

Participation Plan

*Michigan Department of Transportation
State Long Range Transportation Plan
2005–2030*



**Prepared for
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of Transportation**

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The goal of the Participation Plan (PP) for the update of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Long Range Transportation Plan (MI Transportation Plan) is to ensure that the process for public engagement is inclusive, sensitive, and responsive to the diverse issues of the stakeholders and the public. One focus of the MI Transportation Plan will be to identify transportation investment strategies that will contribute to the economic growth of the state. Another important focus will be on the users of the system—improving mobility and connectivity to all residents of the state. For example, like many other states, Michigan is experiencing a population that is growing older and whose mobility will become increasingly important.

A strategic, flexible, and dynamic participation process is required to guide the education, outreach, and engagement activities throughout the MI Transportation Plan development. The process will need to be nimble to allow for mid-course corrections to ensure that the update meets its goals and the needs of the public. This includes establishing an ongoing, inclusive, and meaningful two-way communication with the stakeholders and the public.

The process must be transparent so that everyone is educated and informed of the progress of the work and understands how their input has been incorporated as appropriate. Access and inclusiveness are key components of the approach to participation. The goal will be to “cast as wide a net as possible,” so that the MI Transportation Plan really reflects the interests of a broad and varied constituency. The project team will pay special attention to identifying and involving the underserved, minority, and low income populations by: 1) holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times; 2) making materials available in alternative formats and languages upon request; and 3) proving translators where there is an identified need.

The PP is an integral part of the development of the MI Transportation Plan. It will include and build upon significant participation activities MDOT has undertaken during and after the highly successful Transportation Summit, including the work of the Communication, Consciousness-Raising, & Public Involvement Action Team, as well as the recent development and adoption of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) policy. Coordination with MDOT’s Office of Communications will occur throughout the process, so that a consistent message will emerge and be delivered through press releases, public meetings, and the study Web site.

Technical staff will provide the techniques, tools, and strategies needed to inform and educate the public regarding existing conditions across the state. The public will play an important role in the development and adoption of the MI Transportation Plan through this participation process. A knowledgeable public is central to the successful development and implementation of the MI Transportation Plan.



Chapter 2. Participation Plan Elements

The framework for the PP for the MI Transportation Plan will include, but not be limited to, the following tools and techniques:

- Economic Advisory Group (EAG) meetings;
- Stakeholder interviews;
- Tribal outreach;
- Visioning process;
- Household participation studies;
- Stakeholder workshops;
- Public meetings;
- Community and Environmental Justice outreach;
- State Library System collaboration;
- Partner [Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)/Regional Planning Agencies (RPA)] involvement process;
- Visualization and other communication techniques;
- Government Cable Television access;
- Web site/Web page; and
- Hotline.

2.1 Visioning Process

The first task in developing the MI Transportation Plan is to begin the visioning process, which will build upon the results of the extensive visioning process that took place during the December 2003 Transportation Summit. Participation at this stage is crucial, because the vision developed through this transparent process is central to and will serve as the backbone of all future work.

