Franklin County Transportation Planning Organization
Public Participation Plan

2016

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Notice of Nondiscrimination Rights and Protections to Beneficiaries

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1. INTRODUCTION
This is a Plan for collecting public input on the Franklin County Transportation Planning Organization’s (FCTPO) transportation planning efforts, documents, and projects. The Franklin Region has a long history of involving local residents, business owners, elected officials, and other stakeholders in its transportation planning work. Similarly, it has long been recognized that including a broad group of stakeholders improves both the planning process and the ultimate product, while improving ownership and buy-in from those involved. This document will formalize the process that has been followed successfully since the implementation of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in 1991, while reflecting recent MAP-21 requirements and restructuring changes in the Franklin Region that took place in 2006.

This Plan, most importantly, also serves as a guide to including those populations that have been traditionally underserved by the transportation system and/or have lacked access to the decision-making process. This Plan guides the FCTPO in its efforts to offer early, continuous, and meaningful opportunities for the public to identify social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed transportation policies and projects. This Plan shapes all public engagement, from information sharing to formal public involvement in project development and decision-making.

2. BACKGROUND
The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (referred to as the FRCOG) serves the towns of the Franklin County Region in the upper Connecticut River Valley in mid-western Massachusetts. The FRCOG integrates regional and local planning, human service advocacy and coordination, and the provision of municipal services, such as cooperative purchasing, to advance the following regional goals:

- Balancing economic development with the protection of natural and cultural resources, and with the rural character and heritage of the region;
- Ensuring the most economical creation and delivery of public services in a rural region comprised of many political subdivisions; and
- Building healthier communities by developing and connecting broad-based coalitions, which raise the level of expectations for community achievement.

The FRCOG advocates on behalf of its member communities at the state and federal level to ensure that funding, programs, and policies are sensitive to and respond to the rural nature, economic strengths, and human and natural resources of the region.

Additionally, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments serves as one of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ thirteen (13) Regional Planning Agencies and provides staff to the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). (An MPO consists of a Committee of Signatories, who together make decisions about transportation planning goals, projects, priorities, and funding.) In Franklin
County, this group is referred to as the Franklin County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). In its role as staff to the TPO, the FRCOG follows federal transportation planning regulations, including the establishment of a citizen advisory group to participate in transportation planning activities. The FRCOG staff is responsible for coordinating and working with the other TPO members to develop, implement portions of, and routinely update the Regional Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Unified Planning Work Program for Franklin County, as well as performing a wide range of other planning services.

3. **FCTPO MEMBERSHIP**

During 2006, the Franklin County TPO was restructured with the goal of increasing the role of the 26 towns in Franklin County on this regional transportation decision-making body. As part of the restructuring process a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was executed. The MOU redefined the TPO’s structure and how it will function. The FCTPO membership was expanded from five members to nine members including the following representatives:

- the Secretary of MassDOT (to act as the Chair of the FCTPO);
- the Administrator of the MassDOT Highway Division;
- the Chair of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Executive Committee;
- the Chair of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority;
- the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Regionally Elected Official,
- the Mayor of Greenfield; and
- three Franklin County Sub-Regional Appointments (one from the West County, one from Central County and one from East County sections of Franklin County as defined in the MOU).

The MOU defines that the FCTPO shall have the responsibilities for developing, reviewing and adopting the region’s annual transportation Unified Planning Work Program, the Regional Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and air quality conformity determinations. The MOU further states that the FCTPO shall have the responsibility of meeting all of the provisions of the federal 3C (Continuing, Cooperative, Comprehensive) Transportation Planning Process including: the initiation of studies, evaluation and recommendation of transportation improvements and the programming of funds for transportation improvements and the programming of funds for transportation projects in the region for which funding is sought for implementation. The MOU also states that the FCTPO shall be the forum for cooperative decision-making by officials of local government, regional planning commission, regional transit authority and state officials representing state transportation agencies.

The MOU defines that the Franklin Regional Planning Board (FRPB) acts as an advisory board to the FRCOG in order to ensure that all decisions are considered within the context of comprehensive regional planning. The mission of the FRPB with regard to transportation planning is: to review all matters of policy affecting
the conduct of the region’s 3C transportation planning and programming process; to review recommendations of the FCTPO on such regional transportation work activities, plans, studies, project priorities and financial constraints as may be required for the effective operation of the FCTPO; and to provide maximum participation in the transportation planning and programming process by creating a forum and other opportunities to bring together officials of local government, public agencies, transportation providers, interest groups and residents for open dialogue and the exchange of views on current transportation issues. The composition of the FRPB includes a Select Board and Planning Board member designee from each town as well as 18 at-large members.

The FRCOG is, by state designation and consistent with applicable federal transportation laws, the primary transportation planning staff for the FCTPO and also serves as the principal source of transportation planning for local and regional transportation projects.

4. LEGISLATIVE MANDATE
On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU requires the involvement of the public in transportation planning and investment activities. On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). This legislation updates SAFETEA-LU and continues to emphasize public involvement in the transportation planning process. The purpose of the development of a Public Participation Plan is to ensure that the public is involved early in the transportation planning process by providing complete information, timely public notice, and full opportunity to participate in decision-making. The following Public Participation Plan is intended to provide for the continuing involvement of the public.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
This Public Participation Plan (PPP) provides the opportunity for interested parties to comment on the transportation planning that the FCTPO does for the region. The following are required by MAP-21:

- Make Regional Transportation Plans (RTP), Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP), Unified Planning Work Programs (UPWP), and other transportation studies available for public review in advance of board meetings where documents will be endorsed.
- The PPP should provide opportunities for the public to offer commentary, which should be scheduled at convenient and accessible places and times.
- The PPP must use visualization techniques. These techniques may vary, but can include maps, transportation models, and animation.
• Provide the RTP, TIP, UPWP, and other transportation studies in electronic format on the internet. These will be provided on the FRCOG website (www.frcog.org).

5.1 Public Participation Techniques
The FCTPO strives to ensure that the public can participate in transportation planning in Franklin County in an all-inclusive manner. To facilitate communication, the FCTPO typically conducts outreach with the public through one or more of the following methods:

- Local newspapers (press releases and legal notices)
- Local radio stations
- FRCOG website
- FRCOG social media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Newsletters
- Mailing and email lists
- Posters, display boards, and flyers
- Information stands at local events
- Presentations, public meetings, public hearings, open houses, and workshops
- Civic advisory groups and working groups

6. RESOURCE DOCUMENTS
The following is a description of planning documents that will be required to adhere to the PPP.

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
The RTP is required in the federal MAP-21 law, and is a comprehensive report, updated every four years, that identifies existing conditions, needs & issues, and opportunities for improving Franklin County’s transportation infrastructure. The infrastructure includes roadways, bridges, freight transport, public transportation, bike and pedestrian facilities, airports, tourist facilities such as scenic byways, sustainable energy opportunities, and intelligent transportation systems (ITS). The RTP also articulates the goals and objectives for future projects and programs to improve the system, and provides a 25-year fiscally constrained schedule for implementing the recommended improvements.

The draft RTP will be developed in consultation with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, environmental justice (EJ), disability serving agencies, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation, as well as with representatives of public transportation, freight transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and disabled populations. The draft will be made available for public review at least twenty-one days prior to the FCTPO endorsement. Copies will be made available at the FRCOG office, as well as in an electronic format on the FRCOG website (www.frcog.org). At least one public meeting will be held before the endorsement to solicit public
comments and questions, and visual aids such as maps, diagrams, photos, web-based survey techniques and powerpoint presentations will used, as appropriate, to help convey information about the Regional Transportation Plan and Planning process. Efforts will also be made to attend stakeholder meetings and make presentations. Legal notices will be placed in local newspapers to notify area residents of documents available for public review and notices will also be placed on the FRCOG website.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

This is the short-range transportation programming document covering 4 years that includes a prioritized listing of improvement projects (roads, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian, air quality improvement and transit projects) identified in the RTP that would utilize federal funding to implement. The TIP must be financially constrained and endorsed annually by the FCTPO.

The draft TIP will be developed in consultation with the members of the FCTPO, MassDOT, and the Federal Highway Administration. The draft will be made available for public review at least twenty-one days prior to the FCTPO endorsement unless extenuating circumstances necessitate a shorter timeframe. In such instances, the FCTPO may vote to confirm extenuating circumstances and shorten the public review time frame to fifteen days. Copies will be made available at the FRCOG office, as well as in an electronic format on the FRCOG website (www.frcog.org). At least one public meeting will be held before the endorsement to solicit public comments and questions, and visual aids such as maps, diagrams, photos, and powerpoint presentations will used, as appropriate, to help convey information about the Transportation Improvement Program and development process. Legal notices will be placed in local newspapers to notify area residents of documents available for public review notices will also be placed on the FRCOG website.

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The UPWP is a document that describes all of the transportation planning activities expected to be undertaken in the Franklin Region during the year. The UPWP is endorsed annually by the FCTPO, and is one of the federal requirements for a certified transportation planning process that is a prerequisite for the receipt of federal funding for transportation improvements for roads or transit in the region.

The draft UPWP is prepared with input from the members of the FCTPO, MassDOT, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Federal Highway Administration. The draft will be made available for public review at least twenty-one days prior to the FCTPO endorsement. Copies will be made available at the FRCOG office, as well as in an electronic format on the FRCOG website (www.frcog.org). At least one public meeting will be held before the endorsement to solicit public comments and questions, and visual aids such as maps, diagrams, photos, and powerpoint presentations will used, as appropriate,
to help convey information about the Unified Planning Work Program and development process. Legal notices will be placed in local newspapers to notify area residents of documents available for public review notices will also be placed on the FRCOG website.

**Transportation Planning Studies**

These studies are routinely undertaken by the FCTPO to address the goals and objectives stated in the RTP, and to provide required information and potential recommendations for the TIP. Funding for these studies can originate from the UPWP, but can also be provided through other sources, such as other grants. These studies can range from major in scope, such as a large transit study, to minor projects, such as park and ride lot vehicle counts.

Prior to beginning a transportation planning study, the FRCOG staff will assess each project as to the appropriate level of public engagement warranted. To do so, the staff will use the attached “FCTPO/FRCOG Title VI & LEP Public Participation Checklist” found in Appendix B to do the following:

- Conduct preliminary community research;
- Determine if there may be particular populations that would be impacted by the project or if there are any barriers to participation;
- Determine the stakeholders that should be involved; and
- Draft a strategic plan of engagement, as needed.

The completed Checklist will also provide documentation for each project that the FRCOG staff thoughtfully considered the level of public engagement necessary and conducted the appropriate outreach for the project.

7. **NOTIFICATION**

The FCTPO will be informed by the FRCOG staff at the beginning of the development of, or amendment to, the Regional Transportation Plan, TIP, UPWP, or transportation planning study, and will have an opportunity to provide comments on the scope and ways to involve the public in the process. At the time of notification, the FCTPO should discuss and approve the scheduling of future public meetings required as part of the public participation process.

