

Public Participation Plan

This document, upon its adoption, is to serve as the Public Participation Plan (PPP) for the City of Arlington. Availability of the policy for review will be advertised in a manner reasonably expected to reach the general public, as well as minority populations, and other traditionally under-served populations. This could occur through contacts mentioned earlier in this document, notification of contacts available in English, Spanish, and other languages, in addition to traditional public notices in local newspapers. Public involvement is important at all stages of plan development. Opportunities for participation for both users and non-users of the City of Arlington transportation system will be available. A notice will be posted in the local newspaper. People can also obtain information about the process or submit input to the City of Arlington – Handitran office.

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If materials are requested in another language other than English, large type and/or Braille, staff will make a reasonable attempt to accommodate those needs. Other techniques could also be determined to be useful at any stage of the process, and new and different techniques will be utilized as deemed appropriate.

The purpose of this Public Participation Plan (PPP) is to establish procedures that allow for, encourage, and monitor participation of all citizens in the City of Arlington service area, including but not limited to low income and minority individuals, and those with limited English proficiency. While traditional means of soliciting public involvement may not reach such individuals, or might not allow for meaningful avenues of input, the intent of this effort is to take reasonable actions throughout the planning process to provide opportunities for historically under-served populations to participate.

This document will lay out procedures to provide opportunities for all area citizens to participate in the development of the Public Participation Plan for the City of Arlington. The PPP is a short-range plan (roughly 5 years) which analyzes all aspects of transit operations. Where appropriate, recommendations are made to improve these aspects of transit operations.

A notice will be posted in the local newspaper, noting the existence of this Public Participation Plan and a copy will be sent, at a minimum, to the stakeholders, and posted on the City's Transportation website, the Handitran webpage and the Via webpage.

Goals and Objectives for the Public Participation Plan

Goal: The goal of the PPP is to offer real opportunities for the engagement of all citizens of the City of Arlington service area to participate in the development of a Transit Development Plan (TDP) whether English-speaking or non-English speaking.

Objectives:

- To determine what non-English languages and other cultural barriers exist to public participation within the City of Arlington.
- To provide a general notification of meetings, particularly forums for public input, in a manner that is understandable to all populations in the area.
- To hold meetings in locations which are accessible and reasonably welcoming to all area residents, including, but not limited to, low-income and minority members of the public.
- To provide avenues for two-way flow of information and input from populations which are not likely to attend meetings.
- To provide a framework of actions appropriate to various types of plans and programs, as well as amendments or alterations to any such plan or program.
- To use various illustrative visualization techniques to convey the information including but not limited to charts, graphs, photos, maps and the internet.

Identification of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are those who are either directly, or indirectly, affected by a plan, or the recommendations of that plan. Those who may be adversely affected, or who may be denied benefit of a plan's recommendation(s), are of interest in the identification of specific stakeholders. Stakeholders are broken down into several groups: Disabled citizens, Senior Citizens, minority persons, public agencies, and private organizations and businesses.

General Citizens: There are approximately 394,266 residents in the City of Arlington, TX (U.S. Census, 2020). Thirty-eight percent of the population of the urbanized area consider themselves to be solely of a white race. Some of the techniques that can be used to engage the general population are public notices of meetings in the local newspaper, open house format public information meetings. While these techniques will continue, staff will make a greater effort to engage the general public, possibly with techniques such as, nominal group exercises, surveys, use of local news media, etc.

Minorities: Minority populations make up a smaller percentage of the population in the City of Arlington area. Hispanics make up the largest minority, with nearly 29.2 percent of the total population of the urbanized area. Black, Asian and persons who consider themselves to be of more than one race account for the remaining population.

Engaging minority, and low-English proficiency populations can be challenging. Language and cultural differences may not be compatible with the more traditional means of engaging the public in the planning process. The City of Arlington staff will make reasonable efforts to engage minority populations using techniques, such as including notations in public notices in appropriate non-English languages that will provide a contact where the individual can be informed of the process/project and will have the opportunity to give input. Focus groups may also be established for the purpose of gaining input from a defined portion of the community. Also, advocacy groups can be a good resource for contacts and dissemination of information to minority and low-English proficiency populations. Such advocacy groups or agencies can have insight into the needs of the under-represented populations, as well as providing valuable contacts or arenas for input. Contacts with local translators should also be maintained and used as requested and needed.

Public Agencies: Public agencies can provide valuable input to the planning process, in addition to assisting in gaining participation from traditionally under-represented populations. Pertinent public agencies include those that have clients who fall into under-represented populations, including but not limited to minorities, low-income, and limited English proficiency households. These agencies have great insight into the transportation needs of their clients and are useful partners in overcoming difficult barriers that may not be understood by professionals dealing more distinctly with the provision of transportation services.

Private Organizations and Businesses: Private organizations and businesses offer several perspectives that are valuable to the planning process. Often, transportation for employees is of critical concern to private sector employers. For that reason, representation of private business interests will be welcomed in the planning process.

City of Arlington Stakeholder Groups:

Special Transit Advisory Board

Aging and Disability Resource Center

Lighthouse for the Blind

Easter Seals North Texas

Department of Assistive Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

MHMR of Tarrant County

Senior Citizen Services of Greater Tarrant County

TRIP Steering Committee

Arlington Independent School District- Special Education Program/Graduating Students

Special Connexions

Arlington Charities
Salvation Army
Mission Arlington
Tarrant County Community College administration, students and faculty

Outreach efforts

In addition to the outreach efforts identified earlier in this policy, staff will use the following techniques during its planning studies, as deemed appropriate by the City of Arlington staff.

- Presentations to professional, citizen, and student organizations.
- Articles in community newsletters.
- Press releases and meetings with local media representatives.
- Informal conversations with individuals and small groups.
- Interviews with people who are or could be affected by study recommendations.
- Presentations by experts on various transit-related subjects.
- User and non-user surveys.
- Use various illustrative visualization techniques to convey the information including but not limited to charts, graphs, photos, maps and the internet.

Other techniques will be examined to determine the best methods of involving all segments of the service area population in the planning process.

Availability of Planning Documents: Hard copies of documents, upon completion, will be available at the City of Arlington - Handitran Office at 1101 W. Main St. Electronic versions of the documents will be available on the City of Arlington Transportation Department website at www.arlingtontx.gov/transportation.

Methods of Addressing Comments: Comments will be documented, presented to decision making bodies, modified in the contents of the document as necessary, and will be included in the appendices of planning products after they are approved and published. Comments received after studies and other planning products are completed and approved will be documented and referenced when amending or updating the planning products in the future.

Responses to information requests and comments: Information can be requested from staff in person and by phone, fax, e-mail, and U.S. mail.