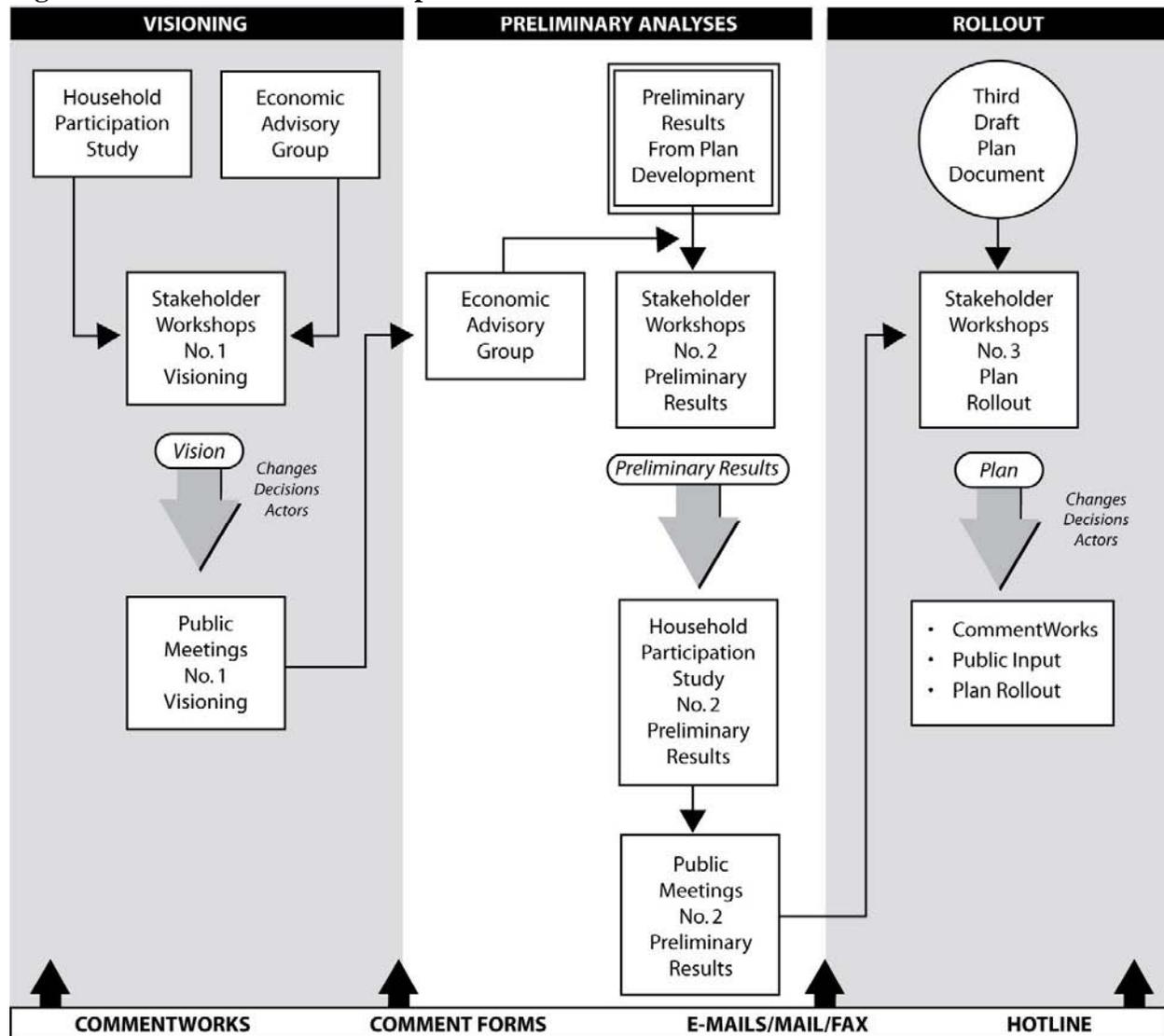
As the MI Transportation Plan evolves, the project team will tailor subsets of the vision to address the specific needs and characteristics of individual corridors. The visioning process will continue throughout the development of the MI Transportation Plan as statewide and corridor strategies are defined.

The visioning process also will include initial input to the performance measures. Often, performance measures are developed later in the process and without any real public input, but such measures should reflect what the public views as important to the transportation system for 2030. This also addresses the need for early and continuous public input into the MI Transportation Plan.

The project team will conduct Economic Advisory Group (EAG) briefings, stakeholder workshops, a household participation study, and public meetings, as well as other innovative techniques, as part of this process.

Completion of this initial visioning process and related activities will result in a document titled *Preferred Vision for an Integrated Transportation System*. This document will provide the framework for the vision for Michigan’s integrated transportation system and describe how the vision promotes progress beyond the existing state system. The MI Transportation Plan Planning Team will draft and review the *Preferred Vision for an Integrated Transportation System*. Once the document has been finalized, it will appear on the MI Transportation Plan Web page for public review; a press release will announce this milestone. The team will use this final document as a reference in the development of future participation activities.

