

Hampton Roads 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan: Public Involvement



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Report Documentation

TITLE:

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2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan: Public Involvement

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ABSTRACT: This document – part of a compendium of reports that comprise the Hampton Roads 2040 Long –Range Transportation Plan, provides an overview of the public involvement activities conducted for the plan, and serves as an informational guide for public use.

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FHWA/VDOT/LOCAL FUNDS

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Public involvement was a critical component in the development of the 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Transportation has a significant impact on the residents of Hampton Roads and is closely intertwined with the economic health of the region; therefore, citizen participation in the development of the regional transportation plan is essential.

In order for citizens to be involved, they must first be informed of not only the transportation planning process, but also of the way in which their involvement can shape and enhance programs and policies. A major goal of the 2040 LRTP was to reach out to all citizens in Hampton Roads and engage them in meaningful dialogue regarding the process itself, their needs and perceptions, potential impacts to their way of life and their community, as well as the elements of the 2040 LRTP. This goal helped to ensure that potential Environmental Justice (EJ) issues were recognized

and properly addressed and that community stakeholders as well as the public had ample opportunity to provide meaningful input while the LRTP was being developed. The HRTPO knows that early and continuous public involvement during the development of the LRTP is important since the LRTP is the regional transportation plan that will guide transportation investment over the next twenty years.

Public involvement for the LRTP 2040 included a variety of ambitious and innovative methods to educate the public about the long range transportation planning process, raise awareness of the existing transportation network in Hampton Roads, and facilitate a shared vision and goals regarding the future of transportation here in our region.

HRTPO placed great emphasis on public involvement because the LRTP affects every resident, employee, and visitor in the community. To garner local support and produce a plan that is grounded in a shared vision for the future, we encourage resident involvement in a variety of ways.



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HRTPO placed great emphasis on public involvement because the LRTP affects every resident, employee, and visitor in the community. To garner local support and produce a plan that is grounded in a shared vision for the future, we encourage resident involvement in a variety of ways. For the 2040 LRTP, the public outreach efforts have been expanded to include a website, a social media campaign, the development of a Title VI/Environmental Justice Methodology, period newsletter updates, the utilization of region-wide surveys, and extensive media campaigns.

In addition, the HRTPO utilized direct and indirect electronic mail, provided updates and public comment opportunities to the region via placement of draft versions of the LRTP in all libraries across the region, conducted outreach, partnered with community organizations and existing events, and held public meetings and roundtables.



The HRTPO remains committed to presenting transportation-related information in a clear and concise format. Wherever applicable, staff utilizes various visualization techniques to present information in an easy to understand manner to accommodate a wide range of audiences.



In an effort to elicit widespread and meaningful input, HRTPO staff incorporates various methods to target the culturally rich and diverse communities of Hampton Roads. A concerted effort was made to reach out to Environmental Justice (EJ) populations, comprised of minority and low-income populations, as well as other traditionally underrepresented populations (refer to the *Hampton Roads 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan: Candidate Project Evaluation Title VI/Environmental Justice Methodology* Report for a description of EJ populations and maps illustrating the distribution of these identified groups).

The HRTPO staff also set out to establish community relationships during the development of the 2040 LRTP in order to increase awareness of the LRTP planning process as well as the need and impact of the plan. Community relationships were created with local community centers and civic organizations.

All public involvement efforts are documented in order to demonstrate the efforts implemented by the HRTPO. The HRTPO strives to provide interested and concerned citizens of Hampton Roads ample opportunity to review and comment on regional transportation priorities. Moreover, citizen input is provided to the HRTPO Board and its advisory committees so that citizen input is considered throughout the development of the LRTP.

LRTP Public Participation Objectives

LRTP public participation objectives include:

- Providing broad-based access to the LRTP planning process
- Developing and disseminating information about the long-range transportation planning process through multiple sources, with clear, non-technical language
- Engaging all aspects of the public, including minority, low-income, disabled, and elderly persons in a meaningful exchange of ideas related to the transportation planning process
- Establishing working relationships with partner and peer organizations in the region with the purpose of information exchange, resource sharing, and regional dialogue

Public Involvement Requirements

Federal requirements for the public involvement process related to the transportation planning process are identified in 23 CFR 450.316 and 23 CFR 450.322. Per these regulations, MPOs are required to document a participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties, with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the planning process.

