

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

2021 UPDATE

# Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study

## Public Participation Plan

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*PPUATS is dedicated to providing access to the transportation planning process and associated MPO planning documents to all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, socio-economic status, English proficiency, or disability.*

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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Executive Summary**

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) and Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS) aims to dedicatedly provide access to the transportation planning process and associated MPO planning documents. These are open to all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, socio-economic status, English proficiency, or disability status. TCRPC/PPUATS has prepared two key documents, the Public Participation Plan (PPP), and the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, to help guide the agency in ensuring that the transportation planning process welcomes everyone.

The TCRPC/PPUATS PPP outlines the strategies developed to distribute information to the public regarding transportation planning and programming processes. This plan includes the MPO's methodologies, projects, studies, and plans, as well as gathering public feedback on these projects. TCRPC/PPUATS recognizes that effective public participation, with an emphasis on traditionally underserved populations, is critical to ensuring that a comprehensive viewpoint and considerations are appropriately incorporated into the transportation planning process.

This document is meant to guide how TCRPC/PPUATS intends to engage the public and gain their participation in the planning process. At the beginning of this update process, TCRPC/PPUATS first sought to understand how it can diversify public participants and make the planning process more inclusive. To do this, TCRPC staff conducted stakeholder interviews with various community organizations and members. These interviews were meant to make the public aware of the PPP update, as well as gain insight into different methods community organizations use to conduct public outreach, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the stakeholder interviews, TCRPC staff developed an interactive website with an imbedded survey to educate the public about the PPP update and to gather input. The intent of the interactive website was to reach a wider audience. The platform gave background information about TCRPC, PPUATS, and laid out the PPP purpose. Finally, the interactive website ended with a survey asking for the public's input on the type of outreach that would be most effective for them and what would sway them to participate in public forums.

## **Introduction**

Because the Greater Peoria region receives federal funding for transportation projects, a designated planning process must be followed to program and spend these funds. This process includes specific public participation requirements.

Public participation is a crucial component of any planning process. Such a system should both communicate information about the process to the public and enable the public to provide input into the process. The constant exchange of information and ideas between planners and the public helps save time and money by discovering and avoiding issues long before they become burdens on the tax base. Effective participation also builds trust and buy-in from the public, resulting in not only a more effective plan, but a more easily executable plan that is more likely to be supported and embraced by the region. These benefits are the basis for why the designated planning process includes public participation requirements.

The purpose of this document is to create a roadmap that describes the continued efforts and sets forth the policy of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to involve public officials, community leaders, organizations, and area citizens in the transportation planning process. Transportation, in all forms, is a basic need of society. Partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Greater Peoria Mass Transit District (GPMTD/CityLink), and many other cooperating agencies, the MPO seeks to provide an efficient and equitable surface transportation system for the Peoria Metropolitan Area.

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is divided into different sections based on topic area. **Section 1: Introduction** is this section, which outlines what this plan is and serves as a starting point. **Section 2: Planning Process** illustrates the methods by which input was collected from the public. **Section 3: Public Participation Strategies** reviews the existing general strategies that Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) uses for engaging the public and receiving input. **Section 4: Public Comment Periods and Input** delineates the policies that TCRPC staff follows when developing MPO documents. In addition to the policies, this section also outlines where the public review sites are located within the MPO boundaries. Lastly, **Section 5: Evaluating the Public Participation Strategies** depicts measurement metrics to determine the effectiveness of the techniques and strategies outlined in this plan.

The PPP was last updated in 2017 and is being updated in conjunction with the 2021 Title VI Program with Environmental Justice Consideration and Limited English Proficiency Plan with the purpose of including lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Metropolitan Planning Organization

Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, introducing Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). This Act required the formation of MPOs in urbanized areas with a population of 50,000+ to provide multi-modal transportation planning. MPOs were created to ensure that existing and future expenditures for transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) planning process. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs in a metropolitan area is allocated through the MPO.

As a result, TCRPC was designated as the MPO for the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area by Illinois Governor Dan Walker in 1976. TCRPC has since delegated the responsibilities of the MPO to the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area Transportation Study (PPUATS). Thus, PPUATS is recognized as the MPO for the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area. The MPO brings together local governments, transportation authorities, citizens, and other interested parties to assist in creating transportation policy. These stakeholders help develop comprehensive plans that reflect the area's transportation vision for the future.

### Transportation Planning Documents

MPO staff's job is to update federally mandated transportation planning documents, such as the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and Public Participation Plan (PPP). No federal funding can be applied towards transportation improvement projects, transportation services, or transportation studies in the PPUATS 20-Year Planning Boundary unless the project, service, or study is included in one or more of the above transportation planning documents.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a comprehensive proposal for the further development, improvement and maintenance of the major transportation systems for the Peoria Metropolitan Area. The LRTP has a 20-year (minimum) time horizon and addresses all forms of transportation: Highway, transit, pedestrian, public, and private. The LRTP is updated every five years.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) proposes expenditures using federal dollars for transportation improvements scheduled for the next four years. The listing includes all transportation projects proposed within the 20-Year Planning Boundary for the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area. The document establishes priorities and is financially constrained (i.e., a project can only be included if there is a reasonable expectation of sufficient funding for its completion). The TIP is updated annually.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is prepared annually to direct day-to-day work of the TCRPC staff and committees. The UPWP outlines specific planning activities to be accomplished in the coming fiscal year and assigns responsibilities to the various



TCRPC departments. The bulk of the work is funded by grants from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a federally mandated document that details PPUATS policies and guidelines for providing opportunities for the public to be involved in transportation projects and planning activities.

#### MPO Committee Structure

PPUATS representation is drawn from elected officials and staff of local municipalities and counties, along with the General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport, GPMTD, and IDOT. Other entities such as the FHWA and IDOT – Office of Planning and Programming serve as advisory members to PPUATS.

Two committees make up PPUATS: A Policy Committee and a Technical Committee. The PPUATS Policy Committee comprises elected officials representing their respective communities. The Policy Committee's function is to determine transportation policy within the framework of the urban transportation planning process. The Policy Committee must vote on the Technical Committee's recommendations.

The PPUATS Technical Committee is made up of individuals appointed by their respective PPUATS communities. Most members are public works and/or engineering staff. Throughout the year, the Technical Committee reviews and recommends planning policies to the Policy Committee.

#### TCRPC-PPUATS Policy Committee Merger

TCRPC and the PPUATS Policy Committee are currently in talks to merge to the two boards. The purpose of the merger is to help TCRPC and PPUATS Policy more effectively represent the region by becoming one united front and to remove redundancies between the two boards. With the merger, TCRPC board will consist of representation from Peoria County, Tazewell County, Woodford County, municipalities that are at least partially within the Peoria-Pekin Urbanized Area, GPMTD, and IDOT District 4. PPUATS Technical Committee will remain after the merger and be the recommending body to the TCRPC board for all transportation related projects within the MPO boundary.

## **Planning Process**

TCRPC staff conducted interviews with various community organizations and members to help share the PPP update process. The purpose of these interviews was to gain community engagement perspectives from different sectors of the public. The stakeholders interviewed belonged to the public health sector, grassroots organizations, non-profit organizations, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. By gaining insight into how these entities perform outreach, TCRPC will become better informed at creating successful outreach practices and bringing in more diverse gatherings of people.

In addition to the interviews, TCRPC staff developed an interactive website to broaden the reach of the planning process and gain as much input as possible. The interactive website, or story map, provided further information about TCRPC, PPUATS, the purpose of the PPP, and types of public engagement. An embedded survey invited participants to provide input about their preferred communication type and meeting locations.

## Stakeholder Interviews

Tri-County staff interviewed six individuals who are active in the Greater Peoria Region. The interviewees discussed a wide variety of topics, but there were two overarching themes: 1) Engage the community to meet them where they are comfortable and 2) Partner with trusted organizations.

When engaging the public, it is essential to understand the different perspectives that make up the targeted audience. This is important because each viewpoint will have a different take on any given issue. For example, at a food pantry, the different personalities include those donating food, volunteers handing out food, and clients picking up the food. Once TCRPC has a firm grasp of the varying points of view, staff can consider them more pointedly to better explain the benefits of the project at hand and receive input.

