

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Council (“Council”) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”) for the seven-county metropolitan area and is responsible for certain regional transportation planning activities. This ***Public Participation Plan*** (“PPP”) was adopted to help ensure the Council’s transportation planning processes include a proactive public involvement process and comply with federal public participation plan requirements. This PPP identifies strategies and tools to help ensure effective public participation in the Council’s transportation planning activities. This PPP replaces the *Citizen Participation Plan* contained in Appendix D of the Council’s *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* (adopted December 15, 2004).

## POLICY STATEMENT

The Council’s agency-wide [Customer Relations and Outreach Policy](#) states: ***“The Metropolitan Council recognizes the importance of stakeholders in its decision-making processes, including other units of government, other metropolitan area agencies, customers and the public. Sound policy and service delivery decisions need to reflect community sentiment and public opinion from broad outreach. These public outreach strategies must be designed to offer the customer effective access to information and efficient, convenient methods of participating in the Council’s public process.”***

## BACKGROUND AND REASONS FOR PLAN

The PPP is intended to help ensure the public participation activities of the Council’s transportation planning processes:

1. Comply with the proactive public involvement requirements of title 23 Code of Federal Regulations section 450.316, the public participation plan requirements of the federal Safe, Accessible, Efficient Transportation Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (title 23 United States Code section 134(i)(5)), and other applicable federal regulations and guidelines on transportation planning and program access.
2. Efficiently use resources devoted to public participation.
3. Contribute to sound transportation planning decisions that benefit the region.

The PPP reinforces the Council’s long-standing commitment to public involvement in its planning efforts, and continues its tradition of incorporating best practices. The PPP offers a range of practices to engage people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences. It incorporates a summary of regulations and continues Council activities that comply with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other applicable standards for collecting and addressing public comments. The Council will use its data collection and analysis processes to guide participation efforts and help ensure meaningful access to its public participation opportunities.

## SCOPE

The PPP applies to transportation planning activities for which public participation is a required component.

When the Council is lead agency for regional activities undertaken with other government agencies, and a public participation process is involved, the PPP applies to joint participation activities. When another unit of government is the lead agency, the PPP applies only if the Council conducts its own public participation activities for decisions that do not involve its partners.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Project staff and members of the Council's Public Affairs Department should consult the PPP to identify appropriate levels of involvement, tools and regulatory requirements when preparing public participation plans for specific planning processes or activities.

The Council's Data Resources Department, Office of Diversity, and Public Affairs Department provide expert advice and resources to help identify and involve members of the general public and other stakeholders throughout the region, including people who belong to traditionally underserved or underrepresented groups.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Metropolitan Council:** The Council sets policy direction, fosters and participates in public involvement initiatives, and considers the outcomes of public participation when making key decisions.
2. **Metropolitan Council staff** should encourage public participation by:
  - a. Providing easily accessible information
  - b. Identifying parties likely to be affected by or interested in a Council activity
  - c. Informing affected or interested parties about ways they may participate
  - d. Identifying opportunities to increase public participation.
3. The **Public Affairs Department** should cooperate with Division staff to:
  - a. Provide direction about public participation strategies
  - b. Maintain staff resources, including the online Public Participation Plan
  - c. Execute, or assist with planning and implementing, specific participation activities.

### Excluded activities -

- The PPP does not apply to **normal course-of business** or **administrative activities** that do not significantly affect the general public or alter public policy.
- Meetings of the Metropolitan Council** and its standing committees are governed by the Council's bylaws and Minnesota's Open Meeting Law and are therefore outside the scope of the PPP.
- Alternate approaches** may be considered following consultation with the Council's Legal, Public Affairs and Diversity Departments

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The Council's Director of Public Affairs (651-602-1518) will respond to inquiries regarding Council public involvement activities and implementation of this PPP. The Council's Regional Administrator will review any issues that remain if cooperative efforts between the Director of Public Affairs and program staff responsible for the subject participation processes have not resolved the issues.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW**

Public participation activities obtain information and identify public sentiment. They help the Council build public support and trust in the region. Although the goal is always better decisions, the level of public influence on a decision and the tools used to inform and involve the public may vary.

For some Council initiatives, appropriate participation may be limited to public information. Other initiatives and key decisions may require much more involvement, incorporating techniques commonly associated with social science and marketing research, facilitation and mediation, organizational development, and/or consensus building.