Figure 1 Stakeholder and Participation Process



2.2 Economic Advisory Group

The Economic Advisory Group (EAG), a high-level advisory group selected by MDOT, will provide guidance on all economic issues to be addressed through the MI Transportation Plan participation program. The group will meet in March and June 2006 to help provide continuity between the Transportation Summit and the MI Transportation Plan. The March EAG meeting will kick off the visioning process for the MI Transportation Plan update. At a follow-up meeting in June, the study team will report to the EAG on the subsequent visioning workshops and meetings with stakeholders and the public. Members of the group represent the following organizations:

- Michigan Manufacturers Association;
- Small Business Association of Michigan;
- Intermodal Association of North America;
- Michigan Retailers Association;
- Michigan Commission on Agriculture;
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation;
- Automation Alley Headquarters;
- Michigan Health and Hospital Association; and
- Michigan League of Human Services.

2.3 Stakeholder Interviews

At the outset of the MI Transportation Plan update, the study team will conduct a series of interviews with key stakeholders to identify needs, issues, and concerns from a variety of constituencies. Key stakeholder groups in this process will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Regional planning agencies;
- Councils of government;
- Chambers of commerce;
- Social service agencies;
- Environmental groups;
- Business owners;
- State agencies;
- Road building/pavement groups;
- Transit organizations; and
- Airport organizations.

The study team will conduct stakeholder interviews during January and February of 2006, using several formats, including a personal one-on-one discussion, group interviews, and by telephone. The interview style will depend on several factors, including the location of the stakeholder and his or her schedule availability.

The purposes of the interviews are to:

- Establish conceptual and organizational continuity between the Summit and the MI Transportation Plan;
- Provide a snapshot view of the public and stakeholder issues to be addressed in the participation process;
- Ensure that the MI Transportation Plan and the PP reflect how the public wants to participate and what tools they will need to provide the informed input so important in the progress of the technical work; and
- Identify additional individual stakeholders and organizations to be included in the MI Transportation Plan development process.

The stakeholder interviews are not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to serve as a qualitative data-gathering tool used at the outset of the planning process to get a sense of what issues and concerns may be raised when reaching out to the broader public.

Three questions included in the stakeholder interviews specifically relate to input into the PP. These questions and answers are set forth in **Appendix A**.

The interviewers will record the results of the interviews to share with the MI Transportation Plan Planning Team and incorporate them into the development of the document, as appropriate.

2.4 Tribal Consultation

MDOT will take the lead role in all outreach and analysis of needs, priorities, and concerns of federally-recognized Indian Tribes in Michigan. MDOT will directly perform all tribal governmental consultations, including equitable consideration of issues brought forth by the federally-recognized Tribes for evaluation in the development of the MI Transportation Plan. The consultant team will help prepare materials for any presentations and attend meetings in support of MDOT as required.

2.5 Household Participation Studies

To provide an overview of the general satisfaction with the transportation system and identify issues of concern and needs for different sections of the State, the study team will conduct two household participation studies during the development of the MI Transportation Plan and develop its study methodology in coordination with the MI Transportation Plan Planning Team. The input from the general public in these studies will be used as part of the visioning process and will help to assess connectivity between modes, and how well the system is providing mobility and access to essential markets and services, such as health care and employment.

To kick off the visioning process, the study team will conduct a statistically valid household participation study. This survey will elicit public opinion to provide an overview of the level of

public satisfaction with different aspects of system performance, and to ascertain key values the general public holds with regard to the transportation system. The findings will be part of the overall results of the visioning process.

A total of 1,100 Michigan adults will be interviewed for an average of 12 minutes. The survey will be Random Digit Dialed (RDD) with at least four callbacks on each live number over four nights, before starting on a new number.

In order to achieve a sample size large enough to generalize to all seven regions, the study team has set a quota for each region. However, because over 40% of Michigan's population lives in one region (Metro), it is important not to under-sample that region by too much or the statewide sample will have a considerably higher margin of error. As a result, a quota of 300 for the Metro region has been established, 150 each for the next four largest regions, and 100 each for the two smallest regions. **Table 1** shows those quotas and the actual population distribution for the regions.

Table 1 Sampling Breakdown

Regions	2004 census estimates: adult population	Sample, if random	Sample, set by quotas
Metro	42%	458	300
University	15%	166	150
Southwest	9%	103	150
Bay	13%	138	150
Grand	12%	134	150
North	6%	65	100
Superior	3%	36	100

The sample sizes within each region are not optimal regional sample sizes, but given the skewed population distribution across regions and the primary need for statewide analysis, this distribution is the best route to take for the 1,100 interviews.

