



Public Participation Plan

Adopted by the RVMPO Policy Committee

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Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

The RVMPO is staffed by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments

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About this Document

This Public Participation Plan update was adopted by the RVMPO Policy Committee after a public hearing on July 25, 2023, to meet requirements of the federal transportation act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

This Plan has been updated by RVMPO Planning Staff, in consultation with the RVMPO Technical Advisory Committee and RVMPO Public Advisory Council. A 45-day public comment period, beginning on Friday, September 9, 2022, was advertised in the newspaper of record (Medford Tribune) and on the RVMPO website. Special outreach was initiated during the comment period for interested parties including citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, and representatives of the disabled. This contact list is on file with the RVMPO and is available upon request. All comments received were recorded in the project file and reviewed by the Policy Committee at the public hearing.



1. Introduction

It is a goal of the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVMPO), as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Medford-Ashland metropolitan area, to provide citizens and interested parties with reasonable opportunities to participate in the metropolitan transportation planning process. Beyond efforts to provide information to the public, this goal encompasses a wide range of strategies and activities to enable the public to be involved in a meaningful way in the RVMPO's decision-making process. Ultimately, efforts to bring more voices and wide-ranging interests to the table will yield better planning results.

The purpose of the Public Participation Plan is to provide all interested parties with reasonable opportunities to comment on the RVMPO's plans, programs and projects. The policies and practices described in the Public Participation Plan recognize the need for robust public involvement at all stages of regional planning. This plan is intended to encourage, facilitate and follow through on public comments, concerns and suggestions by establishing procedures for providing full public access to information and decisions, timely public notices, and early and continuing public involvement in plan development.

The Public Participation Plan describes methods, strategies and desired outcomes for public participation, addressing outreach to a broadly defined audience of interested parties. Efforts undertaken outlined in this plan are a facet of the RVMPO's role of providing the region with a continuing, cooperative and collaborative transportation planning process.

A. Consistency with Federal Requirements

Adopted in January 2007, the RVMPO's previous Public Participation Plan was created to comply with the public involvement requirements outlined in the prior transportation authorization bill, the Moving Ahead for Progress-21 Act (MAP-21). Today, the current transportation authorization act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law in November of 2021 incorporates performance goals, measures, and targets into the transportation planning process. Just as federal legislation builds on preceding standards, this update incorporates much of the previous plan into a plan for public participation that complies with the continuing public participation provisions of the IIJA.

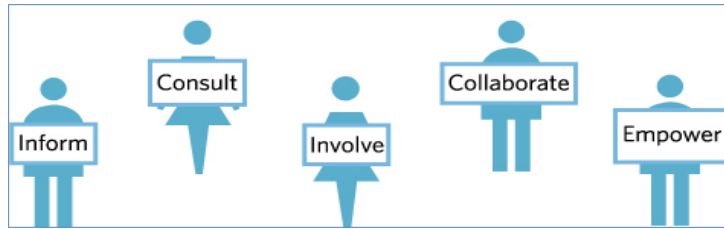
Carried over from MAP-21, the IIJA continues to require MPOs to develop a participation plan to define a process for providing residents, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private

providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. In doing so, MPOs must hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, and make public information available in electronically accessible formats. The participation plan must support continued consultation by all interested parties in all aspects of the planning process.

In addition to the transportation act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and a succeeding 1994 Executive Order require federal-aid recipients to consider impacts on minority and low-income populations and assure those populations are able to participate in planning decisions. Plan goals address these federal requirements, and procedures are consistent with those goals.

B. Establishment and the Role of the RVMPO

Federal law requires that metropolitan areas of at least 50,000 population form Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to be responsible for planning regionally significant transportation projects to assure that long-range, multimodal transportation system needs are met. Additionally, MPOs must show that transportation plans meet Clean Air Act requirements. Following the 1980 Census, the greater Medford urbanized area was designated a Metropolitan Statistical Area (an urbanized area with a population exceeding 50,000). To fulfill the federal planning obligation, the governor designated the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) the region's MPO on July 27, 1982. Subsequently, the RVCOG Board of Directors delegated responsibility for RVMPO policy functions to the RVMPO Policy Committee. RVCOG provides staff support for the RVMPO.



2. Plan Overview

The Public Participation Plan is an adopted document of the RVMPO. It provides the policy framework for the role of the public in RVMPO decision making and it describes activities through which public concerns and suggestions are solicited, how responses are formulated, and how final work products reflect public sentiments.

The plan recognizes four key aspects of a meaningful public participation program that must be supported:

- **Inform** – The public must be provided with ample opportunities to learn about activities, issues and upcoming decision making.
- **Understand** – The public must be given adequate, relevant and understandable information about an issue, including competing values, technical issues, applicable standards and likely decision options. “Plain talk” should be used to be sure information can be easily understood by the general public.
- **Participate** – Project scheduling must allow adequate time for the public to learn about an issue and prepare responses that can be incorporated into the decision-making process at a time when such comments can influence outcomes.
- **Response** – Subsequent planning steps must clearly demonstrate how public input influenced the final product, or provide some other response to input received.

The plan also recognizes that for any single project or planning activity there are likely to be several points at which the key activities described in this plan will need to be initiated. For example, providing up-to-date information should be ongoing throughout a project and opportunities should be provided to periodically update the public regardless of their level of familiarity with the project.

The goals and policies contained in the plan guide RVMPO activities to provide the public with opportunities to become informed, gain an understanding, and provide comment. The RVMPO intends for the public to have a say at all phases of metropolitan planning—from identifying needs to evaluating and selecting projects. Through the goals, procedures and tools discussed in the plan, the RVMPO intends to foster on-going, two-way communication between decision makers and the public so that decisions reflect and respond to public concerns, needs and values.

The plan section *Public Role in Decision Making* (pg. 13) describes activities the RVMPO undertakes to foster public participation. Some activities are regularly scheduled and others are special events that coincide with particular project milestones. This section also describes the RVMPO's decision-making authority and outlines its processes and procedures, which include a citizen committee: the RVMPO Public Advisory Council (PAC). The organization's consistency with applicable regulations also is described, including its consistency with federal requirements for public participation contained in the IIJA.

The *Public Participation Tools* section (pg. 19) describes various methods the RVMPO uses to engage the public. Through the course of any single project, it is anticipated that more than one tool or activity will be used.