### **Recognize that People “Have a Stake” in Council Decisions:**

Public participation is designed to involve “stakeholders” with meaningful public access to key decisions. Stakeholders may be people, groups or organizations who care about or might be affected by a Council action. Because the Council recognizes that stakeholder participation improves its decisions, it provides resources and guidance to encourage public comments and involvement.

Federal transportation planning statutes and regulations require stakeholder participation in key decision-making activities. Staff are encouraged to consult with the Council's Legal, Diversity and Public Affairs staffs to better identify appropriate stakeholders and target audience(s) for their public participation efforts.

The metropolitan transportation planning process must be a proactive public involvement process that provides public access to key decisions. The public involvement process should provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, program and projects, including central city and other local jurisdiction concerns.

As appropriate, the metropolitan transportation planning process should include: traffic, ridesharing, parking, transportation safety and enforcement agencies; commuter rail operators; airport and port authorities; toll authorities; appropriate private transportation providers; and city officials.

## **Make Participation Meaningful:**

Public participation opportunities are most meaningful when agencies ask questions that matter to the participants. As part of its efforts to assure appropriate and meaningful opportunities, the Council should structure participation opportunities to fit their audiences. Examples of subjects appropriate to a stakeholder group include:

- ✓ Technical committees: expert advice
- ✓ Local governments: impacts related to local projects
- ✓ Jurisdictional agencies: relation to plans for other regions
- ✓ General public: priority rankings, neighborhood character

The Council will also structure its events to include [visualization techniques](#) when appropriate to help members of the general public understand potential outcomes of complex projects or plans.

## **Develop, Maintain and Update Key Contact Lists:**

The Council's Public Affairs Office, operating divisions and individual departments develop and maintain stakeholder, media and marketing databases. Project staff should regularly update these lists to reflect current data and a broad range of stakeholders.

Stakeholders are often specific to a particular initiative. Contact lists should expand throughout the project as people, organizations and agencies become involved and offer their opinions. To establish new key contacts, the Council may provide or request:

- ✓ "Opt-in" registration on its website or via Email
- ✓ Announcements of advisory body and focus group opportunities, which may be online, in Council newsletters, through news releases, or read at meetings
- ✓ Existing stakeholders to suggest potential participants
- ✓ Professional, civic and community organizations to provide representatives, suggest participants, or encourage participation

## **Identify Participants Through Geographic Analysis:**

The Council carefully analyzes the relationship between the region's populations and its regional investments, plans and programs. Geographic analysis may help the Council:

- ✓ Identify and target stakeholders likely to be affected by or interested in the outcome of key Council decisions.
- ✓ Periodically assess the locations of persons or populations, in consultation with the Office of Diversity, related to the delivery of Council services and participation opportunities.
- ✓ Identify threshold concentrations that require outreach specific to a target population.
- ✓ Prepare maps illustrating the correspondence between affected persons or populations, and mailing list ZIP codes to help the Council evaluate its effectiveness in providing equal access notification and public participation opportunities.

## **Efforts may be geographically targeted:**

As a regional agency, the Council provides plans, policies, programs and services that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Where this is true, the Council considers everyone served by the various jurisdictions and governments to be stakeholders. In the case of more localized issues, the public may be defined by the affected geographic areas.

## **PROMOTING INCLUSION**

### **Recruit Representatives of Underrepresented Groups:**

The Council may recruit representatives of groups traditionally underrepresented in regional policy making and provide enhanced participation opportunities to encourage people who belong to under-represented groups to share their unique perspectives, comments and suggestions. The Public Affairs Department and Office of Diversity monitor emerging practices and techniques, and provide consultation to project staff to support effective participation methods. Council members or employees may:

- ✓ Participate in community organizations/events to build relationships
- ✓ Prepare culturally-sensitive outreach materials and meeting plans, such as:
  - Use appropriate language (for example, say “people with disabilities” instead of “the disabled” )
  - Consider colors and graphics that appeal to target groups
  - Incorporate photos and art that depict people of diverse cultures, age, abilities and economic status
  - Demonstrate respect for cultural sensitivities and prohibitions

### **Accommodate People With Disabilities:**

To ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Council’s Public Meeting Notices and comment opportunities include TTY information and provide multiple input methods. Public meetings are held at ADA-accessible locations, and notices and information are published on the Council’s ADA-compliant website. Extended public hearing notices in the Council’s Metro Meetings bulletins and on its Meetings and Events webpage provide needed planning time for people who rely on public transit, Metro Mobility or special arrangements to get to Council events.

