

## MOVING FORWARD: CERTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

The Berkshire MPO will use the standards and guidelines set forth in this Public Participation Plan as the basis for determining outreach and engagement efforts that occur throughout the regional transportation planning process. As a living document, evaluation and implementation of public participation techniques listed in this plan will occur as outreach takes place and products are developed.

These guidelines will be used in developing an outreach strategy for each transportation planning product/plan/study. For the three Certification Documents (briefly described below) the Berkshire MPO will ensure a robust public outreach plan and public comment period. Federal and state regulations require that Berkshire MPO document the public involvement processes and require the MPO to be proactive in providing complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement. The principal mechanisms for public participation are public meetings, workshops, open houses, electronic outreach, and electronic information availability. For MPO Certification Documents, BRPC has tailored its outreach methods to achieve the most effective public participation. A brief outline of each is provided below.

### Regional Transportation Plan

The Berkshire MPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the long-range transportation planning document that describes the region's current transportation system and how that system should be maintained and modified over the next 20-25 year planning horizon. The RTP is updated every four years and addresses multimodal and intermodal transportation. The RTP is a performance-based planning document and as such outlines goals, performance measures, objectives, targets, and an inventory of the existing transportation system. The RTP includes recommendations to improve and maintain the Berkshire transportation system. Projects and major transportation improvements expected over the long-range planning horizon are reflected in the RTP's fiscally constrained project list.

The adopted RTP was developed utilizing several public participation outreach methods, which are described in the plan. In every RTP development process, public engagement efforts occur from the early visioning stages through the adoption of the plan. The RTP planning process includes opportunities for the public to participate in the development of the development of the planning framework to commenting on the draft fiscally constrained project list.

Throughout the RTP development process the Transportation Advisory Committee and MPO are involved, and all meetings of the TAC and MPO are open to the public with agendas available a week in advance, to alert members of the public of upcoming decision points and providing the public opportunity to comment for each item. Each RTP public outreach process is documented as part of the draft and final documents. Before each RTP is adopted, there is a minimum ~~30~~3021-day public comment period and staff advertises opportunities for the public to comment during the comment period in *The Berkshire Eagle*, via e-mail distribution, and on the

BRPC website. Moving forward, BRPC will utilize this PPP to guide the public participation strategy throughout the development of each RTP.

### Transportation Improvement Program

The Berkshire MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), updated annually, lists all highway, bridge, transit and intermodal projects in Berkshire County that are programmed to receive federal funding. In order for a project to receive federal funding, the project must be listed in the TIP. Cognizant of limited statewide transportation funding resources, the annual program of projects must demonstrate fiscal constraint within the federal-aid funding targets established for each of the state's MPOs by the Office of Transportation Planning.

The Berkshire MPO TIP development process is designed to guarantee early involvement of elected officials, stakeholders, individuals, and other interested parties with full consideration of the principles discussed in this PPP. Each TIP includes an overview of the public process used throughout the TIP development process. The Transportation Advisory Committee and MPO are involved throughout the development process, which typically begins at the start of each calendar year and is adopted ~~in~~by June. Each spring, before the new TIP is adopted, there is a minimum ~~30~~21-day public comment period, where public notice is released in *The Berkshire Eagle*, via e-mail distribution, and on the BRPC website. Amendments to the TIP will also undergo a minimum 21-day public comment period.

### Unified Planning Work Program

The Berkshire MPO Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), updated annually, outlines of all transportation planning activities anticipated within the region during the upcoming fiscal year. It indicates who will perform the work, the available funding, the schedule for completion, and the products that will be developed.

The UPWP must be prepared and endorsed annually by the MPO prior to the start of the planning program period and the Transportation Advisory Committee and MPO are involved throughout the development process, which typically begins early in the calendar year as the document is adopted ~~in~~by June. Each spring, before the new UPWP is adopted, there is a minimum ~~30~~21-day public comment period, where public notice is released in *The Berkshire Eagle*, via e-mail distribution, and on the BRPC website. Amendments to the UPWP will also undergo a minimum 21-day public comment period.