The study team will conduct the second household participation study after the second round of visioning workshops to collect public input on the *Preferred Vision for an Integrated Transportation System*. Results of this study will be used to develop the framework for the second round of public meetings.

The MI Transportation Plan Planning Team will consider the information collected through these studies in subsequent phases of the visioning process and reference it in the development of marketing materials and information for the MI Transportation Plan.

2.6 Stakeholder Workshops

The study team will conduct three rounds of stakeholder workshops as part of the development of the MI Transportation Plan. Workshop participants will include representative stakeholder groups involved in the Transportation Summit and CSS focus groups, MPOs, and others identified through stakeholder interviews, MDOT databases, and the like. Each round will consist of three workshops held at various locations around the State. During each round, workshops will be held in different locations to allow for greater participation across the State.

All workshops will be highly interactive and “hands on.” There will be few presentations; instead, participants will break into small facilitated groups. Detailed graphics and visuals will inform and educate participants. At the workshops, participants will review and comment on work done to date to ensure that it reflects the needs and concerns of the public. The study team will provide comment/evaluation forms at each workshop that will build on format and content issues.

2.6.1 Round 1

The first round of workshops will follow the visioning meeting with the EAG. Participants will review and refine concepts developed by the EAG and the Transportation Summit, and identify missing information or modifications. Once they review these concepts, the workshop participants will define what issues or modifications need to be addressed in advancing the visioning and planning process for the MI Transportation Plan.

Participants also will review the results of the initial household participation study. Workshop participants will incorporate key issues identified in the household participation study into the vision from the EAG.

The first round of workshops will be held March 8 through 10, 2006, in Lansing, Escanaba, and Detroit. The outcome of this first round of workshops will be a refined evolving vision to be brought to the public at the first round of public meetings for review and comment.

2.6.2 Round 2

The second round of workshops will give participants the opportunity to respond to public input from the first round of public meetings and the visioning process. The workshops will include a presentation and interactive small group discussion of the technical progress of the MI Transportation Plan. During this round, one potential activity is the application of MDOT’s audience response system. Use of this system will be discussed and considered closer to the time of the meetings. The second round of workshops will be held June 23 through 30, 2006, in Grand Rapids, Marquette, Grayling, and Detroit.

2.6.3 Round 3

The third round of workshops will occur during the rollout of the draft MI Transportation Plan. Participants will review the findings of the second round of public meetings and the second

telephone interview. These workshops also will elicit input on how to begin to implement the MI Transportation Plan.

The third round of workshops will also lead to public input using CommentWorks via the project Web page. This will give the public an alternative way to review and comment on the MI Transportation Plan. CommentWorks also will be available throughout the study for the public to provide input and comments on any items posted on the Web site, or to simply provide comments about the study.

The outcome of this round will be a series of comments on the draft MI Transportation Plan. The third round of workshops is scheduled to take place from November 13 through December 15, 2006, in Detroit, Lansing, Escanaba, and Gaylord.

For each round of workshops, the study team will review and summarize the comments and suggestions received. The team will then recommend revisions to the emerging MI Transportation Plan that will address stakeholder concerns.

2.7 Public Meetings

The study team will conduct two rounds of public meetings during the development of the MI Transportation Plan. Each round will consist of up to eleven meetings, one in each MDOT region, one statewide meeting to be held in Lansing, and additional meetings added as necessary in larger regions.

The purposes of the public meetings are to:

- Inform and educate the public about the vision from the EAG, the Summit, and other existing plans;
- Receive public input and comment on changes, actions, and decisions identified in the stakeholder workshops; and
- Explicitly address key issues found important to the public in the household participation studies, or in previous rounds of public meetings.

Public meetings will use a variety and mix of formats, including open house, presentation, and audience engagement. Language translators will attend the meetings as necessary. All meeting facilities will be handicapped accessible and held at convenient and accessible locations and times, especially in urban areas where public transit services are available. Upon request, meeting materials will be available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, and audio tape.