The Council may use one or more of the following tools to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities:

- ✓ Provide copies of materials in 14-point or larger type
- ✓ Adapt computer screens for people with visual or hearing impairments (technology includes screen magnifiers, readers and translators)
- ✓ Prepare easy-to-read versions of materials for people with learning disabilities
- ✓ Provide Braille or raised-print notices, materials and displays

- ✓ Allow visually impaired participants to touch 3-Dimensional maps or architectural models
- ✓ Record materials to audio or audio-visual media
- ✓ Require presenters to verbalize information provided through presentations or written during activities
- ✓ Provide electronic copies that participants may open on personal equipment
- ✓ Structure seating to provide visibility for participants who lip-read
- ✓ Mount microphones at wheelchair height
- ✓ Require facilitators to provide hand-held microphones to participants
- ✓ Provide amplification systems
- ✓ Provide sign language interpreters
- ✓ Display spoken information as printed words through technology (computer assisted reading technology, known as CART)
- ✓ Present meetings through video- or teleconferencing, to allow offsite participation

### **Accommodate People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP):**

Individuals with limited English proficiency (“LEP”) and for whom English is not their primary language may have difficulty participating in key decisions. Accordingly, the Council will take reasonable steps to help ensure LEP persons have meaningful access to key transportation planning decisions and have opportunities to become involved in Council transportation planning processes

### **PUBLIC NOTICES**

The Council informs stakeholders about its public participation meetings and opportunities, as well as involvement milestones and outcomes. The Council’s Public Affairs Department publishes public comment opportunities at the Council’s ADA-compliant website ([www.metrocouncil.org](http://www.metrocouncil.org)), in the *State Register*, and in designated newspapers, as well as on the Council’s official calendar. As a rule, the Council releases information about regional participation opportunities through both popular and specialized media outlets that serve people with disabilities and limited English proficiencies.

Vital public information documents written in English, including meeting notices, will include statements that the Council will reasonably accommodate people with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

The Council provides legal notices, beginning 30 to 45 days prior to public hearings, to inform members of the general public and other stakeholders about opportunities to provide formal public comments. Each notice provides, at a minimum, the following information:

- ✓ Name of activity/type of participation event
- ✓ Sponsoring organization
- ✓ Subject of meeting
- ✓ Action to be taken and by whom

- ✓ Day, date, time and location of meeting
- ✓ Brief summary of the proposed action or plan and geographic scope
- ✓ Start and end dates for public comments
- ✓ Where to obtain copies of the plan or materials, and how to provide formal comments
- ✓ A designated contact for more information (name, telephone, email, TTY)
- ✓ Offer to provide accommodations for people with limited English proficiency (published in the native languages for identified subject threshold groups)
- ✓ Offer to provide accommodations for people who are disabled

Council design standards require program staff to consult with members of the Public Affairs design staff or Metro Transit marketing group to assure consistent use of Council identity elements, design features and typography before publishing display advertisements. *(This requirement does not apply to classified-style legal notices placed through the Data Center.)*

### **Public Comments:**

The Council values the efforts stakeholders make to participate in its regional decisions. To inform participants how their ideas, comments and suggestions influence key regional decisions, the Council considers summaries of public comments at regular business meetings. The Council's designated project managers prepare and present the summaries following each major initiative or project participation process, and provide copies to the Public Affairs Department for publication on the Council's ADA-compliant website and distribution through the Data Center.

The Council's public comment summaries identify:

- ✓ the Council activity for which comments were solicited
- ✓ the matters on which public input was sought
- ✓ a description of the public participation methods used
- ✓ a general description of groups that participated (categorized by factors such as interest, demographic sub-group, or agency affiliation)
- ✓ public comments categorized by major themes
- ✓ how public comment influenced the outcome or recommendation that resulted from the process, and why any consistent themes are not reflected in proposed Council actions.

### **Scheduling Public Meetings:**

The Council provides a variety of opportunities for face-to-face and interactive public participation at ADA-accessible venues. Council public participation activities may range from highly structured public hearings to informal special events, and may incorporate online forums or surveys. The Council's Public Affairs staff provides consultation for planning, organizing and publicizing public meetings, and can assist division staff with presentation coaching or meeting evaluation.

