Transportation Planning & Programming Process
Public Participation Plan

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and Revised with the latest
update being done on June 19, 2014

Prepared for the LEBCO MPO
by the transportation staff for the
Lebanon County Planning Department

Introduction...

Public involvement is a key component of the transportation planning and programming process. A proactive Public Participation Plan (PPP) is one that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to major transportation decisions, and supports early and continuing consultation with and involvement of the public (interested parties) in developing transportation plans and programs.

Every citizen must have the opportunity to take part, feel entitled to participate, welcomed to join in, and able to influence the transportation decisions made by the Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO MPO). This LEBCO MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP) attempts to provide the necessary framework in accomplishing that goal.

Federal Regulations...

The LEBCO MPO is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for a major portion of Lebanon County. As such, LEBCO MPO has a mandated responsibility to determine how federal transportation funds will be spent within that area. The urbanized area encompasses the City of Lebanon, four (4) boroughs and twelve (12) townships. LEBCO MPO serves over 133,500 people and encompasses 363 square miles with 26 municipalities.

Federal regulations for metropolitan transportation planning (23 CFR Part 450.316) not only requires there be a proactive public involvement process, but also requires the process be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, identify actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, involve all interested parties and public/private intermodal providers, and include local, state, and federal environmental resource and permit agencies as appropriate. A collaborative effort, as provided in this plan, is necessary to ensure adequate public involvement opportunities exist throughout the Lebanon Urbanized Area and the county.

As the transportation planning process evolved through ISTEA, TEA-21 and now the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), a renewed emphasis was given to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and environmental justice. Title VI declares:

> "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."
>
> - *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000)*

In 1994, Executive Order 12898 provided additional reinforcement to Title VI and requires:

> "Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."

- *Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994*

In support of Executive Order 12898, the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) issued an Order on Environmental Justice (DOT Order 5610.2) in 1997. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) followed with an Order on Environmental Justice (FHWA Order 6640.23) in 1998 to establish policies and procedures for compliance with Executive Order 12898. The FHWA Order established three fundamental environmental justice principles:

1. To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
3. To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations.

Executive Order 12898 and the DOT and FHWA Orders on Environmental Justice address persons belonging to any of the following groups:

- **Black** - a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic** - a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Asian** - a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.
- **American Indian and Alaskan Native** - a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in its Bulletin No. 00-02, "Guidance on Aggregation and Allocation of Data on Race for Use in Civil Rights Monitoring and Enforcement," issued March 9, 2000, provided guidance on the way federal agencies collect and use aggregate data on race. Added to the previous standard delineations of race/ethnicity was the category of:

- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** - a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **Low-Income** - a person whose household income (or in the case of a community or group, whose median household income) is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.
- **Adverse effects** – the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and

economic effects, which may include, but are not limited to: bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death; air, noise, and water pollution and soil contamination; destruction or disruption of man-made or natural resources; destruction or diminution of aesthetic values; destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality; destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services; vibration; adverse employment effects; displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations; increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion, or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community; the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of, benefits of DOT programs, policies, or activities.

By nature of its location in Pennsylvania Dutch Country, planning in Lebanon County should also address the special needs of the "Plain People" living in its communities.

- **Amish & Mennonite** - the Amish and Mennonite are religious sects which were both part of the early Anabaptist movement in Europe during the Reformation. Old Order groups all drive horses and buggies rather than cars, do not have electricity in their homes, and send their children to private, one-room schoolhouses. As a result of their "plain" lifestyle, the Amish and Mennonite face unique transportation and land use issues that need to be factored into the overall planning for any community within which they live and work.

LEBCO MPO Public Involvement...

LEBCO MPO will develop non-discriminating plans and programs through continuing public involvement. The manner of involving the public may change from one plan or program to the next since there is no 'one-size-fits-all' standard. LEBCO MPO will remain flexible and adaptable in this respect, but will assure federal regulations are met. This public participation plan provides for a variety of methods to be used by LEBCO MPO as particular or unique local circumstances warrant. LEBCO MPO public involvement efforts will produce:

- non-discriminating transportation plans and programs responsive to public input; and,
- an engaged and informed citizenry of all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds in matters of area transportation planning and programming; and,
- a sustained dialogue between the citizens/all interested parties and the transportation decision-makers of the LEBCO MPO area.

Lebanon County Planning Department Public Involvement...