The study team will develop informational materials and PowerPoint presentations for each round of public meetings. For the first round, the PowerPoint presentation will be a 5-8 minute looping PowerPoint with voiceover. The presentation will provide background on the project,

schedule, and vision information. Study team members will engage the public at stations following the PowerPoint presentation to answer questions and seek input about the vision. For later meeting rounds, a facilitated discussion will follow the PowerPoint presentations to answer questions, provide clarification as needed, and solicit input. Comment forms will be developed and distributed to participants at all meetings. Comment forms will also be posted on the project Web page and include fax and E-mail information so that they can be submitted after the meetings if necessary. CommentWorks.com remote will be used at the public meetings and stakeholder workshops to give participants an opportunity to enter comments directly into the comment depository. This program can be used to gather general comments on the MI Transportation Plan and to ascertain comments on specific aspects of the plans development.

The study team will aggressively promote the public meetings through the distribution of flyers, press releases, E-mail notification, and postings on the project Web page. Meeting dates and related information will be provided for stakeholder groups to post on their Web pages or include in upcoming newsletters and bulletins.

The first round of public meetings will take place from March 28 through April 6, 2006, at eleven locations across the State. A second round is scheduled to take place between August 7 and August 21, 2006.

2.8 Environmental Justice/Community Outreach

While workshops and public meetings are one way to reach stakeholders, a variety of methods will ensure ongoing stakeholder outreach. A key element of this outreach will be to minority, low-income, and/or underserved populations as well as the disabled community and the older population. These populations often do not participate in the formal planning process, but it is crucial to get their input. Outreach to these populations will include identifying local organizations that serve these constituencies and attending their meetings to discuss and elicit input on the MI Transportation Plan. The project team will contact key organizations representing environmental justice populations prior to each round of public meetings to encourage their participation. Team members will attend at least two organizational meetings a month, and undertake more if resources allow. A notice on the Web page will alert organizations to contact us if they would like a presentation on the MI Transportation Plan.

Collaboration with the state's library system will be an important element in community outreach, providing access to CommentWorks in communities across the state for people who do not have computers at home. The study team expects that not only will people have access to the MI Transportation Plan Web page at the libraries, but by partnering with the state's library system, local librarians will actively engage visitors to go on-line to access CommentWorks, providing input at the local level. During three peak times over the course of the development of the MI Transportation Plan, librarians will alert patrons to CommentWorks. The first will follow the first round of stakeholder workshops and public meetings, the second will follow the second round of these meetings in July, and the third will occur at the time of the

MI Transportation Plan roll-out in November. These alerts are timed to coincide and seek input similar to that generated by the stakeholder workshops and public meetings.

Outreach materials such as brochures, flyers, and press releases will help the public understand the MI Transportation Plan and illustrate how the process works and how the public's input will be used. When area demographics necessitate, we will engage Spanish and/or Arabic translators to encourage participation by these populations.

2.9 Partner (MPO/RPA) Involvement Process

Through MDOT and other meetings, the study team will coordinate with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), Regional Planning Agencies (RPA), municipalities, and other agencies throughout the development of the MI Transportation Plan. The team will develop a general model for inter-governmental coordination that will incorporate decisions and actions from the *Preferred Vision for an Integrated Transportation System* and be used to coordinate state agencies and organizations involved in transportation planning activities. This model will be developed through meeting with planning officials from MPOs, RPAs, and other government entities across the state.

The study team will review and incorporate existing transportation plans and documents into the MI Transportation Plan as appropriate. A report titled *MPO/RPA Synthesis Report* will examine how existing plans complement the overall vision of the MI Transportation Plan and identify issues in MPO/RPA documents that should be considered in the MI Transportation Plan planning process.

The study team will work with the MDOT Office of Communications to develop articles for inclusion in organization newsletters and distribution to these MI Transportation Plan partners. The team will identify and coordinate other activities and meetings throughout this process.

2.10 Web Page

The study team will work with the MDOT Webmaster to design an interactive project Web page that will be both informative and interactive, with E-mail capability and general comment forms available on-line. The Web page will include such elements as:

- Easy-to-read explanations of the purpose and goals of MI Transportation Plan;
- Plan schedule;
- Brochures and fact sheets;
- Public meeting schedules and announcements;
- PowerPoint presentations;
- Draft and final reports;
- Relevant meeting summaries;
- Comment forms; and
- Contact information.