Whenever reasonably possible, the Council holds its public meetings at times and places convenient to its stakeholders. To encourage optimal participation, the Council may consider:

- ✓ Locations easily accessed by transit riders and Metro Mobility clients
- ✓ Holding meetings in different areas of the region
- ✓ Holding meetings at nontraditional locations such as schools, religious facilities or cultural centers
- ✓ Partnering with community or service organizations to promote/host participation events
- ✓ Holding meetings outside of traditional business hours
- ✓ Holding multiple meetings on different days of the week and/or at different times of the day
- ✓ Avoiding potential conflicts with participation opportunities hosted by other units of government in the region

## **INFORMATION DOCUMENTS**

The Council distributes policy documents and data sets that provide stakeholders and the general public with pertinent information about the planning and decision process. The Council provides copies of its draft and adopted policy and plan documents for public review at its Data Center, library and ADA-compliant website. Single copies of most Council documents are free. A nominal fee may be collected to recover costs on select items.

In response to an informal request for information, any Council staff member may distribute published Council documents or direct the requester to the Public Affairs Department.

## **DATA PRACTICES**

Documents, data and information at the Metropolitan Council, unless specifically excepted, are a matter of public record under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 1. Staff must respond in a timely manner to any request for information from a member of the public. If a staff member receives a request for information under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, the request should be referred to the Data Practices Official, at 651-602-1387, in accordance with the Council's Data Practices Procedure.

## **ADVISORY BODIES**

The Council's advisory bodies provide key opportunities for stakeholder participation. They allow members, representing a cross-section of key stakeholder groups in the region, to help shape regional transportation plans and policies. The Council appoints members of the general public, local elected officials, professionals with technical knowledge and experience, or representatives of statute-identified groups, according to the responsibilities of particular advisory bodies. Advisory bodies may conduct studies, recommend action to the Council's standing committees, and/or provide expert advice.

- 1. *Transportation Advisory Board (TAB):*** Advises the Council on transportation matters involving the regional highway, public transit and airport systems; helps the Council, Mn/DOT, counties and cities carry out transportation planning and programming for the region as designated in state and federal laws; participates in drafting the Transportation



Policy Plan (TPP), and reviews and adopts the region's three-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Its 33 members include 10 municipal elected officials; seven county commissioners; four state and regional agency representatives (Mn/DOT, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Metropolitan Airports Commission – (MAC), Metropolitan Council); eight citizen representatives; and four transportation mode representatives (one represents freight providers, two represent transit providers, and one represents nonmotorized transportation users of bicycle and pedestrian facilities).

2. ***Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC)***: The TAAC advises the Metropolitan Council on short- and long-range management plans and policies for special transportation services. Composed of transit riders and advocates for the disability community, it includes 2 Senior Federation representatives, 2 from the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, and 1 American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) representative.
3. ***Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)***: provides expert advice about plans and programs to the TAB. It includes staff from the Council including Metro Transit; representatives from Transit Opt-Out providers; MnDOT; MAC; the MPCA; the FHWA; the seven counties; the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul; and 8 representatives from the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities (AMM). Members of the TAC may also serve on one or more subcommittees. One subset, the Funding and Programming subcommittee, includes representatives from the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and state Bicycle Advisory Committee.
4. ***Transit Providers Advisory Committee (TPAC)***: Advises the Council on issues related to contracted transit services and reviews and participates in the Council's referral process for the TPP and TIP. Its members represent transportation providers, including private transportation providers.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION**

In addition to involving local governments in regional transportation planning processes through its advisory bodies, the Council actively seeks participation by local governments informally and early in its decision-making process. Council and staff members obtain input from local governments through a variety of venues, several of which are integral to the Council's land use planning and other statutory obligations.

1. ***Face-to-Face Meetings and Interviews***: Council members and staff may participate in professional networks or meet with their peers and other agency contacts to discuss regional policy and program issues, as well as day-to-day services and community issues, concerns and needs.
2. ***Discussion, Educational and Outreach Meetings***: The Council may customize forums, workshops, focus groups and other participation processes to encourage participations by representatives from local governments.
3. ***Local Government Meetings***: Council members and staff may attend city, county or township meetings to inform local officials about Council activities, listen to local concerns, or solicit participation in public activities.

4. **Review process:** The Council’s departments use a formal review process to comment on updates and amendments to local comprehensive plans, Environmental Assessment Worksheets, Environmental Impact Statements, and Surface Transportation Referrals. Its departments consult about activities that interact, guiding and coordinating implementation of transportation and other regional facilities with local and regional land use plans, in accordance with the Council’s regional development guide and metropolitan system plans.
5. **Staff assistance:** To assist local governments with land use, facilities and service planning related to regional issues and Council activities, the Council provides designated staff experts and periodic technical assistance opportunities to local governments. Council Sector Representatives act as first contacts for assigned communities and meet regularly with local officials and staff members. Staff assistance develops relationships with local governments throughout the region, enhancing the Council’s ability to identify and address local issues in its regional decisions.

