

TODAY → 2030 → 2045

# PATH FORWARD

Advancing our region with innovation to enhance mobility.

## Public Involvement Plan



980 N Jefferson St, Jacksonville, FL 32209

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# Table of Contents

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>What is the Long Range Transportation Plan? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Public Participation Activities .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Community Events .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Community Conversations.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Branding and Materials.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Planning Process.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Goals of the LRTP PIP .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Traditionally Underserved Communities .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Public Participation Schedule.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Public Involvement Procedures .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Scheduling and Noticing Procedures .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Open Meetings.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Meeting Accessibility.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Coordination with Statewide Transportation Planning .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Methods of LRTP Public Outreach &amp; Advertisement .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Public Workshops .....	5
Public Notices .....	5
The North Florida TPO LRTP Website.....	5
Email Newsletter .....	6
Social Media .....	6
<b>E-Townhall Meetings.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Public Forums .....	7
Focus Groups .....	7
Presentations.....	7
Surveys.....	7
<b>Identifying Stakeholders.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Elected and Appointed Officials Coordination .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Advisory Committees .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Existing Community Networks .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Visualization Techniques .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Availability of Information.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Public Participation Final Report.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Disposition of Public Comments.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Contact.....</b>	<b>10</b>

## Overview

### What is the Long Range Transportation Plan?

The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan details how the North Florida transportation system will evolve over the next 25 years. Federal law requires a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update on a five-year cycle. However, it may be amended or administratively modified anytime within that five-year period.

Public participation is a critical element in the development and adoption of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. This is due to the significant sociocultural, economic, health, and environmental impacts of transportation on all persons in the region. This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines widespread opportunities for the general public to be informed and engaged throughout the development of the 2045 LRTP. The purpose of the PIP is to provide a roadmap to systematically achieve goals and objectives for participation, ensuring diverse and inclusive public input.

### Public Participation Activities

The public involvement process for developing the plan will allow diverse communities access to the planning process and the opportunity to provide meaningful input into decisions made by the North Florida TPO. These activities will identify areas of concern, needed improvements, as well as concerns regarding one or more projects identified in the plan.

Outreach and data gathering activities will include the following:

- Public perceptions survey
- Interactive project web site
- Social media
- Community forum engagement
- Overview video
- Contact list
- *E-News* Newsletters (4)
- Focus Groups
- Overview brochure
- Youth outreach strategies
- Visualization techniques
- Agency meetings
- E-Townhall Meetings
- Public hearing

A comprehensive effort will be made to engage minority and underserved populations in accordance with the requirements of Executive Order 12898 and Title VI of the Civil Rights. Strategies and tactics used to engage minorities and underserved will include identifying the population locations, target outreach to organizations serving these populations, scheduling focus groups in areas with clusters of these populations, and identifying community champions that will assist in supporting our efforts. Analysis of the investments related to these populations can be performed to ensure the investments resulted in equity and the projects implemented would not result in disproportionate impacts.

The stakeholders engaged will represent a wide range of community organizations and populations.

- Future decision-makers (middle and high school students) utilizing local area schools and community youth organizations
- College students (Edward Waters University and University of North Florida)
- Users of public transportation will be engaged via surveys and onsite interviews.
- Freight shippers and freight transportation providers
- The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)
- Sunshine Bus (St Johns County)
- Military
- Representatives of pedestrian and bicyclist organizations
- Representatives of the disabled community
- Neighborhood associations and community groups
- Business and professional groups
- Elected officials and agency representatives

### **Community Events**

Community events will provide opportunities to raise awareness of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan and build positive relationships with the North Florida TPO, its partners, and the community. As a cost-effective measure, a limited number of specific locally planned community events will be selected to help distribute information and collect comments regarding the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

This strategy includes a variety of events sponsored by organizations that represent the community's diverse demographics. Events may include community and school fairs, farmer's markets, sporting events, cultural and art festivals. Information will be provided through information booths, printed materials and exhibits. Event attendees will be able to submit feedback via surveys.

