

Public Participation Plan

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Overview

Victoria Transit is operated by the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission (GCRPC) through a contract with the City of Victoria. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) should be used as a guide for conduct on seeking public input on transit plans, programs, and projects, in combination with the GCRPC's PPP. This document outlines the strategies, procedures, and goals that guide Victoria Transit's public participation efforts, ensuring that public input is actively integrated into transit decision-making. Following the Federal Transit Administration's policy, the Public Participation Process should offer the following:

- Early and continuous involvement
- Reasonable availability of information
- Opportunities for collaborative input
- Open public meetings
- Access to the decision-making process

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this PPP is to outline procedures that promote inclusive and meaningful engagement in transportation planning and services. This includes ensuring opportunities for participation by all community members, with particular attention to low-income individuals, minority populations, and those with limited English proficiency (LEP). This plan is intended to guide efforts that proactively seek input from historically underserved groups throughout the planning process.

Victoria Transit recognizes the importance of involving the public in planning and implementing transportation projects, and that public comments contribute to better plans and decision-making. The following goals of the Victoria Transit PPP were developed to ensure meaningful opportunities are provided to the community to stay informed and involved in decisions affecting them:

- **Awareness and Outreach** – Reach all members of the community using a variety of methods, including social media, printed materials, and outreach events, to share information about the potential impacts of transportation projects.
- **Participation** – Encourage participation from all segments of the public using accessible and appropriate methods to collect comments, feedback, and opinions.
- **Responsiveness** – Document and meaningfully consider all public input received throughout the planning and implementation process.
- **Consistency** – Maintain regular communication throughout all phases of the planning process and ensure this plan is applied consistently across all projects.

Federal Requirements

In accordance with the public participation requirements of 49 U.S.C. Section 5307, programs of projects¹ must be developed with public participation and a locally developed process to consider public comment before raising a fare or carrying out a major reduction in transportation service is required.² Below is a list of activities requiring proactive public participation effort, according to the FTA Title VI Circular 4702.1B. Planning and project development activities not detailed below are at the discretion of the agency to effectively engage and provide outreach to customers and users of transit services.

- Modification to fares, fare media, or fare policy
- Instituting a major change in service, including but not limited to removal or addition of a route
- Major capital projects and investments

Title VI and LEP Considerations

The considerations of Title VI, the Executive Order on LEP, and the DOT LEP Guidance shall be integrated into the public participation process. Participation opportunities shall be open to everyone, including but not limited to, minority populations, LEP populations, people with disabilities, and low-income populations. Efforts to involve minority and LEP populations may include comprehensive measures, such as placing public notices at all transit stations, stops, and vehicles. Targeted measures may also be used to address linguistic, institutional, cultural, economic, historical, or other barriers that may prevent minority and LEP persons from effectively participating in the decision-making process.³ Some proven practices and strategies for engaging minority and LEP populations may include the following:

- Scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible
- Employing different meeting sizes and formats
- 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
- Advertising through radio, television, newspapers, or podcasts that serve LEP populations
- Offering non-written methods for public input, such as oral interviews or audio/video recordings to capture public comments⁴

LEP and Language Assistance Planning

Consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, DOT's implementing regulations, and Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" (65 FR 50121, Aug. 11, 2000), the Agency shall take reasonable steps to ensure

¹ 49 U.S.C. Sections 5307(b)

² 49 U.S.C. Sections 5307(c)(1)(I)

³ [FTA Circular 4702.1B: Title 6 Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients](#)

⁴ [FTA EJ Circular 7.14-12 FINAL 0.pdf](#)

meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are limited-English proficient (LEP). GCRPC has a Limited English Proficiency Plan in place to meet the federal requirements as well as the Agency's goals to achieve maximum opportunity for public participation.

A required component of a transit agency's Title VI Program, the Four Factor Analysis is used to determine the appropriate language services to support individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The analysis helps agencies assess the level of need and guides the development of a Language Assistance Plan. Key resources for LEP planning and access include:

- DOT's LEP Guidance ⁵
- DOJ's Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool ⁶
- LEP.gov materials ⁷

Safe Harbor Provision

DOT has adopted DOJ's Safe Harbor Provision, which outlines circumstances that can provide a "safe harbor" for recipients regarding translation of written materials for LEP populations. The Safe Harbor Provision stipulates that, if an agency provides written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the total population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, then such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the agency's written translation obligations. Translation of non-vital documents, if needed, can be provided orally. These safe harbor provisions apply to the translation of written documents only. They do not affect the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and are reasonable.⁸

Stakeholders

This plan serves as a framework to ensure outreach efforts are inclusive of all stakeholders, and particularly bridges the gap between those who are historically underserved, such as disabled and minority populations, and those who depend on our services.