8. **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Notices of meetings where these plans, programs and studies will be discussed will be made 14 days but not less than 48-hours in advance through the FRCOG office, and posted on the FRCOG’s website (www.frcog.org). In addition, legal notices will be placed in local newspapers announcing formal public review and comment periods as identified and required for documents. Notice for public meetings regarding changes to the Public Participation Plan will be posted 21 days prior to the meeting date.

The notice of meetings shall also be sent to all interested parties listed in the FCTPO’s and the FRPB’s mailing lists (contained at the end of this document).
9. ADVERTISEMENT
Advertisements announcing the twenty-one-day, or an approved shortened public review period as defined above, of draft copies of the RTP, TIP, UPWP, or transportation planning study, and the opportunity to review and comment on the document will be published in The Recorder local newspaper in Greenfield and the Athol Daily News in Athol.

Public notice of the approved public review period and availability of draft documents shall also be made on the FRCOG’s website (www.frcog.org).

10. REVIEW OF DRAFTS
There will be a twenty-one-day review period prior to the endorsement of the final RTP, TIP, UPWP, or transportation planning studies unless extenuating circumstances necessitate a shorter timeframe. In such instances, the FCTPO may vote to confirm extenuating circumstances and shorten the public review timeframe to fifteen days. In some instances, a longer timeframe may be required such as is the case with the Public Participation Plan that requires 45 days.

The members of FCTPO and FRPB shall receive electronic copies of the draft documents, or notice of the availability of the document for download. Hard copies will also be available upon request, or by making a standing request to the FCTPO staff (FRCOG) to always receive hard copies due to technology limitations or preference.

Copies of the drafts shall also be readily available to the general public at the FRCOG office or by request via telephone (413-774-3167), email (mrhodes@frcog.org), or fax (413-774-3169).

An electronic version of the draft will be made available on the FRCOG website (www.frcog.org) during the public review period.

At least one public meeting will be held when developing or amending the RTP, TIP, UPWP, or transportation planning study. The number of public meetings will be in proportion to the significance of the item under consideration.

If the public comments or interagency comments result in significant changes to the draft document, then a new twenty-one-day public review period will be announced. Written comments and a summary of changes to a draft document resulting from these will be made part of the final RTP, TIP, UPWP, or major transportation planning study, and presented to the FCTPO.

The FRCOG staff is available to meet with local officials or any other interested citizens to discuss or receive written comments on the RTP, TIP, UPWP or major transportation planning study.
11. LANGUAGE AND ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
The FCTPO will work to ensure that all members of the public can fully participate in the planning process regardless of language or disability. If members of the public require translation or accessibility assistance, they should contact FRCOG staff within a reasonable advance notice period (usually two weeks or 10 business days), so that staff can ensure that FCTPO meetings and written documents are accessible. To request accessibility or language accommodation for any FCTPO meeting or for written documents, the contact will be the FRCOG Title VI Coordinator at 413-774-3167 (voice), 413-774-3169 (fax), or mrhodes@frcog.org (email). FRCOG Staff will continually update its Language Implementation Plan and Four Factor Analysis to monitor language needs in Franklin County, particularly in advance of public outreach events.

12. TITLE VI AND ADA PROTOCOLS, POLICIES, AND RESOURCES
The FCTPO strives to safeguard the ability and opportunity of all citizens to participate in the transportation planning process. To assist in this effort, the FCTPO has adopted Chapter 3 of MassDOT’s Public Participation Plan\(^1\) as part of its own Public Participation Plan within this Section 12 and modified it for regional application. This section sets forth civil rights protocol for public meetings, hearings, and public engagement, and the like. The FCTPO will follow this protocol, as adapted to the Franklin County region.

The civil rights protocols set forth in this document are a baseline for holding inclusive, accessible and responsive public meetings, hearings and the like. There are two primary sections. Section 12.1 contains protocols and resources for ensuring diversity and inclusivity in public engagement. Section 12.2 contains protocols and resources for ensuring the accessibility of FCTPO’s transportation planning public activities. These efforts are related and appropriate references are made between these sections, as needed.

12.1 Civil Rights Protocols for Public Engagement
The FCTPO and FRCOG planning staff conduct and participate in unique types of meetings and hearings within the course of their day to day operations. These Protocols have been designed with the intention of supporting and not supplanting the basic form and structure of existing operations. Further, these Protocols will provide links, resources and contacts for the purpose of achieving public engagement that is compliant with civil rights law. The obligation to comply with these Protocols begins with the person(s) responsible for organizing and/or conducting the meeting or hearing.

\(^1\) MassDOT Public Participation Plan, May 14, 2014.  
https://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights/TitleVI.aspx
These Protocols include steps and strategies to implement prior to holding a public meeting or other such activity and during the course of the public process. Due to the varied nature of FCTPO’s engagement with the public, it is not the intention within these Protocols to include all required actions specific to varying stages of the planning process, or varying departmental standard operation procedures. However, where a staff member encounters a difficult public involvement situation, he/she is advised to contact the Title VI Specialist to identify strategies and alternatives to address such situations.

Similarly, these Protocols should not be woodenly applied to every meeting/hearing. Meetings should be tailored to the special needs of the community, and/or the target audience and subject matter to be addressed. Effective public participation from a civil rights perspective includes awareness of the local population (demographics) or individuals to be engaged, including languages spoken, represented cultural groups, community organizations and leaders and key players. Equally critical to an effective meeting are well communicated (effectively circulated across types of media, and translated when needed) and timely notices, early response, and coordination on requests for language assistance for limited English proficient individuals or reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities.

Federal nondiscrimination obligations, through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), reach the categories of race, color, national origin (including LEP), age, sex, and disability. These protocols are designed to ensure that sufficient consideration of outreach to and inclusion of these groups is incorporated into the FCTPO's public engagement procedures. Adherence to these protocols will also sufficiently address State-level nondiscrimination obligations.

While the following protocols endeavor to highlight specific resources where available, past experience with the public can and should be considered a resource to identify individual and community needs, including civil rights related considerations such as language assistance needs, accessibility accommodations and inclusive public participation. Please use these Protocols as a guide and use good professional judgment in the decisions you make as you implement them.

12.1.1 Civil Rights Protocols by Type of Public Engagement
The following represent the four types of public engagement most commonly encountered by FRCOG planning staff:

- Meetings for the general public
- Targeted outreach gatherings

State level protections include the federal protections plus ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, veteran’s status (including Vietnam-era veterans), and background.
• Open houses
• One-on-one interactions

An introduction to each of these four types of public engagement is provided below. Familiarity with the following descriptions will help inform the user on how they should navigate the protocols set forth in this document.

Meetings for the General Public
Public meetings and hearings, both at the project level and more broadly, are an opportunity for members of the public to engage in the transportation decision making process. The civil rights considerations described in this section are designed to inform and guide all FRCOG planning staff involved in planning and conducting such events. Incorporation of these processes and utilization of these resources when planning or participating in public meetings/hearings will help ensure that these events are Title VI compliant.

Open Houses
FRCOG staff and consultants regularly interact with members of the public through “open house” sessions prior to meetings/hearings. These sessions afford members of the public an opportunity to view plans for projects that will be discussed at the formal public outreach event. FRCOG staff and consultants are on hand to discuss particular details of interest with members of the public. While the interactions during these sessions are informal, critical issues are often raised. FRCOG staff and consultants strive to address these issues accurately and effectively during these sessions. [Practice Tip: Some attendees choose to forego the meeting/hearing satisfied with the information gained or with the opportunity to express concerns at the open house session.] Due to the direct nature of interaction with members of the public at these open houses, there exist civil rights risk factors. These risks can be mitigated by adhering to the principles outlined in this section.

Targeted Outreach Gatherings
At times, the complexity of a project, controversial issues, or the reality of having multiple large Title VI groups to address may require engaging targeted audiences of stakeholders. Similarly, the FRCOG planning staff may at times convene selected people within advisory committees, research efforts, focus groups and the like. The general work of understanding the demographics of people in a locality or project area still apply to determine what Title VI groups are impacted by an initiative, as described above. However, there may be a need to include strong and possibly visible community leaders within Title VI populations; this can require more subtle and challenging efforts to secure their participation and needed contribution to discussions or deliberations.

One-on-One Interactions
FRCOG planning staff members interact directly with the public by virtue of the public facing programs, services, and activities the organization provides. These interactions can include planned meetings, such as those with property and
business owners directly impacted by transportation projects, and spontaneous interactions with members of the public. These interactions, whether in person, over the phone, or electronic, present particular civil rights related risk factors that can be mitigated.

12.1.2 Meetings for the General Public

12.1.2.1 Preliminary/Ongoing Considerations

1) Identify the population and composition of the individuals/communities impacted by the FCTPO activity by considering the following:
   a. Project parameters, such as location, areas that will be impacted by construction phases, areas that may benefit from the completed project, and the areas that may be burdened by the completed project
   b. The nature of the program, service, or activity (is it connected to the project development process? is it regional or local?)

2) Determine the Title VI features of the community to be engaged by reference to FRCOG’s Title VI maps. Consult the following maps and additional resources.
   a. MassDOT LEP Maps
      http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/0/docs/CivilRights/TitleVI/fta_lap/FTA_LAP_AppendixB.pdf
   b. FRCOG Minority Populations Map. N:\FRCOG PLANS\3C Plans\Transportation Equity Analysis 2015_FINAL US Census Bureau Language Mapper
   c. MassDOT Public Engagement Online Tool
      http://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/maptemplate/languagetracts
      (please note this tool is still in beta)

3) Identify key Title VI-related and other community based organizations and community leaders. [Practice Tip: You may already have well established connections with individuals and groups throughout the Commonwealth. You are encouraged to continue reaching out to those. These instructions provide you with steps to identify previously unknown points of contact to diversify outreach.] There are several approaches meeting planners can take to accomplish this step including:
a. Use the FCTPO Community Contact List that lists community contacts by affiliation. P:\Library\Title VI Documents.

b. Use the Civil Rights “GovDelivery” database that has been developed through IT, and codes organizations by e-mail, county.

112.1.2.2 Meeting Location and Time

1) Title VI Considerations

a. Consult with community leaders and community based organizations to identify any aspects of the community which may be central in determining the time and location of the public engagement activity. [Practice Tip: These individuals can help you understand the cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, and political histories/experiences of the demographic groups in the locale to better inform meeting planning.]

b. Consider factors such as cultural sensitivities and/or professional and academic commitments in setting the number of meetings. Multiple meetings can be held at various locations and times if doing so promotes meaningful access to the public engagement opportunity.

c. Where possible, select a meeting location near public transportation options. [Practice Tip: A general rule of thumb is within ½ mile walking distance.]