The *Public Participation Implementation & Documentation* section (pg. 21) outlines how public participation tools and methodologies are used in the context of the RVMPO's key tasks and responsibilities. This section also provides a snapshot of the basic duties of the MPO in fulfilling regional transportation planning obligations.

A list of commonly used transportation terms and acronyms relating to the metropolitan planning process is in *Appendix A*.

This plan is intended to provide the public with basic information about RVMPO operations so that any interested parties can begin to consider how they may participate. Additionally, it is a tool for RVMPO staff and can be a resource for member jurisdictions. It sets basic standards and procedures for the RVMPO to assure that the public is provided with opportunities to participate in metropolitan planning in a meaningful way. The plan describes numerous activities that may be undertaken to identify stakeholders, inform both the general public and targeted audiences, and elicit comments and ideas from the community. It is not anticipated that all strategies would be effective in every situation. Nor is a single activity or strategy likely to foster sufficient public awareness and participation. Instead, this plan provides a menu of activities that can be combined to create a public involvement plan tailored to the scope and expectations of a plan, program or project. It also sets expectations for public participation in key RVMPO activities.



3. Goals and Objectives

In an effort to meet federal standards continued under the IIJA and to continue to improve transportation planning, the RVMPO has set the following goals and policies for public participation.

Goal 1: Opportunities shall be created for all segments of the public to understand and be informed about issues under consideration by the RVMPO. Reasonable access to complete information about transportation planning issues and events will be provided.

Policy 1: An RVMPO website will be maintained containing information on: schedules and agendas for upcoming meetings; various updates and news topics; plan, program, and study documents; project applications and selection processes. Descriptions of programs, contact information and links to other organization's websites will also be available. E-mail will be utilized and encouraged to allow comments on transportation planning related matters, including plan, program, and project development. The RVMPO website address will be included in printed materials.

Policy 2: All RVMPO plans and documents shall be made available for the public to review at the RVCOG office and on the RVMPO website (www.rvmppo.org). Copies of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and other RVMPO Plans may be distributed to all public libraries. Copies of draft documents for public review and comment shall be provided to planning partners to allow public review of those documents at their offices.

Policy 3: A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning shall be created and periodically updated as a resource to the public. The Public Participation Plan outlines what strategies will be used by the RVMPO to increase public participation, while the Citizen's Guide provides an overview of the region's transportation policies and strategies for becoming involved in the planning process.

Policy 4: Fact sheets will be created on current transportation topics. These will translate the technical aspects of transportation planning into easily understood language. Fact sheets will be made available on the RVMPO website, and can be included in information packets and placed in public areas.

Policy 5: A public involvement brochure will be designed to introduce the regional transportation planning process and specify how citizens can better participate in

decision making. It can be sent to interested parties, included in information packets, and placed in public areas. Contact information will be included.

Policy 6: RVMPO will provide regular updates to the RVMPO website to help residents keep current and gain a better understanding of the transportation planning process, and related projects and programs.

Policy 7: RVMPO will provide project specific progress reports on significant MPO projects. Progress reports will aid in keeping those citizens that have shown an interest involved.

Policy 8: RVMPO will share articles on the regional transportation planning process with its transportation planning partners. Planning partners will be encouraged to use these articles in their organizational publications and websites.

Policy 9: RVMPO will provide summaries of several important documents on its website, including the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and Air Quality Conformity Analysis. These summaries will be short and will be presented in a non-technical way to make them more easily understood by the public.

Policy 10: RVMPO will work with local media on an ongoing basis to ensure proactive coverage of transportation planning activities. Press releases will be issued on current project and programs. Additionally, designated members of the various RVMPO committees will be encouraged to provide public statements on planning activities to increase public awareness.

Policy 11: Whenever possible, RVMPO will go directly to interested groups instead of asking people to come to public offices. Staff shall be available to attend community meetings to discuss current planning initiatives and to provide an overview of the transportation planning process.

Policy 12: The RVMPO will employ visualization techniques to convey plans, issues and concerns. These techniques may include maps, photographs, aerial photography, interactive tools, artist renderings and models to help analyze options, impacts and potential outcomes.

Goal 2: The public shall be provided timely notice on all transportation issues and processes.

Policy 1: Advance notification will depend on the project and its timeline. The project work plan, with specific dates and timelines, will be published and sent to affected groups and interested citizens. Public notification will continue throughout the process, with emphasis on periods when input can have the greatest impact. The RVMPO will provide adequate time for public review of draft documents prior to opportunities for comment or testimony. The length of comment period and review periods will vary based on the nature of the plan or program, but during the development of major plans or projects such as the RTP, TIP, UPWP, and Air Quality Conformity will have at least a 30-day comment period. Amendments to

existing plans and programs will have at least a 21-day comment period. Development of or major updates to the Public Participation Plan will have at least a 45-day public comment period (refer to Section 5: Public Participation Tools, Comment Periods).

Policy 2: Agendas of all meetings of the RVMPO committees shall be uploaded to the website at least six days before they occur. Notifications will be easy to understand and provide adequate information or indicate how additional information can be obtained. Information on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access and availability of information in other languages will be included.

Policy 3: To the extent possible, notifications of citizen involvement opportunities will contain the following information: the purpose of a meeting or event, location and time, as well as information on public transit and a phone number where additional information can be obtained. The format for citizen involvement and the time line for public comment on the project will also be included.

Goal 3: Provide the public with opportunities to participate in the transportation planning process.

Policy 1: The RVMPO will provide frequent opportunities for general public, interest groups, providers of transportation and others to participate in the transportation planning process, especially in the early stages of plan and project development, when such comment can have the greatest effect.

Policy 2: The RVMPO shall conduct public hearings prior to the adoption of and/or amendment to each of the transportation plans and programs for which it is responsible, and shall hold public forums and public meetings related to transportation planning initiatives and projects at appropriate times in the planning process. Whenever practicable, the RVMPO will work to improve the format of public meetings and hearings to better facilitate the public involvement process. An agenda item will be included in regularly scheduled RVMPO meetings to allow an opportunity for public testimony.

Policy 3: The RVMPO will schedule meetings to allow the greatest opportunity for attendance by the public and interested groups, including evening, lunch, or weekend meetings when necessary.

Policy 4: Planning initiatives shall be reviewed to determine the appropriate public involvement techniques, outreach activities and communication strategies. These tools will be tailored to the affected groups and interested citizens whenever possible.

