

**DRAFT
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**



AUGUST 2007

**Green River Area Development District
Regional Transportation Committee**

DRAFT
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN
GRADD REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

August 2007

Green River Area Development District

270.926.4433
270.684.0714 (fax)
1.800.648.6056 (TDD)

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INTRODUCTION

The Green River Area Development District's Regional Transportation Program is the designated agency for transportation planning for the Kentucky counties of Hancock, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster. The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Owensboro-Daviess County, which includes the City of Owensboro. The Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization is the designated MPO for Henderson County, which includes the City of Henderson. As such, the GRADD coordinates planning for transportation needs and federal surface transportation spending in the area.

Regional Transportation Committee meetings are held as needed but at least bimonthly. Members include the following:

- Private and public sector
- Local government officials or representatives
- Transportation providers; people and freight
- Business/economic development interests
- Environmental issues
- Representatives for the transportation disadvantaged, especially minorities and low-income groups

The purpose of this document is to describe actions the GRADD Regional Transportation Committee (RTC) shall take to provide opportunities for the public to be involved in the transportation planning process. It serves as a guide for GRADD to follow in planning public involvement opportunities. The public process has a four-fold purpose:

- a. To make information available to the public in a timely manner
- b. To provide opportunity for public input to the transportation planning process
- c. To provide public comments to the Regional Transportation Committee
- d. To emphasize communication and coordination with other agencies and interests

Public Involvement Policy

It is the policy of GRADD to provide all persons access to the transportation planning process. GRADD has developed a public involvement plan where solely “providing the opportunity” to influence the planning process is not enough. GRADD’s process is aimed at maximizing the number and diversity of comments that are forwarded to the Regional Transportation Planning Committee. By doing so, the Regional Transportation Planning Committee shall have available for its consideration ideas, concerns, and suggestions on transportation planning issues that have been collected through GRADD outreach activities.

Additional activities to engage low-income populations and minority populations are being developed through the efforts of GRADD’s Regional Transportation Committee. Additional actions shall be explored as possible avenues for increasing community awareness about the planning activities and increasing opportunities for all persons to influence the decision-making process. New recommendations shall be presented to the Regional Transportation Committee for its consideration as amendments to the Public Participation Plan.

GRADD Public Involvement Process

The following actions shall be carried out by GRADD, and in some circumstances, its member governments, government agencies, and committees. Actions are recognized as those that occur on a regular basis and those that take place in accordance with planning studies.

Standard Activities

Opportunities to submit ideas and issues to GRADD exist within the regular course of conducting GRADD activities (i.e., committee meetings). As new tools become available, GRADD shall consider their potential for engaging the public. One such tool is the internet and GRADD’s web site. Interested people are encouraged to attend meetings and access the web site.

At meetings, attendees may take advantage not only of the opportunity to make comments, but also glean information from the conduction of business and observe the committee process. The web site serves as a tool for enhancing awareness about GRADD activities and a resource for meeting materials, documents, and an additional means for communicating with GRADD.

In fulfilling GRADD’s commitment toward incorporating the issues and concerns of the public into the planning process, creating awareness about transportation issues, and extending opportunities for exchanging information, the following participation tools shall be implemented.

GRADD Committee Meetings

- a. All GRADD Regional Transportation Committee (RTC) meetings are open to the public.
- b. The agenda for each meeting of the RTC will include a public comment period.
- c. The agenda for each meeting will be posted on the GRADD website.

Public Review Process

- a. The GRADD shall hold local or regional public information/input meetings as requested by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC).
- b. The GRADD shall provide an accessible and conspicuous area of our office to display plans and/or documents requested by the KYTC for public review.
- c. The GRADD shall inform the public and transportation committees and appropriate boards in our area of the availability for review of such plans and/or documents.
- d. The GRADD shall contact all local agencies/or organizations which may have an interest in the specific plan, notifying them of the availability of this document for review and comment and of the review period.
- e. The GRADD shall forward all comments received to the Division of Planning as soon as possible, but no later than the specified date.
- f. The GRADD shall reply in writing to all parties providing comments on the specific document thanking them for their input and assuring them that their comments have been forwarded to KYTC for consideration.
- g. The GRADD shall assist the KYTC with public involvement as requested.
- h. The GRADD shall provide documentation of its public involvement process and efforts to the KYTC Division of Planning within the specified period of time.