People are more likely to show up to meetings and supply input if they are more informed and aware how the topic or project affects them. It is important to note that many of the topics and projects that TCRPC covers are quite broad and technical. Many projects span across the urbanized area, the entire Tri-County region, and sometimes beyond. Therefore, these topics need to be disseminated into informal language for community members to become more engaged. Interviewees suggested having informational sessions to break down topics followed by the regularly scheduled session that talks more in-depth about the project.

Another important aspect to consider is the location of events and outreach. The stakeholders interviewed made it clear that the location of the event matters. If the outreach occurs in a place that is accessible and convenient, the event may attract more people. However,

some groups are uncomfortable attending an event at city hall or any other government building. From the interviews, below is a list of comfortable places identified where the intended audience might be more familiar with:

- Friendship House
- Neighborhood House
- East Bluff Community Center
- Peoria Latin Soccer Club
- Neighborhood Associations
- Churches
- Group meetings
- Social events

A useful tool that has shown to benefit Tri-County stakeholders was the ability to have one-on-one conversations with their clientele. Interviewees said the benefit of having these individualized conversations is that they help build meaningful relationships in the community. With established regional relationships, there is also trust, making it easier to spread information and engage the community. Having one-on-one conversation with residents in the urbanized area is probably not the most practical thing considering the scope of many of the projects MPOs work on. However, individualized talks with key stakeholders and influencers in the community can be beneficial in understanding the public's needs and earning buy-in for the project. It is also critical to partner with the local organizations that have more personal discussions with the community to help spread Tri-County's message and gain insight into the public's needs.

#### Interactive Website and Survey

To gather input from the public, TCRPC staff developed an interactive website via the ESRI Story Map platform. The story map outlined Tri-County's background information, the roles and functions of an MPO, and the PPP planning process. A survey attached to the story map was designed to gather information on how people wish to receive information, what motivates them to attend meetings, and locations where they prefer to see community engagement efforts.

A total of 44 people responded to the survey. Most respondents were between ages 45 and 54, with 60.5 percent being male. Respondents' racial makeup was majority white, with 86 percent identifying as white. The level of education of responses received was

primarily a bachelor's degree from a college or university. In this public outreach attempt, the demographic that was most captured were middle-aged white men who are college educated.

During Tri-County's stakeholder interviews, staff learned that the public was, in general, not aware of TCRPC and its role in the region. The survey asked respondents to share if they were familiar with Tri-County. The results showed 90 percent of respondents were familiar. When asked to expand on how they are familiar with TCRPC, the major responses were they either attended a TCRPC-sponsored event or received information from TCRPC in some form. This result is a bit biased, since the story map was shared via TCRPC's monthly newsletter, social media, and direct email. Tri-County shared the story map with the six stakeholders interviewed, asking them to share with their clients and members. Peoria Magazine also shared the story map in their weekly newsletter.

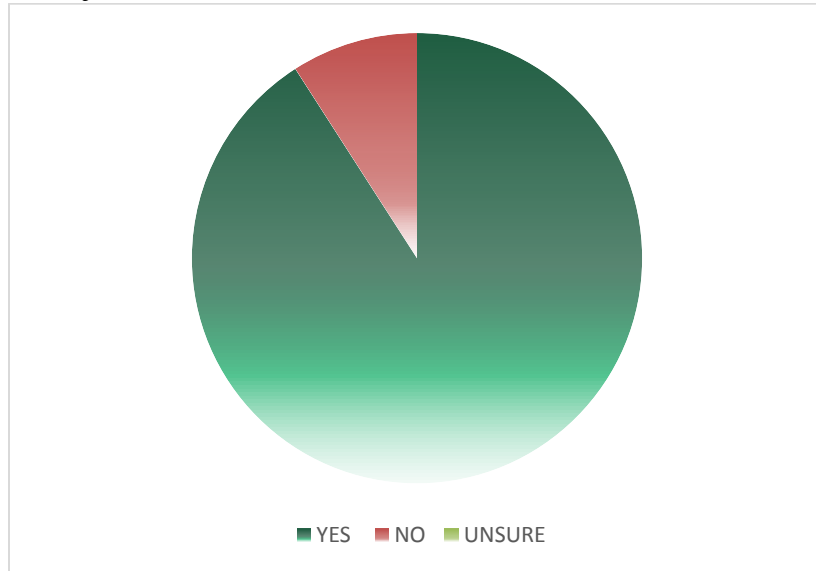
Most respondents indicated that email is the best way to communicate about regional issues and projects. The second-best form of communication noted in the survey was placing information on TCRPC's website. The survey also asked what resources people use to learn about what is happening in their community. The biggest answers were community/neighborhood social media pages and community-wide events. When asked about the best ways to gather comments for projects, most respondents answered that they would rather complete a survey.

The survey was also meant to gather input of preferred days and times to hold public meetings. Our respondents gave indication that there was some willingness to attend a public meeting each day of the week. When it came to weekdays, survey respondents indicated that they would prefer the meetings to be held within the 5:00 – 8:00 pm time slot. During the weekends, respondents indicated that they would rather meet around lunchtime, in the 11:00 am – 1:00 pm timeslot.

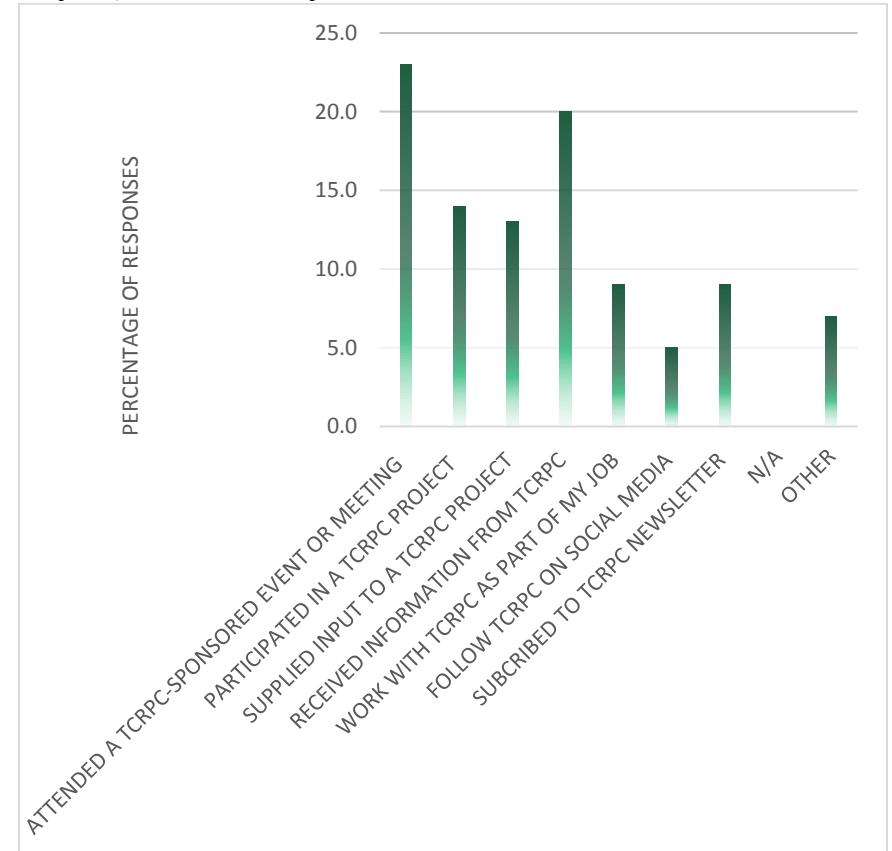
In addition to the meeting time, the survey asked respondents about their preferred meeting location and what motivates them to attend meetings. It was revealed that respondents would like to meet in community centers or recreational buildings. City halls and government buildings arose as the second-most preferred meeting location. Motivation for attending public meetings comes when the subject covered is one that directly affects the public. People also noted that they would be motivated to attend Tri-County meetings to improve their community.