2) ADA Considerations

a. Identify a venue for the public meeting that is ADA compliant and accessible to people with disabilities.

i. MassDOT maintains an Accessible Facilities Database that contains updated information regarding venues that have been previously assessed for ADA compliance. Note: the database is currently being incorporated into MassDOT’s Public Engagement Online Tool (http://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/maptemplate/languagetaracts)

b. If an appropriate venue cannot be identified, the following resources can identify public meeting venues that may be accessible:

i. The Massachusetts Office on Disability http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/
ii. The Disability Commissions

iii. The Independent Living Centers
   http://www.masilc.org/membership/cils

c. Take the opportunity afforded by early communication with venue staff to identify pre-existing accessibility accommodations, such as assistive listening devices and Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) equipment. [Practice Tip: Even though you don’t know if such devices will be needed yet, this is a good opportunity to take stock of what is available should the need arise.] The need for these accommodations will be addressed in Section 2.1.4, below.

d. For a full treatment regarding ADA obligations in the public outreach context, consult the Accessible Meeting Policy in Section 12.2 below or online at: http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/0/docs/CivilRights/ADA/Attachment_13.pdf. The policy enumerates ADA obligations in the public meeting context and provides a checklist for holding an ADA accessible public meeting. [Practice Tip: If you are planning on using a venue for the first time, this checklist can help you verify its accessibility.]

12.1.2.3 Coordinating Public Notice

1) Draft the public meeting notice document, either utilizing existing approved templates or creating a new one, ensuring that the following civil rights related components are included:
   a. Notice of Nondiscrimination
   b. Availability of language services and reasonable accommodations
   c. Contact information and procedures for requesting the above services, additional information, or to express a concern
   d. International Symbol of Accessibility

2) Public meeting notices must be accessible. For guidance, please refer to the FRCOG Accessible Print Design Standards and Guidance, June 2014 (P:\Tools\Accessible Templates). [Practice Tip: Since public meeting notices are disseminated in a variety of ways, including physical postings, website postings, and email blasts, it is important that the appropriate font and font size be
used and that the electronic document be compatible for use with screen readers.]

3) Address language needs and utilize non-English language outreach resources in the dissemination area if individuals who have limited proficiency in English are present.

   a. Refer to the FRCOG Language Implementation Plan in order to determine if there are sites with a strong presence of individuals who have limited proficiency in English (transportation facilities, community centers, libraries, commercial/employment/educational establishments, places of worship, cultural centers, etc.) that may be effective in communicating notice to individuals who have limited proficiency in English. [Practice Tip: The reason you are identifying these resources first is to know what services actually exist to provide translated materials to.] Consider also consulting the other following resources:

      i. MassDOT Office of Diversity and Civil Rights
         http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx
      ii. Community Leaders
      iii. Regional Transit Agencies (RTAs)
         http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/17/docs/MapCatalog/Maps/RTAs-Statewide.pdf
      iv. Public Libraries
         http://www.publiclibraries.com/massachusetts.htm
      v. Schools/Universities
      vi. Chambers of Commerce
         http://masshome.com/cofc.html
      vii. Local Legislators

   b. Develop translated version(s) of the notice document or other related announcements, as needed, based on the extent of LEP need and available media sources. [Practice Tip: If you've identified a large population of individuals who are LEP in the meeting or project locale, consider translating the meeting notice in full. If you are less likely to encounter individuals who are LEP, you can consider including the single line of text into the languages other than English you may encounter.] This could include:

      i. Full translation of the notice into the languages indicated
ii. The inclusion of the following statement translated into the appropriate languages into the English language version of the notice:

1. “This notice describes the date, time, and location of a public meeting or hearing on a transportation project in this area. If you need this notice translated, contact FRCOG’s Title VI Specialist at 413-774-3167.”

iii. Translated versions of print, TV, radio, and online announcements related to the meeting, as applicable.

c. Consult the following resources for translation needs:

i. UMass Translation Center

1. Request Procedure:
   http://www.umasstranslation.com/services/request-an-estimate/

2. Rates:
   http://www.umasstranslation.com/services/rates/

ii. Statewide Language Services Contract


   a. Entities eligible to utilize this contract:

   i. Cities, towns, districts, counties and other political subdivisions;

   ii. Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, including all Departments and elected offices therein;

   iii. Independent public authorities, commissions and quasi-public agencies;

   iv. Local public libraries, public school districts and charter schools;

   v. Public hospitals, owned by the Commonwealth;

   vi. Public institutions of high education;
vii. Public purchasing cooperatives;

viii. Non-profit, UFR-certified organizations that are doing business with the Commonwealth;

ix. Other states and territories with no prior approval by the State Purchasing Agent required; and

x. Other entities when designated in writing by the State Purchasing Agent.

4) The final dissemination of public notice should incorporate the following:

a. The dissemination of public notice has occurred sufficiently in advance of meeting to ensure adequate processing time for language and accessibility accommodation requests. [Practice Tip: Distributing notice three weeks in advance of a public engagement opportunity is generally regarded as appropriate, with two weeks or 10 business days considered the minimum limit for reasonable notice.]

b. The public notice/announcement materials have been delivered to non-English language outreach resources and sites previously identified in the Language Implementation Plan.

c. The public notice has been delivered directly to individuals, organizations, and other stakeholders that represent Title VI populations in the region. You should consider sending notice to the entities below with the instruction that they forward the notice among their own distribution lists and/or post it.

i. MassDOT Office of Diversity and Civil Rights
   http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx

ii. Community Leaders

iii. Regional Transit Agencies (RTAs)
   http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/17/docs/MapCatalog/Maps/RTAs-Statewide.pdf

iv. Public Libraries
   http://www.publiclibraries.com/massachusetts.htm
v. Schools/Universities

vi. Chambers of Commerce
    http://masshome.com/cofc.html

vii. Local Legislators

### 112.1.2.4 Preparation for the Meeting

1) While preparing for the meeting, consider the following questions:
   (1) Are there civil rights implications in the background/history of the project? (2) What public involvement has already been accomplished and did it illuminate civil rights concerns? and (3) What are the known benefits and burdens of the FCTPO program, service, or activity on Title VI populations? Consult the following resources:
   - Public meeting/hearing transcripts
   - Written public comments
   - FRCOG staff involved in planning and/or conducting prior related meetings

2) Meeting planners should maintain an ongoing dialogue with the individuals and organizations previously identified in order to remain well informed on the level of community interest and likely involvement in the public outreach event.

3) The subject matter of transportation-related public engagement can often be based on highly technical studies, project designs that address difficult engineering requirements, multi-faceted long range plans, and other complex documents. In such instances, project managers and meeting planners should create summary documents to present complex information in as simple and clear manner as possible to members of the public who have widely varying backgrounds, including varied education levels. This guidance document produced by the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center gives pointers on writing effective executive summaries of highly technical documents
   http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/environmental-programs/risk-communication/Appendix_E_AGuideToWritingAnEffectiveExecutiveSummary.pdf. The key points and tips, such as avoiding industry jargon, replacing complex words with simple words, and using acronyms carefully, apply not only to the development of
executive summaries, but also the development of documents that effectively convey information to the public.

4) Similarly to #3 above, any spoken presentation of complex topics should be as simple as possible to effectively communicate the subject matter across the varying background of meeting attendees. The guidance document below describes good strategies for presenting technical information to nontechnical audiences. [Practice Tip: Adobe Acrobat Professional and Microsoft Word have built-in “accessibility checkers.”] This applies to documents produced by FRCOG staff as well as consultants. Consult the following for instructions on developing accessible documents:

a. Best practices for text and color contrast considerations when preparing hardcopy and electronic visual aids (such as maps, posters, plans, PowerPoint templates/graphics, charts, graphs, etc.) http://li129-107.members.linode.com/accessibility/design/accessible-print-design/


f. General information on accessibility from Adobe: http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/

5) Ensure that electronic documents related to the subject of the public meeting and intended for public dissemination and review are accessible, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
g. Adobe Acrobat X Accessibility Guide:

h. Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro Accessibility Guide:

i. Video on preparing accessible InDesign files:
   http://tv.adobe.com/watch/accessibility-adobe/preparing-indesign-files-for-accessibility/

6) The period between notice dissemination and the meeting date should be used to identify and arrange accommodations and produce meeting materials in alternate languages and formats (such as Braille and large-print), if requested.

   a. Alternate formats can be obtained by contacting:
      i. Massachusetts Office on Disability
         http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/

   b. The nature and extent of accommodations that may be needed can be identified through the following:
      i. Direct requests
      ii. Past experiences, both within the community and at specific meeting locations which can include previously encountered reasonable accommodation and language service requests
      iii. An understanding of community demographics
      iv. Feedback from community leaders, CBOs, stakeholders, advocacy groups, etc.

   c. Foreign language document translation can be provided by:
      i. UMass Translation Center
         1. Request Procedure:
            http://www.umasstranslation.com/services/request-an-estimate/
         2. Rates:
            http://www.umasstranslation.com/services/rates/
ii. Statewide Language Services Contract

1. Search COMMBUYS website
   [https://www.commbuys.com/bs0/](https://www.commbuys.com/bs0/) for contract “PRF48”

   a. Entities eligible to utilize this contract:
   
   i. Cities, towns, districts, counties and other political subdivisions;
   
   ii. Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, including all Departments and elected offices therein;
   
   iii. Independent public authorities, commissions and quasi-public agencies;
   
   iv. Local public libraries, public school districts and charter schools;
   
   v. Public hospitals, owned by the Commonwealth;
   
   vi. Public institutions of high education;
   
   vii. Public purchasing cooperatives;
   
   viii. Non-profit, UFR-certified organizations that are doing business with the Commonwealth;
   
   ix. Other states and territories with no prior approval by the State Purchasing Agent required; and
   
   x. Other entities when designated in writing by the State Purchasing Agent.

   d. To obtain accessibility accommodations not provided by the venue (Section 2.1.2 §§ 2; c), contact:

   i. MassDOT Facilities

       1. Phone: (857) 368-9560
       
   2. Email: dotgeneralservices@dot.state.ma.us
ii. Massachusetts Office on Disability  
http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/

e. If unsure how to provide a particular accommodation or for guidance on recommended accommodations, consult:

i. MassDOT Office of Diversity and Civil Rights  
http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx

ii. The Massachusetts Office on Disability  
http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/

iii. The Disability Commissions

iv. The Independent Living Centers  
http://www.masilc.org/membership/cils

f. Funding Considerations

i. All accommodations must be provided to the public free of charge.