GRADD Web Site

- a. A schedule of the regular meetings of the RTC shall be made available on the GRADD web site for, at least, the current and next month. Scheduled events are subject to change without prior notification.
- b. The current Unscheduled Projects List and the Public Participation Plan shall be made available on the GRADD web site.
- c. A schedule of Regional Transportation Public Participation Activities shall be available on the GRADD web site. The schedule shall include a listing of GRADD and member agency activities that are associated, at least, with projects in the Unscheduled Projects List. As well, GRADD, at a minimum, shall list public participation activities associated with updates and amendments to the Unscheduled Projects List and Public Participation Plan. The schedule will indicate the current and next month. Activities published on the schedule are subject to change without notice.

GRADD Newsletter and E-Newsletter

- a. Efforts to reach, educate, and involve the public in the transportation planning process include providing information on the various transportation plans through use of the GRADD newsletter and e-letters, each of which are published several times a year.

Additional General Outreach Opportunities

- a. GRADD transportation staff anticipates attending the following gatherings, which provide potential opportunities to speak about GRADD's Public Involvement Plan.
 1. Chamber of Commerce meetings
 2. Citizens Public Transit Advisory meetings
 3. Civic Meetings
 4. GRADD Board of Directors meetings

In addition, staff is frequently asked to speak at meetings of private and public agencies (i.e. senior centers).

- b. Information regarding the GRADD Public Involvement Plan's process shall be sent to each of the county judges and Regional Transportation Committee members.
- c. Staff will attend Fiscal Count meetings in each county to request input for the Unscheduled Projects List (UPL). GRADD will notify local newspapers prior to these meetings to invite public comment into the UPL process.
- d. Staff will occasionally appear on local cable access television or radio programs to speak about the transportation planning process.
- e. The following is a list of ideas that may be included in the GRADD Regional Transportation Public Involvement Plan:
 1. Create mailing lists and e-mail lists of agencies to periodically send information to and ask for comments. Examples of agencies include economic development organizations, public transit providers, senior citizen's centers, school transportation directors, local public libraries, modal representatives, service organizations, etc.
 2. Use surveys in newsletters, mail-outs, e-mails, etc., to gain public input.
 3. Maintain a presentation and table-top display that could be used at public meetings, speaking engagements, and/or 'fairs' explaining the statewide planning process.

4. Staff will maintain a calendar of local and regional events (annual and special) that can be attended and/or utilized for public involvement.
5. Conduct a regional transportation-planning workshop for government and local officials, planning commissions, economic and tourism officials, etc.

Targeted Outreach Methods

Analysis of the census data pertaining to the GRADD region included in Appendix A shows the need to target a few particular segments of the population in order to obtain their input on the transportation planning process.

- a. Utilize existing services/programs at the GRADD to distribute information (i.e., Workforce Investment, Economic Development, and Social Services programs) to help reach minority, elderly, and/or low-income populations.
- b. Coordinate with the Hispanic Alliance of Greater Owensboro and Migrant Education in each county to contact interested parties in the Hispanic community.
- c. Develop a working relationship with organizations that assist the disabled population, including the Department for the Blind, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Disabled American Veterans, etc.
- d. Reach low-literacy individuals through Adult Education programs in each county.
- e. Coordinate with Community Based Services, housing authorities, Audubon Area Community Services, etc., to target low-income populations.
- f. Work with the Human Relations Commission to get the word out to Black populations about the transportation planning process.

Staff will work with the above organizations and keep in contact them through whichever means is convenient for the organization: emails, newsletters, press releases, telephone. Staff is willing to participate in any event held by the organizations which involve speaking or setting up an information booth. The following Chart 1 gives further information on the outreach efforts and associated groups.

Review and Evaluation

The public involvement process is flexible and evolving. Because it is dynamic the Public Involvement Plan shall be reviewed and evaluated annually. During the review and evaluation period new opportunities for GRADD to engage the public are explored for possible application. Conversely, activities that have proven inefficient and ineffective will be considered for removal from the plan.