## Survey Results

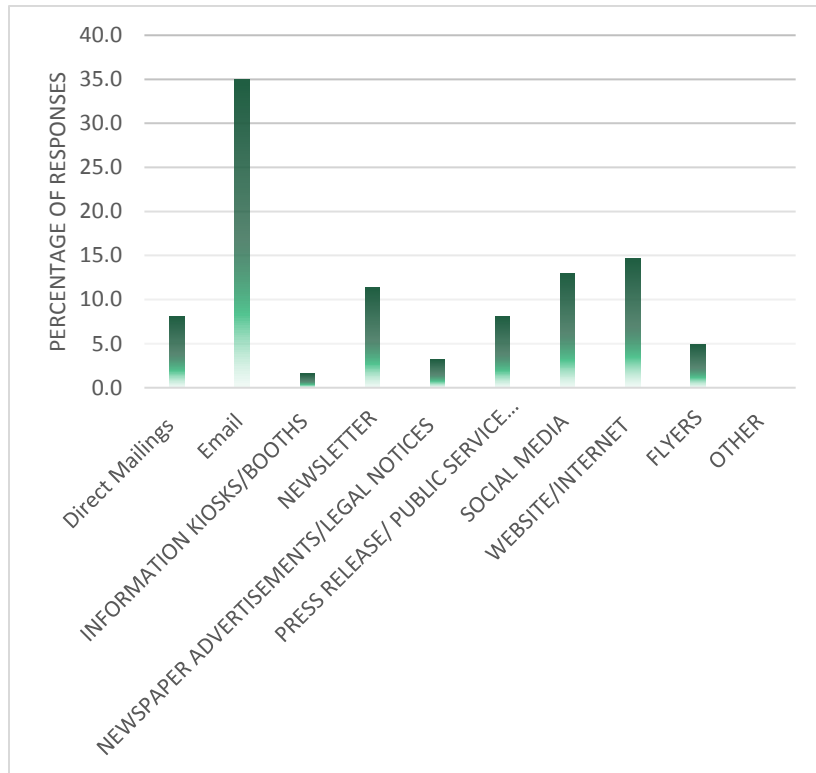
### Are you familiar with TCRPC?



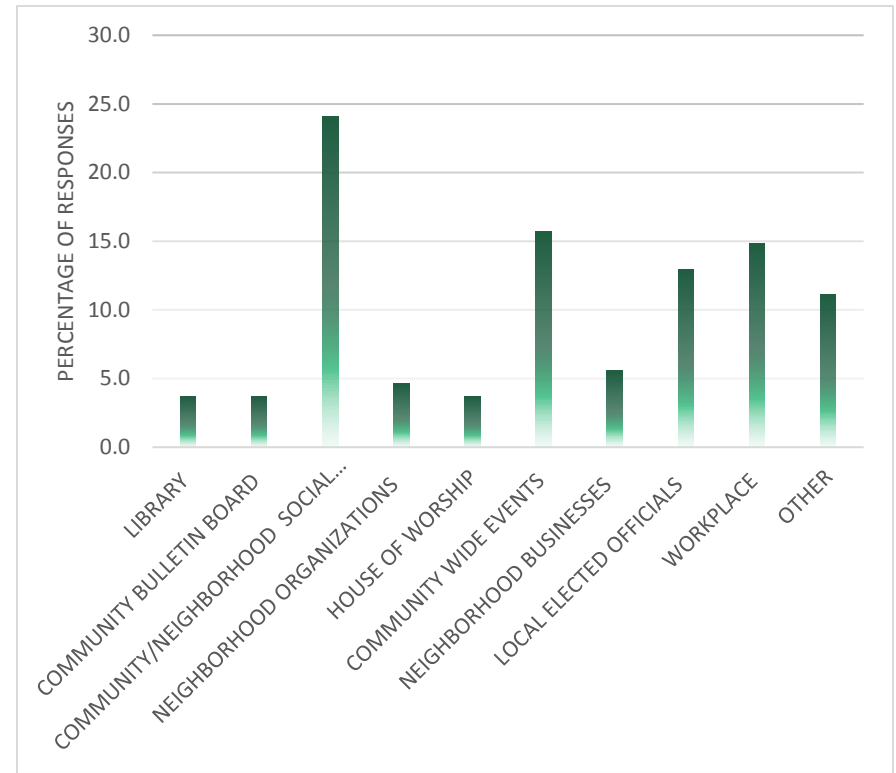
### If yes, how have you heard about TCRPC?



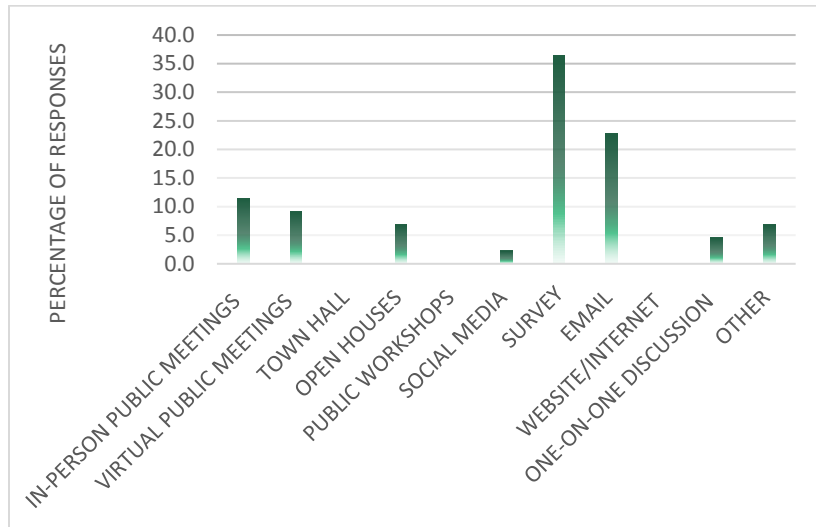
## What are the best ways to communicate with you about regional issues?



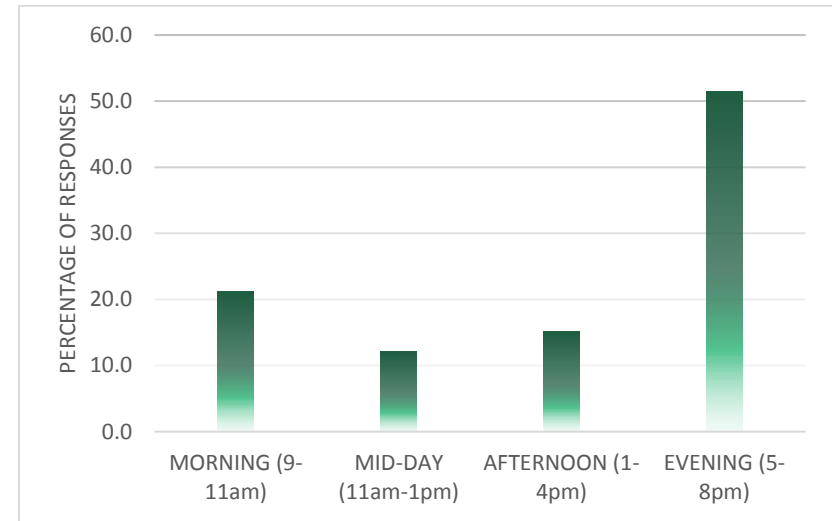
## What are the resources you use to get information about what is happening in your community?



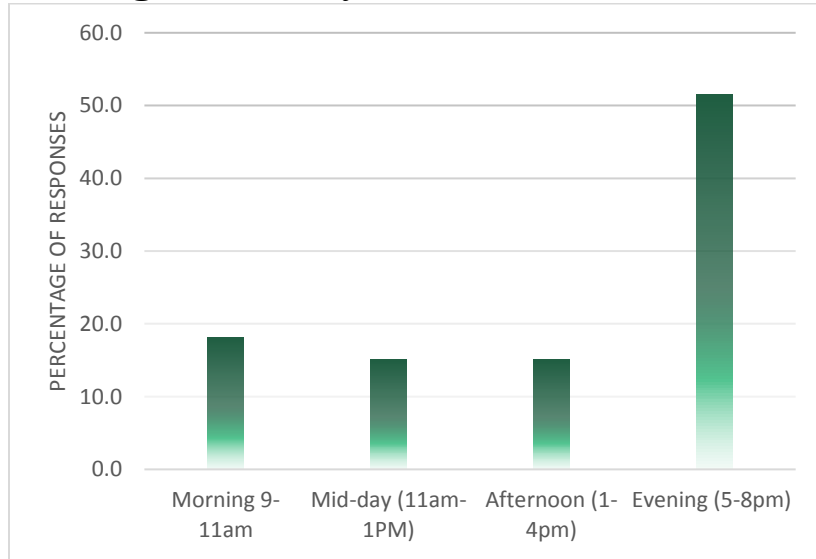
### What is the best way to gather your comments and questions about local projects?