Policy 5: Citizens and other interested parties who have expressed interest in a particular topic, such as bicycle and pedestrian issues shall be included in the planning process. Task forces shall be convened at appropriate times in the planning process.

Policy 6: Scientific surveys may be conducted at appropriate times to produce statistically valid results identifying the desires of the region. This will be considered a tool that could be used to determine the preferred outcome of a plan or project, and used accordingly.

Policy 7: To increase the participation of citizens and organizations in the transportation planning process, the RVMPO will maintain a contact spreadsheet that can serve as an email and mailing list for a newsletter and/or other digital and paper mailings. Entries in this spreadsheet will include the names of those requesting copies of draft documents, submitting comments and attending public hearings. Citizens requesting placement on this contact list will also be added. At the conclusion of the review and comment period for a planning project, individuals on this list can review the determination on an action and a summary of all public comments received and staff responses on the RVMPO website. The RVMPO will attempt to verify ongoing interest by allowing participants an opportunity to remove their names from the contact list. The request can be made by mail, telephone, or email.

Policy 8: The RVMPO shall continually work to identify new stakeholders interested in or affected by the transportation planning process. In accordance with the IIA, stakeholders shall include, but are not limited to “citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties”.

Policy 9: A Public Advisory Council shall be maintained that reflects the diverse constituencies affected by transportation decisions. This group’s function will be to act as community liaisons by assisting in keeping the public informed on regional plans and programs, and provide the citizen perspective on planning issues. The group will advise and recommend appropriate courses of action to the Policy Committee and RVMPO staff on regional transportation issues.

Policy 10: The RVMPO staff and RVMPO committees will consider public input, which may result in revisions to draft plans and programs, as an integral part of the planning process. Every attempt will be made to respond to public comment in a timely manner. Summarized oral comments will be recorded at public meetings. When developing the RTP forms for written comments will be provided at all public meetings along with staff contact information. The public will have an opportunity to comment during public meetings of the Policy Committee before any final action, as well as via email prior to the meeting. A link on the website will be provided for public comments.

Goal 4: Identify and involve traditionally underserved communities, including communities of minority, low-income or elderly populations, in the transportation planning process.

Policy 1: The RVMPO will work to identify traditionally underserved populations within the region, including minority, low income and senior citizen populations. Outreach activities will be developed to involve stakeholders from these communities in the transportation planning process.

Policy 2: Some meeting sites will be selected which are more easily accessible to traditionally underserved communities. Meeting announcements will be placed in publications serving minority communities to ensure there is notification of upcoming meetings to these populations.

Policy 3: Assistance shall be provided upon request, and with 48-hour notice, to the hearing and visually impaired, those not fluent in English, the transportation disadvantaged or others requiring special assistance at all MPO meetings, hearings and workshops. Public notices of these events shall notify the public of this opportunity. Meetings shall be held in ADA-compliant venues.

Policy 4: Meeting locations served by transit or accessible by means other than the automobile will be chosen whenever possible. Information on any transit routes that serve the meeting location will be included in meeting announcements.

Goal 5: Public comments and concerns shall be considered as projects and plans are developed.

Policy 1: The RVMPO will gather and record public comment, making comments part of the permanent record for MPO projects and plans.

Policy 2: A summary, analysis or report on comments received and their disposition will be made a part of all Regional Transportation Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs.

Policy 3: In instances when a final version of a Regional Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program differs significantly from the draft version that was subject to public review, another opportunity for public comment will be provided.

Policy 4: Summaries of responses to comments and any changes made as a result will be prepared and distributed at subsequent committee or public meetings and will be available on the MPO website.



4. Public Role in Decision Making

A. RVMPO Decision-Making Authority

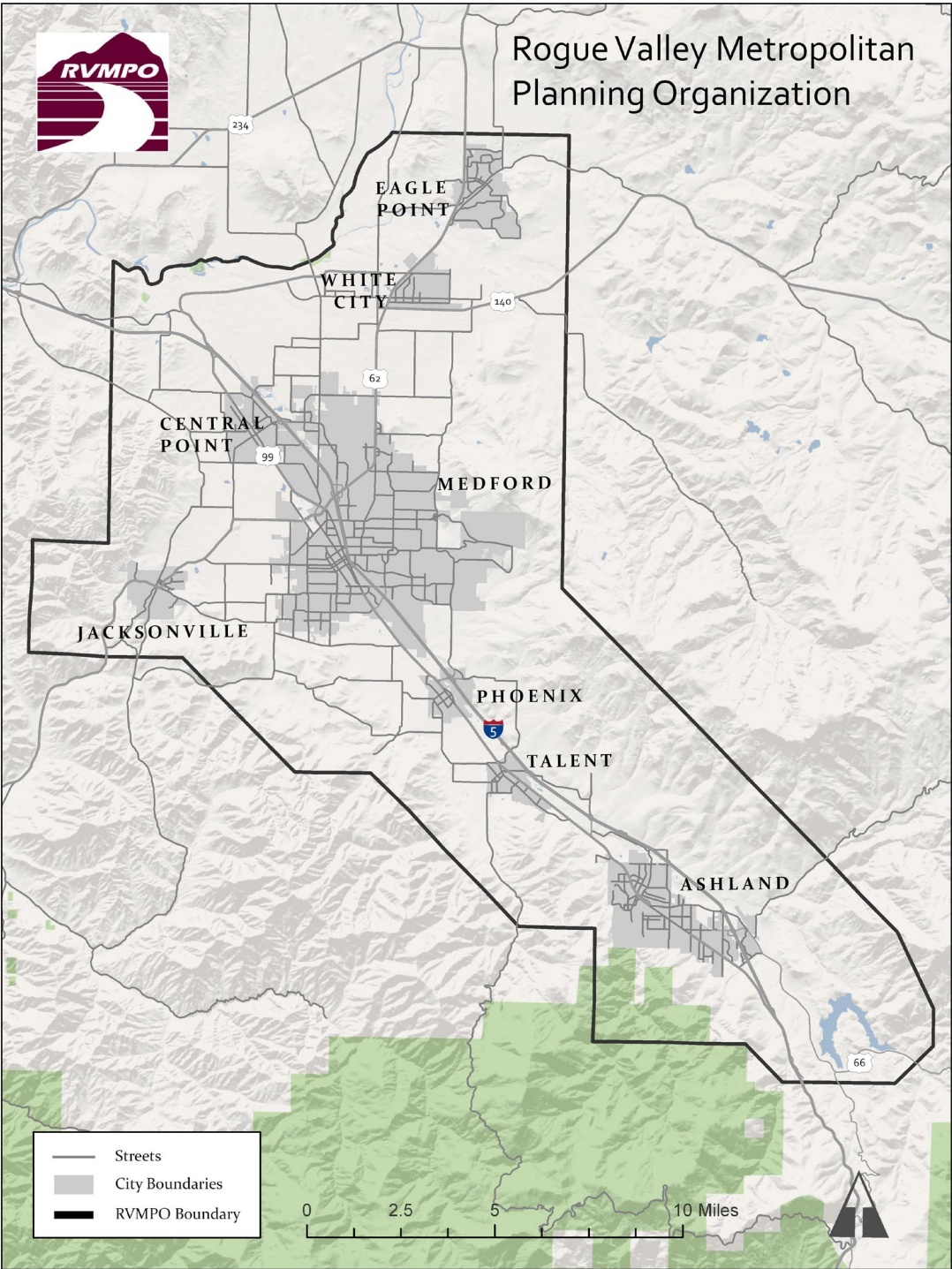
The RVCOG Board of Directors has delegated responsibility for RVMPO policy functions to the Policy Committee, a committee of elected and appointed officials from member jurisdictions – Central Point, Medford, Phoenix, Ashland, Talent, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Jackson County – as well as the Oregon Department of Transportation and Rogue Valley Transportation District. Map 1 on the following page illustrates the RVMPO boundary.

