHIP

The CTAT strives to obtain membership from all of the LAPC member communities, transit and active transportation advocacy groups, safety officials, and departments of transportation. Interested citizens are also invited to participate.

MEETINGS

The CTAT meetings generally occur on the second Thursday during the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November. They may occur more or less frequently as business dictates. Meetings begin at 3:00 pm in room 1107 of the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 212 6th St N, La Crosse. Meetings are held at a location and time accessible to persons with disabilities and to persons dependent on public transit, and are open to the public.

All meetings are noticed at least one week in advance, with minutes and agendas distributed via e-mail to CTAT members, CTAT-interested parties, and the media (agenda only). Meeting materials are also posted to the LAPC website (www.lapc.org) prior to e-mail notice of the meeting. Any change in the meeting date, time, or place is reflected in the agenda.

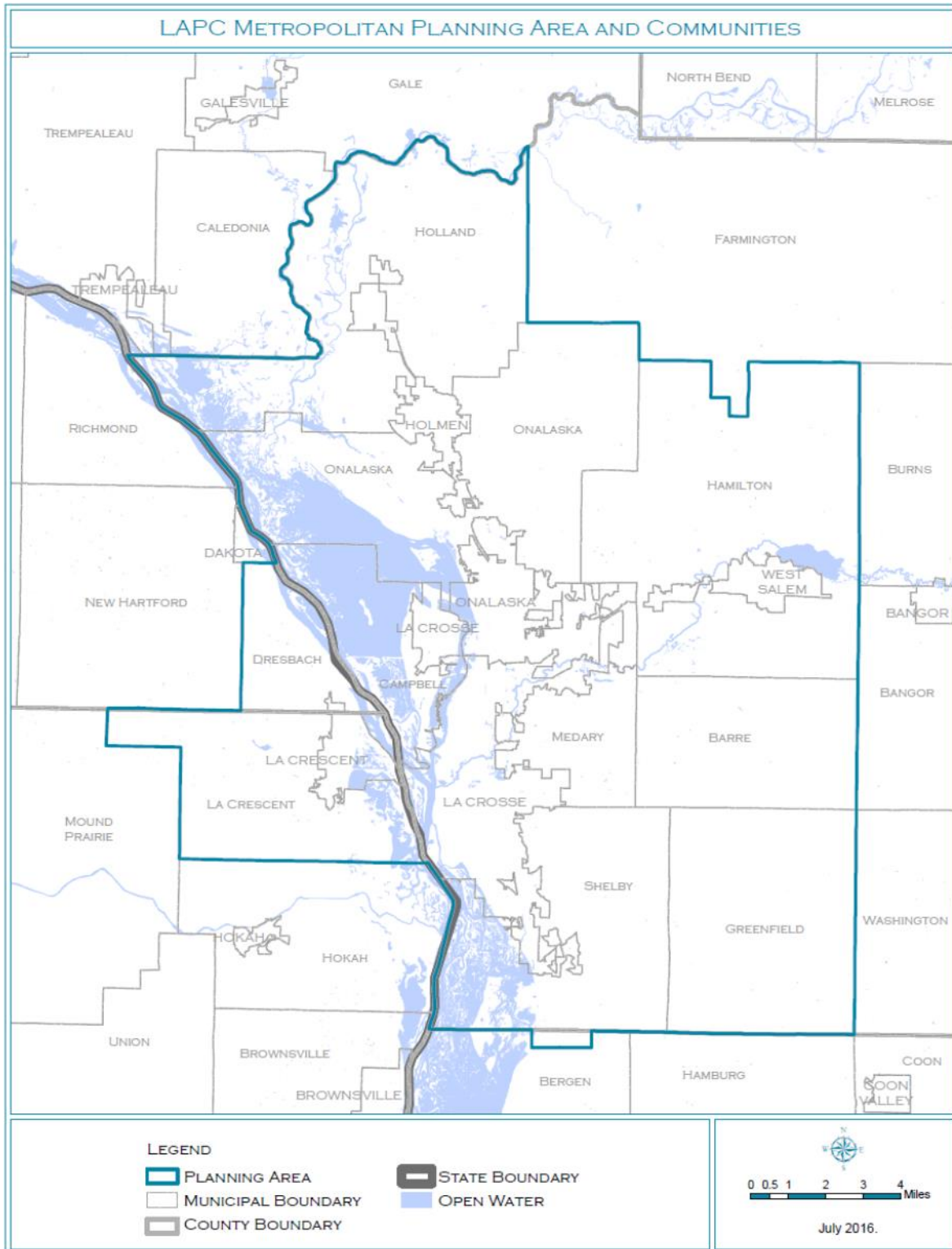


FIGURE 2: LANCIP PLANNING AREA

Planning Process for LAPC Plans and Programs

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Updates and Amendments

The LAPC is required by Federal law to prepare a long-range (20-year) transportation plan every five years. The MTP must include both long- and short-range strategies and actions that provide for the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand. At a minimum, the MTP must include:

- The current and projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan;
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan;
- A description of the performance measures and performance targets used in assessing the performance of the transportation system;
- A system performance report and subsequent updates evaluating the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets;
- Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods;
- Assessment of capital investment and other strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure, provide for multimodal capacity increases based on regional priorities and needs, and reduce the vulnerability of the existing transportation infrastructure to natural disasters;
- Transportation and transit enhancement activities;
- Design concept and design scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities in sufficient detail to develop cost estimates;
- A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities;
- A financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented; and,
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 217(g).

As the MTP is being prepared, LAPC staff make use of several outreach methods to provide reasonable opportunities for the public to be involved in the planning process. Each activity and its results are summarized and incorporated into the MTP as appropriate. Public participation is encouraged

throughout the update process at LAPC committee and public information meetings and through other outreach activities.