12.1.2.5 Meeting Set-Up

1) ADA considerations in public outreach are fully articulated in the Accessible Meeting Policy in Section 12.2 below and online at:  
http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/0/docs/CivilRights/ADA/Attachment_13.pdf. Meeting setup is addressed in the “Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners” which should be used in order to verify the following:

a. If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is the accessible entrance unlocked?

b. Are there integrated seating areas for individuals who use a wheeled mobility device in the meeting room? [Practice Tip: Seating areas for individuals with disabilities should not be segregated from the rest of the audience or limited to just one area.]

c. Is there seating available for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, and have requested an accommodation, near the front of the meeting room so that attendees may see the interpreter/captioner, or lip read?

d. Is the space allotted to sign language interpreters and/or the CART screen or monitor clearly visible?
e. Are the aisles at least three feet wide and clear of obstacles or tripping hazards?

f. If microphones are used during the public meeting, are adjustable microphone stands available for attendees? Can staff be used as floaters with microphones as an alternative?

g. If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is there directional signage towards the accessible entrance?

h. Is the accessible entrance unlocked and able to be used independently? If the meeting is taking place at night, is the path leading to the alternate entrance well lit?

i. If a stage or platform will be used during the public meeting, is it accessible?

j. If a podium will be used during the public meeting, is the podium height adjustable? If not, is there a small table (between 28 and 34 inches in height) provided to the side of the podium?

k. Have assistive devices been tested for full functionality immediately prior to the start of the event?

l. Is there directional signage for accessible restrooms and/or emergency exits, if applicable?

2) Title VI considerations can be addressed through the following:

a. Based on identified or likely-to-be-encountered language needs, has signage in other languages been posted?

b. Is the space allotted to foreign language interpreters clearly visible to the entire audience?

c. Has space been given to foreign language interpreters to sit with individuals who need language assistance?

d. Have Title VI related materials been made available at the welcome desk and/or in the meeting packet? [Practice Tip: Assistance is provided at the welcome desk, paying special attention to indications that meeting attendees may have literacy or non-English speaking issues.] This should include:

i. “I speak” language cards

ii. Translated versions of the written comment form, as applicable
12.1.2.6 During the Meeting

1) At the official start of the meeting, make the following statements. If a foreign language translator(s) is present, instruct them to repeat.
   a. (Insert language here when finalized by Title VI Working Group, address: general statement regarding nondiscrimination and availability of language and accessibility accommodations, including assistance in providing written comments and/or filing in forms)
   b. Include instructions on site-specific accessibility considerations, such as accessible emergency exits.
   c. 

2) FCTPO is required to “demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input” (23 CFR 450.210). During a public outreach event, this requires affording attendees with opportunities to voice comments, questions, and concerns and provide an adequate response at the event or by following up in writing or at subsequent public outreach opportunities. [Practice Tip: All FRCOG staff in attendance at open houses and similar informal meetings should take written note of any oral comments made by the public during the meeting and during one-on-one interactions and give this information to the Project Manager as part of post-meeting follow up.]

12.1.2.7 Post Meeting

1) All public comments (written and oral), testimonials, and sentiments expressed during the public outreach event have been gathered/documented by FRCOG staff that attended the meeting and passed on to the Project Manager (or designee). [Practice Tip: This can be accomplished through in-person debriefing sessions following the meeting or reviewing the meeting transcript, if available.]

2) Once received, the Project Manager (or designee) catalogues all public comments.

3) The Project Manager is responsible for coordinating responses to public comments. [Practice Tip: Remember: direct impacts require direct communication. 23 CFR 450.210]
   a. Methods of responses can include:
      i. Individualized written responses
      ii. General distribution written statements (web, email, newsletter, newspaper, etc.)
iii. Postings to project specific website, if available

iv. In-person or telephonic follow-ups with individuals/organizations regarding the topics of discussion at the public outreach event [Practice Tip: The protocols and tips found in Section 2.4 regarding one-on-one interactions can help you eliminate communication barriers you may encounter.]

4) In instances where the FCTPO will draft a written response to a public comment, the content of the response itself can “demonstrate explicit consideration” by:

   a. Describing changes to the recommendations prompted/requested by the comment and how they will be considered

   b. Describing alternate recommendations prompted/requested by the comment and how they will be considered

   c. Describing mitigation measures prompted/requested by the comment and how they will be considered

   d. Describing the resources that were consulted in formulating the response

   e. Noting whether the comment is novel or previously encountered

   f. Noting whether the comment has been received from a multitude of sources

5) Responses should also contain:

   a. Contact information for additional information and follow-up

   b. Notice of upcoming related public engagement opportunities

6) The Project Manager should note civil rights considerations encountered through the planning and conducting of the outreach event, such as translation requests or foreign languages encountered. The community leaders previously identified should be thanked for their assistance/efforts with a call or written correspondence.

12.1.3 Open Houses

12.1.3.1 Title VI Considerations

1) “I Speak” language cards have been provided at the welcome desk. http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf

FCTPO Public Participation Plan
2) If the FCTPO is providing interpretive services at the public meeting/hearing session, then they should also be available during the open house session and their availability should be made clear through signage and/or announcements. [Practice Tip: Those running the meeting should ask interpreters to announce their presence and the availability of their services several times during the open house.]

3) After the session, FRCOG staff and consultants in attendance should relay the nature of questions and concerns identified through interaction with the public to the Project Manager (or designee). [Practice Tip: It is important for FRCOG staff working on all stages of a project to know community concerns. Sometimes these are made evident during informal open house interactions. Just because they don’t make it onto a public hearing transcript doesn’t mean we don’t have an obligation to be aware of them and respond accordingly.]

4) Written descriptions of items on display may need to be translated depending on requests received and/or the anticipated level of LEP participation.

12.1.3.2 ADA Considerations

1) The open house should be set up in an ADA compliant manner. Please see the MassDOT Accessible Meeting Policy in Section 12.2 below or online at: http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Portals/0/docs/CivilRights/ADA/Attachment_13.pdf

2) Consider the following when setting up the open house venue:
   a. Consult the following guide on best practices for text and color contrast considerations when preparing hardcopy and electronic visual aids (such as maps, posters, plans, PowerPoint templates/graphics, charts, graphs, etc.) http://lin129-107.members.linode.com/accessibility/design/accessible-print-design/ [Practice Tip: Choose color schemes that are least likely to be problematic for individuals with common types of color blindness and visual impairments.]
   b. Pathways that guide attendees to display materials or FRCOG staff and consultants should be clear of obstructions. [Practice Tip: Rule of Thumb: remove tripping hazards (such as electrical cords) and keep the pathway at least 3’ wide.]
   c. Proper heights and viewing angles of display materials to make them accessible. [Practice Tip: Rules of Thumb: For
display materials mounted on the wall, they should be no higher than 48" from the floor and provide clear floor space 30" wide and 48" wide. For tabletop displays, the table should be between 28 and 34" inches in height and there should be at least 27" of knee space from the floor to the underside of the table.)

d. Horizontal surfaces used for display should be at a height accessible to individuals that are short of stature and/or rely on assistive mobility devices.

e. Similarly, materials displayed vertically should not be at an excessive height nor at an angle that makes them difficult to view.

3) FRCOG staff and consultants should be prepared to describe displays to blind or visually impaired attendees.

4) Alternate versions (Braille, large print, etc.) of public documents (such as informational packets) should be available if requested.

12.1.4 Targeted Outreach Gatherings (Small Group Meetings/Committees/Task Forces/Studies)

12.1.4.1 Strategic Planning for Title VI Group and Individual Inclusion

Strategic planning for the involvement of Title VI community members on special purpose meeting groups or committees is essential to an inclusive and successful effort. Engaging the public in a targeted context is complex, political and always challenging, and ensuring diverse participation adds even more difficulty to meeting this objective.

Preliminary Steps:

1) Identify and analyze the location affected by the project or initiative at issue to determine the Title VI populations in the area.

2) Establish a clear objective and role for the envisioned targeted group, including the nature of community involvement and particular skills which may be needed for fruitful discussion or deliberations.

3) Create an outline or public participation matrix to identify the different types of community representation and interests that reflect the community affected by a project or initiative with careful attention to Title VI populations. Types of organizations or interests that may include representatives of Title VI populations:

   a. transit-dependent community
   b. affected businesses
   c. civic organizations (women, seniors, youth, people with disabilities)
Beyond demographic data and identification of the types of Title VI related groups or individuals in the community, there are certain key questions to help define the individuals or groups to invite. Consider meeting with a small group of internal staff and/or managers from among key FRCOG departments who know the community and who can help answer these key questions:

1) Who can represent these diverse groups and constituencies in a credible and responsible way?

2) Who needs to be at the table for the work to be accomplished?

3) What is the history of relationships between stakeholder representatives and groups? Is there any past tension that may be a deterrent to participation? If so, are there other community leaders who could help mediate to encourage participation despite differences?

4) If known from past experience, are there stakeholders critical to the process who may be reluctant to participate? How can this reluctance be alleviated? What would be the impact of their refusal to participate in the process? Is there an alternative to their participation?

5) What commitments do you want from participants?

6) Other than known stakeholders, what other individuals or groups could have an interest in the project that are not in the immediate project area, and/or are not otherwise represented in the outreach strategy?

7) Do any necessary parties have possible concerns about participating? How can those concerns be alleviated?

8) Do you have natural allies on an issue? Natural adversaries?

12.1.4.4 Conduct Targeted Research on the Leads you Gather

Conduct a Google-type search on the communities involved and the groups and individuals who have been identified. This effort is potentially time consuming, but will both educate the meeting convener and potentially identify “landmines” that could complicate the effort to organize a group.
Tip: In carrying out this task, it is useful to limit searches which can be done through linking key words to a query such as a year, a past issue or individual words like “bio,” “biography,” “background,” “transportation,” “complaint” and the like.

If a meeting planner is not aware of the racial, ethnic or national origin background of the individual or group being engaged, it is similarly possible to research Title VI groups individually, using query strings to the group or individuals and Massachusetts, the regional area or the locality where the group or individual is based. This information is useful in gaining a basic understanding of traditions and holidays which may impact participation, through to a more thorough understanding of complex considerations like values, beliefs and relationship to government and/or transportation.

12.1.4.5 Reaching out to Potential Title VI Group Members – Anticipating Potential Obstacles to Participation

1) Outreach approaches:

i. Look for formal and informal opportunities to engage, collaborate, and build relationships, including calls of introduction made by volunteers you identify who are trusted in the community.

ii. Use multiple outreach methods and do not rely on e-mail or websites alone

iii. Tailor materials to the audience, including translations

iv. Identify existing channels of communication through communities

v. Experiment and reflect on the effectiveness of new approaches

In Title VI communities, there are a range of factors leading to reluctance to participate for individuals and groups that could be helpful in a transportation planning or development process. For example, many times natural leaders are either the heads or well-placed leaders of agencies or community groups; this limits their ability to participate because there are many demands on their time, resources and commitment.

2) Think through and identify the factors which would encourage participation and involvement before reaching out, to be in the best position to explain how it is important for this individual or group to participate. If there is a possibility of grant funding to support participating groups, this can certainly provide an
incentive for participation, but such ideas should only be shared if the possibility is real.