### **Community Conversations**

Community Conversations are interactive presentations that foster two-way communication about regional transportation concerns and solutions. These presentations are given to stakeholders and specific groups (such as Rotary and Chamber committees) and allow participants to take part in the 2045 LRTP. Proactive public participation often means meeting with community members where they live or congregate. The public participation process for this plan update will include Community Conversations with focus groups such as homeowner's associations, business groups, cultural, civic and fraternal organizations, houses of worship, environmental groups and others.

Information will be clearly communicated regarding the region's transportation needs and proposed 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan through these community speaking engagements. Community Conversations will ensure that accurate 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan information is distributed far beyond those who are able to attend the scheduled public meetings, and that feedback is received from these groups.

### **2045 Long Range Transportation Plan Branding and Materials**

The North Florida Transportation Planning Organization will establish a 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan brand to make the planning effort immediately recognizable during public presentations and meetings, special events and in plan materials. The slogan "Advancing our region with innovation to enhance mobility" has been

developed to help community members connect with the importance of shaping the region's mobility future.

Branded 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan materials, to be produced electronically and in print, will be eye-catching and easy to understand. All materials will be clear and concise; they will help connect key messages with target audiences. All branded materials will include the appropriate project team contact information for interested persons with questions or concerns. Creative, attractive community outreach materials will be developed for target audiences and distributed via the U.S Postal Service and electronically.

## The Planning Process

The North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) creates plans and policies for transportation at the regional level. These plans and policies generally build on the plans created by local communities, but also consider the benefits and impacts of transportation improvements at the regional level. These plans include the TPO's Long Range Transportation Plan. The TPO's planning process generally consist of:

1. Gathering background information to get a feel for the current conditions of an area and to see how it's changed over time
2. Getting public input and feedback on goals and objectives for the project and the project's outcomes
3. Technical analysis that helps to form the plan's recommendations
4. Public input and feedback on the plan's recommendations
5. Adoption of the plan

Most planning work at the TPO also involves a steering committee for each project. These are residents and people from various agencies and organizations in the affected communities, who help guide the project's goals and recommendations.

## Goals of the LRTP PIP

The LRTP Public Involvement Plan(PIP) is intended to provide all interested parties, including local public agencies and planning partners, with information on how the TPO actively engages the public in the transportation planning and programming processes. An effective public involvement plan requires TPO staff and consultant to both provide information to and gather information from the public.

Goals for planning and programming processes are to:

1. Obtain understanding of transportation needs through public engagement.
2. Engage the public in transportation decision-making early and often.
3. Provide to the public reasonable access at key decision points during the development of TPO plans and programs.
4. Ensure full and fair participation in the transportation decision making process.
5. Provide timely and adequate notice to the public about meetings and plans.
6. Seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, who may also face challenges accessing employment and other services, including:
  - a. Low-income (households below the poverty line);
  - b. Minority population (population reporting a race and ethnicity other than White, Non-Hispanic);
  - c. Limited-English proficiency (population over age 14 reporting low English proficiency);
  - d. Senior population;

- e. Zero-car households;
  - f. Persons with disabilities; and
  - g. Low educational attainment.
7. Seek out and consider the needs of those who are geographically nearest potential projects and therefore a higher potential for being directly impacted.
  8. Record all public comments and responses provided;
  9. Measure the effectiveness of the strategies utilized and the overall public engagement effort.

## Traditionally Underserved Communities

The North Florida TPO is committed to ensuring ongoing participation by traditionally underserved “environmental justice” populations, such as the transportation disadvantaged, transit-dependent, minorities and those living in low-income communities. The need to produce materials for non-English speakers and the hearing and visually impaired will be evaluated throughout the process.

Special accommodations will be made at no cost for persons with disabilities or persons requiring translation services who desire to participate in a 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan event. To arrange for special accommodations, persons should contact Marci Larson, Public Affairs Manager, North Florida TPO at 904-306-7513; 904-307-2888(c) or mlarson@northfloridatpo.com at least seven (7) business days prior to the event.

The transportation needs and opinions of those with disabilities will be sought out through engagement with the North Florida Regional Transportation Commission (NFRTC) Transit Subcommittee, the City of Jacksonville Mayor’s Disability Council, Jacksonville Transportation Advisory Committee and the planning process will be made accessible to such persons as per the regulations provided by the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

To facilitate outreach to traditionally underserved communities for membership on the advisory committees and to inform the communities of public workshops on the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, flyers and/or posters for display will be distributed on Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) buses and Sunshine Bus, information kiosks and paratransit vans in Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns Counties.