Although a new MTP is completed every five years, components of the MTP, which include modal plans like the Transit Development Plan and the Regional Bicycle Plan, may be completed or amended as needed. These plans serve as stand-alone plans as well as components of the MTP. Once adopted by the Policy Board, stand-alone documents that amend the modal plans or the MTP will be considered part of the MTP. During the development of the final MTP, new and amended modal plans will be incorporated into the document either by reference or by content. Amendments to the MTP may occur when significant changes have been made in Federal transportation law. “Significant” changes include:

- Changing the scope of the planning process (i.e. adding a new planning factor).
- Adding new requirements for the development of the plan.
- Adding new requirements for consultation.

Public Notice and Comment

The public notice process for the new and amended MTP and related modal plans includes:

- Publishing the draft plan along with a public notice on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org to begin a 30-day public comment period on the plan document.
- Distributing the public notice via mail and e-mail to all LAPC contact lists.
- Inviting the public, and notifying the media, by meeting agenda to provide public comment at the LAPC Policy Board meeting scheduled to adopt the new or amended MTP or modal plan. Comments made at the Policy Board meeting are recorded in the minutes. Significant comments received by staff during the review period are documented and included in an appendix.

An additional 30 day public comment period will be provided in cases where the final MTP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment and it raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts.

Publication

The MTP and other modal plans and studies will be made available in digital format at www.lapc.org and in hardcopy at the LAPC staff office. Hardcopies printed in black and white may be distributed to LAPC member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders upon request. Color copies will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the size of the document. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be considered and accommodated when possible.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

As required by 23 CFR 450, the LAPC develops a four-year TIP that reflects the investment priorities established in the current MTP and includes:

- A description of the anticipated effect of the TIP toward achieving the performance targets identified in the MTP and linking investment priorities to those targets.

- Capital and non-capital surface transportation projects within the boundaries of the metropolitan planning area proposed for funding under 23 U.S.C. and 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53. (Small-scale projects may be grouped by function, work type, and/or geographic area.)
- Regionally significant projects requiring an action by FHWA or FTA regardless of funding source.
- For each project or phase, sufficient descriptive material, estimated total project cost, the amount of federal funds to be obligated each program year, and identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project or phase.
- A financial plan that demonstrates how the approved TIP can be implemented.