## COUNCIL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### Formal Public Meetings

The Council accepts testimony from stakeholders and the general public in multiple formats, including testimony, postal mail, email, voice mail, fax, and on forms provided for written or website comments. Guidelines for the content of accessible notices soliciting formal public comments are included under “Public Notices.”

- ✓ **Business and Committee Meetings** – are always open to the public as required by Minnesota’s Open Meeting Law and allow the Council’s stakeholders to provide public comments and observe the way it conducts its business. Business and committee meetings are listed in the Council’s master calendar, posted online and publicized through Metro Meetings. They typically are held at Council headquarters, located at 390 Robert Street North, St. Paul, MN 55101. The building is ADA-compliant and accessible via several major transit routes.
- ✓ **Public Hearings** – provide formal public input on issues and business of regional interest. In accordance with state law, the Council adds public hearings for matters that do not pertain to Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Updates to its master calendar and publishes, at least 30 days prior to the meeting, paid legal notices in the State Register and local newspapers. The Council may also issue news releases and highlight hearings on its homepage to promote participation at public hearings and meetings.

### Education and Outreach Meetings

The Council implements a variety of face-to-face and interactive opportunities to ensure meaningful public participation and promote full understanding of Council initiatives. Education and outreach meetings provide information and may solicit input.

- ✓ **Forums** – Including online forums, elicit stakeholders’ and communities’ ideas and perspectives on regional issues, projects and initiatives. Usually held in series, forums are often used to encourage continuous feedback/input. While formal minutes are optional, the Council’s staff or facilitators generally record general or specific content of public comments.
- ✓ **Workshops** – Include meetings or series of meetings designed to share knowledge or information, educating the audience on a topic of regional interest or importance. The Council’s workshops provide technical assistance to local communities, help it increase public awareness or promote public involvement. The Council may record public responses or additional questions/concerns for later use by staff or the Council.
- ✓ **Special Events** – The Council may develop special events to announce, highlight or kick-off its outreach about an issue, project, initiative or news event. The Council generally publicizes its special events through the media, Council websites or direct mail.
- ✓ **Open Houses** – The Council may provide meetings/tours/receptions specific to locations that interest the public, in order to highlight an initiative, project or facility.
- ✓ **Conferences** – Provide opportunities for the Council to enhance its regional reputation for leadership and innovation by providing professional education, participating in policy discussions and forums, or networking with stakeholders who are interested in similar issues or technically skilled in areas of Council business.
- ✓ **Focus Groups** – Solicit in-depth information about issues, activities or public perceptions from small groups of stakeholders. Often held in series, focus groups allow the Council to obtain detailed information and responses by asking questions that build upon knowledge discovered during the course of the meetings or prior public interaction. May also be used as a problem-solving vehicle, a specialized focus group also known as a “Charrette”.
- ✓ **Key Person Interviews** – Council members or employees may meet individually with designated stakeholder opinion leaders, such as Chamber officials or members, mayors, advisory body members, nonprofit agency representatives, education representatives, religious leaders, business owners or individual constituents potentially impacted by a Council decision.
- ✓ **Civic and Community Meetings** – the Council provides updates to City Councils and other elected bodies, and speakers on topics of interest to groups hosting meetings in the region. Council representatives establish relationships host organizations and may attend the organization’s meetings and events.

### **Interactive/Visualization Techniques:**

The Council provides a variety of accessible information resources to help participants understand competing proposals, impacts and possible outcomes related to complex regional transportation projects and plans. Visualization techniques used to illustrate these issues may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following materials and practices:

- ✓ Aerial photographs, alone or with mapping overlays
- ✓ Photo simulations of proposed projects

- ✓ Photographs of existing projects comparable to those proposed
- ✓ Interactive maps that allow comparison of proposals
- ✓ Interactive maps that allow addition/subtraction of proposed elements
- ✓ Printed, three-dimensional, or raised print maps, diagrams, or architectural figures
- ✓ “Before” and “After” photos, simulations, maps, diagrams or drawings
- ✓ Scenario planning exercises

**Media Relations: 651-602-1357**

The Council’s Public Affairs Department includes staff experienced in news reporting and media relations. It issues news releases, works with reporters to generate stories about Council activities, responds to reporter inquiries, provides briefings, holds press conferences and prepares editorial commentaries. Media activities inform and interest members of the media and public about Council issues, events and opportunities for public participation, maintaining contact with more than 40 broadcast outlets and daily newspapers, 40 weekly newspapers, more than 30 specialty news outlets (serving audiences such as ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and people over age 65), and 50 neighborhood publications. Staff also produces content for and places the Council Chair’s Annual State of the Region Address, and periodic highlights of regional issues, on local broadcast/cable television.