## Public Participation Schedule

A schedule for the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan PIP activities is shown below. It should be noted that as the plan update unfolds there will likely be minor adjustments to the schedule.

## Public Involvement Procedures

The following are some of the procedures and techniques that the TPO can use for gathering public input.

### Scheduling and Noticing Procedures

The North Florida TPO develops and updates its planning and programming documents on a regular basis. There are various minimum public input and public noticing periods based on the type of planning document.

### Open Meetings

Notifications, cancellations, and any special announcements for regular meetings conducted by the TPO will be advertised in the Florida Times-Union, listed on the TPO website, the TPO’s Facebook and Twitter pages, at the TPO office, and an email will be sent to subscribers of the TPO’s newsletter. All meetings posted on the TPO

website are open for the public to attend.

### **Meeting Accessibility**

The transportation needs and opinions of persons with disabilities shall be included in the long range transportation planning process. The planning process will be made accessible to such persons by ensuring that all public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times. When possible, public meetings are held at facilities accessible by transit. All standing LRTP meetings will be accessible by transit.

### **Coordination with Statewide Transportation Planning**

The North Florida TPO consistently engages the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in its planning processes. As part of this coordination effort, TPO staff reaches out to FDOT for participation in planning processes and updates on FDOT plans and programs.

### **Methods of LRTP Public Outreach & Advertisement**

Public outreach is essential to the planning and transportation programming process. A variety of engagement techniques and tools should be used to ensure transparency and increase opportunities for the public to participate. All TPO plans and processes will track the type and amount of public involvement methods used, and feedback received. What follows are some of the best practice techniques for generating meaningful public input into planning and transportation programming processes:

#### **Public Forums**

Federal law requires the provision of public hearings for the creation of and amendments to specific TPO documents. These public hearings provide the general public and other interested parties with an opportunity to have their position heard. Public hearing procedures will be in accordance with Appendix B of this Public Involvement Plan.

The forums will be:

- Held at locations where residents regularly congregate;
- Held at accessible locations that comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements;
- Held at locations accessible to public transportation;
- Properly signed along routes leading to meeting locations; and
- Scheduled at a time that is convenient to the public.

#### **Public Notices**

Public notices, issued to major news publications, will be issued for meetings or documents available for public comment in accordance with the minimum advertising periods as set forth in this Public Involvement Plan.

- The Florida Times Union shall be the TPO's Newspapers of Record. The TPO will advertise in other publications as needed, on a case-by-case basis.

### **The North Florida TPO LRTP Website**

Advertisements for public hearings, public review periods, public forums, review draft availability, and other occurrences will be posted to the TPO's website. The website also houses individual project pages where updates and drafts of planning products will be posted for public review, and comments on individual products can be made.

The website domain [www.pathforward2045.com](http://www.pathforward2045.com) is currently being managed by MVP Public Relations and will be transferred to the appropriate party.

### Email Newsletter

The North Florida TPO utilizes its email newsletter, *North Florida TPO News*, to distribute news stories, public meeting notices, and other important information to its members and interested citizens and agencies. LRTP updates will be added to content within this newsletter. At four points during the 2045 LRTP Update the Email Newsletter will focus on the LRTP. This will occur prior to the E-Townhall Meetings during the development of the Needs and Cost Feasible Plans, prior to the adoption of the Cost Feasible Plan and immediately after the overall plan adoption.

### Social Media

The North Florida TPO uses Facebook as its primary social media presence (<https://www.facebook.com/NorthFloridaTPO>). The TPO also uses Twitter (<https://twitter.com/northfloridatpo>). The North Florida TPO Facebook and Twitter pages share information on current planning activities and distribute news and information about member agencies, many of whom have an active presence on social media. Other current social media outlets utilized by the TPO are, <https://vimeo.com/northfloridatpo>, <https://www.instagram.com/northfloridatpo/> and <https://www.pinterest.com/northfloridatpo/>.