In addition to the local government members, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and local Tribal Governments also participate in the MPO process.

Federal and state transportation planning responsibilities for the RVMPO can generally be summarized as follows:

- Develop and maintain a RTP and TIP consistent with state and federal planning requirements.
- Perform regional air quality conformity analyses for carbon monoxide (CO), for which the Medford area is a Maintenance Area, and particulate matter (PM₁₀) for which an area corresponding roughly to the expanded RVMPO boundary is a Maintenance Area.
- Review specific transportation and development proposals for consistency with the RTP.
- Coordinate transportation decisions among local jurisdictions, state agencies and area transit operators.
- Develop an annual work program.

Map 1: RVMPO Area Map



B. RVMPO Structure and Process

The Policy Committee considers recommendations from the public and from RVMPO sponsored advisory committees as part of its decision-making process. The organization maintains two standing advisory committees that meet regularly to review matters to be decided:

- The Public Advisory Council (PAC), made up of representatives from a broad range of interests and constituencies; and
- The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), made up of jurisdictional public works and planning staff members.

All committees operate under bylaws, which were adopted after public hearing by the Policy Committee.

Additionally, the RVMPO periodically organizes advisory committees and steering committees for specific projects and purposes. These committees often capitalize on particular knowledge or capability in the community. For example, a Freight Advisory Committee consisting largely of local shippers and carriers was organized to provide review and advice for the Rogue Valley Freight Study.

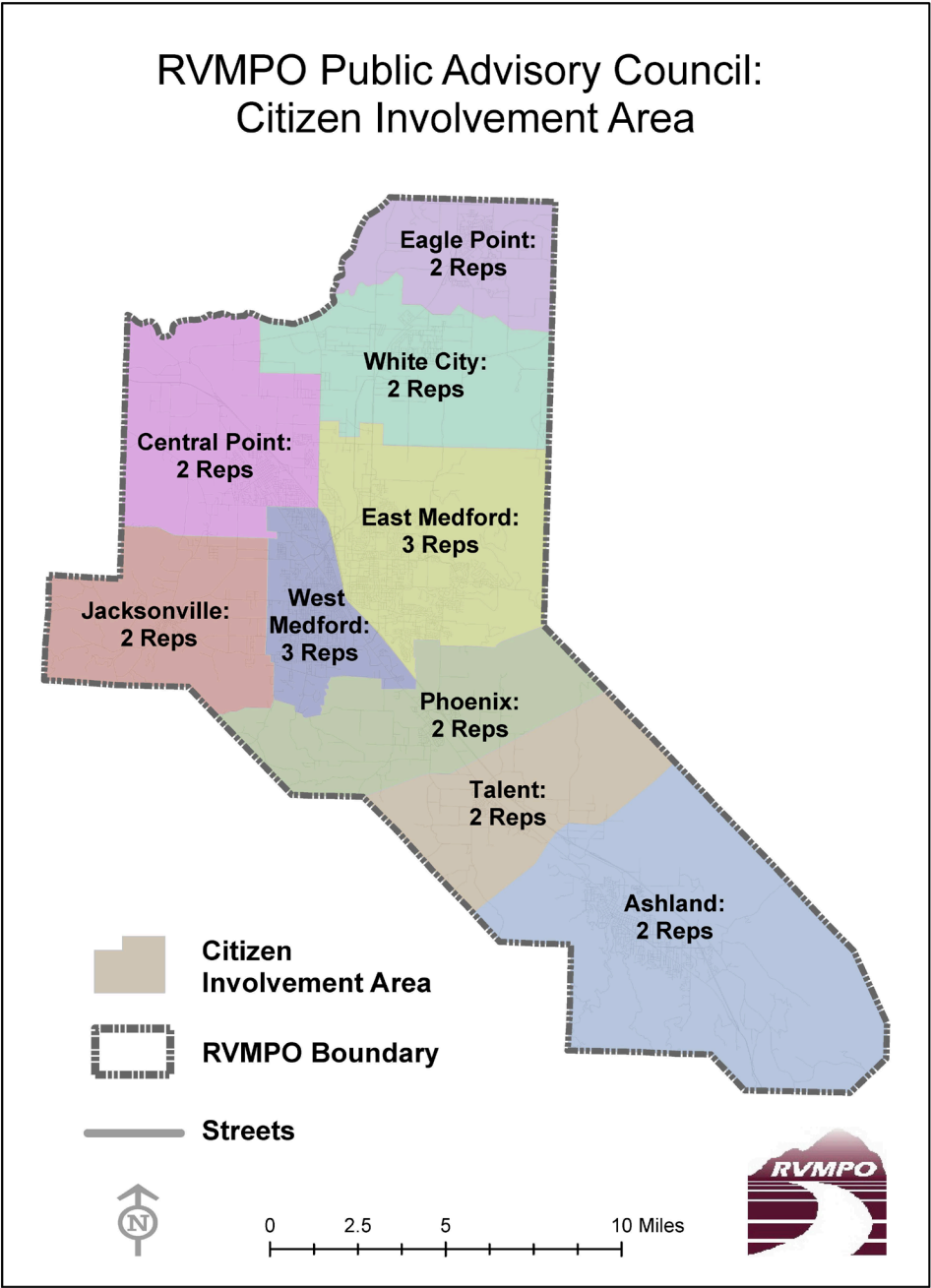
All RVMPO committee meetings are public and are announced by direct notice to stakeholders and website postings. Material for all committee meetings is posted on the web site (www.rvmppo.org) and time for public comment is reserved for all committee meetings.

