



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

FOR THE NORTHEAST WASHINGTON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION (NEW RTPO)

The goals of the NEW RTPO include providing visionary leadership on regional plans, policies and issues, which are best achieved with public outreach activities and interactions.

Through its Public Participation Policy, NEW RTPO intends to provide opportunities for appropriate broad-based, early, continuous, and meaningful public participation in all planning, programs, and projects. Further, NEW RTPO intends to encourage an on-going forum for the discussion of regional issues, striving for open exchanges of information and ideas. The Policy calls for a broad range of public information and participation opportunities, supplying complete information, timely public notice, and full access to key decisions.

The Policy provides a broad overview of basic public participation policy. As deemed necessary, NEW RTPO will incorporate details of routine procedures into NEW RTPO policies and procedures. Certain major planning efforts, programs, or projects may include Public Participation Plans specific to that effort. The term "major" is to be applied loosely. If a proposed action or decision is clearly a normal-course-of-business activity that does not significantly affect the public or alter public policy, it may not be necessary to apply these public procedures. If there is a question as to whether the Policy should be followed, NEW RTPO shall apply the policy to ensure appropriate public notification and participation is obtained.

The Policy will be reassessed as necessary to determine if the public's needs for information and access are being met or to comply with changing regulatory requirements. Additionally, the Public Participation Policy shall be reviewed periodically to determine its effectiveness in assuring full and open access to all.

Failure to exactly comply with all Policy elements shall not constitute a failure of public process, nor render any actions or decisions invalid.

Public Access

NEW RTPO will provide the public with timely notice and reasonable access to meetings and information. All regular meetings of NEW RTPO and any Policy Board Committee meetings shall be open to the public, except as needed and as allowed under the State Open Public Meetings Act. Special meetings, such as public hearings and forums, shall also be open to the public.

NEW RTPO shall hold all regular and special meetings at venues that are accessible to persons with disabilities where possible. Every effort will be made to select venues that are accessible to people who rely on public transportation.

Public notification of all regular meetings of the RTPO's committees shall be made at least seven calendar days in advance of the meeting. Each agenda shall also include the date of the next scheduled meeting. In the case of special meetings, every attempt will be made to provide at least seven calendar days advance notice.

Notification of all regular and special meetings will be provided to PRTPO membership, meeting participants, local news media, and anyone requesting notification. Notification will be made via news media and or/electronic means, and shall include the time, date and location of the meeting. In certain circumstances, notice may also take the form of a press release, paid legal notice or advertisement, or may use non-traditional methods to reach certain segments of the community.

All NEW RTPO plans and documents shall be made available for public review at the NEW RTPO office. In certain circumstances, copies of documents and plans may also be distributed to public libraries and other public venues for review, as well, as posted to the NEW RTPO website.

Most publications will be made available free of charge. When appropriate, a charge may be assessed to cover the cost of reproduction and mailing.

NEW RTPO will provide reasonable access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and programs.

Public Outreach

NEW RTPO shall create opportunities for all segments of the community to learn about and engage in issues under consideration by NEW RTPO, particularly those segments that may be directly impacted by the outcomes of specific recommendations and decisions.

NEW RTPO shall inform and educate the public about regional issues using a variety of means, including, but not limited to: regular and special meetings, printed materials, electronic communication.

NEW RTPO may work with civic, advocacy, service and other organizations and interested or potentially interested persons to disseminate information about regional activities.

Public Input

NEW RTPO values a two-way conversation with the public it serves. Explicit consideration of public input and response to public input shall be an integral element of NEW RTPO's decision-making processes.

A public comment period shall be provided during each regular meeting of NEW RTPO. The Policy Board President, or assignee, may limit the duration of comments or provide alternative options for public comment in certain circumstances.

As needed, NEW RTPO will utilize surveys to assess either widespread or selected public opinion.

NEW RTPO shall offer multiple avenues for public comment, such as written, oral, formal, informal, electronic and other means suitable to the project and the constituency involved.

Certain plans and programs require an extended review period, often from seven to thirty days, to allow for the submittal of written comments. For projects with an extended review period, NEW RTPO shall provide ample notice and opportunity for review and written comment.

Written and oral comments will be maintained in NEW RTPO's files. In certain circumstances, the comments may be incorporated into plans, programs or studies, either in total or in summary.

Title VI Notice to Public

It is the Northeast Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization's (NEW RTPO) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with the NEW RTPO office. For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact the Title VI Coordinator of NEW RTPO at (509)684-4571.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

For events:

Accommodation requests for people with disabilities can be made by contacting NEW RTPO at (509)684-4571

For publications:

This material can be made available in an alternate format by calling (509)684-4571.

ADA and Title VI Information

By law, both ADA and Title VI information is required on all publications that NEW RTPO produces.

This enables the NEW RTPO to fulfill its commitment to taking those affirmative action steps which will ensure equitable participation in our business and employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, marital status or sexual orientation.

What is ADA?

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is federal legislation that opens up services and employment opportunities to Americans with disabilities. The law is intended to eliminate illegal discrimination and level the playing field for disabled individuals.

What is Title VI?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

To get this language in an electronic format that you can cut and paste directly into your folios, go to the Title VI and ADA Language for Publications site: www.tricountyedd.com

In addition to the procedures outlined in the Policy, NEW RTPO will comply with all applicable state and federal laws, including but not limited to:

Open Public Meetings Act {RCW 42.30}
State Environmental Policy Act {RCW 43.21C}
State Growth Management Act {RCW 36.70A}
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 {P.L. 101 –336}
Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA21) {P.L. 105-178}
The Civil Rights Act of 1964 {42 U. S.C 2000d}
Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973 {23 U.S.C. 324}
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 {29 U.S.C. 790}
Age Discrimination Act of 1975 {42 U.S.C. 6101}
Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 {P.L. 100-209}
Executive Order 12898 - 59 Fed. Reg. 7629 (1994) - (Environmental Justice)

For additional information regarding NEW RTPO's Public Participation Policy, please contact NEW RTPO at the following:

Northeast Washington Transportation Planning Organization (NEW RTPO)
986 S Main, Suite A
Colville, Washington 99114
Phone: (509) 684-4571
FAX: (509) 684-4788

Adopted by NEW RTPO Policy Board on: May 26th, 2021