The following criteria should be met regarding public involvement opportunities:

- Providing adequate notice of public participation activities
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information pertaining to transportation issues and processes
- Using visualization techniques
- Making public information available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web
- Holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final plan differs significantly than the version made available for public comment
- Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the HRTPO's *Public Participation Plan* to ensure a full and open participation process.



Opportunities for Citizen Input

As indicated in the HRTPO *Public Participation Plan*, the following strategies were utilized for engaging the public in the development of the LRTP, including:



Environmental Justice Involvement: Identifying current Environmental Justice and other traditionally underrepresented populations within Hampton Roads to ensure these communities are involved. In addition to creating the newly developed Title VI/EJ Methodology, the HRTPO also convened its Environmental Justice Roundtable to ensure that during the planning of the 2040 LRTP, the following goals were achieved:

- Make better transportation decisions that meet the needs of all people. Enhance the public-involvement process, strengthen community-based partnerships, and provide minority and low-income populations with opportunities to learn about and improve the quality and usefulness of transportation in their lives.

- Improve data collection, monitoring, and analysis tools that assess the needs of, and analyze the potential impacts on minority and low-income populations.
- Partner with other public and private programs to leverage transportation agency resources to achieve a common vision for communities.
- Avoid disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.
- Minimize and/or mitigate unavoidable impacts by identifying concerns early in the planning phase and providing offsetting initiatives and enhancement measures to benefit affected communities and neighborhoods.

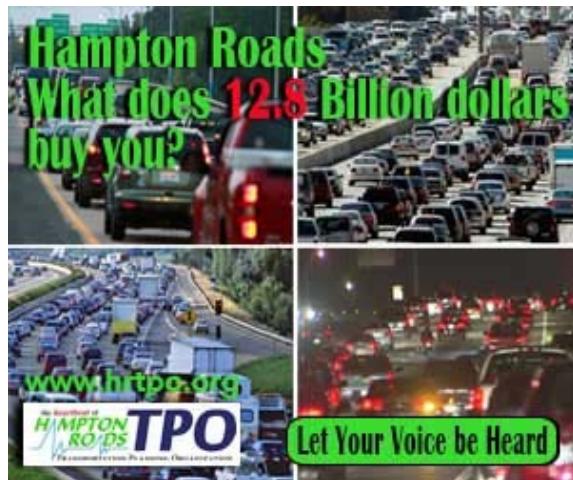
Website: Creating a webpage dedicated to the 2040 LRTP for the purposes of documentation and outreach. From the home page of the website, users can access news and announcements, informational videos, LRTP event invitations, LRTP documents including draft portions of the full plan and report cards that track progress made toward the objectives set forth in the 2040 LRTP, and opportunities to contribute input on the transportation system and the planning process itself.



Public Meetings and Open Houses: Holding public meetings/Open Houses related to the LRTP.

Surveys/Polls: Conducting surveys and polls to solicit public input. The HRTPO conducted 3 surveys during the development of the LRTP 2040. Surveys were made available to the public via the following avenues:

- HRTPO website, Facebook page, and e-newsletter
- Localities' websites
- Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) website
- Military database (contains over 2,000 contacts)
- Ads on Facebook, Virginian Pilot, Daily Press, Southside and WY Daily, and Cox Media.
- Bookmarks sent to all 53 libraries in the region
- Community groups and organizations
- Presentations



In total, the 2040 LRTP was viewed electronically by the public over 80,000 times, and over 4,000 survey results were received. Surveys were conducted:

- LRTP Visioning Survey - October- December 2012
- 2040 LRTP Draft Candidate Projects - April – May 2014
- 2040 LRTP Draft List of Projects – April – May 2016



Newsletter and E-Newsletter Articles: Including articles relating to the development of the LRTP in the HRTPO newsletter/e-newsletter. HRTPO generated 16 articles on the 2040 LRTP from 2012-2016. Each newsletter, is distributed to over 5000 newsletter recipients across Hampton Roads.