The PAC is a key public participation activity for the RVMPO. It serves as a public sounding board for discussion of regional transportation issues. PAC membership is determined by both geographical and topical areas or categories, as set out in the PAC bylaws. Members must reside, own property or operate a business in the geographical area they represent. To represent one of the seven topical interest areas – bicycle/pedestrian, mass transit, freight, low income families, minority populations, seniors, and public health – members must demonstrate a particular interest or expertise.

Figure 1: Public Advisory Council (PAC) Membership Areas and Categories

Membership Areas	Membership Categories
Ashland	Bicycle/Pedestrian
Talent	Mass Transit
Phoenix	Freight
Medford	Low Income
Central Point	Minority
Jacksonville	Public Health
White City	Senior
Eagle Point	

Map 2: Citizen Involvement Areas Map*



*This map illustrates the nine citizen involvement areas for the RVMPO Public Advisory Council. The number of areas is determined by population. Each area has at least two (2) PAC seats, except the West and East Medford areas which both have three (3) seats.

The public is encouraged to participate in RVMPO issues by joining the PAC, or attending its meetings. The PAC meets in the evening to accommodate work schedules. (Both the TAC and the Policy Committee meet during the day.) To become a PAC member, volunteers are asked to fill out an application, which is reviewed by the PAC for a recommendation. The Policy Committee appoints PAC members to two-year terms, which may be renewed. The PAC application form is in Appendix B. The three standing committees maintain a regular meeting schedule, as noted in Table 1 below.

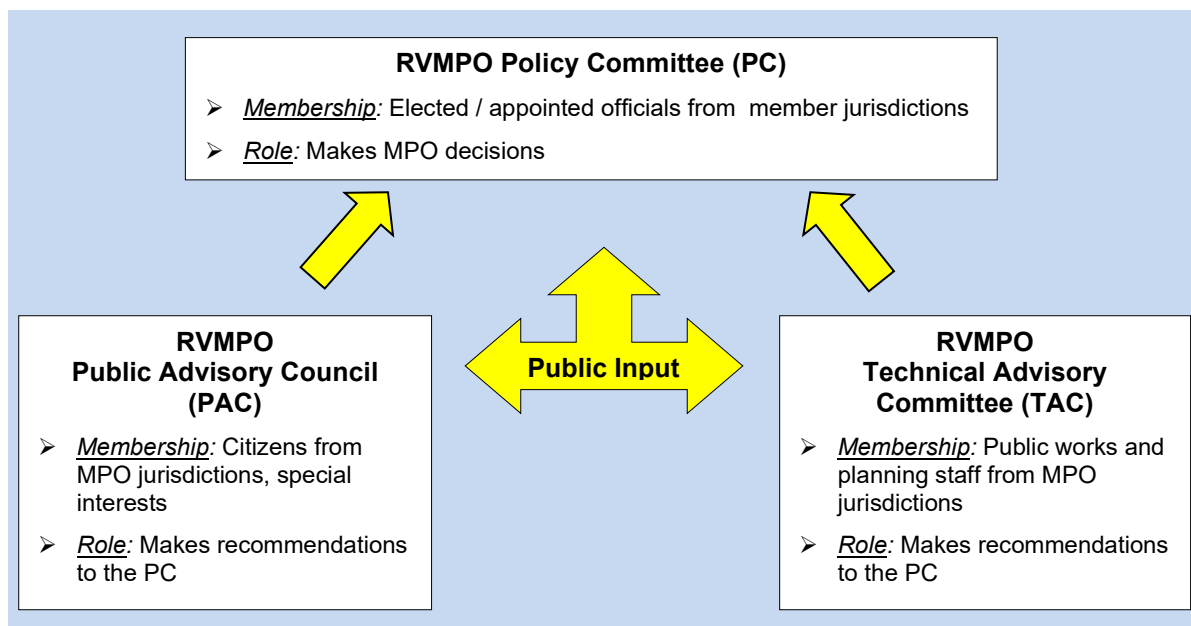
Table 1: RVMPO Meeting Schedule

Policy Committee (PC)	Fourth Tuesday	Monthly
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Second Wednesday	Monthly
Public Advisory Council (PAC)	Third Tuesday	Monthly

C. RVMPO Committees and Committee Relationships

The RVMPO's committee structure and its schedule of regular, public meetings help ensure that decision makers on the Policy Committee routinely hear from a broad base of stakeholders. The public may choose to address only the Policy Committee, or provide input to the advisory committees as well. The RVMPO organizational structure chart, below, illustrates how the public may participate in decision making.

Figure 2: RVMPO Organizational Structure



D. Compliance with Guidelines

The Public Participation Plan and the goals and policies that form its foundation are intended to ensure that the RVMPO provides the public with opportunity to influence Policy Committee decisions. The plan acknowledges that much of the RVMPO's decision making is based on policies and decisions made at the jurisdictional level. Therefore the RVMPO supports local efforts to encourage public participation in local decision making. In some instances, project ranking at the regional level may be based in part on demonstration of local support. Local governments, in their transportation planning activities, are encouraged to be consistent with the RVMPO Public Participation Implementation Guidelines in Section 6.

The procedures outlined in this plan establish minimum standards for public participation. However, failure to exactly comply with the procedures contained in the plan shall not, in and of itself, render invalid any RVMPO decisions or actions. Any dispute arising from this plan will be resolved with a focus on the degree of compliance and the extent to which the RVMPO's actions met the intent of the goals and policies. If it is determined that the spirit of the goals is not met, the RVMPO may conduct additional public involvement to ensure adequate public review.