When posting messages about documents available for public comment, it will be suggested that the TPO reads and considers responding to all comments made on TPO Facebook and Twitter posts, only comments that are submitted to the TPO's Facebook or Twitter accounts in direct messages will be part of the official public comment record for a product that is out for public review and feedback. As available, the TPO may also work with local governments who have access to other platforms like the Next Door App, Facebook Ads, Instagram Ads, Snapchat Geotags and YELP.

### E-Townhall Meetings

Setting priorities in the ever-changing municipal environment presents both opportunities and challenges – making it more important than ever that we hear from members of the community regarding the changes taking place in our community.

Interested residents will be invited to watch a live meeting via online mediums to receive pertinent LRTP information and to share their ideas and views, and provide input at a Town Hall Meeting.

This virtual meeting will allow residents to listen to community questions about the LRTP. Participants will not be obligated to speak during the call, they can simply listen to the meeting without asking a question. If residents would like to ask a question, they can do so during the event or may submit questions ahead of time.

**In Person:** Participants can attend the meeting in person and ask questions of the consulting team at a microphone.

**Online:** Watch the meeting online and submit questions through one of the below online methods. The online stream of the meeting can will be accessible via the LRTP and TPO websites, but the live stream will not be accessible until 15 minutes prior to the meeting.

The townhall meetings shall inform the public of the Long Range Transportation Plan update. These meetings will



occur at two (2) points during the project to discuss the proposed projects and programs, as well as funding. The public will have an opportunity to provide input which will help in the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan specifically the Needs and Cost Feasible elements. Meeting attendees will be able to submit feedback via e-mail or on the LRTP website. Comment forms will be posted on the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan website for greater accessibility and be distributed at community presentations and other events. The public will be encouraged to offer their ideas, suggestions, issues and concerns about future transportation plans. A portion of each meeting shall be devoted to questions and answers and the public shall be asked to identify and provide information about transportation problem areas. A report detailing public comments and responses will be provided to the North Florida TPO.

**Note: The team can respond to questions on the live broadcast, not in direct response via Twitter, Facebook or Email.**

**Email:** Questions can be submitted through any email provided. The team will constantly monitor the selected email during the broadcast to answer any questions that are emailed.

**Facebook:** Residents can submit questions via Facebook. Residents can register with the event to participate. 15 minutes before the meeting begins, the wall will open for comments to be submitted. The team will answer any questions via the web broadcast (not directly on the Facebook page).

**Twitter:** Residents can submit questions via Twitter using a hashtag that will be posted one hour before the event. Team members will answer these questions via the web broadcast (not directly in response to Twitter postings).

## Public Forums

Public forums are used to engage the public for specific planning activities. They may be in the form of advertised meetings or open houses, or may take place at regularly scheduled community meetings for neighborhoods, community development groups, or other interested / affected organizations. The intent of public forums is to disseminate and gather information in an informal setting. These forums may be conducted in a specific planning area for a location-based project, or may be spread throughout the region, depending on the geographic scale of the project.

## Focus Groups

As necessary for planning processes, the TPO will use Focus Groups to guide staff during key decision points and in forming recommendations. A focus group would not replace public input, but would provide an additional resource during the process.

## Presentations

Presentations will be given by staff at appropriately scheduled public meetings or to organizations or agencies with specific interest in particular projects, either as preliminary outreach or as requested by the organizations. Whenever possible, the TPO will plan to post a recording of each presentation online for those who cannot participate in person can stay informed and provide feedback via survey, email, phone, or mail.

## Surveys

One helpful tool for gathering public input is surveys. Surveys can take many shapes, sizes, and method of deployment: online, paper, by telephone, and in-person. The North Florida TPO uses surveys to gather information from the public on specific planning activities and uses the information to inform the planning process.

## Identifying Stakeholders

Achieving these public participation goals and objectives begins with appropriately identifying stakeholders with a jurisdictional, direct or other interest in contributing input to the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. The PIP includes conducting a formal, comprehensive community inventory to develop a stakeholder database. A variety of resources will be used to compile the database, including updating existing agency stakeholder lists. The North Florida TPO will receive regular updates on community feedback. The stakeholder database will be updated throughout the public participation process.