The TIP will also include the criteria and process for prioritizing projects included in the TIP and any changes in priorities from previous TIPs.

The LAPC has elected to include a list of “illustrative projects” that are desired but do not yet have identified funding.

Updates and Amendments

LAPC policy is to update the TIP annually to reflect changes in Minnesota and Wisconsin Federal- and State-funded projects. The TIP includes the States’ allocations of Surface Transportation Program (STP)- Urban and Transportation Alternatives funds. Public participation is encouraged throughout the update process at LAPC and technical committee meetings, through comments received at the LAPC office, and at outreach events.

The general update schedule is illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1: GENERAL SCHEDULE FOR TIP REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Activity	Schedule
Publish public notice to begin TIP update process	June
Receive STIP for Minnesota	June
Prepare and submit TIP project tables for Minnesota	July
Solicit transportation projects for next Wisconsin TIP project list	July
Prepare draft TIP	July - August
TAC and LAPC review and adopt TIP project list	September
Review draft TIP with FHWA, DOTs, TAC	September
LAPC approves and submits final TIP	November

Revisions to the TIP may occur between its annually-scheduled updates. Revisions include administrative modifications and amendments.

Administrative modifications are revisions to the TIP that are not significant enough to require public or committee, notification, review, and comment or re-demonstration of fiscal constraint. Examples include:

- Changing the implementation schedule for a project within the TIP's four-year program window.
- Changing the character of work or project limits while remaining reasonably consistent with an approved project.
- Changing source (Federal, state, local), category, or amount of funding for a project without changing the scope of work or schedule of any other project within the TIP's four-year program window.
- Adding, deleting or modifying a project in the Grouped Project List.

Amendments are project changes significant enough to require public review and comment and re-demonstration of fiscal constraint. Amendments are processed through the LAPC committee structure and by WisDOT and/or MnDOT. Amendments include:

- Adding or deleting a project.
- Advancing a project for implementation from the illustrative list.
- Moving a project forward, out of the four-year project window.
- Changing the character of work or the project limits of a project such that the current description is no longer reasonably accurate.
- Changing project funding that impacts funding for other projects, forcing any project out of the four-year window.

Public Notice and Comment

The annual TIP update and TIP amendments initiate a public participation process whereby LAPC staff:

- Publish the annual TIP update document, TIP amendment, and/or TIP project list and a public notice on the LAPC website to begin a 15-day public comment period.
- Distribute the public notice via mail and e-mail to all LAPC contact lists.
- Invite the public and notify the media by meeting agenda to provide public comment at:
 - The LAPC Policy Board meeting scheduled to approve a TIP amendment.
 - The LAPC Policy Board meeting scheduled to approve the annual TIP update project list (September).
 - The LAPC Policy Board meeting scheduled to approve the annual TIP update (November).

Comments made at the Policy Board meeting are recorded in the minutes. Significant comments received by staff during the review period are documented and included in an appendix. An additional 15-day public comment period will be provided in cases where the final TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment and it raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts.

Publication

A copy of the public notice and all significant comments received will be incorporated into an appendix in the final TIP document. The TIP will be made available in digital format at www.lapc.org and in hardcopy at the LAPC staff office. Hardcopies printed in black and white may be distributed to LAPC member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders upon request. Color copies will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the size of the document. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be considered and accommodated when possible.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Updates and Amendments

The public participation process outlined in the PPP will be evaluated and amended at least every five years. An amendment to the PPP may also occur if a federal or state regulation regarding public participation or environmental justice has been created or modified. In all cases, the public will be invited to provide comment. Public participation is encouraged throughout the update process at LAPC and technical committee meetings. Additional public meetings may be held depending on the scope of the update or amendment.

Public Notice and Comment

The public notice process for the PPP includes:

- Publishing the PPP document and a public notice on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org to begin a 45-day public comment period on the draft plan.
- Distributing a public notice via mail and e-mail to LAPC contact lists.
- Inviting the public and notifying the media by meeting agenda to provide one last opportunity for public comment at the LAPC Policy Board meeting scheduled to adopt the PPP. Comments made at the Policy Board meeting are recorded in the minutes. Significant comments received by staff during the review period are documented and included in [Appendix A](#).