3) The following are some common barriers to participation, and reasonable responses that a meeting planner should anticipate, understand and be able to articulate to encourage potential participants to get involved:

   a. **Limited English language skills and/or limited literacy** – it is first important to know that FRCOG has the ability and obligation to fund translation and interpretation support and to convey this message. It would be ideal to have a colleague or staff person who speaks the language or is of the culture in question to support the outreach effort, or to use a translator as an intermediary.

   b. **Lack of trust due to past experiences** - it is important to be in a position to respond with as much information as will demonstrate that both participation and the project are being honestly and openly addressed.

   c. **Lack of experience with transportation decision making processes** – if this process is not well understood or the meeting convener has a difficult time explaining the process, it is important to have a representative from Planning involved to explain the process.

   d. **Economic barriers** – (such as transportation costs and work schedules) meetings should be sited in the community to avoid cost factors, and they should be timed to meet the schedule of the majority of participants, after due consideration of all schedules, alternatives and needs.

   e. **Cultural barriers** – there may be intergroup dynamics that make bringing groups together problematic due to class, racial ethnic or political differences. Early research will help build understanding of this possibility, and suggest whether a mediated way of bringing the groups together is an option, or there is a need to have separate meetings.

   f. **Common barriers** – time, other demands. The key to this element is making sure that the importance of an effort is clear and well stated to the candidate, including the benefit to an individual or group representative being recruited.

**12.1.4.6 Responding to a Refusal to Participate from a Potential Title VI Participant**

1) If a person or group declines to participate in a particular effort, it is important not to get frustrated but instead to handle the refusal
diplomatically because that same group might be the subject of an outreach effort in the future, and may wish to participate on another occasion.

2) In responding to a decision not to participate, thank the person or group for considering the invitation and suggest that they might accept an invitation for a different opportunity in the future. In this way, no feelings are hurt, doors are left open and the person or group remains feeling that they are valued in the future.

3) Consider sending the individual or organizations updates on the effort that are sent to others. This effort could be informative and demonstrate a good faith effort to be inclusive.

**12.1.4.7 Documenting the Effort to Achieve Diversity and Next Steps**

It may be impossible to achieve a perfectly diverse committee for purposes of transportation planning, given the difficulty of recruitment and obstacles to participation. Simply put, the concept of diversity in transportation planning is elastic - it will change based on the geographic location, the issue under study or discussion or the nature of the need for input. Nonetheless, our federal partners, and even community members will expect to know about our efforts and may wish to question whether the FCTPO truly conducted outreach for Title VI inclusion purposes. For Title VI purposes, this documentation is good evidence of the opportunity that was given to the public, such that complaints after the fact about the lack of inclusion can be responded to. Our Title VI obligation requires us to provide an equal opportunity to participate in transportation planning exercises and ultimately, it is an exercise in trying and proving that the FCTPO has been thoughtful and reached out effectively to increase diversity in our community engagement.

For purposes of proving that an outreach effort was genuine and reached out to diverse communities, there are steps that the meeting convener or planner should take:

1) The meeting planner should keep a file on available resources and methods used to identify individuals and groups, the nature of the outreach effort, the people invited and the results of a recruitment effort. Possible resources:
   a. Lists of potential invitees who were considered and/or accepted
   b. Samples of research conducted and/or consultations made for recruitment
   c. Copies of invitation e-mails or other correspondence
   d. Group membership lists, with indications of the Title VI communities represented
   e. Meeting sign in sheets
f. Correspondence from invited individuals

2) The meeting planner should make the list of actual participants easily available and strive to secure a means for the public to reach out to these individuals should they have questions, comments or concerns that they may not be willing to air publicly.

3) Meeting planners should plan to discuss with the members of the group that is ultimately recruited the efforts made to reach out and recruit individuals, including the potential need that may remain after the fact for additional participation by certain Title VI group members or related organizations.

4) Effective management of the group that is ultimately formed is key to the productivity and longevity of relationships with Title VI community members. Following-through with stakeholders to demonstrate that input was considered and/or had an impact on project parameters, study outcomes, and planned activities can demonstrate to participants the value added to their interests and communities through continued involvement in these activities.

12.1.5 One-on-One Interactions

12.1.5.1 Communicating with Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

If a member of the public is attempting to interact with you but there is a language barrier, the following procedures are recommended based on the types of interactions.

1) In-person

   a. The first step is to identify the preferred language of the individual. The following resources are available:


      ii. Google Translate ([http://translate.google.com/](http://translate.google.com/)) or a similar real-time free online language translator can be used to identify the language. [Practice Tip: If the member of the public is directed to type (or speak into the computer's microphone, if available) on the webpage in a language other than English, the software can "Auto-Detect" which language is being used and provide real-time translations. Please note that the accuracy and effectiveness of these translation systems is not complete and should not be relied on as an exclusive means of providing language access to LEP individuals.]
b. Once the language has been identified, the methods you use to address the needs of the individual will change depending on the circumstances.

i. You may be able to address simple inquiries informally on-the-spot with the aid of multi-lingual staff or Google Translate (http://translate.google.com/) or a similar product. [Example: providing directions around the building/office to an LEP individual.]

1. Identify a co-worker that can assist. [Practice Tip: Assisting in this way is purely voluntary and the nature of the communication should be incidental.]

2. 

   P:\Library\Title VI Documents An employee and an LEP individual can type or speak into Google Translate software and carry out a rudimentary conversation. This should remain limited to incidental interactions.

ii. If the conversation turns to more complex issues or you have reached the limitations of the technology or your knowledge of the subject at issue, the FRCOG staffer providing informal translations or Google Translate should inform them that professional language services are available that may be better suited to meeting their need. More complex issues may require professional translators/interpreters. [Example: An LEP individual who needs assistance to engage in the complaint resolution process or to participate in a program, service, or activity] Complex issues are those that affect the legal rights of the individual and therefore depend on the accuracy of translations/interpretations. The following services are available in those instances:

1. (Note: MassDOT is currently procuring the services of a firm that will be providing telephonic real-time interpretation. When finalized, that information will be included here for use in this context.)

2. Statewide Language Services Contract
a. Search COMMBUYS website [https://www.commbuys.com/bso/] for contract “PRF48”

b. Entities eligible to utilize this contract:
   
   i. Cities, towns, districts, counties and other political subdivisions;
   
   ii. Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, including all Departments and elected offices therein;
   
   iii. Independent public authorities, commissions and quasi-public agencies;
   
   iv. Local public libraries, public school districts and charter schools;
   
   v. Public hospitals, owned by the Commonwealth;
   
   vi. Public institutions of high education;
   
   vii. Public purchasing cooperatives;
   
   viii. Non-profit, UFR-certified organizations that are doing business with the Commonwealth;
   
   ix. Other states and territories with no prior approval by the State Purchasing Agent required; and
   
   x. Other entities when designated in writing by the State Purchasing Agent.

iii. Should you require time to secure professional language services (such as scheduling a meeting with an interpreter or sending out documents to be translated) then you should try to make this clear to the individual on-the-spot with the aid of multi-lingual staff or Google Translate. [Practice Tip: Using Google Translate to convey this information allows you to include details such as expected turnaround times, meeting dates and locations, and contact information.]

2) Over the Phone

   a. If you are able to identify the language of the caller and you can identify a co-worker that can assist.
b. If you are unable to identify the language of the caller and/or there is no coworker that can assist, contact (Note: MassDOT is currently procuring the services of a firm that will be providing telephonic real-time interpretation. When finalized, that information will be included here for use in this context.)

3) Electronically (includes email, website comment form, etc.)

a. If you receive such correspondence in a language other than English, use Google Translate (http://translate.google.com/) or similar product to determine the language and nature of the interaction

b. Once the language and the nature of the interaction has been identified, the methods you use to address the needs of the individual will change depending on the circumstances.

   i. You may be able to address simple inquires informally with the aid of multi-lingual staff or Google Translate (http://translate.google.com/) or a similar product. [Example: emailing a link to requested web content.]

   ii. If the conversation turns to more complex issues or you have reached the limitations of the technology or your knowledge of the subject at issue, the FRCOG staffer providing informal translations or Google Translate should inform them that professional language services are available that may be better suited to meeting their need. More complex issues may require professional translators/interpreters. [Practice Tip: Complex issues are those that affect the legal rights of the individual and therefore depend on the accuracy of translations/interpretations.] [Example: An LEP individual who needs assistance to engage in the complaint resolution process or to participate in a program, service, or activity] The following services are available in those instances:

   1. (Note: MassDOT is currently procuring the services of a firm that will be providing telephonic real-time interpretation. When finalized, that information will be included here for use in this context.)

   2. Statewide Language Services Contract


      b. Entities eligible to utilize this contract:
i. Cities, towns, districts, counties and other political subdivisions;

ii. Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches, including all Departments and elected offices therein;

iii. Independent public authorities, commissions and quasi-public agencies;

iv. Local public libraries, public school districts and charter schools;

v. Public hospitals, owned by the Commonwealth;

vi. Public institutions of high education;

vii. Public purchasing cooperatives;

viii. Non-profit, UFR-certified organizations that are doing business with the Commonwealth;

ix. Other states and territories with no prior approval by the State Purchasing Agent required; and

x. Other entities when designated in writing by the State Purchasing Agent.

12.1.5.2 Communicating with People with Disabilities

1) Outlined below are tips to help you in communicating with persons with disabilities. [Practice Tip: For more information visit: http://www.labor.state.ny.us/workforcenypartners/forms/communication.pdf.]

a. General Tips:

i. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)

ii. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.

iii. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions such as "See you later," or
"Did you hear about that?" that seem to relate to a person's disability.

iv. Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.

b. Tips for Communicating with Individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired:
   i. Speak to the individual when you approach him or her.
   
   ii. State clearly who you are; speak in a normal tone of voice.
   
   iii. When conversing in a group, remember to identify yourself and the person to whom you are speaking.
   
   iv. Never touch or distract a service dog without first asking the owner.
   
   v. Tell the individual when you are leaving.
   
   vi. Do not attempt to lead the individual without first asking; allow the person to hold your arm and control her or his own movements.
   
   vii. Be descriptive when giving directions; verbally give the person information that is visually obvious to individuals who can see. For example, if you are approaching steps, mention how many steps.
   
   viii. If you are offering a seat, gently place the individual's hand on the back or arm of the chair so that the person can locate the seat.

   c. Tips for Communicating with Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:
      i. Gain the person's attention before starting a conversation (i.e., tap the person gently on the shoulder or arm).
      
      ii. Look directly at the individual, face the light, speak clearly, in a normal tone of voice, and keep your hands away from your face. Use short, simple sentences.
      
      iii. If the individual uses a sign language interpreter, speak directly to the person, not the interpreter.
      
      iv. If you telephone an individual who is hard of hearing, let the phone ring longer than usual. Speak clearly and be prepared to repeat the reason for the call and who you are.
d. Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Mobility Impairments:
   i. If possible, put yourself at the wheelchair user's eye level.
   ii. Do not lean on a wheelchair or any other assistive device.
   iii. Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
   iv. Do not assume the individual wants to be pushed — ask first.
   v. Offer assistance if the individual appears to be having difficulty opening a door.
   vi. If you telephone the individual, allow the phone to ring longer than usual to allow extra time for the person to reach the telephone.

e. Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Speech Impairments:
   i. If you do not understand something the individual says, do not pretend that you do. Ask the individual to repeat what he or she said and then repeat it back.
   ii. Be patient. Take as much time as necessary.
   iii. Concentrate on what the individual is saying.
   iv. Do not speak for the individual or attempt to finish her or his sentences.
   v. If you are having difficulty understanding the individual, consider writing as an alternative means of communicating, but first ask the individual if this is acceptable.

f. Tips for Communicating with Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities:
   i. If you are in a public area with many distractions, consider moving to a quiet or private location.
   ii. Offer assistance completing forms or understanding written instructions and provide extra time for decision-making. Wait for the individual to accept the offer of assistance; do not "over-assist" or be patronizing.
iii. Be patient, flexible and supportive. Take time to understand the individual and make sure the individual understands you.