The TPO uses its email newsletter, *North Florida TPO News* as the main form of communication with interested citizens and agencies. The TPO uses the *North Florida TPO News* to disseminate information about transportation plans, policies, and activities. The TPO strives to include organizations that represent low-income, minority, and other traditionally underserved populations as subscribers of the *North Florida TPO News*. Subscribers of the *North Florida TPO News* will be continually examined for inclusiveness and usefulness, and opportunities to subscribe to the email newsletter will be offered to all individuals who take an interest in participating in the TPO's transportation planning and programming processes. Anyone who wishes to subscribe to the *North Florida TPO News* newsletter can sign up at <http://northfloridatpo.com/global/contact/>

The TPO attempts to ensure that the *North Florida TPO News* subscribers include representatives of the following:

- Traffic agencies
- Private providers of transportation services
- Ridesharing agencies
- Parking agencies
- Transportation safety agencies
- Traffic enforcement agencies
- Commuter rail operators
- Airport and port authorities
- Freight companies
- Railroad companies
- Environmental organizations
- Neighborhood associations
- Local Health Departments
- Other City, County, and Municipal departments
- Advocacy Groups
- Interested citizens
- Public/Private/Parochial/Charter Schools
- Employers
- Organizations representing the interests of:
  - Older Adults
  - Minority populations
  - Transportation agency employees
  - Users of various modes of transportations

- Persons with disabilities
- Economically disadvantaged persons
- Others underserved by the transportation system

### **Elected and Appointed Officials Coordination**

The 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan team will keep local, state, county and federal officials briefed and engaged. This will occur through various avenues including newsletters and the distribution of 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan materials, as well as through briefings and/or periodic presentations to the North Florida TPO and its partners. At a minimum, presentations will be made as the TPO Board is considering adoption of the Needs and Cost Feasible Plans. As the TPO staff presents the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to the various community partners, an update to the LRTP process will be given as well.

### **Advisory Committees**

North Florida TPO utilizes advisory committees in its transportation planning decision processes. Periodic updates regarding the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan and community outreach activities will be presented at advisory committee meetings. The following committees have been established to provide additional public input in the transportation planning process:

- Citizens Advisory Committee
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board
- RTC Transit Sub-Committee

### **Existing Community Networks**

Under the direction of the North Florida TPO staff, meeting notices and other information for the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan will be submitted for placement in municipal and community newsletters, on websites, in house of worship bulletins, in libraries within the study area, and social service agencies, community centers, and at various locations within the University of North Florida, Edward Waters College, and Florida State College at Jacksonville.

### **Visualization Techniques**

Visualization will be used to illustrate important concepts and critical information in clear and easily understood formats such as maps, pictures, displays, videos, and PowerPoint presentations. This will enable the public to better understand and respond to a new ideas and concepts introduced in the plan. Visualizations can help bridge the gap between the TPO's vision and the stakeholders' understanding by helping the public understand "how will the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan affect me, my family, and my neighborhood.

Displays, maps, pictures and presentations that are used at public meetings and community conversations will be posted on the website at [www.pathforward2045.com](http://www.pathforward2045.com).

### **Availability of Information**

All documents seeking public comment will be posted to project pages on the TPO/LRTP website at [www.pathforward2045.com](http://www.pathforward2045.com) and advertised via the TPO email newsletter and social media. TPO staff will make printed materials available to the public upon request. When appropriate, a charge may be levied for copies of publications. The charge will cover the cost of production and, if applicable, the cost of mailing the materials. All such materials are available for viewing at the TPO office at no cost.

### **Public Participation Final Report**

The entire public involvement effort shall be documented as a final Public Participation Report in Technical Report 1. All outreach efforts will be documented including public participation strategies, activities, materials, photographs and subjects discussed, along with evaluation and performance measures documenting the results of the process for each methodology. Meeting minutes will be prepared for all public workshops, community conversations, meetings and hearings, and all public comments will be summarized, evaluated and documented. All meeting minutes, emails, comments from the public as well as responses provided and related information concerning the public outreach for the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan and technical reports shall be compiled and included in the final Technical Report 1.

### **Disposition of Public Comments**

When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft Year 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (including the financial plan), a summary, analysis and reports on the disposition of public comments shall be prepared and included as part of the adopted Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Cost Feasible Plan Final Report.

## **Contact**

Those seeking more information about our planning activities can contact

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