The Lebanon County Planning Department (LCPD) functions as the lead staff agency for LEBCO MPO, and provides planning and administrative support services. Because of the varied activities of LCPD, the commitment to public involvement and outreach occurs both with the general public and the municipal governments.

Demographic Profile of Lebanon County...

Data from the 1990, 2000 and 2010 Censuses shows Lebanon County increased in population from 113,744 to 120,327 to 133,568 people. Of this current population, 94.5% are white persons, 1.3% are African Americans, and 5.0% are persons of Hispanic or Latino origin. Additionally, the combined total of American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander residents is approximately 1% of the county's population. Persons 65 years and older make up 16.4% of the county population, and 15.6% of the population reports some type of disability. Furthermore, based upon poverty statistics, 7.4% of the households in Lebanon County have incomes below poverty level. A complete demographic profile is available by contacting LCPD.

LEBCO MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Process...

An MPO Policy Board and Technical Planning Committee compose a balance of representatives from across Lebanon County, and direct the LEBCO MPO transportation planning and programming process. The Policy Board is the MPO decision-making body and the Technical Committee advises the Policy Board.

The following charts reflect the current membership of the Policy Board and Technical Committee.

POLICY BOARD

Entity/Agency	Number of Votes
County Government-Commissioners	3
City Government-Mayor	1
Lebanon Transit – Director	1
Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce-President	1
Municipal Officials At-large Twp. or Borough	2
PennDOT	2

The LEBCO MPO Policy Board also includes the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as ex-officio members.

TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Entity/Agency	Number of Votes
County Government	1
Lebanon County Planning Department (LCPD)	2
City Government	1
Lebanon Transit	1
Lebanon Valley Economic Development Corp.- President	1
Municipal At-Large - Twp./Borough	2
Aviation	1
PennDOT	2

The LEBCO MPO Technical Planning Committee also includes representatives from the Lebanon City-County GIS Office, the Lebanon County Farm Bureau, the Tourist Bureau, the Community of Lebanon Association, the Lebanon Valley Rails to Trails, and the Emergency Management Agency as non-voting members to incorporate the expertise offered by these providers. The Lebanon County Community Action Partnership has voice and vote at Technical Committee meetings only for matters related to state and federal funding for coordinated public transportation services. The FHWA, FTA and EPA are ex-officio members as well. All plans and programs are presented to the LEBCO MPO Policy Board for adoption.

Public Notice and Accessibility...

All LEBCO MPO Policy Board and Technical Committee meetings are open to the public and advertised in the Lebanon Daily News at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Thirty-day (30) public review and comment periods are held prior to the adoption of LEBCO MPO transportation plans and programs and formal public meetings are held prior to the adoption of these documents. Those formal public meetings are advertised at least two (2) weeks in advance. Legal notices indicate where copies for review can be obtained and where to send comments. When comments are received, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of all comments is discussed at the LEBCO MPO Technical and Policy Board meetings and made part of the final document. When the final document differs significantly from the one that was made available for

public comment or raises new issues, an additional thirty (30) day opportunity for public comment is provided.

All meetings are held in places accessible to the disabled as well as the visually and hearing impaired. With advanced notification, accommodations will be provided through Lebanon Transit for those with special transportation needs. Upon request, LEBCO MPO will also arrange for translation services to be provided by designated county employees (Spanish) or by a professional translation service provider (other languages).

Meeting notices are:

- ✓ always posted on the LEBCO MPO's website for LEBCO MPO Technical Committee and Policy Board meetings
- ✓ advertised on the area's two radio stations (WLBR, 1270 AM; WQIC, 100.1 FM: including WLBR's Sunday afternoon Spanish-speaking radio programming) if they involve major activities/decision points like a plan or TIP update or deal with a significant study (i.e., Lebanon Transit Business Plan) and
- ✓ advertised on Comcast TV Public Service Advertisements (PSAs) in English and Spanish for major activities/decision points and significant studies.

Public Education and Public Involvement Goals...

As previously noted, meeting the literal requirements of the law is the minimum acceptable level of effort, but experience has proven that genuine public input demands more than the basic requirements. To that end, LEBCO MPO has used and will continue to use a variety of public involvement and outreach techniques. Day-to-day outreach and contacts within the area's communities should continue on an on-going basis to develop and implement the most effective public involvement methods possible. All methods have and will continue to:

- Provide for adequate public notice and public participation
- Provide timely notices and reasonable access to information
- Employ visualization techniques to better describe plans, programs and projects
- Use the world wide web (www), the media and social media to share and/or obtain information
- Hold meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times
- Show how public comments are considered and/or used to improve decision making
- Identify, seek out and engage low-income and/or minority population, Limited English Proficient persons and persons with disabilities and
- Assess impacts of programmed transportation plans/projects on everyone to insure no disproportionate impact
- Provide for additional comment periods if revised final plans and programs are significantly different from the original draft plans and programs.