The study team will post all project materials in a timely manner and in an accessible format to be easily viewed and downloaded by visitors. A protocol for input on answering E-mails and responding to comments will be established to ensure that all E-mails are responded to within 24 hours.

Throughout the process, the public will be able to provide input through the project Web page by using CommentWorks, a tool that allows them to comment on draft documents posted on the Web page and participate in on-line surveys and polls. This tool provides an opportunity for those who could not attend a meeting or workshop to review materials and submit comments. CommentWorks will serve as a repository for all comments received through the Internet, mail, fax, hotline, and E-mail. Members of the MI Transportation Plan Team will be able to access the CommentWorks database from any Internet connection. CommentWorks will enhance the overall interactivity of the Web page and increase the ability to collect and organize input received from the public.

All project materials will promote the Web site address, and Web cards will be available at public meetings, transportation service centers, and other appropriate locations.

The study team also will provide hard copies of the MI Transportation Plan materials at all Transportation Service Centers for those who do not have Internet access. Other activity nodes may be identified as well, such as libraries and community centers, where master copies could be maintained.

2.11 Hotline

The study team will maintain a hotline (800-341-1828) throughout the MI Transportation Plan process. This is a particularly useful tool for those without Internet access. The team will keep a log of all calls, and respond within 24 hours.

Chapter 3. Public Participation Evaluation Process

An evaluation process will help ensure that the PP implementation works effectively. The Communications Action Team formed to continue Transportation Summit activities developed a host of recommendations and actions to ensure good communication with the public. The PP will incorporate their recommendations as appropriate as the progress of the work continues and as more data is collected on the needs and issues expressed by the public.

The study team will develop a comprehensive public participation evaluation comment form and distribute it at all public participation meetings and activities. This form will include detailed questions about the public participation techniques, meeting formats, meeting locations, and materials produced for the MI Transportation Plan. The team will review and analyze the completed forms to gauge the effectiveness and progress of the participation

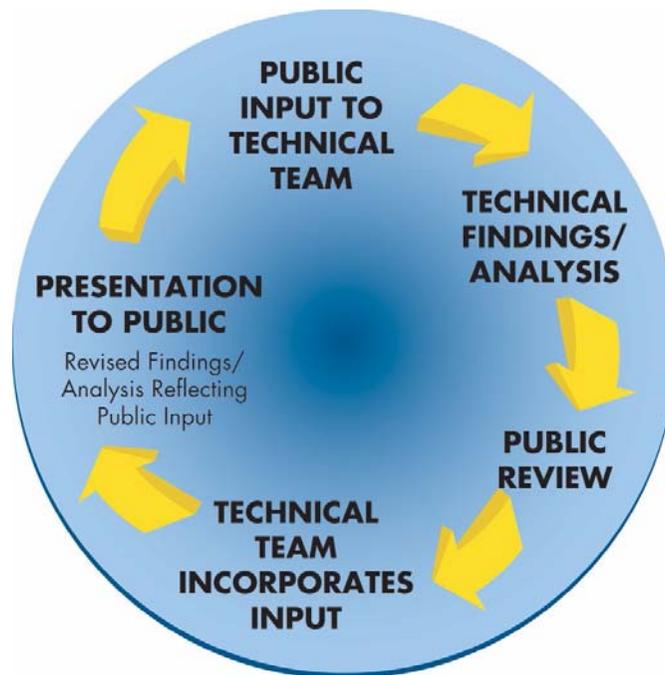
process. The participation program will be updated as improvements are identified. An interactive version of this form will also be available on the project Web page.

CommentWorks also will play a crucial role in the evaluation process. Tracking comments and results of other Web-based activities, such as surveys, questionnaires, and the like, will provide valuable information to use to gauge the PP's success.

Throughout the planning process, the study team will coordinate with EAG members and other identified stakeholders to solicit feedback on the success of participation activities. If the team determines that a specific group or demographic group should be better engaged in the participation process, team members will contact stakeholders and local government officials to seek assistance identifying alternative methods for reaching these groups.

Questions and concerns raised by the public will be reviewed to establish a visible, continuous feedback loop (see **Figure 2** below) for incorporating their input into the MI Transportation Plan.