**Websites:** [www.metrocouncil.org](http://www.metrocouncil.org) and [www.metrotransit.org](http://www.metrotransit.org)

The Council’s ADA-compliant websites provide interactive content and static documents, accessed at a rate of more than 200,000 visits per month. The website includes contact information and venues for public comment, and advertises openings on the Council’s advisory bodies. It provides information about the Council’s planning and decision-making processes, as well as copies of its draft and adopted plans and policies, maps, displays, and meeting agendas. The homepage highlights public events, and “Meeting and Events” pages provide calendars of the public hearings, meetings and events held by the Metropolitan Council, the Metropolitan Airports Commission and the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission. The Council’s website provides information about federally funded projects, grant opportunities, Council programs and affordable housing. Metro Mobility, the Council’s transportation provider for people with disabilities, provides an online handbook and enrollment form, and the Council’s Metro Transit site provides transit schedules, dynamic trip planning and fare information online.

**Data Center: 651-602-1400**

Public Comment Line: 651-602-1500

TTY: 651-291-0904

Fax: 651-612-1464

Email [data.center@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:data.center@metc.state.mn.us)

390 Robert Street North

St. Paul, MN 55101

The Council Data Center publishes official public notices of the Council’s hearings and public participation meetings. Data Center staff members respond to 12,000 public contacts annually, including requests for printed documents, inquiries about the status of projects, and public comments received at the data center during the public participation process. The Data Center staff assists at events managed by the Public Affairs Department and maintains several database

lists. The Data Center distributes Council documents, notices and newsletters via email, messenger and traditional mail service.

## **Print materials, electronic publications and presentations**

The Council's Public Affairs team includes professional editors, writers and designers who are available to assist program staff developing public participation materials. The Public Affairs Department publishes, periodically updates and distributes an extensive array of fact sheets, policy summaries, brochures, audio-visual materials and topical print and electronic publications. The Council distributes several periodicals to stakeholders and interested parties. At the time of PPP adoption, Council publications included the following titles:

1. *Metro Meetings* (electronic and print, based on preference): Sent weekly to 300 subscribers, provides information about meetings and public events held by the Council, its committees and subcommittees, the Metropolitan Airports Commission and the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission.
2. *Directions Newsletter*: Electronic version mailed monthly to 700 subscribers, provides articles to inform the public and stakeholders about current regional planning, program and service issues; promotes public use of best management practices related to Council responsibilities. Print version mailed bi-monthly to 4,000 subscribers, summarizes information provided in the electronic version.
3. *Metro Digest* (electronic and print, based on preference): Sent monthly to 300 subscribers, summarizes Council and Commission activities (see Metro Meetings), as well as committee and commission vacancies.
4. *Take Out* (print): Provided for user pickup monthly on all regional buses and trains, discusses meetings and decisions affecting the region's transit system.
5. *Annual Report* (print): Distributed annually by direct mail to 300 subscribers and at the Council's State of the Region event, discusses major Council accomplishments and initiatives.
6. *Metro Mobility Monitor* (print): mailed at least annually to 20,000 clients and stakeholders of the Council's ADA-demand transportation service, discusses policy and service matters affecting its clients.
7. *The Wire* (electronic): distributed to Council members and staff by email, discusses activities and personnel at the agency.
8. *Insights* (print and electronic): distributed to Council members and transit staff, available online to other Council employees; discusses activities and personnel within the transit operations.

## **Direct Mail/Email Notices**

Council departments, as well as its Public Affairs and Transit Marketing staffs, maintain active lists of subscribers and parties interested in the Council's public participation efforts. In addition

to its “Meetings and Events” web presence and Metro Meetings bulletins, the Council distributes:

- ✓ Formal meeting notices with requests for comments
- ✓ Form/personalized letters requesting comments and participation, and
- ✓ Form/personalized participation invitations.

Database contacts include members of the media or general public, local officials, citizen activists, interest groups and other stakeholders; materials may be sent electronically or by post.

**Library: 651-602-1310**

390 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55101

The Council’s library and library staff assist members of the Council and its staff, members of the public, and local officials with Council or regional research.

**Staff assistance: 651-602-1545**

The Council’s public outreach coordinator and other members of the Public Affairs staff provide expert assistance with planning, implementing and evaluating a broad range of public participation activities.