- Coordinate with ongoing statewide transportation planning and programming processes.

Methods of Public Education and Public Involvement...

Public participation is a process that provides everyone (interested parties, private citizens, community groups, government agencies, etc.) the opportunity to participate in and influence public decisions. The following list describes methods the LEBCO MPO has utilized or will possibly utilize, as appropriate, to educate and involve the public.

Brochures, Posters, Ads and Billboards are materials used in publicity and educational campaigns related to projects, planning and programming related issues. The substance of these materials may be factual or present a point of view. Some of these materials and items are small, containing a logo or telephone for more information. Advertisement and promotional materials may be developed for a broad audience, while others are developed to smaller audiences such as the Spanish or Asian communities. In these cases, advertisement and promotional materials can be written in these particular dialects.

Charrette - A Charrette is meeting held within a specific time period for the participants to intensely work together to reach a resolution. Charrettes are problem-oriented meetings, which attempt to bring out all the points of view from concerned citizens, agency representatives and experts by defining, analyzing, clarifying, and responding to issues.

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) - Citizen Advisory Committees are one of the most common forms of public involvement. A CAC is a representative group assigned a role in the planning and/or review process. The CAC meets regularly to discuss and review issues of common concern in accordance with its mission. Beginning in 2013, Lebanon Transit (LT) and the LEBCO MPO are now holding quarterly LT Advisory Committee meetings to gather input from a wide spectrum of the county's population.

Citizen referendum - A citizen referendum is a formal process where citizens vote their approval or disapproval of a public measure by official ballots. Structured legal requirements are in place for adding a referendum issue and/or question on the election ballot.

Citizen Training - During the plan process, and following its completion it is important to train citizens on the plan process and implementation mechanisms which they may use. Through the use of educational material and techniques, citizens are given training in the planning process that enables them to more knowledgeably participate and/or assist in implementation.

Conference - Conferences are highly structured special meetings designed to inform citizens and solicit input on specific policy issues, plans, or projects. Traditionally, conferences have presentations and panel discussions on a variety of related topics. They can be a subset of a larger meeting, a half-day session, or they may be a large multi-day event. The most recent conference was held in early November of 2013 for the update of

the MPO's Congestion Management Processes (CMP) plan called Lebanon County Moves.

Direct Outreach – LCPD planning staff provide direct outreach to minority and/or low income groups or other interested parties through contact with local community groups and/or their leaders. For example, the Amish have contact with the LEBCO MPO through their Bishops. Each Old Order Amish church has a Bishop. There are presently 32 Amish Bishops in Lebanon County. The LEBCO MPO works with Amos King, an Amish businessman from Myerstown, to get the appropriate bishop(s) to contact on an issue, project, program or service where we want their possible input. Most often we or others will write to the bishop asking for comments, but if he has a telephone, we will call him. We recently did this with the two new TIP projects related to the North Cornwall Commons (NCC) development in North Cornwall Township; the appropriate Bishop was Moses Lapp on Fox Road. Another good example is Leticia Perez; she is the Hispanic contact person in Lebanon County. She works for The Salvation Army and handles coordination with the Hispanic community for input on transportation planning and programming activities.

Exhibits and displays - Exhibits and displays include maps, photos, models, slide shows, videos and other visually-oriented activities designed to inform citizens and develop interest in general and specific topics or projects. These can be stand alone documents that are handed out and/or are posted on the LEBCO MPO's website.

Facilitation - Facilitation is guidance of a group in a problem-solving process. The group leader (facilitator) assumes a neutral role on the issues and topics and works with the group as a whole to provide procedural help in moving toward a conclusion. The goal of both the group and the facilitator is to arrive at a collective decision through substantive discussions.

Focus group - A focus group is a small-organized group discussion designed as a tool to gauge opinions on a specific topic or topics. Taken from marketing and advertising techniques, a focus group regards a plan, policy, process, or project as a product. Focus group members are asked in a formal discussion to comment on how the product may be improved for the public. It is a way to identify citizen/customer concerns, needs, wants, and expectations. Thus, focus groups can assist in policy and program development and provide to decision makers the attitudes and values of affected citizens.