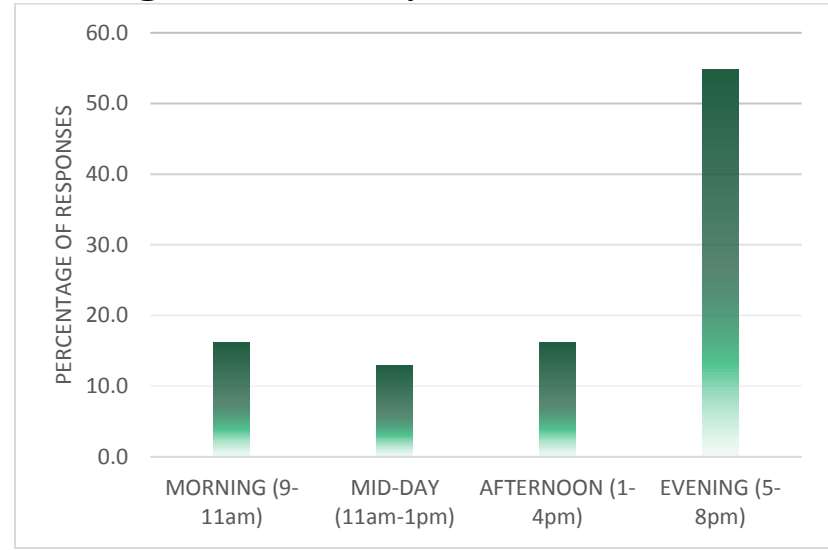
### When are you most likely to attend a public meeting on Monday?



**When are you most likely to attend a public meeting on Tuesday?**

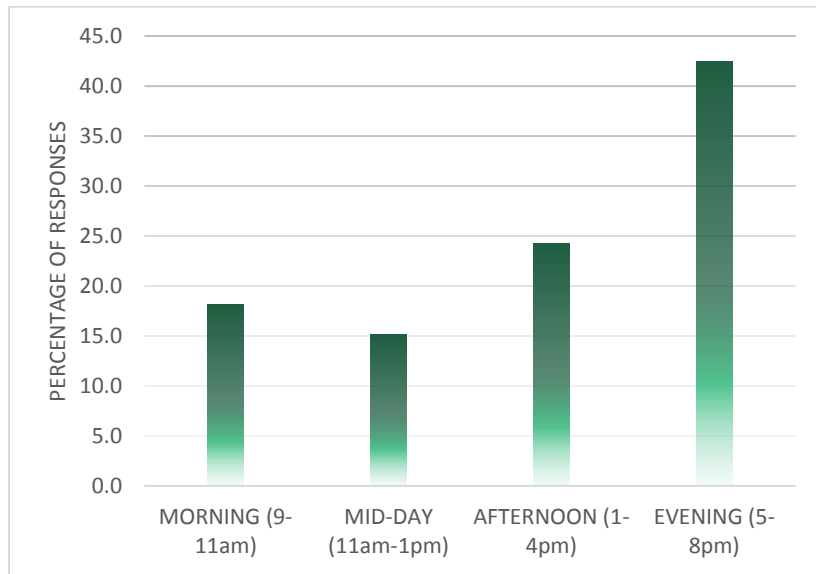


**When are you most likely to attend a public meeting on Wednesday?**

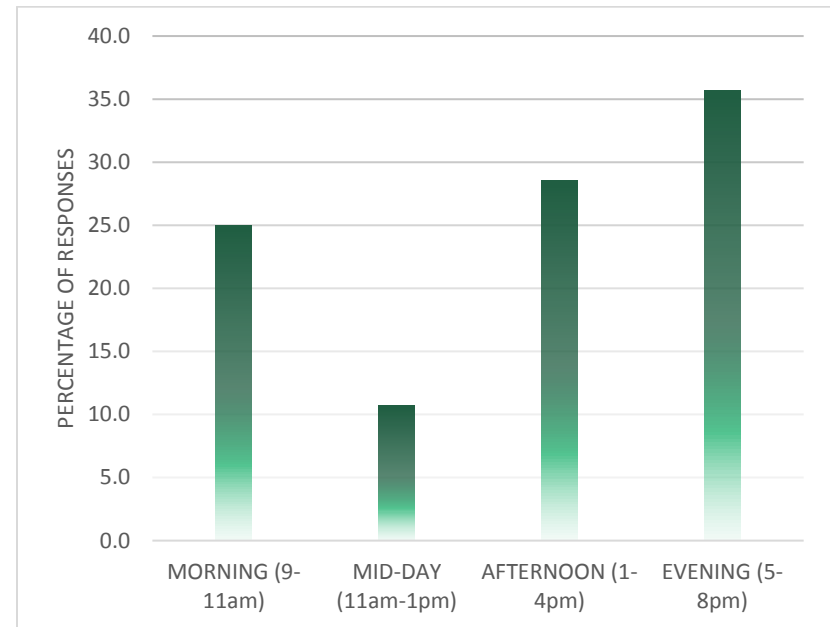




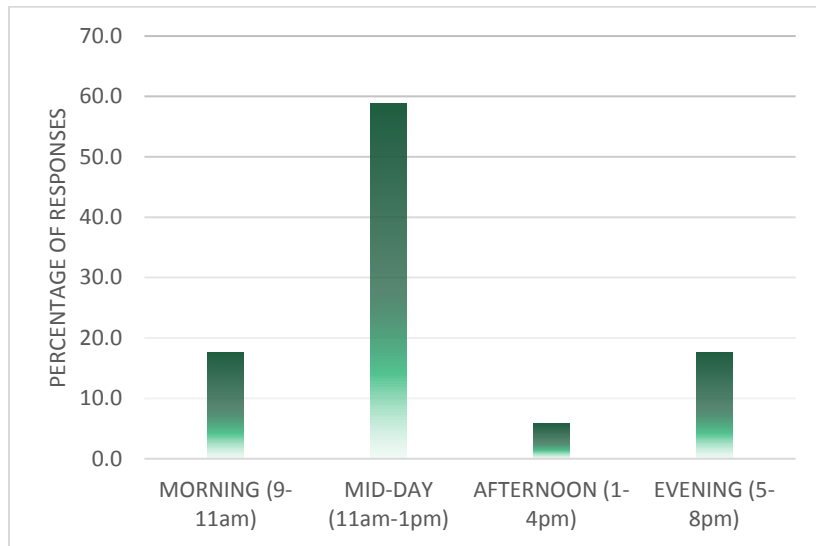
**When are you most likely to attend a public meeting on Thursday?**



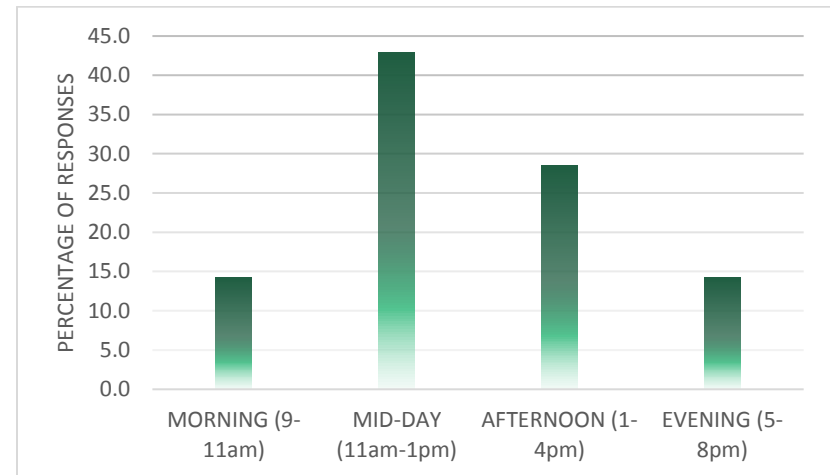
**When are you most likely to attend a public meeting on Friday?**