Publication

The PPP will be made available in digital format at www.lapc.org and in hardcopy at the LAPC staff office. Hardcopies printed in black and white may be distributed to LAPC member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders upon request. Color copies will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the size of the document. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be considered and accommodated when possible.

Title VI Non-Discrimination Program and Limited-English Proficiency Plan

The LAPC maintains a Title VI Non Discrimination Program and Limited-English Proficiency Plan (Title VI Program) in compliance with *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, *the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987*, and related federal regulations.

The Title VI Program assures that no person or groups of persons shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability/handicap, and income status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs, services, or activities administered by the LAPC, regardless of whether those programs and activities are federally

funded or not. The Program also assures meaningful access to services for persons with limited-English proficiency.

This PPP adopts by reference the requirements for public participation outlined in the [Title VI Non-discrimination Program and Limited-English Proficiency Plan](#).

Updates and Amendments

The assurances and procedures in the Title VI Program will be evaluated and amended at least every five years. An amendment to the Title VI Program may also occur if a federal regulation regarding non-discrimination or limited-English proficiency has been created or modified. In all cases, the public will be invited to provide comment. Public participation is encouraged throughout the update process at LAPC and technical committee meetings. Additional public meetings may be held depending on the scope of the update or amendment.

Public Notice and Comment

The public notice process for the Title VI Program includes:

- Publishing the Title VI Program and a public notice on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org to begin a 30-day public comment period on the draft plan.
- Distributing the public notice via mail and e-mail to LAPC contact lists.
- Inviting the public and notifying the media by meeting agenda to provide one last opportunity for public comment at the LAPC Policy Board meeting scheduled to adopt the Title VI Program. Comments made at the Policy Board meeting are recorded in the minutes. Significant comments received by staff during the review period are documented and included in an appendix.

Publication

The Title VI Program will be made available in digital format at www.lapc.org and in hardcopy at the LAPC staff office. Hardcopies printed in black and white may be distributed to LAPC member communities, agencies, and other stakeholders upon request. Color copies will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the size of the document. Reasonable requests for alternate formats will be considered and accommodated when possible.

Public Transit Operating Assistance (Section 5307)

The LAPC provides public notice and an opportunity for public comment for the Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5307) that is available for transit operating assistance. Public comments are welcomed in September and November when the TIP is included on the agenda and considered by the LAPC.

The public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comment on the TIP satisfies the program of projects requirements of Section 5307 for the La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility and the Onalaska/Holmen/West Salem Public Transit.

Public Notice and Comment

The public notice process for the Section 5307 program includes publishing a public notice for the La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU) on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org. Comments are forwarded to the La Crosse MTU.

Outreach Activities and Evaluation

Activities

The LAPC uses a variety of methods to inform and engage the public during the planning, update, and amendment of plans and programs. The type of medium used and the degree to which the public are encouraged to be involved depends on the planning activity that is taking place. The LAPC commonly uses the following methods and techniques:

- **Committee Structure.** Public participation most often occurs at one or more of the LAPC committees.
- **News Media.** LAPC staff distributes committee meeting agendas, public notices, and public announcements via a media e-mail and fax list maintained by La Crosse County.
- **Interested Public E-mail Distribution Lists.** LAPC staff maintain interested public distribution lists for each of the committees. The Policy Board Public list includes all committee members and all interested parties.
- **Website.** LAPC staff update the site at www.lapc.org on a monthly basis with agendas and minutes from committee meetings and with draft and final plans and programs as needed. The website also serves to inform the public of LAPC policies and contacts.
- **Public Information Meetings (PIMs), Workshops, & Open Houses.** LAPC staff may hold one or more public information event during plan updates and planning studies. The results and significant comments obtained at these meetings are incorporated into their respective planning documents. All public events are held at locations and times accessible to persons with disabilities and persons dependent on public transit.
- **Public Relations.** LAPC staff will upon request present before or participate in any school, civic, special interest, neighborhood, or other group event to educate the public on LAPC planning functions, plans, programs, and studies.
- **Focus Groups.** LAPC staff and/or consultant staff may conduct focus groups as needed during the update of the MTP. The results and comments are incorporated into the MTP document.
- **Surveys.** LAPC staff or consultant staff may conduct online or paper surveys as needed for plans and studies. The process and results are incorporated into their respective planning documents.
- **Information Booths/Kiosks.** LAPC staff may participate in local events by staffing a display table of LAPC planning activities.
- **Visualization Techniques.** LAPC staff incorporates maps, charts, and pictures into its planning documents and utilizes presentation software and display boards with graphics to describe MTPs, TIPs, and studies at public meetings.
- **Technical Assistance.** This is a more passive technique, but it allows the LAPC to get its name and logo out for public recognition.

Social media (Facebook) has been used in the past by current staff with seemingly little success and so was abandoned. Potential new staff may have more knowledge of social media to make this a more successful outreach technique.

Evaluation

Table 2 is an evaluation matrix of the outreach activities, their frequency of use, and their relative success rank for and challenges to engaging the public in LAPC plans and programs.

TABLE 2: EVALUATION MATRIX OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Outreach Activity	Frequency of Use	Success Rank	Challenges	How to improve
Committee structure	Monthly or bi-monthly	Good	Participation has been lagging.	Survey of committee members
News media	Monthly or bi-monthly	Fair	Attend only when a controversial issue is on the agenda	Direct solicitation of reporters as well as the organization
Distribution lists	Monthly	Good	Limited contacts among low-income and minority groups	Seek out new organizations in the community
Website	Monthly	Good	Not currently ADA accessible	Make website accessible
Public meetings	During plan updates	Fair	Poor to fair attendance	Better marketing
Public relations	When requested	Good	Too infrequent	Direct solicitation of civic, neighborhood, and other groups
Focus groups	During plan updates	Very good	Obtaining the appropriate contacts	Expand network; improve public relations
Surveys	During plan updates/studies	Very good	Distribution to desired universe	Establish contacts for external distribution
Information booths	At special events	Fair	Attendees reluctant to stop and chat	Provide more eye-catching displays
Visualization	Monthly to more or less frequently	Very good	Can be too technical	Simplify; make easier to interpret
Technical assistance	When requested	Fair	Passive	Include and/or require LAPC credits

Table 3 identifies the pages in this Public Participation Plan where the requirements of 23 CFR 450 are addressed.

TABLE 3: ASSESSMENT OF REQUIREMENTS UNDER 23 CFR 450 SECTION 316 INTERESTED PARTIES, PARTICIPATION, AND CONSULTATION	
Requirement	Pages where addressed
Providing adequate public notice	6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13
Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information	6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 18
Employing visualization techniques to describe plans and programs	15
Making public information available in electronically accessible formats	16-17, 18
Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times	6, 7, 15
Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input	10, 12, 13, 14
Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems	2-3, 16, 17
Providing an additional opportunity for public comment if the final MTP or TIP differs significantly from the version made available for public comment	10, 12
Coordinating with statewide processes	4, 6, 7
Reviewing the effectiveness of the participation plan	16-17

Public Participation Improvement Plan

Evaluation of the current Public Participation Plan reveals a need to be more aggressive with some of our outreach techniques to increase participation, especially by those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems. We also need to establish accessibility policies and best practices so as to make LAPC plans, programs, and processes equally accessible to persons with disabilities as they are to persons without disabilities. The Public Participation Improvement Plan outlines the objectives and outcomes for three broad goals to be met by the next update of the Public Participation Plan:

- Improving attendance at LAPC committee meetings;
- Improving participation by those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems;
- Complying with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Improving Attendance at LAPC Committee Meetings

- A. Increase attendance by the general public at all committee meetings by 5% by 2020.
 - Improve outreach to the general public.
 - Market the LAPC.
- B. Increase attendance of committee members to 80% by 2020.
 - Modify membership as needed to achieve maximum attendance and representation.
 - Conduct a survey of members to find out how best to improve member attendance.