Social Media: Using Facebook to disseminate information regarding upcoming public participation opportunities and development of the LRTP. From 2012 to 2016, the HRTPO used Twitter (The HRTPO) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/LRTP) to encourage people to use attend meetings, comment on draft LRTPs, and to promote other public LRTP events and opportunities. HRTPO staff keeps these accounts active and engaging to increase traffic. Facebook's tracking capabilities demonstrate that Facebook is an effective venue to reach more residents who live in Hampton Roads, and specifically in locations, that are often underrepresented at traditional public meetings. HRTPO Facebook posts were shared over 16,000 times from 2012 to 2016 and on average, 79 people per day were engaged.



These meetings also provide public participation opportunities, as members of the public attend these meetings are allotted time at the start

of each of these meetings to speak. In addition, Board members are encouraged to share information with their community members.

Public Notices: Distributing notices pertaining to LRTP public involvement activities via electronic correspondence (email) and/or direct mail, including any public meeting and/or surveys.

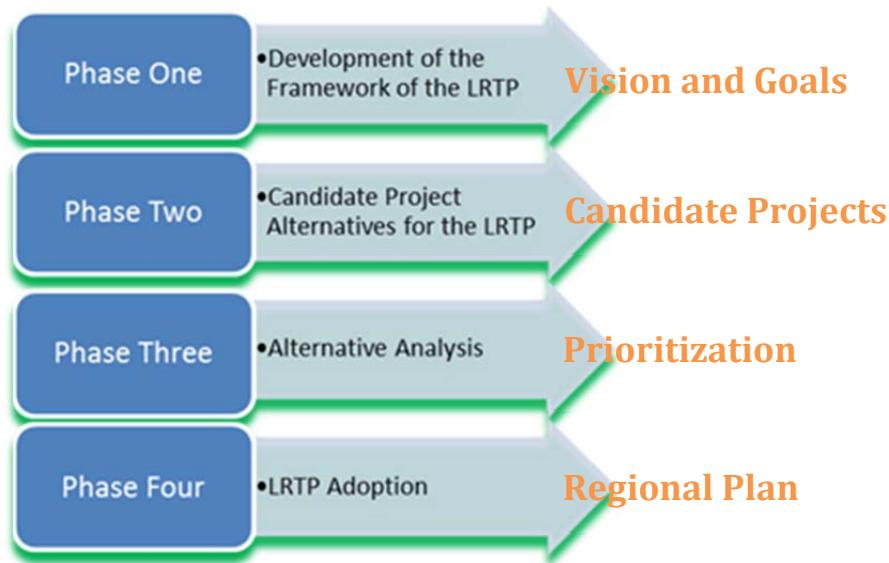
HRTPO Board, Advisory, and Subcommittee Meetings: Communicating LRTP updates and information via the HRTPO Board, Advisory (i.e. TTAC, FTAC, CTAC), and Subcommittee meetings (i.e. LRTP Subcommittee). HRTPO's Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) is comprised of concerned citizens from across the region with diverse backgrounds. LRTP status updates were presented to the committee throughout the development of the plan; Prioritization results, the fiscally-constrained list of projects and studies, and the LRTP report were also presented to CTAC. CTAC members were also invited to provide feedback on various aspects of the LRTP during the development of the plan

For more information about HRTPO Public involvement strategies, please refer to the *HRTPO Public Involvement Plan*, the *HRTPO Title VI and LEP Plan* and the *HRTPO Citizens Guide to Transportation Planning*.



Getting the Community Involved

Since the LRTP is a multi-year effort, development of the LRTP occurs in phases. Therefore, HRTPO staff conducted public outreach in accordance with each phase (see **Figure 5.2**). Engaging the community during all phases of the development of the LRTP is essential to the overall success of the plan.