E. Consultation with Tribal Governments

The RVMPO boundary resides within ancestral and unceded traditional territories of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation. The Indigenous people of this land never surrendered lands or resources to the United States. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today's descendants of the Kalapuya are citizens primarily of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon. We give our respect and appreciation to all the Kalapuya generations stewarding this land and to the many more tribes who have ancestral connections to this land.

The United States Government's relationship with Tribal governments is set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, judicial decisions, and Executive Orders and Presidential memorandum. Therefore, to the greatest extent practicable and to the extent permitted by law, RVMPO will consult with tribal governments prior to taking action that have substantial direct impact on federally recognized tribal governments. To ensure that the rights of sovereign tribal governments are fully respected, all such consultations are to be open and candid so that tribal governments may evaluate for themselves the potential impact of relevant proposals.

Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation are all contacted during the RTP and TIP update period to determine their interest in participating in the RTP or TIP update, the extent they would like to participate, and the means of receiving information and commenting on the draft documents.



5. Public Participation Tools

Through the course of any single project, it is anticipated that more than one tool or activity will be used.

Website The RVMPO website, www.rvmipo.org is the organization's principal means of communicating all of its work to the public. All meeting schedules and materials, including meeting minutes, are posted, as are drafts of all reports, research findings and publications, including the regional plan, TIP and work plan. A tool on the site enables visitors to directly contact staff. Project selections, such as the CMAQ and STBG funding process, are conducted on the web (applications posted for committee review). Staff continues to expand the utility of this site.

Newsletters The RVMPO can produce newsletters, seeking to time publications to important events and opportunities for the public to participate in an event or comment on a pending action. Copies may be distributed to libraries and city halls around the region, sent to email addresses on transportation-related lists, and distributed at meetings.

Fact Sheets, Brochures These are typically single topic communication pieces that address a subject in depth for deeper public understanding. They are used at open house sessions to provide participants with background for discussion and comment, and available in the public information display in the RVCOG lobby.

Feedback Forms Simple, one-page questionnaires can elicit public attitudes about a variety of subjects. These forms should be designed to include guided comments (specific questions to which the RVMPO seeks comments) and open-end questions that encourage respondents to describe their concerns.

Visualization Techniques As much as possible the RVMPO should use maps, charts, photographs, aerial photography and interactive tools to engage the public. Visual cues may tell the story more quickly than paragraphs of information, and can be used with written material to give the public a more thorough picture of an issue or debate. Visualization techniques should be incorporated into other tools listed in this section whenever possible, e.g., photographic posters at open houses illustrating smart growth concepts, plan maps printed as fact sheets, and diagrams of possible improvements.

In 2021, the RVMPO developed an inter-active TIP on its website. This inter-active TIP is designed to provide the Transportation Improvement Program in a more user-friendly format. It provides the basic information on each of the projects in an easy-to-read format. Each project

sheet contains a map of the project location and/or limits, a project description and Key Number, and a funding table indicating which funds are being used for which phases of the project and, for any amendments that occur, a link is provided to the Change Management Request form that explains in detail what modifications are being made to the project.

Open Houses These informal sessions use visualization techniques to foster discussion and elicit comment from all segments of the community including agency staff, public and elected officials. Open Houses are held in conjunction with RTP and TIP updates, as well as major planning studies. They are widely advertised.

Committee Meetings Efforts are made to schedule meetings of the three standing committees and ad hoc committees at convenient times and locations as determined in consultation with committee members. Public Advisory Council meetings agendas are mailed (paper or electronic) to an interested-parties list, with meeting materials being posted on the website. Oregon Public Meetings Law requires that all meetings of governing bodies be noticed in advance, be open to the public, held in an accessible location, and that a recording and/or minutes be made available for public review.

Comment Periods, Legal Advertising Formal public comment periods are initiated for draft UPWP, RTP, TIP and Air Quality Conformity Determination (AQCD), Public Participation Plan and major funding decisions. Comment periods related to the various plans and programs vary. Table 6.1 in section 6. – Public Participation Implementation and Documentation outlines the various timelines. Public hearings and initiation of comment periods are advertised in the Press Release section of the Mail Tribune (newspaper of record), Medford, OR. Additional advertising may be purchased. All comments received are retained in the project record.

Public Hearings The Policy Committee conducts public hearings for plan and program updates and other key funding decisions.

Press Releases Project milestones and key opportunities for public input may be described in press releases sent to all news media in the region (print, radio and television).

Display Advertising Public Advisory Council meetings and other key events may be promoted in newspaper ads. The RVMPO should attempt to obtain prominent placement in Sunday and other editions.

Spanish Language Information The Spanish-speaking population is the region's largest minority. According to 2011-2016 American Community Survey data 2.4% of the RVMPO's population has been identified as having limited English proficiency (LEP). In order to assure that LEP populations are provided meaningful access to MPO activities, the RVMPO will continue to provide Spanish language translation, when requested.

Social Media The RVMPO may utilize social media to increase engagement, promote public events and build new relationships.



6. Public Participation Implementation & Documentation

The RVMPO is responsible for coordinating a collaborative transportation planning process for the region. All interested parties must be included, including those who are traditionally underserved by the transportation system and services. This section of the plan addresses the core metropolitan planning activities and responsibilities, focusing on how the public participates in their production.

A. MPO Work Products and Public Participation

There are four core work products that an MPO is responsible for producing and keeping up to date on a regular schedule. Those products and the public participation in each are discussed below.

- 1) **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).** Produced annually, the UPWP lists all planning tasks and studies the MPO will undertake during the year. All three RVMPO standing committees discuss and propose planning tasks. Public Advisory Council meetings are advertised and materials are posted on the website. Staff conducts additional consultation with agencies and interested parties as necessary. Policy Committee holds a public hearing on the draft UPWP after a 30-day comment period. Fact sheets and other information may be produced by staff as necessary. A record of comments received and responses is kept on file, reported to committees, posted on the website, and may be incorporated into the final plan.
- 2) **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).** Updated every four years, the RTP is a long-range, 20-year plan that contains the region's goals and policies, projects, funding forecasts, strategies, and projected demands on the transportation system. Advisory committees discuss the plan update over several meetings. The RVMPO hosts two open house sessions, a 30-day comment period and public hearing. Comments received will be responded to and included in the final document. The draft RTP and supporting White Papers and other research as needed are posted on the website and provided to interested parties. Open house meetings are advertised in the newspaper, on the website, and by mailing (paper or electronic) to individuals and organizations on transportation mail/email lists. Staff conducts outreach including community presentations.