Improving Participation by Those Traditionally Underserved

- A. Add at least one TAC and/or CTAT member to represent the interests of minority persons and low-income persons by 2020.
 - Solicit organizations interested in connecting workers to jobs

- Post educational materials and meeting agendas at local libraries

Complying with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Establish Accessibility Guidelines and Policies

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires the LAPC and other state and local governments to provide people with disabilities equal access to programs, services, and activities. Because La Crosse County is the LAPC's third party fiscal agent, La Crosse County compliance with Title II is not a condition of LAPC compliance with Title II. The LAPC will be able to self-certify ADA compliance in its planning process in time for the submission of its 2019-2022 TIP if the following are in place or are in the process of being implemented:

- **An ADA coordinator.** Contact: Tom Faella, Executive Director at 608.785.5977, tfaella@lacrossecounty.org, or 212 6th St N, room 1200, La Crosse, WI 54601.
- **A Notice Under the Americans with Disabilities Act.** See [Appendix B](#). The notice is posted in the LAPC staff office and on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org.
- **A grievance procedure.** See [Appendix B](#). The grievance procedure is posted in the LAPC staff office and on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org.
- **Effective communications policies and procedures** to deal with requests from the general public for alternative formats and interpreters. See [Appendix C](#). The effective communications policies are posted in the LAPC staff office and on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org.
- **An accessible website.** This activity is in progress. The Title II checklist for website accessibility as provided in the *ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments* can be found in Appendix D. This checklist assesses where the LAPC is as of this Public Participation Plan update. A task to develop a plan to make the website accessible will be included in the 2018 Planning Work Program.

Appendix A: Record of Public Process

Public Process

- 1) Public comment period begins on July 3, 2017 by posting a public notice on the LAPC website at www.lapc.org and by noticing LAPC-interested parties and committee members by e-mail.
- 2) Public Participation Plan is presented to the Technical Advisory Committee on July 12, 2017.
- 3) Public Participation Plan is presented to the Committee on Transit and Active Transportation on July 13, 2017.
- 4) Substantive comments are incorporated into the Public Participation Plan.
- 5) Public comment period ends on September 11, 2017.
- 6) LAPC Policy Board approves the Public Participation Plan on September 20, 2017.

Substantive Comments

[To be received.]

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Appendix B: Notice and Grievance Procedure Notice Under the Americans with Disabilities Act



NOTICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

In accordance with the requirements of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the La Crosse Area Planning Committee will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The La Crosse Area Planning Committee does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title I of the ADA.

Effective Communication: The La Crosse Area Planning Committee will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in La Crosse Area Planning Committee's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The La Crosse Area Planning Committee will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in La Crosse Area Planning Committee offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, should contact the office of Tom Faella at 608.785.5977 as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the La Crosse Area Planning Committee to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Tom Faella at 608.785.5977.

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

Grievance Procedure Under the Americans with Disabilities Act

This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"). It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the **La Crosse Area Planning Committee**. The County's Personnel Policy governs employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Tom Faella
Director, LAPC
212 6th St N, Room 1200
La Crosse County Administrative Center
La Crosse, WI 54601

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, **Tom Faella** or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, **Tom Faella** or his designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the **La Crosse Area Planning Committee** and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by **Tom Faella** or his designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the **Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) ADA Coordinator** or her designee.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the **WisDOT ADA Coordinator** or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the **WisDOT ADA Coordinator** or her designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by **Tom Faella** or his designee, appeals to the **WisDOT ADA Coordinator** or her designee, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the **La Crosse Area Planning Committee** for at least three years

Appendix C: Provision of Effective Communication

The LAPC has adopted a written communications policy and a public meeting accessibility policy to ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to request auxiliary aids and services to participate in LAPC programs, services, and activities.