To support targeted and meaningful outreach, the table below highlights key demographic characteristics of the community:

⁵ [Federal Register :: Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient \(LEP\) Persons](#)

⁶ [Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs](#)

⁷ [Welcome to LEP.gov](#)

⁸ [FTA Circular 4702.1B: Title 6 Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients](#)

Targeted Community	Victoria, TX	Victoria Transit Service Area ⁹
Minority ¹⁰	64.8%	69.1%
Low Income ¹¹	14.6%	20.7%
LEP ¹²	6.3%	6.9%

These figures provide a foundation for tailoring outreach strategies to ensure efforts are responsive to the needs and characteristics of the community, leading to more effective and inclusive engagement.

Partnerships

Victoria Transit partners with a range of community-based organizations to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of its services. These partnerships help extend outreach to residents who may not engage through traditional methods and ensure that the needs of underserved populations are heard and considered. The following is a sample of organizations with which Victoria Transit maintains collaborative relationships:

- Victoria ISD Education Foundation
- Crossroads Community Action
- Homeless Coalition of the Golden Crescent
- Victoria Housing Authority
- Victoria College
- Victoria Chamber of Commerce
- Boys & Girls Club of Victoria
- County Office of Emergency Management

Public Participation Implementation

Victoria Transit will notify the public about opportunities to be involved in transit decisions and will document and consider all public input received. To support access for individuals with limited English proficiency, in-person or web-based translation services will be used when needed. A combination of the following methods may be used to promote public involvement:

- Printed materials such as brochures, flyers, and signs

⁹ The service area was defined based on block groups or census tracts where a significant portion falls within walking distance (0.25 miles) of an existing bus route.

¹⁰ Table B03003, 2023 American Community Survey.

¹¹ Table C17002, 2023 American Community Survey.

¹² Table C16001, 2023 American Community Survey.

- Local media including newspapers, radio, and television
- Online platforms including websites and social media
- Public meetings and hearings
- Attendance at community events
- Partnerships with local organizations

Major Events

Victoria Transit is committed to informing and involving the public in significant service decisions. The following are considered major events and require a public participation process:

Major Service Changes

GCRPC implements service changes annually around October based on ridership demands, public requests, and budget fluctuations. However, formal board approval is required for major service changes, which include the following:

- The addition or elimination of service
- Service changes that impact 25% or more of a route's passengers, route miles, or vehicle miles
- Proposed changes that are anticipated to be controversial with a particular community or interested parties

Service changes that do not meet these thresholds may still undergo public outreach at the discretion of Victoria Transit to ensure transparency and community awareness.

Fare Increases and Decreases

Fare adjustments are evaluated based on financial needs and service goals. While some changes may be necessary, public input is a key component of determining whether, when, and how fare adjustments should occur.

Planning Activities

Long-range planning efforts, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) updated every five years by the Victoria MPO, require public input to ensure the resulting vision reflects the community's needs and priorities.

Capital Investment and/or Improvement Projects

Capital investment or improvement projects are programmed into the Victoria MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Victoria Transit coordinates with the MPO to meet the outreach requirements of their Public Participation Plan for capital projects. For major capital projects affecting Victoria Transit, the Agency will conduct its own outreach to ensure affected community members have a chance to review and comment.

Public Outreach Strategy

For each major event, Victoria Transit will develop a tailored public outreach strategy. This strategy will consider the scope of the proposed change, affected populations, and the most effective methods of engagement. Outreach strategies will:

- Use inclusive methods of communicating with the riding public, non-riding public, state and federal agencies, and private partners to determine strategies to reach the target audience
- Identify particularly affected members of the public and stakeholders
- Assess barriers to participation among stakeholders and strategies to reduce barriers
- Select appropriate outreach techniques (see Public Notice Procedures)
- Provide opportunities for continued participation
- Document and respond to public feedback in a timely and transparent manner