2) Additional information can be provided by:

a. MassDOT Office of Diversity and Civil Rights
   http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/OfficeofCivilRights.aspx

b. Massachusetts Office on Disability
   http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/

c. Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office of Access and Opportunity
   http://www.mass.gov/governor/administration/groups/oao/
12.2 FCTPO Accessible Meeting Policy

The following policy has been developed by MassDOT and has been adopted by the FCTPO and adapted to regional application.

1.0 Purpose

This policy outlines criteria that must be fulfilled in order to ensure that all FCTPO public meetings are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. This document will also address issues related to attendees with limited English proficiency.

The ability to access and participate in state government, including participating in public meetings, is a fundamental right protected by both State and Federal law. The Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law and the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate that persons with disabilities must not be denied participation in public meetings, and that reasonable accommodation requests made by attendees shall be honored. For these reasons, when planning and executing public meetings, FCTPO personnel must ensure that all aspects of the meeting are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Commonwealth Executive Order 526, the FCTPO must also ensure that programs and activities do not discriminate based on race, color or national origin, age, disability and sex, among other protected categories. A public participation plan is being developed for Title VI purposes, which should be consulted by meeting planners in coordination with this Accessible Meeting Policy to ensure that the FCTPO includes Title VI constituencies in transportation programs and activities. The method for determining whether and/or what non-English languages need to be translated or interpreted is called a “four factor analysis. Essentially, to determine whether translation is needed, meeting planners must analyze the number of limited English proficiency persons (LEP) by language group where a meeting will be held, the frequency of contacts with the program, the importance of the program and cost factors.

This document will provide guidelines for ensuring the accessibility of public meetings hosted by the FCTPO. Components such as the meeting location, room setup, alternate formats and translations of handouts, and the requirement to provide CART and/or sign language and/or foreign language interpreters upon request will be discussed.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Public Meeting

Any meeting open to the general public, hosted by or on behalf of the FCTPO, during which information is shared.

2.2 Attendee
An individual attending a public meeting.

2.3 Reasonable Accommodation
Any reasonable service, aid, modification or adjustment to the public meeting that gives a person with a disability the opportunity to be an active participant in the meeting process.

2.4 Path of Travel
A continuous, unobstructed way of pedestrian passage by means of which an area may be approached, entered, and exited.

2.5 TTY (Text Telephone)
An electronic device for text communication via a telephone line, used when one or more of the parties has a hearing or speech-related disability. Public payphones equipped with TTY have a small keyboard that pulls out underneath the phone. Note: TTYs are gradually phasing out for many people due to the increased use of voice and video relay, but they will remain in use for some period into the future.

2.6 Clear floor space
The minimum unobstructed floor or ground space required to accommodate a single, stationary wheelchair and occupant.

2.7 Wheeled mobility device
Means by which some individuals with physical disabilities travel throughout their environment. Commonly refers to such devices as wheelchairs (manual and motorized) and scooters. Non-traditional wheeled mobility devices may include Segways and bicycles.

2.8 American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter
An individual trained to facilitate communication between a deaf American Sign Language user and hearing individuals via American Sign Language.

2.9 Assistive Listening Device
An electronic device used by individuals who are hard of hearing to amplify sound. The assistive listening device is usually used as a system where the audio source is broadcast wirelessly over an FM frequency. The person who is listening may use a small FM Receiver to tune into the signal and listen at their
preferred volume. There are other forms of Assistive Listening Devices that exist and could be used as alternatives.

2.10 **CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Transcription)**

A trained operator uses keyboard or stenography methods to transcribe spoken speech into written text. This may be done either on site or remotely by using a voice connection such as a telephone, cell phone, or computer microphone to send the voice to the operator and the real-time text is transmitted back over an Internet connection. For meeting rooms without an internet connection, it is possible to establish connectivity via a WIFI router connection or by using a wireless “hot spot.”

2.11 **Video Remote Interpreting**

A contracted video service that allows individuals who are Deaf to communicate over webcams/video phones with hearing people in real-time, via a sign language interpreter.

2.12 **Video and Telecommunication (Voice) Relay Services**

Video Relay Service (VRS) is a form of Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) that enables persons with hearing disabilities who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text. Video equipment links the VRS user with a TRS operator – called a “communications assistant” (CA) – so that the VRS user and the CA can see and communicate with each other in signed conversation. The VRS caller, using a television or a computer with a video camera device and a broadband (high speed) Internet connection, contacts a VRS CA, who is a qualified sign language interpreter. They communicate with each other in sign language through a video link. The VRS CA then places a telephone call to the party the VRS user wishes to call. The VRS CA relays the conversation back and forth between the parties – in sign language with the VRS user, and by voice with the called party. No typing or text is involved.

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) is a telephone service that allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls. TRS uses operators, called communications assistants (CAs), to facilitate telephone calls between people with hearing and speech disabilities and other individuals. A TRS call may be initiated by either a person with a hearing or speech disability, or a person without such disability. When a person with a hearing or speech disability initiates a TRS call, the person uses a teletypewriter (TTY) or other text input device to call the TRS relay center, and gives a CA the number of the party that he or she wants to call. The CA in turn places an outbound traditional voice call to that person. The CA then serves as a link for
the call, relaying the text of the calling party in voice to the called party, and converting to text what the called party voices back to the calling party. VRS and TRS are overseen by the Federal Communications Commission and private contractors who perform the intermediary communication service are reimbursed for this service.

2.13 Closed Captioning
A term describing several systems developed to display text on a television, computer or video screen to provide additional or interpretive information to viewers/listeners who wish to access it. Closed captions typically display a transcription of the audio portion of a program (either verbatim or in edited form), sometimes including non-speech elements.

2.14 Descriptive Video/Described Narration
A feature that makes television programs, videos, films, and other visual media accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired by providing descriptive narration of key visual elements in programs. Key visual elements in a program that a viewer who is visually impaired would ordinarily miss are described by voice. Actions, costumes, gestures and scene changes are just a few of the elements that, when described, engage the blind or visually impaired viewer with the story.

2.15 Limited English Proficient (LEP)
Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or “LEP.” These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

2.16 Four Factor Analysis
Federal DOT guidance outlines four factors recipients should consider to assess language needs and decide what steps they should take to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons:

1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.

2) The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
3) The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to the LEP community.

4) The resources available to the FRCOG and overall cost.

In each instance, this analysis will enable FRCOG staff to determine the extent of language assistance that must be provided to enable LEP individuals to participate in a program or activity. For further information, including answers to specific situations that meeting planners may encounter, planners should consult the ADA Coordinator, the Title VI Specialist and/or the Language Access Plan.

2.17 Vital Document

A vital document is determined by the context of a program, service or activity, and can include but not be limited to an application, notice, complaint form, legal contract, and outreach material published by a covered entity in a tangible format that informs individuals about their rights or eligibility requirements for benefits and participation.

2.18 Language Access Plan

Under Federal Executive Order Executive Order 13166, each Federal agency is required to prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons. Each plan is required to be consistent with the standards set forth in related guidance, and shall include the steps the agency will take to ensure that eligible LEP persons can meaningfully access the agency's programs and activities. Just as federal agencies must have LEP Plans, as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance, they must establish guidelines for recipients such as the FCTPO to comply with Title VI and LEP requirements, including the provision of language assistance, as needed.

3.0 Scope

All public meetings hosted by, or on behalf of, the FCTPO.

4.0 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the FCTPO and FRCOG staff charged with the coordination of the public meeting to ensure that the public meeting is accessible to all. The local contacts for the meeting facility, in conjunction with the responsible FRCOG staff, are responsible for filling out the “Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners” in Attachment 6.1 to ensure the space is accessible prior to the meeting.
5.0 Policy

5.1 General Considerations

5.1.1 Public meeting planners shall identify at least one person who is responsible for making sure that the public meeting is accessible for all attendees. This individual shall serve as the contact for attendees requesting reasonable accommodations. See, Attachment 6.1 for a Checklist for Meeting Planners.

5.1.2 Public meetings should be planned and publicized as early as possible—ideally, at least 14 calendar days, but no less than 48 hours in advance.

5.1.2.1 Meeting notices should include a date by which attendees should request reasonable accommodations—typically ten days before the meeting.

Note: After the cutoff date, staff must still try to provide an accommodation but should not guarantee the provision of the requested accommodation. Since it is so difficult to schedule CART and/or sign language interpreters with less than 2-3 weeks’ notice, most meetings should strive to be publicized with 21 days’ notice. This allows attendees ample opportunity to request and receive appropriate reasonable accommodations.

5.1.3 Attendees shall not be charged for any reasonable accommodation provided.

5.2 Choosing a Location

5.2.1 Access to Nearby Transportation. All public meetings shall be within ¼ mile of an accessible bus stop or rail station, where feasible.

5.2.1.1 The path of travel from the transit stop to the meeting location shall be accessible. Specifically, it should be:

5.2.1.1.1 At least three feet wide
5.2.1.1.2 Unobstructed (not blocked by trash cans, light poles, etc.)
5.2.1.1.3 Free of steps, drop-offs or curbs

5.2.2 Parking. If parking is available to meeting attendees, meeting planners shall ensure that the number of accessible parking spaces available complies with state and Federal
regulations. See, Attachment 6.2 for state and Federal regulations regarding accessible parking.

5.2.2.1 The path of travel from the accessible parking to the meeting location shall be accessible. Specifically, it shall be:

5.2.2.1.1 At least three feet wide
5.2.2.1.2 Unobstructed (no trash cans, light poles, etc.)
5.2.2.1.3 Free of steps, drop-offs or curbs

5.2.3 Identifying the Accessible Entrance. If the main entrance to the building (in which the public meeting is being held) is not the accessible entrance, a sign containing the universal symbol of accessibility with an arrow appropriately pointing to the accessible entrance shall be posted at the main entrance.

5.2.4 Ensure the alternate accessible entrance is unlocked and available to be used independently and that the path of travel to the alternate entrance is well lit (if the meeting is taking place at night). If the door is locked and intercom service or another format is used to gain access, an attendant must be at the door to accommodate deaf or hard of hearing individuals, as well as others with disabilities.