Written Communications Policy

The LAPC will include in each document it distributes to the general public the following statement indicating that the information is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities upon request and within reason:

“To request this document in an alternate format, please contact Jackie Eastwood at 608.785.6141 or at jeastwood@lacrossecounty.org.”

Public Meeting Accessibility Policy

The LAPC will include in all of its written correspondence for meetings and events open to the public the following statement ensuring accessible meeting locations and interpretive assistance:

“If you have a disability and need assistance participating in this meeting, please contact Jackie Eastwood at 608.785.6141 or at jeastwood@lacrossecounty.org at least one week in advance of the meeting.”

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Appendix D: Title II Checklist for Website Accessibility

The following checklist was provided in the *ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments* as a tool to conduct a preliminary assessment of the accessibility of a government website. LAPC staff has conducted this preliminary assessment and the results are provided below.

1. Does the top of each page with navigation links have a “skip navigation” link?

Yes

No

2. Do all links have a text description that can be read by a screen reader?

Yes

No

3. Do all of the photographs, maps, graphics and other images on the website currently have HTML tags with text equivalents of the material being visually conveyed?

Yes

No

4. Are all of the documents posted on your website available in HTML or another text-based format (for example, rich text format (RTF) or word processing format), even if you are also providing them in another format, such as Portable Document Format (PDF)?

Yes

No

5. If your website has online forms, do HTML tags describe all of the controls (including all text fields, check boxes, drop-down lists, and buttons) that people can use in order to complete and submit the forms?

Yes

No

N/A

6. If your website has online forms, does the default setting in drop-down lists describe the information being requested instead of displaying a response option (e.g., “your age” instead of “18 - 21”)?

Yes

No

N/A

7. If a webpage has data charts or tables, is HTML used to associate all data cells with column and row identifiers?

Yes

No

N/A

8. Do all video files on your website have audio descriptions of what is being displayed to provide access to visually conveyed information for people who are blind or have low vision?

Yes

No

N/A

9. Do all video files on your website have written captions of spoken communication synchronized with the action to provide access to people who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Yes

No

N/A

10. Do all audio files on your website have written captions of spoken communication synchronized with the action to provide access to people who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Yes

No

N/A

11. Have all webpages been designed so they can be viewed using visitors' web browser and operating system settings for color and font?

Yes

No

12. Do you have a written policy on website accessibility?

Yes

No

13. Is the website accessibility policy posted on your website in a place where it can be easily located?

Yes

No

N/A

14. Have procedures been developed to ensure that content is not added to your website until it has been made accessible?

Yes

No

15. Does the website manager check the HTML of all new webpages to confirm accessibility before the pages are posted?

Yes

No

16. When documents are added to your website in PDF format, are text-based versions of the documents (e.g., HTML, RTF, or word processing format) added at the same time as the PDF versions?

Yes

No

N/A

17. Have in-house staff and contractors received information about the website accessibility policy and procedures to ensure website accessibility?

Yes

No

N/A

18. Have in-house and contractor staff received appropriate training on how to ensure the accessibility of your website?

Yes

No

19. Have in-house and contractor staff who create web content or post it on your website received copies of the Department of Justice’s technical assistance document “Accessibility of State and Local Government Websites to People with Disabilities”?

Yes

No

20. If your website contains inaccessible content, is a specific written plan including timeframes in place now to make all of your existing web content accessible?

Yes

No

N/A - website is completely accessible

21. Have you posted on your website a plan to improve website accessibility and invited suggestions for improvements?

Yes

No

22. Does your website home page include easily locatable information, including a telephone number and email address, for use in reporting website accessibility problems and requesting accessible services and information?

Yes

No

23. Do you have procedures in place to assure a quick response to website visitors with disabilities who are having difficulty accessing information or services available via the website?

Yes

No

24. Have you asked disability groups representing people with a wide variety of disabilities to provide feedback on the accessibility of your website?

Yes

No

25. Have you tested your website using one of the products available on the Internet to test website accessibility?

Yes

No

26. Are alternative ways of accessing web-based information, programs, activities, and services available for people with disabilities who cannot use computers?

Yes

No