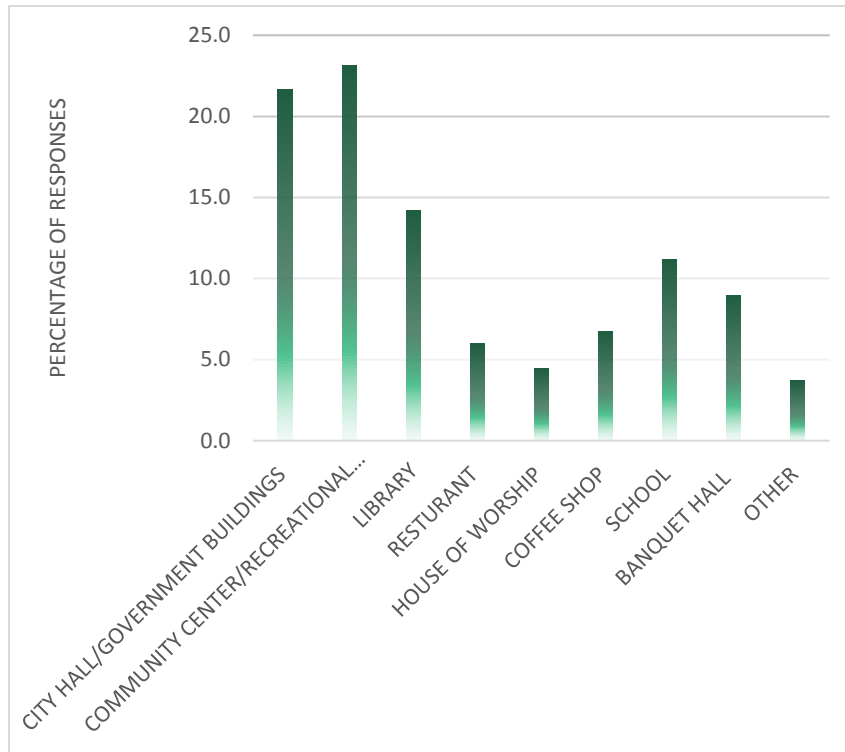
**When are you most likely to attend a public meeting on Saturday?**



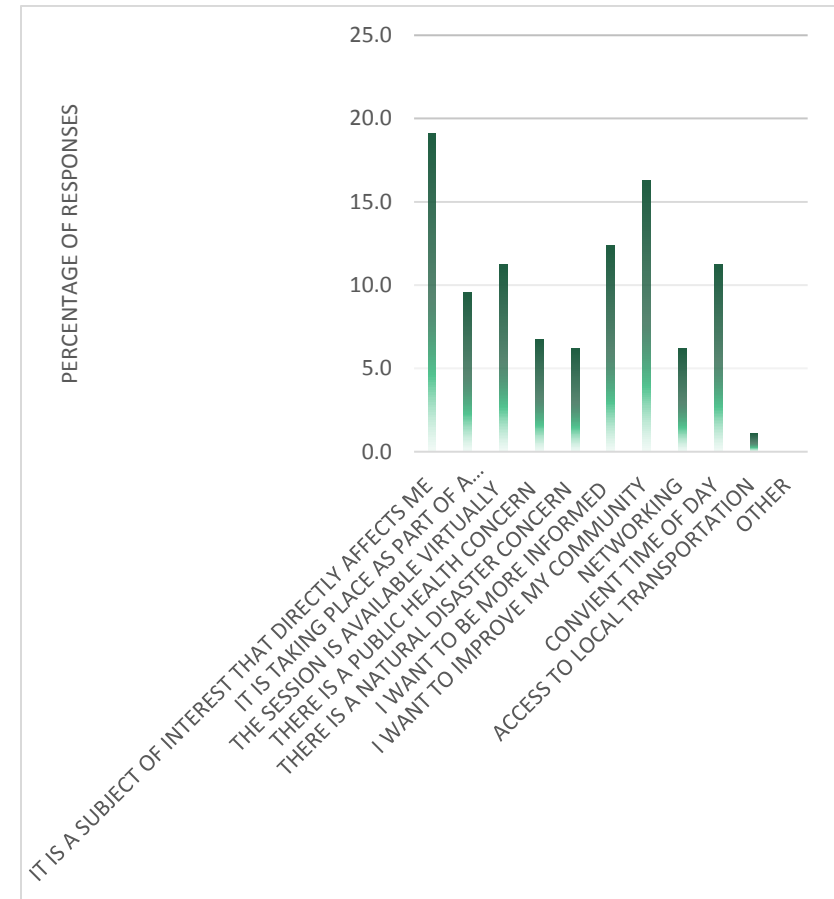
**When are you most likely to attend a public meeting on Sunday?**



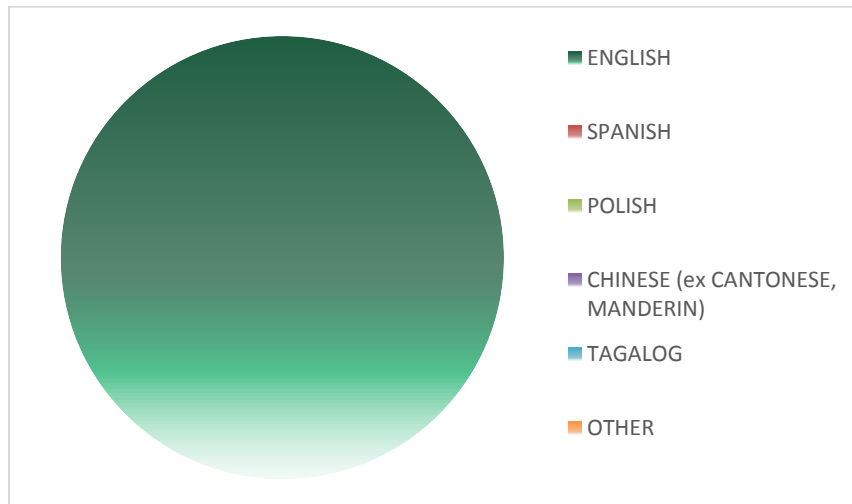
## What location would you prefer to meet at for a public meeting?



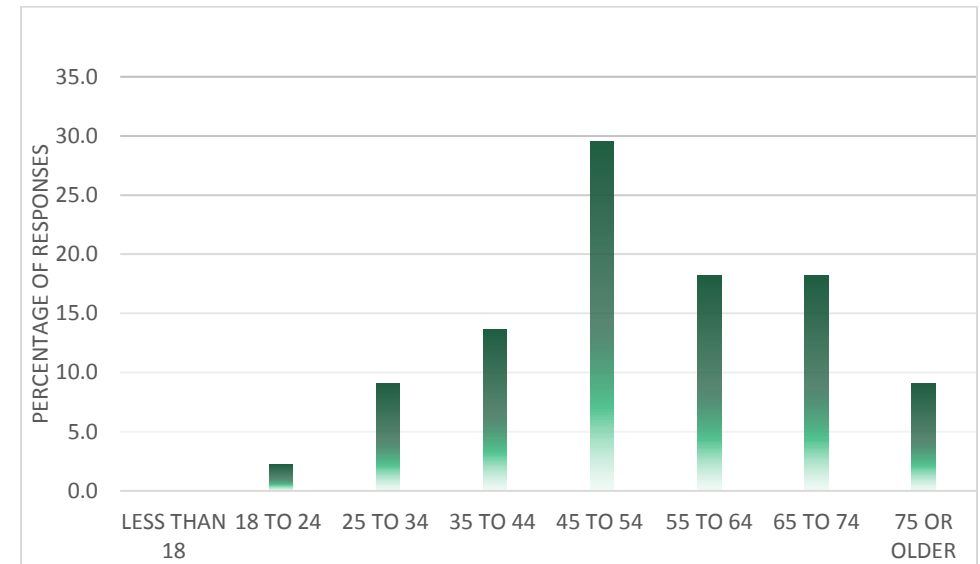
## What would motivate you to attend an informational session on community or regional issues?



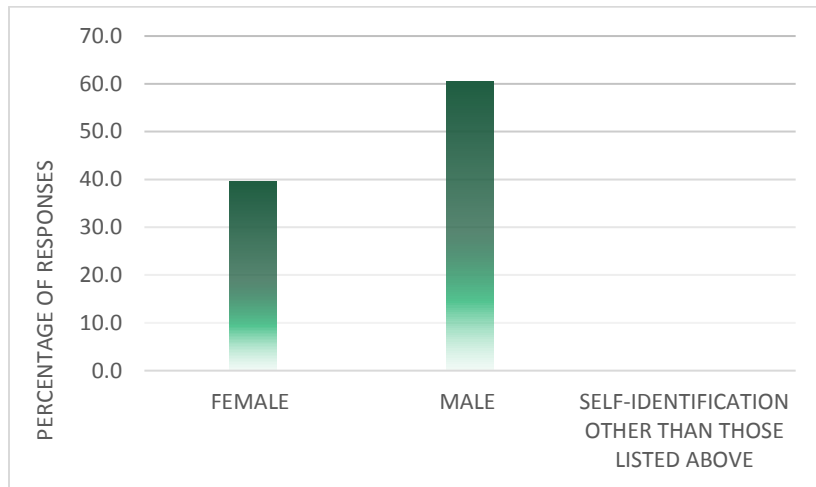
## In what language do you prefer to receive information?