- 3) **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).** Updated every four years, the TIP is the short-range listing of financially constrained (funded) projects to be undertaken in the coming four years. Projects in the TIP are incorporated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Public process for the TIP update is the same as, and conducted concurrently with the RTP update. The TIP and all major amendments are subject to a public comment period (30-day for program adoption, 21-day for major amendments) and a public hearing. (Public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comment on the TIP will satisfy the Program of Projects (POP) requirements of the Section 5307 Program and other Federal Transit Administration funding programs.) A record of comments received is kept on file with responses, reported to committees, posted on the website, and may be incorporated into the final plan.
- 4) **Air Quality Conformity Determination (AQCD).** The RVMPO is required to show through the AQCD that both the RTP and the TIP conform to federal Clean Air Act standards. The determination process is technical in nature, but the findings are subject to public review during the activities described above for the RTP and TIP. A record of comments received will be kept on file with responses, reported to committees, posted on the website, and may be incorporated into the final plan.

B. RVMPO Public Participation Plan

The Public Participation Plan is subject to periodic review, evaluation and updating. The plan is maintained to meet federal requirements for public involvement in metropolitan planning and Oregon Public Meetings and Public Records Law. Furthermore, the RVMPO covers a growing region where the public has demonstrated an interest in the state of transportation facilities and services. RVMPO staff should periodically review the Public Participation Plan with an eye toward augmenting tools and procedures.

Evaluation is an integral part of public involvement, and is discussed in the next section *Review, Evaluation and Revision of the Public Participation Plan*. Updates that follow an evaluation will be reviewed by the PAC and the TAC, advertised in the newspaper, posted on the website, and publicly discussed to encourage both comments and suggestions. There will be a 45-day comment period prior to public hearing by the Policy Committee. Comments received will be responded to and kept on file with the final document.

C. RVMPO Discretionary Funding

The RVMPO coordinates the allocation of funds from two significant federal sources: Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program. Jurisdictions submit applications based on the goals, priorities and projects in their state Transportation System Plans (TSP). All TSPs in the region are periodically updated and those updates include a public participation component, which typically includes a citizen advisory committee. Additionally, RVMPO applications ask jurisdictions to provide information about public participation in the project for which federal funds are sought. Applications are posted on the website for comment, along with guidelines and criteria. Comments received during a 30-day comment period are kept on file with responses, reported to committees and posted on the website.

Table 6.1 – Public Participation Process

Regional Transportation Plan		
Activity	Adoption	Amendment
Development of Draft Document or amendment	Public input will be sought during development of draft document. Such efforts can include but not be limited to the following: making available fact sheets and brochures, feedback forms, participating in local events, holding public meetings, posting information on the MPO's website.	N/A
Releasing draft Document or Amendment for public comment and agency review	Notice of formal public comment period that will last a minimum of 30 days and notice of public hearing will advertised in local print media and on MPO website. Comments will also be sought from participating agencies as well as from the MPOs standing and policy committees.	Draft document is made available online at least 21 days prior adoption. Notice of the documents availability shall be advertised in local print media and placed on the MPO's website.
Adoption of Final Document or Amendment	30 days after the notice of public comment period and upon holding a public hearing during the Policy Committee meeting	21 days after noticing the amendment in the local print media, and after review and recommendation from the MPO's standing committee(s), the Policy Committee shall hold a Public Hearing at its regularly scheduled meeting and then take action on proposed amendment
Transportation Improvement Program & Unified Planning Work Program		
Activity	Adoption	Amendment
Development of Draft Document or amendment	Developed internally	Developed internally
Releasing draft Document or Amendment for public comment and agency review	Notice of formal public comment period that will last a minimum of 30 days and notice of public hearing will advertised in local print media and on MPO website. Comments will also be sought from participating agencies as well as from the MPOs standing and policy committees.	Draft document is made available online at least 21 days prior adoption. Notice of the documents availability shall be advertised in local print media and placed on the MPO's website.
Adoption of Final Document or Amendment	30 days after the notice of public comment period and upon holding a public hearing during the Policy Committee meeting	21 days after noticing the amendment in the local print media, and after review and recommendation from the MPO's standing committee(s), the Policy Committee shall hold a Public Hearing at its regularly scheduled meeting and then take action on proposed amendment

Public Participation Plan

Activity	Adoption or Regular Update
Development of Draft Document	Draft Document to be distributed to MPO Standing Committees prior to commencing 45 day public review period
Release draft document for public review	Advertise 45-day public comment period in local print media and place draft document on MPO website
Adoption of Final Document	45 days after the notice of public comment period and upon holding a public hearing during the Policy Committee meeting



7. Review, Evaluation, and Revision of the Public Participation Plan

Federal Metropolitan Planning guidelines require a periodic review of the effectiveness of public involvement processes. By evaluating public involvement activities, it is possible to improve or add new activities to the MPO program and to discontinue those that are deemed ineffective. RVMPO staff will review the Public Participation Plan with respect to changes in local, state and federal legislation and in terms of its effectiveness in assuring that the process provides full and open access to the public. If the RVMPO, including both staff and committees, and the public determine that involvement techniques described in the plan are inadequate, additional techniques will be researched for inclusion into the RVMPO public involvement process.

The table in *Appendix C* contains information regarding public outreach efforts used in association with the 2021 Regional Transportation Plan update. This information is used by staff and RVMPO committees as a point-in-time evaluation of public input opportunities provided, public participation methods used, and public input received.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary, Acronyms and Common Transportation Terms

AQCD	Air Quality Conformity Determination: Finding based on analysis showing that plans, programs and projects comply with Clean Air Act standards. The RVMPO area is regulated for carbon monoxide (Medford) and particulates.
CMAQ	Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality: The program is a federally-funded program for surface transportation improvements designed to improve air quality and mitigate congestion.
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
TSP	Transportation System Plan: A state-required long-range plan for municipal multi-modal transportation networks generally incorporated into comprehensive land use plans; must be consistent with the RTP and TIP.
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization: Required by federal law in urban areas over 50,000 population, and designated by the governor, MPOs consist of local jurisdictions that collaborate to fulfill federal requirements for long- and short-range, regional, multimodal transportation planning.
PPP	Public Participation Plan
PAC	Public Advisory Council: The RVMPO's citizen sounding board; makes recommendations to the Policy Committee, which makes all MPO decisions.
PC	Policy Committee: The RVMPO's decision making body; made up of member jurisdiction representatives.
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan: Long range, multimodal plan for regional transportation needs.
STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant Program: Provides flexible funding for surface transportation needs.
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee: RVMPO committee of member jurisdictions' planning and public works representatives; makes recommendations to the Policy Committee.
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program: Federally required, short-range multi-modal list of the region's projects for the coming four years.
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program: Federally required plan for projects and studies to be undertaken by the MPO for the year.