5.2.5 Accessible Restrooms. If restrooms are available for use by the public then all public meetings shall have at least one accessible restroom for men and one accessible restroom for women, or one accessible gender neutral restroom. See, Attachment 6.3 for state and Federal regulations regarding accessible restrooms.

5.2.5.1 The accessible restrooms shall be within reasonable proximity to the meeting room.

5.2.6 Accessible Telephones. If two or more public payphones are available at the meeting facility, at least one should be:

5.2.6.1 Equipped with TTY
5.2.6.2 Mounted no higher than 48" from the floor and provide clear floor space 30" wide and 48" wide (so that attendees using wheeled mobility can properly access the phone).
5.2.6.3 FRCOG should notify the facility owner if the facility does not comply with the accessible telephone requirement.
5.2.7 The Meeting Room: The meeting room in which the public meeting will take place shall be made accessible for persons with disabilities. The following shall be provided:

5.2.7.1 An integrated seating area for wheeled mobility device users shall be made available.

5.2.7.1.1 If possible, meeting planners should remove several chairs to accommodate potential attendees who use wheeled mobility devices.

Note: Remove a chair to the side and to the rear of the designated space to ensure enough room for the wheeled mobility device.

5.2.7.1.2 Such spaces for wheeled mobility device users shall be dispersed throughout the room, and not clustered all in one section (e.g. all in the front or all in the back). This allows attendees using wheeled mobility a variety of seating/viewing options.

5.2.7.2 Space for Sign Language, CART and Foreign Language Interpreters

5.2.7.2.1 A well-lit area and chairs facing the audience shall be made available for sign language interpreters at the front of the room (likely just off to one side of the main presentation area). If a CART provider is to be used, a small table for the laptop and space for a screen and projector should be provided near an electrical outlet.

5.2.7.2.2 Priority seating at the front of the audience and in direct line of sight of the interpreters/CART provider shall be provided for attendees who are deaf/hard of hearing.

5.2.7.2.3 For foreign language interpreters, there is a need for space where they can sit with the individuals who require language assistance.

5.2.7.3 Aisles within the meeting room shall be

5.2.7.3.1 Clear of tripping hazards (e.g. electric cords).

5.2.7.3.2 At least 3 feet wide.
5.2.7.4 Microphones. The microphones used at public meetings shall be available on a stand that is adjustable in height.

Note: While wireless microphones have become popular, some attendees with disabilities will not be able to hold a microphone independently. In this situation, allowing an attendee use of a microphone stand adjusted to their height is almost always preferable to holding the microphone for them. Alternatively, and particularly for larger meetings, staff with a floating microphone would be preferable to facilitate communication.

5.2.7.5 Podiums. If any attendee may have an opportunity to speak at a podium, meeting planners shall ensure that either:

5.2.7.5.1 The podium is height adjustable, or

5.2.7.5.2 A small table is provided to the side of the podium.

5.2.7.5.2.1 The table shall be between 28 and 34" inches in height.

5.2.7.5.2.2 There shall be at least 27" of knee space from the floor to the underside of the table.

5.2.7.5.2.3 If a microphone is provided at the podium, one shall also be provided at the small table.

5.2.7.6 Raised Platforms. If any attendee may have an opportunity to move onto a raised platform or stage during the meeting, the raised platform or stage shall be accessible by:

5.2.7.6.1 A ramp that

5.2.7.6.1.1 Is at least 3 feet wide.

5.2.7.6.1.2 Does not have a slope that exceeds 1/12.

5.2.7.6.2 Platform lift

5.2.7.7 High Speed internet Connection. Public meeting rooms shall provide for a high speed internet connection, if available, to allow attendees who rely on video remote interpreting or CART. There should also be a conference capable telephone with a speakerphone function available.
5.3 American Sign Language and Foreign Language Interpreters, Assistive Listening Devices, CART and Video Remote Interpreting.

5.3.1 American Sign Language and/or foreign language interpreters shall be provided at all public meetings upon request. See, Attachment 6.4 for information on how to request an interpreter.

5.3.1.1 To ensure their availability, interpreters should be requested at least two weeks in advance of the public meeting.

5.3.1.2 The cost associated with providing sign language or foreign language interpreters shall be paid for by the Department hosting the event.

5.3.2 Assistive Listening Devices. Assistive Listening Devices for attendees who are hard of hearing shall be provided at all public meetings upon request. See, Attachment 6.5 for information on how to provide assistive listening devices.

5.3.3 CART services shall be provided at all public meetings upon request (See Attachment 6.6 for information on how to provide CART services). Staff should schedule or make requests for CART services at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, and preferably as soon as an attendee makes this need known. When remote CART services are to be used (the CART reporter is not in the room), staff should try to provide the reporter any technical terms or acronyms to be used, as well as the names of key meeting attendees before the meeting date.

5.3.4 Video Remote Interpreting shall be provided at all public meetings upon request via a computer/laptop with a webcam and high speed internet connection.

Note: Video Remote Interpreting is a relatively new form of technology and may be an adequate alternative to providing ASL interpreters in certain situations. However, if an attendee requests Video Remote Interpreting, ASL interpreters will be an adequate substitute, if the meeting planner cannot secure the requested technology.

5.4 Alternative Formats and Translation of Handouts/Presentation Material

Large print versions of all printed material shall be available at all public meetings. If requests for additional alternative formats are made in advance of the meeting (within the timeframes below), these formats must be available for the start of the meeting. If requests for alternative formats are made at or
following the meeting, the alternative format must be provided within seven days of the request.

These requirements are the same with respect to translation into foreign languages, where the language requested is identified through application of the four factor analysis process, set forth in the FCTPO Title VI Language Implementation Plan. When a language group is small, defined as 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, foreign language translations of “vital documents” should be provided, and non-vital documents may be orally translated. This requirement does not affect the requirement to provide meaningful translation to one or more in a small group of LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters or translation where language services are needed and are reasonable.

5.4.1 Creating Alternative Formats

See attachment 6.7 for step by step instructions on creating alternative formats.

5.4.2 Large Print Version

5.4.2.1 Large print meeting materials shall:

5.4.2.1.1 Be created using "Arial" font with a font size of 16 pt.

5.4.2.1.2 Have the same information as the original handout.

5.4.2.1.3 Have the highest contrast possible (e.g. black on white).

5.4.2.1.4 If graphics (such as images, tables, or graphs) are used in the original document, the same graphics shall be included in the large print version of the document.

5.4.2.1.4.1 If graphics are used in the large print document, a brief description of the image shall be provided. Image descriptions shall be brief and provide the viewer of the document with a general idea of what is in the image.

5.4.2.1.4.2 If tables or graphs are used in the large print document, a summary
of the table or graph shall be provided.

5.4.3 Electronic Version

5.4.3.1 If an electronic version of materials is requested within 24 hours in advance of the meeting, this version shall be available for the meeting, if no advance request is made but rather is requested at or after the meeting, then meeting materials shall be made available electronically, within 7 calendar days of the request.

Note: Whenever possible, meeting planners should bring several copies of an electronic accessible version of the meeting material to the public meeting. Some individuals with visual impairments or other disabilities may attend with portable screen reading software that would allow them to access electronic material during the meeting.

5.4.4 Braille Version

5.4.4.1 If a Braille version of materials is requested within one week in advance of the meeting, this version shall be available for the meeting, if no advance request is made but rather is requested at or after the meeting, then Meeting materials shall be made available in Braille within 7 calendar days of the request.

5.4.5 Audible Version

5.4.5.1 If an audible version of materials is requested within one week in advance of the meeting, this version shall be available for the meeting, if no advance request is made but rather is requested at or after the meeting, then meeting materials shall be made audible, within 7 calendar days of the request.

5.4.6 Foreign Language Version

5.4.6.1 If a common foreign language version of materials is requested within one week in advance of the meeting, this version shall be available for the meeting, if no advance request is made but rather is requested at or after the meeting, then Meeting materials shall be made available in the language requested within 7 calendar days of the request.
5.4.7 Other requests for alternate formats

5.4.7.1 Individual attendees may have unique specifications for alternate formats. All reasonable requests for alternate formats shall be honored upon request, within 7 calendar days of the request.

5.4.8 Meeting attendees will not be charged for any cost affiliated with the creation of alternate formats of meeting material.

5.5 Publicizing the Meeting

5.5.1 Public meetings shall be publicized as early as possible—ideally, at least 21 calendar days in advance, but never less than 48 hours in advance. This allows attendees time to submit requests for reasonable accommodations and for meeting planners to set deadlines for accommodation requests to be made in a timely manner. The meeting publicity also needs to be translated into the languages that are identified through application of the four factor analysis set forth in the FCTPO Title VI Language Implementation Plan.

5.5.2 All meeting notices shall include:

5.5.2.1 The statement “This location is accessible to persons with disabilities”

5.5.2.2 A brief listing of accessibility features that either are available or may be made available upon request during the public meeting (e.g. sign language, CART, assistive listening devices and/or foreign language interpreters).

5.5.2.3 Information on how to request reasonable accommodations by phone, e-mail or fax and the deadline for requests.

5.5.2.4 Information on how to request foreign language interpreter assistance.

5.5.2.5 See Attachment at section 6.7 for a sample meeting posting.
5.6 Additional Considerations

5.6.1 Within 48 hours, meeting planners shall follow-up with attendees who have requested reasonable accommodations to let them know their request has been received and will be honored to the extent possible.

Note: Especially in the case of ASL interpreters, the meeting planner may not know of their availability until 24 hours prior to the meeting. It is reasonable to let people know their request has been received and that it is in the process of being put in place, however if no interpreter is available people need to be notified and alternate plans must be made – such as CART or Video Relay.

5.6.2 Emergency Preparedness

5.6.2.1 In the event of an emergency, some attendees with disabilities may not be able to evacuate independently. Meeting planners shall familiarize themselves with the evacuation plan for the meeting space.

5.6.2.2 At the beginning of each meeting, meeting presenters shall announce the safety briefing--including information regarding where those attendees who would require assistance should wait during an emergency.

5.6.3 When opening a public meeting, presenters shall announce:

5.6.3.1 The presence and function of sign language interpreters (if interpreters are in the room), and/or CART providers

5.6.3.2 That assistive listening equipment is available

5.6.3.3 The location of accessible restrooms

5.6.3.4 The safety briefing (see 5.6.2.2).

5.6.4 When presenting, presenters at public meetings shall:

5.6.4.1 Speak slowly and clearly so that the sign language interpreters have time to interpret.

5.6.4.2 Verbally describe information presented visually (e.g. PowerPoint) so that attendees with visual impairments can access the information.

5.6.4.3 Ensure that any videos/DVDs shown during the meeting are encoded with closed captioning and are shown on a closed caption compatible device. Subtitles are an acceptable alternative.

5.6.4.3.1.1 Provide an alternate version of the video/DVD with descriptive
video/described narration. (See Attachment 6.9 for captioning resources.)