Handbook - A handbook is an information booklet used independently or as part of publicity and educational activities. A handbook is a well investigated and researched collection of factual and descriptive information used to educate, guide, instruct and assist the user to understand and apply a particular process and/or activity, and can be written in various dialects to assure broad public and educational activities.

Information meetings and information fairs - Information meetings and information fairs are organized events used to publicize and interest local citizens in planning programs and specific projects. A fair is typically a one-day event, heavily promoted to encourage

residents to see it. Information fairs focus on visual exhibits, videos, maps and/or models of projects and plans. Often, there is a speaker or presenter present to introduce the purpose of the fair. Other staff and officials are also present to address questions.

Media - Information continues to be shared with the media (TV, radio and newspapers) to better inform and involve the public in LEBCO MPO endeavors.

Nominal group technique (NGT) - Nominal group technique (NGT) is decision making process for a small group. The process is designed to identify issues and priorities. Where there may be individuals and officials of varying degrees of standing within a community, NGT provides a process where all participants are considered equals, thus the term nominal is used to define these techniques. Using cards or note boards a facilitator collects ideas and issues generated silently from the participants. This information is then compiled and registered in organized listings. The participants then discuss what these ideas mean and individually rank each idea or issues. Other variations of NGT are also in use.

Policy Delphi - Policy Delphi is a group interactive process in which experts in a particular field are invited to formally prepare advice to decision makers on a related topic, project or issue. The process begins with a survey of the group members followed by a compilation and distribution of the survey results to each expert member. Upon receipt of the results, the experts are asked to meet and discuss the results. The expert group will meet and follow-up as necessary to reformulate positions until a consensus is reached. The findings and results of this process are used and/or forwarded to other decision makers as part of the public input process.

Press conference - A press conference is a formal public meeting where decision makers (usually elected officials or other appointed leadership) formally and publicly announce or present significant news related information regarding a decision, initiative, process, study, or project. A press conference often is recorded for television and customarily involves organized questioning from the press. Press conference events are used as a forum to publicize and inform local citizens of major planning projects, programs and other community issues, activities and initiatives.

Local government memorandums - Notices are mailed to the 26 municipalities in the LEBCO MPO area indicating the date, time, place, and tentative agenda items of the next round of LEBCO MPO meetings. These notices are mailed at least five (5) working days prior to the meetings. Local government memorandums are also sent prior to formal thirty-day public review and comment periods and formal public meetings to keep local elected officials and governments informed. It is hoped the local governments, in turn, can distribute information to their constituents and be 'ambassadors' for LEBCO MPO.

Local Planning Assistance (LPA) Program – LCPD staff serve as professional/technical advisors to their assigned municipalities throughout the region to assist in subdivision and land development, zoning and comprehensive plan reviews and recommendations. As part of the LPA program, staff planners provide information to the municipalities as to

county activities and request input and feedback from the municipalities. This function provides continuity between development activities occurring within the region and the identification of potential transportation infrastructure needs.

Special studies/plans – LCPD planning staff produce special studies and plans as issues and needs arise. This will continue to be a part of the transportation planning process.

Social Media – LCPD staff are now using social media, Via Mindmixer, to gather information related to traffic congestion in Lebanon County as part of the LEBCO MPO's current update of its Congestion Management Processes (CMP) Plan. This effort is called Lebanon County Moves, and it will conclude in the summer of 2014.

Surveys and Questionnaires – When circumstances warrant, LCPD staff will conduct surveys and develop questionnaires suitable for distribution in specific project areas or at public meetings, training sessions, etc., in order to elicit increased public input into the decision-making process.

Technology – In 2013, the LEBCO MPO began putting QR bar codes on its key documents so that persons with smart phones with readers can download the document to their phones from the LEBCO MPO website.

Website of the LEBCO MPO – LCPD planning staff will continue to update and enhance the LEBCO MPO website to inform and involve everyone in Lebanon County.

Conclusion...

Public involvement is an evolving process, and LEBCO MPO will continue to reflect the opinions of the county's citizens and all interested parties. LEBCO MPO will continue to work with municipalities, elected officials, other agencies and community organizations, any interested party as well as the general public to identify and develop an effective combination of outreach and involvement techniques to maintain ongoing communication on transportation plans, programs, processes, issues and products. All public involvement will be evaluated following completion. The information and feedback will be used to improve methods and techniques.

The initial LEBCO MPO Transportation Planning Process Public Involvement Policy was adopted by the Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO) on September 4, 2003. Since then, it has been revised and expanded into what exists above.