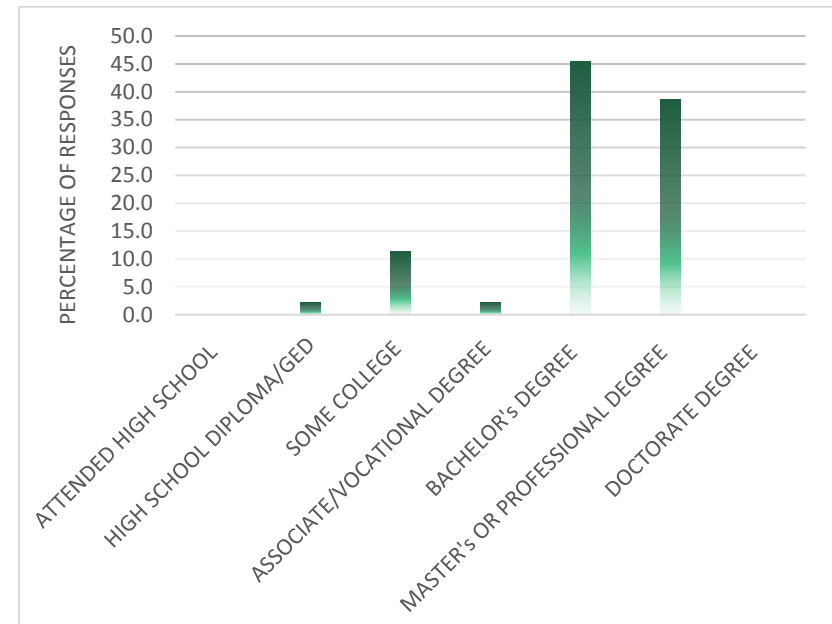
## What is your age?



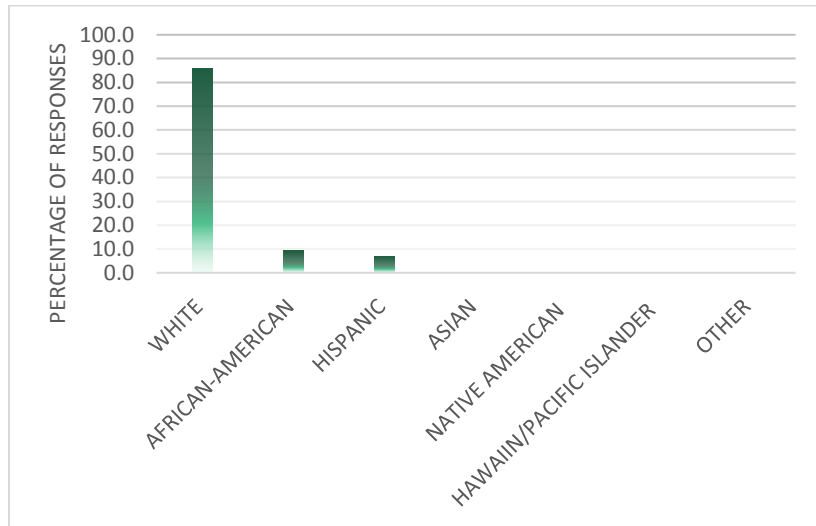
## What is your gender?



## What is the highest level of education you have completed?



## What is your race and ethnicity?



### COVID-19 Pandemic

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) was detected in late 2019 and spread rapidly worldwide, eventually reaching the United States. Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order 2020-10, a Stay-at-Home order that required everyone to stay at home to stop the spread of COVID-19, excluding essential activities. This Executive Order resulted in TCRPC staff working from home, with limited gatherings. All TCRPC and PPUATS boards met virtually to continue day-to-day operations. During virtual meetings, roll call voting is required for passing all agenda items.

The PPUATS LRTP 2045 plan update began in 2019 and was in the public participation process when the Stay-at-Home order was enacted. Before this order, staff had organized and hosted focus group meetings. These meetings provided detailed input from regional experts on each long-term goal topic: Public Health, Environment, Economy, Mobility and Connectivity, and Freight.

Supplementary public outreach was unable to be conducted before the Stay-at-Home order. Tri-County released an interactive website to educate and engage the public about the LRTP. The website allowed residents to provide their input on the LRTP planning process from their own homes and on their own schedule. The website resulted in 58 unique ideas for improving the Greater Peoria region.

Additionally, Tri-County held a virtual public open house where staff presented about the plan and participants discussed the future of regional transportation.

Virtual outreach proved to be a key component of the planning process due to the COVID-19 pandemic. TCRPC's goal is to maintain virtual options to allow increased participation from those unable to attend meetings in person.

### Recommendations

When it comes to deciding locations for an event, it is best to choose a place within the community, such as community centers, gyms, churches, nonprofit organizations, or local businesses. These places are recognizable to the public and already serve as gathering places. The ideal time to hold public meetings is between 5:00 and 8:00 pm during the weekdays or over the lunch hour, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, on weekends.

TCRPC is not a well-known governmental agency to the public. To better spread the word about projects and events, staff needs to think more deliberately about who the targeted audience is for each individual outreach session. Once the audience has been identified, targeted outreach must occur at locations where the chosen group congregates or consumes information. Another useful technique is to utilize recognized community organizations, trusted messengers, or influencers to spread project information related to outreach activities.

To expand and diversify Tri-County's event reach, it is necessary to incorporate alternative presentation- and information-sharing methods. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional methods such as face-to-face public meetings and town halls were no longer safe. Moving forward, Tri-County should continue to offer a call-in or virtual option for all public meetings. Another option would be creating interactive websites, such as story maps, with surveys and other collaborative elements to gather input. Providing more virtual options allows Tri-County to broaden its reach to acknowledge that many people have access to the internet. On the other hand, not all individuals have reliable web access. To include options for these people with little or no internet access, Tri-County will need to utilize options such as partnering with local community organizations, utilizing local influencers, or radio.

An effort to make Tri-County a more well-known organization in the community is also key to increasing its outreach capabilities. During the stakeholder interviews, a community member mentioned that many organizations have educational components in their outreach efforts. An example of this might be to have a "road show" that engages the community by providing a presentation about what TCRPC and the MPO does and how it helps the community. This session would be presented in broad, easy-to-follow terms, with some specific examples/projects at the end. The session should last no more than 20 to 30 minutes. An informed community is more likely to attend events and supply input.

## **Public Participation Strategies**

TCRPC staff utilizes many techniques to organize and implement public participation activities. These activities are intended to raise awareness of transportation issues and projects, allowing the public to comment and contribute to the planning process. The following section lays out PPUATS' public participation strategies:

### Brochures and Flyers

Materials with general information about TCRPC/PPUATS or to announce upcoming meetings and events can be distributed to public places such as city and town halls, public libraries, post offices, and community centers. These materials can also be distributed via the TCRPC website, mailing lists, and social media.

### Calendar of Events

TCRPC maintains a regularly updated calendar of events on their website.

### Comment Forms

Comment forms are often used to solicit community input on specific topics, plans, and events at workshops, public meetings, community events, and public review sites during public review periods.

### Focus Groups

Focus Groups allow TCRPC staff to obtain detailed input from stakeholders on a variety of topics. Pointed questions and activities are included in Focus Groups to facilitate group discussion, interaction, and feedback. Stakeholders will be identified during the beginning stages of the planning process and invited to participate in all public participation activities.

### Innovation Board

The Innovation Board is a portable chalkboard custom-built by TCRPC staff to gather input from residents at community events. Questions such as, "What do you think are the region's biggest transportation challenges?" are written on the board, and residents are able to use sidewalk chalk to write their responses. The Innovation Board proves to be a fun way to engage residents in supplying their input on area transportation needs and concerns.