Figure 2 Public Input Feedback Loop



These techniques and others will be used as evaluation tools throughout the development of the MI Transportation Plan. This PP will be updated frequently to reflect any changes needed to address public needs and concerns.

Chapter 4. Marketing Plan

One of the key tools we are using to accomplish participation in this planning process is the MI Transportation Plan Marketing Plan. This marketing plan will foster broad-based support, understanding, and buy-in for key improvements in system performance associated with the transportation vision. It also will maximize public awareness of the MI Transportation Plan planning process and opportunities for public participation.

A variety of materials will support public participation activities. These materials will be branded with the MI Transportation Plan logo as a way to identify the materials with MI Transportation Plan. The logo also will be the focal point of the Web page to differentiate it from other Web pages on the MDOT site.

Additional details are provided in the Marketing Plan, which is a separate document.



Appendix A Stakeholder Interview Questions

The following three stakeholder interview questions and results are included in this document because they are most pertinent to the Participation Plan. The remainder of the stakeholder interview questions and their results can be referenced in the Stakeholder Interview Summary document.

Stakeholder Interview Question 11

What are some of the transportation needs of minority, low income and/or underserved populations today, and how will they change by 2030?

- Provide more mobility for people in urban areas;
- Offer transportation options other than driving;
- These are growing populations that will only continue to increase;
- Better access to schools and employment is needed;
- Transit hours and services need to be expanded;
- Increased funding is needed;
- Create more walkable, higher density communities;
- Low cost transit is needed in high density areas;
- Cars and gas just keep getting more expensive making the situation worse;
- The number of Non-English speakers is growing and needs to be reflected in transit materials and advertising;
- We need to get people to the suburbs where employers are moving; and
- Need to provide transit options that serve rural areas and older populations.

Stakeholder Interview Question 14

An important part of this plan is getting input from the public. How would you prefer to receive information about the 2030 Long Range Plan?

1. Web site/E-mail
2. Newspaper article
3. Stakeholder meetings and outreach
4. Public meetings
5. Fact sheets/brochures/newsletters
6. MDOT TSC

Other ideas

- Web casts
- Billboards
- Legislative outreach and activities

- Cable
- Special outreach to those who can't read
- Serve food
- All of the above

Stakeholder Interview Question 15

What groups of people are critical to be engaged in this planning process?

Additional groups to engage in the long range planning process:

- AAA
- AARP
- Academia
- Airports - regional and local
- Automotive industry representatives
- Battle Creek Bicycle Club
- Bicycle advocates
- Copper County Scenic Byway Committee
- Counties
- County Road Commissions
- Detroit Working for the Environment
- Disability network
- Economic and private developers
- Flint Area Pastors Association
- Freight rail providers
- Governor's Council on Physical Fitness
- High school student government leaders
- Hispanic groups/publications: El Zocolo news, Nueva Opinion
- Historical societies
- Independent Living Centers
- Industry representatives
- Insurance agencies
- Keweenaw Community Foundation
- Keweenaw Land Trust Foundation
- Legislators
- Lions clubs
- Local and school health departments
- Michigan Association of Counties
- Michigan Association of Rail Passengers
- Michigan Association of Timberland
- Michigan conservation clubs
- Michigan Environmental Council
- Michigan Gamaliel Institute affiliates (faith-based activist groups)

- Michigan Land Use Institute
- Michigan Municipal League
- Michigan Nurses Association
- Michigan Road Builders Association
- Michigan Suburbs Alliance
- Michigan townships
- Michigan Transportation Research Board
- Monroe County Planning Commission
- MPOs /Regional Planning Agencies
- NAACP in Detroit
- National Park Service
- Native American groups
- Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency - Alpena
- Private ferry operators
- Realtors associations
- Religious organizations
- Safe community groups
- School transportation providers
- SMART (Southwestern Michigan Alliance for Recreational Trails)
- State and local police, fire departments, hospitals
- Tourism groups
- Traffic Safety Committees
- Tri-City Cyclists
- Trucking industry
- Upper Peninsula Recreation and Travel
- UPS and FedEx
- Western Michigan Disability
- Western Michigan Environmental Action Council