Note: It may not always be a good choice to use a described video in an open meeting as this can be a problem for other viewers.
6.0 Attachments

6.1 Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners

Meeting Date:
Meeting Time:
Subject of Meeting:
Location:

FCTPO Attendees:

☐ Is there at least one person or Department who is responsible for ensuring that the public meeting is accessible for all attendees?
Print Name/Department: _______________________________

Publicizing Meeting:

☐ Has the public meeting been publicized at least 3 weeks in advance?
☐ Has the meeting been publicized on the FRCOG website?

☐ Does the public meeting notice include accessibility information, how to request a reasonable accommodation, relevant dates for making requests and information on whom to contact to request a reasonable accommodation?

☐ Does the public meeting notice include information on how to request foreign language interpreters?

Facility:

Date of Facility Assessment: ___________________________

☐ Where applicable (in areas where public transportation is available), is the meeting location 1/4 mile or less from the nearest accessible bus stop or rail station?

☐ Where applicable, is there an accessible path of travel provided from the public transportation stop to the meeting location and meeting room?

☐ If parking will be available at the meeting location, are there accessible parking spaces available (review # of car and van accessible spaces)?
☐ Is there an accessible path of travel provided from the accessible parking area to the meeting area?

☐ If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is there directional signage towards the accessible entrance?

☐ Is the accessible entrance unlocked and able to be used independently? If the meeting is taking place at night, is the path leading to the alternate entrance well lit?

☐ If there are restrooms that are open to the public, is there a pair of accessible restrooms available within close proximity of the meeting area? If not, is there at least one accessible gender neutral restroom?

☐ If there are public phones, is there at least one accessible (TTY and within appropriate height range) telephone available?

☐ If a stage or platform will be used during the public meeting, is it accessible?

☐ If a podium will be used during the public meeting, is the podium height-adjustable? If not, is there a small table (between 28 and 34 inches in height) provided to the side of the podium?

☐ If available, is there a high speed internet connection within the meeting space?

Ensuring Appropriate Accommodations:

☐ Have sign language and foreign language interpreters, if requested, been reserved for the public meeting?

☐ Have CART services, if requested, been reserved for the public meeting?

☐ Are Assistive Listening Devices available for the public meeting? Does someone know how to use the device? Have you checked the devices at least 24 to 48 hours before the meeting and rechecked immediately before the meeting starts? (Note: For large meetings, to avoid the loss of equipment, it is reasonable to ask for a driver's license or other ID as collateral.)

☐ Are large print copies of meeting handouts available?

☐ Are printed materials available upon request, in alternative formats and/or relevant foreign languages?
☐ Are film or video presentations closed captioned and audio described?

Facility/Room Setup (prior to meeting):

☐ If the main entrance to the building is not accessible, is the accessible entrance unlocked?

☐ Is there an integrated seating area for individuals who use a wheeled mobility device in the meeting room?

☐ Is there seating available for attendees who are deaf or hard of hearing, and have requested an accommodation, near the front of the meeting room so that attendees may see the interpreter/captioner, or lip read?

☐ Is there an appropriately lit area in the front of the room for sign/foreign language interpreters and/or CART providers?

☐ Are the aisles at least three feet wide and clear of obstacles or tripping hazards?

☐ If microphones are used during the public meeting, are adjustable microphone stands available for attendees? Can staff be used as floaters with microphones as an alternative?
6.2 Ensuring adequate accessible parking

6.2.1 See [http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dps/aab_regs/521023.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dps/aab_regs/521023.pdf) for Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations


6.3 Accessible Restrooms

6.3.1 See [http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dps/aab_regs/521030.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dps/aab_regs/521030.pdf) for Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations


6.4 How to request sign language, CART Providers or foreign language interpreters

6.4.1 Sign Language Interpreters

- Complete and submit an on-line request for interpreting services through the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing’s (MCDHH) website
  - Go to [http://mass.gov/mcdhh](http://mass.gov/mcdhh)
  - Click on “Interpreter/CART referral services”
  - Select “Request an Interpreter on-line”
  - Note: A copy of the Request Form is attached at 6.7, for reference.

- Requests should be submitted within 21 days, but no later than 14 calendar days in advance of the meeting to ensure interpreter availability.

- If the meeting is cancelled or rescheduled, interpreter requests must be canceled at least 48 hours advance in order to avoid
being billed for the service. CART providers must be cancelled no later than 72 hours in advance of the event.

- Interpreters invoices are billed as a minimum of two hours.

- For meetings that are anticipated to last more than 75 minutes, two interpreters shall be provided. In most situations, one CART provider is sufficient if the meeting is no longer than three hours.

6.4.2 Sign Language Interpreters

- Complete and submit an on-line request for interpreting services through the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing’s (MCDHH) website
  - Go to [http://mass.gov/mcdhh](http://mass.gov/mcdhh)
  - Click on “Interpreter/CART referral services”
  - Click on “CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) Providers”
  - Click on “Request a CART Provider” and follow listed directions
  - Note: A copy of the Request Form is attached at 6.7, for reference.

6.4.3 Foreign Language Interpreters/Translators

- The FCTPO’s policy combines the use of bilingual staff, interpreter services and translated materials to communicate effectively with persons who are not fluent in English. When a request for oral interpretation is made, or a significant language speaking population is expected to attend a public meeting, the following steps should be reviewed and carried out to ensure compliance with Title VI requirements.
  - Conduct a four-factor analysis as to the kind of meeting in question and the populations that are in the affected communities, using the language group maps that are contained in the Language Implementation Plan. Identify the languages that are likely to be needed and consult with the Title VI Coordinator for assistance with any problems concerning the language groups that may require interpreter services.
Identify the source for interpreter services, recognizing that most providers require one-two weeks advance notice of a meeting, based on the language(s) to be interpreted.

6.4.2.2 Request and cancellation timeframes

- Requests should be submitted at least 14 calendar days in advance of the meeting to ensure interpreter availability.
- If the meeting is cancelled or rescheduled, interpreter requests must be canceled at least 48 hours advance in order to avoid being billed for the service.
- Interpreter invoices vary by provider but may have a minimum of two to three hours.
- For meetings that are anticipated to last more than 75 minutes, two interpreters shall be provided.

6.5 How to Create Alternate Formats

6.5.3 Electronic Version

6.5.3.1 Accessible electronic formats include email, and Microsoft Word Document (DOC or DOCX), a text file (TXT), or Rich Text Format (RTF).

Note: Some attendees requesting material electronically may have a visual impairment and use screen reading software. The formats referenced above are most compatible with such software.

6.5.3.2 Public meeting materials that are created electronically shall:

6.5.3.2.1 Be created using "Arial" font and a font size of 16 pt.

6.5.3.2.2 Shall have the same information as the original document and shall have the highest contrast possible.

6.5.3.2.3 If graphics (such as images, tables, or graphs) are used in the original document, the same graphics shall be included in the electronic version of the document.

6.5.3.2.4 If images are used in the electronic document, a brief description (providing the viewer of the document with a general idea of what's in the image) shall be provided.
6.5.3.2.5 If tables or graphs are used in the electronic document, a summary of the table or graph shall be provided.

6.5.4 Braille Version

6.5.4.1 Meeting materials that are in Braille shall:

6.5.4.1.1 Be created using contracted Braille (Grade 2) and single-spaced.

6.5.4.1.2 Braille documents shall have the same information as the non-accessible handout.

6.5.4.1.3 If tables or graphs are used in the regular document, a summary of the table or graph shall be provided in the Braille document.

6.5.4.2 In order to create a Braille document:

MassDOT’s Central Planning Transportation Services (CTPS) currently owns and operates a Braille printer.

Contact:
Janie Guion, CTPS, 617-973-7507 or jguion@ctps.org

6.5.5 Audible Version

6.5.5.1 Public meeting material that is recorded audibly shall:

6.5.5.1.1 Have the same information that's printed on the original handout.

6.5.5.1.2 Be spoken clearly.

6.5.5.1.3 Shall describe images used in the original handout.

6.5.5.1.4 Shall provide an explanation of any table or graph is used in a meeting document. The meeting planner shall ensure that the audible explanation of the table/graph is clearly explained and represents the table or graph on the printed document.
### 6.6 Sample meeting posting (in an MBTA context)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>September 21, 20__</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Time</td>
<td>1:00 P.M.-3:00 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject of Meeting</td>
<td>Judge Patrick King’s Update on MBTA/BCIL Settlement Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>State Transportation Building, 2nd Floor, Conference Rooms 2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBTA Attendees</td>
<td>Department of System-Wide Accessibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Text**

Meeting Purpose - Judge Patrick King will be hosting a public meeting to discuss his assessment of the MBTA’s progress towards compliance with the MBTA/BCIL settlement agreement. Please come to share your questions and comments regarding accessibility at the T.

Notice: This location is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT’s Chief Diversity & Civil Rights Officer by phone at (857) 368-8580, TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email to MASSDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us. Requests should be made as soon as possible prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the meeting.

(Note: This notice should be translated into the languages other than English that are identified to be necessary for the Limited English Proficient populations represented in the area of the project or initiative to be invited to participate.)
6.7 Resources for adding closed captioning and/or described narration to your video


- 3 Play Media - [http://www.3playmedia.com/](http://www.3playmedia.com/)


13. FCTPO MAILING LIST
The FCTPO maintains a mailing list that is used for communication of meetings, comment periods, and other transportation planning projects/processes. This list contains the following interested parties:

- Representatives of Franklin County in the Federal and State Legislature,
- MassDOT, Secretary
- MassDOT, Office of Transportation Planning
- MassDOT Highway Division Administrator
- MassDOT Highway Division Districts 1 and 2 Directors
- Selectboards of 26 Franklin County towns
- Planning Boards of 26 Franklin County towns
- Council on Agings
- Mayor of Greenfield
- Franklin Regional Transit Authority
- Regionally elected representative to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments
- Franklin Regional Housing Authority
- Franklin County Resource Network
- *The Recorder* newspaper
- *The Athol Daily News* newspaper
- *The Montague Reporter* newspaper
- *The Shelbume and West County Independent* newspaper
- Franklin Regional Planning Board
- WHAI
- WRSI
- Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
• North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce
• Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association
• Environmental Protection Agency
• Greenfield Community College Administration
• YMCA
• Community Action
• Montague Catholic Social Ministries
• LifePath
• Franklin County Resource Network
• And various members of the general public.

Anyone can be added to the mailing list upon written request to the FRCOG office.
FCTPO TITLE VI AND LEP PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CHECKLIST

Project Name: ________________________________________________________________

Staff Lead: ___________________________ Date: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preliminary Planning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review public participation plan materials on inclusive interactions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate internally within FRCOG</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify potential barriers to inclusive participation</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct preliminary community research</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draft strategic plan of engagement, as needed</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow Accessibility Checklist for Meeting Planners (Section 12.2 above of “Title VI and ADA Protocols, Policies, and Resources) as needed</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Follow Up</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document all efforts to achieve diversity of involvement and results</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share meeting insights with project manager and/or across FRCOG departments</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to questions, especially from Title VI communities</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised 3/3/2016