

Appendix D

Public Participation Plan

Plan Adopted: 08/23/2022

Purpose:

To integrate consideration of the viewpoints of minority, low-income, and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations into the Transit System's community outreach activities. The public participation strategy offers early and continuous opportunities for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transportation decisions.

Strategies

The Faribault – Martin County Transit Board considers the LEP populations and key stakeholders in proactive strategies, procedures, and projected outcomes that align with the public participation activities throughout the year(s). The Faribault – Martin County Transit Board offers adequate notice of public participation activities in the planning stages and throughout the process. When appropriate, notice of free language assistance will be posted in areas that the public and staff have access to during all public activities. All language assistance services provided during public engagement or community outreach will be recorded on the Language Service / Public Participation Log is attached as **Appendix E**.

Strategies to involve minority and LEP populations in effective participation in our decision-making process and to serve on appropriate committees, groups, boards, etc. has been implemented. The Faribault – Martin County Transit Board monitors the involvement and percentage of transit-related, non-elected planning boards, advisory councils or committees, or similar bodies, and their membership of which is selected by the system, and provides annually an updated table with the following areas shown as in the attached **Appendix K**.

Virtual Engagement

Microsoft Teams is a tool that can be used in communication with LEP individuals attending an online public engagement event. Microsoft Teams allows for real-time closed caption translations during a Teams [meeting](#) or [live event](#). Meeting organizers will provide information to attendees at the beginning of the meeting or live event on tools to use translated closed captions. For a Teams live event, the event lead can turn on the ability for attendees to view closed captioning in up to 6 languages. Instructions for this is available [here](#). For Teams meetings, there is no ability to automatically set up closed captioning for attendees. Attendees, can however, turn on closed captioning for their view only. Instructions for this is available [here](#).

Surveys to the public and current ridership

Surveys are an opportunity to gain public input and obtain insight on opinions of and feedback on the usage or lack of use of the public transit system, services, and information. All surveys provided will be accessible to LEP individuals based on the four-factor analysis that identifies the targeted populations.

Website and Online Documents

Based on the four-factor analysis the following languages were identified as the top three LEP groups in the jurisdiction providing service: Spanish, Other Asian / Pacific Islander, and French languages. As appropriate, the Faribault – Martin County Transit Board provides notice of the availability of free language assistance for each of these identified languages. All vital documents will be translated as needed.

In-Person

All facilities that have interaction with the public in-person will display the Public Notice of Rights Under Title VI in a location that accessible to the public. Non-English versions of the notice will be posted as well if, based on the four-factor analysis that particular language was identified as needed. Notices in English and Spanish are attached as **Appendix G**. Staff will use language guide if necessary if bilingual staff are not available to assist. Language guide resources are available in **Appendix C**.

Phone

Planned resources will be identified and utilized when bilingual staff is not available to assist. Language translation assistance apps on smart phones will be utilized as much as possible to assist staff.

Email or Other Written Communication

Language translation assistance websites will be utilized as much as possible to assist staff.

Outreach practices:

The nature of language assistance provided will be based in part on the number and proportion of LEP individuals served, the frequency of contact between the Faribault – Martin County Transit Board and the LEP population, and the importance of the service provided to the LEP population. The Faribault – Martin County Transit Board will assess the needs of the populations frequently encountered or affected by their program or activity to determine whether translation of outreach materials is needed. Every effort will be made to coordinate with community organizations to assist in determining outreach materials that would be helpful to translate, find opportunities to align with other outreach activities in the area, and utilize ethnic media, schools, and religious or community organizations to help spread the message.

The following outlines the practices that the Faribault – Martin County Transit Board takes in community outreach:

- Scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for minority and LEP communities:**
 - Public notices regarding meetings placed at following locations: Notices sent to local newspapers. Notices posted at meeting exterior locations prior to meeting

 - Efforts made to ensure meeting times and locations are in convenient and accessible locations: Board meetings are held during the daytime. Public input meetings are held during the daytime and again in the evening.

- Adequate notice of public participation activities in the planning stages and throughout the process and early and continuous opportunities for participation:**
 - Public input meetings held 30 days in advance when necessary

- Coordinating with community- and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities:**
 - Specific organizations, institutions, or other organizations are: Human Services of Faribault and Martin Counties and specific subcommittees organized by them that focus on serving a number of populations including LEP populations.

- Involvement of minority, low-income and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations as Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) members:**

Special Interest Group(s) serving on TAC: Human Service staff is usually represented on the Transit Advisory Committee. Elected officials that represent LEP residents are usually represented on Transit Advisory Committee. Individuals representing entities such as retail establishments or senior care facilities that are high origin and destinations are appointed. Also it is ideal that a representative from one of the two major medical centers in the service area is on the TAC if possible.

TAC meeting schedule: Transit Director is scheduled to meet quarterly with TAC appointees from Transit Board of Commissioners. Also, regular public open house meetings are planned in communities throughout the service area, either as stand alone Transit Board meetings, or tag-along with other entity meetings, to gather input from the public regarding the public transit service, answer questions, and to be recruiting potential TAC appointees for Commissioners whose appointee is no longer able to serve on the TAC.

Role and Purpose of TAC: Advise Transit Director on activity and needs of transit system and transit riding public.