Public Notice Procedures

The Victoria MPO has a Public Information Officer (PIO) to support facilitation of formal announcements and public input opportunities. Should a major event occur that requires a public outreach strategy, the following series of events must be followed prior to implementation:

- Public Notice and Comment Period
 - A notice will be posted in both English and Spanish
 - Notices will be available in accessible formats in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - The public comment period will remain open for no fewer than 21 calendar days
- Comment Submission Instructions
 - Clear details on where to access review material
 - Instructions on how to submit comments
 - Beginning and ending dates for public comment
- Meeting Information
 - The time, date, and location of meetings will be publicized
 - The purpose of each meeting will be clearly stated
 - Notices of meetings will be published at least 10 days in advance

When appropriate, Victoria Transit may also conduct other activities to solicit public comment, including but not limited to:

- Holding extra public meetings or workshops in affected areas
- Presenting to elected officials, neighborhood groups, or civic organizations
- Publicizing events through marketing promotions, such as local radio, television, and social media in English and Spanish

Public participation may also be required for other activities not classified as major events if determined by the program director, in consultation with the Title VI Officer. In such cases, a customized outreach strategy may be developed by Victoria Transit and approved by the Title VI Officer.

Ongoing Engagement

Outside of major events, Victoria Transit remains committed to providing regular opportunities for community feedback. Continuous engagement helps build trust and ensures that both riders and non-riders feel heard in the planning and delivery of transit services.

Public Meetings and Hearings

The Victoria City Council holds public meetings twice a month, offering residents a chance to provide input. For major service or fare changes, the City Council or GCRPC may also hold public hearings or meetings to collect public comments. Public meetings often include presentations, polls, or workshops to encourage flexible engagement, while public hearings follow a more formal process for gathering feedback.

Victoria Transit Board (VTB)

The Victoria Transit Board (VTB) is a standing committee that serves as the governing body of Victoria Transit, meeting at least four times per year. Each meeting includes an open forum where members of the public can provide comments or complaints directly to the board. These forums support the VTB's commitment to public involvement by offering a regular opportunity to gather community feedback that informs service planning and improvement recommendations.

Board membership must reflect a range of local stakeholders, such as Victoria College and the Victoria MPO, and one seat is reserved for a current Victoria Transit rider. All members must reside within the Victoria Transit service area. Beyond its oversight role, the VTB represents the interests of riders and residents across the service area and actively contributes to long-range planning, including coordination with the city's Metropolitan Transportation Plan, to ensure services align with community needs.

Public Comments

Public feedback is welcomed year-round through various channels, including:

- Online at GCRPC's website
- During public meetings or hearings
- By phone or email

Customers of Victoria Transit who believe they have been denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or subject to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin can file a complaint to the Title VI Program Director at GCRPC.

Additional Outreach Methods

Victoria Transit employs a variety of outreach tools to reach diverse audiences. These include:

- Community presentations
- Awareness campaigns
- Advisory committees
- Press releases, flyers, and banners
- Social media updates
- Project-specific websites
- Targeted surveys

Measuring Effectiveness

At the conclusion of outreach for major events, Victoria Transit will fill out a summary report documenting outreach activities and public input received. When possible, demographic information will be collected to evaluate whether outreach efforts effectively reached priority populations. This documentation will be maintained by GCRPC and shared with the Victoria MPO.

Conclusion

Victoria Transit is committed to fostering a transparent, inclusive, and equitable decision-making process that reflects the needs and voices of the entire community. This Public Participation Plan serves as a roadmap for engaging with the public in meaningful ways, both during major service decisions and through ongoing communication with riders, stakeholders, and underrepresented groups.

This plan also reflects Victoria Transit's commitment to complying with all applicable federal requirements. Special attention is given to engaging historically underserved populations, including individuals with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, low-income communities, and communities of color. By establishing clear procedures, outreach strategies, and tools for engagement, Victoria Transit ensures that public input is not only welcomed but actively incorporated into planning, service delivery, and investment decisions.

The success of Victoria Transit depends on maintaining strong partnerships with the public. Through this plan, the agency will continue to build trust, increase transparency, and develop transportation solutions that reflect the priorities and values of those who depend on transit services. This plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated regularly to stay responsive to community needs, best practices, and federal guidance.

Victoria Transit encourages all community members to participate, stay informed, and help shape the future of public transportation in the region.

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