Phase One

This phase is dedicated to establishing the vision and goals of the LRTP and includes the following tasks:

- Review federal, state, and local public involvement requirements
- Develop a public involvement plan for the 2040 LRTP
- Develop a database of stakeholders and interested parties
- Conduct spatial analysis of EJ communities

- Branding of the LRTP (design logo, webpage, and marketing and outreach pieces)
- Solicit public input regarding regional priorities and concerns

Phase Two

This phase is dedicated to collecting candidate transportation projects for the LRTP and includes the following tasks:

- Collect candidate projects from stakeholders, including citizens
- Review candidate projects with the LRTP subcommittee
- Collect data for candidate projects

Phase Three

This phase is dedicated to alternative analysis for the LRTP. The Project Prioritization Tool was used to analyze and evaluate projects for the LRTP. This phase includes the following tasks:

- Solicit HRTPO Board, HRTPO Advisory and Subcommittees, regional stakeholder, and public input regarding prioritization criteria and weighting factors
- Hold public meetings regarding Project Prioritization results

Phase Four

This phase is dedicated to the adoption of the LRTP, including the list of projects and studies in the plan as well as the report documenting the LRTP planning process. This phase includes soliciting the HRTPO Board, HRTPO Advisory Committees and Subcommittees, regional stakeholders, and public input regarding the following items:

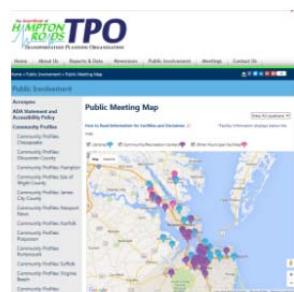
- Projects and studies in the LRTP
- LRTP report marketing and outreach pieces

Summary of Outreach Efforts

Below is a listing of outreach efforts conducted during the development of the 2040 LRTP:

Technology-based

- World Wide Web
 - HRTPO.org HRTPO.org/LRTP
 - Statistics of web visitors HRTPO.org
 - 2012 -- 47,044
 - 2014 – 62,502
 - 2015 – 114,472
 - 2016 (to date) – 144,337
 - HRTPO E-Newsletter
 - 5322 subscribers
 - 16 articles
 - Facebook
 - 16,000 updates shared
 - Over 100,000 people engaged
 - LRTP Facebook page created
 - Active Transportation Facebook page created
 - Interactive Public Meeting map created



Environmental Justice Involvement

- Spatial Analysis of EJ communities
- LEP Plan developed
- ADA Plan developed
- Title VI and EJ Plans updated
- Libraries in EJ communities identified
- EJ Outreach Database expanded
- 3 EJ Roundtable meetings convened
- HRTPO Senior Page created for HRTPO website



In the Field

- Meetings with 232 Community Groups, Civic Leagues
- 14 Community Events attended
- Connections made with over 600 organizations

Meetings and Advisory Committee Meetings

All HRTPO Board, advisory, and subcommittee meetings are open to the public and include a public comment period.

- HRTPO Board
 - Meetings held every month at The Regional Building in Chesapeake
 - Comprised of representatives from local, state and federal governments; transit agencies; and other regional stakeholders
- Transportation Advisory Committee
 - Meetings held as needed
 - Comprised of the chief administrative officer of each HRTPO member locality and local transit agency, plus representatives from VDOT, DRPT, the Virginia Port Authority (VPA), FHWA, FTA, and other regional stakeholders.
- Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)
 - Meetings held every month at The Regional Building
 - Membership includes transportation engineers and planners from each HRTPO member locality, representatives from local transit agencies, VDOT, DRPT, VPA, FHWA, FTA, and other regional stakeholders
- Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)
 - Meetings held every 3 months
 - Comprised of residents of HRTPO member localities
- Freight Transportation Advisory Committee (FTAC)
 - Meetings held every other month at the Virginia Port Authority (meet more frequently as needed)

- Membership includes representatives from various sectors of the freight industry
- Meetings include a five-minute public comment period
- Legislative Ad-Hoc Committee
 - Meetings held as needed
 - Membership includes appointed HRTPO Board members, including representatives from the Virginia General Assembly and elected officials from Hampton Roads localities, plus local legislative liaisons
- LRTP Subcommittee
 - Meetings held every two months (or more frequently as needed)
 - Comprised of members from TTAC