### Mailing List

TCRPC's primary mailing list has evolved and grown throughout the years. This list includes press and media contacts, Policy and Technical committee members, elected and appointed officials, member agency staff, local Chambers of Commerce, transportation providers, advocacy groups, civic groups, and other interested organizations and citizens. TCRPC staff utilize the email list to distribute information and advertise public events, review periods, and meetings. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please sign up on TCRPC's website, <https://tricountyrpc.org/>; contact TCRPC by email: [info@tricountyrpc.org](mailto:info@tricountyrpc.org); reach out by phone: (309) 673-9330; or request via mail: 456 Fulton Street, Suite 401, Peoria, IL 61602.

### Newsletters

TCRPC staff utilizes newsletters to inform the public of general and ongoing programs and projects, as well as targeted newsletters for special transportation plans and studies. The website, email list, and social media are used to distribute newsletters.

### Online GIS Maps

TCRPC provides Geographic Information System (GIS) services to municipalities. The TCRPC website includes online maps referencing different projects and community needs. TCRPC/PPUATS' public participation strategy includes the incorporation of online interactive maps on TCRPC's website. This enables the public to view the maps and contribute to future transportation plans.

### Online Planning and Engagement Tools

Not every resident has the time or means to attend public meetings to comment and give their input. Having an online tool that allows residents to provide feedback on their own schedule allows for a more diverse participation base. A variety of online resources may be used to encourage public participation and to gather input, such as online interactive maps, online surveys, collaborative forums, and blogs.

### Presentations

TCRPC staff will develop and present information to the public and interested communities and organizations by request to better visualize and clarify draft plans, planned improvements, and the transportation planning process.

### Public Meetings

TCRPC/PPUATS holds three public hearings during the public review periods. These public hearings allow the public to learn more about draft plans and to comment on the plans. All TCRPC, PPUATS Policy, and PPUATS Technical meetings are open to the public. In some cases, Ad Hoc groups are formed for specific projects or issues. PPUATS also holds other types of meetings including open houses, transportation symposiums, and workshops.

### Public Notices

All of TCRPC/PPUATS public meetings and public review periods are advertised in the Peoria Journal Star and the Pekin Daily Times. Annually in the fall, a tentative list of the year's PPUATS Policy and Technical meeting dates and times are published in both the Peoria and Pekin newspapers.

### Public Review Periods

The public is afforded a review period to evaluate and comment on TCRPC/PPUATS draft LRTP, TIP, and PPP. The public review period is 30 days for all major MPO documents, except for the PPP, which has a 45-day review period. Copies of the draft documents are available on the website, at the public review sites, and upon request at the TCRPC offices.

### Public Review Sites

All of TCRPC/PPUATS draft LRTP, TIP, and PPP documents are distributed to area public libraries to allow public members without internet access to review and comment on the drafts.

### Public Service Announcements and Press Releases

Public Service Announcements are utilized as marketing tools to announce a special event or new campaign TCRPC/PPUATS is developing. Press Releases provide media outlets the basic information they need to develop news stories on current and future projects.

### Social Media

TCRPC staff utilizes social media to distribute information and advertise public events, public review periods, and public meetings. Social media can also be used to engage the public on different topics by asking questions or providing links to online planning and engagement tools, such as interactive maps and surveys.

### TCRPC Website

The TCRPC website provides links to TCRPC/PPUATS meeting agendas, minutes, committee representatives, staff contact information, news, maps, plans, and publications. The website is a convenient place to locate further information about initiatives, plans, and documents. All major MPO documents can be accessed via the website at <http://www.tricountyrpc.org>. TCRPC will utilize the website to make a variety of information and public participation outlets available to the those with internet-enabled devices.

### Virtual Meetings

In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, meeting structures had to be changed. When entirely virtual meetings must be conducted, TCRPC will follow the notification process in the Illinois Open Meetings Act. There will be flexibility for public comment via online and by phone before and during the meeting. TCRPC staff utilize roll call voting during virtual meetings. Whenever possible, hybrid meetings (with both in-person and virtual attendance options) will be offered to better accommodate everyone's schedules and encourage additional participation from those who may not have attended otherwise.

### Visualization Techniques

TCRPC/PPUATS will use different types of visual media to convey information about draft plans, planned improvements, and the transportation planning process. Some examples of visualization techniques are charts, graphs, maps, models, photos, renderings, and videos.

## **Public Comment Periods and Input**

This section outlines the required regulations governing public participation per federal regulation 23 C.F.R. §450.316. This section also includes strategies that TCRPC staff utilize to keep the community informed and increase public participation on transportation-related projects and studies.

TCRPC/PPUATS maintains various planning documents that guide the future of the region's transportation network. Throughout the process of updating/creating these documents, staff utilizes the strategies outlined in the section above titled **Public Participation Strategies** to achieve effective public involvement.

### Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP utilizes many of the approaches outlined in the section titled **Public Participation Strategies** during the planning process. The most recent LRTP, adopted in 2020, utilized stakeholder committees, focus groups, public open houses, and public hearings to provide community members with sufficient opportunity for feedback. The LRTP requires a 30-day public comment period.

To ensure community members are provided reasonable access and timely information about transportation issues, the LRTP draft document is opened for 30 days for the public to review and comment. Announcements are made via public notices in the Peoria Journal Star and the Pekin Daily Times for three days prior to the beginning of the public review period. The notice denotes when the three public hearings will be held and the location of the 20 Public Review Sites.

During the 30-day public review period, three public hearings are held. Tri-County staff can generally respond directly to verbal comments and written submissions presented at the hearings, or the topic is continued for later response. Staff compiles minutes for all public hearings, where public comments and responses are recorded therein. All public hearings take place in settings that accommodate persons with disabilities.

If significant comments are received, staff will appropriately modify the LRTP and redistribute a second draft for further review. This process continues until the PPUATS Policy Committee is satisfied that all comments have been appropriately addressed. A final adopted LRTP is then made available to the public.

The LRTP can be amended or updated for reasonable cause at any time. Persons seeking to amend or refine the plan can initiate the process by contacting the TCRPC staff or any member of the PPUATS Technical or Policy committees. When significant changes are proposed once the LRTP has been adopted, an additional public review period will be provided. Significant changes to the LRTP will

require a formal amendment by the Policy Committee. Normally, notification of the public via the TCRPC/PPUATS agenda mail-out is considered sufficient notice. Objections from citizens or Policy Committee members may warrant more lengthy comment periods.

If the amendment in question calls for a lengthier comment period, the Policy Committee in conjunction with IDOT will determine whether the amendment should involve a public hearing. If it is determined the amendment will need a public hearing, three hearings will take place, and the amendment will be made available at the public review sites. The amendment will also be available to the public by request. The Policy Committee and IDOT will base their choice to hold a public hearing for the amendment depending on the project's cost, scope, and project importance.

#### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is updated on an annual basis through input from the PPUATS Technical Committee and planning partners. During the development process, the TIP document is a topic in many TCRPC and PPUATS public meetings. Like the LRTP, the TIP requires a 30-day public comment period and follows the same procedures as the LRTP.

#### Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP is prepared annually. It describes, prioritizes, assigns responsibility, and allocates funds for planning work carried out within TCRPC/PPUATS. The TCRPC fiscal year corresponds with the IDOT fiscal year, running from July 1st through June 30th. Even though formal work on the UPWP does not normally begin until January or February, PPUATS begins consideration of items to be included in the next year's UPWP as early as September or October. For this reason, individuals and/or organizations seeking planning work on a special topic should approach TCRPC/PPUATS as early as possible.

The UPWP is not required to go through the formal 30-day public review process including public notices. Despite not going through the formal review process, there are still several opportunities for the public to comment. Agendas will announce the distribution of the documents for both PPUATS Technical and Policy committees. At the following month's meetings, the committees will discuss the documents and make comments. If no major changes are required, they will be approved during those meetings. The public can comment on any of these plans at the meeting where the document is distributed or discussed. If one is not able to attend, their comments and concerns can be sent to TCRPC staff, where they will be forwarded to the committees.

Amendments to the UPWP are possible at any time. The public review period for amendments need not be more than the approximate two-week period between when proposed amendments are prepared and mailed out to the time of the Policy Committee meeting. The review period may be shortened or extended by the Policy Committee depending on the significance of the amendment. Public comment will be accepted at any time.

### Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The PPP is a required document per federal regulations. The PPP is a roadmap that describes continued outreach efforts and sets forth the policy of PPUATS to involve public officials, community leaders, organizations, and area citizens in the transportation planning and improvement programming process.

TCRPC/PPUATS updates its PPP in conjunction with their Title VI Program update or whenever there are significant changes to: 1) The planning process, 2) The geographic coverage area of the planning process, and/or 3) The approach of PPUATS in facilitating and encouraging public involvement.

Unlike the LRTP and TIP public comment period, the draft PPP is required to have a 45-day public comment period. When updating the PPP, the PPP draft is distributed to the PPUATS Technical Committee, PPUATS Policy Committee, and the TCRPC. The PPP Draft is also forwarded to public review sites for community members to review. Public notices are published in both the Peoria Journal Star and Pekin Daily Times for three days, beginning the 45-day public review period.

During the 45-day public review period, three public hearings are held. Tri-County staff can generally respond directly to verbal comments and written submissions presented at the public hearings, or the topic is continued for later response. Staff compiles minutes for all public hearings, where public comments and responses are recorded therein. All public hearing locations are selected with an eye for accommodating persons with disabilities.

If significant comments are received, PPUATS will appropriately modify the PPP and redistribute a second draft for further review. This process continues until the PPUATS Policy Committee is satisfied that all comments have been appropriately addressed. A final adopted PPP is then made available to the public.

### Special Transportation Plans and Studies

Regarding special transportation plans and studies, extra efforts are made to announce and invite participation. These efforts include sending out transportation-related documents to public review sites, sending out press releases, publishing public notices, holding public meetings, and holding press conferences. BikeConnect HOI, the Heart of Illinois Regional Bike Plan, is an example of one of the most recent plans where special efforts were made.

### Public Review Sites

During the public comment period, the draft documents can be found at 20 public review sites and TCRPC's website. The public review sites are located throughout the 20-Year Planning Boundary in area public libraries and are accessible by public transportation. The table below lists all 20 sites, including their name and address.

Name	Branch Name	Address	City	State	Zip
Peoria Public Library	Main Library	107 NE Monroe St	Peoria	IL	61602
Peoria Public Library	McClure Branch	315 W McClure Ave	Peoria	IL	61604
Peoria Public Library	Lakeview Branch	1137 W Lake Ave	Peoria	IL	61614
Peoria Public Library	Lincoln Branch	1312 W Lincoln Ave	Peoria	IL	61605
Peoria Public Library	North Branch	3001 West Grand Pkwy	Peoria	IL	61615
Peoria Heights Public Library		816 E Glen Ave	Peoria Heights	IL	61616
Fondulac District Library		400 Richland St	East Peoria	IL	61611
Washington District Library		380 N Wilmor Rd	Washington	IL	61571
Washington District Branch Library		16 Sunnyland Plaza	Washington	IL	61571
Creve Coeur Public Library		311 N Highland St	Creve Coeur	IL	61610
Alpha Park Public Library		3527 S Airport Rd	Bartonville	IL	61607
Marquette Heights Public Library		715 Lincoln Rd	Marquette Heights	IL	61554
Morton Public Library		315 W Pershing St	Morton	IL	61550
Pekin Public Library		301 S 4th St	Pekin	IL	61554
Germantown Hills Library		101 Warrior Way	Germantown Hills	IL	61548
Dunlap Public Library		302 S 1st St	Dunlap	IL	61525
Spring Bay Branch Library		411 Illinois St	Spring Bay	IL	61611
Illinois Prairie District Public Library		208 E Partridge St	Metamora	IL	61548
Chillicothe Public Library District		430 N Bradley Ave	Chillicothe	IL	61523
Tremont District Library		215 S Sampson St	Tremont	IL	61568

## Evaluating the Public Participation Strategies

The Public Participation Plan outlines TCRPC/PPUATS' roles and responsibilities to involve stakeholders and the public in the transportation planning process. A measurement metric is needed to determine the effectiveness of the techniques and strategies outlined in this plan.

During the evaluation of the public participation techniques, it is critical to measure the effectiveness of public participation efforts to ensure their inclusivity of all populations in the 20-Year Planning Boundary. It is important to maintain demographic records of all participants in the planning process. This can be done by including demographic questions on surveys and comment forms. This can also be completed by planning outreach events for traditionally underserved populations, such as disabled, minority, and low-income community members.

The table below identifies evaluation criteria, performance goals, and methods to reach the goals for each public participation strategy. PPUATS is interested in maintaining the effectiveness of the different public participation strategies. Surveys and comment forms are used to better understand the public's perception of community participation activities and allow them to note how they heard of the event or online engagement tool. This information will be utilized to better gauge the effectiveness and plan for future public participation strategies.

Public Participation Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation Criteria	Methods to Meet Goal
Brochures and Flyers	Materials readily available and distributed on request	Comments and inquiries	Have materials available at public events and by request; use the mailing list, website, and social media to help distribute when needed
Calendar of events	Keep calendar current	Calendar reflects all currently known events	Post on website in a timely manner
Comment Forms	50% of meeting attendees fill out or 80% of focus group attendees fill out	Attendance, comments, responses, and inquiries	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving feedback to improve the planning process
Focus Groups	Seek attendance from stakeholders, representatives and groups from affected neighborhoods	Attendance, comments, inquiries	Schedule at convenient times and locations; hold multiple focus groups to allow for options



Public Participation Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation Criteria	Methods to Meet Goal
Innovation Board	80% of visitors interact with the tool	Attendance, comments, responses, and inquiries	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving feedback to improve the planning process
Email List	Reaches a minimum of 80% of recipients	Number of persons reached	Update mailing list based on undeliverable mail; categorize list to accurately target interested parties; monitor email opening rate
Newsletters	Reaches a minimum of 80% of recipients	Number of persons reached	Update mailing list based on undeliverable mail; monitor email opening rate
Online GIS Maps	Annual increase in unique website visitors; utilizing interactive maps to gather input from the public	Use Google Analytics report to determine number of hits/users; Number of comments and engagements	Use different public participation strategies to promote TCRPC's online GIS maps; update and maintain the content of the GIS maps regularly
Online Planning and Engagement Tools	Increase the number of contacted persons that participated with the online tools	Number of responses, comments, and engagements	Encourage responses by explaining the importance of receiving feedback to improve the planning process; Promote using a variety of public participation strategies
Presentations	Market presentation opportunities to area boards and groups using different public participation strategies	Attendance, comments, inquiries	Seek opportunities to present transportation plans, projects, and the planning process to area village and city councils, neighborhood associations, civic groups, and organizations

Public Participation Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation Criteria	Methods to Meet Goal
Public Meetings	Seek attendance from citizens, stakeholders, representatives, and groups from affected neighborhoods	Attendance, comments, inquiries	Schedule at convenient times and locations
Public Notices	Advertise all required public hearings	All required public hearings are advertised in the required number of days in advance	Ensure a plan is in place to advertise public hearings in advance
Public Review Periods	Advertise all required public review periods using multiple public participation strategies	Comments and inquiries	Ensure a plan is in place to advertise public review periods in advance
Public Review Sites	Maintain up-to-date documents at 100% of the identified sites	Comments and inquiries	Promote the hours of operation and locations of the documents at the different sites
Public Service Announcements and Press Releases	Seek coverage from media outlets that reach the PPUATS region	Number of news stories generated	Provide accurate and important information to regional media outlets
Social Media	Create and maintain profiles on existing and new social media platforms.	Number of followers and engagements	Provide information, announcements, links to online planning and engagement tools, and pose open-ended questions to encourage online discussions about related transportation topics and issues
TCRPC Website	Annual increase in unique website visitors	Use Google Analytics report to determine number of hits/users	Use different public participation strategies to promote TCRPC website; update and maintain the content of the website regularly

Public Participation Strategy	Performance Measure	Evaluation Criteria	Methods to Meet Goal
Virtual Meetings	Seek attendance from citizens, stakeholders, representatives and groups from affected neighborhoods	Attendance, comments, inquiries	Schedule at convenient times
Visualization Techniques	Increase the number of comment forms and web users from attendees that find the graphics and other visualization techniques helpful	Comments and inquiries	Include a variety of graphics and other visualization techniques online and during public meetings, hearings, workshops, etc. to provide a better understanding of the transportation planning process