Appendix B: Public Advisory Council Application Packet

***ROGUE VALLEY METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION***

Public Advisory Council (PAC)

Membership Application

Return Application to:

Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
Rogue Valley Council of Governments
P.O Box 3275
Central Point, OR 97502
541-664-6674
www.rvmppo.org

Email return to: rvmppo@rvcog.org

For background about the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization and the role of the Public Advisory Council go to our website, www.rvmppo.org

PLEASE PRINT

Personal Information: *Please circle one.* (Mr. / Mrs. / Ms.)

Name: _____

Home address (include Zip code): _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (business) _____

Email _____

About PAC membership... The Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Advisory Council (PAC) makes recommendations on transportation planning issues to the RVMPO's Policy Committee. PAC members are appointed by the Policy Committee to two-year terms, representing one of the RVMPO's regional areas of interest. The PAC has positions for both geographic and issue-specific interests. Appointments are based on an applicant's ability to represent one of the Geographic or Issue-Specific interests.

- To represent one of the **geographic areas** listed below and illustrated on the attached RVMPO map, you must live, own property or operate a business within that area. You do not have to live within city limits. (Please refer to the RVMPO map, or call 664-6674 ext. 360, for clarification.)

- **Issue-specific positions** represent the bicycle/pedestrian, freight industry, mass transit, low-income citizens, minorities, senior citizens, and public health. Low-income and minority representatives do not have to be low income, or a racial minority, but would advocate for the concerns of those communities. Special-interest representatives may live, own property, or operate a business anywhere within the RVMPO.

1. Please indicate below the geographic area, or special interest that you would represent. Select only one from the following list, section (A) or (B) below.

A. Geographic Area (see Citizen Involvement Area map on the last page):

<input type="checkbox"/> Ashland	<input type="checkbox"/> Central Point	<input type="checkbox"/> Eagle Point
<input type="checkbox"/> Jacksonville	<input type="checkbox"/> East Medford	<input type="checkbox"/> West Medford
<input type="checkbox"/> Phoenix	<input type="checkbox"/> Talent	<input type="checkbox"/> White City

B. Special Interest Area:

<input type="checkbox"/> Freight industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Mass Transit
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Income Citizens	<input type="checkbox"/> Minority
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizens	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Health

(Continued on Next Page)

2. What experience, interest, knowledge or qualifications would you bring to the Public Advisory Council?

3. Why do you want to become a member of the Public Advisory Council?

Signature _____

Date _____

Thank You!

POLICY STATEMENTS REGARDING CITIZEN APPOINTMENTS

- ◆ The council consists of representatives from Citizen Involvement Areas within the RVMPO and special interests. There are nine Citizen Involvement Areas with at least two members possible from each area, representing a population of up to 25,000. An additional position is created when an area exceeds 25,000 population. The council may have as many as seven at-large members, one each representing the following: bicycle/pedestrian, freight industry, mass transit, minority citizens, low income citizens, senior citizens, and public health.
- ◆ Members of the council must reside, own property, or operate a business within the Citizen Involvement Area that they represent.
- ◆ Public Advisory Council members will be approved by the RVMPO Policy Committee.
- ◆ Vacancies on the PAC shall be publicly announced. Potential members shall submit a statement of interest. When more than one person applies for a position, selection shall be based on maintaining a broad cross section of interests on the council. If no one responds to the public announcement, staff and PAC members may solicit to groups or individuals to fill membership vacancies.
- ◆ Selection of council members shall be conducted through RVMPO's established application process, meeting the nondiscrimination requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 12898.
- ◆ The term of office shall begin the day the member is appointed to the council and shall continue for two years, except that such term of office shall terminate immediately upon:
 - a. Relocation outside the RVMPO, or the Citizen Involvement Area that the member represents; and
 - b. Unexcused absence from three regularly scheduled, consecutive meetings.

Please Note: These policy statements are from Public Advisory Council bylaws.

Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization map attached. Boundaries of Citizen Involvement Areas are illustrated. Medford has two Citizen Involvement Areas divided by Interstate 5.

For more information call: Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization, Rogue Valley Council of Governments, 541-664-6674.

RVMPO Public Advisory Council: Citizen Involvement Area



0 2.5 5 10 Miles



Appendix C: Analysis of Public Outreach Efforts, 2021 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update

2021 RTP UPDATE

Review of Effectiveness: Opportunities Created for Public Input and Outreach Methods Used

Activity:	Public Advisory Council (PAC) Meetings w/ RTP Review	Public Workshop (Virtual Open House)	RTP Survey	Public Hearing for RTP Adoption at Policy Committee Meeting	Brochure Distribution	RTP Draft Copy Distribution	Website Email Link (Comment Period)
How Advertised or Distributed to Public: (policy/method)	Website	Newspaper advertisements; Website homepage	Talent Harvest Festival, Medford Pear Blossom Festival, Jackson County Harvest Festival, Website	Newspaper advertisement; Website homepage	Talent Harvest Festival, Medford Pear Blossom Festival, Jackson County Harvest Festival, MPO Meetings, RVCOG Entryway	All Public Libraries w/in RVMPO Area	Website homepage
Activity Dates/Times:	08/18/20, 5:30pm 11/17/20, 5:30pm 01/19/21, 5:30pm 09/08/21, 1:30pm	Thurs, 06/10/21	N/A	Tues, 09/28/21, 2pm	N/A	Public Comment Period (Aug.-Sept., 2021)	Public Comment Period (Aug.-Sept., 2021)
Public in Attendance: (measure of effectiveness)	0	Visited 539 times	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Public Comments Received: (measure of effectiveness)	PAC, only (no outside public comment)	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0

Note: All PC & TAC meetings containing RTP review are not listed. These meetings are open to the public. During RTP update development, no public comment re: RTP noted during these meetings.